

LOCAL GOLF

Swann, of Tokatee, wins Oregon Open

SISTERS — Amateur Kennedy Swann of Tokatee Golf Club (McKenzie Bridge) won the Oregon Open Invitational Thursday by two strokes over PGA professional and defending champion Brady Sharp of Wine Valley GC (Walla Walla, Wash.) and Mason Koch of Fairwood G&CC (Renton, Wash.).

Swann is the first woman to ever win the tournament, which dates back to 1905.

The 54-hole Oregon Open was held Tuesday through Thursday at the Glaze Meadow course at Black Butte Ranch.

Isaac Buerger, of Eagle Crest Resort, finished tied for sixth, four strokes back of Swann. Buerger led the tournament after day 2, but shot a 75 on Thursday, while Swan carded a 69 to take the win.

In addition to the individual competition, the Oregon Open included 48 teams competing in a 36-hole best-2-of-4 net team event and pro-am four-ball.

A team including PGA professional David Phay, of Whidbey Golf Club (Oak Harbor, Wash.), PGA professional David Castleberry and amateur Matt Kline, of Harbour Pointe GC (Mukilteo, Wash.) and amateur Doug Pierce (Whidbey Golf Club) won the net team competition. They fired an impressive 34-under par.

Winning the four-ball team competition was Phay and Pierce, with a two-day total of 19-under par.

— Bulletin staff report

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Pac-12 wants auto bids on expansion

ROSEMONT, Ill. — College Football Playoff expansion took another step forward Friday as the full group of commissioners who manage the postseason system wrapped up two days of digging into a plan for a 12-team format that would revamp the national championship.

The first debate about what the final version of a new playoff will look like has emerged: The Pac-12 is pushing for each Power Five conference to receive an automatic berth.

Expect a lot more negotiating to come.

Last week, the CFP unveiled a plan to expand from four to 12 teams. Six spots would be reserved for the highest-ranked conference champions, but no league would automatically qualify. The other six teams would be chosen at-large from the selection committee's rankings.

Incoming Pac-12 Commissioner George Kliavkoff, whose represents the only Power Five conference to publicly support playoff expansion, left his first CFP meeting encouraged.

"The good news is everyone who's on this conference committee supports expansion. So we're aligned on that," said Kliavkoff, who attended the meeting along with outgoing Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott.

But the Pac-12 also made clear what it wants in the early going: In a statement, Scott said: "The Pac-12 supports expansion of the CFP and believes that the Autonomy Five champions should annually qualify for the CFP."

— Associated Press

U.S. OLYMPIC TRACK AND FIELD TRIALS

Bend's Rebecca Mehra advances to 1,500-meter semifinals

BULLETIN STAFF REPORT

EUGENE — Bend's Rebecca Mehra finished fourth in her heat to advance to the semifinals of the women's 1,500 meters at the U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials at Hayward Field on Friday.

Mehra will race in the semifinals on Saturday evening. If she finishes in the top five in

her semifinal or as one of the next two fastest runners by time, she will advance to the 1,500 finals, set for Monday evening.

The top three runners in Monday's final qualify for the U.S. Olympic team for the Tokyo Games later this summer.



Mehra

Mehra, who runs for the Littlewing Athletics team in Bend that is sponsored by Oiselle, finished with a time of 4 minutes, 13.71 seconds. She finished fourth out of 10 runners in the second of three heats on Friday.

Twenty-four of the 28 entered runners in the women's 1,500 advanced to Saturday's semifinals.

Jenny Simpson finished with the fastest time, winning her heat in 4:11.34.

Nikki Hiltz was the next fastest in 4:11.42, and Shannon Osika was third-fastest in 4:11.59.

Mehra, who ran collegiately for Stanford and moved to Bend in 2018, is also entered in the 800, which is scheduled for Thursday.

On Sunday evening, Bend's Mel Lawrence, one of Mehra's teammates on Littlewing, is scheduled to run in the first round of the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase.

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Saints march to state tourney

Class 1A Trinity Lutheran goes undefeated in league, now prepares for state title run

BY BRIAN RATHBONE • The Bulletin

For the third straight year, Trinity Lutheran will make the trip to Baker to play in the Class 1A boys basketball state tournament next week.

The Saints completed an undefeated Mountain Valley League season Thursday night with a 49-45 comeback win over Rogue Valley Adventist Academy. As they begin their march toward a state title, their coach hopes they finally put a full game together.

