

- 49ers adapt to new COVID-19 rules
- San Jose Sharks are ready to play

SPORTS

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Tragic death of soccer icon saddens fans around the world

by Brynn Gibson and Sidney Bricker

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Last month, soccer fans across the globe were shocked and saddened by the news of Diego Maradona's death on Nov. 25 after he suffered a heart attack following brain surgery a week prior. Considered one of the best soccer players of all time, Maradona was known for his incredible skill, distinguished talent, and intense drive for greatness.

The Argentinian soccer icon was more than just a player, as he had a larger-than-life personality and an ability to leave an impression wherever he went. He was a symbol of Argentina's national pride and will be remembered for generations to come.

Born into an impoverished family in Buenos Aires on Oct. 30, 1960, Diego Armando Maradona would grow up to become arguably the greatest soccer player in history. Maradona's legacy is noteworthy; at only 15, he turned pro, signing with Argentinos Juniors, and was the youngest player in the Liga Profesional de Fútbol. Throughout his 21-year-long career, he played in over 490 professional games, scoring a total of 259 goals. He won nine club trophies with Copa Juniors, Barcelona, and Napoli, including the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa Italiana. Most notably, donning his number 10 jersey, he led his nation to victory during the 1986 World Cup in Mexico City.

Maradona's most famous moment occurred during the 1986 World Cup quarter-final against England. Six minutes into the second half of a scoreless game, an English defender kicked the ball up into the air,

right towards Maradona who was waiting by the goal. He leapt into the air, but instead of heading the ball, he punched it with his left fist, sending it flying into the net. Amazingly, the referee, oblivious to the fact Maradona had used his hand instead of his head, allowed the goal. This unprecedented call led to Maradona himself coining the goal, "the hand of God," as a reference to divine intervention. Despite this extraordinary series of events, the game was not over; Maradona still had more surprises.



KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN: Maradona battles for the ball in an intense matchup.

Four minutes later, Maradona received the ball in his own half and single-handedly dribbled through four defenders, before placing the ball into the opposite corner of England's goal. Considered the "goal of the century," this amazing display of pure talent, speed, and strength is easily one of the best goals ever scored in the World Cup. Argentina went on to win their match against England 2-1, setting them up to win the 1986 championship.

During his life, Maradona helped Argentina secure many historic wins, but he also held symbolic importance. At the time of the 1986 World Cup, Argentina played against England in the quarterfinal only four years after Argentina surrendered to England in a conflict over the Falkland Islands. Political tensions between the two countries were high. The 1986 win against England gave Argentinians a renewed sense of power and victory, all thanks to Maradona's goals. He became a national icon and a symbol of an Argentinian victory.

News of Maradona's death hit fans like a tsunami. Across Argentina, hundreds of thousands of people mourned with flowers, tributes, and monuments to his life. Alberto Fernández, the president of Argentina, declared three days of national mourning in Maradona's honor. On the day of his death, many Argentinian news outlets were down due to the sheer number of citizens visiting them to read about Maradona and his passing. The world will never forget Maradona's politically and athletically significant victories.

(Sources: Harvard, Washington Post, NY Times)

NBA set to start on Dec. 22

by Revanth Rao

Sports Editor

The 2020-21 NBA season will begin on Dec. 22, with the Warriors playing the Nets and the Lakers taking on the Clippers on opening night. While the league delayed the starting date of the season, the NBA and the NBA Players Association were able to negotiate terms for the upcoming season, which will look very different from previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While typical NBA seasons begin in October and end in June, this season will begin in December due to the league taking a four-month hiatus after shutting down operations back in March. This meant a shortened offseason for players, as the final games of last season occurred in October. While some players, including Lakers star LeBron James, wanted more time to rest, the NBA and the players eventually agreed to begin the season in late December.



ONE-ON-ONE: Beal playing solid defense against James.

Another major change this season involves the number of games. Each team will play 72 games, down from the 82 games a team usually plays. Additionally, the NBA has chosen to split the season into two halves with a break from Mar. 5-10. The league did this to maintain flexibility in their schedules, especially if games have to be postponed due to health reasons. The season will end around mid-July, which will give players the opportunity to play in the Tokyo Summer Olympics.

While the offseason was unexpectedly short, many of the best teams from last season will likely contend for a championship this season. In the Western Conference, the Los Angeles Lakers signed James and Anthony Davis to contract extensions and added key players around their two stars in an attempt to repeat as NBA champions. They will have tough competition from their crosstown rival, the Los Angeles Clippers, who re-signed many of their key players and hired Tyrone Lue to be their head coach after firing their previous coach Doc Rivers.



COMING THROUGH: Antetokounmpo charges by defense.

In the Eastern Conference, the Milwaukee Bucks could once again be at the top of the conference after reshuffling their roster by trading for guard Jrue Holiday from the New Orleans Pelicans. This season will likely be an important one for them, as Giannis Antetokounmpo, their star player, will be a free agent in 2021, and could leave the team if they are not successful. The Toronto Raptors also figure to have another good season after extending star point guard Fred VanVleet's contract; however, due to travel restrictions, they will play their home games in Tampa, FL, rather than Canada.

While the NBA may look very different this season playing in empty arenas, it is sure to still be entertaining and filled with intrigue.

