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## Coaches Pick Grand Valley State, Hillsdale to Win 2006 GLIAC Volleyball Divisional Titles

**BAY CITY, Mich.** -- The head volleyball coaches of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) chose Grand Valley State University to win the league's North Division, and Hillsdale College to take the South Division in preseason balloting.

Grand Valley State, the 2005 NCAA Division II champion, received 36 points and all six first-place votes it was eligible for. The Lakers outdistanced Northwood University, which garnered 28 points and the remaining first-place vote. Ferris State University placed third in the division with 26 points, while Northern Michigan University finished fourth with 21 points.

Michigan Technological University placed fifth in the division with 18 points, followed by Lake Superior State University and Saginaw Valley State University, which tied for sixth place with nine points.

Hillsdale, after tying for third place in last season's South Division race, received 23 points and four first-place votes in the poll. The Chargers edged out both Ashland University and the University of Findlay, who tied for second place, by three points (23-20). The Eagles and the Oilers each received one first-place nod.

Wayne State University tallied 13 points and finished fourth, followed by Mercyhurst College (9 points), and Gannon University (5).

The GLIAC proved to be one of Division II's toughest conferences last season, sending five teams -- Ashland, Ferris State, Grand Valley State, Hillsdale, and Northwood -- to the NCAA II Great Lakes Region Tournament. Grand Valley State emerged as the regional champion, earning a trip to the "Elite Eight," Division II's national championship tournament. The Lakers defeated host and top-ranked Nebraska-Kearney in the championship match, 3-1.

The GLIAC's 13 coaches voted for the division in which they play, but were not allowed to vote for their own team. The first-place team in the North Division ballot received six points, while the second-place team received five points, etc. The first-place team in the South Division received five points, while the second-place team received four points, etc.

GLIAC volleyball teams open play on Thursday, Aug. 24 with conference play beginning Tuesday, Sept. 5. The 2006 GLIAC Volleyball Championship Tournament will be held on Oct. 31, Nov. 3, and Nov. 4 on campus sites. The quarterfinals will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 31, while the semifinals and finals are scheduled to take place on Nov. 3 & 4 on the campus of the highest remaining seed.

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### 2006 GLIAC Preseason Volleyball Coaches Poll

<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Grand Valley State (6) .....	36
2. Northwood (1) .....	28
3. Ferris State .....	26
4. Northern Michigan .....	21
5. Michigan Tech .....	18
6. Lake Superior State .....	9
Saginaw Valley State .....	9
<i>South Division</i>	
1. Hillsdale (4) .....	23
2. Ashland (1) .....	20
Findlay (1) .....	20
4. Wayne State .....	13
5. Mercyhurst .....	9
6. Gannon .....	5

### 2005 GLIAC Volleyball Final Standings

<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Grand Valley State .....	32-6 (15-3)
Northwood .....	23-11 (14-4)
Ferris State .....	22-10 (12-6)
Northern Michigan .....	15-12 (12-6)
Michigan Tech .....	10-18 (6-12)
Lake Superior State .....	9-22 (6-12)
Saginaw Valley State .....	8-23 (2-16)
<i>South Division</i>	
Ashland .....	23-10 (13-4)
Findlay .....	22-10 (12-5)
Hillsdale .....	19-12 (11-6)
Wayne State .....	16-10 (8-9)
Mercyhurst .....	3-14 (13-15)
Gannon .....	5-22 (0-17)

The following are previews on each of the GLIAC's 13 women's volleyball sponsoring institutions:

**Ashland University:** The Eagles bring back three starters from last year's 23-10 (13-4 GLIAC) club. A year ago, head coach Connie Surowicz (56-38 in three years at AU) directed the Eagles to the GLIAC South Division crown and their second straight trip to the NCAA playoffs. There should be enough returning talent to make a run at the postseason in 2006.

Junior outside hitter Mary Kate Glowe (Avon Lake, Ohio/Magnicat) had 617 kills, the third highest season mark in school history and established a school record with 518 digs. Glowe was a first team All-GLIAC selection as was setter Lynsey Warren (Worthington, Ohio/Bishop Watterson). Warren, a junior, had 1,393 assists, 323 digs and tied for the team high in aces (56). She owns the two highest single-season assist totals in AU history. The third returning starter is senior outside hitter Beth Dangel (Cincinnati, Ohio/Mother of Mercy), who had 220 kills and 291 digs in 2005. The returning nucleus will be bolstered by a group of nine newcomers.

