

SPORTS

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NFL

Rams' Donald gets an apology

PITTSBURGH — The attorney for a man who accused NFL star Aaron Donald of assaulting him at a Pittsburgh nightclub last weekend has apologized, saying it was a case of mistaken identity.

Attorney Todd Hollis, who represents DeVincent Spriggs, told Pittsburgh reporters Friday that his client mistook someone else for Donald during the altercation. He said his client had believed Donald was responsible, but after reviewing the tapes, "I realized that it was not Aaron Donald."

"I certainly extend an apology to Aaron for any problems this may have caused him," Hollis said. "Aaron has certainly been through enough so we want to put this to rest."

Earlier, an attorney for the Los Angeles Rams defensive lineman said witnesses and surveillance video refuted the accusation. Attorney Casey White told WPXI-TV that the video indicated that Donald did not assault anyone but was trying to save Spriggs.

The incident occurred around 3 a.m. Sunday in the city's South Side. White said the men were at a private party in an apartment, and that after the initial confrontation, Donald and another person encountered Spriggs in a back alleyway.

Donald, 29, was named the Associated Press NFL defensive player of the year in February and played college football at the University of Pittsburgh.

— Associated Press

MLB

Former Mariner gets shot at majors

CHICAGO — Sean Kazmar Jr. returned to the major leagues after an 13-year absence, pinch hitting for the Atlanta Braves and grounding into a double play on Saturday against the Chicago Cubs.

The 36-year-old infielder's contract was selected by the Braves from their alternate training site before the game. He pinch-hit in the fifth inning grounded into a 4-6-3 double play.

Kazmar last played in the major leagues on Sept. 23, 2008, with the San Diego Padres. He appeared in 19 games that season for his only previous major league action, and had since played in Triple-A for the Padres, Seattle Mariners, New York Mets and Braves, plus Double-A for the Mets — a total of 1,106 minor league games.

"That was probably one of the greatest moments I've had as a manager at all the levels, quite honestly," Braves manager Brian Snitker said of informing Kazmar of his return. "It's amazing. You go from '08 to 2021, in between, you've got to be kidding me, to have the perseverance and the dedication and the drive."

The gap between big league appearances was the greatest since that of right-hander Ralph Winegarner, according to Elias Sports Bureau. Winegarner played on June 23, 1936, for the Cleveland Indians and did not return to the majors until July 7, 1949, with the St. Louis Browns — a span of 13 years, 14 days.

— Associated Press

FOOTBALL

Tight training schedule

High Desert Storm has under 3 weeks to prepare for 1st season

BY BRIAN RATHBONE

The Bulletin

REDMOND — Keith Evans, the head coach of the Oregon High Desert Storm, made one guarantee as the indoor professional football team opened training camp in preparation for its quickly approaching opening game.

For the first couple of days, there would be no football, he said. Instead the first part of training camp is to see which

players came ready to play and those of whom might not be physically ready to help the team.

"We got 18 practices before we go to Idaho, and the goal is to get that win," said Evans at the Deschutes County fairgrounds Friday evening. "I have 18 practices to first see who is in shape, who is going to start. If you aren't in shape and I see that you can't get in shape in a couple of days. I

can't do anything for you."

The inaugural season for the Desert Storm kicks off May 8 at the Ford Idaho Center against the Idaho Horsemen.

As much as getting into playing shape is important, the next couple of weeks will be vital to take a group of players from around the country and gel them into a team that can contend for a title.

One of the players the Storm brought is a veteran of arena



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

William Crest Jr. runs sprints during an Oregon High Desert Storm football practice at the Deschutes County fairgrounds on Friday.

football, Chuck Jones, who has been in the league for nine seasons and has been part of

championship teams throughout his career.

See Storm / B3

SKIING

Racing reflections

Bend's Laurene Ross looks back at her World Cup skiing career, and ahead to her next chapter, after winning her final race

BY MARK MORICAL

The Bulletin

Laurenne Ross is officially retired from ski racing, but no one should be surprised to find her on the slopes of Mount Bachelor over the next year.

The longtime World Cup skier and two-time Olympian from Bend — who announced her retirement last week before winning the downhill at the U.S. Championships in Aspen, Colorado, on April 10 — plans to take a year off before jumping into her next career, possibly in sustainable architecture.

During that year, she plans to give back to the Central Oregon ski community that gave so much to her.

