

= Michigan State Spartans =

The Michigan State Spartans are the athletic teams that represent Michigan State University . The school 's athletic program includes 25 varsity sports teams . Their mascot is a Spartan warrior named Sparty , and the school colors are green and white . The university participates in the NCAA 's Division I and the Football Bowl Subdivision for football . The Spartans participate as members of the Big Ten Conference in all varsity sports . Michigan State offers 12 varsity sports for men and 13 for women .

The university 's athletic director is Mark Hollis , who was promoted to the position on January 1 , 2008 . Hollis replaced Ron Mason , who also served as head hockey coach from 1979 to 2002 , retiring with a 608 ? 261 ? 68 record at MSU .

MSU 's football team has won or shared six national championships in 1951 , 1952 , 1955 , 1957 , 1965 and 1966 , and has won the Rose Bowl in 1954 , 1956 , 1988 and 2014 . Its men 's basketball team won the NCAA National Championship in 1979 and 2000 . The MSU men 's ice hockey team won national titles in 1966 , 1986 and 2007 .

= = History = =

In 1925 , the institution changed its name to Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science , and , as an agricultural school , its teams were referred to as the Aggies . Looking to move beyond its agricultural roots , Michigan State held a contest to find a new nickname . They had decided to call the teams the " Michigan Staters " or the " Michigan State Sport Ons " . MSU officials headed up by George S. Alderton and local sports writers for the Lansing State Journal and the Capital News went through the entries as well as met with longtime Michigan State University supporters to find a better and more heroic name . They decided on the " Spartans " , which had been suggested by Stephen G. Scofes and his two brothers Pete and Nick , all natives of Sparta , Greece . The three brothers met with MSU officials at their Lansing restaurant , The Coffee Cup then renamed the Famous Grill , when they told them the story of the Spartan war at Thermopylae , Greece in 480 B.C. , where 300 Spartan warriors held back thousands of Persian warriors led by Persia King , Xerxes . Today the Scofes family still honors the Michigan State men 's Basketball and Football teams with trophies awarded to MSU players and faculty , since the banquets began in the Scofes families Coffee Cup and Famous Grill restaurants . This story was also highlighted in the popular book entitled , " The Tradition Continues " authored by Constantine and Steven Demos , page 56 . By coincidence , Justin Morrill had once compared the Land Grant colleges to the schools of ancient Sparta . With a heroic name and a historic precedent , the " Spartans " quickly caught on as the teams ' new nickname . They later changed the lyrics of the Fight Song to reflect the name change of the College and its sports teams .

As the college grew in size , it looked to join a major collegiate conference . When the University of Chicago eliminated varsity football and withdrew from the Western Conference (now the Big Ten) in 1946 , Michigan State president John A. Hannah lobbied hard to take its place . Despite opposition from the University of Michigan , the Big Ten finally admitted M.S.C. on May 20 , 1949 . After joining the conference , head football coach Clarence L. " Biggie " Munn led the Spartan football team to the Rose Bowl in the 1953 ? 54 season , beating UCLA 28 ? 20 . Successor coach Hugh " Duffy " Daugherty carried the football team to a second Rose Bowl where it again defeated UCLA , 17 ? 14 .

= = Varsity sports = =

Michigan State has 23 NCAA Division I @-@ A varsity teams : 11 varsity sports for men and 12 for women . They participate in the Big Ten Conference except fencing , where until 1997 , from the University founding , MSU featured fencing as a varsity sport . During that time , MSU was coached by the first American recognized as a master of fencing , Charles Schmitter , for 45 years , from 1939 to 1984 . Upon his retirement , his student , Fred Freiheit , coached from 1984 until fencing

was demoted from varsity status in 1997 . The Michigan State University Fencing Club is a competing member of the Midwest Fencing Conference , which consists of sixteen (16) schools with varsity or club programs .

