

Hoosier Happenings

Presented by



The latest news from the world of Indiana University athletics

Silent but DEADLY

Kim Roberson didn't make a lot of headlines or highlights in her IU career, but the Hoosiers wouldn't have been where they were without her

By Mike Johnston

It was the type of stat line that is overlooked. Passed over, dismissed by the type of fan that doesn't truly know how to properly analyze a box score. It was a 13-point performance with a trio of assists and rebounds to boot — a solid performance by anyone's calculations, but nothing mind-blowing.

Yet, it was just another game for Kim Roberson. The same ol', same ol', the same stuff she did for four years of Big Ten play. It was just another game where her value is severely undervalued, and the true nature of what she meant to her team won't be felt until she is long gone.

Roberson's 13-point performance against Purdue in this year's Big Ten Tournament quarterfinal loss will likely be remembered by the shot she missed, a three-pointer with less than 10 seconds to go. It was one of those tantalizing looks that any basketball player knows — at least those who have played past the middle school level, that is — slightly off-balance, but it looks good... it looks good... and the cruel sound of leather striking front iron is the end result. Had it gone in, she would have been the hero. Yet, it fell short, and for those who pay attention to simply the final score, Roberson had the last look, and she didn't convert.

Those who attended the game or watched it on the Big Ten Network had a different viewpoint altogether. Roberson was the sole reason the Hoosiers were even in the game as her gutsy play and lockdown defense kept the Purdue offense off-balance all game long. It

was a perfect illustration of what Roberson brings to the table — and to the surprise of no one on the Indiana sideline, Roberson led all players with six steals. In fact, those who pay no attention at all wouldn't realize that Roberson isn't afraid to be the one to take the shot at the end of the game, to have the outcome on her shoulders. She proved it earlier this season, drilling a game-tying three-pointer with less than two seconds to go against Wisconsin, sending the game into overtime. The Hoosiers went on to pick up a crucial road victory that kept their hopes for an at-large NCAA Tournament berth alive.

It's a shame, because too many basketball fans don't look inside the box score, inside the game. They don't look past the "big three" of points, rebounds, and assists. But triple-doubles don't define basketball, they simply enhance its image. Games are won and lost by points off the bench and the turnover margin. Every once in a while a crew of officials takes center stage. Only now are colleges keeping track of statistics like "deflections," and only now are hustle plays getting tracked for what they truly mean to the outcome of any given contest. Those statistics, the deep, unseen numbers, are where Kim Roberson made her impact.

Roberson left Bloomington as Indiana's all-time leader in steals, a mark unlikely to be eclipsed any time soon. While she has always been a great defender, Roberson saved her best for last as her 2.8 steals per game place her second in the Big Ten. Her defensive prowess was enough to earn Roberson a spot on the Big Ten's All-Defensive Team for the second straight season. In addition, her free throw shooting — another one of those "little things" — was good enough to rank ninth in the league. What she'll be remembered for most, however, is her passion for defense.

"I think Kim and I both have a passion for defense, so it's not a coincidence that we have been going back and forth with the steals record," says Roberson's teammate Whitney Thomas. "We both have a passion for defense and a passion for the game, and we want to lay it all on the line each time we're out there."

In fact, Roberson and Thomas have known each other since the seventh grade, playing in the same basketball circuits in the state of Indiana, playing AAU games against each other, and eventually, becoming teammates in Bloomington.

"There's no question that the senior class is a tight-knit bunch," says Roberson. "We have the same goals. I have known Whitney for a long time, I've lived with (starting center) Amber (Jackson) here at Indiana, and we share a passion for

winning and competing."

In many ways, Roberson's offensive output is often ignored as opposing teams and Hoosier fans alike are quick to notice her stellar play on defense. However, Roberson averaged double digits in scoring for the past three seasons, no small feat in a conference as tough as the Big Ten. She is second on the team in assists and boasted an assist to turnover ratio around 2:1. Yet, opponents will remember her for her pocket-picking presence and her ability to make them look silly as they were bringing the ball up the floor.

Another teammate, freshman Ashlee Mells, is thankful that she had a teammate like Roberson early in her collegiate career. After Indiana's 67-61 dispatching of Michigan on Senior Day, Mells was asked what each of the seniors brought to the table in terms of helping her improve. The first thought that came to Mells' mind was about Roberson.

"Kim helped me with my defense. When I came in here, my defense was horrible, and she helped me with that," said Mells.

Roberson herself is more reserved and doesn't enjoy speaking about her own accolades, but she takes pride in her defensive effort. It has always been something that has come naturally to Roberson as she was blessed with great speed and quick hands, two of the biggest keys to becoming a defensive stopper.

