

THE OFFICIAL DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE WISCONSIN BADGERS

WARSIITY

2015

VOL. 5 NO. 29

A group of Wisconsin Badgers basketball players in white jerseys with red accents, standing on a basketball court. The players are wearing jerseys with numbers 24, 21, 3, 30, and 10. They are looking upwards and pointing, suggesting a celebratory or motivational moment. The background shows a crowd of spectators in a gymnasium.

MADE FOR MARCH

THE EXPERTS AGREE: WISCONSIN CAN WIN WHEN IT COUNTS



COVER STORY

MARCHING ORDERS

Seeding and sites won't be set until Selection Sunday, which gives Wisconsin three days in Chicago to make its closing arguments to the NCAA tournament selection committee.



MEN'S HOCKEY

GREATER GOALS

Joel Rumpel has helped the Badgers to a pair of league tournament titles, but the senior goaltender's impact is even bigger off the ice.

LUCAS AT LARGE

SPRING FORWARD

Michael Caputo missed football enough to strap on his helmet just to get the feeling, but his wait to get back on the field is over.



FEATURES

IN [FOCUS]

The week's best photos

LUCAS AT LARGE

Badgers set for spring

THE VOICE

Plenty to play for in Chicago

BY THE NUMBERS

Facts and figures on UW

WHAT TO WATCH

Hockey, hoops and more

ASK THE BADGERS

Favorite comfort food?

BADGERING

Joseph LaBate (Men's Hockey)

INSIDE MEN'S HOCKEY

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

VARSIITY

Wisconsin Athletic Communications

Kellner Hall, 1440 Monroe St.,
Madison, WI 53711

VIEW ALL ISSUES

Brian Lucas

Director of Athletic Communications

Julia Hujet

Editor/Designer

Brian Mason

Managing Editor

Mike Lucas

Senior Writer

Matt Lepay

Columnist

Drew Scharenbroch

Video Production

Amy Eager

Advertising

Drew Pittner-Smith

Distribution

Contributors

Paul Capobianco, Tam Flarup, Kelli Grashel, A.J. Harrison,
Brandon Harrison, Patrick Herb, Diane Nordstrom

Photography

David Stluka, Neil Ament, Greg Anderson, Steve Gotter,
Mike Bradley, Cal Sport Media, Icon Sportswire

Cover Photo: David Stluka

Problems or Accessibility Issues?

VarsityMag@UWBadgers.com

© 2015 Board of Regents of the
University of Wisconsin System.
All rights reserved worldwide.



Caputo ready to take first step toward 2015

Wisconsin safety Michael Caputo wasn't sure how many days had passed since Wisconsin shocked Auburn in the Outback Bowl. To him, it felt like nine weeks going on 10 months. Or something like that. All he knew for sure was that it had been "too long" since he was last in pads. So he felt like he had to scratch where it itched. "The other day, I put on my helmet," he said. "It felt good. I'm ready."

Ready for the opening of spring practice Sunday. When the Badgers hit the field, it will signal another stage in the Paul Chryst era; not that the taciturn Chryst would ever refer to himself or his first-year UW program in such a manner. Era? That would be an error, at least to Chryst's thinking because it would be casting too much attention in the wrong direction, namely towards him; reticence rules.

This is not to say Chryst doesn't have something to say, a message. "He basically puts into words what we all want," Caputo said. "He helps us realize what we can achieve if we put forth the effort, if we come together as a team, if we just go out and work hard every day. We have things in the palms of our hands in terms of where we can get at the end of the season. We can be as good as we want to be."

By all accounts, the Badgers completed a very successful winter conditioning cycle under the guidance and old-school leadership of strength coach Ross Kolodziej, a former UW defensive lineman. Caputo gave it high marks. "It was definitely a change of pace in my eyes," he said of the difference in what is now being demanded of the players in the weight room compared to the last two offseasons.

"It was a kind of a flashback to a couple of years ago when we had Ben Herbert," said Caputo in reference to the operation under Herbert, who worked for Bret Bielema and accompanied him to Arkansas. "This is more what I'm used to, the philosophy. I feel like he (Kolodziej) will put us in the right spot to move forward; how he runs things is really beneficial to the players and good for Wisconsin."

Herbert was also a former UW letterwinner. Many have resurfaced in different roles since Chryst's return. Ethan Armstrong is assisting with the linebackers and Antonio Fenelus with the secondary. "It's weird, I just played with Ethan a few years ago," Caputo said. "I played with Fenelus for a year as a freshman. I'm only 22 but it makes me feel old; it makes the senior feeling a little bit worse."

Most fifth-year seniors, like Caputo, feel the same thing; the generation gap between

themselves and the younger players on the roster. But this is also where Caputo is most valuable in leading by example. "Mentally, I'm at a point where I want to really push these guys to step up," he said. "I want to bring them up to the speed of the game. My thing this spring is more of a leadership role."

But he's just 'bout that action, boss; he's all about getting better. Caputo has already earmarked areas where he needs to improve. "Watching my film from last year," he said, "and going over a lot of things that were a negative, believe it or not, I need to work on tackling a little better in terms of form and just keeping my head up. Another thing is working on my back-pedal and staying deep."

Caputo, who led the Badgers in tackling last season, is going through yet another coaching transition at safety to yet another position coach, his fourth in five years. DeMontie Cross, Chris Ash, and Bill Busch preceded Daronte' Jones who was hired by Chryst. Jones, a former Morgan State player and Canadian Football League assistant, coached the Hawaii secondary the past three seasons.

"There have definitely been positives with each coach I've been with because we hire top of the line coaches at Wisconsin," Caputo said. "Coach Jones is a good guy; he has really de-



veloped a relationship with us and we haven't been on the field yet. You just get that feeling being around him. It's hard to explain but it's that feeling he knows what he's talking about and he's all about the players."

Defensively, the Badgers have some veterans, some experienced players at cornerback (Sojourn Shelton, Darius Hillary, Devin Gauden) and outside linebacker (Vince Biegel, Joe Schobert). The biggest question mark going into the spring is inside linebacker with the graduation losses of Marcus Trotter and Derek Landisch. Both were playmakers leaving a sizeable hole to fill.

"You can't replace those guys, you really can't; I said the same thing about Chris Borland and Dez Southward the year before," Caputo noted. "What I've tried to emphasize to the young guys is you have to carve out your own legacy. You have to make your own footprints. There are a lot of guys that I'm anxious to see this spring, not that I'm an expert or anything. But how are they going to respond?"

Caputo made mention of two of the linebacker candidates: junior Leon Jacobs ("We all know what the guy is athletically, this is his chance to rise up and seize the opportunity") and redshirt freshman T.J. Edwards ("He definitely has a knack for the

football, he's really savvy"). It's too early to tell how an early enrollee, freshman Nick Thomas, will mesh with the group because he is so young, so raw.

But another early enrollee, Serge Trezy, a junior college transfer, could be an early contributor. "He's going to be a great asset to how we do things on defense," Caputo said, "mainly because the kid (he paused upon catching himself) did I say kid? He's my age, but



he runs like a gazelle. He definitely has the athletic ability, the built and the strength. He has good feet and a good head on his shoulders."

Caputo figures that Trezy, who played defensive end and running back at Eastern Arizona, could be utilized in a variety of ways. "I see him as a safety, dime, nickel, maybe even a corner; that's how I would kind of picture him," he said. "It will be fun to have him on the field this spring. The scheme will come for him — that comes with getting reps. He will be exciting to watch."

When asked about quarterback/safety Tanner McEvoy and where he might be lining up, Caputo said that McEvoy has been attending meetings on offense and defense. "I really haven't talked to him about what they want to do with him," he said. "I'm not too worried if he switches back and forth because I know that he's going to do well wherever they've got him."

In so many words, then, in recognizing McEvoy's versatility — he played safety in the bowl game without a hitch — Caputo was tipping his hat, er, helmet to him; the helmet that he has been wearing recently to get back in the mood for football.

"I missed it really bad," he said.

The wait is over Sunday. ■



Seeding scenarios will play out this week

Before the Badgers closed out the Big Ten basketball regular season at Ohio State, a theme question posed to some of the players was whether coach Bo Ryan would rest his regulars. Wisconsin had secured the outright conference title at Minnesota, so it begged the question — will the coach go easy on the starters in Columbus?

Right.

Even those with cameras and microphones, including the person who asked the question, could hardly keep from laughing. He knew. The players knew. They all knew. Because they know Bo.

For the record, in the Badgers' 72-48 romp of the Buckeyes, Bronson Koenig logged 36 minutes. Josh Gasser played 34, while Sam Dekker and Frank Kaminsky played 32 and 31 minutes, respectively. The one starter with a lighter workload was Nigel Hayes, who was on floor for 25 minutes, and only nine in the first half as he picked up two fouls.

