

- HEALTH, B4
- COMICS, B5
- CLASSIFIEDS, B6-B7
- FACES & PLACES, B8

SPORTS

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SECTION B

Football coach leaving Greenwood

Wimmer will build new Fishers program

By JOHN GROTH

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Greenwood high school football coach Rick Wimmer has long been intrigued about starting a football program from scratch.

Next year, he'll get the chance. Starting in the 2006-07 school

year, Wimmer will be the head football coach at the new Class 5A Fishers High School.

He accepted the position of physical education instructor and head football coach at the Hamilton Southeastern school board meeting Monday night.

"I'm excited about it because it's an opportunity to really build a program from ground up," Wimmer said. "The school has tremendous potential I think. I thought it looked like a great opportunity. I've always

been intrigued about the idea of starting a football program."

He told players and coaches about the decision Monday before the Hamilton Southeastern school board meeting.

Wimmer was offered the job in December. Interviews were conducted before Christmas.

He compiled a 57-42 record in nine seasons at Greenwood. This season, he guided the Woodmen to

(SEE COACH, PAGE B2)

STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/
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Greenwood football coach Rick Wimmer accepted a job at the new Fishers High School on Monday night.

IU's White out again with injury

The Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON

It took the Indiana Hoosiers more than three years to get back into the top 10. Staying there will depend on how well they play without forward D.J. White.

White is expected to miss four to six weeks, and possibly the rest of the season, with his second foot injury in two months.

"We are definitely going to miss him a lot," coach Mike Davis said Monday. "Before, we knew he was coming back. Now we don't know how long it is going to take."

(SEE WHITE, PAGE B2)



Indiana's D.J. White suffered a second foot injury this season in Saturday's game against Ohio State.

NFL PLAYOFFS: DIVISIONAL ROUND

SUNDAY'S GAME

Pittsburgh Steelers (12-5) at Indianapolis Colts (14-2)

Time: 1 p.m. TV: WISH-Channel 8 Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM



Ready after rest

Colts healthy, eager to get back on field after layoff

By MICHAEL MAROT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Peyton Manning spent two weeks calling plays and resting his right arm. Now, after winning 14 games and leading the Indianapolis Colts to the AFC's No. 1 seed, Manning doesn't feel rusty; he feels stronger.

"I've always taken every rep available, and in the past, I've sacrificed my arm a little bit to do that," Manning said Monday. "But you do have to rest your arm. ... The arm does feel live now, which is great for this late in the season."

That's an ominous message for foes who have watched Manning break records and win the past two NFL passing titles with ratings topping 100.

Coach Tony Dungy noticed the difference last week in practice when he said Manning was throwing with more zip, and that's only part of the benefit the Colts have gotten from taking a break the past three weeks.

Edgerrin James has said he feels fresh. The Colts' contingent of battered players apparently also has healed in time for Sunday's playoff game against Pittsburgh.

"That's what we hoped for, and that's why we rested some of our guys," Dungy said. "I think the rest did help them."

The Colts (14-2) haven't had much to play for since losing 26-17 to San Diego on Dec. 18.

After wrapping up home-field advantage with three games left in the regular-season and no longer pursuing perfection, Indy took advantage of the opportunity to rest most of its key players.

Even Manning, James and Harrison, who squirm at the notion of taking breaks during practices much less games, stayed on the sideline. Manning played only three series in the final two games, Harrison missed the Seattle game and played only two series against Arizona, and James played one half against the Seahawks before taking the regular-season finale off.

The result, Dungy said,

(SEE READY, PAGE B3)

Ben has been working hard in practice to develop some timing and continuity with the receivers. That will be the biggest difference against Indianapolis this time."

— Bill Cowher, Steelers coach, on quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (below)



AP PHOTO

Can you hear me now? Steelers ready for noise

By ALAN ROBINSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH

Pump up the volume. Tune out the distractions.

The Pittsburgh Steelers have already played and lost this season in Indianapolis' noise-factory RCA Dome, and they don't plan on making the same mistakes in Sunday's divisional playoff game that they made during that 26-7 loss to the Colts on Nov. 28.

That means it will be very loud when the Steelers practice this week in their indoor building — so loud, it might seem to each player like he's wearing an iPod turned up to the maximum volume.

The Steelers blamed the louder-than-loud conditions inside the dome for

their five false-start penalties during that Monday night loss in Indianapolis.

How loud was it? Ben Roethlisberger had never been in a game where the center couldn't hear a play call he was shouting into his ear from a few inches away.

Artificially loud? The Steelers still wonder about that.

NFL spokesman Steve Alic said the league did not investigate whether the Colts artificially enhanced the noise that night, as some Steelers players suspect. But, several weeks later, commissioner Paul

(SEE NOISE, PAGE B3)

Cowher a survivor in 'performance-now' business

PITTSBURGH

No other NFL coach looks or acts like Bill Cowher on the sideline.

That's why the camera spends so much time framing his mug. Even after 14 seasons, Cowher's expressions are so entertaining, it's a wonder his jaw doesn't have its own TV show.

That face isn't why Cowher got the Pittsburgh job, of course, nor why he's held on to the same one longer than any other member of the pro fraternity. The best record in the NFL since 1992, a string of respectable showings in the playoffs and a Super Bowl appearance are the reasons for that.

