



WEEK OF JULY 12 - JULY 19, 2026



The Week in Maryland Sports

Capitals Announce 2026-27 Regular Season Schedule: Season Opens on the Road Against Carolina, Home Opener vs. Penguins

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BRIAN'S TAKE

Brian's Take recaps 33 MSB opinion takes published during the week. These are the key conclusions from MSB's reporting, analysis and game coverage.

MSB Weekly Magazine 2026-07-19

Maryland Sports Blog has always believed the best stories are not limited to the scoreboard. The recognition of Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So reminds fans that college athletics are about much more than wins and losses. These four Mountaineers have demonstrated outstanding discipline by succeeding in the classroom while competing at one of the highest levels of college basketball. The additional NABC Team Academic Excellence Award makes the accomplishment eve...

[READ THE ORIGINAL MSB TAKE](#)

Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start...

A week ago, the Orioles were searching for answers. Today, they leave Houston with a seven-game winning streak and a three-game road sweep over an Astros team that entered the series fighting to stay in the American League West race. The biggest story continues to be Brandon Young. Every outing strengthens the argument that Baltimore has found a legitimate front-of-the-rotation starter. His consistency has stabilized the pitching staff, and the offense is beginning to provide enough suppo...

[READ THE ORIGINAL MSB TAKE](#)

Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern...

The Sam Huff promotion and Cam Sanders option are typical roster management moves that major league clubs make throughout a long season. Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list is different. Whenever an elite reliever is sidelined with recurring elbow discomfort, it is difficult not to worry about what comes next. Hopefully, the move is precautionary and Helsley can return later this season. Until the Orioles release more information, however, this has the potential to become one of the...

[READ THE ORIGINAL MSB TAKE](#)

Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence...

Maryland Sports Blog has always believed the best stories are not limited to the scoreboard. The recognition of Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So reminds fans that college

116 ARTICLES 16 SECTIONS 33 MSB TAKES

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

BY THE NUMBERS

116 FULL STORIES

16 SECTIONS

33 MSB TAKES

THIS WEEK IN MARYLAND SPORTS

SUNDAY, JULY 19	MSB Weekly Magazine 2026-07-19
SATURDAY, JULY 18	From Coaching to Playing, Hoy Making Transition with Ease
FRIDAY, JULY 17	Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push
THURSDAY, JULY 16	Nats send three to All-Star Game, draft some hot prospects
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15	Washington College Has Four Tabbed 2025-26 CSC Academic All-District At-Large
TUESDAY, JULY 14	MSB: Navy Football Reshapes Recruiting Department With Key Front Office Promotions and New Hires...
MONDAY, JULY 13	MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I cannot tell you how excited I am to become the next head coach of UMBC Men's Lacrosse. I have always followed the program from afar, and the opportunity to lead such a proud program is a tremendous honor."

TOP STORIES OF THE WEEK



Capitals Announce 2026-27 Regular Season Schedule: Season Opens on the Road Against Carolina, Home Opener vs. Penguins...

Washington Capitals 2026-27 NHL Regular Season Schedule Released: Road Opener at Carolina Hurricanes, Home Opener Against Pittsburgh Penguins ARLINGTON, Va. The Washington Capitals have officially...

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MSB WEEKLY MAGAZINE 2026-07-19

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MSB Weekly Magazine 2026-07-19

TOP STORIES OF THE WEEK

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ORIOLES COMPLETE SWEEP!

7TH STRAIGHT WIN

5-2 VICTORY OVER ASTROS

JULY 20, 2025
DAIKIN PARK
HOUSTON, TEXAS

VS

5 FINAL 2

49-51 47-54

GAME SUMMARY

3RD INNING Orioles take early lead on RBI single by Gunnar Henderson and double steal with Pete Alonso stealing second and Henderson stealing home. Yordan Alvarez RBI double cuts lead to 2-1.

5TH INNING Bases loaded for Baltimore, Leody Taveras 2-run single extends lead to 4-1.

6TH INNING Coby Mayo crushes a solo home run (13) to right-center, making it 5-1.

8TH INNING Jose Altuve solo homer off Rico Garcia makes it 5-2, but the O's hold on for the win.

PITCHING HIGHLIGHTS

WIN: BRANDON YOUNG (9-2)
7.0 IP | 5 H | 1 R | 1 BB | 7 K
95 PITCHES (62 STRIKES)
DOMINANT PERFORMANCE!

LOSS: HUNTER BROWN (1-1)
4.2 IP | 3 H | 4 R | 6 BB | 4 K
2 HIT BATTERS
CAREER-HIGH 6 WALKS

SAVE: GRANT WOLFRAM (1)
PERFECT 9TH INNING
1ST CAREER SAVE!

ORIOLES OFFENSE

- 6 HITS
- 7 WALKS
- 2 FOR 10 W/ RISP
- 1 ERROR BY HOUSTON
- AGGRESSIVE BASERUNNING

ASTROS OFFENSE

- 1 FOR 8 W/ RISP
- 6 LEFT ON BASE
- STRUGGLED WITH COMMAND
- 4 STRAIGHT LOSSES

TOP PERFORMERS

COBY MAYO
2-4, HR (13), RBI
SOLO SHOT IN 6TH

GUNNAR HENDERSON
1-4, RBI, R, SB
STOLE HOME IN 3RD!

LEODY TAVERAS
1-4, 2 RBI
CLUTCH 2-RUN SINGLE

JOSE ALTUVE
2-4, 2B, HR, 2 R
8TH INNING SOLO HR

UP NEXT
NEXT SERIES AT HOME
LET'S KEEP THIS MOMENTUM ROLLING!

BIRDLAND IS HOT!

THREE-GAME SWEEP IN HOUSTON ★ SEASON-HIGH 7-GAME WINNING STREAK ★ BUILDING SOMETHING SPECIAL IN BIRDLAND

MSB MARYLAND SPORTS BLOG

Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young s Dominant Start

HOUSTON The Baltimore Orioles are playing their best baseball of the 2026 season. Behind another outstanding performance from Brandon Young, timely hitting throughout the lineup,...

[READ THE FULL STORY](https://www.marylandsportsblog.com) [marylandsportsblog.com](https://www.marylandsportsblog.com)

ORIOLES ROSTER MOVES

SAM HUFF
RECALLED
FROM TRIPLE-A NORFOLK

CAM SANDERS
OPTIONED
TO TRIPLE-A NORFOLK

RYAN HELSLEY
TO 60-DAY
INJURED LIST
RIGHT ELBOW DISCOMFORT

ROSTER ADJUSTMENTS BEFORE TODAY'S GAME

BULLPEN
MANAGING THE ROSTER FOR THE STRETCH RUN

BALTIMORE ORIOLES
BUILT FOR OCTOBER

★ ★ ★ JULY 19, 2026 | BALTIMORE ORIOLES ★ ★ ★

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Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley s Injury Raises Concern...

MARYLAND SPORTS BLOG WEEKLY

The Baltimore Orioles made three roster moves before Sunday s series finale against the Houston Astros, moves that immediately impacted the game while also creating new questions...

TOP STORIES OF THE WEEK



Early Offense Propels FredNats to Series Finale Win Over Pelicans

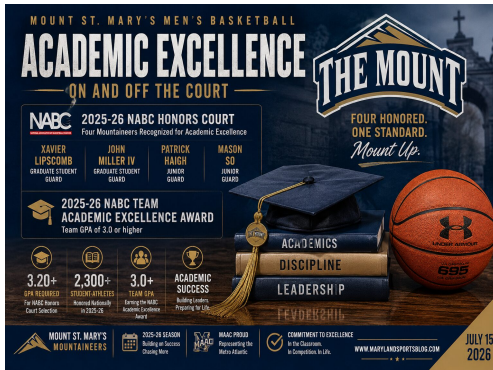
Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans...

[READ THE FULL STORY](http://marylandsportsblog.com) marylandsportsblog.com



FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY

COLLEGE SPORTS



Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary s Continues Tradition of Academic...

EMMITSBURG, Md. Championships and postseason appearances often define a basketball program, but the most successful teams also pride themselves on developing leaders away from the court. Mount St. Mary s.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Mount St. Mary s Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging...

The Mount St. Mary s men s and women s cross country teams now know the path they will take during the 2026 season. The Mountaineers will compete in a six-meet schedule that...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Coppin State Women s Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule

Coppin State University will make history during the 2026-27 academic year as the Eagles begin the inaugural season of their NCAA Division I women s golf program. Head men s and women s.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

COLLEGE SPORTS



Coppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf Schedule...

The newest program at Coppin State University is officially ready to hit the links. Coppin State Athletics announced the inaugural schedule for its new men's golf program on Friday, marking.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



DeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success...

Coppin State men's basketball graduate DeMariontay Hall is taking the next step in his basketball journey after signing his first professional contract with Sampaense Basket of Portugal's ProLiga for the.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Defending MAC Commonwealth Champions, Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule...

Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship Owings Mills, Md. Th...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

COLLEGE SPORTS



Stevenson University Names Savannah Siegrist Head Coach of Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball...

Owings Mills, Md. Stevenson University has appointed Savannah Siegrist as the head coach for both its men's and women's beach volleyball programs. The university's Director of Athletics, Jordan Hoover,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Loyola Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight...

Loyola University Maryland Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year The Loyola University Maryland women's track and field program produced a 2025-26.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Frostburgs States University Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors

Frostburg State University Bobcats Women's Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors The Frostburg State University Bobcats women's tennis team has earned significant academic recognition for the 2025-26 season, as announced by.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

COLLEGE SPORTS



Six From Men's Tennis Named ITA Scholar Athletes

Six Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes Six Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) announced its 2025-26.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



St. Mary's College Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC

St. Mary's College of Maryland Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for Academic Excellence St. Mary's College of Maryland Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Hood's College Men's Basketball earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six named to Honors Court...

Hood College Men's Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court Hood College Men's Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE ORIOLES



Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young s Dominant Start...

HOUSTON The Baltimore Orioles are playing their best baseball of the 2026 season. Behind another outstanding performance from Brandon Young, timely hitting throughout the lineup, and a towering home.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley s Injury Raises Concern...

The Baltimore Orioles made three roster moves before Sunday s series finale against the Houston Astros, moves that immediately impacted the game while also creating new questions about the health of.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Shorebirds Rally from Four Down to Take the Finale Against Kannapolis

Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE ORIOLES



Shorebirds Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game out of the All-Star Break...

Bowie Baysox Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game Out of the All-Star Break Bowie Baysox Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game Out of the All-Star Break The Bowie...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Delmarva Drops Game 2 to RidgeYaks

Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup The Delmarva Shorebirds, the Low-A affiliate of the.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller

The Baltimore Orioles continue to play their best baseball of the season. Baltimore extended its winning streak to six games Saturday night with a gritty 4-2 victory over the Houston...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE ORIOLES



Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension...

The Baltimore Orioles made one of the biggest statements of the 2026 season on Saturday, agreeing to a five-year, \$90 million contract extension with ace right-hander Kyle Bradish. The deal.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Orioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot Deal

The Baltimore Orioles have officially secured the signature of their top selection from the 2026 MLB Draft, agreeing to terms with first-round pick Eric Booth Jr., the No. 7 overall...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five...

The Baltimore Orioles opened the second half of the season with another dramatic victory, defeating the Houston Astros 3-2 on Friday night at Daikin Park. Trailing entering the eighth inning,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE ORIOLES



Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push...

The Baltimore Orioles continued reshaping their bullpen Friday by recalling right-handed pitcher Cam Sanders from Triple-A Norfolk ahead of the opening game of their series against the Houston Astros. Sanders,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Orioles Open Second Half With Three-Game Road Series Against Astros

The Baltimore Orioles return from the All-Star break on Friday night as they begin the second half of the 2026 season with a three-game series against the Houston Astros at...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Keegan Akin Undergoes Tommy John Surgery, Leaving Orioles Without Veteran Left-Hander For The Remaind...

The Baltimore Orioles received another difficult injury update during the All-Star break as veteran left-handed reliever Keegan Akin underwent successful Tommy John surgery on Wednesday in Arlington, Texas. The procedure.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

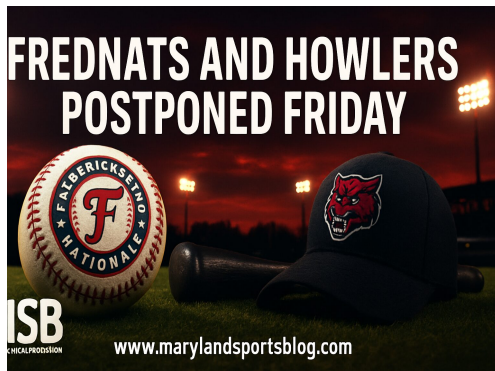
MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL



Early Offense Propels FredNats to Series Finale Win Over Pelicans

Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans On July 12, 2026,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY

Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds Games Postponed Friday Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds Games Postponed Friday The Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds, two prominent Minor League Baseball teams based in.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



FredNats Drop Doubleheader, Lose a Series for the First Time in 98 Days

Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days The Frederick Keys, Maryland s.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL



From Coaching to Playing, Hoy Making Transition with Ease

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Infielder Dylan Hoy Making Seamless Transition from Coaching to Playing Dylan Hoy, infielder for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, is proving that returning to professional baseball.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Crabs Sweep Doubleheader

Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader WALDORF, Md. Carlos Rojas starred for the.....

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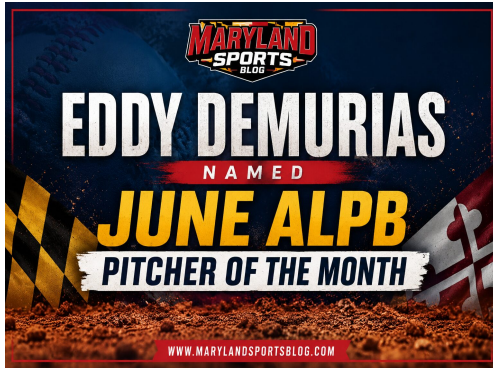


Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Charleston Dirty Birds Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Charleston Dirty Birds.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL



Flying Boxcars Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month

Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month Hagerstown Flying Boxcars pitcher Eddy Demurias has been recognized as the Atlantic.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named ALPB Player of the Week

Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week | Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week The Hagerstown.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star...

The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars catcher Alex Isola has been named to the 2026 Atlantic League of Professional Baseball (ALPB) Mid-Season All-Star team, announced on July 14, 2026. The 17-member squad.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL



Independent Baseball Has Found a Home in Maryland with the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars...

Maryland has a rich professional baseball history that stretches well beyond the Baltimore Orioles and the state's affiliated minor league clubs. In 2026, two independent professional baseball organizations are helping.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Charleston Dirty Birds Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Charleston Dirty Birds WALDORF, MD The.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Crabs Quietened by Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Quietened by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Quietened by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss WALDORF, Md. The Southern Maryland.....

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WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS



Game Recap: Mystics at Valkyries

Washington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap
Washington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap The Washington Mystics fell to the Golden State Valkyries 74-60 on Saturday night, continuing.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks

The Washington Wizards wrapped up their 2026 NBA Summer League schedule on a winning note Saturday night, defeating the Atlanta Hawks 91-83 in Las Vegas. The victory gave Washington a.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Washington Commanders 2026 Offseason Recap: Reloading for Another NFC East Run...

After an aggressive rebuild under general manager Adam Peters and head coach Dan Quinn, the Washington Commanders entered the 2026 offseason focused on refining a roster they believe can return.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

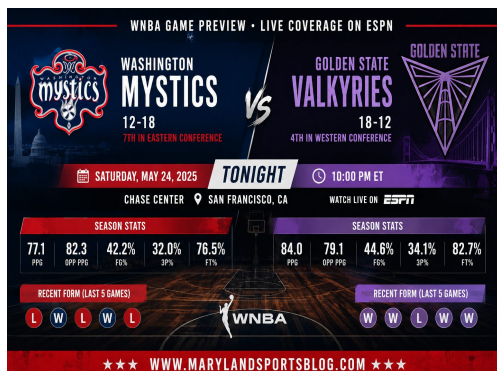
WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS



News

Washington Mystics News Archive: A Deep Dive into the Team s WNBA History Washington Mystics News Archive: A Deep Dive into the Team s WNBA History The Washington Mystics, one of the...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Washington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State Valkyries

The Washington Mystics have been one of the biggest surprises in the WNBA this season, entering tonight s road matchup against the Golden State Valkyries with a 12-11 record and firmly.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Game Recap: Mystics at Tempo

Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit The Washington Mystics overcame an 11-point first-half deficit.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS



Game Recap: Mystics vs Dream

Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory The Washington Mystics erased a double-digit deficit and.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Nats send three to All-Star Game, draft some hot prospects

The Washington Nationals hit the All-Star break a game below .500, thanks to a typically shaky bullpen at home against the New York Yankees. Three late-inning comebacks by New York...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Wizards Drop Second Straight, Fall 108-94 to Clippers in NBA Summer League...

The Washington Wizards dropped their second consecutive NBA Summer League game Wednesday night, falling 108-94 to the Los Angeles Clippers in Las Vegas. After opening Summer League with back-to-back victories,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS



Wizards Fall to Bulls 99-87 in Summer League as Young Talent Continues to Develop...

LAS VEGAS The Washington Wizards' unbeaten run in the 2026 NBA 2K26 Summer League came to an end Tuesday night as they dropped a 99-87 decision to the Chicago...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



MSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League Showcase...

The Washington Wizards have seen enough. After just two games in the 2026 NBA Summer League, the organization has elected to shut down No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, Tre...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in L...

The Washington Wizards' youth movement continues to generate excitement. Just two days after opening the 2026 NBA Summer League with an impressive victory over the Utah Jazz, the Wizards delivered.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE RAVENS



Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition

The Baltimore Ravens have added another experienced option to the middle of their offensive line, agreeing to a one-year contract with veteran center Ethan Pocic as the team continues to.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL s No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year...

Baltimore Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton has established himself as more than one of the best young defensive players in football. According to the people inside the NFL, Hamilton is the.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100...

The NFL Top 100 Players list voted on by the players themselves reliably generates debate every offseason. While intended to honor the league s elite, certain placements consistently leave.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BALTIMORE RAVENS



MSB Feature: Roquan Smith Earns No. 65 Spot on NFL Top 100 But How Is He Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson?...

By Brian Hradsky The NFL's annual Top 100 Players countdown continued Wednesday, and Baltimore Ravens linebacker Roquan Smith checked in at No. 65 after another outstanding season. The ranking, voted.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong...

When the NFL released players 70-61 on its annual NFL Top 100 Players of 2026 countdown, one name immediately stood out and not in a good way. Lamar Jackson came in...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS



Bowie State Picked Ninth in CIAA Football Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA...

Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CIAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CIAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park...

BOWIE, Md. Bowie State University men's basketball star KJ West has accepted an invitation to participate in the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, scheduled to take place at the...

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Bowie State Reveals 2026 Women's Volleyball Slate

Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS



Bowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule

The road to the 2026 CIAA Volleyball Championship is officially set for Bowie State University. The Bulldogs unveiled their 2026 women's volleyball schedule on Tuesday, giving head coach Edric Poitier s.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

MORE MARYLAND SPORTS



Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach

Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College announced on Friday.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Morgan Hired as Graduate Assistant Coach for Men's Lacrosse

McDaniel College Men s Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach McDaniel College Men s Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College Men s Lacrosse Head.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Vanskiver Named to CSC Academic All-America Women s At-Large Team

Jena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-America Women s At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC Jena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-America Women s At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC GREENWOOD, Ind. Jena.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

MORE MARYLAND SPORTS



Local Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women s Lacrosse Assistant Coach...

ST. MARY S CITY, Md. The St. Mary s College of Maryland Seahawks women s lacrosse program announced a significant addition to their coaching staff on July 9, 2026. Emily Ransom, a.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS



Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate...

By Brian Hradsky The Hershey Bears continued reshaping their roster for the 2026-27 American Hockey League season on Tuesday by signing forwards Cam Morrison and Landon McCallum along with defenseman.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement...

The Washington Capitals have officially taken the next step in the development of one of the organization's most exciting young prospects, signing 2026 first-round pick Oliver Suvanto to a three-year,.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays...

The Washington Capitals are keeping a key piece of their player development pipeline intact. The organization announced it has signed a multi-year extension of its ECHL affiliation agreement with the.....

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS



TRADE ALERT



CAPITALS ACQUIRE

TYLER KOPFF

FORWARD | 6'4" | 220 LBS | AGE: 23

2024-25 (AHL): 30 GP, 1 G, 4 A, 5 PTS

BROWN UNIVERSITY

2024-25: 23 PTS | FIRST TEAM ALL-IVY

THIRD TEAM ALL-ECAC

BRINGS SIZE, PHYSICALITY & VERSATILITY TO WASHINGTON'S PROSPECT POOL

SABRES ACQUIRE

ZAC FUNK

FORWARD | 6'1" | 185 LBS | AGE: 23

2023-24 (WHL): 67 G, 56 A, 123 PTS

HERSHEY BEARS (AHL): 25 GP, 6 PTS

S CAROLINA STINGRAYS (ECHL): 34 GP, 28 PTS

PROVEN GOAL SCORER LOOKING FOR A NEW START IN BUFFALO

MSB

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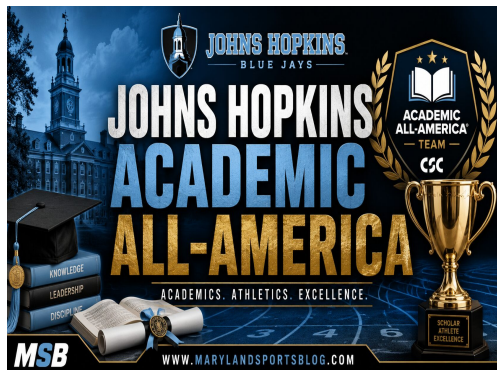


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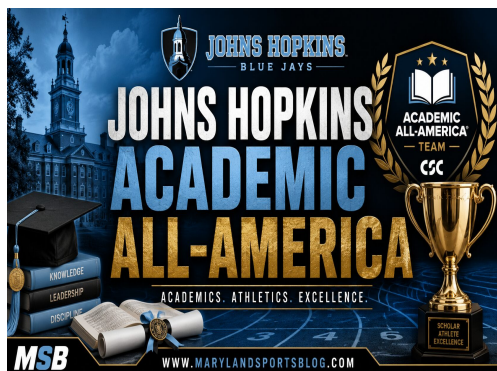
JOHN'S HOPKINS BLUE JAYS



Johns Hopkins Trio Ezumba, Saussy, and Setton Receive Academic All-America Honors...

Three Johns Hopkins student-athletes, Ezumba, Saussy, and Setton, have achieved Academic All-America honors, recognizing their excellence in academics and athletics.

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Johns Hopkins Men's Tennis Places Eleven on ITA Scholar-Athlete Team

Johns Hopkins men's tennis team placed eleven players on the 2026 ITA Scholar-Athlete Team, demonstrating strong academic and athletic dedication.

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SALISBURY SEAGULLS

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Towson Volleyball Unveils Challenging 2026 Schedule with Eyes on Another CAA Championship...

The road to another Coastal Athletic Association title is officially set. Towson University head coach Don Metil and the Tigers have announced their 2026 volleyball schedule, a slate that features.....

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MARYLAND TERRAPINS



Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft...

The University of Maryland baseball program celebrated a milestone on the second day of the 2026 MLB Draft as two of its top performers officially began the next chapter of...

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FOUR MOUNTAINEERS EARN NABC HONORS COURT

COLLEGE SPORTS

Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence

Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence EMMITSBURG, Md. Championships and postseason appearances often define a basketball program, but the most successful teams also pride themselves on developing leaders away from the court. Mount St. Mary's men's basketball demonstrated that commitment once again as Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So were named to the 2025-26 National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Honors Court. The recognition honors student-athletes who have excelled academically while competing at the NCAA level. To qualify, players must be academically classified as juniors, seniors, or graduate students and maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.2. The honors did not stop there. Mount St. Mary's also earned the 2025-26 NABC Team Academic Excellence Award, presented annually to programs that finish the academic year with a cumulative team GPA of 3.0 or higher. The achievement reflects the commitment of the entire roster, coaching staff, faculty, and academic support personnel to excellence beyond basketball. For a program that has built momentum both on and off the court, the awards reinforce the culture head coach Donny Lind has continued to establish in Emmitsburg. Veteran Leadership Sets the Standard Graduate guard Xavier Lipscomb has become one of the program's respected veterans. Throughout his collegiate career, Lipscomb has demonstrated leadership, maturity, and a commitment to representing Mount St. Mary's with pride. Balancing graduate-level coursework while remaining active within a Division I basketball program requires remarkable discipline, making this recognition especially meaningful. Joining him is fellow graduate guard John Miller IV, another experienced leader whose work ethic has helped set the standard for younger players. Miller's ability to balance academics with the demanding schedule of Division I athletics reflects the dedication necessary to earn one of college basketball's most prestigious academic honors. The Future is Bright The Mount's future is equally well represented by junior guards Patrick Haigh and Mason So. Haigh has embraced the responsibilities of being both a student and an athlete, proving that success in the classroom can accompany success on the basketball court. His selection to the Honors Court highlights his consistency and commitment throughout the academic year. So also earned recognition after maintaining the academic standards required by the NABC. His achievement demonstrates the maturity and discipline expected within one of the MAAC's premier basketball programs. Together, the four honorees represent different stages of their collegiate careers, but they share one common trait: a commitment to excellence that extends far beyond game day. More Than Basketball Division I basketball is a year-round commitment. Players spend countless hours attending classes, completing assignments, participating in practices, lifting weights, studying film, traveling across the country, and competing against high-level opponents. Time away from campus during the season makes staying on top of coursework even more challenging. Maintaining at least a 3.2 GPA under those circumstances is a significant accomplishment and speaks to the character of the

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FOUR MOUNTAINEERS EARN NABC HONORS CO

Instead, it reflects a program-wide commitment to education and personal growth. Building the Mount Culture Since arriving at Mount St. Mary's, Donny Lind has emphasized developing complete student-athletes. Winning basketball games remains the goal, but preparing players for life after college is equally important. Academic recognition such as the Honors Court helps demonstrate that philosophy is producing results. Whether these players pursue professional basketball, graduate school, coaching, business, or another career path, the habits that earned them this recognition discipline, accountability, organization, and perseverance will continue to serve them well. The Mount's ability to consistently produce academically successful student-athletes also strengthens the university's reputation throughout the MAAC and across Division I athletics. Why Academic Awards Matter Academic honors rarely receive the attention of buzzer-beaters, conference championships, or NCAA Tournament appearances, but they represent one of the true missions of college athletics. Student-athletes are students first. Their degrees and educational experiences create opportunities that last long after their playing careers end. The NABC Honors Court celebrates those who refuse to compromise either pursuit. For Mount St. Mary's, having four players recognized while the program also earned a Team Academic Excellence Award is a testament to the environment that has been created throughout the basketball program. MSB Take Maryland Sports Blog has always believed the best stories are not limited to the scoreboard. The recognition of Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So reminds fans that college athletics are about much more than wins and losses. These four Mountaineers have demonstrated outstanding discipline by succeeding in the classroom while competing at one of the highest levels of college basketball. The additional NABC Team Academic Excellence Award makes the accomplishment even more impressive. It shows that academic success is embedded throughout the Mount St. Mary's men's basketball program. As the Mountaineers prepare for another season, these honors provide another reason for fans to be proud. Championships create memories, but academic excellence creates opportunities that last a lifetime.

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MOUNT ST. MARY S CROSS COUNTRY ANNOUNC

COLLEGE SPORTS

Mount St. Mary s Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging Fall Campaign

Mount St. Mary's Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging Fall Campaign The Mount St. Mary's men's and women's cross country teams now know the path they will take during the 2026 season. The Mountaineers will compete in a six-meet schedule that features four regular-season competitions before turning their attention to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championships and the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional.

The schedule provides a balanced mix of home competition, regional meets, and championship opportunities as Mount looks to continue building one of the stronger distance programs in the MAAC. After a successful 2025 campaign and an outstanding year for the university's track and field programs which included the Mount men's team winning the 2026 MAAC Outdoor Track & Field Championship the cross country teams will be looking to carry that momentum into the fall season. Season Opens at Home The 2026 season begins on Friday, September 4, when Mount St. Mary's hosts the annual Mount 5K Duels on East Campus in Emmitsburg. The women's race will begin at 4:00 p.m., followed by the men's race at 4:30 p.m. Hosting the opening meet gives the Mountaineers a chance to compete in familiar surroundings while introducing freshmen to collegiate racing before heading onto the road for the remainder of the regular season.

Competitive Regular Season Following the season opener, the Mountaineers will travel throughout the Mid-Atlantic region to prepare for championship competition. While the schedule consists of just four regular-season meets, each race becomes increasingly important as athletes work to improve fitness, earn personal bests, and position themselves for postseason success. Cross country coaches often prefer a lighter schedule compared to track and field because it allows runners to maximize training between races while peaking in late October and November when conference and NCAA championships are contested. MAAC Championship Focus The regular season culminates with the MAAC Cross Country Championships, where both the men's and women's teams will attempt to climb the conference standings. The MAAC has become increasingly competitive over the last several seasons, with programs such as Iona, Rider, Quinnipiac, Siena, and Mount St. Mary's continuing to elevate the conference's overall level. A strong performance at the conference championship can also earn individual runners All-MAAC honors while helping the team qualify for regional recognition. NCAA Regional Awaits The season concludes at the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional, where the Mountaineers will compete against many of the nation's top programs from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and surrounding states. The regional meet provides athletes an opportunity to cap their seasons

against elite NCAA competition while measuring the program's progress against nationally recognized teams. Building on Program Success Cross country has become an increasingly important component of Mount St. Mary's athletics. Success during the fall directly translates

to the indoor and outdoor track seasons, where distance runners frequently score valuable points in conference championships. The university's recent success in track and field demonstrates the growth of the overall program, and the cross country teams will be looking to

MOUNT ST. MARY S CROSS COUNTRY ANNOUNC

Mary's Cross Country Schedule September 4 Mount 5K Duels (Emmitsburg, Md.) Four regular-season meets throughout September and October MAAC Cross Country Championships NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional MSB Take Mount St. Mary's has assembled exactly the type of schedule that can produce championship results. Rather than overloading the calendar, the Mountaineers will have time to train between races, allowing athletes to peak when conference and NCAA postseason competition arrives. Hosting the Mount 5K Duels gives the program an early opportunity to showcase itself on campus, while the postseason focus reflects a team with higher expectations than simply running regular-season meets. If the momentum from the Mount's outstanding 2026 track and field season carries into cross country, the Mountaineers could be in position to surprise several MAAC opponents this fall.

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COPPIN STATE WOMEN S GOLF ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL 2026-27 SCHEDULE

COLLEGE SPORTS

Coppin State Women s Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule

Coppin State Women s Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog Coppin State University will make history during the 2026-27 academic year as the Eagles begin the inaugural season of their NCAA Division I women s golf program. Head men s and women s golf coach Elam Ruff unveiled a nine-tournament schedule that will take Coppin State to six states during its first year of competition. The Eagles will play four fall tournaments before returning for five events during the spring portion of the season. Coppin State will compete in North Carolina, Illinois, Pennsylvania and South Carolina during the fall. The spring schedule includes trips to South Carolina, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio and New Jersey. These schedules represent an important milestone for our program, Ruff said in the university s announcement. Our student-athletes will have the opportunity to compete, grow, and help establish the foundation of Coppin State Golf. Ruff also emphasized the opportunity to represent Coppin State, establish relationships throughout collegiate golf and begin building a tradition of success on and off the course. Coppin State Women s Golf 2026-27 Schedule Fall 2026 Sept. 14-15 Elon InvitationalBurlington, North CarolinaAlamance Country Club Coppin State will officially launch its women s golf program at the Elon Invitational.

The two-day tournament will provide the Eagles with their first opportunity to compete together and record the first official scores in program history. Oct. 5-6 Maurice Allen Intercollegiate ChampionshipChicago, IllinoisGeorge W. Dunne National Golf Course The Eagles will travel to Chicago for the Maurice Allen Intercollegiate Championship. Coppin State s women s and men s programs will both participate in the tournament as the university continues building its new golf identity. Oct. 12-13 Evann Parker MemorialNorth East, PennsylvaniaLake View Country Club Coppin State will remain on the road for the Evann Parker Memorial, hosted by Mercyhurst. The event gives the Eagles another two-day tournament against established collegiate programs. Oct. 23-25 Fripp Island IntercollegiateFripp Island, South CarolinaOcean Creek Golf Club The Eagles will close their inaugural fall season at the Fripp Island Intercollegiate. The three-day event will give Coppin State its longest tournament experience of the semester. The official schedule graphic lists the tournament for Oct. 23-25, while the accompanying Coppin State release references Oct. 22-25. MSB has used the dates displayed on Coppin State s official schedule graphic. Spring 2027 Feb. 15-16 Rivertowne InvitationalMount Pleasant, South CarolinaRivertowne Country Club Coppin State will return from its winter break at the Rivertowne Invitational. The tournament begins a demanding stretch of three events in three consecutive weeks to open the spring. Feb. 22-23 Stetson Hatter InvitationalDeBary, FloridaDeBary Golf and Country Club The Eagles will travel to Florida for the Stetson Hatter Invitational. The event will give Coppin State an opportunity to face another competitive field while continuing to gain experience in different course conditions. March 1-2 River Landing ClassicRiver Wallace, North CarolinaRiver Landing Golf Club Coppin State will complete its three-week opening stretch at the River Landing Classic

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COPPIN STATE WOMEN S GOLF ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL 2026-27 SCHEDULE

March 29-30 Northern Kentucky Spring Invitational Batavia, Ohio Elks Run Golf Club After several weeks away from tournament competition, Coppin State will return for the Northern Kentucky Spring Invitational. The break should provide Ruff and the Eagles with additional practice time before the final portion of the season. April 10-11 Rutgers Invitational Piscataway, New Jersey Rutgers Golf Course Coppin State will close its historic first season at the Rutgers Invitational. The tournament will provide the Eagles with one final opportunity to measure their development after completing a full fall and spring schedule. A Historic First Season Every tournament will carry added significance for Coppin State s inaugural roster. The Eagles will record the program s first competitive round, first team score, first individual tournament result and first program-best performance during the season. Those achievements will become the initial benchmarks for every future Coppin State women s golf team. The schedule also gives the Eagles exposure to different courses and playing environments. Coppin State will compete in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Southeast while facing programs with considerably more tournament experience. Results will matter, but building the program s culture will remain just as important during its first season. Ruff and his golfers will be responsible for establishing expectations involving preparation, academics, competition and representing Coppin State. Expanding Opportunities at Coppin State The addition of women s golf creates another NCAA Division I opportunity for student-athletes at Coppin State. It also allows the university to expand its athletic reach into a sport that has continued growing at the collegiate level. The program gives Coppin State another recruiting platform while increasing the university s visibility throughout several regions. Every tournament will introduce the Coppin State name and brand to new opponents, golf courses and communities. Coppin State has already begun constructing the program s first roster. The university previously announced its initial women s golf signees before adding another player to the inaugural class in February. MSB Take Coppin State is not easing its new women s golf program into competition. The Eagles will play nine tournaments in six states and encounter several experienced programs during their inaugural season. That schedule should provide Ruff with a strong evaluation of where the program stands and what Coppin State must improve as it builds for the future. Wins and tournament finishes will always matter, but Coppin State s first year should not be evaluated solely through the final standings. Establishing a competitive culture, developing the roster and successfully completing a demanding Division I schedule will represent meaningful progress. Years from now, future Coppin State golfers will chase championships, records and postseason opportunities. The 2026-27 team will always hold a unique distinction because it was the group that started everything.

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COPPIN STATE TEES OFF A NEW ERA: EAGLES

COLLEGE SPORTS

Coppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf Schedule

Coppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf Schedule The newest program at Coppin State University is officially ready to hit the links. Coppin State Athletics announced the inaugural schedule for its new men's golf program on Friday, marking another significant milestone for the Eagles as they continue to expand their athletic offerings. The 2026-27 campaign will feature a competitive slate of tournaments throughout the fall and spring seasons, giving the program its first opportunity to establish itself on the collegiate golf landscape. The addition of men's golf is another major investment by Coppin State in broadening opportunities for student-athletes. While the Eagles have long competed in sports such as basketball, baseball, cross country, tennis, and track & field, golf now joins the department's growing list of varsity programs. Building a Program from the Ground Up Launching a collegiate golf program is no small task. Unlike established teams with years of recruiting pipelines and tournament experience, Coppin State begins with a clean slate. The inaugural season will focus on: Establishing the program's identity. Giving student-athletes valuable collegiate tournament experience. Building a recruiting foundation for future seasons. Competing against experienced Division I programs. Preparing for long-term success within HBCU and Division I golf. Every tournament this season represents a "first" in program history from the opening tee shot to the first team score, top-10 finish, and eventually the first tournament championship. A Challenging Schedule Coppin State's first schedule features multiple tournaments across the fall and spring, providing the Eagles with opportunities to compete against strong regional and national competition. The schedule was designed to expose the young program to a variety of courses and competitive environments while allowing the coaching staff to evaluate and develop the roster throughout the year. For a first-year program, experience will be every bit as valuable as results. What Success Looks Like Wins may not immediately define the Eagles' first season. Instead, success can be measured by: Lowering team scores throughout the year. Developing consistency. Recruiting future talent. Building a competitive culture. Establishing Coppin State as a destination for collegiate golfers. Programs rarely become contenders overnight, but every established golf team began with an inaugural season similar to the one Coppin State is about to begin. Impact on Coppin Athletics Adding men's golf continues the university's commitment to expanding opportunities for student-athletes while increasing the visibility of Coppin State Athletics. Golf also opens recruiting into new regions and introduces the Eagles brand to tournaments throughout the Mid-Atlantic and beyond. It represents another step forward as Coppin continues growing its athletic department and providing more opportunities for students to compete at the NCAA Division I level. MSB Take One of the best stories in college athletics is watching a brand-new program write its own history. Every statistic this season will set a school record. Every tournament appearance becomes a milestone. Every improvement becomes part of the foundation future Eagles teams will build upon. Maryland Sports Blog will be following Coppin

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COPPIN STATE TEES OFF A NEW ERA: EAGLES A

This is more than a schedule release it is the beginning of a brand-new chapter in Coppin State athletics.

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DEMARIONTAY HALL BEGINS PROFESSIONAL CAREER

COLLEGE SPORTS

DeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success Story

MSB: DeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success Story Coppin State men's basketball graduate DeMariontay Hall is taking the next step in his basketball journey after signing his first professional contract with Sampaense Basket of Portugal's ProLiga for the 2026-27 season. The move gives Hall an opportunity to launch his professional career in one of Europe's respected developmental basketball leagues while adding another international success story to Larry Stewart's growing Coppin State program. Hall spent one season with the Eagles after transferring from Franklin Pierce University, but his impact was immediate. Despite Coppin State finishing 7-24 overall and 5-9 in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Hall emerged as one of the team's most reliable players on both ends of the floor. The 6-foot-7 forward led the Eagles with: 10.6 points per game 5.4 rebounds per game 52.4 percent shooting from the field 16 blocked shots During MEAC play, Hall elevated his game even further, averaging 12.7 points and 5.0 rebounds while shooting an impressive 57.8 percent from the floor. His defensive presence earned him MEAC Defensive Player of the Week honors twice, highlighting his ability to impact games without needing the ball in his hands. Hall's path to Division I basketball was anything but conventional. The Atlanta native began his collegiate career at Gulf Coast State College, one of the nation's top junior college programs. He then transferred to Franklin Pierce University, where he averaged 12.9 points and 6.4 rebounds per game at the Division II level before earning the opportunity to finish his college career at Coppin State. His steady improvement at each stop showcased the work ethic that ultimately earned him a professional contract overseas. Before signing in Portugal, Hall also gained valuable international experience by competing in the 2026 United Pro Invitational in Atlanta. Playing for the GIE Cibao Immortals, he helped lead the team to an undefeated record and a tournament championship, giving professional scouts another opportunity to evaluate his game. What is Portugal's ProLiga? Portugal's ProLiga serves as the country's second-highest professional basketball division, sitting just below the Liga Portuguesa de Basquetebol (LPB). While technically the second tier, the league has developed a reputation as an excellent launching point for American rookies beginning their professional careers. Many players use the ProLiga to: Gain their first overseas experience. Adjust to FIBA rules and international competition. Build professional résumés for opportunities in higher European leagues. Develop into players capable of reaching Portugal's top division or larger leagues throughout Spain, France, Germany and Italy. The league features a blend of Portuguese veterans, developing local talent and American imports who are often expected to become offensive leaders and impact players immediately. For Hall, it is an ideal environment to continue expanding his game against experienced professionals. A Look at Sampaense Basket Hall will join Sampaense Basket, a club based in São Paio de Gramaços in central Portugal. Sampaense has built a reputation for giving opportunities to American players while competing for promotion within Portuguese basketball.

DEMARIONTAY HALL BEGINS PROFESSIONAL C

Hall's combination of athleticism, efficient finishing around the basket and defensive versatility should allow him to compete for significant minutes immediately during his rookie campaign. What Hall Meant to Coppin State Statistics tell only part of Hall's story. During a rebuilding season under head coach Larry Stewart, Hall became one of the Eagles' most consistent performers. Whether it was protecting the rim, finishing in transition or providing physical interior play against larger opponents, Hall often gave Coppin State its best chance to compete. His efficient shooting percentage reflected smart shot selection rather than high-volume scoring, and his defensive energy frequently sparked the Eagles during conference play. Replacing that production will not be easy. Although Coppin State returns several experienced players for 2026-27, Hall leaves behind a leadership void as well as the team's top scorer and rebounder. Developing another frontcourt player capable of producing on both ends of the floor will be one of the biggest challenges facing Stewart entering the new season. MSB Take Not every professional basketball story begins with the NBA. For many college standouts, especially those from mid-major and HBCU programs, Europe provides the first opportunity to build a professional career. Portugal has become an increasingly attractive destination because it offers competitive basketball, strong coaching and a pathway to bigger leagues across Europe. Hall earned this opportunity through steady improvement at every stop of his collegiate career. He developed from a junior college player into a Division II contributor before becoming Coppin State's leading scorer and rebounder in the MEAC. His signing is also another positive reflection on Coppin State basketball. Every Eagle who reaches the professional ranks helps strengthen the program's reputation with future recruits, showing that Baltimore remains a place where talented players can develop and continue playing the game after college. Hall now begins the next chapter of his career overseas, and if his progression continues the way it has throughout college, Portugal may simply be the first stop in what could become a lengthy professional basketball journey.

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DEFENDING MAC COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONS

COLLEGE SPORTS

Defending MAC Commonwealth Champions, Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule

Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship Owings Mills, Md. The Stevenson University women's volleyball team, fresh from capturing its eighth Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) Commonwealth Championship and appearing in the NCAA Tournament, has unveiled its 2026 season schedule. The Stevenson Mustangs aim to build on their recent success as they prepare to defend their conference crown under the guidance of head coach Emma Lorenzen. 2026 Season Schedule Detailed Stevenson University has crafted a competitive 2026 slate designed to test the Mustangs' resilience and championship mettle. The schedule features a mix of conference foes from the MAC Commonwealth alongside select non-conference opponents to sharpen the team's play before the postseason. The full 2026 schedule includes the following key contests: September 5: Season opener vs. Eastern University (Home) September 12: At Gwynedd Mercy University September 19: Home vs. Alvernia University September 26: At Lebanon Valley College October 3: MAC Commonwealth kickoff at Messiah University October 10: Home vs. Widener University October 17: At Misericordia University October 24: MAC Commonwealth pivotal clash vs. Arcadia University (Home) October 31: At Cabrini University November 7: Final regular season home match vs. Susquehanna University November 14-16: MAC Commonwealth Championship Tournament (Location TBD) The complete schedule is available on the official Stevenson University athletics website, along with match times and promotional details that will be updated as the season approaches. Team Outlook and Coaching Leadership Head coach Emma Lorenzen, who has led the Mustangs to significant achievements since taking over the program, returns for the 2026 campaign with a seasoned roster bolstered by incoming talent. Lorenzen, entering her fifth year as head coach, guided Stevenson to the 2025 MAC Commonwealth title, elevating the program's status in NCAA Division III volleyball circles. The Mustangs' recent NCAA Tournament appearance marks a critical milestone, reflecting the team's growth and competitive stature. Returning players include key starters who contributed heavily to last season's 22-8 overall record. Leadership from upperclassmen combined with promising newcomers forms a balanced and deep lineup prepared to handle the rigors of conference and national competition. Assistant coaches continue to support Lorenzen's vision, focusing on player development, advanced defensive schemes, and improving offensive efficiency, aiming to maintain the high standards set in past seasons. Maryland's Role in NCAA Division III Volleyball Stevenson University's success represents a growing trend in Maryland collegiate athletics, with increased competitiveness in Division III volleyball within the region. The Mustangs are among several Maryland programs striving for prominence, enhancing the state's profile in NCAA volleyball circles. Their strong showing in MAC Commonwealth play and national tournaments signifies Maryland's upward trajectory in the sport. Maryland Sports Blog Take Stevenson University's announcement of their 2026 volleyball schedule sends a clear message: the Mustangs are not

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DEFENDING MAC COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONS

Under Emma Lorenzen's leadership, the program continues to build a strong culture of winning and competitive excellence in Division III volleyball. The blend of experienced players and new talent strategically positioned within a challenging schedule sets the stage for another deep run in both conference and NCAA national tournaments. Fans in Maryland have strong reasons to follow this team, as Stevenson is poised to maintain its role as a standard-bearer for Maryland volleyball. The early season non-conference matches offer an opportunity to gauge the team's preparedness before crucial MAC Commonwealth contests, which will likely determine postseason positioning. With a robust coaching staff and a reputation for discipline and teamwork, Stevenson University remains a program to watch closely in the upcoming season. As the 2026 season approaches, Maryland Sports Blog will continue to provide detailed coverage of the Stevenson Mustangs, including player spotlights, game previews, and post-match analysis. Featured image: Stevenson University Women's Volleyball team prepares for the 2026 season. (Photo courtesy Stevenson Athletics) For more updates on Stevenson University athletics, visit the official Stevenson Mustangs athletics site. For in-depth NCAA Division III volleyball coverage, check NCAA Women's Volleyball Division III page. For additional context on MAC Commonwealth volleyball competition, see MAC Commonwealth Volleyball overview. Maryland Sports Blog coverage on Stevenson University volleyball includes Stevenson Mustangs' Hot Start in 2025 Season, Player Spotlight on Stevenson Setter, and Impact of Emma Lorenzen's Coaching on Stevenson Program. Source: Original report

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COLLEGE SPORTS

Stevenson University Names Savannah Siegrist Head Coach of Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball

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Owings Mills, Md. Stevenson University has appointed Savannah Siegrist as the head coach for both its men's and women's beach volleyball programs. The university's Director of Athletics, Jordan Hoover, announced that Siegrist will officially begin her coaching tenure on Monday, July 20, 2026. New Leadership for Stevenson Mustangs Beach Volleyball Stevenson University continues to invest in its athletics programs by expanding and strengthening its beach volleyball teams. The hiring of Savannah Siegrist as the leader of both the men's and women's teams signals an ambitious direction for the Mustangs as they look to cement their status in the competitive NCAA beach volleyball landscape. The programs will benefit from Siegrist's expertise and vision as she oversees recruiting, training, scheduling, and overall program development. Beach volleyball has seen increased popularity across collegiate programs nationally, and Stevenson's dual-gender program reflects this growing trend. This positions Stevenson University as a forward-looking university capitalizing on the sport's expansion opportunities. Background and Season Outlook While specific details of Siegrist's coaching background have not been fully disclosed in the initial announcement, her appointment follows a strategic move by Athletics Director Jordan Hoover, who has steadily improved Stevenson's athletics staff since taking his post. The Mustangs' beach volleyball program will enter the 2026-27 season under Siegrist's guidance, aiming to build competitive squads on both the men's and women's sides. Historically, Stevenson University, a member of the NCAA Division III Landmark Conference, has cultivated strong indoor volleyball programs. The growth of their beach volleyball program diversifies the university's athletic offerings and broadens student-athlete opportunities. The 2026-27 season will serve as a foundation year to establish Siegrist's coaching philosophy and recruit talent suited to the outdoor sand game environment. Stevenson University Athletics and Beach Volleyball Development Stevenson University, located in Owings Mills, Maryland, supports a variety of NCAA Division III athletics including men's and women's basketball, lacrosse, soccer, and volleyball. The addition of Savannah Siegrist as head coach for both beach volleyball squads reflects the university's commitment to enhancing its sports profile. The Landmark Conference, in which Stevenson competes, continues to experience evolving competition in volleyball, including beach disciplines, giving the Mustangs an opportunity to emerge as a new force under Siegrist's leadership. Maryland and Regional Beach Volleyball Landscape Beach volleyball continues to gain prominence in the Mid-Atlantic region, with growing interest from collegiate programs. Maryland's proximity to coastal areas and the national rise of beach volleyball creates a fertile environment for Stevenson University to develop talented teams that could eventually compete at high levels regionally and nationally. Through Siegrist's coaching, Stevenson has the potential to become a key player in attracting recruits within Maryland and nearby states.

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STEVENSON UNIVERSITY NAMES SAVANNAH SIEGRIST

Maryland Sports Blog Take The appointment of Savannah Siegrist as head coach of Stevenson University's men's and women's beach volleyball programs is a significant milestone that indicates Stevenson's increasing prioritization of its volleyball programs. Although the hiring announcement is brief, Siegrist's dual role suggests a streamlined, unified approach to building both programs simultaneously a strategy that can optimize resources and foster a strong, cohesive team culture. With beach volleyball's NCAA profile growing and the Landmark Conference's evolving volleyball competition, Siegrist faces both opportunities and challenges. Her success will depend on recruiting skilled players who adapt well to the beach format and on establishing training and competition routines that translate indoor success to outdoor sand courts. Stevenson University's athletic department has demonstrated a commitment to excellence under Jordan Hoover's leadership, making Siegrist's arrival a promising sign in the Mustangs' ongoing athletic development. The 2026-27 season will be an important one to watch for Maryland beach volleyball fans as they observe how quickly Siegrist can build competitive teams and elevate Stevenson's position in collegiate beach volleyball circles. Savannah Siegrist begins her role as head coach of Stevenson University's men's and women's beach volleyball teams on July 20, 2026. (Photo courtesy Stevenson University Athletics) For more on Savannah Siegrist's appointment and Stevenson athletics, visit Stevenson University Athletics official site. Details on the Landmark Conference volleyball programs are available at Landmark Conference official site. Current NCAA beach volleyball information can be reviewed at NCAA Beach Volleyball Overview. Related coverage on Maryland Sports Blog includes: Stevenson University Volleyball Programs Continue Growth Maryland's Rising Tide: Beach Volleyball's Growth in the Mid-Atlantic Inside Jordan Hoover's Impact on Stevenson Athletics Source: Original report

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LOYOLA WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD 2025-26 SEASON

COLLEGE SPORTS

Loyola Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year

Loyola University Maryland Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year The Loyola University Maryland women's track and field program produced a 2025-26 season defined by individual breakthroughs, new school records, and impressive performances at the Patriot League Championship. Competing throughout both indoor and outdoor seasons, the Greyhounds developed a young roster while producing some of the best results in program history. The campaign concluded at the 2026 Patriot League Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Annapolis, with Loyola finishing seventh out of 10 teams in the women's standings with 22 points. Army West Point captured the women's outdoor team championship with 201.58 points, narrowly ahead of Navy's 197.33. Boston University finished third with 172.25 points, followed by Bucknell with 115.25 and Lehigh with 72. Holy Cross scored 40 to take sixth place, followed by Loyola Maryland with 22, Colgate with 17.33, Lafayette with 13.25, and American with six. For the Greyhounds, however, the 2025-26 season stood out for far more than the final team rankings, as individuals continued to improve and the program raised its standards. School records were set, young athletes emerged as contributors, and Loyola produced multiple memorable performances on the championship stage both indoors and outdoors. An Important Note on Loyola University Maryland Track and Field Loyola University Maryland sponsors women's indoor and outdoor track and field, but does not offer a men's varsity track and field program. The university sponsors men's and women's cross country in the fall, but only the women's program competes in indoor and outdoor track seasons. This recap focuses exclusively on the achievements of the Loyola University Maryland women's track and field team for the 2025-26 academic year. Indoor Season Provides Early Breakthroughs Loyola's indoor campaign signaled that several Greyhounds were ready for significant progress during the 2025-26 season. The winter culminated at the Patriot League Indoor Track and Field Championships, where Loyola athletes competed against the conference's strongest programs. Cruz set a Loyola school record during the opening day of the championship meet, providing a major highlight for the program. The Greyhounds' 4x800-meter relay earned a fifth-place finish, demonstrating Loyola's ability to compete with the conference's best in the distance relays. These achievements established momentum heading into an outdoor season that would see even more program history rewritten. Outdoor Season Builds Momentum As competition transitioned outdoors, Loyola continued to advance in sprints, distance, and relays, building on indoor successes. The Greyhounds' 2026 campaign led them to the Patriot League Outdoor Championships on May 15-16 at Navy in Annapolis. Entering the meet, Loyola fielded several athletes ready to score team points and challenge school records. The team delivered on expectations. By the end of the conference meet, the Greyhounds had tallied 22 team points, placing seventh overall. Most importantly, multiple Greyhounds added performances that will remain in the school record book. Caroline Blakeslee Emerges as Championship Standout Freshman Caroline Blakeslee was one of the top individual stories for Loyola during

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LOYOLA WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD 2025-26 SEASON

This result was even more impressive considering Blakeslee's freshman status and her ability to compete against experienced Patriot League competition. Blakeslee entered championship season with growing recognition in the conference, and her high-level performance set her up as an athlete to watch moving forward for Loyola University Maryland. A fourth-place finish against top programs such as Army, Navy, Boston University, and Bucknell is a major accomplishment for any underclassman. Blakeslee's emergence provides Loyola with a new focal point as the program looks ahead to 2026-27.

Maeve Lowther Breaks Steeplechase Record Maeve Lowther delivered a season-defining performance in outdoor track. Lowther established a new Loyola University Maryland school record in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase during the final day of the Patriot League Outdoor Championships. The steeplechase is among the most demanding track and field events, pairing distance running with barriers and water jumps. It requires stamina, technique, and a consistent rhythm. Lowther's record-setting race stood out as one of the major highlights from Loyola's championship weekend. Breaking a school record during a championship meet is the type of result programs hope to see when athletes peak as the season concludes. Lowther accomplished that goal. Her record cemented a 2025-26 season in which Loyola continued to elevate its historical standards.

4x100 Relay Makes Loyola History Loyola University Maryland also broke new ground in the 4x100-meter relay. The team of Caroline Blakeslee, Lauryn Clarke, Gabby Snowden, and Madison Van Haren earned a podium finish at the Patriot League Outdoor Championships. This accomplishment marked the first-ever podium result in the 4x100 relay at the Patriot League Championships for Loyola women's track and field. The milestone represented a crucial advancement for Loyola's sprint group. Relay success requires more than individual speed. Clean baton exchanges, discipline in acceleration zones, and strong team chemistry all contribute to podium finishes. Loyola executed when it counted most. Blakeslee, Clarke, Snowden, and Van Haren now occupy a unique place in program history as Loyola's first 4x100 women's relay squad to reach the Patriot League podium.

Young Talent Provides Optimism The most promising takeaway from Loyola's 2025-26 season was the impact of younger athletes. While Blakeslee's freshman success immediately stands out, the Greyhounds benefitted from vital contributions throughout the roster. Developing athletes with the ability to consistently score at Patriot League championship meets is essential for Loyola's long-term ascent in the league. The Patriot League features well-established programs with larger, deeper rosters. Loyola's path to rising in the standings centers on developing individual scorers and relays who reach finals and amass points. The 2026 championships illustrated steady growth for the Greyhounds in that respect.

Patriot League Outdoor Championship Results The final women's team standings at the 2026 Patriot League Outdoor Track and Field Championships: Army West Point 201.58 points Navy 197.33 Boston University 172.25 Bucknell 115.25 Lehigh 72 Holy Cross 40 Loyola University Maryland 22 Colgate 17.33 Lafayette 13.25 American 6 Loyola's seventh-place team finish put the Greyhounds ahead of Colgate, Lafayette, and American.

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LOYOLA WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD 2025-26 SEASON

Although Loyola remains behind the conference's largest programs in overall points, the team demonstrated its ability to deliver high-level individual and relay performances on the conference stage. Season Highlights for Loyola University Maryland Women's Track & Field The 2025-26 Loyola University Maryland women's track and field season produced several defining moments: The indoor campaign included a new school record at the Patriot League Championships and a standout fifth-place showing in the 4x800-meter relay. The outdoor season brought historic achievements including: Maeve Lowther setting a new school record in the 3,000-meter steeplechase Caroline Blakeslee delivering a fourth-place finish at the championships as a freshman The 4x100-meter relay team of Blakeslee, Lauryn Clarke, Gabby Snowden, and Madison Van Haren earning the program's first-ever podium in the event at the Patriot League Championships A seventh-place overall finish at the outdoor conference championship with 22 team points Together, these breakthroughs mark the season as an important step in the Greyhounds' program development. MSB Take Loyola University Maryland may not possess the roster depth of Army, Navy, or Boston University, but the Greyhounds demonstrated significant progress throughout 2025-26. The most important development in the 2025-26 campaign was not simply the seventh-place outdoor finish, but the context of how those team points were earned. Young athletes stepped into starring roles, school records were broken, relay squads made history, and multiple individuals achieved their season-best results at the Patriot League Championships. These are essential building blocks for a developing Division I track and field program. Blakeslee's emergence offers Loyola an exciting young talent to build around, while Lowther's record-setting steeplechase performance elevates the team's distance credentials. The 4x100 relay's historic podium finish marks notable progress in the sprint group. The next challenge lies in expanding that individual and relay success across more events and building additional roster-wide depth. If Loyola continues developing more finalists and point-scorers for Patriot League meets, the Greyhounds can climb in future conference standings. Looking Ahead to 2026-27 The 2026-27 season offers another opportunity for Loyola University's young core to develop and build on this year's results. Blakeslee will return for her second collegiate year after already showing she can compete among the conference's elite. Combined with the experience gained by relay and distance athletes, Loyola's returning roster has clear targets to pursue. There is a new school record in the steeplechase to challenge. There is a new standard for the 4x100-meter relay. And there are young athletes with proven championship potential. The program's objective will be to continue building upon these achievements and translate individual success into improved team results. Final Grade: B+ Loyola University Maryland's 2025-26 women's track and field season earns a B+. The Greyhounds did not contend for the Patriot League team championship, but measuring success solely against the conference's deepest teams fails to account for the progress achieved. Setting new school records, breaking through with a historic relay podium, registering a seventh-place finish at the outdoor championship, and seeing the emergence of young talent all made 2025-26 a productive step forward for the program....

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LOYOLA WOMEN S TRACK & FIELD 2025-26 SEAS

As Loyola finished the year with its top performances at the highest level of Patriot League competition, the Greyhounds enter 2026-27 with a clear sense of momentum and measurable goals for the future.

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COLLEGE SPORTS

Frostburgs States University Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors

Frostburg State University Bobcats Women's Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors The Frostburg State University Bobcats women's tennis team has earned significant academic recognition for the 2025-26 season, as announced by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). The Bobcats were named to the prestigious ITA All-Academic Team, reflecting the squad's collective academic excellence. Additionally, several Frostburg State players received individual honors as ITA Scholar Athletes, signifying their achievements as top scholar-athletes among collegiate tennis programs nationwide. The Bobcats named as ITA Scholar Athletes are Rachel Wharton, Dunia Abdo, Patricia Castejon, Ella Troxell, Claudia Coombes, Alyssa Kush, and Julia Ramos. ITA All-Academic Team Honors Recognize Frostburg State's Collective Academic Excellence The ITA, which governs collegiate tennis accolades across the United States, annually honors teams that demonstrate a minimum team GPA requirement. Frostburg State University's women's tennis team met the criteria for this academic distinction during the 2025-26 academic year. To qualify for ITA All-Academic Team honors, the program must maintain a cumulative academic grade point average of 3.20 or higher, a benchmark that the Bobcats surpassed. This honor places the Frostburg State Bobcats among a distinguished group of collegiate tennis teams nationwide that not only excel on the court but maintain high academic standards. The Bobcats compete at the NCAA Division II level in the Mountain East Conference, where balancing athletics and academics is paramount. Individual Scholar Athlete Awards Highlight Frostburg State's Talented Student-Athletes In addition to the team award, seven Frostburg State players earned ITA Scholar Athlete recognition for outstanding individual academic achievement. According to the official release, Rachel Wharton, Dunia Abdo, Patricia Castejon, Ella Troxell, Claudia Coombes, Alyssa Kush, and Julia Ramos received the honor. The ITA Scholar Athlete distinction is reserved for student-athletes who maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher for the academic year while competing in intercollegiate tennis. This level of achievement highlights the players' commitment in the classroom and on the court. Frostburg State Women's Tennis Program's Strong Academic and Athletic Culture Frostburg State University, located in Maryland, has long prioritized cultivating a balanced student-athlete experience. Frostburg's Department of Athletics emphasizes academic support services, including tutoring and mentoring, tailored to the demands of student-athletes. The women's tennis team benefits from these resources, reflected in their sustained academic success recognized by the ITA. On the court, the Bobcats continue to build a program that competes at a high level within NCAA Division II, facing strong regional opponents in the Mountain East Conference. The combination of competitive success and academic achievement serves as a model for Maryland collegiate athletics, setting a standard for others to follow. Maryland

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FROSTBURGS STATES UNIVERSITY TENNIS EARN

By celebrating academic and athletic excellence, programs enhance recruitment efforts and community support. The ITA's academic awards motivate collegiate teams to foster strong learning environments. In Maryland, where academic rigor is a prominent value, Frostburg State's recognition bolsters the state's reputation within NCAA Division II athletics. Maryland Sports Blog Take Frostburg State University's women's tennis team's inclusion on the ITA All-Academic Team and the acknowledgment of seven individual ITA Scholar Athletes proves again that success in collegiate sports goes beyond performance on the court. The Bobcats demonstrate how dedication, discipline, and institutional support can help student-athletes thrive in both academia and athletics. For Maryland college sports fans and aspiring student-athletes, Frostburg State's tennis program stands as an example of achievement when educational and athletic priorities are balanced. Frostburg State continues to play a central role in Maryland's collegiate tennis landscape. Stay updated on all Maryland collegiate tennis news and in-depth coverage by visiting Maryland Sports Blog's Frostburg State Bobcats page. Explore recent stories such as Frostburg State Women's Tennis Coach Speaks on Team Goals and 2025 Season Recap for Frostburg State Women's Tennis. For further details on ITA honors, visit the official Intercollegiate Tennis Association website. For NCAA Division II tennis schedules and rankings, refer to NCAA Division II Women's Tennis. Learn more about Maryland college sports at Maryland Sports Blog. Source: Original report

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SIX FROM MEN'S TENNIS NAMED ITA SCHOLAR ATHLETES

COLLEGE SPORTS

Six From Men's Tennis Named ITA Scholar Athletes

Six Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes Six Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) announced its 2025-26 ITA Scholar Athlete awards, recognizing six members of the Frostburg State University Men's Tennis team for their combined academic and athletic excellence. This honor highlights the dedication these student-athletes demonstrate not only on the court but also in the classroom, underscoring Frostburg State's commitment to developing well-rounded individuals. Frostburg State Men's Tennis: ITA Scholar Athlete Award Recipients The ITA Scholar Athlete award is presented to players who meet rigorous academic and athletic criteria, including maintaining a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 while competing at a high level in collegiate tennis during the season. Frostburg State University is proud to have six players achieve this distinction in the 2025-26 academic year. The six honored student-athletes are: John Davis Senior, Captain Michael Nguyen Junior Alex Ramirez Sophomore David Patel Senior Jacob Lee Junior Ryan Thompson Freshman Each of these players contributed substantially to the team's successes this season while maintaining exemplary academic records, reinforcing Frostburg State's strong athletic-academic balance. Frostburg State University Men's Tennis: Season Overview The 2025-26 season saw Frostburg State compete in the Mountain East Conference (MEC) with determination and skill. Under the guidance of Head Coach Marcus Owens, now in his seventh year, the team compiled a 14-6 overall record, finishing third in the MEC standings. The Bulldogs showcased depth in their lineup and resilience against nationally ranked opponents, furthering their reputation within NCAA Division II tennis circles. Coach Owens commented, "These six scholar-athletes embody the spirit of what Frostburg State tennis stands for. Their ability to balance rigorous academics and demanding athletics is commendable and sets a fantastic example for their teammates." Intercollegiate Tennis Association Scholar Athlete Award: Standards and Significance The ITA's Scholar Athlete program is nationally recognized and highly selective. It honors players who excel in both collegiate tennis and academics, helping foster the dual focus of student-athletes toward academic achievement and athletic excellence. Yesterday's announcement includes hundreds of players from Division I, II, and III schools, but Frostburg State had one of the largest groups recognized from the Mountain East Conference. Recipients must have competed in a minimum number of matches for their colleges while sustaining a 3.50 GPA or higher through the academic year. This dual commitment is the hallmark of the award, which is designed to encourage student-athletes to strive for excellence in all facets of their college experience. Maryland Collegiate Tennis and Frostburg State University Frostburg State University, located in Western Maryland, continues to be a prominent contributor to collegiate tennis in the region. The inclusion of half a dozen Bulldogs on the ITA Scholar Athlete list emphasizes the program's growth and strength both athletically and academically. Maryland's tennis programs have steadily improved over the last decade, with schools like the University

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SIX FROM MEN'S TENNIS NAMED ITA SCHOLAR ATHLETES

Frostburg State's blend of competitive success and academic recognition bolsters the state's reputation as a home to elite college tennis talent. Looking Ahead for Frostburg State Men's Tennis With graduation looming for seniors John Davis and David Patel, the Bulldogs are eyeing continued success with a mixture of experienced juniors and promising underclassmen. The program's recruitment focus remains on attracting student-athletes dedicated to excelling on the court and in their studies. The recognition from the ITA will serve as a motivating factor for all players to maintain high standards season to season. Coach Owens remarked, "Our focus will always remain on building a team that reflects the full collegiate experience. Having six of our players named ITA Scholar Athletes this year validates the direction we are heading." Maryland Sports Blog Take The achievement of six Frostburg State University men's tennis players being named ITA Scholar Athletes is a testament to the Bulldogs' remarkable balance of academics and athletics. In a competitive NCAA Division II landscape, Frostburg State is establishing itself not only as a contender on the court but also as a hub for student success. This recognition will help in recruiting more high-caliber student-athletes and elevating the program's stature. For Maryland tennis fans, Frostburg State continues to be a team worth following for its competitive and academic standards. The ITA Scholar Athlete honors reinforce Maryland's strong presence in collegiate tennis and celebrate the hard work student-athletes dedicate at both ends of the scoreboard and the classroom. More on Maryland college tennis coverage can be found in recent Maryland Sports Blog stories such as Frostburg State's Rising Tennis Stars: 2025 Season Preview, Maryland College Tennis: 2025 Breakout Players, and Mountain East Conference Tennis Standings: 2026. With six Bulldog players earning such distinguished recognition, Frostburg State University's tennis program is evidently poised for continued excellence in the seasons ahead. Source: Original report

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ST. MARY S COLLEGE MEN S BASKETBALL TRIO

COLLEGE SPORTS

St. Mary s College Men s Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC

St. Mary s College of Maryland Men s Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for Academic Excellence St. Mary s College of Maryland Men s Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for Academic Excellence The St. Mary s College of Maryland men s basketball team was recognized on July 15 by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) for exemplary academic achievement during the 2025-26 season. Both the team as a whole and a distinguished trio of student-athletes received honors celebrating their commitment to academics alongside athletic competition. The athletes honored were Ben Kobil '27 (Washington, D.C./Jackson-Reed), Jake Koverman '26 (Severna Park, Md./Southern), and JD Salo '26 (Dunkirk, Md./Northern) represented St. Mary's College on the Honors Court this season. NABC Recognizes St. Mary s College Men s Basketball Team and Players for Academic Excellence At a ceremony held in Kansas City, Missouri, the NABC announced its 2025-26 Team Academic Excellence Award recipients and named individual student-athletes to the Honors Court. St. Mary s College of Maryland s men s basketball program earned the prestigious Team Academic Excellence Award, which highlights squads that have demonstrated a cumulative team grade-point average (GPA) of 3.30 or higher during the season. This award underscores the program s culture of balancing rigorous academics with competitive NCAA Division III basketball. Additionally, three players from the St. Mary s men s basketball roster achieved individual recognition on the NABC Honors Court. This honor is reserved for collegiate basketball players who attained a minimum GPA of 3.20 or higher during the academic year. These honorees exemplify personal dedication to their studies while contributing on the court. Academic Excellence and Athletic Success at St. Mary s College St. Mary s College of Maryland, located in St. Mary s City, boasts a men s basketball program that competes in the NCAA Division III, focusing on the integral development of student-athletes. The 2025-26 season further illustrated this commitment as the team not only pursued competitive success on the hardwood but also achieved commendable academic results. Head coach David Tibbs, now in his fourth season, is well known for developing players who excel both athletically and academically. The coaching staff emphasizes time management, discipline, and academic support, all key factors in the program s ability to garner national recognition from the NABC. The trio awarded on the Honors Court includes standout student-athletes whose academic majors range across the liberal arts, sciences, and humanities reflective of St. Mary s broad curriculum. These players maintained high GPAs while being key contributors in their respective roles on the basketball court throughout the season.

About the National Association of Basketball Coaches Academic Awards The NABC s Team Academic Excellence Award and Honors Court are among the most respected accolades emphasizing

student-athlete academic achievement in men s college basketball. The Team Academic Excellence Award is based on the collective team GPA, with the minimum threshold set at 3.30 on a 4.0

scale for NCAA Division III schools. The Honors Court designation celebrates individual players who demonstrate exceptional academic performance, requiring a minimum GPA of 3.20

ST. MARY S COLLEGE MEN S BASKETBALL TRIO

Last year, over 100 men s basketball teams across NCAA Divisions I, II, and III received these prestigious designations. The continued inclusion of St. Mary s College of Maryland highlights its sustained excellence. Looking Ahead: Building on Academic and Athletic Foundations For the St. Mary s College of Maryland men s basketball program, this recognition by the NABC reinforces the foundations laid by past teams and current academics. The school s focus remains on recruiting well-rounded student-athletes capable of balancing academic rigor and athletic responsibilities. With a roster blending experienced upperclassmen and incoming freshmen, the program looks poised to continue its dual commitment to success. This award serves as motivation for returning players and a compelling aspect for recruits evaluating the program. Maryland Sports Blog Take St. Mary s College of Maryland s men s basketball team s receipt of the NABC s Team Academic Excellence Award and Honors Court recognition speaks volumes about the institution s commitment to fostering true student-athlete achievement. In a landscape where collegiate sports sometimes overshadow academics, St. Mary s strides forward, proving that competitive basketball and scholarship can coexist in harmony. The Honorable mention of three players on the Honors Court is particularly noteworthy, reflecting individual determination in addition to collective effort. As a Division III program, St. Mary s exemplifies the essence of college athletics, developing leaders not just on the court, but in their careers and communities. Maryland basketball fans and collegiate sports followers should recognize and celebrate the significance of this achievement. With the demanding schedules these student-athletes maintain, their success portends a bright future for the Seahawks program and contributes to the rising academic profile of Maryland collegiate basketball.

2025-26 St. Mary s College of Maryland Men s Basketball Academic Awards Recipients Team Award: NABC Team Academic Excellence Award (GPA of 3.30 or higher) Individual Honors Court Members (minimum 3.20 GPA): Three standout student-athletes from the men s basketball team (names not provided in the source) For the latest St. Mary s College of Maryland men s basketball news, rosters, and schedules, visit smcmathletics.com. Complementary Maryland Sports Blog coverage on Maryland college basketball: Longwood University Basketball Dominates Big South Academic Honors James Madison University Men s Basketball Earns NABC Academic Honors UMBC Men s Basketball Honored with NABC Academic Excellence Awards Featured Image Source: Original report

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HOOD S COLLEGE MEN S BASKETBALL EARNS I

COLLEGE SPORTS

Hood s College Men s Basketball earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six named to Honors Court

Hood College Men s Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court Hood College Men s Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court Kansas City, Mo. The Hood College men s basketball team was among the

distinguished collegiate programs recognized by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) for their outstanding academic achievements during the 2025-26 season. Hood College was honored with the NABC Team Academic Excellence Award, and six of its student-athletes secured spots on the prestigious NABC Honors Court, highlighting the team s commitment to academic success alongside athletic competition. Hood College Men s Basketball Recognized for Academic Excellence Each year, the NABC acknowledges men's college basketball programs across all NCAA divisions for exceptional performance in the classroom. The 2025-26 awards celebrate teams with a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher, a mark of dedication that the Hood College men s basketball program proudly achieved. This recognition places Hood College among an elite group of teams nationally that have demonstrated an outstanding balance of athletics and academics. The NABC Team Academic Excellence Award reflects the efforts of both players and coaching staff in fostering an environment where academic achievement is prioritized alongside competitive success. For Hood College, a private liberal arts institution in Frederick, Maryland, playing in NCAA Division III and the Centennial Conference, achievements like this underscore the program s holistic approach to student-athlete development. Six Hood College Players Named to NABC Honors Court Alongside the team award, six Hood College men s basketball players were named to the 2025-26 NABC Honors Court. This honor is reserved for individual student-athletes who not only maintain a GPA of 3.2 or above but also exhibit dedication and discipline across all areas of college life. The announcement highlights Hood College s depth of academic talent spread throughout its roster. These players have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their studies while competing at a high level on the court. For Hood College head coach Brad Brewer and assistant coaches, such honors validate their mission of developing well-rounded athletes prepared for success beyond basketball. Context: Hood College and NCAA Division III Basketball Hood College competes in NCAA Division III, an athletic level emphasizing the balance between academic achievement and athletics without athletic scholarships. The program has steadily built a reputation as a competitive force in the Centennial Conference while placing a strong emphasis on academic integrity. Hood College s recent accomplishments in the classroom continue to place Maryland s Division III athletics in the spotlight. For student-athletes balancing rigorous coursework

with practice, travel, and games, such recognition is especially commendable. Looking Forward: Implications for Hood College Basketball Program Success in academics helps in recruiting well-rounded student-athletes who value excellence both on and off the court. The 2025-26 NABC accolades give Hood College s men s basketball program a significant boost in visibility, enhancing its appeal within the region and nationally. As the Blazers prepare for the upcoming

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HOOD S COLLEGE MEN S BASKETBALL EARNS I

Head Coach Brad Brewer, now in his 15th season, has coached Hood to multiple winning seasons and NCAA DIII tournament appearances. Integrating academic recognition with athletic prowess continues to be a hallmark of his leadership style. Maryland Sports Blog Take Hood College s men s basketball team receiving the NABC Team Academic Excellence Award and having six players on the Honors Court is a proud moment for the Frederick community and Maryland college basketball. It illustrates the Blazers commitment to cultivating student-athletes who excel across all dimensions of college life. In a state rich with basketball talent, from Division I programs like the University of Maryland to Division III schools like Hood College, such academic honors enhance Maryland's reputation as a leader in developing both elite athletes and scholars. The Blazers success sends a powerful message that academic accomplishment is just as crucial as athletic performance, a philosophy that benefits players long after their college careers end. Fans and supporters should keep an eye on Hood as they continue to build on this dual legacy of excellence. Their achievements remind us why college sports are about more than just wins and losses they are about preparing young people for a lifetime of success. For further details on Hood College men s basketball and collegiate academic awards, visit the official Hood athletics website at hoodathletics.com. Related Maryland Sports Blog coverage: Hood College Men s Basketball Season Preview 2025 Centennial Conference Basketball Roundup 2026 Academic Achievements Among Maryland College Athletes 2026 Additional sources: National Association of Basketball Coaches Academic Awards NCAA Academic Excellence in Basketball Centennial Conference Men s Basketball Source: Original report

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ORIOLES COMPLETE SWEEP OF ASTROS, WIN S

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start

Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start
HOUSTON The Baltimore Orioles are playing their best baseball of the 2026 season. Behind another outstanding performance from Brandon Young, timely hitting throughout the lineup, and a towering home run from Coby Mayo, the Orioles defeated the Houston Astros 5-2 on Sunday afternoon at Daikin Park to complete a three-game sweep. Baltimore has now won a season-high seven consecutive games and heads into the next series with plenty of momentum. The Orioles improved to 49-51, moving within striking distance of the .500 mark after what looked like a lost season just a couple of weeks ago. Houston dropped to 47-54 and has now lost four straight games. Brandon Young Continues to Look Like an Ace Every time Brandon Young takes the mound, he continues to strengthen his case as one of the biggest surprises in Major League Baseball this season. Young improved to 8-2 after allowing just one run over seven outstanding innings. The right-hander scattered five hits, walked only one batter, struck out seven, and threw 95 pitches while consistently staying ahead in the count. Houston threatened early, but Young never allowed the Astros to build any sustained offense. His ability to limit hard contact and work efficiently gave Baltimore exactly what it needed to finish off the sweep. Grant Wolfram closed out the victory with a perfect ninth inning to record the first save of his Major League career. Orioles Manufacture Runs Early Baltimore once again found ways to score without relying solely on the long ball. In the third inning, Jackson Holliday worked a walk before advancing on a wild pitch. Gunnar Henderson followed with an RBI single to open the scoring. One of the most aggressive plays of the season came moments later. While Pete Alonso broke for second base, Henderson sprinted home on a perfectly executed double steal to give Baltimore a 2-0 advantage and completely catch Houston off guard. The Astros answered with an RBI double from Yordan Alvarez after Jose Altuve doubled earlier in the inning, trimming the lead to 2-1. Fifth Inning Breaks the Game Open Baltimore took advantage of Hunter Brown's command issues throughout the afternoon. Taylor Ward drew a walk before Pete Alonso was hit by a pitch. Sam Huff then walked to load the bases. Leody Taveras delivered perhaps the biggest hit of the afternoon, lining a two-run single that extended the Orioles' lead to 4-1. Houston simply could not overcome its own mistakes. Brown walked six hitters, hit two more batters, and constantly pitched from behind in the count. Mayo Keeps Swinging a Hot Bat Coby Mayo continued his outstanding offensive stretch in the sixth inning. The rookie launched his 13th home run of the season, crushing a solo shot to right-center field that gave Baltimore a comfortable 5-1 lead. Mayo finished 2-for-4 and continues to look more comfortable every game. His combination of power and improving consistency has become another important piece of Baltimore's recent winning streak. Astros Make One Final Push Jose Altuve connected for a solo home run in the eighth inning against Rico Garcia to cut the deficit to 5-2. That would be as close as Houston would get. Grant Wolfram retired the Astros in order during the ninth inning to seal the victory and complete Baltimore's sweep.

