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TODAY'S VERSE

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Meet Athena



Athena is a 3 year old female American Pit Bull Terrier available for adoption from The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWL) since 11/23/24. Athena loves going for walks, frolicking in a fenced yard, playing fetch, and snuggle time with her SOS! Athena is looking for her best friend. Could that be you? AWL is open Monday - Friday from 12:15p-5p and Saturday's from 9:30a-3p. Come say hi, snuggle cats, walk dogs, or lend a helping hand!

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Boomer Bits

Ask Rusty – How Are Medicare Premiums Determined



ASK Rusty Social Security Advisor

Social Security Matters

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Dear Rusty:

Please explain the Medicare premium increase based on income reported to Social Security? For those of us that waited to draw Social Security until age 70, and who are still working - drawing a salary, and planning to retire at age 75 after RMDs kick in at age 73 - how do we make sure that Social Security reports our earnings accurately, so we don't wind up with increased Medicare premiums? Why not charge increased Medicare premiums when we are younger, instead of waiting to sneak up on us when we are older?

Signed: Confused about Medicare Premiums

Dear Confused:

I believe you are referring to Medicare's "Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount," or "IRMAA." IRMAA increases

the Medicare Part B (and Part D) premium amounts for those whose combined income from all sources exceeds specified levels for their IRS tax filing status. Social Security (and Medicare) get your earnings information from the IRS and use your reported IRS income (on your income tax return) to calculate your Medicare premium each year. But there is a twist – they use your reported combined income (also known as your "MAGI" or "Modified Adjusted Gross Income") from 2 years ago to determine your current year's Medicare premium. For example, they will use your 2023 MAGI to determine your 2025 Medicare Part B premium (and your Part D premium if you have Part D). So, if your income reported to the IRS on your tax return

➔ See RUSTY Page A2

Return Power to Patients to Slash Costs

By Sally C. Pipes

America's health bill will surpass \$7.7 trillion by 2032. That's equivalent to one in every five dollars flowing through the economy.

To address this crisis, we must make health care work like other sectors of our economy, rather than the bloated, over-regulated mess it is today. And that will require giving patients more control over their healthcare dollars.

➔ See COSTS Page A2

Tennis Healthy Sport for Boomers

Everyone knows that exercise is healthy, and that playing sports is one of the best -- and most enjoyable - ways to maintain optimal weight, boost mental wellbeing, and improve strength, balance, and flexibility.

But what is the "healthiest" sport? Does it really matter which activity folks pick, so long as they're exercising?

➔ See TENNIS Page A3

Well-Read Citizen Wrapped, With Eye on '25



Have a book you're itching to talk about with others?

The League of Women Voters, open to men as well as women, is a nonpartisan, multi-issue political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. For information about the Montgomery County LWV, visit: www.lwvmontco.in.org or message to LWV, PO Box 101, Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933.

If only others read this, you might think, as you fan the pages of what? The magical realism of Colson Whitehead's Underground Railroad, which ends in Indiana? The starkness cost of the opioid epidemic in Barbara Kingsolver's Demon Copperhead? The untold story of James, Huck Finn's protector, by Percival Everett? Some non-fiction about pressing issues in our democracy?

For the third year, the League of Women Voters in Montgomery County gathered for rich conversations around fiction and nonfiction, local, national and international authors. We'll continue to do so in 2025.

We read our way through 2024, largely choosing books linked to women's history, democracy, the purpose of the League – to educate and engage with democracy. Here's a synopsis of what we read:

The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhorn fictionalizes a real American midwife -- not a housewife -- who oversaw hundreds of births in 1700s America without death. We followed up columns on women's reproductive health, looking at the fraught regulations around midwives, freedom of birthing choice and the problem of healthcare deserts in rural Indiana. We hope to revisit this issue as more OB-GYNs leave Indiana and other states that have enacted laws that penalize women's healthcare.

We dug into history with Timothy Egan's A Fever in the Heartland, looking at how Indiana became the center of the Ku Klux Klan at the moment when its membership swept the nation. The story uncovers its crooked leadership under the conman D.C. Stephenson and the horrors that Madge Oberholtzer endured while undoing his horrific power.

Warren Rosenberg, retired professor of literature, drew us into a deep discussion of Jewish immigrant women finding their rights in The Breadgivers. He invited us to glimpse into discussions he had over decades of teaching young Wabash men about the impact of immigration,

➔ See LWV Page A3

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Applying heat to an injury the first few days can actually make it worse.

Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Paper and online at www.thepaper24-7.com



TODAY'S QUOTE

"Make New Year's goals. Dig within, and discover what you would like to have happen in your life this year. This helps you do your part. It is an affirmation that you're interested in fully living life in the year to come."

