

TV HIGHLIGHTS

NFL: Jets-Patriots, 1 p.m., CBS
NBA: Celtics-Pistons, 3 p.m., NBATV, NBCSB
NFL: Cardinals-Rams, 4:25 p.m., CBS
NFL: Packers-Bears, 4:25 p.m., Fox
Listings, C13

Sports

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE JANUARY 3, 2021 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/SPORTS

DAN SHAUGHNESSY

Tom has won this year, but back off on Bill



Picked-up pieces while desperately seeking a better new year . . .

■ The rush to give Tom Brady all the credit for the last two decades of Patriots success is unfair and inaccurate. At this hour Brady is leading bigly in the “Tom vs. Bill” debate, but none of those six Super Bowls happen without the Hoodie. Week in and week out, year in and year out, the Patriots won because of preparation, coaching, and abject intimidation of the opposition — in

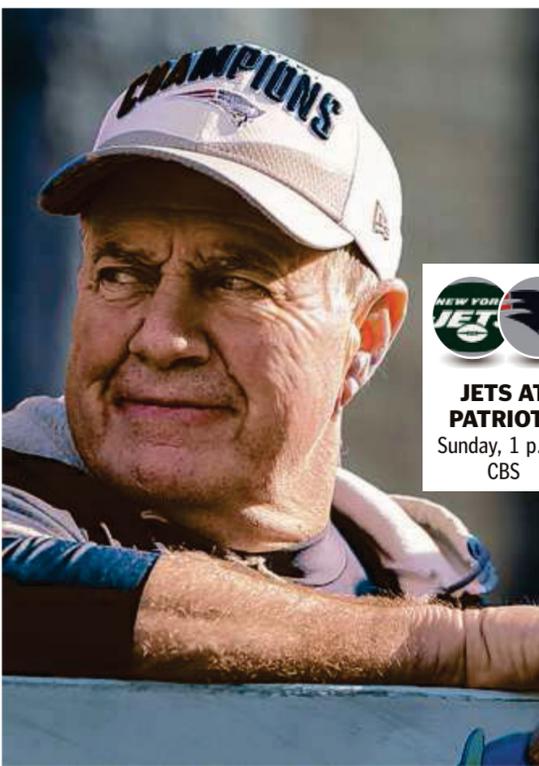
addition to talent. In these dark hours along Route 1, it's a mistake to assign New England's two-decade dynasty solely to Brady.

History will treat Bill Belichick much better than what he's been hearing from all of us these last couple of weeks. Does anyone ever challenge Red Auerbach's credentials as a head coach? No. And Auerbach the coach never won a championship without Bill Russell.

In 20 seasons on the bench, Red won nine championships, all with Russell on the court. We still built a statue for Red.

■ The Red Sox have not been

SHAUGHNESSY, Page C7



JETS AT PATRIOTS
 Sunday, 1 p.m., CBS

This Patriots season has not gone at all well, but Bill Belichick can still boast the title of six-time champion.

2019 FILE/NATHAN KLIMA FOR THE GLOBE

BEN VOLIN

ON FOOTBALL

Trust fall: Poor season exposes cracks

The 2020 season will forever be known as the year that many of the Patriots' streaks came to an end.

This is the first season since 2008 they didn't win the AFC East or even make the playoffs. The first season since 2000 they will finish with a losing record, sitting at 6-9 entering Sunday's finale against the Jets. The first season since 2002 they had a four-game losing streak.

But 2020 will also go down as something bigger — the year that our collective confidence in Bill Belichick was shaken.

“In Bill we trust?” After this season, it's more of a question

than a statement of fact.

Belichick has a storied track record of making unconventional decisions work — such as getting rid of Lawyer Malloy and Logan Mankins right before a season, or letting the clock run down on the Seahawks in the Super Bowl. Certainly Belichick has made some wrong calls (hello, Malcolm Butler), but six Super Bowl rings, nine conference championships, and 17 division titles speak for themselves.

But Belichick ran out of magic fairy dust in 2020. His first season since 1999 without Tom Brady was, unequivocally, a

ON FOOTBALL, Page C5

NHL PREVIEW 2020-21

Bruins have questions to answer

By Matt Porter
 GLOBE STAFF

The Bruins open training camp Sunday in Brighton, and more puzzling questions persist besides who will be David Krejci's wingers.

With the NHL eschewing the bubble of last summer to let teams play in their home rinks, will the league escape the season without major COVID-19 issues? Will vaccination spread far enough to let fans return to games this spring? Or will cancellations and virus spread force games to move to hub cities, or chill the action entirely?

