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Meet the candidates: Indiana primary midterms

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The deadline to register to vote in the Indiana primary midterm elections is approaching on Monday, April 6, with elections happening a month later on Tuesday, May 5. This cycle, all nine U.S. House seats, all 100 Indiana House seats and half of the 50 Indiana Senate seats will be on ballots. There will also be local Marion County positions up for election.

College students in Indiana are eligible to vote in Indiana elections if they register using their school address. However, students can only register under one address, so they must choose either their home or school address.

Butler's campus falls in Marion County, U.S. Congressional District seven, Indiana Senate District 33 and Indiana House of Representatives District 96. There will not be an election for Indiana Senate District 33. The following list outlines the candidates for Indiana's U.S. Congressional District seven and Indiana's House of Representatives District 96.

U.S. House



André Carson

Democratic Rep. André Carson is the incumbent candidate for this position. His platform is centered around the work he has done and hopes to continue in office. As a congressman, he supports fighting discrimination, improving infrastructure and building national security.

Carson aims to fight discrimination by reforming the justice system with stronger accountability measures for police, expanding voting rights, ending health disparities by supporting minority healthcare access and research and promoting civil rights for all.

He wants to improve infrastructure by building traditional infrastructure, connecting cities with transportation networks, improving rail service and safety to make Amtrak more efficient and investing in charging stations and clean energy.

Carson hopes to build national security by fighting against foreign threats, specifically cyber threats, and confronting domestic threats like domestic terrorists and white supremacists.

Voting registration closes April 6.



Felipe Rios

Republican candidate Felipe Rios' campaign is centered around a vision based on faith, integrity and service to the community. His priorities include the regularization of immigration, migration reduction, lifting the blockade against Cuba, implementing labor mobility programs, supporting farm workers, combatting drug addiction and gun regulation.

Rios supports a regularization program to grant legal status for immigrants with a clean criminal record who have lived in the United States for at least five years. He is also fighting for the United States to support funding for poor countries and suspend sanctions to reduce migration.

He proposed the development of online platforms that connect employers with employees to reduce unemployment. Rios also supports farmers getting a fair wage and regulation of working hours.

Rios wants to end drug addiction by implementing educational programs in schools.



George Hornedo

Democratic candidate George Hornedo's campaign is centered around supporting the "Fair Shot Agenda", which has six pillars that address issues directly affecting Indianapolis.

The six pillars are "An Economy That Works", "A Stronger Foundation", "A Safer City", "A Sustainable Future", "A Democracy That Puts People First" and "Fair Shot in the Age of Artificial Intelligence".

Hornedo aims to support the economy and build a stronger foundation by focusing on raising wages and lowering costs for families, including lower childcare costs. He also supports local businesses. A main priority is ensuring every job can support a life, including paid leave, stable housing and access to care. Hornedo also wants to ensure worker protections against artificial intelligence.

He wants to build a safer city by supporting investment in mental health crisis response, community violence prevention and re-entry programs. Additionally, Hornedo supports local businesses. A main priority is ensuring every job can support a life, including paid leave, stable housing and access to care. Hornedo also wants to ensure worker protections against artificial intelligence.

He wants to uphold democracy by fighting to protect voting rights, end

gerrymandering, ban dark money and hold those in office accountable.

Hornedo hopes to create a sustainable future by supporting the creation of good-paying clean energy jobs, lowering energy bills, modernizing public transit and protecting the air, water and neighborhoods from climate change.



Patrick McAuley

Republican candidate Patrick McAuley's campaign focuses on what voters have spoken up about. He is also promoting his background in grassroots politics in Indiana.

He took a poll with over 350 responses from voters in the 7th District on what issues are most important to them. The top issues were affordability, public safety, housing stability, career opportunities and the future well-being of communities.

McAuley believes that for the Republican-led government in both Indiana and Washington, D.C. to make progress, they need more financial resources. He plans to fight for funding for the Republican initiatives concerning infrastructure, public safety, housing and creating jobs.



Destiny Wells

Democratic candidate Destiny Wells' campaign is centered around ensuring the government is working for the people, not corporations that can afford lobbyists. She supports affordable healthcare, working families, fair pay, strong schools, affordable homes, clean water and veterans.

Wells hopes to support working families by fighting for affordable childcare, paid leave, a strong school system with well-funded educators and special education programs.

She wants to build stronger communities by supporting increased housing supply, consistent energy bills and support for first responders. She plans to support community members by fighting for raising the minimum wage and universal healthcare.

Wells also aims to fight for the environment by supporting holding polluters accountable and banning insider stock trading in Congress to restore trust in the government.

She wants to support veterans and reliable defense by fighting for the modernization of the Veterans' Affairs, assurance that the military is prepared and assurance that the defense budget is being spent responsibly.



Denise Paul Hatch

Democratic candidate Denise Paul Hatch is the former Center Township constable. She was removed from her position in October 2024 due to several months of court cases involving six felony charges. Her charges included a Level 6 felony official misconduct and Class A misdemeanor theft in one case, and a Level 6 felony official misconduct, Class A misdemeanor attempted assisting a criminal and Class A misdemeanor attempted resisting law enforcement in a separate case. She maintains her innocence and filed an appeal that is currently moving through the courts.

Hatch claims that her past, which she discloses on her campaign website, has deepened her commitment to justice. Her campaign priorities include fighting for lower utility bills, healthcare for all pregnant women, affordable housing, humane immigration reform, public safety and marijuana justice.

She wants to make housing affordable by supporting utility companies being held accountable for rate increases, rent control and stronger tenant protections.

Hatch also aims to end abusive practices performed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, legalize marijuana and expunge past marijuana convictions.

Indiana House



Gregory W. Porter

Democrat State Rep. Gregory W. Porter has been serving as the state representative for Indiana House of Representatives District 96 for 17 terms. He is running unopposed in the current primary election.

During his time as a state representative, he has been an advocate for affordability, public schools, affordable health care and public safety.

Porter has authored legislation involving bullying prevention in K-12 education, property tax relief for seniors, lower prescription costs and support for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

Photos courtesy of candidate's campaign websites.

