

MEDIA PACKET

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Pioneer

Friday, September 12, 2003

Ferris Defensive Backs Coach Stresses Weekly Improvement

Ferris State defensive backs coach Darrell Perkins missed out on last season's installment of the team's rivalry with Grand Valley State.

But just because Perkins missed last season's game does not mean he is totally unfamiliar with what these types of rivalry games are all about - as a player and coach during his lifetime. During stops as a player and as a coach at Purdue and his alma mater, the University of Wyoming, Perkins, who also serves as the special team's coordinator, has been part of some heated battles between teams that do not care for each other.

"I've been around enough rivalries in my career as a player and as a coach that I have a pretty good idea about what to expect," said Perkins, who was a two-year starter at running back for Wyoming. "There is always going to be a higher level of excitement any time you suit up to go against big rival.

"When you play against our big rival there's going to be that little extra of motivation. Guys are always ready for their big rival."

Perkin's task for the weekend is to have his secondary ready for battle in this great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference opener between the two West Michigan rivals. The Lakers have a talented young quarterback in Cullen Finnerty, who transferred from Toledo, and a solid receiving corps, that includes Paul Cummings, a transfer from Michigan State. Another key wide out for the Lakers is true freshman Mark Caitlin of Lowell.

In the Lakers' 9-6 overtime win against the University of California Dam last weekend, Caitlin led them with six catches for 42 yards and Cummings had three grabs for a total of 31 yards. Mario Locricchio finished with two catches for 87 yards and Tyrone Hibbler had two catches for 15 yards. It's a talented passing game the Bulldogs must contend with this weekend.

Perkins felt his defensive backs unit, which includes Vito Ciaramellano at strong safety, Ryan Carruthers at cornerback, Rob Skodak at cornerback and Rich Dosh at free safety, had a solid outing as starters. Corey Scheick, Nick Beaudry, Jason Davis and Bruce Cook are the backups.

Ferris won its season opener last weekend at Hillsdale, 25-20.

"We have some guys we put out there who gained some experience and I thought they responded to the challenge in front of them and played pretty well," Perkins said "We know there's still some room for improvement-there's always some room for improvement-but we still did a nice job for our season opener

"The thing we stress with our guys is to make sure we continue to get better and better each time we step out onto the field."

One of the keys to success for the defensive backs in the opener, during fall training camp and back to the spring has been the leadership of Ciaramellano, a co-captain for the Bulldogs this season.

"Vito has given us good leadership back there and he's also a good player for us, which makes him an even bigger asset," Perkins said. "Against Hillsdale he helped our guys make sure they were in the proper positions to make plays in the game and kept everyone on the same page back there.

"In his position, he's sort of the quarterback for our defensive unit ... making sure that everyone knows where they're supposed to be on the floor ... he's a vocal leader who is respected by his teammates."

The Grand Rapids Press

Friday, September 12, 2003

Ferris St. coach is delighted by break from Army

By Howie Beardsley

The first thing Keri Becker did when she returned home this week on military leave from Doha, Qatar, was remove her shoes and wriggle her toes in the Michigan grass.

"It was the greatest feeling in the world," Becker said.

Becker, 30, is the seven-year head softball coach at Ferris State University. The Howard City resident is also a 13-year member of the United States Army Reserves, and holds the rank of sergeant with the 182nd Transportation Co. based out of Traverse City.

Her life was completely turned upside-down last February when she was called to active duty because of the war in Iraq. Since April 9, Becker has been serving in Doha with Camp As Sayliyah, the site of the U.S. Military Special Operations Command Central.

"The Army let me go on leave and come state-side until Sunday, sort of as an 'Attaboy-type' of thing for the work I've done in Qatar," Becker said Wednesday while making a visit to the Ferris State athletic department.

"My leave was perfect timing, because I've been gone from my softball team, family and friends a long time. It's been a draining, unique experience."

Becker has been assigned to the supply unit at Command Central, thousands of miles south of Baghdad.

She admitted seeing some time in Baghdad, but doesn't care to get too specific about her assignment in Iraq.

"I'd be happy to tell you all about the stuff I've done when I get back home for good, which, I've been told, and hope, will be before first semester final exams, around Christmas," said Becker.

"The military doesn't like you talking a lot about your assignments, and I don't want my mom to know that I've been traveling over there. But it has been interesting."

Becker's parents, Carlene and William, a former military man, live in Sanford.

The Bulldog coach was taken away from her softball program a week before the Bulldogs embarked on their annual spring trip to compete in Southern climate.

Becker said it was the complete unknown that was her biggest adjustment.

"Mentally, it was just obviously hard to leave," Becker said. "Just knowing you were about to be away from everything I knew both professionally and personally. I just had to try to make mental adjustments on how to approach things."

"You just leave everything you know to the complete unknown. And in wartime situations, that multiplies the fear factor even more. Especially since I didn't know for the first month-and-a-half after being called up where I'd be stationed. I could have been stationed in Baghdad just as easily as in Doha."

