

Daily

Sports

Point/Counterpoint: Did Patrick Mahomes deserve to win Super Bowl MVP?

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On Sunday, the Kansas City Chiefs defeated the San Francisco 49ers to win their first Super Bowl in 50 years, propelled by a fourth-quarter comeback where they outscored the 49ers 21-0. Quarterback Patrick Mahomes was named the game's MVP despite having one of his more shaky performances of the season, so was he really the right choice? Ashton Stansel and Jorge Eckardt debate.

Stansel:

I think Mahomes was the right choice. He definitely had a shaky start to the game, throwing two interceptions and generally failing to get his team off the ground, but that didn't matter when it was important: What mattered at the end of the game was that Mahomes took the ball in the fourth quarter and made magic happen. His offense scored 21 points in the fourth quarter, largely on the back of Mahomes, who was exceptional.

Eckardt:

The quarterback doesn't always have to win the MVP, as we saw last year with Julian Edelman after a rather uninspiring performance from Tom Brady. Yes, Mahomes was the quarterback behind the comeback, but he would not have been able to do so without the excellence of his supporting cast. The big completion to Tyreek Hill on third and long was thanks to a crispy route from Hill that got San Francisco's Jimmie Ward spinning in circles and left him wide open. The big completion to Sammy Watkins on the next



Under a shower of confetti, Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, left, responds to cheering fans with Mickey Mouse during a parade in the team's honor at the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Monday, Feb. 3, 2020.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE BURBANK, AP

drive was thanks to Watkins taking advantage of the slower Richard Sherman and beating him off the line of scrimmage. Most of all, Damien Williams was able to do something not many players have been able to do against the 49ers all season, and that's run the ball. San Francisco had given up just 41.5 yards per game in the post-

season; Williams finished the game with 104 yards all by himself. That included two touchdowns: the 38-yard touchdown rush to ice the game and one of Mahomes' two passing touchdowns. Arguments could be made for Hill or Watkins with their two big plays accompanied by overall very solid games, but Williams was the true MVP of

this game. San Francisco dared Kansas City to run the ball to try to prevent Mahomes from beating them, and Williams did a great job of making them pay.

Stansel:

While the plays and routes from receivers like Hill and Watkins were impressive, a lesser quarterback wouldn't have been able to pull them

off. Mahomes came back from a very rough first three quarters and threw good footballs for good plays to good receivers. Given that you can't give the MVP to the whole offense, it seems fitting that Mahomes, who was the centerpiece, receive it. Hill, Watkins and Williams were good all game, but that didn't stop their team from being significantly down in the fourth quarter. And while their routes were good, it was the throws that made the plays happen. What did turn that game around and cause a victory for the Chiefs was Mahomes' resurgence. He was what turned the game around and created openings for the Chiefs to win.

Eckardt:

Mahomes' errors earlier in the game can't be ignored. He threw an absolute duck to Fred Warner about two-thirds of the way through the third quarter and then another pick on a pass that was thrown well behind Hill, causing it to go off his hands and into the hands of Tavarious Moore early in the fourth. The first pick led to seven San Francisco points, and the second one took what would have most likely been three points off the board, seeing as they were already in field goal range. He also fumbled the ball twice, but he was just lucky enough to fall on one and have the other go out of bounds. Mahomes just didn't have a typical Mahomes day. Did he make it work? Yes, but his success was because of the excellent play of the people around him, not the other way around. Mahomes is still the best quarterback in the league, but the credit for Sunday should go to his supporting cast.

Column: Best and worst January transfer in the Premier League

by David Sandoval
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This January was a quiet — some would even say disappointing — transfer window in the Premier League. That isn't to say however there weren't notable transfers that went under the radar. Today, I'll go over what I believe was the best and worst transfer from in and out of England.

Best: Bruno Fernandes (Sporting CP to Manchester United)

I hate to admit it, but United actually had a pretty decent transfer window — mainly because of their purchase of Bruno Fernandes, but I digress.

Fernandes essentially saved United's transfer window, and for good reason: He's incredibly good. Many fans saw how he was performing at Sporting CP, and from his long shots that end up going to the back of the net to his skills on the ball, it's clear why other English clubs wanted him.

While there were rumors of the Portuguese midfielder joining other Premier League clubs like Tottenham Hotspur last transfer window, he ended up signing for the Red Devils for \$60.5 million. Even though he's only



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes controls the ball, during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton Wanderers, at Old Trafford, in Manchester, England, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020. PHOTO BY MARTIN RICKETT, PA VIA AP

played one game under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, I think he'll adapt to the league and will be a key player for Manchester United.

