

Shaq, Iverson, Yao, Izzo lead Hall of Fame class

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Shaquille O’Neal, Allen Iverson, Tom Izzo and modern-day basketball pioneers Yao Ming and Sheryl Swoopes headline the 2016 Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame class announced Monday.

Longtime Chicago Bulls owner and chairman Jerry Reinsdorf will be enshrined and posthumous inductees are NBA referee Darrell Garretson, John McLendon, the

first African-American coach in professional basketball and former stars Zelmo Beaty and Cumberland Posey.

O’Neal was an unstoppable force as a 7-foot-1 dunking machine who was named a 15-time NBA All-Star. He was a three-time NBA Finals MVP, won four NBA titles and was the NBA MVP in 2000. He was one of the first crossover stars to go beyond endorsements, earning regular roles on the big screen.

Iverson was a brash point guard who averaged 26.7 points despite standing just 6 feet tall. The 11-time All-Star known as “The Answer” was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1996 draft. He was named rookie of the year, won four scoring titles was the 2001 NBA MVP, leading the Sixers to the NBA Finals, where they lost to O’Neal’s Lakers.

Izzo won a national title at Michigan State in 2000, has led the Spartans to seven Final Fours

and earned 524 career victories since becoming the head coach at Michigan State in 1995.

Swoopes was the first WNBA player signed and won three MVP awards and four WNBA titles.

Ming, the No. 1 overall pick in 2002 of the Houston Rockets and a transcendent 7-foot-6 center, is recognized as much for opening the door to international stars as his statistics. Ming’s career ended early because of foot injuries but he averaged 19 points, 9.2 re-

bounds and 1.9 blocks per game in eight seasons but played only five games combined in his final two seasons.

Reinsdorf also owns the Chicago White Sox but is identified for elevating the Bulls into consistent winners during the pairing of Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson. The Bulls won six NBA championships in the 1990s.

Garretson was an NBA referee for 27 years and spent 17 years as the league’s chief of officiating.

Rangers defeat Mariners in opener

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Texas Rangers took advantage of two Seattle Mariners errors in the fifth inning to score three times on just one hit to edge the Mariners 3-2 on Monday.

The Texas win snapped a nine-game opening day winning streak for the Mariners.

Seattle ace Felix Hernandez didn’t allow a hit until the fifth inning and could have gotten out of that inning unscathed if it weren’t for the defense behind him.

Hernandez walked Rougned Odor to lead off the inning with the Mariners up 2-0, and after Odor stole second, Elvis Andrus hit a grounder to third. Seattle’s Kyle Seager, who hit a solo homer in the second, booted the ball to put runners on the corners.

A one-out walk loaded the bases for Shin-Soo Choo, who drew a walk to force in a run and cut Seattle’s lead to 2-1. Prince Fielder tied the game with an RBI bloop single to left to keep the bases loaded. Hernandez, who was making his eighth-straight opening day start, appeared to get out of the inning when Adrian Beltre hit a potential double-play grounder to short, but Ketel Marte couldn’t handle the ball and Delino DeShields scored to put Texas up 3-2.

The Fielder single ended up being the only hit the Rangers had in the game.

Texas left-hander Cole Hamels (1-0) allowed a first-inning homer to Robinson Cano and the homer to Seager in the second, but that was it. He pitched seven innings, allowing just four hits and the two runs while striking out eight. Shawn Tolleson picked up his first save with a perfect ninth.



SMILEY N. POOL | DALLAS MORNING NEWS | TNS

Texas Rangers starting pitcher Cole Hamels is doused with water by second baseman Rougned Odor after their opening-day win against the Seattle Mariners on Monday at Globe Life Park in Arlington, Texas.

Reds 6, Phillies 2

CINCINNATI — Joey Votto’s two-run single with the bases loaded highlighted a five-run eighth inning on Opening Day before 43,683 fans, the largest regular-season crowd in the history of Great American Ball Park.

