

Sports



C9 Wimbledon canceled, and the British Open may follow suit today, according to Golf Digest.



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Madison senior Christian Becerra will have pitched his last prep game if the CIF on Friday officially cancels high school spring sports.

SENIOR MOMENTS DENIED

Virus turns final year into a bust for Madison pitcher, many other high school athletes

BY ANDERSON HAIGLER

This wasn't how Christian Becerra imagined his high school baseball career coming to a close.

The hard-throwing right-hander and his Madison teammates were supposed to be competing for a championship ring late into spring.

"I thought our team was good enough this year to potentially have won it all," Becerra said.

Instead, what most likely will be the 6-foot-2 senior's final game — a 4-1 win over Granite Hills on March 11 — has come and gone without fanfare.

Warhawks coach Robert Lovato warned his players that it could be their last, to make it count, so they did.

Becerra, not due to pitch that day,

“Working hard for the last four years to get the opportunity to be a senior captain, to have it just ripped away like that was heartbreaking.”

Christian Becerra • Madison pitcher

singled. A positive final note if there could be one in times like these, but clearly not enough to make the abrupt ending due to the COVID-19 pandemic sting any less.

"We wanted to end with a 'dub,' which we did. It was a beauty," Becerra said by phone, his voice filled with pride.

With campuses unlikely to open before the end of the school year, the

California Interscholastic Federation is expected to officially cancel high school spring sports in a meeting on Friday.

Becerra took a somber tone when contemplating what could have been, searching for the right words to describe what figures to be a lost season.

"It sucks," he said, noting that he and his teammates fully understand

why safety comes first. "Working hard for the last four years to get the opportunity to be a senior captain, to have it just ripped away like that was heartbreaking."

As with thousands of local high school athletes, the coronavirus appears to have ended what was shaping up to be an impressive year for Becerra. His first outing this spring saw him dazzle, carrying a no-hitter deep into a seven-inning, six-strikeout scoreless effort. His second, nearly as sharp, resulted in just one earned run allowed in six frames.

But games have given way to a state mandate to stay at home. Playing catch is nearly impossible, and practices are out of the question as social distancing becomes of the utmost importance. Workouts are

SEE PREPS • C9

FLYNN ADDS WOODEN TEAM TO PORTFOLIO

BY MARK ZEIGLER

Malachi Flynn has done something only one other men's basketball player from San Diego State and two others from the Mountain West have.

He's a member of the John R. Wooden Award All-American Team.

It's the latest national accolade for the 6-foot-1 junior guard and perhaps the most prestigious. Flynn made the cut to 15 last month, but just 10 gain Wooden All-American status. The Washington State transfer has been a consistent second-team All-American by various publications and organizations, and a first teamer by Sports Illustrated and Stadium.

The only other SDSU player to make the Wooden team in its 44-year history is Michael Cage in 1984. (Kawhi Leonard was in the final 15 in 2011 but didn't survive the cut to 10.) The only other Mountain West players are Utah's Andrew Bogut in 2005 and BYU's Jimmer Fredette in 2011.

Joining Flynn in the 2020 Wooden top 10 are Udoka Azubuike and Devon Dotson from Kansas, Luka Garza (Iowa), Markus Howard (Marquette), Filip Petrushev (Gonzaga), Myles Powell (Seton Hall), Payton Pritchard (Oregon), Obi Toppin (Dayton) and Cassius Winston (Michigan State). The Wooden national player of the year — Toppin is the favorite — will be announced April 7 on ESPN.

Flynn will now turn his attention to deciding whether to turn pro. He is widely expected to enter the NBA Draft pool before the April 26 deadline for underclassmen. He also likely will submit paperwork by April 16 requesting a pre-draft evaluation from the NBA Undergraduate Advisory Committee, a group of general managers who provide feedback about their draft prospects.

Players would normally start workouts with NBA teams later this month leading to the draft combine from May 19-24. All that is up the air now, along with the June 3 withdrawal deadline to retain collegiate eligibility and the draft itself on June 25.

Most mock drafts project Flynn to go in the middle of the second round, although some scouts have privately said they rate him a late first-rounder in what is generally considered a weak class.

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VOTING HIGH JINKS ADDS TO MADNESS

'Caddyshack' in Final Four over 'Hoosiers'

BY KIRK KENNEY

Every compelling story needs a villain, I suppose.

That includes the Union-Tribune's March Movie Madness, which has been building for two weeks now toward an exciting championship matchup.

In this case, the scoundrel was cloaked in online anonymity — surprise, surprise — voting hundreds of times for one movie in an effort to alter the outcome.

While Twitter voting allowed only one vote per account, voting on the U-T website did not prevent multiple submissions from one person.

We don't know if the breach was foreign (Russian bots?) or domestic (we've all heard stories from Chicago about how their constituents are known to vote long after they've passed away).

What we do know is that sometime after noon on

Tuesday, irregularities were detected in the online voting, which began Saturday evening for the Elite Eight.

Reservations for three slots in the Final Four were all but assured almost immediately.

No. 4 "Field of Dreams" was handily ahead of No. 2 "The Natural" in the Baseball Division. No. 7 "Brian's Song" was comfortably leading No. 5 "The Longest Yard" in the Football Division. And No. 2 "Rocky" was pummeling No. 1 "Raging Bull" in the Combat Division.

If there was any doubt, it was in the Other Sports Division, where No. 1 "Hoosiers" was trailing No. 2 "Caddyshack" but within range of a late comeback.

As of noon Tuesday, "Caddyshack" led the online voting on the U-T's website with 53 percent of 1,016 votes cast (554-482).

The lead was built up SEE MADNESS • C9



Former Padres owner Joan Kroc throws out first pitch before team's first home playoff game in '84.

THIS DATE IN PADRES HISTORY

PHILANTHROPIST SELLS THE TEAM

Joan Kroc wanted to give Friars to City of San Diego in 1984

BY JEFF SANDERS

The Padres, as the San Diego Union wrote, "officially went Hollywood" on April 2, 1990, as Joan Kroc announced she was selling the team to an investment group fronted by television producer Tom Werner.

Before that, the McDonald's heiress tried to give the Padres to the city of San Diego.

Because of course she did.

The Krocs' philanthropic endeavors included donating \$87 million to The Salvation Army to open a community center in San Diego's Rolando neighborhood. Joan's estate later bequeathed \$1.5 billion after her death in 2003 so similar centers could be built across the country, as well as \$225 million to National Public

Radio and \$50 million each to peace studies institutes that were named for her at USD and Notre Dame. She would have remained anonymous had intrepid reporters not unearthed her as the Grand Forks, N.D., "Angel" who donated \$15 million to flood victims in 1997.

Among Kroc's countless deeds in her inner circle was asking longtime radio play-by-play man Ted Leitner if she could be the godmother to his twins and showing up at the hospital on the day of their birth with trust funds for each.

"She was one of those angels," Leitner said by phone last week, "that was out there changing people's lives."

Decades before selling the team to Werner and his partners, Joan Kroc's baseball acumen was so lacking that she asked her husband Ray why he wanted to buy a "monastery" when he said he was interested in buying SEE HISTORY • C9