There was then the physical adjustment to the conditions in Qatar.

"Just getting acclimated to the heat and working outside in the Middle East was very difficult. You really never really get used to it," Becker said. "And everything is barren earth. It's all desert there.

"But where I'm at, it's very secure. It's very Americanized in Doha. I can go to a McDonald's and Applebee's there with no problem, although the food does taste different at those restaurants than it does back home."

It comes as no surprise that the two groups Becker misses most while transporting military supplies in the Middle East are her family, and her Ferris State players.

"I'm able to keep up with my players through computers and e-mail, so I can at least be an ear for them to communicate to," Becker said. "But it's hard not being with them, and helping them deal with personal or school problems. And it was really hard last season, when you know how to help your team win, but you're not with them to lead them.

"As for my family, ... I've always been very close to my family. Since Feb. 10, not having anything but a phone call from the family was tough. It makes for good days and bad days."

Becker began her leave by going straight to Sanford to see her parents.

She even played a little trick on her mom, who had no idea she was on leave.

"I walked in the back door of the house and was talking to her on the cell phone," Becker said. "Mom had her back to me and said, 'You should see the new deck we built.' I closed the phone, walked up behind her and said, 'Why don't you show me.' She about had a heart attack.

"It's just great to be home for a few days, and it will be wonderful to hopefully be home for good in a few months, and be a full-time softball coach again."

The Grand Rapids Press

Saturday, September 13, 2003

Lame ducks or mighty ducks? Court may decide

By Ian C. Storey

BIG RAPIDS -- Court appears to be next on the bill for the duck dispute at Ferris State University.

Ferris biology student Beckie Ingham has rejected the university's offer to house her two pet mallards for free, saying she will continue to keep them in the on-campus town house she shares with her 4-year-old daughter, Molly.

The university said her failure to accept the offer means it will begin eviction proceedings against her in court.

"I decided that it is too important that I keep the ducks with me, not only for my daughter and myself, but also for them," said Ingham, a 27-year-old biology major. "Rather than just give them up, even in a good place, I think at this point being without me would not be good for them."

The university released a statement Sept. 4 saying it would offer Ingham's birds a place to stay on campus with food, maintenance and veterinary services, free of charge, to resolve the issue.

The deal also would have allowed Ingham to stay in the apartment she has rented for the past three years.

But as the offer's seven-day deadline expired on Friday, Ferris spokeswoman Shelly Armstrong said the university will head to district court in Big Rapids to start eviction proceedings.

"We feel like we've done what we can to provide an alternative that would avoid her having to find other housing," Armstrong said. "It is unfortunate that we haven't heard from her and we couldn't work out some kind of arrangement with having her pets over in one of our facilities. It appears that she will have to make other arrangements."

Under the proposal by the university, Ingham would have been able to visit Merrill and Britain, the subjects of her senior thesis, while Ferris would uphold its ban on animals in campus housing.

But Ingham said last week though she appreciated the offer, she feared that taking the birds out of her custody would not be good for them, because they have been with her since they were very young.

The controversy started in May after school officials discovered Ingham was keeping the domesticated ducks in her home in the West Campus Family Housing Complex.

After initially agreeing to give up the pets in June, Ingham changed her mind, saying the leases she has signed for the past two years allowed "caged birds," despite a change in policy this year allowing only fish in university-run housing.

Last week, the university restated its argument that keeping the ducks is not only a violation of the Ingham's current lease agreement, but added that it also violates a Big Rapids city ordinance prohibiting "any animal or fowl" within 500 feet of any dwelling or house.

"I still don't understand why the school has a hard time understanding that the policy in the lease was not specific enough," Ingham said. "I still don't think I violated anything. Now I will have to prove that in court."

Ingham said she does not yet have a lawyer, though she is talking to several about representing her.

Pioneer

Weekend, September 13&14

Ferris coach savors leave

By Sandy Gholston Pioneer Sports Writer

BIG RAPIDS - Keri Becker leaned back in the chair of her new office at the Ewigleben Sports Complex and smiled.

"It feels good to be back home ... not only for the body and the mind, but also for the spirit," said Becker, who has spent the last week in Michigan on a military leave from serving in Doha, Qatar at the U.S. Military Operations Command Central in the Middle East. "Being back in the community here in Big Rapids reminds me that this is who I am.

"This leave from the military could not have come at a better time for me because I had been over there so long and involved in a lot of mindless type of work that it was beginning to take a toll on me and this came, as a sort of pat on the back, at the perfect time."

The 30-year-old Ferris State softball coach has been away from her parents, who live in Sanford, her softball team, here in Big Rapids, and her home, in Howard City, since Feb. 10 when the United States Reserves sergeant received a letter that told her she had been called to active duty - a surprising letter she got in January that changed her life forever.

Becker earned the brief trip home - to transport military equipment- for work she has done in Qatar since her arrival there in April. The Bulldog softball coach, who missed the entire 2003 spring season with her squad, has enjoyed her return trip home.

