



Jeff Ligney
Director of Media Relations

1110 Washington Ave.
 Bay City, MI 48708
 Voice: (989) 894-2529 Fax: (989) 894-2825
 E-mail: jligney@gliac.org
 web site: www.gliac.org/2003/winter/mbkball/

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GLIAC Men's Basketball Coaches Choose Northern Michigan and Findlay for 2005-06 Division Titles

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

Northern Michigan received four of the seven first-place votes it was eligible for, tallying 33 points. Grand Valley State University claimed two of the three remaining first-place votes and finished second in the poll with 31 points. Ferris State garnered one first place vote and 28 points total. Michigan Tech University (20 points) finished fourth in the poll. Northwood University placed fifth with 15 points, followed by Saginaw Valley State University in sixth (14 points), and Lake Superior State University in seventh (6).

Findlay received four out of the six first-place votes it was eligible for to rank first in the South Division. Gannon and Wayne State tied for second place, each gaining one first place vote and 18 total points. Hillsdale College (15), Ashland (9), and Mercyhurst College (6) placed fourth, 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 Wayne State in the finals of the 2004-05 GLIAC postseason tournament claiming the conference tournament. The 2005-06 GLIAC tournament quarterfinal games will be played on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 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. 3 and Saturday, Mar. 4.

GLIAC basketball teams open play on Tuesday, Nov. 15 with conference play beginning Thursday, Dec. 1.

2005-06 GLIAC Preseason Men's Basketball Coaches Poll

<i>North Division</i>		
<i>Rank</i>	<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1.	Northern Michigan (4)	33
2.	Grand Valley State (2)	31
3.	Ferris State (1)	28
4.	Michigan Tech	20
5.	Northwood	15
6.	Saginaw Valley State	14
7.	Lake Superior State	6
<i>South Division</i>		
1.	Findlay (4)	24
2.	Gannon (1)	18
	Wayne State (1)	18
4.	Hillsdale	15
5.	Ashland	9
6.	Mercyhurst.....	6

2004-05 GLIAC Men's Basketball Final Standings

<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Ferris State	24-7 (13-5)
Grand Valley State	18-10 (11-7)
Michigan Tech	18-10 (10-8)
Northern Michigan	13-15 (8-10)
Northwood	10-15 (6-12)
Saginaw Valley State	10-17 (5-13)
Lake Superior State	9-18 (5-13)
<i>South Division</i>	
Findlay	30-4 (16-1)
Wayne State	20-12 (11-6)
Gannon	18-11 (11-6)
Hillsdale	15-13 (10-7)
Ashland	13-14 (6-11)
Mercyhurst	8-19 (2-15)

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

Ashland University: The Eagles (13-14/6-11 GLIAC) were one of the youngest teams in the GLIAC a year ago. The hope in Ashland is that the nucleus of last year's team has grown up a bit and can push the Eagles to the conference tournament. This year's team will be built around 6-9 senior forward-center Justin Brown. The Columbus, OH, native is coming off the best season of his career – he led the GLIAC in rebounding (9.3 rpg.) and was second in field goal percentage (.658). That rebound-per-game total has been bettered just once in the last 18 years at AU. The top returning scorer is 6-4 junior guard-forward Vahn Knight, who averaged 10.8 ppg. A third battle-tested veteran is 6-7 junior forward Greg Emmons (10.4 ppg., 5.6 rpg.). Head coach Roger Lyons (189-140/13th season) has bolstered the holdovers with a large contingent of newcomers which includes 6-0 guard Brett Bartlett (transfer from Kent State) and 6-1 guard Rob McRae (transfer from Mott C.C.).

Ferris State University: The Ferris State men's basketball team returns five of its top eight players from a banner 2004-05 campaign, which saw the Bulldogs win the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) North Division Championship for the second consecutive campaign and advance to the NCAA Division II Great Lakes Regional title contest for the third time in school history. FSU, which was 24-7 overall last season, is expected to be led by talented senior point guard Dennis Springs (Toledo, Ohio/Scott) in 2005-06. The 5-7 Springs ranks as the school's career assists leader and attained second-team All-GLIAC kudos last year. He also averaged nearly 13 points per contest last season and was named to the NCAA-II Great Lakes Regional All-Tournament Team. Other returning starters include junior forwards Michael Daniels (Detroit, Mich./Murray-Wright) and Terrance Shaw (Saginaw, Mich./Bridgeport). FSU, which is guided by fourth-year head coach Bill Sall, also expects key contributions from senior guard Antwan Holt (Okemos, Mich.) and senior forward Jeffery Shanahan (Flint, Mich./Kearsley). Hopes remain high at Ferris State as three starters are back this season. Sall holds a 54-44 (.551) mark at FSU.

