

Skenes turns to youth baseball for mental reset

BY WILL GRAVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH — Paul Skenes was bored and driving through the northern Pittsburgh suburbs on Monday — a rare in-season off day — when the Pirates ace caught the familiar lights of a baseball field out of the corner of his eye.

The next thing the reigning NL Cy Young winner knew, he was circling the parking lot, searching for a spot. Not long after, one of the brightest stars in the game was watching various Ingomar Little League teams practice.

The 24-year-old star tried to stay “incognito,” which is kind of hard to do in general when you’re 6-foot-6 and 260 pounds and one of the brightest young stars in your sport. Soon enough, Skenes found his way onto the field in sandals, a T-shirt, and a pair of shorts, a sure sign that the typically well put-together Skenes hadn’t planned on stopping in the first place.

Over the next two hours, he played catch, signed autographs, and remembered a time in his life when his relationship with the game was far simpler.

The impromptu practice went viral, as things tend to



Gene J. Puskar | AP Photo

Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Paul Skenes delivers during the second inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Pittsburgh, Tuesday.

do when Skenes is involved. His girlfriend, former gymnast turned influencer and actress Livvy Dunne, shared it on TikTok. A popular Pittsburgh DJ did the same on Instagram.

Skenes has learned to accept that attention comes with the territory, even when he’s trying to avoid it.

“Should’ve worn some sunglasses and a fake moustache,” he joked.

Yes, Skenes is well aware of the core memory he created for the players at Ingomar Little League, about 20ish minutes north of PNC Park. Los Angeles Angels outfielder Garrett Anderson did the same for Skenes when the two briefly con-

nected while Skenes was growing up in Southern California.

Yet just as importantly, with the Pirates in the midst of a losing streak that stretched to four after they were drilled 12-2 loss by Los Angeles on Tuesday — when the Dodgers exploded for 10 runs in the seventh immediately after Skenes departed — it offered Skenes a reminder of why he does what he does for a living.

“I went to watch some baseball, but you got to remember it’s just a game,” Skenes said. “There’s a lot of things that make it a business. It’s work. It’s a job for us, for sure, on some days more than others, but you

got to remember you love the game and why you started playing it in the first place.”

Particularly during the times when that love can feel elusive during a difficult stretch like the one Skenes is in at the moment.

Despite limiting the two-time defending World Series champion Dodgers to two runs over six innings and retiring four-time MVP Shohei Ohtani all three times he faced him, Skenes remained winless over his last five starts after the bullpen imploded behind him.

Is Skenes in a slump? Only in comparison to the remarkably high bar he has set during his rapid ascent to one of the best pitchers in baseball. His ERA since May 17 is a pedestrian 4.50, more than double his career ERA up to that point.

Things were a little better, a little sharper against the Dodgers than they have been of late. He recorded seven strikeouts, and Los Angeles swung and missed at more than 15 of the 103 pitches he threw.

Skenes’ fastball largely went where he wanted, when he wanted, and if Pirates second baseman Brandon Lowe can knock

down a sharp grounder that instead deflected off his glove and into the outfield with two outs in the sixth that allowed Freddie Freeman to score and tie the game, Skenes might have exited with the lead.

Not that it mattered in the end. The 10-spot the Dodgers put up in the seventh made sure of that.

Still, Skenes is trying to keep things in perspective. The season is long. Every team struggles at some point. He is trying his best to remain focused on the process.

Asked why his fastball — which now sits more in the 97 mph range after frequently topping 100 as a rookie two years ago — looked better on Tuesday than it has in

a while, he shrugged.

“Just a good day, I think,” he said. “Kinda comes and goes as the season goes. Just a good day with that.”

The lobs he threw to the Little Leaguers didn’t have nearly that kind of velocity. They might have as much meaning, however, over the arc of a season that can sometimes feel more like a slog than a dream come true.

“We’ve all played those sandlot fields when we were nine,” he said, later adding, “The game looks different when it’s 200-foot fences and there are no ads out there, no fans out there, just playing for the love of the game.”

Bengals clear additional cap room through Burrow contract changes

BY JOE REEDY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Cincinnati Bengals have restructured the contract of franchise quarterback Joe Burrow, a person familiar with the move told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the move was not announced.

The restructured deal was first reported by ESPN and NFL Network.

Cincinnati gains around \$10 million in cap space by spreading out some of his base salary over the final three years of the deal (2027 through '29). Burrow signed a five-year, \$275-million extension in 2023.

