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SPORTS

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SECTION B

NFL: DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

SATURDAY'S GAME

Indianapolis Colts (13-4) at Baltimore Ravens (13-3)
Time: 4:30 p.m. TV: WISH-Channel 8 Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM

Talking a good game



Indianapolis Colts defensive end Robert Mathis celebrates after Kansas City AFC wild-card game at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. The Colts will travel to Baltimore to face the Ravens in a divisional playoff game Saturday.

Colts' defense wants to keep proving its critics wrong

By Rick Morwick

DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS EDITOR
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INDIANAPOLIS

Colts' defense couldn't resist needling the news media after the Indianapolis Colts' oft-criticized defense shut down the Kansas City Chiefs on wild-card weekend.

"We have the worst run defense that has ever been assembled. I don't know what to say," June joked Saturday afternoon with reporters who swarmed around his locker.

But when the topic switched to Saturday's AFC divisional playoff opponent, the host Baltimore Ravens, the Colts' linebacker got serious.

Sort of.

"It's one of those things where we're going to allow you guys to tell us what we can't do next week," June said. "You'll probably say, 'Oh, Jamal Lewis, he's 250 pounds, and you're 210 pounds. How are you going to stop them?' So, I don't know.

"We're just going to sit back and wait for every-

INSIDE

Diversity has been the key for Baltimore's offense this season, and the Ravens plan on using the same approach in Saturday's playoff game against the Colts.

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one to tell us what we can't do, and go out there and do it."

That's pretty much what the Colts (13-4) did against Kansas City.

Indianapolis' 32nd-ranked run defense was given little, if any, chance of containing Chiefs running back Larry Johnson, the NFL's second-leading rusher.

But the Colts responded with an improbable performance. They limited Johnson to 32 yards and gave up a total of 44 rushing yards, a franchise record for the playoffs.

Players insist the effort was no fluke. And they

(SEE TALKING, PAGE B3)

BY THE NUMBERS

A look at how the Indianapolis Colts' defense has performed against the run in recent games, with attempts, yards and yards per attempt:

Sunday Kansas City	17-44	2.6
Dec. 31 Miami	26-150	5.8
Dec. 24 At Houston	42-191	4.5
Dec. 18 Cincinnati	30-133	4.4
Dec. 10 At Jacksonville	42-375	8.9
Dec. 3 At Tennessee	35-219	6.3

Indy letting other teams take the heat

By Barry Wilner

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis Colts have not lowered their expectations.

They still envision a Super Bowl title next month.

Yet the Colts, burdened by a sieve of a run defense and an unimpressive final seven games of the regular season, entered the playoffs as more of an outsider than a championship contender.

Judging by their performance in their postseason opener, that might be a very good thing for Peyton Manning and his team.

Not that they will ever go unnoticed as long as the premier quarterback of his generation is flinging the ball and rookies like Joseph Addai are outrushing the likes of Larry Johnson.

If the Colts were an NFC team, they could have booked flights to Miami for the first week in February. But being something of an afterthought in the loaded AFC could work in Indy's favor.

The focus is on San Diego, the 492 points scored, the MVP/Offensive Player of the Year (LaDainian Tomlinson), the leading sack

COLUMN

(SEE HEAT, PAGE B3)

Colts' owner hopes for Baltimore's forgiveness

By Michael Marot

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Jim Irsay has almost everything an NFL owner could want.

The Indianapolis Colts' All-Pro quarterback is still in his prime, two receivers are headed to the Pro Bowl, and there's a budding star at running back.

His team has reached the playoffs seven times in eight years. The financial future looks equally bright: There's a new stadium under construction and an expanding season-ticket list.

Yes, Irsay has grown comfy in his Indianapolis digs.

But Irsay has one other wish: That 23 years after the Colts' bitter move from Baltimore to Indy, some of the hard feelings it created would finally heal.

"We're talking about a long time ago,

really a quarter-century ago," Irsay said Monday. "That was another time, another place and another era."

Some Baltimore Colts fans may never forgive the Irsay family. And now they'll get another chance to vent their frustration with the Colts coming back to Baltimore to play the Ravens in an AFC divisional playoff game Saturday.

