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## QB streak, games and events



Purdue Boilermakers at Michigan Wolverines

# Purdue QB streak in NFL and memorable Boilermaker moments

By the time you are reading this, the 212th Purdue-Indiana basketball game will have been played.

Thursday's matchup in Assembly Hall will likely not crack anyone's list of the greatest games in the series. The Big Ten Conference's two youngest teams have played like it all season. Impressive one night, puzzlingly out of kilter a few days later.

While Boilermaker and Hoosier fans look forward to the day when, as Purdue coach Matt Painter likes to say, their favorite teams get old and stay old, let's look back at 10 memorable games in one of college basketball's greatest rivalries.

March 8, 1969: Purdue 120, Indiana 96

More than 50 years later, this remains the highest winning total in series history.

Best games in Purdue-IU basketball series. Rick Mount scored 40 points and backcourt mate Billy Keller had 31.

The regular season finale closed out a 13-1 Big Ten championship season for the Boilermakers and started them on the path to an NCAA runner-up finish to Lew Alcindor (later known as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and UCLA.

Feb. 22, 1975: Indiana 83, Purdue 82

If not for the broken arm suffered by All-America forward Scott May in this game, perhaps Bob Knight coaches the Hoosiers to back-to-back undefeated national championships.

Purdue had lost 103-71 in Bloomington on Jan. 25 but had two chances in the final 11 seconds to record the upset of the 1974-75 season. Indiana instead improved to 26-0 and clinched its third consecutive Big Ten title.

Steve Green led IU with 29 points on 13 of 15 shooting. All five Purdue starters scored in double figures, with center John Garrett contributing 20 points.

A few weeks later, May was limited to seven minutes in a 92-90 loss to Kentucky in the NCAA Mideast Regional.

Feb. 16, 1976: Indiana 74, Purdue 71

May got his revenge, hitting the two game-clinching free throws with two seconds remaining after Eugene Parker had brought Purdue within 72-71 with four seconds to play.

May finished with a game-high 26 points for the top-ranked Hoosiers, while Parker had 23 for the Boilermakers.

March 21, 1979: Indiana 53, Purdue 52

Jerry Sichting's shot rimmed out at the buzzer, giving the Hoosiers the NIT championship at Madison Square Garden. Butch Carter scored the game-winning basket with five seconds remaining.

Joe Barry Carroll, who led Purdue with 14 points, and the Boilermakers would earn a bigger victory 357 days later.

March 13, 1980: Purdue 76, Indiana 69

It was 40 minutes of sweet revenge at the NCAA Mideast Regional in Lexington, Ky., as Purdue built a 19-point lead in the second half.

Television cameras caught IU coach Bob Knight with head in hands during that long second half, which saw Keith Edmonson and Drake Morris outshine Carroll with 20 points apiece. Two days later, Purdue dispatched Duke to earn its second, and most recent, Final Four berth.

Jan. 31, 1981: Indiana 69, Purdue 61

Isiah Thomas scored a game-high 26 points, but his reported "sucker punch" of Purdue guard Roosevelt Barnes (future guardian of Boilermaker All-American Caleb Swanigan)



**KENNY THOMPSON**  
Columnist

and its fallout is what makes this game memorable.

A week later, Purdue won the rematch 68-66 in Mackey Arena. Purdue fans were even harsher toward Knight than usual, and the temperamental coach seethed for weeks.

On March 8, Knight opened his coach's show by saying he had invited Purdue athletic director George King to be a guest.

Since King hadn't been able to appear,

Knight said he had a friend at least as qualified as King to discuss basketball.

"Jack," a donkey wearing a Purdue cap, appeared on camera a few feet away from Knight.

Feb. 23, 1985: Purdue 72, Indiana 62

"The Chair." Those two words sum up the most bizarre game in this series.

The game was only five minutes old when Knight was ejected for throwing a chair across the playing floor. Purdue guard Steve Reid was at the free throw line, preparing to shoot six technical free throws, when the chair sailed in front of him.

Feb. 26, 1987: Purdue 75, Indiana 64

It was a battle of Top 10 teams in Mackey Arena, the Hoosiers at No. 3 and the Boilermakers sixth.

