

**MLS**

# Timbers part ways with head coach Caleb Porter

Had signed long-term contract in January 2016

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**  
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Coach Caleb Porter has parted ways with the Portland Timbers after five seasons with the team, including an MLS Cup championship.

The team made the move official Friday morning.

The 42-year-old Porter compiled a 68-50-52 record and guided the team to the league title in 2015. He was named the MLS Coach of the Year after his first season with the team in 2013.

In a lengthy statement released by the Timbers, Porter thanked the organization.

“My goal in taking the Timbers job was to lead the club to new heights and to win things that had never been done by the organization,” Porter said. “Looking back and reflecting on my time with the Timbers, I am very proud of the results we all achieved and I know that joining the club in 2013 was one of the best decisions of my life.”

Porter signed a long-term contract extension with the team in January 2016.

“I respect Caleb’s decision to seek his next challenge. He leaves Portland with a lasting legacy valued by everyone associated with the club, and I wish him nothing but success in the future,” team owner Merritt Paulson said in a statement.

Porter tied the Major League Soccer record for fewest losses through his first 100 games with just 25.

The Timbers qualified for the CONCACAF Champions League twice during his time with the team. The Timbers also reached the semifinals of the U.S. Open Cup in 2013, his first season with the team.

Portland finished this season as the top seed in the Western Conference but fell in the conference semifinals 2-1 on aggregate to the Houston Dynamo. The Timbers were decimated by injuries in the semis, including to midfielder Diego Chara, who broke a bone in his foot.

“This is one that hurts for sure. We fell short. We felt we could move on, but we didn’t,” Porter said after the game. “When the dust settles I think we will look back and realize it was a good season, but it’s also a season where you think to yourself, ‘What if? What if we were at full strength?’”

Porter came to the Timbers from the University of Akron, where he was head coach of the Zips from 2006-12. He went to the NCAA College Cup championship game twice during his tenure, winning the title in 2010.

The Timbers said they were identifying candidates to succeed Porter.

“With our next on-field leader, we look forward to building on the Timbers’ winning tradition and to setting the course for even greater achievements in the seasons ahead. Caleb leaves a strong club foundation and we are well-positioned to manage this departure,” Paulson said.



Porter

**Auto Racing**

# Earnhardt ready to say goodbye to NASCAR

By **DAN GELSTON**  
Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. bounded out of the media center and was instantly swarmed by fans snapping photos and shoving Sharpies in his face. Earnhardt was tailed until he walked up the steps to another TV interview.

“Did you see him?” a man yelled as more fans arrived a few steps too late to reach NASCAR’s most popular driver.

The chance to catch him is winding down.

Earnhardt will retire Sunday, ending a career that saw him emerge from his father’s intimidating shadow and grow into NASCAR’s favorite son over 18 full seasons. Hilarious and heartfelt, his folksy charm endeared him to the millions that comprised “Junior Nation” and made him a household name to the casual fan who recognized Earnhardt simply as NASCAR’s top pitchman.

Earnhardt has one final destination on his farewell tour, at Homestead-Miami Speedway, a track which over the last two years also helped the sport bid farewell to NASCAR greats Jeff Gordon and Tony Stewart. His legacy will be different from theirs, and not simply because Earnhardt never won a championship as they did. If anything, he was more beloved as an ambassador of the sport than any driver of his era.

The 20-something Earnhardt that retreated into his motorhome to play video games all night has matured into a 43-year-old man that will be flanked Sunday by his pregnant wife, his mother and sister before he slides into the No. 88 Chevrolet one last time.

“There’s a whole other world out there waiting for him,” sister Kelley Earnhardt Miller said. “There’s his marriage and having a baby and doing other things in life, either professionally or personally that he hasn’t been able to do. He’ll have time for them now. It’s exciting.”

Earnhardt’s finale hit a bump Friday — he’ll start from the rear of the field because of an engine change in the Chevys. His one wish was to end the race on his terms.



Dale Earnhardt Jr. speaks with the media during a news conference at Homestead-Miami Speedway in Homestead, Fla., Friday, Nov. 17, 2017.

AP Photo/Terry Renna

buttoned-down operation at Hendrick Motorsports.

Earnhardt has driven for team owner Rick Hendrick since 2008 after he split DEI, the team founded by his father but run by his stepmother. He was unhappy with the direction of DEI since his father’s 2001 death in a last-lap accident at the Daytona 500, and a frosty relationship with his stepmother led him to bolt to NASCAR’s most powerful team.

He won a Daytona 500 with each team, and 26 races overall. But he never won a Cup championship, or came close in achievements to matching his late Hall of Fame father, Dale, who won seven titles and was known as “The Intimidator.”

A third-generation driver, Earnhardt wanted to win a title for himself, Hendrick and the legion of fans who have idolized him for a generation. Earnhardt has been feted with charitable donations, his father’s race car, a barrel of pickles and numerous video tributes from tracks, sponsors and teams.

