

SPORTS

Fisher and 'Fab 5' hit Final Four scene

Editor's note: This is the second in a four-part series.

By Mark Anderson
Senior Writer

"Yes."

A simple answer repeated five times by five Michigan freshman basketball players, but one that speaks volumes about this team's temperament.

After the Wolverines beat Oklahoma State Friday, a reporter asked whether the "Fab Five" really thought they could win four national championships at Michigan. Straight down the line came affirmative responses.

"The possibility of a national championship was a reality to us from day one," guard Jalen Rose said. "Now it's a reality to you."

The brash Wolverines then took the court Sunday and continued to prove that they are not merely a novelty act. Michigan disposed of a veteran Ohio State team, the Southeast Region's top seed, 75-71 to step into the Final Four.

Any team starting five freshmen should be thrilled just to make the Final Four, right? Well, these five freshmen make Michigan far from just "any" team. The Wolverines are 11-2 with the "Fab Five" as starters, and if the youngsters have any say, they are far from finished.

"It's a dream come true, but it's not a feeling of satisfaction," Rose said. "Our goals are much higher."

Chris Webber, Rose's teammate on the All-Region team, said Sunday's win was just one step.

"Not many players go to the Final Four, so this is one dream accomplished," Webber said. "But at the beginning of the year, we talked about the Final Four and winning the championship. We're not satisfied. When you

become complacent, you become a loser.

"We hate losing. We don't go out and say it's okay if we lose because we have next year. If we're waiting for next year, we should quit now and start practicing for next year."

These young Wolverines are anything but losers. Webber led his high school team to three straight state championships, and Rose's prep teams pulled the feat twice. In the regional, both showed why their teams seldom lose.

With Webber playing only 18 minutes against Oklahoma State because of foul trouble, the 6-foot-8 Rose grabbed the reins. He finished with 25 points and 11 rebounds, but 18 and seven of those came in the second half.

Ohio State should have known Rose was coming Sunday. His jumper with 3:03 left pulled Michigan within 61-59. His steal led to the tying basket. In overtime, Rose scored six of Michigan's 10 points, grabbed two rebounds and had one assist. He finished with 20 points, six boards and four assists.

"Jalen Rose is a very intelligent basketball player," said OSU coach Randy Ayers. "He has a good feel for the game. He just took over down the stretch."

After a disappointing Friday, Webber made the most of his second chance Sunday. Webber's rebound bucket with 28 seconds left sent the game into overtime, and he finished with 23 points, 11 rebounds and five blocked shots.

"Man-child" is an overused term, but Webber may be the definition of that combination. With a sculptured frame that defies his 19 years, the 6-9, 240-pounder does everything with authority, whether it is punishing unfortunate shots thrown up in his area or throwing down lightning-bolt dunks. When he rebounds, an unsuspecting onlooker



Michigan Wolverines

Record: 24-8

Coach: Steve Fisher, 3rd year at Michigan (47-23), 3rd overall

Key Players: Jalen Rose (17.9 ppg, 4.1 rpg, 4 apg), Chris Webber (15.6 ppg, 9.9 rpg)

Road to Minneapolis: Defeated Temple 73-66, ETSU 102-90, Oklahoma St. 75-72, Ohio St. 75-71 (OT)

Semifinals: vs. Cincinnati Saturday, 5:42 p.m., Metrodome, Minneapolis

Keys to the game: No mental letups against Cincinnati's full-court pressure. Get early confidence boost.

could mistake him for Karl Malone.

Despite the physical gifts of the Michigan freshmen, head coach Steve Fisher was most pleased when the Wolverines came together mentally after Ohio State's 11-0 run in the closing minutes. Michigan, which blew a 20-point lead to the Buckeyes earlier in the year, came back to tie the game. Any remaining doubts that youth and inexperience would fold Michigan's tents were finally erased.

The Wolverines still play like freshmen, now and then checking out mentally. Sunday, they made the plays when they had to. Fisher said Rose and Webber excelled in the most important area.

"From the neck up," Fisher said. "Both are tremendously gifted physi-

cally, but they also possess a lot of things other people don't. Maybe that's why we are in the Final Four."

Another reason Michigan is in the Final Four is Rose and Webber's supporting cast. Freshman forward Ray Jackson, 6-6, is the defensive stopper. He forced OSU's Jim Jackson into 9-of-21 shooting and nine turnovers Sunday.

