

GOLF

HONOLULU

Wie struggles to her worst score on PGA Tour

After Michelle Wie signed for her highest score on the PGA Tour at the Sony Open on Thursday, she struggled to keep her voice steady while explaining what went wrong.

Three double bogeys. Two three-putts. And late in a blustery round at Waialae, one shot was so off-line that her agent held up his leather-bound notebook to keep the ball from hitting him in the head.

Unable to stop the slide in gusts up to 35 mph, Wie stumbled to a 9-over 79 that left her tied with John Cook for last place with virtually no hope of becoming the first woman in 61 years to make the cut on the PGA Tour.

"Today it was like, 'Wow,'" she said. "It's like, 'I can't believe I'm doing this bad.'"

And as the 16-year-old got up from her chair, she figured out what would make it all go away.

"I want some chocolate," she said.



WIE

Packers name new coach • Playoffs

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McCarthy is youngest to lead NFL team

The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis.

The Green Bay Packers are coming off their worst season in 15 years. They don't know if their franchise quarterback is returning. Now they've hired the youngest head coach in the league.

Rebuilding year, anyone? New coach Mike McCarthy says no.

McCarthy compared his previous jobs, as an offensive coordinator in San Francisco and New Orleans, to building a house from the ground up.

This, he says, is like walking into his dream house.

"Now, we may knock down a few walls and give all the rooms a fresh coat of paint," McCarthy said. "But this definitely is not a rebuilding process."

Packers general manager Ted Thompson gave McCarthy a three-year deal to replace Mike Sherman, who was fired Jan. 2 after a 4-12 season.

Thompson touted the 42-year-old McCarthy as someone who could return the franchise to a championship level.

"What stood out to me in the interview process was Mike's leadership ability and the comfort level that he and I had on a personal level," Thompson said. "Mike is someone who is a tough, no-nonsense person. That appealed to me very much. And he is all about football."

McCarthy, who is three months younger than Jon Gruden, expects to win a championship.

"There will be an unconditional commitment from Ted and myself to bring a World Championship



AP PHOTO

Mike McCarthy, shown during a news conference in Green Bay, Wis., on Thursday, was named the head coach of the Green Bay Packers.

back to Green Bay," McCarthy said. "I think that's very important to state that right up front."

McCarthy has ties to the Packers and, perhaps more important, Brett Favre.

He was the team's quarterbacks coach in 1999, a forgettable 8-8 season under Ray Rhodes, who was fired after his only season as head coach.

Favre struggled that season, throwing 23 interceptions to 22 touchdowns. But he played

much of the season with a sprained, swollen thumb on his throwing hand.

Now, McCarthy must try to convince Favre to come back next season. He said he tried to call Favre on Thursday but they missed each other.

Thompson said McCarthy's relationship with Favre wasn't the deciding factor in hiring him, but it certainly didn't hurt.

Thompson said he spoke to Favre on Wednesday morning but

SKIING

WENGEN, Switzerland

Miller apologizes for comments on drinking

Bode Miller is backing down.

The overall World Cup champion apologized

Thursday for his comments about skiing and drinking during a televised interview, regretting the confusion and pain he caused.

The apology, while out of

character for the usually obstinate and defiant Miller, was not unexpected given the concern the comments caused within the sport's hierarchy.

"The most important thing is that I wanted to come straight out and apologize to mostly my family, friends," Miller said at a news conference. "But also we have a lot of people who supported me along the way, through my team and even just family and friends who have supported me, who I think are subject to only what the media puts out in America."

"And because of the way I made those comments in the '60 Minutes' interview it caused a lot of confusion and pain for all those people, and obviously that's not something I want to do so, firstly, I'd like to apologize to them," he added.



MILLER

RACING

MADONNA DI CAMPGLIO, Italy

F1 champ Schumacher considering retirement

Michael Schumacher will announce his retirement midway through this year's Formula One season if he feels he can't win another title with Ferrari.

"I will decide at midseason whether to continue or not in 2007," Schumacher said. "It depends on how competitive we are."

Schumacher's run of five straight world titles ended last season when Ferrari struggled to compete with champion Fernando Alonso's Renault and Kimi Raikkonen's McLaren-Mercedes.

