

Virginia cancels Virginia Tech game after players killed

By **HANK KURZ Jr.**
Associated Press

The University of Virginia has canceled its game against rival Virginia Tech scheduled for Saturday following the slaying of three football players on campus just over a week ago. The university made the announcement Monday night, two days after a nearly two-hour memorial service to remember Lavel Davis Jr., Devin Chandler and D'Sean Perry. The three were fatally shot on Nov. 13 after a field trip to see a play in Washington. "The decision was made following

communication between the Atlantic Coast Conference, Virginia and Virginia Tech athletic department administration," Virginia Tech said in a statement. "The ACC and Virginia Tech continue to support UVA following the devastating tragedy" Authorities have said that Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., a UVA student and former member of the football team who was on the trip, began shooting at students on the bus as it pulled to a stop at a campus parking garage. A prosecutor said in court last week that a witness told police the gunman

targeted specific victims, shooting one as he slept. Two other students were wounded. Jones, 23, faces second-degree murder and other charges stemming from the shooting, which set off a manhunt and 12-hour campus lockdown before Jones was apprehended in suburban Richmond. Jones is being held without bond. Authorities have not released a motive. Virginia also canceled a game against No. 23 Coastal Carolina last Saturday. Neither the Cavaliers (3-7, 1-6 At-

lantic Coast Conference), under first-year coach Tony Elliott, nor the Hokies (3-8, 1-6), under first-year coach Brent Pry, have anything to lose by not playing their Commonwealth Cup matchup, the last scheduled game for both. The Hokies, who endured a massacre that left 33 dead, including the gunman, in 2007, wore orange uniforms as they ended a seven-game losing streak with a 23-22 victory at Liberty on Saturday. The Hokies and Virginia share orange as a signature color.

Widow asks \$55M from NCAA for ex-USC football player's death

By **BRIAN MELLEY**
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Attorneys asked a jury Monday to award \$55 million to the widow of a former USC football player in a landmark case accusing the NCAA of failing to protect him from repetitive head trauma that led to his death.

Matthew Gee, a hard-hitting linebacker who was on the 1990 Rose Bowl-winning squad, endured countless blows that caused permanent brain damage and led to cocaine and alcohol abuse that eventually killed him at age 49, his lawyers said in closing arguments. His widow, Alana Gee, was in the courtroom Monday.

In the first case of its kind to go to a jury, the attorneys told Los Angeles Superior Court jurors that the NCAA, the governing body of college athletics in the U.S., had known about effects of head trauma in sports since the 1930s but failed for decades to notify players of the risks or put rules in place to protect players. "You cannot bring Matt back but you can say what the NCAA did to him was wrong," attorney Bill Horton said. "Put this on the NCAA's radar. ... This is the only way they will ever listen."

A lawyer for the NCAA said Gee experienced a sudden cardiac death brought on by long-standing hyperten-

sion and acute cocaine toxicity. He discussed a raft of Gee's other serious health problems, which he said were not related to football.

"The NCAA had nothing to do with the things that tragically took Mr. Gee's life," attorney Will Stute said.

The issue of concussions in sports, and football in particular, has been front and center in recent years as research has discovered more about long-term effects of repeated head trauma in problems ranging from headaches to depression and, sometimes, early onset Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease.

The monthlong trial is one of hundreds of wrongful death and personal injury lawsuits brought by college football players against the NCAA in the past decade.

But Gee's is only the second case to go to trial with allegations that hits to the head led to chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative brain disease. A 2018 case in Texas settled a few days into the trial.

Gee was one of five linebackers on the 1989 Trojans squad who died before turning 50. As with teammate and NFL star Junior Seau, who killed himself in 2012, Gee's brain was examined posthumously at Boston University's Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy Center and found to have CTE.

CTE is associated with memory loss, depression and progressive dementia. It can only be diagnosed after death.

Boston University has found CTE in the brains of 110 of 111 deceased former NFL players and 48 of 53 former college players, according to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Hall of Famers diagnosed after death include Ken Stabler and Mike Webster.

In his senior year, Gee was team captain and led USC in tackles, forced fumbles and fumble recoveries.

