



CROSSROADS CLASSIC

Butler, IU favored to earn bragging rights

Hammons may hold key to today's game, Purdue's season



Video: Travis Carroll, Errick Peck and Terone Johnson discuss the matchup with Butler at jconline.com



It's a homecoming game for Ronnie Johnson, left, but A.J. Hammons may be the key to victory. KIM KLEMENT/USA TODAY SPORTS

Star report

Indiana Insider Zach Osterman and Butler Insider Zak Keefe of the Indianapolis Star, plus Purdue beat writer Nathan Baird of the Lafayette Journal & Courier and Notre Dame beat writer Tom Noie of the South Bend Tribune, discussed Saturday's Crossroads Classic and Division I basketball in Indiana.

TODAY'S GAME

Purdue (8-2) vs. Butler (7-2)
Where: Bankers Life Fieldhouse
Time: 6 p.m. **TV:** BTN
Radio: WSHP (95.7)

On ranking the Division I teams in Indiana

Osterman: I don't know that there's a lot of separation between IU and Butler, but I'll give Indiana the edge, barely. I might be disrespecting Evansville a bit too much.

Baird: Purdue has some unrealized upside, but it also doesn't really have an impressive victory (the 21-point home win over Boston College is the closest thing). Prior to the season, I picked Purdue to finish one spot ahead of IU in the conference, based in part on their only meeting coming at Mackeey. I think I would hold to that pick, despite my rankings.

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BOYS BASKETBALL



Central Catholic's Pete Metzinger drives against Twin Lakes' Dane Holmes. JERRY SCHULTHEISS/FOR THE J&C

Knights' surge denies Indians

Senior guards spark 63-59 comeback victory

By Nathan Baird
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After getting whipped on the boards and struggling to make a shot for the first 14 minutes, Central Catholic's boys basketball team might have tolerated a six-point halftime deficit Friday against Twin Lakes.

Pete Metzinger decided to provide a spark anyway, and Mitch Witteveen picked up where his teammate left off after halftime. Those senior guards ignited a half-straddling surge that pushed Class A No. 3 Central Catholic to a 63-59 victory over the Indians at McHale Gymnasium.

Witteveen and Metzinger scored 14 points apiece for the Knights, who rallied from a 26-19 deficit late in the first half for a Hoosier Conference victory.