She started turning heads at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, a private school on the northeast side of town that is known for its strong athletic programs. As a senior, Roberson averaged over 18 points, eight rebounds, six assists and nearly six steals per game, which earned her a spot on the Indiana All-Star Team. Roberson's strong play caught the eye of former Indiana coach Kathi Bennett, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Coach Bennett recruited me to Indiana, and they were always my top choice," says Roberson. "There were other schools involved, but Indiana stayed at the top."

Roberson was part of the senior class that experienced a whirlwind of change in four years. The class was largely recruited by Bennett, who announced her departure from Indiana basketball in March of 2005, months before Roberson and her fellow signees would ever set foot on campus. Roberson's freshman year was spent under the tutelage of new head coach Sharon Versyp, who jetted for her alma mater after just one season at the helm of the Indiana program. When Felisha Legette-Jack was named the third head coach at Indiana in just 13 months, it would have been easy for Roberson and her peers to question their decision to don the cream and crimson at Indiana.

Instead, Roberson hit the ground running under Legette-Jack, flourishing in her system and earning big minutes in her sophomore season. Roberson went from appearing in just 17 of 32 games as a freshman and averaging just 1.3 points per game to appearing in all 33 games, earning 20 starts and averaging over 10 points per contest as a sophomore. Roberson led the Hoosiers in steals and assists, solidifying her status as one of the Big Ten's most versatile players.

"Coach Jack has always talked about having pride in the program," says Roberson. "She wants our defense to make a statement, and that's something I take to heart. She wants our defense to create our offense, and I feel like I can help our team in that area."

How will Indiana attempt to replace Roberson once she graduates this spring? One person won't be able to; it will take a team effort to replace the productivity — the quiet, silent numbers — that Roberson puts up on a game-in, game-out basis. That fact, more than any, will make Roberson missed at IU next season.



Photo by A.J. Mast

More than a thief — Kim Roberson made her mark in the record book on "D," but she was a key to IU's offense, as well.

