

# Sports

Want to see your sports news and photos in the Enterprise? Contact the sports department at 891-2600 ext. 26 or sports@adirondackdailyenterprise.com

## 19 students earn black belts as local school closes

By LOU REUTER  
Senior Sports Writer

SARANAC LAKE — Grand Master Jon O’Kelly’s final day of being a Taekwondo instructor was one of his most memorable ones.

After a 35-year career of teaching the martial art, O’Kelly has retired. A Saranac Lake resident, O’Kelly opened the Northeast Taekwondo school in this village in Sept. 2016. On Saturday, he performed his final duty as the head of the school, promoting 19 local students to black belts during an outdoor ceremony held on the North Country Community College soccer field.

O’Kelly said all 19 who were promoted were original students of the Saranac Lake-based school when it opened nearly four years ago, and the youngest new black belt earner was 9-year-old Cole Davide. The ceremony was held on a chilly, damp day with plenty of space between the students, who all wore matching black facemasks that included an image of a martial artist.

The day began with testing and ended with the handing out of black belts and certificates. O’Kelly said he was especially impressed with the display by his students because the school has been shut down for three months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“This black belt test was unlike any that I have ever seen, and I’ve seen hundreds of them,” O’Kelly said. “There are a few that stick in your mind, and this was certainly one of them. We did it on that huge field outside, and the students’ performances were just amazing.”

“I told them that the measure of their success was the fact that they were just there on a cold, rainy morning in June after not having a school for three months. The performance was exceptional. Promoting 19 students was pretty special in



Easton Cray is presented his black belt by Northeast Taekwondo school instructor Grand Master Jon O’Kelly.

itself.”

Although O’Kelly has retired from teaching and the Northeast Taekwondo school in Saranac Lake is now closed, his school in Washington D.C. will continue and plans to reopen once guidelines regarding the pandemic allow that to happen. O’Kelly said he won’t be teaching in D.C. anymore either but will continue administrative duties there.

O’Kelly lamented it’s unfortunate that the school closest to Saranac Lake is currently in Glens Falls, and hoped the students will continue their studies.

“Some of them right now are enjoying Zoom classes from D.C.,”

he said.

“Right now, I have plenty of work with reopening in D.C. That’s the big thing on the plate right now, but I’m not going anywhere. Saranac Lake is our home. I have lots to do at my house and the list keeps getting longer. I’m not looking to start another career. I’m looking to take care of my house, my wife, my dog.”

O’Kelly said he’s really enjoyed teaching and has been fortunate to have such a great group of students.

“I’ve been 35 years teaching, and it was time,” he said. “I have promoted hundreds of black belts and thousands have come through the



Sophie Baker receives her black belt from Grand Master Jon O’Kelly Saturday afternoon at the North Country Community College soccer field.

(Enterprise photos — Lou Reuter)

program. Saranac Lake was great. Northeast Taekwondo came here and was embraced by the students. They worked hard and they were dedicated.”

O’Kelly said he’s been overwhelmed by the well wishes from local parents and students.

“Everybody said ‘We are going to

miss you,’ and I am going to miss the students, too. I will miss teaching students. I always make sure they understand that they are the future, they are the change that’s going to happen, they are the leaders who are going to take others along with them. For the students, it’s all about building character.”

## Cuomo approves fan-free US Open

By HOWARD FENDRICH  
AP Tennis Writer

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the go-ahead Tuesday for the U.S. Open tennis tournament to be held in his state starting in late August — but without spectators — as part of the reopening from shutdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

“You can watch it on TV, and I’ll take that,” Cuomo said at his daily briefing in Albany.

Now that the U.S. Tennis Association’s proposal to hold its marquee event has been accepted — including a “bubble” setup with designated hotels, limited player entourages and a facility closed to the hundreds of thousands of people who usually attend the U.S. Open — the key question becomes: Who actually will end up competing on the blue hard courts in Flushing Meadows from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13?

Some of the sport’s top names, including defending U.S. Open men’s champion Rafael Nadal along with No. 1-ranked players Novak Djokovic and Ash Barty, have expressed reservations about heading somewhere that was a hot spot for the COVID-19 outbreak. An indoor tennis facility at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center temporarily

housed hundreds of hospital beds at the height of New York’s coronavirus crisis.

