

## OKLAHOMA BEAT OREGON 4-2 TO REACH SOFTBALL TITLE SERIES

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** The Women's College World Series dream matchup is set. Shay Knighten singled in two runs in the fifth inning to help defending champion Oklahoma beat Oregon 4-2 on Sunday in the semifinals. The Sooners (59-9) will play top-seeded Florida tonight to start the best-of-three championship series. The teams have combined to win the past four national titles, but are meeting for the first time in the championship series.

Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso has great respect for Florida's program. "They're good, well-coached, very complete team,"

she said. "Again, we're going to have to play really, really well, give all we've got, and we're looking forward to it." Paige Parker (26-5) earned the win and Paige Lowary got the save against Oregon.

The Ducks would have needed to beat Oklahoma twice on Sunday, and for a while, it looked like they might at least force a second game. Danica Mercado's two-run homer in the top of the fifth put the Ducks (54-8) up 2-0. Oregon's Megan Kleist (21-4), who earned a win and a save in elimination games Saturday, took a shutout into the fifth against Oklahoma

before unraveling. Oklahoma got its rally started when Lea Wodach reached on an error. She bunted, and though the ball was moving towards foul territory, Oregon catcher Gwen Sveiks picked it up and made an errant throw to first. Wodach ended up on second.

Oregon coach Mike White thought the ball went into foul territory, and he thinks there should be a way to find out. "One thing I'd like to see going forward, and I think this tournament has really illustrated it, is the need for an instant replay, a need for the ability to make a challenge," White

said. "There's been so many games decided by some calls that could have gone - I think were incorrect calls to be quite frank, and that made a big difference. This game is played at a high speed. Umpires are human. You should have the ability to challenge a call." Pinch runner Raegan Rogers stepped in for Wodach and scored on a fielder's choice. Knighten then dropped the ball lightly into right field to score Nicole Mendes and Kelsey Arnold. Knighten had hoped to make better contact. "I'll take it," she said. "It worked. All I wanted to do was just put the ball in play, come into the

right side, and just give my team a chance to score." Nicole Pendley followed with a double to score Knighten and chase Kleist.

Lowary closed the deal with two perfect innings to claim her 10th save of the season. Now, Oklahoma, the No. 10 seed, has the chance to defend its title. The Sooners view themselves as underdogs. "They really are getting into their groove," Gasso said. "We've wasted about eight weeks of trying to figure this out, and I think we're making up for lost time, and they are relaxed, they're playing their best softball, they're having a blast. They don't want it to end." — AP

### GOLF

## DUFNER BOUNCES BACK TO WIN THE MEMORIAL

**DUBLIN:** Jason Dufner spent quality time on the practice range that played in a big role in his victory at the Memorial.

It had nothing to do with his swing. This was about beating balls to burn off the anger from a 5-over 77 in the third round that looked as though it might cost him the tournament. His pulse back to normal, which for Dufner means barely beating, he bounced back in a big way Sunday.

He stayed in the game during a wild stretch early, and then hit the ball so pure that he hit every green until the 18th and only once had a birdie putt over 12 feet. And then he capped off his 68 with a 30-foot par putt for a three-shot victory.

"Yesterday was not my best day," Dufner said. "But I had to get over it quick. It's a 72-hole tournament, there's a lot of things that can happen out there. I knew I was still in the mix."

The recap shows what an up-and-down week it was for Dufner. He set the 36-hole record at Muirfield Village on Friday and built a four-shot lead. The 77 on Saturday dropped him four shots behind. And he wound up winning by three shots over Rickie Fowler and Anirban Lahiri.

"It was important for me not to leave this golf course angry and upset," Dufner said. "I needed to leave it at the golf course yesterday, I felt like, and to move on. It would be best for me today. It wasn't something that I planned or that I thought about, it's just that's what I felt like I needed to do."

Dufner finished at 13-under 275 for his fifth PGA Tour victory, and he earned mentions with Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo. He joined Nicklaus as the only Ohio-born winners of the Memorial, the tournament Nicklaus created in 1976 and won twice. And not since Faldo in the 1989 Masters had anyone shot a 77 in the third round of a PGA Tour event and still gone on to win.

### LARGEST PAYCHECK

He was happier about the first reference. "I'll always have a close place in my heart for this event, being a champion now," Dufner said. "It will be very special for me to look back and know that I'm part of an event that Mr. Nicklaus put on out here on the PGA Tour."

