

## SPORTS

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SPORTS  
IN BRIEFHealy, Mariners  
rally past Astros  
for 4-game sweep

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Edwin Diaz was supposed to be off on Sunday after earning saves in each of the last three games for the Seattle Mariners.

Instead, after the Mariners tied the Houston Astros in the ninth inning, the All-Star closer told bullpen coach Brian De Lunas to call the dugout to say that he wanted to try to make it four in a row.

Ryon Healy hit a tying home run with two outs in the ninth, Mitch Haniger delivered an RBI double in the 10th and Diaz finished up as the Mariners beat Houston 4-3 to sweep a four-game series from the AL West leaders.

Diaz allowed one hit in a scoreless 10th for his major league-high 46th save. Manager Scott Servais was pleased but not surprised that Diaz offered to help out on Sunday.

“Sometimes you’ve got to do that,” he said. “That’s how Eddie’s wired and how this team is wired.”

It’s the first time in franchise history that Seattle swept a four-game series from the Astros. The third-place Mariners pulled within four games of Houston.

Vancouver  
snaps Portland’s  
unbeaten run

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Kei Kamara and Cristian Techera scored for the Vancouver Whitecaps in a 2-1 Cascadia Cup victory over Portland on Saturday night, snapping a 15-match unbeaten streak for the Timbers.

Portland (10-3-8) had not dropped a league match since losing 3-2 at Orlando City on April 8. The 15-match streak was the longest in MLS this season and equaled a franchise record.

“We came in here and we knew what the record was. It’s all about that, sometimes, in soccer. You kind of want to spoil the party for somebody else,” Kamara said.

The Whitecaps (9-9-6) were without 17-year-old midfielder Alphonso Davies because of a groin injury. Bayern Munich acquired Davies last month for a transfer fee that could, with bonuses, total an MLS record of \$22 million. He’ll move to the German team after Vancouver’s season.

US beats Japan  
in final of softball  
championship

Associated Press

MAKUHARI, Japan — Kelsey Stewart drove in the winning run in the bottom of the tenth inning as the United States beat Japan 7-6 in the final of the women’s world softball championship on Sunday.

Stewart’s single down the third base line scored the runner from third as the defending champions rallied with three runs in the tenth off Japan starter Yukiko Ueno.



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Seattle Seahawks offensive lineman George Fant runs off the field after a June practice.

Fant travels long road  
back for Seahawks

By MATT CALKINS

The Seattle Times

**G**eorge Fant stands 6 feet 6, weighs 322 pounds and likely treats 20 ounce steaks as finger food. If anyone wanted to approximate life as Peter Dinklage, they’d need only stand next to Fant for two seconds.

The man is a giant among behemoths — a Himalaya among Alps. Yet, last year at this time, the hype surrounding him was about 10 times bigger.

An undrafted rookie in 2016, Fant seemed to have made unparalleled strides two offseasons ago. On the first day of training camp last year, Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said Fant was the player whose gains most caught his attention.

It seemed the panacea for Seattle’s protection woes lay in a former basketball player turned left tackle. Then came Week 2 of the preseason, when Fant rolled up his leg in the second quarter and left on a stretcher.

Torn ACL. Out of the season.

This was painful for the Seahawks but devastating for Fant. The former forward at Western Kentucky — where he weighed 245 pounds — seemed to have developed into a legitimate NFL starter.

His strength and size had skyrocketed. His footwork improved exponentially. Testimony suggested the now-third-year player had emerged from his cocoon as a potential Pro Bowler.

Then the 26-year-old learned it would be nearly a year before he’d even be able to prac-

## UP NEXT: PRESEASON

- Seattle Seahawks (0-1)
- at Los Angeles Chargers (0-1)
- Saturday, 7 p.m. TV: FOX

tice again. For a brief second, he wondered what the point of it all was.

“I felt like I put all that work in for nothing,” Fant said. “I had a lot of expectations and expected a lot of things.”

The public didn’t see or hear much from Fant after that, but his disappointment was clear to those around him. Asked about him earlier this week, Carroll said Fant was “crushed” by the injury after “putting everything he possibly could into the offseason.”

But it wasn’t long before the melancholy morphed into motivation. And George had his wife to thank for that.

A standout forward at Western Kentucky, Chastity Gooch righted her husband’s mentality almost instantly. She herself had experienced injuries throughout her playing days, but finished her senior season as the Conference USA Player of the Year.

Fant didn’t want to say what she said to him directly. Might not have been safe for a family paper. But it is safe to say her words resonated with George and got him back on the right path — even if he had to use crutches to navigate it.

“(The injury) wasn’t for nothing. I didn’t lose anything,” Fant said. “I haven’t lost confidence in myself at all. I still want to be one of the best in the game.”

Of course, much has changed in the past 12 months since that torn ACL. Last season, the Seahawks acquired Pro Bowl left tackle Duane Brown, who would most certainly keep Fant on the sideline if healthy.

The team has been insistent on keeping Fant at left tackle since coming back to practice, although Carroll said an eventual move to the right side is possible. The main thing right now is trying to ease him back into competition.

“We don’t even want to try to evaluate him for a couple more weeks,” said Carroll, adding that he still sees Fant as “a heck of a prospect. “Just let him keep getting back and showing what he can do right now.”

There wasn’t much talk about Fant after the game Thursday night, but he did play against the Colts. And even though it isn’t time to evaluate him yet, that doesn’t mean he can’t feel a great sense of achievement.

It had been nearly a year since he had played in front of tens of thousands of people, and shortly after taking the field, he took to Twitter to express himself.

“So happy to step back on CenturyLink Field last night,” Fant said. “So many emotions last night and it’s been a long road back.”

With injuries to fellow tackles Jamarco Jones and Isaiah Battle on Thursday, Fant’s chances to impact the Seahawks this year grew. The man who “still wants to be one of the best in the game,” as he said, might get to help his team sooner than expected.

At this point, the hype has disappeared. Now is Fant’s chance to show that he hasn’t.

Heisman darkhorses: Can UW’s  
Browning repeat Mayfield’s path?

Associated Press

Washington’s Jake Browning is hoping to repeat what Baker Mayfield did last year.

Mayfield was a Heisman Trophy longshot in the preseason, but ended up winning the award while leading Oklahoma to the College Football Playoff for the second time in three years.

Browning was sixth in the Heisman voting two years ago after leading the Huskies to the Pac-12 title and the playoff, where they lost to Alabama in the semifinals. His productivity declined last year though as his touchdowns fell from 43 to 19.

Washington was 10-3 last season, but is the preseason favorite to win the Pac 12. Browning and the Huskies will also have an early opportunity to make a favorable impression to rest of the nation as they face Auburn in the opener in Atlanta on Sept. 1.

Browning — who has thrown for over 9,000 yards and 78 touchdowns the past three seasons — is facing high expectations, but none might be bigger than what coach Chris Peterson expects out of the senior.

“Jake plays really good football and has made some spectacular plays in his career,” Peterson said.

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