

MSU wide receiver gets strong NFL look

By Ernie Boone

EAST LANSING - Who would'da thunk it!

What a difference a year makes!

This time last year, Devin Thomas was busy preparing to do his best to break into the Michigan State University starting line-up.

The junior college transfer from Ann Arbor was listed number two on the Spartan depth chart at wide receiver after seeing little action his first season under fired head coach John L. Smith. Today Thomas is busy flying around the country working out for and visiting with National Football League decision makers in places like Buffalo and Minnesota to test the waters in advance of the upcoming draft.

Thomas not only broke into the Spartan starting line up, he posted a record breaking season that saw him catch 79 passes for 1260 yards and 8

touchdowns.

It was that performance which prompted Thomas

He then posted a time of 4.4 in the 40-yard dash and displayed glue-like hands at the Combine to (some say) bolt to the head of the class at wide-receiver.

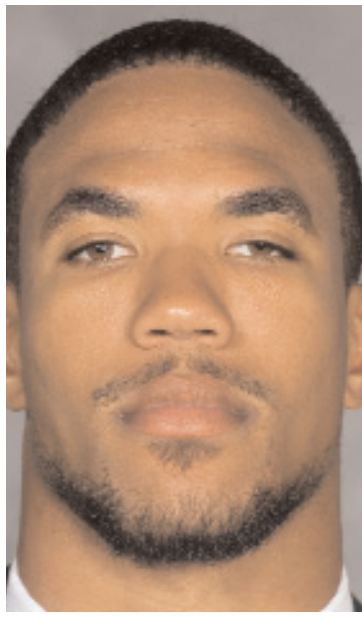
He was back in Spartan land March 12, working out before NFL scouts along side 15 former Spartans and six would-be draftees from around the state.

"My goal is to be the first receiver picked," Thomas said during a lull in the NFL Pro Day testing at the Duffy Daugherty Building.

"I felt real good today," he said.

He performed that way also, improving his vertical leap to 33 inches and getting 15 reps in the bench press.

Other MSU standouts that appeared to be impressive in the workouts were tight end Kellen Davis and running back Jehuu Caulcrick.



Devin Thomas

The three were using the MSU workout as a sort of do over following an earlier Combine in which they participated last month.

Caulcrick was also pleased with his performance. He earned his degree in December and has spent his time since then working out

at the St. Vincent Sports Center in Indianapolis.

He displayed some hops that might make basketball coach Tom Izzo a little envious, marking 37 inches in the vertical leap.

Davis, who has been working out in Miami following an appearance in the Senior Bowl, will meet with Buffalo and New England. His Combine work seems to have improved his draft stock.

Went 4.58 in the 40 and

observers say caught everything in sight.

Drawing a crowd was 31-year-old former basketball standout, Antonio Smith.

The 6-7 260-pound tight end has been working out in the Daugherty building since fall, and appeared ready to take a real shot at a spot on an NFL roster. He looked good running patterns and catching the ball.

Admitting that making an NFL roster is a long shot at

this late date, Smith is hoping some team will give him a look, and feels confident that given a shot, he can make it. If he does land a spot, he'll be the third in his family to play in the league.

His two brothers, Fernando and Robaire both played in the NFL.

He had an impressive audience. There were 39 scouts representing 27 NFL teams.

MSU's men and women cagers fall to second half comebacks

A pair of second half collapses plagued the Michigan State men and women's basketball teams leading to upset losses the weekend of March 8 and 9.

Ohio State's Jamar Butler led a late rally that erased a 10-point Spartan lead and lifted the Buckeyes to a 63-54 victory in the final game of the regular season at Columbus.

It was Jenna Smith whose 16 points paced the Illinois victory. The Spartan loss led to a semi-final exit from the Big Ten Tournament and a return to a seat on the NCAA bubble for the women.

MSU head coach, Suzy Merchant, feels that her team, 19-13, overall and 10-8 in the Big Ten with five wins over top 50 teams have earned a spot in the NCAA tourney but expressed little confidence regarding the Spartans' status.

Coach Tom Izzo's men will get a chance to take on the Buckeyes again Friday, March 14 in the quarterfinals of the Big 10 Tournament in Indianapolis.

She said that she looked forward to the week's practices noting that there are some things the team must repair before they get into post-season play.

MSU is all but certain to continue playing, if not in the NCAA then in the NIT.

The Spartan women gave up an 8-point lead in the final six and one half minutes to lose to Illinois, 55-44, Saturday, March 8.

MSU is now sitting and waiting for 7 p.m. March 17 when the NCAA will announce its pairings.

MSU went 1-1 in the conference meet, beating Minnesota, 56-51, in a quarterfinal contest.

After sitting out most of the

first half with two fouls against the Gophers, Alyssa DeHaan took over on both sides of the ball against the Gophers.

The 6-9-sophomore center scored all 12 of her points in the second half and dominated on defense.

Brittney Thomas finished with 12 points and seven rebounds and Mia Johnson also added 12.

The men saw a return of the turnover problem, with a season high 21 miscues.

The Buckeyes took full advantage, scoring 28 points off turnovers.

Butler led all scorers with 21 points. He was joined by three other double-digit scorers. Raymar Morgan was the only Spartan in double figures with 19 points.

MSU will try to win the tournament title for the third time in its 11-year history.

Three Spartans earn Big Ten honors Neitzel, Morgan, Walton

Four Michigan State University basketball players received all-conference honors this week as coaches and media members announced their selections.

Senior guard, Drew Neitzel, was named First-Team All-Big Ten by league coaches and placed on the Second Team by the media.

Raymar Morgan was named to the Second Team by both groups.

Junior co-captain, Travis Walton, was named to the All-Defensive team, and freshman guard, Kalin Lucas received Honorable Mention.

For Neitzel, it was the second straight First Team selection. Walton's selection was also his second.

Joining Neitzel on the coaches' team are Eric Gordon and D.J. White of Indiana, Purdue's Robbie Hummel and Wisconsin's Brian Butch. Ohio State's Jamar Butler switched spots with Neitzel on the media team.

White was a unanimous selection as conference Most Valuable Player. Gordon was a unanimous choice for Freshman of the Year.

Others on the second team are Michigan guard, Manny Harris, Purdue's E'Twaun

Moore, and Marcus Landry of Wisconsin.

The Third team is made up of Armon Bassett, Indiana, Tony Freeman, Iowa, Lawrence McKenzie, Minnesota, Kosta Koufos, Ohio State, and Michael Flowers, Wisconsin.

Gordon, Harris, Koufos, Hummel and Moore make up the All-Freshman team.

Joining Walton on the All-Defensive teams are Ekpe Udoh, Michigan, Chris Kramer, Purdue, Flowers, and Joe Krabbenhoft of Wisconsin.

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Ruth Hallman was committed to fighting and solving problems that affected quality of life for a 400-home neighborhood, her efforts touched lives of people who never ventured onto Lapeer Street or North Sycamore. By working so hard to keep this one pocket of Lansing safe and livable, Ruth was on the front line of the fight to keep the entire Capital City vibrant and, by extension, the region as well.

Indeed, one shudders to think what the proud but struggling Genesee Neighborhood would be like were it not for decades of Ruth Hallman's energy, leadership and love. Yet Ruth would be the first to admit that her neighborhood was far from finished with its work. Certainly, she was not done with hers.

No single person can replace her voice or fill her shoes. Ruth Hallman's life legacy is a challenge to all of us to give our best to our community, in efforts small and large.

We must be tireless. We must be determined. We must be committed. And yes, in some matters, we will need to be fearless.

Most of all, we must be devoted. The community owes Ruth Hallman nothing less.