

# CollegeBasketballPlus

■ Thursday: **GoldPlus**  
 ■ Friday: **PrepsPlus**  
 ■ Saturday: **PrepsPlus**  
 ■ Sunday: **PrepsPlus**  
 ■ Monday: **BullsPlus**



## Stats and stuff

### BY THE NUMBERS

0

Number of turnovers UIC point guard Anthony Coomes had in 40 minutes in Sunday's 88-83 win over Detroit

7-0

Indiana's record when it scores at least 80 points.

25

Number of times in the past 50 years that the team with the best winning percentage won the national title.

5

Number of academic All-Americans Duke had from 1978-80.

0

Number of academic All-Americans Duke has had since 1980.

1,351,990,520

Number of hockey pucks it would take to fill the 16,500-seat Kohl Center, which opens Saturday in Madison as Wisconsin's new basketball arena.

7.2

Big 12-best assists per game for Oklahoma State point guard Doug Gottlieb, who transferred from Notre Dame.

7

Overall victories separating Kentucky (1,699 victories) and North Carolina (1,692), the two winningest major-college schools.

### THE TRIBUNE'S TOP 10

1. North Carolina
2. Duke
3. Kansas
4. Utah
5. Kentucky
6. Arizona
7. Stanford
8. UCLA
9. UConn
10. Mississippi

### GAMES TO WATCH

**Illinois at No. 11 Iowa, Thursday:** Kevin Turner will need another big game for the Illini, who always seem to have a tough time in Iowa City.

**Indiana at Northwestern Wednesday:** Bob Knight, meet Kevin O'Neill. The Wildcats go after their first win over the Hoosiers since 1988, and their fourth since 1970.

**No. 8 UCLA at No. 7 Stanford Saturday:**

The first big Pac-10 test for the Cardinal. The Bruins are trying to bounce back from last weekend's loss at Arizona.

**No. 25 Oklahoma State at Missouri Saturday:** Cowboy coach Eddie Sutton goes for his 600th career win. Standing in his way is Mizzou's Norm Stewart, who won his 700th last month.

**Clemson at No. 2 Duke Saturday:** The Tigers have been a huge disappointment this year. The Blue Devils are unbeaten at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

**No. 9 Purdue at Indiana Sunday:** Old friends reunite in Bloomington. Does anyone need to tell the Hoosiers that this is a must-win?

### MORE ON THE INTERNET

Find complete NCAA basketball schedules and the Tribune's 1997-98 college basketball special section at [chicago.tribune.com/go/hoops](http://chicago.tribune.com/go/hoops)

## COLLEGE REPORT/Andrew Bagnato

# After slow start, Arizona's in a zone

## Wildcats flex muscles with 6 in row

With virtually its entire roster returning, defending national champion Arizona was the team to beat going into the season.

And in the first two months, the Wildcats lived up to the billing. They were beaten by Duke, Kansas and Florida State—elite teams, no doubt, but hadn't Arizona dumped three No. 1 seeds on its way to the school's first national title last spring?

Since the UCLA dynasty died in the mid-1970s, only one team—Duke in '92—has put together back-to-back national championships. By Christmas, it appeared Arizona wasn't going to be the second.

Sometimes the Wildcats seemed indifferent. Miles Simon wasn't living up to the standards he set as the 1997 Final Four MVP and a preseason All-American. The Wildcats' complacent approach to defense, especially in the half-court game, frustrated head coach **Lute Olson**. And on offense, Arizona seemed more content to fling three-pointers than attack the basket.

In the preseason, some Pac-10 coaches predicted the Wildcats wouldn't win the conference, let alone the national title.

But just when it became fashionable to dismiss the champs, they have begun showing signs of strength. Sound familiar, Bulls fans?

The fifth-ranked Wildcats (13-3) have won six straight games heading into Thursday night's intrastate battle with upstart Arizona State in Tucson.

