

PURDUE MEN'S BASKETBALL

# PRIDE, DEFENSE

## measure Davis' leadership



JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

Coach Matt Painter recently called Rapheal Davis "one of the best defenders we've had here in the past 10 years."

## Junior captain posts straight double-doubles

By Nathan Baird  
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**S**eated at the postgame press conference after Purdue's 92-85 victory over Rutgers on Thursday, Rapheal Davis could barely contain his indignation.

Purdue had piled up a season high for points, maintained its second-place standing in the Big Ten Conference and moved one win closer to an NCAA tournament berth. But The Boilermakers' junior captain couldn't comprehend the lack of focus that allowed Rutgers to cut a one-time 20-point Purdue lead to six in the final minute.

"Excuse my language," Davis said, before suggesting the Boilermakers suffered from a metaphorical lack of bladder control.

Forgive Davis for wanting to get his point across. The first two seasons of his career featured more losses than wins and zero

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**SUNDAY'S GAME**  
Purdue (19-9, 11-4) at Ohio State (20-8, 9-6)

Time: 7:30 p.m.  
TV: BTN  
Radio: WYCM (95.7)

AT JCONLINE.COM

**Nathan Baird's blog:** Vince Edwards has been cleared to play tonight at Ohio State



SAM KING/JOURNAL & COURIER

Central Catholic senior Emily Burks cuts down the net after scoring nine points in the final 1:44 to help Central Catholic win the Class A semistate.

CLASS A SEMISTATE

## Central Catholic wins semistate in dramatic finish

By Sam King  
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**CROWN POINT** — Three days after the death of beloved Central Catholic girls assistant basketball coach Jeff Dienhart, his words still resonated.

"Keep going. Keep fighting. Keep battling."

Down eight with 50.7 seconds left, the message printed on the back of the Knights' shooting shirts played out on the basketball court at Crown Point High School.

Central Catholic outscored defending state champion Oregon-Davis 11-0 over those final 50.7 seconds to conclude a miraculous 47-44 Class A north semistate victory.

**CLASS A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Central Catholic (23-6) vs. Barr-Reeve (28-0)**  
Saturday  
At Bankers Life Fieldhouse

Time: 10:30 a.m.  
Tickets: \$15

**If you go:** The fieldhouse is at 125 S. Pennsylvania St. in Indianapolis.

"This was the most important game to Jeff of this season. He stressed that all year. We knew we had to win for him," said senior Emily Burks, who scored nine points in the final 1:44.

The last two years, this was where CC's journey ended. Semistate losses to Fort Wayne Canterbury in 2013 and Oregon-Davis a season ago motivated the Knights to get past this point. So did Dienhart, whose bucket list included a state championship.

In last season's loss to the Bobcats, Dienhart left the hospital and arrived at Crown Point in time to see the final game of the season. When years of battling cystic fibrosis heavily weighed down on his way of living, the 44-year-old returned to the sidelines this season because he believed this team would win the Class A state title.

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PURDUE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

# Tenth straight loss deposits Boilermakers in basement

By Mike Carmin  
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The reset button has already been used by Sharon Versyp.

The ninth-year coach of the Purdue women's basketball team probably did it a long time ago, but the end of the regular season makes it official.

"Do we like what we did this season? No. Could we control everything? No. Could we control other things? Yes," Versyp said following Saturday's 61-56 loss to Michigan State at Mackey Arena. "You don't have a choice. Anything can happen."

For the second time in program history and the first time in 31 years, the Boilermakers finished last in the Big Ten standings. Purdue ends the regular sea-

son on a 10-game losing streak and the only thing left is next week's conference tournament in Hoffman Estates, Ill.

"You go into the tournament and trust and believe that we can go in and win this thing. I fully do," said senior Whitney Bays, who totaled 17 points and 10 rebounds.

It's a monumental task to win five games in five days for a team which hasn't been effective shooting from the perimeter, recently endured turnover and rebounding problems and struggled with execution in late-game situations.

"We have to go out there and battle," senior Liza Clemons said.

Versyp will point to what transpired in 2008 when the Boilermakers needed to win three games in three days to earn the automatic bid to the NCAA tourna-

ment. They beat Indiana, Iowa and Illinois that year.

The difference? Purdue was the No. 3 seed seven years ago but start this year's tournament as the No. 14 seed.

"Is it a hard task? Absolutely. Everybody has to be fresh and giving great energy all the time," Versyp said.

For stretches Saturday, that's what the Boilermakers did. They took a page out of Illinois' defensive playbook and trapped the Spartans out of their zone defense, helping force 20 turnovers.

