

COUGAR & REVIEW

February

THE YEAR OF THE COUGARS

2026

IU WINS 1ST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

BY: COUGAR REVIEW STAFF



For the first time in school history, the Indiana University Hoosiers are national champions, and it's a story that will be remembered for years to come. On January 19, 2026, the Hoosiers capped off a perfect 16-0 season by defeating the Miami Hurricanes 27-21 in the College Football Playoff National Championship Game at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida. With this win, Indiana University claimed its first-ever national football title. Head coach Curt Cignetti's mindset throughout the season was summed up by one of his famous lines: "You don't go to war with warm milk and cookies," a statement about toughness and focus that helped define the Hoosiers' championship run.

The game was full of drama and big plays. Indiana took a 10-0 lead by halftime, thanks in part to a blocked punt returned for a touchdown. But Miami fought back in the second half and kept the outcome in doubt until the final minutes. The decisive play came from Hoosiers quarterback Fernando Mendoza, who scored a 12-yard touchdown on fourth down to extend Indiana's lead and eventually secure the victory. Mendoza, who also won the Heisman Trophy this season, finished the game with a strong performance that combined leadership and determination. Mendoza reflected on the team's bond after the game, saying, "I would die for my team ...that's what makes us national champs and so special."

This national title marks a dramatic turnaround for a program that had long struggled in past decades; Indiana was once one of the teams with the most losses in major college football history. But the 2025-26 Hoosiers proved doubters wrong, finishing undefeated and becoming one of the few teams in the modern era to achieve a perfect season on their way to a national championship.

From humble beginnings to national champions, the Hoosiers' 2025-26 season will go down as a defining chapter in Indiana University history, marked by grit, teamwork, and unforgettable success.

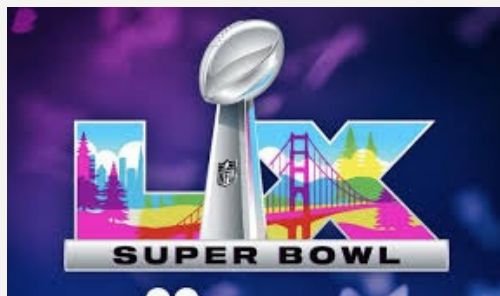


IU Head Coach Curt Cignetti celebrates the championship win against the Miami Hurricanes on Monday, January 19. Photo credit: Rich Janzaruk/Herald-Times

SUPER BOWL LX:

HOW THE SUPER BOWL BECAME AMERICA'S BIGGEST GAME

BY ASHER HOOTS



What started as a championship game between two football leagues has grown into a nationwide tradition, and as the upcoming Super Bowl approaches, students and fans alike are looking back at how the game became a sports phenomenon.

The Super Bowl's origins lie in the creation of the American Football League (AFL) in 1960. Started by a group of businessmen who wanted their own pro football franchises but were frustrated by the NFL's unwillingness to expand, the AFL quickly became a strong competitor. The two leagues battled for players, fans, and television contracts, creating intense rivalry and driving the popularity of professional football.

To end the competition, the AFL and NFL agreed to merge in 1966. As part of the merger, the leagues created a championship game to determine the best team from each league. That game, originally called the AFL-NFL World Championship Game, was first played in January 1967 and later renamed the Super Bowl, a title inspired by a popular toy of the era.

What began as a simple championship matchup has grown into one of the most-watched sporting events in the world. This year's Super Bowl LX is scheduled for Feb. 8, 2026, at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, where the New England Patriots and Seattle Seahawks will compete for the NFL title. The game will feature star entertainment, including a halftime show headlined by global artist Bad Bunny, and will be broadcast nationally on NBC and streaming platforms.

Today, the Super Bowl is known not only for the championship game itself but also for its halftime performances, commercials, and cultural impact. From its roots in league rivalry to its place as an annual national tradition, the Super Bowl has become far more than just a football game — it's a celebration of sport and entertainment that draws millions of viewers each year.



Patriots vs. Seahawks. The Super Bowl stage is set.



VALENTINES DAY

BY: DONNIE BLACKBURN



Every February, stores fill with hearts, candy, and flowers, but Valentine's Day wasn't always about romance. The holiday actually began with ancient Roman traditions that were very different from how it is celebrated today.

Valentine's Day has roots in Lupercalia, a Roman festival held on February 15 that honored fertility gods. During this festival, Romans took part in rituals meant to bring good luck and fertility. Some of these traditions included animal sacrifices and a matchmaking lottery, where men would draw women's names and spend time together during the festival.

