

# SPORTS



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Devils Lake's Grant Nelson dunks the ball during a North Dakota Class A East Region boys basketball tournament semifinal game against Fargo Davies on Thursday, March 5, in the Sanford Health Athletic Complex in Fargo.

## BETTER WITH AGE

Bison recruit Grant Nelson of Devils Lake named North Dakota's Mr. Basketball

By Jeff Kolpack  
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Fargo

As a freshman in high school in Devils Lake, N.D., Grant Nelson was about 6-foot-1 and was just another kid on the 9th-grade basketball team. Four years later, he's a part of North Dakota high school basketball history.

The 6-foot-10 guard-forward-center was named the state's Mr. Basketball on Friday by the North Dakota Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association. He edged future North Dakota State teammate Boden Skunberg of Jamestown, with Nelson receiving 13 first place votes and 88 points and Skunberg seven first place votes and 70 points.

Carson Henningsgard of Hillsboro-Central Valley was third with three first place votes. How Nelson went from a run-of-the-mill player to a Division I prospect is one of those feel-good stories in the state.

"I never thought I had the skill-set for it," Nelson said of Mr. Basketball. "I always looked up to

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Complete list of past ND Mr. Basketball award winners. PAGE A5



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Devils Lake's Grant Nelson goes up to block a shot during a North Dakota Class A state boys basketball tournament quarterfinal game against Jamestown March 12 at the Sanford Health Athletic Complex in Fargo.

Here is a list of recent ND Mr. Basketball award winners as voted upon by the North Dakota Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association

Year	Player	High school	College
2020	Grant Nelson	Devils Lake	North Dakota State
2019	Mason Walters	Jamestown	University of Jamestown
2018	Wyatt Hanson	Stanley	Minnesota State Moorhead
2017	Aanen Moody	Dickinson	North Dakota
2016	Jason Feather	Four Winds-Minnewaukan	Lake Region State

the players who won it and thought that would be cool to get."

He never thought he had the skill-set until last summer when his body caught up to his growth spurt. Bison head coach Dave Richman said he saw Nelson play about this time last year and thought maybe he had a chance to be a prospect.

"By June, he comes to camp and you're like this is a no-brainer," Richman said. "Every time I saw him he got better."

Nelson averaged 25 points, 18 rebounds and six blocked shots per game. He had nine games with at least 20 rebounds and was his team's top 3-point shooter. Skunberg, who was named the state's Gatorade Player of the Year earlier this week, averaged 28 points and 11 rebounds.

Both signed with NDSU last November.

"I said it back when they signed, we're excited about both of these young men and they happen to be from North Dakota, too," Richman said. "They are guys who can help us early in their career and build on our championship standard."

Nelson said he didn't receive any college interest until last spring.

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## Coste more consumed with 'daily life' than vacant Opening Day

Cobbers head baseball coach is a former MLB player

By Eric Peterson  
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**MOORHEAD** — Chris Coste is a World Series champion and self-described diehard baseball fan, yet what is usually one of the game's most sacred days wasn't on his mind earlier this week.

"Oddly enough, not even 1%," the Concordia Cobbers head baseball coach said Friday, March 27. "I'm more consumed with

what's going on in daily life."

What's going on in daily life has halted the sporting world in recent weeks. Opening Day for Major League Baseball that was scheduled for Thursday was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The traditional start of the MLB season is generally a day when Coste is sitting on his couch, if his coaching schedule allows, watching multiple games on his computer, iPad and television while sending texts to former teammates.

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Forum file photo

Concordia Cobbers head baseball coach Chris Coste is dealing with losing the Cobbers spring season due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Minnesota State High School League further postpones spring sports

Forum News Service  
**BROOKLYN CENTER,** Minn. — The Minnesota State High School League

announced Wednesday the continued suspension of all participation in spring activities at all member schools until the current school closure declaration is lifted.

The decision was made in alignment with Gov. Tim Walz's extension of school closures through May 4, meaning the earliest date for spring sports has been pushed back to May 5. Walz issued a "stay at home" order effective 11:59 p.m. Friday, March

27, through 5 p.m. Friday, April 10, to slow the spread of the coronavirus in Minnesota.

"Pending a reopening of schools by the Governor, return to participation protocols will be determined and communicated by the MSHSL Board and MSHSL staff," the MSHSL said in a release. "No decisions regarding the cancellation of spring activities have been made at this time."

"In alignment with state leadership and the Governor, we support the actions to limit gatherings and to

**MSHSL:** Page A5

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BRIEFS

**Jamestown's Skunberg, a Bison recruit, named Gatorade N.D. boys basketball player of the year**

CHICAGO — Jamestown senior Bodan Skunberg has been named Gatorade boys basketball player of the year for North Dakota, the Gatorade Company announced Thursday, March 26.

