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SPORTS

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SECTION B

Pacers topple Bucks

Faster pace seems to benefit Indiana

By CLIFF BRUNT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

The Indiana Pacers came back from their West Coast trip looking like a Western Conference team.

The Pacers gave up their grind-it-out style for a quicker pace in a 112-88 win against Milwaukee on Wednesday.

Stephen Jackson, who scored 24 points, said the Pacers have enjoyed developing their new style in recent games. The Pacers have won three of their past four games while averaging 102 points per contest.

"We're starting to get a real feel for each other," Jackson said. "We're at our best when we're up-tempo."

It was the Pacers' second-highest output of the season. The Pacers shot 56 percent from the field and handed the Bucks their fourth loss in five games.

The 24-point margin tied Milwaukee's most lopsided loss of the season.

Dan Gadzuric led Milwaukee with 17 points and T.J. Ford added 16. Michael Redd entered the game averaging 25 points, but the Pacers held him to just 13 on 4-of-15 shooting from the field.

The Pacers' new attacking offense caught Redd by surprise.

"A team like that which is known to execute real well in the halfcourt offense, you don't expect them to come out and score 110 points," he said.

Fred Jones has been a key to Indiana's surge. The guard scored 17 points against the

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The Pacers' Fred Jones, right, is fouled by the Bucks' Dan Gadzuric during the first quarter of Wednesday's game in Indianapolis.

Coach says Cubs watched Falcons play strong game

By GREG DODDRIDGE
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

The Perry Meridian High School girls basketball team used its inside duo to perfection against Franklin.

Freshman Sam Hawk and senior Molly McCarty made all nine shots they attempted as the Falcons defeated the Grizzly Cubs 41-27 on Wednesday night.

"We got outplayed in every phase of the game," Franklin coach Walt Raines said. "(The Falcons) deserved to win. They outplayed and outstuffed us."

"We spent the game watching, and Perry Meridian spent the game playing."

The Falcons (5-8) held Franklin (9-8) to 9-of-38 shooting while they made 14 of 25 field

FALCONS 41

GRIZZLY CUBS 27

INSIDE

Class 3A No. 8-ranked Whiteland falls to Mid-State Conference foe.

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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

Too soon to tell

Long-term success, not playoff wins, will define legacy for Colts' Manning

By RICK MORWICK

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INDIANAPOLIS

For all the records, all the wins, all the playoff appearances, all the commercials and all the endorsements, Peyton Manning doesn't have the one commodity that defines greatness in the NFL.

He doesn't own a Super Bowl ring.

He hasn't even been to the Super Bowl.

But Manning isn't worried.

At 29, he's already had a career like few others.

He's still got plenty of football left. And if the Indianapolis Colts fail in their latest bid to reach the Super Bowl, he's confident he'll get another chance.

But whether he does or whether he doesn't, Manning won't reflect on it until his playing days end.

And the two-time league MVP doesn't envision that happening anytime soon.

"I'm not into defining a career in the middle of a career," said Manning, who is winding down his seventh season as the Colts' quarterback. "I hope to play for a number of more years, and I'm not really one to reflect on my first eight years or what happens in years nine or 10."

"I'm concerned with this season and where we are and just trying to get myself ready to play, and hopefully we can go out and play well on Sunday."

On paper, the Colts (14-2) have their best chance to reach the Super Bowl since Manning's arrival in

TELLING NUMBERS

A look at Peyton Manning's performance in the playoffs:

0-3 Manning's record in his first three playoff games. Manning is 3-5 overall in the playoffs.

35.5 Manning's passer rating, a season low, in the 2004 AFC title game at New England.

3 Points scored by the Colts in a loss at New England in last year's divisional round. His passer rating was 69.3. His rating during the regular season was a record 121.1

1.63-1 Ratio of TD passes thrown to interceptions in the playoffs since 2002. His regular-season ratio during that same period is 2.71-1.

1998. They have the NFL's best record, are the AFC's top seed and have home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

They also have a second-round opponent, the Pittsburgh Steelers, they routed 26-7 in a Monday Night Football game Nov. 28 in the RCA Dome.