Also, it helped that Duje Dukan knocked down three shots in the first half, while Zak Showalter and Vitto Brown turned in some good work off the bench as well.

Still, it was mostly business as usual for the starting five. In Ryan's World, if they are going to keep score, you play all out.

Besides, as Kaminsky re-

marked, "We're not the Spurs," referring to San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich's tendency to rest his regulars from time to time during the grueling NBA regular season.

While that works well for Pop, the NBA is different from college basketball. Ryan is a staunch believer that every game has meaning. For the Badgers this week, that could be especially true.

IT IS FUN STUFF.
IT IS EVEN MORE FUN TO
KNOW THE BADGERS ARE
INVOLVED — FOR THE
17TH STRAIGHT YEAR.

As hoops fans prepare for the conference tournament, there is plenty of talk about seeding for the NCAA tournament. From now until Selection Sunday, bracketology reaches its peak. The best known of the bunch, ESPN's Joe Lunardi and CBS Sports' Jerry Palm, both have the Badgers has a No. 2 seed in the Midwest Region. The top seed is — you guessed it — Kentucky.

This has sparked a fair amount of debate regarding the selection committee's preference to reward higher seeds by having them play as close to home as possible. In this case, close to home means Cleveland for the Sweet 16 and regional final.

As of now, many are of the opinion that the Badgers deserve better than having to draw Kentucky anywhere short of the Final Four. If the tournament field was formed by seeding 1 through 68, surely the Badgers would be slotted a better position than No. 8 (with the seemingly safe assumption that unbeaten Kentucky would be the top overall seed).

It is an easy topic for talk show hosts and columnists. I understand where they are coming from, but who knows what will happen between now and then?

With a good weekend in Chicago, maybe the Badgers end up as a No. 1 seed. How will Villanova, Virginia and Duke fair in their conference tournament games? If any of them lose, how might that alter the seeding?

It makes for an entertaining week of college hoops.

Wisconsin and Kentucky could very well end up in the Midwest, but as we have seen in March, anything can happen. Seemingly invincible teams can become vulnerable. Remember the Badgers had to work like crazy to beat Oregon in Milwaukee. Who had UConn winning the title last year? Is there another team very few people are talking about ready to make a deep run?

It is fun stuff. It is even more fun to know the Badgers are involved — for the 17th straight year. ■

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COMFORT FOOD?



MACY OSWALD
Junior • Softball

“ I like to make a white bean chili soup in the Crock-pot. Basically I eat carbs, just lots of carbs.”



AIDEN CAVALLINI
Soph. • Men's Hockey

“ There's so many of them (laughing). I always get the spicy chicken sandwich from Chik-fil-A. You have to ask for extra Chik-fil-A Sauce with waffle fries and their home-made lemonade. Whenever I'm back home (Barrington, Illinois), I always go there. I don't know what it is about it, but I love it.”



EDDIE WAJDA III
Freshman • Men's Golf

“ My favorite comfort food is lasagna because it reminds me of my mom's cooking. I had lasagna last week at one of the dining halls but it did not compare to when I'm at home. My mom's food is definitely something I miss when I am in Madison.”



DANI STEINBERG
Soph. • Women's Rowing

“ My favorite comfort food is ordering something from Wings Over Madison because it gives me a little taste of happiness during the dreary winter season in the erg room. My favorite flavor is sweet chili, but all the flavors are good.”



JOSEPH LABATE

Senior forward and assistant captain **Joseph LaBate** plays his final weekend at the Kohl Center in the Cardinal and White. He is one of six seniors and is also one of six UW players that calls Minnesota home, including freshman Cullen Hurley, who is also from Eagan. The 6-4, 210-pound forward leads all current Badgers with 31 goals, 50 assists and 81 points in 147 career games. LaBate is a draft pick of the NHL's Vancouver Canucks, which took him in the fourth round (101st overall) in the 2011 NHL Entry Draft.

What is your routine on a typical game day?

"Most game days I do the exact same thing. If it (the game) is on a Friday we have a team breakfast and pre-game skate. I go to my classes, then we have lunch as a team and after I go home around one o'clock and nap. I'm usually one of the first guys to the rink. I take my suit off and get into my warmups. I have my pre-game snack at the rink, start taping my sticks and start getting mentally ready for the game."

How would you describe your style of play?

"Obviously I'm a big forward. I like to use my size to my advantage. I can move around the ice pretty well and I have a good set of hands. I feel like I have a good touch with the puck. I can shoot the puck well. I try to use my big body and move my feet to create open ice for myself. I like to get on the forecheck and cause a little bit of havoc there. I think when

ALL ABOUT JOSEPH

Year: Senior

Major: Economics

Height/Weight: 6-4 / 210

Position: Forward

Hometown: Eagan, Minn.

High School: Academy of Holy Angels

QUICK Qs for JOSEPH

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

"Sushi. It's been one of my go-to's."

Favorite TV show? "How I Met Your Mother. I've seen every episode and can follow along whenever it's on. I absolutely loved *Boy Meets World* growing up."

Favorite vacation spot? "Southern California. The past two years I've gone to visit one of my best friends (former Badger and current Carolina minor-league prospect) Brendan Woods who lived there."

Best thing about Minnesota? "The four seasons and the nice people there."

Favorite sport besides hockey? "My roommate Eddie Wittchow just started getting me into watching football. In the summer, I like to play golf with my buddies."

- SCROLL FOR MORE -

BEST TO

IMPRESS

A photograph of two Wisconsin Badgers basketball players shaking hands on the court. The player on the left is seen from the back, wearing a white jersey with the number 15. The player on the right is facing forward, wearing a white jersey with "WISCONSIN" and the number 44. The background is a blurred crowd in a basketball arena.

WITH NCAA SITES AND SEEDINGS STILL UP IN THE AIR, THE EXPERTS AGREE: **WISCONSIN COMES TO CHICAGO FULLY CAPABLE OF CLAIMING THE BIG TEN TOURNAMENT TITLE AND SENDING A STRONG SIGNAL ON SELECTION SUNDAY.**

BY MIKE LUCAS
UWBADGERS.COM



Ninety minutes before Sunday's tip-off between Wisconsin and Ohio State, CBS analyst Bill Raftery was merrily holding court in his office: a courtside seat in a basketball arena, Value City Arena.

Paired with network royalty, Jim Nantz, a play-by-play voice unlike any other, Raftery couldn't resist taking a jab at his new partner after a 1986 throwback shot of the two appeared on a monitor.

"It's amazing, but he has really aged, hasn't he?" Raftery cracked.

In a sense, Raftery, who's five weeks shy of his 72nd birthday, is just now coming of age in that he will be joining the 55-year-old Nantz on CBS's Final Four broadcasting team.

Raftery has replaced Greg Anthony, who was suspended by CBS and Turner Sports following his arrest for soliciting prostitution. A year ago, Anthony took over for Clark Kellogg as lead analyst.

For a little over two decades, Raftery has been one of the radio voices of the Final Four while also teaming on telecasts of the NCAA tourna-

ment with longtime friend and associate Vern Lundquist.

Given his vast experience, his hoop instincts, Raftery was asked Sunday about the ingredients that factor into making a deep run in March. What's his recipe for a Final Four team?

"A mix of Kaminsky and D'Angelo Russell," he said with a twinkle in his eye. "How's that?"

That would be a feast since Wisconsin's Frank Kaminsky was just named the Player of the Year in the Big Ten and Russell, the precocious Ohio State guard, was selected as Freshman of the Year.

Making sure his one-liner wasn't misconstrued as a slap at the UW guards, Raftery stressed, "I love their backcourt and the way they compete and the leadership of Josh Gasser.

"Hopefully, they'll get Traevon (Jackson) back because they'd be tough come (NCAA) tournament time. If healthy, it would give them a guy who can penetrate and control the game.

"But I don't think Bo (Ryan) would trade anybody that he has right now."

Nantz and Raftery will be at courtside Satur-

day and Sunday for the Big Ten tournament at Chicago's United Center. The Wisconsin-Ohio State game was their tune-up.

Raftery, a former Seton Hall head coach, is not the only newcomer to the Final Four crew. Grant Hill, the former Dukie, has taken over as an analyst for Steve Kerr, now the Golden State Warriors' head coach.

"The game today (Sunday) is big because if they could run the table they would be in serious consideration for a No. 1 seed," Raftery was saying before the Badgers crushed the Buckeyes, 72-48.

"Will they be picked for a No. 1 seed? It remains to be seen. But they're just a very difficult match. They're sound, there are no weaknesses. They can play any speed, they can play any way.

"They can play half-court or they can score early on the clock. They just know how to play."

