

Sports shorts

Pelicans nab final West playoff spot

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Anthony Davis had 31 points and 13 rebounds and the New Orleans Pelicans earned their first playoff berth since 2011 with a 108-103 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday night.



Davis, who'll make his playoff debut against Golden State next weekend, came through in the waning minutes with a pair of clutch jumpers, two blocks and two rebounds to prevent the Spurs from pulling off a 23-point comeback.

Tyreke Evans had 19 points and 11 assists, and Eric Gordon added 14 points for New Orleans, which had to win to make the postseason because Oklahoma City also won in Minnesota. The teams finished with identical records, but the Pelicans held the tiebreaker on head-to-head results.

Phelps aiming for 5th Olympics

MESA, Ariz. (AP) — Michael Phelps is aiming to compete in a fifth Olympics next year in Rio, although the 18-time Olympic champion won't swim in the world championships this summer.

Phelps confirmed his intention to make one last run at the Olympics on Wednesday. The 29-year-old swimmer is in Arizona to compete in his first

FACES



meet since serving a six-month suspension by USA Swimming after a second drunken driving arrest last fall.

But Phelps says he won't be swimming at the world meet in Russia in August as part of the punishment set forth by the sport's U.S. governing body. That is the last major international meet before the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016.

"Reckless fighter? That's how people like me and love me, because they like an exciting fight."

— Manny Pacquiao Professional boxer in response to a comment by Floyd Mayweather Jr., who called Pacquiao a "very reckless fighter" as the two continue to train for their much-anticipated bout on May 2.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS 1991 — The St. Louis Blues become the eighth team in NHL playoff history to come back from a 3-1 deficit as they beat the Detroit Red Wings 3-2 in the seventh game.

1987 — Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls scores 61 points in a 117-114 loss to the Atlanta Hawks and becomes the second player to surpass the 3,000-point mark in a season.

1997 — The Chicago Cubs set the mark for worst start in National League history, extending their losing streak to 12 with a 4-0 loss to the Colorado Rockies. Chicago breaks the overall NL record of 0-11 by the 1884 Detroit Wolverines.

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

CRC Softball

Offense could carry CRC

Scores up as softball teams break in fresh arms

By MATT ENTRUP East Oregonian

Scores are on the rise for Columbia River Conference softball teams in 2015, and with the start of league play just days away, coaches aren't expecting things to slow down anytime soon.

In a conference traditionally decided from the circle, hitters may get the final say in which team claims the title — and with it the only automatic berth in the OSAA playoffs.

"I think the scores are going to be a little higher this year," said The Dalles head coach Steve Garrett. "I think it's going to be pretty dog eat dog."

"There might be some exciting games for the fans, but it might be some tough ones for the coaches as well," said Pendleton coach Tim Cary. "I think that is very possible. I think the CRC teams are all pretty similar, really. We're all kind of searching for a true ace right now, and I think all of the CRC teams hit the ball quite well as well."

Garrett's Riverhawks (8-5) enter Saturday's season openers tied for the lead in 5A scoring at 8.5 runs per game, and their 110 total runs

See SOFTBALL/2B



Hermiston head coach Kylee Lete (right) congratulates Bulldog senior Abi Drotzmann after the left fielder hit a triple in a game this season.

PENDLETON

Moore makes D-1 leap



BMCC's Mar'Shay Moore celebrates a late-game shot in the Timberwolves' loss to Walla Walla last February in Pendleton. Moore will sign papers to play basketball at the University of Oregon today.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BMCC guard to sign Letter of Intent with Oregon

By ERIK SKOPIL East Oregonian

Blue Mountain Community College women's basketball coach Adam Driver isn't used to receiving phone calls from his players after 10 p.m.

So, when the first-year coach's cell phone lit up with an incoming call from star player Mar'Shay Moore late Tuesday night, he knew something was up. As it turned out, Moore was calling to let him know that

she'd be continuing her collegiate basketball career at the University of Oregon.

"She normally doesn't call that late," said Driver. "I knew she must be excited after talking to (Oregon coach) Kelly (Graves)."

The conclusion of the NWAC Player of the Year's recruitment arrived abruptly. Prior to Tuesday's conversation with Oregon coaches, Moore was uncertain of her standing with the Pac-12 basketball program.

Graves made it plenty clear over the phone.

"He said 'I want to give you a full ride. We want you,'" Moore said. "I was like 'Alright, I want to come down there.'"

