

Rams fans mourn end-of-season loss

ST. LOUIS (AP) — There was supposed to be a parade here Monday.

The route and schedule were planned. The Rams' colors were draped across the region, on buildings, cars and people. Even Busch Stadium, the home of the Cardinals in what is supposed to be a baseball town, had switched its spotlighted archways over to alternating blue and gold.

The hometown Post-Dispatch summed it up with a front page, banner headline: "HEARTBREAKER." And there was no parade.

So, even beyond the hangovers, it's understandable if Rams fans were feeling a bit ill. For serious fans, few events in life are as stressful as when your team unexpectedly ends its season with a loss.

The amount of discomfort depends largely on the amount of emotional investment leading up to the Super Bowl, said Dr. Richard Wetzel, a medical psychologist at Washington University in St. Louis.

"Obviously, how stressful this is depends on what it means to people," he said. It's especially unpleasant for those who "have been pumping up their identity and sense of self worth — 'I'm a Rams fan and we're the best in the country.'"

On the other hand, those who only casually follow sports, or disdain them altogether, avoid that stress. Those people may scoff, and rightly so. Certainly there are more important things in life. But to an avid sports fan, which after all is short for fanatic, it can be hard to put things in perspective.

Especially if you talk too much.

Those overconfident of victory — the Rams were 14-point favorites, weren't they? — are eating crow at the office this week.

"How stressful also depends on, and I hope you can put this tactfully, depends on how big your mouth is," said Wetzel, who added that he was "mortified" Monday. "Because the Rams lost and I was vocal about it."

Karl Marx said religion was the opiate of the masses, and Russell Baker of the New York Times borrowed that phrase in 1967 and applied it to sports.

In St. Louis, for better or worse, that opiate offers a shared identity like nothing else — maybe even during the withdrawal symptoms of a jarring, unexpected loss. Whether it's wearing Rams jerseys to work or talking football with strangers, the city's sports teams can be a way to bridge social gaps.

"Racial gulfs, socio-economic gulfs, or if you're talking about the East side versus the Missouri side — all of those social divides instantly disappear," Saint Louis University sociologist Charles Marske said. "You can see that sense of community is very real."

The TV ratings back it up: Fox reports that about 81 percent of televisions being watched in St. Louis were tuned to the Super Bowl, compared to about 78 percent in Boston. Other major cities hovered between 50 and 60 percent.

"We feed off each other when there's this sort of positive effervescence," Marske said. "We feed off each other in an upward spiral. And this game kind of sends things in a downward spiral."

Freshman wins tournament

Cowboys Freshman Chad Normandin placed first in the 103-pound weight class at a 9-10 wrestling tournament on Saturday in Goodland.

Normandin won both of his matches at the tournament, held at the Max Jones Fieldhouse.

Sophomore Mike Zimmerman, 140 pounds, placed second, winning two of three matches, and sophomores Korey Schulte, 125, and Michael Middleton, 145, both took third. Schulte had a 2-1 record and Middleton 1-1.



Normandin

Freshman Brandon Cowan took fourth in the 152-pound weight class, winning two of four matches.

Brett Jarmin, another 152-pound freshman, strained his back during his first match and couldn't complete the rest of the tournament.

Sophomore Brock Whitmore, 112, finished with a 1-2 record; freshman Ray Brigham finished 112, 0-2; and freshman Tray Klinge, 125, 0-2.

Mustang girls run over Burlington

The seventh grade Grant Junior High girls beat the Burlington basketball team 50-16 Tuesday in the junior high gym at Max Jones Fieldhouse.

Dani Bedore led all scorers with 14 points, three rebounds, two steals, one block and one assist. Whitney Archer had 11 points, three rebounds, six steals, no blocks and no assists.

Amber Cowan had 8, 3, 2, 0, 0; Kaylee Billinger 6, 2, 4, 1, 0; Emily Murray 5, 5, 4, 0, 1; Jenna McCall 2, 5, 0, 1, 0; Lindsay Shields 2, 1, 2, 0, 1; Nicolette Clancy 2, 1, 1, 0, 1; Alicia Studor 0, 1, 4, 1, 0; and Stephanie Sheldon 0, 1, 1, 0, 0.

In the "B" game, the Grant Mustangs

slaughtered Burlington 21-4.

Nicole David led scoring for both teams with eight points, four rebounds, two steals, two blocks and three assists.

She scored four more points than the entire other team.

Tanae Garrett had 4, 3, 2, 1, 0; Candice Meissinger 4, 0, 1, 0, 1; Chariss Tatman 2, 1, 5, 1, 1; Kerri Bellamy 2, 0, 3, 2, 1; Valerie Macias 1, 1, 1, 0, 0; Sandy Johnson 0, 1, 2, 0, 0; Brooke Whitmore 0, 1, 2, 0, 0; Vanessa Crotinger 0, 0, 2, 0, 0; Ashley Cebula 0, 0, 1, 1, 0; Sheldon 0, 0, 1, 0, 0; Emily Linden 0, 0, 1, 0, 0; Amber Webster, Tiffany Bennett and Hannah Burkett participated.

