

NFL

Teams back at combine in search of 2018 success

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INDIANAPOLIS — Lured out of the broadcast booth with a \$100 million contract that makes him the highest-paid football coach ever, Jon Gruden sauntered up to the podium and flashed that mischievous smile.

“I’m very excited to be back here in Indianapolis,” Gruden declared. “I sure have missed the combine.”

Gruden is navigating an offseason NFL landscape that’s changed drastically since he last roamed the sideline nearly a decade ago.

“It’s a lot different because you’re not allowed to have any interaction with the players, and I’ve always complained about that since the new (collective bargaining agreement) came into place,” Gruden said Wednesday. “A lot of players would come to see me in Tampa to get their football fix.

“So, you’re not allowed to have contact with these guys. But what’s most discouraging to me is we’ve got to make some decisions on our roster, on salaries, on players and their futures and you can’t even meet them,” Gruden grumbled.

“I don’t know these guys. I’ve never coached them. I never met half of them. So, that’s been very, very difficult for me and I’ve been emotional about it at times.”

On the next podium was Matt Patricia, who, unlike his former colleague Josh McDaniels, didn’t



Oakland Raiders head coach Jon Gruden speaks during a press conference at the NFL Combine on Wednesday in Indianapolis.

balk at leaving Bill Belichick’s brigade.

Then there was Andy Reid, in the midst of another major roster shakeup, and his protege, Doug Pederson, still basking in Philadelphia’s first Super Bowl triumph in just his second season as coach of the Eagles.

All are gathering this week in Indianapolis hoping to better their chances of winning in 2018.

Top college prospects, including a group of quarterbacks that could produce five first-round draft picks, will spend four days getting poked

and prodded, tested and timed.

GMs and coaches will pepper them with questions either in formal 15-minute interviews or during a mixed zone after their physical assessments.

“It’s a chance to get to know these guys, to know exactly what you’re getting when they come into the building,” said new Texans general manager Brian Gaine.

He said their athleticism and acumen are already well-known, and they’ll flash their strength, speed and swiftness this week at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Study states little progress in minority hiring in college sports

Associated Press

A diversity report released Wednesday on college sports finds little progress in improving racial and gender hiring practices.

The report card from The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at Central Florida says NCAA member schools continue to lag behind professional leagues in hiring women and minorities. The combined overall college grade for 2017 was a C-plus with 76.7 points, up slightly from 2016.

The report covers hiring for coaches and administrators

such as athletic directors.

While the sport covered a wide range of categories, it specifically pointed to a pair of concerns: hiring for athletic directors and Division I men’s basketball coaches.

Whites held 86.1 percent of AD positions at Division I schools for the 2016-17 season, 87.4 percent in Division II and 93.4 percent at Division III. And women made up just 11.2 percent of Division I ADs, though that was up from 9.8 percent in 2015-16.

With Division I men’s basketball, the problem is the percentage of black head

coaches hasn’t rebounded after falling in recent years from a high of 25.2 percent during the 2005-06 season. The report found that 22.3 percent of Division I men’s basketball head coaches were black in 2016-17, up from the 20.8 percent a season earlier.

The report card includes data on head coaches, football coordinators, athletic directors, university presidents and faculty athletic representatives at Bowl Subdivision programs, reporting white men made up 86.9 percent of FBS head coaches in a similar number to the previous season.

2A TOURNEY: Boys start at Convention Center, girls at Pendleton High School

Continued from 1B

Grant Union’s last loss came on Jan. 6 in a 52-49 defeat from Lakeview, while Faith Bible (25-2) has not lost in 2018.

Grant Union, the Wapiti League champions, boasts an offensive capable of lighting up the scoreboard, where it averages 57.3 points per game and has scored 80 points or more four times. Faith Bible, the Northwest League champs, average 48.3 points per game but have a tough defense that holds teams to 27.8 points per game.

NO. 3 OAKLAND (26-2) vs. NO. 6 ST. PAUL (22-5), 6:30 p.m. — On paper, the Oakland Oakers and St. Paul Buckaroos are very similar teams.

Both teams average roughly the same points per game of offense — Oakland at 48.2 and St. Paul 46.9 — and defense — 27.0 and 27.9 respectively. Which could make for a highly-entertaining game. Oakland won the Mountain View Conference and its only two losses of the season both came at the hands of No. 2 Monroe by a combined 10 points, though the Oakers got their revenge in the district championship with a 47-41 win over Monroe.

St. Paul finished second to No. 1 Kennedy in the Tri-River Conference.

NO. 2 MONROE (24-3) vs. NO. 7 GOLD BEACH (18-6), 8:15 p.m. — The defending state champion Monroe Dragons will conclude the first night of the tournament at PHS, facing a Gold Beach team making its first-ever trip to the 2A state tournament.

The Dragons won the Mountain View Conference regular season title before falling to No. 3 Oakland in the district championship 12 days ago. They’ve scored the most points in Class 2A this season

(1,525) and returned all but one major contributor from last year’s state championship team.

