



Wittenberg University Women's Basketball

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For Immediate Release
Written: Feb. 21, 2002

Tigers host OWU, Allegheny, Earlham for NCAC Tourney Semis

Game 1: No. 2 Seed Ohio Wesleyan University (17-7, 13-3 NCAC) vs. No. 6 Seed Earlham College (11-14, 7-9 NCAC)

Thursday, Feb. 21, 2002 • 5:30 p.m. • HPER Center

Probable OWU Starters:	Yr.	Ht.	PPG	RPG	APG	Hometown/High School
G Talia Brader	Sr.	5-4	3.6	2.1	3.1	Westerville, Ohio/DeSales
G Michelle Wolfe	Sr.	5-9	8.8	4.3	2.1	Gahanna, Ohio/Lincoln
F Katy Sturtz	Sr.	5-11	16.2	10.2	2.9	Worthington, Ohio/Watterson
F Mindy Hammond	Jr.	5-11	13.9	7.2	3.2	Columbus, Ohio/DeSales
F Kelly Heil	Fr.	5-10	17.0	5.7	1.5	Sylvania, Ohio/Southview
Probable EC Starters:	Yr.	Ht.	PPG	RPG	APG	Hometown/High School
G Michelle Behler	So.	5-5	12.9	3.7	2.9	Cincinnati, Ohio/Finneytown
G Kim Patton	So.	5-8	6.8	2.7	2.7	Versailles, Ind./Milan
F Lindsey Chappell	So.	5-10	17.4	8.2	0.8	Highland, Ind./Highland
F Melissa Liffick	Jr.	5-10	9.1	5.5	2.4	Whiteland, Ind./Whiteland
F Summer Cress	So.	5-10	14.7	7.3	1.5	Fremont, Ind./Fremont

Game 2: No. 1 Seed Wittenberg University (20-5, 14-2 NCAC) vs. No. 4 Seed Allegheny College (15-10, 10-6 NCAC)

Thursday, Feb. 21, 2002 • 7:45 p.m. • HPER Center

Probable AC Starters:	Yr.	Ht.	PPG	RPG	APG	Hometown/High School
G Jessica Kankowski	So.	5-9	17.0	7.1	2.1	Bend, Ore./West Linn
G Jamie Parone	So.	5-5	10.6	2.8	2.9	Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Beaumont
F Alyssa Hinkle	Sr.	5-11	9.2	9.0	2.5	Westerville, Ohio/Olentangy
F Meredith McDonough	Fr.	5-11	7.9	5.8	0.7	Taylor Mill, Ky./Scott
F Michelle Popovec	Sr.	6-0	10.5	7.5	0.2	Maumee, Ohio/Toledo St. Ursula
Probable WU Starters:	Yr.	Ht.	PPG	RPG	APG	Hometown/High School
G Meghan Gaydos	Sr.	5-5	4.0	1.4	1.6	Concord, Ohio/Mentor Lake Catholic
G Stephanie Campbell	Jr.	5-7	11.8	4.2	2.4	South Charleston, Ohio/Southeastern
G Kate Rolf	Jr.	5-7	13.2	4.8	2.1	Ft. Wayne, Ind./Carroll
F Jill Swary	Sr.	5-10	4.7	3.7	0.4	Columbus, Ohio/Grandview
F Tiffany Keller	Jr.	5-10	9.4	3.8	0.8	Massillon, Ohio/Tuslaw

SETTING THE SCENE:

The Wittenberg University Tigers play host to the North Coast Athletic Conference semifinals and finals, starting Thursday, Feb. 21, thanks to a first-place finish in the regular season. The Tigers finished 14-2 in NCAC action and carry a 20-5 overall mark into a challenging semifinal match-up opposite a hot Allegheny Gators team that defeated Wittenberg on its home court on Feb. 2, 78-69.

The first semifinal game is an intriguing one and a re-match of last year's NCAC tournament championship game. Defending champion Ohio Wesleyan, the No. 2 seed in this year's competition, squares off with an improving No. 6 seeded Earlham Quakers team that is dangerous when healthy, which they now appear to be. The Bishops arrived in the semifinals by virtue of a hard-fought home win over Oberlin on Tuesday, while Earlham took to the road to upend No. 3 seed Denison 72-71 in overtime on the same night.

