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SPORTS

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SECTION B



NBA: BLOCKBUSTER DEAL

Cleaning house

Pacers send Harrington, Jackson, two others to Golden State in eight-player trade

Introducing the new Pacers



Troy Murphy

Position: Forward
Height: 6-foot-11
Weight: 245 pounds
Age: 26
NBA experience: Sixth season
College: Notre Dame
2006-07 stats: Averaging 8.9 points, 6.0 rebounds and 2.3 assists a game. Has hit 37.3 percent of his 3-point shots. Has played in 26 games for the Warriors, starting 17.

Mike Dunleavy

Position: Forward
Height: 6-foot-9
Weight: 230 pounds
Age: 26
NBA experience: Fifth season
College: Duke
2006-07 stats: Averaging 11.4 points, 4.8 rebounds and 3.0 assists a game. Has hit 36 3-pointers this season. Has played in 39 games for the Warriors, starting six.



Ike Diogu

Position: Forward
Height: 6-foot-8
Weight: 255 pounds
Age: 23
NBA experience: Second season
College: Arizona State



2006-07 stats: Averaging 7.2 points and 3.7 rebounds a game. Has hit 53 percent from the field and 79.5 percent from the foul line. Has played in 17 games, all in a reserve role.

Keith McLeod

Position: Guard
Height: 6-foot-2
Weight: 190 pounds
Age: 27
NBA experience: Fourth season
College: Bowling Green State



2006-07 stats: Averaging 5.3 points and 1.7 assists a game. Has hit 39 percent from the field and 88.7 percent from the foul line. Has played in 26 games, starting two.

Say goodbye to these players



Al Harrington

Position: Center-forward
Height: 6-foot-9
Weight: 245 pounds
Age: 26
NBA experience: Ninth season
High school: St. Patrick's, N.J.
2006-07 stats: Averaging 15.9 points, 6.3 rebounds and 1.4 assists a game. Has hit 45.8 percent from the field. Has appeared in 36 games, all as a starter.

Stephen Jackson

Position: Guard-forward
Height: 6-foot-8
Weight: 218 pounds
Age: 28
NBA experience: Seventh season
College: Duke
2006-07 stats: Averaging 14.1 points, 2.6 rebounds and 3.1 assists a game. Has hit 82.2 percent of foul shots and made 41 3-pointers. Has appeared in 37 games, 32 as a starter.



Sarunas Jasikevicius

Position: Guard
Height: 6-foot-4
Weight: 197 pounds
Age: 30
NBA experience: Second season
College: Maryland



2006-07 stats: Averaging 7.4 points, 1.3 rebounds and 3.0 assists a game. Has hit 92.2 percent from the foul line and 37.2 percent from 3-point range. Has started one of 37 games.

Josh Powell

Position: Forward
Height: 6-foot-9
Weight: 225 pounds
Age: 23
NBA experience: Second season
College: North Carolina State



2006-07 stats: Averaging 1.7 points and 2.7 rebounds a game. Has played in just seven games with no starts and 23 minutes played. Averaged 3.0 points a game last season with Dallas.

By GREG BEACHAM
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND, Calif.

Almost every player involved in the Indiana Pacers' eight-man trade with the Golden State Warriors on Wednesday is likely to welcome the change of scenery.

The Pacers traded Al Harrington and Stephen Jackson to Golden State for forwards Troy Murphy and Mike Dunleavy in a large, bold deal to shake up two struggling teams.

The Pacers also sent guard Sarunas Jasikevicius and forward Josh Powell to the Warriors, who gave up forward Ike Diogu and guard Keith McLeod.

According to Chris Mullin, the Warriors' vice president and a former player for both teams, the wholesale shuffle will benefit everyone involved.

"This is a situation where both teams feel good about what's

going to happen," Mullin said. "They're all key components. All these guys that are in the deal, they're going to have good roles with their new teams."

Murphy, Dunleavy and Diogu had been reduced to high-priced backups for failing to produce more in new coach Don Nelson's offensive-minded system. Both Murphy and Dunleavy have hefty contracts that allowed Golden State to finish the deal with significantly less financial impact than the Pacers.

Harrington, the most accomplished player in the trade, struggled to get comfortable alongside Jermaine O'Neal in his first season back with Indiana.

Meanwhile, Jackson has been dogged by legal troubles and attitude problems all season, embarrassing the club with an early season fight at a strip club and a spat with coach Rick Carlisle last month.

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B3)

Time will tell if Pacers have made right moves

Before we get to the main point, allow me start by saying: Good riddance, Stephen Jackson.

Too bad we had to wait this long to say it, but better late than never.

Now, on to the topic.

Have the Indiana Pacers lost the magic touch? This trade should provide the answer.

If it works, faith in the Pacers' former reputation as master wheeler-dealers might be restored.

If it doesn't, you have to wonder if Larry Bird & Co. really know what they're doing.

Are they grasping at straws? Are they wandering in a maze? Are they simply victims of a stretch of incredibly bad luck?

Or has the character of today's typical NBA player devolved to the point where it's almost impossible to manage any of them, rendering any and every trade



Rick Morwick

(SEE TIME, PAGE B3)

ROAD TO THE SUPER BOWL



AFC Championship Game:
 New England Patriots at
 Indianapolis Colts



Time: 6:30 p.m. Sunday
 TV: WISH-Channel 8 Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM

Distractions don't bother focused Colts

Players know their only goal is to earn trip to Super Bowl

By MATTHEW GLENESK
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INDIANAPOLIS

Taped to the back of Jason David's locker is a picture drawn by a young Indianapolis Colts fan. The picture is of a ladder listing the Colts' victories, and at the top it reads, "Colts win the Super Bowl."