Hoosier Happenings

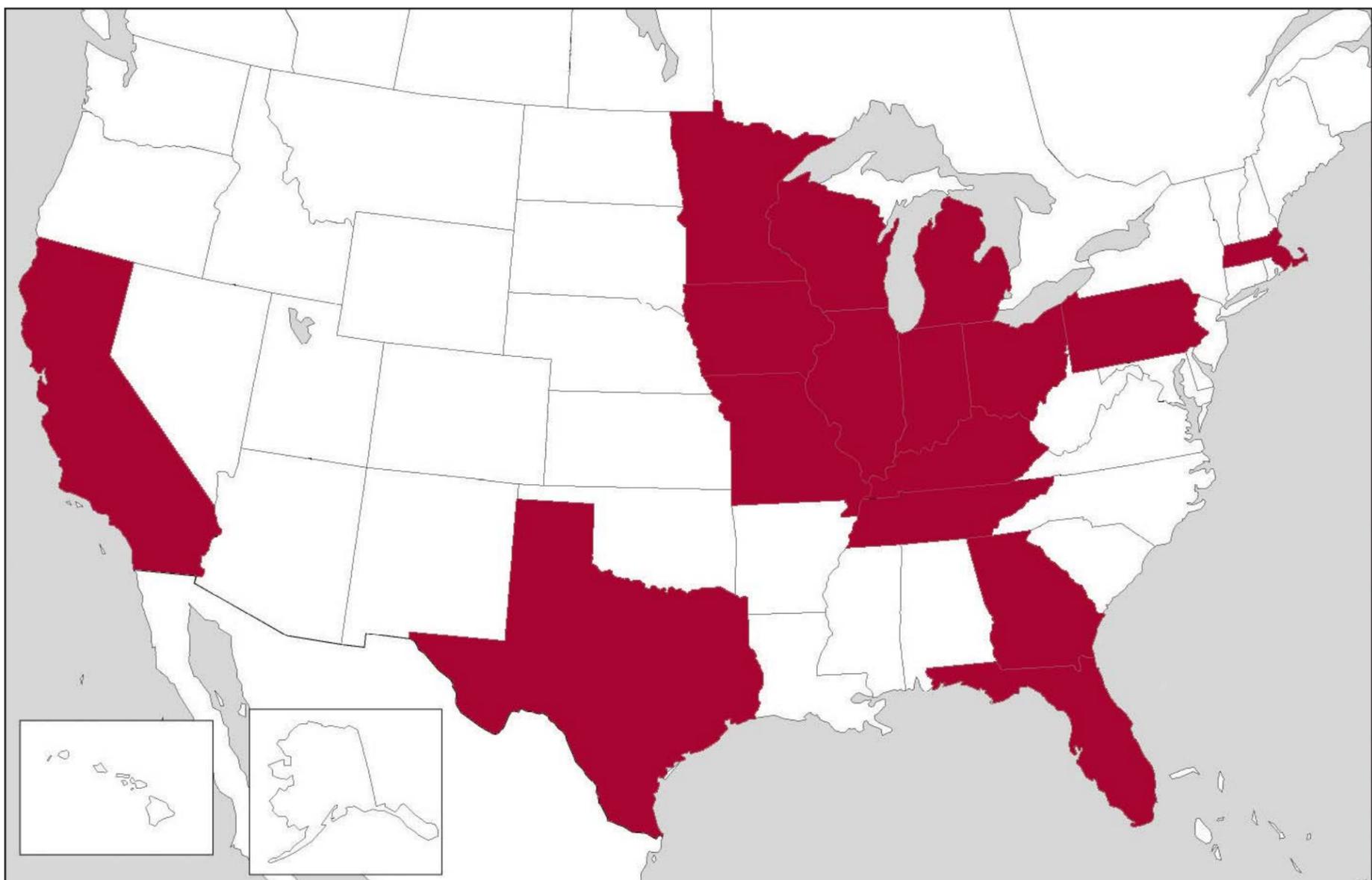
Presented by



To subscribe to Inside Indiana, call 800-282-4648

Where are the Hoosiers?

Indiana's spring athletic schedule is in full swing, and the Hoosiers are traveling across the country to carry on the glory of old IU. Take a look at the map below to see if the Hoosiers are going to be visiting your state and check the schedules at the bottom of the page for information about when Hoosier athletic teams might be visiting your area.



Men's April athletics

Baseball

- April 1 — at Cincinnati
- April 3-5 — at Illinois
- April 7 — at Louisville
- April 8 — Valparaiso
- April 10-12 — at Iowa
- April 15 — at Ball State
- April 17-19 — Penn State
- April 21 — Louisville
- April 22 — Indiana State
- April 24-26 — at Michigan
- April 28 — Miami (Ohio)
- April 29 — Western Illinois

Golf

- April 5-7 — at United States Collegiate Championship; Atlanta, Ga.
- April 11-12 — adidas Hoosier Invitational
- April 18-19 — at Boilermaker Invitational; West Lafayette, Ind.

Swimming & Diving

- April 22-26 — at USA Diving Spring Nationals; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Tennis

- April 3 — at Minnesota
- April 5 — at Iowa
- April 10 — Ohio State
- April 12 — Penn State
- April 18 — at Michigan State
- April 19 — at Michigan
- April 23-26 — at Big Ten Tournament; Ann Arbor, Mich.

Track & Field

- April 3-4 — at Stanford Invitational; at Texas Relays
 - April 10-11 — at Sea Ray Relays; Knoxville, Tenn.
 - April 17-18 — Indiana Invitational; at Mt. SAC Relays; Walnut, Calif.
 - April 23-25 — at Drake Relays; Des Moines, Iowa
- Dates subject to change*

Women's April athletics

Field Hockey

- April 4 — vs. Ohio; at Louisville
- April 18 — vs. Miami (Ohio); vs. Michigan; vs. Ball State; at Columbus, Ohio

Golf

- April 6-7 — IU Invitational; at Columbus, Ind.
- April 18-19 — at Lady Buckeye Invitational; at Columbus, Ohio
- April 24-26 — at Big Ten Championship; West Lafayette, Ind.

Rowing

- April 3-4 — Dale England Cup (vs. Penn, Louisville & Michigan State)
- April 11 — vs. Minnesota, Ohio State; Columbus, Ohio
- April 18-19 — at Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association Championships; Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Softball

- April 4-5 — at Northwestern
- April 8 — Ohio State
- April 11-12 — at Michigan State
- April 15 — at Illinois
- April 22 — Ball State
- April 25-26 — Iowa
- April 29 — at Michigan

Swimming & Diving

- April 22-26 — at USA Diving Spring Nationals; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Tennis

- April 4 — Iowa
- April 5 — Minnesota
- April 10 — at Penn State
- April 12 — at Ohio State
- April 18 — Michigan
- April 19 — Michigan State
- April 23-26 — at Big Ten Championship; Madison, Wis.

