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Weekly



GRADES

May 7 - May 13, 2021

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DALLAS STARS

The logo for 'The Ticket Sportsradio' is prominently displayed. It features the word 'THE' in small white letters above the word 'TICKET' in large, bold, red letters with a white outline and a 3D effect. Below 'TICKET' is the word 'SPORTSRADIO' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. At the bottom, the frequencies '96.7fm/1310am' are written in yellow text on a red oval background. The entire logo is set against a dark background with a green and black geometric pattern.

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AROUND THE AREA

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

Goodwin AAC Player of the Year



Goodwin Named AAC Player of the Year, Three Others Honored By League

IRVING, Texas – SMU's Noah Goodwin was named American Athletic Conference Men's Golf Player of the Year, the Mustangs' Nathan Petronzio was named AAC Freshman of the Year and three Mustangs, Goodwin, Mac Meissner and Ollie Osborne, were named to the all-conference team.

Goodwin becomes the fifth SMU golfer to win the conference golfer of the year since 2007, joining a distinguished list that includes Colt Knost (2007, C-USA), Kelly Kraft (2010, C-USA), Bryson DeChambeau (2015, AAC) and Meissner (2019, AAC).

Goodwin, who earned his second All-AAC honor, was the conference's leader with a 70.00 stroke average. He had four top-10 finishes in six events this season, including a pair of second-place results at the Trinity Forest Invitational and the AAC Championship. Goodwin played the entire season at -21, and had just a single 54-hole score above par this season.

Petronzio joins a similar list as the sixth conference freshman of the year from SMU since 2003. Knost (2004, WAC), Kraft (2008, C-USA), DeChambeau (2013, C-USA) and Meissner (2018, AAC) all won conference freshman of the year before earning player of the year honors, while Will Dodson (2003, WAC) joins the

list as a freshman of the year winner. Petronzio had two top-10 finishes, tying for fourth at the Trinity Forest Invitational and tying for eighth at the AAC Championship. He averaged 72.72 strokes per round on the season, and turned in a scorecard of even-par or better in half of his 18 rounds.

The Mustangs placed three members on the All-American Athletic Conference team for the first time since joining the league in 2013-14. SMU previously had two members on five of the past six all-conference teams.

Mac Meissner earned his third All-AAC honor, and joined Goodwin as Mustangs to be unanimously selected to this year's team. Meissner, a candidate for the Ben Hogan Award and the Byron Nelson Award, finished no worse than 15th in six events this season. Meissner did not post a 54-hole score worse than +1, and went par-or-better in 13 of 18 rounds. He joins Austin Smotherman, DeChambeau, Kraft and Knost as three-time all-conference.

Ollie Osborne earned his first all-conference selection, posting a 73.00 stroke average on the season. Osborne's collegiate highlights were a tie for fourth at the Trinity Forest Invitational, and a solo-11th finish at the AAC Championship. Osborne competed in The Masters Tournament in April, where he posted the low 36-hole score among all amateurs in the field. Overall, Osborne had six par-or-better rounds and three scorecards in the 60s in 18 college rounds.

The Mustangs expect to receive an at-large bid to the NCAA Men's Golf Championship Regionals, when the field is announced on May 5.

AAC Men's Golf Awards

2021 American Athletic Conference Men's Golf Player of the Year

Noah Goodwin, Sr., SMU

2021 American Athletic Conference Men's Golf Freshman of the Year

Nathan Petronzio, Fr., SMU

2021 American Athletic Conference Men's Golf Coach of the Year

Steve Bradley, USF*

2021 American Athletic Conference Men's Golf All-Conference Team

Clement Charmasson, So., UCF*

Johnny Travale, Jr., UCF*

Clay Amlung, Jr., Cincinnati*

Sam Jean, So., Cincinnati*

A.J. Beechler, Jr., East Carolina

Alexander Frances, Jr., Houston*

Albin Bergstrom, So., USF*

Luke Gifford, So., USF*

Noah Goodwin, Sr., SMU*

Mac Meissner, Sr., SMU*

Ollie Osborne, Jr., SMU

Marcus Wochner, So., Wichita State

*-Denotes unanimous selection

SMU Conference Men's Golf Players of the Year (Since 2007)

Colt Knost (2007, WAC)

Kelly Kraft (2010, C-USA)

Bryson DeChambeau (2015, AAC)

Mac Meissner (2019, AAC)

Noah Goodwin (2021, AAC)

SMU Men's Golf Freshman of the Year (Since 2003)

Will Dodson (2003, WAC)

Colt Knost (2004, WAC)

Kelly Kraft (2008, C-USA)

Bryson DeChambeau (2013, AAC)

Mac Meissner (2018, AAC)

Nathan Petronzio (2021, AAC)

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	MAY 7 FRIDAY	MAY 8 SATURDAY	MAY 9 SUNDAY	MAY 10 MONDAY	MAY 11 TUESDAY	MAY 12 WEDNESDAY	MAY 13 THURSDAY
	Mavs vs Cavaliers 7:30 / BSSW		Mavs at Cavaliers 6:00 / BSSW		Mavs at Memphis 7:00 / BSSW	Mavs vs Pelicans 8:00 / BSSW	
	Stars at Tampa Bay 6:00 / KTCK		Stars at Chicago 6:00 / KTCK	Stars at Chicago 7:00 / KTCK			
		FC Dallas vs Houston 2:30pm					
	Rangers vs Mariners 7:05 / BSSW	Rangers vs Mariners 6:05 / BSSW	Rangers vs Mariners 1:35 / BSSW	Rangers at Giants 1:45 / BSSW	Rangers at Giants 2:45 / BSSW		Rangers at Astros 7:10 / BSSW
	Americans at Oilers 7:05	Americans vs Oilers 7:05	Americans vs Oilers 2:05			Americans at Mavericks 7:05	

Rangers win second straight series



Texas has now won six of their last eight games and seven of their last 10



BY DIC HUMPHREY
DHUMPHREY24@GMAIL.COM
MEMBER: USBWA

The Texas Rangers started this week by winning three of four games against the Minnesota Twins, including two games when the Rangers' 10th inning ghost runner scored the winning run. It was the second straight series win for the Rangers, both four-game series, the third four-game series win of the season, and the fourth straight four-game series win going back to late last season, when Texas took three of four from the Houston Astros. The Rangers pushed their road record over .500 at 9-8 a, and their overall record is just one game under .500 at 16-17.

Once again, the bullpen was the main reason for the series win. Kolby Allard gave up three runs in Monday night's loss, but that was all the scoring the Twins did against the Ranger relievers, who logged 15 innings, in the series. The bullpen has clearly become an area of strength for Texas.

Jordan Lyles was the Rangers' starting pitcher on Thursday afternoon. He has been the weak link in the rotation, and manager Chris Woodward said in a pregame interview that this was a "big start" for Lyles, hinting that his hold on a spot in the rotation was not secure. Lyles gave up a home run in the first inning and two more runs in the third inning, but finished five innings with the Rangers trailing 3-2. Lyles at least gave his team a chance to win.

Joey Gallo homered and Isiah Kiner-Falefa singled home a run to account for the Rangers scoring. The Rangers tied the game

in the seventh inning with a home run from backup catcher Jonah Heim.

With the bullpen largely depleted from the overload of the first three games, not to mention the previous series against Boston, the Rangers had three rookie pitchers to hold down the hard hitting Twins. They were all great! Brett de Gues, the Rule 5 pick, followed Lyles to the mound, and threw two shutout innings. Taylor Hearn was next, and he kept the Twins off the scoreboard in the eighth and ninth innings. Willie Calhoun drove in the ghost runner in the top of the tenth inning to give the Rangers the lead. With Ian Kennedy unavailable for the save after saving four games in five days, Woodward went with Josh Sborz for the save. He pitched a one-two-three bottom of the tenth to earn his first Major League save. Hearn got the win to go to 1-1.

One thing this Ranger team is not, is a good defensive team. It showed in Monday's series opening game that the Rangers lost 6-5. The Rangers were charged with just one error, a Gallo throw from right field to third base that sailed on him allowing the runner advancing to third base to score. That was not the only miscue. Adolis Garcia in center and David Dahl in left also made questionable plays that led to Minnesota scores. Jose Trevino failed to actually tag a runner on a collision at the plate. All six Minnesota runs were scored with two outs. This was a very winnable game that didn't fell short.

A three run sixth put Minnesota in front 5-0. Texas rallied for three runs in the eighth and two more in the ninth inning. Garcia and Gallo hit two run home runs, but the rally fell short as the Twins added an insurance run in their half of the eighth inning, which ended up being the difference in the game. Dane Dunning went 5-2/3rds innings allowing three runs, two of which were earned, and Allard finished the game. Dunning is 1-2 with the loss, while Twins starter Kenta Maeda got the win to even his record at 2-2.

On Tuesday, the Rangers staged another

late innings rally. Kyle Gibson was the starter for Texas, and J. A. Happ opposed him. In the first inning, both got knocked around. The Rangers took their first lead of the series with a first inning run. It felt like it should have been more as Gallo blasted a ball that on most nights would have been a home run. It was caught with an assist from a wind blowing in from centerfield to hold the Rangers to one run.

The Twins came back to take the lead in their half of the first inning. Gibson walked a batter and Byron Buxton homered to put the Twins ahead 2-1. It was the first home run Gibson has given up this season. The game had the look and feel of a high scoring affair.

Fast forwarding to the ninth inning. Gibson had completed eight innings allowing just two hits after the first. Unfortunately, one of those hits was another home run. Happ righted his ship and pitched into the sixth inning. Hansel Robles relieved and they combined to keep the Rangers off the scoreboard after the first inning. The Rangers came to bat in the ninth inning trailing 3-1.

Willie Calhoun led off the ninth with a home run. Charlie Culberson reached on an error and went to second base on Andy Ibanez's ground single. (The scoring on the error was later changed to a single.) Andy Ibanez made his Major League debut by pinch hitting for Dahl and singled Culberson to second base. Jose Trevino pinch hit for Heim and laid down a sacrifice bunt to move the runners to second and third with one out. Kiner Falefa followed with a sacrifice fly that tied the game.

Joely Rodriguez pitched a perfect ninth inning for Texas striking out two of the three batters he faced. In the 10th, the second batter of the inning – Garcia – homered driving in the ghost runner and himself to put the Rangers in front 5-3. Gallo and Culberson both later doubled to add an insurance run making the final score 6-3.

Kennedy did his usual in the bottom of the 10th. Single, strikeout, double play to earn his eighth save. Rodriguez is 1-1 with the win.

Hyeon-Jong Yang was the Rangers' starting pitcher on Wednesday night. He was the sixth pitcher to start a game this year for Texas; and at 33, he became the oldest Ranger to make his first Major League start. He is considered a pitch to contact pitcher, so naturally he struck out the side in the first inning. Mitch Garver homered leading off the second inning, but Yang pitched into the fourth. Woodward took him out with the bases loaded and one out. Yang surprisingly struck out eight batters out of the 10 outs he recorded.

John King relieved and escaped any scoreboard damage by coaxing two ground balls that turned into force outs at home plate and second base to end the inning.

King pitched two more scoreless innings before handing it over to Martin, Rodriguez and Kennedy. They closed out the Twins on two hits.

Meanwhile, the offense tied the game on two singles and a Gallo force out in the fourth inning. Texas picked up two more runs in the sixth inning with Solak scoring on a wild pitch and Ibanez's sac fly drove in another. It was Ibanez's first Major League RBI.

That was all the scoring. The final score was 3-1. King was the winning pitcher. He's 3-1, and Kennedy was credited with his ninth save, which leads the A.L.

Texas has now won six of their last eight games and seven of their last 10. Their record of 16-19 has pulled them out of last place in the American League West and are now in fourth place, three games behind division leader Oakland, and one-half game ahead of the Los Angeles Angels which made big news on Thursday by DFAing Albert Pujols.

Texas returns to Arlington this weekend to face the Seattle Mariners, the third series of the season against a divisional opponent. Texas trails Seattle by just 1.5 games, so the series gives the Rangers the chance to make up more ground in the division. It is a three game set before the Rangers hit the road again. Start times of the games are 7:05 on Friday, 6:05 on Saturday and 1:35 on Sunday, and the only announced starting pitchers for either team is Mike Foltyniewicz (1-3) for Texas on Friday,

ROSTER MOVES: Prior to Tuesday's game, Brock Holt (hamstring) was placed on the 10-day injured list, and Andy Ibanez was called up from Round Rock to te his place on the active roster. To make room on the 40-man roster for Ibanez, Sam Huff was transferred from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Ranger manager Chris Woodward also indicated that he expects Khris Davis to be activated this weekend.

MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL: Minor league baseball was played Tuesday night for the first time in more than 600 days. The Rangers Low-A, High-A and Double-A teams all saw action, and all won. Frisco beat Corpus Christi 4-3. Down East beat Kaanapolis 8-4, and Hickory beat Greensboro 7-5. AAA Round Rock opened their season Thursday with a 6-0 win over OKC.

NOTABLE:

- The Rangers set AAA Round Rock's starting rotation with Wes Benjamin, Jason Bahr, Joe Palumbo, Sam Gaviglio and Brock Burke.

- All of Adolis Garcia's seven home runs have come in road games, and that leads the Majors in road home runs.

- Kyle Gibson was with the Twins from 2013-2019. He won 32 games in Target Field, the Twins home ballpark. That is the most wins for a pitcher in Target Field, which opened for the 2010 season.

Omni PGA Frisco Resort Groundbreaking



TOM WARD

TOMPWARD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

On Tuesday May 4th I attended the ceremonial groundbreaking event in Frisco announcing the Omni PGA Frisco Resort has begun construction on their newest high profile hotel. As a golf professional I was excited to learn more about this project because of the PGA's involvement.

Plenty of local business leaders and dignitaries were on hand to celebrate the occasion. Peter Strebel, President of Omni Hotel & Resort spoke to a large, enthusiastic outdoor crowd along with PGA President Jim Richerson, Frisco Mayor Jeff Cheney, Texas Governor Greg Abbott and a few others.

After their speeches, Peter Strebel along with owners Bob Rowling, Founder of TRT Holdings, Inc, and Blake Rowling, President of TRT Holdings, Inc, as well as Frisco Mayor Jeff Cheney, Texas Governor Greg Abbott and PGA President Jim Richerson grabbed shovels and hard hats to break ground for the new property.