Purdue led most of the game, getting 18 points from Troy Lewis. Teammate Todd Mitchell, who added 17, summed up the atmosphere this way: "It's like going to the Super Bowl or something like that as far as intensity goes."

Feb. 26, 1996: Purdue 74, Indiana 72

Feb. 18, 1997: Purdue 89, Indiana 87 (OT)

Chad Austin hit not one but two game-winning shots in Assembly Hall. His 3-pointer with 13.7 seconds left in the 1996 game helped Purdue earn its third consecutive outright Big Ten Conference championship.

One year later, Austin waited until almost literally the last second – 0.6 seconds to be exact – to stick another dagger in the Hoosiers. The shot also gave Gene Keady his 400th career victory.

COVID fallout

Purdue basketball's game in Mackey Arena against Penn State on Sunday will end a 24-day stretch between home games.

That's because COVID issues at Nebraska led to the postponement of its Jan. 5 game at Mackey. The game has yet to be rescheduled but the Big Ten may have hinted at a possible date Tuesday.

Purdue's game at Ohio State, originally set for Jan. 27, was moved to Tuesday in Columbus. That change means Purdue will play six of its first nine conference games away from Mackey Arena.

Coaching carousel

Several media sources reported that former Indiana football standout Mark Hagen is returning to the Purdue coaching staff and will oversee the defensive line.

Goldandblack.com reports that Hagen is the first to have to coaching stints at Purdue and Indiana. Hagen served under Joe Tiller and Danny Hope from 2000 to 2010 before returning to his alma mater in 2011

Hagen's two stints in Bloomington were interrupted from 2013-15 when he was on the Texas A&M staff. Hagen spent the 2020 season at Texas, serving as associate head coach/defense and coaching the defensive line.

Hagen is a welcome addition to a Purdue defensive staff that has lacked stability. During his first stint at Purdue, Hagen coached a pair of first-round NFL draft picks (Ryan Kerrigan, Anthony Spencer) as well as future pros Kawann Short, Alex Magee, Stanford Keglari and Craig Terrill.

As unusual as Hagen's career moves have been, he is topped by a member of the Indiana Football Hall of Fame.

Bernie Crimmins' coaching career path from the mid 1940s to 1964 took him from Notre Dame to Indiana, back to Notre Dame and then to Purdue.

Crimmins made Notre Dame history by becoming the first football player to earn letters at three different positions (right halfback, fullback and guard) from 1939-41 under coaches Elmer Layden and Frank Leahy. After a distinguished Navy service during World War II, Crimmins joined Leahy's staff and remained for six seasons.

Indiana lured him away in 1952 but Crimmins was unable to turn around the Hoosiers over the next five seasons, winning 13 of 45 games. Crimmins returned to Notre Dame for two seasons under Terry Brennan before joining Jack Mollenkopf's staff at Purdue in 1959.

Crimmins served under Mollenkopf for six seasons before entering private business. Crimmins was elected to the Indiana Football Hall of Fame in 1975 and died at the age of 75 in 1993.

And then there were two

Drew Brees and rookie tight end Brycen Hopkins are the only Boilermakers remaining in the NFL playoffs after wild card weekend.

Brees, who turned 42 on Friday, is seeking to lead the New Orleans Saints to their second Super Bowl victory. After missing four games due to multiple broken ribs and a collapsed lung, Brees looked close to his old self in the Saints' playoff opening win against the Chicago Bears. He completed 28 of 39 passes for 265 yards and two touchdowns in a 21-9 victory.

Hopkins has been buried behind a deep tight end corps, appearing in just two games with no receptions.

Ryan Kerrigan and David Steinmetz saw their seasons end with the Washington Football Team's 31-23 loss to Tampa Bay. Dennis Kelly and the Tennessee Titans were eliminated by the Baltimore Ravens, 20-13.

Coaching stability

Matt Painter moved past Montgomery County legend Ward "Piggy" Lambert into second place on Purdue's all-time games coached list last week at Michigan State.

Painter's 524th game on the Boilermaker bench trails only his mentor and predecessor Gene Keady, who coached 782 games at Purdue. During the past 40 years under Keady and Painter, the Boilermakers have compiled an 857-448 record for a .656 winning percentage.

