

Hoosier Happenings

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The latest news from the world of Indiana University athletics

The wisdom of the ages

Harold Mauro has had a front-row seat for IU football history as a player, coach and administrator, and he walks into retirement proud of what he has accomplished



Photo by A.J. Mast

The Hoosiers don't boast a long, proud tradition of winning on the gridiron, but there have been some bright spots. The 1945 team went undefeated and won the Big Ten championship, and the 1967 team made IU's only appearance in the Rose Bowl. Eight other seasons have ended in bowl games and for every one of IU's postseason battles since that magical Rose Bowl season, Harold Mauro has been involved with the football program in some capacity. He has participated in bowl games as a player, a coach and as an athletic department administrator, and he went with the Hoosiers to the Insight Bowl in 2007 as the director of football operations, a position he took over in 2005.

IU's loss to Purdue this season marked Mauro's final football game as an IU employee. He's retiring from his position, but his heart will always be with the Hoosiers. Indiana's starting center for the Rose Bowl squad, the pride of Verona, Pa., has bounced around in Bloomington, even leaving the area for a few years in the 1970s. He graduated from IU with a degree in physical education in 1968, and he was an assistant coach in the early 1970s for the Hoosiers both for the freshman team and the varsity squad. He spent four years as an assistant with former IU head coach John Pont at Northwestern before return-

ing to Bloomington in 1977. After giving up coaching to become an administrator following the 1982 season, Mauro spent 22 years in the athletic department as an associate athletic director.

In other words, if anyone is attuned to what has gone on around the football program over the past half-century, it is Mauro. Still tough as nails at nearly 65 years old — he won a bet with this year's seniors that he would be his college playing weight of 208 pounds at the start of the regular season — Mauro has seen it all, and he isn't afraid to tell people what he thinks about Hoosier athletics. *Inside Indiana* sat down with Mauro to discuss his career at Indiana, where IU has gone wrong at times when it comes to the football program and the importance of his wife, Joy, during his time in Bloomington.

Inside Indiana: What drew you to Indiana?

Harold Mauro: I was a heavily-recruited athlete. I'm not bragging. That's what I was. I actually signed a scholarship at Alabama before I decided to come up here. In fact, my two hosts when I went down there were Joe Namath and Lee Roy Jordan. Bear Bryant... he never took his hat off the whole time I was down there. I watched some film of Lee Roy Jordan kicking the hell out of people on a Sunday, and these lights

came on. (Bryant) says, 'You want to play for me, don't you, son?' Well, what are you going to say to the Bear? Yes, I do. I came home and told my dad, 'Dad, I'm going to go to Alabama.' That was when you could sign without your parents being there. It was fantastic. They had seven-foot beds, the 'Bryant Hilton.' It was great. But my dad said, 'How many players from up north have made it down there?' I said, 'Joe Namath.' He said, 'That's right. You should keep looking around.' He was right, so I spent some time looking around, and I visited eight or nine schools. It actually came down to Michigan State and Indiana. There actually were a lot of players from Pennsylvania here who Phil Dickens had recruited and who I had played against or knew of, so thinking about that, I felt comfortable here. That's when I chose to come to Indiana. It was a good decision. My wife keeps reminding me that I could have gone to four Orange Bowls and won a national championship, but there's nothing like the Rose Bowl, and fortunately, I was able to play on that team.

II: Going into that 1967 season, did you think you would have a shot at winning the Big Ten?

HM: I thought we would be pretty good from a player standpoint. I don't know what the coaches thought.