"I think he probably likes this one better than Augusta right now," Nicklaus said. "It's paying a little better," Dufner replied. He earned \$1,566,000, the largest paycheck of his career. Fowler, in prime position to force

a playoff on the 18th hole by making birdie, instead made bogey after Dufner ended it with his big par putt. Fowler shot 70 and tied for second with Lahiri, who closed with a 65 before both of the two rain delays that lasted a combined 2 1/2 hours.

Justin Thomas missed consecutive short birdie putts that stopped any momentum he had. Matt Kuchar fell back with three bogeys on the back nine. They finished another shot behind. Daniel Summerhays, who began the final round with a three-shot lead, began the back nine with two straight bogeys, and he finished with a double bogey for a 78 to tie for 10th.

Dufner got back into the mix quickly when Summerhays lost his three-shot lead after four holes. Over the next five hours because of the rain delays, four players had at least a share of the lead and seven players were in the hunt.

### CLOSE TO PERFECT

Dufner had one stretch on the front nine of bogey-birdie-bogey-birdie-bogey. He played the front nine in even par, and then he came to life. He is better with the putter, though his strength remains his iron play, and it was close to perfect.

"I feel like if I wanted to have a chance to win today that I needed to hit it close," he said. He stuffed his approach on No. 10 to 4 feet and holed a 10-foot birdie putt on the par-3 12th.

After missing a pair of birdie chances in the 12-foot range on the next holes, he hit the par-5 15th in two and two-putted for birdie from 40 feet to take the lead.

Fowler fell back when he missed the 14th green long and took bogey, and then hit his fairway metal into the gallery on the 15th and failed to make birdie. Dufner gave himself a cushion on the 17th with his best drive of the day and a wedge to 3 feet.

He made it more exciting than he preferred on the 18th by driving into thick rough just short of the bunker, and hacking out into more rough. He put his third shot to just over 30 feet on the 18th. Fowler, who pulled his wedge left of the green, had Dufner go first to make sure Fowler would have needed to hole the birdie chip to have a chance. Dufner ended the suspense with a putt and a rare show of emotion, slamming down his fist. "I made the swings and couldn't convert and make the birdies," Fowler said. "But to see him make the putt on the last was cool." — AP



**DUBLIN:** Jack Nicklaus, right, hands Jason Dufner the trophy after Dufner won the Memorial golf tournament, Sunday, in Dublin, Ohio. — AP

### ATHLETICS

## S AFRICA'S VAN NIEKERK WINS 200M IN BOSTON

**BOSTON:** South Africa's Wayde Van Niekerk and Shaunae Miller-Uibo of the Bahamas each captured their 200 metre races on the second day of a track and field event in Boston on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Van Niekerk, who is the reigning World and Olympic champion in the 400m, clocked a winning time of 19.84 on a temporary built track to beat runner-up BeeJay Lee (20.17) at the Boston Boost Games.

Because the competition was run on a straight line instead of the traditional curved track and field surface the time will

not be listed in 2017 International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) records. "I still have a lot of work ahead of me," said Van Niekerk, of Cape Town, who will run the 200m next weekend in Kingston, Jamaica. "But it is a positive result."

The reigning Olympic champion in the 400m, Miller-Uibo, won the women's 200m with a time of 21.76. She beat the American Natasha Hastings (22.50) and Kimberlyn Duncan (22.81). Miller-Uibo's time was also boosted because the race was run in a straight line. — AFP



**BELLE ISLE:** Graham Rahal holds the trophies from the IndyCar Detroit Grand Prix auto race doubleheader on Belle Isle, Sunday, in Detroit. Rahal completed a doubleheader sweep in the race to become IndyCar's first two-time winner this season. Rahal's Honda-power car finished 1.17 seconds ahead of Josef Newgarden's Chevrolet, a day after getting to the checkered flag six-plus seconds ahead of the competition. — AP

### MOTOR RACING

## RAHAL SWEEPS DETROIT GRAND PRIX DOUBLEHEADER

**DETROIT:** Graham Rahal is relishing a remarkable run - this weekend in the Motor City and over the last two-plus seasons. Rahal completed a doubleheader sweep at the Detroit Grand Prix on Sunday and became IndyCar's first two-time winner this season.

Driving for father and former racing star Bobby Rahal's Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing team, Rahal has six career victories, five in two-plus seasons during a stretch of success that followed a six-year winless streak. "Through the ups and downs of my career, when you get a chance to win a race, you never take it for granted," he said. "So, it's pretty special for me."

