




IN SPORTS

Walton not in danger

The Lakers still have faith in coach Luke Walton **2C**

College football grades

Which teams made the grade this season? **3C**

More to achieve

Olympian Kelly Clark motivated to help people **6C**

CLARK BY JEFF SWINGER/USA TODAY SPORTS

SPORTSLINE



CLARK BY KYLE TERADA/USA TODAY SPORTS

FIRST WORD

The future is so scary. I can't imagine being totally paralyzed. I keep trying to re-enact it — just lay there, and think, 'I can't get up.' But I can't do it for very long. It freaks me out."

Former 49ers star wide receiver Dwight Clark, speaking with *The Mercury News* about his life with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

TWEET OF THE DAY

@RyanShazier

I want to thank the Lord for the first downs that he has been allowing me to achieve. The touchdown is going to come in his timing, but today was a first down. I finally made it to practice with my teammates.

Steelers linebacker Ryan Shazier on Wednesday watched his first practice since suffering a spinal cord injury Dec. 4 against the Bengals. Shazier, in a wheelchair, shared a photo via Instagram from his visit to the UPMC Sports Performance Complex. The Steelers have not disclosed the details of his injury. Last week, his father, Vernon Shazier, said his son had regained feeling in his legs.

LAST WORD

“LaVar Ball has to keep saying crazy stuff to stay relevant. He's actually good for the NBA in a perverse way, because he gets casual fans' attention. It's Dennis Rodman all over again. The only thing left for LaVar Ball to do is put on a dress.”

Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, to *The Dallas Morning News* about LaVar Ball, father of the Lakers' Lonzo Ball.

SPORTS WEEKLY

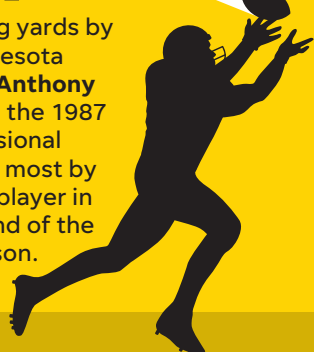
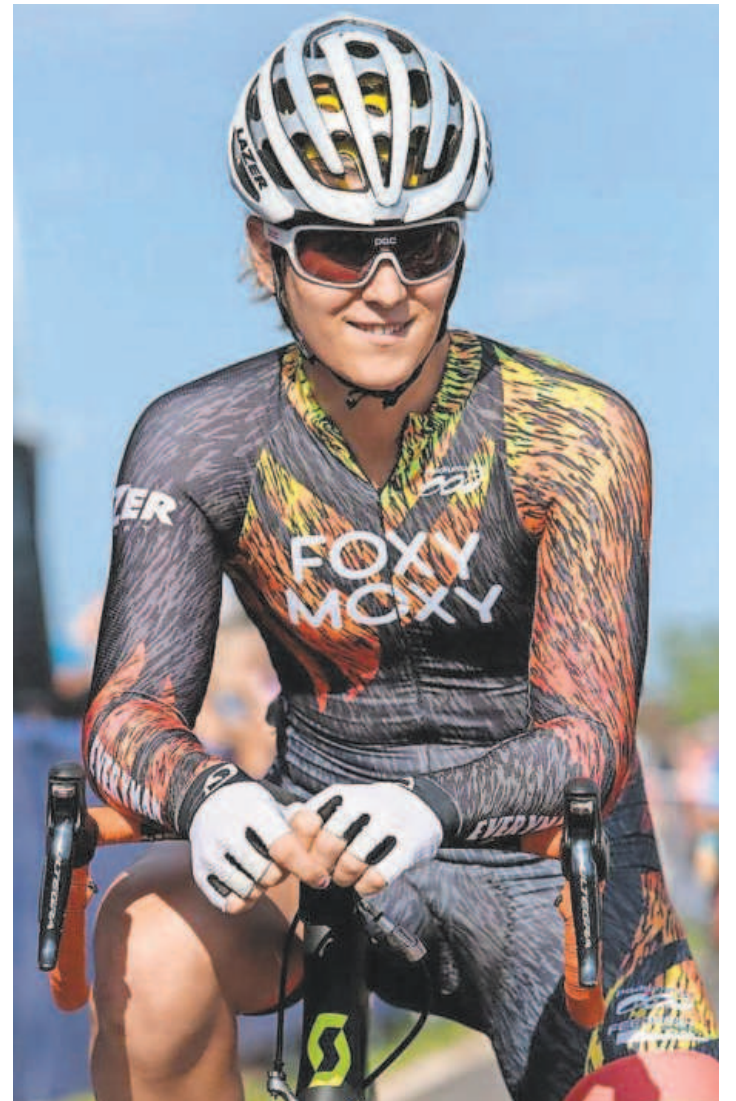
The underdog Eagles sense a fresh start; previews for the NFL divisional round. In college football, relive Alabama's dramatic title-game victory and see an early top 25 for 2018. Also, in-depth team reports on MLB's Rangers and Rays, and how LaVar Ball is damaging the Lakers. On newsstands. To subscribe, go to mysportswweekly.com or call 800-872-1415. The digital edition is in Apple, Google Play and Amazon Kindle stores.

