IIISECTION B

## CB Jackson 'giddy' to begin

Veteran expected to provide complement to Porter Jr. in secondary

#### BY CHRIS ADAMSKI

Donte Jackson hadn't experienced this kind of anticipation for almost a decade, dating to when he was embarking on his college career as one of the nation's highest-rated five-star recruits.

"I almost feel, like, giddy," Jackson said last week after his first full-squad organized activities session with the Pittsburgh



the standard was already set (at that program). You know what you had to come in there to do (because) it's been like this for years. And that's kind of how I felt

coming here. "I'm excited, giddy like a little kid, because the here standard is set: You come in here, you've got to swim with sharks, man. And I like to think I am a shark.

Jackson, a seven-year veteran cornerback, doesn't need to be the alpha predator on this defense. Acquired in



Steelers cornerback Donte Jackson (26) warms up during the team's OTA's workout last Tuesday.

March in exchange for receiver Diontae Johnson in a rare player-for-player NFL trade, Jackson only needs to be a reliable, complementary piece on a unit that features a few hall-of-fame-caliber players as well as an established No. 1 at his position in second-year cornerback Joey Porter Jr.

Jackson, 28, has 80 career NFL games, 76 starts and 4,284 defensive snaps — all with Carolina — since he entered the league as a second-round pick in 2018.

 $\textbf{STEELERS} \cdot \text{B4}$ 

"I joke around with them that I get to fly under the radar. **No one even notices I'm here."** — Mitch Keller, Pirates All-Star pitcher



PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER HORNER | TRIBLIVE

Paul Skenes (above) and Jared Jones have combined for 89 strikeouts and only 14 walks in 75 innings.

## Steelers 'open to adding' receiver



hat I heard from the Pittsburgh Steelers on Tuesday regarding their wide receiver position was encouraging.

Well, unless you're one of the preemptive excuse-making as to why everything will be perfectly fine if the wide receiver depth chart stays just the way it is.

As if there's really a depth chart beyond George Pickens anyway. Or is it just a random collection of barely

recognizable names? Most who root for (or cover) the Steelers agree that the roster is too thin at

that position. Right now, it's

Roman Wilson, and a bunch

portion of fans, bloggers and media advancing the notion that concerns shouldn't

Of course, they don't franchise should it fail to add a legitimate, starting-caliber

than just the slot receiver some analysts say he is.

• Tight end Pat Freiermuth can become essentially

**BENZ** · B4

#### Pickens, third-round rookie of fringe veterans, none of whom had more than 20 catches a year ago.

There is, however, a

really believe this. They are just laying the foundation to fend off criticism of the wide receiver before Week 1 against the Atlanta Falcons.

go a little something like

• Wilson is going to be a rookie standout and more

## **TIM BENZ**

Those arguments usually



## PAIRofACES

Rookie right-handers Jones, Skenes shine in spotlight, drawing attention to Pirates

#### **BY KEVIN GORMAN**

They look like baseball's odd couple when standing side-by-side at their lockers in the Pittsburgh Pirates clubhouse: Jared Jones has flowing hair, a trimmed beard and appears a shade below his listed 6-foot-1, and Paul Skenes has a cropped cut, distinctive mustache and looks every bit of 6-6, 260 pounds.

Don't let their contrasting appearances fool you. Oscar Madison and Felix Unger they are not.

"We're basically the same person, if I'm being perfectly honest," Jones said. "We have a job to do, and we're just doing it to the best of our capabilities, making sure our bodies are feeling good every single day and getting ready to get after it.

Jones and Skenes are the talk of the baseball world, a pair of 22-year-old rookie right-handed pitchers who have thrown triple-digit fastballs, recorded double-digit strikeouts and turned their starts into mustwatch moments for a team Hall of Fame pitcher Dennis Eckersley



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dubbed a "hodgepodge of nothingness" only two years ago.

Their early success this season has drawn major media attention to Jones and Skenes, even though they have pitched in only a combined 13 career games heading into their scheduled back-to-back starts Tuesday and Wednesday

at the Detroit Tigers. Jones and Skenes have made individual guest appearances on MLB Network, "The Pat McAfee Show," "Baseball Tonight" with Buster Olney on ESPN and the "Foul Territory" podcast that features former major-league catcher A.J. Pierzynski, creating a buzz beyond

"Ya think?" Pirates manager Derek Shelton said, with a laugh. "I think it's really good for our franchise. ... I do think that that notoriety for our club is import-

Where Jones shined in spring training to earn a spot in the Opening Day starting rotation and had 10 strikeouts in his major-league debut March 30 at Miami, Skenes started the season at Triple-A Indianapolis to methodically build up his pitch count before making the most anticipated debut for a No. 1 overall draft pick since Stephen Strasburg.

**PIRATES** · B4



## Warriors looking to take final step

P-T baseball team has progressed in each of Cortazzo's 2 seasons

#### BY PAUL SCHOFIELD

When Lou Cortazzo inherited the Penn-Trafford baseball team in 2023, he walked into a program that was ready to become dominant.

All the Warriors have done is learn how to win big games. In Cortazzo's first season,

the Warriors reached the WPIAL Class 5A semifinals and won their first PIAA play-This season, the Warriors

have taken it a step further

by advancing to the 5A cham-

pionship game for the second time since 2019. "That was our goal, to take it to the next level," Cortazzo said. "We've reached the

championship game, and we

#### **INSIDE**

» Capsule previews for today's playoff games **B3** 

want to progress through the PIAA playoffs and, hopefully, bring home a crown.'

But first, the Warriors (18-3) have their eyes on the championship game against Bethel Park at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Wild Things Park in Washington.

The Black Hawks (15-6-1) defeated Penn-Trafford, 8-5, in the 2023 semifinals. Bethel Park, however, lost to Shaler 10-1, in the title game. Both teams opened the PIAA playoffs with wins but lost close games in the quarterfinals.

Penn-Trafford defeated Bethel Park in the Fall League playoffs, 5-2 in the quarterfinals, and went on to win the

Cortazzo said that win means nothing now.



Penn-Trafford's Ethan Septak rounds the bases after hitting a home run against Fox Chapel during their **PENN-TRAFFORD** · B3 WPIAL Class 5A quarterfinal.

## Burrell baseball team hits reset

After WPIAL playoff loss, Bucs head into PIAA tournament

#### **BY MICHAEL LOVE**

Burrell baseball players were given the day off last Wednesday, one day after a tough 2-1 loss to Avonworth in the WPIAL Class 3A semifinals at North Allegheny.

The brief respite from the rigors of the postseason gave them a chance to recharge and refocus. The immediate focus for the Bucs, who hit the field for practice Thursday, Friday and Sunday, is Tuesday's third-place consolation game against No. 4 South Allegheny at Washington & Jefferson's

#### **INSIDE**

» Norwin senior softball players hope to pull off one more WPIAL stunner **B3** 

Ross Memorial Park.

"We got back together (Thursday) and talked about the (Avonworth) game a little bit and then realized what we have in front of us," senior center fielder A.J. McLafferty said. "We're definitely not done yet. We feel we have a lot of baseball left.'

Burrell coach Jay Miller said his players responded well and got back to work to get ready for a South Allegheny team that pitched a pair of shutouts in the first two WPIAL rounds before being

**BURRELL** · B3

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## Norwin hopes for 1 more stunner

Seniors lead Knights into WPIAL softball title game

BY BILL BECKNER JR.