Budweiser, his sponsor at DEI, aired a tear-jerking appreciation of his days in the No. 88 car.

“They were all very emotional. Amy is the one that’s obviously the most emotional, with being pregnant and everything, so they’ve really been hitting her,” he said, laughing.

Earnhardt, who says he’s healthy and feels good in

**Dale Earnhardt Jr.**

**NASCAR Cup Series Driver Profile**

- 630 career starts
- 179, 165 laps driven
- 8,234 laps led
- 26 victories
- 149 Top-5 finishes
- \$95+ million in earnings

\*-Stats from Racing-Reference.info

the wake of concussions that cost him 20 career races, wants some of those memories on home video and hired a photographer to shoot the final weekend and has a camera crew filming in preparation for a potential documentary.

While the sport has all eyes on Earnhardt, his are on two more parting gifts: JR Motorsports can win an Xfinity Series championship on Saturday and hunting buddy Martin Truex Jr. is the favorite to win the Cup championship on Sunday.

“I’m Team Martin this weekend, for sure,” Earnhardt said.

Earnhardt’s not quite ready for a complete uncoupling from NASCAR: He has two or three Xfinity races planned for next season and tossed out the Homestead finale in 2018 as a potential race.

He’ll still be around at the track with his Xfinity teams and his job in the NBC Sports broadcast booth. Alex Bowman takes over his ride in 2018.

Outside of his family, Earnhardt will have his flock of fans pulling for him one final time in the 88.

“I thing going to Daytona next year, I’ll still be coming to terms about what it looks like without Dale on the race track,” Earnhardt Miller said. “I’m sad about it in terms of, it’s what we’ve known, it’s what our family’s done. It’s all that we’ve lived through and worked through in our lives with losing our dad, starting JR Motorsports and all the fun and different things we got to accomplish.”

It’s not over yet — but it’s getting there.

“We want to enjoy this weekend,” Earnhardt said, “but we want to end well.”

**BRIEFLY**

## Stanfield’s Woods signs with WWCC

STANFIELD — Stanfield junior pitcher Brody Woods signed with Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) on Wednesday, which makes him the fourth Tiger from the 2017 team to go on to play collegiate baseball.

Woods has received All-State honors the last two seasons, and after the 2017 season was named to the First Team All-EOL.

Last season, the Stanfield went 21-2 overall and 13-0 in league play. The Tigers had a nice postseason won, but it ended with a one-run loss in the 3A semifinals. Woods ended the season with a .479 average and 38 RBI; 1.44 ERA, 41 IP and 63 strikeouts.

Woods will join Dylan Grogan (Yakima Valley CC), Tony Flores (Blue Mountain CC) and Klay Jenson (Blue Mountain CC) at the collegiate level next year.

Kennewick High School’s Cooper Shelby and Southridge (WA) catcher Lane Hailey have also signed with WWCC.

**College Football**

# No. 16 Washington in an unusual spot as it hosts Utah

By **TIM BOOTH**  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — It’s a very strange place that No. 16 Washington finds itself in with two games left in the regular season.

The Huskies’ hopes of landing a spot in the College Football Playoff were dashed when they lost to Stanford. Their shot at playing in the Pac-12 championship game is completely out of their control. Even if the Huskies (8-2, 5-2, No. 18 CFP) win their last two games to reach 10 victories it may not be good enough to land them an at-large spot in one of the New Year’s Six bowl games.

In the end, the Huskies may end up playing the role of spoilers, beginning with Saturday’s game against Utah.

But things could still swing significantly in Washington’s favor. If California can upset Stanford on Saturday then Washington’s situation becomes far different. In that scenario, the Huskies only need a win

**Pac-12**

 <b>Utah Utes</b> (5-5, 2-5)	 <b>Washington Huskies</b> (8-2, 5-2)
<p>• Sat., 7:30 p.m. (ESPN) • at Husky Stadium</p>	

over No. 15 Washington State in the Apple Cup to claim a spot in the Pac-12 title game.

But if Stanford beats Cal then Washington becomes a spoiler. A win over Utah would keep the Utes waiting another week to try to gain bowl eligibility, and a win over the rival Cougars in the Apple Cup would keep Washington State out of the Pac-12 title game.

“These will be two really tough games and I know this: We’ll feel really good about ourselves if we can get that done. Because these are going to be tough challenges,” Washington coach Chris Petersen said. “Then we look up and say, ‘OK, now what?’ But for us to sit here and worry — that has nothing to do with the

mindset we have around here.”

The Utes (5-5, 2-5) need one victory in their final two games to become bowl eligible for the fourth straight season. After starting the season 4-0, the Utes have lost five of six, including last week’s 33-25 home loss to Washington State.

