

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference Office

P.O. Box 425, 205 S. Madison Ave., Greenwood, IN 46142; Phone: (317) 882-8090; Fax: (317) 882-8086



Tom Bohlsen
Commissioner
commissioner@heartlandconf.org

www.heartlandconf.org

Ryan Davis
Sports Information Director
hcac@heartlandconf.org

--October 31, 2006-- **HCAC Men's Basketball Pre-Season Poll**

Franklin College Selected as Favorite to Capture HCAC Men's Basketball Title

GREENWOOD, Ind. – Franklin College has been voted as the frontrunner in the 2006 Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference men's basketball championship race. The Grizzlies, who finished second in last year's conference race, received four first place votes in the Coaches Preseason Poll. They garnered 72 points overall in the poll outdistancing defending conference champion Transylvania.

Transy received three first-place votes and 63 total points. Hanover College has been forecasted as the third place team by receiving 49 points in the poll. Mt. St. Joseph's 39 points and one first place vote tied with Anderson University for the fourth spot. Manchester College (38 pts), Defiance College (36), Rose-Hulman (35, one first place vote) and Bluffton University (34) round out the poll.

Franklin will be looking to capture its first HCAC championship since the 1999-00 season. The Grizzlies finished second to Transylvania last winter posting a 20-8 overall record and 10-4 mark in the HCAC.

Returning to guide the Grizzlies this season in their search for a title are a trio of honorable mention all-HCAC selections. Sophomore guard Dustin Marshall (Lexington, Ind./Scottsburg) claimed the HCAC freshman of the year award last season after averaging 11 points and 2.6 rebounds per game. Junior guard Jon Neil (Bloomfield, Ind./H.S.) chipped in 9.8 points and 3.0 rebounds a game, while sophomore guard Jace Redman (Mount Vernon, Ind./H.S.) averaged just under nine points and 3.6 assists for the Grizzlies.

A key loss for Franklin will be the loss of last year's HCAC MVP Nick Kane. As a senior, Kane averaged 17.9 points a game, 8.4 rebounds and 2.1 assists.

Franklin, led by head coach Kerry Prather (23rd year, 354-240), will return three starters after losing two to graduation.

Transylvania comes into this season the defending regular season and tournament champions in the HCAC. The Pioneers advanced deep into last season's NCAA tournament, advancing all the way to the elite eight before falling to #3 Wittenberg. Transy completed the 2005-06 season with a 12-2 conference record and 27-5 overall mark.

Leading the way for the Pioneers will be senior forward Joey Searle (Nicholasville, Ky./W. Jassamine), sophomore guard Joey Verax (Falmouth, Ky./Pendleton Co.) and junior guard Stephen Gabbard (Annville, Ky./Jackson Co.). Searle was an all-HCAC selection as a junior, averaging 11.2 points per game. Verax added 7.7 points per game and Gabbard chipped in four points per game.

Hanover will look to make a run at the title this winter with the help of Clint Parker (Brownstown, Ind./H.S.). The 5-11 junior will be the leading returning scoring for the Panthers after averaging 10.3 points per game last season. Hanover finished third last season with a 9-5 HCAC record and 16-10 mark overall.

The opening weekend is Nov. 17-18 with the first conference games scheduled for Nov. 29.



2006-07 Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches Poll

<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (first place votes)</u>
1. Franklin	72 (4)
2. Transylvania	63 (3)
3. Hanover	49
T-4. Mt. St. Joseph	39 (1)
T-4. Anderson	39
6. Manchester	38
7. Defiance	36
8. Rose-Hulman	35 (1)
9. Bluffton	34

2006-07 Men's Basketball Players to Watch

Anderson: Nick Cochran (Sr., G, 6-0, Bluffton, Ind./H.S.), Vynsynt Vann (Sr., G, 5-9, South Bend, Ind./Riley), Nick Vandergrift (So., G, 6-3, Fishers, Ind./Hamilton Southeastern), Tyler Stotter (Jr., G, 6-3, New Castle, Ind./Blue River Valley)

Bluffton: Mike Anthony (Sr., P, 6-3, Ohio City, Ohio/Delphos St. John's), Eric Schieterman (Sr., PG, 5-8, St. Henry, Ohio/H.S.), Justin Rufenacht (So., P, 6-4, Wauseon, Ohio/Pettisville)

Defiance: Anthony Pettaway (So., C, 6-8, Toledo, Ohio/Bowsher), C.J. Johnson (Jr., G, 5-10, Toledo, Ohio/St. Francis DeSales), Bryan Post (Jr., F, 6-4, St. Henry, Ohio/H.S.), Matt Muratori (Jr., F, 6-4, Clyde, Ohio/H.S.), Anthony Jackson (So., G, 6-1, Ayersville, Ohio/H.S.)

Franklin: Dustin Marshall (So., G, 6-0, Lexington, Ind./Scottsburg), Jace Redman (So., G, 5-9, Mount Vernon, Ind./H.S.), Luke Tudor (Sr., G, 6-0, Indianapolis, Ind./Warren Central), Jon Neill (Jr., G, 6-4, Bloomfield, Ind./Bloomfield), Marty Young (Jr., F, 6-3, Norman, Ind./Brownstown Central)

Hanover: Rob Brown (Jr., P, 6-7, Cincinnati, Ohio/Mariemont), Clint Parker (Jr., G, 5-11, Brownstown, Ind./H.S.), Marc O'Leary (Jr., F, 6-3, Terre Haute, Ind./North)

Manchester: Derek Hammond (Sr., G, 6-0, New Carlisle, Ind./New Prairie), Wes Gardner (Sr., F, 6-4, Columbia City, Ind./H.S.), Kyle Plumlee (So., G, 6-1, Plymouth, Ind./H.S.)

Mount St. Joseph: Tony Blomer (Sr., F, 6-6, Cincinnati, Ohio/Princeton), Jeff Perry (Sr., G, 6-1, Massillon, Ohio/Washington), Robbie Noschang (Sr., G, 6-2, Cincinnati, Ohio/Glen Este), Michael Eirons (Jr., F, 6-5, Huron, Ohio/H.S.), Paul Volkerding (Sr., G, 6-1, Harrison, Ohio/H.S.), Michael Romes (Fr., F, 6-3, Covington, Ky/Beechwood)

Rose-Hulman: David Yarachefski (Sr., C, 6-6, Mooresville, Ind./H.S.), Jared Moore (Jr., F, 6-3, Indianapolis, Ind./Perry Meridian), Jason Bednarko (Sr., G, 6-2, Athens, Ill./H.S.), Lorenzo Rice (So., F, 6-4, Grandview, Mo./H.S.)

Transylvania: Stephen Gabbard (Jr., G, 6-4, Annville, Ky./Jackson Co.), Joey Verax (So., G/F, 6-5, Falmouth, Ky./Pendleton Co.), Nick Feagan (Sr., F, 6-7, Verona, Ky./Ryle), Joey Searle (Sr., F, 6-6, Nicholasville, Ky./W. Jessamine)

- HCAC -

