

## DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at [dearabby.com](http://dearabby.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



**Dear Abby:** My husband's dad, "Adam," is very mellow and can talk to anyone. His mom, "Eve," is friendly, but a little more reserved.

Early in their marriage, Adam was a drinker, and my mother-in-law has never forgiven him for the way he treated her during that time. She has always treated him disrespectfully, but as they get older, it's becoming worse.

She has hit Adam when we had people over because he didn't do what she told him to do. I told her to stop, and my husband told her she embarrassed him, but Eve forgets or doesn't care and continues to do it. She talks down to him constantly. If that's how she acts when people are around, I hate to think what happens behind closed doors.

When she hits him, Adam sits there expressionless and doesn't react.

He's not the man he once was, and he is adored by many people.

What can we do to help my FIL and make her stop doing this in front of her grandkids and company? Eve claims to be a Christian, but isn't acting like one.

— *Frustrated in Michigan*

**Dear Frustrated:** Your father-in-law may have had a drinking problem years ago, but he has a different problem now.

He is a victim of verbal and physical abuse. He may have tolerated it all these years out of guilt for what he put his wife through when he was drinking. He may also have become so beaten down that he can no longer protect himself.

He does need help. With your and his son's encour-

agement, he can receive it because there are programs available for male victims of domestic violence.

Stop Abuse for Everyone (SAFE) is an organization that helps abused individuals of all ages, genders, races and sexual orientations. The website is [stopabuseforeveryone.org](http://stopabuseforeveryone.org).

**Dear Abby:** I met a nice friend. He's a widower whose wife has been gone for three years. My husband died 10 years ago.

He makes me laugh, something I haven't done in a while. I really like this guy, but he is still grieving. Some days he's good, but others he's a mess.

I want us to be in a relationship, and I think he could be "the one." We've only been courting for a month, but he has been pursuing me for a year.

Should I give it more time, or should I move on with my life?

I haven't been intimate with him, but he still makes me feel like a woman, which is something I've missed.

— *Thinking It's Him in Maryland*

**Dear Thinking:** As you know, the process of grieving isn't a straight line. When a loved one dies, the survivors have good periods and ones that are less so.

You are further along in this grieving process than your friend because his loss is more recent.

If a relationship (or more) is what you want, allow him more time to work through his feelings.

However, if the bad spells don't become less frequent, suggest he talk with his doctor about joining a grief support group in which he can safely vent his feelings.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Ducks have strength, depth among RBs

BY JAMES CREPEA

The Oregonian

EUGENE — C.J. Verdell thought about leaving for the NFL, but that was before.

Before a shortened 2020 season. Before an injury to his left thumb. Before the Oregon iron horse missed the first two games of his career.

Verdell met with Mario Cristobal, offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead and running backs coach Jim Mastro after the season and said he'd return for a fourth season in five years.

"I love Oregon, I love the team here, I love the coaching staff, a great environment overall," Verdell said. "Coming back was never something that I was like, 'No I don't want to do that.' Talking with my parents they were with me 100% whatever I chose and when I said I wanted to come back they was with me full bore."

A 1,000-yard rusher in 2018 and 2019, Verdell is one of the best running backs in the Pac-12 and the country when healthy. But in just five games last season he had only 65 carries for 285 yards and three touchdowns.

Verdell said the left thumb injury that kept out of the Pac-12 Championship game against USC and the Fiesta Bowl actually happened during the Washington State game, when he had 18 carries for 118 yards and a score, and not the UCLA game, when he fumbled and saw his workload fall dramatically afterward.

He said there was "a whole lot going on" with the injury, including a torn ligament and bone fracture.



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian file

**Oregon running back C.J. Verdell (7) carries the ball against Stanford in the Pac-12 season opener in Eugene in November.**

"Those last few games that I played, I was playing with a club the whole time so it kind of made it rough," Verdell said. "I kind of played through it. ... I was definitely going through it, especially the Pac-12 championship. I couldn't even go because I had to go to the doctor the same day so I was watching it from (Eugene)."

"It was definitely one of those feelings like, man, I wish I can be out there or at least have been out there on the field rooting the guys on. It was good to see them take home that championship. I called and FaceTimed the whole group after and we all talked and celebrated so it's still good."

Back to full strength, Verdell still tops Oregon's running back corps this spring, even as Travis Dye emerged in a different and even more dynamic role last season. They don't see each other as competition, but rather as a tandem that few others can match.

"I think before the season he was leaning on more of leaving," said Dye, who ran for 443 yards and a touchdown and had 239 receiving yards and four scores on just nine receptions last season. "In the middle of the season we talked about it a little bit more and he said he wanted to come back and I was all for it. I told him this 1-2 punch can keep going and that we're going to be an awesome duo still. Last year I know there's a bad taste in his mouth. He's ready to come out there year and go off and I'm all for it."

At their peak, Verdell and Dye make a compelling case for the best running back duo in the conference and one of the best in the country. The only Pac-12 teams with comparable running back pairings are Colorado and Washington State, which also saw their leading rushers from 2019 miss most or all of 2020 due to injury.

With Sean Dollars and Trey

Benson both out this spring recovering from injuries, Verdell and Dye are the only two healthy scholarship running backs on Oregon's roster and while there's always something to refine and improve, staying healthy is the priority for the next nine practices and the off-season.

They have high aspirations, individually and as a team, and in order to each them the Ducks need both to be available on Saturdays.

"The goal for us right now is we want to win a national championship really bad," Dye said. "Becoming the best 1-2 punch in the Pac, that's going to help us. Obviously I believe that we are the best 1-2 punch in the Pac, if not the nation. Of course we're going to say that, but we're going to show it this year for sure."

