



**PRESS RELEASE: Ferris Hockey Fans Heading to Tampa for Frozen Four**

**Sandy C Gholston** to: Archive

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Included below is a press release highlighting fans who are doing whatever they can to make it to Tampa, Fla. to cheer on the Ferris State University hockey team in the Frozen Four next week. Any questions about this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager.

The online version of this story can be viewed at:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2012/march/fans.htm>

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**Ferris Hockey Fans Heading to Tampa for Frozen Four**

BIG RAPIDS – Tom Czech says he would trade Super Bowl tickets to watch the NCAA Frozen Four “any day of the week.” And now that the Ferris State University ice hockey team has earned the right to play for the national title, making the 1,300-mile trek to Tampa, Fla. is a no-brainer for the Bulldog hockey fan.

“I’m dead passionate about all levels of hockey,” said Czech, a senior from Chicago majoring in Communications. “As far as Ferris hockey is concerned, I’ve been a season-ticket holder the past four years and I’ve missed one game – a game that I shouldn’t have missed. The hockey program is the heart and soul of student life here at Ferris.”

The student section has been secretly budgeting for the trip to the Frozen Four since Christmas, he said.

“We did our best to not talk about Tampa, because it would have been bad luck but it was on our minds,” said Czech, who will travel on one of the free fan buses that the university is providing to watch the Bulldogs play in Tampa. “I couldn’t be prouder to be a hockey fan in Big Rapids.”

The Bulldogs will make their first-ever appearance in the Frozen Four when they take on Union, another first-timer, on Thursday, April 5 at the Tampa Bay Times Forum at 4:30 p.m. Minnesota and Boston College, two programs with a history of winning championships, will play in the other semifinal at 8 p.m. The title game is Saturday, April 7 at 7 p.m.

Many students have taken advantage of the free transportation provided by the Ferris President’s Office.

“We filled two buses within 24 hours,” said Jon Coles, associate athletic director. “The student

support has been good throughout the entire year, so it wasn't surprising."

Success of the Ferris program has resulted in a 127-percent increase in the number of student season-ticket holders over the past four years, Coles said.

"I am very happy I can make it to Tampa. Without the fan bus, I would not have been able to make the trip," said Megan Cynowa, a senior from Oxford who is majoring in Resort Management and Special Event Planning. Cynowa, who dates Bulldog hockey player Derek Graham, said she has been to every home game. "I think it's great that the boys get a chance to compete for the national championship. It's really something special."

As soon as the buzzer sounded at the end of the Bulldogs' 2-1 victory over Cornell to win the Midwest Regional Championship March 24 in Green Bay, Wisc., Nate Allison left the TV to wake up his parents.

"They said they would send me – it's a once-in-a-lifetime deal," said Allison, a junior from Niles set to enter the College of Pharmacy, who opted to take the fan bus. "This season has been incredible. Boston College and Minnesota have been there before and have all of these NHL draft picks, but we play really well as a team. If we go up against one of them, it will be like David vs. Goliath."

Sophomore Matt Leindecker, a Criminal Justice major from Fruitport, also is taking the fan bus with friends to Tampa. He didn't even consider not making the trek.

"As soon as the buzzer sounded at the end of the game in Green Bay, my mom texted me and said 'No, no, no to Tampa,' but I said 'Mom, I HAVE to go. I'll give up Christmas,'" said Leindecker, who dons a monkey suit when he attends games to help add to the fun atmosphere in Ferris' Ewigleben Ice Arena. "This season has been unreal."

"The players said it felt like a home game with all of the fan support and were thanking us for what we do. It gives them energy. I have to be in Tampa."

Joel Root, a freshman from Sterling Heights who is majoring in Sports Marketing, also is taking a bus with other Ferris fans and students.

"It's awesome to see the team doing this well and bringing some recognition to Ferris," said Root.

Junior Brandon Chojnacki, a Criminal Justice major from Gaylord, is driving to Florida with friends and staying at one of his friend's grandmother's home near Tampa.

"We're splitting gas, and we also wanted to drive so we could have a vehicle down there and go to the beach in our free time," said Chojnacki, a season-ticket holder. "The team ... has proven they have fight in them, time and time again. Boston College and Minnesota are almost always in the Frozen Four, which I think is an honor to be a student at a school with a hockey team that can play at that level."

“I’m looking forward to watching the games in Tampa and watching the Bulldogs go for the national D1 title.”

The buses of Bulldog fans will be joined by Ferris alumni, including 1996 College of Pharmacy grad Michael Fernstrum.

“I’m totally psyched up,” Fernstrum said in a post on the Ferris State University Facebook page. “I live here in the Tampa area. I never thought I would ever get to see Ferris play again, let alone here.”

For ticket information, call the FSU Athletics Ticket Office at (231) 591-2888 or visit the Bulldog Athletics Web site at [www.ferrisstatebulldogs.com](http://www.ferrisstatebulldogs.com).

For more information on the NCAA Frozen Four, visit [www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com).

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