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**PURDUE FOOTBALL** 

# Johnson, **Short** set for combine

Purdue stars out to improve draft status

By Mike Carmin mcarmin@jconline.com

Josh Johnson won't soon forget the day his invitation to the NFL Scouting Combine was re-

It was Jan. 8, and his mother, Nicki Craig, was celebrating her birthday.

"She was ecstatic," Johnson said. "It just really touched her. That's something that I'll always look back on, and I'll never

forget that day. It was a dream come true and also a blessing.'

The



Johnson

Kawann Short

Purdue cornerback would like to enjoy more memorable moments during April's NFL Draft. But Johnson needs to impress scouts and general managers during this weekend's NFL Scouting Combine at Lucas Stadium.

former

Johnson isn't the only ex-Boilermaker in Indianapolis. Defensive tackle Kawann

Short is scheduled to attend, but may not participate in drills. Short said potentially sitting out is "injury-related but nothing serious." NFL.com reported that Short is dealing with a hamstring injury.

He's disappointed, but plans to attend Purdue's Pro Day on March 1. Short is considered a late first- or early second-round draft pick.

"It's not the end of the road," aid Short, who was name North's Most Outstanding Player in the Senior Bowl in January. "I still have Pro Day to fall back on. Push comes to shove, I'll be

Meanwhile, Johnson wants to leave a favorable impression on everyone who's watching him in the 40-yard dash, shuttle run, 3-cone drill and vertical jump. His on-field testing is Tuesday.

The native of Dade City, Fla.,

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**PURDUE MEN'S BASKETBALL** 



Incoming recruits Basil Smotherman, Bryson Scott and Kendall Stephens expect to provide the Purdue men's basketball team with a much-needed boost next season. DOUG MCSCHOOLER: THE NEWS-SENTINEL: BRENT DRINKUT/J&C

# Recruits eager to help Painter's team

By Jeff Washburn | jwashburn@jconline.com

he collective message from Kendall Stephens, Bryson Scott and Basil Smotherman to Purdue basketball fans would be titled, "Reinforcements are on the way." Shooting guard Stephens, combo guard Scott and lanky left-handed wing Smotherman comprise Matt

Painter's recruiting class for 2013 and are eager to join forces with the returning Boilermakers, who have suffered through a 12-14 season to date.

"Me, Kendall and Basil are going to bring a lot of help," said Scott, a senior guard at Fort Wayne Northrop. "I'm going to bring toughness, leadership and different ways to score. I want to give Purdue a

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**HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING** 

## Miller feeling nothing but confidence entering state

Jeff diver overcomes arthritis to excel

By Sam King

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The only pain Lafayette Jeff senior Dustin Miller accrues from the diving boards these days comes from not finishing

Miller is diving without pain,

and he hopes that trend continues Saturday when he competes in the IHSAA state finals at IU Natatorium in Indianapo-

This summer, a visit to Riley Hospital in Indianapolis determined Miller suffers from juvenile onset arthritis, which limited his flexibility and required longer preparation time for competition.

'Î would wake up and feel like I just had an eight-mile



Miller now receives injections weekly or biweekly that keep the pain under

**Dustin** Miller

control. According to the Mayo Clinic

causes joint pain, swelling and

website, juvenile arthritis typically occurs in children under the age of 16 and

jog," Miller said. stiffness. "It was weird." It stun It stunted Miller's ability to gain muscle mass.

He'd go through weighttraining sessions and not gain muscle. He wasn't able to get fully flexible for diving during his first three seasons with the Bronchos and still managed a 13th-place finish at the state finals as a junior.

The injections have cured the soreness, and it's showing.

Earlier this season, Miller

broke the Hoosier Crossroads Conference meet diving record, previously held by Olympic gold medalist David Boudia. On a wild Tuesday night where the power went out at Hamilton Southeastern, forcing a change in venues, Miller was not fazed and won his first regional diving title.

It's the kind of talent Lafayette Jeff diving coach Deana

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boost on the offensive and defensive sides. Kendall is a great shooter, somebody that we can pass to and set screens for. If we get him open shots, he will knock them down. I've seen him

"Basil gives us another athletic wing that we need. He can get boards and run the floor well. He also can match up defensively. We're going to bring something special to Purdue, along with the recruiting class they brought in last year. I think we can do good things.

Stephens, a senior at St. Charles (Ill.) East, underwent surgery on Jan. 22 to repair a torn labrum in his right shoulder, ending his high school career. He averaged 19 points in the 11 games in which he played. Tthe son of former Purdue point guard Everette Stephens, Kendall is doing rehab three times a week and hopes to begin shooting in late April or early May before coming to campus to stay in

The 6-foot-6 guard said his rehab is going well.

'The range of motion is better than what they expected," Stephens said this week. "It helps that I'm really long and double-jointed. That helps the range of motion more than the average person.'

