

Most employers were ready for few workers

Some businesses planned for Colts fans to be off work

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Production floors were empty or staffed with skeleton crews and office workers at several Johnson County industrial plants Monday morning.

Workers at one office slipped in late wearing blue Super Bowl champion shirts the day after the big game.

Production was at a lull. But managers at the local companies said they were ready for a slowdown the day after the Colts' victory.

At businesses in Center Grove, Greenwood and Franklin, human resource managers rearranged schedules, altered shifts and

"I just can't imagine my father or grandfather calling in because they stayed up too late watching a sports game."

Timothy Baldwin

Indiana University Kelley School of Business professor on how so many people missing work could be seen as sports having too much emphasis

even made coming to work an option.

They worked with employees and planned for the absences in the week before the game to avoid any surprises in staffing levels on Monday, officials said.

Lost production from one day will be a blip in the long run and benefits such as higher morale in the workplace could come from the day off, one economics professor said.

The effect of the post-Super Bowl lulls at businesses will be felt more in Indianapolis than elsewhere in the country, said John Stevens, a professor of economics at Franklin College.

He compared the losses for the

day to a weather emergency or other events that prevent employees from coming to work. In the long run, he would not anticipate any significant repercussions, he said.

Another professor said he had mixed feelings about the attitudes toward taking off.

The fact that so many people felt the need to take off the day after the Super Bowl could be seen as disproportionate emphasis on sports, said Timothy Baldwin, professor at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business.

"I just can't imagine my father or grandfather calling in because they stayed up too late

watching a sports game," he said.

Yet at the same time, when a local team is playing in a national event, there might be a time to be playful, relax and celebrate, he said.

"This is a once-in-a-generation event," he said.

Local employers looked at the day in just that way.

About 45 people out of 200 showed up for the 5:30 a.m. shift at Arbonne distribution center in Greenwood on Monday.

"We expected that, and it was fine," said Jim Balder, human resources manager.

Last week, managers at the plant, which fills and ships orders for makeup, hair and facial-care products, decided to make work on Monday optional.

Managers expected high calls the day after the Super Bowl.

"We actually beat them to the punch," he said.

The workers were told that if plant production was ahead of schedule for the month, they

would have the option to not work on Monday.

Employees will not be paid for the day off, but they won't be penalized for not showing up for work, he said.

If workers wanted to stay home after a late night watching the game or to take their families to the parade and other festivities in downtown Indianapolis, that's fine, Balder said.

At NSK in Franklin, many factory employees did not come in Monday morning and instead will be working Saturday, said Jim McGinnis, human resources manager.

The company anticipated a lot of workers would want the option, especially for the first shift, which starts at 7 a.m., he said.

Some salaried employees also requested vacation time for Monday, he said.

Production floors were empty at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Climate Control in Franklin Monday.

Managers there decided to shift the schedule. Employees usually work four 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday. This week, they will work Tuesday through Friday.

"If we hadn't changed the four days, I anticipate we would have had some lates; but this way we didn't have to worry about it," said Bob Francis, human resources manager.

Employees suggested the schedule change, he said.

At their Super Bowl party Friday, employees of Century 21 Realty Group had joked about how they might slip in a bit late the day after the game.

Sporting a Super Bowl shirt, blue nails and blue socks, Wilma Harmening came in about 90 minutes late, she said.

Employees set their own schedule and did give a warning that they would be late, said Sean M. Christie, sales manager.

They came in a little sleepy but high in morale, which made the day worth the tardiness, he said.

REPORTERS' NOTEBOOKS

Daily Journal staff report

More than one MVP

As Peyton Manning accepted the keys to a new sports car Sunday night as the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player, Martinsville resident Thomas Johnson felt he wasn't the most deserving.

Dominic Rhodes played a big role in getting the team to the Super Bowl and should have been MVP, he said.

It would have been nice to see someone else shine other than Manning, Johnson said.

Spencer Sullivan, 10, said he thought Manning was the right choice.

A team to respect

"Champions" isn't the only word fans are using to describe the Colts.

They're classy.

They're role models. Finally, the city has a team to cheer for and athletes who are serving as good Christian role models, Franklin resident Charlotte Sullivan said.

"You want your kids to look up to them," she said of the team. She and her three children were at Dick's Sporting Goods on Monday morning buying shirts and hats.

Sullivan's children, Spencer, 10, Ethan, 8, and Sarah, 7, had Monday off from St. Rose of Lima Catholic School.

The Sullivan family planned to use the day to first buy Super Bowl championship gear and then head downtown for the rally.

Chris Osborne, of Greenwood, said he wouldn't hesitate to consider Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison and Tony Dungy great role models for his 8-year-old son.

"It couldn't happen to a better group of guys," Osborne said of the Colts' Super Bowl win.

'We're all so happy'

Bargersville resident Brian Spetter played in six state baseball championships for Center Grove schools.