Others expressed an eagerness to return to action: Both the ATP and WTA tours have been suspended since early March because of the virus. The U.S. Open normally is the fourth and final Grand Slam tournament of each season but would be the second major of 2020, following the Australian Open, which concluded in early February.

The start of the clay-court French Open was postponed from May and currently is scheduled to begin a week after the U.S. Open ends. Wimbledon was canceled altogether for the first time since World War II in 1945.

“Well done @usta for being so forward thinking in getting this done. A great achievement. Players and fans alike are thrilled with this development,” tweeted John Isner, the top U.S. man in the rankings at No. 21. “Time to get back on the courts!”

Another American, No. 195 Mitchell Krueger, quoted Isner’s comment and wrote: “I can find you about 140+ players that are most certainly not ‘thrilled’ with this development.”

That’s a reference to the USTA’s decision to eliminate qualifying rounds that normally give lower-ranked

singles players a chance to earn a spot — and extra money — in the U.S. Open field. The USTA is getting rid of qualifying and instead moving the Cincinnati hard-court tournament that it owns to New York ahead of the start of the U.S. Open.

Another reduction for 2020: The men’s and women’s doubles draws for the U.S. Open each will have 32 teams instead of 64. Overall player compensation for the U.S. Open and Cincinnati tournament, which includes prize money and hotel costs and \$6.6 million to compensate players who would have been in qualifying in Flushing Meadows, will be \$60 million; that’s about \$7 million less than in 2019.

The tours are expected to reveal the restructured 2020 tennis calendar within the week. More than 40 tournaments at the sport’s highest levels have been scrapped so far and there likely will not be any sanctioned play until early August, although various exhibition matches with no rankings points at stake have been taking place around the world in recent weeks.

“We recognize the tremendous responsibility of hosting one of the first global sporting events in these challenging times,” USTA CEO Mike Dowse said in a statement released

shortly after Cuomo’s announcement, “and we will do so in the safest manner possible, mitigating all potential risks.”

With international TV contracts — including an annual average of \$70 million from ESPN alone — helping offset the loss of money from ticket sales and other onsite revenue, and facing a recession that already led to the elimination of more than 100 jobs at the USTA, the association’s board decided to go forward with the U.S. Open.

“We can showcase tennis as the ideal social distancing sport,” Dowse said.

Cuomo opened Tuesday’s news conference by touting “good news on the numbers, good news on the facts” in New York, which he said has its lowest number of coronavirus-related hospitalizations since the outbreak began.

Last week, Djokovic said the restrictions that would be in place for the U.S. Open because of the virus would be “extreme.”

“Most of the players I have talked to were quite negative on whether they would go there,” Djokovic said.

He hosted exhibition matches with packed stands last week in his home country of Serbia, where the government lifted most virus restrictions last month.

## WTO ruling: Saudis facilitated sports piracy

By ROB HARRIS  
AP Global Soccer Writer

Saudi Arabia facilitated sports broadcasting piracy by blocking moves to shut it down, the World Trade Organization said in a ruling Tuesday that throws new doubts on the kingdom’s takeover of English Premier League club Newcastle.

The WTO’s findings is the latest salvo in a long-running dispute over the bootlegging by Saudi Arabia-based beoutQ of broadcasting rights owned by Qatar’s beIN Sports.

The beIN network, which is banned from operating in Saudi Arabia, airs some of the world’s biggest sports competitions across the Middle East — including the World Cup and the Premier League — thanks to broadcasting rights worth billions of dollars.

The WTO decision on Tuesday provides a further complication for the Premier League, which is having to decide whether to approve a takeover of northeast English club Newcastle by the Saudi sovereign fund. The league has spent two years trying unsuccessfully to get beoutQ shut down.

“The panel considers that Qatar has established a prima facie case that beoutQ is operated by individuals or entities subject to the criminal jurisdiction of Saudi Arabia,” the WTO said.

Champions League organizer UEFA said the piracy threatens “existence of professional sport as we know it.” FIFA demanded that Saudi Arabia “takes the necessary steps in order that it conforms” with the WTO’s findings.

Saudi Arabia failed to take action to stop beoutQ’s operations and protect the intellectual property of rights holders, the WTO dispute panel concluded. The panel highlighted how beIN was prevented from hiring lawyers in Saudi Arabia to take action in the courts against the piracy.

