

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Arizona hires Gonzaga assistant

Arizona has hired long-time Gonzaga assistant Tommy Lloyd as its men's basketball coach.

The school said Wednesday that Lloyd will receive a five-year contract, pending approval by the Arizona Board of Regents.

Lloyd replaces Sean Miller, who was fired after 12 years on April 7 amid an NCAA infractions investigation.

"After speaking with a tremendous pool of candidates and with so many in and out of the college basketball world, it became clear that Tommy has the passion, the experience, the knowledge, the coaching and recruiting acumen and the drive to lead us to championships," Arizona athletic director Dave Heeke said in a statement.

The 46-year-old Lloyd spent the past 20 years as an assistant to Few, helping turn Gonzaga into a national powerhouse.

Lloyd was Few's right-hand man during the run and has proven to be an adept recruiter, particularly overseas.

"I am extremely grateful to President (Robert) Robbins and Dave Heeke for the incredible opportunity to lead one of the country's most storied men's basketball programs," Lloyd said in a statement.

Arizona has been in the NCAA's crosshairs since a 2017 FBI investigation into shady recruiting practices led to the arrest of 10 people.

Arizona was hit with nine allegations of misconduct in a Notice of Allegations issued last year.

— Associated Press

NWSL

Thorns eye 2nd straight victory

After opening the NWSL Challenge Cup with a 2-1 victory in a match that turned wild late, the Portland Thorns will try to build on that success as they go on the road to take on the Chicago Red Stars on Thursday (4:30 p.m., Paramount+).

Chicago is coming off a scoreless draw against Houston in its Challenge Cup opener. The Red Stars outshot the Dash 11-3 but managed just two shots on goal. Chicago held Houston without a shot on goal, however.

"We're excited to be in this position where we've got to come into this place and look to impose ourselves and cause problems," Thorns coach Mark Parsons told reporters Wednesday.

Both teams will be without some of their top players, who remain away on international duty.

But the Thorns also will be without forward Simone Charley and coach Parsons after each drew a red card late in last Friday's opener against Kansas City.

Forward Morgan Weaver also was shown a red card late after a scuffle with KC NWSL's Kristen Edmonds, but the Thorns successfully appealed that decision and the league rescinded Weaver's red card on Tuesday.

The Thorns already sit atop their division in the Challenge Cup standings. After facing Chicago, the Thorns will have two more matches in division play. The two division winners will then meet in the Challenge Cup championship May 8.

— The Oregonian

PREP SOFTBALL

Freshman fortitude

Johns steps into the circle for defending state champion Ridgeview

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
The Bulletin

REDMOND —

The morning of Ridgeview's season opener, text messages in the softball team's group chat began flooding into Kilby Johns' phone.

