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Helms named one of Michigan's top sports figures

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

OU's high-scoring senior guard **Mike Helms** was named one of 28 finalists for Michigan's Top Sports Figure for 2003 by the "Detroit Free Press." Readers will select the winner by filling out a ballot from the print edition of the paper. The winner will be announced sometime within the next few weeks.

Helms placed his name on the national stage last year when he flirted with the national scoring title before finishing third with a 26.9 average. He scored more than 30 points in 13 games, with a season high of 43 against Texas Southern. He also set school single-season records for points (752), free throws (196) and free throw attempts (263). Helms also was named Mid-Continent Conference Player of the Year and became Oakland's first men's basketball All-American when the Associated Press named him to the honorable mention team.

This season, Helms became OU's all-time leader in free throws and free throw attempts and became just the third player in school history to record 2,000 points. He is second in the Mid-Con in scoring with a 23.0 average, a mark that is 10th in the nation.

"Recruiting Mike (from Detroit King) was very big for OU," said OU head coach Greg Kampe. "The fact that he has gone on to have a tremendous career and is on track for graduating (with a B.A. in communications) really made a name for us in the PSL (Detroit Public School League), one of the country's best basketball leagues. He was also our first All-American in Division I and received a lot of exposure on ESPN when leading the country in scoring most of last season. He really boosted OU athletics nationally, and you can't buy that kind of publicity.

"I also think his nomination (for Michigan's Top Sports Figure) is very deserving. His season last year was phenomenal. It was a once in a lifetime thing. I'm very pleased that he has been recognized and given publicity for his accomplishments. He's in a class of very talented athletes and a beacon for what athletes can be."

For more information on Helms and Golden Grizzlies men's basketball, visit the **OU Athletics** Web site.

SUMMARY

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