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— AP photo by CHARLIE NEIBERGALL

Michigan players including Tim Hardaway Jr., (right), and Nik Stauskas (11) celebrate after defeating Syracuse in their NCAA Final Four tournament college basketball semifinal game on Saturday, in Atlanta. Michigan won 61-56.

Vergiels gets front-row seat to UM ascension

■ The Monroe man has been the public address announcer for UM home games for eight years.

BY NILES KRUGER
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The University of Michigan didn't have a very good basketball team eight years ago.

But things started to change when John Beilein took over as coach of the Wolverines for the 2007-08 season. Michigan has gone from an afterthought in the Big Ten to a team that will play tonight for the national championship.



BOBB VERGIELS

And Bobb Vergiels of Monroe has enjoyed a front seat for the transformation.

Mr. Vergiels has been the public address announcer for UM basketball games at the Crisler Center for eight years.

But even after sitting courtside for every home game this season and watching most of the others on television, Mr. Vergiels had no idea the Wolverines would make this kind of run in the national tournament.

"No, I don't think anyone did," he said Sunday morning during his drive to Detroit to serve as public address announcer for the Tigers' game against the New York Yankees. "It's always a goal of a team to get to the Final Four, but this was unexpected."

Mr. Vergiels was up late Saturday night basking in the glow of the thrilling 61-56 victory over Syracuse in the national semifinals.

"I watched it like everybody else," he said. "I had a lot of trouble sleeping after that. Oh, my gosh, what an exciting game."

Mr. Vergiels will be back at the Crisler Center tonight as the

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Sharp-minded Wolverines ready for final challenge to win national title

BY NOAH TRISTER
AP sports writer

ATLANTA — Virginia Commonwealth's press. Syracuse's zone.

The University of Michigan has handled every test so far. Now it's time for the final exam — a University of Louisville team that is the NCAA tournament's top overall seed.

Michigan is trying for its first national title since 1989 and tonight will be its first appearance in the championship game since 1993, when the Fab Five lost to North Carolina.

The last two decades have been difficult for the Wolverines, but after sanctions and mediocrity, they're back in the spotlight

at college basketball's signature event.

Coach John Beilein's team is plenty talented, but point guard Trey Burke and the Wolverines have reached this moment because of their smarts — and their ability to adjust quickly to new challenges.

"It means a lot to Michigan," Burke said. "This program hasn't been this far in two decades, so just to be back in this situation definitely means the world to alumni and it means the world to us. That's been our No. 1 goal since Day One."

It was clear from the start that this could be a special team. Led by Burke, the Wolverines won

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► Basketball no longer takes backseat at Michigan, Louisville — Page 1B

► Breakdown of tonight's national title game — Page 1B

► Go Blue! Tom Treece shows his colors supporting favorite team — Page 3A



— AP photo by CHRIS O'MEARA

Michigan head coach John Beilein speaks during a news conference Sunday in Atlanta.

SNAKE ON A SHIP

Encounter with Burmese python doesn't end well for the reptile

BY DANIELLE PORTTEUS
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Vinnie Maltese has one amazing story about his snakeskin wallet.

The story involves a Burmese python, a merchant marine ship and a spooked crewman.

Mr. Maltese, the dean of science and mathematics at Monroe County Community College, brought his wallet to the Monroe County Historical Museum on Friday to share his story.

The event encouraged residents to bring One Amazing Artifact, which will be on display in the museum through Saturday. It was held in conjunction with the One Book, One Community celebration.

During 1993, Mr. Maltese was working on a ship that was stationed at Lhokseumawe, Indone-



sia, facing the Malacca Strait.

"We were anchored three miles off the port and when the tug boat went to take us to shore, one of the men reached down and out comes this snake," the former seaman described. "It was a good size, about 14 to 16 feet and just came up out of the water."

However, the pesky snake didn't go away. Later, as the crew was preparing to warm up the hydraulic winches, an unlucky

See SNAKE, Page 7A



— Evening News photo by Tom Hawley

Vinnie Maltese, dean of science and math at Monroe County Community College, brings in a Burmese Python snake skin wallet from 1993 as part of the one amazing artifact to be on display at the Monroe County Historical Museum.

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TODAY'S OBITUARIES Details, 7A

SHARON (SHERRY) ANN (LIEDEL) KISH, 74, of Dundee
BARBARA L. MCAULIFFE, 78, of Monroe
NETTIE ELIZABETH SOWDER, 101, of Monroe

DUANE R. VENABLE, 59, of Toledo, formerly of Monroe
JEFFREY (JEFF) E. ZEILER, 54, of Temperance

WEATHER Details, 6A

TONIGHT
Breezy, cloudy



49°

TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy



56°

