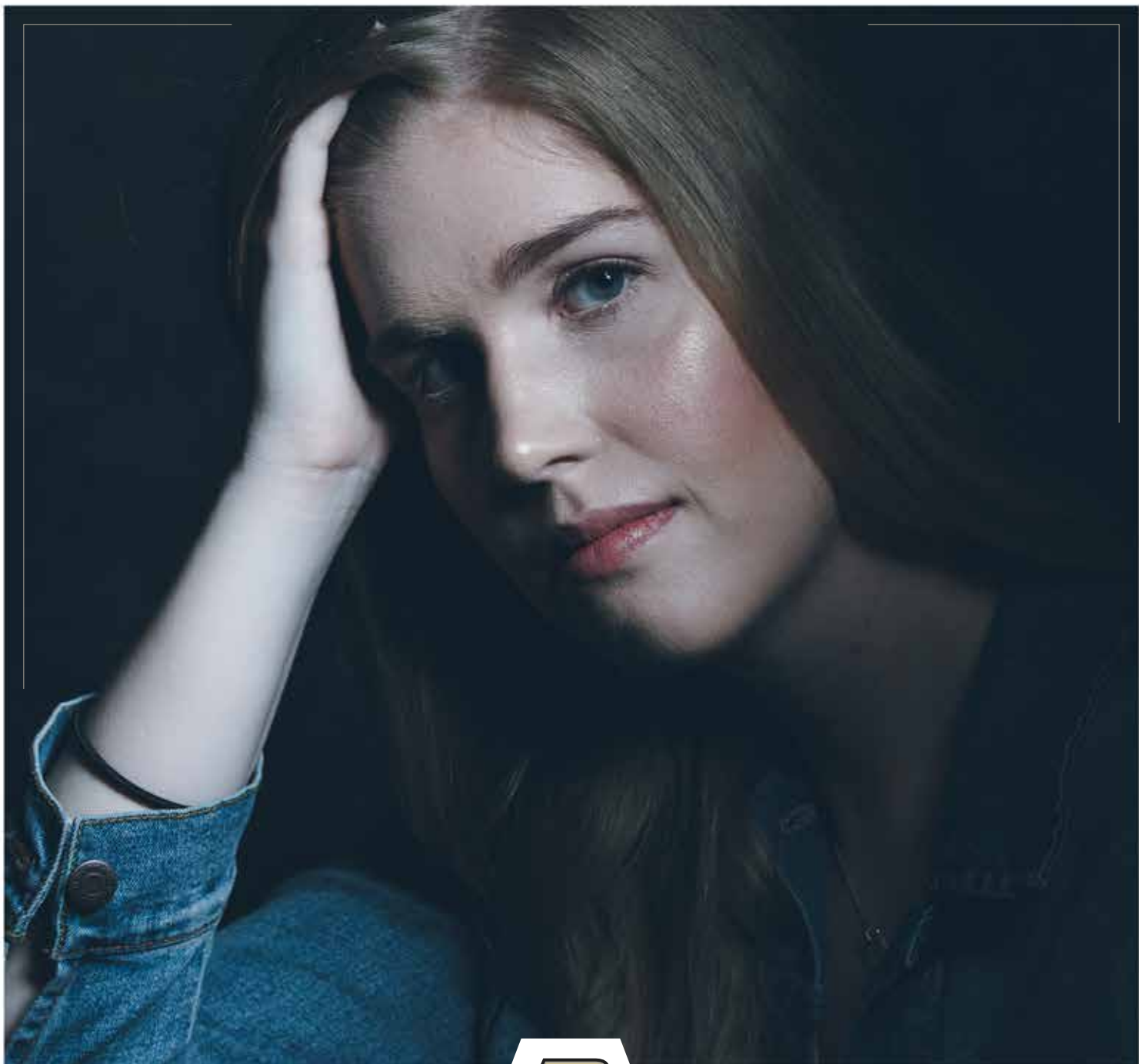


FORGE





Boilermaker Nation:

Looking back on my time at Purdue, there were so many people who supported me along the way, from professors, coaches and other students to members of the John Purdue Club. Without all of them, I would not have been able to earn a top-notch degree and compete at the highest level, both collegiately and in the Olympics. I would not have been to do what I did at any other university in the nation.

Purdue has a lot of great athletes who also are exceptional in the classroom. We pride ourselves on being competitive athletically and academically.

There is an awesome community of students here. I made it a point to attend as many sporting events as possible – from basketball and football, to volleyball, soccer, golf and tennis – because I wanted to support other athletes. We feel that same strength and generosity from you, as well.

Being at Purdue has given me the opportunity to grow not only as an athlete and but as a future filmmaker. My immediate plans are to train for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo at Purdue under our highly acclaimed coach, Adam Soldati. You can read about what a wonderful person he is on page 22.

Although I no longer will be competing for Purdue, I will forever bleed old gold & black.

To all of you and many others, I say thank you.

Boiler Up!



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Nothing like I planned... more than I ever imagined

**NORA KIESLER GIVES A
FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF HER
BOILERMAKER EXPERIENCE**

"I can't do it, I can't," I cried out between short breaths and uncontrollable sobs. The weight of reality was crashing down on my heart hard and fast. My throat was closing. My eyes were swelling shut. My chest felt only moments from collapsing. "I can't, please don't make me do it," I repeated as I buried my face in my mom's shoulder, trying to hide myself from the world around me. Physically, I was numb, yet my heart felt everything. The grief I had suppressed for months confronted me with a vengeance. It could no longer remain dormant inside of me; it was here, and it was real. I shifted away from my mom and buried my face into my legs, squeezing them closer to my chest, forming the smallest ball my 6-foot, 6-inch frame could physically allow. Tighter and tighter I squeezed, thinking maybe I could make myself so small I would just disappear into nothing and finally wake up from this nightmare that had consumed my life.

That night last November was only 12 hours before the first basketball game of my senior season. The season that was supposed to be my last go at it, my chance to set the world on fire. But everything that it was supposed to be was ripped out of my hands and simultaneously ripped out my heart by a decision that ended my playing career ... and saved my life.

Basketball isn't just a game to me. It isn't something I just played for fun. It is my escape, my rock, my first love. So, in order for you to understand my pain, you must first understand my love; for basketball, for my university and for everything and everyone that the first two brought me.

THE DREADED INJURY

My playing career ended because of the one word no student-athlete wants to hear: concussions. With five hits to the head in four and a half years, my doctor, mom, coach, and athletic trainer collectively decided the risk of me playing basketball was too high.

The first concussion definitely was the worst. I suffered a head-to-head

collision January 19, 2014, which resulted in 12 hours of memory loss and an overnight stay in the hospital. The usual confusion, slowed response and panic that result from a concussion were heightened when I woke up in the hospital room alone with no idea how I ended up there. After weeks in a dark room and a treatment plan from the best sports neurologist in the country, I returned to basketball five months later fully healthy with zero complications.

Concussions two, three and four wouldn't come until a year and a half later during my sophomore year at Purdue. I sustained three concussions in five months, significantly altering my quality of life. With a constant headache that impaired my ability to think and sleep, let alone play basketball, I had to take a three-week break from basketball in December of 2016 to get my health and myself back to normal.

