

Sports

Thursday, February 26, 2015

★★★

■ **Tyler Ulis** (right) and No. 1 Kentucky used a strong surge in the second half to defeat Fallou Ndoye and Mississippi State on Wednesday night in Starkville, Miss. **3C**



MARK WEBER/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

The numbers say the start of University of Memphis coach Josh Pastner's career ranks among the best of all time.

Start to Pastner's career ranks among top 10

■ **Coach says criticisms show passion of fans**

By **Jason Smith**
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When University of Memphis coach Josh Pastner was hired to replace John Calipari in 2009 at the age of 31 and with zero head coaching experience, it's doubtful anyone would have predicted that six years later Pastner would be one of the top 10 winningest coaches in NCAA Division 1 men's basketball history over their first six seasons as a head coach.

It's an elite list that includes former Butler coach Brad Stevens, Pittsburgh's Jamie Dixon, Gonzaga's Mark Few, former Kansas and current North Carolina coach Roy Williams and VCU's Shaka Smart.

With the Tigers' next victory, Pastner, who has 147 career wins entering today's 8 p.m. game against No. 21-ranked SMU at FedExForum, will tie Ohio State's Thad Matta and Michigan State's Tom Izzo for ninth on the list. He'll also tie

See **PASTNER, 3C**

MEMPHIS VS. (21) SMU

When, where: 8 p.m. today, FedExForum
TV, radio: ESPN2 (live), WKNO (replay at midnight); WREC-AM 600, WKBQ-FM 93.5

Play ball? Weather (not) permitting

■ **Tigers shuffle games**

By **Phil Stukenborg**
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The icicles clinging to the padded railing in the dugout at FedExPark tell part of the story. The soggy outfield grass and ice-laden warning track offer further evidence.

While winter's recent grip has been a nuisance for most, it has been particularly disruptive for Mid-South college baseball programs attempting to play games during February, the traditional opening month of the season. The University of Memphis has spent the past two weeks either moving games to avoid wintry weather, rescheduling them, or forging through and taking its swings at fastballs and snowflakes.

Such was the scenario last weekend in Conway, Arkansas, where the Tigers were able to play only one game of a scheduled three-game weekend. The U of M beat Central Arkansas, 5-2, Sunday in a game whose final innings were played in a steady snowfall, temperatures in the mid-30s and a brisk north wind.

"It was tough, it was tough," said Tiger coach Daron Schoenrock. "We played the last two innings in snow. It wasn't snow flurries."

This week, the Tigers were scheduled to play their home opener Tuesday at FedExPark against Mississippi Valley State. Weather concerns forced them to move it to Wednesday before predictions of snow on Wednesday led Schoenrock to reschedule the game for what he hopes are more suitable conditions in late April.

Even this weekend's three-game, non-

See **WEATHER, 2C**

SACRAMENTO 102, MEMPHIS 90

HARD FOUGHT

Kings get under Grizzlies' skin to earn win but Memphis earns 2-1 record on West Coast trip



PHOTOS BY RICH PEDRONCELLI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sacramento Kings forward Reggie Evans and Grizzlies guard Tony Allen battle for the ball during the first quarter on Wednesday night in Sacramento, Calif. The Grizzlies fell to the Kings 102-90 but finished their 3-game West Coast road trip 2-1.

By **Ronald Tillery**
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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Grizzlies ran hot and cold on the last leg of a three-game West Coast trip.

They were mostly hot at Sacramento Kings center DeMarcus Cousins and spent too much time being cold offensively in a 102-90 loss Wednesday night in Sleep Train Arena.

After winning back-to-back games at Portland and against the Los Angeles Clippers earlier in the week, Memphis had a nine-game winning streak against Sacramento end.

The Griz mostly trailed through three quarters but clawed back and took a 77-76 advantage into the fourth. However, a scoring drought that lasted nearly five minutes to start the final frame did in the Griz.

This sequence summed up the fourth for Memphis: Tony Allen left a layup attempt short at the rim and the Kings grabbed the rebound. Rudy Gay then buried a 3-pointer that put the Kings ahead 93-83 with 4:51 left in the game.

