

Sports

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Macomb Daily staff photo by Ray J. Skowronek
Stevenson's assistant coach Brett Schalk gives a player instruction during practice Tuesday.

Stevenson vows to avoid letdown

Titans coming off two big upsets at county tournament

In the depths of Fraser's Great Lakes Sports City, there's an outbreak of PTS lurking in the Stevenson hockey locker room. This scary, hard-to-understand affliction can only be cured by the Titans players and head coach Al Korolewicz. This isn't some flesh-eating fungus — it is worse. Known more commonly as Post Tournament Syndrome, it has taken hold of the team for the first time. This is an ailment, however,

that every team would like to contract. Stevenson, you see, is fresh off an improbable set of wins. Over the holiday break, the Titans defeated a pair of Macomb Area Conference Red Division opponents en route to a victory in the Laker Invitational Tournament in Saint Clair Shores.



Fred Costello

SLAP SHOTS

First, Stevenson took down Dakota in a hard-fought, 3-2 final

on Dec. 26 — Korolewicz called it "probably the best game of the season." The next day, they downed Saint Clair Shores in overtime of the championship game, again by a score of 3-2.

The upsets boosted the Titans overall record to 5-1-1 on the season. "I was talking with my assistants after the second game was over and I was saying that historically, it was one of the biggest wins in the school's hockey history," Korolewicz said.

Citing the teams' lack of success against MAC Red opponents over the years, the coach was upbeat following the tournament title, but wanted to ensure his message was clear: the season is

far from over.

"The guys were really excited after that game, but the season goes on," explained Korolewicz. "Going back to when I played we called it P.T.S. — Post Tournament Syndrome. It didn't seem to matter who we were playing, we just wouldn't do well after that."

Stevenson will have no time to sit back and admire the trophy — they've got no choice but to regroup quickly. The first annual Titan Invitational Tournament kicks off on Jan. 1, with the title game scheduled for Jan. 3.

As a first-time tournament host, Korolewicz and assistant

See **COSTELLO**, Page 2B

TV Coverage

Where: Orlando, Fla.
Time: 1 p.m. Today
Channel: Ch. 7



Fast Facts

- Michigan State is 1-7 in games at Florida.
- Georgia favored by 7 1/2.

Against all odds

Spartans relish underdog role against Georgia

By Dana Gauruder
Journal Register News Service

ORLANDO, Fla. — On sheer talent, Michigan State does not match up with Georgia in the Capital One Bowl today.

The Bulldogs have arguably the best quarterback in the nation in Matthew Stafford and top running back in Knowshon Moreno, along with other top-notch athletes that made them the preseason No. 1 team.

Going by conference affiliation and results, the Spartans deserve to be decided underdogs. The Bulldogs won six games in the stronger, deeper Southeastern Conference, beating bowl teams like South Carolina, Van-



Michigan State will rely heavily on its All-American tailback Javon Ringer, who rushed for 1,590 and 21 touchdowns.

derbilt and LSU. Michigan State's biggest victories came against Iowa and Northwestern.

There are two factors where the Spartans could have a decided edge — enthusiasm and motivation.

See **SPARTANS**, Page 3B



AP photos
Georgia quarterback Matthew Stafford throws a pass during practice for the Capital One Bowl game in Orlando, Fla., on Dec. 29. Stafford, who passed for 3,209 yards and 22 touchdowns, is one of the Bulldogs the No. 19 Spartans will have to focus on if they hope to win today.

Lucas scores 24 points in victory over Gophers

MSU rolls in Big Ten opener, 70-58

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Michigan State point guard Kalin Lucas found his rhythm against Minnesota, handing the Gophers their first loss of the season.

Look out Big Ten. Lucas scored a career-high 24 points and Chris Allen added 13 as the 10th-ranked Spartans beat No. 21 Minnesota 70-58 Wednesday.

Al Nolen led Minnesota (12-1) with 14 points, and Lawrence Westbrook added 11 in the Big Ten opener for both teams. The



Up Next
Michigan State at Northwestern
Time: 7 p.m.
Saturday
TV: BTN

Nolen said. "It lets you know you're not as good as you think you are, you're not as bad as you think you are. We really just got

See **LUCAS**, Page 2B



AP photo
Michigan State guard Kalin Lucas, right, shoots over Minnesota center Ralph Sampson during the first half in Minneapolis.

Michigan stumbles against Wisconsin, loses by 12

ANN ARBOR (AP) — Wisconsin's hot shooting helped it avoid losing consecutive games for the first time in nearly two years.

Up Next
Michigan vs. Illinois
Time: Noon
Sunday
TV: BTN

Marcus Landry and Trevon Hughes each scored 16 points and the Badgers beat No. 23 Michigan 73-61 Wednesday in a Big Ten opener.

