



2008 GLIAC Volleyball Preview



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Coaches Pick Grand Valley State, Hillsdale to Win 2008 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 North Division and Hillsdale College to win the South Division in preseason balloting.

Grand Valley State, the 2007 North Division and GLIAC Tournament champion, received 24 points, including four of the five first-place votes it was eligible for. The Lakers edged out Northern Michigan University, who received 18 points and the only other two first-place votes. Ferris State University and Michigan Technological University both ended up with 16 points in a tie for the third slot.

Saginaw Valley State University finished with 11 points in the five spot, followed by Lake Superior State University in sixth place with five points.

Hillsdale College, after winning the South Division last season, received 23 points along with three first-place votes for the top spot in this year's preseason poll. Ashland University finished just one point behind Hillsdale with 22 points for the second-place slot, including three first-place votes as well.

Northwood University finished in third-place with 17 points, followed by the University of Findlay with 13 points in fourth-place, Wayne State University in fifth-place with 10 points, and Tiffin University rounding out the South Division in sixth place with five points.

Each of the GLIAC's 12 coaches voted for the division in which they play, but were not allowed to vote for their own team. First-place votes were worth five points, second-place were worth four, etc.

GLIAC play opens-up on Sept. 10 with Tiffin University playing at the University of Findlay in a 7:30pm contest. The GLIAC Tournament quarterfinals will begin Nov. 12 at campus sites, with the semifinals and finals taking place Nov. 15-16 at the campus of the highest remaining seed.

2008 GLIAC Volleyball Preseason Coaches' Poll

North Division

<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Grand Valley State (4)	24
2. Northern Michigan (2)	18
3. Ferris State	16
Michigan Tech	16
5. Saginaw Valley State	11
6. Lake Superior State	5

South Division

1. Hillsdale (3)	23
2. Ashland (3)	22
3. Northwood	17
4. Findlay	13
5. Wayne State	10
6. Tiffin	5

2007 GLIAC Volleyball

Final Standings

North Division

<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Grand Valley State (1N) *	33-4 (17-1)
Northern Michigan (2N)	20-12 (13-5)
Ferris State (3N)	20-10 (12-6)
Saginaw Valley State (WC1)	20-12 (9-9)
Michigan Tech (WC2)	9-17 (7-11)
Northwood	18-12 (6-12)
Lake Superior State	8-22 (3-15)

South Division

Hillsdale (1S)	26-8 (15-2)
Ashland (2S)	26-6 (14-3)
Findlay (3S)	19-14 (8-9)
Wayne State	10-15 (5-12)
Mercyhurst	18-14 (4-13)
Gannon	6-20 (1-16)

(x) - GLIAC Tournament Seed

(*) - GLIAC Tournament Champion

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-- The following are previews of all 12 GLIAC Volleyball teams for the 2008 season --



Ashland Eagles
Head Coach: Connie Surowicz
6th Season (105-54)

The Ashland University women's volleyball team enters the 2008 season after another successful year in 2007. Head Coach Connie Surowicz returns four starters and seven total lettermen. Surowicz enters her sixth year coaching the Eagles with a record of 105-54 over the past five seasons. Ashland will be very young this season with zero seniors, five juniors, two sophomores, and four freshmen.

Top returners for the Eagles include; Britney Jurchenko (JR, MH/OH, 5-10, 251 Digs, 263 Kills, 32 Service Aces), Marina Santos (JR, OH, 5-9, 397 Digs, 280 Kills, 22 Service Aces), and Amanda Stefanski (JR, MH, 6-2, 177 Digs, 332 Kills, 11 Service Aces).



Findlay Oilers
Head Coach: Wick Colchagoff
11th Season (223-99)

The Oilers finished the 2007 season with a 19-14 record. Findlay, who has won four Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) South Division titles during their association with the NCAA Division II ranks, finished with an 8-9 record in the league last year and will be looking to improve on their mark during the fall with a young and energetic squad under the guidance of head coach Wick Colchagoff who has amassed a 223-99 record during his 10 years with the team.

The team will be led by sophomore middle hitter Courtney Niemeyer who had 221 kills and 81 blocks last season en route to being named honorable mention All-GLIAC.



