

Indianapolis enjoys epic sports weekend

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) Drive through the neighborhoods surrounding Indianapolis Motor Speedway and it looks like Christmas in May.

Checkerered flags and “Welcome race fans” signs on every block. Neatly trimmed lawns decorated with cut-out Indy cars, a mock Borg-Warner Trophy, even an inflatable version of the track’s familiar golden, winged logo.

Yet the “Racing Capital of the World” is eagerly and happily sharing the Memorial Day weekend stage with the Indiana Pacers and the Indiana Fever, two teams straight from the Hoosier State’s lifeblood of basketball.

The Pacers flags and Caitlin Clark jerseys are easy to see all over town, including Gasoline Alley a few steps from the speedway’s famous Brickyard.

Pacers & Racers weekend is in high gear. “This is an epic weekend, an incredible opportunity to put Indianapolis on the minds of virtually every major sports fan on the planet,” said Chris Gahl, executive vice president and chief marketing officer for Visit Indy. “Our initial research shows no other city in the U.S. has hosted this diverse level of major sporting events in such a short amount of time.”

It may be an anomaly nationally, but Indianapolis is built to thrive in this sort of spotlight.

The city has hosted the Super Bowl, two NBA All-Star Games, multiple international and national championships and, of course, now the 109th running of the Indianapolis 500. and through every virtually twist — even an NCAA men’s basketball tournament held entirely in and around Indy — the reviews have come back with races.

Clark and the Fever opened the weekend hosting the defending WNBA champion New York Liberty, but Clark lost the ball on the final possession and Indiana lost 90-88 in front of a sellout crowd. An estimated 350,000 race fans are expected for Sunday’s midday Indy 500 race, including the first sold-out grandstands since 2016. The weekend will be capped Sunday night when the Pacers host the New York Knicks for Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Finals.

It’s the fourth time an NBA game has converged with race day, and the Pacers lost each of the first three — to the Knicks in 1999, to the Pistons in 2004 and to the Heat in 2013. They went on to lose all three series, too.

The off-court, off-track stories such as the Team Penske cheating scandal, the WNBA investigation into alleged racial comments directed at Angel Reese after a Fever game and the call for international peace from Israeli-born, Russian-raised pole win-



A house near the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is decked out in race gear for the Indianapolis 500 on Friday.

ner Robert Schwarzman have played into the buildup. Even the Oscar Mayer Wienermobiles came to town Friday.

The crossover continued on the eve of the race as IndyCar points leader Alex Palou wore a Tyrese Haliburton jersey in the Indianapolis 500 Festival Parade. At least one Fever player is expected to be at the track Sunday.

In a state where the greatest athletic feats often have been defined by auto racing or basketball, this weekend seems like a fitting marriage even to locals. Just

ask IndyCar team owner-driver Ed Carpenter, a longtime Pacers fan and the stepson of former speedway president and CEO Tony George.

“I think it celebrates the city, the people that live here and the fans that make the pilgrimage to the race,” he said. “(Having the other events) just makes it that much more special.”

Carpenter hopes to attend Sunday night’s game — even if he wins the 500 — and now finds himself surrounded in Gasoline Alley by a growing legion of cross-

over fans

Six-time IndyCar Series champion Scott Dixon and three-time 500 winner Dario Franchitti attended Game 3 of the Indiana-Cleveland series. Former IndyCar driver and broadcaster James Hinchcliffe was there for Game 2 and the triumvirate of Kyle Kirkwood, Colton Herta and Marcus Ericsson went to Game 2 of the Indiana-Milwaukee series. Scott McLaughlin, a Knicks fans, has a wager on the series with Carpenter and may attend Sunday’s game

if he’s not drinking the milk in victory lane.

“How’d that go?” fellow driver Alexander Rossi asked after the Pacers’ thrilling Game 1 victory on Wednesday.

“Real bad, we lost the unloseable,” McLaughlin said. “We had a good wager. I have to buy the equivalent — if the Pacers win in six games — if they win in seven, the bet is off, or I win — I have to buy the equivalent up to 2500 bucks of his (coffee/java).”

The red carpet isn’t just being rolled out for the Pacers and the racers. Film director Spike Lee is expected to be in his familiar spot inside Gainbridge Fieldhouse while his old foil, Reggie Miller, calls the game for TNT. It’s unclear how many big wigs from the race will make the 15-minute drive (in good traffic) to the arena for the game. Two tickets to each event would cost you nearly \$4,000.