As Christianity became more widespread, the Catholic Church worked to replace pagan festivals with Christian holidays. In the 5th century, church leaders began honoring Christian martyrs, including one known as St. Valentine. One of the most popular legends says Valentine was a priest during the rule of Emperor Claudius II. The emperor believed unmarried soldiers made better fighters, so he banned marriages. Valentine secretly married couples anyway, which eventually led to his arrest and execution.

To replace Lupercalia, Pope Gelasius established the Feast of St. Valentine on February 14. Over time, the holiday became associated with romance and love rather than its original traditions.

Today, Valentine's Day looks much different from how it did in ancient Rome. Many couples exchange gifts such as chocolates, flowers, and stuffed animals. Some people go on dinner dates, watch movies, or simply spend time together. Others celebrate friendships or family, while some choose not to celebrate at all. So what does Valentine's Day really mean? For many people, it's a chance to show appreciation and affection for those closest to them.

Although the holiday has changed a lot over the centuries, its modern message focuses on kindness, connection, and love. Valentine's Day may no longer involve ancient rituals, but it remains a day when people pause to express care for one another, something that never goes out of style.



GROUNDHOG DAY

BY LAYLA LONG

On February 2nd, 1887, the first Groundhogs day was celebrated in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The origins of Groundhog Day dates back to ancient European tradition to predict the weather. It was brought to America by German immigrants who substituted the groundhog for the traditional hedgehog or badger as the prognosticator of winter's end.

Every year between the winter solstice and spring equinox, people start to anticipate for early warmer temperatures. And with that came a way in order to predict it, whether it would be 40 days of cold and snow or 40 days of spring warmth. The Celts, for instance, celebrated it as Imbolc, a pagan festival marking the beginning of spring. But as Christianity spread through Europe, the timing and themes of Imbolc coincided with Candlemas, a feast commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the holy temple of Jerusalem.

Soon enough, Germans developed their own take on the legend, pronouncing the day sunny only if badgers and other small animals glimpsed their own shadow. When German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries, they brought the custom with them, choosing the native groundhog as the annual forecaster.

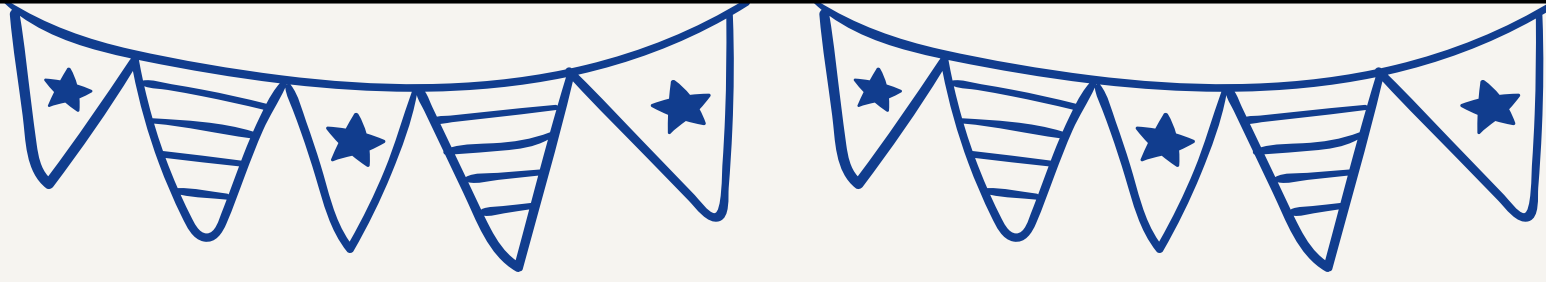
Every February 2, tens of thousands of spectators attend Groundhog Day events in Punxsutawney, a borough that's home to some 6,000 people. It was immortalized in the 1993 film Groundhog Day, which was actually shot in Woodstock, Illinois.

While sunny winter days are associated with colder, drier air, we probably shouldn't trade our meteorologists for groundhogs just yet. Studies by the National Climatic Data Center and the Canadian weather service have yielded a dismal success rate of around 50 percent for Punxsutawney Phil. Staten Island Chuck, on the other hand, is reportedly accurate almost 80 percent of the time.

Nowadays, the yearly festivities in Punxsutawney are presided over by a band of local dignitaries known as the Inner Circle. Its members wear top hats and conduct the official proceedings in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. They supposedly speak to the groundhog in "Groundhogese."

