



AP Photo/Mark Humphrey

New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft reads a statement during a news conference Monday in Chandler, Ariz.

Kraft takes the offensive, defends Patriots team, seeks NFL apology

CHANDLER, Ariz. (AP) — The New England Patriots came out swinging upon their arrival at the Super Bowl.

Not star quarterback Tom Brady or All-Pro cornerback Darrelle Revis. Not coach Bill Belichick, either.

Robert Kraft. The team owner on Monday night demanded an apology from the league once the Patriots are found to be not guilty of breaking any rules regarding using under-inflated footballs in the AFC championship game.

A conclusion Kraft is certain will occur.

In an unscheduled statement, Kraft strongly defended his team's actions and integrity, growing more fiery with each sentence.

"I want to make it clear that I believe, unconditionally, that the New England Patriots have done nothing inappropriate in this process or in violation of NFL rules," Kraft said at the team's first media availability in Arizona.

"If the (Ted) Wells investigation is not able to definitively determine that our organization tampered with the air pressure in the footballs, I would expect and hope the league would apologize to our entire team, and in particular to coach (Bill) Belichick and Tom Brady, for what they've had to endure this week."

NFL Executive Vice President Jeff Pash and Ted Wells of the law firm of Paul Weiss are leading the probe. Wells was the investigator in the Miami Dol-

AP NFL WEBSITE http://pro32.ap.org/dailycastle

phins bullying scandal and has said the current investigation could last a while.

Kraft welcomes a thorough search.

"I'm disappointed in the way this entire matter has been handled and reported upon," Kraft said, pointing directly to reports citing anonymous sources. "We expect hard facts rather than circumstantial leaked evidence to drive the conclusion of this investigation."

The NFL has said evidence shows the Patriots used underinflated footballs during the first half of the AFC title game victory over Indianapolis. The league is still determining why the balls were underinflated.

"I am confident that this investigation will uncover whatever the facts were that took place last Sunday and the science of how game balls react to changes in the environment," Kraft added. "This would be in direct contrast to the public discourse, which has been driven by media leaks as opposed to actual data and facts. Because of this, many jumped to conclusions and made scarring accusations against our coach, quarterback and staff questioning the integrity of all involved."

Belichick and Brady followed Kraft to the podium, but basically left any comments on the investigation to their boss.

When asked if he was upset by the

accusations and jokes of which he was the subject, Brady said: "I've moved past those initial feelings and I want to move forward."

But moving away from the deflated footballs theme will be particularly difficult on media day, when just about any question has been fair game in the past.

So Kraft came out swinging before then with a speech tinged with emotion — and fire.

"Tom, Bill and I have been together for 15 years. They are my guys," said Kraft, who has three Super Bowl titles and three other trips to the big game since 2001.

"They are part of my family. Bill, Tom and I have had many difficult discussions over the years. I've never known them to lie to me. That's why I'm confident in saying what I just said."

"It bothers me greatly their reputations and integrity — and by association that of our team — has been called into question this week."

This hardly is the first time the Patriots have been under such scrutiny. Most famously was 2007, their undefeated regular season. Revelations that New England videotaped New York Jets coaches' signals during a game cost Belichick a \$500,000 fine, and the team was fined \$250,000 and stripped of its 2008 first-round draft choice by the NFL.

During this year's playoffs, Ravens coach John Harbaugh accused the Patriots of being deceitful with some alignments on offense. The NFL exonerated Kraft's team of any wrongdoing.

Walker, Bergerson score titles at Gervais

GERVAIS — Two Warrenton Warrior wrestlers scored individual championships in the 15-team Cougar Classic, held Saturday in Gervais.

Scio won the team title with 198 points, followed by Monroe, Rainier, Dayton and Warrenton.

Perfect records were posted by Warrenton's Colton Walker at 106 pounds, and Rogue Bergerson at 120. Walker had an easy path to the title at 106, where he opened with a bye, had another bye in the quarter-finals, then pinned Dayton's Lane Penrose in the semifinals (4:46), followed by a 20-5 technical fall over Ricardo Flores of Gervais in the title match.

Bergerson (33-1 on the season) wrestled at a higher weight, and still won the championship, with a pin over Ryland Adams of Dayton (1:25) in the quarters; followed by another pin in the semi's; then an 8-4 decision over Rainier's Justice Larson in the final.

Warrenton's Michael Suppa was third at 145.

Knappa finished tied for seventh in the standings with Creswell.

Logger Ryan Simpson was third at 132. After a 3-1 semifinal loss to Rainier's Ryan Schmunk, Simpson rebounded with a pin over Dayton's Jake Brown (4:00) in a consolation semifinal, then defeated Warrenton's Parker Whitsett 7-3 in the third-place match.