Norwin has only three seniors, but they weren't ready to turn in their softball uniforms before they donned their caps and gowns.

The girls graduated Friday, but their allegiance to the Lady Knights program will carry on for at least another week or so.

And a diploma could be accompanied by ... a championship?

The reality of the situation is be-

ginning to set in for the girls. Bailey Snowberger, Josey Michalski and Brookelyn Kotch helped

fifth-seeded Norwin pull a monumental upset in the WPIAL Class 6A semifinals as the Lady Knights sent Hempfield, the state's No. 1 team, packing with a 5-2 semifinal win last Wednesday at Gateway.

Just when everyone wrote it off, Norwin sprung up and delivered a knockout punch that propelled it to its first WPIAL championship game. If you saw this coming, share your

crystal ball with the rest of us. Norwin did not fear defending champion Hempfield and pitcher Riley Miller, rather embracing a chance to shock 6A with a nothingto-lose mentality.

"We lost to Hempfield the last two years," said Michalski, who hit a two-run homer in the win. "We got together and said, 'Let's go out with a bang. If we lose, we lose. But let's go out and play our best and see what

Norwin (10-10) will get another huge challenge Wednesday when it faces No. 2 Seneca Valley (20-1) and star pitcher Lexie Hames in the championship at 4:30 p.m. at Cal



Norwin's Josey Michalski rounds the bases after hitting a 2-run homer against Hempfield during the first inning of their WPIAL Class 6A semifinal. The Knights face Seneca Valley in the final Wednesday.

(Pa.)'s Lillev Field.

Even Hames admitted she was surprised it will be Norwin, not Hempfield, in the finals.

"A little bit," she said. "But, honestly, every team in 6A is hard. Every team is extremely competitive and is going to be a tough game." The Lady Knights, who finished

7-9 in section play, were swept by Pine-Richland and Hempfield but beat both of them in the playoffs.

Now, they have an opportunity for redemption against Seneca Valley. "I think we can win," said Kotch,

who limited star-studded Hempfield to six hits and got the Spartans to pop up 13 times. "If we have the same mindset, we can."

Kotch is a Penn State New Kensington commit but held her own against a number of Division I com-

"It doesn't matter if you're D-III or D-I," she said. "That doesn't de-fine who you are. Anyone can beat

Snowberger, a D-I Holy Cross commit, concurred from a classification standpoint.

"It's 6A," she said. "With the schedule we play, you can't take any nights off. It prepares us for this."

Snowberger said she and her teammates made pinky promises to fulfill their roles in the semifinal.

They didn't let her down, with a collective thumbs up.

Freshman Diem Wardzinski

caught all seven balls hit her way. • Junior Rachel Minteer went 3

• Kotch didn't walk anybody and delivered an RBI double. "Everyone is buying in," Snow-berger said. "Softball is a game of failure. It's about the next pitch, the

Coach Brian Mesich said the team readjusted to Miller's pitching, paying more attention to detail while 'shouldering up to the ball" and being more aggressive.

"It was more attacking than backing (off)," Mesich said. "We wanted to make them make plays rather than stand there and strike out. They have been our kryptonite.'

Michalski said she knew Norwin had potential to make some noise in

"If we all pick each other up," she

"That is important. If I strike out, they pick me up."

Mesich said Kotch's hard work earned her the starting nod in the

circle in the postseason. He said the defense made "game-changing plays" against Pine-Richland in the quarterfinals,

and the momentum carried over. It's reps, attention to detail," Mesich said. "Keep getting better, and it will come. We need to put the ball in play and get contact.'

Bill Beckner is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at bbeckner@triblive.com.

#### **CAPSULES**

WPIAL PREVIEW

BASEBALL

No. 7 Penn-Trafford (18-3) vs. No. 4 Bethel Park (15-6) 7 p.m. at Wild Things Park, Washington

On the air: Trib HSSN Players to watch: Brandon Roher, Penn-Trafford; Ethan Stanhoff, Bethel Park Extra bases: Bethel Park de-

feated Penn-Trafford, 8-5, in the 2023 semifinals. In the semifinals, Stanhoff went 2 for 3 with a double, Michael Bruckner went 3 for 4 with a double and three RBIs and Ryan Walsh also doubled and drove in a pair. ... Noah LeJeune is batting .293 with four, doubles, four home runs and 19 RBIs. ... Ryan Petras is hitting .469 with 30 hits — which includes five doubles - 23 runs scored and 18 stolen bases. ... Santino Diulus is 6-1 with a 1.31 ERA. ... Both teams are section champions. ... Three Warriors have 12 or more RBIs. Ethan Septak leads with 23, and Jason Sabol has 21. Septak has four home runs and lan Temple three, Chuck Fontana

leads with 28 hits. The Warriors

played in the 2019 final. ... Both

teams will play in the PIAA

postseason. The winner plays

the District 3 fifth-place team,

and the loser faces the District

3 champion. The state tourna-

ment begins June 3 at sites and

times to be determined. SOFTBALL

Class 5A Third-place game Penn-Trafford (14-6) vs. Latrobe (11-11)

3 p.m. at Gateway

Winner: Takes third place in the WPIAL for the PIAA playoffs. The loser is fourth.

Players to watch: Bella Rubbe, Penn-Trafford; Macie McHugh, Extra bases: Penn-Trafford

is looking for a repeat of 2019 when it lost in the WPIAL semifinals and rallied to win the PIAA championship. The fourth-seeded Lady Warriors had a 6-1 lead in the semifinals but lost 8-6 on a walk-off, tworun homer by Emma Paul in the bottom of the eighth inning. Rubbe blasted a pair of two-rur homers in the loss. ... Latrobe, the No. 11 seed, dropped a 4-2 decision to No. 10 Thomas Jefferson in the semifinals despite a home run and two RBIs from Kayla Williams. The Wildcats hadn't been to the semis since 2018, which was also the last time they made the state playoffs. ... The state tournament opens Monday. The winner of this game plays the champion of District 6, 8 or 9. The loser travels to play the WPIAL champion, Armstrong

or Thomas Jefferson. Class 3A Third-place game Ligonier Valley (15

Avonworth (14-4) 5 p.m. at Gateway Winner: Earns third place in the WPIAL for PIAA tournament seeding. The loser is fourth. Players to watch: Cheyenne Piper, Ligonier Valley; Alivia Lantzy, Avonworth

**Extra bases:** The top two seeds in the WPIAL bracket didn't expect to meet in this game. Ligonier Valley will look to ace Piper to power them through another postseason test, but the Rams will need more offensive production. After Piper tossed three consecutive no-hitters — two in the playoffs, including a perfect game - she allowed four hits, including two home runs to Kaitlyn Polk, in a 3-0 loss to South Park in the semifinals The Rams last made the PIAA playoffs in 2021 and were the state runners-up in 2A. ... Avonworth, the favorite to three-peat as WPIAL champion, was upset by No. 4 Mohawk, 5-3. Lantzy, the Antelopes' go-to ace for several seasons, has as many strikeouts as hits allowed (10). Rylee Gray had two hits, including a homer, in the loss. The Antelopes had won 12 straight.

loser travels to play the District 10 champion, Fairview. – Bill Beckner Jr., Paul Schofield

They won WPIAL and PIAA

state playoffs start Monday.

championships in 2022. ... The

The winner of this game visits

the champion of District 6. The

## Pitching key in Warriors'

PENN-TRAFFORD · FROM B1

run to final

"Both teams had multiple-sport athletes who missed that game," Cortazzo said. Winning the title was nice because it gave us confidence, and we got to see our future pitchers. We worked hard in the

 $Those\ pitchers\ included\ Brandon\ Roher,$ Zach Feldman, Hunter Brown and Dom Delio. Roher was the winning pitcher against Fox Chapel in the WPIAL quarterfinals, and Feldman started and got the win in emifinals against Franklin Regional.