Trying to help the team



Max Saint, 145 pounds, got on top of his opponent last month at the Northwest Kansas League Tournament. Saint finished 1-2, and Goodland won the tournament with 140 points.
Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

Jayhawks' recruiting got late start

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — With just two months to recruit after being named Kansas' football coach, Mark Mangino had no time to waste.

"We basically started from scratch," Mangino said Wednesday at a news conference to announce his first recruiting class. "The first week I was in here, my staff and I got together and watched videotape from about eight in the morning until 11 or 12 at night."

Speed was at the top of the Jayhawks' shopping list.

"The other programs I've been with in the Big 12, we've won because we could run," said Mangino, who was an assistant at Oklahoma and an assistant at Kansas State before taking over for the fired Terry Allen in December. "We had guys who could run on both sides of the ball."

Mangino's first recruiting class at Kansas includes three quarterbacks, five offensive linemen and five wide receivers — but none of the defensive tackles Mangino had hoped to land.

"You get a guy who's big and can run, you put him on defense. You get a guy who can't run as well, you put him

on offense," Mangino said. "Everybody wants those big guys who can run."

The Jayhawks are solid at the position through the upcoming season, he said, and still are talking to two prospects who didn't sign on Wednesday.

Quarterback Bill Whittemore, who threw for 2,444 yards and 16 touchdowns and ran for another six scores in his only season at Fort Scott Community College, is among the four junior college transfers signed by Mangino.

As a redshirt freshman in 2000 at Division I-AA Tennessee-Martin, Whittemore threw for 282 yards and one score with four interceptions before injuring his knee.

"The things I like about him are his gutsy play, his pocket presence and his competitive nature," Mangino said. "I talked to every head coach in the Jayhawk Conference about Bill Whittemore. Every one of them said he was a difference maker, that their defensive game plans were geared toward stopping him."

The 6-foot-1, 190-pound Whittemore, who has enrolled at Kansas,

picked the school over New Mexico and Middle Tennessee State even though he never visited Lawrence.

"I did as much research on Coach Mangino as I could," he said — including a telephone call to former Oklahoma quarterback Josh Heupel, who led the Sooners to the national championship after the 2000 season.

"We talked for 30 or 40 minutes," Whittemore said. "Josh had nothing but great things to say."

Whittemore underwent offseason surgery after separating his throwing shoulder in Fort Scott's final regular-season game. He is expected to take part fully in spring drills, Mangino said.

Kansas' other juco transfers are offensive lineman Tony Coker of Hutchinson Community College and two defensive ends from California schools: Reggie Curry of Moorpark Community College and Cory Kipp from Riverside Community College.

Coker signed with Kansas out of Hoisington High School and redshirted a year before transferring to Hutchinson.

sports briefs

HOUSTON (AP) — Enron Corp. is willing to consider a buyout to remove its name from the Houston Astros' 2-year-old retractable roof stadium, but the team's owner believes the energy company has it backward.

Astros owner Drayton McLane said Enron owes them for 27 years left on its contract.

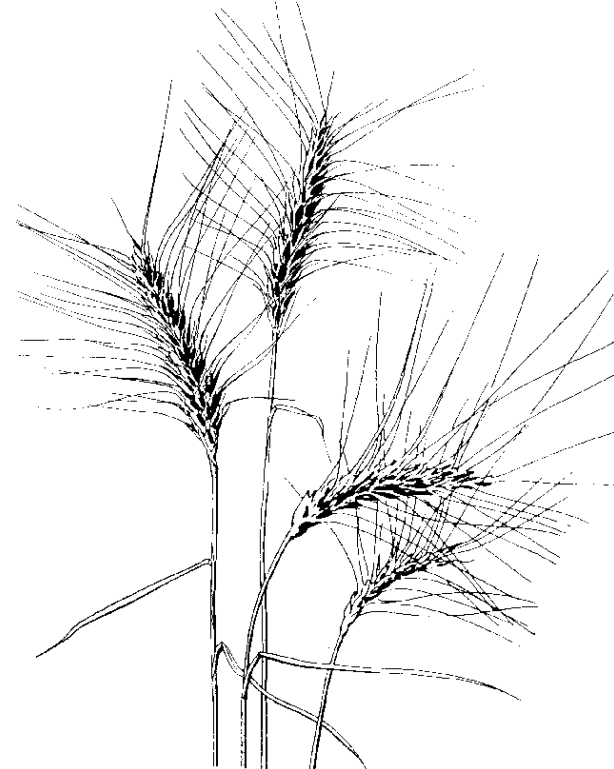
SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The tattered American flag recovered from the rubble at ground zero will be carried at the Winter Olympics' opening ceremony Friday night.

A group of U.S. athletes, New York City firefighters and Port Authority police will be allowed to take the flag into the ceremony in a "solemn, dignified entrance," the International Olympic Committee said, reversing an earlier decision against the plan.

NEW YORK (AP) — The Association of Boxing Commissions is recommending that other states follow Nevada by denying Mike Tyson a boxing license.

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