

Talking Upcoming Purdue Football And Players



Photo courtesy of Purdue Athletics

Purdue Sports Are Heating Up With Drafts, Seeds And New Players

Purdue men's basketball coach Matt Painter continues to lay the foundation for a potential second consecutive NCAA tournament No. 1 seed.

The Boilermakers will play in senior center Zach Edey's home city as part of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame doubleheader in Toronto on Dec. 9. The opponent? Alabama, like Purdue a No. 1 seed in the 2023 NCAA tournament.

TCU and Clemson will square off in the second game. Times and TV will be announced at a later date.

The Alabama matchup comes exactly one week before Purdue takes on Arizona in the Indy Classic. Already on the Boilermaker schedule is a home game with Xavier as part of the Gavitt Games on Nov. 13 and the Maui Invitational on Nov. 20-22. The Maui field includes Kansas, Tennessee, Gonzaga, Marquette, UCLA, Syracuse and host Chaminade.

The Crimson Tide (2) and Boilermakers (7) combined to be ranked No. 1 in the Associated Press poll nine of the 19 weeks last season. While Purdue returns its top seven players from a year ago, including the National Player of the Year in Edey, Alabama lost standouts Brandon Miller, Noah Clowney and Charles Bediako to the NBA Draft.

Speaking of Edey, he could pick up yet another award at ESPN's ESPY ceremony July 12. Edey is one of four finalists for Best Male College Athlete. The others are Creighton men's soccer player Duncan McGuire, Duke men's lacrosse player Brennan O'Neil and Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams of USC.

NFL bargains?

For the rest of eternity, anytime someone is skeptical that a late round draft pick can become a star in the NFL, the chorus of "Tom Brady at No. 199" will ring out.

Nick Baumgardner of The Athletic lists former Purdue standouts Payne Durham and Cory Trice among 11



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players picked on Day 3 who have a chance to surprise in their rookie seasons.

On Durham, who was taken in the fifth round by Brady's former team, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers: "Outside of his frame (6-5, 253, 33 3/8-inch arms), there is nothing flashy about Durham," Baumgardner writes. "He's not that fast; he doesn't have much wiggle; if he averages 10 yards per reception, you're probably doing OK with him. But if you throw him the ball 75 times, he'll probably catch 70 of them. Durham has powerful hands, a great frame, and he understands the finer points of football, which allows him to give QBs friendly throwing windows over and over again.

Durham is a solid blocker who can be a dependable, team-first chain-mover in the NFL. He's a three-down prospect who likely will start as a TE2, but there is TE1 potential here. Known at Purdue as a tone-setter because of the way he worked, Durham won't get bullied as a run blocker in training camp — a lot of rookie TEs do."

Trice lasted until pick No. 241 in the seventh round when the cornerback was taken by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"This could go in the books as

one hell of a steal. Trice, a 6-3, 206-pounder with elite burst (broad jump of 11 feet) and agility (6.70 three-cone), most likely fell in the draft due to injury concerns — his 2021 season at Purdue included an ACL tear and an ankle injury, and he later suffered a groin injury. Trice, a former safety, also still has some technical issues in coverage as well.

"But why did he slide to the seventh round? I'm not coming up with a great answer there. Our draft guru, Dane Brugler, had Trice ranked No. 88 overall in the 2023 class.

Trice's traits are off the charts, and he can play anywhere on the back end. He has the goods to compete for a spot on the depth chart immediately."

Cornerback Darius Rush, a fifth-round pick by the Indianapolis Colts, also made Baumgardner's list.

Purdue a portal winner

In at least one category, the Purdue football program is ranked in a Top 10 with Alabama and USC.

The Athletic rated the Boilermakers as one of 10 "non-Deion" spring transfer portal winners. The ranking excludes Colorado's mass exodus and importing of players since the legendary Deion Sanders took over as head coach.

The two newest Boilermakers singled out by The Athletic are wide receiver Jahmal Edrine (Florida Atlantic) and defensive lineman Jeffrey M'Ba, the No. 1 ranked junior college recruit of 2022 who departed from Auburn.

