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# Weekly

**CHAMPIONSHIP**



**CHAMPIONSHIP**

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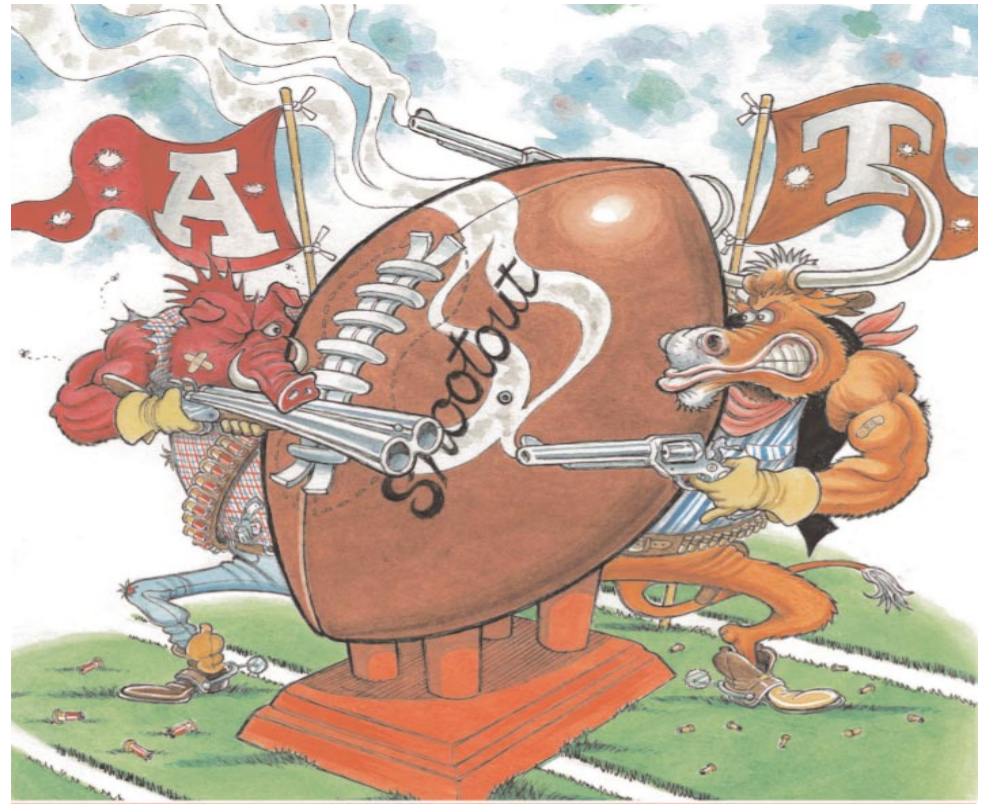
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BY MIKE LOONEY

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 info@sportspagedallas.com  
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 P.O. Box 820813  
 Dallas, Tx. 75382

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## AROUND THE AREA

## LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

# Texas Motorplex hosts Funny Car Chaos



The Spell Paving Services 2021 Funny Car Chaos Championship Tour presented by Red Line Shirt Club and Mears Mazda Volvo kicks off March 26-27, at the historic Texas Motorplex in Ennis, Texas. This event will make history as the first time Funny Car Chaos and Outlaw Fuel Altered Series will co-headline two days of wild drag racing action. The \$250,000 championship tour will run at eight venues across the country beginning in North Texas.

"We are thrilled to be hosting the world's only Outlaw Funny Car Championship series with 200+ mph ground-pounding nitro action combined with the Outlaw Fuel Altered Series," said Andy Carter, Texas Motorplex general manager. "We have been building towards hosting these mega-events for some time now. These two days will feature some of the most exciting and unpredictable racing action in the country."

Friday will feature multiple qualifying sessions followed by a Friday Night Live After Party on the starting line open to any ticket holder. Fans can meet and mingle with the racers and crews from some of the most entertaining race teams in the country. On Saturday one more Funny Car Chaos qualifier will lead into a wild night of racing action. Eliminations will begin at 5:00 p.m. and everyone is invited to join the winner's circle at the end of the day.

Funny Car Chaos features a wide open array of body styles and engine combinations with an emphasis on safety. The entertainment value and character of these Funny Cars makes them the most popular and identifiable drag racing vehicle on the planet.

Tickets on sale at [texasmotorplex.com](http://texasmotorplex.com)

### Schedule of Events

- Thursday - March 25**  
 Pre-Party in the Pits  
 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- Friday - March 26**  
 Funny Car Qualifying  
 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.  
 Outlaw Fuel Altered Qual.  
 8:30 p.m.  
 Friday Night Live After Party After Q2
- Saturday - March 27**  
 Spectator Gates Open  
 10:00 a.m.  
 Racing Starts  
 Noon  
 Funny Car Final Qualifier  
 2:00 p.m.  
 Funny Car/Fuel Altered Elims 5:00 p.m.  
 Winners Circle  
 10:00 p.m.

in a vote by the league's head coaches. This marks the 12th occurrence in the last 13 years the Sooners have collected the honor.

OU received four first-place votes and 34 total points. Texas was picked second with the other three first-place votes and 33 points. This season marks just the second (2006) that the top two teams are separated by one point since the preseason poll was first conducted in 2000.

Oklahoma State was picked third followed by Baylor in fourth. Texas Tech, Iowa State and Kansas rounded out the preseason selections. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own team.

The 2020 Big 12 softball season was canceled prior to the start of conference play due to COVID-19. Team schedules for 2021 will be released when available.



### Big 12 Men's Basketball Schedule Adjustments

The following Big 12 men's basketball conference games have been rescheduled. Future schedule adjustments will be announced when available.

**Thursday, January 28**  
 TCU at Kansas (Big 12 Now on ESPN+), 7:00 p.m. (originally scheduled for Jan. 26)

**Thursday, February 11**  
 Iowa State at Kansas (Big 12 Now on ESPN+), 7:00 p.m. CT (originally scheduled for Jan. 16)

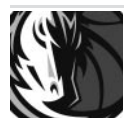




TEAM	POINTS
1 OKLAHOMA (4)	34
2 TEXAS (3)	33
3 OKLAHOMA STATE	26
4 BAYLOR	21
5 TEXAS TECH	14
6 IOWA STATE	13
7 KANSAS	6

### Sooners the Favorite in Big 12 Softball Preseason Poll

For the ninth consecutive year, Oklahoma has been chosen as the favorite in the 2021 Big 12 softball preseason poll

### NCAA Basketball - Top 25

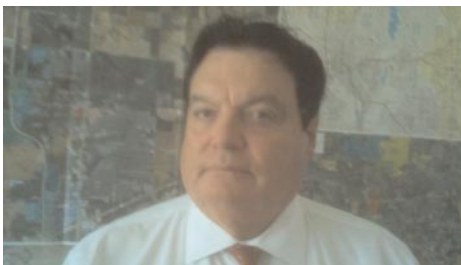
Coaches	(Week 8) AP
1. Gonzaga	1. Gonzaga
2. Baylor	2. Baylor
3. Villanova	3. Villanova
4. Texas	4. Texas
5. Michigan	5. Iowa
6. Creighton	6. Kansas
7. Kansas	7. Michigan
8. Iowa	8. Creighton
9. Wisconsin	9. Wisconsin
10. Tennessee	10. Tennessee
11. Houston	11. Houston
12. Clemson	12. Clemson
13. Illinois	13. West Virginia
14. West Virginia	14. Illinois
15. Texas Tech	15. Texas Tech
16. Missouri	16. Louisville
17. Oregon	17. Missouri
18. Louisville	18. Virginia
19. Minnesota	19. Duke
20. Virginia Tech	20. Virginia Tech
21. UCLA	21. Ohio State
22. Virginia	22. Oregon
23. Duke	23. Minnesota
24. Alabama	24. Saint Louis
25. Saint Louis	25. Uconn

	JANUARY 22 FRIDAY	JANUARY 23 SATURDAY	JANUARY 24 SUNDAY	JANUARY 25 MONDAY	JANUARY 26 TUESDAY	JANUARY 27 WEDNESDAY	JANUARY 28 THURSDAY
	Mavs at San Antonio 7:30 / FSSW	Mavs vs Rockets 7:30 / FSSW		Mavs vs Golden State 7:30 / FSSW		Mavs at Utah 8:00 / FSSW	
	Dallas vs Nashville 7:30 / KTCK		Dallas vs Nashville 7:00 / KTCK		Dallas vs Detroit 7:30 / KTCK		Dallas vs Detroit 7:30 / KTCK
		SMU at UCF 1:00 / KTCK			SMU at Memphis 7:00 / KTCK		SMU vs Memphis 6:00 / KTCK
		TCU vs Texas 5:00 / ESPN2			TCU at Kansas 7:00 / WBAP		
							

# The free agent market starting to move



Joey Gallo and Isiah Kiner-Falefa were signed before the arbitration deadline



BY DIC HUMPHREY  
DHUMPHREY24@GMAIL.COM  
MEMBER: USBWA

The date for teams and players to exchange salary proposals for arbitration eligible players came and went last week, and the final day was a busy one. Twenty-eight hours before the deadline, 128 players were involved. When the smoke cleared the following day, deals were finalized with 115 of them, leaving just 13 players heading to arbitration hearings. Teams and players can continue to negotiate up to the hearing date, though several teams choose to stop negotiating once the salary figures are exchanged.

The Texas Rangers had two arbitration eligible players – Joey Gallo and Isiah Kiner-Falefa. They signed both, making Lee Stevens in 2000 still the last Ranger player to actually go to an arbitration hearing. Gallo signed for \$6.2 million assuming the entire 2021 season is played. Kiner-Falefa signed for a 2021 salary of \$2 million. Both players won the Gold Glove Award for fielding excellence last season – Kiner-Falefa at third base and Gallo in right field.

With the arbitration situation essentially settled, the slow moving free agent market shows some sign of getting on the road. Two of the top available free agents agreed

to contracts this week. George Springer, the most highly regarded free agent among position players agreed to a deal with the Blue Jays. Reliable sources have indicated that Springer received a six-year contract worth \$150 million. It is the largest contract in Blue Jays history. Toronto has pursued other upper end free agents this off season and has failed; but Springer was thought to be their top target.

In recent years, the Jays have brought some outstanding young talent to the Major Leagues, including the sons of three former Major League players – Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., Cavan Biggio (son of Craig), and Bo Bichette (son of Dante). The commitment to Springer is a clear indication that the Blue Jays rebuilding phase is over, and that they are in the “win now” mode. Springer brings not only outstanding baseball skills, but playoff experience, something sorely missing on the young Blue Jays’ roster.

Springer never showed interest in re-signing with the Astros. He is from Connecticut, and it was obvious from the beginning that he was most interested in signing with an East Coast team. The offers boiled down to two teams – Toronto and the New York Mets. The Mets are believed to have topped out at \$125-\$130 million.

The Blue Jays also bolstered their bullpen with two additions this week. They signed right-handed pitcher Kirby Yates to a one-year contract with \$5.5 million guaranteed and an additional \$4.5 million available in performance bonuses. Yates was overwhelming in 2019 saving 41 games with a 1.19 ERA. He averaged a whopping 15 strikeouts per nine innings. In addition, Toronto signed Tyler

Chatwood to a \$3.0 million one-year contract which also provides for \$2.5 million in performance bonuses.

The other big name free agent to sign was last season’s American League batting champion, D. J. LeMahieu. He re-signed with the Yankees – a six year, \$90 million deal. LeMahieu had been looking for a four year deal at \$90 million similar to the contract Josh Donaldson signed with the Twins last year. LeMahieu and Donaldson have similar statistics and LeMahieu is about the same age that Donaldson was last year. In the end, the Yankees were willing to pay \$90 million, but went to six years to keep the annual value down enabling New York to stay under the luxury tax.

As anticipated, former Ranger right-handed starter Corey Kluber signed with an East Coast team. He accepted a one-year, \$11 million deal with the Yankees. New York had at least two holes to fill in their rotation. If Kluber returns to the form he showed in the middle years of the last decade, he will be a steal for the Yankees.

