

He's Donald Trump's Not-So-Secret Weapon in Indiana

It's unlikely anyone imagined at the onset of the 2016 presidential election cycle that Indiana would be a decisive battleground state for the Republican nomination.

Be that as it may, the Hoosier State has become the focus of the political world, and will continue to do so until the final votes are cast next Tuesday. In an effort to drive more support for his campaign, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz worked out with a deal for Ohio Gov. John Kasich to stop campaigning there, and then announced Wednesday afternoon that former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina would be his running mate.

GOP front-runner Donald Trump wasn't without a surprise or two of his own. During a rally Wednesday night, he revealed a new "celebrity" endorsement—that of former Indiana University men's basketball coach Bobby Knight.

The outspoken coach offered his endorsement:

"[Trump] is the most prepared man in history to step in as president of the United States," he said. "There has never been a presidential candidate prepared to the length that this man is.

"They talk in a negative way when they want to about Donald and say he isn't presidential. I don't know what [that] means. To me, I think of Harry Truman; they said Harry Truman wasn't presidential, [but] he went on to be one of the three best presidents in U.S. history. [Trump] will at some point be one of those also."

Knight is the closest thing basketball-crazy Indiana has to royalty. With more than 900 wins over 20-plus seasons and three national championships—including the last Division I

men's undefeated season in 1976—he still carries a lot of weight among everyday Indianans despite the problems that eventually ended his tenure at IU.

He appeared with Trump after the rally on FOX News Channel's "On The Record With Greta Van Susteren." He also served as a campaign surrogate, discussing his endorsement on several network morning programs Thursday.