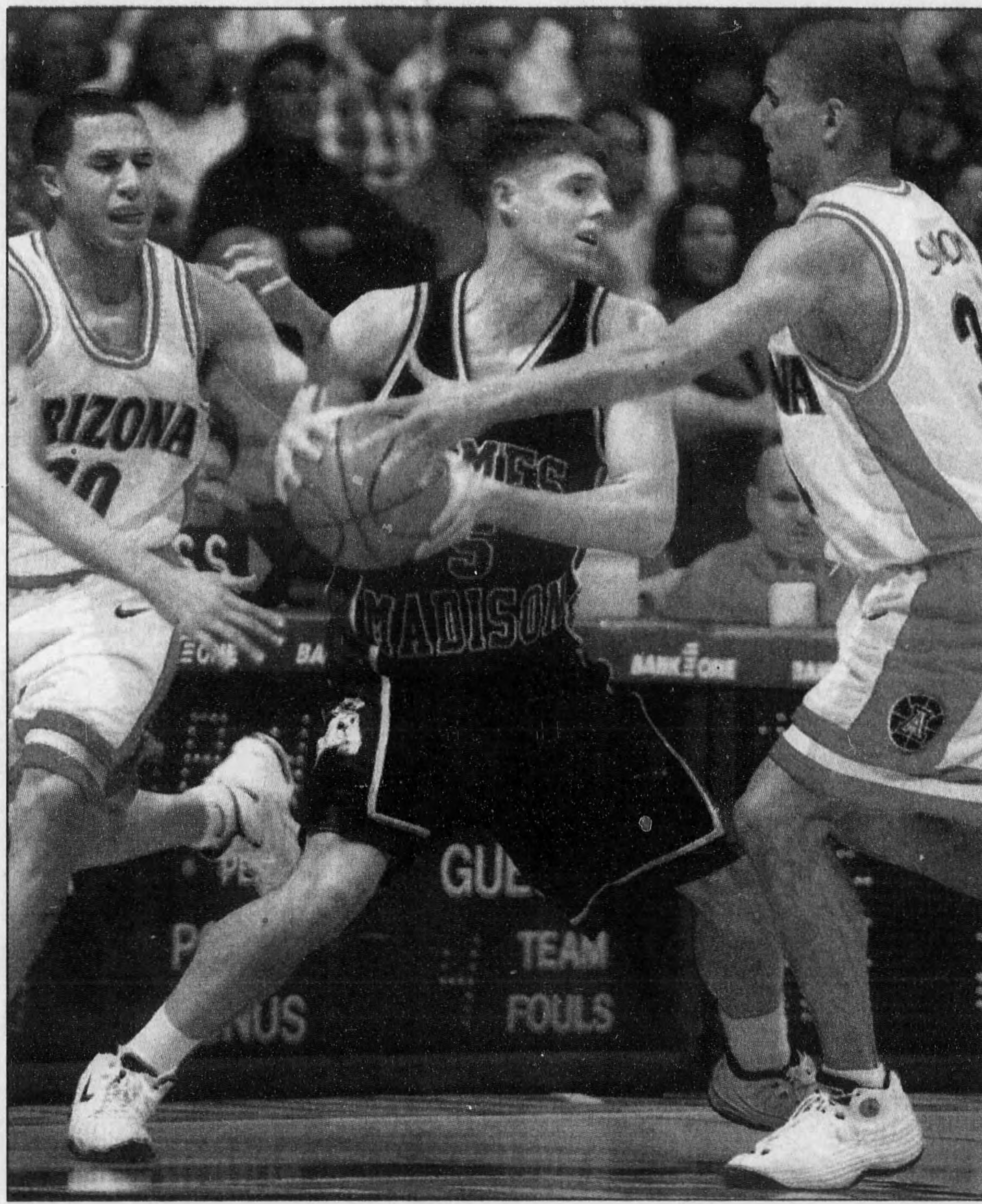
In the second game of the streak, Arizona blitzed Kansas State 27-0 at the start of the second half on its way to a 125-87 victory Dec. 30. Then the Wildcats broke a three-game losing streak to UCLA in an emotional 12-point victory on Jan. 3, the night the 1997 championship banner was unfurled at McKale Center. Simon burned the Bruins for a season-high 27 points, underscoring his reputation as a prime-time performer.

Two nights later, Arizona hounded Southern Cal into 28 turnovers in a 91-72 triumph.

"When you make one mistake, it leads to two mistakes, then three, and then they get a 10-point lead before you even gather yourself," said Trojans coach **Henry Bibby**, father of Arizona point guard **Mike Bibby**.

Then the Wildcats shot a school-record 82.1 percent from the floor (23 of 28) in the second half of a 110-91 rout of Washington Jan. 10.

"We played a little more like we did late last year," Olson said after that game. "I haven't felt that we did in many other games."



Arizona's Mike Bibby (left) and Miles Simon hound Riley Trone of James Madison in a victory last month.