Dawgs take third at Research Symposium

The first time Butler has placed at the conference

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Before spring break, a team of five Butler students competed in the Big East Research Symposium. Butler placed third overall, with senior biochemistry and biology double major Milica

Nenadovich placing third in an individual.

2026 is the first year Butler has placed in the top three in the five years the conference has been hosted. Compared to other Big East universities, Butler is the second smallest in total enrollment, only ahead of Providence. The event occurred at Madison Square Garden, simultaneously with the Big East Men's Basketball Tournament.

The Butler team consisted of Nenadovich, junior biochemistry major Jason Garcia, senior astrophysics major Chase Nixon, junior biology major Abbey Shafier and junior biochemistry major Julia Harmon.

Nenadovich received an individual award in the engineering, physics, chemistry/biochemistry and biology, or the non-health sciences category. This was her first time attending the event.

"Five years ago, the Big East decided that they didn't want to just celebrate athletic achievement in their conference," Nenadovich said. "They also wanted to celebrate academic achievement, so they started an undergraduate research symposium."

Nenadovich's research was specifically in biochemistry, but other students can compete in the humanities and health sciences.

"My research is investigating the function of a protein in the model organism *C. elegans* and how that protein is involved in the nervous system's responses to oxidative stress," Nenadovich said.

Like Nenadovich, Garcia also presented his work in the non-health sciences category. Garcia worked with biochemistry and chemistry professor Michael Samide, and they are now in the process of trying to publish their research.

"My work focuses around art conservation chemistry," Garcia said. "[That means] making sure that artworks and artifacts in museums aren't damaged by the materials that are used to construct the enclosures to let everyone see them."

Dixon was the only participant in the entire competition to present in the field of astronomy. Their research looked to distinguish rare calcium supernovas from common supernovas, using spectroscopy to analyze their individual helium profiles.

"I was the only person at the entire research symposium doing astronomy," Dixon said. "[Being the] only representative, I had a bit of extra energy."

Shafier did her research on dissecting fruit flies' ovaries, looking to manipulate proteins that can reverse infertility. Julia Harmon, a junior biochemistry major, did her research on finding more sustainable and less hazardous ways to use the cancer-treating drug YK-4-279.



Pictured from left to right: Chase Dixon, Julia Harmon, Jason Garcia, Abbey Shafier and Milica Nenadovich.

Photo courtesy of Jason Garcia.

"Butler is unique in that it offers these opportunities for undergraduate students because we don't have any PhD programs," Nenadovich said. "You learn skills from doing research that you don't learn from other types of activities because you're taking responsibility for your own project."

All five of Butler's team members have taken advantage of the university's undergraduate research opportunities, including participating in the Butler Summer Institute.

Research students are excited that Butler's undergraduate research is getting recognition.

"Winning both third overall and an individual award means a lot," Garcia said. "A lot of the other universities in the conference — especially those who have won and continue to win — have a lot of money to spend, both on research and in general."

Campus observes Disability Awareness Month

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Approximately 16% of the global population has a disability, and throughout

March, Butler has been celebrating Developmental Disability Awareness Month to promote conversations about disabilities.

Many organizations have collaborated on events to engage students. Lauryn Jones, coordinator of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming and engagement, reached out to Karly Keiper, a professor who teaches the first-year seminar course "The Fight for ADA - The Past, Present, and Beyond", to partner on a diversity dialogue.

The conversation was about invisible disabilities, allowing students to gather and discuss their assumptions about disabilities, while bringing awareness to existing stigmas around invisible disabilities — mental, physical and neurological conditions that are not immediately visible.

"We talked about the lack of representation, and how that continues to create harm or lack of support and access for those with invisible disabilities," Jones said. "There is a lack of conversation around disabilities, especially invisible disabilities, meaning you can't readily see them if someone does not disclose they have this condition. When someone discloses that they have aphasia, [obsessive-compulsive disorder] or any other intellectual disability, it is not really supported or normalized yet, so it's almost awkward for them to disclose it to their friends."

Jones spoke about her hope that these dialogues will help normalize ongoing conversations about disability.

"I encourage students to educate each other and have conversations amongst each other and even amongst faculty and staff [to] understand how they can support [others] whether it's in their classroom, on campus or in the greater [Indianapolis] community," Jones said. "I encourage them to have those hard conversations with each other. I know there [are] plenty of different ways people can get involved."

Every Friday this month, Butler Student Disability Services (SDS) has held tablings, partnering with clubs such as Bulldogs for Universal Design (BUD) and Delta Alpha Pi, a disability honor society.

Addison Miller, a disability specialist in the SDS office, hopes that inviting student organizations will encourage students to learn about topics that are new to them.

"[For] a lot of students, this is the first time [they have] been around [or celebrated] Disability Awareness Month," Miller said. "There might be general misconceptions they're not sure about."

On March 20, Delta Alpha Phi joined SDS to discuss disability pride and belonging, and on March 27, BUD will partner with SDS to teach students about the importance of accessibility.

Student organizations serve as an outlet for students to engage in advocacy, fostering a supportive environment across campus.

Oli Barnett, a senior art and design major and

BUD president, discussed how involvement in clubs like BUD can benefit students and prepare them for life after college.

"Student advocacy is so important because it gives us a playground to practice advocacy," Barnett said. "Once we [enter] the postgraduate world, we are able to be really proficient in advocacy, and we are able to bring that into the workforce and our personal lives. It's important that, as students, we keep speaking out and [that] our voices are being heard, so we [can] really make an impact."

Throughout the year, BUD hosts a variety of educational and community-building events. Some of their events bring awareness to disability, but their primary goal is to showcase and promote disability pride.

"We want to focus on the way that disabled people live in their day-to-day lives," Barnett said. "[BUD focuses on] being proud of the fact that we are so resilient and so strong in the ways that we support our community."

While only March is Disability Awareness Month, groups across campus have started conversations about disabilities, hoping to create a sense of community that endures long after.

