

## 2005-06 SEASON PREVIEW

The Ferris State University men's basketball team posted only a 21-82 (.204) mark in the four seasons prior to current head coach **Bill Sall's** arrival.

In three seasons under Sall, the Bulldogs have recorded a 49-36 (.576) record and claimed back-to-back Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) North Division Championships.

*To say the least, things have certainly changed.*

The Bulldogs capped off a banner 2004-05 campaign with a runner-up finish in the NCAA Division II Great Lakes Regional Tournament held in Findlay, Ohio. FSU reached the regional title game for only the third time in school history and fell one game short of advancing to the NCAA-II Elite Eight for the second time ever.

In addition, Ferris' 24-7 overall record last year, which represented the third-most wins in Bulldog history, also enabled the squad to win its second-straight divisional title.

While the Bulldogs must replace three key players from last year's nationally-ranked squad, Sall returns three starters and five regulars entering the 2005-06 campaign. Unlike the scenario when he first arrived, he won't have to rebuild but rather reload in FSU's quest for a third consecutive divisional title.

"This is our fourth year here at Ferris and the bar has certainly been raised based on what we expect from our program," said Sall. "We'll have a good nucleus of players back this year and they understand what it takes to win a championship."

Headlining the list of returnees is a two-time All-GLIAC North Division Second Team honoree in senior guard **Dennis Springs**. The 5-6 Springs, who broke both the school's career and single-season assists records last year, serves as the quarterback in the Bulldog attack and is one of the premier playmakers in the region if not the nation. With the departure of leading scorer and first-team all-region pick Carlton Epps to graduation, Springs likely will be called upon again to increase his workload on the offensive end where he averaged 12.8 points per game a year ago.

Springs will be joined in the backcourt by fellow senior **Antwuan Holt**, who came into his own during FSU's regional tournament run last season. The 6-3 Holt tallied 7.3 points per game in his initial Bulldog campaign after spending his first two collegiate seasons at GLIAC-member Northern Michigan. His ability to slash to the basket and solid outside shooting touch will become an even more integral part of the FSU offensive attack this season.

In the frontcourt, the Bulldogs return three veteran players in senior forward **Jeffery Shanahan** along with junior forwards **Michael Daniels** and **Terrance Shaw**. While there may be better individual post players in the league, the group as a whole provides as much punch as anyone else around.

A three-year regular, Shanahan has provided an invaluable contribution off the bench throughout his career. Last season, he led the squad in rebounding with 5.3 boards per contest and also totaled 5.5 points per outing while proving to be an extremely solid and tenacious defensive player.

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One of the squad's returning starters, Shaw increased his numbers a season ago by averaging 8.1 points and 4.5 rebounds. His athleticism, reach and ability to run the floor give Ferris one of the most versatile frontcourt weapons in the GLIAC.

A two-year starter, Daniels is often undersized in the post but has shown the ability to become a productive threat. The 6-6 Detroit native registered 5.6 points and 4.1 rebounds a contest last year and will be expected to improve upon those numbers as the Bulldogs must replace third-leading scorer Willie Burrell from last year's four-player interior rotation.

"Although we have a good nucleus back, we lost around 44 points a game to graduation," Sall said. "In addition, we also had 14 games or so last year that were decided in the last couple of minutes. Those things can determine a huge amount of wins and losses, but if we can play with great intensity and focus hopefully things will come together."

The only other returning letterwinner is two-sport athlete **C.J. Van Wieren**. The 6-4 Van Wieren, who earned GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week honors as the football team's quarterback this fall, took a medical redshirt last season after being injured two games into the season. His toughness and competitive demeanor should provide a boost off-the-bench and give Sall added versatility on the wing and in the frontcourt.

"We're happy with the position we're in right now and we've seen solid progress out of all of our returning players," Sall said. "I really like the squad we have, but how successful we end up being will depend on how

the everyting develops."

In an effort to replace backcourt scoring lost with both Carlton Epps and twin brother Corey Epps graduating, Sall brought in former Muskegon Heights and Muskegon Community College guard **Julius Vines**. Vines did not play college basketball last season after previously totaling a team-high 19.4 points per outing in 2003-04 for MCC. In his initial season with the Jayhawks, Vines helped guide the squad to a 21-8 overall record and a runner-up finish in the Michigan Community College Athletic Association's Western Conference.

