

the SPORTS page

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Weekly



May 10 - May 16, 2024

Vol. 22, Issue 35

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FREE

MAY 13-15



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VS.

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2024-2025 ACC MEN'S BASKETBALL OPPONENTS



2024-2025 ACC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL OPPONENTS

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AWAY



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AWAY



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2024 SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | 28 CHC | 29 | 30 CHC |
| 31 CHC | 1 TB | 2 TB | 3 TB | 4 | 5 HOU | 6 HOU |
| 7 HOU | 8 HOU | 9 OAK | 10 OAK | 11 OAK | 12 HOU | 13 HOU |
| 14 HOU | 15 DET | 16 DET | 17 DET | 18 DET | 19 ATL | 20 ATL |
| 21 ATL | 22 | 23 SEA | 24 SEA | 25 SEA | 26 CIN | 27 CIN |
| 28 CIN | 29 | 30 WSH | | | | |

JULY

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|-----------------------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 SD | 3 SD | 4 SD | 5 TB | 6 TB |
| 7 TB | 8 LAA | 9 LAA | 10 LAA | 11 | 12 HOU | 13 HOU |
| 14 HOU | 15 | 16 2024 ALL-STAR WEEK | 17 | 18 | 19 BAL | 20 BAL |
| 21 BAL | 22 CWS | 23 CWS | 24 CWS | 25 CWS | 26 TOR | 27 TOR |
| 28 TOR | 29 STL | 30 STL | 31 STL | | | |

MAY

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | 1 WSH | 2 WSH | 3 KC | 4 KC |
| 5 KC | 6 OAK | 7 OAK | 8 OAK | 9 | 10 COL | 11 COL |
| 12 COL | 13 CLE | 14 CLE | 15 CLE | 16 | 17 LAA | 18 LAA |
| 19 LAA | 20 | 21 PHI | 22 PHI | 23 PHI | 24 MIN | 25 MIN |
| 26 MIN | 27 | 28 AZ | 29 AZ | 30 | 31 MIA | |

AUGUST

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 BOS | 3 BOS |
| 4 BOS | 5 HOU | 6 HOU | 7 HOU | 8 | 9 NYY | 10 NYY |
| 11 NYY | 12 BOS | 13 BOS | 14 BOS | 15 MIN | 16 MIN | 17 MIN |
| 18 MIN | 19 PIT | 20 PIT | 21 PIT | 22 | 23 CLE | 24 CLE |
| 25 CLE | 26 | 27 CWS | 28 CWS | 29 CWS | 30 OAK | 31 OAK |

JUNE

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | 1 MIA |
| 2 MIA | 3 DET | 4 DET | 5 DET | 6 | 7 SF | 8 SF |
| 9 SF | 10 | 11 LAD | 12 LAD | 13 LAD | 14 SEA | 15 SEA |
| 16 SEA | 17 NYM | 18 NYM | 19 NYM | 20 | 21 KC | 22 KC |
| 23 KC | 24 MIL | 25 MIL | 26 MIL | 27 BAL | 28 BAL | 29 BAL |
| 30 BAL | | | | | | |

SEPTEMBER

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 1 OAK | 2 NYY | 3 NYY | 4 NYY | 5 LAA | 6 LAA | 7 LAA |
| 8 LAA | 9 | 10 AZ | 11 AZ | 12 SEA | 13 SEA | 14 SEA |
| 15 SEA | 16 | 17 TOR | 18 TOR | 19 TOR | 20 SEA | 21 SEA |
| 22 SEA | 23 | 24 OAK | 25 OAK | 26 OAK | 27 LAA | 28 LAA |
| 29 LAA | 30 | | | | | |

Schedule subject to change. Times to be announced at a later date.

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Publisher
Sports Page Publishing Group, LLC
 info@sportspagedallas.com
 www.sportspagedfw.com

Contact Us
 Main Number (214) 683-1469
 P.O. Box 820813
 Dallas, Tx. 75382

Dic Humphrey, Tom Ward, Bo Carter, Richard Pollak, Robert Cortinez, James McAnally

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AROUND THE AREA

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

Kidd signs multi-year extension



Dallas Mavericks coach Jason Kidd has signed a multi-year contract extension with the team. The Mavericks announced the move a day before opening their second-round playoff series at Oklahoma City. Dallas advanced last week by eliminating the Los Angeles Clippers in six games. The hall of fame point guard, who won an NBA title with the Mavericks in 2011, is in his third season coaching Dallas. He guided the Mavs to win the Southwest Division title with a 50-32 record — his second 50-win season with the team. The Mavs did not disclose the length of the contract extension.



FC Dallas to play Tampa Bay Rowdies in Lamar Hunt US Open Cup

FC Dallas will travel to St. Petersburg, Florida, for its Round of 16 fixture versus the Tampa Bay Rowdies of the USL Championship on Wednesday, May 22

from Al Lang Stadium at 6:30 PM CT.

Dallas defeated USL Championship side Memphis 901 FC 1-0 on May 7 in the Round of 32 of the U.S. Open Cup. 2024 MLS SuperDraft pick Logan Farrington scored the game-winning goal for Dallas. ABOUT THE LAMAR HUNT U.S. OPEN CUP

Now in its 109th edition, the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup – U.S. Soccer's Club Championship – has crowned a champion since 1914 in every year except 2020 and 2021. The history-filled tournament is conducted on a single-game-knockout basis and open to all professional and amateur teams affiliated with U.S. Soccer. In 1999, the oldest ongoing national soccer competition in the United States was renamed to honor American soccer pioneer Lamar Hunt.

The U.S. Open Cup winner will earn \$300,000 in prize money, a berth in the Concacaf Champions Cup and have its name engraved on the Dewar Challenge Trophy – one of the oldest nationally-contested trophies in American team sports – now on permanent display at the National Soccer Hall of Fame in Frisco, Texas. The runner-up will earn \$100,000, while the team that advances the furthest from each lower division will take home a \$25,000 cash prize.

Houston Dynamo are defending Open Cup champions, having earned the club's second tournament title thanks to a 2-1 victory against fellow MLS club Inter Miami CF on September 27, 2023 in a Final played before a capacity crowd at Miami's Chase Stadium.



NFF Gridiron Club of Dallas Charity Golf Tournament big success

The second annual NFF Gridiron Club of Dallas Charity Golf Tournament was held on Monday, May 6, on the King's Course at Gleneagles Country Club in Plano. The event consisted of a golf tournament during the day followed by a dinner banquet in the evening with Gary Reasons, two-time Super Bowl champ (XXI and XXV) with the New York Giants and 1996 College Football Hall of Fame inductee. Reasons was recognized for his play at Northwestern State as the first player in FCS Football history (then Div I-AA) to earn First Team All-America honors.

Scott Murray, legendary sportscaster and CEO of Murray Media, kicked off the event as the players readied to start their rounds and Larry Dan Melton, care pastor of Fielder Church in Arlington, Texas, provided the opening prayer.






The evening wrapped up with the announcement of Silent Auction winners and raffle tickets being drawn for over 30 raffle items. Photographs for the event will be shared on the chapter's website, www.nffdallas.org, in the next few weeks.

~Bo Carter

NCAA Basketball Poll

| Coaches Poll | FINAL | AP Poll |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Houston | 1. Houston | 1. Houston |
| 2. UConn | 2. UConn | 2. UConn |
| 3. Purdue | 3. Purdue | 3. Purdue |
| 4. Iowa State | 4. Iowa State | 4. Iowa State |
| 5. North Carolina | 5. North Carolina | 5. North Carolina |
| 6. Tennessee | 6. Tennessee | 6. Tennessee |
| 7. Auburn | 7. Auburn | 7. Auburn |
| 8. Marquette | 8. Marquette | 8. Marquette |
| 9. Arizona | 9. Arizona | 9. Arizona |
| 10. Illinois | 10. Illinois | 10. Illinois |
| 11. Creighton | 11. Creighton | 11. Creighton |
| 12. Kentucky | 12. Kentucky | 12. Kentucky |
| 13. Duke | 13. Illinois | 13. Illinois |
| 14. Baylor | 14. Baylor | 14. Baylor |
| 15. Saint Mary's | 15. South Carolina | 15. South Carolina |
| 16. South Carolina | 16. Kansas | 16. Kansas |
| 17. Kansas | 17. Gonzaga | 17. Gonzaga |
| 18. Gonzaga | 18. Utah State | 18. Utah State |
| 19. Alabama | 19. Alabama | 19. Alabama |
| 20. Utah State | 20. BYU | 20. BYU |
| 21. BYU | 21. Saint Mary's | 21. Saint Mary's |
| 22. Texas Tech | 22. Washington State | 22. Washington State |
| 23. Wisconsin | 23. Nevada | 23. Nevada |
| 24. San Diego State | 24. Dayton | 24. Dayton |
| 25. Washington State | 25. Texas Tech | 25. Texas Tech |

WEEKLY CALENDAR

| | MAY 10 FRIDAY | MAY 11 SATURDAY | MAY 12 SUNDAY | MAY 13 MONDAY | MAY 14 TUESDAY | MAY 15 WEDNESDAY | MAY 16 THURSDAY |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
|  | | Mavs vs Thunder 2:30 / ABC | | Mavs vs Thunder 8:30 / TNT | | Mavs at Thunder 7:30 / TNT | |
|  | Rangers at Rockies 7:40 / Bally's | Rangers at Rockies 7:10 / Bally's | Rangers at Rockies 2:10 / Bally's | Rangers vs Guardians 7:05 / Bally's | Rangers vs Guardians 7:05 / Bally's | Rangers vs Guardians 7:05 / Bally's | |
|  | | FC Dallas vs Austin 7:30 | | | | | |
|  | | Stars at Colorado 7:30 / TNT | | Stars at Colorado 7:30 / TNT | | Stars vs Colorado 7:30 / TNT | |
|  | Roughriders vs San Antonio 7:05 | Roughriders vs San Antonio 7:05 | Roughriders vs San Antonio 11:05 | | Roughriders at Amarillo 11:05 | Roughriders at Amarillo 7:05 | Roughriders at Amarillo 7:05 |

2024 Ben Hogan Award Finalists



Koivun, Lamprecht and Sargent named 2024 Ben Hogan Award Finalists Presented by PNC Bank

The Hogan Trophy Award Foundation, Friends of Golf (FOG) and Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA) have announced the three finalists for the 2024 Ben Hogan Award presented by PNC Bank, which annually awards the top men's NCAA Division I, II or III, NAIA or NJCAA college golfer based on all collegiate, amateur and professional events over the previous 12 months.

Determined by voting from the award's esteemed selection committee made up of more than 30 leaders in collegiate, amateur and professional golf, the 2024 Ben Hogan Award Finalists are Auburn freshman Jackson Koivun, Georgia Tech senior Christo Lamprecht and Vanderbilt junior Gordon Sargent.

Koivun is the first-ever finalist from Auburn, while Lamprecht is the second from Georgia Tech, joining Ollie Schniederjans (2014). Sargent is a finalist for the second straight year, and is the school's third ever, all in the past five years (John Augenstein, 2020). Koivun is just the second freshman to be an award finalist in the last decade, joining Florida's Ricky Castillo in 2020.