"The fall league helped us because we got to work in younger players that ended up helping us," Roher said. "It gave us confidence because we could trust them in key situations. Bethel Park is a good team.

Cortazzo said he doesn't know a lot about Bethel Park yet. He said the Black Hawks have a strong pitching staff. Roher said the spring trip to Myrtle

Beach brought the team together. "We jelled as a team," he said. "We're a family, brothers backing brothers. We

Cortazzo said many of the players have been playing together since they were 7 and 8 years old.

have more of a family atmosphere.'

Ethan Septak homered against Fox Chapel and had a two-run single against Franklin Regional. Jason Sabol hit a three-run homer, and

Braydon Stone had a two-run triple and finished with three RBIs against Franklin Bethel Park rolled over section rival

Trinity, 11-1, in the quarterfinals and edged No. 1 West Allegheny, 7-6, in the semifinals. The Black Hawks rallied from a 3-0 deficit against West Allegheny. Mike Bruckner and Ryan Walsh hit

back-to-back two-run doubles to give the Black Hawks a 4-3 lead, and Joe Revis singled home Walsh in the third inning. Bruckner made it 6-3 on a single in the fourth inning, and Noah Lejeune had the winning sacrifice fly in the seventh inning.

Dylan Paul held West Allegheny scoreless over the final two innings to earn the save.

Paul Schofield is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at pschofield@triblive.com.

## Bucs playing for PIAA seeding

**BURRELL** · FROM B1

limited in a 2-0 loss to top seed Riverside in the other WPIAL semifinal game at North Allegh-

eny.
"We talked at the start of practice Thursday about how much we've grown since the start of the season, what we've done well and not so well and what we can do better," Miller said. "For as much as we've accomplished. I feel this team can do more and will do more. The guys understand what they need to clean up as they move on.'

Miller said his team's 1-0 win over Neshannock in the quarterfinals and the immediate return to the field the next night against Avonworth was draining.

"It was intense," Miller said. "I love those intense games. I think these guys do, too, now that they are seeing it and experiencing it. The guys expended so much energy and gave it everything they had in those two games. You can tell that everyone has bought into it. It has brought this team closer together."

Junior Stevie Hasson is a likely candidate to get the start against South Allegheny. He was solid against Neshannock as he threw seven shutout innings and allowed just two hits as the Bucs edged the No. 11 Lancers, 1-0.

Hasson is 6-3 on the season with a 2.59 ERA over 54 innings. South Allegheny, the No. 4 seed, beat No. 13 McGuffey, 7-0. and No. 12 Shenango, 2-0, to reach the WPIAL semifinals.

Senior Jaxson Champ and iunior Rvan Cortes collected South Allegheny's only two hits against Riverside. They both reached with no outs in the fourth and were on second and third with one out. But South Allegheny was unable to get either runner home.

South Allegheny, the Section 2 champion, split with Avonworth

in section play. Senior Trenton Popovich mirrored Hasson's success as he fashioned back-to-back complete games in getting his team to the semifinals. He surrendered a combined five hits over 14 innings in the two wins.



Burrell's David Kleckner celebrates with Dylan McKallip after McKallip scored against Avonworth during their WPIAL Class 3A semifinal May 21.

Miller said his team is well aware of what the Gladiators can do. The teams met for a doubleheader in the fall with South Allegheny getting the better of Burrell in those matchups.

"They took it to us in the fall," Miller said. "We lost one game 15-0, made a lot of mistakes and gave them a lot of free bases with walks and things like that. We bounced back and lost the second game 3-1. It was a team that we felt we could compete with then, and we're better now. I am sure they are a better team, too.

"It's some motivation for the guys to try and get one back. It should be a really good game Tuesday.'

Beyond Tuesday's game against South Allegheny, Burrell will be playing June baseball as the first round of the PIAA tournament is Monday at a site to be determined.

The Bucs, in the state playoffs for the first time since 2010 when they made it to the quarterfinals, will be traveling for their first-

round game. "It's great to know we get to keep playing," said junior Isaac Lacinski, who gave up four hits and struck out six in seven-plus innings in the loss to Avon-

Lacinski also doubled home the Bucs' lone run.

"In recent years, we've exited the playoffs quickly, and the season's been cut short. It's a lot of fun to keep playing games, he said. "We were the 14 seed, but we didn't let that affect how we approached games or how we played. The playoffs have brought out the best in us.

A Burrell win Tuesday will mean a meeting with the District 6 champion (Central Cambria or Huntingdon). That title game is set for Wednesday at Vet's Field in Altoona. A loss would set the Bucs

against the District 10 champion, Fairview, in the first round. Fairview defeated Mercyhurst Prep, 5-1, for the District 10 title Monday.

"It's crazy to think that we will be playing games in June,' McLafferty said. "Not too many teams can say that. It's a blessing for everyone on this team who has worked so hard to get to this point. I'm happy that we did what we did in the regular season to get us to the playoffs and happy that we did what we knew we could do once we got to the playoffs."

Michael Love is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at mlove@triblive.com.

#### HIGH SCHOOLS

BASEBALL WPIAL playoffs CLASS 6A

**Wednesday's schedule** Mt. Lebanon (18-4) vs. North Allegheny (16-5) at Wild Things CLASS 5A

Championship Today's schedule Penn-Trafford (18-3) vs. Bethel Park (15-6-1) at Wild Things Park, 7 p.m. Third place Wednesday's schedule Franklin Regional (14-8) vs. West Allegheny (16-4) at

Washington & Jefferson, 6:30 p.m. CLASS 4A Championship Wednesday's schedule

Indiana (13-9) vs. North Catholic (16-4) at Wild Things Park,

4 p.m. Third place Today's schedule
Montour (15-6) vs. Thomas Jefferson (19-3) at Washington & Jefferson, 6 p.m.

Lass 3A Cham: Championship Today's schedule Riverside (16-1) vs. Avonworth (15-8) at Wild Things Park,

Today's schedule South Allegheny (17-5) vs. Burrell (11-8) at Washington & Jefferson, 1 p.m. Championship
Wednesday's schedule
Serra (atholic (17-1) vs. Seton LaSalle (16-3) at Wild Things

Today's schedule

Burgettstown (13-4-1) vs. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (17-5) at Washington & Jefferson, 3:30 p.m. **CLASS A** Championship
Today's schedule
Bishop Canevin (14-4) vs. Eden Christian (16-4) at Wild
Things Park, 1 p.m.

Third place Wednesday's schedule Carmichaels (13-5) vs. Avella (11-6) at Washington & Jefferson, 4 p.m. **SOFTBALL** WPIAL playoffs
CLASS 6A
Championship
Wednesday's schedule
Norwin (10-10) vs. Seneca Valley (20-1) at Lilley Field, 4:30

CLASS 5A Championship Thursday's schedule Armstrong (17-3) vs. Thomas Jefferson (12-7) at Lilley Field,

**Today's schedule** Penn-Trafford (14-6) vs. Latrobe (11-11) at Gateway, 3 p.m. Championship

Thursday's schedule Elizabeth Forward (19-1) vs. Hampton (17-3) at Lilley Field, Third place Today's schedule Chartiers Valley (16-4) vs. Blackhawk (9-8) at North Allegheny, 3 p.m.