It serves as an additional reminder for the third-year cornerback of the team's goals, but it also reminds David that the Colts have another rung on the ladder to climb, namely Sunday's AFC Championship Game against New England.

"Our goal this year was to make it to the Super Bowl," David said. "I think everybody in this locker room knows what's at stake, and we're ready to go."

With the prospect of advancing to the franchise's first Super Bowl since relocating to the Circle City in 1984, Colts players are trying to stay even-keeled and focused on the task at hand.

In a city that has been painted blue and white, players can't escape the Colts love fest.

"There's a buzz in this city, and we're excited, but as players you have to keep yourself reined in, and you don't want to get over excited and lose focus," linebacker Rob Morris said.

INSIDE



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, left, has another opportunity to cement a legacy of greatness, while New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady seems to be the perfect fit for coach Bill Belichick's system.

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"I would love to play in a Super Bowl, win a Super Bowl and get a ring. But really, right now, my main focus is getting an AFC championship. I would love that, too. I don't have one of those either. That's clearly the focus right now."

For some players it's not easy to put the magnitude of Sunday's game out of their minds. David said he's having a hard time sleeping with the anticipation of such a big contest.

Safety Antoine Bethea might be a rookie, but he doesn't need to be

(SEE COLTS, PAGE B4)

Indy defense hopes to establish pattern with another solid effort

By RICK MORWICK
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INDIANAPOLIS

When coach Tony Dungy gave the Indianapolis Colts defense a vocabulary lesson last week, he didn't clearly define all terms.

After the Colts' bottom-ranked defense shut down Kansas City on wild-card weekend, Dungy told players that one outstanding effort is an aberration. Two in a row, he said, was a coincidence. And four, five and six was a pattern.

He neglected to say what "three" represented until Wednesday, when the Colts returned to practice in preparation for Sunday's AFC Championship Game against the New England Patriots.

"Three is starting a pattern," said Dungy, whose team's defense is ranked No. 1 in the postseason. "We'd like to start a pattern. Two is still a coincidence.

"We're at two right now, the way I look (at) it."

Two consecutive sterling defensive efforts are the major reason the Colts (14-4) are one win away from the Super Bowl.

Ranked 32nd during the regular season, the Colts' defense is suddenly a run-stuffing, pass-stifling machine.

As a result, Indianapolis' defense has taken center stage in the buildup to the title game. Peyton Manning and the offense have been almost an afterthought.

"I take a lot of pride in us playing well," said linebacker Cato June, the Colts' leading tackler. "I don't look at it as us carrying the team, because it takes everybody to play together to get a win."

"As long as we continue with that confidence, everything else will take care of itself."

(SEE DEFENSE, PAGE B4)

Strong first half doesn't result in Purdue victory

The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis.

Michael Flowers scored 15 points to lead No. 2 Wisconsin to its 14th consecutive men's basketball victory, 69-64 against Purdue on Wednesday night.

The Badgers (18-1, 4-0 Big Ten), led by 10 points midway through the second half.

Keaton Grant's fast-break layup with 39 seconds left brought the Boilermakers (13-6, 2-3) within 67-62. Kammron Taylor made one of two free throws for Wisconsin with 36 seconds left.

Purdue missed and rebounded two 3-point attempts, finally settling for a putback by Carl Landry that made it 68-64 with 4.3 seconds left.

Gordon Watt had 18 points for Purdue, which led 30-29 at halftime.



AP PHOTO

Purdue's Carl Landry, top, fouls Wisconsin's Michael Flowers during Wednesday's Big Ten game in Madison, Wis.

Whiteland wrestler doesn't skip a beat

By MATTHEW GLENESK
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As a freshman, Ronnie Pecina showed great promise on the wrestling mat.

The Whiteland Community High School wrestler qualified for the regional round of the state tournament and looked to be a major player in the future of Whiteland wrestling.

But Pecina was forced to sit out his entire sophomore season because of a kidney ailment.

Being sidelined was difficult for him to take. Coming off a successful freshman campaign, he had planned big things for his sophomore season.

"Once they told me I couldn't wrestle again, I cried," he said. "I was missing a whole year's experience. ... Once the doctors told me, I didn't take it well at all."



Whiteland Community High School junior Ronnie Pecina, top, wrestles against Fishers' Cris Allen during Wednesday's match at Whiteland.

Now healthy again, the junior is taking last year's frustrations out on his opponents.

His return to the lineup was highlighted by his championship performance at 152 pounds in

the county meet last month.

"Winning county was something else," Pecina said. "It just puts more pressure on me because people expect more, which is kind of better because

THE PECINA FILE

Name: Ronnie Pecina
Class: Junior
High school: Whiteland
Family: Mother, Norma Nelson; step-father, Mike Nelson; sisters Alicia, 19, and Carol, 12; brother Jarod, 7; niece Eliana, 2 months
Hobbies: Playing guitar, hanging out with friends
Favorite movie: "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby"
Favorite restaurant: Mi Pueblo
Dream car: Shelby Mustang GT500

it makes you work harder." Warriors coach Dave Thompson was asked if he was surprised by Pecina's performance.

"I said, 'No.' That type of performance from him is expected. He has that ability," he said.

(SEE WRESTLER, PAGE B3)