

Johnson played well in Ryder Cup

Written by Mark Dukes

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Snippets of sports items from near and far ...

I have a gracious invitation this week to play golf at the home course of Zach Johnson over at Elmcrest Country Club. Going into Sunday's final day of the Ryder Cup, it appeared I'd be playing the course of a Ryder Cup champion.

But, no, Team Europe stormed back from a two-day deficit of 10-6 and retained the Ryder Cup. Some may view it as a colossal American collapse, and to an extent it was, but Europeans made incredible shots and unbelievable putts time after time.

Cedar Rapiidian Johnson was one of America's best players in this Ryder Cup, winning three of four matches including a singles clash Sunday with Graeme McDowell. It appeared for a time Sunday he would be able to send some winning Ryder Cup memorabilia to the Elmcrest clubhouse.

Nevertheless, Johnson made a great account of himself on one of sport's biggest pressure-packed stages. The USA loss won't make this week's trip to Elmcrest any less enjoyable, knowing that's where Zach Johnson got his start.

Wayne Elliott spent last Monday night in the National Football League as referee in the controversial Green Bay-Seattle game. Friday night, he was on a high school field in Texas.

The NFL officials' lockout was ended shortly after Monday night's game, sending replacements back to their old jobs. Many of those men returned to the high school and college ranks.

Ellliott, not the official who ruled that Seattle's Golden Tate had made a catch in the end zone for a Seahawks victory, worked a prep game in Texas Friday night between two teams from

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Austin. During the NFL game, Elliott was not in the end zone to view the controversial play and rather was positioned behind Packer quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Elliott told CBS Sportsline: "No regrets at all. It was a blast, absolute blast. Most fun I've ever had."

He added that he'd received some harrassing phone calls. "Mostly, they're saying I should commit suicide, I should die, but nobody has offered to pull the trigger so it's just been pretty laughable," he said.

"One lady was cursing me out and telling me I was hot. I saved that one, it was pretty funny."

No similar incidents were reported in Friday's high school game in Texas.

The Metro area can claim a contributing member on college football's No. 2-ranked team in the land.

Cedar Rapids Kennedy's Christian French is a redshirt freshman at Oregon, which is 5-0 and rated second behind Alabama in the polls. French has played in four of five games and has made seven tackles.

French, 6-foot-5 and 242 pounds, went to Oregon as a highly touted prospect and began his career as a tight end. But he was converted to defensive end/outside linebacker before fall drills. French is No. 3 on the depth chart at that position behind senior Dion Jordan, a returning all-conference player, and a sophomore.

French's father, Cherokee, was an excellent basketball player at Cedar Rapids Washington.

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The NFL and college football teams are collectively putting up amazing offensive numbers and an ungodly number of points. Friday night, Iowa high school teams also lit up scoreboards.

Iowa City West scored a school-record 76 points in its win over Dubuque Hempstead. The Trojans never punted in the game and used their reserves the entire second half.

Butch Pedersen won his 250th game as a high school coach Friday night. His West Branch team scored 55 first-half points against Sigourney-Keota and took it easy in the second half of a 55-20 victory. Several winning teams scored in the 60s or 70s, including Marion in a 63-0 shutout of Benton Community.

(Mark Dukes is former sports editor of the Cedar Rapid Gazette. He is co-host of The Gym Class radio show weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM-AM 1600, FM-107.5 and FM-106.3.)