Melody Beattie

THREE THINGS You Should Know

- As holiday packages made their way to doorsteps across America, porch pirates were certainly looking to intercept them. New data reveals nearly half of Americans now have been victims of package theft. According to the annual package theft report by Lombardo Homes, package theft continues to be a problem with 92 percent of Americans expecting holiday deliveries. The average stolen package now costs Americans \$228, up from \$219 in 2023.
- With New Year's parties looming, a recent survey says that those events can be a professional minefield. It's the one night when questionable dance moves, overshared gossip and a little too much eggnog can collide in full view of your colleagues - and, worse, your boss. Career experts at resume.io ran a survey of 3,000 managers in Indiana and found that drinking too much, not showing up at all and flirting with co-workers were the top three offenses. You've been warned!
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the final approximately \$300 million in assistance to distressed direct and guaranteed farm loan borrowers under Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act. Since President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law in August 2022, USDA has provided approximately \$2.5 billion in assistance to more than 47,800 distressed borrowers. This latest \$300 million in assistance is scheduled to go to over 12,800 distressed direct and guaranteed Farm Loan Programs borrowers.

TODAY'S JOKE

A good New Year's resolution is to stop hanging out with people who ask about New Year's resolutions.

MONTGOMERY MINUTE

Just a reminder, there will be no Paper of Montgomery County Print or Online Edition on Wednesday, Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day. The Paper will publish the regular Monday and Friday Online Editions.



The Paper appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank ROBERT ROGERS for subscribing!

↓ COSTS From Page A1

Because massive government programs like Medicare reimburse providers so little, hospitals and doctors charge private insurers higher rates to make up the difference. Private health plans pay hospitals 254% of what Medicare would have paid, on average.

Private insurers pass their higher costs onto patients in the form of soaring premiums, deductibles, and restrictions on what's covered.

Obamacare's many mandates have encouraged consolidation throughout the healthcare marketplace.

Hospitals are getting bigger, too, in order to gain negotiating leverage with insurers. The 10 biggest U.S. healthcare systems now manage more than 1,200 hospitals, or about 20% of our country's total.

All that consolidation reduces competition and nudges costs higher.

To top it all off, nobody knows exactly how much anything costs until they get hit with the bill. As of February 2023, three-quarters of hospitals still failed to publish their prices, despite federal rules requiring them to do so.

It's time to end this madness.

The first move should be to create a regulatory environment that incentivizes providers to disclose cash prices in a clear and usable fashion. Enforcing price transparency rules would help.

But so would empowering consumers to make real choices. If patients are responsible for spending their own healthcare dollars, they will naturally become more price-conscious.

That's where health savings accounts and health reimbursement arrangements come into play. HSAs allow consumers to set aside money tax-free, which they can use to pay for health care as they see fit. When people have control over their healthcare dollars, providers have to

compete for their business. Over time, that leads to better quality and lower costs.

Congress should consider allowing Medicare beneficiaries to contribute to HSAs. Lawmakers should also raise the limits on what people can contribute to an HSA each year.

Health reimbursement arrangements allow employers to give their employees tax-free money for medical costs or insurance premiums.

Employers may prefer them to traditional health insurance plans because they're a defined cash benefit. Employees may like HRAs because they can pick the health insurance plan that meets their needs -- or use the money to pay for care from a provider of their choosing, not their insurer's.

Finally, policymakers should relax rules that reduce the supply of health care. Scope-of-practice regulations limit what services nurse practitioners and physician assistants can provide -- even when those providers are fully qualified.

A 2018 study found that patients treated by nurse practitioners had lower rates of hospital admission, readmission, and inappropriate emergency department use than those treated by physicians. Allowing NPs and PAs to practice more independently would effectively expand the supply of providers -- and thereby cause prices to fall.

We don't have to let health spending spiral out of control. Common-sense, market-based reforms could unleash the power of competition to lower costs -- and deliver savings for taxpayers and patients alike.

Sally C. Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Her latest book is False Promise, False Promise: The Disastrous Reality of Medicare for All (Encounter 2020). Follow her on X, formerly Twitter, @sallypipes.

Seth Carlson Named to Dean's List

Seth Carlson, a Senior Nursing major from Linden, was among approximately 720 Bob Jones University students named to the

Fall 2024 Dean's List. The Dean's List recognizes students who earn a 3.00-3.74 grade point average during the semester.

↓ RUSTY From Page A1

in 2023 is correct, Social Security will use that amount to determine next year's Medicare premium.

IRMAA uses a sliding income scale to determine your Medicare premium. If you filed your 2022 taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income for that year was \$206,000 or less, for 2024 you are paying the standard Medicare Part B premium of \$174.50, and there is no additional amount added to your Part D premium. But if your MAGI as a married couple was over \$206,000 your Medicare premiums will be more -- e.g., MAGI up to \$258,000 makes your Part B premium \$244.60 and results in a Part D supplement of \$12.90 per month. And so on -- as your MAGI further increases, so will your Medicare premiums until you reach the maximum. MAGI over \$750,000 means a Part B premium of \$594/month and a Part D supplement of \$81/month. Thus, Medicare premiums are "means-tested" (those with higher income pay higher premiums).

A word about "MAGI" -- MAGI starts with your Adjusted Gross Income on your tax return, to which is added any non-taxable interest you may have had, and 50% of the Social Security benefits (if

any) you received during the income tax year. The total of those three amounts is your MAGI, from which your Medicare premium is determined for the forthcoming year.

