



2009 GLIAC Softball Preview

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Ferris State Picked to Win 2009 GLIAC Softball Title

Wayne State Places Second, Saginaw Valley State Finishes Third in Preseason Balloting

BAY CITY, Mich. -- The head softball coaches of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) chose Ferris State University to win the league's 2009 championship.

Ferris State, a participant in the 2008 NCAA Division II Softball Championships, received six of nine possible first-place votes and tallied 78 points. The Bulldogs edged out Wayne State University, who received two first-place votes and tallied 72 points. Ferris earned the No. 2 seed in the 2008 GLIAC Tournament after tying for the league's best regular season record (16-4). The Bulldogs finished in a tie for fifth at the NCAA Championships in their third appearance.

Wayne State and Saginaw Valley State University each received two first place votes to finish second and third with 72 points and 67 points, respectively. Wayne State was the No. 1 seed in the 2008 GLIAC tournament and finished runner-up when is lost to Saginaw Valley in the championship game. Ferris State, Wayne State, and Saginaw Valley State all advanced to the 2008 Great Lakes Regional Tournament.

Grand Valley State University recorded 55 points to place fourth in the polls. Ashland University sits in fifth place with a total of 53 points.

Northwood University placed sixth in the poll with 37 points. In its first full season in the GLIAC, Tiffin University finished seventh, having recorded 29 points. Hillsdale College placed eighth in the poll with 25 points, while the University of Findlay tallied 20 points and finished ninth. Lake Superior State University rounded out the poll in tenth place with a total of 14 points.

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

The 2009 GLIAC postseason softball tournament is slated for May 1-3 in Midland, Mich. All games will be played at Emerson Park.

GLIAC softball teams open the 2009 conference season on March 21, when Ashland plays at Tiffin.

2009 GLIAC Softball Preseason Coaches' Poll

Rank	School (first-place votes)	Points
1.	Ferris State (6)	78
2.	Wayne State (2)	72
3.	Saginaw Valley State (2)	67
4.	Grand Valley State	55
5.	Ashland	53
6.	Northwood	37
7.	Tiffin	29
8.	Hillsdale	25
9.	Findlay	20
10.	Lake Superior State	14

2008 GLIAC Softball Final Standings

Place	School	GLIAC (Overall)
* 1.	Saginaw Valley State	14-6 (34-17)
* 2.	Wayne State*	16-4 (35-18)
3.	Ferris State	16-4 (35-18)
4.	Ashland	13-7 (29-17)
5.	Grand Valley State	12-8 (27-16)
6.	Northwood	10-10 (23-26)
t7.	Gannon	7-13 (28-23)
t7.	Mercyhurst	7-13 (25-30)
t9.	Findlay	6-14 (11-30)
t9.	Hillsdale	6-14 (13-37)
11.	Lake Superior State	3-17 (9-31)
#	Tiffin	(27-14-1)
# -	<i>Independent Division II Overall Record</i>	

* - Positions based on conference tournament finish.
All other positions based on combination of regular season and tournament records.

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The following are season previews on each of the GLIAC's Ten Softball Teams:

Ashland Eagles

Head Coach: Sheilah Gulas

24th Season (625-330)

Last Season: (29-17, 13-7 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	7	5

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Erica Miller	OF	So
(08' "GLIAC Freshman of the Year")		
Shannon Gray	P/1B	Sr
Logan Hursey	P	So

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Emlyn Knerem	P	Fr
(2nd Team All-Ohio)		
Alyssa Kelly	3B	Fr
Carrie Hosier	2B	Fr

Outlook:

The Eagles hope some newcomers can provide instant help. On the mound, Emlyn Knerem will have the opportunity to pitch major innings. If she can do that, the Eagles should have a strong one-two punch on the mound because of the return of sophomore Logan Hursey. Outfielder Erica Miller is the top returning offensive threat. She hit .363 a year ago and was the GLIAC freshman of the year. Senior Shannon Gray pitched and played the outfield last season, but will probably be stationed at first base this year. She hit well in limited action and will get more at bats in 2009. The biggest question is the infield, where the Eagles will have an entirely new cast of characters. The Eagles must also solidify the catching spot.

