

## GOLF | PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

## Wild ride for Mickelson and 18 holes away from history

BY DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. — Phil Mickelson survived a wild ride Saturday at Kiawah Island with a 2-under 70 in the PGA Championship that left him 18 holes away from becoming golf's oldest major champion.

The 50-year-old Mickelson walked off the 10th green with a five-shot lead and such amazing control of his game that it was shaping up to be another runaway on the Ocean Course.

Far from it. Mickelson hit one tee shot into the water and another under the tire of a cart. Brooks Koepka rattled off three birdies to tie him for the lead.

The difference was the closing hole at Kiawah, easier as the wind shifted from being in the players' faces to coming from right-to-left off the Atlantic Ocean. Koepka, in the group ahead, went just long and took three putts for a bogey and a 70.

Mickelson went well long and played a flop shot, a risky shot to most everyone but him, and nearly jarred it. He curled in the 4-foot par putt to become the oldest player with a 54-hole lead in a major since 59-year-old Tom Watson at Turnberry in 2009.

That didn't end well for Watson, who lost that British Open in a playoff to Stewart Cink. For Mickelson, it's an opportunity to become the oldest player to win a major. Julius Boros was 48 when he won the 1968 PGA Championship.

Mickelson was at 7-under 209. For all his success in the majors — five victories, run-



David J. Phillip/AP

**Phil Mickelson hits his second shot on the 16th hole from the rough during the third round at the PGA Championship on Saturday in Kiawah Island, South Carolina.**

ner-up finishes in all four of them — this is only the third time he has held the 54-hole lead.

He will play in the final group with Koepka, a twosome with nine majors among them. Koepka will be going for his third Wana-maker Trophy in the last four years.

Koepka, shaking off effects from ligament surgery on his right knee that has limited him to two tournaments in three months before arriving at Kiawah, called the third round his worst performance of his career. Still, he wasn't surprised to have another shot at a major.

"It just feels good, feels normal. It's what you're supposed to do, what you practice for," he said. "I'm right where I want to be, and we'll see how tomorrow goes."

Louis Oosthuizen knows the feeling. He started the third round tied with Mickelson and had a long three-putt bogey. The South African never caught up, though he had his chances until missing a 4-foot birdie putt on the par-5 16th

and a 5-foot par putt on the par-3 17th. He wound up with a 72 and was two shots behind.

At least they have a chance.

Mickelson broke away quickly with four birdies in seven holes, and he even managed to avoid losing his focus. One distraction came from the fourth fairway, when Mickelson saw a drone in the air left of the green and said to a CBS spotter, "Can you radio to the TV guys to get the drone out of the flight of my shot?" He saved par from a back bunker.

He went out in 32 — Mickelson played the front nine on Friday in 31 — and was five shots clear until he showed signs of sputtering. He badly missed a 7-foot birdie attempt on No. 11. He pulled his tee shot into a bunker on No. 12 and had to play back to the fairway, leading to his first bogey of the round.

And then he drove into the water on the 13th with his 2-wood, had to hit his third shot from the tee because of where he thought it crossed the hazard line, and missed a

12-footer for bogey. Oosthuizen also found the water with a big fade, dropped further off the fairway and made bogey.

"Mine was on the edge," Mickelson said on why he hit again from the tee. "I just didn't feel good about it."

It was tight the rest of the way. Mickelson is going after his first major since the 2013 British Open, and the final hour made it clear that this might not be easy.

But it will be loud. The gallery is the largest at a major since the pandemic — the PGA of America has said there would be 10,000 people, a number that felt far greater — and Mickelson was the object of their raucous shouting.

Kevin Streelman bogeyed the 18th for a 70 and was alone in fourth at 4-under 212, followed by Branden Grace and Christiaan Bezuidenhout of South Africa, each with a 72.

Jordan Spieth matched the low round of the day with a 68, still seven shots behind and most likely too far back to contend with a dozen players ahead of him.

Spieth was headed back to his rental home to flip on the TV, a rarity for him.

But it's Phil.

It's theater.

"I don't watch golf but I promise you I'm going to turn it on to watch him today," Spieth said.

"It's pretty incredible. I have no way to relate to it, right? But I also don't think it's necessarily that special because didn't he win a World Golf Championships in the last couple years?"

"The guy's got four good rounds on any golf course in him, and no one would bet against that."