So, if your 2023 combined income (your "MAGI") as a couple was under \$206,000 you will pay the standard 2025 Medicare premium which, for Part B, will be \$185/month. If your 2023 MAGI as a married couple is more than \$206,000, you will pay higher Medicare premiums in 2025 due to IRMAA.

Why not pay higher Medicare premiums when we are younger? Well, that's because IRMAA only applies when you are enrolled in Medicare, and your premium relates to your income while receiving Medicare benefits.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. Russell Gloor is the, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Kroger Holiday Hours

Kroger is adjusting its schedule for the holidays, allowing associates to celebrate the holidays with their families.

December 31 -- Most stores close at 10 p.m.

- Pharmacies close at 6 p.m.

- The Little Clinic sites close at 4 p.m.

January 1 -- Stores operate on normal schedules.

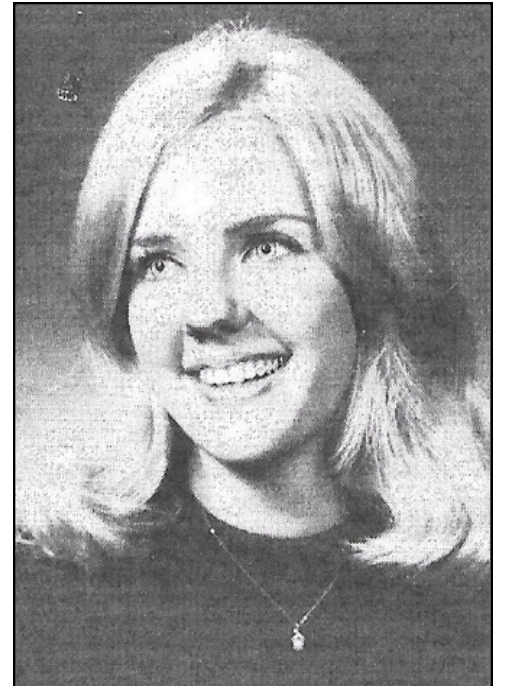
- Pharmacies and clinic sites will be closed.

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Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia



Do You Know this 1971 New Market H.S. Grad?

HINT: She was a twirler, played in the school band and was senior Homecoming Queen.

Answer on Page A3

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↓ LWV

From Page A1

socioeconomic status, religion and culture on women's lives.

When we read Reading Lolita in Tehran (Azar Nafisi), we looked at the impact of American literature in nations where human rights and free speech have been eradicated in the interest of religious fundamentalism.

The slightly more academic How Migration Really Works by Hein de Haas challenged us to face data sets that don't fit the left and right narratives about why people move from one nation to another. We learned that a proportion of the world's population is always on the move and that percentage remains steady. Most people would rather stay close to their homes and cultures, so they tend to migrate mostly within their national borders. When they have the means and cannot thrive in their homes, they migrate to other nations, usually to those nearby. The book contextualizes migrations over time and place, reminding us that spikes in our present time and place are issues we can address with thoughtful, humane policies.

One selection, The Tyranny of the Minority by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, evaluated the imbalance of political groups in power compared to the American public and analyzed how traditionally "conservative" resistance to change

introduces some vulnerabilities in democratic self-governance. As countries grow or retract in population and respond to dynamic changes to culture, which is just natural to being human, they need the tension between change and status quo, which the book examines. The more academic How Organizations Develop Activists by Hahrie Han looked at well-known organizations and how they maintain energy and engagement with their volunteers.

ocal author and Wabash Professor of English Agata Izabella Brewer gave a book talk for her award-winning memoir, The Hunger Book, about growing up in Communist Poland. Protected by her grandparents, Brewer and her brother survived food shortages, the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster in nearby Ukraine, her parents' divorce and her mother's alcoholism and mental illness. Her story reveals the empathy and inner work she brings to her roles as a writer, professor, mother and wife.

The Death of the Public School mapped out the history of a long campaign to dismantle public education with the efforts of well-known figures such as Milton Friedman.

After Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023 attack that left over 1,200 Israelis dead and another 251 in hostage, Israel launched a defense that has left 44,000 to

45,000 Palestinians dead and with another 105,500 injured -- and many more displaced. We wanted to better understand the nation of Israel's political, historical and cultural climate. Warren Rosenberg led a thoughtful discussion for American citizens with limited awareness of the nuances of Middle East politics and the claims around them. The book behind our discussion was Noa Tishby's Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth.

We wrapped up with the historical fiction Good Night, Irene, about the little-known Red Cross Donut Dollies -- women who wore lipstick to war -- who served coffee and donuts in Great Britain, France and Belgium during World War II.

The Well-Read Citizen book club is open to all. Each year we kick off by voting on the list of books submitted by our readers, who do not have to be members of the LWVMC. If you'd like learn more, join us at our annual white elephant book exchange at 7 p.m., Jan. 8 at Backstep Brewery.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, multi-issue political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government. For information about the League, visit the website www.lwv-montcoin.org; or, visit the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Indiana Facebook page.

