

## GOLF

## Sorenstam to play in PGA event

More than a decade after Annika Sorenstam won her last PGA Tour event, she's ready to tee it up again.

The PGA Tour announced on Twitter that Sorenstam, 50, has committed to play the Gainbridge PGA in Orlando, Florida, scheduled for Feb. 25-28 on her home course of Lake Nona.

It will be her first official event since she missed the cut in the season-ending ADT Championship at Trump International in 2008, her final season of a Hall of Fame career that included 72 wins on the PGA Tour and 10 majors. Her last victory was the Michelob Ultra Open at Kingsmill in 2008, and a month later she announced she was retiring.

Sorenstam recently played the PNC Challenge in December with her father, Tom. She said then her son was starting to play and motivating her to get back on the golf course. Sorenstam had said she was interested in a few senior events but did not hint at playing an official PGA event.

She was part of the celebrity field at the season-opening Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions last month.

Sorenstam has kept busy since retirement, with two children at home and a foundation that includes a focus on junior golf. She also was appointed president of the International Golf Federation, which oversees the Olympics.

Sorenstam received heavy criticism for accepting the Presidential Medal of Freedom from former President Donald Trump on Jan. 7, one day after a deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol as Congress was certifying the election victory of President Joe Biden.

— Associated Press

## NFL

## Schottenheimer, ex-coach, dies at 77

Marty Schottenheimer, who won 200 regular-season games with four NFL teams thanks to his "Martyball" brand of smash-mouth football but regularly fell short in the playoffs, has died. He was 77.

Schottenheimer died Monday night in Charlotte, North Carolina, his family said through Bob Moore, former Kansas City Chiefs publicist. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2014. He was moved to a hospice on Jan. 30.

Schottenheimer was the eighth-winningest coach in NFL history. He went 200-126-1 in 21 seasons with the Cleveland Browns, Kansas City Chiefs, Washington and San Diego Chargers.

His success was rooted in "Martyball," a conservative approach that featured a strong running game and tough defense. He hated the then-Oakland Raiders and loved the mantra, "One play at a time," which he'd holler at his players in the pre-kick-off huddle.

Winning in the regular season was never a problem. Schottenheimer's teams won 10 or more games 11 times, including a glistening 14-2 record with the Chargers in 2006 that earned them the AFC's No. 1 seed in the playoffs.

It's what happened in January that haunted Schottenheimer, who was just 5-13 in the post-season.

— Associated Press

## PREP SPORTS COMMENTARY

## Gov. Brown dropping the ball on high school sports

BY JOHN CANZANO  
The Oregonian

Officials in Michigan cleared high school basketball and ice hockey teams to return to play this week. Competitive cheer and wrestling can begin, too. So if you have the financial means and are ready to tap out of the bureaucracy of the state of Oregon, pack up and have at it.

I won't blame you. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority have boxed the non-affluent out of playing "contact" high school sports to this point. I know more than one family that has secured a short-term lease in

another state and sent one parent and a child to go play their prep sports season.

All because our state is woefully out of touch with the science and data that proves playing seven-on-seven football is really no different than holding a full-contact football season. The National Federation of State High School Associations issued a statement this week indicating its research found that "proven cases of direct COVID-19 transmission during athletics remain relatively rare."

Turns out, per the organization that, "the majority

of sports-related spread of COVID-19 appears to occur from social contact, not during sports participation."

On Monday the governing body of high school athletics in our state was left to formulate a plan to create flag football or a seven-on-seven league or maybe some kind of virtual combine for the high school kids.

I drove past a high school football field Monday late afternoon and found the varsity team lined up in formations running plays vs. air. They wore masks and didn't have pads on. I'm left wondering if anyone in Salem is paying attention to

what's happened as it pertains to sports in our country.

The NBA doesn't have a proven case of COVID-19 transmission during competition. Neither does the NFL, MLB or college football or basketball. The high school data in other states echos that. We know that competition is a low-risk endeavor. The medical community has learned that it needs to be open to re-assessing evidence and making appropriate changes to policy. So why are we still talking about a tiered system for high school sports in Oregon?

