

● Hoosiers

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shooting a dreadful 31.8 percent from the field, connecting on only 1 of 10 3-pointers, going 9:18 without a point and finishing with a season-low 15 points.

To coach Mike Davis, it looked eerily reminiscent of recent games he'd seen at Purdue and Michigan.

"We got off to a great start, a blazing 15 points in the first half," Davis joked. "Just kidding."

Fortunately for Davis and the Hoosiers, the second half also looked familiar.

Indiana shot 64.3 percent from the field, and Killingsworth and Strickland each scored 14 points. Killingsworth finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds, while Strickland had 16 points in the Hoosiers' fifth straight win.

Indiana is now 5-1 since Davis announced his resignation last month and faces No. 7 Ohio State on Saturday in its first semifinal game since 2003. The Buckeyes advanced after surviving a scare from Penn State 63-56. Indiana won the first matchup this season 81-79 in Bloomington.

"It'll be a fun thing," Killingsworth said. "The last game, it was a good battle. I'm looking forward to it."

The victory also helped Indiana solidify its NCAA tournament hopes.

But this wasn't the finish Wisconsin (19-11) wanted to leave with the selection committee. Despite getting 20 points and eight rebounds from Tucker, 12 points from Brian Butch and 10 points from freshman Kevin Gullikson, the Badgers have now lost three straight and are still one win away from their fourth consecutive 20-win season.

Coach Bo Ryan called it an uncharacteristic effort from the Badgers, who have one win since Feb. 15. Wisconsin forced only five second-half turnovers and couldn't prevent Killingsworth from dominating the middle down the stretch.

It's also the first time in three years the Badgers have not reached the title game.

"I think they were more attentive in getting the ball to Killingsworth, and he was killing us," Ryan said. "He was 10 for 15, and we thought we were making him work."

Indiana extended the lead to as much as nine points twice in the second half, but the Badgers countered with a 9-1 run midway through the second half to retake a 46-45 lead.

After Michael Flowers' driving layup gave Wisconsin a 49-48 lead with 6:48 left, the Hoosiers scored seven straight points to make it 55-49 and never trailed again as they continued their late-season

rally around their outgoing coach.

"As a team, we've grown closer and we're having fun together," Strickland said. "You never know what's going to happen on Selection Sunday. But our goal is to win this tournament."

In Friday's other action

BIG TEN

No. 7 Ohio State 63 Penn State 56

INDIANAPOLIS — Penn State's zone defense gave Ohio State a lot more to worry about than its three-year NCAA probation.

Ron Lewis scored 17 points, and the No. 7 Buckeyes, who missed 11 of their first 13 shots, needed a flurry of 3-point baskets in the second half to rally past the Nittany Lions in the quarterfinals of the Big Ten tournament.

Ohio State, the tourney's top seed, found out shortly before the game about the sanctions, which brought an end to a lengthy NCAA investigation but will not affect their eligibility for the postseason.

ACC

No. 3 Duke 80 Miami 76

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Call it a slump, or maybe just the result of the normal ups and downs in a shooter's season. Either way, J.J. Redick finally appears to be beyond his struggles.

"I didn't really consider it a slump," Duke's star guard said. "There's been a lot written and a lot said and I've fielded a lot of questions from you about it, but I'm just happy we won."

In the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament, the third-ranked Blue Devils rarely do anything else.

Redick had 25 points and made a clutch jumper in the final minute, Sheldon Williams had his sixth straight double-double and Duke held off Miami in the quarterfinals.

Wake Forest 82 No. 25 N.C. State 71

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Eric Williams scored 20 points to lead Wake Forest past No. 25 North Carolina State in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament quarterfinals, giving the Demon Deacons their second upset of the Wolfpack in a week.

Senior Chris Ellis added a career-best 15 points for 12th-seeded Wake Forest (17-15), which reached the semifinals for the first time in three years and will face No. 3 Duke on Saturday.

Gavin Grant scored a career-high 24 for the fourth-seeded Wolfpack (21-9), who are suddenly reeling as they prepare for a fifth straight NCAA tournament. N.C. State has lost four straight, including consecutive losses to a team that hadn't beaten a ranked opponent all season.