Memphis' deficit was 14 points with 2:13 remaining.

Gay led the Kings with 28 points.



Grizzlies point guard Mike Conley had 12 points and seven assists in a losing effort against Ray McCallum and the Sacramento King. McCallum scored 10 points for the Kings.

Cousins, the only player in the NBA averaging at least 20 points and 12 rebounds, finished with 16 points and nine boards.

Zach Randolph's 20 points paced the Griz, who finished shooting 40 percent from the field.

The Griz trailed 62-52 at halftime and it could have been worse if not for Randolph's improbable shot that beat the second-quarter buzzer.

With 0.9 seconds left before the intermission, Randolph heaved the ball 62 feet and banked in a 3-point basket as the crowd gasped in amazement. The referees upheld their ruling on the floor after a vid-

eo review confirmed that Randolph launched the shot before time expired.

Mercifully, the first half ended on a high note for Memphis.

Sacramento led 61-45 after a Ben McLemore slam with about a minute remaining in the second quarter. The Kings shot 56 percent by outscoring the Griz 28-24 in the paint and 14-8 on fast-break points.

The Griz were just as slow and flat-footed on the glass as they were defensively. Cousins and Kings forward Jason Thompson combined for 12 of the Kings' 27 rebounds. Memphis grabbed just 15 rebounds with no player collecting more than three. Randolph and Marc Gasol combined for just three rebounds in the first half.

Tempers flared as the Griz began to mount a charge with 9:49 left in the third quarter.

Randolph and Cousins spared verbally under the basket after Randolph took issue with the contact he received on a layup.

Randolph picked up an offensive foul moments later after he tagged Cousins with two elbows to the jaw while trying to create space for a shot. Randolph became just one of the Kings' many problems after halftime.

Sacramento stumbled around and looked discombobulated against Memphis' aggressive, physical defense. The Griz held the Kings scoreless for the first five minutes of the third period.

Courtney Lee's floater in the lane capped a 13-2 run that gave the Griz their first lead, 65-64, midway through the third.

Harding coaches follow hearts on, off hardwood

By **John Varlas**
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Taking a team to the state tournament is always sweet. But for Harding Academy's Becky and Kevin Starks, this weekend in Nashville will be extra special.

Both Becky, who coaches the girls team, and husband Kevin, who coaches the boys, will have teams in the Division 2-A tournament, which starts today at Allen Arena on the campus of Lipscomb University. And while they've both had plenty of success with their respective teams — Kevin has two state titles and Becky one — it's the first time the two will be at state together.

"It makes it so much more exciting that we can enjoy it at the same time," said Becky, in her eighth year at the school. "It's really a family affair."

Family has been the theme all season for Harding's teams.

BLUECROSS TSSAA DIVISION 2 STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS

When, where: Thursday-Saturday at Lipscomb University's Allen Arena in Nashville.

Opening games for area teams: Thursday, Briarcrest boys vs. Brentwood Academy, 11:30 a.m.; Briarcrest girls vs. Harpeth Hall, 1:15 p.m.; CBHS vs. Ensworth, 2:45 p.m. Friday, Harding girls vs. Franklin Road Academy, 10 a.m.; Harding boys vs. Battle Ground Academy, 11:30 a.m.; Northpoint girls vs. Knoxville Webb, 1:15 p.m.; St. George's boys vs. Davidson Academy, 2:45 p.m.

Saturday's championship schedule: D2-AA girls, 1 p.m.; D2-AA boys, 3 p.m.; D2-A girls, 5:30 p.m.; D2-A boys, 7:30 p.m.

Becky was hospitalized for 18 days during the preseason after being diagnosed with a small fiber neuropathy.

The couple's second child was born on Sept. 19 and Kevin said doctors don't know if the two events were connected. Becky wasn't able to return to the bench until three weeks into the season.

"I'm one of those people that believes when you commit to

something you commit 100 percent, so it was very hard for me to miss," she said. "I've always said I have the best staff in the state and my assistants (Steve Mizell, Gabe Jauregui and Alyssa Hall) have been just incredible."

