



# 2020 FOOTBALL ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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# Tight end steps into veteran role

## Durham prepares for a team 'counting on' him

**BY EMILY PRIMM**  
Staff Reporter

Sophomore tight end Payne Durham had to grow up quickly last season to fill the veteran position as an underclassman.

The age spread of tight ends for the Boilermakers ranges between a freshman, three redshirts and one other sophomore who transferred from the defensive end position this season. With 250 snaps in the position under his belt, Durham has the experience necessary to be a leader among the tight ends.

Last year he played in the shadow of fifth-year star tight end Brycen Hopkins and studied the dynamics of Boilermakers' offense.

"Last year, I had a very specific role behind (Hopkins)," Durham said. "This year, it's a little bit different. There's guys counting on me, and coaches are counting on me."

Durham says Hopkins served as an important role model for him, which he hopes to do this year for the rest of the young tight end squad.

"Garrett (Miller) and Kyle (Bilodeau) come over to my house a whole lot of nights and just study the playbook with me," Durham said. "(I) teach them things that were taught to me, kind of how to conduct

of tight ends, to his high school lacrosse career. He didn't pick up football until his senior year, but tallied 22 receptions for 330 yards and five touchdowns by the end of the season.

He played in two games as part of the reserves his freshman year, but it wasn't until last year that he was inducted into the Boilermakers' arsenal.

In a receiving core that was stacked with such big names as Hopkins and sophomores Rondale Moore and David Bell, Durham still found a way to make plays.

He saw the field in all 12 games and started in four. In last year's game against Vanderbilt University, his first reception ended up being his first touchdown. He had eight more receptions for 82 yards and three more scores by the end of the season.

To maintain his power in the red zone, Durham said he wants to keep up what he did last year and find a way to always come away with the ball.

"(I need to) get myself open and in tight spaces making sharp cuts," Durham said. "(When) the ball's up in the air, kind of having a basketball rebounding mentality, that that's my ball, and I have to come down with it. There's no other option."

– Payne Durham, sophomore tight end

"There's guys counting on me, and coaches are counting on me."

themselves."

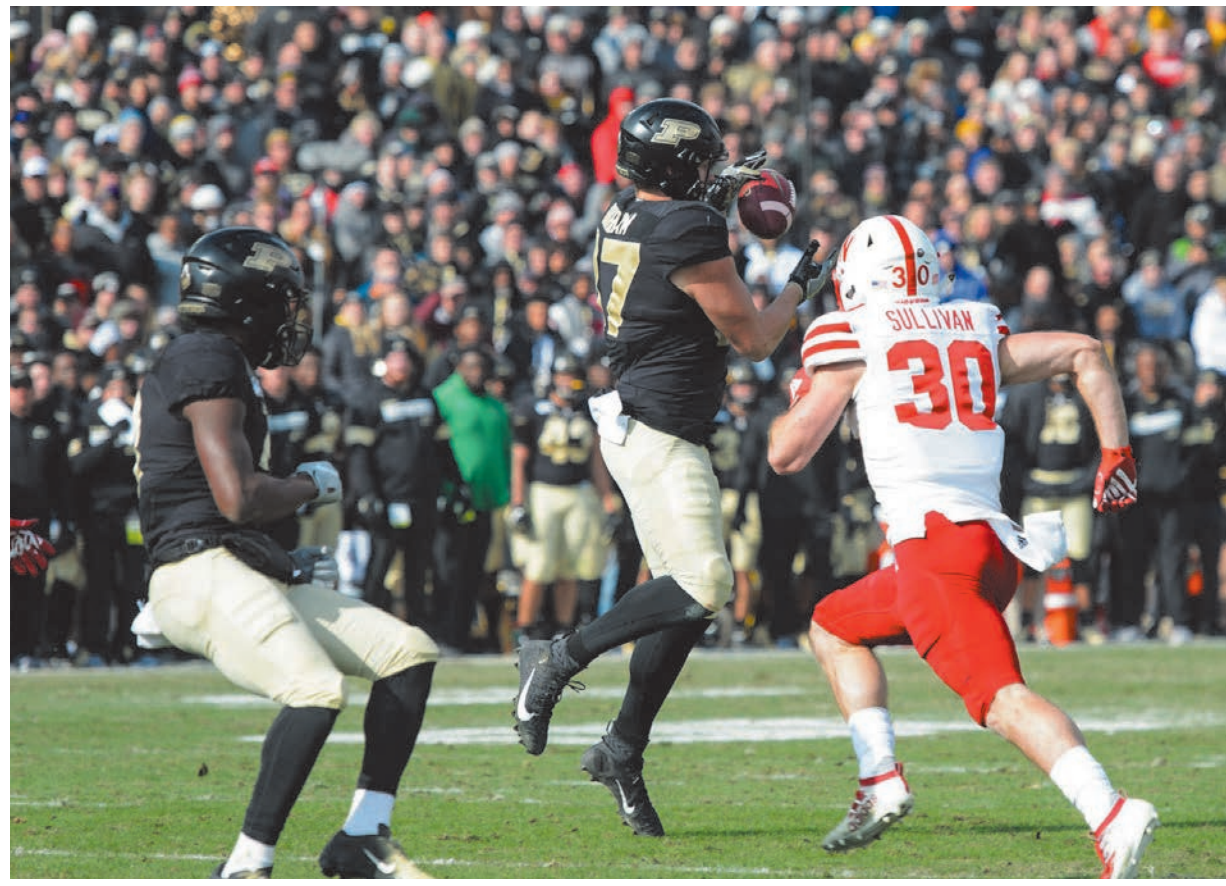
Tight ends coach Ryan Wallace said he feels good about Durham becoming the number one tight end.