Individually, Verdell is shooting for 2,000 yards. If he's able to stay healthy enough to not only play each week, but not been limited due to a variety of minor injuries he's played through over the years, there's no reason to believe he can't reach that.

Durability remains the question with Verdell though and he recognizes the wear and tear he's taken.

"For me it's like maybe picking and choosing when to be physical," he said. "Knowing to spare my body. Not to try to take too many hits if I don't have to. If I can make somebody miss here, I do that, not always lowering my shoulder. That's one of the main things me and coach Mastro have been talking about."

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021:

Free-thinking, assertive and self-assured, follow your dreams no matter how challenging they seem. This year, you show those who underestimated you a thing or two. Watch your tendency to become a workaholic. Make time for recreational family activities. A steady income with an occasional bonus will let you plan ahead seamlessly. If single, a casual friendship takes a serious turn. If attached, love always wins an argument. CAPRICORN is loyal.

## ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Community issues and concerns may take you by surprise. An online meeting or town hall will clarify the situation. Offer your assistance, but only allot time you can spare. Prepare for a visit from out-of-town relatives. Tonight: Share music recommendations.

## TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Keep an eye open for garage sales. Think about organizing one of your own. It is not easy to let go of items that have sentimental value. A friend not attached to your possessions can start the process. Tonight: Practical chores.

## GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Throw modesty to the wind. Toot your own horn and show off an accomplishment or milestone. Shop with a friend at a local or online mall. Go a little crazy but don't break the bank. Tonight: An indulgent meal.

## CANCER (June 21-July 21)

★★★★ Put your money where your mouth is. Try your hand at that artistic endeavor you've been doing in dribs and drabs. A class or instructor will allow you to finesse your talent. Show off what you've done. Tonight: Lazy evening.

## LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Streamline membership organizations for which you pay monthly dues. Eliminate those whose meetings you do not attend and whose publications you do not read. Join an alumni online group and track down classmates with whom you lost touch. Tonight: Exercise video.

## VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Your need to be in charge serves you well. Present your vision tactfully to people with whom you work or volunteer. Given your powers of persuasion, they will embrace your ideas and weave them into a current project. Tonight: Romantic plans.

## LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Declutter your home office or the room where you go online. Clear shelves of books you won't read again. Donate them to a charity that makes house calls. Save the space for reference materials that are not digital. Tonight: Group dancing.

## SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Competing gets your juices flowing. Ask your children and grandchildren to show you how to play the latest brain teasers. Organize a friendly game night between multiple generations. Stock up on finger foods and have fun. Tonight: Movie night.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Avoid a debate with someone whose ideas you will never change. Forge a new bond with someone who shares your ideas about love and life. Take things slowly, and your connection is more likely to blossom. Tonight: Select new podcasts.

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You could be affected by a sad story, so keep tissues handy. You will feel the urgency to do something altruistic. Consider adopting a rescue animal from a shelter, or post photos of furry friends in need. Tonight: Gossip with friends.

## AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Enjoy the fresh air. Take a detour on a daily walk or run. Visit a local museum or gallery. If there aren't any nearby, then go online. The world of art is at your fingertips. Tonight: Step up your fitness routine.

## PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Let people you love know how much you appreciate them. Prepare a favorite meal, give them compliments or buy a gift mentioned in passing. Plan a get-together with friends who are part of your extended family. Tonight: Book club.

## Baseball

Continued from A5

Two years ago, MLB announced that Atlantic League mounds would be moved back 24 inches to 62 feet, 6 inches, for the second half of that season but then abandoned the experiment before it began.

In addition, the MLB partner league will have an experimental "double-hook DH" rule in which a team would lose its designated hitter when its starting pitcher leaves the game. That will be in effect the entire season, which starts May 27, and the goal is to encourage managers to leave their starting pitchers in games longer.

The Atlantic League will continue use of the automated ball-strike computer umpire system that it started with in 2019. The ABS will be used in some Low-A Southeast League games this season.

In a change, the strike zone in the Atlantic League this year will be two-dimensional, measuring at the front of home plate, rather than three-dimensional.

"One we think will better match the human zone people are expecting," Sword said.

The Southeast League also will use a two-dimensional zone, but it will run on the Hawk-Eye system of cameras and the Atlantic League will use TrackMan radar system. MLB's Statcast system switched from TrackMan to Hawk-Eye for the 2020 season.

"We're talking about it but we haven't made a firm decision yet of whether to modify the geometry of the Atlantic League strike zone a little bit," Sword said. "The zone that's actually called by major league umpires is kind of like an oval. And going to a two-dimensional zone that has corners in it is going to be pitcher-friendly because you're adding space to the strike zone."

"So the thought is you actually might end up with something that feels better to people if you widen the strike zone by an inch or two and compressed it vertically by an inch or two."

Other experimental minor league rules this year require infielders at Double-A to keep both feet in the infield at the start of every play; the use of 18-by-18-inch bases at Triple-A rather than 15-by-15 and a limit of two step off or pickoff attempts per plate appearance at Low-A with at least one runner on base.

The designated hitter was

adopted by the American League in 1973 and was used in all major league games during the 2020 season due to pandemic rules. Its possible extension to the National League is expected to be discussed


during bargaining between MLB and the players' association this year.

The Atlantic League will use the 18-inch bases, which were part of the 2019 experiment, but the league decided to do

that on its own this season.

The rule that a pitcher face three batters or end the half-inning that was used by the Atlantic League in 2019 was adopted by the major leagues in 2020.

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