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SPORTS

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SECTION B

ROAD TO THE SUPER BOWL



Super Bowl XLI: Indianapolis Colts vs. Chicago Bears

Time: 6 p.m. Feb. 4 TV: WISH-Channel 8 Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM



This Bear has Indiana roots

Grossman's hometown torn when it comes to loyalties

By MICHAEL MAROT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

This Super Bowl is all about family to Maureen and Dan Grossman.

Their son, Rex, is the Chicago Bears' quarterback, but the family has strong ties to football in Indiana going back to the 1940s. They've had Colts season tickets for 23 years, and Dan Grossman, like his brother Dobby and their father, also named Rex, played football at Indiana University.

On Super Bowl Sunday, though, their allegiance will be with the Bears.

"We're excited, nervous and proud," Maureen Grossman said Thursday. "There's a lot of love for Rex in Bloomington, and I think everyone is wishing him well."

Maybe not too well, though.

When Chicago beat the New Orleans Saints on Sunday, and the Colts pulled off the greatest comeback in conference championship history later Sunday night, it set up a dream matchup for the Grossmans and their friends.

But to many others in Bloomington, a city of about 70,000 where the Grossmans still live, the game tugs at their deepest loyalties.

Rex Grossman's high school coach, Mo Moriarity, has a solution.

"I'll cheer for the team with the ball," said Moriarity, now the coach at Carmel High School.

"You know I have as much respect for Tony Dungy and Peyton Manning as you can have for anyone, and I sure wouldn't be upset if they won a Super Bowl. But when you coach somebody, you always root for that person to do well, too."

Many remember Grossman as the talented quarterback of Bloomington South High School.

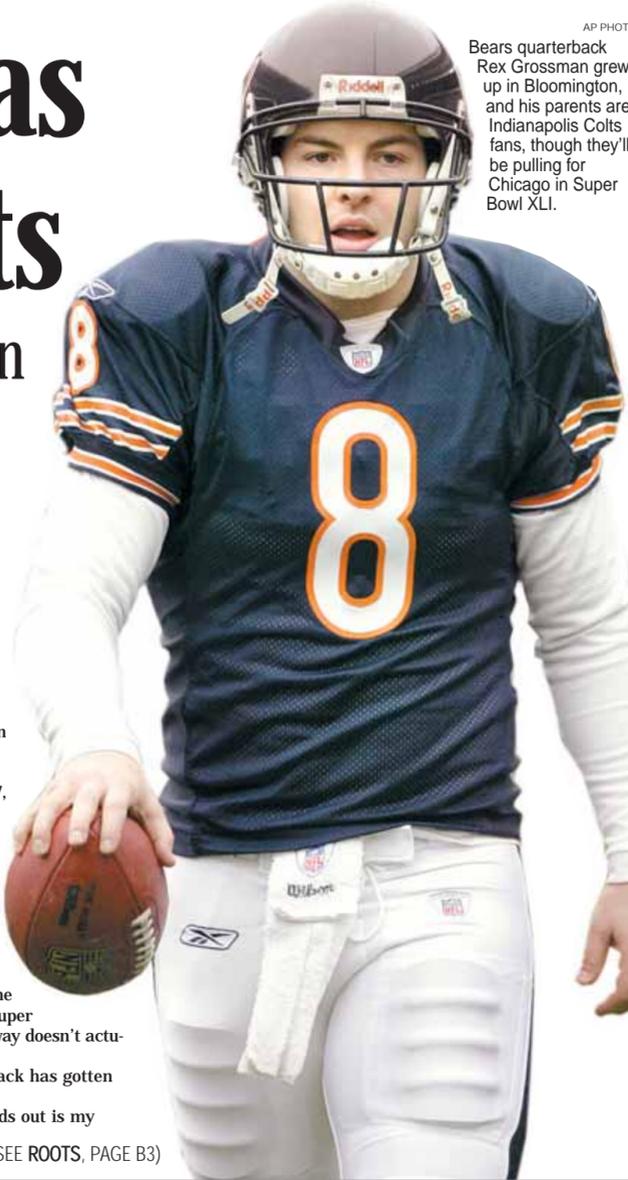
He led the school to a state runner-up finish in 1997, his junior season, then won a state title and Indiana's Mr. Football Award in 1998.

