



PURDUE MEN'S BASKETBALL

# A BIG ENTRANCE

Hammons' return sparks 109-73 rout of CCSU

By Nathan Baird | nbaird@jconline.com

Less than 20 seconds after tiptoff, the man at the center of attention extended his long arm and swatted a shot attempt out of bounds.

Just that quick, Purdue 7-foot sophomore A.J. Hammons announced his return. In his first game back from a three-game suspension for a violation of team rules, Hammons flashed next-level skills around the rim at both ends of the floor against Central Connecticut State.

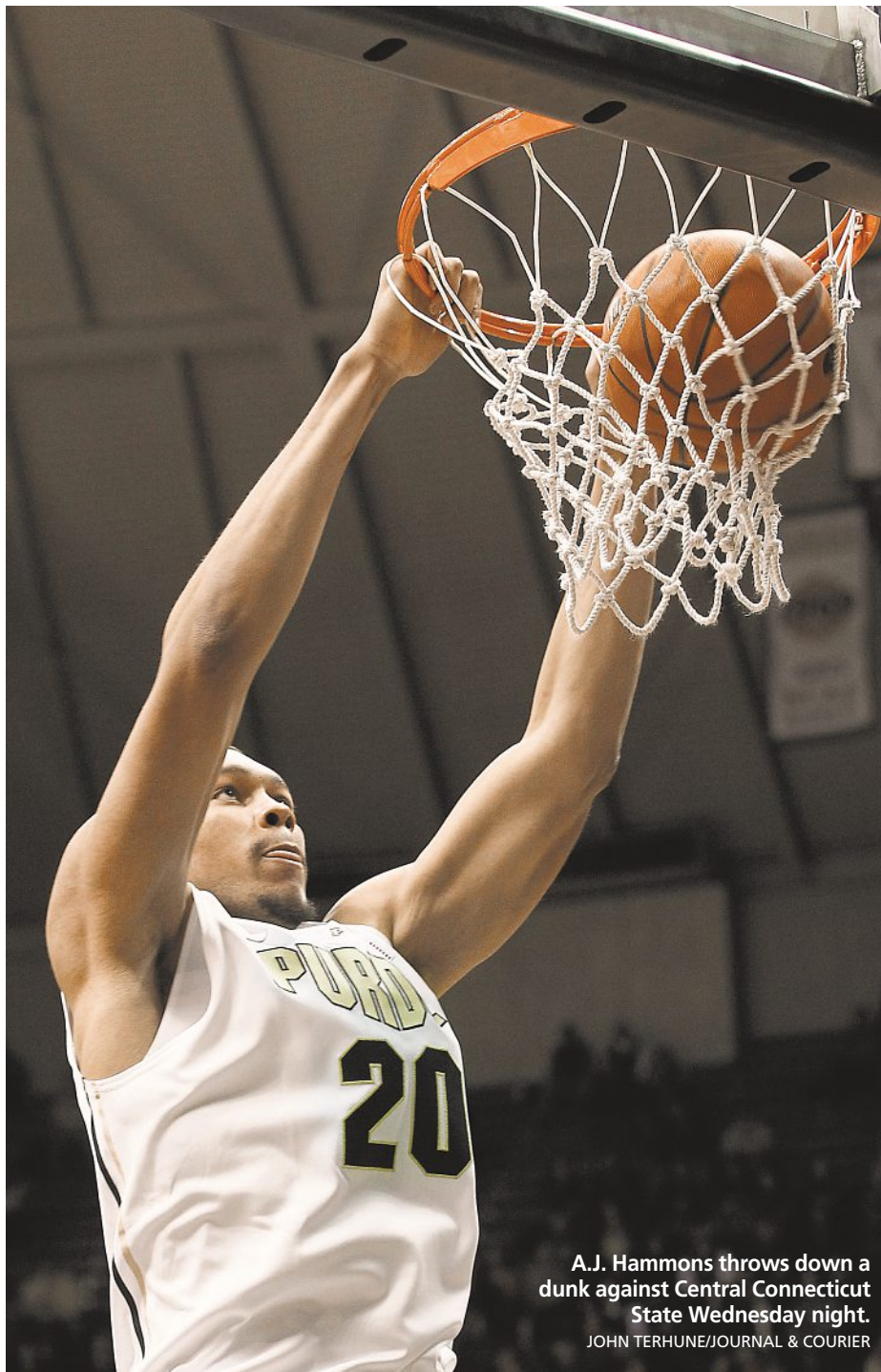
That first block of a Kyle Vinales shot attempt was followed by six more before Hammons took a seat for the night. The career-high performance sparked Purdue to a 109-73 rout of the Blue Devils in front of 11,966 on Wednesday.

