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The Free Press, D1, Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Bulldogs defeat Golden Gophers

Oturu leads Minnesota with 24 points, 10 rebounds

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Kamar Baldwin scored 27 points to lead Butler to a 64-56 victory over Minnesota on Tuesday night in the Gavitt Tipoff Games between Big East and Big Ten teams.

Baldwin made 10 of 24 shots and 5 of 6 free throws. Bryce Nze contributed 11 points and Jordan

Tucker scored 10 for the Bulldogs (3-0).

Daniel Oturu paced the Golden Gophers (1-2) with 24 points and 10 rebounds. Payton Willis added 13 points for Minnesota.

Butler shot 38% from the floor, while the Gophers made 33%. Minnesota held a 35-33 rebounding edge.

Butler used an 8-0 run to take a 46-39 lead with 7:40 to go. The Bulldogs pushed

the lead 54-44 with 4:57 left. The Gophers narrowed the deficit to 57-51 with 2:04 remaining, but could not get any closer. Tucker was fouled on a 3-point shot and hit all three free throws with 59.7 seconds left to give Butler a 60-51 cushion.

Sean McDermott's layup with 2 seconds left in the first half gave the Bulldogs a 29-26 halftime lead.

Butler led by as many as

eight points in the opening half at 19-11 with 6:30 left.

The Bulldogs shot 41% percent in the first half while the Gophers shot 36%.

The Gophers again struggled from the 3-point line, shooting just 26 percent. Minnesota shot 25 percent in its 71-62 loss to Oklahoma at Sioux Falls, S.D. on Saturday.

Up next, the Gophers will play their third consecutive game away from home at Utah on Friday night.



The Associated Press

Minnesota guard Payton Willis (right) brings the ball up court in front of Butler guard Kamar Baldwin in the second half of Tuesday's game in Indianapolis.

No. 1 Kentucky upset

Sam Cunliffe scored 17

points, including two free

Please see GOPHERS, Page D2

BRIEFS

Scarlets open season with win

WORTHINGTON —

The Mankato West girls hockey team opened the season on Tuesday night with a 2-1 nonconference victory over Worthington.

Brooke Pockrandt and Molly Grundhoffer scored goals for the Scarlets. Pockrandt's goal was her first varsity goal.

Goaltender Sarah Olsen made 16 saves. The Scarlets outshot the Trojans 27-17.

West (1-0-0) plays again Thursday at Albert Lea.

Bethany men fall to Buena Vista

MANKATO — Brian Smith was one four Bethany Lutheran men's basketball players to reach double figures, scoring 20 points on Tuesday, but the Vikings fell to Buena Vista 92-76 in a nonconference game at the BLC Sports and Fitness Center.

Cire Mayfield scored 16 points and six assists for the Vikings. Jared Milinkovich had 12 points and 10 rebounds, and Tevin Nelson had 12 points.

The Beavers led 56-36 at halftime, making 13 of their 18 3-pointers, and cruised from there, leading by as much as 30 points in the second half. Timothy Jeffries scored 26 points, one of five Buena Vista players in double figures.

The Vikings (1-1) will play Saturday against St. Olaf in Northfield.

The Free Press

Tide drops, Gophers climb to 8th in CFP

Alabama is fifth in the latest College Football Playoff rankings, behind LSU, Ohio State, Clemson and Georgia, which took over the fourth spot in the selection committee's second top 25.

LSU replaced Ohio State as No. 1 after the Tigers won at Alabama on Saturday. The Buckeyes were bumped to No. 2. Clemson moved up two spots to No. 3 after two teams ahead of the Tigers lost for the first time last week, including Alabama.

The Crimson Tide fell to 46-41 to LSU and dropped two spots. Penn State, which had been No. 4, lost 31-26 at Minnesota and fell to ninth. The unbeaten Gophers jumped nine spots to eighth.

Georgia moved up two spots to give the Southeastern Conference two of the top four for the second straight week.

The Associated Press

For more sports news, go to The Free Press web page at www.mankatofreepress.com.

Cougars' Hogue, Scarlets' Leonard are BACK AT STATE



Mankato East's Maddie Hogue swims the 100-yard butterfly during the 2018 Class A state girls swim meet at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

Photos by Pat Christman

Several relays for both schools also qualify

By Kevin Dudley

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If you looked at the track record of Mankato West swimmer Olivia Leonard, you'd probably assume she was a junior or senior.

A two-time state qualifier in both the 100-yard breaststroke and the 200 individual medley. The two-time defending Big Nine champion in the 100 breaststroke. The West school record holder in the 100 breaststroke.

It would seem like anyone with that many accolades and records would need to spend several years working to accumulate them.

Considering the fact that she's an eighth-grader, what she's done is impressive. But what she might be able to do in the future is even more staggering.

"Olivia is just one of those swimmers you'd love to have more of. She's kind of our big gun as far as individual strokes," West coach Dave Burgess said. "To have somebody who's in the top eight in two events is a great for us... She's worked hard for this."

