

Sports

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SECTION B

By the Numbers: Tigers at Astros kicks off MLB playoffs

PAGE B4



Spotlight: Five special moments in Oakland Coliseum history

PAGE B6

COMMENTARY



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Floodwaters from the Catawba River overtook the baseball and practice fields at West McDowell Middle School. Many sports facilities across the Foothills are feeling the impact from Hurricane Helene.

As region recovers from catastrophe, sports will ultimately help in healing process

All of western North Carolina continues to deal with the catastrophic flooding and loss of infrastructure associated with the remnants of Hurricane Helene that moved in.



DAN CRAWLEY

The local sports scene is no different as many facilities from local recreational leagues to high school fields also have taken significant damage from the flooding with Helene. Burke and McDowell counties were hit very hard over a three-day period with rain in excess of 20 inches that fell along the area, according to the National Weather Service. The rain led to rapid rises of water all along the Catawba River.

In McDowell County, the most significant sports damage is focused on ball fields operated by the McDowell County Parks and Recreation. As of Sunday afternoon, more of the damage is becoming realized. The North Fork of the Ca-

tawba River widened as the storm peaked on Friday and brought a lot of damage into the valley in the Ashford and North Cove communities.

Sandy Andrews Park is one of the locations in North Cove that received extensive damage from the rapids that developed as the North Fork reached major flood stage on Friday. Other facilities owned by McDowell Parks and Recreation that may have been damaged include Lindley Park in Old Fort, which lies a matter of yards from the Catawba River. As the recovery efforts continue over the next few days, additional issues will likely be realized as we learn more about the true scope of the flooding.

Another area that was heavily impacted includes the practice and baseball fields at West McDowell Middle School due to the Catawba River's expansive reach.

According to U.S. Geological Survey data, the Catawba River at Pleasant Gardens had a record high crest of 21.66 feet Friday afternoon, nearly four feet above the previous record crest that occurred

in 2004. That all results in several feet of water covering the practice football field and baseball field for the school. With the water now gone, all the debris and a muddy mess is left behind.

McDowell High School's athletic facilities as of Sunday has appeared to fare in better shape. The school, which is located on a ridge, was well away from the floodwaters. More will be known about the status of the high school fields once members of the school and athletic department can safely get out and inspect things.

Freedom High School dealing with flashbacks of 2004

In western Burke County, the flood damage associated with Helene brings back memories of 2004, but worse.

Lake James water levels peaked at 10 feet above full pond, according to Duke Energy, which forced an immense

Please see **SPORTS**, Page B2

Americans win the Presidents Cup for the 10th straight time

DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

MONTREAL — Xander Schauffele ran off four straight birdies to lead an onslaught of red scores on the board Sunday and the Americans made the outcome as inevitable as it usually is, winning the Presidents Cup for the 10th straight time.

Sam Burns completed an unbeaten week, Russell Henley capped off his impressive debut in the Presidents Cup with a win and Keegan Bradley — the Ryder Cup captain next year — delivered the deciding point when Si Woo Kim missed a 10-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole.

Max Homa finished the scoring with his first point of the week, a 2-and-1 victory over Mackenzie Hughes that made it 18 1/2-11 1/2, the largest margin of victory for the

Americans away from home, even if was just north of the border at Royal Montreal.

“We talked about taking care of business today, and we all went out there and did it. I was just lucky enough to be in that spot in the day, but really a meaningful moment in my life,” Bradley said. “The last time I played in one of these I was the clinching point for the Europeans in the Ryder Cup. Fast forward 10 years later, and I got to do that today.

“Really something I’ll remember the rest of my life.”

The Internationals needed everything to go right at Royal Montreal. All they could manage was a good fight, more tight matches, but still no cup.

Please see **PRESIDENTS CUP**, Page B2



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP

United States team captain Jim Furyk hoist the Presidents Cup as Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau looks on at Royal Montreal Golf Club on Sunday in Montreal.