

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference Office

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Preseason Baseball Coaches Poll

Franklin Chosen as Preseason HCAC Baseball Favorite

GREENWOOD, IN – The Franklin College baseball team has been selected as the favorite to claim the 2009 Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference baseball championship. The Grizzlies received 70 total points and three first place votes in the annual HCAC Preseason Coaches Poll.

The poll collects votes from all nine head coaches in the HCAC. Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology collected the second most votes in the poll and finished with 67 total points and two first place votes. Transylvania University finished third in the poll with 66 points and two first place votes and was followed by the College of Mount St. Joseph which claimed 63 points and the final two first place votes. Anderson University (43 points), Manchester College (39), Bluffton University (24), Hanover College (20), and Defiance College (13) rounded out the poll.

Franklin will be looking for its third HCAC baseball title and first since 2005 as the Grizzlies enter the 2009 season. The blue and gold received some votes in the *Collegiate Baseball Newspaper Preseason Poll* and will look for the school's second straight HCAC Tournament appearance. The Grizzlies finished second during the 2008 season with a 16-6 conference mark, standing a half game behind conference champion Mount St. Joseph. Franklin was 26-14 overall and fell to Transylvania and Rose-Hulman in the HCAC Tournament. The blue and gold return a host of key components from last season's team including **Joel Chrobak (LaPorte, Ind./H.S.)**. The senior outfielder ranked among the conference leaders, slugging .671 last season with 44 RBI, eight home runs, 37 runs, 14 doubles, and a .458 on-base percentage.

Also returning to set the table for the heart of the Grizzlies' order is senior outfielder **Lance Noel (Union, Ky./Ryle)**. The senior hit .368 a year ago with 49 runs scored, 25 RBI, and 12 doubles.

On the mound, Franklin will be led by All-HCAC first team selection **Jared Applegate (Scottsburg, Ind./H.S.)**. The senior left handed pitcher was 6-2 on the hill last year with a 4.85 earned run average. Applegate ranked second in the conference with 88 strikeouts in 81.2 innings pitched.

Rose-Hulman will be looking for the school's first baseball title as a member of the HCAC. The Engineers also garnered some votes in the *Collegiate Baseball Newspaper Preseason Poll* and will look for a return trip to the HCAC Tournament. RHIT was the runner-up in the HCAC tournament last season, falling to Transylvania 16-10 in the final. Three returning All-HCAC first-team selections return to lead the offense this spring.

Junior infielder **Tim Tepe (Cincinnati, Ohio/Elder)**, junior catcher **Keenan Long (Niles, Ill./Notre Dame)**, and junior third baseman **Chandler Kent (Antioch, Ill./H.S.)** return looking to pick up where they left off last spring. Tepe led the Engineers with a .389 batting average and added 39 runs, 21 doubles, and 50 RBI. Long hit .386 with 48 runs scored, 16 doubles, and 50 RBI, while Kent finished the season .348 at the plate with 13 doubles.

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Rose-Hulman finished 32-15 last season with a 15-6 mark in the HCAC standings. The Engineers ended their season with losses to Adrian and Wooster in the NCAA Division III Mid-East Regional.

Transylvania University is predicted to finish third and make a strong push for their second conference title. The Pioneers finished with a 31-14 mark last season and posted a 15-7 conference record for fourth place. Transy will have key members returning from last year's HCAC tournament championship team. Junior infielder **Adam Clark (Ashland, Ky./Paul Blazer)** and junior first baseman **Ben Young (Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier)** will be looked upon to lead the offense. Clark led the HCAC last spring, batting .412 at the dish and added a team-high 50 runs scored, while Young provided the power with 14 doubles and a conference-best 11 home runs and 57 RBI.

The 2009 baseball season opens on February 20. The HCAC portion of the schedule will begin on March 17 with the HCAC Tournament slated for May 7-9.

2009 HCAC Baseball Coaches Preseason Poll

<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (first place votes)</u>
1. Franklin	70 (3)
2. Rose-Hulman	67 (2)
3. Transylvania	66 (2)
4. Mount St. Joseph	63 (2)
5. Anderson	43
6. Manchester	39
7. Bluffton	24
8. Hanover	20
9. Defiance	13

2009 Baseball Players to Watch

Anderson: Christ Jarrett – OF/P (Jr., Hagerstown, Ind./H.S.), Brad Lantz – C (Sr., Lapel, Ind./H.S.), Daniel Hiatt – SS (Jr., Elwood, Ind./Madison-Grant), Cody Young – 1B/OF (Jr., Muncie, Ind./Delta)

Bluffton: Curtis Schroeder – 1B (Sr., Shelby, Ohio/H.S.), Chris Bauman – OF (Sr., Milford, Ohio/H.S.), James Hausman – RHP (Sr., Milford, Ohio/H.S.), Cody McPherson – RHP/DH (Jr., Northwood, Ohio/Millbury-Lake)

Defiance: Tim Pitro – IF (Jr., Gahanna, Ohio/Lincoln), Brad Timofeev – RHP (Sr., Oregon, Ohio/Clay), Kirk Jesse – OF (Jr., Ney, Ohio/Fairview)

Franklin: Joel Chrobak – OF (Sr., LaPorte, Ind./H.S.), Ian Sanders – 2B (So., Decatur, Ind./Bellmont), Lance Noel – OF (Sr., Union, Ky./Ryle), Adam Blackburn – SS (Sr., Shelbyville, Ind./H.S.), Jared Applegate – LHP (Sr., Scottsburg, Ind./H.S.)

Hanover: Adam Miller – SS (Jr., Franklin, Ind./H.S.), Jake Schwartz – P (Jr., Kokomo, Ind./Western)

Manchester: Matty Miller – OF/3B (Sr., Rochester, Ind./H.S.), Colin Denihan – P (Sr., Columbia City, Ind./H.S.), Kaz Kalita – SS (Jr., LaPorte, Ind./H.S.), Shawn Baker – OF (Sr., Middlebury, Ind./Northridge)

Mount St. Joseph: Nick Weimer – OF (Sr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Oak Hills), Ryan Rodriguez – OF (So., Mason, Ohio/Moeller), Steve Matre – P (Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Purcell-Marian), Ben Stroube – OF (So., North Bend, Ohio/St. Xavier), Todd Schwertman – P (Sr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Oak Hills)

Rose-Hulman: Keenan Long – C (Jr., Niles, Ill./Notre Dame), Derek Eitel – P (Jr., Marshall, Ill./H.S.), Chandler Kent – 3B (Jr., Antioch, Ill./H.S.), Tim Tepe – SS/2B (Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Elder)

Transylvania: Adam Clark – SS/2B (Jr., Ashland, Ky./Paul Blazer), Phil Blakely – OF (Sr., Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier), Adam Wilkins – RHP (Sr., Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier), Ben Young – 1B (Jr., Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier), Corey Colyer – RHP (Jr., Lexington, Ky./Lexington Christian)

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