

## SPORTS

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## NFL

## NFL looking into Watson allegations

DALLAS — The NFL said Thursday that it was investigating allegations that Houston Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson sexually assaulted multiple women after three massage therapists filed lawsuits against the star player.

In lawsuits filed this week, two of the women claim that Watson touched them with his penis during massages last year, and the third alleges he forced her to perform oral sex.

Watson, 25, has broadly denied that he acted inappropriately and said he looks forward to clearing his name.

The women, who are not named in the lawsuits, are represented by Houston lawyer Tony Buzbee, who posted a picture Thursday of a letter from the NFL on his verified Instagram account that said the league had launched an investigation. Buzbee later deleted the post.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy confirmed that the matter was “under review of the personal conduct policy.”

Watson’s attorney and agent did not immediately respond to requests for comment Thursday.

“I have never treated any woman with anything other than the utmost respect,” the quarterback said in a statement posted to Twitter Tuesday.

According to the suits, the women live in Texas, Oregon and Georgia and work giving massages.

Texans spokesman Omar Majzoub released a statement on behalf of the team Thursday saying it had been informed by the NFL about its investigation.

— Associated Press

## KOBE BRYANT

## Widow reveals names of deputies

Vanessa Bryant on Wednesday named the Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies who allegedly shared grim photos of the helicopter crash that killed her husband, Kobe Bryant, their daughter Gianna and seven others.

The disclosure came after a legal fight with L.A. County lawyers who sought to keep the identities of the deputies secret. A federal judge this month sided with Vanessa Bryant, saying that the names of police officers accused of misconduct should not be kept from the public.

Bryant’s attorneys filed an amended copy of a lawsuit Bryant has brought against the county and the deputies that includes the names of four deputies whom Sheriff’s Department officials investigated for allegedly taking or sharing photos of the crash site. Bryant’s legal team based their new claims on an internal affairs report the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department turned over.

According to the lawsuit, the deputies involved are Raul Versales, Rafael Mejia, Joey Cruz and Michael Russell. The deputies did not respond to emails requesting comment.

The lawsuit alleges that Versales obtained multiple photographs of the crash scene while stationed at a makeshift command post that was set up at the crash site and shared them with members of the Sheriff’s Department, including Mejia and a detective.

— Los Angeles Times

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## ALL 4 IN

Ducks, Beavers land men’s, women’s teams in NCAA Tournament for 1st time

BY JOE FREEMAN  
The Oregonian

There have been championship chases by the Tall Firs,

flops by the Orange Express, captivating runs for Sabrina and

Co., and six combined Final Four appearances.

But for all the history-making NCAA Tournament moments surrounding the men’s and women’s basketball programs at the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, the four teams have never qualified for the “Big Dance” in the same season. Until now.

Thanks to the continued brilliance of both women’s programs, a stunning Pac-12 Conference championship run by the Oregon State Beavers men and an at-large bid by the regular-season champion Oregon Ducks men, the state’s oldest Division I basketball programs will make history this week when — for the first time — they all



Oregon State men’s basketball coach Wayne Tinkle celebrates with players Ethan Thompson (5) and Zach Reichle (11) after the Beavers upset Colorado in the Pac-12 Conference tournament championship game on Saturday night in Las Vegas. The Beavers’ unlikely victory helped clinch NCAA Tournament berths for all four Oregon and Oregon State basketball teams.

“It’s really cool for the state of Oregon. I think both teams are really just honored and excited to rep the university.”

— Aleah Goodman, Oregon State women’s basketball player

will play in the 2021 NCAA Tournaments.

“It’s really cool for the state of Oregon,” Beavers guard Aleah Goodman said, referring Oregon State’s achievement. “I think both teams are really just honored and excited to rep the university.”

All four programs have had memorable runs and even extended stretches of excellence, but rarely at the same time.

The Ducks, then dubbed the Tall Firs, won the first men’s championship played in 1939, riding the talent of three All-Americans — Urgel “Slim” Wintermute, Laddie Gale and Bobby Anet — to a 46-33 victory over Ohio State in the title game. But Oregon reached the tournament just four more times the rest of the 20th century, before becoming a regular and qualifying 12 times since 2000. More recently, the Ducks have become a

mainstay under coach Dana Altman, reaching the tournament seven times since 2013. Along the way, they have advanced as far as the Elite Eight (2016) and Final Four (2017).