Becker laughed at the comment that she has gotten more hugs from loved ones in the past week than maybe she has had in her entire life. Since Becker's return to Michigan, she has taken the opportunity to drop a few surprise introductions on everyone from her parents, to Ferris Athletics Director Tom Kirinovic, to even her players before a fall practice session.

"I screamed loud enough that I think people heard me all the way across town," Kirinovic said Wednesday afternoon after his softball coach sprung up on him at the FSU Athletics Department offices on Tuesday. Becker's players screamed almost in unison as they opened the door to the equipment shed at the FSU Varsity Softball Field - to see their softball coach handing them a bucket of balls for which to begin practice.

"I know it was a shocking thing for them to come to practice thinking it's going to be just another regular practice and then all of a sudden they see me," Becker said.

"It was so great for me to see them again ... to be back here." Even while trying to relax during her brief stay at home, Becker also has had some demands on her time for lunches, dinners, interviews and practice with her players - in typical Becker-type workaholic fashion.

She has enjoyed it all - even if just for a brief time.

"I consider all the people here my family," Becker said about not only her parents, siblings and the rest of her real family, but also people in the Ferris State University and Big Rapids communities.

"I think the fact that I've had this leave will make the last two months that I have to serve that much easier knowing that I will be returning to a loving family that has supported me."

Becker, the 1997 Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Coach of the Year, has a record of 201-125 in six seasons as the head softball coach at Ferris State University. During that time she has led the Bulldogs to a GLIAC championship (2000) and back-to-back NCAA Division II Great Lakes Region championships in 1998 and 1999.

In 1998, the team finished third in the nation and in 1999 the program set a school record for single-season victories (46).

While Becker has been serving in the military, she has placed control of the team in the hands of assistant coaches Lesa Bickley and Chad Haberland, a pair of softball coaching veterans, who have Becker's complete gratitude and trust.

"I couldn't ask for two better people to take over the program in my absence," Becker said. "They understand my philosophies and they have helped keep the program moving in that direction and really have helped make the program even better with their organizational skills."

"They went above and beyond the call of duty with what they did to keep the players focused and to keep the program moving in a positive direction. They did a lot of work with recruiting to help the program address some of its needs for the future."

Although Becker, who reports back to Tampa, Fla., on Sunday and likely back to Doha Qatar after that, has been involved in practice this week she has left much of the control in the hands of Bickley and Haberland.

She has had more of an opportunity to walk around the field, make points and get to know her players even better. But, listening to Ferris football coach Jeff Pierce speak with passion about his team's game this weekend with rival Grand Valley and listening to Bulldog volleyball coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm do the same about young team, made Becker feel that fire in her own belly.

Becker started to break down as she spoke before that same crowd of over 70 people at the Wheeler Pavilion at Top Taggart Field for the first Ferris State Sports Luncheon of the 2003-04 seasons.

"Listening to Tia and Jeff speak with such passion made the emotions come rushing back into me. That's me... being a coach."

"I look at my players and I am their coach, but at the same time, for now, at least, I'm not really a full-time employee of Ferris State University," Becker said.

“But I can’t wait until December when I can come back, hopefully, and once again be a full-time softball coach.

Pioneer

Monday, September 15, 2003

Ferris State duck dispute heads to court

BIG RAPIDS (AP) - A dispute over a Ferris State University student's pet ducks may be headed for court.

The university on Sept. 4 offered to house, feed and care for Beckie Ingham's ducks if she agreed to move them out of her on-campus apartment.

But Ingham, a 27-year-old biology major, has rejected the offer, which expired on Friday.

"I decided that it is too important that I keep the ducks with me, not only for my daughter and myself, but also for my Daughter and myself, but also for them," Ingham told The Grand Rapids Press for a Saturday story. "Rather than just give them up; even in a good place, I think at this point being without me would not be good for them."

University officials said they plan to begin eviction proceedings against her in court.

"We feel like we've done what we can to provide an alternative that would avoid her having to find other housing," university spokeswoman Shelly Armstrong said. "It is unfortunate that we haven't heard from her and we couldn't work out some kind of arrangement with having her pets over in one of our facilities."

Ferris State learned in May that Ingham was keeping the ducks as pets, and told her then she was violating housing policy.

Ingham said the terms of her old lease allow her to keep pet birds. The school said she entered into a new agreement on July 30 that prohibits the keeping of birds on the premises.

The university tried to evict Ingham late last month, but she ignored the warning. She said she is talking to lawyers about representing her in court.

Also in: Detroit Free Press

Pioneer

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Ferris picked second by coaches, third by media

By Sandy Gholston Pioneer Sports Writer

DETROIT - It's difficult to believe, but Ferris State and the rest of its peers in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association are about ready to drop the puck on another season of college hockey.