Trevor Bauer is now the biggest name free agent available. With roughly three weeks until spring training camps open, the market for free agents is finally starting to move.

The Rangers aren’t going to be in the market for big name free agents, but in their eternal search for pitching, they signed Hunter Wood to a minor league contract with an invitation to Major League spring training. Wood spent most of the 2020 season at Cleveland’s alternate site but did not appear in a Major League game. The Arkansas native’s career record in three Major League seasons is 2-2 with a 3.32 ERA. He has appeared in 66 Major League games, including 10 starts, for Tampa Bay and Cleveland.

On a sad note, Hall of Fame pitcher

Don Sutton died at the age of 75 this week. Sutton won 323 games over 23 seasons. He is most known for his durability. He started 756 games, third most in baseball history behind Cy Young and Nolan Ryan. After his playing career ended, he had a marvelous career announcing baseball games for the Atlanta Braves.

In 2020, seven Hall of Fame players passed away, the most ever in a year. This year may be just as devastating. In addition to Sutton, Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda passed away earlier this month.

#### NOTABLE:

- The increased number of day games on the 2021 schedule – six more than any previous year – may not be all that startling. Besides opening day, there are nine day games on Mondays and Thursdays. There have often been as many as six weekday day games in the past, so the increase is just three. Also, the time frame that the 162 game schedule is played in has been expanded to include 27 weekends instead of 26. The 2021 season is one in which the Rangers get an extra weekend – 14 instead of the 13 in past years. All Sunday games will start at 1:05 PM, except for the final day of the season, which will start at 2:05 PM. Five of the Saturday games are scheduled to begin at 3:05 PM, and the other nine at 6:05 PM. All 14 of the Friday games are scheduled to begin at 7:05 PM as are 29 of the other weekday games.

- MLB Pipeline announced its All-Defensive team from among the top minor league prospects. The Rangers’ Leody Taveras was named to the team as one of the outfielders. Taveras played in 33 Rangers games in last year’s truncated season hitting .227 with a .703 OPS. He is considered a top-flight centerfielder defensively and will likely be the Rangers’ open-

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# How to maintain your swing center



TOM WARD  
TOMPWARD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

The simplest way to understand what the swing center is in the golf swing is to visualize a wheel. The hub of the wheel is your swing center. If the hub is out of center, you'll have a wobbly wheel.

So what is definition of a hub?

1: the central part of a circular object (such as a wheel or propeller) spokes attached to the hub of the wheel.

2: a center of activity.

All body parts and movements directly influence the swing center position. Once you set up over the ball at address you've established the swing center.

When taking your stance, make sure the feet are in position to carry all of the body movements, with balance, throughout the swing. Avoid a stance that is too wide as it can inhibit your body motions.

The knees should remain flexed. To keep body movements from moving the swing center out of line during the backswing keep your weight on the inside of your feet. This will allow you to make the rotation of the shoulders and arms, carrying the club to the top of the backswing.

In the three sequence photos, one of my students is demonstrating the importance of maintaining the swing center.

The top photo shows the golfer setting up over the ball. I placed a golf club adjacent to his left shoulder.

In the second photo, the golfer completes the backswing. Notice how much he moved from where he started. He actually makes a good shoulder turn, however he made the move that a lot of golfers do, making it difficult to get back to the ball. This will cause the golfer to use his upper body to initiate the downswing which is a real no-no.

Notice the arrow highlighting the gap that was created. By having too much lateral motion going back he has lost his hub, or center, and balance in the swing. This is commonly known as swaying.

The bottom photo shows the golfer making his backswing while maintaining the swing center. I placed a wheel in front of his chest as a visual aid to highlight the proper move. By maintaining the swing center, you are able to properly spring load the backswing to create power. There is no

wasted motion when doing this correctly.

That technique employs both the upper body and lower body working in unison to make the golf swing work efficiently. The golfer wound up the backswing powerfully, without sacrificing balance and motion, and begins to make the downward transition back to the ball.

Stabilize the swing center from start to finish. Inconsistencies will occur when the swing center (hub) moves too far up or down or too far back and forth while making the swing. Excessive movement will cause the swing center to become disconnected. Just like the wheel shown in the bottom photo, it will be out of control and wobble all over the place.

No matter what sport you play, motion without balance is a wasted effort. Remember, swing the club by feel, and learn feel through good motion.

Another easy way to understand and feel the swing center is to place a golf ball on the ground with the sun to your back. Address the ball whereby the shadow of your head covers the golf ball. While swinging, keep your eyes on the shadow. It will move slightly, but if it moves off the ball you've lost the correct swing center. If the shadow remains on the ball you have kept the swing in position. Keeping an eye on your shadow will teach you the feel of the upper body staying in position – neither moving to the right or left- nor up and down.

Having good solid imagery is vitally important in developing what you are trying to accomplish in the golf swing. Try incorporating these ideas....they work, and help reinforce good habits in the swing which will yield favorable results. These movements keep the swing center stationary while moving the golf club both forward and back.

These key points will provide great feedback in understanding how to feel the proper technique in maintaining your swing center.

Tom Ward can be contacted at [www.tee-timewithtom.com](http://www.tee-timewithtom.com)

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# The First Look: The American Express



Andrew Landry wins at The American Express

By Adam Stanley  
PGATOUR.COM Follow

The PGA TOUR returns to the U.S. mainland for The American Express in La Quinta, California. This year's edition will have a different look – only two courses will be used, and amateurs will not play alongside the pros – but a strong field has assembled, highlighted by Jon Rahm, Brooks Koepka, Patrick Reed, Patrick Cantlay and tournament host Phil Mickelson. Andrew Landry is your defending champion.

**FIELD NOTES:** Amateur standout John Augenstein, the runner-up in the 2019 U.S. Amateur, is making his professional debut. He also was a member of the United States' victorious Walker Cup team in 2019 and the 2020 SEC Player of the Year. He made the cut in the 2020 Masters, finishing T55... Koepka is making his first start of the 2021 calendar year. He battled injury last season but showed flashes of his usual brilliance with a T5-T7 run at the Vivint Houston Open and the Masters... Past FedExCup champion Bill Haas looks to become the only three-time winner of The American Express. Arnold Palmer won the event five times, but Haas is one of seven golfers (including Mickelson) who has won it twice... Mickelson is making his first start of the 2021 calendar year. This is the second time he'll play host, as well as compete... Francesco Molinari returns to action. The past Open Championship winner had a truncated year in 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns. He played three times in the fall, with his best finish being a T15 at the Vivint Houston Open... There

are 13 golfers ranked in the top 50 in the world teeing it up at The American Express. Rahm, who's ranked No. 2 in the world and a past American Express champion, leads the way. Rahm beat Landry in a playoff at PGA West in 2018. Other top-ranked golfers making the trip to the Coachella Valley include the ninth-ranked Cantlay, No. 11 Reed, who won the 2014 American Express, No. 15 Matthew Wolff, and No. 18 Sungjae Im.

**FEDEXCUP:** Winner receives 500 points  
**COURSE:** Stadium Course at PGA West, 7,113 yards, par 72 and Nicklaus Tournament Course at PGA West, 7,152 yards, par 72 (yardages subject to change). For the first time in tournament history, The American Express will be conducted on fewer than three courses. This marks the sixth year the Stadium Course and the Nicklaus Tournament Course will be part of the rotation.

**STORYLINES:** The pro-am portion of the tournament has been eliminated for the first time in its history due to COVID-19 health and safety precautions. The cut will go from the typical 54 holes to 36. The only other time there was not a pro-am was in the second round of 2010, when amateur play was suspended due to weather. It's set to return in 2022... Youth will be served at The American Express. Not only will Augenstein make his pro debut, but other sponsor exemptions include 18-year-old Korean star Joohyung Kim, fellow teenager Akshay Bhatia, and 23-year-old Englishman Harry Hall, who had two top-10s to finish the Korn Ferry Tour season last October... Landry is looking to become the first golfer to defend his title at

The American Express since Johnny Miller in 1975-76... Adam Hadwin finished 2nd-T3-T2 at this event from 2017-19 before missing last year's event due to the birth of he and his wife's first child. He'll return this year looking for some rekindled magic... The American Express, PGA TOUR, and the Mickelson Foundation announced a \$1-million donation to Coachella Valley-based charities.

**72-HOLE RECORD:** 260, Patrick Reed (2014).

**18-HOLE RECORD:** 59, David Duval (5th round, 1999 at PGA West/Palmer), Adam Hadwin (3rd round, 2017 at La Quinta CC). Stadium Course record: 63, Abraham Ancer (4th round, 2020), Sam Burns (4th round, 2020), Jonathan Fricke (2nd round, 2008 Q-School\*), Whee Kim (2nd round, 2012 Q-School\*). Nicklaus Tournament record: 59, Harrison Frazer (4th round, 2008 Q-School\*).

**Note:** Q-School does not count as an official PGA TOUR event.

**LAST TIME:** Landry fended off a hard-charging Abraham Ancer to notch his sec-

ond PGA TOUR title. Ancer, fresh off his Presidents Cup appearance in 2019, fired a Sunday 63 (tied for the round of the day) which included going 3 under for his final five holes. Landry made it interesting in the final nine holes. He birdied Nos. 10-12 but gave those shots right back with bogeys on Nos. 13-15. His only par of the back nine came on the par-5 16th. He added birdies on the final two holes to seal the win. Scottie Scheffler, who would go on to win PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year, finished third. Bud Cauley and Sepp Straka finished T4 and rounded out the top five.

## HOW TO FOLLOW

**PGA TOUR LIVE:** Thursday-Friday, 11:30 a.m.- 7 p.m. ET (Featured Groups)

**Television:** Thursday-Sunday, 3 p.m.-7 p.m. ET (Golf Channel).

**Radio:** Thursday-Saturday, 1 p.m.-7 p.m. ET. Sunday, 2 p.m.- 7 p.m. ET (PGA TOUR Radio on SiriusXM and PGA-TOUR.com/liveaudio)

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# Woods undergoes fifth back surgery



Woods and Sam Snead are tied with 82 career wins, the most in PGA TOUR history

## Woods will miss Farmers Insurance Open, The Genesis Invitational

By PGATOUR.COM

Tiger Woods has undergone a fifth back surgery. He recently had a microdiscectomy to remove a pressurized disc fragment that gave him nerve pain during last month's PNC Championship, his TGR Foundation announced Tuesday.

"I look forward to begin training and am focused on getting back out on TOUR," Woods said in the statement in which his doctors deemed the operation successful and predicted a full recovery.

Woods' quest for a record 83rd PGA TOUR victory has been put on hold. He announced that he will miss next week's Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines and his own The Genesis Invitational, which he will host at Riviera Country Club on Feb. 18-21. Woods and Sam Snead are tied with 82 career wins, the most in PGA TOUR history.

Woods has won eight times at Torrey Pines – seven times in the Farmers, and at the 2008 U.S. Open – but remains winless at Riviera, where he played his first PGA TOUR event. Woods will be at Riviera next month to serve as tournament host, according to Tuesday's release.

Woods underwent his fourth back surgery, a spinal fusion, in early 2017. He returned in 2018, contending for multiple titles before winning the TOUR Championship at East Lake. He won The Masters Tournament and ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP in 2019, when he was also the playing captain of the U.S. Presidents Cup Team, leading a dozen of the best American players to victory at Royal Melbourne while also going 3-0-0 himself. Since then, however, he's gone largely quiet.

His 45th birthday last month was an occasion to step back and appreciate not only his 82 victories, but also his 31 seconds, 19 thirds, and 199 top-10 finishes in 368 starts. He has an 11-1 career playoff record, and earnings of nearly \$121 million. But his 1,322 rounds on TOUR have taken a toll.

Woods, who has also endured multiple operations on his left knee, had but one top-10 finish in the 2020 calendar year – a T9 at the Farmers Insurance Open. Worn out by 2019, and experiencing stiffness in his back, he skipped the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, which he's won eight times; The Honda Classic, his hometown tournament; and THE PLAYERS Championship (two-time champion).