Set to open in 2023, the Omni PGA Frisco resort will feature 501 guest rooms and seven four-bedroom golf villas, each with dramatic views of two 18-hole championship golf courses designed by Beau Welling and Gil Hanse. A true culinary, recreation, relaxation, meeting and entertainment destination, Omni PGA Frisco Resort will offer 12 dining outlets, three pools including an adults-only rooftop infinity pool, 127,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting and event space, and a destination spa.

PGA Frisco is the new home of the PGA Headquarters, which was designed to deliver innovative and differentiated experiences for 28,000 PGA Golf Professionals and golfers of all abilities. An expansive retail and entertainment district will feature dining, shopping and an outdoor stage set to be activated for concerts and other outdoor programming.

As a \$500 million investment into the City of Frisco, Omni PGA Frisco Resort is the largest resort currently in development in the country. The resort will be a beacon within the community and country for PGA Championship golf, instruction, and play. Omni PGA Frisco Resort will provide experiences that pull through the local fla-

vor of the destination and surroundings through design, amenities, and services.

The following are some highlighted remarks from some of the featured speakers.

Peter Strebel (Omni): "Today marks an exciting new chapter for Omni Hotels & Resorts as we break ground on our first resort to be built from the ground up. We're honored to be able to celebrate this momentous occasion in our home state of Texas and to build the Omni brand's flagship resort in the City of Frisco. Omni Hotels & Resorts exists to provide guests authentically local experiences and this stunning resort will certainly create a lasting legacy for golf enthusiasts, families and groups for generations to come."

Greg Abbott (TX Gov.): "There was no industry in the United States and perhaps the entire world that was more challenged over the 2020 Covid year than the hospitality industry. This opening for the Omni PGA Frisco Resort is an incredible milestone for this entire community. I can insure you when this project is complete this will be one of the premiere destinations in all of the United States. People from across the country and across the globe will be coming to this location celebrating what Texas travel and tourism is all about. We are proud to have Texas businesses like Omni Resorts and Hotels as well as our newest Texas business the PGA of America. The PGA is learning what the Omni has long known and what Frisco proudly preaches, Texas truly is the best state in America for doing business and it just gets better day by day."

Jim Richerson (PGA): "This project for the PGA of America started several years ago. You have to give thanks to the north Texas PGA which is the local group of professionals here. They had a vision of a golf park for their office and location they were looking for, and that led to the vision of what could the PGA of America do. So the vision of the North Texas PGA lead us for the PGA of America to relocate our headquarters to Frisco. It started with a new building and where could we relocate for the next 100 years for our new home. It turned into an unbelievable partnership with Bob and Blake (Howling), the Omni organization and the city of Frisco. It became apparent to us that the best way to fulfill our mission is to be with partners that had the same type of passion that we do. The golf industry is a \$84 Billion dollar industry with over 2 million jobs. The PGA Frisco and the Omni Frisco hotel will be the beacon of that industry for years to come. It will truly be the heartbeat of the PGA of America and what our men and woman strive to do and give back every



single day. We are so excited about this property that has two unbelievable 18 hole golf courses designed by Beau Welling and Gil Hanse. We have the 10 hole short course called the swing. We have a 75,000 square foot putting course called the dance floor. Does it get any cooler than that? We are excited about bringing 26 of our championships to Frisco over the next 12 to 13 years. We will have KPMG Women's Championships and introduce this facility to the world with a televised event. We will have the 2023 Kitchen Aid PGA Senior Championship. To have this be our new headquarters and we are so excited to be part of what will be the new and modern home of American golf."

After the ceremonial dirt was tossed and the hard hats and shovels were put away, my wife and I were shuttled down to an outdoor reception area where food and drinks were being served. I visited briefly with one of the golf course architects, Beau Welling, who told me he was excited about this project. Unfortunately, we had to leave

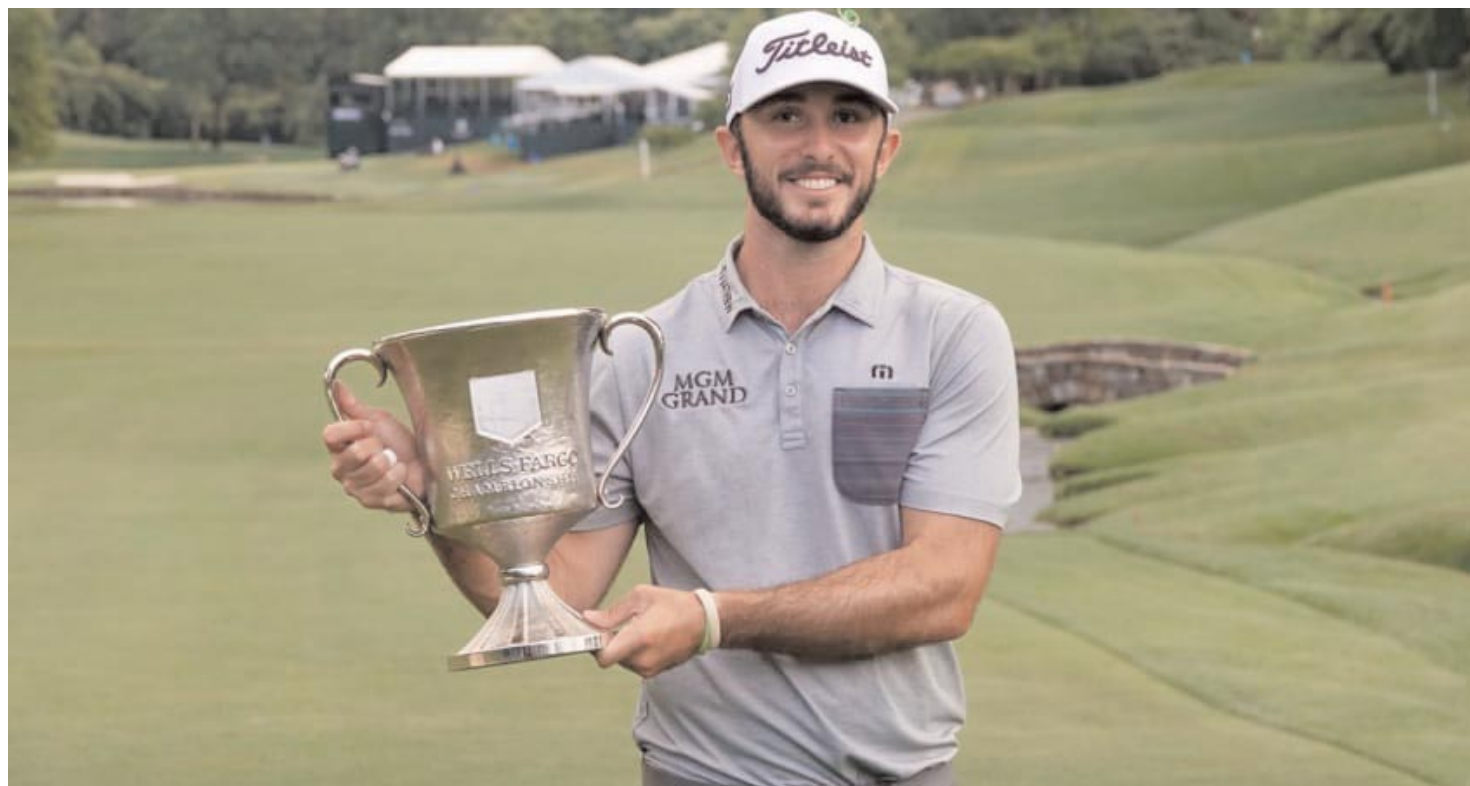
early, so we didn't have time for a personal tour to see some of the holes or to speak with Mr. Willing in greater detail about his design work. Perhaps, sometime soon I'll be back, and have the opportunity visit again with Mr. Willing and see the courses as they are being built and give updates.

With Omni Hotels & Resorts and the PGA of America teaming up with their investment partners, and the city of Frisco, along with the state of Texas behind them all I can say is something very special is happening here in north Texas. I look forward to 2023, because I can't wait to see this epic project come to fruition. It will be a game changer.

For more information on Omni PGA Frisco Resort, visit omnihotels.com/hotels/pga-frisco, call 1-800-The-Omni or follow Omni Hotels & Resorts at Facebook.com/OmniHotels, Instagram.com/OmniHotels and Twitter.com/OmniHotels.

Tom can be contacted at www.teetiemwith-tom.com

This week: Wells Fargo Championship



Max Homa won the 2019 Championship by three strokes over Joel Dahmen



WELLS FARGO CHAMPIONSHIP

Wells Fargo Championship
May 6 - May 7, 2021
Quail Hollow Golf Club
Charlotte, North Carolina
Purse - \$8,100,000
Winners share: \$1,458,000
2019 Winner - Max Homa

By Adam Stanley
 PGATOUR.COM

The Wells Fargo Championship returns to the PGA TOUR schedule after being cancelled last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Max Homa returns to defend his title against a field full of TOUR stars, including FedExCup leader Justin Thomas.

FIELD NOTES: Two-time FedExCup champion Rory McIlroy returns to action for the first time since the Masters. McIlroy also is the Wells Fargo Championship's only two-time winner. He set a course record in each win, shooting a final-round 62 in 2010 and a third-round 61 in 2015... The top two players in the FedExCup – Thomas and Bryson DeChambeau – are teeing it up in North Carolina. Thomas won the 2017 PGA Championship contested at Quail Hollow... Phil Mickelson will tee it up at the Wells Fargo for the 17th time in 18 editions. He

missed the cut in 2017 but owns 12 top-12 finishes at the event...Sponsors exemptions include 19-year-old Akshay Bhatia, a North Carolina native, and Wake Forest alum Will Zalatoris. Zalatoris hasn't missed a cut in the 2021 calendar year but enjoyed two weeks off after finishing runner-up at the Masters and T42 at the RBC Heritage – buying his own place in Dallas and getting engaged.

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 500 FedExCup points.

STORYLINES: No golfer has ever defended his title at the Wells Fargo. Homa, who won at The Genesis Invitational earlier this year, looks to buck that trend. He arrives in good form, sitting in third place halfway through the Valspar Championship... Overall, 13 of the top 20 golfers in the FedExCup (through the Zurich Classic of New Orleans) are teeing it up at Quail Hollow... Rory McIlroy loves the Wells Fargo Championship. He's finished outside the top-10 just twice in nine starts and in 2019 he finished T8... Rickie Fowler is looking for a spark after recording just two top-10 finishes in 29 events across 2020-21. Fowler, who is now ranked outside the top 100 in the world, won his first TOUR title at the Wells Fargo in 2012 and finished T4 in 2019... This year's Wells Fargo will give players one last look at Quail Hollow before the 2022 Presidents Cup. Next year's Wells Fargo will be played at TPC Potomac as Quail Hollow prepares to host the intercontinental tussle between the U.S. and International teams. It will be the first Presidents Cup since 2019 in Royal Melbourne, when the International Team

took the lead into Singles but was overcome by the U.S in the final session.

COURSE: Quail Hollow Club, par 71, 7,521 yards. The long-time PGA TOUR stop was originally laid out by George Cobb in the early 1960s. An upgrade was overseen by Tom Fazio as the course prepared for the PGA Championship in 2017. Annually rated as one of the toughest courses on TOUR, its 'Green Mile' closing stretch of holes flummoxes TOUR players year after year. Quail Hollow is set to host The Presidents Cup in 2022 and the PGA Championship again in 2025.

72-HOLE RECORD: 267, Rory McIlroy (2015).

18-HOLE RECORD: 61, Rory McIlroy (3rd round, 2015).

HOW TO FOLLOW

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

PGA TOUR LIVE: Thursday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m. (Featured Groups), Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (Featured Groups), 3 p.m.-6 p.m. (Featured Holes)

Radio: Thursday-Friday, 12 p.m.-6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 1 p.m.-6 p.m. (PGA TOUR Radio on SiriusXM and PGA-TOUR.com/liveaudio).

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

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

LAST TIME: Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the 2019 Wells Fargo Championship saw Max Homa capture his maiden PGA TOUR title. Homa, the former NCAA champ who endured a difficult slump early in his pro career, shot a 4-under 67 in Sunday's final round to top Joel Dahmen by three shots. Homa, who started the final round as one of three co-leaders, trailed Dahmen through six holes. But after going 3 under in a five-hole stretch, he held a four-shot lead before a weather delay with just five holes to play. After the hour-long delay was completed, Homa nailed a 5-foot par saver and cruised to victory after that. Justin Rose finished third while Rickie Fowler, Paul Casey and Jason Dufner rounded out the top five.

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2020 Texas Golf Hall of Fame Inductees



Hank Kuehne II is a former U.S. Amateur Champion

Texas Golf Hall of Fame Reschedules Class of 2020 Induction Event

San Antonio, Texas – The Texas Golf Hall of Fame announced this week that the previously postponed formal 2020 induction dinner has been rescheduled for Monday, August 9, 2021 and will be held at the River Crest Country Club in Ft. Worth, Texas. The event was originally slated for October 2020 but was postponed as a cautionary measure due to COVID-19.

Last July 2020 the Hall announced its 2020 class of Inductees that are to be honored during this formal induction ceremony that is open to the public. For tickets and sponsorship information please visit www.texasgolfhof.org/donate.

2020 Texas Hall of Fame Inductees:

- Professional Player: Angela Stanford
- Amateur Player: Hank Kuehne
- Lifetime Achievement: Verne Lundquist
- Golf Professional / Teacher: Mike Wright
- Golf Professional / Teacher: Dow Finsterwald, Jr.
- Texas Registry of Historic Golf Courses: Oak Hills Country Club

In addition to the upcoming induction dinner, each of the Inductees has been commemorated on a granite marker on the prestigious Texas Golf Walk of Fame at historic Brackenridge Park Golf Course, in San Antonio Texas.

“We are very excited to finally give this class of inductees the celebration that they deserve!” said Texas Golf Hall of Fame Board Chairman, Reid Meyers. “These are extraordinary times, and we are fortunate to be able to slowly return to the normalcy of life. We hope you join us in celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of this class to the State of Texas and the great game of Golf.”

