

SPORTS

HOW TO REACH US



Sports editor
Dan Reilly:
570-387-1234,
extension 1331, or
sports@present-
enterprise.net

To report scores:
Call 570-784-2123
from 5-10 p.m.

CBS' GRANT MAKING HISTORY

• (AP) — **Mark Grant** was considering retirement two years ago after a long career as a director at CBS and ESPN. Those plans changed though when CBS Sports executives offered him the chance to be the lead director for college basketball and the NCAA Tournament. Grant will be the director for tonight's national championship game between San Diego State and UConn, and it's believed he will be the first Black director for a championship game in any sport.

"I know what this means to people who look like me, and I don't take that lightly at all," Grant said. "When you think about it, there haven't been many opportunities. I hope this will open doors and give some opportunities to other people. We have a lot of talented Black people doing sports, I hope that they can look at me and say, 'Well, if he can do it, then so can I.' It just takes a lot of work, a lot of preparation and luck. You've got to be in the right place at the right time."

FATIGUE SIDELINES ARIZONA PITCHER

• LOS ANGELES (AP) — Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher **Madison Bumgarner** returned to Phoenix to be evaluated by medical staff after he felt fatigue during his first start this season. The 33-year-old left-hander allowed five runs, four hits and four walks in Arizona's 10-1 loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers on Saturday. **Trayce Thompson** hit a grand slam in a five-run first inning.

Laubach a leader of young ladies

Central grad coaches softball, wrestling at Freedom

By **ANNA WATSON**
Press Enterprise Sports Writer

Michele (Lamon) Laubach has come a long way since she first met legendary longtime Central Columbia softball coach Duane Ford.

Back in 1994, (Lamon) Laubach was a freshman transfer student who moved from the Berwick school district to Central Columbia. During an introductory basketball session, Ford explained his objectives for the team.

At the end of practice, Lamon approached Ford and explained, "Captain, I didn't understand a lot of the words you were us-

ing." That's when she decided the next day, she would start a new program with the team.

"She would learn a new word every day and use it in a sentence until she knew its meaning and could use it in everyday conversation," Ford recalled.

The vocabulary program lasted well into softball season. During an inning in the 1994 Eastern final, the team made mistakes. Coach Ford called a timeout to talk to his team and calm their emotions. Lamon followed him with her own pump-up speech, proudly using some of the "big" words she acquired. "Everyone cracked up laugh-

ing," Ford said. "I had a feeling we were back on track emotionally. The next inning we tied the game, and the inning after we went ahead and won a trip to the state final."

Laubach's driven personality became the building blocks that have established her career today at Freedom High School in Bethlehem, where she coaches the girls softball and wrestling teams.

Laubach and Ford still keep in touch regularly, nearly 30 years later. Laubach spoke of their tight-knit relationship and the respect she has for Ford as a coach.

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Photo by Hannah Buss/lehighvalleylive.com

FREEDOM COACH MICHELE LAUBACH, a Central Columbia graduate and former state softball champion, fist-bumps player **Brenna Ortwein** during a game against Parkland in the Lehigh Valley High School Softball Showcase in 2020.

NCAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT FINALS



AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

LSU'S ANGEL REESE reacts in front of Iowa's **Caitlin Clark** during the second half of the NCAA Women's Final Four championship game Sunday in Dallas. LSU won, 102-85.

Men's title match brings up memories of Fab Five

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
AP National Writer

HOUSTON — Thirty years ago, a group of disrupters with baggy shorts and black socks changed college basketball as we know it, and took a good slice of American culture along for the ride.

Those freshmen known as the Fab Five ended up one win short of the title, which is exactly where San Diego State — a team coached by a former Fab Five assistant, Brian Dutcher — finds itself in 2023 during another transformative period in college hoops.

The Aztecs (32-6) themselves certainly aren't trying to deliver change to the game or the culture when they face UConn (30-8) in the title game today.

But the fact that they're here — a team with Michigan bloodlines that was forged quickly through the newly liberated transfer portal and enriched by opportunities that have sprung from name, image and likeness deals — speaks volumes about where those Fab Five superstars were trying to take the game three decades ago.

"We got to college and started understanding the hypocrisy in the game, with the schools making millions and us sitting around poor as hell," said Fab Five guard Ray Jackson. "We wanted to change the dynamics of that, get the athletes feeling empowered a little more."

