

# Sports

Friday, May 6, 2016

★★

■ **Ole Miss coach Hugh Freeze** said he was shocked by former tackle Laremy Tunsil's NFL draft night comments about accepting money from a Rebels coach while in college. **4C**



NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raptors forward DeMarre Carroll, who had a team-high 21 points Thursday night, celebrates after making a basket during the first half against the Miami Heat in Toronto.

## NBA PLAYOFFS

# Raptors tie series behind Carroll

## ■ Toronto stymies Heat in OT

**RAPTORS 96, HEAT 92 (OT)**

From Our Press Services

TORONTO—DeMarre Carroll scored 21 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and 12 rebounds, and the Toronto Raptors beat the Miami Heat 96-92 in overtime on Thursday night to even the Eastern Conference semifinals at one victory apiece.

Valanciunas had 11 points and seven rebounds in the fourth quarter and overtime as the Raptors

avoided losing consecutive games for the first time this postseason.

Toronto made just 42 percent of its shots compared to Miami's 49.4 percent, but the Raptors survived.

"There's a lot of different ways to win a game," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "Fortunately our guys found a way."

DeMar DeRozan scored 20 points, Kyle Lowry had 18 and Terrence Ross 10 for Toronto, which battled back late in the fourth quarter and then shut the

Heat down to start overtime. Carroll, the Grizzlies' first-round pick in 2009 who played for Memphis from 2009-11, had five rebounds and four steals.

"I didn't think we did a good job at all executing (in overtime)," Heat guard Dwyane Wade said. "I thought our offense was poor. In a sense, we feel like we gave one up."

Goran Dragic scored 20, and Wade and Joe Johnson each had 17 for the Heat. Hassan Whiteside had 13 points and 13 rebounds, and Luol Deng had 12 points.

The Heat were leading 77-70 midway through the

fourth quarter, but back-to-back baskets by Valanciunas shaved the gap to 80-78 with 3:18 remaining. Ross tied the score with a jumper at 2:01.

DeRozan missed a pair of free throws with 1:22 remaining, but Valanciunas grabbed the rebound on the second and tipped it home to give Toronto an 82-80 lead. After a missed shot by Wade, Lowry hit a pullup jumper with 45 seconds left, giving the Raptors a four-point advantage.

Wade, with his revitalized 3-point stroke, then

See NBA, 4C

## UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS SOFTBALL



BRANDON DILL / SPECIAL TO THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Brittany Seale (center) talks to Tiger softball teammates (from left) Christen Torres, Bre Valenzuela and Samantha Schulz at practice. Seale has excelled as an athlete despite hearing impairment. "At this point, I don't even consider it a disability," Seale said. "It's who I have always been."

# LISTEN UP

U of M catcher Seale a master communicator despite her deafness

Behold, the hearing aids. Behold, the brilliant pink and blue.

These are not the hearing aids of a woman who is trying desperately to blend in with the rest of the universe.

These are the hearing aids of a woman who says, "Yes, this is me. I'm deaf. Take me as I am."

These are the hearing aids of a softball catcher who printed the phrase "Thou Shalt Not Steal" on her headgear in high school.

These are the hearing aids of a woman who says one of the great advantages of wearing the things is that "when you don't want to hear someone, you can just turn them off."

These are the hearing aids of Brittany Seale, the 21-year-old junior catcher for the University of Memphis.



**GEOFF CALKINS**

COLUMNIST

"She always got the earmolds that were the brightest and prettiest colors," said her mother, Jennifer Seale. "As a child, she was never afraid to wear her hair back. She's always been like that. She's upfront. When she wants something, she's pretty much unstoppable."

### A STORY WORTH HEARING

This story is not about Tubby Smith. Nor is it about Josh Pastner. Nor is it about Big 12 expansion. Nor is it about Memphis football or basketball.

It is about one of the dozens of other scholarship athletes at the University of Memphis, athletes who work just as hard, who care just as much, and who do it for little or no celebrity or acclaim.

It has been a good year for those athletes, honestly. Lars van Meijel was a national semifinalist for the Jack Nicklaus award, given to the men's golfer of the year. The rifle team finished the year ranked No. 9 in the country. The women's basketball team qualified for the WNIT. Pole vaulter Carolina Carmichael earned an invitation to the U.S. Olympic trials. The men's tennis team qualified for the NCAA tournament for the fourth time in five years.

