

# the game

## A YEAR TO REMEMBER

—Compiled by Alex Altman, Alex DiFilippo, Joey Nowak and Joseph Terry, for more see page 2B

### BEST PLAY

#### DURRELL SUMMERS' DUNK

The only thing that would have made sophomore guard Durrell Summers' dunk over Connecticut forward Stanley Robinson better is if Summers had been wearing a "Welcome to Detroit" T-shirt instead of a green MSU jersey.

Although Summers wasn't wearing the shirt, his scintillating dunk was a metaphor for MSU's success during the tournament—a 6-foot-4 guy fearlessly throwing his body right at the chest one of the nation's best shot blockers.

Perceived as underdogs, the Spartans were considered stepping stools for the "povehouse" programs in each of the past three games. It wasn't until North Carolina knocked them off in the national championship game that MSU's journey ended.

Although they fell a game short, the Spartans and their fans will always have memories like Summers' dunk.



Altman



**Sophomore guard Durrell Summers goes in for a dunk during the NCAA Final Four game April 4 against Connecticut at Ford Field in Detroit. MSU won 82-73.**

KATIE RAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

### SENIOR WHO WILL BE MISSED THE MOST

#### HOCKEY'S JEFF LERG

It was a season the MSU hockey team would like to forget. But for MSU hockey fans will never fail to remember senior goaltender Jeff Lerg.

The tiny, 5-foot-6 goaltender defied all odds throughout his career at MSU and gave the Spartans a chance to win every time they stepped on the ice.

Lerg was instrumental in MSU's national championship run in 2007 and head coach Rick Comley named him the captain of this year's team, an oddity only seen once before in school history.

This season, Lerg was peppered every game and led the country in saves with 1,050 and became the CCHA's all-time saves leader. He also won the Lowes Senior CLASS Award for his achievement on and off the ice.

Lerg gave everything for the team, playing with a torn ACL for the last two weeks of the season.



DiFilippo



**Head coach Rick Comley hugs senior goalkeeper Jeff Lerg as he steps off the ice after being defeated by Northern Michigan 8-2 in the second round of the CCHA Tournament on March 7 at Barry Events Center in Marquette.**

If you think this year was tough for the MSU hockey team, imagine how bad it could have been without Lerg. It's hard to picture anyone

else between the pipes for the Spartans and Lerg will forever be remembered as one of the finest netminders to ever don the Green and White.

JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS

### BREAKOUT TEAM

#### MSU FOOTBALL

After years of heartbreak and despair, the MSU football team finally made its return to relevancy this season. Under the stewardship of second-year head coach Mark Dantonio, the Spartans made their first New Year's Day

bowl game since 2000. Although they lost the game to Georgia, it certainly doesn't negate MSU's accomplishments this season.

MSU went 9-4 this year, and the team's success was punctuated by the fact Dantonio signed arguably the best recruiting class in school history. The success both on the gridiron and on the recruiting trail ensures the success won't be short-lived.



Altman

their first New Year's Day



JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS

**Senior running back A.J. Jimmerson (20), junior wide receiver David Williams (19) and senior offensive guard Roland Martine (73) celebrate after the Spartans' victory against Michigan at Michigan Stadium on Oct. 25, 2008, in Ann Arbor.**

### BEST HARDWARE

#### FRANKLIN GOMEZ'S NATIONAL TITLE



Terry

Returning to the NCAA Championships as the favorite after finishing third in the 133-pound weight class last season, junior wrestler Franklin Gomez completed his goal, win-

ning the national championship 5-4 over Ohio State's Reece Humphrey.

A takedown with 45 seconds left in the match sealed the win for the two-time All-American, giving him MSU's first wrestling title since 1995.

### PLAYER OF THE YEAR

#### SOCCER'S DOUG DEMARTIN

While there have been many worthy candidates this year, no one meant more to their team than



DiFilippo

senior forward Doug DeMartin.

DeMartin led the Spartans to the school's first Big Ten regular season title and was

MSU's go-to man up top.

The captain and All-American was an offensive machine, scoring a league-high 17 goals en route to being named the Big Ten Player of the Year. He was drafted No. 22 overall in the MLS SuperDraft by the Kansas City Wizards.

Without DeMartin's explosive speed and strength in the air, it's unlikely that the MSU men's soccer team would have had such a magical season.



JEANA-DEE ALLEN/THE STATE NEWS

**Saint Francis' Jon Guse, left, tries to steal the ball from sophomore forward Doug DeMartin.**