The 2020 Hall Inductee in the Professional Player Category, Angela Stanford born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Angela Stanford won numerous junior Women’s Championships. Following graduation from Boswell High School in 1996, Angela enrolled at TCU. She won nine collegiate tournaments for the Horned Frogs, was a four-time All American, and a four-time All Western Athletic selection. She was named Western Athletic Freshman of the Year and Player of the Year in 1997 and 1999, respectively. Angela was also a member of the 2000 U.S. Curtis Cup Team. Angela turned professional in 2000, earning a victory on the Futures Tour at the season-ending event, and finished 4th at the LPGA Qualifying Tournament to earn exempt status on the LPGA in 2001. Angela has 95 Top-10 finishes on the LPGA, including six Championships and one Major (2018 Evian Championship). She has played in six Solheim Cups and ranks 11th on the LPGA Career Money List. Angela created the Angela Stanford Foundation in 2009 to give scholarships to students who have been affected by cancer.

The 2020 Hall Inductee in the Amateur Player Category, Henry “Hank” Kuehne II is a former U.S. Amateur Champion and a professional golfer who enjoyed some success on the PGA Tour. Born in Dallas, Texas, Hank’s father started him playing golf at a young age. Hank began his college career at Oklahoma State University but transferred to SMU. He earned All American honors three times, won the 1998 U.S. Amateur, and played on the U.S. Eisenhower Trophy Team in 1998. He has been inducted into the SMU Athletics Hall of Fame, was ranked Golf Digest’s #1 World Amateur in 1999, and received numerous other Amateur titles and

distinctions. Kuehne’s best finish on the PGA TOUR was a T-2 at both the 2003 Shell Houston Open and the 2005 John Deere Classic. In 2003, Hank won the TOUR’S Driving Distance title, unseating John Daly, who had won eight consecutive titles. Hank joins his sister Kelli, a former U.S. Women’s Amateur champion and brother Trip, winner of the 2007 U.S. Mid-Amateur in the Texas Golf Hall of Fame. Linger back problems have prevented Hank from playing, but he remains involved in the game as an instructor.

The first of two 2020 Hall Inductees in the Golf Professional/Teacher category is Mike Wright. At just 23 years old, Mike Wright was appointed as the Head Golf Professional at Shady Oaks, a Hall of Fame course. He had the unwavering support and emphatic endorsement of Ben Hogan. Now as the Shady Oaks Director of Golf, Mike has served the club for 36 years. Eleven of Mike’s assistants have been promoted to Head Professionals/General Manager positions. He co-founded the Ben Hogan Foundation, which has awarded over \$835,000 in scholarships to deserving students and children of soldiers and is now breaking ground on a new learning center. Mike has received the highest honors as a merchandiser, teacher, and player. As an instructor, he has an enviable reputation from both the professional and amateur rank. He counts Angela Stanford, Gerina Piller, Chad Campbell, and Mark Brooks among his students. He has been a thoughtful, graceful representative of Ben Hogan’s legacy and his service to the PGA of America at both the section and national levels is admirable.

The second of two 2020 Hall Inductees in the Golf Professional/Teacher category is Dow Finsterwald, Jr. Finsterwald Jr. is the son of PGA Champion Dow Finsterwald Sr., who won 11 PGA Titles and played on four Ryder Cup teams. Dow Jr. grew up working for his father at the Broadmoor Country Club caddying, working the driving range, and helping guests. After graduating from Arizona State in 1981, Dow was hired by Oak Tree Country Club in Oklahoma City as an Assistant Golf Professional. In 1987, his life changed dramatically when he was hired by Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas as its Head Golf Professional. Dow Jr. has been the host of 33 PGA TOUR events and a Women’s U.S. Open. He has won the Metro Chapter Championship (1990) and the Club Pro Championship (1991); he’s played in four Joe Black Cup Matches and has qualified for the Byron Nelson Championship and Colonial National Invitationals. Daily, Dow Jr. keeps busy with the 700 golf members at Colonial Country Club. Dow and his wife Mary Lou have two children, Dow the third and Katy, and two grandchildren.



Verne Lundquist

The 2020 Hall Inductee in the Lifetime Achievement Category, Verne Lundquist graduated from Austin High School and Texas Lutheran University. Verne now serves on TLU’s Board of Regents and has also given much of his time to various charities. After beginning his career in Austin, Verne went to Dallas as a sports anchor. He was an immediate success, and it wasn’t long before he was courted for the national stage. His career rocketed with ABC Sports, then CBS. From the NFL and the Olympics to SEC Football and PGA Golf, Verne’s achievements in broadcasting are legendary. Notably, it was Verne’s voice that richly illustrated, beautifully and timely, The Masters. The honors he has amassed during his career are numerous.

The 2020 Hall Inductee in the Texas Registry of Historic Golf Courses, Oak Hills Country Club is one of the oldest and most respected private member-owned country clubs in the country. Originally founded in 1922 as the Alamo Country Club, Oak Hills was designed by premier architect A.W. Tillinghast – perhaps the most prolific golf course designer of his time, with a course portfolio including Winged Foot, Baltusrol, and San Francisco Golf Club. Tillinghast brought his vision of beauty and challenging play to life on the course, now regularly enjoyed by PGA, collegiate, and amateur players. Oak Hills has hosted 32 PGA TOUR events, including the inaugural PGA TOUR Championship, the USGA Jr. Amateur Championship, TGA Tournaments, and USGA Qualifiers.

This will be the Texas Golf Hall of Fame’s eleventh class to be inducted since the Hall’s reconstitution in 2009. Public nominations made online were voted on by living Hall members, the Texas Golf Hall of Fame Board of Directors, and designated Texas golf media members. As a reminder the Induction Dinner will take place at historic River Crest Country Club in Ft. Worth, Texas on Monday, August 9th.

2021 NFL Draft Grades For All 32 Teams



By Mike Tagliere

Rashod Bateman was part of a masterful draft plan by the Baltimore Ravens

All the anticipation is gone. The cards have fallen where they may and there are hundreds of prospects with new homes. Some players fell a lot further than most anticipated, while others were selected rounds before the consensus opinion. Some will tell you that you can't grade a draft until a few years down the road. That's not true. Doing that would be considered hindsight analysis, which is something that annoys me. Everyone is right in hindsight. This article is not about my opinion. Ok, that might be a lie. It's not just about my opinion. I like to think my opinions are well thought out and aren't too outlandish. This article is really about how each team maneuvered the draft board, whether they reached multiple rounds for players, took value when it fell to them, filled positions of need, or simply took the best player available.

That criteria can absolutely be judged just hours after the draft, as we know where players were expected to go, we know what holes the team had to fill, and we had a good idea about which of these prospects were the most talented entering the NFL. So, with that being said, let's talk about the grades I'm handing out to each of the 32 teams.

Arizona Cardinals

1.16 – Zaven Collins (LB – Tulsa)
2.49 – Rondale Moore (WR – Purdue)
4.136 – Marco Wilson (CB – Florida)
6.210 – Victor Dimukeje (EDGE – Duke)
6.223 – Tay Gowan (CB – UCF)
7.243 – James Wiggins (S – Cincinnati)
7.247 – Michal Menet (IOL – Penn State)

We heard rumblings about 24 hours before the first round that the Cardinals were likely to take Collins, though he was someone expected to go in the mid-to-late 20's. Could they have traded back and landed him? Maybe. But his versatility combined with that of Isaiah Simmons and Budda Baker make this a tough defense to play against. Moore makes so much sense in the second round, as we still don't know if Larry Fitzgerald will return. No matter what, he's a perfect fit to play the slot in their offense. I liked Gowan better than Wilson, so getting him two rounds later saved their score a bit, as Wilson seemed like a bit of a reach. If there's one thing I would've liked to see them do, it was to add a nose tackle seeing as many of them fell much further than expected.

CARDINALS DRAFT GRADE: B

Atlanta Falcons

1.04 – Kyle Pitts (TE – Florida)
2.40 – Richie Grant (S – UCF)
3.68 – Jalen Mayfield (OT – Michigan)
4.108 – Darren Hall (CB – San Diego St)
4.114 – Drew Dalman (IOL – Stanford)
5.148 – Ta'Quon Graham (IDL – Texas)
5.182 – Adetokunbo Ojundeki (DL – N. Dame)
5.183 – Avery Williams (CB – Boise St)
6.187 – Frank Darby (WR – Arizona St)

Many will call Pitts a generational talent, and while I agree to a certain extent, there's a reason he was the first tight end to ever be drafted before the fifth pick. It's a tough position to project at the next level, as there have been many great athletes who've failed at tight end in the NFL. I love Pitts, but the Falcons are rebuilding right now, and I really would've loved to see them trade back to acquire more picks. Don't hate the pick, but don't absolutely

love them making it, either. Taking Grant with Trevon Moehrig still on the board was a big no-no in my book, and many agreed, as Moehrig was -400 to be the first safety off the board. The Falcons did get what I'd consider to be one of the better steals of the draft when they took Mayfield in the third round, as I had a late-first-round grade on him. They didn't select an edge rusher until the fifth round, which is really problematic. When you have as many holes as the Falcons do on defense, it's going to be tough to address all of them, but edge should have been a priority.

FALCONS DRAFT GRADE: C

Baltimore Ravens

1.27 – Rashod Bateman (WR – Minnesota)
1.31 – Jayson Oweh (EDGE – Penn State)
3.94 – Ben Cleveland (IOL – Georgia)
4.104 – Brandon Stephens (CB – SMU)
4.131 – Tylan Wallace (WR – Okla. St)
5.160 – Shaun Wade (CB – Ohio State)
5.171 – Daelin Hayes (EDGE – Notre Dame)
5.184 – Ben Mason (FB – Michigan)

As I heard the Ravens picks coming off the board, I wondered if they were using my big board at times. I kid, obviously, but I absolutely loved both first-round picks. Bateman is a perfect complement to Marquise Brown as a shorter, intermediate target who can play in the slot, while Oweh is someone I'm expecting the Ravens to develop into a rock-solid pass-rusher. Then, they selected one of my favorite interior lineman in the draft, taking Cleveland in the third round. He improves the offensive line almost immediately. I didn't like the two cornerback selections they made, as Stephens wasn't even on my list of prospects, and Wade was someone who should be reserved as slot-only after a miserable 2020 on the perimeter. But then, they went right back to their great draft by selecting Wallace later in the fourth round, a player who many expected to go in the second or third round. The Ravens no longer have an issue at wide receiver. They then closed out their draft by adding another edge rusher, the major position of need. The Ravens also snagged Ar'Darius Washington as a UDFA, which was one of the biggest steals among players who went undrafted (I liked him as a potential third or fourth rounder). Bravo, Ravens.

RAVENS DRAFT GRADE: A

Buffalo Bills

1.30 – Gregory Rousseau (EDGE – Miami)
2.61 – Carlos Basham (EDGE – W Forest)
3.93 – Spencer Brown (OT – N. Iowa)
5.161 – Tommy Doyle (OT – Miami-Ohio)
6.203 – Marquez Stevenson (WR – Houston)
6.212 – Damar Hamlin (S – Pittsburgh)
6.213 – Rachad Wildgoose (CB – Wisconsin)
7.236 – Jack Anderson (IOL – Texas Tech)

I'd mentioned in my mock drafts that the Bills were a pretty complete team com-

ing into the draft and could've gone a number of different directions but taking the best player available should've been the priority. I believe they did that in the first couple rounds, adding a falling Rousseau in the first round, and then the sturdy Basham in the second round, giving them depth at edge rusher, one of the most important positions on the field. The picks of Brown and Doyle weren't exactly values, as they were expected to be late Day 3 prospects but adding depth to the offensive line isn't the worst way to use draft picks, though they're both far from pro-ready. One of the sleeper picks they made was Stevenson in the fifth round, as he's someone who can blow the top off a defense. With how often they run 4WR sets, he should see some playing time relatively soon. This felt like a competent draft, especially if Rousseau can reach his potential.

BILLS DRAFT GRADE: B-

Carolina Panthers

1.08 – Jaycee Horn (CB – South Carolina)
2.59 – Terrace Marshall (WR – LSU)
3.70 – Brady Christiansen (OT – BYU)
3.82 – Tommy Tremble (TE – Notre Dame)
4.126 – Chuba Hubbard (RB – Ok. St.)
5.158 – Daviyon Nixon (IDL – Iowa)
5.166 – Keith Taylor (CB – Washington)
6.193 – Deonte Brown (IOL – Alabama)
6.204 – Shi Smith (WR – South Carolina)
6.222 – Thomas Fletcher (LS – Alabama)
7.232 – Phil Hoskins (IDL – Kentucky)

Well, the Panthers didn't go 100 percent defensive picks like last year. However, the defensive picks they made were phenomenal. Horn was certainly one of the better cornerbacks in the draft and will help them slow down the NFC South receivers just a little bit. Nixon in the fifth round is theft. Heck, even someone like Taylor was someone I expected to go in the fourth-round range. As far as the offense is concerned, Marshall was one of the few big-bodied receivers in this class who was going to cost a pretty penny, though he did fall just a tad due to medical concerns. I think he went right around where he should've, honestly. Christiansen felt like a bit of a reach in the third round, but after passing on offensive tackles in the first and second round, I'm not sure they had a choice. In the end, that's the worst part of their draft. They have a lot of holes on the offensive line, and I don't think this draft helped very much, though I suppose you can add in Tremble, who is a phenomenal blocker at tight end (or fullback). Snagging Hubbard in the fourth round gives them a solid depth piece behind Christian McCaffrey. He was someone who would've been a second-round pick in last year's draft had he chosen to leave college.

