

## Chapter 🏀 10 - Michael Kebler





**Mike Kebler**

### Personal

Michael ("Mike") Howard Kebler was born on November 5, 1989, the son of Irvin and Susanne Kebler.

**DOUBLES**

**Shawn Savage, Okemos, junior**  
**Mike Kebler, Okemos, sophomore**



**Savage**      **Kebler**

Finished 25-4, won CAAC-1 and Division 2 regional titles at No. 1 doubles. Advanced to the state tournament semi-finals before losing to eventual champions Trey Chatman and Matt Richmond of Portage Central. Made the Division 2 all-state team.

### Okemos High School

#### 2003-04

As a freshman, Kebler played on the freshman team.

A group photo of the Okemos High School freshman boys basketball team. There are 15 players and one coach posed in two rows on a basketball court. The front row is kneeling, and the back row is standing. They are wearing white jerseys with "OKEMOS" and their numbers.

**Freshman boys basketball**  
Front row: Collin Eidelson, Michael Kebler, Anthony Earley, Scott Stolz, Trey Baughman, Anthony Schiro & Dugan Murphy. Back row: Tony Scott, Kyle Miller, Nathan McDonald, Andrew Newton, Anthony Ianni, Tyler Stewart, Ben Magsig, Ben Burmeister & Coach Bob Hundt.

## 2004-05

As a sophomore, Kebler played on the Junior Varsity (JV) team.



## 2005-06



### Okemos

- **Last season:** 16-5, second
- **Coach:** Dan Stolz, 12th season
- **Returning starters:** Johnathon Jones, 6-0 G, sr.; Ivan Parker, 6-1 G, sr.; Dan Hess, 6-2 G, sr.
- **Other contributors:** Jasper Bibbs, 6-1 F, sr.; Anthony Ianni, 6-10 C, jr.; Denny Means, 6-6 F, jr.; Bobby Albers, 6-3 F, sr.; Mike Emerson, 6-0 F, sr.; Mike Kebler, 6-3 G, jr.
- **Outlook:** The Chieftains' guards highlight a group of nine returnees, and Kebler is a solid addition. Jones has been one of the area's top players for three years and should contend for all-state first-team honors. Bibbs, a

transfer from Sexton, is a strong addition on the perimeter but won't join the team until second semester. The improvement of Ianni and Means is necessary if Okemos is to be elite.



**Mike Kebler (#24), 2005-06 Varsity Squad (2006 *Tomahawk*)**

As a junior (#24), after game six of the season, Kebler earned a starting spot as a defensive specialist. As a defensive specialist, Kebler's contributions to the Chieftains often did not get reported by the press as there is no statistic to track how many baskets a defensive player forced an offensive player to miss, or how many turnovers and shot-clock violations a defensive player forced the other team to commit. During his varsity career, Kebler was among the area's leaders in steals, averaging over two steals per game.

### ***Regular Season***

On December 6, in a nonconference game, Okemos defeated **Howell**, 79-48, with Kebler scoring four points on a basket and 2-3 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 9, Okemos topped **Waverly**, 76-64, with Kebler going 3-4 from the free throw line for four points ([Source](#)).

On December 13, Okemos beat **Grand Ledge**, 64-54. Kebler scored six points on two field goals and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 16, Okemos downed **Sexton**, 58-45, with Kebler scoring three points on 3-5 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 20, Okemos scored a nonleague win over **Mason**, 60-32. Kebler scored five points on a basket and 3-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 29, Buena Vista fell to Okemos, 73-62, with Kebler scoring six points on a basket and 4-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On January 6, Okemos toppled **East Lansing**, 55-38, with Kebler scoring four points on two baskets ([Source](#)).



On January 10, in a nonleague game, Okemos (8-0) defeated **Hartland**, 73-35. Kebler contributed a basket for two points ([Source](#)).

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Okemos left **Everett** in the dust, winning 81-49, behind another stellar performance from Chieftain Johnathon Jones—until the start of the second quarter:

Against Everett on Friday, Okemos senior guard Johnathon Jones was amazing as usual with 29 points, six assists, four rebounds and two steals.

But it was Jones' other stat — four fouls, his third coming just as the second half got underway — that called for big things from his teammates.

In particular, that response came from junior Michael Kebler and senior Mike Emerson, who scored 11 of their combined 31 points in the third quarter as Okemos pulled away from Everett for an 81-49 victory.

Kebler ended with 16 points and three steals. Emerson had 15 points and four rebounds for the Chieftains, ranked fourth in Class A.

"That's the thing about this team," said Jones, who sat out for half of the third quarter. "Any night, those two and other people on our team can go for big scores."



The win kept the Chieftains unbeaten (9-0, 4-0) and tied with **Holt** atop the Capital Area Activities Conference (CAAC) Division 1. Kebler was the game's second highest scorer with 18 points on seven baskets and 1-3 from the foul line ([Source](#)).

On January 20, Okemos (10-0, 5-0) outscored **Jackson**, 63-41, with Kebler scoring four points on two baskets ([Source](#)).

On January 23, Okemos (11-0) defeated **Lansing Catholic**, 70-58, with Kebler scoring four points from the free throw line (4-4) ([Source](#)).

On January 27, Okemos (11-1, 5-1) suffered its first loss of the season to **Holt**, 65-60. Kebler scored seven points on three baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 31, Okemos (12-1, 6-1) defeated **Eastern**, 70-53, with Kebler scoring seven points on three baskets including one 3-point goal ([Source](#)).

On February 3, Okemos (13-1, 8-0) squeaked past **Grand Ledge**, 54-51, with Kebler scoring seven points on two baskets and 3-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On February 7, Okemos (13-1, 8-1) defeated **Sexton**, 64-56, with Kebler scoring 12 points on five baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



**Deflected:** Michael Kebler (24) of Okemos had 12 points for the Okemos in its 64-56 victory over James Denning and Sexton.

On February 10, Okemos trounced **East Lansing**, 65-34. Kebler scored six points on a basket and 4-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On February 14, Okemos (17-1, 10-1) downed **Everett**, 63-52. Kebler's two baskets translated to four points, keeping the Chieftains in a first-place tie in the CAAC-1 with **Holt** ([Source](#)).

On February 17, Okemos (17-1, 11-1) notched a 75-60 victory over **Jackson**, with Kebler contributing three points on 3-4 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On February 24, Okemos (18-1, 12-1) beat **Holt**, 56-49, to avenge the Chieftains' only loss of the season. In the last two minutes and 16 seconds of play in the game "Kebler had a basket, a free throw and a steal...during a 10-2 run – surprisingly with none of the points coming from [Johnathan] Jones, arguably the area's top player" ([Source](#)), Kebler scored a total of six points on two baskets and 2-5 from the free throw line.

On March 3, Okemos (19-1, 13-1) won the CAAC-1 crown with an 83-63 victory over **Eastern**, led by Jones scoring 25 points. However, Kebler scored four points on two baskets ([Source](#)).

Scoreboard			
W 64:54	Grand Ledge	L 60:55	Holt
W 58:45	Sexton	W 70:53	Eastern
W 60:32	Mason	W 54:51	Grand Ledge
W 73:62	Saginaw	W 64:56	Sexton
W 48:34	Sexton	W 70:62	East Lansing
W 55:38	East Lansing	W 63:52	Everett
W 73:35	Hartland	W 75:60	Jackson
W 81:49	Everett	W 56:49	Holt
W 63:41	Jackson	W 83:63	Eastern
W 70:58	Lansing Cath.		

## Districts

On March 8, Okemos (20-1) downed **East Lansing**, 70-62, with Kebler scoring eight points on three baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On March 10, No. 1-ranked Okemos (21-1) defeated **Jackson Northwest**, 52-40, securing the Class A district title. While Kebler may have played in this game, the box score reported by the *Lansing State Journal* does list Kebler's name ([Source](#)).

