

Basketball Bust

Let me begin by extending my congratulations
for a great basketball season.

You know, there is probably no tougher challenge
that to face a season as a national champion.

Everybody is gunning for you...
Every team is up to play you...
You can never relax...

We should all take great pride in this team,
for throughout the year it always showed that
it was indeed a champion...

Sure, it would have been great to win the Big Ten...
...or to make the Final Four again.

But we should also take great pride in what was
accomplished.

This team has faced the most difficult
of challenges...

- intense media pressure
- running a gauntlet of the toughest teams in America
- in the toughest conference

And it has come through it all not only as champions,
but with a sense of character, of class, that clearly
demonstrates what is so special about intercollegiate
athletics at Michigan

In fact, Steve Fisher and his team have demonstrated all
that is so great about the Michigan tradition in athletics

- teamwork
- dedication
- courage
- character
- and class!!!

On behalf of the University, I want to take this
opportunity to congratulate the Michigan basketball team...
and convey to them as well our great pride in their
achievements

- to the student-athletes who have played so brilliant
- to Steve Fisher, who has earned the great respect
of our University, but of an entire nation...
- to all of the other coaches, trainers, managers,
and staff who have worked so hard

- to the band, cheerleaders, and all of the students who sacrificed by missing classes so that they could make the trek to Seattle to cheer on the team

But I would like to convey a very special

congratulations to the families of the players and coaches... who have stood behind this team during good times and bad

Importance of intercollegiate athletics at Michigan

You know, Michigan athletics is one of the great traditions that make our institution the place it is...

Michigan is unique in its combination of world-class academic programs...and its winning tradition in athletics...

...If you compare the two top ten lists...

the top ten universities in academic quality...

and the top ten athletic programs in football...

You will find only one name on both lists...Michigan.

Yet, as important as winning is, we are also proud of our programs for their integrity...their class.

And of course, we have long taken great pride in having the nation's leading football coach...

Bo Schembechler...and the superb coaching staff he leads...

But perhaps of most importance of all is the way in which Steve and our other coaches dedicate themselves first and foremost to the education of the student-athletes who don the maize and blue.

The role of intercollegiate athletics

We understand the dedication and commitment required to balance the demands of intercollegiate athletics with the demands of a Michigan education.

A Michigan education is challenging enough, without the additional pressures of participation in one of the nation's leading athletic programs.

But, I suspect that later in life most of our athletics look back upon their experience at Michigan as providing an extraordinary education, in the most complete sense of the word.

It has sometimes been said that the purpose

of a college education is to learn the art of life...
And, in this, you as student athletes may have
a certain edge, since most of you are benefiting
from a full-range of experiences on our campus,
from the intellectual to the athletic to the cultural...

A final word to the seniors...

You have had a truly spectacular experience
at Michigan.

Building one of the nation's top teams...

Winning the National Championship last year

Demonstrating what it takes to be a true champion

You are to be congratulated

and you are to be thanked, for the excitement
and pride you have given this University.

Congratulations...thanks...and

Hail to the Victors Valiant,

the Champions of the West!