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John (Pont) had visited a lot of different teams from the South, and he came back and said, 'We're going to get in shape, boys. We're going to run, run, run.' I thought I was on the track team instead of playing football, and we were in damn good shape. I think several things helped us that year. Our defensive coordinator, Ernie Plank, switched to a 4-4 defense, and no one else ran that in the league. I thought it was very hard for teams to emulate that when they prepared for us. We had a good mix of young talent along with some fifth-year seniors. I was one of those. We had a lot of older guys who had played on the line before and had played together for a lot of years. I thought we would be decent. The Big Ten sportswriters didn't think so at the time. I think Bob Hammel gave us a vote of confidence, but everyone else pretty much picked us last in the league. We had the breaks. Unfortunately, this team this past year didn't get the breaks like we did. We stayed healthy, and we got a few breaks. That's what it takes in this league if you're an up-and-coming team to get to that next level. We started winning games and eking that out, and after a while you start to believe in yourselves. The older guys started to think the younger guys were pretty good. We started pulling games out, and people started calling us the 'Cardiac Kids.' That's how that became famous. Before you know it, we were undefeated. We went up to Minnesota, and we actually scored the first two touchdowns of that game, but they were called back because of penalties. That could have been a different ballgame (editor's note: IU lost 33-7). We got back to Bloomington, and (Pont) said we were going to the Fieldhouse. We thought we were going to practice on sawdust. We walked in, and there were 10,000 people there waiting on us. It was very moving. John got up on stage and said that he guaranteed that we were going to win over Purdue, and that put the message out to us right away. We had a good preparation all week. I was banged up. I had gotten hurt in the Minnesota game the week before along with some other guys, and the trainer stayed up all night long to treat us. I thought I wasn't going to be able to play in the Purdue game, but I was fortunate to play. It was a pretty big win for us. I think we were ranked like third in the country when they came in. Three teams (in the Big Ten) ended up 6-1, and Purdue had gone (to the Rose Bowl) a year or two before and so had Minnesota, but we never had. I was married at the time, and a couple of the other guys came over to my apartment and were sitting around. We got a phone call about midnight from John saying that we had been chosen — I guess they had some kind of committee to vote on it — and we were whooping and hollering it up over at Tulip Tree. We ended up playing a pretty damn good football team in Southern Cal, and they ended up being national champs. Can you believe that if we would have beat them? National champs — Indiana football.

II: Do you think college football is a better game today or back when you played?

HM: That's a very excellent question. It may be difficult to answer because I like the elements. I like playing outside, and there are games in domes today. I think football hasn't (changed) much from the fundamental standpoint. You're still blocking and tackling. The game has progressed from the standpoint where there is much better training than we had back then. We used stretchy ropes that Doc Counsilman developed. They gave you resistance both positively and negatively. Today, they have personal trainers. My dad was my personal trainer. We got some old cans and put some cement in them with a bar, and that was my weights. Our dads used to scrimmage against us in high school because we couldn't get enough players. Sometimes, we wouldn't have enough people. We would practice against the semi-pro team in town. I think the game has changed where you used to run more of the I-formation and go from there, but now you have the Pistol and the Spread — you name it, they have it. It probably has made it a little more exciting, but I think the fundamentals haven't changed a lot. From a scouting standpoint, it's much better. I used to have to break down 16mm film. It used to take me eight