Jon Leuer added 12 points for the Badgers (10-3), coming off a

five-point loss to then-No. 9 Texas last week. Wisconsin has not lost consecutive games since falling to Ohio State and Michigan State in February 2007.

"It answered a bunch of questions for us," Hughes said. "Obviously, it showed we can still play Wisconsin defense and take care of the ball. We shot over 50 percent and that's tremendous. Everything we threw up basically went in."

Freshman Zack Novak scored a season-high 20 points and DeShawn Sims had 14 for the Wolverines (10-3). Michigan had won five in a row.

See **MICHIGAN**, Page 2B

Pistons extend streak

Despite injuries, team wins its 5th straight

By Pat Caputo
Journal Register News Service

AUBURN HILLS — There have been times this season, a lot of them actually, when it was reasonable to wonder if getting Allen Iverson was an upgrade.

The first 21 games the Pistons played with Iverson, they won just 10 times.

Whether the last five games — all victories — represent a big turnaround or not, it's evident the Pistons are playing much better.

Their 83-75 victory over the New Jersey Nets Wednesday at The Palace might have been the best example of progress yet.

The Pistons were without Richard Hamilton for the third straight game because of a groin pull, and without Rasheed Wallace for most of the final three quarters because of a foot injury. Antonio McDyess dressed, but didn't play because of a rib injury.

The Pistons' depth emerged, and more and more Rodney Stuckey is enforcing his will as the Pistons' point guard. Aaron Afflalo played 30 minutes off the bench, scored 10 points.



Up Next
Sacramento at Detroit
Time: 8 p.m.
Friday
TV: FSN

SPORTS INSIDER



No defense for Tampa 2

Lions GM says next coach will have something to say about next system.

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Gauruder's **NBA NUGGETS**

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Lions eye scrapping Tampa 2

GM Mayhew wants to 'get the right coach and then the system we can figure out'

By David Birkett

Journal Register News Service

ALLEN PARK — The Tampa 2's time in Detroit appears to have passed.

New general manager Martin Mayhew wouldn't rule out a return to the scheme that had the Lions ranked last in the NFL in defense the last two years, but he didn't sound too thrilled about it, either.

"I wouldn't close the door on the Tampa 2," Mayhew said at the press conference announcing his permanent promotion Tuesday. "But we will certainly look at other alternatives defensively and offensively. From my

standpoint, it's important to get the right coach and then the system we can figure out."

Mayhew said he wants to get bigger, faster and more physical on defense, and wants to hire a coach who shares his philosophy.

Rod Marinelli, fired Monday after three years and a 10-38 record with the Lions, was a staunch proponent of the Tampa 2 defense that placed a premium on smaller, quicker players. The Lions did not have a defensive lineman over 300 pounds last season, and had one of the oldest rosters in the league.

At least four coaches on Detroit's emerging list of candidates have history as an NFL defensive coordinator. Just one of those, current Vikings assistant head coach/defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier, has significant Tampa 2 experience.

Frazier coached two seasons under Tony Dungy in Indianapolis and runs a form of the Tampa 2 now in Minnesota, but he's not as married to the scheme as some think. He won a Super Bowl playing for blitz-happy Buddy Ryan and the Bears two decades ago, and he worked for ultra-aggressive Jim Johnson in his first NFL job in Philadelphia.

An NFL source confirmed that Frazier has been contacted by the Lions and plans to interview once Minnesota's playoff run is over. He's also a candidate for the vacancy in St. Louis.

The Lions also have been given permission to interview Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo, Titans defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz and Redskins secondary coach Jerry Gray, who spent five seasons as defensive coordinator in Buffalo. All three run base 4-3 de-

fenses and mix heavy pressure with complex schemes.

Spagnuolo, who will interview with the Lions today or Saturday according to the New York Daily News, worked with Frazier and Johnson in Philadelphia. He's considered a leading candidate for the Jets job after turning down a chance to coach in Washington last year.

Schwartz, like Spagnuolo, has impressive bloodlines (Jeff Fisher, Bill Belichick) and is considered one of the best defensive minds in the game. He's considered a leading candidate in Cleveland, and is expected to interview this week during Tennessee's first-round playoff bye.

Gray, a four-time Pro Bowler who played with Mayhew in Tampa Bay, also could interview this week. He worked alongside pressure-driven coaches Gregg Williams and Dick LeBeau in

Buffalo and entered the NFL as an assistant under Fisher in Tennessee.

According to an NFL.com report, the Lions also plan to interview Dolphins assistant head coach/secondary coach Todd Bowles next Wednesday. Bowles, who played with Mayhew in Washington, has never been a coordinator at the professional level.

