

Tebow

Continued from Page B4

laughing at his own description. "I mean, after what he's accomplished, imagine if he actually made it in baseball. We could be seeing the start of history here."

A little later Tebow was in right field doing long-toss with a fellow outfield prospect named Gene Cone, seven years his junior.

As they finished that drill and walked to another field, Cone briefly paused to be asked about the experience of playing catch with Tebow. His instant wide grin seemed genuine. "The guy's a legend," Cone said.

Well, he'd be on the way if he went from being a Heisman Trophy-winning two-time national-championship college quarterback to one whose three-year NFL career had its moments — and then made it in Major League Baseball. If Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders are sports legends of almost mythical size, Tebow would be the same.

What he stressed Monday is that he's serious about the pursuit. He isn't pretending while secretly coveting another NFL shot. But, Tim, what if the Patriots called tomorrow?

"No sir, I'm part of the Mets family," said Tebow, who homered on his next-to-last swing of the day on his second day of Instructional League on Tuesday.

For now Tebow is a 29-year-old bottom-rung rookie. "I feel like it comes back super-fast," he said.

He might surprise doubters and be in the majors in 2017. But even if all he does is languish in the minors a bit and then scrap the whole baseball thing, his attempt alone qualifies as something in the neighborhood of the "Linsanity" Jeremy Lin created on a basketball court.

I mean, he's Tim Tebow — beloved to many, mocked by others. Polarizing. Adored as an All-American type and perfect role model, yet also made fun at times because he wears his religion too overtly for some or because of a perception he may be disingenuous or an attention-seeker. That he signed onto the New York media market magnifies the story.

For sure, it's gold for the Mets. It should have other teams — like Marlins — kicking themselves for not being the ones who offered him a contract after his recent "showcase" audition in Los Angeles.

The Mets already are cashing in. On the team's website his No. 15 jerseys were selling Monday for \$119.99 and were the club's third-biggest seller, trailing only those of pitching ace Noah Syndergaard and blank [Your Name Here] jerseys. The Mets will profit, in attention and cash, even if Tebow never makes the big club.

Many people seem to be rooting for that failure, and I'm not sure why. Is it because Tebow is, well, too perfect?

Cynical media brethren of mine were joking that angels should sing and a rainbow appear as he took the field Monday morning. Have we become so jaded or accustomed to pro athletes letting us down that we are suspicious and not sure how to react when one seems to do everything right?

Two weeks ago Tebow was in a remote area of the Philippines — "Taking bucket baths and riding in jitneys," he said — as part of the ministering he does through his foundation, which supports a hospital and an orphanage there. Tebow, who was born in Makati, Philippines, mentions one boy named Sherwin who'd been born with his feet backward. He was shunned as cursed. The foundation was able to arrange for the medical procedures needed.

So many pro athletes, either by misdeeds or disinterest, run from the idea of being role models. Tebow embraces it. He is polite, polished and practiced at the art of parrying any negativity.

"People say let it go in one ear and out the other — I try to not even let it get to an ear," he said. "I guess there's a little chip on my shoulder, but it's not about the naysayers. I'm doing this to live out a dream and live life to the fullest."

He ended Monday's press conference thusly: "Thank you so much. God bless." Perfect.



San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick (left) poses for selfie photos with fans before the team's game against the Carolina Panthers at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Sunday. JEFF SINER | CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

Kaepernick gets death threats

QB continues protest by kneeling during national anthem

WIRE SERVICE REPORTS

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick said on

Tuesday that he has received

NFL NOTEBOOK death threats regarding his actions during the playing of the national anthem.

"If something like that were to happen, you've proved my point," Kaepernick told reporters, saying he had received the threats through several avenues. "It'll be loud and clear why it happened."

Kaepernick started his protest in the preseason by sitting down during the national anthem.

He has since kneeled during the anthem in protest of what he calls racial inequalities and injustices taking place in America, including police-related violence.

Several NFL players have joined Kaepernick in his protest.

Kaepernick also addressed the shooting of Terrence Crutcher by police in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"They shot and killed a man and walked around like it wasn't a human being," Kaepernick said.

Kaepernick intends to go through with his plan to donate \$1 million to local communities. He said he will donate \$100,000 a month for the next 10 months and will also set up a website so the public can see how the money is spent.

Former 49ers star Jerry Rice has changed his stance on Kaepernick.

After previously criticizing Kaepernick's actions, Rice came out in support of the quarterback on Tuesday.

"I support @Kaepernick7 for bringing awareness for injustice!!!!" Rice tweeted. "As Americans we all have rights! Im (sic) hoping we all come together#solution"

Initially, Rice had tweeted that Kaepernick should not disrespect the flag.

Cutler sprains right thumb

Chicago Bears quarterback Jay Cutler suffered a sprained right thumb in Monday's loss to the Philadelphia Eagles and his status is day-to-day, according to coach John Fox.

