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Weekly



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July 19 - July 25, 2024

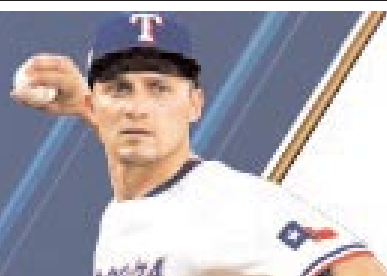
Vol. 22, Issue 45

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VS.



JULY 19-21

2024-2025 ACC MEN'S BASKETBALL OPPONENTS



2024-2025 ACC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL OPPONENTS

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HOME AWAY



HOME

AWAY



HOME AWAY



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2024 SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

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

JULY

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

MAY

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

AUGUST

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

JUNE

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

SEPTEMBER

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

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

Home Games

SMU athletics receives sizeable gift

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SMU Athletics Receives \$1 Million Gift From Pratt Family To Support The Men's Basketball Program

SMU Athletics is thrilled to announce a \$1 million gift from Jodi and Kenneth Pratt to support the SMU men's basketball program. This donation will help fund the renovation of the locker room and coaches' offices and is made in support of new head men's basketball coach Andy Enfield. In recognition of this generous gift, the team tunnel entering David B. Miller Court at Moody Coliseum will be named the Pratt Family Team Tunnel.

"We are immensely grateful to the Pratt Family for their significant contribution," said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. "Their support exemplifies the commitment of our community to advancing SMU's athletic programs and ensuring our student-athletes have top-notch facilities."

Director of Athletics Rick Hart added, "The Pratt Family's generosity is a testament to their belief in the future of SMU basketball. This gift will play a crucial role in elevating the program's competitiveness as we embark on our inaugural season in the Atlantic Coast Conference under Coach Andy Enfield."

"We are incredibly grateful to the Pratt

Family for their unwavering support and commitment to our men's basketball program," said Brad Cheves, Senior Vice President for Development and External Affairs. "This gift enhances our facilities and reinforces our dedication to providing the best resources for our student-athletes."

The \$1 million gift will kick-start a campaign aimed at boosting the competitiveness of the SMU men's basketball program through enhanced facilities, top talent recruitment, and additional resources. The gift sustains the momentum of the Mustang Club's fundraising efforts and adds to the robust community support of a \$125 million fundraising campaign to support ACC transition efforts.

Coach Enfield expressed his gratitude, saying, "This investment in our program is a game-changer. We are excited to start this new chapter in the ACC and look forward to the bright future ahead."

On the heels of a school-record eight-championship season and set for its inaugural season in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), SMU is riding a surge of momentum heading into 2024-25.

SMU has already set a new season ticket sales record for Ford Stadium and is on pace to more than double the amount of season tickets sold for the upcoming year.

To continue the momentum, SMU Athletics invites season ticket holders to become part of the Game Changer program, by selling season tickets within your network. Signing up is easy! You'll be paired with a ticket sales executive and you will be helping us fill Ford Stadium this fall. Check it out.



Dallas Mavericks point guard Kyrie Irving breaks hand, undergoes surgery

Mavs point guard Kyrie Irving recently underwent surgery to repair a broken left hand suffered earlier this month while training, the club announced this week.

No timetable for the 32-year-old's return was given, but ESPN reported the team is optimistic he will be ready for the start of training camp in a couple of months.

The eight-time All-Star teamed with Luka Doncic to key Dallas' run to the NBA Finals, where the Mavericks lost to the Boston Celtics in five games last month. Irving averaged 22.1 points and 5.1 assists in 22 playoff games after putting up 25.6 points and 5.2 assists during the regular season. He was seeking his second NBA championship after winning one with Cleveland in 2016. The Cavaliers selected him No. 1 overall in 2011.

In 13 seasons, Irving has averaged 23.6 points and 5.7 assists with Cleveland, Boston, the Brooklyn and Dallas. He joined the Mavericks in a trade with the Nets in February 2023. He signed an extension with Dallas the following offseason.

He also reportedly played a key role in luring free agent Klay Thompson to Dallas earlier this month; Thompson had spent his entire career with Golden State.

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NCAA Basketball Poll

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	JULY 19 FRIDAY	JULY 20 SATURDAY	JULY 21 SUNDAY	JULY 22 MONDAY	JULY 23 TUESDAY	JULY 24 WEDNESDAY	JULY 25 THURSDAY
	Rangers vs Orioles 7:05 / Bally's	Rangers vs Orioles 6:05 / Bally's	Rangers vs Orioles 1:35 / Bally's	Rangers vs White Sox 7:05 / Bally's	Rangers vs White Sox 7:05 / Bally's	Rangers vs White Sox 7:05 / Bally's	Rangers vs White Sox 1:35 / Bally's
	Roughriders at Wichita 7:05	Roughriders at Wichita 6:05	Roughriders at Wichita 1:05		Roughriders vs Tulsa 7:05	Roughriders vs Tulsa 7:05	Roughriders vs Tulsa 7:05
		FC Dallas at New England 6:30					
	Thoroughbred Racing Post time: 6:35	Thoroughbred Racing Post time: 1:25	Thoroughbred Racing Post time: 1:25				

2024 College Football rule changes



College football rules changes for 2024: Explaining two-minute warning, helmet communication

A refresher on what's coming to college football during the 2024 season.

For the third-consecutive season, college football implemented significant rules changes. These moves are sure to affect end-of-game situations. For the first time in college football history, a two-minute warning will be observed in the second and fourth quarter along with in-helmet communication on the field, ideas originally announced by the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel in March before being approved last week.

Helmet communication helps protect against sign-stealing while use of a two-minute provides another extended timeout for teams during the decisive portion of games. In other words, an offense on the move should be aided by the two-minute warning, which could result in more competitive finishes next season.

The most significant rule change last season was the clock continuing to run after first downs unless chains move inside the final two minutes of play of the first or second half. And in the fourth quarter, this resulted in a negative effect on close finish. This was similar to the NFL's handling of time after first downs, but college football has never had a two-minute warning, time stoppage that started at the professional level in 1942.

Here's an explanation of the 2024 season's new rules across college football and a refresher on recent alterations:

Two-minute warning defined

Double two-minute warnings are coming to college football at the end of each half, which doesn't necessarily mean an assist for TV networks with more advertisement time as well, per reports. Stoppage in play will not only assist in game-planning in the final moments of the second and fourth quarters, but personnel changes will be easier, too. No additional

timeouts are being given to teams, but a pair of two-minute stoppages should help coaching staffs and players with execution.

In-helmet communication will be shut off 15 seconds before the end of the play clock and the player designated with communication from the sideline will have a green dot on his helmet. The NCAA says all FBS teams will be allowed to use up to 18 tablets for viewing in-game replays, including broadcast feeds and specific camera angles.

Rules committee co-chair Kirby Smart said in March the move to helmet communication is to grow college football closer to its NFL counterpart and is not a result of Michigan's sign-stealing saga and teams intercepting signals — as some suggested. Ex-Michigan staffer Connor Stalions resigned from his position last November, two weeks after his suspension as the NCAA investigated his alleged role in Michigan's advanced scouting and sign-stealing scandal that resulted in a multi-game suspension for former coach Jim Harbaugh.

Texas coach Steve Sarkisian, among others in the profession, had previously advocated for the move to in-helmet communication to help combat signal-stealing on gamedays.

"That's not what the sole intent was," Smart said, via ESPN. "I've been on the rules committee now three to four years, and coach-to-player communication has come up every single year. It's been talked about. We've been evolving, trying to get closer to it. A lot of coaches debate, talk about how this is not going to stop people from signaling, or having the big cardboard signs on the sideline.

"A lot of people have said it would take 11 headsets to take that way, or three or four headsets to take that away. That's not the intent. The intent is to get a little closer to what the NFL has done to allow communication. We don't know where it's going to take us, so we're going to onboard one step at a time. It allows communication between mostly your quarterback and somebody on defense, and we'll find out where it takes us."

Recent rule changes were designed to shorten games

The most significant rule change last fall that will continue in 2024 was the clock continuing to run after first downs unless chains move inside the final two minutes of play of the first or second half. This is similar to the NFL's handling of time after first downs, but college football does not have a two-minute warning. Previously, this is what separated college football's offenses from those in the NFL

as the chain gang was given time to re-set and the clock would not begin again until the next play was snapped. This is expected to shave several minutes off the total time of games overall. Clock stoppage after first downs had been around since 1968 in college football.

"We're going to have to be mindful of the outcomes and mindful perhaps there are other adjustments that can be made," SEC commissioner Greg Sankey said last summer at SEC Media Days. "It's interesting to read the history of the college football, so I just finished a book that goes back to the late 1800s, early 1900s, Jim Thorpe's biography was the most recent, and realized the passing game was inserted 100 years ago to college football, yet we still have elements of the rules from 100 years ago that guide our thinking around college football, and I think it's an appropriate update."

Consecutive timeouts were also outlawed. Teams are longer be allowed to "ice the kicker" before a field goal attempt, nor is a head coach able to signal a timeout before an offensive or defensive snap if his team is coming out of one the previous play. While the latter is rare, it does happen. With this change, coaches will be less likely to hold as many timeouts as they can for late-game situations. You can't take with them with you and now, opportunities might be spare in the final moments.

There was also a change to untimed down scenarios. No longer can the first quarter or third quarter be extended by an untimed down following a defensive penalty. Instead, that penalty will be assessed to begin the ensuing quarter. This is a change that may go unnoticed for the most part, but the down will be clocked in the second or fourth quarter, according to the NCAA's updated rulebook. There's no changes if a defensive penalty happens at the end of the first or second half and will be played as an untimed down as before.

There was also a clarification of sorts, according to the NCAA pertaining to second-half warmup activities for teams coming back onto the field for the third quarter. This is an effort to cut down on the possibility of opposing getting into it by designating certain areas of the field and sideline that they're allowed to warm up. Teams must wait until the field is made available to return following allotted half-time activities as well. Also, the NCAA announced earlier this spring that the use of drones to film plays while teams are warming up or playing is strictly prohibited on gamedays.

New-age rules changes emphasize player safety

College football's various rules changes over the last few years, including the crack down on targeting, players faking injuries and major alterations to blocking below the waist all emphasize player safety. The rules committee recommended appeals for targeting suspensions as early as 2022 and now, conference offices are able to request a review from the national coordinator of officials to determine if a player was incorrectly penalized for a specific hit.

John McDaid, the SEC's coordinator of football officials, explained in detail last summer at SEC Media Days that many of the recent changes college football's revisions against blocking below the waist was a hot-button offseason topic among coaches. According to McDaid, playbooks will have to be revised and how games are called by offensive coordinators based on the new rules. And now, the number players forced to miss the first half of the next game if penalized for targeting in the second half should decrease with further reviews.

Faked or exaggerated injuries are a growing trend in college football, especially on defense used to combat tempo-driven offenses. The NCAA, however, chose not to add in-game penalties for players accused of faking injuries, but other post-game penalties could be assessed. Supposed fake injuries were a topic of conversation following Ole Miss' road win at Tennessee during the 2021 season, and that was not the last time either school was involved in a game that drew suspicions on the front. The topic resurfaced following Ole Miss' Egg Bowl victory over Mississippi State in November 2021 and then again during Tennessee's Music City Bowl loss to Purdue that season.

According to the NCAA, "in an attempt to crack down on teams awarded an injury timeout after a player fakes an injury, schools and conferences will be able to report questionable scenarios to the national coordinator of officials. The coordinator will provide feedback. Any penalties levied would be up to the conference office or school involved."

Several conferences also revamped respective guidelines ahead of the 2023 season. Within the SEC, teams will now pay opponent if their home fans storm the field after a game. In hopes of deterring fans from rushing the field, which causes safety issues for players, coaches and spectators resulting in mass chaos, the league office announced last June it will assess a \$100,000 penalty for the first offense, \$250,000 for the second and \$500,000 for the third. Those fines will be paid to the opposition.

This week: The Open Championship



Brian Harman is looking to become the first player since Padraig Harrington in 2008-09 to go back-to-back at The Open

another major championship. McIlroy, who missed two short putts down the stretch at Pinehurst, is making his 15th start at The Open. He finished T4 at the Genesis Scottish Open as he looks to end his decade-long winless drought at majors ... Collin Morikawa won The Open in his debut in 2021 but has since missed two straight cuts at this major. He has, however, competed in the final group at both the Masters and the PGA Championship – and was in the mix at the U.S. Open ... Xander Schauffele is one of only two players to finish inside the top 10 at each major championship this season and has seven top-10 finishes in his last nine events overall.

HIGHEST-RANKED PLAYERS IN THE FIELD

World Ranking	FedExCup
1. Scottie Scheffler	1. S.Scheffler
2. Rory McIlroy	2. X. Schauffele
3. Xander Schauffele	3. Rory McIlroy
4. Ludvig Åberg	4. C. Morikawa
5. Wyndham Clark	5. W. Clark
6. Collin Morikawa	6. Ludvig Åberg
7. Viktor Hovland	7. S.Theegala
8. Patrick Cantlay	8. H. Matsuyama
9. Bryson DeChambeau	9. P. Cantlay
10. Jon Rahm	10. Sungjae Im

NOTABLE QUALIFIERS: Aaron Rai, Alex Noren, and Richard Mansell claimed the final three spots on offer for The Open via their finishes at the Genesis Scottish Open. Rai fired a final-round, 7-under 63 to scoot up the Genesis Scottish Open board, finishing T4 to stamp his ticket to Troon. Mansell, meanwhile, shot a Sunday 61 – tying the course record at The Renaissance Club – in order to earn his way into The Open ... Justin Rose will make his 21st start at The Open (highlighted by a runner-up in 2018) after getting through Final Qualifying in England ... Adam Scott's major championship streak will continue at The Open after he earned his way in via the Open Qualifying Series at the ISPS HANDA Australian Open last December.

COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP 10 UPDATES: Sungjae Im jumped inside the TOUR TOP 10 after his T4 at the Genesis Scottish Open. Im has notched six top-10 finishes so far this season, with four of them coming in his last six starts ... Scottie Scheffler continues his run at No. 1 in the standings ... Sahith Theegala (who finished T4 at the Genesis Scottish Open) and Hideki Matsuyama swapped spots in the standings, with Theegala now No. 7 and Matsuyama now No. 8 ... This is the first week all season that Byeong Hun An is not inside the TOUR TOP 10.

THE OPEN

152ND ROYAL TROON

The Open Championship

July 18 - July 21, 2024

Royal Troon Golf Club

Troon, Scotland

Purse - \$17,000,000

Winners share - \$3,200,000

Defending Champ - Brian Harman

By Adam Stanley

It's the final men's major championship of the year – with the world's best heading to Royal Troon for The Open Championship.

With the weather set to be fairly typical Open Championship weather – rainy, blustery and cool – we are likely set for a classic test for the claret jug.

And there is no shortage of storylines

for The 152nd Open, which will be played at Royal Troon for the 10th time overall and first since 2016.

Whether it's local heroes looking to add even more hardware to their trophy case and keep the party going, players looking to break a major-less drought, or those striving to add another major to their resume, it's all possible this week at Royal Troon.

Here's everything else you need to know for The Open Championship, the final men's major of 2024.

FIELD NOTES: World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler returns to action after his playoff triumph at the Travelers Championship. Scheffler has won six times on TOUR so far this season, including the Masters. He finished T8 at the PGA Championship and T41 at the U.S. Open. Scheffler has never finished outside the top 25 in the three Open Championships he's played in his career ... Scotland's own Robert MacIntyre heads to Royal Troon a conquering hero, having won the Genesis Scottish Open on Sunday – his second TOUR title in as

many months. MacIntyre went 4 under for his final five holes at The Renaissance Club to take the title by one over Adam Scott. MacIntyre finished tied for sixth in his Open Championship debut in 2019 and has one other top-10 finish at The Open in his career ... Brian Harman is looking to become the first player since Padraig Harrington in 2008-09 to go back-to-back at The Open. Six of the last seven Open winners at Royal Troon have been American (Henrik Stenson in 2016 the lone non-American to do it). Harman has three top-10s this season and has finished T19-T6-1 in the last three Open Championships ... This will mark the first year since 2019 that Tiger Woods will play in four major championships. After making the cut at Augusta National, however, he failed to find the weekend at the PGA Championship or the U.S. Open. Woods, a three-time winner of The Open, did not play The Open the last time it was hosted at Royal Troon, but he finished T9 in 2004 ... Rory McIlroy is looking to put the heartbreak of the U.S. Open behind him at

FEDEXCUP: Winner receives 750 FedExCup points.

COURSE: Royal Troon Golf Club, par 71, 7,385 yards. This is the 10th Open Championship contested at Royal Troon and the first since 2016. Troon's Old Course was founded in 1878 and was redesigned by five-time Open Championship winner James Braid ahead of its first Open in 1923. The club is designed in the traditional out-and-back layout like the Old Course at St. Andrews. Troon's opening stretch meanders through striking links land (which typically plans downwind and provides birdie opportunities) before a challenging test awaits on the back nine. The par-5 sixth at 623 yards is set to play as the longest hole in Open Championship history, while the "Postage Stamp" par-3 eighth will be the shortest hole played at The Open – with the forward tee potentially being utilized this year, meaning the hole could measure just 99 yards.

72-HOLE RECORD: 264, Henrik Stenson (2016 at Royal Troon)

18-HOLE RECORD: 62, Branden Grace (Round 3, 2017 at Royal Birkdale).

LAST TIME: Brian Harman dominated the field at Royal Liverpool, winning his first major championship by an incredible six shots. Harman, who won for the first time anywhere in six years, fired a second-round 65 which beat the scoring average that day by more than eight shots. He had a five-shot advantage entering the final round before eventually winning by six over a foursome of players including Tom Kim, Jason Day, Jon Rahm and Sepp Straka. Harman was even par through nine holes in his final round and despite bogeying No. 13 to open the door just a crack, he made back-to-back birdies on Nos. 14 and 15 to slam it closed.

The last time The Open Championship was contested at Royal Troon, Henrik Stenson won his first major title in a thrilling Sunday duel with Phil Mickelson.

HOW TO FOLLOW

Television

- Thursday-Friday: 1:30-4 a.m. (Peacock), 4 a.m.-3 p.m. (USA), 3-4:15 p.m. (Peacock)

- Saturday: 5-7 a.m. (USA), 7 a.m.-3 p.m. (NBC)

- Sunday: 4-7 a.m. (USA), 7 a.m.-2 p.m. (NBC)

Radio:

Championship broadcasts will begin on SiriusXM (Channel 92) and on the SXM App on Thursday and Friday at 2 a.m.

- Thursday-Friday: 2 a.m.-conclusion of play

- Saturday-Sunday: 4 a.m.-conclusion of play

Online:

Various feeds available via [TheOpen.com/watch](https://www.theopen.com/watch)

FedExCup Fall schedule released

FedExCup Fall schedule includes stops in five U.S. states, Japan, Mexico and Bermuda

Written by Staff

The PGA TOUR today announced its schedule for the 2024 FedExCup Fall, consisting of eight official PGA TOUR events that serve as the final chance for players to secure or improve their status for the 2025 FedExCup Season.

The 2024 FedExCup Fall will finalize top 125 eligibility for the next season, providing exempt status for Full-Field Events, as well as a spot in THE PLAYERS Championship. The significant benefits to winning during the FedExCup Fall include a two-year PGA TOUR exemption, 500 FedExCup points, entry to the season-opening The Sentry, THE PLAYERS and eligibility into major championships that have invited PGA TOUR winners in the past. Players who finish No. 70 or better in the FedExCup standings through the 2024 TOUR Championship are exempt for the 2025 season, with players ranked Nos. 1 through 50 also being exempt into all Signature Events for 2025. Players ranked No. 51 and beyond will carry their FedExCup Points from the Regular Season and first FedExCup Playoffs event into the FedExCup Fall and will continue to accumulate FedExCup Points to finalize eligibility for the 2025 season. As part of the Aon Next 10, players ranked Nos. 51-60 through the FedExCup Fall earn their way into two early-season 2025 Signature Events, the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and The Genesis Invitational.

"With more at stake than ever before, the 2023 FedExCup Fall produced compelling storylines and meaningful competition from start to finish," said Tyler Dennis, PGA TOUR Chief Competitions Officer. "As we approach year two of the FedExCup Fall, we appreciate the continued commitment and support of all our title sponsors and tournament organizers in working together to produce an exciting conclusion to the 2024 golf calendar."

The FedExCup Fall begins at the Napa Valley Golf Championship (Sept. 9-15) before taking a two-week hiatus, during which the 15th Presidents Cup (Sept. 23-29) will be contested. The United States and Captain Jim Furyk will face the International Team and Captain Mike Weir at The Royal Montreal Golf Club in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Upon conclusion of the Presidents Cup comes a four-week stretch of tournaments in October, beginning with the Sanderson Farms Championship (Sept. 30-Oct. 6). The inaugural Black Desert Championship (Oct. 7-13) follows in the Greater Zion Region of Utah. The tournament is one of two professional golf events coming to Black Desert Resort, which will also host an LPGA event in 2025. The par-72 Black Desert Resort Golf Course was designed by Phil Smith and the late Tom Weiskopf, the final design from the World Golf Hall of Fame 2024 inductee.

Following the PGA TOUR's first trip to Utah since 1963 is the Shriners Children's Open (Oct. 14-20) in Las Vegas and the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP (Oct. 21-27) at ACCORDIA GOLF Narashino Country Club in Chiba, Japan. After a one-week break, the FedExCup Fall resumes with the World Wide Technology Championship (Nov. 4-10) at El Cardonal at Diamante, a Tiger Woods-designed golf course. The FedExCup Fall concludes with the Butterfield Bermuda Championship (Nov. 11-17) and The RSM Classic (Nov. 18-24), where eligibility will be finalized for the 2025 PGA TOUR Season.

Below is a recap of the 2023 FedExCup Fall winners:

- Sahith Theegala's maiden PGA TOUR win at the Napa Valley Golf Championship came after several near misses over his first two seasons on TOUR. The California-born golfer hoisted the winner's trophy in front of more than 35 friends and family.
- Luke List won the Sanderson Farms Championship in a five-way playoff.
- With his repeat victory at the Shriners Children's Open, Tom Kim became the

youngest three-time winner on the PGA TOUR since Tiger Woods.

- Collin Morikawa captured the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP for his first TOUR title since the 2021 Open Championship and first worldwide victory since the 2021 DP World Tour Championship.

- Erik van Rooyen dedicated his World Wide Technology Championship victory to best friend Jon Trasamar, who would pass away less than two weeks later at the age of 33 after a battle with Stage 4 melanoma.

- At the Butterfield Bermuda Championship, Camilo Villegas won for the first time since the 2014 Wyndham Championship, ending a drought of 9 years, 2 months and 26 days. In 2020, Villegas and his wife Maria lost their 22-month-old daughter, Mia, after a four-month battle with brain and spine tumors. After his win, Villegas said: "Life has given me so many great things and, in the process, it kicks my butt too. My little one up there is watching." After finishing the PGA TOUR Regular Season outside the top 200, Villegas earned a two-year TOUR exemption with his victory.

- Rookie Ludvig Åberg, the first player to earn PGA TOUR status directly from PGA TOUR University, won on both the DP World Tour (Omega European Masters) and the PGA TOUR (The RSM Classic) less than six months after turning professional at the RBC Canadian Open in June.

All eight FedExCup Fall events will be televised on Golf Channel and Peacock, with PGA TOUR LIVE on ESPN+ providing featured group coverage on Thursday and Friday for the five U.S. domestic events.

The PGA TOUR's Challenge Season, consisting of three events, will follow the FedExCup Fall: the Hero World Challenge (Dec. 2-8), hosted by Tiger Woods; the mixed-team Grant Thornton Invitational (Dec. 9-15), an event co-sanctioned by the PGA TOUR and LPGA; and the PNC Championship (Dec. 16-22). All three Challenge Season events will be televised on NBC, Golf Channel and Peacock.

2024 PGA Tour FedEx Cup Fall schedule

Dates	Tournament	Golf Course	Location
Sept. 9-15	Napa Valley Golf Championship	Silverado Resort (North Course)	Napa, California
Sept. 23-29	Presidents Cup	The Royal Montreal Golf Club	Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Sept. 30 - Oct. 6	Sanderson Farms Championship	The Country Club of Jackson	Jackson, Mississippi
Oct. 7-13	Black Desert Championship	Black Desert Resort Golf Course	Ivins, Utah
Oct. 14-20	Shriners Children's Open	TPC Summerlin	Las Vegas, Nevada
Oct. 21-27	Zozo Championship	Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club	Chiba, Japan
Nov. 4-10	World Wide Tech. Championship	El Cardonal at Diamante	Los Cabos, Mexico
Nov. 11-17	Butterfield Bermuda Champ.	Port Royal Golf Course	Southampton, Bermuda
Nov. 18-24	RSM Classic	Sea Island Golf Club	St. Simons Island, Georgia
Dec. 2-8	Hero World Challenge*	Albany	New Providence, Bahamas
Dec. 9-15	Grant Thornton Invitational*	Tiburón Golf Club and The Ritz-Carlton	Naples, Florida
Dec. 16-22	PNC Championship*	The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando	Orlando, Florida

* Challenge season event not applicable to the FedEx Cup Fall

Nine things to know about Royal Troon



The 2024 Open Championship marks The Open's 10th time visiting Royal Troon, and it comes 101 years after the tournament was first played there. (David Cannon/Getty Images)

By Bradley S. Klein

Golf's oldest major is returning this week to a treasured venue for its 152nd edition. This marks The Open Championship's 10th time visiting Royal Troon, and it comes 101 years after the tournament was first played there. World Golf Hall of Famers Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson and Tom Weiskopf are among the champions at Royal Troon, which is best known for the tiny, but treacherous, Postage Stamp par 3.

Before The Open gets underway, here are nine things you need to know about the course.

1. The Ayrshire Coast

Royal Troon is situated on Scotland's west coast, on the far side of Glasgow. While not as well known as Scotland's East Lothian, this region still offers some of the game's richest links.

Troon is located along the sandy, windswept coast of the Firth of Clyde, a large bay framed by Northern Ireland to the south and the Kintyre Peninsula to the north that opens up to the North Atlantic. Royal Troon is at the midpoint of a 21-mile stretch of shorefront dunes land that includes such wonderful layouts as Prestwick, St. Nicholas, Western Gailes, Dundonald Links, Gailes Links, Irvine GC and West Kilbride.

2. Its evolution

Royal Troon is now a 45-hole private club that abuts an active commuter train line on its eastern flank. It occupies the crumpled, sandy dunes land between the

shoreline and what used to be farmland, and its ninth green is only 600 yards from the main runway at Glasgow Prestwick Airport.

