

## Sports Briefs: USC quarterback Matt Barkley will return for senior season

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 24 December 2011 10:46

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Southern California quarterback Matt Barkley has decided to return for his senior season and put off the NFL. With USC coach Lane Kiffin and his family in attendance at USC's Heritage Hall, Barkley announced that while he feels prepared for the NFL, he has unfinished business with the Trojans.

"I am staying so I can finish what I started," Barkley said.

Barkley is coming off a spectacular season in which he led the Trojans to a 10-2 finish and the No. 5 ranking in the country. Because of NCAA sanctions, USC wasn't allowed to play in the postseason. The 6-foot-2, 220-pound quarterback has been projected as a first-round pick in the NFL draft, in the top 10 overall on some boards.

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PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pittsburgh hired Wisconsin offensive coordinator Paul Chryst as head coach and charged him with providing a much-needed dose of stability.

Chryst replaces Todd Graham, who left for Arizona State last week after spending less than a year on campus. Graham's departure — he resigned when the Panthers wouldn't allow him to talk to the Sun Devils and notified players he was leaving via forwarded text message — was an embarrassing turn for a program that thought it had seen it all over the last year.

Instead, his abrupt move left the Panthers searching for their fourth coach in just over a year. It also opened the door for Chryst, who was in the mix when Pitt was looking for someone to replace Dave Wannstedt and Mike Haywood a year ago.

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COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) — Texas A&M senior offensive lineman Joseph Villavisencio was killed in a car accident, the university said.

Witness reports said Villavisencio swerved to avoid a buzzard and veered head-on into the path of an 18-wheeler near the town of Normangee about 40 miles from College Station.

Villavisencio spent part of the day with the team delivering gifts to families at a shelter after the Aggies finished their last workout on campus in preparation for the Meineke Car Care Bowl. Villavisencio was heading home at the time of the crash.

Villavisencio saw very limited action in his career with the Aggies.

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CLEVELAND (AP) — Akron has hired Terry Bowden as its football coach.

Bowden, a onetime hot coaching commodity who spent six seasons at Auburn and the past three at Division II North Alabama, takes over a team that went 2-22 and won just one conference game the past two seasons.

Bowden coached Akron's quarterbacks in 1986 under Gerry Faust.

ESPN first reported Bowden's hiring.

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INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Colts owner Jim Irsay told NFL Network he couldn't foresee a scenario in which Peyton Manning would play anywhere but Indianapolis unless he can't play at all.

Manning missed the entire season and has not participated in full team practices since having the third and most invasive surgery on his neck Sept. 8.

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### BASEBALL

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Carlos Beltran and the World Series champion St. Louis Cardinals agreed to a two-year contract pending a physical, a move that would fortify the lineup following Albert Pujols' departure.

The team said it expects to make a formal announcement shortly after the holidays.

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KMOX, the Cardinals' flagship radio station, reported the deal is for \$26 million over two years — the same figure cited by a person familiar with the negotiations who spoke to The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because financial details of the agreement were not announced by the team.

The 34-year-old Beltran hit .300 with 22 home runs, 84 RBIs and a .385 on-base percentage for the New York Mets and San Francisco Giants this year.

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OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — All-Star pitcher Gio Gonzalez said the Oakland Athletics have agreed to trade him to the Washington Nationals, and the deal is nearly finished.

ESPN.com first reported the swap.

A person with knowledge of the deal said Oakland will receive right-handers A.J. Cole and Brad Peacock, lefty Tom Milone and catcher Derek Norris. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday night because the trade hadn't been finalized, also said the Nationals would receive minor league right-hander Rob Gilliam.

The 26-year-old Gonzalez was 16-12 last season.

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NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Yankees were hit with a \$13.9 million luxury tax bill, their lowest since 2003.

The fee, assessed by Major League Baseball under its labor contract, is down from \$18 million last year and \$25.7 million in 2009, when the Yankees won the World Series.

Boston, which missed the playoffs for the second straight season, is the only other team that will have to pay a tax. The Red Sox received a bill for \$3.4 million, up from last year's \$1.5 million.

