

Union president wants Rams fined in Keenum case

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

When quarterback Case Keenum staggered to all fours and again collapsed to the turf at Baltimore, the NFL's tiered system for recognizing and diagnosing head injuries should have been activated by medical personnel, a league concussion spotter or the St. Louis Rams.

None stepped in to protect Keenum. He was aided to his feet and left in the game.

The NFL investigated the response and determined no punishment would be levied in this instance, but warned teams they are subject to discipline going forward.

Keenum's helmet bounced hard off the turf and he grabbed the front, top side of his head with both hands.

"Complete failure to adhere to the protocol," NFLPA president Eric Winston told USA Today. "Show me someone that says, 'No, the Rams did exactly the right thing.' They didn't. Everybody knows they didn't. So, there has to be discipline then, right? Because when a player doesn't do something that he's supposed to do, he gets fined for that when it comes to health and safety."

Rams head coach Jeff Fisher said that because he was in "game management mode" he didn't see Keenum struggling to find his bearings. Winston isn't so sure.

"I didn't see anything from my vantage point on the sideline as far as Case's slow recovery," Fisher said. "The shot that you see where he got up slow that we've seen out there, I didn't see that. I was in the game management mode at that point, less than a minute left. That's where I was."

Committee formed to define 'catch'

What is a catch? The NFL is forming a special com-

mittee to review the rule in the offseason with a goal of simplifying how officials rule what is and isn't a catch.

At the one-day meeting of league owners in Dallas on Wednesday, commissioner Roger Goodell enlisted a group of current and former general managers, former players and former officials to make recommendations to the league's competition committee about changes to the catch rule.

How fans react to the controversy surrounding plays that were ruled incomplete is of great importance to Goodell, who was intent on tackling a larger issue of officiating errors when owners met Wednesday.

Goodell asked the competition committee to mull possible improvements in officiating.

'Gleason' selected for Sundance

"Gleason," a film chronicling former New Orleans Saints safety Steve Gleason's battle with ALS, was selected as an entry in the full-length documentary category at Sundance Film Festival.

The documentary premiere will be held in January.

"We could not be more honored to screen the film here in front of tens of thousands of people in Park City (Utah) this January," Gleason said in a statement. "As you may know, this project began as a series of personal video journals for our son Rivers, as a way of sharing my life, who I am, and love for him, when I was first diagnosed with ALS in 2011. Although it has been a uniquely difficult journey at times, we believe it is an important message to share. Our film is not just focused on living with ALS, but on a more universal story, exposing the resilience of the human



EVAN HABEEB | USA TODAY

St. Louis Rams quarterback Case Keenum (left) throws the ball while being pressured by Baltimore Ravens linebacker Elvis Dumervil in the fourth quarter at M&T Bank Stadium on Nov. 22.

spirit, when faced with extreme adversity."

Gleason said the "hope is that the film will be a catalyst for positive change and choices for those who face major challenges in life."

Coldplay part of Super Bowl show

British rock band Coldplay will perform at halftime of Super Bowl 50 on Feb. 7 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, according to multiple reports on Thursday.

The group has won seven Grammy Awards and has a new album, "A Head Full of Dreams," coming out Friday.

Also taking the Super Bowl stage again will be Bruno Mars, who performed with Red Hot Chili Peppers at halftime of last season's Super Bowl.

Revis appears unlikely for Giants

New York Jets cornerback Darrelle Revis missed practice again on Thursday and appears unlikely to play in Sunday's game against the New York Giants.

Revis suffered a concussion against the Houston Texans on Nov. 22 and hasn't practiced since.

Jets coach Todd Bowles doesn't believe Revis will play.

Berhe: Cousin killed in attack

New York Giants safety Nat Berhe said that a cousin of his is one of the 14 people killed in Wednesday's shooting rampage in San Bernardino, California.

Berhe tweeted out the news on Thursday. He didn't identify the cousin by name. "Just got word that one of my cousins was among the 14 killed yesterday. I'm so sick right now," Berhe tweeted.

Berhe is on injured reserve due to a calf injury. He grew up in San Bernardino County and played college football at San Diego State.

McCoy undergoes hand surgery

Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive tackle Gerald McCoy underwent minor surgery on his left hand earlier this week and said he hopes to play in Sunday's contest against the Atlanta Falcons.

McCoy described the surgery as "a small procedure." He injured the hand during last Sunday's game against the Indianapolis Colts.

McCoy leads the Buccaneers with seven sacks. He has also been dealing with a nagging shoulder surgery for most of the season.