University of Findlay: The Oilers are coming off of a 30-4 season in which they finished the year ranked first in the nation. They won their fourth consecutive GLIAC South Division title, second consecutive GLIAC Tournament championship and their first Great Lakes Regional championship. Leading the returnees heading into the 2005-06 season is senior guard Dustin Pfeifer. Pfeifer was named First Team All-GLIAC, NABC First Team All-Great Lakes Region and Daktronics Second Team All-Great Lakes Region last year. Also returning is junior forward Frank Phillips, who sat out last season with a knee injury. Phillips has started every game in his career with the Oilers and won the 2004 GLIAC Tournament MVP. Head coach Ron Niekamp is beginning his 21st season at the helm of the Oilers and has a 432-162 career record at Findlay. This year, Niekamp will have to gel seven returning lettermen with seven freshmen.

Grand Valley State University: Grand Valley State head coach Ric Wesley returns four starters and 11 letterwinners from a team that finished 18-10 during the 2004-05 campaign. The Lakers finished 11-7 in GLIAC action and hosted a GLIAC Tournament first-round game. 2004-05 GLIAC Freshman of the Year, Callistus Eziukwu, set GLIAC single-season and single-game records for blocked shots and field goal percentage as a freshman. In addition, Eziukwu averaged 13.7 points and 8.7 rebounds per game. Senior guard Courtney James returns for his senior season after averaging 9.1 points and 4.0 assists as a junior, while sophomore guard Jason Jamerson chipped in 10.8 points per game. Wesley enters his second season at the helm of the GVSU program.

Gannon University: The 2005 preseason will be one of Gannon's most important in recent history. The Golden Knights return only four letterwinners and three starters from last year's 18-11 squad that made its sixth consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance and ninth straight GLIAC Tournament appearance. Both marks are school records. John T. Reilly begins his first season as a head coach at Gannon, but he is no stranger to the Gannon community. Reilly was an assistant at Gannon for six seasons (1987-93) before becoming the head coach at Brescia (Ky.) University. The Golden Knights advanced to the NCAA Tournament three times during his six years as an assistant and won the East Region Championship twice. Junior forward Shelby Chaney (14.8 ppg, 7.1 rpg in 2004-05), senior guard Demondi Johnson (7.3 ppg, 3.1 rpg), and senior forward Bobby Bossman (7.6 ppg, 4.6 rpg) headline Gannon's returning group. Chaney was named to the All-GLIAC second team in 2004-05. He ranked second among GLIAC players in offensive rebounds per game (2.76), sixth in rebounding, sixth in blocked shots per game (1.21), eighth in field goal percentage (.549), and ninth in scoring.

Hillsdale College: The Hillsdale College men's basketball team returns all five starters from last season, and with an infusion of young talent, hopes to take a step forward in the GLIAC's tough South Division. Seniors Cory Coe and John Hamood bring a wealth of experience to the backcourt. Both have started for more than two seasons and have seen every type of game situation. Coe is currently Hillsdale's all-time leader in free throw percentage (.875). Sophomore Tim Homan had a spectacular freshman campaign, and led the Chargers in scoring (12.6 ppg) and ended the season on a roll. Look for Homan to continue his ascension into the elite players of the conference. Juniors Drew Powell and John Farr are also returning starters from last season.

Lake Superior State University: Third-year coach Mike Fitzner's only returning players in 2005-06 are junior guards Dave Zeitlin and Brock Bower. The Lakers lost four players to graduation, released four from the team, and one player transferred. Zeitlin averaged 4.7 points per game and finished second on the team in assists with 67. Bower came off the bench for the 9-18 Lakers to average 7.3 points and 3.6 rebounds per game. Newcomers who are expected to make an immediate impact are junior guard/forward Shawn Berry, a transfer from Sauk Valley (Ill.) Community College, and junior guard Tim Stark, a former local player who transferred from Grand Rapids Community College.

Mercyhurst College: The 2005-06 Lakers will look to improve upon last year's 8-19 season. Nine of the setbacks were by seven-points-or-less and another came in overtime. Last season's group of ten newcomers, coupled with only five returnees, battled through injuries, adversity, and the loss of three projected starters while gaining some valuable experience with the always-difficult GLIAC schedule. Mercyhurst returns ten players, including four starters, and has added four newcomers to the roster. Among those suiting up for the first time will be 6-2 University of San Diego transfer, Avi Fogel, and 6-5 Mott Community College standout, Richard Field. Both should provide added scoring and leadership to the lineup. Freshman 6-0 point guard, Kerry Wilkinson, and freshman 6-5 wingman Stu Anglum will add depth to the backcourt.

