



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks pitcher Gage Hinsz had heart surgery in 2018 and Tommy John surgery in 2019.

HEADED IN A GOOD DIRECTION

RedHawks' Gage Hinsz thankful to be back on the mound after heart, elbow surgeries

By Eric Peterson
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Fargo
Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks pitcher Gage Hinsz has about an eight-inch scar on his sternum from a surgery the 25-year-old had three years ago. Less than a month after his

22nd birthday, he had heart surgery to repair a leaky aortic valve on May 8, 2018. "It wasn't really a matter of playing at that point," said Hinsz, from Billings, Montana. "It was a life decision type of thing." About a year after heart surgery, Hinsz had another

health setback as he was resuming his pro baseball career. The right-handed starter had Tommy John surgery on July 3, 2019, to repair his throwing elbow. "It's obviously been tough because the past few years there hasn't been a full focus on baseball, it's been getting

healthy," said Hinsz, who the Pittsburgh Pirates selected in the 11th round of the 2014 Major League Baseball amateur draft. Hinsz has a 1-2 record with a 7.71 ERA in his four starts with the RedHawks this season. F-M is in first place in the American Association

North Division entering Tuesday night's game against the Milwaukee Milkmen at Newman Outdoor Field. "We know he has the tools to succeed," RedHawks manager Chris Coste said. "It's just a matter of
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No growing pains for Moorhead boys lacrosse

Spuds reach section final in only 2nd season of competition

By Carissa Wigginton
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MOORHEAD — Moorhead's boys lacrosse team won four games in its inaugural season two years ago. It was a year of firsts for the Spuds and the handful of players who were brand new to the sport. After a one-year break

because of the pandemic, they weren't sure what to expect heading into Year 2. The Spuds, who came on to the prep lacrosse scene in spring 2019, concluded their inaugural campaign with a 4-7 record. "Going into this year, I'd say we didn't really know what we were getting into right away, but it came together pretty quickly," said Moorhead assistant John Deelstra. At Moorhead, there are no growing pains. In their third year of existence and second

season of high school action, the Spuds (9-3) have more than doubled their number of first-year wins, and earned themselves a trip to the section championship. The fourth-seeded Spuds knocked off top-seeded St. Michael-Albertville in the semifinals of the Class 1A, Section 8 tournament Monday. Moorhead clinched a berth in Wednesday's section final with a 9-5 win over the Knights. "It feels pretty good, because those guys were

supposed to be the powerhouse of our section," said Andrew Searls, a junior attack. "And a lot of people really didn't think that we'd win, so I think it's pretty cool we came out with one." The Spuds play third-seeded Buffalo (10-5) in the section championship at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Buffalo High School. The Bison beat sixth-seeded Monticello 17-11 in the quarterfinals and posted a 17-12 win over No. 2 seed
SPUDS: Page B3



WDAY file photo

In their third year of existence and second season of high school action, the Moorhead boys lacrosse team earned a trip to the Class 1A, Section 8 championship. The Spuds play Buffalo at 7 p.m. Wednesday for a section title.

Fraternity of referees band together to help family of veteran local official

By Jeff Kolpack
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FARGO — When the Zebras Ryder Cup golf tournament commences around 11 a.m. on June 30 at Maple River Golf Club, there won't be a shortage of officials. In fact, they'll be everywhere. Yes, referees do have plenty of friends. "No doubt," said Dave Klundt, in his 39th year of officiating. "Especially at the college level, you spend a lot of wind-shield time together. There becomes a bond there."



Klundt

That bond is coming together to help Dave's daughter, Katie Klundt, who is battling a nervous system disorder. The original intent of the tournament was an event to get current and retired officials together, but morphed into helping Dave at the suggestion of a couple of others. "I'm a retired military guy and it reminds me in the military of a band

of brothers," said Chris Heise, a longtime official who is a driver behind the event. "When we do a baseball, basketball or football game, they're your best friends out there. We work together as a team." It didn't take long for officials to take notice once word got out. The tournament is full with a waiting list of 12 golfers. To add some spice, the 18 holes will be divided into three separate Ryder Cup formats for two-person teams: six holes of best
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Veteran official Chris Heise is one of the backers behind the Zebras Ryder Cup fundraiser June 30, 2021, at Maple River Golf Course.
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SPUDS

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Elk River in the semis.

