

GOLF

Woods' car wreck caused by speeding

LOS ANGELES — Tiger Woods was driving more than 80 mph — nearly twice the posted speed limit — on a downhill stretch of road when he lost control of an SUV and crashed in a wreck that seriously injured the golf superstar, authorities said Wednesday.

Sheriff Alex Villanueva blamed the Feb. 23 crash outside Los Angeles solely on excessive speed and Woods' loss of control behind the wheel. The athlete will not face any citations for his third high-profile collision in 11 years.

"The primary causal factor for this traffic collision was driving at a speed unsafe for the road conditions and the inability to negotiate the curve of the roadway," the sheriff told a news conference.

Woods was driving 84 to 87 mph in an area with a speed limit of 45 mph, Villanueva said. No one else was hurt, and no other vehicles were involved.

The stretch of road is known for wrecks and drivers who frequently hit high speeds.

There was no evidence that the golfer tried to brake, and investigators believe Woods may have inadvertently stepped on the accelerator instead of the brake pedal in a panic, said sheriff's Capt. James Powers, who oversees the sheriff's station closest to the crash site.

Woods was wearing a seat belt at the time, and the vehicle's airbags deployed.

Detectives did not seek search warrants for Woods' blood samples, which could have been screened for drugs or alcohol, or his cellphone. Authorities said there was no evidence of impairment or of distracted driving.

On Twitter, Woods thanked first responders, as well as the people who called 911.

"I will continue to focus on my recovery and family, and thank everyone for the overwhelming support and encouragement I've received throughout this very difficult time," Woods wrote.

— Associated Press

BASKETBALL

Shaquille O'Neal pays off stranger's ring

NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal made a man's day with a random act of kindness at an Atlanta jewelry store Tuesday.

In a video shared on Instagram, O'Neal decided to pay off the engagement ring debt a man owed to the store. O'Neal was at the store to purchase hoop earrings when he heard the man ask the store employee how much he owed on the ring. Then, O'Neal stepped in on the purchase.

On Tuesday night O'Neal said on TNT this was something he frequently did for people. He recalled a time recently where he paid for the furniture of a mother with an autistic child while out shopping with his mother.

"I'm just trying to make people smile, that's all."

— The Oregonian

Blazers — Portland continues to struggle with Western Conference contenders. Details, **A7**

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Lava Bears find next gear

Bend holds off Summit in 5 sets to win the season series against its rival

BY BRIAN RATHBONE • The Bulletin

Bend High coach Kristin Cooper could not help but feel a sense of relief as she watched Harper Justema's game-tying kill attempt sail high and out of bounds in the fifth set.

The hit out of bounds brought an end to a grueling match after the Lava Bears survived a comeback by Summit to win 3-2 (25-16, 25-20, 21-25, 19-25, 15-13) Tuesday night at Bend High School.

The victory also gave Bend the series win over its crosstown rival, claiming two of three matches this season.

"By the end, I think I had a couple of extra gray hairs but those are the matches that you love to coach in," Cooper said. "It is always a great game when we play against Summit."

A big sigh of relief was released on the court as well when the match finally ended.

"I can't describe how good this win feels," said senior outside hitter Izzy Armstrong, who finished with 15 kills.



Bend's Marley Hardgrave fires the ball over the net as Summit's Shannon MacCallum (8) and Harper Justema attempt to block during Tuesday night's volleyball match at Bend High School.

Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

"I can't describe how good this win feels. Summit and Bend have always been a big rivalry. It is a really special way to end, especially having so many friends on the other team."

— Izzy Armstrong, Bend senior outside hitter

"Summit and Bend have always been a big rivalry. It is a really special way to end, especially having so many friends on the other team."

Through two sets it looked as though Bend would cruise to an easy win as Armstrong and junior middle blocker Marley Hardgrave were strong

at the net, combining for 32 kills and nine blocks.

The Lava Bears won the first set comfortably, 25-16, then after trailing for most of the second set they found an extra gear and closed the set on a 7-1 run to win 25-20.

"One of my quotes is that we need

to 'shift to the next gear,'" Cooper said. "We came out strong, that was a goal."

But the Lava Bears could not find that next gear for the next two sets. Meanwhile, on the other side of the net, there was little panic from Summit despite falling behind two sets.

"It has been our tendency to start out a little slow and then kick it into gear, so I was fine with it because this is what we usually do," said Summit coach Jill Waskom. "So let's just keep doing what we usually do."

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GOLF | THE MASTERS

In firm conditions, Masters in November a distant memory

BY DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. — No one needed to see the colorful blooms at Augusta National to realize this will be a much different Masters than the last one. It was the color of the greens.

They were yellow. On Wednesday.

The excitement of the first major of the golf season was mixed with no small measure of trepidation about the test Augusta National might present this week without intervention and a little precipitation.

Fred Couples, who played his first Masters in 1983 and is competing for the 36th time, played a practice round Wednesday with Rory McIlroy.

"Rory said it five times: 'Have you ever seen the greens like this on Wednesday?' And five times in a row I said, 'No,'" Couple said. "He was laughing. So I think if it stays like this, come even Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I mean, honestly, a 70 or 71 will be a heck of a score."

A score like that would have meant getting lapped in November, when the Masters had to take an autumn date after it was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dustin Johnson played conservatively along the back nine because he had a big



Curtis Compton/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP

Bryson DeChambeau, left, talks with Phil Mickelson on the 10th tee during a practice round for the Masters in Augusta, Georgia, on Wednesday.

lead, and he still finished with a record score of 20-under 268 to win by five shots in the lowest-scoring Masters in history.

"I've seen some young guys this week have a slightly deer-in-the-headlights look because they've walked out on a couple of those greens and they've seen the color of them and they've felt the firmness," Paul Casey said. "You can see they're kind of going, 'Whoa. This is a whole different animal.'"

Still to be determined is what the weather has in store for the rest of the week. The sun has added that scary shine to the putting surfaces starting with the Augusta National Women's Amateur on Saturday — the winning score

was at 1-over par. Scattered storms are in the forecast the rest of the way.

For the the 13 players who played the Masters for the first time in November, it's like starting over.

"November is a Masters that we'll probably never see again," Webb Simpson said. "You know, flying hybrids, 5-woods, 3-woods to the hole and the ball stopping. It's good to forget about that because that's not our normal Masters. It's in a way relearning the nuances."

Phil Mickelson and Bryson DeChambeau dropped balls left of the 10th green Wednesday morning to play chip shots to potential hole locations.

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FOOTBALL



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP file

Oregon's Brady Breeze, left, runs for a TD after a blocked punt during the 2020 Rose Bowl game in Pasadena, California.

Ducks players who opted out of 2020 season have no regrets as they prepare for NFL

BY JAMES CREPEA
The Oregonian

EUGENE — Pro days are about evaluating potential in the NFL. But Oregon's also was a bit about the potential of last season.

With four of nine participants having opted out of last season after the Pac-12's initial August decision to suspend all sports until January 2021, including Penei Sewell, Jevon Holland, Thomas Graham Jr. and Brady Breeze, there was a feeling of what could have been for the Ducks in 2020.

"I really do believe that the situation out West was a lot different than the rest of the country," Oregon coach Mario

Cristobal said.

"It wasn't like we were told it was going to take a little while. We were postponed twice and really canceled. There was no guarantee of actually playing a season and that's when the opt-outs took place. I don't think anyone should judge that. Those guys were tremendous competitors. Some of the guys that were seniors that did opt out, they had made the decision to return, had gone through spring ball, had gone through the offseason. They had every intention and carried out their intentions through actions to play this year, it just didn't happen."

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