

Metro/Sports

Gearing Up For Little League



Peninsula Little League players and team officials gather on Saturday for opening day. The 45-year-old league survived another year thanks to the generous support of donations. The league was in a battle to stay alive this winter because of declining financial support. (PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER)

Baseball Great Dies at 61

(AP) — Willie Stargell, the thunderous home run hitter who carried the Pittsburgh Pirates into two World Series with his power and helped win them with his fatherly leadership, died Monday. He was 61.

Stargell, who had been in failing health for years because of diabetes and a kidney disorder, died at New

Pirates are opening today."

Stargell hit 475 home runs, many of them soaring, majestic shots that rattled many a pitcher's confidence. With Stargell batting cleanup for most of his 20-year career, the Pirates won World Series championships in 1971 and 1979 and six National League divisional titles from 1970-79.

Nicknamed "Pops," Stargell was a dynamic leader on the field and a fatherly yet forceful presence off it, distributing his coveted Stargell stars for extra effort to teammates who proudly attached them to their ballcaps.

"When you had Willie Stargell on your team, it was like having a diamond ring on your finger," Tanner said.

At 6-foot-4 and 225 pounds, and with a deep, commanding voice, Stargell intimidated pitchers even before they delivered the ball by pinwheeling the bat in rhythm with their delivery. Despite being overshadowed by the more prolific home run hitters Hank Aaron and Willie Mays, and by his own Hall of Fame teammate, Roberto Clemente, Stargell's sheer power was unrivaled. He hit seven homers over the right-field roof at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field and once held the record for the longest homer in nearly half of the NL parks. "He didn't just hit pitchers, he took away their dignity," former Dodgers pitcher Don Sutton said.



Willie Stargell

Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, N.C., the hospital said.

He died on the day the Pirates were opening their new ballpark, PNC Park, where a 12-foot bronze statue of Stargell's likeness was unveiled Saturday. "Now, every opening day at PNC Park, everybody will know this is Willie Stargell's day," said Chuck Tanner, Stargell's manager from 1977-82. "He's up there, and he knows the

Victory Gives Tiger Woods Grand Slam

By DOUG FERGUSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Tiger Woods claimed the greatest feat in modern golf Sunday by winning the Masters, giving him a clean sweep of the four professional majors in a span of 294 days. Woods punctuated the win with an 18-foot birdie, raising both arms in triumph as breathless fans roared their approval. He doffed his cap to cover his tears as he left the green and walked into the arms of his father, who trained him to be a champion from the time he was in a highchair.

Woods, who closed with a 68, was steady down the haunting back nine holes of Augusta National as David Duval and Phil Mickelson failed to harness the magic that has carried Woods to five of the last six majors. "I've succeeded in what I wanted to accomplish," Woods said as he waited for last year's winner, Vijay Singh, to help him put on the winner's green jacket. "I don't feel ecstatic yet. It hasn't sunk in."

Locked in a thrilling battle with

his two chief rivals, Woods hit a daring approach from 149 yards into the perilous 11th hole. The ball grazed the cup for a tap-in birdie, giving Woods a lead that he never lost.



Tiger Woods is triumphant at the Masters.

Duval, who had believed this might be his year after three close calls, made it through Amen Corner without a mistake but took bogey on the par-3 16th, firing his tee shot over the green and missing an 8-foot putt for par.

He had two chances to catch Woods, but looked on in shock as

birdie putts from 12 feet on the 17th hole and 5 feet on the final hole failed to fall. Mickelson, who had been poised to claim his first major, also missed an 8-foot par putt on the 16th hole. He also failed to cash in on birdie putts on the final two holes.

Woods, who turned pro five years ago, never faltered.

His lead remained at one stroke when he missed a 3-foot birdie putt on the 15th, but he traded spectacular golf for solid play and delivered.

Some have debated whether Woods can claim a Grand Slam, which traditionally has meant winning four majors in a calendar year. Either way, Woods' trophies from the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open and PGA Championship allow him to claim a place in history no other professional has occupied.

Not Jack Nicklaus, his idol, who missed his chance to hold the titles of all four majors in 1972. Not

Arnold Palmer, who dreamed up the idea of a Grand Slam in 1960 but only got halfway there. The only Grand Slam in golf not up for debate is the one that belongs to Bobby Jones, who won the U.S. Open, U.S. Amateur, British Open and British Amateur in 1930.

