

We want your scores!

We want your scores! Coaches, parents, team officials and fans are encouraged to send in scores of area high school athletics to Tribune sports editor Chris Siers at sports@t-g.com.

In order to keep up with the increasingly rising demand for up-to-date and current online reporting, the staff of the Tribune relies on the help of coaches and team officials to help report scores on the nights of games and events from Cornersville, Marshall County and Forrest High Schools.

NFL teams tapping USFL veterans for help in training camp

By **TERESA M. WALKER**
AP Pro Football Writer

NASHVILLE — Cornerback Terrell Bonds has talked about being a member of the NFL's Tennessee Titans since he played in college at Tennessee State.

Five years after his college days ended, he's finally on the Titans' roster as a training camp signee.

"For it to actually come true now, it's crazy and I'm thankful for it," Bonds said.

Bonds owes his latest football opportunity to the revived USFL where he played 10 games this spring with the Pittsburgh Maulers, and he's got lots of company as the NFL starts its first week of preseason games Thursday night. Bonds is among 42 players from the USFL's inaugural season signed through Tuesday by 26 of the NFL's 32 teams.

USFL MVP KaVontae Turpin now is with Dallas, while All-USFL offensive lineman Cameron Hunt signed with the Chargers and All-USFL tight end Sal Cannella joined the Green Bay Packers. Wide receiver (12) has been the most popular position for NFL teams followed by cornerback (nine) as NFL teams look for help in training camps.

Like Bonds, Turpin has been scrambling to keep his dreams of professional football alive since his college career at TCU ended during the 2018 season. Turpin has bounced from the Fan Controlled Football League, Spring League and finally the USFL before being signed by Dallas for camp.

"Man, it's like a dream come true. It's a blessing," Turpin said. "I've been in four leagues before I came here. So, it's a blessing to be here and know the Cowboys gave me a wonderful opportunity to come here and prove myself. I'm just happy to be here."

Many of these USFL players have been in the NFL before.

Hunt played with both Denver and the Raiders. Bonds played four games with Baltimore in 2020 and spent last offseason with Miami before being waived last August. Darrius Shepherd caught six passes over 2019-20 with Green Bay and signed with Denver after reviving his career with the New Jersey Generals.

"It was really beneficial," Shepherd said of the USFL. "I'm really happy that they put that league on. They did a great job and provided a lot of opportunities for guys as you see people get signed all over the league."

NFL teams certainly were watching. Not only did 32 officials from the NFL Development Pipeline work USFL games, NFL teams had no issues quickly accessing USFL game tapes so pro scouts could watch breakdowns for any players they liked.

Tennessee general manager Jon Robinson said their pro staff had specific teams to evaluate and grade and met to rank those players just before the USFL's championship.

The Titans previously had worked out both Bonds and cornerback Shakur Brown, Bonds' teammate with Pittsburgh who signed with Tennessee a few days before Bonds.

"But then certainly watching the USFL and seeing how they performed or things they needed to work on, it gave us more, I'd guess, comfort knowing that we're bringing a guy in that's played football recently," Robinson said.

Having practiced and played this spring gave USFL players a couple of big advantages over those working out on their own hoping for an NFL team to call. First, they're physically ready for the grind of training camp.

"I just got finished with a whole season so I'm definitely like midseason for me," Brown said.

For the USFL players who spent three months practicing in pads, a full preseason will take a physical toll that will only grow.

"You just got to be a pro about it," said Cannella, who was in camp last year with the Miami Dolphins before playing with the New Orleans Breakers this spring. "We all went into that season trying to get to this point right here so we all knew what we signed up for."

Secondly, these USFL veterans also have recent game tape. Robinson said he had to pull up tape from the 2021 NFL preseason Sunday when he wanted to check out players on his emergency list who didn't compete in the USFL. Robinson knows only too well the value of that list after his Titans used an NFL-record 91 players last season because of injuries.

"I love it when those guys come in, and they just want an opportunity," Robinson said. "We saw that last year ... Hopefully we don't go down that road again this year, but guys were looking for an opportunity. Hopefully these two guys will come in here and seize it, and we'll see kind of where it goes from there."

For now, these USFL players are focused on one practice and day at a time trying to make the most of this latest NFL opportunity. They also want to see the USFL continue.



Xavier Viazcan, pictured with teammate Jonathan Zuniga, will represent Cornersville and Marshall County in Fargo, a highly-touted tournament held in Fargo, North Dakota.

Bulldog sophomore making history on the mat

Xavier Viazcan, a rising sophomore at Cornersville High School is preparing to go to the biggest high school wrestling tournament in the nation next month.

Viazcan earned his spot on Team Tennessee for the second year in a row by placing third in the Freestyle and fourth in the Greco Roman state tournaments respectively.

Xavier continues to train for the tournament affectionately known as "Fargo," as it takes place in Fargo, North Dakota.

High school wrestlers from every state in the country go to this tournament to see where they land among the best of the best.

This will be Xavier's first year

representing Cornersville and Marshall County at Fargo—although he has participated in other national tournaments before.