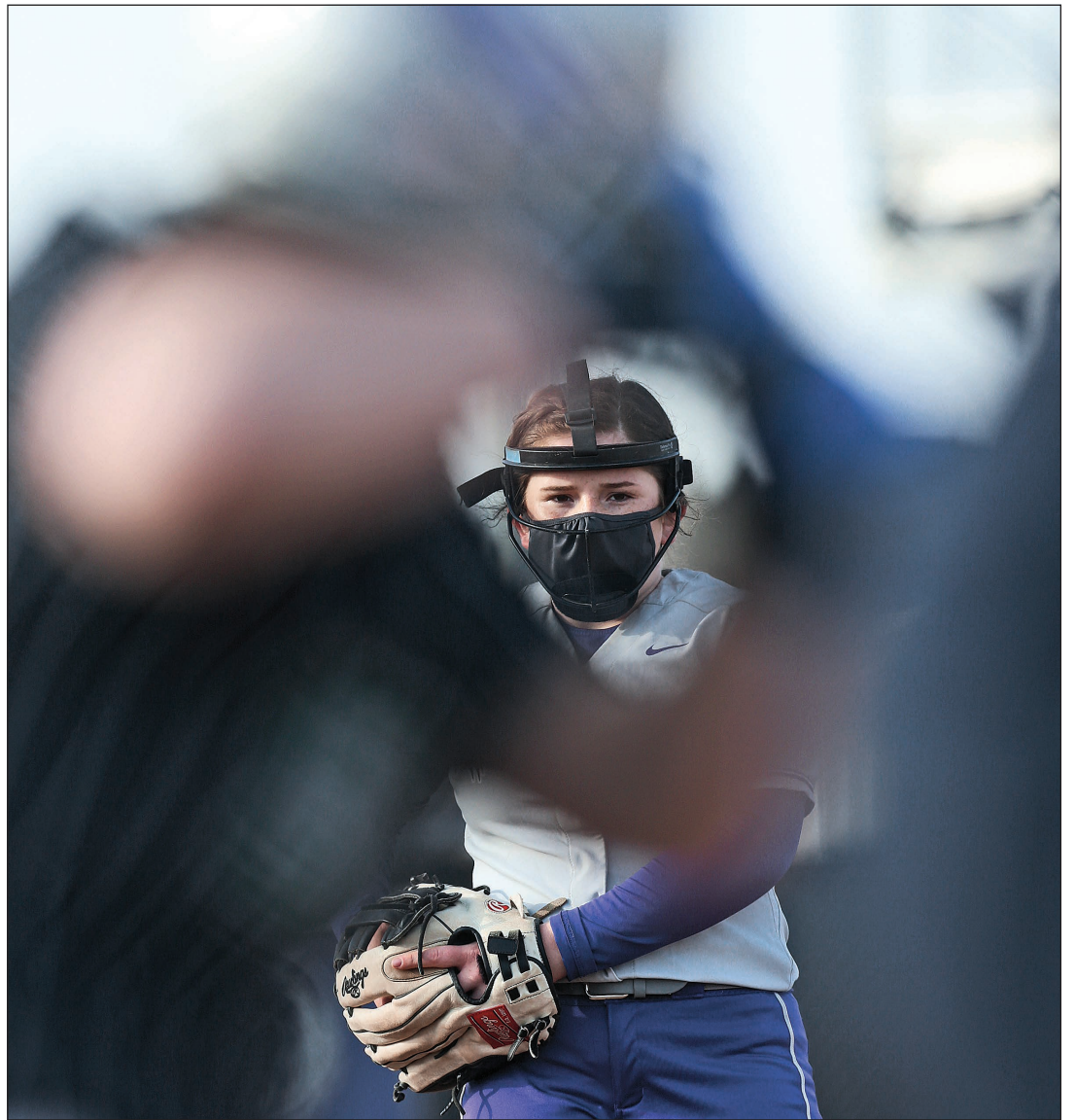
The messages confirmed that the freshman would be starting in the pitcher's circle for the defending state champion Ravens against Summit.

"I'm trying not to get too nervous," Johns said. "And then we got out on the field and you have a different feeling."

Nerves were to be expected in a first-time start for a program with the prowess of Ridgeview, which was playing in its first game Tuesday night since the state title game in June 2019.

The outfield fence at Ridgeview is lined with Intermountain Conference championship banners, which the Ravens have won every year since 2014, and in dead center field, a large "2019 State Champions" banner.

The state title was achieved in part by 2019 5A state Pitcher of the Year, Allicite Frost, now playing for Portland State.



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Ridgeview pitcher Kilby Johns sizes up the batter and prepares to deliver during Tuesday's softball game against Summit at Ridgeview High School in Redmond.

"I liked her demeanor. This pitcher is going to be good, but she is just young at playing competitively, so this competition is really good for her."

— Sandy Fischer, Ridgeview softball coach

With big shoes to fill, Johns quickly settled in with two strikeouts in the opening frame, which set the tone for a shutout performance against the Storm.

Johns struck out eight and gave up just two hits in the Ravens' 15-0 win in four innings.

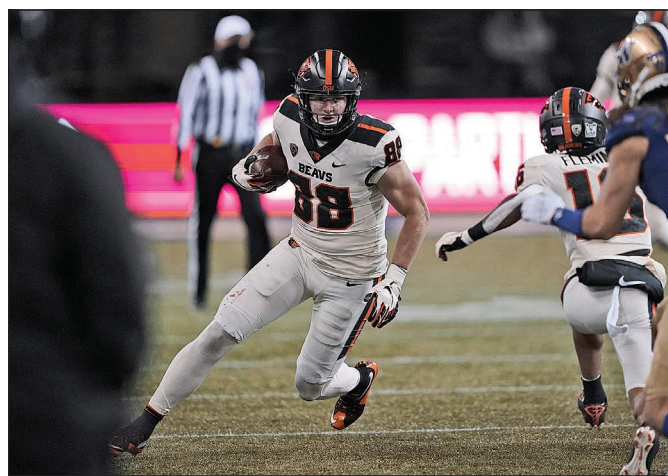
"I liked her demeanor," said Ridgeview coach Sandy Fischer.

