

ROAD TO THE SUPER BOWL

NOTEBOOKS

Super celebrations: Fans delight in Colts' win

Daily Journal staff report

Colts convert group of fans

On the sidewalk outside the Homewood Suites Hotel on Meridian Street in downtown Indianapolis, cheerleaders were chanting and applauding for the Colts on Sunday night, but they weren't in blue uniforms.

Their yells of "Go Colts!" rang with a slight Southern accent.

The dozen or so 12- to 14-year-old girls were from Newnan, Ga., south of Atlanta, and they had just finished competing at the JAMFest Cheer Super Nationals.

Just after midnight, they were joining the local excitement.

The troupe had watched the game at a nearby restaurant.

"We have been here since Friday, and we have just been swept up in the emotion of the city. My daughter came up to me and said, 'Mom, I think I am a Colts fan,'" said Terri Brown, chaperone and mother of one of the girls.

That's dedication

A Salvation Army bell ringer at Capitol Avenue and Georgia Street in Indianapolis said he turned down two free tickets to the Colts AFC playoff game near halftime.

He was offered the tickets when the Colts were down 21-6.

"A man walked up and said, 'Are you going to the game?' and I said, 'No, I don't have tickets,'" said Rex Coy, who was ringing bells with his wife, who was a block away.

The man had several tickets in his hand and told Coy, "Well, I will give you two."

Coy refused, and the man went into the stadium.

"Who would stay here and ring the bells?" Coy said.

'It is their time'

Two New England Patriots fans said if they had to see their team lose, they were glad for the city of Indianapolis.

"I am excited for the Colts fans. It is their time," Boston resident Ross Silverstein said.

As he spoke to a reporter on Capitol Avenue after the game Sunday, several men in Colts jerseys approached him and his son, Ezekiel. The two were wearing their Patriots silver.

"I'm sorry about what happened to you guys. You have done very well," one man told Ross.

'I had to be a part of it'

People gathered on the steps of St. John Cathedral to watch the throng flowing out of the RCA Dome across the street in downtown Indianapolis.

Many used camera phones to capture the moment Sunday night.

One woman who lives downtown came to the area just to watch the celebratory crowd flow out of the stadium.

Leaning quietly against the church's iron gate, Bonnie Daniel held her coat close to her and watched with a smile.

"I've never seen anything like this. I had to come be a part of it," she said.

When she was younger, Daniel said, she was a huge fan of Archie Manning, the former Saints great and father of Colts quarterback Peyton Manning.

"This is just so great, great for our city, for the Colts and for Peyton. I am just so very, very proud," she said.

WEB EXTRA

Visit us at thejournalnet.com for more coverage of Sunday's AFC Championship Game

By CANDACE BEATY

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As soon as the Indianapolis Colts finished their AFC Championship Game victory Sunday, fans were ready for a change.

Those who had spent as many as 11 hours in Indianapolis restaurants rushed outside to see the crowd pour out of the RCA Dome, while ticket holders were ready to settle down in a watering hole and have a drink.

Standing outside the RCA Dome, A.J. Feeney-Ruiz held up signs that exclaimed the Colts won.

"I've been waiting for (a berth in the Super Bowl) as long as I knew football existed," said Feeney-Ruiz, a Martinsville resident.

He and Vanessa Voight watched the game from Jillian's, about three blocks from the dome.

"We headed for the dome as soon as it happened," she said. "We knew this is where all the excitement would be."

Jerry Trent and Dennis Tyler saw the game from the 30-yard line. They shared drinks at Jillian's after the game.

The two plan to travel with family to Miami for the Super Bowl next month.

"South Beach, the Colts, the Bears, there's nothing better," Trent said.

While Tyler rooted for the Colts on Sunday night, the South Bend

resident said he will go with the Bears for the Super Bowl.

Who will come out with the championship? Colts, Trent said.

"(The Colts) haven't got a chance," Tyler said with a grin.

'It's perfect right now'

The post-game celebrations continued downtown well past midnight.

Music selected just for the post-game celebration played at Ike and Jonesy's, a restaurant and bar about four blocks from the RCA Dome.

Will Smith's song about this year's Super Bowl site played: "I'm going to Miami. Welcome to Miami."

At 12:20 a.m., last call was announced, and fans danced to "Hit the Road Jack," dedicated to New England fans.

A rowdy beer-sloshing round of "We Are the Champions" followed.

"The Colts are going to be the Super Bowl champions!" Jeremy Patton yelled after singing verses of the song with his arms in the air.

"It's perfect right now," he said, looking around the bar, crowded with fans.

Even New England fans joined in the party.

"This is the equivalent of (Boston) beating the Yankees in the World Series," said Steve Smith, of Fairfield, Conn.

Smith and his cousin John Smith, of Rhode Island, rooted for New England but went to Ike and Jonesy's to celebrate with Colts fans.

"It's nice to see these people so happy," John Smith said of the Colts fans. "(The Colts) need to win the next game."

More than 100 fans gathered at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Circle and chanted, "Super Bowl! Super Bowl!"

Some parked their cars and stopped to join the makeshift pep rally. Others drove around slowly as friends stood in the back of trucks yelling and waving Colts flags and reaching out to give fellow fans high fives.

People clambered atop trash cans, raising their fists in the air more than an hour after the game had ended.

IUPUI student Jeff Danner watched the game at his downtown home but ran out into the street to join in the celebrations.

"I've lived in Indy my whole life, and we've never had anything like this," he said.