From staff and wire reports

USA SNAPSHOTS®

227

Receiving yards by the Minnesota Vikings' Anthony Carter in the 1987 NFC Divisional Playoffs, most by any NFL player in that round of the postseason.

SOURCE NFL
ELLEN J. HORROW, JANET LOEHRKE/USA TODAY

Jillian Bearden, left, is a pro-level cyclist and has a reasonable chance to make the 2020 U.S. Olympic team. McKinnon is a category-1 elite-level road cyclist who hopes to make Canada's team. BEARDEN PHOTO BY SARAH BEARDEN; MCKINNON BY JEFF SOCHKO

DEBATE OVER WHAT IS FAIR

Trans cyclists have Olympian disagreement on defining fairness

Scott Gleeson and Erik Brady
USA TODAY

Jillian Bearden and Rachel McKinnon have much in common as cyclists, Olympic hopefuls and transgender women — and much in conflict as opposite poles of an intractable argument over how to balance what's fair with what's right.

Bearden agrees with the International Olympic Committee that naturally occurring testosterone gives transgender women an unfair advantage in competition against cisgender women, meaning women who were born female, while McKinnon believes subjecting trans women to testosterone blocking violates their human rights.

Bearden sees trans women who compete with unlimited levels of natural testosterone as dopers and cheaters while McKinnon says looking at the issue that way only furthers the oppression of transgender people.

And never the twain shall meet.

USA TODAY spoke with the antagonists, both of who say they are fighting for fairness. Bearden sees it as fairness for all competitors while McKinnon frames it as fairness for transgender athletes. All this comes in the wake of updated IOC guidelines in 2015 that require women who transition from men to block certain amounts of natural testosterone.

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The IOC has long struggled with issues of gender. 2015 guidelines said trans women needed to test below a specified level of testosterone for more than a year before they could compete. Jillian Bearden thinks the new guidelines make sense. Rachel McKinnon thinks they are manifestly discriminatory.

Eagles in rare position as playoff underdogs



Jarrett Bell
Columnist
USA TODAY

PHILADELPHIA — They won 13 games and earned the NFC's No. 1 playoff seed. Yet when the Philadelphia Eagles open their postseason on Saturday, they will be underdogs on their own turf.

Talk about disrespect — that's never been the case for a top-seeded team. “That's what's wrong with America, I guess,” cracked running back Jay Ajayi on Wednesday, when someone mentioned the historic significance of the betting line.

Players in their insulated NFL cocoons aren't supposed to pay attention to point spreads, pundits' picks or anxious fans dialing in to talk radio shows. The city could be buried under 3 feet of snow or a fugitive could be on the loose, but football mentality doesn't waver.

Ignore the noise.

“I know a lot of people don't give us a chance, but I don't really care,” tight end Brent Celek told USA TODAY Sports. “It doesn't affect me.”

Odds makers have installed the defending NFC champion Atlanta Falcons as three-point favorites, which tells you a lot about the Eagles' perceived chances with Nick Foles, who has been

See **BELL**, Page 2C



The top-seeded Eagles and Nick Foles, who has been shaky since taking over, enter Saturday's playoff game as underdogs. KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS