

Hoosier Daddy

Written by {ga=furls}

Friday, October 20 2006 7:00 PM -

Indiana University has come a long way in the last couple of years under new head coach Terry Hooppner, going into Iowa and defeating the 15th ranked Hawkeyes last week to move to 4-3 on the season. Are they talented enough to pull off similar heroics this week against the Bucks? Hell no. Furls is here with the best damn Buckeye football preview in the land. GO BUCKS.



Had you told me at the beginning of the year that Indiana would have four wins when they came to Columbus, I would have asked why the basketball team was playing so poorly. Even though they are transitioning into the Kelvin Sampson era, I still would have expected better.

Now if you had told me that you were talking about the football team, I would have laughed in your face, rudely, for there are few things in life that are certain: death, taxes, and Indiana sitting prominently at the bottom of the Big Ten standings.

All this begs the questions, how in the hell did this happen and will it last? Well I think you can blame a lot of Indiana's success on their new coach, Terry Hooppner. Hooppner, in his second year, is making substantial headway towards turning this program around. Things are really looking up in Bloomington for the long term because the Indiana job was a dream job for the Fort Wayne, Indiana native.

Lightning in the bottle is not enough to turn things around in Bloomington. The Hoosiers need a coach and a program that is committed to winning in the long term, not a staff that is going to take off at the first offers following initial success. It appears that this is exactly what they got in Hooppner. While a head coach at Miami (Ohio), Hooppner stated that the only way he would leave Oxford was if he was offered the job in Bloomington, so one can only presume that he is not renting his house right now.

The task he has undertaken is nearly immeasurable. Indiana University is a basketball school and it is obvious even at their football games. Earlier this year, fans at a Hoosier home game began chanting the name of a prized basketball recruit that was rumored to be at the stadium. Ironically, he was not there and it was the only time that afternoon that the crowd noise rose above a dull roar.

What Hooppner brings to the table is a gritty toughness, the kind that is a throwback to the Big Ten of old. In his first real recruiting class, this year, Hooppner brought in a shocking SEVEN

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offensive lineman. SEVEN. Last year, Ohio State's entire recruiting class consisted of twenty players. Hoepfner motivates his players and rapidly crushing the culture of losing that has prevailed in Bloomington for twenty years (the Hoosier's last winning season was in 1987).

The media has really latched on to this story. They love the heroic coach recovering from brain surgery and rallying his troops to two consecutive conference wins. It is the kind of feel good Cinderella melodrama that the talking heads love to indulge in nearly as much as they love rambling about Miami thuggery.

Has he turned this team around enough to come into Columbus and beat the number one team in the country? HELL NO. Has he turned it around enough to give them a game? Well, I predict that it will be tied for at least a minute (if the Hoosiers receive the opening kick off). If the Buckeyes receive the kickoff, all bets are off.

Introducing the Indiana Hoosiers:

The Hoosier's offense, led by freshman quarterback Kellen Lewis, is a fairly balanced, inefficient attack. They run for a little more than 100 yards per game, and pass for a little less than 200. Lewis is not afraid to tuck the ball and take off and actually leads the team with 66 carries, averaging only 2.9 yards per carry. While that average is very low, it is important to remember that in college football yardage lost on quarterback sacks counts against rushing statistics. Lewis has completed a meager 50% of his passes this year and has 5TD passes against 3Ints.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Hoosiers are giving up about 200 yards rushing per game and nearly 220 yards through the air. None of this sounds very good for the Hoosiers, but they do feature one of the nations best return men, Marcus Thigpen. Thigpen currently leads the nation with a return average of 37.0 yards and three touchdowns.

The Match Ups:

Ohio State Offense vs. Indiana Defense: This is no match up. The Buckeyes will be able to score at will and Troy Smith will have ALL DAY to pass. The Hoosiers rank 10th in the Big Ten and have amassed only 10 sacks this year. To put that in perspective, Quinn Pitcock and Vernon Gholston combined have 12 this year against much better competition. The Hoosier's day will be exactly as long as Jim Tressel says that it is.

Ohio State Defense vs. Indiana Offense: The Hoosier's best chance to score is on one of the Buckeye's many kickoff tomorrow. I doubt highly if the Hoosiers will actually be able to move the ball against the Buckeyes subs in trash time.

Don't Be Surprised if:

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1 The Buckeyes pitch a shut out. Indiana runs a primitive run option offense and they do not have any ANY homerun threats. Their best chance to score will be on a kick off return.

2 The Buckeyes pull in four quarterback induced turnovers, either fumbles or ints. Freshman quarterback, playing in front of 105,000 fans? Against a defense with more team speed than he has ever seen before? Good luck with that.

3 The Buckeyes record 7 sacks or more. The Hoosiers offensive line is young and vulnerable. They are starting two freshman on the left side of the line. Good luck with Quinn Pitcock and Vern Gholston. Additionally, the Buckeyes should be able to do this without a lot of blitzing leading us back to the whole "int" thing.

If I were a betting man:

I would take the Buckeyes -31 if I had to bet this. I have already stated that I do not like to take a Tressel team giving up big points, but this is going to be an ugly game. I love the under in this game. There is no way that Tressel puts a 50 on anyone, and I do not think that the Hoosiers will score more than 10. Final Score: Ohio State 45-Indiana 0.

Let's face it, Buckeye's fans enjoy taking the jaunt down I-70 to watch the game in Columbus West. Playing in Bloomington is a lot like giving the Buckeyes an extra home game every year.