The Tigers have played well against a difficult schedule, losing to nationally ranked Wisconsin-Oshkosh by 12 points, nationally ranked

Capital on the road by six, perennial powerhouse Defiance on the road by five, defending NCAC titlist Ohio Wesleyan on the road by two, and defending NCAC regular season co-champion Allegheny by nine. The combined record of those five opponents is 92-34 and all five teams are still alive in their respective conference championship tournaments.

Wittenberg is led by junior guard **Kate Rolf**, who tops the team in scoring for a second straight year with a 13.2 points per game average while averaging a team-best 24.0 minutes per game. The balanced team — 12 players are averaging at least 10 minutes per game — is led in rebounding by sophomore forward **Geri Woessner** and Rolf with 4.8 boards per game each. As a team, Wittenberg is topping its opponents by 9.4 boards per game, good for first in the NCAC and ninth in the nation.

Also scoring in double figures for Wittenberg is junior guard **Stephanie Campbell**, who posted 21 points against Wooster on Tuesday. Also providing key offensive threats are junior forward **Tiffany Keller** with 9.4 points per outing, and junior forward **Meghan Bruggeman**, who

has come on strong of late, including a career-high 20-point performance against Wooster on Feb. 9.

Allegheny is healthy and playing its best basketball of the season, having won six of its last seven games, including a 73-60 win over Kenyon on Tuesday. The Gators, a strong inside team, provides a very challenging match-up for the Tigers, who are a guard-oriented team. Three players average double-figures for the Gators, led by sophomore guard Jessica Kankowski's 17.0 and 7.1 rebounds per game. All five starters average at least 7.9 points per game.

Ohio Wesleyan heads into the NCAC semifinals on a roll as well, winners of four straight and owners of a 16-3 record since a loss at Thomas More on Nov. 28, 2001. The Bishops, who are led by 2001 NCAC women's basketball and women's soccer Player of the Year Katy Sturtz, swept Allegheny and Earlham during the regular season and split with Wittenberg.

Earlham is a threat, in part thanks to the relative health of sophomore leading scorer Lindsey Chappell, who has played in just 13 games this year. The Quakers concluded the



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regular season on a three-game losing streak, but they defeated Denison on Tuesday. The Quakers were swept by the other three semifinal participants, including the host Tigers, who beat the Quakers three times, including once in the consolation game of the Kalamazoo Tip-Off Tournament on Nov. 17, 2001.

THE COACHES:

A 1982 Wittenberg graduate, **Pam Smith** is in her 16th season as the Tigers' head coach with a record of 300-128 (.701), all with her alma mater. Smith's teams have made six NCAA Division III tournament appearances and have won eight NCAC regular season titles and five NCAC tournament championships. She has been named NCAC Coach of the Year three times (1991, '92 and '95) and Converse District Coach of the Year in 1993.

Patrolling the sidelines for Allegheny is **Jennifer Reimer**, who 35-16 in two seasons leading the Gators. Reimer's career mark, which includes two years at Mount Union and one at Juniata, is 72-51.

Ohio Wesleyan is led by first-year Head Coach **Liana Coutts**, who has guided the Bishops, a Final Four participant a year ago under longtime coach Nan Carney-DeBord, to a 17-7 record thus far in 2001. She is a 1989 Ohio State University graduate.

Rounding out the semifinal coaching quartet is Earlham's **Jeannine Ruh**, a former Wittenberg assistant under Smith who has guided the Quakers to a 52-76 record in five years at the helm. A 1987 Otterbein College graduate, Ruh's career record, including three years at Haverford, is 72-125.

COACHING MILESTONE:

Wittenberg Head Coach **Pam Smith** won her 300th career game on Tuesday against Wooster. No other coach in Wittenberg history has won more than 50 games in a career.

