

MSR: MONTGOMERYSPORTSREPORT

The Paper of Montgomery County

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INSIDE MSR:

- **SAGAMORE BASKETBALL STANDINGS**
- **BRENT WHEAT**

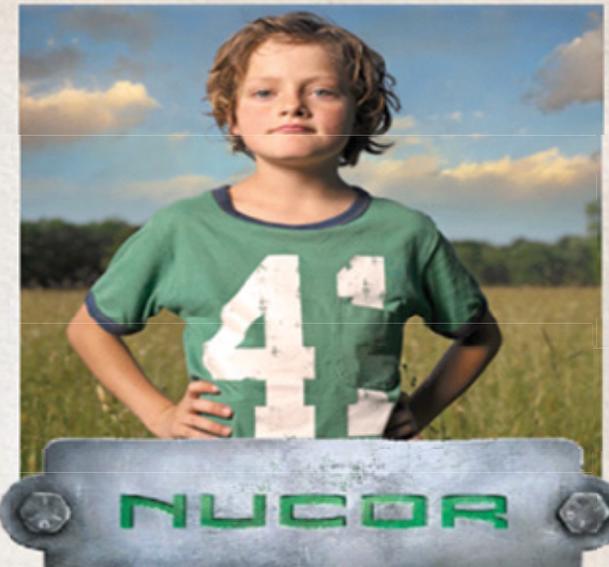
Sagamore **Girls Basketball Standings**

	CONF	AG	OA	DA	AM	Streak
 Tri-West	2- 0	6- 1	64.6	47.4	17.1	Won 2
 Danville	1- 0	6- 3	55.8	45.4	10.3	Lost 2
 Lebanon	1- 0	4- 4	47.1	50.8	-3.6	Won 2
 Frankfort	1- 0	3- 6	43.6	53.3	-9.8	Won 1
 Southmont	0- 0	2- 6	41.9	50.1	-8.3	Lost 2
 Western Boone	0- 1	6- 3	59.1	50.4	8.7	Won 1
 North Montgomery	0- 1	1- 9	33.0	51.8	-18.8	Lost 9
 Crawfordsville	0- 3	2- 7	38.9	59.6	-20.7	Lost 4

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Sagamore **Boys Basketball Standings**

	CONF	AG	OA	DA	AM	Streak
 Crawfordsville	1- 0	3- 1	56.0	50.8	5.3	Won 3
 Southmont	1- 0	1- 5	39.8	59.0	-19.2	Lost 1
 Tri-West	0- 0	1- 1	63.5	54.5	9.0	Lost 1
 Danville	0- 0	1- 2	57.3	61.0	-3.7	Won 1
 Frankfort	0- 0	1- 3	41.3	53.5	-12.3	Lost 3
 Western Boone	0- 0	0- 0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Lost 7
 Lebanon	0- 1	2- 2	51.0	51.0	0.0	Won 1
 North Montgomery	0- 1	0- 3	37.7	50.7	-13.0	Lost 7

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MSR: SPORTSTALK

Out in the Open- There's Bears In Our Hair, Again!

If you hadn't seen the news reports last week, it would appear that Indiana experienced our first bear-vehicle accident in about 150 years.

We're basing that assumption on two things. First, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources confirms that a car hit a bear on Interstate 64 near New Albany around 8 p.m. on Sunday, November 18. Secondly, when Indiana was a young state and bears were still reasonably common, it seems likely there was probably the occasional bear-stagecoach or bear-Conestoga wagon traffic accidents. Unfortunately, police reports from that era, written on bark slabs, have largely disappeared.

The New Albany bear was never found but hair and footprints at the scene, along with eyewitness statements, allowed the DNR to make a positive identification of the animal involved. This incident does raise some intriguing questions for Indiana outdoors enthusiasts.

Two years ago we followed the tale of a young male bear that moved north from Kentucky, swam the Ohio River and briefly holed up in the city limits of Corydon. At one point he was surrounded near the Walmart store like some sort of hairy Jesse James until the authorities pulled back. Seizing the moment and taking the hint, Mr. Bear headed east and was eventually witnessed heading into the 50,000-acre Big Oaks