The NCAA did not host a women’s tournament until 1982, and the Oregon teams quickly joined the fray, as the Ducks played in the first event, the Beavers did so a year later and both qualified in 1984. They combined for nine appearances in the 1990s — six by Oregon and three by Oregon State — and Oregon had an eight-year run of tournament berths from 1994-2001.

See **Tournament** / B5

## MOTOR SPORTS | NASCAR CUP SERIES

## Harvick reflects on anniversary of emotional Atlanta victory

BY JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The first three weeks following Dale Earnhardt’s death were a whirlwind for Kevin Harvick, the driver suddenly tasked with carrying a race team reeling from grief.

Harvick was slated to race for the 2001 championship in NASCAR’s second-tier series but Richard Childress needed him to fill Earnhardt’s seat. Harvick, admittedly “young and dumb” at the time, told Childress he’d do both jobs.

Attempting to replace Earnhardt was an unenviable ask of any driver, let alone a 25-year-old at the start of his NASCAR career. By committing to that frantic two-series schedule, Harvick created a shield from the intense scrutiny of an emotionally draining season.

His Cup Series debut came seven days after Earnhardt’s death and then Harvick was off to Las Vegas for his wedding — it had been built into the NASCAR schedule before the season began — and the start of a year spent primarily in race cars and airplanes.

The standout moment of that tumultuous season came in his third Cup race when Harvick held off Jeff Gordon by 0.006 seconds — the edge of his front bumper — to win at Atlanta Motor Speedway. Harvick returns to Atlanta on Sunday for the 20th anniversary of that victory. He says he wishes he “would have realized then how big this moment was.”

His memories of that emotional win two decades later are scattered. He recalls the



Kevin Harvick holds up the trophy in victory lane after winning a NASCAR race at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Georgia.

five-car battle over the final 10 laps, the fans lining the fence along the back straightaway and the backward victory lap when he flashed three fingers out his window to honor Earnhardt.

The rest is a bit of a blur. “It was obviously a moment I don’t think any of us expected, but there are a number of things that obviously changed in the weeks before that,” Harvick said. “It took me

a long time to really get comfortable, to really even think about things that happened that day. There were so many things that happened backwards in my career.”

Harvick won two Cup races that year and beat Kurt Busch for top rookie honors. He won another five times in the Xfinity Series (then called the Busch Series) and the championship.

See **Harvick** / B4

## MLB



Seattle Mariners’ Kyle Lewis during spring training practice on Feb. 25 in Peoria, Arizona.

## Mariners’ Kyle Lewis ready for challenge after rookie honors

BY TIM BOOTH  
Associated Press

During a normal offseason, Kyle Lewis would have enjoyed traveling around and being celebrated after becoming just the third Seattle Mariners player to be named the American League rookie of the year.

Instead, some of Lewis’ most cherished moments of the offseason came when he spent time hanging around his old high school in Georgia.

“I went over there just to continue to show my face and show the high schoolers that there are people who were in the same positions and have been able to accomplish great things,” Lewis said. “That to me was definitely a point I made to go back home and be around, be accessible to some extent as much as I could.”

As the Mariners enter the next stage of their rebuilding plan, Lewis is one of Seattle’s foundational players. He showed enough in last year’s 60-game truncated season for the Mariners to believe they have a burgeoning superstar on

their hands and for the rest of the American League to take notice.

Lewis wasn’t great for the entire 60-game season, but he was good enough to be the best rookie in the AL. His mix of raw power to all fields, hitting for average, and proving he can handle the demands of playing center field were major revelations for the Mariners as they plot out the next steps for becoming a contender in the AL West in 2022.

But as much as Lewis proved last season, he has still played just 76 total games in his major league career. His first taste of the majors didn’t arrive until September 2019. And while he was great last season, Lewis played against only the AL and NL West.

So while there is optimism about just how good Lewis could end up being as Seattle’s center fielder, he understands being successful in a full season this year may be more important than what he did last year.

See **Lewis** / B4