

SPORTS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2020 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



Photographs by WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

AFTER A WORKOUT for his Feb. 22 fight against Deontay Wilder, Tyson Fury opened up about mental health. “When you’re battling in your own mind, that’s the hardest fight anyone can ever have,” he said.

TAPPING INTO HIS HEALING POWER

Depression and anxiety threatened Fury’s life, but the heavyweight recovered through his true solace — training

BY MANOUK AKOPYAN

LAS VEGAS — Tyson Fury has proved to be enigmatic and complicated, but he also rarely hesitates to speak about sensitive topics. He’s a boxer who pulls no punches.

For example, one day last week, he tells visitors he has been depressed since the minute he woke at 6 a.m.

Exactly why his mood swings as violently as his fists he can’t quite explain. He is surrounded by friends, family and comfort, yet it wasn’t until a training run three hours after he woke that Fury felt fine again.

The 31-year-old certainly looks relaxed now. He has chosen to give a scheduled interview while soaking in his backyard hot tub, his arms stretched back, elbows resting on a ledge.

On Feb. 22 at MGM Grand on the Las Vegas Strip, the unbeaten heavyweight will meet Deontay Wilder in a rematch of their controversial split draw Dec. 1, 2018, at Staples Center. The fight will take place about 10 miles from where he’s sitting, before a sold-out crowd and huge pay-per-view audience. But rather than discussing Wilder, the conversation turns toward [See Fury, D7]



TYSON FURY, left, running with his team, lost 150 pounds in his comeback and now weighs slightly more than 250 pounds.

A margin for era in scoring chase

Jordan is a fan of James, who is poised to overtake Bryant for third all-time.

BY TANIA GANGULI

PHILADELPHIA — The instinct is powerful in many sports discussions.

If a player from one era faced a player from another, who would win? Does record-setting and record-breaking mean a consistent upward trend in sports? Can an athlete’s transcendence be measured by how many points they have accounted for during their career?

That’s the question that naturally follows milestones, and one that surfaced Friday in Paris when Michael Jordan, whose Charlotte Hornets played the Milwaukee Bucks there, was asked about LeBron James.

“I know it’s a natural tendency to compare eras to eras, and it’s going to continue to happen,” Jordan said. “I’m a fan of his. I love watching him play. ... I think he’s made his mark. He will continue to do so over a period of time, but when you start the comparisons, I think it is what it is.”

The urge to compare eras has resurfaced this week when James approached [See Lakers, D4]

He puts triples in triple-double



LYNNE SLADKY Associated Press

MONTREZL HARRELL, driving by Miami’s Tyler Herro (14) and Derrick Jones Jr., helped the Clippers overcome an early deficit and take control after halftime.

Ex-coach points finger at UCLA

Salcedo, charged in admissions scandal, says school admitted athletes for money.

BY NATHAN FENNO

Jorge Salcedo, the former UCLA men’s soccer coach charged in the college admissions scandal, accused the school of using athlete admissions “as a vehicle to raise funds” in a motion filed by his attorneys in U.S. District Court in Boston.

The motion filed late Thursday seeks authorization to subpoena a wide variety of documents from UCLA and the University of California.

“UCLA’s own internal documents reveal that, for many years, its Athletic Department has facilitated the admission of unqualified applicants — students who do not meet UCLA’s rigorous academic or athletics standards — through the student-athlete admissions process

in exchange for huge ‘donations’ by the students’ wealthy parents,” the motion said.

“These documents, which UCLA did not disclose to the government before this prosecution, tell a compelling behind-the-scenes story, one that undermines the Superseding Indictment’s narrative by definitely proving that UCLA is not a victim of a fraud scheme,” it said.

The motion alleged, as well, that UCLA has admitted nonathletes as sports recruits to help boost team grade-point averages. No names or other specifics were provided.