## Regionals

On March 14, No. 1 Okemos (22-1) topped No. 4 **Holt**, 62-58, in a Class A regional semifinal. Kebler scored four points on a basket and 2-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On March 16, Okemos (23-1) won its first regional title as a Class A school, beating **Dexter**, 56-48. Kebler scored five points on 5-6 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



### **Quarterfinals**

On March 21, Okemos (24-1) defeated **Grand Rapids Northview**, 55-47, in overtime in a Class A quarterfinal game. Kebler scored three points on a single basket – a three pointer! ([Source](#))

#### **Okemos**

- ▶ **Record/rank:** 24-1, No. 1
- ▶ **Coach:** Dan Stolz, 233-44 in 12 seasons
- ▶ **League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Division 1
- ▶ **Best wins:** 56-49 and 62-58 (regional semifinal) over No. 4 Holt, 76-64 over Class B No. 10 Waverly, 73-62 over Class C No. 9 Saginaw Buena Vista.
- ▶ **Championship history:** Class B state champion in 1981 and 1982.
- ▶ **Top players:** Johnathon Jones, 6-0 G, sr. (20.9 ppg, 6.5 apg, 4.0 rpg); Ivan Parker, 6-1 G, sr. (9.6 ppg).
- ▶ **Analysis:** Jones is the star, but balance keeps Okemos alive. Stolz maneuvers six other guards/small forwards, including Parker, depending on his defense, ball-handling or shooting needs. Okemos has held opponents to only 50.6 points per game — and six to 41 or fewer. Fundamentally, no area team was as sound from top to bottom. Juniors Anthony Ianni (6-10) and Denny Means (6-6) do give Okemos some size defensively, but must rebound well for the Chieftains to win the title.

## **Semifinals**

On March 24, Okemos (25-1) downed **Orchard Lake St. Mary Eagles**, 57-56, in a Class A semifinal matchup. Kebler's only point came on a free throw when the game was tied 56-56 with seconds remaining ([Source](#)). Here's the backstory of the game at the point where Okemos regained the lead.

Okemos retook the lead with 3:38 to play when Jones was going up for a fastbreak dunk and was fouled using "excessive contact" as he was soaring to the rim. Jones was awarded two free throws, and hit both, despite taking a hard fall on the foul.

Lucas did have one last chance to bring the Eaglets back. He was fouled on a 3-pointer with his team down five and six seconds to play.

Lucas made his first two free throws and missed the third intentionally — but it didn't hit the rim, which it must by rule, and Okemos took back the ball with four seconds to play and the celebration imminent.

Junior Michael Kebler then hit one more free throw after the inbounds pass to put the game away before a final meaningless three by St. Mary at the buzzer.

## **Final (Championship Game)**

On March 25, the Chieftains' season came to an end with Okemos losing, 95-94, in double overtime to **Saginaw Arthur Hill** in the Class A state championship game. Kebler scored three baskets, including a three-pointer, for a total of seven points ([Source](#)).

How close Okemos came to winning — and how a controversial five-second call to this day is a reminder of what might have been — was reported in the Lansing *State Journal* recap of the game:



After 32 minutes of regulation and all but 17 seconds of two over-times, Okemos had the ball with the score tied 81-81. Jones, who had put on one of the most impressive performances ever in the state finals, was set to attack the basket one more time.

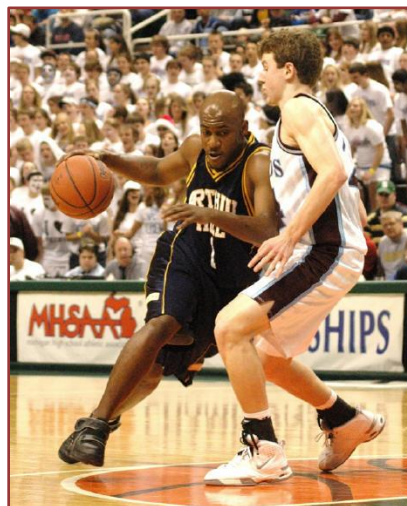
Instead he was called for a 5-second call as he waited in the left corner near halfcourt. It was arguable whether the Arthur Hill defender was guarding him closely enough for the violation to be called.

What wasn't arguable was how crushing the call was for Jones and the Chieftains.

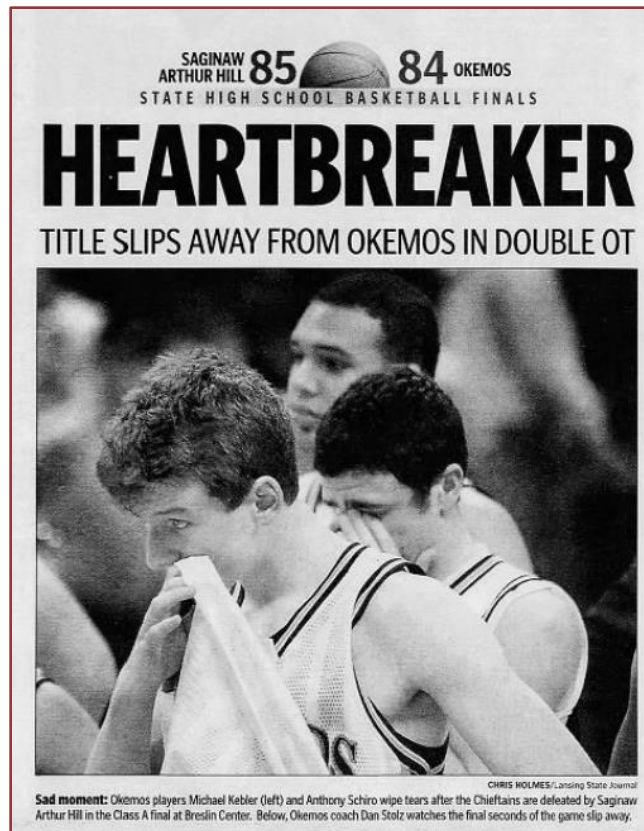
Jones took responsibility for the mishap, and Stolz blamed himself for not calling a timeout. Instead, thirteen seconds later Arthur Hill junior Darquavis Tucker went hard to the basket to lay-in the go-ahead points.

Okemos then was forced to take two timeouts trying to inbound the ball for one last-ditch attempt. Arthur Hill senior Damarkis Carroll intercepted the pass that finally came, and hit two free throws to seal the win before a final 3-pointer by Okemos junior guard Michael Kebler.

"Sad as we are right now ... we showed we were deserving to be here, and maybe even deserving to win it all," Okemos senior guard Ivan Parker said.



**Michael Kebler defends Arthur Hill's Tommie Prater**

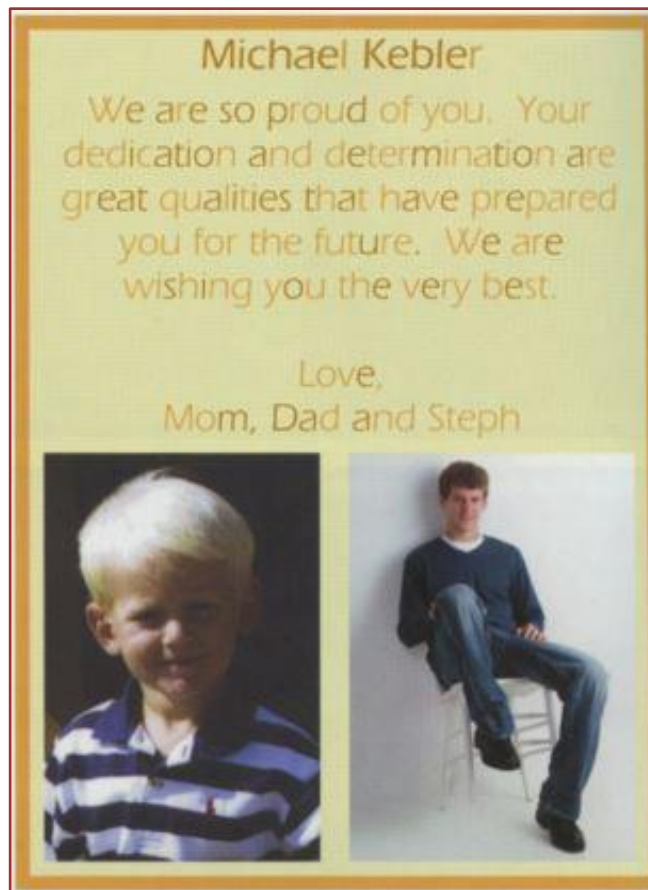


## Laurels

For the season Kebler averaged 5.0 points, 4.5 rebounds, and 2.0 assists in a 25-2 season that ended with the 85-84 double-OT loss in the Class A State Final against Saginaw Arthur Hill. He was 2007 Associated Press Class A honorable mention All-State, Academic All-State, and honorable mention on the Capital Area Activities Conference (CAAC) Division 1 Area All-League Team ([Source](#)).

