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NKU, DRURY HEADLINE GLVC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PRESEASON POLL

NORSE, PANTHERS SELECTED BY PEERS TO WIN RESPECTIVE DIVISIONS IN 2008-09

INDIANAPOLIS – Defending Great Lakes Valley Conference divisional champions, Drury University and Northern Kentucky University, have been selected as the favorites to repeat the feat in 2008-09 in a poll of the league's 13 head coaches. Drury has been voted the top team in the GLVC West Division and Northern Kentucky's is the league's pick to claim the GLVC East Division crown.

Drury collected 23 total points and three first-place votes to top the GLVC West Division poll. The Panthers edged Quincy in the voting. The Lady Hawks finished second with 20 total points and two first-place votes. Missouri S&T picked up the remaining first-place vote in the division polling and finished third with 19 total points.

Southern Indiana came in fourth in the voting with 13 total points and was trailed by Missouri-St. Louis and Rockhurst, which collected 10 and five points in the poll, respectively.

Northern Kentucky, the top-ranked team in the preseason Division II Bulletin Top 25 and reigning NCAA Division II national champion, is the unanimous pick to claim the GLVC East Division. The Norse posted 36 total points and six first-place votes to top the divisional poll.

Indianapolis finished second in the GLVC East Division poll with 31 total points and one first-place vote. Bellarmine finished closely behind with 26 total points for third-place. Lewis finished fourth in the voting with 18 total points and was trailed by UW-Parkside, Kentucky Wesleyan and Saint Joseph's, who posted 17, 13 and six points, respectively.

Northern Kentucky and Drury were two of the top teams in the country last season, evident based on the success each had during postseason runs.

Drury claimed its first GLVC women's basketball championship by edging Northern Kentucky in the title game of the GLVC tournament a year ago. The Norse, however, claimed the Great Lakes Region title in a rematch of the GLVC title contest and went on to claim the school's second NCAA women's basketball national championship.

Drury, under the guidance of second-year head coach Steve Harold, returns four of its five starters from last season. Despite the loss of 2007-08 GLVC Player of the Year Molly Carter to graduation, the Panthers will return two third-team All-GLVC selections in Melanie Oliver and Lindsay Ballweg.

Oliver averaged 12.3 points and 8.0 rebounds per game last season, while Ballweg is the top returning scorer having averaged 12.8 points and 3.1 rebounds per game. In addition, fellow starters Sara Bos and Hannah Carter return to bolster the Panthers strong nucleus of talent.

Northern Kentucky returns seven letterwinners and three starters from last season's national championship team. The Norse, led by head coach Nancy Winstel, posted a 28-8 overall record

in 2007-08 and finished tied for first in the GLVC East Division with a 13-6 league record. NKU closed the 2007-08 campaign winning 10 of their last 11 contests with the only setback coming in the GLVC title game to Drury.

Key returnees for the Norse in 2008-09 will be seniors Cassie Brannen and Jessie Slack. The pair were third-team All-GLVC selections a year ago. Brannen averaged 13.6 points and 5.4 rebounds per game, while Slack contributed 13.3 points and 3.9 rebounds per game.

The Norse will open the exhibition season in their new arena, The Bank of Kentucky Center, on Nov. 8 and will begin their defense of the national title on Nov. 20 against Wayne State.

The 2008-09 women's basketball season will begin on Nov. 15 for the majority of GLVC teams. Conference play will start on Dec. 4 The GLVC Championship, featuring the league's top eight teams, will be hosted on March 6-8 at the home site of the league's top seed.

The complete 2008-09 GLVC Women's Basketball Preseason Coaches Poll follows:

West Division

<u>Team (First-place votes)</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>2007-08 Records (GLVC)</u>
1. Drury (3)	23	28-4 (16-3)
2. Quincy (2)	20	20-10 (14-5)
3. Missouri S&T (1)	19	24-7 (15-4)
4. Southern Indiana	13	10-17 (5-14)
5. Missouri-St. Louis	10	7-20 (5-14)
6. Rockhurst	5	8-19 (3-16)

East Division

<u>Team (First-place votes)</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>2007-08 Records (GLVC)</u>
1. Northern Kentucky (6)	36	28-8 (13-6)
2. Indianapolis (1)	31	22-8 (13-6)
3. Bellarmine	26	20-12 (12-7)
4. Lewis	18	13-13 (9-10)
5. UW-Parkside	17	17-11 (11-8)
6. Kentucky Wesleyan	13	14-13 (8-11)
7. Saint Joseph's	6	1-25 (0-19)

For more information about the GLVC and each conference member, please visit www.glvcsports.org.