But not many people care about those stories.

See CALKINS, 2C

See DERBY, 4C

# Harding pitchers strong-arming the competition

By John Varlas  
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Sometimes, the toughest competition the Harding pitching staff faces comes from within. Take Nathan Ruble and Jake Criswell, for example.

The two — who are listed as starters 1A and 1B for the deep and talented Lions — have a friendly battle going to see who comes out on top by season's end. So how's it going?

"I'm leading in strikeouts by an unreachable margin," said Criswell with a laugh. "But Ruble's beating me in ERA. Competition always brings out the best."

And thanks in large part to its talented pitching staff, Harding has a

fine chance to finish as the best when the playoffs begin next week.

It all starts with the two aces. Ruble, a 6-0, 190-pound junior right-hander, is 7-0 with an 0.58 ERA. In 48 innings, he's struck out 58 and walked just 13.

Criswell, a 6-2, 195-pound senior who will play collegiately at Southeast Missouri, is the most successful pitcher in the school's history. He holds Harding records for career victories (224) and innings pitched (224½) and is on the verge of breaking the school record for strikeouts (280).

The talent doesn't stop there.

Third starter Noah Sharp is 4-1 while No. 4 starter Evin Olds is 5-2.

Sophomore Jacob Simmons (1-1) is coming along well as the fifth starter and Ty Wooton has three of the team's five saves. As a staff, the Lions are allowing under two earned runs per game.

And that's without a lot of contribution from Casey Harford, who had a 1.21 ERA in 2015 and picked up his first victory of the year in relief last Friday after playing primarily at third base this season due to arm and leg issues.

That's five quality starters, any one of whom can be on the mound for a big game. And that's how coach Al Stevens likes it.

Stevens — now in his 14th season as the Lions' coach — has staunch belief



NIKKI BOERTMAN / THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Harding Academy head baseball coach Al Stevens (center right) has developed five quality starters this season, and the Lions are reaping the rewards with a 25-6 record.

See LIONS, 2C

## In the news

## Tiger baseball team on road vs. Houston

The University of Memphis baseball team heads to Houston for a three-game weekend American Athletic Conference series that gets underway at 6:30 p.m. today. The series between the Tigers (15-30, 6-9) and Houston (25-18, 6-8) will be broadcast on WUMR-FM 91.7.

In today's opener, Memphis will pitch sophomore right-hander **Colton Hathcock** (4-6, 3.68 ERA) against Houston junior right-hander **Andrew Lantrip** (5-5, 2.37). Saturday night at 6:30, the Tigers will start senior right-hander **Matt Ferguson** (4-4, 4.68) against Cougars sophomore left-hander **Seth Romero** (4-4, 2.61). In Sunday's 1 p.m. finale, the Tigers will start freshman right-hander **Jonathan Bowlan** (2-4, 3.27) against Cougars freshman right-hander **Mitch Ullom** (5-2, 2.47).

## U of M men's golfers in Wisconsin Regional

The Memphis men's golf team received an at-large bid to the Wisconsin Regional, hosted May 16-18 at Blackwolf Run Meadow Valleys Course in Kohler, Wisconsin, by Marquette.

The low-scoring five teams in the six regional tournaments will advance to the NCAA Championships on May 27-June 1 at Eugene, Oregon.

## NASCAR releases 2017 slate, with changes

NASCAR announced its 2017 race schedule Thursday with a few notable changes in the Sprint Cup season:

■ Talladega (Alabama) Superspeedway and Kansas Speedway will switch places in the Chase's second round, with Talladega being the second race on Oct. 15 and Kansas the round's third race Oct. 22.

■ Texas Motor Speedway's spring race moves from its traditional Saturday night slot to Sunday, April 9.

■ Dover's spring date has moved to June 4, the week after the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

■ Michigan International Speedway's second race returns to its Aug. 13 slot, swapping slots with Bristol.

## Pastner adds two to Georgia Tech staff

Georgia Tech men's basketball coach **Josh Pastner** has completed his staff by hiring former University of Portland coach **Eric Reveno** and former Georgetown assistant **Tavaras Hardy** as assistants.

