

Woods pleased with rehab progress

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Tiger Woods was at Augusta National briefly last week for the Champions Dinner two nights before the start of the Masters. Even though he wasn't playing as he continues his recovery from back surgery, he managed to make some news.

PRO GOLF NOTEBOOK

It came the day after when he went home to Jupiter, Florida.

“Tiger Woods was hitting drivers full speed today at Medalist GC,” Tim Rosaforte of the Golf Channel reported on Twitter.

Woods, who has not played since the Wyndham Championship last August, is taking his comeback slowly at the age of 40 and insists he will return to action sometime this year.

It wasn't until a week before the Masters that he announced that he would not play in the first major of the year, which he has won four times, but he also seemed encour-

aged by his improvement.

“I'm absolutely making progress, and I'm really happy with how far I've come, but I still have no timetable to return to competitive golf,” Woods wrote on his website.

Woods, who has 79 PGA Tour victories, including 14 major titles, has said he still believes he can break Sam Snead's record of 82 in the former category and Jack Nicklaus' mark of 18 in the latter.

Nicklaus said again that he believes Woods can do it.

“Tiger and I both won young, and he may span 25 years (in his career) himself,” Nicklaus said at the Masters. I don't think he's done. I think Tiger's going to win more tournaments.”

Woods' next target could be to play before or at the U.S. Open in June at Oakmont.



Woods

DeChambeau set to tee off pro career

Bryson DeChambeau isn't your typical college dropout.

The 22-year-old left SMU at the beginning of the school year in September, and he will turn pro this week when he tees it up in the RBC Heritage at Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head, S.C.

That wasn't the way he planned it, but when the Mustangs were put on probation for recruiting violations, it meant he would be unable to defend the NCAA championship he won last spring.

“I seriously believe it was a blessing in disguise,” said DeChambeau, who is from Clovis in California's San Joaquin Valley. “It's unfortunate for the guys on the team, the seniors there. I feel bad for them.

“But it was a blessing in dis-



DeChambeau

guise for me. I had two paths, and it made it real sort of clear, and it helped push me in a certain direction. It's given me the experience to be comfortable out there on tour.”

DeChambeau last year joined Jack Nicklaus, Phil Mickelson, Tiger Woods and Ryan Moore as the only players to win the NCAA and U.S. Amateur titles in the same year. The U.S. Amateur victory gave him a berth in the Masters — as long as he remained an amateur.

So he accepted several invitations to play in pro events around the world and was impressive, tying for second in the Australian Masters, leading the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship with a first-round 64, tying for 18th in the Omega Dubai Desert Classic by finishing with three scores in the 60s and shooting 66 in the final round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational to tie for 18th while playing alongside four-time major champion Rory

McIlroy of Northern Ireland.

Spieth opens as U.S. Open favorite

Jordan Spieth, who lost a chance at history with his meltdown at the Masters, is back on top of the list of favorites for the U.S. Open.

Spieth, the defending U.S. Open champion, was installed by the Westgate Las Vegas SuperBook on Monday as the favorite at 7-1 to win the tournament, which tees off June 16 at Oakmont Country Club.

Rory McIlroy and Jason Day are each at 8-1. Dustin Johnson, who finished in a tie for fourth at the Masters, opened at 15-1, followed by Rickie Fowler, Adam Scott and Justin Rose, each at 20-1. Phil Mickelson is 30-1 and Tiger Woods is listed at 100-1.

As defending champion at the Masters, Spieth gave it away to Englishman Danny Willett, losing a five-stroke lead early on the back nine at Augusta National Golf Club on Sunday. Willett fired a bogey-free 5-under-par 67 to win the 80th Masters.

Changes

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then reflected on the demise of satellite camps, how coaches benefit from working at off-campus camps and how hundreds of players have earned scholarships thanks to these camps.

When he was at Bowling Green, he and his staff would make the drive to Columbus to take part in Ohio State's camps and see players, who they could potentially offer scholarships.

“I wish they'd revisit that part of it. I think there's a knee-jerk reaction because people complained and I get that,” Meyer explained. “It's a slippery slope. I'm not worried about the high-level players, because they're going to find a way to get where they need to get.

“I'm talking about, there's a big chunk of players who deserve to play major college football. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, because I don't really know. But you should always think first about the players.”

One of Meyer's solutions is to allow student-athletes to have a voice on some changes, while adding his comments were not “anti-NCAA.”

The NCAA has also approved a three-year moratorium on new bowl games until 2019 at the earliest, according to reports Monday.

ESPN reported that members of the NCAA Division I Council are evaluating whether future bowl eligibility should be determined by teams earning a winning record or simply reaching .500.

