THE

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



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 fan-

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

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 meet-

ing 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 sea-

"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-America 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 Petrusev (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 firstrounder 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 out-

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 im-

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 Divi-

sion. And No. 2 "Rocky" was pum-meling No. 1 "Raging Bull" in the Combat Division.

If there was any doubt, it was in the Other Sports Diwhere No. "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 Di-

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

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

Among Kroc's countless deeds in her inner circle was asking longtime radio playby-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

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

NO WIMBLEDON; BRITISH OPEN, TOO?

Wimbledon was canceled on Wednesday because of the coronavirus pandemic, the first time since World War II that the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament won't be played.

Wimbledon was scheduled to be held on the club's grass courts on the outskirts of London from June 29 to July 12.

Instead, the next edition of the tournament will be June 28 to July 11, 2021.

Meanwhile, the British Open also is expected to be canceled, according to Golf Digest, citing sources. The decision could be announced as early as today. Sources told Golf Digest last week the R&A was awaiting the decision on Wimbledon before proceeding.

Wimbledon was first held in 1877 and has been contested every year since, with the exception of two stretches: from 1915-18 because of World War I, and from 1940-45 because of World War II. Wimbledon is the first

major tennis championship completely wiped out this year because of the coronavirus. The start of the French Open was postponed from late May to late September.

As of now, the U.S. Open is still scheduled to be played in New York from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13.

The British Open was set to be contested starting July 16 at Royal St George's Golf Club, which would have hosted its 15th Open and first since 2011. The last time the Open wasn't played was in 1945 because of World War

Part of the reason the championship is being canceled rather than postponed like the Masters and PGA Championship has to do with insurance, a Golf Digest source said. Similar to Wimbledon, the R&A has a policy that shields against a global pandemic, and a source indicated the Open would have to cancel by a certain date in order to collect on its insurance premium.

More virus

UFC lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov says he won't leave quarantine in Russia to fight, dealing another blow to UFC President Dana White's determination to hold UFC 249 in two weeks amid the coronavirus pandemic. Nur-



ALEX DAVIDSON GETTY IMAGES

A staff member works outside Centre Court at Wimbledon on Wednesday, when the tournament was canceled.

magomedov (28-0) was scheduled to fight top contender **Tony** Ferguson (25-3) in the main event of UFC 249, which was initially scheduled for Brooklyn before the pandemic threw the UFC's schedule into up-Nurmagomedov heaval. made it clear he isn't leaving for the fight even if White is

able to find a location to stage it.

•The recruiting dead period has been extended in all NCAA Division I and II sports through May 31. The latest decision by the Division I Council Coordinator Committee essentially wipes out spring recruiting for this academic year. A dead period prohibits in-person visits by recruits and coaches, but electronic communication is still permissible.

 Major League Soccer reportedly plans to cut the pay of some executives and front office personnel while the season is on hold.

· An unnamed player for the Philadelphia Union has tested positive, the first player case in MLS.

• The Professional Fighters League has put its season on hold indefinitely due to the new coronavirus pandemic. The mixed martial arts promotion was expected to begin competition in May.

• The Ottawa Senators say four more members of the organization tested positive for COVID-19. Senators previously had two players test positive.

du •The Criterium Dauphine cycling race, one of the key warm-ups for the Tour de France, has been postponed. The race had been scheduled for May 31-June 7 in southeastern France.

• Brooklyn Nets General Manager **Sean Marks** says the four players who tested positive for the new coronavirus have completed their two weeks of isolation and are now symptom-free. The Nets announced on March 17 that four players had tested positive, with Kevin Durant telling The Athletic he was among

• Major League Baseball has canceled a two-game series in London between the Chicago Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals. The teams had been scheduled to play at Olympic Stadium on June

• Rangers veteran Shin-Soo Choo is helping out financially strapped minor league players with the season on hold, giving \$1,000 each to 191 of them who are in the Texas organization.

 UEFA has postponed the Euro 2020 playoffs for the second time. The games were originally scheduled for March 26-31 and have now lost their June 4-9 dates.

NFL

Cowboys have agreed to a one-year deal with defensive end Aldon Smith, according to multiple reports. Smith has not played in a game since 2015 because of legal and substance-abuse issues, but he is in the process of seeking reinstatement to the NFL, according to ESPN.

