

FOOTBALL

High Desert Storm lose opener, 46-44

NAMPA, Idaho — The Oregon High Desert Storm lost their franchise opener Saturday night to the Idaho Horsemen, 46-44, at the Ford Idaho Center.

It was the first ever game for the Storm, the newest team in the American West Football Conference, a pro indoor football league with five teams in the Northwest.

According to oregonstorm.com, the Storm had a chance to tie the game with just under three minutes left, but quarterback William Crest Jr. was sacked on a 2-point conversion attempt.

The Horsemen, the defending AWFC champions from 2019 after last season was canceled, opened the game with two consecutive touchdowns and had a 38-18 lead by halftime.

In the second half, the Storm defense made a few adjustments and held the Horsemen to just eight points.

Storm running back Caleb Stennis scored a touchdown with 4:59 remaining, and then scored again on a 1-yard run a couple of minutes later after an Idaho fumble to cut the Horsemen lead to 46-44 with 2:51 left.

But Crest was sacked on the conversion and Idaho was able to run out the clock for the victory.

After two weeks off, the Storm will travel to Yakima, Washington, to face the Yakima Canines on May 29.

Aside from the Oregon High Desert Storm and the Idaho Horsemen, the three other teams in the AWFC are all based in Washington: the Yakima Canines, Tri-City Rush and Wenatchee Valley Skyhawks.

The Storm are scheduled to play their first home game at First Interstate Bank Center in Redmond on June 5 against the Horsemen, and they are scheduled to play six of their 11 games in Redmond this season, which runs through July 30.

For more information about the team, visit oregonstorm.com.

—Bulletin staff report

NFL DRAFT

UO's Thibodeaux projected No. 1

Oregon's presence early in the first round of the NFL draft is expected to continue.

Ducks edge rusher Kayvon Thibodeaux is projected as the No. 1 pick in the 2022 NFL draft by both ESPN's Mel Kiper Jr. and Todd McShay.

"He was the No. 1 player coming out of high school, he's maintained that grade throughout at Oregon with the Ducks," Kiper said. "He's that pass rusher off the edge who can bend it and close quickly on the quarterback."

A third team AP All-American last season, Thibodeaux had 38 tackles with 9.5 tackles for loss, including three sacks, and three pass breakups in seven games last season. He won the Morris Trophy as the Pac-12's best defensive lineman as voted on by the players.

Kiper evoked comparisons to former No. 1 overall pick Myles Garrett and Jadeveon Clowney in discussing Thibodeaux, who was projected as a top pick in the 2022 draft even a year ago.

—The Oregonian

TENNIS

Ready to return



Serena Williams returns the ball during a training session at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome on Monday.

Gregorio Borgia/AP photo

BY ANDREW DAMPF

Associated Press

ROME — Forget all that speculation about Serena Williams considering retirement after her emotional hand-to-heart gesture upon her Australian Open exit three months ago.

While Williams has not played since losing to Naomi Osaka in the Melbourne semifinals in February, she has been practicing "very intensely" on clay courts and is ready to "start fresh" in her pursuit of Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam titles.

Preparing to return at this week's Italian Open to gear up for Roland Garros later this month, Williams on Monday detailed her recent training regimen.

There was a block of time on clay courts back home in the United States followed by 2½ weeks on the red dirt at the

French academy run by her coach, Patrick Mouratoglou.

"So we had an intense several weeks of training — very intense," Williams said. "I feel good. ... I'm going to have some good matches here hopefully, and then I will be at another Grand Slam, which always makes me excited. So I think either way I'll be ready."

The 39-year-old Williams, who only needs one more Grand Slam title to match Court's record, added that her fans shouldn't read too much into the lack of tennis information she shares on social media.

"I don't do a lot of sport content, so I do feel like people are wondering if I'm playing, and I have to say I always am, you just don't see it," she said. "I don't show what I do. I don't always show my cards."

Williams, a four-time champion in Rome, will face either French Open semifinalist Nadia Podoroska or German

qualifier Laura Siegemund in her opening match at the Foro Italico. She's in the same quarter of the draw as Osaka and has a first-round bye.

"It's good to start fresh but it's also hard to start fresh," Williams said.

Williams was also asked if she will play at the Tokyo Olympics if coronavirus protocols mean she can't bring her 3-year-old daughter into Japan.

"I haven't spent 24 hours without her, so that kind of answers the question itself," Williams said. "We're best friends."

"I haven't really thought much about Tokyo, because it was supposed to be last year and now it's this year, and then there is this pandemic and there is so much to think about," she added. "Then there is the Grand Slams. It's just a lot. So I have really been taking it one day at a time to a fault, and I definitely need to figure out my next moves."

NFL

Tebow-Meyer reunion on verge of becoming official

There's a twist: former Heisman QB to play TE

BY MARK LONG

AP Pro Football Writer

Tim Tebow and Urban Meyer are apparently getting back together, this time in the NFL.

The former Florida star and 2007 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback is expected to team up with his college coach by signing a one-year contract to play for the Jacksonville Jaguars, the NFL Network reported Monday.

The league-owned network said the deal "could be official in the next week or so."

The 33-year-old Tebow would be returning to the NFL after four years (2016-19) in the New York Mets' organization and he'd be playing for Meyer for the first time since his senior year in 2009.

This reunion would come with a twist, though.

Tebow would be joining the Jaguars as a tight end. He switched positions after retiring from baseball in February. He worked out for Jacksonville a week later.

Meyer and general manager Trent Baalke are seemingly wait-



AP file

ing until after this weekend's rookie minicamp to get the deal done.

Tebow, who grew up in Jacksonville, could fill a huge hole with his hometown team. The Jaguars decided not to pick up a team option in veteran Tyler Eifert's contract and traded oft-injured 2019 draft pick Josh Oliver to Baltimore. They signed run-blocking specialist Chris Manhertz in free agency, brought back James O'Shaughnessy and drafted Ohio State's Luke Farrell in the fifth round.

Those were considered minor moves after Meyer vowed to completely revamp the position group. Tebow, at the very least, would provide a splash.

"That will be interesting to see how that contributes to us on offense," Jaguars co-owner Tony Khan said. "Obviously Urban knows Tim really well, and Tim's got a great history of winning. Urban really believes he can help us, and I think it makes a lot of sense. And it's a position where we need to get better."

But how much can a guy on the wrong side of 30 who's never played the position bring to the team? Tebow's value could mean as much off the field as on it.

Meyer has said repeatedly that signing players who already know his methodology would be helpful in Year 1.

See Tebow / A7

HORSE RACING

Medina Spirit traveling to Preakness, minus Baffert

BY GARY B. GRAVES

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit is headed to Baltimore for the Preakness Stakes while trainer Bob Baffert said Monday that he won't attend the race to avoid being a distraction in the wake of scrutiny following the colt's failed postrace drug test.

Medina Spirit's Derby win by half a length over Mandaloun on May 1 gave Baffert his record seventh victory in the sport's premier race. That milestone win is now in jeopardy following Baffert's announcement on Sunday that test results revealed the horse had more than twice the state-allowed amount of the steroid betamethasone.

Baffert is appealing the positive test and part of the original sample will be re-tested. If the violation is upheld, Medina Spirit could be disqualified and runner-up Mandaloun elevated to winner.

The trainer has denied all wrongdoing and promised full transparency with Kentucky racing officials. Churchill Downs nonetheless suspended Baffert from entering horses at the track. The Maryland Jockey Club and Pimlico officials say they will decide on Medina Spirit's status in the Triple Crown's middle jewel after reviewing the facts.

See Medina Spirit / A7