= = = Basketball = = =

= = = Men 's Basketball = = =

Michigan State 's men 's basketball team has won the National Championship two times : in 1979 and 2000 . In 1979 , Earvin " Magic " Johnson , along with Greg Kelser , Jay Vincent and Mike Brkovich , carried the MSU team to a 75 ? 64 win against the Larry Bird @-@ led Indiana State Sycamores . In 2000 , three players from Flint , Michigan , Morris Peterson , Charlie Bell and Mateen Cleaves , carried the team to its second national title . Dubbed the " Flintstones " , they were the key to the Spartans ' win against Florida 89 ? 76 . In addition to the two Championships , the 2008 ? 09 team reached the NCAA Championship game , but lost to North Carolina 89 ? 72 .

Since 1995 , Michigan State has been coached by Tom Izzo , who has a 524 ? 205 record . Izzo 's coaching helped the team make six of twelve NCAA Final Fours from 1999 to 2010 , winning the title in 2000 and leading ESPN to define MSU as the best team in that decade . Michigan State basketball has been selected for 19 consecutive NCAA tournament bids under Izzo . The Spartans have won one NCAA Championship , seven Big Ten Regular Season Championships , and five Big Ten Tournament Championships (the most of any team in the Big Ten) under Izzo . The team has made two NCAA Championship games and advanced to seven Final Fours , nine Elite Eights , and 13 Sweet Sixteens under Izzo .

Overall , Michigan State has won 2 NCAA Championships , 13 Big Ten Regular Season Championships , and 5 Big Ten Tournament Championships . The Spartans have appeared in 3 NCAA Championship games , 9 Final Fours , 13 Elite Eights , 19 Sweet Sixteens , and 29 NCAA Tournament appearances .

Spartans formerly or currently in the NBA include Maurice Ager , Alan Anderson , Charlie Bell , Shannon Brown , Mateen Cleaves , Paul Davis , Terry Furlow , Jamie Feick , Draymond Green , Johnny Green , Gary Harris , Earvin " Magic " Johnson , Greg Kelser , Mike Peplowski , Morris Peterson , Zach Randolph , Shawn Respert , Jason Richardson , Scott Skiles , Steve Smith , Eric Snow , Sam Vincent , Jay Vincent , and Kevin Willis .

= = = Women 's Basketball = = =

MSU also has a fairly successful women 's basketball team , with its greatest accomplishment being a national runner @-@ up finish to Baylor in 2005 . MSU 's women 's basketball started in 1972 ? 73 under coach Mikki Baile . The women 's team has had five coaches in its history . The Spartans current coach is Suzy Merchant . The Spartans have made one National Championship game , one Final Four , one Elite Eight , three Sweet Sixteens , and appeared in 15 NCAA / AIAW Tournaments .

= = = Football = = =

Football has a long tradition at Michigan State . Starting as a club sport in 1884 , football gained varsity status in 1896 . During that time , the Spartans had a roster of impressive players , including Lynn Chandnois , Dorne Dibble , Meredith Assaly , and Don McAulliffe . In 1951 , the Spartans finished the season undefeated , and performed the same feat the following year in addition to the nation 's longest winning streak of 24 games . The team was named the " undisputed national champions by every official poll " .

After waiting for several years , the team was finally admitted into the Big Ten Conference as a regular member in 1953 . They promptly went on to capture the league championship (losing only

one game during the season) and beating UCLA in their first Rose Bowl game . After the 1953 season Biggie Munn , the legendary Spartan coach , turned the team over to his protégé and future legend Duffy Daugherty . Daugherty went on to win the 1956 Rose Bowl . George Perles was the head coach when the Spartans defeated USC in the 1988 Rose Bowl .

The current coach is Mark Dantonio , who was hired on November 27 , 2006 . Dantonio has a 63 ? 29 record in his coaching tenure as of the end of the 2013 season .

Under Dantonio , MSU has won three Conference Championships , 2010 , 2013 , and 2015 . The Spartans have won three Big Ten Divisional championships and two Big Ten Championship games during that period . In 2015 , MSU was selected for the College Football Playoff as the No. 3 seed , but lost to Alabama in the Cotton Bowl . He also led the Spartans to a victory in the 2014 Rose Bowl , the 100th edition of the " Granddaddy of them all . "

All told , Michigan State has won six national championships and nine Big Ten championships .