During the roll, Arizona has begun asserting its superiority in the paint. That has paid off at the free throw line, where the Wildcats lead the Pac-10 at 74.9 percent.

And it has paid off in the standings. The Wildcats are 4-0 in Pac-10 play for the first time in four seasons.

"We all know about Arizona," Oregon State coach **Eddie Payne** said.

Or do we? If this hot streak is any indication, Arizona might be even better than a year ago.

"It's like whenever we want to, we can [turn it on]," Simon said. "We just need to want to."

**Birds and Bearcats:** Sunday's Cincinnati-Louisville game in the 'Ville is a meeting of Conference USA teams headed in different directions.

Cincinnati (11-2), hurt by player suspensions early in the season, has put together a seven-game winning streak, punctuated by

last weekend's 17-point pounding of Marquette.

"This team just kind of scrambles around and finds ways to score," Bearcats coach **Bob Huggins** said. "What they've done is a good job of being very unselfish."

While all the Bearcats are chipping in, Huggins cited the contributions of 6-7, 243-pound power forward **Bobby Brannen**, a banger in the **Danny Fortson** mold.

"He's not really what you call a vocal leader, but when he talks, everybody listens," Huggins said.

Brannen would rather lead by example: He has seven double-doubles this year, best in Conference USA.

The Cardinals, meanwhile, are 7-8 but the losses have come to North Carolina, Georgia Tech (twice), Purdue, Arkansas, Mississippi, Syracuse and Marquette.

"We could schedule 10 victories if we wanted to do that," Cardinals coach **Denny Crum** said. "I've never done that. I don't

believe in that. The competition we've played has forced our kids to learn to do some things.

"We've always played one of the top three or four schedules in the country. [But] I've never played a schedule any tougher than this one," Crum said. "It just happened to come on a year when we didn't have any experienced guards."

The Cardinals knew they would miss sharpshooter **DeJuan Wheat**, one of the best players in school history. But it didn't help when they lost **Marques Maybin**, their best returning all-around guard, to knee surgery.

**Goodwill hunting:** **Clem Haskins** won't know who's eligible for his Goodwill Games roster until May 10, the deadline for underclassmen to declare themselves eligible for the NBA draft. But the Minnesota coach knows what he's looking for as he prepares to lead the U.S. men's team in July at Madison Square Garden.

"We need shooters," Haskins

said. "We at USA Basketball realize that over the last two decades our shooters have gone away, gone the way of the buffalo."

Much like Haskins' Golden Gophers, who are winless in three Big Ten games after appearing in the Final Four last year.

**Bet on it:** As legal fallout continues from Arizona State's basketball point-shaving scandal, a former mobster told the NCAA convention this week that gambling has become "a lot more prevalent" on campus.

"Many of the young men are telling me that they are gambling," said **Michael Franzese**, a former captain in the Colombo crime family who now serves as a national sports gambling consultant. "It's a very real problem. ... We don't all wear black shirts, white ties and pinstriped suits."

Indeed, some favor maroon and gold—the Sun Devils' colors.

In related news, the Division I men's basketball committee will order Final Four teams to meet with an FBI agent on the Friday before the national semifinals to discuss gambling awareness. The FBI also will meet with referees the week before the Final Four.

**Free throws:** The Atlantic Coast Conference is probably the best in the nation. But the league put only three teams in this week's AP rankings: No. 1 North Carolina, No. 2 Duke and No. 17 Florida State. Before they started pounding each other in conference play, as many as seven ACC teams were ranked. The Southeastern—with Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina and Arkansas—is the only league with four schools in the Top 25. ... South Carolina coach **Eddie Fogler** went to Lexington Tuesday night looking for his second win in his last nine trips to Rupp Arena, with Vanderbilt and South Carolina.

**Dick Vitale** likes Princeton's chances of finishing the regular season with only one defeat. The Tigers, who have lost only to North Carolina in Chapel Hill, are 13-1 in the second year under **Bill Carmody**. They went 24-4 in his first season. ... Former Central Florida coach **Torchy Clark**, 68, still is teaching PE classes at the Orlando university. Clark won 274 games during his career and was one of the most quotable around. Asked to describe the difference between his Knights and rival Rollins, Clark once said, "Rollins' kids are Heineken drinkers who wear cashmere sweaters. Our kids drink Budweiser and wear sweatshirts." ... The NCAA has announced the five finalists to play host to the Final Four from 2003 through 2005, and—surprise—each city has a dome. Atlanta, Indianapolis, New Orleans, St. Louis and San Antonio will make their pitches for the three slots to the NCAA in June. The next five Final Fours are in San Antonio in March; St. Petersburg, Fla., in 1999; Indianapolis in 2000; Minneapolis in 2001; and Atlanta in 2002.