Back in the Day with Butch Dale



Some people love a snowy winter. Others not so much! Shown above is Main Street in Darlington in February of 1984. The town received 12 to 14 inches of snow, and then eight days later received another six inches. The piles of snow lasted for several weeks.

↓ TENNIS From Page A1

Contrary to conventional wisdom, it does matter. A recent study tracked more than 8,000 people over a quarter century to determine which activities offered the greatest health benefits. And there was a clear standout: tennis.

Tennis added 9.7 years to a typical player's life, compared to that of a sedentary person. The only sport that came close to this was badminton, which added 6.2 years of life.

As a physician who previously served as the chief medical officer of the NCAA, US Open, and chaired two high-level forums for the International Olympic Committee, I've noticed for decades that tennis offers people who want to get and stay healthy the most "bang-for-their-buck" when it comes to time, effort, and actual bucks.

Tennis is ideally orchestrated to keep your heart healthy. The high-intensity intervals of activity elevate your heart rate, enhance blood flow, and strengthen cardiovascular health. Just three hours on the court each week could reduce the risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 56%, and the risk of death from all causes by 47%.

Aerobic exercise, by comparison, reduced all-cause mortality by just 27%. Remarkably, running and soccer had no effect on people's risk of death.

Playing tennis is associated with greater bone mineral density in the femurs, hips, and spine. Tennis players have "significantly greater" upper body musculoskeletal function than their inactive counterparts.

Even those new to the sport could reap its benefits. As one review notes, "numerous studies have identified

better bone health not only in tennis players with lifelong tennis participation histories, but also in those who take on the sport in mid-adulthood."

Tennis also improves mobility, flexibility, and balance. Returning a serve, or positioning yourself for a precision volley, engages the whole body. Each burst of movement -- stretching, accelerating, or pivoting -- leads to improved coordination.

The confidence that comes from engaging skillfully with a physical task -- sometimes referred to as physical literacy -- is another reason to take up the game. 80% of players reported improvements in self-esteem after regular trips to the court.

Tennis is also one of the few lifelong sports that can be played cheaply and conveniently. Visit any tennis court -- there are roughly 250,000 of them nationwide -- and it's common to see folks playing into their 70s and 80s.

Any exercise is better than no exercise. But if folks are looking to maximize their health gains, now and for decades to come, I always tell them to go pick up a racquet and head to their local tennis court.

Brian Hainline, MD is Chair of the Board and President of the United States Tennis Association and recently transitioned from the NCAA as their Chief Medical Officer. He co-chaired the International Olympic Committee Consensus Meetings on both Pain Management in Elite Athletes and Mental Health in Elite Athletes. Brian is a Clinical Professor of Neurology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. This piece originally ran in the Duluth News Tribune.

Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia
Answer: Janie Bullerdick

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Purdue Loses Frank Kendrick After Four-Week Battle with Cancer



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

Frank Kendrick seemed bigger than life, even at an imposing 6-foot-6.

The man who played a key role in recruiting Glenn Robinson, Cuonzo Martin and a host of other Purdue basketball standouts in the 1990s died Dec. 18 in his hometown of Indianapolis after a four-week battle with an aggressive sarcoma.

Long before he brought his charismatic recruiting skills to Gene Keady's coaching staff, Kendrick enjoyed a Hall of Fame playing career at Indianapolis Tech and Purdue in the early 1970s. Arriving in West Lafayette just before freshman eligibility was granted by the NCAA, Kendrick recorded 28 double-doubles during his three-year career.

Kendrick was one of the stars of Purdue's 1974 NIT championship team, back in the days when the NIT wasn't just programming filler for ESPN. Eighth-ranked North Carolina was the first school vanquished by the Boilermakers on their path to the title in Madison Square Garden.

The high point of Kendrick's basketball career came a year later when he earned an NBA championship ring with the Golden State

Warriors. Kendrick proudly wore that ring the rest of his life, and it was quite a selling point on the recruiting trail when he joined Gene Keady's staff in 1990.

Robinson, Martin, Brandon Brantley, Roy Hairston, Chad Austin and Brad Miller bought Kendrick's sales pitch. They contributed to three consecutive Big Ten championship teams from 1994-96. Then came Jaraan Cornell and McDonald's All-American Mike Robinson, starters on the 2000 Elite Eight squad.

Kendrick's love affair with Purdue endured a bitter separation when NCAA sanctions led to his departure in 1999. Time healed his wounds, and the reconciliation was complete when Kendrick was inducted into the Leroy Keyes Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

"I was very emotional, and I cried," Kendrick told the Journal and Courier's Sam King upon the news of his election. "There's not many things I can say I love. I love my family and I love Purdue. Purdue is family."

Kendrick also was elected to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2002.

Portal insanity

Among major college football schools, only

Ball State, Tulsa and Kent State had lower rated defenses in 2024 than the Purdue football team.

So why then have three of the eight Boilermaker starters with eligibility in 2025 been snapped up by College Football Playoff schools?

Safety Dillon Thieneman is the biggest loss, heading to Oregon for a likely significant payday and a better chance at finishing 11-1 than 1-11.

Former Carmel standouts Will Heldt and Cole Brevard are also out the door in West Lafayette. Heldt made history as the first transfer portal signing at Clemson. Brevard is headed for Texas.

