

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference Office

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Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference

Anderson Selected to Claim HCAC Softball Championship

GREENWOOD, IN – The Anderson University softball team has been selected as the favorite to win the 2012 Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference softball title in a vote of league coaches. The Ravens claimed 76 total points and six first-place votes in the Coaches' Preseason Poll.

Transylvania University placed second in the poll with 73 total points and two-place votes. Bluffton University finished third in the poll with 61 total points (one 1st place vote) and was followed by Defiance College with 59 points. Manchester College (44), Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (34), College of Mount St. Joseph (29), Hanover College (15), and Franklin College (14) rounded out the poll.

Anderson finished the 2011 season as the conference tournament champions and will be looking for the school's fifth conference title this spring. The Ravens were 29-15 overall and 12-4 in conference play. Anderson claimed the HCAC Tournament title with a 6-4 win over Defiance and ended the season with a 3-2 loss to Central (IA) in the NCAA regional.

The Ravens return multiple All-HCAC first-team members from last season's team, including the HCAC's Freshman of the Year. Sophomore **Katie Lee (Anderson, Ind./Highland)** returns to play outfield after earning the top freshman honor last spring. Lee posted a .381 batting average and added 35 runs scored, seven doubles, three triples, and 15 RBI. Junior **Lauren Smith (New Palestine, Ind./H.S.)** returns after an All-HCAC season a year ago. Smith hit .387 with 22 runs, six doubles, three home runs, and 13 RBI.

On the mound for Anderson, senior **Monica Crowe (Muncie, Ind./Wes Del)** returns after a solid junior campaign. Crowe finished 13-7 last season with a 2.20 earned run average. The senior pitched 15 complete games and struck out 137 batters in 133.2 innings of work last spring.

Transylvania won its third consecutive conference title last season with a 15-1 record. The Pioneers were 23-13-1 overall and fell to Anderson 2-0 in the HCAC tournament. Transy returns two-time HCAC Most Valuable Player **Megan Mitchell (West Lafayette, Ind./Wm. Henry Harrison)** to the lineup this spring. Mitchell set new HCAC records with a .629 batting average, 27 runs scored, and 11 home runs during league play. She also led the league in RBI (28), slugging percentage (1.629), on-base percentage (.772), and walks (21). For the season, Mitchell ranked top ten nationally in slugging percentage (1.091), home runs (17), and on-base percentage (.609).

Bluffton finished just behind Anderson in the conference standings with an 11-5 record. The Beavers were 19-16 overall and dropped both games at the conference tournament. BU returns one first-team All-HCAC selection to their lineup. Senior **Megan Price (Toledo, Ohio/Springfield)** will play catcher for the Beavers this spring and hit .316 with 28 runs, one double, five home runs, and 11 RBI as a junior.

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The 2012 softball season opens on February 25. The HCAC portion of the schedule will begin on March 22 with the HCAC Tournament slated for May 4-5.

2012 HCAC Softball Coaches Preseason Poll

<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (first place votes)</u>
1. Anderson	76 (6)
2. Transylvania	73 (2)
3. Bluffton	61 (1)
4. Defiance	59
5. Manchester	44
6. Rose-Hulman	34
7. Mount St. Joseph	29
8. Hanover	15
9. Franklin	14

2012 Softball Players to Watch

Anderson: Monica Crowe – P (Sr., Muncie, Ind./Wes Del), Stephanie Atkins – C (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Perry Meridian), Amy Wuestefeld – OF/IF (Jr., Batesville, Ind./H.S.), Lauren Smith – P/OF (Jr., New Palestine, Ind./H.S.), Katie Lee – OF (So., Anderson, Ind./Highland)

Bluffton: Meagan Price – C (Sr., Toledo, Ohio/Springfield), Lindsay Robertson – 3B (Fr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Northwest), Brittany Baker – 2B (Fr., Springboro, Ohio/H.S.), Megan Patton – P (Fr., Waynesfield, Ohio/Perry)

Defiance: Aubrie Ridinger – OF (Sr., Keystone, Ohio/H.S.), Katie Miller – OF (Jr., Archbold, Ohio/H.S.), Jordan Sawmiller – Util. (So., Wapakoneta, Ohio/H.S.), Lauren Dicke – P (Fr., Lima, Ohio/Shawnee), Tori Plummer – SS (Fr., Perrysburg, Ohio/H.S.)

Franklin: Alli Stropes – SS/P (Jr., Trafalgar, Ind./Indian Creek), Kelsey Whitson – OF (Sr., Elwood, Ind./H.S.), Ashley Burton – OF (Sr., Nineveh, Ind./Indian Creek), Megan Smith – P/3B (So., Salem, Ind./H.S.)

Hanover: Lauren Kreinest – IF (Sr., Harrison, Ohio/William Henry Harrison), Jessica Conover – IF (So., Hanover, Ind./Southwestern), Shelby Overton – OF (So., Greenwood, Ind./H.S.)

Manchester: Amy Hommema – C (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Southport), Holly Morris – IF (Sr., Eaton, Ind./Delta), Kayla Yates – OF (Jr., Delphi, Ind./H.S.), Danielle Howell – OF/DP (Jr., Denver, Ind./N. Miami)

Mount St. Joseph: Kathleen Horn – 3B (Sr., Florence, Ky./Boone Co.), Kim McElhinny – P/1B (Jr., Crestwood, Ky./Oldham Co.), Taylor McElhinny – P/IF/OF (Fr., Crestwood, Ky./Oldham Co.), Mallory Wright – IF/OF (Fr., Germantown, Ohio/Valley View), Tanya Sefton – C/OF (Jr., Vevay, Ind./Switzerland Co.)

Rose-Hulman: Brianne Widmoyer – P/IF (Jr., Elkhart, Ind./Central), Alyse Mueller – P/1B (Jr., Belleville, Ill./West), Jenna Martinek – OF/2B (So., Troy, Mo./Buchanon), Carly Heibel – P/IF (Fr., Ft. Wayne, Ind./Lakewood Park Christian)

Transylvania: Megan Mitchell – 3B (Jr., West Lafayette, Ind./Wm. Henry Harrison), Emily McCarty – OF (Sr., Hawesville, Ky./Owensboro Catholic), Anne Broadhead – SS (Sr., Booneville, Ind./H.S.), Emily Hampton – P/Util. (Fr., Frankfort, Ky./Franklin Co.), Alyssa Oakley – 1B (Fr., Lexington, Ky./Lafayette)

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