

# Hoosier Happenings

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## A Tale of Two Cities

**Indiana dominated in Columbus, Ohio at the Big Ten Tournament, but the Hoosiers' trip to Louisville for the NCAA Regional was a different story**

By Ken Bikoff

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times — in that order.

Inconsistency was the calling card of IU baseball during the 2009 campaign, and that issue reared its ugly head during a two-week span that saw the Hoosiers storm to a Big Ten Tournament title one weekend, then flame out in two games during the NCAA Tournament. Indiana's dominating run through the BTT pushed IU to its first appearance in the Tourney since 1996, but an offensive brownout and defensive woes made the Hoosiers' stay a short one.

Despite the quick exit from the NCAA Regional in Louisville, Ky., head coach Tracy Smith did his best to temper his disappointment.

"I don't want to say we're disgusted because that is a strong word, but we are very disappointed in how (we) played," Smith said. "I don't think it was well representative of what we are capable of."

Indiana was outscored 18-2 in its two outings in Louisville after earning the Big Ten's automatic bid by winning the conference tournament. The Hoosiers finished the season 32-27. IU also went 16-7 in Big Ten play, posting the team's best winning percentage in the conference since 1939.

Still, the Hoosiers went into the Big Ten Tournament in Columbus, Ohio, as the No. 3 seed and faced rival Purdue to open the tournament. Pitcher Eric Arnett, who has been IU's ace all season, dominated the Boilermakers by allowing just four hits and one walk while striking out 10 batters in a 9-1 victory. RF Chris Hervey started the Hoosiers off well by drilling a leadoff homer, and he later scored in the third inning to give IU a 2-0 lead.

Indiana exploded in the bottom of the fifth. First, C Josh Phegley reached first on an error. Then, Kipp Schutz doubled to left field, sending Phegley to third. DH Michael Earley then doubled down the left field line, scoring both Phegley and Schutz, and Earley came around to score when 3B Vince Gonzalez doubled to center field. A single by Jake Dunning later scored Gonzalez, and Dunning scored on a double by CF Brian Lambert.

By the time the dust settled, IU led 8-0. Arnett cruised, moving to 12-1 on the year. He faced just 24 batters in seven innings, and relievers Joe Vicini and Joey O'Gara wrapped up the game by giving up a lone run in the final two innings.

One day later vs. Minnesota, Matt Bashore matched Arnett's performance by throwing seven innings of scoreless ball in a 12-3 win over the Golden Gophers. Bashore struck out nine batters and allowed just two hits and two walks.

IU's bats gave Bashore plenty of cushion early in the game. Lambert led off with a single, then 1B Jerrud Sabourin was hit by a pitch. Phegley then singled to center to score Lambert while Sabourin took third. A single by Schutz through the right side of the infield scored Sabourin two batters later, giving IU an early 2-0 lead.

That advantage stretched to 6-0 in the top of the second as Indiana used five hits, including doubles from Dunning, Lambert, Phegley and DH Alex Dickerson to push four runs across the plate. Bashore, meanwhile,

didn't give up a hit until the fifth inning, and he handed a 10-0 lead over to his bullpen. Drew Leininger and Matt Carr handled the mop-up duties to push the Hoosiers to the semifinals.

The Hoosiers didn't slow down in their next matchup vs. No. 27-ranked Ohio State. The Buckeyes jumped out to an early 2-0 lead vs. IU's Blake Monar, who showed some nerves early, but the Hoosiers bounced back in the bottom of the fourth by scoring three runs on five hits to go up 3-2. The Buckeyes left two runners on base in the top of the fifth and were held scoreless, and IU exploded in the bottom of the frame.

Sabourin led off with a single through the left side of the infield. Then, Phegley singled through the right side. A single by Dickerson scored Sabourin, and a single by Schutz to left loaded the bases for Gonzalez. Gonzalez kept the rally going by singling home Phegley. Lambert then was hit by a pitch, which scored Dickerson, and 2B Tyler Rogers cleaned the bases with a triple to left center to bring home Lambert, Gonzalez and Schutz.

The 10-2 lead settled Monar down, and he gave way to Matt Igel with two out in the seventh. O'Gara came on in the eighth to set down the Buckeyes. IU added three more runs in the bottom of the eighth to seal the win.

Minnesota knocked off Ohio State in the loser's bracket to set up a rematch with the Hoosiers in the championship game, and Smith made the unconventional decision to hand the starting assignment to Igel, a true freshman who hadn't started a game all season. Igel rose to the occasion, scattering four hits and allowing just two runs in five innings to help IU to a 13-2 victory.

IU scored two runs in the top of the second, and Sabourin led off the third inning with a homer down the right field line to put Indiana up 3-0. Minnesota answered with a homer in the bottom of the third, but IU wasn't about to let the Gophers rally.

Following singles from Lambert and Rogers, Dunning bunted down the third base line, and a throwing error by Minnesota 3B Kyle Geason allowed Lambert and Rogers to score. A single to left by Hervey scored Dunning, and Hervey later came around to score on a sacrifice fly by Phegley. Igel handed over the pitching duties to Chris Squires to start the sixth inning, and Squires held the Gophers scoreless over the final four innings to earn his eighth save of the season.

