

## Trio of Chargers named to the Daktronics First-Team All-Region

November 28, 2007 - Five players from the 2007 Hillsdale College football team were honored on the Daktronics All-Region Teams Wednesday, including three who were named to the First Team.

Sophomore offensive lineman Jared Veldheer and junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie were each named Second-Team All-Region. Hillsdale's five all-region players were tied for second-most from any team, along with Grand Valley. Nebraska-Omaha led all teams with six all-region players.

Nicolet, the GLIAC Player of the Year, broke six school records in 2007 and was a nominee for the Harlon Hill Trophy. Vanover set the GLIAC record for punting average in a season, and was also named First-Team All-GLIAC. Korte was voted First-Team All-GLIAC and was named Hillsdale's top linebacker for a second year in a row.

Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet, senior punter Matt Vanover, and junior linebacker Tom Korte were all named First-Team All-Region, in voting conducted by Northwest Region SIDs. All three players are now automatically up for All-American honors, which will be announced within the next two weeks.

Veldheer was named Second-Team All-GLIAC, and was a nominee for the Gene Upshaw Award, going to the top offensive lineman in Division II. Waldie shattered several school records, and remains tied for the national lead in touchdown receptions on the season with 18.

## Hillsdale College's Mark Nicolet named GLIAC Football Player of the Year

November 14, 2007 - Hillsdale College senior quarterback Mark Nicolet is now reaping the rewards of a record-breaking season.

Nicolet was named the 2007 GLIAC Football Player of the Year Wednesday, in a vote compiled by league coaches. He was also one of five Chargers to be voted to the First-Team All-GLIAC.

Nicolet, a native of Zionsville, Ind., broke a host of school records in 2007 in leading Hillsdale to an 8-3 record, its best since 1999. Nicolet led the GLIAC in passing yards per game (303) and passing touchdowns (31) in the regular season. He attained those marks with some of the most prolific games ever recorded in Hillsdale's 116-year history of college football.

Nicolet set single-game school records for completions (34) against Michigan Tech, and in passing yards (426) vs. playoff-bound Ashland. Nicolet threw for five touchdowns in three separate games

this season, the only GLIAC quarterback to pull off such a feat.

Nicolet also shattered the GLIAC record for passing yards in conference games in one season with 3,145. His overall passing yardage of 3,335 set a new single-season school record, as did his mark of 240 completions. He also led the GLIAC in total offense and has served as team captain each of the past two seasons.

Nicolet's gaudy numbers and well-deserved honors also came in part due to the outstanding play of his teammates, particularly the wide receiver combination of junior Aaron Waldie and senior Nick Gurica. They each were named First-Team All-GLIAC this season.

Also earned First-Team All-GLIAC honors were linebacker Tom Korte and punter Matt Vanover. Offensive lineman Jared Veldheer and defensive lineman Eric Weber each netted Second-Team All-Conference recognition.

Waldie and Gurica were the most prolific wide receiver tandem in all of Division II this season. Gurica, who got First-Team All-GLIAC honors for a second year in a row, caught a school record 78 passes for 1,055 yards and eight touchdowns this season. His receiving yard total is second-best in school history, thanks to a 2007 teammate. In any other year in Hillsdale history, Gurica's number would give him the best receiving year any player has ever had at Hillsdale. But he shares the record-breaking stage with Waldie, who broke out to become a lethal deep threat in the Charger offense. Waldie set school records for touchdown catches (18) and receiving yards (1,139) in a single-season. His five touchdown grabs at Findlay are a single-game school record, and his 110 points scored are second-most in one season in school history.

Korte was named First-Team All-GLIAC for a second year in a row, and had another dominating season from his linebacker position. Korte led the Chargers in tackles with 109, and ranked second in the GLIAC with that total. His five interceptions were also a team-high, and he's picked off nine passes in the past two seasons. He has won the Ralph Miller III Award as the team's best linebacker each of the past two seasons.

Vanover also had a record-breaking year, setting a new GLIAC record with a punting average of 43.4 yards for the season. He was named GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week twice, and had three kicks of 60 yards or more this season.

Veldheer and Weber were each named Hillsdale's Freshman of the Year in their respective rookie seasons, and have become rock-solid forces along each line for the team as they've gotten older.

Hillsdale's list of honorable mention All-GLIAC players is as follows: offensive linemen Chet Crowley, Dan Staph and Josiah Swartz, defensive back Josh Hutchison, running back Vinnie Panizzi and tight end Matt Patillo.

# Charger football team hands out postseason awards

*Mark Nicolet named Team MVP for 2007*

November 13, 2007 - After its most successful season this decade, the Hillsdale College football team announced its team award winners at the annual banquet Sunday afternoon.

Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet received the Roy Beck Most Valuable Player Award after a record-setting season. Nicolet also received the Leonard Urbonik Award for scholarship, leadership and ability.

Nicolet set single-season school records for passing yards and touchdown passes in 2007, and set a new GLIAC record for passing yards in conference games in one season.

Nicolet and junior linebacker Tom Korte received the Captains Awards. Korte led the team in tackles with 109, and in interceptions with five. Korte also received the Ralph Miller III Award as the team's outstanding linebacker for the second year in a row.

Senior wide receiver Nick Gurica received the Howard "Champ" Messenger Award, as well as the Outstanding Offensive Back Award. Gurica shattered the school record for receptions in a season with 78. He also set single-game school records with 13 catches in a game twice.

Fellow wide receiver Aaron Waldie received the E.P.E.P. Award (Every Player Every Play). Waldie broke the school record for touchdown catches (18) and receiving yards (1,139) in 2007. His 110 points scored are second-most in a season in school history.

Senior punter Matt Vanover was given the One Play Warrior Award for turning in one of the finest seasons a punter has ever had in Charger history. Vanover averaged 43.4 yards per punt, a new single-season GLIAC record. He was also named GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week twice.

Sophomore Jared Veldheer received the Outstanding Offensive Lineman Award, while junior Eric Weber took home the Outstanding Defensive Lineman Award for the second year in a row.

Defensive back Cody Henderson was named Outstanding Freshman. Henderson earned a starting safety spot early in the season and played extremely well throughout the season. He was one of two true freshmen to get regular playing time on the team.

Senior Josh Hutchison was named the team's Outstanding Defensive Back. Hutchison intercepted four passes and was second in the GLIAC with 12 pass breakups during the season.

# Charger football team loses heartbreaker to Saginaw Valley, 24-21

November 10, 2007 - Any loss is tough to stomach, but this one bit deep for the members of the Hillsdale College football team.

On a day when it honored an outstanding senior class, the Chargers suffered their first home loss of the season, 24-21 to the Saginaw Valley State University Cardinals Saturday afternoon. Hillsdale's regular season ends with an 8-3 record, while SVSU finishes at 7-3. Both teams finished with 7-3 GLIAC marks.

All three of Hillsdale's losses this season have come by four points or less. It was also the first time the Chargers didn't lead in any point of the game all season. It was Saginaw Valley who led the entire way, and it didn't wait long to do it.

On the team's first play from scrimmage, wide receiver Mike Meade took an end around 73 yards for a touchdown with less than 20 seconds expired in the contest. That would be the first of two big plays generated by the Cardinals that proved to be the difference in the game.

Later in the first quarter, after an SVSU field goal, Cardinals quarterback Dan Stiefel connected with wide receiver Ric Cottengim on a 96-yard touchdown pass that put the team up 17-0. It was Hillsdale's largest deficit of the season, but one that wouldn't last long.

Hillsdale put together a long drive to end the first half, concluded by a touchdown pass from quarterback Mark Nicolet to junior Aaron Waldie with 19 seconds remaining in the second quarter. It was the 18th time this season Nicolet and Waldie have connected on a scoring pass, one of many records set this season by Charger players and the team.

Stiefel, making his first collegiate start, showed speed and smarts with a 20-yard touchdown run with 6:25 left in the second quarter to help SVSU regain a 17-point lead. But the Chargers rallied, showing the strength of character that has defined them all season.

Sophomore running back Vinnie Panizzi, who finished the season with more than 1,000 yards on the ground, powered his way into the end zone from four yards out to cut the lead to 24-14.

Nicolet still had one more great pass left in him for the home fans, lofting a gorgeous 20-yard touchdown to A.J. Kegg with 7:55 left in the fourth quarter to cut the deficit to three. But Saginaw Valley's defense showed why it has one of the toughest units in the league by stopping Hillsdale on a fourth down play later in the fourth quarter. One big first down by the Cardinals finished off the game.

The 8-3 record compiled by Hillsdale equals the mark set by the 1999 team and is the first winning

season since then. Hillsdale set many school records throughout the campaign, including points scored (432). Individually, Hillsdale offensive players did a thorough job of making the record book their own, led by Harlon Hill Trophy candidate Mark Nicolet.

Completing a wonderful career, Nicolet set school records for passing yards (3,335), passing touchdowns (31) and completions (240). His 3,335 passing yards also set a GLIAC single-season record.

Waldie had the finest season ever turned in by a Hillsdale wide receiver, catching 63 passes for 1,139 yards and a school-record 18 touchdowns. His 110 points scored on the season are second-most in school history. Senior Nick Gurica also set school records this season for most catches in a game (13) and in a season (78). He led the Chargers vs. SVSU with 10 receptions for 110 yards. Gurica finished with 1,055 receiving yards, giving Hillsdale its first-ever pair of 1,000-yard receivers in the same season.

Although the end was bitter, the 2007 Hillsdale College football season was awfully sweet.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: 25th-ranked Charger football team to host Saginaw Valley with playoff hopes on the line**

November 8, 2007 - An entire season's worth of big victories, shattered records and good times comes down to one Saturday afternoon for the Hillsdale College football team.

Now nationally ranked for the first time in more than a decade, the Chargers will play their final regular season game at home vs. Saginaw Valley State University starting at 2:30 p.m. at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium.

The Chargers have cracked the national rankings, getting the 25th spot in the latest AFCA Division II Top 25 poll. Top-ranked Grand Valley State University is the only other GLIAC school to be nationally ranked. But more importantly, Hillsdale is currently No. 7 in the Northwest Regional rankings. The top six teams from each region qualify for the playoffs, and a win over a tough Cardinals team Saturday can put the Chargers in position to get in.

But before the Chargers can start making playoff plans, they have to do something they've done just once this decade, and that's beat Saginaw Valley State University. The Cardinals own a six-game winning streak over Hillsdale, with the Chargers' last win in the series coming in the 2000 season opener, by the score of 21-19.

