

Talking the Success of Purdue's Zach Edey





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Columnist

Carroll, Rowinski, Others Laid Groundwork For Zach Edey At Purdue

Zach Edey is closing in on Purdue basketball history, not to mention his second consecutive Big Ten and National Player of the Year awards.

Edey became the second Boilermaker to reach 2,000 points along with 1,000 rebounds during Purdue's 68-60 victory at Rutgers on Sunday.

All-American center Joe Barry Carroll (2,175 points and 1,148 rebounds) was the first of now six Big Ten Conference players to achieve that status. The others are Ohio State's Herb Williams (2,011 points-1,111 rebounds), Michigan State's Greg Kelser (2,014 points-1,092 rebounds), Wisconsin's Ethan Happ (2,230 points-1,217 rebounds) and Indiana's Trayce Jackson-Davis (2,258 points-1,143 rebounds).

With 2,047 points and 1,102 rebounds, Edey needs just two blocked shots to become the third player in NCAA history with 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 200 blocks while shooting at least 60 percent from the field.

The amazing feats of the 440th ranked recruit in 247 Sports' composite rankings for the Class of 2020 are the latest in a string of unexpected success stories for Purdue basketball.

We'll start this tale of overachievement with Carroll, who was so unheralded coming out of Denver East High School that the Lafayette Journal



Zach Edey

and Courier referred to him as "Barry Carroll" in its May 13, 1976 story that reported his signing.

Discovered by Purdue assistant George Faerber, who was in Denver looking at another prospect, Carroll came to Denver East as an uncoordinated 6-8 junior.

"He hadn't caught up to his body and had a tough time making any moves," Carroll's high school coach, Rick Schraeder, told the Journal and Courier's Bruce Ramey in 1977. "He would bring the ball down on rebounds and kids who were 5-10 would tie him up."

After averaging just 5.3 points and 5.2 rebounds his junior season, Carroll underwent an off-season weight lifting and conditioning program.

"He worked for hours on agility drills and played a lot of playground and youth center games against college students and a couple of professional players," Schraeder said. "His improvement was just phenomenal.

"He was very receptive to coaching and knew who to listen to. He knew who could help him."

Now standing 7 feet tall, Carroll had offers from Purdue, Missouri, Southern California, Oklahoma, Iowa and Kentucky according to Schraeder. The decision came down to Purdue and Missouri.

"The places that had a lot of glitter and tried to wine and dine him didn't impress him as much as the places that were honest with him," Schraeder said. "Purdue and Missouri ... both stressed academics and showed him what life on

campus would be like. They painted a very realistic picture. I think he finally chose Purdue because he preferred the Big Ten over the Big 8."

Purdue head coach Fred Schaus knew he had a potential star on his hands early on.

"Carroll's strength is his shot blocking and rebounding and that is what we are looking for," Schaus told the Journal and Courier. "He will play an important part in our program, even as a freshman."

Carroll became a fan favorite right from the start with his shot blocking skills in a backup role behind Tom Scheffler. On Dec. 10, 1977, Carroll recorded the only triple-double in Purdue history with 16 points, 16 rebounds and a school record 11 blocked shots in an 80-78 victory at Arizona.

By the time Lee Rose arrived as head coach for the 1978-79 season, Carroll was ready to break out. He averaged 22.8 points, led the Big Ten in scoring and grabbed a school record 352 rebounds while earning first-team All-Big Ten honors.

Carroll was nearly unstoppable his senior season, leading Purdue to the Final Four and earning first-team All-American and Big Ten honors in the process.

He scored 35 points in his final game as a Boilermaker, a consolation game victory against Iowa at the Final Four. That put Carroll's career total at 2,175, which remains second to Mount on Purdue's all-time scoring list. Carroll also left Purdue as the career record-holder for blocked shots (349).

Carroll briefly crossed paths with another unexpected Purdue success story.

There were no expectations when Jim Rowinski followed in his father and sister's paths to Purdue in 1980 from Syosset, Long Island. He had been cut from his high school basketball team as a 5-10 junior.

The first of two major growth spurts, maturing into a 6-3 forward by the start of his senior year, helped Rowinski not only make the varsity but earn all-conference honors.

