

- BUSINESS, B4
- COMICS, B7
- CLASSIFIEDS, B8-B9

SPORTS

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SECTION B

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS: AN OPPORTUNITY LOST

'We'll be better next year'

Dungy not planning to depart

By Rick Morwick

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INDIANAPOLIS

Disappointed but not discouraged.

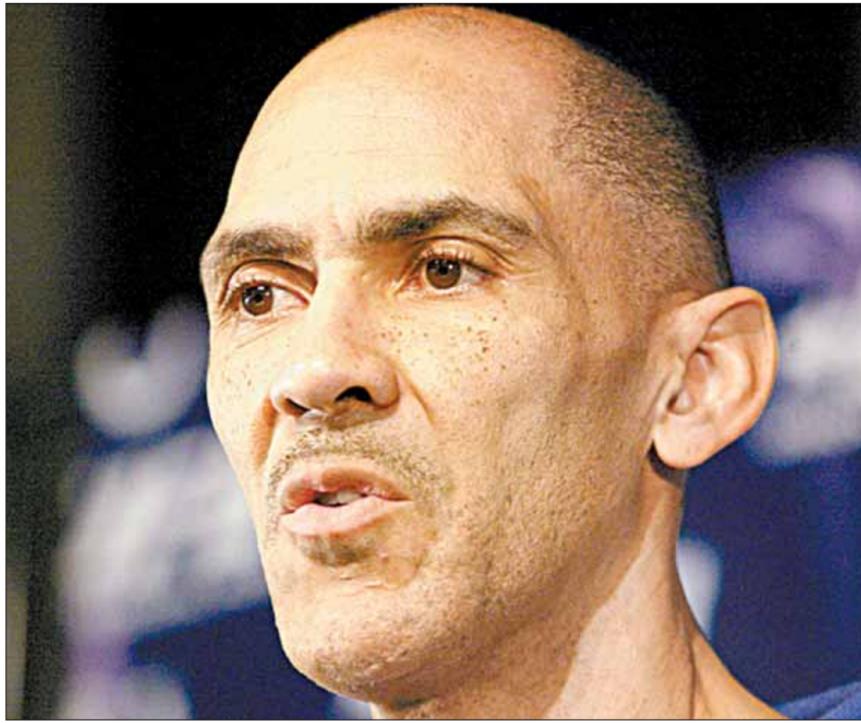
That's coach Tony Dungy's mind-set as the Indianapolis Colts sort through the aftermath of Sunday's crushing playoff defeat against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

On Monday, Dungy acknowledged that the 21-18 loss was especially bitter for a team that started with 13 straight wins, was the AFC's No. 1 seed, had home-field advantage throughout the playoffs and was an undisputed frontrunner to reach the Super Bowl.

But one day after the dream was shattered in the RCA Dome, Dungy told players to pick up the pieces and try again next season.

"I talked to the players about the difference between disappointment and discouragement," said Dungy, who remains confident the Colts (14-3) still have the right pieces to win a Super Bowl.

He attributed Sunday's demise to a combination of Pittsburgh executing a sound game plan and the Colts not executing to their



Colts coach Tony Dungy, shown at a news conference in Indianapolis on Monday, said of his future, "I would say

right now it's 100 percent that I'll be back. The only thing I don't know now is how I'll feel in the next four or five days."

usual standards. He still likes their roster, still likes their capabilities and still likes their chances of winning a championship next season.

But the fact they failed to do it this year, when virtually all advantages lined up in their favor, takes all the luster off what prom-

ised to be their best season in Indianapolis.

"You come in with the idea to win in the playoffs and win the Super Bowl," Dungy said. "We didn't win in the playoffs, so it is a failure."

But Dungy, 50, isn't giving up. Barring an unforeseen circum-

stance, he all but guaranteed he'll return next season. He plans to take a few days to contemplate his future but anticipates coming back so long as the Colts want him back.

Dungy, who signed a three-year

(SEE DUNGY, PAGE B3)

NFL says ref was wrong when he overturned call

By Dave Goldberg
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

The NFL said the referee made a mistake: Troy Polamalu caught the ball.

The league acknowledged Monday that referee Pete Morelli erred when he overturned on replay Polamalu's interception of a Peyton Manning pass Sunday in the playoff game between Pittsburgh and Indianapolis.

Mike Pereira, the league's vice president of officiating, said in a statement that Morelli should have let the call on the field stand.

"He maintained possession long enough to establish a catch," Pereira said. "Therefore, the replay review should have upheld the call on the field that it was a catch and fumble."

After the reversal, made with 5:26 left in Pittsburgh's win against the Colts, Indianapolis

went on to score a touchdown and a 2-point conversion, cutting the Steelers' 21-10 lead to 21-18.

