



**NCAA TOURNAMENT**



Associated Press

Indiana was loose during its practice Thursday before tonight's game against North Carolina. "We know how great a team Carolina is," Indiana guard Yogi Ferrell said. "I feel our team is ready."

# IU ready for best shot

Hoosiers up for another test in No. 1 Tar Heels

**CHRIS GOFF**  
*The Journal Gazette*

PHILADELPHIA — Don't blare the theme from "Rocky."

But if prognosticators want to make No. 5 seed Indiana a big underdog tonight against North Carolina, the top seed in the East Region, guard Robert Johnson is fine with that.

"We've grown used to this throughout the year, people overlooking us, not expecting us to play well against the better teams," he said. "Being in the Sweet 16, it doesn't get better. It's fun playing teams like that. They are Carolina. But we are Indiana, too."

Johnson, a starter battling a high-ankle sprain, said he would likely be a game-time

decision once the Indiana staff sees how he looks in warmups at the Wells Fargo Center.

What Johnson clearly wants to get across, though, is how much he wants to play. After all, this is the kind of game everyone wants to play in.

It will be the third NCAA Tournament meeting between the Hoosiers (27-7) and Tar Heels (30-6). Their first two were classics: a national title game in 1981 and a Sweet 16 clash in 1984, both won by IU.

"You know about Michael Jordan playing his final game against Indiana in 1984 and stuff like that," Carolina guard Marcus Paige said. "I know it was two of the best coaches of all time (Indiana's Bob Knight

and the Tar Heels' Dean Smith) coaching against each other."

But that was then.

What we have now is an Atlantic Coast Conference champion on a seven-game win streak facing a team that just knocked off No. 4 seed Kentucky in the second round.

What we have now is a showdown of highly ranked offenses — Indiana entered this round first in the nation with an average of 116.9 points per 100 possessions, UNC sixth (113.7 points per 100 trips).

"They play fast, up and down, kind of like Iowa," Hoosiers point guard Yogi Ferrell said. "They have great inside presence that

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**INDIANA**

**vs. North Carolina**  
**When:** 9:57 p.m. today  
**Where:** Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia  
**TV:** TBS  
**Radio:** 1250 AM

**SEE ALSO**

- IU-UNC matchups **Page 2B**
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- NCAA roundup **Page 5B**

**ON THE WEB**

To watch video interviews with Indiana players, go to "Eyeing IU" at www.journalgazette.net; for more on the **NCAA Tournament** including a scoreboard, stories and interactive features, go to www.journalgazette.net/sports

# Familiar foes Notre Dame, Stanford set for new test

**STEVE MEGARGEE**  
*Associated Press*

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Notre Dame and Stanford aren't looking at today's game as a rematch, even though they're meeting in an NCAA women's Lexington Regional semifinal for the second straight season.

Both teams say their rosters have changed since their last matchup, making it hard to read too much into Notre Dame's 81-60 victory in the 2015 Oklahoma City Regional semifinal.

"I think we're both kind of two different teams," Notre Dame guard Lindsay Allen said.

The winner of today's game faces either No. 3 seed Kentucky (25-7) or No. 7 seed Washington (24-10) on Sunday with a Final Four bid at stake. The top-seeded Irish (33-1) are seeking their sixth straight Final Four appearance, while No. 4 seed Stanford is seeking its 13th overall Final Four berth.

The Cardinal insist they aren't talking much about avenging last season's loss.

"We really don't think about revenge," Stanford forward Erica McCall said. "We're thinking it's a completely different game with two different teams, two different game plans."

Stanford's plan should start with trying to contain Allen, who scored a career-high 28 points against the Cardinal last season.

Notre Dame's first two tournament games have shown the many different ways Allen can help the Irish win. In a first-round blowout of North Carolina A&T, Allen didn't take a shot, but dished out 10 assists. She followed that up by contributing 22 points, seven assists and a career-high five steals against Indiana.

"I think the thing that makes her the best point guard in the country is she takes advantage of what the defense gives her, and she does whatever we need her to do on that particular day," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said.

Notre Dame's status as the No. 1 seed puts the Cardinal (26-7) in an unfamiliar underdog role. Stanford's players say they're embracing that approach.

Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said her team feels as if it's playing with "house money" after needing Lili Thompson's 3-point play with 8.2 seconds left to escape with a 66-65 second-round victory over South Dakota State.

"Some (of us) call ourselves the 'party crashers,' the team that's just going to come in there and crash

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Associated Press

Lindsay Allen, left, is "the best point guard in the country" because she "does whatever we need her to do on that particular day," Irish coach Muffet McGraw said.

