

2008-09 SEASON PREVIEW

This will be a new era of sports for the Ferris State University women's basketball team beginning this season. In recent seasons, the Bulldogs have had the good fortune of being able to rely on the skills and physical talents of 6-1 forward/center Rachel Folcik, a do-it-all player for the program. Folcik, a versatile scoring threat and strong rebounder who graduated last season, currently is working on her professional playing career overseas in Portugal. With Folcik's departure, the Bulldogs begin a new chapter in the growing tradition of women's college basketball at Ferris under the leadership of 11th-year head coach **Tracey Dorow**.

Last season, Ferris finished 17-12 overall and 11-7 in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) North Division standings to finish third. The bad news is the Bulldogs lose one returning starter from last season, and a very good one: Folcik. The good news, however, is Ferris returns four players with starting experience. Among those returning standouts is senior guard **Teghan Thelen**, who could be in store for a big-time season of college basketball as the team's go-to player. Thelen, a 2004 Michigan Miss Basketball candidate while playing at Pewamo-Westphalia High School, has worked since the end of her junior season to improve her ball handling and ability to drive to the basket to complement her deadly long-range shooting. Thelen has experienced help returning along with her. Ferris has a returning starter in the paint that features 6-1 senior center **Jenna Guay**. Also returning with experience are senior guard/forward **Caitlin Hutchison** and sophomore point guard **Becci Houdek**.

"I think the players on our team are very enthusiastic and very excited," Dorow said. "Our goals are still high, but we're not taking anything for granted as we begin practice to get ourselves ready for the start of the season."

This will be a season of transition for the Bulldogs in more ways than one. With the loss of Folcik, Ferris' offensive attack is likely to become far more perimeter oriented with an emphasis on pushing the basketball up the floor as much as possible. Thelen is likely to be the focal point of that along with Hutchison, who has developed into a solid offensive threat with the dribble drive and her medium-range jump shot. Houdek returns after a solid first year running the point. Ferris also will benefit from the addition of Western Michigan University transfer **Chelsea (Ciba) Simonetti**, a point guard, and three highly-touted freshmen backcourt players in **Lindsey Pettit**, **Tricia Principe** and **Kelsey DeNoyelles**.

"We're going to have to be more of a balanced team with our scoring this season because we're not going to have Rachel that we can just give the ball to and have her score for us," Dorow said. "We're going to need a number of people who can step up and make plays for us this season. We have some kids that have been in our program for a few years and gained valuable experience as well as new kids coming in who can help us be more team oriented and not one-dimensional."

Ferris will look to its experience on the perimeter first, led by Thelen. The 5-6 guard was the team's second-leading scorer last season as she averaged 10.4 points to go along with the 4.1 rebounds she secured per contest. Thelen arrived at Ferris with a great outside shooting touch, but has rounded out her game with improved ball handling and the ability to put the ball on the floor and drive to the basket. The 5-11 Hutchison averaged 8.7 points and four rebounds during her junior season. Hutchison also provides leadership and a solid all-around presence on offense and defense to the Bulldogs' lineup. Houdek, a 5-9 point guard, averaged 5.4 points and 2.8 rebounds during her rookie season and is expected to perform at an even higher level with the experience she gained during the 2007-08 season. Houdek, a two-sport star who played keeper for the women's soccer team and was a second-team All-GLIAC pick during the fall of 2008, brings leadership and command of the team's offense to that critical position. **Stephanie DeNoyelles**, who has two years of experience including her first campaign she sat out during recovery from an injury, also returns with two years of experience and a high basketball IQ.

Up front, the Bulldogs have high hopes for sophomore **Tiara Adams**, who averaged 1.6 points and 1.3 rebounds last season. Look for Adams numbers to be much improved as her playing time is likely to increase thanks to the hard work she put in since she joined the program. The 5-8 Adams, a native of Lansing who prepped at Waverly High School, provides great athleticism and energy to Ferris' lineup. The Bulldogs have even more depth on the wing with 5-10 sophomore **Amy Joostberns**, a former prep star at Lakewood High School, who averaged 1.5 points during her freshman season.

