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GLIAC Men's Basketball Coaches Choose Grand Valley State and Findlay for 2006-07 Division Titles

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

Grand Valley State, the 2006 GLIAC Champion, was a unanimous first-place selection, receiving all six of the first-place votes it was eligible for, tallying 36 points. Ferris State University finished second in the poll with 27 points. The Bulldogs fell to GVSU in last season's GLIAC title game. Michigan Technological University garnered the remaining first-place nod and finished third in the poll with 26 points. Northern Michigan University placed fourth in the rankings with 23 points. Saginaw Valley State University (17 points), Lake Superior State University (11), and Northwood University (6) round out the North Division poll.

Findlay was also unanimously voted first, receiving all five of the South Division first-place votes it was eligible for. Ashland University earned the remaining first-place nod to finish second in the Division with 17 points. Mercyhurst College narrowly edged out Wayne State University for third place. The Lakers tallied 13 total points to the Warriors' 12. Hillsdale College (10 points), and Gannon University (6) 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.

The 2006-07 GLIAC tournament quarterfinal games will be played on Tuesday, Feb. 27, 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. 2 and Saturday, Mar. 3.

GLIAC basketball teams open play on Wednesday, Nov. 15 with conference play beginning Wednesday, Nov. 29.

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2006-07 GLIAC Preseason Men's Basketball Coaches Poll

<i>North Division</i>		
<i>Rank</i>	<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1.	Grand Valley State (6)	36
2.	Ferris State	27
3.	Michigan Tech (1)	26
4.	Northern Michigan	23
5.	Saginaw Valley State	17
6.	Lake Superior State	11
7.	Northwood	6
<i>South Division</i>		
1.	Findlay (5)	25
2.	Ashland (1)	17
3.	Mercyhurst	13
4.	Wayne State	12
5.	Hillsdale	10
6.	Gannon	6

2005-06 GLIAC Men's Basketball Final Standings

<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Grand Valley State	27-4 (16-2)
Ferris State	18-13 (13-5)
Northern Michigan	17-11 (13-5)
Michigan Tech	14-14 (10-8)
Saginaw Valley State	9-18 (4-14)
Lake Superior State	6-21 (3-15)
Northwood	7-20 (2-16)
<i>South Division</i>	
Findlay	25-5 (15-2)
Ashland	19-10 (10-7)
Mercyhurst	19-9 (9-8)
Hillsdale	12-16 (7-10)
Gannon	12-15 (6-11)
Wayne State	11-14 (6-11)

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

Ashland University: AU returns four starters from last year's team, which went 19-10, 10-7 in conference play. Guard-forward Vahn Knight (Euclid, OH/Benedictine), a 6-4 senior, is the top returning scorer (13.9 ppg.). Knight and 6-7 senior forward Greg Emmons (Ashland, OH) are both closing in on 1,000 career points. Emmons averaged 12.8 ppg., and 6.8 rpg., last season. Guard Rob McRae (Flint, MI/Mott C.C.), a 6-1 senior and point guard Brett Bartlett (LaGrange, OH/Kent State), a 6-0 junior, should form one of the league's quickest backcourts. McRae averaged 11.9 ppg., last season with a team-high 39 steals. Bartlett averaged 10.5 ppg., and had a team-high 60 three-point field goals. He shot .438 from beyond the three-point arc. The top newcomer figures to be 6-2 junior Steve Gansey, a transfer from Cleveland State. The Eagles are coached by Roger Lyons (208-150), who's in his 13th season at AU.

Ferris State University: Fifth-year Ferris State University men's basketball head coach Bill Sall returns three starters and six letterwinners from last season. The Bulldogs posted a 18-13 overall mark last campaign, including a second place 13-5 record in the GLIAC North Division while making their second consecutive NCAA Division II Great Lakes Regional Tournament appearance and claiming GLIAC Tournament runner-up honors. Headlining the returnees is senior forward Terrance Shaw, who picked up All-GLIAC Second Team laurels last campaign after ranking as the squad's leading rebounder (6.8 rpg) and second-leading scorer (13.0 ppg). FSU's other returning starters include senior forward Michael Daniels (Detroit/Murray-Wright) and junior guard/forward C.J. Van Wieren (Holland/West Ottawa). Ferris must replace four-year starting point guard and the school's career assists leader in Dennis Springs, but the Bulldogs will have a much larger roster this season with 15 players in uniform including three transfers and six freshmen. Sall holds a current 72-57 (.558) record at Ferris State and directed the Bulldogs to back-to-back league divisional championships in 2003-04 and 2004-05.