The Bengals found themselves low on cap space after acquiring defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence from the New York Giants before the NFL draft and signing him to a one-year extension

worth \$28 million.

Cincinnati is also trying to get some of its key players from its 2023 draft class still under rookie deal signed to extensions before the start of training camp. That group includes DE Myles Murphy, RB Chase Brown, and defensive backs Jordan Battle, DJ Turner and Dax Hill.

Burrow, the top overall pick in the 2023 draft, is going into his seventh season. He led the Bengals to a Super Bowl appear-

ance in the 2021 season and the AFC championship game the following year, but Cincinnati has missed the playoffs the last three seasons.

Burrow played in only eight games last season. He suffered a turf toe injury in a Week 2 win over Jacksonville and was out until late November. He threw for 1,809 yards with 17 touchdowns and five interceptions that included three pick-6s.

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For this year at Shinnecock Hills, the qualifiers stand at a mere 62 players.

That number figures to go up because the USGA has set aside seven spots for players who potentially can qualify through the top 60 in the world ranking after this week (Memorial winner J.T. Poston is a lock).

Even so, it’s not close to the U.S. Open ideal of a 50-50 split. That had been the sweet spot for years until the USGA responded to the changing landscape in golf and went away from its roots by trying to get all the right players.

The only player the U.S. Open probably missed out on over the years was Justin Rose in 2010 when he won the Memorial and moved to No. 33 in the world, two weeks after the cutoff for what was then top 50. The next year, the USGA added a second deadline the week before the Open so that wouldn’t happen again.

But over the past few years, the USGA felt it should recognize LIV Golf by adding two spots — a leading player from last year (Joaquin Niemann) and this year (Lucas Herbert). Nothing would have kept either one from trying to qualify.

It has added five leading players from the FedEx Cup this year (Sudarshan Yellamaraju among them),

two players from the Race to Dubai in 2025 (Laurie Canter and Adrien Saddier) and one this year (Jayden Schaper). There’s still a 36-hole qualifier in London that offered seven spots.

The U.S. Junior Amateur winner began getting an exemption in 2018, the NCAA champion in 2023. There’s now a place for the top player on the Korn Ferry Tour last year.

Each addition gets the U.S. Open further away from its roots.

All of them are quality players, and all of them certainly earned the right to be there based on performance, the key word when golf throws out “meritocracy.” All of them could have qualified, just like four-time All-American Ben James and PGA Tour player Keith Mitchell.

“Today is such an important day for us,” John Bodenhamer, the USGA’s chief championships officer, said Monday night as the qualifying at 10 sites across the continent were winding down. “Openness and qualifying and earning your way into our national championship is part of our DNA.”

It still is. But it’s not as evident as it used to be. This should get the attention of the USGA, if it hasn’t already.

There’s no need to go down the path of the British Open from just over a decade ago when it established the “Open Qualifying Series” at tournaments around the world.

It has been effective in identifying a good field through performance, but it’s not the same as proving it over 36 holes. Players show up at tournaments to win — a place in the British Open often is a consolation prize (Poston managed to get both at Muirfield Village on Sunday).

Now the British Open offers 20 qualifying spots at four venues, plus something called a “Last Chance Qualifier” to be held over 18 holes on Monday of The Open at Royal Birkdale.

The U.S. Open still has a right to boast of being the most open of Open championships around the world. It would do well not to get too far away from that. There’s really no risk of missing out on a player whom the golfing public wouldn’t know was missing.

There would be more opportunity to see Russell and Giuseppe Puebla, Nos. 1 and 2 in the American junior ranking, be among three amateurs who qualified in Florida; to see Andrew Putnam at No. 84 in the world earn the final spot Tuesday morning in a nine-hole playoff in Oregon over Spencer Tibbitts, who has no world ranking.

Monday brought the joy of Vaughn Harber, an Ohio State sophomore who went 5 under over his last five holes to get into a playoff and advance to his first U.S. Open. There were other stories

like him. The U.S. Open needs more moments like that, not fewer. It’s part of its DNA.