PRESIDENTS DAY

BY ADDIE BRUNSTING



Every year in February, students get a break from school for Presidents' Day; however, most don't even know what the holiday is about. Presidents Day is a federal holiday that honors the presidents of the United States, especially George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Both Presidents were born in February, which is why the holiday is celebrated during this month.

Originally, the holiday was called Washington's Birthday and was meant to honor the first U.S. president. Over time, it became known as Presidents Day to recognize all presidents and their impact on the country. Presidents Day was officially established as a federal holiday in 1879, making it one of the oldest holidays in the United States. Even though not all states celebrate it the same way, it is still widely recognized across the country.

Besides its historical importance, Presidents Day has also become known for major sales and discounts. Many stores use the holiday as a chance to attract shoppers, which is why people often associate it with furniture, mattress, and car sales. While the sales are popular, it's important to remember that the holiday is meant to reflect on leadership, history, and the role presidents have played in shaping the nation.



Mt. Rushmore - Black Hills of South Dakota



LUNAR NEW YEAR

BY HAYDEN KING



Red lanterns, family gatherings and centuries-old traditions marked the start of Lunar New Year as communities around the world welcomed the Year of the Snake, which is traditionally associated with wisdom, intuition and renewal.

Lunar New Year began more than 3,000 years ago in ancient China as a celebration tied to the agricultural calendar, marking the end of winter and the arrival of spring, a time when families prepared for planting and hoped for a successful harvest.

Over time, the celebration became rooted in cultural traditions, including honoring ancestors, sharing meals and using symbols believed to bring good luck. One common legend tells of Nian, a mythical beast that was frightened away by loud noises and the color red, which is why fireworks and red decorations remain central to the holiday.

Today, Lunar New Year is celebrated by millions of people around the world, including those living outside Asia. For many families, the holiday serves as a time to reconnect with relatives, reflect on the past year and set intentions for the year ahead.

The traditions associated with Lunar New Year also promote cultural awareness and understanding, allowing people from different backgrounds to learn about and appreciate its significance. In schools and communities, the holiday encourages conversations about history, identity and the importance of preserving cultural traditions.

Though its origins trace back thousands of years, Lunar New Year continues to influence modern life by bringing people together through shared traditions, reflection and renewal.



The Chinese dragon, Loong, is on display for the Lunar New Year celebration



SB78

NEW INDIANA BILL COULD CHANGE CELL PHONE RULES IN SCHOOLS
BY COUGAR REVIEW STAFF

A new bill being considered by the Indiana Legislature could affect how students use cellphones and other wireless devices during the school day. Senate Bill 78 (often referred to as HB 78 when first introduced) focuses on wireless communication device policies in public and charter schools across the state.

If the bill becomes law, every school in Indiana would be required to adopt a policy that limits when students can use or carry wireless communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, and gaming devices, during the school day.

Under the proposal, schools must choose one of two approaches:

- A no-device policy, where students would not be allowed to bring wireless devices to school at all, or
- A secure storage policy that allows students to bring devices but requires them to keep them stored away and not use them during instructional time.

The bill still allows exceptions in certain situations. For example, students may use devices:

- If it's part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or required for a 504 plan.
- For health or medical needs.
- During an emergency.
- For language translation when needed for learning.

The Indiana Department of Education would also publish sample policy language and guidance to help schools implement the new rules.

Supporters of the bill say it could reduce distracted learning and help students stay focused in class. Opponents have expressed concerns about students needing devices for communication or learning support.

GCHS student reaction varied. Senior Kaycie Moles stated, "I am so happy I don't have to deal with that because I use my phone to make sure the people in my life are safe. I think kids should be able to have their phones when they are not in class."

Sophomore Donnie Blackburn explains, "I told my parents, and they were not happy. They said I need it for safety reasons, and until the government or school pays the phone bill, I will have it with me."

On the other side, Bella Lane elaborated, "My mother, who is an elementary teacher, approved of the proposed new law, as she struggles with student engagement and participation."

As of now, the bill is still under consideration by lawmakers and has not yet become law. If passed, schools would be expected to have new policies in place by July 1, 2026.



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LEAP JOB FAIR

BY COUGAR REVIEW STAFF

Greenfield-Central High School students will have the chance to explore future careers and college options when the annual LEAP Job Fair returns on March 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The LEAP Job Fair is designed to help students learn about different career paths, colleges, and job opportunities they may be interested in after high school. Businesses, trade programs, colleges, and organizations attend the event to share information about what they offer and, in some cases, discuss job opportunities.

