

Mick McCabe's top 25 boys basketball teams

By MICK MCCABE
FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

1 Kalamazoo Central **Last season:**25-2

Scouting report: The Maroon Giants' run to the Class A final in March was not a one-and-done thing. Central will be a Class A force again behind the play of 6-foot-7 Devin Oliver (Dayton), a do-it-all player. Junior T.J. Buchanan, 6-3, is out of the same mold. Darius Norman (6-6) and Dyland Hughes will provide scoring punch. And the Giants add three juniors from last year's undefeated JV team.

2 Detroit Pershing **Last season:** 26-1.

Scouting report: The defending Class A champs are good right now, but they will be even better in March. Guard Keith Appling (Michigan State) (23 points) is the state's best player, and he will score and be more of a playmaker. Juwan Howard Jr. (Western Michigan) (16 points) has improved his ballhandling skills. Raymoan McAfee, 6-8, will provide defense and rebounding inside.

3 Rockford **Last season:** 22-3 **Scouting report:** This should be Rockford's best team since it won the Class A state title in 2003. The Rams aren't big, but there is quality depth at every position. Junior Ryan Majerle, 6-3, is an excellent shooter. Jacob Greene, 6-4, has a knack for grabbing rebounds. Matt Karamol will shore up the rebounding and inside defense. Robert Pierson is another outstanding shooter.

4 Detroit Southeastern **Last season:** 21-4

Scouting report: Former Detroit Central and Oak Park coach George Ward takes over last season's most underachieving team. Junior Brandan Kearney (Michigan State) will have a breakout year. Carlos Carter is a heady point guard, and 6-8 junior Percy Gibson is a force inside. Junior Landon Gray is a defensive stopper, and Finney transfer Edward Brown is a scorer.

5 Saginaw Arthur Hill **Last season:** 20-4

Scouting report: Maurice Jones, the state's best little big man at 5-6 who signed with USC, is coming off a sensational junior season (27 points, 13 assists). Sophomore Jordan Hare, 6-9, is a shot blocker. Tyler Dwyer, 6-4, will add inside toughness. Junior Lydell Simon is a combo guard. Quincy Tucker

6 Ann Arbor Huron **Last season:** 20-3

Scouting report: This team is filled with juniors and they are playing a difficult schedule to ready themselves for this March and March 2011. Junior A.J. Mathew is the consummate point guard. Junior Dante Williams, 6-6, is the off guard who can shoot. Junior Kyle Baker, 6-4, is a rugged inside defender who will rebound and finish inside.

7

Holt **Last season:** 19-6

Scouting report: This is a team capable of advancing to Class A's final four. Cole Darling (Wright State), 6-6, averaged 20.5 points last season. Donlunto Jackson (13 points) is a four-year starter and hit 40% of his three-point shots last season. Dominic Todd is a terrific athlete who excels on defense. Taylor Beachnau is a scorer from the wing.

8 Romulus **Last season:** 21-6

Scouting report: Playing the toughest schedule in the state, Romulus may have more losses than last season and be better than the team that advanced to the Class A semifinals. DeAndray Buckley is the lone returning starter and will score from the wing. Junior Justin Moss, 6-6, is a strong scorer and rebounder. Junior Derrick Stephens is progressing nicely as a point guard.

9 Flint Powers **Last season:** 26-2

Scouting report: The defending Class B champs will be contenders again. Junior Point guard Patrick Lucas-Perry (14 points) has improved his shooting. Patrick O'Brien (16 points) is even more consistent. DeMarco Sanders is a shooter who plays tough defense. The Chargers will get better when 6-5 Flint Beecher sophomore transfer Javontae Hawkins becomes eligible.

10 Bridgeport **Last season:** 23-3

Scouting report: A return to the Class B final four is a possibility, but much will depend on the ability of Derrick Davis Jr. to move from power forward to point guard. Darvin Ham, 6-5, will play more inside this season. Ethan Johnson has a quick release on his perimeter shot. Kyle Hampton, 6-3, is a fine defender and rebounder.

11 Lansing Eastern **Last season:** 13-8

Scouting report: Look for an improved Quaker team built around 6-6 junior LaDontae Henton. His inside game has always been solid and now he has better ballhandling and shooting skills. Cameron Sanchez is quite a floor general and is capable of playing the off guard spot as well, which will make room for freshman point guard Charles Tucker Jr.

12 Saginaw **Last season:** 14-8

Scouting report: A return to the Breslin Center and the Class A final four is a possibility. Junior Tommie McCune, 6-7, has improved his perimeter skills to go with his ability to score inside. Juniors Trey Babers, 6-5, and Marquavius Ford are excellent perimeter shooters. Christian Dawkins will be the defensive stopper on another good defensive team.