PANTHERS DRAFT GRADE: B

(continued on page 10)

Chicago Bears

1.11 – Justin Fields (QB – Ohio State)
2.38 – Teven Jenkins (OT – Oklahoma St)
5.151 – Larry Borom (IOL – Missouri)
6.217 – Khalil Herbert (RB – Virginia Tech)
6.221 – Dazz Newsome (WR – N. Carolina)
6.228 – Thomas Graham (CB – Oregon)
7.250 – Khyiris Tonga (IDL – BYU)

I wasn't expecting the Bears to trade up for a quarterback, but once Fields fell outside the top-10, it got a bit more realistic because the asking price comes down dramatically. Ryan Pace pulled off a move that didn't mortgage their future, but the move did help them both now and in the future by selecting Fields. It's important because it also makes the Bears an attractive landing spot for a coach/GM should Pace and Matt Nagy not right the ship in 2021. Considering many thought he should've went at No. 2 or No. 3 overall, the Bears did great. Then, in the second round, they moved up a bit to get Jenkins, a player many selected for them at No. 20 overall in mocks. He's going to be plugged in at right tackle from day one to replace Bobby Massie. Those two picks meant they didn't have another pick until the fifth round, where they started filling other holes, including cornerback with Graham, and then wide receiver with Newsome in the sixth round. Many will tell you that you can't judge a draft class until a few years down the road, but that's not true. I was heavily critical of the Bears and their 2020 draft, but in 2021, Pace did everything he could've and should've in this draft, as a result the Bears get an excellent grade.

BEARS DRAFT GRADE: A-

Cincinnati Bengals

1.05 – Ja'Marr Chase (WR – LSU)
2.46 – Jackson Carman (OT – Clemson)
3.69 – Joseph Ossai (EDGE – Texas)
4.111 – Cameron Sample (EDGE – Tulane)
4.122 – Tyler Shelvin (IDL – LSU)
4.139 – D'Ante Smith (OT – E. Carolina)
5.149 – Evan McPherson (K – Florida)
6.190 – Trey Hill (IOL – Georgia)
6.202 – Chris Evans (RB – Michigan)
7.235 – Wyatt Hubert (DL – K-State)

The Bengals were going with the whole "this is a strong tackle class, so we can take a receiver in the first, and snag tackle in the second" approach. That approach really did work, though they got too cute with it. When they got on the clock in the second round, they had both Teven Jenkins and Liam Eichenberg available, but then decided to trade back. Both were gone by their next pick, so they selected Carman, who was in another tier. Not horrible, but it could've gone better. The Bengals then headed over to the defensive side of the ball to snag two edge rushers, a position that was obviously a weakness for them. Ossai got some first-round buzz, so even though I wasn't very high on him, they got good value. They also got tremendous value with Shelvin in the fourth round, as he was someone who's potential should've been enough to get into the second or third round. There was nothing that stood out

about their picks in the fifth through seventh rounds, though it was odd to see them completely bypass linebacker, as it was one of their biggest weaknesses.

BENGALS DRAFT GRADE: B-

Cleveland Browns

1.26 – Greg Newsome (CB – Northwestern)
2.52 – Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah (LB – Notre Dame)
3.91 – Anthony Schwartz (WR – Auburn)
4.110 – James Hudson (OT – Cincinnati)
4.132 – Tommy Togiai (IDL – Ohio State)
5.153 – Tony Fields (LB – West Virginia)
5.169 – Richard LeCounte (S – Georgia)
6.211 – Demetric Felton (WR – UCLA)

When the Browns got on the clock in the first round, I was sure the pick would be Owusu-Koramoah. When they selected Newsome, who is a rock-solid player, I was disappointed. But then, the Browns made it right by trading up and taking Owusu-Koramoah in the second round, making the Newsome pick look that much better. They got two first-round talents and filled a major need at linebacker. Selecting Schwartz in the third round was a head-scratcher for me, as he's simply a field-stretcher who has a long way to go as a receiver. I didn't expect him to go until the sixth/seventh-round range. I loved the Hudson pick in the fourth, as he's a bit developmental, but the Browns don't need him to play right away. He'll have time to develop. I wished they would've gone with an interior lineman sooner, but landing Togiai at the end of the fourth round wasn't the worst-case scenario.

BROWNS DRAFT GRADE: A-

Dallas Cowboys

1.12 – Micah Parsons (LB – Penn State)
2.44 – Kelvin Joseph (CB – Kentucky)
3.75 – Osa Odighizuwa (IDL – UCLA)
3.84 – Chauncey Golston (DE – Iowa)
3.99 – Nahshon Wright (CB – Oregon St)
4.115 – Jabril Cox (LB – LSU)
4.138 – Josh Ball (OT – Marshall)
5.179 – Simi Fehoko (WR – Stanford)
6.192 – Quinton Bohanna (IDL – Kentucky)
6.227 – Israel Mukuamu (CB – S. Carolina)
7.238 – Matt Farniok (IOL – Nebraska)

The Cowboys didn't go full-on 2020 Panthers in this draft, but they did select defensive players with eight of their first nine picks. Parsons was likely the best defensive player in the draft, though many thought he might fall due to off-the-field incidents. He filled a hole and is uber-talented, so as long as they can get him to grow as a person, it was a great pick. Joseph was a bit of a reach early in the second round as an inconsistent player and someone else who also has some off-the-field issues. Odighizuwa was a solid value in the third round at a position of need, so there are no complaints there. Snagging Cox in the fourth round was also a tremendous value considering where he was expected to go, even if I wasn't particularly a fan of his game. The picks in between there were rough though, as both Golston and Wright weren't Day 2 picks. I absolutely loved the pick of Fehoko, as I

have him labeled as a developmental wide receiver with a big ceiling. Knowing the Cowboys don't need him on the field right away, he'll get to sit back and learn from a few Pro Bowl receivers. Overall, this was a very risky draft for the Cowboys with some room for upside, but also some room for disaster. At least they addressed the positions of need on defense early in the draft.

COWBOYS DRAFT GRADE: C

Denver Broncos

1.09 – Patrick Surtain (CB – Alabama)
2.35 – Javonte Williams (RB – N. Carolina)
3.98 – Quinn Meinerz (IOL – Wisconsin-Whitewater)
4.105 – Baron Browning (LB – Ohio St)
5.152 – Caden Sterns (S – Texas)
5.164 – Jamar Johnson (S – Indiana)
6.219 – Seth Williams (WR – Auburn)
7.237 – Kary Vincent (CB – LSU)
7.239 – Jonathon Cooper (DL – Ohio St)
7.253 – Marquiss Spencer (DL – Miss St)

Many thought that the Broncos would be looking at a position other than cornerback at the top of the draft considering they signed both Ronald Darby and Kyle Fuller in free agency, as well as drafting Michael Ojemudia in the third round last year, and having Bryce Callahan on the roster. Surtain was considered a top-two cornerback on many boards, so you can't fault the pick too much, but it didn't really fill a hole. The Williams pick was solid from a value standpoint, though there were other positions they likely could've addressed, as they still have Melvin Gordon for one more season. Meinerz and Browning were both great values in the third and fourth round, as both received second-round buzz. They also filled needs on the team. Johnson and Williams in the fifth and sixth rounds were both phenomenal picks considering the upside they have built into them. This draft can be looked at two different ways, but it appears they drafted best player available early-on, then addressed team needs while getting solid values. Knowing Fuller and Gordon have just one year left on their deals, you can't even be upset about the Surtain and Williams picks, so this was a solid draft, and it'll look even better one year from now. If there's one thing that brings down their grade just a tad, it's passing on quarterback like Fields at No. 9 when they don't have a sure thing on their roster.

BRONCOS DRAFT GRADE: A-

Detroit Lions

1.07 – Penei Sewell (OT – Oregon)
2.41 – Levi Onwuzurike (IDL – Washington)
3.72 – Alim McNeill (IDL – NC State)
3.101 – Ifeatu Melifonwu (CB – Syracuse)
4.112 – Amon-Ra St. Brown (WR – USC)
4.113 – Derrick Barnes (LB – Purdue)
7.257 – Jermar Jefferson (RB – Oregon St)

It was clear that the Lions were focused on one thing during the first two days of the draft: The trenches. Once they saw Sewell on the board at No. 7, they wasted no time turning in their pick. I have zero issue with that considering how difficult it is to find dominant left tackles in the NFL.

I also had no issues with the pick of Onwuzurike in the second round, as they needed help on the interior of their defensive line. But the McNeill pick was a bit of overkill, especially when there were still quite a few solid linebackers on the board (might have been their biggest weakness). Melifonwu is a big, physical cornerback whose ceiling is massive if he can continue to grow, but you can't teach size, and he's got it opposite of Jeff Okudah. The Lions should consider themselves lucky they landed St. Brown in the fourth round, as he fell further than most thought. I was legitimately shocked that's all the Lions did at wide receiver, though. I didn't think Barnes is someone who should start on day one, but the Lions might have different plans. While I like Jefferson as a running back, that felt like a wasted pick considering the holes all over their roster (their running backs were a strength).

LIONS DRAFT GRADE: C+

Green Bay Packers

1.29 – Eric Stokes (CB – Georgia)
2.62 – Josh Myers (IOL – Ohio State)
3.85 – Amari Rodgers (WR – Clemson)
4.142 – Royce Newman (IOL – Ole Miss)
5.173 – Tadarrell Slaton (DT – Florida)
5.178 – Shemar Jean-Charles (CB – Appalachian State)
6.214 – Cole Van Lanen (IOL – Wisconsin)
6.220 – Isaiah McDuffie (LB – Boston C.)
7.256 – Kylin Hill (RB – Mississippi St)

The story of the Packers draft was Aaron Rodgers and not so much the prospects they selected, but that's what we're looking at here. Let's start here: The No. 1 problem the Packers had last year (and the year before) was stopping the run, and I don't think any of their picks helped. Stokes is a cornerback who reminded me a bit of Josh Jackson, the cornerback the Packers picked in the second round just a few years ago, as both were ballhawks in college, even though I didn't love their coverage skills. The pick of Myers in the second round did fill a need at center, though it was a reach in the draft community. He was a third-round pick on my big board, while PFF had him projected as a fifth-round pick. Rodgers is going to be perfect for this offense, as he has a bit of Randall Cobb to his game and can play all over the field. The rest of their draft was kind of a mess, as there were no standouts when it came to value or talent except for Hill, but running back was not a position they really needed help at. I just believe they failed when it came to their biggest weakness: stopping the run.

PACKERS DRAFT GRADE: C-

Houston Texans

3.67 – Davis Mills (QB – Stanford)
3.89 – Nico Collins (WR – Michigan)
5.147 – Brevin Jordan (TE – Miami)
5.170 – Garret Wallow (LB – TCU)
6.195 – Roy Lopez (IDL – Arizona)

I'm not sure where to begin here, as the Texans franchise is simply in ruins right now. Bill O'Brien left them in a bad spot, and things haven't gotten better since he

left. This draft isn't likely to change that. They selected Mills with their first pick (in the third round), which feels bad considering they're a long way from filling out their roster and would prove to be a wasted pick if Deshaun Watson plays for the team again (many aren't expecting him to). Still, they should stick with stop-gap quarterbacks for the time being until they put together a competent roster. Collins was a solid pick late in the third round, and they also signed Damon Hazelton as a UDFA, so they did a good job adding to their wide receiver depth chart with two solid players. Jordan was someone who fell during the draft process, as many started to say he's more of an athlete than a football player. The Texans really didn't need another tight end. Wallow and Lopez are depth chart pieces, and to be fair, we couldn't expect home-run picks in the fifth and sixth round, but Daviyon Nixon was there as a steal in the fifth round at a position of need.

TEXANS DRAFT GRADE: D

Indianapolis Colts

- 1.21 – Kwity Paye (EDGE – Michigan)
- 2.54 – Dayo Odeyingbo (EDGE – Vanderbilt)
- 4.127 – Kylan Granson (TE – SMU)**
- 5.165 – Shawn Davis (S – Florida)
- 6.218 – Sam Ehlinger (QB – Texas)**
- 7.229 – Mike Strachan (WR – Charleston)
- 7.248 – Will Fries (IOL – Penn State)

The No. 1 need that I (and many) had going into this draft for the Colts was offensive tackle after the retirement of Anthony Castonzo. They didn't select a single offensive tackle in this draft, so I guess they're moving forward with Sam Tevi? Yikes. The second need they had was edge rusher, so to see them snag both Paye and Odeyingbo was great from a team-need standpoint. While I wasn't particularly high on Paye, Odeyingbo was someone I liked quite a bit. The Granson pick was 100 percent scheme-related, as he'll play the Trey Burton-type role in the offense. The Ehlinger pick was a bit of a head-scratcher considering they now have Carson Wentz, along with last year's fourth-round pick Jacob Eason. If Paye pans out, this draft will look better, but in the end, they are overvaluing their current left tackle, which is problematic for Wentz.

COLTS DRAFT GRADE: C-

Jacksonville Jaguars

- 1.01 – Trevor Lawrence (QB – Clemson)
- 1.25 – Travis Etienne (RB – Clemson)
- 2.33 – Tyson Campbell (CB – Georgia)
- 2.45 – Walker Little (OT – Stanford)
- 3.65 – Andre Cisco (S – Syracuse)
- 4.106 – Jay Tufele (IDL – USC)
- 4.121 – Jordan Smith (EDGE – Alabama-Birmingham)
- 5.145 – Luke Farrell (TE – Ohio State)
- 6.209 – Jalen Camp (WR – Georgia Tech)

Any time you get a generational quarterback in the draft, you're going to get a good grade. That pick starts you out at an A+, so you can only go down from there. The Jaguars can rebuild in a hurry if they get the picks right. The second pick of Etienne was odd for me, as I love the play-

er, but running back is such a convenience position, and the Jaguars don't have the convenience of having a complete roster. In fact, they already had a competent running back in James Robinson. Hearing Urban Meyer say after the pick that Robinson and Carlos Hyde are the 1-2 down backs while Etienne is the third-down back made me roll my eyes harder than I have in a long time. You don't draft a third-down back at No. 25 overall. Loved the Campbell pick in the second round, as he was my top-rated Georgia cornerback. Cornerback wasn't the biggest need, but taking the best player should be rewarded. While I wasn't high on Little as a prospect, it wasn't a bad pick in the middle of the second round, as it gives them options with Cam Robinson next offseason. Cisco is a playmaker who'll make some bad decisions, but he'll also make some game-changing plays. Having solid cornerback play alongside him is paramount, and they should have that with C.J. Henderson, Shaquill Griffin, and Campbell. Tufele was a solid add in the fourth round, too. Waiting on tight end was not something I expected, as Farrell wasn't even someone I scouted, and tight end was a big need for them. I believe it was a good draft for the Jaguars overall, though it could've been even better.