• Anthony Lynn has expressed plenty of confidence in Tyrod Taylor if he ends up becoming the quarterback for the Chargers, but there are a lot of questions that still need to be answered between now and the start of the season. The Chargers coach said Taylor has the inside track with the departure of Philip Rivers, but the team is still assessing all options. "Right now he's in the driver's seat but nothing is finalized," Lynn said.

• The Patriots released quarterback Cody Kessler, who spent time on New England's practice squad last season

• The Seahawks agreed

to terms on a one-year deal with defensive end Benson Mayowa. • The Bears finalized a

five-year, \$70 million contract with former All-Pro pass rusher Robert Quinn and a one-year deal with former Seahawks offensive lineman Germain Ifedi.

College basketball

Washington freshman standout Isaiah Stewart has declared for the NBA Draft. Stewart, a bruising 6foot-9 forward, was named to the All-Pac-12 first team after averaging 16.6 points and 8.7 rebounds in the regular season.

 Arizona State junior power forward Romello White has joined teammate Remy Martin in declaring for the NBA Draft.

Also

be on display until the end of April in Japan's northeastprefecture an official "handover ceremony"at the J-Village Na-

and prefecture officials held tional Training Center in Fukushima. Olympic officials have postponed the Tokyo Games because of the coronavirus until next year. **U-T NEWS SERVICES**

The Olympic flame will

Fukushima. Tokyo Olympic

MADNESS

over the first 42 hours of voting. By 4 p.m. Tuesday, however, "Hoosiers" had overcome the deficit and actually led 774-728. It received 292 of 466 votes (63 percent) over that four-hour period.

Put another way, in the first 42 hours of the voting. "Hoosiers" received 11 votes an hour. During that fourhour period, the movie received 73 votes an hour.

Such a turnaround seems statistically questionable. But let's say "Hoosiers" fans conducted a get-outthe-vote campaign. Such a premise goes out the window with what happened thereafter.

During the 5 p.m. hour Tuesday, "Hoosiers" received 107 of 113 votes (95 percent) cast. From 4 p.m. through midnight it received 85 percent of the votes. Statistically improbable, given earlier voting trends.

Most egregious was what Wednesday happened morning, however. After only 38 votes were cast from

HISTORY

the San Diego Padres.

FROM C10

Final Four

(2) Caddyshack vs. (4) Field of Dreams

(2) Rocky vs. (7) Brian's Song

TO VOTE

Online at sandiegouniontribune.com/sports

Via Twitter (@sdut or @sdutkirkdkenney)

Email kirk.kenney@sduniontribune.com

midnight to 9:15 a.m. as the voting was winding down, 41 votes were cast from 9:15 to

The tally: "Hoosiers" 40, 'Caddyshack" 1.

Statistically impossible. Guess our villain was rested and ready after a good night's sleep.

In view of these irregularities, the U-T's selection committee determined that in order to maintain voting integrity, the polling be concluded Tuesday at noon, before the shenanigans began, rather than Wednesday.

So "Caddyshack"

vanced to the Final Four, where it will meet "Field of Dreams." The matchup is "Brian's Song"

vs. "Rocky." Everyone reacts differently to being cooped up inside the house.

Some channel pent-up energy in a positive way, like cleaning the garage, cracking open a book they've been meaning to read or participating in a contest to select the best sports movie.

For others, who might otherwise be occupied outside pulling the limbs off insects, hoarding toilet paper or crowding onto a public beach, perhaps that's too

much to ask. Too harsh?

No more harsh than one message we received earlier in the tournament.

Emails from readers are running about 200-to-1 on the positive side for hosting the tournament.

That one email?

A reader accused us of rigging the voting against "Eight Men Out" and "Hoop Dreams," which both suffered narrow first-round losses.

As we said in our reply,

"We have no interest in 'rigging' this. What is there to gain? There is nothing at stake here. It's presented as a fun diversion for readers."

Apparently, some take it more seriously than others. It's too bad.

