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## GLIAC Men's Basketball Coaches Tab Michigan Tech and Findlay for 2004-05 Division Titles

**BAY CITY, Mich.** -- The head men's basketball coaches of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) chose Michigan Tech University and the University of Findlay to win the league's North and South Division titles, respectively.

Michigan Tech received four of the six first-place votes it was eligible for, tallying 35 points. Ferris State University claimed the two remaining first-place votes and finished second in the poll with 32 points. Grand Valley State University garnered 21 points, narrowly edging out. Northern Michigan University (20 points) for third place. Northwood University placed fifth with 18 points, followed by Saginaw Valley State University in sixth (10 points), and Lake Superior State University in seventh (8).

Findlay received all five first-place votes it was eligible for to rank first in the South Division. Second-place Gannon University finished four points behind the Oilers with 21 points. Wayne State University finished one point ahead of Ashland University (15-14) to finish third. Hillsdale College (10) and Mercyhurst College (5) placed fifth and sixth, respectively.

Each of the GLIAC's 13 coaches ranked the teams in the division in which they play, but were not allowed to vote for their own team. The first-place team on the North Division ballot received six points, while the second-place team received five points, etc. The first-place team in the South Division received five points, while the second-place team received four points, etc.

Findlay defeated Michigan Tech in the finals of the 2003-04 GLIAC postseason tournament, claiming the school's first conference championship. The 2004-05 GLIAC tournament quarterfinal games will be played on Tuesday, Mar. 1, on campus sites with the higher seeds hosting the games. The semifinals and finals will be hosted by the highest remaining seed on Friday, Mar. 4 and Saturday, Mar. 5.

GLIAC basketball teams open play on Monday, Nov. 15 with conference play beginning Wednesday, Dec. 1.

2004-05 GLIAC Preseason Men's Basketball Coaches Poll		
<i>North Division</i>		
<i>Rank</i>	<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1.	Michigan Tech (4) .....	35
2.	Ferris State (2) .....	32
3.	Grand Valley State .....	21
4.	Northern Michigan .....	20
5.	Northwood .....	18
6.	Saginaw Valley State .....	10
7.	Lake Superior State .....	8
<i>South Division</i>		
1.	Findlay (5) .....	25
2.	Gannon (1) .....	21
3.	Wayne State .....	15
4.	Ashland .....	14
5.	Hillsdale .....	10
6.	Mercyhurst .....	5

2003-04 GLIAC Men's Basketball Final Standings	
<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Ferris State .....	14-14(14-4)
Michigan Tech .....	22-8(13-5)
Northern Michigan .....	16-12(10-8)
Northwood .....	17-12(10-8)
Grand Valley State .....	14-13(6-12)
Saginaw Valley State .....	9-18(3-15)
Lake Superior State .....	9-19(2-16)
<i>South Division</i>	
Findlay .....	25-7(13-4)
Gannon .....	22-8(12-5)
Wayne State .....	19-12(11-6)
Mercyhurst .....	16-12(10-7)
Hillsdale .....	13-14(6-11)
Ashland .....	11-16(4-13)

**The following are season previews on each of the GLIAC's 13 Men's Basketball Teams:**

**Ashland University:** The Eagles were one of the youngest teams in the GLIAC a year ago and the nucleus from that 11-16 team (4-13 GLIAC) is back in 2004-05. Sophomore guard Alex Jones, last year's GLIAC freshman of the year, figures to be the sparkplug for this year's team. The 6-0 Jones paced last year's team in scoring (12.5 ppg.) and three-point field goals (54). Another guard, 6-0 senior Michael Fowler, averaged 10.3 ppg., with a team-high 104 assists. Vahn Knight, a 6-4 sophomore, is settling in at small forward after averaging 10.4 ppg., as a guard last season. Knight was ninth in the conference in free throw percentage (.777). Inside, head coach Roger Lyons (12<sup>th</sup> season at Ashland) is counting on 6-7 senior Kevin Shorter. Last season Shorter was the GLIAC leader in blocked shots (1.16 bpg.), was seventh in field goal percentage (.559) and 10<sup>th</sup> in rebounds (5.5 rpg.).

