

2006 Wittenberg University Men's Basketball NCAA Tournament News & Notes - March 3-4, 2006

• **SETTING THE SCENE:** The Wittenberg Tigers have reached this point before. Now this veteran team is ready for more.

Wittenberg is in the NCAA Division III Tournament for an NCAA-record 24th time, but in recent years the Tigers haven't been able to put together a run deep into the national competition. That fuels the fire for a 2005-06 Tiger team that features four seniors in the starting lineup, none of whom have tasted victory in an NCAA Division III Tournament game.

The Tigers bring a 25-3 overall record into the 2006 national tournament after winning three straight games last week to capture their second consecutive North Coast Athletic Conference Tournament title. Wittenberg is ranked No. 3 in the nation, but the Tigers face a daunting 16-team regional bracket that includes five of the top eight teams in the latest d3hoops.com poll.

• **TOURNAMENT MATCH-UPS:** Wittenberg is set to square off with Lake Erie College at 8 p.m. Friday in the HPER Center or 30 minutes following the conclusion of the game between Baldwin-Wallace College and Carnegie Mellon University, which is scheduled for a 6 p.m. tip-off.

Lake Erie figures to provide a stiff test for the Tigers after the Storm posted a 21-6 overall record en route to regular season and tournament championships in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference. This is Lake Erie's first appearance in the NCAA Division III Tournament and also the Storm's first game ever against Wittenberg.

Baldwin-Wallace, regular season and tournament champion of the Ohio Athletic Conference, brings a 24-4 overall record into the first round match-up with University Athletic Association champion Carnegie Mellon. The Tartans are 20-5 overall.

Friday's winners will square off at 7 p.m. Saturday, also in Wittenberg's HPER Center. Sites for the four-team sectional sites (Rounds of 16 and 8) will be announced on Sunday, March 5.

• **THAT OLD SAYING:** Offense wins championships, but defense wins games.

The Wittenberg Tigers are the top-ranked defensive team in the NCAC and all of NCAA Division III as they are holding opponents to a paltry 54.6 points per game and have allowed just one opponent, Wooster, to score more than 61 points in a game (the Scots scored 86 points in each of their two regular season games against Wittenberg and then 69 points in the championship game of the NCAC Tournament). If the season ended today, this year's squad would post the program's best defensive numbers in more than 40 years.

In the three years before legendary Wittenberg and University of Tennessee coach Ray Mears took over the Tiger program in 1956, starting the current run of 50 straight non-losing seasons, Wittenberg was allowed between 76 and 82 points per game in three straight losing seasons. Fast forward to the 1961-62 season and the Tigers won a national title while allowing a stunning 41.5 points per game, a modern-day record for the program.

The overall record is held by the 1920-21 team, which limited 16 opponents to just 250 total points, good for an average of 15.6 points per game.

• **THE RANKINGS:** Wittenberg is ranked No. 3 nationally by d3hoops.com, which publishes the only weekly national poll for NCAA Division III men's basketball. The Tigers started the season ranked No. 10 in the preseason poll for the second straight year, but they moved into the top five in the first weekly poll while starting the season with six straight wins for the first time since the 1993-94 season. The Tigers moved up to the top spot on Jan. 8 and held that lofty ranking for three weeks before losing at home to Wooster on Feb. 4.

BY THE NUMBERS

WITTENBERG (25-3, 13-3 NCAC - ranked No. 3 by d3hoops.com)

Prob. Starters	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	G-GS	PPG	RPG
10 Pat Denbow	Jr.	G	6-0	28-28	3.0	1.7
20 Phil Steffes	Sr.	W	6-1	28-28	4.0	2.5
35 Kenny Brady	Sr.	W	6-4	28-28	10.9	4.5
45 Dane Borchers	Sr.	P	6-8	28-28	13.2	7.7
55 Daniel Russ	Sr.	P	6-9	27-27	15.6	6.0
Key Reserves	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	G-GS	PPG	RPG
11 Gregg Hill	Fr.	G	6-0	25-0	5.3	1.2
22 Tyler Howard	Fr.	W	6-2	26-0	6.9	2.3
40 Jack Hemenway Jr.	Jr.	P	6-5	28-0	3.6	2.8
15 Billy Bowen	Jr.	W	6-1	28-1	3.8	2.6

Head Coach: Bill Brown (Wittenberg '73)

Career Record: 360-168 (19th season)

Wittenberg Record: 300-69 (13th season)

