

2004 SEASON PREVIEW

The more things change, the more they stay the same. While the 2004 season may be a different scenario for the Ferris State women's volleyball team than a year ago, the bulk of the faces remain the same.

Entering last season, the Bulldogs' task included replacing four starters and six letterwinners from the previous campaign. A much different situation exists this year.

Ferris heads into the 2004 campaign returning not only all seven starters from a year ago, but also all 12 letterwinners from a squad which won 12 of its final 18 matches in finishing with a 15-14 overall mark.

"We've worked extremely hard to prepare and our expectations will be high this season," head coach **Tia Brandel-Wilhelm** said. "Our program has an opportunity to take a big step forward this year into being a top contender on the national level."

The list of letterwinners begins with the trio of senior outside hitter **Karla Fairbanks**, senior setter **Ashley Green** and junior libero **Brittney Godlewski**. All three individuals garnered postseason accolades last season as the Bulldogs recorded both their sixth consecutive winning campaign and sixth-straight Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) Tournament appearance.

Fairbanks, who presently ranks 12th on the school's all-time chart with 1,111 kills, attained American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Division II Honorable Mention All-America kudos in 2003. The first-team All-GLIAC and AVCA All-Great Lakes Region honoree ranks as one of the league's premier hitters and should contend for additional postseason plaudits in her final season.

The 5-9 Green heads into the 2004 campaign needing 1,426 assists to move into second place on FSU's all-time list. Green garnered honorable mention AVCA All-Region recognition last year after previously earning first-team all-region status in 2002. A two-time first-team All-GLIAC pick, Green has been a mainstay in the Bulldog attack for each of the last three seasons due to her leadership and veteran play. Expect 2004 to be no different.

Now in her third season, Godlewski is the only libero the Bulldogs have ever had. One of the GLIAC's best at her position, the 2004 Daktronics Second-Team All-Great Lakes Region selection has proven to be an extremely valuable weapon for the Bulldogs. She totaled a personal career-high 315 digs a season ago while receiving honorable mention all-conference laurels.

"It will be a challenge for us to keep our strong team chemistry with a large roster this season," said Brandel-Wilhelm. "However, with the key leaders we have back it will be a challenge we'll welcome and prepare for as a team."

The list of significant returnees doesn't stop with Fairbanks, Green and Godlewski. Other key figures back are four additional starters in sophomore outside hitter **Danielle Baucher**, junior defensive specialist **Emily Clouse** along with junior middle hitters **Lauren Heine** and **Becky Thurau**.

Baucher made an immediate contribution in her initial campaign as evidenced by her 250 kills, 314 digs and 42 service aces from the outside. She joined Fairbanks, Godlewski and Green as the only Bulldog players to appear in all 113 games. Baucher, who started 29 contests, also showed versatility by compiling six double-double (kills & digs) performances. She'll be expected to progress even more this campaign.

Clouse came into her own last year in her first season as the squad's primary defensive specialist. The Tiffin, Ohio, product registered 191 digs and chipped in 76 assists. The 5-9 Clouse also proved to be a steady backup at the setter spot.

The Bulldogs return quality experience inside with Heine and Thurau, who could form one of the league's top interior tandems with additional experience and added strength. The 6-1 Heine posted 221 kills and was the squad's leader at the net with 120 total blocks in 2003. Thurau notched 259 kills, 113 blocks and 40 aces. The duo's return provides the Bulldogs with a more established middle entering the 2004 campaign.

Behind the seven returning starters are five other letterwinners who received valuable playing time last season.

Sophomore **Molly Pickvet** will be asked to move to the outside this season after registering 136 kills, 67 blocks and 32 digs on the right-side a season ago. With Pickvet's transition to the outside, sophomore **Karla White** is left as the squad's most experienced middle hitter behind Heine and Thurau. She tallied 55 kills and 21 blocks in 24 outings as a rookie.

On the outside, the Bulldogs expect the combination of junior **Sarah Miller** along with sophomores **Jamie Palazzolo** and **Keagan Krauss** to provide

vide quality and established depth.

A fourth-year junior, Miller has continued to develop throughout her career. Last season, she started three matches and registered 35 kills. One of the squad's tallest players at 6-3, Miller figures to contend for additional playing time this season.

Palazzolo proved to be a quality reserve in her first season at FSU. She appeared in 49 games and recorded 35 digs while providing aid from the service line. The 5-10 Krauss gives Ferris needed depth and should fight for ample time this campaign after seeing action in 13 matches a season ago.