All I will say is, Sporting

have given players to United that end up being legends at Old Trafford: Nani and Cris-

tiano Ronaldo, for example. Will history repeat itself? Only time, and Ole's questionable tactics, will tell.

Worst: Chelsea FC (spoiler alert, they didn't sign anyone)

See CHELSEA, p. 10

League of Legends rundown

by Ashton Stansel
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LPL delayed

The LPL, China's League of Legends League, which was meant to be restarting on Feb. 5, has been delayed due to the coronavirus outbreak in China. The official LPL English Twitter account tweeted out last week, "We have decided to postpone Week 2 of the LPL until we can ensure the safety and health of our players and fans." No more news has come through in the last week on the questions of what this delay will do to the international schedule, especially since Worlds is supposed to be in China this year.

LCK to start on time

Many were concerned that the LCK, Korea's League of Legends League, would also be postponed. Thankfully, that isn't the case; Riot Korea has announced that LCK will be starting on Feb. 5 as planned. However, until further notice, the matches will be played without an audience due to the risks of coronavirus.

G2 continues dominance, Origen and Fnatic fight for second

Despite only getting second

place at Worlds last year, G2 Esports hasn't slowed down. A surprise offseason move that sent Perkz back to midlane and Caps to bot lane seems to be working so far,

and G2's victory over Origen only solidifies their place at the top of the leaderboard in Europe. Fnatic and Origen are battling for second place, though Origen did win their matchup this week. If Fnatic can claim a win versus G2 this week, they'll be solidly back in the conversation, but for now, it seems like Origen, on the backs of Upset and Nukeduck, might get their wish of being the team that gets to challenge G2.

Cloud9 and Dignitas won the offseason

Coming into the season, many people questioned the decisions made by Cloud9 and Dignitas. Cloud9 replaced their botlaner Sneaky, who had been with the team since 2013, with TSM's Zven, and sold MVP jungler Svenskeren and support Zeyzal. To replace them, they promoted Blaber, their academy jungler who had previously subbed in for some games, to full-time jungler and bought talented support Vulcan from Dignitas in a deal that reportedly cost over a million dollars, according to an ESPN report at that time.

Despite concern from fans, Cloud9 has started the season

with a strong statement, going 4-0 in their first two weeks including a win against four-time champions Team Liquid.

See LEAGUE, p. 10

THIS WEEKEND IN UCONN SPORTS

Women's Basketball



vs.

56 vs. 74

vs.

Hey Seanny J: What were the best Super Bowl commercials?

by Sean Janos
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Maybe you used the breaks in action to use the bathroom, get more food or scroll social media for buzz around the game. For whatever reason, you may have missed a portion of those classic Super Bowl commercials your friends will talk about for the next week or so. As someone who was glued to his seat the entire time, I will filter out all of the duds and just give you the highlights from Sunday evening. Here are the top 10:

The Tide Trilogy

Charlie Day, best known as lovable idiot Charlie Kelly in "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," starred in three commercials that aired periodically throughout the big game. The commercial started with Charlie's friend Emily Hampshire accidentally rubbing a stain on Charlie's shirt. Charlie wanted to take care of the stain immediately, but couldn't because the game was on. This ironically could've been solved with Tide to Go, but whatever. During the second quarter, he traveled back in time, where he got ridiculed by the Bud Light Knight. Then in the fourth, as an old man and finally with a clean shirt, he ran into his old friend Emily who went to congratulate Charlie with a pat on the shoulder. And guess what ... she stains his jacket. Classic!



Post Malone trashes a gas station

In this one, Post Malone goes to the gas station for a cold, refreshing brew. It probably isn't uncommon to run into your favorite rapper at the gas station refrigerator. Anyway, the new product Bud Light Seltzer catches his eye, and the well-dressed, yet hilariously tattooed people in his brain controlling his actions decide to try it. You know, because it's totally acceptable to crack open a gas station beer and drink before paying for it. His taste buds love it, and the two people in control of the big movement lever fight over whether to get the seltzer or classic Bud Light, which results in Malone flinging his body all over the gas station, knocking down shelves and effectively destroying the place. That's when another person in his brain points out that Post is rich and hits the "Get Both" button that the only the extremely wealthy must have.