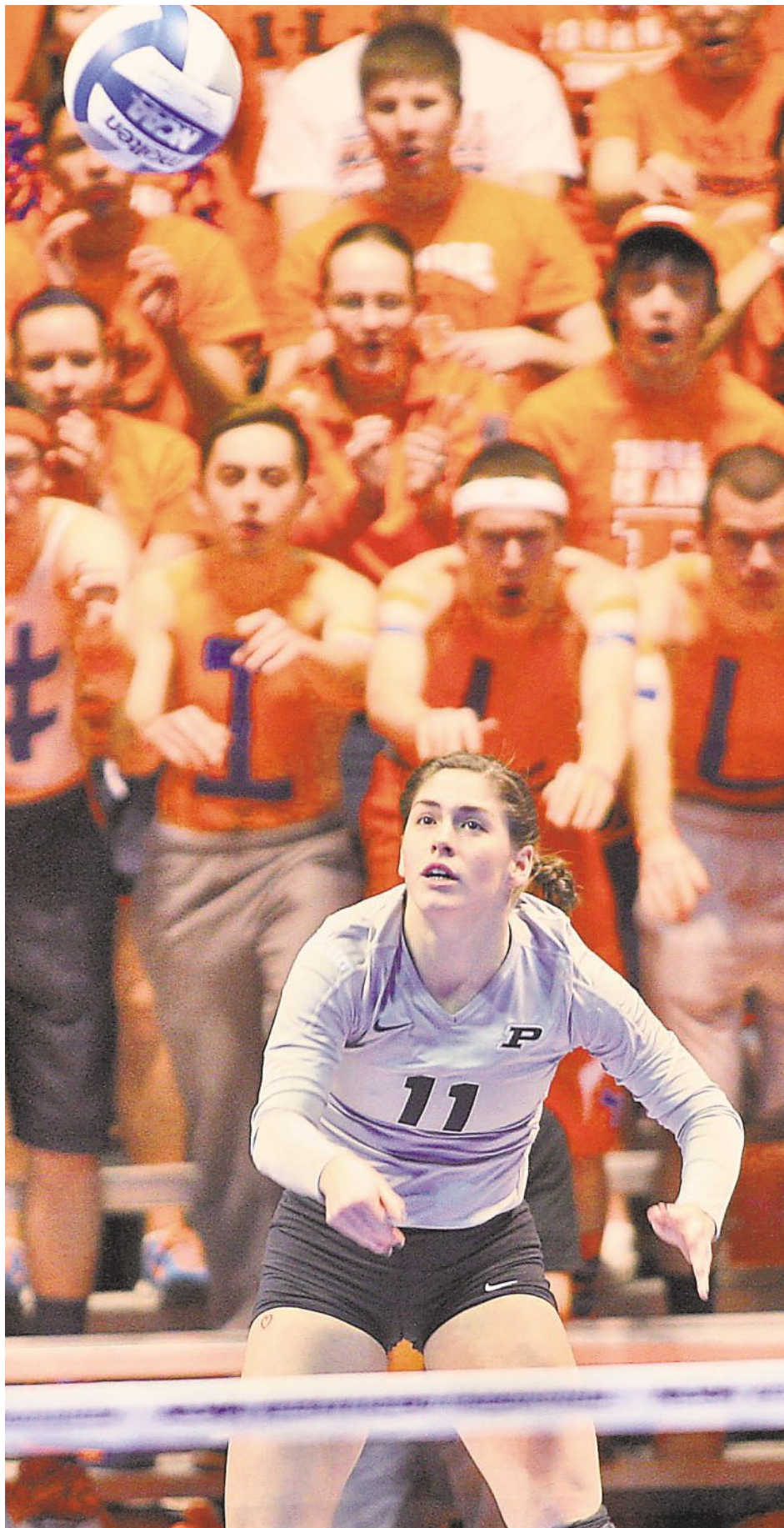
"We were hoping to get something going before the end of the half, but things didn't go our way," Witteveen said. "Coach (Dave Barrett) drew up some plays before the second half to counter what they were doing. We came out, did what we needed to do and jumped out to a quick lead."

Twin Lakes senior Jordan Crouch came off the bench to post career highs of 13 points and 14 rebounds. His second-quarter work on the offensive boards helped propel the Indi-

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PURDUE VOLLEYBALL

ELITE AGAIN



Purdue's Carly Cramer serves in front of Illinois' student section. TOM CAMPBELL/FOR THE JOURNAL & COURIER

Purdue sweeps Illinois; Wisconsin awaits for Final Four berth

By Sam King
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CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — In a moment of sheer will, Purdue senior Hillary Fox left the ground, extending her right arm just enough to punch the ball into the air and keep a play alive.

From the 10th row in Section A-32 of Illinois' State Farm Center, an elderly gentleman put his hands on his head and let his inner voice speak out.

"How do they do that?" the Illini fan asked to anyone who was listening.

The view was too pretty from the Purdue Boilermakers' vantage point. Surrounding them on the court were 4,631 riled up fans, many clad in orange hoping to will their Illini to the Elite Eight.

Instead, there were a lot of plays just like the one Fox made that sent the Boilermakers into the Elite Eight with a 28-26, 25-20, 25-19 sweep of NCAA Regional host Illinois.

Those fans remained in their seats long enough to see the No. 19 Boilermakers rally in a momentum-changing first set, then were awed by a masterful display of defense and a balanced offense for which Illinois had no answer.

"The key tonight was a college volleyball team taking the things that they'd worked on all week long and the adjustments that we needed to make and some of the things we had to do defend and score and then execute it in a near flawless manner," Purdue coach Dave Shondell said.

Purdue (23-11) plays Wisconsin (26-9) tonight with a Final Four berth on the line. The Boilermakers and Badgers split a pair of regular season meetings.

Val Nichol nearly totaled a triple-double with nine kills, 17 assists and 11 digs. Kiki Jones and Catherine Rebarchak matched Nichol's team-high nine kills and Sam Epenesa provided four, including a cross-court shot that put Purdue

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Video: Purdue coach Dave Shondell and the Boilermakers discuss Friday's victory.

NBA

Pacers top Bobcats, now 11-0 at home



Indiana's Paul George drives around Ben Gordon. AJ MAST/AP

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Lance Stephenson had 20 points and 11 rebounds to help the Indiana Pacers improve their franchise-record home start to 11-0 with a 99-94 victory over the Charlotte Bobcats on Friday night.

