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McCallum, Detroit ready for fresh start

BY PERRY A. FARRELL • FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER • NOVEMBER 14, 2008

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Muncie, Ind., is about a 2-hour drive from West Lafayette, Ind., where Ray McCallum will make his debut as University of Detroit Mercy [basketball coach](#) tonight when the Titans face one of the Big Ten's favorites in 11th-ranked Purdue.

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McCallum grew up in Muncie and starred at Ball State, so he knows the task facing his young, inexperienced team.

"Starting at [Purdue](#) ... as a player and a program you want to play against the best," said McCallum, an assistant at Indiana the previous two seasons. "Having been in the Big Ten with them the last two years, believe the hype. They are legitimately a top 10 team. It wouldn't surprise me if they were at Ford Field in April -- they're that good."

UDM is the host school for the Final Four at Ford Field. Facing the Boilermakers may show the Titans how far they have to go to become a legitimate program after last season's 7-23 disaster.

With 10 new players in the program and a new coach, a new era has begun at Calihan Hall. In the team's lone exhibition, the Titans defeated Tiffin, 85-60, with four players scoring in double figures. Chris Hayes led Detroit with 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Eulis Stephens and Thomas Kennedy each added 18 points off the bench.

Stephens, Hayes and junior point guard Woody Payne will need to produce every game during a difficult schedule that has Detroit playing just one home game in December. The starters should be Xavier Keeling, who scored 12 points against Tiffin, and Hayes at forwards, Michael Harrington at center and



Coach Ray McCallum

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1 the backcourt.

"We played like we practiced against Tiffin," McCallum said. "I thought we had some great carryover from the things we've been emphasizing in practice. The ball moved. The body moved. We had 15 assists and four guys in double figures. I thought the first 15 minutes our defense was really solid. We made a big emphasis on rebounding, and we were plus-10. Regardless of the opponent, those are the things I'm really pleased about."

If Eli Holman were to be declared eligible by the NCAA, it would be a great boost to the Titans' inside game. Holman transferred from Indiana after a season in which Kelvin Sampson was fired, following McCallum to UDM. The school has requested a waiver but doesn't realistically expect Holman to be eligible this season.

"We're looking at it as he won't be available this year," McCallum said.

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