



STAFF

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Former U-M star Braylon Edwards and celebrity friends deliver for charity in Crisler Arena showcase

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Former Michigan football players Braylon Edwards and David Terrell horse around during the Champions for Children's Hearts golf scramble fundraiser at Michigan Golf Course earlier this month. Melanie Maxwell | AnnArbor.com
For all of his bravado, **Braylon Edwards** still knows his limits.

He's not overly-anxious to put his game - at least on the basketball court - on a level where it's not. Instead, the former Michigan star receiver is content to take more of a middle-of-the-road approach to the skills he and several NFL players and celebrities put on display Saturday night at Crisler Arena.

When it's for charity, as Edwards' inaugural celebrity basketball game was, Edwards is fine with allowing a good cause to take center stage rather than a night's worth of misfired jump shots, shoddy defense and an NBA-esque dunk fest headlined by former Michigan forward **Brent Petway**.

Good fun is, after all, good fun - even if Edwards' game doesn't quite meet the standards of the receiving skills that made him a star in Ann Arbor.

"I don't have a bad game," Edwards said. "If I'm on your team, you won't be disappointed. I mean, I'm not a great player. I'm not trying to be the next **Derrick Rose** or **LeBron James**, but I'm OK."

A portion of Saturday night's ticket sales went to the Michigan women's basketball scholarship fund, one of the newer the New York Jets receiver is giving back to his alma mater. In addition, Edwards donates each year to a football endowment fund as well as work his foundation does for under-privileged children in Cleveland and Detroit.

Several of Edwards' fellow Michigan alumni also took part, supporting Edwards' efforts to continue U-M into their respective professional careers. Saturday night's rosters included **Steve Breaston** (Arizona Cardinals), **Adrian Arrington** (New Orleans Saints), **Ryan Mundy** (Pittsburgh Steelers) as well as other NFL and NBA players.

The Ballers team was coached by former NBA player Derrick Coleman and included former Michigan State standout Jason Richardson, now of the Phoenix Suns.

Others found a way to play their part - even if it meant not setting foot on the floor.

Michigan all-time leading rusher **Mike Hart** spent the night pacing the sidelines with a towel draped around his neck. As the coach of Edwards' Michigan Blue team, Hart's plan of getting the ball to Petway paid off in the form of several highlight reel dunks.

Perhaps Petway's top individual effort came in the second quarter when soared down the middle of the key before delivering a thunderous slam over ESPN personality Rob Parker.

"I was the only one out there trying to play defense," Parker said. "But man - you know that (dunk) is going to make its way around. But he didn't hurt me."

Petway's Saturday night showing wowed about everyone from former Fab Fiver **Jimmy King**, who called Petway "bionic" to Wolverines' basketball coach **John Beilein**, who acknowledged he certainly could use Petway's length and athleticism on his current roster.

Meanwhile Hart, who said prior to Saturday night's game that he didn't have a set strategy going in, admitted he was better off staying on the bench rather than filling a roster spot.

"I'm an old man," he said, his trademark smile crossing his face. "My body's beat up and I'm not a great basketball player and so I'm going to use my coaching to help the team out."

Hart continues to train at Michigan and continues to support **Rich Rodriguez's** program despite its troubles - both on the field and off. Hart said it's been tough to watch the Wolverines struggle like they have, but now, it's time for Rodriguez and his players to move past what's happened.

Michigan admitted to several NCAA violations last month and imposed penalties that include a reduction in practice time and probation. The NCAA will decide later this summer to add to the punishment.

"I just want to see how they bounce back," Hart said. "It's always hard to see your alma mater when bad things are being said about it. You never want to see that. But it's done, it's over with and there's nothing they can do about it now so they just need to come back from it."

Edwards agreed, saying he understands how oversights like Michigan's misunderstanding of practice hours rules happen. "I feel like Rich Rod was trying to get the guys ready and I feel like sometimes, when you're in that atmosphere, sometimes you go over and it's not on purpose," Edwards said. It's not as though you write it down and you go, 'Today, we're going to go over by two hours, tomorrow, we're going to go over by three hours. You're trying to get a team ready, trying to get a team prepared to be the best in the country."

Despite his understanding, Edwards - who said he will continue to introduce himself as coming from "**Lloyd Carr's** University of Michigan - but again reiterated his feelings that this coming year would be a make-or-break year for Rodriguez.

He said his support for Michigan's program has not wavered, but that his viewpoint changed once he started looking at his former team as an alumni rather than a player. Still, he doesn't back down from his belief that the Wolverines have to show improvement now rather than later.

"Michigan - this is one of those schools where we don't accept failure," Edwards said. "Being part of the alumni now, I can see how they think. So (Rodriguez) has a task this year.

"There will be no excuses this year - he has to put them in a position to win games and if he doesn't, he's in trouble and that's just not me. That's how the alumni feel. He has to win games and especially the you-know-what game."

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