Center Roy Hibbert added 18 points and 11 rebounds as Indiana overcame an off night from Paul George, who had 10 points on 2-of-12 shooting in the Pacers' first game since defeating the two-time defending champion Miami Heat on Wednesday night in a rematch of last season's Eastern Conference Finals. George entered the contest averaging 24.7 points a game.

Al Jefferson had 21 points and nine rebounds for the Bobcats, who extended their losing

streak in Indiana to eight games. Charlotte was trying to win on the Pacers' home court for the first time since Nov. 28, 2008.

Stephenson added seven assists and David West scored 14 points, George Hill had 13 and Luis Scola 11 for Indiana (20-3). Rasual Butler, playing his most significant minutes (23:47) of the season, scored eight points on 3-of-5 shooting.

The Pacers led 56-55 at half-time, but trailed by 90-89 after Gerald Henderson sank a 15-foot jump shot with 5:17 left in the fourth quarter. Stephenson's layup made it 91-90 with 4:18 to play and Indiana never trailed again.

**Thunder 122
Lakers 97**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Kevin Durant scored 31 points, Russell Westbrook added 19 points, 12

assists and eight rebounds and the Oklahoma City Thunder rolled to a win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

**Pistons 103
Nets 99**

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Andre Drummond had 22 points and 13 rebounds, and Detroit held off a determined Brooklyn rally.

**Hawks 101
Wizards 99 (OT)**

ATLANTA — Al Horford scored a season-high 34 points, including a jumper as time expired in overtime, and Atlanta recovered after blowing a 15-point lead in the fourth quarter.

**Celtics 90
Knicks 86**

BOSTON — Avery Bradley scored seven of his 13 points in the fourth quarter, hitting a 3-pointer with 2:38 to play to give Boston the lead for good.

**Pelicans 104
Grizzlies 98**

NEW ORLEANS — Eric Gordon had 25 points as New Orleans won its second straight game.

**Raptors 108
76ers 100**

TORONTO — DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points, Terrence Ross had a season-high 24 and Toronto handed Philadelphia its fifth straight loss.

**Spurs 117
Timberwolves 110**

SAN ANTONIO — Tony Parker had 29 points to offset a season-high 42 points from Kevin Love and San Antonio rallied for a victory over Minnesota.

**Cavaliers 109
Magic 100**

ORLANDO, Fla. — Kyrie Irving scored 31 points, Dion Waiters added 21, and Cleveland used a big second half to earn its second road victory of the season.

RIGHTS

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Osterman: I'm just more impressed by Purdue's best loss (Oklahoma State) than by Notre Dame's (Iowa).

Keefe: I'm not so sure Indiana State isn't the best team in the state ... right now, after a month of most teams padding their non-conference schedules. While I do believe Indiana has the most talent, and Butler has the capability to surprise a lot of people in the Big East, until either team earns a signature win, I'll remain skeptical.

I've seen Purdue live three times — in the Old Spice Classic last month — and it might have been some of the worst basketball they've played this season. It appears the Boilermakers will only go as far as A.J. Hammons will take them. And, as up-and-down as the talented 7-footer is, that's not exactly a vote of confidence.

On the Crossroads Classic as an event

Keefe: From the Butler perspective, it's a valuable non-conference game. It allows them to play an in-state rival on a neutral court, an opportunity they haven't always been able to acquire. Plus, it doesn't hurt when you're undefeated in the event and have won both games on buzzer-beaters.

Osterman: There's probably some feeling at Indiana that

it helps carry the event, just because it has so many fans in Indy. But Indiana definitely enjoys the event.

Baird: I know Purdue sometimes feels overshadowed by IU in Indianapolis, and obviously Butler broke through under Brad Stevens to grab some attention as well. But what better way to affirm your relevance than an event like this where you're going head-to-head with the state's other top teams?

Noie: The Irish are often a distant fourth when it comes to fan support of the four teams at the Crossroads. Maybe football season keeps their fans from getting excited about it.

Indiana vs. Notre Dame

Osterman: I think Indiana wins, and it might not be that close.

Noie: This has the makings of a fragile team, psyche-wise, toughness-wise, and it may get lopsided in a hurry.