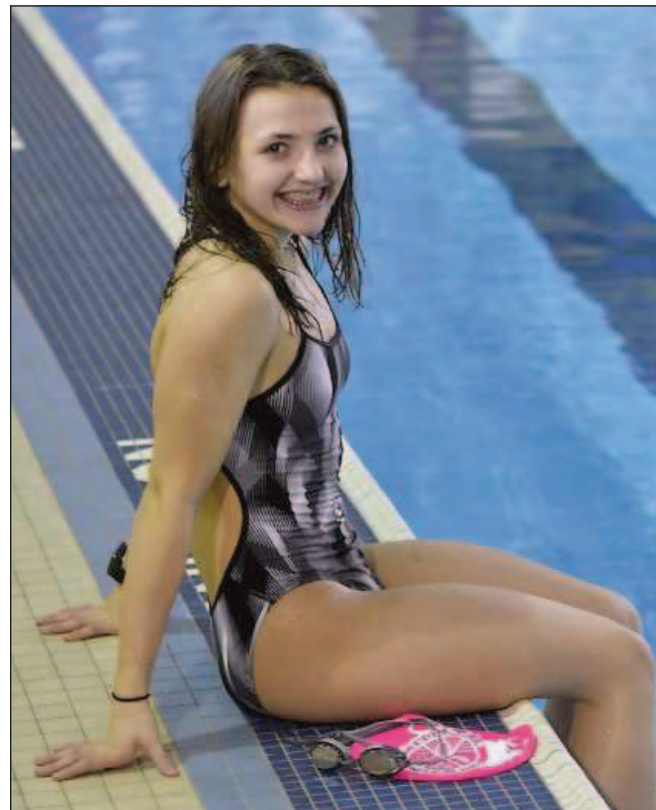
Leonard was the section champion, in the 200-yard IM with a time of 2:11.41, along with the 100 breaststroke at 1:05.9.

After finishing seventh in the 100 breaststroke at state last season, Leonard hopes to be in the top three this year.

"It's a really fun at state. Going to Mall of America, and just being in a room with your team is just really fun," Olivia Leonard said.

She also helped two relays qualify for state with second-place finishes. The 200 medley relay qualified with a school-record time of 1:49.34, while the 200 freestyle made it at 1:39.88. Sophia Leonard, Sarah Patenaude and Annika Younge are the other members of those relays.

Other individual qualifiers for West include Sophia Leonard, who took second in the 100 backstroke (59.86) and also met the state qualifying standard in the 50 free with a time of 24.79. Patenaude (1:09.54) finished third in the 100 breaststroke, but met the qualifying time. East also has a number of state



After taking seventh in the 100-yard breaststroke at the state meet a year ago, Mankato West's Olivia Leonard will look for a top-three finish this season.

participants, headlined by Maddie Hogue.

The Cougars junior is coming off another fantastic season that saw her win a pair of events at the section meet. Hogue won the 50 free with a time of 24.40 and the 100 free at 53.79. She qualified in both the 50 free and the 100 butterfly last season.

"As far as placement on the team, she's definitely someone that holds the fastest splits," East coach Greg Summers said. "If your fourth person's coming in at a body length away, she's probably going to be able to take that one down."

Hogue, who swims year-round, knows all the physical work has been done. Summers has been focused on getting Hogue and the rest of his team rested and mentally prepared for this time of year.

"You have to think your going to do good if you actually want to do good," Hogue said. "It's pretty easy to do with the practices (Summers) writes."

Hogue also anchored the section-winning 400 free relay team of Grace Busch, Eve Anderson and Kaylee Sivertsen (3:42.90). Busch,

Avery Schuh, Sivertsen and Hogue (1:40.98) also qualified via the standard in the 200 free relay.

Sivertsen also qualified for state in two individual events, placing second in the 200 freestyle (1:57.45) and the 500 freestyle (5:24.29). Anderson (5:27.09) will also swim at state after meeting the standard.

"I think we're still working on building that confidence of recognizing how powerful of a team we can be," Summers said. "There's still a lot of growth to come because we've got a lot of young swimmers that are going to be around for the next few years, so that's really exciting and makes the next couple of years look even better."

For St. Peter, Morgan Kelly qualified for state, taking second in the 200 IM (2:11.70) and the 100 breaststroke (1:07.22). The 200 medley relay team of Kelly, Shelby Graft, Jaiden Landsom and Olivia Denzer (1:52.98) met the qualifying standard. Lauren Feder also qualified for the Saints in diving.

The state meet is Thursday through Saturday at the Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

Twins' Baldelli is AL's top manager

Cardinals' Shildt wins NL award

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mike Shildt began his life in baseball at his mom's side, tagging along for her shifts at a Double-A ballpark and picking up odd jobs around the clubhouse.

When Shildt was recognized Tuesday night for the career that has followed, the late Lib Shildt was the first thing on his mind.

Less than a week after his mother's passing, Shildt was honored for piloting the St. Louis Cardinals back into the playoffs, narrowly beating Craig Counsell of the Milwaukee Brewers to win NL Manager of the Year.

Shildt earned the award in his first full season on the job, even though Counsell received more first-place votes in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Minnesota Twins manager Rocco Baldelli won the AL prize in a tight ballot over Aaron Boone of the New York Yankees. Both received 13 first-place votes, but Baldelli got more second-place nods. The 38-year-old is the youngest to win the award.

Shildt teared up upon learning he'd been chosen. The 51-year-old is the first manager of the year who never played pro ball at any level. Of course, he's been around the pro game since he was a child, when his mom took him to her job with the Charlotte O's in the Baltimore Orioles' system.

"Appreciative of the time and love she and my dad invested in me," Shildt said.

Baldelli and Shildt are the eighth and ninth managers to win this award in their first full seasons on the job.

Baldelli took over a team that won 78 games in 2018 and pushed them to 101 victories and an AL Central title. He worked tightly with Minnesota's analytics-focused front office — a shift from predecessor Paul Molitor, who won this award in 2017 — and oversaw a turnaround propelled by the team's major league record 307 home runs.

