

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Sports shorts

Tiger arrives for mystery Masters

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Tiger Woods arrived later than usual Monday for a Masters that is different from all the others he has played.

No one was sure what to expect from him.

Woods offered a quick glimpse that it could be just about anything. He hooked his tee shot so far left that it nearly went into the ninth fairway. And then he hit a shot to about 6 feet and rolled in the putt for birdie.

"I felt like I had to get my game into a spot where I felt I could compete to win a golf tournament and it's finally there," Woods said after playing 11 holes. He played the front nine with Mark O'Meara, then the 10th and 18th holes before darkness.

More relevant than any of his shots — including his chipping, which looked fine — was the atmosphere.

The first official day of practice at Augusta National was filled with warmth and optimism for the first major of the year.

NFL, Peterson to meet Tuesday

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson will meet Tuesday with the NFL to discuss his playing status, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

The person spoke Monday to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the information.

Peterson was suspended under the league's personal conduct policy through at least April 15 due to the child abuse case involving his young son, a punishment he appealed. Commissioner Roger Goodell has said he planned to meet with Peterson before the anticipated expiration date of the suspension to assess the six-time Pro Bowl pick's status.

When the punishment was announced Nov. 18, Goodell ordered Peterson to attend a counseling and treatment program in conjunction with the suspension.

Once Peterson's playing status is clarified, there's still the glaring matter of his disinterest in continuing his career in Minnesota.

Dogra said two weeks ago that the 30-year-old Peterson wants to play elsewhere, but the Vikings have said repeatedly they want Peterson back.

"It's not typical. Just figured he could use a bit of support. It's always good to know someone is in your corner."

— "Bald Vinny"
Leader of Yankee Stadium "Bleacher Creatures" on cheering for Yankee and admitted steroid user Alex Rodriguez.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1963 — Jack Nicklaus, 23, becomes the youngest golfer to win the Masters, beating Tony Lema by a stroke.

2003 — Syracuse wins the NCAA tournament with an 81-78 victory over Kansas. Freshman Carmelo Anthony, fighting off a bad back, finishes with 20 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists. Gerry McNamara hits six 3-pointers in the first half and finishes with 18 points.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com

By TIM BOOTH
AP Sports Writer

Mariners christen Opening Day with win

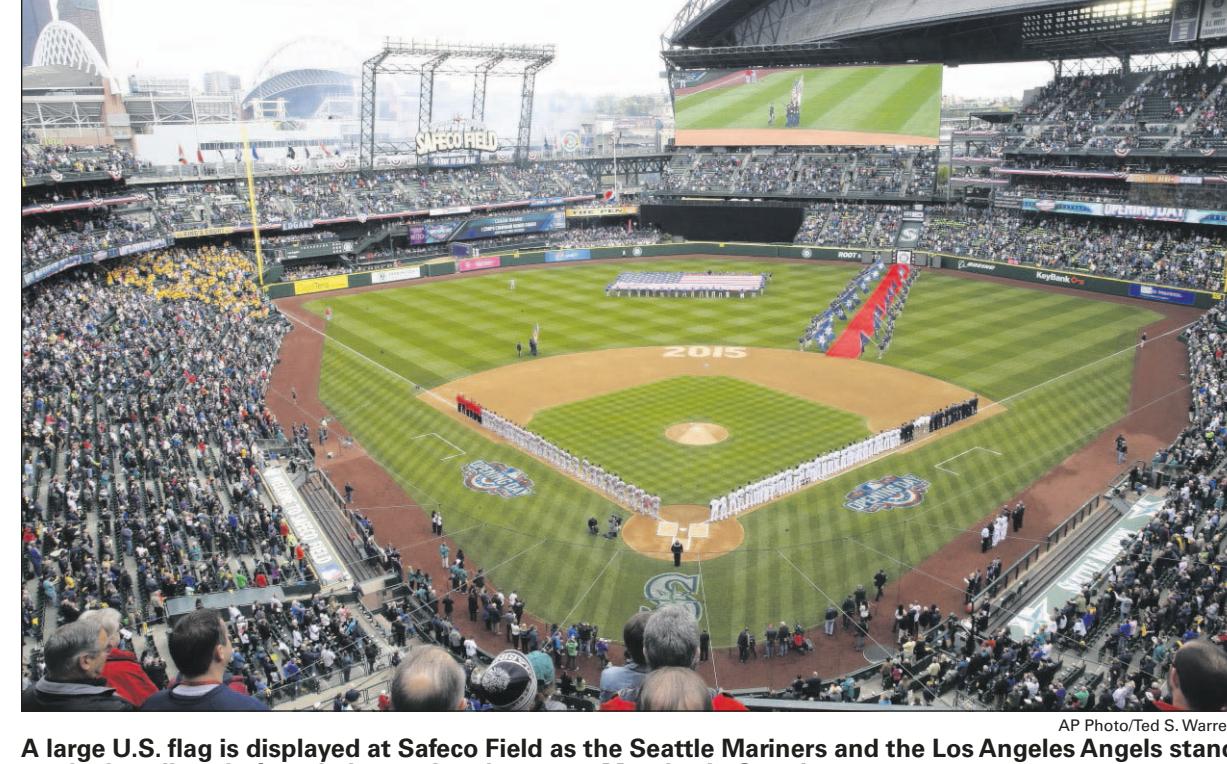
SEATTLE — For all the attention paid to what the Seattle Mariners did to improve their offense in the off-season, their foundation remains the pitching.

