

LOCAL

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Grizzlies' Kane named HCAC player of the week

Franklin College senior Nick Kane, who averaged 29.5 points a game last week, was voted the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference's Player of the Week, the league announced Monday.



KANE

It was the third this season Kane has earned the honor.

Against Bluffton on Wednesday, Kane scored a team-high 32 points and also grabbed 11 rebounds and had five blocked shots and an assist. The Grizzlies' center was 12 of 18 from the field and 8 of 11 from the free-throw line.

In Franklin's 97-83 home victory against Anderson on Saturday, Kane scored a team-high 27 points on 12-of-20 shooting from the field. He was also 3 of 3 from the foul line and had nine rebounds, three blocked shots, an assist and a steal.

BASEBALL

MIAMI

Pitcher Willis agrees to contract with Florida

Dontrelle Willis avoided arbitration, agreeing to a \$4.35 million, one-year contract with the Florida Marlins on Monday.

Willis went 22-10 with a 2.63 ERA last season and finished second to St. Louis' Chris Carpenter in NL Cy Young Award balloting.

Willis, a 24-year-old left-hander, gets a large raise from the \$378,500 he made in 2005. He would also earn a \$50,000 bonus if he starts 35 games in 2006.

BASKETBALL

NEW CASTLE

Hall of Fame names 16 to Silver Anniversary Team

Cheryl Cook, the state's 1981 Miss Basketball at Washington, and Shelley Brand Adlard of 1981 state champion Evansville Reitz were among 16 women named Monday to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame's Silver Anniversary Team.

The former players will be honored during the annual Hall of Fame banquet April 29. The Silver team each year recognizes Indiana's top high school seniors from 25 years earlier.

The other Silver Anniversary players are Miranda Bryant Harding of Tech, Judy Burns Powell of Marion, Tonya Burns-Cohrs of Leo, Brenda Kelsay Simmons of Shelbyville, Lisa Krieg of Evansville North, Donna Lamping Hoeing of Batesville, Debbie Law Marr of Columbus North, Allison Lear of Greencastle, Linda Malender of Southport, Sue Morris Mills of Chesterton, Mary Beth Schueth-Cain of Perry Meridian, Leslie Seehafer Clodfelter of Benton Central, Vicki Vaughan of Lawrenceburg and Diane Windler of Benton Central.

NEW YORK

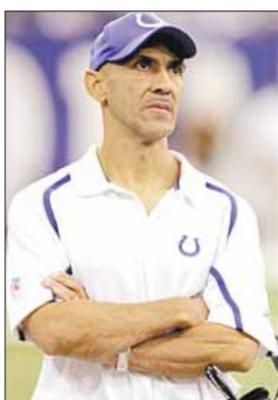
Duke still No. 1 in poll, but it's not unanimous

Duke was still No. 1 in The Associated Press' college basketball poll Monday, as it has been all season. This week, however, the Blue Devils weren't a unanimous choice.

One of three unbeaten teams in Division I, Duke (16-0) received all but one first-place vote from the 72-member national media panel. The other No. 1 nod went to No. 2 Florida (16-0) after a week in which 11 ranked teams lost, two of them twice.

Indiana, after suffering its first Big Ten loss of the season, dropped from ninth to 13th.

Tennessee again was No. 1 in the AP women's poll. Purdue was 11th, up from No. 12 last week.



AP PHOTO

Colts coach Tony Dungy watches from the sideline during the fourth quarter of Sunday's playoff loss to the Steelers in Indianapolis.



SIGN OF THE TIMES

A sign in front of a roadside vendor's stand at U.S. 31 and Main Street in Greenwood advertises a 50 percent reduction in the price of Colts merchandise Monday, a day after the team lost 21-18 to Pittsburgh in an AFC divisional playoff game at the RCA Dome. Colts items have been hot sellers since the team started the season with 13 straight wins.

STAFF PHOTO BY MATT OOLEY/mooley@thejournalnet.com

Steelers continue to survive

'Great Escape' gives Cowher another shot at Super Bowl crown

BY ALAN ROBINSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH

They overcame a bungled call and a fumbled ball, and now the Pittsburgh Steelers are headed to their sixth and least-anticipated trip to the AFC Championship game in a dozen years under coach Bill Cowher.

The difference this time is the road they're taking, a route they've never traveled in their 73-year history but one that is bringing out the best in a team that in recent years has played its worst in mid-January.

To reach Sunday's AFC championship game in Denver, the Steelers withstood a late-season three-game losing streak that left them without a home playoff game and overcame the biggest breakdown The Bus has ever had.

After going 100-1-1 in regular-season games under Cowher when leading by 10 points or more, only what may be remembered as the "Great Escape" allowed the Steelers to get this far.