"I think this one is kind of a matchup we were hoping for," Deelstra said. "It's been kind of like a revenge tour, playing STMA after getting our butts kicked by them and beating them. I'd say Buffalo is next on the list."

Buffalo edged Moorhead 9-8 in the lone regular-season meeting between the teams. In 2019, the Bison ended Moorhead's season in the Section 8A round of 16. Though, the Spuds aren't dwelling on either loss.

"After our game in Buffalo at the start of the year, everyone has been talking about how we want to play them again," Searls said. "I think everyone will be fired up, and it should be a fun game."

The Spuds used a high-scoring fourth quarter on Monday to get past the Knights, who beat them 15-6 just over five weeks ago in the regular season. Moorhead opened the final semifinal frame with four unanswered goals. STMA cut the lead with two scores in the last three minutes, but the



The Moorhead boys lacrosse team is finding success in their second season of high school action.

Spuds were too much to handle.

"Everyone was definitely hyped up on the bench and on the field," said Gavin Feil, a sophomore defender. "With the final seconds winding down, you had to kind of step back and realize, 'Hey, we really did it. We did what everyone thought we wouldn't be able to do.'"

Deelstra gave credit to Spuds goalie Gavin Lindberg, whose "play has been outstanding throughout this tournament." Lindberg also plays hockey for Moorhead.

Moorhead has enjoyed a rare level of success for a program so new. The Moorhead School Board

voted to bring boys and girls lacrosse to the high school in June 2018.

The Spuds set the standard early on as they opened this season with three straight wins — outscoring their first three opponents by a combined 37-9.

They flew into the playoffs a bit under the radar, but have proved to be a team not to underestimate. The Spuds grabbed their first post-season win in program history with a dominant, 15-2 victory over No. 5 seed Becker in the quarterfinals last Thursday.

"Coming from Moorhead, in sports, we've always been a hard-working city overall," said Feil, a defen-

sive captain. "We've always kind of been the underdogs, not being in the (Twin Cities) area. We knew we'd have to work for it, that's for sure."

All three of Moorhead's losses this season came during a three-game skid. The Spuds bounced back to win the next six games, and will be riding that six-game win streak into the section final.

"I think with some of the new schemes that were installed, the chemistry has just blossomed so much over the last couple of weeks," Deelstra said. "They've really been able to mesh and know what each other is going to be doing."

As they prepare for



Moorhead knocked off top-seeded St. Michael-Albertville in the Class 1A, Section 8 semifinals to reach Wednesday's section final.

Wednesday's matchup, it's business as usual for the Spuds. The expectations remain the same.

"Just do the simple things," Searls said.

Sports reporter Carissa Wigginton can be reached at (701) 241-5536.

HINSZ

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continuing to build up the endurance for him."

Three years removed from open heart surgery and nearly two years removed from Tommy John surgery, Hinsz said he's working his way back to full strength after pitching only 25 innings over 2018, 2019 and 2020.

"It's definitely been nice to play again. I couldn't be more thankful for the RedHawks giving me the opportunity to come back and play," he said. "Other than working through some of the bugs with having a new elbow, my arm feels as good as it ever has. ... I feel like there is just as much in the tank as in the past. It's just a matter of building back up and getting to that point."

The 6-foot-2, 222-pound Hinsz said coming back from the Tommy John surgery has been more challenging than bouncing back from the heart procedure. He still gets yearly checkups for his heart.

"I would say the

arm," Hinsz said on what took longer to recover. "The heart surgery, that was going to take time, that's something that had to happen."

Prior to the 2015 season, a routine physical with the Pirates is when Hinsz learned he had a heart murmur. After that, he had annual checkups to monitor his heart. A 2018 checkup revealed the valve leak had worsened.

"Luckily, I was getting physicals every year so we knew something was wrong," Hinsz said. "We knew that I had a leaky valve. It just got to the point where it was time for surgery."

After a successful surgery, Hinsz said he spent one night in the intensive care unit and a few nights in the hospital before he returned to Billings. Dr. Lars Svensson performed the surgery at the Cleveland Clinic.

"Recovery wasn't bad," said Hinsz, who wasn't allowed to carry anything heavier than a carton of milk for four to six weeks after the surgery. "It was a slow gradual buildup."

Hinsz said he started throwing again about 6 to 9 weeks after the

surgery and played winter ball in Puerto Rico that following fall, pitching 25 innings. He returned home before Christmas in 2018.

"I just wanted to go home and be with the family, especially that year," he said.