Fox said Tuesday that the injury won't require surgery. He said Cutler will undergo rehab. Cutler is scheduled to undergo more tests on Tuesday to determine the severity.

Chicago also lost outside linebacker Lamarr Houston to a potentially season-ending knee injury in the contest while inside linebacker Danny Trevathan injured a thumb that will require surgery, although he might not be finished for the season.

Cutler injured his thumb in the season opener against the Houston Texans and said he aggravated it early in Monday's game and had trouble gripping the football. If Cutler is unable to play, journeyman Brian Hoyer would start Sunday's road game against the Dallas Cowboys.

The Bears also released fullback Paul Lasike, one day after he rushed for 2 yards on his lone carry of his NFL career.

Browns sign QB Whitehurst

The Cleveland Browns signed center Austin Reiter off the Washington Redskins' practice squad and also added quarterback Charlie Whitehurst. To make room, Cleveland terminated the contract of defensive tackle John Hughes III and waived LB Scooby Wright III.

The Browns are preparing to play at the Miami Dolphins in Week 3 without new starting center Cameron Erving, who was hospitalized Sunday and diag-

nosed with a pulmonary contusion. Reiter may be asked to start in Week 3.

Cleveland will be starting a third quarterback — rookie third-round pick Cody Kessler — in three games.

Josh McCown (shoulder) started Week 2 but was already ruled out for Sunday's game. Week 1 starter Robert Griffin III (shoulder) could miss 3-4 months.

Whitehurst, who appeared in four games with Indianapolis last season, has played in 24 career contests with San Diego, Seattle, Tennessee and the Colts.

Johnson to appeal suspension

Philadelphia Eagles offensive tackle Lane Johnson will appeal a 10-game suspension during Philadelphia's Week 4 bye.

Johnson is permitted to play during the appeals process, including the first two games, and Sunday against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Johnson was previously banned four games in 2014 for what he said was "foolishly" ingesting a banned prescription drug.

Colts release safety

The Indianapolis Colts released safety Winston Guy. Guy took over at safety after Clayton Geathers left with a foot injury in Sunday's loss to the Denver Broncos.

Speculation at the time was that Guy could start at safety in the Colts' next game if Geathers and T.J. Green (knee) remain out. Obviously that will not be the case. The move suggests Geathers and/or Green will be ready for Sunday's game against the San Diego Chargers (4:25 p.m. ET).

Spiller visits Packers

Free-agent running back C.J. Spiller paid a visit to the Green Bay Packers, ac-

ording to a report by ESPN. The 29-year-old, who was cut by the New Orleans Saints last week, could be used as a change-of-pace back behind bruising Eddie Lacy if the Packers decide to sign him.

Green Bay has an available roster spot after recently waiving running back Jhurrell Pressley.

Bills' McCoy avoids criminal charges

Buffalo Bills running back LeSean McCoy avoided facing criminal charges in connection with a nightclub brawl earlier this year. But two Philadelphia policemen made sure McCoy would face a civil lawsuit involving that incident.

McCoy, along with three other men, and the Recess Lounge were named as defendants in the pending lawsuit.

The altercation began over a bottle of champagne and according to the police report one of the off-duty officers was punched and knocked to the ground, and then was punched, kicked, and stomped on.

The NFL investigated the incident earlier this year and decided not to charge McCoy.

Chargers sign halfback

The San Diego Chargers signed versatile running back Dexter McCluster on the heels of losing Danny Woodhead to a season-ending torn ACL injury.

The team also waived wide receiver and kick returner Isaiah Bruce from the active roster. Tight end Austin Traylor was signed to the practice squad, while offensive tackle Austin Shepherd was released.

McCluster was released by Tennessee on the last round of cuts before the start of the regular season, ending his run with the Titans after just two seasons.

Notebook

Continued from Page B4

fensive coordinator Charlie Weis and former Patriots head coach Bill Parcells.

"I'm a big Jacoby fan. I love the kid. It didn't surprise me at all that he went in there and had composure," Weis told the Boston Herald. "I know one thing, the guy who's probably going to be the most ready out of all of them for Jacoby to count on, is Jacoby. He has a lot of confidence in himself."

Weis recruited and coached Brissett at University of Florida in 2011. He also helped prepare Brady behind Drew Bledsoe in 2001.

"Between that head coach and that offensive coordinator and that staff, they know what Jacoby's capable of doing at this time," he added. "They've got plenty of evidence. The kid played a whole bunch in preseason. He's got a whole bunch of reps."

"I'm sure Jacoby is going to do his job for them to win," Weis said. "But more than anything, I think this is a perfect Bill situation."

