

# SPORTS

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**WEB EXTRA**

**Enjoy the show**

Blogger Brian Moore, an Indian Creek High School graduate, says it's time we stopped trying to predict where Ohio State's Greg Oden and Texas' Kevin Durant will go in the NBA Draft and instead appreciate what they are doing in the college game.



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**PREP WRESTLING**

**State titles still in reach?**

Find out how Center Grove's Blake Harvey and Whiteland's Matthew Fields and Travis Thomas fared in their opening matches in the IHSAA individual wrestling state finals.

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**COLLEGE BASKETBALL**

**Boilers get back on track**

Thursday's victory against rival Indiana not only gave Purdue state bragging rights, but it also enhanced the Boilermakers' chances of earning a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

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**NEXT UP**

**Purdue Boilermakers**  
(17-9 overall, 6-6 in the Big Ten)  
**at Iowa Hawkeyes** (15-11, 7-5)  
Time: 9 p.m. Wednesday  
TV: WTTV-Channel 4  
Radio: WNDE-1260 AM



**TODAY'S GAME**

**Indiana Hoosiers**  
(17-7 overall, 7-4 in the Big Ten)  
**at Michigan Wolverines** (17-9, 5-6)  
Time: 4 p.m.  
TV: ESPN  
Radio: WLHK-97.1 FM

**WHERE THEY STAND**

The Big Ten men's basketball standings going into this weekend's games:

Team	Conf. W-L	All W-L
Wisconsin	11-1	25-2
Ohio State	11-1	23-3
Indiana	7-4	17-7
Iowa	7-5	15-11
Purdue	6-6	17-9
Illinois	6-6	18-9
Michigan State	5-6	18-8
Michigan	5-6	17-9
Minnesota	3-9	9-17
Northwestern	2-10	12-13
Penn State	1-10	10-14

**Today's games**  
Penn State at Wisconsin, 12:15 p.m.  
Iowa at Michigan State, 2:30 p.m.  
**Indiana at Michigan, 4 p.m., ESPN**

**Sunday's games**  
Ohio State at Minnesota, noon  
Northwestern at Illinois, 2 p.m.

**PREP BOYS BASKETBALL**

**Friday's scores**

Center Grove 74  
North Central 69

Franklin 60  
Plainfield 48

Martinsville 64  
Whiteland 52

Mooresville 49  
Greenwood 44

South Decatur 58  
Edinburgh 40

# MIC champions

## Trojans slow Gordon, earn share of title

By MATTHEW GLENESE  
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER  
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**INDIANAPOLIS**

Friday night's challenge for the Center Grove boys basketball team wasn't easy. But the Trojans sure made it look that way. Unranked Center Grove traveled to Class 4A No. 5-ranked North Central, which features the state's leading scorer, and shocked the Panthers 74-69 to earn a share of the Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference championship.

**Trojans 74  
Panthers 69**

The Trojans displayed a true team effort en route to their first-ever MIC title, which they share with Warren Central. The Warriors lost to Carmel on Thursday night, which opened the door for the Trojans.

"I didn't think we were going to get a second chance after (losing to) Warren Central, and coach (Cliff Hawkins) said that we might not get another chance," senior Tyler Kitchel said. "They gave us that chance, and we took advantage of it."

"It's just huge for the community. To be MIC champions is awesome."

Five Center Grove players scored in double figures, led by junior Corey Gray with 19.

Seniors Louis Kamo and Andrew Bowman had 13 points apiece, senior Jason Kaylor added 16 points off the bench, and Kitchel finished with 11 points and eight assists.

"Tonight, we were players, every one of our kids on the floor," Hawkins said. "We were absolute players tonight, and I thought the quality we got from our players was just unbelievable."

"This is a true team victory."

Center Grove (16-2, 6-1 in the MIC) unleashed a 3-point barrage in the first half

(SEE TROJANS, PAGE B3)



Center Grove senior Tyler Kitchel, left, tries to drive past North Central defender Joey Brown during Friday's Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference game in Indianapolis.

STAFF PHOTO BY JOE SABA



Rick Morwick  
**PACERS BEAT**

## Despite turmoil, Pacers are contenders

In light of circumstances, being four games above .500 at the All-Star break isn't so bad. Not inspiring, perhaps, but certainly not bad.

One could even argue it's a minor, if not a major, miracle. The series of unfortunate events that began even before training camp was two days old are well-documented. But somehow, somehow, the Indiana Pacers haven't unraveled.

