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Monday, March 12, 2007

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Jonathan Daniel/Getty Images

Defensive end Dewayne White (90) chased a full-time job with the Buccaneers to no avail. Now that he's in Detroit, he's eager to show his former team it was wrong.

Terry Foster

## Marinelli has reins on Lions



The Lions are creating a team in the image of coach Rod Marinelli, which tells me president Matt Millen is not making most of the decisions.

It also tells me Marinelli must stick around no matter what happens this year.

Marinelli has been allowed to get rid of players who questioned his tactics and did not fit his system. In getting rid of most of the team within two seasons, he is also sending the message Millen did not do a good job in assembling it.

Now, Hot Rod is replacing them with

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borderline starters who are hungry and finally getting a chance to show what they can do. Guys like that will run through a brick wall in appreciation.

Players such as defensive end Dewayne White. He could not wrestle a full-time starting job with Tampa Bay, so now he is here to prove himself.

And running back T.J. Duckett, who still believes he can batter this league.

And Tatum Bell (if he is not traded), who can prove it was him and not the system in Denver that made him a 1,000-yard runner.

The Lions have enough fifth-round draft picks to move up in the draft to get some solid picks, and there is enough interest in the No. 2 pick for the Lions to move down and get a couple more pieces.

And when the selections are made, they will be Marinelli's men.

Marinelli is not interested in players who question what he does. He wants players who simply say, "Let's go, Coach. I'm ready to do what you ask."

"I believe 100 percent in Coach Marinelli's philosophy," White said. "With that belief comes hard work and effort, and all that is going to pay off."

This is why the Lions cannot cut and run from Marinelli if they have another bad season. When you allow a coach to bring his guys in, you are making a long-term commitment to him. It would be foolish for the Lions to stockpile Marinelli men, fire him after this season, and then bring in another coach who might not like Marinelli's men.

### Just kidding

So, the Lions are interested in Notre Dame quarterback **Brady Quinn** at the No. 2 pick? I'm calling it a smoke screen to get somebody to trade up. Marinelli wants interior linemen and more help on defense.

### Hey, Detroit Mercy

On Saturday night, the University of Windsor won the Wilson Cup Ontario League basketball championship for the first time in 27 years by beating the Canadian national champion Carleton Ravens, 84-75, at St. Denis Arena in Windsor.

Most of you don't care about Windsor basketball, but there is a statistic about the Lancers that should shock University of Detroit Mercy fans and administrators. St. Denis seats 2,500, but the school squeezed 3,000 in for the championship game.

UDM's Calihan Hall seats around 9,000. But Windsor averaged about 2,300 fans and the Titans just 2,312. Now how in the world does Windsor draw even with the Titans even during a down season?

This is embarrassing and should be a wake-up call for Titans nation. Something needs to change there.

The program needs a jolt of energy. It has become stale and people do not care.

### Just say no, Michigan

Speaking of embarrassment, the University of Michigan is back in the National Invitation Tournament for a third time in the **Tommy Amaker** era.

The Not Invited Tournament is sort of like the losers' bracket for teams that underachieved or

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enjoyed nice seasons but played in smaller conferences.

The NIT is sort of like the Poinsettia Bowl. Do you think Michigan football would accept three invitations to the Poinsettia Bowl?

I don't think so. It is beneath the program. The same should apply for basketball. This is a senior-dominated team. The extra practices and games are not going to benefit the team for next season. I'd turn the invitation down.

### U-M basketball lacking

Plenty of folks rag on Amaker about the job he is doing. But don't you think there is something wrong with the brew in Ann Arbor?

The men's team (21-12) padded its record on a weak nonconference schedule.

The women's team had another losing season, coach **Cheryl Burnett** "retired" and Michigan is looking for another coach.

It seems as if Amaker and Burnett will take the heat. But perhaps the school needs to put more time, effort and money into upgrading the basketball program.

A practice facility would do wonders for enhancing the image of Michigan basketball and attracting more recruits.

Mark me down as a guy who believes Michigan needs a change at coach, but I'm convinced Amaker is returning.

### Troy site terrific

One of the more interesting Class A boys basketball regionals will take place at Troy High, where a possible showdown between Orchard Lake St. Mary's and Pontiac Northern looms. This would be a terrific regional final.

There is just one problem. Romeo faces Northern, and this is its opportunity to show the state it is a good team -- not just a good team from Macomb County.

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