



DUNGY



SMITH

League poised for double dose of history

By MARK CRAIG
MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL STAR TRIBUNE

Less than 20 years ago, the NFL still was looking for its first black head coach of the modern era. Tony Dungy was the favorite but lost out when the Raiders hired Art Shell in 1989.

The Buccaneers hired Dungy in 1995. He turned the franchise around and would have been the first black head coach to reach the Super Bowl. But the Bucs fired him after the 2001 season, a year before Jon Gruden took Dungy's team to a victory in Super Bowl XXXVII.

The guess here is Dungy will reach the Super Bowl about 9:30 Sunday night. But he won't be the first black head coach to get there. The other guess here is Dungy's student, Lovie Smith, will beat him by about 3½ hours, only because Smith's Bears play the Saints in the NFC Championship Game at 3 p.m., and Dungy's Colts play the Patriots in the AFC Championship Game at 6:30 p.m.

Of course, after 40 years' worth of Super Bowls, what's a few hours between close friends and former co-workers? They will be happy to walk together down the uncharted path to Super Bowl XLI in Miami on Feb. 4.

"It would be special if that happened," Smith told reporters this week. "Tony is a good friend. I'm a big Colts fan since they're on the AFC side. We realize the position we're in, and it hasn't happened a lot of times. We have an opportunity to do something special."

Five times a black head coach has reached a conference title game and lost. Shell did it during the 1990 season, followed by Dennis Green (1998 and 2000) and Dungy (1999 with the Bucs and 2003 with the Colts). This is the first time two black head coaches have reached the conference championship games in the same season.

Taking the next step won't be easy. The Colts and Bears have their share of blemishes. But the steady hand and quiet strength that Dungy and Smith displayed amid chaos this season led both teams, both men, to history's doorstep.

The Colts' defense was terrible during the regular season as opponents averaged 5.3 yards per carry and a 47.1 third-down conversion percentage. But in the postseason the defense has been spectacular, carrying struggling quarterback Peyton Manning while holding the Chiefs and Ravens to 3.4 yards per carry and a 13.6 third-down conversion percentage (3 of 22).

"Things aren't always as bad as they look," said Dungy, who wasn't outwardly frazzled even when the Jaguars ran for a staggering 375 yards in a late-season rout of the Colts.

Meanwhile, in Chicago, Smith has steadfastly defended erratic quarterback Rex Grossman amid an upheaval of protest by fans and the media in Chicagoland. Although Grossman made mistakes in Sunday's victory against Seattle, he also threw a 68-yard touchdown pass and completed a 30-yard strike on third-and-10 to set up the game-winning field goal in overtime.

Smith is calm and steady by nature. But it didn't hurt his composed leadership qualities that it was Dungy who brought him into the NFL as Bucs linebackers coach from 1996 to 2000. Smith had spent the previous 16 seasons in the high school and college ranks before Dungy added him to a coaching tree that blossoms more each year.

In the history of the NFL, there has been a combined 51 seasons by eight black head coaches. Of those 51 seasons, 27, or 52.9 percent, reached the playoffs.

"I hope for a day when it is unnoticed, but that day isn't here," Smith said. "This is the first time I think that two black men have led their teams to the final four. You have to acknowledge that. We do. I do. I realize the responsibility that comes with that. But as much as anything, I realize that my responsibility of just being the head coach of the Chicago Bears."

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Ex-Cub leading the way for Buckeyes

By WALT VANDERBUSH
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Ohio State high jumper Jessie Stringer, a three-time Big Ten champion, opened her final season with a second-place finish in the Kentucky Indoor Track and Field Invitational.

In the field of 20 competitors, only Kelly Bowman, a former Louisville performer who was competing unattached, had a better jump than the Franklin Community High School graduate's leap of 5 feet, 8 inches.

Franklin

• Wooster swimmer Kyle Oaks won the 50-yard freestyle in dual meets won by the Fighting Scots against Hiram (149-80) and Ohio Wesleyan (137-99). He was first of eight competitors in 22.83 in the win against Hiram and first of six in 23.25 in the victory against Ohio Wesleyan. He was fourth of six (1:00.31) in the 100 backstroke and swam on the winning 200 freestyle relay team in the Hiram meet and was second of six in the 100 freestyle (51.40) and a member of the winning 400 freestyle relay team in the Ohio Wesleyan meet.