Ferris State Bulldogs

Head Coach: Keri Becker

12th Season (348-227-1)

Last Season: (35-18, 16-4 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	11	9

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Amanda Jager	1B	Sr
(08' 1st Team All-GLIAC / 2nd Team All-Region)		
Holly Bruntjens	P/UTL	Sr
(08' 2nd Team All-GLIAC / Great Lakes Regional MVP / Regional All-Tournament Team)		
Sarah Mueller	P/UTL	Sr
(08' 1st Team All-GLIAC / 2nd Team All-Region / Regional All-Tournament Team)		
Krystle Bailey	C	Sr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Amanda Harrington	2B	Jr
(08' 2nd Team All-GLIAC)		

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Makenzi Peterson	UTL	Fr
(08' All-State Selection)		
Shannon Roney	P/3B	Sr

Outlook:

Ferris State has its sights set on making a return NCAA Division II Softball Championship appearance as the Bulldogs will field an experienced and talented team in 2009 consisting of eight upperclassmen. Headlining the list of returnees for the 2008 NCAA-II Great Lakes Regional Champions are four seniors - Amanda Jager (.354, 7 HR, 31 RBI, 51 hits), Holly Bruntjens (15-9, 1.68 ERA, 149.2 IP, 85 K's), Sarah Mueller (.325, 3 HR, 29 RBI, 54 hits, 16-7, 1.75 ERA, 147.2 IP, 69 K's), and Krystle Bailey (.253, 2 HR, 24 RBI, 39 hits). Amanda Harrington (.325, 2 HR, 19 RBI, 49 hits) was also among six Bulldogs to earn all-conference plaudits a season ago. Head coach Keri Becker, the 2008 GLIAC Coach of the Year and FSU's all-time winningest coach, believes anything less than a top spot in the GLIAC will be disappointment considering the level of talent and experience on the 2009 FSU squad.

Findlay Oilers

Head Coach: Ron Ammons

7th Season (77-193)

Last Season: (11-30, 6-14 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	16	8

Top Returners:

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
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Katie Ammons	OF	Jr
(08' 1st Team All-GLIAC)		
Jeanne Hilvers	IF	Sr
(07' & 08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Audrey Semanco	C	Sr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Lauren Orban	P	So
Jaccie Tufts	IF	Sr

Top Newcomers:

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
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Amanda Kern	IF	Sr
(1st / 2nd Team All-NLL / All-County)		
Jaci Messmer	OF	Sr
(1st Team All-League / District)		
Brittany Dauterman	P	Fr
(1st Team All-Ohio / SLL "Player of the Year")		

Outlook:

The Oilers will be able to rely on some valuable leadership with eight seniors and five juniors on their roster. Junior outfielder Katie Ammons returns after being named First Team All-GLIAC last season while senior catcher Audrey Semanco and senior first basemen Jeanne Hilvers racked up honorable mention status. Findlay has returners at six positions as well as four transfers to help the Oilers improve on their ninth place finish in the GLIAC last season.

Grand Valley State Lakers

Head Coach: Doug Woods

20th Season (672-301-3)

Last Season: (27-16, 12-8 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	10	5

Top Returners:

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
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Lori Andjelich	P	Sr
Nichole Woityra	SS	Jr
(08' 2nd Team All-GLIAC)		
Breanne Kronberg	C/1B	Jr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Rebecca Plummer	P/UT	Jr

Top Newcomers:

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
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Andrea Nicholson	P	Fr
Carli Raisutis	C/1B	Fr

Outlook:

The Lakers are coming off of a 27-16 season in which they placed fifth in the GLIAC. While GVSU lost its top four hitters, it returns 10 letterwinners and five starters, led by senior shortstop Nichole Woityra and juniors Breanne Kronberg and Rebecca Plummer. On the mound, the Lakers feature senior Lori Andjelich, who ranks third in program history in strikeouts and eighth in wins. Grand Valley State hit .315 as a team last season with a .469 slugging percentage, as Plummer (.328) and Woityra (.324) hit well over .300. The Lakers open their season at the NTC Spring Games Tournament in Clermont, Florida from Feb. 28 to March 8 and will take on perennial powers Tampa and Winona State within their first 10 games.

