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Two-Time Defending National Champions Tabled 2004 Preseason Favorite By GLIAC Football Coaches

Defending League Champion SVSU Finishes Just Three Points Behind Lakers

BAY CITY, Mich. -- Two-Time Defending NCAA Division II Champion Grand Valley State University was picked to win the 2004 Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) football title by the head football coaches of the league in preseason balloting.

The Lakers edged out 2003 league champion Saginaw Valley State University by just three points in the voting (140-137). The Lakers garnered eight first-place votes, while the Cardinals nabbed the five remaining top votes.

The poll was released in conjunction with the league's football media day luncheon held at the Alumni House on the campus of Grand Valley State in Allendale, Michigan.

The league's 13 head coaches participated in the balloting, but were not allowed to vote for their team. The first-place team on each ballot received 12 points, while second received 11 points, etc.

Northwood University, coming off a third-place finish in last year's league race, placed third in the balloting with 107 points. Ferris State University claimed fourth place with 101 points while Michigan Tech University placed fifth in the poll, just four points ahead of the University of Findlay (88-84). The Oilers edged out seventh-place University of Indianapolis by five points.

Hillsdale College placed eighth, six points in front of Northern Michigan University (72-66). Ashland University (41), Mercyhurst College (36), Wayne State University (33), and Gannon University (30) round out the poll. Gannon University will be making its GLIAC football debut with the beginning of the 2004 season.

GVSU advanced to the 2003 NCAA Division II championship game, where the Lakers defeated the University of North Dakota, 10-3. Saginaw Valley State also advanced to postseason play last season, falling to Grand Valley State, 10-3 in the Northeast Region Championship Game.

NCAA Division II football regional realignment has moved the GLIAC to the new Northwest Region beginning this season. GLIAC teams will battle squads from the North Central Conference, the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, and six independents for the newly expanded six regional playoff berths.

For more information about GLIAC football please check the GLIAC football web page at: www.gliac.org/.

2004 GLIAC Preseason Football Coaches Poll	
<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Grand Valley State (8)	140
2. Saginaw Valley State (5)	137
3. Northwood	107
4. Ferris State	101
5. Michigan Tech	88
6. Findlay	84
7. Indianapolis	79
8. Hillsdale	72
9. Northern Michigan	66
10. Ashland	41
11. Mercyhurst	36
12. Wayne State	33
13. Gannon	30

2003 GLIAC Final Standings				
	GLIAC		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Saginaw Valley State	10	0	12	1
Grand Valley State*	9	1	14	1
Northwood	6	4	6	5
Ferris State	5	5	6	5
Indianapolis	5	5	6	6
Findlay	5	5	6	5
Michigan Tech	5	5	5	5
Mercyhurst	4	6	5	6
Hillsdale	4	6	4	7
Northern Michigan	3	7	3	8
Wayne State	2	8	3	8
Ashland	2	8	2	9

* - NCAA Division II Champion