

The Miami Herald

February 11, 2014

Circulation: 147,130 / UMV: 1,073,638

ALVAREZ'S JOYFUL JOURNEY HITS A SNAG

SPORTS 1D

GOLFERS TEED OFF AFTER THEFT AT TRUMP RESORT

LOCAL & STATE 1B

MIDWAY

Miami's Best Diesel Shop
2-year Unlimited Mileage Warranty on All Repairs

8150 W. Flagler St. (888)848-8011 MidwayMiami.com

Miami Herald

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2014 \$1.00 BROWARD & KEES EDITION | MIAMIHERALD.COM

HEALTHCARE

The Florida Legislature will consider creating statewide standards for telemedicine, the practice of using communications technology to care for patients

HEARD AT WORK Dr. Andrea Pragasin is demonstrating telemedicine equipment at Miami Children's Hospital, which is focusing its telemedicine efforts on international consultations.

EXPLORING BENEFITS OF TELEMEDICINE

BY KATHLEEN HADDAD
Miami Herald Health Care Columnist

TALLAHASSEE — The doctors at Miami Children's Hospital are all recent converts to telemedicine, a practice of using communications technology to diagnose and treat patients from afar. The hospital's telemedicine program is one of the most advanced in the state, and it is now being used to care for a growing number of patients, both in and out of state.

For one, telemedicine equipment is Florida isn't required to reimburse doctors for telemedicine services, meaning physicians aren't guaranteed payment for Web-based consultations or diagnostic and intervention services. When more, many doctors don't have the licenses to practice in other states or the infrastructure to support it at other hospitals.

Pragasin said he is now in a state where he can be a child at home and be a child at Miami Children's Hospital.

The Florida Legislature wants to change that.

Over the past few weeks, state lawmakers will consider creating statewide standards for telemedicine. They will also debate establishing an accreditation requirement, as well as a system for regulating and certifying telemedicine providers by their state.

"The goal is to create a single standard for this kind of technology to be used," said state Rep. Ross Utter, a health care committee member.

Utter said the goal is to create a single standard for this kind of technology to be used.

Extremists' tactics raise questions

BY SYDIA

Stories by former prisoners of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria group raise concerns about the ultimate goals of extremists in Syria.

BY BOB GUTMAN
Miami Herald Staff Writer

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The agreement to get Syria out of the conflict is a long way from being a reality, and it is unclear how long it will take to reach that point. In the meantime, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has taken control of large areas of Syria and Iraq, and it is unclear how long it will take to reach that point.

ISIS has taken control of large areas of Syria and Iraq, and it is unclear how long it will take to reach that point.

Out of the closet, into limelight

After announcing he is gay, many fans and players welcomed Michael Sam on Sunday and Monday with expressions of support.

BY MIKE HALEY
Miami Herald Sports Columnist

In a field that has been so much more accepting of diversity, Michael Sam will not only be a player, but he will also be a role model.

Sam's announcement was met with a mix of support and criticism. Some fans and players welcomed him, while others expressed their disapproval.

Sam's announcement was met with a mix of support and criticism.

Employer mandate delayed until 2016

BY THE OREGON ADMINISTRATOR

The Obama administration gave companies with 50 or 100 workers more time to comply with the Affordable Care Act's requirements.

The Obama administration gave companies with 50 or 100 workers more time to comply with the Affordable Care Act's requirements.

FOOTBALL

Out of the closet, into limelight

After announcing he is gay, many fans and players welcomed Michael Sam on Sunday and Monday with expressions of support.

BY ADAM H. BEASLEY
abeasley@MiamiHerald.com

In a little less than three months, Michael Sam will most certainly become the first openly gay active player in NFL history.

Then what? Will Sam be greeted with acceptance, taunts or — as many believe — ambivalence? Truth is, no one knows

for sure. That's the problem with firsts. There's no template to follow.

Several Dolphins players sent out messages of encouragement to Sam, including this one: "#respect bro. It takes guts to do what you did. I wish u nothing but the best."

Richie Incognito, the face of the Dolphins' bullying scandal, privately used vile slurs in text message conversations with teammate Jonathan Martin. On Sunday, however, Incognito joined those locally and around the globe to voice their support for Sam.