Hillsdale Chargers

Head Coach: Jamie Meyers

2nd Season (13-37)

Last Season: (13-37, 6-14 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	9	6

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Devon Trimmer	OF	Jr
Kellie Hirst	P/OF	So
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Jordan Kellie	IF	So
Britt Sevey	OF	Sr
Dana Gould	OF	Sr

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Jessica Guertin	C	Fr
Laura Homan	P	Fr
Allison Hetrick	OF	Fr

Outlook:

Chargers head coach Jamie Meyers enters her second season in leading the program, and has brought in a solid freshman class to complement the team's returning starters. Freshmen Laura Homan and Jessica Guertin figure to have big impacts on the team's pitching staff and hitting lineup, respectively. The entire outfield returns, with Devon Trimmer, Dana Gould and Britt Sevey combining for eight years of starting experience between the three of them. Sophomore Kellie Hirst carried a big load both on offense and on the mound last year and figures to anchor the team's lineup. Sophomore Jordan Kellie can play both shortstop and catcher, and is one of the team's best defensive players.

Lake Superior State Lakers

Head Coach: Don Myers

20th Season (221-596-1)

Last Season: (9-31, 3-17 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	9	6

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Rachel Hall	LF	Sr
Nikki Christensen	P/OF	Sr
Helena Zandarski	OF	Sr
Lacey Knoop	IF	Jr
Nicole Dunford	C	Jr

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Samantha Klinker	1B	Fr
(08' Division I 1st Team All-State)		
Jillian Willette	P	Fr

Outlook:

LSSU returns six starters, including base hits leaders Rachel Hall and Nicole Dunford, and No. 1 pitcher Nikki Christensen in 2009. Hall, a senior outfielder, led the Lakers in hits with 30 and batted .265 last season, while Dunford, a junior catcher, had 28 hits and batted .252. Dunford was also LSSU's leader in RBIs with 14. Christensen, a senior, was 4-15 with a 4.42 earned run average in 2008. The Lakers also return junior first baseman/designated hitter Amber Kern, junior middle infielder Lacey Knoop and senior outfielder Helena Zandarski. Don Myers is entering his 20th season as LSSU's head coach.

Northwood Timberwolves
Head Coach: Meaggan Pettipiece
3rd Season (43-49)
Last Season: (23-26, 10-10 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	13	11

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Alyssa Eppler	C	Sr
Michelle Boscola	IF	Jr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Tiffany Melgoza	OF	So
Alicia Brandenburg	P	Sr
Sheena Smith	P	Jr

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Andrea Dieterle		
Andrea Martin		

Outlook:

Expectations are high heading into the 2009 softball season for the Northwood Timberwolves. Northwood returns 11 starters while losing just two regular players from last season's squad that went 10-10 in GLIAC play. Alyssa Eppler and Michelle Boscola will lead the way for the Northwood offense, while Alicia Brandenburg and the return of Sheena Smith will be the key pitchers for the Timberwolves this season.

Saginaw Valley State Cardinals
Head Coach: Everett Roper
14th Season (190-192-2)
Last Season: (34-17, 14-6 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	16	8

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Stacy Kraatz	UTL	Sr
(08' GLIAC "Player of the Year", 1st Team All-GLIAC / 2nd Team All-Region)		
Angela Kaiser	OF	Jr
(08' 2nd Team All-GLIAC / HM All-Region)		
Nicole Fick	IF	Sr
(08' 1st Team All-GLIAC)		
Vanessa Briggs	IF	Sr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Jade Fulton	P	So
(08' 2nd Team All-GLIAC)		

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Ashley Cofin	IF	Fr
Monica Gathright	OF	Jr
Sarah Sheffer	UTL	Jr

Outlook:

Saginaw Valley State University will look to build upon their extremely successful 2008 season in which they captured their first GLIAC Title since 1990 and made their first appearance in the NCAA Regional's since 2000. The Cardinals will return almost every starter from last seasons squad; including reigning GLIAC Player of the Year Stacy Kraatz. The Cardinals will also boast a lineup that returns seven of nine starters from the end of the 2008 campaign and will also welcome back former starting catcher Jessica Anhel behind the plate after missing most of last season. SVSU is going to look to attack teams this year with strong pitching, as they return all three starting pitchers from last season. Sophomore Jade Fulton will look to improve on a season in which she broke a saves record that had stood at University Center for over 26 seasons.