Hinsz said he is grateful for the support he's received from family, friends and teammates over the past few years. Some of his friends set up a GoFundMe to help pay for his medical expenses.

"I couldn't be more thankful for all of them helping out," he said.

Hinsz said he was having a good 2019 spring training when something in his elbow didn't feel right as he broke camp with the Pirates Class Double-A affiliate. He tried to rehab the injury for several months before having Tommy John surgery that July.

"We're headed in a good direction right now," Hinsz said of this season with the RedHawks. "The first several outings it was making sure I was taking care of my arm. ... I feel like I finally got that nailed down."

Hinsz, who went to Billings West High

School, played American Legion baseball for the Billings Scarlets prior to being drafted since Montana doesn't have prep baseball. Away from the baseball

diamond, he likes to work on older vehicles and hunt. One of his favorite vehicles is a 1971 Plymouth Barracuda.

"It's green at the

moment with a little bit of rust," Hinsz said with a laugh. "It's not quite running yet, it's pretty close. I like getting them mechanically as sound as possible."

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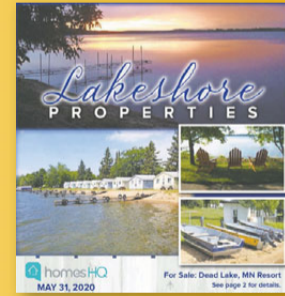
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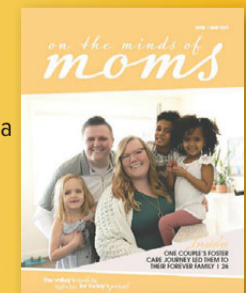
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Vikings beat Texans to Mond on draft day

By Chris Tomasson
St. Paul Pioneer Press

Quarterback Kellen Mond will play next season for the Minnesota Vikings, 1,250 miles north of his hometown of San Antonio. For an instant, though, it looked as if he might have stayed in his native Texas.

Mond was drafted out of Texas A&M with the No. 66 pick in the third round by the Vikings on April 30, the second day of the NFL draft. They apparently snatched him away from the Houston Texans, who had the No. 67 selection.

"(There was a) phone call from his agent, text message, and the agent said, 'Hey, the Houston Texans are getting ready to select (Mond) at pick 67,'" Mond's father, Kevin, said. "So, we're sitting (at the San Antonio family home) on the couch and (Mond) gets the phone call a couple of minutes later and it's a team."

"Then, when he hung up the phone, he goes, 'I'm going to the Vikings.'" The Texans had already told his agent they're getting ready to take him at pick 67. The Vikings happened to have the pick 66."

Houston wound up

choosing Stanford quarterback Davis Mills with the next pick.

"It wasn't supposed to be Mills," Kevin Mond said. "It was going to be Kellen."

Mond is expected to back up Kirk Cousins this fall. Had he gone to the Texans, he might have found himself in the mix to start as a rookie considering the uncertain future of Deshaun Watson, who is facing 22 civil lawsuits accusing him of sexual assault and inappropriate behavior. Watson has denied the accusations.

Nevertheless, Kevin Mond said his son is pleased he instead ended up with the Vikings.

"I think he's comfortable and he likes the decision," Mond's father said. "He's thrilled about being in Minnesota. ... In Houston, he might be rushed into it. (He can) sit back and watch and learn. But he's a fast learner."

Kevin Mond said his son has no issues with playing far from home after it had looked as if he might stay in Texas. Houston is about 200 miles from San Antonio, and about 100 from Texas A&M in College Station.

"He wanted to get away," the senior Mond



Craig Lassig / Special to the St. Paul Pioneer Press

Quarterback Kellen Mond (11) during the Minnesota Vikings rookie minicamp at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center in Eagan, Minn. on Friday, May 14, 2021.

said. "He wanted to start his own life, his own career and get away and do things away from family and Texas, and A&M is right down the highway. He just wants to start his own journey, and I think that's good."

"You work with the hand you're dealt," he

continued. "If that's the hand you're dealt, you go and you work and you work to get better and you've got to do that no matter where you're at. He's got to do that in Minnesota, so he would have handled (going to Houston) fine."

For now, Mond is busy getting acclimated in

Minnesota. He took part Tuesday in the seventh practice of organized team activities, which will conclude Friday. The Vikings on June 15-17 will complete spring drills with a mandatory minicamp.