Then came the pandemic.

Returning at the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide in July, he finished T40 and did not contend elsewhere, either. His T72 at the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP @ SHERWOOD, a course where he'd won the Hero World Challenge five times, said it all.

"I haven't put all the pieces together at the same time," he said before the Masters in November.

He didn't put the pieces together at Augusta, either. Tied for 10th after an opening-round 68, he faded to the finish, and his 10 at the 12th hole in the final round – where he hit three balls in the water -- was the highest score of his career. Although he bounced back with birdies on five of the last six holes, he still shot 76 and finished T38 to cap a largely forgettable year.

At the PNC Championship last month, he opted not to hit a tee shot on a handful of holes where his partner, 11-year-old son Charlie, was already in play well down the

fairway.

"He's a very young man, but he is predisposed to a few injuries, too, and we've seen that," Padraig Harrington, 49, said then. "Some weeks he doesn't look like he could be competitive, but the weeks that he does come out and is walking that bit better, he's a big contender."

What he'll have left after stepping aside to heal once more remains to be seen.

## 2021 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am to be played without traditional format Tournament will continue to maximize local charitable impact with support of title sponsor AT&T

The PGA TOUR, in conjunction with AT&T, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation and Pebble Beach Company, announced that the 2021 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am will be played without the traditional multi-day pro-am format due to local COVID-19 circumstances in the Monterey Peninsula. The professional portion, featuring 156 players, will be played as scheduled, February 8-14, 2021, and will be held on only two courses: Pebble Beach Golf Links and Spyglass Hill Golf Course.

"We are incredibly grateful for the commitment of our title sponsor AT&T, corporate partners, PGA TOUR, Pebble Beach Company, Monterey Peninsula Country Club and volunteer community," said Steve John, Tournament Director and Monterey Peninsula Foundation CEO. "While we will truly miss watching the actors, musicians, athletes and other amateur participants that make this event so special, we are pleased to continue on with the professional competition, enabling the Foundation to support nonprofits in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties. Our charitable giving will target basic needs like food insecurity, educational inequities and health inequities brought on by the pandemic."

The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2021, had previously announced spectators will not be on-site at this year's event. Through the unwavering support of AT&T, the second-longest running title sponsor on the PGA TOUR, the tournament will continue to maximize charitable contributions in the area. Since 1947, the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am has generated more than \$176 million for charities in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties.

In addition, a pro-am will be conducted Wednesday morning to support local charitable giving. The 'Every Shot Counts' pro-am will allow participants the opportunity to help drive grantmaking by targeting four key initiatives. Just as every shot counts, every dollar contributed will be invested by

Monterey Peninsula Foundation in critical areas brought on by the pandemic. Over the last five months, the PGA TOUR has successfully hosted Wednesday pro-ams, an integral part of tournament week. With a limited number of amateur participants, the pro-am is conducted in accordance with a comprehensive health and safety plan, including COVID-19 testing.

Following the standard cut to 65 and ties, the third and final rounds will be played on Pebble Beach Golf Links. Since the tournament moved to the Monterey Peninsula in 1947, the final action has unfolded on the iconic holes of Pebble Beach Golf Links. The tournament plans to return to the traditional pro-am format – conducted over three courses – in 2022.

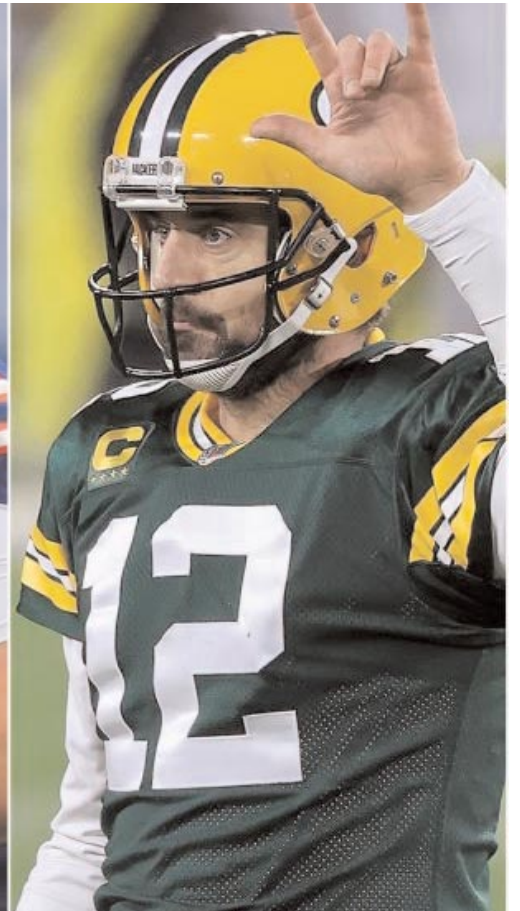
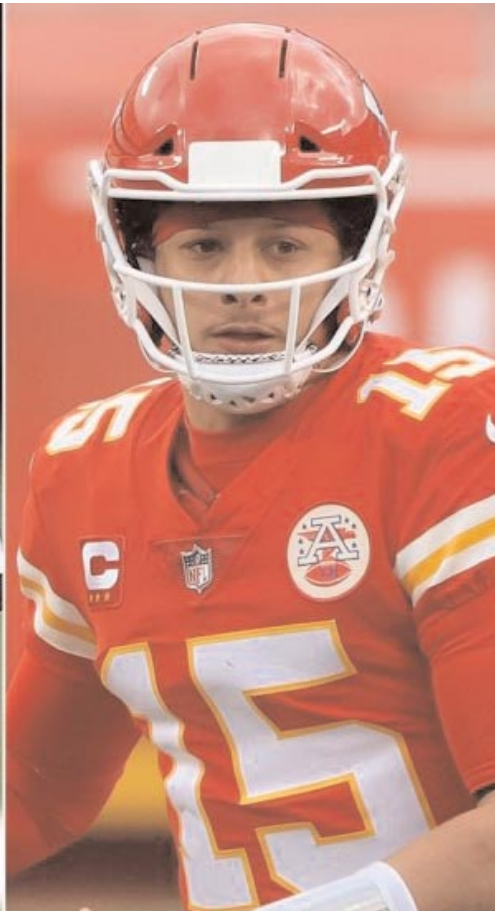
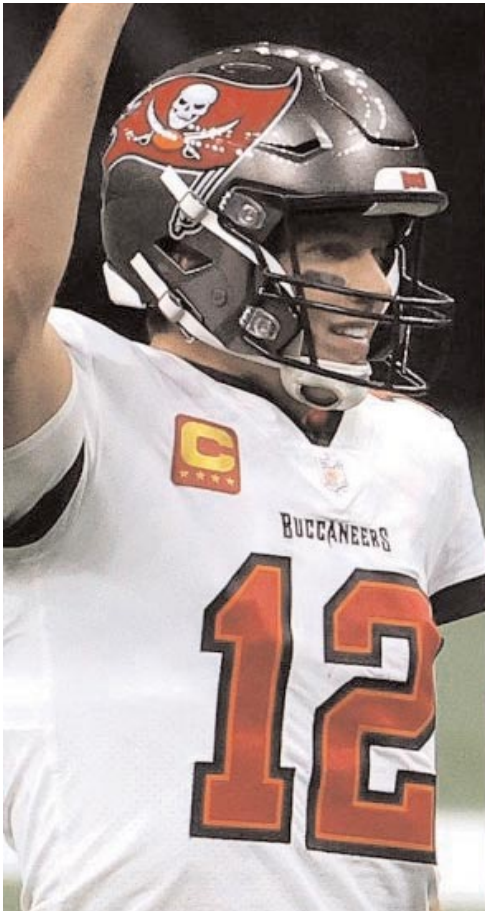
"This was a very difficult decision, but the right one given the recent surge in COVID-19 cases," said Bill Perocchi, Chief Executive Officer of Pebble Beach Company. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have put the health and safety of our guests, employees and community first. We know this will create challenges for many local charities this year, but we are confident that the incredible giving associated with this event will continue well into the future. We appreciate the support from Monterey County and the State of California in helping to ensure a safe and successful professional tournament, as well as from our partners at AT&T, the PGA TOUR and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation."

The 2021 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, which was won by Nick Taylor in 2020, will be broadcast by CBS, Golf Channel, PGA TOUR LIVE, DIRECTV's "PGA TOUR Experience" and PGA TOUR Radio. Fans also can follow along the tournament's social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

"The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am's lineup of celebrities competing with the PGA TOUR's best players with the Monterey Peninsula as the backdrop has been a perfect marriage of sports and entertainment since 1947," said Tyler Dennis, EVP and President, PGA TOUR. "The PGA TOUR and our partners have maintained that the health and safety for all involved with our events and the communities in which we play is our No. 1 priority, and for that reason – together with AT&T, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation and Pebble Beach Company – we feel strongly this decision, while difficult, was the right call to make given the current environment. We thank our title sponsor AT&T for their support of this reimagined event and for the positive impact that will continue in the region through the charitable initiatives of the Monterey Peninsula Foundation."



# 2021 NFL Conference Championship



**NFL playoff picks, predictions: Packers edge Buccaneers, Chiefs hold off Bills in championship games**

By Mike McFee

NFL championship weekend features a pair of quarterback matchups for all ages.

First, Tampa Bay meets Green Bay in the NFC championship game at 2:05 p.m. on Sunday. Aaron Rodgers, 37, is playing in his fifth NFC championship game, but it's his first one at Lambeau Field. Tom Brady, 43, is in his 14th NFC championship game, but this is his first one in the NFC. It's also the first postseason matchup between the two future Hall of Fame quarterbacks.

Buffalo travels to Kansas City for the AFC championship game at 5:40 p.m.

It's the Chiefs' third straight AFC championship game at Arrowhead Stadium, and it remains to be seen whether Patrick Mahomes, 25, will clear concussion protocol for the game. If not, the Chiefs will turn to backup quarterback Chad Henne, 35, who sealed the divisional playoff round victory against the Browns. Josh Allen, 24, is trying to get the Bills back in the Super Bowl for the first time since 1993.

I hit three of four on divisional playoff weekend. Here is a look at my track record this season:

- Last Week: 3-1
- Regular season: 129-75
- Playoffs: 7-3
- Overall: 136-78

**Tampa Bay (11-5) at Green Bay (13-3)  
Sunday, 2:05 / FOX  
Line: Packers -3 / 51**

Green Bay looked unstoppable on offense against the Rams with the combination of Rodgers' efficiency and a three-headed running game led by Aaron Jones, Jamaal Williams and A.J. Dillon.

That's where this matchup starts. The Packers generated just 94 rushing yards in the regular-season meeting, a 38-10 loss at Tampa Bay that was ignited by two Rodgers' interceptions in the second quarter. The Buccaneers had five sacks, and the combined pressure from defensive linemen Jason Pierre-Paul and Ndamukong Suh flustered Green Bay. Devin White and Lavonte David are speedy linebackers who can stuff the run, too. That is the challenge for a Packers' offensive line that has improved since, even without starting tackle David Bakhtiari.

Rodgers needs those play-action opportunities to work with Davante Adams and Robert Tonyan. Green Bay made it look easy against the Rams. Can they do it again?

Then there's Brady, who made the Packers pay for those mistakes in the first meeting. He's working with a loaded group of receivers. Ronald Jones had 113 yards and two TDs in the first meeting, and Green Bay's defense has been susceptible to the run. Defensive tackle Kenny Clark needs to be more disruptive in this game.

The Packers did not get a sack in that

first meeting either. Rashan Gary, Preston Smith and Za'Darius Smith need to pressure Brady, or he will sit back and work with a loaded group of receivers. Who wins the red-zone matchups between Rob Gronkowski and Mike Evans and Green Bay's secondary, which features a lockdown cornerback in Jaire Alexander and an emerging safety in Darnell Savage Jr.? That will be the key.

With these two quarterbacks, it comes down to a handful of plays. The Packers will hold on to a one-score lead at halftime, but Tampa Bay ties it early in the fourth quarter with an Antonio Brown touchdown. It really might come down to which quarterback has the ball last – and which defense comes up with the stop. How much of an advantage is Lambeau Field? We think it makes the slight difference in an instant classic.

