

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Beavers edged out by Bruins, 57-52

LOS ANGELES — The No. 23 UCLA Bruins held on for a 57-52 victory over Oregon State at Pauley Pavilion, though there were more than a few scary moments for UCLA along the way.

What had been an 11-point UCLA lead was down to three with 14 seconds to go before Oregon State called a timeout to set up a play and Beavers guard Ethan Thompson drove toward the corner. Thompson stumbled and lost the ball out of bounds with 8.6 seconds left, pounding the court with his hand in frustration.

UCLA's Tyger Campbell made four free throws in the final seconds to close out the Beavers and extend the Bruins' home winning streak to 16 games going back one year.

UCLA forward Cody Riley powered his way to 16 points and 10 rebounds.

The Bruins (13-3, 9-1 Pac-12) also extended their advantage over second-place USC to 1½ games one week before the rivals meet at Galen Center.

Thompson scored 16 points to lead the Beavers (8-7, 4-5), who are happily leaving Los Angeles after a two-game sweep.

The Beavers' defense re-emerged, holding the Bruins to 17-of-52 (32.7%) shooting from the floor and 6-of-24 (25%) from 3-point range.

However, Oregon State committed 20 fouls and UCLA capitalized by making 17-of-23 (73.9%) of their free throws. The Beavers also turned the ball over 15 times, compared to just seven for the Bruins.

— Los Angeles Times

NFL

Lions, Rams swap quarterbacks

LOS ANGELES — The Detroit Lions are trading quarterback Matthew Stafford to the Los Angeles Rams in exchange for quarterback Jared Goff, two future first-round picks and a third-round pick, a person with knowledge of the deal tells The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Saturday night because the deal has not been completed. ESPN first reported the swap, which will include the Rams' first-round picks in 2022 and 2023, along with their third-round pick this year.

Stafford asked to be traded shortly after the current season ended with the Lions' third straight double-digit losing record. He has been one of the NFL's most prolific passers during his 12-year career spent entirely in Detroit, but has never won a playoff game.

Meanwhile, the Rams' coaching staff and front office have publicly expressed a clear loss of confidence in Goff in recent weeks after Los Angeles earned its third playoff berth and posted its fourth straight winning record during his four years under coach Sean McVay.

Stafford, who turns 33 years old next month, has two years left on a \$135 million, five-year contract.

Goff is about to begin a four-year, \$135 million contract with \$110 million guaranteed.

— Associated Press

Prep Sports

Taking a toll

Mental health at the forefront of high school sports' return

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
The Bulletin

During a recent television interview, Patrick Walsh, a football coach for Serra High School in Southern California, made a plea for his state to restart youth sports.

"The biggest issue is kids are losing hope," he said. "Mental health is declining, and we think youth sports can help."

Oregon, Washington and California are still grappling with how to return to official high school competition for the first time in nearly a year. At the forefront of the discussion is not the number of games, the missing out on state titles or players losing chances at receiving college scholarships, but rather, the mental health impact on youth athletes.

"The social aspect as well, being around friends, teammates and dedication towards their craft whatever sport that might be," said Dr. Kyle Ahlf of Peak Wellness Services in Bend. "Those are the basics that athletes are missing out on."

As of now, practices for traditional



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin file

Members of the Summit High School football team maintain a safe social distance while running through conditioning drills during the summer.

"The biggest issue is kids are losing hope. Mental health is declining, and we think youth sports can help."

— Patrick Walsh, a football coach for Serra High School in Southern California

fall sports are set to begin Feb. 22 (Feb. 8 for football) with official contests starting the week of March 1. The Oregon School Activities Association will hold an executive board meeting on Feb. 8 to further clarify what the "fall" season will look like.

The OSAA, the school's athletic directors and coaches all seem to agree the mental health of student athletes is the driving force behind bringing high school sports back.

It is a sentiment that Redmond High football coach Seth Womack shares. The planning required to operate a football program during a pan-

demie — scheduling, safety protocols, practice restrictions and weight room logistics — has taken a back seat to the most challenging issue: telling his players their season continues to be delayed.

"The kids want to play," Womack said. "They have been on fieldwork this whole week and our kids are showing up. We are just trying to keep morale up."

Nick Moss wanted to be the cool dad, but recently he has found himself having to be a dorky dad just to try and put a smile on his daughter, Layla's, and son, Jakoby's faces. He found

his daughter, a freshman cheerleader and lacrosse player, being sad with the continuous bad news while Jakoby, a junior quarterback for the Cougars grows with frustration.