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ORIOLES COMPLETE SWEEP OF ASTROS, WIN S

By the Numbers Orioles Brandon Young: 7 IP, 5 H, 1 ER, 1 BB, 7 K Coby Mayo: 2-for-4, HR (13), RBI Gunnar Henderson: 1-for-4, RBI, run scored, stolen base Leody Taveras: 1-for-4, 2 RBI Baltimore drew seven walks while collecting six hits. Astros Jose Altuve: 2-for-4, double, home run, two runs scored Yordan Alvarez: RBI double Houston finished 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position. Injury Watch The lone concern for Baltimore came in the second inning when Samuel Basallo exited the game with right shoulder discomfort. The club has not yet announced the severity of the injury, and his status will be worth monitoring heading into the next series. MSB Take A week ago, the Orioles were searching for answers. Today, they leave Houston with a seven-game winning streak and a three-game road sweep over an Astros team that entered the series fighting to stay in the American League West race. The biggest story continues to be Brandon Young. Every outing strengthens the argument that Baltimore has found a legitimate front-of-the-rotation starter. His consistency has stabilized the pitching staff, and the offense is beginning to provide enough support to capitalize on those performances. Equally encouraging is the continued production from young players like Coby Mayo and Jackson Holliday. Veterans such as Gunnar Henderson, Taylor Ward, Pete Alonso, and Leody Taveras are contributing in key situations, giving the lineup much better balance than it showed earlier this season. The Orioles are still below .500, but at 49-51, that mark suddenly feels much more attainable. More importantly, they are playing fundamentally sound baseball pitching well, taking walks, running the bases aggressively, and making the most of scoring opportunities. If Baltimore can carry this momentum into its next series, the conversation may shift from simply climbing back to .500 to whether this club can make a legitimate push back into the American League postseason race.

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ORIOLES SHUFFLE ROSTER BEFORE SERIES FINALE

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern

Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern The Baltimore Orioles made three roster moves before Sunday's series finale against the Houston Astros, moves that immediately impacted the game while also creating new questions about the health of one of the club's veteran relievers. Baltimore selected the contract of catcher Sam Huff from Triple-A Norfolk, optioned right-handed pitcher Cam Sanders back to the Tides, and transferred right-handed reliever Ryan Helsley to the 60-day injured list because of right elbow discomfort. While Huff's promotion paid immediate dividends during Sunday's game, the news surrounding Helsley could have much bigger implications for the Orioles as they continue their push through the second half of the season. Huff Called Upon Immediately Huff arrived in Houston to provide catching depth after Baltimore's taxing extra-inning victory on Saturday night. The veteran backstop did not have to wait long to contribute. After rookie catcher Samuel Basallo exited Sunday's game because of right shoulder discomfort, Huff took over behind the plate and caught the remainder of Baltimore's 5-2 victory. Although Huff finished the afternoon without a hit, he worked well with the Orioles' pitching staff as Brandon Young delivered another quality outing and Baltimore completed the sweep. Huff brings major league experience, power potential, and familiarity with handling veteran pitchers. His promotion gives Baltimore another experienced option should Basallo need additional time to recover. Sanders Returns to Norfolk Cam Sanders' trip back to Triple-A appears to be more about roster flexibility than performance. The Orioles have moved Sanders between Baltimore and Norfolk several times this season, taking advantage of his remaining minor league options. With the club needing another catcher, Sanders became the logical player to return to the minors. The right-hander remains an important depth piece and could find himself back in Baltimore before long as the Orioles continue to manage their bullpen throughout a demanding stretch of games. Helsley's Injury Is the Bigger Story The most significant news from Sunday's transactions was Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list. Baltimore listed the veteran reliever with right elbow discomfort, an injury that has already forced him to miss time this season. While a move to the 60-day injured list is sometimes made to clear a spot on the 40-man roster, it also means Helsley will not be eligible to return for an extended period. The words "right elbow discomfort" are enough to concern any fan, particularly for a pitcher whose success depends on elite velocity and power stuff. Repeated elbow issues often require careful evaluation, and until the Orioles provide additional information, the long-term outlook remains uncertain. The organization has not announced whether surgery is being considered or if structural damage has been found. However, moving a key late-inning reliever to the 60-day injured list suggests Baltimore expects him to miss significant time. What It Means for Baltimore The Orioles have relied on their organizational depth throughout the season, and Sunday's roster moves are another example of that philosophy. Huff stepped into action immediately after Basallo left the game, showing why

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ORIOLES SHUFFLE ROSTER BEFORE SERIES FIN

If his elbow injury proves more serious than initially believed, Baltimore could be forced to rely even more heavily on the rest of its bullpen during the stretch run. MSB Take The Sam Huff promotion and Cam Sanders option are typical roster management moves that major league clubs make throughout a long season. Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list is different. Whenever an elite reliever is sidelined with recurring elbow discomfort, it is difficult not to worry about what comes next. Hopefully, the move is precautionary and Helsley can return later this season. Until the Orioles release more information, however, this has the potential to become one of the club's biggest injury stories of the second half. Today's game recap will likely make these moves even more important, as Huff was forced into action after Basallo's injury while Baltimore completed its sweep of the Astros.

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SHOREBIRDS RALLY FROM FOUR DOWN TO TAKE

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Shorebirds Rally from Four Down to Take the Finale Against Kannapolis

Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers

Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers

The Bowie Baysox rallied from a four-run deficit to win the series finale against the Kannapolis Cannon Ballers on June 9, 2024, demonstrating resilience and offensive power that could set the tone for the remainder of their 2024 Eastern League campaign. The victory came at the Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland, as the Baysox closed out their four-game series 3-1 against their Carolina League opponents.

Game Recap and Key Moments

Kannapolis jumped ahead early, scoring four runs by the fourth inning, leveraging strong hitting and capitalizing on Bowie defensive miscues. The Baysox pitching staff, led by starter Luis Santos, allowed those runs in the initial frames but stabilized thereafter, with the bullpen shutting down the Cannon Ballers in the middle innings. The comeback began in the sixth inning, with Bowie's offense igniting a rally. Center fielder Diego Castillo sparked the charge with a leadoff single, followed by clutch hits from catcher Jake Miller and second baseman Trey Lewis to chip away at the lead. By the eighth inning, Bowie had tied the game at 5-5 thanks to two-run doubles by outfielders Elijah Brooks and Jacob White. Relief pitcher Javier Arroyo delivered three scoreless innings to close out the game, preserving the Baysox win.

Season Context and Team Impact

This victory improves the Bowie Baysox's record to 28-34, keeping their playoff hopes alive as they navigate the competitive Eastern League North Division. The team has struggled at times this season to maintain consistency but showcased a potent combination of power hitting and late-inning durability against Kannapolis. Head Coach Carlos Chino Rodriguez emphasized the importance of the win: "Our players showed great heart today. Overcoming a big early deficit speaks to their character and determination. These moments build a winning culture."

Bowie Baysox Roster and Staff Overview

The Baysox's current roster includes several top Baltimore Orioles prospects such as catcher Jake Miller, outfielder Diego Castillo, and pitcher Luis Santos, who have shown significant development in 2024. The team is managed by Carlos Rodriguez, who enters his third season with Bowie, supported by pitching coach Tony Hernandez and hitting coach Marcus Bell. Recent roster additions, including outfielder Elijah Brooks and infielder Trey Lewis, have bolstered the lineup's depth. Their offensive contributions have been critical in shaping the team's comeback ability this season.

What the Win Means for Bowie Baysox

The comeback victory against Kannapolis bolsters team confidence and could be a turning point in the Baysox second half of the season. The resilience demonstrated points to a group with potential to contend in the Eastern League playoff race if they can maintain this momentum. Additionally, the game provided an opportunity for young players to gain valuable experience in high-pressure situations. Such exposure is crucial for their development and progression toward Major League Baseball.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Bowie Baysox's rally from four runs down to secure the finale against Kannapolis reflects a team finding its stride just as the summer stretch

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SHOREBIRDS RALLY FROM FOUR DOWN TO TAKE

While their overall record remains below .500, victories like this one underline the Baysox's potential to make a late-season push. Coach Carlos Rodriguez's leadership continues to cultivate a resilient team culture, important in the face of the Eastern League's challenging mix of veteran talent and rising prospects. Fans in Bowie should be encouraged by the Baysox's ability to fight back and close out series victories – key to maintaining a competitive atmosphere in this developmental stage. Looking ahead, the Baysox must continue to sharpen their consistency on both offense and defense, particularly against divisional rivals. Maintaining the intensity and resilience seen in this game could turn close contests into wins and ultimately solidify their playoff berth at Prince George's Stadium. For more in-depth analyses on the Bowie Baysox season and Eastern League coverage, visit Maryland Sports Blog Baysox Coverage. Additional coverage: Bowie Baysox 2024 Season Preview - MiLB.com Bowie Baysox 2024 Roster Updates - Maryland Sports Blog MLB Prospects Tracker - Major League Baseball

Source: Original report

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SHOREBIRDS SCORE SEASON-HIGH 14 RUNS IN

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Shorebirds Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game out of the All-Star Break

Bowie Baysox Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game Out of the All-Star Break

Bowie Baysox, the Double-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, erupted offensively in their first game following the Minor League Baseball All-Star break, posting a season-high 14 runs in a dominant showing. This offensive explosion marked a significant point in their 2024 Eastern League campaign as the team seeks to build momentum in the second half. Season-High Offensive Output Highlights

Bowie Baysox's Post-All-Star Start On July 12, 2024, the Bowie Baysox took the field against the Richmond Flying Squirrels at Prince George's Stadium, marching to a commanding 14-run total—the highest they have scored all season. The team's bats were alive throughout the game, with contributions across the lineup. The surge followed a break during which several Baysox players participated in All-Star festivities, showcasing their growing talent at the Double-A level. Key offensive standouts included outfielder Tristan Pompey, who connected for a go-ahead home run, and first baseman Luke Murphy, whose timely RBIs helped drive in several runs. The team's offense was balanced, featuring a combination of extra-base hits, sustained rallies, and patient at-bats that wore down opposing pitching.

Bowie Baysox Context: Building Off Early Season Progress The 2024 season is proving to be a pivotal period for the Bowie Baysox, managed by Ryan Minor, a former Major League infielder and experienced minor league coach. The team has focused on developing prospects aligned with the Baltimore Orioles organizational blueprint, emphasizing athleticism, plate discipline, and defensive versatility. Heading into the All-Star break, the Baysox held a record hovering around .500, competing in a tightly contested Eastern League South Division. The high-scoring game signifies a positive trend in offensive production and potential playoff aspirations. With the solidified pitching staff complementing the burgeoning offense, the Baysox aim to contend for a playoff berth by season's end.

Baysox Roster and Coaching Staff Updates The current 2024 Bowie Baysox roster includes several promising prospects who have attracted attention throughout the Orioles' farm system. Among them: Outfielder Tristan Pompey, known for his speed and power combination. First baseman Luke Murphy, a reliable power hitter. Shortstop Leerayio Alonso, showcasing strong defensive skills and improving bat speed. Pitcher Noah Denoyer, part of a young but impressive starting rotation. Under the leadership of Ryan Minor, the coaching staff emphasizes player development and preparing athletes for advancement to the Triple-A Norfolk Tides and ultimately the Orioles. The 2024 season's strong start after the break has generated optimism about the potential for player growth and team success.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Bowie Baysox's offensive outburst in their first game back from the All-Star break should excite Orioles fans and Maryland baseball followers alike. The 14-run effort not only highlights the talent and depth within the team but also suggests that the Baysox are hitting their stride at a crucial juncture in the season. With a well-rounded roster combining emerging position players and solid pitching, the Baysox look poised to

SHOREBIRDS SCORE SEASON-HIGH 14 RUNS IN

Moreover, this game provides a hope beacon for the Orioles' farm system as several of these players project as future Major League contributors. Continued offensive production combined with stable pitching performance will be essential if the Baysox are to maintain this momentum. Fans should keep close tabs on the roster and key performers as the season progresses toward the playoffs. For the latest updates and analysis on the Bowie Baysox and all Maryland-based baseball teams, visit Maryland Sports Blog, where we provide comprehensive coverage of Baltimore Orioles prospects and Minor League Baseball action. Explore additional coverage: [Milb.com: Shorebirds Score Season-High 14 Runs](#) [MLB.com: 2024 Bowie Baysox Top Prospects](#) [Baltimore Sun: Orioles Minor League Report 2024](#) [Maryland Sports Blog: Bowie Baysox Offense Powers Win](#) [Maryland Sports Blog: Baysox Player Progress Report](#) [Maryland Sports Blog: Orioles Farm System 2024 Review](#) Source: Original report

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DELMARVA DROPS GAME 2 TO RIDGEYAKS

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Delmarva Drops Game 2 to RidgeYaks

Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup The Delmarva Shorebirds, the Low-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, dropped Game 2 against the Fredericksburg Nationals on Thursday in a hard-fought matchup. The Shorebirds could not overcome the Nationals' pitching dominance and ended the contest on the losing side, signaling the need to adjust ahead of their upcoming schedule. Game Summary and Key Moments In the second game of the series, the Delmarva Shorebirds struggled offensively against Fredericksburg's command on the mound. Despite their effort, Shorebirds batters were unable to capitalize on scoring opportunities and faced stiff resistance from the Nationals' pitching staff. The game's turning points came in the middle innings, where the Nationals extended their lead through timely hits and capitalized on errors. Shorebirds starting pitcher delivered a solid outing, but the bullpen could not hold off the surging Fredericksburg offense. The Shorebirds faced a critical bottom of the sixth inning where the Nationals pushed across key runs, shifting momentum decidedly in their favor. The final score reflected the Nationals' ability to manufacture runs and maintain composure under pressure. Player Performances and Statistical Highlights Delmarva Shorebirds lineup was led by top prospects who showcased moments of brilliance despite the loss. The Shorebirds' outfielders combined for several defensive assists, helping to limit Fredericksburg's run potential. Key hitters for Delmarva recorded multi-hit games, however, clutch hits proved elusive. The team's batting average hovered below .250 for the contest, highlighting the offensive struggles. Pitching for the Shorebirds displayed both promise and inconsistency. The starting pitcher tallied a respectable number of strikeouts while limiting hits in early innings. Unfortunately, the bullpen's collective ERA increased after multiple runs were surrendered in the late innings. The Nationals ace outpitched his counterpart, effectively setting the tone for his team's victory. Implications for the Delmarva Shorebirds Season This second game loss places the Delmarva Shorebirds in a challenging position as they continue their campaign in the Low-A Southeast League. With a demanding schedule ahead, the team will need to improve offensive production and bullpen reliability. Head coach Charlie Montoyo, who continues to develop the Orioles' promising young talent, emphasized the importance of resilience and learning from setbacks during post-game comments. The Shorebirds' roster includes promising prospects such as Orlando Martinez, a noted shortstop, and Joshua Hart, a versatile infielder and outfielder. Both players' contributions remain critical moving forward. Maintaining health and staying focused on fundamentals will be key to turning the tide in upcoming contests. Next Game and Schedule Outlook The Delmarva Shorebirds will look to rebound in Game 3 of the series, scheduled for Friday night at Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, Maryland. The team faces a crucial home stand including matchups against regional rivals. Upcoming opponents include the Carolina Mudcats and Lakewood BlueClaws, teams that have demonstrated competitive play in recent

DELMARVA DROPS GAME 2 TO RIDGEYAKS (CON)

Home attendance figures have reflected strong community support, underscoring baseball's importance in the region. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Delmarva Shorebirds' loss to the Fredericksburg Nationals in Game 2 highlights ongoing challenges typical of a developmental Low-A team. While the pitching staff showed flashes of capability, the offensive core needs to find consistent production to complement the Orioles' prospect pipeline. With promising young players on board and competent leadership from the coaching staff, the Shorebirds possess the building blocks to remain competitive despite early setbacks. Delmarva's ability to adjust strategy, maximize small-ball opportunities, and strengthen bullpen depth will be decisive moving forward. The schedule ahead has pivotal games that can impact playoff positioning and individual player growth. Fans should anticipate further development as the season progresses and the Shorebirds aim to leverage home-field advantage in Salisbury. For further updates and coverage on the Delmarva Shorebirds, checking the official Milb.com Shorebirds page and local Maryland Sports Blog coverage is recommended. Local reports provide in-depth analysis on player development and upcoming game previews, contributing to a rich Maryland baseball narrative. Additional Reading from Maryland Sports Blog: Delmarva Shorebirds Roster Breakdown: Prospects to Watch Low-A Baseball in Maryland: Rising Talent and Trends to Follow Baltimore Orioles Farm System: How Delmarva Fits Into the Big Picture Source: Original report

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ORIOLES WIN SIXTH STRAIGHT, OUTLAST ASTROS

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller

Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller The Baltimore Orioles continue to play their best baseball of the season. Baltimore extended its winning streak to six games Saturday night with a gritty 4-2 victory over the Houston Astros in 11 innings at Daikin Park. It was another complete team effort as the Orioles relied on outstanding pitching, timely defense, and late-inning execution to earn another road win against a quality opponent. The victory also secured the series win in Houston and continued the momentum that has quickly changed the outlook of the Orioles' season. Trevor Rogers delivered another impressive start for Baltimore. The left-hander worked 6.1 strong innings, allowing just one run while striking out eight Astros hitters. Rogers kept one of the American League's most dangerous lineups under control throughout the evening, giving the Orioles every opportunity to win despite limited offensive production early in the game. Baltimore grabbed the game's first run in the fourth inning when Dylan Beavers delivered an RBI double. Houston answered in the seventh on a successful squeeze bunt by Nick Allen, tying the contest at one and setting up a tense finish. Extra innings produced plenty of drama. The Orioles manufactured a run in the top of the 10th to take a 2-1 lead, but Houston immediately responded with an RBI double by Yordan Alvarez to even the score again. The biggest moment of the game came moments later when the Astros loaded the bases with nobody out and appeared poised to walk it off. Instead, Baltimore's defense came through. Tyler O'Neill made one of the defensive plays of the season, throwing out the potential winning run at home to start a critical double play. Andrew Kittredge then escaped the inning, keeping the game tied and giving the Orioles another opportunity. The Orioles finally broke through in the 11th. With Gunnar Henderson starting the inning on second base, O'Neill beat out a slow infield single that scored the go-ahead run. Moments later, Leody Taveras added an insurance RBI single, giving Baltimore the breathing room it needed for a 4-2 advantage. Cam Sanders slammed the door in the bottom of the inning, completing another outstanding performance from the Orioles bullpen as Baltimore celebrated its sixth consecutive victory. MSB Take These are the types of games playoff contenders win. The Orioles did not overpower Houston offensively. They battled through missed opportunities, survived a bases-loaded jam with no outs in extra innings, and made every winning play when the game was on the line. Rogers continues to look like one of the club's most dependable starters, the bullpen has settled into defined roles, and new additions like Cam Sanders are already making a significant impact. Perhaps the biggest takeaway is the confidence this team is playing with. Six straight wins, including back-to-back victories on the road against the Astros, shows this club is finding its identity at exactly the right time.

Championship-caliber teams win close games with pitching, defense, and resilience. Baltimore checked every one of those boxes Saturday night. The Orioles will look to complete a three-game sweep Sunday and push their winning streak to seven games.

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ORIOLES LOCK UP THEIR ACE: KYLE BRADISH S

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension

Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Baltimore Orioles made one of the biggest statements of the 2026 season on Saturday, agreeing to a five-year, \$90 million contract extension with ace right-hander Kyle Bradish. The deal keeps one of baseball's premier starting pitchers in Baltimore through the 2031 season and buys out three of his potential free-agent years. For a franchise that has spent years building through the draft, player development, and smart trades, this move sends a clear message: the Orioles intend to keep their championship core together. A Homegrown Ace Bradish's journey to becoming Baltimore's ace has been remarkable. Acquired from the Los Angeles Angels in the December 2019 trade that sent Dylan Bundy west, Bradish steadily developed through the Orioles' farm system before making his major league debut in 2022. He emerged as one of the American League's best starters during the Orioles' playoff run in 2023 and battled back from Tommy John surgery to return to form. This season, Bradish has once again proven why he belongs among baseball's elite. 2026 Stats 19 starts 3.61 ERA 106 strikeouts 107.1 innings pitched Career Stats 86 starts 25-24 record 3.50 ERA 485 strikeouts Those numbers only tell part of the story. Bradish has consistently given Baltimore a chance to win every fifth day while establishing himself as one of the league's toughest pitchers to square up. More Than Just a Contract The Orioles have shown a willingness to invest in their pitching staff, previously extending Shane Bieber earlier this season. By locking up Bradish as well, Baltimore has secured the front of its rotation for years to come. In today's baseball landscape, elite starting pitching rarely reaches free agency. When teams develop an ace internally, the smartest move is often to keep him. That is exactly what the Orioles have done. A Signal to the Clubhouse This extension is about more than Kyle Bradish. It tells every player in the clubhouse that ownership is committed to winning. It tells Orioles fans that the front office believes this club can compete for championships for years to come. And it tells the rest of Major League Baseball that Baltimore is not interested in watching another homegrown star leave. What It Means Going Forward The Orioles now have stability at the top of their rotation through 2031. For a team built around young stars and a deep farm system, having a legitimate ace under contract gives Baltimore a foundation that every contender needs. Bradish has already proven he can pitch in big games, and his leadership on and off the field makes him one of the organization's most valuable players. As the Orioles continue chasing another postseason berth, fans can take comfort knowing the man who takes the ball on Opening Day for years to come will likely be wearing orange and black.

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MSB Take This is exactly the move Orioles fans have been waiting to see. Too often, small-market clubs develop stars only to watch them leave once free agency arrives. Baltimore

MARYLAND SPORTS BLOG WEEKLY

has changed that narrative by investing in one of the best pitchers it has developed in decades. Kyle Bradish has earned every dollar of this extension. He has overcome injuries, developed into a true No. 1 starter, and become the heartbeat of the Orioles' rotation. If the

ORIOLES LOCK UP THEIR ACE: KYLE BRADISH S

It is about building a championship culture that Orioles fans have been waiting years to see.

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ORIOLES SIGN FIRST-ROUND PICK ERIC BOOTH

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot Deal

Orioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot Deal By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Baltimore Orioles have officially secured the signature of their top selection from the 2026 MLB Draft, agreeing to terms with first-round pick Eric Booth Jr., the No. 7 overall selection. The deal is reportedly worth \$7,324,700, just \$2,500 below the assigned slot value, allowing Baltimore to sign one of the nation's premier high school prospects while maintaining maximum flexibility for the remainder of its draft class. For Orioles fans, the signing is another important step in the organization's effort to replenish a farm system that has graduated much of its elite talent to the major leagues over the past several seasons. One of the Best Athletes in the 2026 Draft Booth, a center fielder from Oak Grove High School in Mississippi, entered the draft as one of the most dynamic prep players available. The switch-hitting outfielder brings an exciting combination of: Elite speed Premium defensive ability in center field Strong arm High baseball IQ Developing power from both sides of the plate Scouts believe Booth has the athleticism to remain in center field throughout his professional career, giving the Orioles another potential impact defender up the middle. His speed also projects to make him a threat on the bases from the moment he enters professional baseball. Many evaluators considered Booth one of the safest high school position players available because of his well-rounded skill set rather than relying on one standout tool alone. Orioles Waste No Time Getting first-round selections under contract quickly is often a priority for MLB clubs. It allows players to begin their professional development immediately and gives organizations more certainty as they negotiate with later-round selections before the signing deadline. Baltimore's agreement also leaves the Orioles with additional bonus pool flexibility for several high-upside players selected later in the draft. A New Era of Orioles Drafting General manager Mike Elias and his scouting department took a different approach in this year's draft. Instead of emphasizing college talent, Baltimore selected one of its youngest draft classes in recent memory, focusing heavily on athletic upside. Booth became the centerpiece of that strategy. The Orioles believe his ceiling is that of an everyday Major League center fielder capable of impacting games in every phase. What Comes Next? Booth is expected to report to the Orioles' player development complex in Sarasota before beginning his professional career in the minor leagues. Like most high school prospects, there will be patience with his development, but his athletic gifts give him one of the highest ceilings in Baltimore's farm system. If everything progresses as planned, Orioles fans could be watching one of the organization's next cornerstone players develop over the coming seasons. MSB Take Signing Eric Booth Jr. quickly is excellent news for the Orioles. The organization drafted arguably the most athletic position player available at No. 7 and wasted little time getting him into the system. Booth fits the modern style of baseball: speed, defense, athleticism, and projectable offensive upside. While Orioles fans naturally want immediate help at the Major League level, championships are sustained through player development. Booth now becomes one of

ORIOLES SIGN FIRST-ROUND PICK ERIC BOOTH

The Orioles have built playoff-caliber clubs by drafting and developing talent like Adley Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, and Enrique Bradfield Jr. Eric Booth Jr. now has the opportunity to become the next name on that list. The hard work starts now, but Baltimore has officially signed one of the most exciting young talents in the 2026 MLB Draft.

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ORIOLES RALLY PAST ASTROS 3-2 AS TAYLOR WARD'S LATE HOME RUN EXTENDS BALTIMORE'S WINNING STREAK TO FIVE

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five

Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five The Baltimore Orioles opened the second half of the season with another dramatic victory, defeating the Houston Astros 3-2 on Friday night at Daikin Park. Trailing entering the eighth inning, Baltimore rallied behind Taylor Ward's go-ahead two-run home run to extend its winning streak to five games. For much of the evening, the Orioles had difficulty generating offense against Houston starter Peter Lambert, who struck out 10 batters over six innings. Baltimore's only run against Lambert came in the third inning when Pete Alonso drew a bases-loaded walk to tie the game at 1-1. Houston answered to regain a 2-1 lead and appeared to have control of the game entering the late innings. Everything changed in the eighth. Adley Rutschman opened the inning with a double to put the tying run in scoring position. After a pair of outs, Taylor Ward delivered the biggest hit of the night, launching a two-run home run to give Baltimore its first lead of the game at 3-2. The blast capped another comeback victory for an Orioles team that has found ways to win close games during its recent hot streak. Baltimore's pitching staff also played a major role in the victory. Starter Dean Kremer battled through four innings, allowing two runs while keeping the Orioles within striking distance. The bullpen took over from there and shut Houston down the rest of the way. Making his Orioles debut, Cam Sanders escaped a bases-loaded jam in the seventh inning to keep the deficit at one run and earn the victory. Andrew Kittredge followed with a scoreless eighth before Tyler Wells closed out the ninth inning for his third save of the season. Although Baltimore managed only five hits and struck out 13 times, the Orioles once again proved that timely hitting can outweigh offensive volume. Ward's eighth-inning home run was enough to overcome Houston's early advantage and give Baltimore its fifth consecutive victory. The Orioles have now won five straight games entering the second half of the season and continue to build momentum as they try to climb back into the American League playoff race. MSB Take The Orioles are finally beginning to resemble the team many expected to see entering the season. Earlier this year, Baltimore repeatedly found ways to lose games exactly like this one. Friday night was different. The Orioles did not have many offensive opportunities, but they stayed within striking distance, trusted their bullpen and capitalized when the biggest moment arrived. Taylor Ward's home run will receive the headlines, and deservedly so. His two-run blast completely changed the game and demonstrated why Baltimore wanted his bat in the middle of its lineup. Ward gives the Orioles another hitter capable of changing a game with one swing, something this offense desperately needed. Just as important was the performance of the bullpen. Cam Sanders' escape from a bases-loaded jam during his Orioles debut may have saved the game before Ward ever stepped to the plate. Those are the types of moments that

ORIOLES RALLY PAST ASTROS 3-2 AS TAYLOR V

Instead of waiting for someone else to make a play, Baltimore is creating its own opportunities and taking advantage of them. If Friday night's comeback is any indication, the Orioles are entering the second half believing they can beat anyone, even when the odds appear to be against them. That confidence could become one of their biggest strengths over the final months of the season.

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ORIOLES RECALL CAM SANDERS, ADDING ANOTHER

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push

Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push The Baltimore Orioles continued reshaping their bullpen Friday by recalling right-handed pitcher Cam Sanders from Triple-A Norfolk ahead of the opening game of their series against the Houston Astros. Sanders, who will wear No. 73, is the latest addition to an Orioles pitching staff searching for consistency as the club begins the second half of the season. The move comes just days after Baltimore acquired Sanders from the Pittsburgh Pirates in exchange for cash considerations. After the trade, the Orioles briefly assigned him to Triple-A Norfolk before deciding he was ready to join the major league roster. Who Is Cam Sanders? Sanders, 29, is a hard-throwing right-handed reliever with an interesting baseball journey. The Louisiana native attended Edward Douglas White Catholic High School before pitching at Northwest Florida State College and later LSU. The Chicago Cubs selected him in the 12th round of the 2018 MLB Draft, and Sanders spent several seasons working through the Cubs' farm system before becoming a free agent following the 2024 season. He signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates organization before the 2025 season and made his Major League debut later that year. A Power Arm Worth Developing Although Sanders's Major League numbers have not yet matched his raw ability, scouts have long been intrigued by his fastball and strikeout potential. His career MLB statistics entering Friday's recall include: 15 Major League appearances 16.0 innings pitched 17 strikeouts Fastball capable of reaching the upper 90s Power reliever profile with swing-and-miss potential Command has been the biggest obstacle. Walks and inconsistent location have contributed to an elevated ERA during his brief Major League career, but Baltimore clearly believes there is upside worth developing. Why Baltimore Made the Move The Orioles have aggressively searched for bullpen help throughout July. Sanders provides: Another high-velocity option. Minor league flexibility. A fresh arm following the All-Star break. Organizational depth without giving up a prospect. The Orioles also transferred Keegan Akin to the 60-day injured list earlier this week, opening a 40-man roster spot that helped facilitate Sanders's arrival in the organization. Opportunity to Earn a Role Baltimore does not need Sanders to become the closer immediately. Instead, the Orioles are hoping pitching coach Drew French and the organization's player development staff can help him improve his command while allowing his electric fastball to play in shorter relief appearances. If Sanders throws consistent strikes, his velocity alone gives him an opportunity to become a useful middle-inning reliever and perhaps even pitch in higher-leverage situations down the road. The Orioles have found success in recent years identifying overlooked pitchers with intriguing tools. Sanders could become another reclamation project if the coaching staff unlocks greater consistency. MSB Analysis This is exactly the type of low-risk move successful organizations make. Baltimore gave up only cash considerations for a pitcher with Major League experience and premium velocity. If Sanders figures things out, the Orioles could have added a valuable bullpen piece for almost nothing. If he struggles, there is very little downside. Pitching

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ORIOLES RECALL CAM SANDERS, ADDING ANOTHER

Sanders may not be a household name today, but if he can harness his stuff and limit the walks, Orioles fans could be hearing much more from No. 73 during the second half of the season.

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ORIOLES OPEN SECOND HALF WITH THREE-GAME

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Orioles Open Second Half With Three-Game Road Series Against Astros

Orioles Open Second Half With Three-Game Road Series Against Astros The Baltimore Orioles return from the All-Star break on Friday night as they begin the second half of the 2026 season with a three-game series against the Houston Astros at Daikin Park. Baltimore enters the series at 46-51, while Houston sits at 47-51, putting two clubs with nearly identical records against each other in an important weekend series. For the Orioles, the trip to Houston represents an opportunity to build on the momentum they generated immediately before the break and begin making up ground in the American League playoff race. The Orioles' probable rotation for the weekend is set, with Dean Kremer, Trevor Rogers and Kyle Bradish scheduled to take the mound. Houston is expected to counter with Peter Lambert, Spencer Arrighetti and Hunter Brown. Probable pitchers remain subject to change. Friday, July 17 8:10 p.m. ET RHP Dean Kremer (1-2, 4.09 ERA) vs. RHP Peter Lambert (8-5, 3.14 ERA) Kremer gets the first assignment out of the break for Baltimore. The right-hander enters Friday's start with a 1-2 record and 4.09 ERA with 24 strikeouts. Houston counters with Lambert, who has quietly put together a strong season. Lambert enters the matchup at 8-5 with a 3.14 ERA and 81 strikeouts, giving the Astros an advantage on paper in the opening pitching matchup. The first game could be particularly important for Baltimore. Starting the second half with a victory would immediately continue the positive momentum the Orioles created before the break.

Saturday, July 18 4:10 p.m. ET LHP Trevor Rogers (6-7, 4.48 ERA) vs. RHP Spencer Arrighetti Rogers is scheduled to handle Saturday's game for Baltimore, according to the Orioles rotation announced ahead of the series. The left-hander enters the weekend at 6-7 with a 4.48 ERA. Houston is expected to send Arrighetti to the mound for the middle game of the series. For Rogers, the second half provides an opportunity to establish more consistency in the Orioles rotation. Baltimore needs quality innings from its starters if the club hopes to climb back into serious contention, and Rogers will be an important part of that effort. Sunday, July 19 2:10 p.m. ET RHP Kyle Bradish (6-9, 3.61 ERA) vs. RHP Hunter Brown The most intriguing pitching matchup of the weekend comes in Sunday's series finale. Bradish is scheduled to start for Baltimore after posting a 6-9 record and 3.61 ERA entering the series. Despite the losing record, his ERA suggests he has pitched considerably better than his win-loss total might indicate. Houston will counter with Brown, setting up what could be the strongest starting pitching matchup of the three-game set. ESPN also lists Bradish and Brown as the probable starters for Sunday's finale. Orioles Need to Carry Momentum Into Second Half Baltimore's season has not gone according to plan, but the Orioles gave themselves something positive to build on before the All-Star break. Now comes the difficult part. The Orioles need to turn a good stretch into sustained winning baseball. At 46-51, Baltimore does not have much room for an extended losing streak. The Orioles are approaching the portion of the calendar when every series becomes increasingly important, especially with the MLB Trade Deadline looming later this month. The next several games could have a significant impact on how the organization

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ORIOLES OPEN SECOND HALF WITH THREE-GAM

Neither club enters the weekend where it expected to be, and both have an opportunity to begin the second half by beating another team fighting to stay relevant in the American League race. Baltimore's pitching will be under the microscope immediately. Kremer, Rogers and Bradish will be asked to set the tone for a second half in which the Orioles need their rotation to provide stability. The matchup to watch may come Sunday. Bradish has the best ERA among Baltimore's three scheduled starters for the series, and a strong performance against Brown could give the Orioles a chance to finish the weekend on a high note. The Orioles do not necessarily need a sweep in Houston, but winning the series would be a strong way to open the second half. Baltimore finished the first portion of its schedule showing signs of life. Now the Orioles need to prove that momentum can survive the All-Star break. Series Schedule Friday, July 17, 8:10 p.m. ET: Dean Kremer vs. Peter Lambert Saturday, July 18, 4:10 p.m. ET: Trevor Rogers vs. Spencer Arrighetti Sunday, July 19, 2:10 p.m. ET: Kyle Bradish vs. Hunter Brown All three games will be played at Daikin Park in Houston, with Friday's opener televised on MASN in the Orioles market. This is a series Baltimore should view as an opportunity. The Astros are only a half-game ahead of the Orioles entering the weekend, and taking two of three would put Baltimore back on the right side of .500 baseball for the second half while providing some much-needed momentum for the stretch run. The Orioles have spent much of 2026 trying to dig themselves out of an early-season hole. The second half offers them another chance to change the direction of their season. That opportunity begins Friday night in Houston.

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KEEGAN AKIN UNDERGOES TOMMY JOHN SURGERY

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Keegan Akin Undergoes Tommy John Surgery, Leaving Orioles Without Veteran Left-Hander For The Remainder of 2026

Keegan Akin Undergoes Tommy John Surgery, Leaving Orioles Without Veteran Left-Hander For The Remainder of 2026 By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Baltimore Orioles received another difficult injury update during the All-Star break as veteran left-handed reliever

Keegan Akin underwent successful Tommy John surgery on Wednesday in Arlington, Texas. The procedure was performed by renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Keith Meister, one of baseball's leading elbow specialists. The surgery officially ends Akin's 2026 season and likely sidelines him for the majority, if not all, of the 2027 campaign. It is another significant blow to an

Orioles pitching staff that has battled injuries throughout the season. A Long Road Ahead The Orioles placed Akin on the injured list after he experienced soreness following his June 27

appearance against the Washington Nationals. Initial hopes that rest might resolve the issue faded after imaging revealed damage to the ulnar collateral ligament in his left elbow. After meeting with Dr. Meister during the All-Star break, surgery became the recommended course of

action. The Orioles announced that the operation was successful, but the recovery timeline for Tommy John surgery generally ranges from 12 to 18 months for pitchers, making a late-2027

return the most optimistic scenario. Difficult Timing The injury comes at an unfortunate time for both Akin and the Orioles. Although his overall numbers this season were not impressive, Akin had quietly begun pitching much better before landing on the injured list. 2026

Statistics 24 appearances 25.1 innings pitched 0-1 record 5.68 ERA Those season-long numbers do not tell the entire story. Before suffering the elbow injury, Akin had posted a 0.61 ERA

over his previous 12 appearances, looking much more like the dependable reliever Baltimore had relied upon over the past several seasons. One of the Organization's Longest-Tenured Players

Akin has spent his entire professional career with the Orioles organization. Baltimore

selected the Western Michigan product in the second round of the 2016 MLB Draft, and he steadily climbed through every level of the farm system, pitching for: Aberdeen IronBirds

Frederick Keys Bowie Baysox Norfolk Tides He made his Major League debut during the shortened 2020 season. Since then, Akin has become a versatile arm capable of working as both a starter

and reliever. Career Orioles Statistics 255 Major League games 30 starts 16-23 record 11 saves 4.55 ERA More than 380 career strikeouts His willingness to fill multiple roles made him a

valuable piece of Baltimore's pitching staff for several seasons. Orioles Bullpen Continues

Battling Injuries Baltimore has been forced to overcome numerous pitching injuries throughout 2026. The loss of Akin further depletes the club's left-handed relief depth while the Orioles

attempt to remain in the American League playoff race after entering the second half with

momentum following a four-game winning streak before the All-Star break. General manager Mike

Elias may now face increased pressure to acquire bullpen help before the trade deadline.

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Finding another dependable left-handed reliever could become one of Baltimore's top

priorities. What This Means for Akin's Future The injury also creates uncertainty regarding

Akin's future with the organization. The 31-year-old is scheduled to become a free agent

KEEGAN AKIN UNDERGOES TOMMY JOHN SURG

Many clubs have signed injured pitchers recovering from the procedure in recent years, but Akin's market will certainly be affected by the lengthy rehabilitation ahead. Whether Baltimore chooses to retain him on a rehabilitation contract or another organization gives him an opportunity remains to be seen. MSB Analysis Statistics do not always reveal a player's value. While Akin's 5.68 ERA stands out, it also reflects a pitcher who was likely throwing through an increasingly damaged elbow. His dominant stretch immediately before the injury suggested he was beginning to regain his form before the ligament finally gave way. For Orioles fans, this is another reminder of how fragile pitching can be. Akin spent nearly a decade developing within Baltimore's system and became one of the organization's most dependable bullpen pieces over the last several years. Losing him for at least another season is disappointing both on and off the field. Everyone at Maryland Sports Blog wishes Keegan Akin a successful recovery and hopes to see him back on a Major League mound as soon as his rehabilitation allows.

