

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2020

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Pandemic-proof: Fall college football revived on West Coast

By RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — A major college football season that was in peril six weeks ago as conferences succumbed to concerns about COVID-19 is reconstituting.

The West Coast got back in the game Thursday night, Sept. 24. The Pac-12 set Nov. 6 to start a seven-game season, joining the Big Ten in overturning August

decisions to punt on fall football. The Mountain West followed up a few hours later by announcing it is aiming to kick off Oct. 24.

Nine of the 10 FBS conferences are now ready to have their seasons completed by Dec. 20, the day the College Football Playoff selection committee is scheduled to pick teams to play for the national championship and in the most lucrative bowls.

As soon as Friday, Sept. 25,

the Mid-American Conference, the first FBS league to postpone, could make it 10 out of 10.

All that talk about playing football in the winter and spring, about whether it was a good idea to play during a pandemic at all? Out the window. Not even a pandemic could stop college football at the schools that play it at the highest level.

"The discussion among the presidents and chancellors was

largely about the benefits as well as the cons of starting in the fall versus starting in January," said University of Oregon President Michael Schill, the head of the Pac-12's CEO Group. "The consensus opinion was the benefits of starting in the fall were much greater than the benefits of starting in the ... winter."

With the Pac-12 having secured daily COVID-19 testing for its athletes and been given the green

light from state and local health officials, the CEOs voted unanimously to lift a Jan. 1 moratorium on athletic competition.

"Things changed from the first time we addressed this issue," Schill said.

The Pac-12's men's and women's basketball seasons can start Nov. 25, in line with the NCAA's recently announced opening date.

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AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson looks to pass against the New England Patriots during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Sept. 20, 2020, in Seattle.

QBs, offenses take spotlight as Cowboys visit Seahawks

Russell Wilson and Dak Prescott will be in the spotlight on Sunday, Sept. 27

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Russell Wilson has made a career of coming through late in games, to the tune of 32 fourth-quarter and overtime comebacks with Seattle.

Dak Prescott is trying to catch up, although few will match the outrageous comeback Prescott led a week ago that helped Dallas avoid an 0-2 start to the season.

"Dak does such a great job. He remains poised, remains confident. He seems to have always done that over his career," Wilson said. "I just got a lot of respect for how he approaches the game."

Wilson and Prescott will be



AP Photo/Ron Jenkins

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) throws a pass under pressure from Atlanta Falcons linebacker Deion Jones (45) in the second half of an NFL football game in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, Sept. 20, 2020.

in the spotlight Sunday, Sept. 27, when the Seahawks host the Cowboys in a big NFC showdown that could end up being a shootout.

Two of the most potent offenses in the league will be facing defenses that have under-

performed throughout and have injury concerns. And the quarterbacks are coming off two of the best games of their careers, Wilson throwing for five touchdowns against New England and Prescott using his arm to lead a late rally to beat Atlanta.

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AP Photo/Mark Sutton

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, of Britain, attends a media conference prior to the Russian Formula One Grand Prix, at the Sochi Autodrom circuit, in Sochi, Russia, Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020.

Hamilton aims to match Schumacher's F1 win record

Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — Lewis Hamilton has set many Formula One records over the years, but few as significant as the one he can match Sunday, Sept. 27, at the Russian Grand Prix.

Victory for Hamilton at the Sochi Olympic Park would see him draw level with Michael Schumacher on 91 career wins, more than any other driver in the 70-year history of F1.

It would also further increase Hamilton's commanding 55-point lead over teammate Valtteri Bottas in the championship standings, putting him closer to a seventh world championship, matching another Schumacher record.

History is on Hamilton's side. He's won four of the six Russian races so far and all six were won by Mercedes drivers. His closest challenger is likely to be Bottas, who beat Hamilton in the 2017 edition of the Russian Grand Prix to claim what was his first career win.

Between them, Hamilton and Bottas have taken pole position at every race this year. That's less of an advantage in Sochi because the long run to the first corner allows cars coming from behind to overtake using the slipstream.

Hamilton is not only targeting wins on the track. He also revealed Thursday, Sept. 24, the members of a commission he set up in June to find ways to make racing more diverse, including figures from engineering, education and politics. Hamilton is co-chair.

"In F1, our teams are much bigger than the athletes that front them, but representation is insufficient across every

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SPORTS SHORTS

Reds say broadcaster Brenneman resigns after anti-gay slur

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Reds say team broadcaster Thom Brenneman has resigned following his use of an anti-gay slur on air last month.

Brenneman used the slur moments after the feed from the Fox Sports Ohio telecast returned from a commercial break before the top of the seventh inning in the first game of a doubleheader at Kansas City on Aug. 19.

Brenneman did not seem to realize he was already on air. He later apologized.

The 57-year-old was taken off the air before the fifth inning of the second game.

"The Reds respect Thom Brenneman's decision to step away from the broadcast booth and applaud his heartfelt efforts of reconciliation with the LGBTQ+ community," Reds CEO Bob Castellini said in a statement. "The Brenneman family has been an intrinsic part of the Reds history for nearly fifty years. We sincerely thank Thom for bringing the excitement of Reds baseball to millions of fans during his years in the booth."

The son of Hall of Fame broadcaster Marty Brenneman, Thom has called major league games for 33 years and has been with Fox Sports for the past 27, covering primarily baseball and football.

Fox Sports had already said that Brenneman wouldn't call NFL games because of the slur.

Fox issued a statement on Aug. 20 that said "we are moving forward with our NFL schedule which will not include him." The network also said Brenneman's remarks were "abhorrent, unacceptable, and not representative of the values of Fox Sports."



In this Sept. 25, 2019, file photo, Cincinnati Reds broadcaster Thom Brenneman sits in a special outside booth before the Reds' baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers in Cincinnati.

AP Photo/John Minchillo, File