

NBA

Blazers ink TV deal with Root Sports

The Portland Trail Blazers' television broadcast is moving to a new home.

After months of negotiation and speculation, the team has agreed to a four-year deal with Root Sports to broadcast Blazers games, ending a 14-year partnership with NBC Sports Northwest.

The deal, which runs through the 2024-25 NBA season, will put Blazers games in more homes than ever, end a long-running public relations nightmare surrounding satellite television distribution and elevate them onto a regional network alongside teams in multiple professional sports leagues.

NBC Sports Northwest had been the Blazers' television home since the start of the 2007-08 season, when the sides signed a mammoth 10-year agreement. But their partnership encountered problems from the beginning because the network — which is owned by Comcast Corp. — could never land distribution deals with satellite providers DirecTV and Dish, leaving thousands of Blazers fans two choices: ditch satellite or ditch their beloved team. That nearly 15-year headache will go away with the move to Root, which is available on cable and both major satellite providers.

As a result, the Blazers' distribution footprint will nearly double, expanding from 1.1 million homes to nearly two million in the Northwest. The Blazers will also continue to produce and control their games and choose their on-air personalities.

— *The Oregonian*

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Is ex-Beavs skipper headed to LSU?

Former Oregon State baseball coach Pat Casey may be headed for LSU to replace retiring coach Paul Mainieri, according to a report.

D1Baseball.com reports it has sources claiming Casey, who won three national titles during his 24-year Oregon State tenure, has emerged as the leading candidate at LSU.

Casey, 62, retired as coach in 2018, and has since worked in Oregon State's athletic department as a special assistant to athletic director Scott Barnes. Casey is currently under contract at OSU through June 2022 and is slated to make \$630,000 during the final year of his deal.

At the time of his retirement press conference, an emotional Casey was conflicted about retiring. He wasn't certain that he was finished as a coach.

Casey was eventually replaced in 2019 by Mitch Canham. Oregon State recently finished its 2021 season when it lost in the Fort Worth Regional championship game to Dallas Baptist on Monday.

LSU won the Eugene Regional on Monday and takes on Tennessee in a best-of-three Super Regional this weekend.

Casey's record at OSU was 900-458-6. Combined with a seven-year stint at George Fox before taking over at OSU in 1995, Casey has won nearly 1,100 games as a college coach. Under Casey, the Beavers won national titles in 2006, 2007 and 2018, and played in six College World Series.

— *The Oregonian*

PREP WRESTLING

Aiming for more state titles

Culver, La Pine prepare for final stretch of wrestling season, including state championship meets

BY BRIAN RATHBONE • The Bulletin

CULVER —

On one hand, Tuesday night felt odd to Culver coach J.D. Alley when La Pine made the drive north to grapple on the mats for a dual meet against the Bulldogs. Graduation had already passed. The school year is winding down and the week earlier temperatures exceeded 90 degrees.

On the other hand, it felt completely normal.

"When we turn off the lights here, that's all it is, is wrestling," Alley said. "Me versus him."

In a bout between two of the best wrestling programs in their respective classifications, the match between Class 2A/1A Culver and 3A La Pine came down to the heavyweights. Wylie Johnson's third-round pin gave the Bulldogs the 48-36 victory over the Hawks.

Culver once again, even in a shortened year, feels primed to make another run at a state title, a feat the program has accomplished 12 times since 2007.

"Are we in as good of shape? No. Are our fundamentals as good? No," said Alley two weeks prior to the 2A/1A state meet, which will be held at Sweet Home High School. "This is our sixth match. Normally we have 18. It is what it is. But I wouldn't trade our team with any team, even the bigger ones, in the state."

The Bulldogs had their streak of six consecutive state titles snapped last year. Finishing second prompted this year's senior class to continue to work at their sport even though the season would extend past their graduation date. They want to hang yet another state championship team portrait in the school's gym.

See *Wrestling* / A6



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Culver's Christian Mattson-McKenzie, left, wrestles LaPine's Dominick Evans during a dual meet at Culver High School on Tuesday night.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



Ross D. Franklin/AP file

Oregon safety Verone McKinley III hits Iowa State running back Breece Hall (28) during the Fiesta Bowl in January in Glendale, Arizona.

McKinley III the unquestioned leader of Ducks' secondary

BY JAMES CREPEA

The Oregonian

Verone McKinley III will enter his third year as a starter as the unquestioned leader of the Oregon secondary.

He is the most experienced of the Oregon Ducks' defensive backs and serves as the proverbial quarterback of the defensive backfield at field safety.

Jordan Happle is a field safety by trade and can also play nickel. Jared Greenfield is the future of the position and could see a major uptick in reps this fall.

Post-spring depth chart

Verone McKinley III: 5-foot-11, 196 pounds, redshirt-sophomore

Jordan Happle: 5-foot-11, 205 pounds, graduate-senior OR

Jared Greenfield: 6-foot, 181 pounds, freshman

Daymon David: 6-foot-1, 178 pounds, freshman

Mario Cristobal's take

"Verone is a tremendous blessing to all of us here and those guys around him in the locker room," said Cristobal.

See *McKinley* / A6

COLLEGE SPORTS

Lawmakers agree NCAA needs NIL help, but how much and when?

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

A federal law governing how college athletes can earn money off their fame and celebrity seems certain to pass — at some point.

There is no real debate among lawmakers on Capitol Hill about whether athletes should be permitted to monetize their name, image and likeness.

"There is broad consensus that Congress should pass a law that grants athletes NIL rights," Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) said Wednesday during a hearing held by the Senate Commerce Committee.

But less than a month before NIL laws go into effect in several states, NCAA President Mark Emmert was back in Washington renewing his plea for help from Congress — help that is unlikely to come as soon as the NCAA would like.

For some lawmakers, federal regulation of college sports should not end with NIL and the time is right to tackle other issues — from long-term health care and educational opportunities for athletes to more uniform and enforceable safety standards.



J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., left, greets NCAA President Mark Emmert, ahead of a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on student-athlete compensation and federal legislative proposals to enable athletes participating in collegiate sports to monetize their name, image, and likeness, at the Capitol in Washington on Wednesday.

"To race to just an NIL bill and not address these injustices is tragic," Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), a former Stanford football player, said before Emmert and five other witnesses testified before the committee.

Wicker wants to take a different approach, calling for a "more focused bill on a faster timeline."

Emmert said the NCAA plans to act on its proposed NIL legislation soon.

"Preferably by the end of the month," Emmert said.

The Division I Council meets June 22-23 and could take action then, but only a federal law can preempt state laws in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and New Mexico that are set to go into effect July 1.

Earlier on Wednesday, Connecticut became the 19th state to pass NIL legislation.

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