Shortstop Zack Cozart went 3-for-3 with two doubles and an RBI to become the first Reds player with three hits on Opening Day since Barry Larkin in 2001.

Ross Ohlendorf (1-0) earned the victory.

Freddy Galvis hit a two-run home run and starter Jeremy Hellickson allowed one unearned run in six innings for the Phillies in a losing effort.

Nationals 4, Braves 3

ATLANTA — Daniel Murphy hit a home run and added an RBI double in the top of the 10th inning to give Dusty Baker a victory in his debut as Nationals manager.

The Braves tied the score

with a run in the bottom of the ninth, and the Nationals won on an unearned run in the 10th after second baseman Gordon Beckham threw away a grounder hit by Ryan Zimmerman with one out. Murphy knocked him in with his double and Nationals closer Jonathan Papelbon pitched a perfect 10th inning to record the save.

Bryce Harper and Murphy hit homers for the Nationals, while Freddie Freeman and Adonis Garcia connected for the Braves.

Orioles 3, Twins 2

BALTIMORE — Matt Wieters lined a single to center with two outs in the bottom of the ninth that scored Chris Davis and gave the Baltimore Orioles a 3-2 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Monday.

Baltimore closer Zach Britton (1-0) earned the victory after he retired the Twins in order in the ninth.

Red Sox

Continued from Page B5

The Indians last reached the playoffs in 2013, Francona’s first year as manager. Expectations are soaring this year, but Francona said he isn’t getting caught up in such predictions.

“The only expectations that are important to me are

the ones we set for ourselves,” Francona said. “If we let other people’s expectations get in the way of what we’re trying to do, we’re not very good anyway.”

NOTES: The Indians and Red Sox will meet on opening day for just the fourth time ever, and the first since 1979. ... Indians OF Michael Brantley, on the DL following offseason shoulder surgery, will have his streak of six consecutive appearances in the Indians’ opening day lineup snapped. ... Boston LHP David Price’s will be making his third consecutive opening day start for three different teams: the Rays, Tigers, and Red Sox. According to Elias, only two other pitchers have been Opening Day starters in three consecutive years for three different teams: Kevin

Brown from 1997-99 for the Marlins, Padres and Dodgers, and Jack Morris from 1990-92 for the Tigers, Twins and Blue Jays. ... The Indians will be the first opposing team to celebrate Red Sox DH David Ortiz’s illustrious career in his final season. Ortiz announced his retirement in November on his 40th birthday and he will spend 2016 on a farewell tour.

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Latvian hockey player commits to play at UM

BY NATHAN FOURNIER
MAINE HOCKEY JOURNAL

The University of Maine men’s hockey team has received a verbal commitment from 2015-16 Eastern Hockey League’s Premier Division MVP, Eduards Tralmaks, for the 2017-18 season.

The 6-foot-2, 19-year-old from Riga, Latvia, recorded 28 goals and 27 assists in 40 games in his first season of junior hockey with the Boston Bandits. He spent the previous two seasons with the Bandits 16U and 18U Midget teams.

“This is definitely a dream that has come true to me, and I’m really proud to be a part of this incredible team,” Tralmaks said in an email. “One more reason I chose the University of Maine was the coaching staff. They are really nice people with great coaching experience. I know I am in good hands now, and I want to thank them for giving me an opportunity to play for my dream university.”

Bandits General Manager and coach Todd Sterling knew Tralmaks was a skilled player, but his performance at last season’s International Ice Hockey Federation’s World Under-18 Championships in Zug, Switzerland, really opened his eyes where Tralmaks had a goal and two assists in six games.

“They were playing in the top pool, and I saw video of

him against the Canadian team and really dawned on me and struck me that he has played on a major league stage,” Sterling said. “His Latvian team was playing against the best 20 kids from Canada and the U.S. It became very real for me. We knew he was a highly-skilled player. That was a world stage he was on.”