And for that knowledge, that know-how, Raftery credited Ryan, the ageless Wisconsin coach.

"I think everybody who played high school basketball finds some of his high school coach in Bo," said Raftery, a product of St. Cecilia High in Kearny, New Jersey. "He's so fundamental and fundamentally sound.

"It's a basic game and I love how the team coaches itself. By that, I mean Bo has taught them how to read situations and respond. That epitomizes a Hall of Fame coach."

Referencing Ryan's four Division III national championship teams at UW-Platteville, Raftery emphasized, "Even if he didn't do what he's doing at Wisconsin, he's a Hall of Fame coach."

Based on what Ryan has been able to do with the Badgers over

BILL RAFTERY:

"Will they be picked for a No. 1 seed? It remains to be seen. But they're just a very difficult match. They're sound, there are no weaknesses. They can play any speed, they can play any way."



DAVID STLUKA



the last 14 seasons, it leads Raftery to believe that he wouldn't have any trouble adjusting if the NCAA adopts a 30-second shot clock.

"You take what he has done here (Wisconsin) and his evolution as a coach towards the talent he has," Raftery said, "it proves the flexibility that he has in how he analyzes the game.

"They would still get the ball side-to-side as they always do. They would still be busy cutting and screening as they always do. Only they would do it quicker (with a shorter clock)."

After winning the regular season championship, the Badgers are the No. 1 seed going into the conference tournament, which they've won twice — 2004 and 2008 — since its inception in 1998.

Both title wins came over Illinois at what was then Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. The Badgers have reached the finals at the United Center three times and lost all three (2005, 2007, 2013).

Last season, No. 2 seed Wisconsin beat No. 7 Minnesota, 80-55, in the quarterfinals before losing to No. 3 Michigan State, 83-75. The Spartans went on to defeat No. 1 Michigan in the title

game.

The Badgers went on to the Final Four.

It has always begged the question, "What bearing does success or failure in a conference tournament have on the success or failure of a team in the NCAA tournament?"

Raftery remembered covering a late season game between Villanova and Pittsburgh in 1985. "Rollie Massimino was so upset," he said, "that he yanked his starters with 18 minutes to go."

Pitt embarrassed Nova, 85-62. But the wily Massimino, a veteran coach, knew that he had the attention of his players, who bounced back in the Big East tournament with a win over Pittsburgh.

After losing to St. John's, Villanova entered the Big Dance with a 19-10 record and a No. 8 seed. It was the first year that the tournament expanded to 64 and the last one played without a shot clock.

The Wildcats ended up making history by winning six games in March and an NCAA title.

So what does a Final Four team look like? Especially on Selection Sunday?

"What I find, occasionally, it's the teams that

get hot,” Raftery said. “But I’ve also seen teams get into their conference tournament and slip on the banana peel.

“They get three to four days off but they practice and their coach gets them back. So it’s different for every Final Four team.

“It’s what you know about your team,” he said, putting the onus on the coaches, “and what you know your team can handle — how they cope with success and failure.”

Raftery knows enough about the Badgers to suggest they have the look of a Final Four team.

“I just think they’re mentally tough, they play together, which all good teams do,” he said. “They seem to really care about each other. You read the different articles and there’s a kinship among them.”

He also knows that all the pressure is riding on No. 1 Kentucky. “They will have the ‘X’ on their back,” he said, “much like Wisconsin does all week (in the Big Ten tourney). So how do you respond?”

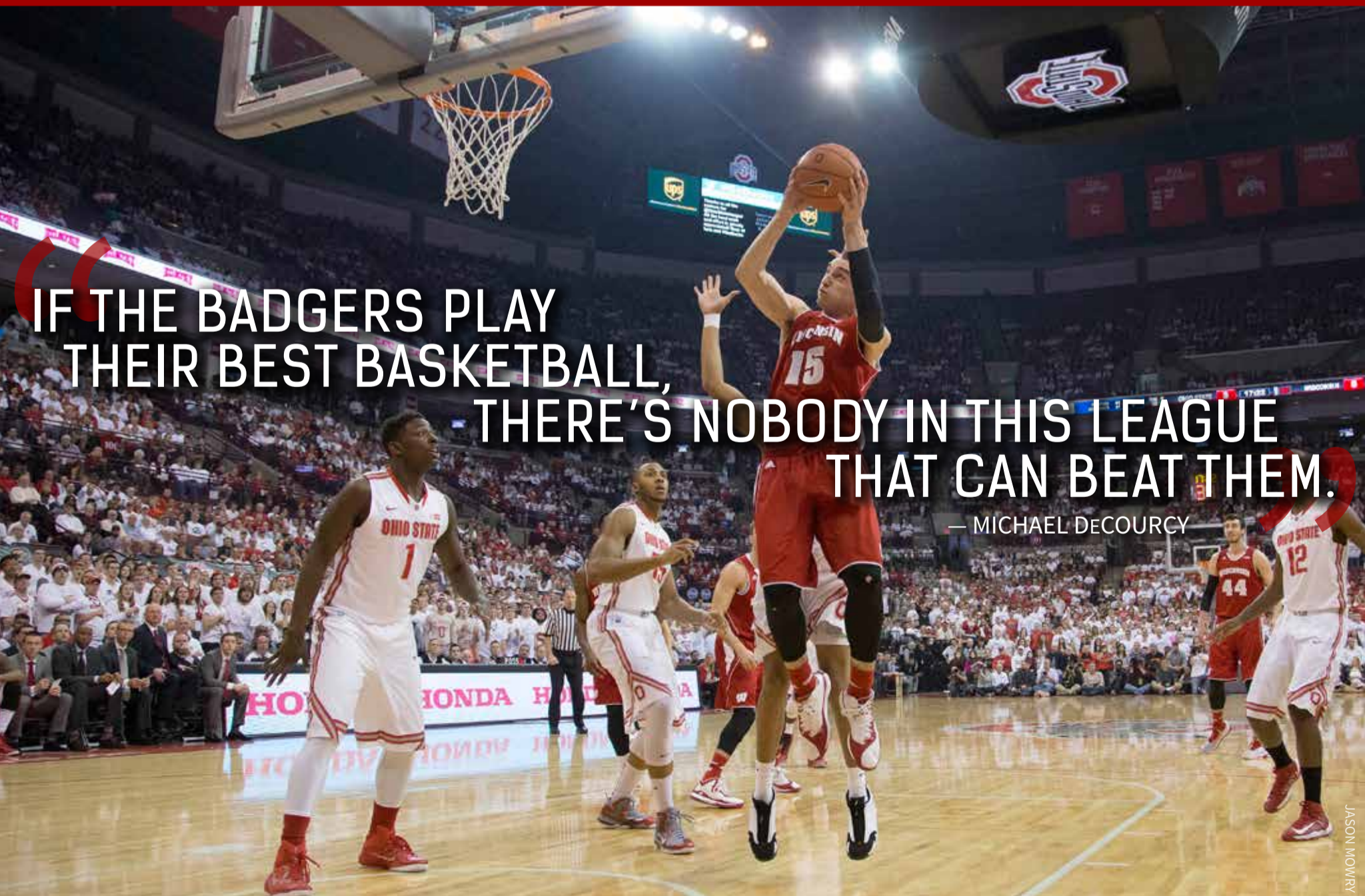
•••••

Michael DeCourcy has tracked Wisconsin as closely as anyone outside the 608 area code. While serving as a studio analyst on Big Ten Network, DeCourcy, a USBWA Hall of Fame basketball writer for The Sporting News, has studied many of the current trends and scenarios involving UW.

Surveying the landscape — accepting Kentucky is the only lock for a No. 1 seed — DeCourcy noted there’s more incentive for the Big Ten champion Badgers to perform well in Chicago than there might be ordinarily; more impetus than, “Let’s not mess this up and we’ll still be a No. 1 seed.”

Calling the situation that Wisconsin finds itself in as unique, DeCourcy said, “We have at least six and, in my feeling, seven teams that would be No. 1 seeds in most seasons, and that’s unusual.”

Everybody is chasing unbeaten Kentucky. For now, the No. 1 seed-worthy challengers would



IF THE BADGERS PLAY THEIR BEST BASKETBALL, THERE'S NOBODY IN THIS LEAGUE THAT CAN BEAT THEM.

— MICHAEL DECOURCY

be, in order of their AP poll ranking, Duke, Virginia, Villanova, Arizona, Wisconsin and Gonzaga.

“And perhaps this year more than any season in the last 20,” DeCourcy said, “there’s the hunger to get on that (top) line so you can avoid the obvious (facing Kentucky) until you get to the Final Four.”

What is also obvious is that geography will weigh heavily with the NCAA selection committee upon building the brackets and placing the higher seeds in regions closest to their respective campuses.

