

# MSU ready to take on Golden Bears

By Ernie Boone

It's being billed as a business trip, this 2008 football opener. And that's just what head coach Mark Dantonio is hoping his Spartans will do Saturday, August 30 when they meet California in a night contest at Berkley - Take care of business!

A victory over the highly regarded Golden Bears could launch Michigan State University on the road to a highly successful season.

A victory against a quality opponent on the road in a different time zone following a five-hour flight would, as Dantonio said, "send a maturity message," to the Spartans that could boost their confidence and raise their level of play for the season.

MSU will follow its season opening road trip with four

straight winnable home games (Eastern Michigan, Florida Atlantic, and Notre Dame), a trip to Indiana, a visit from Iowa and a trip to Northwestern.

Don't look now, but with a victory over California, little luck and solid play, MSU could open 7-0 and be ranked among the nation's best.

Things get a lot tougher after that, with a visit from Ohio State, a trip to Michigan's Big House, home dates with Wisconsin and Purdue, and the finale at Penn State.

Solid play could reap at least two wins in that home stretch which would mean a 9-3 regular season and a very attractive bowl bid.

That's a "best case" scenario, and it all hinges on a season opening win at Berkley.

A loss wouldn't condemn the Spartans to doom and gloom however.



Otis Wiley

Most observers figure MSU for seven or eight regular season wins, providing they take care of business at home and handle adversity at places like Indiana, and Northwestern. The trip to California, however, will be no stroll in the park. Under coach Jeff Tedford California has developed a solid football

program that has advanced to bowl games five straight years.

Like the Spartans, California finished 7-6 last season. That includes a 42-36 victory over Air Force in the Armed Services Bowl.

The Bears return five starters on offense and nine on defense. And they have plenty of speed. They are particularly tough at home where they have won 22 of their last 26 contests.

That's what has Dantonio and his Spartans concerned. The Eagles have speed on both sides of the ball and present the kind of challenge top flight programs have to conquer.

"They're a fast team," said senior defensive tackle and Spartan co-captain Justin Kershaw. "Their center, Alex Mack (Cal's All-American center), is the first person off the ball. He looks like a defensive lineman playing center so we have to get ready for them. Their tackles are fast. Their running back runs a 4.4. In high school he won the state championship in the 100.

"We've got to play fast and we'll be alright."

Perhaps the most dangerous California speedsters, however, are the receivers, junior Nyan Boateng, a transfer from Florida; sophomore Jeremy Ross and red-shirt freshman, Michael Calvin.

"They're all in that 6-3 height-range," said Tedford. "They can leap out of the gym, and they've got very good ball skills."

The job of countering that wide receiver goes to another MSU co-captain, senior strong safety Otis Wiley and his defensive secondary running mates.

"The wide-outs haven't had that much experience," said

Wiley. "This is going to be their first time playing in a game. Their running back is fast also, so we're prepping for that right now."

"We really want to start off right. The speed - it's a whole different ball game when it comes to speed."

"Any time it's your first game a lot of things are up in the air," said Kershaw. "You really don't know what they're going to run... a lot of it is guessing. But our coaches are real smart when it comes to that stuff and they're going to prepare us."

While there has been a lot of talk about the California team, the Spartans are

focused squarely on themselves and what they must do on offense to be successful,

And to a large degree that means the performance of the two offensive co-captains, senior quarterback, Brian Hoyer and running back, Javon Ringer.

Hoyer is excited and confident as he gets ready for the trip.

"We're excited to go out there and play a top quality PAC 10 opponent in their home," Hoyer said. "We know it's going to be a tough game. We have to go out there with a business mentality and handle our business."

## George Webster Memorial Scholarship Reception celebrates its first recipients

Former Michigan State University Athletic Director, Clarence Underwood, celebrated sports commentator, George Blaha, and former MSU and NFL quarterback Jim Miller will be featured speakers at the George Webster Memorial Scholarship Reception slated for September 4 at the Clara Bell Smith Center on the MSU campus.

Local football fans will get an opportunity to join in the celebration of the first concrete results of the George Webster Memorial Scholarship Fund at a reception for the first four graduating scholarship recipients. Admission is \$10.00.

Attendees will meet the graduates and tour the newly remodeled Skandalaris Center at the Duffy Daugherty Football Building.

The fund, established in honor of former Spartan football All-American, George Webster upon his death last year, provides financial assistance to former MSU varsity athletes who return to campus to complete their degrees.

This year's graduates are former football players, Demitry Bernard, Little John Flowers, Craig Jarrett and Jason Randall.

Participants must have earned at least two varsity letters and be independently admitted to the university to be eligible for scholarship assistance.

Space is limited and interested people are asked to make reservations no later than September 2 by calling (517) 483-7243.

People interested in contributing to the fund may do so by contributing to the Spartan Fund at MSU and designating the Webster scholarship fund c/o Downtown Coaches Club, P.O. Box 4765, East Lansing, MI 48823.

## Four seniors named captains of the MSU football team

Four seniors were elected captains of the Michigan State University football team as the Spartans prepare to open their season August 30 at the University of California at Berkley.

Quarterback, Brian Hoyer, running back, Javon Ringer, defensive tackle, Justin Kershaw, and strong safety, Otis Wiley were introduced as the 2008 team leaders by head coach Mark Dantonio Thursday August 21.

Ringer, a 5-9 202-pound speedster, was a second-team All-Big Ten selection last season when he ran for 1,447 yards and became the first Spartan since Sedrick Irvin (1996-98) to lead the

Spartans in rushing three straight years.

Kershaw, a three-year letterman at defensive tackle, started all 13 games last season, setting personal highs in tackles (34), tackles for loss (5 for 9 yards) and sacks (1.5 for 4 yards).

Wiley started seven of 13 games and led the team in interceptions (4 for 77 yards). He finished eighth on the team in tackles. He scored on a 54-yard interception return against top-ranked Ohio State.

Hoyer, a 6-3 215-pound quarterback, ranks seventh among the MSU career leaders in touchdown passes

with 26, eighth in pass completions (320), ninth in pass attempts (543) ninth in completion percentage (.589) and tenth in passing efficiency rating (127.7).

"To me it means a lot," Ringer said of being named captain. "I feel real honored that my teammates voted me. That's a team thing. Our teammates picked me."

"It's an honor for me," said Kershaw, "because it was voted by my teammates and the coaches. It's humbling. Hoyer, Otis and Javon are good friends of mine and I'm just happy for the opportunity and hopefully - I mean we will help lead this team to a good season."

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