"It had a big impact," said Clemons, who had 11 points. "We got after it. It was big."

However, for every turnover Purdue forced, it gave one back. The Boilermakers committed 21, leading to 26 points for Michigan State.

WEDNESDAY'S GAME

**Big Ten Tournament**  
Sears Centre, Hoffman Estates, Ill.  
Wisconsin, Indiana or Penn State vs. Purdue (10-19)  
Time: 8:30 p.m.  
Radio: WBPE (95.3)

Tori Jankoska delivered the knockout punch when she stole Bridget Perry's pass and scored a layup with 14 seconds to play, providing the final margin. The Boilermakers needed a 3-pointer but hadn't hit one all day. Jankoska, who scored the Spartans' final nine points to finish with 26, didn't give them a chance.

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## PURDUE ROUNDUP

# Dias wins Big Ten title; divers help Boilermaker swimmers finish fourth

Staff Reports

Senior Lyam Dias captured the 200-meter breaststroke title in the final race of his Purdue career Saturday night at the Big Ten Men's Swimming and Diving Championships hosted by Iowa.

Diam set a pool record with his winning time of 1:53.92, Purdue's first swimming Big Ten title since 2009. Teammate Marat Amaltdinov was third in 1:54.33, breaking his own Purdue freshman record.

That duo and Purdue's diving squad led the Boilermakers to a fourth-place team finish with 401.5 points, 19.5 more than Wisconsin. The result matches Purdue's best finish, most recently accomplished in 2010. Michigan dominated the championships with 760 points for its fifth consecutive title.

Steele Johnson's third runner-up finish of the championships led five Boilermakers in the top 10 of men's platform diving. Johnson's 510.20 points trailed only James Conner of Indiana, who scored 532.45.

Purdue's Nathan Cox was third with 463.35. Add in Jamie Bissett's fifth-place finish, Sean Mokhtari's eighth-place effort and the 10th-place finish of Alec Back, and the Boilermakers earned 65 points to vault into fourth place.

The Boilermaker Aquatic Center is up next in the rotation to host the Big Ten Championships and will host the conference meet the final weekend of February 2016.

## Baseball

Five consecutive batters reached base safely for CSU Bakersfield in both the ninth and 11th innings as the Roadrunners scored six unanswered runs to defeat



PURDUE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Purdue pitcher Matt Frawley threw seven shutout innings Saturday.

Purdue 6-4 Saturday morning on the final day of the Phoenix Muni Classic.

Behind seven shutout innings from Matt Frawley, the Boilermakers (4-7) carried a 4-0 lead into the bottom of the ninth. But Purdue did not record the first out of the inning until CSUB (6-6) had already tied the game thanks to five consecutive hits.

Alex Lyons (0-1) retired both batters he faced in the ninth inning after entering the game with the go-ahead run on third base and no outs. Following a pop fly to short left field, the inning came to an end on a strike-'em-out, tag-'em-out double play when CSUB inexplicably tried to execute a suicide squeeze bunt with one out and an 0-2 count on the hitter. Two batters earlier, Ryan Grotjohn tied the game with a two-run triple to left center.

But Lyons was unable to record the third out of the 11th inning. Jeff Evak made a diving effort to catch a sinking humpback line drive off the bat of Grotjohn, but

was unable to come up with it. Kris Cayton followed with an RBI double to right center. A pinch hit RBI single for Soloman Williams followed.

Frawley surrendered only three singles and one walk over seven innings. He retired 15 of 16 batters from the second through seventh innings.

McCutcheon graduate Cody Strong delivered a two-out, two-run single in the seventh inning to extend Purdue's lead to 4-0 and chase CSUB starter Nick Rogowski, who struck out eight over 6⅔ innings. Rogowski retired nine batters in a row after the Boilers took a 1-0 lead in the fourth inning on a squeeze bunt by Brett Carlson.

A double into the right field corner from Jack Picchiotti followed by consecutive walks to Evak and Harry Shipley loaded the bases in the seventh. Michael Vilarado's fielder's choice drove in a run before Strong's single.

Purdue returns to action Friday when it opens a series at Oklahoma.

The first pitch Friday in Norman is set for 7 p.m. ET.

## Women's tennis

Strong doubles play, combined with dominating singles lifted the 21st-ranked Boilermakers to a 5-2 Big Ten victory at Iowa.

