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Jan. 27 - Feb. 2, 2023

Vol. 21, Issue 22

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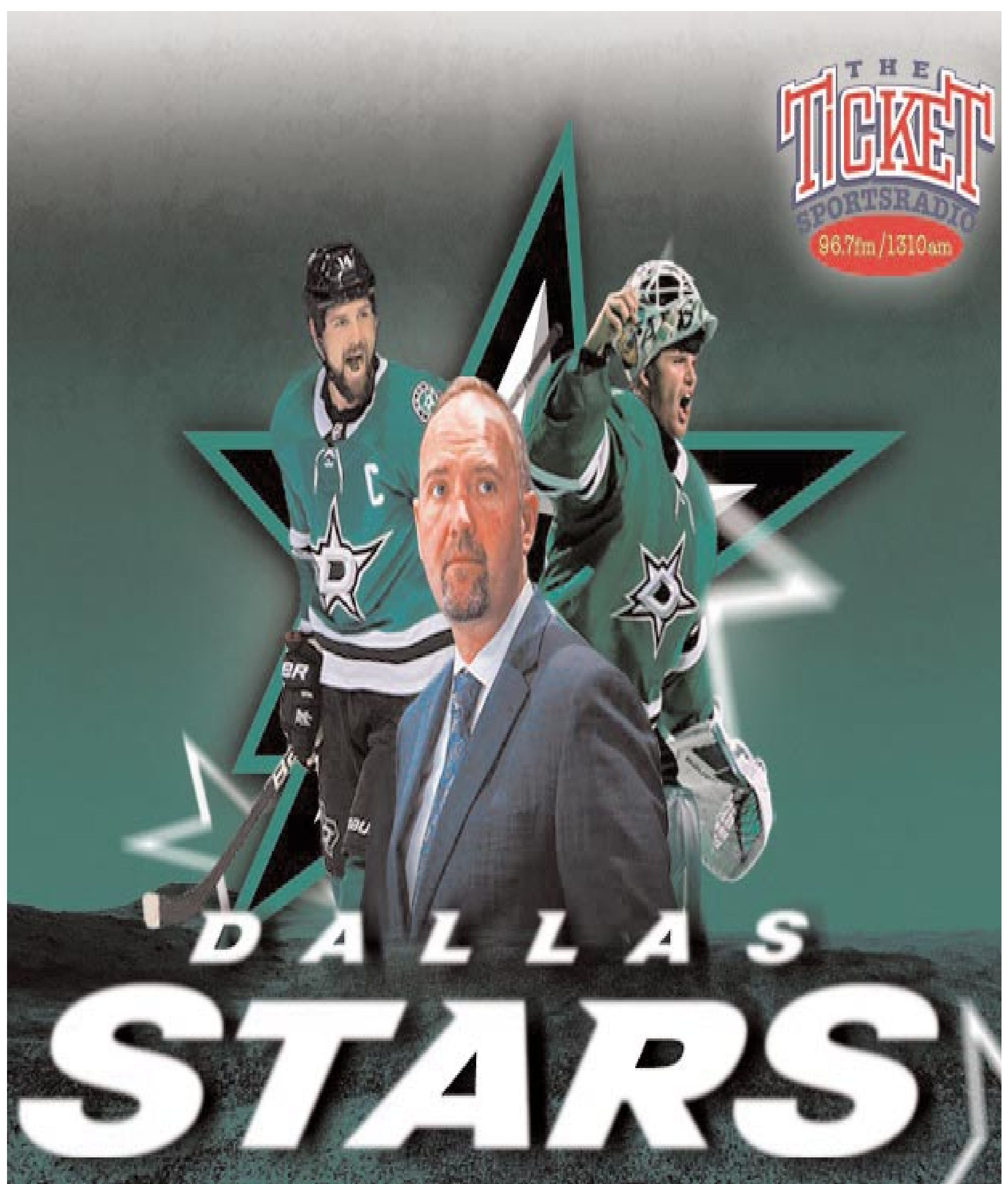


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AROUND THE AREA

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

Pony's announce non-conference slate



SMU has finalized its 2023 non-conference football slate, which opens Sept. 2 at Gerald J. Ford Stadium against Louisiana Tech.

The Mustangs travel to Oklahoma for the front half of a home-and-home series with the Sooners on Sept. 9, with the return trip to Dallas in 2027, and the Battle for the Iron Skillet heads to Fort Worth on Sept. 23 when SMU faces Metroplex rival TCU. The final addition to the schedule is a Sept. 16 home meeting with Prairie View A&M.

SMU finished the 2022 regular season, the first under Head Coach Rhett Lashlee, 7-5 to become bowl eligible for the fourth straight season. The streak is the longest since SMU went to four bowls from 2009-12 and made the Mustangs bowl eligible in five of the past six seasons. The program has won at least seven games each season dating back to 2019, making it the longest stretch with at least seven wins since the 2009-12 seasons. It was also the first season the Mustangs have won five conference games since going 6-2 in league play in 2019.

The Mustangs finished the regular season in the top 15 among FBS rankings for passing offense (5th, 324.9), scoring offense (11th, 38.4), total offense (12th, 279.8), first down offense (12th, 302), red

zone offense (13th, .914), blocked kicks (8th, 4) and fewest penalties per game (10th, 4.42)

Maurice Crum Jr. Joins Mustang Football Staff

Head Coach Rhett Lashlee has announced the addition of Maurice Crum Jr. to the SMU Football staff. Crum will serve as the Mustangs' linebackers coach and run game coordinator.

Crum arrived on the Hilltop after one season at Ole Miss, where he served as co-defensive coordinator and linebackers coach. He helped the Rebels to an 8-5 record and an appearance in the TaxAct Texas Bowl. Ole Miss ranked 13th in the FBS and second in the SEC in fumbles recovered (12) and was 27th nationally and third in the league in sacks (2.69).

Prior to his time in Oxford, Crum spent five seasons at Western Kentucky, where he served as Defensive Coordinator in 2021. The Hilltopper defense held opponents to 21 points or less in seven of their last eight regular season games in 2021.

In 2020, Crum served as Co-Defensive Coordinator and linebackers coach, helping the defense to national rankings of eighth in passing yards allowed (177.3), 28th in total yards allowed (348.7) and 41st in points allowed (25.3) per game.

A top-25 defense in 2019, WKU allowed only 20.1 points per game, ranking No. 22 in the FBS and setting the best mark in program history, and held opponents to a 29.7% third down conversion percentage, sixth nationally. The Hilltoppers ranked third in FBS with only 82 missed tackles all season long.

In 2018, Crum mentored linebacker Ben Holt who set WKU's FBS-era record for tackles per game (9.67) with 116 tackles in 12 games. He also served as Co-Special Teams Coordinator. In 2017, Crum helped Joel Iyiegbuniwe to All-Conference USA First-Team honors. He led the Hilltoppers in tackles with 116, the third-most in a single season in the FBS era, and tackles for loss with 11.5. The junior declared for the NFL Draft was selected in the fourth round by the Chicago Bears.

Crum spent the 2016 season at Indiana State, where he coached corners and nickelbacks, and during the 2015 season he served as a defensive graduate assistant at Notre Dame, helping the Fighting Irish to an appearance in the Fiesta Bowl.

In three seasons at Kansas, Crum started as a graduate assistant (2012), before being elevated to the assistant director of operations (2013) and eventually the director of high school relations (2014).

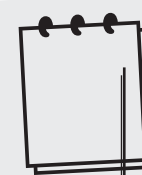
A four-year letterwinner at Notre Dame (2005-08), Crum appeared in 50 games, making 42 consecutive starts. He registered 306 tackles, including 23 TFLs and eight sacks. His 306 career tackles ranked 11th in program history. Crum served as a two-time team captain (2007 & 2008), making him one of only 17 players in school history to have accomplished the feat.

Following his collegiate career, Crum had a three-year stint in the UFL(2009-11).

Crum graduated in 2009 with a degree in Sociology and is married to the former Crysta Swayzer. The couple has three sons, Maurice III, Allen and Noah. Crum's father, Maurice Sr., was a consensus All-American at Miami in 1990.

NCAA Basketball Poll

AP	Week 12	Coaches
1. Purdue	1. Purdue	
2. Alabama	2. Alabama	
3. Houston	3. Houston	
4. Tennessee	4. Tennessee	
5. Kansas State	5. Kansas State	
6. Arizona	6. Virginia	
7. Virginia	7. UCLA	
8. UCLA	8. Arizona	
9. Kansas	9. Kansas	
10. Texas	10. Texas	
11. TCU	11. TCU	
12. Iowa State	12. Xavier	
13. Xavier	13. Iowa State	
14. Gonzaga	14. Gonzaga	
15. Auburn	15. Marquette	
16. Marquette	16. Auburn	
17. Baylor	17. Baylor	
18. Charleston	18. Charleston	
19. UConn	19. Miami	
20. Miami	20. UConn	
21. Florida Atlantic	21. Providence	
22. Saint Mary's	22. Saint Mary's	
23. Providence	23. Clemson	
24. Clemson	24. Florida Atlantic	
25. New Mexico	25. Duke	



WEEKLY CALENDAR

	JANUARY 27 FRIDAY	JANUARY 28 SATURDAY	JANUARY 29 SUNDAY	JANUARY 30 MONDAY	JANUARY 31 TUESDAY	FEBRUARY 1 WEDNESDAY	FEBRUARY 2 THURSDAY
		Mavs at Jazz 8:00 / BSSW		Mavs vs Pistons 7:30 / BSSW			Mavs vs Pelicans 7:30 / BSSW
	Stars vs New Jersey 7:30 / BSSW						
	Allen vs Oilers 7:05	Allen vs Oilers 7:05	Allen at Oilers 4:05			Allen at Grizzlies 8:10	
		TCU at Mississippi State 3:00 / ESPN2			TCU vs West Virginia 8:00 / ESPN2		
			SMU vs USF 3:00 / ESPNU			SMU at Tulane 8:00 / ESPNU	

Interesting matchups for 2023 Challenge



SEC v Big 12 Challenge 2023: Where you can watch and series schedule explored

By Daniel Munro

It's that time again! The SEC Big 12 Challenge is back for 2023, and we've explored the full series schedule, and where you can watch each game, as the Big 12 looks to take back the title from the SEC.

After the Southeastern Conference put the Big 12 to the sword in the 2021-22 season with a 6-4 victory, all eyes will be on the Big 12's 10 universities as they look to take the title back from the Southeastern institutions.

And if you're planning a couch marathon this weekend, here's all you need to know about how to watch all 10 games in the SEC v Big 12 Challenge 2023.

Where to watch the SEC Big 12 Challenge 2023

The 2023 SEC v Big 12 Challenge will take place on Saturday, January 28, with the first game starting at 12pm, right through to the final two games at 8pm.

And while it may require having multiple screens on the go at the same time, it is technically possible to watch, at least some, of every single game.

What to expect and names to look out for in 2023

In the nine SEC v Big 12 showdowns we've witnessed since the series' inception, the Big 12 narrowly lead the SEC in terms of total titles with four, compared to the

SEC's three. That being said, a double-header of SEC series wins has followed on from a tied series in 2019-20, meaning the Big 12 are now without a win over the SEC in four years – a stat they will certainly look to rectify this weekend.

