### **Baseball loses** big personality

Joe Garagiola, one of the game's average players but a popular broadcaster and all-around nice auv. dies at 90. Page C5



JIM INGRAHAM

### Consistent mode might be something Cavs could try

Just so you know, I'll be going into playoff mode Friday. Probably sometime in the early to mid-afternoon. Say 1:15-ish, something like that. I've got a of couple errands to run, so it depends on how that goes.

But, I suspect, by 3:21 p.m. at the latest, I'll be solidly in playoff mode.

It's actually pretty good timing, because I'm already in home improvement mode, personal hygiene mode and pie a la mode.

Speaking of people who have a lot on their plate, LeBron James has "announced" that he has gone into playoff mode as well. Not sure why he felt the need to officially announce that -why not let the Warriors try to figure it out themselves? but so be it.

Maybe LeBron was trying to light a fire under his frequently undermotivated teammates. LeBron may now be in playoff mode, but the Cavs too frequently play like they are not even in regular-season mode.

At any given time this season, the team's mode and mood can drive you mad.

Depending on the day of the week, the Cavs can run the gamut from unstoppable to inexplicable. They are a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. In some games they play so well they look like a runaway train. In others, they barely even show up.

Surely they lead the league in number of times letting teams they are blowing out back into games. This, among other Cavs calling cards, is not a championship trait, which begs the question of whether the Cavs are legitimate championship timber. Granted, they have won 51 of their first 71 games. But when they changed coaches, ostensibly to improve the team, the opposite happened. At least statistically. Their winning percentage has plunged over 32 points since the change: it was .732 (30-11) under David Blatt, .700 (21-9) under Tyronn Lue. The players didn't like playing for Blatt. They supposedly like playing for Lue, but you'd never know it. Their defense since the coaching change has gone from solid to solid waste. Their attention span? Forget it. Under Lue, the Cavs have shown that when they don't feel like playing, they REALLY don't feel like playing. Entering their game Wednesday vs. Milwaukee, the Cavs' last four losses were the kind of losses that sometimes get coaches fired, except the Cavs have already tried that, and it didn't work.

# **CAVALIERS 113, BUCKS 104** New-buddy system?

WWW.CHRONICLET.COM



LeBron James throws down one of several dunks he had Wednesday on the way to a 26-point performance.

FOOTBALL

### LeBron finds plenty of support as Cavs move ball, beat Bucks

#### **Rick Noland** The Chronicle-Telegram

CLEVELAND — LeBron James dreams of one day playing - and winning — with close friends Dwyane Wade, Carmelo Anthony and Chris Paul.

Guys like Kevin Love, Kyrie Irving and Tristan Thompson were more than enough Wednesday, as the Cavaliers moved the ball extremely well while defeating the Milwaukee Bucks 113-104 at Quicken Loans Arena.

There were tons of individual numbers on a night when neither team played a ton of defense until the final quarter, which Cleveland won 22-17.

James had 26 points, six rebounds

and eight assists for the Cavs (51-20), while Love had 24 points, 10 boards and four assists and Irving had 16, eight and eight while playing on his 24th birthday.

Thompson was tremendous off the bench, finishing with 13 points and 10 boards, while J.R. Smith had 13 points and Timofey Mozgov had 10.

"It is great basketball," James said. "Everyone is in a great rhythm."

Cleveland has won 10 of its last 13 games, but James once again became the focal point after a story by Bleacher Report quoted him as saying he'd be willing to take a pay cut in order to fulfill a dream and play with longtime friends Wade, Anthony and Paul.

See CAVS, C4



**KRISTIN BAUER / CHRONICLE PHOTOS** 

Hundreds of people line up outside the new Panera Bread, outside of Chestnut Commons, to meet former Ohio State star running back Ezekiel Elliott. Below,

### BROWNS

## **Goodell: Gordon** case still pending

### Scott Petrak The Chronicle-Telegram

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell hasn't met with suspended Browns receiver Josh Gordon, isn't sure if he will and might not make a decision about his reinstatement for a couple of weeks.

