

COLLEGE SPORTS

Ducks' Ashford to play 2 sports

EUGENE — Robby Ashford is going to be splitting his time between the gridiron and diamond for the next two months.

The Oregon second-year freshman quarterback and outfielder was recruited as a two-sport athlete and Mario Cristobal and Mark Wasikowski are going to enable Ashford to make that work.

Ashford spent the fall dedicated solely to football. With football winter workouts under way and baseball season about to start, he's spending the majority of his time with football and practicing individually to be prepared for baseball.

"We've had detailed conversation with coach Cristobal and his staff, (offensive coordinator Joe) Moorhead, all the way through Matt Noyer with the operations standpoint to make sure we're in compliance with rules," Wasikowski said. "Robby's a two-sport athlete; he's going to play football, he's going to play baseball. It's not just all of a sudden he moves over and he's 100% baseball. He wants to be the starting quarterback at the University of Oregon and he feel as though he can do that. He wants that opportunity. I want to give him that opportunity."

Ashford and Oregon's other quarterbacks threw earlier this week to have their velocity and revolutions tracked.

Wasikowski said Ashford playing in the outfield makes it easier for the baseball staff to work with him individually and he's been doing so for a couple of weeks.

"He's still full-time football," Wasikowski said. "He'll be full-time baseball as well, which is going to take a lot of discipline and time management on his hands with the exception that he's not going to practice full-time with the team like our team practices. He's been impressive so far, really good kid."

— The Oregonian

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Beavs 4th, Ducks 7th in Pac-12 poll

In a poll dominated by UCLA and the Arizona schools, Oregon State is picked to finish fourth and Oregon seventh in the Pac-12 coaches pre-season baseball poll.

Oregon State gained 59 points to edge Stanford by one point for fourth place. Oregon had 47 points.

UCLA is the unanimous choice to win the Pac-12, earning all 10 first-place votes and 100 points. Arizona, with 85 points, edged Arizona State (83) for second place.

UCLA won the 2019 Pac-12 championship. The 2020 season was canceled before the start of conference play due to the pandemic.

Oregon State, under second-year coach Mitch Canham, kicks off its 2021 season Friday against Kansas State in Surprise, Arizona. Oregon's season opener is delayed until Feb. 25 against Seattle. The Ducks' three-game series against Omaha that was to begin Friday was canceled due to a COVID-19 situation.

— The Oregonian

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Stretch run

Ducks look to continue seasonal success in February

BY CHRIS HANSEN
The (Eugene) Register-Guard

February has traditionally been a month that's belonged to the Oregon men's basketball team and there isn't a team out there happier to have January in the rearview mirror than the Ducks.

Oregon played just four games in the first month of 2021 and went 2-2 as it had two long COVID-19 pauses and had five games postponed.

Since the calendar flipped to February, the Ducks (12-4, 7-3 Pac-12) have gone 3-1 and have won three straight, continuing a trend that dates back to the 2017 Final Four season.

Oregon's record in February through the Pac-12 Tournament in the four full seasons plus four games since then is 37-14.

The reigning Pac-12 champions are back in the thick of another conference championship race as they're in third place and just one game back in the loss column in the Pac-12 standings. Southern Cal is in the lead at 12-2 and UCLA is second at 10-3.

In fourth place is Colorado (16-6, 10-5), whom the Ducks play at 8 p.m. Thursday in Eugene.

"Fortunately we've had something to play for every year and so the guys have rallied around that and been unselfish and we've found ways to get a little better," Oregon coach Dana Altman said of his program's history of late-season success. "I'm hoping this group will be the same."



Josh Galemore/Arizona Daily Star via AP

Arizona's Terrell Brown Jr. (31) tries to block a shot by Oregon's Chandler Lawson (13) on Saturday in Tucson, Arizona.

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— Dana Altman, Oregon coach, on his program's history of late-season success

The Buffaloes are responsible for one of the Ducks' losses this season thanks to a 79-72 win in Boulder on Jan. 7. It was a loss that snapped Oregon's eight-game winning streak while also keeping it winless in 10 games all-time at Colorado.

The Buffaloes dominated the Ducks on the boards in that game, winning the rebound battle 40-29. Altman also lamented Oregon's transition defense as it allowed Colorado to score 26 fast-break points.

