

"Where Champions Compete"



2008 Softball Preseason Coaches' Poll



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For Immediate Release

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Coaches Pick Wayne State to Win 2008 GLIAC Softball Title

GVSU Places Second, Ferris State and Gannon Tie For Third in Preseason Balloting

BAY CITY, Mich. -- The head softball coaches of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) chose Wayne State University to win the league's 2008 championship.

Wayne State, the defending GLIAC co-champion, received four of ten possible first-place votes and tallied 94 points. The Warriors edged out Grand Valley State University, who also received four first-place votes, recording 89 points. Wayne State earned the No. 1 seed in the 2007 GLIAC Tournament after posting the league's best regular season record (15-5). The Warriors fell to GVSU, the No. 4 seed, in the semifinals of the GLIAC tournament.

Ferris State University and Gannon University each tallied 79 points in the poll to tie for third place. The Lady Knights garnered two first-place nods, while the Bulldogs tallied one in the balloting. FSU earned the No. 2 seed in the 2007 GLIAC tournament, but was ousted after three games. Gannon claimed the 2007 GLIAC Tournament title, defeating GVSU, 3-2, in the Conference final. Ashland University recorded 63 points to place fifth in the polls, while Saginaw Valley State University posted a sixth-place finish with 54 points.

Northwood University placed seventh in the poll with 49 points, outdistancing Mercyhurst College (39 points) by 10. Hillsdale College finished ninth, having recorded 27 points. The University of Findlay placed tenth in the poll with 20 points, while Lake Superior State University tallied 12 points and finished 11th.

Each of the GLIAC's 11 head coaches ranked the teams in the conference, but were not allowed to rank their own team. The first-place team on each ballot received ten points, while the second-place team received nine points, etc.

The 2008 GLIAC softball tournament will be held at the Emerson Park Softball Complex in Midland, Mich. The eight-team double elimination event will run from Friday, May 2 through Sunday, May 4.

GLIAC softball teams open the 2008 conference season on Wednesday, Mar. 26.

2008 GLIAC Preseason Softball Coaches Poll

Table with 3 columns: Rank, School (first-place votes), Points. Lists 11 schools and their respective points and first-place votes.

2007 GLIAC Softball Final Overall Standings*

Table with 3 columns: Place, School, GLIAC (Overall). Lists 11 schools and their overall records.

* - Overall standings are a combination of tournament and regular season finishes.

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2008 GLIAC Softball Preseason Team Reports

 <p>Ashland University Eagles Head Coach: Sheilah Gulas (11th Season, 393-189) 2007 Record: 29-20 (11-9 GLIAC, t-7th place)</p>	 <p>University of Findlay Oilers Head Coach: Ron Ammons (6th Season, 66-163) 2007 Record: 11-40 (3-17 GLIAC, 10th Place)</p>
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The Eagles went 29-20 last year, 11-9 in GLIAC play. Head coach Sheilah Gulas (596-313 in 21 years/393-189 at AU in 11 years) will look to senior infielder Kristen McGaughey to anchor the lineup. McGaughey was a second team All-GLIAC choice last year when she hit a team-high .355 with 11 homers and 38 runs-batted-in. Outfielder Jenn Alderson will also be counted on heavily, she hit .306 with four homers and 23 RBI last season. Designated player Amanda Thomas, a senior, had a breakout year in 2007 when she hit .314 and earned first team All-GLIAC laurels. Another key factor figures to be infielder Kelli Williams, a 2006 All-GLIAC first team selection.


The biggest question for the Eagles entering the season is the pitching staff. Graduation claimed Jaime Williams (24-11, 1.92 ERA). The most experienced returning hurler is Sam Hendrix, a sophomore, who was 5-7 last season with a 3.40 earned run average. Junior Shannon Gray, primarily an outfielder a year ago, is expected to be a key part of the rotation. She pitched in 19 games in 2006.

The University of Findlay softball team is looking for success this season with the help of their seasoned underclassman. The Oilers, under the guidance of head coach Ron Ammons, finished last season with a record of 11-40, which included a mark of 3-17 in the GLIAC.

