

Sports

WORLD SERIES GAME 7



Elsa / Getty Images-TNS

The Washington Nationals celebrate after defeating the Houston Astros, 6-2, in Game 7 of the World Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston on Wednesday.

Home Sweet Road

■ Washington Nationals rally past Houston Astros, 6-2, to win franchise's first World Series in an unprecedented series in which the visiting team won all seven games

By Ben Walker
AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON — Stephen Strasburg paraded the MVP trophy for delirious fans packed behind the dugout. Max Scherzer tearfully hugged his teammates. Gerardo Parra did the Baby Shark chop, Sean Doolittle flapped snow angels next to the mound.

Almost out of contention in May, champs in October.

Howie Kendrick, Anthony Rendon and the Washington Nationals completed their amazing comeback journey — fittingly with one last late rally on the road.

In Game 7 of the World Series, no less.

Kendrick and Rendon homered in the seventh inning as the Nationals overcame a two-run deficit, rocking the Houston Astros 6-2 Wednesday night to win the first title in franchise history.

With all eyes on Scherzer and his remarkable recovery after a painkilling injection, these Nationals truly embraced their shot in the only Series when the road team won every game.

Even more against the odds: Juan Soto and Washington came from behind to win five elimination games this postseason, an unprecedented feat.

“What a story,” said Ryan Zimmerman, the only player who’s been a part of every Nationals team.

“The way this game went is the way our whole season went.”

Strasburg, new lefty Patrick Corbin and the Nats brought the first World Series championship to the nation’s capital since ol’ Walter Johnson delivered the crown for

the Senators in 1924.

This franchise started out as the Montreal Expos in 1969 when the major leagues expanded beyond the border, putting a team with tricolor caps at jaunty Jarry Park. They moved to D.C. in 2005, ending Washington’s three-decade-plus wait for big league baseball after the Senators skipped town to become the Texas Rangers.

But the incredible path these wild-card Nationals with the curly W logo took, well, no one could have imagined.

Because in one topsy-turvy week, they put aside the pain of past playoff failures and upended heavily favored Houston. Quite an ending to a season that began back in February with the Nationals and Astros working out side-by-side at the spring training complex they share in Florida.

“Resilient, relentless bunch of guys,” manager Dave Martinez said. “They fought all year long.”

Having lost star slugger Bryce Harper in free agency and beset by bullpen woes, Washington plummeted to 19-31 in late May. It got so bad there was talk the Nationals might fire Martinez and trade away Scherzer.

Instead, they stuck with the mantra that sprung up on T-shirts — Stay In The Fight.

“That was our motto,” Scherzer said.

And months later they finished it, indeed. Shut out on one hit by Zack Greinke going into the seventh, they still found a way to win.

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OREGON MEN’S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Retooled Ducks look to avoid another slow start

■ Oregon advanced to the Sweet 16 in the NCAA tourney last spring but the Ducks struggled during the Pac-12 season

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

Payton Pritchard wants Oregon to dominate from the start this year.

The Ducks are No. 15 in the AP preseason poll. They were ranked at the start of last season, too, but before their surprising run in the NCAA Tournament they had a number of early losses that dropped the team out of the Top 25. They finished 25-13 overall and 10-8 in the Pac-12.

This season, the Ducks don’t want to be a surprise.

“We’re really motivated for this year because I felt like last year, I guess my last two seasons, my sophomore and junior seasons, we played down in the regular season,” Pritchard said. “Definitely didn’t play how we wanted to and finish how we wanted to, so we’re looking forward to the beginning of this season. We kind of want to make a statement and change the narrative of how it’s been lately.”

Oregon rebounded last season by winning the Pac-12 tournament for an NCAA berth, then defeated Wisconsin and UC Irvine as a No. 12 seed before falling to Virginia in the Sweet 16.

This season the Ducks were selected to win the Pac-12 title in the preseason media poll. But they’ll have a decidedly new look.

Oregon returns just three scholarship players from last season’s team: Pritchard, Will Richardson and Francis Okoro. Starters Kenny Wooten, Paul White and Louis King have all moved on.

Oregon landed some high-profile prospects with a recruiting class considered among the top five nationally, including 6-foot-11 center N’Faly Dante from Kansas and 6-foot-9 power forward C.J. Walker from Florida. Also joining the Ducks is national junior college player of the year Chris Duarte. Shakur Juiston and Anthony Mathis are graduate transfers.

The newcomers will work around Pritchard, who averaged 12.9 points, 4.6 assists and 3.9 rebounds last year and was named the Pac-12 tournament’s most outstand-



Michael Conroy / Associated Press file photo

Payton Pritchard returns for his senior season with the Oregon Ducks men’s basketball team.

ing player. He went through the NBA draft process after last season but ultimately decided to stay at Oregon for his senior year.

“We have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of new players. I think they’re talented and are a good group, but we’ve got a lot of new faces to try to blend together and try to get to work together,” said Oregon coach Dana Altman, who is in his 10th season.

