



Fab Five Part II
By: Austin Rader

The Fab Five is back.

Well 20% is.

Juwan Howard has recently accepted the head coaching position at The University of Michigan, his alma mater. The contract is for five years and will start at \$2 million with a base salary of \$400,000 per year.

Although this is his first head coaching job, he has the experience to know what it takes to win a championship.

Howard played in the NBA for 19 seasons, winning a championship in 2012 with LeBron James in Miami in his final season. After his retirement, he received a job offer from the Miami Heat organization as an assistant coach.

The Miami Heat coach, Erik Spoelstra said, in regards to Howard as a coach, "Juwan is an absolute star as a person, player and coach. I feel he is more than ready. He is a terrific leader and mentor, which translates very well to the collegiate level... He will forever be a champion and part of the Heat family."

Spoelstra relied on Howard, who played power forward in his NBA career to develop the big men of the team and help orchestrate the defense. The Miami Heat coach also leaned on Howard to be an emotional leader for the team.

Howard is good at building relationships with players and has the talent to recruit kids from different backgrounds, whereas John Beilein would only recruit kids from two-parent homes. Howard would not have been on Beilein's radar as a player given he was raised by his grandmother.

Howard's program at Michigan will be different than Bielein's. Coach Bielein tends to represent a professor. His players found out he left on ESPN and his Assistant coaches found out through Twitter. Obviously the players were heated, however he did send them individual text messages, instead of calling for an emergency meeting like a father figure coach would have. Howard is also a Michigan man while Beilein did not attend the University. These are two huge points to support the success Howard may have at Michigan.

The key for Howard to be successful from day one is to develop relationships with the top recruits. Howard knows what it takes to make it to the NBA from a player's perspective and a coaches perspective, which he can use as persuasive points when talking to up and coming stars about their futures. He's still going to have to coach and develop these young men, along with walking into a recruit's home and convince their parents to entrust him with their son.

In terms of recruiting, Howard is going to try to build what Penny Hardaway has done at Memphis. Recruits like playing for coaches that have NBA experience and know how to get to the next level. Michigan is also a bigger college basketball brand than Memphis is. There are questions to who Howard will put on his staff. These decisions will be crucial. How many assistants will he keep from Beilein's staff? Will he hire a former head coach to be his top assistant? He's going to have pressure to win right away, not just from the fans, but from himself.

It is hard to follow after the winningest coach in school history but Juwan Howard has the universities support. Jalen Rose a member of the "Fab Five" says that Juwan Howard returning to Michigan "squashes any beef because we're not going to bring that to Ann Arbor's campus with Juwan Howard as our head coach. The one thing that we both know is his success turning around the University of Michigan is first and foremost about him and about the players that he's going to influence. Then it's about us being there to support him, not being drama, not being splintered, not giving any indication of dysfunction." Chris Webber the best player out of the "Fab Five" said he would like to have a reunion with his former teammates.

If the Fab Five ever got a redemption story this would be it. Even if it was one player of the group that led the charge, but if Juwan Howard led Michigan to its first National Championship since 1989, it would make the Fab Five legacy even more legendary.

U-M's AD took a big risk with the hiring of Howard but if Juwan Howard is able to recruit at a high level and develop these kids, then I believe he will be successful and build a winning culture.

Howard is emotionally invested in this program and his hiring shows that the Fab Five is back (sort of) and is working towards putting Michigan back on the map.