Last winter, Ferris put together its most successful campaign in program history as it compiled a record of 31-10-1 overall and 22-5-1 (first place) in the CCHA. It was the first time in program history Ferris won the regular season championship in the CCHA and earned a bid to the NCAA Tournament. Although the Bulldogs and head coach Bob Daniels received several pats on the back from rivals in the league during Tuesday afternoon's CCHA Media Day in Detroit, the veteran coach entering his 12th season knows it's for a fresh start.

A year ago, Daniels read how his Bulldogs were projected to finish in ninth-place in the preseason coaches and media polls. This year, Ferris was picked to finish second in the CCHA Coaches Poll and third in the media poll on Tuesday afternoon.

Daniels, like all other coaches, knows preseason polls are far from an exact science and generally do little more than reflect the team's accomplishments from the season prior. The 2002-03 American Hockey Coaches Association National Coach of the Year, Daniels understands Ferris' post-season finish is far more important than the typical preseason prognostications.

"Regarding the preseason polls, I can remember coming (to Detroit) last year and seeing how we were picked to finish ninth," said Daniels to the assembly of media at the Olympia Club in Joe Louis Arena. "I can remember thinking to myself 'We're a lot better than a ninth-place CCHA team.'

"I wasn't sure who we could be good enough to pass to move up as high as we did in the conference, but I thought we were definitely better than ninth. This year, I look at the poll and have a similar feeling in that I believe there are a number of teams that could easily move up or down in the CCHA standings."

Among the major challenges for Ferris, in its run to repeat as CCHA regular-season titlist and make a second straight trip to the NCAA Tournament, will be replacing the veteran leadership it lost in Troy Milam, Chris Kunitz and Phil Lewandowski. Kunitz, an All-American forward and Hobey Baker Memorial Award finalist, scored 35 goals with 44 assists for 79 points; Milam, a defenseman, was an All-CCHA First-Team selection and FSU's team captain; while Lewandowski had a solid season with 15 goals and 17 assists.

"We definitely lost a lot of talented players to graduation in Kunitz, Lewandowski and Milam," Daniels told the media in Detroit. "Another big factor in losing those three is the fact we also lost a lot of leadership that will be a challenge for us to have to replace this season."

The good news is the cupboard is far from bare for the Bulldogs. Ferris returns center Jeff League, who earned All-CCHA Second-Team recognition; and winger Derek Nesbitt, a pair of high-scoring forwards, who composed the first line last season with Kunitz. League tallied 24 goals and 35 assists last season while Nesbitt finished with 20 goals and 33 assists. Greg Rallo, another high scoring forward, returns for his second season of college hockey with a wealth of potential.

"I think we have a really nice group of forwards returning to our team for the upcoming season," said Daniels, who also cited Mike Kinnie as a forward to watch out for this coming season.

On the blueline, the Bulldogs return Simon Mangos, a senior defenseman who earned All-CCHA Second Team honors.

Matt York and Jeremy Scherlinck also return to help solidify Daniels' defensive corps.

The marquee returning name for Ferris might well be in net, where junior Mike Brown returns from an All American sophomore season.

"In net we do have an All American returning in Mike Brown, and we're hopeful he can duplicate or even do better than what he did for us last season," Daniels said.

"The good thing about Mike is that he is a well-grounded individual who's always working hard to make himself better"

Ferris opens its regular season with a CCHA road game in Kalamazoo vs. Western Michigan at 7:35 p.m. on Oct. 10 in the first of a home-and-home series. The two teams will face off in Big Rapids the next day at 7:05p.m.

WDIV- Local Channel 4- Web-page

Thursday, September 18, 2003

Parents Shocked By Charter School's Closing

Teachers, Students Likely To Be Reassigned To Other Schools

Some local parents were shocked to find out a Detroit charter school was closing its doors for good at the end of the day on Thursday.

Marshall Crawford walked his daughter to school at the Beacon International Academy Thursday morning to find that it would be her last day at the school, Local 4 reported. "I've got to figure out where I'm going to take my kids at," Crawford said. "I don't even know which school I'm going to get them in know. All the schools are packed."

The Beacon International Academy has been open since 1999, but due to failed negotiations, the school will close on Thursday.

About 300 students go to the school that's run by the Leona Group, Inc. -- an educational services company.

Ferris State University held the charter but voted a year ago to rescind it, according to Local 4 reports. There were reportedly negotiations going on between Ferris State, the landlord of the property, East Lake Church of Detroit and the school's board of directors. Ferris State apparently wanted there to be a review of the lease agreement. The college also wanted to replace the school's board.

The talks ended without any type of agreement.

Ferris State officials say they've known that the school would close for about a year, but some parents were caught off guard.

"It don't make sense. What are we going to do with our children? I'm appalled by these people," said one parent. Beacon will hold classes on Thursday, but will close for good at the end of the day.

A representative from Leona Group told Local 4 that it owns other schools in Detroit and the metro Detroit area and the students at Beacon will likely be placed in those schools. The company also said that if students wanted to be transferred into the public school system, they would try to help them get in their school of choice.