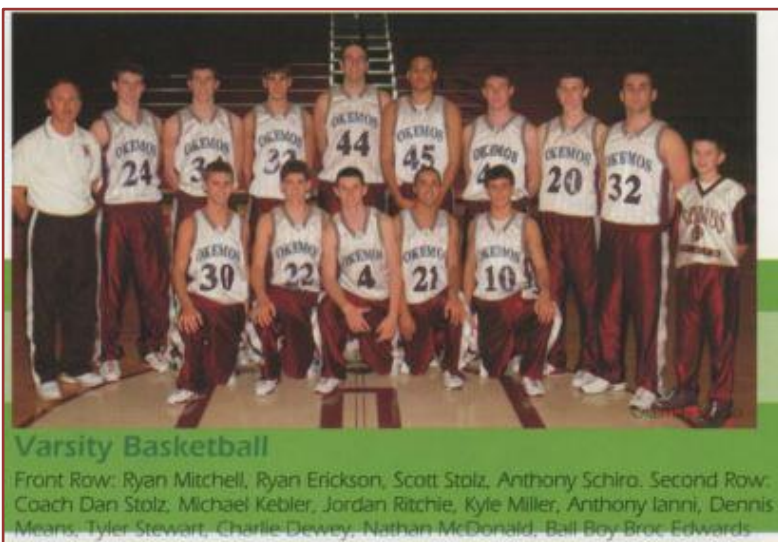


**Coach Stolz (2006 Class A Coach of the Year) huddles with his team – Mike Kebler (#24) listens intently (upper left corner) (2006 Tomahawk)**



**2006-07**

In Kebler's senior year, the Chieftains were 17-6 and shared a CAAC-1 tri-championship with **East Lansing** and **Holt**.





## Regular Season

In early December Kebler (left) offered the following prognosis for Okemos' 2006-07 season without two of the previous season's teammates who graduated, while the *Lansing State Journal* (right) shared its outlook on the Chieftains' upcoming season.

"It was weird during the start of summer camp, different," senior guard Michael Kebler said. "Just not having those guys to rely on, you have to do it yourself. (But) you always wait for the opportunity to do what you can to make it better."

The focal point will likely shift to 6-foot-10 senior center Anthony Ianni and 6-6 senior forward Denny Means (above), with the 6-4 Kebler adding more size to the lineup. He played starter minutes last year as part of a rotation of six guards whose varied talents were the main reasons for the team's 25-2 record and state runner-up finish in March.

None of the Chieftains bring Jones' star power, nor the expectations that came with it.

"(Teams) will probably be counting us out, figure we lost our good guys," Kebler said. "Hopefully, we can use that."

### Okemos

- **Last season:** 25-2, first
- **Coach:** Dan Stolz, 13th season
- **Returning starters:** Anthony Ianni (6-10 C) sr., Mike Kebler (6-4 G) sr.
- **Other contributors:** Tyler Stewart (6-3 F) sr., Denny Means (6-6 F) sr., Scott Stolz (5-10 G) sr., Anthony Schiro (5-10 G) sr., Kyle Miller (6-4 F) sr.
- **Outlook:** The Chieftains graduated a ton of backcourt experience and depth from last year's Class A state runner-up. But the front line returns intact, and should lead a team that will improve as the guards gain experience.

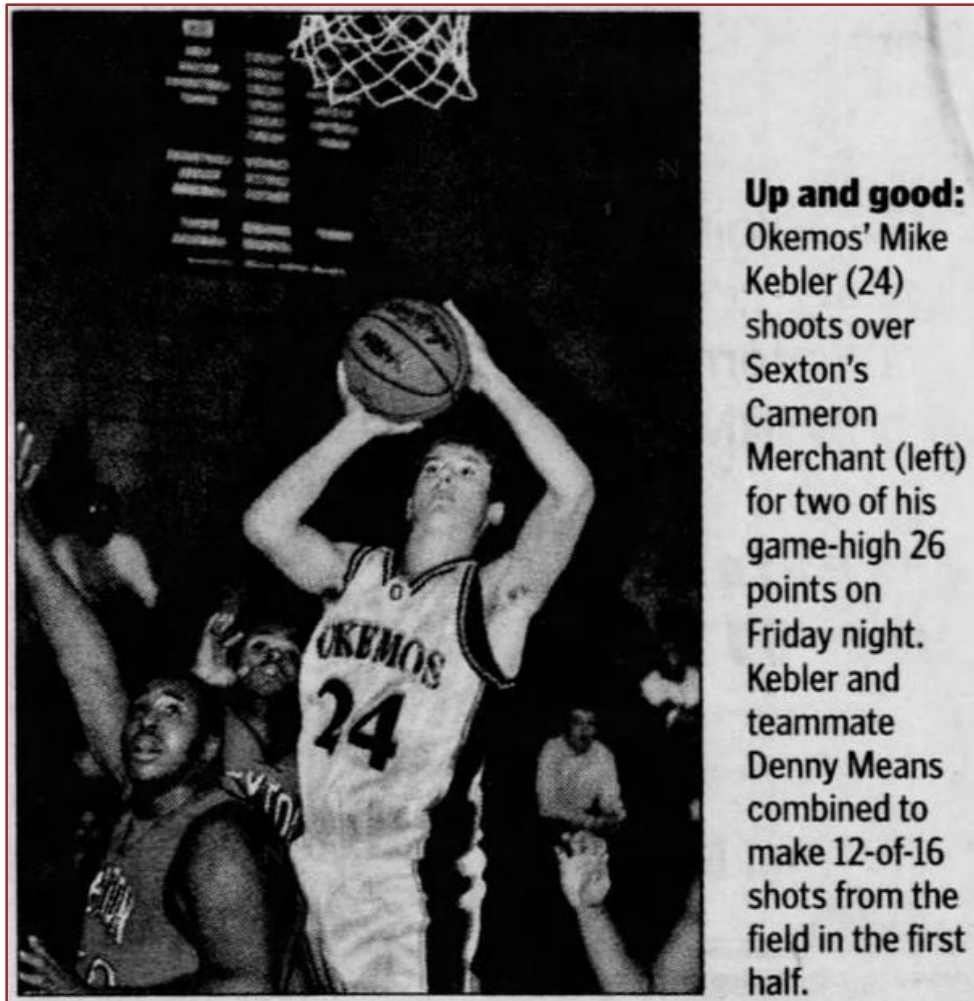
On December 5, Okemos notched a nonleague victory over **Howell**, 63-38, with Kebler scoring 12 points on six baskets ([Source](#)).

On December 8, Okemos scored its second nonleague victory, downing **Waverly**, 79-43. Kebler had five steals, five rebounds, and 20 points on seven baskets and 6-7 on free throws ([Score](#)).

On December 12, Okemos (3-0, 1-0) defeated **Grand Ledge**, 63-55. "Kebler scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter ([Source](#)). Kebler's 20 points came on five baskets and 10-12 on free throws.

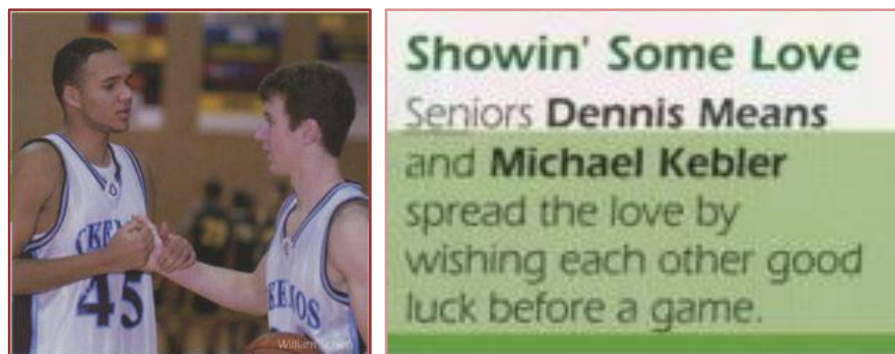
On December 14, Okemos upped its record to 4-0 overall and 2-0 in the CAAC-1 with a 66-55 win over **Sexton**, with Kebler scoring 26 points on 11 baskets (including one 3-point goal) and 3-5 on fouls ([Source](#)).





On December 19, Okemos (5-0) defeated nonleague opponent **Mason**, 73-51, with Kebler scoring 12 points on four baskets and 4-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 23, Okemos (5-1) lost to **Ann Arbor Pioneer** defeated Okemos (5-1), 52-41, in the Holiday Classic at Ypsilanti Lincoln. [More detailed information on this game yet to be found on the Internet.]



On January 5, Okemos (5-2, 2-2) lost to **East Lansing**, 54-40, with Mike Kebler scoring 10 points on five baskets ([Source](#)).

On January 12, Okemos (6-2, 3-2) held off **Everett**, 49-46, with Kebler hitting a free throw with 3 seconds left. "Kebler scored half of his 10 points in the fourth quarter" ([Source](#)). Kebler's scoring came on four baskets and 2-6 from the charity stripe.