All students will attend the job fair during assigned time slots based on grade level. This structure allows students to visit booths, ask questions, and interact with representatives from a wide range of fields.

Last year's job fair featured more than 80 businesses and organizations, and organizers are working to increase that number this year. The goal is to recruit 100 or more vendors, representing careers in trades, health care, manufacturing, law enforcement, fire services, retail, and more. Colleges and employers looking to hire students will also be present. Several sponsors are helping make the event possible. County Materials is serving as the Diamond Sponsor, while the Indiana National Guard is the Platinum Sponsor.

The event is organized by students enrolled in LEAP Class 1, who help plan and coordinate the job fair. Each student in the class selects one business or organization to assist with, giving them hands-on experience in planning a large schoolwide event.

The LEAP Job Fair offers students a valuable opportunity to think about life after high school, whether that means college, trade school, military service, or entering the workforce. By bringing a variety of options directly to campus, the event encourages students to ask questions, explore interests, and begin planning for their future.



WINTER BANDS & GUARD

BY BELLA LANE

As the winter sports season is in high gear, the band and guard department is preparing for the indoor competition season. For most, the north end of the building is nothing special, but for the Band and Guard scholars, it's known as a place that shows their hard work, dedication, and skills in the performance world. As our three programs start working towards IPA State Finals and WGI performances. As we take a closer look at each section of our performance groups, we also see how this 2026 winter season is growing our music and guard program through their quick-starting season.

Winter Winds:

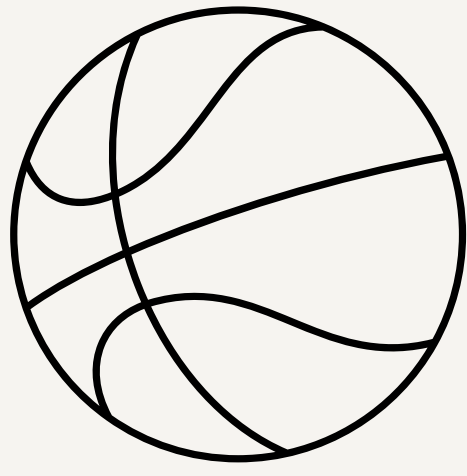
Winter winds are designed for our Greenfield-Central woodwinds and brass players to showcase their musical abilities and endurance through short after-school practices and ample time at home perfecting choreography, music, and the little details. Audrey Low explained, "The season is currently going pretty well, we're getting pretty solid on music, and we're learning more drill and choreo, but I'm very excited for competition season to start this month." On the other hand, some of the scholars who perform for winter winds are excited to create more memories throughout the season. Lainey Riggs added, "I'm excited to spend more time with my friends while doing something that I enjoy." As their season begins, most are excited for the performances and getting to bond with their sections even more.

Indoor Percussion: Indoor percussion begins completion this month. This season is really big for the percussionist this year, as the last couple of winter seasons went very well. With practicing every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for about 3 hours, depending on the weather and other groups' demands, due to limited space for the tarps. Sean Fannin stated, "I'm excited for completions this season to start."

Winter Guard: As the winter season picks up, the guard is in full force with their practices every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings, with camp days on Saturdays leading up to shows. Delaney Kent added, "I'm looking forward to Dayton at the end of the season. I love getting to watch shows at UD, and I also just like staying with the team for the weekend. It's a fun experience. I'm sad it's my last trip." As the guards begin their competition, they receive a spotlight to showcase their performance skills for judges, parents/family, and friends.

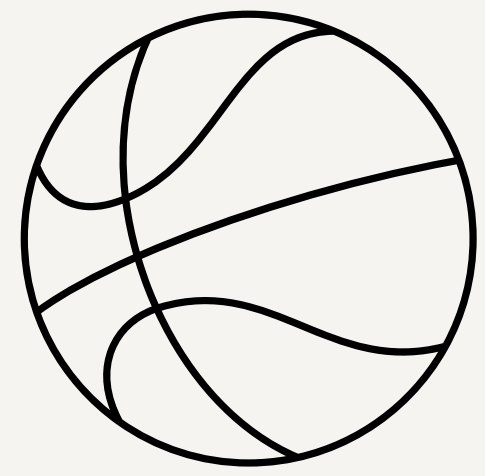
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BASKETBALL

BY BRYSON MINTON



With the season moving into the second half, the boys and girls basketball teams at Greenfield-Central High School have shown measurable improvement through recent wins, efficient scoring, and continued development on the court.