We were all set to enjoy seeing which would come out on top — the real-life drama of a small-town high school basketball team that wins an Indiana state championship or a golf-themed comedy that may be the most quoted film in history

on a daily basis. We're confident Milan High coach Norman Dale wouldn't have wanted to win

this way. After all, there are still those who believe in good

sportsmanship. For the final two rounds. voting will be monitored hour-by-hour for any irreg-

ularities. Here are the Elite Eight results (voting percentages based on responses from emails, online responses and

Baseball Division No. 4 "Field of Dreams"

Twitter polls):

had a heck of a swing, but he didn't have a catch phrase to match "If you build it, they will come."

percent of vote): Roy Hobbs

Other Sports

No. 2 "Caddyshack" def. No. 1 "Hoosiers" (54 percent): Turns out internet trolls are even more troublesome for golfers than gophers.

Football Division

No. 7 "Brian's Song" def. No. 5 "The Longest Yard" (58 percent): A victory by "Brian's Song" would make it among the lowest seeds to ever reach the championship. The lowest seed to win remains No. 8 Villanova, which upset No. 1 Georgetown for the 1985 championship.

Combat Sports Division

No. 2 "Rocky" def. No. 1 "Raging Bull" (83 percent): Only other boxer Jake LaMotta had this much trouble with was Sugar Ray Robinson, who handed Jake four of his 14 career losses (against 83 wins).

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def. No. 2 "The Natural" (57 loved San Diego Ronald

pen. A couple of drug suspensions. Goose going off. The lockout. The strikes back in 1985 and 1981. She has been through a lot. From an owner's perspective, you just get tired of it.

"You know, it was just time to move on. You've just got to respect that." Kroc said as much in a

brief statement before giving the stage to Werner and his partners, for good.

"I expect that my status with respect to the Padres,' she said, "will soon be that of many thousands of San Diego citizens. While I will be relinquishing ownership of the Padres, I will not be relinquishing my status as a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of this team.

"Being identified with the Padres for the past 15 years has been one of the special privileges of my life and a source of the deepest pride.'

PREPS

limited to what Becerra can accomplish in the confines of his own home — focusing on body-weight exercises and a treadmill for cardio. As for baseball, he's had to settle for video games.

"With gyms shutting down, I don't have a lot of the materials I need to stay in shape, so I've just been doing a lot of ... push-ups and situps," Becerra said.

Regardless, Becerra plans to be ready to go whenever baseball resumes. Possibly by then he will be a freshman again, playing at Cal State San Marcos after he graduates from Madison. His scholarship with the Cougars is the culmination of a longstanding goal that Becerra set for himself.

It was toward the end of his sophomore year that his aspirations began to come into focus.

"He pitched in the CIF finals, threw five great innings," Lovato said of his pitcher's 2018 performance. "It was a 2-2 ballgame when he came out, but he definitely proved himself.'

It was perhaps then that Becerra realized his goal of playing at the next level, earning a scholarship to help his family financially, could become a reality.

"My main focus was to take stress off of my mom for college," Becerra said.

Pointing to a picture of Kevin Abel in the Warhawks' locker room — another hardthrowing righty who came through the program before him — Becerra said he tries to model his game after the now-Oregon State star who shined in the College World Series.

"Just watching him pitch, and his mentality, that's how I want to be," added Becerra, who crossed paths with Abel during his freshman year of high school.

Becerra has forged his own legacy at Madison, even if his senior season is cut short. Employing a fastball that runs into the upper 80s alongside a slider and a split-finger fastball that he describes as having "nasty drop," the 17year-old rolled to a 9-2 record and a minuscule 1.81 ERA his junior year, notching four complete games along the

Becerra was rewarded with a selection to the CIF San Diego Section All-Star Game at Petco Park.

"Just playing on that field, the same field the Padres play on — that was sick. That was the best part probably," Be-

cerra said. Given the value he places on family, choosing San Marcos was a natural fit

"It was important to stay close to home, so that my family can continue to watch me play and support me," Becerra said. "I think that I can really fit into their program."

Though the next chapter of his career may begin sooner than he imagined, Becerra is still trying to focus on the present, staying in touch with teammates virtually.

"He really gets us going," Madison junior catcher/third baseman Victor Arreola said of Becerra before an earlyseason practice. "He's the same guy on the field as he is in the classroom—a leader by example."

