

LASTING PERFECTION

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
NCAA
BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONS
1976

2026 MARKS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIANA BASKETBALL'S UNDEFEATED SEASON

ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER

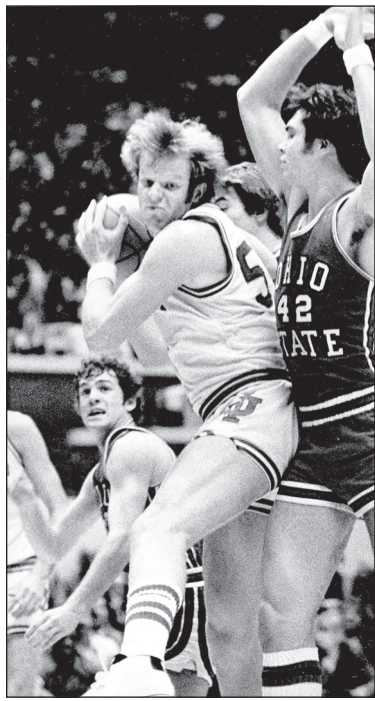
Game-by-game results of IU's historic 1975-76 season:

Site	Opponent	W-L	Score
N	UCLA #2	W	84-64
H	Florida St.	W	83-59
H	Notre Dame #8	W	63-60
N	Kentucky #20	W	77-68(OT)
H	Georgia	W	93-56
H	Virginia Tech	W	101-74
A	Columbia	W	106-63
A	Manhattan	W	97-61
A	St. John's #17	W	76-69
A	Ohio State	W	66-64
H	Northwestern	W	78-61
A	Michigan #19	W	80-74
A	Michigan State	W	69-57
A	Illinois	W	83-55
H	Purdue	W	71-67
A	Minnesota	W	85-76
A	Iowa	W	88-73
H	Wisconsin	W	114-61
H	Michigan	W	72-67(OT)
H	Michigan State	W	85-70
H	Illinois	W	58-48
A	Purdue	W	74-71
H	Minnesota	W	76-64
H	Iowa	W	101-81
A	Wisconsin	W	96-67
A	Northwestern	W	76-63
H	Ohio State	W	96-67

NCAA TOURNAMENT

N	St. John's #17	W	90-70
N	Alabama #6	W	* 74-69
N	Marquette #2	W	** 65-56
N	UCLA #5	W	*** 65-51
N	Michigan #9	W	**** 86-68

*Sweet Sixteen
**Elite Eight
***Final Four
****Championship game



AP file photo

Kent Benson of Indiana pulls down a defensive rebound against **Bill Andreas** of Ohio State in Bloomington on March 1, 1975.