Gordon was indefinitely suspended for his latest violation of the league's substance abuse policy and sat out all of 2015. He applied for reinstate- yet." ment on or before Jan. 20, but Goodell hasn't rendered a

league will have a ruling when "appropriate."

'I have scheduled when I get back to New York sometime in the next week or so to get an update on that," Goodell said Wednesday at a news conference at the owners meetings in Boca Raton, Fla.

"Our staff has been working on it. We're obviously aware of it. Soon as we have an opportunity to see it. No decision

In order to earn reinstatement, Gordon must've passed every drug test over the last year and convince the league he's committed to staying on the right path.

In Section B: Section

NASCAR Page B3



TONIGHT

Cleveland

vs. Brooklyn

**TIME:** 7:30

WHERE:

Barclays

Brooklyn,

FS Ohio;

930-AM,

1100-AM.

100.7-FM,

La Mega

87.7-FM

WEOL

WTAM

WMMS

TV/RADIO:

Center,

N.Y.

WHO:

See INGRAHAM, C4

Helen Dronsfield, of Wellington, and her grandson, Jonah Stump, 8, meet Elliott.

## A favorite Buckeye

### Fans willing to wait to meet OSU star Elliott

### Shaun Bennett The Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott doesn't bat an eyelash when exploding between a pair of 300-pound tackles during a Division I football game.

He doesn't break a sweat when facing off against the rival Michigan Wolverines in front of 110,000 at the Big House in Ann Arbor.

He even remained cool under pressure while racking up 246 rushing yards during the national championship game against the Oregon Ducks two seasons ago.



wide Wednesday night as he walked into the tent outside the new Panera on Chestnut Ridge where nearly 600 fans were waiting to meet him.

"This is pretty intimidating ... walking up here and seeing this long line of Buckeyes fans,' Elliott said. "It's a credit to and

But Elliott's eyes were shows how much love there is from the Ohio State fanbase, and you can't be anything but grateful to these fans."

Elliott has earned the adoration from the Buckeye fanbase during his three seasons of work at Ohio State.

See ELLIOTT, C3

decision.

The policy calls for a decision within 60 days but a league spokesman said that's not a rigid requirement and the

See BROWNS, C3

### INDIANS

## **Tribe unleashes** long ball in win

### **Gary Schatz** The Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — Offense topped pitching for a change Wednesday for the Cleveland Indians.

Tyler Naquin homered twice and Francisco Lindor and Jason Kipnis also homered, powering the Indians to a 7-6 win over the Kansas City Royals.

Naquin, the Indians' first pick in the 2012 draft, hit his first two home runs of the spring. He also doubled and scored on an RBI single by Mike Napoli.

"Naquin's doing everything he can do," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "We'll get to a point where we start to do some things. You don't want to do them too early, but he's done a really good job."

Lindor and Kipnis hit consecutive homers in the first inning. It was the first for Lindor and third for Kipnis, who also tripled and scored in the third.

Napoli signed with the Indians to play first base and designated hitter along with Carlos Santana.

See TRIBE, C5



### The Chronicle-Telegram

### **GIRLS LACROSSE:** AVON 8, ST. JOSEPH ACADEMY 5

# Eagles feel right at home in stadium

#### **Todd Shapiro** The Chronicle-Telegram

AVON — After waiting for more than a year to take the field on the Joe Firment Chevrolet Stadium turf, the Avon girls lacrosse team made the most of its opportunity Wednesday night.

The Eagles scored three goals in the opening 2:21 of the game and went on to post an 8-5 non-league win over St. Joseph Academy.

Freshman Allison Kortowich had a hat trick and junior Anna Scheider scored a pair of goals for the Eagles, which improved to 1-1 after starting the year with a loss at Beaumont.

The Avon lacrosse program is in its second season and after playing its

front of the school last year, Eagles were of the night off of an 8-meter free but we're really happy we could win approached Wednesday's game. finally able to play at their own stadium.