# A lot of love in Philadelphia

Irish, Badgers show respect before Sweet 16

**TERRY HUTCHENS**  
*For The Journal Gazette*

PHILADELPHIA — Wisconsin coach Greg Gard said that it always seems like Notre Dame is a team you don't hear much about on Selection Sunday, but then you get to the second weekend of the tournament and the Irish are always there.

For Gard and the seventh-seeded Badgers, not

**NOTRE DAME**

**vs. Wisconsin**  
**When:** 7:27 p.m. today  
**Where:** Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia  
**TV:** TBS

only is Notre Dame there but it's also the next obstacle in the way of Wisconsin's surprising NCAA Tournament run.

"I think (Notre Dame coach Mike Brey) has done a great job of really identifying the type of student-athlete he needs at Notre Dame to fit his system," Gard said.

"And much like us, the names change, the numbers change but the production in terms of what they do on the floor together and how they grow together, I think doesn't change. I think there are a lot of similarities between the programs."

Tonight when Wisconsin (22-12) and Notre Dame (23-11) meet in the East Regional semifinals at the Wells Fargo Center, the biggest similarity is that few expected either team to get this far. With Wisconsin, most believed that second-seeded Xavier would end its season but the Badgers won, 66-63.

With Notre Dame, most believed third-seeded West Virginia would be waiting for the Irish in the second round. But the Mountaineers were upset by 14th seeded Stephen F. Austin 70-56 in the first round. Notre Dame then beat the Lumberjacks 76-75 to advance to Philadelphia.

That set up what could be called the unofficial ACC/Big Ten Challenge Round II tonight as the Badgers play the Irish, followed by Indiana and North Carolina.

Brey said he has always

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# Player shuffle could pinch Komets' playoff push

**JUSTIN A. COHN**  
*The Journal Gazette*

Only eight games remain in the Komets' 64th regular season and they are atop the Midwest Division, in line for the second or third seed in the Western Conference playoffs. Yet some of the players who are helping the Komets to this success might not be a part of the post-season run.

San Antonio of the higher-level American Hockey League has six players that have played this season with the Komets — Will Weber, Troy Bourke, Garrett Thompson, Spencer Martin, Trevor Cheek and Alex Belzile — and all could be returned before the ECHL playoffs begin. The Komets could also get

back Mike Embach, who is injured but with Chicago of the AHL, while Brett Perlini and Brock Montgomery are on the Komets' injured list.

The Komets (36-20-8) are on a 5-1-3 run heading into tonight's game at Memorial Coliseum against the Toledo Walleye (41-18-5), and Fort Wayne is working on building more momentum and chemistry before the regular-season finale April 9, but the dynamic could drastically change if San Antonio misses the AHL playoffs, as expected.

"You get some new guys here to fill in and some don't work out and it's kind of a revolving door, which sucks," said Shawn Szydowski, who had the overtime goal in Wednesday's 1-0 victory over the Wheeling Nailers. "Obviously,

**KOMETES**

**vs. Toledo**  
**When:** 8 p.m. today  
**vs. Evansville**  
**When:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday  
**Radio:** 1190 AM, 107.5 FM

ly, when guys come here and play for your team, you like them and you want to build a friendship. It's tough getting close to guys, especially now when you know how many could be coming back (from the AHL). You don't know who is going to be safe and that's tough, but we've got a good group that's keeping their heads in it. Despite the situation, they're working their (butts) off and that's what

we're looking for."

Over the last month, the Komets have brought in players such as Daniel Barczuk, Mason Baptista, Leo Thomas, Taylor Crunk and Austin Sevalrud through trades, free-agent signings and call-ups from the lower-level Southern Professional Hockey League. But the Komets have an affiliation with the NHL's Colorado Avalanche and San Antonio, so even if they didn't want to upend the chemistry, they have to give deference to the Avs' prospects.

"It's great on one aspect that you know you're probably going to be getting guys back. But then, you get them back with only a day or two to practice and all of a sudden you're back on the ice (for a game)," Komets

coach Gary Graham said. "Then, the guys who have been scratching and clawing and battling like crazy for you, you have to look them in the face and say, 'Hey, you might not have an opportunity here.' But that's the business. The guys know it."

Graham said the Komets focus on "taking care of the now" and he credited the players for hustling despite the uncertainty.

"They're doing everything they can right now to help us win some games," he said.

**Note:** Mason Geertsen has been reassigned to the Komets from San Antonio of the AHL. ... The Komets released forward Patrick McCadden, who was scoreless with 15 penalty minutes in seven games. jcohn@jg.net