For the fourth time this season, the Boilermakers (5-2, 1-0 Big Ten) claimed the doubles point with victories at Nos. 1 and 2. Lynda Xepoleas and Natalia Davila struck first, cruising past Hawkeye duo Morven McCulloch and Zoe Douglas 8-2. Tess Bernard-Feigenbaum and Daniela Vidal used an 8-4 decision over Shelby Talcott and Anastasia Reimchen to claim their ninth win.

Three consecutive singles victories came in dominating fashion from Krisztina Kapitany and Vidal, with the clinch coming at No. 3 courtesy of Xepoleas. Kapitany (5-2) rolled past Douglas at No. 6, 6-1, 6-2, followed by a 6-0, 6-3 showing from Vidal against Talcott at No. 1. Xepoleas posted a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Reimchen for her seventh win of the spring season.

The final point for Purdue came from Nicole Robinson at No. 5, who outlasted Katie Zordani 7-6 (4), 6-7 (3), 1-0 (7).

## Men's tennis

The Boilermakers defeated Morehead State and Dayton by identical 6-1 scores at the Schwartz Tennis Center, defeating both Morehead State and Dayton, 6-1.

Purdue (4-6) won the doubles point in both matches, with the No. 1 team of Diego Acosta and Ricky Medinilla going 2-0.

The top five singles players won seven of 10 matches in straight sets.

shot, keep shooting," Onken said. "Some of our shooters were getting down on themselves. I said, 'Keep shooting. They'll fall.' It happened. Burks hit that shot, Angela Tharp hit a shot. We started hitting our free throws and everything came together."

With a solid defensive showing, DeVault elected to let his team make one last stop after Onken's two free throws put the Knights ahead by three with 7.6 seconds left.

Oregon-Davis never got a shot off, and the CC student section spilled on to the court.

In a week of heartbreak, it seemed the world was about to deliver a crushing reminder to a group of teenage basketball players that life isn't always fair.

The problem was, these girls would have none of it.

"We gave as much heart as we had," Burks said. "We showed our heart, put it together and earned the points that we got. I am very proud of our team for that."

So is Jeff Dienhart.

# DAVIS

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NCAA tournament appearances. That second goal remains in reach, but only if Purdue doesn't stumble in its final three regular season games.

Besides colorful language, Davis is finding new ways to push the Boilermakers back to success. He posted his second straight double-double in Thursday's victory and is averaging 11.5 points, 8.5 rebounds and 4.3 assists during Purdue's four-game winning streak.

"You can tell that he's hungry," senior guard Jon Octeus said. "He's experienced a rough couple of years in his college career. We have an opportunity to experience something special, and he's ready for that. He's hooked up."

Prior to the winning streak, Davis had just one double-digit rebounding performance all season. He grabbed nine against Nebraska on Feb. 15 and followed that with 10 against both Indiana and Rutgers. A quarter of his rebounds in that stretch came on offense.

Davis credited the increased boards presence to "just playing hard — doing whatever it took for my team to get more possessions, get more chances and take away chances for second-shot opportunities for other teams."

Purdue coach Matt Painter recently called Davis "one of the best defenders we've had here in the past 10 years." Davis initially balked at what he called a "bold" statement, but appreciated the confidence Painter has invested in him.

That should continue down the stretch, beginning with Sunday's game at Ohio State. Davis was a big reason why Buckeyes star freshman guard D'Angelo Russell had to work so hard for his 20 points in Purdue's 60-58 victory at Mackey Arena on Feb. 4.

Just about every other star guard in the Big Ten Conference has also struggled to break out against Davis — a self-described "non-defensive player" when he ar-



JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL &amp; COURIER

Purdue junior captain Raphael Davis posted his second straight double-double in Thursday's game.

rived in West Lafayette.

"He's one of the best, if not the best, perimeter defensive players out there," Painter said. "Every night, he takes that on as a challenge — and look who he's guarded. I think one guy all season in Big Ten play has gotten him: (Penn State guard) D.J. Newbill. Outside of that, I think he's gotten the upper hand on everybody he's guarded."

Davis said he loves those challenging defensive assignments. They fit his ultra-competitive nature.

So do the handful of fiery halftime or post-game locker room talks he's delivered this season. He understands that, due to his tenure and captaincy, the Boilermakers listen when he speaks.

"Sometimes I'm more cutthroat than I should be," Davis said. "At the time, I felt like everybody needed to know how I felt. I felt like we should have done a lot better. It wasn't a good game to watch. It wasn't a good game to play in towards the end. We should have been better than that and I just wanted everybody to know."

