

Newsworthy



Longhorn needs organ transplant

Texas outfielder Carson Kainer needs a transplant for his only functioning kidney. Kainer, 21, said his doctor told him earlier this month that the organ was failing.

"My doctor told me that my kidney function went down to 13 percent," he told the Austin American-Statesman. "That one kidney that had been doing all the work all this time is starting to give out."

Kainer was born with chronic renal failure, a condition in which kidneys are unable to filter toxins and waste from the blood.

Kainer, who was selected by the Cincinnati Reds in the 14th round of last week's draft, said he would postpone plans to turn pro and instead return for his senior season at Texas.

He said he hoped one of his relatives would prove a kidney match, saving him from dialysis or a wait on the transplant list.

"The quicker they do it, the better," he said. "There's a process involved for me to go through — like three months or so — before I can do baseball stuff. Hopefully I can take it slow and be ready for next season."

— The Associated Press

Stubbs signs, gets \$2 million

CINCINNATI — Former Texas outfielder Drew Stubbs signed with the Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday, a week after he was selected eighth overall in the amateur draft. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The 21-year-old, one of five finalists for Golden Spikes Award as the nation's top amateur baseball player, hit .342 with 12 home runs and 58 RBIs this season as a junior for the Longhorns.

He was picked in the third round by Houston in 2003 after his senior season at Atlanta (Texas) High School, but chose to attend Texas. He started in center field all three seasons for the Longhorns, helping them win the NCAA title last year.

— AP

Roethlisberger makes apology

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger apologized to the Pittsburgh Steelers, fans and his family Thursday, a day after leaving the hospital, saying he was fortunate to be alive and promising to wear a helmet if he ever again rides a motorcycle.

"In the past few days, I've gained a new perspective on life," the Super Bowl-winning quarterback said in a statement released by the team. "By the grace of God, I'm fortunate to be alive."

Roethlisberger, who wrecked his bike and cracked his unprotected head on a car windshield on Monday, was discharged Wednesday night.

— AP

Heat take Game 4, even series at 2-2

Wade shows no sign of injured knee, leads Miami to 24-point win

By Tom Withers

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Dwyane Wade's tender knee held up fine, and so did home-court advantage for the Miami Heat.

The NBA finals aren't over — not even close. They've only just begun.

Wade, barely able to walk on a badly banged-up left knee 24 hours earlier, scored 36 points and big buddy Shaquille O'Neal added 17 and 13 rebounds as the Heat downed the Dallas Mavericks 98-74 Thursday night to even the series 2-2.

Remember a few days ago when the runnin' and gunnin' Mavericks were in control and possibly on their way to a sweep?

Well, they've taken a Texas two-step sideways as the once-lop-sided finals are a dead heat and guaranteed to be returning to Big D.

Wade, who saved Miami's season with 42 points in an epic Game 3 comeback, followed up with a performance just as impressive. Although the lightning-quick guard didn't have his

usual bounce off the floor, he fired in jump shots from every corner of American Airlines Arena, the South's white house which will host Game 5 on Sunday.

"I think this is our first almost-good game," O'Neal said. "We're picking it up. Different series now, 2-2."

After two dominant double-digit victories at home, Dallas came to town thinking it could wrap things up on the road. The Mavericks had won their three previous playoff series away from home, including a dramatic Game 7 in San Antonio that went into overtime.

Now, the Mavs are somewhat of a wreck. They scored just seven points in the fourth quarter, a record low for the NBA finals.

Jason Terry scored 17 points to lead Dallas and Dirk Nowitzki added 16, but rolled his left ankle taking a jumper with nine minutes left in the fourth quarter and favored it the rest of the way.

Leading by 10 points at half, the Heat pushed their lead to 20 midway through the third quarter when tempers flared after Jerry Stackhouse's hard foul on O'Neal and Miami coach Pat Riley and Dallas' Avery Johnson had to run on the floor to help restore order.