Curry, George win Player of Month

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry and Indiana Pacers forward Paul George were named Western and Eastern Conference Players of the Month, respectively, for games played in October and November.

Curry averaged 31.6 points and made 94 3-pointers as the Warriors won all 19 of their games. The reigning NBA MVP scored 40 or more points on five occasions, including a 53-point outing against the New Orleans Pelicans on Oct. 31.

George displayed he is fully recovered from a gruesome broken leg suffered in the summer of 2014. He averaged 27.2 points and made 51 3-pointers as Indiana won 11 of 16 games.

New York Knicks center Kristaps Porzingis was named Eastern Conference Rookie of the Month while Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns won Western Conference honors.

Porzingis, the fourth overall pick, averaged 13.7 points and 9.3 rebounds. Towns, the first overall pick, averaged 14.4 points and 9.4 rebounds.

Cavs' Irving nearing return

Cleveland Cavaliers All-Star guard Kyrie Irving is nearing a return to action after being fully cleared to resume practicing on Thursday.

Irving suffered a broken left kneecap in Game 2 of the NBA Finals against the Golden State Warriors last June. He had been practicing on an individual basis in recent weeks.

Irving hasn't revealed a target date for his return but speculation persists he's aiming for the Christmas Day game against the Warriors.

The three-time All-Star declined to speak with reporters after Thursday's practice.

Guard Iman Shumpert (wrist) also returned to practice as Cleveland moves closer to having its full roster.

"Every day I'm watching them making progress and we're being very cautious and conscientious about keeping them within their limits and not rushing them back," Cavaliers coach David Blatt told reporters. "But they are both working hard and well and they are making progress. Exactly when they're going to return I just can't say because I don't know. Not yet."

Baynes undergoes nose surgery

Detroit Pistons backup center Aron Baynes underwent surgery on Thursday to repair a broken nose, the club announced.

Baynes suffered the injury in a game against Oklahoma City last Friday but doctors cleared him to continue playing. He played 11 minutes in Wednesday's overtime victory over the Phoenix Suns.

Baynes is averaging 4.3 points and 3.9 rebounds per game.

Gortat leaves team due to mother's health

Washington Wizards center Marcin Gortat will miss at least two games after leaving the team due to a family emergency.

Gortat traveled to Poland on Thursday to visit his ailing mother, who is hospitalized in his native country. Gortat learned of his mother's condition prior to Tuesday's game against Cleveland.

Gortat played that night against the Cavaliers and had 15 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots. He scored a season-high 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in Wednesday's game against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Heat sends Stokes to D-League

The Miami Heat re-signed forward/center Jarnell Stokes to Sioux Falls of the D-League, the club announced Thursday.

Stokes was recently acquired Memphis as part of the package in which guard Mario Chalmers was traded to the Grizzlies.

Stokes played in two NBA games with the Grizzlies prior to the trade but hasn't seen action with Miami.

Hawks option Hardaway, Tavares

The Atlanta Hawks sent guard Tim Hardaway Jr. and center Edy Tavares to Canton of the NBA Development League on Thursday.

Hardaway, a third-year pro, has played in just four games for the Hawks this season and averaged 2.5 points and 1.3 rebounds. The former Michigan standout started 30 games for the New York Knicks last season and averaged 11.5 points before he was acquired by Atlanta in a draft-night trade in June.

Tavares has played in three games for Atlanta this season and has one point, one rebound and one assist. The D-League assignment is his second of the season. He averaged 16.0 points, 14.5 rebounds and 4.5 blocks in two games for Austin.

UMFK rallies past SUNY Cobleskill

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

COBLESKILL, New York — The University of Maine-Fort Kent rallied from an 11-point half-time deficit by pouring in 51 points in the second half on the way to a 70-64 men's basketball victory over SUNY Cobleskill at Iorio Gymnasium on Thursday night.

Junior forward Joe McCloskey of Howland connected for 23 points with 12 rebounds and three assists to power the Bengals (7-7), while senior swingman Marquis Glenn came off the bench to register 22 points and 11 rebounds.

UMFK shot only 5-for-20 in the first half, but went 16-for-33 (49 percent) after intermission. Qaadir Ali added 10 points and six assists for the winners.

Frank D'Esti and Kemar Hemmings tallied 12 points each for SUNY Cobleskill (0-8), while Brandon Smith provided 11 points and 10 rebounds and Quincey Miller 11 points.

Bentley 76, Saint Anselm 68

At Waltham, Massachusetts, senior forward Tyler McFarland of Rockport scored 16 of his game-high 26 points during the first 6½ minutes of the second half, powering Bentley University to victory over previously unbeaten Saint Anselm College in Northeast-10 Conference men's basketball action at the Dana Center.

