

LOCAL MOUNTAIN BIKING

Bone Crusher race is set for Madras

The Bone Crusher XCO mountain bike race is set for the Madras East Hills Trails on April 23-24.

The event has expanded to two days of racing in a World Cup-style format with short track on Day 1, and an XCO race on Day 2.

XCO (cross-country Olympic) is a race format that substitutes one massive lap for quick, spectator- and ability-friendly laps that total 1½ hours of racing. The Madras East Hills Trails are fast, flowy and packed with jumps, berms and wood features. The course is do-able for juniors and novices, and spectators are encouraged.

Short-track racing is scheduled for April 23, set for a 1-mile course that features 50% singletrack and 50% fire roads. The race is just 20 minutes long, and will favor racers who are willing to attack each lap and push the pace at every turn.

The XCO course for April 24 follows a lap format, and is 5.8 miles for Category 1/2 racers and 4.7 miles for Category 3 racers.

For more information or to register, visit www.bonecrusherxco.com.

Located just east of Madras near Juniper Hill Park, the Madras East Hills trail system includes 14 miles of mountain biking trails and 6 miles of horse-back-riding trails.

— Bulletin staff report

LOCAL MULTISPORT

PPP entry fees increase April 19

The 44th edition of the SELCO Pole Pedal Paddle multisport race is set for May 14 on a course from Mount Bachelor to Bend. Entry fees increase on April 19.

Before April 19, entry fees range from \$55 to \$85 per person, depending on race category.

Visit www.pppbend.com to register and for more information. Registration closes on May 11.

The PPP — which includes teams, pairs and individuals racing in alpine skiing, nordic skiing, road cycling, paddling and running on a course from Mt. Bachelor ski area to Bend — was canceled the past two years due to the pandemic.

The PPP stages include an alpine ski down an intermediate run at Mt. Bachelor ski area, an 8-kilometer nordic ski, a 22-mile bike ride from Bachelor to Bend, a 5-mile run along the Deschutes River, a 1.5-mile paddle on the river and a finishing “sprint” of 1 mile.

The new finish area for the PPP will be in the west end grass just south of the Hayden Homes Amphitheater (where the finish was previously staged), near the Hampton Inn. The finish area was moved away from the amphitheater due to construction.

The PPP is the biggest fundraiser for the Bend-based Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation, a nonprofit that serves more than 600 youth athletes in competitive alpine and nordic skiing, freeride skiing, freeride snowboarding and cycling.

For more information, contact race organizer Molly Cogswell-Kelley at molly@mbsef.org or 541-388-0002.

— Bulletin staff report

GOLF COMMENTARY

A sign of parity



Charlie Riedel/AP

Scottie Scheffler celebrates after winning the 86th Masters Sunday in Augusta, Georgia.

Amazing as what Scottie Scheffler has done, it's too soon to think of him as golf's next dominant player

BY DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Start with Scottie Scheffler winning four times in two months. Now consider the money.

His PGA Tour earnings in his past six tournaments — dating to his first victory in the Phoenix Open on Feb. 13 — come to \$8,872,200.

With consideration to purse increases and the Tour Championship no longer offering official prize money, Scheffler has made more in two months than what would have won the PGA Tour money title in four of the past eight seasons.

Golf has not seen a stretch this torrid since Jason Day rattled off four wins in six starts, including the PGA Championship, in the summer of 2015.

And he was not even the best player that year: Jordan Spieth's five wins that year included two majors and the FedEx Cup.

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MOTOR SPORTS | NASCAR CUP SERIES



James H. Wallace/Richmond Times-Dispatch via AP

Ty Gibbs celebrates in victory lane after winning a NASCAR Xfinity Series race April 2 in Richmond, Virginia.

Logano watches Ty Gibbs scrap with veteran bemusement

BY JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

Joey Logano has had his share of conflict during a career that began with his appointment as “Sliced Bread” upon arrival.

He was 18 and overhyped, evidenced by a nickname that likened him to the “greatest thing since ... sliced bread.” Eager to prove himself and determined not to be pushed around, Logano scrapped with just about all of NASCAR's biggest stars.