Kyle Larson, who is making his second attempt at a different kind of race day double — completing 500 miles at Indianapolis and 600 more in Charlotte’s NASCAR nightcap — already has made that trip. He went to the Fever game Tuesday night.

“Outside the car, it’s been crazier this year logistics-wise,” Larson said. “Going to New York and having a full day of media there and then flying back here. Going to the Fever game was fun.”

SLATER

From Page B1

soon as the season ends, through the winter, spring, summer, fall, it’s a nonstop thing with him. He works really hard at it and he’s come a long way with it.”

Slater said his focus this offseason was to improve physically, however he could.

“I was really trying to gain some weight,” Slater said. “And was doing a lot to just stay consistent with my throwing and trying to keep my arm in shape. That was about it.”

Commanding the mound is something Slater has wanted to do for a long time. He used to watch his cousin, Cameron Planck, play varsity and thought following in his footsteps would be a worthwhile goal.

Planck pitched for Rowan County before being drafted in the 11th round by the New York Mets in 2016.

“My cousin, Cameron Planck, is someone I looked up to,” Slater said. “If I was going to pitch like somebody, it was going to be like him.”

And just like Slater wanted to emulate his cousin, there’s a batch of younger players who look to Slater in the same light.

“I have middle school kids who are trying to emulate his wind-up, his pitching mechanics,” Conley said. “They want to do what he’s doing. He’s a role model for them, whether he knows it or not. They look up to him and want to be like him.”

Slater said his advice to younger players is to play your own game and not worry about the circumstances around you.

“I’d say just don’t let the emotions get to you,” Slater said. “You need to just go out there and let your game talk for you.”

And as the 16th Region Tournament approach-

es, Slater has a straightforward goal in mind.

“Just go out there and win it all,” Slater said.

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Boyd County's Grant Slater makes contact with a pitch during the 16th Region championship game on May 29, 2024.



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Individual Remembrance Honoring Those Who Were Buried During The Past Year

May 24, 2024 - May 24, 2025

James William "Jack" Stone	Philip Jay Hoffman	Leo F. Brislin III
Linda Bowe Bocook	Linda Mae Sullivan	Ruby Koelling Simpson
Nancy Janice Wheeler	Robert Leedy Woolery II	Robin Simmons Kendall
David "Ethán" Young	David Kent Ross SR.	David W. Klaiber
Richard Edward Jones SR.	Regina J. Hill	Gaines Dee Stewart
James Michael Pauley	Jean Kathryn Jenkins	Doris Lewis Fannin
Dr. Charles Alfred Webb	Rebecca Conaway	Russell Scarberry
Joyce Ann Webb	Mary Francis Johnson	Glenys Jeanette Jackson
Leona "Lee" Houck	Piper McDonald	Jo-Ann Morman Scarberry
Ramona A. Webb	James Kevin Lutz	Gypsy Avis McDavid
Frederick B. McCullough	Leonard Allen Johnson	Christine Stewart
Patricia Gayle Barker	Linda Diane Cumutte	Hazel Johnson Hall
Frank Warren Hamilton	David Thompson SR.	Sandra "Jill" Sparks
Martha Anderson Trimble	Denver Eugene Maddox "Gene"	Randy Lee Skaggs
Robert Alexander Stoehr "Alex"	Barbara J. Howard	Leslie Frank Higgins "Jimbo"
Theresa Estep	Jane Anne Young	Randell C. Memmer
Robert Ford Brooks	Linda Rae Cassity	Christian Gowin
Elizabeth Ann "Dolly" Daniels	Luster Senters Jr.	Frances Jane "Frannie" Coleman Morris
Anna Belle Dowdy	Charles Hensley	Robert Stanley Corbitt
Carlos Ray Queen	William E. Carpenter	Andrea Dean Lake
Bonnie Jean Hall	Mary Katherine Kelley	Eva J. Hensley
Kenna Jean Smith Dunn	Shirley Elizabeth Dixon	Nancy Blair
Carol Gartrell Kashuba	Phyllis Wright	Josephine S. Owsley
Betty Jo Adams	Ida Devaney	Frances Alice Henderson
Rhonda G. Howard	Donna Carol House	Christopher A. Dean
Homer Michael Duvall	Wilma Rose Montgomery	Delilah Ruth Fields
Ray L. McCann	Robert Galloway	Cheryl McKarey
Shirley Anne Franks	Melvin Joe Weis	Franklin Eskew
Nancy J. Trimble	Geraldine Howard Skaggs	Thomas Helms
Brenda Gail Franz	Etta Rose Elkins	Dr. David Keith Bush
Brian Keith Bailey	Charles Major Whitt	