



## High school volleyball players to watch in SW Indiana

SPORTS, 1B

# Evansville COURIER & PRESS

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Approximately 300 residents of Evansville and the Tri-State showed up Dec. 7, 1991, to spell out a message to Madonna on the parking lot of Roberts Stadium. The human message was prompted by the non-flattering remarks that Madonna made about the city of Evansville in a recent TV Guide interview. RICHARD HICKS/COURIER & PRESS

## ESPN recounts Evansville’s weird feud with Madonna

**Jon Webb**  
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EVANSVILLE – If you visited ESPN’s website recently, you probably expected to see stories about the NFL preseason, or maybe some copy on the race to the Major League Baseball playoffs.

Instead, the top story chronicled a quarter-century-old feud between Evansville and a music icon.

Using a mixture of Courier & Press archives and new interviews, ESPN writer Harry Lyles Jr. – who spent portions of his childhood in the city – relived the brief drama between Evansville and Madonna: the giant pop star and actress who spent several months here during the filming of “A League of Their Own” in 1991.

Her actual stay was largely controversy-free. She played baseball, visited a local gay bar, and randomly knocked

on a McCutchanville family’s door when she was out jogging and struck with an urgent need to pee.

But after production wrapped, she gave an interview to MTV elder statesman Kurt Loder in TV Guide that November.

“For the past three months – it might as well have been three years – she was stranded in Evansville, Indiana, a place she will not be revisiting in this current lifetime,” Loder wrote. “(‘I may as well have been in Prague,’ she says, by way of summing up the town’s attraction.)”

The comparison to a then-Soviet city didn’t go over well. So local radio station WSTO-96 hatched a plan.

On Dec. 7, 1991, it brought around 300 people to the Roberts Stadium parking lot. With a helicopter carrying an Evansville Courier photographer chattering overhead, participants used their bodies to spell out “Madonna.” A few formed

a line that crossed out the middle portion of her name, like some sort of living, breathing no-smoking sign.

The low-stakes protest made national headlines, and solidified a weird rivalry that still survives today.

“Before the demonstration, Evansville was just the small town in Indiana that served as the backdrop for some of the most significant movie scenes in one of history’s most popular sports films,” Lyles wrote. “Afterward, it was thrust into the national spotlight, portrayed as the town that rebelled against one of the most famous people in the world.”

**Madonna and Tom Hanks in Evansville**

The filming of “A League of Their

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## Police apply 25-foot rule at Beckwith town hall

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People were spilling out of Indiana Lt. Gov Micah Beckwith’s town hall and past two people who had been arrested in Newburgh on Wednesday night when they received a stern warning from a Warrick County Sheriff’s deputy to “get back.”

“If you’re not 25 feet, you’re going to go to jail,” the official says in video captured by a Courier & Press reporter. “It’s a state law.”

There are state laws that say just that. Two in fact. But the first has been deemed unconstitutional, while the second is still being enforced despite being similar to its predecessor.

The first “buffer zone” law was written by Evansville-area Rep. Wendy McNamara and signed into law in 2023. It stipulated that any person “who knowingly or intentionally approaches within twenty-five (25) feet of a law enforcement officer lawfully engaged in the execution of the law enforcement officer’s duties after the law enforcement officer has ordered the person to stop approaching commits unlawful encroachment on an investigation, a Class C misdemeanor.”

In a decision from Aug. 5 of this year, however, a panel of judges in the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the first law violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It protects people from any law that deprives them of the “privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States” without due process.

Judges called the law “suspectable to arbitrary enforcement” and “unconstitutionally vague.” They said it fails to provide officers with any guidelines on how to enforce it.

“Without such guidance, any on-duty officer can use the buffer law to subject any pedestrian to potential criminal liability by simply ordering them not to approach, even if the pe-

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## Failed English tests mean truckers taken off roads

Thousands are removed amid new crackdown

**Trevor Hughes**  
USA TODAY

At least 3,000 truckers have been taken off American roads over the past two months after they failed mandatory roadside English tests, as the Trump administration gets tougher on commercial drivers nationally.

The move has drawn applause from many trucking associations, which say consistent enforcement will improve road safety by ensuring drivers can read roadside signs, including message boards warning of slow traffic ahead or dangerous road conditions. But some critics worry about the potential for improper racial profiling by police.

Adding new urgency to the debate: California-licensed trucker Harjinder Singh is accused of causing a fatal Aug. 12 crash in

Florida after pulling an illegal U-turn and colliding with a minivan. He then failed a roadside English proficiency test, federal officials said in a social media post calling him an undocumented immigrant who should not have been licensed.

“Federal law is clear, a driver who cannot sufficiently read or speak English – our national language – and understand road signs is unqualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle in America. This common-sense standard should have never been abandoned,” Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said in announcing the new enforcement policy.

The top five states where drivers have been removed from roads are, in descending order, Texas, Tennessee, Wyoming, Iowa and Arizona. Texas has removed nearly 350 drivers from the road, according to federal statistics.

Although some states allow drivers to take the written portion of the Commercial

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Once on the road, truckers are required to speak and read English during traffic stops and weigh-station checks. MARK VERGARI/WESTCHESTER JOURNAL NEWS FILE

