

QUICKREAD

BASEBALL

Six home games at Alexander highlight Boilers’ 2015 slate

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Six home weekends and 25 home games at Alexander Field highlight Purdue baseball’s 2015 schedule, unveiled by head coach Doug Schreiber.

The Boilermakers are scheduled to host Northern Illinois (March 13-15), Rutgers (March 20-22), Butler (March 27-28), Iowa (April 3-5), Maryland (April 24-26) and Penn State (May 14-16) for their home weekends. Valparaiso (March 18), Kent State (March 24), Western Michigan (March 31), IPFW (April 1 and April 15), Indiana State (April 21), Ball State (April 22) and Illinois State (April 28) also visit Alexander Field for midweek action.

Purdue is scheduled to play in a pair of four-team tournaments during the pre-Big Ten portion of the schedule. The Boilermakers will take on Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, Sam Houston State (twice) and Missouri the weekend of Feb. 20-22 at the Minor League Baseball stadium in Corpus Christi, which is home to Houston Astros double-A affiliate in the Texas League.

The following weekend Purdue is slated to travel to the state of Arizona for the first time in program history for Arizona State’s Phoenix Muni Classic. The Boilermakers are scheduled to take on Gonzaga (twice), ASU and CSU Bakersfield at Phoenix Municipal Stadium. The Sun Devils’ new home field opened in 1964, underwent major renovations in 2003 and most recently served as the Oakland A’s spring training home.

Weather permitting, Purdue is scheduled to play 15 home games over a 24-day stretch from March 13 through April 5. Northern Illinois is the opponent for the home-opening weekend and the Boilers’ first two Big Ten series are at home (vs. Rutgers and Iowa). Butler filled the open weekend in Purdue’s Big Ten schedule and the coaches decided to play the first two games of the series at Alexander Field and the Sunday, March 29, series finale at Bulldog Park in Indianapolis.

The March 13 home opener would match the earliest in program history. The 1996 team also played at home on March 13. The early 1990s saw the Boilers play their first home game no later than St. Patrick’s Day four times as well. The 2002 team’s March 20 home opener marks the earliest Purdue has played at home during Schreiber’s first 16 years as head coach.

Although the number of home and true road games is equal at 25 apiece on the original schedule, there is another road-heavy stretch from April 7 through May 12. The Boilermakers will be on the road for four of the five weekends during that stretch, including back-to-back road trips to Illinois and Michigan in April and Michigan State and Nebraska in May.

Purdue hosts Iowa for the third year in a row and fourth time in the last five years. Conversely, the Boilers travel to Michigan State for the third year in a row and fourth time in the last five years. Purdue also visits Champaign-Urbana for the third year in a row after the Illini traveled to West Lafayette for the final two years of Lambert Field.