Mickelson has had three good ones at Kiawah Island. One more for history.



Matt York/AP

**Brooks Koepka works on the 16th green during the third round at the PGA Championship on Saturday in Kiawah Island, South Carolina. Koepka's 2-under 70 kept him one shot back of overall leader Phil Mickelson heading into Sunday's final round.**

## Ravens

Continued from B1

Whether because of the unusual overlap of sports seasons this year or COVID-19 complications sending high school athletes into quarantine, high school basketball teams are taking longer to find their competitive form — or even field full rosters — after a 14-month hiatus.

"We are just grateful to be playing, grateful to have our people in the stands," said Summit girls basketball coach Lynette Landis. "I think Monday we will have our full team available. We haven't had that."

Ridgeview won its second game over Summit in as many days Friday evening, beating the Storm 49-43 to start the season after its state tournament campaign more than a year ago with two wins.

Faye Davis led the Ravens with 21 points while fellow senior Paige Pentzer jumped-started the ravens with eight of her 10 total points coming in the opening quarter. Sophomore Rose Koehler led the way for Summit with 17 points while Mimi Dioguardi added 11.

"For not playing for over a year, I am super impressed



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

**Ridgeview High School's Faye Davis (44) attempts a shot against Summit High School at Ridgeview on Friday night.**

and I am happy with how it is starting off," said Ridgeview coach Alicia Love follow-

ing the win. "We are missing some kids so it is a good feeling to know that there are

more coming in and we are still playing at a high level."

Friday's game showed how the high school sports world is beginning to sway back to normal for players, coaches, officials and fans who are vaccinated. Vaccinated players did not need to wear masks while playing. All three officials were maskless as well. As were a large portion of the fans in attendance.

Per the guidelines of the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon School Activities Association, people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks at athletic competitions. To be fully vaccinated it takes two weeks after the final dose of the vaccine. High school students have only recently been able to receive the vaccine.

Until then, anyone playing, officiating or attending a high game who has not been vaccinated must still wear a mask.

"It is crazy to see people in the stands not wearing masks, then you look on the court and all the players that are working are wearing them," said Love. "As a coach you have to think of what the kids are doing, their playing time. You don't want the kids passing out because of the mask."

While most of the region's teams have started the final

leg of the high school sports year, two suffered serious setbacks less than a week after starting.

The Bend High girls basketball team has yet to play a game this spring because COVID-19 outbreak sent all but a handful of players into quarantine. The Lava Bears are set to play their first game since March of 2020 on Thursday against Summit.

Thirty miles south in La Pine, Friday brought devastating news to the high school and athletic programs. An outbreak of COVID-19 is forcing the school to shut-down with students returning to distance learning for two weeks. During that time, no activities or athletics can take place until early June.

The Hawks girls' basketball team had already played a game while the wrestling team was coming off a victory in a dual meet over Bend earlier in the week.

"They have had so much taken away," said La Pine athletic director and wrestling coach Aaron Flack. "They are starting to get in the swing of winter sports. It is tough. Had some good things rolling and now we are having to take a step back."

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## Ducks

Continued from B1

However, there is room for improvement for the group. The Ducks didn't face three of the top five teams in the Pac-12 in sacks last season and their run protection is an area of emphasis this offseason.

"We always say five men, one mind," Forsyth said. "You got to be on the same page. Whether I'm making the call the tackle has got to know why is he making that call versus what front. Everybody's got to know the holistic picture of everything if we want to be five minds as one. I think that's a big thing we're trying to emphasize this spring, five guys got to play as one. That's when we're most powerful."

Forsyth is a critical piece for Oregon to improve in those areas in 2021 and also in aiding Jonathan Denis and Jack-

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— Alex Forsyth, Oregon Ducks starting center

son Powers-Johnson while they serve with the second and third-teams.

## Post-spring depth chart

Alex Forsyth: 6-foot-4, 305 pounds, redshirt junior

Jonathan Denis: 6-foot-3, 305 pounds, freshman

Dawson Jaramillo: 6-foot-5, 303 pounds, redshirt sophomore OR

Jackson Powers-Johnson: 6-foot-3, 284 pounds, freshman

## Mario Cristobal's take

"Alex Forsyth, of course as a leader because he's a guy that's started for us. Dawson Jaramillo has done a really good job. ... The young guys still

continuing to shine; Jonathan Denis, I got to single him out because he's jumped in there, him and Marcus Harper, at multiple positions and they are playing hard for playing time."