**Pick: Packers 31, Buccaneers 28**

**Buffalo (13-3) at Kansas City (14-2)  
Sunday, 5:40 / CBS  
Line: Chiefs -3 / 53.5**

It's difficult to make a pick without knowing whether Mahomes is playing this week, but we're going to base this prediction on the premise he's able to go. Clyde Edwards-Helaire (ankle, hip) also practiced last week but was inactive for the Browns' game. Edwards-Helaire had 161 rushing yards in Kansas City's 26-17 victory against the Bills in Week 6. Darrel Williams started over Le'Veon Bell last

week, so he could be the focus if Edwards-Helaire can't go. The Chiefs also were without Sammy Watkins (calf) last week. The good news? Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill were still in action. They can hit the chunk plays against Buffalo's secondary no matter who is at quarterback.

Josh Allen struggled in the regular-season matchup, but he didn't take a sack in that loss. He also had not established a strong connection with Stefon Diggs, who has emerged as one of the best – if not the best – receiver in the league this season. Allen will target Diggs frequently, and Cole Beasley and John Brown to need to take advantage of their 1-on-1 opportunities. The Bills need to generate a running game with Devin Singletary early, and Allen will make more plays this time. Again, this pick still comes down to Mahomes. If he's cleared, then we'll assume he's healthy enough to lead the Chiefs to another Super Bowl appearance.

Buffalo takes the early lead on a Diggs' TD, and the Bills cling to a third-quarter lead before the Mahomes magic act begins. Second-half TDs to Kelce and Hill re-take the lead, and Kansas City closes the door behind the running game in the fourth quarter. If last week taught us anything, then it's Andy Reid won't hold back in crunch time.

It's tight again, but Kansas City repeats as AFC champions. We will re-evaluate this pick if he can't go.

**Pick: Chiefs 28, Bills 26**



# Pro Football HoF balloting has begun



Charles Woodson, Peyton Manning, Calvin Johnson and Jared Allen are eligible for the first time

By Mike Tanier

## Predicting how the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame balloting will go

The 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame balloting process has begun. Who are the nominees this year, and who is the most likely to be inducted?

Peyton Manning's 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame "debate" will consist of his name getting called and everyone saying "Aye." Calvin Johnson and Charles Woodson are also likely first-ballot inductees. But what about John Lynch, who has been a Hall of Fame finalist for years? Or Torrey Holt and Reggie Wayne, a pair of great wide receivers who are so similar that they force voters to take sides? Or linebackers Clay Matthews and the late Sam Mills, who may not get another chance if they are not enshrined this year?

## The important context of Hall of Fame voting

I've been writing about the Pro Football Hall of Fame for years. I've often picked the ears of many selection committee members in the past. It gives me as good a chance as just about anyone about how this year's balloting will go. Let me share some of the backdrop to the Hall of Fame voting process.

You may notice that there's not much in this article about how much "greater" or "more worthy" one Hall of Fame candidate might be than another. That's because for

non-Peyton level legends, reaching the Hall of Fame is more about navigating through backlogs and logjams at various positions — and getting off-the-record endorsements from teammates, coaches, and opponents — than racking up stats or Pro Bowl berths.

All 15 of this year's finalists have strong Hall of Fame credentials. Who gets in will probably come down to who has been waiting the longest and who is stuck on a ballot next to a similar player, resulting in a split ticket.

Oh, and stick around until the end, where I suggest a solution to the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame's logjam of overqualified candidates.

## 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame Ballot Who is on the list this year?

### Jared Allen Defensive End

Allen is an excellent 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame candidate but not a high-priority one. As a first-time finalist not in the Peyton-Megatron category, voters will quickly shunt him to the back of the line. Voters will work on players who have been on the docket for years.

### Ronde Barber Cornerback

Another 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame first-time finalist whose candidacy stalled at the semifinalist stage for a few years. Barber will also be overshadowed by

Charles Woodson and prioritized behind former teammate John Lynch on the selection committee's list.

### Tony Boselli and Alan Faneca Offensive Line

Hall of Fame voters have been telling me the same things about Boselli for years. They know he's great, but his short career has shunted him behind fellow offensive linemen Kevin Mawae (Hall of Fame Class of 2019), Steve Hutchinson (Class of 2020), and Faneca. You may not love that logic. Hall of Fame voters have little choice but to try to prioritize players from similar positions and eras.

Mawae was an All-Pro at age 37. Faneca and Hutchinson were high-impact starters in their mid-30s. Boselli's career was over at 29. It's hard to pretend that his career length shouldn't be a factor. Especially true at a position with no statistical record to fall back upon.

Faneca is a sixth-year finalist because of the offensive line backlog; Boselli is a fifth-year finalist. Voters have tacitly been clearing this logjam one lineman at a time. This will be Faneca's year. Boselli will have to wait beyond the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame voting.

### LeRoy Butler and John Lynch Safety

There's an old football adage — the further you are from the ball, the less impact you have. That's silly in the modern pass-happy NFL, but it made sense in the

old slobber knocker days. Frankly, it still impacts the decision making of Hall of Fame voters trying to differentiate among defensive backs.

Lynch played his signature seasons in Tony Dungy's Tampa-2 defense, often tasked with covering deep zones. Lynch got shunted behind Steve Atwater, Brian Dawkins, Ed Reed, and Troy Polamalu in recent votes and could get stuck behind Butler as well, not really because Butler has better stats (safety stats are often misleading, anyway), but because Butler was perceived (rightly) as more of a versatile box safety and enforcer than Lynch, and therefore someone who impacted far more plays.

Working in Lynch's favor is his presence as a high-profile NFL figure as the 49ers general manager (it's easier to vote for a guy you may need as a source) and the fact that he is an eight-time finalist. So Packers fans, if Butler is "snubbed" this year, it will probably be because the voters were clearing Lynch through to make room for Butler next year.

One last note, Ronde Barber's candidacy might also stall because of the perception that he was a Tampa-2 "system guy" who only worked the short sidelines.

### Torrey Holt and Reggie Wayne Wide Receiver

Holt and Wayne are both second-time finalists who will probably share the ballot for a while. Both achieved fame as the #2 receivers for historic offenses (the "Greatest Show on Turf" St. Louis Rams and Peyton Manning's mid-2000s Indianapolis Colts) whose careers took off as their teams' fortunes began to decline. That makes them Sammy Hagar candidates — great for a long time, but not quite at the same level as the guys who came before them.

The similarities between Holt and Wayne will end up in a split ticket for at least another year. At the very least, both will have to wait until there is no better wide receiver candidate on the ballot.

### Calvin Johnson Wide Receiver

The only arguments against Johnson for the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame voting, if there are any, will be: a) short career, and b) he should wait until the committee processes Holt and/or Wayne.

Johnson's career is not Boselli-short. He left on his own terms (as opposed to fading or succumbing to injuries at an early age), so the short career argument likely won't sway anyone. And most voters surely place Megatron in a separate category from Holt and Wayne. Plus, voters may like the idea of shooing Johnson in and leaving the Detroit Lions alone for a few decades.





This might be Zach Thomas' last chance to get in the Hall of Fame

**Calvin Johnson  
Wide Receiver**

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**Peyton Manning  
Quarterback**

Yerp.

**Clay Matthews Jr.  
Linebacker**

Matthews is a first-time finalist in his 20th year of eligibility after years and years in semifinalist purgatory. In other words, his case is being sent to the "Supreme Court" for a final ruling before he is (most likely) shipped over to the senior's committee.

Matthews' Hall of Fame case is a grab-bag. An ultra-long career, some seasons with fondly-remembered Dawg Pound defenses, interesting-but-not-overwhelming statistical accomplishments (leading the league in tackles is not the sort of thing that impresses most voters), some famous offspring to keep him fresh in the minds of fans/voters, and a few very high-profile former coaches known to stan for (and sometimes against) their favorite players and opponents behind the scenes.

My gut tells me that the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame committee will pass on Matthews, knowing that he will be a top-of-the-list guy at the senior's level. It may all come down to what one of those high-profile former coaches thinks.

**Sam Mills  
Linebacker**

A favorite of mine, Mills (who passed away in 2005) is in his 19th year of eligibility and will also soon be likely sent over to the senior's committee. His portfolio is better than Matthews', but even odder. He was the leader of the Dome Patrol Saints defenses of the early 1990s, a key contributor to the early seasons of the Carolina Panthers, and the greatest player on the greatest team in USFL history (Mills started his career with the Philadelphia /Baltimore Stars, who won two USFL titles).

Mills' candidacy has suffered from the same issue that has held Matthews back. It could befall many others on this list (including the next guy). If it takes a few sentences to explain why a player was an all-time great, he'll inevitably get stuck behind the guys who can be summed up in a few words.

**Richard Seymour  
Defensive Line**

Seymour is likely to end up the sixth or seventh player on many ballots (among the final cuts, in other words) for a few more years until he's in a Faneca-Lynch situation where there is more urgency to make a final decision. His candidacy might take off now that the Patriots dynasty appears to be over. The time is coming to put the franchise's accomplishments into a historical perspective. Just not sure it will take place for the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame balloting.

**Zach Thomas  
Linebacker**

Despite Thomas' many All-Pro and Pro Bowl selections, he suffers from a variation of the Lynch problem. There's a perception that he was a "system guy" protected by space-eating defensive linemen who funneled plays into his lap. Keep in mind that these "perceptions" typically come from conversations with coaches, players, and opponents of the time, not from sportswriters who hate your favorite team or something.

Thomas' candidacy also lost momentum

when he shared the ballot with teammate Jason Taylor (Class of 2017) for several years. This year, his chances come down to whether the receivers, offensive linemen, and safeties box each other out in just the right combination. He will likely be prioritized ahead of the old-timer linebackers. Kevin Mawae sung Thomas' praises in his Hall of Fame enshrinement.

**Charles Woodson  
Defensive Back**

The only argument against Woodson will be about the queue, not his accomplishments. Some voters may push for Lynch to get in before Woodson, and there's a slim chance of some Woodson-Butler split Green Bay Packers' ticket confusion. Most likely, he's in on the first ballot.

**My early 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame prediction**

Alan Faneca, John Lynch, Calvin Johnson, Peyton Manning, Charles Woodson. I hope to revisit this prediction after speaking to some voters over the next week or two.

**My Hall of Fame preferences**

Alan Faneca, Calvin Johnson, Peyton Manning, Sam Mills, Charles Woodson. I prioritize Sam Mills over John Lynch, but the committee may see otherwise.

**My suggestion for "fixing" the Hall of Fame voting**

Any fifth-time finalist should be subjected to a separate "yes or no" vote by the committee. If the fifth-time finalist wins a simple majority, he's enshrined in the Hall of Fame. Most importantly, his selection does not count against the five players in that year's class. If he does not get a majority, his case is sent to the senior's committee.

This year, Boselli, Faneca, and Lynch would each be voted upon separately. All three would almost certainly pass and reach the Hall of Fame by a simple majority. The committee could then discuss other players without prioritizing guys who have been stuck in various positional logjams for many years.

This plan would result in a few years where 6-8 players are inducted into the Hall of Fame. This would not be counting seniors, coaches and contributors. After that, the docket would simmer down to the point where someone like Jared Allen doesn't get the "we don't have time for you yet" treatment for several years. It would not swell the ranks of the Hall of Fame too much or make it less of an honor; it would just be a way of handling air traffic control. And it would allow us to talk more about the accomplishments of these players and less time on balloting logistics.



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# NCAA announces tournament details



The Final four is still scheduled for Saturday, April 3 and Monday April 5

BY DIC HUMPHREY  
DHUMPHREY24@GMAIL.COM  
MEMBER: USBWA

The NCAA announced more details this week on the Men's NCAA Post-Season Tournament, which will be played entirely in Indiana. The four play-in games that reduce the field from 68 teams to 64 usually take place on Tuesday and Wednesday. This year they are being pushed back to Thursday to give more time for teams to get settled in Indianapolis, tested, and otherwise deal with COVID-19 protocols. The four games will be played on Thursday, March 18 at Mackey Arena in West Lafayette, home of the Purdue Boilermakers, and Assembly Hall in Bloomington, home of the Indiana Hoosiers.