Blount churning ahead

LeGarrette Blount tied a career high with 29 rushes against the Dolphins in Sunday's win, churning out 123 yards (4.2 average) with one touchdown. The big back picked up the slack in the second half with Garoppolo knocked from the game, picking up 92 yards on 15 attempts after halftime with Brissett under center protecting what had been a 31-3 lead at the break.

When the day finished, Blount ranked third in the NFL with 193 yards rushing. But Belichick says the production has been very much a group effort.

"The big thing that's contributed to it is that he has had some space to run," Belichick said. "There were a lot of plays, too many plays last year, where it didn't matter who the back was, we just couldn't get him started, couldn't get him into any kind of space, couldn't let the back build up any kind of momentum. I think all our backs have the ability to make yards. They've all been productive. We've seen it in preseason, we've seen it through the years with some of these guys, depending on which guy you want to talk about, but we had to give him a chance. You've got to give them a chance to have some type of opportunity to operate with some space or momentum, just something. No back can gain yardage when there's just no place to run. I don't care how good the guy is."

UMaine

Continued from Page B4

UMaine football games provide fans with all elements of the college experience, complete with touchdown runs, quarterback sacks, nifty passing plays and crushing tackles.

Single-game tickets start at \$12 per person, while other packages provide a chance to save with a four-game package costing as little as \$40 or a season membership for 55 bucks.

I have always been amazed at how few Maine high school football players I see at UMaine games. If their passion is football, there is no better place to see the game played at the highest level.

And there always are several athletes from the state, including some from Greater Bangor, who have proven themselves worthy of playing time.

The 2016 UMaine football team is expected to be highly competitive in the CAA, where it will battle the likes of Saturday's opponent, seventh-ranked James Madison University. And this year's Black Bears have unveiled a more multifaceted offense that should be more entertaining for fans.

As a football fan myself, I would encourage Maine sports fans to make the trip to Orono for a UMaine home game this season. It's good, clean, family entertainment and fun — and games are much more enjoyable to watch when the Black Bears have a large group of vocal fans in the stands.

Kickoff Saturday is at noon. Check it out.

UM-Farmington dedicates court to MacPhee

FARMINGTON — The University of Maine-Farmington athletic department on Friday dedicated its newly renovated basketball court at Dearborn Gymnasium to leg-

endary **COLLEGE REPORT** coach Len MacPhee.

The event coincided with a campaign to raise funds for a dedicated auxiliary varsity weight room in the gym.

MacPhee coached at the school for 36 years before retiring in June 2001. His tenure included 24 years of coaching men's basketball,

seven with women's basketball, six with baseball and softball for three years. He also taught in the physical education department.

MacPhee also served as the school's athletic director, was chair of the Phys Ed program and director of the Coaching Certificate program. He also started the school's hall of fame

Friends, family and alumni of UMF basketball returned to Farmington for the well-attended event to honor the longtime coach. The guests included Charlotte Hornets head coach

Steve Clifford of the NBA.

As a basketball coach, MacPhee earned numerous Coach of the Year awards with both teams and holds the record for most career wins in the men's program with 322. The women's program is most notable for its back-to-back appearances in the NAIA National Championship Tournament in 1995 and 1996.

MacPhee is a member of the UMF Athletics Hall of Fame as well as the New England Basketball Hall of Fame and the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame.

UM field hockey ranked 19th

The University of Maine field hockey team moved up one spot to No. 19 in the most recent National Field Hockey Coaches Association poll released on Tuesday.

Coach Josette Babineau's Black Bears (6-2) beat Bryant University 2-0 on Friday, then dropped a 3-1 decision on Sunday in Orono to then-No. 3 North Carolina.

UMaine returns to action with games on the road Saturday in Boston at Northeastern and Sunday at Harvard.

Calhoun

Continued from Page B4

sens All-Americans and coached several players who would go on to play in the NBA, including the late Reggie Lewis of Northeastern and Boston Celtics.

Calhoun directed Connecticut to seven Big East tournament titles, five NCAA Final Fours and na-

tional championships in 1999, 2004 and 2011. He earned the NCAA Coach of the Year honor in 1990.

The Hall of Fame banquet will run from 6-8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 for those ages 6 to 12. Those planning to attend must register online.

Ross was a key member of Thomas' lacrosse program in his four seasons, joining the team in its first NCAA season. He earned North Atlan-

tic Conference Player of the Year accolades as a senior.

Ross also captained the men's basketball team as a senior and was invited to participate in the USILA Division III North-South game and the NEILA Division III East-West game, both prestigious Division III all-star lacrosse games.

Lovely amassed more than 1,600 points in a four-year basketball career, earning first-team, all-conference

honors on two occasions.

She was was an all-conference field hockey player and a talented softball player.

Johnson, the former Brittaney Morin, started at shortstop in all four years for the Terriers' softball team, never hitting below .341 in a season. She earned NAC Rookie of the Year honors as a freshman, and was a first-team, all-conference selection as a senior. Johnson also played basketball at the school.