

SPORTS

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Offense continues to struggle in loss

RED WINGS, 4F

Woodson pledges \$2M to hospital

Ex-Wolverine's gift to U-M will help fund pediatric research

BY ANGELIQUE S. CHENGELIS
The Detroit News

Ann Arbor — Twelve years ago, Michigan's Charles Woodson was "the best player in the country standing before you."

Those were his words when asked late that season if he was, indeed, the best collegiate player.

Now, a Heisman Trophy, a national championship and an NFL career later, he might just be one of the best guys standing before you. Woodson has made a \$2 mil-

lion gift to the new University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital, which opens in the fall of 2012. The Charles Woodson Clinical Research Fund will support pediatric research for children with life-threatening illnesses. The hospital's lobby will be named in his honor.

"(I just want to) bring a sense of hope to someone who might not see any hope," Woodson, now with the Green Bay Packers and in town to face the Lions today, said of his gift. "I know I want to be part of that symbol of hope that they can have that at some point (and believe), 'I can beat this thing, and I know there are people out there

trying to help me beat it.'" The Michigan football program and Mott Children's Hospital have long been associated. Former coach Lloyd Carr, for whom Woodson played, has dedicated much of his time over the years to raising money for the hospital through avenues, like the Carr Wash, that also involved participation from the Michigan football team.

But even before that, during Bo Schembechler's tenure as coach, the football program began its association with the hospital, when players started to visit the children Thursday nights.

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Packers cornerback Charles Woodson delivers an autographed ball to Haley Greene, 7, at Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor on Tuesday.

Report says Iverson's done

Allen Iverson is set to retire from the NBA, according to an online report. Commentator **Stephen A. Smith** published a statement on his Web site attributed to Iverson. It said Iverson plans to retire but also that "I feel strongly that I can still compete at the highest level."

The 10-time All-Star played three games this season with Memphis before taking a leave of absence to attend to personal matters. He was waived after the two sides agreed to part ways.

It was the second straight ugly ending for Iverson, 34, who was unhappy last season playing for the Pistons. He was upset Detroit coach **Michael Curry** and Memphis' **Lionel Hollins** used the ex-MVP as a reserve.



Iverson

Lions enjoy working holiday

BY JOHN NIYO
The Detroit News

Allen Park — They've made it a rallying cry and a promise. They've told everyone who'll listen, from the NFL commissioner to season-ticket holders to rain-soaked fans standing in line for autographs.

And if the rest of the country is tired of watching these turkeys make a mockery of their 75-year-old Thanksgiving Day football tradition, well, you can just imagine how the Lions feel.

"We haven't been a good football team for awhile here, but on Thanksgiving people are excited to come and be a part of (the tradition) despite us, you know?" said kicker Jason Hanson, in his 18th NFL season in Detroit. "And that's special. Hopefully, the guys realize that and it's a motivation to make this a special day for them, too."

For a change, that is.

The NFL's losingest team of this decade has been anything but special on Thanksgiving in recent years. The Lions, who'll host the Packers today in the 70th Thanksgiving Day game in Detroit, have lost seven of their last eight holiday games.

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Packers at Lions

Kickoff: 12:30 p.m. today, Ford Field, Detroit

TV/radio: FOX/WXYT 97.1

Records: Packers 6-4, Lions 2-8

Series: Packers lead 87-64-7

Line: Packers by 11

Injury update: Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford is officially listed as doubtful, four days after suffering a separated left shoulder in a 38-37 win over the Browns. Receiver Calvin Johnson, who injured his left knee early in Sunday's win, is listed as questionable. Neither player was deemed able to practice Wednesday.

'Get the ... off of me:' Stafford's wired footage is riveting, 7F

CAVALIERS 98, PISTONS 88

James crowns Pistons

He has 34 points, eight rebounds, seven assists; Gordon is injured



LeBron James scores two of his 34 points, motoring past his former teammate, Ben Wallace.

BY TED KULFAN
The Detroit News

Auburn Hills — Hours before Wednesday's game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, coach John Kuester was talking about what makes LeBron James such a premier player.

Kuester was an assistant coach in Cleveland last season and got an understanding of what fuels James.

It was James, to no one's surprise, who ignited Cleveland in its 98-88 victory Wednesday over the gummy Pistons, who made a customary late game run.

"He would drive hard on his mom," said Kuester, talking about the competitiveness that James has. "It doesn't matter who he's playing against, he's the type of competitor he wants to win and he'll do what it takes to win."

"I'd like to say he's going to take it easy but I have a gut feeling he's not."

No, James didn't take it easy. James had 34 points and he got help from Mo Williams (14 points) and Daniel Gibson (13 points) for the Cavaliers (11-4).

Rodney Stuckey scored 25 and Charlie Villanueva 19 for the Pistons (5-10), who lost their sixth straight game.

The eventual loss could be more than just one game, though.

While driving for a layup, Ben Gordon suffered a left ankle sprain with 3:13 left in the second quarter.

Gordon didn't play the rest of the second half.

Gordon crashed to the floor and immediately began grabbing for his ankle.

He returned to miss both free throw attempts, then immediately was taken out by coach John Kuester.

The Pistons didn't immediately release the severity of Gordon's injury.

Losing Gordon — who had nine points and four assists in 17 minutes — and is the Pistons' leading scorer, would be a terrible blow to a team already mis-



Michael Conroy/Associated Press

Quarterback Brady Quinn played two seasons under Charlie Weis at Notre Dame.

Quinn thinks Irish should stick with Weis

With **Charlie Weis** perhaps down to his final days at Notre Dame, Cleveland Browns quarterback **Brady Quinn** came to his former coach's defense.

"It would be a horrible decision if they did make that change," Quinn said.

Notre Dame is 16-20 the last three seasons (6-5 this year) after going 19-6 in Weis' first two.

Area doctor resigns from NFL committee

NFL commissioner **Roger Goodell** said Dr. **Ira Casson** and Dr. **David Viano**, an adjunct professor of Wayne State's biomedical engineering department, have stepped down as co-chairmen of the league's committee on brain injuries but will continue to assist the NFL.

Both have recently come under criticism, Viano for saying it might be OK for high school players to return to games in which they earlier had suffered a concussion.

Contact us

You can reach Ruben Luna, Sports Editor, by calling (313) 223-4642, faxing (313) 496-5248 or at ruben.luna@detnews.com.

More online: Check out a photo gallery of Wednesday night's Pistons-Cavaliers game at detnews.com/pistons



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Watch the Pistons vs. Cavaliers on **ESPN2** tomorrow starting with **Rubens in Focus** at 7:30pm.