CLOSING IN

Pritchard is closing in on several Oregon records his senior season. If all goes well, he should leave the Ducks as the career leader in assists, steals, wins and career games played. With 1,803 career points, he likely won’t break Ron Lee’s career record (2,085) but could surpass Luke Jackson for second place.

“To watch Payton grow over four years, he was our point guard on our Final Four team, and last year really exploded to take us to the Sweet 16. He’s a talented young man that’s driven,” Altman said. “He works very hard at his game. You love players like that.”

DEPARTURES

Heralded recruit Bol Bol left Oregon after just one season, during which he was limited to just nine games because of a foot injury. The son of the late Manute Bol was a second-round pick in the NBA draft and is currently on a two-way contract with the Denver Nuggets.

Louis King played just one season at Oregon as a freshman before declaring for the draft, but he was not selected and is now on a two-way deal with the Detroit Pistons. Kenny Wooten, who was a sophomore last season, also declared and went undrafted. Picked up by the Knicks, he was waived before the start of the NBA season.

THE WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Dante won’t be able to play right away because he was not cleared in time by the NCAA after graduating early and reclassifying as a 2019 signee in August. He has said he’ll enroll for the winter term on Dec. 14, which means he’ll miss at least nine games. A native of Mali who has a 7-foot-5 wingspan, Dante chose Oregon over Kentucky.

OREGON STATE MEN’S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Tinkle returns with high hopes

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

Wayne and Tres Tinkle are looking to make their last father-and-son season at Oregon State memorable.

Tres Tinkle, the son of head coach Wayne Tinkle, is a senior this year. He considered leaving for the NBA in the off-season but ultimately decided to return to the Beavers. That means he’ll have one more chance to do something with his dad that Oregon State hasn’t managed since his first year: Make the NCAA Tournament.

But first, a Pac-12 title is on Tres Tinkle’s wish list.

“All that stuff is kind of why I came back,” he said. “I think this is our best chance with this group of guys to do something like that.”

Tinkle averaged 20.8 points, 8.1 rebounds and 3.8 assists last season, when the Beavers finished 18-13 overall and 10-8 in the Pac-12 — their best finish in the league since 1989-90. Oregon State fell to Colorado in the quarterfinals of the Pac-12 tournament to cap the season.

The younger Tinkle has moved beyond thinking he has to “prove it up” because he’s the coach’s kid, his dad said.

“The way he’s approached his teammates and the way he’s approached his leadership has shown great maturity,” Wayne Tinkle said.

The Tinkles aren’t the only family in the Oregon State program. Ethan Thompson, the son of assistant Stephen Thompson, is a junior this season. Older brother Stevie graduated last year.

Like Tres Tinkle, the younger Thompson also considered the draft.

“It’s hard when you’ve got guys like, ‘OK, now I’m going to test the waters,’ and you worry about what that does to your locker room. But I thought both Ethan and Tres showed great maturity in that they still worked with their teams, when we met to work out, and then they did what they had to do on the side to prepare for that experience,” Coach Tinkle said.

Tinkle and Thompson are joined on the roster by senior

Kylor Kelley. Four freshmen and three junior college transfers are newcomers to the team. Among them is 7-foot-1 post Roman Silva out of San Bernardino College.

The Beavers were picked to finish seventh in the league in the Pac-12 preseason media poll. Rival Oregon was picked to finish first.

FAB FROSH

Freshman Jarod Lucas is already turning heads. The 6-foot-3 guard set 15 school records at Los Altos High School in Hacienda Heights, California, starting every game in four years. He set a CIF Southern Section record with 3,356 career points, which was the third-most points in state history.

“He can put it in the basket. We didn’t shoot it particularly well last year, and he’s one guy that we think brings that, and the surprise has been his toughness and his IQ to pick up our concepts on the defensive end, and so that more than just rolling him out there to make shots I think is going to give him an early shot,”

coach Tinkle said.

THE LAST DANCE

Tres Tinkle didn’t play as a freshman when the Beavers last made the NCAA Tournament in 2016 because of a foot injury. The Beavers fell to VCU 75-67 in the opening round. Gary Payton II was a senior that year.

COMING BACK

While his son is moving on, Wayne Tinkle appears to be staying put. He signed a one-year contract extension in the offseason that keeps him at Oregon State through the 2022-23 season.

GELLING

The Beavers played a pair of exhibition games this season to help the new players integrate. Oregon State beat Carroll College 79-60 on Oct. 23, and beat Warner Pacific 96-45 on Tuesday night.

“We felt like the more opportunities to get our guys to be introduced, to play in front of a crowd, will help us get out of the gate when we’re playing in earnest,” Wayne Tinkle said.



Nick Daschel / The Oregonian

Oregon State junior Ethan Thompson, left, and senior Tres Tinkle represented the Beavers at Pac-12 men’s basketball media day.

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