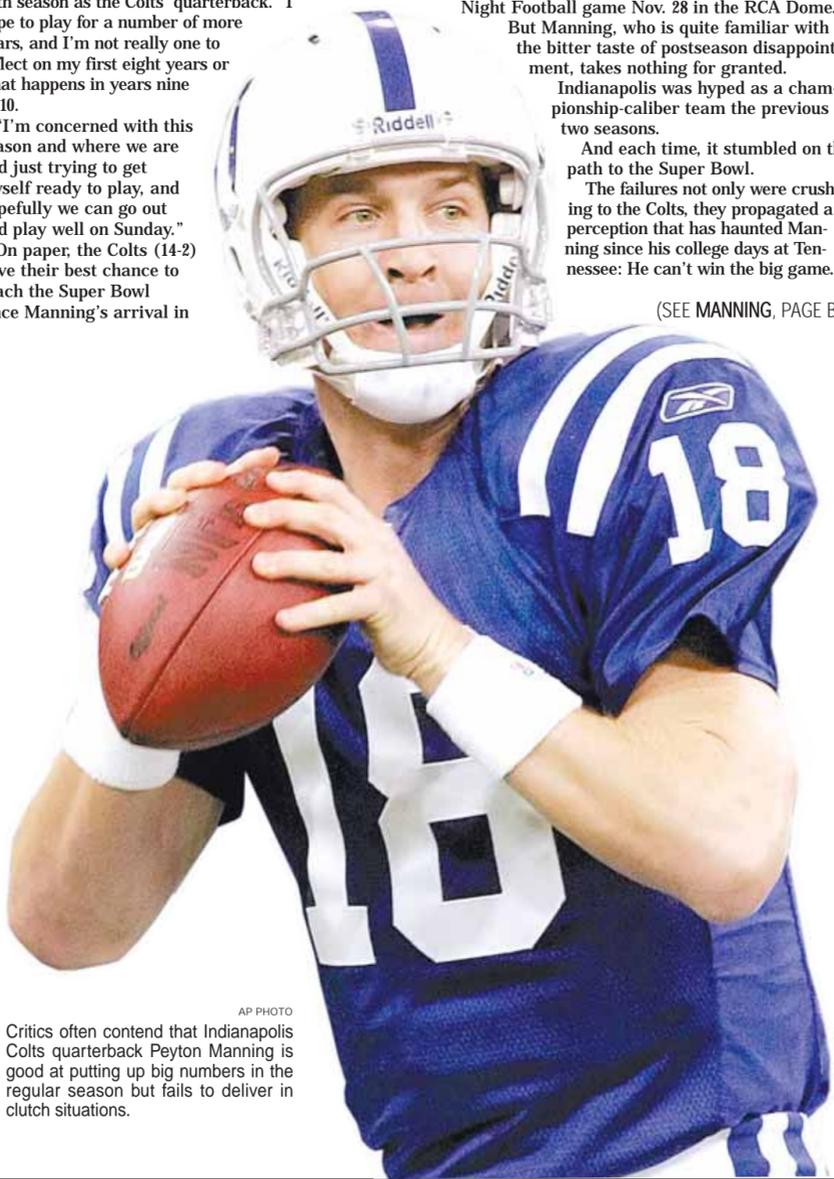
But Manning, who is quite familiar with the bitter taste of postseason disappointment, takes nothing for granted.

Indianapolis was hyped as a championship-caliber team the previous two seasons.

And each time, it stumbled on the path to the Super Bowl.

The failures not only were crushing to the Colts, they propagated a perception that has haunted Manning since his college days at Tennessee: He can't win the big game.

(SEE MANNING, PAGE B5)



AP PHOTO

Critics often contend that Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning is good at putting up big numbers in the regular season but fails to deliver in clutch situations.

Spartans get past Hoosiers

Coach's critique gives lift to Michigan State

By LARRY LAGE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST LANSING, Mich.

Maurice Ager and Paul Davis were challenged publicly and privately by Michigan State coach Tom Izzo after two poor games.

They responded.