And so has her team, which will take a 25-6 record into their tournament opener against Franklin Road Academy at 10 a.m. on Friday.

"One day the whole team visited her and the doctor pulled me aside and said, 'Kevin, that's better than any medicine she could have,'" Kevin said. "Family has been such a priority, both the girls and the guys. This has been the hardest four or five months of my life but also the most humbling."

"It's been an inspiration and just shows the healing power of God's love."

While the Lady Lions — who have been anchored all season by the strong play of sophomore Antoinette Lewis and junior Anna Horner — have been solid all year, it's taken a real Cinderella run for Kevin's team to get to this point.

Harding started the season 4-7 but has won seven of its last eight down the stretch, including a 70-61 victory over Knoxville Webb on Monday

See **PREPS, 2C**

In the news

Chemist for Biogenesis sentenced

A chemist working out of his suburban South Florida garage has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for supplying banned performance-enhancing substances to a clinic whose customers included professional baseball players and other athletes.

A Miami federal judge imposed the sentence Wednesday on **Paulo Berezuk**, who pleaded guilty in December to conspiracy to distribute testosterone. Berezuk faces deportation to his native Brazil after prison.

Investigators said Berezuk was the key drug source for **Anthony Bosch**, who ran the now-closed Biogenesis of America clinic that provided steroids to baseball players and other athletes. One customer was New York Yankees star **Alex Rodriguez**, who recently apologized to fans for his actions.

The doping scandal resulted in suspensions last year for 14 professional baseball players and criminal convictions for Bosch and others.

AUTOS

McLaren says **Fernando Alonso** has left the hospital after being treated following a crash in Formula One testing. The Spanish driver escaped serious injury but was airlifted to a hospital for precautionary checks after his McLaren hit a wall at the Barcelona-Catalunya circuit on Sunday. In a statement released Wednesday, McLaren said Alonso has now returned to his family's home in Spain to continue his recuperation.

COLLEGES

Arkansas coach **Bret Bielema** has hired former Oklahoma State assistant **Jemal Singleton** as his new running backs coach and special teams coordinator. Singleton, who spent the last four seasons with the Cowboys, replaces **Joel Thomas**, who left for the New Orleans Saints earlier this month.

GOLF

Quail Hollow Club has been selected to host the Presidents Cup in 2021, the biennial competition between the United States and players from every other country except Europe. Previous U.S. sites were in Virginia, Ohio and California. Quail Hollow will also host the PGA Championship in 2017. The Presidents Cup is going to South Korea this year, and then Liberty National in New Jersey in 2017.

NFL

A person with knowledge of the negotiations confirms the Denver Broncos and **Peyton Manning's** representatives are discussing ways to revise his contract and give the team more flexibility in free agency. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the talks. Manning, who has made more money than any player in pro football history, is due to make another \$19 million in both 2015 and '16, and his salary cap number for next season is \$21.2 million.

The Detroit Lions have released running back **Reggie Bush**. After joining the team as an unrestricted free agent from Miami in 2013, Bush started 23 of 25 games and had 299 carries for 1,303 yards and six touchdowns. He also had 94 catches for 759 yards and three touchdowns. In nine NFL seasons, Bush has started 94 of 116 games and has 1,266 carries for 5,465 yards and 35 touchdowns.

Jacoby Jones was cut Tuesday by the Baltimore Ravens. The wide receiver and kicker returner was a major contributor to the Ravens' Super Bowl championship. The 30-year-old played three seasons with Baltimore after a five-year run with Houston.

NHL

Sean Monahan scored a power-play goal 35 seconds into the third period and the visiting Calgary Flames beat the New Jersey Devils 3-1 to move into a Western Conference wild-card spot. **Curtis Glencross** scored late in the second period to tie it 1-1. **T.J. Brodie** added a short-handed, empty-net goal in the final minute, and **Karri Ramo** made 26 saves as the Flames snapped a three-game losing streak. **Mike Cammalleri** scored his fifth goal in four games for the Devils, who had a season-high, four-game winning streak snapped. **Cory Schneider** made 23 saves, giving up two goals in a 49-second span bridging the second and third periods.

