



« IN THE GAME

Lance Armstrong is getting back on his bike, determined to win an eighth Tour de France. Armstrong's return from cancer to win the Tour a record seven consecutive times made him a hero to cancer patients worldwide and elevated cycling to an unprecedented level in America. The 36-year-old Armstrong told Vanity Fair in an exclusive interview posted on its Web site Tuesday that he was inspired to return after finishing second last month in the Leadville 100, a 100-mile mountain bike race through the Colorado Rockies.

BEST BETS ON THE TUBE

BASEBALL

>> **Seattle Mariners** play an afternoon game against the Texas Rangers at Safeco Field in Seattle.

1:30 p.m., FSN

SOCCER

>> **United States** goes into tonight's contest with **Trinidad and Tobago** atop Group One in World Cup qualifying from the North and Central American and Caribbean region semifinals. A victory would all but assure the U.S. of a spot in next year's six-nation finals.

5 p.m., ESPN2

Turn to page C4 for more TV and radio listings

CONTACT US

Sports editor
Joe Palmquist: (509) 459-5503
Outdoors editor
Rich Landers: (509) 459-5508
Sports desk/report results:
(509) 459-5500
Toll Free: (800) 789-0029
Fax: (509) 744-5655
North Idaho: (208) 765-7127
Or send us an E-mail at sports@spokesman.com

NEWSMAKERS

From staff and wire reports

Named Top-ranked **Rafael Nadal** will lead Spain when it hosts the defending champion United States in the Davis Cup semifinals. The Wimbledon and French Open champion was chosen Tuesday by Spain captain **Emilio Sanchez Vicario**, who also picked **David Ferrer**, **Fernando Verdasco** and **Feliciano Lopez** for the best-of-5 series against the Americans from Sept. 19-21 on clay at Madrid's Las Ventas bullring. United States captain **Patrick McEnroe** had already chosen **Andy Roddick**, **James Blake** and **Mike and Bob Bryan**. But Blake was dropped because of exhaustion and will be replaced by **Sam Querrey**.

Died Ultimate Fighting Championship star **Evan Tanner** has died in the desert east of San Diego, possibly of heat exposure. Sheriff's Lt. **George Moreno** said the 37-year-old Tanner was found Monday about two miles from his campsite in a remote area of the Palo Verde Mountains, where temperatures had reached 110 degrees.

Signed Florida Panthers defenseman **Keith Ballard** agreed to a six-year contract extension. Terms were not disclosed.
• The Detroit Red Wings re-signed defenseman **Chris Chelios**, 46, for one year.
• The Philadelphia 76ers gave coach **Maurice Cheeks** his second contract extension in seven months. Terms of the latest deal were not disclosed.

Courts Professional wrestler and Olympic gold medalist **Kurt Angle** has been found not guilty of drunken driving in suburban Pittsburgh.

Induction Former light heavyweight champion **Marvin Johnson** joins **Lennox Lewis**, **Pernell Whitaker** and **Greg Haugen** in the World Boxing Hall of Fame on Nov. 15 in Los Angeles.

He said it



"This is a long-awaited matchup for everybody, especially the fans."

Pete Carroll, USC coach on the top-ranked Trojans' game against No. 5 Ohio State on Saturday at 5 p.m.

TODAY'S BEST

Top performers from the Inland Northwest and beyond:

CARLOS DELGADO

New York Mets slugger went 3 for 3 with two home runs in a victory over Washington.

LANCE BERKMAN

Had three hits, including home run, four RBIs to lead Houston over Pittsburgh.

MEGHAN DE LA ROSA

CC Spokane setter tallied 42 assists, eight digs in NWAACC victory over Treasure Valley.

IN BRIEF

From staff and wire reports

FOOTBALL

Merriman will have season-ending surgery on knee

Star outside linebacker Shawne Merriman pulled the plug on his 2008 season on Tuesday when he told the San Diego Chargers he'll have surgery on the two torn ligaments in his left knee.

The loss of Merriman, whose hard hits earned him the nickname "Lights Out," is a big one for a team that has Super Bowl expectations.

