

# the game

**MSU vs. Purdue**

Noon Saturday

**Follow the game**  
 TV Big Ten Network  
 Radio WJR (760-AM)

**Forecast**  
 Showers  
 High 42° | Low 36°  
 Precipitation 50 percent

**Extra point:**  
 Show up to the game  
 an hour early for the  
 senior ceremonies.

**For more online ...**  
 Visit statenews.com for  
 live blogging through-  
 out the game.

## ONE FINAL MEMORY

 From wide receiver to  
 linebacker, Allison  
 always put team first

**Ryan Allison fast facts**

 Switched  
 from wide  
 receiver to  
 linebacker  
 at the end  
 of the 2007  
 season.

 Put on 20  
 pounds to play linebacker in  
 2008.

 Had a career-high 11 tackles  
 against Northwestern this  
 season.

 Played mostly on special  
 teams for the first three  
 seasons.

 Was a Michigan high school  
 finalist in 110-meter hurdles at  
 Lake Orion High.

SOURCE: MSU ATHLETIC  
 COMMUNICATIONS

 By Jacob Carpenter  
THE STATE NEWS

 The dried blood on the  
 inside of senior lineback-  
 er Ryan Allison's helmet  
 tells the story of his evolu-  
 tion the past six months.

 A gash on the bridge of  
 Allison's nose, the result  
 of countless hits on team-  
 mates in practice and oppo-  
 sition offenses, has stained the  
 front padding of his prac-  
 tice helmet. While Allis-  
 on attributes the con-  
 stant cuts across his nose to  
 a helmet that slides down  
 his long, wavy brown hair,  
 the abrasion wouldn't have  
 been there last season.

 Allison, who will play his  
 final game in Spartan Sta-  
 dium on Saturday, con-  
 verted from a wide receiv-  
 er in his first three years at  
 MSU to a quick lineback-  
 er with safety-like instincts  
 at the start of spring prac-  
 tice. MSU head coach Mark  
 Dantonio switched Allison,  
 a superb high school safe-  
 ty, to defense because of his  
 combination of size and 4.5-  
 second 40-yard dash speed.

 "He's sort of a hybrid guy,"  
 Dantonio said. "He's real-  
 ly learning how to play the  
 game at that position, but  
 he's instinctive and he can  
 get off of blocks and tack-  
 le. When people do that,  
 you can be successful."

 To transition from wide  
 receiver, a position char-  
 acterized by dash, flash  
 and finesse, to a hard-hit-  
 ting linebacker, Allison  
 added 20 pounds to his 6-  
 foot-3, 190-pound frame.

 "When I was playing  
 receiver, I was going against  
 180-pound (defensive backs)  
 and now I'm going against  
 320-pound guards, so that's  
 a big difference of just need-  
 ing to bring it every play,"  
 said Allison, who ran in  
 national track hurdling rac-  
 es at Lake Orion High.

 "You can't really take a  
 play off because if you do,  
 a guy my size is going to get  
 driven to the sidelines."
 Allison's lingering speed  
 has benefited the defense

See ALLISON on page 2B

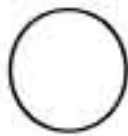

JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS
**Junior running back A.J. Jimmerson (20), sophomore wide receiver David Williams (19) and senior offensive guard Roland Martin (73) celebrate with the Spartan Marching Band after their victory against Michigan on Oct. 25 at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor.**

 From the trenches to the toy store, Jesse Miller and Roland  
 Martin have created a special bond that neither will soon forget

**Roland Martin**

 22 years  
 old  
 6-foot-5,  
 330  
 pounds

**Favorite memory:**

 "I have two of them: (One  
 is) when we get to go to  
 any hotel and just relax,  
 do a couple things, eat the  
 team dinner, just sit around  
 and goof around a little  
 bit and then go up to the  
 room and just pray it's one  
 of those luxurious rooms.  
 ... (No. 2 is) right after the  
 game when we just had a  
 great win and everybody's  
 happy ... after the game is a  
 great feeling — coach is not  
 angry and that's  
 always good."
 By Cash Kruth  
THE STATE NEWS

 In a warm November evening last week,  
 senior offensive linemen Jesse Miller and  
 Roland Martin were enjoying one of their  
 last off days as MSU football players. The  
 two most experienced and decorated MSU offensive  
 linemen were at Ralph Young Field, experimenting with  
 their most recent purchase — remote control cars.

 "We were just some big  
 kids playing out at Ralph  
 Young Field (Monday)  
 night," said the 23-year-  
 old Miller, a 6-foot-6, 338-  
 pound right tackle. "That  
 was fun. We got them like  
 last week and finally got  
 them all charged up and  
 ready to go out there."
 Miller and Martin,  
 a 22-year old, 6-foot-5,  
 330-pound right guard,  
 have been joined at the

 hip along MSU's offen-  
 sive line for most of their  
 careers as three-year start-  
 ers on the right side.