About two blocks from the Circle, two men climbed on top of a camper van decorated with Colts horseshoes, screaming and yelling.

While the driver, who was stuck in traffic, jumped out and ordered the men to get off the van, he didn't seem too mad. He also stopped and shook hands

with a few fellow fans crossing the street.

Lines of people crossing the street at Washington and Meridian streets gave each other high-fives as they walked in opposite directions just before midnight.

'Enjoying the moment'

Zach Eagle, 11, and his father, Brian Eagle, stood silently in the road outside the RCA Dome gazing at the celebrations and fans streaming out.

"We're just enjoying the moment," Brian Eagle said. "It was an awesome night."

The father and son are sure to remember the game for a long time.

"Wow! That's all I can say," Zach Eagle said.

Tony Dundy and Peyton Manning finally got over that can't-make-it-to-the-big-one hump, Brian Eagle said.

"Unbelievable!" he said. Unbelievable.

That's a word that may have echoed outside the RCA Dome more often than "Super Bowl."

Fans poured out of the dome exclaiming, "Unbelievable!" after watching the team rally from an 18-point deficit and finishing with a nail-biting 38-34 victory.

One fan coming out of the dome held up a sign that said: "Do you want Addai?"

Another sign read: "Man O Manning."

Others lined up at a stand outside the dome to buy \$25 AFC Championship T-shirts and hats.

"That was unreal!" Mark Hicks said, as he waited in line. He turned and high-fived a youngster standing in line behind him.

This was something Hicks said he had waited 20 years for.

He didn't care how much the shirt cost. And he plans to buy another one after the Colts win the Super Bowl, he said.

Hicks watched the game from inside the RCA Dome in the end zone where Peyton Manning and the Colts scored all their touchdowns.

"I've never heard anything quite so loud in my life," he said of the crowd noise inside the dome.

People who bought the AFC Championship shirts walked around outside holding them up in air like a sign.

"That was the best sporting event I've seen my life," said David Bacon, of Ligonier in northeastern Indiana. "This (win) means a lot."

Bacon, who watched the game from inside the dome, said the crowd was the loudest he had ever heard.

He's convinced the Colts are going to go all the way.

"I think this is their time," he said. "They deserve it."



In photos sent to the Daily Journal after the first significant snowfall of the season, Colts fans all over the county got some help from Mother Nature to display their team spirit. Above, Lilly Bothwell, left, and Laurel Castillo pose with a snowman they and some friends created. Both girls attend Center Grove schools.

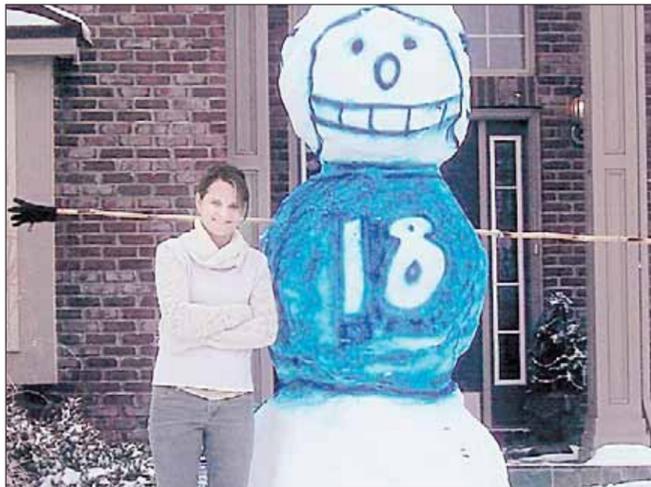


From left, siblings Danielle Harrell, 4, Marielle Harrell, 4, Andrew Harrell, 6, and Gabrielle Harrell, 4, pose with their Colts snowman.

Johnson County shows its Colts spirit — in the snow



Above: Nine-year-old Center Grove area resident Kayla Long poses with her snowman before Sunday's AFC Championship Game. Right: Bargersville resident Bonnie Ochsner poses with a larger-than-life Peyton Manning snowman.



● Tickets

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

just to get in the door, he said.

Speculation of legions of Bears fans eager for tickets is causing the higher prices, Kinnett said.

While prices are greatly inflated now, they will come down considerably, he said.

Sport Events received some calls for tickets Monday, but people aren't exactly lining up to get a seat yet, Kinnett said.

Only select season-ticket holders got a chance to buy Super Bowl seats from the

Colts, a news release said.

Season-ticket holders with the most seniority and seats got first dibs. The majority of season-ticket holders didn't even get a chance at the tickets, the release said.

A random drawing of those with the most seniority decided who would get the tickets. All of the tickets allotted to the team

are spoken for, the release said.

National Football League guidelines say most of the tickets had to go to season-ticket holders, according to the release.

Tickets are available, though, from local travel agencies or online ticket brokers.

AAA Hoosier Travel Club received several calls Monday

about its Super Bowl packages, vice president of AAA travel Suzanne DeCellis said.

AAA has packages with or without Super Bowl tickets, and people who are not AAA members can use the travel agency's services, she said.

Two people sharing a room can expect to pay at least \$11,690 for

round-trip flights, three nights in a hotel, upper level tickets and access to a Colts pre-game event, according to AAAHoosier.com.

Super Bowl tickets listed on StubHub.com start at \$3,589 per ticket for upper-level seats. Two front-row, lower-level tickets will cost a total of \$24,000 on StubHub.com.

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