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
HOPKINS CIRCUIT COURT
MADISONVILLE,
KENTUCKY 42431
CIVIL ACTION NO.
26-CI-00081

KENTUCKY HOUSING CORPORATION PLAINTIFF

vs. NOTICE OF SALE IN EQUITY

KRISTIN FAYE SUTTON and CHRISTIAN TYLER SUTTON DEFENDANTS

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Hopkins Circuit Court the undersigned will, on **Monday, June 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.** on the steps of the Hopkins County Judicial Center, 120 East Center Street, Madisonville, Kentucky, proceed to expose to PUBLIC SALE, the real estate located at **642 Hopewell Street, Madisonville, PVA Parcel No. M-21-43-1**, Hopkins County, Kentucky. See **Deed Book 820, page 291**, Hopkins County Court Clerk’s Office, for the legal description of said property. Terms: The real estate shall be sold for cash or on credit of thirty (30) days. If on credit, the purchaser must pay a down payment of 10% of the purchase price at the time of the sale and post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, bearing interest at the rate specified in the judgment from the date of said bond, with a lien reserved upon said property until payment is made in full. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year’s property taxes.

J. Keith Cartwright
Master Commissioner
Hopkins Circuit Court



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
HOPKINS CIRCUIT COURT
MADISONVILLE,
KENTUCKY 42431
CIVIL ACTION NO.
25-CI-00809

AMERIHOMEMORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC PLAINTIFF

vs. NOTICE OF SALE IN EQUITY

LUCAS RAMAGE DEFENDANT

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Hopkins Circuit Court the undersigned will, on **Monday, June 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.** on the steps of the Hopkins County Judicial Center, 120 East Center Street, Madisonville, Kentucky, proceed to expose to PUBLIC SALE, the real estate located at **338 Weldon Avenue, Madisonville, PVA Parcel No. M-21-25-9**, Hopkins County, Kentucky. See **Deed Book 810, page 435**, Hopkins County Court Clerk’s Office, for the legal description of said property. Terms: The real estate shall be sold for cash or on credit of thirty (30) days. If on credit, the purchaser must pay a down payment of 10% of the purchase price at the time of the sale and post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, bearing interest at the rate specified in the judgment from the date of said bond, with a lien reserved upon said property until payment is made in full. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year’s property taxes.

J. Keith Cartwright
Master Commissioner
Hopkins Circuit Court



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
HOPKINS CIRCUIT COURT
MADISONVILLE,
KENTUCKY 42431
CIVIL ACTION NO.
25-CI-00893

PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC PLAINTIFF

vs. NOTICE OF SALE IN EQUITY

LINDA S. WESTFALL, ET AL. DEFENDANTS

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Hopkins Circuit Court the undersigned will, on **Monday, June 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.** on the steps of the Hopkins County Judicial Center, 120 East Center Street, Madisonville, Kentucky, proceed to expose to PUBLIC SALE, the real estate located at **175 North Seminary Street, Madisonville, PVA Parcel No. M-21-47-1**, Hopkins County, Kentucky. See **Deed Book 806, page 773**, Hopkins County Court Clerk’s Office, for the legal description of said property.

Terms: The real estate shall be sold for cash or on credit of thirty (30) days. If on credit, the purchaser must pay a down payment of 10% of the purchase price at the time of the sale and post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, bearing interest at the rate specified in the judgment from the date of said bond, with a lien reserved upon said property until payment is made in full. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year’s property taxes.

J. Keith Cartwright
Master Commissioner
Hopkins Circuit Court



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
HOPKINS CIRCUIT COURT
MADISONVILLE,
KENTUCKY 42431
CIVIL ACTION NO.
25-CI-00281

FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION PLAINTIFF

vs. NOTICE OF SALE IN EQUITY

JEFFERY ALLEN ZENTZ, as Administrator of the Estate of Clay Martin Zentz, ET AL DEFENDANTS

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Hopkins Circuit Court the undersigned will, on **Monday, June 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.** on the steps of the Hopkins County Judicial Center, 120 East Center Street, Madisonville, Kentucky, proceed to expose to PUBLIC SALE, the real estate located at **101 North Trim Street and 113 North Trim Street, Dawson Springs, PVA Parcel Nos. DS-2-6-5, DS-2-6-4 and DS-2-6-6**, Hopkins County, Kentucky. See **Deed Book 795, page 745**, Hopkins County Court Clerk’s Office, for the legal description of said property.

Terms: The real estate shall be sold for cash or on credit of thirty (30) days. If on credit, the purchaser must pay a down payment of 10% of the purchase price at the time of the sale and post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, bearing interest at the rate specified in the judgment from the date of said bond, with a lien reserved upon said property until payment is made in full. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year’s property taxes.

J. Keith Cartwright
Master Commissioner
Hopkins Circuit Court