MLS PLAYOFFS

Sounders to defend their MLS Cup title

By TIM BOOTH Associated Press

SEATTLE — Victor Rodriguez scored on a nifty give-and-go with Will Bruin

Houston

in the 22nd Western minute, **Conf. Final** Clint Dempsey added his

third goal of the playoffs early in the second half, and the Seattle Sounders advanced to the MLS Cup final with a 3-0

over win the Houston Dynamo on Thursday night.

The defending champion Sounders advanced on aggregate after their convincing two-goal win in Houston last week. Bruin added his second goal of the series in the 73rd minute as the Sounders advanced to face Toronto in the final and get the opportunity to become the first repeat MLS Cup champions since the Los Angeles Galaxy in 2011-12 — and on the same field Seattle won its first title a year ago. The Sounders and Toronto played to a 0-0 draw in the 2016 final before Seattle won on penalty kicks.

The Sounders took any nerves out of the second-leg with Houston early. Rather than packing in on defense,



Seattle Sounders midfielder Victor Rodriguez, center, kicks a goal against the Houston Dynamo during the first half of the second leg of the Western Conference final on Thursday in Seattle.

Seattle pushed forward and aggressively tried to get that third goal. It came on a four-pass series, with Bruin's right-footed flick the key. It found Rodriguez unmarked on a diagonal into the penalty area, and his right-footed shot beat Joe Willis to give Seattle the early advantage.

Rodriguez's goal gave the 45,298 at CenturyLink Field a collective exhale as Houston would have needed to score three goals to advance. That number became four when Dempsey finished a deft cross from Joevin Jones in the 52nd minute, and if that didn't put the match out of reach, Bruin added his goal in the 72nd minute to complete the rout.

Seattle's goal While scoring deserved recognition, its defense continued to be stellar. The Sounders have yet to allow a goal in the playoffs and haven't been scored upon since a 2-0 loss at Philadelphia on Oct. 1. Seattle finished off the Dynamo without defender Roman Torres, who was out due to yellow card accumulation.

Houston played the final 24 minutes with 10-men after Tomas Martinez was sent off for shoving the head

of Seattle's Jordy Delem as he was lying on the field following a foul. It was the second red card in the two-game series for Houston. Jalil Anibaba was given a red card in the first leg and missed Thursday's game. Houston was also without defender Philippe Senderos (hamstring) and forward Romell Quioto (illness).

Seattle also got a boost with the return of forward Jordan Morris after being out for two months due to a hamstring injury. Morris played the final 15 minutes of the match and should be available for the final.

College Football

Stanford seeks revenge in Pac-12 title game

By JOSH DUBOW Associated Press

CLARA, Calif. — The Stanford team that walked out of the Los Angeles Coliseum nearly three months ago after being overpowered by Southern California seemed an unlikely pick to get a rematch with the

Yet here Stanford is in the Pac-12 title game ready to get revenge against USC for that 42-24 loss in the second game of the season after having won eight of nine games with a familiar formula.

"You're talking about a very hot football team right USC coach Clay Helton said. "A lot of it can be attributed to how the defense is playing. I've always thought a David Shaw team is extremely strong down the middle of the defense."

An improved defense and the switch at quarterback to K.J. Costello are the biggest differences for the 14th-ranked Cardinal (9-3, 7-2 Pac-12, No. 12 CFP)

Pac-12 Championship



USC Trojans (10-2, 8-1)

• Friday, 5 p.m. (TV: ESPN) • at Levi's Stadium

heading into Friday night's title game at Levi's Stadium against No. 11 USC (10-2, 8-1, No. 10).

Stanford gave up 623 yards of offense to Sam Darnold and the Trojans in the first meeting, the highest total allowed in coach David Shaw's seven seasons. USC gained more than 300 yards through the air and on ground and dominated the line of scrimmage.

"I think we hit them and they were hitting on all cylinders, especially offensively," Shaw said. "You go back and watch again and it was just like, 'Wow!' Running it, throwing it, the pass protection was outstanding. The quarterback was as good as you can play the position."

Stanford hasn't allowed more than 430 yards or 24 points in a game over the past eight contests. The other big difference

has been the switch to Costello, who has provided more of a passing threat to complement big-play running back Bryce Love since taking over for Keller Chryst at the beginning of November. Costello threw four TD

passes last week against Notre Dame and is improving each week, the same way the rest of his team is improving. We started off the season 1-2, backs against the wall,"

Love said. "Just a testament to the team that we have. We're resilient. We tought back. We've come a long way. We still have more to prove.

Here are some other things to watch in the Pac-12 title

LOTS OF LOVE: Love has been slowed a bit in recent weeks by a sprained ankle but still is quite dangerous. He ran for 125 yards on 20 carries last week and ranks

second in the nation with 1,848 yards rushing while averaging 8.6 yards per carry. He had a 75-yard TD run against the Trojans, one of his FBS-record 11 runs of at least 50 yards this season.

"He's very patient," safety Chris Hawkins said. "They love pitching him the ball straight backward. Usually you get pitches to the outside. They pitch it backward and let him use his eyes and his footwork to good use. If you're not in your hole, he's going to find it."