Tiffin Dragons

Head Coach: Jeff Nickerson

7th Season (167-128)

Last Season: (24-17-1, Independent)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	12	7

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Krista Sowers	P	Sr
(08' 1st Team All-Independent)		
Cyla Hawkins	SS	Sr
(08' 1st Team All-Independent)		
Tiffany Smith	3B	So
(08' 2nd Team All Great Lakes Region)		
Kellie Kitchen	P	So
(08' 2nd Team All-Independent)		
Jessica Ramirez	OF	Sr

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Meagan Baird	SS	Fr
(Canadian National All-Star)		
Lauren Mazzuca	2B	Fr
Jessie Creakbaum	OF	Fr

Outlook:

The Tiffin University softball team enters the 2008-09 season in a new conference and with a new coach. Head Coach Jeff Nickerson will take over the reins for a Lady Dragons squad that went 27-14 last season. Coach Nickerson will be leading the team into uncharted territory, as Tiffin will be competing for the first time as a member of the GLIAC. Last year's squad went 6-4 against GLIAC foes, marking the ninth straight year the team has won at least 27 games and a .500 or better winning percentage. The Lady Dragons feature a balanced team of decorated veterans and talented newcomers. Senior shortstop Cyla Hawkins returns after being named the 2008 All-ICAA Player of the Year. Hawkins hit .413 and collected 22 RBIs last season while leading the team with 59 hits. Third baseman Tiffany Smith returns after an injury-shortened freshman campaign which saw her play only 23 games. Despite missing significant time, Smith managed to lead the team with a .493 batting average and was named to the All-Great Lakes Region Second Team. The pitching staff will be led by two All-Independent team award recipients, senior Krista Sowers and sophomore Kellie Kitchen. Sowers went 16-5 last year with a 3.23 ERA and struck out 145 batters in 153.2 innings of work. Kitchen was 11-9 with a 2.70 ERA, and held opposing batters to a .249 average.

Wayne State Warriors

Head Coach: Gary Bryce

28th Season (885-561-6)

Last Season: (35-18, 16-4 GLIAC)



	<u>Players</u>	<u>Starters</u>
Returners:	10	5

Top Returners:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Stephanie LeClair	OF	Jr
Casey Hanes	P	Jr
(06' NFCA Third Team All-American)		
Sarah Teller	OF	Sr
Jaci Banton	SS	Jr
(08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		
Lisa Seymour	2B	Sr
(07'/08' Honorable Mention All-GLIAC)		

Top Newcomers:	<u>Position</u>	<u>Year</u>
Sam Cain	P/IF	Fr
Brittany Omelanchuk	1B/3B	Fr
Alison Allen	IF/OF	Fr

Outlook:

Gary Bryce begins his 28th year leading the Warrior softball program with a balanced squad of veterans and recruits. Ten players will return from the 2008 squad which was the GLIAC co-Champion (16-4) and advanced to the NCAA Great Lakes Regional tournament for the third consecutive year. Of the 10 members returning there are five seniors, four juniors and one sophomore—Rachel Spaccarotelli (Ray, Mich.). Nine of the 10 were letterwinners last year, except for redshirt junior Casey Hanes (Richmond, Va.). Seven newcomers join the roster as freshmen including catcher Dani Williams (Monroe, Mich.), pitcher Sam Cain (Taylor, Mich.) and first/third baseman Brittany Omelanchuk (Brooklin, Ont.). Other first-year players are Alison Allen (Redford, Mich.), Becca Ryan (Westland, Mich.), Rebecca Stanley (Waterloo, Ont.) and Kristin Susalla (Garden City, Mich.).