Hillsdale comes into Saturday's game with a season-high four-game winning streak, the latest coming in a 45-7 romp over the University of Findlay last week. In that game, junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie set a school record with five touchdown receptions.

Waldie's record is just one of a host of marks that have fallen at the hands of the explosive Hillsdale offense this season. Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet now owns single-game school records for completions and passing yards and has broken the single-season school records for completions, passing yards and passing touchdowns. Waldie, along with senior wide receiver Nick Gurica, have been frequent targets for Nicolet's passes. Gurica's 68 catches this season is also a single-season Hillsdale record.

The Chargers have averaged more than 40 points per game this season and have scored 30 or more points in 11 straight contests. But those streaks will face a stiff test this weekend in the form of the SVSU defense. The Cardinals are second in the GLIAC in scoring defense and turnover margin, and are third in the GLIAC in passing defense and total defense.

Hillsdale needs help to get into the playoffs, even with a win. Several other matchups around the region could determine the Chargers' playoff fate. The Division II playoff qualifiers will be announced Sunday morning.

## **Aaron Waldie named GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week**

November 5, 2007 - Hillsdale College junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie was named the GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week Monday morning, as released by the conference office.

Waldie had a record-breaking day for the Chargers in their 45-7 win over the University of Findlay Saturday afternoon. Waldie hauled in eight passes for 148 yards and a school-record five touchdown catches.

No Hillsdale player has ever had five touchdown receptions in one game, though three other players have scored five total touchdowns in one game: Gordon Piatt vs. Olivet on Nov. 10, 1939, Nate Clark vs. Adrian on Nov. 5, 1955, and Willis Miles vs. Ferris State on Oct. 16, 1982.

On his first touchdown catch of the game, Waldie broke the single-season touchdown reception record, previously held by Dave Mifsud and set back in 1985. Waldie now has 17 touchdown receptions on the season, well ahead of the old record.

Waldie also broke Hillsdale's single-season receiving yards record during the game. His 148 yards against the Oilers give him 1,106 for the season, breaking the old record held by Ed House in 2001, when he had 1,037 yards.

For the season, Waldie leads the GLIAC in both receiving yardage and touchdown catches. His 61 catches are second in the conference behind teammate Nick Gurica, who has 68.

Waldie's honor marks the sixth time a Hillsdale player has earned player of the week honors from the GLIAC, either on offense, defense or special teams. Quarterback Mark Nicolet and linebacker Tom Korte were recognized on offense and defense, respectively earlier in the season. Kicker Mark Petro and punter Matt Vanover (twice) have also been recognized by the GLIAC with their weekly awards during the 2007 season.

Hillsdale (8-2) will wrap up a memorable regular season this Saturday at home vs. Saginaw Valley State University starting at 2:30 p.m.

Waldie is a 2005 graduate of Southview High School and is a native of Sylvania, Ohio.

## Hillsdale College football team moves up to seventh in latest Northwest Regional rankings

November 5, 2007 - The Hillsdale College football team is one step closer to a playoff spot, having moved up to No. 7 in the latest Northwest Regional rankings, released Monday evening.

The top six teams from each region qualify for the Division II playoffs. Hillsdale has been regionally ranked through much of the second half of this season.

The Chargers host Saginaw Valley State University at 2:30 p.m. Saturday at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium. A Hillsdale win does not guarantee it a playoff spot, but it will improve its chances, if it can beat a team with the kind of record SVSU has (6-3).

Winona State is sixth in the latest poll, with Ashland one spot ahead in fifth. Ashland has been Hillsdale's primary competition for one of the final playoff spots all season. The Eagles (8-1) are higher in the rankings because they have just one loss on the season, compared to Hillsdale's (8-2) two. Ashland will face Gannon University Saturday in its regular season finale.

Hillsdale hasn't played a postseason game since 1988. In 2005, Ashland did not get into the playoffs, despite a 9-2 record. That season, the Eagles did not play Saginaw Valley or Northwood, playing a schedule similar in structure to the one Hillsdale's had this season, when it didn't play Grand Valley or Northwood.

The outcome of two other games could affect the playoff standings of both the Chargers and Eagles. Indianapolis plays at Northwood, and Ferris State visits Wayne State. The outcomes of those games could affect one of the criteria for playoff positioning, and that's opponents' opponents' won-loss record.

To check out the Division II regional rankings throughout the country, click on the link below.

## Scores of records fall as Charger football team routs Findlay, 45-7

November 3, 2007 - The final bus ride home of the regular season is sure to be a fun one for the Hillsdale College football team.

The Chargers' explosive offense had another amazing day in propelling the team to a 45-7 victory over the University of Findlay Saturday afternoon at Findlay's Donnell Stadium. The win improves Hillsdale to 8-2 on the season and 7-2 in the GLIAC, while the Oilers fall to 4-6 overall and 3-6 in conference play.

After back-to-back sub-200 yard passing games, Hillsdale quarterback Mark Nicolet enjoyed another memorable performance, as he completed 18-of-24 passes for 267 yards and five touchdown passes. It's the third time this season he has thrown for five or more TDs in a single game, and in the process, shattered three school records in one game.

Nicolet now owns the single-season records for passing touchdowns (29), passing yards (3,037) and completions (215). He is the first Hillsdale quarterback to ever throw for more than 3,000 yards in one season. He also helped the team achieve a new record with 411 points scored on the season.

Junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie has been Nicolet's preferred long-range target throughout the season, and on this day, Waldie and Nicolet were working in perfect synchronization. Waldie caught eight passes for 148 yards and a school-record five touchdown receptions. Waldie came into the game tied with Dave Mifsud with 12 touchdown receptions on the season, and the speedy Waldie left that record, along with a host of Findlay defenders, in the dust on this record-setting day.

Waldie now has 17 touchdown catches on the season, a new record, and he broke Ed House's record for receiving yards in a single season. Waldie now has 1,106 receiving yards this season with one game still remaining.

Hillsdale used a first-quarter rushing touchdown from sophomore Vinnie Panizzi (72 rushing yards) to hold a 7-0 lead after one quarter. The Chargers then exploded for 24 second-quarter points to put the game out of reach by halftime.

Waldie caught touchdown passes of 15 and 34 yards after a Mark Petro field goal to give the Chargers a 24-0 cushion in the second quarter. Findlay responded with an 11-play drive capped by a one-yard touchdown to cut the lead to 17. Nicolet and Waldie then teamed up for the dagger.

On Hillsdale's first play of the next drive, Nicolet found Waldie for a 58-yard touchdown catch that increased the lead to 31-7. Waldie would catch two more scoring passes of 11 and nine yards in the third quarter to sew up the scoring.

Waldie wasn't the only Hillsdale receiver to make history Saturday. Senior Nick Gurica caught four passes for 41 yards, giving him the single-season reception record with 68. House held the previous record of 65, set in 2001.

The Chargers generated 521 yards of total offense, and got a combined 135 yards rushing from Panizzi and junior Brett Lark. Redshirt-freshman receiver Andre Holmes also caught three passes for a career-high 56 yards.

Hillsdale's defense enjoyed another productive day, as Tom Korte (11 total tackles) and Jared Kell each intercepted passes. Drew Berube recorded two sacks, while Marcellus Wade, Cody Henderson and Josh Hutchison each had six total tackles.

Hillsdale has scored 40 or more points in four of its five road games this season, and finishes with a 3-2 record away from Muddy Waters Stadium this regular season. The team's playoff fate is still far from being decided, as next week's home finale against Saginaw Valley looms large with playoff implications for the Chargers. Kickoff for that game is set for 2:30 p.m.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers in search of fourth straight win on the road vs. Findlay**

November 1, 2007 - One of Hillsdale's oldest rivals in football will host the Chargers this weekend on the team's final road trip of the regular season.

Saturday afternoon, the Hillsdale College football team makes the quick trip south to the University of Findlay for a GLIAC game against the Oilers at Findlay's Donnell Stadium starting at 1 p.m.

Hillsdale (7-2, 6-2 GLIAC) is looking for its fourth straight win, which would be a season-high. Findlay (4-5 overall, 3-5 GLIAC) is coming off a 34-10 home loss to Ashland last week.

This is one of Hillsdale's oldest gridiron rivalries, with the first meeting between the schools coming back in 1925. There were two long gaps in the series between the teams, but they have played every year since 1998, when the Oilers moved from NAIA status to Division II. Hillsdale snapped a four-game losing streak to Findlay with a tightly played 10-7 victory at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium last year.

The Oilers have enjoyed a much-improved 2007 season under first-year head coach John Wauford. Findlay was 2-8 last season, with its two wins coming by one and seven points. But the team has shown toughness, particularly on defense, this season with an improved record. Findlay has averaged more than 33 points per game in its four wins this season.

When it comes to scoring points, few teams have been as good as Hillsdale this season. The

Chargers have scored 30 or more points in every game this season, and are among the nation's top 10 in passing offense, scoring, turnover margin and pass efficiency.

In last week's 31-14 win over Tiffin, senior quarterback Mark Nicolet set Hillsdale's single-season passing yardage record, and now has 2,770 yards through the air this season. He is still averaging more than 300 passing yards per game, despite not hitting the 200-yard mark in either of the past two games. Nicolet is plus-19 in his touchdown-to-interception ratio, and needs two TD passes to break the Chargers' single-season touchdown pass record.

But as good as the passing game has been this season, it's been Hillsdale's defense and running game that have helped key the team's current three-game winning streak. Sophomore tailback Vinnie Panizzi has rushed for more than 100 yards in each of the past three games, including a career-high 161-yard effort last week against Tiffin. Panizzi is second in the GLIAC with 14 rushing touchdowns this season.

The defense leads the conference in forced turnovers and turnover margin. The team has four interceptions over the past two weeks, including two by linebacker Tom Korte. Korte and Josh Hutchison each have four interceptions this season. Hillsdale allowed a season-low 163 total yards to the 22nd-ranked Dragons last week.

Hillsdale remains in eighth place in the Northwest Region. The top six teams make the playoffs. It's still too early to determine anything for certain in the region's final four spots, but the Chargers could be as likely to make it or not make it, even with winning their final two games. Much depends on how well the teams ranked just ahead of Hillsdale - Winona State, Ashland, South Dakota - do in their final two games. Even though Hillsdale beat Ashland back on Sept. 15, the Eagles currently have a stronger strength of schedule rating, and have just one loss, compared to two for the Chargers. In the mathematical formula that determines regional rankings, those factors place Ashland ahead of Hillsdale. The Eagles play Wayne State and Gannon in their final two regular season games. In 2005, Ashland went 9-2 and did not qualify for the playoffs.

