

# Hoosier Happenings

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## Player at heart

Roshown McLeod's playing days ended too soon due to an injury, but he's still making his presence felt on the court for the Hoosiers



Photos by A.J. Mast

By Ken Bikoff

From a distance, it simply looked like some of the Hoosiers were staying after practice to get in a little extra work on their game. To a certain extent, that's exactly what it was. But instead of four of IU's young players working out the kinks in their game, the group actually consisted of three current players and one young, energetic and newly-healed assistant coach.

See, Roshown McLeod is making just as much of an adjustment this season as the rest of the Hoosiers. IU's first-year assistant coach is still very much a basketball player at heart, someone who wishes they still could be on the court basking in the cheers of the crowd. At 33, the former first-round NBA draft pick is far from too old to be an effective basketball player, but a nerve injury in his knee led to myriad other leg problems, and he was forced to limp away from the playing side of the game he loves so much in 2002.

That doesn't mean he had to walk away completely. Instead, McLeod jumped into the coaching ranks with both feet. He spent a season as an assistant at Fairfield before coaching on the AAU level. He was added to new Indiana head coach Tom Crean's staff last August, and McLeod quickly made an impact on the new Hoosiers by showing them how to compete at a high level and providing feedback from working with the team on the

court.

McLeod's NBA experience gave him instant credibility with the Hoosier players, and he could name-drop to get their attention when trying to make a point. There's no question that 18-year-old kids will listen a bit harder if their coach suddenly starts talking about Paul Pierce or Allen Iverson or Dikembe Mutombo, players who were either former teammates of McLeod's in the NBA or players he competed against.

Unfortunately, McLeod's time on the court didn't last too long after the Hoosiers opened practice last October. McLeod suffered a torn ligament in his wrist during a drill, and he was forced to undergo surgery.

"We were doing the shell drill, and Matt Roth came up to me and put his hands out," McLeod says. "I bumped him, and it snapped my wrist back. I tore a ligament. It was just a freak accident, and I've probably made that move a million times in my career, and it has never happened. I guess I'm just getting old."

McLeod was forced to the sideline again, but this time Crean made sure McLeod made the most of his opportunity to watch from a distance. Crean used the injury to help mold McLeod into a better coach.

"One of the biggest things I had to learn was to teach and not just show," McLeod says. "I think (the injury)

helped me a little. Coach (Crean) recognized that as soon as I (hurt the wrist), and we had a little talk. He thought it would be good for me to learn how to be hands-on without necessarily being on the floor. I think it helped elevate my ability to see things as a coach as opposed to just doing it, reading it and being able to explain it. I can see it without being on the floor."

Still, getting McLeod back on the floor has been a positive for the Hoosiers. It took eight weeks for the wrist to fully heal following the surgery, and now he's going through eight weeks of rehab. McLeod isn't quite 100 percent, but he's getting there and his presence on the floor is starting to pay some dividends for the players and the other coaches.

"I think it helps immensely because not only is he a very good player, but he's a very tough competitor," says Crean of McLeod's return to active practice on the floor. "The thing he does is he measures who is putting up fight and who is putting up resistance. We always talk about, 'Who can he feel?' I think that's really important in practice. I think it's one of the more valuable ways to coach. When (the coaches) can be on the floor and teach what is going on in the heat of the battle, it is all part of the progression. It's also a part of the progression of him becoming a great coach."

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Photo by A.J. Mast

**Plenty of backup — Tom Crean (front) is counting on assistants Tim Buckley (left), Bennie Seltzer (middle) and McLeod to provide feedback on how IU is progressing.**

McLeod believes the results are showing on the floor because he is teaching the players to be more physical.

"Personally, me being out there and playing against those guys, when I see things that I would do, I can tell them what is going on and what to look for," McLeod says. "It was a little more difficult not being on the floor after suffering the early injury with my wrist. But one of my biggest things, and it's one of the reasons we're getting a chance to compete... Tom (Pritchard's) numbers aren't showing, but the physical presence with him and Nick (Williams) and Verdell (Jones III) is getting better because I screen. I make sure I'm doing what the other team is going to do to us so that in practice they can get a familiarity about what is going on and what it takes to win."