Koivun, a native of Chapel Hill, N.C., is ranked third in the National Collegiate Golf Ranking System and fourth in the World Amateur Golf Ranking. He reached the quarterfinals of the 2023 U.S. Amateur and placed second at the 2024 Jones Cup Invitational. His amateur finishes also include a 20th-place showing at last summer's Southern Amateur and a 21st-place landing at the Western Amateur.

Koivun owns a 69.15 collegiate scoring average thanks to 16 sub-70 scores in his 33 rounds. He has nine top-5 finishes in 11 tournaments, including wins at the SEC

Championships and the Pinehurst Intercollegiate. His victory at the conference tournament came by six strokes with a 12-under-par total of 198. He earned SEC Golfer of the Week honors three times and Freshman of the Week accolades on five other occasions.

Lamprecht sits atop the World Amateur Golf Ranking, is second in the PGA TOUR University rankings and sixth in the National Collegiate Golf Ranking System. He won the 2023 Amateur Championship and claimed the Silver Medal as the low amateur at the 151st Open Championship (T-74). The South African finished 71st at the 2024 Masters Tournament. A member of the International Team at the 2023 Arnold Palmer Cup, he also competed at the 2023 World Amateur Team Championship, placing eighth.

Collegiately, he won the OFCC/Fighting Illini Invitational and was co-medalist at the 2023 Ben Hogan Collegiate Invitational. Additionally, Lamprecht shared second place at the Watersound Invitational and tied for third at this spring's ACC Championship. Overall, he owns a 69.11 stroke average with six top-10 finishes in 10 events and no placements outside the top 16.

Sargent, a product of Birmingham, Ala., ranks second in the World Amateur Golf Ranking and seventh in the National Collegiate Golf Ranking System. In the fall, he became the first player to earn his PGA TOUR card through the PGA TOUR University Accelerated program. A member of the United States teams at the Walker Cup and Arnold Palmer Cup, Sargent was low amateur at the 123rd U.S. Open (T-39). He also reached the round of 64 at the 2023 U.S. Amateur and was fifth individually at the World Amateur Team Championships for victorious Team USA.

Sargent has a 69.93 average over 27 col-

lege rounds in 2023-24. He won the Mason Rudolph Invitational and was runner up at the SEC Stroke Play and the Watersound Invitational. His tie for third at the Ben Hogan Collegiate Invitational gives him four top-5 finishes in nine events.

The finalists will attend a black-tie dinner Monday, May 20, at Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas, where the winner will be crowned.

The Ben Hogan Award presented by PNC Bank has honored the outstanding amateur collegiate golfer at Colonial Country Club since 2002. Prior to its move to Fort Worth, the original Ben Hogan Trophy, which was awarded based on a different list of criteria, was issued at Bel-Air Country Club beginning in 1990.

Recipients of the Ben Hogan Award presented by PNC Bank have combined to accumulate 88 worldwide victories, including 66 PGA TOUR wins, and have amassed more than \$420 million in prize money on the PGA TOUR. Additionally, the group has appeared in 17 Ryder Cups and a dozen Presidents Cups.

Past recipients are Ludvig Åberg ('22, '23), Ricky Barnes ('03), Patrick Cantlay ('12), Matt Every ('06), Rickie Fowler ('08), Doug Ghim ('18), Bill Haas ('04), Viktor Hovland ('19), Chris Kirk ('07), Hunter Mahan ('03), Maverick McNealy ('17), Ryan Moore ('05), John Pak ('21), Jon Rahm ('15, '16), Patrick Rodgers ('14), Kyle Stanley ('09), Nick Taylor ('10), Sahith Theegala ('20), D.J. Trahan ('02), Peter Uihlein ('11) and Chris Williams ('13).

Since 2002, the Hogan Trophy Award Foundation has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships and charitable contributions. For more information on the Ben Hogan Award presented by PNC Bank, visit TheBenHoganAward.org and follow @BenHoganAward on all social media.

2024 Finalists

Jackson Koivun, Auburn Freshman, Chapel Hill, N.C.
Christo Lamprecht, Georgia Tech Senior, George, South Africa
Gordon Sargent, Vanderbilt Junior, Birmingham, Alabama



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How to hit out of fairway bunkers



TOM WARD
TOMPWARD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Landing in a fairway bunker can be quite frustrating for golfers of all abilities. It's important not to lose your cool. Instead accept the challenge, because extracting the ball out of the sand is not going to be an issue anymore. In the accompanying photos, I have a student demonstrating the technique.

In the top left photo, the golfer is addressing the ball in the sand trap. Unlike a short bunker shot around the green, the

player has kept his normal stance. In this scenario, I had the golfer hitting to a green about 130 yards away. He has established a solid foundation with his feet. It is important to have a good base in make a solid swing. You don't have to dig the feet into the sand too much like you would a bunker shot around the green.

As you can see, he is letting the club head hover above the ball, not touching the sand which would incur a penalty.

Next, in the top right photos the player has begun his backswing. It's critical that you maintain good posture over the ball while taking the club to the top of the backswing. I've drawn some lines down the golfer's right leg to highlight the importance of staying flexed. If the right leg stiffens or straightens up it will cause you to lift up and come out of posture. Take note that the golfer has kept his head down to stabilize balance. There is manipulation, or no pre-cocking, of the wrists at this juncture as his hands/wrists will hinge automatically going back.

In the bottom left photo, the golfer is transitioning into the downswing. His head has remained facing downward throughout the swing. His knees are flexed which help to pull the club downward into a shallower angle of attack. His hands are leading with the club head trailing behind which is ideal.

In the bottom right photo, the golfer is able to get his ball out perfectly leaving a shallow divot. I've drawn an arrow down his shoulders to pinpoint how his right shoulder is working down and under. It's like you're making an uppercut punch, instead of a roundhouse.

In many cases, especially on tough courses, you would rather be in the bunker than the thick rough. The key is to make a normal swing without trying to pick the ball out of the sand.

Doing these simple things I've mentioned will help to eliminate your fear in the sand traps.

Please visit: www.teetimewithtom.com

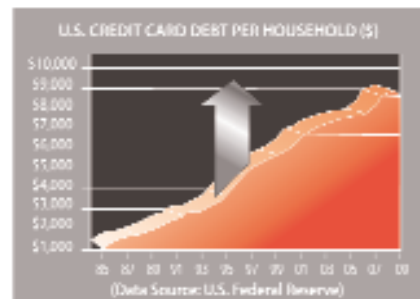


Credit Card Debt?

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.

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One such case is Sandra L. who proclaimed "CreditGUARD cut my monthly payment by \$666 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"

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This week: Wells Fargo Championship



Wyndham Clark set to defend his first title

Wells Fargo Championship
May 9 - May 12, 2024
Quail Hollow Club
Charlotte, North Carolina
Purse - \$20,000,000
Winners share - \$3,600,000
Defending Champs - Wyndham Clark

By Adam Stanley

The Wells Fargo Championship, a Signature Event on the PGA TOUR schedule, will bring almost all the TOUR's best to Quail Hollow Club.

While Scottie Scheffler – still awaiting baby No. 1 – is the only eligible player not scheduled to tee it up this week in Charlotte, North Carolina, the rest of the field consists of the TOUR's top talent including those who earned their way via the Aon Next 10 and the Aon Swing 5.

We are set for another dramatic week with the 69-player field sprinting to the finish – trying to navigate the tricky "Green Mile" stretch, to boot – with the winner earning 700 FedExCup points.

With a reinvigorated Rory McIlroy going for his fourth win here and Wyndham Clark set to defend his first title, it's set to be a great week.

Here's everything you need to know as the TOUR returns to Charlotte.

Editor's note: Ludvig Åberg announced his

withdrawal from the Wells Fargo Championship on Monday afternoon.

FIELD NOTES: McIlroy returns to a course where he's had plenty of success, and once again with momentum. McIlroy teamed up with Shane Lowry (also in the field) to capture the Zurich Classic of New Orleans two weeks ago and has made Quail Hollow a home away from home. It's the only TOUR event he's won three times... Last year's winner, Clark, returns to the Wells Fargo Championship looking to become the first man to ever go back-to-back. Clark captured the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am earlier this season... Max Homa is looking to continue his fine form at Quail Hollow. Homa finished T8 a year ago, and he's won two of the previous four editions of this event. Homa and McIlroy are the only multiple champions of the Wells Fargo. Homa also went 4-0-0 at the Presidents Cup at Quail Hollow in 2022... Viktor Hovland returns to action for the first time since missing the cut at the Masters. Hovland's best result at Quail Hollow came in 2021 when he finished T3... Scheffler is the only eligible player electing not to tee it up at the Wells Fargo Championship as he and wife Meredith are awaiting the arrival of their first child... The latest TOUR winner, Taylor Pendrith, returns to Quail Hollow after playing in the

Presidents Cup in 2022. He qualified for this week via the Aon Swing 5 after breaking through for his first TOUR title at THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson.

HIGHEST-RANKED PLAYERS IN THE FIELD

| World Ranking | FedExCup |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 2. Rory McIlroy | 2. W. Clark |
| 3. Wyndham Clark | 3. X.Schauffele |
| 4. Xander Schauffele | 4. S. Theegala |
| 7. Viktor Hovland | 6. H. Matsuyama |
| 8. Patrick Cantlay | 7. Chris Kirk |
| 9. Brian Harman | 8. B. Hun An |
| 10. Max Homa | 9. M. Pavon |
| 11. Tommy Fleetwood | 10. P. Cantlay |
| 12. Sahith Theegala | 11. C. Morikawa |

SPONSOR EXEMPTIONS: Quail Hollow resident Webb Simpson will tee it up at his local TOUR event. He's finished second and fourth at this event... Gary Woodland continues his comeback after brain surgery at the end of last year. He finished 14th the last time he teed it up at Quail Hollow and had a career-high fourth at the Wells Fargo Championship in 2015... Adam Scott has had a steady 2024 campaign with five top-25 finishes in eight starts. He finished fifth the last time he teed it up at the Wells Fargo Championship... Nine-time TOUR winner Matt Kuchar, whose career-best at Quail Hollow is a T23, rounds out the sponsor exemptions.

SIGNATURE EVENT STORYLINES: Wells Fargo is the sixth Signature Event on the 2024 PGA TOUR schedule... Kevin Tway, who finished No. 154 on last year's FedExCup Fall standings – meaning he'd compete on Past Champion status in 2024 – took full advantage of the chance provided by the Aon Swing 5 over the last few weeks. He finished third at the Corales Puntacana Championship (after getting in on his number), partnered with Kelly Kraft for a T11 at the Zurich Classic, and finished ninth at THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson. He outlasted Chad Ramey, Wesley Bryan and Martin Trainer for the fifth spot... Pendrith (winner of THE CJ CUP), Ben Kohles, Billy Horschel and Alex Noren rounded out the Aon Swing 5... No player moved inside the Aon Next 10 at THE CJ CUP with Ludvig Åberg, Matthieu Pavon, Lowry, Stephan Jaeger, Will Zalatoris, Akshay Bhatia, Jake Knapp, Justin Thomas, Christiaan Bezuidenhout and Austin Eckroat the qualifiers there... The next Signature Event on the TOUR schedule is the Memorial Tournament presented by Workday. The next round of the Aon Swing 5 kick-starts this week at the Myrtle Beach Classic, played alongside the Wells Fargo Championship.

COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP 10 UPDATES: Thanks to his T4 at THE CJ

CUP Byron Nelson, Byeong Hun An moved up one spot in the Comcast Business TOUR TOP 10 to No. 8, with Pavon moving into the No. 9 spot... There was no other movement in the TOUR TOP 10 with Scheffler continuing his stranglehold on the top... Last year's winner of the Wells Fargo Championship, Clark, remains No. 2... Pendrith's win at THE CJ CUP saw the Canadian move to No. 34 in the standings... An and Chris Kirk remain the only players who have been in the TOUR TOP 10 every week so far this season.

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 700 FedExCup points.

COURSE: Quail Hollow Club, par 71, 7,558 yards. After last year's Wells Fargo Championship, the club closed for a few months for a renovation to prepare for this year's TOUR event and next year's PGA Championship. The club redid all the tees and greens, installed a new drainage system and, for the first time in 16 years, overhauled the bunkers. Laid out by George Cobb in the early 1960s, the club was re-worked by Tom Fazio as it prepared for the PGA Championship in 2017. Its "Green Mile" closing stretch (Nos. 16, 17, 18) continues to be one of the toughest on TOUR.

72-HOLE RECORD: 265, Clark (2023). McIlroy's 21-under 267 in 2015 came when par for the course was 72.

18-HOLE RECORD: 61, McIlroy (Round 3, 2015).

LAST TIME: Clark won by four shots – and set the tournament scoring record in the process – for his maiden PGA TOUR title to kick-start an incredible run on the game's biggest stages. Clark opened Sunday with a two-shot lead, surrendered it to Xander Schauffele after seven holes, and stormed back to play his final 11 holes in 4 under for the win. Clark finished at 19 under, four strokes clear of Schauffele. Clark was trending in the right direction heading into the week in Charlotte, having finished in the top six in three of his previous five tournaments. He would go on to win his first major, the U.S. Open, in June. Harris English and Tyrrell Hatton tied for third, with Tommy Fleetwood and Adam Scott sharing fifth place.

HOW TO FOLLOW (all times ET)

Television:

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

The Five: Midseason PGA TOUR awards



Players talk about Scottie Scheffler's dominating season

Players talk about Scottie Scheffler's dominating season

By Paul Hodowanic

The PGA TOUR season doesn't have an All-Star break or a clear delineation of a season's progress. In the MLB, the 81-game mark is the universal halfway point. In the NBA and NHL, it's 41 games.

The TOUR is inherently different. Golfers' schedules fluctuate frequently. Some, like Scottie Scheffler, have played 10 events. Others have played 17. It's difficult to set perfect denominators to divide the season into equal pieces, though last week's THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson was as good as any. It marked the approximate halfway point of the FedExCup calendar, which spans from The Sentry to the TOUR Championship.

In other sports, it's an annual tradition to take stock of what has happened and set the stage for the action to come by giving out midseason awards. We will do the same, unofficially, for the TOUR this week.

Some of these awards are actual races that the TOUR membership will vote on at the end of the season, while some were stolen from other sports for the purpose of this exercise.

Let's give out some midseason awards! Player of the Year: Scottie Scheffler

We will start with the obvious. Scheffler is the Player of the Year midway through the season and it's not particularly close. He's racked up an entire season of accolades in 10 events. He's won four times, with five other top 10s. He's amassed \$18 million in earnings and has more FedExCup points (3,915) than he did during the entire 2022-23 TOUR season.

There aren't enough stats to explain the dominance he has displayed. His scoring average (68.7) is more than a shot better than No. 2 Billy Horschel (69.8). Scheffler leads the TOUR in Strokes Gained: Total, birdie average, bogey avoidance and greens in regulation percentage, to name a few. His wins have come against the toughest fields. Scheffler won three Signature Events and the Masters, making the conversation about a potential major championship grand slam seem feasible. That in itself is an achievement and tells the tale of Scheffler's superiority.

Scheffler, who won PGA TOUR Player of the Year in the last two seasons, would become the first golfer to win the award in three consecutive seasons since Tiger Woods (2005-07).

Rookie of the Year: Matthieu Pavon

With his victory at the Farmers Insurance Open, Pavon became the first Frenchman to win on the PGA TOUR since World War II. Pavon could also be the first Frenchman to win PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year. Midway through the season, he should be the favorite.

Pavon is ninth in the FedExCup standings, the best of any rookie. He briefly held the No. 1 spot following his performance at Torrey Pines and his solo third at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. Pavon also finished T12 in his Masters debut.

Pavon will be pushed. The Rookie of the Year race is shaping up to be highly competitive. Jake Knapp had a chance to jump into pole position with a win at last week's CJ CUP Byron Nelson, but a disappointing Sunday kept him behind Pavon. Nick Dunlap will also garner consideration for the award, but his play has dropped off since the improbable victory at The American Express.

Pavon has displayed the most consistency midway through the season. He's made eight of nine cuts and finished inside the top 25 in half of his starts.

Most Improved Player: Stephan Jaeger

In two years, Jaeger has jumped from the outskirts of the PGA TOUR to a consistent force. His breakthrough win at the Texas Children's Houston Open is evidence—Jaeger is the only player to beat Scottie Scheffler since the beginning of March—but it's the consistency that has cemented him among the upper half of TOUR membership.

Jaeger finished T3 at the Farmers Insurance Open and T3 at the Mexico Open at Vidanta. He's notched three other top 20s, including at the RBC Heritage and CJ CUP Byron Nelson.

Jaeger's improvement is tangibly linked to several changes in his game, most notably his speed.

In Jaeger's words, he was "crooked and short" off the tee. Not a good combo. The stats showed it. He ranked 184th in Strokes Gained: Off-the-Tee in 2021-22 and was outside the top 125 in Driving Distance and Accuracy. Speed training has helped him drastically improve in the area. He ranks 16th in Strokes Gained: Off-the-Tee this season and is 20th in driving distance.

Jaeger's climb has been steady. He re-earned his TOUR card in 2021 and finished 94th in the FedExCup in 2021-22. He finished 56th in the season-long points race last year and is now 13th at the midway point of the 2024 season.

Comeback Player of the Year: Gary Woodland

Comeback Player of the Year hasn't been given out on the PGA TOUR since 2012. It's not on the official awards ballot this year either, though if there were any

time for it to return it would be now to honor Gary Woodland.

That's why we are giving it out in his mock exercise anyway.

Woodland has successfully returned to the PGA TOUR after undergoing a craniotomy last September to remove a brain lesion. The symptoms of the brain lesion date back to the 2023 Mexico Open at Vidanta. He started waking up with a jolt—small seizures—and having thoughts of death. He was nauseous the week of the PGA Championship, and his doctor ordered an MRI, which revealed the lesion. He went on medication and was advised to wait and see regarding surgery, but with symptoms worsening, it seemed that the lesion might be growing. It was time to operate.

"They cut me open all the way down to my ear," Woodland said at the Sony Open in Hawaii. "Cut about a baseball-sized hole in my skull and went in through that and then put it back with plates and screws."

Doctors told him they'd gotten most of the lesion, and that it was benign. Since then, Woodland has been busy reconnecting with friends and family and plotting his return to the TOUR.

The on-course results have been up and down this season. Woodland has missed seven cuts with just two top-40 finishes, but his comeback is remarkable regardless of the birdies and bogeys.

Shot of the Year: Hideki Matsuyama's victory-sealing approach shots at The Genesis Invitational

Ok, so we are cheating a bit, but it's a fake awards article, so why not?

The most impressive shots of the TOUR season, in both execution and consequence, came back-to-back during the final round of The Genesis Invitational at The Riviera Country Club. Trailing Will Zalatoris by a shot, Matsuyama fired a dart into the notoriously tricky par-4 15th that cleared the front bunker and settled just eight inches from the hole. Most players are just trying to escape the 15th with a par. Matsuyama laced a 6-iron from 189 yards out and nearly holed it for an eagle.

The shot was made more impressive by how he followed it. Standing on the famed par-3 16th tee box, Matsuyama thought he made a poor, letting the club dangle as he followed the flight. There was nothing to worry about. The ball rolled to six inches for another kick-in birdie. Moments later, Zalatoris bogeyed the 15th hole and the tournament was all but over.

Matsuyama's two shots secured the win, his first since the Sony Open in Hawaii two years ago. It was Matsuyama's ninth win on the PGA TOUR, breaking the record for Asian-born players he shared with K.J. Choi of South Korea.

The Green Mile gets a make over



A new tee was added to No. 16 that can add another 20 yards

By Staff

The Green Mile might be even more difficult.

The final three holes at Quail Hollow Club, which is hosting this week's Wells Fargo Championship, form one of the most famous, and difficult, closing stretches on the PGA TOUR. Now, the course's par-4 16th hole is even longer. A new tee was added to No. 16 that can add another 20 yards. The new tee brings the fairway bunker on the hole's right side back into play for long hitters who used to carry it with impunity. In recent years, the TOUR's biggest hitters could carry the trap and access an even wider landing area, giving them an exponential advantage on the 506-yard hole.

"I'm hopeful now the long guys can't fly the right bunker because that was a problem with the old tee," said Max Homa, who earned his first PGA TOUR victory

five years ago at Quail Hollow. "If you could fly it 320 (yards), that fairway is double the size and you're hitting way less club in. So you could swing way harder and be kind of bailed out left and right a little bit. Now ...I don't think anybody can fly it. I say that and Wyndham (Clark, the defending champion) will probably carry it.

"I think it is one of those rare positive changes of moving a tee that far back and actually continuing to give the long guys an advantage but kind of making them hit into a similar-width fairway that the rest of us are."

The 16th hole now has a scorecard yardage of 529 yards, though it plays shorter because the hole runs downhill. No. 16 precedes the 190-yard, par-3 17th and 494-yard 18th hole. All three holes are made more difficult by water that surrounds the greens.

'It's a big boy golf course': Xander

Schauffele on Quail Hollow Club.

The lengthening of Quail Hollow's 16th hole was one of multiple changes made while the course was closed for nearly four months after Clark won last year's Wells Fargo Championship. The greens were resurfaced with Tif Eagle Bermudagrass and slopes were softened on 12 of the greens to better showcase hole locations at higher green speeds. The tees also were resurfaced and the bunkers were rebuilt with new drainage, bunker liners and sand. A new tee also added 10 yards to the par-3 13th, which now plays 205 yards.

The changes were made in part to prepare Quail Hollow to host the 2025 PGA Championship. The club also hosted the 2017 PGA won by Justin Thomas and the 2022 Presidents Cup.