Championship
Wednesday's schedule
Mohawk (17-5) vs. South Park (19-1) at Lilley Field, noon **Today's schedule** Avonworth (14-4) vs. Ligonier Valley (14-6) at Gateway, 3

Allegheny, 5 p.m.

**Thursday's schedule**Neshannock (20-0) vs. Bentworth (16-2) at Lilley Field, noon Third place Today's schedule
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (14-5) vs. Laurel (17-5) at North

CLASS A Championship Wednesday's schedule Union (20-1) vs. Chartiers-Houston (17-2) at Lilley Field, 4.30 n m

West Greene (13-7) vs. Carmichaels (15-3) at Jefferson-Morgan, 3:30 p.m.

All schedules are subject to change. To report scores or schedule changes, email ptrsports@triblive.com. Visit TribHSSN.triblive.com/scores for results, stats, standing: and box scores from around Western Pennsylvania



PAUL SKENES (LEFT) AND JARED JONES

## Pirates' aces are used to intense spotlight

**PIRATES · FROM B1** 

Both have been described as electric. Jones (3-4, 3.05 ERA) is averaging 10.4 strikeouts per nine innings and has seven quality starts in 10 outings, despite giving up as many home runs (10) fastball 17 times in his debut, then fanned the first seven batters he faced on his wav to 11 strikeouts in six no-hit innings in his second career start, against the Chicago Cubs on May 17 at Wrigley

The emergence of Jones and Skenes has turned a cern into the team's greatest strength, with 27 quality starts through the first 54 games, while overshadowing a magnificent May by All-Star right-hander Mitch

"It doesn't take the load off or anything but definitely the spotlight," said Keller, who is 4-0 with a 1.30 ERA in four starts this month, including a complete game against the Los Angeles Angels on May 6. "I joke around with them that I get to fly under the radar. No one even notices I'm here, so it's funny.'

The notoriety is nothing new for Jones and Skenes, both former two-way players who have taken turns in the spotlight before

I'm on the mound, I

don't really hear

and the catcher

behind there."

they reached the majors.

Jones was the Los Angeles Times Player of the Year at La Mirada High ed him in the second round.

Skenes won the John Olerud Award as the nation's top two-way player as a sophomore at Air Force before transferring to LSU and leading the Tigers to the College World Series championship and being selected with No. 1 overall pick in the MLB Draft last July.

"There are definitely some things to adjust to, but all of the attention isn't super crazy. It's just more people in the stands, I think," said Skenes, who turns 22 on Wednesday. "It's not too different because I was doing it in Indy, too. Really, the big spike in all of that was after tĥe draft. It wasn't so much when I debuted. It's not super new.

Despite their differing

appearances, teammates say Jones is spot-on about his similarities to Skenes. Both arrive to the ballpark early, are rigid in their routines between starts and share the same mentality toward attacking hitters. They have learned to block out the distractions and concentrate on playing a game of catch — at intense velocity and movement that is complemented by a variety of secondary pitches. "These two guys know

what they need to do, especially in the game, in big situations," said Pirates lefty Martin Perez, who, like Skenes, broke into the majors at age 21. "They get here early, do all their routines. They like to talk. They ask a lot of questions. My job is not to just go out there and pitch. My job is helping them get to the process and make sure the process is not too hard for them.

"At that age, a lot of things are going on around you. But these guys have a really good personality. They know what they want and what they have to do."

Jones and Skenes simply consider it their normal. Both are adjusting to life in the majors but shrug at the suggestion their lives have changed because of the increased publicity and scrutiny. To them, it's the same game, just on a bigger stage.

and playing baseball," Jones said. "All of that stuff is just

When I'm on the mound, I don't really hear anything. It's just me and the catcher behind there. I'm just doing

Five years ago, Skenes was

outside noise. It's all really

cool stuff, talking to those

people. But it's just noise.

catching Jones. Growing up 30 minutes apart in Southern California. they played for rival travel teams as teenagers. But at 17, they were teammates for a Prep Baseball Report event heading into the summer circuit, with Skenes catching Jones for an inning as he recorded three strikeouts.

Where Jones signed with the Pirates out of high school for \$2.2 million in 2020, Skenes blossomed while attending Air Force and LSU and signed for a draft-record \$9.2 million bonus last

"It's surreal," Jones said.
"I'm super happy for him and all that he's accomplished. The growth spurt essentially is what hit him. It's been incredible to watch. I've watched him go through college, watched him at LSU last year. By growth spurt, I just mean playing baseball. He was never a big-name dude in high school, but he obviously stood out.

"He was a really good player in high school. Once

he got to college, **"It's just noise. When** he just took off. It's so cool to see that type of stuff. I'm really happy anything. It's just me for him.'

Shelton smiled at the sight of Jones and Skenes JARED JONES standing with Keller in the

dugout during games, building a bond that could benefit the Pirates for the next five years. All three were drafted and developed through the same system, providing what Shelton calls an "organizational win," and are forming the nucleus of a starting rotation that quickly has become one of baseball's best through the

first two months. "I don't think we've had many starters from previous years stay, so we've had a new rotation it feels like every year. It's definitely nice to have those guys, Keller said. "I learn from those guys, too. We're sharing experiences. They've got questions and stuff. Most of the time we're in the dugout, we're just talking about the game going on, probably not as deep as everybody's reading into it.

"Some of them might get there, deeper questions or answers, sharing experiences or stories. Mainly, trying to get a good relationship and be really good teammates first and foremost and good friends, too. I think that carries a lot of momentum and gives us the trust in each other.'

It hasn't taken long for Jones and Skenes to earn the trust of the Pirates, starting with the top of the organization. General manager Ben Cherington credited the rookies for how they have handled their transition to the major leagues by acting like they belong, on and off the field.

"I think they've handled it very well," Cherington said. 'We're seeing two young pitchers that are certainly competing in games and giving us a chance to win but handling themselves between starts and have quickly become comfortable

in a good way. "I think they would both tell you, and we feel like, as much as that's exciting, we want the story to be about the team more than we want it to be about individuals. But they're both doing their part, for sure. We're lucky to have them both.'

Kevin Gorman is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at kgorman@triblive.com.

## Jackson addition was long time coming

"Just knowing that I was coming here to be part of something that was always already up and running and that was already dominant and that I could come in and just be come out rolling, that's exciting," Jackson said. Jackson tied for the fastest time in

the 40-yard dash at the 2018 NFL Combine, and he had 14 interceptions over his first 63 games. But, just eight months after signing a three-year, \$35 million contract exten-

sion in March 2022, Jackson suffered a torn Achilles tendon that ended his In his only action that followed last season — Jackson did not have an

five passes defensed over 16 games for the 2-15 Panthers. I play corner, so the spotlight is

interception and was credited with just

always on that position, no matter if you're a big name or you are just a solid guy who's been out there making plays," Jackson said. "And I like to think I was always a solid guy who was out there making plays. It's just not in great learner and he writes a lot down, front of the right eyes.

'So this is an opportunity to go out there and show what I have been doing my whole career, and that's making plays. Flying around. Being an impact player. That's my mindset right now, just to come in and fly around and be a difference-maker.' Jackson is in the early stages of a

partnership with Porter, who, as a rookie last season, played more on the left side of the defense. Jackson has tended to play more on the right throughout his career. "I don't care where I play, left or right," Porter said. "Whoever I'm

'D-Jack' feels the same way. We are just taking turns right now. Jackson called the paring with Porter "a match made in heaven."

guarding, I don't care where I go.