One matchup to keep an eye on this year is the Texas Longhorns at the Tennessee Volunteers. This game could have a big impact on where Texas may ultimately end up on the NCAA Tournament bracket. The likes of Santiago Vescovi, Zakai Zeigler, Josiah Jordan-James and Uros Plavsic, all of whom featured in Texas' narrow win against Tennessee last year, will be looking to claim back a series win for the Big 12.

The Challenge opens with Auburn vs. West Virginia at 11 a.m. CT/noon ET, and it concludes with both Kansas at Kentucky and Ole Miss at Oklahoma State taking place at 7 p.m. CT.

The SEC/Big 12 Challenge started during the 2013-14 season. It was announced in December that the series will come to an end after this season with the inception of an ACC/SEC Challenge.

In the 2022 event, the SEC went 6-4 against the Big 12. The SEC has won five of the last six SEC/Big 12 Challenge events, according to an SEC press release. This is the eighth year that the SEC/Big 12 Challenge has been a single-day event after initially being spread over several days in its first two iterations.

2023 SEC/Big 12 Challenge schedule and TV channels		
Saturday, Jan. 28		
Auburn at West Virginia	11 a.m. / ESPN	
Alabama at Oklahoma	1 p.m. / ESPN	
Iowa State at Missouri	1 p.m. / ESPN2	
Texas Tech at LSU	1 p.m. / ESPN	
Texas at Tennessee	3 p.m. / ESPN	
TCU at Mississippi State	3 p.m. / ESPN2	
Arkansas at Baylor	5 p.m. / ESPN	
Florida at Kansas State	5 p.m. / ESPN2	
Kansas at Kentucky	7 p.m. / ESPN	
Ole Miss at Oklahoma State	7 p.m. / ESPN2	

Kansas State Wildcats	3	6
Oklahoma Sooners	6	3
Oklahoma State Cowboys	6	3
TCU Horned Frogs	5	4
Texas Longhorns	4	4
Texas Tech Red Raiders	6	3
West Virginia Mountaineers	2	7
Overall	48	41

Big 12 STANDINGS		
Team	Conf.	Overall
Iowa State	6-2	15-4
Kansas State	6-2	17-3
Texas	6-2	17-3
TCU	5-3	16-4
Baylor	5-3	15-5
Kansas	5-3	16-4
Oklahoma St	3-5	11-9
Oklahoma	2-6	11-9
Texas Tech	1-7	11-9
WestVirginia	1-7	11-9

Overall Record Year by Year		
Year	Winner	Overall record
2013–14	Big 12	7–3
2014–15	Big 12	6–4
2015–16	Big 12	7–3
2016–17	Tie	5–5
2017–18	SEC	6–4
2018–19	Big 12	6–4
2019–20	Tie	5–5
2020–21	SEC	5–4
2021–22	SEC	6–4
All years combined	Big 12	48–41

Big 12 Conference (4–3–2)		
Institution	Wins	Loss
Baylor Bears	7	2
Iowa State Cyclones	4	5
Kansas Jayhawks	5	4

SEC Standings		
Team	Conf.	Overall
Alabama	7-0	17-2
Tennessee	6-1	16-3
Auburn	6-1	16-3
Texas A&M	5-1	13-6
Kentucky	5-3	14-6
Florida	4-3	11-8
Missouri	4-4	15-5
Georgia	3-3	13-6
Vanderbilt	3-4	10-10
Arkansas	3-5	14-6
S. Carolina	1-5	8-11
Mississippi St	1-6	12-7
LSU	1-7	12-8
Ole Miss	1-7	9-11

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The need for speed in your golf swing



TOM WARD
TOMPWARD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

All golfers strive for more distance. An important element is club head speed. What is club head speed? Technically

speaking, the definition is: The linear speed of the club head's geometric center just prior to contact with the golf ball. In other words, club head speed determines a golfer's distance.

Speaking of speed, in the accompanying photos is my friend Doug Donley. In his playing days at Ohio State, and in the NFL with the Dallas Cowboys, his nickname was "White Lightning". He got that moniker because of tremendous speed as a wide receiver. With Doug's assistance you will see how to really spring load the body through the ball with lightning speed.

In the top left photo please take special note of his head in relation to the bushes behind him. I've drawn an X to highlight

how his head has moved dramatically while transitioning to the top of the backswing. By having too much lateral motion going back his head is out of balance and that pulls the rest of the body out of the correct body posture. You can clearly see a big gap in the bush behind him.

Comparing the top two photos, there is a significant amount of movement that is detrimental to the swing. This incorrect move makes it extremely hard to time up rhythm and synchronicity of the swing. He's leaking a lot of power because he didn't coil up properly. The body is straightening up and his weight is too far over on the right side. The backswing is all about building up and storing energy.

The top right photo is Doug in the correct position. Notice that his head is centered and you can't see any gap with the bushes in the background. When in this position you can create a lot of torque and leverage with the body. A human coil so to speak.

I've drawn an arrow down his torso to

showcase how well he has remained centered and let the club work around the body.

The bottom left photo is Doug starting his downswing. His right leg has absorbed the coiling of the upper body against a braced lower body. He has great leverage and can push off from the ground unwinding his body naturally creating a tremendous pulling action with his arms. This move will allow him to unleash all the stored up energy that has built up. He has kept his head centered over the shot which is crucial to staying balanced.

The bottom right photo is the big payoff after releasing all his power into the shot in the correct sequence. His balance on the follow-through shows that he had no wasted motion.

When you have the need for speed, it's all about staying centered and letting centrifugal force be your friend instead of trying to muscle your shots with brute strength.

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Credit Card Debt?

Solutions that can help you get out of debt.

Tom Hill
CGA STAFF WRITER

Every three minutes another person falls behind on credit card debt. It's no wonder, since every major credit card company has nearly doubled the minimum monthly payment on consumers' bills. Federal Regulators forced the change because of their concern about the growing mountain of consumer debt, which stands at \$2.17 trillion. Many consumers can only pay the minimum payment, which can take up to 30 years to pay off. Now, relief is in sight for millions of Americans.

CreditGUARD of America, a non-profit licensed debt management service provider, is making a new program available to lower debt payments and become free of all credit card debt in only three to five years. Consumers need only \$2,000 or more in total credit card debt and at least 30 days behind on any account, to cut their payment by 35% to 50%, and reduce or eliminate interest charges altogether.

Over 200,000 families, located throughout the U.S. have regained financial independence with CreditGUARD's licensed, bonded and insured service. CreditGUARD of America has received high marks in consumer surveys showing high consumer satisfaction and confidence. The CreditGUARD debt management program can lower your monthly payments by hundreds and save you thousands!

One such case is Sandra L. who proclaimed "CreditGUARD cut my monthly payment by \$656 and saved me over \$29,206.53 in interest. They saved my way of life and gave me back my peace of mind! Now I can see myself on my way to becoming debt free." or Jeffrey C. who said "CreditGUARD of America helped me consolidate 3 of my credit cards into one affordable payment. They are now saving me nearly \$200 a month. Now I will be debt free in 2 years or less"

Certified Credit Counselors at CreditGUARD of America provide Debt Relief Consultations at no charge, when you call:

1-866-253-0182

U.S. CREDIT CARD DEBT PER HOUSEHOLD (\$)

(Data Source: U.S. Federal Reserve)

This week: Farmers Insurance Open



Luke List captures his first victory at the Farmers Insurance Open

event with a Saturday finish ... Luke List is looking to become the first back-to-back Farmers winner since Tiger Woods won four straight at Torrey Pines from 2005-2008 ... Michael Herrera, who grew up watching the Farmers Insurance Open and cites Tiger Woods' 2008 U.S. Open win at Torrey Pines as a huge inspiration, went to school to play basketball, but once his coach saw his golf ability, he cut him from the team ... Can Jon Rahm keep up his excellent play at Torrey Pines? Aside from Rahm's win in 2017, his last four Farmers results have been T5-2-T7-T3, in addition to his 2021 U.S. Open title.

72-HOLE RECORD: 266, George Burns (1987), Tiger Woods (1999).

18-HOLE RECORD: North Course record: 61, Mark Brooks (Round 2, 1990), Brandt Snedeker (Round 1, 2007). Redesigned North Course record: 62, Jon Rahm (Round 1, 2019), Ryan Palmer (Round 2, 2020), Alex Smalley (Round 2, 2022), Adam Schenk (Round 2, 2022) South Course record: 62, Tiger Woods (Round 3, 1999)

LAST TIME: Luke List had one of the more emotional victories of the 2022 PGA TOUR season – finally breaking through for a TOUR title in his 206th start at 37 years old. List, who defeated Will Zalatoris in a playoff, began the day five shots back of the 54-hole leaders (Zalatoris and Jason Day) but fired a final-round 66 and waited nearly two hours to see if his score would hold up. Zalatoris burned the edge on a winning 8-foot birdie try on the 72nd hole. Both players, who finished at 15 under, hit their tee shots into the fairway bunker on the first playoff hole, but List's approach from 131 yards landed just a foot from the cup. List tapped in and Zalatoris missed, so the victory went to the veteran. Zalatoris closed his final round with 12 consecutive pars. This was the fourth playoff in 11 years at Torrey Pines. Jon Rahm, Cameron Tringale and Day finished a shot further back at 14 under and tied for third, while five players finished tied for sixth at 13 under



Farmers Insurance Open

January 26 - 29, 2023

Torrey Pines Golf Course

La Quinta, California

Purse - \$8,000,000

Winners share - \$1,440,000

Defending Champ - Hudson Swafford

By Adam Stanley
PGATOUR.COM

Jon Rahm leads the way at the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines, where he has won a U.S. Open and a Farmers title. He's one of five of the top-10 on the Official World Golf Ranking set to compete as the TOUR's West Coast swing continues.

FIELD NOTES: Joining Rahm as the top-ranked players in the field are Xander Schauffele, Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa and Will Zalatoris, last year's runner-up at Torrey Pines ... Luke List, last

year's winner in dramatic fashion for his first PGA TOUR title in 206 starts, returns to defend ... Other former winners at Torrey Pines set to compete include Justin Rose (T6 in 2022), Jason Day (T3 in 2022), Scott Stallings and Nick Watney ... Other top-25 players returning to San Diego including Tony Finau, Max Homa and Hideki Matsuyama ... Reigning PGA Professional Player of the Year Michael Block earned a start in both The American Express and the Farmers Insurance Open ... Cole Hammer is among the sponsor exemptions. The conditional Korn Ferry Tour member is 3-for-5 in cuts made on TOUR this season, including a T5 at The RSM Classic in November, as he seeks his first TOUR card. He finished fifth on last year's PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking ... Second-year pro Joey Vrzich, a Pepperdine alum, will make his first PGA TOUR start. Vrzich notched two top-10s on PGA TOUR Canada last year after a solid collegiate career that saw his scoring average end up third in school history ... Other sponsor exemptions include Keita Nakajima, who was the world's No. 1-ranked amateur for a record 87 weeks (he also played the Sony Open). Taiga Semikawa, who won consecutive starts on

the Japan Tour in late 2022 while still an amateur. He has since turned pro. Oklahoma senior Patrick Welch, who made the cut and finished T28 at Shriners Children's Open. He sits 8th in the PGA TOUR University Rankings presented by Velocity Global. As well as APGA Tour winner Michael Herrera ... J.B. Holmes returns to TOUR action for the first time since the 2021 Fortinet Championship.

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 500 FedExCup points.

COURSE: Torrey Pines GC (South), 7,765 yards, par-72. Torrey Pines GC (North), 7,258 yards, par-72.