The 6-foot-5 Skunberg averaged 28.4 points, 11.1 rebounds and 2.8 assists in his final high school season with the Blue Jays. He's signed to play men's basketball at North Dakota State.

Skunberg was recently named a North Dakota Class A first-team, all-state selection. He was a unanimous choice. Skunberg missed the Blue Jays final seven games of the season with a fractured right pinky finger.

Former Jamestown Blue Jays standout Mason Walters was named Gatorade player of the year for North Dakota last season.

Forum staff reports

**Manfred: Red Sox report coming before games resume**

Commissioner Rob Manfred said Major League Baseball's sign-stealing investigation of the Boston Red Sox is complete and a report is forthcoming.

"We are done with the investigation," he said during an interview on ESPN's SportsCenter on Wednesday. "There's been a delay in terms of producing a written report, just because I, frankly, have not had time to turn to it with the other issues. But we will get a Boston report out before we resume play."

The "other issues," of course, include the interruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Opening Day was originally scheduled for Thursday.

The Red Sox were investigated for allegedly using their video replay room to steal signs during the 2018 season, when they went on to win the World Series under first-year manager Alex Cora. Cora has since been dismissed by the team.

If the league did find sufficient evidence to punish the Red Sox, they could face similar sanctions to those levied against the Houston Astros in January for their own sign-stealing scheme.

**MLB draft reportedly moved back to July**

Major League Baseball plans to delay its annual draft at least one month to July.

ESPN reported the draft is likely to be shortened with bonuses deferred due to uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus.

MLB and the Players Association are engaged in talks that would reduce the draft to between five and 10 rounds, ESPN reported. Signing bonuses with a small upfront payment and larger amounts due in July 2021 and July 2022, are planned for the deferral of bonuses.

The No. 1 pick in the 2019 draft was Oregon State catcher Adley Rutschman, who signed for \$8.1 million, a record baseball bonus.

All 2020 undrafted players would have a maximum signing bonus of \$10,000, according to the report.

The 2019 draft was held June 3-5 and had 40

total rounds.

**Indianapolis 500 postponed to Aug. 23**

The Indianapolis 500 won't run on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since 1946.

On Thursday, officials postponed the 104th edition of the race from May 24 to Aug. 23 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Practice sessions for the Indy 500 will be Aug. 12-13, followed by qualifying from Aug. 15-16.

**'Virtual' WNBA Draft to be held April 17 as scheduled**

No players, no guests and zero media.

The "virtual" WNBA Draft will go on as scheduled April 17 with precautions in place to minimize health risks during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert's announcement of all picks will air live on ESPN2. Top prospects will take part remotely, a plan similar to what has been disclosed by the NFL for its player draft six days later.

The NBA is on hiatus until at least April 12 and players are not likely to be asked to report until May, commissioner Adam Silver said. When the league returns to action, the expectation is it will do so without fans present for safety reasons.

**PGA of America: Chamblee's comments 'offensive, sexist and disgraceful'**

PGA of America officials on Thursday blasted Golf Channel analyst Brandel Chamblee's recent remarks as "offensive, sexist and disgraceful." Chamblee, 57, made controversial comments about the golf instruction industry in an interview with Golfweek.

"The teachers are being exposed for their idiocy," Chamblee said. "They completely spread this flawed philosophy through all of teaching and all teachers stuck to that ideal and all teachers taught flawed philosophies and these philosophies finally got (expressive) slapped by reality." PGA of America CEO Steve Waugh and president Suzy Whaley responded to his comments and choice of language with a letter to the editor at Golfweek. Chamblee apologized for his language Wednesday on Twitter.

**Globetrotters dribbling wizard Curly Neal dies**

Harlem Globetrotters legend Fred "Curly" Neal died Thursday morning at his home near Houston. He was 77.

Known for his shaved head and dribbling wizardry, Neal played in more than 6,000 games in 97 countries for the Globetrotters from 1963 to 1985. "We have lost one of the most genuine human beings the world has ever known," Globetrotters general manager Jeff Mann said. "Curly's basketball skill was unrivaled by most, and his warm heart and huge smile brought joy to families worldwide."

In 2008, Neal became the fifth Globetrotters player to have his jersey retired, joining Wilt Chamberlain, Marques Haynes, Meadowlark Lemon and Goose Tatam. His No. 22 was raised to the rafters at New York's Madison Square Garden.

—Field Level Media

**Vikings re-sign RB, returner Abdullah**

By Chris Tomasson  
St. Paul Pioneer Press

EAGAN, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings re-signed running back Ameer Abdullah on Friday to a one-year contract.