The first and second rounds after the play-in games will take place on Friday, March 19 through Monday March 22 at six venues, which are Lucas Oil Stadium, Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Hinkle Fieldhouse, Indiana Farmers Coliseum and the two venues of the play-in games. The Sweet Sixteen will be played on Saturday, March 27 and Sunday March 28, followed by the Elite Eight on Monday and Tuesday, March 29 and 30. The Elite Eight games will be televised in prime time.

The Final four is still scheduled for Saturday, April 3 and Monday April 5.

## SMU Basketball update

As for the SMU Men's basketball team, their third consecutive scheduled game was postponed Wednesday night. This time it was Tulane that had COVID-19 problems

causing the postponement. No make-up date has been announced. The original positive SMU test came shortly after the last game SMU played forcing quarantining of players and coaches.

"I haven't seen the team in a week," Head Coach Tim Jankovich said last Monday. "It's very strange not to see your team for a week in the middle of the season."

Practice resumed last Tuesday.

The American Athletic Conference has particularly been hit hard with COVID-19 postponements. Every school in the conference has had conference games postponed.

The Mustangs now travel to Orlando to face the Central Florida Knights this Saturday. SMU is 12-10 all-time against the Knights, including 3-7 in Orlando. Last season, the teams split two games, with the home team winning each time. Game time is 2:00 PM Eastern/1:00 PM Central, and the game will be televised on ESPNU.

With the postponements, the Mustangs are looking at finishing January with four games in nine days. After Saturday's game in Orlando, SMU plays Memphis next week on Tuesday and Thursday and finish the month on Sunday, January 31 against Houston. Next Thursday's game against Memphis is the only home game among the four.

## SMU Football update

The Mustangs tackle football team received two significant transfer commitments. Grant Calcaterra, a tight end from Oklahoma switched his commitment from Auburn to SMU because of Auburn's coaching change. At Oklahoma, he caught

41 passes for 627 and scored nine touchdowns over the 2017, 2018 and 2019 seasons. In 2018, he was the Big XII's first team All-Conference tight end. Calcaterra is the second Oklahoma transfer coming to SMU this spring as he joins quarterback Tanner Mordecai. Calcaterra said part of his decision revolved around the success that Kylen Granson had the last two seasons at tight end for SMU. The Mustangs' offense is obviously one that Calcaterra expects to thrive in.

SMU also received a commitment from former University of North Texas running back Tres Siggers. Siggers tweeted earlier this week that he was moving down I-35 to SMU. Siggers said that he wanted to play for SMU coming out of high school in Duncanville, however, his grades did not qualify him for admission. Now, he is on schedule to graduate from UNT this May, and he is qualified for admission. He will be eligible to play this season and will have two years of eligibility remaining.

Ulysses Bentley, IV was named the Football Writers Association of America Freshman All-American team. Bentley led

the AAC with 913 rushing yards last season. He became the first Mustang to win Freshman All-American honors.

## SMU Men's Soccer

The MLS Super Draft was held Thursday, and three Mustangs were selected, all in the first three rounds. Nicky Hernandez was drafted by FC Dallas with the 15th pick in the first round. He is the 12th Mustang to be selected in the first round and continues a streak of four consecutive years in which an SMU player has been drafted in the first round. Brandon Terwege was taken in the third round by Houston Dynamo FC with the 57th pick overall. Toronto FC nabbed Talen Maples in the third round with the 72nd overall pick.

## NOTABLE:

- SMU point guard Kendrick Davis goes into the weekend leading the AAC and the NCAA in assists at 7.7 per game. Davis's 6.9 assists per game in his SMU career places him second behind Billy Allen's 9.0 assists per game over the 1978-80 seasons.

- Classes at SMU resume this Monday, January 25.



# College Football News and Notes



McNeese State travels to Tarleton State on February 13



**BO CARTER**

[bcarter@footballfoundation.com](mailto:bcarter@footballfoundation.com)

College football in 2020-21 has turned virtually into a year-round sport. NCAA FCS power and Ohio Valley Conference favorite Jacksonville State and dozens of FCS, NCAA Division II and III and NAIA squads open spring season workouts this week, and the first contest on the spring slate is Feb. 13 when McNeese State travels to Tarleton State. Stephenville, Texas, where TSU is located, is just thawing out from a rare, eight-inch snowfall on Jan. 10.

Turner Classic Movies, which had a special season of college football movies' remembrances in autumn 2019 with special interviews at the NFF College Hall of Fame, has been airing the historic MGM Movie Reviews from the 1950s with the award-winning actor and emcee George Murphy who was host for the first NFF Awards Banquet at the Waldorf Astoria in 1958. The famed former Yale football player narrated dozens of these MGM shorts with some of his best friends from all walks of Hollywood and the sports world.

## NFF College Hall of Fame Facts

**Some notable birthdates** in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the Jan. 19-25 time period are Jan. 19 (1892) Eddie Mahan, Natick, Mass.; (1932) Joe Schmidt,

Pittsburgh, Pa.; Jan. 20 (1929) Frank Kush, Windber, Pa.; (1960) Ronnie Mallett, Pine Bluff, Ark.; Jan. 21 (1879) Gil Dobie, Hastings, Minn.; (1901) Lynn Bomar, Gallatin, Tenn.; (1925) George Connor, Chicago, Ill.; (1952) Billy "White Shoes" Johnson, Boothwyn, Pa.; (1967) Jacob Green, Pasadena, Texas; (1975) Aaron Taylor (Neb.), Wichita Falls, Texas; Jan. 22 (1948) Bob Stein, Minneapolis, Minn.; (1958) Charles White, Los Angeles, Calif.; (1964) Joe Dudek, Boston, Mass.; Jan. 23 (1890) Morley Jennings, Holland, Mich.; (1935) Jerry Tubbs, Throckmorton, Texas; (1952) Shelby Jordan, E. St. Louis, Ill.; Jan. 24 (1881) Bill Warner, Springville, N.Y.; (1920) Chuck Taylor, Portland, Ore.; (1936) Don Bosseler, Weathersfield, N.Y.; (1985) Patrick Willis, Bruceton, Tenn.

**Notable anniversary death dates** for Hall of Famers are Jan. 19 (1936) Dan McGugin, Nashville, Tenn.; (1942) Jimmy Johnson (Carlisle, Northeastern), San Juan, Puerto Rico; (1980) D.X. Bible, Austin, Texas; (2015) Lou Michaels, Swoyersville, Pa.; Jan. 21 (1969) Bowden Wyatt, Kingston, Tenn.; Jan. 23 (1976) Paul Robeson, Philadelphia, Pa.; (2011) Dr. Ed Dyas, Mobile, Ala.; (2017) Ralph Guglielmi, Wallace, N.C.; Jan. 25 (1999) Herman Wedemeyer, Honolulu, Hawaii; (2007) Ken Kavanaugh, Sarasota, Fla.

**Happy birthdays** to NFF College Hall of Fame members Jan. 20 Ronnie Mallett, Jan. 21 Billy "White Shoes" Johnson, Jacob Green, Aaron Taylor (Neb.), Jan. 22 Bob Stein, Charles White, Joe Dudek, Jan. 23 Shelby Jordan, Jan. 24 Don Bosseler (a spry 85), Patrick Willis...

Kansas State and Stanford will meet in the Allstate Kickoff Classic Sept. 4 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas...UNLV and UTSA will start a six-game series on Oct. 2, 2021, and the Rebels will host

Idaho State in 2022...New Mexico State and UTSA will start a four-game series in 2024...Liberty and Old Dominion will renew a three-year series from 2021-23... Interestingly, both Alabama and Ohio State had 90-10 overall records in the 100 games prior to last week's College Football Playoff Championship Game...Texas A&M enjoyed its highest finish in the final Associated Press national poll since the 1939 won the national championship as the 2020 Aggies closed in the No. 4 position...

Ardent Ohio State fan Tommy Wainwright of Prosper, Texas, received immeasurable support from OSU coaches and student-athletes and former Buckeyes head coach Urban Meyer in messages of encouragement throughout his long battle with cancer. The seven-year-old Wainwright later rang the ceremonial bell to complete his chemotherapy treatment and being designated cancer-free at an area children's hospital Jan. 11...Vanderbilt chancellor Dr. Daniel Diermeier has debuted the Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy with a special presentation with former College Football Playoff selection committee chair and Distinguished Stanford Herbert Hoover Professor Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Vanderbilt law alumnus and former undergraduate roommate of Harvard football student-athlete Tommy Lee Jones former U.S. vice president Al Gore....The Texas Woman's U. school newspaper, the Lasso, is doing special features on Black alumni and Black former student-athletes in its Black History Month editions in February.

Indiana head coach Tom Allen is the 2020 AFCA National FBS Coach of the Year in the 86th annual awarding of this honor. NFF College Hall of Fame coaches Joe Paterno (five times) of Penn State and Bear Bryant (three times) of Alabama have been the most frequent recipients of this AFCA honor...New Boise State head coach Andy Avalos has finalized his five-year contract with performance bonuses, and Avalos is retaining defensive coordinator Spencer Danielson from the current staff...Florida head coach Dan Mullen spoke of the possibility of playing a regular-season game at the end of spring training at one of the traditional bowl or campus sites in an ESPN interview. He also addressed opening the 2021 season with bowl games – especially the cancelled contests from post-2020 – and spoke of the post-COVID-19 a hypothetical outing between Florida and Southern California might draw in Miami or Orlando, Fla...

....Alabama named former Penn State and NFL Dallas Texans head coach Bill O'Brien as offensive coordinator...Dayton head coach Rick Chamberlin said he

agreed with the university administration's decision to cancel spring football activity and to start the regular season in September...Oregon head coach Mario Cristobal told media he is buoyed by his contract extension and '21 returnees for the Ducks and offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead...Jerry Neuheisel, former UCLA quarterback and son of former Colorado and UCLA head man and noted ESPN broadcaster Rick Neuheisel, is the new receivers coach at UCLA...Georgia co-defensive coordinator Dan Lanning indicated he will remain with the Bulldogs instead of moving to the Texas football staff in the same capacity...Maryland added Dan Enos as 2021 offensive coordinator...Former Vanderbilt head coach Derek Mason is the new defensive coordinator at Auburn...Former Baylor head coach and longtime SEC teams' assistant coach Kevin Steele has been added to the Tennessee staff as a defensive assistant coach...Duke head coach David Cutcliffe will allow an assistant coach to perform offensive play calling duties in '21...Miami (Fla.) head coach Manny Diaz is taking over defensive team signal calling in the coming season...Washington head coach Jimmy Lake expressed a notion to play tough-minded defense in both '20 and the upcoming 2021 campaign for Pac-12 Conference success...New Texas head coach Steve Sarkisian was complimented on his game planning and play calling for Alabama when it downed Ohio State in the CFP title test. The Crimson Tide averaged 9.5 yards per play on seven touchdown drives. Sarkisian's introductory news conference at Texas was webstreamed nationally last Tuesday...The new Texas head coach added fellow former Crimson Tide assistant coaches Kyle Flood as the Longhorns offensive coordinator and Jeff Banks as special teams coach...UTEP hopes to name former Texas A&M assistant coach Bradley Dale Peveto as its defensive coordinator...UMass director of sport performance Matt Shadeed has joined South Alabama as assistant head coach and director of strength and conditioning. A.T. Turner has replaced Shadeed at Massachusetts...2020 Texas assistant coaches defensive coordinator Chris Ash and defensive tackles coach Bo Davis have been interviewed as possible holdovers for the '21 UT staff...Tennessee Tech tabbed Lamont Seward as a new assistant coach...Tennessee chose Nick Davison as defensive line coach...Arizona State assistant head coach and co-defensive coordinator Antonio Pierce become sole defensive coordinator and will send in defensive plays and formations. Former NFL Cincinnati Bengals Marvin Lewis is moving into a special adviser's post for the Sun Devils in 2021...Former



Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer spoke of the injection of offense current head coach Ryan Day has brought to the program since taking the reins in 2019 and before that as OSU's offensive coordinator during the 2017 and '18 outings. By the way, Meyer is finalizing contract details to become head coach of the NFL Jacksonville Jaguars...South Carolina named former Marshall strength and conditioning coach Luke Day to that post at USC.