Players alternate between Torrey Pines' North and South courses for the first two rounds. The final two rounds are played on the South Course.

South: Designed by William P. and William F. Bell in 1957, renovated by Rees Jones in 2001 and 2019 – saw 80,000 rounds played in 2022.

North: Designed by William P. and William F. Bell in 1957, renovated by Tom Weiskopf in 2016 – saw 91,000 rounds played in 2022.

STORYLINES: The event will be played from Wednesday to Saturday for the second consecutive year. It is the only TOUR

HOW TO WATCH

Television: Wednesday-Thursday, 3 p.m.-7 p.m. ET (Golf Channel), Friday, 3 p.m.-5 p.m. (Golf Channel), 5 p.m.-8 p.m. (CBS). Saturday, 2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (Golf Channel), 4:30 p.m.-8 p.m. (CBS)

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

Five things to know: Torrey Pines



Both the South and North courses at Torrey Pines are used for the TOUR's annual trip to San Diego

By *Cameron Morfit*
PGATOUR.COM

The Farmers Insurance Open returns to Torrey Pines' two courses this week, with a red-hot Jon Rahm headlining the field. The Spaniard has two wins on TOUR this season and is a previous Farmers champion having won the event in 2017 – his first of nine PGA TOUR wins and counting – as well as the U.S. Open in 2021 at Torrey's South Course. Luke List is defending champion after a playoff win over Will Zalatoris at last year's Farmers.

Both the South and North courses at Torrey Pines are used for the TOUR's annual trip to this municipal facility perched on the cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Torrey Pines has hosted the Farmers every year since 1968. Players play one round apiece on each course before the 36-hole cut, with the final two rounds taking place on the famous South Course, which has been host to many memorable moments.

Torrey Pines may best known for Tiger Woods' success here. It is where he won the Junior World championship and eight PGA TOUR titles, including his dramatic playoff win over Rocco Mediate in the 2008 U.S. Open. But one could argue that the biggest star is the venue itself, with its sumptuous, sweeping views that mark the TOUR's return to network television each year and stoke the passions of snowed-in golf fans during the dead of winter.

The cornerstone of San Diego-area golf, Torrey Pines has hosted the San Diego City

Amateur, Junior World, U.S. Amateur Public Links, California State Amateur, Farmers Insurance Open, and in 2021, for the second time, the U.S. Open. In a twist that's new this year, the Farmers will begin on Wednesday and end on Saturday, making room for the APGA Tour, which is dedicated to diversity in golf, to stage its own final round at Torrey South on Sunday. It will be televised on Golf Channel.

Here are Five Things to Know about Torrey Pines.

1. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Torrey pine – which is featured in the Farmers Insurance Open's trophy – is native only to this 36-hole golf complex, the neighboring Torrey Pines State Reserve and Santa Rosa Island, located up the California coast near Santa Barbara.

The tree features clusters of five pine needles and, because it is protected, when some 30 Torrey pines were removed during a renovation of the South Course, they were simply relocated and transplanted.

Although early Spanish explorers certainly knew of the tree, Dr. Charles Christopher Parry, a botanist for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Survey, officially discovered it. He named it for his mentor, Dr. John Torrey, who had co-written "A Flora of North America" and was the solo author of "A Flora of New York State." Torrey never visited the region, but Parry sent him samples of the tree.

2. TRAINING GROUNDS

Camp Callan opened on what is now Torrey Pines Golf Course in 1941, just

prior to the Pearl Harbor invasion. It was used for anti-aircraft artillery replenishment, and roughly 15,000 people lived on site. There were movie theaters and chapels, among other conveniences.

After World War II, the government sold the land and buildings back to the city of San Diego. Lumber from the buildings was used to build housing for veterans.

3. RE-DEFINING 'DRIVER'

The term 'driver' once meant something completely different at Torrey Pines.

After Camp Callan, the land was repurposed to build a grand prix racecourse, hosting car-racing contests that included some of the biggest names in driving. Among them were Carroll Shelby, who was played by Matt Damon in the movie "Ford vs. Ferrari." The last race was held in 1956.

4. A FATHER-SON TEAM

Torrey Pines was designed by a father-son team that was named "California's First Family of Golf Course Design." William P. Bell, who was born in 1886 and apprenticed under Willie Watson and George C. Thomas, Jr., was a turf consultant for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, and shortly after that was joined by son William F. Bell in the family golf course design business.

A special city election in 1956 led to the dedication of roughly 100 acres of the former Camp Callan being set aside for the creation of a golf course. William P. had the original vision for Torrey Pines, but he had died by the time Torrey Pines was

built. His son, William F., oversaw its creation in the late 1950s.

William P. also worked with Thomas on the Bel-Air, Riviera and Los Angeles country clubs, and William F. was involved in the building of Sandpiper and Industry Hills golf clubs, and Bermuda Dunes Country Club. Riviera is the annual host of the Genesis Invitational, which is hosted by Woods, while LACC is slated to host next year's U.S. Open.

5. A WORK IN PROGRESS

In the spring of 1999, the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation began a five-year capital improvement program for the courses. Rees Jones moved four green structures and added 10 new tees to stretch the course from 7,000 to nearly 7,600 yards. He made smaller changes in 2019, and as a result is the architect most responsible for transforming the South.

But he's not the only one. Billy Casper and architect David Rainville oversaw the first redesign in the mid-1970s. Stephen Halsey and Jack Daray, Jr., redid it in '88. Tom Weiskopf, who won what would become the Farmers in its first year using Torrey South in 1968 – the tournament had mostly been at Stardust C.C. – redesigned the North Course in 2016.

As for changes to the South, a new tee and two new bunkers down the left side have added a new wrinkle to the 612-yard, par-5 13th hole. A new tee has added 37 yards to the par-4 15th hole, as has a new low chipping area front-left of the green, which will collect errant shots.

A new tee has been added to the left of the previous tee on 17, creating a new angle that favors a draw into the fairway. The hole features the shallowest par-4 green, 26 yards.

The fairways and rough are still mostly kikuyu, the greens poa annua. Devlin's Billabong, the small pond fronting the 18th green, is still the only water hazard (other than the Pacific Ocean). The 387-yard second hole is still the only par 4 under 400.

Additionally, the picturesque, 195-yard third hole, which plays downhill into the prevailing wind, is still the signature par 3. With multiple teeing areas and wind directions, it can call for anything from a pitching wedge to a long iron.

The dogleg-right sixth hole, a par 4 for the U.S. Open, plays as a 560-yard par 5 for the Farmers. The easiest hole is usually the 568-yard, par-5 18th, the site of Tiger Woods' do-or-die putt at the 2008 U.S. Open, and Dan Hicks' call: "Expect anything different?"

It often decides the tournament, too – just ask Jon Rahm. He holed a long eagle putt on the 72nd hole to win the Farmers in 2017 and birdied both 17 and 18 in 2021 to win his first major.

Texas Tech star leads PGA TOUR U.



Aberg holds the top spot in PGA TOUR University's Velocity Global ranking. (Courtesy Texas Tech Athletics)

Honest Aberg: PGA TOUR University No. 1 wants to know where he stands
Texas Tech star leads PGA TOUR University presented by Velocity Global ranking

By Sean Martin
PGATOUR.COM

LUBBOCK, Texas – Confusion often reigns on the final holes of a college golf tournament. With five-man teams spread across multiple holes and live-scoring updates often dependent on the quality of a player's cell service, it can be hard to get an accurate appraisal of the leaderboard. One thing was certain on Ludvig Aberg's final hole of last year's Cabo Collegiate Invitational, however. He needed to make his 30-foot birdie putt to keep his team's hopes alive.

Texas Tech's head coach, Greg Sands, did not hesitate to share the importance of that putt with his star player. While some coaches may be reticent to divulge such information, lest they add more pressure to a stressful situation, Aberg always wants to know where he stands. He'd rather have the facts than a sanitized version of the truth. Just call him Honest Aberg.

"You could see that focus hone in," Sands said. "He knew what he needed to do."

And he did it. After making the putt, Aberg simply turned to his coach and said, "I love this game."

Sands uses that story to illustrate Aberg's ability to remain calm and control his emotions in the heat of competition.

"He loved the opportunity it presented and loved the fact that he got it done," Sands said. "I think that speaks to his ability to, so to speak, want the ball at the end of the game. 'He wants the putt. He wants the big shot.'"

Aberg, who is in the final semester of a successful college career, has all the physical tools of a future star, but success in the pro game is often defined by intangibles, and observers believe his poise and patience, more than an elite long game, could set him apart.

He'll get another chance to test himself against the pros when he tees it up in this week's DP World Tour Hero Dubai Desert Classic. He received the invitation for holding the top spot in the PGA TOUR University presented by Velocity Global ranking after the fall portion of the college season. An even bigger award awaits Aberg if he can stay No. 1 through this year's NCAA Championship.

It was announced late last year that PGA TOUR University's top player will earn PGA TOUR status after the conclusion of the college season. He will be eligible for all open, full-field events and will earn FedExCup points for his finishes, giving him the opportunity to qualify for the FedExCup Playoffs.

Aberg, who stands more than 6 feet tall and has a physique that belies his childhood passion for playing soccer, is a golfer built in the modern mold. A strong ball-striker, he wields driver with impunity to press his advantage over his competition.

"He's got the ability to take over a golf course," Sands said, pointing to the final round of Aberg's win in last year's Big 12 Championship at Whispering Pines Golf Club in Trinity, Texas, to illustrate his point. Aberg putted for birdie on all 18 holes after hitting 16 greens and two approach shots onto the fringe.

His victory at the 19th Jones Cup Invitational last year provides further proof. There may not be an amateur event that does a better job of prognosticating

professional success than the Jones Cup, which is played on a penal layout in the heart of winter on Georgia's southeastern coast. More than half the winners, including multiple major champions, have played on the PGA TOUR. And that doesn't count Jordan Spieth, who lost in a playoff to John Peterson (who finished T4 in the next year's U.S. Open) in 2011.

In winning that tournament, Aberg invited comparisons to the elite of the elite.

"I always felt he looked like Adam Scott," Sands said of Aberg, "kind of a tall, dark and handsome guy that swings it pretty effortlessly."

Aberg is built in the modern mold but with an old soul. Like Scott, he is selective with his words and not known for showing emotion. Reflecting on the final hole in Cabo last year, Aberg said, "It's so much fun because it's so much tension and everyone is so stressed out, but if you just take a step back and look at it from the outside, it's hilarious. I just enjoy those kinds of situations."

He goes about his work quietly, which is evident on an early fall morning when Aberg and his teammates go through workouts in the Texas Tech Sports Performance Center. It is still dark outside as the typical testosterone-fueled soundtrack of a weight room – blaring hip-hop interrupted by grunts, groans and crashing metal plates – echoes through the spacious facility, which also houses an indoor track and practice facility for the football team under its 85-foot-high ceilings. 'Quiet exertion' may sound like an oxymoron, but it is an apt description as he moves through a series of medicine-ball throws. Toward the end of the workout, players perform multiple vertical jumps as a trainer barks out the height of each attempt.

"If they see that number on there, it's just like whenever they're on TrackMan and getting their clubhead speeds," said Scott Ramsey, the strength and conditioning coach for Texas Tech's golf teams. "They're going to try to beat it every single time. ... All I'm trying to do is just get them to try their best every single attempt."

