

PACERS

FROM PAGE B3

first practice of the week. “This year, I think we have real expectations to do something special as a group and when I say something special, I mean win a championship.”

Those are bold words from the leader of a team seeded fourth in the Eastern Conference and up against two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and the surging, fifth-seeded Milwaukee Bucks.

The numbers back him up. Only three teams posted better marks than

the Pacers since Jan. 1: Oklahoma City, the No. 1 seed in the West, and the top two seeds in the East, Cleveland and defending champ Boston. And Indiana ousted the Bucks 4-2 last year. Plenty has changed for the rematch, though. Instead of scrambling at midseason to learn the nuances of Pascal Siakam, the Pacers have had 1 ½ seasons — and a summer — to get acclimated to the three-time All-Star. Last year, Indiana entered the playoffs scoring a league-high 123.3 points while yielding the highest-scoring total (120.2) of the 16 playoff teams. This season, Indiana fin-

ished seventh in scoring (117.4) and 17th in points allowed (115.1) despite a sluggish start that had some questioning whether the Pacers really could replicate last season’s success. “I think we’ve been working for this since we got bounced last year (by Boston),” Pacers center Myles Turner said. “That’s been our mindset, to get back to this time of the year. So we’re healthy, we’re good to go, we’re excited and everything in between.” Things have changed in Milwaukee, too. While Antetokounmpo is healthy after missing last year’s entire series with a strained

calf, nine-time All-Star guard Damian Lillard’s status remains unclear. Lillard hasn’t played since March 18 as he was treated for deep vein thrombosis in his right calf. He has been cleared to return but won’t play in Game 1 as he tries to get into game shape. The Bucks also are bigger and more athletic since acquiring Kyle Kuzma and Kevin Porter Jr. at the trade deadline, and they’ve had a full season with coach Doc Rivers, who took the job in late January 2024. Plus, they’ve been one of the NBA’s hottest teams since Lillard’s injury and won their final eight games in the regu-

lar season. Antetokounmpo has four triple-doubles in his last five games and has averaged 11.8 assists over his last six. The Bucks believe it will help them avoid a third straight first-round exit. “I’ve watched 20 games against the Pacers — I can guess the game plan,” Antetokounmpo said. “They’re going to try to pick up the pace of the game. They’re going to try to run and play fast, so we just got to be ready for that.”

**DIFFERENT PORTIS**

Bucks forward Bobby Portis got ready for the playoffs by playing the final three regular-season games after complet-

ing a 25-game suspension for testing positive for the painkiller Tramadol. Portis was ejected early in Game 4 of last season’s series, but now says the adversity he’s dealt with this season will help him keep his emotions in check.

**INJURY REPORT**

Pacers guard Benndict Mathurin will be at full strength. Indiana’s No. 3 scorer at 16.1 points per game got some extra rest late in the season to prepare for his playoff debut. Mathurin missed the end of last season following shoulder surgery.

SOFTBALL

FROM PAGE B1

available for John Hardin. Fort Knox plays two games today in Bowling Green.

**CENTRAL HARDIN 8, BETHLEHEM 1**

Central Hardin snapped a three-game losing streak with a home win Thursday.

Central Hardin (11-8) plays three games today in the Mustang Stampede in Muhlenberg County.

**NORTH HARDIN 10, GRAYSON COUNTY 1**

The host Trojans ran their winning streak to five games with a win Thursday with their second win of the season over the Cougars.

Freshman Brook-

lyn Carmickle tossed a no-hitter and had 16 strikeouts with six walks. Sophomore Jacie Cain had three hits with a pair of doubles and a triple for North Hardin. Carmickle drove in a pair of runs with two hits and junior Addisen Vinton also knocked in two runs. The Trojans (11-3) return to action today in the Ohio County Triangle Event.

**LARUE COUNTY 15, HART COUNTY 0**

The Hawks improved to 3-0 in 18th District play with a home win Thursday in four innings. LaRue County (13-2) is scheduled to play four games today in the Turf Classic in Somerset.

**HANCOCK COUNTY 9, MEADE COUNTY 8**

The Lady Waves

dropped an 8-inning road decision Thursday in 11th District play. The loss dropped Meade County (10-6) to 2-1 in district play and was the third setback in four games for the Lady Waves. Senior Savannah Miller had three hits with two runs batted in, while senior Logan Compton had a pair of hits and two RBI. Meade County plays today in the Mustang Stampede in Muhlenberg County.

**BASEBALL**

**NORTH BULLITT 8, NORTH HARDIN 0**

The visiting Trojans had seven hits, but were unable to avoid a shutout Thursday night. Senior David Hamilton had two hits for North

Hardin (8-8). The Trojans also drew three walks and had two batters hit-by-a-pitch in the game. Freshman Jayce Baker and senior Drake Bell each worked three innings, allowing 10 hits and six walks. North Hardin hosts Nelson County today.

**MEADE COUNTY 4, HANCOCK COUNTY 2**

Junior Austyn Stans-

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bury tossed a nine-strikeout complete game and allowed just three hits Thursday night as Meade County won an 11th District home game. The win was Stansbury’s fifth of the season as the Green Wave improved to 12-4 overall and 1-0 in district play. Sophomore Gavin Brown drove in two runs for the Green Wave, who play Monday at Central Hardin.

**LEGAL NOTICE**

**INVITATION FOR BID**

The Hardin County Fiscal Court requests bids for a **NEW NEVER TITLED V8 4 DOOR 4X4 SUV**. Bids will be received in the office of the Judge/Executive, and opened in the Fiscal Court Meeting room, located at, Hardin County Government Center, 150 N. Provident Way, 3rd floor, Elizabethtown, KY 42701. All bids must be received by 1:00 PM EST on May 1, 2025, at which time bids will be opened. Bids must be in a sealed envelope with the words “Sealed Bid for: NEW NEVER TITLED V8 4 DOOR 4X4 SUV” prominently displayed on the front of the envelope.

Any questions concerning bid should be directed to Samantha Mitchell at 270-982-7232 or smitchell@hardin-countyky.gov

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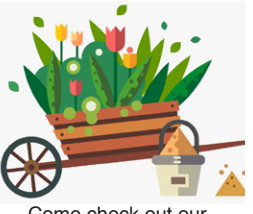
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