TENNIS

Tomas Berdych became the eighth active ATP player to post 500 career wins when he beat **Simone Bolelli** of Italy 7-6 (7), 5-7, 6-0 at the Dubai Championships on Wednesday in the United Arab Emirates. "It feels great," Berdych said. "I need to make sure I keep my body fresh so I can make another 500." Third-seeded **Andy Murray** also moved into the quarterfinals off of a swift 6-0, 6-2 win over **Joao Sousa** of Portugal.

JURISPRUDENCE

A shell casing found in a car rented by ex-New England Patriots player **Aaron Hernandez** and at the scene of a killing near his home were fired from the same weapon, a state police sergeant testified Wednesday. Five shell casings were found near where **Odin Lloyd** was shot to death June 17, 2013, in an industrial park not far from the Hernandez home in North Attleborough. An employee of a rental car business has previously testified that she found one shell casing under the driver's seat of Hernandez's rented Nissan Altima, which he returned the day of the killing. Police later found that shell casing in a trash bin at the business. **Sgt. Stephen Walsh** testified Wednesday that his examination determined all six .45-caliber casings were fired by the same gun.

From Our Press Services

On the air

TELEVISION

Basketball: Houston at Temple, CBS Sports, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Nebraska at Ohio State, ESPN, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Vanderbilt at Tennessee, ESPN2, 6 p.m.
Basketball: High Point at UNC Asheville, ESPNU, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Virginia women at North Carolina, FSTN, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Florida women at Alabama, SEC Network, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Miss. St. women at South Carolina, SportSouth, 6 p.m.
Basketball: UTEP at Louisiana Tech, FS1, 7 p.m.
Basketball: NBA, Golden State at Cleveland, TNT, 7 p.m.
Basketball: Tennessee Tech at Morehead State, CBS Sports, 8 p.m.
Basketball: Arizona at Colorado, ESPN, 8 p.m.
Basketball: SMU at Memphis, ESPN2, 8 p.m.
Basketball: Rutgers at Purdue, ESPNU, 8 p.m.
Basketball: Tennessee women at Georgia, SEC Network, 8 p.m.
Basketball: Auburn women at Vanderbilt, SportSouth, 8 p.m.
Basketball: Arizona State at Utah, FS1, 9:30 p.m.
Basketball: NBA, Oklahoma City at Phoenix, TNT, 9:30 p.m.
Basketball: San Diego at Gonzaga, ESPN2, 10 p.m.
Golf: PGA, The Honda Classic, Golf, 1 p.m.
Golf: Honda LPGA Thailand, Golf, midnight
Golf: European PGA, Joburg Open, delayed, Golf, 4 a.m. (Friday)
Hockey: NHL, Minnesota at Nashville, NBC Sports, 7:30 p.m.
Soccer: UEFA Europa League, Liverpool at Besiktas, FS1, noon
Soccer: UEFA Europa League, Young Boys at Everton, FS1, 2 p.m.

RADIO

Basketball: Vanderbilt at UT, WMFS 680 AM/92.9 FM, 6 p.m.
Basketball: SMU at Memphis, WREC-AM 600, WKQB-FM 93.5, 7 p.m.

This listing is compiled using information supplied by stations and networks, and is subject to late changes without notice.

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McIlroy looking to keep momentum to the Masters

Associated Press

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Fans stood three-deep and formed a corridor from the 18th green at PGA National as they tried to get an autograph, a picture or even a close look at Rory McIlroy. Moments later, another group of fans pressed against him with souvenir flags to sign as McIlroy left a conference room.

The attention comes with being the No. 1 player in golf, the apparent heir to Tiger Woods. McIlroy is used to this by now. He has been the best player in the world since August, filling the void of a sport looking for a dominant figure.

"This is the position I want to be in," McIlroy said Wednesday. "And I want to be in it as long as I can."

It's only going to get more chaotic.

McIlroy competes on American soil for the first time in five months when the Honda Classic begins today. The palm trees and tropical warmth of south Florida are the sure signs that the Masters is around the corner. McIlroy, who blew a four-shot lead in the final round at Augusta National in 2011, goes there with a chance to become only the sixth player to capture the career Grand Slam.