Freshman Juwan Howard, 6-9, holds down the middle. Howard matched Ray Jackson's feat by forcing All-American Byron Houston into 2-of-14 shooting and eight turnovers Friday. Freshman Jimmy King, 6-5, runs the point and hits the occasional 3-pointer. King scored 15 points in both regional games.

Junior center Eric Riley, 7-0, is the only player who produces anything more than minutes off the bench. Two years ago, Riley was second in the Big Ten in rebounding and in blocked shots. With Webber out Friday, Riley scored 15 points and grabbed 10 rebounds.

Howard and Ray Jackson are the cornerstones of what can be an intimidating defensive team. Only five teams shot better than 50 percent against Michigan this year. Sunday, the Wolverines spent the entire game in the Buckeyes' faces — both physically and vocally — and blocked eight shots.

"Their athletic ability contributed," Ayers said. "They never really gave us a good look at the basket, even on our penetration."

Fisher, now 11-1 in the NCAA Tournament, led Michigan to the national title in 1989 after taking over at the end of the regular season.

"I went through this dream once. Now, I'll try to relive it," he said. "Crazy things have happened, and I've been in the middle of it. We just hope we can do what happened in '89."

Softball moves to 24-9 by splitting 2 with ECU

By Jeff McKinley
Staff Writer

Just by looking at the statistics for Tuesday's doubleheader at Finley Field, it is apparent that the UNC softball team played an evenly-matched East Carolina squad.

Both teams scored a total of three runs on the day. The Tar Heels collected 13 hits in the two games; the Pirates totaled 11 hits. Each team won one game, and one run provided the margin of victory in each game.

UNC coach Donna Papa said she had expected strong competition from the Pirates. "Every time we play East Carolina, they're always close games," Papa said. "Since I've been coaching here, we've never had games where they've been blowouts. They're always one-run games or games that go down to the final inning."

Keeping with tradition, Tuesday's games provided both situations. UNC won the first game in the bottom of the seventh inning, 3-2. In game two, ECU pulled off an extra-inning 1-0 victory.

In game one, UNC first baseman Vicki Huff drove in freshman Tanya Spishak in the bottom of the seventh to break a 2-2 tie and give the Tar Heels the victory. Sophomore Paige Lauby earned the win for the Tar Heels.

North Carolina scored the day's first run in the fourth. UNC senior center fielder Theresa Buscemi led off with a single to center. A Beverly Smith sacrifice bunt and a Lisa McGloin single moved Buscemi to third base. With one out, McGloin on first and

Game 1	East Carolina	000 002 0 — 2 6 1
	North Carolina	000 200 1 — 3 9 1
	Parsons and Jones; Lauby and McGloin. W-Lauby (13-4). L-Parson (21-6). HRs-none.	

Game 2	East Carolina	000 000 01 — 1 6 3
	North Carolina	000 000 00 — 0 4 0
	Parsons and Jones; Smith and McGloin. W-Parson (22-6). L-Smith (11-5). HRs-none.	

Buscemi on third, senior Julie O'Shields' sacrifice bunt brought Buscemi home and McGloin to second. An error by ECU third baseman Stephanie Hobson moved McGloin to third and O'Shields to second. McGloin scored on Amy Cole's sacrifice fly, giving UNC a 2-0 lead.

ECU scored its two runs in the sixth inning. With two outs and a runner on second, Pirate pitcher Jenny Parsons singled to right field, scoring Cheryl Hobson. Parsons advanced to second on the throw to the plate. Pinch runner Lisa Corprew scored on the next play when Michelle Jones singled.

Game two featured strong pitching by UNC's Smith and ECU's Parsons. The teams battled to a scoreless tie after seven innings. In extra innings, the tie-breaker rule took effect. The rule allows each team to begin its half of the inning with a runner on second.

Despite the added baserunner, neither team scored in the eighth inning.

In the top of the ninth, ECU's Stephanie Hobson, the tie-breaking runner, moved to third on a sacrifice bunt. With two outs, Cheryl Hobson singled to left, scoring Hobson for the winning run.

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ACC honors Lauby's striking week
Staff report
UNC softball pitcher Paige Lauby has been named ACC Player of the Week after posting a 4-1 record last week, including a no-hitter.
Lauby, a sophomore from El Toro, Calif., hurled the no-hitter March 25 against Central Connecticut. For the week, Lauby compiled a 1.35 earned run average, yielding seven earned runs in 36 1/3 innings.
Lauby also had complete-game shut-outs versus Ohio University and Winthrop last week.
For the season, Lauby is 14-4 with a 1.02 ERA.

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