The 25 staff members at the school are also expected to be reassigned to other locations. State Sen. Hansen Clarke along with parents and other local leaders have planned to protest the school's closing.

Pioneer

Friday, September 19, 2003

Ferris State hockey to get championship

Friday, September 19, 2003

By Sandy Gholston Pioneer Sports Writer

BIG RAPIDS - The celebration and recognition will continue this coming weekend for the Ferris State hockey program.

Coming off its most prolific season in program history, the Bulldogs will get to try on those Central Collegiate Hockey Association regular-season championship rings for real this Saturday evening in a ceremony that will take place during halftime of the home football game at Top Taggart Field for the Bulldogs against

Ferris hockey coach Bob Daniels will have nearly all of the 24 members of the 2002-03 squad in attendance at Top Taggart Field to finally receive their rings. Ferris finished 30-10-1 last season overall and 22-5-1 in the CCHA (first-place). Ferris also qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the first time in school history on the ice.

"It's really exciting for us not only to be receiving our rings, but also to be out there at halftime of the football game on a night when Ferris State will be honoring not only the football team, but the heroes of the past at Ferris and the members of the new Hall of Fame class," said Daniels.

"It's all a part of the school's "Night of Champions Champions' appropriate rings."

Daniels also recognizes that this ring ceremony gives the players a chance to say thanks to the fans who helped pack the Ewigleben Ice Arena nearly every night from the first game to the last game, every night from the first game to the last game, followed the to the CCHA Super Six Tournament at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit and even to the NCAA West Region tournament in Minneapolis at end.

The fans mean so much to our players and to our program," he said. "We're so grateful to the student section and also to the members of the community who came out and really supported us last year, when things were going well, and even during times in past years when the situation was not quite so rosy."

The Bulldog hockey team opens the season officially on Oct. 10 when the team travels to Kalamazoo to take on Western Michigan in a CCHA battle at 7:35 p.m.

The next night, Ferris hosts its regular-season home-opener against the Broncos at 7:05.

The Grand Rapids Press

Friday September 19, 2003

Summons will take duck issue into court

By Ian C. Storey
The Grand Rapids Press

BIG RAPIDS -- A Ferris State University student says she will continue to fight attempts to evict her and her two pet ducks, accusing Ferris of breaking truth-in-renting laws.

Biology major Beckie Ingham received a summons to appear in district court Sept. 29 after the university filed a motion claiming she should be evicted for violating her lease and creating a health hazard by keeping pet ducks in her on-campus apartment.

Ingham, 27, said she believes the university is violating truth-in-renting and landlord-and-tenant relationship laws.

"Due to the fact that this violation renders my lease agreement unenforceable, I expect the University to drop all alleged violations and related alleged violations previously imposed upon me," she said. "There are things that are required to be in every lease and they left them out."

Ferris spokeswoman Shelly Armstrong said Thursday a previous offer to house the ducks in an on-campus facility is still an option, but the university will continue to pursue an eviction based on Ingham's past refusals to accept the offer.

She said university lawyers are reviewing Ingham's claims.

The controversy started in May after university workers discovered Ingham was keeping the domesticated ducks in her home in the West Campus Family Housing Complex.

After initially agreeing to give up the pets in June, Ingham changed her mind, saying the leases she has signed for the past two years allowed "caged birds," despite a change in policy this year allowing only fish in university-run housing.

Pioneer

Weekend-September 20 & 21, 2003

Ferris attempts to close school

DETROIT (AP) - A Detroit charter school may keep its doors open thanks to help from a state senator.

Ferris State University on Thursday said it was closing one of seven charter schools it oversees in Michigan's largest city. But that announcement was quickly followed by news that Sen. Hansen Clarke, D. Detroit had organized, at least a temporary truce. WDIV-TV reported the school will remain open for 30 days and a mediator will meet with Ferris State and Beacon International Academy in the hopes of reaching an agreement to open the school "There is no reason to justify throwing these kids out in the street in the middle of the semester, in the middle of the school year," Clarke said.

The school has 293 students in kindergarten through fifth grades. The university said it notified Beacon a year ago of the impending termination of the charter. Although Ferris State and the school tried to find a way for Beacon to remain open longer, major issues remained unresolved, Ferris officials said in a news release. The university said the biggest problems were the failure of Beacon and its landlord, East Lake Missionary Baptist Church, to provide adequate classroom space and the cost of renting modular classrooms from the church. Ferris State said the annual lease rate of \$560,000 is three times higher than the property's \$160,000-per-year fair-market rental value.

The university said its per square-foot lease costs at the other six charter schools it has in Detroit average less than one-third of the amount that Beacon was paying. "Ferris State University could not allow Beacon International to operate with such a huge gap between what the academy was being charged for rent and the fairmarket rental value for that property" Ron Rizzo, associate director of the university's Office of Charter Schools said in a statement early Thursday before reports of an extension were made public. "This is a case of taxpayers' dollars meant to further educational opportunities not being used for that purpose." No one from the church was available to comment. There was no telephone service there when calls were attempted late Thursday afternoon.