**Ferris State University:** The expectations continue to rise for the Ferris State University women's volleyball squad, which returns three starters and nine letterwinners from last season. The Bulldogs concluded the 2005 campaign with a 22-10 overall record and recorded the program's seventh 20-win campaign in the last eight years to date.

Head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm, who enters her 11th season at FSU with a 212-106 (.667) school mark, returns two first-team All-GLIAC selections from a year ago in senior outside hitter Danielle Baucher (Kalamazoo/Mattawan) and senior middle hitter Karla White (New Baltimore/Anchor Bay). A 2005 all-region honoree, Baucher heads into her final season needing only two kills to become the 14th player in school history to join the 1,000 career kills club and only the sixth Bulldog player ever to garner both 1,000 kills and digs. Ferris has compiled an impressive 179-69 (.723) mark over the past eight years and has advanced to the NCAA-II Tournament four times in that span, including three of the last four years. The Bulldogs, who captured their ninth GLIAC Championship by winning the league's annual postseason tournament for the first time ever in 2004, inked five prep standouts in the offseason to replace the loss of nine letterwinners from last campaign.

**University of Findlay:** The Oilers finished the 2005 season with a 22-10 record, including a 12-6 mark in the GLIAC. Going into 2006, Findlay looks for its eighth-straight 20-win season under head coach Wick Colchagoff. Colchagoff will strive to build upon the success in 2005 with an experienced group of returning players and nine talented newcomers.

Senior Kelly Byrnes returns to the Oilers at the setter position. Byrnes, who has been named second team all-GLIAC three times and second team all-Great Lakes Region twice, racked up 1,420 assists last year and 36 service aces to lead the Oilers. Senior Erin Puthoff and junior Mallory Fleming will anchor the outside hitter position after having very successful 2005 seasons. Puthoff, who was named first team all-region and first team all-conference, tallied 445 kills last year while Fleming, who was named second team all-conference, racked up a team-high 493 kills.

Senior Kelly Harms will return to lead the Oilers group of defensive specialists. Harms saw action in 104 games last year and racked up 173 digs and 29 service aces as a junior. The Oilers will return junior Jackie Kahlig at the middle hitter position for the 2006 season. Returning in the opposite hitter position will be sophomores Kelsey Wesaw and Ali Zimmerman.

**Gannon University:** Gannon expects to rebound from its first back-to-back losing seasons since 1996-97. The Lady Knights finished 5-22 overall and 0-17 in GLIAC competition last season. Eighth-year head coach Michele Mason (99-92 career record at Gannon) has guided the Lady Knights to the GLIAC Final Four twice in the last four seasons, including an appearance in the title game in 2002. She ranks second all-time at Gannon in coaching victories (99) and winning percentage (.518).

Ten letterwinners return to form an experienced program that lost only two players from last year's team. All 10 returning letterwinners started at least two matches in 2005, including six who reached double digits in starting assignments. Senior middle hitter Jessica Santavy (Greensburg, Pa./Hempfield), junior outside hitter Noelle Schad (Coraopolis, Pa./Montour), and senior outside hitter Katie Flower (Hudson, Ohio/Twinsburg) headline the returnees. Santavy and Schad recorded 176 and 150 kills, respectively, last season. Flower returns after missing the final 16 matches of the 2005 season due to injury. She enters the 2006 campaign eighth all-time at Gannon with 1,070 career kills. The Lady Knights also return their top three setters in senior Marcie Soltész (Venango, Pa./Cambridge Springs/363 assists), sophomore Nikki Urban (Pittsburgh, Pa./Baldwin/192 assists), and junior Alyse Parker (Conneautville, Pa./Linesville/182 assists). Gannon opens the 2006 season August 29 against Clarion University at home.