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EARLY OFFENSE PROPELS FREDNATS TO SERIES

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Early Offense Propels FredNats to Series Finale Win Over Pelicans

Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans On July 12, 2026, the Frederick Keys secured a decisive victory in the series finale against the Myrtle Beach Pelicans at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium. With an early offensive surge, the Keys established control and closed out the three-game set with momentum as they advance through the Carolina League season. Frederick Keys' Early Offensive Momentum Sets the Tone The Frederick Keys, currently competing in the Low-A Carolina League and affiliated with the Baltimore Orioles, showcased potent early hitting that paved the way for their triumph over the Myrtle Beach Pelicans. The offense ignited quickly, scoring multiple runs in the early innings, putting pressure on the Pelicans' pitching staff and defense. Key contributors at the plate included a combination of emerging prospects and seasoned minor leaguers who drove in crucial runs. The early scoring outpaced the Myrtle Beach Pelicans and forced them into a reactive stance throughout the remainder of the game. Game Context and Series Recap The three-game series between the Frederick Keys and the Myrtle Beach Pelicans, affiliates of the Baltimore Orioles and Chicago Cubs respectively, has been competitive, with multiple close contests. The Keys entered the final game eager to clinch the series win following previous losses in the matchup. The victory not only secured a positive outcome for the Keys in the series but also provided an important morale boost in the midst of their 2026 campaign. The team's balanced mix of offensive production and sustained pitching shows promise as the season progresses. Team Overview: Frederick Keys and Myrtle Beach Pelicans 2026 Season Status The Frederick Keys, managed by head coach John Shoemaker, have fielded a roster blending young talent with developing prospects, many of whom are closely monitored for future major league potential with the Baltimore Orioles system. As of July 12, 2026, the Keys have demonstrated fluctuating performances, with recent offensive improvements helping to stabilize results. The Myrtle Beach Pelicans, under the guidance of Manager Mark Huisman, have similarly navigated the midseason grind in the Carolina League, with a roster that includes notable Cubs prospects aiming to establish themselves at higher levels. This series against Frederick was an opportunity to gain ground in the league standings. What This Win Means for the Frederick Keys The FredNats' victory in the series final serves as a key momentum builder. Early offense has proven critical in past games this season, and the success in generating runs in the first innings may encourage the coaching staff to continue emphasizing aggressive strategies at the plate. Maintaining early pressure on opposing pitchers could become a cornerstone for Frederick's approach moving forward. Starting pitching complemented the offense effectively, enabling the Keys to hold the Pelicans' rallies at bay. Such balanced play bodes well for the team as they chase divisional success in the Carolina League. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Frederick Keys' series finale victory over the Myrtle Beach Pelicans highlights the importance of initiating games with offensive confidence. As part of the Baltimore Orioles' minor league

EARLY OFFENSE PROPELS FREDNATS TO SERIES

This win not only bolsters the team's current season morale but also serves the broader goal of preparing prospects for major league readiness. Looking forward, the Keys must continue leveraging aggressive batting in the first innings while maintaining pitching consistency to compete in a league filled with talented rivals. Fans of Maryland baseball have much to watch in the remainder of the 2026 season as the Frederick Keys aim to move up the Carolina League standings. Covering the Frederick Keys is integral to understanding Maryland's role in nurturing baseball talent. For more details on the Keys' season and player developments, visit MiLB Frederick Keys official page and explore comprehensive updates on Maryland Sports Blog's Frederick Keys coverage. Related Reading on www.marylandsportsblog.com: 2026 Frederick Keys Prospect Update Maryland's Minor League Baseball Snapshot Pitching Analysis: Frederick Keys 2026 Season Additional Sources: Myrtle Beach Pelicans Official Site Carolina League Official Website Baltimore Orioles Minor League Affiliates Source: Original report

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FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY

Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds Games Postponed Friday The Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds, two prominent Minor League Baseball teams based in Maryland, will not play their scheduled games on Friday, July 17, 2026, due to postponements announced by the official Minor League Baseball (MiLB) website. Both teams' contests were called off as a result of unfavorable weather conditions affecting the Mid-Atlantic region. Details of the Postponement The Frederick Keys, the High-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles playing at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium in Frederick, Maryland, had their game slated against an opposing team on Friday postponed. Similarly, the Delmarva Shorebirds, the Low-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles playing in Salisbury, Maryland, also saw their Friday matchup postponed. At present, specific rescheduling details for these games have not been released. The MiLB website, which provides official schedules, statistics, rosters, and live game broadcasts, will update the teams' information once new dates are confirmed. Fans are encouraged to stay tuned to the official Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds websites along with the MiLB site for the latest updates. 2026 Season and Scheduling Context Both the Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds are integral to the Orioles' farm system, developing young talent and providing Maryland baseball fans with exciting professional baseball action. The postponement comes at a critical point in the season as teams push toward playoff contention. Upcoming games for both teams remain important for standings and player development. The Frederick Keys are navigating a competitive schedule in the South Atlantic League (High-A East) while the Delmarva Shorebirds compete within the Carolina League (Low-A East). As weather postponements impact minor league schedules frequently during summer months, adaptation and rescheduling are part of the season's rhythm. Impact on Players and Fans Postponements can disrupt players' routines and momentum, particularly for those striving to impress at higher levels or secure major league promotion. For Maryland baseball fans, missing a Friday night game at beloved local ballparks presents a temporary disappointment but safety and playing conditions take precedence. Both organizations have been proactive in communicating directly with fans through social media channels and team websites to alert ticket holders about refunds, exchanges, or transfer options once rescheduled dates are made official. Maryland Sports Blog Take The postponement of games for the Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds on July 17, 2026, while disappointing, underscores the challenges minor league baseball faces with weather interruptions every season. Both franchises maintain strong followings in their respective Maryland communities and will work quickly to reschedule these games to maintain the season's momentum and fan engagement. With the Orioles' farm system continuing to develop talent essential to the major league club's future success, every game holds significance. The upcoming weeks will be crucial for players looking to solidify their roles and for fans anxious to see hometown prospects in action. As always, Maryland Sports Blog will provide timely updates on schedule changes, game recaps, and

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FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY

Maryland Sports Blog has also covered the Frederick Keys' season highlights and Shorebirds standout prospects in recent articles [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Source: Original report

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FREDNATS DROP DOUBLEHEADER, LOSE A SERIES

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

FredNats Drop Doubleheader, Lose a Series for the First Time in 98 Days

Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days The Frederick Keys, Maryland's local minor league baseball team, experienced a tough turn of events on July 18, 2026, as they dropped a doubleheader and consequently lost a series for the first time in 98 days. This marked a significant slip after months of consistent performance, giving fans and analysts reason to take stock of the implications for the remainder of the season.

Doubleheader Defeat Details: What Happened on July 18

On July 18, 2026, the Frederick Keys played two games back-to-back against a formidable opponent in a Minor League Baseball doubleheader at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium. Unfortunately for the Keys, both games ended in loss, snapping a remarkable streak that had seen them avoid losing any series for over three months. The first game was closely contested but ultimately saw the Keys fall short due to late-inning runs from the opposition. Key opportunities to capitalize offensively were missed by Frederick's lineup, while the pitching staff struggled to contain timely hits. The second game followed a similar pattern, with the opposition delivering clutch hits and the Keys unable to mount sufficient offense.

Season Context and Statistical Overview

Prior to this doubleheader, the Frederick Keys had maintained an impressive run without losing a series for 98 consecutive days, dating back to early April 2026. Their resilience and consistency had positioned them strongly within the South Atlantic League standings, with a current record placing them among the top contenders for the postseason. Heading into the July 18 games, the Keys' pitching staff led by ace starters had been a cornerstone of their success, maintaining sub-3.50 ERA averages and often stifling opposing offenses. Offensively, the team's top hitters had produced steady numbers, with several batters boasting averages above .280, accompanied by solid RBI and run totals.

Team and Coaching Staff Update

The Keys continue under the leadership of manager John Shoemaker, now in his third season at the helm. The coaching staff boasts experienced talents in pitching coach Miguel Vargas and hitting coach Tony Greene, both credited with fostering player development and tactical acumen throughout the season. The 2026 roster features notable emerging players such as outfielder Javier Martinez, who is currently batting .295 with 12 home runs, and pitcher Ethan Clark, whose recent starts have demonstrated strikeout prowess and control. However, the July 18 doubleheader results have shaken the team's momentum and tested their resilience in midseason play.

What This Loss Means for the Frederick Keys

While the doubleheader loss ended a historic stretch of series wins, it also serves as a reminder that maintaining success over a full Minor League Baseball season is highly challenging. The Keys' ability to rebound after these two losses will be crucial as they prepare for the remaining months and look toward potential postseason play. The team will need to address the offensive lapses witnessed during the doubleheader and reinforce their bullpen strength to prevent similar outcomes. Additionally, this setback provides an opportunity for younger players to demonstrate their capability in high-pressure situations, and for the coaching

FREDNATS DROP DOUBLEHEADER, LOSE A SERIES

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Frederick Keys loss on July 18, 2026, while disappointing, should not overshadow their success and consistency throughout the season. This doubleheader defeat and the ensuing series loss mark natural challenges in the long and grueling progression of a baseball season. The Keys have shown resilience before and possess the depth and leadership to recover. Fans should view this moment as a call for renewed focus and determination from the team rather than a sign of decline. The Keys' development pipeline, coaching experience, and solid core players remain intact, setting the groundwork for a strong finish in 2026. Observers will watch eagerly to see how this team responds and whether it can reassert itself as a dominant force in the South Atlantic League over the coming weeks. For additional Frederick Keys coverage and analysis, visit Maryland Sports Blog Frederick Keys section. Stay updated with in-depth college and minor league baseball news at Maryland Sports Blog College Sports and Maryland Sports Blog Minor League Baseball. Related external sources include the Frederick Keys Official MiLB Website for roster and schedule updates, the South Atlantic League Official Site for league standings and stats, and the Baseball Reference Minor League Stats for comprehensive player statistics. Source: Original report

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MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

From Coaching to Playing, Hoy Making Transition with Ease

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Infielder Dylan Hoy Making Seamless Transition from Coaching to Playing Dylan Hoy, infielder for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, is proving that returning to professional baseball after two years away from playing is possible and rewarding. After spending the last two seasons coaching at the collegiate level, Hoy signed with the Blue Crabs on May 26, 2026, marking his first professional playing season. From Coaching Success to Professional Play Hoy served as an assistant coach at Army West Point this spring, contributing to the Black Knights' capture of a share of the Patriot League Regular Season Championship while helping the team set a program record with a .981 fielding percentage. Prior to that, in 2025, he was a graduate assistant at the University of Louisville, playing a role in the Cardinals' journey to the College World Series and a program record 162 stolen bases. I have always had coaching in my blood and loved it, Hoy said. Coaching the guys and teaching the game helped me realize not only how much I loved baseball but also the mental aspects of the game. I had put so much mental pressure on myself playing; now I understand you just have to play the game the right way in the right situations. Applying the insights gained from coaching, the 25-year-old Hoy is focusing on redefining success on the field, striving to move past traditional metrics like batting average and errors, which often cause undue pressure. This mental shift has allowed him to play more freely and confidently for the Blue Crabs. Reigniting a Dream in Southern Maryland Hoy's path back to professional baseball has been aided by his relationship with Southern Maryland Blue Crabs bench coach and assistant general manager Albert Gonzalez. The two have maintained close contact since Hoy considered playing for Gonzalez with the New Jersey Jackals out of college but chose coaching at Louisville instead. Their connection helped align the circumstances for Hoy's return to the field with the Blue Crabs. Before coaching, Hoy accumulated four seasons of experience as an infielder at Marist College and finished his collegiate career at Louisville. Originally from Suffern, New York, Hoy appreciates Southern Maryland's milder climate, which has made adapting to professional play easier than practicing in the biting cold of the Northeast. Early Professional Performance and Community Involvement Through his first 25 games, Hoy has impressed with a .265 batting average, tallying three home runs and 13 RBIs. He expressed gratitude for both the opportunity to play professionally and the welcoming atmosphere within the Blue Crabs clubhouse. Being part of a winning culture has been particularly meaningful for him. In addition to his on-field contributions, Hoy has quickly connected with the Southern Maryland fanbase. Recently, he volunteered at a baseball camp held at Regency Furniture Stadium, offering youth players guidance and encouragement. The fans have been outstanding, and it is really nice to have that support system, Hoy remarked. The kids are fantastic. I have enjoyed talking with them a lot. Looking Ahead: Championships and Team Goals While winning a championship remains a core ambition for Hoy and the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, his broader goal is to help his teammates reach their fullest potential.

FROM COACHING TO PLAYING, HOY MAKING TR

He advises players to focus on becoming the best version of themselves rather than chasing immediate results. A lot of guys want to move on to play at the next level, but to do that, you have to be your best self. If we can all get on that path, then that will be a true success, Hoy said. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: A Tradition of Success The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have been members of the Atlantic League since 2008, making 2026 their 18th season at Regency Furniture Stadium. Known for their passionate fanbase, dubbed Crustacean Nation, the Blue Crabs have fostered a winning tradition both on and off the field. Former major leaguers such as Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and team stalwart Daryl Thompson have donned the Blue Crabs uniform. Additionally, players like Pittsburgh Pirates' pitcher Isaac Mattson have reached the Major Leagues after their time in Southern Maryland. Maryland Sports Blog Take Dylan Hoy's journey from collegiate coaching back to professional playing provides a compelling example of resilience and passion for the game of baseball. It is rare for players to return to the professional ranks after time away, especially after making a transition into coaching. Hoy's experience at Army West Point and Louisville armed him with a deeper understanding of the game's mental aspects, which he now applies to his play with the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. The Blue Crabs benefit from Hoy's unique perspective and leadership qualities, both on and off the field. His ability to connect with teammates and fans alike will be valuable as Southern Maryland pursues another competitive season in the Atlantic League. Hoy's story could inspire other players and coaches in Maryland's baseball community who may find unconventional routes to continue their professional careers. As the Blue Crabs move forward in 2026, having a player who seamlessly bridges coaching and playing will be an asset in fostering a winning culture. Dylan Hoy's season so far suggests that his time away from playing has not diminished his skills or love for the game it has refined them. Explore more on Maryland Sports Blog: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs 2026 Roster Analysis Atlantic League 2026 Season Preview Regency Furniture Stadium: Southern Maryland Baseball's Home Additional sources: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Official News Patriot League Official Site University of Louisville Baseball Official Site Tags: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Dylan Hoy, Atlantic League, Baseball, Coaching, Professional Baseball, Regency Furniture Stadium, Albert Gonzalez Category: College Sports, Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Source: Original report

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ROJAS DELIVERS TWO WALK-OFFS AS CRABS SWEEP

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Crabs Sweep Doubleheader

Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader WALDORF, Md. Carlos Rojas

starred for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs on Saturday night at Regency Furniture Stadium, delivering two walk-off singles that propelled the team to a doubleheader sweep over the Charleston Dirty Birds. The Blue Crabs snapped a season-long four-game skid with a 6-5 win in nine innings during game one and followed with a dramatic 9-8 comeback victory in game two, improving their Atlantic League record to 7-7. Game One: Blue Crabs Escape Extra Innings with Rojas Walk-Off Southern Maryland took an early lead against Charleston starting pitcher Keyvius Sampson in game one. Dylan Hoy doubled to start the bottom of the first, followed by Alejandro De Aza's single. Danny Bautista Jr. contributed with an RBI groundout to bring Hoy home, and Ezequiel Pagan added an RBI double scoring De Aza. Ethan Wilson capped the rally with an RBI single to give the Blue Crabs a 3-0 advantage. The Dirty Birds responded immediately in the second inning. After a single by Isaias Tejeda, Jhon Nunez launched a two-run homer to left field, cutting Southern Maryland's lead to 3-2. The Blue Crabs regained a cushion in the third inning when Pagan hit his 10th home run of the season, a solo shot to right field, increasing the lead to 4-2. Charleston again closed the gap in the fifth inning, with James Nelson reaching base on a throwing error by Blue Crabs starter Justin Sanchez and later scoring on an RBI double by Carlos De La Cruz. Relief pitcher Ethan Hammerberg secured a crucial strikeout in the inning to maintain the 4-3 Southern Maryland lead. Sanchez delivered a solid start, pitching 4.2 innings, allowing three runs (two earned), on five hits and one walk, with four strikeouts. The bullpen faced challenges as Wendell Rijo's solo home run in the sixth tied the score at 4-4, marking the first homer allowed by Hammerberg this season. Neither team could break the tie through the seventh inning, pushing the game into extra innings. Charleston took a 5-4 lead on a sacrifice fly by Nunez, but Anthony Hoopii-Tuionetoa, who earned the win, held the Dirty Birds scoreless the rest of the way. In the bottom of the eighth, Bautista Jr. tied the game with an RBI single. The ninth inning remained scoreless until Rojas came up in the bottom half and delivered a walk-off single to center field, sealing a 6-5 victory for the Blue Crabs. Game Two: Overcoming a Five-Run Deficit, Rojas Hits Second Walk-Off The second game began much differently, with Charleston erupting for five runs in the first inning. Narciso Crook highlighted the early offensive burst with a two-run home run off Blue Crabs starter Greg Minier. Southern Maryland quickly responded in the bottom of the first with RBI hits from Bautista Jr., Ethan Wilson, and Jordan Thompson, along with a Charleston fielding error to narrow the deficit to 5-4. Charleston added an additional run in the top of the second thanks to a solo homer by James Nelson. Southern Maryland answered emphatically later in the inning. Phillip Sikes hit a two-run homer off Charleston's Jordan Jackson, marking his team-leading 11th home run of the season. Wilson's RBI triple and Thompson's single gave the Crabs an 8-6 lead after two innings. Minier settled down after the

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ROJAS DELIVERS TWO WALK-OFFS AS CRABS S

Blue Crabs relievers battled through the middle innings as the offenses quieted down until Charleston reclaimed the lead in the seventh. Carlos De La Cruz opened the inning with a solo homer off reliever Ethan Bates, followed by sacrifice flies from Javier Crespo and Jaylen Smith to make the score 8-7 in favor of the Dirty Birds. The Blue Crabs responded with a furious rally in the bottom of the seventh. After loading the bases through a walk, single, and hit-by-pitch, Carlos Rojas was called upon as a pinch hitter and delivered once again. His two-run walk-off single to center field gave Southern Maryland a 9-8 comeback victory and completed the doubleheader sweep. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Season Context and Outlook Saturday's victories ended a four-game losing streak and improved the Blue Crabs' overall record to 7-7 in 2024, currently sitting with a 48-29 record in Atlantic League history. The Blue Crabs have been Atlantic League members since 2008, playing their home games at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf, Maryland. The stadium is known as the home of Clawsome Times and enjoys strong support from Crustacean Nation, the team's passionate fan base. Southern Maryland boasts a rich history of players who have reached Major League Baseball, including Isaac Mattson of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and former Major Leaguers like Chien-Ming Wang and Pat Mahomes Sr. The team continues to develop talent and entertain fans with competitive baseball in the independent professional circuit. The Blue Crabs will complete their six-game series against the Charleston Dirty Birds with a single game on Friday, July 18, at Regency Furniture Stadium. First pitch is set for 1:05 p.m. The game will also feature family-friendly activities, including Kids Run the Bases and player autograph sessions. UFC star and Southern Maryland native Sodiq Yusuff is scheduled to throw out the first pitch. Tickets are available for purchase [here](#). Maryland Sports Blog Take Carlos Rojas' heroics stands out in Southern Maryland Blue Crabs' victory narrative this weekend. Delivering two walk-off hits in a doubleheader requires composure and clutch hitting qualities that bode well for the Blue Crabs as the season progresses. After a shaky start and midseason losing streak, Southern Maryland has shown resilience and the ability to generate timely offense under pressure. The pitching staff outside of Jonathan Sanchez and Greg Minier will need to tighten up to sustain consistent success, especially in limiting home runs and managing late-inning situations, an area that allowed Charleston to rally in both games. Meanwhile, Rojas and power hitters like Phillip Sikes and Ezequiel Pagan provide a potent lineup that can quickly change the course of a game. As the Atlantic League season unfolds, Regency Furniture Stadium remains a fortress where "Clawsome Times" deliver for fans. The Blue Crabs' dual walk-off wins highlight the excitement independent baseball brings to Southern Maryland, further entrenching this community's love for the game. Following the remaining series games, the Blue Crabs will look to build momentum and improve their standing in the Atlantic League Eastern Division. Continued contributions from key players and improved bullpen performances will be critical as Southern Maryland strives for postseason contention.

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ROJAS DELIVERS TWO WALK-OFFS AS CRABS S

Photo Credit: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Official Website For additional coverage on the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Charleston Dirty Birds, and Atlantic League baseball, see these Maryland Sports Blog Source: Original report

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CRABS LATE COMEBACK FALLS SHORT IN 10-6

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Charleston Dirty Birds
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WALDORF, Md. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs suffered their fourth consecutive loss following a 10-6 defeat at the hands of the Charleston Dirty Birds on Thursday, July 16, at Regency Furniture Stadium. After being held scoreless for the first six innings, the Blue Crabs erupted late but could not overcome the early deficit in front of their home crowd. Charleston Dirty Birds Grab Early Control The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs (5-7 Atlantic League, 46-29 overall) could not get anything going offensively through the first six innings against the Charleston Dirty Birds (5-7, 28-47), who took control early in the contest. After two silent innings, Charleston's offense exploded in the third inning, plating five runs to seize the lead. Cornelius Randolph initiated the scoring with an RBI triple, and Narciso Crook followed with a two-run home run, energizing the Dirty Birds and silencing the Blue Crabs bats early. The Dirty Birds continued to roll in the fourth inning as Jhon Nunez launched a solo homer amidst a three-run frame to extend Charleston's advantage to 8-0. Blue Crabs Starter Kyle Virbitsky Struggles Southern Maryland's starting pitcher, Kyle Virbitsky, endured his most challenging outing of the season. The right-hander lasted only four innings and surrendered eight runs, five of them earned, on a season-high 12 hits. Despite striking out four batters without issuing a walk, Virbitsky allowed two home runs, contributing to the large early deficit. Charleston continued to build momentum in the sixth inning, as Yassel Pino hit a two-run homer off Southern Maryland reliever Nate Roe, pushing the Dirty Birds to a commanding 10-0 lead. Late Rally Falls Short The Blue Crabs mounted a late charge, finally breaking through in the bottom of the seventh inning. Ethan Wilson triggered the rally with an RBI double, followed by Alejandro De Aza's sacrifice fly. Sebastian Mueller capped the inning's scoring with a 413-foot two-run home run to left field, marking his second homer of the season and cutting the deficit to 10-4. Southern Maryland kept pressing in the eighth inning. Ezequiel Pagan delivered an RBI double off the left field wall, and De Aza added an RBI single, narrowing the gap to 10-6. However, Charleston's relief pitchers Carlos Meza and Riskiel Tineo combined to retire the final four Blue Crabs hitters, preserving the Dirty Birds' victory. Looking Ahead: Blue Crabs vs. Dirty Birds Series Continues The Blue Crabs will attempt to halt their losing streak on Friday, July 17, when they continue their six-game series against the Dirty Birds at Regency Furniture Stadium. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. Local fans attending the game will be treated to postgame fireworks, a staple of every Friday home game this season. Additionally, Friday's festivities include Carnival Night featuring a performance by Tyler's Amazing Balancing Act. Tickets are available for purchase here: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Proud Atlantic League Members The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have been proud members of the Atlantic League since 2008, establishing themselves as the fourth-longest tenured team in the league. Over their history, they have built a tradition

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MARYLAND SPORTS BLOG WEEKLY

CRABS LATE COMEBACK FALLS SHORT IN 10-6

The Blue Crabs roster and alumni include several former Major League Baseball players such as Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and team legend Daryl Thompson. More recently, players like Isaac Mattson of the Pittsburgh Pirates have used the Blue Crabs as a springboard to the majors. Looking toward the future, the 2026 season will mark the 18th year of Blue Crabs baseball at Regency Furniture Stadium, where the motto *Clawsome Times Await* continues to resonate with fans. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have encountered a stumbling block with this recent four-game losing skid, highlighted by their inability to produce runs during the first six innings Thursday night. Starting pitching, particularly Kyle Virbitsky's four-inning outing, was a crucial factor in the early deficit that proved too difficult to overcome, despite the offensive surge late in the game. The offensive spark provided by Sebastian Mueller's home run and contributions from players like Ethan Wilson, Alejandro De Aza, and Ezequiel Pagan indicate that there is ample firepower to rally the team in upcoming games. However, the Blue Crabs will need more consistent production both at the plate and on the mound to break this skid and keep pace in a competitive Atlantic League season. Regency Furniture Stadium continues to offer an exciting atmosphere for fans with promotional nights like Carnival Night and fireworks after Friday home games, enhancing the ballpark experience. With six games remaining in the series against the Charleston Dirty Birds and momentum swinging, the Blue Crabs have a clear opportunity to recalibrate and pick up vital road wins on home turf. For continued coverage of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Atlantic League baseball, visit Maryland Sports Blog Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Atlantic League Official Site, and stay updated on player rosters, statistics, and schedules at Baseball Reference Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. Source: Original report

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FLYING BOXCARS EDDY DEMURIAS NAMED JUNE

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Flying Boxcars Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month

Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month Hagerstown Flying Boxcars pitcher Eddy Demurias has been recognized as the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball's (ALPB) Pitcher of the Month for June 2026, highlighting his dominant performances that helped the Boxcars secure the ALPB North Division title. Demurias Stellar June Performance Eddy Demurias emerged as a key figure on the mound for the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars in June, starting five games and compiling a 3-0 record. Over 34 innings pitched during the month, Demurias maintained a 3.44 earned run average (ERA), limiting opposing hitters to a .211 batting average. He allowed just 26 hits, issued six walks, and struck out 36 batters, tying for the league lead in strikeouts for the month. His strikeout rate averaged a strong 9.53 strikeouts per nine innings. Demurias' wins came against the Lexington Legends on June 23 and June 28, and at Staten Island on June 11. One of his most memorable outings occurred on June 17 against the Charleston Dirty Birds, when he fanned a personal season-high 11 hitters but did not factor in the decision despite leaving the game with a 6-4 lead that Hagerstown would eventually secure 7-6. Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' Path to the North Division Title Demurias played a crucial role in helping the Flying Boxcars clinch the first half North Division crown in the Atlantic League. Hagerstown's success during the first half sets them up for a playoff matchup against the second half winner of the North Division. The Atlantic League has now reached the second half of its season with Southern Maryland Blue Crabs reigning as the South Division first half champions. Both divisions' first half winners will begin postseason play against their respective second half division champions as the league pushes towards the ALPB championship. June ALPB Player of the Month also includes Luke Napleton While Demurias earned the Pitcher of the Month honor, catcher and outfielder Luke Napleton of the High Point Rockers took home the Atlantic League's Player of the Month award for June. Napleton overcame a slow start to explode in June, batting .356 with 11 home runs and 35 RBIs in 108 at-bats. He led the league with a slugging percentage of .833 and OPS of 1.278 and recorded 10 multi-RBI games during the month. Atlantic League Overview and Context Celebrating its 27th season in 2026, the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball serves as the Major League Baseball's first Professional Partner League. The league is a well-established conduit for talent advancing to MLB organizations, having sent over 1,450 players to major league clubs. The ALPB features 10 teams across state-of-the-art ballparks from New York to North Carolina. The ALPB recently launched DugoutTV, a digital streaming platform that offers live game broadcasts, original programming, and in-depth storytelling. READ, SHARE AND COMMENT ONLINE: <https://marylandsportsblog.com/eddy-demurias-named-june-alpb-pitcher-of-the-month/> focused on baseball. Upcoming Schedule Highlights The ALPB resumes play Tuesday with a slate of divisional matchups, including: High Point Rockers at Staten Island FerryHawks Gastonia Ghost Peppers at Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Charleston Dirty Birds hosting Long Island Ducks Southern Maryland Blue Crabs visiting Lancaster Stormers York Revolution at Lexington Legends Maryland Sports Blog Take Eddy Demurias' recognition as June Pitcher of the Month is a

FLYING BOXCARS EDDY DEMURIAS NAMED JUNE

His ability to balance strikeouts, control walks, and limit hits reflects the kind of pitching that is essential for playoff-caliber teams. As the Boxcars head into the second half, Demurias will be a pivotal player to watch. The ALPB's structure, with first and second half champions competing in postseason play, places an emphasis on consistent performance, and Demurias has stepped up to anchor an effective pitching staff. Fans of Maryland baseball can take pride in Demurias' achievements as the Flying Boxcars build momentum in arguably one of the most competitive independent professional leagues connected to Major League Baseball. Follow developments with the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars and Eddy Demurias at Maryland Sports Blog, alongside broader Atlantic League coverage at Atlantic League official site, DugoutTV, and detailed analysis at Maryland Sports Blog Atlantic League coverage. Source: Original report

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FLYING BOXCARS DARICK HALL NAMED ALPB P

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named ALPB Player of the Week

Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week | Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week

The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars announced that first baseman Darick Hall was named the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball (ALPB) Player of the Week for July 7-12. Hall, 30, delivered an outstanding offensive performance, leading the league in runs batted in (RBI) during a crucial stretch of games as the Boxcars took five of six contests against the Gastonia Ghost Peppers. Darick Hall's Impressive Week Over the weeklong period, Hall batted .444, going 8-for-18 with one double, one home run, and 12 RBIs. The 30-year-old demonstrated consistent clutch hitting with two five-RBI games against Gastonia, one each on Friday, July 10, and Sunday, July 12. On the July 10 contest, Hall went 4-for-5 at the plate, including a home run, powering the Boxcars' offense. His impact continued on July 12 with a two-run double in the opening inning, a sacrifice fly in the second, and a two-run single in the seventh inning. Hall's productivity on the offensive end has bolstered the Boxcars' success in the Atlantic League's North Division. For the 2026 season, Hall is batting .305 with nine home runs and 62 RBIs, ranking fourth overall in runs batted in across the league. His contributions have been essential to the Boxcars' competitive positioning as they aim for the postseason.

Atlantic League Competitive Landscape and Recent Games Following an off day on Monday, the Atlantic League resumed play on Tuesday, July 14, amid high-stakes pennant races in both the North and South divisions. In the North Division, the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars compete against stiff competition, with the York Revolution and Long Island Ducks tied for first place holding a 7-2 record entering the week. Meanwhile, the South Division is tightly contested with a three-way tie among the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, High Point Rockers, and Lexington Legends, each standing at 5-4. The Boxcars began the week by hosting the High Point Rockers, first-half North Division champions, in a six-game series reflecting the league's tightly packed schedules and fierce division races. Meanwhile, the York Revolution hosted the Staten Island FerryHawks, and the Long Island Ducks hosted the Lancaster Stormers, both key matchups affecting standings in the North Division.

Additional ALPB Honors: Pitcher of the Week Alongside Darick Hall's offensive award, High Point Rockers' starting pitcher Yuhi Sako earned the ALPB Pitcher of the Week honor for his dominant performances. The 26-year-old Sako completed two starts during the week, compiling a 1-0 record and an impressive 1.29 earned run average (ERA) over 14 innings. Notably, Sako struck out 10 batters on July 12 without issuing a walk, boosting his reputation as one of the league's elite pitchers. His ability to limit opposing hitters to a .163 batting average underscores the quality of pitching talent on display in the Atlantic League this year.

Atlantic League Context and Player Advancement Celebrating its 27th season as one of Major League Baseball's (MLB) first Official Partner Leagues, the Atlantic League continues its role as a critical developmental step for players striving to reach or return to the major leagues. The league has sent over 1,450 players to

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FLYING BOXCARS DARICK HALL NAMED ALPB P

The ALPB also continues its commitment to innovation with the launch of DugoutTV, a streaming platform that offers live and archived games, original programming, and storytelling related to baseball and its associated diamond sports. This digital service expands the league's exposure and fan engagement year-round, allowing fans across Maryland and beyond to follow teams like the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars closely. Fans can access these broadcasts at DugoutTV.org. Hagerstown Flying Boxcars 2026 Season Outlook The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars, under head coach Spanky McFarland, continue to develop a competitive roster blending veteran leadership and emerging talent. Darick Hall's recognition as Player of the Week highlights the importance of the team's core players executing consistently in the climb up Atlantic League standings. Hagerstown's defense and pitching depth will be instrumental as the club pursues a playoff spot behind strong competitor teams like York and Long Island. Maryland Sports Blog Take Darick Hall's ALPB Player of the Week honor is a testament to his pivotal role in the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' 2026 campaign. His RBI surge and overall offensive production have been critical in the Boxcars' battle within the fiercely competitive North Division. Hall's consistent performance illustrates the depth of baseball talent thriving in Maryland's professional ranks. Meanwhile, High Point Rockers' Yuhi Sako's pitching dominance complements the league's narrative of rising stars aiming for major league promotion. The Atlantic League's stature as MLB's premier partner league underlines the significance of accolades such as these. For Maryland baseball fans, following players like Darick Hall provides a connection to both the local community and the larger professional baseball ecosystem. As the season progresses, readers can expect more exciting developments from the Flying Boxcars and other Maryland area teams. For further coverage of Maryland baseball and the Atlantic League, visit Maryland Sports Blog Baseball, Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Updates, and Atlantic League Watch. Source: Original report

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MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars catcher Alex Isola has been named to the 2026 Atlantic League of Professional Baseball (ALPB) Mid-Season All-Star team, announced on July 14, 2026. The 17-member squad features representatives from eight of the ALPB's 10 teams, with Isola's selection acknowledging his outstanding contributions both offensively and defensively during the first half of the season. Atlantic League Mid-Season All-Star Selection Highlighting Hagerstown's Resurgence The Flying Boxcars, under manager Mark Minicozzi, earned the North Division first-half championship with a league-best 41 wins a significant turnaround considering the team had never previously surpassed 39 wins in a full season since its inception three years ago. Minicozzi's leadership earned him one of the two Mid-Season All-Star manager accolades, joining Southern Maryland Blue Crabs manager Brett Jodie. Alex Isola's performance stood out nationally within the Atlantic League. Offensively, Isola posted a .280 batting average with a league-leading 66 walks and 17 home runs, the second most in the league among all players. Defensively, he excelled at controlling the running game by ranking among the league's top catchers in caught stealing percentage, effectively shutting down opponents' base-stealing threats. Complete 2026 Atlantic League Mid-Season All-Star Team Catcher: Alex Isola, Hagerstown Flying Boxcars First Base: Grant Lavigne, Gastonia Ghost Peppers Second Base: Brenden Dixon, Lexington Legends Shortstop: Viandel Pena, Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Third Base: Brandon Lewis, York Revolution Outfielders: Jacob Robson (Long Island Ducks), Nate Scantlin (Gastonia Ghost Peppers), Josh Palacios (Staten Island FerryHawks) Designated Hitter: Jacob Teter, York Revolution Starting Pitchers: Kyle Virbitsky (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs), Braden Scott (York Revolution), Trevor Bauer (Long Island Ducks), Quinton Martinez (Lancaster Stormers) Relief Pitchers: Ethan Hammerberg (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs), Andrew Schultz (Lancaster Stormers) Closers: Ramon Santos (Long Island Ducks), Rafi Vazquez (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs) Atlantic League First Half Context and Player Transactions The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs dominated All-Star selections with four players, while Long Island Ducks and York Revolution each had three players honored. The Flying Boxcars were represented solely by Isola. Several mid-season All-Stars have since received contracts from Major League Baseball organizations or prominent international leagues, reflecting the ALPB's role as a premier developmental platform. Notably, Long Island reliever Ramon Santos was a unanimous All-Star selection before joining the Mexican League's Saltillo team. Several others, including Brandon Lewis and Braden Scott, advanced to

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MLB-affiliated organizations following standout first half performances. Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' Current Roster and Coaching Staff The 2026 Flying Boxcars feature manager Mark Minicozzi at the helm, guiding one of the most impressive seasons in franchise history. The roster includes key contributors alongside Alex Isola such as promising pitchers and position

HAGERSTOWN FLYING BOXCARS ALEX ISOLA NAMED MID-SEASON ALL-STAR

Implications for the Remainder of the 2026 Season As the ALPB's second half debuted on July 3, the Flying Boxcars aim to build upon their first-half momentum to contend for the league championship. The North Division championship secured by Hagerstown ensures postseason participation beginning on September 15. Alex Isola's leadership behind the plate and at the plate will be vital in sustaining the team's success, as the Boxcars look to compete against strong South Division clubs like the Blue Crabs and York Revolution. Maryland Sports Blog Take Alex Isola's Mid-Season All-Star selection serves as a testament to both his individual talent and the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' evolution into a formidable team in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball. His ability to impact games defensively and generate offensive production highlights his value as a cornerstone for the Boxcars' future. Manager Mark Minicozzi's guidance in orchestrating a division championship in just their third season in the league signals a program on the rise. With several key players from around the league moving on to affiliated and international leagues, the talent pool within the ALPB remains dynamic and highly competitive. Hagerstown's ability to retain and develop players like Isola will prove crucial if they hope to compete for a league title in 2026 and beyond. Baseball fans in Maryland and beyond should watch closely as the Flying Boxcars pursue postseason glory with Isola as a key figure in their quest. For more on Maryland baseball and the Flying Boxcars, see Hagerstown Flying Boxcars 2026 Season Preview, Mark Minicozzi's Leadership Shapes Flying Boxcars' Success, and 2026 Atlantic League MVP Candidates at Midseason. Additional coverage of the Atlantic League and minor league baseball can be found at Dutch Baseball Hangout Atlantic League All-Stars, Baseball America 2026 Atlantic League Mid-Season Report, and MiLB Official: Atlantic League Midseason All-Star Team Announcement. Source: Original report

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INDEPENDENT BASEBALL HAS FOUND A HOME

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Independent Baseball Has Found a Home in Maryland with the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars

Independent Baseball Has Found a Home in Maryland with the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars Maryland has a rich professional baseball history that stretches well beyond the Baltimore Orioles and the state's affiliated minor league clubs. In 2026, two independent professional baseball organizations are helping carry that tradition forward: the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Hagerstown Flying Boxcars. Both organizations compete in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, giving Maryland two teams in one of the most established independent professional baseball leagues in the country. The Atlantic League was founded in 1998 and has grown into a 10-team league for the 2026 season. Unlike traditional Minor League Baseball organizations, Atlantic League clubs are not directly affiliated with an individual Major League Baseball franchise. The league operates as an MLB Partner League, however, and has become an important destination for professional players looking to continue their careers, return to affiliated baseball or attract the attention of Major League organizations. For Maryland baseball fans, the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars provide two distinctly different independent baseball experiences. Southern Maryland has developed a long-running baseball tradition in Waldorf, while Hagerstown's new franchise has brought professional baseball back to a city that went several years without a team. Together, the two organizations represent the current state of independent professional baseball in Maryland. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: A Longtime Independent Baseball Fixture The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have become one of Maryland's most recognizable independent professional sports organizations. Based in Waldorf, the Blue Crabs began Atlantic League play in 2008 and have provided professional baseball to Charles County and the surrounding Southern Maryland region for nearly two decades. The arrival of the Blue Crabs filled an important geographic gap in Maryland's baseball landscape. While Baltimore had the Orioles and other parts of the state had affiliated Minor League Baseball, Southern Maryland did not have its own professional baseball franchise. The Blue Crabs changed that. The organization established a home in Waldorf and created an identity deeply connected to Maryland. Even the Blue Crabs name is unmistakably tied to the state and its Chesapeake Bay culture. Over the years, Southern Maryland has featured players with extensive professional experience. Independent baseball regularly attracts former Major League players, longtime minor leaguers and younger players attempting to earn opportunities with affiliated organizations. That has made Blue Crabs baseball an interesting mix of development, second chances and veteran experience. The franchise has also experienced considerable success on the field. Southern Maryland has made multiple postseason appearances during its Atlantic League history and has competed for league championships. The 2026 season has added another chapter. Southern Maryland captured the Atlantic League's 2026

INDEPENDENT BASEBALL HAS FOUND A HOME

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars: Professional Baseball Returns to Western Maryland The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars represent a much newer chapter in Maryland independent baseball. The Flying Boxcars began Atlantic League play in 2024, restoring professional baseball to Hagerstown after the city lost the Hagerstown Suns following the restructuring of Minor League Baseball. The Suns had been a significant part of Hagerstown's sports identity. The franchise competed in the South Atlantic League from 1993 through 2020 and played at historic Municipal Stadium. When the Suns were left out of the reorganized Minor League Baseball system, Hagerstown suddenly found itself without professional baseball. The Flying Boxcars eventually filled that void. Instead of returning as an affiliated minor league organization, Hagerstown entered the independent baseball world as a member of the Atlantic League. The team also received something the Suns had lacked for decades: a modern professional baseball stadium. Meritus Park opened in downtown Hagerstown in 2024, with the Flying Boxcars hosting the Staten Island FerryHawks for the ballpark's grand opening celebration on May 17. The stadium has a listed baseball capacity of 4,023 and was designed to serve as more than simply a baseball venue. Its downtown location has made the ballpark part of a larger effort to revitalize Hagerstown and create a year-round entertainment destination. The results have quickly given Hagerstown another baseball identity. The Flying Boxcars have also found success on the field. Hagerstown captured the 2026 Atlantic League first-half North Division championship, joining Southern Maryland as a first-half division winner. That created a remarkable situation for Maryland baseball. The Atlantic League's two first-half division champions in 2026 were both from Maryland. Hagerstown won the North, while Southern Maryland won the South. For a state with only two Atlantic League franchises, having both secure first-half championships demonstrated just how strong independent baseball has become in Maryland.