"We all believed we can get this



AP PHOTO

Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger throws a pass during Sunday's victory at Indianapolis.

done," wide receiver Hines Ward said. "We all believe."

But would anybody have believed all this?

After underachieving so many times before in the playoffs — remember the AFC title-game collapse against the Chargers in January 1995, and the twin failures in 2002 and 2005 against the Patriots? — these Steelers are over-achieving like never before.

Until this season, the Steelers had won only two road playoff games in 30 years, none under Cowher. Now they've won two in two weeks, including a 21-18 heart-stopper of an upset Sunday in Indianapolis that almost featured one of the most amazing collapses in NFL playoff history. Almost.

"Maybe this is the way to do it,"

Cowher said of going on the road in the playoffs rather than playing at home, where they are only 1-4 in AFC title games under him. "We haven't been too successful the other way."

They have been wildly successful this way, playing with confidence and an on-the-edge aggression that was visibly missing when they were 15-1 and the top-seed in last season's playoffs before losing to New England 41-27 for the conference title.

"Everybody counted us out about six weeks ago, so don't change now," linebacker Joey Porter said. "Everybody was against us, so keep it that way. It keeps a chip on our shoulder, it makes us play like we know how to play."

Well, at least for 55 minutes Sunday in Indianapolis it did.

After dominating the Colts for three quarters to open a 21-3 lead, the Steelers admittedly may have gone into a protected-lead shell too early, and the Colts surged back to make it 21-18.

Jerome Bettis fumbled while trying to score a touchdown to give Indianapolis one last chance.

But Colts kicker Mike Vanderjagt missed a game-tying 46-yard field goal attempt on the Colts' final play.

"When Jerome fumbled, we were over there talking, saying, 'Well, there must be a reason, because he doesn't fumble,'" Roethlisberger said. "So, somehow, something's supposed to happen."

and defensive back Bob Sanders.

"I'd like to come back with our same group of guys and make a run at it next year," Dungy said. "You do have to resist the idea that something has to be overhauled. I like our team the way it is."

"I liked our team when we were 13-0, and I liked our team yesterday."

Quarterback Peyton Manning, who has won just about everything but a Super Bowl, reluctantly talked about regrouping next year in the aftermath of Sunday's loss.

"I'm going to be disappointed tonight and tomorrow," Manning said Sunday.

"It takes time to move on from a game like this, make peace with the football gods and move onto next season."

In the meantime, Manning, a two-time league MVP, will again hear whispers of being a great regular-season player who can't get his team to the Super Bowl.

"When you're a quarterback, that's what you're judged by, short-term," Dungy said. "But he's got a long career ahead of him. It's going to be that way until we win it."

Dungy appears ready to try again next season.

"We'll have to put ourselves back in this position again next year, which isn't easy," Dungy said. "I think we'll be better next year than we were this year."

WHEN IT COUNTS

The Colts are 5-9 in playoff games since moving to Indianapolis. Here's how they've fared each season:

1987	— Lost to Cleveland 38-21
1995	— Beat San Diego 35-20; beat Kansas City 10-7; lost to Pittsburgh 20-16
1996	— Lost to Pittsburgh 42-14
1999	— Lost to Tennessee 19-16
2000	— Lost to Miami 23-17, OT
2002	— Lost to New York Jets 41-0
2003	— Beat Denver 41-10; beat Kansas City 38-31; lost to New England 24-14
2004	— Beat Denver 49-24; lost to New England 20-3
2005	— Lost to Pittsburgh 21-18

tractions, Dungy insists the Colts don't need many, if any.

Indianapolis had an NFL-high seven players selected for the Pro Bowl, including three players on a defense that traditionally ranks among the league's worst.

This season, the defense was one of the NFL's best, finally complementing an offense that features stars at all skilled positions. The Colts' defense allowed an AFC-low 247 points and produced Pro Bowlers in defensive end Dwight Freeney, linebacker Cato June

an "act common to the game" is defined as controlling the ball long enough to hand it, pitch it or pass it.

The NFL almost never makes public the result of its reviews, although it did three years ago, when Pereira said officials should have called pass interference against San Francisco on the final play of a wild-card game with the New York Giants. The correct call would have given New York a second chance to kick a game-winning field goal in a 39-38 loss.

The call Sunday incensed Pittsburgh's Joey Porter, who said after the game: "I know they wanted Indy to win this game; the whole world loves Peyton Manning. But come on, man, don't take the game away from us like that."

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello had no comment on Porter's statement.