## Chargers get defensive in 31-14 win over Tiffin

October 27, 2007 - Thanks to a stout defensive effort, and a terrific running game, the Hillsdale College football team knocked off 22nd-ranked Tiffin University 31-14 on a gray, drizzly Saturday afternoon at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium. Both teams now sit at 7-2 after the non-league game.

Sophomore running back Vinnie Panizzi (pictured) rushed for a career-high 161 yards and two touchdowns to help lead the Chargers to a grind-it-out victory. He scored back-to-back touchdowns in the third quarter, including a three-yard run that was pure highlight-reel material. Panizzi cut to his left, shook off two tacklers, came back to his right and ran through a crowded goal-line Tiffin defense for a touchdown that brought the cold, but happy crowd to its feet. Panizzi also had four

catches for 33 yards in the game.

Panizzi's two scores broke open a tightly played 10-7 first half of football, where neither team was able to sustain momentum for any period of time. The result also evens the all-time series between the two teams at 2-2. Tiffin will join the GLIAC in 2008.

After the Chargers used Panizzi's two scores to go up 24-7, the Dragons cut the deficit to 10 on a Donnie Johnson one-yard touchdown run early in the fourth quarter. Hillsdale put the game away thanks to its record-setting quarterback, who made the decisive play not with his arm, but with his feet.

Senior Mark Nicolet, who set Hillsdale's single-season passing yard record in the contest, scrambled on a 38-yard touchdown run where he eluded several tacklers and sped past three defenders for the game-clinching touchdown. The 38-yard run was the longest of his career.

Nicolet completed 19-of-35 passes for 190 yards, giving him 2,770 passing yards for the season, a new record in Hillsdale annals. He finished with 51 yards rushing in the game.

Senior wide receiver Nick Gurica caught six passes for 54 yards, putting him into second place on Hillsdale's career receptions list with 137 in his four-year career.

Much of the game was won on the defensive side of the ball for Hillsdale, as the Chargers got superlative efforts from many members of the defense. Alex Wojcik and Tom Korte each had a team-high five solo tackles. Marcellus Wade batted down two passes and Josh Hutchison and Jared Kell each intercepted a pass. Jordan Knudsen delivered a key third-down sack for a 15-yard loss.

Tiffin came into the game averaging 200 rushing yards per game, but the Chargers held the Dragons to 59 total yards on the ground. Tiffin managed just 163 yards of total offense, the best mark turned in by the Hillsdale defense this season.

Hillsdale plays its final road game of the 2007 season next week at Findlay, starting at 1 p.m.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers step out of conference play to host Tiffin**

October 25, 2007 - The high-flying Hillsdale College football team returns home this weekend to take on the Tiffin University Dragons in a non-league contest at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium at 2:30 p.m. Saturday. This will be the last time the two teams play in a non-league setting, as Tiffin will join the GLIAC as a full member starting in the fall of 2008.

These two teams wrap up a four-game non-league series this year, with Tiffin having won two of

the first three meetings between the schools. Hillsdale's lone win vs. the Dragons came back on Oct. 22, 2005 in Tiffin in a 24-7 victory. Last year, Tiffin beat Hillsdale 24-14 in a game that started in a vicious sleet storm. In the last meeting between the teams in Hillsdale, Tiffin overcame 391 rushing yards by the Chargers to pull out a 15-13 win.

Those days of Hillsdale scoring less than 20 points seem like a distant memory now, as the Chargers have emerged as one of Division II's most potent offenses. Hillsdale has scored 30 or more points in nine consecutive games, dating back to the 2006 season finale. Hillsdale leads the GLIAC in touchdowns scored, and is third in points per game.

At home, the team has been even more powerful, averaging 23 more points than its opponents (36-13). Hillsdale's closest home game came two weeks ago in a 35-21 win over Wayne State.

At 6-2, the Chargers have clinched their first winning season since 1999. With that season goal checked off the list, the possibility of an NCAA Division II playoff berth is still alive. Hillsdale is eighth in the most recent Great Lakes Regional rankings. The top six teams from each region make the playoffs, with the top two seeds receiving first-round byes.

It's likely Hillsdale will need to win its final three games and get some help in the form of teams ahead of it losing before the end of the season. GLIAC rival Ashland is seeded fifth with a 5-1 record. The Eagles' only loss this season came to Hillsdale, but Ashland's one loss gives it a big edge over two-loss Hillsdale. But if Ashland were to lose a second game, Hillsdale's head-to-head win over the Eagles would likely give it an advantage when it comes to the final rankings. Ashland plays Findlay, Wayne State and Gannon in the final three weeks of the regular season.

But before Hillsdale can start punching its playoff ticket, it needs to focus on each individual opponent each week, something the players and coaching staff have done very well throughout the season. Tiffin presents its own set of challenges to the Chargers, with their athletic lineup on both sides of the ball. Tiffin is 7-1 this season and ranked 22nd in the nation in the latest AFCA Division II Top 25 poll.

The Dragons also sport an explosive offense, having scored 34 or more points five times this season. Last week, the team blew out Lincoln (Mo.) University 57-6, representing Tiffin's most one-sided win of the season.

But the Dragons are sure to have their hands full with Hillsdale's offense, which can set several records in Saturday's game.

Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet needs 85 yards passing to become the all-time leader in single-season passing yards, surpassing the mark currently held by Mike Gatt and set in 1985. Nicolet also needs two touchdown passes to break Gatt's single-season touchdown pass record, and if he

completes 24 passes, will own the single-season pass completion record.

Two players on the receiving end of all these Nicolet passes also have some records in sight. Junior Aaron Waldie's next touchdown reception will give him the single-season touchdown pass reception record of 13. His 12 TD catches currently tie him for first on the list with Dave Mifsud.

Senior Nick Gurica, the GLIAC's leader in catches this season, needs eight catches in the three remaining games to break Ed House's six-year-old record for catches in a season, which stands at 65. Gurica's 58 catches this season are already a career-high for one season.

Hillsdale's offense is balanced out nicely by the tough running of sophomore Vinnie Panizzi, who is second in the GLIAC with 12 rushing touchdowns. He has shown a great ability to score short-yardage touchdowns this season, and had three in last week's 42-33 win over Mercyhurst.

Credit also needs to go to Hillsdale's offensive line, who gives Nicolet outstanding pass protection. The Chargers have been ranked near the top of the GLIAC all season in fewest sacks allowed, one of the stats that can be directly applied to the effectiveness of the team's veteran offensive line.

The defensive side of the ball got some recognition this week also, as junior linebacker Tom Korte was named GLIAC Defensive Player of the Week. Korte had eight tackles and two interceptions in the win over the Lakers last week, a truly triumphant return to the field for the team's co-captain, who missed the previous week's game against Wayne State with an injury. Korte's four interceptions on the season tie him for the GLIAC lead.

## Tom Korte named GLIAC Defensive Player of the Week

October 22, 2007 - Junior linebacker Tom Korte won his first career GLIAC Defensive Player of the Week honor Monday morning. The award was announced by the conference office.

Korte was a key part of Hillsdale's 42-33 win over Mercyhurst College Saturday afternoon in Erie, Pa. After missing the Oct. 13 game vs. Wayne State due to injury, Korte returned to the Charger lineup in a big way, recording a team-high eight tackles and two interceptions.

His second interception came with 23 seconds left in the fourth quarter, when the Lakers were trying to come back from a nine-point deficit. His pick sealed Hillsdale's second road victory of the season.

Korte has been a starter at linebacker ever since he arrived on Hillsdale's campus in the fall of 2005, and has established himself as one of the finest players at that position in the conference. Korte was named First-Team All-GLIAC in 2006, and was named honorable mention All-American by Don Hansen's Football Gazette. Korte led the GLIAC in tackles last season with 134, and has

maintained that pace this season. He was named Hillsdale's team MVP in 2006.

In 2007, Korte has 44 solo tackles, and 74 total tackles, which rank him second in the conference. He has a team-high four interceptions on the season and has 5 1/2 tackles for loss. He was also an Academic All-GLIAC selection last year.

Korte is a 2005 graduate of Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers in search of second road victory this season with game at Mercyhurst Saturday**

October 17, 2007 - There's no question that the Hillsdale College football team has established a level of dominance at home during the 2007 season. The Chargers will try to carry that high level of play on the road this weekend, when they face off with the Mercyhurst College Lakers at 1:30 p.m. Saturday in Erie, Pa.

Hillsdale is 5-2 on the season, ranked 10th in the latest Northwest Region rankings and closing in on a Top 25 spot in the AFCA Division II poll. The Chargers are in the "others receiving votes" category this week. The Lakers are 4-4 and 3-4 in the GLIAC.

The Chargers are coming off their fourth straight home victory of this season, 35-21 over Wayne State University. Hillsdale has won nine of its last 10 home games, but has had a tough time away from Muddy Waters Stadium, going 2-7 away from the 'Dale since the start of the 2006 season.

Hillsdale won its last visit to Mercyhurst, 40-21 on Oct. 29, 2005. The past two meetings between the two teams have finished with identical 40-21 final scores, both in Hillsdale's favor. Hillsdale leads the all-time series with Mercyhurst, 6-3. This will be the final time the two teams play one another in GLIAC competition. Mercyhurst and fellow Erie, Pa. school Gannon are leaving the conference at the end of this school year to join the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference. Tiffin, Hillsdale's next opponent, will join the GLIAC in the fall of 2008.

The Chargers are enjoying one of their most successful seasons in many years in this campaign, thanks to some record-breaking performances by the team and by several individuals. One more victory will clinch the program's first winning record since 1999, and put the team one step closer to a possible playoff spot.

But before any of that can happen, Hillsdale will have to win away from home for the second time this season. The Chargers' only two losses this season have come on the road, 44-41 at Ferris State and 34-30 at Indianapolis. The deciding score in each loss came in the final minute of the game, and the Chargers held fourth-quarter leads in each game.