Let's park that, zoom in, and tackle the major team-related issues:

What to make of the back end?

Even though the top three of Charlie McAvoy, Brandon Carlo, and Matt Grzelcyk should be stout, and they should have enough NHL-caliber talent, how much will they miss Torey Krug's puck-moving ability and Zdeno Chara's size? Can Carlo (fifth year in the league) help John Moore (24 games last season) readjust to regular duty? Are Jeremy Lauzon and Con-

BRUINS, Page C11

KEVIN PAUL DUPONT

ON SECOND THOUGHT

NHL wiring its pucks for the web



The hockey puck as it's been known forever, that humble 6-ounce chunk of hard rubber patented decades ago by Bruins general manager/coach Art Ross, has left the building.

There's a new kid in NHL rinks, and this is fitted with a tiny embedded battery, a circuit board roughly the size of a half-dollar, and 6-inch-long tubes that emit infrared light at 60 pulses per second — fast, yet still two beats behind Connor McDavid on a breakaway.

“Crazy, isn't it?” said the NHL's Dave Lehanski, an executive vice president who has helped steer the puck's development the last 7-8 years. “It almost has a life of its own.”

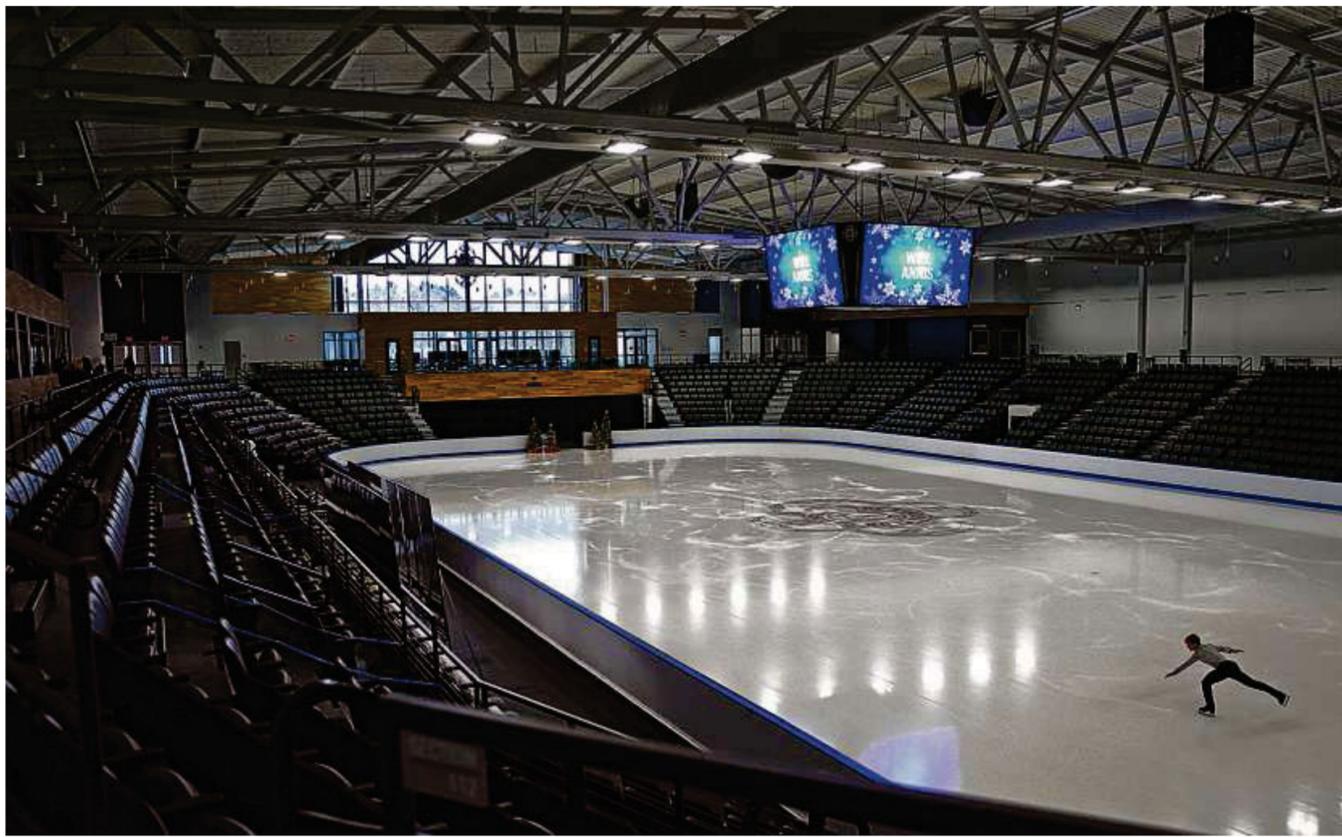
Crazy ain't the half of it, especially for those of us who remember maddening nights of pond hockey, searching in the dark, knee-deep in drifted snow for pucks gone astray. Where were those light beams then?!

