



Wittenberg University Men's Basketball

CONTACT: Ryan Maurer
Sports Information Director
Office: (937) 327-6114
Home: (937) 342-1654



For Immediate Release
Written: Jan. 23, 2002

Tigers make long trip to Wabash for important NCAC showdown

Wittenberg University (15-2, 8-0 NCAC) at Wabash College (7-9, 4-4 NCAC)

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2002 • 7:30 p.m. • Chadwick Court

<u>Probable WC Starters:</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Ht.</u>	<u>PPG</u>	<u>RPG</u>	<u>APG</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
G David Wagner	Fr.	6-0	1.9	1.4	1.4	Belleville, Ill./Belleville
G Brady Claxton	So.	6-1	16.4	3.0	3.0	Shelbyville, Ind./Shelbyville
F Joe DesJean	Jr.	6-6	17.6	10.1	1.7	Indianapolis, Ind./Perry Meridian
F James Bartlett	So.	6-4	3.6	1.8	1.1	Louisville, Ky./DuPont Manual
C Ryan Short	Jr.	6-5	11.9	4.6	1.6	Indianapolis, Ind./Perry Meridian
<u>Probable WU Starters:</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Ht.</u>	<u>PPG</u>	<u>RPG</u>	<u>APG</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
G Greg Rustad	Sr.	5-10	9.3	2.6	2.1	Lakewood, Ohio/Lakewood
G Mark Borland	So.	5-9	8.9	3.0	4.7	Kettering, Ohio/Alter
F Chad Mossing	Sr.	6-4	10.4	1.9	1.1	Maumee, Ohio/Holland Springfield
F Kevin Longley	Jr.	6-7	9.8	7.7	1.7	Vandalia, Ohio/Butler
C B.J. Harris	Jr.	6-8	12.8	8.1	1.7	Riverside, Ohio/Stebbins

SETTING THE SCENE:

The Wittenberg University Tigers, ranked No. 12 in the nation by d3hoops.com and No. 10 in the nation by Basketball America, hit the road again for the first time in 10 days as they square off with North Coast Athletic Conference rival Wabash. The Tigers, off to an 15-2 start (8-0 in the NCAC) following last Saturday's 100-69 victory over Denison, will square off with a Little Giants squad that is 7-9 and 4-4 in the NCAC.

Wittenberg, the winningest men's basketball program in NCAA Division III history, is off to another tremendous start as the Tigers are already almost assured of extending a phenomenal string of 45 consecutive non-losing seasons. Coming off a 24-4 season a year ago in which they won the NCAC regular season championship and advanced to the NCAA Division III regional semifinals, Wittenberg features a balanced, deep offensive attack. Junior center **B.J. Harris** leads three players averaging double figures in points with 12.8 per game, and he also tops the squad with 8.1 rebounds per outing.

Joining Harris in double figures in scoring are sophomore forward **Peter Walker** and senior forward **Chad Mossing**, who are averaging 10.1 and 10.4 points per game respectively. On the boards, junior forward **Kevin Longley** is pulling down 7.7 and Walker is averaging 6.3 per outing. In terms of assists, sophomore guard Mark Borland has a team-best 81, good for an average of 4.7 per game.

Wabash is still struggling for an identity in 2001-02, in part due to a lack of quality and consistent depth. The Little Giants, led by returning All-NCAC selection Joe DesJean and his double-double average of 17.6 points and 10.1 rebounds per game, are off to a 7-9 start, including a 4-4 mark in the NCAC coming off a surprising setback at Oberlin last Saturday. Eleven different players have started at least one game for Wabash in 2001-02, with only three —

Brady Claxton, Joe DesJean and Ryan Short — in the starting lineup regularly.

THE COACHES:

A 1973 Wittenberg graduate, **Bill Brown** is in his ninth season as the Tigers' head coach with a record of 195-49 (.799). His overall record is 255-148 (.633), including stops at Wooster and Kenyon. Brown's Wittenberg teams have made five NCAA Division III tournament appearances, won three NCAC regular season titles and two NCAC tournament championships. He has been named NCAC Coach of the Year three times (1986, '94 and '01).

Joining him on the sidelines tonight is Wabash's **Mac Petty**, who is in his 26th season as the team's leader. He has a record of 350-281 at Wabash and is just two wins away from 400 for his career (398-309 in 29 seasons). Petty was the Division III Coach of the Year in 1981-82 after leading Wabash to the NCAA championship.

COACHING LANDMARKS:

Wittenberg Head Coach **Bill Brown** is steaming toward several milestones. He recently coached his 400th career game and won his 250 career game. By season's end, he likely will reach 200 wins at Wittenberg, a feat accomplished by just one Tiger head man previously — Larry Hunter, the school's leader in wins with 305 from 1977-89.

REBOUNDS GALORE:

The Tigers, who led the nation in rebounding margin a year ago and weren't beaten on the boards in a regular season game, are once again dominating in that area. Wittenberg is garnering 13.3 more caroms than their foes, a total that ranks among the best in the nation.

A year ago, the Tigers were beaten by just one team in the rebounding category — Ohio Northern in a 76-62 defeat in the NCAA Division III

tournament regional semifinals. This year, just one team has outbounded Wittenberg — Otterbein on Jan. 2 in a 73-64 win over the Tigers at the HPER Center.

POINTED IMPROVEMENT:

A year after leading the team in both assists and turnovers, **Mark Borland** has made significant strides not only distributing the basketball from his point guard position but also taking care of it. He leads the NCAC in assist/turnover ratio with an outstanding 81 assists to 37 turnovers. A year ago, Borland finished with 91 assists and 66 turnovers.

WITTENBERG/WABASH SERIES:

Wittenberg leads the series 15-4, including a 5-2 mark since the Little Giants joined the NCAC prior to the 1999-2000 season. The Tigers won the first meeting this season, 90-69, at the HPER Center in Springfield. **B.J. Harris** had one of his six double-doubles this season with 16 points and 10 rebounds. **Kevin Longley** chipped in with 11 points and nine boards, and **Peter Walker** came off the bench to score 21 points and pull down seven rebounds in just 16 minutes.

RADIO:

WBLY (AM 1600) carries all Wittenberg men's basketball games, with the Voice of the Tigers, **Marty Bannister**, calling the action.

ON THE WEB:

Wittenberg's World Wide Web site offers up-to-date information on all Tiger athletic teams. Scores, results, statistics, news releases and boxscores are available by visiting Wittenberg's athletics home page www5.wittenberg.edu/news/athletics. Wittenberg also offers Internet broadcasts of various sporting events carried by WBLY. Just click on www5.wittenberg.edu/news/athletics/broadcast.html.