



AP Photo/John Froschauer, File

In this Sept. 23, 2018, file photo, Seattle Seahawks free safety Earl Thomas, left, reaches for a pass he intercepted that was intended for Dallas Cowboys tight end Blake Jarwin, right, as Seahawks' Bobby Wagner, center, looks on during the second half of an NFL football game in Seattle.

### Wild-card: Rematches highlight weekend

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think anybody's approach will change in this locker room," Andrew Luck says. "If you've played five, six, seven years in this league, you've overcome something. So there are a lot of folks who have overcome a lot."

The Colts don't let any defenders get to their quarterback, a stunning turnaround. Last season, which Luck missed with a right shoulder injury, Indy allowed 56 sacks, most in the league. In 2018 with Luck: 18, an NFL low.

Indy also has two sensational rookies in line-backer Darius Leonard, who had 163 tackles, and guard Quenton Nelson.

Neither team allowed a 100-yard rusher in 2018. Texans DE J.J. Watt, who along with Luck is a leading contender for Comeback Player of the Year, had an AFC-leading 16 sacks, 25 quarterback hits, 18 tackles for losses and forced a career-high seven fumbles, which tied for most in the NFL.

"To be able to get back to the top level of the game and know that I still have things to improve on and things that I want to get even better at, it's exciting," Watt says.

#### Seattle (10-6) at Dallas (10-6)

The Seahawks' 24-13 win vs. the Cowboys got them back on track on their way to an unexpected playoff berth in a rebuilding year. Seattle's first team with a 1,000-yard rusher (Chris Carson) and three men with at least 300 yards on the ground since the 2001 Steelers, and led the NFL in rushing. The Seahawks also led the NFL with a plus-15 turnover margin; their 11 giveaways tied for third fewest in league history.

But Dallas, which has lost three straight to Seattle, with one touchdown scored in total, was 7-1 at home this season. It also will run the ball first with Ezekiel Elliott.

"I just think over the course of the early part of the season, we learned a lot," coach Jason Garrett says. "We learned a lot of things from the experiences we're having and I think we've grown. Guys have played more together, and I think we've benefited from that."

#### Los Angeles Chargers (12-4) at Baltimore (10-6)

Two weeks ago, the visiting Ravens beat LA and moved atop the AFC North, which they then clinched last Sunday. Now comes a redux, and the Chargers will have top running back Melvin Gordon back, a real boost.

They will need a balanced offense, with Gordon's running complementing the passing of Philip Rivers, and a defense that can solve the

speed and moves of Baltimore's Lamar Jackson. Since Jackson replaced an injured Joe Flacco at quarterback, the Ravens are 6-1. Jackson and fellow rookie Gus Edwards give them a formidable running game to go with the No. 1-ranked defense in yards.

"They just never let you get comfortable as an offense," Rivers says. "It's always something trying to keep you off-balance. "It's going to be back and forth. There will be times where we pick everything up just right and do everything just right. There will be other times where we're going to have to, again, manage all those things that they do so well."

#### Philadelphia (9-7) at Chicago (12-4)

Thirty years ago, they played the "Fog Bowl" at the old Soldier Field. There isn't a whole lot of clarity about this matchup, either.

The Bears, paced by a strong version of the Monsters of the Midway, have been the better team all year. But they are generally playoff newbies, and they face perhaps the most resilient team in the league.

Philly has been ravaged by injuries, yet here it is, making big plays on both sides of the ball thanks greatly to the veterans who had such a big role in its roll to the title a year ago: Nick Foles, Zack Ertz, Lane Johnson, Fletcher Cox, Malcolm Jenkins. The Eagles still have to produce on the field, but their credentials are valid.

"I know how our team has really fought this last month of the season, last six weeks," coach Doug Pederson says. "And it does give you a little comfort knowing that we've kind of went through this grind and we're here now and we have to continue to grind and continue to work."

"But I don't think it's any easier. It's a different team again. Different set of circumstances. We have to travel. If we're fortunate to win, we have to be on the road again. It feels different, but the excitement is the same."

There's no shortage of excitement in Chicago, either. Under first-year coach Matt Nagy, the Bears have moved from last place in the usually difficult NFC North to the top.

"I would say last year when we were playing good football, even though we had struggles within the team and struggles would be, you know, everything else was going haywire around us," DT Akiem Hicks says, "but we were able to pull together and keep fighting. And there was no quit, and you saw that this year when we got into last minutes of the game and still fighting and coming up with those wins. You could tell that guys have that fight in them."

## Umatilla boys claim day one of tourney

By BRETT KANE East Oregonian

The Umatilla boys are now enjoying a nine-game streak after turning away Blanchet Catholic 51-40 at the Crusader Classic New Year's Invitational in Salem on Thursday morning.

"For traveling all last night, staying in a motel, and playing an early morning game, we did pretty good," said coach Scott Bow.

Umatilla was up by just one point at the end of the first quarter before posting 17 points over Blanchet's eight in the second quarter for a 29-19 halftime lead.

The Vikings stumbled in the third and were outscored

13-9, but came back in the fourth to claim the win.