“Yeah, it went in right there . . . it went in right there . . . I swear!” said Lehanski, briefly a netminder in his Bowdoin days, recalling fruitless childhood hunts for black chunks of vulcanized rubber. “I know it's out here somewhere!”

ON SECOND THOUGHT, Page C11



Place where dreams are made



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The Skating Club of Boston includes a performance center with an Olympic-size ice sheet, 2,500 seats, and an overhead scoreboard.

New Skating Club of Boston drawing the elite

By John Powers
 GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

NORWOOD — Olga Ganicheva told her skaters at the Dallas Figure Skating Club about a new building going up in Massachusetts that would make the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg look like an ice shanty.

“At the beginning I thought, this totally won't happen,” said Ashley Lin. “Then at the end of August we came up and took a tour and I thought, ‘Well, this is serious.’”

The Skating Club of Boston, which for more than eight decades operated out of a glorified Quonset hut by the Charles River, has become the sport's 21st-century mecca. Its new \$67 million facility on University Avenue, which



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Hanna Harrell is among the elite figure skaters who train at the Skating Club of Boston.

opened in September, has three ice surfaces plus an extraordinary range of amenities.

The centerpiece is a performance center with an Olympic-size ice sheet, 2,500 upholstered seats, an overhead scoreboard, and a Bose sound system. There's also a figure skating training rink with 1,500 seats and another for hockey with benches and penalty boxes that will be used by the local high school team.

Other features include a strength-and-conditioning center with examination, therapy, treatment, and X-ray spaces, a dance studio with mirrored walls, an academic center, a conference room, a club lounge, a trophy room, a lobby cafe, and a skate shop.

“If we missed something, it's probably very small,” reckoned Joe Blount, the club's long-time president.

In an era when competitive skaters usually have to bounce around multiple venues for practice ice, dance space, conditioning, and medical care, the Skating Club offers a full-service destination.

“This is providing everything under one roof and it's all new,” said Ganicheva, who, with Aleksey Letov, directs the high-perfor-

SKATING CLUB OF BOSTON, Page C12

INSIDE

Westphal dead at 70
 Hall of Famer played three seasons for the Celtics. **Obituary, A26**

Not good enough
 Celtics' starters were lullaby Friday vs. Pistons. **On basketball, C3**

Saints take a hit
 They'll be without Kamara, other backs Sunday. **NFL notebook, C8**

Sunday notes
 Basketball, **C2** Football, **C6**
 Baseball, **C9** Hockey, **C10**



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The \$67 million Skating Club of Boston, which opened in September, has three ice surfaces plus extraordinary amenities.

New Skating Club of Boston draws elite

► SKATING CLUB OF BOSTON

Continued from Page C1

mance program. “It is a dream facility for any skater in the world.”

The building is spacious enough that it likely will host regional and sectional qualifiers for the US championships, possibly Skate America or an ISU Challenger Series event, plus Ice Chips, the club’s signature century-old show, now held at Harvard.

For the majority of skaters, who were afterthoughts in rinks dominated by hockey players, practicing in a building designed specifically for them is a welcome novelty.

“Here, you are the important one,” observed Alex Krasnozhan, who’d trained in Dallas since emigrating from Russia, where he was coached by the legendary Alexei Mishin.

That’s how it was inside the old building at 1240 Soldiers Field Road in Allston, which was built in 1938. The Skating Club, the third oldest in the country, had produced Olympic gold medalists Dick Button and Tenley Albright, as well as a lengthy list of national champions.

But as the sport expanded with learn-to-skate programs, adult skating, synchronized skating, ice dancing, showcase skating, and Theatre On Ice, competition among hundreds of members for the one sheet of ice became intense.

“The club was outgrowing itself,” said Blount.

Thus began a quest for a new venue that consumed more than two decades and involved scouting three dozen sites after a planned land swap with Harvard for a spot on Lincoln Street alongside the Mass. Pike fell through. What was clear, given the soaring price of land in the city, was that the Skating Club of Boston couldn’t create what it needed in Boston.