"I try everything that I can," Moss said. "I feel if you let a little bit of that fester it is only going to get worse, it is best to nip it in the bud. The problem is we will know more in two weeks, then two weeks go by and nothing changes."

Last week, Washington eased its restrictions to allow for different areas to allow for high school football to return to play. With Oregon, Washington and California having similar guidelines to one another, there is optimism that Oregon might follow suit.

"We are seeing some hope, we just hope it isn't false hope," Moss said.

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MOTORSPORTS | ROLEX 24 AT DAYTONA

Johnson invigorated after stint in prestigious Rolex 24

BY JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

The nerves hit Jimmie Johnson as he stood on the starting grid before the Rolex 24 at Daytona.

The seven-time NASCAR champion is beginning a new chapter of his career — at 45 years old — in unfamiliar race cars. He was tabbed to start the most prestigious sports car race in America for his Action Express team and Johnson had just one goal for his first stint in the Cadillac.

"Certainly didn't want to break the toy in the first couple of hours," Johnson said after

driving about 70 minutes Saturday around Daytona International Speedway.

He gave the No. 48 over to teammate Simon Pagenaud and then turned to Kamui Kobayashi, the two-time reigning winner of the Rolex 24, for an animated debrief.

Johnson, a little more than two months removed as the most dominant NASCAR driver of the last two decades, has "jumped into the deep end of the pool with weights on my ankles" as he transitions into new formulas of racing. This Rolex 24 is the eighth of his career but first in a decade

and its a warmup for his move to IndyCar, where he'll be a rookie in a field stacked with drivers half his age.

His career change has made for a busy offseason of testing alongside some of the top drivers in the world and the demands have lit a spark in Johnson. He was winless in the final three seasons of his NASCAR career.

"I know the world that I'm stepping into and I know what I walked away from and the comfort that I had there, and I'm very aware of how uncomfortable I am going to be stepping into this new arena and it

makes me feel alive," Johnson said.

The Rolex began with a field of 50 cars, a rebound after an event-low 38 entries last season. Daytona officials said infield attendance would be limited for the event but did not release a capacity number. Campers were only permitted in motorhomes with tents banned and masks required on property.

Alegra Motorsports announced right before the race began that driver Michael de Quesada tested positive for COVID-19 and had left the speedway to self-isolate. He was replaced in the Mercedes com-

peting in the GT Daytona class by Mike Skeen.

Otherwise, the event went on as scheduled. The midway bustled with fans visiting manufacturer displays, the Ferris Wheel was up and running and many of the best road course racers in the world were eager for the twice-round-the-clock endurance event.

Johnson held his own in his first stint driving the Cadillac and the Action Express entry, fielded in part with Hendrick Motorsports and sponsored by Ally, has a solid chance at the overall win.

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FREESKIING | SUPERPIPE

17-year-old daredevil Eileen Gu could be China's next Olympic star

BY EDDIE PELLIS
AP National Writer

ASPEN, Colo. — When sports fans hear the name Eileen Gu over the next 12 months — and they will hear it a lot — it will not be by accident.

Hard work, laser-focused planning, an unworldly wealth of talent and a splendid bit of timing could turn this 17-year-old freeskier, who hails from San Francisco but whose mother is from China, into the most recognizable daredevil in the action-sports world.

She broke through this weekend to become a two-time Winter X-Games champion

— once on the halfpipe Friday, then again on the slopestyle course Saturday. Those victories place Gu squarely on the short list of gold-medal contenders at the Beijing Olympics next February.

Wins there could be nothing less than transformative for snow sports in China. Though Gu grew up in the United States and skied most of her childhood on the U.S. team, she will compete for the home team at the Beijing Olympics. It was a difficult decision made less so because of the untapped audience in that country. When China was bidding to host the Olympics, it set a

target of putting 300 million people on snow in a country of 1.4 billion.

Gu, who speaks fluent Mandarin and makes yearly trips to China with her mom, Yan, figures she could do her fair share to bring some young girls along for the ride.

"Some people retire with 10 gold medals and then, they're 30 years old and don't know what to do," she said. "But I want to be able to have those medals and to be able to feel like I've changed someone's life or changed the sport or introduced the sport to a country where it wasn't before."

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Kelsey Brunner/The Aspen Times via AP

Winter X Games rookie Eileen Gu airs out of the superpipe during women's finals at the 2021 Winter X Games Aspen on Friday night in Aspen, Colorado. Gu took home the gold in her first superpipe final.