That’s not what you want to hear if you’re Wisconsin, if you’re the highest No. 2 seed, since it would likely result in the UW being placed in the Midwest Region with Kentucky, the No. 1 overall.

Cleveland, the site of the Midwest Regional, is definitely closer to Madison than the other sites in Houston, Los Angeles and Syracuse. “But there’s no reward there,” DeCourcy noted. “Who do you think you’re doing a favor for?”

It’s also not fair to Kentucky; a point that DeCourcy has repeatedly made. Why should the No. 1 overall seed have to play the No. 5 overall seed in the regional final? “Ridiculous,” he said.

Barring a quarterfinal-round upset in the Big Ten tournament, DeCourcy believes the Badgers will not be at the bottom of the list of teams in consideration for the second line, the No. 2 seeds.

“At the very least, they’re either No. 5 or 6 (overall),” he said, “and to say to them, ‘Here’s your reward, you have to play a team (Kentucky) that has not lost

a single basketball game and that has statistically the most impactful defense that we’ve ever recorded and that has all these NBA players ...

“And we’re going to reward you — remember the word is reward — we’re going to reward you by forcing you to play them (in a regional). There’s no one who has ever watched a basketball game that you can look straight in the face and say that’s logical; no one can say that.”

As you can tell, DeCourcy has never been timid about posting-up the NCAA.

“Here’s the interesting thing about this,” he went on. “Those of us who have followed the NCAA for a long time — written about it, talked about it — the one thing we’ve always said, ‘They do this championship thing really well.’“

That said, he would then implore the selection committee to do what? “Well, for goodness sake, do it well, do it right,” he said.

“Don’t foul up the competition to give somebody a 20-minute shorter plane flight. Once you’re on that plane, it doesn’t matter.”

Certainly not to a Wisconsin team that travels as well as anybody in the nation.

“They’re beautifully coached,” DeCourcy said. “One of the things people complained about for years was because of the tempo, it wasn’t attractive (basketball). But the way they play the game is beautiful. Every player can handle the ball, pass the ball and shoot the ball.”



▲ PHOTOS: Tap to pause/play • Swipe to change

Conceding that they may not be the greatest shooting team in college basketball, he cited how everybody on the floor is a threat to score when they launch a good shot. “Which, of course, in Bo’s system, if you don’t launch a good shot, you’re in trouble,” he said.

Before Ryan was named the Big Ten Coach of the Year on the ballot of league coaches, DeCourcy opined, “With the great coaches the league has had from (Bob) Knight to (Fred) Taylor to (Gene) Keady to Lou Henson, and whoever else you want to throw in there, maybe they should just name it the Bo Ryan Coach of the Year award and then you could consider other people with a good conscience.”

Speaking to Ryan winning the award this season when the Badgers were the preseason favorite, he said, “It’s richly deserved because he has done a masterful job with this team — keeping it up, keeping it focused. He lost his starting point guard and still won the league by two games. Just because you have the best team doesn’t mean that you don’t have challenges to conquer.”

How then would DeCourcy handicap Wiscon-

sin in the Big Ten tournament? “If the Badgers play their best basketball, there’s nobody in this league that can beat them,” he said. “There’s nobody in the league that is built to really make Wisconsin not play their best basketball. It’s really up to them to say, “We’re into this, we want this title.””

In this context, fellow BTN analyst Shon Morris has no illusions about how the UW players have approached this season. “When they walked off the floor after losing to Kentucky last year (in the Final Four),” he observed, “their body language was such that they couldn’t wait to get back to work. That’s kind of how I read it and they’re really played that way this year.”

With so much on the line, including a precious No. 1 seed, Morris added, “I don’t think they want to stub their toe going into the NCAA tournament. They’ve just been so focused.”

If the Badgers get past their quarterfinal game Friday against either Michigan or Illinois, and they own a victory over both this season, they could draw the winner of a potential matchup between Iowa and Purdue in Saturday’s semifinals. They are 2-0 against the Hawkeyes and 1-0

against the Boilers.

“Iowa is almost coming in a complete 180 from the way they did a year ago,” Morris said. “Indiana (this year) kind of reminds me of where Iowa was last year. I just wouldn’t want to play Wisconsin right now because of how confident they are. They don’t do anything to beat themselves. My instincts tell me that Purdue (though) would have a better chance of beating them than Iowa.”

The Badgers have been on a record-setting pace throughout this season. But how much better are they than last year’s team? “They miss (Ben) Brust — a guy who can give you five rebounds from the guard position is hard to replace,” Morris said. “Put it this way: they’re every bit as good as last year.”

Maybe better. Their record, after all, is better, much better; and they’re better at a couple of key positions, he said, because Kaminsky and Nigel Hayes are better than they were a year ago. “But for all the people who say they’re better off without Traevon (Jackson) — and I’ve heard

people say that — that’s insane, that makes no sense,” said Morris, who has loved the way Bronson Koenig has played.

With or without Jackson in the NCAA tournament, Morris has faith in how the Badgers operate.

“It’s not just one guy handling the basketball,” he said. “If the ball ends up in Gasser’s hands, he’s more than capable. The bigs are more than capable of handling the ball. And that’s what makes them so difficult to beat. They don’t turn it over and they don’t do anything to help you beat them.”

In this week’s Big Ten tournament, Morris expects the Badgers to be consistent with who they have been and who they are. “They’ve kind of approached the whole year in a businesslike fashion and I think that’s what they will do here,” he said. “They’d be my pick to win the whole thing.”

In Raftery’s trademarked world, this is March; a time of reckoning when teams reveal their onions. **W**

“WHEN THEY WALKED OFF THE FLOOR AFTER LOSING TO KENTUCKY, THEIR BODY LANGUAGE WAS SUCH THAT THEY COULDN’T WAIT TO GET BACK TO WORK.”





GREG BARTRAM

Badgers get big boost from bench

Reserve trio of Brown, Dukan and Showalter help Wisconsin close regular season on high note

BY MIKE LUCAS ■ UWBADGERS.COM

Vitto Brown was caught off guard by the numbers and how telling they were.

“I didn’t even realize that,” said Brown, exiting the locker room.

Zak Showalter wasn’t aware of the statistic, either.

“I didn’t know — not until now,” said Showalter, following Brown to the team bus.

Duje Dukan sounded the least surprised, especially because of its impact.

“Absolutely, it was big,” Dukan said.

After Wisconsin’s emphatic 72-48 thumping of Ohio State — the worst Big Ten home loss for the Buckeyes in 17 seasons, or since they began playing at Value City Arena — Dukan, Showalter and Brown had to feel pretty good about their contributions to the Badgers’ 28th victory of the season.

Not that any of them knew how convincing their statement was.

12-0.

Bench points at halftime.

“As assistant coaches, we took note of that,”

Lamont Paris said. “All three guys scored.”

Dukan, Showalter and Brown helped trigger a run Sunday that extended Wisconsin’s lead from 12-7 (at 13:38) to 28-12 (at 8:29). During this stretch, the Badgers outscored the Buckeyes, 8-2, with Frank Kaminsky and Bronson Koenig on the bench; 16-5 without Nigel Hayes, who had two early fouls.

Dukan had seven points, Showalter had three and Brown had two in the first half. “It was great that they scored,” Paris said. “But when they came off the court, we were excited by all of their contributions. Vitto did a good job on a couple of defensive possessions. Showalter did the same thing by harassing the ball and make some good hard chases off screens. The scoring was icing on the cake.”

All three agreed that it was long overdue.

“It felt good,” said Showalter, a redshirt sophomore from Germantown. “It felt good to see the ball go through the hoop and have a positive influence on the game. It felt good to get back to that.”

“It was fun,” said Dukan, a fifth-year senior from Deerfield, Illinois. “It was definitely a big confidence boost going into the tournaments, especially knowing we’re going to be needed down the stretch.”

“It feels good,” echoed Brown, a sophomore from Toledo, Ohio. “We know that we’re going to need the whole team (contributing) to win like we want.”

Speaking for the others after finishing with a 14-2 advantage in bench points, Brown said, “It definitely felt good to be part of our win today and close out the regular season like we wanted to.”

All three had been struggling to score during their brief exposures. Dukan had seven points over the last five games; Brown had two points over the last six; Showalter had two points over the last eight.

Dukan has been getting the majority of the bench minutes, averaging 14 and playing no fewer than nine in any Big Ten game; he played 23 at Ohio State, matching a league season high. Showalter entered the game averaging 7.9 minutes in conference play, with Brown averaging 4.8.

Their challenge is not knowing from game to game if they will get any playing time. And when they play, they’re never sure how long they will play; they aren’t guaranteed X-number of possessions.

