

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Sports shorts

Gonzaga's Karnowski out for rest of season

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Gonzaga center Przemek Karnowski will miss the rest of the season after undergoing back surgery.



Bulldogs coach Mark Few said Karnowski had surgery on Thursday. The 7-foot-1 center has been out since Nov. 27 due to a bulging disc and has missed six games. He averaged 8.8 points and 5.4 rebounds in five games.

Karnowski has been one of college basketball's best big men the past three seasons, causing matchup problems with his size and footwork, while anchoring Gonzaga's defense.

The Zags (11-3, 1-0 West Coast) opened the season No. 9 in The Associated Press Top 25, but dropped

Cal QB Jared Goff leaving for NFL

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — California quarterback Jared Goff is skipping his senior season to enter the NFL draft.

He announced his decision Thursday, two days after capping his stellar career by throwing six touchdown passes in a bowl victory against Air Force.

Goff is widely considered to be one of the top two quarterbacks eligible for the draft and is projected as a high first-round pick. He is the first Cal quarterback to leave early for the NFL since Aaron Rodgers following the 2004 season.

Goff is the career leader at Cal in just about every significant statistic for quarterbacks. He broke Marcus Mariota's Pac-12 season record for touchdown passes by throwing his 43rd in the 55-36 win over Air Force in the Armed Forces Bowl.

"Maybe the ego got in the way. Too much power. Control. Not being human about things; not working together, with the team, instead of being a dictator."

— **Lane Johnson**, Philadelphia Eagles offensive lineman speaking to the media about his now former coach Chip Kelly's firing after three seasons at the helm. Johnson went on to say that Kelly's practice styles "take a toll on you," adding that the "practices are the same from April through the end of the season."

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

2006 — Seattle's Shaun Alexander sets the NFL mark for touchdowns in a season with 28 and wins the league rushing title with 1,880 yards. He breaks Priest Holmes' mark of 27 set in 2003 with a 1-yard run, the 100th touchdown of his career.

2007 — Boise State, after tying the game with seven seconds to go in regulation, stuns No. 7 Oklahoma 43-42 in overtime to win the Fiesta Bowl. The No. 9 Broncos win on Ian Johnson's 2-point conversion run.

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

College Football

Clemson to play Alabama for national championship



Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson (4) poses with the Orange Bowl trophy following an NCAA college football semifinal playoff game against Oklahoma, Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015, in Miami Gardens, Fla. Clemson defeated Oklahoma 37-17.

Dominant second half lifts Clemson over Oklahoma

By PAUL NEWBERRY
AP National Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — So much for Clemsoning.

The Tigers are headed to the national championship game. Deshaun Watson turned in another stellar two-way performance, running for one touchdown, passing for another and accounting for 332 yards to lead top-ranked Clemson to a 37-17 victory over Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl on Thursday.

Clemson (14-0) dominated the second half and shut down Oklahoma's high-scoring offense, which had averaged 52 points over its last seven contests. The Sooners (11-2) actually came into the game as favorites, but the Tigers showed their perfect record was no fluke.

Until this season, the Tigers were known for such inexplicable disappointments that a term was coined for it — Clemsoning.

With one more win, they'll be known as something else.

National champions. "How 'bout them Tigers, baby?" coach Dabo Swinney screamed from the middle of the field, standing with a trophy full of oranges. "It was an awesome second half. It's been 34 years since Clemson played for a national championship. It won't be much longer."

See CLEMSON/2B



Alabama knocks out Michigan State

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Jake Coker played the game of his career, hooking up with Calvin Ridley for two touchdowns, as second-ranked Alabama aired it out to beat No. 3 Michigan State 38-0 Thursday night and advance to the national championship game.

Alabama (13-1) will face No. 1 Clemson (14-0) on Jan. 11 in Arizona looking for its fourth national title in nine seasons under coach Nick Saban.