Crean believes the fact McLeod is closer to being a player than a coach allows McLeod to carry a little more weight on the court because his feedback makes more of an impact.

"It's one thing to be called out by your head coach who is standing on the side coaching the team," Crean says. "It's another thing to be called out by someone who is a competitor inside of a practice and will tell everybody what he sees and feels. I think that's really important. I always want to have a well-rounded staff where a minimum of one, but hopefully two (assistants), can really get in and be a part of practice."

McLeod also can relay information to Crean and the rest of the coaches that wouldn't normally show up in practice tapes.

"Being able to relay all that information to Coach is awesome because when I'm not getting hit, I'm able to tell him who is not being as physical as he needs to be for us to play," McLeod says. "I mean, I'm going to hit you. If I don't feel resistance from me hitting you, then we can make those points as far as what it's going to take for us to win."

McLeod has always been about winning. He played his high school ball for Bob Hurley, Sr., at famed St. Anthony High School in New Jersey, and he signed with St. John's out of high school. After two years with the Red Storm, McLeod became the first player to transfer to Duke in Mike Krzyzewski's tenure with the Blue Devils. After sitting out a season, he averaged 11.9

points as a junior and 15.3 points as a senior, helping Duke to a 56-13 record over the two seasons and leading the Blue Devils to the Elite Eight. He was the 20th-overall selection in the 1998 NBA Draft by the Atlanta Hawks, and he averaged 7.2 points in 113 pro games before being forced to retire.

The opportunity to come to Indiana held plenty of appeal, despite the fact the Hoosiers were going to be rebuilding this season. He also jumped at the opportunity to coach with Crean, and he sees plenty of similarities between Crean's style and those of some of the other successful coaches he played for in his career, including NBA Hall-of-Famer Lenny Wilkens.

McLeod says he's excited to have the opportunity to take a little something away from each coaching great he has played or worked for, which will help McLeod develop his own style.

"Having played for Coach Hurley, he was a big-time screamer," McLeod says. "He was a really, really good developer of talent because I didn't start playing basketball until I got to high school. Playing for Coach K, that was another thing that elevated my game — understanding the different positions and being able to put the ball on the floor or shoot the three. It expanded my game. Coach Crean touches on a little bit of those things throughout the season."

"From a philosophy standpoint, it's not really a big difference. The delivery is a little different, but everybody has their own way, and Coach Crean has done a good job of coming close to perfection when it comes to his philosophy and his methods. It's really good for a guy like me to have this opportunity to learn from a guy who has learned from other greats, like Tom Izzo, or been a part of a coaching fraternity with Darren Horn or Ralph Willard and guys like that. Being able to add those philosophies on top of the guys I've learned from... I think I can come up with something that will work for me in building my future as a coach."

McLeod's background as an AAU coach has allowed him to bond with the younger Hoosier players because he is used to being surrounded by athletes who are learning to take the next step in their basketball careers.

"It was really helpful because I got to work with kids from different programs and when you're at this level in

college, you're bringing kids from different walks of life," McLeod says. "You have to be able to mold a new guy or a guy who hasn't had experience at this level and get him to buy into what the ultimate goal is. Having the AAU team really helped me understand the different personalities and getting kids to buy into winning as opposed to just coming in and trying to do what it took for them to get noticed by colleges."

McLeod's eyes light up when he talks about the future of IU basketball. The struggles of this season certainly aren't easy for McLeod — or any of the Hoosiers, for that matter — to swallow, but he says this year's lumps will help keep the team focused down the road. He knows, because his Duke team took its lumps from some of the ACC's best during McLeod's career in Durham.

He talks about the way then-Wake Forest center Tim Duncan dominated the Blue Devils during his college days, and he used the memory of Duncan to motivate himself even after Duncan had moved on to the NBA. He hopes the Hoosiers will do the same thing down the road when the tables start to turn in IU's favor.

"The best thing about being the youngest team in the league is eventually, you become the oldest team in the league," McLeod says. "With that being said, you never forget."

