

Soccer

Sounders have rare chance to repeat as MLS champions

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press



• Saturday, 1 p.m.
• at BMO Field, Toronto

TUKWILA, Wash. — In the immediate aftermath of winning their first MLS Cup title a year ago, the Seattle Sounders started to plan long term.

After playing all the way into December, the Sounders knew the challenge of trying to make it back to the playoffs in 2017, let alone contend for another title, with a short, limited offseason. They also had evidence of how tough it was as the 2015 finalists — Portland and Columbus — both missed the playoffs in 2016.

The Sounders stuck to their plan early in the season even if it meant resting players and possibly giving away some early matches. But those decisions, combined with some key additions during the summer transfer window, have helped put Seattle back in the MLS Cup final against Toronto with a chance to do what few teams in league history

have accomplished: repeat as champions.

“We know for reigning champions it’s extremely difficult to reach the playoffs again, let alone repeat,” goalkeeper Stefan Frei said. “For us to have a chance to do that is massive.”

A win on Saturday would raise Seattle to another level in North American soccer. They’re already highly regarded for their fan support and one of the most successful expansion launches in pro sports. They’ve won multiple U.S. Open Cup titles and last year added the desired star to their crest with their first league championship.

But a victory over Toronto would make Seattle just the fourth team in league history to repeat. D.C. United won



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Seattle Sounders forward Clint Dempsey looks to pass during training on Wednesday in Tukwila, Wash.

the first two titles in league history. Houston won consecutive titles in 2006-07 and Los Angeles went back-to-back in 2011-12.

“I think we’re at the point now where we’re starting to get in that elite level of clubs in MLS. I think the league and people from the outside are starting to notice that since (2009) we’ve reached the playoffs every time, we’ve consistently grabbed

trophies, we’ve consistently found ourselves competing for trophies,” Frei said. “And even though we may be a young team compared to some of the original ones we’re starting to fill the cabinet with trophies. I think being able to achieve something like the L.A. Galaxy did winning back-to-back would definitely cement us in that elite class.”

Repeating has been a

rarity in the league’s 22 seasons. The back-to-back titles by Los Angeles earlier this decade may be the most impressive because they came at a time when the league was expanding rapidly and there was more parity in the league.

That’s why Seattle and Toronto making it back to the final for the second straight year is such a notable accomplishment. Between league play, domestic competitions, international call-ups and a variety of other obstacles, both have enough depth and talent to stand out.

“There are a lot of teams that are even because of the way the league is set up, salary cap situations for teams. I just feel like there are a lot of teams that are pretty close to each other,” Seattle forward Clint Dempsey said. “It’s not like there is one team that has an opportunity to really go and get a ton of players and have a huge salary cap to try and push themselves away from everybody else like you see

in the other leagues. It’s a good league, we have a great team and I think the organization has done a great job of providing depth for this team but also an attractive style of soccer for the fans to watch.”

There’s also Seattle’s sports history. Both the Seattle Seahawks and Seattle SuperSonics played in consecutive championships, yet neither was able to pull off two straight titles. The Sonics lost to the Washington Bullets in 1978, but beat them in 1979. The Seahawks won the Super Bowl in 2014 and were on the verge of winning the following season before a famous late interception against New England cost Seattle a second straight title.

“We’re living in a really cool moment because what happened last year is special and what is happening this year is special,” coach Brian Schmetzer said. “We still have one more game to go. We’re going to do our best to put out a good performance and we’ll see which team wins.”

Prep Roundup

Riverside girls knock off Rockets at buzzer

East Oregonian

UMATILLA — In the first day of the Columbia River Clash at Umatilla High, the Riverside Pirates continued their win streak after a dramatic finish. Riverside held on to defeat the Pilot Rock Rockets 38-36 thanks to a strong second half performance from senior Skylar Wightman and a bucket at the buzzer.

The Rockets (3-1) put their scoring woes behind them and came out ready to fight for their previously undefeated record, but the Pirates (4-0) held on in the final seconds.

“They played real well defensively,” Riverside head coach Clair Costello said of his team.

While Costello said the girls have yet to have the offensive performance they are capable of, Wightman had an impressive outing with a game-high 13 points.