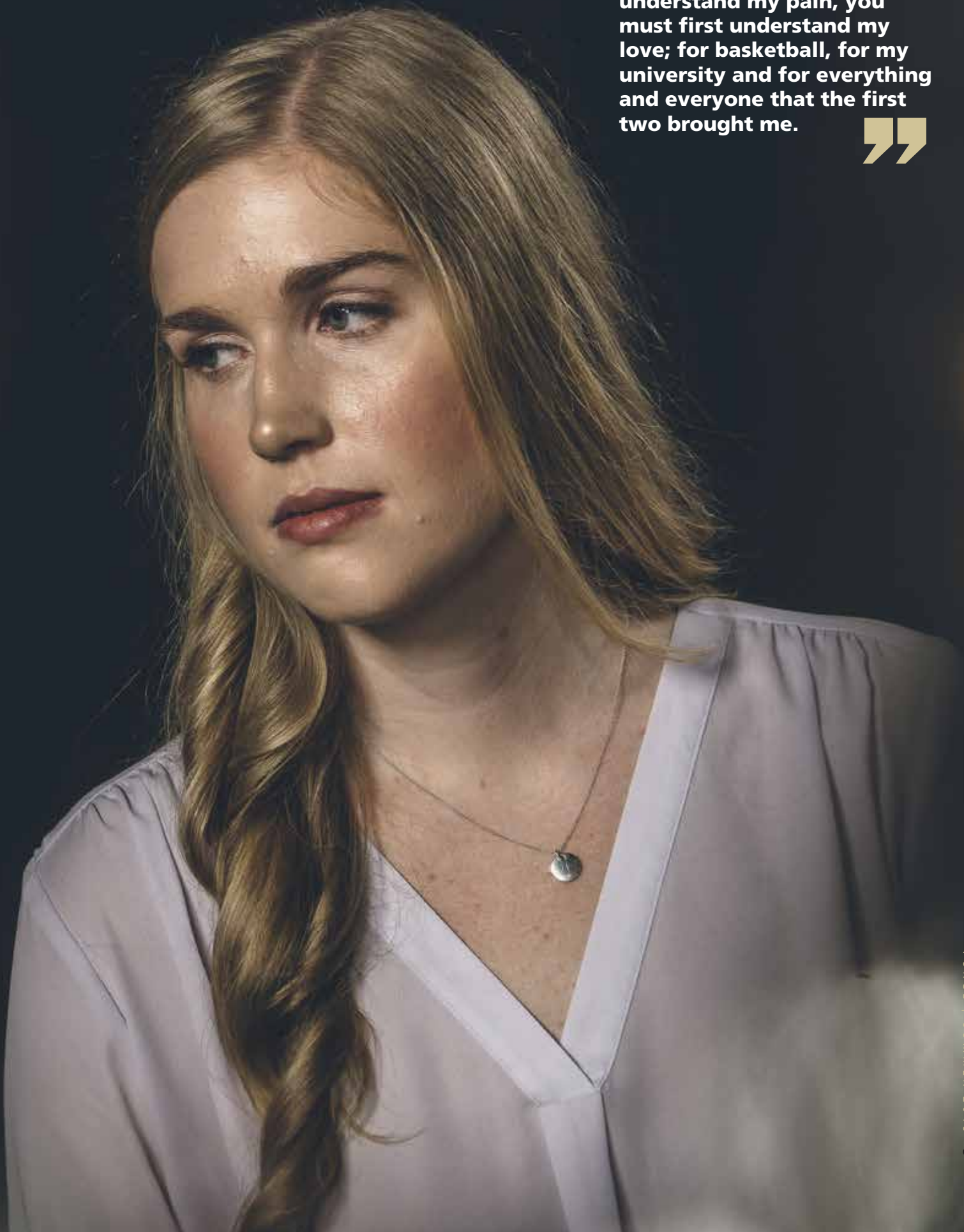
I made my way back to the court in January of 2017. However, this recovery felt different. My body didn't quite bounce back the way it did in my "younger" days. Tough practice? Headache. Long day of class? Headache. Not enough water? Headache. Sunny day? Headache. Flight to an away game? Definite headache. I survived thanks to a concoction of Tylenol, prescriptions and vitamins to ward off headaches and provide some relief from the pain.

Over the next six months, the headaches happened more and more frequently. First, every other week. Then weekly. Then four times a week. Then it reached a point during the summer of 2017 that I lived with this kind of excruciating pain constantly. Nothing gave me relief. From my temples to the base of my neck, it felt like someone was slowly slicing through the center of my skull with a knife. Every hair on my head felt like it was pulling at its base. All I wanted was a dark room and my bed. I would wake up at 6 a.m. for workouts, do what was asked of me for that hour and a half, leave and immediately crawl back in my bed for the remainder of the day. It

“

In order for you to understand my pain, you must first understand my love; for basketball, for my university and for everything and everyone that the first two brought me.

”





took every ounce of energy and what little I had left physically to get through those lifts, conditioning sessions and individual practices.

AND NO ONE KNEW

I convinced myself I couldn't tell the truth. What would my teammates say? What would coach Versyp think? What could even fix me at this point?

I accepted that these debilitating headaches were just part of how I had to live now. The way I saw it, I had a bad head that just meant I would need an extra nap every now and then. But this wasn't just a "nap"; this was an hour or two outside of bed and the other 22 spent in it. It was my new normal.

Eventually I caved and told the truth. My neurologist's solution: a nerve block to stop the pain. The treatment meant two shots in the base of my neck — needles that burned as they pierced my skin and went deep into my nerves. I felt every drop of liquid in that vile pulse through my neck and flow into my body. It was slow, agonizing and felt longer than the 30 seconds it took. But I knew it was worth it, and I was excited about the idea of having relief from how I had been living all summer. Or so I thought.

Two days later, I woke up at 3 a.m. Burning, fiery pain was pounding at the spots the two shots had been administered. A few short hours later, I went to our 6 a.m. workout, expecting myself to push through the pain.

I didn't even make it to warm up.

My teammates found me folded over, crying from the pain. They took me to the athletic trainer immediately, but there was nothing she could do to fix it.

My neurologist told me sometimes this type of reaction happens. The medicine didn't make it into my nervous system and the block didn't take hold, which meant not only was I now experiencing pain from the failed nerve block but also the pain from my headaches wasn't going away any time soon.

After days of deliberation and decisions,

my neurologist decided there was only one treatment option left if I was going to go back to a truly normal life: five days and four nights in the hospital with a 24-hour IV. The purpose was to reset my nervous system and get myself headache-free. It was scary. It was intense. But it was the only option I had left.

My time in the hospital proved successful. The headaches were gone, the pain disappeared and suddenly I had a sparkle back in my eye. But my real recovery had just begun. With a reset nervous system and a determination to play again, I started the uphill battle.

From August through October, I fought. Fought through discomfort, fought through obstacles and ultimately fought for my love for basketball.

The 2017-18 season started, and I still was fighting. It was hard watching those first few games, but I knew I was close. Seeing those games made me work that much harder to be back on the court. And on November 20, 2017 — four months after I was admitted to the hospital and told I may not play basketball again — I got what I worked for and wanted so much.

I played the rest of the season with no complications and no other hits to the head. It wasn't the perfect season, but it was one that reminded me how precious basketball is and how quickly it can be taken away.

And then it actually was taken away.

On Tuesday, July 3, 2018, we had a 6 a.m. practice. We had gone through drills for about 45 minutes, and coach V wanted to wrap things up playing 3-on-3. Each end of the floor had two teams playing against one another. At my end, my team had been behind the whole drill. In the last two minutes, we were making a comeback and when the horn sounded for practice to end we were tied. "Keep playing," coach yelled from half court. So we did. On the next shot, the ball bounced off the rim to my side of the basket. It ping-ponged

from one hand to the other, and I ultimately ended up with it. As I tried to secure the ball, I was met with a swinging palm that made contact with my temple. Immediately, my world went black. I couldn't see, my ears were ringing and the pain in my head felt like my skin was splitting right down the middle. I started to panic. I laid myself down in the Mackey Arena tunnel. Our athletic trainer met me there, asking the standard questions: "What happened? What are you feeling?" I couldn't get my breathing to slow enough to answer her, but she knew. While the contact to my head was minimal, it had caused significant symptoms.

The next few days were spent doing normal concussion-recovery protocol: sleep in a dark room with little stimulation. No television, no movies, no cell phone, nothing. I was so preoccupied with how crummy I felt, I didn't even take time to process what my fifth concussion meant. Or maybe I just wanted to deny it.

The next Friday, coach V and our athletic trainer pulled me aside after watching practice. Before saying a word, I knew something was wrong. Their demeanor told me everything I needed to know. Ultimately, they were preparing me for the decision that would come one week later.

A DATE I WILL NEVER FORGET

July 20, 2018. A moment I truly can't talk about because it still brings up too much emotion, so I black it out. The day I felt my world crash down around me.

When grief overcame me, I focused on what was taken away from me rather than what I had accomplished with what had been given to me. For a long time, I grieved the loss of the fantasy of what could have been, rather than celebrating what was: a basketball career that provided me

a foundation for the rest of my life, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and a world-class education.

Traveling with Purdue women's basketball is a first-class experience. Top-of-the-line accommodations, meals and, of course, the destinations themselves always set the standard. I have been everywhere from Maine to Mexico, from Hawaii to the Virgin Islands. Every trip was incredible in its own way, but I never will forget our journey to Italy and Switzerland my freshman year. The 12-day tour showed off the cities of Rome, Florence, Pisa, Venice, Lake Como and Montreux. Days were spent exploring cobblestone streets and appreciating the history of these beautiful places, not to mention enjoying gelato. It was truly an experience of a lifetime.

Not only did Purdue give me the opportunity to travel the world, the university also honored me with memorable on-campus occasions – the most obvious being my role as the student responder at the 235th Purdue Commencement Ceremony in August of 2018. With two months of preparation and a team of proofreaders, I created a graduation speech I was proud of (and one that I hoped would not put the audience to sleep). I decided to compare the college experience to skydiving, making parallels between the emotions at each stage of both. The idea came to me from a professor's "Final Words of Wisdom" presentation that spring when he told us, "Graduating from college feels a lot like being forced to jump out of a plane with no parachute. Jump anyway, and just make sure you have a soft place to land."