 On the field, the cohe-  
 siveness of the two play-  
 ers has grown consider-  
 ably during their five years  
 in East Lansing (both play-  
 ers were redshirted as  
 true freshmen in 2004).  
 In fact, they've grown so

See SENIORS on page 2B

**Jesse Miller**

 23 years  
 old  
 6-foot-  
 6, 318  
 pounds

**Favorite memory:**

 "(2007 Champs Sports  
 Bowl), actually.  
 Just the whole thing  
 of being around your  
 teammates in another light  
 beside hitting each other.  
 We got to spend some time  
 with each other outside of  
 practice and everything."
 To hear what MSU's  
 seniors have to say  
 about the emotions  
 heading into Saturday's  
 game, visit statenews.  
 com/multimedia.

**Thanks for all the  
 memories, good  
 times, seniors**

 In their four or five years  
 at MSU, the Spartans foot-  
 ball seniors have gone  
 through more ups-and-  
 downs than an elevator.

 They've endured an eigh-  
 t-loss season, a coaching  
 change and draining gassers  
 from strength and condition-

**Carpenter**

 ing coach  
 Ken Man-  
 nie, while  
 reveling  
 in a bowl  
 appear-  
 ance, a pos-  
 sible ro-  
 win season  
 and a reviv-

 al of Spartan football.  
 For this and much more,  
 all 16 of MSU's seniors who  
 will play their final game at  
 Spartan Stadium deserve  
 a hearty "thank you."
 Thank you Ryan Allison,  
 for putting on 20 pounds in  
 one year to move from wide  
 receiver to linebacker. That's  
 a lot of steak and potatoes.
 Thank you Mike Bacon,  
 for having the best last name  
 on the team (we said you

**Kruth**

 would stiz-  
 le at some  
 point this  
 season and  
 you deliv-  
 ered last  
 week).  
 Thank  
 you Mike  
 Bell, for

 ... ummmm, we don't real-  
 ly know anything about  
 you, Mike. You played  
 special teams, I guess,  
 so thanks for that.
 Thank you Todd Boleski,  
 for kicking the ball far. Real-  
 ly far. And for making tack-  
 les on kickoffs (we're eter-  
 nally impressed that you're  
 6-foot-6 and a kicker).
 Thank you Deon Cur-  
 ry, for having the cool-  
 est dad on the team. We'd

 give anything to go to  
 "Take Your Child To Work  
 Day" with your old man.
 Thank you Matt Haughey,  
 for being the kick-  
 er in 2005 when nobody  
 else would. And for put-  
 ting up with being called  
 "Chips A-Haughey" for two  
 years by former MSU head  
 coach John L. Smith.
 Thank you Dwayne Hol-  
 mes, for playing three  
 positions in four years  
 and ultimately proving  
 that, as you say, you truly  
 can't deny a ball player.
 Thank you Brian Hoy-  
 er, for not listening to what  
 anybody says and just win-  
 ning football games.

Thank you Justin Ker-

See THANKS on page 2B

 Former walk-on Bacon  
 earned his football  
 scholarship the hard way

**Mike Bacon fast facts**

 Started two  
 games at  
 left guard  
 for MSU this  
 season.

 Went  
 without a  
 scholarship

 for three years before getting  
 one as a junior.

 Played at Lansing Catholic  
 Central High.

 Played hockey for about 15  
 years and was a defenseman  
 in high school.

 Weighed about 225 pounds  
 before enrolling at MSU as a  
 preferred walk-on in 2004.

SOURCE: MSU ATHLETIC  
 COMMUNICATIONS

 By Jacob Carpenter  
THE STATE NEWS

 When senior guard  
 Mike Bacon arrived at  
 MSU in 2004 as a pre-  
 ferred walk-on from Lan-  
 sing, he looked more like  
 a hockey defenseman than  
 an offensive lineman.

 Weighing in around 225  
 pounds after finishing one of  
 his 15 seasons playing hock-  
 ey, Bacon was dwarfed by  
 300-pound behemoths on  
 the MSU offensive line.

 "He was just this little bit-  
 ty guy that ran around when  
 he was a walk-on," said fel-  
 low senior offensive guard  
 Roland Martin, who enrolled  
 at MSU the same year as  
 Bacon. "He always just hung  
 in there and made his way."
 Four years and 75 pounds  
 later, Bacon will run out of  
 the Spartan Stadium tun-  
 nel for the final time Satur-  
 day. The fifth-year senior has  
 provided depth at both guard  
 positions and at backup cen-  
 ter, mixing in two starts  
 this season at left guard.
 The local product, who  
 was recruited by Mid-Amer-  
 ican Conference programs  
 in high school, has reached  
 the end of a long road of re-  
 lative obscurity while work-  
 ing his way into a schol-  
 arship and the MSU line-  
 up. After three years as a  
 walk-on, countless weeks  
 on the Spartans' scout team  
 and only two game appear-  
 ances, the 6-foot-4, 300-  
 pound Lansing Catholic Cen-  
 tral High graduate obtained  
 the scholarship in 2007.
 "I had a little doubt after  
 my second year because I  
 thought I'd worked pret-  
 ty hard and I still didn't  
 get (a scholarship)," said  
 Bacon, one of three fifth-  
 year seniors at offensive line-  
 man. "It was kind of doubt-  
 ful that I'd get one, but I  
 was moving up the depth  
 chart so it gave me inspi-  
 ration to keep on going if  
 I was going to get one."
 After seven appearanc-  
 es and one start along the  
 offensive line last season,  
 Bacon contended with red-

See BACON on page 2B