The self-dubbed Bomba

Please see BALDELLI, Page D2



Rocco Baldelli

TV TODAY

Wednesday
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)
5 p.m.
ESPN2 — Louisiana State at Virginia Commonwealth
6 p.m.
BTN — McNeese State at Wisconsin
CBSN — St. Joseph's at Connecticut
FS1 — Villanova at Ohio State
8 p.m.
BTN — Providence at Northwestern
CBSN — Oklahoma State at College of Charleston
FS1 — Purdue at Marquette
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)
6 p.m.
SEC — Connecticut at Vanderbilt
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
7 p.m.
ESPN2 — Northern Illinois at Toledo
ESPN — Bowling Green at Miami (Ohio)
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL (WOMEN'S)
5 p.m.
ESPN — Tennessee at Arkansas
8 p.m.
SEC — Auburn at Texas A&M
GOLF
1 a.m. (Thursday)
GOLF — PGA Tour: The Nedbank Golf Challenge, first round, Sun City, South Africa
MLB BASEBALL
5 p.m.
MLB — BBWAA MLB Awards
NBA BASKETBALL
6:30 p.m.
ESPN — LA Clippers at Houston
7 p.m.
FSN — San Antonio at Minnesota
9 p.m.
ESPN — Golden State at LA Lakers
NHL HOCKEY
6:30 p.m.
NBCSN — Washington at Philadelphia
9 p.m.
NBCSN — Chicago at Vegas
TENNIS
6 a.m.
TENNIS — ATP: World Tour Finals, Doubles Round Robin, London
8 a.m.
TENNIS — ATP: World Tour Finals, Singles Round Robin, London
Noon
TENNIS — ATP: World Tour Finals, Doubles Round Robin, London
2 p.m.
TENNIS — ATP: World Tour Finals, Singles Round Robin, London ---
WEEK IN SPORTS
WEDNESDAY
Minnesota State women's soccer vs. Mary in NSIC tournament, 1 p.m., The Pitch
Bethany Lutheran women's basketball vs. Carleton, 7 p.m., Bethany Gym
THURSDAY
Mankato East/Loyola girls hockey at Fairmont, 7 p.m.
Mankato West girls hockey at Albert Lea, 7:15 p.m.
Mankato West, East/Loyola girls swimming and diving at state meet, Minneapolis
Minnesota State women's swimming vs. Augustana, 5 p.m., MSU pool
Minnesota State women's basketball vs. Northern Michigan, 6 p.m., Bresnan Arena
FRIDAY
Mankato West, East/Loyola girls swimming and diving at state meet, Minneapolis
Minnesota State women's soccer in NSIC tournament, TBA
Minnesota State volleyball vs. Bemidji State, 6 p.m., Bresnan Arena
Gustavus Adolphus women's hockey at St. Catherine's, 7 p.m., St. Paul
Gustavus Adolphus men's hockey vs. Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 7 p.m., Don Roberts Ice Rink

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct, PF, PA. Lists scores for Carolina, Tampa Bay, Atlanta, Green Bay, Minnesota, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Seattle, L.A. Rams, Arizona, Oakland, Baltimore, Chicago, Atlanta, Tennessee, N.Y. Jets, Cleveland, Tampa Bay, Miami, Green Bay, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Open: Washington, Jacksonville, Denver, Philadelphia, Houston, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Dallas, Houston, Dallas, N.Y. Jets, New Orleans, Denver, Houston, Buffalo, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Arizona, New England, Cincinnati, Chicago, Kansas City vs L.A. Chargers, MEX, 7:15 p.m.

NBA Standings

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Divisions: Eastern Conference Atlantic Division (Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, Brooklyn, New York), Southeast Division (Miami, Charlotte, Atlanta, Orlando, Washington), Central Division (Milwaukee, Indiana, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit), Western Conference Southwest Division (Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Memphis, New Orleans), Northwest Division (Denver, Utah, Minnesota, Portland, Oklahoma City), Pacific Division (L.A. Lakers, L.A. Clippers, Phoenix, Sacramento, Golden State).

Monday's Games, Tuesday's Games, Wednesday's Games, Thursday's Games, Friday's Games, Saturday's Games, Sunday's Games. Lists matchups and times for various teams.

NHL Standings

Table with columns: Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Divisions: Eastern Conference Atlantic Division, Metropolitan Division, Pacific Division, Western Conference Central Division, Pacific Division.

NFL

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct, PF, PA. Divisions: AFC East, AFC South, AFC North, AFC West, NFC East, NFC South, NFC West.



Matt York

Houston Astros general manager Jeff Luhnow speaks during a media availability during the Major League Baseball general managers annual meetings Tuesday in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Report: '17 Astros stole signs

MLB investigating Houston rule-breaking

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ — Major League Baseball has expanded its investigation into the Houston Astros after The Athletic website reported the team stole signs during home games in 2017 by using a camera positioned in center field.

The report Tuesday quoted pitcher Mike Fiers, who played for the Astros that season, and three other unidentified people with the club. The Astros won the World Series that year — two sources told The Athletic that Houston used the system into the playoffs while another source said the system ended before the postseason.

The website said the process was started by a struggling hitter and a coach, neither of whom was identified. The camera at Minute Maid Park was connected to a television monitor in the tunnel between the Astros' dugout and clubhouse. The Athletic said, and team employees or players would communicate expected pitches by banging a trash can to signal off-speed pitches.

"I just want the game to be cleaned up a little bit because there are guys who are losing their jobs because they're going in there not knowing," Fiers told the website.

The Astros said in a statement the team "has begun an investigation in cooperation with Major League Baseball" and declined additional comment.