A private company, The Leona Group Michigan LLC, provided the school's day-today operations. Spokeswoman Kelly Updike said her company was caught in the middle of a dispute between Ferris State and the church. Updike said 97 percent of the students' parents surveyed last spring said their children were receiving a good education at the school, which was on the city's east side. "We feel very badly for the position that students, parents and employees find themselves in," Rizzo said.

The other charter schools that Ferris State oversees in Detroit are Hope of Detroit Academy, George Crockett Academy Pierre-Toussaint Academy, Voyageur Academy, Allen Academy and Joy Preparatory Academy. The university has chartered nine other public schools throughout the state.

Pioneer

Tuesday September, 23 2003

Ferris State icers seek to build off last season's success

By Sandy Gholston Pioneer Sports Writer

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State has not completely turned its back on all the historic accomplishments of last season, but today's first official practice marks the start of a new chapter in the program's history.

The defending Central Collegiate Hockey Association regular-season champions are on a mission they hope ultimately will prove to the skeptics that last winter's 31-10-1 overall, 22, 5-1 finish (first place) was hardly some sort of amazing fluke.

"We want to use last season's success as more of a springboard into what we hope will be a future that includes more success to build off of what we started," said Ferris State head coach Bob Daniels, who is entering his 12th season as leader of the program. "But, at the same time, we have to realize this is a new season and we're starting basically from ground zero again.

"There is nothing that will be rewarded to us for what we accomplished last season. ... Anything we achieve this season will have to be earned like it was a year ago."

This Ferris squad is a new team in many ways. Gone is Hobey Baker finalist Chris Kunitz, who scored 35 goals with 44 assists for 79 points en route to earning first-team All CCHA and first-team All-America honors.

This month, Kunitz is in the camp of the National Hockey League's Anaheim Mighty Ducks as a rookie free agent signee. Also departed are team captain Troy Milam, who earned second team All-CCHA recognition as one of the team's top defensemen and Phil Lewandowski, a key scoring forward for Ferris..

In all, Ferris State lost six letterwinners, but returns 17, along with nine promising newcomers, led by the highly-touted forward Mark Bomersback.

Derrick McIver, who series as team captain this season, knows Ferris has to be on top of its game from start to finish, a as it was a year ago.

"The element of surprise definitely gone for us coming into this season," said, Thunder Bay, Ontario native, who scored seven goals with 10 assists a year ago. "We know this year that we're coming in with some high expectations even though there will be a lot of people looking at Michigan and Michigan State being the favorites to win the league."

This season's assistant captains are Brett Smith, a center, and Simon Mangos, who was All-CCHA Second Team with 11 goals and 11 assists as a defenseman.

The key returning player, and the man the Bulldogs seek yet another solid season from, is goaltender Mike Brown, who earned first-team All-American honors from the American

Hockey Coaches Association as well as first-team All-CCHA recognition.

Brown says Ferris does not have to completely put last season blindly behind it.

"I think we build off of what we accomplished last season," he said. "We had a great year last year, but we also have a lot of quality players returning from last season who have talent and have played in big games.

"There are a lot of high expectations for this team and we want to keep it going."

In the preseason CCHA polls, Ferris was tabbed to again finish in the upper echelon of one of the toughest conferences in all of college hockey.

The Bulldogs were picked third in the coaches poll behind Michigan and Michigan State and in the media poll they were fourth behind U-M, MSU and Ohio State.

Ferris hosts its Crimson and Gold Intrasquad game Saturday evening at 7:05 p.m. and its first exhibition game on Oct. 4 against Windsor at 4 p.m.

The Bulldogs open the regular season on the road in a league game in Kalamazoo against Western Michigan at 7:35 p.m. on Oct. 10.

Ferris opens the regular season at home one night later (Oct. 11) vs. Western in the Ewingleben Ice Arena at 7:05 p.m.

Pioneer

Wednesday September 24, 2003

Soccer coach faces charges involving minors

BIG RAPIDS - A local soccer coach faces four counts of furnishing alcohol to minors, a misdemeanor punishable by up to 60 days in jail and a mandatory \$1,000 fine following an investigation by the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety.

Howard Thomas Sizemore II, a coach for the Northland United Soccer Club, was arraigned Monday in Mecosta County's 77th District Court, Chief Assistant Prosecutor Hillary B. Koebel reported.

Sizemore was arrested after police were sent to a residence hall on campus to investigate an alleged sexual assault at a campus apartment.

Two other men located at Sizemore's residence and a juvenile male also face various misdemeanor and felony criminal charges in connection to the investigation, prosecutors said.

Pioneer

Wednesday September 24, 2003

Cox new head of educational, career counseling

BIG RAPIDS - With the new semester under way, students at Ferris State University looking for career guidance have a veteran in that field to help them with their choices.

