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Men's college basketball

TOURNAMENTS Atlantic Coast Conf First round Miami 66, Clemson 63 Wake Forest 78, Florida State 66
Virginia 60, Virginia Tech 56
Atlantic 10 Conference
Quarterfinals

Temple 68, George Washington 53 Saint Joseph's 56, Saint Louis 37 Xavier 59, Charlotte 55 La Salle vs. Fordham, 9 p.m.
Big East Conference
Quarterfinals
Syracuse 86, Connecticut 84, OT

Syracuse 86, Connecticut 84, OT Georgetown 62, Marquette 59 Villanova 87, Rutgers 55 Big Ten Conference First round Penn State 60, Northwestern 42 Minnesota 59, Michigan 55 Michigan State 70, vs. Purdue 58 Big 12 Conference First round Texas Tech 73, Kansas State 65 Colontol 65 E. Purles 66

Fexas Tech 73, Kansas State 65 Colorado 65, Baylor 61 Oklahoma State 79, Iowa State 70

Oklahoma State 79, lowa State Mid-American Confer Quarter 127 Cluarterfinals
Toledo 78, Northern Illinois 77
Akron 72, Western Michigan 57
Kent State 76, Buffalo 67
Pac-10 Conference
Quarterfinals
Arizona 73, Stanford 68 UCLA 79, Oregon State 47

Women's college basketball

TOURNAMENTS First round Thursday, March 9
Maine 73, Albany 56
Atlantic Sun Conference First round Belmont 63, Stetson 49

Florida Atlantic 74, Jacksonville 61 Mercer 59, East Tennessee State 56 Big 12 Conference Oklahoma 75, Missouri 54

Colonial Athletic Association Quarterfinals
James Madison 53, Drexel 51, OT Delaware 55 Northeastern 45 Hofstra 86, Georgia State 77 Old Dominion 66, George Mason 50

Preseason baseball

Thursday's games Houston 3, N.Y. Mets 2 L.A. Dodgers 6, Boston 4 Tampa Bay 6, Atlanta 3 Detroit (ss) 3, Toronto 2 Minnesota 4, Baltimore 2 Minnesota 4, Battimore 2 Cincinnati 2, Pittsburgh 1 Florida (ss) 3, St. Louis 0 Florida (ss) 5, Washington (ss) 4 Cleveland 10, Washington (ss) 5 New York Yankees (ss) 8, Philadelphia 3 Detroit (ss) 6, New York Yankees (ss) 1 Oakland 7. Milwaukee 3 Oakland 7, Milwaukee 3
Colorado 6, Chicago Cubs 2
Arizona 9, San Diego 8
Chicago White Sox 10, Seattle 3
L.A. Angels 6, San Francisco 5
Kansas City 12, Texas (ss) 4
Japan vs. Texas at Surprise, Ariz., 9:05 p.m.
Today's games
Philadelphia vs. Boston at Fort Myers, Fla., 105 p.m.

1:05 p.m. Atlanta vs. Cleveland at Winter Haven, Fla.,

1:05 p.m. Pittsburgh vs. Minnesota at Fort Myers, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Toronto vs. Tampa Bay at St. Petersburg, Fla., 1:05 p.m. N.Y. Yankees vs. Cincinnati at Sarasota, Fla.,

Baltimore vs. Florida at Jupiter, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Washington vs. Houston at Kissimmee, Fla., Detroit vs. L.A. Dodgers at Vero Beach, Fla.,

St. Louis vs. N.Y. Mets at Port St. Lucie, Fla., 1:10 p.m. Oakland (ss) vs. L.A. Angels (ss) at Tempe, Ariz., 3:05 p.m. San Francisco vs. Chicago White Sox at

San Francisco vs. Cilicago Willie Sox at Tucson, Ariz., 3:05 p.m.
Oakland (ss) vs. Kansas City at Surprise, Ariz., 3:05 p.m.
LA. Angels (ss) vs. Chicago Cubs at Mesa, Ariz., 3:05 p.m. Seattle vs. Colorado at Tucson, Ariz., 3:05 p.m. Arizona vs. Milwaukee at Phoenix, 3:05 p.m

Texas vs. San Diego (ss) at Peoria, Ariz., South Korea vs. San Diego (ss) at Peoria, Japan vs. Milwaukee at Phoenix, 9:05 p.m.