In the loss to Indianapolis, Hillsdale surrendered 20 unanswered points in the fourth quarter. But in last week's win over Wayne State, the defense answered the bell with a terrific effort in the final 15 minutes. Missing three defensive starters, the Chargers shut out the Warriors while rallying from a 21-20 deficit to begin the fourth quarter. Junior Alex Wojcik and freshman Cody Henderson each had career-highs in tackles, getting 13 and 10 respectively, in the win.

Offensively, it was another day at the office for the high-powered Chargers, who scored 30 points or more for the eighth straight game. Hillsdale is ranked among the nation's best offenses in total yards and scoring, and is led by senior quarterback Mark Nicolet, who is on the verge of breaking even more records.

Nicolet, who has already set new school records for completions and passing yards in a single game, can overtake the school's single-season records for passing yards and touchdown passes this week. Nicolet is averaging 342 yards passing per game this season, and has thrown 23 touchdown passes in seven games, compared to just two interceptions.

Wide receivers Nick Gurica and Aaron Waldie each rank 1-2 in the GLIAC in receptions, receiving yards and touchdown catches. Gurica tied his own school record last week with 13 catches vs. the Warriors. After catching two passes in the first game of this season, Gurica has caught at least six passes in six straight games, including two 13-catch performances.

Mercyhurst has one of the most explosive ground attacks in the league, led by tailback Richard Stokes. Earlier this season, the Lakers scored 42 or more points in four straight contests, and were one of the surprise teams in the conference.

## **Matt Vanover nets second GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week honor this season**

October 15, 2007 - For the second time this season, Hillsdale College punter Matt Vanover was named the GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week. The award was announced by the conference office Monday morning.

Vanover had three punts in Saturday's win over Wayne State, but each were effective in giving the Chargers field position advantage. Vanover's three kicks spanned a total of 145 yards, an average of 48.3 yards per punt. He also kicked a 61-yard punt, his third boot this season of 60 or more yards.

Vanover previously won the award in September. He currently leads the GLIAC with 46.6 yards per punt, five yards per punt more than any other player in the conference.

Hillsdale is 5-2 on the season, and plays at Mercyhurst College at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. The Chargers are ranked 10th in the latest Northwest Region rankings, released Monday afternoon.

Vanover is a 2004 graduate of Adrian High School.

## **Mark Nicolet a semifinalist for National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete Award**

October 15, 2007 - Hillsdale College senior quarterback Mark Nicolet has been announced as one of 16 Division II semifinalists for one of the most prestigious college football postseason awards.

Nicolet is a semifinalist for the National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete Award, also known as the Draddy Award. The awards recognizes players who excel both on the field and in the classroom. Eligible players must carry a minimum grade point average of 3.2 and must have demonstrated outstanding leadership on the team and in their communities.

The award is named after Vincent dePaul Draddy, a quarterback from Manhattan College who developed the Izod and Lacoste brands.

Past winners of the award have included Peyton Manning, Chad Pennington, Craig Krenzel and Danny Wuerffel.

There will be 15 finalists announced on Oct. 25. Each finalist will receive an \$18,000 postgraduate scholarship and be recognized as part of the 2007 National Scholar Athlete Class. The winner will be announced at the NFF Awards Dinner on Dec. 4 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. This will be the 18th year the award will be presented.

Nicolet is currently enjoying a record-breaking season for the 6-2 Charger football team. He has completed 164 passes in 236 attempts for 23 touchdowns and two interceptions. He leads the GLIAC with 2,398 passing yards this season, and has broken single-game school records for completions and passing yards this season. He needs three touchdown passes to break the school's single-season touchdown pass record, and is less than 300 yards away from Hillsdale's single-season passing yardage record.

## **Hillsdale resumes winning ways with 35-21 home triumph over Wayne State**

October 13, 2007 - There's no place like home for the Hillsdale College football team.

The Chargers bounced back from its second tough loss of the season with a grind-it-out 35-21 victory over Wayne State University at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium Saturday afternoon. Hillsdale is now 5-2 overall and in the GLIAC, while the Warriors are 2-5 overall and 1-5 in conference play.

This game didn't follow the pattern of the first three home games for the Chargers, who were facing a 21-20 deficit entering the fourth quarter. But the team found a way to win by putting together efficient drives in the final quarter, while stiffening up on defense to keep the Warriors off the scoreboard in the final 15 minutes.

Senior wide receiver Nick Gurica caught two of his game-high three touchdown passes in the fourth quarter to cap another brilliant day. Gurica tied his own school record with 13 catches in the game, for 167 yards and three scores. Gurica originally set the record for catches in the game two weeks ago in a win over Michigan Tech.

The game was back-and-forth through much of the first three quarters, with the Warriors inching ahead 15-14 on a Joique Bell one-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. The Chargers responded less than four minutes later on a two-yard touchdown run by sophomore running back Vinnie Panizzi, who enjoyed the most productive game of his career.

Panizzi ran the ball 28 times for 158 yards and one touchdown, the carries and rushing yards being career-high marks for Panizzi. He was not tackled for a loss in the game, a statement to the quality of run-blocking provided by the offensive line, along with the great vision Panizzi ran with.

Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet had his sixth straight 300-yard passing day, completing 26-of-33 throws for 312 yards and three scores. Nicolet completed 78 percent of his passes and once again ran the offense with expertise against the athletic Wayne State defense.

In last year's meeting, Bell ran the ball 51 times for 278 yards. Although Bell ran for 140 yards, Hillsdale's injury-depleted defense was able to contain Bell's big runs and keep the Warriors from sustaining long second half drives. Fellow tailback Daryl Graham ran 18 times for 114 yards for Wayne State.

Hillsdale outgained Wayne State 467-407 in the game, and scored touchdowns on three of its final four possessions.

Junior defensive back Alex Wojcik had a career-high 13 total tackles, including eight solo stops. True freshman Cody Henderson made a number of touch stops in the second half, and had a career-high 10 total tackles, with seven solos. Henderson also had two tackles-for-loss.

Hillsdale is on the road next week, taking on the high-scoring Mercyhurst College Lakers at 1:30 p.m. in Erie, Pa.

## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Charger football team embarks on second half of season with home game vs. Wayne State Saturday

October 10, 2007 - One of the longest continuous rivalries in Hillsdale football's recent history will add another chapter Saturday afternoon, as the Chargers host Wayne State University at 2:30 p.m. at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium.

The Charger football team comes into the game with a 4-2 overall record, while the Warriors are 2-4. Despite the contrasting records of the teams, it's Wayne State who comes into the game carrying the momentum of a victory last week, while Hillsdale will try to bounce back from just its second loss of the season, suffered on Oct. 6.

Hillsdale got off to a 4-1 start to the season, its best in eight years, before getting knocked off by the University of Indianapolis on the road last week, 34-30 in a heartbreaking loss. Hillsdale only trailed for the final 22 seconds of the contest, as the Greyhounds came back from a 30-14 fourth-quarter deficit to post the shocking victory.

Hillsdale was able to bounce back from its only other loss of the season in near-perfect fashion. After losing a similar game, 44-41 at Ferris State on Sept. 22, the Chargers came back with their most complete effort of the season in a 37-0 victory over Michigan Tech on Sept. 29.

Hillsdale will be in search of a similar bounce back-type of performance this week against the Warriors.

This game features some of the top offensive talent in the GLIAC. The conference's top passer (Hillsdale's Mark Nicolet) and the conference's top rusher (Wayne State's Joiqie Bell) will be among the attractions at this week's contest.

Nicolet turned in his fifth straight 300-yard passing game against Indianapolis, throwing three touchdown passes in front of his hometown crowd. All three of those scoring passes spanned more than 60 yards, with two going to the GLIAC's top receiver, Aaron Waldie.

Waldie and fellow wide receiver Nick Gurica have combined for 81 catches and more than 1,400 yards through the air. They each rank in the top five in all of Division II in catches and receiving yards per game.

Another key to Hillsdale's high-powered offense (43 points per game) has been the stellar play of the offensive line. Led in part by sophomore Jared Veldheer (pictured), Hillsdale leads the GLIAC in fewest sacks allowed, one of the few stats directly attributable to the play of the offensive line.

When Wayne State has the ball, look for the Bell to be rung repeatedly. Bell ran the ball 51 times

for 278 yards in last year's meeting between these teams, a 41-26 Wayne State victory in Detroit. That game marked the first time Wayne State had beaten Hillsdale since 2001. The Chargers lead the all-time series vs. the Warriors 35-12-1.

In 2004, these two teams wrapped up their respective seasons against one another, playing in Detroit's Ford Field. Hillsdale won that game, 37-10, and beat the Warriors in the team's last meeting at Waters Stadium, 28-14 on Nov. 5, 2005.

Wayne State was picked to finish in the top half of the GLIAC standings, according to the preseason coaches poll, but the team has battled injuries and tough losses throughout 2007. Three of the team's four losses have come by one score or less, including a mind-boggling 58-50 triple-overtime loss to Mercyhurst last month. The team's two wins have come by 23 and 35 points, the most recent being a 56-21 rout of Gannon University last week. Wayne State also lost to Findlay in overtime, 35-28 earlier this season.

Hillsdale's two losses have come by a total of seven points, both on the road. At home however, the Chargers have blown out all three teams they've hosted, outscoring their opposition by a combined score of 145-31. Hillsdale is 8-1 in its last nine home games, dating back to the 2005 season. The Warriors have lost four straight GLIAC road games.

Live stats for Saturday's game will be available, free of charge, through the Hillsdale College athletic website. The game will also be webcast via B2Networks. Check the Charger football home page for links and ticket information. More information about this weekend's game can be found in the links below.

## Charger football team 11th in first regional rankings of the season

October 8, 2007 - The Hillsdale College football team debuted in the Northwest Regional rankings Monday night at 11th. Monday night marked the first release of the Division II rankings of the 2007 season.

The Chargers are 4-2 on the season. The top six teams in each region qualify for the national playoffs, with the numbers one and two seeds receiving first-round byes. Then the remaining four teams play one another in the regional semifinals, scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 17.

Nebraska-Omaha is the top-ranked team in the first set of regional rankings. North Dakota is second, while Grand Valley is third. Even though the Lakers have won more than 30 games in a row and are the two-time defending Division II national champions, the team is only ranked third in the initial poll.

Central Washington, Ashland and South Dakota round out the top six in the region. Ashland has played just four games this season, having one week off and its game against Grand Valley canceled due to lightning. The Eagles' lone loss this season came to Hillsdale, 49-28 on Sept. 15.

