

COLLEGE SPORTS

Oregon NIL bill back to House floor

The proposed legislation to permit college athletes in Oregon to be compensated for their name, image and likeness starting on July 1 is inching towards becoming law.

Senate Bill 5, which passed in the state Senate earlier this month, is headed back to the House floor with a do-pass recommendation following a 7-0 vote in favor after a work session in the House Rules committee on Wednesday.

"I just want to call out the testimony from Mr. (Jaydon) Grant, the (Oregon State) student-athlete, (Tuesday)," House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland) said. "Admire his advocacy and his willingness to engage in this work. I think this is an important thing for us to do."

If the House passes the bill — it passed 23-6 with one excused in the Senate — SB 5 will need to be signed by Gov. Kate Brown to go into effect immediately, with Oregon college athletes able to earn NIL compensation beginning July 1, the same day similar laws are to go into effect in six other states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas.

University of Oregon president Michael Schill, Oregon State University interim president Becky Johnson and Portland State president Stephen Percy, issued a joint letter to the House Rules committee in support of the bill.

Meanwhile, efforts continue from federal lawmakers to craft a national NIL bill with the goal of passing it before July 1, with numerous different proposals being circulated.

The U.S. Senate Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on "NCAA Student Athletes and NIL Rights" Thursday morning, its second hearing in as many weeks related to the issue.

— The Oregonian

NBA

Hornets' Ball rookie of the year

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — LaMelo Ball thought he would become NBA Rookie of the Year long before he joined the league.

That belief became a reality Wednesday night as Ball's versatility as a passer, scorer and rebounder earned the Charlotte Hornets point guard the honor despite missing 21 games with a fractured wrist.

Ball was the runaway winner, receiving 84 of the 99 first-place votes to beat out finalists Anthony Edwards from the Minnesota Timberwolves and Tyrese Haliburton from the Sacramento Kings. Edwards received the other 15 first-place votes.

"Way before the league when I was playing basketball and they were talking about the NBA stuff, that is when I knew when I'm a rookie that is one of the accomplishments I can get," Ball said.

Ball led all rookies with averages of 6.1 assists and 1.6 steals per game and was third with 15.7 points and 5.9 rebounds.

He made an immediate impact with the Hornets, becoming the youngest player in the NBA history to have a triple-double with 22 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists in just his 10th career game.

— Associated Press

WEST COAST LEAGUE BASEBALL

Looking for more wins

Bend Elks are starting to swing the bat well, but victories have been hard to come by in the WCL

BY BRIAN RATHBONE • The Bulletin

With the recent roster turnover on the Bend Elks, the bats showed signs of life — especially at the top of the order.

Sam Linscott, Bryce Boettcher and Chase Engelhard, all new additions to the Elks lineup, were key in the squad's best game at the plate through the first seven games of West Coast League play. The 1-2-3 hitters collected six of the team's 10 hits, scored five of the eight runs and drove in six runs in the Elks' 9-8 loss to the Ridgefield Raptors Tuesday night at Vince Genna Stadium.



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Bend Elks' Sam Linscott gets a hit during Tuesday night's 9-8 loss to Ridgefield at Vince Genna Stadium in Bend.

"I thought they swung the bat well, I really did," said Elks coach Kyle Nobach. "I thought they really competed at the plate."

While Boettcher and Engelhard both made their Elks debut on Tuesday at Vince Genna Stadium, Linscott has been off to a hot start at the plate in his four games since joining the team.

"The kid can really swing it," Nobach said.

A Lewis-Clark State College outfielder, Linscott has three multi-hit games and has scored six runs since joining the squad last week. He credits his hot start to

working with assistant coach Tyler Graham.

"He made a small adjustment in my setup, and it is helping me see the ball a little further," Linscott said. "He shortened up my stance; I was striding too far. It has been working. Everything is clicking right now — I'm trying not to think about it too much."

While the offense strung together its best run output over the past two games — 15, compared to eight combined in the five games prior — an old baseball adage has rang true for the Elks.

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TRACK & FIELD



Charlie Neibergall/AP file

English Gardner runs in a women's 200-meter dash preliminary heat at the U.S. Championships in 2019, in Des Moines, Iowa. Gardner is one of 33 current or former members of the Oregon track and field program entered in the Olympic trials.

