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SPORTS

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SECTION B

NFL

Super game minus Colts

Indianapolis fans plan to watch Seattle, Pittsburgh square off

By JOHN GROTH

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Edward Dundas expects the Super Bowl to be a super blowout. After watching Pittsburgh shut down the Indianapolis Colts in the playoffs and then steamroll over the Denver Broncos, he's convinced the Steelers are this year's supreme team. Dundas, 59, anticipates the Steelers to dominate again when they play the Seattle Seahawks in the Feb. 5 Super Bowl in Detroit.

In fact, the Franklin resident predicts the Seahawks won't come within two touchdowns of the Steelers. He plans to watch even though the Colts won't be there.

"I was looking for the Colts to win it, but they let me down. They let everybody down," Dundas said. "I figure if Pittsburgh can beat the guy (Peyton Manning) that broke all the all-time records, they can win the Super Bowl."

Pittsburgh and Seattle cruised to respective AFC and NFC Championship game victories Sunday and will face off in Super Bowl XL in Detroit on Feb. 5.

The showdown clearly isn't want Colts fans wanted, but a number of local residents still intend to watch the big game even though Indianapolis' season ended with a thud.

And many are picking the Steelers to win. Warren Larison is one of them.

He said he wouldn't dare miss the Super Bowl.

Larison, 59, loves football and looks forward to watching the game on TV each year.

He insists the Steelers have the advantage because they defeated the Colts and the other top AFC playoff teams.

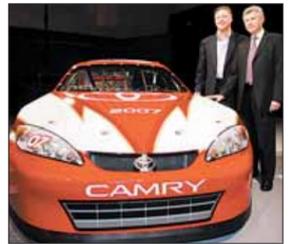
"Pittsburgh played in a stronger division," said Larison, an Indianapolis resident. "I think the Steelers will win by at least 10 points or so."

"But I hope it's a good game and it's closer than that."



The Seahawks' Darrell Jackson celebrates with fans in the end zone after his third-quarter touchdown during Sunday's game against Carolina.

AP PHOTO



AP PHOTO

NASCAR chairman and CEO Brian France, left, and Dave Illingworth, senior vice-president for Toyota Motor Sales USA, unveil a Toyota Camry that will begin racing in NASCAR Nextel Cup in 2007 in Concord, N.C., on Monday.

Toyota going racing

Carmaker joins chase for Cup

By MIKE HARRIS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONCORD, N.C.

Toyota is planning to move up to NASCAR's top two stockcar series, and not everybody is happy about it.

The Japanese automaker, which has competed in NASCAR's Craftsman Truck Series the past two seasons, announced Monday it will also run its Camry brand in both the Nextel Cup and Busch Series in 2007.

NASCAR chairman Brian France gave his blessing to Toyota, telling more than 200 reporters taking part in the first day of the annual preseason media tour "Toyota has proven in the truck series it can be a great partner. NASCAR offered them the best opportunity to build their presence in racing in North America, and we're glad they are here."

Toyota will become the first foreign competitor in NASCAR's top series since Jaguar ran in several races in the 1950s.

Team owner Jack Roush, who runs cars in each of the three top NASCAR series and whose drivers have won two of the past three Cup titles, offered a warning about Toyota's move up.

"If NASCAR manages to get in front of Toyota and tell them what they want to do and enforce it, they'll be the first sanctioning body that ever did that," said

(SEE TOYOTA, PAGE B3)

BRAGGING RIGHTS

How the three automakers involved in NASCAR Nextel Cup racing fared in last year's manufacturers' points standings:

	Chevrolet Points: 259 Wins: 17
	Ford Points: 246 Wins: 16
	Dodge Points: 179 Wins: 3

IN THEIR OPINION

What some local residents had to say when asked if they had any interest in watching the Super Bowl even though the Colts won't play in the game:



Edward Dundas
Franklin

"(The Steelers) ran over the Colts and ran over Denver. I should have bet on them. I had the opportunity to bet \$200 on them beating Denver, but I changed my mind. I think they'll dominate again. "Jerome Bettis is twice as big as anybody in the NFL. How do you stop someone like that?"