New York has cleared high school contact sports. Illinois

did it. So did New Mexico, too. They long ago played in a long list of other states. Peter Weber, head of the OSAA told me on Monday, "We believe that with the right protocols in place, it's been done in other states, we can do it here."

Gov. Kate Brown's office issued more word salad this week as it pertains to clearing kids to play sports. I can only surmise that those in charge haven't spent much time communicating with high school kids who are frustrated, depressed and feeling as though they don't matter to our state leaders.

See **Brown** / A6

## ALPINE SKIING

## Good time to say goodbye

Two-time Olympic champion skier Ted Ligety to retire after worlds

BY PAT GRAHAM  
Associated Press

Ted Ligety's young son recently brought home a medal he earned at ski school and wondered if dad had any of his own.

The two-time Olympic champion rummaged around to locate his medals. They then proudly paraded around the house with them.

More golden moments like that with the family is reason No. 1 why Ligety plans to retire from the World Cup circuit, effective after the world championships currently going on in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. Ligety's final race will be the giant slalom on Feb. 19.

"I feel really lucky to have done what I've done and be in a place in my life and my career where I'm able to walk away on a happy note," Ligety said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm just excited for that next step. It's going to be scary and different and all those things, but it's definitely exciting."

Known for his smooth, technical racing, Ligety captured a surprise gold medal in the combined at the 2006 Turin Olympics and then another gold medal eight years later in the giant slalom at the Sochi Games as the favorite.



Giovanni Auletta/AP file

Ted Ligety has been known for his smooth, technical racing in giant slalom.

His storied career also includes five wins at world championships, 25 World Cup victories and five season-long World Cup giant slalom titles. Ligety's dominance in the giant slalom once led Austrian skiing great Marcel Hirscher to pronounce him "Mr. GS."

Now, "Mr. GS" simply wants to be known as "Dad."

The 36-year-old Ligety's retirement plans include

spending more time with his wife, Mia, and kids at home in Park City, Utah. He has a nearly 4-year-old son, Jax, who's already showing his talent in ski school, along with twin boys, Alec and Will, who are 7 months old.

Ligety's desire to dart off to Europe to race and train has dwindled next to the prospects of being home for the milestones of his kids.

See **Ligety** / A7



Jessica Hill/AP file

Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna watch the first half of an NCAA college basketball game between Connecticut and Houston in March 2019, in Storrs, Connecticut.

## KOBE BRYANT

## Pilot's poor decisions blamed in chopper crash

BY STEFANIE DAZIO, BRIAN MELLEY AND DAVID KOENIG  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The pilot who crashed the helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant, killing all nine aboard, made a series of poor decisions that led him to fly blindly into a wall of clouds where he became so disoriented he thought he was climbing when the craft was plunging toward a Southern California hillside, federal safety officials said Tuesday.

The National Transportation Safety Board primarily blamed Ara Zobayan in the Jan. 26, 2020, crash that killed the pilot along with Bryant, his daughter and six other passengers heading to a girls basketball tournament.

Zobayan, an experienced pilot, ignored his training, violated flight rules by flying into conditions where he couldn't see and failed to take alternate measures, such as slowing down and landing or switching to auto-pilot, that would have averted the tragedy. The NTSB said it was likely he felt pressure to deliver his star client to his daughter's game.

The agency announced the long-awaited findings during a four-hour hearing pinpointing probable causes of what went awry in the 40-minute flight. The crash led to widespread public mourning for the retired basketball star, several lawsuits and prompted state and federal legislation.

The agency also faulted Is-

land Express Helicopters Inc., which operated the aircraft, for inadequate review and oversight of safety matters.

When Zobayan decided to climb above the clouds, he entered a trap. Once a pilot loses visual cues by flying into fog or darkness, the inner ear can send erroneous signals to the brain that causes spatial disorientation. It's sometimes known as "the leans," causing pilots to believe they are flying aircraft straight and level when they are banking.

Zobayan radioed air traffic controllers that he was climbing when, in fact, he was banking and descending rapidly toward the steep hills near Calabasas, NTSB investigators concluded.

See **Kobe** / A6