He's had a beef with Kevin Harvick, as well as former Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Denny Hamlin and Kyle Busch. Tony Stewart, the guy he replaced at Gibbs, called Logano “nothing but a little rich kid” during their spat, and Matt Kenseth was suspended two races for deliberately knocking Logano out of championship-contention during their contentious flare-up.

And so it is with some bemusement that Logano watches from afar as Ty Gibbs, the 19-year-old heir apparent at the Gibbs organization, is struggling to find his own footing with three incidents in the past six Xfinity Series races.

“I have a lot more grace for seeing that stuff after going through it myself,” Logano said. “Do I agree with the way it went down? No, I don't. Have I done that type of thing before? Yeah, I have. Am I proud of it? No, not at all. But I learned from it at least.”

Ty Gibbs this year hasn't helped his bid to overcome the perception he's only advanced to NASCAR's second-tier Xfinity Series because his grandfather owns the team. Gibbs has the best car on track each week and it shows — he has three wins through eight races, is ranked second in the standings and has led nearly a quarter of the laps completed to date — but he's aggressive and it exploded last weekend at Martinsville Speedway.

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NBA

Trail Blazers looking ahead to a bright future after a dismal season

BY AARON FENTRESS
The Oregonian

Portland Trail Blazers interim general manager Joe Cronin decided about four months ago that the best course of action for the franchise was to make moves and decisions that would create flexibility and garner a high draft pick to retool the roster around superstar Damian Lillard.

That meant losing. A lot. And badly.

It was NBA tanking at its finest.

But with the 16th worst season now in the rearview mirror, Cronin and coach Chauncey Billups are on the clock to deliver fans a winning product. They must prove that trading away franchise cornerstone C.J. McCollum and enduring blowout losses on a nearly nightly basis for six weeks was worth the suffering for fans, many of whom paid top dollar for an NBA-level product.

On Monday, both men faced reporters at the team's exit interviews to discuss the end of a season that saw the Blazers (27-55) finish with the sixth-worst record in the NBA. And as they broached the future, they did so with an air of confidence that a season of misery could lead to something better in the future.

“I feel good about it,” Billups said. “I think that we have an opportunity that I don't think that this organization has ever had. To be able to step it back just this one season and be able to get pretty good, pretty fast.”

The NBA has evolved into a league that occasionally rewards losing. Bad teams net higher draft picks, providing a chance for struggling franchises to score a future All-Star. The Blazers chased



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian

The Portland Trail Blazers are hoping to retool their roster around star Damian Lillard.

that path in December, after Lillard was sidelined with a severe abdominal injury and McCollum suffered a collapsed lung, sending the team to a 2-11 record with no chance to contend.

By the Feb. 10 trade deadline, McCollum, Norman Powell and Robert Covington were gone, Lillard had undergone surgery and was shut down for the season, and the Blazers had decided that losing would be more beneficial than fighting for a berth into the play-in round.

Although this strategy might ultimately pay off, it doesn't mean Cronin always felt at ease with the path he chose.

“I still feel uncomfortable about it,” he said. “We have a really competitive group. We didn't want to lose ball games. Sometimes it's necessary. Sometimes you have to go with your youth movement. ... This, theoretically is a really quick step backward. We're not looking at two, three, four years of this. So, that makes it easier. But as far as the discomfort, the willingness to accept losing, that was really hard for us and continues to be.”

The path to simply becoming competitive again won't require much. After all, most of the crew that finished the season 2-21 will not be in the regular rotation next season.

Lillard is on the road to a full recovery and has already spoken about how much better his body feels after sitting out the last three months of the season. Josh Hart, Justise Winslow and Nassir Little established themselves as legitimate rotation pieces. Plus, Anfernee Simons and Jusuf Nurkic, at their best, had the Blazers winning games without Lillard before the All-Star break.

While Nurkic and Simons are not under contract for next season, the Blazers have prioritized re-signing both.

“He is the type of player that we definitely want to build around,” Cronin said of Nurkic, who will be an unrestricted free agent.

Simons will become a restricted free agent, and although Cronin said he expects the guard to receive offers from other teams, the Blazers plan to be proactive in locking him in with a long-term extension.

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