On January 19, "Mike Kebler's tie-breaking layup with less than three minutes...gave Okemos the lead for good in a CAAC-1 win over **Jackson**, 57-55. . . . Kebler scored nine of his 15 points [on five baskets and 5-6 from the free throw line] in the fourth quarter for the Chieftains (7-2, 4-2)" ([Source](#)).

On January 22, Okemos (8-2, 4-2) topped **Lansing Catholic**, 72-65 in a non-league game, with Kebler grabbing eight rebounds and scoring 21 points ([Source](#)).

On January 26, Okemos (8-3, 4-2) fell to **Holt**, 55-47, Kebler scoring nine points on three baskets and 3-4 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On January 30, Okemos (9-3, 5-2) downed **Eastern**, 62-42, with Kebler grabbing eight rebounds and scoring 16 points on eight baskets and 0-2 from the free throw line, ([Source](#)).

The Chieftains' Anthony Ianni, a 6-foot-10 center, sat for the majority of the game as he battled foul trouble. He finished with seven points and nine rebounds.

"When (Ianni) is not scoring, it's time for everybody else to pick it up," Kebler said. "We just got the ball moving, and we're going to get good shots."

On February 2, Okemos (10-3, 6-2) downed **Grand Ledge**, 61-41, with Kebler leading all scorers with 15 points on six baskets and 3-4 from the charity line ([Source](#)).

On February 6, Okemos (11-3, 7-2) defeated **Sexton**, 60-46, with Kebler scoring 14 points on four baskets and 6-8 on free throws ([Source](#)).

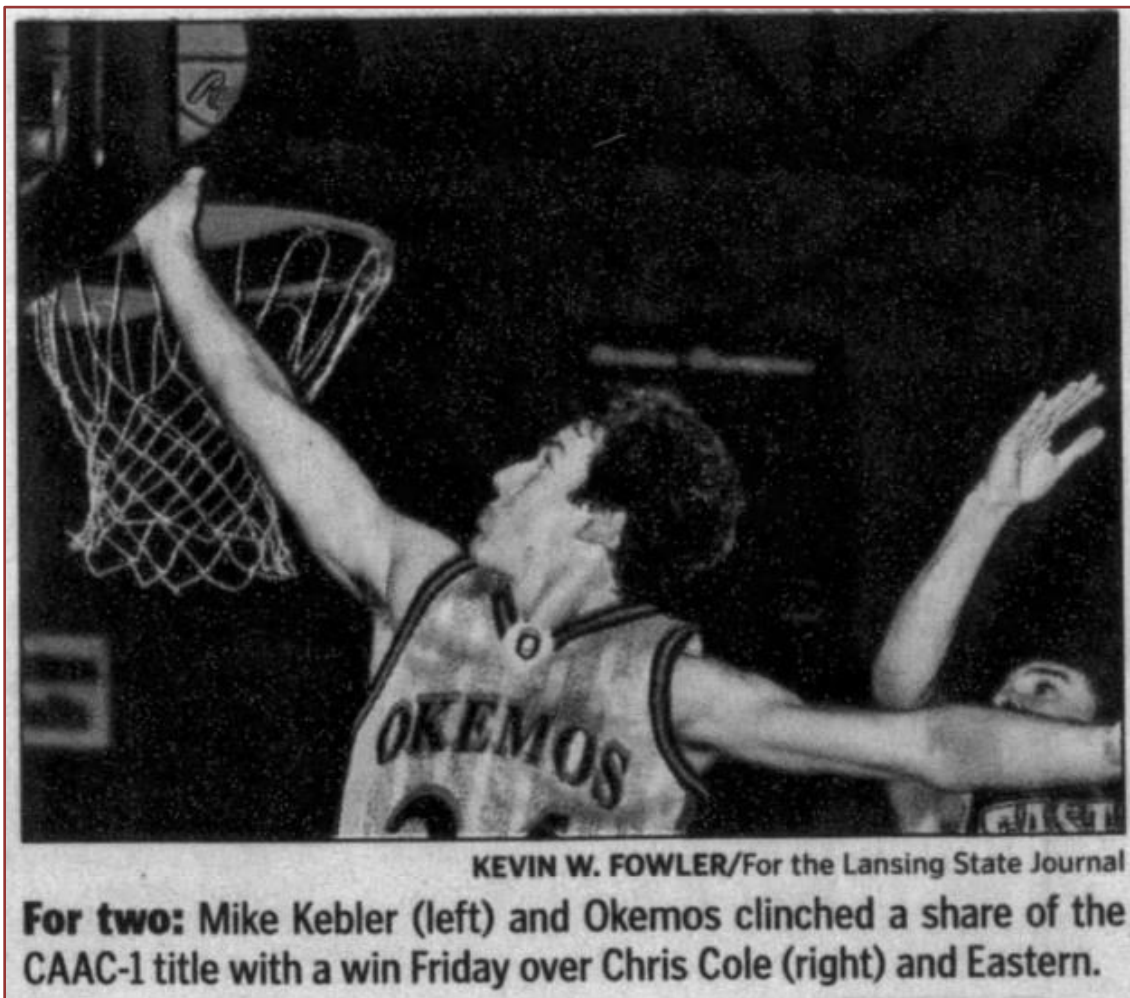
On February 9, **East Lansing** edged Okemos (11-4, 7-3), 38-35. Kebler scored nine points on four baskets and 1-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On February 13, the Chieftains (12-4, 8-3) bounced back with a 54-49 win over **Everett**. Kebler had 14 of his 18 points in the second quarter, scoring a total of seven baskets and 5-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 16, Okemos (13-4, 9-3) downed **Jackson**, 67-62, to take a one game lead in the CAAC-1 over **East Lansing** and **Holt**. Kebler led all scorers with 21 points on seven baskets and 7-8 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 23, Okemos (13-5, 9-4) suffered a setback, losing to **Holt**, 50-42. Kebler scored 10 points on three baskets and 4-4 from the stripe ([Source](#)).

On March 2, with three CAAC-1 teams (**East Lansing**, **Holt**, and **Okemos**) each winning, all three tied for the CAAC-1 championship with 10-4 records. Okemos (14-5, 10-4) rolled to a 75-47 victory over **Eastern**, with Kebler scoring 16 points on five baskets and 6-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).





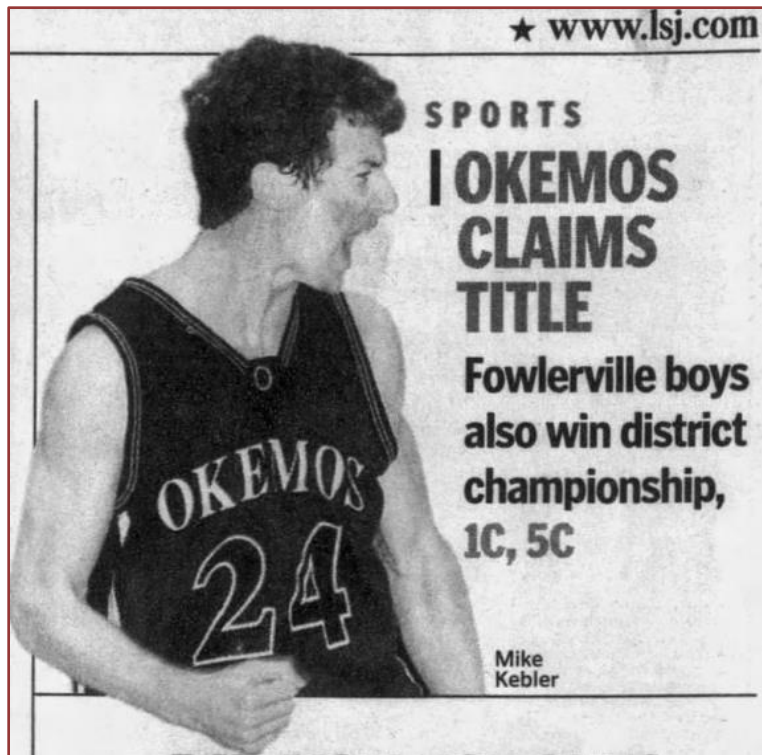
## ***Districts***

On March 6, "Kebler led Okemos [15-5] with 17 points [on six baskets 5-6 on free throws] in a Class A district victory over St. Johns," 76-49 ([Source](#)).

On March 8, "Kebler scored 17 points to lead Okemos [16-5] to a Class A semifinal victory [71-56] over **Eastern**" ([Source](#)).

On March 10, after falling twice to **East Lansing** during the regular season, Okemos (17-5) defeated the Trojans, 54-51, for the Class A district title. Kebler scored 28 points on ten baskets, including four three-point goals, and 4-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).





