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SPORTS

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SECTION B



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com

A fan cheers on the Colts during the first half of Sunday's playoff game against the Pittsburgh Steelers.



Rick Morwick
COLTS BEAT

Colts' love of Indianapolis isn't returned by angry fans

Funny thing about the Indianapolis Colts season. In many ways, it was an unqualified, if not unprecedented, success. But it's going down in history as a dismal failure.

Even Tony Dungy said as much the day after the meltdown.

But in the same breath, he expressed hope for the future, asserting the Colts will be even better next season.

Problem is, fans apparently don't share the optimism. Not if talk radio, chat-room chatter and other armchair information conduits are indicators.

Reaction to Sunday's playoff loss is singular: Anger is the emotion of the day. Time has not healed this wound.

Fans, at least what appears to be a vocal majority, are livid. They feel cheated, slighted, perhaps even gullible. They believed, truly believed, that this was the year. They believed it, in the end, even more strongly than the Colts.

What else can explain their bizarre reaction to the latest playoff failure?

In the end, 13 straight wins meant nothing. A 14-2 record meant nothing. An NFL-high seven players in the Pro Bowl meant nothing. Being the talk of the NFL all season meant nothing.

Being seeded No. 1 and losing to sixth-seed Pittsburgh in the RCA Dome meant everything.

And you know what? It's hard to blame fans for being angry.

The Colts, after all, did nothing to temper expectations.

Players and coaches didn't promise a Super Bowl. But many talked openly about what great things would happen if only a No. 1 seed, a first-round bye and home-field advantage could ever be secured.

Wow, what a difference that would make.

In the end, of course, it made no difference.

No need to relive the gory details here. We all know what happened. Yet fan reaction to this one is interesting, if not bizarre.

Yes, their anger is understandable but not altogether logical. The city readily forgives the Pacers for shortcomings and pratfalls, be it playoff failings, the brawl, Ron Artest or the chemistry dysfunction that is derailing the season.

That's why the Colts' front office is, or at least ought to be, concerned.

(SEE LOVE, PAGE B3)

BASKETBALL SKILLS

Gaining an advantage



Franklin Community High School junior Adrian Moss tries to dribble past a Greenwood defender during a Johnson County Boys Basketball Tournament game at Center Grove on Jan. 13.

Carrying ball while dribbling can give player step on defender

BY JOHN GROTH
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER
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John Pfifer tries to fake opponents out of their shoes with his dribble.

Pfifer, a senior point guard on the Greenwood Community High School boys basketball team, crosses opponents' legs and beats them to the basket with one quick move.

He'll fake his head and body one way and then dribble the other direction, catching defenders off guard.

Pfifer calls it the stop-and-go move, which sends defenders scrambling to catch up.

"My theory is that if you can get one step past the defender, then you pretty much have (him) beat," Pfifer said. "When I was little, I really practiced dribbling by dribbling around the outside of a court."

HERE'S THE RULE

Palming (illegal dribble): "Palming" or "carrying" the ball is an illegal maneuver. When the ball comes to rest in the dribbler's hands, by rule, the dribble has ended. Continuing to dribble after the ball has come to rest in the hand is a violation and should be called.

SOURCE: 2005-06 NCAA men's and women's basketball rulebook

"I dribbled through my legs one time and around my back another."

Dribbling has become one of basketball's prime offensive weapons. Crossover moves, behind and around-the-back and reverse

(SEE DRIBBLING, PAGE B3)

IN THEIR OPINION

What some local basketball players and coaches think about "palming" or carrying the basketball



Evan Checkeye
Greenwood senior

"You want to keep your hand on top of the ball so you don't get called for palming. You want to have control over the ball as much as possible. You don't want a turnover."



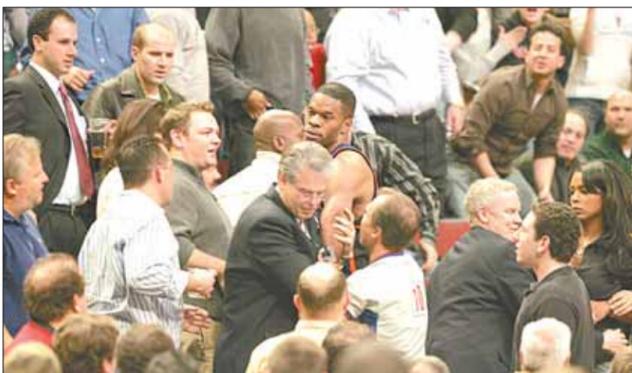
Dave Clark
Franklin Community High School boys coach

"As long as (players) are keeping their hand on top of the basketball and not getting their hand underneath the ball and rolling it over, it is the correct way."



Kerry Prather
Franklin College men's coach

"My experience is anytime a rule is circled as a point of emphasis is that it has a shelf life about the first two weeks of the season. ... By the time the conference tournament rolls around, everybody has completely forgotten about it."