Royal Troon has evolved from an initial six-hole layout designed in 1878 by Old Tom Morris protégé Charlie Hunter. Six years later, it was expanded to 18 holes by club professional George Strath. A major refinement came in 1910 at the hands of 1883 Open Champion Willie Fernie, whose work created the current routing and what quickly became two of the course's most famous holes, the Postage Stamp par-3 eighth, and the par-4 11th hole known as "Railway" because of its proximity to the rail line, which forms an uncomfortably-close boundary. Royal Troon's Old Course derived much of its more demanding bunkering and playing character in 1922 through an extensive renovation by five-time Open Champion and (future) World Golf Hall of Famer James Braid. That came a year before Troon hosted its first Open, which saw England's Arthur Havers upset defending champion Walter Hagen by one shot.

The club's other 18-hole layout, the Portland Course, circulates inland, to the east and south, and owes its present routing to a fresh 1921 design by Alister MacKenzie, another World Golf Hall of Famer. The club also has a nine-hole, par-3 layout called Craigend. Troon's main clubhouse, aligned immediately behind the 18th hole of the Old Course on a perpendicular axis, is a classic stone Victorian struc-

ture designed in 1888 by Glasgow-based building architect Henry Edward Clifford. The club received its "royal" designation as part of its centenary celebration in 1978.

3. Three in one

The Old Course at Royal Troon offers a variety of experiences in a single round. It's best to get ahead early at Royal Troon, then simply hang on for dear life. The first six holes play downwind over crumpled terrain, and the opening trio consists of three short par 4s all under 400 yards.

Two of the next three holes are par 5s that play downwind, usually reachable in two despite measuring 599 yards and 623 yards, respectively.

The next six holes, by contrast, amble through sand dunes and steeper terrain at the far end of the golf course. The start of the back nine presents two of the hardest long par- 4s in championship golf, thanks to narrow fairways, a prevailing headwind from the left and out-of-bounds close in on the right. Things don't get much easier for the final six holes, a brutal finish that continues the trek into the breeze. The par-3 17th measures more than 240 yards, with players hitting long irons (or more) to a tabletop green. The finishing hole, which measures nearly 460 yards, features a heavily bunkered fairway.

The five par 4s on the front nine have an average length of 393 yards; on the back nine, the six par 4s average 472 yards – a 79-yard gap that's exacerbated by the fact that many of them play into the wind.

"From the 10th tee onwards, it's a long

way home," said Colin Montgomerie, a longtime Royal Troon member.

4. A new look

British golf designer Martin Ebert has been Royal Troon's consulting architect for more than two decades. It's a role he holds at several other Open rota courses, including Turnberry, Royal Portrush, Carnoustie, Royal Lytham & St. Annes, Royal St. George's, Royal Birkdale and Royal Liverpool.

For this year's Open Championship, Ebert's edits included a half-dozen back tees that added 201 yards to the course. The three par 5s all been lengthened. The course has been lengthened 2.8% since it last hosted The Open eight years ago, which corresponds exactly to the additional 2.8% of distance the average PGA TOUR player has gained in that span.

Some modest bunkering was added to the landing areas on several holes, as well. Along the way, the club's nine-hole, par-3 course, Craigend, was dramatically redesigned. It also was moved to find higher, drier ground and provide target greens for the temporary practice range for The Open.

Royal Troon spectator infrastructure has also been expanded to accommodate an expected 250,000 spectators for the week – as many as 45,000-50,000 per day during the championship rounds. The feature 13,300 seats, the largest of which will overlook the 18th fairway. That grandstand will hold more than 4,000 people.

Course superintendent Billy McLachan will have his full crew of 38 at the ready, supplemented by a dozen other staff and volunteers from the R&A and other clubs.

5. Postage Stamp

Royal Troon's shortest hole also is its most famous. The par-3 eighth is only 123 yards long, the shortest of any hole in The Open rota. From a platform tee above sandy broken ground, golfers target a tiny green that's just 2,500 square feet.

The small pedestal of a putting surface is framed by five intensely deep bunkers and steep slopes of short grass that repel mishits. The hole heads due west, with the prevailing wind coming in from the player's right. It is usually the first shot of the day that a player is hitting into the wind, and the short approach requires him to control both his distance and trajectory. On a calm day, the hole requires nothing more than a wedge. The wind can necessitate a mid-iron, however.

"You're playing downwind for seven holes then you have to turn around and hit off this elevated tee to this green that looks like the size of this table into the wind," said Justin Leonard, who won the 1997 Open at Royal Troon.

(continued on page 10)



Number 18 measures nearly 460 yards and features a heavily bunkered fairway

Gene Sarazen was 71 years old when he aced the hole in the 1973 Open Championship (he holed a bunker shot for birdie the following day, playing the hole in three strokes for the two rounds he played that week).

“For many years, the Postage Stamp hole had haunted me,” Sarazen once told the Palm Beach Post. “When the clubhead came into contact with the ball, I had the same feeling when I had my double-eagle (at Augusta National) in 1935. When the crowd roared I realized that the ball was in the hole. I knew there was no better way to close the books on my tournament play.”

Herman Tissues made a 15 on the hole in 1950, needing 12 strokes to get out of a greenside bunker.

No. 8 even derailed Tiger Woods in his first Open as a professional. He was making a serious final-round charge after a Saturday 64 vaulted him into contention, but he overshot the green and made a triple bogey.

The short hole played slightly over par in 2016, with the field averaging 3.1 strokes. Despite not having any water, it played slightly more difficult than TPC Sawgrass’ island-green 17th that year (3.09 to 3.02).

“When the wind is rollicking in from the sea, as it so often is, this is scarcely a hole for the chap whose nerves are fidgety,” George Trevor wrote in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle back in 1923. It still holds true today.

6. Railway

While the Postage Stamp can befuddle players in more subtle ways, Royal Troon’s 11th hole hits them with a show of brute strength.

The 490-yard par 4 plays even longer because of the prevailing wind, and thick gorse and out-of-bounds wait on each side of the fairway to deliver a harsh penalty. This hole, nicknamed “Railway,” is among the most difficult at any Open venue.

Stretched to its limit with a back tee hard against the eastern boundary wall that

separates the golf course from the train tracks, the hole heads straight northwest into the teeth of the wind.

At the tee shot landing zone some 300 yards away, the fairway starts to narrow down from 35 yards to 28. The out-of-bounds stakes along the rail line are just 20 yards from the fairway’s right side.

The tracks are even tighter to the right side of the green, but players who shy away from them must contend with a deep pot bunker that guards the green’s front-left corner. The slightest imprecision in ball striking is grievously punished, such as in the first round of The Open in 1962 at Troon, when defending U.S. Open champion Jack Nicklaus took a 10 here on his way to an 80.

The hole played to a 4.6 scoring average in 2016, making it the hardest hole on the PGA TOUR that year.

7. A long history

Troon has been quite the stage through nine Open Championships. The first one in 1923, saw Englishman Arthur Havers prevail over defending champion Hagen by a single stroke. Hagen went on to win the 1924 Open Championship, and then two more (1928, ’29).

Perhaps the biggest surprise of that first Open at Royal Troon, however, was the fact that 1922 U.S. Open champion Gene Sarazen failed in final qualifying to make the championship at all; in those days, having just won a major did not spare you from having to play your way into the championship just like everybody else. South Africa’s Bobby Locke won his second consecutive Open Championship in 1950 at Royal Troon, winning what would become the second of four claret jugs he claimed in his remarkable career. With his flat cap, plus-fours, hickory shafted putter, and at times painfully slow play, he was a powerful presence on the course. His win at Troon came during a streak from 1947 through 1950 that saw him win 11 times in 59 appearances on the PGA TOUR.

When The Open returned to Royal Troon 12 years later, fans saw another Hall of Famer successfully defend his title. Arnold Palmer won the 1962 Open a year after claiming the claret Jug at Royal Birkdale. Massive crowds cheered Palmer as he dominated Troon with a winning total of 12 under par, six shots better than runner-up Kel Nagle. (Palmer lost to Nagle by a shot two years earlier at St. Andrews, halting Palmer’s bid for the Grand Slam after he won that year’s Masters and U.S. Open).

Having convinced fellow American pros to join him in playing the event, Palmer’s presence gave a powerful boost to the championship and to the whole business of British golf in general.

Tom Weiskopf’s win in the 1973 Open Championship at Troon came in the middle of a torrid nine-week stretch that saw him win five times – at Colonial, Charlotte, Memphis, The Open and the RBC Canadian Open. It was the lone major championship for Weiskopf, who was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame this year.

Nobody carried the weight of more expectations into the Open Championship in 1982 than a young Bobby Clampett. And after rounds of 67-66 (11 under par), he held a five-shot lead going into the third round. It appeared those high hopes for the 22-year-old would be validated. But rounds of 78-77 on the weekend brought him tumbling back to earth. Clampett was never the same, and Tom Watson won to continue his incredible record in The Open. By successfully defending the next year, Watson completed a remarkable nine-year stretch that saw him win five Open Championships.

8. Recent opens

Mark Calcavecchia added another chapter to Greg Norman’s major letdowns by beating him in a four-hole aggregate playoff in 1989 (Australia’s Wayne Grady, who’d go on to win the 1990 PGA, also was in the playoff). Calcavecchia holed a 50-foot par putt on the 11th hole, then birdied 18 to join the playoff.

Norman shot a course-record 64 in the final round, which looked like it would be enough to overcome a seven-shot deficit to Grady, the 54-hole leader. Not even two birdies by Norman on the playoff’s opening two holes could secure a win, in large measure due to a disastrous final hole (the 18th) that saw him pick up without finishing after finding two bunkers and hitting his third shot out-of-bounds into the clubhouse area.

Justin Leonard was one of the game’s young stars when he won the 1997 Open Championship at 25 years old. He won the U.S. Amateur, NCAA Championship and had two wins apiece in the Western and Southern amateurs during his decorated amateur career. He won twice on the PGA TOUR before arriving at Royal Troon, as well.

A final round 65 closed a five-shot deficit behind Sweden’s Jesper Parnevik, who

ended up in second place, three shots back, with Northern Ireland’s Darren Clarke. Todd Hamilton was still glowing in the aura of his first PGA TOUR win at The Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches earlier that season when he came to Royal Troon in 2004 for the Open Championship. He consistently recovered greenside with pars by chipping with a hybrid 3-wood and won a four-hole aggregate playoff with South Africa’s Ernie Els.

The Open Championship in 2016 saw Royal Troon stage an epic final round, final pairing showdown between Phil Mickelson and Sweden’s Henrik Stenson. Shot for shot, birdie for birdie, they parried each other’s shot making down the stretch, with Stenson’s 63 besting Mickelson’s 65 and tying the record for lowest-ever major score. That left Stenson at a major championship record 20-under par, one better than Mickelson and an amazing 14 shots better than third-place finisher J.B. Holmes.

9. What to watch for

Watching on TV at home, the impact of an Open Championship played on a true links course can be very strong, if at times controversial. The grass is browned out, the bounces wild and seemingly unfair at times, the wind is always a major factor, and the natural setting becomes part of the charm and the mystique of a round rather than a simple frame or background. These are all takeaways that could enhance one’s appreciation of golf at one’s home course considerably.

Golf aesthetics are a tricky thing. For those accustomed to a lush green landscaped lawn, Royal Troon will take some getting used to. But as Martin Ebert says, Royal Troon “has a special quality to it, due as much to the strength of its holes as to its natural setting.”

Small wonder the club carefully metes out its guest tee times. A round here is a treasured component of any Scottish golf journey.

Royal Troon Golf Club – Old Course

Hole	Par	Yards	Name
1	4	366	Seal
2	4	380	Black Rock
3	4	376	Gyaws
4	5	599	Dunure
5	3	220	Greenan
6	5	623	Turnberry
7	4	403	Tel-el-Kebir
8	3	123	Postage Stamp
9	4	440	The Monk
36		3,530	
10	4	450	Sandhills
11	4	498	Railway
12	4	451	The Fox
13	4	473	Burmah
14	3	200	Alton
15	4	502	Crosbie
16	5	572	Well
17	3	242	Rabbit
18	4	458	Craigend
35		3,845	
71		7,276	

Troon's short but daunting Par 3



NBC will have 11 cameras on hole number 8, including a wire cam that spans the distance from tee to green, to capture the potential carnage

Troon's short but daunting task: Tackling the par-3 'Postage Stamp'

By Sean Martin

Golf's shortest holes often have the most character, and the eighth hole at Royal Troon is no exception.

The 123-yard par 3 is known as the "Postage Stamp." Though diminutive, it is no pushover. Five deep bunkers surround the green, and shots from the elevated tee are often played back into a breeze blowing off the frigid water of the Firth of Clyde.

It's easy for a hole to overwhelm players with length. Like a featherweight fighter, the shorter ones have to be craftier, and they have a punishing jab waiting for those who underestimate them.

Henrik Stenson called Troon's eighth hole "one of them great little par 3s." It joins the likes of TPC Sawgrass' 17th, No. 12 at Augusta National and Pebble Beach's 107-yard seventh as short one-shotters that offer more of a challenge than the scorecard would indicate. TOUR players usually smile when they face a shot of less than 150 yards. These short par 3s carry a severe penalty for those who don't properly execute the tee shot.

Embarrassment is just one of the pratfalls for those who miss the green.

"The hole is so short that you feel like a plonker if you miss the green," said Golf Channel commentator Frank Nobile, who finished 10th in the 1997 Open

Championship at Royal Troon. He ranks the Postage Stamp in an esteemed class of holes that "bring people back to play, take a picture or share a story, and no bulldozer is ever allowed to touch."