Bryan Cranston does the Dew

Personally, I thought this one was hilarious. The only alternative is to think it's super weird. Cranston parodies the iconic "Here's Johnny" scene from "The Shining," but while pushing Mountain Dew Zero Sugar on Wendy. When Wendy accepts the soda through the busted bathroom door, Cranston gives a hilarious smile and nod reminiscent of his days as Hal in Malcolm in the Middle. The commercial ends with quick cuts of Mountain Dew flooding the halls of the Overlook Hotel and Cranston's face on the twin girls. Disturbing, yet jarringly funny.



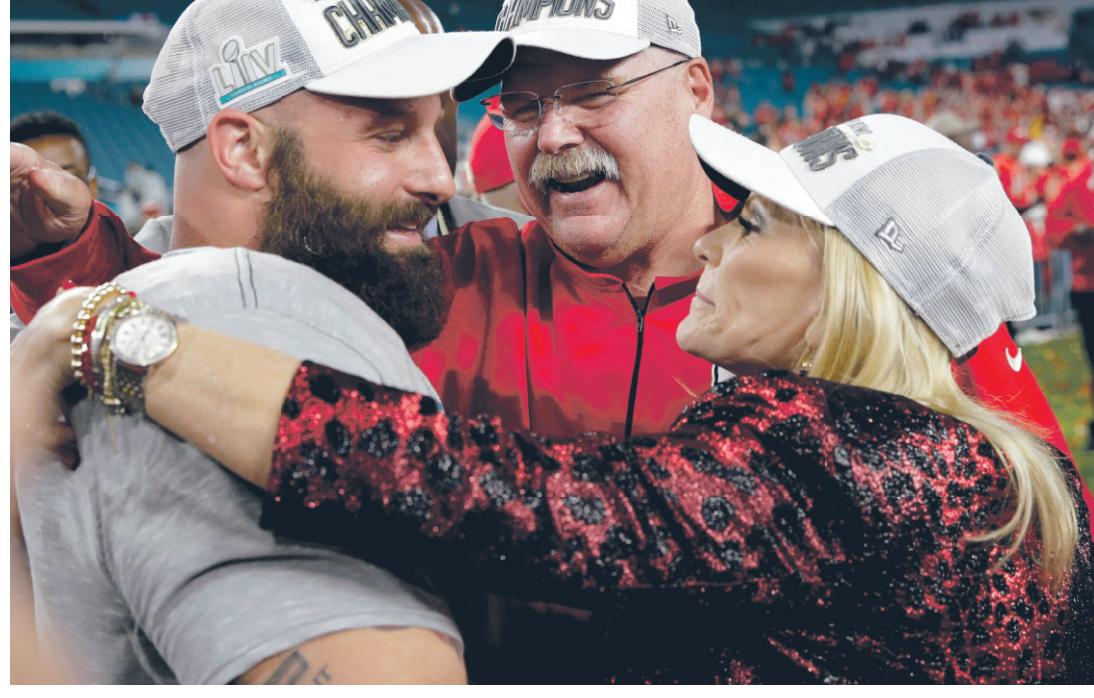
Remember Loretta

Google decided to switch gears from the typical humor or excitement that Super Bowl commercials usually try to invoke and went straight for the heart. All jokes aside, this one was a tear-jerker. An elderly man, seemingly with impaired memory, is typing and speaking to Google asking about faded memories he has of his late wife Loretta. Old photos of man and woman throughout the years fade onto and away from the screen, as the man remembers things like how Loretta laughed and the things she loved. Not many companies can execute the emotional route, but Google did it well.



Turbo Tax dance

I think this has to be the most underrated commercial of the night. This one played all of the greatest hits in terms of what makes a commercial stick in your head in the weeks to come, and with perfect timing. It had the super catchy song, the goofy yet simple dance to go with it and perhaps the most genius part of all, it came just over a week after we all got out W-2s for tax season. Now sing it with me, "All people are tax people!"



Kansas City Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, center, celebrates with wife Tammy, right, and former UConn fullback Anthony Sherman after Super Bowl 54 against the San Francisco 49ers, Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020, in Miami Gardens, Fla. The Chiefs won 31-20. PHOTO BY PATRICK SEMANSKY, AP

"Smaht Pahk"

If Boston sports rub you the wrong way, or you think Boston accents are annoying, this one isn't for you. Various famous Boston celebrities such as Chris Evans, John Krasinski, Rachel Dratch and David Ortiz do their best, most obnoxious Boston accents while talking about a Hyundai Sonata's new Smart Park feature. Of course, they abandon the use of the letter "r." John brags about all of the different "pahts" of Boston that he was able to "pahk his cah" using this feature. Big Papi calls this "wicked smaht."