"We try to create space for students to come together and celebrate their different identities, whether it's within [a] group or inviting others to be a part of those celebrations," Jones said.



**DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
AWARENESS
MONTH**
MARCH

Photo courtesy of The University of Arizona.

Butler celebrates Red Cross Month



Hink and Buddy the Blood Drop visited students in Atherton Union during the blood drive to encourage students to donate.

Photo by Mason Buysse.

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National Red Cross Month has been celebrated every March for over 80 years. Red Cross Day, held on March 18, was the date chosen for the Red Cross Club's first blood drive of the academic year, drawing more than 20 students who were able to

proceed. The day also included tabling events to spread the word about the Red Cross Club.

Larianna Joseph, a junior kinesiology major and president of the Red Cross Club, joined as a first-year and worked her way up to the highest position, serving as event coordinator prior to her current role. She joined the club because of her interest in service and healthcare, seeking to become a physical therapist in the future. She was happy with the turnout of student donors, despite the challenges that prevented people from donating, such as high pulse or low hemoglobin levels.

Joseph acknowledged the difficulty of donating blood, especially to the college-age group, citing the common fear of needles as a major barrier preventing students from donating. Over 60 students attempted to donate.

"I would just recommend that people think about why we're doing this," Joseph said. "There are people out there [who] truly do need blood transfusions. So, if you can make a difference, why not do it?"

Min Thuta, a junior public health and health sciences double major, serves as the vice president of the Red Cross Club. This role consists of organizing activities, member outreach and administrative duties like logging club activity hours and attendance.

"We wanted to bring Red Cross Day on campus [for] a greater outreach [beyond] the confines of our club," Thuta said.

Beyond Red Cross Day, the club also hosts other events related to health advocacy, disaster relief and community health. Past and current examples include free CPR/AED training, naloxone workshops and fire alarm installs.

"Blood drives [and other events] spread a lot of awareness on things that most people don't really think about in their day-to-day," Thuta said.

Suneeta Kercood, the faculty advisor for the Red Cross Club, has been in this role for over 15 years. She is a professor of special education and board-certified behavior analyst, as well as a paramedic and EMT. Her grandmother was a part of the Red Cross, and she has been volunteering with the organization for decades.

"It's nice to see students who are proactive in community service and have a connection [with healthcare]," Kercood said.

In her work with the Red Cross, Kercood has traveled to respond to emergencies like Hurricane Sandy, tornadoes and building fires. She encourages students to know basic safety and precautionary measures in case of an emergency.

"[The Red Cross Club has] been very enthusiastic about conducting many activities at the university in partnership with their class," Kercood said.

Thuta and Kercood both pointed out the possibilities of volunteering in the greater Indianapolis area that joining the Red Cross Club can open up. Joseph recommended following the club's Instagram page and Engage, where communication will be sent via email or post.

"It's a great club," Kercood said. "I encourage all to be a part of it."



American Red Cross

Photo courtesy of the American Red Cross.



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Softball first-years step up to the plate



The softball team has five first-years this season.

Photos by Darcy Leber.

Sports Scores

Women's Tennis

March 22: 5-2 win at Southern Indiana



Photo courtesy of Butler Athletics.

Men's Tennis

March 21: 6-1 win vs. Southern Indiana



Baseball

March 20-22: 3-0 series loss at Ohio State

March 24: 11-1 win vs. Toledo

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Kayla Priess

Infielder from Germantown, Wisconsin



"Relying on my mechanics and my swing of what I truly know for myself, and then confidence, [is important in maintaining a high level of play against college pitchers]."

"[Breaking many records during high school, I plan to maybe break Butler's record for] RBI (Runs Batted In)."

"[If my style of play were a candy, it would be a] Dum-Dum sucker."

Alyx Johnson

Pitcher/infielder from Watertown, Wisconsin



"I wasn't cleared to play fall [softball] here, so I just got cleared to start playing after Christmas break. It was a long road back, but I think the encouragement of my teammates and my coaches has let me have the confidence that I do belong here. It was just a setback, but it doesn't define what the next four years are going to be like."

"I definitely don't think I'm back at 100%. I think that our coaching staff has done a really good job of letting me slowly ease back into it. I've worked so hard to get to where I am now, [so] we don't want to take big steps back, especially [since] conference [play] just started [March 13]."

Kate Murray

Pitcher from Fishers, Indiana



"[If my style of play were a candy, it would be] Warheads because they're sour and [make] you smile, and I smile a lot when I play."

"[A hidden gem from Fishers that my teammates might not be familiar with is] the Nickel Plate Trail. It's kind of like the Monon in Carmel, and it's so fun. It's a really long trail you could walk, run [or] bike and it's really pretty, so I'd recommend it."

Kendall Graves

Infielder from Bedford, Indiana



"[My college highlights so far are] probably my first and second home run[s]. I feel like that gave me confidence, and then I just need to stick with my plan and focus on my swing and my mechanics."

"[Moving from high school to college play,] things move at a much faster pace. Even in the game, things are [at] a faster pace."

"[If my style of play were a candy, it would be] Skittles. I just like Skittles."

Rachel Hunt

Infielder from South Bend, Indiana



"[If my style of play were a candy, it would be a] Reese's cup. I think they're pretty reliable [and] sturdy. They don't change very much."

"I stay ready just knowing that I am on this team for a reason, and I came in knowing I am a freshman, [so] I wasn't going to be starting all the time. Since I do play so little, whenever I do get the chance, that's my one chance to give it at all. I have that mindset of whenever I do get to go, I get to give it my all and do my best for the team, because that's what they need me there for."

Collegian file photos.

Softball

March 20-22: 3-0 win in best-of-three vs. Seton Hall

March 24: 7-6 win at Ball State



Lacrosse

March 20: 22-14 loss at Wofford

Women's Track

March 20: Fourth place out of nine teams, with a score of 51.50 points, at the Blizzard Buster meet in Ohio.

Men's Track

March 20: Fifth place out of 11 teams, with a score of 38 points, at the Blizzard Buster meet in Ohio.