The NCAA Division I Council's decision comes a year after there were not enough bowl-eligible teams to fill the record 41 postseason games. As a result, three teams with losing records — Minnesota, Nebraska and San Jose State — were awarded bowl berths, setting an NCAA record.

The NCAA ruling affects three cities trying to add bowl games in 2016 — Austin, Texas; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Carolina and Charleston, S.C.

This is the second time in the past five years that the NCAA has issued a hold on new bowls. When the last three-year moratorium was lifted in 2014, six new bowls were added over the next two years — the Bahamas, Boca Raton, Camellia and Miami Beach bowls in 2014 and the Arizona and Cure bowls in 2015.



PATRICK SCHOLZ PHOTOGRAPHY

Russell Lamour Jr. (right) of Portland throws a sharp right to Borngod Washington of Queens, New York, during their bout Saturday night at Rockingham Park in Salem, New Hampshire.

Portland boxer scores TKO win in NH

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

SALEM, New Hampshire — Portland middleweight Russell Lamour Jr. improved his professional boxing record to 13-2 Saturday night with a third-round technical knockout over Borngod Washington at Rockingham Park.

The 33-year-old Lamour, a Deering High School graduate nicknamed “The Haitian Sensation,” dominated the fight from the outset against Washington, a product of Queens, New York, who entered the bout with just three career victories.

The win was Lamour's sixth by knockout and his

first fight since last Nov. 14, when he lost for the second time in his career by unanimous decision to Thomas Falowo of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Their most recent meeting was a battle for what had been Lamour's USA New England middleweight title.

Another Maine pro, super welterweight Casey Kramlich of Raymond, also fought on the Rockingham Park card and scored a win by technical knockout when his opponent, Jason Kelly of Dorchester, Massachusetts, failed to answer the bell for the third round.

Kramlich was winning comfortably through the first two rounds, using com-

binations to the head and body to control his opponent.

Kramlich is now 4-0-1.

Two other members of the Portland Boxing Club won amateur bouts over the weekend at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover, Massachusetts.

Tito Morales of Portland, the New England Golden Gloves novice featherweight champion, won a unanimous decision over Jonathan DePina of Nashua, New Hampshire. Teammate Sasha Lamour of Portland, the cousin of Russell Lamour Jr., won by unanimous decision over Lorenzo Giovanni of Middleboro, Massachusetts.

Retire

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ramifications of head injuries gave him further pause when considering his future.

“That does start weighing more heavily than the other types of injuries,” DeVito conceded. “You can come back from a knee injury or something like that, but when you start messing with your brain, it starts changing who you are, so you have to be careful with that.”

DeVito said the risk of suffering a concussion is something that is understood, and accepted, by NFL players.

“I knew what I signed up for when I started playing football,” he said. “That's part of the game and I wouldn't want to take anything away from the game because of it.”

DeVito's NFL career began with the team he followed as a youngster, the New York Jets.

He spent six seasons there, racking up a career-best 59 tackles in 16 games in 2010.

In all, DeVito appeared in 110 NFL games and posted 250 tackles with 5½ sacks.

In addition to the initial excitement of seeing his name on the back of the Jets jersey and running onto the field for his first game at The Meadowlands, it is the relationships developed with teammates, coaches and staff that make up his fondest memories.

“Being able to play on the same team for three years with my best friend, Matt Mulligan, that was incredible,” DeVito said of the Enfield native and his former UMaine teammate.

He also singled out Chiefs teammate Derrick Johnson, with whom he shared the recovery process after an Achilles' injury, as a true friend.

“Just to be around the caliber of person like him, what a blessing that was,” DeVito said.

He praised the efforts of

former UMaine coaches Jeff Comissiong and Jack Cosgrove, former Jets teammate Kenyon Coleman, and New York pastor Adam Burt as key influences in his personal growth.

“Those are the kinds of relationships I remember, not just the guys who taught me football but guys who taught me how to become a better person,” DeVito said.

His football roots were established by his maternal grandfather, the late Ralph Consiglio, and his father, Vinny DeVito.

Consiglio, the longtime coach at Suffern (New York) High School, helped foster his passion for football. Vinny DeVito, a former professional powerlifter, instilled in him a relentless work ethic and pride in training.

“My grandfather brought me all the knowledge he had and then my dad brings me this Brooklyn toughness with his powerlifting background. The combination of those

things was what allowed me to play football at a higher level,” DeVito said.

Cosgrove and his staff saw potential in the young DeVito, who was a 210-pound tight end at Nauset High School on Cape Cod. The Black Bears initially offered DeVito a \$1,000 athletic scholarship to attend UMaine.