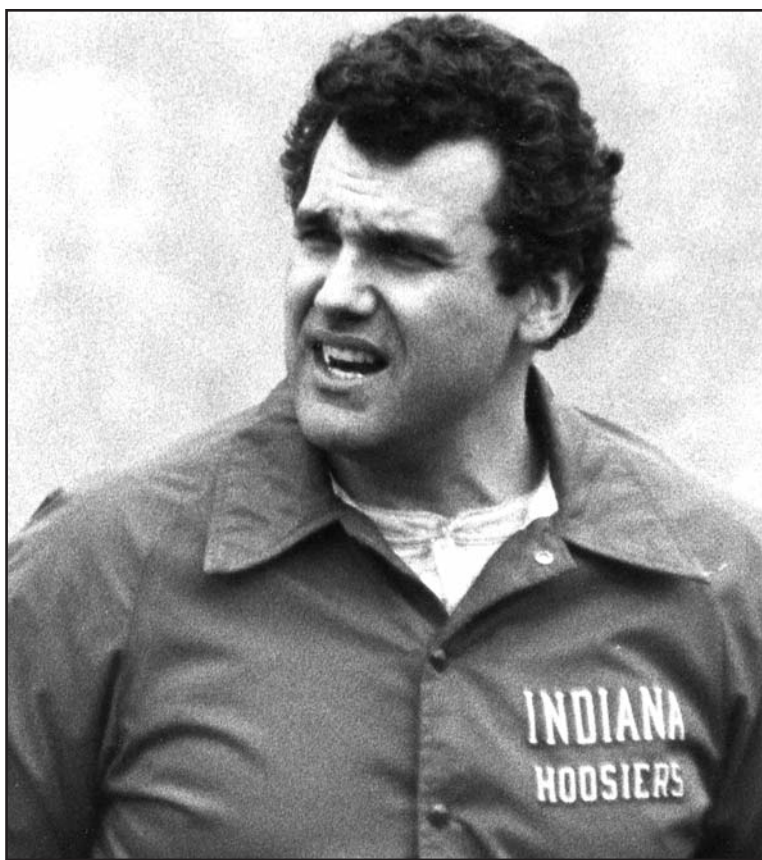


Photo courtesy IU Athletics

Mainstay — After finishing his playing career, Mauro coached with John Pont, Lee Corso and Sam Wyche.

hours to break down one game. You would have to break down the film and put up some masking tape with paper clips and hang the strips with the different plays on it. The coaches today laugh because they ask how we used to scout. We had these cards that had hole punches in them. I would get the whole game done, and then I would take an ice pick and stick it through the first-and-10 plays, then shake the ice pick. All the other plays would fall out, and my first-and-10 would be on the ice pick. Then I would have to repeat the process for the other downs. IBM... It's Better Manually.

II: What was the most rewarding part of coaching?

HM: Being around the players would be the biggest thing, then the game-planning. I loved trying to put something together like a big chess match and finding out if it would work. I was offensive coordinator in my last year (1982), and that's a tough position to be in, especially when things don't go well. When things are going well, they think you're a genius. That was with Sam Wyche, and that was an experience. He was very bright. He was way ahead of his time when it came to offensive football, but Sam thought we would have the players for eight hours a day, just like in the pros. We don't. We have them for two and a half hours in the afternoon, then they get to go home. That made it quite difficult for him, but we got through it, and I learned a lot of football from him. Unfortunately, he couldn't take a lot of us with him to the pros because a lot of those guys have two- or three-year contracts, and it just didn't work out. It was a great experience. That was my last year of coaching after 15 years, and then I got into administration. I actually was going to take a job at Georgia Tech, but (former IU athletics director) Ralph Floyd called me. I actually had interviewed for the head coaching job — a lot of people probably don't know that — when they hired Coach (Bill) Mallory. That's when my high school coaching came into play. They asked me if I had ever been a head coach, and I said, 'Yes.' They were looking at college, but they didn't look at my grade school resume (laughing). I said, 'Yeah, I was a head coach. Eighth-grade football coach.' They all went, 'Oh.' I said, 'We won a city championship. We didn't lose a game.' I knew at that time that I wanted to do (the interview) for the experience, and I was honored that they interviewed me for the job. But, I understood what Ralph had to do. He had to bring in a big name, and Coach Mallory was the best hire we could have gotten. They should have never fired him — you can print that in your story! I cried when they fired Coach Mallory. We would have been in more bowl games, and the way he coached his defense and the way he built charac-

ter, we would have been way ahead of the game. Unfortunately, we have made some poor decisions at this institution, and that is sad.

II: Who was your favorite coach to work with either from a coaching standpoint or an administrative standpoint?

HM: There were a lot. John (Pont) gave me my first chance. He was a great man and a great communicator. Coach (Lee) Corso for sticking with me and Coach Dickens for even recruiting me. I've had the luxury of having really wonderful people that I could learn something from. Coach Mallory was a guy who ran a disciplined defense, and to observe him — I never really worked football for him — I would have loved to have played for him and coached with him. Lee Corso, he calls me once a month. When Sam left, Lee was the first guy to call to see if we needed help finding jobs. Sam was only here 10 months. He didn't know anybody on the collegiate level, and (the assistants) were all out trying to get jobs. When I think back on that, I've been let go by this school three times, but I'm still working for them. I've got to be stupid (laughing)... Not really.

II: How did you get into the administration side of things?