Louisville also made the portal top 10 for its haul under former Purdue coach Jeff Brohm. The list includes former Boilermaker offensive tackle and 2021 Indiana Mr. Football Brady Allen.

Quick hits

Incoming Purdue freshman basketball player Myles Colvin was selected to the USA Basketball U19 World Cup team that begins competition Saturday in Debrecen, Hungary.

The 17-year-old Colvin is the only Big Ten representative on the team.

He'll be seeking to join Purdue stars Caleb Swanigan, Trevion Williams, Jaden Ivey and Caleb Furst to win a World Cup gold medal. Carsen Edwards (2017) and Edey, representing Canada in 2021, brought home bronze medals.

The six Purdue players selected to the U.S. team since 2015 is the most nationally. Oklahoma State is next with four, followed by Duke, Kentucky and Villanova with three apiece.

The 6-6 Colvin, the son of former Purdue and NFL standout Rosevelt Colvin, was ranked 51st nationally by Rivals.com and 58th by 247 Sports. ...

Former Purdue guard Dru Anthrop will be part of the new Phoenix Suns coaching staff, reuniting with former boss Frank Vogel.

Anthrop, who starred at Lafayette Central Catholic, was named one of seven assistant coaches. He moves to Phoenix from the Los Angeles Lakers, where he spent four seasons as head video coordinator and player development coach.

Anthrop was a special assistant to Vogel for two seasons with the Orlando Magic. Anthrop began his NBA career as a film coordinating intern for the Indiana Pacers from 2013-15.

Interesting Days Ahead For College Football

Flex Protect Plus sounds like a Medicare supplemental insurance commercial you might see on MeTV.

It's a different kind of insurance, though. One that should ensure the Big Ten Conference will be well represented in the upcoming 12-team College Football Playoff.

It's also an opportunity for Purdue to perhaps build some momentum under Ryan Walters.

The Big Ten unveiled its Flex Protect Plus scheduling for the 2024 and 2025 seasons, when the league grows to 16 teams with the addition of USC and UCLA. Flex Protect

🔁 KENNY From Page 2

Plus is a combination of protected opponents and rotating opponents that will guarantee every school will play every other conference foe at least twice (home and away) in a four-year period.

Flex Protect Plus also spells the end of division play. The top two teams will meet in the Big Ten championship game.

Purdue fans who like to grumble and complain should have nothing to say after the Boilermakers' traditional games with Indiana and Illinois were among the 11 protected rivalries announced this week. Even better, the first of the rotating "two-play" opponents for Purdue is Northwestern.

The only thing better than that is if the Wildcats were made a protected rivalry alongside the Hoosiers and Fighting Illini.

Indiana has no protected rival outside of Purdue but the Hoosiers did OK with the "two-play" assignments of Michigan State and Maryland for 2024-25.

Iowa is the only school with three protected rivalries and all three make sense: Minnesota for Floyd of Rosedale, Nebraska for the Heroes Trophy and Wisconsin for the Heartland Trophy.

Penn State was the only school with no protected rival. The other protected rivalries are Michigan-Ohio State, Michigan-Michigan State, Illinois-Northwestern, Minnesota-Wisconsin, USC-UCLA and Rutgers-Maryland.

New Big Ten commissioner Tony Petitti said much of the scheduling decisions had already been made before he replaced Kevin Warren in May. That said, he believes Flex Protect Plus will endure well beyond 2025.

"The first thing is preserving the matchups that are important to Big Ten fans," Petitti said on Big Ten Network. "The second important thing is being able to see more opponents more frequently. I'm happy where this ended up.

"We wanted to have more competitive balance. You want to respect history and tradition in the conference even as you are expanding. You also want to connect fans. All those things were done with this format."

Purdue's 2024 conference schedule features five away games (Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan State and Wisconsin). Nebraska, Northwestern, Penn State and USC will come to Ross-Ade Stadium. The Trojans have not played in West Lafayette since defeating the Boilermakers 31-13 in 1976, led by Heisman Trophy winner Ricky Bell's 177 yards rushing.

The non-conference schedule features Notre Dame's first appearance in Ross-Ade since a 31-24 Irish victory in 2013, plus a home game with Indiana State. Purdue also travels to Oregon State.