"Payne has a very high ceiling," he said. "He stays motivated because he never has a bad day."

Wallace attributed Durham's physicality and agility, both traits

Durham added he wants to focus on third-down conversions and lengthening the 9.1 yards per reception he had last season.

Despite the ups and downs of the offseason, Durham made the most of it. That being said, he was still disappointed when the news came in August that the 2020-21 season had



Then-redshirt freshman Payne Durham catches a third down pass from quarterback Jack Plummer. Durham would score on this play to put Purdue in the lead during the Boilermakers' 2019 game against Nebraska.

been postponed.

"I was so down in the dumps when it got canceled," Durham said. "I think I had a really good offseason, so I was ready to show what I would have been working for."

Durham was not the only person in the locker room who felt that way.

When the news of the canceled season was released, Durham said morale was so low that the training facility was "probably one of the worst places to be in America."

However, last month's update announcing this year's modified football season flipped the team's bummed morale on its head. Durham spoke for Boilermakers on and off the field when he talked about returning to the field Saturday.

"(The news) couldn't come fast enough," Durham said. "I've had the jitters all week. It's a surreal feeling that we're finally here, and I'm excited."



The Purdue offense celebrates with then-redshirt freshman tight end Payne Durham, who had just scored Purdue's sole touchdown of the game on Saturday. With rain pouring down for most of the game, Purdue struggled and fell 24-6 to Illinois.



# Boiler defense prepares for possible air attack

BY ALEX BROPHY  
Staff Reporter

The road to the 2020 season has had its ups and downs, the most recent being head coach Jeff Brohm's COVID-19 diagnosis. Brohm announced Monday that his brother, co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Brian Brohm, will lead the Boilermakers against the University of Iowa on Saturday.

But according to players, the absence of Jeff Brohm hasn't fazed them before game time. Sophomore defensive end George Karlaftis sees the continuous improvement the team has made since last season.

"The coordinators have done a tremendous job," Karlaftis said. "Coach (Jeff) Brohm is with us, not physically, but when it's necessary he lets us know."

The Iowa Hawkeyes capped off the 2019 season with a dominant victory over the University of Southern California in the Holiday Bowl. Sophomore wide receiver Ihmir Smith-Marsette stole the

show with three touchdowns, including a 98-yard kick return.

Purdue fared well against the then-No. 23 Hawkeyes last season, despite losing the matchup. Holding the Iowa offense to field goals the entire first half and taking the Hawkeyes to third down a total of 13 times, the Boilers forced a 26-20 final score.