Despite returning 12 letterwinners, Brandel-Wilhelm and her staff didn't rest easy during the off-season. FSU inked eight prep recruits, which gives the program its largest roster in recent memory.

"A large roster gives us depth at each position," Brandel-Wilhelm said. "We won't have to rely on only a few players like we've had to in the past."

Ferris added considerable size through the recruiting process by landing 6-2 middle hitter **Andrea Zylstra**, 6-1 outside hitter **Ashley Ollenburger** and 6-0 middle/outside hitter **Emily Nemmers**.

A two-time All-Ottawa-Kent (OK) Red Conference honoree, Zylstra led Muskegon Mona Shores to back-to-back district final appearances under prep coach Kyle Kurant. Ollenburger, who received *Lansing State Journal* Dream Team honors and all-state second-team laurels as a senior, averaged 4.0 kills and 4.8 digs per game in 2003-04 for Charlotte High School. Nemmers, a third-team all-state standout, notched 408 kills, 276 digs, 178 total blocks and 66 service aces last season at East Kentwood High School.

Among the other new additions are outside hitters **Lindsay Tye**, **Jessica Dezelski** and **Lindsay Johnson**.

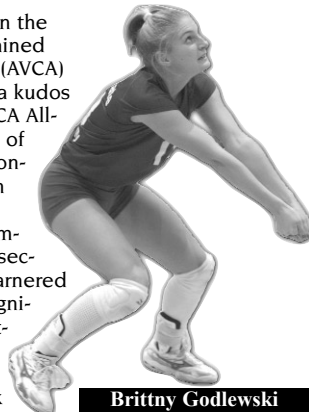
The 5-10 Tye recorded 561 kills, 369 digs and 142 total blocks in her final prep season while attaining second-team Class A All-State honors. Dezelski guided Traverse City West High School to a Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Class A state semifinal berth in 2003-04. Meanwhile, Johnson posted 508 kills, 501 digs and 44 solo blocks in leading Cadillac High School to a 41-17-3 overall record as a senior.

Ferris also solidified its setter position with the acquisition of Pinconning's **Candice Marut** and Fruitport product **Megan Dusnik**.

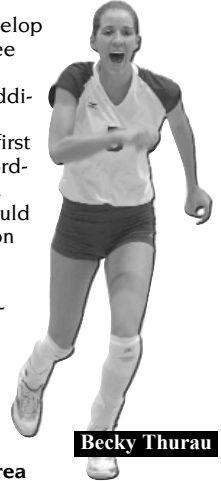
Marut was both a first-team all-region and All-Northeastern Michigan Conference selection after leading PHS to three consecutive conference titles and two regional crowns. A 5-6 setter/defensive specialist, Dusnik earned all-conference, all-area and all-state accolades for the second consecutive season in 2003-04. She tallied 1,521 assists, 374 digs, and 76 kills as a senior.

While the Bulldogs appear to be one of the GLIAC's top teams on paper, an always-challenging league slate in one of the nation's most competitive conferences won't make things easy.

The more things change, the more they remain the same.



Brittney Godlewski



Becky Thurau

Returnees

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
2	Lauren Heine	MH	Jr.	6-1	2L
4	Karla Fairbanks	OH	Sr.	5-11	3L
5	Becky Thurau	MH	Jr.	6-4	2L
6	Danielle Baucher	OH	So.	5-10	1L
8	Jamie Palazzolo	OH	So.	5-7	1L
9	Keagan Krauss	OH	So.	5-10	1L
11	Emily Clouse	S/DS	Jr.	5-9	2L
12	Ashley Green	S	Sr.	5-9	3L
13	Brittney Godlewski	LIB	Jr.	5-7	2L
14	Molly Pickvet	OH	So.	6-0	1L
15	Karla White	MH	So.	6-0	1L
16	Sarah Miller	OH	Jr.	6-3	2L

Newcomers

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
1	Ashley Ollenburger	OH	Fr.	6-1	HS
3	Candice Marut	S/OH	Fr.	5-10	HS
7	Lindsay Johnson	OH	Fr.	5-10	HS
10	Andrea Zylstra	MH	Fr.	6-2	HS
17	Lindsay Tye	OH	Fr.	5-10	HS
18	Jessica Dezelski	OH	Fr.	5-10	HS
19	Emily Nemmers	OH/MH	Fr.	6-0	HS
20	Megan Dusnik	S/DS	Fr.	5-5	HS

MH – Middle Hitter

OH – Outside Hitter

S – Setter

DS – Defensive Specialist

LIB – Libero