

First year coach leads Spartan men's golf to top honors

By Ernie Boone

EAST LANSING –There's room to improve on his first year performance as Michigan State's men's golf coach – but not too much. The former Tennessee State University golf team captain walked away with Big 10 Coach of the Year honors while leading the Spartans to their second straight conference title, third in four years.

Sam Puryear, who took over the MSU golf program in August, has led the Spartans to a top 20 national ranking with a 97-34-2 record overall. That and the conference title

earned the coaching honor. MSU took full advantage of its Forrest Akers West home course, carving out an 11-stroke lead over the first two days, and then holding on to claim a four-stroke victory over Minnesota.

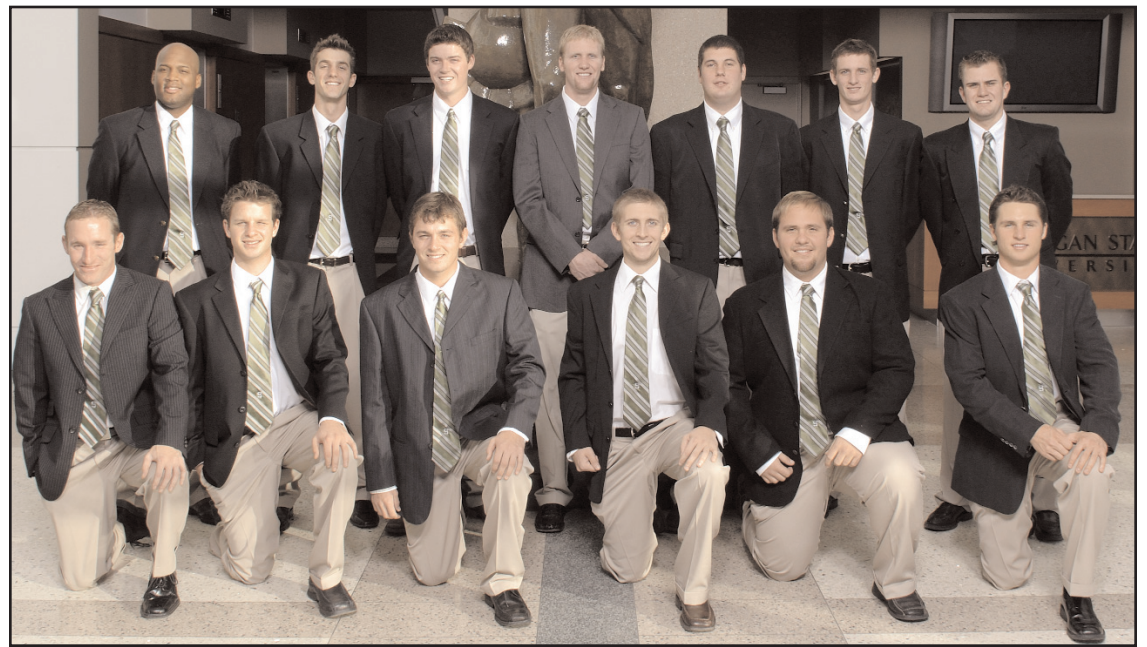
"Patience was the key to this weekend," Puryear said, "patience by the players and by the coaches. We really made some good decisions the last two days as a team to pull this out."

The Spartans were led by senior Ryan Brehm. With Minnesota having cut the lead to two strokes, Brehm tallied a birdie and par on the final two holes put

away the title. He finished with an eight-under par 278 to claim second place in the individual scoring. It was his third runner-up finish in his Spartan career.

The showing was made all the more impressive by the knowledge that Brehm was the only senior in the Spartans' competitive group. Sophomore, Jack Newman was the only other Spartan in the top 10, shooting a five-under 293 to place fifth.

A pair of freshmen was among the MSU competitive players. Payne Gniwek tied for 22 at 14-over 302, and



First year Spartan mens head golf coach Sam Puryear, (top left) with the MSU Big Ten championship team

Three Spartans selected in National Football League draft

It took a lot longer than expected, but when the smoke settled on this year's National Football League draft, a trio of big strong athletic Spartans was tapped to take their shots at pro football stardom.

Devin Thomas, Kellen Davis and Ervin Baldwin were all drafted by NFL teams during the two-day event.

Thomas, projected by most college talent watchers to be the first wide receiver selected and slated as an early first-round choice, slid all the way to pick 26, the third of the second round, the top choice of the Washington Redskins.