Greg Grabhorn
Indianapolis

"I'd like to see Pittsburgh win because of Jerome Bettis. It'd like to see Bettis win in his last year. Roethlisberger isn't too far from there, either."



Matthew Holtsclaw
Greenwood

"I'll still watch the Super Bowl. I'll still be partying but I won't be drinking as much. "The Colts are cursed. They always mess up in the playoffs. I always will be a Colts fan. But they won't ever make it to the Super Bowl. They've got to make me a believer."



Cedric Jones
Indianapolis

"I will still watch it. I support Pittsburgh because they beat the Colts. It won't be as good for me, but I'll still watch it."



Warren Larison
Indianapolis

"The Steelers outplayed (the Colts), so they were the better team. If we had played a little bit better, it would've been us winning (and going to the Super Bowl). "This was our year. We had everything going for us. It should've been our year."



Tiffany Mesecher
Indianapolis

"I want to see Pittsburgh win because it's Jerome Bettis' last year. He deserves it. He's worked hard, and if this is his last year, why not? "We can get it next year."

Indianapolis resident Cedric Jones was disgusted when the Colts lost to the Steelers. But he's still picking Pittsburgh to win.

Jones, 27, will watch and support the Steelers, only because they defeated the Colts to get to the Super Bowl.

"Pittsburgh has a better defense and is more aggressive than Seattle," Jones said. "With the running game they have, they should get that started and dominate the whole game."

It's not as easy for other people to pick a winner.

Indianapolis resident Greg Grabhorn will be watching the game with

friends. But he's not sure who will take home the title.

Grabhorn, 37, would like Pittsburgh to win for veteran running back Jerome Bettis, who is probably playing in his final game after 13 seasons and is making his first trip to the Super Bowl.

But Grabhorn said the style of the game will dictate the outcome.

"If it's a defensive game, Pittsburgh will win," said Grabhorn, who is originally from Greenwood. "Pittsburgh has a little bit better defense, and if it's a close, tight game, then the Steelers will hold on."

"If there (are) a lot of points, then

I'd say Seattle. Seattle has a really good offense, especially with (Shaun) Alexander running the ball."

Other fans, like Greenwood resident Matthew Holtsclaw, are rooting for the Seahawks, just to spite the Steelers.

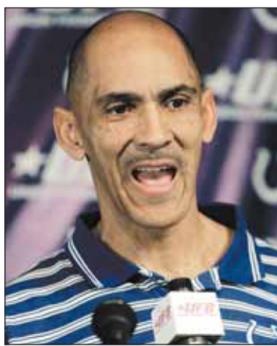
Holtsclaw, 23, plans to watch the Super Bowl.

But he doesn't expect to enjoy it as much since the Colts aren't playing.

"I want Seattle, just because Pittsburgh beat us," Holtsclaw. "That's the only reason I want to see (the Seahawks) win."

"I'm just going to watch it because it's the Super Bowl."

Dungy now says he's certain of return



AP PHOTO

Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy considered taking time off after the team was eliminated from the playoffs by Pittsburgh on Jan. 15.

By MICHAEL MAROT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Tony Dungy needed one week to decide he still wants to be an NFL coach. Now it's back to pursuing that elusive Super Bowl run.

The Indianapolis Colts said Monday that Dungy would return as their coach next season, ending speculation he might retire following the December death of his 18-year-old son, James.

"I was always coming back unless I said I wasn't," he said through the team. Dungy and team president Bill Polian were en route to the Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala., Monday and were unavailable for comment. The Associated Press left a phone message for team owner Jim Irsay. Dungy's eventual decision was not a

"I was always coming back unless I said I wasn't."

Tony Dungy

Indianapolis Colts coach on speculation he would retire

certainty. One day after the Colts' shocking 21-18 loss to eventual AFC champion Pittsburgh in the playoffs, Dungy seemed genuinely conflicted about his coaching future.

At one point during his final news conference, Dungy said he was 100 percent sure he would return if the Colts asked him back.

