

# Tourneys bring money to city now, later

By JOHN GROTH  
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Indianapolis could generate \$10 million from the Big Ten basketball tournaments.

But Bob Schultz estimates the value goes far beyond that number.

The more Midwesterners who attend and sample the city's product, the more likely they are to return. And that means an even bigger profit for the future.

"People coming for the tournaments have high potential for returning for a leisure getaway or a leisure

visit," said Schultz, director of communication for the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association.

The tournaments also help Indianapolis reinforce itself as an amateur sports destination, Schultz said.

Fans from across the country are drawn to the tournaments.

The tournaments also mean media exposure for the city. Visitors dine in restaurants, relax in hotels and experience downtown Indianapolis. And that increases direct visitor spending.

Direct visitor spending is money visitors spend on accommodations, food and beverage, merchandise

and transportation while they're inside the city and attending the event, Schultz said.

It does not include admission, registration costs or the cost of traveling to or from the host city.

As for tournament attendance, more people come for the men's tournament than the women's.

The women's tourney draws between 6,000 and 9,000 fans per session. The men's attendance ranges from 10,000 to 15,000 per session.

Each total could rise in the finals. But there are many variables that determine how many fans attend and stay for tournament games.

"How long IU and Purdue are in the tournament, whether Illinois advances versus a Penn State (are factors)," Schultz said. "Minnesota or Penn State fans may not travel in as large a group to Indianapolis."

The tournaments also create a basketball atmosphere unlike any other. With basketball memorabilia, signs and hoopla all over downtown Indianapolis, fans and visitors are immersed in Hoosier Hysteria.

"They are feeling the collegiate buzz that accompanies a basketball tournament in downtown Indianapolis," Schultz said.

Although the economic profits

are important, John Stevens expects the psychological benefits to help the city even more.

Stevens, an economics professor at Franklin College, said other benefits of hosting the tournaments are just as great as economic gains.

"Indianapolis has gained recognition as a sports center with the NCAA headquarters, professional teams (and) minor-league baseball teams," he said. "Being at the center of the Big Ten area, having people come around and look in Indianapolis, I think the psychological factor is probably as important as the economic factor."

"People coming for the tournaments have high potential for returning for a leisure getaway or a leisure visit."

Bob Schultz  
Director of  
Communication  
for the Indianapolis  
Convention and  
Visitors Association

## Events

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

Indianapolis host this year's men's and women's Big Ten tournaments and the men's NCAA Final Four. The women's tournament begins today. The men's tournament begins March 9. The Final Four starts April 1.

It's the second straight year the city has hosted three high-profile college basketball events within a month.

Last year, Indianapolis hosted the women's Big Ten Tournament, first- and second-round games in the NCAA men's tournament and the women's Final Four.

The Indiana Sports Corp. is in charge of organizing the tournaments and events. They recruit volunteers, create organizing and planning committees and develop marketing strategies to promote the events throughout the city.

And for Indiana Sports Corp. president Susan Williams and media relations director Jeff Weitekamp, it's a challenge.

"It makes for a busy, busy March," Weitekamp said. "In the past, we've been able to take a little bit of time off after the Big Ten tournaments. Not this year."

"You sweat. You really have to communicate. That's really the secret to it. ... But it's lots of fun. It doesn't happen anywhere else. We're kind of lucky."

The city also is fortunate. Help comes from everywhere.

The city aids in promoting the events by putting up decorations, such as banners and street signs. This year, there even will be

## TOURNEY CITY

Basketball tournaments hosted by Indianapolis:

**Big Ten women's tournament**  
1995 to 2000, 2002 to present

**Big Ten men's tournament**  
2002, 2004 and 2006

**NCAA Tournament**  
Men's first and second rounds  
1982, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993,  
1996, 1999, 2003 and 2005

**NCAA Tournament**  
Men's Final Four  
1980, 1991, 1997, 2000 and 2006

**NCAA Tournament**  
Men's regional  
1979

**NCAA Tournament**  
Women's Final Four  
2005

SOURCE: Indiana Sports Corporation Web site, [www.indianasports.com/ISC2/whoisISC2.php](http://www.indianasports.com/ISC2/whoisISC2.php)

13-foot by 7-foot fiberglass shoes located throughout downtown.

The Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association organizes a hotel and dining list for fans. Indianapolis Downtown Inc. helps visitors find parking. Conesco Fieldhouse staff get the facility ready for play.

The Indianapolis Department of Public Works is also involved, as are local companies, including SportGraphics.

"It seems like we always have people willing to jump in and help in this city," Weitekamp said. "I don't know if other cities have that type of camaraderie. We get a lot of help. And that is what makes Indianapolis a great place to host sporting events."

## Planning ahead

The sports corporation has been planning this year's Big Ten tournaments since 2004, the most recent time the city hosted both.

After recruiting volunteers, it grouped people into seven committees: administration, community programs, game operations, event operations, participant services, special functions and marketing and media. Each committee had about 40 people and met one to three times per month.

In October, the seven groups came together to form an organizing committee. And once each month, the 50-member organizing committee met and discussed their specific group's progress.

But a lot of the volunteers aren't the people you might expect. Many are professionals with busy careers and lifestyles. Yet, they still make time to help out.

Debbie Lacey is a marketing manager at American Family Insurance in Indianapolis. She's volunteered for NCAA events since the late 1980s. In recent years, she has stepped into a leadership role.

Lacey created a volunteer group called site control in the early 1990s. The group consists of seasoned, professional volunteers who facilitate team movements inside Conesco Fieldhouse. They are responsible for getting teams to their locker rooms, onto the court and into their buses. No other venue in the country provides the service.

They are the first people to arrive in the morning and the last to leave.

"We've threatened to get cots here," said Lacey, who will work 9 a.m. to midnight today and then

arrive at 6:30 a.m. Friday for the first shoot-around.

"People think I'm crazy because of the time commitment," Lacey said. "But I'm a big sports and college basketball fan. I do it to have interaction with the teams and coaches."

Along with Lacey, Zionsville resident Andy Conner serves as a co-chairman for the site control group.

Conner, 48, is a senior banker with JP Morgan private client services in Indianapolis. He's been a Big Ten Tournament volunteer since 2002.

But he's been an NCAA volunteer since 1994. He's also served as a team host group member during the Final Fours in 1997 and 2000.

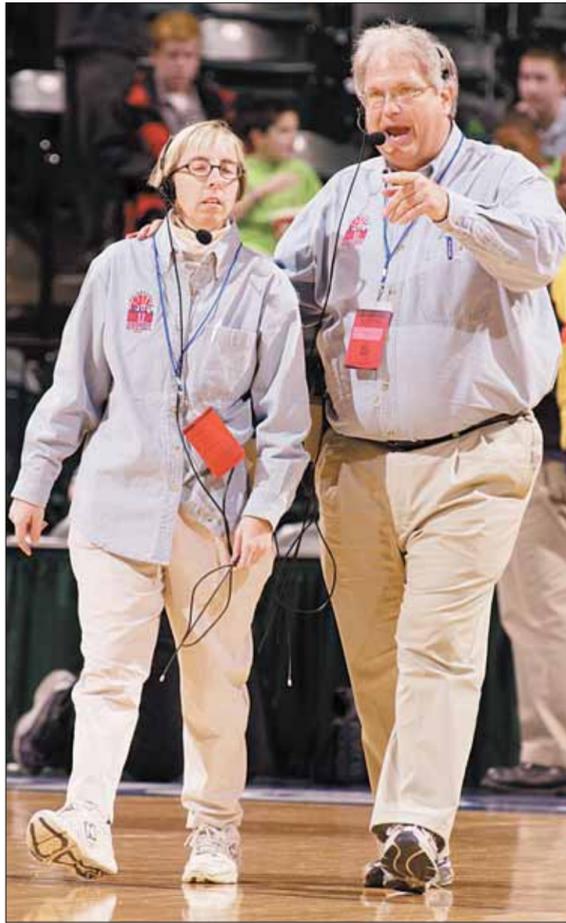
"It's a group that provides services outside the venue," Conner said. "We assist with team movements, dinner reservations, getting players ice cream sundaes while watching game film."

