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Wolverines' Jordan Morgan continues to improve in post

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The Detroit News

Atlantic City, N.J. -- Jordan Morgan continues to be a dependable post presence for Michigan.

Morgan, a redshirt freshman center from University of Detroit-Jesuit, had 11 points and eight rebounds in Friday's loss to Syracuse and has scored in double figures in the last three games. His toughest test was against Syracuse's big front line, with three players taller than 6-foot-7.

Michigan coach John Beilein said Morgan held his own in his biggest game and is still improving game-by-game.

"He is really growing and learning different ways to get his body on people," Beilein said. "Another good rebounding game and double-figure scoring game for him, so we like what we see from him and he's got another gear he's learning about every day and we're pushing him to know that he's got more he can do." Morgan scored the Wolverines' first three baskets and established a post presence, enabling the outside shooters to get space when the post defenders collapsed on him.

"He's learning about the intensity you have to play with at this level and he's soaking it up -- he wants to be a player," Beilein said.

Overrated?

Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim is trying to convince anyone who will listen that a No. 10 ranking for his team is too high.

The Orange have struggled in their victories -- especially offensively -- and barely beat Detroit Mercy (66-55) and William & Mary (63-60) at home in the regional rounds.

"I don't think it's just execution; some of it is shot-making," Boeheim said. "We've got to go to the basket because we're not making much from the perimeter." Despite suggestions that his team could use a victory like Friday's to help toughen up for a run in the NCAA Tournament, Boeheim is focused on the immediate future.

"I'm concerned about November. I'm not thinking too much past that," Boeheim said. "Everybody talks about schedules -- I'm glad it's not any harder, because we'd be 1-4."

Melo out, Boeheim

Syracuse freshman Fab Melo, a McDonald's All-America center, started, but played just four minutes in the first half. He didn't have any shot attempts and Boeheim was furious about his defense.

"Fab did not have much success in the post defensively and that's a concern for us. We need him to be a good rebounder and defensive player and right now, he's just not able to do that," Boeheim said. "You can't give him minutes -- he's got to earn them -- and he's not earning them right now."

Another Rice

Glen Rice Jr., son of the former Michigan player, is a sophomore for Georgia Tech. Rice had 19 points, 11 rebounds and five assists for Tech, which will play Syracuse in the championship game Saturday night.

The elder Rice starred on Michigan's 1989 national championship and was the most outstanding player in the tournament run.

Slam dunks

Michigan is the second Big Ten team to play in the Legends Classic. Last season, Michigan State, ranked No. 2, was upset by Florida, 77-74, in the semifinals.

...Morris had six assists, ending his streak of two games with double-digit assists. Morris has the same number of assists (31) as U-M's opponents in the four games.

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