Merriman's decision came two days after he barely resembled the player who had an NFL-high 39 1/2 sacks in the past three seasons and played in three straight Pro Bowls.

"Shawne informed me he did not feel right and thought it best to shut it down," Chargers general manager A.J. Smith said. "The road to winning the AFC West just got more difficult, but not impossible. Nothing is impossible. Shawne is a great player and an inspirational leader. He will be missed. We wish him a successful surgery and a speedy recovery."

Merriman had only two tackles in a 26-24 loss to Carolina at home on Sunday.

False alarm: Jeff Fisher said the Tennessee Titans didn't have the luxury of waiting to be sure about the safety of quarterback Vince Young before calling police for help in finding him.

That led to four hours' of uncertainty Monday night before Young contacted the Titans and met with Fisher, a psychologist and police crisis negotiators at the team's headquarters before driving himself home. Combined with Young's reaction to being heavily booed in Sunday's opener, his mental state has been questioned heavily the past two days.

Young has a sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee, and will not play Sunday.

Young was located at a friend's home where he was watching football and eating chicken wings.

Collier targeted: The lead detective in the shooting of Jacksonville Jaguars tackle Richard Collier said he believes the player was targeted.

Sheriff's detective Dennis Sullivan said Collier remains in critical but stable condition at a Jacksonville hospital, with multiple gunshot wounds. He was shot in his car on Sept. 2.

Mauk denied: Former Cincinnati quarterback Ben Mauk, who sued the NCAA after being denied a sixth season of eligibility, lost another appeal when a judge in his hometown ruled against him.

Mauk was turned down by the NCAA five times before he asked the court in Kenton, Ohio, for help.

AUTO RACING

McLaren appeals penalty that cost Hamilton win

McLaren appealed the time penalty that cost Lewis Hamilton a win at the Belgian Grand Prix.



Associated Press

San Diego's Super Bowl hopes took a hit with loss of Shawne Merriman.

Race stewards penalized Hamilton 25 seconds for cutting across a chicane to overtake then-leader Kimi Raikkonen during the closing stages of Sunday's race. Hamilton re-emerged onto the track and allowed the Ferrari driver back into the lead before overtaking for good.

"From the pit wall, we then asked race control to confirm that they were comfortable that Lewis had allowed Kimi to re-pass, and they confirmed twice that they believed that the position had been given back in a manner that was 'OK,'" McLaren chief executive Martin Whitmarsh said.

The appeal will be heard by FIA's International Court of Appeal before the Singapore GP on Sept. 28.

Hamilton was demoted to third place and Felipe Massa of Ferrari was upgraded to first. Instead of an eight-point edge, Hamilton still retains the lead with a 76-74 margin with 50 more points at stake in the remaining five races.

TRACK AND FIELD

Harper, Robles finish first in women's, men's hurdles

American Dawn Harper backed up her unexpected 100-meter hurdles gold medal at the Olympics by winning at the Zagreb (Croatia) Grand Prix against four other Beijing finalists.

In another strong showing, Cuba's Dayron Robles won the men's 110 hurdles in Zagreb for the third time in a row.

Harper won in 12.65 seconds, beating Jamaican Delloreen Ennis-London by 0.05 seconds. Priscilla Lopes-Schliep of Canada, who took bronze at the games, was third in 12.86, and the silver medalist Sally McLellan of Australia was fourth.

Robles, the Olympic champ and world record-holder, finished in 13.20 seconds, 0.46 faster than

Richard Phillips of Jamaica. Petr Svoboda of the Czech Republic was third.

MISCELLANY

Monarchs edge Storm

Nicole Powell scored 20 points to help the Sacramento Monarchs clinch the final playoff berth in the Western Conference with a 77-74 victory over the Seattle Storm in Sacramento, Calif.

Katie Gearlds scored 17 points to lead Seattle. The Storm fell out of the first-place tie with San Antonio.

Chestnut advances: Jimmy Chestnut beat Matthew Williams 5 and 3 to reach the quarterfinals of the U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship in River Hills, Wis.

Two rounds of match play at the Milwaukee Country Club trimmed the field to eight going into today's quarterfinal and semifinal matches.