"It felt really great, to tell you the truth," said Hammons, who added 12 points and five rebounds to his seven blocks in just 17 minutes. "Just sitting on the bench kind of (stunk). They've been keeping on me, making sure I'm doing all right in practice and everything to make sure I'm ready when I came back. It just felt good to be out there with my teammates."

Purdue, which trailed by four points in the final minute of its season opener against Northern Kentucky, responded with an emphatic victory. Terone Johnson's 17 points led five Boilermakers in double figures, and an 18-0 run propelled Purdue to a 54-32 halftime lead.

Hammons scored four points in that game-changing run, and his wingspan and footwork helped Purdue to decisive advantages on rebounds (52-41), points in the paint (64-32) and second-chance points (26-13). His presence in the lane also helped persuade the Blue Devils to pass up drives and settle for lower-percentage jump shots.

See HAMMONS, Page B4



A.J. Hammons throws down a dunk against Central Connecticut State Wednesday night.  
JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER



NEXT GAME

Rider at Purdue  
When: Sunday, 7 p.m. TV: BTN  
Radio: WSHP 95.7

AT JCONLINE.COM

Look for video and a photo gallery from Purdue's lopsided home win.

PURDUE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

# Boilermakers surge past IUPUI

Houser leads big second-half burst

By Curt Cavin  
Indianapolis Star

INDIANAPOLIS — Two games into this women's basketball season, Purdue coach Sharon Versyp has found her team's pop.

Senior guard KK Houser certainly isn't a new face, but she's gone back-to-back with two of her best offensive outbursts.

She had a career-high 21 points in the season-opening win over Ball State, and Wednesday night she dropped another 20 points on IUPUI.

That average is nearly

double what she brought to games last year (11.3 points).

Houser credits sophomore teammate April Wilson for some of that, as Wilson is guarding the opponents' point guard, freeing Houser to find her rhythm and shot.

"I just feel so much more relaxed," Houser said after a 76-56 victory for the 18th-ranked Boilermakers over the host Jaguars. "I don't feel the pressure of having to handle the ball and play the No. 1 defender for 40 minutes."

"April is so good on the ball, so quick with the hands, and then she's so poised offensively. It's good."

Houser didn't abandon the point; in fact, she started there in second half to get

herself in the flow after two early fouls limited her to 5 first-half minutes.

Then she floated to the wing, and that's when the rolling picked up speed. She scored 18 of her points in the period, including 10 straight in one stretch with a pair of 3-pointers.

See HOUSER, Page B4



NEXT GAME

Purdue at Toledo  
When: Sunday, 2 p.m.  
Radio: WBPE 95.3



Whitney Bays scored 13 points for Purdue. DOUG MCSCHOOLER/FOR THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

H.S. FOOTBALL

# Kiger happy to be back in action

Junior's recovery boosts Bombers' title chances

By Sam King  
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RENSELAER — The sky turned black and the temperature dipped into the low 30s during Wednesday's Rensselaer football practice.

Junior Ab Kiger enjoyed every second of it.

Five months after tearing the ACL in his left knee a second time, Rensselaer's junior receiver and defensive

back gets to play for a regional championship Friday night against visiting Bremen, and he appreciates any chance he gets to put pads on.

"I was a coach for about three months. I wasn't a player anymore," Kiger said about rehabbing following his second ACL tear in June.

Instead of sulking, he became the symbol of hard work and dedication that other players pointed to as motivation to get better themselves.

"I think that is what the motto of our town and our whole team is. We always put in the extra mile," senior lineman Noah Ahler said.

As an eighth-grader, Kiger heard his knee pop while doing fumble drills after his heel caught in the ground as he tried to scoop up the ball, but the severity of the injury didn't dawn on him. The next game, he went out to play quarterback and on a sweep, he made a cut and immediately dropped to the ground in pain without being touched.

A day later, Dr. Patrick Sheets delivered the bad news.

"He looked me straight in the eye and told me I had a torn ACL," Kiger remembers.

Kiger didn't just recover from the injury, he excelled after it. As a sophomore, he earned all-state honors while intercepting four passes and breaking up five more to go with 104 tackles.

Then, last summer, his worst nightmare recurred.

On the final day of team camp at St. Joseph's, Kiger tried to cut when he was knocked off his route. His foot stayed planted in the ground and he heard the grind and pop. This time, Kiger knew what had happened.