**Ferris State University:** Hopes are extremely high for the Ferris State men's basketball team heading into the 2004-05 campaign following a season in which the Bulldogs claimed the GLIAC North Division Championship under head coach Bill Sall. In 2003-04, the Bulldogs registered a 14-14 overall mark, including a first-place 14-4 league finish. Eight of the squad's top 10 players will return this season. Among the key returnees are a first-team All-GLIAC standout in senior guard Carlton Epps (Benton Harbor) and a second-team all-league guard in junior Dennis Springs (Toledo, Ohio/Scott). Sophomore forwards Terrance Shaw (Saginaw/Bridgeport) and Michael Daniels (Detroit/Murray-Wright) should provide significant contributions following productive rookie seasons. A solid class of newcomers is highlighted by Northern Michigan University transfer guard Antwan Holt (Okemos), who should help fill the graduation void left by last season's leading scorer Willie Thomas.

**University of Findlay:** The Oilers return four starters from a 25-7 team and are looking for their fourth consecutive GLIAC South Division crown during the 2004-05 season. In all, Findlay is returning nine letter winners from last season and have added to their depth with two, redshirt freshmen and two, true freshmen posts. Leading the returners will be junior playmaker Dustin Pfeifer who led the team in scoring last season with a 12.2 points per game average. Pfeifer was named Second Team All-GLIAC last season and is poised for a tremendous junior season. Head coach Ron Niekamp enters his 20<sup>th</sup> season at the Oilers' helm with a 402-158 career record.

**Grand Valley State University:** Grand Valley State enters the 2004-05 season with renewed enthusiasm under the direction of first-year head coach Ric Wesley. The Lakers return all five starters and 10 letterwinners from a team that finished 14-13 overall. Four double-digit scorers return for the Lakers, including senior forward Marcus Wallace who led the team in scoring (16.4 ppg) and rebounding (5.7 rpg). Junior guard Courtney James notched 12.4 points and a team-high 4.4 assists, while sophomore Mike Hall turned in an outstanding freshman campaign by averaging 11.3 points and 4.2 caroms per game. Senior center Eric Chess averaged 10.9 points and 5.0 rebounds per game and provides the Lakers with a strong low post presence.

**Gannon University:** Gannon returns nine letterwinners and three starters from last year's 22-8 squad. The Golden Knights qualified for the GLIAC Tournament for the eighth consecutive season, the longest current streak in the conference. In the process, the program won 20 games and qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the fifth consecutive season. Head coach Jerry Slocum enters the season sixth among active Division II coaches in career victories with 562 over 29 seasons. He is Gannon's all-time leader in coaching victories with a 161-67 record during his eight-year tenure. Preseason All-American Geoff Husted anchors Gannon's attack. The senior earned All-Region first-team honors last season after averaging 17 points and 8.4 rebounds. Seniors Matt Jones and Joe Rivera, along with junior Demondi Johnson, also return with starting experience. Gannon owns a .645 winning percentage during its 60-year history, the 16<sup>th</sup>-highest winning percentage among all NCAA Division II programs.

**Hillsdale College:** The Hillsdale men's basketball team, under seventh-year head coach Ed Douma, returns 10 letterwinners from a team that finished 13-14 overall in 2003-04. Despite the loss of scoring leader Tom Farmer to graduation (16.8 ppg), the Chargers bring a great deal of talent to this year's squad. Junior guard Cory Coe, a Second Team All-GLIAC performer last season, returns after finishing second on the team with 14.5 points and 4.3 rebounds per game. Also returning are sophomore forward/center John Farr and junior Rodney Whaley. Farr averaged 8.2 points per game, while Whaley posted 7.2 ppg and a team-high 71 assists (3.0 apg). HC's leadership will come in the form of seniors Ben Bixenmann and Marius Kliokys, who both played in all 27 games last season. Both averaged over 10 ppg combined.

**Lake Superior State University:** Lake Superior State, under second-year coach Mike Fitzner, is determined to improve defensively in order to move up in the GLIAC standings in 2004-05. LSSU returns seniors Steve MacDonald (5-10) at point guard, Jim Clement (6-7) at shooting guard and Scott Jamison (6-6) at forward. Jamison earned All-GLIAC Second Team honors last season after leading LSSU in scoring (14.7 ppg) and rebounding (7.3 rpg). The Lakers' other returning starter is junior center Eric Marquardt (6-8), who posted double doubles in four of his last six games of 2003-04. Fitzner is 9-19 through one season.