Ferris State Bulldogs
Head Coach: Tia Brandel-Wilhelm
16th Season (371-145)

Ferris State enters the 2008 season with six returning starters and the most depth at every position in several seasons. Returning to the fold are junior MH Kristy Gilchrist (336 kills, 48 SA, 83 blocks), a 2007 second-team All-GLIAC selection, and senior S/OH Andrea Rich (213 digs), a 2007 honorable mention All-GLIAC pick, along with senior S/OH Candice Marut (199 digs), sophomore MH Arielle Goodson (90 blocks), and junior OH Katie Edwards (279 kills).

The Bulldogs also welcome an outstanding freshmen class which is expected to have a significant impact in the program. Nine of the last 10 seasons have resulted in at least 20 victories for Ferris State, which seeks to continue its streak of 10 consecutive winning campaigns in 2008.



Grand Valley State Lakers
Head Coach: Deanne Scanlon
14th Season (354-98)

Grand Valley State is coming off of a 33-4 season in 2007, which resulted in the Lakers returning to the Elite Eight for the sixth time in the last eight years. Winning its fourth consecutive GLIAC North Division title, GVSU was 17-1 in league play last season. Leading the Lakers is head coach Deanne Scanlon, who enters her 14th season at Grand Valley State with a 354-98 career record.

The Lakers return 12 letterwinners and four starters, including senior middle blocker Danielle Alexander (417 kills, .330%, 148 blocks), a third-team AVCA All-American and a first-team All-GLIAC choice. Senior setter Jamie Ashmore (1407 assists, 364 digs, 59 aces), a second-team All-GLIAC selection and the GLIAC Tournament MVP, will again control the offense. Sophomore middle blocker Rebeccah Rapin (.350%, 326 kills, 155 blocks) was named both the GLIAC and Great Lakes Region Freshman of the Year and tallied the most blocks in the league last season.



Hillsdale Chargers
Head Coach: Chris Gravel
13th Season (237-154)

Over the past two years, the Hillsdale College volleyball team has established itself among the nation's elite programs, winning 55 of its past 65 matches. Hillsdale will be searching for its fifth straight trip to the NCAA Division II regional tournament in 2008, and has won two straight GLIAC South Division titles.

Three players return who received All-GLIAC recognition in 2007. Setter Stephanie Booms (Marysville, Mich.) has been named First-Team All-GLIAC each of the past two seasons. Outside hitter Kittrick Smith (Colorado Springs, Col.) was named Second-Team All-GLIAC last year, and senior defensive specialist Jamie Murray put together her most effective season in 2007, and was an honorable mention All-GLIAC pick.



Michigan Tech Huskies
Head Coach: Krista Mikesch
10th Season (118-154)

The Michigan Tech Huskies have 15 players returning and welcome three freshman to the squad for the 2008 season. The Black and Gold hope to continue as one of the most dominate teams at the net after leading the league in blocks last year (2.72 bpg).

Senior Jen Jung, a three-time All-GLIAC selection, returns after leading the league with 1.37 blocks per game. Joining Jung will be fellow senior and All-GLIAC selection Veronica Armstrong who led the team with 260 kills (2.71 kpg) in 2007.

The Huskies will once again have a pair of players share time at the setting position, juniors Alison Greene (5.87apg) and All-GLIAC honoree Kelsey Skoog (5.10 apg).



Lake Superior State Lakers
Head Coach: Mark Engle
14th Season (117-276)

Lake Superior State, which boasts a 19-player roster including nine returnees, expects to field one of its strongest lineups during coach Mark Engle's 14-year coaching tenure. The Lakers lost setter Erin McLain and middle hitter Jamie Groos to graduation, but return attack percentage and blocking leader Sara Hess (6-0 junior) as well as standout libero Jessica Ewer (5-10 junior). Hess totaled 280 blocks with a .187 attack percentage and 72 blocks last season. Ewer finished third in the GLIAC in digs per game last season, averaging 5.07 dpg, and led the Lakers in service aces with 33.

LSSU also returns junior outside hitter Ali Jones (5-10), who totaled 232 kills, sophomore middle blocker Samantha Gibbs (6-0), senior outside hitter Brishia Stroven (5-10) and senior setter Ashley Purvis, who all played key roles in 2007. The Lakers finished 8-22 overall and 3-15 in the GLIAC.