Tom Brady has live sports

We're staying in Boston for this one. In case you missed it, Thursday night Brady dropped a cryptic photo of him walking through a dark Gillette Stadium tunnel. Football fans, especially those who root for and against the Patriots, spent the days leading up to Sunday speculating. Is he retiring? Is he staying? Will he sign somewhere else? Saturday, he leaked that we will find out during the Super Bowl, because of course every Super Bowl has to be about Tom freaking Brady. As it turns out, this was just an elaborate ploy to let us know that Hulu doesn't just have live sports, but they have all sorts of other crap, too. I wonder how big the Brink's truck Hulu "pahked" outside Brady's house for this one was.



RIP Mr Peanut

Babies are hot in the streets right now. With the insane popularity of Disney's Baby Yoda, I anticipate brands will all want to get on board the baby train. Planters did so in a big way, by reporting that Mr. Peanut has died, and that his funeral will be a Super Bowl commercial. At the funeral, the Kool Aid man shed a tear (that wasn't even red) on to Mr. Peanut's grave, which created a peanut plant and spawned none other than Baby Nut. This adolescent legume then made dolphin noises for some reason because saying in an adult voice, "Just kidding, I'm back," and the hashtag #BabyNut appeared on screen. I really didn't like the commercial until I saw this absurd hashtag. Now I'm on board, baby (nut).



Old Town dance off

Speaking of trendy, does it get any more trendy than Lil Nas X and "Old Town Road?" It's no surprise that Doritos, who consistently pumps out fire Super Bowl advertising every February, got the hottest song of 2019. In this, Lil Nas rides into a wild west town called "Cool Ranch" for what seemed like a duel with Sam Elliot. The music from "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" then turns into "Old Town Road," and the two have a dance off. It appeared that Nas X won for a nice little dance move he did with his horse, while Elliot's horse refused to dance. However, I think Elliot won with his mustache wave.



Jason Momoa gets comfortable

This one was the best. Ask literally anyone. Rocket Mortgage burst onto the scene with one of the funniest commercials I've ever seen. Notable jacked guy Jason Momoa gets home from a long day of ... well I assume moving worlds, and says home is the one place he can let his guard down. He then proceeds to remove the boots that add six inches, the muscles that qualified him to be Aquaman and his luscious locks. The commercial humorously ends with Momoa struggling to bench press the bar, pathetically screaming for his spotter to "take it, take it, take it!" The ad hilariously humanized the real-life superhero, but I have to admit, I'm still not quite sure what Rocket Mortgage actually does.

Photo of the Day | Up high!



UConn senior Crystal Dangerfield (middle) and freshman Aubrey Griffin (right) high five while junior Megan Walker (left) claps during Monday's women's basketball game versus the Oregon Ducks. The Huskies lost to the ducks 74-56, with Dangerfield, Walker and Griffin scoring 19, eight and three points respectively.

PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE LAO, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Premier League transfer window winners and losers

CHELSEA, cont. from p. 12

The fact that Chelsea's transfer ban was lifted and they didn't make a single signing is shocking, and will likely hurt the club in terms of where they'll stand in the Premier League table. For those unaware, Chelsea were originally banned from the 2019 summer and January windows for signing players under the age of 18.

Lampard's Chelsea were in dire need of a striker this window, as they wanted a replacement for 33-year-old Olivier Giroud. Despite rumors of them getting Edinson Cavani or Dries Mertens, they were not able to get anyone, which meant they could not sell Giroud.

This can be detrimental simply because of how young Lampard's squad is. Because of their ban, Lampard had to resort to Chelsea's youth players. That isn't to say Chelsea have a poor youth system — just take a look at Tammy Abraham and Mason Mount, for instance.

As they currently sit in fourth with 41 points, they are treading water for Champions League qualification as Tottenham Hotspur sit below them with 37



Tottenham's manager Jose Mourinho reacts during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Norwich City at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, England, Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2020.

PHOTO BY MATT DUNHAM, AP

points. The Blues play their next Premier League match against Manchester United on Feb. 17, and should they lose before their London derby against the Lilywhites they could maintain fifth place and go back to the Europa League.

