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The logo for 'The Ticket Sportsradio' is prominently displayed. It features the word 'THE' in small white letters above the word 'TICKET' in large, bold, red letters with a white outline and a blue shadow. Below 'TICKET' is the word 'SPORTSRADIO' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. At the bottom, the frequencies '96.7fm/1310am' are written in yellow text on a red oval background. The entire logo is set against a black background with green and white diagonal lines.

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AROUND THE AREA

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

SMU to hold open practice Friday



Mustang Football To Hold Open Practice Friday At 7 p.m.

DALLAS (SMU) – SMU football will hold its annual Open Spring Practice on Friday, April 30 at 7 p.m. in Ford Stadium.

Gates will open at 6:30 p.m. and parking in campus garages is free. While inside the stadium, fans are expected to wear face coverings and observe social distancing practices.

Food trucks will be available in the south end zone for concessions, and fans can enter a raffle for some coveted Triple D, Dallas and Mustang Football gear.

SMU opens the 2021 slate at home against Abilene Christian on Sept. 4. The non-conference schedule also features the Battle for the Iron Skillet against TCU in Fort Worth on Sept. 25.

Conference play includes home matchups with USF, Tulane, UCF and Tulsa, while the Mustangs will play Navy, Houston, Memphis and Cincinnati away.

For ticket information, call (214) (768-4263).



Luka Doncic named Western Conference Player of the Week

DALLAS — Mavericks guard Luka

Doncic was named the Western Conference Player of the Week for games played Monday, April 19 through Sunday, April 25, marking the fourth time in his career and third time this season he has received the honor (Nov. 18-24, 2019; Jan. 4-10, 2021; March 29-April 3, 2021). Doncic joins Denver's Nikola Jokic and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo as players to have received the honor three times this season.

When Doncic (6-7, 230) won player of the week earlier this month, he joined Dirk Nowitzki (2002-03, 2006-07, 2009-10, 2010-11) and Josh Howard (2006-07) as the only Mavericks to garner the award multiple times in the same season. He also joined Nowitzki (16 times), Michael Finley (three) and Jason Kidd (three) as the only Dallas players to win the award at least three times in his career. Nowitzki holds the franchise record for player of the week honors in a single season, four (2009-10).

Doncic led the Mavericks to a 3-0 week at home with averages of 26.0 points, 9.0 rebounds, 10.0 assists and 1.7 steals.

The two-time All-Star recorded back-to-back 30-point games against Detroit (4/21) and the Lakers (4/22). The games were his 17th and 18th with 30+points, 5+ rebounds and 5+ assists, which leads the NBA.

To open the week against Detroit, Doncic recorded 30 points, 10 rebounds, nine assists, two steals in the 127-117 win.

The following night, in the first of two consecutive victories against the reigning NBA champion Lakers, Doncic led all scorers with 30 points, including 17 in the second half, to go with nine rebounds, eight assists and three steals as the Mavericks won 115-110.

The Mavericks concluded the week with a 108-93 win versus Los Angeles (4/24). Doncic contributed 18 points, eight rebounds and 13 assists on the night.

In 54 games this season, Doncic is averaging 28.5 points, 8.8 rebounds, 8.8 assists and 1.0 steals on a career-high 48.3% from the floor. Among league leaders, the Slovenian ranks fourth in scoring, assists and triple-doubles (nine).

Washington's Bradley Beal joins Doncic as the Eastern Conference Player of the Week.



Roughriders unveil a Jam-Packed May Promotional schedule

Fireworks, drink specials and theme nights highlight the opening month

With baseball's return to Frisco just about a week away, the Frisco RoughRiders are thrilled to announce a massive May promotional schedule.

The home schedule begins with Opening Week presented by Baylor Scott & White on May 4th! This marks the first of two-straight weeks at home, where they will host 12 games in 13 days.

On Opening Day, the first 5,000 fans will receive a magnet schedule giveaway courtesy of Carpet Tech and everyone will enjoy a postgame fireworks show.

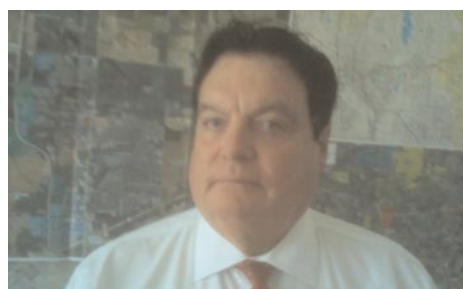
The RoughRiders follow up the opener with their Cinco de Mayo Celebration on May 5th. The night will feature Dos Equis and Corona specials, a live Mariachi band and beautiful festive jerseys.

WEEKLY CALENDAR							
	APRIL 30 FRIDAY	MAY 1 SATURDAY	MAY 2 SUNDAY	MAY 3 MONDAY	MAY 4 TUESDAY	MAY 5 WEDNESDAY	MAY 6 THURSDAY
		Mavs vs Wizards 8:00 / TXA21	Mavs vs Kings 7:00 / BSSW		Mavs at Heat 7:00 / BSSW		Mavs vs Nets 6:30 / BSSW
	Stars at Nashville 7:00 / KTCK	Stars at Nashville 7:00 / KTCK		Stars at Florida 6:00 / KTCK		Stars at Tampa Bay 6:00 / KTCK	
		FC Dallas vs Portland 7:00pm					
	Rangers at Red Sox 7:05 / BSSW	Rangers at Red Sox 6:05 / BSSW	Rangers at Red Sox 1:35 / BSSW	Rangers at Twins 6:40 / 105.3fm	Rangers at Twins 6:40 / 105.3fm	Rangers at Twins 6:40 / 105.3fm	Rangers at Twins 12:10 / 105.3fm
	Americans vs Thunder 7:05	Americans vs Thunder 7:05	Americans vs Thunder 2:05			Americans vs Oilers 7:05	

Texas Rangers News and Notes



Nick Solak leads the team with a .305 batting average



BY DIC HUMPHREY
DHUMPHREY24@GMAIL.COM
MEMBER: USBWA

ARLINGTON, Texas – The Rangers opened a four game series with the Boston Red Sox Thursday night with a 4-1 win. Kyle Gibson pitched magnificently again with six innings of three hit ball. Two of those, a pair of doubles in the sixth inning, scored the only run of the night for Boston. Meanwhile, Adolis Garcia supported Gibson with a fourth inning sacrifice fly. After Boston tied the game in the sixth inning, Jose Trevino hit a two run home run to put the Rangers back in front and make Gibson the winning pitcher. Isiah Kiner-Falefa added an insurance run in the seventh inning with his third home run of the year.

Gibson is 3-0 with the win. John King, Joely Rodriguez and Ian Kennedy each pitched a scoreless inning in relief to ice the win. Kennedy was especially strong in the ninth to earn his fifth save.

Thursday's win was, surprisingly, just the fifth home win in 13 home games this season. After opening the home schedule by taking two of three from Toronto, the Rangers have won just three more home games and no more home series since. It is a miserable performance even for a team admittedly in a rebuild. The reason is quite

simple. They don't hit at home. After the series with the Angels this week, the team's home batting average was .198, and they averaged 2.6 runs and 10.4 strikeouts per game.

One contributor is Joey Gallo. He changed his swing to a smaller launch angle in hopes of driving the ball more. He also has become more selective at the plate. He goes into the weekend with a .225 batting average. However, the selectivity at the plate has paid off with 23 walks that boosts his on base percentage to .415. Perhaps worse is his power outage. He has just three extra base hits in 25 games, and two of those, his second home run and a double, came this week against the Angels.

One idea is that Gallo is simply not getting any pitches to hit. Opposing pitchers have chosen to walk him and face the next batter rather than give in with a hittable strike late in the count. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Gallo showed a power spark with two extra base hits against the Angels with Garcia, the reigning A. L. Player of the Week, now often batting behind him. Maybe Gallo is about to start hitting home runs in bunches.

Garcia isn't the only one in the lineup hitting better. Nick Solak, who has been regarded as a contact hitter, not only leads the team with a .305 batting average, but has also socked seven home runs, only one off the Major League lead. Nate Lowe is also leading the Majors with 22 RBIs.

Texas scored 13 runs against the Angels this week. That is the most the Rangers have scored in a home series this season. Willie Calhoun came off the injured list recently, and Khris Davis has resumed baseball activities such that he may be a

week to 10 days away from getting activated from the IL. Perhaps the offense is coming around to support starting pitching that has been good enough to play at least .500 ball.

As for that that starting pitching, Gibson of course is putting up "Ace" numbers. His ERA is among the league leaders at 2.16. He is so good there is already speculation he could be traded by the July 31 trade deadline. Mike Foltyniewicz seems to be coming around after winning his first game as a Ranger this week. Kohei Arihara and Dane Dunning have been good at times and not so good at times but show promise.

That leaves Jordan Lyles as the weak link in the rotation. Certainly, the patience is growing thin. An ERA of almost seven isn't going to work. The most likely candidate to take his place is Kolby Allard. He has been the best long man in the bullpen.

As for the rest of the bullpen, the Rangers have the arms to win a game when they have a lead. Ian Kennedy has been dominant at times and scary at times, but he gets the job done. He's five for five in save opportunities. Brett Martin and Joely Rodriguez have solidified the back end of the pen. John King is also giving some consistent outings.

It is not a great bullpen yet, but it is getting better. The pen also got a new face this week. Hyeon-Jong Yang made his Major League debut in the Angels series. When the 33 year-old Korean took the mound last Monday, he became the 12 th rookie to be on the Rangers' roster this year. That is by far the biggest number in the Major Leagues, and it's not close. He showed a lot of poise and completed four innings, that were badly needed after two short starts in a row.

It still is something to keep in mind. This is a very young team. It will be interesting to see if the offense can gel enough

to put this edition of the Rangers into the fringes of contention.

FRISCO ROUGHRIDERS:

The Rangers set the roster this week for Frisco, and it is a team that local fans may want to watch – in person! First of all, seats in quality locations cost much less than comparable tickets at Globe Life Field; but most of all, a number of upper end Ranger prospects are reaching the AA level. It's an interesting team with players that have a chance to play in Arlington.

The starting rotation includes Cole Winn, the Rangers' number three ranked prospect, the highest on the team. Yeri Rodriguez, Tim Brennan and A. J. Alexy are next. The fifth slot will be a tandem of Hans Crouse and Tyler Phillips. MLB Pipeline ranks Crouse is the number seven and Alexy number 23 in the Rangers' farm system.