Despite playing at that level, he never felt so strongly about a game before Sunday.

He was calm while playing, but he was wound up Sunday, he said. Spetter was unable to sit during the game, standing behind a packed wraparound couch in his basement and shifting tensely.

Spetter couldn't relax even after a fourth-quarter intercep-

tion made a Colts title seem assured.

He was tense even as seconds ticked off the clock after the two-minute warning with the Bears stalled on a final drive.

Even after the victory, Spetter remained wired, standing stiffly.

Visibly moved, he joined in a hug with friends and family as time ran out. Spetter brought out the bubbly after the win, toasting the Colts to their success.

Spetter, a long-time season-ticket holder, remembers his enthusiasm when the Colts came from Baltimore. He was in the seventh grade.

"I couldn't believe they came to Indiana," he said. "And I can't believe they brought the championship back home. This is beyond your wildest dreams as a young boy."

'The Colts finally done it'

Season-ticket holders and long-suffering Colts fans reveled after the Super Bowl win Sunday.

A house party in Bargersville erupted into joyous shouts, pumped fists and group hugs Sunday.

Glasses of champagne circulated around the room as cameras flashed.

Many welled up with tears as the Vince Lombardi trophy was presented to the team.

"Doggone, it's terrific! The Colts finally done it," Greenwood resident Ronald Lautenbach said.

"I'm so glad for Peyton Manning after trying all these years and taking all that criticism, now bringing a great win to our city and our state."

Most reacted with incredulity, even if they considered the Super Bowl a foregone conclusion after the Colts knocked off the rival Patriots in the hard-fought AFC Championship.

They couldn't believe it, even as they predicted the start of a football dynasty.

"It's just unbelievable, such a long time coming," Chris Bass of Greenwood said. "As a season ticket holder, I've seen a lot of bad football, and everything just fell into place this year."

The game was one for the ages, Greenwood resident Mike Poole said.

"If you love this city, you love tonight," he said. "I'm just glad I can be sharing this moment with my closest friends."

'A source of pride'

A Clark Township resident hadn't seen a Colts game this sea-

son before the Super Bowl.

Don Lautenbach has only seen one Colts game in its entirety, a decade ago at the RCA Dome. He took his son for the experience.

Still, even as a non-football fan, he never considered doing anything else Sunday.

"As a Hoosier, you can't deny this right now," he said. "This is a source of pride."

Lautenbach has never been a football fan. He attended Clark High School and graduated with a class of 14.

He played both baseball and basketball, the only teams the school could field at the time. They didn't have enough for a football team.

Lautenbach occasionally catches the highlights. He didn't follow everything that happened on the field but took his cue from the raucous reaction of party-goers at the family gathering he attended.

Key plays brought many to their feet to pump fists and slap hands.

The camaraderie made it a special evening for Lautenbach.

"You've got little kids and old men like me," he said. "Where else are you going to see coming together for one event."

Keeping warm for parade

Carol Hellman had never worn long underwear and layered socks until Monday.

She and her husband, Tim Hellman, moved to Indianapolis from Texas about three months ago and immediately became Colts fans.

"We got all excited about it," Carol Hellman said.

The couple stood on Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis holding a homemade sign that said, "Texas Backs the Colts World Champs."

They arrived downtown about 1 p.m. and stood in the single-digit temperatures waiting for the parade to start.

They planned to watch the parade and then run to the RCA Dome in hopes of finding a seat for the rally.

The couple, more used to smoldering Texas weather, went inside during the first few hours of waiting only for a coffee break "to take the chill off," Tim Hellman said.

Friendly race for signs

The paper signs read "Colts, AFC Champions."

T-shirts, sweat shirts and other

items proclaiming the team's Super Bowl victory were selling out.

Inside the RCA Dome, before the pep rally Monday, free championship posters were in demand.

A crush of about 75 people stood around a person handing out the placards.

The fans were surprisingly calm and didn't push or shove. Instead, they handed the signs back one at a time to people standing at the back of the crowd.

A few feet away, a woman stood around the corner with a half-dozen signs. Her toddler daughter stood beside her.

Whenever a child walked by, she offered one to the little girl or boy.

"I was just scared one of those little boys or girls was going to get smashed," said Crystal Devault, Indianapolis.

Dirt for sale

Peyton Manning knows what to do.

If you are injured, just rub some dirt on it.

The remedy must work better with Hoosier soil.

That is what some entrepreneurs were counting on outside the RCA Dome.

Bags of Indiana soil could be purchased for a dollar apiece.

A family affair

One Indianapolis man wouldn't miss the rally at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis for anything, he said.

He wouldn't have his son miss the moment, either.

Joe Clegg said he had been watching the Colts since he was 10 years old.

Now, his son Alec is 12, and the two watch the games together.

Clegg kept Alec home so they could come to the rally together. He took two hours off of work as well, he said.

The once-in-a-lifetime event was worth it, he said.

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