After Wade scored six straight points, O'Neal, criticized for not dominating in Games 1, 2 and 3 despite constant double-teaming, spun on the baseline for a three-point play to give Miami a 68-51 lead.

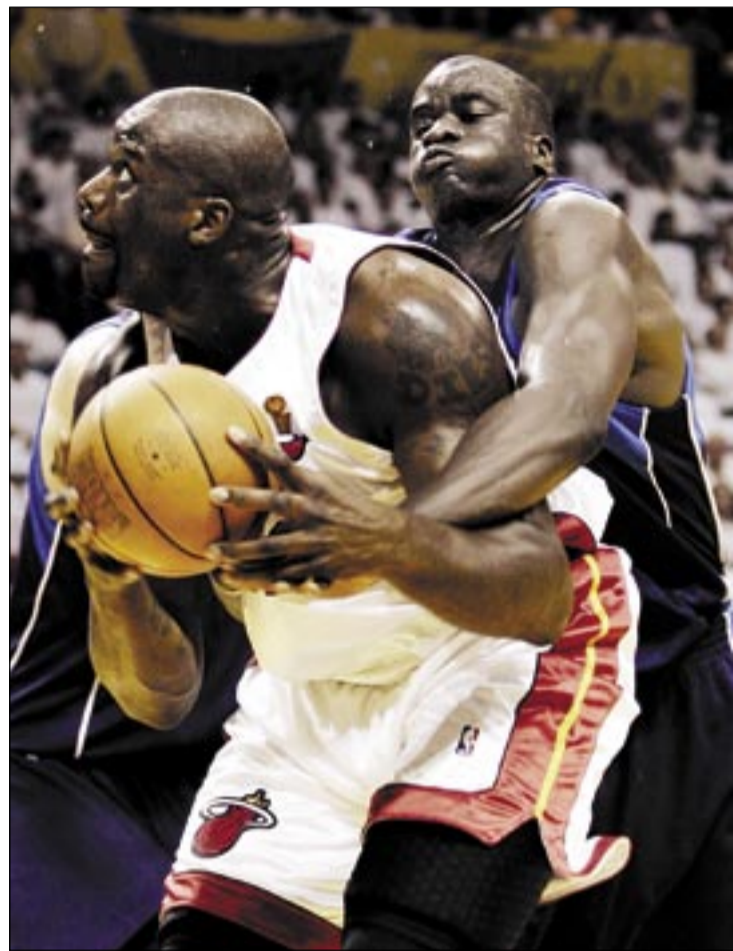
On a steal and breakaway, Miami's Jason Williams waited for a trailing O'Neal, who as he was gathering himself for a backboard-bending dunk was knocked to the floor by Stackhouse — the Mavs forward risking life and limb by taking on the Deisel.

Face first on the floor, O'Neal attempted to get up and retaliate when Wade pushed down on his teammate as players on both teams exchanged dirty looks and dirtier words.

O'Neal made two free throws — he finished a 5-of-10 from the line — and two by Wade gave Miami a 20-point lead with 6:23 left in the period.

The Mavericks used an 8-0 run to close within 78-67 entering the fourth, but Miami finally put Dallas away with seven straight points, the last coming on Antoine Walker's 3-pointer with 4:21 left that made it 92-72.

That's when Heat fans began stripping the white covers off their seat cushions and celebrated



Alan Diaz | Associated Press

Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal is fouled by Dallas Maverick DeSagana Diop, of Senegal, in the third quarter in Game 4 of the NBA basketball finals in Miami, Thursday.

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Playtime must end for U.S.

Americans need to regain edge, confidence in order to advance

By Simon Provan

Daily Texan Columnist

"There's still six points out there, and that's the way you have to look at it."

Those were the words U.S. manager Bruce Arena used to describe his outlook on his team's chances of getting out of group play after the United States' 3-0 "embarrassing" loss, as Landon Donovan put it, to the Czech Republic on Monday.