The squad will be lead by junior Jeanne Hilvers, who was named honorable mention all-GLIAC last season. Hilvers led the Oilers with a .314 batting average, knocked in 17 runs and scored 15 runs. She also has the fifth highest fielding percentage in Oilers history at .989.

Also returning will be seniors Jessica Rolston and Jenna Binz along with juniors Tracy Mays, Amanda Mirabella, Audrey Semanco, Jamie Smith, Jaccie Tufts and Katie Yarnell, who each earned Academic All-GLIAC honors. The Oilers saw 11 women earn this honor, the most of any GLIAC team.


Sophomore Brigitte Webb looks to have a great season after a stellar freshman-year performance where she had a batted .289, scored 21 runs, had a team-high 41 hits and team-high 23 stolen bases.

 <p>Ferris State University Bulldogs Head Coach: Keri Becker (11th Season, 313-209-1) 2007 Record: 31-17 (14-6 GLIAC, 4th place)</p>

The Bulldogs have hopes of once again being a top contender for the GLIAC title and making a return appearance in the NCAA Tournament. Ranked 25th in the 2008 NFCA D-II Preseason Top 25 Poll, FSU returns four earning all-conference players from last season's squad. Head coach Keri Becker, the school's all-time winningest coach, enters her 11th season at FSU.

Ferris State returns a pair of seasoned hurlers in juniors Sarah Mueller (12-8, 1.61 ERA, 121.2 IP) and Holly Bruntjens (14-6, 1.16 ERA, 138.2 IP, 125 K's). A 2007 first-team All-GLIAC pick, Mueller also received Daktronics All-America Third-Team accolades a season ago as she batted .342 with a team-high 54 hits to go with 16 doubles, five home runs, and 31 RBI in 48 games.

The two will be throwing to junior catcher Krystle Bailey (.336, 10 2B, 3 HR, 17 RBI), an all-conference second-team performer last season. Behind them in the infield are senior third baseman Katie Kraai (.286, 14 2B, 6 HR, 40 RBI), a 2007 NCAA Great Lakes Region All-Tournament Team selection, and junior shortstop McKenzie West (.285, 10, 2B, 3 HR, 21 RBI). Amanda Jager (.296, 5 HR, 26 RBI), is the lone outfield starter returning.

 <p>Gannon University Lady Knights Head Coach: Beth Curtiss (8th Season, 238-116-1) 2007 Record: 38-15 (13-7 GLIAC, t-1st Place)</p>

Beth Curtiss enters her eighth season as Gannon's head coach, ranking 33rd among active NCAA Division II coaches with a .672 winning percentage. She has led the Lady Knights to three consecutive NCAA D-II Tournament berths and the squads first GLIAC title in 2007.

Twelve letterwinners and seven position players who started at least 34 games return from last year's squad. Senior shortstop Jaelyn Corroto headlines the returnees after landing a spot last season on the Daktronics and Louisville Slugger/NFCA All-America second teams. She broke the all-time NCAA D-II record for longest hitting streak in 2007, recording a hit in 39 consecutive games. Corroto hit .445 with 50 runs and 46 RBI last season.

Other returners who hit at least .300 last season include junior catcher Holli Michaels (.397), sophomore outfielder Carol Kienzl (.340), sophomore infielder Casee Piquet (.338), and junior catcher Kara Hensley (.312). Junior Lauren Solder will anchor the pitching staff after redshirting in 2007. She ranks fourth all-time at Gannon in strikeouts (375), sixth in victories (44), and sixth in innings pitched (403).

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2008 GLIAC Softball Preseason Team Reports