World Baseball Classic

Today At Scottsdale, Ariz. At San Juan, Puerto Rico Panama vs. Netherlands, 1 p.m. Cuba at Puerto Rico, 7:30 p.m. At Kissimmee, Fla.

Dominican Republic vs. Australia Sunday, March 12 At Anaheim, Calif. Japan vs. Group B second place, South Korea vs. Group B winner, 11 p.m Monday, March 13 At Anaheim, Calif. South Korea vs. Group B second place, 10

At San Juan, Puerto Rico
Group C winner vs. Group D second place, 1 Group D winner vs. Group C second place, 8

Golf

PGA HONDA CLASSIC Thursday's top ten
At The Country Club at Mirasol
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Yardage: 7,384 First round pended due to darkness with

Note: Play suspen three golfers not finishing.

1. Mathias Gronberg 1. Mathias Gror 2. David Toms 3. Ryuji Imada 4. Geoff Ogilvy 5. Brian Gay 6. Billy Mayfair 32-35—67 31-36—67 34-33—67 32-35—67 35-33—68 33-35—68 34-34—68

7. Jeff Gove **Colts**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

Manning and Marvin Harrison agreed

to as the new labor agreement was

being negotiated are now void. Those

changes would have saved about \$12.5

million on this year's cap, an Indiana-

cies, but when you count all the (pro-

iected) expenditures we don't have a

Other prospective free agents include

'We have room for some contingen-

polis newspaper reported this week.

EVENTS

TV TODAY

Men's college basketball

Big Ten Tournament: Penn State vs. Ohio State, noon, ESPN

ACC Tournament: Miami vs. Duke, noon, ESPN2 Big Ten Tournament: Indiana vs. Wisconsin, 2 p.m.,

ACC Tournament: Wake Forest vs. North Carolina State, 2 p.m., ESPN2

Patriot League Tournament: Holy Cross at Bucknell, 4:30 p.m., ESPN2

Big East Tournament: Syracuse vs. Georgetown, 7 p.m., ESPN

ACC Tournament: North Carolina vs. Virginia 7 p.m., ESPN2

Big East Tournament: Rutgers vs. Pittsburgh or West Virginia, 9 p.m., ESPN

ACC Tournament: Boston College vs. Georgia Tech or Maryland, 9 p.m., ESPN2

Indiana Pacers vs. New Orleans Hornets at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m., Fox Sports Midwest

Golf

PGA Honda Classic, second round, 4 p.m., USA

SPECTATOR SPORTS

TODAY

Gymnastics

Center Grove at Columbus East Regional, 7 p.m.

Call us with results

Results can be called in to the Daily Journal sports department from 6 to 10 weeknights and Sunday evenings at 736-2715.

Results also can be faxed to 736-2766.

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division		
NBA		
ohn Cook Oudley Hart	35-34—69 34-35—69	
ason Schulz	34-34-00	

W L 32 28 New Jersey 30 30 26 35 21 40 17 43 Philadelphia .500 .426 .344 .283 6½ 11½ 15 .667 .500 .339 .333 GB 40 20 10 19½ 20 24 30 39 40 45 Washington Central Division
W L Pct
W L Pct
49 11 .817
d 36 26 .581
30 28 .517
ee 29 31 .483
27 34 .443
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division n Pct .817 GB Detroit 14 18 20 22½ Indiana L Pct 13 .783 13 .783 27 .557 29 .517 Dallas San Antonio 13½ 16 19 New Orleans 29 55 . Northwest Division W L Pct 33 .468 GB Denver 3 6½ 10 13½

28 31 34 38 41 .541 .492 .433 .377 .317 Utah 30 Minnesota Portland Pacific Division 17 25 30 31 36 .712 .576 .516 L.A. Clippers L.A. Lakers .492 .410 Golden State Cleveland 98, Toronto 97 Detroit 106, Chicago 101 Miami 118 Washington 112 Boston 104, Philadelphia 101 Charlotte 104, Golden State 101

GB

Sacramento 123, Milwaukee 116
L.A. Lakers 113, New Orleans 107
Houston 103, Indiana 99 Utah 96, Minnesota 93 Memphis 99. Seattle 74 Thursday's games Denver at Philadelphia, (n)
Dallas at Portland, (n) San Antonio at Phoenix, (n)

Today's games Denver at Toronto, 7 p.m. Cleveland at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Milwaukee at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Golden State at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana vs. New Orleans at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m. L.A. Clippers at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.

