

Wolverines like Beilein's style of play already

By Andrew Skwara – [Rivals.com](#)



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It will be six more months before Michigan's players begin to learn any of **John Beilein's** offensive plays. Same goes for that strange 1-3-1 zone defense (and all of its nuances) he likes to run.

But already they've already gotten a taste of what to expect from their new coach.

Beilein held an 80-minute practice – without any assistants – on the day he was introduced as the Wolverines coach two weeks ago. The former West Virginia coach chose to spend the entire session on drills, showing his new pupils what he expects them to work on in the offseason.

"A lot of it was completely different from what we are used to," Michigan junior forward **Ronald Coleman** said. "We did a lot of work on foot speed and shooting. Coach Beilein even demonstrated a lot of the stuff himself. He had a lot of energy and did a good job communicating."

"He put us in a lot of game situations. During one drill, we had to make a certain amount of jump shots in a certain amount of minutes. By the end I could barely lift my arms, but I think it really helped. It taught us how to shoot when you are exhausted."

That's a requirement when it comes to playing for Beilein and his perimeter-oriented offense.

WVU attempted 989 3-pointers on its way to capturing the NIT title last season. That's 200 more attempts than any other Big East team and nearly 500 more than the Wolverines took (their 495 attempts ranked 10th in the Big Ten).

Those kinds of numbers have Coleman and his teammates salivating for the chance to play in Beilein's system.

"I was reading the paper every day, checking to see who might be our coach," Coleman said. "I was pretty excited when I heard it was (Beilein) because I had watched West Virginia play and they shoot the ball a lot. I really like his style of play."

That style doesn't mean jacking up every open look you get beyond the arc. Beilein stresses sharing the ball and lots of movement without the ball. The Mountaineers ranked first in the Big East with an average of 17.5 assists a game last season. The Wolverines averaged 13.6 per game, ranking ninth in the Big Ten.

That unique style has also translated into winning at just about every level imaginable, including the junior college ranks. Beilein has coached at Erie Community College, Division III Nazareth College, Division II Le Moyne College, Canisius, Richmond and West Virginia. Beilein has compiled a 551-318 (.634) career record at those stops.

Still, critics question Beilein's recruiting abilities. He never has landed a top-100 prospect and never produced an NBA player. Even former WVU standout Kevin Pittsnogle, who carried the team to the Elite Eight in 2005, wound up in the CBA.

But Beilein has never had this much to sell, either.

"Michigan is one of the few places that has won a national championship in basketball and football," Beilein said. "This is a unique place with great resources."

Most of those resources are located in and around Detroit, whose public schools consistently produce major prospects. Much of former coach **Tommy Amaker's** struggles – the Wolverines failed to reach the NCAA Tournament in his six seasons at the helm – were blamed on his inability to land top local talent.

Beilein said he plans to make the Detroit area and the state a recruiting priority. He backed that statement up with his first hire, luring assistant **Mike Jackson**, who played at the University of Detroit Mercy, back to Michigan. Jackson, who had taken a job on the staff at Illinois State three weeks ago, was on Amaker's staff the last two seasons.

"We can all vouch for Coach Jackson," Coleman said. "He is very straightforward and can relate to us."

Jackson's return helped the Wolverines hold on to Detroit guard **Corperryale Harris**, Rivals.com's No. 33 prospect. He had signed his letter-of-intent in the early period, but waited to meet with Beilein before saying he would honor it.

Alex Legion, another Detroit guard and Rivals top-50 player who signed early with the Maize and Blue, asked for and recently was granted a release. However, he still plans to take an official visit to Ann Arbor on April 28.

Regardless of where Legion lands, the Wolverines expect to get back to the NCAA Tournament soon, and there is no doubt from where the newfound confidence stems.

"We never got over the hump the past few seasons, and I can't say really what it was," Jackson said. "We needed more guys willing to buy into Coach Amaker. Now, I think possibly we can get over that hump with Coach Beilein. He's got so much energy, and he knows how to win. I think that will rub off on us."

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Welcome to the Big Ten

Michigan's **John Beilein** is one of three new coaches in the Big Ten, along with **Tubby Smith** at Minnesota and **Todd Lickliter** at Iowa. Here is how the eight returning coaches (listed alphabetically by last name) fared in their first seasons in the league:

Name	Season	Record
Bill Carmody , N'western	2000-01	11-19
Ed DeChellis , Penn State	2003-04	9-19
Tom Izzo , Michigan State	1995-96	16-16 (NIT)
Thad Matta , Ohio State	2004-05	20-12 *
Matt Painter , Purdue	2005-06	9-19
Bo Ryan , Wisconsin	2001-02	19-13 (NCAA)
Kelvin Sampson , Ind.	2006-07	22-11 (NCAA)
Bruce Weber , Illinois	2003-04	26-7 (NCAA)
Overall		132-116

*-Ohio State was not eligible for postseason play in Matta's first season.

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