Reveno and Hardy join former Georgia State assistant **Darryl LaBarrie**, a former Georgia Tech player and assistant.

Georgia Tech hired Pastner, the former Memphis coach, on April 8 to replace **Brian Gregory**, who was fired.

## Stars rebound to top Blues in overtime

**Cody Eakin** scored at 2:58 of overtime and the visiting Dallas Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 3-2 on Thursday night, bouncing back from a 6-1 loss two days earlier to tie the second-round series at two victories apiece. **Patrick Sharp** set up the winner and also scored for the Stars. Game 5 is Saturday in Dallas.

## FOOTBALL

■ The Seattle Seahawks placed running back **Marshawn Lynch** on the NFL's reserve/retired list, making official what was implied in February when Lynch indicated he was retiring. ... The Tennessee Titans have hired **Ryan Cowden** as director of player personnel. Cowden spent the last 16 years with Carolina and was the Panthers' assistant director of college scouting the last two years. ... The Washington Redskins signed tight end **Jordan Reed** to a multiyear contract extension worth up to about \$50 million, including \$22 million guaranteed. ... The Kansas City Chiefs and second-round draft pick **Chris Jones** have agreed to terms. Jones is a 6-6, 308-pound defensive lineman out of Mississippi State. ... Former Ridgeway and Ole Miss star running back **Jaylen Walton** has signed with the New Orleans Saints as an undrafted free agent.

## GOLF

■ **Steve Wheatcroft** and **Andrew Loupe** each shot 7-under 65 on Thursday in rain and steady wind to share the first-round lead in the Wells Fargo Championship at Charlotte, North Carolina. **Rory McIlroy**, the only two-time winner of the tournament, shot a 73 after a bogey-plagued start. India's **Anirban Lahiri** was a shot back after a 66. **Phil Mickelson**, who has finished in the top five six times in 12 starts here but never won, opened with a 69. ... At the Yokohama Tire LPGA Classic at Prattville, Alabama, Israel's **Laetitia Beck** took the first-round lead, dodging some of the morning wind and finishing with a bogey-free 7-under 65. **Annie Park** and **Minjee Lee** were tied for second at 67.

## COLLEGES

■ **Carolina** and **Ofelie Carmichael**, members of the Memphis women's track and field program, received NCAA Ethnic Minority and Women's Enhancement Postgraduate Scholarships for Careers in Athletics, the national office announced. The goal of the program is to provide qualified minority and female candidates opportunities for careers in intercollegiate athletics through postgraduate scholarships. ... The U of M women's golf team signed **Ellie Youree** of Carroll High in Southlake, Texas.

■ The Ole Miss baseball battery of pitcher **Brady Bramlett** (Bartlett) and catcher **Henri Lartigue** (Southaven) has been named to the Academic All-District team by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

## TENNIS

■ **Novak Djokovic**, **Andy Murray** and **Rafael Nadal** reached the Madrid Open quarterfinals Thursday. The top-ranked Djokovic beat **Roberto Bautista Agut** of Spain 6-2, 6-1. Defending champion Murray defeated **Gilles Simon** of France 6-4, 6-2, and Nadal topped **Sam Querrey** of the U.S. 6-4, 6-2. Also, sixth-seeded **Kei Nishikori** reached the quarterfinals by defeating 10th-seeded **Richard Gasquet** 6-4, 7-5. In women's play, 19-year-old American qualifier **Louisa Chirico** defeated **Daria Gavrilova** of Australia 7-6 (1), 6-2 to reach the semifinals.

From Our Press Services

## On the air

## TELEVISION

**Autos:** Sprint Cup, GoBowling.com 400 final practice, FS1, 12:30 p.m.  
**Autos:** Sprint Cup, GoBowling.com 400 qualifying, FS1, 5:30 p.m.  
**Autos:** Truck Series, Toyota Tundra 250, FS1, 7:30 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Washington at Chicago Cubs, MLB Network, 1 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Boston at N.Y. Yankees, MLB Network, 6 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Arizona at Atlanta, FS1, 6:30 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Pittsburgh at St. Louis, FSSE, 7 p.m.  
**Basketball:** NBA playoffs, Cleveland at Atlanta, ESPN, 6 p.m.  
**Basketball:** NBA playoffs, San Antonio at Oklahoma City, ESPN, 8:30 p.m.  
**Golf:** LPGA, Yokohama Tire Classic, Golf, 11:30 a.m.  
**Golf:** PGA, Wells Fargo Championship, Golf, 3 p.m.  
**Golf:** Champions Tour, In斯perity Invitational, Golf, 6 p.m.