University of Findlay: The Oilers, who return four starters and 11 letter winners, are ranked sixth in the nation according to the 2006 Division II Bulletin preseason poll. Last season, Findlay won its fifth consecutive Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference South Division title and made its fifth straight appearance in the NCAA Division II Tournament. Head coach Ron Niekamp, who has a 457-167 record at Findlay in his 21 years, was named GLIAC Coach of the Year last year after guiding the Oilers to a 25-5 record. Findlay, who is riding a national best 39 game home winning streak, will be led by seniors Frank Phillips, Dorian Bass and Brent Schnipke. Phillips, a senior from Cincinnati, Ohio, returns after being named first team all-GLIAC as a junior. A 6-4 forward, Phillips has scored 1,120 career points heading into his final year and averaged 13.6 points and 4.4 rebounds per game as a junior. Bass, a 6-1 senior guard from New Concord, Ohio, was

named second team a All-GLIAC last year after averaging 11.9 points and 2.3 rebounds per game while Schnipke, a 6-8 senior center, was voted to the all-defensive team after averaging 8.7 points and 4.7 rebounds per game as a junior.

Grand Valley State University: GVSU enters the 2006-07 campaign with the majority of its GLIAC Championship starting lineup still intact. Leading scorers and All-GLIAC selections G Jason Jamerson (13.4 ppg) and C Callistus Eziukwu (13.1 ppg) return to a Laker squad that posted a 27-4 record in 2005-06 and advanced to the postseason for the first time since 2001. Head Coach Ric Wesley has tallied a 45-14 record in two years as the Laker head man. Wesley's 45 wins is the most by a GVSU coach in his first two years. Grand Valley faces a schedule that features three NCAA Tournament teams, including a Monettevallo (Ala.) squad that advanced the Elite Eight.

Gannon University: GLIAC fans will need a game program when Gannon and second-year head coach John T. Reilly come to town in 2006-07. The Golden Knights return only four players from last year's 12-15 squad, including one that redshirted. In all, the roster includes nine new faces. Senior forward Aurimus Truskauskas and sophomore guard Ron Hollis provide Gannon with its most experience. Truskauskas led the GLIAC and ranked third among all NCAA Division II players with 11.6 rebounds per game. As a team, Gannon ranked No. 1 in the country with an 11.3 rebounding margin. Truskauskas had 16 double-doubles last season. Hollis started every game in 2005-06 as a true freshman, becoming the first freshman to start at Gannon since the 2001-02 campaign. Hollis ranked second among GLIAC players in three-point field goal percentage (.459), hitting 51 of 111 attempts. He averaged 8.9 points and 1.2 rebounds. Returning experience also comes from sophomores Pat Washington (F) and Tyler Stoczynski (G).

Hillsdale College: Head coach Ed Douma returns for his eighth season at Hillsdale College, having compiled a 115-80 mark at the Charger helm. He has amassed a 531-274 record in his 30 years as a college head coach. Hillsdale's starting backcourt of the past three years, John Hamood and Cory Coe has graduated. Top returning players include junior forward Tim Homan (Celina, Ohio), senior guard Drew Powell (Belmont, Mich.) and senior center John Farr (Marietta, Ohio). Hillsdale started the 2005-06 season 4-0 in the GLIAC, but finished 12-16 overall and lost to Findlay in the first round of the 2006 GLIAC Tournament. Freshmen Andrew Taylor and Kyle Brown are expected to contribute immediately. The Charger's home opener is Saturday, Nov. 25 against Saginaw Valley State.

Lake Superior State University: LSSU's freshman-dominated team finished 6-21 overall and 3-15 in the GLIAC last season, but ended the year with three straight wins, including two in league play. LSSU's top returnees include sophomore forward/center Ryan Kuhl (12.8 ppg, 5.1 rpg), sophomore guard Mark Morse (12.2 ppg, 3.9 rpg), sophomore guard Tim VanOudheusden (9.9 ppg, 3.3 rpg) and sophomore forward Mike Rader (7.8 ppg, 4.6 rpg). The Lakers' only seniors include Andrew Kearney, who did not play in 2005-06, and Darin Kanouse, a transfer from Muskegon Community College. Head coach Mike Fitzner is entering his fourth season and has a career record of 24-58.