 <p>Grand Valley State University Lakers Head Coach: Doug Woods (18th Season, 645-285-3) 2007 Record: 36-18 (12-6 GLIAC, 3rd Place)</p>	 <p>Lake Superior State University Lakers Head Coach: Dom Myers (19th Season, 212-565-1) 2007 Record: 7-33 (2-18 GLIAC, 11th Place)</p>
<p>Doug Woods returns for his 18th year at the helm of Grand Valley State's softball program. GVSU closed out its 2007 season with a loss in the Great Lakes Regional Championship game and enters the 2008 season as the No. 13 team in Division II.</p> <p>Junior Lori Andjelich (Munster, Ind.) will be a steadying presence on the mound for the Lakers once again this season. Last season, Andjelich posted a record of 17-7 and an earned-run average of 1.51 on her way to being named to the All-Great Lakes Region First Team and the All-GLIAC Second Team. She struck out 181 batters in 189.2 innings.</p> <p>At the plate, GVSU will be led by returning seniors Kristin Moleski (Rockford, Mich.) and Elizabeth Smith (Chicago, Ill.). Moleski was a First Team All-GLIAC selection last season and ranked fourth in the conference with 42 runs-batted-in. She led the team with a .383 batting average and banged out nine home runs. Smith was Honorable Mention All-GLIAC with a league-leading 49 RBIs and a batting average of .366. She also finished fourth in the conference with 10 home runs.</p>	<p>Lake Superior State head coach Don Myers enters his 19th season at the Lakers helm and will rely on a group of veteran players during the 2008 season.</p> <p>The Lakers will be led by sophomore designated hitter/catcher Nichole Dunford, who was named GLIAC Freshman of the Year in 2007 after batting .340 in league play and .280 with eight home runs overall. Senior April Brandt posted a .250 batting average while leading the team in doubles and stolen bases in 2007. She is joined by her sister, junior transfer Katie Brandt, who batted .343 with 46 hits and 45 RBIs in 49 games for Kalamazoo Community College last year.</p> <p>LSSU's pitching lineup includes senior Stephanie Reveley, junior Nikki Christensen and freshmen Jennie Elliott and Claire Ostrowski. Christensen led the Lakers in strikeouts with 61 and innings pitched with 77.1.</p> <p>Sophomore Lacey Knoop is LSSU's top-returning defensive player. Knoop is a middle infielder who had a .920 fielding percentage and was second on the team in batting at .277.</p>
 <p>Hillsdale College Chargers Head Coach: Jamie Meyers (1st Season) 2007 Record: 18-24 (7-11 GLIAC, 9th Place)</p>	 <p>Mercyhurst College Lakers Head Coach: Sarah Headley (5th Season, 76-97-1) 2007 Record: 23-23 (11-9 GLIAC, 5th Place)</p>
<p>There's a new head coach for the Hillsdale College softball team for the second year in a row. Recent graduate Jamie Meyers takes over the head coaching reins, and inherits an experienced club as the Chargers look to return to the GLIAC Tournament.</p> <p>The team's three seniors all bring skill and leadership to the team. Katie Botsis will move from second base to shortstop and has been one of the team's best RBI producers during her career. Pitcher Aimee Genter hopes to return from an injury-shortened 2007 season. In 2006, Genter set the school record for strikeouts in a season with 199. Brecken Libbe has hit 10 home runs in her two seasons with Hillsdale, and can play catcher or third base.</p> <p>Sophomore Devon Trimmer led the team with a .373 batting average last season. Junior Ellen Eldridge was pressed into starting pitching duty, and finished with eight victories. Freshmen Kellie Hirst (pitcher) and Jordan Kellie (catcher) figure to form a formidable battery for Hillsdale for the next four years. The Chargers finished with an 18-24 record in 2007, and were 7-11 in the GLIAC.</p>	<p>Coming off of its most successful season in program history, the Mercyhurst softball team will look to climb even further in its final season in the GLIAC.</p> <p>The Lakers finished 23-23 a year ago, the most wins in program history. Sara Headley returns for her fifth season at the helm with a 76-97-1 career record. She needs one victory to post the most wins by a softball coach in Mercyhurst history.</p> <p>For Mercyhurst to improve on last year's fifth place finish in conference, the Lakers must find a replacement for first team all-conference pitcher Jen Feret. Now an assistant coach for the team, Feret ranked fifth in the country in homeruns and was among the national leaders in ERA and strikeouts.</p> <p>Sophomore Megan Houston is the only returning all-conference player and she started 43 games a year ago at shortstop, batting .279 with four homers. Senior outfielder Jessica McNurlen is the team captain after batting .235 with five homers in 24 starts a year ago.</p>


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Northwood University Timberwolves
Head Coach: Meaggan Pettipiece
 (2nd Season, 20-23)
2007 Record: 20-23 (11-9 GLIAC, t-7th Place)

The Northwood University softball team will look to a mixture of experience and youth heading into the 2008 season. Coming off a 20-23 season that saw the Timberwolves go 11-9 in the GLIAC, Northwood is hoping for improvements across the board heading into the year.