Gold Beach dropped to the 2A classification prior to the 2010-11 season and have not made it past the first round of the playoffs since. The Panthers were Sunset Conference champions this season.

The boys quarterfinal action will take place at the Pendleton Convention Center.

NO. 1 WESTERN MENNONITE (24-3) vs. NO. 8 GRANT UNION (18-6), 1:30 p.m. — The Western Mennonite Pioneers stroll into Pendleton looking like the state championship favorites this year thanks to a fast-paced and highly potent offense. The Pioneers have scored the most points in the state (2,038) and average more than 75 per game. They have also topped the 100-point mark three times, most recently last week’s first round 100-33 win over Stanfield.

But Grant Union will give them a run on Thursday for sure. The Prospectors have a talented, lengthy lineup that can also run an offense and defense to match the Pioneers’ pace. The Wapiti League champions also knocked off defending state champion Santiam in the first round last week.

NO. 4 TOLEDO (20-6) vs. OAKLAND (24-3), 3:15 p.m. — Two league champions will face off Thursday afternoon, hoping to get one step closer to playing for a state championship.

The Oakland Oakers won the Mountain View Conference title, and are making their first appearance in the state tournament since 2014 when they lost to Irrigon in the championship game. The Oakers’ offense averages 62.2 points per game and they have height inside with a pair of 6-foot-5 forwards and a

6-foot-4 wing.

The Toledo Bombers began the season with a 4-6 record, which included a pair of losses to No. 1 Western Mennonite. However, the Bombers have rolled off 16 consecutive wins since Dec. 21 to claim the Sunset Conference championship and reach the state tournament.

NO. 3 KNAPPA (23-4) vs. NO. 11 VERNONIA (19-8), 6:30 p.m. — The first evening game will feature a pair of league rivals with the Knappa Loggers and the Vernonia Loggers.

Knappa had the upper hand on Vernonia this season with two wins by scores of 69-48 and 61-48, though the last meeting came on Jan. 25. Knappa also has strong wins over No. 1 Western Menno-nite (49-47 on Dec. 16) and defeated No. 2 Columbia Christian 64-58 on Feb. 6.

However, Vernonia and its head coach David Weller, have had success at the state tournament highlighted by its state championship run in 2016, and are coming off an upset of No. 6 Monroe in the first round last week.

NO. 2 COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN (27-1) vs. NO. 10 KENNEDY (16-13), 8:15 p.m. — The nightcap pairs one of the best teams in the state in Columbia Christian against one of the most battle-tested in the Kennedy Trojans.

Columbia Christian’s lone blemish on the season so far is a 64-58 loss to No. 3 Knappa on Feb. 6, and otherwise the Lions have rolled through the schedule. The Trojans come in off an upset of No. 10 Pilot Rock last week, adding to their list of tough games this season, such as No. 11 Vernonia, Class 3A No. 6 Santiam Christian among others.

The Lions and Trojans met in the preseason in mid-December, where the Lions squeezed out a 47-45 victory.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Thursday

Nixyaawii vs. Triad (1A quarterfinals, at Baker), 3:15 p.m.

Irrigon vs. De La Salle North Catholic (3A quarterfinals, at Cocos Bay), 3:15 p.m.

Saturday

Hermiston vs. TBD (5A first round), TBD

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Thursday

Heppner vs. Kennedy (2A Quarterfinals, at Pendleton HS), 1:30 p.m.

Friday

No. 9 Crescent Valley at No. 8 Pendleton (5A first round), TBD

No. 12 Hermiston at No. 5 Silvertown (5A first round), TBD

Basketball

OSAA PLAYOFFS

Boys Class 2A Tournament

(at Pendleton)

Thursday's Games

No. 1 Western Mennonite vs. No. 8 Grant Union (at Convention Center), 1:30 p.m.

No. 4 Toledo vs. No. 5 Oakland (at Convention Center), 3:15 p.m.

No. 3 Knappa vs. No. 11 Vernonia (at Convention Center), 6:30 p.m.

No. 2 Columbia Christian vs. No. 10 Kennedy (at Convention Center), 8:15 p.m.

Girls Class 2A Tournament

(at Pendleton)

Thursday's Games

No. 1 Kennedy vs. No. 8 Heppner (at Pendleton HS), 1:30 p.m.

No. 4 Grant Union vs. No. 5 Faith Bible (at Pendleton HS), 3:15 p.m.

No. 3 Oakland vs. No. 6 St. Paul (at Pendleton HS), 6:30 p.m.

No. 2 Monroe vs. No. 7 Gold Beach (at Pendleton HS), 8:15 p.m.

