

SPORTS

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WORLD CUP
ALPINE SKIINGBend's Ford 10th
in Swiss Alps

ADELBODEN, Switzerland — Bend's Tommy Ford finished 10th and was the top American on Friday in a World Cup giant slalom ski race in the Swiss Alps.

It marked the fourth top-10 finish of the season for the two-time Olympian, who is having one of the best seasons of his World Cup career at age 31.

Ford's two-run combined time was 2.85 seconds behind winner Alexis Pinturault. The French skier stretched his lead at the top of the overall World Cup standings, posting the fastest time in both runs.

Pinturault finished 1.04 seconds ahead of Filip Zubcic on the icy Chuenisbärgli course. Marco Odermatt was third, 1.11 back, to retain a small lead over Pinturault in the season-long giant slalom standings.

Odermatt was aiming to end Switzerland's 13-year wait for a win in the country's classic giant slalom race.

Defending overall champion Aleksander Aamodt Kilde was more than a second further back in fourth in what is shaping up as another duel with Pinturault for the title.

Kilde completed his run and immediately went to check on injured Norwegian teammate Lucas Braathen, who was being treated on the snow after crashing across the finish line while setting a leading time.

Braathen lost his balance when his skis appeared to touch as he shifted his feet to ensure his right ski did not hook around the last gate.

A second giant slalom is scheduled for Saturday, a race that would normally draw more than 25,000 noisy Swiss fans in a normal season. No spectators can attend this year because of limits on mass gatherings amid the coronavirus pandemic.

— Bulletin wire reports

COLLEGE
FOOTBALLBoise State to hire
Ducks DC Avalos

EUGENE — Less than two years after becoming Oregon's defensive coordinator, Andy Avalos is returning to his alma mater to take over as head coach at Boise State, according to the Idaho Press.

Avalos' hiring comes almost three weeks after Bryan Harsin left BSU for Auburn and less than a week after Boise State hired Jeremiah Dickey as its new athletic director.

In between, Avalos, who played linebacker for the Broncos from 2001-05, and former Boise State QB and Dallas Cowboys offensive coordinator Kellen Moore were linked as leading candidates for the job. Moore agreed to a contract extension with the Cowboys on Saturday.

In 2019, his first season with the Ducks, Avalos led a defense that surged into the top 25 in many major statistical categories, including ninth in scoring (16.3 points). Oregon's defensive stats dropped in 2020 — three defensive starters in the secondary opted out in the offseason, which likely contributed to the decline.

Ducks coach Mario Cristobal will search for his third defensive coordinator in four years and Oregon's fifth in seven years.

— The Oregonian

Prep Sports

Fans in the stands?



Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file

Fans gather last September to watch the Redmond and Crook County high school baseball teams play each other at Redmond High. A lack of masks among people on and off the field prompted school district officials to ban spectators from games. High school athletic directors have been discussing plans for handling fans once competition potentially resumes for fall sports on March 1.

Central Oregon high school athletic directors discussing plans for spectators

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
The Bulletin

On what would be the final day of Oregon high school sports in 2020, at basketball tournaments this past March — including the Crook County boys basketball team playing in an empty Gill Coliseum in Corvallis at the 5A state tournament — fans were excluded from watching in person before the Oregon School Activities Association suspended play.

An interesting wrinkle in bringing back high school sports, which have been shelved since the COVID-19 pandemic began 10 months ago, is how to handle spectators if and when sports return.

While local athletic directors have been discussing plans for handling fans once competition potentially resumes for fall sports on March 1, Sisters athletic director Gary Thorson aptly points out that it is tricky to have a concrete plan in place nearly two months out.

"Rules can change five times between now and then," Thorson said.

Much of the sports world has seen the number of fans in the stands evaporate to close to zero. In the Oregon-Oregon State rivalry football game in November, the stands at Reser Stadium in Corvallis were empty in a game that is typically standing-room only. Fans were not included in the NBA bubble for its playoffs.

But after a season that saw very few, if any fans, teams are starting to allow fans back into their stadiums. The Buffalo Bills are allowing 6,772 fans per New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo for their playoff game against the Indianapolis Colts on Saturday, which is more than 65,000 fewer than the 71,870 capacity at Bills Stadium.

States such as Texas, which played high school sports during the fall, had

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— Doug Taylor, Redmond athletic director

guidelines of limited capacity, six feet of social distancing and masks required in the stands.

Dave Williams, the athletic director of Bend-La Pine Schools, said that ideas are being bounced around with school ADs for plans with or without fans once competition resumes.

While no concrete plans have been in place for the past several months, there have been inklings of what spectators could expect once competition resumes.

When unofficial high school competition started during the fall in Season 1 in Central Oregon, fans were originally able to sit in the stands as long as they socially distanced themselves and wore

masks. Signing in for contact tracing at the entrance gates was also required. But after those efforts were unsuccessful, spectators were excluded from being in the stands.