One of the greatest ironies is that the coach who essentially built the 21st-century version of San Diego State is Dutcher's longtime boss at both Michigan and SDSU, Steve Fisher. Fisher made his way to the West Coast after losing his job at Michigan in the wake of one of the most complex and sordid illicit-benefits scandals in NCAA history.

In essence, the coach, who retired and handed over the SDSU reins to Dutcher in 2017, got caught up in a series of events that, frankly, wouldn't be frowned upon nearly as harshly today. Back then, it was a shady booster with gambling ties trying to funnel money to players. These days, sports gambling is legal in many states (the NCAA brought the Sweet 16 to Las Vegas for the first time last week), while everyone from car dealers to social media conglomerates pay players in the open.

Fisher is in Houston this week, hanging with his son, Mark, a special assistant for the fifth-seeded Aztecs who has ALS.

"I had the ability to close my eyes and dream, and dream of this, to be honest with you," Fisher said earlier this week.

A Final Four wasn't so much a dream as an expectation for the Fab Five — Jackson, Jalen Rose, Chris Webber, Juwan Howard and Jimmy King — who, in many opinions, remain the most electric single recruiting class in college history.

They showed up at Michigan in 1991 and made not one but two appearances in the national title game. They got blown out by

Please see FAB page 12

LSU-BETCHA

Tigers set milestones with first title

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

DALLAS — Kim Mulkey returned home to Louisiana wanting to bring LSU its first basketball championship.

The Hall of Fame coach did just that in only her second year at the school.

Her Tigers used a record offensive performance to beat Caitlin Clark and Iowa 102-85 on Sunday and win the first basketball title, men's or women's, in school history.

"I turn around and look at the Final Four banners (in the home arena), nowhere did it say national champion," Mulkey said. "That's what I came home to do."

The victory made Mulkey the first women's coach to win national titles at two different schools. She won three at Baylor before leaving for LSU two years ago.



AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

LSU COACH KIM MULKEY reacts to a call during the first half of the NCAA Women's Final Four championship game against Iowa on Sunday in Dallas.

"Coaches coach a lifetime and this is the fourth time I've been blessed," Mulkey said. "Never in the history of LSU basketball, men or women, has (anybody) ever played for a championship."

The feisty and flamboyantly dressed Mulkey, who wore a sparkly, golden, tiger-striped outfit, now has the third-most national titles behind Geno Auriem-

ma's 11 and Pat Summitt's eight. Mulkey has never lost in a championship game. "My tears are tears of joy," she said. "I'm so happy for everybody back home in Louisiana."

Clark, The Associated Press national player of the year, couldn't lead the Hawkeyes to their first national title despite one of the greatest individual performances in NCAA Tour-

nament history. The junior finished with 30 points. She scored 40 in the semifinals to knock out unbeaten South Carolina one game after she had the first 40-point triple-double in NCAA history in the Elite Eight.

The dazzling guard set the NCAA record for points in a tournament, passing the 177 that Sheryl Swoopes scored in 1993 en route to leading Texas Tech to the title. Clark ended her tournament with 191.

The 102 points broke the previous high for a championship game, surpassing the 97 that Texas scored against Southern California in 1986.

"So much for preaching defense and rebounding," Mulkey said, laughing.

Taking in the game was first lady Jill Biden, who sat in a suite above the court with tennis great Billie Jean King.

Mulkey said she hadn't met the first lady yet but told the AP that if the team was invited to the White House, she'd go.

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Larson wins, keeps Chevy ahead

By **HANK KURZ Jr.**
AP Sports Writer

Kyle Larson spent the week watching videos of his 10-win, 2021 championship season, he said, "to remind myself that I used to be good."

He still is. Larson pulled away on a restart with 14 laps to go and easily won the NASCAR Cup Series race at Richmond Raceway on Sunday.

"I just really wanted to look at old tape of myself and see where my mindset was and to see my confidence," Larson said after

his 20th career victory in NASCAR's top series.

Larson started the final green flag run with Hendrick Motorsports teammate Josh Berry to his outside and beat Berry into the first turn. Berry, who is filling in for the injured Chase Elliott, held on for second, followed by Ross Chastain, Christopher Bell and Kevin Harvick.

It's the third victory of the season for the four-car Hendrick team and came less than a week after a 100-point penalty against each driver for using an illegal part was overturned by a NAS-

CAR appeals panel. It also came with a fill-in crew chief in Kevin Meendering because the appeals panel upheld the four-race suspensions of all four team crew chiefs.

"I was just happy to fill a gap and help those guys out in a tough situation," Meendering said. "This is a testament to all the hard work but those guys on that team and to Hendrick Motorsports."