"He had aspirations of playing college football, and all of a sudden he's got a second torn ACL in his leg," Rensselaer coach Chris Meeks said. "He thought he lost his junior year of football."

Destined not to let the injury deprive him of those things, Kiger began exercises on his own prior to his rehab stint with Dr. Daniel Daluga, who performed the second surgery.

See KIGER, Page B3

FRIDAY'S GAME

Class 3A regional  
Bremen at Rensselaer  
Time: 7:30 p.m.

## PURDUE FOOTBALL NOTES

# Link finding a niche

By Mike Carmin  
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Collin Link is well-schooled in one element of Purdue's "Jack" position — a mix of linebacker and defensive end.

He's a linebacker by trade. The defensive end part, that's another story.

The junior continues to make it work, though, as the Boilermakers seek answers to repair a struggling defense. Link collected a career-high seven tackles, including one sack, during last week's loss to Iowa.

The hybrid position evolved when the coaching staff switched defensive alignments in early October.

"It helps that I have been a linebacker, so I understand the passing aspect of it," Link said. "Everyone in there has that kind of mix. I have the linebacker stuff and the other guys are better at the D-line stuff."

With Jalani Phillips sidelined with a shoulder injury, Link is seeing increased playing time. Ryan Russell is the No. 1 option at the spot.

The 6-foot-2 Link is small for the position, but his high motor helps overcome some of the deficiencies. One of Link's strengths is running to the ball. Now, being in the right position is a different story.

"He's got a big motor," coach Darrell Hazell said. "He plays so hard and he plays from his heart. That's what makes him so productive for us. Hopefully he can continue to do that. He was out of position a lot of times, but he plays so hard."

Despite his smaller stature, Link prefers to be closer to the line of scrimmage. It's allowed the native of West Liberty, Ohio, to create more plays. He has two of the team's 12 sacks.

"It's a lot more quicker action as opposed to having to drop back to pass all the time," he said. "I feel more comfortable trying to rush the quarterback and use my speed to get underneath the linemen."



Collin Link, left, had a career-high seven tackles last week against Iowa. MICHAEL HEINZ/J&C

## Injury updates

It's unlikely defensive tackle Ryan Watson (hamstring) and Phillips (shoulder) will play against the Nittany Lions.

Hazell said defensive tackle Bruce Gaston and nose guard Ryan Isaac are expected to play, despite missing practice time earlier this week. Freshman nose guard Ra'Zahn Howard didn't attend practice Tuesday or Wednesday because of a stomach virus.

## Family and friends

Saturday's game at Penn State is about 3½ hours from Hazell's hometown in Cinnaminson, N.J., the closest venue until Rutgers joins the Big Ten.

"There will be a lot of people from the Cinnaminson area," Hazell said. "Maybe six or seven family members and some high school friends."

## Memories

Freshman defensive end Jake Replogle vividly remembers the first play of his career.

"I got put on the ground," he said. "It was the offensive tackle for Nebraska."

Replogle said he was "anxious" leading up to the game,

knowing his first college snap was coming.

"It was pretty crazy," he said. "It was great to get that first snap over with, all the nerves I was thinking about the whole week. It was good. I needed to be put on the ground and get some dirt on my pants."

That was the same time the Boilermakers switched from a 4-3 alignment to a 3-4 scheme with an emphasis on playing younger players. Howard and Evan Panfil are seeing increased playing time, usually together along with Replogle on the defensive front.

"It's a cool opportunity to go out with the two other freshmen, because you know they're going through the same things you are," the Centerville, Ohio, native said. "There's a learning curve to it. Hopefully, we do build a good foundation for years to come."

## Top target

The Boilermakers face one of the nation's top receivers Saturday in Allen Robinson.