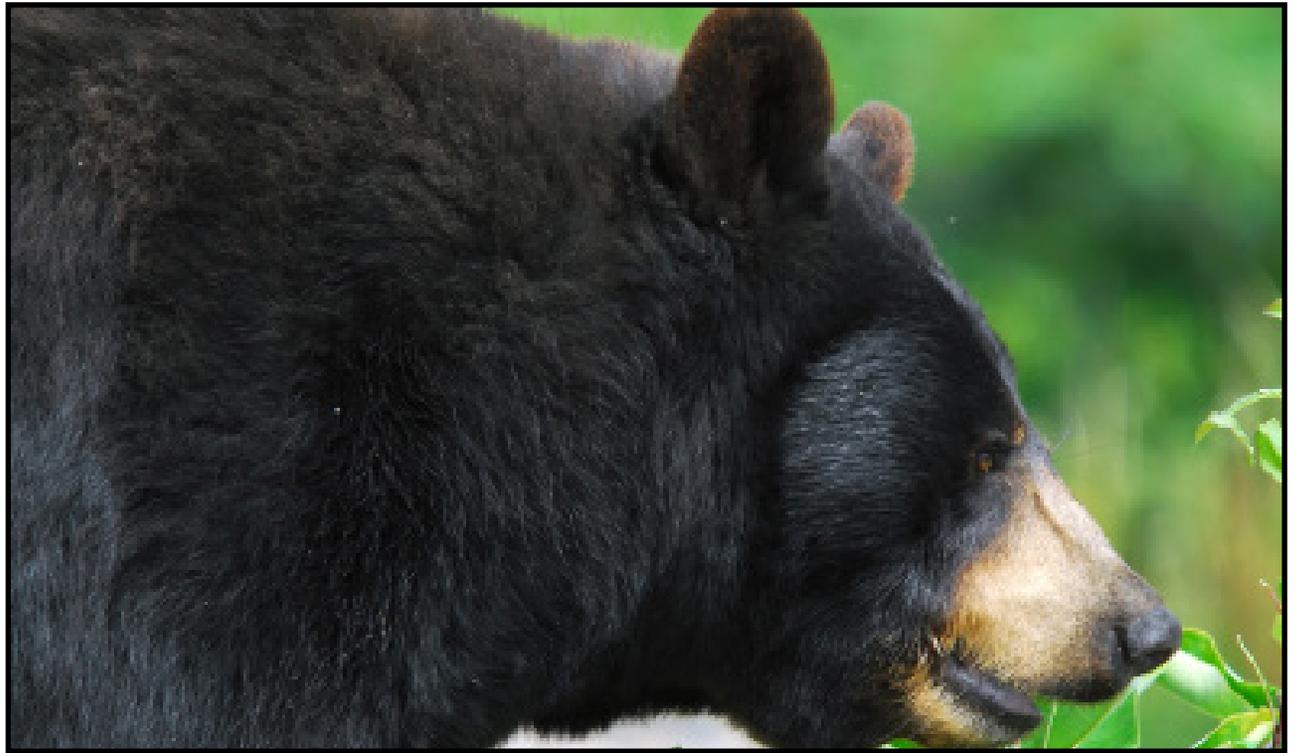


BRENT WHEAT
Out in the Open

National Wildlife Refuge near Madison, Indiana.

If you're not familiar, Big Oaks is an "overlay" refuge operating on a 50-year lease from the U.S. Army on the former Jefferson Proving Ground. Most areas of the refuge have very little human visitation because of the minor problem of live bombs, artillery rounds and other explosives lying around. Countless munitions were dropped and fired onto the area during five decades of military testing and a portion of these were 'duds,' meaning there is still plenty of stuff that could go "BOOM" if you inadvertently step on or kick it.

However, it is paradise for critters and the largest single tract of 'undisturbed' land in Indiana. It is completely surrounded by a tall fence and between restrictive federal visitation rules and the real danger of instantly getting blown to bits, not too many people visit the area. For those reasons, no one really knows for sure what happened to



"the bear."

In the last two years I've heard multiple credible rumors from people who report the bear was still happily living in the Big Oaks. Regardless, with the new confirmed bear sighting, there are interesting new possibilities.

First off, perhaps the "Big Oaks" bear is re-tracing his steps home. Biologist have pointed out that young male bears like to do the same things that teenage human males do, but there is a serious lack of female bear companionship at Big Oaks. Thus our resident bear might be out looking for love in all the wrong places – of course, he certainly wasn't looking both ways before he crossed the road.

The second theory is that this is a new, differ-

ent bear following in the footsteps of the first. This likewise makes considerable sense as whatever general route of travel the first Kentucky bear followed up from the Bluegrass region would likewise be appealing, for similar reasons, to another wandering bear. Now let's throw in the idea that the second bear is female, she survived the accident and decides to head east...

With a little luck and some bruin romance, Indiana has a new Hoosier-born bear in the spring of 2019! More likely would be two native cubs, as that is the common number of black bear offspring when conditions are favorable.

Regardless of what happens, this latest incident reaffirms what wildlife biologists have been saying

for years: we'll probably see some large mammals reclaim certain portions of their former range in our state. Considering this is our third confirmed bear sighting in recent years (the first was a vacationing Michigan bear near Michigan City a few years ago. He made a nuisance of himself and ended up in the big garbage dump in the sky), it seems likely bruins will soon officially be considered residents. We've also had confirmed Hoosier mountain lion and timber wolf sightings in recent years. Within 10 or 20 years, all of these could be a regular part of the Hoosier ecosystem.

Having hiked and tent-camped in areas where these animals are common, their presence adds a certain zest to the experience and a feeling

of true wilderness that makes the adventure much more exhilarating. Their presence also gives a thrill when you know the next bend in the trail could put you face-to-face with something bigger than yourself that might not take kindly to the interruption. However, I look forward to the day where these magnificent animals add to the wondrous experience of our Indiana outdoors.

They'll make the day so special for me...and my large-caliber handgun.

There are, after all, limits to inter-species harmony.

Brent Wheat is a familiar face to Montgomery County readers. His weekly outdoor column, "Out in the Open," now appears in The Paper of Montgomery County. He can be reached at editor@wildindiana.com.