There is no water at the Postage Stamp. The deep bunkers, including the macabre "Coffin Bunker," offer sufficient challenge. Train wrecks are possible at this short hole, which is why Stenson recommended that those who enjoy watching pros struggle park themselves in the grandstand left of the green. NBC will have 11 cameras on the hole, including a wire cam that spans the distance from tee to green, to capture the potential carnage.

Scores ranging from one to 15 have been made on the hole in The Open Championship. The scoring average in 2004 was 3.09, making it the Royal Troon's 13th-hardest hole. There was one more bogey than birdies (83 to 82), as well as 19 scores of double bogey or worse.

"You are expected to hit the green, and everyone knows you are," said Colin Montgomerie. "You are, your caddy is, all the crowd around. Both stands will be full all day, and they're expecting it, too, and it's great. It's drama."

"When the wind is rollicking in from the sea, as it so often is, this is scarcely a hole for the chap whose nerves are fidgety."

George Trevor, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1923

Gene Sarazen was 71 years old when he aced the hole in the 1973 Open

Championship (he holed a bunker shot for birdie the following day, playing the hole in three strokes for the two rounds he played that week).

"For many years, the Postage Stamp hole had haunted me," Sarazen once told the Palm Beach Post. "I feared the hole, so when I stepped onto the tee and faced the wind, I admit that I was nervous. ... When the clubhead came into contact with the ball, I had the same feeling when I had my double-eagle (at Augusta National) in 1935. When the crowd roared I realized that the ball was in the hole. I knew there was no better way to close the books on

my tournament play."

German amateur Herman Tissies made 15 on the hole in the 1950 Open Championship. Reports vary over whether Tissies needed one or three putts to complete the hole, but that seems a bit inconsequential. The point has been made.

The hole still presents a challenge to today's players and their high-tech equipment. Rory McIlroy needed five or six swings, in his estimation, to escape the Coffin Bunker in Tuesday's practice round. Tiger Woods shot a course-record 64 to get in contention at the 1997 Open Championship, but his charge was undone by a triple bogey on Sunday at No. 8.

The hole is little more than a pitch for most pros when played in calm conditions. That is rare, though.

Royal Troon is a tale of two nines. Eight of the first nine holes usually play downwind; the Postage Stamp, which turns back toward the clubhouse, is the exception. The back nine plays into the prevailing wind, giving players a tough road home. Players may have to hit 6- or 7-irons into the No. 8 on days when the breeze is blowing hard. They're forced to approach the green from the air because of a bunker in front of the putting surface. Two bunkers also sit on each side of the green, which is 40 yards long and 14 yards wide.

The putting surface pitches from left-to-right and narrows toward the back. Most players will play conservatively toward the front of the green when the hole is on the green's back portion. They'll contentedly leave each day with a two-putt par. This little hole has players' respect.

"When the wind is rollicking in from the sea, as it so often is, this is scarcely a hole for the chap whose nerves are fidgety," George Trevor wrote in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle back in 1923. It still holds true today.

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2024 Dallas Cowboys Training Camp



The Cowboys will spend nearly a full month in Ixnard and return to Texas on August 22

7 best Dallas Cowboys position battles to watch in training camp

The Dallas Cowboys have a lot of positions up for grabs ahead of the 2024 season

By Jon Thomas

The Cowboys will report to Oxnard, California, for training camp on July 24. They will spend nearly a full month there and return to Texas on August 22. This will be the longest time they've spent in California for camp.

Dallas will have a lot to figure out while they're preparing for the 2024 season and while their looming contract negotiations will get the front page news, they also have several important roster battles to sort out.

Let's take a look at seven of the most important position battles that will take center stage during training camp.

Center: Cooper Beebe vs. Brock Hoffman

Dallas deserves credit for turning the 24th overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft into two potential starters. They traded that selection to the Detroit Lions for the No. 29 pick in Round 1 and the No. 73 pick in Round 3. They were able to turn that into Tyler Guyton and Cooper Beebe.

Guyton is slated to start at left tackle, and there's no competition there. Beebe was a guard for Kansas State but is being moved to center, where the Cowboys have a vacancy following the departure of Tyler Biadasz.

During minicamps, Beebe did every-

thing expected of him and earned the praise of Zack Martin. Of course, things could change when the pads come on. That's when Beebe can prove he deserves the starting job. If not, Brock Hoffman, who started two games instead of Biadasz in 2024, would be the starter.

WR3: Jalen Tolbert vs. KaVontae Turpin vs. Ryan Flournoy

Michael Gallup is now in Las Vegas following his release, so the third wideout spot is up for grabs. Jalen Tolbert was a third-round pick in 2022 and has the inside track, but he needs to prove he's taken a step forward to hold onto the job.

Tolbert had 268 yards and two touchdowns on 22 receptions last year. That was better than his rookie campaign but not exactly numbers that guarantee him anything.

His primary competitor is KaVontae Turpin, who is known more for his return skills. Turpin saw the field more on offense in 2023 and had 237 yards from scrimmage on 23 touches with four touchdowns. He offers more versatility since he can be a weapon as a runner and receiver, making him a threat.

Also in the mix is rookie Ryan Flournoy. He's been turning heads at camp and while the sixth-round pick is still a long shot of winning the WR3 job, he shouldn't be overlooked.

QB2: Cooper Rush vs. Trey Lance

Added in exchange for a fourth-round pick at the end of the 2023 preseason, Trey

Lance didn't get a chance to take snaps in any exhibition games for the Cowboys. That's set to change in 2024, with Lance expected to have a big role this preseason.

Lance spent the entire 2023 campaign as the No. 3 quarterback, but with a strong showing this year, he can assert himself as the primary option behind Dak Prescott.

However, Cooper Rush won't be easy to unseat since the coaches are very comfortable turning to him.

Rush might not wow anyone with a powerful arm or athleticism, but he's a savvy veteran who makes few mistakes. He also kept the team running in 2022, starting five games in place of Dak Prescott and led the team to a 4-1 record. Lance will have to stand out to leap past him, but he will have the opportunity to do so.

Slot Corner: Jourdan Lewis vs. Caelen Carson

Signing Jourdan Lewis was a good move, even though the fan base preferred Stephon Gilmore. Lewis played well down the stretch for Dallas and is an underrated slot corner.

He should be able to hold the job down in 2024, but there will be competition.

Caelen Carson was a fifth-round pick, even though Dallas considered him in Round 3. He doesn't have as much experience as some of the other rookies but has the tools to be special. He thrives in man coverage, which could give him time in the slot.

Maybe he won't overtake Lewis right

away, but this is a battle to keep an eye on.

Linebacker: DeMarvion Overshown vs. Marist Liufau

Linebacker Marist Liufau was a third-round pick this season, and while the Notre Dame product has been making waves, we can't overlook a third-round pick from 2023 — DeMarvion Overshown.

The Texas product was a standout in camp but tore his ACL in the second preseason game. He returns now and can claim the third spot alongside Eric Kendricks and Damone Clark. Liufau won't make it easy on him, but considering Dallas's issues with depth at linebacker, this is the exact problem they want to have.

Strong Safety: Markquese Bell vs. Donovan Wilson

Speaking of linebacker concerns, Markquese Bell was asked to move from safety to linebacker in 2023. Now, he's moving back to his natural position under Mike Zimmer.

Whether he's the official starter or not, Bell should have a significant role with Jayron Kearse gone. He could still fight his way into a starting role.

Donovan Wilson emerged as a star in 2022 with 101 tackles and five sacks but didn't have as many impact plays last year. He could find himself sliding to the No. 3 spot if he doesn't show signs of improvement and Bell continues to shine.

Running Back: Ezekiel Elliott vs. Rico Dowdle

Dallas Cowboys, Ezekiel Elliott / Tim Heitman-USA TODAY Sports

Last year, Tony Pollard and Rico Dowdle were the top two running backs as the Cowboys tried to replace Ezekiel Elliott. In 2024, Ezekiel Elliott and Rico Dowdle are the top two running backs trying to replace Tony Pollard.

With Pollard leaving in free agency, the Cowboys brought Elliott back after failing to add a rookie in the NFL Draft. That means he will compete with Dowdle for the top spot in the Dallas backfield.

Dowdle impressed in 2023 with 361 yards on the ground and 144 through the air. He enters his fifth season in the league with 96 rushes and 17 receptions, meaning he's still not a sure thing.

As for Elliott, he just had the least productive campaign of his career in New England. He averaged 3.5 yards per rushing attempt and had five total touchdowns, both career lows. Perhaps a return to Dallas will help him bounce back, but right now, he must prove he's a superior option over Dowdle.

(continued on page 12)

Five players that need to step up



Running back Ezekiel Elliott and offensive tackle Natham Thomas could provide a possible solution to the run game

With the Dallas Cowboys training camp rapidly approaching, these 5 players are needing to capture our attention before the season starts

Training camp starts on July 25th but this isn't a time for the team to relax. Several players need to use this as a time to prove their worth on the team and show that they are worth keeping through camp and into the season.

Better yet, they need to show what they can do so that they can stay on the field. These five offensive players must prove themselves early on.

The 5 Offensive Players the Cowboys are hoping to step up

1. Trey Lance-QB

Trey Lance is favored by several critics in his ability to make action happen. Lance was drafted as the 3rd overall pick in 2021 by the San Francisco 49ers. However, during his time in San Fran, Lance received little playing time. This past season in 2023, he didn't play at all. Between the 2021 and 2022 seasons, Lance only played eight games, totaling 797 passing yards, five touchdowns, and three interceptions.

His 2019 college stats look a lot more favorable, with 2,786 yards, 28 touchdowns, and no interceptions. The goal of the Cowboys should be to grow Lance into a favorable replacement in case Dak Prescott proves to be either too expensive or too much of a let down. He's the one to watch this training camp.

2. Tyler Guyton-OT

As the blindside tackle for the Cowboys, Tyler Guyton, the rookie from Oklahoma, has some big shoes to fill. With the departure of Tyron Smith, Guyton is left to pro-

tect Prescott from the 39 sacks he received this past year.

Several amazing plays in his college career prove that Guyton will be one to watch this Cowboys training camp. With experience in helping the run and protecting the quarterback, Guyton will be an invaluable treasure to improving the Cowboys offensive power. Watching him during preseason will tell us a lot about his capabilities in the NFL.

3. Ezekiel Elliott-RB

Bringing Ezekiel Elliott back to the Dallas Cowboys could be a fantastic move. In his final season with Dallas, he put up 876 rushing yards and 12 touchdowns. His stats rival that of Tony Pollard, who was picked up by the Tennessee Titans during free agency. Or at least, they used to.

In the 2023 football season, Elliot only had 642 rushing yards and three touchdowns in a year long contract with the New England Patriots. Elliot has been inconsistent his entire career, racking up 1000 yards some seasons and 600 yards in others. Dallas desperately needs to see if the synergy with his former teammates can shape him up or if they'll cut his contract early.

4. Ryan Flourney-WR

A wide receiver coming from Southeast Missouri State, Ryan Flourney is another name with an impressive background. In his final collegiate season, he managed 57 receptions, 839 yards, and six touchdowns.

Right now, the Cowboys are seriously lacking a wide receiver that can run with CeeDee Lamb. The stats listed above, though collegiate, still are better than ever other receiver on the Cowboys team. If

Lamb gets traded, then they're going to need someone with skill to step up to the plate, and Flourney is a viable option.

5. Nathan Thomas-OT

Part of the reason that the Cowboys have struggled to solidify their offense is their weaker run game. When compared for yards against other running backs in the league, Pollard found himself in 12th place. Exceedingly average.

Enter a possible solution to the run game problems-Nathan Thomas. A 7th round draft pick from Louisiana University who was known to be a good block for the run. Time will tell if he'll be successful in protecting the running back in this upcoming season.

There are tons of places where Dallas needs to repair if they want to see some drastic changes to their year. A good chunk of that starts with some of the names listed above. There are high hopes they'll be able to move the program further-specifically, past the first round of playoffs.

Dallas Cowboys training camp 2024: Key Dates & schedule

Here are the key dates and schedule for the team's time in Oxnard, California.

The Dallas Cowboys will begin their 2024 training camp in Oxnard in late-July.

The team will jet off to the West Coast on Tuesday, July 23, before holding the opening press conference the following day. The team's first training camp practice is Thursday, July 25.

Dallas will hold an "Opening Ceremony" on the first weekend in Oxnard, while the first padded practice will be a week after their arrival.

The Cowboys and Los Angeles Rams will have a joint practice on Thursday, August 8, before the team's preseason opener later that weekend. Dallas opens its preseason against the Los Angeles Rams at SoFi Stadium on Sunday, August 11.