Just 21 women's basketball coaches at the NCAA Division III level had won 300 games in their career heading into this season and Smith stood tied for 26th among active Division III coaches in total victories at that time.

Smith now has a career record of 300 wins and 128 losses in 16 seasons as the Tigers' head coach. Since taking over a struggling Wittenberg program prior to the 1986-87 season, Smith has guided the Tigers to ten 20-win seasons, six appearances in the NCAA tournament and eight NCAC regular season championships. The team enjoyed a breakout 1989-90 season by going 26-

3 and winning the NCAC in its first season as a league member, and since that time the Tigers have posted 13 straight winning seasons. Wittenberg has never finished lower than third in an NCAC regular season.

A 1999 Wittenberg Athletic Hall of Honor inductee, Smith was recognized after the game with a proclamation from the Mayor of Cincinnati, her hometown. The 1978 Greenhills High School graduate was a record-setting forward at Wittenberg during her playing days, a three-time team Most Valuable Player and an Academic All-America selection. She still holds the record for scoring average in a season at Wittenberg.

The university's associate athletics director and senior women's administrator, Smith has not only coached basketball but she has survived several bouts with cancer without missing a game.

"I don't worry about the number of wins or anything like that," Smith said. "Primarily, 300 wins means I've been around here a long time. I've had so many great players and so many great assistant coaches. They're all a part of 300 wins that I get credit for.

"I've been so fortunate to be a part of this program and to have worked with so many great people. This is a team game and every one of those wins was a result of that emphasis."

TOUGH AT HOME:

The Tigers are a perfect 12-0 in the HPER Center, including a 7-0 mark in regular season NCAC action. It's the third time that Wittenberg finished perfect in the HPER Center, adding to the 1989-90 and 1994-95 seasons.

ON THE NATIONAL SCENE:

The Tigers are among the national leaders in three statistical categories. Wittenberg stands ninth in the latest NCAA figures in rebounding margin at 9.6 per game (not including Tuesday's game against Wooster), 13th in scoring margin (18.3) and 15th in scoring offense (75.6).

IN THE NCAC:

The Tigers lead the conference in scoring offense (75.6), scoring defense (57.3), scoring margin (+18.3), rebounding defense (35.5), rebounding margin (+9.6) and offensive rebounds (17.08).

TIGERS VS. NCAC SEMIFINAL OPPONENTS:

Wittenberg holds an advantage in the all-time series against the other three NCAC semifinal participants. The Tigers' semifinal opponent, Allegheny, has been dominated by the

Tigers overall (22-4 Wittenberg advantage) but has had the upper hand in the last two years, winning three of the last four. Last year, Allegheny swept the series for the first time ever and this year the two teams split with each team winning on its home court.

Wittenberg's series record against Earlham is even more lop-sided, aided by three Tiger wins over the Quakers in 2001-02. Wittenberg leads the series 30-2.

Finally, Wittenberg's record against Ohio Wesleyan is 24-15, including a home-and-home split with the three-time defending conference regular season titlists this season.

NCAC TOURNAMENT SCENARIO:

The four NCAC tournament semifinal participants advanced to this point by winning quarterfinal games on Tuesday. No. 1 Wittenberg upended No. 8 seed Wooster 76-69 at home, No. 4 seed Allegheny took out No. 5 seed Kenyon 73-60 on its home court, No. 2 seed and defending champion Ohio Wesleyan was challenged on its home court by No. 7 seed Oberlin before winning 73-66 and No. 6 seed Earlham pulled off the tourney's first upset with a 72-71 overtime win at No. 3 seed Denison.

Tonight's semifinal winners will return to the HPER Center on Saturday for the championship game at 4 p.m. Last year, Ohio Wesleyan defeated Earlham to win the title. Whoever survives Saturday's title game will receive an automatic bid to the NCAA Division III tournament. No NCAC teams are expected to be in line for an at-large berth in the national tournament should they be knocked out of the conference competition.

RADIO:

WBLY (AM 1600) carries selected Wittenberg women's basketball games during the season, with **Scott Leo** calling the action. He will be on hand to call every Tiger game for the rest of the season.

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.shtml.