

# No. 1 Indiana Handles Sam Houston State, 99-45

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[box score](#)

**BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP)** - [Christian Watford](#) had only come off the bench once in his Indiana career.

It happened for a second time on Thursday night, and he embraced it. He scored 23 points to help the No. 1 Hoosiers beat Sam Houston State 99-45 in the Progressive Legends Classic.

Watford, a senior, had made just 33 percent of his shots in the team's first two games. "I just think that what I'll say there is that we just wanted to make a little energy change," Indiana coach [Tom Crean](#) said. "He played with as much energy as anybody on the court tonight. It showed up in his numbers. I've got to believe he feels good about the way he played."

Watford said it was strange to come off the bench. He made all 10 of his free throws and had six rebounds and two steals. "Once he (Crean) told me, ain't nothing you can do about it, just get ready to play," Watford said. "Just give 100 percent on both ends of the floor and everything will take care of itself."

[Will Sheehey](#) scored 18 points, [Victor Oladipo](#) had 14, [Cody Zeller](#) 13 and [Jordan Hulls](#) 10 for the Hoosiers (3-0), who shot 57 percent from the field and made 9 of 21 3-pointers.

Indiana beat the Bearkats in every possible way. About the only thing Crean could complain about was that the Hoosiers made just 30 of 44 free throws. Indiana also routed its previous two opponents, defeating Bryant 97-54 and North Dakota State 87-61. It is the first time Indiana has won each its first three games by 25 or more points since the 1979-80 season.

The Hoosiers likely will get tougher tests when the Classic moves to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. Indiana will play Georgia on Monday, then UCLA or Georgetown on Tuesday.

Paul Baxter scored nine points and Marquel McKinney had eight for Sam Houston State (1-2). The Bearkats pushed Arkansas before losing their opener 73-68 on the road but had nothing for the Hoosiers.

"I want to apologize for our performance tonight," Sam Houston State coach Jason Hooten said. "We're way better than that. We weren't very good tonight. I'm embarrassed by it. Not taking anything away from Indiana. They have a great team and they had a lot to do with our performance."

The only drama remaining at the end was whether Indiana would score 100 points. The home crowd booed as the Bearkats basically ran out the clock in the final seconds. Two early 3-pointers by Hulls helped the Hoosiers shake off a bit of a slow start and take a 9-2 lead. Sam Houston State made one field goal in the first 6:30 of the game and fell behind 16-2. Indiana hit 4 of 6 3-pointers early to take a 23-6 lead and force a Sam Houston State timeout. Indiana pushed the lead to 30-10 before the Bearkats' Michael Holyfield, a 6-foot-11 center who was guarding Zeller, committed his third foul. Indiana took advantage inside, and Oladipo's powerful two-handed dunk down the middle of the lane pushed the lead to 36-13.

The Hoosiers reached 50 points on a three-point play by Zeller in the final minute of the first half and led 52-25 at the break. Watford led Indiana with 11 points in 11 minutes in the first half. The Hoosiers outscored the Bearkats 17-4 from the free-throw line before the break.

No Sam Houston State player scored more than five points in the first half. The Bearkats shot 32 percent before the break and committed 10 turnovers. Indiana continued to roll in the second half. A beautiful no-look pass by Hulls from near halfcourt found Watford under the basket, and Watford converted the layup to give the Hoosiers a 64-29 lead. A putback one-handed jam by Zeller made it 66-30. Hulls scored his 1,000th career point on a 3-pointer that gave the Hoosiers an 82-38 lead, and the home crowd gave him a standing ovation.

"That kid epitomizes what we're doing," Crean said. "He epitomizes Indiana basketball in so many ways, and I think people from the past can identify with him, and people in the future can look at [Jordan Hulls](#) and see what can happen when you play in this program and grow up really loving this program, but most importantly, he impacts our present."

An alley-oop pass from [Maurice Creek](#) and two-handed jam by [Austin Etherington](#) bumped Indiana's lead to 98-44.

Indiana held the Bearkats to 7-for-25 shooting in the second half. The constant defensive intensity has been a focal point for the Hoosiers.

"If we're going to get to where we want to go, we can't play 35 minutes," Hulls said. "We've got to play a full 40 minutes."

