

SPORTS

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OLYMPICS

Torch is taking another detour

TOKYO — The Tokyo Olympics torch relay will take another detour this weekend when it enters the southern island of Okinawa.

A leg of the relay on Okinawa's resort island of Miyakojima set for Sunday has been canceled altogether with coronavirus cases surging in Japan. Other legs on Okinawa will take place.

A 17-day state of emergency went into effect on April 25 in some areas in Japan, which has shut down department stores and bars in Tokyo and the country's second largest metropolis of Osaka.

"We don't want people from outside the island coming in. Human life is at stake," Hayako Shimizu, a teacher in Miyakojima, told the Associated Press.

The relay, which will involve 10,000 runners from every corner of Japan, started six weeks ago and has been mostly on schedule despite major rerouting in Osaka and in Matsuyama City in nearby Ehime prefecture.

Organizers on Saturday said that six people helping with traffic control on April 27 in the southern prefecture of Kagoshima had tested positive. Two were identified as men in their 20s and 30s. No other information was immediately available. This brings the total number of positive tests on the relay to eight, according to organizers.

The torch relay — like planning for the postponed Olympics that are to open on July 23 — is filled with uncertainty, constant changes, and questions about why it is taking place, and how it will take place.

A six-day, on-and-off diving event opened Saturday in Tokyo with 225 athletes from from 46 countries — but no fans.

It was not immediately clear where the athletes were staying or under what quarantine conditions, if any, they entered Japan. It's also not clear how many staff members accompanied the divers.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo, citing the Japanese Swimming Federation, said a coach of the Egyptian diving team tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival in Japan. It said the rest of the team tested negative.

The world governing body of swimming FINA listed one of divers in Tokyo as former Olympic bronze medalist Tom Daley of Britain. But other divers were from various countries including Mexico, Germany, Canada, Romania, Colombia, Japan, Malaysia, Ukraine, and Russia.

The diving event is one of several tests this month — all without fans. Organizers say they will be decide in June how many fans — if any — will be allowed for the Olympics. Fans from abroad have already been banned.

In a briefing on Friday, Hidemasa Nakamura, the games delivery officer, pushed back against repeated reports that the venues will be empty.

"Of course we are looking at the possibility of letting spectators in," he said.

Nakamura also said the focus was on "how safely we can have the games" and not on whether they should take place in the middle of a pandemic.

— Associated Press

BALL IS LIFE

Ex-Duck Penei Sewell on his journey to the NFL after being drafted by the Detroit Lions

BY JAMES CREPEA • The Oregonian

Penei Sewell is headed to Detroit. The former Oregon left tackle was drafted by the Detroit Lions with the No. 7 pick in Thursday's first round of the NFL draft. Sewell spoke on a Zoom conference with reporters after he was selected.

Q: How familiar are you with the current group of offensive linemen and your fit in the offensive line?

A: I know a couple. Obviously I know Taylor Decker, the left tackle, Frank Ragnow, the center, and then my boy Tyrell Crosby.

He actually was at Oregon and I was there. To be a part of that room and to be able to join them, it's a blessing. That's a lot of knowledge and a lot of years in the room so coming in I'm going to soak it all up and be a sponge.

Q: How much contact did you have with Brad (Holmes) and Dan (Campbell) and Lions coaches in the pre-draft

NFL



Tony Dejak/AP

A Detroit Lions fan, left, who was chosen to be on stage, points to an image of the team's first-round pick Penei Sewell, an offensive lineman from Oregon, on the display on stage at the draft on Thursday night in Cleveland.

"I'm coming each and every day ready to run through the wall, ready to do whatever it takes to accomplish my goals and the team goals. I'm willing to do whatever it takes. I'm putting everything on the line, my body and everything else. I'm ready to sacrifice everything for my goals and my dreams."

— Former Oregon Ducks offensive lineman Penei Sewell

process?

A: At the beginning it was not that much until towards the end they started showing more interest, conversations started to get more deeper. Now he's trying to get to know who I am as a person and not as a football

player. The fit is awesome, the way coach Campbell approaches the game is the way I like to. I like to come real physical each and every day and get better that way.