Andrew Bagnato covers college sports for the Tribune.

## BIG TEN REPORT/Gary Reinmuth

# Badgers' Okey quits in tiff with Bennett

**Sam Okey** said Tuesday he is quitting Wisconsin's basketball team immediately, closing out a season in which he was suspended for two games and sidelined off-and-on with back pains.

The Big Ten 1996 freshman of the year had been bumped from the starting lineup in a run-in with coach **Dick Bennett** a day earlier.

"Three years ago I couldn't wait to announce my desire to be a Badger," Okey said in the statement read by his mother, **Amy Okey**, in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "My love for this state, its fans, and most of all, my teammates, has never wavered. But in basketball you have to be excited to play and motivated to practice and work hard."

"Although I've tried to work through it, it is no longer possible to nurture my love for the game in this negative environment."

Bennett said he confronted Okey Monday about missing a weight-lifting session. Okey said he did not know about the session, the coach said. Okey and his coach were scheduled to meet Tuesday morning, but when Okey arrived he told Bennett he was leaving the team.

Okey, a 6-foot-7-inch junior, averaged 9.8 points a game. He was leading the team with 4.9 rebounds a game and was eight rebounds away from reaching 500

for his career.

**So long, old friend:** After 68 years, they're saying a heart-felt goodbye to the drafty old barn Wednesday night.

The Wisconsin Fieldhouse's days as a college basketball venue are over after the Badgers' game with Penn State.

Saturday, Wisconsin takes on Northwestern in the \$76 million Kohl Center.

The Fieldhouse will continue as the home of Wisconsin wrestling and volleyball and high school state tournaments, but will it be missed? Yes and no.

"There was an emotional attachment to the fieldhouse—unlike any other place," Bennett said.

On the other hand ... "My big concern is getting the team playing well," said Bennett, whose Badgers are 8-7, 1-2. "If you could put two baskets on either end and nobody would bother me, I'd coach in a bathroom."

Wisconsin won three Big Ten titles in the fieldhouse but the last one came 51 years ago—in 1946-47. The Kohl Center can't be any worse.

**Reid-ing level:** It came down to Illinois—or Michigan. When **Bright Young** transfer **Robbie Reid** finally picked the Wolverines late last summer, Illini fans began scanning medical journals for the side effects of Prozac.

