



► THE WORLD ACCORDING TO US

Players from the Bromley Football Club in London shaved QR codes into their hair for a promotion. When captured by smartphones, the codes took fans to the betting website that sponsored the stunt.

LEAP OF FAITH

FIVE-STAR FRESHMAN CODY ZELLER COULD HAVE PLAYED JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE, BUT HE CHOSE THE SCHOOL THAT NEEDED HIM MOST. QUESTION IS, CAN HE FIND HIS PLACE AS A HOOSIER?

By Ryan Corazza

During a preseason scrimmage in October, Indiana coach Tom Crean saw something he didn't like: His top freshman, Cody Zeller, wasn't getting the ball. So Crean stopped practice to institute a rule. If the 6'11" forward didn't get at least one touch on a possession, his team's bucket wouldn't count.

"They did not lose the next couple of scrimmages," Crean said later. "It was amazing. Cody makes it easier for everyone. Not to be a visionary, but I saw it coming."

Last October, not even a visionary could have seen with certainty that Zeller would end up in a Hoosiers uniform. Recruiting analysts speculated that the Washington, Ind., native would sign with North Carolina to play alongside his brother Tyler, who was a junior there at the time. Or maybe he'd play in Indianapolis, where Butler was coming off its first national championship appearance in 2010. Instead, this year's No. 14 recruit signed with Indiana, a program that hasn't

had a winning season since Kelvin Sampson was forced out in 2008 amid NCAA violations.

"My brothers were a big help in the recruiting process," says Cody, whose oldest brother, Luke, played four seasons at Notre Dame. "They let me make my own decision because I'm the one who has to live with it. I was focused on finding a school that had good players and coaches. So far, I love my decision."

The feeling is mutual for the Hoosiers, as they attempt to erase the memory of Sampson's recruiting infractions, which resulted in three years' probation for the program. Since Crean took over, IU has gone 28-66 in three seasons. But Zeller embodies an identity Indiana is hungry to reclaim: all fundamentals and no flash, the rare rookie who finds open teammates, rarely forces shots and doesn't have to be reminded to get back on defense. "He's the most focused kid I've ever recruited," says Crean, who coached Dwyane Wade, among other future pros, in his nine seasons at Marquette prior to joining IU. "I see a young man with a mental toughness that's not normal at his age."

That maturity has been tested early. Zeller has by far the most upside on the roster. But

incorporating him into a tight-knit group, one that didn't have a set offense during the preseason and focused mainly on D, remains a work in progress. Senior Verdell Jones, junior Jordan Hulls and sophomore Victor Oladipo are all perimeter players capable of leading the team in points, while junior PF Christian Watford (team-high 16.0 ppg last season) likes to step outside and slash—often leaving Zeller, the Hoosiers' most legit interior scorer since D.J. White in 2008, to go at it alone up front.

That means Crean may have to continue his mandates. Zeller had just nine shot attempts in the Hoosiers' first two wins, over Stony Brook and Chattanooga, but he showed off his efficiency (7-for-9 from the floor) and versatility (15 boards, 9 steals, 3 blocks). By the time IU defeated Evansville and Savannah State to move to 4-0, he no longer appeared to be a fourth option, hitting 12 of 14 shots in those two games and pulling down 14 rebounds.

If Zeller sticks around for at least another season, as expected, he'll benefit from Crean's top-10 2012 class, headlined by PG Yogi Ferrell, PF Hanner Perea and SF Jeremy Hollowell, all top-100, in-state recruits. "Getting Indiana kids was our job from day one," Crean says. "We also have to get enough high-quality players to compete in the Big Ten. We're getting closer all the time."

Fans have dubbed the incoming group the Movement—one that Zeller helped start. Rule No. 1 when the new freshmen arrive in Bloomington: Get the leader in Bloomington: Get the leader all the looks he wants. □

216

We know: It doesn't compare to 903. But Pitt's Jamie Dixon holds the record for most wins (216) by a D1 coach in his first eight seasons. To pass Roy Williams' nine-year mark, Dixon will need 32 W's in 2011-12.