The new greens are firm but should be softened by the rain that was forecast to hit Charlotte on Wednesday night and Thursday evening. "(Approach shots) take a massive bounce," said Homa. "Brian Harman's not super tall, but it would bounce clear over his head. It's going to be a bit tough with the new greens, but they're

in good shape, they roll great, so you just somehow have to get the ball to stay on there."

Quail Hollow's 16th hole already was one of the 50 hardest par-4s on the PGA TOUR last year (out of more than 600 par 4s played on the PGA TOUR in 2023). The hole played to a 4.27 scoring average last year, which made it the second-hardest hole at Quail Hollow. Only the 18th hole, which played to a 4.33 average, was more difficult.

Whether the new tee is used this week remains to be seen. The soft conditions at Quail Hollow after recent rain make the hole play longer, which may keep the TOUR's setup team from stretching the hole to its maximum length. But the option is there, allowing the Green Mile to be even more difficult.

"It puts more emphasis on the Green Mile being the toughest three-hole stretch in golf," said Webb Simpson, who lives at Quail Hollow. "If you get to 16 tee with any kind of lead, it's still anyone's golf tournament."

An advertisement for CashNetUSA. The background is dark with white and yellow text. At the top, it says "Oh, the bills you'll pay!" in white. Below that is the phone number "800-306-0714" in yellow. To the right of the phone number are three green dollar signs. At the bottom, it says "Short-term loans by CashNetUSA" in white and blue, with "Fees apply. See Rates & Terms." in white below it.

The First Look: Myrtle Beach Classic



The Dunes Golf and Beach Club will host the first Myrtle Beach Classic

By Adam Stanley

It's a new week on the PGA TOUR and for the first time this season, it will mark the debut of a new event.

The Myrtle Beach Classic will be hosted at The Dunes Golf and Beach Club, an Additional Event alongside the Wells Fargo Championship.

With a field comprised of several TOUR winners and Korn Ferry Tour graduates, a fun group of sponsor exemptions and wily veterans looking for a breakthrough title, it should make for a great week at the beach. There's even a set of brothers, with South Carolina's acclaimed Bryan Bros. duo (Wesley and George IV) on the scene.

Here's everything else you need to know as the TOUR returns to the Grand Strand.

FIELD NOTES: Leading the way in Myrtle Beach is four-time TOUR winner Daniel Berger, who continues his comeback trail after being out for almost a year-and-a-half with a back injury... Other notable TOUR winners in the field include Joel Dahmen, Matt Wallace, Nico Echavarria, J.J. Spaun and South Carolina native Kevin Kisner... 2017 RBC Heritage winner Wesley Bryan will compete following his runner-up at the Corales Puntacana Championship... Ben Kohles is set to return to action after his heartbreaking runner-up result at THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson... With 300 FedExCup points available to the winner, it's prime time for plenty of 2023 Korn Ferry Tour graduates to cash in and set up the rest of their season... Among those Korn Ferry Tour grads is

Jimmy Stanger, who won the 2016 Hackler Collegiate Championship at The Dunes... The highest-ranked player in the field is Ryan Fox, who looks to string together a few more solid results to build his case for a spot on the Presidents Cup's International Team.

HIGHEST-RANKED PLAYERS IN THE FIELD

| World Ranking | FedExCup |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 61. Ryan Fox | 41. E. van Rooyen |
| 66. Erik van Rooyen | 68. Justin Lower |
| 75. Thorbjørn Olesen | 74. S.Valimaki |
| 81. Beau Hossler | 75. B. Hossler |
| 84. Robert MacIntyre | 77. Kevin Yu |
| 85. Matt Wallace | 79. Ben Griffin |
| 87. Ryo Hisatsune | 81. N. Echavarria |
| 88. Ben Griffin | 83. A.Novak |
| 90. Sami Valimaki | 85. Chan Kim |

SPONSOR EXEMPTIONS: Sixteen-year-old Blades Brown will make his TOUR debut. It's the second straight week a 16-year-old will compete on the PGA TOUR after England's Kris Kim made the cut at THE CJ CUP Bryon Nelson. Last year, Brown was the youngest stroke play co-medalist in U.S. Amateur history – breaking a 103-year-old record previously held by Bobby Jones. His is the reigning Tennessee Boys' Junior and Men's Player of the Year, the first player to ever achieve the double... Matt Atkins earned a spot in the field after winning "The Q at Myrtle Beach" that featured a mix of YouTubers and South Carolinian pros. Atkins has made 26 TOUR starts and is a Korn Ferry Tour winner. He finished T29 at the Korn Ferry Tour's Veritex Bank Championship

two weeks ago... George Bryan IV joins brother Wesley in the Myrtle Beach field. Bryan IV finished runner-up to Atkins at "The Q" but received a sponsor exemption anyway. He made his TOUR debut at the Butterfield Bermuda Championship last season and made the cut. The brothers boast more than 325,000 followers on their popular YouTube channel... Coastal Carolina University alum Morgan Deneen will make his fourth career TOUR start. Deneen is an assistant pro at The Dunes... Taylor Dickson, a winner on the Korn Ferry Tour this season at the Astara Chile Classic presented by Scotiabank, will make his PGA TOUR debut... Alistair Docherty will play his first TOUR event since 2019. He currently stands No. 97 on the Korn Ferry Tour's season-long standings... Dalton Ward will make his first TOUR start since Monday qualifying for the WM Phoenix Open last year. Ward is from near-by Sumter, S.C... Evan Harmeling will tee it up for the third time on TOUR this season. He finished T10 at the Puerto Rico Open earlier in 2024. He has made four cuts so far this season on the Korn Ferry Tour, highlighted by a T5 (which included a Sunday 61) at his last event – the Veritex Bank Championship... University of Arizona alum Jordan Gumberg will tee it up on TOUR for the first time at a non-major since 2021. He won the SDC Championship on the DP World Tour earlier this year... Also among the sponsor invites are TOUR winners Jonathan Byrd, Bill Haas and D.J. Trahan... Brandon Berry, Brian Davis, Braden Thornberry and

William McGirt were the four Monday qualifiers.

SIGNATURE EVENT STORYLINES:

After this week's Wells Fargo Championship, the next Signature Event on the PGA TOUR schedule is the Memorial Tournament presented by Workday. The Aon Swing 5 qualification for that event begins this week in Myrtle Beach, with the Charles Schwab Challenge and the RBC Canadian Open the other two events in the series for hopeful qualifiers... This Myrtle Beach Classic is played as an Additional Event to the Wells Fargo Championship, the sixth Signature Event of the season.

COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP 10 UPDATES:

Thanks to his T4 at THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson, Byeong Hun An moved up one spot in the Comcast Business TOUR TOP 10 to No. 8, with Matthieu Pavon moving into the No. 9 spot... There was no other movement in the TOUR TOP 10 with Scottie Scheffler continuing his stranglehold on the top... Last year's Wells Fargo Championship winner Wyndham Clark remains No. 2... Taylor Pendrith's win at THE CJ CUP saw the Canadian move to No. 34 in the standings... An and Chris Kirk remain the only players who have been in the TOUR TOP 10 every week so far this season.

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 300 FedExCup points.

COURSE: The Dunes Golf and Beach Club, par 71, 7,347 yards. Originally designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. in 1948 – it was just the second golf course built in Myrtle Beach, now known worldwide for its plentiful golf courses. The Dunes was renovated by Rees Jones in 2003, 2013, 2018 and 2023 while awaiting the PGA TOUR's maiden venture. No. 8 will play as a par 4 (usually a par 5) while last year's renovation included re-grassing and leveling all championship tees, building new championship tees on Nos. 1, 2, 6, 8 and 14, rebuilding lake edges on Nos. 1, 10 and 18, rebuilding the practice green and building a new chipping green and practice bunker.

The Dunes does have some history with the TOUR. It hosted the PGA TOUR Champions season-ending Charles Schwab Cup Championship from 1994 to 1999 and was the host venue for PGA TOUR Q-School's Final Stage in 1973.

72-HOLE RECORD: Inaugural event

18-HOLE RECORD: Inaugural event

LAST TIME: Inaugural event

HOW TO FOLLOW

(all times ET)

Television:

- Thursday-Friday: 9:30-11:30 a.m. (GC)
- Saturday-Sunday: 3-5 p.m. (GC)

Next teen phenom on TOUR is up



Brown became the youngest stroke play co-medalist in U.S. Amateur history in 2023

16-year-old Blades Brown takes on Myrtle Beach Classic

By Stephanie Royer

At first glance, Blades Brown is your typical 16-year-old: He loves hanging out with friends and playing pickleball with his family.

This week, he's cutting class to make his PGA TOUR debut on a sponsor's exemption at the Myrtle Beach Classic.

Brown became the youngest stroke play co-medalist in U.S. Amateur history in 2023, breaking a record set by Bobby Jones 103 years ago. He blazed the field at the 2023 Tennessee Junior Amateur Championship by 12 strokes, and his 22-under finish over 54 holes was the lowest in tournament history. Brown currently sits at No. 4 on the Rolex AJGA rankings as a sophomore high schooler.

Brown has generational roots in sports. His mother, Rhonda Blades Brown, was starting point guard for Vanderbilt and made the first three-pointer in WNBA history. Brown also grew up playing basketball and was point guard in his freshman year of high school, but it was his father, Parke Brown, who wanted him to play golf.

Parke was diagnosed with hairy cell leukemia in 2022, and after his U.S. Amateur co-medalist finish, Blades recalled: "When I qualified, (my dad) post-

ed, 'My son is going to the U.S. Amateur!' What dad can say that after thinking that they were going to die?"

Ahead of the event, Blades differentiated his parents' varying approaches to his game: "She's my mom. She gives me hugs, encourages me all I can. My dad's like, Hit it at the pin."

This is the second straight week a teenager will compete on the TOUR, as 16-year-old Kris Kim became the youngest player to make the cut on TOUR since 2015 at THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson last week. Kim's performance came on the heels of 15-year-old Miles Russell becoming the youngest player to make the cut on the Korn Ferry Tour.

"I think it's so awesome what Miles (Russell) has done," said Brown, who is also friends with Kim. "He's one of my friends so I was rooting for him. It shows that if he can do it, I can do it.

Amidst the erupting trend of teenage and amateur phenoms in golf, Brown is keeping things simple. He has a simple swing thought this week.

"Executing the shot that I'm visualizing in my head," he said. "Some people can get very mechanical with it – I'm just trying to be an athlete.

"It'd be awesome to make it to the weekend. That's probably my biggest goal this week. ... All my friends have sent me texts like, 'Hey Blades, good luck this week.

Praying for ya.' I'm so excited for this week."

In a family full of inspiring figures, Brown draws his motivation for greatness from a genuine enjoyment of golf.

"I love golf. Playing golf brings me so much joy in life: visualizing shots, making calculations, then executing is awesome," reflected Brown. "It's so much fun. God's given me the ability and the talent, and to be able to put that on display for others is a driving factor.

"Another thing is that you get to play

some really good courses," he added eagerly.

A native Tennessean, Brown grew up playing the Junior Golf Tour of the Tennessee Golf Foundation, backed by Brandt Snedeker and the Snedeker Family Foundation. Brown sees Snedeker, who is also in the Myrtle Beach field this week, as one among several mentors who have kept him grounded.