Also in the portal but yet to find a new football home are defensive backs Nylan Green, Kyndrich Breedlove and Botros Alisandro, plus defensive lineman Jamarius Dinkins.

Linebacker Hudson Miller (so far) is staying with new head coach Barry Odom.

Was it poor coaching or players who didn't fulfill expectations which led to 2024 being arguably the worst defense in Purdue history? Something to watch in 2025.

Purdue's offense will also have a lot of new

faces in the 2025 starting lineup. Gone is five-year starting center Gus Hartwig, whose eligibility has been exhausted. The same goes for quarterback Hudson Card, and offensive linemen Corey Stewart and DJ Wingfield. Guard/tackle Marcus Mbow has entered the NFL Draft.

The transfer portal has found new homes for tight end Max Klare (Ohio State), tackle Mahamane Moussa (Louisville), tight end Drew Biber (Minnesota) and wide receiver Jahmal Edrine (Virginia). Wide receiver Shamar Rigby is also in the portal.

The last man standing is running back Devin Mockobee, who enters his senior season as one of 14 Boilermakers with more than 2,000 career rushing yards.

Welcome to the club

Three former Purdue basketball standouts recently joined Kendrick in the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2025.

Wilburn Cummins' election comes on the 100th anniversary of leading Frankfort High School to the state championship. One of the state's first great scorers, Cummins totaled 1,140 points as a Hot Dog, including a school-record 49 points against Owensville on Dec. 11, 1923. This feat is more impressive considering this was the era when a jump ball took place after every made basket. Under Piggy Lambert at Purdue, Cummins earned first-team All-Big Ten honors in 1927 after leading the league in scoring at 10.3 points in 12 conference games.

Another great scorer was Troy Lewis, who put up 1,966 points while helping Anderson go 68-11 during his three-year varsity career. Lewis shared the 1984 Indiana Mr. Basketball honor with Delray Brooks. A McDonald's All-American, Lewis joined Todd Mitchell and Everette Stephens in West Lafayette to help the Boilermakers win back-to-back Big Ten titles in 1987 and 1988.

All three were inducted into the Leroy Keyes Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame with their coach, Gene Keady, in 2010.

Lewis is one of six men in Purdue history to score more than 2,000 points (2,038) and is a member of the school's Centennial All-Time Men's Basketball Team.

Forest "Jake" Weber of Plainfield amassed 1,384 points during his four-year high school career before helping Purdue win the 1940 Big Ten championship. He played two seasons of pro basketball after World War II with the Indianapolis Kautskys of the National Basketball League in 1945-46 before moving on to the New York Knicks and Providence Steamrollers of the Basketball Association of America. The 6-6 Weber started in the Knicks' opener on Nov. 1, 1946, which is now considered the first game in NBA history.

Silver Anniversary class

The 18-man Silver Anniversary team announced by the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame includes four former NBA/NFL athletes and a couple of Purdue players.

The team was selected based on outstanding accomplishments as a senior basketball player 25 years ago.

Mr. Basketball Jared Jeffries (Bloomington North) went on to play at Indiana University before spending 11 seasons in the NBA with Washington, New York, Houston and Portland.

Zach Randolph (Marion) set the school record for rebounds (1,068) and put up 1,607 points while helping the Giants win a state championship his senior year. After one season at Michigan State, Randolph began a 17-year NBA career that saw him total 18,578 points and 10,208 rebounds during stops with Portland, New York, the Los Angeles Clippers, Memphis and Sacramento.

Andre Owens (Perry Meridian) made collegiate stops at Indiana and Houston before spending parts

of two NBA seasons with Utah and the Indiana Pacers.

John Standeford (Monrovia) played briefly for the Indianapolis Colts after a record-setting career as a wide receiver at Purdue. He set Monrovia career records for points (1,899) and steals (190). At Purdue, Standeford was a freshman All-American for the 2000 Big Ten champions. He set then-Big Ten records for receiving yards (3,788) and receiving touchdowns (27).

Brett Buscher (Chesterton) and Austin Parkinson (Northwestern) would become teammates at Purdue under Gene Keady. Buscher scored 1,365 points over four varsity seasons, including his freshman year at Whiting. Parkinson scored 1,667 points and set a school record with 678 assists. He is now the women's head basketball coach at Butler.

The other honorees were Michael Bennett (Brebeuf, Ball State), Braden Bushman (Mississinewa, Wright State), Ron Dokes (South Bend Riley, Duquesne), Steve Drabyn Jr. (LaPorte, Belmont), Mark Drake (Shelbyville, Alaska-Anchorage), John Hamilton Jr. (Greenfield-Central, Weber State), Adam Mark (Bremen, Belmont), Mickey McGill (Rossville, Indianapolis), Bryant Northern (Jeffersonville, Louisville), Shane Power (Andean, Iowa State/Mississippi State), Corey Seegers (Columbus North, Morehead State/Saint Joseph's College) and Aaron Thomas (Northridge, Robert Morris).

