

COLLEGES

INDIANAPOLIS

NCAA reports Radford has best graduation rate

Almost two dozen Division I schools, led by Radford's 100 percent, reported Graduation Success Rates of at least 95 percent for athletes who enrolled from 1995 to 1998.

All were higher than their general student populations and significantly higher than the rates reported by the federal government, according to NCAA figures released Thursday.

The average for the 318 Division I colleges, including the Army, Navy and Air Force academies, was 76 percent. Other GSR averages included 69 percent for men, 86 percent for women, 82 percent for whites, 59 percent for blacks and 68 percent for Hispanics.

The NCAA considers any rate above 50 percent, a standard adopted by the privately funded Knight Commission on college sports, to be good, President Myles Brand said.

Next after Radford was the U.S. Naval Academy at 99 percent. Notre Dame and Valparaiso, nearby private schools in northern Indiana, tied at 98 percent.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.

Six schools, including IPFW, form alliance

IPFW and South Dakota State have joined four other independent schools in forming an alliance called the United Basketball Conference that will offer home and away games against each other starting a year from now. All of the schools are making the transition to NCAA Division I and are searching for permanent conference membership.

The others are North Dakota State, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Texas-Pan American and Utah Valley State.

Some of the teams already play each other, but the alliance will solve one problem: finding games in January and February when established D-I teams are busy with conference play.

BASEBALL

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.

New owner of Reds has long history in Cincinnati

Baseball owners unanimously approved the sale of baseball's oldest franchise, the Cincinnati Reds, on Thursday to a group headed by produce mogul Robert Castellini.

Carl Lindner, the 86-year-old Cincinnati financier who owned the franchise, had three potential buyers whose offers were roughly the same but chose Castellini largely because of his local ties. Lindner will remain a minority partner.

"Local ownership there was critical, and it was crucial to Carl Lindner," baseball commissioner Bud Selig said. "The one overriding goal we had was to have local ownership."

Terms weren't announced, but Castellini's group is said to be acquiring about 70 percent ownership of a franchise worth an estimated \$270 million.

The Castellini family founded a shipping company along the Ohio River in 1896, 27 years after the Cincinnati Red Stockings became baseball's first professional team.

BOSTON

Epstein to rejoin Red Sox in unspecified position

Theo Epstein is rejoining the Boston Red Sox, 2½ months after he turned down a three-year, \$4.5 million offer to remain as general manager.

Epstein and Red Sox management issued a joint statement Thursday saying he will return to the organization full-time, but they did not specify his capacity except to say it will be in baseball operations. His return had been rumored almost since the day he slipped out of Fenway Park to avoid the media.

Epstein walked away from a deal that would have quadrupled his salary.

GOLF

PALM DESERT, Calif.

Campbell leader after two rounds of Hope

Chad Campbell shot a 6-under par 66 Thursday to take a four-shot lead through two rounds of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic.

Campbell, who tied for second in Hawaii last week, remained bogey-free through 36 holes of the Hope and was at 15-under 129.

Pat Perez had a wind-blown, waterlogged round and struggled to a 73 after an opening 60 and was tied for second with John Sen-den, who had a 63.

Lions, Rams give first-timers jobs

The Associated Press

The Detroit Lions and St. Louis Rams have new head coaches.

The Lions hired Rod Marinelli because they hope he's the tough coach they need to turn around the team that has been the NFL's worst since 2001.

Marinelli, who spent the past 10 seasons in Tampa Bay as defensive line coach, certainly looked and sounded like the right fit Thursday.

"There's one voice for discipline. Mine," the Vietnam veteran said during his introductory news conference. "There's one voice for leadership. Mine."

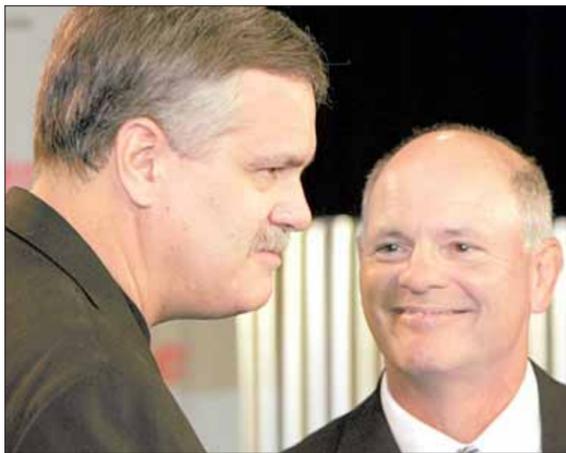
The Rams hired Miami offensive coordinator Scott Linehan on Thursday, the sixth first-time NFL head coach to land a job in the past two weeks.

The team called a news conference today to introduce their fourth head coach since moving to the Midwest in 1995.

In Detroit, Lions president Matt Millen acknowledged the team he began crafting five years ago, which has compiled a league-worst 21-59 record, has been soft.

"That's my fault," said Millen, who later added he will never quit his job in Detroit.