"Honestly I feel like playing under the lights and on our own turf field is a completely different experience," said Scheider, who scored Avon's first goal 23 seconds into the game. "It boosts our self-esteem, we have a bigger student section and we'll play better because there are a lot of people watching us."

St. Joseph Academy (0-1), playing the school's first varsity game, fell behind 4-0 seven minutes into the game and lost four of the five first-half draws. The Jaguars were a different, more confident team in the second half, cutting the Eagles lead to 7-5 with 4:54 left in the game when freshgames on a makeshift grass field in man Ella Calleri scored her third goal

position.

The Jaguars also won six of 10 draws in the second half.

"We brought our momentum up and worked hard to get to loose balls in the second half," Jaguars coach Laureen Antall said. "It just felt great to see them play and start off our season after the long winter."

Kortowich scored two of her goals in the first half and completed her hat trick with 18:13 remaining to give the Eagles a 7-2 lead.

"The draw control is really important. If you get the draw you keep position and go from there," Kortowich said. "There are still some things we need to work on like strengthening our lax IQ and being able to handle the ball pleased with the way her team

our first home game."

Hanna Dilik, Kamryn Wilson and Claudia Smith scored goals for the Eagles while juniors Teresa Reardon and Kaitlyn Nieto each found the back of the net for the Jaguars.

"I think we let the early lead get to our heads and we didn't take it seriously," Scheider said. "When Haley (DeChant) went down with an injury we started to panic a little bit and we struggled on defense in the second half. We've made a lot of improvements this year. We know the game better and we're able to overcome some mistakes that we wouldn't have been able to last year,"

Avon coach Megan Eady was

New ejection proposal OK'd for one-year trial

'We put the right people in the right positions and they responded," Eady said. "Having our powerhouse players take care of business and get an early lead allowed some of the less experienced girls a chance to get valuable varsity playing time. There is a lot riding on this season. We have a lot to prove this year."

Contact Todd Shapiro at 329-7135 or ctsports@chroniclet.com.

### Avon 8, St. Joseph Academy 5

St. Joseph Academy 0 5 – 5 Avon 4 4 – 8 Avon 4 4 – 8 GOALS: (SJA) Ellia Calleri 3, Teresa Reardon, Kaitlyn Nieto; (A) Allison Kortowich 3, Anna Scheider 2, Claudia Smith, Hanna Dilik, Kamryn Wilson. GOALKEEPERS: (SJA) Danielle Smith (5 saves); (A) Meghan Daymut (4 saves) DRAWS: SJA 7, Avon 8 YELLOW CARDS: (A) Haley DeChant, 24:19, second



**KRISTIN BAUER / CHRONICLE** 

Matt Farnsworth, 9, of Brunswick, shakes hands with Ohio State star running back Ezekiel Elliott on Wednesday at the opening of the new Panera Bread in Elyria.

### ELLIOTT

From C1

During the last two years, the 6-foot-1, 225pounder totaled 3,699 rushing yards and 41 touchdowns as the Buckeyes went 26-2 and won a national title.

While the numbers were impressive, Elliott seemed to save his best performances for the biggest games.

After starting quarterback J.T. Barrett was lost for the season during a win over Michigan in 2014, Elliott sparked a three-game postseason run that gave Ohio State its eighth national title. Elliott rushed for 220 yards and two touchdowns in a 59-0 win over Wisconsin in the Big Ten championship game, he rushed for 230 vards and two TDs in a 42-35 win over Alabama in the Sugar Bowl and went for 246 yards and four TDs against the Ducks in the title game. Last season, Elliott rushed for 214 yards and a pair of touchdowns in a 42-13 road win over the Wolverines.

for them to pick me. I think I've done that job so it's all in their hands at this point."

Elliott plans to attend the NFL Draft on April 28 in Chicago — "That will be a very special moment and I'm looking forward to it," he said — but said he will take advantage of autograph signings like the one at Panera's 2,000th store opening Wednesday night and another this weekend in Toledo.