On August 4, 2018, I stood on stage in the Elliot Hall of Music with lights shining in my eyes and 6,000 pairs of eyeballs looking attentively at me. My armpits were sweating, my hands just a bit shaky and my mind telling me, "Well,

if you mess up, the 17 family and friends that are here for you will still have to love you."

"Hello everyone. My name is Nora Kiesler, and no, the podium is not that small, I'm really just that tall." Laughter erupted in the hall. I mean who doesn't love a good tall joke, right? From there, the teleprompter kept me on track, and the ensuing four minutes of the speech were delivered flawlessly. Coming down from the stage started what I like to call my 15 seconds of fame – smiling to the strangers along the aisle, thanking the people who complimented me and posing for picture after picture. It was a dream, a moment in time filled with so much joy I thought I could never feel again.

I WAS WRONG

I experienced another moment like it six months later.

February 17, 2019, is another date I will never forget. But this time, in the best way.

Sixty-six seconds. That's all the playing time I got for my entire senior year. Barely over a minute. Only played in one game. But believe me, those 66 seconds meant more to me than the entire 18 years of playing time before it.

Putting on my jersey, my shorts, my shoes – it was all so much sweeter that day. It meant so much more. I actually forgot what it felt like to wear that silk-smooth Dri-FIT on my body, to run out of Mackey's tunnel, to just be a basketball player.

It was near the end of the third quarter and the game was tied. Coach V had promised I would see the floor, but I understood the importance of a win over Northwestern that night, and I still couldn't get myself out of the "team-first" mindset.

All of the sudden, coach V ran



down the bench and pulled me out of my seat. With one minute and six seconds on the clock, my time had come. I sprinted to the scorer's table, peeling off my warmup in the process. The ball had been blown dead and subs were waved into the game. But not so fast. The referees came running together to review whatever call had been made on the previous play. With that time, coach V pulled our team together and said, "Nora, if we have the ball we're running MSU, and you're making the pass. If we're on defense we'll be in a 2-3 zone."

I froze. Standing there stunned, I thought to myself, "Hold on now, did she just insinuate that I'm ACTUALLY PLAYING?! AND SHE WANTS ME TO MAKE A PASS WHEN THE GAME IS TIED, AND I HAVEN'T PLAYED SINCE JULY?!"

OK, so it was more like a scream in my head.

I looked down at my shoes – barely tied and no ankle braces. My idea of "playing" was five seconds of standing in the corner and maybe getting the ball thrown to me if I was lucky. Not a minute of actual offense and defense. Gulp.

I checked into the game and, of course with my luck, immediately was given a technical foul because someone (I won't name names) forgot to write my name in the scorer's book.

What happened next was a minute of my life that I hold so close to my heart. The public-address announcer called my name, the crowd cheered, and I couldn't help but soak it all in. The fans, the band, all the people who knew what it took for me to step on the floor that evening had loved me through it all. One possession of offense, one possession of defense and, boom, it was over. What was just one minute felt like the blink of an eye to me, but an eternity to my poor mom who was in the stands praying that I didn't take another blow to the head in this final game. Good news: I didn't.

It's hard to put that moment into words and, to be honest, I don't know that I want to share it. Because it's a moment that is entirely mine. It's sacred to me and overwhelming in so many ways: the joy, the pain, the love.

I will put it like this: I had basketball ripped away from me and on that day, I took it back.

Through all of it – the highs and the lows, the really good and the really ugly – one thing cannot be forgotten: my friendship with my teammate and now best friend Abby Abel. Abby is the type of person that brings happiness into your life by just being herself. She always says that what she lacks in height she makes up for in heart, and wow is that the truth. Whether it was a note to make me smile on a bad day, a cake on my birthday every year or just a jam session in the car when the sunshine finally came out after winter, Abby has been my "person" these last four years. She complements me in the best ways – reaching the bottom shelf, cleaning up after I cook and even tying my shoes when I just don't feel like bending allllllll the way down there. College athletics is tough, and if anyone thinks they can get through the experience alone they are flat out wrong. This best friend of mine, a stranger four years ago and now the only other player that made it through these four years with me, forever will be part of my life. And because of what? You guessed it: basketball.

NO REGRETS

As a high school senior in the fall of 2014, I committed to Purdue. The academic reputation, the women's basketball tradition and the life-changing opportunities that awaited me were all factors in my decision. But there was one thing that really set Purdue apart from the others – the feeling that it was exactly where I was supposed to be.

Looking back, I'm glad high school senior Nora listened to that little voice inside her head that told her to come to West Lafayette and wear the old gold & black. Because now, four years later, I'm educated, well-traveled and part of a Boilermaker family that lasts much longer than my time on campus. I'm leaving with not one, but two degrees, as I will add an MBA from Krannert to my undergraduate degree in management and marketing. All because of a bouncy orange ball.

Do I wish I could do it again? Abso-freaking-lutely. But not because I would change anything about my unpredictable journey; I just want to live it all over again. Yes, my college experience was nothing like I planned it would be, but it was still more than I ever imagined.

Ever grateful, ever true. ✕



By Tom Dienhart

FAN-DEMONIUM

The vortex of sound swirls around the Mackey Arena court. The 14,804 black-and-gold clad fans are whipped into a frenzy, feeding the noise. You can feel it, as the wall of sound rises and envelopes Purdue's home court, turning it into a cacophony of sound and fury.

"There is really nothing like it," says Michael Wood, a former president of the Paint Crew and recent Purdue graduate. "Your ears are ringing, and you are trying to match what everyone else is doing."

Welcome to Mackey Arena, where the Boilermakers played to 98 percent capacity last season and in front of sellout crowds 10 times out of 15 games.

The venerable domed edifice that sits along Northwestern Avenue has earned a reputation as one of the loudest venues in the country. It is a deafening den of decibels that un-nerves opponents, fueled by a Boilermaker fan base that ranks among the nation's best.

"Mackey Arena still is the best venue," college basketball analyst Andy Katz said this past season. "It's the loudest just the way it reverberates off the top of that dome. It is by far the most intimidating place for an opponent

to go in to in the Big Ten regardless how good the Boilermakers are. Because when they are home, they are pretty good."

Purdue ended up being more than "pretty good" last season, as the Boilermakers won the Big Ten and advanced to the Elite Eight during a thrilling NCAA Tournament run. And along the way, the program got a big boost from the screaming zealots sardined into Mackey. It's a testimony to a Boilermaker fan base whose support has played an integral part in the fortunes of not just the basketball squad, but also the football program.

That never was more apparent than last October, when a jam-packed Ross-Ade Stadium served as the backdrop to one of the biggest and most memorable victories in school history. With super-fan Tyler Trent on hand as inspiration, the Boilermakers crushed No. 2 Ohio State 49-20.

ESPN play-by-play man Chris Fowler tweeted: "Incredible night @BoilerFootball – from Boilers' total team performance to @theTylerTrent sharing his powerful story and having his wish fulfilled and the team prayer around him in the locker room. I will not forget this game."

It was a night wrapped in a wave of emotions that encapsulated the passion of this fandom. It also contained a trend. Purdue has seen attendance skyrocket at Ross-Ade since head coach Jeff Brohm arrived in 2017. Brohm went 7-6 during his maiden voyage, after the program had won a total of nine games in the previous four years. Attendance at Ross-Ade rose by 13,433 per game, from 34,451 in 2016 to 47,884 in 2017. It was the largest per-game average in the nation, and there is still room for the Boilermakers to add. Last season, Purdue saw its home average jump to 51,119. Capacity for Ross-Ade is listed at 57,236.

Yes, winning has played a big part in that jump. But there are other factors, including an ever-increasing emphasis on marketing and fan experience.

"Our goal is to provide an environment where people can enjoy themselves, learn a little about our student-athletes, connect a little bit and also enjoy the atmosphere that surrounds the games," says Chris Peludat, associate athletics director for marketing and fan experience. "We obviously can't control the result, but we can work to make sure we complement that as best we can."

The John Purdue Club also is doing its part to enhance the fan experience. This spring, it instituted the Boilermaker Athletics Representative program. The JPC isn't just trying to sell tickets, it is trying to cultivate donors and fans at the same time and trying to give people a personal experience.

"We want to take the approach where we are building on the experience Purdue fans want," says Tim House, senior associate athletics director and senior director of development. "We are learning more about our fan base. We can guess what we think people want to see. What's Ohio State doing? What's Michigan doing? What's Clemson doing? Whoever. And model what we do after other schools. Or we could go to our fan base and ask them what they want."