JAGUARS DRAFT GRADE: B+

Kansas City Chiefs

- 2.58 – Nick Bolton (LB – Missouri)
- 2.63 – Creed Humphrey (IOL – OU)
- 4.144 – Joshua Kaindoh (EDGE – Florida St)
- 5.162 – Noah Gray (TE – Duke)
- 5.181 – Cornell Powell (WR – Clemson)
- 6.226 – Trey Smith (IOL – Tennessee)

The Chiefs didn't have many draft picks early on thanks to the trade for Orlando Brown, which must be factored into their grade, as he's a first-round left tackle. To move from Eric Fisher to Brown is just ridiculous. Then to add Humphrey to that offensive line just completed the rebuild, as the Chiefs offensive line might be stronger in 2021 than it was pre-injuries in 2020. Heck, even the pick of Smith in the sixth round was a great one, as he was a third rounder on my big board. The high-energy Bolton was someone who got first-round buzz during some of the draft process, but ultimately fell to the second round where he was a solid pick. It's good to see the Chiefs ready to move on from Anthony Hitchens/Ben Niemann in the near future. The pick of Gray in the fifth round felt like a wasted pick, especially knowing cornerback wasn't addressed. I liked Powell more than most and feel he might be starting over guys like Demarcus Robinson/Byron Pringle very soon if he can get a grip on the playbook right away.

CHIEFS DRAFT GRADE: A-

Las Vegas Raiders

- 1.17 – Alex Leatherwood (OT – Alabama)
- 2.43 – Trevon Moehrig (S – TCU)
- 3.79 – Malcolm Koonce (EDGE – Buffalo)
- 3.80 – Divine Deablo (S – Virginia Tech)
- 4.143 – Tyree Gillespie (S – Missouri)
- 5.167 – Nate Hobbs (CB – Illinois)

7.230 – Jimmy Morrissey (IOL – Pitt)

Had the draft stopped after Day 1, I'm fairly certain you would've seen the Raiders get the worst grade from analysts across the board. Even if they liked Leatherwood a lot, he's someone literally no one expected to go in the first round. Trade back. The Raiders redeemed themselves in Round 2 when Moehrig fell into their laps at 43 overall. He was a top-15 player in this draft for me, and should've been their first-round pick over Leatherwood, though the reason for his fall was reportedly due to medical concerns with his back. Still, great pick. After that, though, we went straight back downhill with the Raiders. Both Koonce and Deablo were not expected to go until Day 3 of the draft and were reaches in the middle of the third round. Then they snagged their third safety of the draft in the fourth round, though many are expecting them to move Deablo to linebacker. Speaking of linebacker, that was my biggest need for this team outside of right tackle, and they really didn't address it. This draft should've netted a lot more, and thankfully, the Moehrig pick saves their grade a tad.

RAIDERS DRAFT GRADE: D+

Los Angeles Chargers

- 1.13 – Rashawn Slater (OT – Northwestern)
- 2.47 – Asante Samuel Jr. (CB – Florida St)
- 3.77 – Josh Palmer (WR – Tennessee)
- 3.97 – Tre' McKitty (TE – Georgia)
- 4.118 – Chris Rumph (EDGE – Duke)
- 5.159 – Brenden Jaimes (OT – Nebraska)
- 6.185 – Nick Niemann (LB – Iowa)
- 6.198 – Larry Roundtree (RB – Missouri)
- 7.241 – Mark Webb (S – Georgia)

The Chargers couldn't have asked for a better start to the draft, as Slater fell into their laps at No. 13 overall, and then Samuel Jr. fell to them in the middle of the second round. Both players were expected to go earlier, and both players filled their two biggest needs. Palmer was a late riser in the process, and he should provide another solid depth piece for Justin Herbert. McKitty felt like the first reach by the Chargers, as he's someone I wondered if he'd be drafted at all. It was a position of need, but in a weak tight end class, they didn't need to force the issue. Roundtree wasn't talked about much, but I believe he might be the better thumper alongside Austin Ekeler than last year's fourth-round pick Joshua Kelley. Having waited until the fourth round to select an edge rusher (who is undersized), you have to wonder if they find a way to bring back Melvin Ingram.

CHARGERS DRAFT GRADE: B+

Los Angeles Rams

- 2.57 – Tutu Atwell (WR – Louisville)
- 3.103 – Ernest Jones (LB – S. Carolina)
- 4.117 – Bobby Brown (IDL – Texas A&M)
- 4.130 – Robert Rochell (CB – C.Arkanasas)
- 4.141 – Jacob Harris (WR – UCF)
- 5.174 – Earnest Brown (DL – Northwestern)
- 7.233 – Jake Funk (RB – Maryland)
- 7.249 – Ben Skowronek (WR – Notre Dame)
- 7.252 – Chris Garrett (EDGE – Concordia-St. Paul)

Not having a first-round pick is tough, but it's something the Rams are used to. When they got on the clock in the second round, the last player I expected them to draft was the 149-pound Atwell. He's someone who will literally bounce backwards when hit. He's fast, but that's about it. The Rams then went on to draft two more wide receivers in the draft. Knowing they have Robert Woods, Cooper Kupp, DeSean Jackson, and Van Jefferson, it felt extremely unnecessary. Jones in the third was also a shock, as he was someone who I didn't expect to go until the fifth or sixth round. Linebacker was a position of need, but there were better prospects on the board. Even Rochell, who they took in the fourth round, was someone who was expected to fall deep into Day 3. Kudos to the Rams for taking the guys they have conviction on, but they might as well have traded down to acquire more picks in the future.

RAMS DRAFT GRADE: D

Miami Dolphins

- 1.06 – Jaylen Waddle (WR – Alabama)
- 1.18 – Jaelen Phillips (EDGE – Miami)
- 2.36 – Jevon Holland (S – Oregon)
- 2.42 – Liam Eichenberg (OT – Notre Dame)
- 3.81 – Hunter Long (TE – Boston College)
- 7.231 – Larnel Coleman (OT – UMass)
- 7.244 – Gerrid Doaks (RB – Cincinnati)

The Dolphins had just seven picks in this draft, and five of them were inside the top-81 picks. When they came on the clock at No. 6 overall, I thought it would be one of the Alabama wide receivers, though I did think DeVonta Smith would've been a better fit with what they had in place with Will Fuller and DeVante Parker. Still, Waddle is a baller and Fuller is on just a one-year deal. Phillips was certainly a top-three edge rusher in this class, though he moved down some boards due to medical concerns. Snagging Eichenberg in the second round was a rock-solid pick with the way offensive linemen were flying off the board. My issue with their draft was the Holland pick, as they did so with Trevon Moehrig on the board, who was far-and-away the best safety in this draft. Holland was expected to be a second-round pick, so it wasn't a reach, but it just could've been better. Drafting Long seemed unnecessary, as they already have Mike Gesicki, Adam Shaheen, and Durham Smythe on the roster, even if he was expected to go in the third round. I would've rather seen them take someone like interior defensive tackle Tyler Shelvin at that point.

DOLPHINS DRAFT GRADE: B-

Minnesota Vikings

- 1.23 – Christian Darrisaw (OT – Vir. Tech)
- 3.66 – Kellen Mond (QB – Texas A&M)
- 3.78 – Chazz Surratt (LB – North Carolina)
- 3.86 – Wyatt Davis (IOL – Ohio State)
- 3.90 – Patrick Jones (EDGE – Pittsburgh)
- 4.119 – Kene Nwangwu (RB – Iowa State)
- 4.125 – Camryn Bynum (CB – California)
- 4.134 – Janarius Robinson (EDGE – Florida State)
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- 5.168 – Zach Davidson (TE – C. Missouri)
- 6.199 – Jaylen Twyman (IDL – Pitt)

When you have 11 picks in the draft, you're going to fill some holes. I thought the Vikings could've gotten a much better return than what they did for the No. 14 pick, as they received the No. 66 and No. 86 pick in order to move back nine spots in the first round. The two main holes on their roster were offensive tackle and edge rusher, so snagging Darrisaw in the first round made tons of sense, especially since two edge rushers had come off the board. The issue is that this wasn't a deep edge class, though they were fortunate to see Patrick Jones available late in the third round. I expected the Vikings to grab a backup quarterback, so seeing Mond go to them in the third round was no surprise. They really didn't need a linebacker, but Surratt joining that group makes them even better. Davis wasn't expected to last until the third round, so they got good value with his as well. The pick of Nwangwu was a major reach, as he might not have been drafted otherwise. The pick of Bynum felt com-

pletely unnecessary, as their cornerback room is one of the deeper ones in football. Robinson is an upside project at pass-rusher, worth taking a shot on where they did. It was odd to see the Vikings continually pass on safety, but they did make their best picks when they needed to.

VIKINGS DRAFT GRADE: B+

New England Patriots

- 1.15 – Mac Jones (QB – Alabama)
- 2.37 – Christian Barmore (IDL – Alabama)
- 3.96 – Ronnie Perkins (EDGE – OU)**
- 4.120 – Rhamondre Stevenson (RB – OU)**
- 5.177 – Cameron McGrone (LB – Michigan)
- 6.188 – Joshuah Bledsoe (S – Missouri)
- 6.197 – Will Sherman (OT – Colorado)
- 7.242 – Tre Nixon (WR – UCF)

While I wasn't extremely high on Jones as a prospect, having him fall into the Patriots lap at No. 15 was a gift. He's a pure pocket passer who should allow Josh McDaniels to go back to the offense they used to run with Tom Brady under center. Barmore falling into the second round allowed them to trade up with the Bengals, and this pick seems unfair, as he's not quite a complete product yet, but once he is, he's going to be a major force up the middle of their defense. After selecting a pair of Alabama prospects, they moved on to select a pair of Oklahoma prospects in Perkins and Stevenson. The Perkins pick was rock-solid for their scheme and they got good value with him at the end of the third. The Stevenson wasn't. That pick made absolutely zero sense to me when they have both Damien Harris and Sony Michel on the roster. If anything, they should've selected Kenneth Gainwell to be James White's eventual replacement. McGrone was a solid value in the fifth round. I've been critical of Patriots' drafts in recent years, but this one feels solid where it mattered most – the first two days.

PATRIOTS DRAFT GRADE: B+

New Orleans Saints

- 1.28 – Payton Turner (EDGE – Houston)**
- 2.60 – Pete Werner (LB – Ohio State)
- 3.76 – Paulson Adebo (CB – Stanford)
- 4.133 – Ian Book (QB – Notre Dame)
- 6.206 – Landon Young (OT – Kentucky)
- 7.255 – Kawaan Baker (WR – S. Alabama)

We heard rumblings about the Saints trying to trade up into the top-10, but that never really made much sense considering the state of their roster and where they were picking. Staying at No. 28 netted them Payton Turner, who was a surprise to most, though I did have a second-round grade on him. According those close to teams, he was someone many teams were targeting in the second round. Not a major reach, but not a major value, either. Werner was considered a "safe" linebacker in this class who doesn't come with much upside, which is fine for the Saints and who they have on the roster, but again, he didn't come at a value. I really liked the Adebo pick in the third round, as he should be able to help slow down some of the big-name receivers in the NFC South, though I did prefer for him to go to a zone-heavy

team. The Book pick was odd, as it seemed the team was choosing between Jameis Winston and Taysom Hill, as they have money tied up in both of them. The interior of the defensive line seemed to be forgotten even though they lost both Sheldon Rankins and Malcom Brown this offseason. The Saints draft was close to average.

SAINTS DRAFT GRADE: C-

New York Giants

- 1.20 – Kadarius Toney (WR – Florida)
- 2.50 – Azeez Ojulari (EDGE – Georgia)
- 3.71 – Aaron Robinson (CB – UCF)
- 4.116 – Elerson Smith (EDGE – N. Iowa)
- 6.196 – Gary Brightwell (RB – Arizona)
- 6.201 – Rodarius Williams (CB – Ok.St)**

I'll start by saying the Giants got excellent value to trade back to No. 20 with the Bears, acquiring a 2022 first, a 2022 fourth, and 2021 fifth in the deal. However, selecting Toney there was a reach, especially when you know that Rashod Bateman was still on the board, Elijah Moore fell to the second round, and Rondale Moore fell to the middle of the second round. You can like Toney, that's fine, but they should've traded back again. Ojulari was a solid value in the second round, and the pick addressed a major concern for the Giants at edge rusher. Robinson was also a solid pick as someone who'll likely start as their nickel cornerback in between James Bradberry and Adoree Jackson. Later on, they snagged Williams, who I had a fourth-round grade on, so their cornerback room is looking good. Smith felt like a reach in the fourth round, though it was a weak edge class as a whole. I was really surprised they didn't add at least one offensive lineman in this draft to help replace the loss of Kevin Zeitler, though they were a team with quite a few holes on defense. A decent draft that could've been better with the trade they made.

GIANTS DRAFT GRADE: B-

New York Jets

- 1.02 – Zach Wilson (QB – BYU)
- 1.14 – Alijah Vera-Tucker (OL – USC)
- 2.34 – Elijah Moore (WR – Ole Miss)
- 4.107 – Michael Carter (RB – N. Carolina)
- 5.146 – Jamien Sherwood (S – Auburn)
- 5.154 – Michael Carter II (CB – Duke)
- 5.175 – Jason Pinnock (CB – Pittsburgh)
- 6.186 – Hamsah Nasirildeen (S – Florida St)
- 6.200 – Brandin Echols (CB – Kentucky)
- 6.207 – Jonathan Marshall (IDL – Arkansas)

The Jets made three of the top-34 picks in the 2021 NFL Draft, and all of them were on the offensive side of the ball. Wilson is someone with a high ceiling, though there is some projecting with him going from BYU to being immediately inserted into a starter role in the NFL. To make that transition easier, they traded up and selected Vera-Tucker, who could play at either guard or tackle, though he'll likely start at guard in 2021. Even better, they didn't have to trade a future first-rounder move up. Moore is likely to make Jamison Crowder expendable as someone who's a weapon in the slot and was reportedly the No.4 wide receiver on plenty of big boards.