"He doesn't need anything from me – he's way better than I am," joked Snedeker.

"He's such a great kid and well-rounded kid," he continued. "Got a great head on his shoulders. I just told him enjoy it, have fun ... Not to go too fast, and just really enjoy and live in the moment. He's gonna have a bunch of first-time things come up in his life, so it's gonna be awesome for him."

Other mentors include Austin Smotherman, who Brown played with in a Korn Ferry Tour pro-am several years ago.

"Jonathan Byrd has shown me how to hit some wedge shots out of this thick rough," added Brown. "Scott Stallings has been a great mentor to me, overflowed me with encouragement and love."

In his first PGA TOUR start, Brown is most looking forward to walking inside the ropes as a competitor.

"My favorite player is Jordan Spieth, who came up beside me on the ropes at the Masters and talked to me for a few minutes," Brown reflected. "There's no way he remembers it, but it meant everything to me. ... I want to do that to others someday."

But for now, Brown is entering this week joyful for the opportunity and committed to patience: "Just treating it like it's any other tournament, cause that's what golf is. ... it's the same shot." He's just 16, going on 17 -- and ready to turn the lights on.

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Thunder-Mavs: 5 takeaways game 2



Luka Dončić and P.J. Washington both score 29 points as the Mavericks top the Thunder to even the series at one game apiece

Luka Dončić breaks loose in Game 2 win Dallas' star dominates (and gets some scoring help from P.J. Washington) to help the Mavs tie up the series

By Jon Thomas

Writhing in agony, Luka Dončić grabbed at his head just as it bounced off the hardwood at Paycom Center.

The fall occurred not even a minute into Game 2.

"I think today was one of the hardest games I've had to play," Dončić said. "I'm battling out there. I'm trying to do my best to help the team win."

The Mavs walked out with a 119-110 triumph over the Oklahoma City Thunder to even their Western Conference semifinals series 1-1 as it heads back to Dallas on Saturday for Game 3 (3:30 ET, ABC). Dončić busted loose from a shooting slump with 29 points, while P.J. Washington added another 29 as an unexpected offensive catalyst.

We'll get into that and more in our five takeaways from the matchup:

1. Luka Dončić fights through slump

Admit it, you wondered whether the sprained right knee Dončić suffered in Game 3 of the first round was starting to negatively affect him.

It was worth pondering after Game 1. Dončić quickly assuaged those concerns in the first half with a red-hot performance that likely lifted him from the shooting slump. Dončić led Dallas with 18 points in the first half, hitting 4-for-6 from 3-point

range with wrecking ball Luguentz Dort draped all over him.

Dončić logged his 36th career game with 25-plus points, five-plus rebounds, five-plus assists, and five-plus made 3-pointers. That ranks as the most in NBA postseason history.

"He was Luka in the sense that he was aggressive," Mavs coach Jason Kidd said. "He was taking the shots that presented. He was attacking early. He wasn't settling." Dončić nailed six of his first eight shots in the first half as Dallas seized a 14-point lead. The five-time All-Star received long-range assistance from Washington.

Remember, Dončić entered Game 2 shooting 22.7% from 3-point range this postseason, fresh off a playoff-low 19 points two nights prior, forced in part by suffocating defense from Dort.

Dončić saw his streak of 24 straight games with at least 20 points end.

So, the NBA's scoring leader bounced back in a major way.

2. P.J. Washington 'set the tone'

At least that's what Kidd said about Washington. You could tell Dallas wanted to involve the forward early in this one. The Mavericks opened the game with a Washington post-up.

"We wanted to look at something different," Kidd explained. "We always look at Kai and Luka. So, we looked at something different and it worked. We'll be able to maybe build on that as we go forward with other role players."

Washington tied his career-high for 3-

pointers in a game with seven in Game 2, marking the third time he's accomplished the feat. The 25-year-old nailed five of his 3-pointers in the first half.

Washington and Dončić combined to drill a blistering 7-for-8 from 3-point range in the first quarter. Over the previous four games this postseason, the duo shot 12-for-55 from beyond the arc before combining to connect on 12-for-19 in Game 2.

Washington's 29 points represent a career postseason high. Since he joined Dallas, it is 3-2 when he scores 20 points or more.

"We played through him a little bit in the post," Kidd said. "I think that sparked him. We didn't go to Luka or [Kyrie Irving] early. We just let the ball find them."

3. OKC's expanded rotation fizzles

Oklahoma City hoped to continue reaping benefits from its expanded rotation. The Thunder has routinely utilized 10 to 11 players this postseason when most squads keep that number to single digits.

"If you ask somebody why that's not an ideal situation, they'd probably relate it to rhythm or confidence," OKC coach Mark Daigneault said. "Generally, our team plays with pretty good rhythm and confidence. These guys have learned how to operate in that environment."

Dallas used largely an eight-man rotation to best the home team.

OKC worked 13 players into its Game 1 (three logged garbage time minutes) win, and 10 saw playing time during critical sections of that game. It's a trend that continued into Game 2. Reserves Jaylin

Williams, Aaron Wiggins, Isaiah Joe, Cason Wallace, and Gordon Hayward contributed a combined 30 points.

Williams came off the bench first in the opening quarter and connected on 3-for-3 for eight points. By the end of the first frame, the Thunder had already utilized 10 players.

The Thunder bench outscored Dallas' reserves 42-23 in Game 1.

In Game 2, the benches tied, 30-30.

4. Can the Mavs maintain this?

Kidd mentioned before Game 2 that Dallas' shots eventually would start to fall. That took place on Thursday as the Mavericks connected on a playoff-high 48.6% from beyond the arc with five players scoring in double-figures.

Washington and Tim Hardaway Jr. combined for 46 points, hitting 9-for-15 from distance. Playing through Washington early on helped to open the floodgates.

"Everybody that stepped on the floor fought," Dončić said.

Irving dished 11 assists in Game 2 and is 5-1 in the regular season and playoffs when he finishes with 10 or more assists. The Mavericks are 17-1 in the postseason and regular season when logging 30 assists or more and they're facing an OKC team intent on stopping Dončić and Irving.

"We're sharing the ball," Dončić said. "They have great players, they have great chemistry, a great team. It's gonna be a fight until the end."

5. Josh Giddey problematic in Game 2

OKC trailed by six points at halftime. When the Thunder came out for the third quarter, Daigneault decided to play reserve Wiggins over Josh Giddey, who started 80 games in the regular season.

Giddey registered a game-worst minus-14 in the first half. He finished at minus-20 over 11 minutes and sits at minus-27 for the series.

Wiggins ended up playing 20 minutes off the bench.

"I wouldn't say [the lineups with Giddy] didn't work," Daigneault said. "Halftime subs are something we've done for a long time. It's basically an in-game substitution."

Since Giddey continues to struggle defensively and as a 3-point shooter, Daigneault elected to start Wiggins in the second half.

"Wiggins' ability to step into a playoff game and not play until the second quarter, then have the game he had [in Game 1]," the coach said. "It's all about how you look at it. We have guys that are mentally tough. If it's not their night, they root for each other's success."



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Big 12 Baseball Power Rankings



Texas Tech has struggled this year with injuries and could miss the Big 12 Tournament

Oklahoma baseball making tracks toward a title

By Stacy Urban

The Oklahoma baseball program last won a regular-season conference championship in 1995 as Big Eight members. The Sooners are in the driver's seat to win the Big 12 in their last year in the conference.

The combination of Oklahoma sweeping Texas Tech last weekend and Oklahoma State and West Virginia losing conference series widened the Sooners' lead in the standings back to three games with two Big 12 series left.

"That's comforting," OU center fielder John Spikerman said, "but we can't get complacent. Anybody can beat anybody in this conference, and we've got to take care of our business in the future. I'm excited to keep going."

Oklahoma had never swept four Big 12 regular-season series before this season. The sweep at Texas Tech was the Sooners' fifth, after they took three apiece from Central Florida, TCU, Kansas State and Brigham Young.

OU coach Skip Johnson's colleagues didn't see that coming, slotting the Sooners to tie for sixth in the preseason Big 12 coaches poll.

"They're free to their opinions," Johnson said. "That's what it is. It's just about playing the game one pitch at a time and inning to inning. They can have their opinions. That's all we care about is playing one pitch at a time, inning to inning."

In Oklahoma's 8-7 victory Sunday in Lubbock, Spikerman homered and threw out a runner at the plate. The Sooners' lead-off hitter, he recently was out of the lineup for five weeks after hamate surgery.

"It's a process and I guess it's moving a little quicker than I anticipated," he said. "But I'm just grateful to be able to play the game I love again."

Here are this week's Big 12 power rankings. Records and rankings in the USA TODAY Sports coaches Top 25 are as of Monday.

1. Oklahoma (29-17, 18-6)

Last week: 1

What to know: The 17th-ranked Sooners can clinch a share of the Big 12 title with another sweep this weekend. Plausible with Baylor coming in to Norman.

2. Oklahoma State (32-16, 15-9)

Last week: 2

What to know: Two-way player Carson Bengue went from the bullpen to the rotation two weeks ago and has looked good doing it. He allowed one run each to Brigham Young and Texas.

3. Texas (30-19, 15-9)

Last week: 3

What to know: Texas went 2-1 against Oklahoma State, because of course. The Longhorns have taken two out of three in seven Big 12 series.

4. West Virginia (28-18, 15-9)

Last week: 4

What to know: With an RPI at 40, the Mountaineers best not lay an egg when they close Big 12 play against Kansas State and TCU.

5. Kansas State (28-19, 12-12)

Last week: 7

What to know: K-State won the Sunflower Showdown from Kansas with 3-2 and 4-2 victories in the three-game series. In both, Nick English had the game-winning hit and Tyson Neighbors the save.

6. Cincinnati (27-21, 13-11)

Last week: 8

What to know: Break up the Bearcats, who have won three Big 12 series in a row. Quality starts by Tommy Boba and Nathan Taylor made the difference against West Virginia.

7. Kansas (27-17, 13-11)

Last week: 5

What to know: Maybe the Jayhawks won't end a nine-year NCAA tournament drought. But they could finish above .500 in the Big 12 for the first time since 2014.

8. Central Florida (29-15, 11-12)

Last week: 9

What to know: Knights steadied themselves with two triumphs at Houston before a rainout. Can they handle Texas at home?

9. TCU (29-16, 13-14)

Last week: 10

What to know: Horned Frogs are 5-1 in their past six conference games. Getting it figured out just in time?

10. Texas Tech (30-20, 12-15)

Last week: 6

What to know: Talk about outcomes that foreshadowed nothing: Tech swept West Virginia three weeks ago and now leads Baylor by 1 1/2 games for 10th place — the last spot that makes the conference tournament.

11. Baylor (20-26, 9-15)

Last week: 11

What to know: Bears are on an eight-game conference losing streak after dropping the last two against Kansas and being swept by West Virginia and TCU.

