

## SPORTS

B

THE BULLETIN • SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2021

bendbulletin.com/sports

COLLEGE  
SOFTBALLDucks open season  
with shutout wins

Oregon softball opened its 2021 season with a pair of shutouts.

Allee Bunker had five RBIs as the No. 10 Ducks topped Weber State 9-0 in six innings, and Haley Cruse had three doubles and Samaria Diaz and Raegan Breedlove combined for a five-inning perfect game in an 8-0 win over Montana Friday afternoon at Grand Canyon in Phoenix.

In the opener, UO and WSU were scoreless through four before the Ducks broke through for a five-run fifth.

Terra McGowan drove in Alyssa Brito on a sacrifice fly to get the scoring started. Two batters later Bunker cleared the bases with a three-run triple and Ariel Carlson drove her in with an RBI single.

McGowan drove in another in the sixth, as Rachel Cid followed with an RBI single and Bunker added a two-run double.

Brooke Yanez struck out eight over five innings and Makenna Kliethermes struck out two in a perfect sixth.

Against Montana, Cruse led off with a double and Bunker drove her in for an early 1-0 lead. Cruse, McGowan and Cid each had RBI doubles to make it 4-0 after two.

Shaye Bowden hit a two-run double and Cruse drove in another on an extra-base hit and McGowan brought her in with a single as Oregon made it 8-0 after three. Cruse tied the program record for doubles in a game.

Diaz struck out four in 3.2 innings and Breedlove struck out one in 1.1 innings of relief.

Oregon takes on Weber State and Grand Canyon at 12:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Saturday, respectively.

— The Oregonian

WOMEN'S  
COLLEGE HOOPSDucks preparing  
for No. 5 Stanford

EUGENE — Taylor Chavez will miss a third straight game when Oregon hosts No. 5 Stanford on Monday.

Ducks coach Kelly Graves said Chavez, who missed the games against UC Davis and Arizona, will be out again and Maddie Scherr, who also missed the last two games, is still going through the return-to-play protocols and it's uncertain whether she'll be available.

Graves confirmed Chavez, who also missed the games against USC and UCLA in early January to be with her ailing grandmother, had been home in Arizona again recently but has since returned to Eugene.

Chavez, who is averaging 5.0 points and 2.2 assists, is arguably Oregon's best defender and a veteran guard at running the point. She returned to the starting lineup against Washington and Washington State.

On a team that lacks experience and is still finding its identity, Chavez's poise and leadership on both ends of the floor is something the Ducks sorely need back.

"The games she's been out, we have definitely missed her," Graves said. "We need her back."

Scherr (3.1 points, 1.9 rebounds) attended Monday's game and has been a significant rotation player off the bench.

— The Oregonian

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Ducks QB Tyler Shough entering transfer portal

BY RYAN THORBURN

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Oregon will have a new starting quarterback in 2021.

Tyler Shough, who completed 63.5% of his passes for 1,559 yards with 13 touchdowns and six interceptions in 2020 after replacing four-year starter Justin Herbert, announced Friday he plans to enter the NCAA transfer portal.

The 6-foot-5, 221-pound redshirt sophomore initially vowed to return to compete for his starting spot after splitting time with Anthony Brown during the Pac-12 championship win over USC and the Fiesta Bowl loss to Iowa State.

Shough, who joins redshirt freshman Cale Millen as the second Oregon quarterback to leave the program this offseason, will be eligible to play immediately somewhere else as a graduate transfer.



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian file

Oregon quarterback Tyler Shough gets past Oregon State's Jaydon Grant to score a touchdown during a game in November in Corvallis.

"I'm going to take what's right in front of me and keep working hard. There's obviously no decision that's being made," Shough, who is from Chandler, Arizona, said when asked if he would consider en-

tering the NCAA transfer portal after the awkward rotation with Brown in Fiesta Bowl. "I'm going to control what I can control and work hard the entire offseason. I'm going to keep proving myself.

"It seems like a lot of people are going to keep doubting me, and I'm going to keep showing them what I can do and keep proving myself right, because I know my abilities and I know I can help and do for this team."

Shough's quarterback efficiency rating of 160.4 led the Pac-12, but after a fast start in offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead's scheme he threw two costly interceptions during the loss at Oregon State and struggled against California's defense in another road loss.

Brown, who joined the program as a graduate transfer from Boston College last year, finished 15-for-23 passing for 164 yards and two touchdowns while taking his first snaps at Oregon in the Pac-12 championship and Fiesta Bowl.

Five-star 2021 recruit Ty Thompson will also compete for the job this spring, along

with 2020 recruits Jay Butterfield and Robby Ashford.