L.A. Lakers at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m. Memphis at Sacramento, 10 p.m. Minnesota at Seattle, 10:30 p.m. Saturday's games

Chicago at Atlanta, 7 p.m. Detroit at Washington, 7 p.m. Golden State at Orlando, 7 p.m. New York at Charlotte, 7:30 p.m. L.A. Clippers at Milwaukee, 8:30 p.m. Dallas at Utah, 9 p.m. Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m. Sunday's games
Cleveland at Miami, 1 p.m.
Houston at San Antonio, 3:30 p.m.

Seattle at L.A. Lakers, 3:30 p.m. Philadelphia at Memphis, 4 p.m Denver at Boston, 6 p.m. Charlotte at Detroit, 6 p.m. New Jersey vs. New Orleans at Oklahoma City, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Sacramento, 9 p.m.
Phoenix at Portland, 9 p.m.

NHL EASTERN CONFERENCE L OT Pts 17 9 81 18 10 80 GF N.Y. Rangers 36 17 9 81 199 150
Philadelphia 35 18 10 80 207 204
New Jersey 32 22 8 72 177 179
N.Y. Islanders 28 29 4 60 179 215
Pittsburgh 14 37 12 40 180 257

Columbus 18 32 10 46 163 218 orthwest Division
W L OT Pts GF GA
35 19 7 77 161 150
35 23 6 76 226 200
35 23 5 75 207 192
32 21 9 73 204 198
30 28 6 66 189 170
Pacific Division Calgary Colorado Vancouver Pacme Division
W L 0T Pts GF GA
41 18 3 85 210 170
35 24 5 75 215 213
29 20 12 70 179 170
28 23 9 65 185 183
29 30 4 62 189 208
a win on color for Dallas Los Angeles Anaheim San Jose Phoenix Two points for a win, one point for loss or shootout loss.

Thursday's games Buffalo 8, Tampa Bay 5

kicker Jose Cortez, defensive tackle

Larry Tripplett, linebackers Rob Morris

and Rocky Calmus, wide receiver Troy

Walters, running back James Mungro,

defensive back Joseph Jefferson and

end Robert Mathis can also test the

market, although the Colts reportedly

have tendered them offers which would

give Indianapolis the right to match

any contract they are offered by anoth-

er team. If the Colts don't match the

offer, they would receive draft picks

Polian said NFL clubs are operating

without having all the details of the

from the teams signing either player.

Linebacker June Cato and defensive

offensive lineman Kurt Vollers.

Columbus 5, Phoenix 4 Montreal 3, Boston 0 Detroit 7, Los Angeles 3 Colorado at Chicago, (n) Dallas at Calgary, (n) Nashville at Vancouver, (n) Edmonton at San Jose, (n) Today's games

Ottawa at Atlanta, 7 p.m.

New Jersey at Washington, 7 p.m.

Toronto at N.Y. Islanders, 7 p.m. Carolina at Florida, 7:30 p.m. Minnesota at St. Louis, 8 p.m Saturday's games Buffalo at Philadelphia, 2 p.m. Nashville at San Jose 4 n m Nashville at San Jose, 4 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Montreal, 7 p.m.
Edmonton at Columbus, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Boston, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Boston, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Pittsburgh, 7:30 p.m.
Carolina at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Anaheim at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Dallas at Vancouver 10 n.m.

Dallas at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

Transactions

BASEBALL

American League
CLEVELAND INDIANS—Reassigned OF Trevor Crowe and OF Ben Francisco to their minor league camp.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS—Assigned RHP David Percy and C Erik Kratz to their minor league camp.

National League.

league camp.

National League
CINCINNATI REDS—Released RHP
Bubba Nelson and RHP Luke Hudson.
Assigned INF Aaron Herr, INF Anderson
Machado, INF Derek Wathan and RHP Josh
Hall to their miner league comments.

Hall to their minor league camp. WASHINGTON NATIONALS—Extended WASHINGTON NATIONALS—Extended the contract of Jim Bowden, vice president and general manager, and Tony Siegle, assistant general manager, through the completion of the 2006 season. Optioned 1B Larry Broadway to New Orleans of the PCL and LHP Michael Hinckley to Potomac of the Carolina League. Assigned RHP Andrew Good, RHP Francis Beltran, LHP Mike Bacsik, LHP Michael Howle, LHP Jim Crowell, C Erick San Pedro, INF Josh Labandeira, INF Kory Casto, OF Frank Diaz, OF Ruben Mateo and OF Cristian Guerrero In their minor league camp. Guerrero to their minor league camp. BASKETBALL