And there's no better pitcher to build around than Felix Hernandez, especially on opening day when Seattle's ace is still undefeated.

"It's a great challenge," Hernandez said. "You've got a lot of eyes on you and you've got to do good."

Hernandez struck out 10 and allowed only two hits over seven innings, Seth Smith had three extra-base hits and two RBIs in his Seattle debut and the Mariners beat the Los Angeles Angels 4-1 on Monday.

Hernandez (1-0) improved to 6-0 in opening day starts, only two of them at home. Taking the mound before a sellout crowd waving yellow "K" towels in his honor, he lifted Seattle to its ninth straight win on



A large U.S. flag is displayed at Safeco Field as the Seattle Mariners and the Los Angeles Angels stand on the baselines before their opening day game Monday in Seattle.

opening day.

The victory to begin the most anticipated season in Seattle in years was exactly to the Mariners' blueprint: dominant starting pitching, a handful of key hits throughout the

lineup and stellar work out of the bullpen capped by an uneventful ninth inning and Fernando Rodney's first save of the season.

"It's always nice to win at home. I'm glad opening day is over. We

can get back to a sense of normalcy around here because it is a very hectic day," Seattle manager Lloyd McClendon said. "But when you

See MARINERS/3B

BEDEVILED



AP Photo/David J. Phillip

Duke players celebrate with the trophy after their 68-63 victory over Wisconsin in the NCAA Final Four championship game Monday in Indianapolis.

Duke wins fifth NCAA title

By JOEDY MCCREARY
AP Sports Writer

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — All those noisy Cameron Crazies got to celebrate one more win at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium.

About 5,000 students flocked to the Blue Devils' famously loud arena Monday night to watch their school beat Wisconsin 68-63 for its fifth NCAA Tournament title.

They cheered, they rushed the court, they treated it like a home game — even though the game was played some 600 miles away in Indianapolis.

After the final horn, Duke sophomore Zach Gorwitz wore a Shane Battier jersey while running up the bleachers. He held his fists skyward and let out a scream. He calls it "unbelievable" and "history" and says "it's a blessing ... to be a part of it."

The students then made their way across campus for a controlled, school-sanctioned bonfire to celebrate.