Assistant Coaches: Artie Taylor, Randy Lincicome, Pat Carlisle, Al Cridge, Andy Bucheit

WITTENBERG QUICK FACTS

Location:	Springfield, Ohio
Founded:	1851
Enrollment:	2,100
Nickname:	Tigers
Colors:	Red & White
Affiliation:	NCAA Division III
Conference:	North Coast Athletic
Home Court (Capacity):	HPER Center (3,000)
President (Alma Mater):	Dr. Mark Erickson (Princeton 1977)
Athletic Director (Alma Mater):	Garnett Purnell (Cheyney St. 1973)
Associate AD/SWA (Alma Mater):	Pam Smith (Wittenberg 1982)
Sports Info. Dir. (Alma Mater):	Ryan Maurer (Miami of Ohio 1994)
SID Phone:	937-327-6114
SID Fax:	937-327-6120
SID E-mail:	rmaurer@wittenberg.edu
Pressbox Phone:	937-327-6126
Web site:	http://www.wittenberg.edu

TIGERS ON THE RADIO/INTERNET

Tiger fans can tune into the radio or internet for live coverage of all men's basketball games. Scott Leo, a radio announcer with the Columbus Clippers, the AAA affiliate of major league baseball's New York Yankees, has been calling games in several sports at Wittenberg since 2000 and was recently named the adviser of WUSO 89.1-FM. He will be wearing the headset this weekend to call all the Wittenberg action.

On the internet Wittenberg fans around the globe can enjoy streaming audio thanks to Wittenberg's partnership with Stretch Internet. Wittenberg fans do not have to pay to listen to the internet broadcasts, and anyone with a computer and internet connection can log on and listen.

ALL-NCAC AWARDS

The Wittenberg Tigers placed three student-athletes on the All-North Coast Athletic Conference honor rolls, which were released on Wednesday, March 1.

Senior post **Daniel Russ (Louisville, Ky./Trinity)** made the first team for the second straight year. The 2005 NCAC Player of the Year and Tournament MVP leads the Tigers with 15.6 points per game and ranks second with 6.0 rebounds per outing.

Senior post **Dane Borchers (Russia, Ohio/Russia)** made the second team for the second straight year. The team leader in scoring and rebounding a year ago, Borchers is second with 13.2 points per game this year and tops in rebounding at 7.7.

Senior wing **Kenny Brady (Reading, Ohio/Reading)** rounded things out with an honorable mention designation. A 2004 second-team honoree, Brady has posted respectable totals of 10.9 points and 4.5 rebounds per game in 2005-06.

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Wittenberg has ascended to the No. 1 national ranking in any weekly poll three times since joining the NCAC in 1989. The Tigers ranked first for part of the 1989-90 season and the latter half of the 1993-94 season, when Wittenberg won its first 26 games before losing in the conference tournament finale to Kenyon. That team went on to finish third in the nation, falling in overtime to eventual national champion Lebanon Valley.

Baldwin-Wallace is ranked No. 6 in the nation and Carnegie Mellon checks in at No. 23. Both teams have been in the rankings for most of the 2005-06 season. Lake Erie is not ranked.

• **ANOTHER YEAR:** The outlook for the 2006-07 season became a bit brighter when senior post Dane Borchers decided to return to school for a fifth year and play basketball. Borchers missed his entire freshman season, and part of his sophomore year as well, with a back injury. He accepted a medical red-shirt from the NCAA and plans to spend one more season in the Red & White.

Borchers has come on strong since making his first collegiate appearance on Nov. 29, 2003, against Wisconsin-Eau Claire in the first round of the John R. Collier Tournament at Hanover College. In that game, a 66-64 overtime loss, Borchers played 11 minutes and finished with two points and five rebounds. He played better and better as the season progressed before suffering a broken wrist in the NCAC Tournament championship game against Wooster.

Last year, Borchers led the Tigers in scoring and rebounding en route to second-team All-NCAC honors. This season, Borchers checks in with 13.2 points (second on team) and 7.7 rebounds (first) per outing. Borchers, who earned second-team All-NCAC honors for a second straight year earlier this week, recently surpassed the 900-point and 500-rebound plateaus for his Wittenberg career.

• **SCORING MILESTONE:** Senior post Daniel Russ continues his march up the career scoring charts at Wittenberg. He became the 28th player in school history to top 1,000 career points earlier this season, and his career total now stands at 1,387, good for 10th place in school history. At 657 career rebounds currently, Russ is unlikely to reach the top 10 in that category.