Houston general manager Jeff Luhnow declined to talk about specifics.

"We take the allegation seriously and we're going to look into it. If you're not following the rules, it's a serious matter," he said Tuesday at the annual GM meetings. "I'm not going to get into exactly what I knew or anybody knew at this point. So I'm just going to have to wait and see. But I'm sure there will be an appropriate time to answer that question directly."

Luhnow said he hoped the allegations wouldn't put a damper on Houston's recent run of success, which includes the team's first World Series title in 2017 and an AL pennant this season.

"Teams are competing with one another and everybody's trying to find an edge," Luhnow said. "But we all have to follow the rules and the rules are set by Major League Baseball. We all agree to follow them and if you don't there's

ramifications to that. We want to follow the rules and we want to compete and win. That's what every other club does, as well."

Danny Farquhar, who pitched for the Chicago White Sox twice at Minute Maid Park in September 2017, told The Athletic of "a banging from the dugout, almost like a bat hitting the bat rack every time a changeup signal got put down." He said after Chicago changed to more complex signals "the banging stopped."

Former Boston Red Sox pitcher Carson Smith added to the sign stealing allegations on Twitter, saying that the Astros bullpen catcher would send signs to certain batters. He added that the "Astros went to extreme measures, undoubtedly still do, and it's paid off for them."

MLB strengthened its rules against sign stealing before the 2019 season, instituting procedures attempting to ensure teams did not use video to steal signs.

"After we review this new information we will determine any necessary next steps," MLB said in a statement.

Los Angeles Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said Wednesday there was "scuttlebutt" that the Astros were stealing signs during the 2017 World

Series, but "we certainly did not know anything definitive at the time." The Dodgers lost to the Astros in seven games.

"There are things that have kind of existed since the beginning of time. And then there are other things that are even more egregious and clearly across the line," he said. "And I think there are enough people involved in it, it would be pretty brazen to do certain things. And when you do, I think people are going to find out about it."

MLB already is investigating the Astros. Assistant general manager Brandon Taubman was fired for directing inappropriate comments at female reporters during a clubhouse celebration after the team beat the New York Yankees to win the AL pennant on Oct. 19. The team issued and then retracted a statement accusing a Sports Illustrated reporter of trying to "fabricate a story." Taubman was fired by the Astros on Oct. 24.

Luhnow said he didn't think the Taubman situation and the sign stealing allegations are related.

"I don't think they're tied together, but they obviously have come one after another it seems like the last few weeks," Luhnow said. "It's disappointing. If there is an issue that we need to address, we'll address it."

GOPHERS: Bulldogs defeat Golden Gophers

Continued from Page D1

throws with 6.8 seconds remaining, and Evansville stunned No. 1 Kentucky 67-64 on Tuesday night in Lexington, Kentucky.

K.J. Riley added 18 points as the Purple Aces — coached by Walter McCarty, who won a national title with Kentucky in 1996 — pulled off the biggest upset in program history with their first win over a No. 1 team in three

tries.

Evansville led much of the game and answered each Kentucky rally with clutch baskets to grab the lead and then maintain it for the season's biggest upset. The Wildcats were a 25-point favorite.

Kentucky had been 39-0 at home against unranked, nonconference opponents when ranked No. 1 in The Associated Press poll. Evansville, meanwhile, got its first-ever road win over

an AP-ranked team.

Tyrese Maxey's layup with 8 seconds remaining got Kentucky within 65-64, but with his teammates locking arms on the bench, Cunliffe stepped to the line and calmly made both ends of the 1-and-1 to seal the victory. The Purple Aces raised their hands and ran around a silent Rupp Arena after the final horn as the Wildcats slowly walked off. Cunliffe did most of his

damage with 15 first-half points off the bench.

Evansville won just 11 games last season, its first under McCarty, who played in the NBA for 10 years and was an assistant at Louisville under Rick Pitino and in the NBA before returning to his hometown to coach the Purple Aces.

Evansville made nine of 30 3-point attempts while shooting 38% from the field to Kentucky's 37%.

BALDELLI: Twins' Baldelli is AL's top manager

Continued from Page D1

Squad thrived under Baldelli, whose big league playing career was spoiled by a rare disorder that led to frequent fatigue and soft tissue injuries.

One of Baldelli's priorities was keeping players rested, a strategy that worked especially well with his catchers. Nobody started more than 73 games behind the plate for Minnesota, yet the trio of Mitch Garver, Jason Castro and Willians Astudillo combined for 48 home

runs, most in the majors by any team's catchers.

Jorge Polanco emerged as a star at shortstop, Miguel Sano and Byron Buxton began to meet the expectations that followed exceptional minor league careers, Nelson Cruz kept putting up big numbers and the bullpen emerged as one of the most reliable in baseball.

Shildt replaced Mike Matheny as Cardinals manager during the 2018 season, and under his steady guidance, St. Louis has been among baseball's best

teams since. The club won 91 games and the NL Central crown this year, ending the franchise's three-year postseason drought. The Cardinals gave Shildt a contract extension through the 2022 season.

"I set my sights on being the best coach I could be just like being the best player I could be, and the journey has led me here," Shildt said.

Atlanta's Brian Snitker was third after winning the award last year. The Dodgers' Dave Roberts finished fourth, and Nationals man-

ager Dave Martinez was fifth. Washington turned a 19-31 start into a World Series championship, but voting for the award concluded before the postseason began. The Nationals entered the playoffs as a wild card, not far off from preseason expectations.

