

SCOREBOARD

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Boys basketball

AP state polls
The Associated Press Top 10 Indiana high school boys basketball teams...

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 10 teams for Class 4A and Class 3A.

Others receiving votes: Bloomington South 29, Merrillville 13, East Chicago 8, Noblesville 7, Mishawaka 6, Cathedra 6.

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 10 teams for Class 4A and Class 3A.

Others receiving votes: New Castle 59, Plymouth 54, Tippecanoe Valley 43, Edgewood 23, West Lafayette 13, Fort Wayne Concordia 8, Northridge 7, Washington 6.

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Others receiving votes: Rochester 26, Boone Grove 25, Providence 20, Southridge 18, Fort Wayne Harding 18, Cloverdale 9.

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 10 teams for Class 4A and Class 3A.

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MAIN

EVENTS

TV TODAY

NBA
New Orleans/Oklahoma City Hornets at Indiana Pacers, 7 p.m., Fox Sports Midwest

Men's college basketball

Illinois at Michigan, 7 p.m., ESPN
Xavier at Dayton, 7:30 p.m., ESPN2
Alabama at Arkansas, 9 p.m., ESPN

Boys basketball

Pike at Lawrence North, 9 p.m. (tape delay), WHMB-Channel 40

Soccer

UEFA Champions League playoffs: Arsenal vs. Real Madrid, 2:30 p.m., ESPN2

Winter Olympics

Skiing: Nordic combined, ski jumping and cross country finals, 4 p.m., WTHR-Channel 13
Men's hockey: United States vs. Russia, 2 p.m., USA
Women's figure skating: short program; men's speed skating, 1,500-meter final, 8 p.m., WTHR-Channel 13

SPECTATOR SPORTS

TODAY

Boys basketball

Greenwood at Indian Creek, 7:30 p.m.
Greenwood Christian Academy at University, 7:30 p.m.
Southwestern (Shelby) at Edinburgh, 7:30 p.m.

Gymnastics

Center Grove at Bloomington South, 6:30 p.m.

Men's basketball

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference
Tournament: Anderson at Franklin, 8 p.m.

Women's basketball

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference
Tournament: Bluffton at Franklin, 6 p.m.

Call us with results

Results can be called in to the Daily Journal sports department from 6 to 10 weeknights and Sunday evenings at 736-2715. Results also can be faxed to 736-2766.

Table with 4 columns: Team, Score, Opponent, Score. Results for Kaman, Brezee, Blount, etc.

Table with 4 columns: Team, Score, Opponent, Score. Results for ATP money leaders, WTA money leaders, etc.

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 25 teams for Women's college basketball.

Women's college basketball

AP top25 poll
The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll...

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 25 teams for Women's college basketball.

Others receiving votes: Bowling Green 69, Indiana St. 39, Kentucky 39, Missouri 32, Wyoming 30, Florida 29, St. John's 20, Washington 18, Virginia Tech 11, W. Kentucky 10, Tulsa 8, Chattanooga 6, Hartford 4, Old Dominion 4, George Washington 3, UCLA 2, Charlotte 1, Pittsburgh 1.

Table with 4 columns: Rank, Team, W-L, Pts., Pvs. Lists top 25 teams for Women's college basketball.

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FC men, women among favorites

Grizzlies host HCAC tournament games

By Rick Morwick

DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS EDITOR

morwick@thejournalnet.com

Expectations were different, but the results have been similarly satisfying for the Franklin College men's and women's basketball teams.

Both recently concluded highly productive regular seasons. Both are high seeds in their respective Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference tournaments.

And both host first-round games tonight at Spurlock Center.

In light of circumstances, men's coach Kerry Prather couldn't be happier how events have unfolded.

Entering the season, the Grizzlies (18-7, 10-4 HCAC) were young and inexperienced. Heading into the postseason, they're seeded No. 2 and front-runners for the conference championship.

Franklin has won six of its past seven games and finished the regular season Saturday with an emotional 89-77 win against arch rival Hanover.

"It's been the most enjoyable season I've had in a long, long time," said Prather, whose team hosts Anderson at 8 tonight.

The winner advances to Friday's semifinal against the highest remaining seed.

Prather is confident the Grizzlies, who beat Anderson twice during the regular season, can make the Friday date, especially with the way they've played defense down the stretch.

In their first seven conference games, the Grizzlies allowed opponents to shoot 50 percent or better from the field six times. In the past seven HCAC games, 47 percent was the best mark against the Grizzlies.

Seniors Nick Kane and Josh Finke are the only upperclassmen in a starting five that typically features freshmen Jace Redman and Dustin Marshall and sophomore Jon Neill.

"There's a good, healthy, just a phenomenal chemistry to this group, and there has been from the very beginning," Prather said. "It's the case on the court, and it's the case off the court."

Winning consistently is nothing new for Prather, who has guided the Grizzlies to multiple national tournament appearances during his 23 seasons. But doing it with such a young team is a first.

And that's why he especially looks forward to this year's HCAC Tournament.

"In years when you're exceeding expectations, there's an extra little bit of excitement there," Prather said. "You certainly hope to put something good together, but I think all of this has gelled a little better than we had a right to expect."

Women's coach Kim Eiler applauds her team for a different reason.

Coming off their second straight HCAC regular-season championship and second consecutive NCAA Division III Tournament appearance, the Grizzlies (22-3, 13-1 HCAC) were expected to do well.

Returning nearly every player from last season, Franklin was the unanimous pre-season choice to win the regular-season and postseason championships.

Having already won the regular-season title, the top-seeded Grizzlies are on course to live up to every projection.