12. Brigham Young (18-26, 6-18)

Last week: 12

What to know: Cougars, odd team out on the conference schedule last weekend, spent it in Coral Gables, losing two of three to Miami. Now back home for Cincinnati and trying to snap a nine-game

Big 12 losing streak.

13. Houston (23-24, 6-17)

Last week: 13

What to know: No Big 12 series victories since March. No reprieves with Kansas and Oklahoma State left to play.

Big 12 Baseball Standings
(as of April 25)

| Team | Conf. | Overall |
|---------------|-------|---------|
| Oklahoma | 18-6 | 29-17 |
| Oklahoma St | 15-9 | 32-16 |
| West Virginia | 15-9 | 29-18 |
| Texas | 15-9 | 30-19 |
| Kansas | 13-11 | 27-17 |
| Cincinnati | 13-11 | 27-21 |
| Kansas State | 12-12 | 28-19 |
| TCU | 13-14 | 29-16 |
| UCF | 11-12 | 30-15 |
| Texas Tech | 12-15 | 30-20 |
| Baylor | 9-15 | 21-26 |
| Houston | 6-17 | 24-24 |
| BYU | 6-18 | 19-26 |



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College Football News and Notes



BO CARTER

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The 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit featured 50 percent of the 2023 NFF Campbell Trophy® Finalists tapped to pursue the dream of playing football at the highest level. There were eight NFF Campbell Trophy® finalists (second-highest total in history) chosen out of 16 standouts overall and 39 members of the elite 2023-24 NFF Hampshire Honor Society selected. 2022 Campbell Trophy® finalist Walter Rouse of Stanford elected to use his final season of eligibility per NCAA rulings at Oklahoma as a senior again in '23 and brought the final 2024 NFL Draft tally to nine.

The NFF Gridiron Club of Dallas is partnering with the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of the NFL Alumni Association for the club's second annual charity golf tournament (today) Monday, May 6. The tournament will focus on raising funds for college scholarships to benefit high school scholar-athletes recognized at its annual awards banquet each spring. "We are excited to partner with the DFW NFL Alumni Association for our tournament this year," said NFF Dallas vice president and tournament director Gary Peek. The tourney is set for the King's Course at award-winning Gleneagles Country Club in Plano, Texas, and will be emceed by award-winning sportscaster Scott Murray.

For additional information, please access: www.nffdallas.golf.

Featured speaker at the post-tourney banquet is NFF College Hall of Fame, NFL standout and award-winning broadcaster Gary Reasons of Northwestern State and the NFL. Golf professional Mitch Dobbyn of Fort Worth will offer entertainment as one of the world's longest drivers (record competitive drive of 442 yards) as the 10-time qualifier for the World Championship Long Drive contest continues to participate in 300-plus charity golf events with \$1 million-plus generated for charities and scholarships.

The 66th NFF Awards Dinner is set for Tuesday, Dec. 10, in Las Vegas, Nev. For NFF membership, ticket information and additional data, please access Footballfoundation.org.

The NIL INFLCR Summit is scheduled for June 22-24 at the NFF Chick-Fil-A College Hall of Fame in Atlanta. There will be an anticipated 500-plus student-athletes and nationally known speakers will help share ideas and conduct seminars. Some of the top speakers already secured for the 440-capacity conference are Sam Acho, 2010 William V. Campbell Trophy® recipient, former Texas and NFL defensive end, ESPN Analyst; Tom Bratton, Medallion Partners CEO, business consultant; Greg Johnson, McAfee President and CEO, former Intuit executive VP, and former Air Force halfback; and Joe Moglia, former TD Ameritrade Chairman and CEO, former Coastal Carolina head football coach. Nominees for the 2024 NIL Awards powered by Influencer at the NIL Summit include such categories as Female Athlete of the Year, Male Athlete of the Year, Innovator of the Year, the Hustle Award, Scholar Athlete of the Year, Athlete Advocate of the Year, Breakthrough Athlete of the Year, Athlete Creator of the Year,

Best Institutional Program, and Brand of the Year. Some of the top institutional program nominees include Cincinnati, Florida, Grand Canyon, Ole Miss, Nebraska, Ohio State, Saint Joseph's (Pa.), and UCLA. Student-athlete and coach/administrator registration also remains open for the NIL Summit in upcoming weeks.

The fourth annual Black College Baseball World Series presented by Tyson opens double-elimination activity Wednesday at Riverwalk Stadium (home of the Class AA Southern League Montgomery Biscuits) with some of the top HBCU programs from NCAA Division II and NAIA ranks competing. May 8 contests include four NAIA teams facing off, and four NCAA Division II squads meeting. The winners of the NAIA and NCAA brackets will meet in the fourth annual championship game Saturday at 2 p.m. (CDT). The competing schools are Bluefield State (W.Va.), Edward Waters, Florida Memorial, Jarvis Christian, Miles, Talladega, and Wiley.

Previous winners of the prestigious postseason meet are Bluefield State in 2021, Edwards Water in 2022, and Florida Memorial in 2023 in an 18-inning marathon triumph over Albany State.

NFF College Hall of Fame Facts:

Some notable birthdates in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the May 6-12 time period are May 6 (1909) Johnny Vaught, Olney, Texas; (1922) Pat Harder, Milwaukee, Wis.; (1957) Tom Cousineau, Fairview Park, Ohio; May 7 (1881) Paul Bunker, Alpena, Mich.; (1896) Belford West, Hamilton, N.Y.; (1905) Henry "Red" Sanders, Asheville, N.C.; (1930) Vito "Babe" Parilli, Rochester, Pa.; (1953) Pat McNally, Villa Park, Calif.; (1964) Leslie O'Neal, Little Rock, Ark.; (1984) Alex Smith, Bremerton, Wash.; May 8 (1930) Doug Atkins, Humboldt, Tenn.; (1959) Ronnie Lott, Albuquerque, N.M.; May 9 (1958) Brad Budde, Detroit, Mich.; May 10 (1917) Charlie O'Rourke, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; May 11 (1874) Langdon Lea, Germantown, Pa.; (1983) Matt Leinart, Santa Ana, Calif.; (1988) Jeremy Maclin, Kirkwood, Mo.; May 12 (1872) Art Wheeler, Philadelphia, Pa.; (1888) John Wilce, Rochester, N.Y.; (1934) Harold Davis, Youngstown, Ohio; (1948) Joe Cichy, Fargo, N.D.; (1949) Don McCauley, Worcester, Mass.

Notable anniversaries of passings if NFF College Hall of Fame members are May 7 (1960) John Kilpatrick, New York City; (1994) Chuck Taylor, Stanford, Calif.; May 8 (1997) Bob Devaney, Lincoln, Neb.; (2006) John Kimbrough, Haskell, Texas; (2023) Joe Kapp, Salinas, Calif.; May 9 (2002) Dan Devine, Tempe,

Ariz.; May 10 (1995) Gil Steinke, Austin, Texas; (2013) Ronnie Caveness, Little Rock, Ark.; May 11 (1986) Fritz Pollard, Silver Spring, Md.; May 12 (1982) Wear Schoover, Arlington, Virginia.

Happy birthdays to NFF Hall of Fame members born May 6 Tom Cousineau, May 7 Pat McNally, Leslie O'Neal, Alex Smith, May 8 Ronnie Lott, May 9 Brad Budde, May 11 Matt Leinart, Jeremy Maclin, May 12 Joe Cichy, Don McCauley...

Schedules:

Iowa State will be playing its second intercontinental football contest in history against Kansas State at Dublin, Ireland, in 2025. The Cyclones previously met Nebraska in the regular-season Coca-Cola Bowl in Tokyo, Japan. It is the first overseas' Big 12 Conference clash in football history...Alabama A&M will host Georgetown (Ky.) to complete its upcoming season slate...Ole Miss will face Charlotte in both 2026 and '27...Louisiana and rival Louisiana Tech will tangle in 2026 and '29...Mississippi State and Tulane are set for a two-game series in 2030 and '32...LSU and Utah have signed an agreement for a pair of games in 2031 and '32...ABC is set for a national telecast for Sunday, Sept. 1, between LSU and USC at 4:30 p.m. (PDT) in Las Vegas, Nev.

Good Works:

Major college sports fans and executives attorney Mary Lane Leslie of Texas Tech and West Volusia (Fla.) Tourism executive director/Auburn alumna Georga Lane Carter Turner are making a historic pilgrimage to the ancestral home of Joel Lane – the Joel Lane House – in Raleigh, N.C. Lane ceded almost 1,000 acres of his property in 1794 to help form the city of Raleigh, the North Carolina state capital and eventual campus of NC State (founded in 1887)...The famed 20th anniversary Mayborn School of Journalism Non-Fiction Conference for the University of North Texas is set for Oct. 25-26...Cal State Dominguez Hills and Toyota North America are collaborating to help bring upward mobility for underserved communities in CSUD and neighboring areas...The month of May is Military Appreciation Month being observed on numerous college campuses and with departments of athletics to salute veterans and active service members.

Football Coaches:

Nebraska head coach Matt Rhule posted on X some prime examples of leadership in football and life...Texas A&M head coach Mike Elko spoke of additional community service and academic goals for the '24 Aggies...Georgia head coach Kirby Smart received a compensation upgrade to

(continued on page 16)

become the highest-salaried head coach in college football. The previous top-compensated mentor was retired Alabama head coach Nick Saban...The LSU Board of Supervisors okayed extended-year contracts for LSU assistant head coach/running backs coach Frank Wilson and offensive line coach Brad Davis...Colorado, Nike and CU head coach NFF College Hall of Fame DB Deion Sanders of Florida State are leaning in toward a unique licensing agreement for marketing and apparel with Coach Prime. Sanders also expressed his thoughts about possibly moving into a NFL coaching position when his sons QB Shedeur and DB Shilo enter the NFL draft as early as 2025...

Hometowns of more 2024 college head coaches – Arkansas State: Butch Jones, Saugatuck, Michigan; Army West Point: Jeff Monken, Peoria, Illinois; Auburn: Hugh Freeze, Oxford, Mississippi; Ball State: Mike Neu, Indianapolis, Indiana; Baylor: Dave Aranda, Kern County, California.