DOMINANT NORTH: The team from the North Division has won all six Pac-12 championship games since the conference expanded to 12 teams, including Stanford's 41-22 win over USC two years ago. That's a fact not lost on the

'No South team has won it since it became a game," Hawkins said. "Last time we went, you all know what happened last time we went, but we're not going to talk about that.'

Phillips powers Knights past Tigers

East Oregonian

Prep Roundup

Johnny Phillips got his senior season started in a big way on Thursday night, as he scored a game-high 28 points to push his Irrigon Knights past the Stanfield Tigers 73-43 at Stanfield Secondary School.

The Knights (1-0) led by just seven at the end of the first quarter but outscored the Tigers (0-1) 18-5 in the second to gain some cushion for the second half. Behind Phillips, Leo Carillo scored eight points, Jesus Sandoval had seven and Eric Carillo added six

"We came out with good energy and the kids were ready to play," Irrigon coach Davie Salas said. "Great first start, but we still have a ways to go."

Brody Woods led Stanfield with 19 points and Fernando Ramirez added

Irrigon next plays Weston-McEwen in the Ione Basketball Bonanza on Friday at 4:30 p.m. Stanfield will play at Sherman on Friday at 7 p.m.

IHS 22 18 17 16 — 73 SHS 15 5 11 12 — 43 IRRIGON — J. Phillips 28, L. Carillo 8, J. Sandoval 7, E. Carillo 6, A. Roa 5, A. Gornez 5, D. Vera 4, P. Holcomb 4, L. Covarrubia 2, K. Fleming 2. STANFIELD — B. Woods 19, F. Ramirez 10, Eduardo Nunez 5. 3-pointers — IHS 5, SHS 3. Free throws — IHS 10-15, SHS 10-23. Fouls — IHS 14, SHS 15.

TOUCHET (WA) 74, **HELIX 35** — At Helix, the Grizzlies fought hard in the first half but ran out of steam in the second half to fall to Touchet in their season opener on Thursday evening.

The Grizzlies (0-1) trailed just 28-20 at halftime, but Touchet (1-0) came out of the gates in the third quarter on fire and outscored Helix 28-7 to take advantage of the game. Helix was debuting a new-look roster featuring numerous first-time varsity players, and head coach Zach Orem said that the inexperience showed.

"İt was a lot of our guys' first high school basketball game, most skipped JV and went right from middle school to varsity," he said. 'We're super young ... the guys played hard but just ran out of gas."

Gavin Newtson put together a double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds and Eli Springer added 15 points and seven rebounds. Helix's only other scorer was Logan Davis with three points.

Helix next hosts Bickleton (WA) on Saturday at 5:30 p.m.

THS 22 6 28 16 — 74
GHS 14 6 7 8 — 35
TOUCHET — Preciado 16, A. Acevedo
10, Warren 10, McKeown 9, Gutierrez 9,
Martinez 7, Arozco 7, Schaffer 6.
HELIX — G. Newtson 17, E. Springer
15, L. Davis 3.
3-pointers — THS 7, GHS 4. Free
throws — THS 9-13, GHS 5-9. Fouls —
THS 12, GHS 13.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

IRRIGON 61, STAN-FIELD 25 — At Stanfield, Jada Burns scored a game-high 23 points to help her Irrigon Knights run by the Stanfield Tigers in both teams' season openers on Thursday evening.

Behind Burns, Alyia Munoz scored 10 points, Taylor Davis and Natalie Romero each had eight and Kylie Wyant pitched in seven for the Knights (1-0). Kendra Hart led the Tigers (0-1) with 13 points and Savannah Sharp added five points.

Irrigon next plays Weston-McEwen at the Ione Basketball Bonanza on Friday at 3 p.m. Stanfield plays Sherman at the Sherman Tournament on Friday at 6 p.m.

 IHS
 10
 16
 19
 17
 —
 61

 SHS
 5
 6
 5
 9
 —
 25

 IRRIGON
 J. Burns
 23, A. Munoz
 10,
 IHHIGON — J. Burns 23, A. Munoz 10, T. Davis 8, N. Romero 8, K. Wyant 7, O. Luna 4. STANFIELD — K. Hart 13, S. Sharp 5, A. Galarza 3, A. Griffin 1, C. Blankenship 1, J. Wallace 1. 3-pointers — IHS 2, SHS 4. Free throws — IHS 8-9, SHS 5-12. Fouls — IHS 13, SHS 8.

TOUCHET (WA) 66,

HELIX 35 — At Helix, the Grizzlies dropped their season opener as Touchet (WA) left town with a 66-35 win on Thursday at Griswold High School.

Helix (0-1) next plays at Mac-Hi on Friday night at

DESALES WESTON-MCEWEN 50 — At Walla Walla, the Weston-McEwen Tiger-Scots erased a 20-point first half deficit but ultimately came up short in their season opener at DeSales (WA) on Wednesday night.

Chelsea Quaempts scored 21 to lead the Tiger-Scots (0-1) as she sank six field goals and made 7 of 12 attempts from the freee throw line. Kate Vescio added 11 points and Alyssa Finifrock pitched in 10 for the TigerScots.