During 7-on-7 non-tackle football competitions, with fans unable to attend at certain schools, teams resorted to streaming the games on Facebook Live as a way to give fans a chance to watch, but the quality of the broadcasts was less than ideal.

When Crook County played its state tournament basketball game with no spectators last March, fans were able to watch that game from the National Federation of State High School Association's Network livestream.

Redmond High is already preparing for the possibility of having to broadcast games if fans are unable to attend.

"We imagine there will still be limitations of some sort on numbers like there was in the fall," said Redmond athletic director Doug Taylor. "We did get our Pixellot camera systems installed and plan on using those to stream competitions."

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NFL

Seahawks
open playoffs
against rival
L.A. Rams

BY TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — In the immediate aftermath of clinching a return to the playoffs, Aaron Donald made perfectly clear he was thrilled to be getting his wish.

The Los Angeles Rams defensive star wanted another shot at Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks.

"They got the division, and they were happy about that. And now they have to see us again, a third time," Donald said. "When you're playing a team that you see twice a year, you've kind of got a feel for each other. They know what you're going to do, we know what they are going to do. It's pretty much man on man, and the best team should win. So there's no better way than that to start it off."

For the second time in three weeks, the Rams and Seahawks will clash on Saturday, this time in the opening round of the NFC playoffs. It's a matchup overflowing with familiarity and a history of close games not decided until the fourth quarter.

But there is uncertainty this time around. The Rams (10-6) have not said whether starting quarterback Jared Goff or backup John Wolford will be under center to face the Seahawks.

Goff injured his thumb in the second half of Seattle's 20-9 win over the Rams in Week 16. Surgery to repair the injury left Goff a spectator last Sunday while Wolford directed an 18-7 win over Arizona to clinch the Rams' postseason berth.

And now? It's been a smoke screen of gamesmanship by Rams coach Sean McVay about which of his quarterbacks — or both, potentially — will be trying to solve a Seahawks defense that held Los Angeles to less than 10 points for only the sixth time in McVay's tenure less than 14 days ago.

"You talk to Jared and then you'd kind of just take it a day at a time," McVay said. "I know that he's in the mindset and the mentality of trying to prepare himself to get ready to play a game."

See Seahawks / B2

Next up

L.A. Rams (10-6)
at Seattle (12-4)

When: 1:40 p.m.

Saturday

TV: FOX



MLB | IN MEMORIAM

Baseball is a better game
because Lasorda was in it

BY TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Columnist

Tommy Lasorda loved the game of baseball more than anything.

If it was somehow possible, he loved the Dodgers even more.

Lasorda lived his life wrapped in Dodger Blue, and when he took his last breath Thursday night at the age of 93 my guess is he was still certain of one thing.

"If you don't love the Dod-

gers," Lasorda liked to say, "there's a good chance you may not get into Heaven."

Under that set of qualifications, Lasorda is already there. No need to present his credentials at the Pearly Gates, even if he didn't show up in his gleaming white uniform with Dodgers scrawled in blue on the front and a big No. 2 on the back.

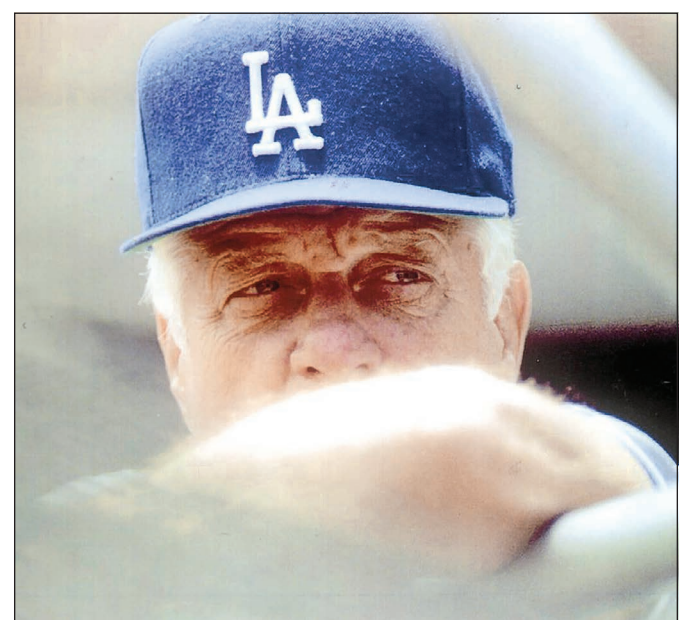
He lived long enough to see the Dodgers break the drought of his lifetime and

win the team's first World Series since he, Kirk Gibson and Orel Hershiser gave them the most improbable one 32 years earlier. His last wish was to see the Dodgers finally win again and, though frail, he traveled to Texas in October to see it happen.

Still, even in death, there's one wish remaining.

"I want my wife to put the Dodgers' schedule on my tombstone," Lasorda often said.

See Lasorda / B2



Vince Compagnone/Los Angeles Times file

Dodger manager Tommy Lasorda in 1994. Lasorda died on Thursday night at the age of 93.