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|-----|----|---|---|----|---|----|
| PR | 6 | 7 | 8 | 15 | - | 36 |
| RHS | 13 | 3 | 8 | 14 | - | 38 |

PILOT ROCK — G. Austin 10, S. Weinke 9, K. Deist 5, B. Howland 5, B. Balezitina 3, K. Evans 2, R. Oates 2.
RIVERSIDE — S. Wightman 13, A. Hernandez 11, B. Avalos 5, A. Caldera 4, F. Rosen 4, E. Daltoso 1.
3-pointers — PR 3, RHS 4. Free throws — PR 5-9, RHS 10-14. Fouls — PR 19, RHS 8.

BOYS BASKETBALL

UMATILLA 83, UNION 35 — At Umatilla, the Vikings opened up their Columbia River Clash tournament on Thursday evening with an 83-35 beatdown of the Union Bobcats.

Seth Cranston led the Vikings (3-0) with 20 points, Sebastian Garcia had 16 points and Moises Garcia-lazo added 10 points. The Vikings led the Bobcats (2-1) by a 42-19 score at the break, and then exploded for 37 points in the third quarter to cruise to the victory. Keegan Glenn led Union with 13 points.

| | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|---|---|----|
| UNION | 12 | 7 | 9 | 7 | - | 35 |
| UMATILLA | 19 | 23 | 37 | 4 | - | 83 |

UMATILLA — S. Cranston 20, S. Garcia 16, M. Garcia-lazo 10, T. Duffey 7, C. De Loera 7, K. Webb 7, G. Armenta 6, U. Garcia 6, L. Miller 4, J. Garcia, S. Hartung, N. Noford.
3-pointers — UNION 1, UMAT 6. Free throws — UNION 2-5, UMAT 9-14. Fouls — UNION 14, UMAT 12.

PILOT ROCK 56, RIVERSIDE 34

— At Umatilla, Bryson Pierce scored 22 points as Pilot Rock defeated Riverside in the Columbia River Clash tournament on Thursday afternoon.

After Pierce, Chris Weinke scored 11 points for the Rockets (4-0), Riley Lankford had 10 and Levi Thieme had nine. Cristian Rea led the Pirates (1-3) with 10 points.

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|-----|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| PR | 15 | 18 | 15 | 8 | - | 56 |
| RHS | 9 | 8 | 4 | 13 | - | 34 |

PILOT ROCK — B. Pierce 22, C. Weinke 11, R. Lankford 10, L. Thieme 9, B. Key 4.
RIVERSIDE — C. Rea 10, F. Aparicio 7, M. Hegar 7, A. Zellar 5, M. Madrigal 3, B. Franco 2.
3-pointers — PR 7, RHS 5. Free throws — PR 9-14, RHS 3-5. Fouls — PR 12, RHS 13.

Also from Thursday’s Columbia River Clash action, the Echo Cougar boys defeated Faith Bible 56-44 and will play Umatilla on Friday. In girls action, Umatilla beat Union 34-32, Mac-Hi beat Stanfield 40-26, and Echo fell to Faith Bible 52-14.

OLYMPICS: US ready

Continued from 2B

from the State Department, which has not issued any travel restrictions to South Korea.

The USOC is in frequent contact with the State Department, the organizing committee in South Korea and law enforcement about security issues in Korea and other places that members of the U.S. team travel.

“Each host city presents a unique challenge from a security perspective, and that is no different in this regard,” spokesman Mark Jones said. “We will continue to work with (authorities) to ensure that our athletes, and our entire delegation, are safe.”

In September, the USOC’s head of security, Nicole Deal, sent a letter to members of the U.S. delegation saying, “Despite current political tensions with North Korea,

there is no specific information to suggest there are imminent threats to U.S. citizens or facilities in South Korea.”

That same week, USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said, “From our perspective, with the information we currently have, it’s full-steam ahead.”

It’s the same position the USOC held as of Thursday, and athletes who have been faced with the question haven’t wavered on their intention to compete.

“I was in Pyeongchang last February and as far as I’ve been told over the past year by the USOC, everything is basically the same,” figure skater Nathan Chen said last month. “I didn’t feel any security threats while I was there and I feel like everything will be basically the same for this upcoming Games. I trust the USOC 100 percent and I know that they would do the best for all of their athletes.”

TIGERS: Lone varsity returner leads Stanfield to its second victory of season

Continued from 1B

game and we should have won by more,” Wood said. “We just need to focus on the next game because Pilot Rock is a league game so it’ll show us. We’ve already played a league team in Culver so it’ll show us what league is like.”

That game versus Culver at the Sherman Invitational in Moro was the first time the Tigers got to see Bailey’s extensive sweater collection.