"There's no magic formula" to hiring the right coach, new team president Tom Lewand said. "It's finding the right person and setting up the right kinds of profiles of the type of people that you're looking for, the type of philosophies that they have. ... That, to me, is much more important than any individual specific characteristic or any individual specific point of experience."

E-mail David Birkett at dave.birkett@oakpress.com and read his blog at theoaklandpress.com.

Briefs

Barkley arrested on suspicion of DUI

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Charles Barkley was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol early Wednesday.

An officer with a task force that targets drunken driving saw the former NBA star run a stop sign about 1:30 a.m., Gilbert police Lt. Eric Shuhandler said. Barkley was in Scottsdale's Old Town area, a trendy spot in the Phoenix area.

"I am disappointed that I put myself in that situation," Barkley said in a statement to The Associated Press. "The Scottsdale police were fantastic. Now it is a legal matter and I will not comment any further as it is a legal matter."

The 45-year-old Barkley, now an NBA television commentator, failed field sobriety tests after the officer smelled alcohol on him, and he was arrested. Barkley declined to submit to a breath test but was given a blood test. The results weren't immediately available.

Barkley was cited and released. His car was impounded and he left in a cab, Shuhandler said. Police described Barkley as cooperative, adding it is customary to release people after an arrest on suspicion of DUI.

"There was nothing unusual about how he was taken into custody," Shuhandler said. "He was treated exactly like we treat anybody else."

Daly suspended for six months by PGA

John Daly has been suspended for six months by the PGA Tour for conduct that brought unwelcome publicity, including a night in a North Carolina jail to sober up.

"Is it fair that I got suspended? It's not fair in reality, but it's probably fair in perception," he told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

This is the second time the tour has suspended the two-time major champion, along with at least two other times he agreed to take time off to get his life in order. The 42-year-old Daly called this the lowest point in his wild 18-year career.

Pennington wins Comeback Player

NEW YORK — Chad Pennington has made a comeback from a comeback.

The Miami Dolphins quarterback won The Associated Press 2008 NFL Comeback Player of the Year award Wednesday, the second time in three years Pennington has received the honor. He also earned it in 2006 while with the New York Jets.

Pennington is the first player in the 11 seasons of the award to win it twice.

Angels agree to terms with Fuentes

LOS ANGELES — Reliever Brian Fuentes and the Los Angeles Angels reached agreement on a two-year deal Wednesday, perhaps giving the AL West champions a replacement for record-setting closer Francisco Rodriguez.

Fuentes gets \$17.5 million over the two seasons. There's a club option for \$9 million in 2011.

The 33-year-old Fuentes was a three-time NL All-Star. The lefty was 1-5 with 30 saves in 34 chances and a 2.73 ERA for Colorado this season and then became a free agent. He struck out 82 in 62 2-3 innings.

Indians acquire infielder DeRosa

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Indians acquired versatile infielder Mark DeRosa on Wednesday in a trade that sent three minor leaguers to the Chicago Cubs.

The Indians sent minor league pitchers Jeff Stevens, Chris Archer and John Gaub to Chicago.

The 33-year-old DeRosa may slide into Cleveland's opening at third base. He hit a career-high 21 homers and drove in 87 runs in 149 games last season while playing six different positions — 95 appearances at second base, 22 at third — for the NL Central champions.

COSTELLO: Stevenson having a breakout year

Continued from Page 1B

coach Brett Schalk are adamant that the team get back to work and regain focus. The Titans have been able to muster up a solid effort in nearly every game this season and both coaches want to see the team continue its success.

"You want to win your own tournament," Korolewicz said. "I know Saint Clair Shores was upset it didn't win its tournament."

The coach thought early in the preseason that the team would be strong offensively. Through seven games, it has not disappointed. Stevenson averages almost five goals per game, paced by junior forward Drew DeMarti, who has scored 10 times.

Senior forward Dan Dougherty has five goals, followed by junior forward Justin Zyvon and senior forward Ryan Belfy, who have four goals each.

All nine forwards have scored at least one goal.

Korolewicz has been especially impressed with Dougherty, the team captain. He also had high praise for DeMarti, Zyvon and Belfy, who is new to the team. He's seeing improvement from all three areas of the team: goaltending, offense and defense.

In goal, junior Rick Ice — another newcomer, earned both wins in the tournament and owns a save percentage approaching 92.

The defense was Korolewicz's main concern as the season began. However, he has seen the group jell, mature and start to emerge.

"As I said in the beginning of the year, our defense may not be the strongest in the MAC, but I knew they would improve," Korolewicz said. "They're only giving up a few goals a game and that's all I can ask for."

He pointed out junior Will Shier and senior Brandon Young as the team's backbone along the blue line. Korolewicz also complemented the forward corps for back-checking hard to help out defensively.