It's all about building trust with the customer and delivering a good experience. It's also about forging a bond. That is where the Boilermaker Athletics Representative program comes in. The JPC assigns a staff member to every member and season-ticket holder. That individual is assigned a contact in the JPC and given that staffer's personal email and direct phone number.

"We will build relationships with trust that way," House says. "We can build a relationship where we are explaining to them and they aren't just showing up seeing it isn't how they want it and assuming they think we don't want what is best for them."

Ticketing also has been a key component to the rise of fans and cultivation of a rabid atmosphere in Mackey and Ross-Ade. The athletics ticket office offers different packages to fans; the more options, the more likely to hit a fan's sweet spot. Brian Fordyce, director of ticket operations and analytics, knows there is an appetite from

the fan base. He saw the fever of Purdue fans up close last December when tickets for the Music City Bowl went on sale.

"This year's bowl game, we sold 3,000 tickets above and beyond our allotment of 8,000," Fordyce says. "We used 11,000 tickets. It was a week of 16-hour days in the ticket office. They were some long days to execute that because of the quantity of tickets."

Fordyce got an indication of what was ahead in the Brohm era at the start of his tenure.

"The thing that sticks in my mind is the game against Louisville in Indianapolis (Brohm's first game)," he says. "When coach Brohm came in, everyone was excited. But our fan base had been excited before. But when the team put forth that effort and that showing in that first game, people realized what we had then. I think we sold 10,000 tickets the week of the Michigan game. Our phones and system blew up for that game. All of sudden, one game and people were on board."

That 2017 debut for Brohm turned out to be magical, ending with a Foster Farms Bowl win over Arizona. It served as impetus to better attendance in 2018. But winning isn't the sole key to selling tickets.

"Winning is important," Fordyce says. "We are trying to create an atmosphere and a relationship with our fans. You can't just sit back and say, well, the team is good, they will come; if the team is no good, we can't do anything about it. You have to try

to create something where people come. And even if the team doesn't win, they had a great time."

No doubt, Michael Wood had fun while he was in the Paint Crew.

"It really is unbelievable to feel and hear how the sound gathers near the center of the court," Wood says. "If I was an opposing player, I would be rattled because it is one of those things when you just stop and think of how loud it is, it is pretty incredible."

What also is remarkable to Wood and others is that the environment is becoming win/loss agnostic. Aggressive marketing and social media set the table for high-performing teams. Fans feel the need to be at the stadium or arena and share in the experience.

No matter what. ✂



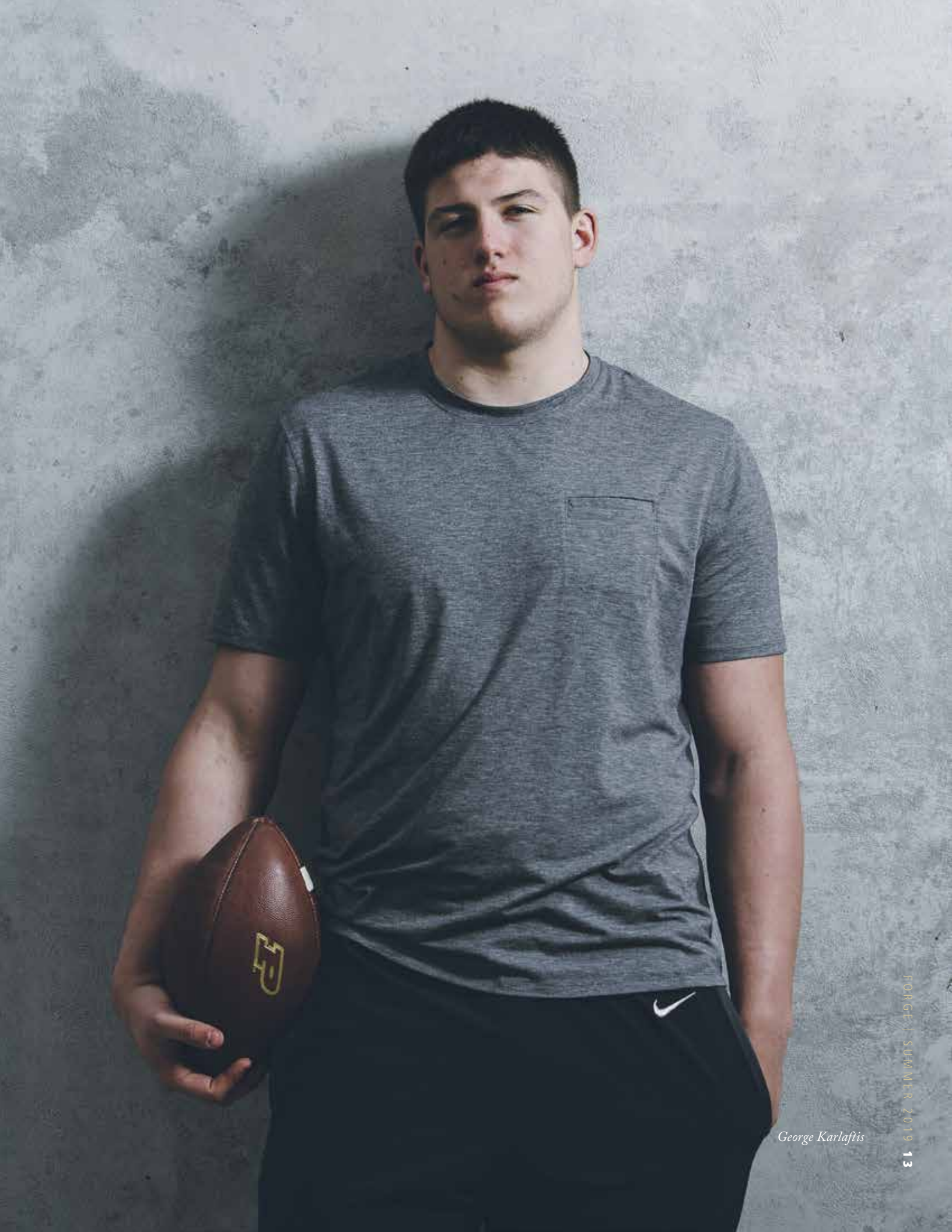
CLOCKING IN EARLY

FOOTBALL PLAYERS ARE GETTING A HEAD START ON THEIR COLLEGIATE CAREERS

By Tim Newton

Spring practice or senior prom?

That's the question high school seniors face once they sign a letter of intent to play college football. While a majority of them complete their senior year of high school, some are opting to graduate a semester early and enter college for the spring semester, giving them an opportunity to take part in spring practice.



Purdue head coach Jeff Brohm says he leaves that choice up to each individual.

“I don’t want people to do it before they’re ready, and they have to be mature enough to handle college at a younger age,” Brohm says. “But if they’re prepared, both mentally and physically, it gives them an opportunity to get on the field early against college players and allows them to get used to the academic schedule here.”

Students can graduate early by taking courses online or in the summer. Those options weren’t available when Brohm was a high school student in Louisville, Kentucky. He admits that even if they were, he wouldn’t have left high school early because he enjoyed playing basketball and baseball. Brohm was selected by the Montreal Expos in the seventh round of the 1989 draft, but opted for college football instead.

MAKING THE NUMBERS WORK

The only limitations for mid-year enrollees are the scholarship numbers. Each program is allowed to have 85 players on scholarship at one time. If a team is at the maximum of 85 and has 20 seniors, suppose 10 graduate during the fall semester (or sooner) of their final year of eligibility and the other 10 will graduate in subsequent semesters. Using an NCAA legislated exception, the program may take up to 10 mid-year enrollees, including junior college and graduate transfers, as well as high school seniors.

This year, four high school seniors decided to enroll at Purdue in January: defensive end George Karlaftis, safety Jalen Graham, offensive lineman Spencer Holstege and quarterback Paul Piferi. Karlaftis was a highly sought recruit from West Lafayette High School. His decision to begin his

college career early was made well in advance.

“I brought it up to my mom, and she was kind of hesitant about it,” Karlaftis says. “She had never heard of it. It probably was decided about a year ago.

“I thought it would give me the best opportunity to play come August 30 (Purdue’s season opener). It would be better for me to develop into the player I want to be my freshman year.”

Athletically, Karlaftis immediately proved he belonged on the collegiate field, running with the first-team defense throughout spring practice. And he quickly noticed a big difference in his physical stature.

“I’ve actually lost weight,” he says. “I’ve lost about 12 pounds in fat and gained 10 to 15 pounds in muscle. It’s been really good for me.”

Karlaftis has been fine in the classroom, too. “I went to West Side, and they take academics pretty seriously. So, the transition wasn’t as difficult for me. It’s still a different speed and you have a different workload, but it’s been pretty good so far,” says Karlaftis, who is leaning toward construction management as a major.

