**Bulldogs Set To Open 30th Season**

**FSU VOLLEYBALL AT A GLANCE** - The Ferris State University women's volleyball team will open its 30th anniversary campaign this Saturday-Sunday (Aug. 31-Sept. 1) at the Wheeling Jesuit (W.Va.) Invitational in Wheeling, W.Va. The Bulldogs will face Bellarmine (Ky.) this Saturday at 11 a.m. (EDT) and then Wheeling Jesuit at 7 p.m. (EDT). FSU will square off against St. Joseph's (Ind.) Sunday at 9 a.m. (EDT) and Alderson-Broaddus (W.Va.) at 3 p.m. (EDT). Sixteen schools are taking part in the invitational, which will hold matches on three different courts.

**LAST SEASON** - Ferris State concluded the 2001 campaign with a 21-11 overall record, which included a second-place tie 12-6 Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) North Division finish. The Bulldogs advanced to the GLIAC Tournament championship match (11/10/01) for the third time in the last four seasons before dropping a 3-0 decision versus Northwood.

**THE 30TH SEASON OF BULLDOG VOLLEYBALL** - The 2002 campaign marks the 30th anniversary of the Ferris State women's volleyball program. Since the program's inception in 1972, the Bulldogs have compiled a 628-369 (.630) overall record. Ferris has won eight GLIAC titles, made 10 NCAA Division II Tournament appearances and registered 22 winning seasons in its previous 29 campaigns.

**A LOOK AT THE 2002 CAMPAIGN** - Seventh-year head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm is optimistic entering the 2002 campaign as eight letterwinners and five starters return from last season's GLIAC Tournament runner-up finish. Senior middle hitter Alaina Olds (Kingsley), a 2001 American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-Great Lakes Region First-Team selection, leads a talented and experienced unit. Olds led the Bulldogs in both kills (405) and total blocks (148) last season. Fellow senior Stephanie Speed (Bothell, Wash.) tallied a team-high 360 digs last year and earned honorable mention all-conference accolades. Seven returning players gained valuable starting experience last season while eight newcomers are expected to challenge for playing time.

**OLDS LEADING THE CHARGE** - Alaina Olds enters her final season 281 kills shy of becoming the 12th player in school history to record 1,000 career kills. A 5-10 middle hitter, Olds registered two triple-double (kills, digs and blocks) performances in 2001 while garnering second-team Daktronics All-Great Lakes Region honors. Olds recorded the school's best single-match attack percentage (.778) in last season's opener against Wisconsin-Parkside (8/25/01) at the Ferris State Invitational. The 2001 FSU Bulldog Award recipient posted 10 kills or more in 25 outings last year.

**FSU PICKED THIRD IN POLL** - Ferris State was picked to finish third in the GLIAC North Division Preseason Coaches Poll, which was released last Wednesday (Aug. 21). The Bulldogs tallied one first place vote and 26 total points. Grand Valley State, the defending league champion and NCAA-II National Semifinalist, was the North Division favorite as the Lakes registered 36 points and had six first-place votes. Northwood finished second with 30 points. The league's 13 head coaches participated in the balloting, but were not allowed to vote for their teams. The first-place team on each ballot received six points while the second received five points, etc. Findlay was expected to challenge for playing time.

**HEADING INTO THE 2002 CAMPAIGN** - Now in her seventh season at the helm, head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm has a current career coaching record of 244-88 (.735). A 1990 Alma graduate, Brandel-Wilhelm guided the Bulldogs to an NCAA-II Tournament appearance in 1999. She previously spent three seasons as head coach at West Virginia Wesleyan (1993-1995) in Buckhannon, W.Va., where she led the Bobcats to a fifth place finish at the 1995 NCAA-II Championships.
Four of Ferris’ 15 20-win campaigns have come under head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm, who is the program’s second all-time winningest coach (694). She currently holds a 244-88 (.735) career record and needs six victories to notch her 250th career win.

The Bulldogs are 93-38 (.710) over the past four seasons. Senior Stephanie Speed (pronounced A-VAH-glave-in) Sports Arena. The Bulldogs are scheduled to play their first 13 matches on the road. FSU tallied eight points to rank 13th among others receiving votes in the 2002 AVCA Division II Preseason Coaches Poll, which was released last Tuesday (Aug. 20).

Three GLIAC teams were ranked among the top 25, including Grand Valley State (No. 9), Findlay (No. 22) and Northwood (No. 23). The 2002 GLIAC Volleyball Tournament will be held Nov. 14-16 at the site of the team with the best regular-season conference record. The tournament had been held at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek, Mich., the past four seasons.

Against The Competition - Ferris State has had success against all of its weekend opponents. FSU and Bellarmine (Ky.) will square off for the eighth time this Saturday with the Bulldogs leading the all-time series 5-2. FSU head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm has a current 2-3 career coaching mark versus Bellarmine and led Ferris to a 3-0 victory in the last series meeting (9/9/00). Ferris holds a 1-0 series advantage against both Alderson-Broadus (W.Va.) and Wheeling Jesuit (W.Va.). The Bulldogs defeated Alderson-Broadus by a score of 3-0 in last season’s Ferris State Invitational (8/25/01) and handed Wheeling Jesuit a 3-2 setback in the 1999 FSU Invite (8/27/99). Ferris is 5-0 all-time against St. Joseph’s (Ind.), including a 1-0 mark under Brandel-Wilhelm. The Bulldogs dealt the Pumas a 3-0 loss in 1998 (8/28) at the Ferris State Invitational.

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Information on the FSU Women’s Volleyball roster is available online at the university’s Athletics website or by contacting the FSU Sports Information Department.