Karlaftis said the key to success on the defensive side of the ball is a "bend-don't-break" mentality. Last year Purdue committed two turnovers, and five penalties for 40 yards against the Hawkeyes.

Iowa has a long history of success not only in the Big Ten, but in the world of college football.

"The winning culture they have there, it's always going to be a challenge," safeties coach Anthony Poindexter said. "When I was a kid playing in college, Iowa was a good football team."

And this could be the year that the physical, run-first offense takes to the air. Head coach Kirk Ferentz may have his best group of wide receivers in his 21-year tenure.



DAVID HICKEY | PHOTOS EDITOR

**Then-junior defensive end Derrick Barnes bursts through the Minnesota offensive line in pursuit of the quarterback. Barnes finished with two tackles and half a sack.**

"They have a great core of receivers," Poindexter said. "They're well-coached and do a great job at recruiting."

Purdue may have the ad-

vantage against the Hawkeyes this Saturday when it comes to depth. Since the conclusion of the 2019 season, Ferentz has lost 11 players to the NFL

Draft and more than 20 to the transfer portal.

The Boilermakers are set to open the season in Ross-Ade Stadium. Kickoff is at 3:30

p.m. EST. Since the pandemic has prohibited in-person attendance, fans can tune in to the Big Ten Network to cheer on the Boilermakers.

## With head coach sidelined by virus, hope remains for strong opening

BY ALEX SABRI  
Staff Reporter

With just three days until Purdue football's first contest in almost 11 months, head coach Jeff Brohm and his coaching staff are preparing to rebound from a disappointing 2019 season. Their first test will come against the University of Iowa in Saturday's home opener.

After Jeff Brohm tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, Brian Brohm, the head coach's younger brother and a co-offensive coordinator, was named the team's acting head coach and play caller against Iowa. Fellow offensive coordinator and wideouts coach Jamarcus Shephard will assist him on the sidelines.

Brian Brohm has worked with his older brother since their days at Western Kentucky University. The coaches transferred to Purdue when Jeff Brohm was named the Boilermakers' head coach in 2016.

Jeff Brohm said during a Monday press conference he's confident in his coaching staff's readiness to fill in. The staff includes members with head-coaching experience such as Bob Diaco, who coached the University of Connecticut in 2014.

"They'll do a great job without me there on Saturday," Jeff Brohm said. "Right now, it's about putting the best game plan out there daily and adjusting as the week goes on, and come game day, our players will respond and play hard. As coaches, we need to do our part to help (our players) achieve their goals, and I know our assistant coaches will continue to

do that."

Jeff Brohm emphasized the tone the Iowa game sets for this shortened season, saying the "tough contest" will be crucial in determining the team's future success.

"We're looking forward to playing a great opponent in Iowa," Jeff Brohm said. "We're going to have to play well to win and find a way to beat them at their own game. This will be a great test to see how we stack and measure up (in the Big Ten), because this is one of the best teams in our conference."

D.J. Johnson, the sophomore cornerback who transferred from Iowa, has been cleared to play against his former team. The Indianapolis native has three years of eligibility at Purdue.

The Boilermakers have three quarterbacks that could be potential starters in Saturday's game: sophomore Jack Plummer, junior Aidan O'Connell and graduate UCLA transfer Austin Burton. While Plummer and O'Connell each had starting experience for the Boilers last year, with seven and three games respectively, Burton started one game and played in six at UCLA between 2017 and 2019.

Jeff Brohm said he has decided on the starting quarterback, but he won't make an official announcement until game day.

"It's been a good competition," Jeff Brohm said. "I think we have three capable guys that can go in and compete. We have to do some good things around them, but we're not going to announce (the quarterback decision) until game time."

Given his recent diagnosis and the ambigu-



EXPONENT FILE PHOTO

**Purdue's offensive line huddles around assistant coach Brian Brohm to hear the play during the Boilermakers' 2019 game against Maryland.**

ity of a lengthened offseason roiled by the coronavirus and uncertainty about whether games would be played at all, Jeff Brohm said he feels more pride than ever in his players and coaching staff.