HM: What happened was when I interviewed for the head football job, an assistant AD job opened up. Ralph called and asked if I would be interested. I didn't know if I wanted to get out of coaching. I was fairly young, and I wanted to do more things. He told me to just come in and

talk, and the majority of the people were the same ones I just talked to about the coaching job. I knew if they were asking me back, I must have made a good impression. They offered me the job, and I went home and talked to my wife. My oldest daughter was born Ohio State weekend, and my wife basically raised the kids. I didn't go to one of her first parent-teacher conferences until she was almost 12 years old. I figured (being an administrator) would give me a better opportunity to be around the girls and help out a little more instead of my wife doing all the work and raising the kids. You have to have a good wife in this business, and I've had the best. For 43 years, she has been a phenomenal wife.

II: What are you most proud of during your tenure at IU?

HM: I think it is just making the ballclub as a player and being able to start for a Big Ten university. The wins sort of fell in place, and we got some accolades after that, but for me to get a degree... my family had never gone to college. I got to start in a major bowl game for a Division I school. That's probably my biggest accomplishment, other than marrying my wife. That's probably my ultimate accomplishment. If I had to do it all over again, I would do the same thing. You can't go wrong. It's a great place to raise a family. I never dreamed I would be here all these years later after serving the University for all these years in different capacities. It has been a good journey. When I think back on it, I've had eight presidents, nine football coaches and 10 athletic directors in my time here, which is almost 37 years. Every four years we've had a change, and that's not good for a major Division I football program.

II: So what does the future hold?

HM: I'm going to take about six months off and just think about what I want to do. Fred (Glass) has asked me to come in and talk to him about different things. My retirement plan is a little different than most, so I have to do everything on a volunteer basis, but I'll stay involved however they want me to stay involved. I want to do some traveling. My dad is 88, and I've got a 'bucket list' for him. We've completed a lot of them. One thing on there is he wants to go to Italy, so I have to get him over there pretty soon. We're going to do some things there. He called me after the Purdue game and said, 'This is your last season. Now we'll be able to do some things together.' It's kind of weird for a son to be talking to his dad who has been retired for 24 years. But it's fun. I'm looking forward to it.

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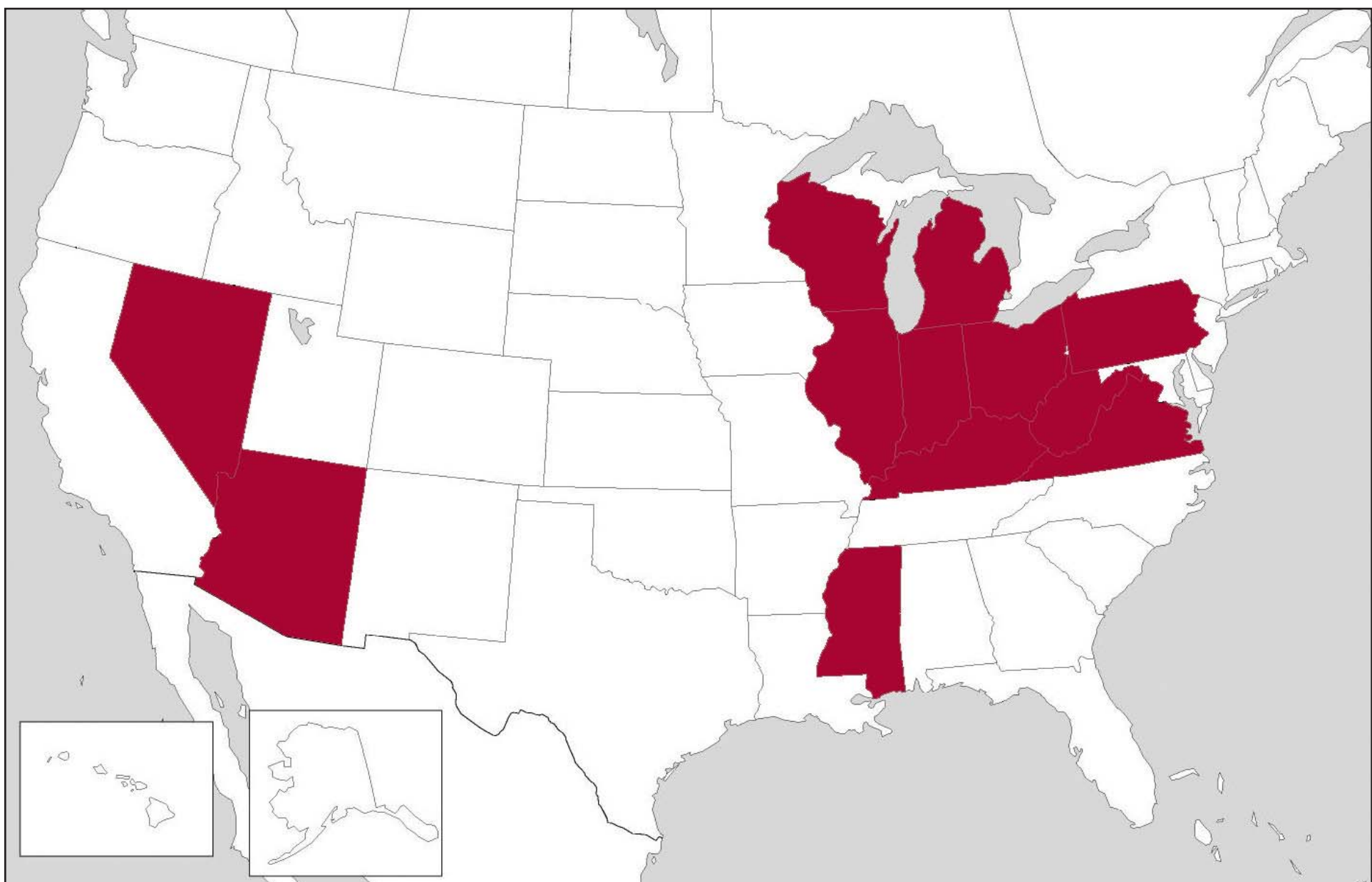
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Where are the Hoosiers?