Thad Matta retires from coaching, stepping into advisory role

Matta concludes with a 502-223 overall record and an 87-77 run with Butler.

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On March 16, head men's basketball coach Thad Matta is retiring from coaching, the university announced in a press release this morning. Matta will remain with the university as a special assistant to the president and athletic director.

Matta explained his decision in the press release.

"After taking some time to reflect following the end of the season, I have decided that the time has come for me to step away from the sidelines," Matta stated. "The love my wife, my daughters and I have for Butler is what brought us back four years ago, and it feels especially meaningful that I conclude my coaching career here. Butler has always meant more to us than just basketball—and that connection is why I'm grateful to con-

tinue working with the University and offering my help in any way I can. My commitment to Butler and to the future of this program remains as strong as ever. I want this program to compete at the highest levels of the BIG EAST and national landscape, and I am excited to be part of what we continue to build here."

Matta has been at the helm for the Bulldogs for the past four seasons, as well as a single year early in his coaching career, the 2000-01 season. His NCAA Tournament appearance in 2001 is his lone March Madness berth as the coach of the Dawgs. He finishes with a 502-223 overall record and an 87-77 mark with Butler. Matta's record only in his second stint in Indianapolis was 63-69.

Matta also spent three seasons playing at Butler, graduating from the university in 1990. Matta averaged a

career-high 11.3 points per game as a junior before dropping to just 3.7 in his senior year.

Grant Leiendecker, vice president and director of athletics, expressed his appreciation for Matta's impact on Butler.

"It is hard to fully capture in words what the Matta family has meant to Butler University and to our men's basketball program," Leiendecker stated. "As a student-athlete, two assistant coaching tenures and then twice as head coach at Butler, Thad has given so much to our university and his impact on our student-athletes has been lifechanging. Today is bittersweet in that Thad will no longer be leading our program on the sidelines but we are grateful that he has accepted President Danko and my offer to remain at Butler University to continue to elevate the institution, as his wis-

dom and experience are invaluable and will help maintain stability in our program."

A national search now begins for the next head coach of the men's basketball team.

"We have begun our search for another head coach who aligns with our values, fits with our institution and will lead us to compete among the nation's elite," Leiendecker stated. "We have such an incredible fan base, a storied tradition, play in an iconic home venue, reside in one of the best basketball states in the nation and compete in a truly elite BIG EAST Conference, and I am confident that we will develop a strong pool of candidates. The future is bright for Butler Basketball and I can't wait to introduce our new head coach to Bulldog Nation!"

— Who's next in line to lead men's basketball? —

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Ronald Nored is the presumed front-runner to be the next head coach. *Photo courtesy of IndyStar.*

After spending the last four seasons at the helm of the men's basketball program in the twilight of his career, Thad Matta is retiring from coaching, maintaining the title of special assistant to the president and athletic director in an advisory role. With a national search underway, two names in the college basketball world are reportedly the frontrunners to become the 26th head coach of the storied program:

Ronald Nored

Before Matta's arrival, the defensive savant and engine of Butler's Final Four offenses was a fan-favorite to take the job. Now, several years later, the 36-year-old Indy native is in a primed position for another stab at the head coaching job. Nored has accumulated over a decade of assistant coaching experience in the NBA and G-League,

currently working on the Atlanta Hawks staff.

In his two lone stints as head coach, Nored finished 11-10 at nearby Brownsburg High School in 2013 before being named the first head coach of the Long Island Nets in 2016, improving from 17 to 27 wins in his two seasons on the job.

John Groce

Groce has built an impressive culture as the head coach at Akron. The Zips won their conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, marking their third straight berth, and fourth in five years.

Groce was largely unsuccessful in his only high-major opportunity to date, departing Illinois with a 37-53 record from 2012-17. Still, Groce has proved himself once again and is ready for the chance to lead a historic program.

The Players Championship is not a major championship

Keeping the status quo allows The Players to still be a crown jewel in golf

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Overtime, or "OT," is an opinion column series where The Collegian takes national sports headlines or polarizing topics and gives them a Butler-centric angle.

The 2026 Players Championship concluded on March 15 with Cameron Young rallying from a four-shot deficit at the beginning of the final round to outlast one of the strongest fields in golf, filled with major winners and rising stars.

In addition to the outstanding test this year's championship proved to be, it was the promotion leading up to the event from the tournament organizers and the PGA Tour that caught the attention of many golf fans. Commercials advertising the event contained the tagline, 'March is going to be Major.'

While the Tour has tried to position The Players Championship as a fifth major for years, this marketing campaign ignited a mostly negative fervor in the golf world.

It is important to note that the PGA Tour does not run the four men's professional golf major

championships. The Grand Slam events of The Masters, PGA Championship, U.S. Open and The Open Championship are instead organized by Augusta National Golf Club, the PGA of America, the United States Golf Association and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrew's respectively.

The PGA Tour has already elevated the event to match the four major championships in terms of FedEx Cup points, so the tournament gives an equal number of points to the winner as they do to a winner of any of the four major championships.

The Players Championship also has one of the largest amounts of prize money given, with \$25 million divided among players in this event, and \$4.5 million going to the champion.

However, the PGA Tour's beliefs about the event's status do not coincide with the views of many golf enthusiasts.

Sophomore biology major Sarah Konosky believes the approach the Tour is using does not come from the fans, but it stems from the it's desire to gain a foothold in the audience's view of golf and the Tour's role in the sport.

"It seems like the push for it to be a major cham-

pionship is very much a corporate-driven [idea]," Konosky said. "I do not believe it represents what the golfers or even the fans want."

In a survey conducted by Golf Digest, two dozen tour players were polled on whether The Players Championship should be considered a major championship. The overwhelming majority responded that The Players is not a major in their view.

Additionally, the PGA Tour still maintains its policy of not letting players currently signed to the LIV Tour compete in PGA Tour-sanctioned events. Previous winners of this event, such as Cameron Smith, Phil Mickelson and Sergio Garcia, were not allowed to participate as a result.