Debra Cox, a counselor in the Educational and Career Counseling department at Ferris State from 1996 to 2003, has been appointed head for that unit in University College.

Cox holds masters degrees in Higher Education Administration and Counseling, both from Central Michigan University. She also is a licensed professional counselor by the State of Michigan. She earned her associate's and bachelor's degrees from Ferris State.

Cox taught at Ferris first as a member of the Dental Hygiene faculty and later in University College. During recent years, in addition to her work as an educational counselor, Cox has played a significant role in the development of Development Task Force.

At both regional and national professional meetings, Cox has made numerous presentations on the subject of career decision-making and is active locally in the Big Rapids Toastmasters organization.

Cox resides in Big Rapids with her husband Gary.

The Grand Rapids Press

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Ferris State's challenge: Stay on top

By Joe Conklin

BIG RAPIDS -- "What's wrong with this picture?"

That thought was on Ferris State University hockey coach Bob Daniels' mind Monday as he arranged the 27 Bulldogs for their team photo. He moved players from one spot to another until every face was visible.

There was something wrong with the Central Collegiate Hockey Association picture last season. The Bulldogs, picked ninth in two polls, moved other teams around until they were visible atop the CCHA regular-season standings. They also came within one victory of a berth in the NCAA Frozen Four.

Practice starts today for a new season and the picture is bright again. Gone are the days when Ferris State was an easy pick for the CCHA's second division. Coaches have predicted the Bulldogs will finish second in the league and a top 10 national ranking is expected before the season starts on Oct. 4.

"I love it," said Daniels, the reigning Division I coach of the year. "We've worked hard to put our program up with the best in the country and we want to stay there."

Goalie Mike Brown is a major reason for the Bulldogs' optimism. An All-American after a surprising 30 victories in his sophomore season, Brown may be the top returning goalie in the nation.

Ferris State has had strong candidates for the Hobey Baker Award the last two years in Rob Collins and Chris Kunitz. The third time could be the charm with Brown.

"In one breath you can say, yes, Mike Brown is the top returning goalie in the country," Daniels said. "But in the next breath you can say he'll be challenged to be the top goalie in our league because there are so many good ones. The competition will be good for him."

Brown leads the way

Brown, who was the CCHA defensive player of the week a record six times last season, is taking the high expectations in stride. He hasn't been drafted so another big season could lead to a free-agent contract offer similar to the one Kunitz signed with the Anaheim Mighty Ducks last spring.

"It's every kid's dream from the time you put on skates for the first time to play in the NHL," said Brown, who had a personal trainer for his summer workouts. "Maybe last year opened a few windows for me. This is one of the most important years of my career."

Dominik Hasek's return to the Detroit Red Wings has the NHL buzzing, but New Jersey's Martin Brodeur is Brown's hero.

"He's so composed, so calm, so relaxed in the net," Brown said. "He makes every hard save look easy and that's the sign of a good goaltender."

Brown, a native of Calgary, had an average freshman season at Ferris State, so his coaches weren't sure what to expect last year.

"There was nothing to indicate going into the year that he was going to have the season he had," Daniels said. "We thought he was a good goaltender, but quite honestly he surpassed our expectations."

That was Ferris State's overriding theme last season. The college hockey world waited for the Bulldogs to collapse, but it never happened. They lost two of their last three games -- to Michigan in the CCHA tournament title game before a crowd of 19,097 at Joe Louis Arena, and at Minnesota in the regional finals as the Golden Gophers drove to their second consecutive title.

Those losses still sting, senior defenseman Simon Mangos said.

"You feel a little embarrassed by it," he said of the 7-4 loss to Minnesota. "You feel if you did something more, something different, the game might have turned out differently. It makes you work even harder."

Hoping to play in GR

Another NCAA bid next March could land the Bulldogs in Grand Rapids for the Midwest Regional. It's more motivation for a program eager to prove it's not a one-year wonder.

"Last year we developed as a program," captain Derrick McIver said. "To be picked second in the (CCHA) coaches poll makes us feel good inside and gives us confidence. We're defending the top spot and we want to win it again. We've got high goals set for ourselves."

Daniels has a mental picture of the Bulldogs playing tournament games before 10,000 of their fans at Van Andel Arena.

"Our fans deserve a shot to see something like that," he said. "It would be ideal for us."

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Detroit Free Press

September 19, 2003

Detroit school loses charter

\$55,000 monthly rent is last straw; 300 students affected

BY CHASTITY PRATT
FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

Parents of the 300 students at Beacon International Academy in Detroit will be looking for new schools for their children today after the academy lost its charter and closed Thursday.

Ferris State University revoked the school's charter amid concerns that members of the school's board of directors were too cozy with the East Lake Missionary Baptist Church, which houses the school and charges \$55,000 per month in rent.

Ferris State notified the school last fall that the charter was going to be revoked effective today, but many parents found out about the closing when they dropped off or picked up their children Thursday.

