

Martinez, Sanchez are All-Stars

Cleveland Indians catcher/first baseman Victor Martinez and Pittsburgh Pirates second baseman Freddy Sanchez will represent their teams at the All-Star Game on July 14 in St. Louis. **C4**

Tour of the Valley attracts top cyclists

By JOHN BASSETTI
VINDICATOR SPORTS STAFF

YOUNGSTOWN — Watching website video of the first stage of the Tour of the Valley induces dizziness.

On tourofthevalley.com, the filming through a car windshield shows the Ellsworth Township route starting along Newton Falls Road, then Palmyra Road, then South Duck Creek Road and finally Ellsworth Road.

On a bicycle, however, the four-turn 5.53-mile course will be less of a strain on the eyes and much more demanding on the legs and respiratory system for riders daring enough to indulge.

Rather than watch from a seat in front of a

computer monitor, bring a chair and sit on-site starting Friday morning.

The weather forecast looks good, but, regardless, rain or shine, the core objective of this weekend's Tour of the Valley won't change: a competitive multi-stage event that is expected to attract 300 pro and elite amateur riders from across the Midwest and beyond.

Friday morning's time trial is just the beginning. A criterium in Canfield takes place in the afternoon and the weekend's bread-and-butter event — a 33-mile road race in Columbiana that becomes 66 for pros — is scheduled on Saturday.

So as not to get countryside overload, even

downtown Youngstown gets a piece of the action with a criterium through city streets on Sunday.

Carbon Racing of Greenford is the local organizer while the Mahoning County Convention and Visitors Bureau is lending its assistance and putting out the welcome mat.

Although patterned after the three-week-long Tour de France, the Mahoning Valley's scaled-down version distinguishes itself in another way.

Carbon Racing has incorporated its "carbon neutral" mantra into the event with emphasis on the Tour of the Valley's secondary objective: the omission of emissions.

Carbon Racing, a non-profit competitive

cycling team, has made its mission to be the leader in offsetting the carbon produced in cycling events and in daily routines.

"There is a need to educate the cycling community on the impact of our energy usage to the environment when we attend these races," Carbon Racing founder Dan Quinlan says. "This occurs when we commute to races, looking for lodging and places to eat."

He spoke about the importance of proper trash disposal.

"An example," Quinlan said, "is using refill-

DEMOGRAPHICS 2009

LICENSED RACERS	
Number licensed	72,000
Median age	34
Median household income	\$75,000
College graduates	81%
Post-graduate	27%
Male/female	89%/11%
Professional/managerial	57%
Married	35%
RECREATIONAL RIDERS	
Total U.S. cyclists	64.3 million
Adults (16 & over)	48 million
Children	14.3 million
Avid cyclists (fitness/health)	31 million
Adult male/female	45%/55%
Median age	32
Median household income	\$60,000
College graduates	70%
Cyclist to golfer ratio	2.5:1

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WIMBLEDON GRAND SLAM HISTORY



FOR THE RECORD BOOKS: Roger Federer of Switzerland, left, holds his trophy and Andy Roddick holds the runner-up plate, after Federer defeated Roddick to win the men's singles championship on the Centre Court at Wimbledon on Sunday. Associated Press

Roger Federer crowned in epic fashion

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Roger Federer was playing for history. Andy Roddick was playing the match of his life.

On and on they duelled, Federer trying for a record-breaking 15th major championship, Roddick striving for his second, in a Wimbledon final that required more games than any Grand Slam title match in the considerable annals of a sport dating to the 1800s.

"Ten games all, final set," intoned the chair umpire. Then, "Twelve games all, final set." And, still later, "Fourteen games all, final set."

They were each other's equal for four full sets and nearly the entire 30-game fifth set. Until Federer, far more experienced in such matters, finally edged ahead, breaking Roddick's serve for the only time in the 77th and last game to close out a 5-7, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (5), 3-6, 16-14 victory Sunday.

The epic match — the fifth set alone lasted more than

1½ hours — gave Federer his sixth Wimbledon title. Add that to five from the U.S. Open, three from the Australian Open and one from the French Open, and Federer's Grand Slam total rises to 15, one more than Pete Sampras, who flew in from California on Sunday morning to be on hand.

"He's a legend," Sampras said. "Now he's an icon." Indeed, Sampras already was among those labeling Federer the greatest tennis player ever, and there's no doubt the 27-year-old from Switzerland keeps bolstering his case.

"It's not really one of those goals you set as a little boy," Federer told the Centre Court crowd during the trophy ceremony, "but, man, it's been quite a career. And quite a month."

Federer won the French Open four Sundays earlier to complete a career Grand Slam and tie Sampras with 14 major titles (Margaret Smith Court owns the women's

record of 24).