Fittingly, it was at the Masters tournament, created by Jones in 1934, that Woods finished his historic run. "It will probably go down as one of the top moments in our sport," Woods said. Asked whether it was a Grand Slam, Woods replied, "I don't think it's right for me to comment on that."

Woods now has won six majors, as many as Nick Faldo and Lee Trevino and only one major behind Palmer, Sam Snead and Harry Vardon. And with his winning score of 16-under 272, Woods swept the majors with a combined score of 65-under par.

It started with a runaway at Pebble Beach in the U.S. Open last June, and concluded with the biggest thriller of them all.

"He simply does what is required," Mickelson said.

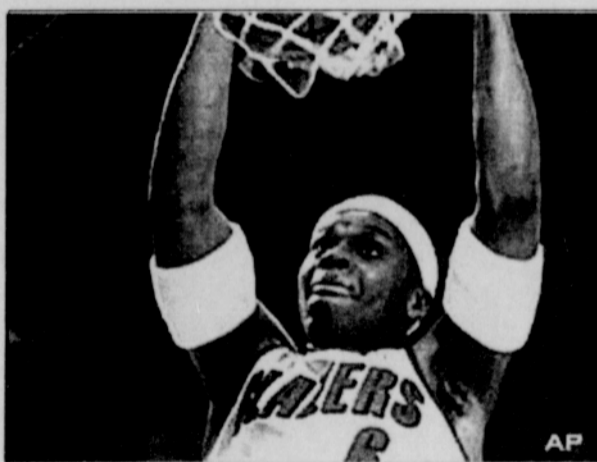
Injury Ends Season for Bonzi Wells

(AP) - Bonzi Wells, the talented guard who bumped Steve Smith from the Portland Trail Blazers' starting lineup, will miss the rest of the season with a knee injury.

Wells has a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

Monday's announcement was a huge blow for the struggling Blazers, who have lost 11 of 17 games to fall from first place in the Western Conference overall standings to sixth. The team also is dealing with the departure of reserve forward Shawn Kemp, who is seeking treatment for cocaine abuse and won't return this season.

Wells, the team's third-leading scorer behind Rasheed Wallace and Smith, was hurt in the second quarter of Friday night's game at Golden State. He crashed to the floor while going up for a pass from Damon Stoudamire on a fast break in the second quarter of



Bonzi Wells

a 31-point rout of the Warriors. It appeared Wells' left foot came down on the instep of his right foot as he was trying to get past a defender.

The injury came when the Blazers had the game in hand against the outmatched Warriors. But Portland, having lost three straight games, wanted a convincing victory. The Blazers led by as many as 47 points and won by 31.

At first, the Blazers thought Wells' knee was sprained. But it had swelled since, and a tear in the ACL was found

during a more thorough examination Monday afternoon.

Wells' teammates and coach Mike Dunleavy didn't know the extent of the injury after finishing practice earlier in the day, but they seemed to sense it was serious.

"It'll definitely be a blow," point guard Stoudamire said. "Bonzi is one of the only guys on this team that can really get easy buckets. He brings a lot of enthusiasm to the game, and it'll hurt us. We have to just find some way to overcome it."

Coach Mike Dunleavy wasn't ready to think about losing one of his best offensive players. "I really don't want to even go there," he said. "But if it were the case, that's 53 percent field-goal shooting percentage out of your lineup, and that's obviously tough."

At 24, Wells is the youngest player in the Blazers' rotation, and he's dangerous in the open court. The former Ball State star has had a breakout third season in the NBA, averaging 12.7 points and 4.9 rebounds. He has made 53.3 percent of his shots, second in the league only to Shaquille O'Neal's 57.3 percent. Wells filled in for Smith as the starting shooting guard against Vancouver on Dec. 29, when Smith had the flu. Wells scored 14 points on 7-of-10 shooting, and Smith didn't start again until Sunday's game at Sacramento.

"I'm always prepared," said Smith, who has averaged 17.8 points in his last five games. "It's not a role where I lost my starting job because of my performance. Mike made that choice. I lived with it, and I kept playing, kept working, and now I'm back in that situation. But if I could have the situation over, you definitely wouldn't wish that on somebody like that."

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