McLeod has been impressed with the way the Hoosiers have stuck together this season, and he's equally impressed with the way IU fans have stuck with the team even as the losses have mounted. For a coach and player who has been in some big-time atmospheres during his career, he says nothing compares to the scene at Assembly Hall on game day.

"This is like nothing I've seen," McLeod says. "I was playing at Duke in 1995 when the team was down because Coach K was sick. That was the year I transferred in. It was similar, but the one thing that is different is the fans are a lot more positive here than they were (in Durham) at that time because they had a bunch of McDonald's All-Americans and they were losing. The expectations for them were a lot higher."

"With us not having those superstar-caliber players, it's a little bit different. The fans have been a little more open to the fact we have to build this from the ground up. It's not like we're losing with McDonald's All-Americans right now. The atmosphere has been phenomenal. I've never seen a team be last in the conference and selling out. I've never seen that in any atmosphere that I've played in, but at the same time, they know that Coach Crean is the right guy for the job and he's building a foundation that is going to get us close to the tradition they've had in the past."

He also appreciates the fans' knowledge of the game.

"The thing I think our fans get a kick out of is how hard we play," McLeod says. "They know we're going to give 100-percent effort, and they cheer on the little things. I think a lot of other places with rich traditions cheer big plays. This is a different place because they cheer the little things on top of cheering the big things so it enhances that atmosphere to another level."

Just how long McLeod will stick around in Bloomington is anyone's guess. Crean certainly is happy to have him working with the team, and he believes McLeod's return to the court as a coach who can fully participate has raised the level of competition in practices. Still, Crean's main goal with McLeod is to help him develop as a coach and eventually move on to bigger things.

"I push him as hard as I push any of the young players because I think that's what is important," Crean says. "He's not just here to be the best assistant he can be. He's here to be the best coach he can be and become a head coach. We had six (assistants who became head coaches) in my time at Marquette, and I don't want to lose that streak of having guys who go out to be head coaches from here. I think that's really important, and I want him to focus on certain aspects every day that help him build his coaching."

McLeod also is stressing to the Hoosiers the importance of working hard not only this year, but beyond. After all, expectations are going to continue to grow for IU, and McLeod wants to make sure his players understand what it will take to develop into the player he eventually became.

"If they don't believe in themselves, then they have no chance," McLeod says. "Just because we have a really good recruiting class coming in next year, that doesn't mean one of these guys can't come in and be one of our top players if they put the work in and if they want it more than the next guy. I think Coach Crean has done a really good job along with the rest of our staff in helping these guys understand the vision that we have, not just for this year, but moving forward. I think the guys are behind it, too."