The Boilermakers get five conference home games in 2025: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota and Ohio State. A trip to UCLA heads the four away games that include Michigan, Northwestern and Rutgers. The Bruins faced Purdue in 1980, coming away with a 23-14 victory over Mark Herrmann and Co. at Ross-Ade Stadium. Purdue has never beaten UCLA (0-3-2).

Home games with Ball State and Connecticut, plus a trip to Notre Dame, comprises the 2025 non-conference schedule.

Indiana's home Big Ten slate in 2024 should sell a few tickets with Penn State, UCLA and Purdue coming to Bloomington along with Maryland and Minnesota. Michigan State, Nebraska, Northwestern and Wisconsin comprise the away games.

A trip to Louisville is sandwiched between home non-conference games with Florida International and Charlotte.

Visits to Ohio State and USC highlight the 2025 Big Ten schedule for the Hoosiers, who also will travel to Illinois, Maryland and Purdue. Michigan comes to Bloomington as part of

a home schedule that will also feature Iowa, Michigan State and Rutgers.

All three of IU's non-conference games will be in Memorial Stadium: Old Dominion, Louisville and Indiana State.

No cupcakes served

Monday's announcement by the Indiana Sports Corporation that Purdue will play Arizona in the second annual Indy Classic at Gainbridge Fieldhouse adds another quality opponent to the Boilermakers' 2023-24 schedule.

Purdue, expected to be a preseason Top 5 selection following the return of National Player of the Year Zach Edey, has already announced it will play Xavier as part of the Gavitt Games on Nov. 13 in Mackey Arena.

The Boilermakers also will be a part of a heavy-hitting Maui Invitational field of Kansas, Tennessee, Gonzaga, Marquette, UCLA and Syracuse from Nov. 20-22. Matchups have yet to be announced.

The Indy Classic, which also features Indiana State vs. Ball State, will take place Dec. 16.

Arizona is the reigning Pac-12 Tournament champions on its way to a 28-7 record. Purdue is 7-5 against the Wildcats, including an 89-64 victory over No. 2 Arizona in the 2017 Battle 4 Atlantis.

Big Ten confidential

As part of its 2023 college football season preview, Athlon Sports granted an unspecified number of Big Ten coaches anonymity in exchange for candid views about league opponents.

Here's what they said about first-year Purdue coach Ryan Walters:

"Jeff (Brohm) never really wanted to be at Purdue long term, so this could be a rare example of where both parties benefit from a coaching change. Defensively, they're going to be better than most people think. The head coach is a darn good

DC and the staff he brought in is really sharp. They can run complex

stuff without sacrificing aggression."

Not surprisingly, after a 2-7 Big Ten finish a year ago, there's a thought around the league that Tom Allen is in trouble at Indiana.

"Probably the most uncertain team in the league going into the season. They have to win some big games to keep Tom around, and that doesn't look likely with the roster they've got. ... Culturally, this is a hard place to win at, stay winning and make the 'football' changes needed to keep it going. Plus, Tom is a 'bullhorn' kind of coach, lot of hollering and that as a trend seems to have waned a lot in recent years."

Hall of Fame hopefuls

A pair of All-Americans from Purdue and Indiana are among 78 players from the Football Bowl Subdivision on the 2024 College Football Hall of Fame ballot.

Record-setting wide receiver Taylor Stubblefield and fellow receiver Larry Burton are back on the ballot. Stubblefield left Purdue after setting the NCAA record for career receptions with 316. He also set a Sun Bowl mark with 196 receiving yards in 2001. Burton earned first-team All-American and Outstanding College Athlete of America in 1974

Indiana's hopes are represented by running back Vaughn Dunbar and quarterback Antwaan Randle-El. Dunbar led the nation in rushing with 1,805 yards in 1991. Randle-El was the first player in FBS history to pass for 6,000 yards and rush for 3,000 in a career.

Also on the ballot are Purdue offensive coordinator Graham Harrell for his feats as a quarterback at Texas Tech, as well as Indianapolis Colts greats Dallas Clark and Marvin Harrison.

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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