Millen interviewed 12 coaches in the past two weeks, a hiring



Detroit Lions president Matt Millen, left, introduces Rod Marinelli, the team's new coach, during a news conference in Allen Park, Mich., on Thursday. Marinelli spent 10 seasons as defensive line coach for Tampa Bay.

process that was in stark contrast to the brief searches leading to the hirings of Steve Mariucci and Marty Mornhinweg.

"It was a learning experience for me," he said.

Marinelli, who has a four-year contract, bristled at the notion of facing a difficult learning curve next season when he is a head coach for the first time at any level.

He had the title of assistant

head coach added by the Buccaneers in 2002, a role he also had at Arizona State and California during his 20 years as a college coach.

"That has prepared me to be a head coach," the 56-year-old Marinelli said.

Marinelli said he had a couple of opportunities to be a defensive coordinator, but Tampa Bay denied suitors permission to interview him.

• Dribbling

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

dribbles are more common among players at all levels.

But as much as the skill has developed among players, it's one of basketball's biggest problems.

Illegal dribbling moves, such as carrying and palming, have permeated the sport. Although the bad habits are prohibited, they can give players an advantage to score if an infraction isn't called.

Franklin Community High School boys basketball coach Dave Clark acknowledges offenses and players are geared to make plays off the dribble more. And that's why the bad habits are developing.

"There's more dribbling in the game than there used to be," said Clark, who's in his 12th season with the Grizzlies Cubs. "As kids get developed in using the dribble to drive to the basket, they

• Love

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

Let's be honest. The Colts have been competitive for much of the Peyton Manning era. They've been to the playoffs six times in the past seven years.

Yet selling out the dome has been a monumental struggle until the past two seasons.

Corporate generosity, in the form of buying up the final couple of thousand tickets before Thursday's blackout deadline, was all that saved the Colts from being blanked on local television as recently as three years ago.

Indianapolis was winning then, and it plays in the league's smallest stadium.

See where this is heading? Right or wrong, Colts fans historically don't shell out Disney World cash on Sundays unless they have a darned good reason. They seem to need a virtual guarantee that a Super Bowl is on the horizon before they flock to the dome.

To be sure, it's an anomaly in the NFL. Nearly every team sells out consistently, during good times and bad, even in small markets.

Indianapolis has been the exception to the rule.

With that in mind, coupled with the backlash of Black Sunday, is this really the best time to raise local taxes to fund a \$500 million stadium that may or may not be at or near capacity when Peyton is gone and the Super Bowl goes back to being a pipe dream?

Little doubt the Colts are wondering the same thing. And with no small degree of discomfort.

Do fans simply need more time to get past their anger? Will they renew season tickets in droves when — or rather, if — their collective wrath dissipates?

Only time will tell. But this much is certain: The city appears in no big hurry to forgive.

More than likely, it's probably because of the quality of opponent the Colts succumbed to. And rather easily, it seemed.

During the 1990s, when the Pacers were trying to get over hump, they consistently reached the conference finals. Each time, they ran into opposition that was

"They just don't call it like they should in the pros. If you didn't think about it before, you think about it now."

Ron McGriff

Basketball official and Whiteland resident on looking out for players carrying the ball

try to get a little extra edge in momentum by not keeping their hand on top of the ball."

Younger players are also picking up the illegal techniques from TV.

The more they see professional players getting away with carrying the ball, the more they think it's standard practice. Center Grove girls basketball coach Joe Lentz said.

During ball-handling drills, Lentz stresses proper technique to avoid illegal dribbles. But players aren't always able to execute in games what they work on in practice.

"I try to get (players) to keep

normally favored, either Patrick Ewing's Knicks or Michael Jordan's Bulls.

Consistently losing against championship-caliber opponents was regrettable but forgivable. And there was always the promise of next season.

And when "next season" finally arrived for the Pacers in 2000, they conquered their Eastern Conference demons. They reached the NBA Finals. They lost to Shaq and Kobe in six games. No shame there.

Regrettable but forgivable.

Then there's what happened in the dome on Sunday.

Shameful, in the minds of many, and not forgivable.

Pittsburgh was a good, but not great, opponent. Jerome Bettis is an antique. Edgerrin James is prime time. Ben Roethlisberger is an up-and-comer. Peyton Manning is a Hall of Famer.

Yet Pittsburgh is one win away from where the Colts sublimely assured fans they'd be.

How can the faithful not be angry?

For the Colts, the critical question is, will they ever forgive?

For the future solvency of the franchise, the answer had better be yes. But there's no guarantee.

After all, we're talking about an organization that for years signaled not-so-veiled intentions of fleeing town without a new stadium deal.

It's also a franchise that, in pursuit of a sweeter long-term agreement, for years condescendingly hinted that being here was somehow a privilege for the city, not a civic partnership.

In Sunday's bitter aftermath, it's tough to define the relationship now. With a long-term commitment sewn up, the Colts suddenly love their fans.

This time, ironically, the feeling might not be mutual.

For the sake of a retractable-roof stadium that will open when Peyton is on the downside of his career, when Edge is gone, when the defense is bad and when Marvin Harrison is a role player or retired, the Colts better hope that it is.