• The Vincennes women's swimmers lost 117-79 to Millikin. However, Laura Swanson was first of six in the 200 freestyle (2:08.81), first of five in the 500 freestyle (5:45.40) and a member of the winning 200 freestyle relay team.

• The Butler women swimmers lost to Wisconsin-Green Bay 141-93. Elizabeth Shafer was sixth of eight in the 200 freestyle (2:10.81) and fifth of seven in the 500 freestyle (1:00.06). The Butler men fell to Wisconsin-Green Bay by a 144-80 score, and Ben Shafer was fourth of five in the 200 breaststroke (2:37.13) and fifth of six in the 100 breaststroke (1:10.40).

• The Purdue wrestlers lost their Big Ten opener to Ohio State (28-6). Sean Schmalz lost 3-1 in overtime at 133 pounds. • Bloomsburg's Jesse Haseman, wrestling unattached during a redshirt year, is 16-8 at 184 pounds.

• Joe Ramey made brief

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appearances for the Franklin College men's basketball team (8-7, 4-3) in a win against Anderson (79-74) and a loss to Transylvania (85-84). In a total of five minutes, the transfer from St. Joseph's made his only shot, a 3-pointer, and had one rebound and one assist.

Whiteland

• Eastern Illinois freshman basketball player Jessica Huffman was named Ohio Valley Conference Freshman of the Week for the fourth time. She is second in the conference in scoring and 35th in Division I nationally with an 18.2 per-game average. The Panthers (5-13, 2-7) lost to Tennessee-Martin (66-55) and Eastern Kentucky (78-69). Huffman led Eastern Illinois with 26 points (10 for 17 field-goal shooting, 4 for 8 3-point shooting, 2 for 4 free-throw shooting) and had three steals, two rebounds and one assist in 30 minutes against UT-Martin and had 16 points (6 for 19, 0 for 6, 4 for 6), seven rebounds, four assists and one steal in 30 minutes against Eastern Kentucky.

• The Brescia women's basketball team (10-12) defeated Lindsey Wilson (75-55) and Pikeville (64-61) and lost to Oakland City in overtime (74-73). Jennifer Patrick had 11 points (5 for 15, 0 for 3, 1 for 2), 10 rebounds, two assists and two steals in 73 minutes in the three games.

• The University of Indianapolis wrestlers defeated Truman State (40-12) and lost to Central Missouri (19-17). Mike Horton pinned his Truman State opponent and lost 6-4 to Central Missouri at 157 pounds. Justin Cooper won 5-4 against Truman State at 197 pounds and lost 9-7 to Central Missouri.

• The University of Indianapolis swimmers bowed to Truman State. Aaron Neeman was third of seven in the 1,650 freestyle (17:07.22), third of eight in the 500 freestyle (4:57.66), fourth

of seven in the 1,000 freestyle (10:23.27) and sixth of seven in the 200 butterfly (2:12.04). In a second 500 freestyle race on the second day of the meet, he was third of seven in 5:01.30.

• The IUPUI men's swimmers lost to Eastern Michigan (132-100). Freshman Justin Shaw was second of nine in the 100 freestyle (22.54) and a member of the winning 200 freestyle relay team. Josh Davis was fifth of eight divers at 1 meter and eighth at 3 meters.

• Vincennes swimmer Lindsey Gieseking was first of four in the 100 backstroke (1:09.41), second of three in the 1,650 freestyle (20:08.14) and a member of the winning 200 freestyle relay team in the Trailblazers' 117-79 loss to Millikin.

• The Ball State tennis team opened its winter season with a 7-0 victory against IUPUI and a 4-3 loss to DePaul. No. 1 singles player Joe Epkey won 6-0, 6-3 against the Jaguars and 6-1, 7-6 against the Blue Demons. At No. 3 singles, Jarrod Epkey defeated his IUPUI opponent 5-7, 6-0 (13-11) and lost to DePaul 6-2, 6-3. The Epkey brothers won at No. 1 doubles against both IUPUI (8-5) and DePaul (8-3).

• The Vincennes men swimmers lost 99-93 to Millikin. Josh Goff was fifth of six in the 100 freestyle (57.50) and fifth in the 200 freestyle (2:12.06).

• The Ohio Northern swimmers defeated Oberlin 225-53 and Mount Union 140-91. Lance Holdorf was first of six in the 1,000 freestyle (11:18.54) and third of five in the 500 freestyle (5:33.41) against Mount Union and second of three in both the 1,000 (11:30.39) and 500 (5:28.51) against Oberlin.