Northern Michigan Wildcats
Head Coach: Dominic Yoder
2nd Season (20-12)

Dominic Yoder enters his second season directing the Northern Michigan University volleyball program. He led the Wildcats to a 20-12 overall record in 2007 which included a 13-5 slate in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC).

First team all-GLIAC performer Caryn VanBeckum returns for the 2008 season. She led the 'Cats with 426 kills in 2007. VanBeckum also led the team in block solos (19), block assists (99) and total blocks (118). Back for the 2008 season is Amy Andersen-Goldsworthy who was the only other 'Cat in 2007 with 10 or more block solos as she ended the season with 13. The 'Cats must find a replacement for Brittany McGowan who was a first-team all-GLIAC selection in 2007. She led the 'Cats with 1,338 assists.



Northwood Timberwolves
Head Coach: Tim Koth
5th Season (78-44)

The Northwood Volleyball team has high expectations heading into the 2008 season. Head Coach Tim Koth, who has posted a record of 78-44 in four seasons as head coach of the Timberwolves, returns 10 letterwinners from last year's 18-12 team.

Honorable Mention All-GLIAC setter Lauren Chapman is back after turning in a solid freshman season. She ranked third in the GLIAC in assists per game in her first collegiate season (11.61). Senior outside hitter Gordana Barac was second on the team in 2007 in kills and points while leading Northwood in aces. Junior middle blocker Ashley Carr is Northwood's top returning blocker and is a co-captain for the 2008 season, while junior libero Sarah Pollard has led the team in digs in each of her two seasons.

Northwood will compete as a member of the GLIAC South Division for the first time this season.



Tiffin Dragons
Head Coach: T.J. Shouse
3rd Season (46-34)

The Tiffin University women's volleyball team enters the 2008 season looking to learn from last year's difficult season.

The team went 11-24 last season with a roster boasting only one senior and six freshmen. This season will feature the team's first year as a member of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, and their second as a Division II member. This year's team will feature five seniors and thirteen returning players overall from last year's squad. Returning seniors include: right-side hitter Beth Willenbrink (229 kills, 76 blocks), middle hitters Katie Luker (285 kills, 109 blocks) and Shannon Burke, setter Dana Peterson (4.6 assists per game), and defensive specialist Becky Lewis. Luker was named to the Division II All-Independent team last season, after her and Willenbrink were named NAIA All-Conference in 2006.



Saginaw Valley State Cardinals
Head Coach: Will Stanton
6th Season (46-103)

The Saginaw Valley State University volleyball team enters 2008 coming off a stellar season in which the Cardinals qualified for the GLIAC Tournament with a 20-12 overall record (9-9 in GLIAC) and produced the 2007 GLIAC Volleyball Coach of the Year in Will Stanton. The team also produced two All-GLIAC performances, as Amy Howard and returning senior starter Sarah Redoute (Clinton Twp., Mich./L'Anse Creuse HS) were picked for the All-GLIAC Second Team. Returning senior Carmen Schacher (Flint, Mich./Kearsley HS) was also tabbed an All-GLIAC Honorable Mention player.

Expectations are high for the Cardinal squad this year as they try to improve even more on their stellar season last year. The team as a whole has some great goals in mind this year that they didn't achieve last year, as making the NCAA Tournament and going further into the GLIAC Tournament are the two main priorities for this team.



Wayne State Warriors
Head Coach: Phil Nickel
1st Season (0-0)

The Wayne State University volleyball team is preparing to begin the 2008 season under new head coach Phil Nickel, who came to WSU after six seasons as an assistant at the University of Houston.

Wayne State posted a 10-15 overall record in 2007 and finished in fourth place in the GLIAC South Division. The Warriors are led on the court by senior Mayssa Bazzi (Dearborn, Mich.), an All-GLIAC Second Team selection who set the school single-season record with 656 digs last year, and senior Kim Gear (Benton Harbor, Mich.), Wayne State's top returning hitter and blocker who was chosen to the All-GLIAC Honorable Mention Team a year ago. A trio of Macomb Community College transfers – Sarha Gosselin (Harrison Twp., Mich.), Candis Jenich (Warren, Mich.), and Lauren Mallast (Chesterfield, Mich.) – will give the Warriors a greater presence at the net. All three players earned All-Region and All-MCCAA honors last season.