Position players of interest include Sherten Apostel, who made his Major League debut with Texas last season. Apostel is ranked as the ninth best Ranger prospect. Outfielder Steele Walker, who played at Oklahoma is on the roster, as is Jax Biggers, who played at Arkansas. Davis Wendzel, who played at Baylor and was selected in the same draft that brought the Rangers Josh Jung is on the roster. He and Jung were co Players of the Year in the Big XII in the year they were drafted, and Wendzel is actually regarded as the better athlete of the two. He is ranked as the Rangers' number eight prospect and has been especially impressive this month at the Rangers' Alternate Site.

NOTABLE:

- Starting pitcher Kyle Gibson has not given up a home run in 33-1/3 rd innings. There are seven pitchers that have completed at least 20 innings and not surrendered a home run, and Gibson has thrown the most innings of the group.

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Tom's Tips: Taking Target Practice



TOM WARD

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Years ago I heard a story out in west Texas about an accomplished marksman who was passing through a local town in which he saw evidence of some amazing shooting. Seemingly, everywhere he looked he saw targets with a bullet hole in the exact center of the bull's eye on trees, barns and fences. He sought out the marksman who had performed these astounding feats. When he finally caught up to the man he gave him a congratulatory handshake and said, "How did you do it? Your shooting beats anything I've ever seen." The marksman replied, "No trouble at all. I just shot first and then drew the circles around the holes."

People often aim at nothing and then try to draw the lines of life around accidental marks. The key to success is you must take aim. Sure, life would be a lot easier if we could replicate what that pseudo-marksman did, but that would be cheating and where's the challenge.

Practices to learn. Practice should be done with definite goals and targets in mind. First, grooving the swing and then getting target conscious. Always have a target in mind when working on irons or woods, it is too easy to just hit balls as hard as you can. With a target, practice is much more interesting.

When practicing to correct fault in the swing, forget target and concentrate on making the necessary corrections. After the corrections have been made, it's time to get back to the target. Do your learning on the practice range where your mind will not be on scoring, but on learning. Also, Shorter practice sessions are much more effective than longer ones. One of the best practices to learn the feel of rhythm and tempo is to pick a par 3 hole that would normally call for say a 7 iron. After you hit the shot, take out a 6 iron and after that a 5 iron hitting to the green. Using different clubs will help teach you the feel of swinging the club.

Visualizing your swing and tempo can be productive in learning the correct motion while practicing. Projecting to your target and having a mental picture of the ball's flight will give your swing direction. In golf, unlike other sports, you are not looking at your intended target while mak-



ing your swing. In Baseball, the pitcher is looking at home plate where the batter and catcher are during his throwing motion. The quarterback is projecting and throwing to his receiver all while looking at where he wants the ball to go. In Bowling, the player's eyes are transfixed on the lane where he is rolling his ball to the pins. I think you get where I'm going on this.

In golf your eyes are looking at the ball instead of your target. Consequently, this makes the ball the target so your swinging at the ball instead of through it. Your mind is on hitting the ball rather than getting it where you want it to go.

In the photographs, I have my friend Mike Bascik hitting a tee shot on a par 3. Mike, is a former major league pitcher who played for the Texas Rangers and the Minnesota Twins. He coaches pitching and knows the value of visualizing when coaching players in Baseball. The photo on the left is Mike looking at his intended target which is the green. Once he settles in over the ball, the swing is on automatic pilot. He swings away trusting the basic fundamentals that he has practiced. The photo on the right is Mike staying down through the shot after impact. I drew an arrow to highlight the importance of

swinging towards the target which he did perfectly. Visualizing ball flight and having it go in the direction imagined is a powerful tool that you want in your golfing arsenal.

Target projection gets your mind away from hitting; and this will help in producing a smooth flowing motion from start to finish. With some practice you'll start hitting more fairways and greens and that will lead to lower scores.

Tom Ward can be contacted at www.teetimetom.com

This week: Valspar Championship



and won by the same margin – this time over Jason Kokrak and Louis Oosthuizen – in 2019. Casey, who hadn't won the PGA TOUR in nine seasons before his 2018 win in Tampa, was steadier than anyone through a tough week in 2019 at the Copperhead Course. His 1-over 72 on Sunday was good enough, as he survived a hard exam at Innisbrook better than anyone, punctuated with a par from the fairway bunker on the 72nd hole. Bubba Watson and Sungjae Im, both at 6-under, rounded out the top five.

HOW TO FOLLOW

Television: Thursday-Friday, 2 p.m.-6 p.m. ET (Golf Channel). Saturday-Sunday, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. (Golf Channel), 3-6 p.m. (NBC).

PGA TOUR LIVE: Thursday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m. ET (Featured Groups). Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (Featured Groups), 3 p.m.-6 p.m. (Featured Holes). Radio: Thursday-Friday, 12 p.m.-6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 1 p.m.-6 p.m. (PGA TOUR Radio on SiriusXM and PGA-TOUR.com/liveaudio).

TOURCast: Get shot-by-shot info in real time with shot tracks and video with TOURCast.

TOUR Pulse: Get the PGA TOUR app to utilize TOUR Pulse, which provides users the ability to experience a mix of content, such as video highlights, written hole summaries and stat graphics on every player after every hole they complete.



Valspar Championship
April 29 - May 2, 2021
Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club
Palm Harbor, Florida
Purse - \$6,900,000
Winners share: \$1,242,000
2019 Winner - Paul Casey

By Adam Stanley
 PGATOUR.COM

The Valspar Championship returns to the PGA TOUR schedule this season after the 2020 edition was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Two-time defending champion Paul Casey returns to try to win for a record third time in Tampa.

FIELD NOTES: Reigning FedExCup champion Dustin Johnson returns to action after a T13 at the RBC Heritage... Past FedExCup winner Justin Thomas is back on the PGA TOUR for the first time since playing the Masters. Thomas sits second in the 2021 FedExCup standings... Phil Mickelson will tee it up at the Valspar Championship for the first time since 2004... Casey is joined by Adam Hadwin (2017) and Charl Schwartzel (2016) as past

winners in Tampa from the last five years... Sponsor Exemptions include college standout John Augenstein, European stars Rasmus Hojgaard and Sam Horsfield, plus Chase Koepka (brother to Brooks)... Ten of the top-30 golfers in the world are teeing it up at Innisbrook.

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 500 FedExCup points.

STORYLINES: The Valspar Championship marks the final event of the PGA TOUR schedule to take place in Florida after its series of tournaments in March... Dustin Johnson's Valspar Championship start in 2019 was his debut at the event and he had a chance to win until a 3-over 74 in the final round. He's back and looking for another good result as the race to the FedExCup heats up... Attendance at the event will be approximately 20 percent of normal capacity... Only 10 golfers since World War II have three-peated at an event on the PGA TOUR (Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Billy Casper, Tom Watson, Johnny Miller, Gene Littler, Stuart Appleby, Steve Stricker, and of course, Tiger Woods have all done it). Paul Casey looks to join that list this year at Innisbrook.

COURSE: Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead), par 71, 7,340 yards. Long known as a TOUR-player favorite, the Copperhead Course at Innisbrook puts a premium on positioning off the tee and is as complete an examination as TOUR players will face all year. Larry Packard's lay-

out near Tampa is tree-lined and all culminates at the 'Snake Pit' with two difficult par-4s sandwiched between the 215-yard par-3 17th. The course opened in the early 1970s.

72-HOLE RECORD: 266, Vijay Singh (2004).

18-HOLE RECORD: 61, Padraig Harrington (1st round, 2012).

LAST TIME: Paul Casey became the first golfer since the event's inception in 2000 to defend his title. He won by one shot in 2018 over Tiger Woods and Patrick Reed,

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Copperhead Course has stood the test



By Mike Glasscott
PGATOUR.COM

Painting fairways and greens this week will be the key as the TOUR returns to Florida at Innisbrook Resort for the Valspar Championship. The Copperhead Course annually rates as one of the most popular on TOUR amongst the pros as Larry Packard's 1971 design (Par-71, 7,340 yards) has stood the test of modern technology, fitness and power. With the 2020 event cancelled due to COVID-19, the 2021 spot on the calendar is brand-new at the end of April.

Set in the rolling hills just north of Tampa in Palm Harbor, the Copperhead Course also ranks annually in the top 10 of most difficult courses on TOUR. It has only ranked outside the top 10 once in the last seven years and it tests all fourteen clubs in the bag. Unlike most Florida tracks, pine trees frame the multiple doglegs and elevation changes are pronounced. Imagine Riviera in the panhandle state.

With a late April start, instead of early-mid March, the TifEagle greens (running up to 12 feet) and Celebration rough (three inches) will still be over-seeded but the fairways will not. Working the golf ball both ways off the tee will bring in 74 bunkers and there are water penalty areas on half of the holes. The biggest test will be the final three holes known as "The Snake Pit". The closing three-hole stretch has been in the top three ON TOUR since 2003 in difficulty trailing only "The Green Mile" next week at Wells Fargo and the conclusion at Jack Nicklaus' Memorial

Village Golf Club. The winner has been even or 1-over on this stretch dating back to 2013.

There's a reason why the tournament scoring record since the move to spring hasn't exceeded 14-under: It's fair and difficult. Players haven't seen this kind of rough since Torrey Pines. The green complexes are complex and birdies aren't easy to come by. Grinding GIR and making pars while taking advantage of the great shots is the formula here. Four Par-5 holes help but there are also five Par-3 holes to keep the concentration on point. The lowest rounds the last two editions are 65 and 66 so par is a very solid score this week.

Two-time defending champion Paul Casey looks to add his name to a VERY short list this week. Only Tiger Woods and Steve Stricker in recent memory have won an event three consecutive times. The field of 156 will be chasing Padraig Harrington's course record of 61 set in 2012 and the post-2015 renovation score of 14-under set by Adam Hadwin in 2017. A purse of \$6.9 million will pay the winner \$1.242 million plus 500 FedExCup points. Top 65 and ties will play the weekend.

Recent Winners and Notables

2019: Paul Casey (-8, 276)

Closed with 1-over par 72 to win by a shot. ... First winner to defend at this event. ... First champion to post an over-par score in Round 4. ... Led the field in Strokes-Gained: Tee-to-Green. ... Top 10 in every Strokes-Gained category minus putting. ... First winner in four outside the top seven in Par-3 scoring. ... Played the Par-5 holes 15-under, five shots better than anyone. ... Third multiple winner at Valspar. ... Played

in the final group (-9) with Dustin Johnson (-8). ... Co-led 36 hole leader (-6). ... Trained by four after opening with 70. ... Picks up his third TOUR win at 41 years. ... Third straight international winner. ... Piping-hot form (T3 WGC, 2nd Pebble Beach and T2 Singapore) entering minus MC at THE PLAYERS the week before.