Cash manager Kevin Cash also earned three first-place votes and finished third for the AL award. Oakland's Bob Melvin was fourth, followed by Houston's AJ Hinch and Cleveland's Terry Francona.

Postseason golf is entertaining, not necessarily fair

By Doug Ferguson
The Associated Press

Scott McCarron has been in position for a \$1 million payoff twice in his career under vastly different circumstances.

The first occasion was in 2002 in the final of the Match Play Championship at La Costa when he stood over an 8-foot putt to extend the 36-hole match against Kevin Sutherland and turned away in shock when it caught the left lip.

The other was Sunday, when he was in the clubhouse at Phoenix Country Club, feeling more stress than if he were playing. He thought the \$1 million bonus for the Charles Schwab Cup was gone when Retief Goosen stood over a 4-foot birdie putt to win, only to miss. He was in shock when Jeff Maggert holed out from 123 yards for eagle to win the playoff and hand the season points race on the PGA Tour Championships to McCarron.

"One of the most incredible shots that has ever affected me that I didn't hit," McCarron said.

It was the second straight

year that the great shots belonged to the last guy on the course while the big check belonged to the guy watching from the clubhouse. Vijay Singh's victory in 2018 gave the Schwab Cup to Bernhard Langer.

This is what the PGA Tour was trying to avoid when it made a radical change to the FedEx Cup finale.

The tour didn't want another scene like Justin Thomas trying to celebrate a \$10 million bonus while stewing inside over finishing second in the 2017 Tour Championship to Xander Schauffele, or the awkward ceremony in 2009 when Tiger Woods became the first player to capture the FedEx Cup twice — after finishing second to Phil Mickelson at East Lake. "I'm sure I would probably be more happy tomorrow than I am right now," Woods said.

So it switched to a format that gave a head start based on a player's position in the standings — 10-under par for Thomas as the No. 1 seed, even par for the last five players in the 30-man field. That gave everyone a



The Associated Press

Scott McCarron reacts after missing a putt during the Champions Principal Charity Classic on May 31 in Des Moines, Iowa. On Sunday in Phoenix McCarron won the Charles Schwab Cup.

chance, with higher probabilities for the top players.

Two weeks ago in China, when Rory McIlroy was talking about trying to avoid slow starts, he was asked for an example. "I was five shots behind at the Tour Championship before it even started," he said with a laugh.

It worked out well — this year. McIlroy won by four shots on the tournament leaderboard, which included how many under par he was at the start. He

won the real tournament by three shots. There was no debate.

There will be at some point. It's inevitable.

Next up is the LPGA Tour, which might be the most radical of all because it is the simplest to follow. Sixty players have qualified for the CME Group Tour Championship based on points earned all season. Once they get to Tiburón Golf Club in Naples, Florida, whoever wins the tournament wins the Race

to the CME Globe and the \$1.5 million in official money, the richest payoff in the history of women's golf.

The best player? That's already been decided.

Jin Young Ko has won four times, more than anyone, and two of them were majors. She already has clinched LPGA player of the year, based on points. Ko has earned more than \$2.7 million and leads the money list by \$721,791 over Jeongeun Lee6.

Throw all of that out at the Tour Championship. It's all or nothing, depending on who has the best four days. There is no advantage, no matter how slight, with points being reset or a manufactured score to par before the first shot is struck.

And because the money is official, anyone from the top 10 has a mathematical chance to win and capture the money title.

Fair? Consider the "LPGA Playoffs" in 2006, in which scores were wiped out and the field reduced after the second and third rounds, leaving eight players on Sunday to play 18 holes for

\$1 million. The winner was Julieta Granada. It remains her only LPGA victory.

Was it fair when Bill Haas won the FedEx Cup in 2011 as the No. 25 player in the field, one who had not won all year until that remarkable par save with his ball half-submerged in the water? Was it fair when Kevin Sutherland won his first PGA Tour Champions title in the final event in 2017 to capture the Schwab Cup over Langer, who had seven victories and three majors that year?

The three tours have three different formats for the postseason.

All have merit. All can be ridiculed as gimmicks.

But it's worth remembering that postseason golf is not supposed to be fair.

It's supposed to be entertaining.

Sutherland practically had to apologize for winning the Schwab Cup over Langer. He wasn't the least bit bothered by all the outrage, instead summing it up beautifully.

"If I hadn't won, no one would be talking about it."

Follow Doug Ferguson on Twitter @dougferguson405

Clemson QB is back in top form

The Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Praise him or criticize him, Trevor Lawrence doesn't care. Not as long as the quarterback keeps improving and No. 3 Clemson keeps winning.

Lawrence and the Tigers have done plenty of both this season.

"I really like the way we're playing," Lawrence said with a smile Monday.

Lawrence came into the season the potential face of college football, fresh off a dominating show where he riddled Alabama in Clemson's 44-16 national championship victory in January. Several analysts even suggested Lawrence withdraw from school and spend the next two years prepping for his inevitable selection as the NFL's No. 1 pick.

Instead, Lawrence vowed to work hard and came into the season as the first-team QB on The Associated Press All-America team presented by Regions Bank, a sure-fire favorite for the Heisman Trophy.

But the 6-foot-6 sophomore slumped early. Lawrence threw just four interceptions in his 15-0 freshman season, but he had five in his first five games this year. He struggled in Clemson's low point of the season, a 21-20 escape at North Carolina on Sept. 28 that grabbed everyone's attention for all the wrong reasons from Clemson's point of view.

Lawrence's health was questioned, his mechanics picked apart. Critics questioned the 19-year-old's ability to make the right decisions.