But that's not even the longest two-coach streak in the Big Ten. From 1976 to the present, Jud Heathcote and Tom Izzo have combined for a 976-465 mark, a .677 winning percent-

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age.

Maybe it's no coincidence then that the two programs have combined to win outright or share 22 Big Ten regular season titles (Michigan State 12, Purdue 10) from 1976 to the present day.

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In the aftermath of what appears to be the final game of Drew Brees' NFL career, Indianapolis radio personality Jake Query wrote on Twitter that Purdue has had a quarterback playing professional football since 1956.

Actually, the streak began in 1957 when Len Dawson made his debut with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

If Brees does retire, as many media reports suggest, it will be up to Detroit's David Blough to extend the streak until Purdue coach Jeff Brohm finds the next great Boilermaker quarterback. In the aftermath of what appears to be the final game of Drew Brees' NFL career, Indianapolis radio personality Jake Query wrote on Twitter that Purdue has had a quarterback playing professional football since 1956.

Actually, the streak began in 1957 when Len Dawson made his debut with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Dawson and fellow Pro Football Hall of Fame member Bob Griese are responsible for the first 24 years of the 64-year streak.

Dawson barely left the bench during his first five professional seasons, three in Pittsburgh and two for Paul Brown at Cleveland. Fortunately for Dawson, his old quarterback coach at Purdue, Hank Stram, was looking for a quarterback to lead the then-Dallas Texans in the AFL.

Stram and Dawson guided Dallas to the AFL championship in 1962, followed by titles in 1966 and 1969 as the renamed Kansas City Chiefs. The latter year saw Dawson win Super Bowl MVP honors for leading the Chiefs past Minnesota in Super Bowl IV.

Dawson retired following the 1975 season, having thrown for 28,711 yards and 239 touchdowns.

Griese overlapped Dawson by nine seasons and retired following the 1980 season with two Super Bowl championships in Miami. Playing mostly for a run-first coach in Don Shula, Griese still threw for 25,092 yards and 192 touchdowns.

Filling the gap between Griese's retirement and Brees joining the San Diego Chargers in 2001 were the combination of Mike Phipps, Gary Danielson, Mark Herrmann, Scott Campbell and Jim Everett.

Phipps closed out a 12-year career with Cleveland and Chicago in 1981, having thrown for 10,506 yards and 56 TDs. Danielson overcame the longest odds of any Purdue Cradle of Quarterbacks, cracking the Detroit Lions roster in 1976 – four years after his final game at Purdue.

Danielson made the most of his opportunity, playing in Detroit for eight seasons and Cleveland for three more before exiting in 1988. He threw for 13,764 yards and 81 touchdowns.

For non-Purdue fans, Herrmann is probably best remembered as part of the Colts trade that sent the rights to John Elway to Denver in 1983. Herrmann played for Denver, Baltimore/Indianapolis, San Diego and the Los Angeles Rams before returning to Indianapolis in 1990. Herrmann was released after leading the Colts to the 1992 season opening victory against the Cleveland Browns.

Campbell, Herrmann's successor at Purdue, also overcame the NFL's disdain for short (6 foot) quarterbacks, to enjoy six seasons in the NFL with Pittsburgh and Atlanta from 1984-90.

Everett threw for 34,837 yards and 203 touchdowns in a 12-year career with the Los Angeles Rams, San Diego and New Orleans.

Now here's where things get sticky regarding Purdue's streak.

The Elias Sports Bureau, which is the long-time official statistician for the NFL, regards Jeff George as a former Purdue quarterback because he began his collegiate career in West Lafayette. Therefore, not only does Elias count George as a former Boilermaker, it also counts his NFL statistics toward Purdue's league-best passing yards and touchdown passing totals.

George, who played at Illinois after leaving Purdue in 1987, lasted in the NFL until his brief stint with Chicago in 2004. By that time, Brees was in his fourth season with San Diego.