### *Regionals*

On March 13, the Chieftains' season ended with a 17-6 record in a 50-42 loss to **Ann Arbor Pioneer** in a Class A regional seminal match. Kebler scored six points on one basket and 3-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).





**Varsity Basketball**

Front Row: Ryan Mitchell, Ryan Erickson, Scott Stolz, Anthony Schiro. Second Row: Coach Dan Stolz, Michael Kebler, Jordan Ritchie, Kyle Miller, Anthony Ianni, Dennis Means, Tyler Stewart, Charlie Dewey, Nathan McDonald, Ball Boy Broc Edwards


Scoreboard					
W	Howell	63:38	W	Grand Ledge	61:41
W	Waverly	79:43	W	Sexton	60:46
W	Grand Ledge	63:55	L	East Lansing	35:38
W	Sexton	66:55	W	Everett	54:49
W	Mason	73:51	W	Jackson	67:62
L	Pioneer	41:52	L	Holt	42:50
L	East Lansing	40:54	W	Eastern	75:47
W	Everett	49:46	W	St. Johns (Districts)	76:49
W	Jackson	57:55	W	Eastern (Districts)	71:56
W	Lansing Catholic	72:65	W	East Lansing (Districts)	54:51
L	Holt	47:55	L	Pioneer (Regionals)	42:50
W	Eastern	62:42			

### Okemos Tomahawk (p. 85)

#### Laurels

For the 2006-07 season Kebler was Team Captain and MVP, averaging 15.6 points, 5.5 rebounds, and 2.4 assists. Leading the Chiefs to the Class A district and CAAC conference titles, the team finished the season with a 17-6 mark. Kebler received awards as CAAC-1 All-Conference ([Source](#)) and Class A All-Area ([third team in Class A](#)), and the Associated Press named him as 2007 Class A honorable mention All-State ([Source](#)).

**Michael Kebler**  
 Okemos senior  
 6-4 guard  
 Averaged 15.6 points, 5.1 rebounds and 2.4 assists per game. Earned an all-state honorable mention.



Kebler along with two other area players were named Academic All-State by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, each having a grade-point average of at least 3.55, with Okemos also earning Class A academic all-state ([Source](#)).

### Other Sports

In tennis, Kebler was a three-time Associated Press Division II All-State selection and three-time Lansing State Journal Dream Team selection. Over four years, he was undefeated in conference and regional matches, winning two individual and four team state championships. Also Kebler was active in motocross for seven years riding a Yamaha 250F in the B Class. In baseball skills competitions representing the Detroit Tigers, Kebler was the 2002 MLB National Champion and a 2000 National Finalist for his age group. Academically, he was a National Honor Society member with a 3.75 grade point average.

On October 7, a Lansing *State Journal* headline read:

## Walk-on realizes his basketball dream

**M**ike Kebler is an enterprising young man. After starring in basketball for three years at Okemos High School, Kebler decided he'd attend Michigan State and dreamed of playing for the Spartans.

Kebler sent Tom Izzo a letter in December asking to be considered as a walk-on. Eventually, then assistant coach Jim Boylen watched Kebler play in a game. He was invited to play offseason pick-up games with the current Spartans, and at the end of the summer Izzo casually informed Kebler he'd made the team.

No muss, no fuss. He'll wear number 20. He was introduced with his new teammates at the Izzone campout eight days ago.

"He'll be playing 99 percent defense," a proud Okemos coach Dan Stolz said. "But at least he's a part of the Spartan program. He either made the team or his playing career was over."

### Mike Kebler

#### No. 20

► **Height/Weight:** 6-3/195

► **Position:** Guard

► **Class:** Freshman

► **Hometown:** Okemos

► **2006-07:** Averaged 15.6 points, 5.1 rebounds, and 2.4 assists per game (Okemos High)

► **Notable:** Earned all-state honorable mention honors following his senior season.

► **Role:** Kebler probably won't see the floor unless it's in the final seconds of a blowout, but the walk-on will serve as a valuable asset during MSU practices.



## Michigan State University

Kebler majored in finance at Michigan State and, during his senior year, playing at the Guard position (#20), listed at 6-3 ft. and 205 lb.

### 2007-08

Kebler joined the Spartans before the 2007-08 season as a freshman walk-on and appeared in nine contests, scoring his first two career points against **Penn State** (2/20). [Steve Grinczel](#) wrote about this memorable milestone early in Kebler's Spartan career:

A true freshman walk-on from neighboring Okemos, the 6-foot-3 Kebler scored the first points of his Spartan career on a sweet baseline jumper during two mop-up minutes in Wednesday's 86-49 win against Penn State.

But what makes Kebler stand out even more, and what he'll always be remembered for if he does nothing more, is that he is the bellwether of success.

When the IZZONE student-cheering section starts chanting Kebler's name, just as they did with [Steve] Cherry and [Matt] Ishbia, it means victory is in hand. And when he [Kebler] gets in, the frenzy builds anew because there's a chance someone who has more in common with them than with the heavily recruited scholarship players will have a chance to score a basket in a game that will be highlighted on ESPN later that night.

But when Kebler scored, it wasn't just the IZZONE that was going crazy. Teammates like Drew Neitzel and Travis Walton Gray were also dancing on the sideline.

It's always a good time, and arguably a singular newfound tradition -- at least I've never experienced boisterous clamoring for walk-ons anywhere else -- the IZZONE has created and continues to nurture with pride.

"That was awesome," coach Tom Izzo said. "I was happy for Kebler, but not as happy as Drew and Travis and the other guys on the bench. You know what was fun, and you don't see it very often because most games are so tight, was seeing the bench get into it." ...

There is a chance, though, that next season, the IZZONE is going to have to create another Walter Mitty because Kebler just might play himself into the playing group that will lose its best perimeter shooter when Neitzel graduates after this season.

"He was a great shooter (at Okemos High School)," Izzo said. "Mike Kebler, if he wants to really work in the off-season and get himself in shape..., he can shoot it as good as anybody we've got."

"He went from a suspect to a prospect. So we're going to look at him now and see if he keeps improving."



It's nice to be immortalized, like [Jamie "Shoes"] Huffman was for losing his shoe during the chase for the 1979 national championship, for being part of Final Four teams the way Ishbia and Cherry were.

On December 2, the Spartans downed **Jacksonville**, 80-51. As reported by the *Lansing State Journal*:

With the game out of hand, Izzo emptied his bench late. Freshman guard Mike Kebler, a former Okemos standout, thrilled the crowd by grabbing four rebounds. That left him tied for second on the team with [Marquise] Gray.

"I'm just happy Kebler played at the end," Izzo said, "because the only way we outrebounded them was for him to get four rebounds in the last minute." ([Source](#))

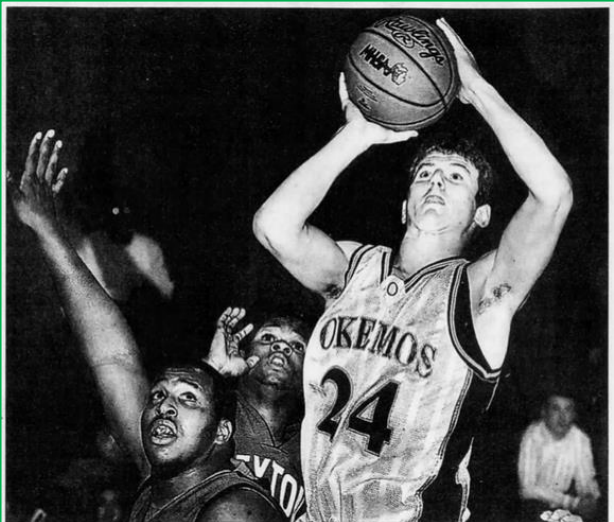
For the season the Spartans were 27-9 overall, while placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the Big Ten (12-6). In the **Big Ten Tournament**, the Spartans defeated **Ohio State** before losing to **Wisconsin**. The Spartans then made a run in the **NCAA Tournament**, winning over **Temple** and **Pittsburgh**, before losing to **Memphis**.

At the end of 2007-08 season Kebler was the recipient of MSU's Tim Bograkovs Walk-On Award.