Later, he left open the possibility of retirement, noting he wasn't sure how he would react after spending time with his

family and reflecting on the death of his son.

"My only reservation is that I really don't know how I'll react in the next few days," he said then.

Players have often praised Dungy for his rapport, his approach and beliefs.

It's a combination that has helped make Dungy one of the NFL's most successful coaches during the past decade.

Dungy has beaten all 32 teams, reached the playoffs eight times, won three straight AFC South titles and taken teams to the AFC and NFC championship games.

When the Colts won their first 13 games this season, the discussion centered on the possibility of an unbeaten season. During the streak, Dungy won

(SEE DUNGY, PAGE B3)

Kobe could pose threat to Wilt's single-game record

By JOHN NADEL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Wilt Chamberlain's record 100-point game seemed unreachable from the time he accomplished the feat nearly 44 years ago.

Perhaps it's not. Maybe Kobe Bryant can do it.

"I guess it's possible. I don't know, bro'. It's unthinkable," the Los Angeles Lakers' star said.

So was 81. At least before Sunday night.

But Bryant, so often unstoppable, was better than ever against the Toronto Raptors, scoring 28 of his team's 31 points in the fourth quarter to reach the



BRYANT

THE 70-PLUS CLUB

NBA players who have scored 70 or more points in a game:

Player	Year	Total
Wilt Chamberlain	1962	100
Kobe Bryant	2006	81
Wilt Chamberlain	1961	78
Wilt Chamberlain	1962	73*
David Thompson	1978	73
Wilt Chamberlain	1962	72
Elgin Baylor	1960	71
David Robinson	1994	71
Wilt Chamberlain	1963	70

*Chamberlain scored 73 twice in 1962.

second-highest single-game total in NBA history.

"Not even in my dreams," he said.

(SEE KOBE, PAGE B2)

Rare rally carries Hawks past Pacers

By PAUL NEWBERRY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA

The Atlanta Hawks found themselves in a familiar position early in the third quarter.

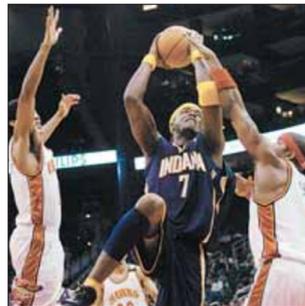
Then came the unusual part: The Hawks didn't fold. In fact, they won the game.

Joe Johnson scored 28 points, Tyronn Lue provided an unlikely spark off the bench, and the Hawks rallied in the second half for a 104-94 victory against the Indiana Pacers on Monday night.

"We made shots, we milked plays, and we just didn't crack," Hawks coach Mike Woodson said, "which was really nice to see."

The Hawks trailed 56-48 at halftime, and the Pacers twice stretched the lead to 11 in the opening minutes of the third quarter.

Considering the Hawks have the worst record in the league and were coming off two blowout losses at



AP PHOTO

The Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal, center, goes up for a shot against the Hawks' Josh Smith, right, and Josh Childress during Monday's game in Atlanta.

home, another defeat seemed likely.

But Atlanta surged in front before the period was over. Lue helped turn things around after missing four games with a sore back.

The Hawks were down 61-50 when the diminutive guard checked in off

the bench to key a 16-5 run. Lue made a 3-pointer, hit a couple of free throws and came up with a steal that set up Al Harrington's dunk.

"When we were struggling, (Lue) really held us together with his leadership and running our offense for us," Woodson said. "I didn't really come in the game thinking I was going to play him 30 minutes, but he had it going. He was orchestrating and creating on offense, so I was content to leave him in there."

Lue, who had 15 points and seven assists, is still trying to get back in game shape, which was obvious after the game.

"Coach about killed me out there," he quipped. "But sitting out those four games while I was hurt, I think it was good because I could sit back and see what we needed out there on the floor."

"When you play the game, there's not really enough time to see what

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B2)



TONIGHT'S GAME

Indiana Pacers (21-19) at Cleveland Cavaliers (21-17)

Time: 7 p.m.
TV: WTTV-Channel 4
Radio: WIBC-1070 AM