

- Lakers win the 2020 NBA finals
- PAC-12 releases updated schedule

SPORTS

EL GATO • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2020 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONNEWS.COM

The Los Angeles Lakers come out of the bubble victorious

by **Trent Bartlett and Senji Torrey**
Sports Editor and Media Production Editor

On Sep. 30, the 2020 NBA Finals tipped-off 345 days after the season first began. The Miami Heat, led by Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo, took on LeBron James' Los Angeles Lakers in a matchup that pitted an unexpected contender against arguably the best team in the NBA.

Coming into the series, ESPN gave the Lakers 2:1 odds at winning the title and predicted that LeBron James would be the MVP of the Finals. However, they acknowledged Miami's recent success, writing that "After upsetting the No. 1-seeded Milwaukee Bucks in the second round and ousting the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference finals, Miami is ready to beat the odds once more inside the bubble."

In Game 1, the Lakers set the tone by outscoring the Heat in every quarter of the game. Forward Anthony Davis emerged as LA's unlikely top scorer, putting up 34 points. However, James did not disappoint, adding 25 more points to the Lakers score sheet.

For Miami, Butler scored 23 points and grabbed 5 rebounds. Additionally, after starting point guard Goran Dragic left the game in the first half with a foot injury, point guard Kendrick Nunn took his place. Nunn managed to score 18 points for the Heat and was perhaps the only positive for the Heat during Game 1.

More injuries plagued the Heat as their star center, Bam Adebayo, left the game after a previously injured left shoulder got reagravated after contact with another player early in the third quarter. In addition, Butler's ankle rolled shortly before the second quarter ended. This hindered the Heat's second-half success drastically, and by the end of the game, the Lakers triumphed over the Heat by a score of 116-98.



HEAD TO HEAD: James and Butler contest over the ball.

With two important players out for the Heat injured for Game 2, it seemed as though the game was going to be dominated by the Lakers. However, the injuries didn't stop the Heat's fighting spirit. The Lakers, however, showed the Heat what analysts predicted: dominance on both sides of the court. Led by Davis and James, the Lakers were ahead

with just a few minutes in until the final buzzer, winning by a score of 124-114. Davis led the Lakers in scoring with 33 while James scored 32 points and had 9 assists.

Despite the Heat's initial two losses, Butler showed the Lakers that a series sweep was impossible. Butler carried Miami on his back, netting 40 points. No other player scored even close to Butler, not even James, who scored a mere 25 points. Largely because of Butler's amazing performance, the Heat was able to claim their first victory of the series, winning by a score of 115-104.

After the game, Butler revealed the secret to Miami's success, saying, "We rebounded. That's going to be the key going forward." Butler later added that "We realized that we belong. That they can be beat, as long as we do what we are supposed to do."

In Game 4, the Heat saw their rising star center, Bam Adebayo, return, giving them a spark to try to get another win and tie the series. Unfortunately, the Heat didn't have a great first quarter, scoring only 22 points, and they trailed by five after the first. They had a stronger second quarter, posting 25 points and keeping the star-studded Lakers to 22 points and cutting the lead to two entering the half. In the second half of the game the Lakers outscored the Heat by scores of 26-23 and 27-26 in the third and fourth quarters. The Lakers extended their series lead to 3-1 by winning Game 4 by a score of 102-96.

Game 5 proved that the Miami Heat had more left in the tank. Butler once again shined for Miami, scoring 35 points and tallying 11 assists. In addition, starting shooting guard Duncan Robinson put in 26 points and five rebounds. The Heat's collective strong outing did not stop the Lakers from putting up a fight, however. James netted 40 points and got seven rebounds, while Davis put in 28 points. Despite this superb performance from LA's frontmen, by the final buzzer, the Heat had the last laugh, defeating the Lakers by a tight score of 111-108.

Game 6 tipped-off on Oct. 11, 350 days after the season first started back on Oct. 22, 2019. Game 6 was the last game of the season, as the Lakers won the NBA Finals 4-2 with a score of 106-93. The Lakers have now tied the Boston Celtics for the most NBA championships with 17. James racked up a 28 point triple double and was able to secure his fourth championship. The Lakers' other superstar Davis scored 19 points, and the first title of his career.

The Miami Heat struggled offensively the whole night, as Butler scored 12 points, his lowest total of the series. The Heat were down by a score of 28 points by the half, and were down by 30 during the third quarter. However, the Heat did put up an incredible fight as a fifth seeded team playing the number-one-seeded Lakers.

(Sources: ESPN, The Guardian, New York Times, NBA, CBS Sports)

Liverpool competes fiercely

by **Senji Torrey**
Media Production Team

On Sep. 12, the English Premier League (EPL) kicked off its new season, and the teams took no time to get going. With so many matches ahead, fans around the world are on the edge of their seats, waiting for their team to score that decisive goal that could set them on the right path towards victory.

Liverpool, the current EPL titleholders, who has placed in the top five clubs in the EPL for the past four seasons, has hit a rough patch. After losing to Aston Villa, a squad that barely avoided relegation last season, by a score of 7-2, the Reds dropped to fifth in the table. Despite this embarrassing loss, Liverpool remains tied for the EPL's third-best record at 3-1.



HUDDLE UP: Liverpool taking a break to talk to each other.

One team that has been at the top of the table for many seasons, including this current one, is Leicester City. Leicester has been incredibly consistent this season, winning games against West Brom and Burnley. However, Leicester's most substantial win was against last season's EPL runner-up Manchester

City. In this match, Manchester City held onto the ball for an incredible 72 percent of the match, leaving Leicester with just over 25 minutes to score five goals. This impressive start has rocketed Leicester City to third place in the table.

