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GLIAC Announces Spring 2009 Commissioner's Award Recipients

BAY CITY, Mich. -- The Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) announced the Spring 2009 recipients of the GLIAC Commissioner's Awards for Academic and Athletic Excellence. The awards, sponsored by Meijer, Incorporated, are presented after the Fall, Winter, and Spring athletic seasons to six male and six female student-athletes that excel both in the classroom and on the fields of play. The Awards were announced in conjunction with the release of the GLIAC Spring All-Academic Teams in which student-athletes were honored for their efforts.

The six female student-athletes to receive the Spring 2009 GLIAC Commissioner's Awards are: **Holly Bruntjens** of Ferris State University; **Katie Ammons** of the University of Findlay; **Caitlin Bennett** of Grand Valley State University; **Sarah Kauk** of Hillsdale College; **Katie Scott** of Lake Superior State University and **Kristen Ameling** of Tiffin University.

The six male student-athletes to receive the Spring 2009 GLIAC Commissioner's Awards are: **Joe D'Andrea** of Ashland University; **James Eric** of the University of Findlay; **Brett Girard** of Michigan Technological University; **Charlie Thomas** of Saginaw Valley State University; **Jeremy Lee** of Tiffin University and **Mike Wiseman** of Wayne State University.

"These 12 student-athletes exemplify the NCAA Division II philosophy of balance between academics and athletics by excelling in both areas," stated GLIAC Commissioner Tom Brown. "Our conference, along with Meijer Incorporated, feel that it is important to recognize these hard working student-athletes for their outstanding performances in the classroom and on the field of play. The GLIAC would like to thank Meijer for their generous sponsorship of the 2009 Commissioner's Awards and for helping us acknowledge the exceptional accomplishments of this group."

The following are biographies of the Spring 2009 GLIAC Commissioner's Awards recipients:

Bruntjens (Gladstone, Mich.) a senior pitcher-outfielder on the nationally ranked FSU softball team, registered a 14-8 pitching mark this season with a 1.76 earned run average in 127.0 innings. The 2009 All-GLIAC First Team honoree batted a career season-high .300 average with a personal season-best 33 base hits in 110 at bats to go with eight doubles, two home runs, and 22 RBIs. She claimed both Louisville Slugger/NFCA Division II All-Midwest Region First-Team accolades and Daktronics, Inc. All-Midwest Region Softball First-Team honors this season. The two-time (2007-08) NFCA Scholar-Athlete concluded her three-year (2007-09) Ferris State career ranking among the program's all-time statistical leaders in sixth pitching and two hitting categories. She helped FSU to the 2008 NCAA Division II Great Lakes Regional Tournament championship en route to being named the tourney's Most Outstanding Player as the Bulldogs proceeded to tie for fifth place at the 2008 NCAA-II Softball Championships. A three-time (2007-09) GLIAC All-Academic Team pick, Bruntjens was the 2008-09 recipient of FSU's 23rd annual Helen Bennett Award as the Bulldogs' most outstanding senior female student-athlete and also was a second-team selection on the 2009 ESPN The Magazine/CoSIDA Academic All-District IV College Division Softball Team. She is an applied biology major with a 3.68 grade point average.

Ammons (Findlay, Ohio) is the keeper of a 4.00 cumulative grade point average, and is a junior education major who appeared and started in 43 games for Findlay's softball team. She was a Second-Team All-GLIAC selection in 2009 after earning first-team all-conference honors in 2008. In 2009, Ammons hit a team-high .352 with 27 runs and a team-high 43 hits.

Bennett (Gross Pointe Woods, Mich.), only a junior, finished 12th at the Division II Women's Golf Championships this year, helping Grand Valley State to a second-place finish. She also earned a fifth-place finish at the NCAA East Regional and a ninth-place finish at the GLIAC Championships. She was a National Golf Coaches Association All-East Region selection and was named to the 2008-09 All-GLIAC Second Team. Bennett was a First-Team All-GLIAC selection during her first two seasons at Grand Valley State and was named the 2006-07 GLIAC "Freshman of the Year." Her highest finish at the national championships came in 2007-08, when she earned sixth-place honors. Bennett, majoring in exercise science, has compiled a 3.56 grade point average.