Season-ending payroll information and the tax was sent to teams and obtained by The Associated Press.

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SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Barry Bonds is officially appealing his felony obstruction conviction. His attorneys paid \$455 and filed a one-sentence notice to the federal trial court late Wednesday, saying that Bonds was asking the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal to toss out his conviction. The case will be randomly assigned to a three-judge panel later.

Bonds was sentenced Friday to 30 days of house arrest, two-years of probation and a \$4,000 fine. But U.S. District Judge Susan Illston delayed imposition until the appeal is resolved.

Bonds appellate attorney Dennis Riordan estimated it could take as long as 18 months for a decision.

Bonds was convicted of giving evasive answers to a grand jury investigating a Northern California-based steroids distribution ring.

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WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — A U.S. District Court judge is considering whether to halt a bankruptcy court order approving a process for the Los Angeles Dodgers to sell media rights until he rules on a Fox Sports appeal.

Judge Leonard Stark heard two hours of arguments but did not immediately rule on Fox's request for an emergency stay while he considers its appeal of the original bankruptcy court ruling.

Stark is set to hear arguments on the merits of Fox's appeal at a Jan. 12 hearing.

Fox attorney Catherine Steege argued that the proposed media rights sale process violates Fox's exclusive rights under an existing contract with the Dodgers, and that Fox will suffer

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irreparable harm if the sales process is allowed to proceed while the appeal is argued.

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MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Right-hander Jason Marquis has agreed to a one-year, \$3 million deal with the Minnesota Twins.

The 33-year-old Marquis went 8-5 with a 3.95 ERA for the Washington Nationals last season before being traded to the Arizona Diamondbacks on July 30. Marquis was 0-1 with a 9.53 ERA in three starts for Arizona.

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### BASKETBALL

MIAMI (AP) — Miami Heat owner Micky Arison revealed that he voted against ratifying the NBA's collective bargaining agreement, saying that ballot was cast as a protest of how revenue sharing is expected to work.

Arison is the second owner to publicly disclose that he voted against the CBA, joining Dallas' Mark Cuban.

The NBA's Board of Governors approved passage 25-5, and Arison's "no" vote came after it was already assured that the deal would go through and the league would be back in business.

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The New Jersey Nets will be without center and leading scorer Brook Lopez for a couple of months because of a broken right foot.

Lopez was injured during an exhibition game against New York on Wednesday and was set to have surgery Friday. To help replace Lopez, the Nets acquired center Mehmet Okur from Utah for a second-round draft pick.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The Sacramento Kings agreed to a contract with forward Chuck Hayes just days after voiding a deal because of a failed physical. Terms were not immediately available.

The Kings voided a \$21.3 million, four-year contract with Hayes on Monday, saying he failed a physical. The team previously said a heart exam on Hayes showed an abnormality that would require further testing.

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### GENERAL

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — A bench warrant has been authorized for sports agent Leigh Steinberg after he failed to appear in court in a case involving a \$1.4 million debt.

An Orange County Superior Court commissioner authorized the warrant after Steinberg failed to attend court last week, court records show. Court papers show Steinberg was ordered to pay \$1.4 million last year to the Irvine Company in a default judgment for office space he leased in Newport Beach.

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### AUTO RACING

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Kurt Busch has a new ride.

Busch will return to the Sprint Cup series next year to drive the No. 51 car for Phoenix Racing and owner James Finch. Busch parted ways with Penske Racing following a tumultuous season.

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### GOLF

Bettye Danoff, one of the LPGA Tour's 13 founding members, has died. She was 88.

The LPGA Tour said Danoff's family confirmed she died in Texas. At 5-foot-2 and barely 100

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pounds, Danoff earned the nickname "Mighty Mite" and was the first grandmother to play the tour.

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### DIVING

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — David Boudia won the men's 10-meter title, and Kelci Bryant and Abby Johnston won the women's synchronized 3-meter competition in the USA Diving Winter National Championships.