He said the energy players and coaches have shown in adapting to the crisis exemplifies how their passion for football has driven them to

succeed despite the obstacles in their way.

"We're looking forward to playing football, just like everyone else around the country," Jeff Brohm said. "We want to go out there as a team and represent (our fans) by playing the game the way it should be played: with all-out effort, playing to the end, and giving it everything you have."

## Offensive coordinator shifts to head coaching slot to battle Hawkeyes

BY HANNAH MITCHELL  
Staff Reporter

Purdue football's already unique game day circumstances this season have been made even more extraordinary, as quarterbacks coach Brian Brohm plans to take the head coaching reins from his brother Jeff.

The Boilermakers will take on Iowa this Saturday without their head coach on the sideline after Jeff Brohm tested positive for COVID-19 Sunday morning.

"I feel ready to take on the challenge and I'm excited about it," Brian Brohm said about his new role within the team.

Brian Brohm will now be making calls from the sidelines rather than analyzing plays from the press box.

"Now it's just going to be me calling it on game day," Brian Brohm said. "Everything I'm doing up until the game day is pretty much the same as what I always do, just now my game day experience will be different."

The Boilermaker offense this season features a deep wide receiver corps led by junior Rondale Moore and sophomore David Bell. Bell was named Big Ten Freshman of the Year in 2019.

"Those guys can make plays, and I really look forward to seeing some of the new ones in live action," Brian Brohm said.

Purdue picked up several new wide receivers for this season, including four-star recruit Maliq Carr and Marcellus Moore. It's unclear who will be the third wide receiver in the starting lineup.

"We're still doing a position battle," Bell said. "(Wide receiver



EXPONENT FILE PHOTO

**Then-freshman wide receiver David Bell leaps up for a reception under tight coverage.**

ers coach Jamarcus Shephard) is still evaluating a lot of guys and he hasn't made a depth chart yet."

Iowa has had a strong defense in recent years according to Brian Brohm, and has not allowed Purdue many chances to make big plays.

"Overall, (Iowa has) strong guys that are very sound in technique, so we all thought we got a big challenge in front of us for this O-line," fifth-year offensive lineman Grant Hermanns said.

This season, there will be no fans allowed at games and no tailgating outside of Ross-Ade Stadium. This change will bring about a different atmosphere for

the players.

"We're going to have to create our own juice and be our own hype man and kind of roll from there, but still remember it's a big game," sophomore tight end Payne Durham said. "We got to go out there and perform like the stadium's full."

Purdue has not won a season opener since Jeff Brohm took over as head coach before the 2017 season.

"That first game can set the tone for the whole year," Hermanns said. "Once you get momentum on your side, you get moving a little bit, then things can get rolling. So this first game is going to be extremely important."

### MEDIA

Continued from Page 1

To read the full story click on this link: [Full Story Here](#)

on campus. A student newspaper is arguably the safest news outlet to allow in the stadium. Instead of traveling from outside of Indiana, Exponent photographers would walk the block from our office to the stadium.

Moreover, student photographers being barred from the stadium begs the question: Who are college sports for? Without students, there's no university.

An athletic event featuring student-athletes at a public university would seem most relevant to student journalists. We work, live and attend classes here, and it is our peers playing in the competition.

In a broader sense, banning photography in a public venue brings up issues of public information and the specter of a filtered narrative.

As an independent media organization, it is The Exponent's responsibility to tell every Purdue story accurately and fairly without incentive to protect or damage Purdue's image. A Purdue Athletics photographer might not have that same charge and will consider their

stakes when choosing which images to capture and share with the public.

For example, would an Athletics photographer be keen on sharing images of mask-less coaches, a particularly brutal injury, depressingly empty stands, or anything else that has the potential to present Purdue Athletics in a negative light? While both universities and the country at large are embroiled in scrutiny over racial injustice, will Athletics choose to share photographs of students and coaches taking action or making statements on the field?

Purdue Athletics should take action to ensure that question remains a hypothetical.

If Purdue doesn't allow Exponent photographers into the game, it will miss out on valuable coverage. Having to choose from select images rather than capture our own, The Exponent would be left to operate under the constraints of Purdue Athletics, unable to do our most basic job — to tell the story.

