

Rodgers honored to have moment with Favre, Starr

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers' only regret about what is shaping up to be an electric Thanksgiving night at Lambeau Field is that he will have to skip the celebration.

The Packers will hold a ceremony at halftime of their game against the Chicago Bears at Lambeau Field on Thursday to honor Brett Favre. The iconic quarterback will have his name and retired No. 4 added to the north facade inside the stadium.

Only five other numbers have been retired by the team. One of those is the No. 15 worn by Green Bay's first legendary quarterback, Bart Starr, who is scheduled to be at the game as well after he had been in declining health at his home in Alabama.

"It's great for the Packers," Rodgers said Tuesday of having the Packers' three most famous quarterbacks at the same event. "We (the current players) won't see the halftime festivities, but it will be a great day for all Packer fans."

Rodgers hopes to get a moment with Starr and Favre, possibly before the nationally televised game.

"Bart's been such a great encouragement to me since I

was drafted here (in 2005), and I really have appreciated all of our conversations over the years with him and his lovely wife (Cherry)," Rodgers said. "It's always fun being around him because he's such a positive, encouraging person. It'll be great to see him."



Favre

Rodgers also won't mind seeing Favre after many years have passed since the latter's bitter divorce from the team in summer 2008, which opened the door for Rodgers to lead the offense after three seasons as a first-round backup.

"It does feel like a long time ago," Rodgers said. "I think it's been a good, proper healing process for everybody. Kind of starting with us on stage at the (NFL) Honors (show in February this year), getting to share some laughs together, and just going from there. It's the right thing to do, and it'll be exciting for him and Packer fans (Thursday) and great to see him going into the Hall of Fame next offseason."

Favre is a semifinalist for the Pro Football Hall of Fame in his first year of eli-



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN | USA TODAY

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers laughs as he waits for Erin Andrews to interview him after the Packers defeated the Minnesota Vikings 30-13 at TCF Bank Stadium on Sunday.

gibility. A total group of 25 semifinalists was announced Tuesday by the

Canton, Ohio, shrine. Fifteen finalists will be announced in January and vot-

ing will culminate on Feb. 6, the day before Super 50 is played at Levi's Stadium in

Santa Clara, Calif. Hall of Fame inductions will be in August.

Hamilton ready to wrap up on a high

BY ALAN BALDWIN
REUTERS

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Lewis Hamilton will find his number is up in lights in Abu Dhabi, and that can only be a good omen as the triple Formula One world champion seeks to end another dominant season on a high this weekend.

The number 44, the one the Briton has on his Mercedes, figures prominently on roadside illuminations as the United Arab Emirates celebrates the 44th anniversary of its founding on Dec. 2, 1971.

The return to Yas Marina will also bring back fond memories for the 30-year-old who clinched his second title by winning at the circuit last season and can take his 50th career pole position this weekend.

"Last year, this place brought probably the most intense weekend of my life. I didn't sleep much through nerves and not knowing

what was ahead," the race favorite recalled.

"But this time around there's no pressure, so I'll be well-rested and aiming to go out on a high.

"A lot of British fans come out to Abu Dhabi so it's like another home crowd for me. To win for them and show how grateful I am for the fantastic support I've had all year would be the best way to end an incredible season," he added.

Another win would also be his 11th of the season, matching his 2014 tally.

For Mercedes, regardless of who wins, a 12th one-two finish from 19 races would also be the icing on the cake by breaking their own record set last year.

With first and second assured in the championship



Hamilton

for the second year in a row, and the constructor's title retained, there is also the hope of seeing both Mercedes drivers battling wheel to wheel.

There was none of that in Brazil two weeks ago, or in Mexico, as Mercedes made clear that its priority was to secure second place for Nico Rosberg.

"We will not be backing off — and an entertaining battle at the front between our boys for one last time in 2015 will be the ideal way to show that," said motorsport head Toto Wolff.

Rosberg will be aiming to continue two sequences of his own, the German chasing his third win in a row and sixth successive pole to go into the winter with at least some bragging rights.

"I've had two really great weekends now in Mexico and Brazil, so I'm heading into the final race on a massive high," he said.

Rosberg started on pole in

the day-to-night race last year but a mechanical failure dashed his hopes.

"Of course, it will be close as always with Lewis and we saw a big push from Ferrari in Sao Paulo, so it won't be straightforward. But I'm up for a battle and hopefully we can put on a great show for the fans to end the year," he said.

With little movement in the driver market and familiar lineups for 2016, there will be fewer farewells than usual in the paddock's end of term atmosphere.

Abu Dhabi will be Frenchman Romain Grosjean's last race for Lotus before moving to the new Haas team while Manor Marussia principal John Booth and sporting director Graeme Lowdon are leaving the tailenders.

Renault's future in the sport may also become clearer, with the manufacturer set to take over Lotus — whose name looks destined to disappear again.

Feisal urges change from 'old school' IOC chiefs

BY KAROLOS GROHMANN
REUTERS

BERLIN, Germany — International federations need to change to become more transparent with some of them still stuck in their "old school" past, Jordanian Olympic Committee chief Prince Feisal Al Hussein said on Wednesday.

Prince Feisal, who is an International Olympic Committee member and whose brother, Prince Ali, is running for the presidency of world soccer's governing body FIFA, said the image of professional sports was taking a hit.