"Kellen has done a good job," head coach Mike Zimmer said last week.

"He's hanging in there mentally with everything. The coaches are working all the time with him, continually working. He's still got a long way to go. But as far as the mental aspect of things, he's hanging in there pretty good."

Vikings announce signing of cornerback Amari Henderson



Brad Penner / USA TODAY Sports

Michigan State running back Elijah Collins (24) runs the ball against Wake Forest defensive back Amari Henderson (4) during the third quarter of the 2019 Pinstripe Bowl at Yankee Stadium. The Minnesota Vikings signed Henderson this week.

By Chris Tomasson
St. Paul Pioneer Press

The Minnesota Vikings have had success with players who try out at rookie minicamps. They hope that trend will continue.

The team on Tuesday, June 8, announced the signing of cornerback Amari Henderson, who tried out at the May 14-16 rookie minicamp. The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported the impending move on Monday.

Previous tryout players to make a mark for the Vikings include two-time Pro Bowl wide receiver

Adam Thielen, receiver Chad Beebe and former kick returner Marcus Sherels.

Henderson was undrafted out of Wake Forest in 2020 after being second in the Atlantic Coast Conference in 2019 with four interceptions. He was then signed by Jacksonville and spent the first week of the season on the Jaguars' practice squad before being released. The 6-foot-1 Henderson has bulked up from 168 to 188 pounds since being undrafted.

The Pioneer Press reported on May 16 that

the Vikings wanted to sign Henderson after he concluded the rookie minicamp but the death of his older brother delayed the process. According to a source, Henderson's brother was killed in a hit-and-run accident in Texas on May 13, the day before the start of the minicamp, and his funeral was May 29 in Ohio.

Henderson's signing gives the Vikings 11 cornerbacks on the roster, and it brings their off-season roster up to the NFL maximum of 90. He took part in Tuesday's

start of the third week of organized team activities.

The Vikings on Tuesday also officially signed cornerback Bashaud Breeland, who had agreed to terms last Friday on a one-year deal that a source said is worth as much as \$4 million. Breeland took part in Tuesday's OTA session.

Henderson becomes the second player signed by the Vikings after attending last month's rookie minicamp as a tryout player. They signed tackle Evin Ksziezarczyk on May 17.

Teammates defend no-show Rodgers at Packers minicamp

Field Level Media

Those holding out hope for a resolution to the Aaron Rodgers standoff with the Green Bay Packers are out of luck.

Rodgers is not present at the team's mandatory minicamp, which began Tuesday morning with team meetings.

The 37-year-old quarterback is entangled in a tense holdout he said is tied to the team's management of the roster and communication with the front office.

Rodgers has told members of the organization he wants a trade and will not play in Green Bay again.

But team president Mark Murphy and general manager Brian Gutekunst insist there's no trade coming for the reigning NFL MVP, despite inquiries from multiple teams, including the San Francisco 49ers and Denver

Broncos.

Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur said all he can do is coach the players who show up.

"You'd love everybody to be here," LaFleur said. "It is what it is, man, and we'll focus and we'll control and work on the guys that are here and try to help them become the best to their ability and coach the heck out of them."

Packers receiver Davante Adams and offensive tackle David Bakhtiari weren't timid about the situation. Both players made it clear they stand firmly behind Rodgers.

"I've got his back through everything so he knows that, at the end of the day, if there's ever a wonder if he's lost a teammate or something because of all that's come out, he knows where I stand," said Adams,



Jeff Hanisch / USA TODAY Sports

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) warms up before playing the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Jan. 24, 2021, at Lambeau Field.

a four-time Pro Bowl selection who led the NFL with 18 touchdowns catches last season. "I'll stand on the (bleeping) mountain and scream on the mountaintop that I've got his back."

Bakhtiari, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, is a close friend of Rodgers. He attended last month's Kentucky Derby with his

longtime teammate.

"For me, I care about Aaron Rodgers from a friend perspective," Bakhtiari said. "Whatever he wants to do, whatever the situation that comes out, I will never hold any grudge against him. That is my friend. That is someone that I have appreciated, and he has done a lot for this orga-

nization and a lot for me as an individual.

"Now, as a teammate I would be idiotic to say that I don't want the MVP back. He's the MVP of the league last year. He's done amazing things as from the quarterback perspective, our quarterback position, but not only for the franchise. So absolutely."