"I'll get up and coach some kids at MBSEF (Mount Bachelor Sports Education Foundation), and spend time with kids who are getting into ski racing, or who are just wanting to free ski," Ross said. "I feel like that's really important, and really had a big impact on me as a skier."

Ross, 32, ended her 13-year racing career in style, claiming her third national title with her parents and longtime boyfriend Tommy Ford, also a World Cup skier, in attendance.



Hugh Carey/AP

Bend's Laurene Ross smiles after winning the women's downhill competition at the U.S. Alpine Championship ski races on April 10 in Aspen, Colorado.

"It was just a long four years of injury after injury, and this slew of recoveries. It was just starting to get old, and I am getting older and having aches and pains, and I want to be able to ski the rest of my life and enjoy the outdoors. That was a big part of my decision, for sure."

— Laurene Ross

Ross said it was "wonderful" to win her last race. "It was a pretty sweet day — bittersweet," Ross said.

On Tuesday at the U.S. Championships, Ross took a sort of victory lap in the super-G, rather than actually racing, according to usskiandsnowboard.org. Dressed in a black Spyder onesie with a blue

tutu and a rainbow unicorn horn, Ross made her way down the course, stopping to hug and high-five coaches. At the bottom, she was greeted by Ford and her father, Rob Ross.

Ross was born in Edmonton, Alberta, but grew up in Klamath Falls and raced for the Bend-based MBSEF as a youth. She moved to Bend about 10 years ago, and recently earned her bachelor's degree in art from the University of Oregon.

Ross overcame several major knee injuries throughout her career, as well as a shattered pelvis, shoulder dislocations, a hip tear, bulging discs and severe ankle sprains.

She raced the downhill at both the 2014 and 2018 Winter Olympics, her top finish 11th at the Sochi Games. She also made two World Cup podiums and was fifth in the downhill at the World Championships in 2017.

See Skiing / B2

MLS

Timbers open season at Vancouver after Champions League test

BY JOEL ODOM

The Oregonian

Although the MLS regular season begins this weekend for the Portland Timbers, it would be a stretch to describe the 2021 season as regular.

Safety protocols will remain in place amid the coronavirus pandemic. Crowds for Portland home games will be far below capacity for the time being.

Yes, there will be a 34-game schedule, but nearly all of the Timbers' matches will be against Western Conference opponents.

And even though the Timbers will play their first game Sunday night on the road against the rival Vancouver Whitecaps, the match won't be held in Vancouver but in Salt Lake City.

After using Portland as its home base for part of last



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian

Timbers midfielder Diego Valeri blows a kiss to the crowd after his goal in the 66th minute against C.D. Marathón in a CONCACAF Champions League match with limited fans in attendance at Providence Park in Portland on Tuesday night.

season, coach Marc Dos Santos' team is playing its home games in Salt Lake for at least the first part of the season as

travel restrictions still make frequent trips between the U.S. and Canada impractical.

See Timbers / B3

NFL DRAFT

Pro days key for NFL hopefuls with no combine this year

BY ARNIE STAPLETON

AP Pro Football Writer

BOULDER, Colo. — As an underclassman, defensive end Mustafa Johnson always enjoyed rubbernecking at the University of Colorado's annual pro day.

He'd cheer on his older teammates as they were getting sized up by NFL scouts in preparation for that year's draft — and he'd envision getting everyone's encouragement when it was his turn.

The pandemic rendered that long-awaited capstone to his college career a much different experience than he'd imagined.

Campus and county COVID-19 restrictions meant that no teammates could watch Johnson and Will Sherman, the only other Buffaloes prospect who participated in Colorado's scaled-down pro day last month.

"We didn't have our teammates there saying, 'You got this! Keep pushing!'" Johnson lamented.

Johnson and Sherman were left to cheer on each other as NFL personnel scrutinized their every move.

"In the past, you have a crowd there. But today it was just me and Mustafa and a bunch of scouts," Sherman said. "So, to have someone else over there cheering me on, it was definitely big. I appreciated that. I was doing the same for him."

"We helped each other out on this weird COVID pro day."

At least they had each other. Forty-five miles up Interstate 25, Colorado State wide receiver Warren Jackson was the only participant at the Rams' pro day, a fact he insisted didn't take away from the experience.

See NFL Draft / B3