Some also remember him for leaving Indiana to play at the University of Florida, and now he's added another chapter to his storybook career by leading the Bears into a game some call the Interstate 65 Super Bowl, even though the highway doesn't actually go into Chicago.

Even the Bears quarterback has gotten caught in the middle.

"The only thing that stands out is my

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AP PHOTO
Bears quarterback Rex Grossman grew up in Bloomington, and his parents are Indianapolis Colts fans, though they'll be pulling for Chicago in Super Bowl XLI.

Getting another chance

Colts' McFarland was sidelined for his first Super Bowl

By RICK MORWICK
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INDIANAPOLIS

To a player, the Indianapolis Colts consider themselves fortunate to be in the Super Bowl.

But perhaps none more so than Anthony McFarland. Consider this:

In 2002, he was Tampa Bay's starting nose tackle. He broke his right forearm in late October, missed four games, returned to the lineup and then broke his right foot two games later in mid-December.

He sat out the entire postseason and watched the Buccaneers win the Super Bowl from the sidelines.

This time, the veteran lineman will have a much better vantage point.

"To have an opportunity to play for a second world title in my career, and also to have the opportunity to be on the field playing this time, it means a lot," said McFarland, who wasn't sure he'd ever get a second chance to play in the Super Bowl.

But it materialized when the Colts had to plug holes in their defensive line.

A season-ending illness to Corey Simon and a season-ending injury to Montae Reagor led to the acquisition of McFarland in an Oct. 17 trade with Tampa Bay. He's been a fixture ever since.

A renowned run-stuffer, the 6-foot, 300-pound player has been a major part of the Colts' defensive resurgence, especially in the postseason.

But he dismisses the notion that he's

(SEE CHANCE, PAGE B3)

THE GROSSMAN FILE

Name: Rex Grossman
Team: Chicago Bears
Position: Quarterback
Number: 8
Born: Aug. 23, 1980, in Bloomington
High school: Bloomington South. Grossman led the Panthers to the IHSAA Class 5A state championship in

1998, passing for 3,080 yards and 44 touchdowns during his senior season. He was named Mr. Football.

College: Florida

Drafted: With the 22nd pick of the first round by the Bears

NFL experience: Fourth season

Height: 6-foot-1

Weight: 217 pounds

Statistics: During the 2006 regular season, Grossman completed 262 of 480 pass attempts (54.6 percent) for 3,193 yards with 23 touchdowns, 20 interceptions and a 73.9 quarterback rating. For his career, he is 367 of 675 (54.4 percent) for 4,496 yards with 27 touchdowns, 26 interceptions and a 72.4 quarterback rating.

Suggestion works out for Fletcher

Tight end's big catch helped set up game-winning TD

By JASON MARTIN
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

INDIANAPOLIS

The play that arguably thrust the Indianapolis Colts into the Super Bowl didn't originate from offensive coordinator Tom Moore's clipboard or from quarterback Peyton Manning's feverish film study.

No, the Colts won the AFC championship largely thanks to a fourth-quarter hunch from a backup tight end who had just dropped a pass.

With 2:12 remaining and Indianapolis trailing New England by a field goal Sunday, Bryan Fletcher was smothered on a short middle

inside route by Patriots inside line-backer Eric Alexander.

"I saw how heavily (Alexander) was sitting on that route; he wasn't backpedaling or anything," Fletcher said. "I just felt that I could run right past him."

Only 2:08 remained in the game, and the Colts faced second-and-10 at their own 31-yard line.

That's when Fletcher did the unthinkable: He trotted back to what amounts to an Indianapolis huddle



FLETCHER

and told Manning to call a long corner route specifically for him on a play that the team rarely runs.