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"We haven't practiced in a couple of weeks," said Kyle Gilbert, the Trinity Lutheran coach. "Through that we haven't been able to work through stuff so it has been a little roller coaster-ish. I was proud of the way they continued to battle back and continued to rally. Some good things are happening, we are just looking to put it together into one big game."

When Trinity Lutheran (7-0 MVL, 8-4 overall) takes the court Monday night against Falls City at Powder Valley High School, the Saints will hardly resemble the team that made the past two trips to the tournament.

Gone is one of the state's most prolific scorers in Matthew Eidler, as are previous seniors Gideon Schippers, Cash Niemeyer and Abe Cliff — key pieces in the Saints' run to the state title game in 2019.

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Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Trinity Lutheran's Scooty Gilbert (34) drives past Rogue Valley's Alex Wiggers (40) to score during the first quarter Thursday night in Bend.

GOLF

Richard Bland, Russell Henley share lead in a U.S. Open that is really open

BY DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Open prides itself on being the most open of all majors with some 9,000 players from all walks of golf having a chance to compete.

Open, indeed.

The weekend at Torrey Pines features major champions and major contenders, players who are unknown or unheralded, all of them still within reach of that U.S. Open trophy. Nine shots separated first from last.

It starts with Richard Bland, a 48-year-old from England who finally won on the European Tour last month in his 478th try. Bland had a 4-under 67 and walked off Torrey Pines with his name atop the leaderboard in only his fourth major. His first one was 23 years ago.

Russell Henley had a chance to build a two-shot lead Friday afternoon when he stood over an 18-foot birdie putt on the par-5 ninth. He missed, and then watched his 2-foot par putt spin out of the cup. That gave him a 70 to join Bland 5-under 137.

They will be in the final group Saturday, with plenty of heavy hitters behind them and getting far more attention. Former British Open cham-



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

Richard Bland hits from the second fairway during the second round of the U.S. Open on Friday at Torrey Pines Golf Course in San Diego.

pion Louis Oosthuizen (71) and Matthew Wolff (68), the U.S. Open runner-up last year at Winged Foot, were one shot behind.

Another shot back were two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson (67) and Jon Rahm (70), a past winner at Torrey Pines and former world No. 1.

Defending champion Bryson DeChambeau and his buddy, Brooks Koepka, were at even par, only five shots behind.

They were on the same score. They will not be in the same group.

Also at even-par 142 was Justin Thomas, who had a 68.

"Most times if I'm five back going into a Saturday, I need to probably make 12, 15-plus birdies on the weekend to hang in there," Thomas said. "But this is a U.S. Open. It's a little bit different."

Henley doesn't know much about Bland except that he

pays a little attention to golf worldwide and recalled hearing about his British Masters win to end his long quest for a victory.

"I'm sure he knows nothing about me, too," said Henley, a three-time winner on the PGA Tour who has played 26 majors without a top 10.

Bland's victory in the British Masters made him the oldest first-time winner in European Tour history. That also was the start of a three-tournament series for the leading 10 players to get into the U.S. Open. Travel restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic eliminated the 36-hole qualifier in England.

This is only his fourth major — twice at Royal Birkdale in 1998 and 2017, once at Bethpage Black for the U.S. Open in 2009 — and he came in on a high note.

"A lot of guys have a lot more on the CV than I do," Bland said. "But I'm here to compete and give it everything I've got."

Oosthuizen, coming off a runner-up finish in the PGA Championship, finished with two pars in the morning to cap off a 67 to share the first-round lead with Henley. He didn't get any lower in the second round and shot 71, but was right in the mix.

So was Wolff, a surprise only because he lost all joy playing golf after such a hot start out of Oklahoma State that he walked away from the game for two months, even missing a major at the PGA Championship. He returned to the toughest test in golf and shot 70-68, two-putting for eagle on the last hole.

"It's awesome that I came out here and played well, but I think more importantly, I'm just getting closer to being more comfortable and being happy and enjoying it," Wolff said.

"I feel like I've done a very good job of enjoying it, but I've still got a long way to go to keep a level head. Like I said, I'll probably be working on the same thing that I'm working on now for the rest of my career."

Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy were headed the wrong direction. Johnson, who missed the cut in the Masters and PGA Championship, dropped to 4 over until a late rally gave him a 73 and a spot in the weekend. He was seven behind. McIlroy had to birdie two holes down the stretch for a 73. He was six behind.

The 36-hole lead at Torrey Pines in the 2008 U.S. Open was 3-under 139.

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