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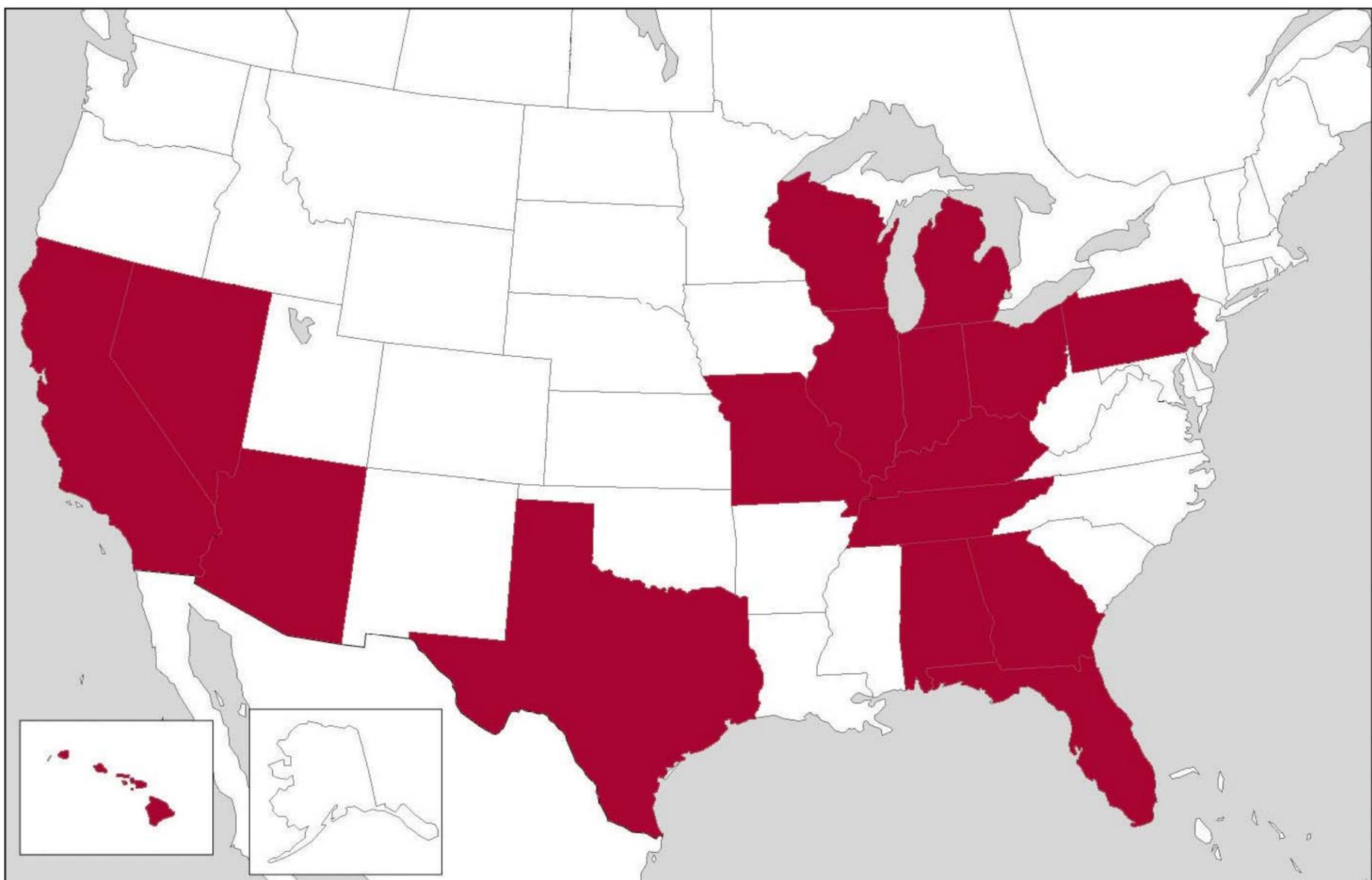
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## Where are the Hoosiers?

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 March athletics

#### Baseball

- March 1 — vs. Cleveland State; Clarksville, Tenn.
- March 3 — at Indiana State
- March 4 — Eastern Michigan
- March 6-8 — at Eagle Invitational; Statesboro, Ga.
- March 10 — Morehead State
- March 11 — at Kentucky
- March 14 — vs. Bowling Green; Winter Haven, Fla.
- March 15 — vs. Jacksonville State; Winter Haven, Fla.
- March 16 — vs. Northern Iowa; Winter Haven, Fla.
- March 17 — vs. Eastern Illinois; Lakeland, Fla.
- March 18 — at Stetson
- March 19 — vs. Hartford; Lakeland, Fla.
- March 20 — vs. Ohio State; Winter Haven, Fla.
- March 21 — vs. CCSU; ; Winter Haven, Fla.
- March 25 — at Xavier
- March 27-29 — Minnesota
- March 31 — Chicago State

#### Basketball

- March 3 — Michigan State
- March 7 or 8 — at Wisconsin

#### Golf

- March 22-24 — Collegiate Match Play Championship; San Diego, Calif.

#### Tennis

- March 1 — Southern Illinois; Butler
- March 7 — Northwestern
- March 8 — Wisconsin
- March 17 — at Fresno State
- March 25 — at Louisville
- March 28 — Purdue
- March 31 — Illinois

#### Track & Field

- Feb. 28-March 1 — Big Ten Indoor Championships; University Park, Pa.
- March 6-7 — Alex Wilson Invitational; South Bend, Ind.
- March 13-14 — NCAA Indoor Championships; College Station, Tex.
- March 27-29 — at Alabama Relays; Tuscaloosa, Ala.

