

## SPORTS

THE BULLETIN • FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2021

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## MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## Ducks to be down 2 starters vs. Beavs

EUGENE — Oregon will be without two starters, including leading scorer Chris Duarte, and have just eight scholarship players available against Oregon State on Saturday.

The No. 21 Ducks (9-2, 4-1 Pac-12) will be without Duarte and starting small forward L.J. Figueroa due to COVID-19 protocols, Oregon coach Dana Altman said on Thursday.

Altman said Duarte (18.4 points, 4.6 rebounds) and Figueroa (10.1 points, 6.5 rebounds) are asymptomatic.

Backup point guard Jalen Terry, who missed the previous four games, will be back in the lineup.

Will Richardson, who has missed the whole season following surgery on his left thumb, is still recovering and won't play this weekend.

—The Oregonian

## NFL

## Former Packers GM Thompson, 68, dies

Ted Thompson, whose 13-year run as Green Bay Packers general manager included their 2010 Super Bowl championship season, has died. He was 68.

The Packers announced Thursday that Thompson died the previous night at his home in Atlanta, Texas.

Thompson announced in May 2019 he had been diagnosed with an autonomic nerve disorder.

He was the general manager from 2005-17 and drafted many notable players on the current roster, including two-time MVP quarterback Aaron Rodgers. He acquired 49 of the 53 players on the Packers' 2010 championship team.

"He, in my opinion, is the best talent evaluator, especially when it comes to the draft, that I've ever seen or been around," said Brian Gutekunst, who worked alongside Thompson at Green Bay before eventually succeeding him as general manager. "He had a very unique way of seeing what a player was going to become and the greatest he could become."

Thompson spent more than two decades in the Packers' front office and was the team's director of pro personnel when the Packers won the Super Bowl for the 1996 season and captured the NFC title the following year.

Thompson had a playing career as a linebacker with the Houston Oilers from 1975-1984.

But he made his biggest impact as an executive. He worked in Green Bay's front office from 1992-99 and was the Seattle Seahawks' vice president of football operations from 2000-04.

"I always appreciated his steady hand and the conversations that we would have," Rodgers said in a statement. "He always made things pretty clear about what he expected from the team and what he expected from me. He always preached to put the team first, to not be a distraction, to be a good teammate, to be a good professional, and I always appreciated those comments."

With Thompson as GM, the Packers made eight consecutive playoff appearances from 2009-16, including the Super Bowl championship season in 2010.

—Associated Press

## PREP SPORTS

## Clock winding down on return of high school sports

BY BRIAN RATHBONE  
The Bulletin

It is a situation that has become all too familiar the past 10 months — waiting for new information on what the future holds for high school sports, which have been shelved since March.

With the Oregon School Activities Association next executive board meeting about three weeks away on Feb. 8, the return of high school sports, specifically the sports deemed as contact sports, remain in flux.

Peter Weber, the executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association, has said unless guidelines change from the Oregon Health Authority, full-contact sports — football, basketball, wrestling, cheerleading and dance/drill — will not be allowed to compete when the seasons restart Feb. 22 (Feb. 8 for football).

While school districts are now able to decide when to allow students back in the classroom, a step toward high school sports, a county's risk

level dictates whether or not sports can be played.

Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties remain "extreme risk counties," which means full-contact sports team players can only condition and train while the other sports teams are able to compete. Six counties in Oregon are low risk, two are moderate risk, two are high risk, and 26 are considered extreme risk.

If county COVID-19 numbers improve, does it matter?

According to the current

guidelines put out by the OHA, if a county becomes "low risk" nothing changes for the full-contact sports. They will still only be allowed to train and condition and "cannot include full contact of any kind," meaning no games.

With time running out on when a final decision is to be made on the return of high school competition, an online petition made by the Oregon "Return to Play" campaign has been making rounds through school emails and has been

shared hundreds of times on the Facebook group, "Let Them Play! — Oregonians for Athletes."

In a letter penned to Gov. Kate Brown, the campaign is making a plea for the return of high school sports.

The letter highlights several reasons for athletics to make their return nearly a year after the initial shutdown, including the mental health of young athletes.

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## NFL Commentary

## SYSTEM FAILURE



Charlie Riedel/AP file

Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy greets a player during the 2019 AFC championship game against the New England Patriots in Kansas City, Missouri. Many considered Bieniemy a leading candidate for one of the seven head coaching vacancies this offseason, but with only one opening remaining, he could be frozen out again. Former San Francisco 49ers defensive coordinator Robert Saleh is the only non-white candidate to land one of the coveted positions when he was hired by the New York Jets.