Notables:

Jason Kokrak (T2) was one of just four players to post all four rounds at par or better for the week. ... Louis Oosthuizen (T2) picks up his second top 10 in three visits with 66-69 weekend. ... Rookie Sungjae Im (T4) sat one of the 36-hole lead. ... Bubba Watson (T4) played for just the second time since 2011. ... Ryan Armour (T6) T10 in fairways and T3 approach. ... Dustin Johnson (T6) shot 74 from the final group with 15 pars and three bogeys. ... Austin Cook (T9) shared the 36-hole lead but closed 72-72. ... Luke Donald (T9) owns five top 10s here, tied for the most. ... Scott Stallings (T9) hit the podium, T3, on his debut here in 2011. ... Denny McCarthy (T9) posted three rounds in the 60s in his first visit. ... Tyler Duncan (MC) shared the co-low round of the week with Casey, Kokrak and Oosthuizen with 66. ... Only five bogey-free rounds on the week and none on the weekend. ... Cut was 1-over and the 36 hole lead was just 6-under. ... Ranked third-hardest NON-MAJOR. ... Followed THE PLAYERS Championship in 2019.

2018: Paul Casey (-10, 274)

Closed with 65 Sunday to win by a shot. ... Secures second win on TOUR at age 40. ... Joins Luke Donald as the only other Englishman to win. ... Second con-

secutive international winner. ... Only player 2018 or 2019 to hit 10-under par at the conclusion of play. ... Only needed a career best 21 putts in Round 4. ... Sat five shots off the 54-hole lead. ... Finished when the leaders were on No. 12. ... Sat just two back after 36 holes. ... Was three back after 18 holes. ... Wins in his fifth start here. ... Next best was T37. ... T12 previous week at WGC-Mexico Championship, his third T12 or better in four starts.

Notables:

Tiger Woods (T2; not entered) was the only player to post all four rounds under par. ... Patrick Reed (T2) bogeyed the 72nd hole to miss the playoff by a shot. ... Justin Rose (T5) sat one back after 54 holes. ... Rory Sabbatini (T5) backed it up with T18 in 2019. ... Branden Grace (T8) was T68 in both Fairways and GIR but was T1 Putts per GIR. ... Jason Kokrak (T8) signed for a 67 and 68. ... Adam Hadwin (T12) posted all four rounds par or better. ... Canadian Corey Connors (T16), trying to follow in the footsteps of countryman Hadwin, slept on his first 54-hole lead and shot 77. ... Brandt Snedeker (T31) was one back after 54 and posted 78. ... Scott Stallings (T31) matched Casey for the low round of the week with 65. ... Cut was 3-over, tying the record. ... Played as the sixth most difficult track on TOUR.

2017: Adam Hadwin (-14, 270)

Posted even-par 71 to win by one. ... First PGATOUR victory at age 29. ... Wins in his third start here. ... Only winner in the last four to lead the field in Par-3 scoring. ... Joined Casey and Charl Schwartzel as recent winners to hit the top three in Birdie or Better Conversion Percentage. ... Middle of three straight international winners (Schwartzel 2016, Casey 2018). ... Posted 64 in Round 2 to lead by a shot after 36 holes. ... Tied the 54-hole record by posting 14-under (led by four). ... Sat six back after Round 1. ... Cashed 71st in his first visit, MC in his second. ... Hot entering as he cashed in five straight including a one shot defeat at The American Express.

Notables:

Jim Herman (T3) missed tying the course record as he opened with 62 and trailed by just one after 36. ... Charl Schwartzel (6th) picked up the best result in defending before Casey's victory. ... Wesley Bryan (T7) cashed T4 at Honda and Riviera prior. ... Henrik Stenson (T7) opened with 64 and closed with 67. ... Russell Henley (T9) opened with 64 and closed with 67. ... John Huh (T9) worst round was 70. ... Top five players were double digits under-par. ... Cut was Even. ... Event followed WGC-Mexico Championships. ... Easiest scoring conditions since 2012.

2021 NTT IndyCar Series Texas preview



First race of the season is this weekend at Texas Motor Speedway

PREVIEW: 2021 NTT IndyCar Series – Genesys 300 and Xpel 375

By Griffin Schmoyer

This weekend, the NTT IndyCar Series makes its way to the Lone Star State for the first oval races of the season at Texas Motor Speedway. Drivers better have their dancing shoes ready for a “Texas Two-Step” as they will be competing in back to back races, with the Genesys 300 on Saturday and the Xpel 375 on Sunday. Chip Ganassi Racing’s Alex Palou holds a slim two-point lead over teammate Scott Dixon and Will Power in the championship standings going into the weekend, and we could very easily have a new points leader come Sunday night.

In addition, drivers like Tony Kanaan and Pietro Fittipaldi will be making their season debuts this weekend, substituting for drivers on road and street course programs.

Hopefully your schedule is clear for a weekend of IndyCar excitement, because here’s everything you need to know about the Genesys 300 and Xpel 375.

The 2020 Genesys 300 became the season-opening event after the delay of the 2020 Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both practice and qualifying were condensed into race day, with Josef Newgarden taking the pole and leading for most of the first stint.

Tyre manufacturer Firestone were unable to make more tyres for the race due to the pandemic, so they brought soft-wall alternate tyres usually only available at road courses and limited teams to no more than thirty-five green flag laps on the tyres, limiting strategy.

Newgarden would hold the lead until lap thirty-two, where Dixon would pass him for the lead as Newgarden came to pit road for his first stop. Newgarden and Team Penske teammate Simon Pagenaud both struggled with their setups due to the limited practice session and found it hard to navigate lap traffic for the entire race.

Soon after the field completed their stops, Ed Carpenter Racing rookie Rinus Veekey stepped out of line in turn two and spun on the ironically low-grip traction compound laid down for NASCAR events. As he spun down the track, he collected fellow rookie Palou, who was racing for Dale Coyne Racing with Team Goh at the time.

At the restart, Dixon would start to build an eventual ten-second lead as Newgarden and Pagenaud struggled behind. Dixon’s teammate Felix Rosenqvist looked just as good as the race leader, and after starting ninth took second place from Pagenaud just before a caution on lap seventy-seven. Dixon lost the lead to Newgarden due to a slow pit stop, even being passed by Rosenqvist for second. After a few laps, Dixon reclaimed his lead from Newgarden by passing both drivers on the outside of turns one and two in separate moves, and began pulling away once more to another ten-second lead. Lap traffic still presented an issue for the leaders, as Rosenqvist was able to get past Newgarden for second and close the gap to under two seconds, but Dixon once again grew the gap after the pit cycle only to have it closed once more by traffic.

The final pit stops came with fifteen laps to go, as Rosenqvist pit from second place. Dixon stayed out three laps longer and took advantage of clean air to keep his

lead. Rosenqvist, who was stuck in traffic ever since he left the pits, tried to make a final push to close the gap, but lost control on the aforementioned traction compound and slammed the turn two wall trying to pass the lapped James Hinchcliffe. After the car came to a stop, the young Swede slammed the wheel in frustration.

On the final restart, Dixon had lapped cars between him and second place Pagenaud, and ran to the finish unopposed. It was said that there would not be enough laps remaining to cycle the traffic to the back of the field, which was a point of contention for some. This marked Dixon’s fourth win at Texas, and the beginning of a three-race win streak that would be the catalyst for his sixth IndyCar series championship.

What to look out for this weekend.

The major difference this weekend in terms of the quality of the on-track product will be the lack of the traction compound. During a test at the track in late March, it was stated that the traction compound was no longer on the track, and will open up more lanes for racing. Firestone will also have the proper tyres available for this event, opening up the strategy options once more.

Much like last year, each race’s events are being condensed into one day affairs, with only one practice session on Saturday. It would not be surprising to see a team that struggles on Saturday work on their cars and potentially be set up for a better race Sunday, so don’t count anyone out. At the test in late March, Patricio O’Ward of Arrow McLaren SP was fastest of all, and despite his best laps being set with the help of drafting, he was among the top five fastest on solo runs. The young Mexican

driver has been a threat in both races so far this season, and could very well improve on his twelfth-place finish from last year. O’Ward’s closest pursuer in that test was Andretti Autosport’s Alexander Rossi, who still continues to struggle with poor performances this season.

With his win record at the track, Dixon will be a threat to win once more, and could take the points lead by the end of the weekend. Last year’s runner-up Pagenaud could also be in the mix for a good event, coming off of one of his best race weekends in recent memory at St. Petersburg, where he qualified fourth and finished third. Pagenaud’s rookie teammate Scott McLaughlin will be making his competitive debut at an oval. The three-time Virgin Australia Supercars Championship winner has had multiple tests at the track, and it will be interesting to see how quickly he adapts to this style of racing.

This weekend will also see the season debuts of oval drivers like Kanaan and Fitipaldi mentioned earlier, who will be filling in for Jimmie Johnson at Chip Ganassi Racing and Romain Grosjean at Dale Coyne Racing with Rick Ware Racing respectively. Ed Carpenter will also be returning to his own team to pilot the No. 20 Chevrolet, as usual driver Conor Daly returns to Carlin for the weekend in place of Max Chilton. Carpenter finished in an impressive fifth place at Texas last season, just a head of Daly in sixth, while Kanaan finished tenth for A.J. Foyt Enterprises. Fittipaldi, who is also the reserve driver for the Haas Formula 1 Team, will make his first start in an IndyCar since 2018.

Weekend Schedule

Saturday 1 May

1230 EST / 1730 BST – Practice
1600 EST / 2100 BST – Qualifying
1900 EST / 0000 BST – Genesys 300

Sunday 2 May

1600 EST / 2100 BST – Qualifying
1700 EST / 2200 BST – Xpel 350

Where to watch

Coverage in the UK for qualifying and the race will be provided by Sky Sports F1.

In the United States, coverage for the race will be on NBCSN. Practice will be streamed exclusively on the Peacock streaming service, while Qualifying will be shown live simultaneously on NBCSN as well as Peacock.

How to keep up with all the action

You can follow all the all the action here at The Checkered Flag. We will be providing coverage of the practice, qualifying, and race sessions.