Carter in the fourth round was an excellent pick, as he's my pick to be the best running back on that team. Sherwood in the fifth round was also a value, as I had a borderline third-round grade on him. They doubled down on safety in the sixth with Nasirildeen, which is fine, as it gives them another possibility at a position of weakness. The only issue I had with the Jets draft is that they waited too long on cornerback. Carter and Pinnock are both far from a starting-worthy cornerbacks, which puts them in a position to start Blessuan Austin and Bryce Hall. In a pass-happy league, that's not ideal. Overall, the Jets had a great draft.

JETS DRAFT GRADE: A-

Philadelphia Eagles

- 1.10 – DeVonta Smith (WR – Alabama)
- 2.37 – Landon Dickerson (IOL – Alabama)
- 3.73 – Milton Williams (IDL – La. Tech)
- 4.123 – Zech McPhearson (CB – Tex Tech)**
- 5.150 – Kenneth Gainwell (RB – Memphis)
- 6.189 – Marlon Tuipulotu (IDL – USC)
- 6.191 – Tarron Jackson (DL – C. Carolina)
- 6.224 – JaCoby Stevens (S – LSU)
- 7.234 – Patrick Johnson (EDGE – Tulane)

The Eagles knew exactly what the Giants wanted to do, and they made the correct choice by jumping them in line to snag Smith, the Heisman winner. Pairing Smith with Jalen Reagor gives the Eagles a competent 1-2 punch for Jalen Hurts. I'm also on board with the Dickerson pick in the second round, as he's someone who can play anywhere on the offensive line, and we saw what the Eagles looked like without any depth last year. Williams was an interesting prospect of mine who I thought may have some upside down the road if he add size, but he wasn't expected to go until the fourth or fifth round. They also reached a bit on McPhearson, who was expected to be more of a mid-to-late Day 3 pick. They really should've addressed cornerback before they took Williams in the third. Gainwell was one of the biggest steals in this draft. I wouldn't have batted an eye if he went at the end of the second round as the best receiving back in the class. They already have a good receiver in Miles Sanders, but Gainwell should see playing time immediately. Their seventh-round pick of Johnson was a very good one, as he could be a rotational pass-rusher very quickly. There were some hits in this draft, but there were also a few reaches.

EAGLES DRAFT GRADE: B

Pittsburgh Steelers

- 1.24 – Najee Harris (RB – Alabama)
- 2.55 – Pat Freiermuth (TE – Penn State)
- 3.87 – Kendrick Green (IOL – Illinois)
- 4.128 – Dan Moore Jr. (OT – Texas A&M)**
- 4.140 – Buddy Johnson (LB – Texas A&M)**
- 5.156 – Isaiahh Loudermilk (EDGE – Wisc)
- 6.216 – Quincy Roche (EDGE – Miami)
- 7.245 – Tre Norwood (CB – Oklahoma)
- 7.254 – Pressley Harvin (P – Georgia Tech)

If we were to go through the positions that teams devalued in this draft, you'd find running backs and tight ends atop that list. Now, to be fair, the Steelers did snag the

best running back in this class and the second-best tight end. I understand the Harris pick, as he can create yards on his own and isn't as reliant on the offensive line as some others. It's a convenience pick, but whatever, Harris is very good. I don't quite get the Friermuth pick, and not because he's not talented. This has more to do with the holes on their roster right now, as cornerback, offensive tackle, and edge rusher should've been more of a priority. Again, Friermuth was the second-best tight end in this class, and there was a big tier gap from him to the next one, so it's not the worst pick, but taking Creed Humphrey here and then Tommy Tremble (if available) in the third round would've made more sense. Green will take over for Maurkice Pouncey at center, a pick that was necessary, though as stated earlier, I would've attacked those two positions differently. Taking Moore in the middle of the fourth was a reach, but that's what happens when you pass on tackle in the first three rounds and they're flying off the board. Not selecting a cornerback until the seventh round is also a mistake, as they lost two of their starters this offseason in Steven Nelson and Mike Hilton. Overall, this draft class will likely look like a miss in a few years.

STEELERS DRAFT GRADE: C-

San Francisco 49ers

- 1.03 – Trey Lance (QB – North Dakota St)
- 2.48 – Aaron Banks (IOL – Notre Dame)
- 3.88 – Trey Sermon (RB – Ohio State)
- 3.102 – Ambry Thomas (CB – Michigan)
- 5.155 – Jaylon Moore (OT – W. Michigan)
- 5.172 – Deommodore Lenoir (CB – Oregon)
- 5.180 – Talanoa Hufanga (S – USC)
- 6.194 – Eli Mitchell (RB – La-Lafayette)

I breathed a sigh of relief that the 49ers didn't trade three first-round picks to trade up and draft a quarterback they already had on the roster. Despite all the reports about Mac Jones being the pick, Kyle Shanahan and the 49ers brass made the pick that gives this offense a whole new identity. Lance only threw 288 career pass attempts in college, but the ceiling is sky-high. It would make sense for them to hang onto Jimmy Garoppolo in order to make sure Lance is ready. Knowing the 49ers still had three picks over the next two rounds was nice, though using one of them on Banks was interesting, as he wasn't expected to go until Day 3. In fact, some didn't expect him to be drafted at all. They then traded up in the third round to select Sermon. Trading up for running backs is seldomly a good thing, though Shanahan's offense is tailor-made for Sermon's skillset, and Raheem Mostert is now 29 years old. The pick of Thomas in the third round did seem a bit early, but the 49ers didn't have another pick until the fifth round, so they really needed to address cornerback with that pick. They took another shot at cornerback in the fifth when they selected Lenoir, though he has been projected to be a safety by some. The 49ers hit the one pick they absolutely needed to, though it was far

from a perfect draft for them.

49ERS DRAFT GRADE: B-

Seattle Seahawks

- 2.56 – D'Wayne Eskridge (WR – W. Michigan)
- 4.137 – Tre Brown (CB – Oklahoma)
- 6.208 – Stone Forsythe (OT – Florida)

Well, this is one of the shorter reviews we've had to do, eh? Three picks. I was a big fan of Eskridge and wound up ranking him as my No. 7 receiver in this class. Now tied to Russell Wilson with second-round equity, I might actually move that number up. Trading back to acquire some more picks would've made sense though, especially since they only had three picks. Cornerback was arguably the biggest need on the team, so seeing them take one in the fourth should come as no shock, though Brown projected as a slot cornerback, a role that was occupied by Ugo Amadi last year. I don't know how the Seahawks bypassed edge rushers as a whole, as they desperately need talent there, but when you have just three picks, you're in a bad spot. It was going to be tough for them to get a good grade in this draft.

SEAHAWKS DRAFT GRADE: D+

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

- 1.32 – Joe Tryon (EDGE – Washington)
- 2.64 – Kyle Trask (QB – Florida)
- 3.95 – Robert Hainsey (OL – Notre Dame)
- 4.129 – Jaelen Darden (WR – North Texas)
- 5.176 – K.J. Britt (LB – Auburn)
- 7.251 – Chris Wilcox (CB – BYU)
- 7.259 – Grant Stuard (LB – Houston)

When you have a team that's loaded with talent and have every starter from a Super Bowl winning roster returning, it allows you a certain level of flexibility in your draft. Tryon was a favorite of some and was getting late-first-round buzz, so adding talent on the edge is never a bad thing, especially when you have Jason Pierre-Paul getting up there in age. The Trask pick was somewhat surprising, though it was absolutely necessary, as the Bucs didn't really have a competent back-up on the roster. Hainsey was listed as a tackle, though some project him as a center in the NFL. Whatever the case, the Bucs added depth to their offensive line. Darden was a great pick in the fourth round, as I compared him to Tutu Atwell, and actually liked Darden a little bit more. Britt was the first pick that seemed like a major reach in the fifth round, especially considering some of the talent that was still on the board. Overall, it was a solid draft for the defending champs. Nothing crazy, but solid.

BUCCANEERS DRAFT GRADE: B

Tennessee Titans

- 1.22 – Caleb Farley (CB – Virginia Tech)
- 2.53 – Dillon Radunz (OT – N.D State)
- 3.92 – Monty Rice (LB – Georgia)
- 3.100 – Elijah Molden (CB – Washington)
- 4.109 – Dez Fitzpatrick (WR – Louisville)
- 4.135 – Rashad Weaver (EDGE – Pitt)
- 6.205 – Racey McMath (WR – LSU)
- 6.215 – Brady Breeze (S – Oregon)

The Titans were expected to add a wide receiver in the first round, but when Farley fell due to medical concerns, they didn't

hesitate to take what I perceived to be the best cornerback in this draft at No. 22 overall. Great pick. Then, we watched them select Radunz, the offensive tackle out of North Dakota State. After whiffing on Isaiah Wilson last year, this is not a surprising pick, but again, wide receiver is arguably the biggest need. With two picks in the third round, they go linebacker and cornerback (again). Rice wasn't a can't miss, must-draft linebacker at this spot, and it wasn't a major weakness, so this pick made little sense. Molden is a safety/nickel cornerback type who they did get solid value on in the third round, as he should be able to start immediately. When the Titans do finally go wide receiver, they take Fitzpatrick, who I didn't even scout, and I scouted 32 different wide receivers. With some of the players that were on the board, this seems like an even bigger reach than Rice. Weaver was a fine value in the fourth round, though there's nothing game-changing about his play. The Titans snagged a few solid players early in this draft, but ultimately whiffed on their biggest needs, as they needed wide receivers badly, as well as a nose tackle. There was talent to be had at those positions while they were on the clock.

TITANS DRAFT GRADE: C-

Washington Football Team

- 1.19 – Jamin Davis (LB – Kentucky)
- 2.51 – Samuel Cosmi (OT – Texas)

- 3.74 – Benjamin St-Juste (CB – Minnesota)
- 3.82 – Dyami Brown (WR – N. Carolina)
- 4.124 – John Bates (TE – Boise State)
- 5.163 – Darrick Forrest (S – Cincinnati)
- 6.225 – Camaron Cheeseman (LS – Michigan)

- 7.240 – Will Bradley-King (DL – Baylor)
- 7.246 – Shaka Toney (EDGE – Penn St)
- 7.258 – Dax Milne (WR – BYU)

We watched Davis have a meteoric rise through the draft process, with some wondering if he'd be the first linebacker off the board. While that wasn't the case, he was the third linebacker, and he went to a coaching staff under Ron Rivera that has consistently churned out All Pro linebackers. It was also a big need for their defense. Getting Cosmi in the second round was a massive steal considering all the tackles that came off the board by the 51st pick. He might start for them at left tackle this year. St-Juste was a solid value in the third round and will provide solid depth at cornerback. Brown was someone many thought might sneak into the second round, so to get him later in the third was solid as well. He will compete for the third wide receiver spot immediately. Bates felt like a reach in a weak tight end class. To know they had four of the first 82 picks in this draft and didn't select a quarterback was odd, but not totally off-the-wall considering the value they got with those picks.

FOOTBALL TEAM DRAFT GRADE: A-



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College Football News and Notes



NCAA FBS title game will be played on Sunday, May 16, at Toyota Stadium in Frisco



BO CARTER

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Quarterfinal scores from the NCAA FBS playoffs last Saturday were Delaware 20, Jacksonville State 14; Sam Houston 24, North Dakota State 20; James Madison 24, North Dakota 20; South Dakota State 31, Southern Illinois 26. Semifinals will be played among the four winners Saturday with the title game on Sunday, May 16, at Toyota Stadium in Frisco, Texas.

Semifinal scores from the NAIA football championships last week were Northwestern (Iowa) 44, Morningside 41; Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) 38, Keiser (Fla.) 14. Lindsey Wilson and Northwestern (Iowa) will face off in the NAIA championship Monday, May 10, at Grambling, La., in historic Eddie Robinson Stadium at 6 p.m.

NFF College Hall of Fame Facts

Some notable birthdates in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the May 4-10 period are May 4 (1903) Elmer Layden,

Davenport, Iowa; (1910) Barry Wood, Milton, Mass.; (1928) Don Coleman, Ponca City, Okla.; (1938) Wayne Harris, Hampton, Ark.; May 5 (1921) Eddie Talboom, Delphos, Ohio; (1927) Al DeRogatis, Newark, N.J.; (1941) Terry Baker, Pine River, Minn.; (1947) Bob Babich, Youngstown, Ohio; 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.; 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.

Notable anniversary death dates for Hall of Famers are May 4 (1991) Don Whitmire, Annandale, Va.; May 5 (1989) Earl "Red" Blaik, Colorado Springs, Colo.; (2005) Skip Minisi, Paoli, Pa.; May 7 (1994) Chuck Taylor, Stanford, Calif.; May 8 (1997) Bob Devaney, Lincoln, Neb.; (2006) John Kimbrough, Haskell, Texas; May 9 (2002) Dan Devine, Tempe, Ariz.; May 10 (1995) Gil Steinke, Austin, Texas; (2013) Ronnie Caveness, Little Rock, Ark.

Happy birthdays to NFF College Hall of Fame members May 5 Terry Baker (a

spry 80), Bob Babich, May 6 Tom Cousineau, May 7 Pat McNally, Leslie O'Neal, May 8 Ronnie Lott, May 9 Brad Budde...

Hometowns of more 2021 college head coaches – Baylor: Dave Aranda, Bakersfield, Calif.; Bates: Malik Hall, Detroit, Mich.; Bethune-Cookman: Terry Sims, Knoxville, Tenn.; Boise State: Andy Acalos, Corona, Calif.; Boston College: Jeff Hafley, Montvale, N.J.

Texas Wesleyan denoted its 2021 schedule after the Rams were limited in fall 2020 and spring competition (cancelled) by COVID-19 protocols. Included this autumn is a first game against a NCAA Division I opponent – Central Arkansas – for the first time since Wesleyan renewed its football program in 2017. The Rams had a historic victory over TCU 17-3 in 1911 when Wesleyan was Fort Worth Polytechnic U. Other tough tests for the '21 Rams are defending Sooner Athletic Conference champ Arizona Christian and Wayland Baptist. Wesleyan also will meet traditional Texas HBCU rival Texas College in the Rams home finale Oct. 30. International opponent Arkansas State Querétaro (Mexico) was originally on the TWU slate before a Mexican government ruling outlawing contact sports indefinitely.