"I love that he might as well be a football he loves the game so much," Jackson said. "Me and him talk all the time, just bouncing ideas off each other. He asks a lot of questions, he's a

so the sky is the limit for Joey. I can't wait to just to get going with him."

The Steelers — specifically, coach Mike Tomlin — have been waiting a long time to get after it with Jackson, a player the Steelers were linked to repeatedly during the lead-up to the 2018 draft. In 2022, the Steelers were one of two finalists during his brief foray into free agency.

The Steelers ended up signing Levi Wallace and re-upping with Ahkello

"So it kind of had a familiarity with how much they really wanted me to come be a part of this," Jackson said. "As a seven-year guy, you look for those things that get you excited to come play football, and that was totally one of them. That had me going to watch all the old (Steelers) games from back in the day. Just excited to be part of an organization like this.'

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## Steelers need 3rd receiver

**BENZ** · FROM B1

the second wide receiver.

 Calvin Austin III is going to emerge. Some of their veteran acquisitions are underrated, and they can use Justin Fields as Taysom Hill.

• New offensive coordinator Arthur Smith's offense doesn't use a lot of three-wide receiver sets anyway.

• Chill 'aht! It's only May, n'at! As far as that last point goes, OK. Agreed. But unless a really big fish surprisingly enters the trade pond — or is released — the pickings have gotten awfully slim for impact pass

catchers now that the draft and free agency have come and gone. As for those first three arguments? They sound like more hope than a

Meanwhile, I believe that other notion that Smith's offense doesn't need receiver depth because he doesn't run a lot of three-wide receiver sets is shortsighted.

That analysis is flawed because, even if Smith doesn't run out of 11 personnel (one back, one tight end, three receivers) very often, the Steelers don't even have a clear-cut No. 2 receiver, let alone a third. Not to mention what kind of a predicament the offense would be in if Pickens

Furthermore, that line of thinking is now being refuted by the receivers themselves. On the first day of minicamp Tuesday, Wilson balked at the suggestion that Smith dilutes receiver snaps.

"No doubt, this offense definitely uses the receivers a lot," Wilson said.
"If you want to say as far as (minimizing 11 personnel) throwing the ball? The receivers are used a lot in the run game. ... I've got no idea what he is going to do. But I'm going to be ready for it" ready for it.

Scotty Miller, who came to Pitts burgh this offseason after playing for Smith last year in Atlanta, gets the sense that his former head coach might be willing to expand the menu for the receivers in Pittsburgh.

"In Atlanta, we had a lot of tight ends: Jonnu Smith, Kyle Pitts," Miller said. "I think they wanted to get them on the field, which limits how many receivers we can have out there."



Receiver Scotty Miller, now with the Steelers, has experience playing for new offensive coordinator Arthur Smith.

Conversely, in Pittsburgh, during the 2023 season, after Freiermuth, backup Connor Heyward averaged the most receiving yards per game among tight ends at just 9.8, totaling

only 167 for the year. Pickens expects Smith to evolve as

the NFL evolves. 'You probably didn't see it in Ten-

nessee. You probably didn't see it in Atlanta. But the game is changing so much overall," Pickens said. "You've got new rules on defense, the hipdrop tackle. As the game is changing, different plays are coming about, too, for offensive coordinators. I could see him doing a lot more college-themed things, which is space and getting open. That's going to work.

It certainly sounds like coach Mike Tomlin is leaving the door open for the Steelers to acquire somebody else at the position.

"We're always open to adding, not only to that group, but any group,"

Tomlin said Tuesday when I asked him if the team might still consider acquiring a receiver. "That is our mentality. But I would imagine that that's the mentality of those that we compete against as well. We continually try to get better in all areas.

That's 100% the right answer. They should consider it. Strongly. Even if it means overpaying a little bit in terms of draft picks for next year.

And, as we all know, those who are making a case as to why the Steelers don't need to get another receiver in May will lavish them with praise in August if they figure out a way to make a trade happen. That's just the wav it works.

Just like how an NFL offense in 2024 works much better if you can field three capable wide receivers at

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## New punter can solidify position

Veteran Johnston was top 10 in many stats last season

#### BY CHRIS ADAMSKI

Scott Township native Christian Kuntz is just getting to know the new colleague he will be working closest with on a daily basis over the ensuing months and maybe years.

And while Kuntz so far has enjoyed his interactions with Australian Cameron Johnston, there's one way in particular the Pittsburgh Steelers' new punter can get on the good side of the player he depends on most to set him up for success.

"I know (former Steelers Aussie punter Brad Wing) brought this desert, some Australian breakfast cook-Kuntz, the Steelers' long snapper, said after an organized team activities session this past week. "And, wow, they were unbelievable. I am gonna ask Cam to bring me back one when he goes home next time.

Whether Johnston produces any culinary delights from Down Under, he figures to be able to endear himself to Kuntz, other Steelers teammates and fans simply by providing consistent, strong punts.

Consistency largely lacked from Johnston's predecessor, Pressley Har-

The Steelers cut Harvin soon after the season ended, clearly with a target in free agency in mind in the 32-yearold Johnston. A seven-year NFL veteran, Johnston last season ranked sixth in the NFL in net punting average (43.7 yards) in large part because his rates

Cameron Johnston signed with the Steelers

for punts landing inside the 20 (45.5%) and that went for touchbacks (4.5%)

ranked among the top 10. "He's a pro," said Kuntz, whose tenure as Steelers long snapper began when Harvin joined the team. "Cam's been around for a while, and he's done it in multiple different stadiums and teams. He hits great heights (with hang time), and he's an Aussie guy so those end-over-ends are good. And he's a good dude too, so it's good to

Part of the burgeoning community of Aussie punters in the NFL, Johnston is familiar with Wing and is close friends with Jordan Berry. The latter was the Steelers' punter from 2015-20, with Wing their primary punter in 2015 and an injury fill-in for Harvin for two games last season.

Johnston and Berry worked together at Prokick Australia, a punting academy of sorts that produces punters for American football college programs and, in turn, the NFL.

"I've known Berry really, really well for a while now, so I messaged him

before signing here and asked him about the Steelers," Johnston said, 'and he said everything was great. He said everything was really, really good here, and I agree. I've loved it since the first day I got here. Great group of guys, and I am super excited.

Johnston won a national championship and was named all-Big Ten while at Ohio State, and he's settled in the Columbus, Ohio, area where his wife is from. In the NFL, he's twice been on teams that have advanced to the divisional round of the playoffs (the 2018 season with Philadelphia and last vear with Houston).

He agreed to terms with the Steelers during the first day of the "legal tampering period" for free agency in March.

"When this opportunity arose, we jumped on it right away," Johnston said. "I am just looking forward to getting out there to try to help win some games.

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"We're going out there

BY BILL BECKNER JR.

It was closing time this season when Jake Kramer headed to the Cal (Pa.) bullpen.

The sophomore out of Hempfield has risen to record status among the program's relief pitchers, and his postseason honors are rolling in. Kramer was named as a Na-

tional Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Second-Team All-American, the first player from Cal to achieve that type of recognition in more than a decade. Kramer was one of the top

relievers in the country as he went 4-1 and set a single-season record with 10 saves. He struck out 26 in  $30^2/_3$ 

innings, and opponents batted just .155 against him. Kramer, who allowed only

one run, also received all-region

from the NCBWA and the Division II Conference Commissioner's Association.