With Rodgers staying away — he's been training in California and recently vacationed in Hawaii — the Packers are using 2020 first-round pick Jordan Love at quarterback with the first-team offense.

Love experienced some rough spots on Tuesday, particularly with his accuracy.

"He needs every rep he can get right now," LaFleur said of Love. "He's a young quarterback that was not afforded a pre-season last year, and so

we'll give him as many (snaps) as he can handle. We'll spell him every now and again, but I just think every rep that he takes is so valuable, and he can learn something from both the good and the bad."

If he sticks to his hold-out stance or retires, Rodgers has a base salary of \$14.7 million in 2021 he'd forfeit. He could also be forced to pay back previously earned bonuses.

Because the minicamp is mandatory, Rodgers is subject up to \$93,805 in fines if he misses the entire three-day camp.

Four Green Bay players are being held out due to COVID-19 protocols: linebackers Preston Smith and Za'Darius Smith, guard Elgton Jenkins and defensive end Dean Lowry.

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ball, six holes of alternate shot and a six-hole scramble.

A dinner, social and silent auction will follow at Hagg's Bar & Grill in Mapleton. Golfers are coming from all corners of North Dakota and Minnesota. For instance, Ron Wright, a retired referee from Williston, N.D., sent three boxes of Terry Redlin prints for the auction.

Aaron Hill, one of the owners of the Fargo Brewery and a former referee, donated several items from his business.



Submitted photo
Dave Klundt is in his 39th year of officiating various sports including basketball.

"It has snowballed into a blizzard, which is a good thing," said Heise, whose best man in his

wedding was Klundt. "I'm not surprised because Dave knows a lot of people."

Klundt, from Fargo and the events and aquatics manager for the Fargo Park District, has been all over the map in his contribution to officiating. He's been on a football crew in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference for years and assigns crews for football games in the North Star Athletic Association.

He's reffed at the college and high school level in basketball for many years, a job where he's worked mainly with about a dozen familiar faces. He officiated an NCAA Division III women's basketball national tournament quarterfi-

nal game and numerous conference tournaments. He's umpired NAIA, high school and American Legion baseball.

"You do your job and focus on that but the relationships you build, the camaraderie — giving each other a hard time — you spend more time doing that," Klundt said. "And then you get to some point where it's let's focus on the game. Let's talk about new rules, mechanics, maybe the league and some game film they want us to look at. But the vast majority of the time, it's about getting to know each other."

Dave said Katie is working her way from being in a wheelchair to a walker. There's no official diagnosis but she's on the mend. Lend A Hand Up (www.lendahandup.org) is matching funds up to \$5,000.

"I've known Chris for 35 years, it's typical Chris," Dave said. "He's such a kind-hearted, organized guy who always wants to help out people. When he sets his mind to doing something, he's always in. It is much appreciated."

Readers can reach Forum reporter Jeff Kolpack at (701) 241-5546. Kolpack's Media Blog can be found at www.inforum.com/bison-media-blog and Twitter @FGSPORTSWRITER

Baffert demands Medina Spirit urine tested

Attorneys for Kentucky Derby-winning trainer have gone to court

By Janet Patton
Lexington Herald-Leader

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Attorneys for Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert and the owner of Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit have gone to court in Frankfort to force the state's racing commission to allow more testing.

In a lawsuit filed Monday in Franklin Circuit Court, Baffert and Zedan Racing Stables asked the court to make the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission allow testing on the urine samples taken at Churchill Downs on May 1.

A hearing on the request is scheduled for 9 a.m. Friday.

Medina Spirit won the Kentucky Derby but tested positive for betamethasone, a steroid that cannot be used during racing. Baffert contends that the horse was treated for a

skin condition with an ointment that contains betamethasone.

A second test of the split sample of Medina Spirit's blood confirmed the presence of betamethasone last week, according to Craig Robertson, Baffert's attorney.

The finding prompted Churchill Downs to announce that Baffert and his employees would be barred from racing or training any horses at tracks owned by the Louisville company for two years.

Clark Brewster, attorney for horse owner Amr Zedan, has said that veterinary records support Baffert's contention that the horse must have acquired the drug through the application of the ointment because there is no indication Medina Spirit was given a joint injection of betamethasone.

According to the attorneys, the first test found a level of 21 picograms per milliliter of blood, a level they allege is consistent with using the ointment once a day for weeks.

However, the method of administration is not spelled out in racing regulations. The Kentucky Horse Racing Commission has yet to act on the case.