"I felt like it was a situation we could take advantage of," Fletcher said. "We don't normally run corner routes in the middle of the field, so it's a tendency breaker. I just suggested it."

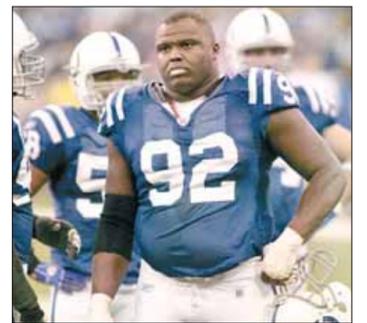
Manning, who saw the same coverage from Alexander, a little-used second-year pro who was making his first career start, agreed with Fletcher, who made only 18 catches all regular season.

On the snap, Fletcher separated

(SEE FLETCHER, PAGE B3)

THE FLETCHER FILE

Name: Bryan Fletcher
Team: Indianapolis Colts
Position: Tight end
Number: 81
Born: March 29, 1979, in St. Louis
Resides: St. Louis
College: UCLA
Drafted: By the Bears in the sixth round of the 2002 draft. He was signed as a free agent by the Colts in 2005.
NFL experience: Second season
Height: 6-foot-5
Weight: 230 pounds
Statistics: During the 2006 regular season, Fletcher caught 18 passes for 202 yards (11.2 average) and two touchdowns. In the postseason, he has two catches for 28 yards and no scores.



AP PHOTO
Colts defensive lineman Anthony McFarland takes a break during the team's AFC wildcard game against the Chiefs on Jan. 6.

Grizzly Cubs girls team prepares to say good-bye to gym

By MATTHEW GLENESK
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For 19 years, Walt Raines has patrolled the home sideline of Franklin Community High School's Vandivier Gym.

On Saturday night, the Grizzly Cubs' girls basketball coach will do so for the final time.

He's not retiring. He's relocating. The whole high school is.

With next year's move to the new high school, Franklin's girls team will play its final home contest at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. The opponent will be Martinsville.

For Raines, it's the end of an era.

"I've coached anywhere from 200 to 250 games there, and I'm sure Saturday night when I walk out of that locker room getting ready for the game, it's going to be a strange feeling leaving that locker room for the last time," he said.

To celebrate the gym's 45-year run, the school is inviting former players to come back and be part of closing a chapter in Cubs girls hoops history.

That history includes 10 sectional winners, four regional

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STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com
Franklin Community High School's girls basketball team practices in Vandivier Gym on Dec. 21. The Cubs will play in a new gym starting next season.

"I'm sure the new high school is going to be great, but I want to finish in the gym I grew up in, the one my mom and sister played in."

Kristin Chaney

Franklin Community High School basketball player on the Cubs' final season in Vandivier Gym

Roncalli outlasts Franklin in double-overtime marathon

By STEVE McCCLURE
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Rebels 60, Cubs 54, 2 OTs

It was right there for the taking. The Franklin Community High School girls basketball team had a three-point lead with 41 seconds remaining in regulation.

But visiting Roncalli tied Thursday's game at the buzzer on a desperation 3-pointer by junior Courtney Pedersen.

And it was Pedersen who figured prominently in the Rebels' 60-54 double overtime victory.

Pedersen, who came off the bench, was 6 of 6 from 3-point range and had a game-high 22 points.

At the end of the first overtime, Franklin freshman Carley Buchanan put the Grizzly Cubs up by four, 51-47, on a 3-pointer and four consecutive free throws.

The Rebels (10-7) came charging back with 8.3 seconds left in the first overtime to tie it at 51 after junior Christina Lorah hit one of two free throws and Pedersen was there to grab the rebound and connect on a 3-pointer.

Pedersen wasn't done, as she hit another 3-pointer to start the second overtime. Franklin could

(SEE FRANKLIN, PAGE B2)