

Opening day! Guardians debut, Ohtani and Braves look to repeat



Steve Helber/AP

Atlanta Braves manager Brian Snitker watches warm ups along with Ron Washington during spring training at CoolToday Park in North Port, Fla.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OPENING DAY

Cubs veteran Kyle Hendricks is set to deliver the first pitch of the season against Corbin Burnes and Milwaukee at Wrigley Field just past 2:20 p.m., the first of seven games still on the calendar amid rainy forecasts across the country.

Gerrit Cole and the Yankees had been set to start the season at home against the rival Red Sox, but New York announced Wednesday that the game was postponed. Same for the Twins

and their opener against visiting Seattle.

Still plenty on the docket, though. The World Series champion Atlanta Braves plan to raise a banner before hosting Cincinnati, and they'll do it without fan favorite Freddie Freeman, who signed with the Dodgers last month. Los Angeles is among 12 teams that weren't scheduled to open until Friday.

WELCOME TO THE SHOW

Plenty new around the majors this year, starting with the branding in Cleveland. The Guardians make their regular-season debut in

Kansas City with ace Shane Bieber on the mound against Zack Greinke.

Cleveland will get the first, surely, of many looks at Bobby Witt Jr., baseball's top prospect who forced his way into the Royals' opening day lineup. A shortstop in the minors, Witt will play third base to start his big league career.

He's one of several touted prospects told they'll begin the season in the majors, including Seattle outfielder Julio Rodríguez, Detroit slugger Spencer Torkelson, Philadelphia shortstop Bryson Stott and Tampa Bay

outfielder Josh Lowe. Cincinnati right-hander Hunter Greene — who was up to 104 mph at Triple-A last year — will start a game over the weekend.

SAME FACE, NEW PLACE

Carlos Correa makes his Minnesota debut in a showdown with new Mariners lefty Robbie Ray, the reigning AL Cy Young Award winner. Both players changed teams via free agency, with Correa departing Houston and Ray leaving Toronto.

Boston newcomer Trevor

Please see **MLB, 2B**

Tiger casts shadow on Masters

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

AUGUSTA — Five players can go to No. 1 in the world by winning the Masters. Another can complete the career Grand Slam with a green jacket. Such is the depth of talent these days in golf on the eve of the first major of the year.

And such is the power of five words at 10:34 a.m. Thursday that are sure to overshadow everything else on the opening day of the 86th Masters.

"Fore, please. Tiger Woods driving."

Those words from the first tee at Augusta National haven't been uttered since Nov. 15, 2020, the last time Woods played — and walked — in a tournament.

For all its youth — the top seven players in the world are 30 or younger — golf still isn't ready to let go of its past, especially when that past is Woods and there was every reason to wonder if he would ever compete at this level again.

Along with images of Woods slipping on any of his five green jackets are those of his crumpled SUV at the bottom of a hill in suburban Los Angeles from his harrowing crash 14 months ago that left him confined to a hospital bed for three months.

In December, when he rode a cart to compete in a 36-hole event with his son, and Matt Kuchar suggested his swing was PGA Tour-ready, Woods smiled and said, "No, no, no, no. I totally disagree. I'm not at that level. I can't compete against these guys right now. No."

And then on Tuesday, he said he was going to play and added a short time later, "I don't show up to an event unless I think I can win it."

"It's just truly amazing. I don't even know how else to say it," Masters Chairman Fred Ridley said Wednesday. "I would have probably taken some pretty high odds a few months ago, even a few weeks ago, whether or not he would be here."

"But when you think about it, it really shouldn't surprise us. He is one of the most determined, dedicated athletes that I have ever seen in my life."

Please see **TIGER, 2B**

A NEW CHAPTER



Illustration by Derrick Davis/The Brunswick News

Frederica Academy boys basketball head coach Carl Nash.

Nash retires as coach, focused on building Frederica athletics

By SEBASTIAN EMANUEL
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Frederica Academy boys basketball head coach Carl Nash is retiring from the sport he has a great passion for, after 40 years in the game.

Nash's first head coaching job was in Mobile, Alabama when he took the role of head coach and athletic director at Spring Hill College, an NAIA school. During his seven years, the Badgers averaged 20 wins a season and went to the NAIA Final Four.

After the conclusion of his first year in charge at Spring Hill, Nash had an opportunity to coach in Saudi Arabia as part of their international program. In his lone year over in the Middle East, Nash guided the team to a 27-7 record, earning Coach of the Year honors, and the Ramadan Game Championship.

