

JANUARY 2026

## What Indiana Teaches Us

### 2025 College Football Predictions

- The Texas Longhorns to win the title, and Arch Manning to win the Heisman Trophy
- Ohio State to repeat its national title
- Clemson PROMISED to go 16-0 and win it all
- Penn State promised a perfect 16-0 season
- Indiana was picked #6 in the Big 10, #20 in the Nation

Admit it. Before the College Football Playoffs, all that you basically knew about Indiana was that it hosted the **Indy 500** and that the **late Bobby Knight was the Hoosiers' legendary basketball coach who won national titles.**

A brilliant man once said, "**You can learn a lot just by paying attention.**"

That man was my late friend, country comedian Jerry Clower, whose homespun stories made him the #1-selling comic in the country music and entertainment world. His statement holds true when considering the success of the Indiana Hoosiers football team, which unexpectedly and spectacularly won the **College Football Playoff** a week ago.

You don't need to be a college football fan to have heard about this football team and its coach. All you need to do... in the worlds of **Jerry Clower** – is "**just pay attention.**"



Here are some useful discoveries we can apply to our own personal and professional lives. There are so many business and personal applications that I can't list them all here. **These are my favorites for elevating your personal and your team's performance:**

1. **Teamwork matters.** Take a close look at the photo with several of the players and notice that the game MVP (and Heisman Trophy Winner), **Fernando Mendoza**, is in the back row, and he's not the guy holding the championship trophy. That's modesty. That's placing others before yourself. That's **leadership**.
2. **Coachability matters.** Indiana's football team had NO five-star recruits on the team. The quarterback, who won the Heisman Trophy, was the **#1,249-ranked** recruit coming out of high school.
3. **Tune out the noise.** At the start of the 2025 season, Indiana had lost more Division 1 football games than any other team in history. Indiana went from **Worst to First** by tuning out the detractors (virtually EVERY sports broadcaster and opponent) and committed to focusing on being their best.
4. **Playing seamlessly together as a team with unheralded teammates tends to outperform more-talented opponents who play as individuals.** On paper, there was **no way** that they could stack up against **Ohio State, Alabama, Oregon, and Penn State**, yet Indiana defeated every one of these marquee programs.



### Business Application

Many years ago, my father and I launched a new radio station in Waco, **KJNE-FM**. The station had previously been located 30 miles north, in Hillsboro. Within one year, **KJNE** was the top-ranked radio station in Central Texas because:

1. **We recruited exceptional under-the-radar on-air talent (Bill Kinder, Zack Owen, John Swan, and Lou Warren) who had succeeded in smaller markets.** They knew how much work it took to win, and they were hungry to win in a larger market.
2. **We positioned ourselves as part of the greater community, while other radio stations focused solely on playing music.** We invited community leaders and nonprofit volunteers to voice their own **public service announcements** to promote their causes – all at no cost. We also broadcast live from every **Baylor football pep rally**.
3. **We promoted relentlessly, from concerts featuring Alabama and the Charlie Daniels Band, to anything that was pro-Waco.** We even **broadcast airborne traffic reports** flying over I-35 to help Baylor football fans find the fastest route to the stadium for home games.

**Just because Indiana – with 715 losses – turned it around to win the College Football Playoff, does not mean that Northwestern (712 losses) or Rutgers (701 losses) can achieve the same results.**



Waco Tribune-Herald Page 1B Tuesday,

#### KJNE-FM new #1 in Waco Radio Ratings By Mike Copeland

KJNE-FM, the upstart radio station known as "The Best Country in the City," is Waco's favorite music station according to the Spring 1985 Arbitron ratings that were recently released.

Of the 72 rated audience segments, the new country station, which launched 16 months ago, ranked #1 in 68 of the 72 rated dayparts. The morning show features the always personable Jane & Jay duo, who thrive on engaging audience members with contests, which have sent listeners to concerts across

the nation and Hawaiian saf  
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**Please see RA**



### Even MORE Leadership Lessons from the Hoosiers and Coach Cignett

[Robyn Ward on Substack](#) reports that transformational coaches and business leaders are bold and inspiring:

1. **Coach Curt Cignetti made a bold promise that set him apart from every coach who aspires to succeed.** At his initial news conference, he was introduced as the national champion coach from **James Madison University**, and he told everyone wondering who he was: **"It's pretty simple: I win. Google me!"**
  2. **He refused to accept inherited narratives.** Rather than recognize he was taking over the losingest major college football team in America, he focused relentlessly on finding and bringing in the talent that would turn everything around.
  3. **He focused on discipline and systems.** This is where talented teams tend to fail. They rely solely on their natural skills and don't commit to the consistent discipline and attention to small details that separate the good from the exceptional. Too often, a leader articulates a bold vision, yet fails to operationalize (demonstrate) it so the team can fully adopt and execute it. Indiana was one of the least penalized teams among 136.
  4. **He focused on meticulous practice and repetition.** When game time arrived, his players trusted each other and knew precisely where their teammates would be in any situation. And they practiced critical game situations repeatedly so they would be prepared for that game-changing moment.
- **Consider the tennis player** who takes a bucket of balls **and hits 200 serves at a target** positioned in a corner of the service court, leaving them ready for the crucial point that will decide a match.
  - **Consider the golfer who spends hours on chip shots or putts** that can shave one or two strokes off their score.
  - **Consider the basketball player who keeps practicing free throws until they can make 25 in a row.**

[Cole Douglas Claybourn from Substack asks](#), How did Biblical Scripture foreshadow a season such as this? It all confirms that, with God, **nothing is impossible.**

- A shepherd boy faced and defeated the giant, Goliath
- A barren woman became the mother of a nation
- The crucified Messiah was resurrected/raised from the dead and walked out of a tomb.

[Chris Wallace, Co-Founder and President of The InnerView Group, shared:](#)

- **Success is a matter of Execution vs. Talent.** Less-talented performers in sports and business frequently defeat their more skilled and heralded competitors because they execute better.
- **Practice what matters.** Determine the scenarios that are most likely to happen at a critical moment (third down and 15 with two minutes to go at the opponent's 25-yard-line, or the fake punt from your own territory) and be confident that you can deliver a successful outcome because you have practiced the play over and over again.
- **Choose leaders wisely and trust them.** There's no need to micromanage the team – in sports or in business – that you have trained thoroughly. You can trust them to deliver.

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## Wisdom from the Savannah Bananas

And yes, the **Savannah Bananas** are getting into the Indiana spirit, as well. In the team's launch announcement of two new teams to form its six-team league, the Bananas welcomed their latest team - [the Indianapolis Clowns!](#)

The name "**Indianapolis Clowns**" harkens back to when this team in the old Negro Leagues barnstormed across America for 50 years, introducing such promising players and future legends as **Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, and Goose Tatum.**

Since the Savannah Bananas are constantly innovating, and the Indiana Hoosiers are continually refining their attention to detail, [could we consider a collaboration in the future?](#)

After all, they're known for "**Fans First, Entertain Always!**" Consider that the teams immerse themselves with fans from the parking lot to the stadium concourses, and even in the upper decks!

The Savannah Bananas and their teams focus on "**You wouldn't believe what they did tonight!**" moments. [What are you doing to energize and captivate your customers?](#)

[Even more important: What are you WILLING TO DO to captivate your customers?](#)

Perhaps we'll even see **Fernando Mendoza throw the opening pitch at an Indianapolis Clowns game** this spring!

