

SPORTS  
IN BRIEF

B.C. Lions give Simon chance  
to gauge CFL trade interest

VANCOUVER (CP) — The B.C. Lions have given all-star receiver Geroy Simon permission to check out the CFL trade market.

General manager Wally Buono said Tuesday he’s giving Simon the opportunity gauge potential interest because the Lions aren’t prepared to pay the veteran his current contract.

The 37-year-old slotback has spent 12 of his 14 CFL seasons with B.C. and last year surpassed Milt Stegall as the league leader in all-time receiving yards. But hamstring injuries forced Simon to miss five games, limiting him to 54 catches for 700 yards and two TDs in 2012.

It marked the first time in 10 seasons that Simon had not cracked the 1,000-yard receiving plateau.

The Lions have been busy this off-season, signing quarterback Travis Lulay to a contract extension reportedly worth \$450,000 annually while also releasing veteran cornerback Byron Parker and slotback Arland Bruce III.

Two coaches canned on heels  
of disappointing London Games

OTTAWA (CP) — Athletics Canada has fired its two top coaches.

Head coach Alex Gardiner and chief high performance officer Martin Goulet have been let go by track and field’s national governing body.

Athletics Canada’s CEO Rob Guy says the decision was made based on the team’s disappointing performance at last summer’s London Olympics.

Canada had set a target of three athletics medals in London, but came away with just one – Derek Drouin’s bronze in high jump.

Gardiner, a Winnipeg native, was Canada’s head coach at the 2004 Athens Olympics then left Athletics Canada to work for the Canadian Olympic Committee. He returned to Athletics Canada in 2008.

Guy says he hopes to have a new head coach in place by mid-March.

NHL suspends Flyers’ Schenn  
one game for charging

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The NHL has suspended Philadelphia Flyers forward Brayden Schenn one game for charging New Jersey Devils defenceman Anton Volchenkov.

Schenn will miss Thursday’s game against the New York Rangers at the Wells Fargo Center. Schenn will forfeit \$4,702.70.

The hit occurred in the second period of New Jersey’s 3-0 win over the Flyers on Tuesday in Newark, N.J. No penalty was assessed on the play.

Schenn, 21, has one assist and five penalty minutes this season, as Philadelphia has stumbled to an 0-3 start. Last year, he appeared in 54 games, posting 12 goals and 18 points. He also blocked 26 shots.

In the off-season, the Flyers acquired Schenn’s brother, Luke, a defenceman, from Toronto.

Saints’ Payton returns  
to work at Senior Bowl

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — Sean Payton has returned to work following a nearly yearlong suspension for his role in the Saints’ bounty program.

The New Orleans Saints coach watched Senior Bowl practice Wednesday and planned to meet later in the day with the staff to evaluate a defence that struggled.

Payton says the challenges of rebuilding after a losing season will be painful and that his return won’t guarantee an immediate return to winning.

He declined to say if he planned any changes to his coaching staff during a 45-minute session with reporters. He spoke a day after NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell lifted his suspension.

Payton says he and Goodell agreed not to discuss specifics when asked whether there was an organized bounty system.

Payton watched practice from the stands with Saints officials.

Hazard sent off for kicking ballboy  
in ribs; Chelsea eliminated

(AP) — Chelsea winger Eden Hazard was sent off in a League Cup semifinal against Swansea on Wednesday for kicking a ballboy in the ribs while attempting to retrieve the ball.

The Belgium international was spoken to by police after kicking at the 17-year-old ballboy, who appeared to be refusing to hand over the ball to Hazard after it had rolled out of play. Swansea said police wouldn’t be pressing any charges, and Hazard and the ballboy apologized to each other in the Chelsea dressing room.


“The boy put his whole body onto the ball and I was just trying to kick the ball and I think I kicked the ball and not the boy,” Hazard said. “I apologize. The ball boy came in the changing room and we had a quick chat and I apologized and the boy apologized as well, and it is over. Sorry.”

The incident occurred in the 79th minute of the match at Liberty Stadium, which finished 0-0.

Swansea advanced 2-0 on aggregate, setting up an unlikely final against fourth-tier Bradford City at Wembley Stadium on Feb. 24. It will be the first major final in Swansea’s 100-year history.

Chelsea manager Rafa Benitez said the ballboy and Hazard had apologized to each other.

“They both recognize there was a mistake,” Benitez said.



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CP PHOTO

**BREAKING THE ICE** — The Vancouver Canucks’ Alexander Edler, Jason Garrison, Daniel Sedin, Henrik Sedin and Zack Kassian celebrate Kassian’s goal against the Calgary Flames during their second period game in Vancouver on Wednesday. The Canucks won in the shootout 3-2.

Gaborik leads Rangers over Bruins

*The Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Marian Gaborik scored twice in the first period and then completed his hat trick 27 seconds into overtime as the New York Rangers overcame a pair of blown leads and beat the Boston Bruins 4-3 on Wednesday night for their first win of the season.

Gaborik broke free and outraced Andrew Ference and Johnny Boychuk down the ice. His first shot was blocked by goalie Tuukka Rask, but Gaborik battled the rebound out of the air to end the game.