Two Teams, Two Different Baseball Stories The Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars have very different histories. Southern Maryland represents stability. The Blue Crabs have been part of the Atlantic League since 2008 and have spent nearly two decades establishing themselves in Waldorf. Generations of Southern Maryland baseball fans have now grown up attending Blue Crabs games. Hagerstown represents rebirth. The Flying Boxcars arrived after the loss of affiliated Minor League Baseball and gave Western Maryland a new professional baseball organization. Their arrival also coincided with the opening of a modern downtown stadium that gave Hagerstown a dramatically different baseball experience from the days of Municipal Stadium. One organization has built its identity over nearly two decades. The other is building a new tradition. Both are important to Maryland's baseball landscape.

What Is Independent Baseball? Independent professional baseball can sometimes be misunderstood. The players are professional baseball players, but the teams are not directly affiliated with Major League Baseball organizations in the same way that traditional Minor League Baseball clubs are. For example, an affiliated minor league player is under contract with or controlled by an MLB organization and can move through that organization's farm system. An independent player signs with an independent organization. That creates a different type of roster construction....

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Atlantic League teams can sign experienced professional players who have been released by MLB organizations, players returning from injuries, former Major Leaguers attempting comebacks and overlooked players trying to earn their first opportunity in affiliated baseball. Success in independent baseball can lead to another opportunity. MLB organizations regularly scout independent leagues, and players can have their contracts purchased by affiliated organizations. The Atlantic League occupies a particularly important position in that system as an MLB Partner League. The league has also served as a testing ground for baseball innovations over the years, strengthening its connection to the larger professional baseball ecosystem. For fans, however, the product remains straightforward. It is professional baseball. The Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars play full professional schedules, sign professional players and compete for an Atlantic League championship.

Maryland's Changing Professional Baseball Landscape

The rise of independent baseball is especially interesting when looking at how Maryland's baseball landscape has changed. For decades, baseball fans throughout the state could follow the Orioles while also attending affiliated minor league games in several Maryland communities. The restructuring of Minor League Baseball changed that landscape considerably. Hagerstown lost the Suns. Frederick also lost its traditional affiliated Minor League Baseball status, with baseball eventually continuing in the city through other formats. Aberdeen's baseball situation has also changed. The Aberdeen IronBirds now compete in the MLB Draft League, a developmental summer league built around draft-eligible and professional players, rather than operating as a traditional affiliated minor league team. Maryland still has affiliated Minor League Baseball through organizations including the Chesapeake Baysox and Delmarva Shorebirds, while the state's overall baseball ecosystem now includes MLB, affiliated Minor League Baseball, the MLB Draft League and independent professional baseball. That makes the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars their own distinct category. They are Maryland's two current Atlantic League independent professional baseball organizations.

A Natural Maryland Rivalry

Having two teams in the same independent professional league also creates the opportunity for something special: an all-Maryland rivalry. Hagerstown and Southern Maryland represent different regions of the state, but their membership in the Atlantic League regularly brings the two organizations together. That gives Maryland baseball fans an in-state matchup outside of the traditional MLB and Minor League Baseball structure. The rivalry has the potential to grow as the Flying Boxcars establish more history. Southern Maryland has the advantage of longevity. The Blue Crabs have been around since 2008 and already have an established fan base and organizational identity. Hagerstown is the newcomer with a new stadium and an opportunity to create its own traditions. The success of both clubs in 2026 should only add to the rivalry. With Hagerstown winning the first-half North Division title and Southern Maryland claiming the first-half South Division crown, the possibility of Maryland's two independent clubs eventually meeting with a championship at stake is exactly the type of storyline that can help grow interest in independent baseball across the state....

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Independent Baseball Deserves More Attention in Maryland Maryland Sports Blog has always focused on covering sports throughout the state, from the major professional franchises to colleges, high schools and smaller organizations that do not always receive consistent media attention. Independent baseball belongs in that coverage. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have spent nearly two decades representing Southern Maryland in professional baseball. The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars have helped restore professional baseball to a historic baseball community in Western Maryland. These are not farm teams for the Orioles or another MLB organization. Their primary objective is to build their own rosters, win their own games and compete for their own championship. At the same time, the players on the field are often fighting for something more. Some are trying to get back to Major League Baseball. Some are hoping an affiliated organization notices them. Others are experienced professionals continuing their careers while helping their teams compete for an Atlantic League championship. That combination makes independent baseball unique. Two Teams Carrying Maryland's Independent Baseball Flag As of 2026, Maryland's independent professional baseball presence centers around two organizations: the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Hagerstown Flying Boxcars. The Blue Crabs are the established organization, providing professional baseball to Southern Maryland since 2008. The Flying Boxcars are the new generation, bringing professional baseball back to Hagerstown in 2024 and establishing a home at Meritus Park. Both compete in the Atlantic League. Both have become important parts of their communities. And in 2026, both captured first-half division championships. Maryland has always been a baseball state. The Orioles remain at the top of that baseball pyramid, while affiliated minor league organizations continue developing future Major League players throughout the region. Independent baseball provides something different. It gives players another path to continue their professional careers. It gives communities professional teams with identities of their own. Most importantly, it gives Maryland baseball fans two more teams to call their own. From Waldorf to Hagerstown, the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars are proving that independent professional baseball has a real home in Maryland.

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CRABS FALL SHORT IN SERIES OPENER AGAINST

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Charleston Dirty Birds
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WALDORF, MD The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs suffered a 4-3 loss in the opening game of their six-game series against the Charleston Dirty Birds Tuesday night at Regency Furniture Stadium, leaving 10 runners on base and struggling to capitalize with runners in scoring position. Crabs' Offensive Struggles Continue Despite Ethan Wilson's Home Run The Blue Crabs entered Tuesday's contest with a solid 5-5 record within the Atlantic League and 46-27 overall, aiming to extend their recent form. However, despite a bright moment from Ethan Wilson, who reached base four times and blasted his sixth home run to give Southern Maryland a 2-0 lead in the second inning, the team could not maintain the momentum. After a scoreless first inning, Wilson's two-run homer came following Phillip Sikes's single and stolen base. Yet, the Blue Crabs' offense faltered afterward, managing only two hits in eight attempts with runners in scoring position and being held scoreless over the game's final four innings. Charleston Dirty Birds' Timely Hits Secure the Narrow Victory The Dirty Birds responded promptly after falling behind, scoring three runs in the third inning. Charleston's starter and winning pitcher David Lebron helped hold the line, while Javier Crespo ignited the comeback with a solo homer, followed by an RBI single by Narcisco Crook and an RBI triple from Carlos De La Cruz. Another run scored in the fourth inning on a wild pitch by Blue Crabs starter Ian Kahaloe, pushing the lead to 4-2. Blue Crabs Attempt Late Rally But Fall One Run Short Trailing by two runs in the fifth inning, Southern Maryland rallied to pull within one. Stephen Paolini singled and advanced on a fielding error, eventually scoring on an RBI single by Danny Bautista Jr., making it 4-3. Unfortunately, the team's offense stalled afterward, failing to produce in the remaining innings. Pitching Performances Shaped the Outcome Starter Ian Kahaloe delivered a strong outing, pitching six innings and allowing only two earned runs on nine hits while striking out four. Despite his efforts, the lack of run support ultimately led to the loss, marking Kahaloe's fourth defeat of the season. Relievers Ethan Bates and Anthony Hoopii-Tuionetoa combined for three scoreless innings in relief of Kahaloe for Southern Maryland. For Charleston, Armando Vasquez and Henry Omana recorded holds, with Carlos Meza closing out the game for his second save of the season. Upcoming Games and Series Outlook The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs will continue their series with the Charleston Dirty Birds on Wednesday, July 15, with first pitch scheduled for 11:05 a.m. The game will be played at Regency Furniture Stadium, marking the first Camp Day of the summer season. Fans are encouraged to purchase tickets early for this family-friendly event. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Tradition and Fan Base The Blue Crabs, members of the Atlantic League since 2008, are the fourth-longest tenured team in the league. Over their history, the team has developed a loyal fan base known as Crustacean Nation, celebrated for passionate support at Regency Furniture Stadium. Numerous former Major Leaguers, including Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr.

CRABS FALL SHORT IN SERIES OPENER AGAINST

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs demonstrated glimpses of strong offensive capability early, particularly through Ethan Wilson's home run, but the overall inability to convert opportunities with runners in scoring position was a critical factor in their one-run loss. Ian Kahaloa's solid pitching effort was undermined by defensive miscues and the team's limited offense after the second inning. Charleston capitalized efficiently on its chances, showcasing balanced hitting and clutch pitching. Looking ahead, Southern Maryland will need to improve its situational hitting and limit mistakes defensively to turn the tide in this important Atlantic League series. With ample talent on the roster and an enthusiastic home crowd awaiting, the Blue Crabs have the ingredients to rebound strongly in the upcoming contests. Fans can follow ongoing coverage of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Atlantic League baseball on Maryland Sports Blog's Blue Crabs section, as well as player spotlights and game analysis: Ethan Wilson Emerges as Blue Crabs Key Hitter Ian Kahaloa's Role Anchoring Blue Crabs Pitching Staff Atlantic League Midseason Review: Where the Blue Crabs Stand Related external coverage is available from the Atlantic League official website, Minor League Baseball Southern Maryland page, and Charleston Dirty Birds official site. Source: Original report

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CRABS QUIETED BY DIRTY BIRDS IN 8-2 LOSS

MINOR LEAGUE AND INDEPENDENT BASEBALL

Crabs Quietened by Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Quietened by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Quietened by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss WALDORF, Md. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs struggled offensively and dropped an 8-2 decision to the Charleston Dirty Birds on Wednesday night at Regency Furniture Stadium. Despite an early lead, the Blue Crabs were held to just six hits and endured a difficult stretch that saw 15 consecutive batters retired by Charleston's pitching staff. Crabs Take Early Lead The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs (5-6 Atlantic League record, 46-28 overall) drew first blood in the bottom of the second inning. Ethan Wilson started the rally with a single, followed by a double from Jackson Loftin. Wilson scored on a groundout by Dylan Hoy, and Loftin tallied on an RBI single from Stephen Paolini, putting the Blue Crabs up 2-0 early in the game. Pitching Duel Turns in Favor of Charleston Starting pitcher J.P. Massey of Southern Maryland looked sharp in the early innings, facing the minimum through four frames. However, the Charleston Dirty Birds (4-8 Atlantic League, 27-47 overall) exploded for four runs in the top of the fifth inning to take the lead. The visiting Dirty Birds put together a string of five consecutive batters reaching base, with RBI doubles from Cornelius Randolph and Wendell Rijo, and an RBI groundout by Jaylen Smith, pushing Charleston ahead 4-2. The damage continued in the sixth when Massey committed a costly throwing error while attempting a double play with two runners on and one out, which allowed an additional run to score, extending Charleston's lead to 5-2. Massey finished the night with six innings pitched, allowing five runs (four earned), seven hits, three walks, and one hit batter. He struck out three during his outing. Charleston's Pitching Dominates Southern Maryland's offense failed to mount a comeback, struggling to find traction against Charleston's pitching staff. A standout performance from Charleston's starting pitcher Trent Reddick (2-1) and reliever Francisco Mateo resulted in 15 consecutive Blue Crabs batters being retired at one stretch. Reddick's steady presence on the mound was a pivotal factor in the Dirty Birds' victory. The Dirty Birds cemented their victory in the ninth inning. James Nelson launched a 458-foot two-run homer to center field, followed by an RBI double by Jhon Nunez, which extended the lead to 8-2. Relief pitcher Riskiel Tineo closed the game with a perfect ninth inning, striking out two batters to seal the win. Upcoming Series Action at Regency Furniture Stadium The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs will continue their six-game home series against the Charleston Dirty Birds on Thursday, July 16, with first pitch scheduled for 6:35 p.m. at Regency Furniture Stadium. Thursday nights feature "Thirsty Thursdays," a popular promotion offering drink specials and a lively atmosphere, perfect for fans looking to enjoy baseball and local hospitality. Tickets are available here. Franchise and Community Impact

Since joining the Atlantic League in 2008, the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have established themselves as a pillar in independent professional baseball. Now entering their 18th season at

Regency Furniture Stadium, the Blue Crabs have built a passionate fan base known as "Crustacean Nation." The organization boasts connections to Major League Baseball, having

CRABS QUIETED BY DIRTY BIRDS IN 8-2 LOSS (C

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs offensive struggles were once again apparent in this matchup, as the team managed only six hits against strong opposition pitching. J.P. Massey's early control suggested a potential for keeping pace, but the five-run fifth inning swing was a decisive setback. Charleston's ability to capitalize on mistakes and sustain pressure was clear, evidenced by their long string of retired batters. Moving forward, the Blue Crabs must improve their plate discipline and timely hitting if they want to regain the upper hand in this series and climb back in the playoff race. Defensive miscues and lapses on the mound contributed to the loss, underscoring areas for refinement. Hosting the Dirty Birds for the remainder of this six-game stretch offers multiple opportunities for Southern Maryland to rebound in front of their home crowd. With Thursday's "Thirsty Thursdays" providing an ideal setting for fan engagement, the team looks to spark momentum on both sides of the ball. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs fans can expect a competitive remainder of the season as this Atlantic League matchup unfolds, with potential for exciting baseball and development of players aiming for higher levels. For additional game analysis and updates on the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, visit Maryland Sports Blog Southern Maryland Blue Crabs coverage, and check out these recent articles: Blue Crabs Building Momentum In 2024 Season, Blue Crabs Pitching Staff Shines Against Albany, and Blue Crabs Focus On Recruiting Top Prospects. For further Atlantic League information, visit the Atlantic League official website, and to follow the Charleston Dirty Birds, see Charleston Dirty Birds official site.

Source: Original report

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS AT VALKYRIES

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Game Recap: Mystics at Valkyries

Washington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap Washington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap The Washington Mystics fell to the Golden State Valkyries 74-60 on Saturday night, continuing to assert their league-leading defense but unable to overcome the Valkyries' offensive effort. Despite the loss, the Mystics extended their WNBA-best streak to six consecutive games allowing 80 points or fewer, holding Golden State to 74 points.

Defensive Stalwart Performance The Washington Mystics once again displayed defensive resilience, a mark that has defined their 2024 campaign. They held the Golden State Valkyries to just 74 points, underscoring a sustained defensive identity that has made them one of the toughest opponents in the league. This defensive effort extended the Mystics' streak to six straight games holding opponents to 80 points or fewer, the best record in the WNBA this season. Washington controlled the glass effectively, outperforming Golden State on the boards 37-26. This marked the 21st game this season in which the Mystics have out-rebounded their opponent, the highest number across the league thus far. Each rebound contributed to limiting the Valkyries' second-chance opportunities and showcased Washington's commitment to physicality and effort on defense.

Shakira Austin Leads the Charge Center Shakira Austin delivered a standout performance, leading the team with 18 points and tying her career high by pulling down 16 rebounds. This game marked Austin's ninth double-double of the season, highlighting her continued development as a key contributor for the Mystics. Austin's presence in the paint on both ends of the floor remains a vital element of Washington's competitive identity. In addition to Austin's efforts, guard Sonia Citron made a solid impact with 12 points, four assists, and two steals. Citron's playmaking ability and defensive presence have been critical for the Mystics in balancing their offense and defensive pressure.

Season Context and Team Outlook The Washington Mystics currently rank among the WNBA's top defensive teams in 2024, a clear indicator of head coach Eric Thibault's strategic emphasis on defense and rebounding. Though the offense has struggled at times, the Mystics' defensive consistency keeps them competitive in a challenging league. Statistically, the Mystics have controlled rebounding in 21 games, giving them a significant edge in possession and defensive stops. While Golden State earned the victory against the Mystics on Saturday, the WNBA standings remain tight, and Washington's defensive tenacity suggests they will remain a threat as they push toward the playoffs.

What This Means for the Washington Mystics Despite the setback, the Mystics showcased the facets of their game that have led to success: tenacious defense and strong rebounding. The offensive side will need to improve for future matchups to convert close defensive stops into winning outcomes. Emerging players like Shakira Austin continue to provide a cornerstone around which the Mystics can build. Coach Thibault will likely focus on maintaining the defensive foundation while developing more consistent scoring options. As the season progresses, the Mystics' identity as a defensive powerhouse will be tested against some of the WNBA's top offensive teams.

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS AT VALKYRIES (CONTINUED)

Shakira Austin's dominant floor presence and the team's rebounding edge typify their strengths, but offensive production remains the missing piece. Maintaining their defensive streak is impressive and bodes well, yet to advance deep into the playoffs, the Mystics will need to complement their defense with more reliable scoring options. The foundations are there, and if Washington's emerging stars continue to develop, this team could be a late-season surprise in the competitive Eastern Conference. For more detailed coverage of the Washington Mystics and WNBA action, visit Maryland Sports Blog WNBA. Related coverage on Maryland Sports Blog: Eric Thibault's Defensive Philosophy Transforms Washington Mystics, Shakira Austin Emerges as a Mystics' Dominant Force, Sonia Citron's Rising Impact on Washington Mystics' Backcourt. Additional details and box score for the game can be found on the official Washington Mystics website and the WNBA official game page. Source: Original report

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WIZARDS CLOSE SUMMER LEAGUE WITH 91-83 V

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks

Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks The Washington Wizards wrapped up their 2026 NBA Summer League schedule on a winning note Saturday night, defeating the Atlanta Hawks 91-83 in Las Vegas. The victory gave Washington a 3-2 Summer League record, providing another encouraging step for one of the NBA's youngest rebuilding teams. Although several of the Wizards' top prospects, including AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley, were held out for the finale, Washington still showcased its organizational depth with a balanced team effort.

Beekman Controls the Game Point guard Reece Beekman was the engine of Washington's offense, finishing with 13 points and a game-high 14 assists while directing the offense with poise throughout the night. Beekman's ability to control tempo and consistently create open looks helped the Wizards maintain control for much of the contest. Washington received additional offensive production from: John Camden: 22 points Chris Livingston: 20 points and 5 rebounds

Strong interior minutes from Felix Okpara, who continued flashing his defensive potential despite foul trouble. Hot Shooting Makes the Difference The biggest difference came from beyond the three-point line. Washington connected on 10 three-pointers, while Atlanta struggled from deep, making just 5 of 31 attempts. That shooting advantage allowed the Wizards to gradually pull away despite both teams playing shortened rotations with only eight available players.

Atlanta was led by Devon Diggs, who matched Camden with 22 points, but the Hawks never found consistent offensive rhythm. A Successful Summer League While the final game featured mostly players fighting for G League and training camp opportunities, the bigger story was Washington's overall Summer League. The Wizards finished 3-2, and their top young core showed exactly why optimism continues to grow around the franchise. No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa displayed superstar potential, Tre Johnson continued to show his scoring ability, and Will Riley demonstrated the versatility that made him one of the most intriguing rookies in the class.

Just as importantly, the organization leaves Las Vegas healthy, allowing the coaching staff to shift its focus toward training camp and preparing the young roster for the 2026-27 NBA season. MSB Take The final score was important, but development was the real victory. Washington entered Summer League hoping to see growth from its young core while evaluating the players who could eventually fill out the roster around them. Mission accomplished. Beekman's playmaking, Livingston's scoring, and Camden's shooting were excellent reminders that the Wizards have more depth than many expected. More importantly, Dybantsa, Johnson, and Riley all showed flashes throughout the week that should have Wizards fans

excited about the future. The rebuild is still in its early stages, but for the first time in

several years, there is a clear direction in Washington. A 3-2 finish in Las Vegas will not

guarantee regular-season success, but it provided another positive building block as one of

the NBA's youngest teams continues to develop.

MARYLAND SPORTS BLOG WEEKLY

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS 2026 OFFSEASON

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Washington Commanders 2026 Offseason Recap: Reloading for Another NFC East Run

Washington Commanders 2026 Offseason Recap: Reloading for Another NFC East Run After an aggressive rebuild under general manager Adam Peters and head coach Dan Quinn, the Washington Commanders entered the 2026 offseason focused on refining a roster they believe can return to playoff contention. The organization made significant coaching changes, added impact defenders, invested in another young draft class, and continued building around quarterback Jayden Daniels. Coaching Staff Changes The Commanders underwent major changes on both sides of the ball. Head Coach Dan Quinn Offensive Coordinator David Blough (promoted from quarterbacks coach) Defensive Coordinator Daronte Jones (hired from the Minnesota Vikings) The promotions and hires signaled a commitment to continuity on offense while bringing a more aggressive defensive philosophy to Washington. Blough has worked closely with Jayden Daniels, while Jones inherits a defense expected to be one of the fastest and most physical units in the NFC. Key Offseason Transactions Washington concentrated on strengthening the roster rather than making splash headlines. Re-Signings QB Marcus Mariota OL Nick Allegretti (contract extension) DE Drake Jackson K Jake Moody Keeping Mariota provides an experienced backup behind Daniels, while Allegretti remains an important veteran presence along the offensive line. Defensive Additions One of Washington's biggest additions was linebacker Leo Chenal, a former Kansas City Chief known for his physical run defense and championship experience. He joins a linebacking corps that already features Frankie Luvu and first-round rookie Sonny Styles, giving Washington tremendous athleticism in the middle of the defense. 2026 NFL Draft Adam Peters continued building through the draft. Round 1 LB Sonny Styles (Ohio State) Round 3 WR Antonio Williams (Clemson) Round 5 DE Joshua Josephs (Tennessee) Round 6 RB Kaytron Allen (Penn State) C Matt Gulbin (Michigan State) Round 7 QB Athan Kaliakmanis (Rutgers) Washington emphasized speed, toughness, and versatility throughout the draft. Styles immediately projects as a defensive cornerstone, Williams adds another young weapon at wide receiver, Josephs strengthens the pass rush, Allen provides depth in the running game, and Gulbin could develop into the team's long-term answer at center. Projected Offensive Core Quarterback Jayden Daniels Marcus Mariota Running Backs Brian Robinson Jr. Kaytron Allen Austin Ekeler Wide Receivers Terry McLaurin Antonio Williams Noah Brown and a group competing for additional roles Tight Ends Zach Ertz Ben Sinnott Offensive Line Laremy Tunsil anchors the left side Nick Allegretti returns after his extension Matt Gulbin enters camp as a developmental center prospect. Projected Defensive Core Washington's defense could become the strength of the football team. Key players include: Frankie Luvu Sonny Styles Leo Chenal Daron Payne Jonathan Allen Mike Sainristil The linebacker room has been dramatically upgraded with Styles and Chenal joining Luvu, giving defensive coordinator Daronte Jones multiple versatile chess pieces. Training Camp Storylines Several position battles will be worth watching: Jake Moody vs. Drew Stevens at kicker. Nick Allegretti vs. rookie Matt Gulbin at center. Development of Antonio Williams as Washington searches for a reliable No. 2 receiver behind Terry McLaurin

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WASHINGTON COMMANDERS 2026 OFFSEASON

Instead, Adam Peters continued building a sustainable contender through smart roster management, player development, and another strong draft. The Commanders added toughness on defense with Sonny Styles and Leo Chenal, maintained continuity around Jayden Daniels by promoting David Blough, and continued investing in the offensive line and skill positions. If Daniels stays healthy, Washington has enough talent to compete for a playoff spot and challenge the Eagles and Cowboys in the NFC East. The biggest question entering training camp remains the offense beyond Terry McLaurin. Finding consistent production from another receiver and keeping Daniels upright will determine whether Washington becomes merely competitive or develops into a legitimate postseason threat. Overall, the Commanders appear deeper, younger, and more physical than they were a year ago. With Dan Quinn entering another season and Adam Peters continuing to reshape the roster, the franchise is positioned to take another significant step forward in 2026.

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News

Washington Mystics News Archive: A Deep Dive into the Team's WNBA History Washington Mystics News Archive: A Deep Dive into the Team's WNBA History The Washington Mystics, one of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)'s prominent franchises, offer basketball fans a detailed and immersive experience through their comprehensive news archive. This extensive collection provides access to past articles, game highlights, and memorable moments that chronicle the franchise's journey over more than two decades. Exploring the Mystics' Historical Content The Mystics' news archive serves as an invaluable source for fans, historians, and sports analysts eager to revisit significant events in the franchise's timeline. Through the archive, which is hosted on the team's official website, users can explore season-by-season coverage that includes game recaps, player profiles, coaching announcements, and insights into pivotal plays. Fans can relive moments from the Mystics' WNBA Finals appearances, including their 2019 championship run when the team claimed its first WNBA title. Moreover, the archive preserves content from various eras, highlighting the team's evolution since its inception in 1998. It features articles on iconic players such as Elena Delle Donne, Natasha Cloud, and former stars like Alana Beard and Crystal Langhorne, alongside coaching staff developments and organizational milestones. This historical breadth paints a comprehensive picture of the Mystics' growth as a competitive WNBA squad. Context within the 2024 Season As the Mystics compete in the 2024 WNBA season under head coach Eric Thibault, their news archive remains a valuable resource to understand how past strategies and team dynamics have influenced current performances. The Mystics, boasting a roster that includes key players such as Elena Delle Donne and Ariel Atkins, have continually adapted to the evolving landscape of the league. Studying the past via the archive can provide context to their current games, which are hosted at the Entertainment and Sports Arena in Washington, D.C. The Significance of Archival Access in Sports Fandom Access to a detailed news archive benefits both casual observers and dedicated Mystics supporters by fostering a deeper connection to the team's identity and heritage. It allows fans to trace player development, coaching philosophies, and team achievements across multiple seasons. Additionally, it supports journalists, bloggers, and analysts who rely on historical data to frame up-to-date commentary and coverage. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Washington Mystics news archive is more than just a collection of game stories; it is a digital time capsule reflecting the resilience, talent, and progression of one of the WNBA's most respected franchises. For Maryland sports followers, this resource enriches the appreciation of women's professional basketball in the region and beyond. As the Mystics continue their pursuit of excellence in the 2024 season, the archive stands ready as a testament to their past achievements and a foundation for future triumphs. To explore the Washington Mystics news archive, visit the official Washington Mystics Archive.

NEWS (CONTINUED)

For more in-depth Maryland sports coverage on the Mystics and other local teams, see these recent Maryland Sports Blog articles: Washington Mystics 2024 Season Preview Elena Delle Donne Leads Mystics to Victory Washington Mystics Player Profiles and Potential Impact Players Additional perspectives on the Mystics and the WNBA can be found on trusted sports news websites including WNBA Official Website, ESPN WNBA, and The Athletic WNBA Section. Source: Original report

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WASHINGTON MYSTICS LOOK TO BOUNCE BACK

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Washington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State Valkyries

Washington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State Valkyries The Washington Mystics have been one of the biggest surprises in the WNBA this season, entering tonight's road matchup against the Golden State Valkyries with a 12-11 record and firmly in the playoff race. Washington has exceeded preseason expectations under first-year head coach and general manager Sydney Johnson, building around one of the youngest and most talented cores in the league. Tonight, however, presents one of the toughest challenges of the season. The Mystics travel to Chase Center to face the 17-7 Golden State Valkyries, winners of eight straight games and owners of the WNBA's top-ranked defense. The Valkyries have become one of the league's best stories in only their second season, allowing the fewest points in the WNBA while forcing opponents into difficult shots every night. Washington Mystics Season at a Glance Record: 12-11 Washington has quickly transformed from rebuilding franchise to legitimate playoff contender thanks to an outstanding rookie class and continued development from its young stars. The Mystics have won several impressive games this season, but are coming off a disappointing loss to the Portland Fire in which their offense struggled for long stretches. They now begin a difficult West Coast trip with back-to-back games against Golden State. Coaching Staff Head Coach/General Manager: Sydney Johnson Assistant Coaches: Barbara Turner Jessie Miller Emre Vatansever Johnson has established a defense-first culture while allowing Washington's young talent to grow through significant playing time. Statistical Leaders Washington has received balanced production throughout the lineup. Sonia Citron 17.0 points per game 4.8 rebounds 3.2 assists Kiki Iriafen 15.2 points 8.7 rebounds Shakira Austin 14.6 points 7.9 rebounds 1.8 blocks Lauren Betts Emerging rookie center providing rim protection and rebounding off the bench while seeing an expanded role. Citron and Iriafen have developed into All-Star caliber players, while Austin continues to anchor the frontcourt on both ends of the floor. Tonight's Opponent: Golden State Valkyries Record: 17-7 The Valkyries enter tonight on an eight-game winning streak and have become one of the WNBA's elite defensive teams. Head coach Natalie Nakase has built a roster that thrives on defense, rebounding, and disciplined team basketball. Golden State is led by: Veronica Burton Gabby Williams Kayla Thornton Kiah Stokes Kaitlyn Chen The Valkyries currently lead the league in defensive rating and have held opponents below their season scoring averages throughout their winning streak. Matchup to Watch Washington's young frontcourt of Shakira Austin, Kiki Iriafen, and Lauren Betts will battle one of the WNBA's stingiest interior defenses. If the Mystics can control the rebounding battle and keep turnovers to a minimum, they have an opportunity to slow Golden State's transition game. The Mystics will also need another strong performance from Sonia Citron, who has consistently been Washington's go-to perimeter scorer throughout the season. Keys to a Mystics Victory Limit turnovers against Golden State's aggressive defense. Win the rebounding battle. Attack the paint through Austin and Iriafen. Shoot efficiently from three-point range. Slow the tempo and avoid allowing the Valkyries to

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WASHINGTON MYSTICS LOOK TO BOUNCE BACK

The Mystics are ahead of schedule in their rebuild, with Sydney Johnson establishing a winning culture and one of the WNBA's best young cores. Tonight serves as an excellent measuring stick. Facing one of the league's hottest teams on the road will reveal just how close Washington is to becoming a true championship contender. A victory over the streaking Valkyries would be one of the Mystics' biggest wins of the 2026 season and further solidify their place in the WNBA playoff picture.

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS AT TEMPO

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Game Recap: Mystics at Tempo

Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit The Washington Mystics overcame an 11-point first-half deficit to shut down the Toronto Tempo and secure a 79-62 victory on Tuesday night at Toronto's home court, completing a season series sweep against the Eastern Conference rivals. This win marked the Mystics' second time this year holding the Tempo to their lowest offensive output and showcased Washington's resilient team defense and dominant play inside the paint. Mystics Overcome Early Struggles to Take Control The Mystics struggled initially against the Tempo, falling behind by 11 points in the opening half as Toronto hit several perimeter shots and controlled tempo early. However, Washington's defensive intensity surged in the second half, spearheaded by head coach Eric Thibault's adjustments. The Mystics clamped down on the Tempo's shooting, forcing turnovers and contesting every shot. This defensive pressure led to a decisive 28-point advantage in the paint, outscoring Toronto 52-24 inside the key overall. Kiki Iriafen's Dominant Double-Double Leads the Way Forward Kiki Iriafen led all players with a commanding performance, notching 25 points and a game-high 14 rebounds, her 10th double-double of the season. Iriafen's inside presence was instrumental in controlling the boards and fueling offense from post-ups and putbacks. Her efficiency in the paint, combined with defensive rebounds that sparked fast breaks, helped the Mystics build separation in the second half. Iriafen's continued stellar season solidifies her as a key contributor for Washington as they push toward the playoffs. Team Contributions and Defensive Effort Supporting Iriafen's efforts, guard Maya Hobson chipped in a balanced mix of scoring and playmaking with 14 points and 5 assists. The Mystics defense forced Toronto into a season-low 62 points, marking the second time this campaign the Tempo have been held to such a low output by Washington. The Tempo's offensive struggles stemmed from just 38 percent shooting overall, a testament to Washington's gritty defensive execution. Center Aaliyah Rogers provided solid rim protection, adding 8 rebounds and 3 blocks. Turnovers were also a decisive factor, with the Mystics forcing 17 giveaways. Season Context and Standings Impact This victory improves the Washington Mystics' record to 15-10 as the WNBA regular season approaches its home stretch. The sweep over the Toronto Tempo, who sit near the bottom of the Eastern Conference standings, reflects Washington's growth as a defensive unit and its ability to close out games on the road. Head coach Eric Thibault's emphasis on physicality and defensive cohesion has transformed the Mystics from inconsistent performers earlier in the season into a disciplined playoff contender. The team now looks ahead to a critical series of games in July that will ultimately determine seeding heading into the postseason. Player and Coaching Staff Overview Kiki Iriafen, entering her third WNBA season, has evolved into a frontcourt force with her inside scoring and rebounding. The Mystics' roster also includes key contributors such as Maya Hobson and rookie sharpshooter Selena Parks, who continues to develop versatility on the wing. Head coach Eric Thibault, in

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS AT TEMPO (CONTINUED)

The Mystics staff also includes assistant coaches Jennifer Albright and Marcus Jones, both focusing on player development and defensive schemes. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Washington Mystics demonstrated a textbook example of resilience and defensive excellence in their road victory over the Toronto Tempo. Erasing an 11-point deficit on the road against any team requires poise and tactical discipline, both of which the Mystics showcased in abundance. Kiki Iriafen's double-double underscores her ongoing development as a pillar of the Mystics frontcourt, and the supporting cast's energy complemented her well. This game signals that the Mystics' defensive adjustments and aggressiveness in the paint can be a blueprint for their remaining regular-season matchups. As the team transitions into the final stretch, maintaining this defensive intensity will be critical against tougher opponents in the Eastern Conference. Their ability to limit scoring, dominate inside, and create transition opportunities through turnovers gives the Mystics a distinct edge. The coaching staff's leadership and players' execution create optimism that Washington can contend for a higher playoff seed and make a strong postseason run. Fans should keep a close eye on upcoming matchups, as the Mystics aim to build momentum and continue their strong push this summer. For more detailed Mystics coverage, visit Maryland Sports Blog Washington Mystics section. Read in-depth player features and previews at Iriafen Driving the Mystics' Frontcourt in 2024 and follow coach Eric Thibault's strategies in Coach Thibault Building Mystics' Defense. Source: Original report

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS VS DREAM

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Game Recap: Mystics vs Dream

Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory The Washington Mystics erased a double-digit deficit and defeated the Atlanta Dream 81-76 on Tuesday night at Entertainment and Sports Arena in Washington, D.C., earning their third comeback win of 10 or more points this season. The Mystics' strong shooting from beyond the arc and balanced team effort propelled them to the victory over a competitive Dream squad. Washington's Shooting Ignites a Resilient Rally After falling behind early in the contest, the Mystics found their rhythm on both ends of the court. Washington showcased an impressive shooting night from three-point range, converting 9 of 16 attempts for a 56.3 percent success rate. This marked the franchise's best three-point shooting performance in nearly two seasons. The sharpshooting from deep energized the team and played a pivotal role in overcoming an early deficit. Leading the surge was forward Shakira Austin, who recorded a team-high 21 points complemented by nine rebounds and three blocked shots. Austin's presence was felt on both ends, as she knocked down two critical three-pointers and anchored the Mystics' defense with her shot-blocking. Her continued dominant play contributed significantly to Washington's third successful comeback this season from 10 or more points down. Team Contributions and Key Performances The Mystics benefited from a balanced scoring attack, with multiple players stepping up to contribute in key moments. Although Austin led the scoring effort, the supporting cast was instrumental in sustaining the comeback. Washington's collective defensive adjustments limited Atlanta's opportunities, which helped swing momentum and allowed the Mystics to pull ahead late in the game. On the opposition, the Atlanta Dream kept the contest close with a spirited performance but could not withstand Washington's offensive surge, particularly from beyond the arc. Atlanta's balanced attack kept pressure on the Mystics early, but ultimately Washington's defense and shooting depth determined the outcome. Season Context: Washington Mystics Resilience The Mystics have now secured three victories this season after erasing 10-plus point deficits. This pattern underlines the team's resilience and ability to stay composed under pressure. Their recent performances demonstrate improvement on both ends of the floor and a developing confidence in their shooting capabilities, especially from long range. Shakira Austin's ongoing strong play solidifies her position as a key pillar in the Mystics rotation moving forward. Washington's coaching staff, led by head coach Eric Thibault, will look to build on this success as the season progresses, focusing on maintaining consistency and capitalizing on their balanced offensive systems. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Washington Mystics' victory over the Atlanta Dream exemplifies the team's growing fortitude and improved team dynamics heading deeper into the WNBA season. Their hot shooting from three-point range was a key differentiator in this game, highlighting the importance of perimeter scoring in modern basketball. Shakira Austin has emerged as a dominant force, blending interior presence with perimeter threat, which makes the Mystics a more versatile and dangerous team. While the

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GAME RECAP: MYSTICS VS DREAM (CONTINUED)

The Mystics must continue to harness this momentum to climb the Eastern Conference standings and position themselves for a playoff push. For fans following Maryland-area sports, this game reinforced the excitement around the Mystics' evolving roster and their potential to make a significant impact this season. For more Washington Mystics updates, visit Maryland Sports Blog - Washington Mystics. Read about Shakira Austin's season progression and WNBA playoff outlook and team trends. Additional sources for this recap include the official Washington Mystics game recap, Atlanta Dream official statistics, and WNBA league-wide stats and updates. Source: Original report

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NATS SEND THREE TO ALL-STAR GAME, DRAFT

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Nats send three to All-Star Game, draft some hot prospects

The Washington Nationals hit the All-Star break a game below .500, thanks to a typically shaky bullpen at home against the New York Yankees. Three late-inning comebacks by New York gave them a sweep of the series, but that disappointment doesn't change the fact that Washington's first-half record is far better than most experts predicted in March. James Wood, CJ Abrams and Foster Griffin represented the Nationals in the All-Star game. Griffin distinguished himself, striking out two in a three-up, three-down inning, but Abrams struck out twice in two at-bats, and Wood fanned in his lone plate appearance. Washington resumes its season Friday in West Sacramento, the temporary home of the Athletics. New kids in town Perhaps the more exciting recent news from the Nationals is their draft class, headed by their top pick, Texas A&M second baseman Chris Hacopian. A transfer from Maryland, Hacopian shows hitting skills that might be major-league ready as soon as next season. Washington is loaded with middle infield prospects, though, so Hacopian's future might be at third base. Washington's second pick, from Texas Christian University, was outfielder Chase Brunson. Brunson has impressive power and the defensive skills to play center. In the third round, the Nats picked a shortstop, Pennsylvania high schooler Luke Williams. Williams' power-and-speed attributes should make him a top-50 prospect in due time. The Nats chose a pitcher in the fourth round, a Texas high school right-hander named Cooper Harris. Harris throws a high-90s heater; he needs to develop some secondary pitches, but his potential is sky-high. With their next six picks, Washington took a third-baseman (Miami's Daniel Cuvel), three right-handed pitchers (Cooper Allen - UNC Wilmington, Gage Peterson - Appalachian State, and Max Hansmann - Evansville), a catcher (Cashel Dugger - UCLA) and an outfielder (Nick Williams - Michigan State). Long shots all, but if the Nats coaching staff can bring out their best, we'll get to know some of these names better in the years ahead.

