

KOBE BRYANT 1978-2020

His 'Mamba' mentality drove Lakers legend to greatness

“ Beyond devastated ... my big brother ... I can't, I just can't believe it.”

Pau Gasol, a former teammate of Bryant's with the Lakers

“ There is a hole in the basketball world and there will be for a long time. Rest in heavenly peace.”

The Rev. Jesse Jackson

“ There was nobody who took more pride in putting on that Laker uniform than Kobe. Nobody. He was just special.”

Lakers great Magic Johnson

“ A true gladiator in our life time.”

Rapper Wyclef Jean

MARK RALSTON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Bryant's tragic death leaves NBA players, others in shock

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kobe Bryant authored some of his most memorable moments at Madison Square Garden and made himself a centerpiece of the Lakers-Celtics rivalry.

Bryant was remembered for that and so much more Sunday after the five-time NBA champion, his teenage daughter and seven others were killed in a helicopter crash.

Tributes poured in from around the basketball, entertainment and political worlds. Players and teams who competed with and

against Bryant struggled their way through the games that were scheduled, unable to summon his intense competitive spirit.

“We laughed and joked about the Mamba mentality. We're all going to need it right now,” Clippers coach Doc Rivers said through tears before his team played in Orlando.

Madison Square Garden was lit up in the Lakers' gold and purple colors for the game between the New York Knicks and Brooklyn Nets. Nets star Kyrie Irving didn't play, leaving the

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LENNY IGNELZI/ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Gianna Maria-Onore Bryant sits on the shoulders of her father, Kobe, as they attend a women's soccer game between the United States and China in April 2014. Gianna also died in the helicopter crash. She was 13.

COMMENT

How can it be? Kobe's story wasn't supposed to end like this.

BY BILL PLASCHKE
Los Angeles Times

Kobe Bryant is gone. I'm screaming right now, cursing into the sky, crying into my keyboard, and I don't care who knows it.

Kobe Bryant is gone, and those are the hardest words I've ever had to write for this newspaper, and I still don't believe them as I'm writing them. I'm still crying, and go ahead, let it out. Don't be embarrassed, cry with me, weep and wail

and shout into the streets, fill a suddenly empty Los Angeles with your pain. Damn it. Damn it! Damn it!!

Los Angeles Lakers legend Bryant, 41, and his 13-year-old daughter Gianna were among nine people who died in a helicopter crash Sunday in Calabasas and how does that happen? Kobe is stronger than any helicopter. He didn't even need a helicopter. For 20 years he flew into greatness while carrying a

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JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: Joey Logano celebrates Sunday after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Pennzoil 400 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

BELOW: British boxer Tyson Fury celebrates late Saturday night after defeating Deontay Wilder of the U.S. in the seventh round of their heavyweight title bout at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

FAST & FURY-OUS



MARK RALSTON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

NASCAR AT LAS VEGAS

LOGANO OVERCOMES A MISSED PIT CALL FOR REPEAT IN SIN CITY

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The adjustments to a major offseason overhaul at Team Penske continued Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, where miscommunication between Joey Logano and his new crew chief led to a botched final pit stop.

Logano still wound up in Victory Lane for the second year in a row, winning a two-lap

sprint to the finish that ended under caution. A caution with six laps remaining forced teams to make strategic decisions and crew chief Paul Wolfe told Logano to come to pit road for new tires. Logano didn't hear Wolfe and remained on track, a move that cycled him into the lead but put him in position to hold off a slew of contenders on fresh tires.

Logano knew it was critical to get his Ford

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BOXING AT LAS VEGAS

SING A SONG FOR GYPSY KING, THE NEW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP

BY TIM DAHLBERG
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The world has never seen a heavyweight champion quite like Tyson Fury, the British behemoth who gave Deontay Wilder a beatdown to win the heavyweight title and then celebrated by leading his fans in a chorus of "American Pie" from the ring at the MGM Grand hotel.

He can fight, he can sing and he can talk. Oh, can he talk.

Before the fight Fury talked nonstop about how he was going to switch from boxer to puncher to take the heavyweight title from Wilder. After the fight he talked about how he did just that — and will only get better as his career goes on.

"Not bad for a fat guy who can't punch,"

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NHL WASHINGTON CAPITALS

Can Ovechkin catch Gretzky? The new Mr. 700 has a shot.