"I want to at least be in a position where I'm able to win, be up there with the top drivers," Schumacher said.

This season's midpoint race is the United States Grand Prix in Indianapolis on July 2.



SCHUMACHER

• Colts

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

124-yard performance in November a "cheap 100." It was the first time the Steelers allowed a runner to top 100 yards in 23 games.

"They don't want to just sit there, line up and play football," Porter told The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "They want to try to catch you off guard. They don't want to play smash-mouth football, they want to trick you. ... They want to catch you substituting. Know what I mean? They don't want to just call a play, get up there and run a play. They want to make you think. They want it to be a thinking game instead of a football game."

If Porter was hoping to trade barbs during the next few days,

the Colts (14-2) weren't interested.

Most players said Porter was entitled to his opinion. Judging by their body language and facial expressions, though, it was clear they disagreed with Porter's view.

"Coach Dungy's thing is always to focus on the reality rather than the perception," left tackle Tarik Glenn said, smiling. "When we're on the field, we're who we are, and we're going to go out and play our game."

The quiet approach helped the Colts set a franchise record for wins, finish with most points scored (439) and fewest allowed (247) in the AFC and gave them home-field advantage through the playoffs.

That won't change now.

"We're not going to run uphill or throw when teams double cover us," Dungy said. "We try to take the path of least resistance."

Porter may not find many sup-

porters in the RCA Dome, either.

Colts officials have asked ticket holders to avoid selling tickets to Steelers fans, regardless of the price, hoping that the blue-and-white clad crowd will make enough noise to cause problems for Pittsburgh again.

Indy fans were already upset because of accusations that artificial noise was being piped into the RCA Dome in November. NFL spokesman Steve Alic said then that the NFL never investigated.

But even the lopsided score, botched assignments and litany of Steelers penalties couldn't convince Porter the Colts were tough enough.

"If they would have outit us, they would have just lined up, and they wouldn't have done all the audibles every play," he said. "If you want to outit us, line up and play football. ... Line up, you get your people, we got our eight

didn't set any sort of deadline for the quarterback to give him an answer on retirement.

"He's working through that," Thompson said. "I haven't said, 'do this' or whatever."

Favre has not committed to playing next season and has hinted that the team's offseason moves would play a role in his decision.

Favre threw a career-worst 29 interceptions this past season, and admitted several times that he was trying too hard to make up for the missing players the Packers lost to injury.

McCarthy said he considers Favre one of the most coachable quarterbacks in the league.

"I think the fire and the passion he plays with gets mistaken for, he might be out of control," he said.

In other coaching news

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y.

Mularkey resigns from coaching job with Bills

Mike Mularkey submitted his resignation to the Buffalo Bills on Thursday, a person familiar with discussions between the coach and the team said.

The Bills will formally announce the coach's resignation during a press conference scheduled for early today. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the official announcement had not been made.

ESPN.com, citing unidentified sources, first reported that Mularkey had reached a settlement with the team to cover the final three years of his contract. ESPN.com also reported that Mularkey's decision to leave the team was because of undisclosed family reasons.

The former Pittsburgh Steelers offensive coordinator, who completed his second season with Buffalo, is married and has two sons.

Mularkey declined to comment on the report, except to say: "Right now is not the best time to talk."

He added that he was aware of the press conference being scheduled and preferred that the news come then.

underdogs against a top-seeded team rather than being a top-seeded favorite so, even if they upset the Colts on Sunday, they can't lose the AFC championship game at home like they've done an unprecedented four times since 1995.

Those losses have forged a belief, not just among their fan base but with some in the sport as well, that Cowher cannot be considered anything more than a good coach until he wins a Super Bowl. The Steelers made it there 10 years ago this month but lost to the Cowboys 27-17.

That Cowher is one of football's renowned competitors, with an icy glare that can cause a 300-pound lineman to scurry to the far end of the bench in fright only exacerbates how he feels about constantly building a winner but not "The Winner."

"Everybody hurts when you lose," wide receiver Hines Ward said. "But he takes it hard."