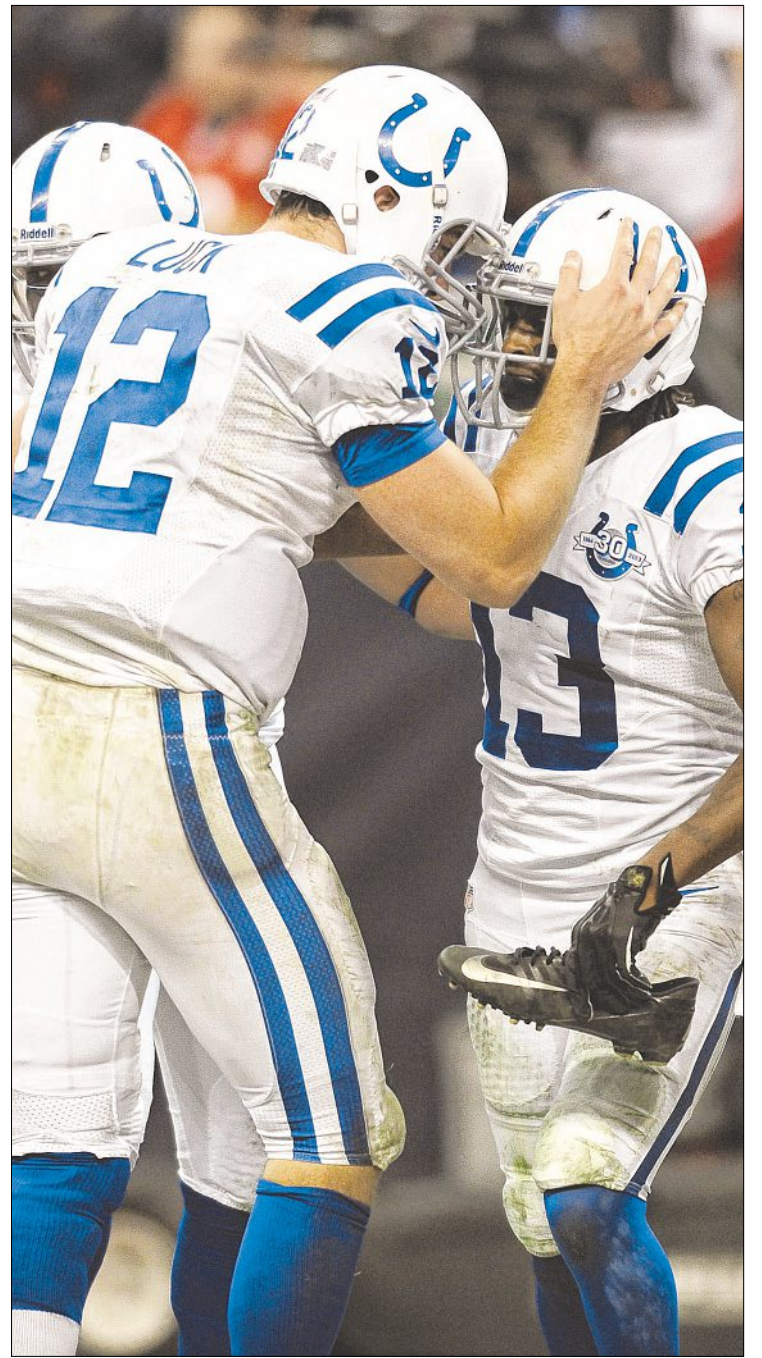
The junior broke Penn State's single-season receiving yardage record (1,106) with last week's 63-yard effort against Minnesota. Robinson, the 2012 Big Ten Receiver of the Year, has 73 receptions this season, four shy of his school-record total set last year.

"They've got a young quarterback, so they've got to be careful in how they get the ball to him," Hazell said. "You watch him drop his hips and come out of breaks, and you can tell he's done it for a while."

Robinson is the subject of double teams and also has drawn several pass interference penalties.

"When Allen gets doubled, that really helped us in the running game against Minnesota, because they had a high safety over the top of him to one side, and we're able to have one less guy to deal with in the running game to that side," O'Brien said.

## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE



T.Y. Hilton, right, has become a favorite target for Andrew Luck in recent weeks. MATT KRYGER/INDIANAPOLIS STAR

# Colts struggling to fill Wayne's shoes

Production level at WR lacking, Hilton aside

By Phil Richards  
Indianapolis Star

At 5-9, 178 pounds with sub-4.4 second 40-yard speed, T.Y. Hilton has the look and skill set of the prototypical NFL slot receiver. Summon the image of Wes Welker, if you will.

So interim Indianapolis Colts coach Bruce Arians raised some eyebrows last season when he was asked if Hilton has what it takes to be a No. 1 receiver.

"I think a solid No. 1," Arians responded. "I do, which is surprising, because when we drafted him we thought he was just a kick returner."

Arians, now head coach at Arizona, spoke on the eve of the 10th game of Hilton's rookie season. The Colts will play the 10th game of the 2013 season tonight in an AFC South showdown at Tennessee.

T.Y. Hilton is their No. 1 receiver.

That it's probably temporary and it comes by default — due to a season-ending knee

injury to longstanding No. 1 Reggie Wayne — in no way diminishes Hilton's performance. In the two games since Wayne went down, Hilton has caught 14 passes for 251 yards and three touchdowns.

The problem is that Hilton prospers alone.

Quarterback Andrew Luck's passer rating when throwing to Hilton over those two games is 152.1 (158.3 is a "perfect" rating). Luck's rating while throwing to the other receivers and tight end Coby Fleener is 52.6.