Aberg doesn't need to be sold on the benefits of objective analysis. He studied economics in high school in Sweden, keeps his Strokes Gained stats and journals after every tournament to reflect on his performance (producing entries in English and Swedish to share with his coaches in each country). The entries range from techniques – "My swing was very neutral throughout the whole week," he wrote after winning the Big 12 Championship – to emotions.

"First time playing in front of big crowds and grandstands," he wrote about the 2018 Nordea Masters, a DP World Tour event where he made the cut at age 18. "It made me more nervous, but I remembered that (Jonnie Erikson, coach of the Swedish national team) said that being nervous is just a feeling and not something that's going to affect your behavior unless you let it."

He doesn't have a Twitter account and rarely posts on Instagram, knowing there are more productive ways to spend his time. Sands has grown accustomed to Aberg taking a few hours to respond to texts about non-urgent matters.

Cal Poly men's golf coach Phil Rowe, who led the International Team at last year's Palmer Cup, described Aberg as a "totally comfortable, yet powerful, presence that permeated the team."

"He was a listener and curious but an assassin on the course who elevated the games of those around him," added Rowe, who represented Great Britain & Ireland in the 1999 Walker Cup and played in the 2000 Open Championship.

Aberg played soccer until he shifted his focus to golf at age 13. He was a central midfielder, a position he enjoyed because it was involved in so much of the action.

"I just feel like you have such control, and I guess it kind of reflects to the golf game a little bit, that you want control," he said. "For me, golf is like the ultimate sport where you actually control everything yourself."

One of the rare times Aberg is constantly checking his phone is during the final holes of a tournament. While other players are trying their hardest to avoid leaderboards, Aberg is refreshing the live scoring. It's another example of his preference for honest assessment.

"He loves seeing leaderboards," Sands said. "He wants to know where he's at and what he has to do."

Close games predicted this weekend



Rookie quarterback Brock Purdy has won seven straight as the 49ers' starter



By Jon Thomas

In two evenly matched games, Jalen Hurts and the Eagles will try to outwit the 49ers' dizzying defense before Patrick Mahomes attempts to reverse his losing streak against the Bengals.

The matchups in this season's conference championships are not just close, they are historically so, at least from a market perspective. The teams in both games are so evenly matched that the point spreads for the A.F.C. and N.F.C. championship games are each less than a field goal.

The Super Bowl-winning odds of the Eagles (+230), Bengals (+240), Chiefs (+280) and 49ers (+320) leave barely a glint of daylight between them, the first time in the recorded history of the N.F.L. betting markets that all four teams in the conference championships were this close. By comparison, the odds for last year's final four were spread out between +125 and +900 going into championship week-end.

The relative parity in the A.F.C. championship forecasts owes almost entirely to Patrick Mahomes's high ankle sprain, sustained in last week's divisional-round win over the Jaguars. Fears that Mahomes may not be able to play on Sunday, or will be so hobbled by the sprain that he can't play effectively, have sent Kansas City's stock

plummeting: The team entered the playoffs as Super Bowl favorites and dropped to the third choice after the injury.

But probability and possibility aren't the same thing. Last year, Kansas City was the +125 favorite to win it all while the Bengals were the +900 longshots, and the Bengals sent a healthy Mahomes packing. Cincinnati has won the last three meetings and has only lost to a Mahomes-led Kansas City team once.

NFC Championship Game

San Francisco (13-4) at Philly (14-3)

Time / TV: Sunday, 2 p.m., FOX

Line: Eagles -2.5 / 46

Jalen Hurts seemed to address questions about the health of his sprained throwing shoulder early in last week's divisional-round win, when he completed a 40-yard pass on his second play against the Giants. But the Eagles got out to a quick four-score lead, and Hurts didn't need to do much to come away with the win. He finished with only 154 passing yards, his second-lowest total of the season.

That's probably not going to work against the 49ers, who have the best linebacker trio in the N.F.L. in Azeem Al-Shaair, Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw. They're fast enough to keep up with

receivers and tough enough to stop running backs in their tracks. Coupled with a staunch defensive line featuring Nick Bosa, the prospective defensive player of the year, San Francisco holds opponents to a league-low 3.4 yards per rushing attempt this season and put the clamps on the Cowboy's top-3 offense last week. They'll need another tightfisted game against the Eagles, the N.F.L.'s No. 2-rated offense, which has kept defenses off-kilter by choosing wisely between the pass and run game.

The rookie quarterback Brock Purdy has won seven straight as the 49ers' starter, with each successive game looking like the one in which his inexperience would be the team's undoing. In the divisional round against the Cowboys, Purdy finally looked shaky and was held without a touchdown for the first time. He still managed to power a win over a tremendous defense.

Against the Eagles, on the road, the task becomes even more difficult. Philadelphia finished the season two sacks shy of the N.F.L. record set by the Bears in the 1984 season (72), and got five sacks last week against the Giants. Purdy will be aided by an offense that thrives on short and intermediate passing — the better to get the ball out of his hands quickly — and teammates' "everybody blocks" mentality, in which

hybrid-skill position players get physical.

The Eagles have attracted over 90 percent of the money bet on this game, but every time the point spread touched 3 at sports books, money came in on the 49ers and brought the spread back to 2.5. It's a tight number in what will most likely be a tight game. All season long, we've leaned toward the underdog in games that felt this close, and we're sticking with that strategy again this week.

Pick: Eagles 24, 49ers 23

AFC Championship Game

Cincinnati (12-4) at Kansas City (14-3)

Sunday, 5:30 p.m., CBS

Line: Bengals -1 / 47

Patrick Mahomes plans to play through his high ankle sprain this week, but because of the injury Kansas City is home underdog for only the second time this season. Bengals defensive coordinator, Lou Anarumo, has thwarted the quarterback with second-half adjustments in each of their past three meetings, and if Mahomes is going to reverse the losing streak against Cincinnati, he will have to depend on his playmakers to keep the offense moving. That's especially true as the forecast calls for below-freezing temperatures and snow that could inhibit big-play gambles.



Quarterback Patrick Mahomes will attempt to play Sunday when the Chiefs host the Bengals

Mahomes leaned on running back Jerick McKinnon as a passing option this season, where McKinnon averaged a team-high 9.7 yards after catch per reception (usually Travis Kelce's annual honor). With the quarterback hobbled last week against the Jaguars, McKinnon saw fewer targets, a trend that's likely to continue if Kansas City needs him as a blocker. That leaves Kelce as the primary safety-valve option, but when these teams met in Week 13, the Bengals defense held Kelce to four receptions and 56 yards, and linebacker Germaine Pratt forced a game-shifting Kelce fumble in the fourth quarter that allowed Cincinnati to seal the win.

The Bengals are steam-rolling teams as they did in the run up to its Super Bowl appearance last year, in no small part because Joe Burrow is taking fewer sacks than he did last season (41 vs. 51 in the regular season). The Kansas City defensive line should generate more pressure than Buffalo did last week without Von Miller, which could pose a problem for a Cincinnati offensive line that has three starters listed as questionable for Sunday. But the Bengals' late-season win streak coincides with a rebuilt run game, and Joe Mixon's big day (20 carries for 105 yards) last week was a big reason Buffalo couldn't key in on Burrow.

The Bengals enter this game with a 13-5 record against the spread, but they've been a mixed bag on the road. Including the bye week, the top-seeded Kansas City will have spent three straight weeks at home. Last week, we pointed out that Kansas City has had a hard time covering because it faced too-large point spreads at home that were inflated by an adoring public. This week, that isn't the case. The Bengals have been great at covering the spread largely because they haven't had much market respect. This time they're get-

ting 73 percent of the money as road favorites. They're finally getting the respect they deserve, but is it too late? It really all depends on that ankle.

Pick: Chiefs 27 Bengals 24

Mahomes' high ankle sprain. What is it?

Among sports-induced injuries, the high ankle sprain is getting special attention this week. It could help determine the matchup in this year's Super Bowl.

Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes will attempt to play Sunday when the Chiefs host the Cincinnati Bengals in the AFC championship game despite having suffered a high ankle sprain last weekend.

The injury to his right ankle temporarily sidelined Mahomes before he returned to action and helped lead the Chiefs to a 27-20 victory over the Jacksonville Jaguars on Saturday in an AFC divisional round game.

So what exactly is a high ankle sprain? How can it be treated? And what are the chances Mahomes will be in top form with a berth to the Super Bowl on the line?

High ankle sprain vs. normal ankle sprain

Let's start with the anatomy. The ankle joint is formed by three bones: the tibia (shin bone), the fibula (the bone next to the tibia in the outer calf) and the talus (a bone in the foot below the tibia).

A common ankle sprain involves the ligament in the ankle. By contrast, a high ankle sprain involves the ligaments above the ankle joint and can require surgery.

"A high ankle sprain occurs when the ligaments between (the) tibia and fibula become torn or stretched," the Beacon Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine reports. "This type of sprain is more of a rotational injury rather than a roll of the ankle. Unlike a low ankle sprain, a high ankle sprain is more significant of an injury. This

type often takes about twice as long to heal."

High ankle sprains are more common among athletes who participate in high-impact sports and usually result from "sudden twisting, turning or cutting motion while a person is running, jumping or falling," according to the Hospital of Special Surgery, a New York hospital that specializes in orthopedic surgery.

High ankle sprain recovery time

Recovery from either a normal ankle sprain or high ankle sprain can take weeks to months. But as Mahomes demonstrated last weekend, professional athletes can perform even while they're recovering – depending on certain factors.

The key factor is stability of the ankle, said David Oji, an orthopedic surgeon who treats athletes at Stanford University with foot and ankle injuries. "If the ligaments are functioning, as long as his pain and his symptoms are very mild, they can aggressively rehab him and get him back to

play," Oji said.

Pain threshold is a factor, according to Oji, who said, "Everybody's pain threshold is different."

Pain seemed of little consequence to Mahomes, who after the Chiefs beat the Jaguars told the media, "I'm not coming out of a playoff game unless they take me out. I'm just going to play. I love this sport too much."

The injury can affect Mahomes' mobility and ability to plant his right foot and throw.

Treating a high ankle sprain

Injecting the athlete with painkillers is a no-no because they can weaken the ligament and decrease healing, according to Oji.

"Injections are contraindicated in these high ankle sprains," he said. "You'll get short-term gain but longterm it will be detrimental to the athlete."

A 2022 study published in Sports Health concluded, "Injections are commonly used by health care practitioners to treat foot and ankle injuries in athletes despite ongoing questions regarding efficacy and safety."

The basics include resting, icing and elevating the leg, and in some cases, the use of a walking boot, according to the American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society.

"The goals of treatment are to move the tibia and fibula to the correct positions with respect to each other and to heal in those positions," reports the American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society. "This allows the ankle joint to function as intended."

Testing the ankle for competition

Athletes typically go through a series of tests before they're cleared to play. That includes X-rays and a stress test in addition to work with a trainer and physical therapist, all of which can be done within a week, according to Oji.

"As long as they pass some of those hurdles," he said, "a lot of these athletes will be able to perform at a very high level."

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Baseball Hall of Fame voting results



Scott Rolen gets in, joins Fred McGriff; Todd Helton just short

Rolen earned 76.3% of the votes from submitted ballots

By Mike Axisa

There is a new member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The Baseball Writers Association of America has voted Scott Rolen into Cooperstown, it was announced Tuesday. Fred McGriff, who was voted into Cooperstown unanimously by the 16-person Contemporary Era Committee in December, is the other member of this year's two-person 2023 Hall of Fame class.