(Sources: ESPN, CBS Sports, NBA)

Mayweather will fight Paul

by Trent Bartlett

Sports Editor

On Sun., Dec. 6, undefeated boxer Floyd 'Money' Mayweather shared an Instagram post announcing that he will be fighting YouTuber and rookie boxer Logan Paul. The fight is scheduled to take place on Feb. 20, 2021. This matchup has been talked about for the last three months by both Paul's camp and Mayweather's camp, but the date of the fight was officially finalized on Dec. 6.

Logan Paul has only ever fought in two boxing matches, and his professional boxing record is 0-1. His first fight, and loss, was against fellow YouTuber KSI which he lost back on Nov. 9, 2019. Paul did have a non-professional boxing match which took place on Aug. 25, 2018. The fight was also against KSI, ending in a tie.



STANDING TALL: Paul participates in a baseball game.

In contrast to Paul, Floyd Mayweather is arguably the greatest boxer in history, with a record of 50-0 with 27 wins by knockout. Mayweather's last pro boxing match was against Connor McGregor on Aug. 27, 2017, from which he emerged victorious with a technical knockout (TKO) in the eleventh round. Mayweather also participated in an exhibition fight in 2018 against kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa, and won easily. During a post-fight interview, Mayweather expressed that he'd "be open for further exhibitions."

Although betting odds haven't yet been released, as of Sun., Dec. 6, many people believe that Mayweather will come out victorious over Paul simply because of his experience and record. However, Paul does have a tremendous physical advantage over Mayweather, as Paul stands at 6 foot 2 inches vs. Mayweather's 5 foot 8 inch frame. Another factor is the weight of the boxers; no official weight class has been assigned, but as it stands, during Mayweather's last fight he weighed in at 149.5 pounds, whereas Paul's weighed in at 199.4 pounds during his last fight. The age difference is also something to consider as Paul will be 25 years old when the fight is scheduled to take place and Mayweather will be 43 years old, but turns 44 just four days after the fight.



BE READY: Mayweather fighting Ortiz in the boxing ring.

The fight is scheduled as a "special exhibition boxing match" and will be a pay-per-view (PPV) with pre-sales starting at 29.99 dollars until the first 1 million PPVs are sold. Afterwards, the price goes to 39.99 dollars, until Dec. 29, when the price will increase to 59.99 dollars. Finally the price will increase to 69.99 dollars on Feb. 11, 2021.

There has not been an official venue for the fight nor any information about undercards, but there is speculation that Paul's younger brother, Jake Paul, could be on the card. No matter who is on the undercard, Mayweather vs Paul is looking to be a very interesting fight.

(Sources: Talk Sport, Sportscenter, CNN)

49ers temporarily move to Arizona due to COVID-19

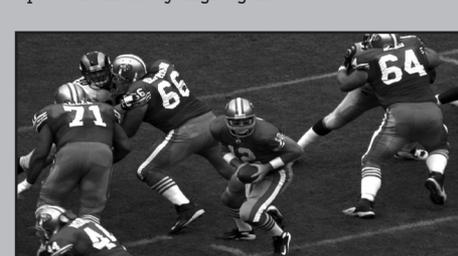
by Michaela Thimot

National/World Editor

In light of Santa Clara County's ban on all contact sports until Dec. 21, the San Francisco 49ers have moved to Arizona and will stay there until the county lifts its restrictions. The county reported that anyone traveling into the area from 150 miles away must quarantine for 14 days in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, which along with the ban, eliminates the possibility of the Niners playing games on their home field.

The entire team is staying at the Renaissance Hotel in Glendale, AZ, which is within walking distance of State Farm Stadium and the Arizona Cardinals practice field. The 49ers will use the stadium for their Weeks 13 and 14 home games, with their first game having taken place last Monday night against the Buffalo Bills. The Niners are also prepared to stay in Arizona for

the rest of the season if restrictions don't permit a return home. Upon their arrival in Arizona, the team resumed a normal practice schedule leading up to the Monday night game.



WATCH OUT: 49ers offensive line protects the quarterback.

Niners head coach Kyle Shanahan noted that the team is emotionally dealing with the move to Arizona. The team is scheduled to be away from their families for roughly a month, but that time-

line will likely increase. Shanahan noticed how NBA players struggled with mental health during their isolation, so he is watching his players carefully and constantly checking in with them to make sure they are doing well emotionally. "The best scenario for us and the most convenient for us right now with the situation presented is just getting out to Arizona; there's a good setup there," Shanahan stated. "The Cardinals have been awesome with us, everyone out there has been awesome with us. I do believe we have a really good setup there to make the best of it, and that's where we'll play our games, too."

Apart from practices and games, the players are not allowed to see each other. They go straight back to their hotel rooms when practice wraps up and don't see their teammates until practice the following day. In order to follow safe social distancing protocols, the team will hold meetings virtually, but this hinders the typical bonding that teams experience when on the road. Before their move to

Arizona, Shanahan made sure the players were aware that they would not be able to socialize outside of practice or at the hotel.

All of the players on the team, including the ones recovering from injuries and the ones just coming off the reserve/COVID-19 list, made the trip down to Arizona.

(Sources: Niners Nation, ESPN, NY Times)



OLD HOME: 49ers play at Levi Stadium in Santa Clara.