"It's always a great opportunity to get out and get a chance to touch the fans," he said. "You don't get a lot of opportunities to be with the fans and interact with them (while playing

#### **Barry Wilner** The Associated Press

NFL OWNERS MEETINGS

BOCA RATON, Fla. — The NFL is putting some bite in its on-field discipline.

NFL owners Wednesday approved as a one-year trial ejecting a player who draws two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties from specific categories. Those categories include throwing a punch at or kicking an opponent, taunting and using abusive, threatening or insulting language or gestures.

It's not quite as strong as what Commissioner Roger Goodell suggested during Super Bowl week when asked about players committing flagrant fouls. But it's a step in trying to curb unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, which hit a high of 75 in 2015.

"Sportsmanship is important to the membership," Goodell said as the owners' meetings concluded. "We all have standards. They have two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties before they're ejected. The message from the membership, our clubs and the coaches is they're going to be held to those high standards."

Atlanta Falcons President Rich McKay, cochairman of the competition committee that proposed the change, said the rule was amended from permanent to one season after feedback from coaches.

"We have made it a point of emphasis every time we felt like it's beginning to cross the line," McKay said of unsportsmanlike conduct penalties. "We have not been able to affect sportsmanship in the way we think we need to, so this year we have another section on sportsmanship. We have specific points we are emphasizing on sportsmanship.

sure that the players are held accountable to what we expect them to do and how we expect them to conduct themselves."

Also approved Wednesday as a one-year trial was placing the ball at the 25-yard line after touchbacks on kickoffs instead of at the 20. The league is seeking ways to reduce injuries on kickoff returns, which it says statistically are the most dangerous plays in the game.

Most proposals on expanding video replay in officiating were dismissed. A suggestion by Baltimore that would simplify the language in replay rules to make clearer what is reviewable has been tabled.

Expanding the use of video on sideline tablets, which many expected to pass easily, also was tabled until the May meetings in Charlotte.

"There was really good discussion from the coaches and some concerns on the technology side and the ramifications of using video,' McKay said. "We will use the Microsoft Surface (tablets) with photos on the sideline and will continue to discuss this."

Also:

Teams no longer will be required to designate the one player allowed to return from injured reserve as soon as he is placed on that list. Instead, they will have until the day before the player returns to practice during the season to designate him. That player must have sat out at least six weeks in the regular season.

• Goodell said reports of substantial progress in talks with the players' union about reducing

A fan favorite in Columbus, he has also become a favorite among NFL teams and is expected to be selected in the top half of the first round of next month's draft.

Elliott performed well at the NFL combine in Indianapolis earlier this month and had a solid pro day in Columbus.

"This process is really long and it's kind of nerve-racking, but I got the hard part over with now," he said. "Now I just have to sit and wait, visit some teams and wait for the draft.

"I'm not necessarily sure who wants me most, that's not really my job. My job is to go out there and give them every reason that I can on Facebook and follow him @ShaunBennettct on Twitter.

#### at Ohio State), so this is something I enjoy getting out and interacting with the people that supported me the last three years. It's time to show them some love - come out and shake hands and take pictures, give back to Buckeye Nation."

Elliott said his schedule is about to become a lot busier as he will be working out for 10 to 15 NFL teams over the next month.

"I'm kind of looking forward to this month to be over with so I can find out what my new home is, my new team, and I can get back to working on my craft, learning that playbook and getting ready for the next year," he said.

Not that his old home will be far from his mind.

"I'm definitely going to miss Ohio State," Elliott said. "Ohio State fans are the best fanbase in all of sports. There's nothing like it. There's nothing like playing in front of 108,000 in Columbus. There's nothing like those teammates and relationships I made at Ohio State."

Contact Shaun Bennett at 329-7137 or sbennett@chroniclet.com. Like him

### **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Baseball/Softball**

RIVALS TRYOUTS: Rivals baseball, based out of Amherst and Lorain, will hold tryouts for the 14U travel season. Email coach John at j.rags72@yahoo.com.

WARHAWKS OPENINGS: The Lake Erie Warhawks program has openings for a few more experienced travel players in the 11U through 14U classes. For info and tryout information, call Mark at 647-2726 or email Mark@lakeeriewarhawks.com.