Still, without an owner who is patient and loyal — and Dan Rooney is both, almost to a fault — Cowher wouldn't have become the poster boy for NFL job security, a TV fixture as recognizable as Homer Simpson.

Chuck Noll, Cowher's predecessor, wasn't nearly as telegenic, but with

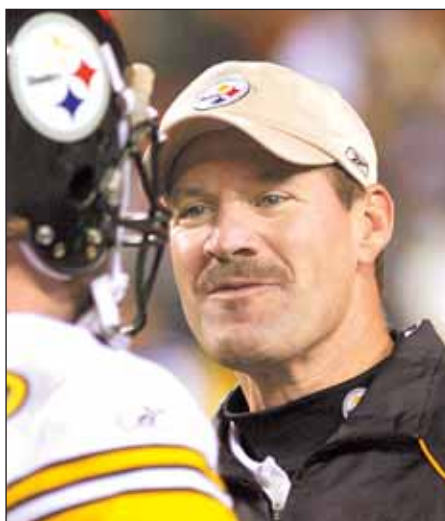


Jim Litke

Rooney's backing, he stuck around for 23 seasons.

Not that any coach gets too comfortable these days. A week ago, on a day known in league circles as "Black Monday," four coaches were fired, bringing to eight the number who began this regular season in charge somewhere but won't be around for the next one. Three of them made the playoffs a year ago, which prompted Cowher to say during

(SEE COWHER, PAGE B3)



AP PHOTO

Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Bill Cowher talks with quarterback Ben Roethlisberger near the end of Sunday's 31-17 playoff victory against the Bengals in Cincinnati.

Trojans hope to win county title on home court

By RICK MORWICK

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Coach Cliff Hawkins has few complaints about the Center Grove High School boys basketball team.

Off to their best start since the 2000-01 season, the Trojans won five of their first eight games, were 4-1 in the month of December, won three of their first four road games and have been competitive against all opponents.

Yet Hawkins isn't fully satisfied. Halfway into his second season, he is eager for Center Grove to take the next competitive step, which is to become a force in the Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference.

Center Grove was 1-6 in the MIC last year and is 1-1 this season after Friday's 69-67 loss at Carmel.

"I'm really happy with our team," Hawkins said. "I'm really happy with how much effort they're giving, and I know that they're holding their heads up very high because they know that they are working at an incredible level."

Center Grove players will hold their heads even higher if they can accomplish a goal that was painfully out of reach last sea-

STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/
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Center Grove High School boys basketball coach Cliff Hawkins shouts instructions to the Trojans' players during Friday's game at Carmel.

son: winning the Johnson County Tournament.

In last year's final at Whiteland, the Trojans lost a 67-66 heart-breaker to Franklin on a rebound basket at the buzzer.

As this year's tournament hosts, the Trojans are expecting a markedly different result. They have a first-round bye and a fierce desire to win on their home floor.

"That should be fun. It's

(SEE COUNTY, PAGE B2)

IF YOU GO

What: 2006 Johnson County boys basketball tournament

Where: Center Grove High School

Defending champion: Franklin

Schedule

First round

Today's games

6 p.m. — Franklin vs. Edinburgh

7:30 p.m. — Indian Creek vs. Whiteland 7:30 p.m.

Second round

Friday's games

6 p.m. — Greenwood vs. Franklin/Edinburgh winner

7:30 p.m. — Center Grove vs. Indian Creek/Whiteland winner

Final round

Saturday's games

4:30 p.m. — Fifth-place game

6 p.m. — Third-place game

7:30 p.m. — Championship

Ticket information

• Tickets are \$5 per session; a tournament pass good for all games can be purchased for \$9

• Each school has at least 50 tournament passes for pre-sale

• All-sports passes from individual schools cannot be used at the tournament

• Tickets go on sale at the door Tuesday and Friday at 5 p.m. and Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

Dreaming big: CG aims for state title

By JOHN GROTH

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If the Center Grove High School gymnastics team needs motivation, it doesn't have far to look.

Signs are displayed through-

out the gym and decorate locker-room walls. They may have different colors and different shapes, but they bear the same message: "New team, same dream."

All remind the Trojans of their goal of winning their first state championship. And it's a goal they get closer and closer to achieving each year.

"They're willing to pay the price to bring the program to where it's been in the past," coach Eric Howe said. "We had our very first team meeting earlier this year and discussed the team slogan. I think I got a brisk glimpse of their desire when they came up with it."

"They're willing to put in the work and hours, the blood, sweat and tears of what it's going to take."

Coming off its best season in school history, Center Grove is even hungrier to win its first state championship.

Last year, the Trojans had an undefeated (14-0) regular season, finished as sectional and regional champions and finished in third

STAFF PHOTO BY MATT COLEBY/
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Center Grove High School senior Elaine Maurer works out on the balance beam during gymnastics practice at the school Monday.

place at the state meet. That's after they finished fourth at the 2005 state meet and fifth in 2004.

Center Grove keeps climbing up in its state finishes, but the Trojans haven't hit their mark just yet. And they want that first

(SEE DREAMING, PAGE B2)