At issue: Whether or not Medina Spirit will be stripped of the Kentucky Derby win, which was Baffert's seventh, and the \$1.68 million purse that goes with it.

The racing commission agreed to allow the remainder of the original blood sample to be tested for other ingredients found in the Otomax ointment but not in the injection.

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Andy Lyons / Getty Images / TNS
Trainer Bob Baffert of Medina Spirit, raises the trophy after winning the 147th running of the Kentucky Derby with Medina Spirit, his seventh career Kentucky Derby win, at Churchill Downs on May 1, 2021, in Louisville, Ky.

Are our days of domination over?

NCAA programs cutting Olympic sports; medal count could decline

By David Wharton
Los Angeles Times

The story goes back a ways, back to the mid-1980s, when Michael Johnson was still in high school.

The famous sprinter was years away from winning gold medals at three consecutive Summer Olympics. He wasn't yet known for those glittering golden spikes.

A nerdy kid, Johnson was running track at a small magnet school in Dallas. The team's coach, Joel Ezar, who taught health class during the day, knew only a little about technique but could spot raw talent.

"No one was paying attention to me," Johnson recalls, "until he started writing letters to all these colleges."

Baylor University offered the unpolished athlete a chance to hone his skills with a coaching staff versed in speed and strength training.

"It was a critical moment for me," says Johnson, who wonders whether he might otherwise have fallen through the cracks and never become an Olympian. "I made a huge leap when I got to college."

This story might sound quaint but it shows how college sports have served as a vast feeder system, helping the Americans dominate every Summer Games for the past 25 years and making them favorites to again win a lion's share of medals at the Tokyo Olympics.

People need to know how it works, Johnson says. They need to understand because the U.S. winning streak could be history — no more piles of gold, silver and bronze — by the time the 2028 Los Angeles Games come around.

Countries such as China, Russia and Germany follow a different method, identifying a small number of prospects at an early age and funneling them into specialized training academies.

The U.S. relies instead on its broad network of colleges



James Lang / USA TODAY Sports
Americans Brianna Rollins, Nia Ali and Kristi Castlin celebrate with American flags after sweeping the women's 100m hurdles final in the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games at Estadio Olimpico Joao Havelange.

to serve as a kind of minor leagues.

As a result, the American team can choose from thousands of candidates to restock its roster every four years.

But that pipeline is now in danger of slowing to a trickle, in large part because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial impact, with scores of universities cutting costs by downsizing their athletic departments.

Football, a non-Olympic sport, and basketball, a prominent Olympic sport, but one that yields few medals, have been spared because they generate tens of millions through ticket

sales and broadcast rights. The ax has fallen instead on such sports as the Summer Games trinity of track, swimming and gymnastics, which operate at a deficit. So far, hundreds of teams have been eliminated nationwide.

Prominent NCAA schools such as Iowa, Minnesota and Connecticut have made cuts, as have many smaller Division II and Division III campuses.

A few universities, including Brown and Clemson, have backed down in the face of public pressure. Stanford, which ranks with USC and UCLA in sending athletes to the Olympics, reinstated 11 teams it planned to drop.

Still, officials see a worrisome trend.

"Eighty percent of our Summer Olympics teams come from college," says Sarah Wilhelmi, a U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee executive. "When college programs are cut, there are dominoes related to those cuts."

A smaller talent pool means fewer athletes to choose from, fewer chances to strike gold. If the trend continues, Americans could soon be knocked off their perch atop the medals table, the unofficial scorecard that fans watch so closely at every Games.

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Refugee team to compete at Tokyo games

Team includes people from Syria, South Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iran

By Karolos Grohmann
Reuters

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (Reuters) — An expanded refugee team of 29 athletes competing across 12 sports at next month's Tokyo Games will provide hope and inspiration to the world, the International Olympic Committee said on Tuesday.

The team, which will compete under the Olympic flag and include people from countries including Syria, South Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Iran, is almost three times as big as the inaugural team at the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics.

Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini, who swam to safety when her boat capsized between Turkey and Greece in 2015, will be back for her second Games after taking Rio by storm.

Also on the team are Kimia Alizadeh, Iran's first female Olympic medalist when she won bronze in taekwondo at the 2016 Olympics and fellow Iranian canoe racer Saied Fazlola.

Alizadeh left in 2020 saying she was oppressed as a woman, while Fazlola reached Germany in 2015 via the Balkans.