When Rowinski arrived in West Lafayette, he answered a callout by Purdue coach Lee Rose to fill a spot on the "Renegades" practice squad. When Gene Keady replaced Rose before the 1980-81 season, he put Rowinski on scholarship. Now standing 6-8, Rowinski played in six games and put up a modest eight points and nine rebounds.

When Russell Cross struggled with

knee ailments, Rowinski made his first start against Houston in December 1981 at the Sugar Bowl Classic in New Orleans. Rowinski held his own against future NBA legend Hakeem Olajuwon in a 59-58 loss. Rowinski grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds and scored nine points.

The performance was even more impressive because after the game he was diagnosed with a slight shin fracture. That turned out to be a blessing for Rowinski and Purdue, which was able to redshirt him under the rules at that time.

That offseason began Rowinski's transformation into a muscular center who earned the nickname "Mr. Atlas," according to a story by the Journal and Courier's Bob Scott.

"It was tough to sit on the sidelines last year, but I made the best of it by lifting weights and using a Nautilus," Rowinski told Scott.

Rowinski gained national attention in a 1984 Sports Illustrated story, in which writer Curry Kirkpatrick called Rowinski "the Prince of Pecs" with "musculature reminiscent of the Sears Tower."

That extra year turned out to be special for Rowinski, the Boilermakers and Keady. Purdue, picked to finish ninth, won a share of the 1984 Big Ten championship. Rowinski won the Chicago Tribune's Silver Basketball as the Big Ten's Most Valuable Player.

"One of the most amazing stories in college basketball," Keady said of Rowinski.

A larger, even stronger version of Rowinski came along a few years later.

Stephen Scheffler's choices coming out of high school included a football scholarship offer from Michigan. The 6-9, 255-pound Scheffler decided to follow in his brother Tom's footsteps and play basketball at Purdue. Scheffler was not ranked among the top 250 players in the 1986 recruiting class despite averaging 22 points and 17 rebounds as a high school senior.

What Scheffler possessed in size, he lacked in confidence. A childhood diagnosis of dyslexia and the cruel teasing from other children left a deep wound in the thoughtful, polite young man.

Former Indianapolis Star writer Mark Monteith got to know Scheffler during the 1987-88 season when he began work on his book, "Passion Play."

"You couldn't meet a more naïve,

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honest and sincere person,” Montieth recalled on his website, markmontieth.com. “This is a guy, keep in mind, who was so polite he said thank you to the referee every time he was handed the ball to shoot a free throw.”

The teasing continued during his freshman year at Purdue, leading Scheffler to consider leaving.

“I looked at my situation and said, ‘Do I really want to play this game anymore?’” Scheffler told the Journal and Courier’s Michael Perry in 1990.

Scheffler’s faith gave him the strength to persevere.

“I just didn’t want to be happy for the sake of being happy,” Scheffler told Perry. “That didn’t make any sense. So in a prayer I said, ‘It appears to me that this is what you wanted me to do. You wouldn’t want me to quit or anything like that, God. So as long as you want me to be in this, could you at least make it enjoyable?’ And believe it or not, it became enjoyable.”

It wasn’t so enjoyable for Purdue opponents, who could not stop Scheffler if he got the ball in scoring position. Scheffler left Purdue as its single-season and career field goal percentage leader (.685), as well as setting the NCAA career record.

And like Rowinski, Scheffler was named the Big Ten’s Most Valuable Player.

“Citizen Pain.” “The Custodian” “That #S@&%*!”

Brian Cardinal was called plenty of names during his career at Purdue but the one that stuck was “winner.”

Cardinal nearly willed coach Gene Keady to a Final Four in 2000. Not bad for someone who four years earlier didn’t think he belonged in a Purdue uniform.

Not recruited by his hometown Illinois Fighting Illini, for whom his father was the basketball athletic trainer, Cardinal accepted a scholarship to Purdue and redshirted his first season. Cardinal paid back the Illini by never losing to them in nine games while at Purdue.

Cardinal’s early onset hairline recession made him the butt of old-age jokes for much of his time at Purdue, but the career of the 6-8, 235-pound Boilermaker remains a testament to his versatility. He could score in the post and on the perimeter, finishing with 1,584 points, hitting 130 3-pointers and shooting

76.1 percent at the line. He could also rebound on both ends (749 rebounds), pass (277 assists) and defend, recording 99 blocks and 259 steals, second all-time. Cardinal helped the Boilers reach three Sweet 16s and the Elite Eight in 2000.