It looked like a given Rahal's Honda-power car was going to finish first easily, for the second straight race, until there was a single-file final restart with two laps to go in the 70-lap race. A red flag stopped the race for 18 minutes after 67 laps because Spencer Pigot's car had a mechanical failure.

The Ed Carpenter Racing driver got out of his smoke-filled car after a yellow flag came out because James Hinchcliffe's car stalled.

That wasn't enough to let the competition close in on Rahal, who pulled away for victory on the Belle Isle course. He finished 1.17 seconds

ahead of Josef Newgarden's Chevrolet, a day after getting to the checkered flag six-plus seconds ahead of the competition.

"I couldn't pull anything too risky because I didn't have any grip on the tires," Newgarden said. Will Power of Team Penske was third Sunday, giving Chevy a better showing than on Saturday when Honda swept the podium near General Motors' world headquarters. "We didn't get the win, but it was a good showing," Power said. "Honda has definitely found something, but it's not reliable."

Rahal became the first to sweep in Detroit since it began hosting doubleheaders in 2013. He became the first to win two IndyCar races in a weekend since Scott Dixon pulled off the feat four years ago in Toronto.

His team won consecutive races for the first time since Kenny Brack drove pulled off the feat in Japan and at Milwaukee in 2001. Rahal, who is from New Albany, Ohio, became the first American to win in Detroit on Saturday since Michael Andretti in 1996. Indianapolis 500 winner Takuma Sato earned the pole earlier in the day and finished fourth with his Honda-powered car for Andretti Autosport.

**POINTS RACE:** Scott Dixon, with an injured left foot from his crash in last week's Indianapolis

500, finished sixth to stay atop the points list with 303 followed by Helio Castroneves (295), Sato (292), Simon Pagenaud (278), Newgarden (259) and Rahal (251) making quite a climb from No. 15 the standings at the start of the weekend.

### CLIPPED

Castroneves finished ninth, ending a race that included one of his tires getting punctured by Marco Andretti's front wing. His winless streak extended to 52 races.

### CONTRACT TALKS

The Detroit Grand Prix has one year left on its contract to hold the race on Belle Isle and event chairman Bud Denker said he is confident the deal will be extended until at least 2021.

"My expectation is that we'll be agreeing with the state over the next several months," he said. The open-wheel series shifts to Texas Motor Speedway, where Rahal is the defending champion, for a race under the lights Saturday night. Rahal beat James Hinchcliffe last year by eight-thousandths of a second in the closest finish for an IndyCar race at Texas.

"I think it's going to be a crazy race once again," Rahal said. "It should be a track that will suit the Honda package very well." — AP

### SWIMMING

## PHELPS JOINS BOARD OF AUSSIE MENTAL

**SYDNEY:** Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian of all time, yesterday joined the board of an Australian mental health company, a subject close to his heart after his struggles with depression and substance abuse.

The American, who won 28 Olympic medals, quit swimming last year and he said joining Medibio met his aim to raise awareness of mental health problems.

"I personally suffered from mental health challenges from my teenage years on, and only fairly recently after reaching a point of desperation-did I acquire the understanding, treatment, and support I needed, which has truly changed my life," he said.

"For me, self-awareness, from a mental health standpoint, is empowerment." Medibio has developed a test to help diagnose depression, chronic stress and other disorders, using circadian, sleep and other information such as blood pressure.

Phelps, who was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) when he was nine, is already an ambassador for the Child Mind Institute's #MyYoungerSelf social media campaign to help end the stigmas associated with mental health and learning disorders.

He isn't the only swimming great to suffer mental problems: Australia's Ian Thorpe has also struggled with depression, and received treatment in 2014 after being found disoriented on a Sydney street. Fellow Australian Grant Hackett also sought help this year-including from Phelps-after his arrest following a family bust-up, the latest in a series of unsavoury incidents involving the troubled star.

"I want to help others who are dealing with these challenges and make the process for them to take action easier and more understandable," Phelps said as part of Medibio's announcement to the stock market. Phelps is widely seen as the greatest swimmer ever to compete, but it came at a price.

After winning four gold medals and two silvers at the 2012 London Olympics, he revealed he was "haunted" by knowing he failed to prepare as well as he could have. A comeback in 2014 ground to a halt within months when his personal demons caught up with him and he was caught speeding while under the influence of alcohol. The incident launched him on a "brutal" personal journey that included a stint in rehab. — AFP



**GOLD COAST:** A file photo taken on August 24, 2017 shows Michael Phelps of the US reacting during the medal ceremony following the men's 100m butterfly final at the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre in Gold Coast. — AFP