13 Detroit Henry Ford **Last season:** 19-4

Scouting report: This team will be on the short side for the PSL, but it will be a quick team that will revolve around 6-5 Matthew Hunter, who can run the point and score from the wing. Junior Warren Jackson will be the main point guard. Sophomore Victor Edge, 6-4, will provide help inside and on the wing. Antonio Leonard is an outstanding defensive player and scorer.

14 Flint Carman-Ainsworth **Last season:** 12-9

Scouting report: Three starters return for a team that should have been much better last season. Jaylen Larry, 6-7, can be a force in the post. Demondre Chapman (12 points), 6-6, can score inside and while facing the basket. Point guard Glenn Cosey (13 points) can score when needed. Dionte Savage, 6-6, 340, is surprisingly effective in the post.

15 Detroit Cooley **Last season:** 6-11

Scouting report: The Cardinals led the state in close losses last season when the players were only sophomores. Now these players are all juniors. Javontay Baynes, 6-4, will play all three perimeter spots and be a main scorer. Zedric Sadler is an experienced point guard. Jerrell McKinney, 6-5, is a lefty who is difficult to guard.

16 Mt. Pleasant **Last season:** 15-9

Scouting report: Look for an improved team because it doesn't have to be the Trey Zeigler (24 points, 9 rebounds) show for the Oilers to win. Josh Rathje is a shooter. Blake Higgins, 6-5, can also draw opposing post players away from the basket. Flint Southwestern transfer James Arnold, 6-2, can rebound and finish around the basket.

17 Detroit Country Day **Last season:** 24-2

Scouting report: The Yellowjackets lost four Division I athletes from a year ago, but they could be a better team this season. Point guard Ray McCallum has exceptional skills. Juniors Chris Fowler and Lee Bailey can both play each guard spot. Amir Williams, 6-10, who showed flashes of brilliance last season, should be dominant.

18 Zeeland West **Last season:** 8-13

Scouting report: All five starters return with good size and quickness. Austin Semple (17 points), 6-7, will be asked to do more inside. Shane Tiemeyer (8 points, 9 rebounds), 6-10, is the team's emotional leader. Josh Gillett is a finisher in transition and is an impressive leaper. Tyler McKellar is the team's defensive specialist.

19 Clarkston **Last season:** 24-2

Scouting report: The Wolves must blend in 10 new players with the few holdovers from last year's Class A semifinalist. Matt Kamieniecki (6-7, 13 points, 10 rebounds, Ball State) is stronger and will be a force inside and out. Tyler Scarlett is a do-everything player. Jordan Clark will help inside.

20 Petoskey **Last season:** 13-8

Scouting report: Seven of the top eight players return and will be led by 6-6 junior Cory Starkey (14 points, 7 rebounds). Point guard Grant Tracy is starting for the third year and will look to score more. Nick Moore, 6-3, will provide strong inside defense. Joe Keedy, 6-5, is a rugged inside player who will score in the paint and hit perimeter shots.

21 Lansing Sexton **Last season:** 16-5

Scouting report: This team may be short on experience, but not on talent. Sophomore Denzel Valentine scored 20 points in his first varsity game as a freshman, but his season ended four games later with a knee injury. James Suttles, 6-8, had a sensational summer. Marcus Cain is an acrobat who helps the team in many ways, primarily on defense.

22 Detroit Denby **Last season:** 1-17

Scouting report: This is quite a leap of faith for first-year coach Chuck Albright, the former coach at now-closed Detroit Cleveland. The Tars will be good to begin the season and much better in mid-January when Finney transfers Isaiah Sykes, 6-5, and Brandon Williams, 6-7, become eligible.

23 Ann Arbor Richard **Last season:** 22-3

Scouting report: This team won't disappear now that Eso Akunne has gone on to college. Josh Herbeck (17 points) could be the best perimeter shooter in the state. Keith Mackie is a talented point guard. The thing that could put this team over the top is the addition of two transfers -- 6-9 junior Darren Washington (Detroit Southeastern) and 6-6 junior Luther Page (Ann Arbor Huron).

24 Southfield **Last season:** 10-11

Scouting report: The offense will revolve around 6-2 junior Carlton Brundidge (Michigan, 24.5 points), who has improved his jump shot. Junior Desmond Barnes is another fine perimeter threat. Junior Patrick Owenu, 6-6, is a tough rebounder who triggers the transition game. Junior Jaylon Floyd cleans up missed shots for scoring opportunities and blocks shots.

25 Muskegon Heights **Last season:** 21-4

Scouting report: The Tigers may contend in Class B with a nucleus of multidimensional players. Jullian Plummer (10 points, 10 rebounds), 6-6, is a strong inside presence. Junior Deontae Hudson, 6-4, is an athletic wing player. Jamil Thornton is a scoring threat from the wing. Van Parker Jr. will start at point..

All players are seniors unless noted