Today , the football team competes in Spartan Stadium , a renovated 75 @, @ 005 @-@ person football stadium in the center of campus .

MSU 's traditional archrival is the Michigan , against whom they compete for the Paul Bunyan Trophy ; MSU has a 23 ? 34 ? 1 record in the annual trophy game . The Spartans have won the trophy seven of the past eight years , as of 2015 season .

Michigan State 's rivalry game against Notre Dame , with whom they compete for the Megaphone Trophy was played every year until 2013 . MSU 's record in the trophy series against the Fighting Irish is 26 ? 34 ? 1 .

Notable MSU alumni who have played in the National Football League include Morten Andersen , Plaxico Burress , Andre Rison , Derrick Mason , Muhsin Muhammad , T. J. Duckett , Flozell Adams , Julian Peterson , Herb Haygood , Charles Rogers , Jim Miller , Earl Morrall , Wayne Fontes , Bubba Smith , Tony Banks , Percy Snow , Rob Fredrickson , Jeff Smoker , Tony Mandarich , Lorenzo White , Hank Bullough , Drew Stanton , Devin Thomas , Tupe Peko , Domata Peko , Chris Morris , Javon Ringer , Chris L. Rucker , Greg Jones , and Kirk Cousins .

= = = Ice hockey = = =

Michigan State has two varsity hockey teams : a men 's ice hockey team and a women 's field hockey team . Helen Knull is the head coach of the women 's field hockey team .

The men 's ice hockey team plays at the Munn Ice Arena . The head coach was Rick Comley , who had a 116 ? 73 ? 19 record at MSU . The current head coach is Tom Anastos . In the 2013 @-@ 2014 campaign , the Big Ten Conference debuted Division I ice hockey , (Michigan State formerly competed in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association with Big Ten sister schools University of Michigan (U @-@ M) and the Ohio State University) .

On October 6 , 2001 , the team was involved in what was then the most @-@ attended hockey game in history : The Cold War . The Spartans set up a hockey rink in the middle of their football stadium , Spartan Stadium and played U @-@ M before a crowd of 74 @, @ 554 . The game ended in a 3 ? 3 tie . A decade later , the same two teams were involved again in the most @-@ attended ice hockey game in history . This time , Michigan hosted the rivalry game at its own Michigan Stadium . The Big Chill at the Big House set the current record with an officially certified crowd of 104 @, @ 173 .

The MSU ice hockey program has seven CCHA regular season championships and 11 CCHA Tournament titles . MSU has also won 11 Great Lakes Invitational titles . The Spartans have been in the NCAA tournament 23 times , with nine Frozen Four appearances and three national titles (1966 , 1986 and 2007) . On April 7 , 2007 , the Michigan State Spartans won their third Collegiate Championship by beating the Boston College Eagles 3 ? 1 .

Former Michigan State players in the National Hockey League include Rod Brind 'Amour , Anson Carter , Duncan Keith , Donald McSween , Adam Hall , John @-@ Michael Liles , Torey Krug , Shawn Horcoff , Justin Abdelkader , Jim Slater , brothers Kelly Miller and Kip Miller , as well as their cousins , brothers Ryan Miller and Drew Miller . Two players for MSU have won the Hobey Baker Award : Kip Miller in 1990 and Ryan Miller in 2001 . Few other players also excelling in other

leagues including forward Brock Radunske and defenseman Brad Fast .

== Cross country ==

Historically , the Michigan State Cross Country men 's team has been one of the school 's most successful programs . Between World War I and World War II , Michigan State College competed in the Central Collegiate Conference , winning titles in 1926 @-@ 1929 , 1932 , 1933 and 1935 . Michigan State also experienced success in the IC4A , at New York ? s Van Cortlandt Park , winning 15 team titles (1933 ? 1937 , 1949 , 1953 , 1956 ? 1960 , 1962 , 1963 and 1968) . Since entering the Big Ten in 1950 , Michigan State has won 14 men ? s titles (1951 ? 1953 , 1955 ? 1960 , 1962 , 1963 , 1968 , 1970 and 1971) . Michigan State hosted the inaugural NCAA cross country championships in 1938 and every year thereafter through 1964 (except a one @-@ year vacation in 1943 due to war) . The Spartans won eight NCAA championships from 1930 to 1959 , including 1939 , 1948 , 1949 , 1952 , and 1955 @-@ 1959 (minus 1957) . Walt Drenth is the current director of both the men 's and women 's cross country and track and field programs . After joining MSU in 2004 , Drenth led the men 's cross country team to a NCAA Championship bid during the 2004 season . The women 's cross country team also advanced to the NCAA Championship Meet after winning the Great Lakes Regional race .