Dallas Cowboys 2024 Oxnard Training Camp Key Dates

Tues., July 23: Team Charter arrives in Oxnard

Wed., July 24: Opening press conference

Thurs., July 25: First practice

Sat., July 27: Opening Ceremony

Tues., July 30: First padded practice

Thurs., Aug. 8: Joint practice with LA Rams

Sun., Aug. 11: Dallas at LA Rams (4:25 p.m. ET, NFL Network)

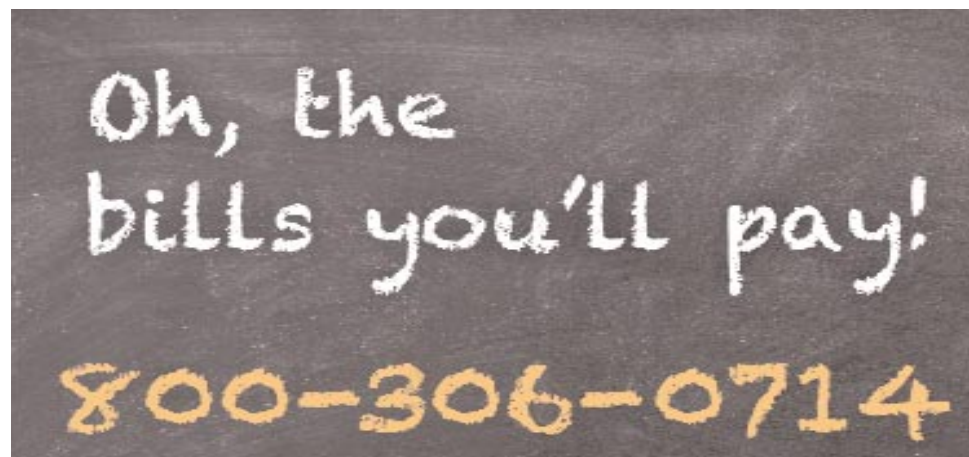
Sat., Aug. 17: Dallas at Las Vegas (10:00 p.m. ET, NFL Network)

Thurs., Aug. 22: Break camp in Oxnard

Sat., Aug. 24: Dallas vs. LA Chargers (4:00 p.m. ET, NFL Network)

The Cowboys will then finish the preseason at home, with practices at The Star in Frisco as they work to determine the final 53-man roster.

Dallas will kick off its 2024 campaign on Sunday, September 8, on the road against the Cleveland Browns. Tom Brady will be making his broadcasting debut for the game on FOX.



Grading every team at the halfway point



The Rangers have gone from co-leading the AL in home runs to ranking in the middle of the pack with 88

Assigning Grades for Every MLB Team Halfway Through 2024 Season

By Stacy Urban

Here at the halfway point of the 2024 MLB season, all the teams around the league are no longer strangers to us. We know them pretty well.

At least, well enough to assign them grades for how they've done so far.

Everyone should know how this works by now, but anyone who doesn't should know it's all pretty straightforward. Good teams get good grades and bad teams get bad grades, and everyone in between—which notably constitutes a lot of teams this year—falls somewhere in the middle of those two extremes.

This said, records and numbers aren't the only things that matter. Whether you want to call it "energy" or "vibes," how it feels like each team's season is going matters in conjunction with how it's actually going. Not just as much, mind you, but more than not at all.

In any case, we'll go in alphabetical order by city and check teams off three at a time.

Arizona Diamondbacks, Atlanta Braves, Baltimore Orioles

Arizona Diamondbacks: C-

**Record: 41-44, 4th in NL West
Run Differential: Minus-14**

After a surprise run to the World Series in 2023, the Diamondbacks' plan for 2024 seemed clear: Ride a stacked rotation and a more versatile lineup all the way back to the playoffs.

As such, it's not the best sign that the last time Arizona was over .500 was all the way back on April 2.

Injuries and Jordan Montgomery's stumbles have rendered their rotation largely helpless to the tune of a 4.80 ERA. The Snakes are otherwise still waiting on the Corbin Carroll of 2023 to show up. He has only two home runs and 14 stolen bases after becoming the first rookie to ever achieve a 25-50 season.

**Atlanta Braves: B-
Record: 46-37, 2nd in NL East
Run Differential: Plus-51**

For a team that's lost Ronald Acuña Jr. and Spencer Strider for the year and has generally had an off-kilter vibe since Day 1, Atlanta is doing an admirable job of hanging around.

It's clear that the offense is not going to be what it was in 2023, but pitching and defense are always good things to fall back on. Atlanta hurlers are second to only Philadelphia's in Fielding Independent Pitching, while its fielders have committed

an MLB-low 33 errors.

How far this team can go nonetheless remains a thorny question, especially given its 16-17 record since Acuña tore his ACL. Suffice it to say the phrase "World Series or bust" doesn't apply like it did last year.

**Baltimore Orioles: A
Record: 54-31, 1st in AL East
Run Differential: Plus-114**

The Orioles have likewise been hit hard by injuries, particularly by way of season-ending Tommy John surgeries for Kyle Bradish and John Means. Accordingly, their own World Series aspirations have an asterisk.

And yet, there they are with the second-best record and the best run differential of any team in the American League.

Despite the arm owies, Orioles starters boast an AL-low 3.32 ERA. And with MLB-leading marks for home runs and OPS, the club's Gunnar Henderson-led offense is an easy pick for the best in either league.

Boston Red Sox, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox

**Boston Red Sox: B
Record: 45-39, 3rd in AL East
Run Differential: Plus-35**

There were times earlier when the wheels seemed primed to come all the way off for Boston. But the worst never arrived, and now the Red Sox are on an 12-5 run since June 12.

The club's improved pitching is still a storyline, and the offense has more recently been coming around. Rafael Devers and Jarren Duran have a thunder and lightning thing going on, while speed has become a big component in general. The Red Sox are stealing 0.94 bases per game, up from 0.69 in 2023.

Defense remains a sore spot by way of an MLB-high 65 errors, with another being an 18-28 record against winning teams. All the same, the low expectations that were attached to the Red Sox at the outset are no longer relevant.

**Chicago Cubs: D+
Record: 39-47, 5th in NL Central
Run Differential: Minus-32**

It hasn't always been bad for the Cubs this season. They were eight games over .500 on April 26 and alone in first place three days later. It seemed like they were going places.

Just not to the cellar, that is, yet that is where they find themselves after dropping 36 of their last 57 games.

The rotation is doing its part with a respectable 3.82 ERA, but ample support from the offense and bullpen just haven't been there. And with a 10-19 record within

the division, the Cubs might as well be actively sabotaging their game of NL Central Catch-Up.

**Chicago White Sox: F
Record: 24-63, 5th in AL Central
Run Differential: Minus-163**

The White Sox are on pace to lose 117 games and get outscored by 300 runs, so don't proceed with the rest of this blurb expecting anything positive.

They're bad. Really bad. They've scored 23 fewer runs than any other team, and all against a pitching backdrop that includes an MLB-high 325 walks and 109 home runs.

Lest anyone think it can't possibly get worse, it absolutely can. Luis Robert Jr., Garrett Crochet and Erick Fedde are the best players the White Sox have, and all three could be playing on new teams come July 31.

Cincinnati Reds, Cleveland Guardians, Colorado Rockies

**Cincinnati Reds: C
Record: 40-45, 4th in NL Central
Run Differential: Plus-16**

The Reds have probably already had their worst stretch of the season. Remember when they lost 20 out of 26 between April 25 and May 23? That was brutal.

Now it's a question of when their best baseball will come, and their run differential isn't the only thing hinting it could come eventually. Their pitching enjoyed a 3.74 ERA in June, while their offense also woke up with a season-high .725 OPS for the month.

What the Reds really need is better fortune in one-run games, for which they have 15 losses against seven wins. As they've dropped four out of their last six such contests, their progress could be going better.

**Cleveland Guardians: A
Record: 53-30, 1st in AL Central
Run Differential: Plus-99**

The hot start the Guardians got off to in April had the feeling of a thing that wouldn't last. And especially in context of their weak starting pitching, their AL-best record still feels suspect.

Yet what the Guardians do well, they do very well. With a league-low 490 men left on base, they're not in the habit of stranding baserunners. And their Emmanuel Clase-led bullpen is terrifying, as it boasts the lowest ERA of any bullpen by half a run.

Cleveland is a modest 17-13 since May 27, but it hasn't mattered. Their lead in the AL Central has more than doubled in this

(continued on page 14)

AL Central has more than doubled in this stretch, from 2.5 to 6.0 games.

Colorado Rockies: F

Record: 29-56, 5th in NL West

Run Differential: Minus-142

The good news for the Rockies is that the White Sox exist, and that they therefore have a buffer between them and the dishonor of being the worst team of 2024.

This is nonetheless on track to be the worst year the Rockies have ever had, as their .341 winning percentage doesn't even live up to last year's winning clip of .364. It's as if pairing a punchless offense with the worst bat-missing pitching staff in the league is a bad idea.

The Rockies entered this year ranked 16th in payroll, so this is not a case of a team not trying. It's a case of a team being very bad at trying.

Detroit Tigers, Houston Astros, Kansas City Royals

Detroit Tigers: D+

Record: 38-47, 4th in AL Central

Run Differential: Minus-24

The Tigers were five games over .500 on May 1, at which time they could look back and see victories in four straight series.

To say it's been a bumpy road since then would be understating it. The 20-34 record is bad enough, and then you have other matters like Kerry Carpenter's back injury and Spencer Torkelson's demotion.

The best thing the Tigers have going for them is the rotation trio of Tarik Skubal, Jack Flaherty and Reese Olson, yet even that may not last. Flaherty, who's on a one-year contract, is an obvious trade candidate, and rumors are even starting to swirl around Skubal.

Houston Astros: C

Record: 43-42, 2nd in AL West

Run Differential: Plus-34

The Astros are still down several of their best pitchers, not to mention Kyle Tucker for about a month at this point. From these angles, their outlook remains bleak.

Yet the comeback is underway, as the Astros are fresh off climbing back into the race by way of a 17-8 record in June. They still have a lot that works, including an offense with an MLB-leading .263 average and Hunter Brown's increasingly compelling breakout.

The trick will be continuing to play in games decided by more than one run. The Astros are 5-15 in actual one-run games, but they played only two such contests in June.

Kansas City Royals: B+

Record: 47-40, 3rd in AL Central

Run Differential: Plus-51

A year after losing 106 games, the Royals have had a winning record for all but the first eight days of this season.

General manager J.J. Picollo should take a bow for Seth Lugo and Cole Ragans, and for extending Bobby Witt Jr. in February.

Even the \$288.7 million they'll pay him over the next 11 years doesn't feel like

enough, as he's already surpassed his rWAR total from 2023.

Warning signs include a shaky bullpen and a 12-15 record in June, but the Royals would nonetheless be in the playoffs if the season ended today. Don't say you saw it coming, because you didn't.

Los Angeles Angels, Los Angeles Dodgers, Miami Marlins

Los Angeles Angels: D

Record: 36-48, 4th in AL West

Run Differential: Minus-66

If anything, it's surprising that the Angels are "only" 12 games under .500.

Their two most expensive players (Mike Trout and Anthony Rendon) are on the injured list, as are two of their primary starting pitchers (Patrick Sandoval and José Soriano). Add in Jo Adell's stalled breakout and Reid Detmers' demotion, and you get a less-than-pretty picture.

Yet even if I'm tempted to hit the Angels with a "Good job, guys," that would be going too far. Only four teams have a worse run differential than they do, and even their 15-11 run in June comes with the caveat that six of those wins were against Oakland and Detroit.

Los Angeles Dodgers: A-

Record: 53-33, 1st in NL West

Run Differential: Plus-120

With Mookie Betts, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Walker Buehler and Max Muncy on the injured list and Clayton Kershaw still yet to throw a pitch this season, it feels like the Dodgers are taking on the competition with one arm tied behind their back.

That the fight is going well perhaps says something about the competition, but it says more about the Dodgers themselves.

It certainly helps to have Shohei Ohtani as he vies for his third MVP, much less fellow newcomers Tyler Glasnow and Teoscar Hernández. And also just a special talent for digging up capable hurlers, as even the injuries aren't keeping Dodgers pitchers from ranking second in MLB with a 3.38 ERA.

Miami Marlins: F

Record: 30-55, 5th in NL East

Run Differential: Minus-121

It's already been two months since the Marlins waved the white flag on their 2024 season, sending Luis Arraez to the Padres in a trade on May 4.

The Marlins have improbably gotten better since then, as even 21-30 looks good in comparison to the 9-25 record with which they began this season. Yet whatever hope this implies doesn't really exist in real life.

That is, not unless someone can heal all those injured pitchers and infuse more power into an offense that is tied for last in MLB with 68 home runs.

Milwaukee Brewers, Minnesota Twins, New York Mets

Milwaukee Brewers: B+

Record: 51-35, 1st in NL Central

Run Differential: Plus-75

Inasmuch as any team was favored to win the NL Central this year, the Brewers certainly weren't. FanGraphs gave them just a 17.6 percent chance to win the division on Opening Day.

That number is now 77.9, and it's still the offense that deserves the lion's share of the credit for flipping the script. No National League team has raised its slugging percentage from 2023 as much as Milwaukee has.

Even if starting pitching remains the Brewers' biggest weakness, their bullpen is only getting stronger. It posted a 2.18 ERA in June, with Trevor Megill and Bryan Hudson combining to allow one run in 24.1 innings.

Minnesota Twins: B-

Record: 48-37, 2nd in AL Central

Run Differential: Plus-43

Is it a jerk move to note that the Twins are a game under .500 on either side of their 12-game win streak from earlier in the year?

Probably, but it's the truth all the same. And one generally doesn't feel confident in this rotation, which only has a 4.40 ERA and has also surrendered an MLB-high-tying 74 home runs.

The lineup is coming around, however. A weak schedule was a factor, sure, but it was still encouraging to see Carlos Correa, Royce Lewis, Byron Buxton and Carlos Santana fuel an .814 OPS for the month. It felt like this offense realizing its very real, very high upside.

New York Mets: C+

Record: 42-41, 3rd in NL East

Run Differential: Plus-15

There's where the Mets' season seemed to be going, and there's where it's going now after a 16-8 romp through the month of June.

There are still major issues with this roster, most notably concerning the pitching side of things. But a lineup that always had the potential to be the best in New York is clicking, as it led MLB with an .865 OPS and the NL with 153 runs in June.