Round 1 expert picks and analysis



Trevor Lawrence already confirmed he's going to the Jacksonville

In our latest 2021 NFL mock draft, the first 10 picks are from the offensive side of the ball. Five are quarterbacks, largely thanks to blockbuster trades.

By Matt Johnson

1. Jacksonville Jaguars Trevor Lawrence, QB Clemson

There's really no drama at the top of the 2021 NFL Draft. Trevor Lawrence already confirmed he's going to the Jacksonville Jaguars with the first pick. He's seen as a generational talent and someone to lead this fledgling franchise into the future. It's now all about what Jacksonville does with its three other picks in the first two rounds to help build talent around Lawrence.

2. New York Jets Zach Wilson, QB BYU

Should Zach Wilson be the New York Jets' pick? Sure. It seems to be the way things are headed. Wilson has the skill set and moxie to thrive in the Big Apple, but whether or not he succeeds will likely come down to how well new coach Robert Saleh and the staff can overcome decades of dysfunction. Wilson may be the most gifted pure thrower in the draft. If the Jets do typical Jet things, though, it won't matter how talented Wilson is.

3. San Francisco 49ers Trey Lance, QB North Dakota State

Maybe Mac Jones is the smartest quarterback in NFL Draft history, but that compliment also speaks volumes to the talent disparity between him and the other top quarterback prospects. The San Francisco 49ers paid a historic price to move up for

No. 3, a cost that places value on upside. Trey Lance brings a combo of arm strength, athleticism and raw ability that is tough to match. The 49ers designed his entire Pro Day workout and Kyle Shanahan has said the way he evaluates QBs is changing. Lance fits everything the 49ers need. If it's Jones, that should raise alarm bells about Shanahan. 4. New England Patriots (via Atlanta) Justin Fields, QB Ohio State

It has been against Bill Belichick's MO to trade up for players in the NFL Draft. Rather, the six-time championship head coach prefers to trade down and collect picks. With that said, this has been anything but a typical Belichick-led offseason for the Pats. That could lead to a blockbuster trade up for Justin Fields. The Pats are not in a situation where they want to add a project quarterback. Boasting dual-threat ability and a strong arm, Fields could sit behind Cam Newton for one year and take over in 2022. It just makes too much sense.

5. Cincinnati Bengals Rashawn Slater, offensive tackle Northwestern

Cincinnati Bengals fans are going to DESTROY this pick. Read the manuscript-length article below. I have your best interests in mind. The reality is, the Bengals are historically conservative. The idea of reuniting Ja'Marr Chase with Joe Burrow is amazing. Penei Sewell is my favorite offensive lineman prospect since Tyron Smith. If Kyle Pitts is there, Cincinnati should absolutely take him. That's precisely why I see the Bengals going with Rashawn Slater, a throwback player who

can line up anywhere in the trenches. Slater will be viewed as a great fit at guard with Jonah Williams and Riley Reiff at the tackle positions.

6. Miami Dolphins Kyle Pitts, tight end Florida Gators

The Miami Dolphins moved back up to No. 6, sacrificing a 2022 first-round pick in the process, for a reason. This front office wants a special talent, someone who can be an All-Pro player and influences an entire offense on his own. That is Kyle Pitts. Generational tight end prospects are rare, but Pitts' size, athleticism and playmaking ability make him special. He is going to be an NFL star.

7. Detroit Lions Ja'Marr Chase, wide receiver LSU

What an ideal NFL mock draft for the Lions under first-year general manager Brad Holmes. While we considered a potential trade down here with a quarterback-needy team, Chase is just too good for the Lions to pass up on. He's seen as one of the better wide receivers to enter the NFL in a decade and would make an immediate impact with recently-acquired quarterback Jared Goff. Besides, the Lions need a ton of help at wide receiver.

8. Carolina Panthers Patrick Surtain II, cornerback Alabama

Appealing as Sewell is here, Patrick Surtain II is the top cornerback in this class. If the Carolina Panthers are patient and wait until the second round, they can get someone like Notre Dame's Liam Eichenberg to compete with Greg Little at left tackle if Russell Okung doesn't re-sign.

Defense is still a major issue in Carolina, and even though Surtain is young, he's the most polished prospect at a key position and is an instant starter for the Panthers.

9. Denver Broncos Micah Parsons, linebacker Penn State

The Denver Broncos should draft a quarterback if the right one becomes available, I'm not sure Mac Jones is their guy. He is better than Drew Lock, but that's also not saying a lot. If our 2021 NFL mock draft scenario unfolds on April 29, Micah Parsons should be the pick. Vic Fangio's defense needs a do-it-all linebacker in the middle, that's the last piece the front seven is missing. Parsons turns this into an elite defense and with a Teddy Bridgewater trade on Day 3, this becomes a playoff team.

10. Chicago Bears (via Dallas) Mac Jones, quarterback Alabama

Embattled Bears head coach Matt Nagy and general manager Ryan Pace are in desperation mode right now. Chicago missed out on top-end quarterback options on the NFL trade block, only to turn to journeyman Andy Dalton in free agency. He's not going to be guy to save their jobs. Rather, Chicago opts to move up for a pro-ready quarterback in Mac Jones who could start in 2021. While Jones' ceiling isn't too high, his floor is up there with the likes of Lawrence and Wilson. It wouldn't be a risky pick for Pace after the Mitchell Trubisky experiment backfired big time.

11. New York Giants Jaycee Horn, cornerback South Carolina

Old-school GM Dave Gettleman isn't going to trade back. He never has. Because of that, we're projecting Jaycee Horn to be the pick. Horn is the type of confident, gritty, physical player who can thrive in press man coverage and embrace the limelight of this huge media market. That's precisely what the New York Giants need. James Bradberry, Adoree' Jackson and Horn would form quite a trio of cornerbacks for coordinator Patrick Graham to work with.

12. Philadelphia Eagles Penei Sewell, offensive tackle Oregon

Don't pass on elite players. Offensive tackle is among the most pressing needs for the Philadelphia Eagles, but there's no way to pass up this opportunity. Andre Dillard remains a huge uncertainty at left tackle, Penei Sewell draws comparisons to Trent Williams and can be one of the best left tackles in the NFL by 2023.

13. Los Angeles Chargers Christian Darrisaw, offensive tackle Virginia Tech

Unfortunately for the Chargers in this

specific NFL mock draft, Sewell went one pick ahead of them to the Eagles. It could force Los Angeles to either trade down or go need over value. That's where Darrisaw comes into play. He's seen as a potential franchise left tackle and has years of starting experience for the Hokies. In need of someone to protect Justin Herbert's blind-side, this is a selection that makes too much sense.

**14. Minnesota Vikings
Jaelan Phillips, EDGE
Miami (Florida)**

Finally, a pass-rusher off the board! I'd personally be hesitant about Jaelan Phillips due to his concussion history, but the physical tools and freaky athleticism are undeniable. Mike Zimmer would love to coach Phillips up, and Danielle Hunter is already in place as a star edge defender. The Minnesota Vikings could soon have one of the most dynamic pass-rushing duos in the NFL if Phillips can stay healthy.

**15. Miami Dolphins (via Atlanta, via NE)
Jaylen Waddle, wide receiver
Alabama**

Jaylen Waddle deserves some consideration at No. 6, he is that good of a wide receiver. With quarterback-needy teams pushing him down the board, Miami could strike with a draft-day trade. The Dolphins are confident Tua Tagovailoa will rebound in 2021. An offense with Pitts, Waddle, Will Fuller and DeVante Parker would make Tua feel like he is back at Alabama.

**16. Arizona Cardinals
Caleb Farley, cornerback
Virginia Tech**

Is this a risky selection given that Farley is dealing with a back issue? Sure. Is it a selection that makes sense for the Cardinals? Yes. Both things can be true. Considered a likely top-10 pick ahead of the aforementioned injury issue, Farley boasts true shutdown ability. He was largely avoided by quarterbacks during a brilliant career with Virginia Tech. Now that Patrick Peterson has moved on from the Cardinals, they need an anchor in the secondary. Farley very well could be that guy.

**17. Las Vegas Raiders
Christian Barmore, defensive tackle,
Alabama**

This is as early as Christian Barmore has ever gone off the board for us. Surprisingly, it hadn't occurred to me before. However, perceived bust Clelin Ferrell was playing decent football when he was on the field in 2020, and Maxx Crosby still shows promise at defensive end, so no need to give up on them just yet. Barmore is an interior pocket-collapsing force who'd bring a new, explosive element to the Las Vegas Raiders' defensive front.

**18. Atlanta Falcons*
Kwity Paye, EDGE
Michigan**

Edge rusher is the biggest need for the Atlanta Falcons. The 2021 NFL Draft is a bad year to be desperate for pass rushers if you have a top-10 pick, let alone the No. 4 selection. Fortunately, Atlanta gets to trade

down twice in this mock. After picking up a stockade of selections, the Falcons land their edge rusher. Kwity Paye is an athletic marvel whose physical tools were wasted by Michigan's coaching staff. With the right guidance and teaching, he can become a Pro Bowl pass rusher in the NFL.

**19. Washington Football Team
Rashod Bateman, wide receiver
Minnesota**

Washington could move up or down the board depending on its strategy for taking a quarterback. The idea is for general manager Martin Mayhew to target area of specific need. With all the top QB prospects off the board, the Football Team makes a move for a potential future top-end pass-catcher in Bateman to team up with Terry McLaurin and Curtis Samuel. We're talking about a receiver who already runs pro-ready routes and can make the contested catch with the best of them. It's an ideal fit for both Bateman and Washington.

**20. Dallas Cowboys (via Chicago)
Zaven Collins, linebacker
Tulsa**

By the time the 2021 NFL Draft rolls around, Zaven Collins might be a top-15 pick. He comes from a smaller program, feasting on lesser competition. But there is nothing small about a 6-foot-4, 260-pound linebacker who can rush the passer, drop back in coverage and will hit running backs like he's a sledgehammer. Dallas just needs to find a spot for him on the field, Collins will do the rest.

**21. Indianapolis Colts
Samuel Cosmi, offensive tackle
Texas**

With the Indianapolis Colts in win-now mode, they need a left tackle to step in and be ready to fill the void in the wake of Anthony Castonzo's retirement. Carson Wentz needs a reliable blind-side pass protector if he's meant to rebound from a horrible 2020 campaign. Cosmi has the necessary, extensive game experience to start from the jump. While other teams would be ill-advised to count on a rookie starter at this position at this stage of the draft, the Colts have All-Pro Quenton Nelson to help out at left guard.