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**Grand Valley State:** Grand Valley State returns 10 letterwinners and four starters from the 2005 NCAA DII National Championship squad. The Lakers, who finished with a 32-6 overall and 15-3 GLIAC record, are also the defending GLIAC Tournament and Great Lakes Region Champions.

GVSU will be led by three-year starter senior outside hitter Megan Helsen who posted 2.75 kills, 2.59 digs, 40 aces, and 52 total blocks. Senior middle blocker Meghan Moore ranked second in the GLIAC and eighth in the nation with 1.40 blocks per game. Moore, a AVCA Great Lakes All-Region and All-GLIAC First Team honoree, also added 2.86 kills per game and a .292 hitting percentage. 2005 Tachikara/AVCA Division II National Coach of the Year, Deanne Scanlon, is entering her 12th season with the Lakers. She has tallied a 294-90 (.766) overall and 157-44 (.781) GLIAC record.

**Hillsdale College:** After qualifying for the NCAA Division II tournament two years in a row, head coach Chris Gravel (182-144 career record) has his team ready for bigger and better things in the upcoming season. Five seniors return to the team, all with considerable experience and a shelf full of awards and accolades. First-Team All-GLIAC middle hitter Taryn Rudland (Holland, Mich.) is a dominant force up front for the Chargers, and already holds the school's all-time record for solo blocks. Seniors Katherine Jones (Blenheim, Ont.) and Becky Grzegorski (Jenison, Mich.) are two more hitters who have earned All-GLIAC honors during their careers. Seniors Tessa Bloemers (Holland, Mich.) and Audra VanderMolen (Cedar Springs, Mich.) bring a wealth of experience and versatility to the lineup.

Junior Megan Howard (Adrian, Mich.) led the GLIAC in digs last season and returns as one of the top liberos in the conference. Sophomore setter Stephanie Booms (Marysville, Mich.) had an outstanding rookie campaign and was one of the GLIAC's top first-year players.

**Lake Superior State University:** LSSU returns six letter winners from last year's 9-22 team, and the Lakers' young 2006 lineup will include no seniors and only two juniors. Coach Mark Engle, heading into his 12th season, has game experience among his underclassmen. He returns sophomore setter Erin McLain, who was sixth in the GLIAC in assists last year with 1,123, junior middle hitter Jamie Groos, who was 10th in the league in blocks per game and is the Lakers' top-returning hitter, and sophomore outside hitter Brishia Stroven. He will be looking for a solid all-around player to replace senior standout Vanessa Vincent, who finished her career as LSSU's second-leading all-time hitter.

**Mercyhurst College:** The 2006 Mercyhurst women's volleyball team will be looking to build on last year's 13-15 campaign. Head coach Ryan Patton begins his second season leading the squad.

Mercyhurst's top five players in kills all return, led by sophomore Jenna Matson (Wexford, Pa./Pine-Richland HS). Matson averaged 3.07 kills per game and was second on the team with 307 digs. Junior Christine Nisbet (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan/Holy Cross HS) led Mercyhurst with a .248 attack percentage last year and added a team-high 40 aces to go with 73 blocks. Senior Megan Fargo (Washington, Pa./Trinity HS) is a force in the middle, totaling a team-high 75 blocks and averaging 2.37 kills per game.

**Michigan Technological University:** The Michigan Tech volleyball team enters its 32nd season of competition in 2006 at the Northern Michigan Invitational Aug. 25-26 with matches against Abilene Christian, St. Cloud State Emporia State and Wisconsin-Parkside. Tech finished took fifth in the GLIAC North Division standings last year after compiling a 10-18 overall record and a 6-12 conference mark. Head coach Krista Mikesch, who is 94-122 overall and 51-67 in GLIAC play in seven previous season at Tech, will lead a team in which 13 of 18 players on the roster are freshmen and sophomores.

