

Curry out at least 2 weeks with knee sprain

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry is expected to miss several weeks after an MRI Monday morning revealed a Grade 1 MCL sprain in his right knee. He will be re-evaluated in two weeks. Just before noon, Curry tweeted: “Thanks 4 all the prayers & messages. Can feel all the positive energy. God is Great! All things considered I’m Gonna be alright!”

The injury means Curry will miss the rest of the Warriors’ first-round series against the Rockets and perhaps a good portion of their second round, most likely against the Los Angeles Clippers. And there is no guarantee that after two weeks, he will be able to return to action right away.



Curry

Curry suffered the injury on the last play of the first half of Game 4 Sunday night at Houston and was diagnosed with a sprained right knee by the team’s medical staff on site. Curry slipped on a wet spot while guarding Trevor Ariza at the first-half buzzer and banged his right knee on the floor. He grabbed the knee and limped off to the locker room. Curry returned to the court after halftime and moved laterally to test the joint but shook his

head toward the bench and returned to the locker room. He was ruled out just after the second half began. The Warriors look to close out their best-of-seven, first-round series against the Rockets on Wednesday night. Curry missed Games 2 and 3 with a right ankle injury. He returned to the starting lineup for Game 4 and missed 7 of 9 shots in the first half, shooting just 1 of 7 on 3-pointers while pairing six points with five assists in 18 minutes before suffering the knee injury.

“I thought his movement looked good. His conditioning was better than I expected,” Warriors coach Steve Kerr said of Curry after the game. “And then he slips on the wet spot unfortunately, and back to square one. “When you have a team that is as together as ours is and cares about each other like ours does, you tend to pick up the fight a little bit. Our guys sensed that we needed to come together.”

Garoppolo lone deflategate winner

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Twenty months after the deflated football drama began in New England, we might finally have a winner: Patriots backup quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo. New England’s No. 2 quarterback is the only player on the depth chart behind Tom Brady. But Brady’s 112-game streak of regular-season starts is in peril after an appeals court restored the NFL’s four-game ban of Brady for his role in deflating game-used footballs in the 2015 AFC Championship game in Foxborough and the subsequent alleged cover-up. While the courtroom football might not be over, it’s fair to wonder what Garoppolo brings the Patriots in the first four games of the 2016 season and what the Patriots might do to fill in with Brady unavailable. For starters, they could lure Brian Hoyer as a backup, considering the free agent has experience in the offense and remains available at this late date. Garoppolo is not Tom Brady. This we know, and the contract is another display of the disparity between No. 1 and No. 2 in New England. Brady stands to lose \$235,941.17 for four games if suspended this season, but none of his \$9 million bonus. Garoppolo will make \$686,718 for the entire season, plus a scheduled workout bonus of \$50,000. For a little on-field insight, here’s what coach Bill Belichick said the day he drafted Garoppolo in the second round in 2014: “With the situation we have at



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New England Patriots quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo makes a throw last August against the New Orleans Saints at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

quarterback, I think that we felt as an organization that we needed to address that to some degree in the future, so we’ll see how all that works out but I think you’re better off being early than late at that position.” He also said, “We know what Tom’s age and contract situation is. I don’t think you want to have one quarterback on your team. I don’t think that’s responsible to the entire team or the organization.” The context has changed, of course, but there is truth in those words. And if the suspension sticks this time around, the tests for Garoppolo will be fast and furious. Garoppolo’s first NFL start would be Week 1 at Arizona on Sept. 11 in a prime-time game against one of the league’s most aggressive de-

fenses. It so happens the Patriots traded their top pass rusher, Chandler Jones, to the Cardinals last month. Garoppolo’s next three starts would all be at home, but against Miami, then another primetime game, Sept. 22 vs. the Houston Texans — and reigning Defensive Player of the Year J.J. Watt — before facing The Ryan Bros. aggressive 3-4 defense on Oct. 2. Snippets of the NFL-DraftScout.com evaluation of Garoppolo coming out of Eastern Illinois University likened him to another EIU quarterback — Tony Romo. “The comparison goes beyond coming from the same college program. Both lack elite physical skills, but are productive due to their timing, smarts and quick re-

lease to get the ball out,” senior analyst Dane Brugler wrote. He was also praised for a “live arm, above-average timing and excellent passing vision.” As for timing, the four-game audition would be ideal for Garoppolo because the 24-year-old can be a free agent after the 2017 season. If not as Brady’s replacement, the live action works as a resume-builder entering free agency. Recall on a similarly brief call with the Broncos (six starts), new Houston quarterback Brock Osweiler was handed \$72 million over four years from the Texans. In 2015, Garoppolo got into five games and completed one pass in four attempts for six yards.

