

## Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference Office

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## Franklin Chosen as Preseason HCAC Baseball Favorite

**GREENWOOD, IN** – The Franklin College baseball team has been selected as the favorite to claim the 2012 Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference baseball championship. The Grizzlies received 94 total points and seven first place votes in the annual HCAC Preseason Coaches' Poll.

The poll collects votes from all ten head coaches in the HCAC. Anderson University collected the second most votes in the poll and finished with 79 total points and two first place votes. Manchester College (one 1<sup>st</sup> place vote) and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology finished tied for third in the poll with 76 points and was followed by Transylvania University which claimed 63 points. Bluffton University (47 points), College of Mount St. Joseph (42), Hanover College (35), Earlham College (26), and Defiance College (12) rounded out the poll.

Franklin will be looking for its fourth HCAC baseball title as the Grizzlies enter the 2012 season. The blue and gold will be striving for the school's fifth straight HCAC Tournament appearance this spring. Franklin finished second during the 2011 season with a 16-8 conference mark, standing one game behind conference champion Manchester. FC was 30-14 overall and won the HCAC Tournament with a 9-0 win over Manchester.

The Grizzlies return a pair of All-HCAC second-team members from last season's team, including the conference's Freshman of the Year. Sophomore outfielder **Scott Windler (Lafayette, Ind./Central Catholic)** led the squad at the plate last spring as a freshman, batting .414 with 34 runs scored, 10 doubles, eight home runs, 31 RBI, and five stolen bases. Junior shortstop **Nick Stoa (Camby, Ind./Decatur Central)** earned second-team All-HCAC honors after hitting .361 with 41 runs scored, 16 doubles, 10 home runs, and 49 RBI.

On the mound, Franklin will be led by All-HCAC second-team selection **Nathan Ellis (Plainfield, Ind./H.S.)**. The senior pitcher was 9-2 on the hill last year with a 3.73 earned run average. In 14 appearances, Ellis posted 64 strikeouts in 89.1 innings of work.

Anderson will be looking for the school's first baseball title since 2010 this spring. The Ravens enter the season receiving votes in the D3baseball.com Preseason Poll and will look for a return trip to the HCAC Tournament. The Ravens dropped both contests in the HCAC tournament last season, falling to Rose-Hulman 8-3 in an elimination game. One All-HCAC second-team selection and the HCAC Most Valuable Player return to lead the Ravens lineup this spring.

Senior catcher **Michael Tucker (Zionsville, Ind./H.S.)** returns after leading the Ravens at the plate last season. Tucker had a MVP junior season batting .433 with 45 runs scored, 14 doubles, 16 home runs, 66 RBI, and a .901 slugging percentage. Senior first baseman **Nate Clem (Pendleton, Ind./H.S.)** returns for his final season after earning second-team All-HCAC honors. Clem hit .348 with 27 runs scored, 11 doubles, and 36 RBI a year ago. On the mound, senior pitcher **Greg Vogt (Indianapolis, Ind./Carmel)** returns after earning first-team All-HCAC honors as a junior. Vogt finished 8-3 in 14 appearances, posting a 3.75 earned run average with 40 strikeouts in 86.1 innings of work.

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Manchester and Rose-Hulman are predicted to finish third and make a strong push for a HCAC title. The Spartans won the conference with a 28-15 mark last season and posted a 17-7 conference record to earn the regular season title. Rose-Hulman finished third in the standings with a 27-16 record, 16-9 HCAC. The black and gold return a pair of All-HCAC first-team members, while the Engineers return three first-team honorees.

For Manchester, junior infielder **Cody Schell (South Bend, Ind./Clay)** is the top bat returning to the lineup after hitting .379 with 37 runs scored, eight doubles, and 24 RBI last spring. Junior pitcher **Bryce Murphy (Ossian, Ind./Norwell)** led the rotation with a 9-1 mark last spring, striking out 40 batters in 50.1 innings of work.

Rose-Hulman returns its top hitter and pitcher from last year's squad. Senior outfielder **Derek Dauenbaugh (Normal, Ill./University)** led the team with a .440 average last spring, adding 33 runs scored, 11 doubles, and 38 RBI. Senior pitcher **Jim Bob Schuler (Salem, Ind./N. Harrison)** had a team-best seven wins a year ago and held a 2.86 earned run average with 55 strikeouts.