“There is a little pressure,” Brown said of maximizing limited opportunities. “But I try not to think of it that way. I just try to be as efficient and productive as possible.”

“Sometimes it’s tough,” Showalter said of the urgency to get something accomplished on both ends of the floor in such small windows, “but you have to roll with it and do the best you can.”

“The worst thing you can do,” Dukan said of the pitfalls of coming off the bench, “is put pressure on yourself because you’ll start making mistakes. You’ve got to let the game come to you.”

Dukan recognized how much the UW reserves had come under scrutiny lately.

“I think the guys kind of took it to heart how the media was talking about how we’re not scoring enough,” he said, “along with the coaching staff saying they needed more from us.”

UW associate head coach Greg Gard spelled it out.

“We’ve never asked for points,” Gard said. “The biggest thing we’ve told them, ‘Just be solid defensively; rebound, take care of the ball, don’t play out of who you are and don’t put us in a position where we have to race those other guys (the starters) back in.’”

“We’ve been talking about, ‘Keep the boat afloat and don’t take on water.’ That was huge today (against Ohio State). It was good for those guys to get in there

“THE WORST THING YOU CAN DO,” DUKAN SAID OF THE PITFALLS OF COMING OFF THE BENCH, “IS PUT PRESSURE ON YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU’LL START MAKING MISTAKES. YOU’VE GOT TO LET THE GAME COME TO YOU.”



and all play well; I think it gives them some confidence. And it's a credit to the other five guys for not losing confidence in them."

The reserves were a factor in last season's Final Four run.

The Badgers got 13 points from their bench (Hayes 6, Koenig 5, Dukan 2) in their 85-77 win over Oregon; and nine points (Koenig 5, Hayes 4) in their 64-63 overtime win over Arizona.

In the national semifinals, a heartbreaking 74-73 loss to Kentucky, they got 21 points from Koenig (11), Dukan (8) and Hayes (2). Hayes and Koenig have moved into the starting lineup this year.

The variable this postseason could be Traevon Jackson. But there's no certainty on his return. For now, then, going into the Big Ten tournament, it will be left up to Dukan, Showalter and Brown.

Understanding their role, they know there's nothing to hold back when called on. "I have en-

ergy to give," Brown said. "And I know I won't be out there for long so there's no reason to take it easy."

As the No. 1 seed, the Badgers won't begin play until Friday at Chicago's United Center when they draw the winner of Thursday's game between No. 9 seed Michigan and No. 8 Illinois.

Who has the edge? They split in the regular season with both games going into overtime. The Wolverines won 73-65 on Dec. 30 in Ann Arbor, while the Illini won 64-52 on Feb. 12 in Champaign.

Whoever advances past that second round game, could use an upset win over Wisconsin to enhance their profile for the NCAA tournament (Illinois) and/or the NIT (Michigan).


The Badgers have a win over each team.

On Jan. 24, Kaminsky had 22 points in UW's 69-64 overtime win over the Wolverines at Crisler Center. Derrick Walter's 3-pointer with 1.3 seconds left in regulation tied the game. But Kaminsky dominated the extra session with eight points. Dekker had 15, Koenig 13 and Hayes 10.

On Feb. 15, Kaminsky had 23 points and 11 rebounds in a 68-49 victory over Illinois at the Kohl Center. The Badgers outscored the Illini, 36-14, in the paint and 16-5 in points off turnovers. They also used a 20-4 run to gain separation. Koenig had 15, Hayes 14 and Dekker 10.

The Badgers will definitely carry some momentum into Chicago off their win at Value City Arena, where the Buckeyes suffered their second-worst beating in the history of the venue, dating back to Ohio State's 28-point loss to West Virginia in 2008.

"We want to win every game, obviously, like everyone else does," Paris said. "But a lot of times you can get into situations where there are not a lot of implications as far as your seeding and conference tournament positioning, so guys can let off the gas a little bit."

This was not the case Sunday in Columbus. "To come into a hostile environment against a really good team, a Top 25 team, and get a win," he said, "it keeps your momentum going and lets the guys know, 'This team could be pretty good.'" 





GREAT GOALS

JOEL RUMPEL HAS SPENT FOUR YEARS GUARDING THE NET FOR THE BADGERS AND WON A PAIR OF LEAGUE TOURNAMENT TITLES, BUT THE SENIOR'S IMPACT GOES FAR BEYOND WHAT HE'S ACCOMPLISHED ON THE ICE.

BY MIKE LUCAS • UWBADGERS.COM

When Wisconsin goaltender Joel Rumpel was a youngster in Canada, he was surrounded by role models. It all started with the example that was set by his mom and dad, Deb and Scott, hard-working people who tapped into small business opportunities over the years, including Subway franchises.

“When I’m home,” Rumpel admitted, “I eat there three times a day.”

Growing up in Swift Current, a small community in southwestern Saskatchewan, Rumpel was influenced by hockey people, not the least of which was his Uncle Roy — Roy Schultz, a 1980 All-America goalie for the Badgers. Schultz played here as a freshman and sophomore before turning pro.

If the Rumpels weren’t housing junior hockey players, they were supporting them on the Swift Current Broncos of the Western Hockey League. And the players would reciprocate by

taking local kids like Rumpel under their wing. “When they would come to our school or practice,” Rumpel said, “it was a moment that you always remember.”

To this day, 113 games into his college career, he has gone out of his way to make a good impression on kids by interacting with them and signing autographs. “It’s nice to be in the position to do that and give back,” he said. “I enjoy being around them, they always put a smile on my face.”

It’s a two-way street. By being attentive to the youngsters who line the runway to the ice and call out his name, he makes them feel special. At the same time, they make him feel the same way. Rumpel has taken it to an even higher level through his commitment to community service.

As a UW freshman, he had no idea what that entailed.

“I didn’t know how to get involved,” said Rumpel, who began following the lead of teammates



who made regular trips to the American Family Children's Hospital. "Giving back to the community is something that I learned how to do here and I enjoy doing and I will continue doing the rest of my life."

One little girl, in particular, has had a pronounced impact on Rumpel's life and many others who have come through the Badgers hockey program. Lucy Cunningham, a 6-year-old from Reedsburg, was born with Down syndrome. Three years ago, she was diagnosed with leukemia.

"She's a young girl who has been through more than anybody could imagine," Rumpel said. "She has been through a lot, but she has finally beaten the leukemia, she has taken her last chemo (treatment). She always has a smile on her face and she's always goofing around."

"She has taught me a lot about life. You think you're giving back to the community and helping out that way, but they're really giving back to you a lot more than you think. We've stayed in touch through texting or Facebook. I'll probably always stay in touch with Lucy Cunningham."

This weekend, the Badgers will play their final home series of the season at the Kohl Center. Rumpel, who will turn 24 in a few days, will be among the seniors who are honored. And he will

have a big cheering section from Swift Current: his mom, dad, brother, sister-in-law and grandparents.

Lucy will be there, too. And Rumpel is looking forward to introducing her to his parents.

"It has been pretty awesome," Rumpel enthused, "to have a relationship like that."

Reflecting on visits to the children's hospital, he acknowledged, "It's eye-opening how lucky and fortunate I am as a person. You see some

of these kids and everything they've been through and you don't know how they manage. It's humbling to see how strong and amazing some of them are."

The most lasting impact on Rumpel has been what you might expect it to be.

"It just kind of puts life in perspective," he said.

Perspective has been a necessity this season for a team that has lost 24 games.

"You learn more about yourself and your hockey skills; you learn a lot more from losing than winning," Rumpel said. "Life is pretty easy when you're winning a lot of games, which I was fortunate enough to do the past couple of years (on teams that won WCHA and Big Ten playoff championships).

"When you lose games like this, you learn a lot about your character and a lot about how strong you really are."

"You think you're giving back to the community and helping out that way, but they're really giving back to you a lot more than you think," Rumpel said. "I'll probably always stay in touch with Lucy Cunningham."





When you're losing, it just makes everything a lot harder. So you have to learn to deal with it. You have to wake up every day, get back to work and try to get better. That's what we're doing."

When in doubt, he thinks about Lucy and others struggling to survive. "You think this is the worst thing in the world, what's going on with the hockey team," he said. "But these kids kind of show you that there is a lot more to life than just playing hockey and it puts everything into perspective."

Over the last four years, Rumpel has experienced growth in three areas — academically, athletically and socially; a hat trick that is not exclusive to just forwards and defensemen.

"I was out of school for two years before I came here because of juniors" said Rumpel, who played for the Penticton Vees, "so it was kind of hard getting back into it off the start." As far as a major, he said, "I really didn't know what I wanted to be or what I was going to do when I grew up."