National health authority Dr. Anthony Fauci sees an end to mandatory face mask wearing in coming days for outdoor events – especially sporting events with proper distancing. Recent research shows that outdoor transmission of COVID-19 without masks has become low risk...Mississippi State's Alumni Association with a number of former student-athletes on hand is making a special trip to Egypt and the Nile River Valley in March-April 2022....

...European Union president Ursula von der Leyen allowed that vaccinated American citizens will be permitted to travel to European Union countries at some point this summer when COVID-19 conditions permit...The Vanderbilt Alumni Association reported gifts in excess of \$5 million from 7,600-plus alumni and friends on VU Giving Day April 30. A good portion of this will go to scholarships and VU athletics...Bluefield (W.Va.) State captured the inaugural Black College Nines HBCU College Division World Series with a 7-2 upset in the final over No. 1 ranked BC Nines Small College Xavier (La.) in Montgomery, Alabama.

Southern (Baton Rouge) assistant coach Jason Rollins was named as head coach of the Jaguars...Alabama head coach Nick Saban spoke of the importance of character as well as ability as NFL teams chose players in last week's NFL Free Agent Draft...Texas A&M head coach Jimbo Fisher

was a featured guest on KTCK-AM Radio (The Ticket) in Dallas last week...Texas Wesleyan's fifth-year head coach Joe Prud'homme was featured by an area publication for starting a football program from the ground up at the Fort Worth university...North Texas officially added Chris Petrelli as outside linebackers coach for '21...Vanderbilt football general manager and director of personnel Barton Simmons explained the unique national recruiting experience that he brought from working with Rivals.com to the Vandy gridiron program...Leon Paul has replaced Chris Gilbert, who joined the Texas assistant coaching staff earlier this year, as head coach at Lancaster (Texas) HS.

Northwestern is scheduled to name deputy AD Mike Polisky as AD early this week...Grand Canyon named Jamie Boggs as fulltime director of athletics...UNLV AD Desiree Reed Francois had her contract extended through 2026 with solid compensation rewards included...Texas State AD Larry Teis is retiring Aug. 31, and interim AD for the Bobcats is for TSU executive senior associate AD for external operations Don Coryell...St. John's (N.Y.) extended the contract of AD Mike Cragg for five years...Naismith Hall of Fame women's basketball head coach Kim Mulkey of Baylor officially has taken over the same slot at LSU...Vanderbilt chancellor Dr. Daniel Diermeier spoke with the Vanderbilt Hustler student newspaper about his first year in the post and future renovations of \$300 million for athletics in coming month...The Denver Broncos added former Wyoming senior associate AD and senior woman administrator China Jude as vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion...Lehigh has named former Dartmouth provost Dr. Joseph Helble as its next president on Aug. 16...Rhode Island tabbed former Monash University (Australia) provost Dr. Marc Parlange as its next head of the university...Florida State will choose the successor for president Dr. John Thrasher by the end of May with assistance from the executive placement firm Storbeck/Pimentel and Associates...LSU started presidential candidates' interviews last week, and former LSU president and NCAA president Dr. Mark Emmert withdrew his name from consideration after getting an extension from the NCAA. Some of the other leading possibilities are Arkansas-Pine Bluff provost Dr. Laurence Alexander, Louisiana System president/CEO Dr. James Henderson, Maryland provost Dr. Mary Ann Rankin, and former White House Office of Science and Technology Policy director Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, among others...Ole Miss has

(continued on page 14)

named Jennifer Saxon executive associate AD and senior woman administrator, Shannon Singletary as executive associate AD for sports medicine, Will Kava as senior associate AD, former communications director Kyle Campbell as associate AD for brand strategy, Tom Kleinlein as deputy AD, and Neal Mead as associate AD for event management. UM AD Keith Carter also spoke of the future impact of names, images and likenesses' legislation and how Mississippi laws might be different than those enacted by the U.S. Congress....

...Arkansas AD Hunter Yurachek has been appointed to the DI Football Oversight Committee and replaces Alabama AD Greg Byrne...Air Force senior associate AD Jim Trego has retired with the academy after 38 years there and also administrative experience at Baylor.....Former New Hampshire executive AD Jon Danos is moving to the Frontier League as CEO...Wagner chose Terrell Coburn as women's basketball head coach...George Washington U. added women's assistant basketball coaches Gabe Lazo, Adam Call and Caitlyn Isler....

...Maryland men's basketball selected Greg Manning Jr. as director of operations...The four finalists for the AD's position at Alaska Fairbanks are Black Hills State assistant AD for Internal Operations and Events Brock Anundson, former Memphis senior associate AD for external relations Steve Macy, Idaho Associate. AD for external relations Tim Mooney, and Wisconsin-Superior AD Nicholas Bursik..

...Louisiana tabbed former Odessa (Texas) College volleyball head coach Kristi Gray as its new VB mentor...New Oklahoma State president Dr. Kayse Shrum spoke of her history with OSU medical units and familiarity with the workings of the university. Cowboys head coach Mike Gundy also saluted the hire of the popular former O-State dean on her appointment....According to study from the College and University Professional Association of Human Resources, there was just a 0.4 percent uptick in pay for college administrators because of COVID-19 circumstances from the 2019-20 to the 2020-21 academic year

...Oklahoma City U. selected former Lamar president Dr. Ken Evans as its president starting July 1...UIC chose former Northwestern women's soccer assistant head coach David Nikolic as Flames head mentor...Wagner selected former women's basketball assistant coach Terrell Coburn to head coach...Binghamton extended women's basketball head coach Bethann Shapiro Ord's contract extended through the 2025-26 season.

Some key finalists for the 2020-21 NCAA FCS Walter Payton Offensive Player of the Year are Percy Agyei-Obese, James Madison; Eric Barriere, Eastern Washington; Julius Chestnut, Sacred Heart; Tim DeMorat, Fordham; Juwon Farri, Monmouth; and Aqeel Glass, Alabama A&M... Celebrated among the finalists for the 2020-21 NCAA FCS Buck Buchanan Defensive Player of the Year are Jordan

Lewis, Southern (Baton Rouge); Robert Rochell, Central Arkansas; Stone Snyder, VMI; Tre Walker, Idaho; and Tristan Wheeler, Richmond...Former Alabama QB Mac Jones has been touted as the new face of the franchise for the NFL New England Patriots...New Mexico State LB Devin Richardson is transferring to Texas...

...Michigan DE Kwitty Paye was one of the first to get personalized plates for his NFL Draft first round status...Texas A&M WR Camron Buckley and safety Derrick Tucker have entered the NCAA transfer portal...

...Texas safety Xavion Alford will play at Southern California this autumn...Central Michigan QB John Keller was injured at an off-campus party on April 24 but is recovering and should be available for fall workouts...Ole Miss standout Justin is transferring to Rio Grande Valley...Marquette's Kur Kuath is joining the Oklahoma program...Texas Tech's Tyreek Smith has transferred to Oklahoma State...Arizona's James Akinjo will be playing at Baylor starting in August...Texas' Courtney Ramey is keeping his options open for a professional contract but has not signed an agent and will be eligibly for the coming campaign...Duke's Henry Coleman III will take his talents to Texas A&M...Ohio State WR Jameson Williams is now ticketed for duty at Texas A&M in 2021...Oklahoma CB Brendan Radley-Hiles is transferring to Washington...Houston safety Jordan Moore has joined the '21 NCAA transfer portal...Noted rapper Master P (Percy Miller) has an arrangement ready for names, images and likenesses' compensation for his son Hercy Miller who has signed to play basketball at Tennessee State. The rapper says the initial value for Hercy Miller's NIL could be \$2.5 million-plus...2020 Butkus Award recipient Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah was under serious consideration at one time for the NFL Cleveland Browns No. 1 '21 draft choice. The Browns instead selected Northwestern CB Greg Newsome II as their initial take.

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference has designated most of its fall schedules after having opted out of the 2021 NCAA FCS spring slate...Alabama A&M captured the delayed Southwestern Athletic Conference, which has been contested in football annually since 1933 (except for World War II cancellation in 1943) over UAPB 40-33 last Saturday, and the SWAC had its first year of gridiron competition without declaring a titlist in 1920. It was A&M's first SWAC football title since 2006...Mid-American Conference commissioner Dr. Jon Steinbrecher shared his feeling on NCAA transfer rules as a member of the NCAA's Working Group on Transfers

...The Southland Conference Board of Directors joined several others in eliminating the loop's intraconference transfer policy effective in 2021-22. The Mountain West and Big East Conferences followed suit with immediate intraconference transfers later last week...NBA presi-

dent of team marketing and business operations, chief innovation officer and former Stanford student-athlete Amy Brooks has withdrawn her name for consideration for the Pac-12 Conference commissioner's job...The Southeastern Conference with 12 selections, Big Ten with seven, Atlantic Coast with six, and Pac-12 Conference with three were the top four leagues with top round draft picks in last week's NFL Draft...The Big 12 Conference became the first Power Five conference without a first round NFL Draft choice since 2006..Media in the Northern California Bay Area compared the process for hiring Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner Jim Phillips and the location of a new leader for the Pac-12 Conference.

Tarrant Area Food Bank has joined the Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic, AT&T Stadium, Dallas Cowboys, and Arlington Police and Fire departments to host the Meals for Moms Mega Mobile Market mass food distribution at AT&T Stadium on Tuesday, May 4, to serve an estimated 2,000-4,000 families. The Meals for Moms distribution follows the same groups' passing out 778,090 pounds of Thanksgiving-related food to 9,154 last November....

Clemson president Dr. James Clements has been named to the College Football Playoff Board of Managers while replacing retiring Florida State president Dr. John Thrasher on the board.

Former Colorado State standout and current NFL star Weston Richburg and his wife Marlee made \$1 million-plus donation to Rams athletics...Nebraska began construction last Friday on the North Stadium \$155 million expansion and football facility in Lincoln and needs just \$20 in private donations to complete financing..Louisville has received a \$3 million gift from Kroger Co. for construction of an indoor baseball practice facility and other facilities. UL administrators are hoping to a start date of work on the nuances before the end of the year...Purdue athletics has gained a \$3.75 million matching gift pool for any individual or corporate gifts of over \$2,500 during its annual Day of Giving. Former Houston, Texas A&M and Arizona head coach and former Purdue student-athlete Kevin Sumlin was one of the early donors to the fund...Aptive Environmental has inked with BYU quarterback and top-round draft choice Zach Wilson...INFLCR is beginning INFLCR Verified to assist compliance coordinators at colleges in managing new NCAA legislation and to help guide student-athletes through changing NCAA regulations...Dallas Baptist athletics and similar departments will be benefitting from DBU Giving Day Monday, May 3...Utah baseball is relocating nine of its remaining games to Smith's Ballpark in Salt Lake City...Syracuse athletics is working with key members of the men's lacrosse team on recent personnel challenges...Adidas is moving its basketball operations hub from Portland, Ore., to Los Angeles...Akron and Wake Forest were two of the pre-meet

favorites and U.S. powers in the Collegiate Esports National Championship hosted by Collegiate Sports Management Group...

...Caroline Kennedy Scholssberg addressed the delayed, live commencement for Vanderbilt's Class of '20 last Friday, and Dr. Anthony Fauci will be guest speaker for the Class of 2021 exercises on May 14. Both events were and will be livestreamed for those who are unable or wish to opt out of live ceremonies...Arkansas athletics now has an officially licensed tortilla chip..

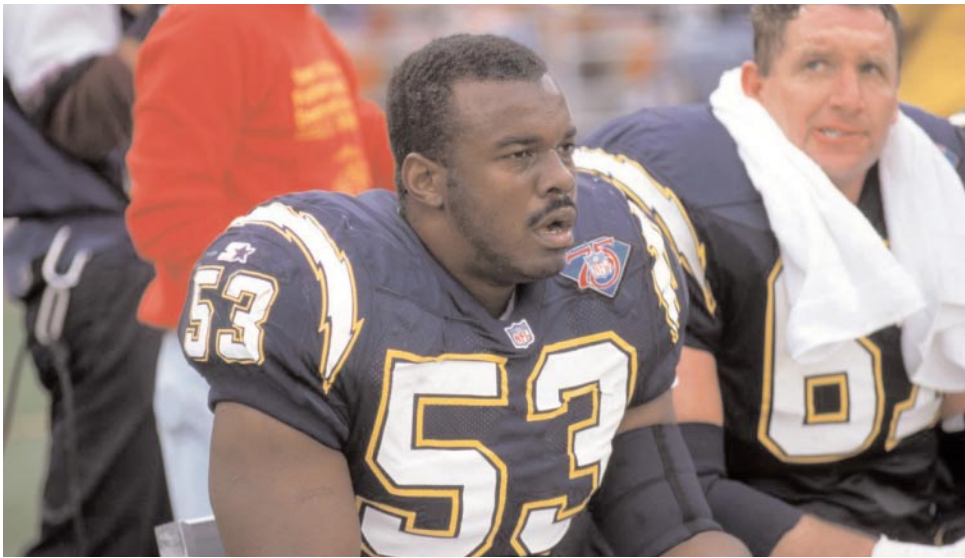
...AthleticDirectorU distributed a recent survey to NCAA Division I commissioners about the current state of college athletics and future challenges...The Florida State administrative task force on diversity has recommended keeping Doak Campbell's name on the Seminoles football stadium..

...Virginia Tech athletics finalized \$99.2 million and \$97.5 million in expenses for fiscal year 2020...The State of Florida produced a legislative amendment to move back the effective date for that state's version of the names, images and likenesses' compensation for college student-athletes from July 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022...Texas A&M athletics formally introduced Reveille X as its latest live Collie mascot...

...Marshall reported 60-plus students in all sports entering the 2021 NCAA transfer portal...Notre Dame athletics just received an endowment donation from John Anthony and Anthony Travel.

Bill Hazen Productions had an extensive national radio show with memories of late assistant commissioner Russ Anderson of Conference USA. C-USA also is accepting donations for the Russell Anderson Memorial Scholarship at Conference USA.com...Stewart Mandel of The Athletic pointed out that 16 student-athletes in the 2019 Alabama-LSU contest were first round NFL draft choices in 2019....College pressbox.com again provided links to biographical sketches for 400-plus draft eligible standouts for last week's NFL Draft...The Athletic noted that Northwestern deputy AD for external affairs Mike Polisky and Duke senior deputy AD for administration, legal affairs and chief of staff Nina King are among the leading finalists for the Wildcats AD's opening...The Athletic and San Jose Mercury News also called for more participation and attention to football issues by Pac-12 Conference presidents as they decide on two top administrators for the league office. Crakes Media Consulting CEO Patrick Crakes gave his thoughts about the possibility of two commissioners with equal powers in the new Pac-12 Conference chiefs' arrangements...Fox Sports executive vice president and head of strategy the future Mike Mulvihill mentioned his opinion about the future of television negotiations and rating with the Pac-12 Networks in a recent story...