Indiana finished the tournament hitting .473 as a team and outscored its opponents 47-9. Bashore was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament for his performance in the second round vs. Minnesota, and Arnett, Gonzalez, Dunning, Schutz and Dickerson all earned All-Tournament honors.

Indiana was handed the No. 4 seed in the Louisville regional by the NCAA, joining Louisville, Middle Tennessee State and Vanderbilt at Jim Patterson Stadium. IU opened vs. the Cardinals May 29, but whatever mojo the Hoosiers boasted during the Big Ten Tournament was left in Columbus.

IU struck first by scoring two runs in the top of the second, but the Cardinals answered by scoring three runs in the bottom of the inning. Indiana committed two errors, leading to the three unearned runs. Another error, this

one by Sabourin, in the bottom of the fifth led to two more unearned runs and gave Louisville a 5-2 lead.

The Cardinals added three insurance runs in the bottom of the eighth to take home an 8-2 win and send Arnett to his first loss since March 7.

"We just didn't play good defense tonight," Smith said. "We didn't deserve to win this game tonight, and Louisville did. We made mistakes tonight we just don't normally make. Baseball is a game of controlled emotion, and we didn't have that tonight."

Louisville's Justin Marks allowed four hits and struck out eight batters in seven innings to score the victory and send Indiana into a second-round matchup with Vanderbilt, which lost 5-4 to Middle Tennessee State.

With the Hoosiers' backs against the wall, Bashore got off to a rocky start, allowing a leadoff homer to Vanderbilt SS Brian Harris. CF Jonathan White then tripled for the Commodores, and he scored on a fielder's choice. A throwing error by Bashore in the bottom of the third led to another Vanderbilt run, and Bashore allowed five runs in the bottom of the fifth to put IU down 8-0.

Vandy scored a run in the sixth and seventh innings while the Hoosier bats remained silent. Commodores P Sonny Gray struck out 10 and scattered seven hits in eight innings to take home a 10-0 victory for Vanderbilt.

"Now I see what teams in the other dugouts, when they are facing Arnett and Bashore, have to deal with all year," Smith said. "(Gray) was pretty dominant today. When you get that type of pitching performance, your margin for error is very, very small...He did a very good job against a team that I think is a pretty good hitting team."

Smith was philosophical about the Hoosiers' best season in a decade coming to such a quick end.

"The reality of college baseball, and really any level of baseball, is that the season ends with a loss for all but one team," Smith said. "It'll make a lot more sense once we get into the summer and hit that recruiting trail a little bit. (We can) say 'You know what, as disappointed as we were, we were Big Ten Champions.'"

"I hope the guys feel that same way once we get away from it. Because right now, I don't want to say we are disgusted or embarrassed, but we just didn't feel we represented what this program is about on the field from a competitive standpoint these last couple of days."

Despite the disappointing end to the season, the Hoosiers are racking up postseason honors. Arnett was named a Louisville Slugger second-team All-American by Collegiate Baseball Newspaper, and he has been named a Pitcher of the Year finalist by the College Baseball Foundation. Arnett is the first player in IU history to be named an All-American. He also finished the season with 109 strikeouts, tying the Indiana single-season record set by Vernon Wilshere in 1936.

Phegley and Arnett were named semifinalists for the Golden Spikes Award, given annually to the best amateur player in baseball, and Schutz was named to the All-Regional team for Louisville after going 5-for-7 at the plate in the two losses. Schutz led the Hoosiers by hitting .392 on the year.



Photo courtesy IU athletics

**All or nothing — IU ace pitcher Eric Arnett stifled Big Ten bats, but he wasn't as successful in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Louisville.**

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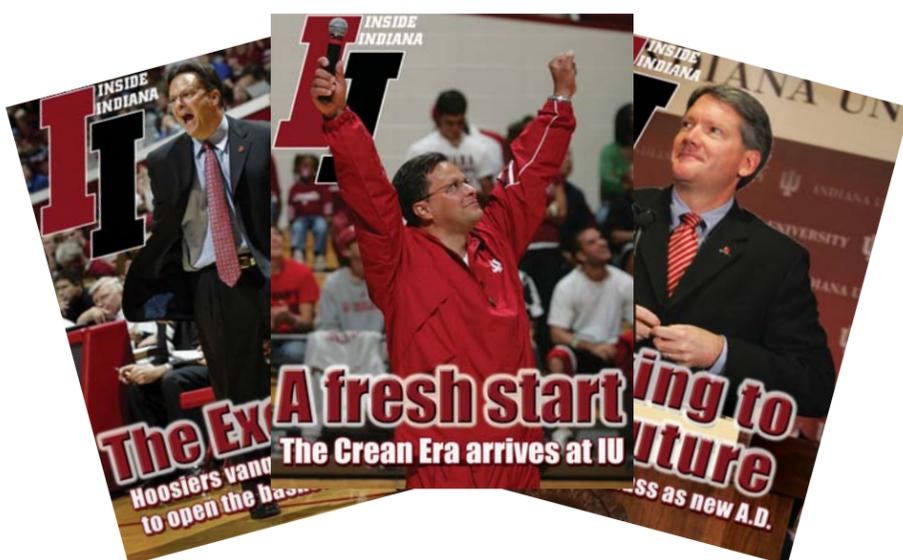
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