Continental Basketball Association GARY STEELHEADS—Announced the GARY SIELLIFLADS—Announced the league office has approved the contractual buyout of G Jimmie Hunter.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS —Released
DL Willie McGinest. Signed DB Artrell

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
ANAHEIM MIGHTY DUCKS—Traded D
Sandis Ozolinsh to New York Rangers for
2006 third-round draft pick. Traded a 2006
second-round draft pick to the Washington
Capitals for LW Jeff Friesen. Traded D Keith
Carney and D Juha Alen to the Vancouver
Canucks for D Brett Skinner and a 2006 second-round draft bick. ond-round draft pick.
CALGARY FLAMES—Traded a 2006

fourth-round draft pick to the Phoenix Coyotes for F Jamie Lundmark . Traded C Jason Wiemer to New Jersey for a 2006

GAROLINA HURRICANES—Acquired F
Mark Recchi from Pittsburgh for F Niklas
Nordgren, F Krys Kolanos and a 2007 second-round draft pick.
CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS—Traded D

Todd Simpson to the Montreal Canadiens for a 2006 sixth-round draft pick. Recalled F Milan Bartovic from Norfolk of the AHL. COLORADO AVALANCHE—Acquired F Jim Dowd from Chicago for a 2006 fourth-round draft pick. round draft pick.
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS—Recalled

F Mark Hartigan from Syracuse of the AHL. Assigned F Cam Severson to Syracuse. DALLAS STARS—Acquired D Willie Mitchell DALLAS STARS—Acquired D viville mitcheil and 2007 second-round foraft pick from Minnesota for D Martin Skoula and D Shawn Belle. EDMONTON OILERS—Acquired F Sergei Samsonov from Boston for F Marty Reasoner, F Yan Stastnya and a 2006 second round frost pick.

ond-round draft pick. FLORIDA PANTHERS—Agreed to terms with C Chris Gratton on a two-year contract extension. Re-signed F Olli Jokinen to a four-

LOS ANGELES KINGS—Traded C Yanick Lehoux to the Phoenix Coyotes for RW Tim Jackman.

NASHVILLE PREDATORS—Recalled D
Kevin Klein from Milwaukee of the AHL. Traded
F Kris Beech and a 2006 first-round draft pick to the Washington Capitals for D Brendan Witt. NEW JERSEY DEVILS—Traded a 2006

third-round draft pick to the New York Islanders for D Brad Lukowich. Traded D Sean Brown to the Vancouver Canucks for a 2006 fourth-round draft pick.
NEW YORK RANGERS—Assigned D Thomas Pock to Hartford of the AHL PHILADELPHIA FLYERS—Traded LW Josh Gratton and two 2006 second-round draft picks to the Phoenix Coyotes for D Denis Gauthier. PHOENIX COYOTES—Traded D Sean O'Donnell to the Anaheim Mighty Ducks for C Joel Perrault. Traded a 2006 seventh-round

draft pick to the Detroit Red Wings for D Jamie Rivers. Traded a 2006 third-round draft pick to the New York Islanders for C-LW Oleg Kvash and conditional draft pick. Assigned Č Yanick Lehoux to San Antonio of the AHL.
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS—Traded D Cory Cross to Detroit for a 2007 fourth-round draft pick and D Ric Jackman to Florida for C Petr Taticek. Claimed C Andy Hilbert off waivers from Chicago. Assigned C Shane Endicott to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton of the AHL. SAN JOSE SHARKS—Traded RW Niko SAN JOSE SHARRS—Iraged HW Nike Dimitrakos to the Philadelphia Flyers for a 2006 third-round pick. Activated RW Scott Parker from injured reserve. Recalled G Nolan Schaefer from Cleveland of the AHL. TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING—Assigned LW Norm Milley to Springfield of the AHL. COLLEGE

DAVIDSON—Announced the resignation.

DAVIDSON—Announced the resignation of Tim Kelly, men's and women's swimming and diving coach. MARYWOOD—Announced that men's

and women's lacrosse will be varsity sports starting with the 2007-08 school year. THE CITADEL—Named Bob Fello assistant head football coach, Isaac Collins defensive coordinator, Dave Cecchini offensive coordina-tor, Eric Westerfield and Chris Partridge defensive line coaches, Ryan Hearn tight ends coach, Kevin Olecki and James Holcombe offensive line coaches and Aashon Larkins cor-

agreement reached on Wednesday

between the league and the players

NFL teams must be at or below the

\$102 million salary cap for 2006 on

Saturday and the Colts have already

taken a major hit on it be re-signing

wide receiver Reggie Wayne, defensive

end Raheem Brock and linebacker Gary

now and 4 p.m. (today) what our best

strategy is toward managing the cap,"

Polian said Thursday. "I'm not ready to

say anyone won't be back. There's a lot

of uncertainty. I think we're going to sit

and see what the market does.