#### Wrestling

- March 7 — Big Ten Championship, University Park, Pa.
- March 19 — NCAA Championship, St. Louis, Mo.

Dates subject to change

### Women's March athletics

#### Basketball

- March 1 — Michigan

#### Golf

- March 16-18 — Dr. Donnis Thompson Invitational; Honolulu, Hawai'i
- March 28-29 — Mountain View Collegiate; Tucson, Ariz.

#### Rowing

- March 21 — at Clemson
- March 28 — Buffalo; Eastern Michigan
- March 29 — vs. Notre Dame, Purdue; Indianapolis, Ind.

#### Softball

- March 1 — vs. Cal Poly; Fullerton, Calif.
- March 13 — vs. Florida Gulf Coast; vs. BYU; Clearwater, Fla.
- March 14 — vs. Hofstra; vs. Ball State; Clearwater, Fla.
- March 15 — vs. Florida International; Clearwater, Fla.
- March 21-22 — Minnesota
- March 24 — at Louisville
- March 26 — Indiana State
- March 28-29 — Wisconsin
- March 31 — at Evansville

#### Tennis

- March 7 — at Illinois
- March 13 — at Wisconsin

#### Track & Field

- March 14 — at Northwestern
- March 16-18 — Las Vegas Invitational; Las Vegas, Nev.
- March 26 — Notre Dame
- March 28 — at Purdue

#### Track & Field

- Feb. 28-March 1 — Big Ten Indoor Championships; University Park, Pa.
- March 6-7 — Alex Wilson Invitational; South Bend, Ind.
- March 13-14 — NCAA Indoor Championships; College Station, Tex.
- March 27-29 — at Alabama Relays; Tuscaloosa, Ala.

#### Water Polo

- March 1 — vs. Santa Clara; Santa Cruz, Calif.
- March 7 — vs. Washington & Jefferson; vs. Chatham; vs. Grove City; Ann Arbor, Mich.
- March 8 — vs. Penn State; Ann Arbor, Mich.
- March 14 — vs. Cal State Bakersfield; at Loyola Marymount; Los Angeles, Calif.
- March 15 — vs. Cal State Northridge; vs. Cal State San Bernardino; Los Angeles, Calif.
- March 20 — vs. Brown; San Diego, Calif.
- March 21 — vs. Hawai'i; vs. San Jose State; San Diego, Calif.
- March 22 — vs. California; at San Diego State
- March 28 — Sonoma State; Michigan
- March 29 — Maryland