SEC

South Carolina 79 No. 14 Tennessee 71

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — South Carolina coach Dave Odom hoped his team could be dominant this season. The Gamecocks picked tournament time to live up to his expectations.

The Kelley scored 25 points and South Carolina finally beat No. 14 Tennessee, knocking off the Volunteers to advance to the semifinals of the Southeastern Conference tournament.

● Flame

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

They're losing their coach. Many of them will be out of athletic eligibility or will transfer after this season.

The only thing left will be a loss or two.

And what does that matter after playing under perceived fan- and self-provided pressure all season to try to save the job of a coach who, it turns out, didn't want the job anyway?

As a result, IU is playing with the reckless abandon of a 16-year-old driving the family car behind his parents' backs.

Everybody knows this is going to end in a crash. The interesting part is when it happens, who gets hurt and who loses what.

Along the way, there's going to be plenty of loud music, laughs, screaming and memories, and nobody's going to want it to end any time soon.

Make no mistake, the Hoosiers are loving jumping all those curbs, medians and Badgers along the way.

Their most recent victory, a 61-56 defeat of Wisconsin on Friday in the Big Ten tournament quarterfinals at Consec-

ration Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, all but ensures an NCAA tournament appearance that few thought possible a month ago.

Indiana is 19-10, with 10 victories in the rugged Big Ten. IU likely will have a top-30 ranking in the Ratings Percentage Index that the NCAA selection committee will use Sunday, and those kinds of teams jockey for seeding instead of just entry.

"I can't tell you the last time I smiled and had so much fun," Hoosiers coach Mike Davis said. "I'm really enjoying it. ... I really am. ... This is the way it should be."

Indiana likely rolls into the tournament seeded somewhere from No. 6 to No. 11, depending on how the rest of this weekend shakes out.

Sluggish Ohio State, which outlasted Penn State Friday, will be the first highly ranked team that wants no part of the Hoosiers in this afternoon's Big Ten semifinals.

Hoosiers senior center Marco Killingsworth is one of the truly dominant post players on the NCAA landscape, and on Friday he went 10 for 15 for 20 points and 12 rebounds and bullied the Badgers' hands-happy defenders.

Surrounding him on the perimeter are a series of quick, defensive-minded guards who

can cause some measure of chaos.

When it comes to shooting, they have no conscience, which, again, can be a good or bad thing.

Marshall Strickland, Robert Vaden and Roderick Wilmont are just as likely to skim the bottom corner of the backboard as they are to laser in a 25-footer.

Wilmont was feeling so cheeky after his 3-pointer gave the Hoosiers a six point lead with 4:29 left in the game that he turned around and talked trash straight at Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan on his trip back to get ready for defense.

This isn't to say that Indiana is any kind of legitimate Final Four threat. The flaws that led to losing seven of eight games in mid-season are still present and for whole halves of games.

In the first half of Friday's defeat of the Badgers, IU produced no assists, nine turnovers and struggled to score 15 points. Yet, due to a suffocating defense that limited Wisconsin to only 25 percent shooting, the Hoosiers trailed by just four points.

In analyzing what went wrong in the first half of this particular game, Davis could have been assessing the flaws that have kept Indiana on the ubiquitous bubble all winter:

"We didn't cut. ... We stood around. ... We settled for jump shots. ... We settled on offense."

After some halftime corrections, the fifth-seeded Hoosiers overwhelmed the fourth-seeded Badgers (19-11), shooting 64.3 percent from the field in the second half, flipping the assist-turnover ratio to 13-to-5 and calmly salting away the game in the final two minutes.

Davis asserted that such a comeback wouldn't have been possible before he resigned after a loss at Penn State on Feb. 15.

"We've won five in a row, and in all five we've been behind," he said. "Before when we were behind, it was tough to come back in that stretch. ... The guys are having fun, and it's important to me to see them having fun, relaxing and enjoying it."

Davis spent some of his post-game news conference joking, facetiously calling the 15-point first half blazing and "as well as we've shot all year."

Dry wit and 3-pointers. Sarcasm and slam dunks.

This March for Indiana, every game's a carefree potential victory, and everybody's a comedian.

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