Weston-McEwen next plays Irrigon at the Ione Basketball Bonanza on Friday at 3 p.m.

W-M 12 5 20 13 — 50 DHS 17 18 7 16 — 58 WESTON-MCEWEN — C. Quaempts 21, K. Vescio 11, A. Finifrock 10, A. Coff man 5, J. Lambert 3, T. Hearn, T. Burke, C. Davis, H. Michtyre. DESALES — H. Buratto 22, K. Buratto

19, Jones 8, Lyons 4, Ness 3, Arceo 2, Cortez.

Correz.
3-pointers — W-M 3, DHS 7. Free
throws — W-M 9-19, DHS 9-17. Fouls
— W-M 17 (Coffman fouled out), DHS 19.

SMITH: Thought about possible return to Oregon State after Andersen resigned

Continued from 1B

Stanford in a close 15-14 loss. A group of players started an online petition supporting Hall, as well as a Twitter hashtag #HALLin.

But Oregon State still wasn't able to muster a win. The Beavers wrapped up the season with a 69-10 loss to Oregon in the Civil War rivalry game to finish 1-11 overall and 0-9 in confer-

Smith admitted that he wondered if a return to Corvallis might be in the offing following Andersen's resignation.

"I was very surprised with Gary. I've met Gary a



Media and guests attend a news conference announcing Jonathan Smith's hiring as football coach at Ore-

couple of times, I think very highly of him," Smith said. "But when that took place it did cross my mind, 'Maybe

gon State, Thursday in Corvallis.

this is the time to do this and go after it.'

Smith joined Petersen's

staff as quarterbacks coach in 2012 at Boise State then moved with him to Washington in 2014. He helped recruit quarterback Jake Browning to the Huskies.

Smith also had stops as an assistant at Montana and Idaho. He was a graduate assistant at Oregon State from 2002-03.

A native of Pasadena, California, Smith was a walk-on in Corvallis, playing for the Beavers from 1998-2001. He was on Oregon State's 2000 team that went 11-1 and defeated Notre Dame in the Fiesta

Bowl under coach Dennis Erickson.

A fan favorite during his playing days, Smith ranks third on Oregon State's career list with 55 touchdown passes and 9,680 passing yards. He holds the record for the longest touchdown pass in school history with a 97-yard TD pass to Chad Johnson in 2000.

Johnson was one of those who congratulated Smith via Twitter: "Congratulations boss, you deserve it, love you man," he said.

Oregon State athletic director Scott Barnes said Smith was among the first candidates interviewed Andersen's departure. He spoke in depth to Smith on Tuesday night and ultimately offered him the job.

"He

incredibly is authentic, he's got grit," Barnes said. "He's got unparalleled passion for this place.'

Hall's future with the Beavers is uncertain. Smith said he had not yet met with him.

feel very positive about the future of that football team in there," Hall said outside the Beavers' locker room following the Civil War loss Saturday, "because I know they've learned a lot and I know they'll be in good hands.'

HERMISTON: Fans able to take pictures with players, championship trophy

Continued from 1B

Bulldogs earned the school's second state title, he felt his grandfather's presence which makes all the awards, all the community support even more special.

"It means everything," White said. "It means a lot because there were a lot of times this year where I got tested and I had to make the most of it and that's what I tried to do every week."

Now a week removed from the final game of the season, the Bulldogs — who finished the year 11-2 — got

to pay back a community that has not only supported them this year but over the last three years under Faaeteete and many more before him. After a team dinner

where the coaches honored their athletes with participation and team awards, the Bulldogs filed into the gym in front of a large crowd. Erick Olson, the voice of the Bulldogs spoke, along with Faaeteete. Afterward everyone poured into the commons area for autographs, pictures with the championship trophy and to reminisce on Hermiston's

You know, when I first got here I didn't know how long I was going to be here," he said. "I thought one year, just coaching getting experience and then find somewhere else but this community really accepted me, took me in and nurtured me into becoming the football coach I am today and it's a credit to the people here and their loving devotion to their kids.'

The community showed that love, and for the players it was something they will never forget.

"It's just special because it's nights like these that I'll never get back in my high school career," senior Joey Gutierrez said. "I'm just glad to see that the whole community supports our football program, it's just great.'

Junior quarterback Andrew James echoed those same sentiments as he is still riding the high from winning his first state title in just his second year starting under center.

"It's amazing," he said. 'We couldn't have done it without everyone. The families of the team. The coaches, (their) wives, and the kids and just all the support from the community. It's so big for all of us. 'The vibe around here,

it's unlike any other," James added. "You go to different towns and you see how other teams work and stuff they've got good things going but we feel like we've

got better things going here." As White, Gutierrez and other stars like Dayshawn Neal, Beau Blake and Jonathan Hinkle hang up their helmets, James will be leading a new Bulldog cast in the WIAA — where Faaeteete wants to become the first coach to win state titles in two different states. James feels good about

those odds.

"It is a legacy we're starting — two championships in five or whatever years, that's showing you've got power," he said, "and if we show power throughout a long period of time, it just makes Hermiston look really good."

Contact Alexis at amansanarez@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4542.