In the paint, Ferris has experienced players returning in the paint to fill the big void left by the graduation of Folcik. The 6-1 Guay, a native of Escanaba who averaged 8.5 points and 5.5 rebounds last season, will be one of the primary options for Dorow to insert into one of the two traditional starting post spots. Guay brings a physical presence in the paint and the ability to score in the paint. **Ashley Fleming**, who has played in a reserve role during much of her career, has experience and a strong work ethic. As a junior, the 6-1 Rogers City native averaged 4.6 points and 3.1 rebounds as a backup to Folcik and Guay. Ferris can become even bigger when it inserts 6-2 center **Andrea Clancy**, who averaged 2.8 points and 1.9 rebounds during

her sophomore season. The Bulldogs are hopeful that Clancy can continue to elevate her game to help that committee fill in with some much-needed scoring and rebounding.

"We're going to need all of our post players to step up this season," Dorow said. "We have some experienced kids there and this is going to be their opportunity to step up for us."

Ferris has high hopes for its newcomers, a group that includes the three freshmen (Pettit, DeNoyelles and Principe) along with a sophomore, Simonetti. Pettit, a 5-9 native of Portland (Mich.) averaged 14.6 points, 4.6 rebounds and two assists during her senior prep season at Portland High School. Kelsey DeNoyelles, the younger sister of Bulldog sophomore Stephanie DeNoyelles, averaged 16.5 points, six rebounds, four steals and three assists per game playing for Sacred Heart High School in Mount Pleasant (Mich.). Simonetti, a prep standout from Olivet who was highly recruited by the Bulldogs, comes to Ferris from Division I Western Michigan University. During her senior prep season for Olivet High School, Simonetti averaged 17 points and an eye-popping 10 steals per game.

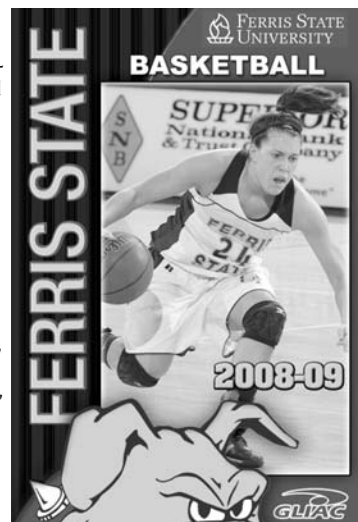
"We have a lot of experience returning with our perimeter players and we've also added some quality freshman as well that we're really excited about," Dorow said. "We're also thrilled to add Chelsea (Ciba) Simonetti. She is a player we recruited very hard when she was in high school and she has transferred to us from Western Michigan and we're expecting her to make a major contribution this year."

The Bulldogs have a challenging schedule to begin the season as they start out at the Kentucky Wesleyan Lady Panther Classic for two non-conference contests. Ferris is back on the road to face Lewis (Nov. 25) for a third non-league battle. The 22-game league schedule starts with three more road games for the Bulldogs who are at archrival Grand Valley State (Dec. 1), at Ashland (Dec. 4) and at Tiffin (Dec. 6). Ferris is not at home until Dec. 13 when it hosts Hillsdale. The league race will be as competitive as always as Ferris battles strong national powers like Michigan Tech and Hillsdale to become a factor in the race for the GLIAC championship. The Bulldogs were picked by the media to finish third in the North Division as part of the pre-season poll.

"We have a very tough schedule as always, but it's a challenge that we're looking forward to," said Dorow, whose team faces a grueling league schedule that features 22 league games. "You will see a lot of mistakes early, but we will learn and grow as a team. We have talented kids who will compete throughout this challenging schedule."

The new-look Bulldogs are going through some changes as the scoring this season will be done by committee in what may turn into an exciting brand of college basketball. Ferris needs contributions from its newcomers and for its post players to step up in a big way to enjoy a season of success against some of the top teams in the country.

*Preview By **Sandy Gholston** (Bulldog Athletics Blog)



Returns

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
10	Caitlin Hutchison	F	Sr.	5-11	3L
11	Becci Houdek	G	So.	5-9	1L
12	Stephanie DeNoyelles	G	So.	5-7	1L
20	Andrea Clancy	C	Jr.	6-2	2L
24	Teghan Thelen	G	Sr.	5-6	3L
30	Amy Joostberns	F	So.	5-10	1L
32	Jenna Guay	F/C	Sr.	6-1	3L
44	Tiara Adams	G/F	So.	5-8	1L
45	Ashley Fleming	F/C	Sr.	6-1	3L

Newcomers

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
3	Lindsey Pettit	G	Fr.	5-9	HS
14	Chelsea Simonetti	G	So.	5-6	T
21	Kelsey DeNoyelles	G/F	Fr.	5-9	HS
42	Tricia Principe	G/F	Fr.	5-9	HS

G – Guard
T – Transfer

F – Forward
HS – High School

C – Center
R – Redshirt