Senior neuroscience major Grant Gilsenan asserted that the absence of big names from the LIV Tour and the PGA Tour's reluctance to let them compete in the Tour's marquee event are some of the reasons the Players should not be seen as a major championship.

Read the full story on
thebutlercollegian.com

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‘He’s a joy to watch’

Rhoades slugs his way into a national spotlight

From NAIA standout to Division I force

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After making the jump from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) to Division I (D-I), junior first baseman Matthew Rhoades was unsure exactly how his game would translate.

About halfway through the season, the answer has been crystal clear: 15 home runs, a spot at the top of the national leaderboard and a solidified role as one of the Bulldogs’ most reliable bats.

Rhoades’ production has not come as a surprise to head coach Blake Beemer, who saw early signs of his offensive potential shortly after he set foot on campus. Beemer did note, however, that one can never be sure how a player’s game translates coming from a lower level of competition.

“We thought we were getting somebody who could really hit,” Beemer said. “[But] I think that’s always the question — will the numbers translate from an NAIA standpoint to a D-I standpoint? We were hopeful; we had seen the video, but until you see it against the higher echelon of pitching, you just don’t know.”

Early on, Rhoades removed much of that uncertainty. It became clear within the first week of fall practice that Rhoades had an advanced feel at the plate, particularly in his ability to control the strike zone.

Like many players making the leap to D-I, Rhoades had to prove to himself that his success at the NAIA level was not situational, but sustainable. Once that belief settled in, the results followed.

“I think early on, he showed that he understood the strike zone,” Beemer said. “He gets here in the fall, and you understand he’s got an advanced field to hit. He’s as ‘hitter-ish’ as I would say. So I did think early on that he would hit [well].”

The adjustment has been as mental as it has been mechanical.

Before arriving in Indianapolis, Rhoades turned in two stellar seasons at Concordia University in Nebraska, one of which culminated in the 2024 NAIA Ball Freshman of the Year award. Across those two seasons, Rhoades clubbed 35 home runs and boasted an elite 1.044 OPS. The lefty also spent part of those seasons on the mound, throwing 27.1 innings with a 2.96 ERA for Concordia.

Rhoades said the biggest challenge in his transition was not his swing, but his mindset.

“I’ve always been a pretty dominant hitter, so that wasn’t the biggest jump,” Rhoades said. It was more about getting over the mental aspect, the ‘I belong here and that I can perform at the highest level’ [aspect].”

The lefty’s understanding of the zone has translated into one of the top power seasons in the country. While Rhoades has emerged as one of D-I’s top home run hitters, his approach at the plate remains elementary.

“I wouldn’t really say I’m trying to hit home runs,” Rhoades said. “I’m just trying to put an ‘A’ swing on [each] pitch.”

Instead, the slugger’s focus is on hunting pitches he can drive and avoiding chase swings.

“[I’m] making sure I’m getting my pitch and not chasing the ‘pitcher’s pitch,’” Rhoades said. “So what if they throw a fastball by me? [My focus is just] being able to bounce back [in] those situations and get my pitch.”

That discipline has forced opponents to adjust. With Rhoades emerging as one of the most dangerous bats in the country, pitchers have become



Fifteen of Rhoades’ 30 hits on the season have been home runs.

Photo courtesy of Butler Athletics.

increasingly cautious. Rhoades has drawn 10 walks and been plunked by eight pitches. In recent weeks, pitchers have gone around the big bat and tried to exploit the boundaries of the strike zone.

Even that has not disrupted his process.

“These [pitchers] are human, they’re going to make a mistake,” Rhoades said. “It’s my job to capitalize on those mistakes that they make.”

That mindset — combining patience and confidence — has helped Rhoades handle not only success, but adversity to boot.

From Feb. 20 to March 1, Rhoades endured an irregular slump, collecting just one hit in a 22 at-bat stretch. That slump was punctuated by a demoralizing five-strikeout day at the plate against Marshall on Feb. 28.

For a hitter unfamiliar with prolonged struggles, it served as a test of both confidence and adjustment. Instead of letting this stretch deject him, Rhoades leaned on mental consistency and the support around him.

“It doesn’t matter, just keep swinging, good things will happen.” Rhoades recalled Beemer telling him.

That response stood out to Beemer as much as any home run.

“For him to battle through that says a lot about who he has become this year,” Beemer said.

“Learning that just because you get out doesn’t mean it’s a failure of an at-bat. ‘Are we seeing a lot of pitches? Are we fouling balls off?’ When you hit so well for so long, you start to expect [success], and the game is just not that way. He just kept working, kept asking questions and weathering the storm, [we know] we can get through it if it ever happens again.”

Beemer remained confident in his first baseman, leaving him in the two-spot in the order despite the ugly stretch. That blend of self-awareness and confidence has elevated Rhoades from a productive hitter to the centerpiece in Butler’s lineup.

Rhoades’ presence has shaped how opposing teams construct their game plan. With one swing capable of flipping a game on its head, pitchers are forced into difficult spots — attack him and risk a ball leaving the yard, or pitch around him and give up a free base.

Either way, his impact is resounding. Rhoades’ value is not limited to the batter’s box. At first base, he has provided Butler with a steady defensive presence.

“He’s an above-average defensive first baseman,” Beemer said. “He moves pretty well left to right, he can really pick [the baseball] and he’s even helped us turn some double plays you don’t usually see. He’s been able to impact the game multiple ways.”

His infield counterparts have felt the same way, particularly through his communication and energy in the field. Junior infielder Charlie Schebler echoed what helps the Bulldog defense the most.

“He’s very vocal,” Schebler said. “[He is] very good at just building and keeping confidence all around and making sure the energy is there for everybody involved.”

For teammates, Rhoades’ impact extends beyond the box score. With 2026 being Rhoades’ third season of college baseball, he passes along as much as he can to his teammates.

“No matter what happens in his at-bat, the first thing he does is come up to someone who’s about to get ready for an at-bat and just gives us the rundown over what he saw,” Schebler said. “The first thing he cares about is making sure the guys who are about to go up to the plate have the best knowledge possible. It’s best coming from a guy like that who sees the ball that well.”