Sean Knapp, Todd Mitchell, Steven Wilson, Jeffrey Wilson, Michael Stamberger, Michael McCoy, and Chris Lange also advanced.

Ratings drop: Television ratings were down for the U.S. Open tennis men's final after rain forced the match to move from Sunday to Monday.

Roger Federer's straight-set win over Andy Murray, which started at 2 p.m. PDT on CBS, drew a 1.9 national rating and a 4 share, the network said.

That's down 49 percent from last year's 3.7/7, when Federer's victory over Novak Djokovic, a more competitive match, was in the customary Sunday time slot.

The women's final saw the opposite effect, with the rain shifting it from Saturday to Sunday, when more people tend to watch TV. Serena Williams' win over Jelena Jankovic earned a 3.3 national rating and 6 share, up 57 percent from the 2.1/4 when Justine Henin beat Svetlana Kuznetsova in 2007.

Seahawks can't catch a break

Seattle's top receivers continue to fall by wayside

BY SCOTT M. JOHNSON

Everett Herald

In football speak, the Seattle Seahawks' situation at the wide receiver position is a little bit like that Hail-Mary pass often seen at the end of a half.

For the time being, things are that desperate for the Seahawks' passing game.

Bobby Engram and Deion Branch are hurting and not expected to play Sunday when the Seahawks host the San Francisco 49ers in the home opener. Nate Burleson was placed on injured reserve Tuesday, joining Ben Obomanu on the list of receivers who are out for the year. Also Tuesday, the Seahawks released second-year player Jordan Kent, whom the team is likely to try bringing back on the practice squad.

The only healthy receivers on the roster are Courtney Taylor and Logan Payne, while ESPN has reported that veteran Billy McMullen is likely to join the group today.

"It's a very unusual situation," coach Mike Holmgren said of the never-ending cycle of injuries the Seahawks have had at the receiver position this season. "I haven't had (a season) like what's happening now - ever."

In McMullen, Seattle would add a veteran who knows the West Coast system. He started his career under a former Holmgren assistant - Andy Reid - in Philadelphia and played last season under ex-Reid assistant Brad Cheders in Minnesota, where he caught a career-high 23 passes.

McMullen spent training camp with the Washington Redskins, who are coached by former Seahawks assistant Jim Zorn, so he certainly knows the offense.

But none of the available veterans - according to the ESPN report, Seattle worked out six on Tuesday - is likely to come in and play like Burleson. So the Seahawks still have to lean on their young pair of wideouts until veterans Branch and Engram get healthy - possibly in Week 3, or more likely, after the Week 4 bye.

"I don't think anybody could have seen this coming," said Payne, who went into training camp as a long shot to make the final roster. "Nate is a big-play type guy and a big play threat."

"It will be tough, but we look at the bright side, where the young guys get more opportunities. We have to step up, and that is what football and the NFL are all about."

Taylor, Payne and Kent - all second-year players - saw the most action of their careers in Sunday's opener. But the trio combined for just 44 yards on four receptions, with two dropped passes.

"I did not particularly like how we played at that position (Sunday) in the game," Holmgren said on Monday. "You kind of anticipate some young mistakes and things like that, but we have to catch the football. That's not youth. That's just - catch the ball."

• The Seahawks got more bad news - right guard Rob Sims may have suffered a season-ending injury to his pectoral muscle. The team is expected to put him on injured reserve today.

If Sims is out, Floyd Womack is expected to be the first choice to become the starter at right guard. Mansfield Wrotto, a second-year lineman, played right guard throughout training camp.

COMING UP

Sunday: San Francisco at Seattle, 1 p.m.
TV: Fox 28

GRAND OPENING!
SOUTH HILL LOCATION
5501 S. Regal 509-448-8442

OZ FITNESS
4 LOCATIONS IN SPOKANE

V.I.P. PARTY
TOMORROW THE 11TH
5PM- 8PM
AT THE SOUTH HILL OZ FITNESS
COMMUNITY AND CURRENT MEMBERS WELCOME
www.ozfitness.com