Chevrolet took the top three spots and has now won five of the seven races this season.

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AP Photo/Mike Caudill

KYLE LARSON celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series race at Richmond Raceway on Sunday in Richmond, Virginia.

SCOREBOARD

Today in Sports History

April 3

April 3, 1993

• The Pittsburgh Penguins move within a game of matching the NHL record for consecutive wins, taking their 14th in a row with a 5-2 victory over the New Jersey Devils.

April 3, 2003

• Central Columbia's No. 1 doubles team of Tim Coyne and Alex Turayev, and No. 2 doubles team of Chris DeMelfi and Brent Robinson both defeat their opponents in straight sets to help the Blue Jays beat previously unbeaten Lewisburg, 4-1.

April 3, 2013

• Warrior Run's Taylor Parker tosses a five-inning no-hitter as the Defenders defeat Hughesville, 14-0, in high school softball.



CALENDAR

Today
BASEBALL
High school
Berwick at Pittsburg4:15 p.m.
Benton at Millville4:30 p.m.
Mt. Carmel at Bloomsburg ...4:30 p.m.
Central at Montoursville4:30 p.m.
Mid-West at Danville4:30 p.m.
Northwest at Vo-Tech4:30 p.m.
Southern at Loyalsock4:30 p.m.
College
Kutztown at BU (DH)noon
SOFTBALL
High school
Berwick at Hanover Area4:15 p.m.
Benton at Millville4:30 p.m.
Northwest at Vo-Tech4:30 p.m.
College
West Chester at BU (DH)2 p.m.
GOLF
College women
BU at Cottrell InviteTBD
TENNIS
High school boys
Berwick at Wyoming Area4 p.m.
LACROSSE
High school boys
Selinsgrove at Danville5 p.m.

Tuesday

BASEBALL
High school
Northwest at Sullivan Cty.4:30 p.m.
College
BU at Seton Hill3 p.m.
SOFTBALL
High school
Warrior Run at Bloomsburg ...4:30 p.m.
Central at Montoursville4:30 p.m.
Danville at Shikellamy4:30 p.m.
Southern at Loyalsock4:30 p.m.
College
Lock Haven at BU (DH)2 p.m.
GOLF
College women
BU at Cottrell InviteTBD
VOLLEYBALL
High school boys
Nanticoke at Berwick4:30 p.m.
TENNIS
High school boys
Bloomsburg at Milliflburg4 p.m.
Central at Danville4 p.m.
Hazleton at Berwick4 p.m.
TRACK AND FIELD
High school
Bloomsburg at Warrior Run4 p.m.
Hughesville at Southern4 p.m.
Mt. Carmel at Loyalsock4 p.m.
Northwest at Lake-Lehman ...4:15 p.m.
LACROSSE
High school girls
Selinsgrove at Danville5 p.m.

TV-RADIO

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)
9 p.m.
CBS — NCAA Tournament: TBD, National Championship, Houston

MLB

2 p.m.
MLBN — N.Y. Mets at Milwaukee
7 p.m.
YES, NBCSP — Philadelphia at N.Y. Yankees
AT&T SportsNet — Pittsburgh at Boston

SOCCER (MEN'S)

3 p.m.
USA — Premier League: Tottenham Hotspur at Everton

TENNIS

10 a.m.
TENNIS — Charleston-WTA Early Rounds
7 p.m.
TENNIS — Charleston-WTA Early Rounds

XFL GLANCE

North Division					
W	L	Pct	PF	PA	
DC	1	.857	207	153	
St. Louis	4	.667	139	112	
Seattle	5	.714	152	122	
Vegas	2	.5	286	137	175
South Division					
W	L	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	4	.667	162	113	
Arlington	3	.429	93	125	
San Antonio	2	.286	101	114	
Orlando	1	.6	143	137	214

Saturday's Games
Vegas 26, San Antonio 12
Orlando 37, DC 36
Sunday's Games
St. Louis at Houston, 2 p.m.
Vegas at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
Arlington at Orlando, 4 p.m.
Sunday, April 9
Houston at San Antonio, 3 p.m.
DC at Seattle, 7 p.m.
Saturday, April 15
Vegas at Houston, 12:30 p.m.
Orlando at San Antonio, 7 p.m.
Sunday, April 16
Arlington at DC, 12 p.m.
Seattle at St. Louis, 3 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
National League
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Placed C Joey Bart on the 10-day IL, retroactive to March 31. Recalled RHP Sean Hjelle from Sacramento (PCL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled OF Stone Garrett from Rochester (IL). Placed OF Corey Dickerson on the 10-day IL.
National Hockey League
DALLAS STARS — Loaned G Matt Murray to Texas (AHL). Recalled G Scott Wedgewood from Texas.
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled G Leevi Merilainen from Belleville (AHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Recalled D Matt Kessel from Springfield (AHL).
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS — Recalled C Nick Abruzzese from Toronto (AHL).
WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Signed C Mitchell Gibson to an amateur tryout contract.