“There was such history there that people were reluctant to leave, but it was necessary,” said executive director Doug Zeghibe. “Our broker said, you cannot afford to build a refrigerated Costco in the city of Boston.”

What was available was a 34-acre parcel just off I-95 and a town with open arms. The Skating Club bought the land for \$7 million and sold its rink and the adjacent hotel for \$40 million to the Davis Companies, a local developer planning a 535-unit apartment building and an adjacent 255-room hotel and 120 condominiums.

The new facility, which is five times as large as the old one with four times as many parking spaces, quickly became a lure for skaters looking to relocate.

“Where we were training we were always struggling to get ice time,” said Misha Mitro-



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

fanov, who came from Dallas with pairs partner Audrey Lu. “We had a lot of complications. The Skating Club was able to relieve all of that.”

Vadim Naumov and Evgenia Shishkova, the former Russian world titlists who were coaching in Simsbury, Conn., brought with them son Maxim, the US junior champion. Laura Jacobson, a junior skater who’d trained in Colorado and Chicago but was looking for a place closer to home, came up from New Jersey primarily to train with Ganicheva and Letov. “This was an amazing opportunity,” she said.

With the Winter Games in Beijing a little more than a year away, the Skating Club has become a magnet for Olympic hopefuls.

“This facility is going to produce many, many champions,” said Krasnozhan. “At some point I’ll get to say I was here at the beginning.”

Krasnozhan and Naumov both could crack the top five at the US championships in Las Vegas (Jan. 14-17), as could Lu and Mitrofanov, who placed third at Skate America. And Lin (a.k.a. Lin Shan) is a top contender for the Chinese team.

“You see your competitor do something and you think, I’ve got to do the same thing, I’ve got to do it better,” said Naumov. “Having the ability to do that here every day is a huge advantage. It’s so motivating. They push you to do things you didn’t think you could do.”

The high-performance skaters, who have an oxygen-regulated “altitude room” available, also have in-house access to the Mi-

Audrey Lu came from Dallas to train with pairs partner Misha Mitrofanov.

cheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention, an outgrowth of Children’s Hospital’s sports medicine division, which offers programs in sports psychology, nutrition, and physical therapy and has specialists for skating injuries and strength and conditioning, plus radiology technicians who perform hip-to-ankle X-rays. The center already has worked with more than 1,000 skaters.

“The beauty of this is that all the equipment is brand new,” said Dr. Bill Meehan, who directs the center. “It’s all top of the line, all cutting edge. We can deliver it right here.”

Convenience is a priceless commodity in a time of pandemic, especially being around kindred spirits.

“You know you’re not the only one going through all this,” said Lu, who relocated with nearly a dozen of her Dallas clubmates. “There are others to talk to. When you come to a new rink, even though there are new people, you still see familiar faces every day.”

Skaters, most of whom are online-schooled, can use the quiet academic center between practice sessions. “I can just pull out my computer and study for a few hours,” said Lin, who’s applying to college.

The cafe provides meals ranging from breakfast burritos and power bowls to soups to salads to sandwiches.

For a club that began in 1912, one-stop skating represents a revolution.

“I told my skaters, if you’re not going to be successful in this building, you’re not going to be successful anywhere,” said Ganicheva.

SportsLog

Northeastern men rout Elon behind Telfort (20)

Jahmyl Telfort poured in a season-high 20 points as Northeastern routed Elon, 75-52, on Saturday at the Cabot Center in the Colonial Athletic Association men’s basketball opener for both teams. **Tyson Walker** had 18 points and six assists for the Huskies (2-5), who snapped their four-game losing streak. **Coleman Stucke** added 15 points. **Shaquille Walters** had 6 points and seven rebounds. **Hunter McIntosh** had 16 points for the Phoenix (3-2). **Hunter Woods** added eight rebounds.

