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Florida coach Billy Donovan has fond memories of Jud Heathcote

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East Lansing -- There are a lot parallels between the careers of Florida's Billy Donovan and MSU's Tom Izzo.

They both became head coaches in the mid-'90s (Donovan in 1994, Izzo in '95) and received a wealth of experience as longtime assistants.

These national championship-winning coaches also shared some laughs together with former Spartans coach Jud Heathcote on a recruiting trip several years ago.

Donovan recalls an antsy Heathcote expressing his desire to bolt from a high school workout in Kalamazoo so he could watch a boxing match.

"When is this thing going to get over with?" Donovan said, repeating Heathcote's comments as the three sat in a gym. "Are they going to do anything in this practice? If not, I need to go home and watch this fight."

Donovan was an assistant at Kentucky under Rick Pitino at the time and always felt fortunate to be entertained by Heathcote whenever in Michigan.

"He was a very, very funny guy to be around," Donovan said of Heathcote. "He would always make me laugh."

Donovan shared his Heathcote memories Monday during a teleconference to preview Friday's 8 p.m. meeting with the Spartans in the Legends Classic in Atlantic City, N.J.

Friday's matchup could channel more history since it's only the fourth meeting of the teams since a 2000 national championship game in Indianapolis that MSU won, 89-76.

The Spartans have a 3-2 edge in this series and won the last game, 68-46, on March 23, 2003, a second round NCAA Tournament game in Tampa, Fla.

The winner Friday plays either Massachusetts or Rutgers at either 5:30 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. Saturday in the four-team tournament's championship game.

Recruiting ties

Donovan and Izzo share a mutual respect for each other because of the dues they've paid in the profession and success recruiting and developing talent.

Florida has had some success recruiting Michigan players such as Al Horford (Grand Ledge) and Anthony Roberson (Saginaw).

Donovan said he was "very fortunate" to get both and doesn't feel like he beat Izzo or MSU to the punch. "We had a lot of success with those guys," he said. "Certainly Michigan State had a lot of success without them."

Izzo marvels at the work Donovan did to help Horford, now one of the NBA's top power forwards playing with the Atlanta Hawks, reach his potential and lead the Gators to back-to-back national championships in 2006-07.

"If you look at that recruiting group, there was a lot of good players, not a lot of great players," Izzo said. "(Donovan) made them great players."

Lucas OK?

MSU's Kalin Lucas, a preseason All-America candidate, sat out Tuesday's practice with a left foot infection but didn't seem concerned about his health for this weekend's tournament.

"I didn't get it cut or anything," said Lucas, who appeared to walk a noticeable limp. "Coach just told me not to practice today."

Lucas walked around Breslin Center's main floor after practice with his left foot covered in a sock. He wore a sandal on the left foot and a shoe on the right.

By the numbers

23.3: Florida's average margin of victory over its first three regular-season opponents (Stetson, Georgia Southern and Troy).

23: Team-leading assist total for MSU's backup point guard Korie Lucious, compared to just three turnovers.

17: Career-high rebound total for MSU forward Delvon Roe in Sunday's 90-60 victory over Valparaiso.

Spartans on TV

Michigan State's games Friday and Saturday will be broadcast on only HDNet, available to Dish Network and DirecTV subscribers. The games aren't expected to be available on Comcast locally. For information about HDNet's availability in your area, visit hd.net.

Quotable

"It's not like I can't get up there. I just never do it." -- Chris Allen, Michigan State guard, defending his ability to dunk.

That looks familiar

Here's a look at Tom Izzo and Billy Donovan's records and accomplishments:

	Age	Career record	National titles	Final Fours
Izzo	54	340-137 (15 years)	1 (2000)	5
Donovan	44	348-146 (16 years)	2 (2006-07)	3

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