**Hometowns** of more 2021 college head coaches – TCU: Gary Patterson, Rozel, Kan.; Texas: Steve Sarkisian, Torrance, Calif.; Texas A&M: Jimbo Fisher, Clarksburg, W.Va.; Texas Southern: Clarence McKinney, Houston Texas; Texas State: Jake Spavital, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Longtime Duke director of athletics /vice president Kevin White is retiring Aug. 1 after serving in that post for 13 years. White previously was AD at Notre Dame, Arizona State, Tulane, Maine and Loras..

...Some possible leading candidates for White's position are Duke senior deputy AD for administration, legal Affairs and chief of staff Nina King, St. John's (N.Y.) AD Mike Cragg, NCAA executive vice president Stan Wilcox, and Pennsylvania AD Grace Calhoun...UC Davis' director of athletics search committee has convened and made solid progress in statements from committee chair and faculty athletics representative Dr. Scott Carrell...Ohio State AD and 2007 NFF John L. Toner Award recipient Gene Smith was interviewed by The Undeclared's Bill Rhoden about NCAA FBS administrators seeking to bring more Black head football coaches into the college ranks...Kent State AD Joel Nielsen will retire from the post after 11 years on June 30 to pursue other career opportunities ...William & Mary interim AD Jeremy Martin reported the university has reached 62 percent (roughly \$2.6 million) of its 2020-21 academic year fundraising goal...

...Georgia Southern AD Jared Benko note on a recent podcast the challenges of COVID-19 and how GSU hopes to host more athletics events on the Savannah and Armstrong, Ga., campus...Missouri State AD and Football Championship Sub division Selection Committee chair Kyle Moats explained about the 2021 number of fewer at-large teams for the spring FCS championship in Frisco, Texas, May 16 ...Stephen F. Austin AD Ryan Ivey posited about some new expenses associated with changing conference logos and travel expenses as the Lumberjacks move to the WAC in 2022...Loyola Marymount AD Craig Pintens discussed various hiring and financial practices during the COVID-19 era and announced the addition of former San Diego State assistant AD for development and major gifts James Batley as senior associate AD for development at LMU ...Clemson associate AD of communications and strategic initiatives Jeff Kallin noted that \$64.8 million in upgrades at CU's Memorial Stadium are on hold tem-

porarily...Minnesota senior associate AD for facilities and capital projects Scott Ellison has retired after 32 years with the department...UNC Asheville AD Janet Cone related how UNCA sent student-athletes home for the holidays, and the youngsters and parents were grateful for their return from campus to their hometowns with special attention to COVID-19 protocols...Ole Miss AD Keith Carter noted that the Rebels anticipated revenue is down \$30 million at this point in the athletics' fiscal year but would have been down potentially \$60 million if the 2020 football season had not been conducted. He also noted that the SEC's new television agreement with ESPN will be a game-changer financially ...One of CarrSports most recent consults in July 2020 was the promotion of Incarnate Word AD Richard Duran to full-time AD status...Marist director of swimming and diving Larry VanWagner is retiring June 1 after 45 years in this role...

...UTRGV president Dr. Guy Bailey said the university will continue to explore the possible addition of a NCAA FCS or FBS football program with the Western Athletic Conference's expansion and return to football as a championship sport in '22.

SEC commissioner Greg Sankey reflected that there was not a totally unified front among NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision members on number of games, start of the season and bowl contracts as COVID-19 conditions progressed. The commissioner also noted that there may be legislation proposed to allow flexibility for the 25-player new enrollees' limit due to excessive transfers, opt outs and early NFL declarations...Big Ten Conference commissioner Kevin Warren spoke about the imperfect season of 2020 due to massive COVID-19 concerns and the importance of remaining calm and thoughtful in times of challenges ...The Southland Conference is working with Dallas-based with Eastman and Beaudine to assist in the future alignment of the circuit. SLC commissioner Tom Burnett noted that the conference had gone through several membership changes for a number of years and would continue to adapt in coming months...The Western Athletic Conference formally admitted new conference members Abilene Christian, Lamar, Sam Houston State, Stephen F. Austin, and Southern Utah as new members for the 2022-23 academic year and will renew WAC football after a 10-year absence with this development...Central Arkansas officially will join the Atlantic Sun Conference in 2022-23 after leaving the Southland Conference...Chicago State confirmed that it will leave the WAC in 2022, and current WAC member Grand Canyon reiterated that it will not start a varsity football program...Yahoo Sports reported that Boise State and San Diego State have had preliminary discussions about possible membership in the American Athletic Conference...The Lone Star Conference had 2,254 student-athletes have earned Commissioner's Honor Roll

honors for the 2020-21 fall semester...The American will play a 32-game, intraconference round-robin slate with up to 24 non-AAC contests allowed beginning in late February or early March...The Southern Conference will form four subcommittees to its Racial Equity and Justice Task Force – the Education, Marketing, Supporting Diversity, and Support Subcommittees have had chairs appointed and will be meeting in coming days.

Bowl Season executive director Nick Carparelli proposed that future NCAA names, images and likenesses' compensation for football student-athletes should include required participation in bowl games to receive full compensation....

...Something to shoot for in 2021: some schools seeking their first time in the CFP rankings in the coming year are Air Force, Akron, Arkansas State, Army West Point, Ball State, Bowling Green, Buffalo, California, Central Michigan, Charlotte, Colorado State, Connecticut, East Carolina, Eastern Michigan, FIU, Florida Atlantic, Georgia Southern, Georgia State, Hawai'i, Illinois, Kansas, Kent State, Louisiana Tech, Maryland, Miami (Ohio), Middle Tennessee, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Illinois, North Texas, Ohio, Oregon State, Purdue, Rice, Rutgers, San Diego State, South Alabama, Southern Miss, Texas State, Texas Tech, Troy, Tulane, UAB, UL Monroe, UNLV, USF, UTEP, UTSA, Vanderbilt, WKU, and Wyoming. There have been 74 schools represented in the first 42 national rankings over seven seasons by the College Football Playoff. There were 91 different schools represented in the 125 Bowl Championship Series standings from 1998-2013 (16 years)...The CFP championship skirmish between Ohio State and Oregon in January 2015 remains as the most viewed title telecast with 34.6 million watching. This year's Alabama-Ohio State contest attracted 24-26 million viewers as final ratings' tallies are being compiled. In bowl geography Alabama is now 13-7 in bowl games played in the state of Florida while Ohio State is 2-11 in postseason play in the Sunshine State after both met in the CFP Championship Game on Jan. 11...The Southeastern Conference captured the most post-2020 bowl encounters with seven wins in 10 encounters...With the COVID-19-related cancellation of 16 bowl games and limited attendance protocols due to the pandemic, total bowl attendance was 170,453 – the fewest fans since there were 137,042 for four major bowls during the height of the Great Depression in post-1935 college football. The 26 bowls played were the fewest since there were 25 bowls in post-2001 – the winter after the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

Alabama kicker Will Reichard made all 98 of his kicks during the 13-0 team's national title campaign. He was 84-of-84 on extra-point boots and 14-of-14 on field goal tries...Oklahoma QB Spencer Rattler garnered Freshman All-America laurels after passing for 3,031 yards and 28 TDs

with just seven interceptions...Georgia QB JT Daniels is expected to be among top candidates for All-SEC honors after he decided to return for '21...Clemson is seeking immediate assistance after the departure of All-ACC QB Trevor Lawrence and RB Travis Etienne who combined for 17,000-plus yards of total offense for seven years with the Tigers...North Carolina QB Sam Howell brings back 68 TD passes in two seasons and tons of savvy in '21 for UNC head coach and NFF College Hall of Fame member Mack Brown...Miami (Fla.) QB and Houston transfer D'Eriq King appears to be on the road to recovery after a knee injury and hopes to start the upcoming season at 100 percent for the Hurricanes ...DB Deane Leonard of the U. of Calgary (Canada) and LB Tavius Robinson who was at the University of Guelph (Canada) both played regularly for Ole Miss in 2020 as transfers and enjoyed the bowl experience against Indiana in an Outback Bowl triumph after starring in Canada's U SPORT Collegiate League before making the trek to Oxford, Miss....Alabama backup QB Bryce Young is awaiting his turn as All-America QB Mac Jones will not return for the defending national champs along with fellow NFL projections CB Patrick Surtain II, WR Jaylen Waddle and DL Christian Barmore...Texas A&M LB Buddy Johnson has declared for the '21 NFL Draft. The Aggies should be loaded again, though, with the returning triumvirate of RBs Isaiah Spiller, Devon Achane and Ainius Smith who dominated SEC contests along with key CB returnee Myles Jones. Youngsters expected to tussle for the A&M quarterback role in '21 are Zach Calzada, Haynes King and Eli Stowers – all freshmen...Notre Dame RB Kyren Williams has been noted on several way-to-early prognostications for All-America honors in '21...Southern California wide receivers Drake London and Bru McCoy are projected to haul in as many as 100 composite passes from Trojans returning QB Kedon Slovis. The receivers combined in '20 for 54 catches and 738 yards in six games...Indiana QB Michael Penix Jr. is working through injury rehab and hopes to see some activity in '21 spring workouts...Former Mississippi State QB-WR Garrett Shrader has transferred to Syracuse ...Texas junior-to-be QB Casey Thompson has tossed for six career TDs in just 29 all-time pass attempts all-time for the 'Horns...Former Oklahoma TE Grant Calcaterra and former Arizona State gridman Nolan Matthews are transferring to SMU...Oklahoma State returning QB Spencer Saunders was credited with stick-to-it-iveness after returning from early injuries to pass for 2,007 yards and 14 TDs last year ...Penn State hopes to continue its late-season roll with the comeback of WR Jahan Dotson...Texas RB Keontay Ingram has requested entry into the '21 NCAA transfer portal...Virginia Tech RB Khalil Herbert has declared for the '21 NFL Draft...LSU tight end Arik Gilbert will enter the 2021



NFL Draft while 2020 Tigers teammate sophomore QB Myles Brennan is set to return for the coming outing ...Liberty seeks to build on its 10-1 season again with standout starters QB Malik Willis and RB TJ Green back in the fold...QB Andrew Brister, son of standout ULM and NFL QB Bubby Brister, appears to be a solid candidate to start as a freshman for Northern Colorado and head coach Ed McCaffrey in spring gridiron activity...Alabama All-America RB Najee Harris complimented Ohio State's defense for its rugged intensity against the running game. He gained 125 hard-earned yards on 15 carries with a long carry of 14 yards in the CFP crown test against the Buckeyes, but he did raise Alabama school record of TDs in one season to 26. Alabama senior LB-FB Joshua McMillion also was praised for coming in as a blocking back for Harris on offense throughout the national championship campaign...Former Vanderbilt QB Danny Clark has entered the NCAA transfer portal...Former Oklahoma WR Charleston Rambo finalized his transfer to Miami (Fla.)...Nebraska has been bolstered by USC transfer RB Markese Stepp after 2020 running backs Dedrick Mills (senior) and Wan'Dale Robinson (NCAA transfer portal)...RB Ty Chandler is moving from Tennessee to North Carolina as a graduate transfer...Five additional North Texas players (one who opted out for the 2020 campaign) have entered the NCAA transfer portal...Top 10 Pro Football Focus 2021 NFL Draft possibilities are Clemson QB Traveor Lawrence, BYU QB Zach Wilson, Ohio State QB Justin Fields, Oregon OT Penei Sewell, LSU WR Ja'Marr Chase, Penn State LB Micha Parsons, Alabama WR Jaylen Waddle, Alabama WR DeVonta Smith, Florida TE Kyle Pitts, and North Dakota State QB Kyle Pitts...Former Vanderbilt soccer standout-football kicker and North Texas soccer student-athlete Sarah Fuller will be featured on a prime-time segment of coverage of the inauguration of 46th U.S. President Joe Biden Wednesday.