Honorable Mention: Steven Bergwijn (PSV to Tottenham Hotspur)

I know this may seem a bit biased, but if you knew the kind of player Steven Bergwijn was like at PSV, then you knew it was imminent that he would make an

impact for Tottenham, and at the time of writing he already has.

There isn't much to say about the Dutch player since he's only played one game, but after their 2-0 victory against Manchester City, Bergwijn said fans haven't yet seen what he can truly produce. As a Spurs fan, that has me excited since I've seen his performance from PSV highlights and because of the possible chemistry on the field with him and other new Spurs signings: Giovani Lo Celso, Tanguy Ndombélé and,

hopefully soon, Ryan Sessegnon.

Jose "The Special One" Mourinho is starting to show his magic.

As clubs throughout the rest of the season will look at who to bring in the summer, they will have the power to change how the future transfer windows will function.

On Thursday, Premier League clubs will have a meeting and be given three options for transfer deadlines: keep the current deadline, or closing the window before the season starts, closing the window at the end of August, or closing the domestic window before the start of the season and close the international window at the end of August.

Many clubs agree that the last option is the greatest option out of the three and for good reason. It would make sense to pick this option since it's a hybrid of the first two with the inclusion of the international window closing. However, because England seceded from the European Union on Jan. 31, this will mean that Premier League clubs will only be able to sign international players 18 or older.

LEAGUE BREAKDOWN

LEAGUE, cont. from p. 12

That's the momentum they'll need for their matches this week against Flyquest and Dignitas, but if they come out of those 2-0, there'll be no argument left that Cloud9 isn't the best team in North America.

On the other hand, Dignitas signed their top laner Huni to a controversial deal that ESPN reports has him making over a million dollars a year. They created a starting lineup around midlaner Froggen and rookie bot laner Johnsun, a lineup where Huni is the only member of last year's team to remain.

This is remarkable when you consider that last year's Clutch Gaming, who was bought by Dignitas, made Worlds. Many thought the moves were a bad choice, but Dignitas has started the season 3-1, only losing a game to Flyquest, a team which is also 3-1. While it's too early to tell if this new Dignitas will better the accomplishments of the past, they've at least proven the staff made the right calls.

MLB Offseason Outlook: NL Central

by Jorge Eckardt

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The NL Central is poised to be one of the most interesting divisional races all season, with four teams realistically having a shot at the playoffs. They sent two to the postseason last year, with the Cardinals winning the division and the Brewers capturing the second wild card, and they very well could do the same if not more in 2020. I wouldn't be all that surprised if by the end of the season, places one through four have done a complete swap with all of them finished above .500, so let's get started.

St. Louis Cardinals

The Cardinals are in a very interesting spot right now after an offseason where they lost more than they gained. Being in one of the most competitive divisions in baseball, there's a very good chance that they could lose control of the Central this season to any of the top four teams. The big loss was outfielder Marcell Ozuna, signed with the Braves on a one-year deal, betting on himself much like Yasmani Grandal and Mike Moustakas did last season. They also lost starter Michael Wacha to the New York Mets, which is not a huge loss but a loss nonetheless. Their biggest moves have been resigning soon-to-be 33-year-old



In this Aug. 10, 2019, file photo, Chicago Cubs' Kris Bryant (17) sits in the dugout during a baseball game against the Cincinnati Reds in Cincinnati. The All-Star third baseman has lost his service-time grievance against the Cubs, two people with direct knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020. PHOTO BY AARON DOSTER, AP

Matt Wieters and 38-year-old Adam Wainwright, or in other words their fourth or fifth starter and backup catcher. They still have a really strong team, anchored by stud first baseman Paul Goldschmidt and breakout starter Jack Flaherty, but coming off a season in which they won their division by just two games, they don't look like they're in any rush to make sure they repeat in 2020.

Milwaukee Brewers

The Brewers are poised to compete for the top of the

division all season long, but they too lost some significant pieces. Moustakas left after just one year in Milwaukee, where he had a rather productive season, and even though they did replace him with a serviceable replacement in Eric Sogard, it's still a noticeable downgrade. Gio González, Jordan Lyles and Drew Pomeranz also bolted in free agency, and while they all had varying levels of success the Brewers still lost three major league arms. However, most importantly, they lost star

catcher Yasmani Grandal to the White Sox. Replacement Omar Narváez was fine in Seattle last season but there's really no replacing what Grandal brought to the team. They still have a great outfield which is led by bona fide star Christian Yelich, a solid infield and bullpen and a fine rotation but one that lacks a true ace. The NL Central will be competitive, and I wouldn't be surprised if in the end, it's the Brewers who come out on top.