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Kauk (Saronville, Neb./Nebraska Christian) finished her career at Hillsdale College with an overall grade point average of 3.94, highest among all Charger athletes for the 2008-2009 season. She was the winner of the Hillsdale College's "Lamond-Wright Award," and the "Outstanding Senior Woman" award, which is voted on by her peers. An exercise science major, she was awarded the Laureates Scholarship for her senior thesis. She is the school record-holder in the pole vault event in both indoor and outdoor track, and was a D-II qualifier in the event in 2008. She was named Academic All-GLIAC five times in her career.

Scott (Mitchell, Ont.) leaves Lake Superior State University owning school records in the indoor mile, and 3,000 and 5,000 meter runs, as well as the outdoor 1,500, 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000-meter runs and the steeplechase. She placed fourth in the steeplechase and fifth in the 5,000-meter run at the 2009 GLIAC Outdoor championships. She finished the 2009 season ranked 21st in D-II in the steeplechase and 30th in the 10,000-meter run after competing in the event one time. The six-time USTFCCCA Academic All-American holds a 3.78 grade point average while majoring in exercise science. Scott has one year of eligibility remaining and plans to attend graduate school at Saginaw Valley State.

Ameling (Milbury, Ohio/Cardinal Stritch) a senior on Tiffin University's women's track team is majoring in accounting and holds a 3.97 grade point average. She qualified for the NCAA D-II Championships in the shot put, finishing 9th. Ameling was named Tiffin's "Scholar Athlete of the Year" during 2009 commencement ceremony, capping a strong season where she set a new shot put record with a throw of 14-.06 meters. She won the shot put event at the GLIAC Championships, Oberlin, and Tiffin Invitationals and was honored as GLIAC "Outdoor Track and Field Athlete of the Week."

D'Andrea (Westerville, Ohio/ St. Francis), a senior on Ashland University's golf team, led AU to its second consecutive trip to the NCAA D-II playoffs for the first time in school history. He had a team-leading stroke average of 72.6, earning Second-Team All-GLIAC honors in 2009. He is a four-year starter and has been a team captain for three years. D'Andrea is a political science major and holds a 3.98 grade point average. He received the "Outstanding Senior Award" from AU's history/political science department and from the economics/finance department. D'Andrea is also a member of AU's Student-Athletic Advisory Committee.

Eric (Beavercreek, Ohio), a University of Findlay senior, wrapped up the outdoor track and field season by finishing fourth in the hammer throw with a school record breaking toss 206'02 to earn All-American honors at the 2009 NCAA Division II Championship. Eric was also named the GLIAC "Field Athlete of the Week" four times during the 2008-09 calendar year and was selected as an All-American during the indoor season for his performance in the weight throw. He took seventh in the event with a school record-breaking mark of 63'09. Majoring in business, Eric holds a 3.70 grade point average and has been named to the GLIAC All-Academic team six times during his career.

Girard (Marquette, Mich.), Michigan Technological University's men's tennis No. 1 singles player and "Most Valuable Player" lead the program to its first-ever NCAA Tournament berth in 2009. He was named to the All-GLIAC Second Team four times and was MTU's No. 1 singles player all four years. He accumulated a 3.98 GPA in business administration. He was named to the GLIAC All-Academic Team three times and was a 2009 ESPN the Magazine Academic All-District IV Second Team honoree.

Thomas (Northville, Mich.), a junior, led the Saginaw Valley State University baseball team in slugging percentage (.522), hits (57), RBI (38) and total bases (83). He was also tied for the lead in homeruns (5). Thomas was second on the team in batting average (.358) and on base percentage (.434). He was named a Second Team All-GLIAC selection in 2009 and holds a 3.90 grade point average while majoring in management. He has been named to SVSU's President's List twice and the Dean's List three times.

Lee (Delta, Ohio), a junior at Tiffin University holds a 3.74 grade point average while majoring in criminal justice. He won the GLIAC Championship in the 1500 meter run and mile run. Lee also holds the school record in four indoor and two outdoor events. He was a provisional qualifier for the NCAA D-II meet in the 1500 meters. Lee earned Academic All-American in cross country and in track in 2006 and 2007 and was named to the All-GLIAC Academic team in cross country and indoor track.

Wiseman (White Lake, Mich./ Lakeland), Wayne State University's catcher, started 49 games behind the plate, posting a .985 fielding percentage and leading the GLIAC with 27 runners caught stealing. He batted .370, including a .406 average in conference games. For the season he totaled six home runs, 35 RBI and 44 runs scored. In 2009, Wiseman earned All-GLIAC First Team and Midwest All-Region Second Team. He is an accounting major and served as the Communications Officer for WSU's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.