"I speak on behalf of the entire Olympic Movement when I say that we cannot wait to meet you in person and to see you compete in Tokyo," IOC President Thomas Bach said at a virtual presentation of the team.

"It will send a powerful message of solidarity, resilience and hope to the world ... You are an integral part of our Olympic community, and we welcome you with open arms."

The athletes, who will march into the stadium during the opening ceremony in second place behind ancient Games founders Greece, were selected from a pool of 56, supported by Olympic scholarships from 13 different countries.

The IOC unveiled its first refugee team at the Rio Games to raise awareness of the issue as hundreds of thousands of people were pouring into Europe from the Middle East and elsewhere escaping conflict and poverty.

That 10-member team from Syria, Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan competed in athletics, swimming and judo.

Jim Fassel, longtime NFL coach, dies at 71

By Sam Farmer
Los Angeles Times

Jim Fassel, a longtime NFL offensive coach who was the league's coach of the year in 1997, has died at age 71.

Fassel's son, John, confirmed his father's death to the Los Angeles Times on Monday night, saying he got the news during a phone call in the afternoon. John Fassel formerly was the Rams' special teams coach and briefly served as the team's interim head coach.

Jim Fassel, who lived in Las Vegas, suffered chest pains Monday and was taken to a

local hospital by a friend. He died of a heart attack while under sedation, his son said.

John Fassel provided The Los Angeles Times with a statement Tuesday morning on his father's death:

"It is with a very heavy heart to announce that we lost our Dad yesterday. Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. While our Dad will be remembered as a longtime fan and face of the football world, his legacy will live forever in our hearts as the greatest Dad and Grandpa of all time. He leaves behind his wife Kitty,

their 5 kids and spouses, as well as 16 happy and healthy grandkids. We love you Dad."

Jim Fassel was coach of the New York Giants from 1997 to 2003. He is one of three coaches to lead the Giants to the Super Bowl. His team lost to the Baltimore Ravens in Super Bowl XXXV at the end of the 2000 season.

He spent the bulk of his career as a quarterbacks and offensive coordinator in the college ranks (Utah — where he was later head coach — Weber State, Stanford) and NFL (Denver, Oakland, Arizona, Baltimore). His last foot-

ball job was as head coach of the Las Vegas Locomotives of the United Football League from 2009 to 2012.

A graduate of Anaheim High, Fassel played quarterback at Fullerton College, USC and Long Beach State. He was the Chicago Bears' seventh-round selection in 1972. It led to stints that year with the San Diego Chargers and Houston Oilers before brief stops with the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts and The Hawaiians of the World Football League.

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Turtles need our help crossing the road



Bob King / Forum News Service

A snapping turtle moves across a highway near Ely, Minn., encouraged a bit by the photographer. Wildlife experts are encouraging Northlanders to slow down when driving near lakes and wetlands in June and to help turtles cross the road as they make seasonal migrations. But be careful with snappers.

Kreuziger contacted the DNR about a highway in Waukesha County where many turtles were crossing. She raised money to pay for stenciling a turtle crossing sign to alert motorists. The Waukesha County highway department did the work last fall and Ella received her Silver Award in scouting for helping turtles cross to safety.

Report Blanding's and wood turtle sightings

Despite its threatened species status, Blanding's turtles are still seen fairly often in some areas of Minnesota. But fewer and fewer young Blanding's are hatching each year due to habitat loss, road mortality and, in some cases, illegal poaching to be sold as pets. Wood turtles are facing similar issues.

Both species remain legally protected throughout all of Minnesota and technically may not be handled or possessed without a special permit. However, in life-or-death situations (for the turtle) it's OK to help them cross a road. Do not bring the turtle into an automobile or place in a container, even temporarily, while helping the turtle out of harm's way.

When possible, document your encounter for Blanding's and wood turtles with a couple of photographs, be sure to note the date and your location. Email or call your regional DNR non-game wildlife specialist. In Northeastern Minnesota that's Gaea Crozier at gaea.crozier@state.mn.us or 218-328-8811. In Northwestern Minnesota it's Amy Westmark at amy.westmark@state.mn.us or 218-308-2641.

Snappers and softshells: Be careful!