*The editorial board is made up of the editor-in-chief, managing editor, sports editor, assistant sports editor, campus editor, assistant campus editor, city editor, graphics editor, photos editor, content editor and design editor.*



DAVID HICKEY | PHOTOS EDITOR

**Ross-Ade Stadium sits empty, awaiting players and fans for Saturday's opening game against Iowa.**



# Breakfast Club to return to Chauncey Hill

BY STEVEN RANDALL  
Sports Editor

West Lafayette bar Where Else announced a set of “Breakfast Club Specials” in a pair of Instagram posts on Wednesday two days after 12 mayors of Big Ten communities issued a letter to the conference asking for caution in the reinstated football season.

These posts are the first indication area bars will participate in the Boilermaker tradition. The morning before each home football game, students typically embark on a bar crawl in Halloween costumes, visiting well-worn haunts like Harry’s Chocolate Shop or Brothers before heading to Ross-Ade Stadium for the game.

Where Else owner Jordan Hassan said he made the decision to advertise Breakfast Club deals Monday night, in an attempt to “bring back something normal” for students.

“Where Else Bar will do all it can to provide a sense of normalcy during this current time,” Hassan said in a text message. “Every part of our operation is influenced by the restrictions and guidelines set forth by the Tippecanoe Health Department in



EXPONENT FILE PHOTO

Students and alumni crowd the entrance at Where Else for Breakfast Club in 2014.

relation to COVID-19. This weekend’s Breakfast Club is not an exemption to that fact. Safety is paramount for our customers and staff members.”

Hassan could not give an exact estimate of his expectations for student turnout, but he does expect it to be higher than normal due to fans being

barred from Ross-Ade. The bar plans to obey all Indiana State Department of Health COVID-19 regulations and restrictions. These include mask-wearing, limiting capacity, small groups and a max capacity of 176 students and staff members.

He also reached out to the West La-

fayette Police Department to advise them of his plans for Saturday. The deals will begin at 10 a.m., according to the bar’s Instagram posts. Hassan said he moved the opening back from the traditional 7 a.m. because of the timing of the Purdue-Iowa game Saturday afternoon. Harry’s also typi-

cally opens at 10 a.m.

Hassan said he plans to close the bar around game time if the crowd diminishes by mid-afternoon. If students are still around and want to watch the game on the bar TVs, the bar will stay open through the afternoon, he said.

The bar has not heard directly from the West Lafayette government or ISDH concerning this move. West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis commented on the gradual reopening of bars and restaurants in a press conference Wednesday afternoon.

“There’s a lot of behavior that’s been changed over the past several months,” Dennis said. “You can see it in the bars and restaurants. People just kind of get it now.”

A lingering question around the opening concerns Bruce Barker, or “The Piano Man.” After the Neon Cactus announced its closure in September, Barker moved his performances to Where Else and has been playing there ever since. Hassan was unable to say whether Barker will make an appearance Saturday morning because of prior commitments on his performance schedule.

## Mayors urge Big Ten to schedule games early, tightly monitor restart

BY CARSON BAILEY  
AND NOAH HENSON

City Editor and Staff Reporter

West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis added his name to a letter urging the Big Ten Conference to be cognizant of the effect its upcoming football season may have on college towns.

Dennis joins the mayors of several other Big Ten cities such as Evanston, Illinois, where Northwestern University is; Iowa City, Iowa, where the University of Iowa is; and College Park, Maryland, home to the University of Maryland.

“We ask that you work with local and county health officials in these communities to define a population positivity rate, where hosting a football game that would bring increased activity into the community is no longer safe to do,” the letter

states.

The letter, dated Monday, also asks the Big Ten to set and reveal its schedule as soon as possible, and host few or no evening games because of increased social activity later in the day.

“We are at a pivotal moment in history,” the letter adds. “Protecting our community members should be, and is, our top priority.”

Despite the tone of the letter, Dennis expressed his optimism and pride in Purdue and West Lafayette.