For all Hilton's high achievement and the increase in passes to the running backs, the void opened by Wayne's absence still gapes. The Colts are getting precious little from Darrius Heyward-Bey, Griff Whalen and LaVon Brazill, and not much more from Fleener.

Hilton already is seeing the coverage roll his way.

"It's been much different," he said. "You know they're going to start trying to take me out of the game. I know they're going to start doubling me, tripling me, trying to take me out."

"Guys have got to step up and make plays."

During a Sept. 6 victory over North Judson, Kiger showed his knee was strong enough that he could soon return to the field with a strength test. The following day, Daluga took him through the same test and told him he could pad up the following Friday.

Kiger played in a 9-7 win over Tipton on Sept. 13, three months after tearing his ACL. He has 50 tackles and an interception in nine games.

"He went from thinking he wasn't going to be playing football to being out here playing for a regional championship," Meeks said.

## SIGNING DAY ROUNDUP

# Ho, Colonis to be rivals

By Sam King  
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Rachel Ho and Brandon Colonis have been swimming together almost from the day they first got in the pool.

When they made their college decisions, they joked whether they could still even be friends.

On Wednesday afternoon, the West Lafayette seniors sat side by side on the pool deck to sign their national letters of intent, one draped in Purdue black and gold and the other wearing a red tie and a white Indiana University baseball cap.

Colonis chose Indiana over Tennessee, Kentucky and Iowa.

"The team there, I went on my visit and I felt like that is where I wanted to be," said Colonis, who will study informatics. "They're just so motivated together and they are going to do good things because with teamwork, you can accomplish anything."

For Ho, the decision was easy. There's a long line of family members who have gone to Purdue. Ho will join Central Catholic's Jacob Thomas as incoming Boilermakers next year. Thomas will sign his letter of intent today.

"Purdue has been in my family for many generations," said Ho, who plans to study general biology. "My parents

went to Purdue, many generations of my family have gone to Purdue. It's always been a part of my childhood. Getting the opportunity, I saw it was only fitting that I would continue on here in West Lafayette."

Thomas was the Zionsville Sectional champion in the 100 backstroke last season and the 200 individual medley, placing 14th at the IHSAA state finals. Colonis was the sectional champ in the 100 butterfly and finished sixth in the state.

Ho was Zionsville Sectional runner-up in the backstroke and fourth in the IM as a junior.

## Baseball

Decision day for Central Catholic catcher Evan Kennedy came in September, when the Knights' catcher verbally committed to Purdue.

Wednesday came the celebration, with family and friends gathered at the school to watch Kennedy sign his letter of intent.

"It's a celebration, yeah, but it's a motivation to keep the hard work going and keep striving to reach the best I can be and striving to make the team I play for the best it can be," Kennedy said.

Kennedy joins a Purdue program that already lists five players with area roots on its 2013 roster.

A three-year starter, Kennedy helped Central Catholic ex-

tend its streak of Class A state championships to five. As a junior he batted .300 with 32 runs, 12 doubles, three home runs and 24 RBIs with a 1.000 fielding percentage.

McCutcheon outfielder Logan Sowers will sign with Indiana today. As a junior he batted .318 with 28 runs, five home runs, 18 RBIs and 11 stolen bases with a .978 fielding percentage.

Clinton Central's Jeff Scott signed with Coastal Carolina on Wednesday morning. The Bulldogs' team MVP, the versatile Scott batted .420 with 29 runs, 31 RBIs and 19 walks and also went 8-3 on the mound with an 0.84 ERA and 98 strikeouts in 66½ innings.

## Purdue volleyball

Coach Dave Shondell's Boilermaker team made a big splash on signing day, receiving letters of intent from four top-50 recruits.

Ben Davis senior middle blocker Danielle Cuttino, ranked as the No. 10 Senior Ace by Prepvolleyball.com, highlights a class that also includes outside hitters Christina Ambrose (No. 20, Orlando, Fla.) and Azariah Stahl (No. 21, Elkhart Central) and setter/outside hitter Lydia Dimke (No. 50, Ham Lake, Minn.).

Contributing: Nathan Baird/nbaird@jconline.com

## KIGER

Continued from Page B1

"Going through it the first time was a huge help," Kiger said. "I knew exactly what I was doing. Daluga does a great job. He lets you heal on your own for two weeks before he just throws you into therapy. I go into therapy and I am two weeks ahead of schedule already. I wasn't about to let it affect me for the rest of the season."

It affected him even less than anticipated.