The Tide looked like a team with no weaknesses against overmatched Michigan State (12-2). Coker, the promising Florida State transfer who sat the bench most of last season, was nearly perfect. The senior completed 25 of 30 for 286 yards. The freshman Ridley was brilliant, streaking by defenders on deep throws and outfighting them on jump balls. He caught eight passes for 138 yards.

Jonathan Allen and the ferocious Tide defensive front sacked Connor Cook four times and allowed the Spartans only one trip into the red zone — which ended with Cyrus Jones intercepting a pass at the goal line.

Jones added a high-stepping 57-yard punt return touchdown for the Tide, which hardly even had to

See ALABAMA/2B



NBA

Burke's season high leads Jazz over Blazers

Utah shoots 50 percent from field

By KAREEM COPELAND
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The Utah Jazz had horrendous shooting nights in consecutive games before facing Portland on Thursday.

Led by Trey Burke, they turned it around in a big way against the Trail Blazers.

Burke scored a season-high 27 points, and Utah cruised to a 109-96 victory over Portland. The Jazz shot 50 percent from the field, making at least half of their shots for the first time since Nov. 25 and just the third time this season.

"We didn't turn it over and we made shots," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. "I don't know what happens in 24 hours, but a lot of the same looks we had last night, we made them."

"It's not like we came in and shot last night or anything like that."

See BLAZERS/4B



Portland Trail Blazers guard C.J. McCollum (3) shoots as Utah Jazz's Gordon Hayward, left, and Raul Neto (25) defend during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015, in Salt Lake City.

AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Dawgs, Bucks bid adieu to 2015

Region's largest programs had plenty to laud from past year

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian

When compiling the list of the year's top 10 local sports stories that ran in 2015's final paper, several worthy moments that may have made it in past years were bumped.

Many of those moments came from the area's two largest programs, the 5A Hermiston Bulldogs and Pendleton Buckaroos, which appeared the most on the initial lengthy list but only once each in the top 10.

Following are some of the best that were omitted in the form of a top five moments for both the Dawgs and Bucks.

Hermiston's Top Five

1. Wrestling dominance: This item appeared as No. 6 on the regional list and has to go down as No. 1 when looking back on Hermiston's year in sports.

It's easy for Hermiston residents to feel entitled to annual OSAA championships these days, and the wrestling program can be thanked for beginning that culture back in 2001 with its first team championship. Fourteen years and nine titles later the program is still defining the Bulldogs throughout the Pacific Northwest. That can be attributed to a great youth program, great coaching and incredibly dedicated athletes.

The Bulldogs won their third-straight title last season in true team fashion with eight placers and just one champion — Sam Colbray at 195 pounds.

2. Silver streak: The Hermiston girls basketball team returned to the state championship for the first time since 2008 and nearly brought home the top hardware in a 51-46 loss to La Salle Prep to match the team's highest finish ever. It was the Bulldogs' sixth-straight state bracket appearance with five trophies won in that span.

Guard Sara Ramirez notched a double-double in the title bout with 15 points and 10 rebounds and returns to lead the Bulldogs this season along with guard Jansen Edmiston, who had 10 points and five rebounds in the 2015 final.

Their encore season is starting well with a 9-3 record that includes a 3-1 showing at the Nike Tournament of Champions in Phoenix, Arizona.

3. Bulldogs retool: Fans knew the Hermiston football team was headed for a rebuilding season after graduating 22 players and nearly the entire starting lineup from 2014's championship run, but a 0-5 start to the 2015 season was tough to watch.

First-year head coach David Faeteete kept the team pointed in the right direction, though, and despite several key injuries the team finished the regular season on a four-game winning streak to win the Columbia River Conference for the fourth-straight season.

The Dawgs clinched the CRC crown and a return to the state postseason with a 28-12 win over Pendleton at the Round-Up Grounds.

Despite a first-round playoff exit in a 49-14 loss to Wilsonville, 2015 saw the

See 2015/4B