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A Wizards coach is fined for his actions against the Knicks.

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Roger Federer channels his past at the Australian Open, at least for one night.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2017 B7

Sports Saturday

The New York Times

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Nomads in No Hurry to Change

The Minnesota Whitecaps Offer an Independent, if Unpaid, Alternative to the Two Women's Professional Leagues

By SETH BERKMAN

MINNEAPOLIS — Kendall Coyne gathered the puck and was in the open ice almost instantly, darting toward the University of Minnesota goalie Sidney Peters. Faced with an unforgiving predicament, Peters sprawled out to no avail. Coyne went to her backhand and easily scored, a trademark goal from one of the world's fastest players.

Last year, such skills earned Coyne the Patty Kazmaier Award as the nation's top college women's hockey player while she was playing for Northeastern.

On this night in January, she was competing for the Minnesota Whitecaps, a collection of unpaid Midwestern hockey nomads who barnstorm against college teams. Coyne occasionally shares shifts with players like Hannah Brandt, Stephanie Anderson, Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson and Monique Lamoureux-Morando, all recent members of the United States national team.

The Whitecaps are considered a profes-

sional team, but they do not play in the Canadian Women's Hockey League or the National Women's Hockey League, the sport's two prominent leagues. Created in 2004, the Whitecaps have remained independent through much of their history. At times, that unconventional arrangement has nearly led to the team's dissolution, but as the Whitecaps persevered, their members were able to cultivate a nuanced view of the women's hockey world shaping around them.

After the game against Minnesota, the Lamoureuxs, twin sisters who are two-time Olympic silver medalists, spent the night at the house of Brandt's parents just outside the Twin Cities. The next morning, the three Whitecaps car-pooled to another exhibition.

The two-hour drive to the University of Minnesota-Duluth is a straightforward path up Interstate 35. Many Whitecaps see the best future for women's hockey as a similarly clear route: a merger between the C.W.H.L.

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The Whitecaps Chelsey Rosenthal, No. 4 top, celebrated a goal during a game against the University of Minnesota at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis on Jan. 6. Above from left: Lindsey Brown, Kalli Funk and Haylea Schmid.

N.F.L. PLAYOFFS

Ryan Flies High While Staying Under the Radar

By BILL PENNINGTON

Bill Henfey Park, three blocks from the beach in the New Jersey shore town of North Wildwood, is a placid, grassy rectangular expanse with a children's playground tucked in the corner.

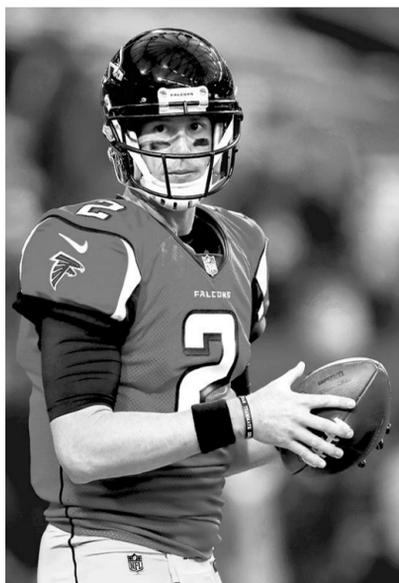
But on summer days throughout Matt Ryan's life, the park has been the site of feisty, heated pickup football games with 20 to 30 of Ryan's cousins, brothers, uncles and in-laws.

The summer games are not for the meek. Ryan, the Atlanta Falcons' All-Pro quarterback, has two brothers who were college quarterbacks. His 6-foot-7, 310-pound first cousin Mike McGlinchey is a left tackle at Notre Dame who could one day be a top N.F.L. draft pick. His uncle John Loughery played at Boston College. The extended family, all living in the Philadelphia area, includes scores of high-level athletes.

"There's a lot of testosterone down at that Shore house," said Loughery, who was a teammate of Doug Flutie's at Boston College. "It's pretty intense."

Henfey Park is not where Ryan earned the nickname Matty Ice, a reference to a fearless, swashbuckling style that has led to memorable late-game rallies and victories. But it may be where he honed

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GREGORY SHAMUS/GETTY IMAGES

Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan honed his skills and style during summer pickup games with his family in North Wildwood, N.J.

Going Extra 1,609 Meters, Florida Extends Metric Use

By JÉRÉ LONGMAN

It seems highly unlikely that the 121.92-meter home run would gain any more traction now than it did during baseball's flirtation with metric distances on outfield fences in the 1970s. And a television audience might be more confused than delirious if it was announced that Stephen Curry had just hit a buzzer-beater from 10.67 meters instead of 35 feet.

The hoariest of clichés also appear safe, too. Football is in no danger of becoming a game of centimeters.

But track and field long ago loosened its ties to the feet and inches of the British imperial system, and among track events, only the seldom-run mile persists as a revered imperial distance.

Yet within American track and field there are conflicting views about how pervasive the metric system should become. One side calls the imperial system antiquated and says it should be abandoned in favor of international uniformity. The other side says familiarity is needed to preserve history and maintain

relevance for a sport that is robust in participation but struggles for spectator interest outside of the Olympics.

The latest organization to enter the debate is the Florida High School Athletic Association. As the outdoor track season opens in February, Florida high schools will apparently become the first in the country to measure field events using the metric system, as they have done for all track events since 1990, introducing it for all district, regional and state track and field championships.

Metric measurements for the throwing and jumping events are being encouraged for regular-season meets this year. That means a 15-foot pole vault will be recorded as 4.57 meters. A shot-put throw of 55 feet 8 1/2 inches will be measured and announced as 16.98 meters. Long jumpers and javelin throwers, among others, will face a similarly new world in which, supporters argue, there will be more accurate measurements and, thus, few ties.

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