## Starter

Forsyth is a steady hand on the field and off. Teammates and coaches speak of him with high regard and most importantly, respect.

He's earned that by the way he carries himself. Forsyth puts in the time with film study and preparation.

Offensive line coach Alex Mirabal likes to say his group speaks the language of "Oregon offensive line." Forsyth is

not only fluent, he's a translator for the younger centers in particular and helps them learn the pre-snap identification and calls.

## Backup

It didn't count as such, but Jonathan Denis essentially redshirted last season. This wasn't unexpected and if the season wasn't shortened he likely would've gotten some game action.

An early enrollee in 2020, Denis is the backup on paper entering the offseason. Oregon has depth, particularly on the interior, but if another center had to take over for Forsyth, Denis would be at or near the top of the list of options.

## Mariners

Continued from B1

The Mariners are sure making it hard for people to get behind them — even the ones predisposed to give them every benefit of the doubt. Between the Kevin Mather incident early in spring training, to the season-long hitting drought that has reached embarrassing proportions, to now this maddening team-wide aversion to vaccination.

For a franchise already riding a 19-year playoff drought, it's not the best way to win friends and influence people.

The Mariners are believed to be hovering around 50% of players vaccinated. GM Jerry Dipoto all but predicted last week that the Mariners would eventually have a COVID-19 disruption.

But I'll make the same point as I did two days ago in a column about Seattle's hitting woes in the wake of being no-hit for the second time in 13 days and dropping under .200 as a team: This is not just a Mariners' issue; it's an MLB issue.

On Friday, MLB and the MLBPA in a joint news release gave out some vaccination numbers. Just 14 of the 30 MLB ballclubs have reached the threshold of 85% or more of their Tier 1 individuals being fully vaccinated, which allows for the relaxation of a variety of health and safety protocols. Two more clubs will get there within the next week because enough Tier 1 people received their final vaccine dose.

But that still leaves 14 teams under the threshold, which means that an awful lot of Tier 1 folks have an awful lot of doubts about the vaccine. For the record, Tier 1 consists of not just players, but also managers, coaches, bullpen catchers, team physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, and strength and conditioning coaches.

Overall, according to the news release, 84.4% of all Tier 1 individuals are considered partially or fully vaccinated. It's reasonable to think that out of that group, the players are the ones most resistant. As Gabe Lacques of USA Today wrote, "Virtually every manager has said they will get vaccinated or confirmed they received it. Additionally, non-playing staff have no union and far less leverage than players. If you're a relatively fungible coach, assistant athletic trainer or media relations rep, do you want to be the person who infected a team and disrupted a \$10 billion industry?"

The Mariners have done all they can to persuade players to get vaccinated. At the major league level, they brought in two leading physicians from the University of Washington school of medicine, Dr. Vin Gupta and Dr. Santiago Neme, to provide information to Tier 1 groups and answer questions. At the minor league level, they made it known that vaccinated players would have an advantage for call-ups because they wouldn't have to go through as much protocol.

The minor leaguers bought in. Dipoto said recently that they have a 90-plus-percent vaccination rate in their farm system and nearly 100% at Tacoma.

But the message has not resonated within the major league clubhouse. I'm not going to begin to speculate why this is the case, because that's treading on dangerous ground. But you've no doubt heard all the common sources of vaccination hesitation — most of them debunked by medical experts. Team officials are adamant about not disclosing who is or isn't vaccinated, citing medical privacy guidelines.

Perhaps this latest COVID-19 incident will finally influence more Mariners' players to get vaccinated. As Servais pointed out, the fallout could have been even worse, because some players who interacted with the positive-testing person had been vaccinated and thus avoided the 10-day quarantine at a hotel in San Diego that the others are now subjected to.

When the Washington Nationals had 11 players sidelined by either positive tests or COVID-19 protocols at the outset of the season, causing the start of their season to be delayed for five days, most (but not all) of the players at that point opted to receive vaccines. We'll see if the Mariners are similarly motivated.

I'm not holding my breath.

"I would hope that a few more might jump on board and get the vaccine," Servais said Friday. "But we can only hope. We can't force anybody to do it."

No, they can't. But they also can't force anybody to be happy about it.