

• Mark

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Raiders to unprecedented heights. All facets of Knight's personality were on display during a half-hour postgame ceremony and the nearly 20-minute soliloquy he gave instead of a news conference.

The first person to congratulate him was his son and successor-to-be, Pat. He later held his two grandsons from his other son, Tim. He introduced his wife and repeatedly thanked her, although he later broke a promise to her by cussing.

"The first 15 minutes of the game was Karen's game plan," he said of his wife, a former high school coach. "The rest of it was mine, unfortunately."

The first thing he did was tell Tech's current chancellor "what an improvement you are" over the predecessor Knight had sparred with at a salad bar. He called his current athletic director one of the best friends he's ever had.

"I've had the chance to work with some really great athletic directors and some really bad ones," he said. "I appreciate what I learned from the bad ones."

Knight singled out a player whose hustle helped pull out this victory, which wasn't easy; Tech blew a 20-point lead and trailed by four points with 6:25 remaining. The Red Raiders (11-4) finally went back ahead with 2:04 left and managed to hold on.

He introduced as "our prized student" the player he suspended for academic reasons at the start of the season. He jokingly tapped the chin of the player whose chin he had jerked earlier this season and told all his players, "If you guys still love me after everything I say to you and everything I put you through, that's a hell of a compliment to me."

Not interested in answering reporters' questions, Knight instead went on a trip down memory lane that was filled with anecdotes and name-dropping, from the famous, such as Red Auerbach, Pete Newell and Clair Bee to the obscure, such as Jake Pryne, the bus driver at Army when Knight was 24 and the nation's youngest coach.

He seemed close to tears at times. Though none fell, he backed away from the microphone a couple of times while on the court, seemingly unable to speak. His eyes moistened while talking to reporters.

In the coaches' locker room later, Knight was asked whether his emotions got the best of him. Gently rocking his head, with his hands clasped over his hair, he paused and said, "Well, I don't know. Maybe."

• Hall

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give details of the committee meetings.

Knight was fired from Indiana in September 2000, making him eligible in the fall of 2005.

Since then, the university has attempted to mend the rift between Knight's loyalists and the school. In November, the athletic department conducted a banquet honoring former Indiana basketball players, and there's now a photo of Knight hanging near a ramp in the main lobby of Assembly Hall.

On Monday, shortly after Texas Tech's 70-68 victory against New Mexico, NCAA President Myles Brand, the man who fired Knight, issued a brief statement.

"Congratulations to coach Knight, and especially to the many young men who played for him over the years," Brand said.

Indiana president Adam Herbert, who succeeded Brand, released a written statement that was ready to go out Thursday. In it, he cited Knight's contributions to the university that helped him become a household name on the coaching circuit.

"Indiana University fans have always been proud of the record of team success that coach Knight achieved here in Bloomington," Herbert said. "On behalf of the IU family, I wish coach Knight continued success."

Athletic director Rick Greenspan tried to explain Knight's exclusion by citing the procedural process, although he wasn't sure whether Knight had yet been nominated.

One factor going against him may be the fact Knight sued the university to collect back pay after his firing, a case that was dropped in February 2004.

Greenspan, who took over at Indiana in 2004, said he believes Knight eventually will get in. The question is how long it will take.

"I would be shocked if, at some point in time, he was not a member," Greenspan said. "I think he'd have to be nominated just because of the sheer magnitude of what he's done."

In Bloomington, where Knight's name still elicits passionate responses, the record chase drew no pomp and no public events.



Indiana's Joey Shaw, center, puts back a rebound over teammate Xavier Keeling as Ball State's Anthony Newell, right, defends during the second half of Saturday's game in Bloomington. The Hoosiers play at Ohio State tonight.

• Player

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One window was blown out.

Another man and a woman who were shot were not identified. They were taken to St. Anthony Central Hospital, where one of them was released.

Coach Mike Shanahan said the killing left him speechless with sadness.

