

49ERS

Assistant Sowers will not return

Offensive assistant Katie Sowers, the first female coach to make it to the Super Bowl, will not be returning to the San Francisco 49ers in 2021.

A person familiar with the situation said Thursday that the 34-year-old Sowers will be leaving coach Kyle Shanahan's staff, where she worked closely with receivers coach Wes Welker. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team hadn't made an announcement.

The Bay Area News Group first reported Sowers' departure and said she is looking for an expanded role on another team.

Sowers posted a message on Instagram on Thursday, writing: "I think it's important to understand that the path you were meant to take is more often than not ... the path that was least expected ... but that is the beauty in your story and YOU will always control the narrative."

Sowers generated a big following after becoming the second woman to work as a full-time assistant coach in the NFL, following Kathryn Smith, who was a special teams assistant in Buffalo in 2016. Sowers was also the first openly gay coach in the NFL.

She was part of San Francisco's staff that went to the Super Bowl last season and was featured in a prominent Microsoft commercial thanking her for knocking down doors for other women.

Sowers, who played in the Women's Football Alliance and for USA Football's national team, got her start in the NFL in 2016 with Atlanta through the Bill Walsh Diversity Coaching Fellowship when Shanahan was offensive coordinator for the Falcons.

She followed Shanahan to San Francisco the following season and was hired as a full-time assistant in 2018, working extensively with the team's wide receivers.

— Associated Press

MLB

Mets acquire star shortstop Lindor

CLEVELAND — The Indians drafted and developed Francisco Lindor, who blossomed into an All-Star shortstop and one of baseball's best all-around players.

Cleveland chased a World Series title with him. They'll now do it with-out Lindor.

Knowing they could never meet his price, the Indians dealt the four-time All-Star and pitcher Carlos Carrasco to the New York Mets, who have a new owner willing to spend at baseball's highest levels in order to get his franchise back on top.

The cash-strapped Indians sent Lindor and Carrasco to the Mets on Thursday for infielders Andrés Giménez and Amed Rosario, right-hander Josh Wolf and outfielder Isaiah Greene — a move Cleveland hopes can keep it competitive and capable of ending baseball's longest title drought.

"They're special people in addition to special players," said Chris Antonetti, Cleveland's president of baseball operations, adding he cried when informing the players they were New York bound. "Trades like this are really, really hard to make. But at the same time, we feel it's the right thing to do for us."

— Associated Press

PREP SPORTS

Sports starting Feb. 22? Still to be seen

BY BRIAN RATHBONE

The Bulletin

High school sports have been on hiatus in Oregon for nearly a year, but are forecasted to make their return in less than two months.

The fall sports of football, volleyball, soccer and cross-country are scheduled to resume practices on Feb. 22 and competitions on March 1. But those dates remain uncertain.

Peter Weber, the executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association, joined

Full interview

For the complete interview with OSAA executive director Peter Weber, visit bendbulletin.com/sports.

The Bulletin on a Zoom interview Thursday to discuss the current state of high school sports in Oregon and the myriad challenges sports are facing to make their return. (The questions and answers have

"Anytime you can get kids back in the classroom in person learning, whether it's hybrid or fully in person, that is a positive. In terms of what it means for sports and athletics in the short term, it doesn't really have any impact or change. But I do believe it bodes well for us moving forward."

— Peter Weber, Oregon School Activities Association executive director

been shortened for clarity and to accommodate space.)

Q: Schools in Central Oregon are expected to open in some capacity — hybrid or in person — later this month or early February. Is having schools re-

open good news for sports to return by Feb. 22?

A: It could be good news. Anytime you can get kids back in the classroom in person learning, whether it's hybrid or fully in person, that is

a positive. In terms of what it means for sports and athletics in the short term, it doesn't really have any impact or change. But I do believe it bodes well for us moving forward.

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NFL PLAYOFFS

First-timers

Seattle Seahawks' Jamal Adams among several stars savoring 1st playoff seasons

Elaine Thompson/AP

Seattle Seahawks' Jamal Adams reacts to a play against the Los Angeles Rams on Dec. 27 in Seattle. After spending the first several years of his career with the New York Jets, Adams gets his first taste of the playoffs on Saturday when the Seahawks host division-rival Los Angeles Rams.

BY JOSH DUBOW

AP Pro Football Writer

Jamal Adams yelled in celebration after Seattle qualified for the playoffs last month and lit up a victory cigar at the podium when the Seahawks clinched the division.

After spending his first three seasons in the NFL on the outside of the postseason with the struggling New York Jets, Adams is reveling in the chance to play in meaningful January games after the offseason trade to Seattle.

"I don't want to be too happy because I don't want people to say he's dramatic or he hasn't been here before."

— Jamal Adams, Seattle Seahawks strong safety

"I don't want to be too happy because I don't want people to say he's dramatic or he hasn't been here before," Adams said after the division-clinching win over the Rams in Week 16.

Adams is among the several big-name players headed to the postseason for the first time, hoping to gain even more fame by shining on the big playoff stage.

Adams has delivered for the Seahawks, who traded a big package featuring two first-round picks to the Jets in July for the

playmaking safety. He set a record for defensive backs with 9½ sacks for a defense that made big strides in the second half of the season and went from a liability to a relative strength.

Here's a look at some other players set to make their playoff debuts this weekend:

Baker Mayfield: The only time the Cleveland quarterback was seen last postseason was on a commercial, not on the playing field. But Mayfield had an efficient third year with the Browns and helped get the franchise back

to the postseason for the first time since 2002.

Mayfield threw 26 TD passes and posted a career-best 95.9 passer rating in his first season under coach Kevin Stefanski, who will miss the game Sunday against Pittsburgh following a positive COVID-19 test.

Mayfield will try to snap Cleveland's 17-game losing streak in Pittsburgh since the Browns' last win there in 2003, the year before Ben Roethlisberger joined the Steelers.

See **NFL** / B5

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

NFL prospects all over the field in Alabama-Ohio State championship game

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

Former LSU linebacker Patrick Queen is a good example of how a huge performance in a national championship game can help a player boost his NFL draft stock.

Queen was a rising prospect throughout last season and capped it by being the defensive MVP of the College Football

Playoff championship victory against Clemson. Queen was later selected in the first round by the Baltimore Ravens at No. 28 overall.

No. 1 Alabama and No. 3 Ohio State head into the national title game Monday with a slew of future NFL players. The matchups will not only determine who wins a championship, but could also influence

INSIDE

• College football awards handed out Thursday night, **B4**

where players are drafted.

"You do want to look into a player's ability to play in the clutch and in the big moments because obviously when you're putting together a football team, an NFL roster, your goal is to be playing in the playoffs," said Jim

Nagy, Senior Bowl executive director and a former NFL scout. "So you want to look at the consequential games. The games that really matter."

Alabama center Landon Dickerson, who is out with a knee injury, and guard Deonte Brown have already accepted invitations to the Senior Bowl on Jan. 30, Nagy said. Heisman Trophy-winning receiver

DeVonta Smith, star running back Najee Harris and tackle Alex Leatherwood have also been invited.

For Ohio State, center Josh Myers, running back Trey Sermon, linebackers Tuf Borland and Barron Browning, and defensive end Jonathon Cooper plan to take part in the Senior Bowl, Nagy said.

See **Prospects** / B5