No. 1 Gonzaga men extend home streak

Corey Kispert scored 26 points on 9-of-11 shooting as top-ranked Gonzaga opened its West Coast Conference schedule by beating San Francisco, 85-62. **Joel Ayayi** added 18 points for the Bulldogs (10-0), who have won 44 straight home games — the longest streak in the nation. **Jamaree Bouyea** scored 18 for the Dons (7-5, 1-1) . . . No. 2 Baylor (9-0, 2-0 Big 12), behind **Jared Butler’s** 21 points, earned its narrowest win this season, 76-65, at Iowa State. Baylor won seven of its previous eight games by at least 29 points. The Cyclones (2-5, 0-3) owned a 55-53 lead midway through the second half before Baylor went on a 13-0 run . . . **Courtney Ramey** scored 18 points and No. 8 Texas (8-1, 2-0 Big 12) routed No. 3 Kansas, 84-59, to match the most lopsided win by a visitor in the history of Allen Fieldhouse. **Jalen Wilson** scored 20 points and **Ochai Agbaji** had 11 for the Jayhawks (8-2, 1-1) . . . UCLA senior guard **Chris Smith** will miss the rest of the season with a torn left anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee . . . BYU said former coach **Dave Rose**, 63, is hospitalized but stable after suffering a stroke Thursday. Rose coached 14 seasons before retiring in 2019, winning 348 games and leading the Cougars to the NCAA Tournament eight times . . . Saturday night’s game featuring No. 20 Duke at No. 18 Florida State was postponed due to a positive COVID-19 test in the Seminoles’ program.

Cochran paces No. 2 Louisville women

Freshman **Olivia Cochran** hit all seven of her shots from the floor in a 15-point effort to lead No. 2 Louisville over visiting Bellarmine, 97-46, in women’s basketball. **Liz Dixon** added 14 points for the Cardinals (7-0). The Knights (0-5) were led by **Lauren Deel’s** 8 points . . . **Moon Ursin** (21 points, 10 rebounds) and **Nalyssa Smith** (18 and 12) starred as No. 7 Baylor beat TCU, 74-50, with both head coaches missing the game in Fort Worth due to coronavirus contact tracing. With associate head coach **Bill Brock** filling in for **Kim Mulkey**, the Bears (8-1, 3-0 Big 12) won their 30th straight game against the Horned Frogs (5-3, 0-3). TCU coach **Raegan Pebley** was out after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.



JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP

Finland’s Aku Raty barks at the officials after inter-fereing with Sweden’s Emil Andrae at the World Juniors.

HOCKEY

Finland into World Junior semifinals

With just 25 seconds left in the third period, **Roni Hirvonen** beat Swedish goalie **Hugo Alnefelt** (28 saves) to give Finland a 3-2 win in the quarterfinals of the men’s world junior championships in Edmonton. **Lucas Raymond** and **Elmer Soderblom** gave Sweden a 2-0 lead before **Henri Nikkanen** and **Anton Lundell** tied it for Finland . . . Russia beat Germany, 2-1, to reach Monday’s semifinals, buoyed by **Vasily Ponomarev’s** shorthanded goal at 9:15 of the first period. **Danil Bashkirov** doubled the lead at 8:27 of the second. **Florian Elias** scored for Germany . . . **Dylan Cozens** and **Connor McMichael** each had a goal and an assist and **Devon Levi** made 29 saves as Canada blanked the Czech Republic, 3-0, to reach the semifinals . . . In men’s college hockey, **Jerry Harding**, **Matthew Kessel**, and **Zac Jones** scored in the first period and No. 9 UMass (8-3-1) held on for a 5-3 win over No. 13 Northeastern (3-3-2) at Mullins Center.

SOCCER

Barcelona: Coutinho out, Messi returns

Brazilian soccer midfielder **Philippe Coutinho** will be sidelined for three months after undergoing surgery on his left knee, Spanish club Barcelona said. Coutinho hurt his knee in Tuesday’s 1-1 tie with Eibar. Also, Barcelona coach **Ronald Koeman** said **Lionel Messi** is “ready, happy, and eager” to play Sunday at Huesca after missing Tuesday’s tilt with a right ankle injury . . . Arsenal won its third straight English Premier League game, 4-0, at West Bromwich behind two second-half goals from **Alexandre Lacazette** . . . South Korea’s **Son Heung-min** scored his 100th career goal for Tottenham, which ended a four-game skid in the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Leeds in London.

MISCELLANY

Basketball Hall of Famer Westphal dies

Paul Westphal, a Hall of Fame player who won an NBA championship with the Celtics in 1974 and later coached in the league and in college, has died. He was 70. The Phoenix Suns confirmed Westphal’s death Saturday. No cause was given, although he was diagnosed with brain cancer in August. Obituary, A26 . . . Houston Rockets star **James Harden** was scratched from Saturday’s 102-94 win over Sacramento less than an hour before tipoff because of a sprained right ankle . . . American boxer **Ryan Garcia** (21-0) staggered Englishman **Luke Campbell** (20-4) with a body blow to win a WBC lightweight title fight on a seventh-round knockout in Dallas.



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Five-year-old Eric Lei took to the ice at the Skating Club of Boston for a recent training session.