Prep scores

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Class 5A Play-in

Bend 65, St. Helens 42

Central 60, Marist 53

Churchill 72, Corvallis 62

Crescent Valley 66, Ashland 58

Pendleton 60, Putnam 39

Sandy 66, Hood River 51

Summit 55, Parkrose 54

Thurston 79, Woodburn 43

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Class 1A Quarterfinal

Country Christian 55, Joseph 52

Days Creek 58, Jordan Valley 50

Nixyaawii 74, Damascus Christian 30

Powder Valley 51, Hosanna Christian 41

Basketball

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	43	17	.717	—
Boston	44	19	.698	½
Philadelphia	32	27	.542	10½
New York	24	38	.387	20
Brooklyn	20	42	.323	24

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	36	26	.581	—
Miami	32	29	.525	3½
Charlotte	28	34	.452	8
Atlanta	19	43	.306	17
Orlando	18	43	.295	17½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	36	24	.600	—
Indiana	34	27	.557	2½
Milwaukee	33	28	.541	3½
Detroit	29	32	.475	7½
Chicago	20	41	.328	16½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	48	13	.787	—
San Antonio	36	26	.581	12½
New Orleans	35	26	.574	13
Dallas	19	43	.306	29½
Memphis	18	42	.300	29½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	38	26	.594	—
Portland	35	26	.574	1½
Oklahoma City	36	27	.571	1½
Denver	33	28	.541	3½
Utah	31	30	.508	5½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	48	14	.774	—
L.A. Clippers	32	28	.533	15
L.A. Lakers	26	34	.433	21
Phoenix	19	44	.302	29½
Sacramento	18	43	.295	29½

Wednesday's Games

Detroit 110, Milwaukee 87

Toronto 117, Orlando 104

Atlanta 107, Indiana 102

Boston 134, Charlotte 106

Golden State 109, Washington 101

Phoenix 110, Memphis 102

New Orleans 121, San Antonio 116

Oklahoma City 111, Dallas 110

Houston 105, L.A. Clippers 92

Thursday's Games

L.A. Lakers at Miami, 4:30 p.m.

Philadelphia at Cleveland, 5 p.m.

Brooklyn at Sacramento, 7 p.m.

Minnesota at Portland, 7:30 p.m.

NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Top 25 Schedule

Wednesday's Game

22 Belmont 88, Murray State 64

Thursday's Games

UNC at No. 23 NC State, 8 a.m. (ACCNE)

W. Carolina at No. 25 Mercer, 8 a.m. (ESPN3)

Arkansas at No. 15 Texas A&M, 12 p.m. (SECN)

Auburn at No. 12 Tennessee, 4 p.m. (SECN)

Ole Miss at No. 14 Missouri, 6 p.m. (SECN)

Pac-12 Tournament

Thursday's Games

No. 8 Utah vs. No. 9 Colorado, 11:30 a.m. (PAC-12)

No. 5 Cal vs. No. 12 Washington, 2 p.m. (PAC-12)

No. 7 USC vs. No. 10 Washington St., 6 p.m. (PAC-12)

No. 6 Arizona St. vs. No. 11 Arizona, 8:30 p.m. (PAC-12)

Friday's Games

No. 1 Oregon vs. Colorado/Utah winner, 11:30 a.m.

No. 2 Stanford vs. WSU/USC winner, 6 p.m.

No. 3 Oregon St. vs. Arizona/Arizona St winner, 8:30 p.m.

No. 4 UCLA vs. Cal/Washington winner, 2 p.m.

Saturday

Semifinal games, 6/8:30 p.m. (PAC-12)

Sunday

Championship game, 6 p.m. (ESPN2)

Hockey

NHL

Wednesday's Games

Buffalo 2, Tampa Bay 1, OT

Montreal 3, N.Y. Islanders 1

St. Louis 2, Detroit 1

Colorado 5, Calgary 2

N.Y. Rangers 6, Vancouver 5, OT

Thursday's Games

Carolina at Philadelphia, 4 p.m.

Pittsburgh at Boston, 4 p.m.

New Jersey at Florida, 4:30 p.m.

Tampa Bay at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.

Nashville at Edmonton, 6 p.m.

Minnesota at Arizona, 6 p.m.

Chicago at San Jose, 7 p.m.

Columbus at Los Angeles, 7:30 p.m.

Basketball

NBA

WESTERN CONFERENCE

MLB

Spring Training

Wednesday's Games

Detroit 9, N.Y. Yankees 6

N.Y. Mets 6, Atlanta 4

Boston 4, Pittsburgh 3

St. Louis 10, Baltimore 9

Tampa Bay 3, Minnesota (ss) 1

Miami 3, Washington 1

Minnesota (ss) 4, Houston 2

Toronto 7, Philadelphia 1

Kansas City 3, Cincinnati 2

Chicago Cubs 7, Oakland 5

San Francisco 10, Milwaukee 10

Cleveland (ss) 4, Seattle 2

Chicago White Sox 5, Texas 4

Colorado 9, Arizona 3

San Diego 10, L.A. Dodgers 5

Cleveland (ss) 15, L.A. Angels 3