Rolen was one of 28 players on the BBWAA's Hall of Fame ballot this year. He appeared on 76.3 percent of submitted ballots and finished only five votes above the 75 percent threshold needed for induction. Here are Rolen's voting percentages in his six years on the BBWAA's ballot:

- 2018: 10.2 percent (lowest first year percentage for any player ever voted in)
- 2019: 17.2 percent
- 2020: 35.3 percent
- 2021: 52.9 percent
- 2022: 63.2 percent (highest among players not voted in)
- 2023: 76.3 percent

Rolen is the 18th third baseman in the Hall of Fame. Thus far, he and Chipper Jones are the only full-time third basemen to begin their careers after 1982 to be voted into Cooperstown.

In parts of 17 MLB seasons from 1996-2012, Rolen authored a .281/.364/.490 batting line with 2,077 hits and 316 home

runs. That includes a .298/.380/.532 batting line during his seven-year peak from 1998-2004. Rolen was also a brilliant defender who won eight Gold Gloves. He retired with 70.1 WAR, tenth all-time among third basemen, and went to seven All-Star Games while receiving MVP votes in four seasons. Rolen was also the 1997 NL Rookie of the Year.

"On behalf of the Phillies, I want to congratulate Scott Rolen on his election to the National Baseball Hall of Fame, the highest honor that can be bestowed on a player. He richly deserves this award," Phillies owner John Middleton said in a statement. "Philadelphia was privileged to have witnessed the beginning of his extraordinary baseball career. In addition to being one of the most impactful offensive and defensive players of his era, Scott played the game the right way. Whether taking an extra base with a headfirst slide or diving for a ball in the hole, his hard-nosed effort and selfless attitude resonated with our fans. Along with his on-field contributions, Scott was a great teammate and a tremendous representative of the Phillies off the field."

We'll soon find out whether Rolen will wear a Philadelphia Phillies or St. Louis Cardinals cap on his Hall of Fame plaque, though he didn't have a choice in mind Tuesday night. A blank cap is also possible. Rolen played more games with the Phillies than he did the Cardinals (844 vs. 661), though he had more All-Star Game selections with the Cardinals (four vs. one), and also finished fourth in the NL MVP voting with St. Louis in 2004. Rolen also played for the Toronto Blue Jays and

Cincinnati Reds late in his career.

"On behalf of the entire St. Louis Cardinals organization, I would like to congratulate Scott Rolen on the well-deserved honor of being selected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame," Cardinals chairman Bill DeWitt Jr. said in a statement. "Scott was a cornerstone of our infield and lineup during his six seasons in St. Louis, and helped create many fond memories as part of the great Cardinals teams of the mid-2000s."

Nearly 400 votes were cast this year and the full voting results are available at the BBWAA's site. Here are the top five vote-getters:

1. Scott Rolen: 76.3 percent
2. Todd Helton: 72.2 percent (11 votes short of induction)

3. Billy Wagner: 68.1 percent
4. Andruw Jones: 58.1 percent
5. Gary Sheffield: 55.0 percent

Helton (five more years), Jones (four more), and Wagner (two) have all made steady gains the last few years and are trending toward induction before their 10 years on the BBWAA's ballot are up.

This was the tenth and final year on the BBWAA's ballot for Jeff Kent, who received 46.5 percent of the vote. Historically, players in their final year on the ballot get a boost in support, though the final year jump wasn't enough to get Kent in. He can be considered for the Hall of Fame again when the Contemporary Era Committee holds their next player vote in December 2025.

Sheffield will be the lone player on the BBWAA's ballot for the final time next year. Manny Ramírez and Álex Rodríguez, two players with Hall of Fame credentials who are unlikely to get into Cooperstown given their performance-enhancing drug suspensions, will be on the ballot for the eighth time and third time next year, respectively. A-Rod received 35.7 percent of the vote this year. Ramírez was at 33.2.

Carlos Beltrán was the only first-timer on the ballot to receive even 15 percent of the vote. He finished at 46.5 percent, which bodes well for the future since he can remain on the ballot for another nine years. That said, Beltrán was identified as a ring-leader in the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal. That may hurt his Hall of Fame candidacy and ultimately keep him out of Cooperstown.

Players must receive at least 5 percent of the vote to remain on the ballot another year. John Lackey, Huston Street, and former Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey are among the notables to fall short of the 5 percent threshold this year.



11 takeaways, including hope for Carlos Beltrán and Todd Helton
Scott Rolin got in but there is more to learn from this Hall of Fame vote

The results of the 2023 BBWAA portion of the Baseball Hall of Fame vote have been revealed and Scott Rolin is now a Hall of Famer, having received 76.3 percent of the vote. Here are the full results with official vote percentages. Players needed 75 percent of the vote to make it and at least five percent of the vote to remain on the ballot for next year, up to 10 years.

Let's dive deeper into the bigger takeaways from our Hall of Fame season.

1. This is actually a two-man class

First of all, the Contemporary Era committee already selected Fred McGriff. There will be a Hall of Fame ceremony honoring two players this coming summer. McGriff is 59 years old while Rolin is 47. Both played for a handful of teams and it should make for a fun event weekend.

2. Rolin's case can provide hope

In 2018, on a much more crowded ballot. Rolin got just 10.2 percent of the vote. But as the ballot cleared over the years with inductions of Hall of Famers and big-name players falling off without induction, spots cleared on the ballots of voters for Rolin. There was also a swell of support from several corners of the internet, pointing out Rolin's defense deserved a lot more credit and that showed up in stats like WAR.

Rolin's move from 10.2 percent of the vote to making it via the writer vote was the biggest in history. It's a record that might not stand long, as there are a few players we'll discuss below making a move similar to Rolin.

Certainly, big moves after pretty small beginnings is a theme with several of the prominent candidates on this ballot.

3. Helton right on the precipice

As I detailed in discussing Rolin last month, it's incredibly rare for players to top 62 percent with time to spare on the ballot and not get voted in shortly thereafter, whether just one or two more rounds of voting. Rolin was over that mark last year and made it this time around. Next up, Todd Helton.

Helton, in his fifth year, got 72.2 percent. It would be unprecedented for a player to get to that level of the vote in his fifth year and not be inducted into the Hall.

Using the available data, zero public ballots had 10 votes that did not include Helton. This is to say that even with players like Adrián Beltré and Joe Mauer coming on the ballot next year, the overwhelming majority of voters either voted for Helton or have spot(s) available to add him. There will be new voters. Some voters will lapse due to not covering the game anymore. Some voters reconsider their stance on players once they get this close to the 75 percent marker.

For all those reasons, Helton is almost

certainly going to be voted in next year.

4. Beltrán has hope

Carlos Beltrán has a statistical dossier that belongs in the Hall of Fame, but since his retirement, the sign-stealing scandal has clouded his Hall of Fame chances (full breakdown here).

The good news here for Beltrán is he's starting at a pretty decent number: 46.5 percent of the vote in his first try.

It's not the best comparison to loop in PED-connected players, but it's the best we've got. The players who have been held out of the Hall of Fame due to being tied to PEDs started in the mid-30s in percentage or lower. Most of them were lower, actually, it was really only Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds in the mid-30s.

With Beltrán starting out here, he's already in much better position. Anecdotally, I've also read several columns from prominent writers who said they are planning to reconsider in future years after not voting for Beltrán here in his first time on the ballot. And some people really do hold up "first-ballot Hall of Famer" as a sacred honor.

In all, I think the results for Beltrán are a net positive. We'll see how much headway he makes next time around -- with the "first ballot" thing not being attached and possibly a few of those aforementioned writers reconsidering his case -- without making any sweeping declarations, though.

5. A-Rod has less hope

The Hall of Fame case for Alex Rodriguez is complicated. We all already knew that. Before the vote last year, we couldn't be sure how exactly the vote would start shaping up for him. This was his second go-round on the ballot and it was his first without the likes of Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens.

Bonds could be the best road map here between the PED connections and all-time great numbers by a position player, though Bonds never was suspended under MLB's JDA and A-Rod was nailed with one of the biggest punishments in history. Bonds started in the mid-30s and topped out at 66 percent in his final year. The voting body will continue to evolve toward a more new-school mindset, but there are future voters who would've voted in Bonds and won't go with A-Rod due to the suspension.

Well, A-Rod got 34.3 percent of the vote last year and 35.7 percent this time.

That's probably within the range of stagnation, right? I know I often mention things about the voting body changing, opinions evolving and stuff like that, but he barely moved.

Simply, while things could change, he seems to be stuck.

6. Wagner, Jones in decent shape now

Billy Wagner started off in 2016 with around 10 percent of the vote (take note of the Rolin section above). Through four rounds, it was just 16.7 percent, but he's on the move now.

2020: 31.7%

2021: 46.4%

2022: 51%

2023: 68.1%

Wagner still has two ballots left and a real shot at getting home. It might even happen next year. He's really close now.

Not quite as close, but moving in range nonetheless is Andruw Jones. He started off having to sweat out just staying above five percent. He got just 7.5 percent in his second ballot, but then he started to get some traction.

2020: 19.4%

2021: 33.9%

2022: 41.4%

2023: 58.1%

This was Jones' sixth time on the ballot, so he's got four more voting cycles to make up less than 20 percent. If so, he would snap Rolin's record with ease.

Still, with both players but particularly Jones since he's further away: There's always the danger of plateauing. That is, a player can get to a certain percentage and then stagnate. It varies player to player because, well, every single Hall of Fame case is unique and they are all being voted on by an ever-changing electorate.

Overall, though, things are looking up for Wagner and it really seems like Jones has the momentum to get him in eventually. Someone who plateaued in recent years who had a possibly-great night was an all-time great bat waggler.

7. Sheffield within range?

This was Gary Sheffield's ninth time on the ballot. He made big gains in 2019-21, going from 13.6 percent to 40.6, but he got exactly 40.6 percent again in 2022. It looked like maybe all hope was lost.

Instead, he's moved into the possibly-over-used-but-still-fun "so you're telling me there's a chance" range.

Sheffield got 55 percent of the vote this year.

Perhaps there will be a nice final-year bump? Kent got a boost of more than 13 percent, though that wouldn't be enough. One of the largest single-year, final-ballot jumps ever seen was Larry Walker, who leaped from 54.6 percent in his ninth year to 76.6 to get in on his final try.

If Sheffield can make such gains with the voting body next year, he'll get in. That's a very tall hill to climb, obviously, but it's possible.

8. Kent falls off the ballot

Jeff Kent was the one player on this ballot for the 10th time. As such, it was his proverbial swan song. We knew he wasn't going to get close, but he did establish a new high with 46.5 percent of the vote, more than 10 percentage points above his previous high of 32.7 percent. It's a feather in his cap to get nearly 50 percent of the vote while hanging around on the ballot for a decade. It's tough just to get on the ballot and Kent can rest easy knowing he obviously made a mark on baseball history.

Plus, my hunch is Kent will fare much better with the committee votes (like McGriff), so this could be a blessing in disguise. I'd wager he's in the Hall within the

next decade.

9. Possible reason for optimism?

The following players are lower on the ballot but have a chance to catch lightning in a bottle the way Rolin did (and similar in fashion to how it appears Helton, Jones and maybe Sheffield and Wagner are).

- Andy Pettitte jumped from 10.7 percent to 17. This is his fifth year on the ballot, so he'll need some bigger leaps, but it's a starting point.