After ripping into just about every player that saw time in the match, Arena is facing perhaps his biggest moment of truth since taking the reins of Team USA after the 1998 debacle in France.

"I don't know if it's the greatest challenge, but it's right up there," he said. "Of course, it's never easy coming off a loss. We experienced one in 2002, losing to Poland, and had to regroup and play against Mexico, so it can be done. We've got a group of players that are resilient, and I think we will respond well and play a good game on Saturday."

But much more will be needed than just a "good game" to beat Italy on Saturday (1:30 p.m. CT on ABC). Here is a look at a few specifics that need to be addressed:

The U.S. must regain its well-known, never-say-die attitude it had before the Czech Republic match.

After Claudio Reyna's almost sure goal bounced off the woodwork, the Americans seemed to have lost all confidence in themselves, never really threatening the Czech goal again.

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Elise Amendola | Associated Press

United States midfielder Ben Olsen, left, tries to hold defender Chris Albright back as they warm up during training in Norderstedt, Germany, Thursday. The U.S. team is preparing to face Italy in the 2006 World Cup soccer Saturday. Other teams in Group E are Ghana and Czech Republic.

Clemens' presence won't help Astros where it's needed

Improvement needed in Houston's bull pen, Lidge looking lost

Adam Bielamowicz

Daily Texan Columnist

When Roger Clemens signed to play the rest of the season with Houston, Astros fans rejoiced, truly believing they just punched their ticket to a third consecutive playoff berth and second straight World Series appearance.

Unfortunately for fans, the addition to the starting rotation will not help out the team where he is needed the most.

Astros starting pitchers have been disappointing this season. Andy Pettitte is underachieving, Brandon Backe is on the disabled list with a sprained elbow, and youngsters Wandy Rodriguez, Taylor Buchholz and Fernando Nieve have shown few, but not

many, flashes of stability. But the problem with the team is not the starting rotation.

Nor is the problem the Astros' offense, which, although ranked in the bottom half of the National League in runs, is severely outperforming the lackluster offense of the 2005 season.

The reason for the recent struggles of the Astros, who after a 19-9 start are now just 34-32, lies with the men who are called upon to keep the team within striking distance late in the game.

Since Opening Day, the Astros bullpen, which was arguably one of the best in baseball last season, has been lackluster to say the least. Relievers all season have allowed big leads to grow smaller, small leads to slip away and small deficits to become insurmountable.

ASTROS continues on page 2B



Houston Astros closer Brad Lidge delivers to the Chicago Cubs during the ninth inning of a baseball game at Wrigley Field, Thursday in Chicago. Lidge got the save as the Astros won 3-2.

Nam Y. Huh | Associated Press



Colin Montgomerie, of Scotland, hits his teen shot on the 10th hole in the first round of the U.S. Open at Winged Foot Golf Club on Thursday, in Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Morry Gash
Associated Press

Monty takes lead in U.S. Open

42-year-old proving that it's not too late to win his first major

By Eddie Pells
The Associated Press

MAMARONECK, N.Y. — He's in the over-40 crowd now, running out of time for "some day" to finally come. On Thursday, though, Colin Montgomerie got off to a good start on his latest quest to break through in the majors.

The 42-year-old Scot, long considered one of the best to never win a major, cut through the clouds and wind at Winged Foot to shoot 1-under 69 and take the lead through the first round of the U.S. Open.

"My goal is to get this kind of attention Saturday night, heading into the final round," Montgomerie said. "But a 69 in the first round and with the way I'm playing, I'm feeling good."

A shot behind Monty on an impressive leaderboard — at least for names, if not numbers — were 2003 champion Jim Furyk and Phil Mickelson, who is trying to win

his third-straight major championship.

Vijay Singh was another shot back, along with John Cook, Mike Weir, Graeme McDowell and Kenneth Ferrie.

