



Wittenberg Men's Basketball 2001-02 Season in Review

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SETTING THE SCENE: The Wittenberg University men's basketball program enjoyed another outstanding season in 2001-02. The Tigers went back-to-back in capturing a second consecutive outright North Coast Athletic Conference regular season championship. The Tigers compiled a 15-1 league mark and then added the NCAC tournament title to their impressive season-long resume of accomplishments. Along the conference tournament trail, the Tigers defeated three very competitive conference rivals (Earlham, Ohio Wesleyan, Wooster) for the third time in one season.

Overall, Wittenberg finished with a record of 26-4. Besides the NCAC regular season and tournament titles, the Tigers also captured the Kiwanis-Wittenberg Holiday Classic with wins over Illinois College and NAIA scholarship program Marian College (Ind.). Wittenberg also participated in the NCAA Division III tournament, defeating Franklin College in a first round home game before falling on the road at DePauw University, a top-ranked team that went on to the regional finals. The Tigers added on to their national record of most NCAA DIII tournament appearances (21) and most DIII tournament victories (42).

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SUPER SENIORS: Chad Mossing (Maumee, Ohio/Holland Springfield), Brian Gratsch (Madeira, Ohio/Madeira) and Greg Rustad (Lakewood, Ohio/Lakewood) were the heart and soul of this year's basketball team. This senior threesome compiled a sparkling four-year record of 87-23.

Mossing and Rustad started all 30 games for the Tigers this season with Gratsch serving as an important substitute in each game. Mossing averaged 7.9 points per game and canned 57 three-point shots, the second-highest total on the team. Rustad, a second team All-NCAC selection, averaged 8.4 points per game, shooting an outstanding 43 percent from behind the three-point arc (52-of-122) and 80 percent from the free throw line (40-of-50). Rustad was also recognized as the squad's Co-Defensive Player of the Year. Gratsch, hailed by head coach Bill Brown as perhaps the best defensive post player he has coached, was the other Co-Defensive Player of the Year selection. In addition, Gratsch received the Tiger Coaches Award for outstanding team leadership.

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A BRIGHT FUTURE: The 10-player rotation that Brown has employed during his nine-year tenure at Wittenberg generally insures the return of a good nucleus of experienced players. Junior post players B.J. Harris (Riverside, Ohio/Stebbins) and Kevin Longley (Vandalia, Ohio/Butler) will lead the charge in 2002-03.

Both players started every game in 2001-02. Harris led the team in several categories including scoring (12.6), rebounding (8.5) and free throws attempted (110). Harris was named first-team All-NCAC and was selected as the Most Valuable Player in the NCAC tournament and the Kiwanis-Wittenberg Holiday Classic. Longley, a second team All-NCAC selection for a second straight year, was second on the team in scoring (9.7), rebounding (6.7) and free throws attempted (102).

Other underclassmen expected to return next year are sophomores Mark Borland (Kettering, Ohio/Alter), Peter Walker (Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier) and Rod Emmons (South Bend, Ind./Adams). Borland started all 30 games at the point guard position and led the team in assists and steals while ranking among the league leaders in assists-to-turnover ratio. Walker was highly productive off the bench despite a midseason shoulder injury, finishing the year as the team's third leading scorer (8.9) and rebounder (5.5). Emmons, an outstanding long distance shooter, led the team in three-point field goals made (60) while shooting an excellent 44 percent from behind the arc. Freshmen letterwinners expected back are guard Danny Bryuczynski (Dayton, Ohio/Northmont) and wing Andy Bucheit (Cincinnati, Ohio/LaSalle), both of whom played in every game.

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CONFERENCE COMPETITION: The Tigers led the NCAC in scoring offense (80.3 points per game), scoring defense (62.3 points per game), three-point field goals made per game (8.7), three-point field goal percentage (41.7%), opponents field goal percentage defense (39.3%), and rebound margin (+12.4). The Tigers' outstanding rebounding margin enabled them to finish No. 1 among all NCAA Division III teams for the second consecutive year in rebound differential.

Because the trademark of this Tiger team was outstanding balance, there were only a few players ranking high in individual conference statistical categories and none in any national standings. Harris finished third in rebounding (8.5 per game), fourth in field goal percentage (56 percent), and 11th in scoring (12.6 per game). Kevin Longley ranked eighth in rebounding (6.7 per game). Rod Emmons ranked second in total three-point field goals made (60) and second in three-point field goal percentage (45%).

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INDIVIDUAL HONORS: B.J. Harris was honored with a first team All-NCAC and second-team All-Great Lakes Region after the season and was also recognized as the team's Most Valuable Player. Kevin Longley was a second team All-NCAC selection. Greg Rustad was also se-

lected to the all-conference second team and was named a team Co-Defensive Player of the Year. Senior Brian Gratsch was recognized as a team Co-Defensive Player of the Year and the winner of the Tiger Coaches Award for outstanding team leadership. Sophomore Rod Emmons was selected as this year's Most Improved Player.

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THE COACH: Head Coach Bill Brown (Wittenberg '73) completed his ninth season at the helm of his alma mater's basketball program. Brown's teams at Wittenberg have compiled an overall record of 206-51 for an .800 winning percentage. This season's 26-4 overall mark continues one of the most amazing winning season streaks in all of college sports. Wittenberg has not had a losing season since 1953-54 and has averaged more than 21 wins per season during that time and more than 22 per year since Brown took the reins in 1993-94.

The Tigers have now won five outright NCAC regular season championships and advanced to six NCAA Division III national tournaments in Brown's nine years. His teams have an 11-6 record in NCAA competition with a Final Four appearance in 1994 and an Elite Eight appearance in 1996.

2001-02 Wittenberg University Men's Basketball Results

Nov. 16	vs. Mt. Vernon Naz.	W, 69-66
Nov. 17	@ Wheaton	L, 72-77
Nov. 20	CASE WESTERN	W, 85-45
Nov. 27	@ Cedarville	W, 108-66
Dec. 1	@ Denison	W, 96-60
Dec. 5	WABASH	W, 90-69
Dec. 8	@ Allegheny	W, 72-66
Dec. 12	@ Urbana	W, 82-62
Dec. 22	@ Thomas More	W, 98-64
Dec. 28	ILLINOIS COLLEGE	W, 81-55
Dec. 29	MARIAN	W, 65-62
Jan. 2	OTTERBEIN	L, 64-73
Jan. 5	@ Oberlin	W, 103-53
Jan. 9	KENYON	W, 86-53
Jan. 12	@ Hiram	W, 91-51
Jan. 16	OHIO WESLEYAN	W, 70-68
Jan. 19	DENISON	W, 100-69
Jan. 23	@ Wabash	L, 65-77
Jan. 26	WOOSTER	W, 75-70
Jan. 30	@ Earlham	W, 70-38
Feb. 2	ALLEGHENY	W, 86-61
Feb. 6	@ Ohio Wesleyan	W, 67-64
Feb. 9	HIRAM	W, 103-60
Feb. 13	EARLHAM	W, 81-60
Feb. 16	@ Wooster	W, 68-66
Feb. 19	EARLHAM	W, 78-51
Feb. 22	OHIO WESLEYAN	W, 75-69
Feb. 23	WOOSTER	W, 58-57
Feb. 28	FRANKLIN	W, 75-44
March 2	@ DePauw	L, 76-89