"It's kind of the circumstances where you are thrown in the situation (that you fall into)," Nash said. "But

I ended up going and did very well. When I came back and started coaching again at Spring Hill, we were very good again."

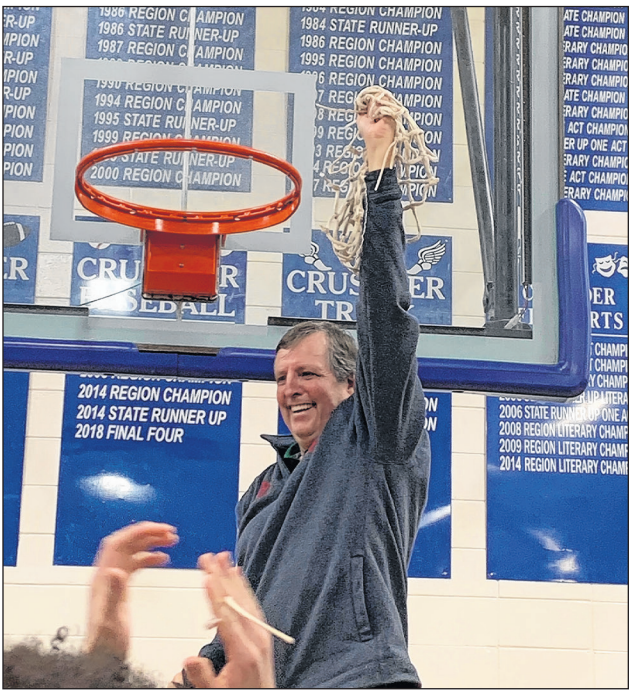
With his seventh season in charge of Spring Hill completed, Nash's newest opportunity rose when Clemson head coach Cliff Ellis asked if he would like to interview for an assistant coach with the Tigers.

"That's when I kind of knew that I had a chance to really make a living at doing what I wanted to do and the passion I had for it," Nash said. "Being with Cliff did a lot for me."

During his brief tenure with Clemson and eventually Auburn, Nash was listed as a top assistant coach who lead the preseason conditioning program and was director of basketball camps.

After spending time with both Tigers' programs, Nash took over as Chipola Junior College head coach and athletic director for three years. Having success once again, Nash received

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Provided photo

Frederica Academy basketball coach Carl Nash raises up the net after cutting it down following a win.

Coastal Georgia men receive challenge at The Farm, finish 4th

THE BRUNSWICK NEWS

A strong second round lifted the Mariner men into the upper half of a championship-caliber field earlier this week at the Roadrunner Classic at The Farm in Rocky Face.

No. 3 Coastal Georgia shot a 5-under 283 in Round 2 that stood as the third-lowest score of any team over the 54-hole event, finishing in fourth place with an overall score of 892. No. 1 Keiser won the tournament at 840 — 45 strokes better than second-place No. 7 Ottawa University — and No. 13

Dalton State rounded out the top 3 at 889.

"Might be the greatest second round to first round in Coastal Georgia history," said men's head coach Mike Cook. "Played horrible in Round 1, then a great round. Team needs consistency, to say the least."

Each of the 12 teams in the field entered the event ranked within the NAIA Men's Golf Coaches' Top 25, including No. 2 South Carolina Beaufort, No. 6 Oklahoma City, No. 8 Point University, No. 10 Wayland Baptist, No. 11 Bellevue, and No. 14 SCAD Savannah.

With thunderstorms threatening the area, teams fit as many holes as possible into the opening day Monday, the Mariners playing all but nine holes in the event.

Despite 12 hours of golf, Coastal Georgia shook off a first round that left it near the bottom of the leaderboard to put itself in contention going into the final round.

"We were in next to last place after Round 1, but that's because the field is (made up of) 12 teams ranked in the top 21," Cook said. "We must perform at our best or get beaten to death."

The Mariners got a 2-over 218 from senior Jackson Lawlor, who finished in a tie for ninth on the individual leaderboard. Sophomore Marcus Reynolds tied for 13th at 6-over 223, and senior Chip Thompson's 9-over 225 put him in a tie for 21st overall.

Sophomore George Langam closed out the scoring for Coastal at 11-over 227, placing him in a tie for 28th, and senior Will Sharpe rounded out the five in 60th at 26-over 242.