Q: Can you tell your back story,

where you're from and how you learned the game?

A: I'm from American Samoa. I stayed in the small village of Malaeimi. We all stayed at the shack there, it's just a beach. It's an island surrounded by nothing but water and it's probably you can hit the whole island probably in a 40-minute drive. It was real small, life was real simple. To come from that to where I'm at today, it's nothing but blessing. Every time I reflect upon that after this moment on it makes me happy, it puts a smile on my face and there's more to do and more to come.

See Sewell / B3

HORSE RACING

Medina Spirit gives Bob Baffert record 7th Kentucky Derby win

BY BETH HARRIS

AP Racing Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Medina Spirit fought off three challengers in the stretch to win the Kentucky Derby by a half-length on Saturday, making Bob Baffert the winningest trainer in the race's 147-year history, with seven victories.

Jockey John Velazquez earned his fourth Derby victory on Saturday aboard the dark brown colt that was purchased as a yearling for \$1,000 and cost current owner Amr Zedan \$35,000.

See Derby / B3



Jeff Roberson/AP

John Velazquez riding Medina Spirit leads Florent Geroux on Mandaloun and Flavien Prat riding Hot Rod Charlie to win the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs on Saturday in Louisville, Kentucky.

COMMENTARY

Oregon's pro sports franchises struggling to meet governor's restrictive COVID-19 guidelines

BY JOHN CANZANO

The Oregonian

The executives who run the professional sports franchises in our state found themselves all wondering the same thing last week.

Who in the world is in her ear?

The "ear" belongs to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

Those franchise executives are pulling their hair out trying to figure out where our state's top politician developed her hardline stance when it comes fan attendance at pro

sporting events.

"She was in sync with Washington and California at the beginning of the pandemic," one team official said this week.

"She was afraid to be on her own. But now, she's completely alone. It's baffling.

"It makes you wonder who is in her ear."

The Trail Blazers, for example, are officially the only NBA team in the country that won't be allowed to have fans at their home arena this season.

See Commentary / B3



David Zalubowski/AP

New York Mets' Francisco Lindor leaves his gear at home plate after striking out against Colorado Rockies pitcher Antonio Senzatela on April 18 in Denver.

MLB

Offense down in season of slumping

BY RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Don Mattingly starred in the action-packed 1980s.

Now the Miami Marlins manager, Donnie Baseball worries about a record lack of hits — and not just from his team's bats.

"I don't think it's cyclical at this point," he said. "There's so much swing and miss, it's kind of off the charts. I think it's something that we have to address."

It's the Season of the Slump, even for All-Stars like Marcell Ozuna (.202), Charlie Blackmon (.184) and Francisco Lindor (.189). Miguel Cabrera, the only Triple Crown winner in a half-century, is batting .140.

Major league batters are hit-

ting just .232 overall through April, down from .252 two years ago and under the record low of .237 set in the infamous 1968 season that resulted in a lower pitcher's mound.

The Mendoza line may not mean what it used to.

Strikeouts have averaged 9.06 per team per game, on pace to set a record for the 13th consecutive full season — up from 8.81 two years ago and nearly double the 4.77 in 1979. Strikeouts already are 1,092 ahead of hits, just three years after exceeding hits for the first time over a full season.

Hits are averaging a record-low 7.63 after fluctuating from 8 to 10 from 1937 through last year, excepting 1968's dip to 7.91.

While it's a bear market for

batters, pitchers are on bull runs.

Joe Musgrove of San Diego and Carlos Rodón of the Chicago White Sox became the second pair of pitchers in a half-century to throw April no-hitters, the first since Atlanta's Kent Mercker and Minnesota's Scott Erickson in 1994. Arizona's Madison Bumgarner pitched another, but the shortened seven-inning gem in a doubleheader was not recognized by MLB.

Mattingly, a six-time All-Star, never struck out more than 43 times in a season during a career from 1982-92.

Texas slugger Joey Gallo already has whiffed 40 times, as has Cincinnati's Eugenio Suárez.

See MLB / B2