AMHERST OGSO: Amherst is accepting OGSO registration for all age groups. Contact amherstfastpitch@gmail.com, or amherstbaseball@ymail.com.

**REBELS HAVE OPENINGS:** Rebels fastpitch travel team is looking to fill a couple spots on the 2016 roster. Contact Lindsey Costello at 309-6125 or Lynnz0301@aol.com

ADULT SOFTBALL: The City of Elyria Parks and Recreation Department is having signups for the summer adult league. League will have games Sunday mornings and Monday-Thursday evenings. Contact Carrie Reardon 326-1501.

TEAMS NEEDED: The Lake Erie Insanity Memorial Day Splash is looking for fastpitch softball teams for a qualifier from May 27-29 at the Oberlin Recreation Complex, 225 W. Hamilton St. The fee is \$425 for 10U, 12U or 14U teams with a \$25 discount for teams entered and paid before May 1. Contact Dave Modock at I.e.insanitysoftball@gmail.com

### Wrestling

DREW PARIANO CAMP: Northwestern University coach and Fairview grad Drew Pariano will host a two-day camo at Fairview High School on June 21-22. Cost is \$150 before June 10 and \$160 the day of the camp. Contact Drew Pariano at (847) 293-9237 or by email drew.pariano@gmail.com.

#### Golf

LESSONS AVAILABLE: Grafton Health and Fitness is offering a Starting New at Golf class on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-10 a.m. through April. Cost is \$15 and equipment is provided. To register, call 452-8488.

SHORT-GAME INSTRUCTION: Former LPGA Tour pro Vicki Harshberger will hold group short-game instruction throughout the winter months on Thursdays from 6-9 p.m. at Grafton Health and Fitness Center. Cost is \$10 per

### **GIRLS LACROSSE**

### Lucas scores two **but Shoregals lose**

WADSWORTH - Sarah Lucas scored two goals and assisted on another as Avon Lake fell 11-5 to Wadsworth on Tuesday in girls lacrosse action.

Isabel Calogeras also scored two goals for Avon Lake.

GOALS: (AL) Lucas 2, Calogeras 2, Marina Wilson. ASSISTS: (AL) Michaela Wolf 2. GOALTENDER: (AL) Megan Mathewson 15 saves. HALFTIME: Wadsworth 5-3

person. Call 926-2781 to reserve a time slot. Private lessons also available.

### Tennis

LCCC SHOOTOUT: Lorain County Community College will host an indoor doubles shootout Sunday. April 3. The event is open to the public and will be broken up into men's, women's and mixed doubles divisions. Cost is \$20 per team and teams will play multiple one-set matches. There are no eliminations. Register are online at www.lorainccc.edu. Contact Jim Powers at LCCC 366-7652 or jpowers@lorainccc.edu

### General

SPORTS TRAINING: The G-PLEX in Garrettsville is offering speed and core training for all sports for all ages and athletes. Individual, group and team sessions are available Contact thegcoachlong@gmail.com or call (330) 527-9000, ext 2. Evening and weekend hours are available

LIFEGUARDS: The City of Elyria Parks and Recreation is accepting applications for lifeguards. Lifeguards must be certified in CPR, first aid and lifeguarding and/or planning to take a class to be certified. Applications can be obtained online at cityofelyria.org and need to be submitted by April 8.

### BROWNS

"I'd rather wait until I sort of get a report and whether it's appropriate to (meet with him)," Goodell said. "I think it probably depends on the circumstances, and until I understand what's in that report. But I might want to do that. I might choose to do that."

Goodell said he wasn't sure if anyone from the NFL has met with Gordon.

"Again, I haven't gotten that report," he said. "I'm supposed to meet with them next week or the week after.

"When I get more information we can decide what the next appropriate step is, whether it's me meeting with him or whether they've already met with him individually or whether others have met with him. A lot of these are also with other people outside our staff, who might be medical professionals."