Michigan Tech University: Michigan Tech has the dubious task of replacing two-time All-American Josh Buettner and four-year starter Jason Marcotte from last year's team. The duo accounted for nearly half of the team's scoring. The Huskies' 12th-year head coach Kevin Luke, who owns a 220-102 career record, will rely on a balanced effort to make up for the difference. Radayl Richardson (Detroit, Mich./De Porres) will be Tech's go-to guy. The 6-3 junior is the squad's top returnee in points, rebounds, steals and assists. Sophomore forward Tim Strom (Marquette, Mich.), a 6-7 inside-outside scoring threat, will look to have a breakout season. Freshman transfer Robby Springborn (Fond du Lac, Wis./Wisconsin-Green Bay) looks to step right in and run the point. Veteran 6-3 senior Bob Evans (Oconomowoc, Wis./Waukesha Catholic Memorial), 6-11 center Ed Ross (Fond du Lac, Wis.) and 6-0 guard Josh Makela (Ishpeming, Mich./Westwood) will also heavily factor into the Michigan Tech's success in 2005-06. The Huskies are seeking their fourth NCAA Tournament appearance in five years.

Northern Michigan University: The Northern Michigan University men's basketball team returns three starters and seven letterwinners to the team. Last year the 'Cats went 14-14 overall and 9-9 in the GLIAC. Dean Ellis, who became the all-time winningest coach in NMU history during the 2004-05 season, enters his 20th campaign in Marquette. He has a career record of 306-229. All-GLIAC selections Ricky and Marco Volcy led the 'Cats in the scoring column. Ricky led the team with 553 points (19.8 ppg) and Marco was next with 329 points (11.8 ppg). R. Volcy also led the 'Cats on the boards with 215 (7.7 rpg) as 77 came off the offen-

sive glass. He also led the team in assists (70) and blocks (36). R. Volcy also had 49 steals and led the team with 211 field goals and 50 three-pointers. Newcomers to watch include three guards, Will Washington (5-7), Chris Warner (6-1) and Ehren Wren (5-9).

Northwood University: The Northwood men's basketball team will feature a much different look in the 2005-06 season. After featuring three players over 6-8 last season, Northwood's two tallest players are each 6-6. Senior guard Nemanja Kreckovic has averaged over 10 points per game in his career. His outside shooting and scoring will be important for Northwood. Graham Mertz started all 25 games for the Timberwolves last season, averaging 8.8 points per game. Eric Giesow ranked third in the GLIAC in 3-point percentage in conference games only (47.7). A large group of newcomers will be counted on for production, led by A.J. Jones, Andre Lawson, Asen Marchev and Aaron Simpson.

Saginaw Valley State University: The 2005-06 SVSU men's basketball team will have a chance to sneak up on some people this season under second-year head coach Jamie Matthews. The program has seen an influx of newcomers this season as three letterwinners return to uniform and one player returns after a redshirt year. With a total of four players returning to the squad, coach Matthews and assistant coach Scott Woods had the task of bringing in nine new bodies to fill the roster. The Cardinals had three of their top four scorers leave as seniors and in the process leave a hole in the frontcourt. Anthony Parker, Kenny Nether and David Williams started a combined 66 games last season and accounted for 34.5 points per game. The frontcourt does return sophomore Chris Johnston (Clarkston, Mich.) who played in 26 games as a freshman and averaged 14.7 minutes per contest. Johnston averaged 3.5 points and 2.8 rebounds per game and really played well in the second half of the season. Johnston raised his scoring average to 4.0 points per game and grabbed 2.9 boards per game. Saginaw Valley returns two starters in the backcourt in sophomore Brandon Ball (Grand Rapids, Mich./Union HS) and junior Sydney McDaniel (Indianapolis, Ind./Pike HS).

Wayne State University: Guiding the Wayne State in his fifth season is head coach David Greer who is 67-50 on the Warriors' bench and has led WSU to four consecutive trips to the GLIAC Tournament and back-to-back NCAA tournaments. Wayne State returns three starters from last year's 20-12 team, including senior Herb Goliday (Royal Oak Twp., Mich.) who averaged 14.2 points and 5.6 rebounds per game in starting a school-record 32 games in 2004-05. Also returning in the Green & Gold are seniors Ethan Banks (Warren, Ohio) and Erik Parker (Oak Park, Mich.). Banks set the school single-season record for three-point percentage at 45.7, while Parker was the leading rebounder in 13 games last year. Wayne State added height and quickness in the off-season with Division I transfers Jeffrey Ferguson, a 6-11 center from Missouri, and Kris Krzyminski, a 6-1 guard from Oakland University. The Warriors begin the season at 15th-ranked West Virginia State on Nov. 15.