

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Oregon State men pause activities

Oregon State announced Tuesday that it is pausing men's basketball activities because of COVID-19 testing and contact tracing protocols.

Among the moves is postponing this week's road games at Utah and Colorado. The Beavers were scheduled to play at Utah on Wednesday, and Colorado on Saturday.

The OSU men join the women's team on the sideline. Oregon State's women's program halted activities on Dec. 20 following a COVID-19 situation.

The Oregon State men began dealing with COVID-19 issues during the past week. Senior center Roman Silva, assistant coaches Kerry Rupp, Marlon Stewart and Stephen Thompson, and graduate assistant Seth Yates missed home games against California and Stanford following COVID-19 testing and contact tracing protocol.

Oregon State lost to Stanford 81-71 Monday.

The Oregon State women have postponed five consecutive games. The Beavers were scheduled to play this weekend in the Bay Area against California and No. 1 Stanford.

— The Oregonian

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Title game is still set for Monday

College Football Playoff executive director Bill Hancock said Tuesday the national championship game between Alabama and Ohio State is still a go for Monday night amid a report that the Buckeyes are having COVID-19 issues.

AL.com reported that Ohio State has been in contact with CFP officials about possible player availability problems that could force the game to be delayed. Those discussions were confirmed to The Associated Press by a person with knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because no one had been authorized to speak publicly about the details.

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said in a statement that the Buckeyes continue to follow the same protocols they have all season. "We plan to play January 11," Smith said.

Hancock said there were no changes and the game in Miami Gardens, Florida, between the top-ranked Crimson Tide and the third-ranked Buckeyes was still scheduled for Monday night as planned.

Hancock has previously said Jan. 18 is a potential makeup date if necessary.

About 87% of the regular-season Bowl Subdivision schedule was played. For Ohio State, though, it has been an especially bumpy road.

The Big Ten initially canceled the fall football season in August, only to reverse course in September. The conference kicked off in late October but left no room in the nine-week schedule for makeup games.

The Buckeyes had three games called off, two for COVID-19 issues with their opponents and one due to their own problems. Ohio State played its final regular-season game and the Big Ten championship game missing more than 20 players.

— Associated Press

COLLEGE FOOTBALL | HEISMAN TROPHY

Alabama's Smith becomes 1st WR to win in 29 years



Michael Ainsworth/AP

Alabama wide receiver DeVonta Smith gets past Notre Dame's Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah (6) and Clarence Lewis (26) on his way to the end zone during the Rose Bowl in Arlington, Texas, on Friday.

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK — On an Alabama team stacked with stars, DeVonta Smith emerged as the best player in college football.

Smith became the first wide receiver to win the Heisman Trophy in 29 seasons Tuesday night, breaking the monopoly quarterbacks have had on college football's most prestigious award by beating out three of them.

Smith finished with 447 first-place votes and 1,856 points to easily outdistance Clemson's Trevor Lawrence (222, 1,187), Alabama teammate Mac Jones (138, 1,130) and Florida's Kyle Trask (61, 737).

The Crimson Tide senior is

the fourth receiver to win the Heisman, joining Michigan's Desmond Howard in 1991, Notre Dame's Tim Brown in 1987 and Nebraska's Johnny Rodgers in 1972.

Quarterbacks had won 17 of the previous 20 Heisman trophies, including the last four.

Smith is the third Alabama player to win the Heisman, all since 2009. Like Tide running backs Mark Ingram ('09) and Derrick Henry (2015), Smith will play in the national championship game as a Heisman winner.

No. 1 Alabama faces No. 3 Ohio State on Jan. 11 in the College Football Playoff title game in Miami Gardens, Florida.

The Heisman voting was

complete on Dec. 21, so playoff performances were not a factor. But Smith made those who supported him feel good about it with a brilliant three-touchdown game against Notre Dame in the CFP semifinals last weekend.

Smith has 105 catches for 1,641 yards and 22 total touchdowns going into the final game of his college career — which will also be his third national championship game.

Smith carved out a place in Alabama's storied history as a freshman, catching the winning 41-yard touchdown pass from Tua Tagovailoa in overtime against Georgia to give the Tide the 2017 national championship.