- Bobby Abreu went from 8.6 to 15.4 percent in this his fourth year. It's a very nice bump.

- Jimmy Rollins went from 9.4 to 12.9 percent. Very modest indeed on the gains and vote percentage, but it's only his second ballot and Chase Utley is coming soon. It's always possible when discussing Utley and Rollins together on the ballot that there's a mutual push in voting for the double-play combo. It didn't work for Lou Whitaker and Alan Trammell, but the times are changing.

- Mark Buehrle went from 5.8 to 10.8 percent. I dove into his case as an all-time workhorse recently and maybe more will continue to come around on him.

- This was the ballot debut for Francisco "K-Rod" Rodriguez. He started with 10.8 percent of the vote. While Rolin's entry provides hope for all players, the movement of Wagner is particularly telling with K-Rod and other elite-level closers moving forward. It's much more difficult for closers to make the Hall, but Wagner getting in next year could help clear the way for some momentum for K-Rod.

10. No-man's land

Now onto the players who seem to not have a chance at induction even though they continue to linger on the ballot.

- Manny Ramirez actually went from 28.9 percent to 33.2 percent, but he's still not even halfway home and has only three ballots left. I just can't see enough room for improvement there.

- Omar Vizquel's descent continues. From 52.6 in 2020 to 49.1 to 23.9 and now to 19.5 percent in his sixth try. There's a better chance he'll fall off the ballot before his 10 years are up than turning things around and gaining enshrinement.

- Torii Hunter went up from 5.3 to 6.9 percent, but he's still awfully close to being five-percented after a very small gain in his third year. He probably needs to get up over 10 percent next year to have any sort of hope, but my guess is this is all a formality.

11. Five-percented

The following players failed to reach five percent of the vote, meaning they are removed from the ballot moving forward: Bronson Arroyo, R.A. Dickey, John Lackey, Mike Napoli, Huston Street, Matt Cain, Jacoby Ellsbury, Andre Ethier, J.J. Hardy, Jhonny Peralta, Jered Weaver and Jayson Werth. Notably, these were all first-timers. Every holdover got at least five percent of the vote.

NFF Salutes the College Football Playoff



The Bulldogs' 15 victories this season mark the most wins in school history while giving them their fourth national title

Ninth edition continues the powerful tradition of using the game as the ultimate platform for showcasing the best of college football.

By footballfoundation.com

The National Football Foundation (NFF) & College Hall of Fame salutes the College Football Playoff (CFP) and its staff, led by CFP Executive Director Bill Hancock, for their exceptional efforts in staging the ninth CFP National Championship. The organization also congratulates the Los Angeles College Football National Championship Host Committee for their hospitality in organizing multiple first-class events.

"As the CFP enters the final year of its first decade, we can empathically say the College Football Playoff has generated heightened interest in college football," said NFF Chairman Archie Manning. "The CFP National Championship has truly become one of the most compelling gatherings in all of sports, and the game's success is a testament to our country's love of college football. Bill Hancock and the CFP staff have once again transformed an entire region, highlighting everything right with our great game as well as the region's unique local assets."

A sellout crowd of 72,628 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, witnessed No. 1 Georgia (15-0) claim a commanding 65-7 victory over No. 3 TCU (13-2) Jan. 9, giving the Bulldogs back-to-back national titles. Georgia, headed by Coach Kirby Smart, now joins Alabama and Clemson as the only programs that have claimed multiple CFP trophies. The Bulldogs' 15 victories this season mark the most wins in school history while giving them their fourth national title: 1942, 1980, 2021 and 2022.

Stetson Bennett IV, the former walk-on who has created a storybook career during the past two seasons in Athens, claimed the

game's offensive MVP honors, completing 18 of 25 passes for 304 yards. He threw for four touchdowns and ran for another two, tying him at first for most points scored (36) in a CFP title game. Safety Javon Bullard earned defensive MVP honors, picking off two passes and recovering a fumble, all before the half, which helped give the Bulldogs a 38-7 advantage after two quarters.

The game generated a Nielsen-reported audience of 17.2 million viewers as part of ESPN's MegaCast presentation while the 2022 College Football Playoff Semifinals, the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl and the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl delivered record-breaking viewership, averaging 22.1 million viewers, the biggest audience in the past five years and the third-most watched Semifinals in the CFP era.

The Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl, where Georgia notched a thrilling 42-41 victory over Ohio State, attracted 22.4 million viewers, the most-watched primetime CFP Semifinal since Year One. The game ranks among the Top 20 cable telecast of all time and the best non-NFL telecast, cable or broadcast, since last year's CFP National Championship. The Vrbo Fiesta Bowl, where TCU upset Michigan, 51-45, garnered 21.7 million viewers, placing it as the third-most watched afternoon CFP Semifinal of the CFP era.

The Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl and Vrbo Fiesta Bowl now place as the fourth and fifth most-viewed CFP Semifinals ever, reaching more than 42 million total viewers between them with 11 percent year-over-year growth. Collectively, the 2022-23 New Year's Six games averaged nearly 13 million viewers across all six games, up year-over-year and the most-watched New Year's Six in three years.

"The whole picture, the championship game, the Peach Bowl, the Fiesta Bowl, the New Year's Six, are a fabulous showcase for college football," said NFF President &

CEO Steve Hatchell. "And the impact on the local community, including the extraordinary work of the Extra Yard for Teachers program, is a great testament to impact of college football. We are extremely grateful to the Los Angeles host committee, Bill Hancock, CFP Chief Operating Officer Byron Hatch, and the entire CFP staff for delivering a first-class experience. We know that they sacrificed incalculable hours with their families and endured many sleepless nights to ensure an exceptional experience for the fans."

Using the national spotlight of the game, the CFP honored Iowa LB Jack Campbell, the 2022 recipient of the William V. Campbell Trophy®, airing a video profiling his accomplishments as a scholar-athlete between the first and second quarters on the video boards. The CFP also supported the announcement of the 2023 College Football Hall of Fame class with a feature on the video boards and an in-stadium interview with newest inductee Troy Vincent (Wisconsin). Earlier in the day, the official announcement of the 2023 class

was announced live on the field at SoFi Stadium during ESPN's "Championship Drive Presented by Mercedes-Benz." NFF President Steve Hatchell surprised Tim Tebow (Florida), an analyst on the broadcast team helping announce the inductees, that he too was a member of the class during the national telecast.

The 2023 class includes Eric Berry (Tennessee); Michael Bishop (Kansas State); Reggie Bush (Southern California); Dwight Freeney (Syracuse); Robert Gallery (Iowa); LaMichael James (Oregon); Derrick Johnson (Texas); Bill Kollar (Montana State); Luke Kuechly (Boston College); Jeremy Maclin (Missouri); Terance Mathis (New Mexico); Bryant McKinnie (Miami-FL); Corey Moore (Virginia Tech); Michael Stonebreaker (Notre Dame); Tim Tebow (Florida); Troy Vincent (Wisconsin); Brian Westbrook (Villanova); DeAngelo Williams (Memphis) and coaches Monte Cater (Lakeland-WI, Shepherd-WV), Paul Johnson (Georgia Southern, Navy, Georgia Tech), Roy Kramer (Central Michigan) and Mark Richt (Georgia, Miami-FL).



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College Football News and Notes



BO CARTER

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The 2023 NFF Awards Dinner will be hosted by the ARIA Resort and Casino and City of Las Vegas on Tuesday, Dec. 5. For ticketing and additional information, please access Footballfoundation.com.

The INFLCR NIL Summit with 350-plus attendees in its 2022 gathering at the Chick-Fil-A NFF College Hall of Fame in Atlanta, is scheduled again for June. Early-bird registration has started at INFLCR.com and closes on Friday, Feb. 17.

Longtime Florida State and Maryland publicist Chuck Walsh has captured the prestigious USBWA Katha Quinn Award for courage in athletics and service to FSU and national media members.

NFF College Hall of Fame Facts

Some notable birthdates in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the Jan. 23-29 time period are Jan. 23 (1890) Morley Jennings, Holland, Mich.; (1935) Jerry Tubbs, Throckmorton, Texas; (1952) Shelby Jordan, St. Louis, Mo.; Jan. 24 (1881) Bill Warner, Springville, N.Y.; (1920) Chuck Taylor, Portland, Ore.; (1936) Don Bosseler, Weathersfield, N.Y.; Jan. 25 (1942) Carl Eller, Winston-Salem, N.C.; (1985) Patrick Willis, Bruceton,

Tenn.; Jan. 26 (1899) Marty Below, Oshkosh, Wis.; (1905) Allyn McKeen, Fulton, Ky.; (1906) Fred Miller, Milwaukee, Wis.; (1926) John Merritt, Falmouth, Ky.; (1948) Mike Kelly, Troy, Ohio; (1950) Jack Youngblood, Jacksonville, Fla.; (1960) Jeff Davis, Greensboro, N.C.; Jan. 27 (1894) Fritz Pollard, Chicago, Ill.; (1907) Peter Pund, Augusta, Ga.; (1920) Frankie Albert, Chicago; Jan. 28 (1937) Charlie Krueger, Caldwell, Texas; Jan. 29 (1896) Edwin "Goat" Hale, Jackson, Miss.; (1927) Arnold Galiffa, Donora, Pa.; (1945) Jim Donnan, Laurens, South Carolina.

Notable death anniversaries in this time period are Jan. 23 (1963) Benny Lee Boynton, Dallas, Texas; (1976) Paul Robeson, Philadelphia, Pa.; (2011) Dr. Ed Dyas, Mobile, Ala.; (2017) Ralph Guglielmi, Wallace, N.C.; Jan. 25 (1999) Herman Wedemeyer, Honolulu, Hawai'i; (2007) Ken Kavanaugh, Sarasota, Fla.; Jan. 26 (1965) Four Horseman Harry Stuhldreher, Pittsburgh, Pa.; (1983) Paul Bryant, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; (1996) Frank Howard, Clemson, S.C.; Jan. 27 (2008) Mike Holovak, Ruskin, Fla.; (2011) Vaughn Mancha, Tallahassee, Fla.; Jan. 28 (1991) Red Grange, Lake Wales, Fla.; (2004) Elroy Hirsch, Madison, Wis.; (2013) Doug Kenna, No. Palm Beach, Fla.; Jan. 29 (1970) Gus Welch, Bedford, Virginia.

Happy birthdays to Hall of Famers on Jan. 23 Shelby Jordan, Jan. 24 Don Bosseler (a spry 87), Jan. 25 Carl Eller (a spry 81), Patrick Willis, Jan. 26 Mike Kelly, Jack Youngblood, Jeff Davis, Jan. 29 Jim Donnan...

BYU and East Carolina moved back the second game of a two-tussle contract back from 2024 to '25 in Greenville,

N.C....North Dakota State and Tennessee State will tangle in a pair of '24 and '25 outings. North Dakota State athletics and fans also expressed glee over the school's first-ever meeting with history FCS power Tennessee State in Nashville in 2025 along with last season's trek to face (and almost upset before falling 31-28) Arizona in Tucson and 2024 meetings with Minnesota in Minneapolis and Colorado in Boulder as "destination" matchups for long-standing Bison fans. NDSU also has been one of the competing teams in the NCAA Division I football championship skirmish during 10 of the last 12 seasons in fashionable Frisco, Texas, north of Dallas with Bison fans helping the local economy to the tune of an estimated \$8-\$10 million during each trek to Collin County...Ohio and San Diego State will open the '23 season on a new date - Aug. 26...East Carolina and Liberty have a new, two-game series set for 2024 and '29...Kennesaw State will host Tusculum for the first time this autumn...Tennessee and Washington will meet twice in 2029 and 2030.....