FLYING INTO THE FRAY

Karlaftis is hoping to have a similar freshman year to another early enrollee. Markell Jones came to campus in the spring of 2015 after being named Mr. Football in Indiana. He made his decision for both academic and athletic reasons.

“I wanted to acclimate to the rhythm that I would be in during the season, with classes in the morning and practice in the afternoon,” Jones says. “It gave me a chance to get to know people

around here without the pressure of starting school during the season.”

Jones also knew that there was an immediate opportunity to play. Akeem Hunt, Raheem Mostert and Brandon Cottom all had exhausted their eligibility after the 2014 season.

Jones took full advantage. He appeared in all 12 games, starting six, in 2015, and ran for a Purdue freshman-record 875 yards with 10 touchdowns.

“I don’t think I would have been able to contribute to that extent without coming in the spring,” he says. “I might have been able to play special teams and have some spot duty, but being here early and going through spring practice had me ready to play.”

Like Karlaftis, Jones used those extra months on campus to transform his body. He came to Purdue at 195 pounds, but gained 10 pounds of muscle before playing as a freshman.

Jones is finished with football. He concluded his Boilermaker career with 20 rushing touchdowns, good for ninth place in program history. He will graduate in August with a degree in professional flight technology, and will follow in the footsteps of his dad, a pilot. Jones eventually hopes to fly for UPS, because “the packages don’t worry about smooth landings.”

Any regrets about missing the last half of his senior year in high school?

“No,” he says without hesitation. “In fact, if I could have come in a full year early, I would have.”

By the way, Karlaftis and Jones attended their high school proms as juniors. Both said once was enough. ✖





LEADER OF THE PACK

When George Karlaftis committed to Purdue during his junior season at West Lafayette High School, it was a win on two fronts.

First, it gave the Boilermakers one of the top defensive ends in the country, a player coveted by the likes of Michigan, Notre Dame and Ohio State. It also gave Jeff Brohm a boost in his quest to show that the program was turning in the right direction.

“It was huge to have such a high-profile recruit in our backyard decide to jump on board,” Brohm says. “It set the table for other top players to join him. He’s a great advocate for the university and for our program.”

Karlaftis has been active on social media, encouraging other top prospects to join him at Purdue. It’s part of the plan that he discussed with Brohm during the recruiting process.

“Coach talked to me, since I was a big-time name, and asked if I would help recruit other players,” Karlaftis says. “I wanted to do that because I knew I wanted to go to Purdue, and I wanted to have a great recruiting class here. I just set it as my goal to help get the best class we could possibly get.”

His efforts helped drive the Boilermaker recruiting class to a top-25 ranking by 247Sports.com. Karlaftis is one of four incoming players ranked as four-star recruits, along with receiver Milton Wright from Louisville, safety Marvin Grant from Detroit and defensive tackle Steven Fauchaux from West Chester, Ohio.

Since arriving on campus, Karlaftis has impressed the coaching staff with his high motor and work ethic. He’s doing everything he can to help continue the turnaround of Purdue football.

“I try to lead in any way I can,” says Karlaftis, who turned 18 during spring practice. “I’m young, so it’s kind of different. But in my recruiting class and with a couple of the younger guys, I would consider myself a leader.”





A dollar deal gives Purdue a Course to Dye For

**STORIES ABOUT THE LEGENDARY
COURSE DESIGNER AND HIS IMPACT**

By Tom Campbell

Pete Dye, designer of some of the most memorable golf courses on the planet, was deep in thought. From his vantage point on the fourth hole on Purdue's Kampen Course, Dye repeatedly glanced up at the fairway, then back to the tee box.

His dog, "60," meandered wherever his curious nose would take him. A golf course, it turns out, is a smorgasboard of sniffs.

From the shade of the tee box, three men and one woman — Purdue men's coach Rob Bradley, women's head coach Devon Brouse and assistant Caroline Hegg, and golf course superintendent Jim Scott — all stood motionless in the sauna of an Indiana July day, waiting for the genius to kick in. And with Dye, it was always just a matter of time.

Suddenly, Dye, now 93, sprang to life. A few waves of his right hand sent Hegg off the tee box and out into the fescue.

"Go stand over there," Dye said. Hegg trudged through the ankle-high grass in the general direction of the adjacent third fairway.

"You are a tree. Keep going until I tell you to stop."

On this day in 2014, Dye was on campus to look at changes he wanted to implement in his redesign of Purdue's Ackerman-Allen Course. By now, the Kampen Course had been open for 16 years. But Dye never really signs off on any of his projects. Each is an eternal work in progress.

Dye and Scott had a warm spot in their hearts for the Kampen Course. They built it with their hands with the help of three dozen students who signed up for the project. To some, it was just a job in the out of doors. But many signed up for the chance to work with Dye.

The consummate tinkerer, Dye always was suggesting subtle changes for Kampen, even while he was working on the Ackerman-Allen layout. Before the Kampen project was completed in 1998, the North Course (as it was known) was dismissed as an "airport course" by

folks like Brouse. The fairways had no irrigation. Sprinklers were hauled from green to green just to keep them from turning into 18 perfectly round, brown circles during the summer months.

"Those fairways were like landing strips," Brouse says. "Just hard and, mostly, straight. Tee shots would just bounce and roll forever."

Good for the golfer's ego, but bad for the game.

DOC AND DYE

Transforming the course into the jewel it is today became the mission of John "Doc" O'Neal, Purdue golf team captain and most valuable player in 1975 and 1976 and victim of a painful North Course initiation.

"It was on my first qualifying round as a freshman," recalls O'Neal, co-owner of a golf management company based in Carmel, Indiana. "I was walking to the fifth tee and got hit in the head by a tee shot from a teammate playing the fourth hole. Knocked me out cold. I didn't even finish the round."

But long after the bump on his head disappeared, the bad memories of the North Course remained.

Shortly after being named athletics director in 1993, Morgan Burke called O'Neal, his fraternity brother. He wanted to get some ideas on increasing revenue from the golf courses by boosting the number of rounds played. But Burke was not interested in spending a lot of money on golf.

"What if I brought Pete Dye up to look at the North Course?" O'Neal asked Burke.

O'Neal grew up playing the same courses as Dye and his wife, Alice. He often crossed paths and fairways with the couple who were golf royalty in the Carmel area.



Photo by Tom Campbell

“That’s great,” Burke said. “He can give us a few ideas.”

Burke, however, was not interested in a total redesign or the \$1 million fee Dye was charging.

“I have to tell you Doc, redoing the North Course is not a priority with me,” Burke said. “We have a lot of other things that we need to fix first. And right now, we don’t have two nickels to rub together for that place.”

A week later, O’Neal and Dye showed up with a gallery in tow the likes of which the North Course had rarely seen.

“We had about 20 people,” O’Neal recalls, “engineers, agronomists, hydrologists, community leaders, even some curious golf fans. For about five hours, we walked every hole on that course from tee to green.”

Burke was about to get a lot more than a few suggestions from Doc and Dye, who also had scheduled a visit with then-Purdue president Steven Beering.

“I told Dr. Beering we would need about \$7 million for the project,” Dye said at the time. “Dr. Beering says, ‘Well, we just don’t have that kind of money right now.’”

Ever the salesman (Dye sold insurance before he was a golf course designer), Dye made Beering an offer he couldn’t refuse and his wife couldn’t believe.

LET’S MAKE A DEAL

“I said I would raise the money myself and that I would waive my fee.” Dye joked that

he would charge Purdue \$1 just to make it a legal transaction.

Beering knew a good deal when he saw one. He nearly jumped across the table to shake Dye’s hand and lock down the agreement.

When Dye returned home and told Alice of his dollar deal with Purdue, she was less than thrilled.

“You did what?” Alice barked. “You go right back up there and tell those people you made a mistake.” But Dye stayed true to his handshake with Beering.

It may be the best buck Purdue ever spent.

TIME WITH A LEGEND

A Pete Dye sighting always excited the Purdue golf community, including Hegg, a Purdue golfer from 2003 to 2007 and the team’s assistant coach from 2010 to 2015.

“We all wanted to spend time with Pete Dye,” Hegg says. “Who wouldn’t?”

Dye is just the second living golf course designer to be voted into the World Golf Hall of Fame. His courses have hosted U.S. Open, PGA Championship, Tournament Players Championship and Ryder Cup events, among others.

“He is an amazing person to listen to,” says Hegg, currently the women’s head coach at Augusta (Georgia) University. “It was always interesting to see how his brain worked. It was an awesome thing to see him go through the entire process of building a golf course, hole by hole, first, recreating every shot in his

mind, then transferring it into a plan.”

So if the tradeoff for spending time with Dye meant she would have to be a tree, Hegg was all in. She walked toward the third fairway with her arms stretched to the sky. “If I had to be a tree for Pete Dye, then I was going to be the best tree I could be.”

