

## FOOTBALL

## Clemson's Lawrence declares for draft

Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence has made it official — he's heading to the NFL.

Lawrence, the 6-foot-6 QB with the power arm and flowing hair, released a video on social media Wednesday announcing he was leaving school and declaring for the NFL draft.

"I really feel like I'm a man now and I'm ready to take on those challenges," Lawrence said. "Super excited for life ahead. I'm grateful for Clemson and I'm going to miss it."

Lawrence had said in September he planned to play his junior season, graduate in December and move on to the NFL. However, in October, Lawrence discussed keeping his options open, which included possibly returning for another year of college.

The Jacksonville Jaguars finished 1-15 and have the top pick in the draft and are expected to take Lawrence.

He finished 34-2 in his college career, leading Clemson to three Atlantic Coast Conference titles and the national title after the 2018 season. He finished second in the Heisman Trophy race Tuesday night to Alabama receiver DeVonta Smith.

On the field, Lawrence finished his college career with 10,098 yards passing with 90 touchdowns and 17 interceptions.

— Associated Press

## LPGA GOLF

## Whan steps down as commissioner

Mike Whan has been commissioner longer than anyone in the 70-year history of the LPGA Tour. Guiding it through its toughest year amid the COVID-19 pandemic made him realize the tour was strong enough for him to move on.

In a surprise announcement Wednesday, the high-energy, fast-talking Whan said he will be leaving after 11 years.

Whan said he had been thinking about stepping down for the last few years and always found unfinished work, even as the self-sustaining LPGA Tour kept increasing its schedule and prize money and expanding the participation of junior girls.

Without guaranteed network TV money amid the pandemic, the LPGA leaned on the relationship with sponsors to get through 2020 and still deliver a 34-event schedule for 2021 with record prize money approaching \$80 million.

"Watching us work through the pandemic of 2020 was the visualization I needed to know that it was not only time, but it was right," Whan said in a conference call.

Diane Gulyas, chair of the LPGA board of directors, said a search committee has been formed, with hopes of having a new commissioner as early as the second quarter. She said it would be "terrific" to have a woman leading the LPGA, but "we're not going to rule anybody out."

"Mike Whan has been positive proof that you pick the best person, and you'll have amazing results," she said.

The LPGA Tour starts its new season in two weeks at the Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions, one of several new tournaments created in recent years.

— Associated Press

## NBA

## 'A sad day': NBA reacts to Capitol protest, Blake decision

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI — With words and actions, several NBA teams showed dismay Wednesday hours after a violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump was able to storm the U.S. Capitol and in response to a decision by a Wisconsin prosecutor not to charge a police officer who shot a Black man last year.

In Miami, the Heat and Boston Celtics released a joint statement saying they were playing "with a heavy heart" in a game where most players and coaches knelt for the national

anthem. In Milwaukee, the Bucks and Detroit Pistons both took turnovers on their first possessions — intentionally, with all 10 players on the court kneeling.

And in Phoenix, the Suns and Toronto Raptors stood in a circle and linked arms for the American and Canadian anthems.

Earlier in the day at the Capitol, a mob delayed Congress from certifying the results of November's election and paving the way for President-elect Joe Biden to be sworn in later this month.

"It's an embarrassing and shameful day in our country," New Orleans coach Stan Van Gundy said.

Wednesday's events came one day after the decision to not bring charges against the officer who shot Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin last year was announced.

Blake's shooting was one of the many issues players focused on last season in the NBA restart bubble, where the issues of racial injustice and police brutality were a constant focus.

See **Protest** / A7



Most Miami Heat players kneel during the playing of the national anthem before Wednesday night's game against the Boston Celtics in Miami.

Marta Lavandier/AP

## NBA COMMENTARY

## Blazers' coach, GM a stale act



Craig Mitchell/der/AP file

Portland Trail Blazers coach Terry Stotts, right, gestures during a preseason game against the Sacramento Kings in Portland on Dec. 13.

*Are coach Terry Stotts and GM Neil Olshey wasting the prime of star Damian Lillard?*

BY JOHN CANZANO  
The Oregonian

I can't help but wonder what late Trail Blazers owner Paul Allen would have thought about Tuesday night's basketball debacle. His beloved NBA team got outworked, out-schemed and outplayed by the Chicago Bulls.

Portland fell under .500 for the season.

Anyone think Paul would have been pleased?

I'm thinking Allen might have woke up today frustrated as any fan, ready to do something about it. Neil Olshey, the general manager, ran back a weary roster for this season. Terry Stotts, the coach, feels like a good guy who needs a change of scenery. Together they've become a stale act, adequate enough for the last eight years, but nowhere near what this franchise needs for its future.