In all, Elias lists 13 Purdue quarterback alumni passing for 248,731 yards and 1,642 touchdowns. That total does not include Green Bay legend Cecil Isbell's 5,945 yards and 61 TDs. Why? Elias record keepers say Isbell played left half-back in Packers coach Curly Lambeau's box offense. Isbell played a similar position at Purdue in the 1930s for coach Noble Kizer.

To put Purdue's impressive yardage and TD passes in perspective, Elias lists runner-up Notre Dame quarterbacks compiling 178,319 yards and 1,144 TDs. That total includes Kent Graham and Ken Karcher, who finished their collegiate careers at Ohio State and Tulane, respectively.

Youth movement at Purdue

Brandon Newman became the third Purdue men's basketball player to be selected Big Ten Freshman of the Week, earning the honor on Monday.

For the first time in school history, Purdue also had the conference's player of the week at the same time. Junior center Trevion Williams shared that award with Minnesota center Liam Robbins.

Williams is a big reason why the Boilermakers have won three consecutive Big Ten road games. Last week, Williams averaged 17.5 points and 10.5 rebounds in victories at Indiana and against Penn State.

The day after earning the Big Ten honor, Williams overcame foul trouble to score a team-high 16 points to go with seven rebounds in a 67-65 come-from-behind victory at No. 15 Ohio State.

Newman joins classmates Zach Edey and Mason Gillis to earn the Big Ten freshman honor.

Don't be surprised if a fourth Boilermaker freshman is chosen by the Big Ten on Monday. Jaden Ivey had 15 points against Ohio State, including the game-winning 3-pointer with five seconds remaining.

During one of the most emotional post-game press conferences I've witnessed in 40 years, Ivey was choked up with emotion while discussing the game-winner on Zoom.

"I just told myself 'it's game over,'" Ivey said before pausing briefly. "I've been in a slump. I'm just trying to gather myself because I wanted this game so bad. I've been strug-

gling mentally. I know I want to win so bad. Just to see that shot go in is everything."

Ivey's emotions, perhaps fueled by performing so well in front of his mother – Notre Dame women's basketball coach Niele Ivey – continued to flow.

"I was thankful she was able to be here today," Jaden said. "I was in tears. We both love the game so much.

"I care a lot about winning. I care about how I'm playing. I know my potential. I don't want to be the reason why our team can't win. I'm emotional because I care about the game."

Thanks to Ivey, Purdue is just the third team in 15 years to have won at Indiana, at Michigan State and at Ohio State in the same season. The other two teams? The 2009-10 Boilermakers and 2016-17 Boilermakers, both of whom went on to win the Big Ten regular season title.

NCAA dates set for Purdue, IU

Purdue's Mackey Arena and Indiana's Assembly Hall will host two First Four games apiece as well as first-round NCAA tournament action, in a statement released Monday.

The tournament will open with the First Four games on March 18, immediately followed by first round games March 19 and 20.

Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Hinkle Fieldhouse, Indiana Farmers Coliseum and Lucas Oil Stadium will also host first round games in addition to second round action March 21-22.

When the field is reduced to 16, those teams will play at Bankers Life and Hinkle March 27-28. The NCAA promises each of the eight games will be televised without overlap unlike previous tournaments that scheduled two games in the early evening and two late night contests.

Lucas Oil Stadium will be the site for the Elite Eight, Final Four and the championship game on April 5.

### IHSAA tourney change

Due to the NCAA taking over Bankers Life Fieldhouse on March 27-28, the IHSAA has decided to have a two-week gap between the four class semistate championship games and the state finals.

The new state finals date of April 3 marks only the second time the boys state finals will take place in April. The 1978 title game between Muncie Central at Terre Haute South wasn't played until April 15 because of severe winter weather and an energy shortage caused by a coal miners' strike.

That year, the regional games were not played until April 1, three weeks after sectionals.

"Our executive committee felt it was most important to preserve the experience for our young people of playing for a state championship in Bankers Life Fieldhouse," IHSAA commissioner Paul Neidig said. "In a year that has seen plenty of disruption, we also felt this arrangement would cause the least amount of disruption and impact the fewest number of schools."

The dates and locations of the earlier rounds remain unchanged with sectionals scheduled for March 2-6, regionals on March 13 and semistate games on March 20.

*Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.*



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