

U-M looks to end drought

Wolverines have not played in Rose Bowl since 1997 season

BY LARRY LAGE
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ANN ARBOR — When Carl Diggs and Grant Bowman left Ohio to play football at Michigan four years ago, they expected to eventually play in the Rose Bowl.

It hasn't worked out that way so far.

The Wolverines haven't played in the Rose Bowl since Jan. 1, 1998, when they beat Washington and earned The Associated Press' national championship.

"That's something we do talk about a lot," Diggs said. "It hurts and it motivates that nobody on this team has been to the Rose Bowl, or has a ring from an outright Big Ten championship."

Since Michigan's last Rose Bowl, it has shared two conference titles and ended every season with New Year's Day games in Florida. The Wolverines lead the Big Ten with four bowl victories over the past five years, but for the winningest program in college football, winning the Orange, Citrus and Outback bowls isn't satisfying enough. If Michigan doesn't go to the Rose Bowl this season, it will have gone six years without a trip to Pasadena, Calif., for the first time since 1965.

"We're real motivated to get there, because you expect to play in the Rose Bowl when you come to Michigan," Bowman said.

The Wolverines should have a shot.

They are ranked No. 4 in the AP preseason poll because of the wealth of experience, talent and a favorable schedule.

Michigan's offense is expected to be dominating.

Four returning starters on the offensive line will be in

front of quarterback John Navarre, a 29-game starter, running back Chris Perry, coming off a career year, and receiver Braylon Edwards, whose production matched his talent last season.

"It's a favorable situation," said Navarre, who has a chance to break a few more team passing records. "And it's one I'm excited to be a part of."

If Michigan can find serviceable replacements for tight end Bennie Joppru and fullback B.J. Askew, it could have one of the best offenses in team history.

There are question marks about the defense, however.

Diggs is one of the many linebackers coming off injury, and just four starters return to the defensive line and secondary.

Safety Marlin Jackson, cornerbacks Markus Curry and Jeremy LeSueur along with defensive end Larry Stevens will be counted on to be standouts.

"I think we're going to be faster than a year ago on defense," said Michigan coach Lloyd Carr, who will lead the Wolverines for the 100th time on Aug. 30 at home against Central Michigan. "The keys are for us to be a better tackling team, and to get our injured linebackers back healthy."

Another question on defense is how — or if — Jackson will be punished by Carr for pleading guilty to aggravated assault earlier this month in a plea agreement.

The Big Ten's preseason defensive player of the year, who moved from cornerback to safety, was accused of striking a man in the right eye with a bottle. He said he punched the man, but did not strike him with a bottle, and Carr said a lie-detector test supported Jackson's claim.

"That to me is a career-threatening or career-ending issue that we don't have to



The Associated Press

U-M tailback Chris Perry, coming off a 1,110-yard rushing season, and the rest of the Wolverines are trying to make it back to the Rose Bowl for the first time since 1998.

deal with," Carr said.

Carr's chief concern will be the same for a second straight year: kicking field goals and extra points.

He used three kickers last season and they missed 12 of 24 field goals and two extra points. Adam Finley, who also punts, Philip Brabbs and Troy Nienberg are all back. But freshman Garrett Rivas may end up with the job of sealing and winning games for the Wolverines with his foot.

The Wolverines, who will not play Penn State or Wisconsin, will be at home for their biggest games: Notre Dame (Sept. 13) and Ohio State (Nov. 22). They also play Purdue, a preseason conference contender, at home on Oct. 25 one week before traveling to Michigan State, where the Wolverines have lost two straight and four of five.

Some have predicted the game against Ohio State, the 100th installment of the rivalry, could be a matchup of two 11-0 teams. The defending national champion Buckeyes begin the season ranked second.

"We can't worry about that game right now," Diggs said. "We need to play our first game and every game like it's our last if we want to get where we want to go."

2003 MICHIGAN SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Opponent	Time
Sat.	Aug. 30	vs. Central Michigan	12:10 p.m.
Sat.	Sep. 6	vs. Houston	Noon
Sat.	Sep. 13	vs. Notre Dame	3:30 p.m.
Sat.	Sep. 20	at Oregon	12:30 p.m.
Sat.	Sep. 27	vs. Indiana	TBA
Sat.	Oct. 4	at Iowa	2:30 p.m.
Sat.	Oct. 11	at Minnesota	TBA
Sat.	Oct. 18	vs. Illinois (Homecoming)	Noon
Sat.	Oct. 25	vs. Purdue	TBA
Sat.	Nov. 1	at Michigan State	TBA
Sat.	Nov. 15	at Northwestern	TBA
Sat.	Nov. 22	vs. Ohio State	Noon

2002 STATS

RUSHING

Player	Att	Yards	TD
CHRIS PERRY	267	1110	14
B.J. Askew	110	568	6
D. UNDERWOOD	36	105	1
TIM BRACKEN	27	97	1

RECEIVING

Player	Rec	Yds	TD
B. EDWARDS	67	1035	10
Bennie Joppru	53	579	5
Ronald Bellamy	46	530	5
B.J. Askew	36	280	1

PASSING

Player	Att	Comp	Pct	Yds	TD	Int
JOHN NAVARRE	448	248	55.4	2905	21	7
SPENCER BRINTON	20	11	55.0	121	0	0

DEFENSIVE

Player	Solo	Ast	Total	Sack	Fum	Int
Victor Hobson	74	25	99	6	2	2
Charles Drake	49	25	74	3	0	1
CARL DIGGS	44	19	63	1	0	0
Cato June	36	17	53	2	0	0
JEREMY LESUEUR	36	16	52	0	1	0
MARLIN JACKSON	39	12	51	1	3	0

2002 RESULTS

Michigan 31, Washington 29
Michigan 35, W. Michigan 12
Notre Dame 25, Michigan 23
Michigan 10, Utah 7
Michigan 45, Illinois 28
Michigan 27, Penn State 24 OT
Michigan 23, Purdue 21
Iowa 34, Michigan 9
Michigan 49, Michigan State 3
Michigan 41, Minnesota 24
Michigan 21, Wisconsin 14
Ohio State 14, Michigan 9
Michigan 38, Florida 30*

*=Outback Bowl, Tampa, Fla.