Like other players, the 25-year-old will venture up to Augusta to practice



World No. 1 Rory McIlroy will tee off on American soil for the first time in five months when the Honda Classic swings into action today at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

in the coming month. The real preparation is to play good golf, and to allow that confidence to become momentum that he can carry to the first major of the year.

"People talk about momentum and talk about sort of riding it, but I think momentum and confidence are two very similar things in golf," McIlroy said. "If you're confident and you've had good performances, that confidence seems to carry on. And if you're happy with how practice goes, then you're obviously going to be confident going into tournaments. So that's sort of how I'm feeling right now. And try to keep that feeling for as long as I can."

It seems like it's been a long time already.

McIlroy still isn't anywhere near the roll Woods enjoyed during his peak years. Going into the 2000 Masters, for example, Woods won 11 times in 19 starts and only twice finished out of the top 10. No one was close to him.

In his last 12 starts worldwide dating to the British Open, McIlroy has four victories (including back-to-back majors and a World Golf Championship), four runner-up finishes and has finished out of the top 10 two times.

In his last six tournaments, he has finished no worse than second place in all but one tournament, the Australian Open. So yes, he's going along quite nicely.

The obstacle at the Hon-

da Classic might be rust.

McIlroy hasn't played since winning the Dubai Desert Classic on Feb. 1. He got past one potential distraction when he settled a court case involving his former management company. He has been home in south Florida the last three weeks, practicing and playing and trying to stay on this roll during an important part of the season.

McIlroy won the Honda Classic in 2012, the first time he rose to No. 1 in the world. A year ago, he was poised to win again until he stumbled on the back nine at PGA National, only to hit 5-wood into 10 feet on the final hole for a two-putt birdie to get into a four-man playoff. Russell Henley won on the first extra hole. McIlroy didn't really get going until a few months later, but he's been tough to beat ever since.

"He's the best player in the world," Rickie Fowler said. "And when he's driving the ball well, that's when he's deadliest."

Woods isn't around. He said two weeks ago he wouldn't return to competition until his game was in tournament shape. So far, that's just one tournament — the Honda Classic — though the attention on the absence of Woods is sure to ratchet up if he misses Bay Hill.

Ridgeway girls run record to 28-0

By John Varlas
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The Ridgeway girls were pushed on Thursday but in the end, the Lady Roadrunners were on the right side of the scoreboard. Just like they've been all year.

Miss Basketball finalist Brandi Beasley scored 18 points as host Ridgeway closed the game on a 10-0 run to defeat White Station, 73-60 in the Region 8-AAA semifinals. Eryn Foster added 14 and Breouanna Humphrey 13 for the nationally ranked Roadrunners, who have won all 28 of their games this year by at least 10 points.

Weather permitting,

Ridgeway will play Overton for the title Friday at 6 p.m. The Wolverines (24-4) got 15 each from Jalisa Jones and Kayla Williams in a 58-52 victory over Central. Jasmine Carson's 19 led the Lady Warriors.

Hamilton advanced to the boys title game, 68-64 over Houston. Dedric Lawson led the way with 26 points 13 rebounds and five blocks while K.J. Lawson added 14 points and 10 boards.

Marlon Hunter scored 21 for Houston in his final high school game, while Ty Robinson added 18.

The Wildcats will play East at 7:30 at Ridgeway. The Mustangs eliminated Overton, 71-53 behind 15 apiece from their talented freshmen, Alex Lomax and

T.J. Moss. Jerry Hurt's 23 led the Wolverines.

TIGERS UPSET CHOCTAWS

Tori Sewell scored 20 points and Raegyn Branch added 18 as Arlington (24-9) surprised previously unbeaten Dyer County, 61-51 in the girls 7-AAA semifinals. The Tigers will play Bartlett for the championship at 6 p.m. at Munford.

Bolton advanced to the boys title game with a 79-62 win over Cordova and will play the Arlington-Dyer County winner.

IN OTHER GAMES

Region 8-AA: Craigmont (25-6) advanced to the girls title game with a 58-40 victory over Jackson Liberty Tech. Daja Scurlock scored

25 to lead the Chiefs, who will face Brownsville Haywood Friday at 6 at Covington.

