

# The problem with Indiana basketball

2019-20 squad not unlike past teams

By JUSTIN CHAPMAN



Freshman Trayce Jackson-Davis has been Indiana's most consistent player this season.

Indiana University basketball can't find a way to win consistently.

As a literal Indiana Hoosier myself who has watched this team for the past 14 years or so, this theme isn't new to this year's 2019-2020 team.

There will be a season every once in a while where they climb their way back into the top 10 national rankings and catch the nation's eye, but the Hoosiers haven't made a deep March Madness run since the early 2000s. Not Sweet Sixteen deep, I mean Final Four deep.

In years past, there have been a variety of problems that led to Indiana (IU) playing inconsistently. This year, the main issue comes down to one player: Devonte Green.

The senior guard can be electric on the court and, at his best, score 25 points or more in a game. At his worst, he can go scoreless.

"We don't have time for that," said Head Coach Archie Miller in an IndyStar article. "[He can be] one of the best players in the country. [But] you look back on some games and you say: Where was he?"

When you can't figure out how one of your best players impacted the game, that's a problem.

Currently sitting at 19-11 (9-10), the Hoosiers are on the bubble for the NCAA Tournament. To get there, they need to win their last two regular season games, both at home, and maybe win a couple of games in the Big Ten Tournament.

It will require some mental toughness, which IU seems to be building. The growth was apparent after defeating Penn State 68-60 at home on Feb. 23.

During the game, Penn State made a 30-5 run, yet IU handled it and didn't collapse under pressure. For reference, they have collapsed at times, even losing four games in a row this season.

"We lost a couple in a row and everyone counts us out," said junior forward Justin Smith about the four-game losing streak in an IndyStar article. "Everyone wants to freak out, but we never waver."

Their most recent loss to the University of Illinois also shows the toughness this team is developing. A one-point 67-66 stinging loss on the road at Illinois doesn't seem positive, but IU played well enough to win but didn't receive some calls that would have changed the outcome of the game.

Missed calls happen in every game, but the reality is they do affect who wins and who loses sometimes. As a 2-8 road team, IU needed that win desperately. While they didn't do enough to win, progress is showing.

And Miller better hope so, because if IU does not reach the NCAA tournament this year, his job could start to be on the line. As a third-year coach, that seems premature, but IU's athletic department and its fanbase hold high expectations for their men's basketball team.

The Hoosiers are almost out of time for bolstering their March Madness resume. The best they can do now is win the few games they have left and build the mental toughness and consistency it takes to win games heading into March Madness.

---

## Related Stories



**Trojan softball plays in Tennessee**

By MARKUS MILLER



**A historic season in Odle Arena**

By JUSTIN CHAPMAN



**Women's basketball ready for exciting season**

By MARKUS MILLER

---