Davis, a 6-6 252-pound tight end, called by many a second or third round selection, tumbled to the fifth round before getting the call from the Chicago Bears.

The Bears also selected 6-2 270-pound defensive end, Ervin Baldwin as the first pick in the seventh round.

Thomas, who set MSU single season records for receptions (79), 100 yard receiving games (7), kickoff return yards (1,135), and all-purpose yards (2,590), took the news in stride and expressed genuine excitement about heading for the nation's capital.

"Obviously I'm going to have to prove (myself) when I go to the pros," Thomas said. "Going into the season I'm going to have a chip on my shoulder..."

"We're about to have a real dynamic offense."

Although selected in the second round, Thomas, a 6-2 216-pound speedster who passed up his senior season to enter the draft, was the Redskins' first selection.

Davis, who's downward slide may have been influenced by reportedly negative feedback by former MSU coach John L. Smith and members of his staff, and Baldwin were clearly pleased to be headed for Chicago.

"I'm excited," said Davis. "It's a storied franchise and a great city."

A four-time letter winner from Adrian, Davis caught 32 passes for 513 yards and six touchdowns this season. He was particularly effective in big games.

Baldwin, who transferred to MSU following a standout junior college career at Readly College in California, started all 25 games MSU played in his two years, led the Spartans in tackles for loss with 18.5 totaling 89 yards. He also led the defense in production points with 239.

His tackles for loss production was third in the Big 10, and 16th in the nation.

"It's really a blessing to be drafted by the same team as Kellen Davis," Baldwin said.

"We're both in the same situation, trying to make the transition... we'll be able to push each other and look out for each other."

Graham Baillargeon scored 309 to tie for 41st along with junior, Randy Hutchison.

Illinois placed third, Indiana fourth and Michigan fifth in the team scoring, followed by Northwestern, Ohio State, Wisconsin, Purdue, Iowa, and Penn State.

Puryear came to MSU from Stanford, where he spent two years as the team's first full-time men's golf assistant

At Stanford he recruited several top freshmen and

helped the Cardinals win a national championship.

Called a "Great fit for Michigan State," by then athletic director, Ron Mason upon his hire, Puryear said he viewed the MSU position as a dream job.

"I would like to extend a huge thanks to the Michigan State athletic family for giving me this incredible opportunity," he said as he was introduced to local media.

"I will be embarking upon a

dream come true...My goal for the Spartan program is to win on the national stage. We will strive to be toughest, hardest working. Most fit, and best prepared team in the country."

The conference title is a first step in that direction. It makes MSU an automatic qualifier to the NCAA Central Regional Championship to be held May 15-17 at Ohio State University.

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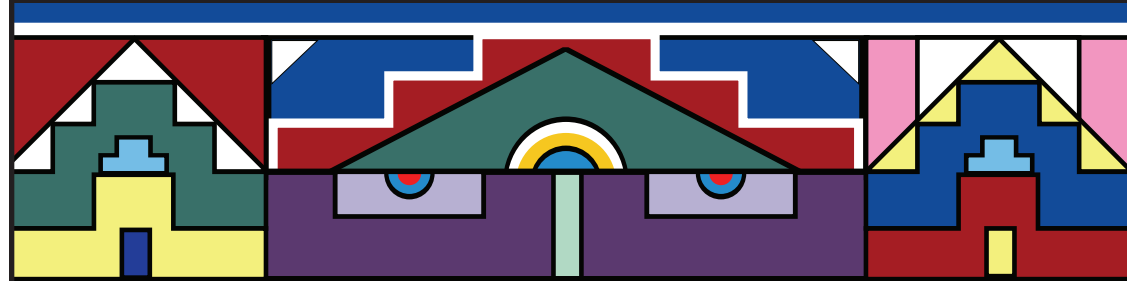
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Mandivamba Rukuni is Regional Director for African Programs with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Pretoria. He has authored and co-authored a great number of academic books on Food security policy options, and has given keynote addresses at conferences around the world.

Rukuni Claims to have lost his way along the intellectual path to success. The traditional human values that were instilled in him as a child were being replaced by Western attitudes, values and acquisitions. Runkin has revisited, rediscovered and embraced his heritage. The result of his quest is the book *BEING AFRIKAN UNHU UBUNTU-BOTH ...THE PATHWAYS TO BEING HUMAN.*

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