Gee married Alana, his college sweetheart, after graduating in 1992, and they lived a normal life for 20 years. They raised three children as he ran a successful insurance company in Southern California.

But things took a turn around 2013, when he began to lose control of his emotions, according to the lawsuit. He became angry, confused and depressed. He drank heavily. He told a doctor he forgot entire days.

Attorneys for Gee said that CTE, which is found in athletes and military veterans who suffered repetitive brain injuries, was an indirect cause of death because head trauma has been shown to promote substance abuse.

Stute said the wrongful death case was about what caused Gee's death and not whether CTE exists, which he said is

still a hypothesis.

After years of denials, the NFL acknowledged in 2016 that BU's research showed a link between football and CTE. The league agreed to settle head injury cases covering 20,000 retired players providing up to \$4 million for a death involving CTE. It's expected to exceed \$1.4 billion in payouts over 65 years for six qualifying conditions.

In 2016, the NCAA agreed to settle a class-action concussion lawsuit, paying \$70 million to monitor former college athletes' medical conditions, \$5 million toward medical research, and payments of up to \$5,000 toward individual players claiming injuries.

Gee never reported having a concussion and he said in an application to play with the Raiders after graduating that he had never been knocked unconscious, Stute said.

He said the NCAA was being placed in a position of having to defend itself from allegations it was unaware of at the time, noting that CTE had not been discovered until 2005. He said nothing the NCAA could have done would have kept Gee alive today.

"You can't hold the NCAA responsible for something 40 years later that nobody ever reported," Stute said. "The plaintiffs want you in a time travel machine. We don't have one ... at the NCAA. It's not fair."

S.C., Vanderbilt fined for fans on the field

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (AP) — South Carolina and Vanderbilt were fined by the Southeastern Conference on Sunday, a day after schools' fans rushed the field to celebrate football victories.

The SEC docked Vanderbilt \$250,000 for the school's third violation of the league's access to competition area rules. The Commodores won their second straight league game and broke an eight-game series losing streak with a 31-24 win over Florida on Saturday.

The SEC said it was Vanderbilt's third violation. The last one came in 2016, at a men's basketball win over Kentucky in February 2016.

South Carolina was fined \$100,000 after its fans filled the field following a 63-38 win over then-fifth-ranked Tennessee on Saturday night. The SEC said South Carolina was last fined in 2014, after its men's basketball team topped Kentucky.

The collected fines go into the SEC Post-Graduate Scholarship Fund.

USC moves into top 5 for 1st time in 5 years

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**
AP College Football Writer

Southern California moved into the top five of The Associated Press college football poll Sunday for the first time in five years.

Georgia received 62 of the 63 first-place votes in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank as the top four teams held their places after playing varying degrees of close games Saturday.

No. 2 Ohio State received the other first-place vote. Michigan was No. 3 again, followed by TCU.

The fifth-ranked Trojans edged up two spots after a thrilling victory against rival UCLA. The last time USC was ranked in the top five was September of 2017, when it started at No. 4 but spent most of the season ranked in the teens before finishing 12th.

Lincoln Riley's first season as USC coach has produced one of the best turnarounds in the country, with the Trojans going from four wins to 10, and the regular-season finale against No. 13 Notre Dame and a Pac-12 championship game still to go.

"If you would have told me at the end of last season I would be here now with this group of guys and being able to play for a championship, I would have called you a dead liar. Just being completely honest," USC fourth-year receiver Kyle Ford told reporters after the UCLA game. "I'm just so thankful for everyone on this team."

LSU stayed at No. 6. Clemson moved up two spots to No. 7. Alabama held at eighth and Tennessee dropped four spots to No. 9 after getting upset in a blowout at South Carolina.

In their 63-38 victory, the Gamecocks scored more points against a top-five team as an unranked team than any in the history of the AP poll. Oregon rounded out

the top 10 after the Ducks beat Utah in the Pac-12's other marquee game on Saturday night.

Poll points

Georgia set a school record with its 10th appearance at No. 1 this season. Last year the Bulldogs had nine No. 1s, the most in school history.

Georgia has been at No. 1 a total of 34 times, tying Michigan for 12th most in the history of the AP poll, which dates to 1936.

