

# Holiday hoops tourneys continue this week

'Tis the Season ... for holiday basketball tournaments. Locally, Astoria High School is hosting the annual Vince Dulcich Tournament today through Wednesday. Following some early games, Sutherlin vs. Knappa boys tips off about 6:15 p.m.,

followed by Knappa vs. Astoria girls (8 p.m.) and Rainier vs. Astoria boys (9:30 p.m.). Game times are approximate. The Seaside boys and girls are playing in the SCTC Holiday Classic at Stayton High School, and Jewell is taking part in Neah-Kah-Nie's Drift-

wood Classic. Across the river, Ilwaco is hosting its annual Holiday Classic. On the boys' side, Ilwaco faces Montesano at 7:15 p.m.; the Ilwaco girls begin play Tuesday at 7:15 p.m. vs. Castile Rock.

Action concludes Wednesday with Toledo vs. Ilwaco girls (5:45 p.m.) and Seton Catholic vs. Ilwaco boys (7:15 p.m.).

**MONDAY'S SCHEDULE**  
Vince Dulcich Tournament  
Girls

1:00: Clatskanie vs RA Long  
2:30: Sutherlin vs Columbia River  
7:00: Knappa vs Astoria  
**Boys**  
4:00: Clatskanie vs Hockinson  
5:30: Sutherlin vs Knappa  
8:30: Rainier vs Astoria  
**SCTC Holiday Classic, Stayton**  
Girls  
3:00: Seaside vs Yamhill-Carlton

**Boys**  
4:30: Yamhill-Carlton vs Seaside  
**Driftwood Classic, Neah-Kah-Nie**  
Girls  
Noon: Jewell vs Neah-Kah-Nie  
**Boys**  
1:30: Jewell vs Willamina  
**Ilwaco Holiday Classic**  
Boys  
7:15: Montesano vs Ilwaco

# Triple Crown, flubbed punt highlight best games of year

By EDDIE PELLIS  
AP National Writer

The games people play. There are around 300 in pro football, 2,500 in baseball, 1,500 in basketball and thousands in soccer every year — and that's just at the very highest levels. Most blend into each other. Only a few stand out.

Those that leave a lasting impression do so because of, say, a flubbed snap on a punt, or a play call that decides a title, or a near-perfect, once-in-a-generation race to the finish line.

Those games and races kept us at the edge of our seats in 2015 — then eventually brought us completely out of our chairs and made us shake our heads upon realizing, once again, that just when we think we've seen it all, we're reminded that we really haven't.

A look at some of the best games and events of 2015:

### Triple Crown

It had been 37 years since Affirmed crossed the finish line first at the Belmont Stakes to win the last Triple Crown. And over those 37 years, horse racing and its fans had seen 13 horses win the first two legs, only to falter — or, in one case, not even line up at the Belmont. American Pharoah finally broke through. He started slow and carried a two-

length lead through most of the race. But then, he showed the heart and speed of a champion, pulling away over the last five furlongs to cross the finish line in 2 minutes, 26.65 seconds — ending nearly four decades of close calls.

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyDcX-tVb8-U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyDcX-tVb8-U)

### The flub

All Michigan punter Blake O'Neill had to do was field the snap and get off the kick, just as he'd done hundreds of times previously in practices and games. Instead, O'Neill fumbled the snap and Michigan State's Jalen Watts-Jackson pulled it in, cradled it to his body and ran 38 yards for a touchdown. The Spartans won 27-23, and because of that win, they are still in the hunt for the national title. Some of the most memorable reactions came from the heartbroken, close-to-tears Michigan fans, a few of which were captured forever on YouTube. "That's why football is loved so much in America," Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio said. "It's because things like this happen. Every now and then, they happen."

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB1gN-85wB6U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB1gN-85wB6U)

### For openers

The first inning of Game



Kathy Willens/AP Photo

Victor Espinoza reacts after guiding American Pharoah across the finish line to win the Belmont Stakes horse race at Belmont Park in New York, June 6. American Pharoah started slow and carried a two-length lead through most of the race. But then, he showed the heart and speed of a champion, pulling away over the last five furlongs to cross the finish line.

I included the first inside-the-park home run in a World Series in 86 years. Later, there was a power outage that stopped play and knocked the telecast off the air. The game lasted 14 innings and, at 5 hours, 9 minutes, was the longest World Series Game 1 played. Kansas City hit a game-tying home run in the bottom of the ninth and went on to beat the Mets 5-4. And if that wasn't drama enough, there was the underlying story of starting pitcher Edinson Volquez, who pitched even though his father had died only hours before the game.

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJQkyv-vMWQo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJQkyv-vMWQo)

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### Rugby upset

It was supposed to be a tuneup for perennial title contender South Africa. It ended up being "a rugby miracle" at the World Cup, as the TV announcers called it, pulled off by none other than 1,000-1 longshot Japan. The "Cherry Blossoms" only other victory on the world's biggest stage had come back in 1991. This time, they played South Africa toe-to-toe for more than 80 minutes, and into extra time. Trailing by three, Japan decided against kicking for a

tie, and instead got the ball to replacement back Karne Hesketh, who squeezed into rugby's version of the end zone for the winning points in a 34-32 victory.

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXhr-wadiFQ4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXhr-wadiFQ4)

### Super call

Seattle had the ball at the New England 1-yard line with two, maybe three, chances to let one of the best running backs in the game, Marshawn Lynch, bull in for what would have been the winning touchdown. Instead, Seahawks coach Pete Carroll called for a pass. Patriots defensive back Malcolm Butler, a one-time do-everything employee at a fast-food chicken restaurant, had been focusing on that exact play call during the week in practice. He recognized it, stepped in front of the receiver and intercepted the pass to save the game for the Patriots. Carroll then spent hours, days and weeks defending his play call, while Butler no longer had to worry about returning to the chicken joint.

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7rPIg-7ZNQ8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7rPIg-7ZNQ8)

### The 3-wood and the three-putt

So many majors are remembered as much for who lost at the end, as who won.

The 2015 U.S. Open will be remembered for both. There was Dustin Johnson's hard-to-watch three-putt from 12 feet that cost him the title — a title that went to Jordan Spieth, hardly a fluke winner in anybody's book. It was the second major of the year for Spieth and he set it up with a 284-yard 3-wood from the near-barren 18th fairway at Chambers Bay that led to a birdie. Four days of listening to players grumble about conditions on the course, then watching most of them play down to their expectations, ended with 30 minutes of pure drama — and with Spieth cradling the trophy.

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvPO-7yL-Yc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvPO-7yL-Yc)

### Flurry of goals

In a rematch of the previous World Cup final, the U.S. team played Japan, which had beaten the Americans on penalty kicks four years earlier. Thanks to Carli Lloyd, this game was anything but a repeat. Lloyd scored in the third minute, then again two minutes later. The United States scored four goals in the first 16 minutes, capped by Lloyd's shot from midfield, and went on for a 5-2 victory. For a while after the match, Lloyd's Wikipedia page listed her as "President of the United States."

On the web: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrsxXa-2DINw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrsxXa-2DINw)

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