**22. Tennessee Titans
DeVonta Smith, wide receiver
Alabama**

If we're only talking about talent, Unfortunately, the reigning Heisman Trophy winner weighed in stunningly low during his trip to Indianapolis and it could really impact his draft stock. The Tennessee Titans are happy to seize on this opportunity. Smith is the perfect No. 2 receiver and with A.J. Brown taking so much defensive attention, this 166-pound wide receiver will have no problem shredding teams out of the slot for huge plays.

**23. New York Jets
Greg Newsome II, cornerback
Northwestern**

It's a fairly discouraging-looking Jets cornerback depth chart as things currently stand, so Greg Newsome II would be an

ideal pick for Gang Green with their second Day 1 choice. Newsome played at Northwestern under Pat Fitzgerald, and has the top-flight athleticism to match his football smarts, which allows him to excel regardless of scheme. He'd be an instant starter in New York's zone-heavy defense.

**24. Pittsburgh Steelers
Najee Harris, running back
Alabama**

The Pittsburgh Steelers seem determined to draft a running back early. If that's the case, a decision that wouldn't be advised, Najee Harris is the way to go. He profiles as a far more dependable three-down back than Travis Etienne, bringing a physicality that this coaching staff clearly wants. Drafting running backs in the first round doesn't work out often, but at least the Steelers are getting a good player.

**25. Jacksonville Jaguars
Teven Jenkins, offensive tackle
Oklahoma State**

The interior of Jacksonville's offensive line is better than many people realize. Where the Jaguars need help to protect Lawrence is at the tackle spots. Cam Robinson is shockingly playing under the franchise tag, and Jawaan Taylor took a step back at right tackle as an NFL sophomore. Maybe the Jags' new staff can help the cause, but with the luxury of multiple high picks, Teven Jenkins makes sense as someone who could ultimately supplant Taylor by Week 1.

**26. Green Bay Packers (via Cleveland)
Alijah Vera-Tucker, guard
USC**

Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst likes moving around in Round 1, it's become a trend for him. Green Bay could take its chances and hope Alijah Vera-Tucker falls to the 29th pick, but that's not a gamble worth taking. This is the best interior offensive linemen in the 2021 NFL Draft and it's not particularly close. Vera-Tucker can start at left guard, pushing Elgton Jenkins to center. The great thing about AVT, he is incredibly versatile and could easily thrive at right tackle to fill another need on this offensive line. He's an ideal fit for the Packers and this would be a great move for them.

**27. Baltimore Ravens
Jayson Oweh, EDGE
Penn State**

Trading away Orlando Brown Jr. had to hurt, especially sending him to a fellow AFC contender in the Kansas City Chiefs. With Teven Jenkins off the board as a potential fill-in at right tackle, Jayson Oweh is someone who can help fill the void left by multiple free-agent departures on Baltimore's defense. Although Oweh didn't record a single sack in 2020, he is an athletic marvel at 6-foot-5 with all the tools to be great. He'll need time to work with NFL coaches, but his potential to be a 10-sack player is real.

**28. New Orleans Saints
Kyle Trask, quarterback
Florida**

Noticing a theme here? With five quarterbacks likely to go in the top-10, other signal callers could sneak into the bottom of the first round. Already rumored to be interested in finding a long-term replacement for the recently-retired Drew Brees, the Saints would make a ton of sense for Kyle Trask. He's your traditional drop-back quarterback that Saints head coach Sean Payton values. He also relies on both timing and intermediate accuracy — two staples in Payton's system. This just makes too much sense for the New Orleans Saints.

**29. Cleveland Browns (via Green Bay)
Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, linebacker
Notre Dame**

What a steal this would be. Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah has a cornerback's coverage skills in a safety's body with a linebacker's physicality demeanor. The Cleveland Browns badly need a tone-setter on their front seven. Owusu-Koramoah has phenomenal range, power and quickness. He'll be on the field for all three downs, and may be the X-factor the Browns defense needs to win a Super Bowl. Heck, Cleveland should trade up for JOK if he's still around in the 20s.

**30. Jacksonville Jaguars (via Buffalo)
Trevon Moehrig, safety
TCU**

Trading up for another first-rounder is something that's definitely in play for the Jaguars, especially if they can get the consensus top safety prospect in Trevon Moehrig. Whether it's size, ball production, sound tackling, versatility or leadership intangibles you most covet in a safety, Moehrig checks all the boxes. He's comfortable at free safety, slot corner or in the box, and would be such a big, necessary help to a highly suspect Jags secondary.

**31. Baltimore Ravens
Elijah Moore
wide receiver
Mississippi**

It's time for the Baltimore Ravens to get serious about Lamar Jackson. He needs a wide receiver who, no matter the coverage, knows how to get open. Forget about Elijah Moore's size. This is an outstanding football player who knows where to find space in the secondary. He will become Jackson's go-to target, and his talents justify the Ravens selecting him. Suddenly, the trio of Sammy Watkins, Marquise Brown and Moore looks pretty electrifying on paper.

**32. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Rondale Moore, WR
Purdue**

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers would love to have someone like Rondale Moore, as this is truly a classic case of "best player available." Tom Brady is certainly happy to have another weapon at his disposal as he tries to lead the Bucs to a Super Bowl repeat. Meanwhile, Moore provides Tampa Bay with some key receiver insurance in case Chris Godwin walks in free agency next offseason after playing under the franchise tag in 2021.

College Football Hall of Fame Spotlight



E.J. HENDERSON
University of Maryland
Linebacker, 1999-2002

E.J. Henderson remains the only two-time consensus First Team All-American in Maryland history, but his Hall of Fame career in College Park almost ended before it ever started. He had to swallow the red-shirt pill his freshman year, and the following year the Terps added a junior college player in front of him on the roster.

"It was frustrating not to be able to play my freshman year, and I kind of understood that, but my second year, it was a little more frustrating," said Henderson, who had starred at Aberdeen High School an hour north of College Park. "I talked to my dad [Eric Sr.] a few times about transferring to a small school just so I could play, but he told me to keep my feet on the ground and things would work out. So, that's what I did, and I ended up starting the second to last game at Florida State as a redshirt freshman."

Having secured his starting spot, Henderson led the Terps with 109 tackles as a redshirt sophomore; and, more importantly, he positioned himself as one of the leaders of a team on the rise. Maryland had posted back-to-back 5-6 records, and the school switched coaches, bringing in Ralph Friedgen for Henderson's redshirt junior year.

"Coach Friedgen comes in with his new

staff, and it's a total culture shock," said Henderson. "He comes in with a no-nonsense grin-and-bear-it type program. Spring ball is gonna be hell. Camp is going to be hell. We'll see how it's gonna pan out during the season. All we really had was blind faith, a work-like-hell attitude and some good recruits."

Friedgen made key additions, including Domonique Foxworth in 2001 and Shawne Merriman in 2002, who supplemented the talented players playing alongside Henderson on defense and quarterback Shaun Hill on offense.

"We accepted the change and hard work," said Henderson. "We decided we were tired of losing and we could compete with the teams in the ACC and win. It was just a whole prototypical culture shift."

As a junior, Henderson was named ACC Player of the Year after leading the conference in tackles per game (13.6) and tackles for loss (28), and Maryland (10-2) claimed the 2001 ACC title, the team's first conference championship since 1985. Henderson and the Terps finished that season with a trip to the Orange Bowl, a No. 11 ranking and the school's first 10-win season since 1976.

"It was a whole new feeling," said Henderson. "We go from just being a college football program to the spotlight...My coming out party was against Georgia Tech on ESPN Thursday Night, and I had a heck of a game returning a fumble for a touch-

down [in a 20-17 overtime road win]. And then there was the win over Clemson at Byrd Stadium to clinch the ACC Championship and everybody rushed the field... It was a dream season for the team and myself."

"It went forward from there," said Maryland teammate Durrant Roundtree, citing Henderson's Georgia Tech fumble recovery. "We were really good those last two years and that play triggered it... E.J. was not a hooting and hollering kind of player. He was just 100 percent full speed, even if he was going to the wrong place, always working hard and we respected him. He was our leader."

A projected first-round NFL Draft pick, Henderson opted to return for his senior campaign to rehabilitate a back injury. He would lead the Terps in tackles with 175 while taking home the Bednarik and Butkus awards and earning ACC Defensive Player of the Year honors for a second consecutive time. He capped it off as the Defensive MVP in a Peach Bowl win over Tennessee, and the Terps finished 11-3.

"Going into the Hall means my career

will live on, which is really special," said Henderson while crediting his high school coach, Kevin Reilly, as the key to his career. "The small percentage of players and coaches in the Hall is crazy. To be part of this elite group is hard to put into words.... I am very proud of my teammates, we did it. My wife Chenise and family, we did it. Not just me, I needed that support staff, you know, from the beginning to the end."

E.J. HENDERSON: UP CLOSE

- Only two-time consensus First Team All-American in Maryland football history
- Owns NCAA records for career solo tackles per game (8.8) and single-season solo tackles (135 in 2001)
- Led Maryland in tackles his final three seasons en route to compiling 473 in his career, which rank second in Terrapins history.
- Played for coaches Ron Vanderlinden and Ralph Friedgen.
- Becomes the seventh Terrapin player to enter the College Football Hall of Fame.



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College Football News and Notes



2020 NFF College Hall of Fame inductee Glenn Dorsey of LSU



BO CARTER

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Scores from the Round of 16 in the NCAA FCS spring tourney from last week were James Madison 31, VMI 24; Jacksonville State 49, Davidson 14; Sam Houston State 21, Monmouth 15; North Dakota State 42, Eastern Washington 20; South Dakota State 31, Holy Cross 3; North Dakota 44, Missouri State 10; Southern Illinois 34, Weber State 31; Delaware 19, Sacred Heart 10. Quarterfinal contests will take place Saturday.

NAIA quarterfinals have concluded with these results from last week: Northwestern (Iowa) 27, Grand View (Iowa) 24; Keiser (Fla.) 42, Reinhardt (Ga.) 14; Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) 49, Concordia (Mich.) 27; Morningside (Iowa) 45, Baker (Kan.) 29. Semifinals will be played Saturday.

2020 NFF College Hall of Fame inductee Glenn Dorsey of LSU was last week's highlighted player in a series about

all the 2020 and '21 Hall inductees.