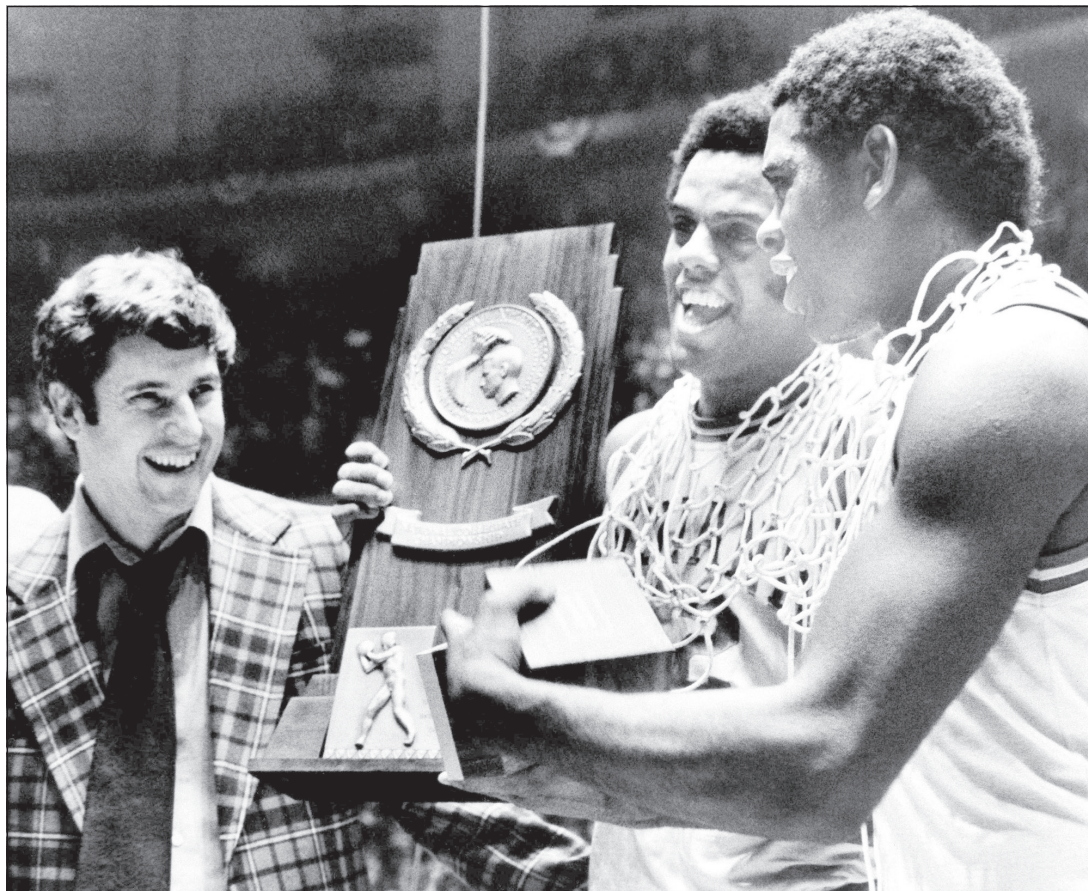
KEY VICTORIES

- Two opponents took the Hoosiers to overtime, but IU still prevailed, defeating No. 20 Kentucky 77-68 at Louisville's Freedom Hall and outlasting Michigan 72-67 at Assembly Hall in Bloomington. The victory over Kentucky avenged a loss the year before in the Elite Eight, and the second win of the season over Michigan presaged one more to come over the Wolverines.

- Purdue, led by Walter Jordan, Bruce Parkinson and Eugene Parker, didn't have its best team in 1975-76, finishing 11-7 and third in the Big Ten. But the Boilermakers gave the Hoosiers all they could handle twice that season, losing the home-and-home battles by a combined seven points.

- Indiana had arguably the toughest stretch of opponents for any eventual champion in the NCAA tournament, vanquishing teams ranked second, fifth, sixth, ninth and 16th. No. 6 Alabama, with center Leon Douglas playing IU center **Kent Benson** to a standstill, gave the Hoosiers their toughest battle, in the second round.

- In 1976, the NCAA tournament was still a 32-team field. It didn't expand to 64 teams until 1985. The top-seeded Hoosiers, like all other teams in the '76 field, didn't get a bye into the second round.



AP file photo

Indiana University coach **Bobby Knight**, **Scott May** and **Quinn Buckner**, right, hold the trophy after winning the NCAA Basketball Championship in Philadelphia on Monday, March 29, 1976.

SPIRIT OF '76

When Indiana University won the national championship in 1976, it capped the last undefeated season in the history of NCAA Division I men's basketball

BY **KEN RAPPOPORT**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

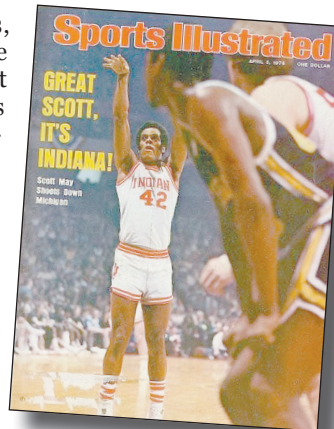
Editor's note: The following is excerpted from an Associated Press game story filed March 29, 1976.

The Indiana Hoosiers were handed the No. 1 ranking at the start of the season, but that doesn't mean anything unless you earn it on the court.

They did — 32 times. The "perfect" Hoosiers capped a glorious 32-0 season at the Spectrum in Philadelphia with a businesslike 86-68 victory over Michigan in the NCAA finals, ending a long quest for college basketball's Holy Grail.

The Hoosiers, playing in one of the toughest regional tourneys in NCAA history, defeated St. John's, Alabama and Marquette to win the Midwest and advance to the gold-plated Final Four in Philadelphia.

UCLA's Bruins, the defending champions, presented no problem to peaking Indiana in the semifinals. The Hoosiers, who had beaten UCLA by a shocking 20 points on open-



ing day, handled them with almost as much ease the second time. The victory over the Bruins set up Indiana's third triumph of the season over Michigan.

"For two years, this (NCAA championship) has been our objective," Indiana coach Bobby Knight said.

"Not just this year, but for two years these kids have worked hard — and no one knows how hard any better than I do."



Photo provided

Hoosier seniors, from left, **Bobby Wilkerson**, **Tom Abernethy**, **Scott May**, **Jim Crews** and **Quinn Buckner** with the hardware IU won during their college careers.

HOMEGROWN HOOSIERS

IU's 1975-76 roster included five players from the state of Indiana, but also five from Illinois.

Name	Pos.	Year	Ht.	Hometown
Bobby Wilkerson	G	Sr.	6-7	Anderson, Ind.
Quinn Buckner	G	Sr.	6-3	Phoenix, Ill.
Wayne Radford	G	So.	6-3	Indianapolis
Jim Wisman	G	So.	6-2	Quincy, Ill.
Bob Bender	G	Fr.	6-3	Bloomington, Ill.
Scott Eells	F	Fr.	6-9	Hoopston, Ill.
Mark Haymore	F-C	So.	6-8	Cleveland, Ohio
Tom Abernethy	F	Sr.	6-7	South Bend, Ind.
Rich Valavicius	F	Fr.	6-5	Hammond, Ind.
Scott May	F	Sr.	6-7	Sandusky, Ohio
Jim Roberson	F-C	Fr.	6-9	Rochester, NY
Jim Crews	G	Sr.	6-5	Normal, Ill.
Kent Benson	C	Jr.	6-11	New Castle, Ind.