“We are managing this much better than other universities,” Dennis said in a Tippecanoe County Health Department press conference on Wednesday. He cited students’ compliance to the Protect Purdue Pledge and the West Lafayette mask mandate.

He still expressed concern, however, about the potential for large gatherings to occur as they traditionally do during home football games.

“Anything that involves group behavior, whether it be Breakfast Club, whether it be standing in line at Harry’s, whether it be being inside at a local bar, tavern or restaurant, is a cause for concern,” Dennis told the Exponent on Wednesday.

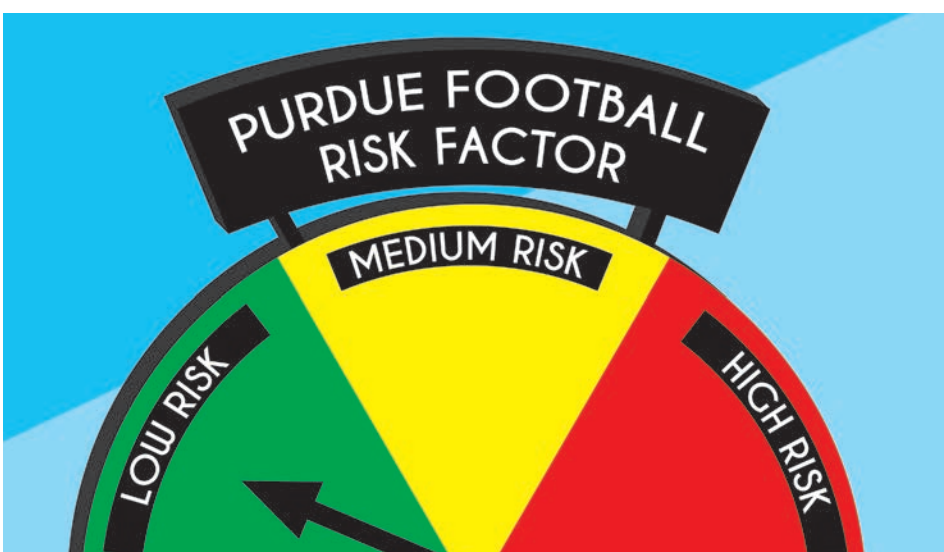
“It’s always a challenge to make sure that people don’t (gather together),” Dennis added. “We’re a social animal.”

Dennis also noted that disciplinary measures similar to those that govern student activities will be enforced by the city during sporting events.

Big Ten guidelines state that if a team’s seven-day average positivity rate is greater than 5% and the seven-day average positivity rate within the athletic department is greater than 7.5%, the team must cancel practices and competitions for a minimum of seven days.

Protect Purdue Health Center Chief Medical Officer Esteban Ramirez said the University would “follow the NCAA recommendations” when it came to postponing or canceling games based on the campus positivity rate. Tippecanoe County Health Officer Jeremy Adler added that if positivity rates rise, sporting events may be reevaluated.

“If we start seeing percent positivity values like some of the other areas in Indiana,” Adler said, “that would certainly raise questions about whether or not we should be having sporting events.”



ADRIAN GAETA | GRAPHICS EDITOR/

Iowa athletics reported 20 COVID-19 cases since daily testing began on Sept. 30.

## How risky is this week’s football game for the players, coaches?

BY EMILY PRIMM

Staff Reporter

Purdue opens Ross-Ade Stadium to the Iowa Hawkeyes on Saturday to play a game that — if played anywhere on campus beyond the stadium gates — would violate the Protect Purdue Pledge by not maintaining social distancing and not involving proper face masks.

Some students fear Iowa players and staff coming to Purdue’s campus can pose a potential risk to the health and safety of our students and athletes alike.

The Exponent will be rating each opponent on a scale from red to green in terms of how it has managed the spread of COVID-19.

Last week, Iowa reported 31 student COVID-19 cases, compared to Purdue’s 121, according to the Daily Iowan and Purdue’s coronavirus dashboard.

Iowa handles random testing a little differently than Purdue does, though —

it doesn’t.

According to the Iowa University website, all COVID-19 cases are self-reported by students and faculty, and tests are conducted by request. For students who test positive, tests are administered to those who have come in close contact with them.