Abdullah, their primary kickoff returner last season, rushed 23 times for 115 yards and caught 15 passes for 88 yards in 2019. He returned 13 kickoffs for a 25-yard average.

Abdullah, 26, will be back for a third season with the Vikings and sixth in the NFL. He was picked up on waivers from Detroit midway through the 2018 season and then re-signed last year on a one-year deal.

The Vikings also officially announced the re-signing of center Brett Jones on Friday. The Pioneer Press reported Thursday that he had agreed to terms on a one-year deal for the veteran minimum of \$910,000.

Minnesota has four unsigned free agents left,



Kirby Lee / USA TODAY Sports  
Minnesota Vikings running back Ameer Abdullah meditates before playing against the San Francisco 49ers in the NFC Divisional Round playoff football game Jan. 11, 2020, at Levi's Stadium.

including defensive end Everson Griffen, who has announced he won't return. Others remaining are guard Dakota Dozier, linebacker Kentrell Brothers and punt returner Marcus Sherels, who could retire.

The Vikings are continuing in free agency to look at defensive backs. They have not brought in

any new secondary players despite having released cornerback Xavier Rhodes and lost in free agency cornerbacks Trae Waynes and Mackensie Alexander and safeties Jayron Kearse and Andrew Senjode.

A source said the Vikings have expressed interest in cornerback Darryl Roberts, a four-year veteran released by the New York

Jets last Saturday. But the source said the Vikings had not made an offer and that other teams might be higher on his wish list. In a 2018 game for the Jets against Minnesota, Roberts had a career-high 11 tackles, including two for loss, and two passes defended.

**Former OL Tausch dies**

Terry Tausch, a starter for the Vikings at right guard in the 1980s and a Super Bowl winner with San Francisco, has died. He was 61.

The University of Texas, which Tausch played for from 1978-81, announced Thursday that he died Wednesday night at his home in Plano, Texas. No cause of death was given.

Tausch was taken by the Vikings in the second round of the 1982 NFL draft and played with them through 1988. He was a starter from 1984-88.

**NELSON**

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He grew to 6-6 as a sophomore, which he said when he first started working on his game. He played with the ECI Basketball AAU team last summer.

"I think Grant is just going to continue to grow and develop and

get better every year," Richman said. "His best quality is he doesn't know how good he's going to be. He's unique; he's long and moves really well. His skill set for being 6-10 is really special."

Asked what position he sees Nelson at and Richman responded with a chuckle.

"We're going to play

him as a basketball player," he said. "I mean that in all seriousness. He provides unique matchups for us. And once he gets an understanding of how we do things, he's going to be a versatile defender."

Nelson will be the sixth North Dakota Mr. Basketball to play for NDSU. Others were Juno

Pintar of Fargo North (1985), Rob Stefanovich of Divide County (1990), Adam Dombier of Fargo South (2001), Lucas Moormann of Dickinson (2004) and A.J. Jacobson of Fargo Shanley (2013).

He is the second player from Devils Lake to win the award joining Travis Mertens in 2006.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Jeff Kolpack at 701-241-5546.

**Here is a list of North Dakota Mr. Basketball award winners:**

- 2020: Grant Nelson, Devils Lake (North Dakota State)
- 2019: Mason Walters, Jamestown (University of Jamestown)
- 2018: Wyatt Hanson, Stanley (Minnesota State Moorhead)
- 2017: Aanen Moody, Dickinson (North Dakota)
- 2016: Jason Feather, Four Winds-Minnewaukan (Lake Region State)
- 2015: Brad Heidlebaugh, Rugby (North Dakota, football)
- 2014: Tanner Kretschman, Fargo Davies (Minnesota State Moorhead)
- 2013: A.J. Jacobson, Fargo Shanley (North Dakota State)
- 2012: Melvin Langstaff, Warwick (Lake Region State)
- 2011: Phillip Shanley, Midway-Minto (South Dakota School of Mines)
- 2010: Adam Randall, Kidder County (Minot State)
- 2009: Cameron Mauler, Turtle Lake-Mercer (Minot State)
- 2008: Austin Dufault, Killdeer (Colorado)
- 2007: Brian Quale, Williston (Montana)
- 2006: Travis Mertens, Devils Lake (North Dakota)
- 2005: James Hennessy, Williston (Montana State)
- 2004: Lucas Moormann, Dickinson (North Dakota State)
- 2003: Tyler Koenig, Fargo North (North Dakota)
- 2002: Tommy Leikas, Fargo North (North Dakota)
- 2001: Adam Dombier, Fargo South (North Dakota State)
- 2000: Tyrone Terry, Valley City (Texas-San Antonio)
- 1999: Jeff Brandt, Minot (Minot State)
- 1998: Jeff Boschke, Valley City (Kansas)
- 1997: Travis Sturdevant, Bismarck Century (North Dakota State, football)
- 1996: Kenny Younger, Minot (Houston)
- 1995: Hunter Berg, Grenora (Williston State)
- 1994: Dustin Undlin, Mohali (Northern State)
- 1993: Randy Torgimson, West Fargo (U.S. Naval Academy)
- 1992: Marty McDonald, Munich (University of Jamestown)
- 1991: Bart Manson, Minot (Minot State)
- 1990: Rob Stefanovich, Divide County (North Dakota State)
- 1989: Chris Gardner, Fargo South (North Dakota)
- 1988: Ben Jacobson, Mayville-Portland (North Dakota)
- 1987: Scott Guildrest, Edinburg (LSU, North Dakota)
- 1986: Bryan Fam, Jamestown (Concordia-Moorhead)
- 1985: Todd Olson, Cavalier (Mayville State)
- 1984: Juno Pintar, Fargo North (North Dakota State)
- 1983: Chris Lamoureux, Newburg (Minot State)