Take a look at Lawrence now.

Lawrence marked his 20th birthday in early October and got right back to looking every part the Crimson Tide slayer he was in January, his accuracy and talent on full display.

Over the past five games, he has thrown for 15 touchdowns, 1,172 yards and just three picks. Clemson's winning streak is now up to 25 games as it tries for a second straight perfect Atlantic Coast Conference season when it

faces Wake Forest (7-2, 3-2 ACC) on Saturday.

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said Lawrence has the same knack for following poor plays with big ones that Deshaun Watson had. Watson threw 17 interceptions during his last season with the Tigers, which ended with the 2016 national title.

"Deshaun made some bad plays, too, but how did he respond?" Swinney said.

"He always was going to make the next play. And that's how Trevor is. He's the exact same. He doesn't go in a shell. He doesn't pout. He just responds."

Swinney and the coaching staff have become used to Lawrence's steadiness in almost every situation. Swinney said Lawrence is continually soaking up lessons to make himself a better teammate and player for the Tigers (10-0, 7-0, No. 5 CFP).

Lawrence said he believes the offensive is playing at a higher level than a year ago because younger players like himself, tailback Travis Etienne and receivers Justyn Ross and Tee Higgins are another year more accomplished in the game.

"We're in the same spot," Lawrence said. "But I believe we're a little bit better because of continuity, the guys have been playing together longer."

Now, about that hair. Lawrence's long locks have led to memes and gentle mocking, even from his teammates. Last year's All-American defensive tackle, Christian Wilkins, joked about taking "a pretty girl" out for breakfast (it was Lawrence) while offensive lineman John Simpson came to ACC media days last summer in a long, blonde wig.

While Lawrence appears steady and calm, safety K'Von Wallace said he has emotions his teammates see all the time.

"He's a human being," Wallace said. "He laughs and plays jokes just like all of us. ... It just so happens that God blessed him to be 6-6 and the best quarterback in the country."



Trevor Lawrence



Photos by The Associated Press

Iowa's Tyrone Tracy Jr. gets past Wisconsin's Jack Sanborn during the second half of Saturday's game in Madison, Wis. Wisconsin won 24-22.

Iowa seeks to play spoiler role

No. 23
Hawkeyes hope to hand defeat to Gophers

The Associated Press

IOWA CITY, IOWA — After a bitter loss to Wisconsin, No. 23 Iowa has been reduced to playing spoiler in the Big Ten race.

The Hawkeyes have often excelled in that role in recent years.

Iowa (6-3, 3-3 Big Ten) has thwarted the national title hopes of four different teams with late-season wins at Kinnick Stadium since 2008.

The Hawkeyes knocked Penn State out of the national title picture 11 years ago with a last-second field goal, and they blew out unbeaten and fifth-ranked Michigan State in Iowa City, 37-6, two years later. Iowa beat second-ranked Michigan as a 24-point underdog in 2016, and the following season the Hawkeyes blasted Ohio State, 55-24. That loss was widely cited as the reason the Buckeyes missed out on the College Football Playoff that year.

No. 7 Minnesota (9-0, 6-0) visits Iowa on Saturday.

A win over the Gophers wouldn't be as shocking as those four victories. After all, the Hawkeyes are a 3-point favorite — and they haven't lost to Minnesota at home since 1999.

But to do so, Iowa will



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz watches during the second half of Saturday's game at Wisconsin.

need to find a way to finish after failing to do so in last weekend's 24-22 loss to the Badgers.

"I think (you have to) just go out there and play like there's nothing to lose," senior quarterback Nate Stanley said. "Most of the pressure is on their shoulders...they're the ones that control their own destiny. So, if we can just come out and play loose and really just give it all for 60 minutes, that's all we can ask for."

A win over the playoff-hopeful Gophers would also help erase some of the sting of a Big Ten season that's fallen painfully short of expectations.

Iowa, which many had pegged as a favorite to win the Big Ten West in August, started 4-0 before suffering three losses to

ranked teams by a total of just 14 points.

The Hawkeyes' offense failed them in a 10-3 loss at Michigan and in a 17-12 defeat to Penn State to start October, and Stanley's potential game-tying sneak on a two-point conversion late in the fourth quarter last week in Madison came up about a half a yard short.

"We've come up short now in three tough competitive ballgames, and you can be proud of that" Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said. "But to come up short, and coming close, is really not the goal."

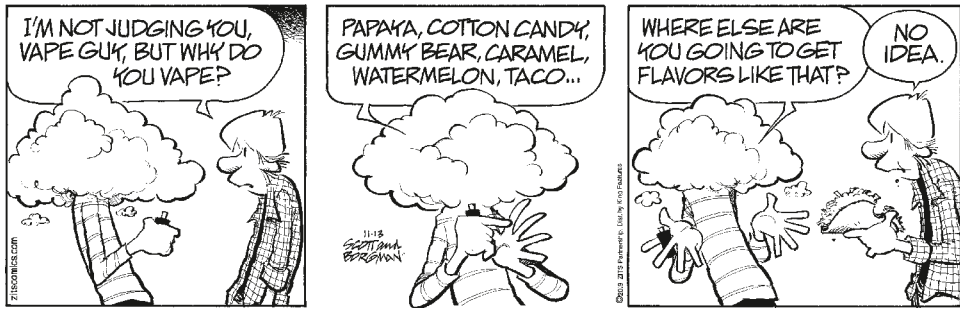
Minnesota, which has won five games by seven points or less, is rolling behind an offense that has put up at least 28 points in each of its first nine games for the first time in school history

Iowa hasn't allowed more than 24 in a game all season. The Hawkeyes scoring defense (11.7 points per game) is the stingiest in coach Kirk Ferentz's 21 seasons, and they are third nationally with just 12 touchdowns allowed. Iowa also ranks in the top 20 in yards through both the air and on the ground.