DeVito embraced the opportunity and pursued excellence on the field with the same urgency he used to chase down opposing ballcarriers and quarterbacks. He became a two-time, All-Atlantic 10 honoree and signed with the Jets as an undrafted free agent in 2007.

“The University of Maine football program and coach Cosgrove and all the coaches in the organization over there, they really build character in the players,” DeVito said, “so you're going to leave that school being tougher, more disciplined.”

DeVito earned a bachelor's degree in Business Adminis-

tration (Accounting) from UMaine and is now studying toward an online master's degree in apologetics, reasoned arguments in justification of religious doctrine.

The continued development of DeVito's Christian faith previously led him to consider becoming a pastor, but he plans to take a step back to consider his options for the future.

“I'm going to continue to pray about that and see what God's going to have for me,” he said.

While football has helped provide DeVito with many benefits, he ultimately does not want to be defined by his athletic exploits.

“It really was such a blessing. A lot of people don't get that opportunity,” he said.

“This [retirement] is a very difficult thing,” he added. “There's a piece of me missing a little bit, because it's been what I've done and who I've been for the past 18 years.”

Red Sox

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undefeated team in the majors.

Yovani Gallardo gave up five runs on seven hits and a walk while striking out three in a five-inning no-decision for the Orioles.

Brad Brach (2-0) earned the victory and Zach Britton picked up his third save.

Betts and Jackie Bradley Jr. each drove in two runs, while Ortiz, Ramirez and Bogaerts had one RBI apiece for Boston (3-3).

Price was up and down in his Fenway debut with the Red Sox, striking out eight but allowing five runs — all in the fifth — on five hits and two walks over five innings.

“I enjoyed having the fans behind me,” Price said. “Even after I gave up that five-spot, they were still behind

me. It was huge. It didn't go the way I wanted it to, but that's part of it.”

Kimbrel (0-1) took the loss after serving up the Davis homer and had two strikeouts.

“It happens. We are all human,” Price said about Kimbrel. “He's one of the best closers in baseball and we are definitely happy he's on our team. If it's a save situation, he's going to be right back out there.”

Baltimore broke a 5-all tie on Schoop's RBI double in the sixth, but Bradley beat out a throw at first to plate Brock Holt in the bottom of the frame to make it 6-6.

Bogaerts kicked off Boston's three-run first inning with an RBI single up the middle.

Ortiz, who was given a standing ovation before his first at-bat, showed his appreciation with an RBI single off the Green Monster in left, and Ramirez's ensuing sacrifice fly made it 3-0.

Davis avenged a first-inning

strikeout — Price's first with Boston at Fenway Park — with a two-run single with the bases loaded and nobody out in the fifth.

Trumbo's three-run blast to center one at-bat later gave Baltimore the lead at 5-3.

“It was execution in that third inning,” Price said. “That has been my Achilles heel. That one bad inning. That's all it takes in this game. One bad pitch. Today it was just that one inning.”

Bradley's ground-rule double into the stands in left let Holt score in the fourth, and Betts brought him home on a fielder's choice as the Red Sox knotted the score at 5-5.

NOTES: Red Sox DH David Ortiz, who said he plans to retire following this season, was accompanied by Boston sports icons Bill Russell, Bobby Orr and Ty Law to throw out the ceremonial first pitches. Ortiz's daughter, Alex, sang the national anthem.

NFL

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league, the greater the likelihood the advanced scan would reveal signs of brain damage, the neurologist said, a correlation that did not show up with traditional scans. With both types of scanning, there was no relationship between the number of diagnosed concussions suffered by a player and signs of brain damage.

That finding suggests the constant banging that players experience during games and practices, especially those playing offensive and defensive line positions, puts them more at risk than the big hits that cause concussions, Conidi told Reuters.

One way of reducing the danger is by eliminating tackling during practices, Conidi said, a step that some

Ivy League football programs have already taken.

Conidi said his study was “one piece of the puzzle” in understanding the link between brain damage and football, the most popular American sport and one that generates billions of dollars in revenue for its players, coaches and owners.

The issue has become the subject of a national conversation in recent years, thanks in part to the 2015 movie “Concussion,” starring Will Smith. The film tells the true story of Dr. Bennet Omalu, a Nigerian pathologist who challenged the NFL with his research into CTE suffered by players.

After Omalu published his research, some 5,000 former players sued the NFL over brain injuries, claiming the league concealed the dangers of repeated head trauma. The players agreed to a settlement that could cost the NFL \$1 billion, but the deal remains tied up in the courts.