"We all know that Darrent was an excellent player, but as a person, he was a first-class young man who brightened every room with his smile, attitude and personality," Shanahan said. "I cannot express how heartsick I feel at this loss."

Jackson said there was a dispute at a nightclub several blocks from the shooting where Williams and his group had attended a party. He said the argument didn't specifically involve Williams, according to witnesses, and the confrontation wasn't physical, just taunts.

"Why this happened, we're not sure," Jackson said.

Police were searching for a white Suburban or Tahoe with dark-tinted windows. Jackson wouldn't identify any of the other passengers nor would he confirm whether any other Broncos players were in the limo, which can hold 23 people.

The club identified by police advertised a New Year's Eve event celebrating the birthday of Denver Nuggets basketball player Kenyon Martin. The Nuggets canceled practice Monday.

Mark Warkentien, Denver's vice president of basketball operations, said police spoke with him but asked him not to comment.

"We'll respectfully honor their request," Warkentien said. "And if the Denver police need us in any way, we'll cooperate fully."

The club, variously called Shelter or Safari, is on the second floor of an building in a once-seedy stretch south of downtown that has a growing number of trendy bars, clubs and restaurants.

Hours after the shooting, the limo sat in a snowbank beside Speer Boulevard, a main street through downtown. Police and technicians worked amid snow and ice from recent storms, using small yellow plastic markers to indicate possible evidence.

"Dee lived his life to the fullest. He had a big heart and helped many people," his mother, Rosalind Williams, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

• Trojans

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

early in her career but now is primed to help carry the load.

"I believe she had an opportunity last year had she competed on any other team to be All-State," Howe said. "We were so deep last year she really didn't have that opportunity. We're going to take full advantage of her this year."

The depth Center Grove enjoyed last year has thinned, which could make things more difficult for the Trojans.

"The biggest challenge is we don't really have any depth," Cristofoli said. "We have no room for error. We have about three people that are going to be key, but we don't know about the fourth person just yet."

Among the candidates to join Cristofoli, Roller and Fernandes is senior Erika Shrum, who transferred from Lutheran.

Cardinals, Falcons hastily fire coaches

The Associated Press

NEW YORK

The Arizona Cardinals and Atlanta Falcons didn't waste any time firing their coaches, doing so Monday, less than 24 hours after the regular season ended.

After finishing 5-11, the Cardinals fired coach Dennis Green. The Falcons fired Jim Mora following a 7-9 year.

Green has joined a long list of failed coaches for the Cardinals.

The franchise with one winning season in the past 22 years already is lining up candidates to be the next one to give it a shot. Mike Sherman is to be interviewed on Thursday, and three other NFL assistants were identified as potential hires.

Green finished with a 16-32 record in three seasons at Arizona. The Cardinals will pay

• Trend

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In 2004 and 2005, Indianapolis also won its division title and wild-card games against Denver before eventually losing to the Patriots.

Three straight times they've been eliminated by the Super Bowl champs.

This year, after winning a fourth straight AFC South title with the league's worst run defense, the Colts are expected by many to follow their old trend.

Opponents rushed for more than 2,700 yards this season, and Indianapolis broke a dubious franchise record that stood since 1953, its first year back in the NFL after a two-year hiatus, by allowing 5.3 yards per carry. The previous mark was 5.2.

With Kansas City and Larry Johnson coming to the RCA Dome on Saturday, Indy is likely to get another steady diet of power football.

Four losses in seven weeks, including four straight on the road, hasn't helped turn doubters into believers.

"I think we're definitely under the radar," Dungy said. "But that's not really a good thing. Usually when everyone thinks you're playing well, it's because you are."

Sunday's 27-22 victory against Miami has at least given the Colts some momentum.

CG ROSTER

The roster for the Center Grove High School gymnastics team:

Seniors: Megan Roller, Erika Shrum and Sarah Sissom

Juniors: Paige Cothron and Adrienne Cristofoli
Sophomores: Katelyn Fernandes, Laura Gregory and Paige Vandoski

Freshmen: Megan Hein, Kelsey Kyburz and Allie Meagher

Head coach: Eric Howe, ninth season
Assistant coach: Michelle Escher

Shrum and her new teammates are familiar with each other, having competed in the same club program at Wright's American Gymnastics in Greenwood.