The Knicks' Antonio Davis, center, is led back to the court after he entered the stands to protect his wife during Wednesday's game at the United Center in Chicago.

Davis' journey into stands costs him five games

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

New York Knicks forward Antonio Davis was suspended five games by the NBA on Thursday for entering the stands during a game in Chicago to confront a fan he thought was harassing his wife.

While the penalty showed the NBA accepted Davis' argument that he believed his wife was in trouble during Wednesday night's game, it also made clear that entering the stands would not be tolerated, no matter the circumstances.

Especially not after an ugly brawl between fans and players at an Indiana-

"It's a totally different situation. ... He's coming to the defense of a loved one. Ours was craziness."

Reggie Miller

Retired Indiana Pacers guard on the difference between the brawl in Auburn Hills and the Knicks' Antonio Davis going into the stands

Detroit game in November 2004.

"At the end of the day, what we had to decide on was the issue of Antonio breaking the barrier from the court into the stands," NBA vice president of basketball

Reserve guard has key role in IU's fast start

Wilmont provides spark off bench

BY GORDON ENGELHARDT
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

BLOOMINGTON

One of Indiana University's many interchangeable parts, Roderick Wilmont appears an unlikely hero. At least on the surface.

A 6-4 junior guard, Wilmont came off the bench brimming with energy and enthusiasm, scoring 10 first-half points for the No. 13 Hoosiers in their 62-60 victory against No. 7 Illinois on Tuesday night.

But the crowd hushed as he went down with a sprained ankle with 17:48 left in the second half.

After going to the locker room to have his ankle taped, Wilmont returned with 12:18 left to a standing ovation.

Ten seconds later, he drilled a 3-pointer from the top of the key to boost the Hoosiers' advantage to 47-36. It didn't matter much that he missed the ensuing free throw.

He tied his season high with 17 points and tied his career high with nine rebounds as IU snapped

Illinois' five-game winning streak in the series.

The Hoosiers are preparing to host in-state rival Purdue in a Big Ten contest Saturday.

Wilmont more than picked up the slack left by second-leading scorer Robert Vaden, who was limited to a season-low three points Tuesday.

"All the hard work we put in came to the (forefront)," Wilmont said after IU fans stormed the court following the Hoosiers' first victory against a top 10 team since beating Michigan State 78-74 at home in overtime last February.

"It felt great to get to this point," Wilmont said. "But we have to stay humble."

It's been an attitude adjustment from scorer supreme to a role player for Wilmont, who averaged 31.9 points as a senior at Miramar (Fla.) High School.

At IU, he's one piece in an ever-changing puzzle in which a different player steps up most

(SEE WILMONT, PAGE B2)



AP PHOTO
Indiana's Roderick Wilmont cheers a call during Tuesday's win against visiting Illinois.



NEXT UP

Purdue Boilermakers
(7-9 overall, 1-4 in the Big Ten) at No. 13 **Indiana Hoosiers**
(11-3, 3-1)

Time: 2:35 p.m. Saturday
TV: WTTV-Channel 4
Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM, WNDE-1260 AM

Of note: Marco Killingsworth leads the Hoosiers in scoring (20.2 points per game) and rebounding (7.4). Matt Kiefer averages a team-best 12 points per game for the Boilermakers, who have been decimated by injuries.

Misses don't stop Gearlds, Purdue

The Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE

Katie Gearlds had a shot at a place in Purdue history.

The junior guard needed just two points to reach 1,000 for her career. With about three minutes left against Penn State, she fired a 3-pointer from one of her favorite spots, the left corner, and ... clang. She left the game for good six seconds later.

It wasn't all disappointment for Gearlds. She tied a season high with 28 points to lead the 11th-ranked Boilermakers to a 70-56 win against the Nittany Lions on Thursday night.

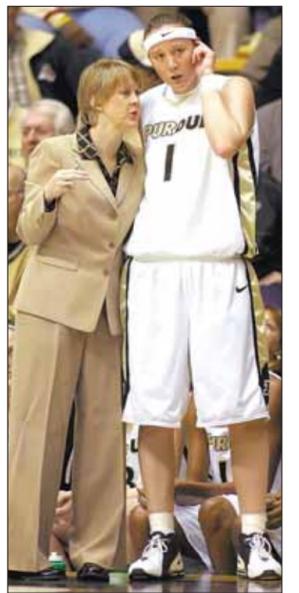
Gearlds, a bit of a perfectionist, focused on the missed 3-pointer and the free throw she missed with 8:40 remaining.

"Why couldn't I hit that three?" Gearlds wondered. "And the free throw?"

"She made all the rest of them," teammate Erin Lawless quickly pointed out.

Gearlds made 12 of 15 field goals and 2 of 3 free throws.

(SEE PURDUE, PAGE B2)



AP PHOTO
Purdue coach Kristy Curry, left, talks with Katie Gearlds after she came out of Thursday's Big Ten game against Penn State in West Lafayette.

(SEE STANDS, PAGE B2)