## Teams continue to pass on hiring new Black coaches

BY TIM DAHLBERG  
AP Sports Columnist

Coaches understand before they sign employment

contracts that they are hired to be fired, something that's particularly true in the NFL where the only measure of success is a playoff slot at the end of the season.

That's why there was no real outcry when Anthony Lynn was let go by the Chargers. Lynn's team went 7-9 this season and some of his head-scratching decisions late in games caused fans to lose their hair.

That Lynn is Black didn't matter when it came to getting a pink slip. A half-dozen coaches who weren't of color were also let go in the annual coaching exodus across the league.

"The disparity in opportunities is mind boggling. It is unfortunate that the performances of coordinators like Eric Bieniemy, Todd Bowles, Byron Leftwich, Leslie Frazier, and Joe Woods, may not meet what appears as 'ever-evolving standards' for becoming a Black head coach in the NFL."

— Rod Graves, executive director of the Fritz Pollard Alliance, an organization that works to promote minority opportunities in the NFL

Unfortunately, though, it seems being Black still does matter when it comes to getting hired in the first place. And that's become a problem the NFL seems increasingly unable — or unwilling — to fix.

The news Thursday that Philadelphia plans to hire Indianapolis offensive coordinator Nick Sirianni as the new head coach of the Eagles is the latest reminder of that. Sirianni seems qualified but at the age of 39 he's getting an opportunity that could have gone to any number of equally deserving Black assistants.

That it didn't means six of the seven coaching vacancies this offseason have now been filled. Robert Saleh was hired to coach the New York Jets as the first Muslim head coach, but there are no new Black coaches in the group.

The Rooney Rule that requires minorities be interviewed for all head coaching openings still gets Black applicants a foot in the door. But the door seems to close when it comes to making the actual hire, and recent tweaks to the rule haven't been enough to change that.

Consider this: In the three previous coaching replacement cycles before this year, 20 coaches were hired and only three were coaches of color — just one of them Black.

That leaves the NFL with four minority coaches, just two of them African-American, pending a coaching hire in Texas. And that's simply unacceptable in a league where 70% of players are Black, and so are a third of the assistants trying to work their way up the coaching ladder.

Yes, there have been two Black general manager hires, but that's scant consolation for those who see other inequalities at the top.

"The disparity in opportunities is mind boggling," Fritz Pollard Alliance executive director Rod Graves said in a statement earlier in the week. "It is unfortunate that the performances of coordinators like Eric Bieniemy, Todd Bowles, Byron Leftwich, Leslie Frazier, and Joe Woods, may not meet what appears as 'ever-evolving standards' for becoming a Black head coach in the NFL."

Graves, whose organization works to promote minority opportunities in the NFL, cited the annual report card issued by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at Central Florida in highlighting the NFL's issues. The 2020 edition put together by Richard Lapchick gives the NFL poor grades in racial hiring for all its executives, including head coaches.

See NFL / B4

## COLLEGE SPORTS COMMENTARY

## Pac-12 presidents prepared to find new commissioner

BY JOHN CANZANO  
The Oregonian

The executive committee of the Pac-12 Conference CEO Group gave me 15 minutes on Thursday morning to ask questions about what's about to happen in the wake of dumping the conference commissioner.

I thought about coming out of the gate with, "What the \$#@ took you so long?"

The conference announced on Wednesday night that it won't renew the contract of embattled commissioner Larry Scott. The Pac-12 will hire a search firm, let it help craft a job description, and Washington president Ana Mari Cauce told me on Thursday, "Nothing is off the table."

Not the Pac-12 Network future. Not the future location of conference headquarters. Especially not a significant reduction in salary for the new hire.

See Pac-12 / B5

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## No. 13 Ducks look to bounce back vs. Cougars

BY JAMES CREPEA  
The Oregonian

EUGENE — The all-time series between Oregon and Washington State has been dominated by the Ducks, 70-19, but the Cougars had command until the closing minutes in a loss last month in Pullman and have emerged as the surprise team in the Pac-12 team this season.

Washington State (7-3, 5-3 Pac-12) is coming off back-to-back overtime losses to the Los Angeles schools entering Friday's game (5 p.m., Pac-12 Network) in Eugene, but its three losses this season have been by a combined 10 points. That includes a 69-65 defeat by Oregon, which is just 2-3 since.

See Ducks / B4