Michigan Tech, another team the Chargers soundly defeated, is ranked eighth in the region. Indianapolis is 10th, one spot ahead of the Chargers. The Greyhounds edged Hillsdale Saturday night, 34-30.

To view all of the regional rankings in Division II, click on the link below.

## **Greyhounds turn tables on Chargers, handing Hillsdale football team 34-30 loss**

October 6, 2007 - One year ago, the Hillsdale College football team snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, picking up a one-point win on a score in the final 90 seconds of the game. Saturday night, the University of Indianapolis gained some revenge, defeating the Chargers 34-30 at Indianapolis' Key Stadium.

Hillsdale falls to 4-2 overall and in the GLIAC with the loss, while Indy moves into sole possession of second place in the GLIAC, improving to 5-1 overall and 4-1 in the GLIAC.

In Hillsdale's 2006 Homecoming game, the Chargers scored a touchdown with 1:22 left in the game to pull out a 14-13 win. But Saturday night, it was Indianapolis' turn, as quarterback Casey Gillin threw for 402 yards and four touchdowns, the last coming with 13 seconds left in the fourth quarter, completing a big comeback.

The Chargers led the Greyhounds 30-14 to start the fourth quarter. But Indianapolis scored 20 unanswered points in that fourth quarter to pull off the come-from-behind victory. Hillsdale hasn't won at Indianapolis since 1995.

Hillsdale quarterback Mark Nicolet, playing in front of many fans near his hometown of Zionsville, Ind., racked up his fifth consecutive 300-yard passing game, completing 16-of-25 passes for 346 yards and three touchdowns. His TD passes covered 54, 63 and 72 yards, the first and third connecting with junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie.

The first half was tightly played by both teams, with Hillsdale holding a 13-7 lead at intermission. Mark Petro kicked the second of his three field goals early in the third quarter, increasing Hillsdale's lead to 16-7. That's when the offensive fireworks began.

Nicolet hooked up with Waldie for a 63-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter, increasing

Hillsdale's edge to 23-7. Indy struck back on the next drive, when Gillin threw a 68-yard touchdown pass on the next play from scrimmage, closing the gap to 23-14.

Not to be outdone, Nicolet threw another scoring pass on the very next play from scrimmage, hitting senior Nick Gurica on a 72-yard strike, putting Hillsdale in command with a 30-14 lead. But that would be the last time the high-powered Charger offense would hit paydirt.

The Greyhounds went on three straight touchdown drives in the game's final 12 minutes to hand Hillsdale its second loss of the season.

Gurica and Waldie each went over 100 yards in the same game for the first time this season. Gurica caught seven passes for 145 yards and a touchdown, while Waldie, Division II's leading receiver, caught four passes for 133 yards and two touchdowns. Waldie now has 11 receiving touchdowns on the season, leaving him one short of the single-season school record, which is 12 held by Dave Mifsud in 1985. Waldie's 810 receiving yards for the season rank fourth on the school's single-season list.

Hillsdale returns home next weekend, hosting Wayne State at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium for a 2:30 p.m. kickoff.

## Hillsdale College football team now nationally ranked

October 2, 2007 - For the first time in many years, the Hillsdale College football team is now ranked among the 25 best in all of Division II.

The 4-1 Chargers are ranked 24th in the Division II Top 25 poll released by D2football.com early Tuesday morning. The D2football.com poll is considered one of the most objective and respected polls in the college football community.

The "official" Division II Top 25 poll, the one compiled by the American Football Coaches Association, is expected to be released later on Tuesday.

Hillsdale is off to a flying start to the season, scoring at least 37 points in all five games, leading the GLIAC in many offensive categories.

The Chargers will travel to Indiana this weekend for a key showdown with the University of Indianapolis at 6 p.m. Saturday.

To view the entire D2football.com poll, click on the link below.

## Football team records first shutout in 11 years in record-setting 37-0 home win over Michigan Tech

September 29, 2007 - If there was a record for setting records, the Hillsdale College football team might have set another record in a near-perfect performance Saturday afternoon.

Both the offense and defense had games to remember, as the Chargers blanked the Michigan Tech University Huskies 37-0 at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium. Hillsdale, off to its best start since 1999, is 4-1 overall and 4-1 in the GLIAC, owning sole possession of second place in the conference. The Huskies drop to 3-3 overall and 3-2 in the GLIAC.

The shutout pitched by the Hillsdale defense is its first since 1996, when the Chargers beat Ashland 21-0. The 37-point margin of victory in a shutout is the most by a Hillsdale team since a 49-0 win over St. Joseph's during the 1994 season.

The defense responded extremely well this week after absorbing a 44-41 loss to Ferris State University last week. Four different players intercepted passes for the Chargers, and Hillsdale did a terrific job of denying the Huskies entry into the end zone, even after several long drives. Josh Hutchison intercepted a pass at the goal line, while fellow cornerback Palmer Schoening picked off a pass inside the Hillsdale 10-yard-line.

On offense, it was business as usual for the Chargers, who eclipsed the 30-point barrier for the sixth straight time, a school record.

Speaking of school records, two more were set by Charger players in the win. Quarterback Mark Nicolet, who is quickly taking over the Hillsdale College passing record book, set a new record with 34 completions. Nicolet finished 34-for-47 for 376 yards and four touchdowns, with one interception. Nicolet has passed for more than 300 yards in four straight games, also a school record, and has 1,740 passing yards for the season. In the game, Nicolet threw his 17th touchdown pass of the season, leaving him one short of his career total coming into this season. His 35 TD passes now ranks him sixth on Hillsdale's all-time list.

Wide receiver Nick Gurica had a career day, one that also put him in the Charger record books. Gurica caught a school-record 13 passes for a career-high 197 yards and two touchdowns. He made a gorgeous spin move to find the end zone for the game's first touchdown, a 21-yard pass from Nicolet.

Tight end Matt Patillo also enjoyed the best game of his career, finding soft spots in the Michigan Tech defense the entire game, catching six passes for 45 yards and two touchdowns. He hit paydirt on back-to-back scores that gave the Chargers a 21-0 halftime lead.

Hillsdale kept the effectiveness on both sides of the ball working through the second half. Gurica scored on a 17-yard touchdown pass from Nicolet on the opening drive of the second half to push the lead to 27-0. H-back Bill Kanitz added a two-yard touchdown plunge with 33 seconds left in the third quarter. Sophomore kicker Mark Petro ended the scoring with a 20-yard field goal with less than five minutes remaining in the game.

Defensively, Tom Korte and Alex Mileskiewicz, former teammates at Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School, each intercepted passes in the second half. Korte led the team with nine solo tackles and 13 overall. Linebacker Marcellus Wade played a fine game, with eight total tackles. Eric Weber had six tackles and a sack in the contest.

The Chargers face another stiff road test next week, taking on the University of Indianapolis Greyhounds at 6 p.m.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers back home to face tough Michigan Tech team Saturday**

September 27, 2007 - Two teams looking to bounce back from losses will collide on the Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium field Saturday afternoon, as the Hillsdale College football team returns home to face the Michigan Tech University Huskies. Kickoff is set for 2:30 p.m. in Hillsdale.

This marks the first meeting between these two teams in Hillsdale since Oct. 26, 2002. The Chargers (3-1) and Huskies (3-2) didn't play one another in 2004 or 2005, and the past two meetings between the teams (2003 and 2006) have been played in Houghton.

This game matches up two explosive offenses, led by highly skilled quarterbacks. Hillsdale's Mark Nicolet is ranked second among all Division II quarterbacks in the nation in passing yards (1,364), pass efficiency (185.9) and total offense (358.5). He has thrown for more than 300 yards in three consecutive games, the first time any Hillsdale quarterback has achieved that milestone. In the Chargers' last home game on Sept. 15, Nicolet set a school record with 426 yards through the air in a 49-28 defeat of Ashland.

The Huskies bring in an excellent signal-caller of their own in sophomore Steve Short. Hillsdale knows Short well, since he made his first career start against the Chargers back on Sept. 30, 2006 in Houghton, and helped lead Michigan Tech to a 14-12 win over Hillsdale. Short has rushed for a team-high six touchdowns on the ground this season, and has more than 1,200 passing yards on the season.

Hillsdale saw its 3-0 start to the season end last week in a 44-41 loss at Ferris State University. The

Bulldogs kicked a field goal with three seconds left to pull out the win in a game that featured 69 points and 10 touchdowns in the first half. The Chargers have scored more than 40 points in each of their first four games of the season, the first such streak in the 116-year history of the program.

Although Michigan Tech is coming off a 48-6 loss to No. 1-ranked Grand Valley, the Huskies are just as capable of putting up a lot of points. The team has scored more than 40 points in a game three times this season, including back-to-back performances of 44 and 43 points in wins over Indianapolis and Northwood, respectively, in their third and fourth games of this season.

Another explosive part of Hillsdale's attack has come in the form of junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie, who currently leads the nation in receiving yards per game (144.3). Waldie has already exceeded his 2006 totals for catches, receiving yards and touchdowns in just four games this season. His nine touchdowns rank him sixth in the nation in scoring.

Hillsdale leads the all-time series between the teams 13-5, although Tech has won five of the past seven meetings between the teams. The Chargers beat the Huskies in their last meeting in Hillsdale, 31-7.

If this game ends up being a high-scoring one, it wouldn't be unusual, given the history between these teams. In the 18 all-time meetings between Hillsdale and Michigan Tech, one of the teams has scored 35 or more points in a game eight times, including a wild 52-35 Hillsdale win back in 2001.

## Football team suffers heartbreaking 44-41 loss to Ferris State

September 22, 2007 - The Hillsdale College football team suffered its first loss of the 2007 season, 44-41 to Ferris State University Saturday night in Big Rapids.

This wild shootout, which featured 69 first-half points, knocks Hillsdale out of first place in the GLIAC. The Chargers are now 3-1 overall and 3-1 in the GLIAC, while Ferris State improves to 2-2 overall and 1-2 in the conference. The win is the first for the Bulldogs over the Chargers since 2004, also the last time the two teams met in Big Rapids.

Ferris State kicker Jim Yates nailed a 41-yard field goal with three seconds left in the fourth quarter to clinch the victory for his team.

The kick concluded a scoring-filled, back-and-forth game that featured big plays by both teams.

Hillsdale led the game 35-34 at halftime, but neither team scored in a third quarter that saw both teams make sound defensive adjustments. Ferris State's defense limited Hillsdale to two Mark Petro

field goals in the second half.

