

## 2004-05 SEASON PREVIEW

After recording the best season ever in Ferris State University men's ice hockey history in 2002-03 with its first-ever Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA) Regular-Season Championship title and its debut in the NCAA Championship Tournament, expectations were high for a repeat performance in the 2003-04 campaign.

Unfortunately, the season didn't go as scripted as the Bulldogs ended up with a 15-20-3 overall record and a 10th-place CCHA finish.

"We all wanted this season to start once last year's was over with," said FSU head coach **Bob Daniels**, who starts his 13th year at Ferris State this season and is the Bulldogs' all-time winningest coach.

"Last season was certainly a disappointment for the program," said Daniels. "We had high expectations entering the season in defense of our league title and our record wasn't really indicative of the team's talent level. I believe our guys weren't prepared for how hard our opponents would come at us night in and out."

With a veteran nucleus intact combined with a talented group of newcomers, the Bulldogs are "focused" on making this 2004-05 campaign a highly-successful one.

Ferris State returns 18 letterwinners from last season's squad, including five of its top nine points leaders. Moreover, the Bulldogs welcome back 56.5% of last season's goal-scoring output and 60.2% of their points production.

"Since the conclusion of last season, we've had a lot of players anxious to get this season underway," Daniels said. "We, as a program, believe there's much for us to prove this year. The guys are more focused this time around and this team is challenging itself this season."

"We've experienced success as a result of our aggressive style of play, which emphasizes speed and skill," Daniels stated. "I want to continue fielding a well-balanced team that's offensive minded which allows our player's skills to be maximized and showcased."

### FORWARDS

**RETURNING: 11; LOST: 4; NEWCOMERS: 4**

Ferris State features a good balance of talented veterans and youth along with solid depth from top to bottom. Graduation claimed the team's Most Valuable Player and leading scorer in Brett Smith along with team captain Derrick McIver, but the Bulldogs still retain the services of their top two returning points producers in senior center **Jeff Legue** (13-16-29) and senior right wing **Derek Nesbitt** (11-17-28). Legue enters his final season hoping to

### JEFF LEGUE



assemble numbers set in his sophomore year when he racked up a career-high 59 points (24-35-59) en route to attaining second-team All-CCHA plaudits. A member of Ferris' 100-point club with 113 career points (43-70-113), Legue's 70 assists ranks 18th on the school's all-time charts. Like Legue, Nesbitt is a proven offensive commodity and is looking to regain the offensive prowess shown two seasons ago in which he netted All-CCHA Honorable Mention laurels as a result of generating a career-best 53 points (20-33-53). Junior right wing **Greg Rallo** (7-11-18) is another skilled offensive skater who should figure prominently in the team's scoring. Daniels believes the trio has the ability to account for at least 50 goals this campaign and will need to be among the league's scoring leaders to produce a winning season.

Sophomore left wing **Mark Bomersback** (8-10-18), who was tabbed FSU's Rookie of the Year last season after pacing all Bulldog freshmen in scoring, is primed for a breakthrough season as is junior left wing **Matt Rutkowski** (1-8-9), who's Bulldog debut a season ago was shortened to 19 games due to an injury. Senior left wing **Carter Thomson** (6-3-9), junior right wing **Nick Scheible** (4-2-6), sophomore right wing **Zac Pearson** (2-7-9) and sophomore left wing **Matt Verdone** (1-5-6) should all receive a substantial amount of ice time and contribute in the offensive department. Thomson scored a career-high six markers last winter while Scheible was a co-recipient of the team's Most Improved Player Award with a career-best six points. Pearson recorded a team-leading plus nine efficiency rating to gain the squad's Plus/Minus Award and tied Rutkowski for the second-best point total among Bulldog newcomers last season.

Center **Tim Vokey** (1-0-1) and left wing **Eric Vesely** (1-3-4), a pair of sophomores, improved their conditioning in the offseason and the Bulldog coaching staff is confident the commitment made will pay dividends on the ice. Right wingers **Matt Stefanishion** and **Matt Frank** along with centers **Adam Miller** and **Chad Haacke** comprise a talented group of freshmen who supply strength and

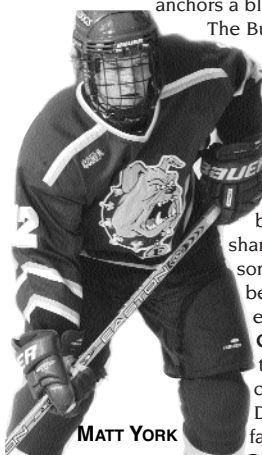
toughness to the frontline positions. **Stefanishion** (6-3, 210) placed fifth in league scoring with 77 points, which included 32 lamplighters. **Frank** posted 25 goals en route to 55 points in the junior ranks last season. **Miller** tied for 21st among his league's top point getters with 46 total of which 22 were goals. The 2003-04 Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Player of the Year, **Haacke's** 43 goals represented the league's highest to go with his 92 season point total.