Moore will sign a Letter of Intent to accept a scholarship to play for the Ducks today at noon at Mosby Court.

When she steps onto the hardwood at Matthew Knight Arena in Eugene this winter, she will become the first fe-

See MOORE/2B

NBA

Blazers drop season finale to Mavericks

Portland will face Memphis in opening round of playoffs

By SCHUYLER DIXON Associated Press

DALLAS — Tyson Chandler had 22 points and 15 rebounds and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Portland Trail Blazers 114-98 on Wednesday night while learning they will play Houston in the first round of the playoffs.

The Mavericks (50-32) have been locked into the seventh seed in the Western Conference for a week. They had to wait until the final night of the regular season to find out their opponent, which was settled with the Rockets' 117-91 win over Utah and San Antonio's 108-103 loss to New Orleans.



114



98

The Blazers (51-31) have the fourth seed as Northwest Division champions but will open the postseason on the road against the No. 5 seed, either San Antonio or Memphis.

LaMarcus Aldridge led Portland with 19 points after missing two games with a left foot sprain.

Aldridge treated the otherwise meaningless game as a way to get back in rhythm. Dallas had the rationale of chasing 50 wins for the first time since taking the title in 2011. Otherwise, both teams were more concerned with what was happening elsewhere.

The former Dallas-area high school star wanted to play close to regular minutes after missing two games. Aldridge has already played about half the season with ligament damage in his left thumb that will require surgery in the offseason. "When you try not to get hurt, that's when you get hurt," Aldridge said earlier in the day. "I knew I was going to at least play this game when we left on the road trip. I wanted to have that as a final tune-up game and keep my wind."

Nicolas Batum (right knee), CJ McCollum (sprained left ankle) and Chris Kaman (back) sat for Portland after getting injured Monday in Oklahoma City. Dorell Wright (broken left hand) and Arron Afflalo (right shoulder strain) aren't expected back until the playoffs.

For Dallas, Chandler Parsons missed

See BLAZERS/3B

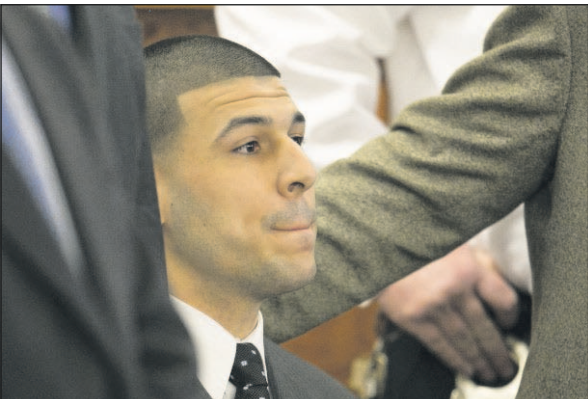
NFL

Hernandez convicted of murder, sentenced to life

By MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

FALL RIVER, Mass. — Former New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison Wednesday for a deadly late-night shooting, sealing the downfall of an athlete who once had a \$40 million contract and a standout career ahead of him.

Hernandez, 25, who had been considered one of the top tight ends in professional football, shook his head, pursed his lips and sat down after the jury forewoman pronounced him guilty in the slaying of Odin Lloyd, a 27-year-old landscaper and amateur weekend foot-



ball player who was dating the sister of Hernandez's fiancée.

Hernandez's mother, Terri, and his fiancée, Shayanna Jenkins, cried and gasped when they heard the

verdict. Hernandez, his eyes red, mouthed to them: "Be strong. Be strong." Lloyd's mother also cried.

Jurors deliberated for 36 hours over seven days before rendering

Former New England Patriots football player Aaron Hernandez listens as the guilty verdict is read during his murder trial, Wednesday in Fall River, Mass.

Dominick Reuter/Pool Photo via AP

their decision, which also included convictions on weapons charges.

"The jury found that he was just a man who committed a brutal murder," District Attorney Thomas Quinn said after the verdict. "The fact that he was a professional athlete meant nothing in the end."

Lloyd was shot six times early on June 17, 2013, in a deserted industrial park near Hernandez's home in North Attleborough. The motive has never been explained.

Police almost immediately zeroed in on the former Pro Bowl athlete because they found in Lloyd's pocket the key to a car the NFL player had rented. Within hours of Hernandez's arrest, the Patriots cut

See HERNANDEZ/3B