

Spartan grid fans waiting for bowl site

By Ernie Boone

EAST LANSING - Michigan State University football fans have their holiday travel plans on hold these days as the Spartans wait for news of their post-season bowl destination. Penn State's high flying Lions ruined the MSU dream of a trip to California and the Rose Bowl with a convincing, 49-18, victory in the regular season finale in Happy Valley. The loss dropped MSU to 9-3 overall and 6-2 in the conference for a third place finish.

Barring unforeseen events, MSU will play someplace warm on New Year's Day,

creating an opportunity for fans to combine some holiday sunshine with support of their favorite college team.

Wherever the Spartans play, their opponent will face a trio of first team All Big Ten performers and 12 others who earned either second team or honorable mention for their conference play.

Senior running back, Javon Ringer, senior safety, Otis Wiley and sophomore linebacker, Greg Jones were all conference selections by the coaches.

Ringer, a dark horse candidate for the Heisman Trophy, led the nation in rushing touchdowns with 21 going into the last week of

competition, ranked second in points per game (10.5) and third in rushing yards (132.5). The 5-9 202-pound speedster led the Big Ten in scoring and all purpose yards and finished second in rushing with 1,590 yards. That total ranks second in MSU single season performances.

He is the first MSU player to post two 1000 yard rushing season in a row since T.J. Duckett turned the trick in 2000-01.

"Javon has been the heart and soul of our football team this season," said MSU head coach Mark Dantonio. "Javon is a complete football player. He's a great blocker in pass protection; he catches the ball well out of the backfield; and he can be equally productive running the ball inside and outside. In addition, Javon has a tremendous work ethic."

Wiley, a 6-2 210-pound safety, finished second in the Big Ten in interceptions with four. He was third on the team in tackles with 71, and fifth in production points with 114. "Otis Wiley is a great leader

MSU women's basketball off to best start

EAST LANSING - The Michigan States women's basketball team is off to one of the best starts in school history.

The Spartans opened with six straight victories before dropping a 78-72 decision to 14th ranked Notre Dame in South Bend November 30.

The six wins is one short of the MSU record.

Aisha Jefferson led all scorers with a career high 34 point. Jefferson tallied 22 points in the first half, and added 11 rebounds for a double double. The Irish countered with a Mid-Michigan escapee. Kellie Watson of Ionia hit five straight first half three point shots.

who has outstanding skills, said Dantonio. "Otis has played nickel back as well as the weak side safety position, and he's demonstrated big play potential in both roles. He also did an outstanding job returning punts this season.

Jones, a 6-1 220-pounder from Cincinnati, made the team at linebacker.

In just his second season, Jones led MSU in tackles with 115 and Big Ten tacklers in conference play with an 11.1 average per game.

"Greg Jones put together an outstanding sophomore season," said Dantonio.

"He's an outstanding competitor who flies to the football. Greg is a very instinctive player who knows how to get off blocks and find the football."

Senior offensive guard, Roland Martin, senior offensive tackle, Jessie Miller, and sophomore punter, Aaron Bates were named to the second team by the media, and the coaches selected placekicker, Bret Swenson to the second team. Swenson, a junior, finished second in the conference in field goals, 1.67 per game, third scoring at 7.8 ppg.

Martin, 6-5 330 pounds, graded tops on the MSU squad in State's first 11 games, and has started 34 times during his career.

Miller, 6-6 318-pounds, has started 37 straight games at left tackle and ranks second on the team in pancake blocks.

Eight Spartans received honorable mention: defensive end Trevor Anderson; tight end Charlie Gant; quarterback Brian Hoyer; defensive tackle Justin Kershaw; defensive end Brandon Long; center Joel Nitchman; cornerback Chris L. Rucker and wide receiver Blair White.

Penn State, took the Spartans apart in the season finale, scoring 49 points with five touchdown passes thrown by quarterback Daryll Clark. Penn State totaled 557 yards of offense.

The Nittany Lions totally dominated the Spartans, holding Ringer to a season low 42 yards on 17 carries and keeping the Spartans out of the end zone until the contest was truly decided.

Spartan football banquet set

The Spartan Football Awards Banquet is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 18 at the Holiday Inn South/Conference Center in Lansing, Mich. A reception begins at 4:30 p.m. with the dinner, player introductions and awards program to follow at 5:30 p.m. Tickets for the Spartan Football Awards Banquet are priced at \$45 each, with tables of 10 available for \$450.

Reservations can be made by sending a check, payable to Michigan State University, to: Spartan Football Awards Banquet, 135 Duffy Daugherty Building, East Lansing, MI 48824. For additional information regarding the awards banquet, contact the MSU Football Office at (517) 355-1647.

MSU men's basketball team steps up at Old Spice Classic

By Ernie Boone

EAST LANSING - The role players stepped up big as Michigan State's basketball team recovered quickly from a shocking 80-62 upset loss to Maryland with 94-79 and 65-57 victories over Oklahoma State and Wichita State respectively in the Old Spice Classic in Orlando Florida. Now all coach Tom Izzo has to do is get his star going with consistency.

Marquise Gray and Travis Walton led MSU in scoring in two of the three tournament contests, and in two of the three games, headliner Raymar Morgan was - well, less than spectacular.

Walton was the biggest surprise. After three years as a defensive specialist who seldom even looked at the basket on offense, the senior guard exploded for 16 points against both Maryland and Oklahoma State.

Gray, counted on for rebounding and athleticism that often results in rally sparking dunks off the bench, scored 12 points twice and

grabbed 6 and 8 rebounds. Morgan was up and down in the Classic, scoring just four points in the loss to Maryland, looking spectacular against Oklahoma State with 29 points and 5 rebounds, then struggling against Wichita to total 9 points and 8 rebounds. Morgan will have to look more like the guy who terrorized Oklahoma State if MSU is to defeat number 1 ranked North Carolina in the ACC Challenge December 3 at Ford Field.

Ranked fifth going into the Classic, the Spartans can expect to drop in the polls following the loss to Maryland, but the fifth place finish with impressive victories over solid opponents, should help prepare them for the North Carolina challenge.

But are they ready. "Are we ready for them (North Carolina)? Izzo said after the Wichita win. "I don't think there are four or five teams in the country ready for them."



Marcus Hyde (11), and Danny Fortener combine to bring down Wisconsin runner in MSU victory over Badgers.

Photo by Adia Boone



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