....Georgia's four non-conference opponents this year are UT Martin, Ball State, UAB, and traditional rival Georgia Tech for the 117th time...Western Michigan will visit Ohio State in 2024...Nebraska and Tennessee have set a 2026 and '27 series. USC athletics is naming the field at Katherine B. Loker Track Stadium in honor of alumna and 11-time Olympic medalist Allyson Felix...Iona's women's basketball squad set a NCAA team mark by connecting on 15 consecutive three-point attempts in a win over Rider...TCU men's basketball won its first game ever at historic Allen Fieldhouse over then-No. 4 Kansas in rather convincing fashion 83-60. It was the second-largest margin (23 points) by a Jayhawks opponent in Lawrence since the 2003-04 season.

South Dakota State head coach John Stiegelmeier is going out on top with the 2022 season NCAA Division I football championship and is retiring after 26 years at SDSU...UAPB head coach Alonzo Hampton had his initial three-year contract finalized with firm compensation and bonus addenda...Louisiana Tech head coach Sonny Cumbie reflected on 20 high school signees and a base of 12 Louisiana prep seniors for the '23 campaign....Former Bethune-Cookman head coach Ed Reed and the football squad spent last week helping to clean up the campus grounds and facilities in athletics after the 2022-23 holiday class break. Reed also made an appeal to all HBCU administrators to give football and athletics the necessary fiscal resources to compete against per NCAA FCS members, and he stepped down as

head coach at BCU last Saturday...Upper level Michigan administrators and AD Warde Manuel have been assured by head coach Jim Harbaugh that he will be the Wolverines coach in 2023.....NC State tabbed Robert Anae as offensive coordinator...SMU added Maurice Crum from Ole Miss as a defensive assistant coach...Former Arkansas and Baylor offensive coordinator Kendal Briles has accepted the same position at TCU...Baylor named AJ Steward running backs coach and Tyler Hancock special teams coordinator....Mississippi State selected former Syracuse assistant Mike Schmidt as offensive line coach...Rutgers chose Dave Brock as wide receivers coach...Texas Tech added Justin Johnson as running backs coach...San Diego State offensive coordinator Jeff Horton is retiring after 12 years with the Aztecs...Penn State receivers coach Taylor Stubblefield will not return for the Nittany Lions in 2023....Michigan co-offensive coordinator Matt Weiss is no longer part of the Wolverines program.

Hometowns of more 2023 college head coaches - Texas Southern: Clarence McKinney, Houston, Texas; Texas State: G.J. Kinne, Mesquite, Texas; Texas Tech: Joey McGuire, Crowley, Texas; UTEP: Dana Dimel, Columbus, Ohio; Toledo: Jason Candle, Salem, Ohio.

Appalachian State director of athletics Doug Gillin remarked about the progress the Mountaineers have made since transitioning from NCAA FCS to FBS, the department's \$100 million fundraising campaign, concessions' updates, and possible expansion of Kidd Brewer Stadium...Belmont AD Scott Corley expressed excitement about some of the facets of the NCAA Transformation Committee's report - particularly the expansion of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship field...Utah AD Mark Harlan gave his reasons about the Utes continued football success and back-to-back Pac-12 Conference titles. He also saluted head coach Kyle Whittingham for winning with less than tons of five-star recruiting talent and Pac-12 commissioner George Kliavkoff's transparency and communications' skills amid membership changes and media rights' negotiations...Utah State interim AD Jerry Bovee has told key university administrators he is a candidate for the permanent title at USU...Troy AD Brent Jones outlined his departmental goals for 2023, the Trojans difficulties in scheduling Power Five conference opponents in light of Troy's consistent success since becoming a FBS member in the 1990s, building new facilities on campus, and completing financing for a

\$13 million upgrade for the Trojans baseball stadium...

Massachusetts AD Ryan Bamford is promoting the Minutemen's NIL initiative the Massachusetts Collective and GoMass NIL programs...Former Buffalo and Auburn AD and current Ole Miss senior deputy AD for external relations and business development Allen Greene had his contractual compensation ratified along with a relocation stipend...Oregon State AD Scott Barnes brought fans and media up to date on upgrades at Reser Stadium, how the NCAA Transformation Committee's requests will affect the Beavers and the Pac-12 Conference's commitment to remain strong in the face of two defections...Tulane AD Troy Dannen related the festive atmosphere and additional financial success after the Green Wave upended powerhouse USC 46-45 in the 2023 Goodyear Cotton Bowl. He also believes the newfound monetary support will lead to some facility updates in coming months for the Greenies...Northern Illinois AD Sean Frazier expressed thoughts about the 2023 NCAA Convention, NCAA Transformation Committee findings, goals for Mid-American Conference schools in light of these updates, and how NIU expects to make diversity, equity and inclusion goals for the remainder of '23...Kansas AD Travis Goff explained the acquisition processes for the hiring of head coaches in football, women's golf and baseball and the strong candidates' pool resulting from each advertisement...Portland State added former Eastern New Mexico AD Matt Billings as PSU senior associate AD...Ball State has started meeting in-person with 6-8 finalists for its AD's search...Alabama executive deputy AD and former West Virginia AD Shane Lyons noted some of the challenges of NIL arrangements at WVU and other universities and how equal support for men's and women's teams is essential...Notre Dame men's basketball head coach Mike Brey will retire in March at the end of his 23rd campaign with the Fighting Irish...Michigan tabbed Erin Virtue as women's volleyball head coach...Arizona women's volleyball head coach David Rubio has retired after 31 campaigns in Tucson. UA moved up assistant coach Charita Stubbs to replace Rubio...Kent State tapped Scott Peace as associate AD for marketing and fan engagement...Robert Morris selected Heather Schrecengost as associate AD for business operations and senior women administrator...Niagara added Tim Frank as men's golf head coach...Former Oregon women's basketball standout Sabrina Ionescu will continue her role as the Ducks director of athletic culture in-person and remotely as she begins workouts the WNBA New York Liberty season...Houston senior associate AD for events, operations, facilities, and grounds Bruce Gregory is retiring after eight years with the Cougars...UAB acquired Lisa Mann as women's soccer

head coach...Akron associate AD Anne Jorgensen has turned in her notice to retire after 35 years in Zips athletics....Appalachian State named Emily Dinsmore field hockey head coach...Fordham named Gary Murphy men's golf head coach...St.Bonaventure women's basketball head coach Jesse Fleming has finished his tenures with the Bonnies in the midst of his seventh season...President Frederick Slabach of Texas Wesleyan is returning to his alma mater Ole Miss as dean of the UM law school...Columbia named Dr. Nemat Shafik as president effective in July...Former Cornell AD and director of physical education Andy Noel bemoaned the influence the NIL has had on college sports in general and specifically on Ivy League contenders..D1Ticker.com has new job postings in athletics for Alabama State, South Dakota State, Penn State, Stanford, James Madison, Virginia, Northern Illinois, Florida, SMU, North Carolina, Fordham, Robert Morris, UTRGV, Northeastern State, Army West Point, Colgate, Georgia Tech, Towson, Prairie View, A&M, Hawai'i, Central Oklahoma, Hamilton, Gardner-Webb, and UC Davis.

The Pac-12 Conference unveiled its complete 2023 schedule last Wednesday with Southern California opening play against San Jose State on Aug. 26. There will be a nine-game, intra-conference slate for the coming year, and the conference may drop down to eight Pac-12 tests in 2024...Big East Conference commissioner Val Ackerman reflected on national impact of the 2022 Women Leaders in Sports Convention and how women and commissioners of color can impact their respective circuits and work with the NCAA on key legislative issues. She also called for some of the NCAA's revenue from football championships and related areas to go into the group's day-to-day operations and personnel additions...The Big South Conference will use Collegiate Sports Associates for its commissioner's opening search...The Sun Belt Conference will add beach volleyball as its 19th sponsored sport starting in September 2023...Current Washington State president and former CEO at Kansas State Dr. Kirk Schulz has been mentioned as a possible contender for the vacant Big Ten Conference commissioner's post...The Pac-12 also has a new pact with the Tempus Ex and Curastory groups to assist student-athletes who hope to pursue careers in sports broadcasting...The Mid-American Conference nabbed the coveted 2022-23 ESPN Progressive Bowl Challenge Cup with a 4-2 postseason worksheet. It was the MAC's first outright title in the competition, and the Mountain West Conference leads with five Cups since competition originated with the 2002-03 bowl season...Bowlseason.com executive director Nick Carparelli was interviewed by ESPN about the possible use of existing bowls in the College Football Playoff's expanded 12-team for-

mat...Collegepressbox.com has updated its conference and team websites and news on the Bowlseason.com official site.

NFF College Hall of Fame coach Barry Switzer of Oklahoma and Sooners super-fan and entertainer Toby Keith were interested in-person observers when the Sooners men's basketball squad played at Oklahoma State last Wednesday...LSU unveiled a statue of women's basketball legend Simone Augustus last week after she paced the 2005-07 Tigers to three consecutive treks to the NCAA Women's Final Four...Former LSU and current NFL Tampa Bay Bucs WR Russell Gage is recuperating from a neck injury he suffered during Tampa Bay's playoff game against Dallas...The NFL Chicago Bears officially introduced former Big Ten Conference commissioner Kevin Warren as president and CEO at a national news gathering. Quarterback Dom Britton, the starter for 2022 Canadian Junior Football (the equivalent of U.S. community colleges) national champ Okanagan Sun, has inked a scholarship with the Calgary (Canada) Dinos. He was 21-1 as a starting quarterback over two seasons at Okanagan...Nebraska WR Isaiah Garcia-Castaneda will remain with the Huskers for 2023 after considering the NCAA transfer portal...TCU wideout-KR Derrius Davis and WR Quincy Brown, Kansas State OLB Ozzie Hoffler, BYU defensive end Isaiah Perez, TCU wideout Quentin Johnston, WR Trey Cleveland (to North Texas), LSU quarterback Walker Howard (to Ole Miss), Oklahoma State QB Spencer Sanders (to Ole Miss), Boise State QB Hank Bachmeier (to Louisiana Tech), Northern Arizona QB R.J. Martinez (to Baylor), and North Texas DB DeShawn Gaddie are newcomers to the '23 transfer portal...Mississippi State WR Tulu Griffin has decided to remain at MSU and de-entry the NCAA transfer area...Former Vanderbilt starting QB Mike Wright is transferring to Mississippi State along with Eastern Washington WR Freddie Roberson...Georgia received a 2024 oral commitment from five-star OL candidate Kam Pringle...UCF women's tennis student-athlete Olivia Lincer will compete for the Knights in 2023-24 as well as getting entrance fees for seven professional tournaments in spring and summer 2023 as part of NIL agreements with UCF...Alabama men's basketball player Darius Miles no longer is associated with Crimson Tide athletics.