Haigler is a freelance writer.

What to watch

With almost no live sports programming outside of horse racing (America's Day at the Races, 10:30 a.m., FS2), the Union-Tribune takes a daily look at what else is on that's sports-related:

ESPN: College football, 2006 Rose Bowl, USC-Texas, 5 p.m.

ESPN2: High school basketball, 2003 Jam Fest featuring LeBron James, 6 CBSSN: College basketball,

Stanford, 6 p.m. NBA TV: 1978 Finals (game 7), Bullets-Sonics, noon; 1984 Finals (game 7),

Celtics-Lakers, 2 p.m.

1998 Final Four, Kentucky-

TRANSACTIONS

FOOTBALL (NFL)
BUFFALO BILLS — Signed OL Daryl Williams and CB E.J. Gaines to a one-year contract. **CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Signed WR Robby anderson to a two-year contract. Signed WR Keith

Kirkwood to a one-year contract.

DETROIT LIONS — Signed LB Elijah Lee. HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed WR Ra HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed WR Randall Cobb to a three-year contract. Signed S Eric Mur-ay to a three-year contract. LOS ANGELES RAMS — Signed OL Andrew

Whitworth to a three-year contract.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Signed LS Casey Kreiter of a one-year contract. Signed RB Dion Lewis.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Released OL Mike

Person.

WASHINGTON REDKSINS — Signed CB Ronald

SOCCER (NWSL)
ORLANDO PRIDE — Acquired M Jade Moore

Ray Kroc made his fortune by taking McDonald's national and set the tone of his ownership in San Diego when he seized the mic in the middle of his first home game as owner and said. "I've never seen such stupid ballplaying in my life." The business advice Ray Kroc offered Leitner some time after the broadcaster moved into the Padres' booth in

food tycoon's drive. 'When your competitor is drowning, you stick the hose in his mouth," "Leitner recalled Kroc saying. "But Joan was totally different. She was the sweetest, most easygoing person in the world. If you spent any time with her, you wouldn't know she had two nickels to rub to-

1980 summed up the fast-

Joan Kroc was largely in

the background after her husband saved the Padres from moving to Washington D.C., with his 1974 purchase, although she infamously offered shortstop Ozzie Smith, strapped for cash and looking to supplement his \$72,500 salary, a gardening job at her La Jolla home when he took out a want ad after the Padres declined his request for a raise.

After Ray's death in January 1984, Joan Kroc inherited the Padres months before their first World Series berth — and took on a more visible role. She threw out the first pitch before their first home playoff game, not long after showing up to a party at Goose Gossage's house in Tierrasanta to celebrate their division title.

"God, it was a lot of fun," former Padres broadcaster Bob Chandler recalled. "The booze flowed and people started getting thrown in Gossage's pool. So now Joan

Kroc shows up. She's wearing a gown that probably was worth more than the house. You could tell it was really nice. Eventually they made a move toward Joan to throw her in the pool and she puts up her hands and says, Nope, nope.

"So everybody stops and then she just jumps into the pool herself."

It was, of course, no laughing matter two years later when Gossage miffed at a clubhouse alcohol ban as part of Operation Cork (a program for families of alcoholics), as well as the direction of the team — said son-in-law and team President Ballard Smith was 'gutless and spineless" and was "just listening to what Mom says." As for Kroc, she was poisoning the world with her hamburgers."

Gossage stood to lose \$140,000 during an ensuing suspension. He avoided that pricev punishment by donating \$25,000 to Kroc's beMcDonald House charity and making amends with Smith, Kroc and, of course, McDonald's. The drama — two work stoppages, drug suspen-

sions for Alan Wiggins and LaMarr Hoyt, rising player salaries and a merry-goround of personnel changes had weighed on Kroc when she first put the team up for sale in 1987. An initial deal with George Argyros, owner of the Seattle Mariners, fell through. Players understood where Kroc was coming from when a deal to sell the team to Werner's group for \$75 million was finally announced on April 2, "Obviously, she was fed

up; she'd had enough," future Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn — who had also squabbled with Kroc over his contract — told the San Diego Tribune at the time of the announcement. "We've had some weird things hap-

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