

Ford float returns for Thanksgiving



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Wings grind out another one

Zetterberg scores winner, and Howard contributes 31 saves

BY CHRIS MCCOSKY
The Detroit News

Detroit — The Red Wings seemed to be on the ropes from the opening faceoff Thursday, but goaltender Jimmy Howard kept them propped up just long

enough for Henrik Zetterberg to sneak behind the Vancouver defense, lift a backhand over Roberto Luongo eight minutes into the third period and send them to a 3-1 victory over the Canucks.

It was the Red Wings' fifth win in six games. They've allowed just four goals in those five wins.

"We are now 9-3-3 since coming back from our trip (to Sweden)," coach Mike Babcock said. "We aren't winning games in the same fashion that we used to, that's pretty obvious. But we are finding ways to grind games out and that's what we have to do."

On the winner, Niklas Kronwall drew the Canucks to one side of the ice and made a quick pass across the Wings' blue line to Brad Stuart. Stuart made a per-

fect two-line pass to Zetterberg, who took it at the Canucks' blue line and went in on Luongo alone. He roofed his backhand.

"I just tried to find some space and see what my options were," Stuart said. "Z did a great job finding the hole and made an unbelievable shot. Not too many guys can do that."

Tomas Holmstrom scored the Wings' first goal, his ninth, a power-play marker set up by Zetter-

berg in the first period. Kronwall finished the scoring with a 190-footer that deflected off the glass and rolled into the empty net.

Fittingly, Howard got his first NHL assist on the play.

"That was kind of cool," Howard said. "I didn't expect to get an assist, just dumping the puck into the corner."

It was that kind of night for

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Verlander is Tiger of Year

Detroit — Justin Verlander has won his first Tiger of the Year award.

In the annual balloting of the Detroit chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America, Verlander received all 22 first-place votes.

Verlander, 26, is the first pitcher since Steve Spinks in 2001 — and just the second since 1986 (Jack Morris) — to earn the honor.

Verlander finished with a 19-9 record and 3.45 ERA, and led the major leagues with 269 strikeouts.



Verlander

Tom Gage

Izzo is never satisfied at MSU

East Lansing

For Tom Izzo, this is just about as good as it gets. His Spartans are No. 2 in the country, coming off a title game appearance in Detroit and favored to win the Big Ten.

He has excellent players returning, excellent recruits coming and first-rate facilities to attract more.

As good as it gets. Almost. This is why Michigan State has risen, and keeps rising, as a new-age power. This is why Izzo has stayed as coach for 14 years, building and fretting, fretting and building. There's no letup because in Izzo's world, there never can be a letdown.

The other day, he was grumbling about his team's preseason injuries, and extolling how tough the Big Ten will be, and worrying about the difficulty of sustaining success, and I had to interrupt.

You do realize your program is as touted and stable as it's ever been, don't you?

Izzo looked up, a bit startled. "That's an interesting point," he said. "But ..."

But? "It's not that I don't want to be satisfied — I do," he added. "It's weird, but I've just seen so many

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More online: Check out The Detroit News college basketball preview at edetroitnews.com



Dale G. Young/The Detroit News

Tom Izzo is shooting for his sixth Final Four in 12 years, and his second national title at MSU.



Photos by David Guralnick/The Detroit News

Mary Lou Comment, 79, and her daughter, Kathy Comment, spruced up an industrial vacuum cleaner to show their support.

A FEW GOOD TEAMS

Marine City has made the football playoffs a very welcome habit

BY TOM MARKOWSKI
The Detroit News

Marine City — Ten miles west of downtown on Marine City Highway, a makeshift sign greets an outsider with two simple, yet heartfelt words:

"Go Mariners."

The sign is the work of Mary Lou and Kathy Comment, mother and daughter, who haven't missed a Marine City High home varsity football game in 33 years.

To express their passion for Mariners football, they maneuvered an old industrial vacuum cleaner between their house and the highway and painted the words on one side.

"We're the last house they see when they leave town for their (away) games," Kathy Comment said. "We want them to know we're behind them."

In Marine City, everyone is behind their 11-0 team, which hosts Goodrich at 7 tonight in a Division 4 region final.

"It's electrifying; the whole town gets excited about Fri-

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Marine City has run its record to 11-0 heading into a Division 4 region final against Goodrich at 7 tonight. It hasn't missed the playoffs since 1997.

Tigers altering their business model

All those who believe payroll is driving the Tigers' steadily hotter trade talks are bang-on with their logic.

But it's more complicated, and more interesting, than a matter of money.

It's about crafting a contender deep into the next decade. And the Tigers, rightly it seems, are banking that melding new talent from trades of Curtis Granderson, Edwin Jackson, etc., with their own fresh crop of farm



LYNN HENNING

prospects will craft a new, long-term contender, at a far more sensible price.

All the commotion will shake out between now and during what could be a rough 2010 transition season. In the meantime, the Tigers won't mind trimming a

salary or two ahead of the Godzilla-sized contract obligations they will jettison after the 2010 and 2011 seasons.

Tigers owner Mike Iltch has almost certainly not told his front-office boss, Dave Dombrowski, to slash payroll. That's because Iltch never has ordered any fire sales with the Red Wings or with the Tigers. And even with business tough and various Tigers contracts even tougher, he will not order Dombrowski to make bad deals to save money.

But what he will abide is what the Tigers are now apparently prepared to embrace: smart trades that will make this team more affordable in the near and long-term, and more competitive into the next decade.

It's why some of us thought all along Granderson would

need to at least be discussed as trade bait this offseason. He was at relatively peak value with an absorbable contract. The Tigers have multiple needs that could become more multiple as a trio of free agents — Placido Polanco, Fernando Rodney and Brandon Lyon — move closer to perhaps playing elsewhere.

Trading Granderson figured to be a difficult, but necessary, way to add net value.

The Tigers also are closing in on promoting new pitchers and

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Tenn. football players charged with robbery

Tennessee freshman football players **Nu'Keese Richardson**, a top receiving recruit, starting safety **Janzen Jackson** and defensive back **Mike Edwards** were charged with attempted armed robbery at a gas station at the edge of the Knoxville campus.

Victims told police they were sitting in a parked car about 2 a.m. Thursday when two males in hooded jackets, one brandishing a gun, demanded, "Give us everything you've got."

The athletic department is reserving comment.

Ex-NBA star addresses massive gambling debts

Former NBA All-Star **Antoine Walker** is trying to resolve criminal charges stemming from \$822,500 in gambling debts to three Las Vegas casinos.

The Las Vegas justice of the peace gave Walker's attorney, **Jonathan Powell**, until Nov. 30 to make a deal or face a trial.

Contact us

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