If Cowher coached in a sunny-weather city such as Phoenix or Tampa, with a youthful fan base and a pro football past that can be measured in a few decades and not generations like Pittsburgh's, his January record might not be such a big deal.

But Pittsburgh's aging population and obsessively loyal fans don't forget easily, especially since many still cling to vivid memories of their four Super Bowl wins under Cowher's predecessor, Chuck Noll, the only other Steelers coach in the past 37 years.

Consider this: Cowher moved into 14th place in NFL career coaching victories this season, one ahead of the Redskins' Joe Gibbs, yet Gibbs has won three Super Bowls and Cowher has won none. Of the 13 coaches ahead of Cowher, nine won at least one NFL title (some coached when there was no Super Bowl) and most have multiple titles.

The Vikings' Bud Grant won the 1969 NFL title in the final season before the AFL-NFL merger but lost the Super Bowl to the AFL's Chiefs and three subsequent Super Bowls.

And the five coaches immediately behind Cowher — Gibbs, Hank Stram, Mike Holmgren, Weeb Ewbank and Mike Ditka — all won at least one Super Bowl.

"Life is full of disappointments," Cowher said of the postseason shortcomings. "Sometimes we wonder why."

"But ours is not to wonder why, ours is to continue to try. We will do that."

It isn't Cowher alone in the Steelers' organization who is getting weary of not winning. Team president Art Rooney said before this season, "I think we all feel like it's time. We've been close, and we have to take that last step."

• Dungy

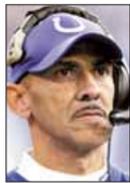
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from you. If anything, be bolder in who you are. Because our boys are getting a lot of the wrong messages about what it means to be a man in this world, about how you should act, and how you should dress, and how you should talk, and how you should treat people.

"They don't always get the right message, but you guys have the right messages."

He couldn't be more right. And the more people who are high profile say it the better.

People who don't think we have a problem with boys in this country are deluding themselves.



DUNGY

The signs are everywhere: from the dropout rates in schools, to overcrowded prisons, to addiction problems, to just about every statistical way to measure performance you can think of. Boys have more problems than girls do. Virtually any teacher will tell you this.

Not that anyone should be surprised.

In a youth culture that worships "street cred," and a larger culture that genuflects on the altar of celebrity and money, is it any wonder so many boys seem lost? Any wonder that so many seem to be chasing the wrong values, perhaps best exemplified in the recent 50 Cent movie, "Get Rich, Or Die Tryin'?"

Listen to Dungy's words: About how you should act, and how you should dress, and how you should talk, and how you should treat people.

Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio, a nation turns its lonely eyes to you? That was

written more than 30 years ago, a lament for the death of heroes and the vacuum those deaths creates. It's only more so now.

Role models? Look around. From self-indulgent actors to pampered athletes and entertainers, it's a barren landscape out there.

Who are kids supposed to emulate? T.O.? The hit rapper of the month? Out-of-control parents screaming at referees? People on talk radio who live off attitude? Too many people who seemingly have no respect for anything.

Who should they emulate? Because our boys are getting a lot of the wrong messages about what it means to be a man in this world.

And if Charles Barkley was right a few years ago when he said athletes and entertainers should not be role models, the unfortunate fact is they are.

That's especially true in a society in which so much of the old order has broken down, whether

it's schools, church, neighborhoods, all the things that once kept a society tethered.

Which brings us back to Dungy. And his words.

You can make a case that too many professional athletes have not exactly been the best of role models, but that doesn't change Dungy's message.

Athletes do have to do more, if for no other reason than they are such high profile, if for no other reason than they help shape the culture, the culture that now cripples so many kids.

In eulogizing his son, Dungy was saying it's never easy being a kid, that adolescence is always a minefield to maneuver through. He was saying that all teenagers are searching for the adults they will one day be.

What he also was saying is that athletes can help get the message out about what it means to be an adult, whether it's simple things like knowing how to dress, or how to talk, to larger things like know-

ing how to treat people.

That, in itself, was refreshing.

We long have become used to coaches who live inside the bunkers they create for themselves. It's become a cliché, the driven coach oblivious to everything except the next game plan, the next practice.