Region 8-A: Mitchell (27-6) advanced to the title game with a 76-44 win over Middleton. The Tigers will play the BTW-Jackson Trinity Christian winner Friday at 7:30 at Trinity Christian.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Due to continuing weather issues around the state, the TSSAA has announced chances to the girls and boys' substate schedules.

All girls substate games will be played Monday at 7 p.m. while the boys will play at 7 on Tuesday. The sub-state winners advance to state.

PREPS from 1C

that reserved its place in the final four.

The Lions (17-14) will open against Battle Ground Academy Friday at 11:30 a.m.

And despite having some very talented players — in particular 6-5 junior Anthony Yarbrough — it's been a collective effort on the boys side as well.

"We were at (former Harding star) Marlon Brown's grandmother's funeral (recently) and I told one of the former players to come to our (next) game," Kevin said.

"I told one and they all showed up.

"When you play here it's like a fraternity and these guys want to be a part of that."

Elsewhere, there are

WEATHER from 1C

conference series against Saint Louis at FedExPark has been tweaked several times because of inclement weather worries. The Tigers and Billikens originally were to play single games Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but, instead, will meet in a doubleheader Saturday and a single game Sunday, weather (not likely) permitting.

Players are trying to cope.

"It's tough to get in a groove right now," said Tiger first baseman Tucker Tubbs.

The U of M (2-2) has played only four games in three weeks.

Schoenrock, in his 11th year at the U of M, has endured early season, weather-related sched-



Coach Kevin Starks has won two boys state basketball championships at Harding, and his wife Becky has led the girls team to a state championship as well.

plenty of other storylines to keep an eye on.

CBHS (28-0) will try to win its first state championship since 1987 when it opens play Thursday at 2:45 p.m. against three-time defending state champ Nashville Ensworth.

If the Brothers win the

title, they will become the first Shelby-Metro team since Hamilton in 2006 to finish the year undefeated.

To accomplish that, they may have to get past Briarcrest, which lost both regular season games to the Brothers in a pair of nail-biters, 45-43 on Jan.

one big inning together."

Schoenrock said players becoming stiff in extremely cold conditions can be a problem.

"You don't run as fast, you don't react as quick, your bat speed isn't as good as it normally is and your arm doesn't work the same," he said. "So the game is slower."

To cope with frigid weather on game days, Tubbs said position players often will stash their gloves in the heated clubhouse between innings. Others will tuck hand warmers in their pockets.

"I'm from Nebraska," said Tiger pitcher Caleb Wallingford. "I came here to get away from the snow. This has been unexpected."

Wallingford said getting, and keeping, his body warm is difficult on cold days. He usually paces

23 and 53-50 on Feb. 13. The Saints take on Brentwood Academy Thursday at 11:30 a.m. in the other D2-AA boys semifinal.

That game will pit former Bartlett coach Hubie Smith against the man who was his assistant during a successful run with the Panthers, John Harrington.

Briarcrest's girls are in the tournament for the fourth year in a row and will open Thursday at 1:15 p.m. against Harpeth Hall.

The St. George's boys and the Northpoint girls round out the local field.

Mr. Basketball finalist Justin Wertner leads the Gryphons against Davidson Academy Friday at 2:45 p.m.

The Trojans — led by talented underclassmen Lauren Gross and Ashtyn Baker — take on Knoxville Webb at 1:15 p.m. Friday.

in the dugout while the U of M is batting, resisting the urge to sit. Often, he'll sprint from the dugout to foul pole.

Wallingford said last weekend's game at Central Arkansas was the first time he had pitched in snow since high school. Schoenrock said it was challenging for his players, but not the most challenging he has seen.

"I remember playing Louisiana-Monroe one Saturday in 2013," Schoenrock said. "It snowed for five innings and it was a blowing, cold snow. But it never stuck to the ground. So we kept playing."

"As long as I've coached here, it's never been like this. We've had three- or four-day stretches of cold or snow to deal with in the past, but never 10. We're going on (11) days. It's brand-new territory."