Petro kicked a 40-yard field goal to tie the game 41-41 with 1:03 left in the game. But the Bulldogs put together an impressive drive in the final minute to set up Yates' game-winning kick.

The game also marked the second time in two away games this season that Hillsdale and its opponent have combined for more than 80 points in a game. The Chargers edged Northern Michigan University 42-41 back on Sept. 8 in Marquette.

Senior quarterback Mark Nicolet (pictured) topped 300 yards passing for the third straight game, completing 24-of-39 passes for 335 yards and two touchdowns. He connected with Nick Gurica and Aaron Waldie on TD passes in the first half. Nicolet has now thrown for 1,364 yards in just four games this season.

Gurica caught seven passes for 66 yards to lead Hillsdale in receptions. Waldie went over the 100-yard barrier for the fourth time in four games, hauling in six passes for 112 yards and a score. His touchdown was a conference-leading ninth of the season, which represents more points (54) than any Charger player scored in the entire 2006 season.

Sophomore tailback Vinnie Panizzi rushed for a career-high 118 yards on 25 carries, with two more touchdowns.

Hillsdale outgained Ferris State 506-412 in the game, but allowed 317 rushing yards to the Bulldogs.

Defensively, Mat Szula picked up his second interception of the season, while linebacker Tom Korte had a sack and a season-high 20 total tackles, including 13 solo stops.

The game was the highest-scoring ever in the 61-year history of the series between the two teams. It also marks the first time Ferris State has ever scored more than 40 points against Hillsdale in a game. The second-highest scoring game between the teams came in 1999, when the Chargers beat the Bulldogs 40-37. This is also the first time in school history Hillsdale has scored 40 or more points in four straight games.

Hillsdale is back home on Sept. 29, hosting Michigan Tech University starting at 2:30 p.m. at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium.

**FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers look to extend perfect start with night game at Ferris State Saturday**

September 20, 2007 - It's been a magical start to the 2007 football season for the Chargers, and the team has a chance to extend it with its first night game of the season Saturday.

Hillsdale College (3-0) travels to Big Rapids to tangle with Ferris State University (1-2) at 7 p.m. Saturday in Top Taggart Field. This marks Hillsdale's first trip to Big Rapids since Week 3 of the 2004 season.

The Chargers have stormed to the top of the GLIAC standings, thanks to their first 3-0 start since 1992. The team is averaging 50 points per game and leads the conference in scoring, passing offense, total offense, pass efficiency, total touchdowns, sacks against and turnover margins. The offense has been unstoppable so far, and the man at the controls is senior quarterback Mark Nicolet.

The reigning GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week, Nicolet has been on fire to start the season, setting a new career-high in passing yards in back-to-back weeks. Last week vs. Ashland, Nicolet set a school record with 426 passing yards in the Chargers' 49-28 thrashing of the Eagles. Through three games, Nicolet has thrown for 1,029 yards, 11 touchdowns and just one interception. He's operating the offense at an extremely high level, and is using his offensive teammates in the most effective way possible.

Junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie has been Nicolet's favorite target. Waldie is off to a scorching start to the season, catching 21 passes for 465 yards and eight touchdowns. In years past, Waldie's receiving yards total and TD catches would have led the team after an 11-game schedule, but his three-game totals have put him in another stratosphere. Waldie leads all of Division II in receiving yards per game (155.0) and is tied for second in all-purpose yards and receiving yards. His 48 points also tie him for third nationally among all non-kickers.

While Hillsdale's offense has lit up scoreboards around the conference, the defense has played its part effectively as well. The Charger defense leads the GLIAC in red-zone defense and is second in opposing teams' third-down conversion rate. That means Hillsdale is doing a nice job at stopping drives and making sure the offense is set up in acceptable field position. Josh Hutchison has two interceptions in three games, while sophomores Drew Berube, Schuyler File and Jordan Knudsen have provided a strong push along the defensive line in all three games.

The Chargers and Bulldogs have a long football history between them, and have quite a few common elements along the way. Hillsdale head coach Keith Otterbein led the Bulldog program from 1986-1994, taking Ferris State on a long run of success, particularly over his final three seasons in Big Rapids. At his side was current Charger offensive coordinator Barry Fagan, who stayed at Ferris State in 1995 and coached one of the top offenses in the country that season.

Current FSU head coach Jeff Pierce took over the program for Otterbein and has kept the Bulldogs

among the top contenders in the GLIAC for more than a decade.

Last year the two teams played a classic, emotion-filled game at a drizzly Muddy Waters Stadium. Just three days after the passing of legendary Hillsdale coach Frank "Muddy" Waters, the Chargers played an inspired game, overcoming an early 14-0 deficit to upend the Bulldogs, 29-27. The loss was one of just three suffered by Ferris State in 2006.

The Bulldogs will be led by returning starting quarterback C.J. VanWieren, who rushed the ball 36 times for 180 yards and four touchdowns in last year's game against Hillsdale. VanWieren is a big, strong signal-caller, and was named GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week after the first game of this season.

Hillsdale has beaten Ferris State in back-to-back years, and leads the all-time series 21-16-1. The two teams have met every year since 1972, one of the longest continuous rivalries Hillsdale has on its football schedule. The two teams entered the 2007 season with the same number of all-time conference victories (138).

This game will represent Hillsdale's latest kickoff time of the season. On Oct. 6, the Chargers face the University of Indianapolis on the road in a 6 p.m. start.

## Mark Nicolet named GLIAC's Offensive Player of the Week

September 17, 2007 - For the first time in his career, Hillsdale College senior quarterback Mark Nicolet was named the GLIAC Offensive Player of the Week. The announcement came from the conference office Monday morning.

Nicolet had a historic day Saturday in the Chargers' 49-28 Homecoming victory over Ashland University. Nicolet set a school record with 426 passing yards, completing 29-of-42 passes with three touchdowns in Hillsdale's defeat of the Eagles. The previous school record for passing yards in a game was 421, set by Kyle Keefer on Nov. 6, 1999.

Nicolet has led Hillsdale to its first 3-0 start since 1992 with spectacular play from the quarterback position. For the season, Nicolet has completed 69 percent of his passes, thrown for 1,029 yards, 11 touchdowns and just one interception.

Nicolet ranks second in all of NCAA Division II in passing yards per game, pass efficiency and total offense. The Chargers' offense ranks 6th in the NCAA in total offense, second in passing offense, fifth in scoring offense and second in pass efficiency.

Also in Saturday's game Nicolet moved into a seventh place tie on Hillsdale's all-time touchdown

passes list with 28 in his career, tying the mark set by Craig Como from 1987-90. Nicolet also has 4,472 passing yards in his career, putting him in fifth place on the Chargers' career passing yards list.

Through three games, Hillsdale is averaging 50 points per game on offense, and Saturday's total offensive production of 567 yards was seven yards shy of the team record for total offense in a game.

A Hillsdale player has earned a conference player of the week honor in each of the season's first three weeks. Mark Petro and Matt Vanover each won the GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week award in weeks 1 and 2, respectively.

Nicolet is a 2004 graduate of Zionsville High School in suburban Indianapolis.

## More history made as Charger football team earns 49-28 Homecoming win over Ashland

September 15, 2007 - Each time the Hillsdale College football team has taken the field this season, a little bit of history is made.

Actually, there was a lot of history playing out on the Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium field Saturday, as the Chargers pleased a big Homecoming crowd with a 49-28 win over Ashland University. Hillsdale is now 3-0 for the first time since 1992, while Ashland falls to 1-1.

The game marked the first time in Hillsdale's 116-year history that it's scored at least 40 points in three straight games. Engineering that potent attack is senior quarterback Mark Nicolet, who somehow improved on an incredible start to the season with a brilliant performance vs. the Eagles.

Nicolet was 29-for-42 for a school-record 426 yards and three touchdowns. He broke the previous school record of 421 yards, held by Kyle Keefer, set during the 1999 season.

Once again, Nicolet's preferred big-play target was junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie, who nearly set a school record himself. Waldie caught 11 passes for 211 yards and three touchdowns. His yardage fell 11 short of the school record held by Ed House and set back in 2001. Waldie's 11 catches did tie a school record for one game, shared by Hugh MacDonald (1971) and Bob Meyers (1976).

The first big play of the day was made by the defense, as cornerback Josh Hutchison intercepted a Billy Cundiff pass in the end zone, stopping what had been an effective opening-game drive by the

Eagles. Senior safety Jared Kell added an interception late in the second quarter that also stopped a deep drive by the Eagles. Kell led the Chargers in interceptions in 2006.

Hillsdale picked up the momentum created by the interception and proceeded to march 80 yards down the field for a score. Nicolet plunged into the end zone from one yard out to put the Chargers up 7-0.

Less than two minutes later, Nicolet hit Waldie with a 50-yard touchdown pass down the right sidelines to put Hillsdale ahead 14-0. Redshirt-freshman T.J. Campbell scored his first career rushing touchdown with 2:05 left in the second quarter to give Hillsdale a startling 21-0 first-quarter lead against an opponent it hadn't beaten since 2003.

Ashland's Jon Schroeder scored less than three minutes into the second quarter, slicing the deficit to 21-7, which would stand until halftime.

But in the third quarter, Hillsdale put on another offensive show reminiscent of the first quarter, scoring 21 straight points on Ashland's defense to build a 35-point lead at one point.

Waldie caught touchdown passes of 51 and 18 yards in the third quarter. He's caught a total of five touchdowns of more than 40 yards each already this season.

Sophomore Vinnie Panizzi added a one-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter to round out the scoring for the Chargers. Panizzi rushed the ball 26 times for 86 yards and two scores. Nicolet gained 23 rushing yards in the game, and completed passes to seven different receivers.

Senior Nick Gurica added six receptions for 76 yards. Matt Patillo and A.J. Kegg each had three catches in the game.

Sophomore Evan Brown played an impressive defensive game for the Chargers, leading the team with six solo tackles and nine overall. True freshman Cody Henderson had a career-high seven total tackles.

Hillsdale has now won four straight Homecoming games, and is 11-6 in its last 17 games overall. The last time the team started 3-0 was 1992, the same year Hillsdale last won a conference championship.

The Chargers travel to Ferris State University next weekend for a 7 p.m. game against the Bulldogs.

## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Chargers aim for first 3-0 start since 1992 in Homecoming Game Saturday vs. Ashland

September 13, 2007 - After a rousing start to the 2007 season, the Hillsdale College football team will try to keep the good times rolling at this weekend's Homecoming game.

The Chargers will host longtime rival Ashland University at 2:30 p.m. at Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium. Both teams come into the game undefeated, with Hillsdale off to its first 2-0 start since 1999. Ashland is 1-0, and is coming off a "no contest" game at home against Grand Valley, which was called because of lightning midway through the second quarter.

This weekend's Homecoming Game will be highlighted by the usual festivities, reunions and celebrations, but on the field, this figures to be a tightly contested game between two teams poised to contend for the conference championship this season. Neither team was over .500 last year, but both bring back a wealth of talent, particularly on offense, that gives each team justifiable optimism for an excellent season.

The Chargers have won three straight Homecoming games, and are 10-6 overall in their past 16 games, dating back to October, 2005. The team is off to an incredible start to the 2007 season, having scored 101 points in wins over Gannon and Northern Michigan. Hillsdale hasn't started a season 3-0 since 1992, also the last time it won a conference title.

The Chargers breezed to an opening-day 59-3 win over Gannon on Sept. 1. Last week's exciting 42-41 win at Northern Michigan was the team's second victory away from home since 2005, and was the highest-scoring game the team had been involved in since the first game of the 2004 season.

Leading the way for Hillsdale in its great start has been senior quarterback Mark Nicolet, who is playing the finest football of his career for the Chargers. Nicolet leads all Division II quarterbacks in passer rating (220.1) through two games, and has thrown for 603 yards and eight touchdowns, with a 70 percent completion percentage in the first two weeks. Nicolet operates the offense with complete knowledge and skill, and has a wide variety of weapons on offense to make plays.

Junior wide receiver Aaron Waldie is also off to his best start to a season, leading the GLIAC in receiving yards per game (127.0), while ranking fourth nationally in total scoring (30 points/5 touchdowns). His five touchdown receptions exceed his previous career total, and he's caught TD passes from Nicolet spanning 40, 73 and 64 yards in the first two games, solidifying his role as a potent deep threat.

On the ground, running back Vinnie Panizzi has filled the shoes previously worn by Phil Martin nicely in the first two games. Panizzi has rushed for 89 and 95 yards in his first two games, and ran for four total touchdowns, including three vs. Northern Michigan. All three of his scores came from inside the 10-yard line, showing his effectiveness at helping to finish off long scoring drives with

touchdowns.

Hillsdale's offensive line has also performed admirably, allowing just one sack in two games. Senior center Dan Stapf was named the team's offensive player of the week against Northern Michigan, a testament to his effectiveness in a game where the offense produced 42 points.

If the Chargers hope to beat Ashland for the first time since 2003, they will need the offense to continue to perform at the elite level they have started the season on. The Eagles and Chargers have played two straight close games, where the final margin could have gone either way. The last time the two teams played in Hillsdale, Ashland squeaked out a 7-3 victory. In last season's meeting in Ashland, the Eagles stopped Hillsdale inside the 10-yard line on the final play of a 30-24 contest.

Ashland trailed top-ranked Grand Valley 14-6 when the game was called last week. The game kicked off at 7 p.m., and didn't make it through the first half when lightning and severe thunderstorms hit the area. Game officials waited until 9:30 p.m. before making the decision to cancel the game. It will not be made up.

The Eagles return all 11 starters on offense from a year ago, and proved what a strong unit it is in a 32-27 Week 1 victory over Saginaw Valley on the road. In that game, Ashland generated 442 yards of total offense against what has traditionally been one of the top defenses in the GLIAC.

Ticket prices are: \$6 for adults, \$3 for students, \$2 for senior citizens and \$2 for children ages 12 and under.

Ashland's football webpage can be found [here](#).

This weekend's game will feature live stats and webcasting. The live stats are presented by GameTracker, a part of the CSTV network. The game will be webcast courtesy of B2Networks. Click on the links below for the live stats and webcasting webpages. Also listed below are the Charger and GLIAC game notes for this weekend's game.

## Matt Vanover named National Special Teams Player of the Week by D2football.com

September 10, 2007 - Hillsdale College senior Matt Vanover was named GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week Monday morning. It marks the second time in Vanover's career he has earned the honor, and the second week in a row that honor has gone to a Charger player.

Tuesday morning, Vanover was named the National Special Teams Player of the Week by

D2football.com.

Vanover, a four-year starter at punter for Hillsdale, played a crucial part in the Chargers' thrilling 42-41 win over Northern Michigan University Saturday in Marquette. Vanover punted the ball four times for an incredible average of 50 yards per punt. His longest punt of the day was 61 yards, the second-longest boot in the conference this season. His punts helped keep field position in Hillsdale's advantage on a day when the two offenses combined to score 83 points.

Vanover currently leads the GLIAC with a season punting average of 49.6 yards. Vanover previously won the Special Teams Player of the Week honor on Oct. 23, 2005 after a strong game against Tiffin University. Kicker Mark Petro won the Special Teams Player of the Week award last week for Hillsdale.

Vanover is a native of Adrian, Michigan, and graduated from Adrian High School in 2004.

## Hillsdale football team off to first 2-0 start in eight years with thrilling 42-41 win over NMU

September 8, 2007 - On a day when the two offenses lit up the scoreboard, it was a huge defensive play in the final minute that keyed Hillsdale's second straight victory to open the 2007 season.

Sophomore defensive lineman Schuyler File forced a fumble on a hit on Northern Michigan University quarterback Buddy Rivera to sew up a thrilling 42-41 win for the Charger football team in Marquette Saturday evening. Junior linebacker Tom Korte recovered the fumble on the play.

Hillsdale is now 2-0 for the first time since the 1999 season, and will play its Homecoming game on Sept. 15 vs. Ashland University. NMU drops to 0-2 on the season with the loss.

File's play came as Northern Michigan was driving inside Hillsdale's 30-yard-line in the last minute of play in a game that featured more twists and turns than you'd find at Cedar Point. Both teams took turns making big plays on offense, including a record-breaking rushing performance by Northern Michigan, and another brilliant day passing the ball by Charger QB Mark Nicolet.

Nicolet connected with wide receiver Aaron Waldie (pictured) on a 64-yard fourth-quarter touchdown pass that proved to be the game-winning score. Waldie, who caught TD passes of 40 and 73 yards in the season opener last week, caught six passes for 120 yards and two touchdowns. Fellow wide receiver Nick Gurica also caught six passes, covering a season-high 126 yards. A.J. Keggs hauled in a career-best six passes as well.

Nicolet, who was nearly perfect last week vs. Gannon, turned his game up a notch in this one, completing 23-of-36 passes for a career-high 376 yards and three touchdowns, with no interceptions. In the first two games of the season, Nicolet is completing 70 percent of his passes with eight touchdowns vs. just one interception.

Tailback Vinnie Panizzi was the finisher for the Chargers in this one, scoring three rushing touchdowns, while gaining 89 yards on the ground. All of Panizzi's touchdown runs were from less than 10 yards from the goal line.

Both offenses were humming in this game, with the two teams averaging at least seven yards per play throughout the game and combining for 1,106 yards of total offense. NMU tailback Mark Bossuah set a Superior Dome record with 317 yards on 35 carries and one touchdown. NMU quarterback Buddy Rivera was 17-for-27 for 235 yards and four touchdowns. Palmer Schoening picked off one Rivera pass, returning it for 22 yards.

The Hillsdale defense stiffened at a key time in the fourth quarter. Northern Michigan drove the ball to the Hillsdale 8-yard-line, but was unable to get through to the end zone. The Wildcats had to settle for a field goal, which made the score 42-41 with Hillsdale maintaining the lead. An NMU touchdown would have given the team a three-point lead with less than seven minutes left in the game, pressuring Hillsdale's offense to produce a score, rather than run time off the clock.

Korte led Hillsdale's defense with 10 solo tackles and 14 overall. Knudsen had three tackles for loss, with one sack, while Drew Berube, Alex Wojcik and Eric Weber all had nine total tackles each.

This game marked the most total points scored in a Charger game since 2004, when Hillsdale needed four overtimes to beat the University of Indianapolis, 49-43. This game marked the first time since 2001 that Hillsdale scored more than 40 points in back-to-back games. The 101 points over a two-game span is the most for Hillsdale since 1969, when the 'Dales (as they were known then) put up a total of 105 points vs. Findlay and Winona State, respectively.

## **FOOTBALL PREVIEW: Hillsdale in search of 2-0 start in the great, white north**

September 5, 2007 - The new season couldn't have gotten off to a much better start for the Hillsdale College football team. Now, it will look to continue that start this weekend on its longest road trip of the season.

The Chargers will make the trek to Marquette to face the Northern Michigan University Wildcats at 4 p.m. Saturday in the second game of the 2007 season for each team. The game will be played at

the Superior Dome, on the campus of Northern Michigan University.

The Chargers come into the game with a 1-0 record, fresh off one of the most lopsided victories in its 116-year history of football. Hillsdale defeated Gannon University 59-3 on Sept. 1, the biggest margin of victory in a game for Hillsdale since 1968. The 59 points scored by the Chargers are the most since a 68-25 win over Northwood in the 1968 season.

Northern Michigan made an even longer trip south than the northern trip Hillsdale faces this week, in the first week of the season. The Wildcats hung tough, but lost at the University of Indianapolis, 24-22 last Saturday. NMU scored a late touchdown, and went for the game-tying two-point conversion, but were not able to convert, giving the Greyhounds a tight victory.

Northern Michigan rallied from a 14-0 first-quarter deficit last season to defeat Hillsdale in its 2006 home opener, 31-24. The Chargers lead the all-time series between the teams, 20-14-1, and last defeated the Wildcats during the 2003 season, 27-20.

This game features a matchup of two of the finest quarterbacks in the GLIAC. Hillsdale's Mark Nicolet had a spectacular debut last week vs, Gannon, completing 12-of-14 passes for 227 yards and a career-high five touchdowns. Nicolet has been the primary starting quarterback in each of his four years with the Chargers, and his experience is a big strength of the team's offense coming into this season.

The Wildcats can counter with a playmaking signal-caller of their own. Buddy Rivera was a Second-Team All-GLIAC pick last season, and has a strong arm and tough disposition on the field. He threw for 249 yards and three touchdowns, and sparked NMU's come-from-behind win over Hillsdale last season.