Manchester City, however, has been standard in more than just one game. City currently holds a mediocre record of 1-1-1, with the loss coming from the aforementioned Leicester City and the tie coming at the hands of recently promoted club Leeds United. Their one victory came in the first week against Wolverhampton. This grudge match win for City put them on track for a strong start, yet in the following two matches, they missed their mark.

Even though the season has just begun, many analysts have already cast their ballots for who will win this year's trophy. Many retain unwavering certainty in Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool squad, despite their humiliating loss. However, a few analysts reached into the past for their prediction and pinned Manchester City as this year's champions.

Upcoming matchups may give a bit of insight into the validity of these predictions. One such matchup is coming up this Sunday on Oct. 18. This game is between second-place Aston Villa and third-place Leicester City. In addition, fifth-place Liverpool will be taking on league leaders Everton on Oct. 17. This matchup will give Liverpool the opportunity to redeem themselves, while also giving Everton their first real test of the season.

Though there is still a long way to go until there will be any sort of certainty as to who may be pulling away with the title, one thing is for certain: this year's Premier League tournament is going to be one to remember.

(Sources: NBC Sports, CBS Sports, ESPN, premier-league)

PAC-12 gets ready to begin

by **Sophie Sullivan and Jackie King**
Humor Editor and Opinion Editor

The Pac-12 CEO group announced its decision to resume play for collegiate football, basketball, and all winter season sports the morning of Sep. 24. The conference made the decision based on recommendations made by the Pac-12 COVID-19 Medical Advisory Committee. The members took the COVID-19 virus's current prevalence, any recent changes to testing capabilities, and official state and local health guidelines into consideration in making their decision.

The decision to return to play comes roughly two months after the CEO group announced that this season's games would be entirely intraconference to limit contact between athletes nationally. Initially scheduling this year as a 10-game slate, the Pac-12 announced their 2020 football schedule on Oct. 3 as a seven-game lineup running from Nov. 7 to Dec. 18-19.

With the Pac-12 split into North and South divisions, each team will play five games against the other collegiate teams in their division, as well as one game against a non-divisional team. Each team will compete in a championship game during the seventh and final week of games. The North division champions will face off against the South division champions at the Championship Game held on Dec. 18.

The Stanford University-University of California-Berkeley Big Game will take place on Friday, Nov. 27 during Week Four at Berkeley. The University of California-Los Angeles Bruins will take on the University of Southern California at UCLA on Saturday, Dec. 12 during Week Six.

Conference games will not allow any fans to attend the games. The group will revisit their decision against allowing fans at games in January

of 2021, with the decision contingent on "health and safety considerations."

The Medical Advisory Committee based the return-to-play decision on three main concerns: the prevalence of the virus both nationally and within the Pac-12 communities, cardiac health concerns relating to COVID-19, and the ability of the Pac-12 to provide consistent testing. The CEO group addressed these concerns one by one, leading to the decision to restart athletics only if the teams have state and local health approvals on Nov. 6 for football and Nov. 25 for basketball, consistent with NCAA's respective start date for these sports.



ANNUAL RIVALRY: USC playing UCLA during the season.

Universities in the PAC-12 are giving at least one weekly COVID-19 test to every student-athlete. An outside source will confirm all positive tests, and the conference will continue to review and update all testing recommendations as it sees fit.

Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott noted in the Sep. 24 statement that Pac-12 is "committed to prioritizing the health and safety of our student-athletes and all those connected to our athletic programs."

(Sources: Pac-12)

MLB remains on schedule after COVID-19 complications

by **Revantth Rao**
Sports Editor

After delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Major League Baseball (MLB) season began on Jul. 23 and spanned only two months. While the season had a couple of setbacks, it ultimately finished on time and set up an exciting postseason.



HAND OVER HEART: MLB All-Stars standing for the anthem

Typically, the MLB season begins around the end of March and continues for the ensuing six months, with the final games of the regular season occurring around the end of September. Each team plays 162 games against teams from around the country, and ten teams advance to play in the postseason, which occurs in October. However, as teams were finishing up their preseason, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the league to shut down.

After a period of time, the league and the Players Association began negotiating in an effort to work out the details of how to start the season. Among the main points of discussion were the number of games in the season and player salaries without owners receiving revenue from fans attending games. Ultimately, the two sides agreed on a 60-game season with the players earning full prorated salaries, meaning players would make the same amount of money per game as they would in a normal season, but they would make less total money because they were playing fewer games.

The new season meant new rules, as MLB adjusted certain aspects of the season due to COVID-19. For one, teams received expanded rosters to allow them to have players on hand if anyone tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, MLB set up three regions: the West, Central, and East regions. Teams only played other teams in their given region to minimize travel. Finally, MLB laid out a set of COVID-19 protocols to follow in order to help prevent the spread of the virus, and teams had the authority to punish violators.

While the opening weekend was relatively quiet, the season got off to a tumultuous start. The Miami Marlins suffered an early outbreak, as a few players violated the virus protocols, leading to around 20 positive tests amongst players and coaches. After a week off, the team did return to play after signing and trading for over a dozen players to replace those unable to play. The St. Louis Cardinals had a similar situation involving their team, and had to spend around two weeks off. However, both teams

managed to finish their seasons on time and made up the games they missed by playing doubleheaders.



LINE UP: MLB team Chicago Cubs standing in front of fans.

Following the season, an expanded postseason began, featuring 16 teams. In order to make the postseason as safe as possible, MLB gathered teams into centralized locations in southern California and Texas. Ultimately, the World Series, will take place in Arlington, Texas, with MLB allowing over 11,000 fans to attend.

(Sources: ESPN, NBC Sports, Miami Herald)