STARTING 5

Some argue that IU's 1974-75 team had better personnel, with "Super Sub" John Laskowski and leading scorer Steve Green still on the roster. But the following year, returning players showed improvement and others stepped up to fill voids left by the graduation of Laskowski and Green.

Here's a look at the 1975-76 starting five:

KENT BENSON: IU's big man was rough and tough but had a silky-smooth touch around the basket. He was an All-American first teamer in 1976 and again in 1977 and became

the first overall draft pick in the NBA, where he averaged 9.1 points and 5.7 rebounds across 11 seasons.

SCOTT MAY: A two-time first-team All-American and the National Player of the Year in 1976, May perfected his mid-range jump shot and was Indiana's leading scorer in 1975-76. He went on to play seven seasons in the NBA and thrice averaged 12 points or more a game.

BOBBY WILKERSON: A versatile player at both ends of the floor, Wilkerson was a trailblazer as a 6-foot-7 guard. He went on to play seven seasons in the NBA, averaging double

figures in scoring five times.

QUINN BUCKNER: The Hoosiers' team captain was renowned for his defense and leadership. After IU, he was selected to the All-Defense second team four times during his 10-year playing career in the NBA, where he helped the Boston Celtics win a championship in 1984.

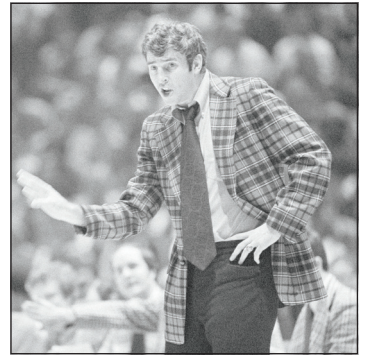
TOM ABERNETHY: As a senior, he stepped forward to take the place of Steve Green in IU's 1975-76 starting lineup and contributed 10 points and 5.3 rebounds a game. Abernethy went on to average 5.6 points across 319 games in the NBA.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

After Bobby Knight took over in Bloomington in 1971, the Hoosiers immediately started building momentum toward a national championship.

In Knight's second season, IU reached the NCAA Final Four before losing to John Wooden and eventual champion UCLA.

Two years later, the Hoosiers went through the regular season undefeated and appeared headed for a national championship before leading scorer **Scott May** broke his arm during a win over Purdue. Without May, Indiana lost in the tournament to Kentucky 92-90 and finished the season 31-1.



AP file photo

Bobby Knight signals his team to "freeze" the ball during the last minutes of play against UCLA on March 27, 1976.

GOOD KNIGHT

Bobby Knight won three national championships at Indiana and compiled a career record of 662-239 (.735) in Bloomington. His coaching career was bookended by stints at Army (1965-71) and Texas Tech (2001-2008). In 1991, he was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

Indiana has commissioned a sculpture of Knight, who had a successful yet tumultuous career at IU, to be placed at Assembly Hall. "The General" passed away in 2023 at the age of 83.

HOOSIER HIGH POINTS

Indiana's national championship in 1976 was the third in school history, following titles in 1940 and 1953.

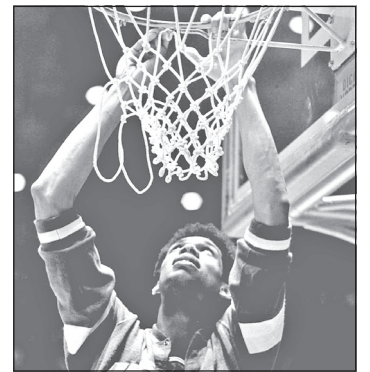
But Bobby Knight's cream-and-crimson crew wasn't done. With talented point guard **Isiah Thomas** leading the way in 1981, and sharpshooter **Steve Alford** swishing jumpers in '87, the Hoosiers grabbed the trophy twice more before Knight's tenure in Bloomington ended.

OTHER GREATEST TEAMS OF ALL TIME

Indiana's 1976 squad is the last NCAA Division I team to go undefeated, but the Hoosiers have some unbeaten company in the history of major college basketball.

Native Hoosier **John Wooden**, a three-time All-American at Purdue who began his coaching career at Indiana State, had four unbeaten teams — 1964, '67, '72 and '73 — among his 12 national championship winners at UCLA. All of them finished 30-0.

The other undefeated men's basketball champions in the NCAA Tournament era (began in 1939) were North Carolina (32-0 in 1957) and San Francisco (29-0 in 1956).



AP file photo

UCLA's Lew Alcindor, 1967