In large part because both parents are Purdue grads, Stephens, like most Boilermaker fans, has had a difficult time coping with a 12-14 record.

"It's been tough in a sense," Stephens said. "You can see the potential, but you can still see that there is room for improvement. When you think about college basketball, it doesn't take a couple of seasons to get things back together. Coach Painter says that college basketball can turn around in one year.

'You can have a totally sub-.500 team and then go from bottom to top. You also can go from top to bottom. It's good that we at least have the pieces. Now, we



Lawrence North's Basil Smotherman is part of a strong recruiting class for Purdue. DOUG MCSCHOOLER/FOR THE STAR

have to work on the chemistry and get this thing back together. I'm excited. We have a group of guys with me, Bryson and Basil coming in that can work well with the guys who already are at Purdue.'

Known as a 3-point shooting specialist, Stephens knows that Purdue fans will be watching him closely.

'The people say the need (for perimeter shooting) is very high," Stephens said. "They may be looking for me to contribute more than normal. I'm fine with that. I know what I am capable of. I can control how much work I put in the gym. My focus is going to be on being a good shooter, but of course, I want to focus on other aspects than just shooting.

"I want to be a good scorer and a good defender. I want to bring multiple things that Purdue needs. I know people are going to expect a lot from me, but the only thing I'm worried about is what coach Painter and the coaching staff expect me to do."

Scott, who is averaging 23.8 points, seven rebounds and three assists for a 16-6 Northrop squad, anticipates a very successful 2013-14 Purdue season,

"We could be a team that could make it far in the tournament," Scott said. "I have confidence in those guys that are there now. Getting a year of experience will help them, and I'm not going to take long to be

"Kendall and Basil are going to be ready coming in as freshmen. Ronnie Johnson is going to continue to be aggressive, and I am going to help him out with the ballhandling and scoring. Big A.J. (Hammons) is going to draw a lot of attention to the paint, which will create a lot of kick-outs to Kendall. We're going to get opportunities, and we're going to be pretty solid."

Scott hasn't enjoyed watching Purdue lose, but he said fans need to look at the big picture of what is happening.

"It's kind of hard to watch it, but at the same time, we have to realize that they are freshmen and are trying to do what they can do to fit in," Scott said. "They will get it together, especially with the three of us coming in. They will have that year under their belts. They will get us involved as fast as they can. Good things are going to come to Purdue.

Smotherman, who is averaging 16.9 points and 5.4 rebounds for Lawrence North, says his recruiting class brings a variety of skills to Purdue's future.

Coach Painter says that Bryson is an attack dog," Smotherman said. "Kendall can play at a high level, just like his dad. With me, it's my size and everything I can do. We're looking forward to it."

Smotherman said the incoming trio understands that if it doesn't play defense, it won't

"Coach Painter is really keen on defense," Smotherman said. "Offense comes second. It all starts on defense. It's going to be different, because at that level, you may be asked to guard a 6-9 (small forward). We have to learn the physicality of the Big Ten. We're going to learn every day. We're going to come in the summer and learn how to play (college) defense."



Rory McIlroy, the No. 1 player in the world, built a 2-up lead early in the match until Shane Lowry rallied and grabbed the moment by chipping in for birdie on the par-3 12th. ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

**SPORTS IN BRIEF** 

# McIlory, Tiger bow out at Match Play

Associated Press

MARANA, Ariz. — The snow is gone from the Match Play Championship, and so are Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods.

In a stunning conclusion to what already is a bizarre week on Dove Mountain, Shane Lowry of Ireland made a 4-foot par putt on the 18th hole to eliminate Rory McIlroy in the opening round of golf's most unpredictable tournament.

It was the third time in the last four years the No. 1 seed went home after one round.

Moments later, Charles Howell III finished off a fabulous round in cold conditions by defeating Woods on the 17th hole. Howell, who had not faced Woods in match play since losing to him in the third round of the 1996 U.S. Amateur, played bogeyfree on a course that still had patches of snow and ice after being cleared Thursday morning.

The match was all square when Howell hit a wedge that stopped inches from the cup on the 15th hole for a conceded birdie. Then, he holed a 25-foot birdie putt on the 16th and went

2 up when Woods badly missed a 12-foot birdie putt. "I had nothing to lose," said Howell, who started the year outside the top 100 in the world and hasn't qualified for this World Golf Championship in five years. "In this format, match play is crazy. He's Tiger Woods. I was lucky to hang in there."

The final matches were played in near darkness, and they could have stopped after 15 holes. Woods wanted to play on, even though Howell had the momentum. Woods was 2 under for the day, and neither of them made a bogey.

"We both played well," Woods said. "He made a couple of more birdies than I did. He played well, and he's advancing."

McIlroy, the No. 1 player in the world, built a 2-up lead early in the match until Lowry rallied and grabbed the moment by chipping in for birdie on the par-3 12th and then ripping a fairway metal to within a few feet for a conceded eagle on the 13th.