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Millen is not bothered by Marinelli's lack of head coaching experience.

"It's been done before, there have been guys that have come from the same route," Millen said. "To me, it's less about what they've done, and more about who they are."

"I've been around coordinators that haven't coordinated."

Marinelli is the latest protege of Indianapolis coach Tony Dungy to get a head coaching job.

"Another one of Tony Dungy's apples has fallen from the tree," Kansas City coach Herm Edwards said in a statement released by the Lions. "(Chicago's) Lovie Smith was part of his staff. I was fortunate to be a part of his staff, and now Rod Marinelli."

Though Marinelli has not led a football team, he attracted interest from at least one other NFL franchise with an opening this offseason. The Oakland Raiders interviewed Marinelli on Monday, then he traveled to suburban Detroit for a second interview with Millen.

In St. Louis, the Rams made their first hire from outside the organization since Dick Vermeil was lured out of retirement in 1997. That move produced the franchise's only Super Bowl victory after the 1999 season.

The 42-year-old Linehan impressed the team in two inter-

views. Then, he passed a final test with a meeting with team majority owner Georgia Frontiere in Arizona.

Linehan helped the Dolphins finish 9-7, winning their final six games. He had been one of three finalists along with Bears defensive coordinator Ron Rivera and Chargers offensive coordinator Cam Cameron.

Linehan replaces Mike Martz, who was fired one day after the Rams finished a 6-10 season. That move also came one day after Martz received medical clearance to return to the job after missing most of the season with a bacterial infection of the heart.

Of seven coaches hired since the regular season ended, the only one with previous head-coaching experience is Edwards with the Chiefs.

Linehan has never been a head coach at any level. He's been in the NFL for four years, the first three as offensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings where he helped produce the top-ranked offense in 2003.

Last season, the Dolphins improved from 29th in total offense to 14th and went from 31st in rushing to 12th.

Linehan shuffled Ricky Williams and Ronnie Brown successfully at running back and coaxed a career-high 18 touchdown passes from Gus Frotter.

much in recent years, he's always on the lookout.

"We are aware," said McGriff, a Whiteland resident. "We watch tapes through the (National Federation of State High School Associations). We look for it a little bit more. The kids watch the pro players that get away with it."

"They just don't call it like they should in the pros. If you didn't think about it before, you think about it now."

McGriff understands why players resort to the illegal dribbling techniques. They help improve their chances of scoring.

"Kids are quicker nowadays," said McGriff, who officiates two or three games each week. "They'll do anything to gain an advantage. Defensive players are quicker."

"If you can carry the ball and get a step, most of the time that will give you a half step or full step on a defender."

Franklin College men's basketball coach Kerry Prather has noticed another trend.

He doesn't see players devoting

as much time to developing their dribbling skills. Prather has observed players have trouble dribbling with their non-dominant hand more so than in years past.

But it doesn't surprise him.

"That's consistent with the whole trend of spending less time on skill development than with competition," said Prather, in his 23rd year at Franklin. "The reality is that they have to improve through hours in the gym, doing boring monotonous drills at full speed with both hands."

"If kids have the option of playing in a game, they will go play. Eventually someone's going to force them to their non-dominant side, and they're not going to have an answer for it."

Pfifer is aware of that possibility, which is why he constantly prepares for it.

"Just the ability to be able to dribble with both hands equally, as well, is beneficial," Pfifer said. "The defender can't force you one way, and you have the ability to go both ways."

Chela sends Hewitt to early exit Down Under

BY JOHN PYE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MELBOURNE, Australia

Adios, Lleyton. G'day, Juan.

Third-seeded Lleyton Hewitt was upset 6-4, 6-4, 6-7 (8), 6-2 by Argentine Juan Ignacio Chela in the second round of the Australian Open on Thursday, reversing the outcome of their spiteful previous encounter at Melbourne Park.

"This will hurt for a few days," said the Aussie, who shook hands quickly with Chela and walked quickly off the court.

And he wasn't talking about his ankle strain that needed attention in the third set.

"I was giving everything I had out there; I just wasn't up to it," Hewitt said.

A finalist in Australia in 2005, Hewitt has lost to the eventual champion in seven straight majors.

But unless unseeded Chela makes a startling run, Hewitt's shocking loss has opened a potentially easier road for top-ranked Roger Federer.

Unlike the third-round tussle in 2005, when Hewitt overcame Chela in four sets with a boister-



Juan Ignacio Chela hits a return shot during his match with Lleyton Hewitt at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia, on Thursday.

ous crowd in his corner, the Rod Laver Arena was almost muted for the first two sets.

With injuries forcing defending champion Marat Safin, No. 2-ranked Rafael Nadal and four-time winner Andre Agassi out, and Hewitt eliminated, Federer is the overwhelming favorite.

Hewitt, for one, can't see anybody beating Federer here.

"No, I can't. It's very hard to back against him," he said. "Obviously his score lines are convincing, and when he's playing with that much confidence, I can't see anyone beating him."

Chela, he said, was not a contender. Chela has won two consecutive matches for the first time since August.

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