Alex Furness of Wells tossed in 21 points with eight rebounds and four assists, while Ferguson Duke netted 11 points and Keegan Hyland of South Portland chipped in with nine points, six rebounds, three assists and three steals for 5-2 Bentley, which improved to 3-0 in league play.

Freshman Kyle Bouchard of Houlton added eight points and seven rebounds for the Falcons, who shot 49 percent overall and 42 percent (10-for-24) from the 3-point line.

Saint Anselm (6-1) was paced by 23 points from Mike McCahey, 17 from Tim Guers and 16 from Harrison Taggart. The visitors out-

rebounded Bentley 44-35.

Delaware 67, South Florida 58

Despite a sizeable depth advantage, South Florida couldn't impose its will on Delaware, falling 67-58 on the road as foul issues bothered the Bulls all game long.

Thanks to a season-ending injury to sophomore wing Chivarsky Corbett (knee) and without the services of junior wing Devonnie Pinkard (foot), Delaware was limited to just seven available scholarship players, six of whom played.

Sophomore point guard Kory Holden led all scorers with 23 points for the Blue Hens but shot 5-of-17 from the floor, going 11-of-14 from the foul line. Redshirt senior forward Marvin King-Davis added 16 points and a career-high 18 rebounds for the Blue Hens.

South Florida was whistled for 27 fouls to just 12 against Delaware, which led to a large discrepancy in the foul shooting department. The Blue Hens were 29-of-37 (78.4 percent) to just 7-of-13 (53.8 percent) by USF, making up for the fact they were just 17-of-55 (30.9 percent) from the floor.

After trailing by 14 at half, USF cut the Delaware lead to four at 41-37 with 10:15 remaining, but that was the closest the Bulls would get. They just three points over the next 5:40 as the Blue Hens went on a 16-3 run, taking a 57-40 lead on a jumper by Holden with 4:49 remaining.

Sophomore guard Roddy Peters (14 points) was the only South Florida player in double figures. As a team, the Bulls shot 37.1 percent (23-of-62) from the floor.

Gonzaga 69, Washington State 60

Gonzaga forward Kyle Wiltjer scored 20 of his game-high 22 points in the first 10 minutes as the 13th-ranked Bulldogs posted a nonconference win over Washington State in Pullman, Washington.

Point guard Josh Perkins scored a career-high 16 points for Gonzaga (5-1). The Bulldogs led comfortably most of the game while playing without star center Przemek Karnowski, who is nursing a back injury.

Major League officials, players to visit Cuba

BY DANIEL TROTTA
REUTERS

HAVANA — Major League Baseball officials and players will visit Cuba this month

for a goodwill tour, MLB's first event on the Caribbean island since a 1999 exhibition game between the Cuban national team and the Baltimore Orioles.

Baseball, nicknamed America's pastime, is the most-popular sport in Cuba and is seen as an avenue for diplomacy as the relations between the former Cold War adversaries thaw.

Hall of Fame player and manager Joe Torre, who is now MLB's chief baseball

officer, and Hall of Fame player Dave Winfield, representing the players' union, will tour Cuba from Dec. 15-18 with a number of current players to be named at a later date, MLB said in a statement.

The announced agenda includes youth baseball clinics and a charity event.

The visit follows an agreement in July between the governments of the United States and Cuba to restore diplomatic relations after a 54-year break.

Commercial relations between Major League Baseball and the Cuban Baseball Federation are still largely blocked by the U.S. trade embargo of Cuba, although MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred has said he would like to

see a minor-league team play an exhibition game in Cuba in 2016.

Cuba would like to reach an agreement with MLB to prevent the poaching of its players without compensation. For its part, MLB would like to regulate the transfer of players and have a chance to scout in Cuba as it does in other Caribbean countries.

In the absence of a formal transfer system, Cuban players wishing to reach the major leagues must abandon the island illegally, often on dangerous overseas journeys in the hands of smugglers.

More than 100 players have left in the past year, hoping to join other Cubans in signing multimillion-dollar contracts.

Cuban defectors among MLB's stars include Jose Daniel Abreu of the Chicago White Sox, Aroldis Chapman of the Cincinnati Reds and Yoenis Cespedes of the New York Mets.

None of them, however, can return to play for the Cuban national team because they defected.

"Major League Baseball is very fortunate to have an opportunity to play a constructive role in the improvement of our country's relations with Cuba," Manfred said the statement.

"Baseball represents a pivotal common bond in our cultures ... I am hopeful that this tour will represent the beginning of a longstanding relationship," he said.