Rumpel settled on personal finance. "I really didn't know what to expect," he said of his

pursuit of the degree. "I was a little bit worried about how hard it was going to be and whether I would be able to graduate on time. It's pretty exciting to know that I will be able to graduate in four years."

Although he must still complete a couple of classes over the summer, he will take part in the graduation in May. After that? "I want to obviously continue my hockey career," Rumpel said. "Being undrafted and a free agent, it's up in the air what is going to happen; there's a lot of uncertainty."

But it's the road that he wants to follow. He has already endured plenty of potholes this year. Rumpel has faced an inordinate amount of shots on goal, nearly 1,000. At that, he has come up with 30 or more saves in 16 games; doubling the number from last season.

Rumpel is averaging is 30.86 saves per game, the fourth-highest total in the nation. He has had 40 or more saves in five games. It had happened only twice in his three previous years. Wisconsin's single-season high average for saves is 32.22. That was set 35 years ago by none other

than Roy Schultz.

“I’m pretty proud and happy with how I’ve done here,” said Rumpel, who’s most proud of the team success, the league tournament titles. “I’ve been able to play all four years which is pretty cool for a goaltender. I’m just happy how I progressed and how things have gone. It has been pretty special.”

Off the ice, he traced changes in “getting older, more mature and just understanding more about life” as part of his development. And he cited the total environment for “teaching you how to become a better person in general” aside from what is happening between the pipes.

Wisconsin head coach Mike Eaves paid his own tribute to Rumpel. “He’s a most unique personality,” said Eaves, who added that Rumpel has the perfect mentality for a goalie “because he’s

able to let it go; it’s water off his back if a goal goes in, and he’s able to focus back on what needs to be done.”

Rumpel’s devotion to community service has not gone unnoticed by Eaves. “I’ve never seen a young man connect with young people (the way he has) — I don’t think we have had anybody quite like him in that aspect. He has a unique ability to relate. Maybe he’s just a kid at heart.”

That will be part of his legacy. Nice kid, good goalie, big heart.

“On the ice or off, I hope people will remember that I did my best,” Rumpel said. “I hope that I had an impact on people whether inspiring future generations to be goaltenders or inspiring kids to get involved and play hockey. Anything in that sense, I hope that I’m remembered.”

Most of those smiling kids will never forget. ❄️

RUMPEL ON HIS LEGACY:

“I hope that I had an impact on people whether inspiring future generations to be goaltenders or inspiring kids to get involved and play hockey. Anything in that sense, I hope that I’m remembered.”



GREG ANDERSON



The Badgers' off-ice officials (left to right): Jerry Kennedy, Tom Bennett, Karen Schwarz, Brian Kieth, John Cliffe and Pete Olson. Not pictured: Randy Wise

Behind the glass: A look at Wisconsin's off-ice officials

Tight-knit crew has kept Badgers games running smoothly for decades

BY CHRISTIAN BLATNER ■ UW ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

G OOOOAAAAAL!!!! The referee straddling Minnesota's goal line emphatically points at the back of the net just nine seconds into Wisconsin's final regular-season game against the Gophers.

Deafened by the Kohl Center's booming horn, the referee glides to center ice toward the scorer's box and shouts through the small circular hole in the glass: "Ten, unassisted."

Seated on the opposite side of the glass, Karen Schwarz leans forward and tilts her head sideways to better hear what she is being told. The arena shakes with the roars of the 13,500-plus fans in the stands, but Schwarz understands the message — No. 10 scored and there were no assists.

She quickly relays the information to the announcer and scribbles the digits onto the official score sheet.

A few minutes pass before the nearby phone rings. It is the press box calling down to give clarification on the players involved in the goal, which tied two other instances for Wisconsin's

quickest score to start a game.

After examining the replay upstairs, No. 10 Jake Linhart did not, in fact, score. It was instead No. 13, Ryan Wagner, who redirected Linhart's shot in front for the tally. Schwarz acknowledges the correction, immediately transmitting the call to the announcer and adding Wagner to the score sheet.

It is nothing new for her, though — Schwarz has been handling hectic situations like this one for nearly four decades as an off-ice official.

Schwarz began helping out at Wisconsin hockey games in 1977 thanks to her involvement with the Dane County Hockey Officials Association (DCHOA).

After founding the UW Women's Hockey Club team in 1973 with two friends, she began working youth hockey games as on-ice official. The opportunity to substitute as an off-ice official at Badgers games presented itself at a DCHOA meeting and Schwarz jumped on it.

For two years she filled in at games here and there before becoming a regular.

Penalty-box charter Jerry Kennedy has been working as an off-ice official for so long he can't remember exactly how many years it has been.

"It's probably been 26 years, or 28 even," he said with a chuckle. "I don't know, it's been quite a while."

Kennedy is responsible for keeping track of when players go in and out of the penalty box. When players are booked, the front charter, for example, makes sure the scorekeeper and announcer know who is coming in and what the penalty is for.

"If there's just one penalty, it's no big deal," Kennedy said, "but when you get two or three of them you have to make sure the right guy goes out."

Schwarz has experience with every off-ice job, but most of the time does the score sheet and acts as a communication link to get the assists on goals, respond to questions and relay information to the announcer. She admits certain jobs have their downfalls.

"I often joke that I must have done something wrong when (crew chief) Randy (Wise) puts me in the penalty box with the stinky players," she said.

But according to Schwarz, the perks of the penalty box job outweigh the negatives, as she enjoys interacting with the players and referees throughout the game.

Kennedy agreed: "I really enjoy getting to know players — both the opposing- and home-team guys. A lot of them are real friendly and talkative."

He recalled a particularly memorable interaction with an opposing player from many years back.

"I used to run a mite tournament for 8-year-old kids at the end of the year in March called the Mighty Badger," Kennedy said.

"We had a kid named Rocky Welsing who drove down from Appleton to Madison every week to

play on our team. He eventually ended up playing hockey at Northern Michigan."

Once when NMU was playing at Wisconsin, Welsing got called for a penalty. He came into the box and Kennedy said to him, "Do you know who I am?"

Confused, Welsing replied, "No, I don't."

Kennedy explained to Welsing that he ran the Mighty Badger tournament over a decade ago when the seventh-round draft pick of Anaheim was just a mite.

The short conversation brought the longtime off-ice official full-circle.

"There's a lot of guys like that," Kennedy explained. "Players come in and talk you, and you get to know them."

Over the years, the off-ice crew has rotated roles, which, in turn, has led to better consistency. Each job is vitally important for a smooth-running game, so having officials with experience at every position is invaluable.

Schwarz's job can be challenging at times, especially when things get a bit lively on the ice with multiple penalties.

"We may be asked for the jersey number of players that were on the ice during an altercation," she said, "so we have to really keep our eyes open to all that is going on."

"But that doesn't mean we don't have fun during a stoppage in play. Everyone has a good sense of humor and that makes this group of people very special."

Schwarz characterized her and Wise as the "real old-timers," as the pair has been a part of the off-ice crew the longest. But she has known most of the other members for many years through DCHOA connections and views them not only as pleasant co-workers, but also good friends.

Almost everyone who is an off-ice official at Badgers games has also been an on-ice official in the past, Schwarz explained. Kennedy falls into

KAREN SCHWARZ:

"There are just so many great memories. We (off-ice officials) have seen many, many successful teams and, because we love hockey, it has been a treat to be able to share in the excitement of that success."

that category, as he was a registered on-ice official for USA Hockey when he took his current off-ice role.

Those that have not been on-ice officials were longtime players and/or worked youth hockey or high school games as off-ice officials.

“The fact that the vast majority of us have been or currently still are on-ice officials is unusual,” she said. “Perhaps it has changed now at other schools, but the on-ice officials know that (because we have substantial knowledge of hockey) we are more engaged in the game.

“The referees know the off-ice crew has a good understanding of the rules. Mistakes are very rare.”

Like some of her colleagues, Schwarz coached youth hockey for a number of years. She even pulled her husband into coaching and refereeing. He hung up the stripes at the end of last season.

As one can imagine, Schwarz has made an endless amount of memories in 38 years of witnessing Wisconsin hockey games. One of her best recollections has an interesting storyline to say the least.

During the 2003-04 season, UW standout and current NHL star Ryan Suter sent a puck around the boards that hopped up and over the glass before drilling Schwarz in the eyebrow. Her glasses were broken and the team doctor stitched up the cut during the intermission. Unfazed, Schwarz finished the game with a patch above her eye, proving off-ice officials can be just as tough as the players on the ice.

It was not all bad, though, as Suter signed a puck for her after the game. To this day, she still laughs when looking back on the ordeal.