Directors of Athletics:

New Washington director of athletics Pat Chun has stepped down from a committee to hire his successor at Washington State...UT Martin AD and NCAA Softball Committee chair Kurt McGuffin related what it takes to gain an at-large berth in the NCAA Division I Softball Championship as well as the continuing surge in college softball interest and other women's sports...New Missouri AD Laird Veatch has a rare contract clause calling for corrections in case of possible changes in the NCAA FBS landscape and certified his initial five-year contract last week...Retiring Tulsa AD Rick Dickson noted that in his final 10 weeks with the Golden Hurricane he will do everything possible way to guarantee a smooth transition for his successor...Baylor AD Mack Rhoades is glancing at possible settlement proposals for the House v. NCAA jurisprudence...UCF AD Terry Mohajir emphasized the duties in college athletics for educating student-athletes and student support personnel as well as what he sees as \$100,000-plus in total benefits for each student-athlete at Division I universities...Texas A&M-Corpus Christi AD Adrian Rodriguez opined about staff changes, plans for a new associate AD for athletic advancement and revenue generation and some new views for the culture of TAMUCC athletics...Coastal Carolina AD Matt Hogue, who chairs the 2023-24 NCAA Division I Baseball Committee, is moving to a different position with emphasis on broadcasting at CCU starting July 15...Arizona State executive senior associate AD Graham Rossini appears to be at the top of the list to become AD for the Sun Devils...Coastal Carolina chair of athletics Joe Moglia explained that players getting paid through NIL opportunities is not the biggest problem facing college athletics but that the lack of structure and national governance have been the major hindrances...Legendary, 42-season Missouri

State head coach Keith Guttin is making his farewell tour before retirement in the Missouri Valley Conference with 1,391 career wins (conference record among the Top 25 all-time in NCAA Division I) through games of April 29...Veteran publicist Danny Kambel is the assistant AD for communications at Spartanburg (S.C.) Methodist College...Colorado senior associate AD for external operations Alexis Williams told media about the positive aspects of approaching more emerging markets and the anticipation and followup of the acquisition of NFF College Hall of Fame head coach Deion Sanders at CU...UAPB added Erica Leak as women's basketball head coach...Air Force named Stacy McIntyre women's basketball head coach...UIC chose Sherard Clinkscales as senior deputy AD and chief revenue officer...Colorado assistant AD for communications Curtis Snyder has been named 2023-24 University of Colorado Staff Member of the Year...South Carolina women's basketball head coach Dawn Staley restated her loyalty to USC athletics despite multiple celebrity appearances, national commercials and other obligations. Friends continue to tell how she always makes time for student-athletes and people who have interest in women's basketball and college athletics...New Hampshire named Megan Shoniker women's basketball head coach...Jackson State chose Margaret Richards as women's basketball head coach...Matt Leach will guide the Iowa State women's swimming and diving team as head coach starting this month...Toledo added Jacy Dyer as women's swimming and diving head coach...Indiana State women's basketball head coach Chad Killinger has left his post after three seasons...Auburn senior associate AD for student-athlete support services Kathryn Flynn is retiring...Quinnipiac tabbed Jordan Christopher as women's lacrosse head coach...Austin Peay men's golf head coach Robbie Wilson is finishing his tenure at APSU...Binghamton named Mary Grimes women's basketball head coach...Central Michigan tabbed Ben Bennett as men's wrestling head coach...Georgia selected Cecil Canqueteau-Landi and Ryan Roberts as co-head coaches of the women's gymnastics squad...Maryland Eastern Shore named Malika Willis women's basketball head coach...USC women's basketball head coach Lindsay Gottlieb had her contract extended through the 2029-2030 campaign...Veteran South Carolina equestrian head coach Boo Major is retiring after 26 years in Columbia...Former Arkansas deputy AD Clayton Hamilton is moving campus to serve as senior associate vice chancellor for campus services...Dennis Driscoll is heading to Alabama State as director of athletics social media and brand management assistant...The TurnkeyZRG Group is helping Tulsa with its search for a new AD...Texas Southern chose Dr. James W. Crawford III as president...McNeese State named Dr. Wade Rousse president...Winthrop presi-

dent Dr. Edward Serna will serve through June 30, 2029, under his new personal pact...The Nebraska Board of Regents appointed Dr. Jeffrey Gold as NU system president...Oregon president Dr. Karl Scholz had mentioned several current projects and challenges facing NCAA Division I athletics with the university's move from the Pac-12 to the Big Ten Conference, the comprehensive Big Ten Library, the sharing of resources among universities such as UO, Michigan State and UCLA Latin American studies, and travel costs involved for Oregon fans attending games in the Big Ten area...Ohio U. professor David Ridpath envisions the College Sports' Tomorrow's football super league as a means for the Power Five conference and similar schools to sustain financial security as well as promote big-time championship events for the gridiron and possible other sports. Ridpath and others also think that sports besides football may go to associational models similar to national Olympic models...Merrimack men's lacrosse head coach Mike Morgan is leaving after 17 seasons with the Warriors...The latest position openings in athletics on DITicker.com are at Arizona State, Cleveland State, Colorado State, Fresno State, Maine, Illinois State, Indiana State, Iowa, Northern Iowa, St. Bonaventure, Stephen F. Austin, UMass Lowell, VMI, Washington State, Long Island, the Big 12 Conference, Texas A&M-Texarkana, California, Cincinnati, Duquesne, Eastern Kentucky, Georgia Tech, Loyola Marymount, Memphis, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, North Carolina, UIC, UT Arlington, Western Kentucky, Western Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The Conferences:

Sun Belt Conference commissioner Keith Gill expounded on the national progress of the Sun Belt Conference (especially in advanced football respect), NIL perspectives, pressures related to collegiate student-athletes' performances, and open-ended answers to the survivability of college athletics under the current circumstances...The Southeastern Conference led all circuits with 11 picks selections in the opening round of the NFL Draft with eight from the Pac-12 and four each from the Big Ten and ACC...Sul Ross State continues its transition in spring sports to full membership in the American Southwest Conference for the 2024-25 competitive year...The Big Ten Conference will schedule back-to-back men's basketball road games with UCLA and USC facing teams in the eastern region of that circuit in 2024-25. Oregon and Washington are slated to make one cross-country jaunt apiece during the upcoming men's campaign. The Big Ten revealed its entire men's schedule for 2024-25 last week...Stephen F. Austin is checking its options for a possible return to the Southland Conference after extensive travel cost additions while the West Coast Conference is eyeballing California Baptist as a new member. The Atlantic Sun

and Southland Conferences may be rethinking their positions on invitations to new and former members Abilene Christian, Tarleton State and UT Arlington...Conference USA chose New Mexico State's Logan Gallina (hitter) and DBU's Jerrod Jenkins (pitcher) Baseball Players of the Week presented by Blenders Eyewear...Mountain West Conference Baseball Players of the Week were New Mexico's Will Asby (player), New Mexico's Brett Russell (pitcher) and New Mexico's Gene Trujillo (freshman)...Missouri Valley Conference Baseball Players of the Week were Mark Shallenberger, Evansville (player); and Bryce Konitzer, Valparaiso (pitcher)...Big 12 Conference Baseball Players of the Week were Oklahoma State's Carson Benge (player), Oklahoma's Braden Davis (pitcher) and West Virginia's Kyle West (newcomer)...The Ivy League has claimed in court documents that it does not control athletes or provide them with compensation despite rulings to the contrary.

The Bowls:

Outgoing College Football Playoff executive director Bill Hancock related how both Army West Point and Navy will be considered for the 12-team CFP with their late meeting if either wins the American Athletic Conference. Hancock also said that the CFP is working with NFL executives about potential time conflicts with NFL playoffs and some Saturday CFP early rounds...Longtime Oregon State and Nebraska retired head coach Mike Riley has been appointed to the CFP selection committee for 2024-25...The Goodyear Cotton Bowl's annual report signified a \$54 million direct impact to the Dallas-Fort Worth economy with a \$45 million indirect financial impact to the area. The study also indicated an 89.2 percent increase in social media hits for all areas associated with this bowl...The Cotton Bowl Athletic Association also denoted three staff promotions - Amy Scott to chief of staff, Kelly Newell to chief experience officer and Scottie Rodgers to vice president of communications...The Vrbo Fiesta Bowl will update its mission as the Fiesta Sports Foundation with more details coming later this year...Florida Atlantic is seeking to raise its already-impressive .800 bowl winning percentage during the 2024 postseason with a 4-1 mark in postseason from 2007-20...Kansas State is looking for its 26th bowl berth in post-2024 with 10 bowl trips since the 2012 season...The Goodyear Cotton Bowl's AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, joined the NFL Dallas Cowboys for the popular Head to Miller Lite® House Tacos and Tunes presented by Miller Lite adjacent to the stadium last weekend.

The Players:

East Carolina's Eric Sowell was highlighted for making 47 catches for 622 yards to pace ECU receivers after transferring to the American Athletic Conference contender from Colorado...UTSA quarter-

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back Owen McCown (son of SMU and Sam Houston star QB Josh McCown) was featured as a Colorado transfer to the bowl-bound Roadrunners in 2023...Mississippi State DT Wilky Denaud has moved into the NCAA transfer portal, but Utah State RB Davon Booth has cast his lot with MSU for 2024...Colorado DB Jaden Milliner-Jones is transferring to SMU...Cornell LB Conner Henderson is moving to North Texas' program for '24...Minnesota's Elijah Hawkins has transferred to Texas Tech...Vlad Goldin has transferred from Florida Atlantic to Michigan...Tennessee's Jason Aidoo is headed for Arkansas via the portal... Creighton's Ryan Kalkbrenner has declared for the 2024 NBA Draft... Koby Brea of Dayton will transfer and finish his career at Kentucky...St. John's men's basketball student-athletes Chris Ledlum and Jordan Dingle have taken to jurisprudence to appeal to the NCAA for a fifth year of eligibility...Uniquely-named QB General Booty of the famed Booty sports family of Shreveport, La., is leaving Oklahoma to enter the transfer portal... Jamie Baum became the first woman to compete for the Rose-Hulman baseball team and got a hit in her first plate appearance...All-America men's basketball guard RJ Davis of North Carolina will return for his fifth season of eligibility in 2024-25...Iowa NCA portal transfers Tony Perkins (Missouri), Dasonte Bowen (St. Bonaventure,) and Patrick McCaffery (Butler) have found their 2024 landing locales...Texas men's tennis standout Eliot Spizzirri was named Big 12 Conference Player of the Year for the second year in succession.

