

# Fans

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Cosgrove said when administrators began lengthy discussions about ticket sales in March, one of the goals was to keep everything simple for the fans.

"Fans like to know how much they're paying and what they're getting for it," said Cosgrove. "They don't want to have to keep reaching into their wallets."

"One price fits all. It makes a lot of sense. Maine people appreciate simplicity," he added.

"We are putting an emphasis on doing everything we can to provide the best fan experience that we can both in pricing and benefits we can offer," said Diamond.

A \$10 parking fee for hockey and football games has been eliminated for several parking areas near the Alford facilities.

Diamond said about 75 percent of the preferred seats at Alford Arena that used to require a \$500 donation will no longer require the donation. The donation ensures a VIP parking pass, which is 80 percent tax deductible. The money goes to student-athlete scholarships.



The University of Maine is taking steps to increase the number of fans at hockey games this season, the administration announced. Steps include lower ticket prices and lower prices for season memberships.

There also will be half-season ticket packages that will include nine games. They haven't gone on sale as yet, he said.

Those will be ideal for people who can attend one weekend night but not the other.

And season ticket holders

who can't attend a game will be able to receive tickets to another game as long as they let ticket office personnel know at least 24 hours before a game. For example, if two season ticket holders can't attend a game, they can get two extra tickets free for a game later in the sea-

son. So they could bring a couple of friends or family members with them.

"That way their tickets won't go to waste," said Diamond, meaning they could sell those tickets to somebody else for the game they can't attend.

In addition, all UMaine

hockey season ticket holders will receive a fleece blanket and will be able to get into the game 15 minutes earlier than non-season ticket holders. There also is a three-month payment plan and a discount for Hockey East playoff tickets.

UMaine will still offer \$50 single game tickets for hockey in desirable areas at center ice, but many of those have been dropped to \$35 and \$20 depending on the section, according to Diamond.

Increased season ticket prices for UMaine football will be negated by the elimination of the \$20 tailgating fee and the \$10 parking fees.

Season tickets, now called season memberships, have gone from \$40 to \$55, \$75 and \$100 depending upon where the seats are. Single game pricing is \$12, \$15 and \$25. Fans also can get four-ticket packages ranging from \$40 to \$90.

"We had the lowest prices in the [Colonial Athletic Association], and we hadn't changed our season ticket prices in over 10 years," said Diamond. "But by bringing up the price a little, we're able to eliminate the price of parking and tailgating."

"It's still going to be the

cheapest ticket in the conference," Cosgrove said. "I've had people tell me in the past they couldn't believe how cheap our season tickets were."

UMaine will play five home games this fall.

There are about 450 season ticket holders for football.

"It has been pretty consistent over the years between 400 and 500," said Diamond.

Diamond said that the change in terminology from season ticket holders to season ticket members reflects that the fans are "getting more than just a ticket. They get the added benefits and feel more like part of whatever team they are following."

The hockey team will play three games in Portland including Hockey East games against Boston College and Notre Dame. The other game will be against Brown University. Fans can purchase three-game packages for the Portland games for \$75 or \$30 per game.

The Cross Insurance Arena, formerly known as the Cumberland County Civic Center, has been a profitable venue for the Black Bears as they have averaged 4,955 per game over the past eight games there.

# Tennis

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Davenport said what Williams has lost physically with age, she's gained in wile and savvy.

"She's definitely a half-a-step to even a step slower than she was at the height of her career," said Davenport, who won Wimbledon in 1999 and has a 14-13 career record against Williams. "But she comes into matches with much more awareness now of her opponent and their game. She knows what she needs to do, and recognizes that better than she did the first part of her career when she really only worried about herself."

To this point, Williams' best finish in a major during the past five years was reaching the quarterfinals last year at the Australian and U.S. opens. Five times during that span she was knocked out in the opening round. Despite her struggles with the illness, she said she didn't consider retiring.

"Retiring is the easy way out," she said. "I don't have time for easy."

Serena Williams' path to this point in the tournament might not have been easy, but she has sure made it look that way. Four of her five victories have come in straight sets, and her only set loss was by tiebreaker to fellow American Christina McHale in the second round.