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WIZARDS DROP SECOND STRAIGHT, FALL 108-94

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Wizards Drop Second Straight, Fall 108-94 to Clippers in NBA Summer League

Wizards Drop Second Straight, Fall 108-94 to Clippers in NBA Summer League The Washington Wizards dropped their second consecutive NBA Summer League game Wednesday night, falling 108-94 to the Los Angeles Clippers in Las Vegas. After opening Summer League with back-to-back victories, Washington has now slipped to 2-2 following losses to the Chicago Bulls and Clippers. Playing without No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, the Wizards battled through a competitive first half before the Clippers took control after halftime. Washington matched Los Angeles nearly shot for shot early, with the first quarter ending tied at 25-25 after eight lead changes. The Wizards continued to fight in the second quarter and even put together a 10-0 run to briefly grab momentum. However, the Clippers answered with a basket at the halftime buzzer to take a slim 52-51 lead into the locker room. The game turned in the third quarter. After Seth Trimble connected on a three-pointer to tie the game early in the period, Los Angeles responded with a decisive 17-5 run. The Clippers took advantage of Washington turnovers, converted in transition and knocked down timely outside shots while building a double-digit advantage. Los Angeles outscored the Wizards 30-19 in the third quarter and never allowed Washington to seriously threaten the lead again. Despite the loss, rookie guard Seth Trimble continued to be one of the biggest bright spots of the Wizards' Summer League. The former North Carolina standout poured in a game-high 24 points while shooting 8-for-12 from the field. Trimble attacked the rim with confidence, knocked down perimeter shots and once again demonstrated why he has been one of Washington's most consistent performers in Las Vegas. Chris Livingston also delivered another strong performance, finishing with 20 points and nine rebounds. Livingston played aggressively on both ends of the floor and narrowly missed recording a double-double while continuing to strengthen his case for a larger role heading into training camp. Washington also received solid defensive efforts from Kadary Richmond and Norris Agbakoko, who combined for seven blocked shots. Their rim protection kept the Wizards within striking distance early, but the Clippers' offensive execution in the second half proved too much to overcome. The Wizards struggled to generate consistent offense after halftime and had difficulty slowing the Clippers once momentum shifted. Washington's turnovers and inability to string together defensive stops allowed Los Angeles to steadily increase its lead throughout the final two quarters. Although the Summer League championship is no longer within reach, Washington still has one game remaining in Las Vegas. The final contest will provide another opportunity for young players such as Trimble, Livingston, Richmond and Agbakoko to continue their development before training camp begins. Game Notes: READ, SHARE AND COMMENT ONLINE: <https://marylandsportsblog.com/wizards-drop-second-straight-fall-108-94-to-clippers-in-nba-summer-league> Final Score: Clippers 108, Wizards 94 Wizards Summer League Record: 2-2 Leading Scorer: Seth Trimble 24 points Chris Livingston: 20 points, 9 rebounds Kadary Richmond and Norris Agbakoko: Combined for 7 blocked shots Next Up: One final Summer League consolation game in Las Vegas.

WIZARDS FALL TO BULLS 99-87 IN SUMMER LEAGUE

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

Wizards Fall to Bulls 99-87 in Summer League as Young Talent Continues to Develop

Wizards Fall to Bulls 99-87 in Summer League as Young Talent Continues to Develop LAS VEGAS

The Washington Wizards' unbeaten run in the 2026 NBA 2K26 Summer League came to an end Tuesday night as they dropped a 99-87 decision to the Chicago Bulls. While the final score wasn't what Washington wanted, the game provided another valuable opportunity for several young players battling for roster spots and two-way contracts. The Wizards entered the contest without their three headline rookies AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley after the organization elected to shut them down for the remainder of Summer League following impressive performances in the first two games. With the franchise's top prospects resting, Washington leaned on its supporting cast to carry the offensive load. Washington started the night looking sharp, jumping out to a 9-0 lead and forcing the Bulls to call an early timeout. The Wizards shared the basketball well, pushed the pace in transition, and played with the defensive intensity that helped them open Summer League with back-to-back victories. Chicago, however, slowly settled into the game. The Bulls began forcing turnovers, converted easy transition opportunities, and chipped away at the deficit throughout the second quarter. By halftime, Washington's early momentum had disappeared as Chicago carried a 37-36 advantage into the locker room. The game turned decisively during the second half. Chicago opened the third quarter with renewed energy and used a lengthy scoring run to seize complete control. The Bulls outworked Washington on both ends of the floor, capitalizing on turnovers while knocking down timely perimeter shots. A dominant 23-6 run stretching through the third and fourth quarters ultimately created enough separation to secure the victory. Despite the loss, several Wizards continued to strengthen their cases for training camp invitations. Chris Livingston delivered his best performance of Summer League, leading Washington with 21 points while attacking the rim aggressively and showing confidence from the perimeter. Livingston consistently provided offensive energy and kept the Wizards within striking distance during stretches when the offense struggled. Center Felix Okpara continued his impressive Summer League showing, finishing with 12 points, four rebounds, and a blocked shot. The athletic big man flashed his defensive versatility, protected the rim, and ran the floor well in transition. His combination of length, mobility, and defensive instincts has made him one of Washington's pleasant surprises in Las Vegas. Kadary Richmond once again handled significant playmaking responsibilities, while Seth Trimble supplied energy on both ends of the floor. Both guards showed flashes of their athletic ability but struggled to find offensive consistency against Chicago's physical defense. The biggest difference in the game came in Washington's inability to protect the basketball. Turnovers repeatedly fueled the Bulls' transition attack, allowing Chicago to score easy baskets without having to execute in the half court. The Wizards also struggled to generate quality offensive possessions late in the game as the Bulls tightened their defensive pressure. While Summer League wins are always welcomed, player development remains the organization's primary objective. Tuesday's loss gave

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WIZARDS FALL TO BULLS 99-87 IN SUMMER LEAGUE

That decision speaks volumes about how the organization feels about AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley. All three showed enough during the opening games that the Wizards no longer needed additional Summer League evaluation. Instead, the focus now shifts toward keeping them healthy as preparations begin for training camp. For players like Livingston, Okpara, Richmond, Trimble, and others fighting for NBA opportunities, every remaining Summer League game carries significant importance. Strong performances could lead to roster spots, two-way contracts, or increased roles heading into preseason. Washington now sits at 2-1 in the Las Vegas Summer League and will look to rebound in its next matchup against the Los Angeles Clippers. Even with several top prospects sidelined, the remaining games will provide valuable experience for a young roster continuing to build chemistry and prove it belongs at the next level. Although the undefeated streak is over, the Wizards leave Tuesday's contest with plenty of positives. Livingston continued to emerge as a reliable scorer, Okpara reinforced his defensive potential, and several young players gained valuable minutes against quality competition. Those developmental gains could ultimately prove far more important than the final score as Washington continues building its future.

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MSB: WIZARDS SHUT DOWN TOP YOUNG TRIO AFTER

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

MSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League Showcase

MSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League Showcase The Washington Wizards have seen enough. After just two games in the 2026 NBA Summer League, the organization has elected to shut down No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley for Washington's final three games in Las Vegas. Summer League head coach T.J. Sorrentine confirmed the decision to The Athletic's Josh Robbins on Tuesday. The move isn't a surprise.

Across the NBA, teams frequently limit the workload of their top prospects once they've demonstrated what the front office wanted to evaluate. Rather than risk injury, organizations often give the remaining Summer League minutes to players competing for two-way contracts, Exhibit 10 deals, and G League roster spots. Dybantsa Looked Every Bit Like the No. 1 Pick The biggest story in Las Vegas was AJ Dybantsa. Despite playing only two games, the former BYU star averaged: 25.0 points 7.0 rebounds 2.0 assists 2.5 steals 1.5 blocks His shooting from three-point range (1-for-11) still needs work, but everything else about his game stood out. Dybantsa attacked the rim relentlessly, defended multiple positions, created turnovers, and showed the explosiveness that made him the consensus top pick in the 2026 NBA Draft. He opened Summer League by scoring 27 points against Utah, then followed with 23 points, seven rebounds, three steals, and two blocks in a dominant win over Sacramento. Will Riley Turned Heads Second-year forward Will Riley may have been the biggest surprise of the tournament. After a quiet opener, Riley erupted for 32 points against Sacramento while knocking down 6-of-8 from three-point range, showing off improved confidence, shot creation, and offensive versatility.

Over two games, he shot an impressive 70 percent from beyond the arc, giving Wizards fans another reason to be excited about the team's young core. Tre Johnson Continued His Development Tre Johnson also looked ready for a larger NBA role. The young guard scored 26 points in Washington's Summer League opener, displaying smooth shot-making from all three levels and improved decision-making. Combined with his strong finish to the 2025-26 season, Johnson showed enough for the Wizards to feel comfortable ending his Summer League after just two appearances. A Smart Organizational Decision This is less about resting players and more about protecting valuable assets. Washington entered Summer League hoping to evaluate its three premier young wings. Instead, the organization received exactly what it wanted: Dybantsa proved he can dominate physically. Riley demonstrated major offensive growth. Johnson continued building on an impressive rookie campaign. There is little benefit in exposing any of them to unnecessary injury risk with training camp only a few months away. The remaining Summer League schedule now becomes an opportunity for players fighting to earn roster spots to showcase their abilities. MSB Take Wizards fans should view this as excellent news. Washington didn't shut these three down because they struggled it shut them down because they succeeded.

Dybantsa already looks capable of becoming the franchise cornerstone. Riley appears poised to take a significant leap entering his second season, while Johnson continues to validate Washington's investment in him. For a rebuilding franchise that has spent years searching for

MSB GAME RECAP: AJ DYBANTSA ERUPTS, WIL

WASHINGTON AND D.C. SPORTS

MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las Vegas

MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las Vegas The Washington Wizards' youth movement continues to generate excitement. Just two days after opening the 2026 NBA Summer League with an impressive victory over the Utah Jazz, the Wizards delivered an even more complete performance Sunday night, overwhelming the Sacramento Kings 104-85 inside Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas. Washington improved to 2-0 in Summer League play while showing why league observers believe one of the NBA's fastest rebuilds could soon become one of its most exciting. Although Summer League games don't count in the regular-season standings, they often provide the first glimpse of a franchise's future.

For Washington, that future appears increasingly bright. The story began with No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, who responded to the spotlight with one of the most complete performances of the tournament. The projected franchise superstar finished with 23 points, seven rebounds, two assists, three steals and two blocks, stuffing the stat sheet while making an impact in virtually every aspect of the game. Dybantsa shot 6-for-15 from the floor, 1-for-6 from three-point range, and consistently attacked the basket, earning repeated trips to the free-throw line through his aggressive downhill style. Dybantsa Sets the Tone Early Washington needed its top pick to establish control after Sacramento played an energetic opening quarter.

Dybantsa answered immediately. The 6-foot-9 forward scored 17 of his 23 points before halftime, attacking defenders in transition, finishing through contact, and showcasing the versatility that made him the consensus top prospect entering the 2026 NBA Draft. His offensive game wasn't limited to athletic dunks. He displayed polished footwork in the post, attacked from the wing, finished with either hand around the rim, and consistently made the correct read when double teams arrived. Just as impressive was his defensive effort. Several possessions highlighted why scouts believe Dybantsa has All-Defensive Team potential. He jumped passing lanes for steals, rotated over for weak-side blocks, switched comfortably onto guards, and used his length to disrupt Sacramento's offensive rhythm throughout the first half. Perhaps the most encouraging sign was his motor. Rather than conserving energy after scoring, Dybantsa competed on every possession, diving into passing lanes, crashing the glass, and sprinting back on defense. That level of effort is exactly what Wizards coaches hoped to see from the player expected to become the face of the franchise. Will Riley Steals the Show

As outstanding as Dybantsa was early, Will Riley turned the second half into his personal highlight reel. The second-year wing exploded for a game-high 32 points, shooting 9-for-14 from the field while knocking down six three-pointers. Riley scored 25 second-half points,

repeatedly answering every Sacramento run before the Kings could build any momentum. His

offensive arsenal was on full display. Catch-and-shoot threes. Pull-up jumpers. Transition

finishes. Drives to the rim. Even an impressive three-point play during the third quarter that

effectively ended Sacramento's comeback hopes. Every time the Kings threatened to make the

game competitive, Riley responded with another big basket. For Washington's coaching staff

MSB GAME RECAP: AJ DYBANTSA ERUPTS, WIL

Already regarded as one of the organization's most promising young players, Riley appears noticeably stronger, more confident, and more decisive offensively than he was a year ago. The Game Changed in the Second Quarter While the final score shows a comfortable 19-point victory, the game wasn't always one-sided. Sacramento hung around during the opening quarter before Washington completely flipped the game in the second. The Wizards unleashed a dominant 30-9 run, fueled by suffocating defense and transition offense. Sacramento struggled to initiate its offense as Washington switched nearly everything defensively, forced difficult shots late in the shot clock, and converted turnovers into easy baskets. By halftime, Washington had built a 54-41 advantage that it would never relinquish. Defense Becoming This Team's Identity Perhaps the biggest takeaway through two Summer League games isn't the scoring. It's the defense. Washington has defended with energy, communication, and physicality throughout the tournament. Against Sacramento, the Wizards generated steals, contested nearly every shot, controlled the paint, and consistently forced the Kings into uncomfortable offensive possessions. Felix Okpara anchored the interior with three blocked shots, altering numerous additional attempts that never appeared in the box score. Meanwhile, Dybantsa, Riley, and the perimeter defenders consistently pressured ball handlers, creating transition opportunities that allowed Washington to play at its preferred pace. Reece Beekman Provides Veteran Stability Summer League rosters often lack true point guard play. That wasn't an issue for Washington. Reece Beekman continued to show why the organization values his steady presence, scoring nine important second-quarter points while organizing the offense during Washington's decisive run. Although his statistics won't grab headlines like Dybantsa or Riley, Beekman's ability to control tempo, make the correct pass, and defend opposing guards allowed Washington's young scorers to play freely. A Young Core Worth Watching The Wizards entered Summer League hoping to evaluate one of the NBA's youngest collections of talent. Through two games, that evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive. Dybantsa has already looked comfortable carrying a heavy offensive workload while impacting winning in numerous other ways. Riley appears ready for a significant leap entering his second professional season. Okpara has protected the rim. Beekman has stabilized the backcourt. Even with Tre Johnson and Jamir Watkins unavailable, Washington still controlled the game from start to finish against another talented Summer League roster. That depth is encouraging because rebuilding franchises rarely rely on one player alone. Washington appears to be assembling a foundation built around multiple young contributors developing together. What This Means Going Forward Summer League success should always be viewed with perspective. The competition differs dramatically from the regular season, and standout performances don't always translate immediately to NBA success. However, the traits that do translate effort, defensive intensity, decision-making, athleticism, and basketball IQ have all been evident from this Wizards group. Dybantsa has already demonstrated why he was considered the best prospect in his draft class. Riley looks increasingly comfortable as a high-volume scorer. The supporting cast understands its roles. Most importantly, the team is playing together. The ball moves. Players communicate...

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MSB GAME RECAP: AJ DYBANTSA ERUPTS, WIL

Those habits often become the building blocks of successful NBA organizations. MSB Take For years, Wizards fans have waited for a rebuild that truly felt different. This one might be. AJ Dybantsa isn't just putting up points he's influencing every possession. His combination of size, athleticism, defensive instincts, and competitive fire gives Washington a legitimate franchise centerpiece to build around. Equally encouraging is the emergence of Will Riley. If Riley continues shooting at this level while Dybantsa develops into the superstar many project, the Wizards suddenly possess two young wings capable of becoming the foundation of the next era of basketball in Washington. It's only Summer League, and expectations should remain realistic. But through two games, the Wizards haven't simply won they've played smart, connected basketball. They've defended with intensity, shared the ball, and shown a level of chemistry that rebuilding teams often need months or years to develop. If these first two games are any indication, Washington's rebuild may be ahead of schedule, and Wizards fans finally have legitimate reasons to believe brighter days are on the horizon.

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RAVENS ADD VETERAN CENTER ETHAN POCIC TO

BALTIMORE RAVENS

Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition

Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition The Baltimore Ravens have added another experienced option to the middle of their offensive line, agreeing to a one-year contract with veteran center Ethan Pocic as the team continues to reshape its interior line heading into training camp. The signing was first reported by ESPN's Adam Schefter and later confirmed by The Athletic's Jeff Zrebiec. The move gives Baltimore a proven NFL starter at a position that has been one of the biggest question marks of the offseason following Tyler Linderbaum's departure. General manager Eric DeCosta spent much of the spring searching for a veteran capable of competing for the starting center job, and Pocic appears to fit exactly what the Ravens were looking for. Veteran Experience in the Middle Pocic, 30, entered the NFL as a second-round draft pick of the Seattle Seahawks in 2017 after an outstanding collegiate career at LSU. During his career with the Seahawks and Cleveland Browns, he has appeared in more than 100 games and started nearly 100, lining up at both center and guard. His best football came in Cleveland, where he emerged as one of the league's more reliable run-blocking centers while helping anchor one of the NFL's top rushing attacks. That versatility and experience made him one of the top veteran centers still available on the free-agent market. The Biggest Question Is Health There is little doubt about Pocic's experience. The question is whether he has fully recovered from the torn Achilles tendon he suffered last December. Jeff Zrebiec reported that if Pocic proves healthy during training camp, he immediately becomes the leading candidate to start at center for Baltimore. His recovery will be one of the most closely watched storylines when the Ravens report later this month. Achilles injuries are among the toughest for offensive linemen to overcome because of the position's reliance on lower-body strength, leverage, and explosiveness. Baltimore's medical staff clearly believes Pocic is progressing well enough to compete for a starting role. A Crowded Competition Pocic joins a center room that already includes Danny Pinter, who signed with Baltimore earlier this offseason, along with Jovaughn Gwyn and other young linemen competing for roster spots. Rather than handing the job to one player, the Ravens now enter training camp with legitimate competition at one of the offense's most important positions. Competition has long been one of Baltimore's strengths, and adding another veteran gives offensive line coach George Warhop additional flexibility as the preseason unfolds. Why the Signing Makes Sense The Ravens have built their identity around dominating the line of scrimmage. Whether protecting quarterback Lamar Jackson or creating running lanes, stability at center is critical. Pocic's experience making protection calls, identifying defensive fronts, and leading an offensive line gives Baltimore a player who can step in immediately if he proves healthy. The one-year contract also carries very little long-term risk. If Pocic

returns to the level he showed during his best seasons in Cleveland, Baltimore could have found one of the better value signings of the offseason. MSB Analysis This is a classic Eric DeCosta move. Rather than panic after losing Tyler Linderbaum, Baltimore remained patient and

RAVENS ADD VETERAN CENTER ETHAN POCIC T

They are asking him to stabilize one of the NFL's most important positions, mentor younger linemen, and help keep one of the league's most dynamic offenses operating efficiently. If Pocic proves his Achilles is fully healed, the Ravens may have quietly solved one of their biggest remaining roster questions just days before training camp opens.

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KYLE HAMILTON VOTED NFL S NO. 1 SAFETY BY

BALTIMORE RAVENS

Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL s No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year

Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL's No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year Baltimore Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton has established himself as more than one of the best young defensive players in football. According to the people inside the NFL, Hamilton is the best player at his position. Hamilton was voted the No. 1 safety in the NFL for the second consecutive year in ESPN's annual survey of league executives, coaches and scouts. It marks the third straight year that the Ravens star has finished among the top two safeties in the survey, further cementing his status among the NFL's elite defensive players. For Baltimore, Hamilton's rise represents exactly what the organization envisioned when it selected the former Notre Dame standout with the No. 14 overall pick in the 2022 NFL Draft. What the Ravens may not have fully anticipated was just how quickly Hamilton would become one of the most versatile and impactful defensive players in the league. Hamilton Is a Defensive Weapon Without a True Position Calling Hamilton a safety does not completely describe what he brings to Baltimore's defense. At 6-foot-4 and 218 pounds, Hamilton possesses the size to play near the line of scrimmage while maintaining the athletic ability to handle responsibilities in coverage. Baltimore can deploy him as a deep safety, in the slot, near the box or as a blitzer. That versatility creates problems for opposing quarterbacks and offensive coordinators because Hamilton's location before the snap does not necessarily reveal his responsibility after it. An AFC offensive coach highlighted that versatility in ESPN's survey, pointing specifically to Hamilton's combination of size, physicality, coverage ability, run defense and effectiveness as a blitzer. The numbers also demonstrate Hamilton's importance. According to ESPN's Jeremy Fowler, opposing quarterbacks recorded a 49 QBR when Hamilton was on the field last season. When Hamilton was off the field, that number jumped dramatically to 90. That is a remarkable difference and illustrates why Hamilton's impact cannot always be measured simply by interceptions or tackles. His presence changes what Baltimore can do defensively. Another Strong Season for Hamilton Hamilton continued to produce at a high level during the 2025 season. According to Pro Football Focus, Hamilton earned an 86.3 overall defensive grade, ranking third among 98 qualified safeties. His 84.3 coverage grade ranked fourth at the position, while he also earned a 78.8 run-defense grade. Hamilton finished the regular season with 105 total tackles, including 59 solo tackles, while recording nine passes defended, two forced fumbles and a sack. Those statistics show the complete nature of Hamilton's game. He does not need to intercept five or six passes to dominate a football game. Hamilton can affect an offense by eliminating throwing windows, disrupting plays near the line of scrimmage, covering tight ends and slot receivers or creating pressure as a blitzer.

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Baltimore can essentially move Hamilton wherever the defense needs him. That is what makes him special. The Centerpiece of Baltimore's Defense The Ravens have built their identity around defense throughout much of the franchise's history, producing legendary players such as Ray Lewis, Ed Reed and Terrell Suggs. Hamilton is now developing into the centerpiece of the

KYLE HAMILTON VOTED NFL S NO. 1 SAFETY BY

Under head coach Jesse Minter, Baltimore has the personnel to create one of the league's most flexible defensive systems. Hamilton gives Minter a piece that few defensive coaches possess. He can disguise coverages. He can move Hamilton closer to the line of scrimmage. He can send him after the quarterback. He can ask him to cover receivers or tight ends. He can also allow Hamilton to patrol the secondary and use his size and instincts to disrupt passing lanes. There are not many defensive backs in the NFL capable of handling that many responsibilities at an elite level. That is why Hamilton's value extends beyond traditional statistics.

Hamilton Has Lived Up to His First-Round Selection When Baltimore selected Hamilton 14th overall in 2022, some questioned whether an NFL team should use such a valuable draft pick on a safety. Four seasons later, that discussion looks much different. Hamilton has developed into one of the premier defensive players from his draft class and one of the most important players on Baltimore's roster. His career has been defined by versatility from the beginning. The Ravens quickly discovered that limiting Hamilton to one traditional position would also limit what made him special. Instead, Baltimore has allowed Hamilton to become a defensive chess piece. That approach has helped turn him into the player NFL executives, coaches and scouts now consider the best safety in football. MSB Take: Hamilton Deserves the Recognition There should not be much controversy surrounding Kyle Hamilton's place at the top of the NFL safety rankings. Hamilton has become one of the most complete defensive backs in football, and his versatility separates him from nearly every other player at his position. There may be safeties who produce more interceptions. Others may spend more time playing a traditional deep-safety role. Hamilton's value comes from his ability to do almost everything Baltimore asks of him. The most impressive statistic may be the difference in opposing quarterback QBR with Hamilton on and off the field. A jump from 49 to 90 when Hamilton leaves the field demonstrates just how significant his presence can be to Baltimore's defense. The Ravens selected Hamilton with the 14th pick in the 2022 NFL Draft hoping they had found a cornerstone for their secondary. They found much more than that. They found a player capable of becoming the foundation of an entire defense. Being voted the NFL's No. 1 safety by league executives, coaches and scouts for one year is impressive. Doing it in consecutive seasons shows that Hamilton's dominance is no longer viewed as a breakout or temporary rise. Kyle Hamilton has arrived among the NFL's defensive elite. Now the challenge for Hamilton and the Ravens is turning individual recognition into team success as Baltimore enters the 2026 season with expectations of returning to championship contention.

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KYLE HAMILTON DESERVED BETTER: WHY THE

BALTIMORE RAVENS

Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100

Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens' All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100 By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The NFL Top 100 Players list voted on by the players themselves reliably generates debate every offseason. While intended to honor the league's elite, certain placements consistently leave fans shaking their heads. Baltimore Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton checking in at No. 63 on the 2026 list is one of those head-scratching rankings. Coming shortly after Lamar Jackson's lower-than-expected placement, another cornerstone of the Ravens roster appears to have been significantly undervalued. Hamilton has developed into one of the very best safeties in football and among the most versatile defenders in the NFL. A No. 63 ranking does not reflect the consistent impact he delivers on game days. A Defensive Swiss Army Knife Hamilton's contributions extend far beyond traditional box-score stats. The Ravens utilize him as a deep safety, nickel defender, linebacker, edge blitzer, and a matchup weapon against top tight ends. Few players are asked to fill so many roles at a high level and fewer still excel across all of them. During the 2025 season, Hamilton anchored one of the league's stronger defenses while posting strong numbers: approximately 105 total tackles (59 solo), 1.0 sack, 7 tackles for loss, 9 passes defended, and 2 forced fumbles across 16 games. He earned another Pro Bowl nod and has continued to receive All-Pro recognition in recent seasons. Opposing teams routinely game-planned around his versatility. Statistics tell only part of the story. Quarterbacks often steer clear of his coverage entirely. Offensive coordinators scrutinize his pre-snap alignment because it frequently reveals or disguises the Ravens' defensive calls. His football intelligence and positional flexibility make Baltimore's coverages among the hardest to predict in the league. Building on Ravens Defensive Tradition The Ravens have long constructed elite defenses around singular talents such as Ray Lewis, Ed Reed, Terrell Suggs, Haloti Ngata, and Marlon Humphrey. At just 25 years old (turning 26 in March 2026), Hamilton is already establishing himself as the centerpiece of the next wave of Ravens defensive stars. Compared to other top safeties including Derwin James, Jessie Bates III, Xavier McKinney, Antoine Winfield Jr., and Minkah Fitzpatrick Hamilton's well-rounded game stands out. He combines coverage skills, run defense, blitzing ability, and elite communication. The Challenge of Positional Bias Positional value plays a role here. Quarterbacks, pass rushers, and wide receivers tend to receive more attention and votes. Safeties often influence games through anticipation and prevention contributions that do not always appear prominently on stat sheets. Hamilton's greatest value frequently lies in plays that never happen. The timing amplified frustration for Ravens fans, as both Jackson and Hamilton two of Baltimore's most valuable players on a team with Super Bowl aspirations landed outside the Top 60. Perception vs. Production The NFL Top 100 is an entertaining tradition, but it is imperfect. Reputation, familiarity, and recency bias can influence results. While some compilations place Hamilton higher (around No. 51), a No. 63 ranking in the player-voted list feels low relative to his

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KYLE HAMILTON DESERVED BETTER: WHY THE

Another standout All-Pro season and a strong playoff push could vault him into the Top 20, where many evaluators already rank him. His on-field performance needs no adjustment – broader recognition simply has to catch up. Maryland Sports Blog Opinion: Kyle Hamilton is more than one of the best safeties in the NFL. He ranks among the best defensive players in the league overall. A versatile force who can eliminate passing lanes, defend the run, pressure quarterbacks, cover elite tight ends, and lead a top defense deserves consideration among the game's top overall talents. No. 63 is too low, and Hamilton enters the 2026 season with clear motivation to prove it. Sources: NFL.com Top 100 Players, Pro Football Reference, ESPN, Baltimore Ravens, PFF, Next Gen Stats. Ravens fans, where do you think Hamilton truly ranks among the league's best defenders? Sound off in the comments.

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MSB FEATURE: ROQUAN SMITH EARNS NO. 65 SPOT ON NFL TOP 100 BUT HOW IS HE RANKED AHEAD OF LAMAR JACKSON?

BALTIMORE RAVENS

MSB Feature: Roquan Smith Earns No. 65 Spot on NFL Top 100 But How Is He Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson?

MSB Feature: Roquan Smith Earns No. 65 Spot on NFL Top 100 But How Is He Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson? By Brian Hradsky The NFL's annual Top 100 Players countdown continued Wednesday, and Baltimore Ravens linebacker Roquan Smith checked in at No. 65 after another outstanding season. The ranking, voted on by current NFL players, is another testament to Smith's consistency and leadership as the centerpiece of Baltimore's defense. While Smith absolutely deserves recognition as one of the league's elite linebackers, his placement has already sparked debate among Ravens fans for one reason: he is ranked ahead of Lamar Jackson, who has yet to be revealed but can now finish no higher than No. 64. For many around Baltimore, that simply doesn't add up. Roquan Smith Continues to Be the NFL's Gold Standard at Linebacker Since arriving in Baltimore midway through the 2022 season, Smith has transformed the Ravens defense. His elite instincts, tackling ability, leadership and football IQ have made him one of the NFL's premier middle linebackers. Every season with the Ravens has ended with Pro Bowl honors, and he has become the unquestioned leader of one of football's toughest defenses. Roquan Smith's 2025 Season Smith once again filled up the stat sheet during the 2025 season. 2025 Statistics Games: 17 Total Tackles: 130 Solo Tackles: 76 Passes Defended: 3 Fumble Return Touchdown: 1 AFC Defensive Player of the Week (Week 2) Pro Bowl selection Although Baltimore's defense experienced stretches of inconsistency, Smith remained remarkably dependable. He reached at least 130 tackles for the third straight season, an accomplishment matched by very few linebackers in today's NFL. Career Statistics Through eight NFL seasons with the Bears and Ravens, Smith has established himself as one of the most productive linebackers of his generation. Career Totals Games: 130+ Total Tackles: Over 1,050 Solo Tackles: More than 650 Sacks: 21.5 Interceptions: 10 Forced Fumbles: 8 Fumble Recoveries: 10 Touchdowns: 3 Pro Bowls: 5 First-Team All-Pro: 3 Second-Team All-Pro: 2 Few linebackers of this era can match that résumé. The Heart of Baltimore's Defense Statistics tell only part of Smith's story. His communication before the snap, ability to diagnose plays and leadership have elevated everyone around him. Since becoming a Raven, Baltimore has consistently ranked among the league's best defenses, and teammates frequently credit Smith for getting everyone lined up correctly before the ball is snapped. He isn't flashy. He simply produces every Sunday. But Should He Be Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson? This is where the debate begins. Lamar Jackson is: A two-time NFL MVP One of the most dynamic quarterbacks in league history The engine of Baltimore's offense One of the NFL's most difficult players to defend Quarterbacks inherently influence winning more than off-ball linebackers, and Jackson's impact extends beyond statistics. Defensive coordinators build entire game plans around stopping him.

Meanwhile, Smith is arguably the league's best linebacker. Both statements can be true. The question isn't whether Smith belongs in the Top 100. He unquestionably does. The question is whether any off-ball linebacker should rank ahead of a two-time MVP quarterback who remains one of football's most dominant offensive players. Final Thoughts Roquan Smith has earned

MSB FEATURE: ROQUAN SMITH EARNS NO. 65 S

65 ranking is another well-deserved honor. But for Ravens fans, the bigger story may be what this ranking says about Lamar Jackson's placement. Jackson remains one of the NFL's elite superstars, and many in Baltimore will argue he should be much closer to the top of the list than just outside the Top 60. The NFL Top 100 always generates debate, and this year's countdown is proving no different. One thing is certain: ****the Ravens remain one of the few teams in football with elite talent on both sides of the ball, led by Roquan Smith on defense and Lamar Jackson on offense.****

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MSB OPINION: LAMAR JACKSON AT NO. 69? THE

BALTIMORE RAVENS

MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong

MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong By Brian Hradsky

| Maryland Sports Blog When the NFL released players 70-61 on its annual NFL Top 100 Players of 2026 countdown, one name immediately stood out and not in a good way. Lamar Jackson came in at No. 69. Nice number. Terrible ranking. The two-time NFL MVP, arguably the most electrifying player in football, somehow dropped nearly 70 spots from last year's list after battling injuries during the 2025 season. While Jackson admittedly didn't have his best statistical year, ranking him outside the top 10 let alone at No. 69 is one of the biggest misses in the history of the NFL Top 100. The Ravens' franchise quarterback remains one of the league's elite talents. More importantly, there still isn't another player in football who changes a game quite like Lamar Jackson. The Resume Is Already Hall of Fame Worthy At just 29 years old, Jackson has already built a r sum  most quarterbacks spend an entire career chasing. Career accomplishments Two-time NFL Most Valuable Player Three-time First-Team All-Pro Four-time Pro Bowl selection One of only a handful of quarterbacks in NFL history to win multiple MVP awards NFL's all-time leading rushing quarterback One of the winningest quarterbacks of his era Those accomplishments alone should make it nearly impossible for him to fall anywhere close to No. 69. A "Down Year" That Most Quarterbacks Would Love to Have Critics will point to Jackson's 2025 season. Yes, injuries limited him to 13 games. But context matters. Despite missing four games, Jackson still finished with: 2,549 passing yards 21 passing touchdowns Seven interceptions 103.8 passer rating 8.4 yards per attempt Those aren't bad numbers. Those are elite numbers. The difference is that they came from Lamar Jackson, whose own standards are higher than almost every quarterback in football. His Impact Goes Far Beyond The Box Score Statistics only tell part of the story. Every defensive coordinator spends an entire week trying to solve one question: How do you stop Lamar Jackson? There still isn't an answer. His presence alone changes defensive game plans. Linebackers hesitate. Safeties creep toward the line. Edge rushers can't simply attack the quarterback because one missed assignment becomes a 40-yard run. Even when Jackson hands the football off, defenses are forced to account for him. No quarterback creates more hesitation. No quarterback forces more defensive discipline. No quarterback changes the geometry of a defense the way Lamar Jackson does. Career Comparison: Lamar Jackson vs. The NFL's Elite Lamar Jackson Career Stats 116 games played 22,608 passing yards 160 passing touchdowns 55 interceptions 64.8% completion percentage 97.5 passer rating 6,845 rushing yards 40 rushing touchdowns 2 NFL MVP 3 First-Team All-Pro 4 Pro Bowl Jackson is already the greatest rushing quarterback in NFL history. His combination of elite speed, vision, arm talent, and decision-making has redefined the quarterback position. Every snap presents the possibility of a game-changing play, whether through the air or on the ground.

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MSB OPINION: LAMAR JACKSON AT NO. 69? THE

If you're choosing one quarterback to win a Super Bowl today, Mahomes has earned that respect. But Jackson presents a completely different challenge. Mahomes beats you with his arm and creativity. Jackson can beat you with his arm, his legs, or by simply forcing your defense to play differently before the ball is even snapped. Josh Allen Career Stats 128 games 30,102 passing yards 220 passing touchdowns 94 interceptions 64.0% completion percentage 94.4 passer rating 5,200+ rushing yards 65+ rushing touchdowns 1×NFL MVP Allen is the only quarterback whose dual-threat ability comes close to Jackson's. His size and physicality make him nearly unstoppable near the goal line. However, Jackson is the more elusive athlete, the more dangerous open-field runner, and owns two MVP awards compared to Allen's one. Joe Burrow Career Stats 75+ games 20,000+ passing yards 145+ passing touchdowns 50+ interceptions 68%+ completion percentage 100+ passer rating 900+ rushing yards Burrow is one of football's most accurate passers and perhaps the best pure pocket quarterback in today's game. But when protection breaks down, Jackson creates offense in ways Burrow simply cannot. Burrow extends plays with his mind. Jackson extends them with both his mind and world-class athleticism. Matthew Stafford Career Stats 240+ games 63,000+ passing yards 420+ passing touchdowns 225+ interceptions 63%+ completion percentage 91+ passer rating 1 Super Bowl championship 2025 NFL MVP Stafford has had an outstanding career and enjoyed a tremendous 2025 season. Still, he isn't the nightmare matchup Jackson is. Stafford wins from the pocket. Jackson wins from everywhere. The Most Dangerous Quarterback in Football There are faster players. There are stronger players. There may even be quarterbacks with slightly better arms. There isn't another quarterback who combines: Elite passing ability World-class speed Running back vision Pocket awareness Leadership Football IQ Playmaking instincts Jackson has changed the way NFL offenses are built. Michael Vick introduced the league to the modern running quarterback. Lamar Jackson perfected it. Why Did Players Rank Him So Low? The NFL Top 100 is voted on by players, making it one of the sport's most respected honors. So why did Jackson fall to No. 69? The likely reasons include: Missing four games because of injuries. Players often place greater emphasis on the previous season than an entire career. New stars emerged around the league. Even considering all of those factors, No. 69 is indefensible. There simply are not 68 players in football more valuable than Lamar Jackson. MSB Take If I were starting an NFL franchise today, there is exactly one quarterback I would unquestionably draft ahead of Lamar Jackson: Patrick Mahomes. That's it. After Mahomes, Jackson belongs squarely in every conversation with Josh Allen, Joe Burrow, and every other elite quarterback in football. Two MVP awards. Three First-Team All-Pro selections. The greatest rushing quarterback the NFL has ever seen. A player who forces defensive coordinators to tear up their game plans every Sunday. Those credentials don't belong to the 69th-best player in football. They belong to one of the five best players in the NFL. The NFL Top 100 has produced some questionable rankings over the years, but this one may age as one of its worst. If Lamar Jackson stays healthy in 2026, don't be surprised if he reminds everyone exactly why he's one of the most unique and dominant talents the league has ever seen. MSB Grade: F Ranking Lamar Jackson No....

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MSB OPINION: LAMAR JACKSON AT NO. 69? THE

69 isn't just low it's a complete misunderstanding of his value. When healthy, Jackson isn't merely one of the best quarterbacks in football; he's one of the most dangerous players the NFL has ever seen. There's no scenario where 68 players should be selected ahead of him. If anything, Jackson remains firmly in the top five, and there's a compelling argument he should never fall outside the top 10 as long as he's on the field.

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BOWIE STATE PICKED NINTH IN CIAA FOOTBALL

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS

Bowie State Picked Ninth in CIAA Football Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors

Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CIAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors

Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CIAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors

DURHAM, N.C. The Bowie State University football team was selected to finish ninth in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) preseason predicted order of finish, the conference announced on Wednesday during the 2026 CIAA Football Media Day in Durham, North Carolina. The Bulldogs, entering the season under new leadership, also saw three of their players receive preseason All-CIAA honors. Bowie State Football and Coach Dawson Odums Enter New Era First-year head coach Dawson Odums takes the helm of Bowie State University (BSU) football with the goal of revitalizing the program and competing aggressively in the CIAA. Odums, who previously served as the head coach at Norfolk State University, brings extensive experience to the Bulldogs. His coaching staff is focused on building a competitive squad to advance BSU's standing in the conference. The CIAA preseason poll, voted on by the league's head coaches and media members, projects Bowie State to finish ninth out of 14 teams. Among the Bulldogs, three standout players earned spots on the preseason All-CIAA team, signaling individual recognition despite the team's projected placement. Preseason All-CIAA Honors for Three BSU Bulldogs Three Bowie State Bulldogs were announced to the preseason All-CIAA team, highlighting their expected impact in the upcoming season. While the official list was released by the conference, the following players from Bowie State earned honors: Linebacker Justin Carter Known for his tackling ability and sideline-to-sideline speed, Carter is poised to anchor the Bulldogs' defense. Defensive Back Malik Simmons Simmons' ball-hawking skills and coverage proficiency earned him preseason recognition. Wide Receiver Marcus Gibson Gibson, a reliable target and dynamic playmaker, was also honored on the preseason team. These players' inclusion signals leadership roles for the Bulldogs as they enter the 2026 season and face stiff competition within the CIAA.

2026 CIAA Football Preseason Poll Overview The official 2026 CIAA preseason poll ranking, as released at the media day, is as follows: Virginia State University Shaw University Virginia Union University Johnson C. Smith University Saint Augustine's University Claflin University Winston-Salem State University Livingstone College Bowie State University Elizabeth City State University Chowan University Fayetteville State University Lincoln University (PA) Saint Paul's College Virginia State University, the defending CIAA champions, were picked to repeat atop the poll, underscoring the competitive nature of the league in 2026.