The Utes are bruised and battered, uncertain of the status of the Pac-12’s leading receiver, Darren Carrington, and could be down three starters on defense. Carrington, safety Chase Hansen and linebacker Sunia Tauteoli did not play against Washington State, while defensive end Kylie Fitts left the game with an injury.

“It doesn’t appear right now like there are any season-ending injuries. Although, in the regular season there are only two games left, so it is kind of a relative statement,” Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. “We just hope for the best, but there are a half-dozen guys that are in the situation of, ‘Are they or

aren’t they going to play?’”

Here are other things to watch for as the Huskies look to improve to 10-1 all-time vs. Utah:

**HUNTLEY’S REBOUND:** Utah needs a far better game from quarterback Tyler Huntley than the way he played last week against Washington State. Huntley threw five interceptions against the Cougars after having just four interceptions in his first seven games of the season. Huntley did throw for 330 yards, but needs to rediscover the efficiency of the previous week when he threw four touchdowns on just 22 pass attempts against UCLA.

**AIR IT OUT:** A year ago, Washington QB Jake Browning threw for 43 touchdowns, regularly hitting big plays downfield.

With two games left in the regular season, Browning has just 16 TD passes and only six of those have been of 20 yards or more. Last year, Browning had six TD passes of 20 or more yards in the first two games of the

season.

Browning needs just one more touchdown pass to set a career school record. He’s currently tied with Keith Price with 75 career TD passes.

**NO VICTOR:** Washington linebacker Azeem Victor was suspended indefinitely this week following his arrest on suspicion of driving under the influence. Petersen would not commit to whether Victor will play again this season.

Victor was a preseason AP All-American as an inside linebacker but was suspended for the season opener and eventually lost his starting job to Ben Burr-Kirven. Washington was in the process of transitioning Victor to a defensive end/outside linebacker.

**KICKIN’ IT:** If it comes down to a field goal, Utah has arguably the best kicker in the country. Matt Gay leads the nation with 22 field goals. He’s 22 of 26 on the season, including five of six on kicks of 50 or more yards. Gay’s season-long is 56 yards.

# SEMIFINAL: Hermiston’s run defense improvement a key to beating Wilsonville

Continued from 1B

performed that well in the first quarter. Their play in the opening 14 minutes has been inconsistent most of the season, and only recently have they been putting up double digits on an almost regular basis — Hermiston was held scoreless in the first quarter by La Salle Prep in Round 1 of the postseason.

On average, Hermiston has scored 8.8 of its 36.5 points in the opening quarter. One of the most common demoniators to the Bulldog’s success when they do score in the first quarter is scoring fast, like they did

against South Albany. And Pendleton. And Redmond. And Lewiston.

Doing this, however, against the future University of Washington defensive lineman Draco Bynum and crew will be a challenge.

Wilsonville has been as steady as one can be on the defense. Overall, they have allowed the fewest points in Class 5A (132) and have held almost every opponent scoreless in the first half. Only three teams have been able to find the end zone before halftime, and all three came in the second half.

During the regular

season, St. Helens took one to the house and Bend and Lebanon followed suit in the postseason.

As scary as Wilsonville’s defense is, its offense is also very threatening. If Hermiston can get the edge early and then bring the pressure to junior quarterback Nathan Overholt, the Bulldogs will better their chances at celebrating on the four-plus hour drive home.

For Wilsonville to return to the 5A finals for the second consecutive year it must assert itself at the line, and not just defensively.

**RUN RUN RUN:**

It has been a theme in every Hermiston game. The Bulldogs establish the run to then open up the passing game. It is also something that has worked for the Wildcats. But unlike Hermiston, who has both junior quarterback Andrew James and senior workhorse Jonathan Hinkle, Wilsonville counts on mostly one player: Cooper Mootz.

The 5-foot 9-inch 165-pound junior has racked up all but 800 of the Wildcats total rushing yards. Mootz has ran for 1,135 yards and 23 touchdowns on 180 carries. His impressive season may continue

if he can impose his will on Hermiston’s defensive line.

In Wilsonville’s last four wins, the Wildcats have ran for 300 or more yards. Hermiston hasn’t given up 300 yards or more since Week 6 against Ridgeview. Since that 48-26 win, the Bulldogs have only given up 200 or more yards once. But the Bulldogs have yet to face anyone like Mootz yet, and he doesn’t even have to have an extraordinary night on the gridiron.

Throughout the season, Hermiston has only allowed three players to collect more than 100 yards in a single game: Redmond’s

Jack Taylor and Mountain View duo Jonas Larsen and Dalton Payfer-Locking. The Bulldogs are 1-1 when allowing a player to run all over the field, and Mootz will threaten that record Saturday.

But all he has to run enough to get Overholt going. If Hermiston’s defense struggles to bring the pressure, Overholt will have another one of his near-perfect performances and Mootz .

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