== Wrestling ==

Wrestling was one of the earliest sports formed at the Michigan Agricultural College . While the sport was dropped in 1906 , it was reformed by the college 16 years later in 1922 . The school 's wrestling team has won the NCAA Division I championship once , in 1967 . Its current coach , Tom Minkel , has produced 33 All @-@ Americans , 11 Big Ten Champions and one NCAA Champion currently in his 23rd season as the Spartans Head coach , and 25th as a coach . The Spartan wrestling team competes on campus at the Jenison Field House which has a capacity of 5 @, @ 017 people . Alumni and standout Spartan Wrestlers Gray Maynard & Rashad Evans are former UFC champions and currently ranked in the top @-@ ten in their weight classes respectively .

Starting in the mid @-@ 2000s. the Spartan wrestling team started to decline . From 2004 ? 2016 , the team had one season better than .500 and finished in the bottom half of the Big Ten , including last on four occasions . During the 2015 championship tournament , the team finished dead last with negative team points (-0.5) thanks to only one qualifier and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty . Minkel announced that he would retire after the 2015 @-@ 16 season .

Michigan State University Spartan Wrestling team accomplishments :

8 Big Ten Titles (1961 , 1966 , 1967 , 1968 , 1969 , 1970 , 1971 , 1972)

57 individual Big Ten Conference Champions

finished in the top @-@ five at the NCAA Championships 9 times

24 individual NCAA Champions dating back to 1936

100 + All @-@ Americans dating back to 1931

== Other varsity sports ==

MSU has a number of other team sports . As in many other NCAA institutions , Michigan State has a baseball team for men and a softball team for women . Jake Boss Jr. is head coach of the MSU baseball team . Former Michigan State players in Major League Baseball include Kirk Gibson , Steve Garvey , Robin Roberts and Mark Mulder . Since 2007 , the baseball team plays a popular annual exhibition game against the nearby minor @-@ league Lansing Lugnuts .

The MSU women 's fastpitch softball team won the 1976 Women 's College World Series to take the AIAW national title , the only team east of the Mississippi River to win the WCWS until Michigan did it in 2005 . The team has appeared in six Women 's College World Series , in 1973 , 1974 , 1975 , 1976 , 1977 and 1981 . Its coach , Jacquie Joseph , has headed the program since 1994 . Since taking over the program , Joseph has helped bring MSU to a record of 445 ? 372 ? 1 and four NCAA

Regional appearances .

The Spartans also have a men 's soccer team , which won two back @-@ to @-@ back championships in 1967 and 1968 . They shared the 1968 title with the University of Maryland , College Park . The men 's coach is Damon Rensing , who is in his 6th year as head coach at Michigan State . The men 's soccer team battles Michigan annually in the Big Bear Trophy game , a series in which the Spartans lead 10 @-@ 3 @-@ 1 against their in @-@ state rival . Coaching the women 's team is Tom Saxton .

There is also a volleyball team ; Cathy George has been the head coach of the women 's volleyball team since 2005 . During her first year at Michigan State , she led her team to a 12 ? 18 record , including a 5 ? 15 , ninth @-@ place finish in the conference standings .

There are a number of contact sports at MSU , including boxing and wrestling . MSU 's boxing team won national titles in 1951 and 1955 , although it is no longer an NCAA varsity sport .