With **Kiwane Garris** gone, who

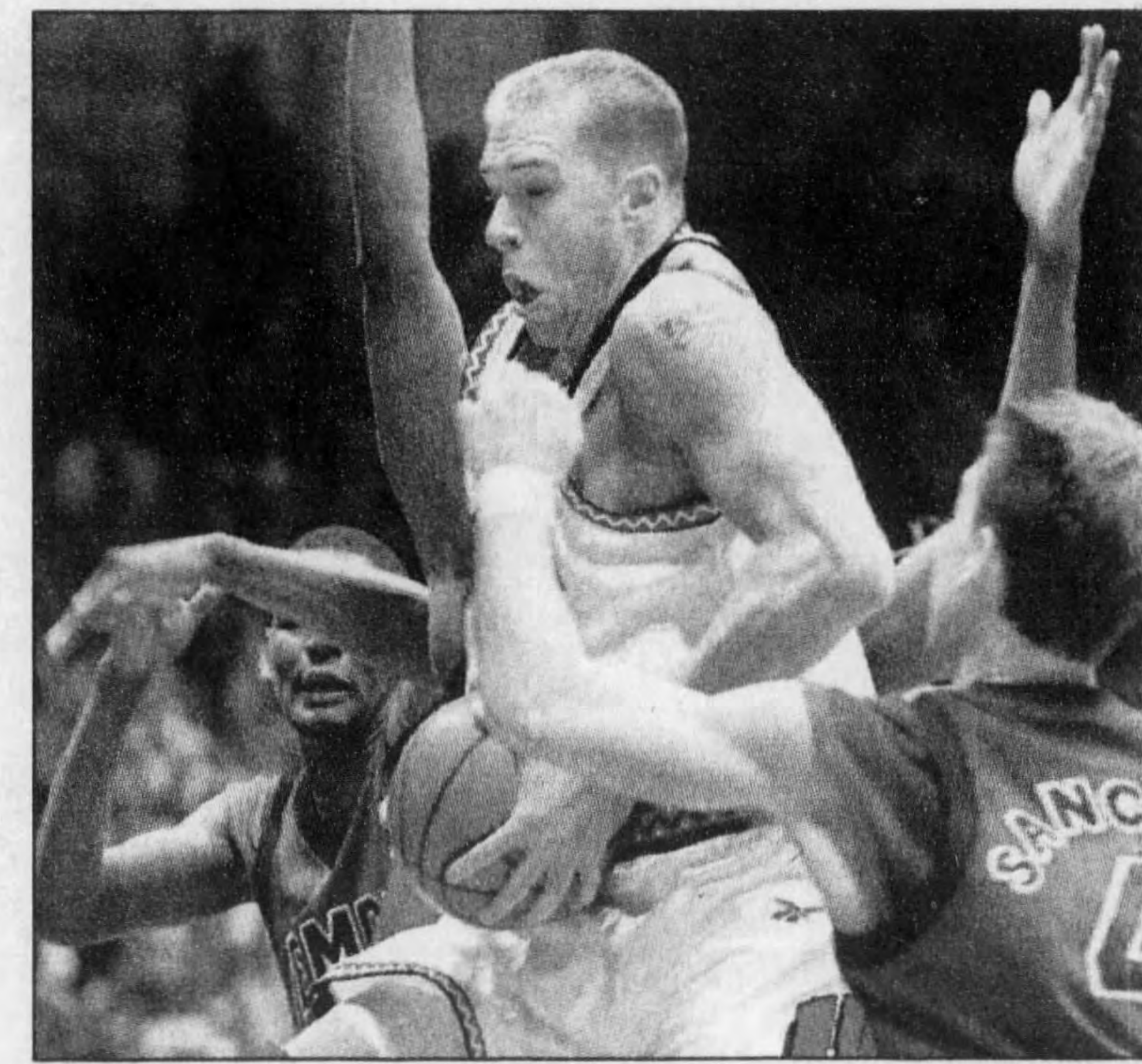
the heck was going to play point guard this year?

Surprise. Reid's decision has turned out well for both sides. **Matt Heldman** isn't Garris but the senior from Libertyville has been a godsend for Illinois' Big Ten leaders. Heading into Tuesday night's matchup with Purdue, Heldman was averaging 10.9 points, 2.8 rebounds and nearly four assists a game. His 27 three-pointers ranked second on the team and he led in free-throw shooting, hitting 86 percent.

"I don't know if surprised would be the word," Illinois coach **Lon Kruger** said. "Matt has worked awfully hard. He's taking care of the basketball, shooting it well and has a lot of respect from his teammates. Without question he has been a huge key to our success."

Reid's influence on No. 19 Michigan (13-4, 3-1) has been equally telling. Eighty percent of the junior's shots have been from three-point range. He leads Michigan in long-range percentage (45.8 percent), free throw percentage (11 of 12), assists (3.3) and is averaging eight points.

**Sick bay:** The black cloud finally seems to be moving away from **Clem Haskins'** head. Monday he was named head coach of the U.S. men's Goodwill Games team. Wednesday, leading scorer **Sam Jacobson** is expected to return to action for the Gophers' game with Michigan State. Jacobson sat out



Against Temple last month, Wisconsin's Sam Okey came down with one of his 492 career rebounds.

last week's losses at Northwestern and Penn State with what now has been diagnosed as back spasms as the defending Big Ten champs fell to 0-3 in the league. Junior forward **Quincy Lewis**, who aggravated a left thumb injury against the Nittany Lions also is expected to play.

**Oops:** Indiana sophomore **Michael Lewis** on his decision to yell back at head coach **Bob Knight** during a heated moment in the Michigan game: "He got on

me. I thought I was right in the situation. I tried to explain to him what I thought. But next time I'm going to make sure I'm 100 percent positive that I'm right."

Next time, Lewis might want to remember Knight's Youth Tip of the Month for January. It's at Knight's new Web site (<http://www.CoachBobKnight.com>).

1. Think. 2. Think. 3. Think. 4. Think. 5. Re-think.

Tribune wires contributed to this report.