Ager scored 28 points, and Davis had 23 points and 10 rebounds to lead the 14th-ranked Spartans to their first Big Ten win, 87-73 against No. 9 Indiana on Wednesday.

Michigan State (13-4, 1-2) bounced back from two straight double-digit losses because Ager and Davis were tough to stop after struggling in those setbacks.

Ager and Davis combined for 34 points at No. 7 Illinois and No. 21 Wisconsin.

"It's a no-brainer; we can't win if me and Paul both play bad," Ager said.

That's essentially what Izzo told reporters and the standout seniors.

"That's what you're supposed to do with good players that have been around for four years," Izzo said. "I do spend a lot of time with them, and I tell them, 'I'm not going to make excuses for you.'"



AP PHOTO

Indiana's Earl Calloway, center, dishes off between Michigan State's Travis Walton, left, and Idong Ibok during Wednesday's game in East Lansing, Mich.

(SEE HOOSIERS, PAGE B3)

Boilers suffer Big Ten loss on own court

The Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE

J.J. Sullinger scored 17 points, and Je'Kel Foster tied his career high with six steals Wednesday night as No. 19 Ohio State beat Purdue 80-64.

The Buckeyes (12-1, 2-1 Big Ten) built a 14-point halftime lead, forced four turnovers by Purdue in the first 2 minutes of the second half and led by as many as 25 points midway through the period.

The Boilermakers, hurt by mistakes the whole game, never came closer than 16 points the rest of the way.

Terence Dials added 13 points, while Foster and Matt Sylvester each finished with 10.

Matt Kiefer had 15 points and 13 rebounds for Purdue (6-8, 0-3), which lost its first home game of the season and its 11th straight against a ranked opponent. Marcus White added 13 points.

Purdue scored the first basket of the game, but Ohio State went on a 12-0 run, including six points by Sylvester, and turned back every comeback by the Boilermakers with timely 3-pointers. Ohio State was

(SEE BOILERS, PAGE B3)



STAFF PHOTO BY MATT OOLEY/moolley@thejournalnet.com

Franklin Community High School senior Erin Bullington, right, drives past Perry Meridian defender Kristin Raker during the first half of Wednesday's game at Franklin.

Smallmouth bass anglers ready to share joy of fight at first expo

By JOHN GROTH

DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER
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J.T. Volz has fought his share of battles with a variety of fish.

But one species in particular puts up a vicious fight every time: smallmouth bass.

Volz is often exhausted after reeling in the biggest of the smallmouth, which are abundant in Indiana rivers and streams.

"They just fight," said Volz, a 28-year-old Franklin resident.

"They're one of the heftiest fighters out there because in rivers, and in the current, they're a stronger fish."

"When you're smallmouth fishing, you have a lighter line. You have to wear the fish out in order to land it in."

Smallmouth fishing is growing among Indiana outdoorsmen.

Five years ago, the Indiana Smallmouth Club had five members. Today, membership tops 900.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Franklin resident J.T. Volz shows off a smallmouth bass he caught on a 2002 visit to Dogtooth Lake in Northwest Ontario, Canada.

On Saturday and Sunday, the Indiana Smallmouth Club will conduct its first Fishing and Conservation Expo at Scott Hall on the Johnson County Fairgrounds in Franklin.

(SEE ANGLERS, PAGE B4)

IF YOU GO

What: Indiana Smallmouth Club Fishing and Conservation Expo
When: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday

Where: Johnson County Fairgrounds, Scott Hall, in Franklin
Cost: Adults \$3; Children younger than 16 \$1.50

Guest speakers

Saturday

10 a.m. — Walleye with Jig'n Jimmy Lang

11 — Carp with Huxley and Gilbert

Noon — Catfishing with Jimmy Hearn

1 p.m. — Smallmouth with Ray Rigby

2 until closing — Casting Kids contest

Sunday

10 a.m. — Panfishing with Larry Creelius

11 — Stripperfishing with Captain Mark "Willie" Williams

12:30 p.m. — Musky Fishing 101 with Kenton Smith

1:30 — Indy Flycasters with Dan Sutton