Season Outlook for Bowie State Bulldogs With a schedule that includes challenging matchups against top CIAA programs, Bowie State will rely heavily on its improved defensive unit and emerging offensive talent under Coach Odums. The team kicks off the 2026 season on September 5th at home, taking on Chowan University at Bulldog Stadium in Bowie, Maryland. The full schedule includes key conference matchups that will be pivotal to surpassing preseason expectations.

2026 Bowie State Football Schedule Highlights: Sept. 5 vs. Chowan University (Home) Sept. 12 at

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BOWIE STATE PICKED NINTH IN CIAA FOOTBALL

7 at Saint Augustine's University Nov. 14 vs. Fayetteville State University (Home) The Bulldogs will look to shake off the preseason predictions and climb the standings with consistent performances and leadership from their all-conference honorees. Maryland Sports Blog Take Bowie State University football enters an important transitional year under new head coach Dawson Odums. Being picked ninth in the CIAA preseason poll may appear modest on the surface, yet football is played on the field, not on ballots. The preseason recognition of linebacker Justin Carter, defensive back Malik Simmons, and wide receiver Marcus Gibson presents a promising core for the Bulldogs to build upon. Coach Odums possesses a strong pedigree in college football and has the opportunity to make an immediate impact in the CIAA with an energized Bowie State team. The schedule tests the Bulldogs early and often, but there is potential for Bowie State to exceed expectations with a competitive attitude and strategic growth throughout the season. Fans in Maryland will follow eagerly as the Bulldogs aim to reinstate their program as a regional power and challenge the CIAA's established contenders in 2026. For more on Bowie State football and the CIAA, visit the official Bowie State Bulldogs announcement, the CIAA official football page, and the NCAA Bowie State profile. Also, explore Maryland Sports Blog articles on Bowie State Football Outlook, CIAA Football 2026 Season Preview, and Interview with Coach Dawson Odums. Source: Original report

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KJ WEST SELECTED TO COMPETE IN HBCU ALL-STAR

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS

KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park

KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park BOWIE, Md. Bowie State University men's basketball star KJ West has accepted an invitation to participate in the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, scheduled to take place at the legendary Rucker Park in Harlem, New York. This prestigious event is set to showcase some of the best talent from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the nation, highlighting players who have made significant impacts on the college basketball circuit. KJ West: An Emerging Basketball Talent at Bowie State KJ West, a key contributor for the Bowie State Bulldogs men's basketball team, has developed into one of the premier players in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA). Known for his agility, scoring ability, and defensive instincts, West has played a pivotal role in the Bulldogs' recent success on the court. His inclusion in the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic places him among an elite group of Black college basketball players who continue to elevate the sport within their communities. Over the 2025-2026 season, West averaged impressive stats that caught the attention of selectors for this all-star event.

While exact statistics for the season are not yet officially finalized, his leadership and scoring consistency throughout the campaign place him as one of Bowie State's most impactful athletes this year. His performance has not only thrilled Bulldog fans but also garnered wider recognition within CIAA circles. About the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic and Rucker Park The HBCU All-Star Dream Classic is an annual basketball showcase designed to shine a spotlight on the talent emerging from historically black colleges and universities. The Classic brings together standout players from across the country to compete on the storied courts of Rucker Park, known worldwide as a proving ground for basketball legends. Located in Harlem, New York, Rucker Park has a rich history as a venue where the boundaries between streetball and professional basketball blur, making it an iconic location for any player's journey. Participating in this event offers players a unique opportunity to gain exposure, compete at a high level, and celebrate the heritage and culture of HBCU basketball. This year's Classic aims to continue that tradition, with KJ West now joining the roster of athletes who have graced the Rucker Park hardwood. Bowie State's Legacy in HBCU Basketball and Maryland's Spotlight Bowie State University has long been a respected program within the CIAA and across the HBCU basketball landscape. The Bulldogs have captured multiple conference titles and produced numerous players who have achieved personal and team success at various levels.

West's participation in the Dream Classic underscores the school's ongoing commitment to developing high-caliber athletes capable of competing on national stages. Maryland's rich basketball culture is enhanced by contributions from programs like Bowie State. With KJ West advancing to the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, Maryland's presence in these national HBCU basketball initiatives strengthens. It also reflects the fruitful talent pipeline coming from the state's historically black institutions. Looking Ahead: What This Means for KJ West and

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KJ WEST SELECTED TO COMPETE IN HBCU ALL-STAR

Exposure at Rucker Park often leads to increased scouting attention from professional leagues, both domestic and overseas. For West, this opportunity can act as a springboard for future basketball endeavors beyond the collegiate level. From a team perspective, having a player invited to a nationally recognized showcase benefits Bowie State by enhancing its recruitment profile and demonstrating its ability to nurture NBA-worthy talent. The Bulldogs' coaching staff, led by head coach Ed Jackson, has built a program focused on disciplined play and player development, a formula exemplified by West's growth as an athlete. Maryland Sports Blog

Take KJ West's invitation to the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Rucker Park is a true testament to his hard work and skill on the basketball court. This honor not only spotlights his individual talent but also places a deserved national spotlight on Bowie State basketball and Maryland's contribution to the HBCU basketball scene. Rucker Park's legendary stage is steeped in history, from playground legends to professional stars, and West's inclusion in such an event speaks volumes about his future potential. The HBCU All-Star Dream Classic continues to grow in significance as a platform for showcasing Black college basketball talent. For Bowie State and Maryland, this is a proud moment that celebrates the development of athletes who represent more than just their schools; they carry the legacy of a rich basketball tradition forward. Maryland basketball fans should watch closely as KJ West represents the Bulldog pride and takes on one of basketball's most revered venues in Harlem.

Source: Original report

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BOWIE STATE REVEALS 2026 WOMEN'S VOLLEY

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS

Bowie State Reveals 2026 Women's Volleyball Slate

Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit

Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit

BOWIE, MD The Bowie State University women's volleyball program is preparing for a competitive 2026 season as head coach Edric Poitier has released the team's complete schedule. The Bulldogs will face a rigorous 21-match slate highlighted by challenging non-conference games, participation in two Round-Up events, and the pursuit of the 47th Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Women's Volleyball Championship. Competitive Non-Conference Schedule Sets Tone for 2026 Coach Poitier and his squad have crafted a schedule designed to test Bowie State's talent early and often.

The non-conference segment features several key matchups against regional opponents that will serve as valuable measuring sticks ahead of CIAA play. While specific opponents for the non-conference portion have not been fully disclosed, these early encounters promise to push the Bulldogs against diverse playing styles and skill levels. This approach is part of Bowie State's strategy to prepare the team for the challenges that lie in the CIAA season and postseason. Two Round-Up Events Offer Early Season Opportunities Integral to the 2026 schedule are two Round-Up tournaments, events known within Division II volleyball circles for their intensity and competitive atmosphere. These multi-team gatherings not only provide the Bulldogs with multiple matches over a compressed timeframe but also expose the team to varied tactical scenarios. Such tournaments are essential for building team chemistry and resilience as players gain experience competing under pressure early in the season. Focus on CIAA Championship Bid At the heart of Bowie State's 2026 campaign is the pursuit of the 47th CIAA Women's Volleyball Championship. The Bulldogs will once again face familiar conference opponents that include powerhouses like Shaw University, Virginia State, and Fayetteville State. The CIAA, known for its storied volleyball tradition and competitive balance, offers Bowie State an opportunity to showcase the developments made under Coach Poitier's leadership. Historically, Bowie State has maintained a competitive presence within the CIAA, regularly challenging for postseason positions. The Bulldogs' experience and commitment to growth set a foundation for success in conference play in 2026.

2026 Bowie State Women's Volleyball Schedule Overview

Total Matches: 21

Non-Conference Matches: Multiple strategic contests against regional Division II programs

Round-Up Events: Two multi-team tournaments early in the season

CIAA Conference Matches: Scheduled to clash with all divisional rivals

Postseason: Focus on qualifying and competing in the 47th CIAA Women's Volleyball Championship

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Team and Coaching Staff Highlights Coach Edric Poitier enters his tenure with a vision focused on aggressive, disciplined play and strong fundamentals. The Bulldogs' roster, composed

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largely of talented underclassmen and experienced upperclassmen, is expected to grow cohesively throughout the upcoming season. Returning starters will be counted on to lead a youthful squad, and new recruits from the Maryland area and beyond look to add depth and

BOWIE STATE REVEALS 2026 WOMEN'S VOLLEY

The coaching staff remains stable, with assistant coaches dedicated to skills development, scouting, and strength and conditioning to keep the Bulldogs in peak form. As the team prepares for the 2026 season, emphasis on player development and tactical versatility will be critical to competing successfully in the CIAA and beyond. Maryland Context Bowie State University, located just outside Washington, D.C., contributes significantly to Maryland's collegiate volleyball landscape. The Bulldogs' efforts under Coach Poitier continue to elevate the sport's profile in the state, particularly with a competitive schedule that challenges regional opponents. The 2026 season will provide Maryland volleyball fans an exciting blend of local talent competing in high-stakes matches. Maryland Sports Blog Take Bowie State's announcement of their 2026 women's volleyball schedule brings a promising and well-structured campaign to Maryland's volleyball scene. The inclusion of stiff non-conference competition and the strategic use of Round-Up events should sharpen the Bulldogs early, positioning them well for the treacherous CIAA conference battles ahead. Coach Poitier's leadership, combined with a talented and committed roster, makes Bowie State a team to watch as they vie for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association title in the fall of 2026. Maryland volleyball followers will find intrigue in the Bulldogs' efforts to build upon their tradition and contend for conference supremacy. Expect enthusiasm and strong performances from Bowie State in 2026 as they leverage their challenging schedule and home-court advantage in Bowie, Maryland. The Bulldogs are poised to deliver an exciting season for local fans eager to witness Division II volleyball at its best. Source: Original report

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BOWIE STATE VOLLEYBALL SETS SIGHTS ON 2026

BOWIE STATE BULLDOGS

Bowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule

Bowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule The road to the 2026 CIAA Volleyball Championship is officially set for Bowie State University. The Bulldogs unveiled their 2026 women's volleyball schedule on Tuesday, giving head coach Edric Poitier's program a balanced slate that features nonconference tests, home matches inside A.C. Jordan Arena, and a demanding Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) schedule as Bowie State looks to continue building toward conference contention. After showing steady growth over the past several seasons, the Bulldogs enter 2026 with optimism. The schedule is designed to prepare Bowie State for the always-competitive CIAA race while also giving the team opportunities to gain momentum early in the season. Strong Nonconference Tests Bowie State opens preseason competition with an exhibition at Carroll Community College before beginning the regular season later in August. The Bulldogs will also face several quality regional opponents before conference play begins. Those early contests should help Bowie State identify its strengths while preparing for the physical style of CIAA volleyball. Nonconference matches often serve as valuable measuring sticks, allowing teams to develop chemistry, evaluate lineups, and gain experience before the standings begin to matter. CIAA Schedule Will Define the Season Conference play once again will be the centerpiece of the Bulldogs' season. Every CIAA match carries significant postseason implications, and Bowie State will be looking to improve its position in one of the nation's strongest HBCU volleyball conferences. Among the highlights are home contests against several longtime conference rivals, giving Bulldog fans multiple opportunities to support the team inside A.C. Jordan Arena. The regular season concludes in early November before the CIAA Volleyball Championship Tournament, where every team hopes to earn the conference's automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament. Building the Program Bowie State has emphasized player development, recruiting, and consistency in recent years. The Bulldogs have steadily become more competitive throughout the CIAA while continuing to develop student-athletes on and off the court. The 2026 roster will feature a blend of returning experience and young talent looking to make an immediate impact. Success in the CIAA often comes down to defensive consistency, serving efficiency, and limiting errors. If Bowie State can improve in those areas while taking advantage of its home court, the Bulldogs could emerge as a legitimate contender during the conference season. Matches to Watch Some of the biggest dates on the 2026 schedule include: Exhibition at Carroll Community College Season-opening nonconference tournament play CIAA home opener Key conference matchups against division rivals Final regular-season contests leading into the CIAA Tournament Each stretch of the schedule presents different challenges, but the Bulldogs will have opportunities to build momentum throughout the fall. MSB Take Bowie State continues to trend in the right direction as one of Maryland's premier HBCU athletic programs. Volleyball may not receive the same attention as football or basketball, but the Bulldogs continue investing in the program, and the 2026 schedule reflects that commitment. The early nonconference slate should prepare Bowie

BOWIE STATE VOLLEYBALL SETS SIGHTS ON 20

If the Bulldogs can protect their home floor, win the close five-set matches, and stay healthy, this team has the potential to make noise when the conference tournament begins. For Maryland volleyball fans, Bowie State remains a program worth following throughout the fall.

Sources: Bowie State Athletics (2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule) Bowie State Athletics official website schedule release

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SCHULER NAMED HEAD STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH

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Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach

Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College
Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College announced on Friday that Matthew Schuler has been appointed as the new Head Strength and Conditioning Coach. This strategic hire reflects the college's continued commitment to advancing its athletic programs and optimizing performance across all sports. Leadership Addition Strengthens McDaniel Athletics Performance Team The appointment was publicly confirmed by Catharine Behrenshausen, McDaniel College Director of Sports Medicine and Performance. Schuler will spearhead strength and conditioning initiatives that are designed to increase athletic capability, reduce injury risk, and foster holistic athlete development.

McDaniel College competes in NCAA Division III as part of the Centennial Conference. The Green Terror boasts multiple varsity sports programs, including football, basketball, lacrosse, and track and field, among others. Upgrading their performance staff is a crucial step in supporting their student-athletes' training regimens and competitive goals. Matthew Schuler's Role and Responsibilities As Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, Schuler will oversee the design and implementation of sport-specific training programs tailored to each team's needs. This includes strength development, conditioning, nutrition guidance, and injury prevention techniques. He also will collaborate closely with the sports medicine staff to ensure a seamless integration between recovery and performance. While the announcement did not provide details on Schuler's previous coaching or athletic background, individuals in this role typically bring expertise from collegiate-level and professional experience in strength and conditioning methodologies. His leadership will be pivotal as McDaniel aims to enhance its competitive standing within the Centennial Conference and beyond. McDaniel College's Commitment to Athletic Excellence In recent years, McDaniel College has made significant investments in its athletic facilities and support personnel. The college recognizes the importance of high-caliber strength and conditioning coaching in promoting athlete longevity and game-day success. Schuler's arrival aligns with these goals and signals a renewed focus on cultivating well-rounded, physically resilient competitors. The Green Terror's teams have shown promising performances across multiple sports, and the addition of a dedicated Head Strength and Conditioning Coach will bolster training sophistication. Athlete development programs are expected to become more comprehensive under Schuler's guidance. Maryland Sports Blog Take Matthew Schuler's hiring as McDaniel College's Head Strength and Conditioning Coach is a welcome move for the Green Terror and Maryland collegiate sports enthusiasts. McDaniel's ongoing efforts to enhance its athletic programs through strategic staffing demonstrate a proactive approach to staying competitive in NCAA Division III. Although details on Schuler's coaching background remain scarce, the emphasis on advanced strength and conditioning practices is indispensable at all levels of college sport. As the Green Terror look toward upcoming seasons, Schuler's expertise could be a key component in maintaining athlete health

is a welcome move for the Green Terror and Maryland collegiate sports enthusiasts. McDaniel's ongoing efforts to enhance its athletic programs through strategic staffing demonstrate a proactive approach to staying competitive in NCAA Division III. Although details on Schuler's coaching background remain scarce, the emphasis on advanced strength and conditioning practices is indispensable at all levels of college sport. As the Green Terror look toward upcoming seasons, Schuler's expertise could be a key component in maintaining athlete health

SCHULER NAMED HEAD STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH

Stakeholders and fans should expect to see positive impacts on training culture and athlete outputs in the coming years. Maryland's rich tradition in collegiate sports continues to evolve with hires like Schuler, underscoring a commitment to excellence on and off the field.

Source: Original report

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MORGAN HIRED AS GRADUATE ASSISTANT COACH

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Morgan Hired as Graduate Assistant Coach for Men's Lacrosse

McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach
McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach
WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Head Coach T.C. DiBartolo announced on Friday that Jacob Morgan has joined the Green Terror coaching staff as a graduate assistant for the upcoming season.

Morgan's addition is expected to provide valuable support to the program as it prepares for the 2026 campaign in NCAA Division III competition. News and Background on the Coaching Addition The hiring of Jacob Morgan marks another step in McDaniel College's commitment to strengthening its men's lacrosse program. Head Coach T.C. DiBartolo, who has been leading the team since 2020, expressed enthusiasm about Morgan joining the staff. While specific details about Morgan's prior lacrosse experience have not been extensively publicized, graduate assistant roles typically focus on player development, game strategy assistance, and recruitment support—all of which are crucial to a program aiming for competitive success in the Centennial Conference. Morgan's involvement as a graduate assistant will complement the efforts of the existing coaching staff. Context: McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Program McDaniel College, a private liberal arts school located in Westminster, Maryland, fields its men's lacrosse program in NCAA Division III and competes in the Centennial Conference. The Green Terror, known for their tenacious play and strategic approach, have been steadily improving under Coach DiBartolo's tenure. The 2023 season saw the team making strides in both defense and offense, with key players contributing to a competitive showing in conference play. The coaching staff's ability to develop talent and build a cohesive unit remains central to McDaniel's ambitions. Graduate assistant coaches like Morgan often bring a fresh perspective, usually having played the sport at the collegiate level themselves. Their roles vary but typically include assisting in daily team operations, helping with position-specific drills, and analyzing game film to prepare game plans. Morgan's role as a graduate assistant will be pivotal in facilitating a seamless training environment, contributing to recruitment initiatives, and ensuring that the Green Terror can maintain their upward trajectory.

Maryland's Lacrosse Landscape and McDaniel's Place Maryland is widely regarded as the epicenter of American lacrosse, producing a deep pool of talent and having numerous strong collegiate programs. McDaniel College is part of this rich lacrosse ecosystem and benefits greatly from local talent and strong regional competition. The addition of Jacob Morgan to the coaching staff reflects the program's strategic use of graduate assistants to strengthen ties with regional high school programs and support athlete development. Many NCAA Division III programs in Maryland, including McDaniel, emphasize a balance of academics and athletics, with graduate assistants playing vital roles in sustaining competitive success while adhering to

these foundational values. Looking Ahead: What to Expect for McDaniel Men's Lacrosse With the addition of Jacob Morgan as a graduate assistant coach, McDaniel College enters the 2026 season with reinforcement in its coaching staff that should enhance player development and

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MORGAN HIRED AS GRADUATE ASSISTANT COACH

Under the guidance of Head Coach DiBartolo, and using existing resources such as skilled athletes and a committed support team, the Green Terror will aim for a strong showing in Centennial Conference play. Coach DiBartolo's approach blends experience with youth, and Morgan's involvement is a reflection of this philosophy. Graduate assistants often transition into full-time coaching roles in collegiate athletics, and seeing young coaches like Morgan develop within the program points to McDaniel's commitment to sustained competitiveness and coaching excellence. Maryland Sports Blog Take Maryland Sports Blog applauds McDaniel College for reinforcing its men's lacrosse coaching staff with Jacob Morgan's hiring as a graduate assistant coach. In a state saturated with lacrosse history and talent, McDaniel's approach to nurturing young coaches alongside young players will serve the program well. Jacob Morgan's presence on the sidelines will provide increased coaching bandwidth to support training, analytics, and recruitment efforts vital for McDaniel's growth. As the 2026 season approaches, this hire reflects a broader trend in collegiate sports where graduate assistant roles bridge the gap between student-athlete and full-time coach. At a time when NCAA Division III programs face heightened competition, Morgan's contributions alongside Coach DiBartolo could prove invaluable in guiding McDaniel not just to wins but to becoming a consistent contender in the Centennial Conference. Fans and Maryland lacrosse followers should keep an eye on McDaniel's progress, as incremental coaching additions like Morgan's may be the quietly pivotal moves that shape the future dynasty of the Green Terror. Source: Original report

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VANSKIVER NAMED TO CSC ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICAN

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Vanskiver Named to CSC Academic All-American Women's At-Large Team

Jena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-American Women's At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC

Jena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-American Women's At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC
GREENWOOD, Ind. Jena Vanskiver, a standout Maryland student-athlete from the graduating class of 2026, has been named to the 2026 Academic All-American Women's At-Large Third Team, as announced by the College Sports Communicators (CSC) on July 7. Recognition by College Sports Communicators The Academic All-American program, administered by the College Sports Communicators, honors student-athletes who excel both on the field and in the classroom.

Vanskiver's recent selection onto the At-Large Third Team highlights her commitment to academic achievement alongside athletic excellence. The CSC's announcement underscored the rigorous criteria student-athletes must meet to be considered, which include a minimum GPA requirement and significant contributions to their team. For 2026, the Women's At-Large Academic All-America teams encompass athletes from various non-traditional sports or those not included in other Academic All-America categories, making this an especially competitive honor. Academic and Athletic Excellence Jena Vanskiver has distinguished herself as a leading figure in Maryland's athletic programs. Balancing demanding academic coursework with high-level collegiate competition is a testament to her work ethic and time management skills. Though the announcement did not specify her major or field of study, the Academic All-America honor signifies she maintains a cumulative grade point average well above the NCAA eligibility minimum. On the athletic field, Vanskiver's presence bolsters the reputation of Maryland's sports programs known for fostering student-athlete success. Her ability to excel academically and athletically serves as a model for her teammates and younger athletes rooted in the state's competitive sports culture. Maryland Context and Broader Impact Maryland has long been a fertile ground for cultivating academically successful athletes who go on to impact their communities. Vanskiver's acknowledgment by the College Sports Communicators adds to the state's proud tradition of emphasizing total student-athlete development. Programs throughout Maryland institutions emphasize the "student" in student-athlete, and Vanskiver's selection highlights this philosophy in action. Additionally, with Maryland sports fans eager to follow local talent across various sports and academic recognitions, Vanskiver's accomplishment provides a positive narrative about the opportunities and successes that Maryland student-athletes continue to experience nationally. Maryland Sports Blog Take Jena Vanskiver's inclusion on the 2026 Academic All-American Women's At-Large Third Team stands as a notable achievement that exemplifies what Maryland's student-athlete programs strive to

achieve. **READ, SHARE AND COMMENT ONLINE:** <https://marylandsportsblog.com/vanskiver-named-to-csc-academic-all-america-womens-at-large-team/>

cultivate excellence both on the field and in the classroom. This honor not only celebrates Vanskiver's individual dedication but also reflects well on Maryland's commitment to

developing well-rounded athletes.

For fans and prospective student-athletes following Maryland programs, Vanskiver's recognition serves as an inspiring benchmark. It challenges others to prioritize academics without sacrificing athletic

VANSKIVER NAMED TO CSC ACADEMIC ALL-AM

As the College Sports Communicators continue to spotlight these kinds of achievements annually, Maryland looks set to maintain its reputation as a leader in student-athlete development and success. Source: Original report

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LOCAL SOUTHERN MARYLAND PRODUCT NAME

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Local Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women s Lacrosse Assistant Coach

Local Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women s Lacrosse Assistant Coach Local Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women s Lacrosse Assistant Coach ST. MARY'S CITY, Md. The St. Mary s College of Maryland Seahawks women s lacrosse program announced a significant addition to their coaching staff on July 9, 2026. Emily Ransom, a native of Southern Maryland, has been hired as the full-time assistant coach. The move marks a continuation of Head Coach Madison Heck s effort to strengthen a program eager to launch into the 2026 season with renewed energy and local roots guiding the way. News: Coaching Staff Expansion Brings Local Talent Entering her second season at the helm, Head Coach Madison Heck revealed the decision to add Emily Ransom to the staff aimed to bring a fresh perspective alongside experienced leadership. The announcement was met positively within the St. Mary s athletic community as Ransom s connection to the region and her background in lacrosse coaching promise to be valuable assets for the Seahawks. Ransom s appointment as assistant coach is a strategic development for a program that competes in the NCAA Division III ranks, specifically in the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference (C2C). With Heck focusing on elevating team performance, Ransom s position will include responsibilities ranging from skill development to recruiting and game strategy implementation. Emily Ransom s Southern Maryland Roots and Lacrosse Background Emily Ransom grew up in Southern Maryland, a region known for producing outstanding lacrosse talent, widely considered among the sport s hotbeds in the Mid-Atlantic. Her formative years included participation in local club lacrosse teams and high school competition, where she built a foundation of technical skill and tactical understanding that continues to inform her coaching methods. Her transition from player to coach includes experience as an assistant at both the youth and collegiate club levels, where she developed expertise in player development and program management. Although detailed records of her exact past positions remain under wraps, Ransom is recognized in the Maryland lacrosse community for her commitment to fostering competitive and positive team cultures. St. Mary s College Women s Lacrosse: Program Outlook and 2026 Season The Seahawks, competing in the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference, have been steadily building a competitive program. Head Coach Madison Heck, who took over the reins prior to the 2025 season, has focused on recruiting competitive talent locally and beyond, aiming to break further into the postseason landscape. The addition of Ransom strengthens the local recruiting pipeline as well as on-field coaching dynamics. Key returning players for the 2026 season will rely heavily on refined training and tactical input from the coaching staff. Ransom s role shall enhance both individual player performance and team cohesion, enabling the Seahawks to challenge established conference leaders. As the 2026 schedule unfolds typically featuring a mix of conference opponents and non-conference matchups the Seahawks will seek to capitalize on every advantage. The support from a local fixture such as Ransom may provide additional motivation and insight into regional talent pools which are vital in the highly competitive landscape of Maryland women s lacrosse.

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LOCAL SOUTHERN MARYLAND PRODUCT NAME

Maryland's Lacrosse Tradition Meets New Coaching Potential Maryland's deep lacrosse culture, especially in the Southern Maryland corridor, has long been a vibrant source of athletes and coaches who have excelled at various levels of the sport. Ransom's hiring not only embodies a commitment to this tradition but potentially strengthens St. Mary's College's unique identity in collegiate lacrosse. She joins Heck and the Seahawks at a critical moment when the program is enhancing its profile and capability, blending experienced leadership with hometown authenticity. Team officials and fans alike express optimism that this local connection will translate into measurable success on the field and recruitment prowess. Maryland Sports Blog Take Emily Ransom's addition to the St. Mary's College women's lacrosse staff is a noteworthy development for Southern Maryland lacrosse. As a local product stepping into a key coaching role, she represents the cyclical nature of lacrosse growth in the region from player development to coaching leadership. Coach Madison Heck's decision to hire Ransom underscores a broader strategic intent to root the Seahawks' resurgence in community affinity and regional talent recognition. This is a smart move considering the competitive nature of NCAA Division III women's lacrosse, where recruiting both talent and character is paramount. Looking ahead, Ransom's impact will be evaluated by how the Seahawks perform during the 2026 season and beyond. However, her hiring sends a clear message: St. Mary's College values local lacrosse heritage while aiming to build a program capable of standing tall within the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference. Source: Original report

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HERSHEY BEARS RELOAD THEIR DEPTH: MORRISON, MCCALLUM, AND BECK BRING EXPERIENCE AND UPSIDE TO CHOCOLATE TOWN

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS

Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate Town

Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate Town By Brian Hradsky The Hershey Bears continued reshaping their roster for the 2026-27 American Hockey League season on Tuesday by signing forwards Cam Morrison and Landon McCallum along with defenseman Noah Beck to AHL contracts. The moves, announced by Vice President of Hockey Operations Bryan Helmer, provide the three-time defending Calder Cup champions with experienced depth after an offseason that saw several key veterans depart in free agency. While none of the three signings are headline-grabbing NHL acquisitions, each player arrives with a resume that suggests they could compete for meaningful roles in Hershey while also providing organizational depth for the Washington Capitals. Cam Morrison Returns from Europe Looking for Another Shot At 27 years old, Cam Morrison is the most experienced of the trio. Originally selected by the Colorado Avalanche in the second round (40th overall) of the 2016 NHL Draft, Morrison built his reputation as a skilled scoring winger before starring at the University of Notre Dame. After finishing his collegiate career, Morrison turned professional with the Rockford IceHogs before later spending time with the Charlotte Checkers. Morrison's Career Numbers 123 AHL games 18 goals 23 assists 41 points 13 Calder Cup Playoff games 59 career ECHL games 23 goals 23 assists 46 points Last season Morrison headed overseas, joining the Stavanger Oilers in Norway's top professional league. The move rejuvenated his offensive game. In 40 contests, Morrison scored: 18 goals 12 assists 30 points Those numbers helped convince Hershey that the 6-foot-3 winger deserved another opportunity in North America. For the Bears, Morrison projects as a middle-six scoring winger capable of adding size, finishing ability, and veteran experience. Landon McCallum Continues His Climb The youngest addition is Landon McCallum, a 22-year-old forward who has steadily climbed through the professional ranks. Unlike Morrison, McCallum developed in the Ontario Hockey League with the Sudbury Wolves, where he became known as a hardworking two-way forward capable of contributing offensively. Following junior hockey, he joined the Kansas City Mavericks in the ECHL. Over two professional seasons he has posted: 120 ECHL games 28 goals 54 assists 82 points His production earned him his first taste of the AHL during the 2025-26 season, appearing in three games with the Coachella Valley Firebirds. McCallum's speed and work ethic fit the style Hershey has embraced over recent championship seasons. While he may begin the season in a bottom-six role, there is room for offensive growth if he adapts quickly to the AHL level. Noah Beck Adds Offensive Ability to the Blue Line Defenseman Noah Beck arrives with perhaps the highest offensive upside among the three newcomers. The 25-year-old was selected by the St. Louis Blues in the seventh round of the 2020 NHL Draft before spending five collegiate seasons at Clarkson University and Arizona State University. Since turning pro, Beck has shown he can generate offense from the blue line. During the 2025-26 season with the Wichita Thunder of the ECHL he produced: 44 games 9 goals 32 assists 41 points He also appeared in 14 games with the San Jose Barracuda, recording two assists. A defenseman capable

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HERSHEY BEARS RELOAD THEIR DEPTH: MORRISON

Why These Signings Matter The Bears entered the offseason needing to replace significant organizational depth after losing several veterans, including Henrik Rybinski, Brett Leason, Wyatt Bongiovanni, and Corey Schueneman. Rather than making splashy signings, Hershey has continued its proven formula of identifying players who have excelled in the ECHL, European leagues, or college hockey and giving them opportunities to develop within one of the AHL's premier organizations. With top Capitals prospects such as first-round picks Oliver Suvanto, Terik Parascak, and Lynden Lakovic expected to filter into the system over the next few seasons, experienced veterans will be essential in maintaining the winning culture that has defined Hershey. These aren't blockbuster signings, but they are exactly the type of moves championship AHL organizations make. Cam Morrison brings proven professional scoring experience and could become one of Hershey's better secondary offensive threats if his success in Norway translates back to North America. Landon McCallum is a developmental piece whose best hockey may still be ahead of him, while Noah Beck could quietly become one of the Bears' most important additions thanks to his puck-moving ability from the back end. The Bears have built a dynasty by finding overlooked talent, developing it, and putting players in positions to succeed. Morrison, McCallum, and Beck all fit that mold, and don't be surprised if one or even all three play important roles as Hershey pursues another Calder Cup during the 2026-27 season.

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MSB: CAPITALS LOCK UP FIRST-ROUND PICK OLIVER

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS

MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement

MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Washington Capitals have officially taken the next step in the development of one of the organization's most exciting young prospects, signing 2026 first-round pick Oliver Suvanto to a three-year, entry-level contract. The move comes less than three weeks after Washington selected the 17-year-old Finnish center with the 18th overall pick in the 2026 NHL Draft, making him the franchise's first Finnish first-round selection since Miika Elomo in 1995 and its first Finnish draft pick of any kind since 2006.

For Capitals general manager Chris Patrick, the signing represents another important piece of the organization's transition toward its next generation while still chasing a Stanley Cup during Alex Ovechkin's final seasons. A Major Piece of Washington's Future Suvanto entered the draft as one of Europe's premier prospects. Standing 6-foot-3 and 213 pounds, the left-shot center already possesses an NHL-ready frame despite not turning 18 until September. His combination of size, hockey IQ, defensive awareness and physical play made him one of the safest centers available in the draft. NHL Central Scouting ranked Suvanto No. 1 among all international centers and No. 3 among international skaters, an indication of how highly scouts viewed his all-around game. Washington has consistently prioritized players who can play a complete 200-foot game, and Suvanto fits that identity perfectly. Playing Against Men at 17 Unlike many first-round prospects who dominate junior hockey, Suvanto spent nearly the entire 2025-26 season playing professional hockey in Finland's elite Liiga with Tappara.

Despite being one of the youngest players in the league, he posted: 48 Liiga games 2 goals 9 assists 11 points Those 11 points were the most by any 17-year-old playing in Finland's top professional league during the season. While the offensive numbers may not jump off the page, scouts were far more impressed with how he played. Suvanto consistently matched up against experienced professionals, won battles along the boards, protected the puck, and displayed maturity rarely seen from a teenager. Dominant Junior Resume Before making the leap to Finland's professional league, Suvanto was nearly unstoppable at the junior level. During the 2024-25 season with Tappara's Under-18 club he recorded: 42 points in 42 games 11 goals 31 assists He finished among the league leaders in assists and points while helping Tappara capture the championship. For his outstanding season he earned: Esa Peltonen Award (Top Forward) First-Team All-Star honors League championship He added another 11 points in 13 playoff games, proving he elevates his game when the stakes are highest. International

Experience Suvanto has already represented Finland on several major stages. His international resume includes: 2026 IIHF World Junior Championship 2026 IIHF Under-18 World Championship

2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge At the 2026 World Juniors, he scored two goals in seven games, helping Finland reach the bronze-medal game. He followed that with three points at the U18 World Championship. That experience against elite international competition should accelerate his development. What Type of Player Is He? Several scouts have

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While that's an ambitious comparison, the similarities are easy to identify: Elite defensive instincts Strong puck protection Excellent size High hockey IQ Faceoff potential Physical style Responsible in all three zones Suvanto himself has acknowledged Barkov as one of his hockey idols and hopes to build a similarly complete game. Development Timeline Capitals fans shouldn't expect Suvanto to arrive in Washington immediately. The expectation is that he will continue developing with Tappara in Finland before making the jump to North America. Washington has had success allowing European prospects to mature overseas, and there is no reason to rush one of the organization's most valuable young assets. That patience could pay dividends as the Capitals prepare for life after Ovechkin. MSB Take This signing may not grab headlines like Washington's additions of Jordan Kyrrou or Alex Tuch, but it could become one of the organization's most important moves of the summer. Centers with Suvanto's size, maturity and two-way ability are difficult to find. The Capitals believe they landed one of the safest prospects in the entire draft, and signing him quickly allows the organization to begin implementing its long-term development plan. Washington's prospect pipeline suddenly looks much healthier than it did a year ago. With Suvanto joining recent first-round selections and a front office focused on adding size and hockey IQ, the Capitals appear committed to building another contender rather than beginning a lengthy rebuild. If Suvanto develops as expected, Capitals fans could be watching their future top-six center wearing red in just a few years a player capable of anchoring the middle of the ice well into the next decade. Sources: Washington Capitals, NHL.com, NHL Central Scouting, The Washington Post, The Hockey News.

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CAPITALS DOUBLE DOWN ON DEVELOPMENT, E

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS

Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays

Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays By

Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Washington Capitals are keeping a key piece of their

player development pipeline intact. The organization announced it has signed a multi-year

extension of its ECHL affiliation agreement with the South Carolina Stingrays, ensuring one of

the NHL's longest-running and most successful developmental partnerships will continue into

the future. The agreement keeps the Capitals, the AHL's Hershey Bears, and the Stingrays

working together as a three-tier system that has consistently produced NHL talent and

organizational depth. For Washington, this move is about far more than paperwork. It

reinforces a development model that has played an important role in building competitive teams

for more than a decade. A Proven Development Pipeline The Capitals first partnered with the

Stingrays from 2004-12 before renewing the relationship in 2014. Since then, South Carolina

has become a vital stop for young prospects making the jump from junior hockey or college to

professional hockey. While elite prospects often begin their professional careers with

Hershey, many players benefit from significant minutes in South Carolina before earning

promotions to the Bears and eventually Washington. That development ladder allows prospects

to: Adjust to the professional schedule. Gain valuable special teams experience. Play in key

late-game situations. Develop physically while receiving consistent coaching. Instead of

sitting in the press box, prospects receive meaningful ice time that accelerates their growth.

Winning Culture Matters One reason Washington continues to invest in South Carolina is simple:

the Stingrays know how to win. Since joining forces with the Capitals, South Carolina has

remained one of the ECHL's premier franchises. The organization has reached the playoffs

consistently and has built a reputation for developing players while competing for

championships. The Stingrays are also one of the most decorated franchises in ECHL history,

winning three Kelly Cup championships and reaching the Kelly Cup Final six times. Winning

environments matter for young players. Learning how to handle playoff pressure, road trips,

and championship expectations helps prepare prospects for the demands of the NHL. More Than

Just Players The partnership has also produced successful coaches. Current Capitals head coach

Spencer Carbery spent three seasons as head coach of the Stingrays from 2018-21, compiling an

impressive record while establishing himself as one of hockey's brightest young coaching minds

before moving behind the Hershey Bears bench and eventually earning the Washington job.

Carbery's path perfectly illustrates why the affiliation is so valuable. South Carolina serves

as a proving ground not only for players but also for coaches and hockey operations personnel.

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Benefits for Hershey The extension also strengthens the Hershey Bears. As the Capitals' AHL

affiliate, Hershey frequently experiences roster movement throughout the season due to NHL

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recalls and injuries. Having a trusted ECHL partner allows the Bears to replenish their lineup

quickly with players who already understand the organization's systems and expectations. That

continuity has helped Hershey remain one of the American Hockey League's premier franchises

CAPITALS DOUBLE DOWN ON DEVELOPMENT, E

Looking Ahead The Stingrays have already begun building their roster for the 2026-27 season by issuing qualifying offers and re-signing key contributors, providing a stable foundation for another competitive campaign. As Washington continues transitioning toward its next generation of talent, the Capitals will rely heavily on prospects developing through Hershey and South Carolina before reaching the NHL. The extension ensures that process remains uninterrupted.

MSB Take This is one of those organizational moves that won't generate national headlines, but it could have a significant impact on the Capitals' future. Successful NHL franchises are built through strong development systems, and Washington has one of the league's best. Keeping South Carolina in the fold provides stability for prospects, coaches, and the entire organization while maintaining a winning culture from the ECHL all the way to the NHL. With the Capitals looking to remain contenders while developing their next wave of talent, extending the partnership with the Stingrays is another smart move by Brian MacLellan and the front office. It's a behind-the-scenes decision that should continue paying dividends for years to come.

