Jeff Pierce embarks on his 12th year as head coach of the Ferris State football program in the 2006 season and owns the distinction of being the Bulldogs' all-time winningest coach.

Pierce, who attained the historic milestone victory in Ferris' overtime conference win at Ashland on Sept. 4, 2004, also boasts the program's third-highest ever winning percentage (.570) in the Bulldogs' gridiron history.

Under Pierce, Ferris State has won or shared three Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) titles while earning back-to-back (1995 and 1996) berths in the NCAA Division II National Championship playoffs, including a '95 semifinal-round appearance.

An individual with lofty dreams and aspirations, Pierce had a lifelong dream turn into reality in May 1995 when the FSU alumnus was named the 12th head coach in the program's history.

Pierce had been an assistant coach for 12 years at Ferris State before being appointed to his current post. He also assists with coaching on the offensive side of the football and specializes in instructing the running backs.

Pierce, who built a national reputation as Keith Otterbein's defensive coordinator for seven seasons, quickly made the most of his golden opportunity during his initial coaching campaign in 1995, guiding the Bulldogs at that time to an unprecedented fourth consecutive GLIAC title with a second straight undefeated regular season and a school-best semifinal appearance in the NCAA-II Playoffs. For his efforts, he was honored as the GLIAC's Coach of the Year.

Pierce has established firm roots with the Bulldogs since graduating from Sault Ste. Marie (Mich.) High School in 1974. He was a defensive back at Ferris from 1974-77 and later started his coaching career in 1983 under Nick Coso as a graduate assistant and head coach for the junior varsity. When Dan Underwood assumed the head coaching reigns in 1984, Pierce remained on board to coach the inside linebackers. He joined Otterbein's staff in 1986 and was promoted to defensive coordinator in 1988.

In his seven years as defensive coordinator, Pierce constructed one of the NCAA Division II's top defensive units. His 1992 Bulldog defense led the nation in fewest points allowed while the 1994 squad was tops among the GLIAC's total defense leaders.

Pierce graduated from Ferris with a degree in trade-technical teacher education in 1979, earning a pair of President's Academic Awards along the way. He completed graduate school in 1985 with a master's degree in athletic administration from Central Michigan University.

"I believe Ferris State is second to none when it comes to selling our academic programs," Pierce said. "Our football student-athletes should never lose sight of the fact that a degree at Ferris State University can significantly aid in getting a job when you graduate."

Pierce initially arrived at Ferris State after an all-conference football career at Sault Ste. Marie in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He also wrestled in high school and was "All-Uppen Peninsula" in track.

In 1978, Pierce was an assistant varsity football coach at Sault Ste. Marie High. From 1979-83, he logged two years as head junior varsity football coach, two years as head varsity football coach, and four years as head varsity track coach at Big Bay De Noc High School, which is located in the Upper Peninsula.

Pierce, 49, resides in Big Rapids with his wife, Suzie, and their two sons, Jason (16) and Justin (12). Pierce is a member of the American Football Coaches Association.