Southern California is a top-five team for the 283rd time in poll history. That's seventh most, 13 behind Nebraska.

The top five at being top five: Alabama (451), Oklahoma (430), Ohio State (418), Notre Dame (318) and Michigan (306).

In

Texas, again. The 24th-ranked Longhorns, who started the season unranked, have moved into the Top 25 four times. They haven't managed to stay there for more than two weeks.

A blowout victory against Kansas pushed the Longhorns back into the rankings as they head toward a season finale against Baylor.

Out

Oklahoma State lost its rivalry game against Oklahoma to drop to 7-4 and out of the rankings again.

Conference call

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 5, 10, 12, 14, 17, 22).

SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 6, 8, 9, 20).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 7, 16, 18).

American — 3 (Nos. 19, 21, 25).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 3, 11).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 4, 15, 24).

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 23).

Independent — 1 (No. 13).

Bengals, Burrow look to keep momentum after beating Steelers

By **MITCH STACY**
AP Sports Writer

CINCINNATI (AP) — Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow said Sunday's 37-30 win over the Steelers was "one of my favorites since I've been here."

Despite being without receiver Ja'Marr Chase and losing running back Joe Mixon to a concussion, the Bengals took control in the second half.

The third-year quarterback liked how it went down.

There were scoring drives of 92 and 93 yards. Backup running back Samaje Perine caught three touchdown passes, and Trenton Irwin, who was promoted from the practice squad for the game, caught the first TD pass of his career.

The defense forced five punts and a turnover on downs in the second half.

"Man, just all day, just overcoming adversity, fighting through, finding ways to get yards, get first downs, put points on the board," Burrow said.

Cincinnati has won four of its past five games and improved to 3-4, one game behind

the Baltimore Ravens in the AFC North.

"I think we're playing as good as anybody," Burrow said. "We're hitting our stride offensively."

Burrow completed 24 of 39 passes for 355 yards on the day he became the third-fastest player in NFL history to reach 10,000 passing yards.

The four passing touchdowns tied his career high.

His composure and focus were on display in a 93-yard drive in the fourth quarter that ended with a 6-yard TD pass to Perine, extending Cincinnati's lead to 34-23 with 4:30 remaining.

Tyler Boyd made critical catches of 27 and 15 yards to keep the chains moving during the drive.

That, Bengals coach Zac Taylor said, "really put the game away for us."

Tee Higgins caught nine passes for a season-high 148 yards.

WHAT'S WORKING

Burrow continues to adapt and just find ways to win. The offensive line battled the tough Steelers front and gave Burrow time to throw

when he started looking deeper down the field in the second half. ... Cincinnati's defense allowed only a field goal in the second half until the Steelers managed another touchdown with 45 seconds left in the game.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Burrow had several short passes knocked down at the line, and Steelers linebacker T.J. Watt miraculously reached up and picked one right out of the air. Burrow had another interception on a tipped ball.

STOCK UP

Perine doubled his number of career touchdown receptions with scoring grabs of 29, 11 and 6 yards. The seven-year pro caught four passes total for 52 yards and rushed for another 30 yards. It was the first time a Bengals running back had three receiving TDs in a game in franchise history.

"You know, it's every role you ask him to play, he's going to do it," Taylor said. "Whether it's the second half, feature back when Joe's out, whether it's playing his role on third down, or

some of the other packages we put him in, he's just as reliable as they come. Very dependable."

STOCK DOWN

Mixon, who scored five touchdowns in Cincinnati's win over Carolina before the bye week, had 20 rushing yards on seven carries and caught three passes for 42 yards before going out with a concussion.

INJURIES

Mixon's status for Sunday's game is unknown.

KEY NUMBER

3 — Field goals made by Cincinnati's Evan McPherson on three attempts. The kicks of 45, 54 and 44 yards not only were important to the game, but showed "Money Mac" is back on track after some misses in the past few games.

NEXT STEPS

The Bengals will need to be at their best when they travel to face AFC South-leading Tennessee (7-3) next Sunday. The Titans, winners of seven of the past eight, beat the Packers 27-17 on Thursday.