Services, including having medical personnel on hand, also must be provided. Holly Heitzman is in charge of those.

She organizes physical and athletic trainers for the tournaments. Heitzman said a primary care physician must be on hand at all times and an orthopedist, ophthalmologist and dentist are on call the entire tournament.

The Indiana Fever athletic trainer has been involved with the Big Ten tournaments for the past seven years. And each year, it gets easier.

"It's just a matter of scheduling," Heitzman said. "It's important for the city to bring in the tournament. You get to work with people in the city and get to know people. It's fulfilling."



Jill Henry, left, and Don Strack are two veteran volunteers for the local organizing committee that helps coordinate the Big Ten tournaments in Indianapolis. The women's tournament starts today at Conesco Fieldhouse.

# Colts making effort to sign their free agents • Road

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

By MICHAEL MAROT  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis Colts kept three more players Wednesday, agreeing to a new multiyear deal with free agent starting linebacker Gary Brackett and offering new contracts to tight end Ben Utecht and offensive guard Ryan Lilja.

Brackett, who led the team in tackles last season, was to become a restricted free agent Friday. But his agent said Brackett has reached an agreement on a new contract with the Colts, ahead of today's deadline for the team to offer him a one-year tender.

No financial details of Brackett's contract were available. The agents for Utecht and Lilja said they had been given new contracts, but Colts spokesman Craig Kelley declined to confirm the moves.



From left, line-backer Gary Brackett, guard Ryan Lilja and tight end Ben Utecht will be getting new deals from the Indianapolis Colts.

Brackett is the first of the Colts' three starting linebackers, all scheduled to become free agents, to stay with the team.

"Gary loves Indianapolis and playing for coach (Tony) Dungy and coach (Ron) Meeks," said Justin Fine, Brackett's agent. "It's a winning team and, coming from Rutgers, he understands how hard it is to play for a team that's not winning. He's looking forward to winning a Super Bowl."

Linebacker David Thornton will become an unrestricted free agent Friday if he can't reach

agreement on a contract. Cato June, who played in his first Pro Bowl this year, would become a restricted free agent, meaning the Colts could match any offer or receive compensation from the team he signed with.

Brackett became a starter for the first time last year and led the team with 131 tackles. He also intercepted three passes and forced Jerome Bettis to fumble near the goal line late in the Colts' playoff loss to eventual Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh. Fine said negotiations increased

with a flurry of phone calls Tuesday night and Wednesday.

"Gary was not their No. 1 priority, but he was a priority after Raheem (Brock) and Reggie (Wayne) got their deals done," Fine said.

Wayne, the Colts' leading receiver last season, agreed to a six-year, \$39 million contract last week. Brock, a defensive end, agreed to a five-year deal last weekend.

But the Colts still are scrambling to sew up free agents.

They offered minimum deals to Lilja, a starting guard, and Utecht, a tight end who saw significant playing time this season. Neither could sign with another team because they do not yet have enough service time in the NFL. By offering Lilja \$385,000 and Utecht \$310,000, they were able to keep both players on the roster.

The Colts still have 11 unre-

stricted free agents to deal with.

The top Colts players on the free-agent market are expected to be Edgerrin James, the team's all-time rushing leader; kicker Mike Vanderjagt; and defensive end Larry Tripplett, a key part of the team's defensive line rotation.

Drew Rosenhaus, James' agent, declined to comment.

Team president Bill Polian said Saturday he hoped to speak with Rosenhaus. He is gambling the lack of a collective bargaining agreement could make James more affordable for the Colts.

Polian hopes to retain as many of his own players as possible.