Other highlights for Schwarz over the years include watching and meeting future NHL and Olympic athletes, getting to know the Wisconsin coaches and working at the 2006 Frozen Four in Milwaukee and 2013 Hockey City Classic at Soldier

Field in Chicago.

Like Schwarz, Kennedy’s favorite memory also involved a future NHL player.


Late in Blake Geoffrion’s final game at Wisconsin he took a “stupid” penalty, which was highly uncharacteristic of him.

“We didn’t know what the heck was going on,” Kennedy remembered.

Geoffrion entered the penalty box and said, “Well, I just had to get a penalty to come in and say thanks for all you guys did for me over the four years I was here. I appreciate it.”

Wisconsin’s lone Hobey Baker Award winner went on to apologize to Kennedy’s wife and Schwarz, who were both working the game. “I’m sorry for my language,” he said. “Don’t let my mom know I swore.”

The simple gesture clearly resonated with Kennedy. It not only demonstrated Geoffrion’s character as a person, but it also shed light on how important off-ice officials are to each and every game.

“There are just so many great memories,” Schwarz said. “We (off-ice officials) have seen many, many successful teams and, because we love hockey, it has been a treat to be able to share in the excitement of that success.” 





For Big Ten's best, March Madness begins

Big Ten awards take on distinct Badgers flavor

The 2014-15 season will go down as the year of the Badgers, at least among Big Ten circles. En route to matching the most conference wins in school history, Wisconsin cruised to the 2015 Big Ten championship.

The UW coronation continued this week when the Big Ten handed out its yearly awards and they were painted Badgers red.

Senior Frank Kaminsky was named Big Ten Player of the Year by both the media and coaches, including unanimous selection from the media. Kaminsky was also a unanimous first-team All-Big Ten selection by both coaches and media.

Ryan was recognized as Big Ten Coach of the Year, as voted on by the league's coaches. His fourth Big Ten Coach of the Year honor places Ryan behind only Purdue's Gene Keady (7) and Indiana's Bob Knight (5) for the most in conference history.

"This award is a reflection of our entire coaching and the terrific job our assistant coaches have done all season," Ryan said. "This also means we've got a pretty good team and pretty good players. This is a team honor."

The Big Ten agreed with Ryan, recognizing three players.

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (28-3, 16-2)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

March 5 at Minnesota W, 76-63
March 8 at Ohio State W, 72-48

COMING UP

2015 BIG TEN TOURN. (CHICAGO)

Mar. 13 vs. Illinois/Mich. 11 a.m.
Mar. 14 Semifinals
Mar. 15 Championship

2015 NCAA TOURNAMENT

M 19-22 First-Second Round
M 26-29 Sweet 16/Elite 8
A 4/6 Final Four/Championship

[> Complete Schedule](#) | [Buy Tickets](#)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Seniors get their moment in the sun

Six-member class recognized this weekend

The last home hockey series of every season is always bittersweet. It means another college hockey season is coming to an end, but it also means the postseason is nearing, and that brings great excitement.

It hits the senior class a little harder as they know it will be their last chance to play in front of their peers — the student section.

They are the heart of a dedicated group of fans who help make the Kohl Center one of the great places to play in the sport.

It is the thing that each and every student-athlete who comes through the program comments on long after their moment in the sun has passed.

For seniors Chase Drake, Joseph LaBate, Brad Navin, Matt Paape, Landon Peterson and Joel Rumpel, that moment will come this Saturday when they are recognized before the Badgers' game against Ohio State.

The class has had some spectacular highs and lows, with the 2013 WCHA Final Five title and the 2014 Big Ten Tournament championship on its resume. It has also been part of a 1-7-2 start to a season and a tough 2014-15 campaign.

[-SCROLL FOR MORE-](#)

SCHEDULE (4-24-4, 2-14-2-2)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Feb. 27	at Michigan	L, 3-0
Feb. 28	at Michigan	L, 5-2
March 6	at Michigan State	L, 3-0
March 7	at Michigan State	L, 3-0

COMING UP

March 13	Ohio State	7 p.m.
March 14	Ohio State	6 p.m.
March 19	Big Ten Tournament	
	<i>Detroit, Mich.</i>	
March 20	Big Ten Tournament	
March 21	Big Ten Tournament	

[> Complete Schedule](#) | [Buy Tickets](#)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Badgers shipping in BU for NCAA quarters

Frozen Four bid on the line at LaBahn Arena

After winning the WCHA Final Face-Off last weekend to claim the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, Wisconsin turns its attention to Boston University as the two teams meet in an NCAA quarterfinal at LaBahn Arena at 2 p.m. Saturday.

UW enters the game as the NCAA tournament's No. 4 seed, while BU captured an automatic bid after defeating top-ranked Boston College, 4-1, in the Hockey East championship game on Sunday.

"We're down to the top eight teams," UW sophomore Jenny Ryan said. "BU was ranked right below us, so we know they will be a really good team. Both of us are fighting for our lives right now. We are expecting a super good game and we know that we will have to play our absolute best to win the game."

The Badgers are fresh off of defeating Bemidji State, 4-0, on Sunday to win the program's fifth WCHA playoff crown. Sarah Nurse led the Wisconsin offense in the WCHA Final Face-Off, scoring four goals while adding two assists to claim the tournament's most outstanding player honors.

"She is getting a lot of high looks and eventually the puck is

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (28-6-4, 19-6-3)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

WCHA First Round

Feb. 27 **St. Cloud State** W, 5-1

Feb. 28 **St. Cloud State** W, 4-1

WCHA Final Face-off

March 7 #8 North Dakota W, 4-1

March 8 #10 Bemidji St. W, 4-0

COMING UP

NCAA Quarterfinal

March 14 **#5 Boston Univ.** 2 p.m.

NCAA Frozen Four

March 21-22 (Minneapolis)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Lihрман ready to shine at NCAA indoors

Senior chasing records in final indoor meet

Wisconsin senior Michael Lihрман has been rewriting the weight throw record books for as long as his been in Madison, dating back to a school-record effort in his first-ever UW competition during the 2012 season.

Since then, Lihрман has broken not only the UW school record, but the Big Ten and NCAA records, as well, and his personal-best heave of 83 feet, 11 1/4 inches ranks as the third-best throw in world history.

The Rice Lake, Wisconsin, native closes out his indoor collegiate career on Friday at the 2015 NCAA Indoor Championships looking to break two marks that have thus far eluded him — the NCAA meet record and the world record.

“I love breaking records,” Lihрман said. “As far as I can see I have two that I don’t hold. I don’t hold the NCAA meet record and I don’t hold the world record, so those are the two I’m gunning for now.”

The NCAA championships record is 78-9 3/4, set by Libor Charfreitag in 2001. Charfreitag is one of the two men ahead of Lihрман on the all-time world list; American Lance Deal holds the world record of 84-10 1/4, while Charfreitag, a Slovakian who

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**.

RECENTLY

Feb. 27-28 **Big Ten Championships**

COMING UP

March 13-14 **NCAA Indoor Championships**

April 3-5 **Stanford Invitational**

April 3-4 **Sam Adams Invitational**

April 18-19 **LSU Alumni Gold**

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Badgers off to Arkansas for NCAA meet

Trio of Badgers will compete on national stage

The No. 14 Wisconsin women's track and field team trio of Kelsey Card, Sarah Disanza, and Georgia Ellenwood heads south to Fayetteville, Arkansas, for this year's NCAA Indoor Championships at the Randal Tyson Center.

The Badgers will be represented in four events, the 5000 meters, weight throw, shot put and pentathlon.

Wisconsin junior Kelsey Card starts the meet for the Badger women with the weight throw beginning at 4 p.m. (CT) Friday. She enters the weekend with the nation's fifth-best throw at 71 feet, 7 1/4 inches.

The Big Ten Field Athlete of the Year and Big Ten Field Athlete of the Championships will also compete in the shot put, where she holds the No. 7 seed after her school-record throw of 56-7 1/4 at the Big Ten championships last month. The shot put is set to begin at 3:45 p.m. Saturday.

"I am pumped to go in and do both events," Card said "I just want to do the best I can do and have fun with it. I feel like I have nothing to lose this weekend and I am going to go after it."

Card's Wisconsin teammate and reigning NCAA men's weight throw champion Michael Lihman commended her as an ath-

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**.