Olshey's new contract runs through 2024. Stotts, the fourth-longest tenured coach in the league, is locked up through the summer of 2022. Be sure, those two worked together to glue themselves to Trail Blazers, Inc. in the wake of Allen's passing. They sold the notion that the franchise needed stability, and it probably did, but now the operation feels like it needs a batch of fresh ideas and new energy.

## Blazers blow big lead in loss to upstart Bulls on Tuesday night

PORTLAND — Zach LaVine was blunt: The Chicago Bulls of the recent past wouldn't have come back to beat the Trail Blazers like this.

The short-handed Bulls rebounded from a 20-point first-half deficit to down Portland 111-108 on Tuesday night.

Coby White had 21 points and a career-high 10 rebounds, while Otto Porter Jr. added 19 points and 13 rebounds. The Bulls had seven players in double figures.

"We didn't stop playing," said LaVine, who finished with 18 points and nine assists. "After the first quarter, they came out hitting a lot of tough shots. It's not like we were playing bad, it just happens in a game. We got to a timeout and we just said we're going to keep playing regardless, and we got back into it."

Asked point-blank if it was a game last season's Bulls would have won, LaVine emphatically said "No."

C.J. McCollum led the Blazers with 26 points, including six 3-pointers. Damian Lillard had 24 points and nine assists. The Blazers led by as many as 20 points early in the game, but the Bulls chipped away at the lead, tying it in the fourth quarter at 91 on Porter's 3-pointer. Garrett Temple's 3 gave the Bulls a 96-94 lead with 6:36 left.

After going 0-3 to start the season, the Bulls have improved with wins in four of their last five games, including a 118-108 victory over the Mavericks, paced by LaVine's 39 points.

The Bulls were without Lauri Markkanen, Ryan Arcidiacono, Chandler Hutchinson and Tomas Satoransky for the fourth straight game because of the league's COVID-19 protocols.

— Associated Press

Food gets stale. Fuel degrades. So does the business of basketball. Stotts may be right for some other upstart franchise, one in need of an offensive spark. Olshey may be perfect for some other NBA city, maybe one with more valet parking. But the duo currently feels like it's out of good answers.

Since Christmas, Portland defeated three former Most Valuable Players — LeBron James, Steph Curry and James Harden. But it followed that up with a 15-point loss to the Warriors (Curry scored 62 points). Then came the short-handed Bulls, who trailed on Tuesday night by 20 but came back to win.

That kind of disappointing swing encapsulates the current era of Blazers basketball. Portland is occasionally fun, but isn't anything resembling a contender. Damian Lillard's prime years are being

wasted. C.J. McCollum deserves better, too. I'd like to see what this franchise might become with a new coach and GM. I'm just not sure, amid the financial uncertainty of a pandemic, if Jody Allen will do what her brother might have done — clean house and give someone else a chance.

I was alarmed on Tuesday by the post-game comments from Stotts, who said: "Chicago outplayed us. They played harder than us."

A big piece of that is on you, coach. The metrics for this team, in season No. 9 for Stotts, suggest defense still isn't a high priority. Also, I've wondered for a while if Olshey's primary focus isn't as much about winning games as it is crafting the narrative about his own job performance.

See **Blazers** / A7

## NFL PLAYOFFS

## No place like home? Host advantage vanishes in year of virus

BY DAVE CAMPBELL  
AP Pro Football Writer

For the eight NFL teams guaranteed to host at least one game in the playoffs this month, the comfort of familiar surroundings sure can't hurt their quest to reach the Super Bowl.

Staying in the same time zone and avoiding airplanes and hotels ought to help players stay fresh.

For the far-north teams, namely Green Bay and Buffalo, the cold, wind and potential snow could provide a timely boost against an opponent from a warmer-weather city or one who plays its home games in a dome.

See **NFL** / A6

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

## Buckeyes RB Sermon breaks out

BY MITCH STACY  
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — During the first four games of Ohio State's pandemic-shortened season, transfer running back Trey Sermon was easy to overlook on a team full of big names and future NFL draft picks.

Nobody is overlooking him now.

Astonishing efforts in the past two games — including a 331-yard, two-touchdown performance in the Big Ten championship game that earned him a Twitter shoutout from Lakers star and Ohio native LeBron James — have brought Sermon the level of national attention he sought while playing three solid years at Oklahoma.

"When I came here, my goal was to do whatever I can to help this team out and play for a national championship," Sermon said this week as the Buckeyes prepared to play top-ranked Alabama in the title game on Monday night. "It's all happened, and it does kind of seem like a dream."

See **Sermon** / A6