Arguably the Huskies' most potent offensive threat returning this year will be sophomore middle hitter Jen Jung (Andover, Minn./Coon Rapids), who was one of just two freshmen to earn All-GLIAC First-Team accolades a year ago. A three-year mainstay at the setter spot, senior Amanda Mackethun (Waconia, Minn./Mayer Lutheran) has led Tech in assists for each of the past two seasons and was second on the squad in service aces (21) in her junior campaign. Other veterans to watch this year are senior rightside hitter Amanda Neuhalfen (Arlington, Neb.), junior leftside hitter Kali Jeter (Middleton, Wis.), sophomore hitter Christa Jung (Andover, Minn./Coon Rapids) and sophomore libero Kelsey Skoog (Long Lake, Minn./Orono). A crop of seven reputable freshmen, that includes four players above 6' will bring added size to the Huskies' lineup.

**Northern Michigan University:** Qi Wang enters his second season at Northern Michigan University. He led the Wildcats to an overall record of 15-12 in 2005 and a 12-6 slate in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC). The 'Cats will have no seniors on the squad in 2006, but 11 freshmen. In the mix the 'Cats will have two juniors and three sophomores. Missing from the team is 2005 GLIAC Freshman of the Year Nicole Hintze.

The 'Cats will be led by sophomore Sam Schulte and junior Brittany McGowan. Schulte was a Second Team All-GLIAC selection in 2005. She recorded 241 kills during the 2005 season which was good for 2.77 kills/game. Schulte had 14 block solos, which tied her for team-honors and 54 block assists for 68 total blocks. Her total blocks were second on the team, behind Holly Greenamyre (73). McGowan, an Honorable Mention All-GLIAC selection last year, led the 'Cats with 815 assists. She also recorded 33 service aces for team-honors.

**Northwood University:** While many of the faces will be the same, the Northwood volleyball team will still feature a bit of a different look for the 2006 season. The Timberwolves return nine letterwinners and a total of four starters from a team that won 23 matches in 2005 and finished second in the GLIAC behind eventual national champion Grand Valley State.

NU's starting lineup should sport four upperclassmen, including senior co-captains Michelle Acker and Stephanie Magness. Second Team All-GLIAC setter Marija Zivanovic is back for her junior campaign, as is outside hitter Lana Sorokina. Kali Kuhl, Taylor Verdon, Ivana Stanojevic and Aleksandra Stoletova all bring a year of experience back to Northwood for the 2006 season. A talented group of newcomers features Gordana Barac, Ashley Carr and Danielle Gass. The Timberwolves open their season at the West Florida tournament Aug. 25-26.

**Saginaw Valley State:** Head coach Will Stanton enters his fourth year at Saginaw Valley State University with 12 letter-winners returning from last year's squad. In 2005, SVSU had seven freshmen on the roster, complemented by a lone senior, Julie Ritsema. The young Cardinals fought to an 8-23 season record, and improvement on the previous year's 3-29 mark. The eight wins brought Stanton's career record at SVSU to 12-78.

This year's Cardinals have another year of experience under their belts, and that should go a long way to helping the young team continue to improve. Leading the way will be senior Suzanne Beaver and sophomore Sarah Redoute. For the Cardinals to make a difference in conference play, Beaver and Redoute will have to take charge. Beaver led the team with just over three kills per game, while Redoute was right behind her with 2.84 each game. Beaver also paced the team with 41 service aces, which placed her in the top ten in the GLIAC. Redoute was a huge force on defense, as well, recording 57 blocks and 313 digs, which were good enough for first and third on the team, respectively. With an older and more experienced roster than last year, the Cardinals should continue the recent increase in wins.

**Wayne State:** The Wayne State volleyball team, which last year made the postseason for the first time since 1999, is entering its third season under head coach Ernie Gilbert (27-24) and has six returning letterwinners, including four seniors. Despite losing key players such as All-American blocker Elisa Joris, who led all of Division II in blocks per game as a senior last year, and two-time All-GLIAC Honorable Mention selection Megan Smolen, the Warriors still have experienced players such as redshirt senior Kristi Pieper (Roseville, Mich./Fraser), an outside hitter whose 224 digs a season ago were good for fourth on the team, and senior libero Michelle Bittner (Hamtramck, Mich./Regina), who led the squad with 431 digs in her first season with WSU in 2005.

The Warriors, who compiled a 16-10 record in 2005 and placed fourth in the GLIAC South Division with an 8-9 mark, face one of the toughest schedules in recent history with 10 matches against NCAA tournament qualifiers on the docket.