He quickly became a fan favorite, inspiring the Journal and Courier in 1997 to hold a nickname contest. “Citizen Pain” was the winner, suggested by a local middle school student. Other contenders included “Rawhide, The Janitor, Fall Guy and Tolono Terror,” a nod to Cardinal’s hometown.

About the same time Cardinal was beginning to make an impact in the Big Ten, Willie Deane decided to walk on at Purdue after leaving Boston College following the 1998-99 season. Deane had followed his family to Fort Wayne, where his father was transferred by General Electric.

No one on Keady’s coaching staff had any idea who Deane was until he asked for a tryout.

“He started playing in some pickup games with our guys and asked if he could try out,” Purdue assistant Jim Thrash told the Journal and Courier’s Jeff Washburn. “We don’t know a lot about him other than he’s a good athlete and a nice kid.”

After sitting out the 1999-2000 season, Deane made an immediate impact. He scored 16 points, including Purdue’s final four, in the 72-69 upset of No. 1 Arizona in the John Wooden Classic at Indianapolis.

“I was just looking for an opportunity to play,” Deane told Washburn in 2003. “I knew that if I worked hard enough, my work ethic eventually would pay off.”

That season, Deane earned first-team All-Big Ten honors.

“It’s just amazing how much he has grown over the years and learned how to play the game right,” Keady said at the time. “I certainly have a great deal of respect for his attitude being positive.”

Purdue’s Zach Edey Ties One Record, Closes In On Rick Mount

Inching closer to decades-long Purdue basketball records, Zach Edey added another milestone to his distinguished



Braden Smith



Lance Jones

college career on Monday.

The 7-4 center was chosen Big Ten Player of the Week for the 10th time in his career, matching Ohio State’s Evan Turner for the most in league history.

Edey recorded his sixth career 30 points-15 rebounds game in a 105-96 overtime victory against Northwestern. It was Edey’s 73rd consecutive double-figure scoring game, eclipsing Rick Mount. Mount had scored at least 10 points in each of his 72 games as a Boilermaker.

Terry Dischinger’s school record for double-doubles fell at No. 6 Wisconsin when Edey tallied 18 points, 13 rebounds, three blocked shots and two assists in the 75-69 victory. Edey now has 55 career double-doubles.

Going into Saturday night’s game with Indiana in Mackey Arena, Edey ranks third nationally in scoring (23.1 ppg), fourth in rebounds (11.7 repg), 14th in field goal percentage (.631) and 14th in blocked shots per game (2.). Just three players in NCAA history (2002-03 – Chris Kaman, Central Michigan; 1997-98 – Michael Olowokandi, Pacific; 1993-94 – Carlos Rogers, Tennessee State) have ever finished in the top 15 in all four categories.

Edey’s 1,115 career rebounds places him within 33 of matching Joe Barry Carroll’s 44-year-old Purdue record. With 2,065 points, Edey has climbed into fifth place in Boilermaker history. He’ll almost certain take over fourth

place Saturday night, standing just nine points off Dave Schellhase’s 2,074 points.

For 54 years, Mount’s record of 2,323 points seemed unreachable, especially in this era of early departures to the NBA. But Edey is 258 points away from matching the “Rocket.” With a guarantee of 10 games left in his career (eight regular season, one Big Ten Tournament, one NCAA Tournament), Edey has a better than average chance of catching Mount.

Difference maker

While Edey gets much of the media attention, an argument could be made that fifth-year senior guard Lance Jones deserved the Big Ten Player of the Week award.

Jones had 26 points against Northwestern. He followed that effort with 20 points, six rebounds and three assists at Wisconsin. In those two games, Jones shot 8 of 14 from 3-point range to raise his Big Ten 3-point shooting percentage to 38.2.

The Southern Illinois transfer hasn’t been totally overlooked. Kevin Sweeney of SI.com rated Jones among his five “X-Factors” for national championship contenders.