“I do have probably 10-15 Christmas sweaters,” he said. “I wore it one time because they just weren’t having fun, so I wore it against Culver and we had some fun and we won so I figured I might as well wear it again. I’ll probably have an array of them throughout December

anyways.”

Bailey is working to continue the recent winning tradition of Stanfield athletics, using an almost entirely new team made up of three sophomores, five juniors and four seniors.

“It’s hard,” Woods said. “There’s a lot of growing up for those kids to do because they don’t know, they don’t have the varsity experiences. Elias (Esquivel) ... he’s getting way better though, he’s improved so much. It’s incredible how much he’s improved. Everybody just needs to keep following in his footsteps, I think.”

Esquivel had an impressive outing against Arlington. All three of his baskets were 3-pointers, and the ball was in his hands during the final seconds as Stanfield clung to a two-point lead.

It was the returning duo who clinched the win for the Tigers.

The Honkers had missed a lay-up to tie the game after back-to-back Stanfield turnovers. Arlington got the ball back and called a timeout to catch their breath. There were 7.7 seconds remaining as they readied to inbound the ball.

“They beat us on about every single inbound,” Bailey said of the Honkers. “They would bring the in-bounder around and I kept telling them, ‘You guys have got to guard him, you’ve got to guard him.’ So finally we just said, ‘You know what, Brody take the in-bounder.’”

Woods did just that and as the ball fell into the hands of Arlington senior Brent Troutman, who stepped back to attempt another three,

Woods used his 6-foot 5-inch frame to block the shot. Esquivel was there to recover the ball and secure at least a tie with a final free throw.

Esquivel was nervous, he admitted after the game — he didn’t want to give Arlington’s productive shooters a chance to tie or win. He made the first and when the second missed and bounced Arlington’s way off the rim, the Honkers didn’t have enough time to execute their final play.

The win was a testament to the potential Bailey sees in the team, which he stresses in no way “rebuilding.”

“Even though we’re young, we’re not rebuilding,” he said. “This is not a rebuilding year by any means and that’s what we’re trying to keep off of us because we owe it to our seniors to have a good year and I really think

once we click we’re going to be a dominating force.”

Stanfield’s recent domination, and the expectations of Tiger athletes, are something he knows well.

Bailey spent grades K-12 in Stanfield, and left to continue his education at Eastern Oregon University. He didn’t play or coach basketball, but he knew one day he wanted to come back to Stanfield to teach and now take the helm of the boys basketball team.

“Everything in my life has kind of fallen into place,” Bailey said. “So when (a teaching position) opened up I was like, ‘I want to go home.’”

There are three generations of Baileys in Stanfield and Bailey’s wife’s family is also from the town with roughly 2,000 residents.

“I just love it, the commu-

nity is — I’ve never been in anything like Stanfield,” he said. “Nothing has ever come close. My high school upbringing was just so much fun that I kind of wanted to go back and try to give these kids the same thing I experienced.”

Stanfield will continue to compete in the Columbia River Clash through the weekend, and face Pilot Rock at 3:30 p.m. Friday.

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|-----|----|----|----|---|---|----|
| SHS | 14 | 11 | 28 | 8 | - | 61 |
| AHS | 9 | 17 | 23 | 9 | - | 58 |

STANFIELD — B. Woods 17, E. Nunez 14, E. Esquiel 10, H. Hernandez 6, M. Sanchez 5, S. Keltz 4, F. Ramirez 2, B. Hernandez 2, R. Orozco 1
ARLINGTON — W. Good 17, B. Troutman 15, T. Evans 9, D. Valdez 8, J. Troutman 5, T. Longacre 4
3-pointers — SHS 5, AHS 5. Free throws — SHS 18-31, AHS 7-10. Fouls — SHS 15, AHS 22.

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SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Friday
Irrigon vs. Imbler (at Heppner), 4:30 p.m.
Ione vs. Prairie City (at Condon), 4:30 p.m.
Walla Walla (WA) at Pendleton, 7 p.m.
Chiawana (WA) at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.
Mac-Hi at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. Salem Academy (at Kennedy), 7:30 p.m.
Helix at Enterprise, 7:30 p.m.
N. Clackamas Christian at Condon/Wheeler, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday
Nixyaawii vs. Crane (at EOU), 7:30 p.m.
Riverside, Umatilla, Pilot Rock, Stanfield, Arlington, Echo vs. TBD (at Umatilla), TBD