Indiana's winter 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 January athletics

Basketball

- Jan. 6 — at Ohio State
- Jan. 9 — Illinois
- Jan. 14 — at Michigan
- Jan. 17 — Minnesota
- Jan. 21 — at Penn State
- Jan. 24 — Iowa
- Jan. 30 — at Illinois

Swimming & Diving

- Jan. 8-9 — at Michigan
- Jan. 16 — at Ohio State
- Jan. 29 — at Louisville

Tennis

- Jan. 8-10 — at UNLV Invitational; Las Vegas
- Jan. 22-24 — at Hokie Challenge; Blacksburg, Va.
- Jan. 30 — vs. Columbia; Oxford, Miss.

- Jan. 31 — at Ole Miss; vs. Arkansas

Track & Field

- Jan. 9 — Indiana Open
- Jan. 16 — Purdue
- Jan. 22-23 — Gladstein Invitational
- Jan. 29-30 — Indiana Relays

Wrestling

- Jan. 2 — at West Virginia
- Jan. 16 — Indiana Duals
- Jan. 22 — at Wisconsin
- Jan. 24 — at Northwestern
- Jan. 29 — Illinois
- Jan. 31 — Ohio State

Dates subject to change

Women's January athletics

Basketball

- Jan. 3 — Michigan State
- Jan. 7 — Illinois
- Jan. 10 — at Penn State
- Jan. 14 — Michigan
- Jan. 17 — at Ohio State
- Jan. 21 — Northwestern
- Jan. 24 — at Michigan
- Jan. 28 — Wisconsin
- Jan. 31 — Ohio State

Golf

- Jan. 31-Feb. 1 — vs. Wisconsin; Phoenix, Ariz.

Swimming & Diving

- Jan. 8-9 — at Michigan
- Jan. 23 — Purdue
- Jan. 29 — at Louisville

Tennis

- Jan. 17 — vs. Western Michigan; vs. Butler
- Jan. 23 — at Miami (Ohio); at Ball State
- Jan. 31 — vs. Marquette; vs. Cincinnati

Track & Field

- Jan. 9 — Indiana Open
- Jan. 16 — Purdue
- Jan. 22-23 — Gladstein Invitational
- Jan. 29-30 — Indiana Relays

Water Polo

- Jan. 23-24 — at Michigan Kickoff; Ann Arbor, Mich.

Dates subject to change

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Practice Facility construction update

As of mid-December



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