Senior guard Sebastian Garcia sank 15 points for the Vikings, and junior guard Andrew Earl had 13.

Umatilla (10-1) will play Western Christian on Friday in the tournament's second round. They'll start the Eastern Oregon League with a home game against Irrigon (6-7) on Tuesday.

"We've played a lot of good teams in these non-league games," Bow said. "I'm ready to see us take on our league."

#### Girls

The Umatilla girls fell to 2-9 after Santiam handed them a 35-19 loss at round one of the Crusader Classic

New Year's Invitational on Thursday.

The Wolverines tore away early, taking a 9-2 lead at the end of the first quarter, leaving Umatilla unable to catch up.

"I thought we did really well," said Vikings coach McKenzie Davis. "We got some great looks at the net, but when it came down to it, they (Santiam) made the shots, and we didn't."

Umatilla put up seven points against Santiam's eight in the second quarter for a 17-9 Wolverine lead at the half. The Vikings could only manage 10 points in the second half.

Senior guard Charlene Alvarez posted five points

to lead Umatilla. Senior post Alexandra Ford and freshman post Taylor Durfee had four each.

Two more Invitational games remain for Umatilla before they return home to begin Eastern Oregon League play. They host Irrigon (9-3) on Tuesday evening.

"We're pretty prepared for the league," Davis said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how the girls stack up against these teams. Right now, there's not as much pressure because we're in the preseason. I know people have kind of low expectations for us, so I'd like to see us show up, play some good basketball, and turn some heads."

## Bucks: Teams trade lead several times

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McGee outweighed his opponent 283-219. The initial takedown was quick, and Kettle offered little resistance.

"I felt it when everyone was cheering for Jacob," McGee said. "The blood was flowing. You want to go out and compete for that."

McGee also admitted he was a little uneasy going into his bout with the match on the line.

"I was a little scared, but it was go time," McGee said. "Once I got the first couple of seconds of the match out of the way, I was OK."

Though Griffen and McGee had must-win matches, so did Aiden Henderson at 195. With the



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton's Jacob Griffin turns Redmond's Dillon Young in the 220-pound match of the Bucks' 36-32 win over the Panthers on Thursday in Pendleton. Griffin pinned Young in 50 seconds.

Bucks trailing 32-21, Pendleton needed to win its final three matches without giving up a point.

Henderson earned a 5-0 decision over Gabe Caudell

to set the table.

"We competed hard," Phillips said. "We had a third-string kid (Josh Whaley) at 160, and our 113 pounder (Kellen Hanson)

was wrestling a state runner-up. We get pinned in those two matches, we lose the match."

The Bucks and Panthers traded the lead several times until Redmond won every match from 160 to 182 to take a 32-21 advantage.

"We definitely didn't wrestle to our potential," Panthers coach Rob Spear said. "They stumbled. It wasn't the outcome we wanted."

Collin Primus (106), Gabe Browning (120), Alex Rendon (132) and Matt Robertson (145) also won matches for Pendleton.

The Bucks will compete in the Bend Invitational on Saturday, while Redmond will be at the Rollie Lane Invitational on Friday and Saturday in Nampa, Idaho.

## Pulisic: Joins Chelsea as most expensive American player

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defender Alexi Lalas wrote on Twitter. "He just happens to be American ... which makes him even more valuable. All brands want to continue to mine the fertile U.S. market, having Pulisic doesn't hurt."

It is the most high-profile move secured by an American outfield player, with goalkeepers Tim Howard having previously played for Manchester United and Brad Friedel for Liverpool.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia said the club has signed "one of Europe's

most sought-after young players."

"At just 20, we believe he has the potential to become an important Chelsea player for many years to come," she said.

Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri said he was unaware the club was signing Pulisic until a day before it was announced.

"I was asked about him a month ago," said Sarri, speaking after Chelsea's 0-0 draw with Southampton late Wednesday, "and my opinion was positive."



Pulisic

Pulisic, who can play on either wing or behind the striker, has been overshadowed somewhat at Dortmund this season due to the emergence of English youngster Jadon Sancho. Sancho was signed from Manchester City for \$10 million in the offseason of 2017 and has already scored six Bundesliga goals and set up nine more this season.

Pulisic has made only 11 league appearances (one goal, two assists) and only five of those were as a

starter.

In a message posted on his Twitter account, Pulisic urged Dortmund fans to "not doubt my passion, determination and my 110 percent commitment to the team right until the last ball is kicked this season."

Dortmund leads the German league by six points heading into the second half of the season and is through to the last 16 of the Champions League, where it will face Tottenham.

Chelsea is fourth in the Premier League, 11 points behind first-place Liverpool after 20 games.

## SCOREBOARD

### LOCAL SLATE

Table listing local sports events including Senior Bowl, NFL Playoff Glance, NBA Eastern Conference, and 2018-19 Bowl Glance.

Table showing NFL Western Conference standings with columns for Team, W, L, Pct, GB.

Table showing NFL Eastern Conference standings with columns for Team, W, L, Pct, GB.

Table showing NFL Western Conference standings with columns for Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA.

THE SEAHAWKS' 24-13 WIN VS. THE COWBOYS GOT THEM BACK ON TRACK