



DENNIS M. COLLINS
Executive Director

P.O. Box 16679
Cleveland, OH 44116
Phone (440) 871-8100
Fax (440) 871-4221
ncac@northcoast.org
www.northcoast.org

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

**For Immediate Release
March 2, 2006**

**ALLEGHENY VOTED PRESEASON FAVORITE IN
NINTH NORTH COAST SOFTBALL SEASON**

CLEVELAND -- 2005 Tournament 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 9-5 league record and 21-16 overall mark, earned three of eight first-place votes from league coaches for 58 points. Defending regular season champion Ohio Wesleyan was voted second with 56 points and four first place votes. Denison, last season's fourth place team, was predicted to finish third with 48 points. Wittenberg claimed the remaining first place vote and was selected fourth with 42 points.

Kenyon and Wooster tied for fifth in the voting with 30 points each. Hiram was seventh with 16 points and Oberlin was picked to finish eighth with a total of eight points.

Last spring the Gators, under the leadership of head coach **Sandra Sanford**, earned their 14th trip to the NCAA Regional Tournament and second in a row. The Gators return eight letterwinners including five position starters. Heading the list of returners are all-conference performers **Abby Bodenlos (Pittsburgh, PA/Shadyside Academy)** and **Giannina Cocco (Miami, FL/Palmetto)**. Bodenlos, a sophomore, hit .336 as a starting infielder for the Gators in her freshman campaign. Cocco, a senior pitcher, posted a 19-9 record on the mound last season, with a 2.02 earned-run average.

Since the North Coast began sponsoring softball as a championship sport, four schools have claimed championships: Allegheny in 1998, '99 and '04, Denison in the years 2001-03, Wittenberg in 2000 and Ohio Wesleyan in 2004 & '05. Denison won the first two NCAC Softball Tournaments, which began in 2001 to help determine the league's automatic qualifier to the NCAA Tournament. Wittenberg claimed the Tourney title in 2003. The Gators won their second tourney title last spring.

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.

-NCAC-

2006 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll

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

- 1. Allegheny (3)58
- 2. Ohio Wesleyan (4).....56
- 3. Denison48
- 4. Wittenberg (1)42
- 5. Kenyon30
- Wooster30
- 7. Hiram.....16
- 8. Oberlin.....8