Dates subject to change

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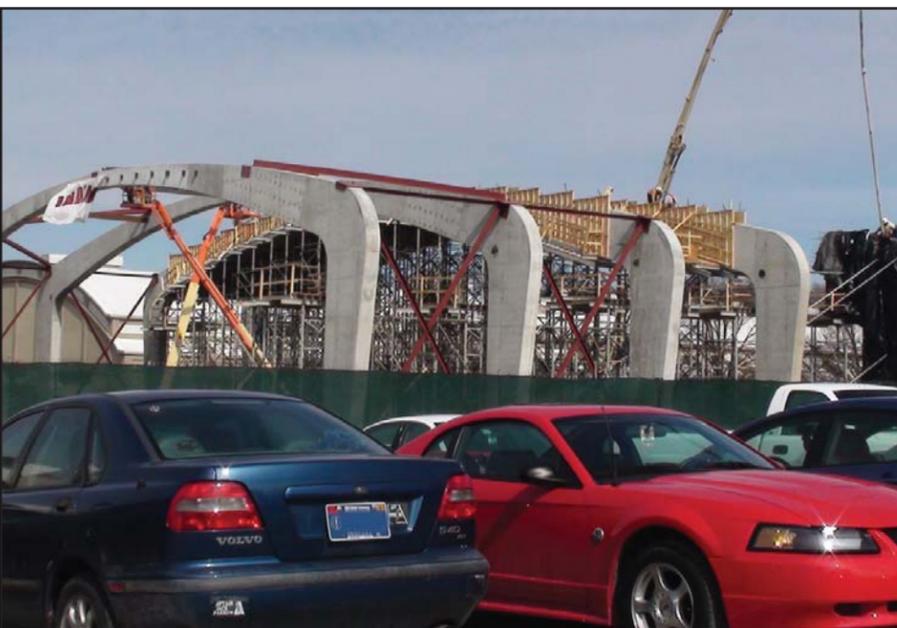
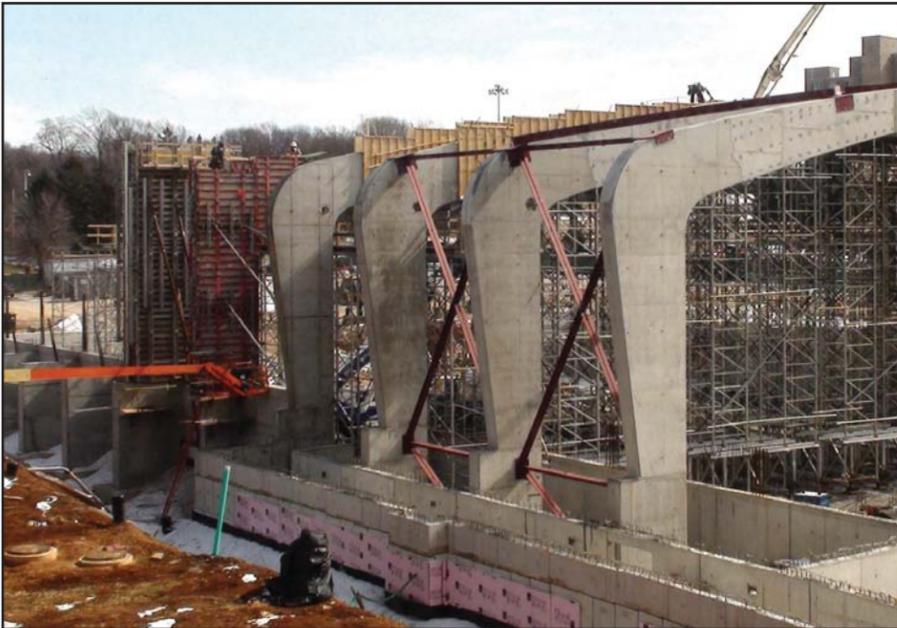
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## Practice facility construction update

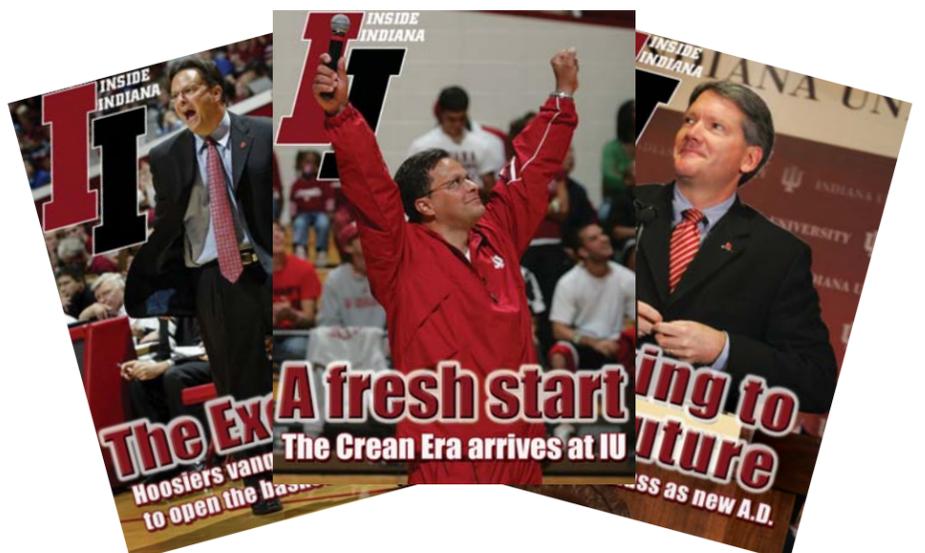
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