The Clubhouse group celebrated its first-ever major sports agreement with exclusive coverage of the 2021 NFL Draft...Former Beyond Meat senior vice president of marketing Marc Patrick was tabbed as global



Former Rice Owl Courtney Hall passed away April 30 at the age of 52

head of sports marketing for Amazon Prime Video...ESPN senior vice president for human resources Paul Richardson is the new Disney senior executive vice president chief human resources officer...The Endeavor Group went public last week at \$24 per share...The College Sports Research Institute performed a survey of broadcasts of 18 bowl games during the post-2019 era and tallied 7,374 graphics over 45 hours of airtime...Sportico did an extensive study on typical fees paid by major administrations and departments of athletics for search firms for such groups as Tennessee, Big 12 Conference schools, Western Michigan, Northern Kentucky, and others...The Portland Oregonian newspaper conversed about the multiple abilities needed for both the new commissioner and deputy commissioner of the Pac-12.

Opio Mashairiki of Savannah State, retired Georgia AD Greg McGarity, Gary Pine of Azusa Pacific, Shelly Poe of Auburn, and Scott Stricklin of Florida were featured subjects and opinion makers in the CoSIDA Open Forum online newsletter and magazine...Alabama, Arizona, Cal State Northridge, Cincinnati, Connecticut, DePaul, Kansas, Louisville, LSU, Michigan State, NC State, South Carolina, Southern California, TCU, Tennessee, and Winthrop are working with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible issues and probes at their respective schools...NCAA president Dr. Mark Emmert had his contract extended through 2025...The NCAA ruled that fully-vaccinated student-athletes and additional Tier 1 individuals (coaches, support staff) displaying no COVID-19 symptoms may be exempt from COVID-19 testing beginning May 1 after consulting the NCAA COVID-19 Medical Advisory Group...Former Ohio State student-athlete and U.S. Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (Rep.-Ohio) and Emanuel Cleaver (Dem-Mo.) have introduced names, images and likenesses' legislation on a national scale to compliment the NCAA's plans, which are scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2023. The Congressional bill could go into effect as soon as June or July...Major League Baseball estimates the cost of any possible

expansion teams could be \$2.2 billion or higher.

Courtney Hall, a teammate of NFF chief operating officer Matthew Sign and All-Southwest Conference standout during Hall's 1985-88 tenure, passed away in the New York City suburbs April 30. He was 52 and a standout for the 1989-96 San Diego Chargers as well as a member of the SWC Hall of Fame...Former Tennessee tailback and assistant coach W.C. Cooper passed away April 11 in Tullahoma, Tenn. He was 92...Former Florida State and NFL player Geno Hayes passed away April 26 in Valdosta, Ga. He was 33...Former Virginia State lineman and VSU Sports Hall of Fame member DeAndrea Neal passed away April 9 in Richmond, Va. He was 53...Bob Verplank, the father of PGA golfer Scott Verplank, passed away April 27 after a long illness in Dallas, Texas. Bob Verplank was 83 and played baseball at Texas from 1955-59.

Schedule with New Year's Six Games

(All Games Televised by ESPN, EST)

Friday, Dec. 31, 2021

(CFP Semifinals & Championship Jan. 10)

Goodyear Cotton Bowl

AT&T Stadium
Arlington, Texas, 4 or 8 p.m.

Capital One Orange Bowl

Hard Rock Stadium
Miami Lakes, Fla., 4 or 8 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 10

CFP Championship, Semifinal Winners
Lucas Oil Stadium
Indianapolis, Ind., 8 p.m.

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

(Other New Year's Six Bowls)

Thursday, Dec. 30

Chick Fil-A Peach Bowl
Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta, Ga. TBD

Friday, Jan. 1

PlayStation Fiesta Bowl
State Farm Stadium
Glendale, Ariz. TBD

Friday, Jan. 1

Allstate Sugar Bowl
Mercedes-Benz Superdome
New Orleans, La., TBD

Friday, Jan. 1

Rose Bowl presented by Capital One
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Arkansas remains at No.1 in NCBWA Division I Poll



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

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

Several schools moved up from the April 26 standings, and these included TCU from No. 6 to 2, Mississippi State from No. 5 to 4, Texas Tech from No. 11 to 7, and Notre Dame from No. 13 to 9 - its highest rating of the year. Southern Miss of Conference USA returns to the Top 30 at No. 25, and Indiana of the Big Ten enters the NCBWA poll for the first time this spring at No. 29.

There have been 13 conferences (nine for the fourth consecutive week) represented in the first 12 standings of 2021, and there were 15 different conferences included in the COVID-19 abbreviated NCBWA polls in 2020.

The 2021 poll voters come from among 33 college baseball writers and related media persons from throughout the nation. The '21 season features 302 NCAA Division I baseball-playing schools, and for more information or to join the NCBWA please go to www.ncbwa.com. Also Receiving Votes (Alphabetically) Alabama (28-15), Arizona State (25-14), Baylor (27-13), California Baptist (29-11), Central Michigan (28-11), Clemson (21-18), Connecticut (20-14), Creighton (17-9), Dallas Baptist (25-11), Fairfield (28-1), Georgia Southern (27-16), Grand Canyon (26-16-1), Indiana State (21-11), Jackson State (25-8), Kansas State (27-16), Liberty (30-11), LSU (26-17), Miami (Fla.) (24-15), Michigan (21-11), NC State (22-14), Nebraska (20-10), Oklahoma (22-20), Rutgers (17-13), San Diego (27-8), San

Diego State (22-12), South Carolina Upstate (30-9), Southern Illinois (31-12), Tulane (24-14), UNLV (16-8), VCU (27-14), Virginia Tech (23-17), Washington State (21-17), Wright State (22-10).

Dropped Out

Michigan (28), Nebraska (29).

By conference

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

No. 1 Schools by Week:

Preseason (Florida); Feb. 23 (Ole Miss); March 1-15, April 12-May 3 (Arkansas); March 22-April 5 (Vanderbilt).

NCBWA BASEBALL - Top 25

(Games played through 4/26)

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

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GMC Yukon available in two sizes



by Matt Degen

The GMC Yukon and its extended-length variant, the Yukon XL, are the mechanical twins of the Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, respectively. The Yukon Denali, meanwhile, is so plush you might mistake it for these models' luxury sibling, the Cadillac Escalade. All three of these full-size GM sport-utility vehicles are built in the same factory in Arlington, Texas. The GMC variant stands out with its own design aesthetics, and aims to have a slightly more upscale feel than its Chevy counterparts. As a traditional body-on-frame 3-row SUV, it excels at towing and hauling, but as with its kin and Ford Expedition rival, trades some efficiency and comfort for its rugged capabilities. The optional and larger of its V8 engine choices can be had on a lower-grade trim.

As with its Tahoe and Escalade brethren, the GMC Yukon shows how far GM's full-size SUVs have come. Though still based on sturdy truck-like body-on-frame construction, the Yukon is quite comfortable considering it also has the capability to tow over 8,000 pounds and go off-roading. Its ride manners shine best on long and wide highways. Opting for magnetic ride control further smooths the driving experience by constantly monitoring and adapting the suspension to quell road imperfections. There's no denying the size of the Yukon, even in standard form and especially in the longer Yukon XL. It can be a handful in parking lots and a squeeze to put in a garage, so make sure you measure yours first if you plan to park inside. The Yukon's standard 5.3-liter V8 engine is a potent and gratifying workhorse. We've used it to pull trailers and RVs, climb grades and meander along Interstates. It's always up for the task

at hand and rarely feels out of breath. Standard on the Yukon Denali and now available on the mid-grade SLT trim if you opt for the Graphite Performance Edition is the larger and more powerful 6.2-liter V8. With 420 horsepower/460 lb-ft of torque on tap, it will happily squeal the tires if you lay into it. The base V8 engine remains paired to a mostly smooth 6-speed automatic transmission, while the 6.2-liter V8 uses a refined 10-speed automatic. Unlike a crossover SUV, the 4-wheel-drive system available on the Tahoe is the real deal, with legit low-range gearing thanks to a 2-speed transfer case.

Opt for this package, and you can get the Yukon's bigger and more powerful engine without quite having to spend Denali money. Whereas that top-line Yukon starts at nearly \$68,000, you can get an SLT variant with the 6.2-liter V8, 10-speed transmission and other goodies for a few thousand less.

Safety is paramount when driving, especially so when you're piloting a 5,000-plus-pound SUV. This package adds active-safety features like forward-collision warning with automatic braking, lane-departure warning and lane-keep assist. It's standard on SLT trims and a bargain at only \$545 extra on base SLE models.

As with the Chevy Tahoe and Suburban, the GMC Yukon and Yukon XL are among the few new vehicles other than a van that can seat up to nine passengers. The caveat there is you'll have to go with the base SLE trim and then opt for a bench seat in front. Far more buyers will choose the more comfortable bucket seats up front, making total passenger count eight. Captain's seats can also be had in the second row, which makes seating capacity top out at seven. Regardless of setup, the Tahoe

is quite roomy, as should be expected of a full-size SUV. Cargo space behind the third row, however, is surprisingly limited at just over 15 cubic feet. Folding the third row, however, expands that space to nearly 52 cubic feet. If you regularly need to use the third row and carry cargo, well, that's what the Yukon XL is for. Ergonomics on the base Yukon SLE detracts due to a steering column that only tilts and doesn't telescope. In addition to getting leather instead of cloth, another reason to opt for at least the mid-grade SLT trim is to get a telescoping steering wheel and power-adjustable pedals.

The Yukon comes in two sizes: big and bigger. The standard model has an overall length of 203.9 inches — nearly 17 feet. The Yukon XL comes in at 224.4 inches — nearly 19 feet. Like its Tahoe/Suburban/Escalade relatives, the GMC Yukon is slab-sided, big and bold. GMC's variant of this boxy SUV has its own touches, and further varies its own theme between the standard and Denali models. The Yukon Denali is even more upscale, featuring a prominent honeycomb grille and lots of glitzy chrome. With GMC's big SUV come big wheels, ranging in size from the standard 18 inches up to optional 22s.

The GMC Yukon is available in three trims: SLE, SLT and the range-topping Denali. The base SLE offers more standard features than the base Chevy Tahoe LS, but it's also more expensive. Standard features include 10-way power-adjustable driver's seat, keyless entry, front and rear parking sensors, rearview camera, tri-zone climate control, 9-speaker Bose audio system, and 8-inch touch-screen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility. If you can swing roughly \$5,000 more, we recommend stepping up to the mid-trim SLT trim. It includes conveniences like leather upholstery, a steering wheel that telescopes and tilts, power-adjustable pedals, and power tailgate. It also includes the Enhanced Driver Alert Package with safety features like lane-departure warning, forward-collision warning, and automatic emergency braking. All models also come with GM's OnStar telecommunications service (subscription required after trial period) with 4G LTE and Wi-Fi connection.

At the top end, the new Yukon Denali ladles on features and amenities including the bigger V8 engine, magnetic-ride-control suspension, hands-free tailgate, navigation, upgraded Bose audio system with active-noise cancellation, head-up display, perforated leather seating with heated and ventilated front seats, and wireless phone-charging cradle. All Yukon models can be had with 4-wheel drive (4WD) in lieu of

the standard (rear-) 2-wheel drive (2WD). In addition to the Graphite Edition packages, the SLT trim can also be had with the new Standard Edition Value Package that bundles sunroof, 2nd-row bucket seats and 20-inch wheels. Other options include blind-spot monitoring, adaptive cruise control, and power-folding rear seats. A rear-seat entertainment system is also available.

Two V8 engine choices are available for the Yukon and Yukon XL. Standard is a 5.3-liter V8 making 355 horsepower and 383 lb-ft of torque, with a 6-speed automatic transmission. Optional is a 6.2-liter V8 that makes a more robust 420 horsepower/460 lb-ft of torque and is linked to a 10-speed automatic. The 6.2-liter V8 was formerly reserved for Denali models, but is now available on mid-grade SLT trims if you opt for the Graphite Performance Edition. Both engines feature the efficiency benefits of direct gasoline injection and Active Cylinder Management, which seamlessly shuts off half the cylinders during steady cruising to save fuel. Even with these technologies, Yukons aren't exactly fuel misers. The GMC Yukon is 2WD, with 4WD optional on all trims. The tow rating maxes out at 8,500 pounds, which is slightly lower than the Tahoe's 8,600-pound rating, and less than the Ford Expedition's rating of up to 9,300 pounds.

5.3-liter V8
355 horsepower @ 5,600 rpm
383 lb-ft of torque @ 4,100 rpm
EPA city/highway fuel economy: 15/22 mpg (2WD), 15/21 mpg (4WD), 14/21 mpg (4WD XL)
6.2-liter V8
420 horsepower @ 5,600 rpm
460 lb-ft of torque @ 4,100 rpm
EPA city/highway fuel economy: 14/23 mpg (2WD), 14/22 mpg (4WD), 14/23 mpg (2WD XL) 14/20 mpg (4WD XL)

The GMC Yukon has a (MSRP) starting at \$50,795 when including the \$1,295 destination charge. In reality, most buyers should plan to spend several thousand more. Stepping up to the Yukon SLT, for instance, puts you into the mid-\$50,000 range, while a new Yukon Denali starts at nearly \$68,000. Adding 4-wheel drive is another \$3,000, and adding length in the form of the Yukon XL adds another \$2,700 to the bottom line. All-in, you can crest the \$80,000 mark, into Cadillac Escalade territory. At its base price, the Yukon is slightly more expensive than its Tahoe sibling, even more so if you consider the Tahoe Custom, a 2-row/5-passenger variant so-far exclusive to the Chevy. The GMC's base price is also above that of the Toyota Sequoia and Nissan Armada.



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