Russ was the 2004-05 NCAC Player of the Year after earning second-team All-NCAC honors the previous year. He was a third-team All-America honoree as well. This year's first postseason award arrived on Wednesday, and Russ was chosen for first-team All-NCAC honors.

• **COMING ON STRONG:** Freshman guard Gregg Hill has had an uneven inaugural collegiate campaign, but he is playing his best basketball at the most opportune time. Against Denison in the NCAC Tournament quarterfinals, Hill had the best game of his collegiate career, hitting 6-of-7 shots from the field and 4-of-4 from the free throw line en route to a career-high 16 points in just 17 minutes of action. He has reached double figures offensively in three of the last six games, and he has hit 20 of his last 31 field goal attempts, dating back to the Feb. 4 loss to Wooster.

• **THE COACH:** Head Coach Bill Brown, a 1973 graduate from Wittenberg, has posted a 300-69 record at his alma mater since taking the helm in 1993. Brown's teams have won six NCAC regular season championships and four NCAC tournament titles and have appeared in nine NCAA Division III tournaments. Brown previously spent one year coaching at Wooster - posting a 13-13 record in 1983 - and five seasons at Kenyon. His career record is 360-169.

Brown's 300 wins are the second-most of any Wittenberg head coach, behind only Larry Hunter, who compiled a record of 305-76 between 1976-89. Brown's .816 winning percentage is second in Tiger men's basketball annals to Ray Mears, who was a sparkling 121-23 between 1957-62, good for an .840 mark.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for this weekend's games will go on sale at 4:30 p.m. Friday and 5:30 p.m. Saturday. Ticket prices are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. There will be no pre-sales, and no passes of any kind will be accepted. One ticket gets spectators into both games on Friday.

50 YEARS AND COUNTING

Wittenberg, the program with the most wins in NCAA Division III history, has already clinched a 50th consecutive non-losing season and 38th consecutive winning campaign, dating back to a 13-13 season in 1968-69.

RECORD EXTENDED

The Wittenberg Tigers hold the records for most NCAA Division III Tournament appearances and wins by fairly wide margins.

The Tigers have a 42-23 record in 23 previous appearances in the national competition. With their 24th appearance in the NCAA Tournament, the record will be extended to five over Franklin & Marshall, Scranton and Salem State, none of which reached the competition in 2006.

Illinois Wesleyan, which is in this year's tourney, stands second with 34 all-time wins.

HOME SWEET HOME

Few teams at any level of college basketball enjoy the kind of home court advantage that Wittenberg does. The Tigers are a 13-1 at home this year.

Wittenberg had a 30-game NCAC regular season home winning streak snapped with last year's triple overtime thriller against Wooster. Dating back to two straight losses against Earlham and Wooster to conclude the 1999-2000 regular season, the Tigers are 39-2 in NCAC regular season home games, with the only two losses coming in the last two seasons to the Scots.

Since 1957, Wittenberg is an amazing 516-59 in Springfield, good for a winning percentage just a shade below .900. Since the HPER Center opened in 1982, the winning percentage is actually slightly lower, standing at .895 thanks to a record of 310-37.

TALKING STATISTICS

	AVG.	NCAC Rank	NCAA Rank
Scoring Offense	70.2	7	232
Scoring Defense	54.6	1	1
Scoring Margin	+15.6	2	8
Free Throw Percentages	.717	1	71
Field Goal Percentages	.495	2	25
Field Goal Percentage Defense	.374	1	4
3-Point Field Goals	6.0	3	229
3-Point Field Goal Percentages	.381	3	53
3-Point Field Goal Percentage Defense	.306	1	-
Rebounding Offense	36.8	3	-
Rebounding Defense	27.5	1	-
Rebounding Margin	+9.4	1	4
Blocked Shots	3.71	1	-
Assists	13.39	4	-
Steals	7.21	5	-
Turnover Margin	+0.11	6	-
Assist/Turnover Ratio	0.97	4	-
Offensive Rebounds	11.29	6	-
Defensive Rebounds	25.54	3	-

STATISTICAL NOTES

-- Wittenberg outrebounded 24 of its 28 opponents this season. When outrebounded (including twice in three meetings with Denison), the Tigers still had a 4-0 record.

-- Wittenberg has had just one player foul out of a game all season - senior wing Phil Steffes against Cedarville on Dec. 6.