



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

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

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- 2004 Tournament and regular-season co-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 season finished the regular season with an 11-3 league record and 22-14 overall mark, earned seven of eight first-place votes from league coaches for 63 points. Defending co-champion Ohio Wesleyan was voted second with 53 points. Wittenberg, which finished third last season, received the remaining first-place vote and earned 47 points to be selected third. Kenyon (35), which finished fourth last season, was picked to finish in that spot again this year. Three-time NCAC champ Denison (31) was fifth, followed by Wooster (29), Hiram (21) and Oberlin (9) in places six through eight.

Allegheny enters the 2005 campaign ranked 17 th in the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Division III Preseason Top 25. Last spring the Gators, under the leadership of head coach **Sandra Sanford**, earned their 13th trip to the NCAA Regional Tournament and first since 1996. The Gators return five starters, including 2004 NCAC Pitcher of the Year **Ginannina Cocco** (**Miami, FL/Palmetto**). Cocco earned second team all-region recognition after finishing last season with a 0.57 earned-run average, tenth best in Division III.

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. 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.

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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2005 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll

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

- 1. Allegheny (7) 63
- 2. Ohio Wesleyan 53
- 3. Wittenberg (1) 47
- 4. Kenyon 35
- 5. Denison 31
- 6. Wooster 29
- 7. Hiram 21
- 8. Oberlin 9