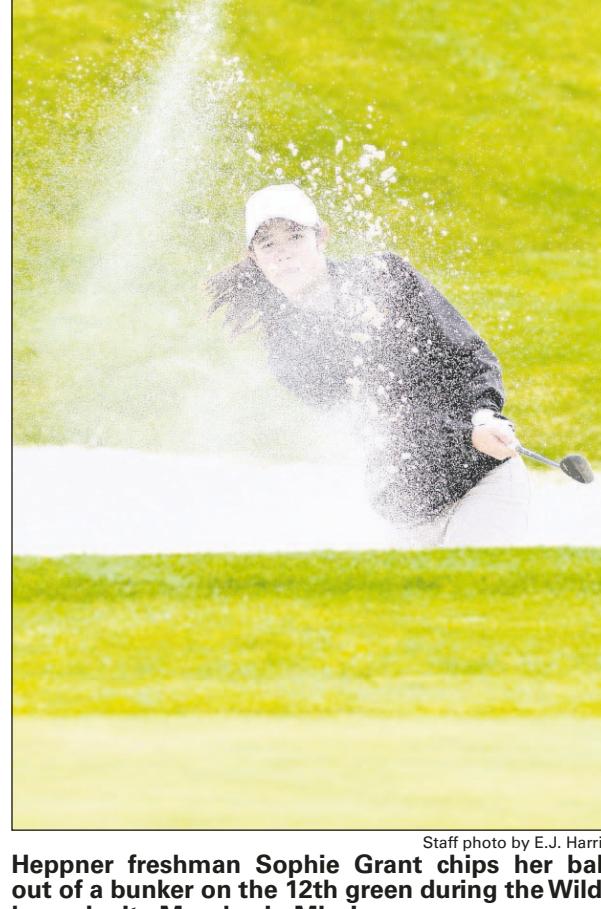
They are certainly used to walking out of Cameron with a smile.

Basketball
Duke 68
Wisconsin 63

By the time the final horn sounded, they had poured onto the court and hugged, danced and screamed for well over a minute.

See DUKE/3B

MISSION



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Heppner freshman Sophie Grant chips her ball out of a bunker on the 12th green during the Wildhorse Invite Monday in Mission.

Bucks, Mustangs win at Wildhorse

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian

MISSION — For most of the teams in attendance, Monday's Wildhorse Invitational was one of their first few tournament rounds of the golf season.

But even though it fell early on the calendar, where the Pendleton-hosted round at Wildhorse Golf Course came in their preparations for the post-season was a matter of perspective.

For Pendleton's Reilly Hegarty, the state tourna-

ment was looming large after he shot a tournament-low 71 to lead the Bucks to a team title.

"It's nice to win on your home course but we have stuff to improve on. We have state coming up in a month or so," he said. "It's going to start hitting fast. This is only our third tournament but we feel like we're in midseason already."

Pendleton's girls were led by Haley Greb, who was one stroke off the lead

See GOLF/3B

Depleted Trail Blazers tangled up by Nets

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — Brook Lopez dominated twin brother Robin and the short-handed Portland frontcourt with 32 points and nine rebounds, and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Trail Blazers 106-96 on Monday night in the only game on the NBA schedule.

The Trail Blazers left La-Marcus Aldridge and others home for the makeup of a game that was postponed by weather on Jan. 26 and couldn't stop Brook Lopez, who has won the last two Eastern Conference

of the week awards. He shot 15 for 25 from the field.

Deron Williams added 24 points and 10 assists for the Nets, who strengthened their hold on seventh place in the Eastern Conference by winning for the ninth time in 11 games. Thaddeus Young scored 20 points. Damian Lillard scored 36 points for the Trail Blazers, who had won two in a

row. Meyers Leonard had 17 points and 15 rebounds, while Robin Lopez had just eight points and seven boards.

Besides Aldridge, Portland was without forward Nicolas Batum and backup center Chris Kaman. With a five-hour flight Sunday just to turn around and fly back after the game Monday, Blazers coach Terry Stotts opted to let the players stay behind and rest some injuries before they host Minnesota on Wednesday.

They cut a 22-point deficit to six in the fourth quar-

See BLAZERS/3B

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AP Photo/Kathy Kmonicek



Brooklyn Nets center Brook Lopez moves around his twin brother, Trail Blazer Robin Lopez on Monday.