The Boston Bandits first saw Tralmaks at a Select Tournament in Portland four years ago, and Tralmaks had a chance to visit Maine during his first season with the Bandits.

“When I played my first year here in the USA, we went to a showcase that was located in Maine,” Tralmaks said.

“After our game, there was an opportunity to see a UMaine hockey game as they played against [New Hampshire]. As soon as I walked into the arena, I suddenly got really excited seeing all those crazy fans cheering for the favorite team and atmosphere was just unbelievable. After that game, I said to myself: ‘I wish I could have played here.’”

Tralmaks will go through the USHL Phase II Draft in May and go from there on where he will play next season before joining the Black Bears in 2017.

Tralmaks’ coming to Maine is contingent upon his acceptance into the school and meeting NCAA eligibility requirements.

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\$38,740 raised for Ronald McDonald House Charities

The 36th annual Maine McDonald’s High School Senior All-Star Basketball Games raised a record-setting \$38,740 for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Maine.

This year’s event, held March 11-12 at Husson University in Bangor, marked the Maine McDonald’s Owner/Operator Association’s 28th consecutive year as lead sponsor of the event.

The Maine Association of Basketball Coaches founded and co-organized the event, which recognizes Maine’s best senior high school basketball players, coaches and scholar-athletes, and bestows the prestigious Mr. and Miss Maine Basketball awards.

The Maine McDonald’s High School Senior All-Star Basketball Games are the second-largest fundraiser for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Maine. The nonprofit operates Ronald McDonald Houses in Bangor and Portland, which provide lodging to families of children with life-threatening illnesses during their stay at a local hospital.

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Olympian tells Hampden youth to go after dreams

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

HAMPDEN — Olympic luger Julia Clukey spoke with students at Reeds Brook Middle School on Monday afternoon armed with a new educational weapon — a college degree.

Clukey, the Augusta resident who finished 17th in the women’s singles competition at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and narrowly missed making the U.S. squad again in 2014, recently graduated from DeVry University with a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering technology and electronics.

The 2003 Cony High School graduate has spent the last four years making time to take online classes between training, competitions and making motivational presentations to more than 12,000 students at schools around Maine through her relationship with the Maine Beer & Wine Distributors Association.

The 30-year-old Clukey completed her degree in conjunction with the U.S. Olympic Committee’s partnership with DeVry University.

“Both my parents were educators, so I grew up valuing the importance of academics,” she said. “My degree means a lot to me, and I am really grateful for the support of the USOC and the program with DeVry University. The program allowed me to accomplish this goal while competing in the sport I love. I also really appreciate the support from



Clukey

my friends and family.”

Clukey spoke to the Reeds Brook middle-schoolers as part of her “Julia Inspires” campaign that also included stops last week at Massabesic High School in Waterboro and Skowhegan Area High School.

The presentations focus on encouraging students to find their passion, create a plan and go after their dreams. As part of her message, she discusses overcoming adversity and sharing how she nearly qualified for the 2014 Olympics, missing the team by 13 thousandths of a second.

Upcoming presentations will take Clukey to Bonny Eagle High School in Standish on April 12, Whitefield Elementary School on April 29, John Bapst Memorial High School in Bangor on May 2, Auburn Middle School on May 6, Machias Memorial High School on May 10, Cony Middle School and Cony High School on May 11, and Erskine Academy of South China on May 19.

This summer, she also will host her annual Julia Clukey’s Camp for Girls at Camp KV in Readfield.

Clukey was inspired to try the sport of luge with the promise of a free T-shirt at a USA Slider Search in downtown Portland at age 12, and she has competed in the sport for 17 years.

In addition to her Olympic appearance, she won the U.S. National Championship in 2012 and has earned two silver medals in World Cup competition.

Clukey, a Maine Sports Hall of Fame inductee, plans to train this summer to prepare for the 2016-17 season and eventually hopes to earn a spot on the 2018 U.S. Olympic team that will compete in PyeongChang, Korea.