"We have a talented quarterback room," coach Mario Cristobal said on signing day earlier this month. "I'm sure that will be a storyline in the spring as we roll into it. We have some guys that have done a good job, a couple young guys that never really get mentioned in Robby and Jay that have also done a really good job developing themselves.

"I look forward to watching that battle and really structuring practice so that there's fair opportunity."

Oregon's offense returns running backs C.J. Verdell, Travis Dye and Sean Dollars, wide receivers Johnny Johnson, Jaylon Redd and Devon Williams, tight ends Cam McCormick, D.J. Johnson, Spencer Webb and Patrick Herbert and all five starting offensive linemen.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE GYMNASTICS



Keith Birmingham/The Orange County Register

UCLA Bruins gymnast Nia Dennis competes in the floor exercise against BYU during a meet at UCLA in Los Angeles on Wednesday. A floor routine that Dennis performed last month that included music by hip-hop icons Kendrick Lamar and Tupac Shakur and intended to shine a light on Black excellence went viral.

BY WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH —

Samantha Snider remembers the rules — be they real or implied — during her collegiate gymnastics career at Arkansas.

This is how you're going to do your hair. This is how you're going to do your makeup. This is how you're going to represent the program.

*"The purpose of my floor routine is to open the eyes of those around me and also shine a light on Black excellence."*

— Nia Dennis, UCLA gymnast

"There was very much this message, 'You need to fit in this box,'" said Snider, now the head coach at the University of Pittsburgh.

Snider, who jokes she often felt like the only Puerto Rican in the state during her time competing for the Razorbacks in the mid-2000s, isn't being critical. Her experience at Arkansas was simply reflective of the culture at large in the sport at the time.

A time, it seems, that is finally over, particularly at the NCAA level. From Pittsburgh to California, female gymnasts are using their platform to empower, educate and bring light to causes they believe in.

When the Panthers host Temple on Sunday at the Petersen Events Center, they will compete in leotards with "BLM" emblazoned in all its sequined glory on their left arms,

while coaches and staff members wear "Black Lives Matter" T-shirts. The idea for such a visible statement arose during a video call last summer after the police killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other Black Americans gave rise to intensified calls for social justice.

Pitt's women's program is largely comprised of white athletes, and simply telling their Black teammates they had their unconditional support wasn't enough.

Putting on a shirt before a meet — only to pull it off while on the competition floor — wasn't enough. A sticker on their bag wasn't enough.

Even putting together a public service announcement in which the Panthers vowed to "promote active change" wasn't enough.

See **Statement** / B2

## BASEBALL

Minor leagues  
get a reset with  
regional alignment

BY RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball has reorganized its minor leagues in a 120-team regional alignment.

MLB released a plan Friday for two Triple-A divisions, and three divisions each for Double-A, High-A and Low-A. Forty affiliates were dropped from 2019, the last season under the old minor league system, and the remaining teams were offered the 10-year licenses in December. All 120 accepted by Wednesday's deadline.

The leagues have not yet been named. Major league owners, Commissioner Rob Manfred and his staff have not decided whether to retain the traditional names of the leagues, such as the International and Pacific Coast at Triple-A, the Eastern, Southern and Texas at Double-A and the California, Florida State and South Atlantic, which had been at Class A.

For now, MLB is calling the minor league groupings Triple-A East and West, Double-A Central, Northeast and South, High-A Central, East and West, and Low-A East, Southeast and West. There are geographic subdivisions within each league.

Triple-A teams for now remain scheduled to open 144-game schedules at the start of April but are likely to be pushed back until the start of May because of the pandemic.

Double-A teams, scheduled for 138 games each, and High-A and Low-A teams, with 132 games apiece, are for now slated to open in early May.

Top minor leaguers probably will spend April at alternate training camps, used by MLB teams to keep potential call-ups in shape last year, when the entire minor league schedule was canceled due to the virus.

Regular-season schedules are to be announced next week. Schedules will be regionalized and include six-game series to reduce travel and cut expenses, a person familiar with the planning told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because that detail was not announced.

Minor league postseason formats have not yet been determined because of the pandemic.

Each franchise's top four affiliates will include one team apiece at Triple-A, Double-A, High-A and Low-A. Additional clubs are allowed at spring training complexes and in the Dominican Republic.

MLB ended the Professional Baseball Agreement that governed the relationship between the majors and minors. The minors are being run from MLB's office in New York under the supervision of Peter Woodford, MLB's new senior vice president of minor league operations and development, taking over from the Florida-based National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, which had governed the minors since 1901.

See **Baseball** / B2