He also was an All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference West Division first teamer.

He is tied for the Cal all-time saves record with 16, a mark he has achieved in only two years. **Bryant:** Grad student Tyler

Horvat (Penn-Trafford) helped the Bulldogs (35-19) reach the America East championship round. Horvat, a right-handed pitcher, started nine games and had a 4-3 record with two complete games. The Washington & Jefferson

transfer had 42 strikeouts and 10 walks in 55 innings with a 3.27 ERA. St. Bonaventure: Sopho-

more Noah Czajkowski (Norwin) had a breakthrough season for the Bonnies, finishing 4-6 with

a 7.26 ERA, 48 strikeouts and 23 walks in 531/3 innings.

He had 10 starts while earning All-Atlantic 10 Academic Team honors.

#### Softball

Pitt-Greensburg: Freshman Jessica Dunn was named to the All-Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference second team as a designated player/utility player. Dunn hit a team-best .312 and 18 RBIs. Freshman Jadyn Dunn made

the third team as an outfielder. She batted .283. Joining Dunn on the third team was junior Melanie Mien-

ke, who had 91 strikeouts and a 2.77 ERA.

#### Men's track and field

Saint Vincent: Senior Tim Patterson was named to the

United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Region Team. Patterson was proficient

in the 1,500, as his time of 3:53.85 was the fifth-best mark in the Mid-Atlantic Region. He also is one of 23 runners

to post a sub-15-minute 5K (14:55.57).

#### Women's track and field

Duquesne: Senior Hannah Seitzinger (Belle Vernon) finished 30th in the 800-meter run at the NCAA Division I East Regional championships in Lexington, Ky. Her time was 2 minutes, 6.03

seconds. Seitzinger placed fifth in her heat Seton Hill: Grad student

Natasha Bernett is a two-time outdoor All-American.

She finished fourth in the

heptathlon at the NCAA Division II Championships and did so in impressive fashion, scoring 5,580 points, which ranks 18th all-time in D2 and is the top mark among any PSAC competitor.

Bernett ran the open 100 hurdles and finished fourth in 13.52 seconds, another all-time best PSAC time.

She owns seven PSAC records.

#### Men's golf

Gannon: Junior Michael Wareham (Franklin Regional) shot 78 on the final day of the 54-hole NCAA Division II Championship in Winter Garden, Fla. Wareham finished at 17-overpar 230 and tied for 100th.

**Notre Dame:** Grad student Palmer Jackson (Franklin Regional) was named to the Ping

All-Region Midwest Team. Jackson helped lead the Fighting Irish to the NCAA National Championship tournament at Omni La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, Calif.

#### Men's lacrosse

**Seton Hill:** Sophomore Carter Green (Penn-Trafford) and grad student Kage Williams were third-team All-American selections by the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Asso-Sophomore Will Cody and

junior Alex Callahan were honor able-mention picks.

Grad student Peyton Gensler was an All-American honorable mention by USA Lacrosse Magazine.

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## Beloved announcer Walton dies at 71

Fomer NBA MVP was known for personality, flair

Bill Walton, who starred for John Wooden's UCLA Bruins before becoming a Hall of Famer for his NBA career and one of the biggest stars in basketball broadcasting, died Monday, the league announced on behalf of his family. Walton, who had a prolonged fight with cancer, was 71.

He was the NBA's MVP in the 1977-78 season, a two-time champion and a member of both the NBA's 50th anniversary and 75th anniversary teams. That followed a college career in which he was a two-time champion at UCLA and a three-time national player of the year.

Walton, who was enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1993, was larger than life, on the court and off. His NBA career — disrupted by chronic foot injuries — lasted only 468 games with Portland, the San Diego and eventually Los Angeles Clippers and Boston. He averaged 13.3 points and 10.5 rebounds in those games, neither of those numbers exactly record-setting.

Still, his impact on the game was



Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Walton (left) jokes with Nuggets center Nikola Jokic during practice for the NBA All-Star Game in 2022.

1973 NCAA title game, UCLA against Memphis, in which he shot an incredible 21 for 22 from the field and led the Bruins to another national

"It's very hard to put into words what he has meant to UCLA's program, as well as his tremendous His most famous game was the impact on college basketball," UCLA and broadcaster, he loved being

coach Mick Cronin said Monday. "Bevond his remarkable accomplishments as a player, it's his relentless energy, enthusiasm for the game and unwavering candor that have been the hallmarks of his larger-than-life personality.

"As a passionate UCLA alumnus

around our players, hearing their stories and sharing his wisdom and advice. For me as a coach, he was honest, kind and always had his heart in the right place. I will miss him very much. It's hard to imagine a season in Pauley Pavilion without Walton retired from the NBA and

turned to broadcasting, something he never thought he could be good at and an avenue he sometimes wondered would be possible for him because he had a pronounced stutter at times in his life. Turns out, he was excellent at that,

too: Walton was an Emmy winner.

"In life, being so self-conscious, red hair, big nose, freckles and goofy, nerdy-looking face and can't talk at all. I was incredibly shy and never said a word," Walton told The Oregonian newspaper in 2017. "Then, when I was 28 I learned how to speak. It's become my greatest accomplishment of my life and everybody else's biggest nightmare."

The last part of that was just Walton hyperbole. He was beloved for his on-air tangents.

He sometimes appeared on-air in Grateful Dead T-shirts. Walton was a huge fan of the band and referenced it often, even sometimes recording satellite radio specials celebrating what it meant to be a "Deadhead.'

#### **IN BRIEF**

#### **Braves' Acuna** out for season with torn ACL

The Atlanta Braves placed outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr. on the 10-day injured list Monday after the reigning NL MVP suffered a season-ending torn anterior cruciate ligament in his Acuna was hurt in the Braves'

8-1 win at the Pittsburgh Pirates on Sunday. After opening the game with

a double, Acuna started toward third on a stolen base attempt. His left knee gave way when he stopped in an attempt to return

#### Hockey

The Seattle Kraken are expected to name Dan Bylsma as their coach, according to a person with knowledge of the choice, putting the man who won the 2009 Stanley Cup title with the Pittsburgh Penguins back in charge of an NHL team

for the first time since 2017. Bylsma has spent the past two seasons as coach of the Coachella Valley Firebirds in the American Hockey League, the top affiliate of the Kraken, and has them back in the Calder Cup

#### Pro football

The Washington Commanders said they were made aware of a lawsuit filed in civil court last week against kicker Brandon McManus. ESPN reported two women are suing McManus for sexually assaulting them during a charter flight to London last year when he was playing for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

#### Boxing

Mike Tyson was recovering after falling ill a day earlier during a flight from Miami to Los Angeles, his representatives said. The 58-year-old boxing legend "became nauseous and dizzy because of an ulcer flare up 30 minutes before landing' Sunday, his publicist's office said in a statement.

