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## WITH NO SPORTS, WHAT HAVE WE MISSED?

While sports fans have been watching replays of old sports events, or watching nothing at all, due to the COVID-19-related sports pause, here's what some of them may have missed:

— Was the late surge by the Philadelphia Flyers' for real? The Flyers were on a 9-1 roll before the National Hockey League season was suspended, with goalie Carter Hart giving up only 14 goals in eight games, going 7-1, and backup Brian Elliott going 2-0. Are (were?) the Flyers the team to beat in the Stanley Cup playoffs?

— Was the six-week self-imposed retreat from PGA Tour play part of Tiger Woods' grand plan to be at his absolute best for the Masters, April 9-12, and would he have moved one major title closer to the record held by Jack Nicklaus? Or would Rory McIlroy have confirmed his No. 1 position in the world rankings by winning at Augusta for the first time to give him the career Grand Slam?

— Is it possible the Toronto Raptors would be part-way along the road to a second consecutive NBA title, awaiting a matchup with the best team in the Eastern Conference and No. 1 overall, Milwaukee Bucks, and then perhaps the Los Angeles Lakers, No. 2 overall at the mid-March stoppage?

— While the Philadelphia Flyers (see above) were certainly on a late-season roll, St. Louis Blues would probably be zooming (small Z) toward their second straight Stanley Cup triumph. Why? Their record of 42-19-10 was best in the West (No. 2 overall, behind Boston), and that was almost totally accomplished without their best player, Vladimir Tarasenko. He underwent shoulder surgery in late October but is now completely healthy. The red-hot Blues adding a superstar? Blues' fans are hoping the season resumes, and playoffs follow.

— We missed rooting for Brad Gushue of Newfoundland, Brier winner in three of the past four years, to capture his second world championship. Although not a lock, Gushue's team was on a roll when the sports world was upended. Bruce Mouat of Scotland and Nikolas Edin of Sweden would have provided a challenge, but Gushue would probably be smiling broadly had he been given a chance to again take on the world.

— And while world curling events are old hat for Gushue, it would have been a brand new experience for Gimli's Kerri Einarson, whose first crack at a world title in Prince George went by the wayside. Will the Canadian Curling Association give her a chance to go to the worlds next year, or will she have to go through the entire provincial and national Scotties grind to get another opportunity to win the world title?

- Ex-NBA star **Charles Barkley**, via Facebook, on Detroit's Bad Boys teams: "Those guys were out there trying to hurt people. ... when you were playing the Pistons you had to call home and tell your family you love them just in case you never saw them again."

- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "The Miami Dolphins just paired a new jersey number with their touted rookie QB, and let's just say **Lawrence Welk** fans couldn't be happier. It's a 1 and a Tua."

- **Shane Lantz** of the Mason City (Iowa) Globe Gazette, on why he likes hockey fights: "It's like a boxing match, but more slippery and with less of a chance of running into **Don King**."

- **Dwight Perry** again: "The Tokyo Olympics have been rescheduled for 2021 but will still be known as the 2020 Games, organizers say. 'We couldn't agree more,' said 12 of the Big Ten's 14 athletic directors."

- Comedy writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha: "The NFL is gonna try to play a football season I'm certain. As soon as players begin testing positive it'll be shutdown. It'll last three or four games, sort of like the XFL."

- **RJ Currie** of [sportsdeke.com](https://sportsdeke.com): "A Chinese man reportedly invented a car that can run on wind. A tentative name was **Feng Chezi**, which roughly translates to **Don Cherry**."

- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "**Secretariat** won the simulated Kentucky Derby of all Triple Crown winners. Even more impressive, he won while wearing a surgical mask."

- Headline at [fark.com](https://fark.com): "\$cott Bora\$ beg\$ player\$ to reject MLB's re\$art plan\$."

- Another one from Fark.com, after the Philadelphia Eagles offered the use of Lincoln Financial Field for free wedding ceremonies for front-line workers: "Here's hoping guests remember to throw rice and not batteries."

- **Dan Graziano** of ESPN.com, on former MVP **Cam Newton** still unsigned in NFL free agency: "He is the prom king who all of a sudden can't get a date."

- **Nick Canepa** of The San Diego Union-Tribune, on the NFL's schedule-revealing show: "I know we're desperate, but three hours? I looked for **Leonardo DiCaprio** on the bow of **Jerry Jones**' yacht."

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