The charter school's officials had been negotiating with the university and holding out hope that the school would not close.

"When I came to pick up my daughter, her teacher said, 'It was nice meeting you,' and I said, 'OK, see you tomorrow,' and that's when she said, 'No you won't, we're closing,' " said Kenya Berryhill, whose daughter, Kayla, was a first-grader at the school. "This is a shock."

Beacon school board treasurer Tony Burnett said during the past year the board hired attorneys to try to fight the closure.

The school, at 12400 E. Jefferson, held meetings last spring with parents to tell them that if the board's efforts were not successful, the school would close, Burnett said.

Many parents said they never got the message. Parents said they liked the school because it had small classes for kindergarten through fifth grades and offered before- and after-school care.

Last year, however, less than a third of its students met or exceeded MEAP standards.

State Sen. Hansen Clarke, D-Detroit, joined parents, community leaders and board members Thursday at the school to protest its closing.

"Even if Ferris State is 100-percent correct and has a very good reason to terminate the charter, there is no reason to justify throwing these kids out in the streets in the middle of the semester," Clarke said.

Ferris State officials said the lease was the main reason for the closure. The other six charter schools that the university authorized in Detroit pay about a third of the \$550,000 yearly lease that Beacon signed with the church, said Marc Sheehan, spokesman for Ferris State.

"We feel very badly for students, parents and employees . . . but this is not something that is a surprise," Sheehan said.

"Taxpayers' money is supposed to be going to education -- and we feel those funds weren't being used for those purposes," he said.

Lease payments at the church have risen every year as parking lots were built and modular classrooms were added, said the Rev. Michael Cunningham. Ferris State complained after the latest phase of new classrooms in the \$1.8-million project were added to the lease, Cunningham said. He said the lease was \$55,000 per month because the loan for the project was scheduled to be paid off by the time the school's charter expired in 2004.

If the university didn't like the rising costs, officials should have said something sooner, Cunningham said.

Board members denied a cozy relationship with the church resulted in the high lease payments.

Cunningham originated the idea for the school, but the board members who now run it were handpicked by the management company with the university's blessing, board members said.

Pioneer
Friday, September 26, 2003

Ferris State celebrates Eisler inauguration

BIG RAPIDS - David L. Eisler will be inaugurated as Ferris State University's 18th president Thursday morning at Williams Auditorium on Ferris State's Big Rapids campus.

Faculty, staff, students and community members are invited.

Highlights include an investiture ceremony and charge to the president by Board of Trustees Chair Bruce Parsons followed by President Eisler's inaugural address.

During the ceremony, Parsons will present Eisler with a presidential medallion as a symbol of office.

The medallion was designed and created by Phillip Canizzi, assistant professor and chair of the Metals/Jewelry Design Program at Kendall College of Art and

Design of Ferris State University.

Setting the stage for Thursday's inaugural activities will be a Wednesday evening reception at Kendall where Carrizzi will present the medallion to Parsons.

Among those invited to bring congratulatory greetings are Academic Senate Chair William Papo, Alumni Association President Kevin Cross and Student Body President Jason Granger.

Following the ceremony, attendees are invited to a dessert reception on the Campus Quad lasting until approximately 2 p.m. The reception is open to the public and will feature live music and a historical display by the Ferris Historical Task Force.

In case of rain, the reception will be held in the Rankin Center Dome Room.

In keeping with President Eisler's desire to have the day's events focused on the students of Ferris State, he has invited faculty, staff, students and community members to join him and the inaugural committee for a progressive supper Thursday evening in the university's dining centers.

For the progressive supper, the inaugural party will move through three of the university's dining facilities and visit with guests at each location.

The progressive supper will begin at 5p.m. in the Westview Dining facility move to: the Rock at 5:30 p.m. and finish at Center Ice; at 6 p.m. Dining Services has provided a special theme dinner of prime rib and shrimp for everyone who wishes to attend at a reduced price of \$5.85.

Individuals can attend the progressive supper at any of the above times and locations and receive a complete entree.

No tickets are required for any of the inaugural events.

The Ferris State Board of Trustees named Eisler as president last spring, and the former provost/vice president for academic affairs and professor of music at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, began his presidential duties at Ferris on July 7.

There also will be a post scrimmage autograph session with team members. "The players will be available for kids who want autographs," Daniels said. Ferris State enters this season as the defending Central Collegiate Hockey Association regular-season champion after compiling a record of 31-1aI overall and 22-5-1 in the CCHA - good for a first-place finish.

After winning the CCHA regular-season trophy the Bulldogs earned their first-ever berth to compete in the NCAA tournament. Ferris advanced to the West Region title game before it was ousted by Minnesota 7-4. The Golden Gophers went on to win the national championship.

A week from Saturday, Ferris will host the University of Windsor in its first exhibition contest of the season at 4 p.m. in the Ewigleben Ice Arena.