## Nadal loses in likely French Open curtain call

14-time winner 'at peace' after defeat in 1st round

PARIS — The noise was loud and relentless, a chorus of thousands of belting out "Ra-fa! Ra-fa!" whenever their guy found the occasional moment of brilliance of the sort he has conjured up so often at the French Open and elsewhere through the

The 15,000 or so on hand roared their support when Rafael Nadal stepped out into Court Philippe Chatrier on Monday. When the 14topspin lefty forehand or chopped he dominated for so long. his two-fisted cross-court backhand or placed a volley perfectly to claim

The problem for Nadal, and for his fans, is that there were not nearly enough such points for him on this afternoon-into-evening match against Alexander Zverev. Not enough vintage play to allow his nearly 38-year-old, oft-injured body to claim one more victory, no matter how much the folks in the stands

time champion at Roland Garros tried to will that to happen. And so he working and going through probably

"If it's the last time that I played here," Nadal said, "I am at peace

with myself." It is the first time in his long and illustrious career that Nadal has been beaten in two consecutive matches on clay courts — he lost to Hubert Hurkacz at the Italian Open on May 11 — and the first time he has dropped a match earlier than

the fourth round at the French Open.

approached the net for the prematch lost 6-3, 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the first round the toughest process in my tennis coin toss. When he took his swings of the French Open to Zverev in what career with the dream to come back during the warmup. And, especially, might turn out to be Nadal's last here. At least I did," Nadal said. "I when he whipped his trademark match at the clay-court tournament mean, I lost, but that's part of the business.

He had indicated 2024 likely would be his last season before retirement, but he said Saturday that he is not 100% sure he won't play again at the French Open. And he reiterated that after Monday's defeat, only his fourth in 116 career matches at the

"I am not saying I am retiring today," said the Spaniard, whose 1½-year-old son, Rafael Jr., sat on his "The last two years, I have been mother's lap in the stands.

BASEBALL MLB NATIONAL LEAGUE East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	.38	17	.691	_
Atlanta				
Washington				
New York				
Miami				
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	.31	22	.585	_
Milwaukee Chicago	.31 .27	22 27	.585 .500	4.5
Milwaukee Chicago St. Louis	.31 .27 .25	22 27 27 27	.585 .500 .481	4.5
Milwaukee Chicago	.31 .27 .25	22 27 27 29	.585 .500 .481 <b>.463</b>	4.5 5.5 <b>6.5</b>

W L Pct GB ...33 22 .600 ...29 28 .509 ...28 27 .509 ...25 28 .472 ...19 34 .358 Los Angeles.... San Diego ...... San Francisco.. AMERICAN LEAGUE
East Division

13 L Pct GB New York.. 37 18 .673 — 34 18 .654 1.5 Baltimore. Roston

..27 27 .500 9.5 ..26 28 .481 10.5 ..24 29 .453 12 Central Division W L Pct GB ..36 18 .667 — ..34 21 .618 2.5 ..29 24 .547 6.5 ..26 27 .491 9.5 ..15 40 .273 21.5 Cleveland. Kansas City .. Minnesota .... Detroit .....

West Division W L Pct GB ..28 26 .519 — ..25 29 .463 3 ..24 29 .453 3.5 ..22 33 .400 6.5 ..20 33 .377 7.5 Seattle. 

American League
Baltimore 11, Boston 3
Minnesota 6, Kansas City 5
Toronto 5, Chicago White Sox 1
Houston at Seattle (n)

Interleague Colorado 8, Cleveland 6

ATLANTA 8, PIRATES 1 **Atlanta** Acuña rf Kelenic If

SUNDAY'S SUMMARY

Interleague
• Pirates (Jones 3-4) at Detroit (Skubal

6-1), 6:40 p.m.
• Arizona (Pfaadt 2-3) at Texas (Dunning

3-3), 8:05 p.m.
• Cleveland (McKenzie 2-3) at Colorado (Feltner 1-4), 8:40 p.m.

4-6), 9:40 p.m.

#### Baseball

WPIAL PLAYOFFS **1 p.m.** Class A championship: Eden Christian Academy vs. Bishop Canevin. **1 p.m.** Class 3A Consolation: Burrell vs. South

**3:30 p.m.** Class 2A Consolation: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart vs. Bur-

gettstown. **4 p.m.** Class 3A championship: Avonworth vs.

(Quintana 1-4), 4:10 p.m., 1st game
• St. Louis (Gibson 3-2) at Cincinnati
(Abbott 3-4), 6:40 p.m.
• L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at N.Y. Mets (TBD),

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6 p.m. Class 4A Consolation: Thomas Jefferson vs. Montour.

**7 p.m.** Class 5A chamionship: Penn-Trafford vs. Bethel Park.

#### Softball

WPIAL PLAYOFFS **5 p.m.** Class 2A Consolation: Laurel vs. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

1 2 0 0 .269 2 .311 0 .230 Ozuna dh Olson 1b 0 .268 1 .207 1 .243 1 .260 2 .158 1 1 0 1 ... 1 1 0 1 ... 2 0 0 0 1 .2 4 0 0 0 0 0 2 .15 37 8 14 8 3 7 AB R H BI BB SO Avg. 4 0 0 0 0 0 3 .226 4 0 1 0 0 0 1 .267 0 0 0 0 0 1 Duvall If-rf Arcia ss Harris cf Short 3b Totals **Pirates** McCutchen dh Reynolds If Joe 1b Gonzales 2b-ss 1 1 0 0 2 243 0 0 0 1 1 203 0 0 0 0 0 0.267 0 1 1 0 2 200 0 0 0 0 1 208 0 0 0 0 0 0.220 Olivares rf Triolo 3b Bart c Grandal c Boston (Bello 5-2) at Baltimore (Rodriguez 5-1), 6:35 p.m.

Oakland (Spence 3-2) at Tampa Bay (Littell 2-2), 6:50 p.m.

Kansas City (Ragans 4-3) at Minnesota (Woods Richardson 1-0), 7:40 p.m.

Toronto (Gausman 3-3) at Chicago White Sox (Clevinger 0-3), 7:40 p.m.

N.Y. Yankees (Cortea 3-4) at L.A. Angels (Canning 2-4), 9:38 p.m.

Houston (Javier 3-1) at Seattle (Castillo 4-6), 9:40 p.m. Taylor cf Williams ss a-Bae ph-2b **Totals** 1 0 0 0 0 1 .200 32 1 5 1 2 12 001 120 022 - 8 14 0 010 000 000 - 1 5 0 Atlanta **Pirates** 

#### Baseball

MLB **6:40 p.m.** Pirates at Detroit. SportsNet Pitts-burgh/93.7 FM, 1480 AM, Pirates Radio Network

7 p.m. L.A. Dodgers at N.Y. Mets. TBS 10 p.m. Philadelphia at San Francisco. MLB (joined in progress)

Basketball NBA

Sale, W, 8-1 Jiménez

Mlodzinski, L, 0-2

Lee **Pirates** 

Stratton

Chapman

WP-Nicolas.

Nicolas

7 4 1 1 1 8 97 2.12 1 0 0 0 0 3 11 3.15 1 1 0 0 1 1 1 20 1.16 IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA

3 4 1 1 2 2 50 4.71

2 3 3 3 1 1 34 12.71 2 1 0 0 0 0 28 4.97 1 3 2 2 0 2 26 5.19 1 3 2 2 0 2 30 6.75

#### 8:30 p.m. Western Con-

necticut. CBSSN

Golf

1 p.m. NCAA champion-

6 p.m. NCAA championships: Team Match Play semifinals. GOLF

#### Hockey

CHL **8 p.m.** Memorial Cup: Drummond vs. Moose Jaw. NHLN NHL

**8 p.m.** Eastern Conference final: N.Y. Rangers at Florida, Game 4. ESPN

**June 2** x-Dallas at Edmonton, TBA

**June 4** x-Edmonton at Dallas, TBA

June 3 x-Florida at N.Y. Rangers, TBA

#### **TENNIS**

MONDAY'S MATCHES FRENCH OPEN

FRENCH OPEN
Paris
Men's singles — First round
Stefanos Tistispas (9), Greece, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 7-6 (7), 6-4, 6-1.
Felix Auger-Aliassime (21), Canada, def.
Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4.
Jannik Sinner (2), Italy, def. Christopher
Eubanks, United States, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4. Eubanks, United States, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

• Kwon Soon Woo, South Korea, def. Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

• Ben Shelton (15), United States, def. Hugo Gaston, France, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

• Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, def. Aslan Karatsev, Russia, 6-4, 4-6, 1-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Women's singles — First round

• Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, 6-2, 6-3.