In last week's loss vs. Indianapolis, Rivera picked up right where he left off last season, completing 29-of-44 passes for 304 yards and two scores.

This figures to be a key game for the Chargers, with their longest road trip of the season coming one week before homecoming and a looming matchup with Ashland set for Sept. 15. But before that can happen, Hillsdale will look to avenge last season's home loss to NMU.

There was more to Hillsdale's blowout Week 1 win than Nicolet's fine play. Sophomore running back Vinnie Panizzi (pictured) received his first collegiate start, and rushed for 95 yards on just 12 carries, a 7.9 yards-per-rush average. Redshirt-freshman T.J. Campbell added 28 yards on the ground. Their first-quarter efficiency on the ground allowed the passing game to open up for the Chargers in the second quarter.

A primary beneficiary from that open space was wide receiver Aaron Waldie, who celebrated his

21st birthday by catching four passes for a career-high 134 yards and three touchdowns. He caught TD passes of 40 and 73 yards, solidifying his role as a lethal deep threat in the Charger offense.

Hillsdale's defense also turned in a fine performance against the Golden Knights, shutting the team out over the game's final 55 minutes. Hillsdale picked off two passes and recorded two sacks, limiting Gannon's three quarterbacks to a combined 12-for-29 for 93 yards in the passing category.

In last year's game, Rivera was able to connect on deep pass plays vs. Hillsdale's secondary. Rivera threw touchdown passes that spanned 19, 31 and 55 yards in the contest, the final one coming with 1:08 left on the clock that snapped a 24-24 tie, and proved to be the winning score.

Northern Michigan is coached by Bernie Anderson, entering his second season with his alma mater. Anderson previously coached for 19 years at Michigan Tech University.

Hillsdale sophomore placekicker Mark Petro was named the GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week on Tuesday, the first time in nearly two years a Charger player had earned the honor. Petro nailed all eight of his extra-point attempts, just one shy of the school record of nine, set by former All-American Chester Marcol on Sept. 18, 1970.

Nicolet's five touchdown passes were also one shy of the school record, set by Kyle Keefer on Oct. 9, 1999.

## Mark Petro named GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week

September 4, 2007 - A near-record offensive performance by the Hillsdale College football team led to an honor for a special teams player Tuesday afternoon.

Sophomore placekicker Mark Petro was named the GLIAC Special Teams Player of the Week. It marks the first time a Charger has received the honor since punter Matt Vanover got the honor on Oct. 23, 2005.

Petro was 8-for-8 on extra-point attempts and hit his only field goal attempt in Saturday's 59-3 rout of Gannon University. Petro's eight extra-points made was not only a career-high, but the second-most in one game in school history. Former All-American Chester Marcol set the record with nine back on Sept. 18, 1970.

Petro's 11 points were the most by any kicker in the first full week of GLIAC football play.

In 2006, the Chargers netted just one GLIAC Player of the Week honor, that going to Jared Kell on

the defensive side of the ball after the team's game on Oct. 7.

Petro and the Chargers will seek their first 2-0 start since 1999 on Saturday when they travel to Northern Michigan University for a game against the Wildcats.

## Charger football team routs Gannon, 59-3 in '07 season opener

September 1, 2007 - It was a win of historic proportions Saturday afternoon for the Hillsdale College football team.

The Chargers opened the 2007 season in nearly perfect fashion, blowing out Gannon University 59-3 before more than 1,700 fans at sun-drenched Muddy Waters Stadium. The Chargers, now 1-0, will head north next week to face the Northern Michigan University Wildcats.

After Gannon opened the scoring with a field goal, the Chargers exploded for 59 consecutive points, the most the team has scored since late in the 1968 season, when it beat Northwood 68-25. The 56-point margin of victory is the largest for the team since the 1969 season, when it had a 56-0 win over Winona State.

The Golden Knights capitalized on an early interception to take a 3-0 lead. But that would finish off the Gannon highlights for the day, as the Charger offense and defense took turns making big plays that led directly to points.

Hillsdale scored three touchdowns in the final eight minutes of the first quarter, on touchdown runs by Vinnie Panizzi and Bill Kanitz, and a 40-yard touchdown strike from Mark Nicolet to Aaron Waldie.

Nicolet enjoyed the best game of his career, completing 12-of-14 passes for 227 yards and a career-best five touchdowns. Three of those touchdown passes went to junior Aaron Waldie, who also had the best game of his career.

Waldie, who turned 21 years old on Saturday, caught four passes for 134 yards and three scores. The biggest play came immediately after a Gannon turnover. Waldie caught a deep pass from Nicolet and sped 73 yards into the end zone, giving the Chargers a 28-3 lead one play into the second quarter.

Nicolet threw two more touchdown passes in the first half, one each to senior Nick Gurica and senior Derek Nelson, building an incredible 42-3 halftime lead.

Nicolet (pictured) threw his final touchdown pass to Waldie less than five minutes into the third

quarter, making it a 49-3 ballgame.

Many of Hillsdale's backups played the rest of the way, and some career firsts took place.

Quarterback Troy Weatherhead threw his first collegiate touchdown pass, to freshman and Hillsdale native Mike Blanchard, with 5:46 left in the fourth quarter. Blanchard, who was a standout athlete at Hillsdale High School, thrilled the local fans with two cuts and a swift run to the end zone off a swing pass from Weatherhead.

Hillsdale intercepted two passes - one each by Alex Mileskiewicz and Mat Szula - and recovered a fumble. The Charger defense held the Golden Knights to 226 total yards, while Hillsdale piled up 436 total yards in the game.

Sophomore Drew Berube, also a Hillsdale native, led the defense with seven total tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss and a sack. Josh Hutchison and Tom Korte each broke up a pass attempt.

## Football team opens 2007 season at home Saturday against Gannon

August 30, 2007 - The curtain will be dropped on the 2007 Hillsdale College football season Saturday afternoon, as the Chargers play their season-opener at home for the first time in three years. Hillsdale will host GLIAC rival Gannon University at Muddy Waters Field at 2:30 p.m.

The last time Hillsdale opened a football season at home was 2004, and that game was one for the ages. The Chargers defeated the University of Indianapolis 49-43 in four overtimes, one of the most memorable contests in the 116-year history of Hillsdale College football.

While Saturday's game might have a hard time living up to that one in terms of dramatics, Hillsdale would happily accept the same result - a win. The Chargers come into this campaign with a seasoned and skilled roster, ready to lead the team over the .500 hump for the first time since the mid-1990s.

Hillsdale leads the all-time series with Gannon, 4-1, including four straight victories. The two teams first met back in 1950, with Gannon earning a 27-16 win. The teams didn't meet on the gridiron again until 1999, when the Chargers beat the Golden Knights 41-7.

The last time these two teams played in Hillsdale was Sept. 18, 2004, when the Chargers celebrated Homecoming with a thrilling 38-31 overtime win. Hillsdale is 40-10 in its last 50 home-opening games. Last year, the Chargers opened the 2006 season with a 35-7 win over Gannon in Erie in a game that was played in a hard rainstorm.

Hillsdale has averaged 39.3 points per game against Gannon in the last four meetings between the two teams. This year's Charger offense is heavy with senior experience, starting with quarterback Mark Nicolet.

Nicolet has finished each of the past three seasons as the starting quarterback, and will play his second season-opener as the top signal-caller. Nicolet threw for 1,949 yards and 12 touchdowns last year, and runs the team with skill and confidence.

He will have a new crop of running backs to hand the ball off to this year, with the graduation of four-year starter Phil Martin. Vinnie Panizzi and T.J. Campbell both figure to carry the ball as part of Hillsdale's rushing attack.

One group of players that will be familiar to Nicolet is his receivers. Returning starters Aaron Waldie and Nick Gurica are both back from last year, and both have game-breaking speed. Gurica led the GLIAC in receptions during the regular season, and Waldie has the ability to stretch the field from his position.

A.J. Kegg has had an impressive preseason at the H-back position, and joins sophomore Bill Kanitz among a deep group of contributing players at that position.

The offensive line returns intact from last season. Seniors Dan Stapf and Chet Crowley lead the way, along with Jared Veldheer, Offensive Lineman of the Year Josiah Swartz, and Phil Davignon. Matt Patillo is listed as the starting tight end coming into Saturday's game.

The Charger defense features just two senior starters, but is also a group that knows how to make game-changing plays.

Junior Tom Korte returns as the starting linebacker. Korte was the team's MVP last season and led the GLIAC with 134 total tackles in 2006. Senior Jared Kell was among the conference leaders in both interceptions and fumble recoveries, and is joined by cornerback Josh Hutchison as the unit's only senior starters.

Junior Eric Weber was Hillsdale's Defensive Lineman of the Year in 2006, and has been among the best players at pressuring the quarterback. The Chargers have several starting-quality players along the defensive front, beyond the other top three of Jordan Knudsen, Mark Yassay and Drew Berube.

Gannon will debut a new coaching staff with this game, led by first-year head coach Jim Kiernan. He previously served as the offensive coordinator at Saginaw Valley State University, where he helped guide a Cardinals offense that was annually among the best in Division II. SVSU won two GLIAC regular season titles while Kiernan was on staff.

## Charger football team picked 9th in GLIAC preseason coaches poll

July 30, 2007 - The Hillsdale College football team was picked to finish ninth in the 2007 GLIAC preseason coaches' poll, released Monday afternoon as part of the conference's football media day, held at the Bay Valley Resort, just outside of Saginaw.

The ninth-place projection was one spot lower than what Hillsdale had been picked in the preseason polls in 2005 and 2006. Hillsdale finished last season tied for seventh in the GLIAC with a 5-5 conference record. The Chargers received 61 voting points in this year's poll, 13 ahead of 10th-place Northern Michigan and 11 behind eighth-place Ashland University.

Two-time defending Division II national champion Grand Valley was once again picked by the GLIAC coaches for first place. The Lakers received 12 of a possible 13 first-place votes, with the remaining vote going to second-place Northwood.

Hillsdale does not play either Grand Valley or Northwood this season.

The media day was the final one for Gannon and Mercyhurst as part of the conference. Both schools are leaving the GLIAC to join the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference in the fall of 2008. Tiffin University, which will join the GLIAC also next fall, was represented at media day by its head coach and sports information director.

Hillsdale's 2007 season opens on Saturday, Sept. 1 with a home game against Gannon University at Muddy Waters Field.