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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**  
**ALLEGHENY AND DENISON PRESEASON FAVORITES IN  
SIXTH NORTH COAST SOFTBALL SEASON**

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 12, 2003**

**CLEVELAND, Ohio** -- Defending champion Denison and Allegheny emerged as the preseason favorites in balloting by North Coast Athletic Conference softball coaches in their annual preseason poll.

The Big Red, who rolled to a 12-2 conference record and NCAC Championship and Tournament titles last spring, earned three first- place votes from league coaches for 53 points. The Gators, who finished in third place a year ago, picked up two first-place nods to also earn 53 points. 2002 runner-up Wooster (48), Ohio Wesleyan (47) and Wittenberg (35) each received one first-place vote to finish third, fourth and fifth, respectively. Hiram (21), Kenyon (20) and Oberlin (11) round out places six through eight in the poll.

Denison is 114-86-1 (.570) since the program began in 1997 and is 106-64-1 (.623) since the NCAC initiated softball as a championship sport with the 1998 season. The Big Red return 11 letterwinners from last year's team. Denison is coached by second-year skipper **Holly Bruder** who led the Big Red to a 27-14 record and their second straight NCAA Tournament appearance in 2002.

Allegheny is 53-61 (.456) under the guidance of fourth-year head coach **Renee Hicks**, who earned NCAC Coach of the Year honors in 2002. The Gators return eight letterwinners and four starters from last year's squad, including All-NCAC first-team infielder, junior **Shawn Gledhill (Erie, PA/McDowell)**.

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 two years. The NCAC held a softball tournament for the first time in 2001, also won by the Big Red the past two springs, 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.

**2003 NCAC Preseason Softball Poll**

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

- 1. Allegheny (3) ..... 53
- Denison (2) ..... 53
- 3. Wooster (1) ..... 48
- 4. Ohio Wesleyan (1) ..... 47
- 5. Wittenberg (1) ..... 35
- 6. Hiram ..... 21
- 7. Kenyon ..... 20
- 8. Oberlin ..... 11