• Liudmila Samsonova (17), Russia, def. Magda Linette, Poland, 6-1, 6-1.

• Marketa Vondrousova (5), Czechia, def.

• Marketa Vondrousova (5), Czechia, def.

#### **TRANSACTIONS**

**BASEBALL** 

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BLATIMORE ORIOLES — Activated RHP Thyago Viera. Optioned LHP Nick Vespi to Norfolk (IL). HOUSTON ASTROS — Optioned IF/OF Joey Loperfido to Sugarland (PCL). Recalled INF Jose Abreu from Sugarland. Place RHO Cristian Javier on the 15-day IL retroactive to May 24. Recalled RHO Alex Speas from Sugarland.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Sent LHP Kris Bu-

buc in a rehab assignment to Omaha (IL). LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Signed SS Chad MINNESOTA TWINS — Optioned LHP Kody Funderburk and RHP Josh Winder to St. Paul (IL). NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned RHP Yoendrys Gomez to Scrantron/Wilkes-Barre

(IL). SEATTLE MARNERS — INF Jorge Polanco

placed on the 10-day IL. Sam Haggerty recalled from Tacoma (PCL) and placed on the 60-day IL. Selected INF Ryan Bliss from Tacoma.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ATLANTA BRAVES — Returned C Sean Murphy for rehabilitation assignment and reinstated him for the IL. Placed OF Ronald Acuna Jr. on the 10-day IL. Recalled OF J.P. Martinez. Designated INF Joey Wendle for

Martinez. Designated ÍNF Joey Wendle for assignment. CINCINNATI REDS — Activated LHP Nick Lodolo from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Carson Speirs to Louisville (IL). COLORADO BOCKIES — Selected the contract of LHP Josh Rogers from Albuquerque (PCL). Recalled RHP RHP Peter Lambert from Albuquerque. Placed RHP Justin Lawrence on the 15-day IL retroactive to May 26. Designated RHP John Curtiss for assignment. Outrighted RHP to Albuquerque. Calliss for assignment. Outrighted KHP to Albuquerque.
MIAMI MARLINS — Optioned Ss Xavier Edwards to Jacksonville (IL).
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Optioned C
Rafael Marchan to Lehigh Valley (IL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Reinstated
OF Lane Thomas from the 10-day IL. Designated OF Victor Robles for assignment.

**FOOTBALL** 

WINNEPEG BLUE BOMBERS — Released

MLS
COLORADO RAPIDS — Announced D Moise
Bombito has been named to the Canadian
Men's National Team.

**SOCCER** 

Today's games National League • L.A. Dodgers (Glasnow 6-3) at N.Y. Mets

AB R H BI BB SO Avg. 1 0 1 0 0 0 .250 4 3 3 0 0 0 .265

LA. Dodgers (TBD) at N.Y. Mets (TBD), 7:10 p.m., 2nd game
Washington (Irvin 2-5) at Atlanta (Fried 4-2), 7:20 p.m.
Chicago Cubs (Brown 1-1) at Milwaukee (Peralta 3-3), 7:40 p.m.
Miami (Luzardo 2-3) at San Diego (Waldron 2-5), 9:40 p.m.
Philadelphia (Wheeler 6-3) at San Francisco (TBD), 9:45 p.m.
American League American League
• Boston (Bello 5-2) at Baltimore (Rodri-

> a-struck out for Williams in the 8th. **LOB**—Atlanta 7, Pirates 6. **2B**—Acuña (8), Albies (12), d'Arnaud (13), Olson (10), Kelenic (6), Olivares (4). **HR**—Olson (8), neterin (v), oliviaes (4). RR—olson (o), off Chapman, Duvall (4), off Chapman, RBIs—Albies 2 (25), Arcia (18), Olson 3 (29), Duvall (11), d'Arnaud (20), Grandal (11). CS—Acuña (3). SF—Arcia, d'Arnaud, Runners left in scoring position—Atlanta (Charlel (March)), Britand (Charlel (March)), Bri

2 (Duvall, d'Arnaud); Pirates 2 (Grandal, Olivares). **RISP**—Atlanta 2 for 7; Pirates

Runners moved up—Duvall, Triolo.

Atlanta IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA

NRA PLAYOFFS CONFERENCE FINALS (Best-of-7; x-if necessary) May 21 Boston 133, Indiana 128 (OT) May 22 Dallas 108, Minnesota 105 May 23 Boston 126, Indiana 110

Umpires—Home, John Tumpane; First, Marvin Hudson; Second, Nick Mahrley; Third, Hunter Wendelsetdt.

T-2:34. A-27,416 (38,753).

**BASKETBALL** 

Friday's game Dallas 109, Minnesota 108 **Saturday's game** Boston 114, Indiana 111, Boston leads Sunday's game
Dallas 116, Minnesota 107, Dallas leads
series 3-0 Monday's game Boston at Indiana (n) **Today's game** Minnesota at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday's game

#### quarterfinals, GOLF ference finals: Minnesota at

SPORTS BROADCASTS

Dallas, Game 4. TNT, TRUTV (BetCast) **WNBA** 

7 p.m. Phoenix at Con-**7 p.m.** Los Angeles at Indiana. NBATV

COLLEGE MEN ships: Team Match Play -

Thursday's game x-Dallas at Minnesota, TBA May 31 x-Boston at Indiana, TBA June 1 «-Minnesota at Dallas, TBA x-Indiana at Boston, TBA **June 3** x-Dallas at Minnesota, TBA

x-Indiana at Boston, TBA

HOCKEY NHL PLAYOFFS CONFERENCE FINALS (Best-of-7; x-if necessary) May 22 Florida 3, N.Y. Rangers 0

May 23 Edmonton 3, Dallas 2, 20T

**Friday's game**N.Y. Rangers 2, Florida 1 (OT) Saturday's game
Dallas 3, Edmonton 1, series tied 1-1 Sunday's game N.Y. Rangers 5, Florida 4 (OT), N.Y. Rangers leads series 2-1 Monday's game Dallas at Edmonton (n)

**Today's game**N.Y. Rangers at Florida, 8 p.m. **Wednesday's game**Dallas at Edmonton, 8:30 p.m. **Thursday's game** Florida at N.Y. Rangers, 8 p.m. May 31 Edmonton at Dallas, TBA June 1 x-N.Y. Rangers at Florida, TBA

Rebeka Masarova, Spain, 6-1, 6-3.
• Ons Jabeur (8), Tunisia, def. Sachia Vickery, United States, 6-3, 6-2.
• Jasmine Paolini (12), Italy, def. Daria - Jashine Padinin (22), Italy, Gel. Dahla Saville, Australia, 6-3, 6-4 • Iga Swiatek (1), Poland, def. Leolia Jeanjean, France, 6-1, 6-2. • Hailey Baptiste, United States, def. Kayla Day, United States, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2.