A team-first mentality has helped Butler’s slugger quickly earn the respect of a locker room filled with both returners and fellow newcomers. Off the field, teammates describe him as energetic and relentlessly competitive, a player who can shift from joking around in the dugout to locked in at the plate.

“He’s just a funny, goofy dude,” Schebler said. “Goofy dude, great guy [and a] great teammate all around. But when it’s time to compete, he’s more confident than anybody that he’s going to get the job done.”

Rhoades credited his loose but still competitive personality to his experience in backyard games.

“I’m really good at outdoor games,” Rhoades said. “Like spike ball, cornhole, ping pong, darts. I [also] enjoy playing hacky sack with the pitchers before the game, [it] gets the body loose, [and gives you a] good mindset, remembering that [baseball is] a kid’s game.”

That personality has allowed Rhoades to settle in seamlessly, despite arriving as a transfer. His transition was made smoother by an unexpected connection — Rhoades and Schebler were roommates upon

arriving on campus, quickly building the kind of chemistry that now shows up both on and off the field.

Beemer said the junior’s willingness to embrace the program and invest in his teammates has been just as valuable as his on-field production.

“He’s a joy to watch,” Beemer said. “He smiles, he bounces around, he enjoys playing baseball. He’s really gone all in on Butler and what we’re trying to do here.”

Rhoades’ scorching start to the season helped earn him Big East Player of the Week honors on March 9, a week where he hit for an unfathomable .563 average, adding five home runs to boot. The lefty has also received national attention, being ranked on D1Baseball’s Top 50 First Basemen list six weeks into the season.

Through 25 games in the 2026 season, Rhoades has slashed a .309/.414/.845 — average, on-base percentage, slugging percentage, respectively — leading the team in home runs, extra-base hits and slugging percentage by almost .200.

Rhoades currently sits tied for second for home runs in D-I with 15, only trailing Cincinnati’s Quinton Coats.

Several of his biggest swings have come in momentum-shifting moments, with six of his long balls being lead-taking blasts. These clutch moments reinforce the sense that every time he steps into the box, Butler has the chance to change the trajectory of a game.

As the Dawgs push toward conference play, Rhoades’ emergence has provided the Bulldogs with more than just a top-of-the-lineup bat. It has given them a stabilizing force — a more-than-capable hitter, a defender steady at first base and a teammate who makes those around him more prepared.

For a player who was once questioned on whether his success would translate to D-I, the answer has echoed across college baseball.

Nearly halfway through the season, Rhoades has not just proven he belongs — he’s established himself as one of the most dangerous hitters in college baseball.

“It sounds simple, but man, Rhoades really enjoys hitting,” Beemer said. “He’s got a confidence that only comes from doing something you really enjoy doing, and again, [he has] the confidence in the [batters] box, [and] understanding of who he is in [his] swing.”

‘The Wiz’ follows the yellow brick road to Butler

There is no place like Clowes

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In 1974, a groundbreaking adaptation of “The Wizard of Oz” debuted to smashing success. “The Wiz” was not just another retelling of Dorothy’s journey to the Emerald City; the play’s all-Black cast sang original songs influenced by contemporary African American culture and shook up the theater industry in all the best ways.

Though the legacy of “The Wiz” never died, the play revamped its performance in the form of a 2024 tour featuring an updated vocabulary and a simplified story.

From March 17–22, Clowes Memorial Hall presented the current tour of “The Wiz” to ecstatic audiences. People from all over were united by the wonder and soul of Oz in this production, strengthening community and theater alike.

Among the musical’s long list of awe-inspiring songs was the ever-popular classic “Ease on Down The Road” — repeated every time Dorothy made a new friend — and newer entries like “You Can’t Win”, the Scarecrow’s introductory song from the 1978 movie in place of the original, “I Was Born on the Day Before Yesterday”.

Noblesville resident Jeannie Vaughn believes the world of Oz deserves all the wildly different adaptations it can get.

“With ‘Wicked’ being out, I’ve been rereading all of the Wicked [books], and the original L. Frank Baum Oz [stories],” Vaughn said. “Honestly, his story is weird, so I really like the adaptations better, I think. Judy Garland [and] the classic ‘[The] Wizard of Oz’ movie, of course, is great, but even that’s different from the book.”

While “The Wiz” did not necessarily incorporate large-scale or elaborate props, its innovative use of a background screen truly brought Oz to the audience. The screen warped and shifted to fit whatever was happening on stage, making the production that much more sleek and stylish.

In a post-show Q&A, crew members explained how important the background screen was, so much so that a back-up screen is mounted directly behind in case of malfunctions. The crew also told all about behind-the-scenes rituals like Tin Man D. Jerome needing a fist bump before his introduction.

Between the crew’s constant attention and the cast’s all-timer performance, “The Wiz” came together as a series of show-stopping songs full of long and high notes galore. Almost every song ended with a dramatic swell worthy of a standing ovation, to which many audience members obliged.



Everybody wants to meet The Wizard.

Photo courtesy of Jeremy Daniel.

Mikaela Bloemker, a sophomore acting major with an emphasis on costume design, was especially impressed with the design of the witches, both wicked and good.

“I think the costuming for the witches in the show [was] so eccentric and so interesting,” Bloemker said. “Evilene’s entire motif was fire, flames and heat, so her costume was a lot of blacks, oranges and reds to mimic the fire and the burning — but then Glinda was just a shining star. She was [wearing] gold and glitter and her bodice was almost like a disco ball. There were shards of glass or mirror ... Casting all of these sparks of light around the entire auditorium.”

Besides their vocal performances, the cast’s most impressive feats were those of physical acting. The ensemble dancers portrayed the Yellow Brick Road and the opening tornado themselves, and the main quartet embodied their characters’ physicalities perfectly.

Throughout the whole play, the Scarecrow moved with the gangly gait that has represented the character for years, and the Lion was no stranger to near-slapstick levels of physical comedy. The Tin Man had the most impressive singular example of

this with “Slide Some Oil to Me”, in which Jerome works one body part at a time until fully lubricated.

