

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

FINDING PURPOSE



Lafayette Jeff's Julius Gibbs will play football at NAIA powerhouse Marian University in the fall.

Marian-bound Gibbs discovered another path with football

SAM KING
JOURNAL & COURIER

INDIANAPOLIS - Violence surrounded Julius Gibbs at every corner.

His upbringing showed him he had two options. Fall into the norm or find a way out.

Gibbs was 7 years old when he found football through a local Pop Warner league and thought to himself that this perhaps was his path to a better life.

"I've always known I never really had another choice," Gibbs said. "Where I'm from, I haven't seen any other way to do anything."

"Everybody I've seen growing up, they either stayed in Gary or didn't grow up at all. They died. They got locked up. It starts right there. I knew football was one thing that could take me somewhere else."

The 6-foot-4, 265-pound Gibbs will play football at NAIA powerhouse Marian University in the fall.

Two years ago, Gibbs family moved from the notoriously crime-heavy town of Gary to West Lafayette.

He found a home at Lafayette Jefferson High School, so much so that he'd get to the City Bus stop near his home hours before school started, ride the bus across town and be at school before most of his teachers.

"Julius is fortunate in that he has two very involved parents, but they work odd hours," Lafayette Jeff football coach Pat Shanley said. "For Julius to not make excuses for anything at all, but just show up and do what is expected and then some, he is a great example for all future Bronchos that come after him."

Lafayette Jeff's football program at that time was going through change, with a new coaching staff coming in.

The timing was just right with the hire of coach Brian Moore coinciding with Gibbs' transfer to Lafayette Jeff.

Moore himself a starting offensive lineman, the first of many pieces to a culture shift puzzle that turned the program from a one-win team to an 8-3 squad that lost in the sectional championship game in Gibbs' first season with the program.

His most redeeming quality, though, was not his skillset.

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SARAH STIER/INDYSTAR

PURDUE BASKETBALL

Edwards building on World Cup experience

NATHAN BAIRD
JOURNAL & COURIER

Hundreds of miles from home and separated from his Purdue basketball teammates, Carsen Edwards heard a familiar message.

This time it came from Kentucky coach John Calipari, not Boilermaker coach Matt Painter. Yet as Team USA's FIBA U19 World Cup training camp began, Edwards might as well have been back on Cardinal Court.

"In the beginning of the camp Coach Cal was like, 'I want to see who can play defense,'" Edwards said. "So I took that seriously. I just wanted to be disruptive. Not just taking the ball from people, but taking time off the shot clock before they can get past halfcourt."

"If I could do that, I felt like I could make a difference."

Edwards made the team, then mixed in a handful of strong performances while helping Team USA win bronze at the World Cup in Cairo, Egypt. He also earned the respect of Calipari, who praised Purdue's rising sophomore

Online

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guard following a victory over Germany. "Carsen Edwards was the one guy that went in and changed the game because of his intensity, and he was dragging people with him," said Calipari, who gave Edwards more minutes than any other player.

Purdue senior forward Vincent Edwards tried out for the same FIBA U19 World Cup team prior to his sophomore season. Despite not making the team, the elder Edwards said he left that training camp in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with a boost in confidence.

Similarly, he feels Carsen Edwards' FIBA experience could push the scoring-minded guard closer to realizing his potential.

"I told him earlier in practice today,

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Purdue guard Carsen Edwards scored 13 points and handed out four assists.

USA BASKETBALL

Gibbs

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"His character was his No. 1 attribute," said Moore, now the athletic director at Fountain Central. "I really enjoyed coaching him and am proud of what he's accomplished."

Perhaps a rare flaw was a testament to Gibbs' true character.

Gibbs showed up late to a practice during his junior season.

"He didn't communicate with us about why he was late," said Shanley, who was the offensive coordinator at the time. "The next practice, we kept him after and he had what we call a reminder session."

Like most who go through the grueling post-practice punishment, the coaches expected Gibbs to complain.

"Julius took it and faced his punishment," Shanley said. "Afterwards, he said he understood what he did wrong. He attacked it instead of moping. That is the symbol for the type of person he is."

Gibbs transferred from Gary's Bowman Academy as a struggling student.

At Jeff, he became an A-B student and blossomed as one of the top offensive linemen in the state.