That list includes First Lady Michelle Obama, who on Monday said he is "an inspiration to all of us. ... We couldn't be prouder of [his] courage both on and off the field."

But what about when the plaudits die down and the world stops watching?

• TURN TO FOOTBALL, 11A



MICHAEL SAM

FOOTBALL

Incognito in group giving Sam support

Many are taking a wait-and-see approach to the long-term ramifications.

As the Dolphins showed last fall, an NFL locker room can be a brutal place. Fireable language in most Fortune 500 companies is laughed off behind closed NFL doors.

Still, it has happened before, even if the world didn't know about it. Just ask Charley Casserly, who spent nearly 30 years working in NFL front offices, including a decade as the Washington Redskins' general manager.

"To be honest with you, I think this thing is way overblown," Casserly said. "We knew of some gay players we had with the Redskins. Everybody in the building knew they were gay."

Casserly added: "It was no issue in the locker room."

Perhaps not, but there's more to NFL franchises

than simply the 53 men of the field. Many old-school scouts, coaches and fans will need to adjust their thinking. And some teams might shy away from drafting Sam simply because his media glow will burn too hot.

Whoever drafts him will become, at least for a short time, the center of the sporting universe. And by and large, football people hate a circus.

But Donte Stallworth, an outspoken retired NFL receiver, thinks that's a cop-out.

"If any NFL team can't 'handle the media coverage' of drafting Sam, then your team is already a loser on the field," Stallworth wrote on Twitter. "There are a multitude of issues that can arise in the long duration of an NFL season. ... With drafting Michael Sam, you get a jump-start on controlling the 'media coverage' right from the

onset."

ESPN analyst and former coach Herm Edwards went down that road Sunday.

He took heat for saying that Sam, a 24-year-old defensive end from the University of Missouri, would be a distraction to the team that picks him.

And earlier this month, Saints (and former University of Miami) linebacker Jonathan Vilma told NFL Network that "I think [a gay athlete] would not be accepted as much as we think he would be accepted."

While there's a chance that some of his new teammates will derisively pelt him with gay slurs, they also might truly welcome him into the brotherhood with the type of tolerance on display via Twitter Sunday and Monday.

First things first, though. Sam has to be drafted, or at least sign



THEY ALREADY KNEW: Missouri coach Gary Pinkel, right, and players, including offensive lineman Robert Luce (56) and defensive lineman Michael Sam (52), prepare to take the field in early January.

with a team as a rookie free agent.

That seems nearly certain. Daniel Jeremiah, a former NFL scout now working for NFL Network, said Sam was projected as a fourth- or fifth-round pick before the news.

"I don't think it will change," he added.

Once in camp, Sam might find life easier than many expect. Attitudes on sexuality have swung rapidly in the last decade, with state after state legalizing gay marriage. The

The Miami Herald

younger generation simply doesn't view social issues through the same filter as their parents and grandparents.

And guess who is inside today's NFL locker rooms? Mostly people who came of age after the turn of the century.

"This generation of students is certainly more open and welcoming than even we as adults give them credit for," said Jenn Strawley, the senior associate athletic director at the University of Miami.

Strawley helped spearhead the Hurricanes' You Can Play initiative, a campaign whose inclusive premise is self-explanatory. If you can play, you can play — regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation. It's not just a slogan on the Coral Gables campus, Strawley said. It's how the vast majority of student-athletes there think.

"I look forward to a day where that's not a story," Strawley said of Sam's announcement, "but I'm thrilled that he had the courage to come out and take that stance."

So, what's next for Sam? Which team will take the plunge?

Perhaps the Dolphins, who could use the positive public relations after six months of negativity. What quicker way to prove that the team's locker room is indeed an inclusive, welcoming place than by drafting the sport's first openly gay player?

It could be a soft landing spot.

South Florida is largely seen as a gay-friendly region. Wilton Manors is the second-ranked gay city in America by percentage of population, according to 2011 statistics released by the U.S. Census Department.

"If they draft Sam, it's got to be for the right reasons," said Tadd Schwartz, a Miami-based marketing expert.

"Because he will help the team. I think if they do it for any other reason, the fans will see through it."