"Not a bad finish, but one

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Provided photo

The Farm Golf Club is pictured Monday in Rocky Face.

Sports

Masters notebook: Weir, Hughes share win at Par 3 contest

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

AUGUSTA — As tradition dictates, there is now very bad news to report about Canadian golfers Mike Weir and Mackenzie Hughes.

Neither will win the Masters.

That is, if you believe the superstition — or at least, believe in the history. No player has won the Par 3 Contest and gone on to win the Masters in the same year, a trend that Weir and Hughes will both try to buck when this year’s tournament starts Thursday.

Weir and Hughes shared the Par 3 title on Wednesday, both finishing 4 under. Play started late because of the threat of weather and ended early when more inclement weather was approaching the area.

“It’s fun. This is a very special day for me,” Hughes said. “This is my third Masters and my first Par 3 Contest. I was really excited to get out here and do this. Very lucky that the weather held off for us.”

Depending on how you count, Hughes either had three caddies or zero caddies. He carried his own bag, while caddy No. 1 (his wife) kept watchful eyes on caddies No. 2 and No. 3 (their kids).

“My youngest, Cohen, he’s 16 months on Monday, so he wanted to get after every ball on the green, heading towards lakes,” Hughes said. “So, definitely priority No. 1 was to keep them on grass. Did that.”

It was the first Par 3 event at the Masters — the traditional, family friendly Wednesday afternoon prequel to the real thing — since 2019. The 2020 and 2021 events didn’t happen because of the pandemic.

Some of the “patrons” on the short course, with holes ranging from 70 to about 140 yards in length, didn’t exactly behave. Sergio Garcia missed the green at No. 1, perhaps because a child loudly announced during Garcia’s swing that he’d be taking a turn next. Kids ran on the greens, others



Mackenzie Hughes' son Cohen sits on the night green during the Par 3 contest at the Masters on Wednesday in Augusta.

jumped up and down by the tee boxes.

Obviously, nobody minded. “Special family time,” Justin Rose said.

Caddies hit balls into the water, wives took putts for their tour-player husbands — Lacey Homa had a birdie for her husband Max — and about 40 players were technically ineligible to win because someone else played their ball at some point during the contest.

Again, nobody minded that, either.

“I think as you get older you understand to appreciate even more,” said 1987 Masters champion Larry Mize, who finished a shot back Wednesday. “Having the Par 3 back this year is a blast. It is so special. I can’t put into words how special it is.”

There are 11 men who have won both the Masters and the Par-3 Contest — Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Ben Crenshaw, Raymond Floyd, Vijay Singh, Mark O’Meara, Tommy Aaron, Sandy Lyle, Gay Brewer and Art Wall Jr.

Just never in the same year.

Weir, however, said he didn’t believe in the Par 3 winning jinx.

“You come out and you want to hit some good shots and get a good feel and leave a good taste in your mouth,” Weir said.

NOTABLE OMISSION
Something’s missing from the Masters this year. And as it turns out, even Augusta National isn’t immune from an increasingly common issue these days.

The Georgia Peach Ice Cream Sandwich — possibly one of the finest \$2 desserts in the free world — hasn’t been available at Augusta National this week.

The official reason: Supply chain issues.

All the other traditional concession items are back at the Masters, with a couple of mild menu tweaks. Egg salad and pimento cheese sandwiches remain priced at \$1.50. A couple of sandwich prices — ham and cheese, and turkey and cheese — were increased 50 cents to \$3 apiece. And a new \$3 egg, meat and cheese breakfast sandwich is on this year’s menu as well.

The peach ice cream might be missing but there is a nod to Georgia’s other official snack, with Georgia pecan caramel popcorn at \$1.50.

And the most expensive item on the menu isn’t expensive at all, compared to

just about every other major sporting event in the world: A glass of chardonnay will set you back \$6, which is \$1 more than beer.

“We have had some modest price increases,” Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley said. “I think that most, if not everyone, would say there is great value in our concessions. So, we are very comfortable with that.”

ONE MORE CLUB
Xander Schauffele went back to the par-3 16th hole during a practice round earlier this week, this time having grabbed a 7-iron.

Had he done that in the final round last year, the Masters might have gone differently.

He had made four consecutive birdies and was within striking distance of leader and eventual winner Hideki Matsuyama last year when he went to the 16th. The hole was playing at 184 yards for the final round. Schauffele chose an 8-iron.