The 2012 baseball season opens on February 25. The HCAC portion of the schedule will begin on March 23 with the HCAC Tournament slated for May 10-12.

### **2012 HCAC Baseball Coaches Preseason Poll**

<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (first place votes)</u>
1. Franklin	94 (7)
2. Anderson	79 (2)
3. Manchester	76 (1)
Rose-Hulman	76
5. Transylvania	63
6. Bluffton	47
7. Mount St. Joseph	42
8. Hanover	35
9. Earlham	26
10. Defiance	12

### **2012 Baseball Players to Watch**

**Anderson:** Michael Tucker – C (Sr., Zionsville, Ind./H.S.), Brett Detty – SS (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Lawrence North), Greg Vogt – P (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Carmel), Nate Clem – 1B (Sr., Pendleton, Ind./H.S.), Dan Schmitz – P (Jr., Chicago, Ill./Wheaton Academy)

**Bluffton:** Nick Broyles – SS (Sr., Toledo, Ohio/Whitmer), Tyler Stephenson – 3B (Sr., Springfield, Ohio/Northwest), Kyle Niermann – OF (Jr., Napoleon, Ohio/H.S.), Miles Richardson – OF/P (Jr., Granville, Ohio/Newark Catholic), Ryan Leugers – P (Sr., Botkins, Ohio/H.S.)

**Defiance:** Darin Waterman – P (So., Celina, Ohio/H.S.), Stephen Leskow – P (Jr., Defiance, Ohio/H.S.), Nick Bratt – P (Sr., Ottawa Lake, Mich.), Aaron Helland – OF (So., Defiance, Ohio/H.S.)

**Earlham:** Ted Williams – SS (So., Harper Woods, Mich./Grosse Pointe North), Tyler Schroeder – OF (Sr., Richmond, Ind./H.S.), Justin Broach – P (Jr., Centerville, Ohio/H.S.), Ryan Hayes – DH (So., New Lebanon, Ohio/Dixie), Sam Ward – OF (Jr., Bay Village, Ohio/Bay)

**Franklin:** Nick Stoa – SS (Jr., Camby, Ind./Decatur Central), Nathan Ellis – P (Sr., Plainfield, Ind./H.S.), Jarrett Johnson – OF (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Beech Grove), Shawn Mattingly – P (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Decatur Central), Scott Windler – OF (So., Lafayette, Ind./Central Catholic)

**Hanover:** Cam Ginder – OF (Jr., Ft. Wayne, Ind./Carroll), Ryan Grau – 1B (Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Moeller), Kevin Sears – OF (Jr., Noblesville, Ind./H.S.), Mitch Hunnicutt – P (So., Seymour, Ind./H.S.)

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**Manchester:** Bryce Murphy – P/OF (Jr., Ossian, Ind./Norwell), Cody Schell – P/IF (Jr., South Bend, Ind./Clay), Brad Murphy – OF (Jr., Ft. Wayne, Ind./Carroll), Corey Marchant – SS (Jr., Ft. Wayne, Ind./Dwenger), Justin Scott – P (Jr., Ft. Wayne, Ind./Snider)

**Mount St. Joseph:** Drew Ernst – P (Sr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Elder), Josh Denny – SS (Sr., N. Charleston, S.C./Flushing), Kyle Ottaway – C (Sr., Fairfield, Ohio/H.S.), Justin Shelton – 3B (Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Anderson), Collin Shaw – P (So., West Chester, Ohio/Lakota West)

**Rose-Hulman:** Jim Bob Schuler – P (Sr., Salem, Ind./N. Harrison), Derek Dauenbaugh – LF (Sr., Normal, Ill./University), Bobby Newman – 3B (Jr., Orland Park, Ill./Sandburg), Will Burchett – SS (Sr., Mokena, Ill./Providence Catholic), Matt Turk – C (Jr., Addison, Ill./Trail)

**Transylvania:** Taylor Bugh – P (Sr., Louisville, Ky./Ballard), Chris Bloch – OF/P (Sr., Louisville, Ky./Ballard), Danny Niehaus – P (Sr., Villa Hills, Ky./Covington Catholic), Zach Muench – 3B (Sr., Ft. Thomas, Ky./Highlands)

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