

# Sophomore guards lead Spartans bounce back charge

By Ernie Boone

EAST LANSING - Like a rubber ball, the Spartans came bouncing back from a shocking 70-63 Breslin Center loss to lowly Northwestern with a solid come-from-behind 78-67 victory over Ohio State and workman like, 71-56, road victory over Iowa.

And while the rebound is enough to boost the spirits of Spartan coaches and fans, it raises a question the answer to which will determine whether or not MSU can lay claim to its first Big Ten title since 2001.

Sophomore guards, Kalin Lucas and Durrell Summers led the way for the Spartans in both contests. Lucas scored 24 points and Summers 21 to down Iowa January 29.

The win kept MSU unbeaten on the road in the Big Ten, raising their road mark to 5-0. The Spartans took a 13-point 38-35 halftime lead at Iowa City behind Summer's 16 points, then built to a 20-point advantage before coasting to victory.

Can those key MSU youngsters perform well consistently on both ends of the floor? That's the big question facing the Spartans. Summers and Lucas were the heroes in Columbus also as Summers hit four three pointers and scored 16 points in the first half to keep MSU close, 31-26, at the half. Lucas took over in the second half scoring all of his 20 points. Summers led all scorers finishing with a career high 26, including 6 of 9 triples. The performance was in



**Durrell Summers**

sharp contrast to the Spartans' work against Northwestern where MSU went 5 of 21 from behind the arc, Summers going 1 for 4.

"I was just being aggressive," Summers said of his big shooting day. "Coach has been telling me all week -



**Kalin Lucas**

really all year - just be ready to shoot and be aggressive.

"They were falling. The couple of shots that I missed didn't stop me from being aggressive. I just kept firing and they were dropping.

Izzo is hoping that the bounce-back performance represents the kind of growth that will result in consistent work on the part of the three key MSU sophomores.

Chris Allen, the third key member of last year's class continues to struggle. He hit just 1 of 11 shots, 0-8 from three against Northwestern and went 1-4, 0-3 against the Buckeyes.

They won't have to wait long to get an indication. MSU visit's Iowa Thursday, January 29, then returns to Breslin Sunday, February 1 to face Penn State.

It was Iowa that dealt the Spartans a near death blow in the Big Ten race last season with a 43-36 upset, and Penn State delivered the knockout punch at State College, 85-76. But it's survival, not revenge, which motivates Izzo and the Spartans as they prepare for the critical weekend. MSU needs a fifth straight road victory to hold onto its one-game lead in what is shaping up to be a rugged conference race.

"There are land mines everywhere," Izzo said as he talked about entering what former coach Jud Heathcoat called the "dog days" of the season (January 20 to mid-February).

"Iowa is a better team than the one that won last year." He expressed particular concern about the Hawkeye's ability to penetrate and shoot or kick the ball out from the wings.

MSU had to hold on to stave off a late Penn State charge for

a 78-73 win at State Park, and the Northwestern victory makes MSU look more vulnerable at Breslin than when they were riding a 28-game home winning streak.

## Spartan men and women place second at ND track meet

The MSU track team placed second in both the men and women's portions of the recent Notre Dame Invitational. Each totaled 160 points behind Notre Dame's 181-point first place finish. Wisconsin and Marquette finished third and fourth.

Charelise Davis won the women's 60 meter dash with a 7.72, then placed second in the 200 meters at 24.65. The 60m victory was her third win of the indoor season.

Jeremy Orr and Yury Ratomski finished first and second in the sprints. Orr placed first and Ratomski second in the 200 meters and Ratomski placed first and Orr second in the 60. Orr finished at 21.24 for his victory and Ratomski clocked a personal best of 6.82 to win.

## MSU gridiron coach gets sweet contract

ORLANDO, Fla. - Michigan State head football coach Mark Dantonio, who has guided the Spartans to 16 victories and back-to-back postseason bowl appearances in his first two seasons, has been rewarded with a revised contract, according to a joint announcement made Friday, Dec. 26 by MSU Athletics Director Mark Hollis and MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. With the contract revisions, the length and base salary remain the same; however, a \$2 million bonus will be payable if Dantonio remains Michigan State's head coach through Jan. 15, 2016.

The 9-3 Spartans will play Georgia Jan. 1, 2009, in the Capital One Bowl in Orlando, Fla. It marks Michigan State's first New Year's Day bowl appearance in nine years.

The contract remains a five-year roll over deal with a base

salary of \$618,000. With the revisions, his supplemental income increases from \$500,000 to \$869,000 annually. In addition, Dantonio will receive \$100,000 from his shoe/apparel agreement. The revised contract also includes a \$200,000 contingent annual bonus if he remains the school's head coach through June 30 each year.

With the revisions, Dantonio's annual compensation increases from \$1.13 million to \$1.8 million.

Here are the annual compensation components of the revised contract:

- \$618,000 base salary
  - \$869,000 supplemental income
  - \$100,000 shoe/apparel agreement
  - \$200,000 contingent annual base
  - \$13,000 benefits
- Components of his contract

were rewritten to provide flexibility, allowing a portion of his postseason bonus to be added to a salary pool for his coordinators and assistant coaches. This is in addition to additional dollars already committed to the salary pool for his coaching staff.

"It was important to reward Coach Dantonio for what his program has accomplished in two short years, but most importantly, we wanted to ensure continuity and set this football program up for sustained success," Hollis said. "The contract revisions certainly help make his total compensation competitive in the Big Ten as well as nationally.

"We're so excited about the team's New Year's Day appearance in the Capital One Bowl and with Coach Dantonio at the helm, the future of Spartan football is in very good hands."



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