Salcedo resigned in March after being arrested by FBI agents as part of the nationwide investigation into fraudulent college admissions dubbed “Varsity Blues.” Prosecutors alleged the longtime coach accepted \$200,000 in bribes from William “Rick” Singer, the scheme’s admitted mastermind, to facilitate the [See UCLA, D6]

Palmer looks like Arnie with a 62

With little fanfare (and few fans), he charges into the lead. Woods is six back.

BY TOD LEONARD

SAN DIEGO — In the renovation of the Torrey Pines North Course a few years ago, a nice addition was a mound behind the 18th green that provides a stadium effect for spectators.

Fans took advantage of it in the first round of the Farmers Insurance Open when the big galleries following Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy arrived. There were no periscopes or foot stools required.

Late Friday in the second round, with thousands on the property traipsing around the South Course, half a dozen people lounged, some in full repose, on that same bank, as if they were

Leaderboard

FARMERS INSURANCE OPEN

Torrey Pines Golf Course
San Diego
North: Par 72 | 7,258 yards
South: Par 72 | 7,765 yards

	1st	2nd	
Palmer	72	62	-10
Snedeker	69	67	-8
Holmes	68	69	-7
Vegas	69	68	-7
Cappelen	66	71	-7
NeSmith	67	70	-7

having a picnic on a gorgeous January afternoon.

With Ryan Palmer scorching the North and playing his final hole, tournament history was in the balance, and the 43-year-old Texan was still competing for a sliver of attention as Woods played out his back nine on the South.

[See Golf, D5]

NHL lets women show their talent

During All-Star event, league smartly featured a game between top female players, Helene Elliott writes. **D3**

Dodgers a big hit at pep rally

Twenty-one players appear at Saugus High to lift spirits following tragic school shooting in November. **D8**

THE DAY IN SPORTS

USC’s defensive coordinator hire is official

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

USC has officially found the new face of its defense.

Todd Orlando was announced as USC’s defensive coordinator Friday, ending a lengthy search for **Clancy Pendergast’s** replacement that had dragged into its fourth week.

“We are excited to have Todd join our Trojan football program,” USC coach **Clay Helton** said in a release. “He is an experienced and successful defensive coordinator who has made an impact everywhere he has coached.”

Orlando, 48, spent the last three seasons as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Texas, where he was one of the highest paid assistants in college football. But after successfully rebuilding the Texas defense in his first season, the Longhorns experienced a sharp defensive downturn in 2019. Texas finished 7-5 under Orlando, who was fired as in a staff overhaul.

The Trojans considered other candidates before settling on Orlando, even getting as far as discussing parameters of a potential contract with Rams linebackers coach **Joe Barry**. But Barry and USC opted not to continue their discussions, and Orlando became the leading candidate.

— RYAN KARTJE

Louisiana State coach **Ed Orgeron** has agreed to a new

contract extension worth more than \$7 million annually and which runs through the 2026 season, the university announced.

UCLA’s thinning tight end ranks were further depleted when redshirt junior **Jordan Wilson** announced on Twitter that he was departing via the transfer portal as a graduate transfer.

Wilson becomes the third tight end to leave the team since the end of the last season, joining **Devin Asiasi** and **Matt Lynch**.

— BEN BOLCH

PRO FOOTBALL
Saints to fight abuse case claim

The New Orleans Saints are going to court to keep the public from seeing hundreds of emails that allegedly show team executives doing public relations damage control for the area’s Roman Catholic archdiocese to help it contain the fallout from a burgeoning sexual abuse crisis.

Attorneys for about two dozen men suing the church say in court filings that the 276 documents they obtained through discovery show that the NFL team, whose owner is devoutly Catholic, aided the Archdiocese of New Orleans in its “pattern and practice of concealing its crimes.”

The Saints organization and its attorneys emphati-



ELSA GARRISON Getty Images

A GIANT GOODBYE

Eli Manning of the New York Giants formally announces his retirement in East Rutherford, N.J., after 16 seasons and two Super Bowl MVP awards.

cally disputed any suggestion that the team helped the church cover up crimes. In a statement, the Saints said the archdiocese sought its advice on how to handle media attention that would come from its 2018 release of its list of more than 50 clergy members “credibly accused” of sexual abuse.