Chicago Cubs

The Cubs offseason has been overtaken by one main storyline: Kris Bryant. Bryant filed a grievance this offseason in an attempt to counteract the Cubs' service time manipulation, but as expected it didn't change anything. Therefore, there has been a lot of speculation about the Cubs possibly shipping Bryant off. While Bryant might not be dealt before the season begins, there's a very good chance that if the Cubs falter early and the playoffs look like a longshot, he could be one of if not probably the biggest piece moved at the deadline. That said, the Cubs should be able to seriously compete for the division. When fully healthy, which hasn't happened much the past couple of seasons, they have the talent to be one of the best teams in the National League.

The core of their lineup — Bryant, Anthony Rizzo, Javy Baez and Wilson Contreras — is really good, and their pitching staff — Jon Lester, Kyle Hendricks and Yu Darvish, anchored by Craig Kimbrel in the pen — is also really solid. Really, a lot of their season hinges on Bryant and whether or not they keep him, and if they don't, whether the return will be good enough to keep them competitive.

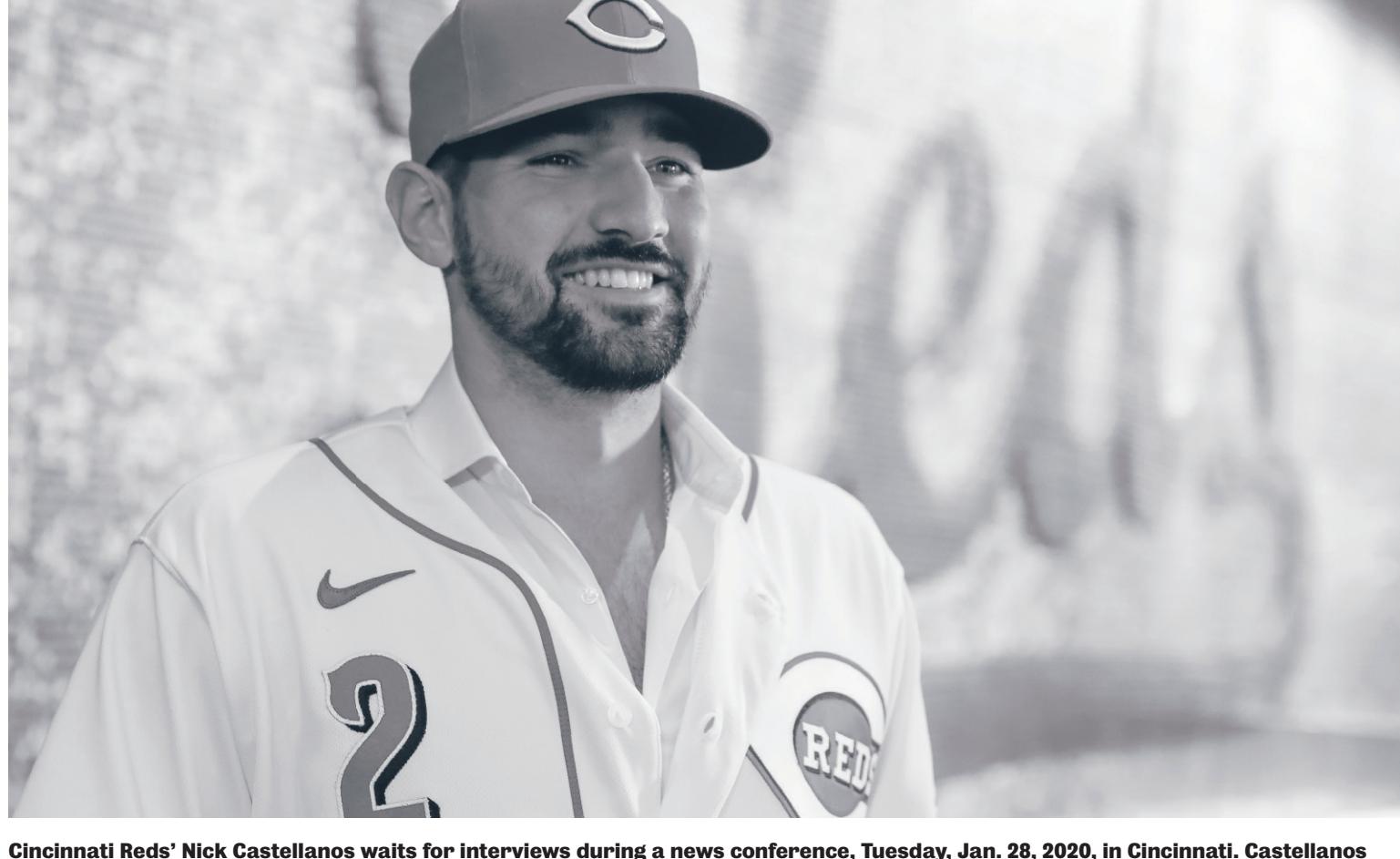
See REDS, p. 9

Reds and Pirates have opposite offseasons

REDS, cont. from p. 10

Cincinnati Reds

The Reds are one of the more exciting teams this season, going big this offseason in an effort to become competitive in a division that, while competitive, has no clear best team. If I'm making a bold prediction list, the Reds winning the Central is one of the ones highest up there. They've made a bunch of really good under-the-radar signings, poaching Moustakas from the Brewers and Nick Castellanos from the Cubs, the latter of whom teams oddly didn't seem to have much interest in. They're on identical four-year, \$64 million deals with \$20 million options for a fifth year and should slide right into the heart of the Reds lineup. They also signed Japanese star outfielder Shogo Akiyama to a manageable three-year, \$21 million deal. They added Wade Miley to the back end of what has become a very solid rotation with Luis Castillo, Trevor Bauer, Sonny Gray and Anthony DeSclafani. Joey Votto still has a lot left in the tank, Eugenio Suárez keeps getting better and Jesse Winkler should be another solid bat in their lineup. The bullpen also should be solid, especially with the recent acquisition of Pedro Strop. The Reds are an interesting breakout contender for 2020, keep your eyes on them.



Cincinnati Reds' Nick Castellanos waits for interviews during a news conference, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, in Cincinnati. Castellanos signed a \$64 million, four-year deal with the baseball club. PHOTO BY JOHN MINCHILLO, AP

Pittsburgh Pirates

And then there's the Pirates. There's always one. Pittsburgh is the one team in the division that's decided they're not even going to try to be competitive in 2020, with the final straw being the trading of Starling Marte to the Di-