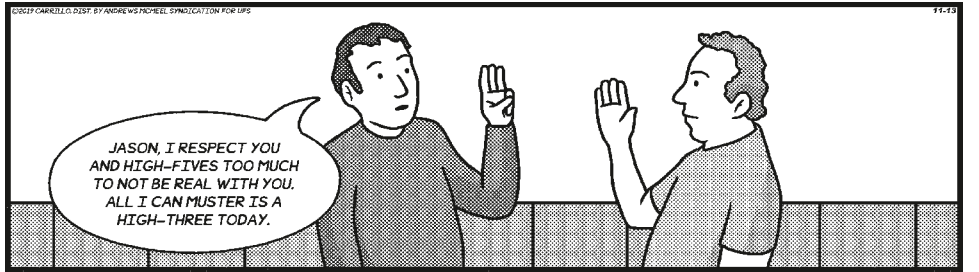
Gophers quarterback Tanner Morgan was brilliant in last week's win over Penn State, completing 18 of 20 passes for 339 yards. Given Iowa's recent history as a spoiler, Morgan might have to play just as well against the Hawkeyes.

"Kinnick is a special place, and we've had some good success in there," linebacker Nick Niemann said. "You want to be playing your best football in November."

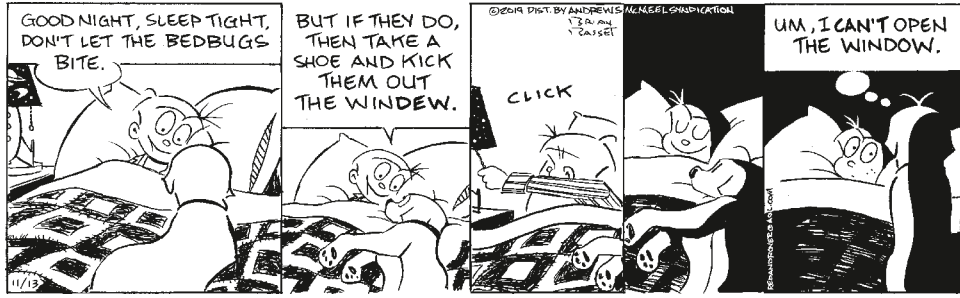
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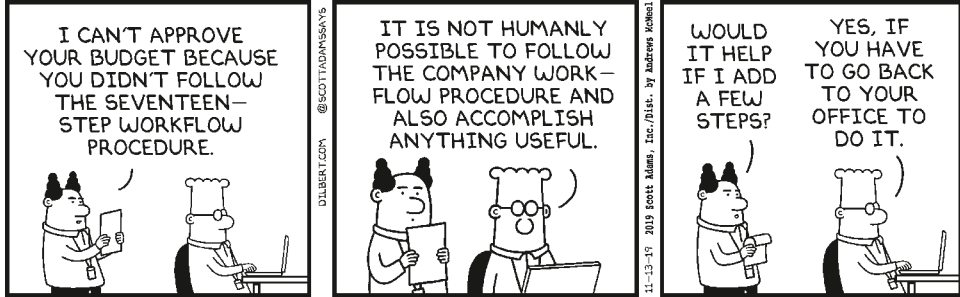
RED AND ROVER



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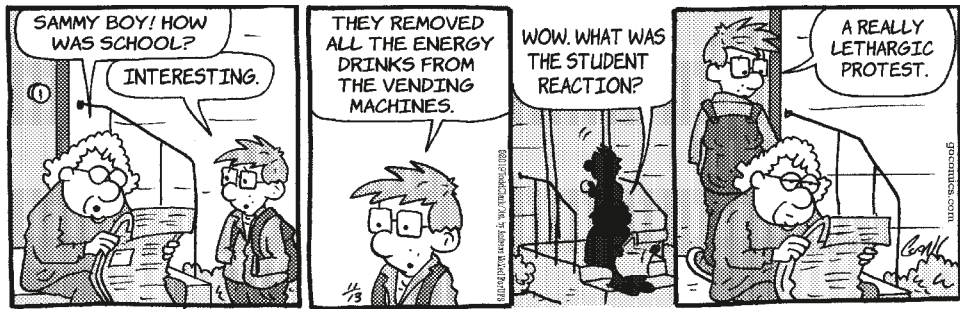
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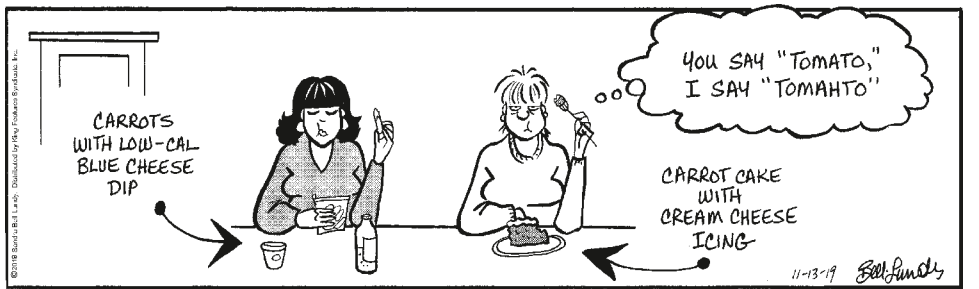
BABY BLUES