Water sports at MSU include rowing and swimming . MSU 's women 's rowing coach is Matt Weise , who is in his tenth year as the Spartan crew coach . In his third year as MSU head coach , Weise coached the Spartans to a program @-@ best sixth @-@ place team finish at the NCAA Championship . Matt Gianiodis is the head coach of both men and women 's swimming and diving . In his four years as head coach , Spartan swimmers and divers have broken 14 varsity records .

Other sports at MSU include golf , gymnastics and tennis . Golf has had a long tradition at MSU . Hall of Fame Coach Bruce Fossum helped carry MSU to its first Big Ten title in 1969 . The Big Ten title would elude the Spartans until 2005 , when arguably , the best team ever assembled , took home the rings in stellar fashion . Not only did the Spartans win the Big Ten Championship in 2005 , but they captured two other titles along the way and rose all the way to # 5 in the U.S. Casey Lubahn coaches the men 's golf team . A former assistant coach at Stanford University , this is his fourth year as a head coach . Stacy Slobodnik @-@ Stoll coaches the women 's team . In the last ten seasons , she has brought the Spartans to nine straight NCAA regional appearances .

The men 's gymnastics team at MSU won one national title , which they shared with the University of Illinois at Urbana @-@ Champaign in 1958 . In 2001 , the MSU Board of Trustees disbanded the team in order to comply with Title IX regulations . The women 's team retained its varsity status . Its coach is Kathie Klages , who has had 16 winning seasons in a row . In 2008 , the team ranked 17th in the nation in the final season standings , the highest placement in program history .

Gene Orlando is the coach of the men 's tennis team . In his 17 years as MSU head coach , Orlando has taken the Spartan men to four NCAA Championship singles qualifiers . Coaching the women 's team is Erica Perkins , a second @-@ year head coach who , in her first year , led the Spartan women to a 12 ? 11 record (2 ? 8 , Big Ten .)

= = Notable non @-@ varsity sports = =

= = = Rugby = = =

The Michigan State University Rugby Football Club was founded in 1964 . Michigan State rugby has been steadily improving in college rugby in recent years . During the 2010 ? 11 season , the Spartans played in Division 2 , finishing with a 10 ? 3 record and qualifying for the playoffs . The Spartans ' success led to them moving up to Division 1 ? AA for the 2011 ? 12 season . For the 2012 ? 13 season , the Spartans once again moved to a higher level of competition ? the Big Ten Universities D1 ? A conference , against traditional Big Ten rivals such as the University of Michigan and Ohio State University . The success of Spartan Rugby is greatly attributed to former head coach Dave Poquette , who had been coaching at Michigan State since 1992 and retired in 2013 .

= = MSU Athletics Hall of Fame = =

In 1992 , thirty former Spartan athletes , coaches , and administrators were inducted into the MSU Athletics Hall of Fame as its charter class . On October 1 , 1999 , the University opened its new

Athletics Hall of Fame , in the Clara Bell Smith Student @-@ Athlete Academic Center .

= = Awards = =

See footnote

= = Academic All @-@ Americans = =

See footnote

= = Championships = =

= = National team championships = = =

As of July 2 , 2015 , Michigan State has 20 NCAA national team titles .

Men 's (19)

Basketball (2) : 1979 , 2000

Boxing (2) : 1951 , 1955

Cross Country (8) : 1939 , 1948 , 1949 , 1952 , 1955 , 1956 , 1958 , 1959

Gymnastics (1) : 1958

Ice Hockey (3) : 1966 , 1986 , 2007

Soccer (2) : 1967 , 1968

Wrestling (1) : 1967

Women 's (1)

Cross Country (1) : 2014

See also :

List of Big Ten Conference National Championships

List of NCAA schools with the most NCAA Division I championships

List of NCAA schools with the most Division I national championships

Big Ten Conference NCAA national team championships

Below are 10 national team titles that were not bestowed by the NCAA .

Men ? s :

Football (6) : 1951 , 1952 , 1955 , 1957 , 1965 , 1966

Rifle (3) : 1914 , 1916 , 1917

Women ? s :

Softball (1) : 1976

= = Spartan sports almanac = =

See footnote

= = Spartan traditions = =

See footnote

= = NCAA Division I Director 's Cup = =

See footnote and NACDA Directors ' Cup