Player	Class	Pos	Height	Summary
<a href="#">Chris Allen</a>	FR	G	6-3	6.3 Pts, 1.2 Reb, 0.6 Ast
<a href="#">Jon Crandell</a>	FR	F	6-8	0.0 Pts, 0.2 Reb, 0.2 Ast
<a href="#">Isaiah Dahlman</a>	SO	G	6-6	1.1 Pts, 0.5 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Marquise Gray</a>	JR	F	6-8	4.3 Pts, 3.7 Reb, 0.3 Ast
<a href="#">Tom Herzog</a>	FR	C	7-0	1.1 Pts, 1.1 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Idong Ibok</a>	JR	C	6-11	0.5 Pts, 1.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Mike Kebler</a>	FR	G	6-4	0.2 Pts, 0.4 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Kalin Lucas</a>	FR	G	6-1	10.3 Pts, 1.6 Reb, 3.8 Ast
<a href="#">Raymar Morgan</a>	SO	F	6-8	14.0 Pts, 6.1 Reb, 1.6 Ast
<a href="#">Drew Naymick</a>	SR	C	6-10	4.3 Pts, 4.1 Reb, 0.4 Ast
<a href="#">Drew Neitzel</a>	SR	G	6-0	13.9 Pts, 2.5 Reb, 4.0 Ast
<a href="#">Durrell Summers</a>	FR	G	6-5	4.9 Pts, 2.4 Reb, 0.6 Ast
<a href="#">Goran Suton</a>	JR	C	6-10	9.1 Pts, 8.2 Reb, 1.8 Ast
<a href="#">Travis Walton</a>	JR	G	6-2	3.5 Pts, 2.0 Reb, 4.3 Ast

## 2008-09

On the eve of the 2008-2009 season, during the week of August 23, 2008, MSU Coach Tom Izzo informed former walk-on Mike Kebler (Okemos High #24 in photo below) that he was being given a basketball scholarship for the coming year.



### For a job well done

When **Mike Kebler** walked on to the MSU basketball team two years ago, he never could have dreamed that coach **Tom Izzo** would one day give him a scholarship. But one became available for this season and Kebler was told in a meeting with the coach last week that he gets it.

Kebler starred for Okemos in the 2006 and 2007 seasons and could have played a far more prominent role at a smaller school, but grew up loving the Spartans.

Who knows how much he'll play in the final two years of his college career, but the scholarship certifies that his contributions to the team are bona fide.

Lansing State Journal file

**Chief recognition:** Former walk-on Mike Kebler (24) of Okemos was informed this past week by MSU coach Tom Izzo that he has been given a basketball scholarship for the coming school year.

As a sophomore, Kebler playing time increased, appearing in eight contests, scoring two points each against **Alcorn State** (12/13) and **Minnesota** (2/4).

Notable teammates were Kalin Lucas (14.7 PPG), Goran Suton (10.4 PPG), Raymar Morgan (10.2 PPG), Durrell Summers (8.6 PPG), Chris Allen (8.4 PPG), and freshman (and future super star) Draymond Green (3.3 PPG).

Player	Class	Pos	Height	Summary
<a href="#">Chris Allen</a>	SO	G	6-3	8.4 Pts, 2.2 Reb, 1.3 Ast
<a href="#">Jon Crandell</a>	JR	F	6-8	0.4 Pts, 0.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Isaiah Dahlman</a>	JR	G	6-6	0.8 Pts, 0.6 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Marquise Gray</a>	SR	F	6-8	3.1 Pts, 2.8 Reb, 0.3 Ast
<a href="#">Draymond Green</a>	FR	F	6-7	3.3 Pts, 3.3 Reb, 0.8 Ast
<a href="#">Tom Herzog</a>	SO	C	7-0	0.6 Pts, 0.7 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Idong Ibok</a>	SR	C	6-11	0.4 Pts, 0.9 Reb, 0.2 Ast
<a href="#">Mike Kebler</a>	SO	G	6-4	0.5 Pts, 0.3 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Kalin Lucas</a>	SO	G	6-1	14.7 Pts, 2.1 Reb, 4.6 Ast
<a href="#">Korie Lucious</a>	FR	G	5-11	3.2 Pts, 0.8 Reb, 1.2 Ast
<a href="#">Raymar Morgan</a>	JR	F	6-8	10.2 Pts, 5.3 Reb, 1.2 Ast
<a href="#">Delvon Roe</a>	FR	F	6-8	5.6 Pts, 5.2 Reb, 0.9 Ast
<a href="#">Durrell Summers</a>	SO	G	6-5	8.6 Pts, 3.4 Reb, 0.8 Ast
<a href="#">Goran Suton</a>	SR	C	6-10	10.4 Pts, 8.4 Reb, 1.6 Ast
<a href="#">Austin Thornton</a>	SO	F	6-5	1.2 Pts, 0.8 Reb, 0.3 Ast
<a href="#">Travis Walton</a>	SR	G	6-2	5.1 Pts, 2.2 Reb, 3.3 Ast

For the season the Spartans were ranked #2 ESPN/USA Today and #8 by the AP. In the NCAA Tournament, MSU defeated **Robert Morris**, **USC**, **Kansas**, **Louisville**, and **Connecticut** before losing to **North Carolina** in the Final Four.

### *Laurels*

Kebler was the tri-recipient of MSU's Scholar-Athlete award and honored as a member of the Academic All-Big Ten team.

### *2009-10*

As a junior, Kebler appeared in 25 games, including the last 14 of the season, emerging as a key defensive reserve in the final two months of the season. He played 13 minutes at **Penn State** (2/13), providing excellent defense against Talor Battle. Kebler was in the game during a key 13-0 second-half run during which MSU forced five straight PSU misses and four turnovers, including two shot-clock violations. He played 20 minutes vs. **Minnesota** (3/12) in the **Big Ten Tournament** quarterfinals, and averaged five minutes in the **NCAA Tournament**, including playing eight minutes vs. **Maryland** (3/21), seven vs. **Butler** (4/3) and six vs. **Tennessee** (3/28).



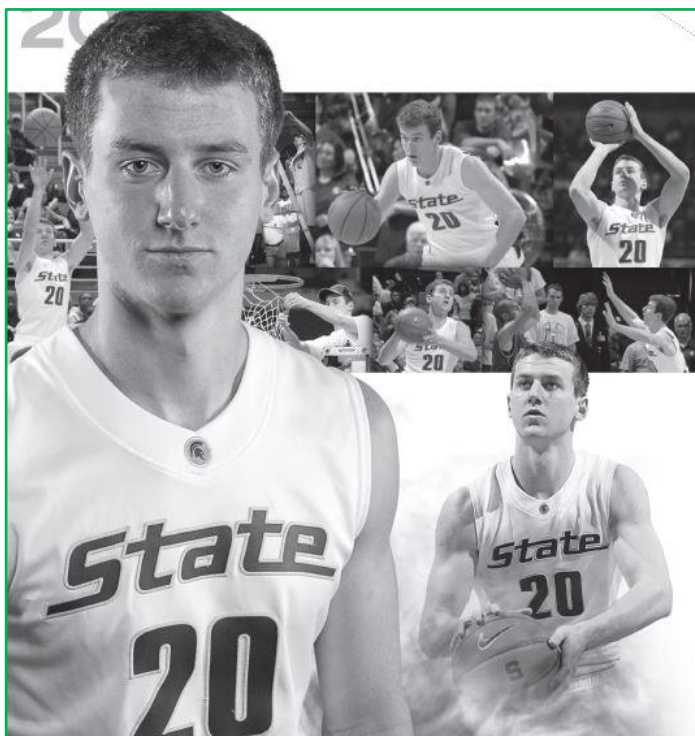
**2009-10 Spartan Basketball Squad (#20 Mike Kebler)**

### *Laurels*

At season's end, Kebler was co-recipient of the MSU Scholar-Athlete Award and again was honored Academic All-Big Ten.

Player	Class	Pos	Height	Summary
<a href="#">Chris Allen</a>	JR	G	6-3	8.2 Pts, 2.8 Reb, 2.0 Ast
<a href="#">Jon Crandell</a>	SR	F	6-8	0.0 Pts, 0.2 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Isaiah Dahlman</a>	SR	G	6-6	1.3 Pts, 0.4 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Draymond Green</a>	SO	F	6-7	9.9 Pts, 7.7 Reb, 3.0 Ast
<a href="#">Tom Herzog</a>	JR	C	7-0	1.3 Pts, 1.2 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Mike Kebler</a>	JR	G	6-4	0.3 Pts, 0.5 Reb, 0.4 Ast
<a href="#">Kalin Lucas</a>	JR	G	6-1	14.8 Pts, 1.9 Reb, 4.0 Ast
<a href="#">Korie Lucious</a>	SO	G	5-11	5.6 Pts, 1.7 Reb, 3.3 Ast
<a href="#">Raymar Morgan</a>	SR	F	6-8	11.3 Pts, 6.2 Reb, 1.8 Ast
<a href="#">Derrick Nix</a>	FR	C	6-9	2.3 Pts, 2.1 Reb, 0.3 Ast
<a href="#">Delvon Roe</a>	SO	F	6-8	6.4 Pts, 5.0 Reb, 1.2 Ast
<a href="#">Garrick Sherman</a>	FR	C	6-11	1.9 Pts, 1.6 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Dion Sims</a>				0.0 Pts, 0.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Durrell Summers</a>	JR	G	6-5	11.3 Pts, 4.7 Reb, 0.8 Ast
<a href="#">Austin Thornton</a>	SO	F	6-5	1.0 Pts, 1.1 Reb, 0.3 Ast

Notable teammates, in addition to former Chieftain Anthony Ianni, were Kalin Lucas (14.8 PPG), Raymar Morgan (11.3 PPG), Durrell Summers (11.3 PPG), and Draymond Green (9.9 PPG).