RECENTLY

Feb. 27-28 **Big Ten Championships**

COMING UP

March 13-14 **NCAA Indoor Championships**

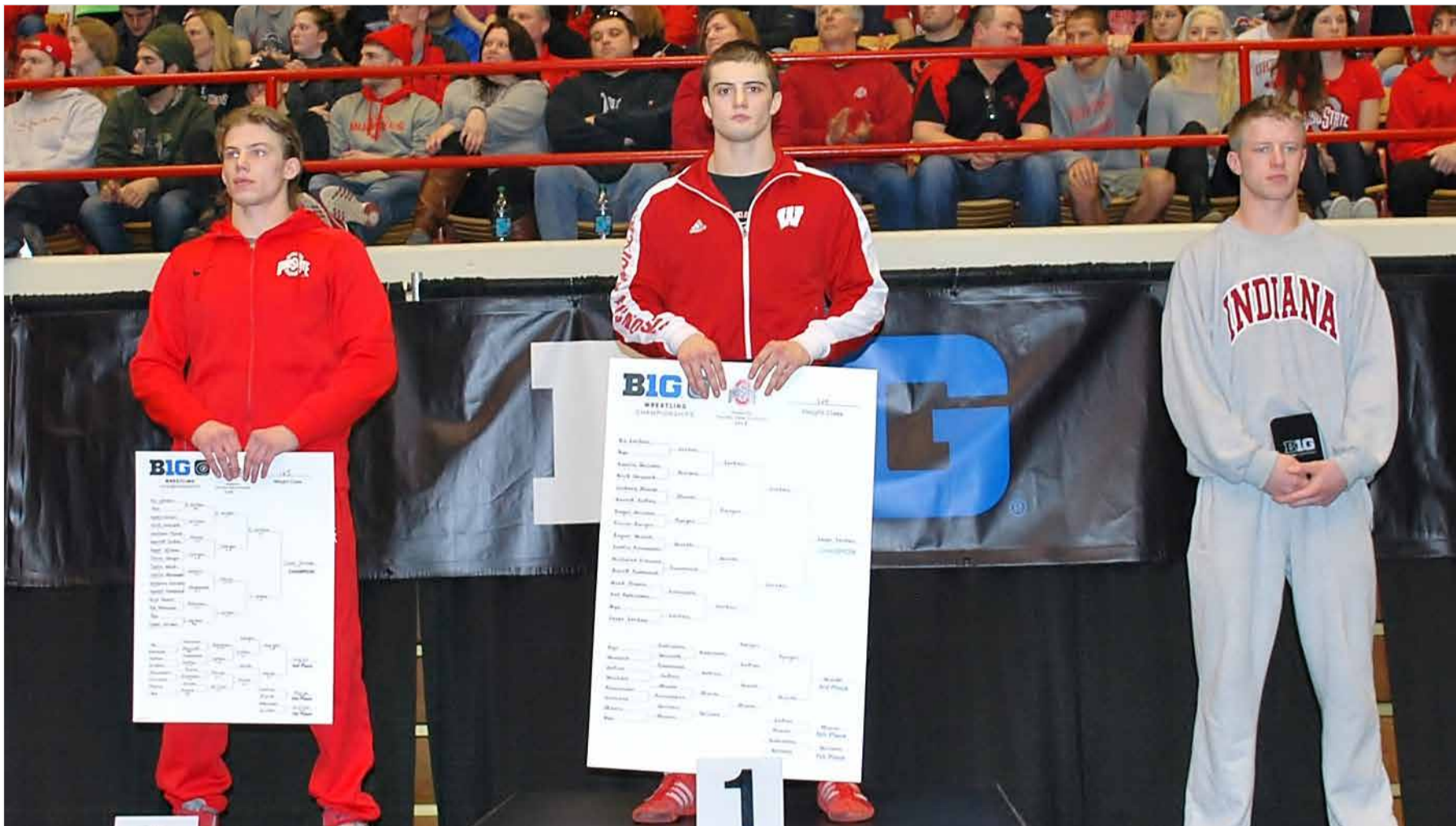
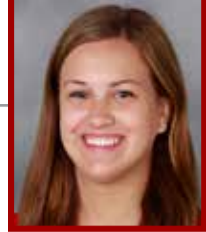
April 3-5 **Stanford Invitational**

April 3-4 **Sam Adams Invitational**

April 18-19 **LSU Alumni Gold**

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





UW's Isaac Jordan has the Eye of the Tiger

Sophomore claims Big Ten champion status

Try to listen to “Eye of the Tiger,” and not get pumped up. Go ahead, try it. It’s hard not to start running up stairs and throwing fake punches. And when people hear the name Isaac Jordan, it’s hard not to think of someone rising straight to the top, who has the guts and the glory — just like the song says.

#EyeoftheTiger has been a staple hashtag of Jordan’s all season, a motivation of sorts. He started the season ranked No. 4 in the country and has consistently remained in the top 10, more than any other wrestler on the team. He had to prove himself to keep his spot at the top, and he did.

Jordan finished the regular season with a 19-2 record and a perfect 9-0 conference dual mark. He entered the Big Ten championships as the No. 2 seed and quickly proved where he actually belonged.

He rose to the challenge by knocking off Purdue’s Pat Robinson in the quarterfinals of the with an easy 16-4 major decision. In a challenging semifinal matchup, Jordan went head-to-head with Indiana’s No. 3-seeded Taylor Walsh. Earlier in the season Jordan, who was ranked seventh at the time, upset the third-

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (9-4, 7-2)

Home events in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Jan. 25	at Michigan St.	W, 34-6
Feb. 6	Rutgers	W, 19-18
Feb. 8	at Illinois	L, 20-15
Feb. 22	at Iowa State	L, 30-16
March 7	Big Ten Championships	
March 8	Big Ten Championships	

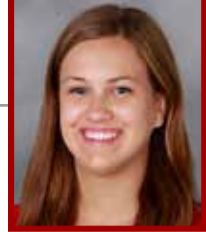
COMING UP

March 19	NCAA Championships
March 20	NCAA Championships
March 21	NCAA Championships

> [View complete schedule](#)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Badgers turn things around in Florida

UW picks up three wins at USF tournament

The Wisconsin softball team earned three crucial wins last weekend at the Under Armour Showcase hosted by South Florida. UW defeated Portland State 2-1, Seton Hall 9-2 and Boston College 4-3 and walked out of the weekend with a 3-2 record.

Wisconsin out-hit its five opponent 33-28 this weekend and tied a season high with nine runs against Seton Hall.

Senior Maria Van Abel led the way for the Badgers by logging seven hits in the weekend series. She finished with a team-best .412 batting average and scored four runs. Sophomore Chloe Miller brought in a team season-high four RBI against Seton Hall, which also gave her the team-high total for the weekend.

Mariah Watts shined under the sun of her home state. She racked up wins in both games she started and finished the weekend with a 1.50 ERA in 14 innings pitched. The freshman only allowed six hits and three runs through two games. She also recorded 17 strikeouts on the weekend, including a career-high five strikeouts against Seton Hall.

UW added another 17 stolen bases to its tally and has posted an impressive 64 steals in 78 attempts this season. Senior

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (9-12, 0-0)

Home events in **bold**. All times CT.

UNDER ARMOUR SHOWCASE

March 6	Portland St.	W, 2-1
	USF	L, 3-1
March 7	Seton Hall	W, 9-2
	C. Michigan	L, 3-0
March 8	Boston College	W, 4-3

COLL. OF CHARLESTON INVITATIONAL

March 13	Furman	4:30 p.m.
	Charleston	7 p.m.
March 14	Marist	10 a.m.
	Memphis	12:30 p.m.

[> View complete schedule](#)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





DAVID STLUKA

BEST OF THE BRACKET

MARCH 14, 2004: Wisconsin defeated Illinois, 70-53, at Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis to win the 2004 Big Ten Tournament, the first tourney title in UW history. Devin Harris was named the tournament's most outstanding player.

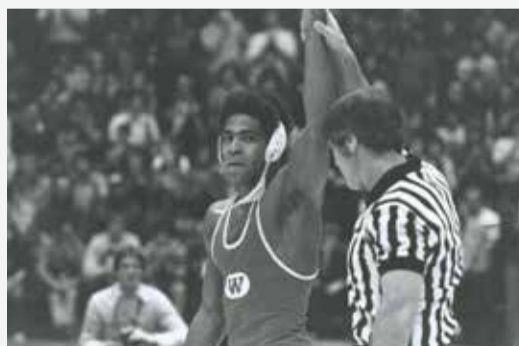
-MORE THIS WEEK-



GOING STREAKING

MARCH 12, 2011:

Jennifer Krueger singled to record a hit in her school-record 17th-straight game. She finished with a 19-game hitting streak.



THREE CHAMPIONS

MARCH 13, 1976:

Pat Christenson, Lee Kemp and Jack Reinwand all won NCAA titles as the wrestling team placed fourth nationally for the program's best-ever finish.



TIM BINNING

BACK TO THE BEST

MARCH 20, 2011:

Senior Maggie Meyer became Wisconsin's first NCAA individual swimming champion, touching the wall in the 200 backstroke in a school-record time of 1:50.76.