Painter mentioned Davis, along with Octeus and A.J. Hammons, as one of the players the rest of the Boilermakers are trying to win for this season. The past two weeks are evidence that Davis doesn't plan to just tag along.

"He's playing like a man," Octeus said. "We've got to just keep it going, keep him clicking. He's one of our leaders, so that's what we expect of him."

## PURDUE AT OHIO STATE

Tipoff: 7:30 p.m.

TV: BTN

Radio: WYCM 95.7/Purdue Radio Network

PURDUE (19-9, 11-4)

Coach: Matt Painter

Pos.	Player	Ht	Points per game
C	A.J. Hammons	7-0	11.3
F	Basil Smotherman	6-6	2.9
G	Jon Octeus	6-4	9.6
G	Rapheal Davis	6-5	10.9
G	Dakota Mathias	6-4	4.3
G (key sub)	Kendall Stephens	6-6	9.4

OHIO STATE (20-8, 9-6)

Coach: Thad Matta

Pos.	Player	Ht	Points per game
F	Jae'Sean Tate	6-4	8.9
F	Sam Thompson	6-7	10.4
C	Amir Williams	6-11	6.6
G	D'Angelo Russell	6-5	18.7
G	Shannon Scott	6-1	7.8
F (key sub)	Marc Loving	6-7	10.7

### THREE THINGS TO KNOW

» **Lineup up:** Purdue is 17-0 when attempting more free throws than its opponent. It was the deciding factor in the Boilermakers' 60-58 win over Ohio State at Mackey Arena on Feb. 4. Purdue attempted 27 free throws to the Buckeyes' nine.

» **Freshman star:** Purdue forced Russell to take 18 shots to get his 20 points in the first meeting. The front-runner for Big Ten Conference Freshman of the Year has tailed off a bit lately, averaging 13.5 points on 34 percent shooting over his past four games. Russell left Thursday's win over Nebraska with a leg cramp, but Matta said he'll play Sunday.

» **Edwards cleared:** Purdue freshman forward Vince Edwards has been cleared to play after passing his concussion test prior to Saturday's practice. The three-time Big Ten Freshman of the Week hadn't practiced since Monday and missed Thursday's win over Rutgers. — Nathan Baird

# CC

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His condition worsened over the season until the players were informed Wednesday morning of his passing.

"The whole game we were stressing that we were playing for Jeff," junior point guard Cameron Onken said. "We had been talking about having heart, having dedication and just fighting like he fought, even in his last days. I definitely think that is what pushed us to have that motivation at the end."

This time, there were tears after the semistate game. Different tears.

"Tears of joy," Onken called them. "I've never actually cried tears of joy before."

Until the final minute, the Knights had solely relied on defense.

At halftime, CC was 5-for-31 from the field. The Knights finished 15 of 64 (23.4 percent). But they kept going, kept fighting and kept battling.

Burks made two free

throws with 50.7 seconds remaining to cut the lead to 44-38. CC stole the inbounds pass and Onken made two free throws, cutting the deficit to four. Eighteen seconds later Burks swished a 3 from the right wing, and the Knights started to feel the comeback.

Burks scored and drew a foul with 21.9 seconds left as CC had turned a 44-36 deficit into a 45-44 lead in less than 29 seconds of game time.

"We told them during a timeout that you've got to keep on fighting," CC coach Craig DeVault said. "These girls kept on battling throughout the game until the final buzzer."

Onken finished with 17 points and nine rebounds, Burks scored 15 to go with seven boards and Angela Tharp provided eight points. Those three combined to go 12-for-51, but it was enough.

With Bobcats junior Alexandria Minix fouled out, CC thought it could exploit having a more experienced lineup. Oregon-Davis turned the ball over eight times in the

fourth quarter. Without Minix and 6-foot-2 center Alexandria Bope, who also was saddled with foul trouble, Taylor Kranenburg did her best to carry her squad.

The junior guard scored 28 points. Oregon-Davis couldn't overcome its 30 turnovers.

"The youth of us came out," Bobcats coach Terry Minix said. "We didn't have our regular point guard in there and everybody else that doesn't really handle the ball was in there and had to handle the ball. It put a little more pressure on these kids and that is something they haven't been through."

Jenny Harkcom's four steals led a stingy Central Catholic defense. Harkcom also was 2-for-3 shooting, the only player who shot better than 33.3 percent for her team.

The Knights trailed most of the afternoon due to poor shooting. Once shots started falling, CC was in perfect position to punch its ticket to Indianapolis.

"Coach stresses that if you don't make your first