Sunday
Nixyaawii vs. Jordan Valley (at EOU), 12:30 p.m.
Ione vs. North Clackamas Christian (at Condon), 12:30 p.m.
Mac-Hi vs. Irrigon (at Heppner), 2:30 p.m.
Prairie City at Condon/Wheeler, 3:30 p.m.
Imbler at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Irrigon vs. Imbler, 3 p.m.
Ione vs. Prairie City (at Condon), 3 p.m.
Chiawana (WA) at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Mac-Hi at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii vs. Crane (at EOU), 6 p.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. King’s Way Christian (WA) (at Kennedy), 6 p.m.
North Clackamas Christian at Condon/Wheeler, 6 p.m.
Helix at Enterprise, 6 p.m.
Pendleton at Walla Walla (WA), 7 p.m.
Riverside, Umatilla, Pilot Rock, Mac-Hi, Echo vs. TBD (at Umatilla), TBD

Saturday
Nixyaawii vs. Jordan Valley (at EOU), 11 a.m.
Ione vs. North Clackamas Christian (at Condon), 11 a.m.
Mac-Hi vs. Irrigon (at Heppner), 1 p.m.
Prairie City at Condon/Wheeler, 3:30 p.m.
Imbler at Heppner, 4 p.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. TBD (at Kennedy), TBD

COLLEGE WRESTLING
Warner Pacific, Clackamas CC at EOU, 4/6 p.m.

PREP SCORES

THURSDAY BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

FRANKLIN 50, Lebanon 42
PLEASANT HILL 71, Siuslaw 60
PARMA (ID) 52, Vale 42
PORTLAND ADV. ACAD. 89, Waverly College (Other) 58
COLUMBIA CHRIST. 52, Cat. Gabel 49 (OT)
WESTSIDE CHRIST. 72, Valer Christian 47
HORIZON CHRISTIAN-TUALATIN 44, Cascade Christian 43
DE LA SALLE NORTH CATHOLIC 84, La Pine 45
Pilot Rock 56, RIVERSIDE 34
UMATILLA 83, Union 35
Pilot Rock 56, RIVERSIDE 34
UMATILLA 83, Union 35
OREGON F/T DEAF 54, Jewell 35
C.S. Lewis Acad. 51, PORT WALDORF 34
EDDYVILLE CHAR. 48, Willamette Valley Christian 45
Trinity Lutheran 61, DUNSMUIR (CA) 33
Grants Pass at EAGLE POINT, canceled

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

PREP WRESTLING

Friday
Heronston at Post Falls (ID)
Pendleton, Mac-Hi, Heppner at La Grande Tournament
Irrigon at Culver Invitational, 8 a.m.
Saturday
Irrigon at Culver Invitational, 8 a.m.
Riverside at Leonard Schutte Invite (WA)
Echo at Nyssa Tournament

PREP SWIMMING

Pendleton, Hermiston at Baker, Noon

MEN’S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Wednesday
Multnomah JV at BMCC, 5 p.m.

WOMEN’S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Friday
Edmonds at BMCC, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday
EOU at Linfield, 4 p.m.
BMCC at Blazer Classic (Centralia, WA), TBA

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East
New England 10 2 0.833 348 223
Buffalo 6 6 0.500 227 283
N.Y. Jets 5 7 0.417 209 298

South

Tennessee 8 4 0.667 266 282
Jacksonville 8 4 0.667 299 178
Houston 4 8 0.333 296 309
Indianapolis 3 9 0.250 205 330

West

Pittsburgh 10 2 0.833 281 213
Baltimore 7 5 0.583 280 207
Cincinnati 5 7 0.417 219 318
Cleveland 0 12 0.000 176 308

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East
Philadelphia 10 2 0.833 361 215
Dallas 6 6 0.500 286 284

Football

SOUTHRIDGE 66, Kalani (HI) 39
Mazama 48, RIDGEVIEW 31
Sutherlin 52, ST. MARY’S-MEDFORD 41
ASTORIA 59, R.A. Long (WA) 45
Ontario at NEW PLYMOUTH (ID) 6:30pm
Nyssa 47, BAKER 38
MCLOUGHLIN 40, Stanfield 26
Klamath Union 53, BUTTE VALLEY (CA) 13

VALE 40, Fruitland (ID) 30
Portland Christian 42, VERNONIA 25
Jefferson 49, TAFT 14
WARRENTON 40, Neah-Kah-Nie 30
Portland Adventist Acad. 47, KNAPP 37
DAYTON 48, Rainier 28
Catin Gabel 39, COLUMBIA CHRIST. 19
Riverside 39, PILOT ROCK 36
UMATILLA 34, Union 32
HARRISBURG 46, Colton 25
Crow 44, LOWELL 25
Faith Bible 52, ECHO 14
Jewell 48, OREGON F/T DEAF 16
PORTLAND WALDORF 34, C.S. Lewis Acad. 21