“Jones has brought a competitive fire that has helped the Boilermakers in big games,” said Sweeney, who wrote this before the Northwestern and Wisconsin



games. “Purdue’s March bugaboos have been outside shooting and perimeter defense, with Matt Painter often bemoaning his team’s struggles with smaller guards in the Big Dance. Jones can solve these problems if he keeps playing how he has of late.”

Fueling the fire

Westfield graduate Braden Smith somehow was left off the Bob Cousy Award semifinalists list despite being the only college basketball player in America averaging at least 12 points (12.4), seven assists (7.3) and five rebounds (5.4) per game.

The Purdue point guard came through again at Wisconsin, contributing 19 points, six rebounds, three assists and two steals. With 167 assists going into the Indiana game, Smith is within reach

of Bruce Parkinson’s single-season record of 207 set in 1975.

The 10 Cousy semifinalists include Tyler Kolek of Marquette and Zakai Zeigler of Tennessee, whose schools Purdue defeated in the Maui Invitational. Northwestern’s Boo Buie also is on the list for the award that honors college basketball’s best point guard.

Since the Jan. 29 announcement, Smith has averaged 15 points, 9.5 assists and 5 rebounds per game.

Purdue atop NFL passing list

With Aidan O’Connell making 10 starts this season for the Las Vegas Raiders, Purdue has widened the gap over Notre Dame for all-time NFL passing yards and passing touchdowns.

O’Connell’s 2,218 yards and 12 TD passes boosted Purdue’s totals to

251,351 yards and 1,656 touchdowns. Drew Brees’ 80,358 yards and 571 touchdowns will likely stand as Purdue’s NFL standard bearer for quite some time.

Notre Dame fans won’t need three guesses to figure out who tops the Fighting Irish NFL list. Joe Montana’s 40,551 yards and 273 touchdowns easily outdistances second-place Joe Thiesmann’s 25,206 yards and 160 TDs.

Notre Dame quarterbacks have thrown for 178,319 yards and 1,144 touchdowns.

Top-heavy Big Ten?

In case you didn’t think Big Ten football was difficult enough with reigning national champion Michigan, Ohio State and Penn State at the top, consider these early 2024 Top 25 rankings with the additions of national runner-up Washington, Oregon, traditional power Southern Cal and UCLA.

Pat Forde of Sports Illustrated has Oregon No. 2 behind Georgia. Ohio State is fifth, Michigan sixth and Penn State 11th. Washington (15th) and Southern Cal (25th) made Forde’s cut as well.

Dennis Dodd of CBS Sports has Michigan (3rd), Oregon (4th) and Ohio State (6th) in his rankings that were also topped by Georgia. Dodd also has Washington 15th and Penn State 16th.

Iowa (22nd) cracks the early top 25 of The Athletic’s Stuart Mandel. Four Big Ten teams – Oregon (3rd), Ohio State (4th), Michigan (6th) and Washington (7th) made Mandel’s Top 10. Mandel slotted Penn State at No. 18.

With divisional play discarded by the new 18-team Big Ten, the top two teams will meet in the Big Ten Championship Game. Many, including myself, were

concerned that most years that would result in back-to-back weeks of Michigan-Ohio State matchups. But if these national sports writers are accurate in their predictions (very unlikely), championship game options would be Oregon-Ohio State or Michigan-Oregon.

New coaches report card

There was no grading on a curve for On3Sports.com writer Jesse Simonton, who handed out very few high marks for the 11 college football head coaches who made their Power 5 debuts in 2023.

One of the highest grades went to former Purdue coach Jeff Brohm, who earned a B-plus for his return to hometown Louisville.

“Brohm delivered on his promise to quickly resurrect his alma mater, taking advantage of a posh schedule (no Florida State, Clemson or North Carolina in the regular season) to take the Cardinals to their first ACC Championship Game,” Simonton wrote. “Louisville had Top 25 victories over Notre Dame and Duke and won 10 games for the first time since 2013.”

Brohm’s replacement, Ryan Walters, was given a C-minus after finishing 4-8.

“The program’s continued transition will be interesting to see unfold in a changing Big Ten next season,” Simonton wrote.

Nebraska’s Matt Rhule was the valedictorian of the trio of new Big Ten coaches, earning a C-plus after going 5-7. Wisconsin’s Luke Fickell received a C-minus as well.

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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