### DEFENSEMEN

**RETURNING: 5; LOST: 3; NEWCOMERS: 3**

Daniels believes before all is said and done that this season's defensive unit will be a productive one and the level of their success will hinge upon how well they mesh as a unit. At the point will be senior **Matt York** (4-8-12), who anchors a blueline corps comprised of at least five returnees.

The Bulldog captain is regarded by Daniels as one of the league's best "offensive" defenseman and the blueliner has also demonstrated to be a capable defender. Prior to last season, **York** recorded two consecutive 20-plus point seasons and has 59 career points (14-45-59) in 97 outings. A pair of juniors, **Jeremy Scherlinck** (0-5-5) and **Andrew Winnik** (0-3-3) have game experience under their belts as does senior **Skip Renaud** (1-3-4), who shared FSU's Most Improved Player honors last season. **Scherlinck** (6-3, 201) and **Winnik** (6-4, 229) will be counted on to provide a strong, physical presence in the defensive zone. Sophomore **Joe Van Culin** (1-2-3), a converted forward, figures to be in the mix after turning in a commendable first-year campaign as evidenced by competing in 20 games. Daniels is also encouraged by the arrival of new faces in talented freshmen **Jim Jorgensen**, **Alex Spezia** and **Adam Welch**, who are expected to battle the veterans for ice time. **Jorgensen**, a teammate of **Derek MacIntyre's** in juniors, tallied 31 points last winter while **Spezia** garnered a 24-point season total. **Welch** (6-3, 205) not only lends size to the lineup but is coming off 30-point plus seasons in each of his last two junior campaigns.



MATT YORK

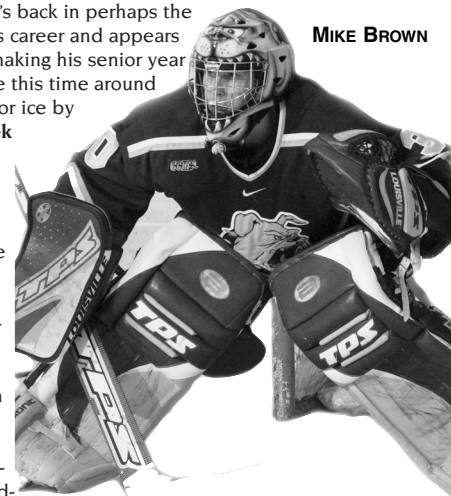
### GOALTENDING

**RETURNING: 2; LOST: 1; NEWCOMERS: 1**

With the winningest goaltender in FSU history returning coupled with a promising freshman in the fold, this should be an area of strength for the Bulldogs this season. Headlining the list of returnees is 2002-03 All-America netminder **Mike Brown**, who's back in perhaps the best physical condition of his career and appears focused more than ever on making his senior year a memorable one. A positive this time around is **Brown** will be challenged for ice by highly-touted freshman **Derek MacIntyre**, a local product.

The inexperience on the blueline will put a premium on **Brown**, who continues to etch his name throughout the Bulldog record annals. The school's all-time winningest netminder with 55 career victories, **Brown** is tops among the program's career leaders in shutouts (eight), second in both saves (2,766) and goals against average (2.73) while ranking third in save percentage (.910). Following a record-setting 2002-03 season in which he received both All-America and CCHA First-Team accolades as a result of compiling a 30-10-1 record with a 2.35 goals against average and a school-best .925 save percentage, **Brown's** numbers tailed off last season. He registered a 15-20-3 mark to go with a 3.18 goals against average and an .894 save percentage in 38 outings.

**MacIntyre**, who was an eighth-round draft pick of the San Jose Sharks in the 2004 NHL Entry Draft, notched a 1.77 goals against average and a .924 save percentage to go with four shutouts. **MacIntyre** posted a 31-3-2 record in 39 contests last season and was selected the nation's fifth-best incoming freshman netminder for this campaign by *Inside College Hockey*. Junior **Tom Mueller**, who made 15 saves in his only appearance last year, is a capable backup.



MIKE BROWN