Lowry missed a short par putt on the 14th, only for McIlroy to give away the next hole with a tee shot into the desert and bunker shot that flew over the 15th green and into a cactus. But the two-time major champion hung tough, coming up with a clutch birdie on the 16th to stay in the game.

McIlroy nearly holed his bunker on the 18th, and Lowry followed with a steady shot out to 4 feet and sank the putt.

For McIlroy, more questions are sure to follow him to Florida for his road to the Masters. He now has played only 54 holes in the first two months of the season, missing the cut in Abu Dhabi and losing in the first round at Dove Mountain.

#### **Auto Racing**

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. - Kevin Harvick won the first Daytona 500 qualifying race on Thursday to make it 2 for 2 at Daytona International Speedway, where he also won an exhibition race last weekend. It positions Harvick, the 2007 Daytona 500 winner, as a top contender in Sunday's season-opening "Great American Race.'

Kyle Busch won the second duel to give Toyota its first victory of Speedweeks and snap Chevrolet's dominance. Harvick took the new Chevrolet SS to Victory Lane twice, and Danica Patrick put it on the Daytona 500 pole in time trials.

NEW YORK — The only trade involving Dwight Howard came last summer. The potent scorers that moved did so long ago.

There was no eye-catching activity left for deadline day, resulting in minor deals Thursday to the disappointment of those hoping for a frenzy.

Josh Smith stayed put and the Boston Celtics' core stayed together, leaving J.J. Redick, dealt to Milwaukee, as the biggest name to be traded. There were nine moves, nothing approaching a blockbuster

and none to jump-start the Lakers. Players such as James Harden and Rudy Gay were traded far before the deadline, but with teams perhaps fearful of new penalties for the biggest spenders, Thursday was mostly quiet.

**COMBINE** 

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is training at St. Vincent's Sports Performance in Indian-

"I really wanted to be viewed as a competitor, well-respected and a well-mannered guy who wants to help out the organization as much as he can," said Johnson, who played in January's East-West Shrine All-Star game. "I want the scouts to realthey have a guy coming in for business and not a guy that just wants to be around.

"I want to make a team, I want to make the 53-man roster, I want to make every fan and support group for that team say, 'I'm glad we've got this guy.' I'll do whatever it takes."

Using that attitude, Johnson enters the event with plenty of confidence.

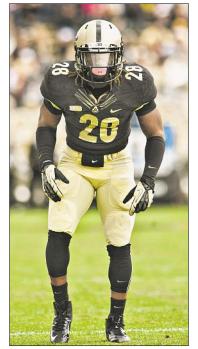
"I feel like going in, it's just football," he said. "There's nothing to be afraid of, there's

nothing to get overwhelmed about. You can't stress about it. Just go out and do what you do best. I've been doing it the last 16-17 years, and everything should go well."

Johnson finished his final third Boilermakers in tackles (65) and ranked second behind Ricardo Allen with three interceptions, including one for a touchdown.

When the 5-foot-11, 195pound Johnson remembers his college career, playing in backout. Purdue played in the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl following his junior season and the Heart of Dallas Bowl this past year.

'We were at a point in time where we had to win our last three games, and eventually we came out with the wins against Iowa, Illinois and Indiana,' Johnson said of his past season. That's what I'll remember the most, making those bowl games the last two years. It's amaz-



Former Purdue cornerback Josh Johnson hopes to turn some heads at this weekend's NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis. **BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER** 

### **MILLER**

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Sotelo knew Miller, who is committed to dive for Florida State next year, possessed.

"I really thought that he was capable of that," Sotelo said. "I believe he's got tons of potential. He hasn't maxed it out, even now. Going to Florida State is going to be a great opportunity for him.'

Miller now has his sights set on giving Lafayette Jeff's boys swimming and diving program its first state champion since Gary Thomas won the 100- and 200yard freestyles in 1966.

He spent the summer outscor-

#### **IHSAA STATE FINALS**

**At IU Natatorium** 

When: 6 p.m. Friday (swimming preliminaries); 9 a.m. Saturday (diving preliminaries); 1 p.m. Saturday (consolations and finals) Tickets: \$8 per session, \$12 for both days If you go: IU Natatorium is at

901 W. New York Street in Indianapolis

ing LaPorte senior Josh Arndt, the defending state champion. 'I definitely had a lot of confidence coming into this year," Miller said. "I have beaten the state champion twice the past three times I went against him. And I went to junior nationals, which he didn't qualify for."

Miller admittedly entered the finals nervous a year ago.
This season, like his arthritic

pain, the nerves have not been a factor. Saturday will test that, but Miller believes he is ready for the challenge.

"I am going to have to go in with the same composure and stay mentally tough, some things I've worked on in the past year," Miller said. "I read some books on other people that have been on the top and pushed a little more to get there.