The ball went in the water, he made triple-bogey and his chance at a green jacket was gone.

“I walked up and hit a 7-iron this year,” Schauffele said. “The green was concrete. My ball landed right near the hole and skipped all the way to the back of the green. ... I waited a year

to hit that shot again.”

WAITING ON 13
Here’s an oddity. The par-4 11th at Augusta National is now longer than the par-5 13th.

That’ll probably change, but nobody seems to know when.

No. 11 has been stretched to 520 yards, 10 more than No. 13, a hole that the Masters has been on-record as wanting to change for at least six years now and counting. It has become too easy for their liking, with the majority of players able to reach the green in two shots.

The Masters is still weighing its options, while the sport’s governing bodies — the United States Golf Association and the Royal & Ancient — continue studying potential changes or solutions to what has been called “bomb and gouge,” a style where distance is valued more than accuracy.

“We are going to go forward on our own timetable and make changes we think to,” Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley said. “Most of our tees are very lengthy and we’ll have that optionality today and we’ll continue to have that optionality going forward.”

FEATURED GROUPS
The Masters’ digital platforms will stream 18-hole “spotlight coverage of select groupings” during Thursday’s opening round, two trios from the morning and two more in the afternoon.

It means those who want to see every shot Tiger Woods plays Thursday will be able to do so.

The 10:34 a.m. grouping of Woods, Louis Oosthuizen and Joaquin Niemann is the first featured trio on the schedule for Thursday, followed by the 10:56 a.m. group of Adam Scott, Scottie Scheffler and Tony Finau.

The afternoon groupings getting the same coverage: Dustin Johnson, Billy Horschel and Collin Morikawa teeing off at 1:30 p.m., and Jordan Spieth, Viktor Hovland and Xander Schauffele who begin at 1:52 p.m.

CCGA

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bad round hurt,” Cook said. “But they are getting there, mentally tougher.”

Coastal Georgia has proven its placement as a top program in its peaks, but it will need to iron out its inconsistencies if it hopes to repeat as conference champions at The SUN Conference Championship held at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., on April 24-26. Each of the top 4 teams in the national rankings belong to the SUN Conference.

MLB

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Story gets his first taste of baseball’s biggest rivalry as his Red Sox face the New York Yankees. Freeman’s replacement, Matt Olson, plays his first regular-season game with his hometown Braves after being acquired in a trade from Oakland.

The Cubs say Japanese star Seiya Suzuki has seemed remarkably comfortable in his first U.S. season. Chicago fans get to greet the 27-year-old outfielder, who slugged 38 homers last season in Japan’s Central League.

DH DUTY
Shohei Ohtani begins his AL MVP defense by pitching and hitting for the Angels against Houston — and he’ll be the only hurler asked to do both.

The designated hitter was added to the National League this winter, creating 15 job opportunities for sluggers who aren’t exactly built to defend. Nelson Cruz signed a one-year deal with the Nationals and seems ready for another big season at 41 years old — he hit a grand slam in his final spring at-bat.

The new rule also cleared a spot for the Cardinals to bring back 42-year-old Albert Pujols for a farewell tour. St. Louis hosts the Pirates, with former Glynn Academy standout Adam Wainwright pitching to Yadier Molina for what could be the final time as those two players also ponder retirement after 2022.

Nash

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another call, this time from Jeff Price at Georgia Southern to be an assistant coach. For 10 years, Nash was part of an Eagles program that broke a 14-year postseason drought by going to the NIT in 2006.

“Over the years, you are put in circumstances that you have no answers for,” Nash said. “There are good times and some bad times. “It just fell altogether for me and there isn’t a place that I coached, that I didn’t like. I loved every place that I’ve been, there’s not a lot of guys that can say that. I’m very blessed.”

A few other destinations Nash coached were in China and with the Orlando Magic for a summer. Nash had an opportunity to work for the Erie Bayhawks (now

Lakeland Magic) in the G-League.

However, an opportunity at Frederica Academy for a head coach and athletic director needed to be filled.

“That’s when I had an opportunity to come to Frederica, and I could actually plant some roots,” Nash said. “That’s what I did, I only did that for a short time. I didn’t really want to move again, and I definitely didn’t want to move to a part of the country where I knew I would freeze to death. I wasn’t quite ready for that climate change.”

“I was very lucky. The job at Frederica came up and I had never been at a high school before, but I felt like it was time to take that opportunity that I felt like the good Lord gave me and it all worked out.”

