

LOCAL
MOUNTAIN
BIKINGBend racers fare
well at Enduro Cup

Youth mountain bikers from Bend competed in the esteemed North American Enduro Cup at Silver Mountain in Kellogg, Idaho, on Saturday and Sunday.

Racers from across the country competed in the event, which included more than 6,000 vertical feet of climbing, followed by a test of speed and technical abilities while descending the slopes at Silver Mountain Resort.

Bend's Tanner Wescott finished third place overall in the Junior Expert Boys 17U class, and Adeline Dishman, also of Bend, finished third place in the Sport Girls 17U class. Her twin brother, Elliott Dishman, finished 19th place in the Sport Boys 17U. At just 11 years old, the Dishmans were the youngest competitors at the North American Enduro Cup.

Wescott plans to compete at the U.S. Mountain Bike Championships in Winter Park, Colorado, next month.

For more information on the North American Enduro Cup, visit naenduro.com.

— Bulletin staff report

COLLEGE
FOOTBALLOSU aims for 100%
stadium capacity

CORVALLIS — Oregon State athletic director Scott Barnes said it is his "hope and wish" that Reser Stadium will be at full capacity this fall for Beavers football games.

Gov. Kate Brown has said once 70% of adults in Oregon have at least one COVID-19 vaccination shot, most safety restrictions will terminate. That includes limits on capacity for spectators at sporting events.

"We're planning to go back to a normal year," Barnes said.

The fan experience, however, has yet to be determined. Roughly three months from the Sept. 11 home opener against Hawaii, Barnes doesn't know if masks will be optional or required. Tailgating, Barnes believes, will be an experience closer to what it was before the pandemic.

Last year, Oregon State was close to selling 14,000 season tickets before the pandemic took over. Barnes said he anticipates more than a 90% renewal rate. He expects the school will sell more than 14,000 season tickets for OSU's six home game schedule.

A breakout season is the fan base's anticipation for coach Jonathan Smith's fourth year at Oregon State. The Beavers, who last played in a bowl game in 2013, are looking to participate in post-season play in 2021.

That's where Barnes' mind is as well.

"A realistic expectation is a bowl game," Barnes said. "Or more."

Barnes believes the OSU program has shown growth over Smith's first three years, to a point where "I don't think you can argue we've been more competitive. ... That competitiveness that we've seen is now going to quantify itself in terms of wins."

— The Oregonian

TOKYO GAMES

NBC banks on Olympics
continuing as expected

BY MEG JAMES
Los Angeles Times

After a yearlong delay, the Tokyo Summer Olympics are just six weeks away — despite concerns about whether it is safe to bring thousands of international athletes and crowds together in the middle of a pandemic.

Medical professionals have warned that they may not be able to handle another surge in COVID-19 cases or contend

with virus variants. As of last month, only about 2% of the Japanese public was fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In recent polls, more than 80% of Japanese residents said they would prefer to have the Summer Games canceled or once again postponed.

But for NBCUniversal, televising the Games is a marquee moment for its TV networks and a huge moneymaking event.

The company had built much of last year's business plan around its coverage of the 2020 Olympics — so NBCUniversal took a hit when those Games were postponed to July 2021. Five years ago, NBCUniversal generated \$1.6 billion in revenue from the Rio de Janeiro Games, including \$1.2 billion in ad revenue, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence's Kagan unit.

See NBC / A7



Tony Gutierrez/AP photo

Simone Biles competes on the uneven bars during the U.S. Gymnastics Championships on June 6 in Fort Worth, Texas. The reigning Olympics gymnastics champion, Biles is set to perform during the first week of the Games, which should help drive viewership interest in the Games.

NBA | COMMENTARY

Underdog?
No, Paul is the
favorite now

Point guard has helped take the Phoenix Suns to levels few thought the team could reach

BY TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

It seems like Chris Paul relishes the notion of being the underdog.

That's why, when the Western Conference semifinals were over and the Phoenix Suns had swept their way into the NBA's final four, he talked about how he felt written off a couple of seasons ago. Why he talked about spending two years on his high school's junior varsity team. How he wasn't, in his words, "necessarily supposed to be here."

It's a neat narrative. But it's not reality.

Fact is, this is exactly where Paul and the Suns are supposed to be. He's still elite at what he does. He's helped take the Suns to levels few thought they could reach in Year 1 of his tenure in the valley. They're headed to the West finals against the Utah Jazz or the Los Angeles Clippers, a matchup that'll start early next week, and there will be no shortage of experts picking the Suns to go from there to the NBA Finals.

"I've always had to grind, and I like that mentality, and that's always been who I've been, and I'm going to stay that way," Paul said. "If you like it, cool. If you don't, it's cool too."

He's a grinder, yes, but make no mistake — he's a wildly successful grinder.

It is true that Paul spent two years on the JV team at West Forsyth High in Clemmons, North Carolina. It's also true that he became a McDonald's All-American and a five-star recruit there before signing with Wake Forest, was a top-five draft pick and then ultimately an NBA rookie of the year.

His is not exactly an out-of-nowhere success story.

And again, to be fair, there were questions whether Paul's realistic window for winning a championship had closed after his hamstring betrayed him and the Houston Rockets couldn't win Games 6 or 7 of the 2018 West finals against Golden State. He was also in Year 1 of a four-year, \$159.7 million contract — the third max deal of his career — at that time, so it's not like everyone had given up on him. He's earned more in NBA salary than anyone other than LeBron James, Kevin Garnett and Kobe Bryant.

Consider this line from Denver coach Michael Malone, offered up Sunday night after Paul scored 37 points to help Phoenix finish off its sweep of the Nuggets, the first 4-0 series win of Paul's career: "Chris Paul could arguably be the greatest point guard of all time."

Paul is no underdog.

The Suns, now they're the underdog story.

See Paul / A7



David Zalubowski/AP

TENNIS | COMMENTARY

Give Djokovic his due as he paves his 'own path'

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Tennis Writer

The question put to Novak Djokovic after he won the French Open for his 19th Grand Slam title, moving within one of rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for the men's record, was whether he ever was resigned to not being able to catch them.

The context: Entering the 2011 season, Federer owned 16 major championships, Nadal nine and Djokovic one.

And while Djokovic began by offering a direct answer Sunday night following his 6-7 (6), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas, saying he didn't consider it "a mission impossible" to bring his trophy collection in line with the other members of the Big Three, what followed was instructive.

"I'll keep on going. I'll keep on chasing," Djokovic said about the Slam standings that everyone has been tracking for a while now as each surpassed

the benchmark of 14 established by Pete Sampras.

In the very next breath, Djokovic added: "At the same time, I'll keep on paving my own path, which is my own authentic path. We — all three of us — have our own journeys, and that's it."

So true. So important to remember. Because what Djokovic seemed to be saying was: Judge me on my own merits. Look at what I am accomplishing. Let's not worry

about the Grand Slam total. Please don't just view me in comparison to Federer and Nadal.

He's right. Give him his due. Instead of analyzing the considerable amount of achievement attained by Djokovic through the prism of how he stacks up with the other two, take stock of his path.

This is not to imply that Djokovic's reputation or legacy would suffer when the trio is grouped together.

If anything, the exact opposite is true. Consider:

- His semifinal win over Nadal at Roland Garros increased Djokovic's lead in their series to 30-28, and he leads Federer head-to-head, too, 27-23.

- Djokovic is the only man to beat 13-time champion Nadal twice at the French Open and is 3-1 against eight-time champion Federer at Wimbledon (3-0 in finals, including saving championship points in 2019).

See Djokovic / A7