PICKLES



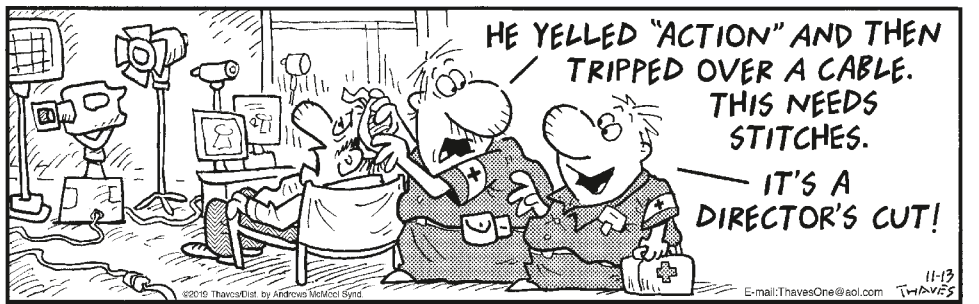
BETWEEN FRIENDS



WUMO



FRANK AND ERNEST



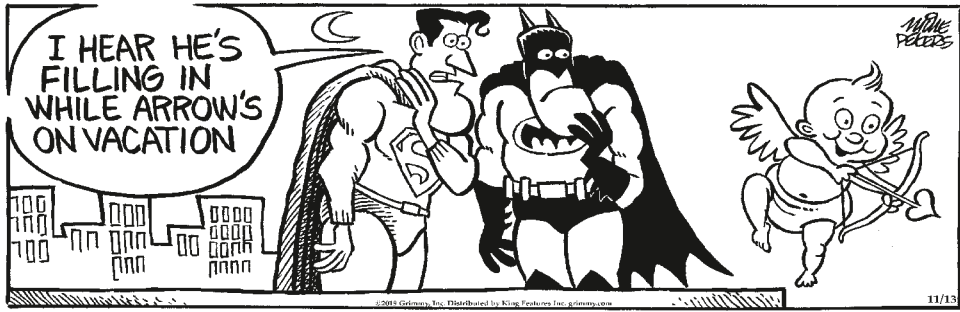
GARFIELD



ARLO & JANIS



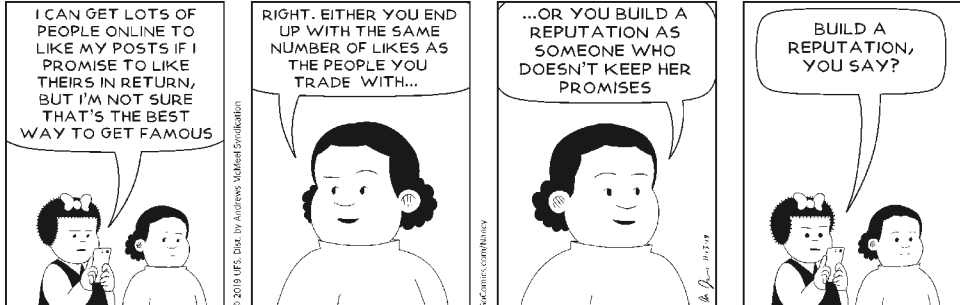
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



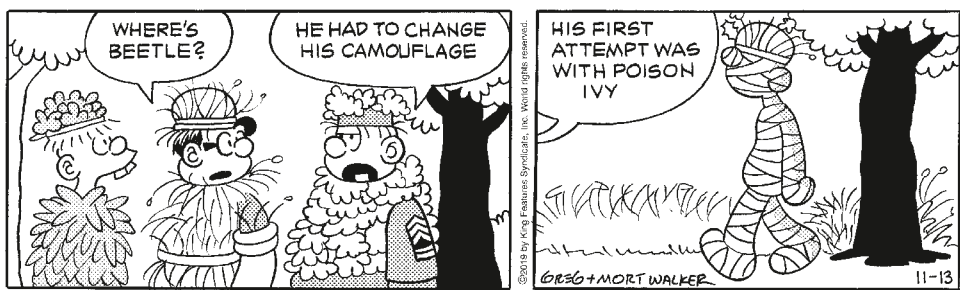
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

Jumble word game section with a cartoon by Billy (7) and a list of words to be unscrambled: SECR, LIYHL, RIDFIG, DALYRH, AND. Includes instructions and the answer: MUSIC TO HIS EARS.

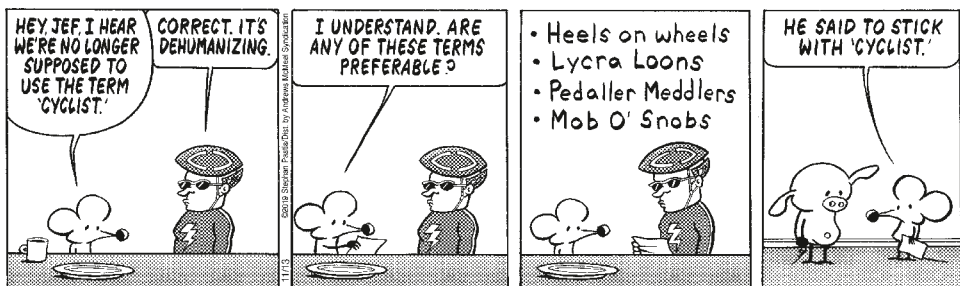
NANCY



BEETLE BAILEY



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Conceptis Sudoku 9x9 grid with some numbers filled in.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once.

Completed Conceptis Sudoku 9x9 grid.

Difficulty Level ★★★

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