## RADIO

**Baseball:** Ole Miss at Georgia, WPGF-FM 87.7, 6 p.m.  
**Baseball:** PCL, Redbirds at Nashville, WHBO-AM 560, 6:10 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Memphis at Houston, WUMR-FM 91.7, 6:15 p.m.  
**Baseball:** Pittsburgh at St. Louis, WMC-AM 790, 6:20 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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NIKKI BOERTMAN / THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Harding Academy senior Jake Criswell holds school records for career victories (24) and innings pitched (224) and is on the verge of breaking the school record for strikeouts (280).

## LIONS

from 1C

in his philosophy toward staff building. And Harding — which has been ranked first in the state in Division 2-A for much of the season — is reaping the rewards.

“I’m big on scheduling four or five games a week and having four or five starters and rolling with that,” he said. “What we’re trying to do is develop younger arms for down the road.”

Stevens’ outlook means the Lions are rarely short of quality pitching. Take Criswell, for example. He gained valuable innings as Harding’s fifth starter when he was in the eighth grade and has progressed steadily since.

His coach said the key is in the routine his players develop at a young age.

“They know what to expect from week to week,” said Stevens. “You’re pitching on Monday, you’re pitching on Tuesday, you’re pitching on Thursday. I just think that’s so important.”

“Of course, we’ll switch things up for the regional (tournament) ... but I absolutely stick with that.”

And he’s careful with the health of his pitchers too.

## CALKINS

from 1C

It’s almost unfair, how it works. As a society, we have decided we care deeply about men throwing a ball through a hoop or advancing an oblong ball across a line, but not about men or women knocking a ball into a cup, or men and women running real fast.

Or a woman picking off a base runner at third, for that matter, even if that woman happens to be deaf.

“To me, at this point, I don’t even consider it a disability,” said Seale, who grew up in Ecru, Mississippi. “It’s who I have always been.”

Seale was 3 before her parents even noticed she was different. Then she started turning up the TV and the radio real loud.

“We took her in to a specialist and got the diagnosis,” said Jennifer Seale. “It was progressive nerve damage resulting in profound hearing loss.”

Seale was fitted with hearing aids. Not long after, she was driving with her father, when it started to rain.

“I was coloring or something,” said Seale. “I guess I didn’t even notice it was raining. But then, the way my father tells it, I looked up and I flew out of my seat onto his lap, and shook him, and kept saying, ‘DADDY, I CAN HEAR THE RAIN!’”

Seale’s daddy, by the way, is a hero of this story. Because he didn’t let his daughter’s hearing loss keep them from playing ball.

“We were always playing ball,” said Seale. “From sunup to sundown. We were hitting or playing catch.”

When Seale turned 5, her parents signed her up to play T-ball.

“They wouldn’t let her,” said Jennifer. “She was too good. They were afraid she’d hurt the other children. She went straight to coach-pitch.”

In this way, sports became a lifesaver for Seale, a source of confidence, and community, and friends. “She made a name for herself,” said Jennifer. “It’s part of her identity. She was on the high school team by seventh grade.”

Were there challenges?

Sure. But nothing that couldn’t be figured out.

“I played basketball in high school,” said Seale. “My coach always wore cowboy boots. That way he could stomp on the floor and I’d hear the vibration. He used to jump up in the air, both feet, and yell, ‘Seale!’”

## PREP PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

**Rashad Haynes, Central track:** The Warriors dominated in winning the team championship at last week’s SCIAA AAA county championship meet and Haynes played a huge part. The senior won the long jump (22-0) and the 100 (10.91) and also ran legs on Central’s winning 400- and 800-meter relays.

**Kiara Rhodes, Whitehaven track:** Rhodes spent plenty of time on the medal stand at the AAA county meet. The sophomore won the high jump (5-6), the 100 hurdles (14.06), the 200 (24.73) and the 400 (56.20) to lead the Tigers, who will be looking to defend their state championship at Spring Fling.