NFF College Hall of Fame member and NFL television analyst Tony Romo competed in last week's PGA Korn Ferry Tour event in Arlington, Texas.

U.S. President Joe Biden has nominated NCAA CEO and chief legal officer Donald Remy as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The Southwestern Athletic Conference regular-season clash between Texas Southern and UAPB had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 protocols. TSU also had to cancel a slated game with Mississippi Valley State in WAC action due to similar circumstances. UAPB meets Alabama A&M Saturday for the delayed SWAC gridiron championship.

The Southwestern Athletic Conference Championship will be played Saturday, May 1st on ESPN2 at Mississippi Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Miss., between East (Alabama A&M) and West Division (UAPB) champions for the 2020 and '21 spring football championships.

Southeastern Conference commissioner Greg Sankey was on hand as Kentucky made history by helping the conference win its 21st NCAA team sport championship in the 21 sports the SEC sponsors with a 3-1 win over Texas in the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship. The NCAA has conducted women's volleyball championships for 40 seasons (since 1982).

The Big 12 Conference claims Alabama and Tennessee as affiliated members in

women's rowing, and Alabama's Varsity Eight was Big 12 Boat of the Week for meets of Apr. 19-25. In fact, the Big 12 held its 2015-19 rowing championships on Melton Lake in historic Oak Ridge, Tenn. ...Missouri has returned to the Big 12 Conference as an affiliated member for wrestling after a 10-year mission trip to the Mid-American Conference. The SEC dropped wrestling as a sponsored sport in 1986 after a 54-year competitive reign.

The Lone Star Conference has started preparations for a 90-year anniversary of the founding of one of NCAA Division II's oldest leagues during the 2021-22 academic. Celebrations will be observed throughout members' campuses during the year and through the LSC home office in Richardson, Texas.

The final regular slate rankings for NCAA FCS included Top Five entries James Madison, South Dakota State, Weber State, Sam Houston State, and Delaware.... The Top Five teams in the final NAIA national rankings were California Baptist named former San Diego State associate AD for development and executive director of the Aztec Club Tyler Mariucci as its director of athletics.....Lee Moon is retiring this summer as AD at North Florida. There are now 39 states that have adopted legislation for names, images and likenesses' compensation for college student-athletes....Economists recently examined the CarrSports Consulting study, which suggested that Hartford could save \$10 million for its 15-sport varsity athletics program by going from NCAA Division I to DIII....The College Football Playoff Management Committee met last week and discussed 63 changes for the future of the CFP. These discussions included expanding the pairings anywhere from 6-16 teams. The group acknowledged that the CFP is in the eighth

year of the original 12-year contract, which includes the four competing teams chosen by the selection committee annually....Rice named former NC State assistant coach Lindsay Edmonds as its new women's basketball head coach...Loyola (Md.) tabbed former Minnesota assistant coach Danielle O'Banion as its new women's head coach... Boston U. added Melissa D'Amico as its women's basketball head coach...Auburn named former Houston swimming and diving head coach Ryan Wochomurka as the Tigers swimming and diving mentor.... Boise State head women's golf coach Nicole Bird is leaving the program after 13 years....West Virginia extended head coach Neal Brown's contract through the 2026 season...New Norfolk State football head coach Dawson Odoms received a five-year contract at NSU after guiding Southern U. (Baton Rouge) for nine seasons....The Wisconsin Athletic Board approved contract extensions for UW head football coach Paul Chryst through January 2026, men's basketball head coach Greg Gard through May 2026, women's hockey head coach Mark Johnson and men's hockey head coach Tony Granato through June 2026, swimming and diving head Yuri Suguiyama through June 2024, and men's wrestling head coach Chris Bono through May 2024.

Virginia Tech's \$400 million Reach for Excellence campaign will help fund \$20 million annually for WT athletics operations, \$60 million in renovations to Cassell Coliseum and endowed scholarships for several years....Several coaches and ADs at leading NCAA institutions are studying the budgeting and procedural differences between the NCAA Division I Men's Baseball World Series and the NCAA Women's Softball World Series....

(continued on page

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....Numerous schools are working with NCAA compliance and enforcement on current and previous issues, and some of the recognized universities are Arizona, Canisius, Louisville, LSU, Michigan State, San Jose State, Tennessee, UCLA, and Wofford....The NCAA is allowing up to 50 percent capacity for its remaining 2021 spring championships and the holdover fall 2020 championships such as the FCS tourney, which finishes May 16 at Toyota Stadium in Frisco, Texas.....USC has aligned with WHOOP for popular WHOOP straps wearables for Trojans student-athletes....The Athletic penned a story about diversity in the Maryland football program, including a female director of football operations and a female football administrator, team physician and director of nutrition.....Maryland athletics honored former student-athletes Darryl Jones and Billy Hill during the inauguration ceremonies for president Dr. Darryl Pines. Jones was Maryland's and the ACC's first Black men's basketball student-athlete in 1965 while Hill integrated the color barrier for ACC football in 1963. UM named the new football operations building the Jones-Hill House in their honor....Former Clemson QB Trevor Lawrence, expected to be the No. 1 NFL Draft choice of the Jacksonville Jaguars, already has endorsement agreements with Gatorade and adidas.....The state of Florida concluded an agreement with the Seminole Tribe of Florida to legalize statewide mobile sports betting and in-stadium retail sportsbooks at all public sports venues. There are 30-plus colleges and universities, which will require students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for the fall semester with the California State University and University of California systems being two of the largest entities.....The Arkansas Razorback Foundation has settled its legal actions with former UA and current Illinois head coach Bret Bielema. Texas, Anterriious Gray of North Texas, Austin Ogunmakin (to Liberty) of North Texas, and Tre Siggers (to SMU) of North Texas, Zep Jasper (to Auburn) of College of Charleston, Jordan Goldwire (to Oklahoma) from Duke, Brady Manek (to North Carolina) from Oklahoma, and Matt Lynch (to Colorado) of UCLA. Texas Tech's Mac McClung has exited the transfer portal for the 2021-22 academic year. Washington LB Zion Tupuola-Fetui is expected to be sidelined 6-10 months after tearing an Achilles tendon in practice....The NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Committee will adjust overtime periods in college football for '21 with two-point conversion tries beginning in the second overtime and the ball being placed on the three-yard line for one play beginning in the third extra period. NCAA studies showed that overtime games last fall averaged 16.4 plays.....Former Tulsa and Wake Forest head coach Danny Manning is going to Maryland as an assistant men's basketball coach...Former Texas standout and

Creighton assistant basketball coach Terrence Rancher has joined the Oklahoma men's basketball coaching staff....Rice University is changing protocols for wearing face masks outdoors on campus and reports that 82 percent of the students, faculty and staff at RU has been vaccinated to protect against COVID-19.....Dr. James Cash, the first Black basketball student-athlete at TCU from 1965-69, will have a statue erected outside TCU's Schollmaier Arena near the Sam Baugh Building, a football workout facility named in memory of NFF College Hall of Fame member and TCU standout Sam Baugh. Dr. Cash recently became the first Black professor at Harvard to have a building named after him – the Cash House – and is member of the board of trustees of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

College gamers continue to formalize competition on the college level with the inaugural Collegiate Esports National Championship hosted by Collegiate Sports Management Group at dates and sites to be determined....Idaho State AD Pauline Thiros related that ISU will add at least one women's sport in the next 3-5 years to help comply with NCAA Title IX regulations....Historically Black College and Universities are attempting to add men's or women's gymnastics programs for the first time. Grambling has taken a first step with a July conference known as Brown Girls Do Gymnastics for the fifth consecutive year.

The final edition prior to the start of the 2021-22 college basketball season of the Basketball Times newsletter has been emailed to USBWA members....Incoming Oral Roberts AD Tim Johnson spoke of being groomed to take the place of retiring AD Mike Carter and how the experience has increased Johnson's leadership savvy.

Former CAA administrator Nick Khan was saluted for his work in obtaining maximum television exposure and key live sporting events in primetime slots.

Florida-based attorney Darren Heitner and Opendorse CEO Blake Lawrence have been discussing the options of allowing third-party groups to continue to work with colleges and universities on names, images and likenesses' marketing and compensation.....Texas' new Moody Center has signed Dell Computers as its premier founding partner. Dell CEO and founder Michael Dell constructed his first computer in a residence hall on the Austin campus....JMI Sports has added the Thoroughbred Racing Association's Breeders' Cup to its portfolio and clients' list. The TRA also is one of the partners with Vanderbilt's prestigious Fred Russell-Grantland Rice Sports Writing Scholarship presented annually in memory of Vanderbilt sports journalism great Fred Russell (longtime NFF member) and NFF tri-founder in 1947 Grantland Rice.....Georgia Tech has finished Phase II of renovations at Mac Nease Baseball Park at Russ Chandler Stadium with a new Champions Hall, the NCBWA Dick

Howser Trophy presented by The Game Headwear Mark Teixeira (famed Tech baseball alumnus) Skyline Terrace and the Yellow Jacket Heritage Area.....Bryant is adding three varsity sports for women in 2021-22: golf, bowling and rowing with varsity status coming in 2022-23 ..Purdue's fiscal year 2021 financial report was \$33 million better than an earlier anticipated deficit and will lower its debt service payment for \$13-14 annually to \$3-4 million. Oklahoma State's Amen Ogbom and Chuba Hubbard are projected as two of the Top Five choices in the upcoming Canadian Football League Draft May 4....Award-winning writers, business owners and sports legends Ken and Ryly Jane Hambleton are new inductees into the 2020 Nebraska Sports Hall of Fame.....New Kent State AD Randale L. Richmond gave a positive assessment of KSU athletics because of a staff, which loves working with Golden Flashes athletics and a strong willingness by alumni to give monetary support to the department.....The names, images and likenesses' bill for student-athletes' compensation has been signed and will go into effect July 1. Alabama's, Florida's, New Mexico's, and Arizona's similar bills also are set for effective dates in mid-summer....Louisville AD Vince Tyra noted the Cardinals athletics 2021 budget shortfall is \$9.9 million through mid-April and could drop to as low as \$5.5 by December with alumni contributions and a short-term loan from longtime UL supporting group Republic Bank...Montana State's \$18 million Bobcat Athletic Complex is set to open on schedule in August....Wisconsin athletics is working with the family and estate of the late Mrs. Marion Lou Coyle to find proper attribution for a \$500,000 grant willed to the Badgers tennis program.....West Virginia men's soccer match with SIU-Edwardsville in regular season activity was cancelled last week due to COVID-19 protocols by the Mid-American Conference.....Portland State has named former PSU assistant women's head basketball coach Chelsey Gregg as the team's new head coach...Utah State women's soccer head coach Heather Cairns is leaving her position after 18 seasons...New Cincinnati head men's basketball coach Wes Miller finalized his contract for six years with ample compensation.