"We have to take a close look between

Brackett to contracts since last season.

labor union.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

PERFECT SEASON

The Center Grove Xtreme fourth-grade girls basketball team recently won the Hoosier Girls Basketball League championship game against Hamilton Heights. The Xtreme finished the season with an 11-0 record. Members of the team are, front row from left, Bobbie Clayton, Jamie Geitner, Molly Shaner and Colleen Gudeman; and back row from left, Sam Bolen, Brea Martlage, Cassie Hendrickson, Erica McGraw and Madi Kolthoff. Not pictured are coach Gary Hendrickson and assistant coaches Jim McGraw and Rob Clayton.

Boilers

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

seed and the defending tournament champion. Illinois has reached the final game the past three years, winning in 2003 and 2005 and finishing second in 2004.

"We found a way to win, but we've got to get a lot better in the next 25 hours or so," Izzo said.

Purdue (9-19), which has never won the conference tournament and was seeded 11th, was eliminated in its first tourney game for the fifth straight year and finished 0-14 away from home this season despite 20 points by Gary Ware.

"We had a great effort," Purdue coach Matt Painter said. "We've struggled shooting the basketball the past four or five games. It's too bad, because these guys have worked hard to get better." The Boilermakers had four projected

starters who were out with injuries or suspended most of the season, although they got one of them back with a surprise appearance by 270-pound freshman Nate Minnoy. "I was going to try to play him a little bit

to see how he looked out there," Painter said. "It's just hard in transition for him. ... He gave a great effort. He missed some shots but he was aggressive.' Matt Kiefer, who added 16 points for Purdue, hit two free throws for the Boiler-

makers' final lead at 20-19, but a dunk by Paul Davis put the Spartans on top for good with less than 6 minutes left before halftime. "We were careless with the ball. That led them to getting out on the break," Kiefer said.

Purdue managed only two more baskets in the next 5 minutes, both by Ware, and Michigan State opened a 31-24 lead before Bryant Dillon scored on a rebound tip in the closing seconds of the period. Minnoy, who had averaged 11 points a

game before he tore a ligament in his knee in January, missed all four of his shots in 6 minutes in the first half and all five of his attempts in 7 minutes in the second period. A basket and free throw by Brown and

then a 3-pointer by Brown gave Michigan State its biggest lead at 49-34 before Kiefer and Ware led Purdue's brief comeback. Purdue, which lost 15 of its final 18 games this season, also got 13 points from Dillon.

In other NCAA action

MEN

Minnesota 59 Michigan 55

INDIANAPOLIS — Maurice Hargrow scored 15 points, and Zach Puchtel added a career-high 15 rebounds as Minnesota defeated Michigan in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament. The Golden Gophers snapped a three-game los-

ing streak and dealt a severe blow to Michigan's NCAA Tournament hopes. The Wolverines (18-10) entered the game ranked

37th in the Ratings Percentage Index, making them a possible at-large team. Michigan has lost seven of its past nine games, a problem since the tournament selection committee traditionally weighs recent history heavily.

Dion Harris led Michigan with 16 points, and Daniel Horton had 14. The Golden Gophers advance to play lowa in today's quarterfinal

Syracuse 86 No. 1 Connecticut 84, OT

NEW YORK — Gerry McNamara hit a 3-pointer with 5.5 seconds left in regulation to tie the game,



Syracuse's Gerry McNamara, right, goes to the basket against Connecticut's Rudy Gay during a Big East Tournament quarterfinal game on Thursday at Madison Square Garden in New York.

and the ninth-seeded Orange went on to beat No. 1 Connecticut.

The win should help the Orange (21-11) end any talk about whether they deserve an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.

McNamara scored 17 points and handed out 13 assists, one short of the tournament record. The loss shouldn't affect the No. 1 seed expected

to go to Connecticut (27-3), but it ended a 10-game winning streak in the Big East quarterfinals for the Huskies, the regular-season co-champions with Villanova. Syracuse, the defending champions in the tourna-

ment, will play No. 23 Georgetown in tonight's semifinals. Demetris Nichols also had 17 points for Syracuse.

which had five starters in double figures. Denham Brown had 20 points for the Huskies, while Marcus Williams had 17 points and 11 assists.

