**Hundreds of shirtless dudes at IU football game lead to viral flash mob**

By Matt Cohen

Published in [The Indianapolis Star](https://www.indystar.com/story/sports/college/indiana/2021/11/13/hundreds-shirtless-dudes-iu-football-game-lead-viral-flash-mob/8606256002/) on Nov. 13, 2021

BLOOMINGTON — It was 37 degrees at Memorial Stadium — before the wind made it feel like 29 — and a sophomore dressed in shorts and a long sleeve shirt thought the best thing to do was take his shirt off.

Jackson Williams was bored. IU was losing 17-0 to Rutgers in the second quarter and hardly had 100 total yards of offense at that point.

“I’m going to go take my shirt off!” Williams screamed to his friends with him, as he ran to Section 19.

Section 19 is behind the north end zone, and on this frigid day between the two last-place teams in the Big Ten East, Memorial Stadium was nearly empty. No one was in Section 19. It was a chance to be seen.

He was joined by a friend, sophomore Brock Pedersen, and together, they stood on the bleacher, took off their IU shirts and swung them above their heads like helicopter rotors.

“We’re both just jacked,” Pedersen said. “And we’re like that’s a big open area over there. Let’s go take our shirts off.”

“We just wanted attention,” Williams said.

And it worked. People started noticing. The small group in Section 19 expanded. Students began running over from the student sections. They came by the dozens. The few friends became a cluster and that cluster became the whole section. Dozens became hundreds, and all of a sudden, they filled up all of Section 19 and began drifting into Section 20. More than students joined; some older men joined in too.

An empty section had become a herd of dudes big and small, all without a shirt on, waving it above their heads and screaming with such energy at their struggling football team. For them, this was more fun than watching the game.

There’s a certain adrenaline, maybe, that can only come from the near frostbite — goosebumps from the cold all over the guy’s chests — with tops off. They chanted the beat of "Seven Nation Army" and an expletive toward the state of New Jersey. They chanted that same expletive about rival Purdue. Some other shirtless students went to the front of the section and led an “I believe that we will win” chant — in a game that IU was certainly not looking likely to win.

The videos gained traction on Twitter. National reporters from The Athletic started paying attention. The Big Ten Network showed the throng on its broadcast.

“Just guys being dudes!” those in Section 19 screamed to each other.

Williams and Pedersen said they were cold at first, but when the crowd gathered and the energy flowed, they didn’t feel the chill any longer.

“We haven’t done anything, Rutgers hasn’t done anything, so we’re changing momentum,” Williams said. “It’s all because of us!”

And as Pedersen talked, IU had its best drive of the first half. The hundreds of shirtless students screamed as senior Ty Fryfogle put IU in field goal range with a 46-yard reception.

They held their arms up and waved their fingers in the air like they would across the parking lot in Assembly Hall for free throws as Charles Campbell trotted out to kick a field goal following the Fryfogle catch.

As suddenly as they were there, they were gone. Campbell’s field goal sailed through the uprights, and the section dispersed. It was 10 minutes of unmitigated, shirtless, flash mob magic. The students threw their sweatshirts and coats back on and promptly left the stadium. It was time to go warm up — or maybe go back to Kilroy’s.

“We didn’t expect this at all,” Williams said. “This was not supposed to happen.”