ESPN acknowledged solid ratings and much appreciation by the NCAA for televising last week's NCAA Division I Women's Gymnastics Championship live for the first time nationally on ABC from the Dickies Arena in Fort Worth, Texas.....The Boston (Mass.) Globe newspaper penned a story about various in-person and virtual commencement ceremonies at colleges in high schools and how local COVID-19 ruling affect the attendance and capping and gowning....CBS News did an interesting feature on Northern Arizona women's basketball student-athlete Sanjana Ramesh, the second Indian-born female to play NCAA Division I basketball along

with former Grand Canyon standout Kavita Akula. Both are hoping at some point to be the first Indian-born college players to make it to the WNBA or NBA.....USA Today noted that the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and the NCAA Women's Basketball Oversight Committee met to discuss equity issues during NCAA men's and women's championships.....Nielsen Ratings announced it would not audit its television ratings for athletics and other live telecasts due to special circumstances during the last 13 months of the pandemic....Former Mid-American, Western Athletic and Sun Belt Conference commissioner and NFL administrator Karl Benson was featured on the Boise State athletics podcast and spoke on key topics such as the NCAA open transfer rulings, student-athletes' compensation and possible additional conference realignment in NCAA Division I and other subdivisions....Dennis Dodd of CBS Sports reported that last week the NCAA Council did not take action on third party administrators for the names, images and likenesses' compensation measures and may put it on the group's May docket....Former Georgia deputy AD for development and executive director of the Bulldog Club Matt Borman accepted a position as LSU's president/CEO of the Tiger Athletic Foundation....The San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News newspaper mentioned that Arizona president Robert Robbins will complete his current contract in summer 2022, and a possible extension is in the offing...Northwestern (La.) State president Dr. Chris Maggio is retiring after 33 years at NSU and the last four as president....University of Dallas AD Dick Stockbrine is retiring at the age of 80 this summer after 26 years at UD and six decades of military or athletics' service...The Sun Belt Conference named former Ivy League assistant executive director of communications and championships Sam Knehans as associate commissioner for communications and branding.....Sacramento State named former Oregon women's basketball assistant coach Mark Campbell as its new women's head coach...LSU release former women's basketball head coach Nikki Fargas last Saturday....former Baylor women's head coach and Tickfaw, Louisiana, native near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Kim Mulkey has taken the head womens basketball coach job at LSU....Eastern Kentucky women's basketball head coach Samantha Williams is leaving her position and will become women's basketball recruiting coordinator and assistant coach at Tennessee...per sources....Portland State named Jase Coburn head men's basketball coach.Tennessee State head football coach and NFF College Hall of Fame running back at Ohio State Eddie George to a five-year contract with several incentives...Norfolk State men's head basketball head coach Robert Jones has inked a five-year contract extension through the 2027-28 season...Virginia head swimming

and diving coach Todd DeSorbo had his contract extended through the 2026-27 season....The Out of Bounds publication pontificated on the effect on the NCAA names, images and likenesses' legislation and future WNBA players while they are in college...The NCAA released a video about its stance on transgender student-athletes in team and individual competition. North Dakota AD Bill Chaves explained how UND student-athletes flocked to receive COVID-19 vaccinations after the state made anyone 16 years and older eligible for the meds – especially the North Dakota football squad prior to NCAA FCS postseason contests....Sportico editorialized about rapid changes in television sports' business model and a large drop in traditional TV watching by millennials in the 18-33 years' age group....Two Oklahoma student-athletes and the department are working with local officials to gather information about an episode in the Norman, Okla., area last week....Dapper Labs, which developed behind NBA and NCAA Top Shots, has gathered funding for continuing to remain a private company or to make an initial public stock offering totaling \$7.5 billion.....Some key names in the NCAA transfer portal are Tyler Pogue of Mississippi State, Jacobi Lott of Kansas, Dylan Disu (to Texas) of Vanderbilt, Phillip Paea of Michigan, Gavin Screws of Troy, Michael Collins (to Rice) of TCU, Jacob Kibodi of Texas A&M, Dae Williams of Louisville, Jordan Pouncey (to Florida) of Texas, Anterioius Gray of North Texas, Austin Ogunmakin (to Liberty) of North Texas, and Tre Siggers (to SMU) of North Texas, Zep Jasper (to Auburn) of College of Charleston, Jordan Goldwire (to Oklahoma) from Duke, Brady Manek (to North Carolina) from Oklahoma, and Matt Lynch (to Colorado) of UCLA. Texas Tech's Mac McClung has exited the transfer portal for the 2021-22 academic year. Washington LB Zion Tupuola-Fetui is expected to be sidelined 6-10 months after tearing an Achilles tendon in practice....The NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Committee will adjust overtime periods in college football for '21 with two-point conversion tries beginning in the second overtime and the ball being placed on the three-yard line for one play beginning in the third extra period. NCAA studies showed that overtime games last fall averaged 16.4 plays.....Former Tulsa and Wake Forest head coach Danny Manning is going to Maryland as an assistant men's basketball coach...Former Texas standout and Creighton assistant basketball coach Terrence Rancher has joined the Oklahoma men's basketball coaching staff....Rice University is changing protocols for wearing face masks outdoors on campus and reports that 82 percent of the students, faculty and staff at RU has been vaccinated to protect against COVID-19.....Dr. James Cash, the first Black basketball student-athlete at TCU from 1965-69, will have a statue erected outside TCU's Schollmaier

Arena near the Sam Baugh Building, a football workout facility named in memory of NFF College Hall of Fame member and TCU standout Sam Baugh. Dr. Cash recently became the first Black professor at Harvard to have a building named after him – the Cash House – and is member of the board of trustees of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

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Historically Black College and Universities are attempting to add men's or women's gymnastics programs for the first time. Grambling has taken a first step with a July conference known as Brown Girls Do Gymnastics for the fifth consecutive year....Former Arizona and current NFL /Super Bowl LV standout Rob Gronkowski hopes to have a Guinness Book of World Records' standard verified for catching a football dropped 600 feet from a helicopter before the UA spring game in Tucson....

....Media observers the Kosner and Desser Group addressed current media rights and the future of negotiating media deals on the college and professional sports levels. The updates specifically dealt with ESPN's and Warner Media's latest and possible future updates....Texas' defense seemed to dominate last weekend's Orange-White game under first-year head coach Steve Sarkisian, but WR Marcus Washington enjoyed a solid afternoon and returning kicker Cameron Dicker hammered a 58-yard field goal...Texas A&M, ranked among the Top Five or 10 nationally in most early preseason polls, got some strong performances from RB Isaiah Spiller, QB Zach Calzada, QB Haynes King, WR Chase Lane, and WR Hezekiah Jones while multiple defenders exerted themselves in the annual Maroon-White game. The Aggies are seeking to plug some holes in the offensive line prior to the '21 season opener Sept. 4....Former Kentucky student-athlete Terrence Clark passed away after an automobile accident in Los Angeles April 22. He was 19. Incoming North Texas football signee Willie Hamilton III passed away in Austin, Texas, April 18. The former Elgin (Texas) HS standout was 18...Walter Mondale, vice president of the United States from 1977-81 under the Jimmy Carter administration and a lifelong football fan of his alma mater Minnesota, passed away April 19th in Minneapolis. He was 93.

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Arkansas still at No. 1 in NCBWA Division I Poll



DALLAS - The National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association continues its tradition of NCAA Division I polls for the 24th year with its 2021 weekly surveys, and Arkansas is No. 1 for the 2021-high sixth week this season.

Southeastern Conference schools - Arkansas, Florida, Ole Miss, and Vanderbilt - also have topped each of the NCBWA Top 30 polls in '21.

Several schools moved up places from the April 19 survey, and these included Tennessee from No. 5 to 4, TCU from No. 8 to 6, Florida from No. 10 to 8, Louisville from No. 11 to 9, and Arizona with the largest jump of the week from No. 17 to 10. The top three teams - Arkansas, Vanderbilt and Texas - from last week remained the same.

There have been 13 conferences (nine for the third successive week) represented in the first 11 standings of 2021, and there were 15 different conferences included in the COVID-19 abbreviated NCBWA polls in 2020.

The 2021 poll voters come from among 33 college baseball writers and related media persons from throughout the nation. The '21 season features 302 NCAA Division I baseball-playing schools, and for more information or to join the NCBWA please go to www.ncbwa.com.

Also Receiving Votes (Alphabetically)
Alabama (24-15), Arizona State (22-13), Baylor (26-13), California Baptist (25-11), Dallas Baptist (22-10), Fairfield (25-0), Florida Atlantic (21-19), Georgia Southern (24-15), Georgia Tech (19-16), Grand Canyon (23-15-1), Indiana (18-8), Indiana State (21-11), Iowa (17-11), Jackson State (22-8), Kansas State (23-16), Kentucky (24-13), Liberty (27-10), LSU (24-15), Miami (FL) (22-13), NC State (19-13), San Diego (24-8), San Diego State (22-9), Southern Illinois (26-12), Southern Miss (26-13), Tulane (21-13), Virginia Tech (21-

15), Wright State (18-10).

Dropped Out

Miami (Fla.) (23), Indiana State (27), Virginia Tech (29), Georgia Tech (30).

By Conference

SEC 8, Pac-12 5, ACC 4, Big 12 4, Conference USA 3, American Athletic 1, Big Ten 2, Big West 2, West Coast 1.

No. 1 Schools by Week:

Preseason (Florida); Feb. 23 (Ole Miss); March 1-15, April 12-26 (Arkansas); March 22-April 5 (Vanderbilt).