"We'll put a restricted offer on them that we think will be good enough to retain them," Polian said Saturday. "Hopefully, we'll get either an offer we can match or because of the complications, they won't get an offer period."

surge with an 11-0 run that included three straight buckets by Ware and five points from Kiefer.

Purdue led 27-25 in the closing seconds of the first half, but Bryant Dillon traveled. Marco Killingsworth, who was held to 10 points and three rebounds, then missed a 3-pointer as time expired, allowing Purdue to take its lead into the break.

## In other NCAA action

### Florida State 79 No. 1 Duke 74

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Florida State beat No. 1 Duke for the second time in three years, and the latest win had quite an ending.

Alexander Johnson's basket with just more than a minute left broke the game's final tie, and the Seminoles (18-8, 8-7 ACC) went on to beat the Blue Devils (27-2, 14-1 ACC).

Florida State won despite being called for a technical foul when its fans stormed the court with 1.7 seconds left.

### No. 9 Ohio State 56 Northwestern 53

EVANSTON, Ill.—Terence Dials scored 18 points, and Ron Lewis drove for a layup in the closing seconds to lift No. 9 Ohio State past Northwestern for a win that clinched at least a share of the Big Ten championship.

The Buckeyes (22-4, 11-4), who lead No. 10 Illinois by a game in the standings, could win the title outright with a victory against Purdue on Sunday.

### No. 23 Iowa 65 Penn State 38

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Mike Henderson scored 16 points, and Erik Hansen added 15 as No. 23 Iowa snapped a two-game losing streak.

Iowa (21-8, 10-5 Big Ten) took control midway through the first half and led by double digits the rest of the way.

## Colts

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

the agreement secret until Wednesday's announcement. But various media outlets began reporting details about the deal two days ago.

"Boy, was this the worst-kept secret in the world," said Lucas, who was born in southern Indiana. "I know a lot of people are saying, 'Lucas Oil,' that doesn't roll off your mouth very good, Lucas Oil Stadium."

"But after you do it a few times, it will."

Negotiations between the Colts and Lucas Oil began in the fall. Colts vice presidents Tom Zupancic and Jay Soures met with Lucas and other representatives twice. They reached an agreement in January.

"Because we've been able to be one of the most successful sports franchises in the country, and one of the most exciting, that's how we were able to do this."

Jim Irsay  
Colts owner on naming-rights deal with Lucas Oil Products

The deal still must be signed by the Marion County Capital Improvement Board. That is expected at its meeting March 13.

Lucas will pay \$2 million when the contract is signed.

Under the sponsorship deal, a Lucas logo will be placed outside each side of the stadium and its roof, as well as on every employee uniform, giant video screen and cup holder.

The company is no stranger to Indiana or the Colts.

Forrest and his wife, Charlotte, are Indiana natives. They found-

ship with the state of Indiana."

Lucas Oil Products was involved with the Colts before the deal. The company lists itself as the official oil products supplier of the team and sponsors items located inside the dome.

The company also has sponsored a Colts television program, "X-treme Horsepower," the past couple of years.

The show is now hosted by Colts offensive linemen Jeff Saturday and Ryan Diem.

Diem attended Wednesday's news conference. He said it's going to be a great relationship.

"I know there'll be sayings about oil slicks and oil fields," Diem said. "But I think it's cool."

Colts owner Jim Irsay called Lucas Oil Products exceptionally strong, competitive and very well-run. He said the match was perfect to him.

"Because we've been able to be

one of the most successful sports franchises in the country, and one of the most exciting, that's how we were able to do this," Irsay said.

Near the end of the news conference, Colts coach Tony Dungy presented Forrest and Charlotte Lucas with team jerseys, complete with their names and the number 08 on the back, representing when the stadium is to open.

Dungy said he liked the fact that the Colts partnered with an Indiana company.

"It's a great deal for us," he said. "It will help us stay competitive. It's a good deal with two organizations that think the same ways and share the same goals."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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