But here was Dungy, in one of the worst moments of his life, telling his players they had to do more, that they had the right messages but they had to do more to get them out. Here was Dungy showing that he lives in a world that's bigger than a stadium, with a vision that goes beyond the next opponent.

Let's not forget Dungy's words. Words that should be listened to. Words a lot more powerful than any pre-game pep talk. Words that transcend football.

Words for a generation.

Bill Reynolds is a columnist for The Providence Journal. Send comments to breynold@projo.com.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

The Associated Press

WOMEN

No. 12 Purdue 60

No. 17 Minnesota 56 OT

MINNEAPOLIS — Aya Traore scored 17 of her 19 points in the second half and overtime to lead No. 12 Purdue past No. 17 Minnesota in a defensive struggle between the final two unbeaten teams in the Big Ten.

Traore's driving layup with a minute to go in overtime gave the Boilermakers (13-2, 5-0) the lead for good, and she added a free throw in the final seconds to put the game out of reach, giving Purdue its ninth straight victory.

The Gophers (10-4, 3-1) had one last shot to tie the game in final 10 seconds, but Shannon Schonrock's 3-pointer was off the mark, giving Purdue its first win on the road against a top 25 team in more

than two years. The Boilermakers beat No. 23 Michigan State in East Lansing, on Jan. 8, 2004, a span of eight games.

Jamie Broback scored 21 points to lead the Gophers, who committed 23 turnovers and shot just 25 percent in the second half.

Traore has emerged as an integral part of the Boilermakers' offense this season, averaging more than 12 points a game alongside steady juniors Katie Gearlds and Erin Lawless.

No. 1 Tennessee 94
No. 13 Georgia 85

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Candace Parker scored a career-high 26 points and had 10 rebounds as No. 1 Tennessee remained undefeated.

The Vols (16-0, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) won their 62nd straight league home game. Georgia (11-4, 2-1) was the most recent SEC team to win in Thompson-Boling Arena in December

1996, and the Bulldogs looked like they could end the drought.

Georgia trailed by nine points with 8½ minutes left but cut it to 77-76 on two free throws by Sherill Baker with 3:53 to go. But Tennessee answered with a quick 7-0 run. Georgia got as close as four points in the final minute before the Vols hung on.

No. 3 LSU 79
South Carolina 46

BATON ROUGE, La. — Simone Augustus scored 22 points as No. 3 LSU beat South Carolina its 24th consecutive home win and 17th straight in the Southeastern Conference.

Augustus was 9 for 17 from the field for the Tigers (14-0, 3-0), while Sylvia Fowles had 15 points and 12 rebounds, Quianna Chaney added 12 and Schloanda Hoston had 11.

Reserve guard Stacy Booker led South Carolina (9-6, 0-3) with 15 points.

No. 7 Connecticut 92
Cincinnati 71

HARTFORD, Conn. — Mel Thomas had 16 of her 21 points in the second half to lead Connecticut past Big East newcomer Cincinnati.

Thomas, who grew up in Cincinnati, hit a pair of 3-pointers in a 20-2 UConn run to open the second half. The fourth-ranked Huskies (14-2, 4-0 Big East) made nine of their first 13 shots in spurt.

No. 8 Ohio State 72
Iowa 62

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Jessica Davenport scored a season-high 34 points, grabbed 16 rebounds and had six assists to lead No. 8 Ohio State past Iowa, the Buckeyes' sixth win in seven games.

Debbie Merrill added 15 points for Ohio State (12-2, 3-1 Big Ten), which never trailed as the Buckeyes' post players dominated play.



AP PHOTO

Purdue's Aya Traore, left, loses control of the ball as she is pressured by Minnesota's April Calhoun during Thursday's game in Minneapolis.

TENNIS

SYDNEY, Australia

Hewitt gets early exit from Sydney tournament

Top seed Lleyton Hewitt was beaten by Italy's Andreas Seppi 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 in the quarterfinals of the Sydney International on Thursday.

Gone was Hewitt's 22-match winning streak at a tournament he captured in 2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005. He didn't play in 2002 and 2003 because of injuries or commitments.

Hewitt nearly pulled out of his first-round match with a stomach virus. Against Seppi, he blew two match points in the deciding set after serving for the match in the second set.