Polamalu's overturned interception wasn't the only unusual call. Earlier in the game, when the Steelers were preparing to go for a fourth-and-inches from the Pittsburgh 48, two Colts defensive linemen ran across the line of scrimmage, pointing at the Steelers as if one of the linemen moved.

The officials stopped the game, but called no penalty.

Replays appeared to show Alan Faneca barely flinched. But Steelers coach Bill Cowher argued the Colts made contact with the linemen, which would have forced an offside call and a first down.

Instead, Ben Roethlisberger ran a quarterback sneak for a first down, which allowed Pittsburgh to use another 5:02 before punting.

• Dungy

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contract extension in September, said the Dec. 22 death of his eldest son, James, would have no bearing on his decision.

"I would say right now it's 100 percent I'll be back," said Dungy, who has acknowledged he doesn't plan to make coaching a long-term venture. "What I don't know is how I'll feel in the next four or five days when I'm relaxing."

"I'm pretty sure I'll be back. If they ask me back, I'm pretty sure I'll be back."

Perhaps the bigger question is, will Pro Bowl running back Edgerrin James be back?

James is one of four starters who will become unrestricted free agents this year. The others are wide receiver Reggie Wayne, linebacker David Thornton and defensive lineman Raheem Brock.

Dungy is confident the Colts can resign all four players, depending on what form a pending collective bargaining agreement between the NFL and players union takes.

As for other roster additions or sub-

• Call

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Had the call stood, the Steelers would have had the ball at their own 48 with an 11-point lead.

"The definition of a catch, or in this case an interception, states that in the process of making a catch a player must maintain possession of the ball after he contacts the ground," Pereira said.

"The rule regarding the performing of an act common to the game applies when there is contact with a defensive player and the ball comes loose, which did not happen here."

Under league officiating procedure,

• Leap

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

record in the league, ensuring no trips to icy New England or blustery Pittsburgh or mile-high Denver.

Finally, their nemesis, the Patriots, had been eliminated elsewhere.

Finally, they had a fast, fierce defense to go with the Peyton Manning-led offense that is feared by every opponent.

It wasn't enough.

"You hear people say 'What's wrong, what's wrong?'" coach Tony Dungy said Monday. "In most cases, not much is wrong, so you need to resist the urge that something needs to be overhauled."

Here's what went wrong:

- The Colts remain a fragile, unbalanced team, despite what the numbers said this season. If their offense is unproductive against quality opponents, it winds up affecting the defense, too. That defense doesn't have enough playmakers yet, and it isn't as physical as some others.

So when Manning struggles the way he did in Sunday's loss to Pittsburgh, the Colts have to scramble. They don't do it well.

- Manning's career almost certainly will lead him to an induction ceremony in Canton, Ohio, but he rarely is at his best in the biggest spots.

Some of his worst performances have come in the playoffs, when Tom Brady, Troy Aikman or Joe Montana achieved the most. A heavy pass rush often turns

Manning into a quarterback with happy feet who forces passes.

Sunday was one of those rare times when he admitted his protectors on the line had issues. For all his skills as a passer and playmaker, Manning can be rattled when his blockers, well, don't block.

"I'm trying to be a good teammate," Manning said. "Let's just say we had some problems with protection. ... I'm looking for a safe word here. Pittsburgh did some things that gave us trouble."

Unless they fix those — other than center Jeff Saturday, the Colts' line is mediocre — more disappointingly early endings are ahead.

- Indy was too good in the regular season.

Say what?

The 13-0 run was magnificent,

and the Colts looked capable of replicating the 1972 Dolphins' perfect. They clinched the division and the home-field edge before they lost a game.

But after San Diego beat them, followed by the death of Dungy's son, the Colts went through the motions in their final two games.

Drained emotionally by the tragedy, they never got back that mental edge champions need. For three quarters against the Steelers, they were rusty and flat, a recipe for defeat.

Dungy blames himself, as most coaches do following a loss. He even hinted Monday that he isn't 100 percent certain he'll return.

That would be a shame, because he might be the classiest act in the sport. Other than Mike Holmgren and Dick Vermeil, how

many coaches are lauded for being good guys?

And he's a fine coach who should be judged on his overall record in Tampa Bay and Indianapolis, which is very good.

But good guy and fine coach almost never are winning combinations in the NFL.

Maybe the Colts need a bit more fervor, an assistant coach or even a few players who can light a fire and keep it burning.

With their supreme talent at the skill positions on offense and an improved defense, the Colts had more going for them this season than any of the four playoff finalists. That's what makes this flop so painful in Indy.

Barry Wilner covers the NFL for The Associated Press. Send comments to bwilner@ap.org.

• Diseases

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are caused by bacteria. And others, like ringworm, come from fungi.