NFF College Hall of Fame player and current Northwestern head coach Pat Fitzgerald has been voted in as American Football Coaches president for 2021...Wisconsin AD and NFF College Hall of Fame coach Barry Alvarez was lauded for his leadership of the Badgers on and off the field and a possible contract renewal for his current pact, which ends in 2022...NFF College Hall of Fame coach LaVell Edwards was recalled in a story about BYU as Quarterback U and Cougars greats Steve Young, Jim McMahon, Marc Wilson, Giff Nielsen, and Gary Sheide...Football historian Mike Burrows celebrated the 50-year anniversary on Jan. 11 of the last game involving an American Football League team – Kansas City's 23-7 victory over Minnesota of the NFL in Super Bowl IV at historic and now-raised Tulane Stadium in New Orleans, La....New England Patriots head coach and Wesleyan

grad Bill Belichick has passed on receiving the 2020 Presidential Medal of Freedom. The six-time NFL Super Bowl winning coach is the godson of late NFF College Hall of Fame coach Bill Edwards of Vanderbilt and Wittenberg, was born at Vanderbilt Medical Center where his dad Steve was previously on the assistant coaching at VU before going to Navy, and is named after coach Edwards...Several news media outlets commented on the NFL's desire to attract a younger audience by simulcasting the New Orleans-Chicago contest on Jan. 10 on the popular youngsters' cable network Nickelodeon...Former UCLA defensive back and longtime NFL teams' executive George Paton is the new general manager of the NFL Denver Broncos...The Texas University Interscholastic League Class 5A Division I playoffs featured two father-son combinations of head coaches and standout players. Denton (Texas) Ryan HS featured head coach Dave Henigan and QB son Seth Henigan, a 2021 Memphis signee. Cedar Park HS is coached by Carl Abseck with son Gunnar Abseck with 1,000-plus receiving yards...Aledo (Texas) HS won a school-record for 11-man football 10th state Texas football championship in Class 5A Division over first-time state finalist Crosby HS last Friday at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas...Katy HS near Houston also won its ninth Texas Class 6A UIL football trophy to tie for second-most all-time in the non-six-man football standings. The Katy head coach (winning his fifth state crown) is Gary Joseph, son of longtime late Texas High School Coaches Association executive director Eddie Joseph...This also is the 100-year anniversary of UIL football playoffs in Texas, and the first championship game (no classifications) resulted in a 0-0 tie between Cleburne and Houston Heights in January 1921 after the '20 regular season closed...Last Friday, Jan. 15, was the 54-year anniversary of Super Bowl I at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum as the NFL Green Bay Packers downed the AFL Kansas City Chiefs...Last Sunday's NFL AFC semifinal game matched former Texas Tech QBs Patrick Mahomes and Baker Mayfield (later transferred to Oklahoma and won the 2017 Heisman Trophy) for the defending Super Bowl champs Kansas City Chiefs and Cleveland Browns, respectively.

More than 8,000 Georgia supporters donated \$22.1M to the COVID-19 UGA Athletics Fund during 2020 and another \$15.6 million to the Hartman Scholarship Fund for the Bulldogs...CarrSports has transferred ownership from founder and former president/retired Houston and Florida AD Bill Carr to managing partners and longtime former college Mike Thomas and Jeff Hathaway. Former Sun Belt and Western Athletic Conference commissioner Karl Benson has joined the 23-year-old company as a special consultant...Texas and Texas A&M athletics had to reschedule classes and activities last Monday due to a mini-snowstorm in Central and South

Texas...Texas Woman's U. athletics has been hit exceptionally hard by COVID-19 in 2020-21 and was able to play just one women's basketball game between Nov. 26 -Jan. 16. The TWU gymnastics squad was able to compete in an intrasquad skirmish on Jan. 9 and was slated to open its 2021 portion of the season against Lindenwood last Saturday. No spectators will be allowed at any Pioneers events until further notice...There are 31 other collegiate basketball or winter sports' teams affected this week by COVID-19 pauses...The Virginia women's basketball joined SMU, San Jose State and Duke in cancelling the rest of its 2020-21 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic...University of Calgary athletics reflected on the lost seasons of 2020-21 and the effect of players receiving an extra year of eligibility in Canada similar to the NCAA extra-season rules for 2021-22....Hawai'i football is planning to play its 2021 home schedule at the Clarence T.C. Ching Athletics Complex with on the Manoa campus with additional seating and other amenities. Aloha Stadium, which has hosted Rainbow Warriors football for 40-plus years, is in need of some immediate renovations before post-2021 bowl season...Collegiate Sports Management Group has chosen former NFL consumer products director Jim Connelly as CSMG's senior vice president of consumer products...Ohio State football produced a pre-CFP title tilt video with fans and famed actor and athlete John Legend and LeBron James narrating the piece...South Carolina State football held a groundbreaking to replace the current synthetic turf of Willie Jeffries Field at Oliver C. Dawson Stadium with Shaw Sports Turf being installed in time for SCSU's season opener Feb. 20 against North Carolina Central...Toyota North America and Stanford's Design Lab for automobiles are studying auto safety procedures, which will impact in the future college athletics' courtesy vehicles and other transportation...According to industry sources, the top five advertisers for the College Football Playoff championship game were AT&T Wireless (\$2.88 million), Allstate (\$2.61 million), Taco Bell (\$2.15 million), Dr Pepper (\$2.11 million), and Chick-fil-A (\$1.54 million). Of note, the \$2.11 million by Dr Pepper was almost the same amount as Dr Pepper's increase in scholarship funding for college students in 2020-21...The 2020 Texas University Interscholastic League high school football championships will be played in December at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas...The Journal of American Medicine has published a study to promote cardiac MRIs as part of the screening process for student-athletes as a secondary health safety measure...LSU is working with Baton Rouge-based Invested Enterprise for an updated version of NCAA compliance with an autumn 2022 starting date...Furman athletics' Charge Forward Campaign started with a goal of \$1 million from March-December 2020 and ended with a whopping, \$5.05

million from 702 total donors...South Carolina athletics will receive an operational loan from the university's general fund to cover missing revenues in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic...Alaska Anchorage's alpine ski team was reinstated by the University of Alaska Board of Regents after the sport was scheduled to be dropped, and there are possibilities with continued fundraising efforts to bring back the UAA hockey and women's gymnastics programs by a vote prior to the end of February.

The Dallas (Texas) Morning News newspaper editorial board projected a Top 25 for NCAA FBS schools in 2021, and the Top 10 included Alabama, Oklahoma, Georgia, Clemson, Ohio State, North Carolina, Iowa State, Miami (Fla.), Notre Dame, and Southern California...Instagram will begin helping musicians, including some college student-athletes in the future months, earn money through tipping and merchandise sales online...Shay Segev and James Rushton have been named-co-chief executive officers for the global sports streaming service DAZN Group...Sportico took a glance at meetings of 10 leading directors of athletics prior to the 2020 fall season and what led to their decisions with conferences or independent schools about the start and continuation of football activity. Connecticut AD David Benedict was featured for his lengthy meetings and consultations before the Huskies decided to opt out of football contests last year...The Washington Post newspaper spoke with leading epidemiologists who are also college football fans and asked how they thought the 2020 football season was conducted and any different protocols that might have been needed...Fox Sports Southwest is working with several regional and national cable providers to regain status on their basic broadcast packages...Advertising placements on the 2021 CFP Championship Game on ESPN were running slightly over \$1 million for 30-second spots...Pac-12 Networks president Mark Shuken was interviewed by Cynopsis Sports about upcoming media rights deals, the college sponsorship marketplace, COVID-19 pandemic issues, and the challenges of live vs. taped sports content both via cable and webstreamed...Broadcaster Thom Brennaman has begun a new podcast entitled Dialed In with Urban Meyer as a frequent guest...ESPN investigative reporter and award-winning writer Mike Drago was highlighted in a recent LinkedIn.com comment...CBS Sports columnist Dennis Dodd spoke with American Athletic Conference commissioner Mike Aresco, and both espoused a major need to expand the College Football Playoff to as many as eight or 16 teams with additional bowl games in the mix...Last week was the 20th birthday of encyclopedic and sports history chronicling Wikipedia founded by Auburn and Harvard alumnus Jimmy Wales...Profiles of all

(continued on page 16)



members of the NFF College Hall of Fame are provided on the Wikipedia.com website with special links to Footballfoundation.org biographies on each member's Wikipedia page...ESPN editorialized about whether coaches should be members of NCAA selection committees...The Coach & Crew show in Northern Virginia is in the process of developing a 2021 college football pre-view magazine.

The FWAA awarded columnist Sid Hartman, who first joined the Football Writers Association of America in 1945, as the posthumous recipient of the association's Lifetime Achievement Award for the 2020 season. At 100 years of age, Hartman was still writing a regular column for the Minneapolis Star-Tribune. FWAA officers held the annual Awards Breakfast during the College Football Playoff Championship Game weekend with president Doug Lesmerises of Cleveland.com, executive director Steve Richardson, first vice president Heather Dinich of ESPN, and second vice president David Ubben of The Athletic...Zach Groen of the Big Ten Conference, Tyler Neville of Maine, Chris Miller of St. Francis (Pa.), Jamie Hall of Youngstown State, and Kenny Klein of Louisville were featured subjects and opinion makers in the CoSIDA Open Forum online newsletter...Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Louisville, LSU, Maryland, Michigan State, Southern California, Tennessee, and UCLA are working with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible issues and probes at their respective schools...The AFCA added West Virginia head coach Neal Brown, Louisiana head coach Billy Napier and Arkansas head coach Sam Pittman to the group's 2021 Board of Trustees. The AFCA also tabbed Lenape Valley (N.J.) Regional High School head coach Don Smolyn as the 2020 AFCA@/AFCF@ Power of Influence Award winner and named Pittsburgh's Randy Bates as FBA Assistant Coach of the Year...The 2021 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championships could take place as soon as 4-5 days after Selection Sunday, March 14. There have been reports that some of the Indianapolis, Ind., area sites will be contested starting Fridays or Saturdays March 19-21 or March 20-22 with the usual day of rest between first and second rounds...The NCAA has tabled a Division I Council vote on the names, images and likenesses' legislation and a new timetable. The council will continue to keep the NIL on its monthly meetings' docket...The NCAA Division III Executive Council withdrew its motion for upcoming NIL legislation...Sportico analyzed the possible differences and outcomes in national athletics' policies between NCAA president Dr. Mark Emmert and new Justice Department administrators under incoming 46th U.S. President and former Delaware football student-athlete Joe Biden...U.S. Senator Cory Booker of Stanford football fame and representing New Jersey chimed

in on some of the NCAA's delays on the names, images and likenesses' legislative timetable and the delay of a final vote on the Division I one-time transfer rule...Former Ohio State wide receiver and U.S. Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (R-Ohio) noted he had some informal discussions with President-elect Biden on NCAA issues.

**2020-21 College Football Playoff Bowl Schedule with New Year's Six Games**

*(All Games Televised by ESPN, Eastern)*

**Friday, Jan. 1, 2021** (CFP Semifinals) – EST start times

**Rose Bowl presented by Capital One**  
CFP Semifinal

Alabama 31, Notre Dame 14  
AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas

**Allstate Sugar Bowl**

Ohio State 42, Clemson 28  
New Orleans, La.