Dozens of Ducks competing at the U.S. Olympic Trials

BY CHRIS HANSEN

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

The most decorated women's sprinter in Oregon history has no plans to purchase food inside the stadium this week during the U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials at Hayward Field.

English Gardner is hoping her ID alone will get her anything she needs, just one of the perks of having a concession stand named after you in the new stadium.

"Hopefully that will get me a free meal," joked Gardner about stopping by English's Garden this coming week. "This is my first time at the new stadium so I'm super excited."

Gardner won't be the only Duck competing in front of a friendly and familiar crowd at the Olympic Trials, which begin Friday and run through June 27.

There are 33 current or former members of the Oregon track and field program entered in 39 events, including five who competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics and three who brought home gold medals — Matthew Centrowitz (1,500 meters), Phyllis Francis (4x400) and Gardner (4x100).

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GOLF

A return to Torrey and prime time for U.S. Open on the West Coast

BY DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

SAN DIEGO — The USGA is starting to escape that reputation of an East Coast bias for the U.S. Open.

The return to Torrey Pines for the 121st U.S. Open means another prime-time show along the Eastern seaboard, and that's happening with greater frequency for the U.S. Open.

It wasn't until the 48th edition of this national championship that it ventured farther west than Colorado, with Ben Hogan winning at Riviera in Los Angeles in 1948. That was the start of eight U.S. Opens in California over a span of 50 years.

The next 25 years include just as many U.S. Opens on the West Coast, which includes Los Angeles Country Club in 2023.

One appeal is being able to go prime time, with the weekend finish anticipated for 6 p.m. Pacific on Saturday and 5 p.m. on Sunday.

"It's always good to have a West Coast site leading into the next TV negotiations or coming out of it," former USGA executive director David Fay said.

The start of a 12-year agreement with Fox (since returned to NBC) was 2015 at Chambers Bay south of Seattle. The next TV contract would start in 2027 at Pebble Beach.

And then there's the weather.

"I've been looking at the forecast," Jordan Spieth said before he even arrived at Torrey Pines. "Cooler nights, 75 degrees in the day and no rain. They can do whatever they want."

As comfortable as it sounds, that's not necessarily comfortable for the players. All indications from three days of practice is the USGA has the South course right where it wants it, with little chance of something unex-



Jae C. Hong/AP

Rory McIlroy plays his shot from the second tee during a practice round of the U.S. Open Golf Championship on Wednesday at Torrey Pines Golf Course in San Diego.

pected causing the wrong kind of havoc.

Missing the fairways is enough of a problem. Of greater concern might be missing the green. Wilco Nienaber, the big basher from South Africa, found that out behind the fifth green Wednesday. All he could do was chop at it to get it up in the air and move it forward, and then watch it roll some 25 feet by the hole.

Sure, it's tough. That's what players have come to expect from the U.S. Open. And that works anywhere in the country, East and West, or somewhere in between.

"It's fairways and greens," Rory McIlroy said. "It's a proper U.S. Open test."

McIlroy arrived later than usual for the U.S. Open, mainly because he played the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines in January. It's not the same — not even close — though he has a familiarity of where the ball should be going, where not to miss.

His hope is not to be too slow out of the gates. McIlroy has gone seven years since he last won a major in the 2014 PGA Championship, a stretch too long for that amount of

talent.

In his last three majors, two of them the Masters, he has started 75-76-75.

"Probably just putting a little too much pressure on myself, playing too carefully, being a little tentative," McIlroy said. "I think that sort of sums it up."

McIlroy at least has won recently, at Quail Hollow. Dustin Johnson hasn't won in four months. He felt the pieces start coming together last week in South Carolina, right up until a triple bogey on the 16th hole Sunday that dropped him out of the top 10.

"If I can drive it well, I feel like I'm going to have a really good week," Johnson said.

The course, as always, figures to take the stage even from the silly feud between Bryson DeChambeau and Brooks Koepka.

Mike Davis, the retiring CEO of the USGA, walked the course over the weekend and was reminded of how tough it played in 2008. Tiger Woods and Rocco Mediate finished at 1-under 283, with Woods beating him in 19 holes of a playoff.

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