Butler vs. Purdue

Keefe: The glaring issue is how Butler handles Hammons inside. The Bulldogs have struggled against bigger, beefier frontcourts.

Baird: I'm impressed with Butler's defense. But Purdue has a little bit of everything — big guys, quick slashers, potent shooters. It's hard to say that limiting one thing will work. But the Boilermakers want to work inside-out, so disrupting the post is probably the best plan for Butler.

BUTLER BULLDOGS (7-2)					
	Pos	Ht	Yr	Pts	Reb
Erik Fromm	F	6-8	Sr.	6.4	3.1
Khyle Marshall	F	6-6	Sr.	17.0	6.6
Kameron Woods	F	6-9	Jr.	10.3	8.9
Alex Barlow	G	5-11	Jr.	5.6	3.1
Kellen Dunham	G	6-6	So.	18.7	4.1

PURDUE BOILERMAKERS (8-2)					
	Pos	Ht	Yr	Pts	Reb
Terone Johnson	G	6-4	Sr.	12.8	2.9
Bryson Scott	G	6-1	Fr.	10.4	2.3
Basil Smotherman	F	6-5	Fr.	5.7	3.7
Kendall Stephens	G	6-6	Fr.	7.8	1.6
Jay Simpson	C	6-10	Fr.	6.8	5.1

About Butler: Losses came against No. 7 Oklahoma State and LSU at the Old Spice Classic by four combined points. ... Is 2-0 in the Crossroads Classic, winning both games by 2 points. ... Has won six straight games at Banker's Life Fieldhouse and is 8-2 there all-time. ... Has won three straight against Purdue. ... Averages 77 points and allows 63.7. ... Shoots 46.2 percent from the field, including 37.0 percent on 3-pointers, and 67.0 percent at the free throw line. ... Dunham has led in scoring for three straight games and four of the last five, averaging 21.0 points in that span. ... Is 37-10 when Marshall scores double figures, winning 21 of the last 23. ... Woods posted 12 points and six rebounds off the bench against Purdue in 2011. ... Brandon Miller is in his first season with Butler.

About Purdue: Has won three straight. ... Is 0-2 in the Crossroads Classic. ... Is 37-16 all-time against Butler. ... Last beat Butler on Dec. 29, 1998, in Indianapolis. ... Is 1-2 away from Mackey Arena, all on neutral courts. ... Has won 3 of its last 13 neutral site games. ... Has started a different lineup in each of the past four games. ... Has held four straight opponents under 70 points. ... Averages 79.7 points and allows 71.4. ... Shooting 45.6 percent from the field, including 34.3 percent on 3-pointers, and 64.8 percent at the free throw line. ... Averages 6.7 blocks per game, led by A.J. Hammons (4.0). ... Ronnie Johnson averages 11.9 points and 4.0 assists. ... Hammons averages 8.0 points and 6.7 rebounds. ... Matt Painter is 209-102 in his 10th season overall and 184-97 in his ninth season with Purdue.

Sagarin ratings: Butler 81.18, Purdue 77.49

What to watch for: Butler typically does not beat itself and has defended well all season. Will Hammons and Simpson show up and assert their height advantage in the post? Or will the Bulldogs make that adjustment and force Purdue to beat them in other ways?

The pick: Butler has played better in these scenarios, both in recent history and this season. The Boilermakers have to prove they can beat a good team in a semi-hostile environment. **Butler 75, Purdue 69.**

— Nathan Baird/nbaird@jconline.com

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

No. 17 Iowa State beats Iowa

Wire reports

AMES, Iowa — Georges Niang scored 24 points, including the go-ahead basket with 18.8 seconds left, and 17th-ranked Iowa State rallied to beat No. 23 Iowa 85-82 on Friday night.

Dustin Hogue had 12 points and 16 rebounds for the Cyclones (8-0), who prevailed in the first meeting between the Cyclones and Hawkeyes as ranked teams in 26 years.

Niang gave Iowa State an 83-82 lead on a reverse layup — and Iowa's Mike Gesell followed by missing two free throws. Hogue then buried two foul shots, and Zach McCabe's attempt for a tying 3 fell short for Iowa (10-2).

Aaron White had 25 points and a career-high 17 rebounds for the Hawkeyes, who led by as much as 10 late in the first half.

**No. 16 Memphis 73
Arkansas-Little Rock 59**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Shaq Goodwin scored 17 points and No. 16 Memphis rallied for a 73-59 victory over Arkansas-Little Rock on Friday night.