• The University of Indianapolis men's and women's swimming teams lost to Truman State. In the men's meet, Greg Jarvis was third of 10 competitors in the 100 freestyle (49.31) and seventh of 10 in the 50 freestyle (22.82). In the second 50 freestyle race on the second day of the meet, Jarvis was sev-

enth of nine in 22.79 seconds. Casey Owen was third of eight in the women's 100 freestyle (55.85), fifth of eight in the 50 freestyle (25.57) and a member of the winning 400 freestyle relay team. In the second 50 freestyle race on the second day of the meet, she was fourth of eight in 25.66 seconds.

• Iowa State diver Tien Tran was second of four at 3 meters and fourth of five at 1 meter in the Cyclones' 184-103 swimming and diving loss to Missouri.

• The Akron women's swimming team defeated Bowling Green 178-121 and fell to Youngstown 140-85. Rachel Ripley won the six-competing 1,000 freestyle (10:39.35) against Youngstown. In the win against the Falcons, she was third of six in the 200 IM (2:13.40), third of seven in the 100 backstroke (1:00.38) and sixth of seven in the 200 backstroke (2:16.62).

• Indiana University long jumper Tyler Skelton was fourth of 12 in the Indiana Open Indoor Track and Field Meet II with a leap of 22 feet, ¼-inch. In the same meet, University of Southern Indiana distance runner Andrew Menner was third of 22 in the mile run (4:29.46).

• Marian sophomore Josh Graham won the triple jump (36-10) at the three-team Huntington University Frozen Forest Indoor Track and Field Invitational. Knights freshman Ty Jessup was third in the shot put.

• The Mount St. Joseph women's basketball team (6-9) lost to Rose-Hulman (68-44) and defeated Cincinnati Christian (87-52). Maria Eichhold had 22 points (11 for 18, 0 for 0, 0 for 1), seven rebounds, two assists, one rebound and one steal in 51 minutes in the two games.

• The St. Joseph's women's basketball team (4-10, 1-5) lost to Drury (95-49) and won against Rockhurst (66-58). Molly Lauck played 27 minutes in the two games and had two points (0 for 3, 0 for 0, 2 for 2) and six rebounds.

• The Ohio Wesleyan women's basketball team lost to Kenyon (62-57) and defeated Earlham (69-48). Stacy Aaron played seven minutes in the two games and had three points (1 for 2, 1 for 1, 0 for 0) and one rebound.

• The University of Indianapolis women's basketball team (9-5, 3-4) defeated Missouri-St.

Louis (69-61) and lost to Rockhurst (74-55) and Drury (66-53). Deanna Thomson led the Greyhounds with team highs in five categories: 11 points (5 for 10, 0 for 1, 1 for 2), 10 rebounds, four steals, two assists and one blocked shot in 38 minutes in the loss to Drury. In 62 minutes in the other two games, she had seven points (3 for 14, 0 for 2, 1 for 1), six rebounds, two assists, one steal and one blocked shot.



THOMSON

Greenwood

• The Marian men's basketball team (7-8, 2-5) lost 79-58 to Grace. Matt Allee had four points (2 for 7, 0 for 1, 0 for 0), five rebounds and one assist in 17 minutes.

• Jon Ensign scored 10 points and led the Asbury College men's basketball team (10-7) in rebounding in a 102-68 win against IU-East at Conesco Fieldhouse.

• The Ohio State women's swimming team defeated Marshall (148-86) and lost to Northwestern (168-132) in a three-way meet. Mary Ann Wiser was ninth of 11 in the 50 freestyle (25.84) and ninth of 12 in the 100 freestyle (56.09).

Indian Creek

• J.R. Angle played six minutes in Iowa's 74-70 men's basketball loss to Illinois and missed his only shot, a 3-pointer. He played one minute in the Hawkeyes' 60-49 win against Minnesota.

• St. Joseph's freshman Jeremiah Tworek finished fifth of 10 runners in the 400-meter dash (52.78), first for the Pumas, at the Mike Lints Laker Indoor Track and Field Challenge at Grand Valley State.

• Marian freshman Kyle Murray won the 800-meter run (2:04.45) at the three-team Huntington University Frozen Forest Indoor Track and Field Invitational. The Knights won the meet, defeating Huntington and Manchester.

Walt Vanderbush is a former principal at Franklin Community High School. Ideas for the weekly College Update should be sent to sports editor Rick Morwick at rmorwick@thejournalnet.com.

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