AP Photo/Darron Cummings

LSU'S JASMINE CARSON reacts to her 3-pointer during the first half of the NCAA Women's Final Four championship game against Iowa on Sunday in Dallas.

LSU 'This is the game of my life'

Continued from page 9

Jasmine Carson scored 22 points, Alexis Morris added 21 and Angel Reese had 15 points and 10 rebounds for LSU (34-2).

"It's no one-man show around here. When I go down, the next man is up," said Reese, who was honored as the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four. "Every single time, every time I go out or Alexis goes out, everybody always comes to step up."

Trailing by 21 points early in the third quarter, Iowa started hitting from the outside to go on a 15-2 run, hitting four 3-pointers and converting a 3-point play to get within 65-57.

The Hawkeyes (31-7) trailed 73-64 with 1:03 left in the third quarter when Clark was called for a technical foul. She swatted the ball away on the floor after a foul call against a teammate. That counted as a personal foul for her, her fourth of the game.

"I thought they called it very, very tight," Clark said. "Hit with a technical foul for throwing the ball under the basket — sometimes that's how things go."

Clark played the entire fourth quarter with four fouls but couldn't get the Hawkeyes much closer.

"They really played well, they were ready to go. They did a great job. I'm just so proud of my team," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said. "This is brutal, it's really tough to walk out of that locker room today and not be able to coach Monika (Czinano) and McKenna (Warnock) again. I'm very thankful for the season we had and don't want to take anything away from that."

After Katari Poole hit a 3-pointer in front of the LSU bench, Mulkey started weep-



AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

LSU PLAYERS CELEBRATE after the NCAA Women's Final Four championship game against Iowa on Sunday in Dallas.

ing.

"With about 1:30 to go, I couldn't hold it. I got very emotional," Mulkey said. "That's not like me, but I knew we would hold on and win this game. I don't what it was, but I lost it. Very emotional and tears of joy. Don't know if it's the mere fact that we're doing it in my second year back home or that I am back home."

A few seconds later after another LSU basket, Reese taunted Clark by putting her hand in front of her face with a "you can't see me" gesture and then pointed to her ring finger.

As the final seconds ticked off, Mulkey and Reese hugged, setting off a wild celebration by the Tigers.

The game was tight for the first 15 minutes before Carson got hot from the outside. She made all six of her shots in the second quarter, including four 3-pointers. After one of them, she threw her hands in the air, which Mulkey mimicked on the sidelines.

For good measure, the graduate student banked in a shot just before the halftime buzzer to give the Tigers a 59-

42 lead at the break. It was the most points ever in the first half of a championship game, breaking the record held by Tennessee since 1998.

LSU shot 58% from the field in the opening 20 minutes, including going nine for 12 from behind the arc. The Tigers finished the game shooting 54% from the field, including making 11 of 17 3-pointers.

Clark had 16 points and five assists before picking up her third foul with 3:56 to go in the half, which didn't go over well with the sellout crowd of more than 19,000 fans.

Before Sunday, Carson had gone scoreless in five of her seven postseason games in her career. She had 11 points in this NCAA Tournament before the finale.

"I would definitely say this is the game of my life because I won a national championship on the biggest stage possible in college," Carson said. "When I woke up I just wanted to win — do anything my team needed in this game, whether it was defense, rebounding, supporting them. I scored tonight and that's what pushed us and got us momentum."

Leader

Continued from page 9

"I was very fortunate to have an incredible leader as my coach at the time," Laubach said. "The work ethic he installed, the special attention to detail. Those are the things even now as a coach and a teacher, when you have players that graduate and move on with life, you're still friends with them 10 years down the road ... he's that once-in-a-lifetime person that I hope everybody has an opportunity to have."

During her time at Central, Laubach also grew close to Ford's daughter Abbey and Julie Novak, as they played three sports together: softball, field hockey and basketball. The trio were members of the 1994 state championship winning softball team.