The Men's Silver Anniversary Team members will be honored at the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame's 63rd Men's Awards Banquet on March 19, 2025.

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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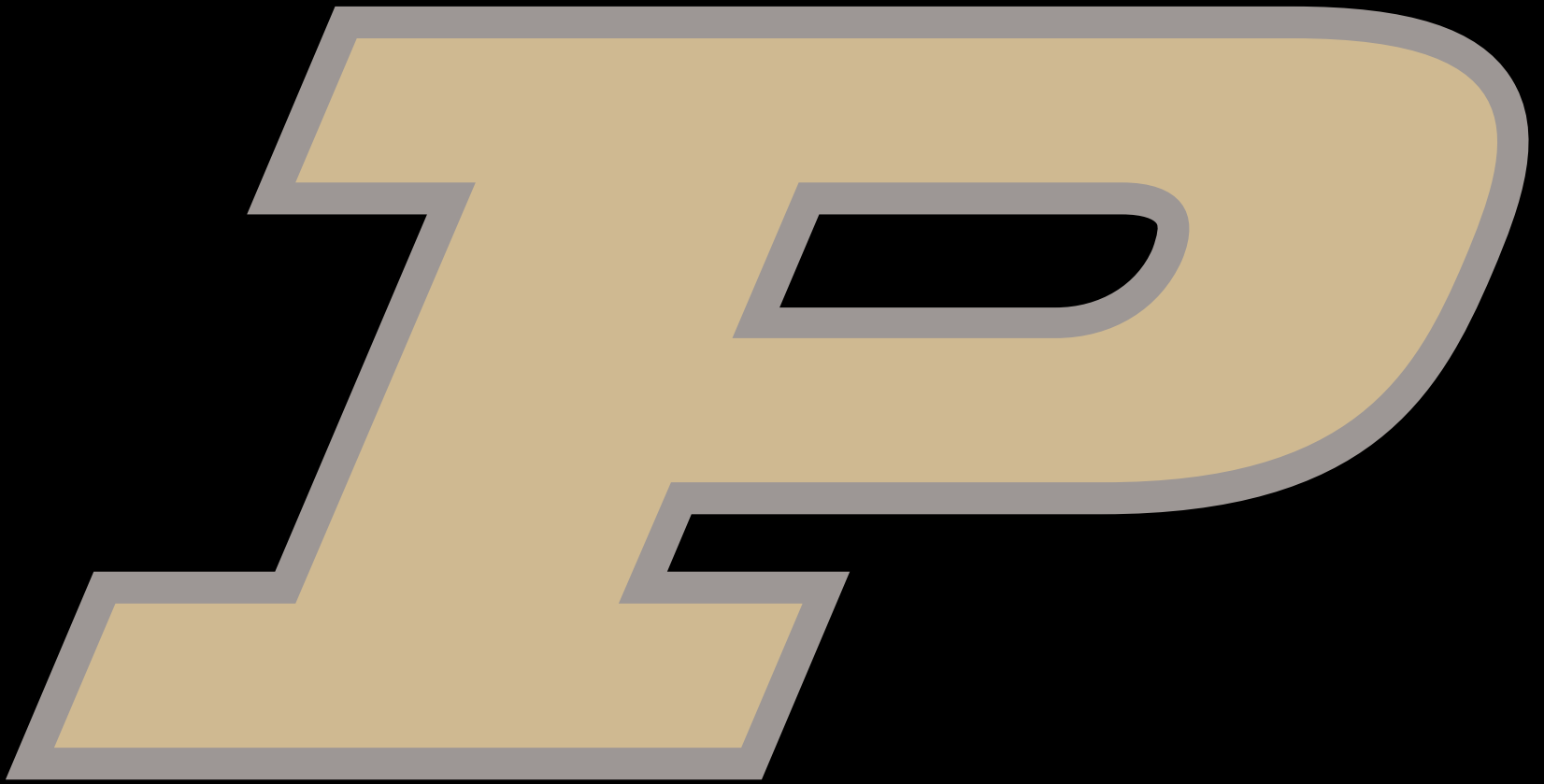


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The Paper of Montgomery County

December 2024



Numbers Staggering Behind Hiring of New Purdue Football Coach



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

Talk is cheap. Being competitive in the Big Ten (Plus 8) is expensive.

On paper as well as the words uttered Tuesday morning inside Mackey Arena by Purdue athletic director Mike Bobinski seem to indicate that the days of being thrifty and oblivious to what it takes to compete in today's pay for play college football are over.

Hopefully embarrassed by the millions spent to get Indiana into the first 12-team College Football Playoff, Purdue president Mung Chiang, the Board of Trustees and Bobinski have gone all-in on new head coach Barry Odom.

"Athletics is an essential and defining part of what Purdue is about," Chiang said during the press conference welcoming Odom. "Athletics is such an important part of what Purdue stands for, what it means to all the Boilermakers out there. The Board of Trustees, myself, we're going to invest more than ever before in athletics."

Contract terms call for Odom to be paid \$6 million each of the first two years, \$6.25 million in year 3, \$6.5 million in year 4, \$7 million in year 5 and \$7.25 million in the sixth and final year of the deal. Another \$1.5 million is available in "academic, performance and personal incentive pay opportunities."