Arriving in 2016, Nash didn’t know the home of the Knights would be the final show for him.

“I think as time went on, I just felt like I wasn’t doing as well as I wanted to do as a basketball coach at this level,” Nash said. “There is a lot of teaching and I felt like I didn’t do a good job with that. Most of our kids play other sports, and I’m not used to spending a lot of time outside of the season watching my basketball players do other sports.

“Most of the time they are in the gym working out. For me, that was pretty difficult. It was hard for me to not be able to have players work out year-round because they are doing other sports, as they should.”

Finding difficulty in having a majority of his team be stars in other sports, Nash continued to coach with an open mind and loved the challenges that came with coaching at Frederica.

“I love the strategy and looking at a basketball almost like a map,” Nash said.

“You are having to decipher that map every day. That’s how I approached my job, and I wasn’t able to do that at Frederica as much as I would’ve liked. Those kinds of challenges were good too, they challenged me to change a little bit, and I needed that every now and then. Sometimes change is good. That’s how I went with Frederica and I think it was successful.”

In his six years in charge, Nash guided the Knights boys basketball team to four Georgia Independent Schools Association Class 3A region championship games and an Elite Eight appearance this past season.

“I think the strategy was there, we didn’t win as many games as I wanted to,” Nash said. “I love the challenge that I had at Frederica. When you are ready to stop and slow down and you want to make it the last stop for your home, that says a lot

about the place that you are at. I haven’t had a real home since I left high school. Most of the time I’ve been on the road coaching, and that’s all I’ve known.

“Now, I want to make a home of where I’m at. I think that speaks volumes for what Frederica Academy is to me. What it’s done for me as a person is more so than a coach.”

Although he steps away from being on the sidelines and leading the Knights basketball team, Nash retains his role as athletic director. As the school continues to expand and showcase itself, Nash sees the first order of business being the improvement of the facilities.

“You want to have the nicest facilities you can have to compete in,” Nash said. “We have to upgrade our facilities, and we are doing that as we speak. Those are the things that I have to do, and I look forward to doing so as the

athletic director. The valuable commodity which is our student-athletes, we have to give them whatever they need to compete within reason. We can do that, we are working on that and it’s getting to that point where some of it is coming to fruition. I feel pretty good about all of that.”

Only ever knowing basketball as his true passion in life, Nash said he’s ready to move the passion he once had for 40 years as a coach into continuing to build Frederica Academy as a sporting powerhouse at the GISA level.

“The passion I have for basketball overrides anything I’ve ever done before,” Nash said. “Now, I can turn that passion into something else. That’s to help our student-athletes in the years to come and to have the proper needs to be successful. I’m going to put that passion into that now and hopefully, some of that will be a success before I leave completely.”

Tiger

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Woods is back — again — and the 90 other players at Augusta National feel like nothing more than an afterthought until scores are posted.

“Tiger takes a lot of attention away from all of us, which I think is a good thing for us,” said Scottie Scheffler, making his debut as the No. 1 player in the world. “He’s used to being in the spotlight. Tiger is the needle for professional golf.”

Tigermania has been in full force ever since the gates opened Monday morning, and the gallery filled every inch behind the ropes for the nine holes he played

with Justin Thomas and Fred Couples. It was like that again Wednesday, when the trio played the back nine, beating the rain.

On the par-5 second hole, Louis Oosthuizen had a fairway metal in hand as he tried to reach the green. Only about 150 people lingered behind to watch. On the third fairway, the caddie for Joaquin Niemann was walking the course to check yardages when someone suggested he should enjoy such a quiet day. Gary Matthews turned and smile.

Woods is grouped with Oosthuizen and Niemann for the opening two rounds. On the other side of the course, both sides of the 15th fairway were lined with spectators to watch Woods

take two shots with his fairway metal to reach the green. They followed him in. Practice tickets are only for one day. Catch him while you can.

“Tiger is Tiger,” Couples said. “He’s not like a lot of us, where I’ve been injured even at age 35 and I go play just to play. He’s not going to do that. He’s won so many times, and he’s just not a guy to go do something mediocre. He’ll compete, and he’ll be ready to roll.”

Rain interrupted the final day of practice after about three hours and cleared up in time for the start of the Par 3 Tournament, the first time that was held since 2019 because of the pandemic. Storms halted this edition of the Par 3.

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