The Timberwolves are led by senior third basemen Sam Thacker, who has earned First Team All-GLIAC honors in each of the past two seasons. She hit a team-best .350 in her junior season. Alyssa Eppler can play any position in the field and provides pop with the bat, finishing her sophomore season with a .328 average. Northwood will also look for contributions from returning players Michelle Boscola (.231, 9 RBIs), Corey Schluckbier (.218, 9 RBIs), Ashley Belling (.184, 4 RBIs) and Ashley Slusser (.175, 8 runs).

NU also features depth in the circle, with Sheena Smith, Jessica Wojcik and Schluckbier all having seen time pitching last year. Meaggan Pettipiece is in her second season as head coach for the Timberwolves.




Wayne State University Warriors
Head Coach: Gary Bryce
 (27th Season, 850-543-6)
2007 Record: 41-17 (15-5 GLIAC, t-1st Place)

Gary Bryce enters his 27th year at the helm of the Warrior softball program with high expectations with 14 returning letterwinners from his 2007 squad which captured the GLIAC regular-season title (15-5), was the co-GLIAC champion, and advanced to the third day of the Great Lakes Regional tournament.

Of the 14 returnees, there are six in both the senior and junior classes. Senior pitcher Molly Yetman (24-5, 300 strikeouts, 0.65 ERA) was the 2007 GLIAC Player of the Year as well as a Daktronics Second Team All-American honoree.

Senior Sarah Berry (.361, 37 RBI, .399 on-base pct.) moves behind the plate, while classmate Lindsey Perry (.349, 10 HR, .614 slug. pct.) will again play first base. Both were voted to the NFCA All-Region First Team a year ago. Two honorable mention All-GLIAC selections from a year ago also return in infielder Lisa Seymour and outfielder Meredith Boxberger (.318). Seymour batted .328 in the league with three doubles and a .426 slugging percentage. In addition to the returnees, WSU added infielder Jaci Banton from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and catcher Rachel Spaccarotelli, a freshman from Romeo High School.



Saginaw Valley State University Cardinals
Head Coach: Everett Roper
 (1st Season)
2007 Record: 25-20 (9-11 GLIAC, 6th Place)

The Saginaw Valley State University softball team will enter the 2008 season after finishing with a record of 25-20 and a conference record of 9-11 in 2007, placing them sixth in the GLIAC. First-year coach Everett Roper will take the reigns of the SVSU Softball team.

On the mound, Kari Bowlby (Elkhart, Ind./Central) started 22 games last season, posting a team-best 13-9 record and a 2.90 ERA in 130.1 innings pitched. Stacy Kraatz (Howell, Mich./Hartland) started 20 games last season and compiled a 9-10 record with a 3.63 ERA in 113.2 innings pitched. She also posted a team-leading stats of a .350 batting average and 26 RBIs.

The Cardinals return the glue of their infield this season, as Vanessa Briggs (Freeland, Mich.) and Nicole Fick (Columbiaville, Mich./Lapeer West) started every game for Saginaw Valley at second base and shortstop, respectively. Briggs batted .257 last season with four home runs and 16 RBIs. Fick posted a .252 batting average but tallied a team-best six home runs with 21 RBIs. Billi Hoepfner (Hemlock, Mich.) will get the nod in left-field where she hit nearly .300 last season and stole three bases.

GLIAC Softball Titles Won

<u>School</u>	<u># of Titles</u>
Wayne State	13 (2007, 2006, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992, 1990, 1989, 1988, 1985, 1983, 1981)
Grand Valley State	11 (2004, 2003, 2001, 1987, 1986, 1981, 1980, 1979, 1978, 1977, 1976)
Ashland	5 (2002, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996)
Saginaw Valley State	4 (1990, 1989, 1988, 1984)
Ferris State	3 (2005, 2000, 1982)
Hillsdale	2 (1991, 1989)
Northwood	1 (2005)
Gannon	1 (2007)