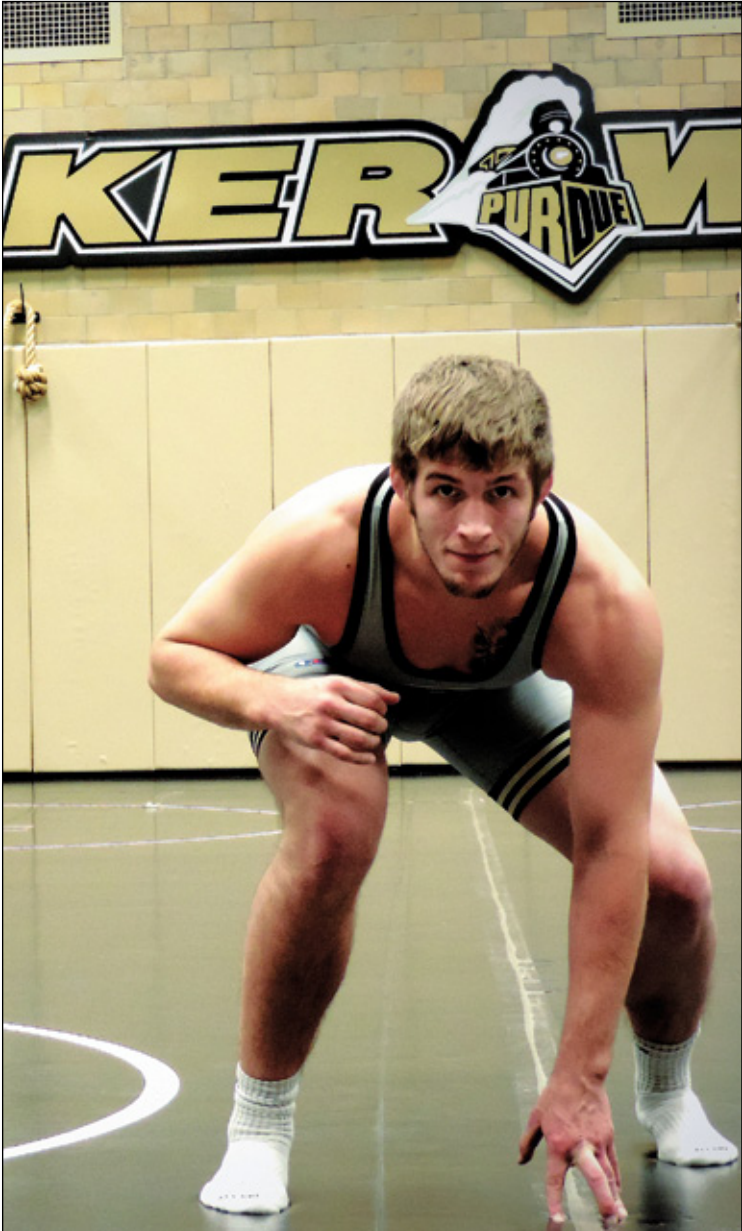
Former Purdue assistant/associate head coach Jeff Duncan brings his Kent State team to campus for a March 24 midweek date. The Boilers have not played KSU since the 2012 NCAA Regional Purdue hosted in Gary. Duncan is in his second year as the leader of the Golden Flashes.

Another familiar face in a new place is former Indiana coach Tracy Smith, now the head coach at Arizona State. And while ASU, CSU Bakersfield and Gonzaga are all first-time opponents for Purdue at that tournament, Schreiber is quite familiar with the ASU program after spending four years as an assistant in Tempe from 1995-98.

Even though Maryland and Rutgers are new to the Big Ten, the Boilers have played them as recently as 2012 and 2010, respectively. Arizona State, Indiana State, Kent State, Louisville, Maryland, Nebraska and Sam Houston State are the teams on Purdue’s schedule that qualified for the NCAA Regionals a year ago. Louisville advanced to the College World Series for the second year in a row and Maryland won a Regional as well.

Nebraska returns to the schedule after it was among the Big Ten rivals the Boilers did not play last season. However, this year’s non-play opponents around the conference have been absent from the schedule often as of late. Purdue does not play Indiana, Minnesota, Northwestern and Ohio State during 2015 regular season. The Boilermakers did not play IU and Minnesota during the regular season in 2012 and 2013. Northwestern is on the non-play list for the second year in a row and Purdue did not take on OSU as recently as 2010 and 2011.

Wrestler won’t let graduation end his athletic career



TAYLOR KENNEDY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Braden Atwood, a redshirt senior in the College of Technology, holds his stance during wrestling practice on Wednesday at Lambert Fieldhouse.

BY BROCK REISH
Staff Reporter

Some college athletes dread the last day of their senior year. For many, it marks the end of a decade or more of total commitment to their sport, but for one Purdue senior, graduation this May means anything but the end of wrestling.

Braden Atwood has goals of coaching in Division I and competing at the international level as an Olympian. Dreams of this magnitude do not show up overnight; they are the result of a lifetime of commitment, hard work and goal-setting. Atwood has spent his entire life thus far committed to his sport.

“I started wrestling when I was five,” Atwood explained. “My dad was the coach. He didn’t let me compete for a couple years, but I just got a start rolling around. After that, I never really looked back.”

Atwood went on to have a successful career at Delphi High School where he was a three-time placewinner at the Indiana High School State Championships, but his goals extended far beyond high school athletics. In fact, when asked what was the proudest moment of his career, Atwood did not say a word about his high school victories or any of his numerous awards as a collegiate athlete. Instead, he recalled his offer to wrestle as a Boilermaker.