Knappa's Andrew Goozee was fourth at 182, with a default loss to Rainier's Thor Ware in the third-place match. Knappa senior Nate Truax took the title at 195 pounds, as he won by fall (1:01) over Peter McKinley of Gervais in the quarterfinals and Xander Bowles of Creswell (:59) in the semifinals, followed by a 5-4 decision over Dayton's Andres Gonzalez in the championship bout.

Team scoring: Scio 198, Monroe 182.5, Rainier 175.5, Dayton 168.5, Warrenton 144.5, Myrtle Point 101, Creswell 77, Knappa 77, Clatskanie 71, Gervais 68, Vernonia 63, Amity 54, Sheridan 54, Colton 51.5, Santiam 18.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Boys Basketball — Astoria at Scappoose, 5:30 p.m.; Seaside at Valley Catholic, 5:30 p.m.; Warrenton at Portland Adventist, 7:45 p.m.; Faith Bible at Knappa, 7:45 p.m.; Crosshill Christian at Jewell, 7 p.m.

Girls Basketball — Astoria at Scappoose, 7:15 p.m.; Seaside at Valley Catholic, 7:15 p.m.; Warrenton at Portland Adventist, 6 p.m.; Faith Bible at Knappa, 6 p.m.; South Bend at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

Swimming — Astoria at Scappoose, 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Boys Basketball — Ilwaco at Naselle, 7 p.m.

Wrestling — Tillamook/Seaside at Astoria, 5:30 p.m.; Ilwaco at Wahkiakum, 5 p.m.

THURSDAY

Boys Basketball — Livingstone Adventist at Jewell, 7 p.m.; Ilwaco at South Bend, 7 p.m.

Girls Basketball — Livingstone Adventist at Jewell, 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

Boys Basketball — Astoria at Seaside, 5:30 p.m.; Oregon Episcopal at Warrenton, 7:45 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 7:45 p.m.

Girls Basketball — Astoria at Seaside, 7:15 p.m.; Oregon Episcopal at Warrenton, 6 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY

Boys Basketball — Delphian at Knappa, 6:15 p.m.; Ilwaco at Life Christian, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball — Delphian at Knappa, 4:30 p.m.; Ilwaco at Life Christian, 5:45 p.m.

Wrestling — Ilwaco Beach Brawl, 10 a.m.

BASKETBALL

HIGH SCHOOLS

Standings

Boys

Lewis & Clark League

Table with 3 columns: Team, League, Overall. Lists teams like Clatskanie, De La Salle, Portland Adv, etc.

Northwest League

Table with 3 columns: Team, League, Overall. Lists teams like Nestucca, Knappa, Vernonia, etc.

Girls

Lewis & Clark League

Table with 3 columns: Team, League, Overall. Lists teams like Portland Adv, Rainier, etc.

Northwest League

Table with 3 columns: Team, League, Overall. Lists teams like Vernonia, City Christian, etc.

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CLASSIFIED INDEX

- ANNOUNCEMENTS: Core Centers, Lost & Found, Professional Services, Bankruptcy. EMPLOYMENT: Babysitters, Child Care, Help Wanted, Work Wanted. INSTRUCTION: Schools & Education, Music Lessons. FINANCIAL: Business For Sale, Sales Op, Money To Lend. REAL ESTATE: Open Houses, For Sale, Lots & Acreage, Homes Wanted, Rentals.

NEW TODAY! Look at these ads first. Astoria: 3 bedroom 1 bath home. \$900 +deposit. (503)440-2105 (503)440-0891. Coming soon Ocean Spa A high end spa at the beach.

30 GENERAL

A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE CHINOOK OBSERVER really makes cents! For a limited time get a year's subscription in Clatsop County for only \$38/year. {Out of county subscriptions are normally \$46 a year!}

35 LOST & FOUND

Found: Keys on river walk east end. Call to identify (503)325-7531

45 PUBLIC NOTICES

Occasionally other companies make telemarketing calls off classified ads. These companies are not affiliated with The Daily Astorian and customers are under no obligation to participate.

46 ANNOUNCEMENTS

A bookcase filled with valuable Swedish literature is looking for a new home since the owner is moving.

61 BANKRUPTCY

BANKRUPTCY \$250 24 Years Experience. (503)440-0281 / (503)678-7939

70 HELP WANTED

eOMEDIA group. Are you a digital Mr./ Ms. Fix-It? Our team needs a digital support tech to make our digital products function better.

70 HELP WANTED

CCO Community Health Partnership Coordinator. Responsible for helping oversee and coordinate activities to assure that the goals and strategies of CPCCO's sponsorship of Clatsop County Way to Wellville are met.

70 HELP WANTED

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