At different times that summer, Dye had asked Hegg to be a green, a tee box and a bunker. It helped him visualize what the course eventually would look like, way before the days of virtual reality and GPS maps.

Even Brouse once was asked to stand on the top of a golf cart so Dye could see what a particular shot over a grassy mound would look like to a golfer.

But in the summer heat, the branches of the Caroline tree began to wilt.

“I dropped my arms, and, finally, I just sat down,” Hegg says.

“Get up,” Dye commanded. “Trees can’t sit down!”

NO MORE SHORTCUTS

For years, tournament players teeing off the par-5 fourth hole had been able to trim 100 yards off the hole by playing up the adjacent third fairway.

“It used to drive Pete crazy,” Scott says. “He never thought players would do this when he was building the course.”

During the Monday practice round for the NCAA women’s championship in 2003,

tournament officials took notice of players taking advantage of the shortcut.

“What can we do?” one official asked. “It’s dangerous for the players on the third hole. Balls are coming right at them.”

“Well, let me plant a few trees in there and block off the tee box,” Scott offered.

“You can’t make trees grow that fast, can you?”

“Sure I can.” And by the time the first players reached the fourth tee the following day, a foursome of ash trees now shaded the tee box, preventing access to the third fairway.

The tree stand was a bigger overnight success than Jack’s beanstalk, making Scott and his crew heroes among golf course superintendents everywhere.

The ash trees stood sentry for years, but eventually they became infested with emerald ash borers and were removed. So by the time Dye came up for a visit in July of 2014, the shortcut issue had become a festering sore.

“Stop right there,” Dye said to Hegg. “That’s where we’ll put the tree.”

But that was only half of the solution. If golfers were bold enough to try the shortcut, they were probably skilled enough to fly tee shots over any tree Scott could plant, even a tall, leafy maple tree.

SOUVENIRS AND SOLUTIONS

Dye turned back to Brouse, Scott and Bradley, standing in the shade cast by a majestic pin oak tree. “And we’ll move the tee right next to this tree,” he said.

The new tee would not add any length to hole, but those overhanging branches sure would keep golfers from shortening it.

The Kampen Course got a new tee that day and Hegg got two souvenirs. Above her office desk flies a Kampen Course pin flag with Dye’s autograph. And from that day forward, the rest of the Purdue golf staff simply called her “Tree.”

PURDUE PAYBACK

For Dye, designing two courses at Purdue

was his payment for what he saw as a free Purdue education.

When he started in the design business, Dye sought the advice of two people, Bill Diddle and William Daniel. Diddle designed Purdue’s South Course and suggested Dye not give up his day job to design courses.

Daniel, a Purdue agronomy professor and namesake of the turf grass center that now sits adjacent to the Kampen Course, became Dye’s go-to guy on all things agronomic.

“Pete would drop in on Dr. Daniel’s classes from time to time, attend seminars or just call him on the phone when he had a turf question,” Brouse says. “Pete was most comfortable when he was talking about dirt or turf. And he loved to talk to Dr. Daniel about both. Dr. Daniel was a huge influence on Pete and designing these two courses was Pete’s way of thanking Dr. Daniel for everything he did for him.”

PETE AND ALICE: PURDUE’S FOREVER FRIENDS

In golf circles, Pete and Alice were the ultimate power couple. Married for 69 years until her death in February, there was hardly a decision made in the household or on the golf course that didn’t involve Alice. The iconic island green at TPC Sawgrass? That was Alice’s idea.

And she helped shaped the Purdue courses. Alice always made sure there were enough forward tees to accommodate all levels of golfers. And she helped cure Kampen’s case of the measles.

“Jimmy! Jimmy! Come here,” she said to Scott during one of the many routine inspections of the Kampen Course. A huge waste bunker parallels the eighth fairway. Dye had sprinkled tufts of fescue throughout the bunker. Each looked like a tiny golf ball-eating island floating in a sandy sea.

“I want you to get rid of all of these measles,” Alice said, pointing to the fescue pods.

Scott was confused. “What measles?” he asked.

“All of these little bumps. I can’t stand these little bumps.”



Photo by Tom Campbell

Scott had grown especially close to Pete Dye. Even though managing a work crew of students “aged me 30 years and landed me in the hospital with exhaustion.” He calls working side-by-side with Dye to build the Kampen Course “the experience of a lifetime.”

In the course of spending so much time with a man generally regarded as a genius, the relationship – based on respect, admiration and a little bit of fear – could go one of two ways.

“Jimmy,” Dye told the superintendent one day, “if Purdue ever fires you, you’ve got a lifetime job with me. But if I fire you, you’ll never work in this business again.”

Scott once called Dye “the best man I know, outside of my dad.” But he would never do anything to the course without first clearing it through Pete. No matter what Alice said.

“But what about Pete?” Scott asked.

“I’ll take care of Pete,” she said. “You just get rid of these bumps.”

Alice went to Pete and revealed her plan to change the bunker. Pete looked at his wife, immediately recognizing the seriousness of her intentions.

“I think that’s a great idea,” Dye said to Alice. “I’ve been telling him to do that for years.”

Within days, Scott had cleared all of the “measles” out of the bunker. ⚡



Q & A

with Matt Painter

By Tom Schott

On the heels of one of the most-memorable seasons in Purdue men's basketball history – highlighted by the Boilermakers' Big Ten-leading 24th conference championship and first trip to the NCAA Tournament Elite Eight since 2000 – *Forge* visited with personable head coach Matt Painter. The National Association of Basketball Coaches National Coach of the Year looked back, glanced ahead and chatted about family and the Chicago Cubs.

FORGE: What are your reflections of the 2018-19 season?

PAINTER: When you graduate four senior starters, you can fall into the trap of worrying about what you lost instead of what you have returning. I felt like we had a lot of experience coming back, even though besides Carsen

Edwards, it was from guys who had come off the bench for us. The experience of Ryan Cline and Grady Eifert, both in their fourth year in our program, really showed in how they played. Matt Haarms might be the oldest sophomore in the country, and that showed. Nojel Eastern's abilities and maturity showed.

I think there was a national narrative that Carsen had to do a lot from a scoring standpoint in order for us to win, and I think we proved that theory wrong. When we won some home games in late December, we saw a lot of guys start to build confidence and find their niche and their role. We proved we could win games without Carsen scoring a lot of points. We kept getting better, started winning games on the road and won the Big Ten

championship. Then at the end, when Carsen played so well in the NCAA Tournament, we got within a half a second of going to the Final Four.

FORGE: When many folks were writing off this team with a 6-5 record in mid-December, what encouraged you?

PAINTER: Sometimes, when you win more non-conference games, you are beating people that you should beat, and you are beating them in your home arena. We lost two games on a neutral site against Virginia Tech and Notre Dame. We lost at Texas in a close game. We lost a close game at Florida State, which ended up being a No. 4 seed in the NCAA Tournament. We were a possession away from winning a couple of those.



The loss to Notre Dame got everybody's attention. A lot of our guys, and this is very natural, were playing through their offense, and they were equating their value with taking shots, making shots, and you just can't play that way. We had to be more defined in our roles. Everybody had to be better in what he was doing. We needed to win to gain confidence, and I think once we started to get some wins there, especially beating Belmont at home and Iowa at home, I think that really helped us. Then getting that win at Wisconsin was huge for us, and we really got on a run after that and played good basketball.

FORGE: What was it like coaching in the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight games – two games for the ages?

PAINTER: After going to Hartford for the first two rounds, being in Louisville, where all the Purdue fans could come, the atmosphere was unbelievable. During the Elite Eight game, we had a tremendous advantage with our crowd.

FORGE: What will you remember most about Carsen Edwards' four games in the NCAA Tournament?

PAINTER: To me, it was like he was playing Pop-a-Shot. He just got into one of those rhythms, and he felt really good about himself. The whole nation got to see we saw in practice. Even when he was not shooting at a high percentage during the season, he always would come back to practice and shoot the ball well. I always felt that when he lands on two feet, the ball is going in the basket. When he lands on one foot, it doesn't go in as much.

He had similar games – at Illinois, at Texas, at Wisconsin, at Penn State – but to be able to string them together like he did and get on that kind of run, especially in those type of games, he showed a lot of growth. When we did a good

job setting him up and did a good job making good decisions, we executed at a high level.

FORGE: What does being named national coach of the year mean to you?

PAINTER: It means we have good players. When your peers recognize you, I think they respected the job that our staff did from where we were at the beginning of the year. Coaches know how tough it is to be in a rut and to get out of that rut and achieve some level of consistency. We were able to do it, win the Big Ten and come close to the Final Four. It's a team award anytime someone receives an individual award.