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Alex Ovechkin is making the seemingly impossible appear to be not so far-fetched after all.

Wayne Gretzky's 894 career goals has, for decades, loomed as one of hockey's most untouchable records. The "Great One" set the bar so high it appeared out of reach for even the NHL's best scorers.

Ovechkin, on Saturday, became the second-fastest and sec-

ond-youngest player to reach 700 goals behind only Gretzky. Because he's only 34 and shows no signs of slowing down, belief is growing that Ovechkin can challenge Gretzky's mark.

"Alex is going to score another probably 150 goals, maybe more, before he retires," Hall of Famer and fellow 700 goal-scorer Phil Esposito said. "He's got a chance to catch Wayne. There's no doubt about that."

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BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Alex Ovechkin celebrates his goal against the New Jersey Devils on Saturday. Ovechkin became the eighth player in NHL history to score 700 goals.

MLB BALTIMORE

No such thing as normal spring day for O's catchers

BY JON MEOLI
The Baltimore Sun

SARASOTA, Fla. — No one likes showing up for work at 6 a.m. to have their time wasted. So when the Orioles' seven spring training catchers got stretched out, strapped up and ready for early work in the cage before Wednesday's sunrise, it was all business.

Then Tim Cossins, the major league field coordinator/catching instructor running the show, reached into a bucket of balls he was feeding into a pitching machine for a blocking drill and found a rubber snake.

So began a day that was typical of a catcher in spring training, but only in how different it was from



JOHN BAZEMORE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baltimore Orioles prospect Adley Rutschman, 22, works with a pitcher during spring training Saturday in Sarasota, Florida.

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PPD



It will be longer before current athletes can follow in the footsteps of such players as Great Bridge soccer standout Bennie Raymond, shown in 2017.

STAFF FILE

ROAD TO MASTERS LEADS NOWHERE AS GOLF SHUTS DOWN

BY DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — For the last 75 years, the golf landscape never changed. March brought anticipation of azaleas and Amen Corner, of the drive down Magnolia Lane and the chase for a green jacket.

The annual road to the Masters took a major detour Friday — but not a dead end, like other tournaments — when Augusta National said the Masters would be postponed because of increasing risks with the new coronavirus.

It was expected, but no less jarring, even as the Masters joined other big sporting events that were suspended (NBA, NHL), delayed (Major League Baseball) or canceled (NCAA basketball tournament).

Xander Schauffele was quick to find hope.

“Well, postponed is a comforting word,” Schauffele said. “Canceled is another.”

Augusta National offered no details except for Chairman Fred Ridley saying he hopes the postponement

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TIM DOMINICK/ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Augusta National decided Friday to postpone the Masters to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

VHSL PUSHES BACK SPRING START DATE AT LEAST 2 WEEKS

BY GREG GIESEN,
JAMI FRANKENBERRY,
LARRY RUBAMA
Staff writers

Editor's note: The coronavirus outbreak is a serious threat. We are taking every step to make sure our coverage is well-sourced and ethical. We believe providing facts reduces panic and empowers readers to make informed decisions about their health.

The Virginia High School League pushed back the start date for the spring sports season for

two weeks because of coronavirus concerns.

The first date for teams to play spring sports events was Monday. The date is moved to March 30.

“After continuing to assess the impact of COVID-19, we convened the VHSL Crisis Management Committee and it was decided that the best course of action and most prudent at this time was to delay spring sports first play date by two weeks,” VHSL Executive Director John W. “Billy” Haun said in a release.

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NASCAR, INDYCAR PUMP BRAKES ON UPCOMING RACES

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

NASCAR and IndyCar reversed course Friday and pulled the plug on racing this weekend, with IndyCar also suspending its season through the end of April due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.

NASCAR called off Sunday's race at Atlanta Motor Speedway and next weekend's events at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Both events were already scheduled to be run without spectators.

IndyCar was scheduled to open its season Sunday

on the streets of downtown St. Petersburg, Florida, without fans. Formula One also canceled its season opening race in Australia, leaving the first full weekend of global motorsports without a major event.

Mark Miles, president and CEO of IndyCar parent company Penske Enterprises, said the about-face came as both IndyCar and NASCAR saw more and more events and attractions closing. He cited the cancellation mid-tournament of The Players Championship and the

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DIRK SHADD/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The areas around the track and grandstands are nearly empty at the IndyCar Grand Prix of St. Petersburg in Florida.

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