Oregon State's \$162 million Reser Stadium renovations are on schedule for completion for OSU's home opener on Sept. 9 against UC Davis...St. Thomas (Minn.) has a new \$75 million naming grant from Lee and Penny Anderson toward the \$175 million construction project and on-campus, multipurpose arena...Furman athletics gained a \$10 million donation from alumnus Ravenal Curry for the \$40 million funding of upgrades for Timmons Arena...Indiana is renaming its women's basketball team facility the

Sandra Eskenazi Indiana Women's Basketball Team Center in honor of a substantial donation to the school by Eskenazi...Colorado athletics notes almost non-stop ticket purchases for 2023 football contests on both a season and individual game basis since the advent of Coach Prime Deion Sanders (NFF College Hall of Fame player at Florida State) as Buffaloes head coach. CU opens the campaign against CFP runnerup TCU on Sept. 2 in Fort Worth, Texas. The early season ticket renewal rate is in the middle 90 percent range with a season sellout anticipated in coming weeks...The Michigan NIL collective Champions Circle has raised \$101 million for the One More Year fund to retain UM football student-athletes and has possible additional pledges for up to \$5 million...Oral Roberts' \$15 million Mike Carter Athletic Center is pushing toward an April 19 dedication in Tulsa, Okla....Oklahoma State athletics reported that OSU owes \$2.425 million in debt service entering 2023 for the lowest total in the Big 12 Conference. O-State hopes to utilize new budgeting to outfit football student-athletes with updated, state-of-the-art helmets...Jacksonville State athletics and the Peak Sports MGMT Group have extended their pact to maximize multimedia rights and corporate partnerships for the Gamecocks who join Conference USA July 1...The formable™ Group in New Jersey has begun new programs to connect nationally-known coaches and athletic trainers with athletes in running-form and swimming events to maximize their performance capabilities and to minimize injuries...The JPMorgan Financial Group eliminated the Frank Project, which reached a peak of just under 300,000 clients for college financial aid at one point last year...Barclays Center in Brooklyn has switched from SeatGeek to Ticketmaster for its event ticketing...Southwest Airlines CEO Bob Jordan indicated that the pace is picking up for refunds and reimbursements for thousands of Southwest passengers, including many trying to travel to 2022-23 bowl games, after the company lost as much as \$725-\$825 million during a 12-day period...The Iowa athletics Swarm Collective will host an off-campus NIL fundraising experience in Dallas April 5 in conjunction with the NBA Dallas Mavericks-Sacramento Kings encounter...Connecticut athletics is working down a \$53 million deficit caused by COVID-19 financial conditions and payouts to former head coaches...Cleveland State athletics and Opendorse initiated Viking Ventures NIL group for expanded possible NIL endorsements...Texas Southern athletics and the AthleteTalk Group are working with a new mental health and wellness mobile application for all student-athletes...Texas and Texas A&M have banned TikTok from all its campus Wi-Fi elements along with all Texas state agencies due to national security concerns....Connecticut

(continued on page 18)

Northwestern athletics continue to be challenged by COVID-19 recurrences on campus and have had to reschedule additional contests over the last seven days...Boise State and Anthony Travel have joined forces for all Broncos team travel and accounting measures...Fanatics has new licensed apparel and gear partnerships with California, Oregon State, Oklahoma State, and Texas Tech through Collegiate Licensing Co...To the chagrin of Dayton athletics, legal gamblers in Ohio on social media criticized Flyers men's basketball performers for failing to reach pregame odds for their bets. The Ohio Casino Control Commission is looking into these allegations and possible exclusion of the gamblers from formal wagering...Utah is the last remaining Pac-12 Conference school with contractual obligations to Under Armour...San Francisco athletics is encouraging donors to help fund The Hilltop Club collective and NIL possibilities through THC...The Purdue athletics Boilermaker Alliance collective is prospering financially, enlarging and adding to its current staff of fulltime employees...Last Saturday's Northwestern-Wisconsin men's basketball contest had to be postponed due to COVID-19 player shortages by the Badgers...Colorado athletics ended an arrangement with a referral bonus for fans signing up for PointsBet with CU's promo code and eventual wagers...

Associated Press college football editor Ralph Russo expressed his thoughts about the tenure of NCAA president Dr. Mark Emmert and projected challenges for the next 10-15 years for new president Charlie Baker, his staff and successors...The Toledo (Ohio) Blade newspaper speculated that the Toledo Rockets may move one of their November contests from their home stadium the Glass Bowl to the city's Fifth Third AAA minor league baseball park. North Alabama and Jacksonville State had a similar situation in moving a football game from Florence, Ala., to neutral Madison, Ala., and Toyota Field – the home of the AA Southern League Huntsville Trash Pandas...D1.ticker interviewed Baylor president Dr. Linda Livingstone about the authenticity she noticed as part of the hiring committee for new NCAA president Charlie Baker and how the NCAA might intermingle in legislative matters with the US. Congress...Sports Business Journal featured Modelo's party bus, which has been a marketing boom and almost daily tailgate gathering at dozens of locations...Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel newspaper columnist Mike Bianchi noted that the NIL has been a roller coaster ride again in 2023 – particularly for high profile prospects and promises of major NIL financial compensation within the Sunshine State...ABC-TV's Good Morning America featured former Texas Longhorns football standouts Michael Griffin and Brian Orapko and their expanding business called The

Cupcake Guys...The New York Times newspaper has been writing about Artificial Intelligence chabots, and how these platforms can compose term papers and other written works for college students with definite repercussions for Honor Code institutions...Microsoft is laying off 10,000 employees in coming weeks worldwide, and the impact on college athletics and social media is yet to be observed...Richmond athletics requested that CBS Sports be available to televise eight home-and-home games against Quadrant I NCAA basketball opponents if the contests can be arranged.....AthleticDirectorU. com took another concerted glance at the possible expansion to 90 or 96 teams for the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Championships...On3.com detailed inordinate amounts and promises for incoming high school football recruits with NIL monetization...Front Office Sports detailed how Stanford women's golfer Rose Zhang (the No. 1 amateur golfer worldwide) was able to complete a NIL agreement with adidas while competing for a traditional power with a Nike apparel and marketing pact...Former NBC sports host Kathryn Tappen will be back on the sidelines to report for the NBC primetime Big Ten Conference football telecasts...Sports Illustrated related that the pending hearing for the Johnson v. NCAA case has been delayed until Feb.15.

PricewaterhouseCoopers and Davos surveys find that 73 percent of CEOs and educational leaders worldwide expect a global slowing of the economy in 2023. College athletics administrators are working with their budgets to make possible adjustments...The Tennessee Volunteer Club NIL corrective has an original membership of 2,100-plus and is setting its sights on 5,000 members prior to March Madness@...LEARFIELD has sold the ANC Group to C10 Media with no public terms announced...Oklahoma and LEARFIELD Sports unveiled the first webstreamed episode of Championship Mindset, a content series focusing on the success of OU softball...FOX Sports' college basketball ratings are averaging 1.25 million with a 35 percent increase over 2021-22 numbers...The San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News' reporter Jon Wilner glanced at a recent Pac-12 statement that the conference is in "no hurry" to finalize its multimedia broadcast rights' contracts before getting too close to current rights' expiration...JohnCanzano.com received source reports that there was not consensus on the finalized 2023 Pac-12 football schedule with at least three drafts on the table. The site also indicated a "high road" approach to the final decision, in which UCLA and USC were not discriminated against in terms of home dates or rugged road tests with conference activity...On3.com purports that some schools may be making larger claims of NIL assets

than are readily available and that the majority of high school recruits and transfers are basing their choices on the fit of the football program, facilities and tradition ...ESPN enjoyed solid ratings of 1.6 million viewers-plus in Nielsen Ratings for weekend men's basketball tussles between Kentucky and Tennessee and Louisville and North Carolina...ExtraPoints.com took a long glance at the possibility of Congress passing legislation to regulate NIL dealings as well as to check for possible rules' or ethics' violations in the cases of some highly-recruited student-athletes...Twitter has banned third-party groups from changing Twitter rules to create substitute or similar services with quasi-Twitter applications ...Incoming Netflix co-CEO Greg Peters plans no major strategy shifts or monetary incentives as the company makes changes in the top leadership rungs ...ExtraPoints. com looked into the challenges of being a publicist in college athletics and having to deal with legalized wagering and agencies looking for "inside" information from schools to establish wagering guidelines – especially on national rivalry games in several sports...The Athletic examined recent NCAA enforcement visits to Michigan and possibilities to additional staff changes and how the university is handling the inquiry.

The FWAA 2023 Volney Meece Undergraduate Scholarship has been awarded to Kate Shatel of Elkhorn, Neb., and daughter of FWAA past president Tom Shatel. Kate will be attending Kansas starting in August...AFCA executive director Scott Berry is looking for some firm answers and interpretations this winter from the NCAA office and NCAA Oversight Committee...The USBWA also has updated its 50-player watch list for the 2022-23 USBWA Oscar Robertson Award ...National Fastpitch Coaches Association executive director Carol Bruggeman has a five-year contract extension through 2027 ...Trending on social media and other platforms nationally from the College Sports Communicators group are Steve Fink of South Carolina, Herman Hudson of SMU, Jack Duggan of Southern Miss, Scott Swegeb of Stanford, and Tyler Cady of Syracuse...Arizona State, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisville, LSU, Michigan (meeting with NCAA officials this week), Michigan State, Tennessee, UCLA, and USC have been conferring with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible issues and probes at their respective schools...The NCAA also will ask a federal appeals court to stop a lawsuit that would provide an estimated \$2,000 per student-athlete as designated employees of colleges...Knight Commission chief executive officer Amy Perko continues to delve into the increased usage and compensation for coaching buyouts, how post-2024 College Football Playoff revenue (estimated to be

rising by \$425-450 million for additional games and media rights) and how departments of athletics have continued to adjust budgets in the wake of COVID-19 delinquencies and other challenges...The NFL Dallas Cowboys (\$8 billion), MLB New York Yankees (\$6.5 billion), NBA New York Knicks (\$5.2 billion), NBA Los Angeles Lakers (\$5 billion), and NBA Golden State Warriors (\$4.8 billion) have been valued as the five most valuable professional franchises as of January...NFL attendance increased 3.25 percent to 69,442 per game in 2022 from 2021 figures for the second-largest gain since 2003...Veteran NFL assistant coach Ray Horton is the new head coach for the Pittsburgh Maulers whose former head coach Kirby Wilson resigned recently ...The NBA Utah Jazz has returned to Delta Airlines as the corporate sponsor for the Delta Center in Salt Lake City...The Class AAA minor league baseball Salt Lake City Bees will be moving to a new stadium in South Jordan, Utah, in coming months...The Drake Group has requested from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights that gender equity be applied to NIL compensation arrangements for women's student-athletes...

2023-24 College Football Playoff Bowl Schedule with New Year's Six Games <i>(All Games Televised by ESPN, Tentative Eastern Standard Airtimes)</i>
Saturday, Dec. 30 Vrbo Fiesta Bowl, CFP semifinals State Farm Stadium, Glendale, Arizona 4 or 8 p.m. Capital One Orange Bowl, CFP semifinals Hard Rock Stadium, Miami Lakes, Florida 4 or 8 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 8, 2024 - CFP Championship , NRG Stadium Houston, Texas, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 29, 2022-Jan. 1, 2024 (Other New Year's Six Bowls)
Friday, Dec. 29 Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl Mercedes Benz Stadium, Atlanta, Georgia TBD
Jan. 1 – Allstate Sugar Bowl Caesars Superdome, New Orleans, La., TBD
Jan. 1 – Goodyear Cotton Bowl AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas TBD
Jan. 2 – Rose Bowl presented by Prudential Rose Bowl Stadium, Pasadena, California 5 p.m.

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