## BASEBALL DANDY DOZEN

Team	Last week	7. St. George's (19-9)	8
1. Arlington (25-5)	1	8. Briarcrest (18-13)	NR
2. Harding (25-6) ★	3	9. MUS (17-10)	5
3. CBHS (25-9)	4	10. Lewisburg (19-10)	9
4. Houston (21-10)	6	11. Center Hill (18-12)	10
5. Munford (22-9)	7	12. DS. Central (16-12)	11
6. Covington (23-10)	2	<b>Dropped out:</b> Brighton	

## SOFTBALL GREAT EIGHT

Team	Last week	5. Southaven (16-8)	5
1. Brighton (23-8)	1	6. T.-Rosemark (22-14)	6
2. Arlington (23-7)	T2	7. Harding (14-6) ★	7
3. Collierville (25-9)	4	8. Houston (14-4)	8
4. DS. Central (21-7-1)	T2	<b>Dropped out:</b> none	

## BOYS SOCCER GREAT EIGHT

Team	Last week	5. Lausana (11-3-1)	6
1. Houston (11-1-2)	1	6. ECS (7-4-1)	7
2. MUS (11-3-1)	3	7. CBHS (6-4-1)	4
3. Collierville (12-3-2)	2	8. Cordova (10-4-0)	T8
4. Bartlett (9-4-5)	5	<b>Dropped out:</b> Kingsbury	

“Take Simmons,” he said. “He was due up (to pitch) the other day, but he had a shoulder issue and I told him, ‘You’re not pitching. There’s no

question.’

“Sometimes coaches will give players the old, ‘Man, just go out there and give me what you can.’ We see some teams

— not in this area — and we just shake our heads. They’ve got pitchers with futures on the next level and they’ve got them going on three or four days’ rest. It’s like, ‘What are you doing?’

“Our guys know they’re going to get a full week (between starts).”

But the coach can’t take all the credit.

“They’ve got great work ethics,” said pitching coach Brodie Brumley, who played at Harding University — and has a scar from Tommy John surgery to prove it.

“They all come in here and work hard and they all have very positive attitudes. They just like to have fun and play ball.”

It’s easy to have fun when you’re winning as much as Harding. The Lions are 25-6 and will be tough to beat when the region tournament begins Friday. Still, you get the sense that these guys don’t need a whole lot of encouragement to stay loose.

“We have a group text message that we send out after every game called ‘The Dynasty’ where we talk about each game,” said Ruble, who politely declined to reveal the messages’ content.

“We like to keep it fun, but we’re always serious during the postseason.”



BRANDON DILL / SPECIAL TO THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Brittany Seale, practicing with the University of Memphis softball team, hasn’t let her hearing impairment slow her athletic career.

But softball was always Seale’s best sport. She played two years at Jones County (Mississippi) Junior College. She transferred to Memphis at the start of her junior year, and introduced herself to her new teammates the only way she knew how.

“I told them, ‘Look, I’m deaf,’” she said. “I wear hearing aids. But I don’t want you to treat me any different. Ask me whatever. Joke about it if you want.”

It’s funny, how it works sometimes. You’d think the deaf person would make it harder to communicate, right? But Seale is so upfront, the communication seems even easier. And on the field, she is more attuned to her teammates and coaches than anyone else.

“If there’s someone who has eye contact on me whenever I’m talking, it’s her,” said Memphis coach Natalie Poole. “She’s totally locked in.”

In other words, hearing is not the same as listening. Some of us could probably learn from that.

Which is not to say there haven’t

been moments of adjustment for Seale and her teammates. Like the time Seale forgot to turn off her alarm when she went away for the weekend.

“My alarm isn’t a regular alarm,” Seale said. “It also shakes my bed. Well, one of my teammates went looking to turn it off, and she opened the door, and she saw my bed shaking for no good reason. She said it scared her to death.”

Seale laughs as she tells this story. Truth is, she laughs a lot. She’s having an operation this summer that is designed to plant hearing devices deep inside her ear, but if that is weighing on her, she doesn’t let on.

She’s a softball player in springtime. She’s a tough, competitive athlete who has spent years honing her craft. And if it so happens that her craft doesn’t get as much attention as certain others?

“That’s OK,” she said. “I love it. It’s made me who I am.”

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