The Rams coaching staff continues to churn with **Jedd Fisch**, senior offensive assistant, joining the New England Patriots, people with knowledge of the situation said.

Fisch joined Rams coach **Sean McVay’s** staff in 2018 af-

ter serving as UCLA’s offensive coordinator in 2017.

Fisch was offensive coordinator for the Jacksonville Jaguars and also has coached with the Houston Texans, Baltimore Ravens, Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks.

He is the fourth assistant from the 2019 Rams staff who will not be with the team in 2020.

Defensive coordinator **Wade Phillips** and running backs coach **Skip Peete** were not retained. Special teams coordinator **John Fassel** and Peete joined the Dallas Cowboys staff.

— GARY KLEIN

NFL free agent **Antonio Brown** was released on bail after a night in a Florida jail, where he turned himself in to face charges that he and his trainer attacked the driver of a moving truck that carried some of his possessions from California.

ETC.

Ex-Astro says sorry for scheme

Dallas Keuchel has become the first member of the 2017 Houston Astros to offer a public apology for the team’s sign-stealing scheme during their run to the World Series championship.

“I’m not going to go into specific detail, but during the course of the playoffs in ’17, everybody was using multiple signs,” said Keuchel at a fan convention for his new team, the Chicago White Sox. “I mean, for factual purposes, when there’s nobody on base, when in the history of major league baseball has there been multiple signs?”

“It’s just what the state of baseball was at that point and time. Was it against the rules? Yes it was, and I personally am sorry for what’s come about, the whole situation.”

The Golden State Warriors were working to finalize a trade to send center **Willie Cauley-Stein** to the Dallas Mavericks for a second-

round draft pick this summer, a person with direct knowledge of the trade discussions confirmed to Associated Press.

Mikaela Shiffrin mastered a tricky course to win a women’s World Cup downhill for her fifth victory of the season, in Bansko, Bulgaria.

After her unceremonious release from the UFC, **Cris Cyborg** will make her Bellator debut Saturday at the Forum when she takes on **Julia Budd** for the fight promotion’s women’s featherweight title.

Cyborg (21-2) is previously a titleholder in the UFC, Strikeforce and Invicta promotions. Her only blemish in the UFC cage came against **Amanda Nunes** in 2018 when Cyborg was beaten in 51 seconds.

Cyborg will have her hands full with the 36-year-old Budd (13-2), a Canadian kickboxer who hasn’t lost since 2011, with her only career defeats coming to Nunes and **Ronda Rousey**.

— MANOUK AKOPYAN

Madelene Sagstrom birdied seven of the first nine holes and shot a 10-under 62 to take the second-round lead in the Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio in Boca Raton, Fla. Sagstrom has a one-stroke lead over **Carlota Ciganda**. ... **Eddie Pepperell** shot five-under 67 to take the lead at the Dubai Desert Classic in the United Arab Emirates.

Fury can be controversial but has become relatable

[**Fury**, from D1] another opponent, one that has knocked down Fury and beaten him more than once. Mental health issues.

During a stretch from 2015 through 2018, Fury was a shadow of himself because of his addictive personality. Shortly after reaching the climax of his career in 2015 by upsetting long-reigning heavyweight king Wladimir Klitschko for multiple world titles, the British-born boxer who’d climbed his personal Mt. Everest quickly collapsed. He was battling daily thoughts of suicide even when he had nothing to be upset about.

With a career-defining win in his back pocket, Fury felt he had no purpose left in life. There was nothing else for him to dominate or destroy. He melted mentally and folded when a path for greatness was there for seizing.