“I won a couple tournaments, but (my proudest moment was) getting that offer to come wrestle for Purdue,” Atwood said. “I grew up around here and ... I always said I was going to be a Purdue Boilermaker. When the time finally came, when Coach gave me an offer, I took it and ran with it.”

Atwood’s time at Purdue thus far has been impressive to say the least, but he is constantly setting goals and striving to reach them. Instead of naming a title he is shooting for or a record he hopes

to claim, when asked about his personal goals, Atwood addressed the question in a different manner.

“(My personal goal) is to score as many points as possible, just staying offensive (and to) stay attacking. If I do that, it will take care of the set goals, ... winning a Big Ten title and winning a national title.”

Only time will tell if Atwood’s goal of an offensive season will pay off with those titles, but one thing is for sure: this senior will not let the end of this season be the end of his involvement in the wrestling community.

“(My) plans for the future (are to) stay (training at Purdue) as long as possible...I want to wrestle with Coach and train and keep competing ...,” Atwood said. He plans to remain competitive by wrestling freestyle after graduation with hope of traveling on a world team and eventually becoming an Olympian.

“I don’t want to look back on life and say I didn’t give it a shot,” he explained when talking about his career goals. “I want to coach Division I and be a part of a winning program.”

Fortunately for Purdue wrestling, Atwood has six more months to share his talent and represent the Boilermakers on the mat. The coaches are excited for him and his fellow seniors this season.

“It is really unique to have such good leadership on the team,” said assistant coach Tyrel Todd while talking about Atwood and his classmates on the team.

Braden Atwood is surely someone to keep an eye on going into this wrestling season and beyond. Hanging up the Purdue singlet this May will not be the end of his presence in the wrestling community. In fact, if his goals pan out, college wrestling may just be the beginning.

BIG FOOTBALL POWER RANKINGS


BY MITCH LYON
Assistant Sports Editor



#7 OHIO STATE

RECORD: 9-1	LAST GAME: 31 – 24 W over Minnesota
BIG 10 RECORD: 6-0	NEXT GAME: vs. Indiana


1 On a cold, snowy day in Minneapolis, freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett continued his tear through the Big Ten, carrying Ohio State to a narrow victory over the Gophers. Barrett accounted for four Buckeye touchdowns including an 86 yard rushing touchdown in the first quarter.



#14 WISCONSIN

RECORD: 8-2	LAST GAME: 59 – 24 W over Nebraska
BIG 10 RECORD: 5-1	NEXT GAME: at Iowa


2 Superstar running back Melvin Gordon turned in the best performance on the ground in the history of college football on Saturday, rushing for an all-time FBS best 408 yards on just 25 carries in the Badgers blowout victory over Nebraska. What’s more, Gordon broke the record in just three quarters of football, racking up all 408 yards and four touchdowns in just 45 minutes of play.



#10 MICHIGAN STATE

RECORD: 8-2	LAST GAME: 37 – 15 W over Maryland
BIG 10 RECORD: 5-1	NEXT GAME: vs. Rutgers


3 Michigan State was able to bounce back from their loss to Ohio State with a dominant performance over Maryland. Jeremy Langford led the way for the Spartans, racking up 25 carries for 138 yards and two touchdowns against the Terrapins.



#21 NEBRASKA

RECORD: 8-2	LAST GAME: 24 – 59 L at Wisconsin
BIG 10 RECORD: 4-2	NEXT GAME: vs. Minnesota


4 The Huskers had no answer for Wisconsin’s Melvin Gordon, and their loss on Saturday likely cost them a place in the Big Ten Championship game. Nebraska trails Wisconsin by one loss in conference play with just two weeks remaining in the season, and Wisconsin now holds the tiebreaker over the Huskers.



IOWA

RECORD: 7-3	LAST GAME: 30 – 14 W over Illinois
BIG 10 RECORD: 4-2	NEXT GAME: vs. Wisconsin


5 It wasn’t an incredibly dominant performance for Iowa this weekend, but the Hawkeyes took care of business against Big Ten basement dwellers Illinois. Iowa put up nearly 600 yards of total offense, but only mustered 30 points, a number they’ll need to build on if they hope to hang with Wisconsin next weekend.