The Las Vegas Journal reported that Odom's base salary at UNLV this season was \$1.75 million.

Purdue also must pay UNLV \$3 million to buy out the remaining years on Odom's contract. Tack on the more than \$9 million it will cost Purdue to pay former coach Ryan Walters' buyout over the next three years, and we're

talking about a sum of money that would have made previous Purdue administrations conclude that Walters' 1-11 record in 2024 wasn't so bad after all. Bobinski would not provide a specific dollar figure for the assistant coaching salary pool, saying Purdue is "committed to doing what's needed." If media reports are accurate that Indiana has \$11 million allocated to Curt Cignetti's assistant coaches and support staff, Purdue probably will need to be somewhere around \$6 to \$10 million.

At these financial stakes, Purdue is betting it can avoid repeating the school's football history over the past 50-plus years of replacing a losing coach with yet another sub .500 head man. Bob DeMoss to Alex Agase, Leon Burtnett to Fred Akers to Jim Colletto and most recently, Danny Hope to Darrell Hazell. If Odom cannot at least approach Jeff Brohm's modest (36-34, two bowl wins) success in West Lafayette, there's a chance the Boilermakers may be viewed as expendable by the Fox/CBS/NBC network trio which has invested more than \$1 billion with the Big Ten (Plus 8).

Don't think it went unnoticed that Notre Dame embarrassed Purdue 66-7 and Penn State drubbed the Boilermakers 49-10 on CBS. Or that Fox saw Purdue lose by a combined 80-0 to Oregon and Ohio State on its airwaves. Fox Sports 1 was the network home of the worst loss in school history, 66-0 at Indiana.

On paper, Odom appears to be the right man for rebuilding a Purdue team that went 5-19 the past two seasons under Walters. Odom led UNLV to its best record in 40 years, a 10-3

mark, and a second consecutive Mountain West Conference runner-up finish to Boise State. The Rebels ranked 14th in the Football Bowl Subdivision in scoring at 36.2 points per game.

Even with the season-opening 49-0 victory against Indiana State, the Boilermakers finished 129th out of 133 FBS teams in scoring offense at 15.8 per game. That's the lowest average of any Power Four (Big Ten, SEC, ACC, Big 12) school.

"What was accomplished at UNLV these last couple years was nothing short of remarkable," Bobinski said. "What that shows me is coach Odom brings a very unique combination of an old-school, traditional football toughness and mindset with ability to operate and adapt to today's college football environment."

Odom's 19-8 mark with the Rebels is even more impressive when you consider UNLV had won just 20 games combined during the five seasons prior to his arrival. UNLV has had just 12 winning seasons since joining Division I as an independent in 1977. The Rebels are bowl eligible in consecutive seasons for the first time.

"Their trust will be rewarded with a football program that will reflect the personality and excellence Purdue is widely known for — character, intensity and a no-excuses winning attitude," Odom said while thanking Chiang, Board of Trustees chairman Mike Berghoff and Bobinski. "I can assure you it will be built to last."

In addition to assembling a coaching staff, Odom must stop the drain of what limited talent wore gold and

black this fall. Twenty-three players at last count are in the transfer portal, including All-American safety Dillon Thieneman of Westfield, former Carmel star Will Heldt, and quarterbacks Ryan Browne and Marcos Davila. One former Boilermaker, three-year starting offensive lineman Mahamane Moussa, has committed to rejoining Brohm in Louisville.

Odom is unlikely to get any help from the high school class that signed last week with the Boilermakers, a paltry six-man group ravaged by decommitments as the losses piled up. The six rank 105th in 247 Sports' composite ratings, 46 spots behind the next-lowest Big Ten school, Northwestern.

The Big Ten schedule that was released Wednesday appears to be unfriendly to Odom's rebuilding project. Nine of the 12 opponents are playing in bowl games, with three participating in the first 12-team College Football Playoff.

The Boilermakers open the season with three consecutive home games: Ball State (Aug. 30), Southern Illinois (Sept. 6) and the return of Southern Cal (Sept. 13) to Ross-Ade Stadium for the first time since 1976.

Purdue has a bye week following its Sept. 20 trip to Notre Dame. The October schedule brings Illinois (Oct. 4) and Rutgers (Oct. 25) to West Lafayette, with trips to Minnesota (Oct. 11) and Northwestern (Oct. 18) in between. Purdue opens November at Michigan (Nov. 1), followed by a home game with Ohio State (Nov. 8) and a trip to Washington (Nov. 15). At least the Boilermakers have



Barry Odom

a bye week before the Old Oaken Bucket game in Ross-Ade Stadium on Nov. 29.

Purdue has committed to the new \$20.5 million per school revenue-sharing model expected to take effect in 2025. Bobinski also promised a stronger commitment to Name-Image-Likeness (NIL) deals.

"Our folks didn't necessarily respond warmly to the way NIL evolved in the recent past, but that's going to change," Bobinski said. "We're going to operate at the full cap. We're going to be as resourced as anybody in the country, allowing Barry and his staff the ability to go out there and be eyeball to eyeball with everybody we're competing for, a transfer or from a high school recruiting perspective."