The Irsay name has been hated and cursed for more than two decades by Baltimore fans.

They're still angry at the images of the infamous midnight move, with Mayflower vans pulling away from the team complex under the cover of darkness in March 1984.

At the time, Jim Irsay was a 20-something recent college graduate in the Colts front office who had little influence

(SEE OWNER, PAGE B3)



A Mayflower moving van carrying the Colts' equipment leaves Baltimore for Indianapolis on March 19, 1984. The franchise became the Indianapolis Colts starting with the 1984 season.

Brees edges Manning for All-Pro QB

The Associated Press

For the first time since 2002, the Indianapolis Colts' Peyton Manning is not the first-team quarterback on The Associated Press NFL All-Pro team.

New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees edged Manning 25 to 24 in voting by a nationwide panel of sports writers and broadcasters who cover the NFL.

Brees, a former Purdue quarterback, engineered the turnaround in New Orleans from 3-13 to 10-6 and an NFC South division title.

Colts wide receiver Marvin Harrison was a first-team All-Pro selection for the third time in his career, while Manning and center Jeff Saturday were second-team picks.

Last year, Manning, Saturday, defensive end Dwight Freeney and defensive back Bob Sanders were all first-team selections, and Harrison and linebacker Cato June were on the AP second team.

This year's All-Pro team was headed by LaDainian Tomlinson, Jason Taylor and Champ Bailey, who capped superb seasons with their unanimous selections. Tomlinson previously was named the league's most valuable player.

All-Pro lists, Page B2

BASKETBALL

Bragging rights at stake

County tournament important to teams, communities as well

By Matthew Glinesk
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Coaches like it. Players like it. Fans like it.

Despite being in just its third season since being re-established after a 40-year hiatus, the Johnson County Boys Basketball Tournament already has provided some memorable moments.

For players and coaches alike, the county tournament is about one thing: bragging rights.

"Bragging rights are important for the players," Greenwood coach Bruce Hensley said. "It certainly would be a feather in your cap. Winning the county tournament is probably a goal all teams have going into the season."

Tournament action gets under way tonight. Indian Creek takes on host Edinburg at 6:30 p.m. Whiteland and Greenwood will meet at 7:30. The Warriors and Woodmen met Saturday, with Whiteland winning 57-48.

Last year's finalists, Franklin and Center Grove, get byes into the county semifinals and will play tonight's winners Friday. The championship game is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

For coaches, the county tournament is more than just another game on the schedule.

Indian Creek coach Rex Wilson said he views the tournament as a chance to see how the Class 2A Braves stand up against the county's larger-school opposition.

Franklin coach Dave Clark said he believes the event is a chance to offset some of the complacency that sneaks in during a long season.

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TOURNEY TIME

What: Johnson County boys basketball tournament

Who: Center Grove, Edinburg, Franklin, Greenwood, Indian Creek and Whiteland

Where: Edinburg Community High School

Schedule

Game 1: Indian Creek vs. Edinburg, 6 p.m. today

Game 2: Greenwood vs. Whiteland, 7:30 p.m. today

Game 3: Franklin vs. winner of Game 1, 6 p.m. Friday

Game 4: Center Grove vs. winner of Game 2, 7:30 p.m. Friday

Fifth-place game: Loser of Game 1 vs. loser of Game 2, 4:30 p.m. Saturday

Third-place game: Loser of Game 3 vs. loser of Game 4, 6 p.m. Saturday

Championship: Winner of Game 3 vs. winner of Game 4, 7:30 p.m. Saturday

CG volleyball coach earns hoops honor

Staff and wire reports

NEW CASTLE

Before she became the head volleyball coach at Center Grove High School, Deb McClurg was a high school and college basketball star.

Now, she is going to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame.

McClurg, a standout player at Wes-Del High School and Indiana University, is one of seven former players and coaches who were named Monday to the Hall of Fame.

Along with four others, McClurg joins former Miss Basketball Maria Stack of Columbus East and former coach Pete Pritchett of Bedford-North Lawrence, who led the Stars to two state championships and a record 89-game regular-season winning streak.

All seven will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on April 28.

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McCLURG