Nonetheless, Big Ten student-athletes and athletic faculty are tested daily, so there is testing data on the Hawkeyes to draw from.

Since beginning daily antigen testing on Sept. 30, Iowa athletics has reported 20 positive cases among student-athletes and athletic faculty, according to the Daily Iowan. Six were just in the last week.

Overall, Iowa receives a low risk factor of yellow. There are no red flags with the current information available, but there are too many unknowns to put them at a green.

In Purdue’s weekly athletics COVID-19 report on Monday, athletics recorded eight active cases among

student-athletes but had no information about active cases among faculty, even though head coach Jeff Brohm was confirmed positive on Sunday.

In a press conference Monday, Brohm talked about COVID-19 cases among athletic staff. He said that there have been flare-ups among staff but noted that he didn’t know how much he was allowed to say during the press conference.

Nevertheless, athletic director Mike Bobinski said in the same press conference that there have been zero positive cases among football players since daily testing began on Sept. 30.

David Broecker, a member of the Protect Purdue Implementation Team, said that surveillance testing, rapid test results, rapid isolation and contact tracing have strongly limited community spread on campus.

For these reasons, Purdue receives a risk factor of green.

## Our sports desk calls the game

We polled The Exponent’s sports desk to report what they predict the final score of Saturday’s Purdue-Iowa game. The ESPN spread is included for reference.

Purdue wins	Iowa wins
Liam (20-14)	ESPN (-3.5)
	Ashlyn (14-10)
Luke (35-31)	Alex S. (27-17)
	Alex B. (21-10)
Dre (27-20)	Ray (24-21)
	Emily (35-20)
	Joe (27-17)
Hannah (27-21)	Steven (17-12)

## Stat of the day

Derrick Henry’s total rushing yards on 22 carries during Tennessee’s Sunday night game against Houston, which managed 92 rushing yards as a team on five more carries

212

## Tweet of the day



BY RAY COUTURE  
Staff Reporter

When Purdue faces off against Iowa at Ross-Ade Stadium Saturday afternoon, the stands will be filled with student-athletes’ family members and about 900 fan cutouts made of corrugated plastic.

Fan cutouts have become popular in both the collegiate and professional sport world during the pandemic. Major League Baseball began using them at the start of its season in July and the NFL followed suit in September.

Purdue is not the only school in the Big Ten expected to employ plastic fans this season. Every Big Ten university except Rutgers is expected to have cutouts in the stands in some capacity.

The cutouts will be placed in the south end zone and student sections of Ross-Ade.

The amount of cutouts expected in the stands for opening weekend varies

throughout the conference. Minnesota Associate Athletic Director Mike Wierzicki said 700 cutouts will populate the stands for the Golden Gophers’ game against Michigan, while Ohio State is expected to have about 4,300 cutouts for its clash against Nebraska.

But how will those cutouts hold up? The forecast for Saturday’s game against Iowa calls for temperatures in the mid-50s and rain, and the stadium will likely see worse weather as the season unfolds.

Can the cutouts at Ross-Ade survive multiple weeks living outside in the cold and rain? Associate Athletic Director Chris Peludat, who helped develop the idea, said the cutouts will be secured to each seat with metal brackets and are designed to endure inclement weather.

“It’s a treated plastic, like if you’ve seen our A-frame signs, those types of things around our stadium, it’s a



PHOTO PROVIDED

Cardboard cutouts of fans sit in the seats at Petco Park before Game 3 of a baseball American League Championship Series between the Houston Astros and the Tampa Bay Rays, Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020, in San Diego.

very similar material,” Peludat said. “It will deal with the weather very well.”

The cutouts had to be ordered by Oct. 18 to make it inside Ross-Ade in time for the Iowa game, but can still be ordered for future games throughout the season. While they can be seen as fun way for Boilermaker fans to stay connected to the team, Peludat maintained that the cut-

outs are a meager substitute to having real fans in the stands.

“Obviously,” Peludat said, “we’d much rather have students at the game in person.”

**Purdue vs. Iowa**  
Ross-Ade Stadium  
3:30 p.m. | Saturday