"They've pretty much stepped up to the challenge. They had the bull's-eye on their back to repeat," said Eiler, whose team plays Bluffton at 6 p.m.

Franklin, which features four of the league's top players in seniors Lindsey



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com
Franklin College senior Lindsey Roberson, left, goes up for a shot as teammate Brittany Beehler, a junior, watches during the Grizzlies' practice at Spurlock Center on Feb. 13.

Roberson, Becky Ballard, Leslie Mehrlich and junior Brittany Beehler, beat Bluffton twice during the regular season.

Yet the Grizzlies take nothing for granted. Eiler likes the Grizzlies' chances of successfully defending their title. But she cautions against overlooking any opponent.

"They're still do-or-die games," Eiler said. "(Hosting) makes it a lot better, but you still have to go out and perform. You still have to go out and play."

"If you don't win, you're done." With the No. 1 seed, the Grizzlies have home-court advantage throughout the tournament. They would play again at 6 p.m. Friday with a victory tonight. The championship final is 3 p.m. Saturday.

If the men win tonight, they'll play again Friday against the highest remaining seed. Transylvania is the No. 1 seed, and that's where the Grizzlies will travel if both teams win tonight. Franklin would host again if it wins tonight and Transylvania loses.

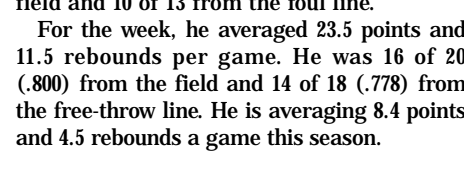
Ray earns HCAC honor

Franklin College's Brandon Ray, who helped the Grizzlies close out the conference season on a strong note last week, was named the HCAC Player of the Week on Monday.

The sophomore forward scored a game-high 25 points and had 12 rebounds in Franklin's 74-70 loss at Transylvania University on Wednesday. Ray was 10 of 14 from the field and 4 of 5 from the free-throw line and also recorded one assist.

In the Grizzlies' win against Hanover on Saturday, Ray had a game-high 22 points and 11 rebounds. He was 6 of 6 from the field and 10 of 13 from the foul line.

For the week, he averaged 23.5 points and 11.5 rebounds per game. He was 16 of 20 (.800) from the field and 14 of 18 (.778) from the free-throw line. He is averaging 8.4 points and 4.5 rebounds a game this season.



RAY

What: Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference men's basketball tournament first-round game
Who: Anderson (8-17 overall, 3-11 in the HCAC) vs. Franklin (18-7, 10-4)
Where: Franklin's Spurlock Center
When: 8 tonight
Admission: \$4 for adults; \$2 for seniors and children high-school age and younger; free for Franklin College students with student ID

What: Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference women's basketball tournament first-round game
Who: Bluffton (4-21 overall, 2-12 in the HCAC) vs. Franklin (22-3, 13-1)
Where: Franklin's Spurlock Center
When: 6 tonight
Admission: \$4 for adults; \$2 for seniors and children high-school age and younger; free for Franklin College students with student ID

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GOLF

Ames gets into Match Play but will face top seed Woods

Stephen Ames has his golf clubs shipped to Tucson, Ariz., last weekend so they would be there when he arrived for his next PGA Tour event.

One phone call changed everything. Thomas Bjorn pulled out of the Match Play Championship with a recurring neck injury, and Ames was first in line to replace him in the 64-man field at La Costa Resort.

One minute he was on his way to Tucson for a \$3 million tournament, the next he was on the practice range getting ready for a \$7.5 million World Golf Championship. That was the good news.

As the No. 64 seed, Ames drew Tiger Woods as his opponent in the first round Wednesday.

"Anything can happen," Ames said, breaking into a smile. "Especially where he's hitting the ball."

Sorenstam atop new women's world rankings; Wie third

No one doubted Annika Sorenstam was the No. 1 player in women's golf. Now it's official.

The Women's World Golf Ranking finally made its debut today with Sorenstam far atop the list based on her 21 victories worldwide and three major championships during the past two years. Such is her dominance that Sorenstam's lead was nearly double that of Paula Creamer at No. 2.

Michelle Wie, who turned pro in October, checked in at No. 3 and could move ahead of Creamer depending on what happens in the Fields Open this week.

The women's ranking will be published every Tuesday and used as criteria for getting into tournaments such as the LPGA Championship, the Women's British Open and the HSBC Women's World Match Play.

FOOTBALL

Chargers quarterback Brees likely to become free agent

The Chargers are primed to let quarterback Drew Brees test free agency. San Diego general manager A.J. Smith said Monday the team has declined to designate Brees, who played at Purdue, as its franchise or transition player. The deadline for designating a player with either tag is Thursday.

If the Chargers had slapped either of the tags on Brees, he would be guaranteed nearly \$10 million in a one-year salary next season. That's too rich for the Chargers, considering Brees was injured in the team's season finale, tearing the labrum in his throwing shoulder while trying to recover a fumble.

Brees underwent surgery last month and is expected to begin throwing in May. But whether he is at full strength by the Chargers' July training camp isn't known.

MIAMI
Report: Dolphins' Williams appealing failed drug test

Troubled running back Ricky Williams is appealing a positive drug test that could force the Miami Dolphins star to sit out the 2006 season, a person familiar with the case said Monday.

If the positive test result is upheld, it would be Williams' fourth violation of the NFL's substance-abuse policy, meaning at least a one-year suspension.

Previous positive tests were for marijuana, which Williams acknowledged using. But the latest test involved a drug other than marijuana, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because league policy is to keep test results confidential.

The Miami Herald reported that two sources said Williams failed a test for a substance not publicly known. His latest positive test was first reported Sunday by Denver television station KDVR.

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