Next up for Serena Williams is Russia's Elena Vesnina, who advanced with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Slovakia's Dominika Cibulkova. Williams and Vesnina have played each other four times, with Williams winning all four, including a first-round victory at the 2008 U.S. Open.

Berdych called on Tuesday for players to have more say in determining when matches are suspended in fading light after he came close to losing his last 16 match at Wimbledon against fellow Czech Jiri Vesely.

In the end, he won a fifth-set shootout for a 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(8), 6-7(9), 6-3 victory on Tuesday after the tussle was called off at 9:21 p.m. on Monday when Berdych had squandered his fifth match point in the gloom during a fourth set tiebreak.

A pumped-up Vesely, 22, served his 21st of 26 aces to storm to a 6-1 lead in the breaker in what was the last match in play at the All England Club, with Berdych complaining to the umpire that it was "absolutely ridiculous" to stay on court.

For Berdych, it was a flashback to 2014 when he slumped to a third-round defeat by Marin Cilic in a match that ended at 9:38 p.m. — the latest finish at Wimbledon outside of Centre Court.

Such was the level of light on Monday that Berdych, 30, was struggling to see and even the Hawkeye call challenge system had stopped working.



Russia's Elena Vesnina celebrates winning her match against Slovakia's Dominika Cibulkova at Wimbledon on Tuesday. She will face Serena Williams in the semifinals.

Berdych tried, unsuccessfully, to get the match moved to Centre Court to finish it off under the floodlit roof.

"I can't really see. That's the fact..." the 10th seed told reporters after finally completing the last eight line up.

"When the referee calls you that the Hawkeye is not in operation anymore, I don't know why actually we have to play in that situation when a very accurate machine is not able to operate. I don't think the human eye can see better than that."

# Durant

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an integral part of the birth of our franchise, evolution of our franchise, and the legacy of our franchise," Presti told USA Today. "Although it ended before we had hoped, no one will change the fact that he started here and I think evolved tremendously as a result of his hard work."

Presti would not directly engage in conversation about personnel or where the Thunder look from here to rebound, but focused on positives with Durant and Russell Westbrook, "founding fathers" of the franchise since it moved from Seattle to Oklahoma City nine years ago. Speculation ranging from the Thunder dealing Westbrook to maximize return — he's a free agent after the upcoming season, and the Thunder get nothing in return for losing franchise cornerstone Durant — and giving him a massive contract extension was



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) is congratulated by Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kevin Durant after Game 7 of the Western Conference finals at Oracle Arena in Oakland, California, in May. Durant will play with Curry on the Warriors next season.

rampant Monday night. Presti said no immediate action is necessary.

"I haven't spoken with him. I've texted with him, and he and I have been in contact, as I have been with a lot of our players through this process," Presti said of

Westbrook in the USA Today interview. "This is a group of people who have been through quite a bit together, so he and I will have our conversation, and reflect on it, but I would let Russell convey and express however he feels."

# Soccer

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with the under-23 Olympic squad on Monday but found he had only a dozen footballers after leading clubs like River Plate and Boca Juniors refused to release their players.

He had already suffered the disappointment of a second successive defeat on penalties by Chile in the final of the Copa America held in the United States that marked the centenary

of the tournament. Argentina's talismanic captain Messi quit the international stage after the June 26 reverse, his fourth defeat in finals with the national team and third in the last two years including the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Messi complained before the final in New Jersey of a lack of AFA support for the squad and said he would go into detail afterwards but has not spoken publicly since announcing his international retirement.

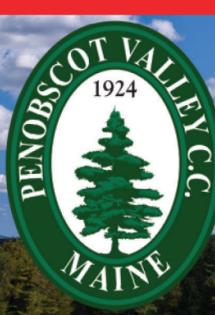
Martino, a former Newell's Old Boys and Barcelona

coach, took the job after Argentina's 1-0 extra-time defeat by Germany in the Brazil final.

Media reports said the AFA owed him the last six months of his salary and also criticized his tactics in the two Copa America finals against Chile in 2015 and this year which went to penalty shootouts after 0-0 draws.

The AFA is under scrutiny from soccer's ruling body FIFA over television revenue irregularities and a failure to agree on a format for presidential elections.

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