

SPORTS

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AP PHOTO
The Mavericks' Dirk Nowitzki, left, and the Pacers' Al Harrington battle for a loose ball during the second quarter of Friday's game in Indianapolis.

Pacers let one get away

Mavericks get past Indiana in overtime

By Rick Morwick

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INDIANAPOLIS

There was only one problem with the Indiana Pacers' playoff-quality performance Friday night in Conseco Fieldhouse.

It resulted in a loss. A thrilling one. In overtime.

Against the Dallas Mavericks.

For most of regulation and a portion of overtime, the Pacers had the NBA's best team on the ropes. But Indiana couldn't deliver a knock-out punch and wound up stumbling 115-113 against the Western Conference heavyweights.

Dallas MVP candidate Dirk Nowitzki scored eight of his season-high 43 points in overtime, including the game-winning free throws in the final seconds.

Teammate Jason Terry added 30 points, including a clutch 3-pointer with 36 seconds left in regulation to set up overtime.

Nowitzki's and Terry's big nights trumped one of the Pacers' best outings of the season. They led almost all but a small portion of regulation and were up by 11 in the first quarter.

But missed free throws at critical moments, untimely fouls in the fourth

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B2)



NEXT UP

Indiana Pacers (20-17) at New Jersey Nets (16-19)
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Monday
TV: None
Radio: WIBC-1070 AM

INSIDE

Trojans, Cubs advance

For the third straight season, Center Grove and Franklin will meet for the Johnson County Boys Basketball Tournament championship after both teams won games Friday at Edinburgh.

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NFL: DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

TODAY'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

A study in contrasts

Colts put finesse up against bruising Ravens

By Rick Morwick

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INDIANAPOLIS

They're big, bad, fast and mad. And if you don't believe it, listen up.

The Baltimore Ravens will tell you themselves.

"When we have it going, and we have that swagger going, and everybody's flowing and moving, and we're moving on that stream together, it's a beautiful thing to watch," Ravens linebacker Bart Scott said. "Ugly football for the fans, but beautiful for us."

By contrast, when the Indianapolis Colts have it going, it's typically NFL football at its aesthetic finest, a veritable X's and O's work of art. And if you don't believe it, well ... you better watch for yourself.

The Colts certainly won't tell you.

"Obviously, we don't have a lot of guys on our team that do a lot of talking," Indianapolis center Jeff Saturday said. "It's just two different styles. (The Ravens) have obviously been very good at what they've done for a long time, and so have we."

"We don't have to tell people what we do. That's just not our style."

But it is Baltimore's. And today's AFC divisional playoff couldn't showcase more strident-

ly different stylistic opponents.

Pillared by the league's No. 1 defense, the Ravens are bellicose and bold. They trash-talk freely and are, in many ways, a mirror image of their self-assured coach, Brian Billick.

And they usually win.

By comparison, the Colts are powered by their No. 3-ranked offense. They show little emotion and are, in many ways, a mirror image of their outwardly reserved coach, Tony Dungy.

And they usually win.

"It's just a different personality," Dungy said of the outward difference between the AFC rivals.

"The fact that they talk doesn't make them any worse or any better. It doesn't really affect their play, and the fact that we don't talk as much I don't think makes us any worse or any better."

"I think it's going to be a great matchup on the field. They'll probably be doing most of the talking."

The Ravens have already started. They began early in the week and took special aim at rookie running back Joseph Addai, who had 122 yards and a touchdown during the Colts' 23-8 wild-card win against Kansas City.

(SEE CONTRASTS, PAGE B4)

BY THE NUMBERS

A look at some of the key regular-season statistics in Saturday's playoff game between the Colts and Ravens:

26.7

Points per game scored by the Colts, second in the NFL.

12.6

Points per game allowed by the Ravens, best in the league.

19

Turnovers by Indianapolis this season, the fourth-lowest total in the NFL.

40

Number of takeaways by Baltimore, the second most in the league.

26.0

Yards allowed per kick return by the Colts, the third-highest total in the NFL.

3.4

Yards per attempt by Ravens ball carriers, the second-worst average in the league.

56.1

Indianapolis' third-down conversion percentage, the best in the NFL.

Indy won't get welcome in Baltimore

By Jason Martin

DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis Colts have gone back to Baltimore three times to play the Ravens since leaving the city on March 28, 1984, but never in such a high-profile game as today's AFC divisional playoff contest.

The focus of this meeting between two cities linked primarily by a football franchise relocation that is almost a quarter-century old is distinctly different in each of the locations.

In Baltimore (13-3), it's still about vengeance as much as a march toward a second Super Bowl.

"Some people still get a little nostalgic when they see that horseshoe," Ravens offensive tackle Jonathan Ogden said. "I understand it."

In Indianapolis, the view is a little more myopic.

The Colts (13-4) are concerned about winning their first road game in five tries. They had won 16 of 19 road

(SEE WELCOME, PAGE B4)

HOW WE SEE IT

Daily Journal staff members predict the outcome of today's AFC divisional playoff game between the Colts and Ravens:

Rick Morwick (4-0) Sports editor

Colts defense: fluke or for real? They'll get a reality check, on the road, against a more versatile offense than Kansas City's. Moreover, the Colts will be challenged by a significantly better team. And there's the nagging fact that all four of the Colts' losses have come on the road. Pulling this one out in a supercharged playoff environment will be a tad tougher than dueling hapless Kansas City in the dome.

Ravens 24, Colts 17

Paul Hoffman (3-1) Special publications editor

The Colts might think about hiring Willie Nelson, who just loves to get "On the Road Again." Indy hasn't won a road game since Nov. 5. Not only that, but they're going to a place where they may be hated more than anywhere. Mayflower moving vans stealing their Colts away are "Always On My Mind" for many Baltimore football fans. With an inspired defensive performance last week, this may not be the same Colts team that left fans' "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" the second half of the year. But Baltimore's defense is the best in the league, and its offense is underrated.

Ravens 23, Colts 20

Jeff Decker (3-1) Assistant sports editor

The Indianapolis bandwagon should come with revolving doors. The Colts give up a million yards to Houston's Ron Dayne, and the season is all but written off. A ho-hum win against the Dolphins inspires a collective yawn. And then Indy smacks around a bad and unimaginative Chiefs offense, the defense suddenly thinks it's the greatest ever, and now everyone is making Super Bowl plans. Sorry, but I'm not buying it.

Ravens 27, Colts 21

Matthew Glesnek (3-1) Sports writer

The Colts' defense showed up to play last week against Kansas City in attempts to quash naysayers. However, all the Colts did was stop a one-trick pony with an obvious game plan. Baltimore is more explosive on offense with weapons like Todd Heap and Mark Clayton in the passing game, so if the Colts are going to advance, they can't be caught cheating on stopping the run or Steve McNair will make them pay. With that said, I'm going with the Colts.

Colts 27, Ravens 21



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning's frequent audibles at the line of scrimmage help keep opposing defenses off balance.

AP PHOTOS

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