 Click to Print[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

# Detroit Mercy basketball season ends with injuries, loss of coach

BY VINCE ELLIS • FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER • March 16, 2008

- 
- 
- [Print this page](#)
- [E-mail this article](#)
- Share this article:
  - [Del.icio.us](#)
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Digg](#)
  - [Reddit](#)
  - [Newsvine](#)
  - [What's this?](#)

The crawl on the bottom of the TV screen said, "Wright State 60, Detroit Mercy 37."

#### ADVERTISEMENT

That March 4 loss at Wright State in the first round of the Horizon League tournament ended the Titans' season with a 7-23 record.

But ESPN viewers that night didn't know the full story behind University of Detroit Mercy basketball this season.

Just look at the list of adverse situations the Titans faced this year:

- Junior college transfer Mychael Broom, who could have been a starter, suffered a season-ending knee injury before the season even began.
- Preseason All-Horizon League senior guard Brandon Cotton (Detroit DePorres) left the team on the eve of the Nov. 10 opener against Wright State.
- Longtime head coach Perry Watson, 57, took a medical leave of absence midway through the season. He would later retire after 15 seasons leading the Titans.

- Sophomore center and sometimes-starter Justin Sample (Detroit Cass Tech) was declared academically ineligible.
- Sophomore point guard Woody Payne (Ypsilanti) was lost near the end of the season due to a foot injury.
- The final blow was when the Titans lost conference-leading scorer Jon Goode to a season-ending knee injury the final four games of the season.

But through it all, somehow, the Titans were competitive in most games, and they kept battling for the staff of interim head coach Kevin Mondro and assistants Carlos Briggs and Garland Mance.

"I've already erased the losses from my mind," Mondro said recently at Calihan Hall. "Probably the greatest achievement in all this is that they played hard, played together and never quit on each other, the coaches or the program.

"We were in so many ball games, but unfortunately, we were on the wrong end."

Losing coach Watson was particularly devastating for the staff and players.

"Losing your boss halfway through the season was really tough for us," Mondro said. "He has done so much for this program, recruited all these kids and became such a positive part of these kids' lives."

The Titans truly were close in many games. There was the seven-point home loss to nationally ranked Butler, a two-point loss at Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a one-point loss at Wright State and other close ones.

"It just seemed like we couldn't get any bounce to go our way the last two, three minutes of a game," Mondro said. "It was incredible.

"Hopefully, all this bad luck will turn into good luck."

Goode was one bright spot. The 5-foot-10 senior led the conference in scoring at 19.3 points per game. And he remained enthusiastic even after his college playing days ended prematurely.

"He was just playing his tail off, and I think single-handedly kept this team afloat," Mondro said. "He kept the coaches positive. He bought into everything we said.

"Jon was always about whatever to help the team win. He was awesome with the kids on the floor. He is getting his degree here. It was so devastating to see his career finish off like that."

As for the future, UDM needs to hire a new coach, and Mondro is a candidate.

Payne should be back up and running by the middle of April. Broom is just moving around after his knee injury.


Mondro is running the day-to-day operations of the basketball program and is out recruiting. He has signed three players, including Detroit Renaissance senior forward Ian Larkin.

You would expect more luck for the Titans next season. Heck, they had none this season.

Contact **VINCE ELLIS** at 313-222-6479 or [vellis@freepress.com](mailto:vellis@freepress.com).

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080316/CFP08/803160462>

 **Click to Print**

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.