**COSTE**

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"My entire day is planned around Opening Day normally," said Coste, who won a World Series title in 2008 with the Philadelphia Phillies.

This spring has been different with the COVID-19 outbreak. Earlier this month, the NCAA canceled all its spring championships. Soon after the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference canceled the regular season and postseason championships for all its spring sports.

"I would have loved to have sat on my couch (Thursday) watching Major League Baseball," Coste said. "It's disappointing as a fan, but the reality of not having a college baseball season for me is much stronger."

The Cobbers baseball team played 12 games this season before it got canceled, completing those contests by March 10 on a trip to Florida.

"It doesn't make it that much better, but at least we were able to come together as a team on the field and enjoy a 12-day Florida trip," Coste said. "We were able to get something out of our season. Certainly not perfect, but it wasn't a total loss."

Not long after the Cobbers returned from that

trip, the season abruptly ended, although Coste said he could see the news coming with major sports leagues starting to put their seasons on hold.

"The finality of it all was pretty emotional," Coste said. "It still is emotional." Coste said word about the canceled season was "already out there" by the time he gathered his team a couple weeks ago in a big science classroom at Concordia. The meeting evolved into a storytelling session.

"It was hilarious, it was emotional, there were tears and then two seconds later there were laughs," Coste said. "It lasted well over an hour."

That emotional end to the Concordia season is part of the reason Coste didn't give much thought to Thursday's vacant Opening Day.

"It should feel odd, but it's not, simply because there are so many more important things," he said. "I'm basically in isolation for the most part with my wife and two daughters. Like everyone else, Opening Day for me was a major setback to the what-ifs of our immediate and far-off future."

There's an uncertainty to when the sports world will restart. Coste is also a coach for the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks, a professional independent team



Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks coach Chris Coste played in Major League Baseball from 2006-2009, spending most of his career with the Philadelphia Phillies.

that plays in the American Association. The AA season remains scheduled to start May 19, but the league will continue to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a recent news release.

"Being a RedHawks coach, that is also in the front of my mind as well," Coste said. "The college season, we can't get it back. What's going to happen with the American Association? Is Major League Baseball going to come back? And when that does, what's that going to look like?"

For now, Coste is spending time at his home, which is on a lake near Perham, Minn., with his wife Marcia

and their daughters, Casey, 20, and Camryn, 11.

"I have a very athletic-minded family," Coste said. "On a nice day, we go outside and hit the volleyball around. My 11-year-old and I play catch every single day whether it's snowing or regardless of the temperature, so at least I have some athletics in my life."

"Life always finds a way and athletics will at some point be back in our lives just the way it's always been. It might have a slightly different feel, but it's easy to put on the backburner knowing what's going on currently."

Forum reporter Eric Peterson can be reached at 701-241-5531

**MSHSL**

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stay home as directed," MSHSL executive director Erich Martens said in

the release. "... The continued suspension of fine arts and athletic activities within our member schools is an example of our responsibility to the health and safety of our

students, schools and communities."

The league said additional information will be provided as it becomes available and as decisions are made.

The MSHSL previously announced on March 13 that spring sports competition could begin April 6. The remaining winter sports competitions were also canceled on March 13.

**TODAY'S RADIO**

- Talk
- The Hockey Guys, 8 a.m., 1100-AM
- Flag Sports Saturday, 9 a.m., 1100-AM
- The Big Wild Outdoors Show, 11 a.m., 1100-AM
- College men's basketball
- Greatest games in NCAA history: 2006 Elite 8, George Mason vs. Connecticut, 11 a.m., 740-AM, 107.3-FM
- Greatest games in NCAA history: 2010 Championship Game, Duke vs. Butler, 1 p.m., 740-AM, 107.3-FM