Patriots

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Ultimately, it didn’t have to prove it. Nor was that the issue considered by the appeals court. Instead, the appellate judges appear to be reaffirming that Goodell acted within the parameters of the NFL’s contractual agreement with the NFL Players Association. “This was always about the CBA [Collective Bargaining Agreement] and not science or evidence,” said longtime Bangor radio personality George Hale of Or-



Goodell

ington. “Goodell said he had power under the agreement and the court agreed.” “Unfortunately,” is how Aaron Jackson, co-host of “The Drive” on 92.9 The Ticket in Brewer, referred to the decision. “If the NFLPA agreed to said system, which they did, then they have to be held to it whether or not it’s actually a system that works. I think that’s probably up for debate,” Jackson added. Even though most Patriots fans are not well-versed in the law, they have come to understand through deflategate that maintaining one’s allegiance to a team can sometimes mean dealing with the team’s shortcomings. “The proceedings had nothing to do with Brady’s guilt or innocence. It was all

based on the application of powers granted to the commissioner in the CBA,” said Pat Spekhardt of Bangor. “While they may be absurdly out-of-whack with traditional systems of arbitration, the court ruled they don’t violate labor laws [nor did Goodell misuse them]. Based on that, there’s no argument.” Brady’s alleged actions aside, fans not only of the Patriots but of the NFL in general have come to realize that it might be time for change in regard to how much power the commissioner has in determining rules violations and imposing punishment. “There’s a reason a movement has started trying to reign in these specific powers. Until that happens, he is judge, jury and execution-

er,” Spekhardt added. It appears as though Brady’s options for appealing the decision of the appeals court are limited. With the likelihood of the suspension being enacted in September, Pats fans are eagerly looking forward. Both Lessner and Spekhardt predicted at worst a 3-1 start for New England with Jimmy Garoppolo or another quarterback directing the offense for the first month of the season. Regardless, most fans want to move on. “I’m ready for it to be over,” said Jackson, who envisions a 2-2 start without Brady. “Just take the four games [suspension]. They’ll still make the playoffs, they’ll get to showcase Garoppolo a little bit. It might be a good thing.”

Speirs

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Speirs said he was disappointed with his last two rounds, but the fact he made the cut is something he can build on. “I was frustrated with how I played on the weekend. I didn’t have a very good game plan. I know better. I deserved what I got. At the same time, making the cut for the first time is a step in the right direc-

tion,” he said Monday. “It’s obviously a process. There are still things I need to realize, like if I’m not comfortable on a hole, I don’t need to push it,” said Speirs. “Golf can beat you down, but you’ve got to take the positives from it. “It was nice to finally play on the weekend. I’ve got to learn from it and keep playing better so I can put myself in position to finish in the top 25, the top 10 or to eventually win a tournament,” he added. He is currently 165th on

the money list with earnings of \$1,495. The top 25 finishers on the money list earn their PGA Tour cards. Speirs qualified for the Web.com Tour on his fifth attempt last fall. The former Texas Christian and University of Mississippi golfer will try to make it two cuts in a row this weekend at the United Leasing and Finance Championships at the Victoria National Golf Club in Newburgh, Indiana. The four-day tourney begins Thursday. He is currently 165th on

MMA

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choke to stop Lemke 24 seconds into the first round of their bout at NEF 13 on May 10, 2014. No date has been set for a Powell-Lemke title fight, but NEF’s next scheduled return to Lewiston is on June 18. Caleb Hall of Dixfield and the Choi Institute of Port-

land won the NEF amateur featherweight title vacated by Lacey with a second-round submission of Erik Nelson of Central Maine Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in Auburn. Hall, a former state championship wrestler from Dirigo High School, used a D’arce choke to force an end to the fight and improve his record to 7-3. Nelson fell to 2-3. Brandon Berry of West Forks and James Lester of

the Kronk Gym in Detroit, Michigan, fought to a six-round majority draw in the lone boxing match of the night. Berry won the bout on one judge’s scorecards, but the other two judges had the 140-pound bout tied. Berry is now 11-1-1 while Lester is 10-9-1.



Berry

Softball

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Bangor took a 2-0 lead in the first inning on a walk to Emily Gilmore, her stolen bases, Payne’s RBI single, a fielder’s choice, a stolen base and Jenna Bishop’s RBI base hit. The Witches responded with five in the bottom of the first to take a lead they would never relinquish. Anna Chute doubled to left-center field off Bragg, went to third on a passed ball and scored on Meg Davis’ grounder to third. Sellars walked and Libby Hewes lined a single off the glove of second baseman Gilmore. Lord hit a slow roller between the plate and the pitcher’s circle, and a wild throw to first allowed two

runs to score. A walk and an out later, a wild pitch produced the fourth run, and Rebecca Gideon’s bunt single produced the final run. Bangor got a run in the third when Gilmore walked and eventually scored on Megan Connors’ sacrifice fly to center. The Rams got another in the fifth. Gilmore walked for the third time, stole second, and raced to third on a ground-out. However, the University of Maine-bound Gilmore jammed her ankle on her slide into third and had to leave the game as she gingerly walked off the field. Pinch-runner Grace Peron scored on Connors’ groundout. Senior Davis, who missed last season with a knee injury, picked up the win with 5¹/₃ innings of four-hit, four-run softball. She struck

out three and walked five. Chapman allowed one hit and one unearned run over the final 1²/₃ innings. They were backed by a strong defensive performance as the W i t c h e s made just one error. “It was a very good win. It was our best defensive game of the year,” Estes said. “I think we made six errors in our last game.” “Brewer played tough today. They were scrappy,” said Bangor coach Don Stanhope. “When they got up to the plate, they kept it simple and hit the ball hard. They played better than we did.” Bangor’s Bishop was the game’s only repeat hitter with two singles.



Davis