**Mercyhurst College:** The 2004-05 basketball season should prove to be a very interesting one for Mercyhurst and second-year head coach Gary Manchel. Although the Lakers had a very successful 2003-4 campaign, finishing the season with an overall mark of 16-12 and making the conference playoffs for the first time in three years, they lost three players to graduation and another who transferred, all of whom contributed nearly two-thirds of the points and assists and 55% of the rebounds. Five returning players will be bolstered by nine new faces on the 2004-05 roster. The GLIAC will be even tougher this year with road games at Michigan Tech and Northern Michigan. Throw in tough non-conference away games against Edinboro, Bloomsburg, Slippery Rock, and the Quincy (IL) Tournament and the Lakers will have their hands full.

**Michigan Tech University:** Michigan Tech, which has been nationally ranked for 32 consecutive weeks, carries high expectations into the 2004-05 season. Eleventh-year coach Kevin Luke lost just two players from last year's team that went 22-8 and advanced to the NCAA Great Lakes Regional semifinal. Senior Josh Buettner, an All-American and the GLIAC Player of the Year in 2003-04, and senior Jason Marcotte have played every game of Tech's 78-14 run over the last three seasons, and they plan on taking MTU to the school's first-ever berth into the Elite Eight. Junior Bob Evans and sophomore Radayl Richardson, who were both starters on the wing a year ago, give MTU plenty of experience to rely on. Freshmen Tim Strom, a 6-7 forward, and Josh Makela, a 6-0 guard, should both make a big impact on the team's success as well.

**Northern Michigan University:** The men's basketball team at Northern Michigan University is coming off a 16-12 overall and a 10-8 GLIAC slate for the 2003-04 season. Dean Ellis, who is just eight wins away from the 300 level, is back for his 19th season in Marquette. He is 292-215 in 18 campaigns at NMU. The 'Cats return three start-

ers from last year. Leading the way are the Volcy brothers, Marco and Ricky. Ricky averaged 11.5 ppg while appearing in 22 games last year and had 148 rebounds (6.7 rpg). Brother, Marco averaged over nine points a game (9.1 ppg) and led the team with 162 rebounds (6.0 rpg). Other top returners include Keder Hyppolite (3.4 ppg), David Noel (3.6 ppg) and Matt LePage (3.2 ppg).

**Northwood University:** The Northwood men's basketball team returns eight letterwinners and four starters from last year's 17-12 squad that reached the GLIAC Tournament semifinals. Senior leadership should be strength for the team, as Bob Taylor's unit features four seniors in their rotation. Junior Nemanja Kreckovic is the Timberwolves top returning scorer, having averaged 11.7 points per game in his first two seasons at Northwood. Richard Kamm, who will join the team at the end of the football season, averaged career-highs in points (7.8) and rebounds (4.4) per game a year ago. Seniors Derek Fillmore and D.J. Hughes will provide Northwood with a pair of outside scoring threats. NU finished the 2003-04 season with the top field goal percentage in the GLIAC (.487).

**Saginaw Valley State University:** The Cardinals will be under the guidance of first-year head coach Jamie Matthews. Matthews had a successful six-year run at D-III Manchester College in Indiana compiling a 109-52 record. He inherits a squad that finished 9-18 overall and 3-15 in the rugged GLIAC North. Senior Anthony Parker returns for his senior year after ranking third in the GLIAC in scoring (19.4 ppg) as a junior. Senior Rojelio Grady possessed the best assist-to-turnover ratio (3.87) in the conference last year. Senior David Williams and junior Mekele Cooper will also see significant time in the frontcourt for the Cardinals.

**Wayne State University:** Coming off a Sweet Sixteen performance a year ago, the Wayne State men's basketball team and fourth-year head coach David Greer look to make another run in the NCAA Tournament. Greer had his best season on the bench last year with a 19-12 record and is 64-50 entering his fifth season overall (47-38 at WSU). The Warriors return three starting guards in Morris Hall, Darrell Evans and Herb Goliday from the 2003-04 squad that fell to the eventual national runner-up, Southern Indiana, by one point in the regional final. Also expected to have an impact in the league is 6-7 forward Ashanti Burke, a transfer from Fordham, along with the return of forward A.J. Parker after a medical redshirt. The Warriors' schedule may be one of toughest in the country as they have 11 games against 2004 NCAA Tournament qualifiers.