Around the Gridiron and Campus:

East Carolina athletics tallied an additional \$1 million donation from the Derek Dunn family for the to-be-built \$24 million Isley Indoor Performance Center For Football ...The Legends and Conventions, Sports and Leisure International Group and Mississippi State have joined in a comprehensive long-term master plan for all MSU athletics facilities. Davis Wade Football Stadium is due for immediate sound media and lighting updates over the next 18 months ...Mississippi Valley State is close to final construction of its new Jumbotron scoreboard inside Jerry Rice-Willie Totten Stadium...The Bexar County (Texas) Commissioner's Court in San Antonio okayed a \$5 million grant for UTSA's upcoming Basketball and Volleyball Training Facility...Southern Miss will make \$35 million in renovations for historic Reed Green Coliseum...Washington athletics garnered \$151.6 million in fiscal year 2023 with a \$1.6 million surplus and university support of \$10.3 million. Fellow Pac-12 member Oregon had \$150.6 million in revenue and an operating surplus of \$3.8 million...Marquette athletics netted a \$1.5 million donation from alumni Bob and Kim Eck via the Eck Family Foundation for the MU basketball practice facility and the university's Athletic and

Human Performance Research Center... Robert Morris athletics has acquired a seven-digit from alumnus Russ Olsen for the Olsen Basketball Excellence Fund with matching funds provided for other donors up to \$1 million...UT Arlington athletics has gained the largest unrestricted donation (the amount was not divulged) from alumnus Raymond Matthews...Indiana athletics is in the final stages of inking a marketing and apparel agreement with adidas...The Rutgers athletics marketing department trotted out a Ferris wheel for young fans' enjoyment at the RU spring game on April 27...Tennessee has sold out its available 70,500 football season tickets for the second year since 2023 (third time since 2002) and also has an alternate ticket interest list of 15,000-plus...Oregon has added more than 11,000 new football season tickets orders in its 2024 presale...Auburn has initiated the Locker Room Club in Jordan-Hare Stadium with capacity of 350 and numerous amenities for patrons...The West Virginia Country Roads NIL collective has a new project and goal called Million in May to raise that dollar amount for NIL purposes. WVU football also will pay tribute to the state's rich heritage in coal mining with a special all-black uniform for selected 2024 contests...St. Joseph's (Pa.) and the Van Wagner Group plus Student NIL have combined for the Hawk Hill NIL Fair to gain needed funding for the programs...Brown athletics and Teamworks Influencer are starting the BRUNO Exchange NIL collective to assist student-athletes...Virginia Tech football has introduced some innovative season and single-game family ticket packages for the coming campaign...Stanford's women's sailing won the 2024 Intercollegiate Sailing Association national team racing championship for the first time in SU annals...Jacksonville State used a NCAA-record 15 baseball pitchers (throwing 207 total tosses) in an 18-10 setback to rival Troy...Utah athletics and JMI Sports have a revised, 10-year multimedia rights contract signed and delivered...UAB football is the first gridiron to ink a players' association pact in Athletes.org...Texas A&M-Texarkana athletics is seeking to make a move to NCAA Division II in coming months...The Auburn men's team has been tabbed as the No. 1 seed in the NCAA Golf Championships after capturing the Southeastern Conference crown. Mississippi State's women's team copped the '24 SEC Championship for the first time in the 43-year history of the MSU women's varsity program...Penn State baseball has had record concessions' sales for the Nittany Lions popular Dollar Dog Nights...Lamar athletics and Under Armour have a new, five-year agreement for marketing and apparel...U. of Denver and Nebraska-Kearney played a special spring volleyball exhibition match last weekend in Kearney...DBU's development office and athletics had another successful National Giving Day along with the U. of

North Texas last Thursday...Temple athletics is planning a new on-campus tennis complex...Houston football is hoping to wear its Luv Ya Blue uniforms as a tribute to the old AFL-NFL Houston Oilers but is facing some opposition about intellectual property rights for the uniforms from the NFL and uniform rightsholder the NFL Tennessee Titans...Sports-minded UCLA and USC (Masters) alumnus Jim Zehmer is retiring as president of TABC Inc. of the Toyota Motors North America after 32 years with the corporation.

NFF College Hall of Fame, Other Notables:

NFF College Hall of Fame standout the late Alex Karas of Iowa and NFL and Penn State stalwart the late Rosey Grier have been featured in multiple repeat broadcasts of the Daniel Boone Show on the INSP Network. Starring as Boone is the late Fess Parker, a longtime athletics enthusiast of his alma maters Hardin-Simmons and Texas. Karas also was highlighted in the movie Victor/Victoria with Academy Award-winning Julie Andrews and former Norman, Okla., resident and Oklahoma football fan James Garner...The Doug Williams Center (directed by NFF College Hall of Fame QB Doug Williams of Grambling) has been advocating more coaching and athletes' diversity and equity in MLS and professional mountain and rick climbing...Former Ole Miss, NFL New York Giants and NFF National Scholar-Athlete QB Eli Manning is appearing in the Ole Miss NIL Grove Collective for a special legendary evening dinner with past and present Rebel greats...Former NFL and Virginia QB star Matt Ryan is moving into a host's role with NFL Today...Former USC and NFF College Hall of Fame RB Reggie Bush was relieved and pleased in public comments about regaining his 2005 Heisman Trophy...Attorneys at Salvi, Schostok and Pritchard representing former Northwestern football student-athletes will consolidate their jurisprudence against the university with a lawsuit filed by former NU football head coach and NFF College Hall of Fame head coach Pat Fitzgerald.

Media Musings:

The Athletic's Pete Sampson chronicled the reasons behind kickers have left their schools in the transfer portal... Communications' expert Mike Adorno related the importance of strategic communications in gathering NIL compensation...ESPN and the NBA are in the process of finalizing a new multimedia rights' package...Apple appears to be near a broadcast agreement with FIFA for the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament...The Skydance Group seems to be early the top bidder for the CBS-Paramount connection with a 4-5 billion cost estimate...Sports Business Journal's Bill King glanced at how prop wagering has been brought to light even more glaringly among pro and college sports in recent months...The Athletic's Scott Dochterman investigated the many main-currents surrounding allegations of wager-

ing investigations inside colleges athletics in the state of Iowa and other cases...The San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News newspaper's Jon Wilner took a closer look at the dismissal of former Arizona State head coach Herm Edwards...ESPN's Jeff Borzello noted that all NCAA Division I men's basketball transfers now are required to have entered the portal by last week - Wednesday, May 1 - for immediate eligibility...JD Sports the Hibbett Co. (founded in Florence, Ala., in the 1940s) for roughly \$1.08 billion. One of the Hibbett family remains prominent in college athletics in Alabama senior deep snapper Kneeland Hibbett who also happens to be the grandson of Alabama All-America WR Dennis Homan...From Jan. 1-April 9, there were 700-plus collegiate administrative jobs in athletics, and many were filled or facilitated by the Development and Creative/Digital Media Group...Endeavor Group CEO Ari Emanuel had an estimated compensation total of \$65 million in 2023 ...The Tampa Bay (Fla.) Times newspaper's Matt Baker is continuing a quest to find additional closed-door discussions about internal Atlantic Coast Conference distribution agreements and other key matters, including the additions of California, SMU and Stanford...Yahoo Sports' Ross Dellenger met with SEC commissioner Greg Sankey about a possible misnomer of a college super league headed by SEC and Big Ten Conference interests and how college athletics' private equity can be compared with stock market investments for profitable businesses...Collegiate Sports Associates added Surefire Baseball Forum's Jason Penry as partner consultant for baseball...ESPN's Pat McAfee questioned NFL commissioner Roger Goodell about the state of college athletics, and the commissioner responded with other questions about the real power behind college athletics - the NCAA or the Power Five conferences...Award-winning sports columnist Greg Riddle of the Dallas Morning News newspaper penned a sterling column about the unique competition in outdoor track in Texas for disabled high school student-athletes ...JohnWallStreet.com believes that cable cord-cutting might lead to additional exposure and more lucrative multimedia rights for the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, and other prime professional leagues...Genius Sports Group chair David Levy sees positive trends in several areas of college athletics, particularly women's basketball, improved data implementation, and more extensive use of artificial intelligence in multiple areas...

Research from historian and author Mike Burrows indicated that 1,850 NCAA Division I men's basketball student-athletes entered the NCAA transfer portal from March 18-May 1, and five schools did not lose youngsters to the portal: Army West Point, Binghamton, Kansas, Marquette, and Navy...On3.com's Eric Prisbell purports that most of the talk around a Group of Five conference-only future system of

playoffs mentions that it is floating among the Group of Five at this point. Some Big 12, ACC and SEC schools also are concerned about being omitted from the possible super conference alignment and have indicated outside interest...Sports Business Journal's Ben Portnoy examined how the NFL Draft and compensation negotiations – especially for free agent signees – have been affected by both the NIL and NCAA transfer portal. NFL scouts have admitted that student-athletes changing universities multiple times have made it a bit more difficult to evaluate these potential professionals in “live game” situations...Front Office Sports' Eric Fisher took an extended view at how colleges release stadium, arena or other renderings – especially when major changes are made in design and costs...Texas broadcasting legends Bill Schoening and Mike Capps were working from opposite booths during the Texas State-UTSA rivalry baseball contest last week...Skydance Media submitted a final to purchase Paramount Global whose CEO and Columbia alumnus Bob Bakish resigned last Monday...On3.com has a new featured entitled On3 HER to focus on women's sports with key columns from Talia Goodman...ExtraPoints.com pontificated on the possible end of partial scholarships, particularly in college Olympic sports, because of NIL considerations.

FWAA, CSC, NCAA, Etc.:

The FWAA is continuing to accept entries for its various 2023-24 Writing Contests through July 1...NCBWA National Players of the Month for April are Christian Moore (hitter) of Kentucky and Trey Yesavage (pitcher) of East Carolina...Kansas athletics communicators Chris Theisen and Adny Eisch spoke to a large class at KU about duties involved with collegiate media relations offices...College Sports Communicators members featured in the news and on social media posts in recent days are Jim Daves of Virginia, Shelly Poe of Auburn, Travis Wells of Virginia Tech, Will Pantages of Wake Forest, Jeff Bechtold of Washington, and Bill Stevens of Washington State...Florida, Iowa, Iowa State, Kansas, LSU, Michigan State, Nebraska, Northwestern, Stanford, Tennessee, UCLA, and USC are convening with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible issues and probes at their respective schools...The NCAA is negotiating with Teamworks, Opendores and the Collegiate Licensing COMPASS Group as its official NIL services and registry agreements' provider...The NCAA Board of Governors passed a resolution to begin NCAA women's wrestling competition officially during the 2025-26 academic year with an initial \$1.7 million Association-wide funding...The NFL is going to offer Guardian Caps on helmets in 2024...The NBA and Amazon Prime are moving closer to a streaming service agreement among the professional sports and media giants...The NCAA and major conferences are in part-

nership to look into a settlement for the House v. NCAA jurisprudence...The NCAA named Florida deputy AD Lynda Tealer senior vice president of championships...Knight Commission co-chairs Len Elmore and Pam Bernard gave several proposals to the NCAA in a recent letter with recommendations for Project DI and reorganization, differences between FBS and FCS programs with some financial considerations, and the authority and accountability of FBS football as related to other sports programs...The U.S. Department of Labor now will require colleges and universities to provide either a compensation raise or overtime benefits for personnel in the admissions' officers, student affairs personnel and selected staff members in athletics...The NFL Chicago Bears announced a multibillion-dollar lakefront indoor stadium and area development via a public-private partnership wishing to draw NCAA Championships, Super Bowls and other national events. The estimated price tag is \$2 billion...The U.S. Federal Trade Commission has issued memos about non-compete clauses, and this will continue to have an effect on several areas of college athletics, including coaching and executive administrative hirings with special clauses included in contracts...The Major League Baseball Players Association has met with the MLB office in New York and Nike to make key alterations to newly-designed MLB uniforms for the 2024 season...The Husch Blackwell Group revealed its 2024 NCAA Compliance Report and gave opinions of how the NCAA v. Alston case had multiple effects on NCAA amateurism with the possibility that NCAA student-athletes may be classified as university employees via interpretations from the National Labor Relations Board... The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency is re-classifying marijuana as a Schedule III controlled substance and will take it off the current drug lists that include heroin, bath salts and ecstasy...The 2024 U.S. Association and Nonprofit Compensation Report is now available through the association's official website...Marijuana has some form of legal acceptance currently in 38 states while legal sports wagering now is allowed in 37 states.

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Tom Hill
CGA STAFF WRITER

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