Dermatologist Thomas Cortese Jr. stresses the importance of hygiene to wrestlers. And if they do contract a skin disease, his goal is to keep it from spreading.

"It's important (wrestlers) try to keep their skin as protected as they can from the invasion of organisms," said Cortese, who works at Southpointe Medical Park on the south side of Indianapolis. "It's serious in a sense. When they have molluscum, it's not so much a difficulty in treating them. It's a difficulty in keeping them from spreading."

"They could start out with three or four (pimples) on their chest and, lo and behold, in a few weeks have 20 or 30. The effort is to contain or hold them in one location and keep them from spreading."

Center Grove wrestler Jeff Knowles knows the frustration of dealing with skin disease.

The junior was one of four Trojans wrestlers who had impetigo during the early part of the school year. He missed a couple of days of practice in December because of the skin disease.

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection caused by staphylococcal or strep bacteria, characterized by blisters that may itch, Cortese said. Knowles noticed his head was itchy one day during practice and felt some bumps on it.

After seeing a dermatologist, he found out it was impetigo, and he was prescribed some antibiotics. Knowles had to miss two practices and had to do running and calisthenic exercises instead of working with his teammates.

"Making sure you get clean, that's how you prevent it," said Knowles, who wrestles at 140 pounds. "Coaches keep us informed. You make sure to take hot showers, not wear the same clothes day after day and wash them."

"I'm just happy that it's gone (now). I don't have to take antibiotics anymore and can wrestle freely. It's a pain to go through. You know the rest of your team is out there practicing and you have to do other, different forms of exercise."

Since the outbreak, Center Grove coach Rusty Cullom said the Trojans haven't had any problems. He's reformed wrestlers of ways they can prevent skin diseases from happening.

"I personally wash the bathroom with disinfectant every day after practice," Cullom said. "I encourage kids to take hot, soapy showers after practice. I emphasize wearing clean clothes every day and taking care of headgear."

Cullom said the two most common skin diseases in wrestling are impetigo and ringworm. That's mainly because they thrive in wet or moist places, and locker rooms provide ideal conditions for both to grow.

He makes sure wrestlers take their sweaty clothes out of their lockers to prevent diseases from spreading.

"If you have a fungal spore on a T-shirt and you put it in a locker overnight, the next day you'll have that fungus growing," Cullom said. "You put that T-shirt on, and then you put it next to a clean T-shirt, you're inviting it to spread."

At Franklin, Hasseman has all but eliminated ringworm. For the past three years, the Cubs have not had any outbreaks.

Hasseman attributes that to his proactive cleaning approach.

"The cure is to eliminate a wet environment," he said. "You need to wash off everything after practice. We're lucky though. The custodians here do a great job. We're able to supply towels to kids, and we have a washer and dryer at the high school."

DEALING WITH SKIN DISEASES

For wrestlers

- Be truthful about skin problems and report any to coaches.
- Use common sense: If you have something on your skin, check with your dermatologist or family doctor to find out about it.
- Take hot, soapy showers after practice and wash thoroughly.
- Bring clean clothes to change into and don't leave dirty clothes in your locker.

For coaches

- Inform wrestlers about skin diseases and how they can prevent them.
 - Keep the locker room clean. Mop floor and wall mats with some type of cleansing bacterial soap each night to decontaminate them.
 - If wrestlers get a skin disease, don't have them practice on the mat, where it could spread. Instead, make them do other types of conditioning, such as running.
 - Have wrestlers wear cellophane plastic wrap or a large band-aid around the infected area to keep it from spreading.
- SOURCES: Franklin Community High School wrestling coach Bob Hasseman; Center Grove High School wrestling coach Rusty Cullom; Thomas Cortese Jr., dermatologist at Southpointe Medical Park in Indianapolis

Common wrestling skin diseases

- **Molluscum contagiosum:** A viral infection of the skin, which is characterized by small flesh-colored or pink bumps that have a central indentation or opening

Treatment: A dermatologist applies liquid nitrogen to each of the lesions, causing the skin to blister. After a week, the skin will develop a scab, and when the scab comes off the molluscum contents come out.

- **Impetigo:** A skin infection caused by staphylococcal or strep bacteria, which is distinguished by blisters that may itch, wrestlers may have a raised scabby-like eruption, which is round and reddish and has a yellowish crust

Treatment: Topical and internal antibiotics

- **Ringworm:** A fungus infection that affects the scalp, body, feet or nails, distinguished by a red ring that appears on the person's skin

Treatment: Topical anti-fungal antibiotics, and in some cases, anti-fungal pills

SOURCE: Thomas Cortese Jr., dermatologist at Southpointe Medical Park in Indianapolis