

NFL

Chargers hire Staley as coach

Justin Herbert will be playing for his second head coach in his first two years with the Los Angeles Chargers.

The Chargers hired Brandon Staley as their new head coach, the team announced Sunday night.

Staley, who was the defensive coordinator for the Los Angeles Rams, replaces Anthony Lynn. Lynn was fired Jan. 4.

Staley, in his first season as defensive coordinator with the Rams, developed the unit into the NFL's top-ranked defense in 2020. The Rams led the league in yards allowed, pass defense and average points allowed. The Rams also possessed two All-Pro first team players in defensive tackle Aaron Donald and cornerback Jalen Ramsey.

The Rams shut down the Seattle Seahawks during a wild card playoff game before being eliminated following a loss to the Green Bay Packers in a divisional round game on Saturday.

Staley, 38, will take over a Chargers team that posted a 7-9 record in 2020. The Chargers endured a number of injuries to key players and struggled to win close games.

The Chargers possess the talent to post a breakout season in 2021.

The Chargers finished the 2020 season on a four-game winning streak that was fueled by the play of Herbert. The rookie quarterback broke a number of rookie records during the season and is the frontrunner to capture the league's Offensive Rookie of the Year award. The Chargers also have wide receiver Keenan Allen and running back Austin Ekeler.

The Chargers' defense possesses defensive ends Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram, and they expect the return of safety Derwin James, who missed the entire 2020 season with a knee injury.

Carroll talks to Pederson about OC

Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll is in need for a new offensive coordinator and he appears to be including former head coaches in his search.

The Seahawks are searching for a new offensive coordinator after Brian Schottenheimer was fired last week. Carroll has talked to former Philadelphia Eagles' head coach Doug Pederson about the position, according to a report.

Pederson was fired as head coach of the Eagles following the 2020 season. The Eagles finished the season with a record of 4-11-1 in 2020. Pederson was fired after he led the Eagles to the playoffs three consecutive seasons (2017-19), including a win in Super Bowl 52 during the 2017 season. Pederson posted a record of 42-37-1 during his five seasons as head coach.

Pederson was previously an offensive coordinator with Kansas City for three seasons under Andy Reid before the Eagles hired him to be their coach in 2016. When Pederson started calling the plays, he transformed the offense and Kansas City won 10 consecutive games to close out the 2015 season.

Carroll has reportedly also talked to former Los Angeles Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn about the position.

—The Oregonian

LOCAL SPORTS

Dates set for start of indoor football league

BY BRIAN RATHBONE

The Bulletin

The Oregon High Desert Storm are officially scheduled to begin their debut season this spring.

Dates have been announced for the team's tryout and a schedule for the American West Football Conference's second season has been released. The five-team conference is a professional indoor, eight-man football league, which recently added the Redmond-based High Desert Storm.

The team will hold their rescheduled tryout on Saturday, Feb. 27, at the First Interstate



Bank Center at the Deschutes County fairgrounds in Redmond. The tryouts are open to everyone and registration is available at oregonstorm.com. The original tryout was set for November, but had

to be rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The High Desert Storm are hoping to have at least 40 players when preseason camp opens. Those players will be narrowed down to 30 before the opening game. For games, only 21 players are allowed to suit up and play. The Storm have already signed three players — a trio of wide receivers who all played college football.

"It is really a competitive, serious situation. I want local talent," said High Desert Storm coach Keith Evans, stressing that the goal is to bring a championship to Central Ore-

gon. "The more local talent the better. But you have to perform and show me that you are that player. I know there are players in this area."

The 12-week regular season for the AWFC is slated to start in late spring and run through the summer. The High Desert Storm's first game is scheduled for May 8 against the Idaho Horsemen in Nampa, Idaho. The three other teams in the AWFC are all based in Washington: the Yakima Canines, Tri-City Rush and Wenatchee Valley Skyhawks.

The Storm's home opener at the First Interstate Bank Cen-

ter will be held on June 5. The Storm are scheduled to play five of their 12 games in Redmond this season. There is still hope that spectators can attend once the season starts in four months.

"We pushed everything back for obvious reasons (COVID), and we are hoping there can be fans," Evans said. "We need them, we can't do what the NFL does with no fans."

The regular season is scheduled to conclude on Aug. 14, followed by the AWFC playoffs.

■ Reporter: 541-383-0307, brathbone@bendbulletin.com

NFL | Commentary

MAKING HISTORY WITH EVERY THROW



Tom Brady, the 43-year-old quarterback, has guided the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to the NFC championship.

Brynn Anderson/AP

Bucs' Brady set to play in his 14th conference title game, but first as a member of the NFC

BY TIM DAHLBERG

AP Sports Columnist

Tom Brady is one win away from the Super Bowl, two wins away from a seventh ring.

If that doesn't get you excited about the final weeks of the strangest NFL season ever, perhaps the thought of Brady heading to Green Bay next weekend to take on Aaron Rodgers and the Packers will.

Lambeau Field will be as unfamiliar for Brady as putting on the Tampa Bay uniform was to begin the year. But the situation won't be, with Brady set to play in his 14th conference title game, his first as a member of the NFC.

Best of all, he'll do it without the dour Bill Belichick there to grab any of the glory.

The greatest ever? Uh, yeah, but was that ever really in doubt?

Certainly not after taking down Drew Brees and the Saints on Sunday in the Superdome. Surely not when Brady can still deliver touchdown passes and find a way to win at the age of 43 in the rookie year of his second career at Tampa Bay.

No, it wasn't exactly the Brady of old against Brees and the Saints. He barely glanced deep down the field and didn't need to guide his team to one of his patented last-minute drives to win.

But he was steady, and he didn't make many mistakes. And on a day when fellow 40-something Brees threw three interceptions — including one in the fourth quarter that Brady and the Bucs quickly cashed in on — that was plenty enough for a 30-20 win.

Just another Sunday at the office for a quarterback whose postseason credentials may never be challenged.

See Tom Brady / A7



NBA | SAN ANTONIO 125, TRAIL BLAZERS 104

Aldridge, DeRozan lead Spurs over Trail Blazers

BY ERIK GARCÍA GUNDERSEN

Associated Press

PORTLAND — LaMarcus Aldridge had 22 points, DeMar DeRozan had 20 points and 11 assists and the San Antonio Spurs defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 125-104 on Monday.

Rudy Gay and Patty Mills came off the bench for 21 points apiece as the Spurs reserves outscored Portland backups 59-24. Reserve center Jakob Poeltl added 11 points and seven rebounds, six of which came on the offensive glass.

"Their bench hurt us," Blaz-

ers coach Terry Stotts said. "The shooting off the bench, the second-chance opportunities. They really hurt us. They had 10 second-chance points in the fourth quarter."

Aldridge, playing against the team he spent nine years with, got things rolling for the Spurs.

"He set the tone early," Gay said. "He got to his spots and he knocked down his shots. Him knocking down shots and pulling out the big men kind of opens things up. It opens up cracks and DeMar slips through those cracks."

Aldridge scored eight points in the first quarter.

"He didn't catch and think about it," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "He was just determined to let it fly."

Between DeRozan and point guard Dejounte Murray, the Spurs also had two players with 11 assists apiece while the Blazers had just 20 total assists as a team.

"They're unselfish guys and they don't really care who scores," Popovich said of his two offensive conductors. "They just play the game the right way."

Damian Lillard led Portland with 35 points.

See Trail Blazers / A7



Steve Dykes/AP

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, right, drives to the hoop against San Antonio Spurs center Jakob Poeltl in Portland on Monday.