"Sorry, Pete," Roddick said. "I tried to hold him off." He weathered Federer's career-high 50 aces and his 107 total winners in the longest match and longest fifth set in major final history, topping marks set in 1927.

The tennis gods — as well as Sampras, Rod Laver and Bjorn Borg, all in front-row seats — must have enjoyed every moment of the 4-hour, 16-minute tussle. Federer, who can make it all look so easy, was forced to work darned hard to eclipse Sampras' mark, and Roddick was left heartbreakingly close to finally winning Wimbledon.

Roddick dropped to 0-3 in finals at the All England Club, also beaten by Federer in 2004 and 2005. After the match ended on a shanked forehand by the sixth-

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McNair's death is ruled a homicide

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Shot twice in the head and two more times in the chest, former NFL quarterback Steve McNair was the victim of a homicide, police declared Sunday.

But authorities wouldn't say it was a murder-suicide — even with his 20-year-old girlfriend dead at his feet from a single bullet.

McNair had been dating Saleh Kazemi for several months, and Nashville police spokesman Don Aaron said Sunday that a semiautomatic pistol was found under her body. She was shot in the head.

McNair, who was married with four sons, had a permit to carry a handgun in Tennessee, and he was arrested once before with a 9mm weapon although charges in the case were dropped.

Police said they had not yet determined who owned the gun found at the scene.

Investigators weren't looking for a suspect, but were questioning friends of the couple as well as Kazemi's ex-boyfriend. They also were waiting for results of drug and other laboratory tests before deciding whether McNair was killed in a lovers' quarrel.

"That's a very important part of the investigation as we work to ultimately classify Miss Kazemi's death," Aaron said.

The details surfacing after McNair's death stand in stark contrast to the public persona he enjoyed during his career.

McNair repeatedly played through serious injuries and pain to win, though he came up a yard short of forcing overtime on the Tennessee Titans' famous drive that came short of forcing overtime in the 2000 Super Bowl.

Generous, he frequently took part in charity work for both the Titans and later the Baltimore Ravens after a 2006 trade.

McNair even helped load donated food, water and clothes onto tractor-trailers that he had arranged for hurricane Katrina victims, and paid for three football camps for children himself this year.

McNair and Kazemi were found



McNair



Kazemi

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Athletics drop Tribe; Wedge declared safe

CLEVELAND (AP) — While their embattled manager received some good news, it was another disappointing day for the Cleveland Indians.

Prior to Sunday's game with Oakland, Indians general manager Mark Shapiro said manager Eric Wedge will keep his job for the rest of the season, even though Cleveland has the worst record in the AL. The announcement came after the Indians recorded consecutive victories for the first time since June 11-12.

The positive news for Wedge ended once the game started. Gio Gonzalez pitched six strong innings for his first win of the season

and the Athletics beat the Indians 5-2.

The loss sent Cleveland its 50th defeat of the season and the Indians have dropped 14 of 18.

"We've had a tough first half," Wedge said. "My job is to be out front and take the heat. I take full responsibility for all of this."

Shapiro gave no assurances that Wedge will return for the final year of his contract next season, but for now any question about the manager's status is gone from the clubhouse.

"He's a great manager," said catcher Victor Martinez,

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HOME RUN: Oakland Athletics' Orlando Cabrera, right, jumps into the arms of teammate Jason Giambi in the dugout after hitting a solo home run in the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Cleveland Indians on Sunday at Progressive Field in Cleveland. Associated Press

Stewart wins after last-lap crash

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Tony Stewart led lap after lap around Daytona International Speedway, using a flawless pit-road performance to inch closer to his second win as owner of his race team.

Then Kyle Busch slid outside in a last-lap bid to snatch the victory away from his former teammate.

The frantic 2.5-mile chase late Saturday night led to a violent wreck that sent Busch sailing into the wall while Stewart skirted by for a somber victory.

Stewart celebrated his 35th career Sprint Cup victory with a bit of heartache.

Busch left the speedway with a definite headache.

Just another wild restrictor-plate finish for NASCAR, which is still smarting from April's frightening crash at Talladega Superspeedway, where Carl Edwards went airborne into the fence in a similar last-lap crash.

"That's not the way I wanted to do it," said Stewart, who won the summer Daytona race for the third time in five years.

Stewart usually takes every win any way he can. But after wrecking Busch in the frantic finish, he wasn't in the mood to gloat.

"I am not shaken by it, it doesn't matter who it is, you don't want a race to be decided like that," Stewart said. "It's just a bad situation. I don't feel as much gratification for winning the race as I should."

Busch passed Stewart right before the final lap to take the lead, but Stewart chased him down and calculated his next move. Stewart closed in on Busch's bumper, and slight contact sent Busch drifting up the track.

Busch slid back down to maintain his lead, then tried to slide in front of Stewart to block Stewart.

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