-www.ncbwa.com-

NCBWA BASEBALL - Top 25

(Games played through 4/26)

1. Arkansas
2. Vanderbilt
3. Texas
4. Tennessee
5. Mississippi State
6. TCU
7. East Carolina
8. Florida
9. Louisville
10. Arizona
11. Texas Tech
12. Oregon
13. Notre Dame
14. South Carolina
15. Ole Miss
16. Stanford
17. Charlotte
18. Louisiana Tech
19. Oklahoma State
20. Pittsburgh
21. Georgia
22. Oregon State
23. Old Dominion
24. UC Irvine
25. Florida State
26. UCLA
27. Gonzaga
28. Michigan
29. Nebraska
30. UC Santa Barbara

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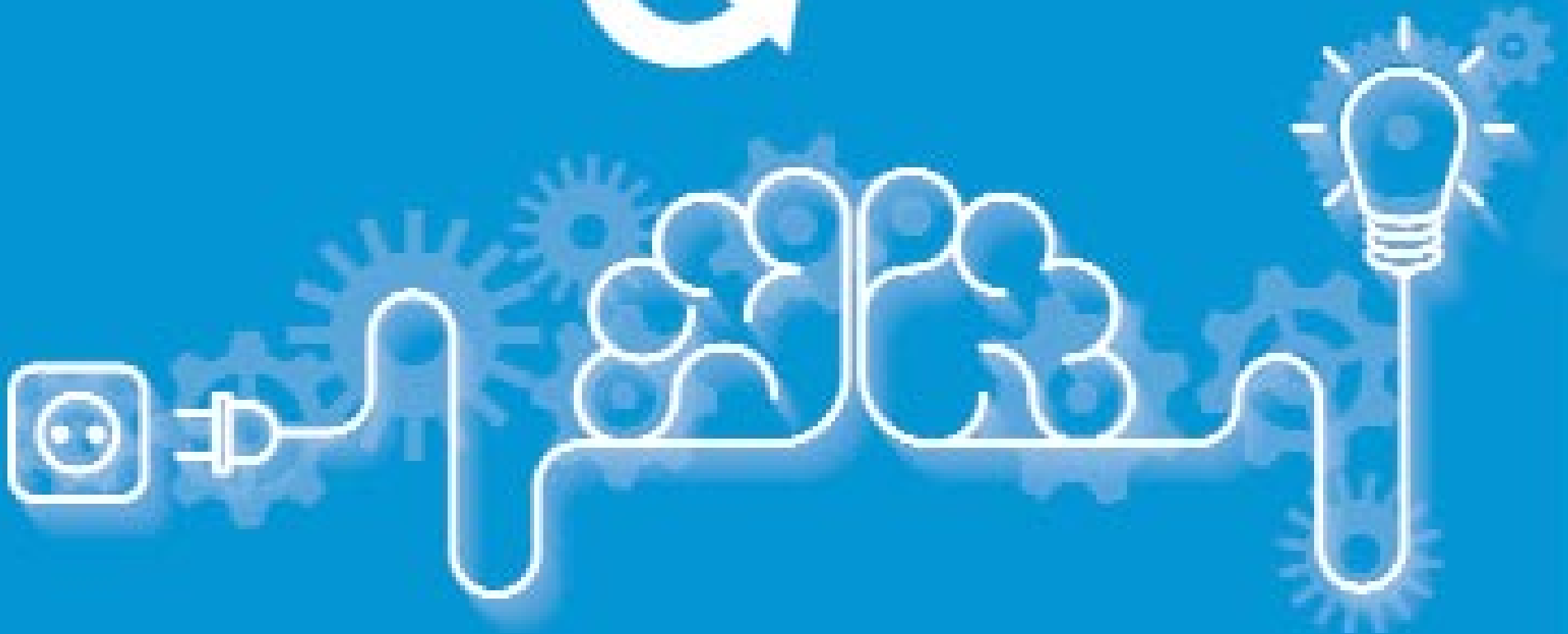


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Chevy Blazer #11 in best midsize SUVs



By Matt Degen

To appreciate the Chevrolet Blazer is to cast aside any memories of — or expectations based on — previous sport-utility vehicles of the same name. That was then and this is now.

Looking to compete with rides like the Ford Edge, Honda Passport and Nissan Murano, the Blazer is a 5-seater midsize-crossover SUV with talents better suited to tarmac than tricky terrain. That's not a criticism, however. After all, suburban speed humps are usually the toughest obstacles most crossover SUVs ever face.

To consolidate the new Blazer's appeal, the amount of standard equipment is generous. As well as a luxurious range-topper, there's also a sporty RS version to compete with the Ford Edge ST.

There's a pleasant balancing act of absorbing bumps while keeping body roll in check and bringing some life to the steering. Selectable driving modes include Sport, Tow and Off-road (probably the one that will be used the least). They change the responses of the steering, throttle and transmission.

The enthusiast-minded Blazer RS version has quicker steering action and a sportier suspension than the regular models, yet the ride quality remains acceptable. In any version, drivers will notice the quiet cabin (active noise cancellation helps here), excellent forward vision and confident braking.

The V6 engine in the RS and Premier trims does its own balancing act of being punchy yet smooth. It's this engine and all-wheel drive that enable the maximum tow rating of 4,500 pounds.

The turbocharged 2.0-liter engine is a welcome addition, providing more muscle than the base unit.

The base engine has a tendency to surge when applying light throttle, making it

finicky to drive smoothly at parking-lot speeds.

The 9-speed automatic transmission is a fine complement to any of the Blazer's power sources, optimizing acceleration and fuel economy.

The Blazer's standard infotainment interface includes a high-resolution 8-inch touch screen featuring clear icons, a logical interface, and standard smartphone integration via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. 360-DEGREE CAMERA SYSTEM Midsize-crossover SUVs aren't always the easiest of vehicles to park. This optional surround-view camera setup removes a lot of guesswork and the potential for dings, revealing any hazards that might otherwise be hidden from sight. It's also extremely useful when connecting a trailer. Sadly, it's not available until the 3LT trim.

A streamlined dashboard housing the infotainment system's 8-inch display underlines the new Blazer's modernity. The cool Camaro-inspired center vents allow temperature adjustment just by rotating them. Stowage spots include a passenger-side map slot, door and seatback pockets, plus an electronically locking glove box. And there are soft points wherever the front occupants' elbows come to rest. Rear-seat passengers enjoy ample space, climate-control vents and convenient slide/recline seats. The Blazer's luggage area of 30.5 cubic feet behind the rear seats is smaller than the Ford Edge's but roomy enough for most needs. For larger loads, release levers located conveniently in the cargo area create a flat load floor.

Contrasting rugged Blazers of the past, this model blazes its own design path. For starters, it has four doors where older versions had two. At its nose the new Blazer features thin, sharply drawn "headlights" that aren't headlights at all but rather LED running lights. The actual headlights sit midway down the fascia.

Blacked-out A- and C-pillars conspire with striking body lines to create a tasty aesthetic for all Blazer variants. However, moving up to the Premier trim dresses up the package with chrome accents and 20-inch wheels. Reserved for the Blazer RS are sporty 20-inch wheels, dark exterior accents and revised exhaust outlets.

The most basic and therefore least expensive Chevy Blazer is the L trim. It still comes with plenty of features, though, such as dual-zone automatic climate control, 8-inch infotainment touch screen, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto smartphone integration, 18-inch alloy wheels, four USB ports (two regular and two type-C), leather-wrapped steering wheel, and keyless entry/ignition.

This wouldn't be our recommended choice, though. The 2LT model isn't much more expensive, has a little more equipment and comes with the new turbocharged engine. It's also eligible for more options.

Getting all-wheel drive into a new Blazer means stretching at least to the 2LT level. The lower LT trim becomes eligible for blind-spot monitoring with rear cross-traffic alert, lane-change alert and rear parking sensors. These items are standard in the 3LT.

The RS may be ordered with 21-inch alloy wheels, a 360-degree camera system, forward-collision mitigation with automatic emergency braking, and adaptive cruise control. These driver aids are also optional in the top Premier trim; the Honda Passport is one rival that packs such features as standard. One extra that's often found in GM vehicles is the Safety Alert Seat that cuts through the visual and audible information with a fundamental sensation to the driver's posterior.

Other options include Wi-Fi, wireless charging, panoramic sunroof, up to six USB ports, and automatic high beams. 2020 Chevrolet Blazer Engine

The base engine for front-wheel-drive (FWD) versions of the 2020 Blazer is a 2.5-liter 4-cylinder unit developing a more than reasonable 193 horsepower.

New for this year is the 230-horsepower turbocharged 2.0-liter 4-cylinder engine in the 2LT and 3LT trims where front-wheel drive is standard, but all-wheel drive (AWD) becomes available as an option.

The RS and Premier models enjoy a gutsy 3.6-liter V6 (which can be added to the mid-level 2LT and 3LT trims for \$500).

Each engine has a fuel-saving engine stop/start function that can be deactivated. Active grille shutters (for aerodynamic and thermal efficiency) are also standard. All-wheel drive (AWD) comes in either a basic setup or, exclusive to the RS and Premier trims, GM's twin-clutch arrangement that can direct power to the outside rear wheel, bringing greater agility through the corners. Both systems have a mode that disconnects the rear axle for optimum efficiency when conditions allow.

All versions of the Chevy Blazer employ a competent 9-speed automatic transmission.

2.5-liter inline-4

193 horsepower @ 6,300 rpm; 188 lb-ft of torque @ 4,400 rpm; EPA city/highway fuel economy: 21/27 mpg (FWD)

2.0-liter turbocharged inline-4

230 horsepower @ 5,000 rpm; 258 lb-ft of torque @ 1,500-4,000 rpm; EPA city/highway fuel economy: 21/28 mpg (FWD), 21/27 mpg (AWD)

3.6-liter V6

308 horsepower @ 6,700 rpm; 270 lb-ft of torque @ 5,000 rpm; EPA city/highway fuel economy: 19/26 mpg (FWD), 18/25 mpg (AWD)

The Blazer range sets out with the front-drive L trim, which has a Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of \$28,800, plus a destination charge of \$1,195, bringing the total to \$29,995. Next is the 1LT model, priced from \$33,495.

The new engine for comes in at the 2LT level, starting at \$33,995. It also propels the 3LT, from \$38,195. The top two trims are RS (\$41,795 before options) and Premier (\$43,895 in front-drive form). We configured an all-wheel-drive Premier model, adding driver aids, a rear-seat entertainment system plus a few other goodies, and the total came to \$53,445. But the Chevy retail site was already chopping \$2,500 from that figure.

In L trim, the Blazer is priced similarly to entry-level Ford Edge and Nissan Murano models. Slightly less expensive than the Jeep Grand Cherokee and Honda Passport (both of those vehicles have all-wheel drive as standard). If all-wheel drive on a budget is preferred, check out the less expensive new Subaru Outback.



TICKET WINDOW



DALLAS MAVERICKS COVERAGE





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