Monday, Jan. 11

CFP Championship

Alabama 52, Ohio State 24

Miami, Florida

**Wednesday, Dec. 30-Jan. 2** (Other New Year's Six Bowls)

Wednesday, Dec. 30

Goodyear Cotton Bowl

Oklahoma 55, Florida 20

AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas,

**Friday, Jan. 1-Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl**

Georgia 24, Cincinnati 21

Atlanta, Georgia

**Sat., Jan. 2 - PlayStation Fiesta Bowl**

Iowa State 34, Oregon 17

Glendale, Ariz.,

**Capital One Orange Bowl**

Texas A&M 42, North Carolina 28,

Miami Lakes, Florida

**2021-22 College Football Playoff Bowl**

**Schedule with New Year's Six Games**

*(All Games Televised by ESPN, Eastern)*

**Friday, Dec. 31, 2021** (CFP Semifinals & Championship Jan. 10) – Tentative EST

**Goodyear Cotton Bowl**

AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas,

4 or 8 p.m.

**Capital One Orange Bowl**

Hard Rock Stadium

Miami Lakes, Fla., 4 or 8 p.m.

**Monday, Jan. 10** - CFP Championship,

Semifinal Winners

Lucas Oil Stadium

Indianapolis, Ind., 8 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 30. 2021-Jan. 1, 2022**

(Other New Year's Six Bowls)

**Thurs., Dec. 30** – Chick Fil-A Peach

Bowl Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Atlanta, Ga., TBD

**Fri., Jan. 1 – PlayStation Fiesta Bowl**

State Farm Stadium

Glendale, Ariz. TBD

**Friday, Jan. 1** –

Allstate Sugar Bowl

Mercedes-Benz Superdome

New Orleans, La., TBD

Friday, Jan. 1 – Rose Bowl presented by

Capital One

Rose Bowl Stadium, Pasadena, Calif.

###

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# Between Crossover SUV and Hatchback



By *kbb.com*

The Mercedes-Benz GLA 250 straddles that vague ground between crossover SUV and hatchback. This subcompact vehicle has the much-loved raised driving position and offers all-wheel drive. But whereas most crossover SUVs tend to be a bit more (or a lot more) imposing, the GLA 250 makes a little less of a splash.

Overall, the GLA 250 is charming, credibly representing affordable luxury as it competes against rivals like the Audi Q3, BMW X2, Infiniti QX30, Lexus UX and Volvo XC40. However, a redesigned Mercedes GLA is just months away, and if you can wait, we recommend doing so.

Driving the Mercedes-Benz GLA Given the modest width and length of the GLA 250, it feels about as stable and planted as it's possible to be. These dimensions make it easy to park, helped by the light steering, and the GLA feels perfectly at home in towns and suburbs.

On the freeway, it's about as quiet as a good mainstream car, but a little more sound insulation wouldn't go amiss in a premium vehicle like this. Similarly, the ride quality is comfortable and connected, but not quite convincing as a luxury car. Our thoughts on the dual-clutch automatic transmission's shift action run along the same lines.

The turbocharged engine, however, is eager and punchy, a pleasant complement to the GLA's nimble handling. Some drivers might not like the noticeable way the engine's fuel-saving stop/start feature kicks back in, but they can easily turn it off if they can't get used to it.

Even with the best of intentions, there are times when your concentration wavers. Or you just might not notice something.

Annoyingly, those occasions often occur at the worst possible time, and that's why it's great to have another unblinking eye on the road ahead, and with the ability to apply the brakes if necessary.

This technology is perfect for traffic jams on your daily commute. Pressing a button keeps the brake applied, such as when stopped at a red light. So the driver can relax that foot a little before stepping on the accelerator pedal.

The usual elegance Mercedes-Benz displays in its cabins is certainly evident in the GLA 250, but look a little closer and some of the plastics used are more mainstream than premium in terms of quality. For the GLA to be the company's least expensive crossover SUV, some cost-cutting has to happen somewhere. Besides, everything seems to be built well enough.

Being a subcompact, the 2020 GLA 250 is far from roomy, but space for rear passengers is acceptable for average-sized adults providing those in front aren't above average in height. With the rear seats flipped down, total cargo space is 43.6 cubic feet. For some context, the VW Golf compact hatchback has 52.7.

Whether or not you think the GLA 250 is a real SUV, it certainly has some of the same attitude with a chunky grille and fake skidplates on the lower front and rear fascias of the all-wheel-drive version. Clearly, the GLA is sleeker than a typical SUV, too, especially in comparison to the new boxy Mercedes-Benz GLB.

Crossover SUV? High-riding hatchback? Whatever it is, it's arguably easy on the eye. The GLA is also unmistakably a Mercedes-Benz, with the prestige that accompanies the name.

Despite the GLA's status as an "entry-

level crossover SUV," it still comes with plenty of premium equipment as standard. The long list includes a power liftgate, automatic dual-zone climate control, 18-inch aluminum-alloy wheels, selectable driving modes, 14-way power-adjustable front seats with memory settings, a high-resolution 8-inch infotainment display, and keyless entry/ignition. Standard safety features include forward-collision warning with automatic emergency braking and driver-attention monitoring.

All-wheel drive (known as "4Matic" in Mercedes jargon) costs an extra \$2,000, bringing an Off-road driving mode, a dedicated display and downhill-speed regulation.

Additional options include leather seats, lane-keeping assist, blind-spot monitoring, adaptive cruise control, a 360-degree camera system, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto smartphone integration, Wi-Fi, ambient LED cabin lighting, a hands-free tailgate, a panoramic sunroof, LED headlights, heated front seats, a Harman Kardon audio system upgrade, remote start/lock/unlock, and a semi-autonomous parking feature. In other words, many of the items offered for larger, truly luxurious vehicles are available for the GLA 250.

A turbocharged 2.0-liter 4-cylinder engine provides a healthy 208 horsepower and 258 lb-ft of torque when burning premium unleaded gasoline. This is sent to the front wheels in standard form (FWD), or all four with the 4Matic system (AWD), through a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission. Steering-wheel-mounted shift paddles give the driver manual control over the transmission.

In performance terms, the sprint from standstill to 60 mph takes 7.2 seconds, or

7.1 seconds with all-wheel drive. These numbers provide no reason to make new entries in the record books, but represent satisfactory performance for most people on most roads.

For greater enjoyment, the Sport driving mode sharpens throttle response and delays transmission upshifts to give the GLA 250 a little extra verve.

2.0-liter turbocharged inline-4  
208 horsepower @ 5,500 rpm  
258 lb-ft of torque @ 1,200-4,000 rpm  
EPA city/highway fuel economy: 24/34 mpg (FWD), 23/31 mpg (AWD)

The Mercedes-Benz GLA 250 has a Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of \$34,250. Add the \$995 destination charge for \$35,245. The 4Matic AWD system runs another \$2,000.

For a premium vehicle, the GLA is priced attractively. Fight the urge to be impulsive, though, when consulting the options list. It's possible to spend close to \$3,500 on supplemental driver aids alone. Throw in a few comfort and convenience amenities, and the bottom line easily zips past the \$40,000 mark and well on the way toward \$50,000.

Compared to other vehicles like the GLA, the Audi Q3 and BMW X2 cost a little more, while the Lexus UX and Volvo XC40 cost a little less. The Infiniti QX30, which shares a platform and powertrains with the GLA, as well as many interior parts, costs several thousand dollars less than the Mercedes.

Before buying, check the KBB.com Fair Purchase Price to see what others in your area are paying for their new GLA 250. According to KBB, resale value is not as favorable as the Lexus UX and Volvo XC40.

## Which Mercedes-Benz GLA Model is Right for Me?

Mercedes-Benz GLA 250  
18-inch aluminum wheels  
MB-Tex simulated-leather upholstery  
Dual-zone automatic climate control  
14-way-power front seats  
Forward-collision warning w/automatic emergency braking  
Mercedes-Benz GLA 250 AMG-Line  
19-inch AMG-design aluminum-alloy wheels  
AMG-design body kit  
Perforated front-brake discs  
Painted front-brake calipers  
Black interior headliner  
Mercedes-Benz GLA 250 Premium Package  
Satellite radio w/free 6-month trial period  
Passive keyless entry system  
Hands-free power liftgate  
Heated front seats  
Blind-spot-monitoring system





# TICKET WINDOW



## DALLAS MAVERICKS COVERAGE





# Shabu Shabu: A boiling pot of soup bliss



By Richard Pollak  
The Traveling Gourmet  
dallasentertain@aol.com

Shabu Shabu is a totally unique dining experience...one that I have never encountered before. I was actually mesmerized by what was in front of me.

Two giant hot pots of boiling bliss preparing to be invaded by the freshest ingredients. A compliment of dipping sauces awaited along with the thinnest slices of prime protein on the planet.



Traditional Japanese starters are elevated at Yoshi Shabu Shabu

A wide variety of Starters from the familiar Gyoza Dumplings, Edamame, Green Beans and a House Salad compete with a very unique Seaweed Salad or Gyudon Beef Ribeye, Karaage Chicken and Oyakodon Chicken which comes on top of a bowl of Rice or Noodles.

Yoshi Shabu Shabu also offers Ramune Japanese Soda available in three flavors; Original, Melon and Strawberry. Japanese children love the challenge of popping the top of the bottle to the Soda. A task that I didn't accomplish on my own

After the Starters, the main experience



The meal begins with an overflowing bowl of fresh cut veggies and Tofu

begins with a Hot Pot full of freshly cut Veggies and Tofu to cultivate the broth. There are a choice of 5 dipping Sauces to accompany the process as well as Rice.

The Sesame Peanut Goma, Citrus Ponzu, Garlic Teriyaki, Rayu Oil and Ichimi Pepper condiments are both traditional yet experimental to the taste and range from smooth to robust to hot as hell!



Kimberly guided us through the Yoshi Shabu Shabu process

When dining at Yoshi Shabu Shabu, one of their token staff members will expertly guide you through the preparation and cooking process. Once the hot pot is prepared, from one of their six signature base broths, its time to enjoy. You can choose from a traditional Kombu Seaweed, very spicy Capsaicin, soybean paste Miso, Tsuyu seasoned Soy Sauce, Tonkotsu is a rich and creamy pork broth and Sukiyaki which is sweet and savory with an Egg (which was expertly held back to add a rich glow to the final bowl of noodle soup.)



The Seafood is fresh and prepares quickly in the Hot Pot

The Seafood is fresh and prepares quickly in the pot. A beautiful presentation of Shrimp, Scallops and Salmon are all ready to dive into the pool. If you are a master of Chopsticks they are available or you can simply plunge these sea morsels or use the custom scoop. Do not over cook the proteins.

The New York Strip, Prime Beef Ribeye, Choice Ribeye come in seven sizes from a small with four pieces to Godzilla with 36 slices.

The Wagyu Beef Ribeye is the most marbled and flavorfull on the menu. It's the art of the quick dip that is so extreme!



Extremely thin sliced Meats make for extremely fast cooking

The protein is the start but certainly not a solo act as Veggies play an important role in the flavoring.



Rice topped with protein along with vegetables

The Chicken, Green Mussels and Berkshire Pork come in three sizes. You can add an additional Vegetarian platter with one of their three Noodles (Udon, Ramen or Maloney). With so many components to this meal everything goes into the pool and with expert guidance, add the remaining veggies to the Hot Pot of Soup to complete the ultimate bowl of bliss.



After mastering the art of the Hot Pot the soup is ready

And the hardest decision of all is dessert with a choice of a hard decision of Nom Nom Ice Cream Bars with flavors ranging from Coffee Oreo to Fruity Pebbles for the kids.

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- 4 (4 oz.) Omaha Steaks Burgers
- 4 (5 oz.) Potatoes au Gratin
- 4 (1 oz.) Caramel Apple Tarts
- Omaha Steaks Seasoning Packet (33 oz.)

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\*Shrimp, scallops, beef, apples and applesauce extra charge. 1 and 2 Family Gourmet Buffet packages. Max 4 free burgers and 4 free kielbasa will be sent to each shipping address that includes the Family Gourmet Buffet (2020). Standard S&H will be added per address. This rate shipping and reward cards and codes cannot be used with this offer. Not valid with other offers, expires 2/28/21. All purchases acknowledge acceptance of Omaha Steaks, Inc. Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. We'd really like to hear from you! Send us your feedback at [feedback@omaha-steaks.com](mailto:feedback@omaha-steaks.com) or call 1-888-273-6752. ©2021 Omaha Steaks, Inc. 11/19/2020





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