Gordon has been suspended by the league three times since being drafted in the second round of the 2012 supplemental draft. He's been suspended for 27 of the last 32 games.

Browns executive vice president of football operations Sashi Brown said last month during the scouting combine he would welcome back Gordon. But he backpedaled Monday at the owners meeting when asked about Gordon's possible return.

"I would just say probably enough Josh chatter," Brown told a small group of reporters. "I know he's intriguing but really for us, we're focused on the guys that are on our roster and if Josh comes back, great, and if he doesn't, we're ready."

New coach Hue Jackson isn't counting on having Gordon.

"I always learned something a long time ago - you never worry about something you never had," he said. "I've never had any contact with him, so I'm going to plan on what's in our building now and go from there."

### **Another departure**

Inside linebacker Craig Robertson agreed to a three-year contact with the New Orleans Saints, according to multiple reports. He was a regular starter for the Browns the last three years and started 37 games in four seasons after not being drafted.

"I gave it all I had every day, no handouts and I wouldn't change that for anything," Robertson wrote in an Instagram post. "Thank you cleveland for giving me a shot when nobody else would. I knew what it meant to be a Brown but most importantly a brother and a teammate. Thank you Cleveland"

He's the latest Browns starter to sign elsewhere. Right tackle Mitchell Schwartz, center Alex Mack, safety Tashaun Gipson, receiver Travis Benjamin and his role in player discipline were inaccurate.

"We are not close to an agreement by any stretch of the imagination on making changes on that," he said. "But we are open to it and "But we felt like we needed a rule to make keeping an open dialogue with the union."

> special teams ace Johnson Bademosi have departed in the first two weeks of free agency.

The Browns will have two new starters at inside linebacker after releasing 34-year-old Karlos Dansby last week. They signed Demario Davis from the New York Jets and are expected to pair him with Christian Kirksey, a third-round pick in 2014 who has started 13 games.

### **Meet the rookies**

The Browns will host Fan Fest on May 14 at FirstEnergy Stadium. New this year will be a rookie minicamp practice open to the public.

The minicamp is usually closed and at team headquarters, but Jackson liked the idea of including it in Fan Fest. The rookies will sign autographs after practice.

Tickets go on sale Tuesday for season ticket holders (\$10) and March 31 for the general public (\$15). Tickets for kids 6-17 years old are \$5, and kids and under are admitted free.

• The Browns will host a draft party April 28 at the Cleveland Public Auditorium. The event is free and doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Season ticket holders can get their tickets April 5, the general public April 7.

### **Trouble for Johnny**

Goodell said the league continues to investigate the domestic incident involving former Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel. A Dallas grand jury is deciding whether to charge him with misdemeanor assault.

'Those investigations have been ongoing," Goodell said. "I haven't gotten an update since before the league meeting. I don't know where they are.

Lisa Friel, our lead investigator, was out here (NFL meetings). I have gotten updates from time to time. She has not been able to conclude her investigation to a satisfactory level. When she does, if it results in discipline, we'll announce it at that point.

The Browns released Manziel on March 11, he cleared waivers and became a free agent. League insiders expect him to have to serve a suspension before he can play for another team

### Extra points

Owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam spoke to a small group of reporters Tuesday at the owners meetings and said it's too early to say whether the team will move training camp to Columbus in the future, as had been widely expected. The team has already announced camp will remain at team headquarters in Berea this summer.

• Despite speculation Jimmy Haslam would try to add friend Peyton Manning to the front office, he said he hasn't talked to Manning since he retired from the Broncos. Haslam said Manning will be successful in whatever job he chooses but Haslam's content with his new regime of Brown, chief strategy officer Paul DePodesta and vice president of player personnel Andrew Berry.

"We feel good about the group we've put together," Haslam said.

• Haslam said Alec Scheiner, who's leaving as president at the end of the month, wants a bigger role than he was going to have with the Browns.

The Browns considered a buyback program for Manziel jerseys but decided against it.

Contact Scott Petrak at 329-7253 or spetrak@chroniclet.com. Like him on Facebook and follow him @scottpetrak on Twitter.