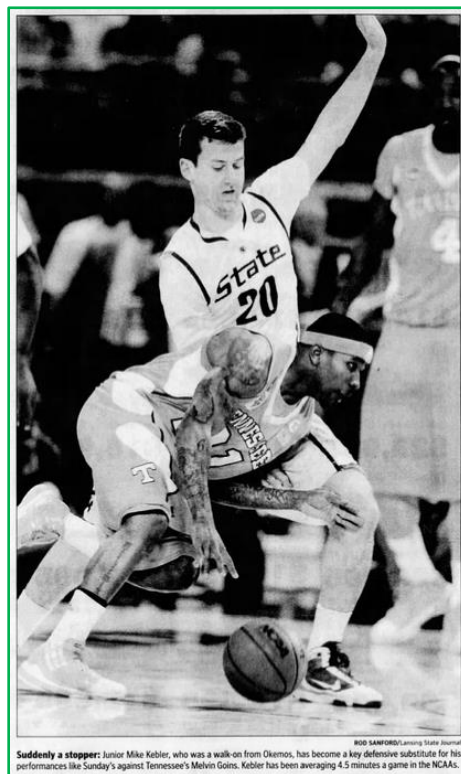




The Spartans, while losing to **Minnesota** in the Big Ten Tournament, made a run in the NCAA Tournament, beating **New Mexico**, **Maryland**, **Northern Iowa**, and **Tennessee**, before losing to **Butler** (50-52) in the Final Four.



**Delvon Roe, Mike Kebler (#20) and Garrick Sherman in the Spartans Midwest March 26, 2010 Regional Final 59-52 win against Northern Iowa ([AP Photo](#))**



**Mike Kebler against Tennessee player on March 28, 2010**



**Bobby Maze (#3) of the Tennessee Volunteers looks to shoot the ball against the Spartans Mike Kebler (#20) and Draymond Green (#23) during the Midwest regional final of the 2010 NCAA men's basketball tournament on March 28, 2010 in St. Louis, Missouri. MSU beat Tennessee 70-69.**

## 2010-11

During the 2010-2011 season, key teammates for Mike Kebler were Kalin Lucas (17.0 PPG), Draymond Green (12.6 PPG), Durrell Summers (11.6 PPG), and Draymond Green (12.6 PPG). The roster also included, for the first time ever three former Okemos Chieftains: freshman Dan Chapman, junior Anthony Ianni, and senior Mike Kebler/

Player	Class	Pos	Height	Summary
<a href="#">Keith Appling</a>	FR	G	6-1	6.4 Pts, 2.8 Reb, 1.3 Ast
<a href="#">Dan Chapman</a>	FR	G	6-3	0.0 Pts, 0.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Nick Giard</a>	FR	G	6-3	0.0 Pts, 0.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Draymond Green</a>	JR	F	6-7	12.6 Pts, 8.6 Reb, 4.1 Ast
<a href="#">Matt Heneveld</a>	JR	G	6-5	0.0 Pts, 0.0 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Anthony Ianni</a>	JR	C	6-9	0.3 Pts, 0.7 Reb, 0.0 Ast
<a href="#">Mike Kebler</a>	SR	G	6-4	1.5 Pts, 1.0 Reb, 0.5 Ast
<a href="#">Kalin Lucas</a>	SR	G	6-1	17.0 Pts, 2.1 Reb, 3.4 Ast
<a href="#">Korie Lucious</a>	JR	G	5-11	6.5 Pts, 1.7 Reb, 4.1 Ast
<a href="#">Derrick Nix</a>	SO	C	6-9	2.7 Pts, 2.0 Reb, 0.3 Ast
<a href="#">Adreian Payne</a>	FR	C	6-10	2.5 Pts, 2.4 Reb, 0.1 Ast
<a href="#">Delvon Roe</a>	JR	F	6-8	6.1 Pts, 5.0 Reb, 1.4 Ast
<a href="#">Garrick Sherman</a>	SO	C	6-11	3.1 Pts, 2.7 Reb, 0.4 Ast
<a href="#">Durrell Summers</a>	SR	G	6-5	11.6 Pts, 4.2 Reb, 0.6 Ast
<a href="#">Austin Thornton</a>	JR	G	6-5	2.0 Pts, 2.1 Reb, 0.7 Ast



As a senior, Kebler appeared in 33 games, starting the season's final nine contests in place of injured Kalin Lucas. On the season Kebler's per game averages were 1.5 points, and 1.0 rebounds. He shot .526 from the field (20-38) and .917 from the foul line (11-12). Over the final ten games, Mike averaged 19.6 minutes and 3.2 points.

Kebler scored a career-high 8 points in three games: at home during the nonconference game against **Prairie View A&M** (12/18) shooting 2-2 from the field and 4-of-4 from the foul line; at **Ohio State** (2/15), and vs. **Purdue** (3/11) in the Big Ten Tournament.

On the 2010-11 season, the Spartans finished 19-15 overall and tied for 4<sup>th</sup> (9-9) in the Big Ten regular season. In the Big Ten Tournament, the Spartans defeated **Iowa** and **Purdue** before losing to **Penn State**. The Spartans qualified for the NCAA Tournament, but narrowly lost to **UCLA** (76-78) in their first game.

### Big Ten Conference

Some highlight photos of Mike Kebler in action during the Big Ten Conference season are presented on the following pages.



Kebler (#20) celebrates 64-61 overtime win against Wisconsin (January 11, 2011)

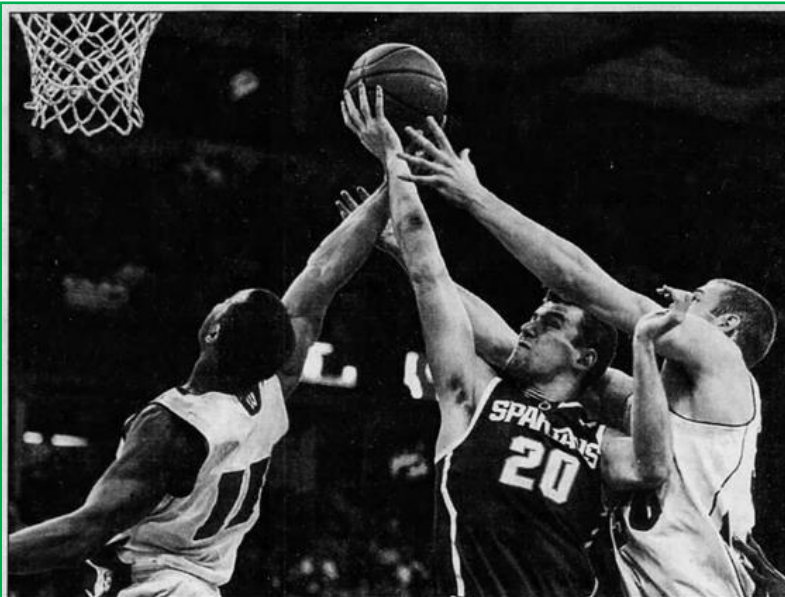




CLIFF JETTE/Associated Press

**Trapped:** Iowa's Matt Gatens looks to pass around Michigan State's Mike Kebler (20), Adreian Payne (5) and Draymond Green (23) during the first half of Wednesday's game.

**Kebler (#20) against Iowa (February 2, 2011)**



ANDY MANIS/Associated Press

**Bottled up in Badgerland:** MSU guard Mike Kebler competes for a rebound between Wisconsin's Jordan Taylor (11) and Jon Leuer at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wis., on Sunday.