The boys basketball team is coming off a weekend win at the Batesville Invitational, a result that helped build momentum heading into the new year. The Cougars continued that success with a road victory against Rushville to open 2026.

On Jan. 20, Greenfield-Central defeated New Castle in a high-scoring game. The Cougars shot 73% from the field, demonstrating efficient offense and balanced scoring. Clay Mullins led the team with 15 points, while Isaiah Humes added 13 points, with additional contributions from multiple players.

After facing several losses, the girls program continues to respond with effort and determination. The junior varsity team has emphasized rebuilding energy and confidence, while the varsity team has focused on maintaining high intensity and increasing scoring opportunities.

Both basketball programs have demonstrated resilience and progress, giving the Greenfield-Central community reason for optimism as the season continues.



Photo by Bryson Minton



COUGAR WRESTLING

BY ZOEY BLOMBERG

As the Greenfield-Central girls wrestling team wraps up its season with Keely Allen representing the Cougars at the state championship, the boys wrestling team continues to show grit and determination, carrying momentum into the postseason.

The Lady Cougars found success at the sectional tournament at Eastern Hancock, where four wrestlers advanced to the regional round at Muncie Central. Sectional champions Isabella McCullough and Keely Allen led the way with standout performances on the mat.

On the boys side, Greenfield-Central earned a decisive 50-27 victory over the Eastern Hancock Royals in a recent meet, sending off the Class of 2026 in strong fashion. The Cougars controlled the pace throughout the night, collecting key wins across multiple weight classes and highlighting the depth of the program as postseason competition approaches.

With strong performances from both programs, Greenfield-Central wrestling continues to build momentum at a crucial point in the season. As the girls compete on the state stage and the boys carry confidence into upcoming tournaments, the Cougars remain focused on finishing the year with the same intensity and determination they have shown all season.

SWIM

BY TREVOR LEONARD

The Greenfield-Central swim team continued its reign in the conference, capturing its fifth straight conference championship in dominant fashion on January 3. The team outpaced the rest of the field by 151 points, delivering a performance that left little doubt about its place at the top of the standings.

The Cougars swimmers scored consistently throughout the meet, earning points in nearly every event. Strong performances in both individual races and relays steadily built the team's lead as the competition progressed.

The championship win highlighted the depth of the roster, with multiple swimmers contributing key finishes rather than relying on a few standout performances. That balance allowed the team to maintain momentum across all sessions of the meet.

The title adds to the program's growing legacy, which now includes five consecutive conference championships. With the conference meet complete, the team will look ahead to postseason competition, aiming to carry its success into the next stage of the season.

SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT COUNCIL

BY KYLIE WOODSON

As February approaches, the GCHS Student Council is planning upcoming events, including Valentine's Day activities, spirit days and prom preparations.

Freshman class Vice President Hannah Hawsey said planning for February is already underway. "We are working on Valentine's activities and possible spirit days," Hawsey said. Junior class President Alessandro Sanchez, who also serves as Student Council vice president, said prom planning has begun alongside discussions about Valentine's Day events. Junior class Secretary Bradley Streveler agreed. "We are currently planning prom and possible Valentine's Day activities," Sanchez and Streveler said.

Junior class Treasurer Charlotte Sible said prom activities are a main focus for Student Council at this point in the school year. "Some current projects we are working on are prom activities," Sible said.

Freshman class President Rylee Conaway said Student Council members continue planning even during a slower part of the school calendar. "We are planning Valentine's activities and spirit days while being in the slow part of the year," Conaway said.

With the second semester underway and the school year entering its final months, Student Council leaders said additional details about upcoming events will be shared as plans are finalized.



Rylee Conaway, 9
Freshman Class President



Bradley Streveler, 11
Junior Class Secretary



Alessandro Sanchez, 11
Junior Class President
STUCO Vice President



Charlotte Sible, 11
Junior class Treasurer



Hannah Hawsey, 9
Freshman class Vice President



CONFIDENTIAL

**HIGHLY
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MISSION: SECURE YOUR YEARBOOK

This year's yearbook is **classified**, and access is limited. Inside this **Top Secret** file are the moments you don't want erased: victories, laughs, traditions, and memories that won't be repeated. From first-day missions to final assignments, this book holds evidence of the 2025-2026 year. Once the year ends, this file closes permanently.

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