Penn State 60 Northwestern 42

INDIANAPOLIS — Geary Claxton had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Penn State's zone defense stymied cold-shooting Northwestern in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament.

Northwestern (14-15), which lost to Penn State in both regular-season meetings this year, was the Big Ten's lowest scoring and worst 3-point shooting team, yet six of the Wildcats' first eight shots were from long range. Northwestern tied a tournament record with 31 3-

point attempts for the game but missed 12 straight during one stretch of the second half, when Penn State built a 26-point lead.

Mohamed Hachad led Northwestern with 16 points. Travis Parker and Mike Walker added 10 points each for Penn State, Vederan Vukusic, the Big Ten's scoring leader at 19.4 points a game, had 10 points for Northwestern but played much of the second half in foul trouble.

Temple 68 No. 6 George Washington 53

CINCINNATI — Temple's famously stingy defense got back to what it does best, breaking down opponents and creating havoc in tournament brackets.

The Owls' inscrutable zone left George Washington's high-powered offense in a shambles as they set up a victory against over the sixth-ranked Colonials in the Atlantic 10 Tournament guarterfinals.

The upset opened the way for the Atlantic 10 to get a second team in the NCAA tournament, soaking up one of the 34 at-large bids for the 65-team field. George Washington was the only A10 team to make it last season, and was expected to go it alone again.

Antywane Robinson led Temple with 19 points. and Marshall and Mark Tyndale added 15 apiece. Carl Elliott led the Colonials with 18 points.

lot of room," said Polian.

overlooked. They actually prefer it. "Maybe we're a little bit under the radar right now," Clark said. "That's

position to be in." Senior center Ben Gordon agrees.

probably OK. That's probably a good

"I love that," he said. "Definitely as a

down south called Franklin or something like that.' Winners of seven straight, the Cubs

would love nothing more than to make a statewide name for themselves by emerg-



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/srobers Franklin boys basketball coach Dave Clark goes over a play with his team during a timeout in the Cubs' sectional final victory Saturday against Center Grove.

ing from a Final Four-like regional field. But by anyone's definition, the task is

Lawrence North (25-0) and Pike (20-3)

are not only two of the state's best teams, they're two of the best in the Powered by the No. 1 high school play-

er in the nation, 7-foot-1 senior Greg

Oden, the Wildcats are rated No. 1 in the country by a number of media outlets. Bidding to become only the third team in IHSAA history to win three straight state championships, Lawrence North is

ranked No. 1 in the USA Today Super 25

national poll. Pike is also on the national radar. Winners of three state championships since 1998, the Red Devils are No. 24 in the HoopsUSA rankings and have received notice in other national polls,

In light of rankings, records and reputations, Lawrence North and Pike are regarded as the top regional contenders. But whoever advances, be it the Wildcats, Red Devils, Greyhounds or Grizzly Cubs, the winner is an instant front-runner for the state championship.

'Whoever comes out of this regional has an excellent chance at the semistate, as well as the state finals," said Pike coach Larry Bullington, whose team has lost twice to Lawrence North. "It's a very competitive field.

"Whoever comes out of it is going to have a great chance at it."

Clark sees no reason why it can't be the Cubs. History, after all, might be on their side.

In 1997, they were unranked and all but ignored heading into the semistate, which happened to be at Hinkle Fieldhouse. New Castle and Cathedral were the favorites. Clark knows because talk centered around those ranked teams at the pre-tournament coaches gathering.

"Going up to that meeting, I can remember everybody talking about Cathedral and New Castle and what a matchup that's going to be in the championship game, and neither team got there," Clark said. "It was us and Delta.

"We weren't ranked that particular time, either."

So here the Cubs are again, unranked and almost certainly overlooked in a vaunted postseason field at Hinkle Fieldhouse.

There's no place else they'd rather be. 'That's why you play the game,' Clark said. "It's obviously a great field of teams. We're just proud of being part of that field, and what a great opportunity for our kids to go up there and play in that kind of atmos-

"We're looking forward to it. We'll get ready for Pike and see what happens.'

Cubs

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

team, going into play a big team like Pike, we don't have much pressure on us. They have all the pressure on them because they're playing some team from



daunting, to say the least.