His eighth-grade year, and final year of eligibility in youth wrestling, resulted in numerous successes including being tied as the AAU third-best wrestler in the state for all weights among middle schoolers, winning most outstanding wrestler at one of the top qualifying tournaments Tennessee has to offer, and runner up at the state Folkstyle tournament.

Postseason he placed first in the state for both Greco Roman and Freestyle.

This past high school year, Xavier had an exciting season

on the newly formed Cornersville wrestling team with 21 wins—13 of them pins—in the 170 lbs. weight class as a freshman.

He lost in the blood rounds of the regional tournament to a more experienced Page wrestler which ended his Folkstyle season.

Xavier continues to weight train at Heavy House in Lewisburg and train technique and speed with the Spartan Wrestling Club in Spring Hill.

Xavier is the son of Katie Warf Viazcan and Edgar Viazcan Rios, grandson of Ann Harris and the older brother of Dominic Viazcan, a Cornersville seventh-grader.

PGA Tour says players knew consequences of joining LIV Golf

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

The PGA Tour asked a federal judge in San Francisco to deny the appeal of three suspended players who joined Saudi-backed LIV Golf and now want to compete in the tour's lucrative postseason, arguing the players knew the consequences two months ago.

Talor Gooch, Matt Jones and Hudson Swafford are seeking a temporary restraining order. They are among 10 players who filed an antitrust lawsuit against the PGA Tour last week.

The hearing is scheduled for 1 p.m. PDT Tuesday in San Jose, California, two days before the first of three FedEx Cup playoff events in the chase for the \$18 million top prize.

The FedEx St. Jude Championship in Memphis, Tennessee, has a \$15 million purse, and the top 70 players advance to the second postseason event in Wilmington, Delaware.

Gooch (No. 20), Jones (No. 65) and Swafford (No. 67) are among nine players who have joined LIV Golf and finished the regular season among the top 125 in the FedEx Cup standings. The other six who joined LIV Golf are not asking to play in the tour's postseason.

In a court filing Monday to oppose the

temporary restraining order, the tour argued antitrust laws do not allow the three players "to have their cake and eat it, too."

Gooch, Swafford and Jones used the same phrase in separate, legal-heavy letters to tour officials last month in protesting their suspensions and claiming the regulations were onerous and kept them from playing elsewhere.

"I am a free agent and independent contractor. The Tour cannot have its cake and eat it too by trying to control me as one might an employee, while not providing me the rights and benefits an employee would receive," each letter said.

The PGA Tour argued in its opposing motion, "Despite knowing full well that they would breach TOUR Regulations and be suspended for doing so, Plaintiffs have joined competing golf league LIV Golf, which has paid them tens and hundreds of millions of dollars in guaranteed money supplied by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund."

LIV Golf CEO Greg Norman said in a statement, "I believe players have the right to play when and where they choose so their talents can take them as far and high as possible."

"I believe all players — whether they choose to play with LIV or the PGA Tour — understand and appreciate

the purpose and importance of the players' legal actions, across the globe," Norman said. "The PGA Tour is trying to cast this as 'us' against 'them.' The players know better."

The three players were not among the highest-sought players for Norman's rival league, though they were among the initial group of players who signed with LIV Golf. Gooch was the only one among the top 50 in the world, mainly from his only PGA Tour win last November.

"Plaintiffs have waited nearly two months to seek relief from the Court, fabricating an 'emergency' they now maintain requires immediate action," the filing said. "It doesn't."

The tour contends player knew they would be ineligible for the FedEx Cup playoffs "when they accepted millions from LIV to breach their agreements" with the tour.

Players were not suspended until they actually teed off in a LIV Golf event.

The LIV Golf events, with a 48-man field, consist of 54 holes and offer \$25 million in total prize money for each event. Seventeen players already have earned \$1 million or more in three or fewer events. Five more events remain on this year's schedule, and LIV Golf already has announced a 14-tourna-

ment schedule for 2023.

The next LIV event does not start until after the PGA Tour's season ends at East Lake in Atlanta with the FedEx Cup, which pays \$18 million to the champion.

Even though LIV Golf players have been suspended, they remain eligible for the FedEx Cup bonus package. Anyone finishing in the top 125 gets \$120,000. Those who finish inside the top 150, such as Pat Perez and Paul Casey, would get \$85,000.

Dustin Johnson, Patrick Reed and Sergio Garcia are among LIV Golf players who chose to resign their PGA Tour membership. Reed is playing two Asian Tour-International Series tournaments this month.

The lawsuit was filed Aug. 3 by 11 players. The manager for Carlos Ortiz told The Associated Press that Ortiz is no longer part of the lawsuit, though it has not been reflected in court documents yet.

"Carlos does not want to be involved in any legal battles," his manager, Carlos Rodriguez, said in a text message. "He is thankful for the opportunity he had to play on the PGA Tour and Korn Ferry Tour the last few years."

Ortiz in two LIV events has made nearly \$3.5 million, about 44% of his career PGA Tour earnings from 160 tournaments.