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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**  
**March 11, 2004**

**WITTENBERG VOTED PRESEASON FAVORITE IN SEVENTH NORTH COAST SOFTBALL SEASON**

**CLEVELAND, Ohio** -- 2003 Tournament champion Wittenberg emerged as the preseason favorite in balloting by North Coast Athletic Conference softball coaches in their annual preseason poll.

The Tigers, who last season finished the regular season in second place with a 10-4 league record and who swept through the NCAC Tournament without a loss, earned five of eight first-place votes from league coaches for 57 points. Defending conference champion Denison and Ohio Wesleyan tied for second with 51 points. The Battling Bishops, who finished fourth a season ago, picked up three first-place nods, while the Big Red received two. Wooster (39) and Allegheny (37) followed in fourth and fifth, respectively. Kenyon (22), Hiram (20) and Oberlin (11) round out places six through eight in the poll.

Wittenberg is 110-91-1 (.547) under the guidance of sixth-year head coach **Becky Hall**, the NCAC Coach of the Year in 2003 and 2000. The Tigers return 11 letterwinners and eight starters from last spring's squad, including two-time, All-NCAC first-team junior **Norah Gillam (Canfield, OH/Canfield)**.

Since the North Coast began sponsoring softball as a championship sport, three schools have claimed championships: Allegheny in 1998 and '99, followed by Wittenberg in 2000 and Denison the last three years. The NCAC held a softball tournament for the first time in 2001, which was won by the Big Red in 2001 and '02, to help determine the league's automatic qualifier to the NCAA Tournament.

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-**

**2004 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll**

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

1. Wittenberg (5) ..... 57
2. Denison (2) ..... 51
- Ohio Wesleyan (3) ..... 51
4. Wooster ..... 39
5. Allegheny ..... 37
6. Kenyon ..... 22
7. Hiram ..... 20
8. Oberlin ..... 11