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SPORTS

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SECTION B



Umpire Garth DeFelice, right, signals a first down for the Pittsburgh Steelers after Troy Polamalu, 43, intercepted a pass by the Colts' Peyton Manning during a Jan. 15 playoff game in Indianapolis. The call was overturned after a review.

Every ruling is big

Botched calls put more scrutiny on Super Bowl refs

By ANDREA ADELSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT

They're the guys in black and white. No names needed.

Unless they make a bad call. Then, everyone finds out who these NFL officials are. Criticized and vilified, their eyesight and sanity are called into question. And a lot of them are making names for themselves lately.

In a postseason filled with questionable calls, the spotlight will be harsher than ever for referee Bill Leavy and his officiating crew when Pittsburgh plays Seattle on Super Bowl Sunday.

"What we want to do is to pick up the paper Monday and read about the game, not the officiating," said Mike Pereira, who oversees NFL refs. "We all want to be anonymous."

That can be tough sometimes. With more than 130 million people watching the Super Bowl in 234 countries around the world, a wrong move can lead to outrage.

"There's no such thing as perfection. Mistakes happen," Jerry Markbreit, the only person to be the head referee in four Super Bowls, said Wednesday. "Officials are so hard on themselves. When they make a mistake, nobody feels worse than they do."

Pete Morelli and his crew found that out first hand while working the Indianapolis-Pittsburgh playoff game last month.

Morelli overturned an interception by Steelers safety Troy Polamalu on video review late in the game, and it nearly cost the Steelers a victory.

Pittsburgh held on to win 21-18, linebacker Joey Porter later said the officials tried to cheat them out of a victory, and the NFL

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SUPER BOWL

Seattle Seahawks vs. Pittsburgh Steelers

Time: 6 p.m. Sunday
TV: WRTV-Channel 6

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Pro-Liffick scorer
Whiteland graduate an ace for Evansville

By RICK MORWICK
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Megan Liffick wasted no time picking up in college where she left off in high school.

The most prolific scorer in Johnson County girls basketball history, the former Whiteland star started the first game of her freshman season at the University of Evansville.

She played 40 minutes and scored 14 points in a 60-58 win against Louisville. She's been scoring strong ever since. Just like in high school.

"I really didn't know what to expect coming in," said Liffick, who had seven rebounds, two assists and a steal in that remarkable debut four years ago. "It was so awesome when (the coach) said I was starting the first game of my freshman year."

"It was just something that I've always dreamed of."

It was also a harbinger of better things to come, both for Liffick and the Purple Aces.

Barring an unforeseen circumstance, Liffick, who scored a county-record 1,873 points in high school, will finish her career among the top scorers in Evansville history.

Heading into tonight's game at Northern Illinois, the 5-foot-10 senior guard/forward needs only 37 points to become the 15th Evansville player to reach 1,000 in a career.

With nine regular-season games left, she's not only virtually assured of reaching the milestone, she has plenty of time to climb significantly higher up the scoring ladder.

Evansville coach Tricia Cullop knew the Aces (10-8) were getting a prodigious scorer when she won a recruiting battle for Liffick against Wisconsin, Kansas State and Wisconsin-Green Bay.

What Cullop didn't anticipate was the complete player Liffick would quickly become or the immediate impact she would have.

"She's been a major contributor since she stepped foot on campus," said Cullop, who is winding down her sixth season at Evansville. "She's a great athlete, and she's continued to work on her skills."

"She's just continued to improve every year. She's closing in on 1,000 points, and she's really

(SEE SCORER, PAGE B3)



Whiteland Community High School graduate Megan Liffick takes a shot for the University of Evansville women's basketball team during a recent game. Liffick is the Aces' leading scorer and is closing in on 1,000 points for her collegiate career.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF EVANSVILLE

THE LIFFICK FILE

Name: Megan Liffick
Home town: Whiteland
Birth date: Dec. 5, 1983
College: University of Evansville
Sport: Basketball
Year: Senior
Height: 5-foot-10
Experience: Four-year starter
Distinctions: Needs 37 points to reach 1,000 for career; Purple Aces' top scorer at 16.7 points per game; has averaged double figures throughout her career.
2004-05: Started all 28 games; averaged 11.1 points per game; earned honorable mention all-Missouri Valley Conference honor.
2003-04: Started 24 of 27 games; was Evansville's second-leading scorer at 10.4 points per game; led team in rebounds at 5.0 per game; ranked sixth in MVC in free-throw shooting at 78 percent.
2002-03: Started first seven games before suffering season-ending knee injury; averaged 10.9 points and 4.6 rebounds; had 14 points and seven rebounds in a 60-58 win against Louisville in college debut
High school: Whiteland
High school honors: Two-time Daily Journal Johnson County Player of the Year; Daily Journal's 2001-02 Johnson County Female Athlete of the Year; four-year varsity volleyball player; four-year varsity track athlete; finished career with county-record 1,873 points
Major: Exercise science
Career goal: To become a physical therapist
Family: Parents Mike and Sally Liffick; sister Melissa, who also played at Whiteland and collegiately at Earlham

IU wins, Purdue falls in Big Ten

Wilmont, Surh lift Hoosiers to home win against Wildcats

The Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON

Roderick Wilmont scored a career-high 23 points in his first start this season, and little-used guard Errek Suhr provided a second-half spark to help No. 22 Indiana beat Northwestern 72-63 on Wednesday night.