FORGE: As we sit here in late spring, what are your thoughts heading into next season?

PAINTER: We have two starters returning who really can expand their game, but they also have to expand their game under the parameters of what they can and can't do. We have some guys who came off the bench for us that have a lot to prove. It is a kind of proving-ground time for those guys to make improvements and get better, but also understand you have to be able to showcase those things within good judgment and good decision-making. I'm excited about the future. We signed three freshman that will come in next year, and I think at some point all three are going to be really good players for us.

Emmanuel Dowuona redshirted for us and got hurt, but I like his attitude and think he's going to help. He has a high motor, he plays hard, and he cares. Evan Boudreaux played early in the year, and then he got hurt, and we went with Trevion Williams. With a new season and his experience, we are hoping Evan will be able to help us next year.

FORGE: What is it like having your son, Brayden, at Purdue and involved with your program as a student manager?

PAINTER: Brayden is 20 years old, but he is very youthful in terms of his passion for Purdue basketball and football. Sometimes he is a little bit too engaged with what is going on in our program. He always has been supportive of every coach and every player. He simply wants Purdue to win. His passion is unmatched, and I think that is pretty cool.

FORGE: Likewise, it must be nice to have your parents and stepparents see you succeed.

PAINTER: They are very loyal, and I appreciate all their support. They come to a lot of games and travel with us a lot. When I was in fourth grade, my parents built me a full-court basketball court with floodlights in our backyard. I spent a lot of time playing on that court. So for them to be able to follow us, it has been great. My dad coached me from kindergarten through sixth grade. He graduated from Indiana, so he went to the 1976, 1981 and 1987 Final Fours as an Indiana fan. It would have been neat for him to go to the Final Four as a Purdue fan this year. Hopefully, we can do that someday, so both my parents can go and root for Purdue in a Final Four.

FORGE: Are you bullish about the Chicago Cubs for the 2019 season?

PAINTER: It is a long season. After a tough start, they strung together some wins, and I feel good about them. I definitely think they have the pieces. They have so many guys that are either all-stars or potential all-stars, and not every team can say that. They are going to have to do a better job with their relief pitching. That is the one area of most concern right now, just to be able to get some consistency. ✂



LIFE COACH

ADAM SOLDATI // HEAD DIVING COACH

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

INSIDE PURDUE ATHLETICS

By Cory Palm

When you walk into Purdue diving coach Adam Soldati's office, you immediately notice all of the accoutrements of a world-class coach. The eight Big Ten Diving Coach of the Year trophies. The banners representing the last four Summer Olympic Games, signed by the athletes he coached. There are various certificates that are given to only the best of the best.

But to understand what makes Soldati special, you have to look beyond the awards that typically denote success. It all begins with a plaque emblazoned with a motivational quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. It reads, "Life's most important question is: What are you doing for others?"

It is in this question and his wide-ranging answers to it that you find the real essence of Soldati.

"Diving is a vehicle to help us grow in character, not just for self-exultation," Soldati says when asked about success in his sport. "If that happens, that's awesome, but we're going to have more failures than successes. Do we still come to work every day passionate because we can see that God is working on us? You're going to have a life beyond this and the more you learn now how to be resilient in the face of trials, you're going to have a peace of mind about yourself and about everything else."

Soldati may be the most-successful coach Purdue has had in any sport. Ever. In 13 years in West Lafayette, he has coached 12 NCAA champions, 17 Big Ten champions and 50 All-Americans. He's been named NCAA Diving Coach of the Year five times and has mentored four Olympic medalists.

But when asked why the program is successful, Soldati doesn't point to himself or the sterling facilities at the Morgan J. Burke Aquatic Center. To him, the quality of the program is measured by the quality of the individuals in and around it.

"When you win things and accomplish a lot, people may deem that as special," Soldati says. "In my mind, we've had some special results but, when I think of what makes Purdue diving special, it's the people. We have Purdue University and all of the support staff behind us. We have a special environment of people that care about the student-athlete. We cast a vision of where we're going to go and then we try to bring athletes in that are going to fall into that mission and purpose and really fly."

One athlete who soared while at Purdue is four-time Olympic medalist David Boudia. A member of the 2008 Olympic team the summer prior to his freshman year, Boudia was an accomplished diver before coming to campus. But he credits Soldati with molding him as a man who understands there is so much more to the world than success in the diving well.

"One of the attributes that I admire most about Adam, both inside and outside of the pool, is his character," Boudia says of the coach who helped him win individual gold at the 2012 Games in London. "Throughout my time at Purdue, I've never seen it waver. He always walks upright and with integrity. He stays firm in his foundation and everything else builds from that."

For Soldati, the molding of that environment starts the minute he begins recruiting a prospective athlete. And the message may not quite be what you think.

"I tell every single recruit that it's not my job to make them a champion," Soldati says. "It's my job to create an environment where you can become a champion. We self-sacrifice for the good of our teammates sometimes and show that humility each and every day. This helps create an environment full of people that are striving for a cause greater than themselves."

That philosophy has played out in real time with recent graduate Steele Johnson. Growing up in the Indianapolis area,



Johnson knew he had Olympic aspirations in 2012 and was looking for a new place to train that would help him meet those goals. He found it an hour up Interstate 65 and never looked back.

Seven years later, Johnson has exceeded his dreams, winning five NCAA titles at Purdue and a silver medal in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. But it's not these accomplishments that he speaks about when talking about Soldati.

"He not only taught me about diving, but also what it was like to be a man of God, what it was like to be a good husband," Johnson says. "He teaches me all of these things as he is teaching me diving. His focus isn't on making me the best diver ever. It's about making me a good man that is loving to the people around him. Everything else falls into place after that."

Learning how to love others more than yourself is a touchstone for Soldati. It's a lesson he imparts daily on his team. And it's a lesson that he has really taken to heart because of the six children he and his wife, Kimiko, are raising.

"Being a father has taught me how to love in the face of adversity," Soldati says. "Because any parent who is going to read this article knows that there's a whole lot of 'hard' when it comes to being a parent. But as a father, I'm called by Christ to love, period. That's also my role as a coach."

That love extends beyond just the eight to 12 divers on Soldati's roster in any given year. Women's swimming coach John Klinge has

worked with Soldati for 11 seasons. He says it's not just student-athletes that benefit from his example.

"There is no doubt Adam's the best diving coach in the country, but what truly makes him stand out is that he is a better person, husband and father than he is a coach," Klinge says. "Adam is a great mentor and role model for everyone in our program from divers to swimmers to his fellow coaches."

Yes, Soldati has had immense success at every level of his sport and it matters to him for many reasons. It represents the sacrifices of everyone involved in the process. And he freely admits that it is a test for him to stay humble in the process. But going through those struggles is something that makes them stronger together. And Soldati realizes it isn't winning medals or standing on a podium that brings fulfillment.

"I am most proud of watching my athletes move on from here having developed a level of character that allows them to be outstanding mothers and fathers, husbands, wives, coworkers, members of society," he says. "I've actually never gotten a message (from a former student-athlete) that says 'Thanks so much for helping me win that Big Ten championship.' Never! It's hard to get them to realize when you're in the fight, but those accolades are not going to last. The medals are going to tarnish and fade away. They aren't what truly matter."

Soldati knows what truly matters. And that is what makes Purdue diving, and its coach, special. ✨







Indy Conversion

Folks are all things Purdue in the Circle City and beyond



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAMS

By Alan Karpick

There are no bigger supporters of Purdue University and Purdue Athletics in the Indianapolis area than Matt and Mary Folk.

Check that.

There are no bigger supporters of Purdue *anywhere* than Matt and Mary Folk.

But it wasn't always that way.

Matt grew up in Huntington, Indiana, and like many from his hometown his college rooting interest was IU. He played high school sports and liked Purdue when it wasn't playing IU, but the Boilermakers were second in line.

It took Matt, a 1991 electrical engineering graduate, being on the West Lafayette campus a couple

of years to fall fully in love with the Boilermakers. His undergrad experience allowed him to separate from his cream and crimson upbringing.

And the rest, as they say, is history. Not long after graduation, he bought basketball and football season tickets and has missed only a couple of football games since the Joe Tillier era.

For Mary, the path was a bit different, but the result was the same.

Mary hailed from Westfield, just north of Indianapolis, where she had a youthful passion for horses before attending and graduating from the University of Findlay with an equine science degree. Her sports-consumption habits were

predicated to some extent on what interested her father: watching pro basketball and boxing to television. College sports were not on her radar (or television) screen in her early days.

That is until about 17 years ago. That is when she met Matt. It didn't take long for Mary to figure out what she was in for if she was going to spend much time with him.

