



NORTH COAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

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ALLEGHENY COLLEGE ★ DENISON UNIVERSITY ★ EARLHAM COLLEGE ★ HIRAM COLLEGE ★ KENYON COLLEGE
OBERLIN COLLEGE ★ OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY ★ WABASH COLLEGE ★ WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY ★ COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

NCAC Softball Special

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ALLEGHENY VOTED PRESEASON FAVORITE IN 12TH NORTH COAST SOFTBALL SEASON

CLEVELAND -- 2008 NCAC champion Allegheny emerged as the preseason favorite in balloting by North Coast Athletic Conference softball coaches in their annual preseason poll.

The Gators, who last spring finished the regular season with an 11-3 league record, a 24-15 overall mark and their fourth NCAC crown, earned four of eight first-place votes from league coaches for 57 points. Hiram was voted second with 49 points and one first-place vote. Defending NCAC tournament champion Denison was predicted to finish third with 48 points and two first-place votes. Ohio Wesleyan was in fourth, with 47 points and the remaining first-place vote. Wittenberg (36), Kenyon (26), Wooster (17) and Oberlin (8) round out places five through eight.

Last spring the Gators earned their second NCAC title under the leadership of head coach **Sandra Sanford**, who is beginning her sixth season at Allegheny. She has accumulated an 106-89 (.544) record at the helm of the Gators. Heading the list of 2009 returnees are first-team All-NCAC performers senior **Rachel Ryan (West Salem, OH/Northwestern)** and sophomore **Marci Potuzko (Greensburg, PA/Hempfield Area)**. Ryan is a three-time first-team all-conference infielder who hit .409 last season. Potuzko, a catcher, was selected as the North Coast's Newcomer of the Year after she hit .447 for the champion Gators.

Since the North Coast began sponsoring softball as a championship sport, four schools have claimed championships: Allegheny in 1998, '99, '04 and '08, Denison in the years 2001-03 and 2006-07, Wittenberg in 2000 and Ohio Wesleyan in 2004 and '05. Denison also won the first two NCAC Softball Tournaments, which began in 2001 to help determine the league's automatic qualifier to the NCAA Tournament. DU also took conference tournament titles in 2006 and 2008. Wittenberg claimed the tourney title in 2003, followed by Allegheny in 2004, '05 and '07.

Founded in 1983, the North Coast Athletic Conference consists of 10 academically selective colleges and universities - Allegheny College, Denison University, Earlham College, Hiram College, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Wabash College, Wittenberg University and the College of Wooster. The NCAC sponsors 22 championship sports, 11 for men and 11 for women.

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2009 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll

First-place votes in parentheses, followed by total points:

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|---------------------------|----|
| 1. Allegheny (4)..... | 57 |
| 2. Hiram (1)..... | 49 |
| 3. Denison (2)..... | 48 |
| 4. Ohio Wesleyan (1)..... | 47 |
| 5. Wittenberg..... | 36 |
| 6. Kenyon..... | 26 |
| 7. Wooster..... | 17 |
| 8. Oberlin..... | 8 |