Avery Briggs, a first year speech, language and hearing sciences major who worked as an usher at “The Wiz”, emphasized the importance of timeliness for the cast, crew and the audience.

“A big thing [with] ‘The Wiz’ [being] a Broadway show was that if people did come late, there was a 10 minute seating hold,” Briggs said. “It is ultimately [so that] the performers have the best production they can have. Opening the doors and having all that light enter would ruin some of the ambiance in the room, not just for the performers, but also for the other people who were on time.”

From “Wicked” to “Oz the Great and Powerful”, L. Frank Baum’s world of Oz is always getting new adaptations, and “The Wiz” turned out so famous it continued to get one of its own. Though the latest revival aims to be more timeless than ever, African American culture and culture as a whole are constantly evolving, meaning that another update down the road is not impossible — and it most certainly is not unwelcome.

“THE WIZ (2024 Broadway Cast Recording)” is available to stream on Spotify.

Comic Carnival: Going strong for 50 years

Indiana’s oldest comic shop is super, man

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Comic Carnival, the oldest comic store in Indiana, recently celebrated 50 years in business. The store, which fashions itself as “Indianapolis’ pop culture headquarters since 1975,” is an essential destination for anyone interested in mystery, horror or science fiction.

Much like a comic book superhero, the business has grown considerably since its humble origin — while the business began as a spinner rack in the back of a barber shop, Comic Carnival has moved locations several times before eventually settling into its current home at 7235 N. Keystone Ave.

Tim Reynolds, the owner of Comic Carnival, wanted to make sure the latest location was more of a friendly environment than a fortress of solitude.

“[Our former] Broad Ripple location — where we were [located] the longest — was a very small space,” Reynolds said. “It had a lot of inventory shoved into corners and [was] a little darker. We wanted to make sure the aisles were wide enough to support wheelchairs, [allow guests to] shop easier and that there was plenty of light.”

The outlet’s entrance is flanked by neon signs of the Superman shield and Batman’s bat signal, and upon entering, guests are greeted by a life-sized figure of Spider-Man posed in the corner. A variety of card and tabletop games are available for purchase, but the main event is past the check-out counter.

While many publishers sell their comics in large retail bookstores or online, there is an impressive quality to the sight of thousands of comic



Comic Carnival’s current location, with posters for new releases on display.

Photo by Samuel Demis.

books available to browse in this locally-owned shop. An endless supply of volumes and graphic novels is on display, from DC and Marvel to film tie-ins and independently published works.

Brand-new issues are placed on the surrounding wall shelves, while older back issues and used books are displayed alphabetically, similar to a record store. Popular series like Batman or X-Men have dedicated spaces to make locating specific stories easier.

Lorelei Guenther, a sophomore middle/secondary education and English double major, appreciates the amount of opportunity within a brick-and-mortar shop.

“I like being able to look at all of [the options] in person,” Guenther

said. “I try to go whenever I’m home for a break, so usually I go a lot over the summer.”

While the store’s primary demographic is adult collectors, its teen and young adult market has been expanding recently. Superheroes have experienced a major spike in popularity thanks to blockbuster films and the internet.

Reynolds also observed the space’s ability to bridge gaps between generations.

“We mostly are dealing with nostalgia ... People born in the ‘70s, ‘80s and ‘90s,” Reynolds said. “Those people now have children, so we get quite a bit of that.”

Sophomore psychology-sociology major Ku Slider experienced an inher-

ited interest in comics firsthand.

“When I found my dad’s old stack of comic books in middle school, I [became] interested,” Slider said. “I have always been interested in graphic novels ... My dad played a very big part.”

Indiana’s comic scene boasts numerous industry legends, such as Mark Waid and Jim Davis.

Reynolds explained how the store has strengthened its connections to local comic artists through meet-and-greets, most notably with Stuart Sayger.

“[Sayger] started working here as a young man ... [He] eventually struck out on his own,” Reynolds said. “He has his own comic called ‘Shiver in the Dark’ ... He is currently doing covers for Dynamite Entertainment.”

Above all, Comic Carnival has been able to cultivate a community of artists, collectors and writers brought together by their love of comics as a medium, both in joy and tragedy.

Ross Hollebon, the College of Communication’s associate director of marketing, enjoys the camaraderie aspect of the store.

“The [co-owner] passed away [in 2023], [so] I went and stopped by,” Hollebon said. “Comic books are another piece of art that brings people together ... [So], I’m thankful for [Comic Carnival] as a local small business, and I’m happy to support them every chance I get.”

While Comic Carnival continues to change and evolve with the times, its goal of supplying the people of Indiana with artistic storytelling remains the same. It will hopefully continue to inspire new generations of creators for decades to come.

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

How to survive the rest of spring semester

We've reached the point of spring semester where final projects and exams are creeping towards us. As the weather starts to warm up and procrastination becomes second nature, here's our advice on how to own the rest of your spring semester.

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Ration your Flex Dollars

By now you're probably realizing that your Flex Dollars are going and are going fast. By this point in spring semester I suggest slowing down on the Starbucks frappuccinos disguised as coffee. If you want to stretch your Flex Dollars so you can still grab fuel for your finals then maybe it's time to stop wasting your precious dollars on treats every day.

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Put it down and go outside

Put down your homework, your resume and your phone. Whatever it is, put it down and go outside. Movement is essential for your mental and physical health, but it can be hard to find the time. Still, it's important enough that it should be a prior-

ity. There are so many ways to enjoy the, thankfully, improving weather. Go on walks or runs, especially along the Holcomb Garden trail. Take the twenty-minute stroll along the river to Tinker Coffee Co. for a morning or afternoon treat. Grab your friends and have a picnic on the lawn. There are just a few weeks left of this semester, and while these are a busy few weeks, they can also be fun. All you need is twenty minutes outside to make it a better day.

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No excuses

Every student is in the same boat, so stop complaining about completing assignments on time or studying for finals. It's a privilege to have access and the resources to obtain a degree in a world where a lot of people don't. Of course it's not going to be easy balancing your social and academic ventures, but please don't make me nickname you "the complainer".