"I felt safer," Gibbs said. "I was a lot more focused on football, a lot more focused on school and grades. There were a lot less distractions and Jeff helped me be the man I am today."

Last week, the 6-foot-4, 265-pound Gibbs was the starting right tackle for the North in the Indiana Football Coaches Association North/South All-Star Classic and helped his team to a game-winning drive in the final minute of a 17-14 victory at North Central High School.

"It felt like a state championship," Gibbs said.

But before that final drive, the defense had to make a stand to get the ball back.

Gibbs was at the forefront of that, too, but in a different role.

"He was the one who started the defensive chant on the sideline," said North kicker Sam Milazzo, who will also play at Marian University. "He is one of the most fun teammates I've ever had. He's always dancing."

Gibbs will study education at Marian. He wants to be a football coach when he graduates, hoping to give back to the sport that gave him so much.

"Where I am from, I never had much," Gibbs said. "I am used to not having anything. Football is one of the only things I've ever had. I take a lot of pride in that."

Contact high school sports reporter Sam King at sking@journalandcourier.com. Follow him on Twitter @samueltking.

NBA

Wardrobe change: No home, road uniforms with switch to Nike

BRIAN MAHONEY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - NBA teams are making a wardrobe change, with the traditional home and road uniforms going back in the closet.

The league said Tuesday it is eliminating the old apparel designations starting with the 2017-18 season, when Nike becomes the official outfitter. Instead, there will be four primary uniforms for each team.

The host team will pick which of its uniforms will be worn for each game and the visitors will select one of the contrasting ones from their collection. Previously, white uniforms were the default for home teams.

The first two editions will debut at the start of the season. The "Association" is formerly the home white uniform and the "Icon" is the previous road jersey, featuring the team's primary color.

The other two primary uniforms will be revealed in the coming months.

Also, eight teams will have a "Classic" uniform available in the fall that they can wear at their discretion.

Nike, which is replacing Adidas, says its uniforms are the NBA's lightest ever and absorb sweat faster, with changes to the neck, back shoulder and armhole to enhance agility. They were tested by members of last summer's gold medal-winning U.S. Olympic basketball team.

Edwards

Continued from Page 1C

you already made your way," Vincent Edwards said. "It's not Carsen making a name for yourself anymore. Now you've got younger guys looking at you and looking up to you. Whatever you do, they're going to reflect off of it."

"He's got to get used to adjusting to that. Other than that he has a good understanding of who he is and what he does and it will be simple for him."

Edwards's 23 assists led Team USA. That drew a trollish response from former Purdue teammate Caleb Swanigan, who labeled Edwards' assist total "#fake-news."

Yet Edwards also averaged 10.4 points in his 20 minutes per game, and his 12 3-pointers made ranked second on the team. With Calipari echoing the same message Edwards received from coaches and teammates at Purdue, the guard realized the more he attacked on offense, the more he could facilitate.

"I've just tried to stay aggressive and continue to look to score," Edwards said. "At that point I feel like I make better

"Being able to go to USA and run point guard makes him more of a two-way player than just a scorer. We tell him all the time his passing comes after you're aggressive. You look to score that's when you get guys open because they have to come inside for you."

VINCENT EDWARDS ABOUT TEAMMATE CARSON EDWARDS

passes."

Edwards said he enjoyed Team USA's more up-and-down style, including more isolation and one-on-one opportunities. He also relished the opportunity to run the point more with Team USA. That's the role originally envisioned for him at Purdue, though his scoring skills and team needs created a detour to an off-the-ball identity.

However, development of those lead guards skills can bolster Edwards' proven skill set. Taking the ball to the basket draws defenders in. The threat of those drives can also create space on the perimeter.

"Being able to go to USA and run point guard makes him more of a two-way player than just a scorer," Vincent Edwards said. "We tell him all the time his

passing comes after you're aggressive. You look to score that's when you get guys open because they have to come inside for you."

» Purdue guards Dakota Mathias and P.J. Thompson were named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Honors Court. Players so recognized must meet a high standard of academic criteria, including a cumulative 3.2 GPA. Thompson has a 3.21 GPA in organizational leadership and Mathias has a 3.20 GPA in management.

Mathias and Thompson were two of nine Big Ten Conference players honored by the NABC.

Reach Journal & Courier Purdue basketball reporter Nathan Baird at 765-420-5234. Follow on Twitter: @nbairdjc.

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