Mercyhurst College: The Mercyhurst College men's basketball team will be looking to build upon last season's 19-9 record, which was an 11-win improvement over the previous season. Head coach Gary Manchel, who brings a 43-40 record into his fourth season, has a strong cast of returners and newcomers as the Lakers make a run in the GLIAC South. Senior Avi Fogel (first team) and junior Terry Smith (second team) give Mercyhurst a starting backcourt of All-GLIAC performers. Fogel was second in the GLIAC with over 17 ppg and also ranked in the top 10 in three-point percentage, assists and free throw percentage. Smith has made his way onto the school's all-time leaderboards in scoring, threes, and steals in just two seasons. Senior Richard Field creates match up problems in the front court with the ability to score in the paint and from the perimeter. Mitch Brennan also returns and has scored over 500 points in his career and is a one of the team's best three-point shooters. The Lakers added Division-I transfer T.J. Mathis, who averaged nearly 10 ppg at Morgan St. last year, and former All-GLIAC performer Shelby Chaney, who averaged a double-double at Gannon in 2005-06.

Michigan Technological University: Head coach Kevin Luke, who owns a 234-116 record in 12 seasons at Michigan Tech, returns 11 of 15 letterwinners from a year ago. Highlighting the list of returnees is potential All-American Radayl Richardson (Detroit, Mich./De Porres). The senior guard averaged 16 points and five rebounds a year ago and earned All-GLIAC First Team honors. The supporting cast for Richardson includes a much-improved frontcourt, led by 6-7 junior Tim Strom (Marquette, Mich.). Strom averaged nine points and five rebounds per contest in 2005-06. Six-foot-11 senior Ed Ross (Fond du Lac, Wis.), 6-6 redshirt freshman Chris Baugh (Detroit, Mich./De Porres) and 6-5 sophomore Fedrick Bowe (Freeport, Bahamas) give Tech strength and athleticism inside. Sophomore Robby Springborn (Fond du Lac, Wis.), who tallied five points and three assists per game a year ago, returns at point guard. Junior Josh Makela (Ishpeming, Mich./Westwood) and sophomore Sean Geary (Marquette, Mich.) give the Huskies depth at the guard position.

Northern Michigan University: Dean Ellis enters his 21st season at Northern Michigan University as the head men's basketball. He is 322-241 with the Wildcats. The 'Cats finished the 2005-06 campaign with an overall record of 17-11 and 13-5 in the GLIAC, which was good for third place in the North Division. NMU returns two starters from last year. Leading returnees include Ricky Volcy (F, 6-8, Sr.) and Will Washington (G, 6-0, Sr.). Volcy averaged 20.4 points and 7.9 rebounds per game last season. Washington averaged 10.9 points and 1.4 rebounds per contest.

Northwood University: The Northwood men's basketball team will look to improve upon last year's 7-20 season thanks to a mixture of youth and experience. GLIAC Freshman of the Year Aaron Simpson led all freshman in scoring last year at 13.7 points per game. His improved all-around game will be an important part of team this season. Senior Curt Ludtke provides Northwood with a low-post presence and basketball smarts. Junior Asen Marchev has improved a great deal in the off-season and should earn the starting nod at the small forward. Other returning players who should see significant action this year include Eric Giesow, Tony Marcotullio, and Pete Overbeek. A group of talented newcomers are led by junior Enique Hope and Alex Kvitnitsky, each of whom should jump right into the starting lineup.

Saginaw Valley State University: After a season that saw a large influx of newcomers, the 2006-2007 Saginaw Valley State University men's basketball team has found some stability. This year, head coach Jamie Matthews returns seven players, five of which have starting experience in the past. Returning starter junior Chris Johnston (*Clarkston, Mich.*) led the team in scoring average last season (12.1 points). Johnston will be joined by junior Mike Zuiderveen (*Kalamazoo, Mich.*) and sophomore Luke Laser (*Hillsdale, Mich.*). Zuiderveen started in all 27 contests for the Cardinals last season, the only member of the team to do so. Laser averaged over nine points per game as a freshman. SVSU will also have two returners with starting credentials returning to the backcourt. Seniors Sydney McDaniel (*Indianapolis, Ind.*) and Martell Summers (*Detroit, Mich.*) both saw significant playing time last season. McDaniel was second on the team in scoring with a 10.7 per game average, while Summers was second on the team in assists with 59.

Wayne State University: The Wayne State University men's basketball team begins the 2006-07 season with four returning letterwinners and 11 newcomers from a squad that lost nine league games by a combined 33 points a year ago. The Warriors return just one of their top six scorers from a year ago in senior Kris Krzyminski, who was 10th in the GLIAC at 14.1 points per game, and second in the conference with 5.6 assists per outing. He was also fifth in free throw percentage (81.2), while leading the league in minutes played per game (38.52). Coach David Greer enters his sixth at the helm of the WSU program with a 78-64 mark with the Warriors. His overall six-year coaching record is 95-76.