Junior Paige Cothron and sophomore Paige Vandoski also will get a chance to fill in the fourth slot for the Trojans.

Howe says he will utilize Cothron's strong beam work and will look for points from

Hoosiers starting to show improvement

Indiana faces difficult task in trip to Ohio State

By MICHAEL MAROT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BLOOMINGTON

The Indiana Hoosiers are starting to resemble Kelvin Sampson's ideal team. They play hard, defend well, rebound, share the scoring burden and, yes, even offer critiques of themselves.

Now comes the toughest test yet: No. 6 Ohio State tonight, followed by the rest of the Big Ten schedule.

"I feel we've still got a lot of areas to work on," forward D.J. White said. "It's our defense that's been carrying us right now, but we've still got to get better."

Sampson concurs.

But what Indiana (9-3) developed during its nonconference schedule were characteristics needed to reverse a troubling conference trend. Since reaching the Final Four in 2002, the Hoosiers are a modest 34-30 against the Big Ten and just 9-23 on the road.

Their resiliency and toughness could help change those numbers.

Indiana's rapidly improving defense also should make an impact. None of the first 12 opponents topped 70 points.



TONIGHT'S GAME

Indiana Hoosiers (9-3)
at Ohio State Buckeyes (11-2)

Time: 8 p.m.
TV: ESPN
Radio: WLHK-97.1 FM

While the early-season learning curve rendered some tough lessons about undisciplined play (such as a loss to No. 13 Butler), the Hoosiers seem to have adapted to Sampson's new system.

During the first six games, the Hoosiers averaged 18 turnovers. That number has been cut by more than half during the past six games when Indiana averaged 8.6, including a school-record low of three against Western Illinois on Dec. 6.

Offensively, the Hoosiers are progressing, too. They're driving to the basket more frequently, getting more free throws, and the emergence of guards Earl Callo-

way and Armon Bassett as legitimate scorers has given Indiana a chance to take advantage when defenses collapse on White in the middle.

Sampson has seen it all before.

"If you have first-year college kids or freshmen, you're going to struggle early," he said. "But look at how our kids have responded. Our three captains are starting to get it and understand it. Early on, they were just trying to survive practice, and I told them that's not good enough. Now look at us."

Whether they'll be good enough to win consistently in the Big Ten is the next big test. Against Ohio State, they'll face one of the nation's most-talented teams.

Exhibit A is center Greg Oden, an Indiana native who got away from the Hoosiers despite being the two-time national high-school player of the year. At 7-foot and 270 pounds, Oden is so strong inside that he's expected to be the No. 1 pick in the NBA Draft whenever he declares.

Exhibit B is guard Mike Conley Jr., Oden's high school teammate who is averaging 9.5 points and 6.3 assists a game for the Buckeyes.



GREEN

MORA

\$2.5 million to buy out the final year of his contract.

He was the seventh coach the Cardinals have had since the franchise moved to Arizona in 1988. The team has had one winning season since 1984, and Green was optimistic he was the man to turn things around. But his three teams in Arizona went 6-10, 5-11 and 5-11.

"In the final analysis, when you look at the three years of wins and losses, we didn't win enough

games," said Cardinals vice president and general counsel Michael Bidwill, son of owner Bill Bidwill.

While Green was shown the door, the man in charge of player personnel, Rod Graves, got a new contract.

Michael Bidwill announced at a news conference that Graves, vice president for football operations, has been given a new three-year contract.

Jim Caldwell, the Colts' assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach, also is expected to be interviewed for the Arizona job.

Not long after Atlanta owner Arthur Blank fired him as the Falcons' third-year coach, Mora went to great lengths to list his accomplishments.

Advancing to the NFC championship game in his first season, however, wasn't enough to save Mora's job. The Falcons, who went

a combined 4-13 during the final two months of 2005-06, missed the playoffs the past two years.