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Keep your exercise routine

We've reached that point in the semester where

the 24-hour limit on a day feels more restrictive than ever. Don't let your fitness routines be the first thing to go. It may be tempting to trade the gym sessions with friends for the lonely library, but remember: your brain can't perform if your body is running on empty. Exercise isn't just a hobby — it's your reset button. It gives you the stamina to show up, the balance to handle the stress and the clarity to readjust before you dive back into the zone. Keep your heart, hands and mind in sync.

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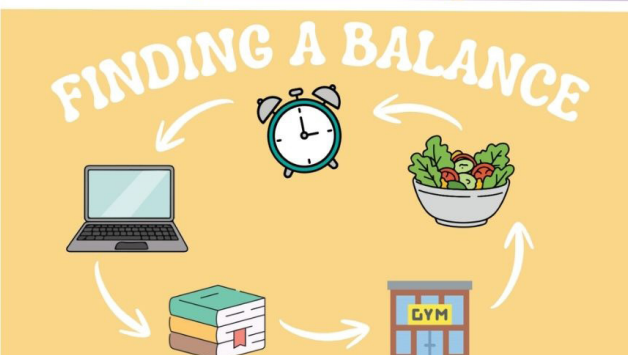
Prioritize sleep

As we enter the final stretch of the spring semester, we are going to see more and more opportunities to give up on prioritizing sleep like campus events, parties, hangouts with friends and studying. However, in order for us to end this school year on a productive note, we need to balance social callings with quality sleep. Studies show we need at least seven hours of sleep, if not nine. However, on average, many of us don't meet this goal. As the days get longer and the professors get demanding, let's prioritize good sleep for seven to nine hours every night in order to end the year as successful as we can be.

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Find the balance

Sometimes we get into the habit of giving all or nothing, spending hours on our phones or staying up until 3 a.m. studying. Neither of these things are healthy or efficient. It's good to find a balance in all the mess, especially with the warm weather. Try doing homework outside in between classes, prioritize spending less time on your phone and more time with friends or make a routine to do homework every day at the same time. Making sure not to overwork or underwork yourself is key. Highs and lows are jostling and will not help you succeed. Pick up a book, soak up the sun, do your homework and chill with friends. Find your balance!



Graphic by Lilly Frieling.

The rise of Ozempic, emaciation and disordered eating

Capitalism is getting too skinny, but that doesn't mean you should

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Women's bodies have always been on the chopping block. Our bodies have been used for pleasure,

criticized and critiqued, objectified and put under a microscope. Companies have used this to their advantage, shifting their clothing to fit smaller, or drug companies marketing their type 2 diabetes drug as a weight loss drug — and now we are shocked when celebrities strut their skinniness on red carpets.

Being 'healthy' has become a marketable idea. It's been categorized as a woman being slim, fit, small and skinny. This purposefully forces women into unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards to profit and control them through their insecurities, which those companies have created for that purpose.

I can't blame these actresses and actors for falling victim to these changes. No, it's not their fault that drug companies want to make more money, or that clothing brands profit from making their clothes smaller. I also cannot blame them for having negative relationships with their bodies or food, but I can blame them for letting it get as far as it has.

First-year psychology major Rowen Rosario delved into the negative side of celebrities normalizing thinness and implicitly creating a body standard.

"I don't think there is [one] ideal body," Rosario said. "Skinniness shouldn't be normalized at all, because it definitely is for young people. It can be really damaging to fans and people who are still impressionable. It can alter their brain chemistry in a really negative way."

These women have power in society, whether we like it or not. But the lack of transparency and the rising pressures from advertisements and companies are forcing an agenda down our throats; they have a responsibility to move us all forward, not push us back. Sometimes it feels like we are living in modern-day Hunger Games while these people purposely starve themselves for the aesthetic.

Ozempic and other GLP-1s were originally developed to treat adults with type 2 diabetes. Some celebrities like Meghan Trainor have spoken out about using it for that purpose, to help treat their symptoms and lose weight. But some have obviously been utilizing GLP-1s to lose these drastic amounts of weight, leaving them skin and bones.

First-year marketing major Stephanie Ramirez shared her opinion on the increase in GLP-1 advertisements and media coverage.

"I think it's too much," Ramirez said. "It's being shoved down people's throats. While it can be helpful for some people, others look at it as a quick way. They think it's fast and easy, that they will take it and get skinny."

There are two sides to the movement of weight loss, and they are very different and receive various kinds of criticism. Some people are unfairly angry at Adele or Selena Gomez for losing weight, receiving backlash for wanting to make themselves intentionally healthier in relation to weight. We are not their doctors and have no reason to be angry with them for doing what feels right as long as it's in a healthy way — which it seems to be.

On the other hand, actresses like Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande are creating a beauty standard that is the result of eating disorders or some form of extreme weight loss. Though when they comment on it, they will claim they're healthy.

Avery Briggs, a first-year speech language and hearing sciences major, highlighted the changes in celebrities' attitudes around body image.

"Setting any one person as a standard can be

damaging," Briggs said. "I think celebrities and the rise of social media are pushing [a standard] a lot harder and in a lot of different ways than they used to."

Frankly, for a long time I didn't find it right to comment on any celebrities' bodies, because it's not my business nor anyone else's. They have doctors and friends to take care of them; it's not anyone's job, especially not strangers feeding into parasocial relationships.

At this point, with how many women in Hollywood have been following this pattern of starvation and being sickly, and seeing it affecting women and girls, I am certain there needs to be a change.

GLP-1s shouldn't be every other ad, companies shouldn't profit from forcing us into smaller sizes and celebrities shouldn't be accessorizing with their protruding collar bone. But as a person with little power in the world, here's what I can give you.

Take care of yourself, eat when you're hungry and until you're full, wear clothes that feel comfortable, not a number or size that seems "right," check in on your friends and remember that you are enough. And you are beautiful the way you are, whatever that looks like.



Graphic by Piper Bailey.