Joe Jackson also had 17 points for the Tigers, but was 3 for 11 from the field. Memphis (7-1) was tied with Arkansas-Little Rock with under 7 minutes to go, but the Trojans faded down the stretch.

Josh Hagins led Arkansas-Little Rock (3-6) with 17 points, connecting on 6 of 11 shots. Will Neighbour scored 10 of his 15 points in the first half as the Trojans built a double-digit lead.

Geron Johnson scored 13 points for Memphis, which shot 52 percent in the second half of its sixth consecutive victory. Goodwin also had nine rebounds.

The Tigers outrebounded the Trojans 41-32 and scored 28 points off 17 Arkansas-Little Rock turnovers.

Arkansas-Little Rock played with more passion in the first half, and Memphis struggled on offense for much of the first part of the game. The Tigers missed 12 of their first 14 shots and were still at 20 percent shooting with 5 minutes remaining before the break.

The Trojans led by as many as 12, but Johnson helped Memphis put together a 16-4 run that tied at 21. Johnson had 10 points in the first half.

**No. 21 Colorado 80
Elon 63**

BOULDER, Colo. — Spencer Dinwiddie scored 17 points and No. 21 Colorado beat Elon 80-63 on Friday night for its 10th consecutive win.

Xavier Johnson added 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Buffaloes (10-1), who were

coming off a win over Kansas. Josh Scott scored 12, and George King had 10 points.

Sebastian Koch scored 27 points on nine 3-pointers for Elon (5-5), which had won three in a row. Tanner Samson added 12 points.

The Buffaloes have won each of their three meetings with the Phoenix, who is winless in 18 career games against a Top 25 team.

Colorado got off to a slow start. Koch made a 3 to give Elon a 16-12 lead with 11:05 to go in the first half, but the Buffaloes then grabbed control with a 15-2 spurt.

Scott started the run with a jumper and Dinwiddie closed it out a 3-pointer.

The Buffaloes also scored 14 of the last 18 points of the first half to grab a 41-25 lead at the break.

Elon began to rally after Aska Booker's layup lifted Colorado to a 19-point lead. The Phoenix clawed back to 55-47 on 3s from Koch and Samson, and a layup by Lucas Troutman.

The lead was 69-60 when Dinwiddie converted a three-point play and a layup to run the advantage to 14 with 3:14 remaining.

Koch was 9 for 14 from 3-point range. He missed his only two shots from inside the arc.

ELITE

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ahead 21-17 in the third set and paved the way to complete the sweep.

"It's not just practice, but us executing against them tonight," said Faye Adelaja, who had six block assists and four kills.

But that first set was the one everyone wanted to talk about.

Purdue trailed 24-21 after getting aced by Ali Stark. For the second match in a row, the Boilermakers showed they could rally no matter the situation. The Boilermakers scored the next four points, two on kills by Nichol, then closed out the set with consecutive kills from sophomore lefty Annie Drews, who finished with six total.

"We kind of focused on heart and execution as the way we are going to win this match," Nichol said. "Big Ten teams are going to be fairly equal in physical abilities, so with heart and determination, I think we won that first set."

Purdue libero Carly Cramer was aced five times in the set, a



Annie Drews (18), Amanda Neill (7), Rachel Davis (1), Carly Cramer (11), Val Nichol (2) and KiKi Jones celebrate Purdue's Sweet 16 victory over Illinois. TOM CAMPBELL/FOR THE JOURNAL & COURIER

rarity, but Rebarchak was up for the moment with five kills and no errors in a rally that left the fans and Illinois players stunned.

"The first set we had a great opportunity to go up 1-0 but they made some plays at the end and dug a couple balls and they took advantage of it," Illinois coach Kevin Hambly said.

From there, the Boilermakers withstood power hitting sophomore Jocelynn Birks, who led the Illini with 12 kills, but hit just .200, and picked off one Illini shot after another, led

by Cramer's 15 digs, 11 more from Fox and eight from Amanda Neill.

The season has been intertwined with talk of a Final Four within the Boilermaker locker room. Now, they're one victory away.

For five seniors who came to Purdue because they wanted to elevate a good program to the next level, that is the only acceptable ending to this ride.

"You could lose and go home. It's my senior year and I want to keep playing," Rebarchak said.