amonds a few weeks ago. In doing so, they've dropped their total 2020 payroll down to just \$48 million, which is somehow still the third least in the league, ahead of the Orioles and Marlins. The Pirates right now epitomize what is one of the biggest problems in

the MLB right now, and that is the full-fledged tank. The Pirates' payroll is just over one-third of the league average and about one-fifth of the largest payroll in the league. Sure, you can be realistic and recognize that you probably won't compete this sea-

son, but what the Pirates and teams like them are doing is committing to multiple years of last-place finishes in lieu of spending money to try to improve the team through free agency. Pirates fans, sorry, but don't get your hopes up. Blame ownership.

Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio retiring after 13 seasons

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — From "pride comes before the fall" to Little Giants, Mark Dantonio leaves Michigan State fans with an abundance of fond memories after bringing the Spartans to heights they hadn't reached in decades.

Dantonio announced his retirement Tuesday, ending a 13-year run in which his teams won three Big Ten titles and he became the school's winningest coach. The 63-year-old Dantonio called his decision a difficult one while noting the non-stop demands of the job.

"I just found myself never having the opportunity to come up for air, and that can wear on you," he said Tuesday night at a news conference.

Dantonio went 114-57 as Michigan State's coach and won Big Ten titles in 2010, 2013 and 2015. The last of those three seasons included a trip to the College Football Playoff, but the Spartans declined after that. They went 7-6 this past season.

Defensive coordinator Mike Tressel will be the acting head coach while Michigan State seeks a replacement for Dantonio, who said qualified candidates would be willing to crawl to campus for the job.

Michigan State athletic director Bill Beekman said he will seek Dantonio's input on the search for his successor. Dantonio plans to have a role within the athletic department.

Beekman acknowledged the timing isn't ideal to search for a new football coach.

"There are times that are better than other times," he said. "But I think when you've won 114 games, you're our all-time winningest coach, and you've taken us to the places Mark has taken us and you've set the bar where Mark set it, I was comfortable operating on his timeline whatever that would be."

"We'll find a very good coach."

The Spartans have fallen from the Big Ten's elite in recent years, but only after Dantonio brought Michigan State to the top echelon of the league — and the nation — during a terrific stretch from 2010-15. He won at least 11 games five times in that six-year span — the first time a Big Ten coach had done that.