“Qatar has established that Saudi Arabia has not provided for criminal procedures and penalties to be applied to beoutQ despite the evidence establishing prima facie that beoutQ is operated by individuals or entities under the jurisdiction of Saudi Arabia,” the WTO said.

The Premier League was among sports competitions to lodge protests with the American government which led in April to Saudi Arabia remaining on a “Priority Watch List” as one of the “notorious markets for counterfeiting and piracy.”

It is a stumbling block to the Premier League approving the Saudi Public Investment Fund buying an 80% stake in Newcastle as part of a takeover alongside the wealthy British-based Reuben brothers and financier Amanda Staveley. They want to buy out retail entrepreneur Mike Ashley.

“We take piracy very seriously,” Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said. “We stand by what we said on the record in the past. But as you know, in relation to anything to do with takeovers, I can’t say anything about the substance or the timing.”

European football’s governing body said it was clear beoutQ’s broadcasts of its games were illegal.

## Sabres fire GM Botterill, also clean house in Rochester

By JOHN WAWROW  
AP Hockey Writer

BUFFALO — On second thought, Buffalo Sabres owners Terry and Kim Pegula weren’t pleased with general manager Jason Botterill continuing to oversee their franchise.

Citing a lack of communication and philosophical differences over the direction of a franchise in the midst of a nine-year playoff drought, the Pegulas reversed course in making the abrupt decision to fire Botterill on Tuesday.

It was a stunning move that came three weeks after Kim Pegula told The Associated Press that Botterill would be retained.

At the same time, the Pegulas had a GM-in-waiting by promoting former player, Kevyn Adams, to succeed Botterill. The Pegulas noted they’re more comfortable with Adams, who held the role of vice president of business operations, in having watched him take on numerous roles within the organiza-

tion over the past nine years. “We felt like we needed to be heard,” Terry Pegula during a Zoom conference call without detailing what the philosophical differences were.

“I’m not going to sit here and dish on Jason Botterill, but we have a vision and we want to see our vision succeed,” he added. “We were in detailed discussions with Jason, and how we felt we needed to move forward effectively, efficiently and economically running this franchise, we felt there were too many differences of opinion going into the future.”

Kim Pegula said the change of heart regarding Botterill’s status stemmed in part with the NHL draft being pushed back to the fall, which will provide Adams more of an opportunity to establish himself in his new role.

Though Adams has no previous GM experience, the Pegulas believe he’s capable of establishing a collaborative line of communication

between ownership and returning coach Ralph Krueger. Botterill did not respond to a text message seeking comment.

During a season-ending Zoom conference call last month, Botterill said the criticism that came with missing the playoffs wouldn’t alter his vision of continuing to build the organizational depth and developing young talent.

“There’s always urgency in this position, and I’m not surprised that our passionate fans want to see a winner on the ice,” he said.

Botterill was fired three years into his tenure and following a season in which Buffalo finished 13th in the Eastern Conference standings and one spot short of qualifying for the NHL’s expanded 24-team playoff.

“Our fans deserve better, and we are all tasked with the burden to improve and provide them a consistent, contending team for years to come,” the Pegulas said in a statement released by the

team.

The Sabres also fired assistant GMs Randy Sexton and Steve Greeley. The house-cleaning even reached the Sabres minor-league affiliate in Rochester, with coach Chris Taylor and his assistants, Gord Dineen and Toby Petersen, also being fired.

The flip flop on Botterill comes at a time the Pegulas have been criticized for mismanaging a franchise which has featured a revolving door at the coach and general manager positions since they purchased the team in February 2011.

In that time, the Sabres are now on their sixth coach and fourth GM.

Adams grew up a Sabres fan in suburban Buffalo and wore No. 11 because of his love of Hall of Famer Gilbert Perreault.

He won a Stanley Cup with the 2006 Carolina Hurricanes during his nine-plus-year NHL career, and briefly worked as an agent following his retirement.

### Janric Sudoku Puzzle Answer

7	9	2	4	6	8	1	5	3
4	6	1	5	2	3	8	9	7
3	5	8	9	1	7	6	2	4
6	8	7	1	4	5	2	3	9
2	4	3	7	9	6	5	1	8
9	1	5	8	3	2	7	4	6
8	3	4	6	5	1	9	7	2
1	7	9	2	8	4	3	6	5
5	2	6	3	7	9	4	8	1

Puzzle on page 5