Washington

Washington 5 7 0.417 272 314
N.Y. Giants 2 10 0.167 189 291

South

New Orleans 9 4 0.692 370 263
Carolina 8 4 0.667 269 238
Atlanta 8 5 0.615 294 261
Tampa Bay 4 8 0.333 243 288

North

Minnesota 10 2 0.833 285 204
Detroit 6 6 0.500 314 308
Green Bay 6 6 0.500 258 281
Chicago 3 9 0.250 191 267

West

L.A. Rams 9 3 0.750 361 222
Seattle 8 4 0.667 290 222
Arizona 5 7 0.417 219 310
San Francisco 2 10 0.167 202 298

Week 14

Thursday’s Games
Atlanta 20, New Orleans 17
Sunday’s Games
Oakland at Kansas City, 10 a.m.
San Francisco at Houston, 10 a.m.
Minnesota at Carolina, 10 a.m.
Chicago at Cincinnati, 10 a.m.
Green Bay at Cleveland, 10 a.m.
Detroit at Tampa Bay, 10 a.m.
Indianapolis at Buffalo, 10 a.m.
Dallas at N.Y. Giants, 10 a.m.
Washington at L.A. Chargers, 1:05 p.m.
Tennessee at Arizona, 1:05 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Denver, 1:05 p.m.
Seattle at Jacksonville, 1:25 p.m.
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams, 1:25 p.m.
Baltimore at Pittsburgh, 5:30 p.m.
Monday’s Game
New England at Miami, 5:30 p.m.

Basketball

Thursday’s Games
L.A. Lakers 107, Philadelphia 104
Washington at Phoenix, 6 p.m.
Brooklyn 100, Oklahoma City 95
Houston 112, Utah 101
Friday’s Games
Chicago at Charlotte, 4 p.m.
Cleveland at Indiana, 4 p.m.
Denver at Orlando, 4 p.m.
Golden State at Detroit, 4 p.m.
Dallas at Milwaukee, 5 p.m.
Sacramento at New Orleans, 5 p.m.
Toronto at Memphis, 5 p.m.

Boston at San Antonio, 6:30 p.m.

NCAA Men’s Basketball

Top 25 Thursday’s Games
No. 21 Purdue 80, Valparaiso 50
Friday’s Games
St. John’s at No. 16 Arizona State, 5 p.m. (PAC12)
Oklahoma at No. 25 USC, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

Pac-12 Thursday’s Games

No games scheduled.
Friday’s Games
Colorado State at Oregon, 7 p.m. (PAC12)
St. John’s at Arizona State, 5 p.m. (PAC12)
Oklahoma at USC, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

NCAA Women’s Basketball

Top 25 Thursday’s Games
No. 4 Louisville vs. Vanderbilt 57
No. 24 Michigan 82, Marquette 76
No. 10 West Virginia 73, Pitt 52
No. 14 Duke 85, UNC 54
No. 13 FSU 84, Stetson 39
No. 25 Cal 89, San Diego 64
Friday’s Games
George Washington at No. 15 Maryland, 4 p.m.
No. 20 Kentucky at Florida Gulf Coast, 4 p.m.
No. 1 UConn at DePaul, 4 p.m. (FS1)
Saint Louis at No. 17 Missouri, 5 p.m.
No. 7 UCLA at Oklahoma State, 5 p.m.

Pac-12 Thursday’s Games

North Arizona 84, Arizona 66
Boise State 85, Washington 82
No. 25 Cal 89, San Diego 64
Friday’s Games
No. 7 UCLA at Oklahoma State, 5 p.m.

Ottawa 27 9 12 6 24 77 93
Buffalo 28 7 17 4 18 60 96

NCAA Men’s Basketball

Top 25 Thursday’s Games
New Jersey 27 16 7 4 36 84 81
Columbus 28 17 10 1 35 80 76
N.Y. Islanders 28 16 9 3 35 104 90
Washington 29 17 11 1 35 90 98
Pittsburgh 30 16 11 3 35 90 96
N.Y. Rangers 27 15 10 2 32 91 85
Carolina 27 11 11 2 28 76 81
Philadelphia 29 11 11 7 29 83 86
WESTERN