**Kebler (#20) against Wisconsin (February 6, 2011)**





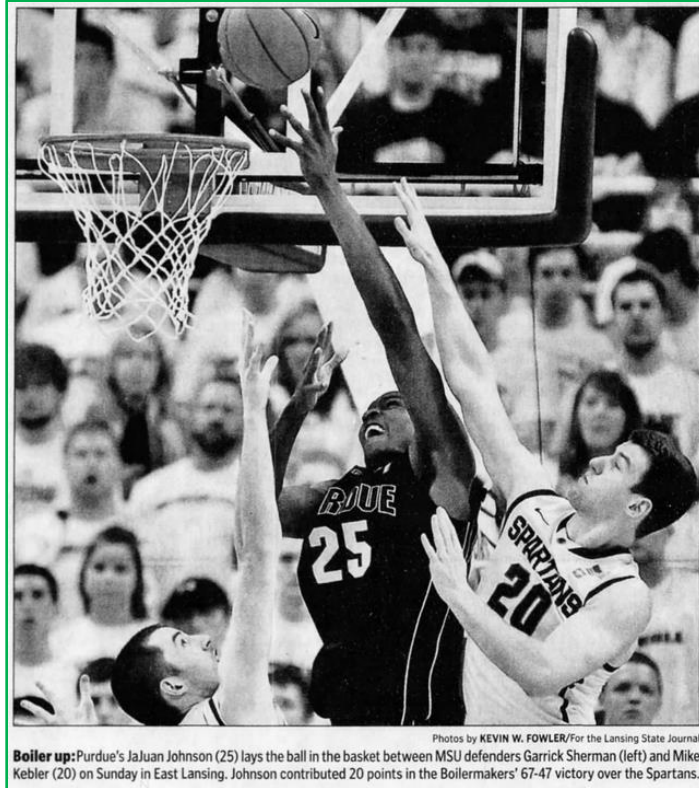
**Kebler (#20) against Penn State Player (February 10, 2011)**



**Kebler (#20) (Assisted by Coach Izzo) Defends against Illinois Player (February 19, 2011)**



**Mike Kebler (#20) Driving to Basket against Purdue Player (February 27, 2011)**



During the Big 10 season, Kebler connected on 4-of-6 shots to score eight points vs. **Ohio State**, adding a career-high four rebounds. He played a career-high 27 minutes vs. **Purdue** (2/27) and scored eight points, hitting 3-of-5 shots, and both free throw attempts in 25 minutes vs. the Boilermakers in the conference tournament.



**MSU's Mike Kebler (#20) celebrates after a basket during the first half against the Ohio State Buckeyes, February 15, 2011, Value City Arena in Columbus, Ohio**

Kebler's last 2010-11 season home game was against **Iowa** on March 2, 2011. Per tradition, the game coincided with Senior Night recognizing Spartan seniors (Mike Kebler, Kalin Lucas, and Durrell Summers) playing for the last time at the Breslin Center. The color photo on the right below is from a display in the Breslin Center.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al\\_6YSGjDZ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al_6YSGjDZ8)

**Mike Kebler at Michigan State Spartans Senior Night**

### ***Big Ten Tournament***

Photos of Kebler in action during the Big Ten Tournament are presented below.





**Mike Kebler (#20) looks to pass against Matt Gatens (#5) of the Iowa Hawkeyes during the first round of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Consecro Fieldhouse on March 10, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Spartans won 66-61.**



**Mike Kebler (#20) reacts to a play during the first round of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Consecro Fieldhouse on March 10, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Michigan State won 66-61 ([Source](#)).**





**Mike Kebler (#20) drives for a shot attempt against the Purdue Boilermakers during the quarterfinals of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Conesco Fieldhouse on March 11, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Spartans won 74-56.**

The video below highlights some Kebler highlights from this game.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2RjvI\\_MUAA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2RjvI_MUAA)

**3/11/2011 - Michigan State 74 Purdue 56 - Exclamation Point Spartans!**



**Tim Frazier (#23) of Penn State drives against Mike Kebler (#20) during the semifinals of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Conseco Fieldhouse on March 12, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Spartans lost 48-61.**



**Penn State's Talor Battle (#12) drives against Mike Kebler (#20) during the semifinals of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Conseco Fieldhouse on March 12, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Spartans lost 48-61.**



**Penn State's Tim Frazier (#23) drives against Mike Kebler (#20) during the semifinals of the 2011 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament at Conseco Fieldhouse on March 12, 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Spartans lost 48-61.**

### ***NCAA Tournament***



**Mike Kebler (#20) looks to pass the ball against Tyler Lamb (#1) of the UCLA Bruins as head coach Ben Howland of the UCLA Bruins reacts in the first half during the second round of the 2011 NCAA men's basketball tournament at St. Pete Times Forum on March 17, 2011 in Tampa, Florida. The Spartans lost 76-78.**

## Laurels

Following the 2010-11 season Kebler was again honored as Academic All-Big Ten and was the recipient of MSU's Most Improved Player and both the Unsung Player and Scholar-Athlete Awards.

## Career Statistics as a Spartan

The table below summarizes Kebler's statistics, per game and totals, over the four seasons (2007-11) as a Spartan.

### Per Game

Season	School	Conf	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	DRB	TRB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS	SOS
<a href="#">2007-08</a>	<a href="#">Michigan State</a>	<a href="#">Big Ten</a>	9	0	1.2	0.1	0.3	.333	0.1	0.2	.500	0.0	0.1	.000	0.0	0.1	.000	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	7.68
<a href="#">2008-09</a>	<a href="#">Michigan State</a>	<a href="#">Big Ten</a>	8	0	1.3	0.1	0.3	.500	0.1	0.1	1.000	0.0	0.1	.000	0.3	0.3	1.000	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	9.37
<a href="#">2009-10</a>	<a href="#">Michigan State</a>	<a href="#">Big Ten</a>	25	0	4.1	0.0	0.4	.100	0.0	0.4	.111	0.0	0.0	.000	0.2	0.4	.600	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	8.16	
<a href="#">2010-11</a>	<a href="#">Michigan State</a>	<a href="#">Big Ten</a>	33	8	10.1	0.6	1.2	.526	0.6	1.1	.541	0.0	0.0	.000	0.3	0.4	.917	0.2	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.8	11.67	
Career	Michigan State		75	8	6.1	0.3	0.7	.434	0.3	0.7	.469	0.0	0.1	.000	0.3	0.3	.760	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	9.22	

### Totals

Season	School	Conf	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	DRB	TRB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS
2007-08	Michigan State	Big Ten	9	0	11	1	3	.333	1	2	.500	0	1	.000	0	1	.000	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
2008-09	Michigan State	Big Ten	8	0	10	1	2	.500	1	1	1.000	0	1	.000	2	2	1.000	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
2009-10	Michigan State	Big Ten	25	0	103	1	10	.100	1	9	.111	0	1	.000	6	10	.600	3	10	13	9	2	1	6	8	8
2010-11	Michigan State	Big Ten	33	8	333	20	38	.526	20	37	.541	0	1	.000	11	12	.917	7	25	32	16	9	5	11	27	51
Career	Michigan State		75	8	457	23	53	.434	23	49	.469	0	4	.000	19	25	.760	13	38	51	26	11	6	17	35	65

## After Michigan State

After MSU, Kebler earned a master's in accounting and a CPA, and worked for three years in an accounting firm. After working as a financial analyst with Otis Elevator in Colorado, Kebler returned to Michigan where he currently works with Morgan Stanley in Traverse City.

Kebler married Sarah Wilson in September 2016. In his spare time Kebler enjoys hiking, camping, golfing, and snowboarding. Today he's only involved in basketball through pickup game and playing in some men's leagues. Down the line he looks to coach youth basketball.

## Looking Back

Mike's best memories from OHS include:

*the state title run in 2006 and playing at the Breslin Center for the state semis and finals. Even though we lost in a very controversial fashion with a horrendous 5 second call on Jones (you can tell I am still not over it and likely never will be) the championship run was a memory I'll never forget (Mike Kebler, personal communication).*





### Plaques Honoring Spartan Squads (Including 20 Mike Kebler)

Mike, looking back on his career as a Spartan, recalled the following as highlights.

*two trips to the final four [in 2009 and 2010] will never be forgotten. I went from being an unknown walk on who didn't travel on road trips as a sophomore to getting playing time in the final four as a junior where we lost to **Butler**. I could not have asked for a better college basketball experience from my freshman year up until my last game versus **UCLA** as a senior. The memories are honestly too long to list – the entire experience in retrospect was amazing (Mike Kebler, personal communication).*

On September 19, 2019, at the Kellogg Center, Kebler was inducted into the Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame. "Kebler was a boys basketball standout that went on to play at MSU" ([Source](#)).