World athletics (IAAF, track and field) and FIFA are in the midst of their deepest crisis in their respective long histories with top officials investigated for corruption, money-laundering and bribery while allegations of widespread doping in professional sports has already led to the ban of Russian track and field athletes, with new IAAF chief Sebastian Coe under mounting pressure.

"When you are looking at high level athletes it does make it challenging with the difficulties several federations are facing," said Prince Feisal, who is also founder and chairman of non-profit, peace-building organisation Generations For Peace, when asked by Reuters about the consequences of the current scandals on world sport.

"We do feel globally there is the impression professional sports is unfortunately corrupt because of some of the issues," he said in a conference call, adding federations needed to become more transparent.

"We would love to see transformation occur. We would like to see greater openness, transparency and accountability. As members

of a sports authority we have the responsibility to be transparent and accountable," he said.

He said federations and sports organizations were now all brushed into the same category despite major differences in transparency between them. "That is not fair," he said.

"But not everybody has been able to transform. Some people may be very old-school and have not evaluated their processes to have that transparency and accountability in place."

He said it was up to the individual federations to put these mechanisms in place, before giving his brother a ringing endorsement for the FIFA top job.

"We would like to see better governance mechanisms for sports in general. That is my position."

Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein is one of five men seeking to replace Sepp Blatter in February's special elective vote, with Blatter under investigation and UEFA President Michel Platini, once his likely successor at FIFA, facing a potential lifetime ban from football.

"I am not an expert in that area (football) but we all grew up, my brothers and I, having a great teacher; our father (King Hussein)," said Feisal, a wrestler in high school. "We all embody his values and his commitments."

"(Prince Ali) is a very good candidate, capable. He can do the transformation needed. Whether he is successful or not is up to FIFA and what they choose for the future. He is a capable person who could help that transformation."

"He is passionate about his work and committed to making a difference. That's the values that will hold him in good stead in this competition," Prince Feisal said.

Kyle Busch enjoying victory tour

BY GEORGE DIAZ
ORLANDO SENTINEL

Sprint Cup season champ Kyle Busch is doing great on his victory tour.

"It's truly been a whirlwind 48 hours," he said Tuesday of his time working the talk-show circuit in New York.

But eventually, when the lights go out and the champagne bottles are empty, it's back to reality. As in foot and leg surgery.

Busch is not officially out of the woods yet in regard to health, as issue since his car veered off the track with just a few laps left in the first Xfinity Series race of the season. The car went across the grass and crashed head-on into an interior wall that didn't have a SAFER barrier.

Busch suffered a broken leg and foot. Some minor repair work, including removing a metal rod from his leg, still needs to be done within the next few weeks. He's hoping that both of the procedures can be done on the same day.

"Not exactly sure when," Busch said. "Either the week after the banquet [in Las



PETER CASEY | USA TODAY

Sprint Cup Series driver Kyle Busch celebrates after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship after the Ford EcoBoost 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway on Sunday.

Vegas] or the following week. "Just having to re-go through the knee and to cut the knee open again in order to pull the rod out, that's going to be the most traumatic part and just having that have to heal and go back together and let the muscle get back together, and of course the tendon as well, too."

But in the meantime, it's all good things.

"To hear everyone calling me, 'Champ,' introducing me as the Sprint Cup cham-

pion, it's really awesome to hear that," he said. "I'm pumped and I couldn't be more elated."

Magical moments for Gordon

There were a lot of magical moments the day of Jeff Gordon's final ride in Homestead. But none was more precious than when he saw his mom approaching his motorhome Sunday morning.

"As soon as I saw her, I got emotional," he said. "Be-

fore she even came in the bus, I just saw her, and I said, 'Yeah, I'm bringing her in here right now.'

"You know, she was not prepared for what was about to happen, I promise you. She walked in, and we started hugging and talking, and I just started thanking her over and over and over again for all that they did for me."

"I just started being very, very thankful of getting here and being a part of this and how special it was that I saw her at that time because I didn't know they were coming to the track at that time, and it just happened to happen. It was perfect."

Carey to host awards show

Actor and comedian Drew Carey will be the host for the 2015 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series awards show set for Friday, Dec. 4, from the Wynn Las Vegas. The event will be broadcast on NBCSN at 9 p.m. EST, with coverage also set from Motor Racing Network (MRN) and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

Other performers include musical artists Andy Grammer, Sam Hunt, Rachel Platten and Sabrina Carpenter.

Michigan Wolverines.

The tradition, which the school does not sponsor, dates back to 1969.

The school issued a safety warning on Wednesday, advising students against entering the lake. It also announced new restrictions, including plans to build a fence around the lake and limit access to enrolled students.

Man dies at Ohio State after taking lake plunge

REUTERS

A young man died after joining in an Ohio State University annual ritual in which students jump into a frigid campus lake to celebrate an upcoming football match, school officials said on Wednesday.

The man, who has not been publicly identified, went into cardiac arrest

after plunging into Mirror Lake on the Columbus campus just after midnight on Tuesday, the Ohio State University Emergency Management department said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, after several hours of medical care, the young man ... passed away from his injuries," the department said.

The university said it was

working to identify the man, who it described as African-American with medium build and tattoos on his chest and arm.

Ohio State students traditionally jump into Mirror Lake, a small reservoir supplied by the city, the Tuesday night before the school's annual football game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the University of