While the win over Dakota might prove the team's most impressive to date, the coaching staff was equally impressed by the manner in which the Titans were able to rise to the challenge of playing Saint Clair Shores in the championship game. The Lakers knocked off Lake Orion in the first round before the showdown with Stevenson.

"It was kind of a sloppy game for the first couple periods," Ko-

Power Five

1. Stevenson — How will they respond after two landmark wins?
2. L'Anse Creuse North — Went neck-and-neck with Notre Dame Prep
3. Eisenhower — Eagles and Lakers get at it on Jan. 3 at Suburban Macomb
4. Saint Clair Shores — Scored impressive tournament win over Lake Orion
5. Utica — Kept up with Dakota in a narrow loss

rolewicz explained. "I think Shores took us very seriously. Both teams were just trying to figure each other out. Halfway through the second period, we really started turning it up. In the third, I think we started to play up to our ability. We tried to instill a strong team defensive effort and take advantage of our chances."

The intensity of the game took its toll and injuries to senior forward Nick Gregorich and Dougherty — who took a slap shot off the toe — threatened the Titans chances. Korolewicz described scrambling on the bench as he attempted to put makeshift lines together. He even missed the best part: Justin Paul's overtime winner.

"I didn't even see the game-winning goal," Korolewicz said. "I was looking over at the defensemen, figuring out who to move up to forward when I heard the uproar."

Stevenson is just two seasons removed from winning the MAC White. Last year they managed a fifth-place finish in the division. Korolewicz believes his team has the potential to earn a second White title and, perhaps, make a run in the state playoffs.

The Titans have just the one loss on the year — to non-conference Troy — and currently trail Eisenhower and L'Anse Creuse North in the White (though they have games in hand). The coaching staff has noticed a huge improvement in attendance for games; students are starting to follow the team on road trips.

Korolewicz is proud of his team's play thus far, but the third-year head coach knows that the battle is just beginning.

"I'm definitely happy for them," he said. "I said this at our banquet when we won the division: The only bad thing about winning is that people start to expect it from you. We're not even halfway through the season and there are a lot of goals we haven't achieved yet, because we're only seven games into it."

LUCAS: 'He's so quick'

Continued from Page 1B

to regroup and just put this game in the past."

Defense and rebounding were the dominant story lines, and Michigan State won both categories. Lucas, the speedy 6-foot sophomore, led the Spartans offense.

"I think he's starting to see things, he's so quick," Michigan State coach Tom Izzo said. "Last year, he went at a blur speed and did not really get to see the court and see what was happening on it."

In his last seven games, Lucas has 42 assists and seven turnovers. Against Minnesota, he scored 15

points in the second half as the Spartan softened up the Gophers defense with backdoor screens.

"More last year I was just trying to be fast and stuff," said Lucas, whose previous career-high was 20 points. "This year, I'm trying to take my time more."

Michigan State (10-2) wore down the smaller Gophers by repeatedly attacking the basket and clogging the lane defensively. With Minnesota big men Jonathan Williams and Ralph Sampson III in foul trouble, only freshman Colton Iverson was left to battle against Michigan



Zack Novak makes a move to the basket against Wisconsin during the first half during Michigan's 73-61 loss to the Badgers at Chrysler Arena. The freshman guard led the Wolverines in scoring with 20 points.

MICHIGAN: Badgers hold Harris to 9 points

Continued from Page 1B

Manny Harris came into the game as the Wolverines' leading scorer at nearly 20 points per game, but was held to 9 points on 3-for-13 shooting.

"We did nothing special," Ryan said of defending Harris who came into the game as the Wolverines' leading scorer at nearly 20 points per game. "Sometimes you get hot as a shooter and sometimes maybe you're not. You don't quite have that feel working. But we didn't do anything differently then

we've tried to do on some of the other teams' better shooters.

"He'll get that feel back. Look at what we had to shoot (58.7 percent) to get in here and get a win."

The Badgers beat a ranked opponent for the first time this season. They previously lost to Connecticut, Marquette and Texas.

Hughes scored 10 straight points early in the second half as the Badgers built a comfortable lead. The Wolverines cut the deficit to nine with three minutes remaining, but Wisconsin held on by making its free throws.

Wisconsin set the tone early by hitting nine of its first 10 shots in taking a 24-12 lead. The Badgers' defense created problems early on for the Wolverines, holding them without a basket for 4½ minutes.

The Badgers made 58.7 percent of their shots overall while Michigan made under 40 percent.

"Wisconsin just put on a clinic in the first half on how to play solid basketball, what it means to play solid defense and be patient," Michigan coach John Beilein said. "It's the way we want our program to be one day."

AP photo