That led to a wild final few minutes, filled with unbelievable twists and turns, including Colts kicker Mike Vanderjagt's missed 46-yard field-goal attempt that clinched it for Pittsburgh.

On the disputed play, Polamalu made a diving catch of Manning's pass, tumbled with it in his hands and got up to run. As he did, he fumbled the ball, then recovered.

Colts coach Tony Dungy challenged, and Morelli ruled Polamalu had not completed the catch.

Shortly after the game, Morelli said: "I had the defender catching the ball. Before he got up, he hit it with his leg with his other leg still on the ground. Therefore, he did not complete the catch. And then he lost the ball. It came out, and so we made the play an incomplete pass."

(SEE CALL, PAGE B3)

Colts can't seem to make leap from good team to champions

By Barry Wilner
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Before Mike Shanahan arrived as Denver's coach, John Elway was just another terrific quarterback with lots of individual stats and memorable plays but no championships.

Since Bill Cowher arrived as Pittsburgh's coach in 1992, the Steelers have made it to six AFC title games, including next Sunday at Denver. They got to the Super Bowl once, in January 1996, losing to Dallas.

ANALYSIS

But at least they have another shot, as a sixth seed, no less.

The Indianapolis Colts, despite their superb quarterback and their excellent coach, are done.

The Colts believed this was their year. It should have been.

"Everything was laid out for us perfectly," Edgerrin James said. "We folded."

Finally, they'd posted the best

(SEE LEAP, PAGE B3)

DUNGY BY THE NUMBERS

A look at Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy's record in the NFL:

102-58

Dungy's regular-season record in 10 seasons as a head coach. Dungy is 48-16 in four seasons with the Colts, a .750 winning percentage.

7

Number of seasons Dungy's teams have won at least 10 games during the regular season. Dungy has not won fewer than 10 games in a season with the Colts.

5-8

Dungy's record in the playoffs, a .385 winning percentage. He is 3-4 in the playoffs with the Colts.

0

Trips Dungy's teams have made to the Super Bowl. His teams are 0-2 in conference championship games (Colts in 2003; Buccaneers in 1999).

FORMIDABLE FOE

Cleanliness is wrestlers' best defense against diseases

By John Groth

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Franklin Community High School wrestling coach Bob Hasseman is adamant that Grizzly Cubs wrestlers stay clean.

He requires showers after practice and makes wrestlers bring a change of clothes.

Each night, he has custodians mop floor mats with Virax, a chemical that kills bacteria and viruses. And once a week, Hasseman even stays after practice and wipes the wall mats himself.

All of the measures are implemented for a reason: They keep skin diseases away and Cubs wrestlers on the mat.

"If you don't, as a coach, take an active role, you're going to lose kids on the mat with skin diseases," he said.

"The best thing kids can do is shower,

wear clean clothes, have a clean locker room and have clean mats."

For wrestlers and coaches, skin diseases are a major concern.

Before meets, wrestlers must have their skin inspected by a referee. If anything is questionable, Indiana High School Athletic Association rules require wrestlers to have a doctor's note saying the disease is not contagious or has been treated and isn't contagious anymore.

With so much skin-to-skin contact, it's not uncommon for wrestlers to develop infections. Many develop from open wounds, including cuts or scratches, and turn into an aggravating problem.

They come in different forms, ranging from small pimples to warts, blisters and scabs. Some, like molluscum contagiosum, are caused by viruses. Others, like impetigo,

(SEE DISEASES, PAGE B3)



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com
Center Grove High School wrestling team manager Sierra Langbell mops the mats with a disinfectant before practice at the school Jan. 10

Nets get win against short-handed Pacers

By David Porter

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

The New Jersey Nets needed a pick-me-up after a winless road trip, and it was provided by the sight of leading scorer Jermaine O'Neal on the Indiana Pacers bench in street clothes.

Jason Kidd had 23 points, including a season-high five 3-pointers, and had 10 assists in the Nets' 97-92 win against the injury-depleted Pacers on Monday.

New Jersey snapped a three-game losing streak and won for the 11th time in its past 14 games.

In addition to O'Neal, who sprained his ankle Saturday against Chicago, Indiana was



AP PHOTO
The Nets' Vince Carter, right, runs into the Pacers' Austin Croshere, left, as the Pacers' Jeff Foster looks on during the first quarter of Monday's game in East Rutherford, N.J.

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B2)

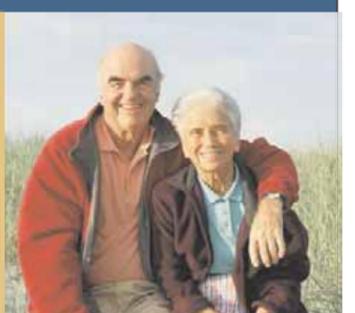
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