"This pitcher is going to be good, but she is just young at playing competitively, so this competition is really good for her."

Starting as a freshman on opening day came as a surprise to Johns, mainly because she has not been pitching competitively for most of her young softball career.

See **Softball** / A6

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



Ted S. Warren/AP file

Oregon State tight end Luke Musgrave, a graduate of Bend High, runs against Washington in November in Seattle. The Beavers may look to lean on a deep tight end class in 2021.

Oregon State intends to lean on a deep TE group in 2021

BY NICK DASCHEL
The Oregonian

CORVALLIS — Let's talk tight ends. Specifically Oregon State tight ends.

Sure, it's not football's sexiest position. The occasional

INSIDE

• Ducks have strong 1-2 punch at RB, A7

pass reception. A lot of blocking. But for the Beavers, it's a position of significant strength and could be that difference maker in 2021 if OSU is to emerge with its first bowl berth in eight years.

The importance of tight ends to an offense varies wildly in college football. At the bottom is Mike Leach's get-them-out-of-my-program offense, to a heavily dependent offense like Oregon State. The Beavers' pro-style attack heavily relies on a tight end for nearly every play, often two, and on rare oc-

casions, three.

Oregon State can do what it wants at the tight end position, as it is well-stocked with veterans and newcomers. The Beavers may face a team this upcoming season with a singular better tight end, but they shouldn't have trouble matching anyone's duo with junior Teagan Quitoriano and sophomore Luke Musgrave.

It's hard to miss either during Oregon State's spring practice. Both cut prominent figures at 6 feet, 6 inches. Quitoriano carries a little more weight at 256 pounds, vs. Musgrave's 248.

There are a couple promising second-year freshmen in Tommy Spencer and Jake Overman that bolster a tight end room. In seven games last season, Oregon State's tight ends combined for 27 receptions for 346 yards.

See **Oregon State** / A6

BASEBALL

MLB to experiment with moving back mound in minors

BY RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball wants to see if moving back the pitcher's mound will increase offense.

MLB will experiment by increasing the distance between the mound and home plate by 12 inches during a portion of the Atlantic League season in an effort to decrease strikeouts and increase offense.

The pitching rubber will be moved back to 61 feet, 6 inches starting Aug. 3 during the second half of the independent minor league's season.

"It's a direct response to the escalating strikeout rate, where you're giving the hitter approximately one one-hundredth of a second of additional time to decide whether to swing at a pitch, which has the effect just in terms of reaction time of reducing the effective velocity of a pitch by roughly 1.5 mph," said Morgan Sword, MLB's executive vice president of baseball operations. "The purpose of the test and hope is giving hitters even that tiny additional piece of time will allow them to make more contact and reduce the strikeout rate."

In 2019, the last full season, strikeouts set a record for the 12th consecutive year at 42,823, up 33% from 32,189 in 2007. Strikeouts exceeded hits the last three seasons after never occurring before in major league history.

MLB calculated the average fastball velocity last year at 93.3 mph and estimated the increased distance would de-



Lynne Sladky/AP file

Boston Red Sox's Jackie Bradley Jr. hits a home run off Houston Astros pitcher Josh James during the 2018 American League Championship Series in Houston. Major League Baseball wants to see if moving back the pitcher's mound will increase offense.

crease the equivalent to 91.6 mph.

The mound has been at its current distance since 1893, when the National League moved the rubber back 5 feet. Strikeouts declined from 8.5% in 1892 to 5.2% in 1893 and the batting average increased from .245 in 1892 to .280.

Chicago Cubs president of baseball operations Jed Hoyer compared these changes to the lowering of the pitcher's mound from 15 inches to 10 for the 1969 season.

"We've got to do something to get more offense in the game, whether you want to talk about the mound being moved back a foot, whether you want to talk about different ways of getting rid of the shift, whether you want to talk about substances on the ball," Hoyer said. "We need to make adjustments. The DH originally came of these

adjustments. The mound being lowered came from these adjustments. And I personally am of the mind of — obviously, I love baseball, but I don't believe the rules are written on stone tablets."

Many baseball purists oppose changing distances on the field. Commissioner Rob Manfred has been open to considering innovations to a tradition-bound sport.

"That seems pretty drastic, but again I think those are things that, you know, sometimes the craziest of ideas end up having some traction," New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "I think that it's important that you try these things out when you're trying to consider different things in a league where you can kind of really take some information and see how it works out."

See **Baseball** / A7