The Mets are supposedly in buy mode now, and why not? The NL wild-card race is wide open and figures to stay that way for the rest of the year.

New York Yankees, Oakland Athletics, Philadelphia Phillies

New York Yankees: A

Record: 54-33, 2nd in AL East

Run Differential: Plus-101

It's lately begun to feel like 2022 all over again for the Yankees. Since peaking at 28 games over .500 on June 14, they've lost 11 out of 15 and have been hit hard by injuries.

Not great for the vibes, perhaps, but let's not lose sight of the fact that this is still one of the elite teams in MLB. And this Yankees team has things the 2022 iteration did not, such as Juan Soto and a rotation nowhere near as Gerrit Cole-centric.

Plus, Aaron Judge is hotter now than he

was at any point two years ago. He has 26 homers in his last 51 games, for which "Bonds-ian" is the only adequate adjective.

Oakland Athletics: F

Record: 31-56, 5th in AL West

Run Differential: Minus-106

After dropping 112 games in 2023, the A's opened this year by threatening to be competitive. They went 11-11 through their first 22 contests.

Man, does that feel forever ago. Such is what can happen when a team goes on a 14-39 run, and this one has been especially painful for Oakland's rotation. It has a league-worst 5.39 ERA in this span.

Unless Mason Miller is pitching, the best thing to do with the A's now is to simply not pay them any mind. Basically, what their fans are already doing.

Philadelphia Phillies: A+

Record: 56-29, 1st in NL East

Run Differential: Plus-123

The one blemish on the Phillies is that they've played the easiest schedule of any team in MLB. They have, in the parlance of our times, been living a charmed life.

Of course, how good they indeed are has a lot to do with how bad they've made their opponents look. There certainly isn't a better starting rotation than theirs, which leads the majors with a 2.95 ERA.

That the Phillies are also scoring 5.0 runs per game is impressive considering that Trea Turner got healthy just in time for J.T. Realmuto, Bryce Harper and Kyle Schwarber to go on the IL. But at this point, getting everyone back for October is all that matters.

Pittsburgh Pirates, San Diego Padres, San Francisco Giants

Pittsburgh Pirates: C

Record: 40-44, 3rd in NL Central

Run Differential: Minus-37

The Pirates aren't a good team, necessarily. And least of all on offense, where they're tied at the bottom of the National League with a .227 batting average.

They nonetheless have been getting better, going 23-22 since May 11. If that date otherwise sounds familiar, it's the day that Paul Skenes arrived and took his place alongside Mitch Keller and fellow rookie Jared Jones in a rotation that ranks seventh in MLB with a 3.65 ERA.

The Bucs have also done a good job of making their wins count, entering Tuesday with winning records against all three NL divisions.

San Diego Padres: B

Record: 46-43, 2nd in NL West

Run Differential: Plus-27

From how many key players they're missing due to injuries and how disappointing Manny Machado has been, it feels like the Padres should be a team on the brink.

That they're not speaks to how well Luis Arraez, Jurickson Profar and Jackson Merrill are carrying the offense, and more so to how nasty this pitching staff is. The Padres lead MLB with 772 strikeouts, with

245 coming just from Dylan Cease and Michael King.

This club also seems to have more fight in it than the 2023 iteration, though I may just be saying that because they're the only NL West team with a winning record against the Dodgers.

San Francisco Giants: D+
Record: 42-44, 3rd in NL West
Run Differential: Minus-27

With the exceptions of Jordan Hicks and the suddenly scorching Matt Chapman, the less said about the Giants' big offseason haul, the better.

It also feels like a small miracle that the Giants are scoring as many as 4.48 runs per game. Theirs is a long-form style of offense, as their .248 average is solid but they're below the league average with 87 home runs and last with 28 stolen bases.

This is to say it's likewise a small miracle that the Giants are only two games under .500. That will have to do for the good news, at least until Blake Snell, Jorge Soler and Robbie Ray show up and lead a second-half resurgence.

Seattle Mariners, St. Louis Cardinals, Tampa Bay Rays

Seattle Mariners: B
Record: 47-40, 1st in AL West
Run Differential: Plus-4

The Astros' and Rangers' first-half struggles have much to do with the Mariners being in first place. Let's also grant their offense is just no good at all. It ranks last with a .217 average and first in strikeouts with 888 strikeouts.

But the pitching? Yeah, that part is pretty darn good.

The 3.56 ERA is nice, and nicer still are the league-best 3.6 strikeout-to-walk ratio and the AL-low 625 hits allowed. Just on this account, one can envision the Mariners making a deep playoff run in the style of the Giants of the early 2010s.

St. Louis Cardinals: C
Record: 44-40, 2nd in NL Central
Run Differential: Minus-37

When you compare that record to that run differential, the notion that the Cardinals have been the luckiest team in the National League begins to make sense.

Good pitching can have this sort of effect, however, and that is what the Cardinals have gotten amid a 29-16 run since May 12. Their ERA in this span is 3.60, good for sixth in the league.

You also have to admire how St. Louis' 20-something hitters have taken the spotlight away from Paul Goldschmidt and Nolan Arenado. Especially Alec Burleson, who had an .824 OPS and seven long balls in June.

Tampa Bay Rays: D+
Record: 43-42, 4th in AL East
Run Differential: Minus-52

Every time I look at the Rays, I expect to see a team in free-fall. Yet by the grace of luck the likes of which only the Cardinals know, they're just not doing that.

You have to hand it to them for going

16-7 in one-run games, and also for coming around offensively in recent weeks. They averaged just south of two home runs per game in winning nine out of 13 to finish up the month of June.

Yet home runs have also been a theme for the pitching staff, which ranks second in surrendering 115 of them. The Rays have also been a punching bag within the AL East, going 10-17 against divisional foes.

Texas Rangers, Toronto Blue Jays, Washington Nationals

Texas Rangers: D
Record: 39-46, 3rd in AL West
Run Differential: Minus-3

It always looked like the Rangers were going into 2024 intending to punt on the first half, so what's befallen them so far shouldn't be that surprising.

The air has nonetheless been thoroughly sucked out of the room, and what is surprising is how much of a problem this

offense has been. That they've gone from co-leading the AL in home runs to ranking in the middle of the pack with 88 is something nobody saw coming.

The defending World Series champs would still be in the race if they were in the National League, but they're not. If their planned second-half surge falls short in any way, so will their playoff aspirations.

Toronto Blue Jays: D-
Record: 39-46, 5th in AL East
Run Differential: Minus-52

The Blue Jays are the best of the six last-place teams throughout MLB, so at least they have that going for them.

Even if it's been worse than expected, the failures of the 2024 Blue Jays aren't all on the offense. Pitching and defense were meant to carry this team, and the former just hasn't been good enough. Indeed, there's no defense for an MLB-high 116 homers.

It does bear noting that the Blue Jays have played only 22 games against other

teams with losing records, but it's hardly an excuse. Simply by virtue of being an AL East team, they should have planned on their schedule being difficult by default.

Washington Nationals: C
Record: 39-46, 4th in NL East
Run Differential: Minus-22

There's a point in every rebuilding cycle when the team in question closes the gap between bad and good by becoming interesting.

That is where the Nationals are in 2024, and how they've gotten here is encouraging. CJ Abrams looks like a proper cornerstone on which to build an offense, while starters MacKenzie Gore, Jake Irvin and Mitchell Parker all have ERAs in the 3.00s.

James Wood's arrival has only heightened the intrigue around the Nationals, and fellow top prospect Dylan Crews may not be far behind in his own right. It all amounts to good vibes for a franchise that lost 289 games across the three previous seasons.



College Football News and Notes



BO CARTER

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By Bo Carter

The first-ever Southeastern Conference Football Media Days in Dallas, Texas, July 15-18, are underway with emphasis on new members Oklahoma and Texas. Conference USA's Media Day will be Tuesday, July 23, at PGA North America headquarters in Frisco, Texas, and the Mountain West Conference just completed its Football Media Days on July 10-11, in Las Vegas. Other key conference media days are Big Ten from July 23-25 in Indianapolis, American Athletic in Arlington, Texas, July 22-23, Atlantic Coast from July 22-25 in Charlotte, Mid-American July 19 in Canton, Ohio, and Sun Belt July 23-24 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The sixth annual William V. Campbell Trophy® Summit, which is sponsored by Intuit, the global technology platform that makes TurboTax, QuickBooks, Mint, Credit Karma, and Mailchimp; will be held Thursday-Saturday, July 25-27, on the Stanford campus in Palo Alto, Calif. The Summit connects more than 200 former Campbell Trophy® nominees with some of the nation's top CEOs and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who will impart valuable life lessons on leadership, personal development and career success techniques. Some featured speakers are former Coastal

Carolina head coach and nationally known entrepreneur Sam Moglia, Sam Acho (ESPN Analyst, NFL player and 2010 Campbell Trophy recipient from Texas); Greg Johnson (Intuit executive vice president and former Air Force two-time all-conference halfback); Joe Moglia (former TD Ameritrade chairman & CEO and Coastal Carolina head coach); Alex Smith (former Utah and NFL quarterback and 2024 College Football Hall of Fame electee); Brad Smith (Marshall University president); and Jeremy Utley (Stanford University Graduate School of Business professor, venture investor and author) are among the 2023 headline speakers.

The 74th annual NFF 2025 College Football Hall of Fame ballot by the NFF was completed by current NFF members. Voting ran Tuesday, July 1, as national results were forwarded to the NFF Honors Court for final selections. The 2025 ballot included 77 student-athletes and nine coaches from the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision and 101 stars and 34 coaches from the NCAA divisional and NAIA ranks. For NFF membership and additional data please access Footballfoundation.org.

More U.S. collegiate stars and their alma maters with qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympiad starting July 26 are men's divers Andrew Capobianco of Indiana, Tyler Downs of Purdue, Greg Duncan of Grinnell and Michigan, and Carson Tyler of Indiana; and women's volleyball Lauren Carlini of Wisconsin, Annie Drews of Purdue, Jordan Larson of Nebraska, three former Arkansas women's sprinting standouts on the 4x400-meter pool of relay competitors, and volleyball All-America Chiaka Ogbogu of Texas via football-famous Coppell, Texas. Last week Colorado and UCCS standout Derrick White also was added to the Team USA basketball squadron. During the 2020/21 Tokyo

Olympics 645 current or former college student-athletes competed in 44 different sports venues for Team USA. Also chosen to train with the 2024 USA Basketball Olympic men's team are select squad standouts such as Jalen Duren of Memphis, Cooper Flagg of Duke, Langston Galloway of St. Joseph's, Nigel Hayes-Davis of Wisconsin, Trayce Jackson-Davis of Indiana, and Jaime Jaquez Jr. of UCLA... In a related note, these Olympic headlines sport the top personal marketing projections for the Paris games gymnast Simone Biles (married to former Missouri Western and current NFL standout DB Jonathan Owens); gymnast Sunisa Lee of Auburn, track and field star Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone of Manhattan College, track and field's Allyson Felix of USC, swimmer Caeleb Dressel of Florida, track and field's Noah Lyles of adidas (and a Florida signee before turning pro), surfer Carissa Moore of Honolulu, gymnast MyKayla Skinner Hamer of Utah, and men's golfer Xander Schauffele of Long Beach State and San Diego State. Opening ceremonies in Paris are set for Friday, July 26.

NFF College Hall of Fame Facts:

Some notable birthdates in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the July 15-21 time period are July 15 (1892) Ray Eichenlaub, Columbus, Ohio; (1893) Orin Hollingbery, Hollister, Calif.; (1935) Alex Karras, Gary, Ind.; July 16 (1889) Percy Wendell, Roxbury, Mass.; (1943) Jimmy Johnson (Arkansas), Port Arthur, Texas; (1951) Jerry Sisemore, Olton, Texas; (1968) Barry Sanders, Wichita, Kan.; (1974) Tommie Frazier, Bradenton, Fla.; July 17 (1927) Thurman "Fum" McGraw, Garden City, Kan.; July 18 (1905) George Wilson, Glenside, Pa.; (1939) Jerry Moore, Bonham, Texas; July 20 (1864) Pa Corbin, Hartford, Conn.; (1920) Frank Merritt, New York, N.Y.; (1920) Tommy Prothro, Dyersburg, Tenn.; July 21 (1912) Bill Wallace, El Campo, Texas.

Notable anniversaries of passings if NFF College Hall of Fame members are July 15 (2017) Vito "Babe" Parilli, Parker, Colo.; July 16 (1992) Buck Buchanan, Kansas City, Mo.; (2018) Gabe Rivera, San Antonio, Texas; July 17 (1980) Ralph "Shug" Jordan, Auburn, Ala.; July 18 (2005) Jim Parker, Columbia, Md.; July 20 (1945) Jake Scott, Greenwood, S.C.; (1964) Lone Star Dietz, Reading, Pa.; (1994) George Munger, Villanova, Pa.; July 21 (1979) Eddie Price, New Orleans, La.; (1999) Kurt Burris, Billings, Mont.; (2022) Jim Lynch, Kansas City, Missouri. to NFF Hall of Fame members born July 16 Jimmy Johnson (Arkansas), Jerry Sisemore, Barry Sanders, Tommie Frazier,

July 18 Jerry Moore (a spry 85)...