Tiger Woods — who is playing in his first tournament since his father, Earl Woods, died — had an afternoon tee time, was paired with defending champion Michael Campbell and bogeyed his first hole on the way to a first-round score of 76.

That is Woods' worst-ever start in a major.

But the morning belonged to Monty, who finished second at last year's British Open, the first time he had been in contention in a major this decade.

In blustery weather that Monty seemed suited for, he played a steady round — three bogeys, three birdies — then grabbed the lead with a twisting, 25-foot birdie putt on No. 17. He could have opened it up to two strokes on 18, but a 6-footer broke off to the right.

He has never seriously contended at the Masters, and while he had two seconds and one third-

place finish in the U.S. Open in the 1990s, he has fallen off the map in the biggest tournaments of late.

"I may never play well at the Masters because it doesn't suit my style of play, but I have a chance here," he said. "I have a chance in this style of golf course, where it's about hitting fairways and hitting greens. It's nice that as we get toward the end of the 2000s, I'm in contention again. I feel great."

Furyk, going for his second U.S. Open title in four years, was alone in the lead until he drove into the rough on the 18th hole. His stance for his second shot was on a drain, but he didn't want to take the free drop for fear the ball might fall deeper into the five-inch grass. He made bogey.

"I think even par is very good," Furyk said. "It all depends on the rest of the scores. It appears it's going to be tough out there. It doesn't look like there are going to be a lot of scores under par."

Mickelson, who won last year's PGA Championship and this year's Masters, scrambled all day — saving par after missing the green five straight times over his

first nine. He made a pair of 30-foot birdie putts to offset his two bogeys, and was happy to get out of there with par.

It was Lefty who said, in the lead up to the tournament, that if the wind kicked up, all the players were in trouble. That happened, and the scores showed he was right.

"Not really," Mickelson said when asked if he could describe how tough things were. "You'd have to go play it to grasp it. It's the toughest test we have all year."

Singh putted from the fringe from 60 feet on No. 15 for a birdie that put him at 1-under, briefly in the lead. He bogeyed the next two holes, however, to fall a stroke behind.

Many thought the heavily contoured greens on this A.W. Tillinghast course would be the undoing of the best players at this, the tournament considered the toughest of them all. Singh saw it differently.

"It's still getting it off the tee and into the fairway," he said. "There's a lot of wind up there. And if you miss the fairway, you're going to have trouble getting it up and down."

SOCCER: U.S. needs a change of pace

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Speaking of attack, not only do more U.S. players need to get involved in the attacking third, but they also have to be confident in their ability to take on players in one-on-one situations. One player who comes to mind is Clint Dempsey. Dempsey's through one-on-one moments is reason alone that Arena should not shy away from starting "the Deuce" on Saturday. His confidence and energy would be a welcome sight against Italy.

Donovan and DaMarcus Beasley demonstrated the same confidence in 2002, a big reason the team was so successful in Korea. On Monday, however, they were both M.I.A. for large portions of the game, causing Arena to openly call them out in statements he made to the media.

The most glaring disappointment in Team USA's performance Monday was the team's inability to execute any type of change of pace throughout the match. Although the U.S. dominated possession (55 percent to 45 percent), the squads play was predictable and slow.

The only tactic the U.S. presented on Saturday was passing the ball out of the back before sending it into the box. The Czechs caught onto this scheme quickly and responded, always having enough players back to thwart any U.S. opportunities. To effectively mix up the pace and throw off Italy's rhythm, the U.S. needs Convey, Dempsey, Donovan and Beasley, if he

plays, to take players on.

The team also needs to work the ball slow at some points but quickly at others. It needs to continue working the ball into the box, but it also needs to throw more surprise shots at the goal like the one Reyna almost converted against the Czechs.

