

## JV Fighting Knights stay perfect



David Bell/News-Herald Photo

Havasu's Mitchell Wegner (30) gets by a Yuma tackler while fellow Fighting Knight Nic Cooke (89) makes a block during the closing moments of the first period of play at Lee Barnes Stadium at Lake Havasu High School Thursday. Wegner scored from four yards out to open the second period and the JV Knights remain undefeated with the 52-26 win.

## NBA

# With refs locked out, NBA confident in 62 backups

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

With its regular referees locked out, the NBA is confident in its roster of replacements — even the two it previously fired.

The NBA begins preseason play Thursday night with 62 referees. The league said more than half have officiated in the NBA Development League, and all but five have worked the summer league.

It also said the two with league experience, Michael Henderson and Robbie Robinson, were some of the best replacements available.

Realizing the scrutiny the backups face, the league reminded teams Wednesday about its rules against publicly criticizing the officials. But senior vice president of referee operations Ron Johnson believes the teams won't have much to complain about.

"I think some people rise to the most amazing level of performance at amazing times," Johnson said on a conference call. "So we'll see."

Denver visits Utah in the first game, and Tre Maddox, Deldre Carr and CJ Washington will officiate. The replacements will be paid about \$1,100 per game, same as a first-year officials and more than they were paid in the D-League or WNBA.

The league had the replacements in training camp last weekend, but thought it wouldn't need them. The NBA said the referees union agreed in principle on a new contract last Friday, but backed out of the deal two days later. The league then told teams Tuesday it was going ahead with the backups.

"The teams and we in the best of worlds would like to have our current staff opening the season of course. They're the best 60 referees in the world. But having rejected the agreement reached by their negotiators, we're left with no choice but to use replacements," president of league and basketball operations Joel Litvin said.

"That's not ideal, but this is part of the sports business and we're moving on with this group. We have plenty of confidence in this group."

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Devine rushes for 220, W.Va. beats Colorado 35-24

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Noel Devine ran for a career-high 220 yards and a touchdown, leading West Virginia to a 28-17 victory over Colorado on Thursday night.

Jarrett Brown threw two touchdown passes and red-shirt freshman fullback Ryan Clarke ran for two fourth-quarter scores for West Virginia (3-1).

Both offenses played sloppily despite having an extra week to prepare. West Virginia lost four fumbles and intercepted three of Cody Hawkins' passes.

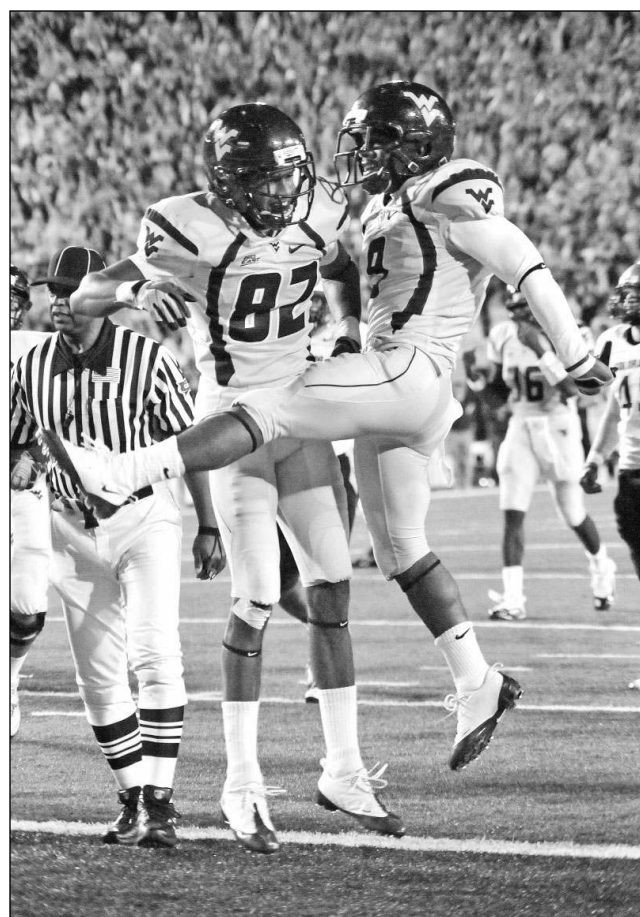
Hawkins threw two touchdown passes, but Colorado (1-3) managed three total points on four other drives that went inside the 30.

Colorado now faces the impossible task of meeting coach Dan Hawkins' off-season directive of "10 wins, no excuses." The Buffaloes would have to win the remainder of their games, including a bowl, starting next week at No. 2 Texas.

**UAB 30, Southern Mississippi 17**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Hiram Atwater returned an interception 40 yards for a touchdown to seal UAB's 30-17 win over Southern Mississippi on Thursday night, the Blazers' first victory over their Conference USA rival.

The Blazers (2-3, 2-1) had set up Josh Zahn's second field goal of the fourth



Jeff Gentner/AP Photo

West Virginia's Alric Arnett, left, and Jock Sanders celebrate Sanders' touchdown against Colorado during the second quarter Thursday in Morgantown, W.Va. West Virginia won, 35-24.

quarter after recovering a muffed punt. Southern Miss (3-2, 1-1) still needed only a touchdown and extra point to improve to 10-0 over UAB.

Atwater stepped in front of Austin Davis's first pass of the drive that started with 1:19 left and no timeouts.

Atwater crossed the field and raced into the end

zone.

He earlier recovered a fumble to set up the go-ahead score late in the third quarter.

Joe Webb rushed for 138 yards and a touchdown and passed for another score for the Blazers, who had lost three straight games and were humiliated 70-14 by the Golden Eagles last season.

## NHL

# Detroit and St. Louis will open NHL season in Sweden

By **STEPHAN NASSTROM**  
AP SPORTS WRITER

STOCKHOLM — More than a few players will feel right at home when the Detroit Red Wings and St. Louis Blues open their NHL seasons with a home-and-home series Friday and Saturday in the Swedish capital.

Eight players who will lace up their skates are originally from Sweden.

"I would say the Red Wings could be the second national team back home," Detroit center Henrik Zetterberg said. "People are really fired up for this. We have a lot of fans in Sweden."

Zetterberg missed all eight of the team's exhibition matches in North America because of a sore groin, but he scored a goal in his comeback as the Red Wings routed Swedish Elite League club Farjestad 6-2 on Wednesday in their preseason finale

on the larger European surface.

Zetterberg, one of Detroit's top players, should be joined by fellow Swedes Nicklas Lidstrom, Johan Franzen, Niklas Kronwall, Thomas Holmstrom and Jonathan Ericsson at the Ericsson Globe arena. Andreas Lilja, another Swede, is injured, while Swedish rookie Daniel Larsson is Detroit's third goalie.

The St. Louis team includes Swedes Patrik Berglund and Alexander Steen.

Detroit has been the NHL's leading club for developing top Swedish players, starting in 1972 with Thommie Bergman, who played 246 games in six NHL seasons.

A six-time winner of the Norris Trophy awarded to the NHL's best defenseman, Lidstrom hails from a city close to Stockholm.

"It's like a dream for me, to get the chance and return to Sweden during fall," Lidstrom said after Thursday's practice.

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