A turning point in his tenure occurred in 2010, when the Spartans memorably beat Notre Dame on a fake field goal



In this Nov. 16, 2019, file photo, Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio watches in the first half of an game against Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich. Dantonio announced his retirement Tuesday, ending a 13-year run in which he guided the Spartans to heights they hadn't reached in decades. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL SANCYA, AP

in overtime. The trick play was called "Little Giants" — and Dantonio had a heart attack in the immediate aftermath of that victory. He returned to coach his team soon after and led Michigan State to a share of the Big Ten title.

The Spartans went to the conference title game three of the next five years after that, winning it twice.

Michigan State also dominated its heated rivalry with Michigan for much of Dantonio's tenure. In 2007, his first season at the helm, the Spartans lost to the Wolverines. Afterward, Michigan's Mike Hart referred to Michigan State as a little brother. Dantonio responded by warning the Wolverines that "pride comes before the fall" — and the Spartans won four straight meetings after that.

Even after losing to Michigan the last two seasons, Dantonio ended up going 8-5 against the Wolverines.

The Spartans went just 27-24 in the four seasons since their playoff appearance, and Dantonio's future was the topic of

speculation in 2019. He seemed to put some of that to rest in November, when he said he planned to be back next season.

Then came Tuesday's news.

"Every February since 2007, I have reset this program in preparation for the next year's challenges. After much reflection and discussion with my family, I feel that it is now time for change as we enter into a new decade of Michigan State football," he said in a statement earlier in the day. "I have told our players on many occasions that 'Michigan State is bigger than any one person. Someday there will be someone else here talking to you from this podium.' That day has come."

Beekman became athletic director in 2018. Mark Hollis, the previous AD, had retired following the sex abuse scandal involving Larry Nassar, a former Michigan State sports doctor who also worked for USA Gymnastics. Hollis' departure came just before ESPN reported allegations of sexual assault and violence against women in

involving Michigan State football and basketball players. The report questioned how the athletic department handled those cases.

In 2017, four players were dismissed from the football team after criminal sexual conduct charges were brought against them.

A report from an external law firm found no evidence that Dantonio violated school policy on handling sexual misconduct claims, but the off-field issues damaged the program's reputation.

Curtis Blackwell, a former Michigan State football employee, filed a lawsuit claiming his employment agreement was violated when he was disciplined while the school addressed sexual assault allegations against players in 2017. Dantonio was named as a defendant in the suit and recently gave a lengthy deposition.

Dantonio said the deposition and potential fallout from the lawsuit had "zero" to do with his decision to retire.

"No relevance whatsoever," he said.

TOKYO OLYMPICS CEO: "I'M SERIOUSLY WORRIED" OVER CHINA VIRUS

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo Olympics organizers on Wednesday said they are increasingly concerned about the disruption the fast-spreading virus in China is causing ahead of the games, which open in just under six months.

Chief Executive Officer Toshiro Muto sounded a grave note speaking at a meeting with officials of the International Paralympic Committee.

"I am seriously worried that the spread of the infectious disease could throw cold water on the momentum toward the games," Muto said, speaking in Japanese. "I hope that it will be stamped out as soon as possible."

Saburo Kawabuchi, the mayor of the Athletes Village where 11,000 Olympians will stay, showed his apprehension.

"I truly hope that the infectious disease will die down somehow so that we will be able to operate the Paralympics and Olympics smoothly," he said. "In the worst case — we will do our utmost for the athletes so that they will be able to concentrate on performing their best."

Tokyo organizers have repeatedly said there are no plans to cancel the Olympics. That position has been repeated by the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee.

But the problems deepen with each passing day. Some Olympic qualifying events have been cancelled, or relocated. Travel restrictions will add more confusion, and traveling fans are sure to be fearful.

Japan has not reported any deaths from the virus. But deaths in mainland China rose to 490 on Wednesday.

"In Japan, we are facing all sorts of problems including coronavirus infections, cyber security and transportation systems," Toshiaki Endo, an organizing committee vice president, said on Tuesday at a news conference.

"The IOC is satisfied with our preparations," he added.

Craig Spence, a spokesman for the Paralympic committee, tried to be reassuring.

"We have full confidence that the relevant authorities, in particular here in Japan and the World Health Organization, will take all the necessary measures to address the situation."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was asked Monday in the national legislature about the viral outbreak and the impact on the Olympics. He brushed aside worries.