To battle his anxiety and depression, he abused alcohol and cocaine and ballooned to over 400 pounds. His binges were disastrous and crazy. He gained so much weight that he couldn’t even tie his shoes. Thinking he had nothing else to offer, the married father of five drove his Ferrari 190 mph one day toward a bridge to end his life. But he heard a voice that told him to stop. He pulled over, shaking and crying. He promised himself he’d never think about taking his life again.

“Depression, anxiety, mental health issues — I’ve had them my whole life, and probably will do until the day I die,” Fury said. “When you’ve achieved your goals, then mental health will really come into play because you don’t have anything to focus on anymore. For a long time, I wanted to die on a daily basis. Mental [illness] will bring you to your knees. Boxing and training brought me back.”

Fury felt that if he was ever going to heal, he had to get fit first — not to fight, but for his own health and sanity. Fury didn’t box until he was 16 years old, but he was a gym rat alongside his brothers and cousins. He realized that training was, and still is today, his medicine, his therapy, his refuge.

Fury, who is 29-0-1 with 20 knockouts and that one disputed draw against Wilder, pieced his life back together, losing nearly 150 pounds to resume his career in 2018.

Fury was born to Irish travelers of Roma, also known as Gypsy, heritage, eight weeks premature and all of 1 pound at birth. John Fury, a heavyweight boxer in the 1980s, named his son after his favorite fighter — Mike Tyson. The doctor advised the name was not a wise decision because he didn’t believe the infant would become a big man. Fury stands today 6 feet 9. He’s reduced his weight to just over 250 pounds, and credits his 27-year-old former



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

ALTHOUGH HE WAS FELLED twice in a 2018 draw, Tyson Fury, in the black cap during a workout, said he can take and deliver big blows in his rematch with fellow unbeaten Deontay Wilder in Las Vegas.

trainer, Ben Davison.

“When you’re battling in your own mind, that’s the hardest fight anyone can ever have,” Fury said. “Boxing to me is like being a fish in the water. I was born to do it. I have no other interests or hobbies outside of boxing.”

After two tuneup bouts in the summer of 2018, Fury faced Wilder, the WBC champion, that December and mostly outboxed the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, landing 84 punches to Wilder’s 71. He succumbed, however, to Wilder’s devastating right hand twice and suffered two knockdowns, including a vicious one in the 12th round.

But much like he’d done in his personal life, Fury unexpectedly rose and continued fighting to the final bell. Many observers believed he should have won by decision, but more importantly, he resuscitated his standing in the sport.

Fury will again meet Wilder (42-0-1, 41 KOs) next month, hoping to settle the score away from the judges’ cards with a definitive knockout.

“I’m not worried about the fight. It’s just another boxing match for me,” Fury said. “Getting punched in the face is nothing. When you’ve been to where I’ve been, I’ve been with hit harder than any man has ever punched me in his life, with mental illness. Boxing is easy compared to that.”

Since his comeback, the frank and forthright Fury has made himself a relatable fig-

ure for those fighting mental health issues. He sends uplifting and encouraging messages on social media to others suffering. On the flip side, he also understands being an entertainer, as evidenced by his outlandish antics and his recent turn as a WWE wrestler. Fury wears suits with images adorned with his own likeness. He’s nicknamed the Gypsy King but has never listened to the band’s songs. He’ll charm viewers with his gregarious personality by sticking out his tongue at opponents, and sing in the ring to his wife, Paris, after victories. Then he’ll self-destruct and turn off fans with offensive remarks about women, religion and homosexuality.

“Anything conventional ain’t for me,” Fury said. “One day I wake up in a good mood, the other I’m down and depressed. I’m starting to really understand myself now after 31 years.”

Fury’s unpredictability was displayed in December when he and Davison unexpectedly split, just days after the trainer was scouting Wilder’s most recent fight in person at the MGM Grand.

Fury reached out to former fighter, confidant and current assistant coach Andy Lee, and expressed that he was no longer satisfied with Davison. In his last fight, Fury had a harder time than anticipated when he won by decision over the unheralded Otto Wallin, yet suffered two cuts over his right eye that required 47 stitches.