Schedules:

Miami (Fla.) and Utah will start the 2027 season in a special neutral site clash at Las Vegas' Allegiant Stadium...The third game of the original Colorado State-Vanderbilt series is set for Sept. 27, 2025, to replace a cancelled CSU-Vandy game in 2020, and the teams have decided in to cancel their 2026 and '27 encounters...The Baylor at Utah contest on Sept. 7 will be a non-conference for both teams since it was contracted before Utah joined the Big 12 Conference in 2025. Both teams will face nine other Big 12 opponents to contend for the Dec. 7 Dr Pepper Big 12 Football Championship...Delaware has added four opponents for the '26 season with home games against Merrimack and Coastal Carolina and road tussles with Vanderbilt (first meeting) and Virginia...Missouri State and Montana have dropped a 2026 contest as MSU moves into full Conference USA membership In July 2025.

Good Works:

S&F Athletics after-school program for underserved youngsters in the Irving, Texas, area is accepting donations and sponsors for the 2024-25 academic year beginning with the Back to School Spectacular on Aug. 10 at the Georgia Farrow Recreation Center in Irving...NFL Dallas Cowboys QB and former Mississippi State standout Dak Prescott hosted the ninth annual Dak Prescott Tom Thumb Grocery Stores Summer Football Camp at football-noted power Southlake (Texas) Carroll High School...Toyota Motors North America, based in Plano, Texas, is making emergency funds available for relief for areas hit by Hurricane Beryl last week.

Football Coaches:

NFF College Hall of Fame player Deion Sanders of Florida State and now Colorado head coaching renown became the first Big 12 mentor to bring two sons – QB Shedeur and DB Shilo – to Big 12 Conference Football Media Days. Sanders later flew to Arlington, Texas, Saturday as the football-baseball phenom at FSU, MLB and the NFL played in the MLB Celebrity All-Star Softball Classic at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas...Maryland head coach Mike Locksley gave his initial impressions on UM athletics joining the Big Ten Conference in 2014 and how it help the Terrapins regain some financial stability after a three-year dropoff in budget shortages from 2011-14...Texas Tech head coach Joey McGuire has the Red Raiders poised to make a third consecutive bowl appearance in his third year at the helm and the school's 42nd all-time post-season trek...Utah head coach Kyle

Utah head coach Kyle Whittingham begins his 20th season – plus a 2005 Fiesta Bowl win as co-head coach with Urban Meyer – with the Utes this outing with a 162-79 overall record and 11-7 mark in bowls. UU has designated defensive coordinator Morgan Scalley as his successor when Whittingham retires. Whittingham now has coached teams in four different conferences since 2005...Oklahoma State head coach Mike Gundy and UU's head coach are the "deans" at their present schools (Houston's Willie Fritz is in his 28th season as a college head coach) of current Big 12 conference mentors as their official hirings took place within days of each other in January 2005...Vanderbilt head coach Clark Lea was featured guest at the National Commodore Club in Dallas last Sunday...Colorado tabbed Damione Lewis as offensive line coach...Matt McLagan is the new special teams coach at UW-Oshkosh.

Hometowns of more 2024 college head coaches – Indiana State: Curt Mallory, Miami, Ohio; Indiana Wesleyan: Andrew Rode, Crawfordsville, Ind.; Iowa: Kirk Ferentz, Royal Oak, Mich.; Iowa State: Matt Campbell, Massillon, Ohio; Jackson State: T.C. Taylor, Magnolia, Mississippi. Directors of Athletics:

UMBC named Tiffany Tucker director of athletics...Nebraska-Kearney named UNK alumnus and former Antelopes baseball student-athlete Mannie Reinsch director of athletics...UMass Lowell tabbed Lynn Coutts as AD...Delaware AD Chrissi Rawak talked about the establishment of an administrative and student-athlete pipeline for the Blue Hens from the home stat ranks and underlying themes needed for successful college leadership...New Tulsa AD and former Texas A&M baseball standout and Aggies administrator Justin Moore has promised a values-based department with strong emphasis on bonding with the Tulsa community and to make the Golden Hurricane a strong point of pride in Northeast Oklahoma. Presently, there is no movement to bring back TU's often-potent varsity baseball program, which ended in 1980 after two trips to the NCAA World Series in its latter stages...Arizona State AD Graham Rossini is concentrating on football and men's basketball as primary revenue generators for the Sun Devils and has his staff working additional local support for ASU athletics to help the effort as the school begins its membership in the Big 12 Conference...Miami (Fla.) AD Dan Radakovich has joined the NCAA FBS Oversight Committee through June 30, 2028...Memphis AD Ed Scott praised former interim AD and UM deputy AD Jeff Crane for keeping things on an even keel in late spring and early summer and for starting an aggressive season football ticket campaign for the American Athletic Conference-contending Tigers. Scott also had his five-year contract and compensation confirmed by the Memphis Board of Trustees...North Carolina Central AD Skip Perkins has been handling several initial

financial challenges for his watch such as underserved potential corporate donations and some student-athlete insurance updates...USF AD Michael Kelly notes that there should be more discussion about a possible annual revenue-sharing cap for student-athletes in conjunction with the House v. NCAA settlement...Purdue AD Mike Bobinski took a closer look at implementation of the House v. NCAA settlement and the probable loss of \$1.2-\$1.4 million in NCAA distribution starting with the 2025-26 competitive year to individual universities along with the \$22 million in revenue-sharing aspects over the next 10 years for student-athletes. Bobinski also spoke about updated Title IX implementation and how football will be even more crucial to revenue generation during the next 2-3 years...Fresno State AD Garrett Klassy related his beliefs about the 2020s' period of transformation in college athletics and how a "herd mentality" might be disrupting the daily business mentality of running an efficient department...

Washington State AD Anne McCoy was interviewed about her current priorities such as open communications among staff, coaches and student-athletes, adapting to differences in running athletics than when she began fulltime work at WSU in 2001 and promoting selfless leadership in all areas of the department...Jackson State associate AD for academics and compliance Malone Silver is a solid addition to the NCAA Division Legislative Committee with a term through June 30, 2028...

Virginia chose James Cullimore as associate AD for compliance and Jason Baum as deputy AD for legal and regulatory affairs...FIU senior associate AD Kevin Kendrick and Dartmouth executive associate AD Taurian Houston explained some of the challenging nuances of NCAA compliance and sporadic claims of selective enforcement historically and in recent years...Washington named Eddie Smith baseball head coach...FCGU selected Josh Molino as men's tennis head coach...U. of New Orleans chose Ryan Havice as beach volleyball head coach...Veteran Missouri State men's basketball head coach Cuonzo Martin is sticking with his job responsibilities and summer tasks at hand at MSU continues its search for an AD...Connecticut officially awarded men's basketball head coach Dan Hurley a six-year contract extension with a base salary of \$50 million over that span...Binghamton selected Paul Caceres as women's tennis head coach...

Middle Tennessee tabbed Lauren Giesecke as women's golf head coach...La Salle added Brianna D'Angelo as acrobatics and tumbling head coach...Southern Utah softball head coach Don Williams has a new contract through 2027...Donnie Smith has been named associate AD for media relations at Jacksonville State...Logan Stout, who founded the Dallas Patriots youth baseball select teams, is the new baseball head coach at UAPB.. Stetson added Sue Murphy as women's lacrosse

head coach...Southern Indiana chose Chris Ramirez as baseball head coach...George Mason women's lacrosse head coach Kara Mupo had her contract extended through 2027...Northwestern State named Jason Pugh associate AD for external operations and Brittany Pajuluoma assistant AD for sports medicine and senior woman administrator...Ball State men's volleyball head coach Donan Cruz now has a personal pact through December 2028...Mount St. Mary's gave a contract extension of unknown length to women's lacrosse head coach Lauren Skellchock...Travis Geopfert has been named head track and field coach at Kansas State...Evan Battey was named men's basketball assistant coach last week...There are now four remaining head baseball coaching positions available for DI schools and the '25 season among 36 previous openings. They are Alcorn State, Cal State Bakersfield, Delaware State, and Washington...USC president Dr. Carol Folt is continuing her tenure after her latest contract expired on July 1...Utah State is seeking a new executive associate AD for internal affairs and senior women administrator...UT Arlington added former Conference USA assistant commissioner Jordan Stepp as associate AD of strategic communications...The latest position openings in athletics on D1Ticker.com are Le Moyne, Alcorn State, Charlotte, Cleveland State, George Washington, Illinois State, Marquette, Missouri State, UNI, Northwestern, Santa Clara, St. John's, UMass Lowell, UMBC, Valparaiso, Arizona, Cleveland State, Louisiana Tech, New Hampshire, Purdue, USC, UTSA, Western Athletic Conference, West Georgia, West Virginia, Wichita State, and West Texas A&M.

The Conferences:

American Athletic Conference commissioner Tim Perneti observed that different members of the AAC have been working on creative solutions for collegiate revenue-sharing with student-athletes as mandated by jurisprudence settlements, and he is not in favor of a separate Group of Five conference mini-championship that might detract from some schools' College Football Playoff invitation possibilities...The Southwestern Athletic Conference will expand its men's and women's basketball postseason tournaments from eight to 10 teams in 2025 and 12 teams in 2026 and has helped SWAC football members obtain sideline tablets for in-game video observations...Conference USA 2023-24 Mike Slive Athletes of the Year Award winners are Liberty quarterback Kaidon Salter and Middle Tennessee basketball's Savannah Wheeler...West Coast Conference commissioner Stu Jackson expressed thankfulness for the prestige that Oregon State and Washington State have added as WCC affiliate members for the next two years and how they will enhance that conference's possibilities for added NCAA Championship at-large berths in several sports...Pac-12 Conference current

bowl agreements will give Oregon State and Washington State automatic bids in the DIRECTV Holiday Bowl, Radianc Technologies Independence, the RSR Distribution Las Vegas, Tony the Tiger Sun, and Valero Alamo Bowls of the Beavers and Cougars manage the prerequisite six wins during the regular season...BYU's Bella Folino (soccer) and Iowa State's David Carr (wrestling) have been selected as the second annual Big 12 Conference Bob Bowlsby Award recipients for leadership and classroom excellence...The Big 12 and Microsoft will partner to provide Microsoft tablets for football coaches and student-athletes on the sideline and in coaching booths similar to the NFL Microsoft agreements and tablet usage. The Big 12 also reported a 79 percent increase in corporate sponsorships from 2022-23 to 2023-24...The cities of the SEC are sponsoring a special SEC at the Movies at the historic Texas Theatre in Dallas Monday with a special panel presentation Monday night with the SEC Network's Laura Rutledge...The Big 12 Conference also has asked NCAA administrators about placing commercial patches on game officials similar to several professional leagues. The conference also is inaugurating an audio program similar to Sirius XM with 24/7/365 broadcasts of Big 12 events, news show and live game/match accounts...Boise State is the preseason choice for the Mountain West Conference gridiron title.

The Bowls:

The short-lived College Bowl Alliance to help determine an undisputed FBS champion from the 1995-97 seasons before the formation of the Bowl Championship from 1998-2013 produced some fairly obvious No. 1 results after bowl selections except for the '97 campaign. Without question, Nebraska's 62-24 win over Florida in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl ('95 season) produced an consensus national champ. During the 1996 season the '97 Sugar Bowl went with No. 1 rated Florida and No. 2 Florida State with the Gators downing the rival Seminoles 52-20 for the FBS crown. The 1997 campaign found Nebraska thumping SEC champ Florida 42-17 in the 1998 Orange Bowl to capture the CBA title in the final game for NFF College Hall of Fame head coach Tom Osborne of Nebraska. Michigan claimed a co-trophy with the final No. 1 position in the Associated Press Top 25 following a 21-16 win over Washington State in the Rose Bowl...The Goodyear Cotton Bowl is accepting additional ticket upgrade requests from existing clients for the 2025 GCB College Football Playoff semifinal tilt on Jan. 10...If the 12-team College Football Playoff had been put in place in 2013 (the final year of the Bowl Championship Series), Utah football would have qualified among the selected teams six times over 12 seasons...The Valero Alamo Bowl could include two

(continued on page 18)

of the 16 Big 12 members because of existing contracts with the Big 12 and former Pac-2 members Arizona, Arizona State and Utah as they begin Big 12 activity in August...CFP executive director Lt. Gen. (ret.) Richard Clark addressed participants at Big 12 Football Media Days and drew rave reviews...The Goodyear Cotton Bowl Foundation thanked consistent donors for helping to fund GCB community service support for the area Hope Tutoring Center, Girls Inc., Communities in Schools, and the Big Thought Project.

The Players:

Kansas State QB Avery Johnson was highlighted in a national preview about a possible high Big 12 Conference finish for the Wildcats...TE Linkon Cure offered a 2025 verbal commitment to K-State as well...Texas A&M standouts DL Shemar Turner, LB Taurean York and OL Trey Zuhn III will join Aggies first-year head coach Mike Elko at this week's SEC Media Days...After missing the 2023 season, Utah quarterback Cameron Rising is ready and willing to lead the charge for the Big 12's projected championship crew...Mississippi State's Cam Matthews and Josh Hubbard have pledged their best efforts for the Bulldogs this year after laying off the offseason enticements of the transfer portal and possible tampering by other programs...MSU SEC Media Day participants are QB Blake Shapen, LB John Lewis and OL Albert Reese. State also received another 2025 verbal commitment from LB AJ Rice...Louisiana stars set for interviews at Sun Belt Media Days in New Orleans, La., later this month are AJ Gillie and K.C. Ossai...Boise State had seven total players selected for preseason All-Mountain West Conference laurels with pre-2014 MWC Offensive Player of the Year Ashton Jeanty and preseason Co-Defensive Player Ahmed Hassanein heading the list...Alabama stars headed to SEC Media Days this week in Dallas are QB Jalen Milroe, OL Tyler Booker and DB Malachi Moore while LSU student-athlete attendees are QB Garrett Nussmeier, TE Mason Taylor and LB Harold Perkin...Colorado is projecting walkon Charlie Offerdahl as a probable starting running back in the season opener against NCAA FCS power North Dakota State...Houston QB Donovan Smith (via Texas Tech transfer) expressed optimism about the Cougars returning to winning ways and a possible bowl bid in posy-2024...Arizona QB Noah Fafita has been highlighted for his role in the turnaround of the season for the Wildcats who won the final seven contests last year and a 38-24 triumph over Oklahoma in the Valero Alamo Bowl....Colorado State QB Brayden Fowler-Nicolosi has been subject of recent transfer portal discussion but is remaining at CSU...Ohio State is projecting former Kansas State QB and 2024 transfer Will Howard as a possible No. 1 on the August Buckeyes depth chart...Shaqir O'Neal, son of Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame

great Shaquille O'Neal of LSU and the NBA, has transferred from Texas Southern to Florida A&M...Alabama's Jameson Scissum has transferred to Mississippi State with August enrollment...Oklahoma State RB and 2023 Doak Walker Award winner Ollie Gordon III will remain on the Cowboys team with a public apology and some additional community service duties after a recent visit with authorities in Oklahoma City.