Although many turtles may attempt to bite when restrained, snapping turtles and spiny softshells, often referred to as leatherbacks, are particularly aggressive, surprisingly quick and will bite with little provocation. In addition, exceptionally long necks enable snappers and softshells to reach around and deliver painful bites if picked up

by the sides of the shell. Only experienced handlers should attempt to lift snapping turtles or softshells clear of the ground. Snapping turtles should never be picked up by the tail; this can damage their spinal cord. Grabbing an aggressive turtle by one rear leg while supporting the turtle from below with your other hand is usually safe for both you and the turtle. Or you can encourage movement off the road with a twig or branch, broom, shovel or similar object to gently prod the animals along from behind. (If the turtle bites your prodding device it may hang on long enough to be pulled to safety.)

How to help turtles cross the road:

- ▶ Don't put yourself or others in danger. Pull off the road and turn on your hazard lights to alert other drivers to slow down. Check your surroundings and be careful of traffic.
 - ▶ Same direction! Always move turtles in the same direction they were traveling when encountered. Turtles should always be moved across roadways in as direct a line as possible. Do not take them to a nearby lake or pond, that may not be where they were going.
 - ▶ Avoid excessive handling. Take a quick look, snap a photo and then release the turtle quickly in a safe spot.
 - ▶ Allow unassisted crossings if possible. When turtles can safely cross roads unaided due to a lack of oncoming traffic, let them do so. Observe from a distance and avoid rapid movements, as doing otherwise will often cause turtles to change direction, stop or hide within their shells.
 - ▶ Handle turtles gently. If it's necessary to pick them up, all turtles except snappers and softshells should be grasped gently along the shell edge near the midpoint of the body. Warning: Many turtles empty their bladder when lifted off the ground, so be careful not to drop them if they should suddenly start peeing.
- Sources: Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR

GPS study helps shed light on waterfowl migration patterns

The lack of winter snowpack created a bit of mystery as to when the spring snow goose migration would begin, which route the birds would take and if the lack of snow would slide the geese through without delay.

Coming up with the answer was a combination of biology, gut feeling and observation.

Luckily for waterfowl biologists, advances in technology are generating more confident results in the movements of waterfowl no matter the time of year.

"From a waterfowl ecology perspective, it's difficult to study ducks in late summer because birds are moving and shuffling around a lot," said Mike Szymanski, North Dakota Game and Fish Department migratory game bird management supervisor.

With previous technology, Szymanski said biologists would have been driving around in vehicles or flying in airplanes with VHF transmitter receivers trying to find marked birds that could have moved hundreds of miles.

"With the advancements in technology, specifically batteries getting smaller, we had the ability to pursue a GPS transmitter study to look at some of the aspects of post-breeding mallards after they start to fledge or attain flight in late summer," Szymanski said. "The



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study design also lends itself to many other uses. With the data, we'll be able to work the project from many angles and figure out a lot of movement and migration dynamics of mallards in fall."

Cynthia Anchor, a South Dakota State University master's student who spent considerable time in the field capturing ducks, is responsible for managing the GPS data and eventually analyzing and writing up the results of the two-year study in North Dakota and South Dakota. While there is a ton of data to further analyze, Anchor said she was surprised by some of the movements the marked mallards had made.

"We had one bird, for example, that was marked south of Bismarck that moved up to Canada and spent most of the pre-migration period in Canada," she said. "We had another bird that left North Dakota, went to Arkansas and then moved to eastern Ohio. So, we're seeing some movements that are going to be really tricky to explain."

"We have seen birds that were marked from all over, kind of converge into the same general areas, especially in northeastern South Dakota," Anchor

added. "I think the first year, we had two or three birds from North Dakota and two birds from South Dakota all using the same random wetland in South Dakota at the same time. And none of those birds were related, none were marked together. They just happened to end up in the same place."

While it's easy to understand ducks pointing their bills south and migrating to warmer climates during the leaner months, Szymanski said people don't immediately think birds move north, east or west before their actual migration.

"Having the ability to collect data in between harvest and marking is very beneficial to painting the picture of their movements," Szymanski said. "We're still looking at the movements, trying to figure out if there is a connection to the directions that they go, the distances they go, and how it possibly relates to habitat, weather and other factors."

"I'm a waterfowl hunter and I knew coming in this was going to be part of the project, and it's been kind of interesting to hear some of the stories from hunters," Anchor said. "In North Dakota, our very first bird was harvested by a 10-year-old, a new hunter who had never shot a mallard before."

Leier is an outreach biologist for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Reach him at dleier@nd.gov.

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