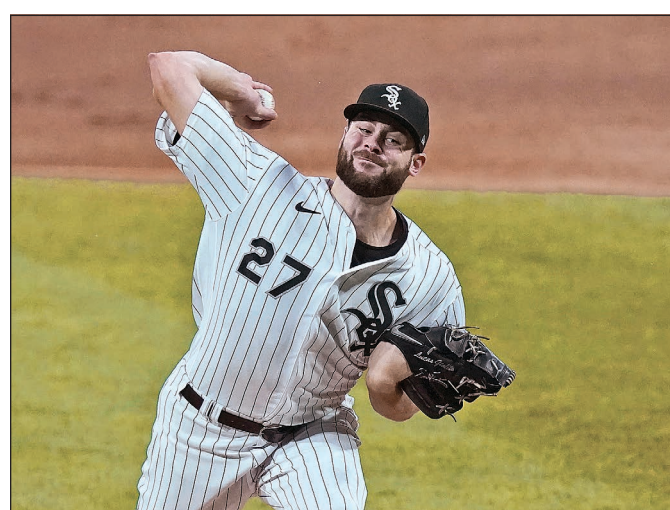
"Those two things enabled them to score 79 and beat us," he said. "We're going to have to do a better job in those two areas."

There's a chance the Ducks could be without starting forward Eric Williams Jr. for a second straight game. The junior has been battling through a sore knee that kept him on the bench in the 63-61 win against Arizona on Saturday.

Williams is averaging 11.3 points and 6.5 rebounds.

See **Ducks** / A6

MLB | SPRING TRAINING



Charles Rex Arbogast/AP file

Chicago White Sox pitcher Lucas Giolito throws during a game against the Detroit Tigers in Chicago in September.

Players return to COVID protocols

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

One year later, players and managers say they have a better understanding of what it takes to play baseball through a pandemic.

Pitchers and catchers around the game reported to spring training Wednesday saying they appreciate what's at stake as they try to make sure the season starts on time. The protocols have been tightened even further from what they experienced during the abbreviated 2020 season.

"We've all gone through a year of this, of living through this," New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "And so I think we're a little, much better equipped of how to handle ourselves, how to conduct ourselves, how to make good use of our time."

New standards agreed to by Major League Baseball and the players' association require players, staffers and other team personnel to wear electronic tracing wristbands for ballpark access.

See **MLB** / A7

GOLF

Broken clubs behind him, Koepka feeling better about his game

BY DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES — Brooks Koepka is back at Riviera with a healthy dose of confidence from winning and the same set of irons.

The latter illustrates some of the frustration for a four-time major champion who was trying to get back to the form that made him No. 1 in the world. He missed the cut in Mexico to end the year. He missed the cut in Palm Springs to start the year. And then he missed the cut at Torrey Pines and was at his breaking point.

Instead, he broke his clubs. Twice.

"I snapped two sets of irons after playing Mexico and then after Torrey, and I don't really do that," Koepka said Wednesday at the Genesis Invitational. "So there was quite a bit of frustration, but at the same time, you've just got to stick it out. I felt like my patience is always there. It's just sometimes results take a little bit longer."

There are photos to illustrate what Koepka did to his clubs, but those stay among his posse. More than a snap decision, this sounded as though it involved some pre-



Ryan Kang/AP

Brooks Koepka tees off on the second hole during the Genesis Invitational pro-am at Riviera Country Club on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

meditation.

"I did it at the house. I wouldn't do it so everybody else could see," Koepka said. "It was in the living room. I walked right into the house and just (snapped it) right over the knee."

Winning doesn't take care of everything, but it goes a long way. Koepka felt good about his game at the Phoenix Open, and winning with a bold charge on the back nine only affirmed what he was thinking.

Now he's at Riviera to face the strongest field of the year and a tournament feels as

prestigious as anything this side of a major championship or The Players Championship.

Some of that has to do with the strength of the field. Much of it has to do with Riviera, among the best course players will see all year, especially in a week of dry weather and conditions that are fast and firm and get their attention.

Dustin Johnson, the No. 1 player in the world, also is coming into Riviera off a victory.

He has no confidence issues, no broken clubs.

See **Golf** / A6