"Being new to Central in ninth grade, Michele needed some new friends here, and Abbey and Julie were two of the first to invite her into their circle," Ford said. "After two seasons together in field hockey and basketball, by the time they arrived at softball that spring in 1994, we had a golden triangle in the key positions defensively with Julie at catcher, Michele at second base and Abbey at shortstop. I wasn't a bit surprised that we went 28-0 and won a state championship."

Laubach is versatile, proven by her being appointed coach of Freedom High School's first-ever women's wrestling program in 2022.

The opportunity was almost made for Laubach. She is a Lock Haven University alum who was an assistance office manager for their wrestling team. She has become familiar with the sport as her son in fifth grade has been wrestling for years.

Laubach spoke about the recruitment process for the team, her strong relationship with kids, and how much she believes in multi-sport athletes. She was able to recruit four softball players, two field hockey players, and one swimmer. The other members of the team have never played a sport before. Laubach reflected on her experience, as her first season of the girls wrestling program comes to an end.

"We have scrimmaged several times with Liberty High School. We're going to tournaments, it's been a great experience," Laubach said, "The six kids that have never played a sport here, those kids are gonna' go through this high school having a totally different connection through this girls wrestling program, than had this program not existed; because they're part of something. To be involved has huge benefits to their experience in high school and later on in life."

In early March, seven members of the team competed at regionals with three earning medals. Juniors Destiny Kemp and Rhyann Simmons both qualified for the PIAA State Championships.

The success of the first-year program empowers all young girls to pursue careers in sports, which is typically a male-dominated industry.

"I think a lot of it is just

Fab

Continued from page 9

Duke 1992 with Bobby Hurley, the brother of current UConn coach Dan Hurley, doing some of the damage. In 1993, it was Webber's costly timeout when the Wolverines didn't have one that made the difference in a close loss to North Carolina.

So, no title, but the Fab Five ended up with more — namely, they opened the world to embracing the style they brought to the playground, while making an indelible statement about the way they felt college players should be treated.

"It could get frustrating and un-fun at times," Jackson said. "We just wanted to be transcendent. We wanted to bring the culture we came from, which was street basketball, community basketball, and bring that fun back to game."

They also ended up as successes after college, building careers in worlds as diverse as nonprofit, finance, TV and even coaching; Howard just finished his fourth season as coach of the Wolverines.

"Isn't that the end goal, when the ball stops bouncing, you're doing something that's productive with your life?" said Dutcher, who has heard from everyone in the group during his program's first run to the cusp of a title.

In many ways, Dutcher's group came together in the polar opposite fashion as the Fab Five. San Diego State's starters came from different places at different times. They could separate themselves from the Michigan greats in another way if they can win the title that eluded Dutcher & Co. for all those years.

It's a tall task. SDSU is coming off an emotionally and physically taxing 72-71 win over Florida Atlantic on Saturday night. When Lamont Butler hit the game-winner at the buzzer, it marked the first time in Final Four history that a buzzer-beater took a team from trailing to a victory.

In addition to the bounce back, there is the opponent. Nobody has come within double digits of fourth-seeded UConn during the tournament. Adama Sano-go has averaged 20 points and nearly 10 rebounds a game over the stretch for the Huskies.

But Jackson, for one, insists this is far from a lost cause. He says Dutcher is a master at "breaking down film, knowing game strategy and preparing for a short turnaround."

times you have to get in necessary trouble," she said.

The Lehigh Valley High School Softball Showcase began at Moore Township Fields in Bath on July 14, 2020 and finished on the 16th at Coca-Cola Park, home of the IronPigs. Since the event was not affiliated with PIAA, the 16 EPA and Colonial League teams were not permitted to wear their usual high school jerseys, WFMZ-TV 69 News reports. However, support from the local community funded sponsorships for the teams to create special uniforms for the tournament.

The event was a huge success, despite the limitations COVID brought. Prior to the championship game between Parkland and Freedom, all seniors were recognized on the field.

"We had 180 high school softball girls from the Lehigh Valley that were seniors march out on the field with their parents for a senior night presentation. It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen... "It was a combination of myself, the IronPigs staff and our coaches... Everything was a team effort," reflected (Lamon) Laubach.

Laubach's work-ethic and positive mindset as a coach goes far beyond athletics. The knowledge she instills into her softball and wrestling teams are valuable life lessons.

"All those lessons and things you learn, you take and try to give good out to other people... To me that's what teaching these girls and coaching and sports is. What can we give back to our community, what can we give back to the next generation."