After considering over a dozen coaches, Lee and Fury zeroed in on Javon “SugarHill” Steward, the nephew and disciple of the late trainer Emanuel Steward. Lee was coached his entire career by Emanuel and he believed Fury needed the renowned Kronk Gym mystique, attitude and mind-set.

Fury’s camp agreed that “SugarHill” was the authoritarian figure necessary to shape the fighter’s fiery personality and career — all while offering techniques on how to improve his power, much like Emanuel did with Thomas Hearn and Lennox Lewis during his heyday.

Fury’s relationship with the Stewards began in 2010 in Detroit at Kronk, and continued abroad in Austria and Canada. He remained friendly with the duo but never trained with them because Emanuel was coaching Klitschko, the foe he’d later overthrow.

“Emanuel and I connected like a house on fire. I liked to spend time with him. I brought on SugarHill to add a little bit more sugar to the cake,” Fury said. “I don’t think I have a missing ingredient. I’m unbeaten. I’m a finished article.”

The initial plan was for the U.K.-based Davison to remain with the team in Las Vegas and take a backseat to Steward as an assistant coach, but that idea was quickly dashed. Even though Davison had led Fury out of the dark days, the fighter said splitting with his trainer

wasn’t difficult or emotional. “Ben and I haven’t had a falling out in any way, shape or form. It’s not personal,” Fury said. “This is my business and how I earn money to provide for my family. I have to make the right decisions for me.”

Davison still engages with Fury on social media and has a collage of pictures of the fighter across his profiles with remnants of their past.

“He’s my friend, and I want to keep it respectful,” Davison said. “I’m just happy to say that everything’s all good.”

Fury has also brought on Conor McGregor’s nutritionist, George Lockhart, a former U.S. Marine. Fury is drinking eight liters of water and eating five meals a day.

“Working with George has been a real big eye-opener,” Fury said. “He’s a food guru. I’m not losing weight. I’m already where I want to be. I feel strong and fit. If that stuff means anything, it will show in this fight.”

Steward, meanwhile, is tasked with preparing Fury to back his prediction of knock-

ing out Wilder by the second round. They are avoiding punches to the head during sparring because they fear the cut could reopen and jeopardize the fight.

“The Kronk style produces knockouts,” Steward said. “We want to knock out the guy who knocks out everyone else — the biggest bully in the schoolyard — so everyone else in the division will take notice. That’s what Tyson wants, what I want, and what Emanuel would have wanted.”

Fury feels he’s always had knockout power but never applied it in big fights because he preferred to stick-and-move around opponents. This time, he wants to stand toe-to-toe in the middle of the ring and slug it out with Wilder to shun the judges altogether.

“I hope the cut [over the eye] doesn’t hold up. I hope it opens in Round 1. Make it a real blood sport,” Fury said. “I got up after his two best shots last time. When you’ve been smashed, rocked and dropped, training, family or millions of fans can’t help you.

“You have to stand up and fight for what you believe in life — for every [mentally] unwell person in the world, for the oppressed people, for all the down and outs, bums, alcoholics, drug addicts and prostitutes — everybody. I fight for those people.”

Fury will make tens of millions of dollars for his bout against Wilder, but he said the career-high payday will not change him.

He’s simply thankful for the fresh air he breathes today, and the blessing of keeping himself busy with the sweet science. What comes after retirement for Fury, a phase plenty of athletes struggle with, could perhaps prove harder to overcome than a punch any fighter swings his way.

“I hate holidays, I hate breaks, I hate festive seasons, I hate it all,” Fury said. “I’m a workaholic. I love being regimented. Some people want to get rich, retire on the beach and relax all day. I’d last about a week ... doing that sort of stuff.

“People ask me, ‘What’s after boxing?’ I really don’t know. Boxing and training is the only thing that drives me. Nothing else matters. If I can’t train anymore, that’s the day I die. I’m just being honest.”

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