Ultimately, the offensive shortcomings fall squarely on Arena's shoulders. On Monday, the U.S. boss employed a 3-5-1 formation in which Reyna and Pablo Mastroeni both played a defensive midfield role. This seemed unlike Arena, a manager that usually favors attacking soccer. Arena used only one forward, and he seemed to be sending a message that even he has always been against — that the U.S. was playing not to lose rather than to win. While shifting to a 4-4-2 for Saturday's match, Brian McBride can be teamed up front with Eddie Johnson or Josh Wolff, allowing for a more diversified attack against Italy's strong backline.

Basically, from here on out the U.S. needs to play every game as if it is going up against Mexico. In those matches, the team is fierce, confident and plays with the belief that it will have what it takes to walk off the pitch with a full three points.

When asked what he will draw up for Saturday's game plan, Arena, in his tongue-in-cheek style, responded, "It's going to be a plan to win. We're not going to go with the 3-0 loss game plan. We threw that page away after the game, and we're going to try and come up with another one."

HEAT: Wade chooses not to drive on Dallas

From page 1B

Miami's 100th playoff game in style. Less than a minute later, Wade came out to a thundering ovation.

Wade picked up where he left off in Game 3, scoring 24 points in the first half as the Heat opened a 54-44 lead. He wasn't Flash as much as he was Finesse, choosing to shoot

jumpers rather than go airborne to the hole.

Only twice did Wade, wearing pads over both knees, dare drive to the basket on Dallas' defense. Instead, he hung around the perimeter and took aim from the outside.

The Heat opened a 30-25 lead after one despite playing most of the period with O'Neal sitting on the bench with two fouls.

ASTROS: Lidge's psyche may be hurt by monster homer from last season

From page 1B

The problems have infected every member of the Astros bullpen from top to bottom, including closer Brad Lidge.

The problems for the right-hander, who was quickly becoming a household name around the league last season, may have started when Albert Pujols hit a game-

winning home run off of him in Game 5 of the National League Championship Series, which coincidentally is still orbiting the earth.

Could that single home run still be affecting Lidge's psyche that it leaves him in disarray eight months later?

We do not know that. All we know is that Lidge, who was almost unhittable last season

with a 2.29 ERA, has a 4.83 ERA and three blown saves in 2006. He ranks fifth among National League pitchers with 17 saves, but most of those have been shaky performances with multiple hits and earned runs allowed.

But it's not just Lidge who has blown leads and caused Astros fans to hold their breaths every time the bullpen door creeps

open.

The reliever virus has been passed down to almost every member of the bullpen. Usually reliable, setup-man Dan Wheeler is 0-4 with a 4.50 ERA this season.

Left-handed specialist Mike Gallo was sent down to Triple-A Round Rock last week after posting a 6.06 ERA and allowing left-handed hitters to bat .360 against

his pitching.

The Astros currently sit five games behind the division-leading St. Louis Cardinals, and the bullpen's shoddy performance has been to blame for a large part of the recent losing trend.

If the bullpen does not get their act together soon, the Astros may be watching the playoffs from home for the first time since 2003.

Astros fans were ecstatic about

Roger Clemens' decision to pitch for the team for the remainder of the season. But it will be extremely disappointing for them when they figure out that, unless the Astros plan to have Clemens come into the game in the seventh inning, they probably will be watching baseball from their couches this October.

Atlantic Coast Conference looking to scratch 51-year-old itch in Omaha, Neb.

ACC has good chance of excelling, winning College World Series

By Eric Olson
The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The Atlantic Coast Conference is poised to end a 51-year national championship drought in baseball.

Four ACC teams, including No. 1 national seed Clemson, make up half the field in the College World Series. That matches the record by the Southeastern Conference, which sent four teams to the CWS in 1997 and 2004.

The ACC never had more than two teams in a CWS.

"The rest of the story has to be written yet, and there are eight great teams here all vying for the same thing," Georgia Tech coach Danny Hall said. "Our league already has made its mark by four teams being here."

ACC teams Clemson, Georgia Tech and North Carolina are joined in Bracket 1 by Cal State Fullerton.

The other ACC team, Miami, is in Bracket 2.