Prior to meeting her future husband, she never had been to a football game, let alone a Purdue sporting event. Coincidentally, however, it was Purdue friends that set them up on their first date in 2002, and the two were married three years later.

"Our first date was an Indiana



Pacers game and our second was a trip to Mackey Arena,” says Matt, somewhat sheepishly. “She met my parents, sister, brother-in-law, a cousin, uncles and aunts who, by that time, were entrenched in the gold and black.”

Mary had no choice; she was going to be a Boilermaker if their relationship to take flight. Yet, Mary admits it wasn’t all that hard for her to get the Boilermaker bug. She loved the spirit of competition and loved becoming part of the Purdue family.

“Everyone was very welcoming,” recalls Mary, when thinking of her first impressions of Boilermaker Nation. “Even the die-hards were very welcoming, and Matt’s friends have become fantastic friends of ours. And I have made my own Purdue friends, and it sort of just built from there.”

And that is what the Folks have done in Indianapolis – made more and more Purdue friends and have continued to be ambassadors for all Purdue Athletics has to offer. And they have done a great job of connecting Boilermakers.

“It took me awhile to get there, but once I did, I figured it out,” Mary says. “I love the integrity of the Purdue programs. No matter the sport, you know the student-athletes are held to a higher standard, and I think that’s fantastic. It is easy to talk to people about it because it is such a good story to tell.”

Matt serves as president of the Boilermaker Business Exchange, a group of like-minded business people whose mission is to strengthen the Purdue brand in the Circle City. And the BBE continues to blossom and burgeon with membership and influence.

“It’s grown from one to two events a year to about 10 or 11,” Matt says. “I work closely with (BBE

chairperson) Pete Quinn, and we thought we knew everybody in Indianapolis. It turns out we hardly knew anybody, but that is changing with the impact of the BBE.”

Speaking of impact, despite their relatively young ages, the Folks are making their mark on Purdue’s athletic campus. The Boilermaker Soccer Complex was renamed after Matt’s parents as Loren and Donna Folk Field in 2016, thanks to a leadership gift from Matt and Mary.

“It has always been a goal of mine to have a facility named after our family, and our daughter (a rising junior in Purdue’s nursing program) loves soccer, so it was a family fit,” Matt says. “We wanted to draw attention to women’s programs, too.”

The Folks are extra proud that the venue named after their family consistently is recognized as one of the top soccer surfaces in the nation, earning its sixth consecutive Fields of Excellence Award following the 2018 season.

“The look in my dad’s eyes when he learned of the naming of the field was priceless to me,” Matt says. “It means a lot to us, and to our entire family, but the fact that it is nationally recognized as a top facility is all the better.”

The Folks are a consistent presence at Boilermaker soccer matches, and it is important to the program.

“Matt and Mary have been very supportive of Purdue Athletics and Purdue soccer, and we are so appreciative of their commitment to what we do,” says head coach Drew Roff, who will begin his fifth season in West Lafayette in the fall. “We have the opportunity to play at one of the finest facilities in the country, and it just goes to show how much pride they have in Purdue Athletics.

“It’s always great to see them at the games and out there supporting us. Their presence is felt on a daily basis, and their generosity is unparalleled.”

Matt and Mary also have been significant supporters to the Football Performance Complex, and they love the overall direction of Purdue Athletics. Folk, the chief executive officer of Technology Marketing Corporation, a manufacturers representative firm based in Carmel, Indiana, said his hope is that more people in their 30s and 40s will jump on board to support the school’s programs.

They drew inspiration to get involved at a deeper level at the “Drew Brees Summit” a couple of summers ago in California. That meeting, which included Purdue president Mitch Daniels, set the strategy for the football program. It allowed the focus to pivot, becoming all-in on a new football facility that has, among other things, helped transform the entire department.

“Since then, the athletics department, from top to bottom, is hitting on all cylinders,” Matt says. “The entire Indy community is taking notice.”

Knowing Matt and Mary, their collective pride in energizing and converting anyone and everyone to be more involved Boilermakers is heartfelt and genuine. Yet, there is a sense that they know the work is just beginning. Part and parcel with this resurgence is convincing all Purdue fans to think big. It is a mantra shared by the BBE and the Folks.

“Even IU people I know are now completely jealous of the way we’re set up and how things are working,” Matt says. “Sure, it is a lot of work to do some of the things we do, but it sure is fun to be a Boilermaker right now.” ✖

THE HOST WITH THE MOST

By Alan Karpick



JACK KARL'S SERVICE TO PURDUE BASKETBALL IS UNMATCHED

Jack Karl has carved his place in Purdue basketball history.

Karl has assisted Purdue in one form or another for the past 59 years, but one of his greatest contributions is having served as gameday host of the referees for every season dating to the opening of Mackey Arena on December 2, 1967. Yet his role as a Boilermaker basketball ambassador actually began in 1960 when Karl was an usher in what is now Lambert Fieldhouse.

While he worked his last game as referees host on Senior Day against Ohio State in March, Karl's longevity and thoughtful attention to putting Purdue's best foot forward on all occasions may never be duplicated in quite the same manner.

In his day job, Karl worked on campus at a high level, first in the division of recreational sports before enjoying a several-decade stint as an executive with the Purdue Alumni Association. Few have served Purdue with greater permanency than Karl. *Forge* caught up with him to get his thoughts shortly before his final game.

FORGE: What advice did athletics director "Red" Mackey give you when you first began to host the referees?

KARL: He said, "I just want you to be polite. Treat them as guests. Don't get involved in their discussions or anything like that, and you'll do fine." That's the way it happened, and 53 years later, that's the way I've been.

FORGE: What is your gameday regiment with the referees?

KARL: Once I know who the

officials for a game will be, I email them and let them know that they have to be there 90 minutes before tipoff. That's when I arrive at the arena. I let them know where to park, how to enter the arena and, if they are particularly new, how to apply for their complimentary tickets. Once they arrive, I just meet them at the locker room, ask if they need ice bags, if they need to see the trainer or need anything taped or whatever.

Each game, Purdue provides two university police escorts, and they stay with them the entire game and escort them to their car after the game, and that's when I leave the arena.

FORGE: What is the typical referee like?

KARL: Ninety-nine percent are really terrific individuals. But once the game starts, they're focused. The one-tenth of one percent (that aren't as terrific), we don't see them at Mackey Arena very often, if at all anymore. The process kind of takes care of the bad ones.

FORGE: Is there anything that would surprise fans about the referees?

KARL: Most of the officials that our fans see work 80 games a year and are assigned to several other conferences. They work an awful lot of games.

FORGE: What are your most memorable moments?

KARL: The IU games have been awesome. It's just exciting and deafening to be there. The 10 Big Ten Conference championships that have been won since I've been doing this have been fun. I will never forget those.

FORGE: Which referees have stood out to you?

KARL: The great Art White, he was always in control. Jim Enright was a great one, too. He had a booming voice, but he also was the sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, something that is hard to imagine an official in that professional capacity today.

These are accomplished individuals. Ed Hightower was terrific. Few know he was a Ph.D. and superintendent of schools in the Alton, Illinois, area. My favorite might have been Gene Steratore, who you saw all over TV as an officials' analyst during the Final Four and NFL games. He is a great storyteller.

FORGE: Positioned behind the opposing team bench all these years, seeing the likes of Bob Knight, Tom Izzo and John Wooden. What stood out?

KARL: Knight and Izzo provided memorable moments, but I really liked Illinois' Lou Henson in the 1970s and '80s. He was a lot of fun. Lou would always bring his wife to the game, and she sat a row or so behind me and she got on the officials more than anybody else. I'm surprised she didn't get the team technical fouls the way she acted. She was a lot of fun, too.

FORGE: You have had the opportunity to be around many great Purdue players too, a good by-product of your gameday role.

KARL: Getting to know some of the great Purdue basketball players, like Terry Dischinger, who just was named to the Basketball Hall of Fame, was special. Dave Schellhase became a great friend. It is the relationships I have made with so many people over the years involved in and around Purdue that has made this the greatest experience for me. ✖

The Archives

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE GOLF CHAMPIONS 1961 - PURDUE UNIVERSITY - 1961



1961 Men's Golf National Champions

Purdue won the first of its three NCAA team titles in school history June 20, 1961, on what is now the Ackerman-Allen Golf Course. Coached by Sam Voinoff, a 165-pound guard on Purdue's 1929 Big Ten Conference championship football team who wasn't much of a golfer, the Boilermakers were dominant in men's golf during his tenure. His teams won 10 Big Ten championships in his 25 years as coach and finished as NCAA runner-up five times. Known as Purdue's version of Yogi Berra, saying things like "pair them up in threes" with his thick Bulgarian accent, Voinoff was one of a kind. And so were his teams. 🍷



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