The Hoosiers (13-5, 5-3) snapped a two-game losing streak by winning their 34th straight home game against the Wildcats. They have also won 13 straight Big Ten home games.

Vedran Vukusic scored 18 points, and Mohamed Hachad added 14 for Northwestern (10-9, 3-5), which has lost six of its past seven games. The Wildcats still have not won at Assembly Hall. Their most recent win in Bloomington came in 1968, when the Hoosiers played in the IU Fieldhouse.

Indiana, which produced season-low shooting percentages in each of its past three games, got itself righted against one of the nation's top defenses. The Hoosiers shot

(SEE HOOSIERS, PAGE B2)

Iowa player feels better after Hawkeyes overcome Boilers

By STEVE HERMAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEST LAFAYETTE

Jeff Horner ditched his knee brace and found his shot. The Iowa senior scored a career-high 32 points and set a school record for career 3-point field goals, leading the 23rd-ranked Hawkeyes to a 77-68 victory against Purdue on Wednesday night.

"It felt like everything was in balance," said Horner, who injured his left knee in early December, sat out four games and wore a brace the past eight weeks.

He missed all eight of his shots from the field in a 67-62 victory against Ohio State on Saturday, then came in the next day for a workout on his own without the brace. He realized he was ready.

"It feels tremendously different. I'm so much faster," he said. "My leg feels a lot lighter."

Horner hit seven 3-pointers, including six in the second

(SEE BETTER, PAGE B2)

Pacers stop Kobe

Indiana ends long losing streak by downing Lakers

By RICK MORWICK
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The NBA's hottest player was no match for the East's coldest team. Or its newest member.

Go figure. In an unlikely turn of events, Peja Stojakovic outshined Kobe Bryant Wednesday night at Conoco Fieldhouse, where the Indiana Pacers routed the Los Angeles Lakers 105-79.

Playing only his second game since being traded from Sacramento for Ron Artest, Stojakovic had 26 points, 13 rebounds and two steals in his home debut. He was 9 of 19 from the field, including 5 of 11 from 3-point range, in a team-high 41 minutes.

Stojakovic's effort not only impressed a home crowd starved for a positive result, it helped the Pacers (22-22) end a six-game losing streak, their longest since March of last season.

"It is important to get a win. We played good basketball," said Stojakovic, Indiana's leading scorer the past two games. "We had a nice home crowd and can build on this win and keep getting better."

"Each and every game I'm going to feel a little more comfortable."

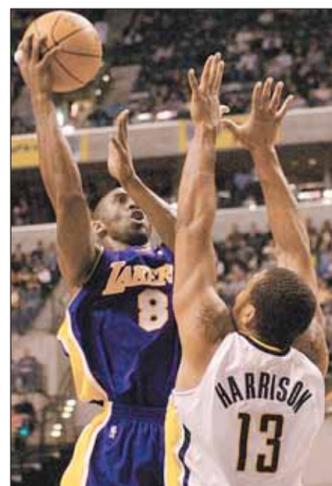
Stojakovic's performance wasn't the only one of note.

Bryant's was noteworthy because of what he didn't accomplish.

For the first time since Jan. 12, the NBA scoring leader failed to reach 30 points.

Five games removed from his 81-point outing against Toronto, Bryant was limited to 26, his lowest output since scoring 21 on Dec. 23 against Orlando.

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B3)



STAFF PHOTO BY MATT DOOLEY/mooley@thejournalnet.com
The Lakers' Kobe Bryant, left, goes up for a shot over the Pacers' David Harrison during the first half of Wednesday's game at Conoco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com
Franklin's Calvin Johnson, top, tries to pin Plainfield's Austin Nichols during the 275-pound match in the regional championship match at Avon on Wednesday.

Cubs overpower foes in wrestling team regional

By JOHN GROTH
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AVON

Franklin Community High School wrestling is back to its dominating ways.

And the Grizzly Cubs on Wednesday showed they're primed and ready for a run at a state title.

Franklin defeated Plainfield 62-8 in the Avon IHSAA team regional championship, and the Grizzly Cubs showed coach Bob Hasseman just how hungry they are.

"I said to the kids, 'Show me the money' before the match," Hasseman said. "And they did that. You

can't just talk about winning. You've got to do it."

Franklin advances to the team semistate next Wednesday at Avon.

The Cubs, who earned their first trip to the team semistate since the 2003-04, pummeled opponents in both matches. They earned revenge against Avon, which ended Franklin's nine-year regional winning streak last year, with a 48-17 win in the semifinal round. Plainfield defeated Center Grove 36-29 in the other semifinal.

Hasseman expected to win both regional matches. But he didn't think the Cubs would do so in such a dominating fashion.

Against Plainfield, Franklin won the first nine matches, jumped out to a 47-0 lead and cruised from there. The Grizzly Cubs won 12 of 14 matches overall, including seven by pin. They dominated Avon in similar fashion, winning nine matches overall and six by pin.

"I thought Plainfield would try to beat us, but they didn't," Hasseman said. "They wrestled their junior varsity players (at the end)."

"I thought the match against Avon would be closer, too. But we don't get a lot of kids pinned. We take pride in not getting pinned

(SEE CUBS, PAGE B3)

AT A GLANCE

Avon wrestling regional Wednesday's scores

Semifinals
Plainfield 36, Center Grove 29
Franklin 48, Avon 17

Championship
Franklin 67, Plainfield 8

Up next
Franklin will take on the winner of the Seymour Regional in the Avon Semistate next Wednesday