"This is a tough business, and it takes tough people, and if you can't take it, you don't belong," Mora said. "My goal is to be a head coach again and work in the NFL for another 20 years."

Mora's past two teams fell apart. In 2005, a 6-2 start gave them a share of the conference lead, then the Falcons lost six of their last eight. This season, Atlanta was 5-2 before going 2-7 in its final nine games.

Entering the final weekend of the regular season, the Falcons had only a slim chance to make the playoffs with a .500 record.

Those hopes ended Saturday night when the New York Giants won at Washington. Mora's final game was a 24-17 loss at NFC East champion Philadelphia.

Chiefs' coach: What's luck got to do with it?

By DOUG TUCKER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Mo.

Herman Edwards lashed out Monday at anybody who says his Kansas City Chiefs lucked into the playoffs.

"Let's don't get this thing twisted and think we backed into this deal," he said, eyes flashing. "We didn't lose. We won. We won the game we were supposed to win."

Nevertheless, the Chiefs (9-7) seemed the longest of long shots Sunday when, with several other teams, they went into the final regular-season game with a chance to grab the sixth and final seed in the AFC. The Chiefs needed to beat Jacksonville, then have Denver, Tennessee and

Miami's Ronnie Brown rushed for 115 yards, a so-so number against the Colts' defense. And although the Dolphins moved inside the Indy 25 six times, they managed only one touchdown.

Manning, the two-time MVP, also has played well. During the past three games, he has completed 72 percent of his passes and thrown for 769 yards and nine TDs with no interceptions.

But for the Colts to stick around for a few more weeks, Dungy real-

Cincinnati all lose at home.

The Chiefs did their part, beating the contending Jaguars 35-30 behind Larry Johnson's three touchdowns.

Then New England beat the Titans, Cincinnati missed a late field goal and lost in overtime to Pittsburgh, and Denver squandered an early lead and lost in overtime to San Francisco.

The players all left the stadium Sunday shortly after the Broncos and 49ers kicked off, thinking they would probably come in Monday, pack and say their goodbyes.

Instead, many of them spent Sunday night and Monday morning canceling travel plans, and they'll begin preparing to play the Colts on Saturday in Indianapolis as seven-point underdogs.

izes the offense must continue to play well while the defense demonstrates it can improve.

"You have to do what you do and do it in high stakes situations," he said. "You can make 100 straight free throws, but can you make the one to win the game? It's about whether you can function and do what you're called on to do when everything is on the line."

A game like Sunday's would normally create optimism.

But Manning is likely to hear

"Those other teams played at home. They didn't win," Edwards said. "That's not our fault. All we can do is win, and we did that, and that's why we're in the playoffs. It's very simple."

"Twenty teams are packing up today. We're not one of those 20. I don't want to hear about luck."

In a meeting that lasted only about 15 minutes, Edwards emphasized the same theme with his players.

"I hear a lot of things about how we lucked into it, and how we did this," he said. "You know what? If we don't get in, if we don't win, and those other teams do, you know what they'll say? You didn't win."

more this week about his 3-6 playoff record and no appearances in the Super Bowl.

The Colts know it can be done. They just have to prove they can advance in the playoffs.

"If you have one good game, you're the hero. If you have one bad game, you're out," Dungy said. "It's kind of like the Indy 500. You get that starting position, and then you run the race. Everyone remembers who won, not who got the pole."

CG SCHEDULE

The schedule for the Center Grove High School gymnastics team:

Date	Opponent	Time
Today	Columbus East	6:30 p.m.
Saturday	at Valparaiso Tourney	TBA

Jan. 9	at Lawrence Central	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Warren Central	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Martinsville	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	Plainfield	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Perry Meridian	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	MIC at Carmel	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	at Col. North	7 p.m.
Feb. 13	Carmel	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	at Roncalli	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 17	Harrison Invite	TBA
Feb. 20	Bloomington South	6:30 p.m.