Track & Field

- April 3-4 — at Stanford Invitational; at Texas Relays
- April 10-11 — at Sea Ray Relays; Knoxville, Tenn.
- April 17-18 — Indiana Invitational; at Mt. SAC Relays; Walnut, Calif.
- April 23-25 — at Drake Relays; Des Moines, Iowa

Water Polo

- April 3 — vs. Gannon; vs. Mercyhurst; at Erie, Pa.
- April 4 — vs. Salem International; at Erie, Pa.; vs. George Washington; at Lewisburg, Pa.
- April 5 — vs. Bucknell; at Lewisburg, Pa.
- April 18-19 — CWPA Western Division Championships; at Cambridge, Mass.
- April 24-25 — CWPA Eastern Championships; at Cambridge, Mass.

Dates subject to change

Hoosier Happenings

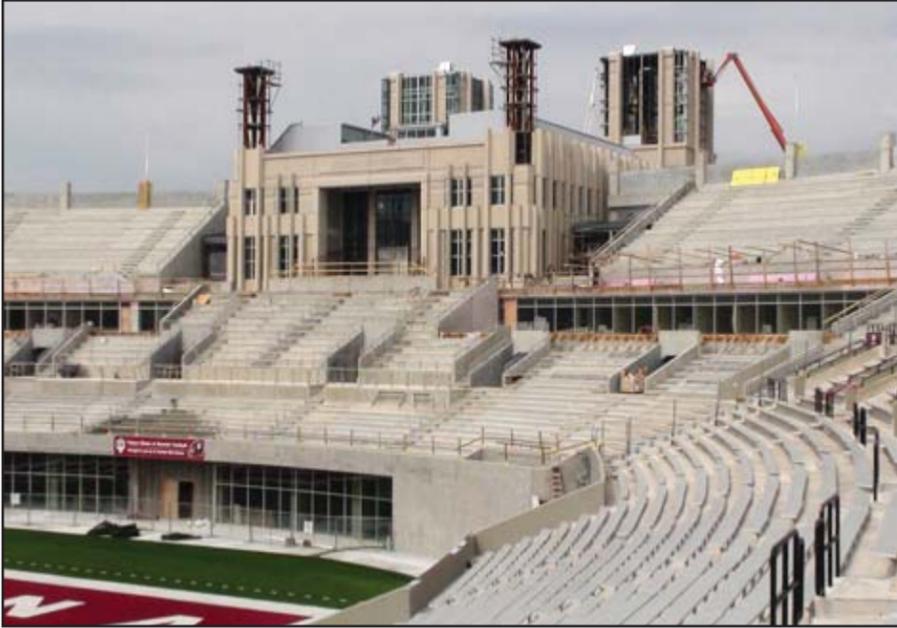
Presented by



To subscribe to Inside Indiana, call 800-282-4648

Facilities construction update

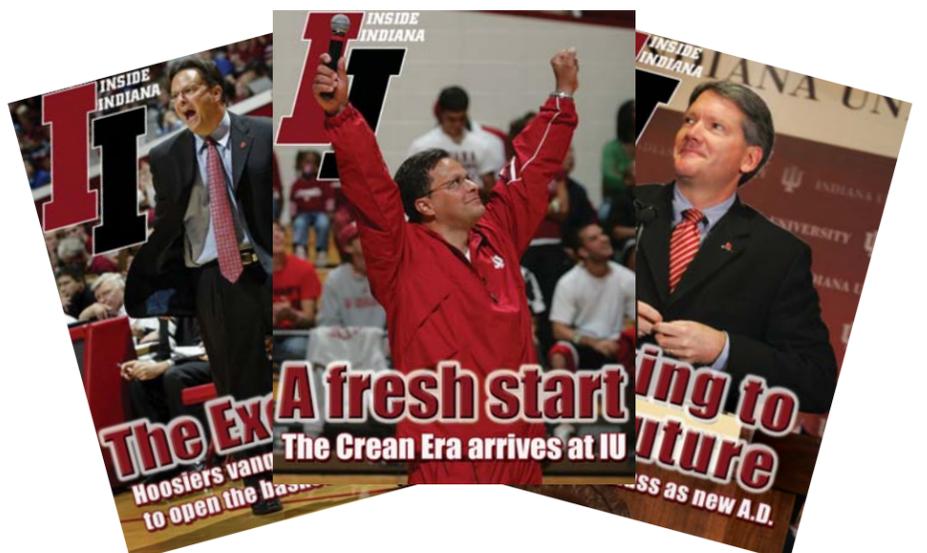
As of March 23



Visit us on the web at www.HoosierShop.com

To get the best in-depth information on Indiana University athletics, subscribe to *Inside Indiana* today!

Call 800-282-4648 today to get 28 big issues, including our football and basketball spectaculars, for just \$49.95!



Use coupon code **IUALUM5** to get \$5 off a one-year subscription or merchandise at www.HoosierShop.com!