The Tigers, Yellow Jackets, Tar Heels and Hurricanes breezed through regionals and super regionals with a combined record of 19-1.

"The telltale will be what happens out here, and whether or not an ACC team can do well and con-

tinue to advance," North Carolina coach Mike Fox said.

If an ACC team wins the national title, it will be the league's first since Wake Forest in 1955.

Miami coach Jim Morris said the league is much stronger than when he was in the ACC as an assistant at Florida State (1980-81) and head coach at Georgia Tech (1982-93). The Hurricanes joined the ACC last year.

"To say four teams from the ACC come to this with all the teams (nationally) emphasizing baseball, it's absolutely amazing," Morris said. "It's due to the emphasis by the administrations, the quality of the coaching, recruiting, the players. All that has to come together, plus you have to be lucky."

Bracket 1 double-elimination play opens Friday with Clemson (52-14) playing No. 8 national seed Georgia Tech (50-16) and No. 5 Fullerton (48-13) playing North Carolina (50-13).

First-round games Saturday in Bracket 2 match No. 2 Rice (55-11) against No. 7 Georgia (47-21) and Oregon State (44-14) against Miami (41-22).

Bracket winners meet in a best-of-three championship series starting June 24.

Clemson is bidding to become the first No. 1 seed to win the championship since Miami in 1999.

"At this point in the year, there's not a No. 1 favorite going into this

tournament," Tigers coach Jack Leggett said. "You're dealing with the eight hottest teams in college baseball right now. It's just a matter of who can continue to stay hot."

The Tigers, the ACC regular-season and tournament champions, split six games with the Yellow Jackets this season.

Clemson hit 10 home runs in five tournament games, four by second baseman Taylor Harbin. The most dramatic was Tyler Colvin's game-winning, ninth-inning grand slam against Oral Roberts in the first game of super regionals.

Georgia Tech comes in with the highest-scoring team in the field, having averaged 8.9 runs a game for the season. The Yellow Jackets scored 40 in a three-game home series with Clemson, including a 22-4 victory over the Tigers on April 16. Catcher-pitcher Matt Wieters is leading the Yellow Jackets in the tournament, reaching base in 20 of 26 plate appearances and batting .647.

North Carolina, at the CWS for the first time since 1989, and Fullerton feature two of the best pitching staffs in the nation.

The Tar Heels have first-round draft picks Andrew Miller (13-2) and Daniel Bard (8-3).

The Titans' team ERA of 2.57 is best in the nation. Wes Roemer, Lauren Gagner and Dustin Miller all have 12 or more wins and ERAs under 3.00. All-American closer

Vinnie Pestano went out with an arm injury in May, but Ryan Paul and Cory Arbiso have a combined four saves in five opportunities since.

Georgia has been well-tested on its way to Omaha, surviving five elimination games in the tournament. The Bulldogs are led by first baseman Josh Morris, whose 23 home runs rank second nationally.

Rice, in the CWS for the fifth time in 10 years, comes in with 37 wins in its last 40 games. The Owls hit nine home runs in their last three games.

Oregon State is making its second straight CWS appearance and third overall. The Beavers are 0-4 and have been outscored 35-12 all-time at the CWS.

Beavers coach Pat Casey said he used more than 30 different lineups this season because of injuries.

"Last year, we didn't have one injury and everything fell in place," he said. "Maybe it made us a little tougher this year. The path seemed a little more difficult."

Same goes for Miami, which made it to the CWS for the 10th time in 13 years. The Hurricanes, who start four freshmen, had to travel to Lincoln, Neb., for regionals and then to Oxford, Miss., for super regionals.

"We're very, very fortunate to be here," Morris said. "This is the toughest road Miami has ever had to get to Omaha."



Eric Francis | Associated Press

Miami's Jemile Weeks throws during practice for the NCAA baseball College World Series at Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha, Neb., Thursday. Miami plays Oregon State on Saturday.