A tough defender and physical guard, Vines will be expected to provide an immediate contribution.

Former Muskegon Heights All-Stater **Jessie York**, who redshirted last season, is another newcomer likely to see significant playing time in the Bulldog lineup. York's overall athletic ability and outside touch will be needed as Ferris tries to reload and develop depth in the backcourt.

Incoming Charlevoix freshman **Jared Hunt** is also a candidate and could figure into the mix as the Bulldogs work to establish perimeter depth. Freshman **Mark Gildersleeve** and sophomore **Josh Schlump**, who did not play last year, will battle for playing time in the frontcourt while talented incoming guard **Anthony Sydnor** is slated to redshirt in his initial campaign.

Last season, the Bulldogs were able to firmly establish a home-court advantage in FSU's Jim Wink Arena as they compiled a school-best 15-1 overall record. This season, however, the schedule includes only one non-conference home game and 10 contests overall inside the friendly confines of Wink Arena.

Seventeen of Ferris' 27 games will be on the road and the slate won't be easy. The Bulldogs are scheduled to play four of the region's top programs in Southern Indiana, Indianapolis, Southern Illinois-Edwardsville and Saint Joseph's (Ind.) in non-league action. A regular-season tilt at NCAA Division I Toledo and matchups with potential Division II top 25-ranked teams Florida Gulf Coast and Montevallo (Ala.) are also included.

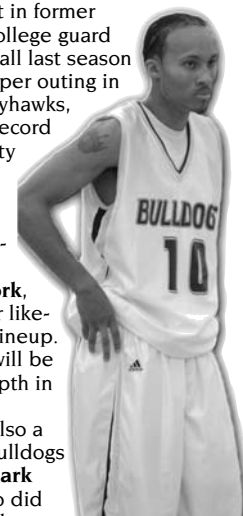
Ferris will also return to Findlay to square off against the defending regional champions in regular-season conference action.

"Our schedule is challenging and things might not fit together right away, but we hope we're playing our best basketball starting in January," said Sall. "We certainly have some key losses from last year, but if we can rebound and defend at a high level we'll have the opportunity to win a number of games."

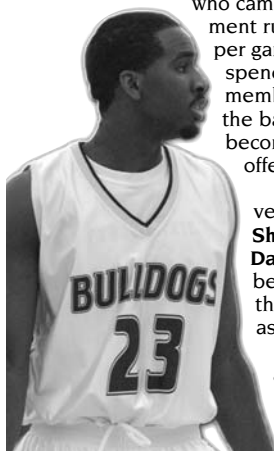
The Bulldog program, which has won more conference titles (11) than any other league member, has certainly come a long way rather quickly with Sall at the helm. The year before he arrived, in 2001-02, FSU won only four games the entire campaign.

While a return trip to the NCAA Tournament and a third-straight GLIAC crown won't be easy to achieve, those remain key goals for a Bulldog program which has suddenly regained plenty of respect under Sall's direction. Ferris entered the national rankings for the first time since 1988-89 a year ago and are listed as a potential national top 10 breakthrough team in the *Street & Smith's* College Basketball Division II preview issued earlier this fall.

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ANTWUAN HOLT



MICHAEL DANIELS

### Returns

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
3	Dennis Springs	G	Sr.	5-6	3L
10	Antwuan Holt	G	Sr.	6-3	1L
12	Terrance Shaw	F	Jr.	6-5	2L
23	Michael Daniels	F	Jr.	6-6	2L
30	Jeffery Shanahan	F	Sr.	6-6	3L
33	C.J. Van Wieren	G/F	So.	6-4	1L

### Newcomers

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
4	Julius Vines	G	Jr.	6-3	T
20	Anthony Sydnor	G	Fr.	6-0	HS
21	Jared Hunt	G	Fr.	6-1	HS
32	Jesse York	G	Fr.	6-1	R
42	Mark Gildersleeve	F	Fr.	6-5	HS
50	Josh Schlump	F	So.	6-3	HS

G – Guard  
HS – High School

F – Forward  
T – Transfer

C – Center  
R – Redshirt