Taylor Pyatt also scored for the Rang-

ers (1-2), who squandered leads of 2-0 and 3-2 en route to avenging a season-opening loss at Boston on Saturday. Henrik Lundqvist made 26 saves for the win.

Brad Marchand and Milan Lucic erased Boston’s 2-0 deficit in the second period, and Nathan Horton got the Bruins even again at 3 with 4:23 left in regulation.

**Leafs beat Penguins**

PITTSBURGH (AP) — James van Riemsdyk scored twice, James Reimer stopped 28 shots as Toronto spoiled

Pittsburgh’s home opener.

Clarke MacArthur, Mikhail Grabovski and Tyler Bozak also scored for the Maple Leafs, and Nikolai Kulemin added three assists.

Sidney Crosby and reigning NHL MVP Evgeni Malkin scored their first goals of the season for Pittsburgh, but the Penguins struggled with Toronto’s speed and failed to play with the kind of discipline that highlighted opening weekend wins over Philadelphia and the New York Rangers.

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 19 shots for the Penguins but Pittsburgh couldn’t get off to its first 3-0 start in 18 years.

49ers QB could have tried  
right arm as pro pitcher with Cubs

*The Associated Press*

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Chicago Cubs scout Sam Hughes watches Colin Kaepernick nowadays and still wonders what the strong-armed NFL quarterback might look like on a pitching mound, as a power arm in the pros. It’s hard not to, seeing the zip and accuracy on each throw, the competitive fire and fierce focus.

The Cubs never even watched Kaepernick throw a baseball before drafting him in the 43rd round almost four years ago.

They did watch him throw a football for Nevada, and decided that college game told them more than enough.

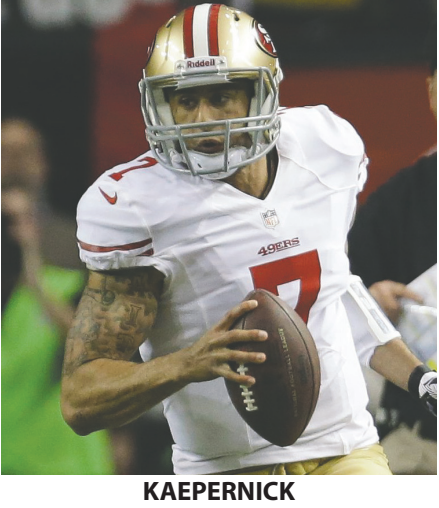
Ultimately, the Cubs just couldn’t lure Kaepernick away from his first love: football. Now, he’s headed to the Super Bowl to lead the San Francisco 49ers against Baltimore on Feb. 3.

Hughes, the longtime national cross-checker in the Cubs’ scouting department, and several others, including then-general manager Jim Hendry, figured they should give it a shot and hope Kaepernick might reconsider.

“Yeah, that wasn’t happening,” Kaepernick said with a smile Wednesday, shaking his head.

Hughes tried for two weeks to convince Kaepernick, who had made it all but clear he wouldn’t sign. He was surprised anybody drafted him at all given he had been so upfront about sticking with football.

But Chicago’s NFL sources – Hughes said three different teams – figured Kaepernick would be a late-round pick or



KAEPERNICK

even someone who might have to go the route of the Canadian Football League.

That seems so laughable now. The Niners picked Kaepernick in the second round of the 2011 draft, made him the starter midseason this year and now will ask him to carry them all the way to the franchise’s sixth championship in what will be just his 10th career NFL start.

“I was looking at this tall, kind of gangly at the time quarterback that was super athletic and had this really long throwing motion,” Hughes said. “I was talking to some of my buddies at Reno and said, ‘Boy, I wonder if this kid’s ever played baseball, he’s got an arm stroke like a pitcher.’”

That sent Hughes on a fun little research project. Kaepernick regularly threw 90 mph in high school, but was now some 40 pounds heavier as a college football player.

He certainly would throw harder.

“So, I was definitely intrigued, bigger, stronger, more athletic,” Hughes said. “Colin had no idea we were even considering drafting him. I kind of caught him off guard when I called him after we drafted him. He kind of got a kick out of it and said his phone was ringing off the hook that he’d been drafted by the Cubs. He had no idea.”

Then-Nevada coach Chris Ault had the challenge of developing Kaepernick’s football motion – and that wasn’t an easy task with the QB having been a pitcher.

“His first two years he was a thrower from his pitching days. It was all side-arm,” Ault said. “That was a habit we had to break. You could see his throwing motion, timing and touch was there. His senior year I saw the whole package. He was a guy ready for the NFL who could do all things they’d like him to do plus run. Now I look at him with the Niners and Jim and those guys are doing a super job. He has all the throws. What I really enjoy watching is he really learned to put the touch on the ball when he has to.”

49ers coach Jim Harbaugh can appreciate the Cubs’ attempt to recruit Kaepernick to baseball. He would have tried, too, had he been in their position.

“He’s a man for all seasons,” Harbaugh said. “Tremendous football player, basketball player, baseball player, a tremendous athlete with a lot of gifts of God. And a tremendous competitive fire, readiness and willingness to compete, to be able to make cool-headed decisions under fire. Who wouldn’t want a player like that in baseball or football?”



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