Around the Campus:

The Bloomberg family has bequeathed \$1 billion to Johns Hopkins for essentially fully-paid tuition, even for JHU student-athletes, for all qualifying students...Clemson athletics posted gains of 20 percent in home attendance in all sports during the 2023-24 academic year with 1.06 million fans watching the Tigers...Auburn Trustees have approved a \$25.7 million video board in the north end zone of Auburn's Jordan-Hare Stadium for usage starting in 2025...Montana's \$10.2 million Grizzlies Indoor Practice Facility just needs to have its all-weather plastic dome inflated to be ready for full-scale activity...The fabled Iowa Wesleyan football program, which fostered the likes of coaches Hal Mumme, the late Mike Leach, Dana Holgorsen and others with the Air Raid offense, has completed its football competition after 50 seasons and the university's closure in 2023...Austin Peay athletics increased its 2023-24 attendance for multiple sports, had a 70 percent upgrade in season tickets and had a record \$2.6 million increase in overall revenue...Virginia Tech football continues its special individual and group rate ticketing offers for the traditional Homecoming clash with Georgia Tech Oct. 26. VT also has an exclusive offer for Hokies custom jerseys with select ticket purchases. The Hokies and Mississippi State also had special mentions on their official websites about the 50-day countdowns to season openers...Air Force's Falcon Stadium East Club addition has all but permanent seating prepared for the Falcons first-ever meeting with Merrimack in the Aug. 31 opener at Colorado Springs, Colo....SMU football is presenting a self-subscribed ticketing plan to allow fans to create desired seating locations and family ticketing preferences...Manhattan will attain varsity status for men's volleyball, women's golf, and women's acrobatics and tumbling beginning in August 2025 after a \$100,000 First Point Volleyball Foundation donation...Colorado's football youngsters have made a team vow to prove media covering the Big 12 Conference to be erroneous in predictions of 11th out of 16 Big 12 teams for the '24 campaign for the Buffaloes...Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Georgia Tech, and Notre Dame have contracted with the Legends Group for broadcast rights and other amenities along with NFL power Dallas Cowboys and MLB's New York Yankees...NCAA Texas A&M-Commerce is debating changing its name after it was East Texas State until 1996-97,

and some suggestions have been Northeast Texas A&M along with Texas A&M-Dallas at Commerce. Fans are anticipating a final decision in coming months...West Virginia football is emailing a survey to ticketholders, alumni and fans to get their opinions on possible additions of premium seating and fan enhancements to Milan Puskar Stadium on campus...UC Davis will facilitate the Aggie Edge official NIL collective through the auspices of Student Athlete NIL with extensive early support from the Davis community...Hawai'i athletics and Teamworks Influencer are combining for the GO BOWS NIL collective...Valparaiso athletics has a solid ticketing agreement with the Vivenu Group...Nebraska and 1890 Nebraska are now in harmony with 1890 Nebraska as NU's official NIL collective...Florida State athletics will use a new academic logo specifically with the traditional Seminole head and exclusively for athletics...San Diego opened the Torero Athletic Fund - the official fundraising provider for USD Athletics...Texas A&M's 12th Man Store has a number of 25 percent summer discounts on fan favorites via online sales...The 2025 Peak Events Frisco (Texas) College Baseball Classic will feature Division I powers Nebraska, LSU, Kansas State, and Sam Houston State...Peak Events and Karbach Brewing Co. also are set to host the Karbach Round Rock (Texas) College Baseball Classic at Dell Diamond Feb. 21-23, 2025, with Oklahoma, Virginia, Oregon State, and Minnesota in the four-team field...Peak Sports and North Carolina Central athletics are working to solve profit percentage agreements' differences between the two groups...Northwestern is utilizing the TurnkeyZRG Group in his location of a new AD to replace former Vanderbilt football student-athlete Dr. Derrick Gregg....Area favorites Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma State, Clemson, Louisville, and Ole Miss will play in the Shriners Hospitals College Classic benefit tourney Feb. 14-16, 2025, at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

Other Notables:

NFF College Hall of Fame members Andrew Ware of Houston, Steve Young of BYU and Robert Griffin III of Baylor, famed broadcaster Joel Klatt of Colorado, Olympic gold medal softball pitcher Jennie Finch, and MLB All-Star infielder Kevin Youkilis are some noted members of the newly-formed Big 12 Conference Alumni Council...Jim Ridlon, standout back at Syracuse and All-Pro defensive back in the NFL, turned 90 last Thursday. He is a noted American painter and designer and sculpted the famed Outland Trophy for annual FWAA national top lineman award...Former Purdue QB star David Blough is now assistant quarterbacks coach for the NFL Washington Commanders...Florida A&M football-baseball standout and MLB great Vince Coleman was featured on MLB Network and was a coach during last Friday's Swingman HBCU National Baseball All-Star Classic in Arlington,

Texas...Iowa state legislator J.D. Scholten at the age of 44 was the winning pitcher over the Milwaukee Milkmen in an American Association independent league game with 6 2/3 innings as a starting pitcher...The Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference denoted its 2024 Hall of Fame with honorees John Cunliffe, women's basketball coaches Diana Lopez of Regis and Jennifer Warner Ramsey of Nebraska-Kearney, men's track and field and cross country star Martin Johns of Adams State, football and men's wrestling great Julius "Hans" Wagner of Colorado State, president Dr. Stephen Jordan of MSU Denver, and national champion men's basketball programs MSU Denver in 1999-2000 and 2001-2002.

Media Musings:

Some of the major award winners on the 2024 ESPN ESPYS last week were NFF College Hall of Fame 2025 coach nominee Nick Saban (Sports Icon), Virginia women's basketball head coach Dawn Staley (Jimmy V Memorial Award), Steve Gleason of Washington State (Arthur Ashe Courage Award), Patrick Mahomes of the NFL Kansas City Chiefs and Texas Tech, and Caitlin Clark of Iowa women's basketball and the WNBA Indiana Fever (Best Record-Setting Performance)...CBS Sports columnist Dennis Dodd found that 55 of the 64 Pac-12 Conference on-field football have been relocated to NCAA FBS and FCS conference assignments and two more moved up into the NFL ranks. Two of the 2023 game officials retired...The Athletic's Scott Dochterman reflected on Maryland's first 10 years as a member of the Big Ten Conference and financial benefits...Gregg Rosenthal, host of the Around the NFL Podcast for 11-plus years and over 1,600 episodes ago, reminisced about the past and pondered future possibilities for the program...Brittney Whiteside, vice president of the ASP College Group at Altius Sports Partners, allowed updates on how groups assisting college athletics such as AASP can help provide capable leaders through job connections and how the group also maintains a strategic division for financing and sponsor leverage updates. She also offered pointers about downsizing from post in athletics to positions in private business...CNBC has inaugurated CNBC Sport, which will provide commentary on the business of sports with a strong college theme and Forbes SportsMoney managing editor host Mike Ozanian serving as CNBC's senior reporter...ExtraPoints.com suggested NIL compensation caps as a means of trying to keep athletics budgets at a logical level...Tennessee professor Dr. Shannon Scovel researched equitable publicity for both men's and women's collegiate teams as well as funding for coverage by various departments - plus, how men's NIL recipients often are publicized more frequently than women's purveyors...Front Office Sports' Daniel Kaplan reports that as many as 30 private equity groups may be providing capital for professional ath

letics and college athletics probably cannot be far behind in this endeavor...Fitch Ratings reported its annual findings on U.S private colleges and universities with major emphasis on the need of immediate funding for several smaller institutions of higher learning. The report also mentioned the continuing challenges with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the pending enrollment "cliff" because of declining birth rates and college enrollees, and continued repercussions for families and prospective students after the COVID-19 pandemic...Paramount, Skydance and CBS are expected to forge a merger with a price tag in the range of \$4.5 billion, and Skydance has announced a \$2 billion budget adjustment in coming weeks...The Houston (Texas) Chronicle newspaper's Joseph Duarte speculated about the continuance of longtime Houston and Texas rivalries now that Texas has joined the SEC. UH men's and women's basketball teams have inquired about 2024-25 contests with the Longhorns along with baseball, softball and volleyball...Front Office Sports highlighted the work of On3.com sports reporters and graphic design aces...CNN is experiencing some downsizing and will eliminate 100 current employees while seeking to expand its digital operations and monetization...404 Media described how extra precautions and authentication have been put in place to keep football ticket counterfeiters and scalpers from duplicating barcodes to gain entry to games – especially in the resale ticket venues...Nike has encountered summer cutbacks with 32 vice presidents, 112 senior directors and 174 directors losing their positions – approximately 40 percent of its corporate workforce...ESPN's Pete Thamel related that finalized plans for the distribution of the House v. NCAA settlement and possible football roster limits of 100-110 student-athletes are in the offing but that settlement enforcement procedures are vague currently...JohnCanzano.com believes that Oregon State and Washington State should make concerted efforts for both athletics branding and football speaking points as they approach bowl and CFP invitations in December...ESPN's Joe Tessitore is the newest broadcaster edition to popular WWE match telecasts...**FWAA, CSC, NCAA, Etc.:**

Hundreds of FWAA members have converged on or are attending NCAA FBS conference media days from July 9-25. Prospective members still may pay 2024-25 dues via NCBWA.com and going to the membership link. There also is a member discount for joining FWAA, NCBWA and USBWA media organizations...College Sports Communicators members featured in the news and on social media posts in recent days are Dean Kenefick of Villanova, Rob Turner

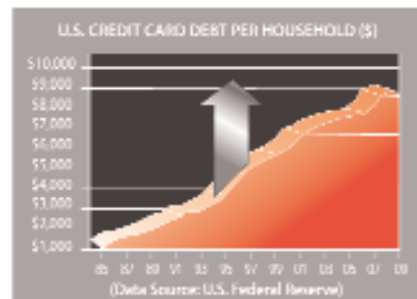
of William & Mary, J.J. Klein of the Ivy League, Tim Geer of Brown, and Mike Kowalsky of Columbia...Arizona State, Florida, LSU, Michigan State, Oregon, Stanford, Tennessee, Texas A&M, UCLA, USC, and Utah State are conferring with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible challenges and probes at their respective schools...The National Baseball Showcase previously held on July 9 and now set for a second session Tuesday, July 16, is set for Zoom and web stream help parents and student-athletes find possible locales for young up-and-coming prospects on the diamond...The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee will make public complete seeding for all 68 entries into the 2025 DI Championship for the first time...NCAA Division I-III Women's Basketball Championships will be played in the same site at Indianapolis in 2028 after all three divisions will compete for the 2026 Men's Final Fours@ at Indy...Plaintiff attorneys in the House, Carter and Hubbard lawsuits v. NCAA are seeking to challenge a rebuttal lawsuit brought by Houston Christian U. against the firms and individuals represented...U.S. District Court Judge Joan Lefkow ruled that social media users will need to disclose paid relationships with brands for transparency and possible Internal Revenue Service tax reports. It could have an immediate effect on NIL compensation and taxation...Clemson attorneys are looking for revealing two redacted pages of the current ACC multimedia rights' agreements through 2036...There was a bit of shock and surprise that 2020/21 Olympic gold medalist Athing Mu was not selected as an at-large member of the U.S. Olympic track and field team for the 2024 Paris Olympiad. Mu was featured on the cover of the Sports Illustrated magazine 2024 Olympic preview edition...The Chalmers v. NCAA jurisprudence maybe complicating final measures for the House v. NCAA legal settlement, and the NCAA is seeking to minimize legal services' spending, which has been a composite \$433 million since 2014...Several federal regulations went into effect July 1 for oversight for college programs (community and four-year institutions), examining colleges that may be considering closing due to financial or enrollment challenges and new requirements for colleges to receive federal financial aid...Church Church Hittle and Antrim Law and the PICTOR Group, which have handled cases for college athletics, are coming together for a strategic partnership...The NFL has asked U.S. District Court Judge Philip Gutierrez to dismiss a \$4.7 billion assessment in the NFL Sunday Ticket antitrust lawsuit.

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Tom I'lli
CGA STAFF WRITER

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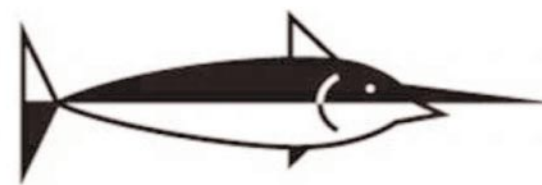
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