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GOLF

Three major champions, and three shots that define their victories

BY DOUG FERGUSON • AP Golf Writer

KAPALUA, Hawaii —

Dustin Johnson and Bryson DeChambeau are renowned for their power, so in a year no one could have imagined, perhaps it was only fitting the signature shot from their major championships came from shorter clubs.

And then there's Collin

Morikawa, polished and precise, who won his major with the longest club in the bag.

Although the British Open was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the first time since 1981 all the majors were decided by two shots or more. That didn't mean they were devoid of crucial moments. Before moving on to a new year, here's a look back at the defining shot of each major, and the shots that were meaningful to the winners even if they didn't get much attention.

PGA Championship

Morikawa's driver on the 16th hole of the final round at Harding Park was not only the defining moment of the PGA Championship, it took its place as among the most clutch drives in any major.

He was tied for the lead with Paul



Jeff Chiu/AP file

Collin Morikawa watches his tee shot on the 16th hole during the final round of the PGA Championship at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco in August. His drive to 7 feet for eagle was the defining moment of his first major title.

"I made sure I gave it full thought — what I had to do, where I wanted to miss. The wind was from the left and into us. It was a perfect driver. I didn't have to do anything with it. When I hit it, I was just hoping for a straight bounce. And I got the straight bounce."

— Collin Morikawa, on his tee shot on the 16th hole of the final round of the 2020 PGA Championship

Casey, who had just birdied the 16th in the group ahead to reach 11-under par. Morikawa reached for driver on the 294-yard hole with trees down the left and a steep bank leading to Lake Merced on the right.

"I made sure I gave it full thought — what I had to do, where I wanted to miss," he said. "The wind was from the left and into us. It was a perfect

driver. I didn't have to do anything with it. When I hit it, I was just hoping for a straight bounce. And I got the straight bounce."

The ball settled 7 feet away, and he made the eagle putt to lead by two, his winning margin.

Morikawa mentioned two putts from about 25 feet he felt were equally instrumental that are easy to overlook

because they came much earlier in the final round. One was on the first hole, which kept him from losing ground early. The other was on No. 6, where Morikawa pulled his tee shot, put his approach in the right rough and hit a chip 25 feet by the hole.

"I was trying to get out of there with a bogey," he said. "Those two par putts were huge."

U.S. Open

DeChambeau had a one-shot lead over Matthew Wolff playing the par-5 ninth in the final round at Winged Foot when he tugged a 9-iron that settled some 30 feet left of the flag, which looked even longer when Wolff hit wedge to 10 feet.

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TENNIS | 2021 PREVIEW

COVID questions key; Djokovic, Nadal eye records

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

When the 2020 men's tennis season ended at the ATP Finals, Rafael Nadal captured a common sentiment that still holds true as the 2021 tennis season is set to begin this week.

"The world is suffering a lot, so we are very lucky that we can play tennis," Nadal said in London in November. "That's the real feeling that I have."

After an off-and-on, pandemic-altered year for the sport, coronavirus questions and an ever-evolving calendar still will be key parts of

the conversation as things get going Wednesday at the Abu Dhabi WTA Women's Tennis Open, where Sofia Kenin leads the field, and Thursday at the ATP's Delray Beach Open, where Reilly Opelka is the defending champion.

Opelka won that hard-court title last February, but the tournament was moved to early January as part of a shuffling on both professional tours.

"It's really going to be for me to find my tennis. I haven't even played in three months," said Opelka, a 23-year-old American who is based in Flor-

ida and ranked 39th. "So this is really just to get me back into the competitive mindset and playing against other guys and back in tournament mode."

The changes include the start of the year's first major championship, the Australian Open, delayed three weeks to Feb. 8, and the joint event played at Indian Wells, California — canceled last year because of the COVID-19 outbreak — giving up its usual March dates without a new spot for it on the schedule as of now.

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Michel Euler/AP file

Sofia Kenin plays a shot against Iga Swiatek in the French Open final in Paris, France, in October. Kenin is the top-seeded woman in Abu Dhabi, where the first women's tour-level tennis event of 2021 begins main-draw play on Wednesday.