They've come apart a bit at the seams, but they're still intact.

Fact is, they're still in solid contention in the Eastern Conference, where only four teams (Detroit, Cleveland, Washington and Toronto) have better records.

Think about that for a second.

They've been through a strip club shootout, a major trade and, most recently, unflattering headlines involving players and unproven allegations of another late-night bar scuffle.

Yet if the playoffs began today, the Pacers (28-24) would be the No. 5 seed in the East.

But hold on. It gets better. Since the playoffs don't start today, the Pacers still have a realistic shot at the No. 1 seed.

With 30 regular-season games left, the Pacers have plenty of time to catch East leader Detroit. The Pistons have a 4½-game edge on Indiana and are a shell of their former championship selves.

So, you see, it's not so bad.

From a contention standpoint, it's actually pretty good.

But that's it for the good news.

On to the bad.

Were the Pacers not victims of

(SEE PACERS, PAGE B4)

**SEASON AT A GLANCE**

A look at the Indiana Pacers' season thus far:

**Record:** 28-24

**Where they stand:** Third in the Central Division; fifth in the Eastern Conference

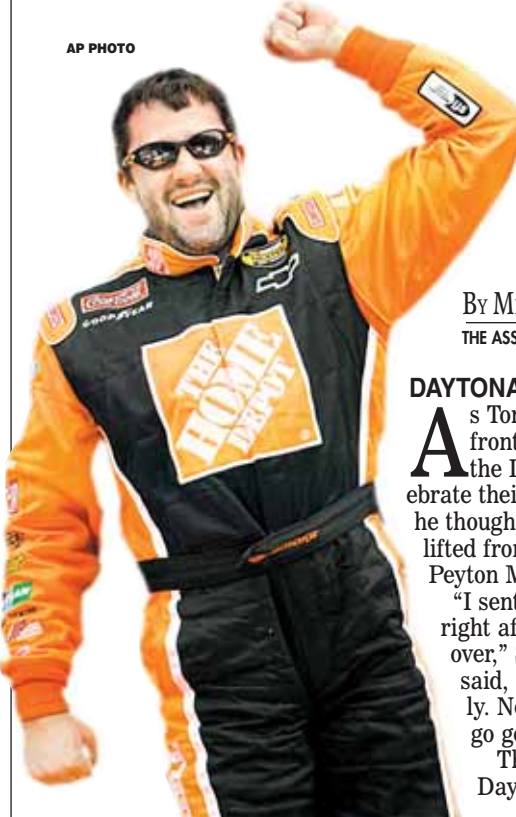
**Top player:** Jermaine O'Neal leads the Pacers in scoring (19.8 points a game) and rebounding (10.3 per game)

**Key stat:** The Pacers are above .500 despite shooting 43.7 percent from the field and allowing opponents to hit 45.1 percent of their shots.

**A look ahead:** The Pacers will resume play after the All-Star break with a home game against the Milwaukee Bucks on Wednesday. The Pacers will begin a four-game Western trip March 2, part of a stretch that includes six road games in seven contests. Indiana will conclude the season with five of its final eight games on the road.



## Stewart the driver to beat in Daytona 500



AP PHOTO

By MIKE HARRIS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.**

As Tony Stewart sat in front of a TV watching the Indianapolis Colts celebrate their Super Bowl victory, he thought about the burden lifted from quarterback Peyton Manning.

"I sent him a text message right after the game was over," Stewart recalled. "I said, 'You got yours, finally. Now it's time for me to go get my Super Bowl.'"

That's Sunday's Daytona 500.

The two-time NASCAR champion is 0-8 in the race that every NASCAR driver wants, and one that has been very tough, or impossible, for some of the sport's biggest names to win.

It took the late Dale Earnhardt 20 tries, while Darrell Waltrip finally got to Victory Circle on his 17th attempt. Rusty Wallace never won it, and Mark Martin will get his 22nd try Sunday.

Stewart already has 10 wins on Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway's 2.5-mile oval, including the non-points Budweiser Shootout on Feb. 10 and his 150-mile qualifying race Thursday.

This week's victories, and the ease with which he got them, have made

(SEE STEWART, PAGE B8)

**GREAT AMERICAN RACE**

**What:** NASCAR Nextel Cup Daytona 500

**When:** 2 p.m. Sunday

**Where:** Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway

**On the pole:** David Gilliland

**TV:** WXIN-Channel 59

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