

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Alabama's freshman quarterback Tua Tagovailoa holds up the championship trophy after Alabama's 26-23 overtime win over Georgia in the college football playoff championship game on Monday in Atlanta. AP Photo/David Goldman

Crimson Tide's dynasty rolls on

Alabama turns to freshman quarterback in second half, wins fifth national title in nine years with overtime win over Georgia

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

ATLANTA — To add another championship to the greatest dynasty college football has ever seen, Alabama turned to its quarterback of the future, and Tua Tagovailoa proved that his time is now.

The freshman quarterback, who had played mostly mop-up duty this season, came off the bench to spark a comeback and threw a 41-yard touchdown to DeVonta Smith that gave No. 4 Alabama a 26-23 overtime victory against No. 3 Georgia on Monday night for the College Football Playoff national championship.

Tagovailoa entered the game at halftime, replacing a struggling

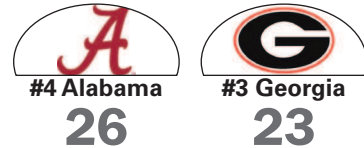


Alabama WR DeVonta Smith (6) makes the game-winning TD catch in overtime against Georgia during overtime of the national championship game on Monday in Atlanta. Curtis Compton/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP

Jalen Hurts, and threw three touchdown passes to give the Crimson Tide its fifth national championship since 2009 under coach Nick Saban.

"He just stepped in and did his thing," Hurts said. "He's built for stuff like this. I'm so happy for him." The Tide might have a quar-

National Championship



terback controversy ahead of them, but first Alabama will celebrate another national title.

For the third straight season, Alabama played in a classic CFP final. The Tide split two with Clemson, losing last season on touchdown with a second left.

What was Saban thinking as the winning pass soared?

"I could not believe it," he said. "There's lots of highs and lows. Last See TITLE GAME/3B

Saturday Prep Roundup

Knights' streak snapped

East Oregonian

VALE — The Irrigon girls basketball team's win streak came to a halt on the road against Vale. In the EOL league opener, the Vikings welcomed the Knights and with it a 37-24 victory.

Leading Irrigon's efforts was senior Olivia Luna with six points. Three other Knights (11-2 overall, 0-1 EOL) scored four points apiece.

"It was actually a close game until the last few minutes," head coach Mike Royer said, "when we just ran out of gas, and frustration set in. We struggled offensively all night, but a lot of that was Vale defending us very tough. Nothing came easy."

The Vikings (3-8, 1-0) had a narrow two-point lead entering halftime, and again held a two-point lead going into the fourth quarter — which they eventually extended to 13 points.

Continuing with league play, Irrigon will host Riverside on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

PILOT ROCK 46, UNION 44 — At Pilot Rock, Grace Austin's lay-in with 1.9 seconds left gave the Rockets a win over the Union Bobcats in front of a packed gym on Saturday evening.

Austin's basket came off an offensive rebound, grabbing a missed shot by Sara Weinke and putting it right back in for the win. It was quite the game for Austin, coincidentally on her birthday, as she finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds. Kayla Deist led the Rockets (10-5) with 13 points and 10 rebounds.

UHS	16	12	8	8	—	44
PR	15	10	11	10	—	46

UNION — K. Good 25, E. Clark 8, A. O'Reilly 6, K. Marriott 3, B. Kohr 2.
PILOT ROCK — K. Deist 13, G. Austin 10, K. Evans 9, S. Weinke 7, R. Oates 6, L. Brewer 1, B. Howland, B. Balezina.
3-pointers — UHS 6, PR 1. Free throws — UHS 8-13, PR 13-22. Fouls — UHS 14, PR 13.

HEPPNER 47, ELGIN 28 — Behind a 14-point performance from sophomore Jacee Currin, Heppner ended non-league play on a high note the first three quarters.

Heppner freshman Sydney Wilson pitched in 12 points. For Elgin, sophomore Tymra Anderson had a team-high seven points.

See PREPS/3B

Five Mustangs earn all-state honors

East Oregonian

Five players that helped the Heppner Mustangs wrap up another league championship and playoff berth were further recognized for their individual efforts.

Seniors Wyatt Steagall, Beau Wolters and Coby Dougherty as well as junior Tyler Carter and sophomore Gavin Hanna-Robinson were selected to the Class 2A all-state football team.

The list, compiled in late December, is voted on by the state's coaches.

Steagall earned a spot on the second team defensive line and third team offensive line. On defense, Steagall recorded 53 tackles with 12 sacks and 20 tackles-for-loss and on offense he was the leader of a line that improved dramatically throughout the season.

Wolters was also a two-way selection as a second team defensive back and third team wide receiver.

The senior tallied 28 tackles with two tackles-for-loss and two interceptions on defense, and finished with 947 all-purpose yards and 15 total touchdowns on offense.

Finishing up Heppner's picks were Coby Dougherty (44 tackles, 11 TFL) on third team linebacker, Tyler Carter on third team offensive line, and Gavin Hanna-Robinson (41 tackles, 8 TFL) also a third team linebacker.

See ALL-STATE/2B



Heppner's Beau Wolters is one of five Mustang players to earn all-state recognition for the 2017 season. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Sports shorts

Bears pick Chiefs assistant Nagy as next head coach

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — The Chicago Bears hired Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Matt Nagy as their new head coach Monday, hoping he can help a foundering NFL franchise emerge from one of the worst runs in its history.

The Bears announced the move a week after firing coach John Fox, who went 14-34 in three seasons for a .292 winning percentage that is the second-lowest in team history. The Bears were 5-11 this past season and haven't finished above .500 since they let Lovie Smith go following a 10-6 finish in 2012, two years after their last visit to the playoffs.

The 39-year-old Nagy spent the past 10 seasons working under Andy Reid in Philadelphia and Kansas City.



Nagy

"It's just a lot of white noise, in a sense. Luke is my guy. I love playing for him. I'm sure most of us love playing for him too. ... We stand by Luke. I know the front office does."

— Kyle Kuzma

Los Angeles Lakers rookie addressing the notion that the Lakers have quit on head coach Luke Walton. The topic arose in comments from rookie Lonzo Ball's father, LaVar, who told ESPN that Walton had lost control of the locker room.

Washington State hires new defensive coordinator

PULLMAN, Wash. (AP) — Washington State has hired former Minnesota head coach Tracy Claeys to be defensive coordinator.

Claeys will replace Alex Grinch, who left for Ohio State after turning the Cougars defense into one of the best in the Pac-12. Washington State was No. 2 in total defense in the conference this season.

Claeys, 49, was most recently the head coach at Minnesota, taking over for Jerry Kill after Kill resigned due to health issues. Claeys went 11-8 and took the Golden Gophers to back-to-back bowls in his year and a half leading the program. His last victory came against Washington State in the Holiday Bowl, but was in the midst of 10 players being suspended in connection with sexual assault allegations.



Claeys

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1996 — The Toronto Raptors set an NBA record by not making a single free throw in a 92-91 loss to the Charlotte Hornets. The expansion Raptors go 0-for-3 from the line.

2013 — No one is elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. For the second time in four decades, baseball writers fail to give any player the 75 percent required for induction to Cooperstown. Craig Biggio, 20th on the career list with 3,060 hits, appears on 68.2 percent of the 569 ballots, the highest total but 39 votes shy.

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