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.

New Purdue Coach Has ‘Plan to Win’ – Will it Work?



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

New Purdue football coach Barry Odom has been working quietly to not only put together a staff but fill the many holes on the

Boilermaker roster.

Odom has announced that his staff will include holdover running backs coach Lamar Conard, offensive coordinator Josh Henson from USC and two assistants from Arkansas, defensive line coach Kelvin Green and defensive ends coach Jake Trump.

For those Purdue fans wanting to know more about Odom, a handful of YouTube videos from the American Football Coaches Association offer a hint of his philosophies and coaching style.

“The Plan to Win” outlines six baselines that Odom used to win 19 games over two seasons at UNLV. Sadly, many of these principles have not been seen inside Ross-Ade Stadium for years.

1. Take care of the ball. The 2024 Rebels were tied for eighth in the nation in turnover margin at plus 13. Purdue was 130th out of 133 schools at minus-14, having forced only five turnovers in 12 games.

2. Run the ball and stop the run. UNLV’s 251.2 rushing yards per game average ranked fifth this season. Purdue tied for 110th at 115.3 yards per game. Defensively, the Rebels held foes to an average of 109.8 yards to rank 16th. Six Big Ten teams ranked in the top 11, including Indiana’s nation-leading 70.8 average. Purdue gave up an average of 200 rushing yards, ranking 119th.

3. Special Teams Factor. UNLV led the nation with

five blocked punts and tied for third with three blocked kicks.

4. Preparation is our edge.

5. Penalties/Discipline. Part of Odom’s offseason preparation is called “Winning Edge.” Starting in late February, Odom’s teams gather at 6 a.m. for drill work. “It’s one of the best things I believe our coaches do ... in getting us a winning edge of having discipline and structure.

6. Finish in the fourth quarter. UNLV outscored its opponents 110-72 in the final 15 minutes.

At the same AFCA Convention in Nashville, Tenn., Odom laid down the foundation of “The Rebel Way,” which presumably becomes the Boilermaker Way.

1. Commitment to being a great teammate. Not always easy to do in an era where some players only commit to the highest bidder. “Our accountability level to ourselves and our teammates will make the difference in our level of success,” Odom said. “How badly do we want to be great?”

2. Unselfishness. See above. “We over Me” seems cliché but it was obvious during last season’s 11-game losing streak fans saw far more “me” than “we.” That’s coaching and a lack of leadership from the players.

3. Three promises. Go to class, have a great attitude and have the willingness to be coached. “If you don’t go to class and are not responsible in that area, there’s no way in the world we can count on you when

its fourth down and one and we need a stop ... or complete a slant,” Odom said.

4. Trust. “Build trust in each other to always do the right thing for our team,” Odom said.

5. Growth every day. This covers academics, social life and athletically. “There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them,” Odom said.

6. Toughness. This covers mental and physical traits.

7. Self-discipline. Have the character and the toughness to make the right choice.

8. Unmatched effort/urgency/enthusiasm.

9. Eliminate mistakes.

10. Be a great competitor. “Don’t ever accept losing. As soon as it’s allowed once, it will be easy to do the rest of your life,” Odom said.

11. Expect to win.

12. Consistency. “(Give) your very best every time.”

13. Leadership. “Be willing to change what isn’t right.”

14. Responsibility. No excuses allowed.

As of Dec. 17, Odom has supplemented the five-man recruiting class held over from Ryan Walters’ staff with five former UNLV signees. Odom says he has 13 questions for a recruit’s high school or junior college coach, including one that echoes former Purdue coach Joe Tiller’s must-have of “do what you’re supposed to do, when you’re supposed to do

it, the way it’s supposed to be done and do it that way every time.”

Some are obvious (Does he have the ability and desire to be a great college player? Does he have a good attitude? Is he a great competitor? Can he be coached and how does he react to criticism? Any medical problems?).

Some are not so obvious (Does he love to play football? Is he liked and respected by his teammates and coaches? Does he lead vocally or by example?)

Coaches are also asked to rate the prospect on a scale of 1 to 10 for traits such as toughness, character and work ethic.

Time will tell if this is a winning template for Odom at Purdue.

Big Ten goes bowling Eleven of the Big Ten (Plus 8) are in the postseason, and the league has one quarter of the 12-man College Football Playoff field.

Here are my picks for the Big Ten bowl games:

Guaranteed Rate (Dec. 26); Kansas State over Rutgers

Las Vegas (Dec. 27): Texas A&M over USC

Pinstripe (Dec. 28): Nebraska over Boston College

Music City (Dec. 30): Iowa over Missouri

Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl (Dec. 31): Louisville over Washington. It’s too bad the winner of this game and the Pop Tarts Bowl champion (Iowa State or Miami, Fla.) can’t meet for the Kellogg’s Cup in Battle Creek, Mich.

Citrus (Dec. 31): Illinois over South Carolina
Duke’s Mayo Bowl (Jan. 3): Minnesota over Virginia Tech.

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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