MINNESOTA

RECORD: 7-3	LAST GAME: 24 – 31 L vs. Ohio State
BIG 10 RECORD: 4-2	NEXT GAME: at Nebraska


6 The Gophers put up a tough fight against one of the best teams in the country on Saturday, but won’t take any moral victories away from their loss. At 7-3 overall and with games at Nebraska and at Wisconsin to close the season, this past weekend’s loss likely eliminated Minnesota from the Big Ten west division race.



RUTGERS

RECORD: 6-4	LAST GAME: 45 – 23 W over Indiana
BIG 10 RECORD: 2-4	NEXT GAME: at Michigan State

7 As has been the case this season for the Scarlet Knights, Rutgers rolled over a weaker opponent in Indiana this past weekend. Rutgers has been dominant against the bottom half of the Big Ten but has failed to pick up a victory against a conference opponent with a winning record.



MICHIGAN

RECORD: 5-5	LAST GAME: Bye Week
BIG 10 RECORD: 3-3	NEXT GAME: vs. Maryland

8 Despite the fiasco that has been this season for Michigan; the Wolverines have an opportunity to clinch a bowl berth on Saturday with a victory over Maryland in the Big House. Michigan closes the season on the road at Ohio State, so this weekend’s bout with the Terrapins will likely determine the Wolverines’ postseason status.



MARYLAND

RECORD: 6-4	LAST GAME: 15 – 37 L vs. Michigan State
BIG 10 RECORD: 3-3	NEXT GAME: at Michigan

9 The Terrapins once again failed to capitalize on an opportunity to secure their first marquee Big Ten win since joining the conference as they were thoroughly outplayed by Michigan State in Saturday’s loss. Maryland turned the ball over four times and managed just 22:28 in time of possession in a game that wasn’t as close as the final score indicated.



NORTHWESTERN

RECORD: 4-6	LAST GAME: 43 - 40 W over Notre Dame
BIG 10 RECORD: 2-4	NEXT GAME: at Purdue


10 The Wildcats stunned the college football world on Saturday by going into Notre Dame and knocking off the Fighting Irish in a wild overtime game. Northwestern used four field goals and a blocked point after attempt that was returned for a two-point conversion to knock off Notre Dame.



PENN STATE

RECORD: 6-4	LAST GAME: 30 – 13 W over Temple
BIG 10 RECORD: 2-4	NEXT GAME: at Illinois


11 Penn State fans can breathe a little easier knowing that the team clinched their all-important sixth win against Temple on Saturday. The Nittany Lions took advantage of five Temple turnovers to become bowl eligible for the first time since their NCAA sanctions were enacted.



PURDUE

RECORD: 3-7	LAST GAME: Bye Week
BIG 10 RECORD: 1-5	NEXT GAME: vs. Northwestern


12 Injuries were piling up for the Boilermakers going into the bye, so the black and gold faithful can only hope that some of Purdue’s key players were able to get healthy over the off-week. Purdue doesn’t have a bowl to play for anymore, but the team will come out fired up for their last game at Ross-Ade Stadium this Saturday against Northwestern.



ILLINOIS

RECORD: 4-6	LAST GAME: 14 – 30 L vs. Iowa
BIG 10 RECORD: 1-5	NEXT GAME: vs. Penn State

13 In many performances this season, a porous Illini defense hasn’t been able to get enough stops to support Illinois’ strong offensive attack. That wasn’t the case on Saturday, however, as both sides of the ball were equally at fault for Illinois’ uninspired loss against Iowa. The Illini only managed 235 yards and didn’t score their second touchdown until the game was out of hand.



INDIANA

RECORD: 3-7	LAST GAME: 23 – 45 L vs. Rutgers
BIG 10 RECORD: 0-6	NEXT GAME: at Ohio State

14 If Tevin Coleman played for any team in the country besides the Hoosiers, his name would be in the thick of the Heisman trophy race. Unfortunately for the standout junior, his 32 carry-307 yard performance on Saturday was overlooked by the pounding Indiana took on the scoreboard.