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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**

**For Immediate Release  
Feb. 22, 2007**

**DENISON VOTED PRESEASON FAVORITE IN  
10TH NORTH COAST SOFTBALL SEASON**

**CLEVELAND** -- 2006 NCAC and Tournament champion Denison emerged as the preseason favorite in balloting by North Coast Athletic Conference softball coaches in their annual preseason poll.

The Big Red, who last spring finished the regular season with an 11-3 league record and a 33-13 overall mark which tied the Denison single-season record for wins, earned six of eight first-place votes from league coaches for 61 points. Wittenberg was voted second with 52 points and the remaining two first-place votes. Allegheny was predicted to finish third with 45 points, followed closely by Kenyon in fourth, with 44 points. Wooster (31), Ohio Wesleyan (28), Hiram (18) and Oberlin (9) round out places five through eight.

Last spring the Big Red earned their third trip to the NCAA Tournament and second under the leadership of head coach **Holly Bruder**, who is beginning her sixth season at Denison. The Big Red return 16 letterwinners. Heading the list of returnees are all-conference performers **Erin Porter (Middlefield, OH/Cardinal)** and **Claire Kopko (Washington, PA/Trinity)**, both juniors. Porter, last year's co- NCAC Newcomer of the Year as a catcher, was perfect in the field with 78 putouts and 10 assists in 14 NCAC games, and hit .395 with seven runs batted in. Kopko hit .432, with 20 runs batted in as a starting outfielder for the Big Red.

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 and in 2006, 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. Wittenberg claimed the Tourney title in 2003, followed by Allegheny in 2004 and '05.

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-**

**2007 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll**

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

- 1. Denison (6) .....61
- 2. Wittenberg (2) .....52
- 3. Allegheny .....45
- 4. Kenyon .....44
- 5. Wooster .....31
- 6. Ohio Wesleyan .....28
- 7. Hiram .....18
- 8. Oberlin .....9