



photos by staff photographer JOHN STANO

Paul Jokisch (center, head down) is finding life on the collegiate hardwood drastically different from what he was used to at Brother Rice High School.

Jokisch in 'transition' game

A tiny light in U-M's galaxy of stars

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Paul Jokisch was always the star at Birmingham Brother Rice. Whenever the Warriors went in his junior and senior years, it was Jokisch and 6-foot, 10-inch teammate John Shasky the fans came to see. They were the Warrior monoliths.

Last year in Flint, for example, Jokisch and crew attracted a standing-room only crowd for their game with Flint Central. It was the same later in the season at DeLaSalle, Southfield and the University of Detroit in the Catholic League playoffs.

Jokisch, an All-State basketball and football player last year, was the starter Rice depended on in tight situations. He was the top scorer (17-point average) on a team that finished with an 18-6 overall record, plus Catholic League and district basketball championships.

It's not that way anymore. Jokisch is now a single light among a galaxy of stars known as the University of Michigan Wolverine basketball team.

Six games into his college career, Jokisch is learning that life is vastly different on a college basketball level than it is in high school.

JOKISCH IS A member of a very young, but star-studded Wolverine squad that's expected to improve as the Big 10 basketball season progresses.

Senior Isaac Person, junior Tim McCormick and sophomores Eric (E.T.) Turner and Leslie Rocky more are the Michigan veterans. Jokisch, Robert Henderson — the high school player of the year in Michigan last season — Roy Tarpley, Richard Relford and Butch Wade compose the freshmen core that some experts claim to be the nation's best.

But, for Jokisch, the transition has been a tough experience. Jokisch, a Birmingham resident, has started only one game so far this season (against Cleveland

State). For the most part, the 6-8 forward will spend more time on the bench than on the court this winter.

"It doesn't bother me . . . I know I'm contributing right now as a sixth man," said Jokisch.

"I know I'll be playing a lot this year if I keep hustling. I know I'm going to give 100 per cent in every game. There is so much of a difference (between high school and college basketball).

"The competition, for one thing, is so much better," he said. "Everybody is just as good or better than you are. But that will only make you a better person in the long run."

MICHIGAN PLAYED its first road game of the season Sunday at the University of Detroit's Calihan Hall. The Wolverines were lucky to escape with a two-point, 65-63, victory by holding the Titans scoreless through the game's final four minutes.

Jokisch, however, hardly made an impression on the fans like he did last season in the same building at the Catholic League finals which Brother Rice won.

He played 15 of the game's 40 minutes, grabbing three rebounds and scoring five points while committing four fouls. He made only two of five shots from the floor and had a rough time defensively against U-D's quicker Albert Blinsky.

"I'm very happy with Paul . . . he plays very hard," said U-M's third-year coach Bill Frieder.

"He makes mistakes, but he's definitely going to be a good one," he said. "He's just a freshman, and he's going to have to learn. Everyone just has to give him a chance."

Jokisch knew he didn't play well against U-D in as close to a homecoming as he'll ever get.

"Today just wasn't my day," said Jokisch afterwards in the locker room. "Coach just has to go with the guys who are hot. The most important thing is that we won."

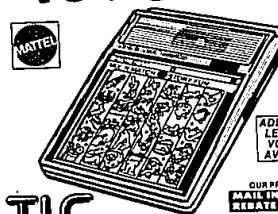


In Sunday's game against the University of Detroit, Jokisch "made some freshman mistakes."

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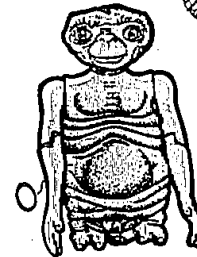


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