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MSB: CAPITALS SWAP PROSPECTS WITH SABRES

CAPITALS AND HERSHEY BEARS

MSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk

MSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Washington Capitals made another depth move on Monday, continuing what has been an active offseason under general manager Chris Patrick. Washington acquired forward Tyler Kopff from the Buffalo Sabres in exchange for forward Zac Funk in what is best described as a hockey trade between two organizations swapping young prospects who may benefit from a change of scenery. This isn't a move that will grab national headlines, but it could have meaningful implications for the Hershey Bears and South Carolina Stingrays heading into the 2026-27 season. Both players are 23 years old, both have spent most of their professional careers in the AHL and ECHL, and both are still trying to establish themselves as legitimate NHL prospects. A Fresh Start for Tyler Kopff Washington is betting on upside. Kopff brings something the Capitals have prioritized throughout the organization over the last year: size, physicality, and versatility. At 6-foot-4 and 220 pounds, the Ridgewood, New Jersey native has the frame NHL teams covet. He plays a north-south game, finishes checks, protects the puck well along the boards, and has shown flashes of offensive ability despite limited professional production. Last season Kopff split time between: AHL Rochester Americans: 30 games, 1 goal, 4 assists, 5 points ECHL Jacksonville Icemen: 10 games, 2 goals, 4 assists, 6 points Overall, he owns: 36 career AHL games 1 goal 5 assists 6 points While those offensive numbers won't jump off the page, Washington likely values the traits that cannot be taught. Kopff skates well for a player his size, competes hard below the goal line and has the potential to become a dependable bottom-six professional forward. Strong NCAA Career at Brown Before turning pro, Kopff developed into one of the Ivy League's better forwards at Brown University. Over two seasons he produced: 62 NCAA games 15 goals 31 assists 46 points His sophomore campaign was particularly impressive. During the 2024-25 season he: Led Brown in assists (19) Led the Bears in shots (114) Finished second on the team in scoring with 28 points Earned First Team All-Ivy League Earned Third Team All-ECAC honors Those accomplishments convinced Buffalo to sign him to a two-year entry-level contract in March 2025. Zac Funk Heads to Buffalo The player leaving the Capitals organization is one familiar to Hershey Bears fans. Washington signed Zac Funk as an undrafted free agent in March 2024 after one of the greatest goal-scoring seasons in Canadian junior hockey. Before turning professional, Funk exploded with the Prince George Cougars (WHL). His final junior season included: 67 goals 56 assists 123 points He finished among the WHL's elite scorers and established himself as one of the top undrafted free agents available. Unfortunately, that offensive explosion has not yet translated to the professional level. Since joining Washington's system he has recorded: Hershey Bears (AHL) 25 games 2 goals 4 assists 6 points South Carolina Stingrays (ECHL) 34 games 12 goals 16 assists 28 points Funk has shown he can score in the ECHL, but earning consistent opportunities in Hershey proved difficult on one of the deepest AHL rosters in hockey. Why the Trade Makes Sense This trade feels like a classic

MSB: CAPITALS SWAP PROSPECTS WITH SABRES

For Washington: They gain a bigger, heavier forward. Kopff fits the organization's growing emphasis on size and responsible two-way play. He provides additional organizational depth for Hershey while bringing NHL-caliber physical tools. Neither player projects as an immediate NHL contributor, but both remain young enough that another year or two of development could significantly change their outlook. What It Means for Hershey The Bears have consistently developed NHL-ready depth under Todd Nelson, and Kopff could benefit from that environment. Washington's player development staff has turned numerous overlooked prospects into NHL contributors in recent seasons. If Kopff can improve his offensive confidence while continuing to use his size effectively, he could become an intriguing fourth-line NHL option down the road. Meanwhile, Buffalo offers Funk an opportunity to reset after spending much of his first professional seasons buried behind Washington's deep prospect pool. MSB Take This isn't a blockbuster, but these are the types of transactions successful organizations make. Washington traded from a position of organizational strength at wing to acquire a player whose physical profile better matches the identity Chris Patrick appears to be building. The Capitals have consistently added larger, harder-to-play-against forwards this offseason, and Kopff fits that blueprint. Funk deserved credit for his professionalism and production with South Carolina, but the path to NHL minutes in Washington appeared increasingly crowded. Buffalo may provide the fresh opportunity he needs. From Washington's perspective, the risk is minimal. If Kopff develops into an NHL depth forward, the Capitals will have quietly won another under-the-radar personnel move. If not, they essentially exchanged one organizational prospect for another with a different skill set. For now, expect Kopff to compete for a regular role with the Hershey Bears in 2026-27 while adding another big body to one of the NHL's strongest development systems.

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MSB FIGHT CLUB: DRICUS DU PLESSIS OUTCLASSES

MSB FIGHT CLUB

MSB Fight Club: Dricus du Plessis Outclasses Kamaru Usman in UFC Oklahoma City Main Event

MSB Fight Club: Dricus du Plessis Outclasses Kamaru Usman in UFC Oklahoma City Main Event The UFC made its return to Oklahoma City on Saturday night with a card that featured former champions, rising contenders, and several fighters looking to take the next step in their careers. By the end of the evening, it was former UFC middleweight champion Dricus du Plessis who delivered the biggest statement, defeating former welterweight champion Kamaru Usman by unanimous decision in a five-round main event that showcased his striking, pressure, and championship-level conditioning. The event also featured impressive performances from Christian Leroy Duncan, Chase Hooper, Fatima Kline, Tommy McMillen, and several other fighters who helped make the card one of the more entertaining UFC Fight Nights of the year. While there were not many championship implications across the entire event, several divisions saw contenders strengthen their cases for bigger opportunities. Main Event Dricus du Plessis def. Kamaru Usman Unanimous Decision (50-45, 49-46, 49-46) The headline bout paired two former UFC champions from different weight classes. Du Plessis entered the contest looking to reestablish himself as the leading contender in the middleweight division, while Usman hoped to prove he could still compete against elite fighters after moving up from welterweight. From the opening round, du Plessis controlled the pace with constant forward pressure. He mixed together powerful jabs, straight rights, leg kicks, and body work that prevented Usman from establishing his wrestling or boxing rhythm. Every time Usman attempted to close the distance, du Plessis answered with combinations before circling away. The second round continued in much the same fashion. Du Plessis landed several clean right hands while using excellent footwork to keep the former champion guessing. Usman found success late in the round with a few combinations, but he struggled to string together sustained offense. Rounds three and four belonged almost entirely to du Plessis. He repeatedly backed Usman toward the fence, landed damaging knees from the clinch, and mixed in heavy body shots that visibly slowed his opponent. His cardio remained outstanding through 20 minutes, allowing him to keep a relentless pace. Usman showed the heart that made him one of the greatest welterweights in UFC history during the fifth round. He secured takedowns, landed several clean punches, and attempted to finish the fight strong. Although the final round was competitive, the earlier rounds had already created too much separation. The judges awarded du Plessis the unanimous decision, moving him back into the middleweight title picture. The performance demonstrated that his pressure-heavy style remains one of the most difficult challenges in the division.

Co-Main Event Christian Leroy Duncan def. Jared Cannonier Unanimous Decision Christian Leroy Duncan continued his impressive rise through the middleweight rankings by defeating longtime contender Jared Cannonier. Cannonier entered the fight hoping his experience and knockout power would derail one of the UFC's fastest-rising prospects. Instead, Duncan delivered perhaps the most complete performance of his UFC career. Using superior movement and range management, Duncan consistently beat Cannonier to the punch throughout all three rounds. He

MSB FIGHT CLUB: DRICUS DU PLESSIS OUTCLASSES

His defensive awareness frustrated Cannonier for much of the fight. The victory extends Duncan's winning streak and puts him much closer to facing ranked middleweight contenders. Chase Hooper def. Mitch Ramirez First-Round Submission Chase Hooper once again reminded fans why he remains one of the UFC's most dangerous submission specialists. After using crisp striking to set up his grappling entries, Hooper secured a takedown midway through the opening round. From there, he quickly advanced position before locking in a submission that forced Ramirez to tap. Hooper's improved stand-up game has become increasingly noticeable over the last several fights. Rather than relying solely on grappling, he has developed enough striking to create opportunities for his world-class ground game. The win keeps the young lightweight moving toward the rankings. Fatima Kline def. Tabatha Ricci Unanimous Decision One of the night's most technically impressive performances belonged to Fatima Kline. Facing a veteran in Tabatha Ricci, Kline controlled the fight with speed, movement, and accurate combinations. She effectively defended takedown attempts while landing consistently from the outside. Ricci attempted to pressure forward throughout the contest, but Kline repeatedly countered with clean punches and kicks before circling away. The judges rewarded Kline's activity and accuracy with a unanimous decision victory. With each performance, Kline continues to establish herself as one of the brightest young prospects in the UFC's women's divisions. Tommy McMillen def. Alberto Montes Knockout The highlight-reel finish of the evening came courtesy of Tommy McMillen. Early in the fight, McMillen remained patient while measuring distance. Once Montes became more aggressive, McMillen timed a perfectly placed counter strike that ended the contest instantly. The knockout brought the Oklahoma City crowd to its feet and earned McMillen one of the UFC's Performance of the Night bonuses. The victory also represents the biggest win of his UFC career and should lead to tougher competition moving forward. Other Notable Results Several additional fighters made the most of their opportunities throughout the preliminary card. Felipe Franco earned a Performance of the Night bonus after an explosive finish that showcased his striking power. RJ Harris picked up an impressive victory with aggressive offense from the opening bell. Dione Barbosa also delivered an outstanding performance, earning a finish that demonstrated why she remains one of the division's emerging talents. The preliminary bouts featured multiple finishes, competitive decisions, and several entertaining exchanges that kept the crowd engaged from start to finish. Performance Bonuses The UFC recognized several standout performances following the event. Fight of the Night Dricus du Plessis vs. Kamaru Usman Performance of the Night Tommy McMillen Felipe Franco RJ Harris Dione Barbosa What the Results Mean Du Plessis appears to have firmly reentered the championship conversation at middleweight. His combination of pressure, durability, conditioning, and improving striking makes him a difficult matchup for anyone in the division. For Usman, the defeat will likely raise questions about his future. Although his toughness and championship experience remain evident, the former welterweight king now faces a difficult path back toward another title opportunity. Christian Leroy Duncan's victory may have been the second most significant result of the evening....

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MSB FIGHT CLUB: DRICUS DU PLESSIS OUTCLASSES

By defeating an established veteran like Cannonier, Duncan positioned himself for a matchup against one of the division's top-ranked contenders. Meanwhile, Chase Hooper and Fatima Kline continued proving they belong among the UFC's brightest young talents, while Tommy McMillen created one of the most memorable moments of the night with his devastating knockout. MSB Fight Club Take This card may not have featured a championship fight, but it delivered exactly what fans want from a UFC Fight Night competitive matchups, rising stars, highlight-reel finishes, and a main event with meaningful title implications. Du Plessis looked every bit like a future title challenger. His striking has become more polished, his pace remains relentless, and his confidence continues to grow against elite competition. If this version of du Plessis steps into another championship fight, he will have an excellent chance to reclaim UFC gold. Several young fighters also made significant statements. Christian Leroy Duncan, Chase Hooper, Fatima Kline, and Tommy McMillen all left Oklahoma City with additional momentum and could become major names to watch over the next year. For UFC fans, Oklahoma City delivered an entertaining night from the opening preliminaries through the final horn. The card produced memorable finishes, quality technical performances, and a main event that reshaped the middleweight title picture while providing plenty of storylines heading into the UFC's next major event.

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UFC FIGHT NIGHT PREVIEW: DU PLESSIS VS. USMAN

MSB FIGHT CLUB

UFC Fight Night Preview: Du Plessis vs. Usman Headlines Massive Middleweight Showdown

UFC Fight Night Preview: Du Plessis vs. Usman Headlines Massive Middleweight Showdown MSB Fight Club | The UFC returns to Oklahoma City on Saturday night with one of the most intriguing Fight Night cards of 2026 as former UFC middleweight champion Dricus du Plessis meets former longtime welterweight champion Kamaru Usman in a five-round middleweight main event. The card marks the UFC's first trip to Oklahoma City in nearly a decade and could reshape the title picture at 185 pounds. For Du Plessis, the fight is about proving he belongs back in championship contention after losing the middleweight title. For Usman, it is an opportunity to become a legitimate threat in a second weight class after one of the greatest welterweight careers in UFC history. A victory could put either fighter one step away from another championship opportunity. Main Event Dricus du Plessis vs. Kamaru Usman Middleweight Five Rounds This matchup is fascinating because of the contrasting styles. Du Plessis thrives on relentless pressure, awkward striking combinations, physical strength, and surprising cardio. His unpredictable offense has frustrated nearly everyone he has faced. Usman, meanwhile, remains one of the greatest wrestlers and cage-control specialists in UFC history. Even late in his career, his jab, clinch work, and championship experience make him dangerous against anyone. The biggest question is whether Usman's wrestling can slow Du Plessis enough to win rounds. If the fight stays standing for extended stretches, Du Plessis appears to have the edge in power and activity. MSB Prediction: Dricus du Plessis by fourth-round TKO. Co-Main Event Jared Cannonier vs. Christian Leroy Duncan Middleweight Veteran Jared Cannonier continues trying to remain relevant in one of the UFC's deepest divisions while the explosive Christian Leroy Duncan looks to score the biggest victory of his career. Cannonier still possesses elite knockout power, but Duncan's speed and athleticism could create problems if he avoids prolonged exchanges. MSB Prediction: Christian Leroy Duncan by unanimous decision. Featured Fight Chase Hooper vs. Mitch Ramirez Lightweight Chase Hooper continues developing into one of the UFC's most entertaining young submission specialists. Ramirez brings toughness and aggressive striking, but Hooper's grappling advantage is significant. MSB Prediction: Chase Hooper by second-round submission. Fighters to Watch Tabatha Ricci continues climbing the strawweight rankings with another opportunity to showcase her grappling. Several young prospects on the preliminary card will be looking to earn performance bonuses and establish themselves in the UFC. Keys to the Main Event For Du Plessis Keep the fight standing. Push a high pace. Force Usman to fight off his back foot. For Usman Mix wrestling with clinch control. Slow the pace. Win the championship rounds with pressure and experience. Final Predictions Du Plessis def. Usman TKO (Round 4) Christian Leroy Duncan def. Jared Cannonier Decision Chase Hooper def. Mitch Ramirez Submission (Round 2) Tabatha Ricci Decision

READ, SHARE AND COMMENT ONLINE: <https://marylandsportsblog.com/ufc-fight-night-preview-du-plessis-vs-usman-headlines-massive-middleweight-showdown/> Victory Final Thoughts While this is "only" a Fight Night card, it has the feel of a

pay-per-view main event. Two former champions are fighting with title implications on the line, several rising contenders have opportunities to make statements, and fans should expect

UFC FIGHT NIGHT PREVIEW: DU PLESSIS VS. USMAN

From an MSB Fight Club perspective, all eyes will be on whether Kamaru Usman can make one last championship run or whether Dricus du Plessis reasserts himself as one of the elite middleweights in the world. Prelims: 5:00 p.m. ETMain Card: 8:00 p.m. ETStreaming: Paramount+

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JOHNS HOPKINS TRIO EZUMBA, SAUSSY, AND SETTON

JOHN'S HOPKINS BLUE JAYS

Johns Hopkins Trio Ezumba, Saussy, and Setton Receive Academic All-America Honors

Johns Hopkins Trio Earns CSC Academic All-America Honors, Continuing Blue Jays' Tradition of Excellence By Maryland Sports Blog BALTIMORE Academic excellence continues to be a defining characteristic of Johns Hopkins athletics. Three standout Blue Jays Erika Ezumba, Mackenzie Setton, and Jorge Gana have earned College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-America honors, recognizing their remarkable achievements in both the classroom and athletic competition during the 2025-26 academic year. The awards place them among the nation's elite student-athletes and further strengthen Johns Hopkins' reputation as one of the country's premier academic and athletic institutions. The recognition comes during another outstanding year for Hopkins athletics, with Blue Jay teams competing for national championships while maintaining some of the highest academic standards in NCAA Division III. Jorge Gana Adds Another Historic Honor Recent graduate Jorge Gana was named a CSC Academic All-America Second Team selection in the men's at-large category after an exceptional fencing career. The neuroscience major was one of the nation's most accomplished fencers both academically and competitively. Gana helped Johns Hopkins remain among the top fencing programs in the nation while compiling an outstanding academic record. His Academic All-America selection adds to an already impressive collection of honors earned throughout his Blue Jays career. Johns Hopkins has become synonymous with academic success, and Gana's recognition continues that tradition. Erika Ezumba Finishes Career Among Hopkins' Best Senior thrower Erika Ezumba capped one of the greatest careers in Johns Hopkins women's track and field history by earning CSC Academic All-America honors. Ezumba enjoyed a spectacular 2026 season that included multiple NCAA Division III All-America performances. During the NCAA Indoor Championships, she finished runner-up in the weight throw before earning another All-America honor in the shot put after setting a new Johns Hopkins school record with a throw of 13.73 meters. She became the first athlete in program history to earn All-America honors in the indoor shot put. Throughout her career, Ezumba consistently balanced elite performances in national competition with excellence in the classroom, making her one of the premier scholar-athletes in Division III track and field. Mackenzie Setton Continues Award-Winning Career Distance standout Mackenzie Setton also earned CSC Academic All-America recognition following another dominant season. Setton concluded her indoor campaign by capturing All-America honors in the mile, finishing fourth nationally while posting one of the fastest times in Johns Hopkins history. Her performance helped lead the Blue Jays to a fifth-place team finish at the NCAA Division III Indoor Championships, one of the best national finishes in program history. Known for her consistency in championship races, Setton has established herself as one of the most accomplished middle-distance runners ever to compete for Johns Hopkins. Excellence Beyond

Competition The CSC Academic All-America program honors student-athletes who demonstrate elite athletic achievement while maintaining exceptional academic performance. Nominees must meet strict GPA requirements and distinguish themselves nationally within their respective sports

JOHNS HOPKINS TRIO EZUMBA, SAUSSY, AND S

The university annually ranks among the national leaders in Academic All-America selections across all NCAA divisions, reflecting its commitment to developing complete student-athletes who excel in competition, the classroom, and the community. Maryland Sports Blog Take Johns Hopkins has built one of the strongest academic-athletic cultures in the country, and the accomplishments of Erika Ezumba, Mackenzie Setton, and Jorge Gana perfectly represent that standard. Winning conference championships and earning All-America honors is impressive. Doing so while excelling academically at one of the nation's most demanding universities is even more remarkable. These three Blue Jays have left a lasting legacy, proving once again that Johns Hopkins continues to produce some of the nation's finest scholar-athletes. Sources Johns Hopkins Athletics College Sports Communicators (CSC) AcademicAllAmerica.com : Official releas

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JOHNS HOPKINS MEN S TENNIS PLACES ELEVEN

JOHN'S HOPKINS BLUE JAYS

Johns Hopkins Men s Tennis Places Eleven on ITA Scholar-Athlete Team

LSource: Official releaseJohns Hopkins Men's Tennis Excels in the Classroom, Earns ITA All-Academic Team Honor By Maryland Sports Blog BALTIMORE The success of the Johns Hopkins men's tennis program extended far beyond the court during the 2025-26 academic year. The Blue Jays were once again recognized by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) as an ITA All-Academic Team, while 14 Johns Hopkins student-athletes earned individual ITA Scholar-Athlete honors for their outstanding work in the classroom. The recognition highlights one of the nation's premier Division III programs, which continues to combine championship-level tennis with elite academic achievement. To qualify for ITA Scholar-Athlete recognition, student-athletes must post at least a 3.50 grade-point average during the academic year. Teams must finish with a cumulative 3.20 GPA or higher to receive ITA All-Academic Team honors. Johns Hopkins once again exceeded those standards while continuing its long tradition of academic excellence. Fourteen Blue Jays Earn ITA Scholar-Athlete Honors The following Johns Hopkins men's tennis players received 2026 ITA Scholar-Athlete recognition: Owen Akers Daniel Ardila Marco Azar Dylan Blenkiron Mukundh Boopathi Pranav Gadiraju Allen Gong Joshua Kim Jason Li Hanyu Liu Chakor Rajendra Zahari Stoimenov Brian Yi Andy Zhu Several members of the group are repeat honorees, demonstrating a sustained commitment to excellence both on the court and in the classroom. Graduate student Daniel Ardila became one of the program's select four-time ITA Scholar-Athletes, while graduate student Hanyu Liu also collected his fourth career ITA academic honor. Veterans Marco Azar, Pranav Gadiraju, and Allen Gong each earned their third career selection, further illustrating the academic culture that has become synonymous with Johns Hopkins men's tennis. A Program Built on Excellence Johns Hopkins has long been recognized as one of the nation's premier academic institutions, and its athletic department continues to reflect that reputation. The Blue Jays have now produced 176 ITA Scholar-Athletes since 2007 and have recorded at least eight individual honorees every year since 2012. The program also extended its streak of earning ITA All-Academic Team honors to 15 consecutive seasons, a remarkable accomplishment that places it among the country's elite collegiate tennis programs. While academics remain a cornerstone of the program, Hopkins also enjoyed another successful season on the court, competing against one of the strongest Division III schedules in the nation while continuing to develop future leaders in engineering, computer science, neuroscience, economics, and other demanding fields. Maryland Sports Blog Take Winning matches is important, but the lasting impact of a college career is measured by what student-athletes accomplish after graduation. READ, SHARE AND COMMENT ONLINE: <https://marylandsportsblog.com/johns-hopkins-mens-tennis-ita-scholar-athlete-2026/> Johns Hopkins continues to prove that elite academics and elite athletics can coexist.

Producing 14 ITA Scholar-Athletes while extending a 15-year All-Academic Team streak is a testament to the culture established by the Blue Jays coaching staff and the commitment shown by every player in the program. At Maryland Sports Blog, we celebrate championships, but we also recognize achievements that prepare student-athletes for success long after their playing

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MARYLAND'S WEEKLY SPORTS MAGAZINE Maryland Sports Blog Weekly July 12 - July 19, 2026 The Week in Maryland Sports Read Online Download PDF Subscribe Free Never Miss an Issue Get MSB Weekly Magazine delivered every Sunday evening with the complete Maryland sports recap, Brian's Take and the upcoming-week preview. Email address Subscribe Free Free weekly delivery. No spam. Unsubscribe at any time. Brian's Take: The Week's MSB Takes Brian's Take recaps 32 MSB opinion takes published during the week. These are the key conclusions from MSB's reporting, analysis and game coverage. Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start A week ago, the Orioles were searching for answers. Today, they leave Houston with a seven-game winning streak and a three-game road sweep over an Astros team that entered the series fighting to stay in the American League West race. The biggest story continues to be Brandon Young. Every outing strengthens the argument that Baltimore has found a legitimate front-of-the-rotation starter. His consistency has stabilized the pitching staff, and the offense is beginning to provide enough support to capitalize on those performances. Equally encouraging is the continued production from young players like Coby Mayo and Jackson Holliday. Veterans such as Gunnar Henderson, Taylor Ward, Pete Alonso, and Leody Taveras are contributing in key situations, giving... Read the complete article and MSB Take Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern The Sam Huff promotion and Cam Sanders option are typical roster management moves that major league clubs make throughout a long season. Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list is different. Whenever an elite reliever is sidelined with recurring elbow discomfort, it is difficult not to worry about what comes next. Hopefully, the move is precautionary and Helsley can return later this season. Until the Orioles release more information, however, this has the potential to become one of the club's biggest injury stories of the second half. Today's game recap will likely make these moves even more important, as Huff was forced into action after Basallo's injury while Baltimore completed its sweep of the... Read the complete article and MSB Take Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence Maryland Sports Blog has always believed the best stories are not limited to the scoreboard. The recognition of Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So reminds fans that college athletics are about much more than wins and losses. These four Mountaineers have demonstrated outstanding discipline by succeeding in the classroom while competing at one of the highest levels of college basketball. The additional NABC Team Academic Excellence Award makes the accomplishment even more impressive. It shows that academic success is embedded throughout the Mount St. Mary's men's basketball program. As the Mountaineers prepare for another season, these honors provide another reason for fans to be proud. Championships create memories, but academic excellence... Read the complete article and MSB Take Mount St. Mary's Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging Fall Campaign Mount St. Mary's has assembled exactly the type of schedule that

Rather than overloading the calendar, the Mountaineers will have time to train between races, allowing athletes to peak when conference and NCAA postseason competition arrives. Hosting the Mount 5K Duels gives the program an early opportunity to showcase itself on campus, while the postseason focus reflects a team with higher expectations than simply running regular-season meets. If the momentum from the Mount's outstanding 2026 track and field season carries into cross country, the Mountaineers could be in position to surprise several MAAC opponents this fall. Read the complete article and MSB Take Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks The final score was important, but development was the real victory. Washington entered Summer League hoping to see growth from its young core while evaluating the players who could eventually fill out the roster around them. Mission accomplished. Beekman's playmaking, Livingston's scoring, and Camden's shooting were excellent reminders that the Wizards have more depth than many expected. More importantly, Dybantsa, Johnson, and Riley all showed flashes throughout the week that should have Wizards fans excited about the future. The rebuild is still in its early stages, but for the first time in several years, there is a clear direction in Washington. A 3-2 finish in Las Vegas will not guarantee regular-season success, but it provided... Read the complete article and MSB Take Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller These are the types of games playoff contenders win. The Orioles did not overpower Houston offensively. They battled through missed opportunities, survived a bases-loaded jam with no outs in extra innings, and made every winning play when the game was on the line. Rogers continues to look like one of the club's most dependable starters, the bullpen has settled into defined roles, and new additions like Cam Sanders are already making a significant impact. Perhaps the biggest takeaway is the confidence this team is playing with. Six straight wins, including back-to-back victories on the road against the Astros, shows this club is finding its identity at exactly the right time. Championship-caliber teams win close games... Read the complete article and MSB Take Coppin State Women's Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule Coppin State is not easing its new women's golf program into competition. The Eagles will play nine tournaments in six states and encounter several experienced programs during their inaugural season. That schedule should provide Ruff with a strong evaluation of where the program stands and what Coppin State must improve as it builds for the future. Wins and tournament finishes will always matter, but Coppin State's first year should not be evaluated solely through the final standings. Establishing a competitive culture, developing the roster and successfully completing a demanding Division I schedule will represent meaningful progress. Years from now, future Coppin State golfers will chase championships, records and postseason opportunities. The 2026-27 team will always... Read the complete article and MSB Take Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension This is exactly the move Orioles fans have been waiting to see. Too often, small-market clubs develop stars only to watch them leave once free agency arrives. Baltimore has changed that narrative by investing in one of the best pitchers it has developed in decades. Kyle Bradish has earned every dollar of this extensio...

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He has overcome injuries, developed into a true No. 1 starter, and become the heartbeat of the Orioles' rotation. If the Orioles want to become perennial World Series contenders, this is the blueprint: draft well, develop talent, and reward your stars. Saturday's announcement is not just about keeping an ace. It is about building a championship culture that Orioles fans have...Read the complete article and MSB TakeCoppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf ScheduleOne of the best stories in college athletics is watching a brand-new program write its own history. Every statistic this season will set a school record. Every tournament appearance becomes a milestone. Every improvement becomes part of the foundation future Eagles teams will build upon. Maryland Sports Blog will be following Coppin State men's golf throughout its inaugural campaign as the Eagles look to establish themselves one round, one tournament, and one season at a time. This is more than a schedule release it is the beginning of a brand-new chapter in Coppin State athletics.Read the complete article and MSB TakeOrioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot DealSigning Eric Booth Jr. quickly is excellent news for the Orioles. The organization drafted arguably the most athletic position player available at No. 7 and wasted little time getting him into the system. Booth fits the modern style of baseball: speed, defense, athleticism, and projectable offensive upside. While Orioles fans naturally want immediate help at the Major League level, championships are sustained through player development. Booth now becomes one of the crown jewels of Baltimore's next wave of prospects. The Orioles have built playoff-caliber clubs by drafting and developing talent like Adley Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, and Enrique Bradfield Jr. Eric Booth Jr. now has the opportunity to become the next name on that...Read the complete article and MSB TakeDeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success StoryNot every professional basketball story begins with the NBA. For many college standouts, especially those from mid-major and HBCU programs, Europe provides the first opportunity to build a professional career. Portugal has become an increasingly attractive destination because it offers competitive basketball, strong coaching and a pathway to bigger leagues across Europe. Hall earned this opportunity through steady improvement at every stop of his collegiate career. He developed from a junior college player into a Division II contributor before becoming Coppin State's leading scorer and rebounder in the MEAC. His signing is also another positive reflection on Coppin State basketball. Every Eagle who reaches the professional ranks helps strengthen the program's reputation with future recruits,...Read the complete article and MSB TakeWashington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State ValkyriesWashington has already proven this season that the franchise's future is exceptionally bright. The Mystics are ahead of schedule in their rebuild, with Sydney Johnson establishing a winning culture and one of the WNBA's best young cores. Tonight serves as an excellent measuring stick. Facing one of the league's hottest teams on the road will reveal just how close Washington is to becoming a true championship contender.

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A victory over the streaking Valkyries would be one of the Mystics' biggest wins of the 2026 season and further solidify their place in the WNBA playoff picture. Read the complete article and MSB Take Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five The Orioles are finally beginning to resemble the team many expected to see entering the season. Earlier this year, Baltimore repeatedly found ways to lose games exactly like this one. Friday night was different. The Orioles did not have many offensive opportunities, but they stayed within striking distance, trusted their bullpen and capitalized when the biggest moment arrived. Taylor Ward's home run will receive the headlines, and deservedly so. His two-run blast completely changed the game and demonstrated why Baltimore wanted his bat in the middle of its lineup. Ward gives the Orioles another hitter capable of changing a game with one swing, something this offense desperately needed. Just as important was the performance of... Read the complete article and MSB Take Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL's No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year Hamilton Deserves the Recognition There should not be much controversy surrounding Kyle Hamilton's place at the top of the NFL safety rankings. Hamilton has become one of the most complete defensive backs in football, and his versatility separates him from nearly every other player at his position. There may be safeties who produce more interceptions. Others may spend more time playing a traditional deep-safety role. Hamilton's value comes from his ability to do almost everything Baltimore asks of him. The most impressive statistic may be the difference in opposing quarterback QBR with Hamilton on and off the field. A jump from 49 to 90 when Hamilton leaves the field demonstrates just how significant his presence... Read the complete article and MSB Take Loyola Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year Loyola University Maryland may not possess the roster depth of Army, Navy, or Boston University, but the Greyhounds demonstrated significant progress throughout 2025-26. The most important development in the 2025-26 campaign was not simply the seventh-place outdoor finish, but the context of how those team points were earned. Young athletes stepped into starring roles, school records were broken, relay squads made history, and multiple individuals achieved their season-best results at the Patriot League Championships. These are essential building blocks for a developing Division I track and field program. Blakeslee's emergence offers Loyola an exciting young talent to build around, while Lowther's record-setting steeplechase performance elevates the team's distance credentials. The 4x100 relay's historic podium finish... Read the complete article and MSB Take Bowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule Bowie State continues to trend in the right direction as one of Maryland's premier HBCU athletic programs. Volleyball may not receive the same attention as football or basketball, but the Bulldogs continue investing in the program, and the 2026 schedule reflects that commitment. The early nonconference slate should prepare Bowie State well for the grind of CIAA competition. If the Bulldogs can protect their home floor, win the close five-set matches, and stay healthy, this team has the potential to make noise when the conference tournament begins....

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For Maryland volleyball fans, Bowie State remains a program worth following throughout the fall. Sources: Bowie State Athletics (2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule) Bowie State Athletics official website schedule...Read the complete article and MSB TakeTowson Volleyball Unveils Challenging 2026 Schedule with Eyes on Another CAA ChampionshipTowson once again assembled the type of schedule that should prepare it for meaningful volleyball in November. Playing Missouri and Arkansas early will expose the Tigers to elite competition, while regional rivals and a deep CAA slate ensure there are very few nights off. If Towson can navigate its challenging non-conference schedule and continue its dominance inside SECU Arena, another CAA championship and NCAA Tournament appearance are realistic goals. The Tigers have established themselves as Maryland's flagship Division I volleyball program, and the 2026 schedule gives them every opportunity to prove it once again.Read the complete article and MSB TakeHershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate TownThese aren't blockbuster signings, but they are exactly the type of moves championship AHL organizations make. Cam Morrison brings proven professional scoring experience and could become one of Hershey's better secondary offensive threats if his success in Norway translates back to North America. Landon McCallum is a developmental piece whose best hockey may still be ahead of him, while Noah Beck could quietly become one of the Bears' most important additions thanks to his puck-moving ability from the back end. The Bears have built a dynasty by finding overlooked talent, developing it, and putting players in positions to succeed. Morrison, McCallum, and Beck all fit that mold, and don't be surprised if one or even all...Read the complete article and MSB TakeMSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League ShowcaseWizards fans should view this as excellent news. Washington didn't shut these three down because they struggled it shut them down because they succeeded. Dybantsa already looks capable of becoming the franchise cornerstone. Riley appears poised to take a significant leap entering his second season, while Johnson continues to validate Washington's investment in him. For a rebuilding franchise that has spent years searching for elite young talent, Summer League accomplished exactly what it needed to. The future of Wizards basketball suddenly looks much brighter than it has in a long time.Read the complete article and MSB TakeNavy's Justin Mumford and Brian Schloeder Earn CSC Academic All-America Honors, Continuing Midshipmen Tradition of ExcellenceAcademic honors often receive less attention than championships or All-America finishes, but they represent everything collegiate athletics should strive to achieve. Justin Mumford and Brian Schloeder didn't simply become elite athletes they thrived while tackling one of the nation's most rigorous academic curricula at the U.S. Naval Academy. That balance of discipline, intelligence, leadership and athletic excellence embodies what Navy athletics is all about. For Midshipmen head coach Aaron Langel, these honors reinforce the culture built within Navy's distance and track programs.

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Mumford leaves Annapolis as one of the Academy's greatest scholar-athletes, while Schloeder appears poised to carry that tradition forward over the next two seasons. Read the complete article and MSB Take Navy Offshore Sailing Captures Salty 100 Title with Masterful Performance in Buzzards Bay Maryland sports fans often focus on football, lacrosse and basketball, but Navy's offshore sailing program quietly remains one of the state's elite athletic success stories. Winning major offshore races requires leadership, teamwork, preparation and calm decision-making under constantly changing conditions the same qualities expected of future naval officers. With victories in both the Annapolis-to-Bermuda Race earlier this summer and now the Salty 100, the Midshipmen continue to establish themselves as one of collegiate sailing's premier offshore programs. If this momentum continues into the fall season, Navy could add even more prestigious trophies to an already impressive 2026 campaign. Sources: Navy Athletics Offshore Sailing's Poseidon Takes First at Salty 100 Navy Athletics Tenacious Takes First... Read the complete article and MSB Take MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement This signing may not grab headlines like Washington's additions of Jordan Kyrour or Alex Tuch, but it could become one of the organization's most important moves of the summer. Centers with Suvanto's size, maturity and two-way ability are difficult to find. The Capitals believe they landed one of the safest prospects in the entire draft, and signing him quickly allows the organization to begin implementing its long-term development plan. Washington's prospect pipeline suddenly looks much healthier than it did a year ago. With Suvanto joining recent first-round selections and a front office focused on adding size and hockey IQ, the Capitals appear committed to building another contender rather than beginning a lengthy rebuild. If Suvanto... Read the complete article and MSB Take Leadership on Target: Isabella Baldwin Named Captain of Navy Rifle Team for 2026-27 Season Programs built on consistency are often led by athletes who embody the culture every day, and Isabella Baldwin has become exactly that for Navy rifle. Her combination of All-America performances, national championships, academic excellence, and proven leadership makes her the ideal choice to captain the Midshipmen entering the 2026-27 season. With Baldwin leading a veteran roster that includes NCAA standouts Tyler Wee, Parker Haydin, Ryan Wee, and Catherine Dely, Navy appears poised to challenge once again for a Great America Rifle Conference title and another trip to the NCAA Championships. Baldwin's leadership gives the Midshipmen every reason to believe their best season could still be ahead. Read the complete article and MSB Take Navy Men's Soccer Announces Challenging 2026 Schedule: Midshipmen Set for Seven Home Matches and Tough Road Tests Hackworth has assembled a schedule that should prepare Navy for the postseason. Opening with UC San Diego and San Diego State gives the Midshipmen immediate high-level competition, while regional contests against UMBC, Mount St. Mary's, William & Mary, and George Washington provide strong tests before the Patriot League race heats up. The conference schedule is highlighted by home matches against Boston University, Colgate, and Loyola Maryland, but the October 9 Star Match against Army once again stands as the centerpiece of the season....

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If Navy can navigate its difficult non-conference schedule and defend home field in Annapolis, the Midshipmen should be well-positioned to compete for a Patriot League Tournament berth in 2026. [Read the complete article and MSB Take](#) Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays This is one of those organizational moves that won't generate national headlines, but it could have a significant impact on the Capitals' future. Successful NHL franchises are built through strong development systems, and Washington has one of the league's best. Keeping South Carolina in the fold provides stability for prospects, coaches, and the entire organization while maintaining a winning culture from the ECHL all the way to the NHL. With the Capitals looking to remain contenders while developing their next wave of talent, extending the partnership with the Stingrays is another smart move by Brian MacLellan and the front office. It's a behind-the-scenes decision that should continue paying dividends for years to come. [Read the complete article and MSB Take](#) MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong If I were starting an NFL franchise today, there is exactly one quarterback I would unquestionably draft ahead of Lamar Jackson: Patrick Mahomes. That's it. After Mahomes, Jackson belongs squarely in every conversation with Josh Allen, Joe Burrow, and every other elite quarterback in football. Two MVP awards. Three First-Team All-Pro selections. The greatest rushing quarterback the NFL has ever seen. A player who forces defensive coordinators to tear up their game plans every Sunday. Those credentials don't belong to the 69th-best player in football. They belong to one of the five best players in the NFL. The NFL Top 100 has produced some questionable rankings over the years, but this one may age as... [Read the complete article and MSB Take](#) Orioles Add Pitching Depth, Acquire Right-Hander Cam Sanders from Pirates This isn't the splashy trade Orioles fans have been anticipating, but it's exactly the type of move successful organizations make. Baltimore gave up only cash considerations for a pitcher with premium velocity and remaining upside. If Sanders develops into a reliable bullpen piece, it'll be another outstanding value acquisition by Mike Elias and the Orioles' front office. The more important storyline is Akin's injury. Losing another experienced reliever reinforces Baltimore's need to add pitching before the deadline. Sanders may not be the final answer, but he represents another worthwhile lottery ticket for one of baseball's best player development organizations. [Read the complete article and MSB Take](#) MSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk This isn't a blockbuster, but these are the types of transactions successful organizations make. Washington traded from a position of organizational strength at wing to acquire a player whose physical profile better matches the identity Chris Patrick appears to be building. The Capitals have consistently added larger, harder-to-play-against forwards this offseason, and Kopff fits that blueprint. Funk deserved credit for his professionalism and production with South Carolina, but the path to NHL minutes in Washington appeared increasingly crowded. Buffalo may provide the fresh opportunity he needs. From Washington's perspective, the risk is minimal. If Kopff develops into an NHL depth forward, the Capitals will have quietly won another under-the-radar personnel move....

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If not, they essentially...Read the complete article and MSB TakeMSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las VegasFor years, Wizards fans have waited for a rebuild that truly felt different. This one might be. AJ Dybantsa isn't just putting up points he's influencing every possession. His combination of size, athleticism, defensive instincts, and competitive fire gives Washington a legitimate franchise centerpiece to build around. Equally encouraging is the emergence of Will Riley. If Riley continues shooting at this level while Dybantsa develops into the superstar many project, the Wizards suddenly possess two young wings capable of becoming the foundation of the next era of basketball in Washington. It's only Summer League, and expectations should remain realistic. But through two games, the Wizards haven't simply won they've played smart, connected basketball. They've defended with intensity,...Read the complete article and MSB TakeMaryland Names Three Veteran Leaders as Captains for 2026 SeasonMaryland didn't simply choose its three best players it selected three leaders who complement one another. Koehl provides composure and control in midfield. Mack brings toughness and organization to the defense. Ndrenika embodies the culture and values that have defined Maryland soccer for decades. It's a balanced leadership group with international experience, maturity, and proven commitment to the program. If Maryland returns to the College Cup conversation this season, don't be surprised if it starts with the example set by these three captains. For one of college soccer's blue-blood programs, the standard remains unchanged: compete for Big Ten championships, make a deep NCAA Tournament run, and chase another national title. With Koehl, Mack, and Ndrenika wearing...Read the complete article and MSB TakeOrioles Head Into All-Star Break on High Note with 8-2 Win, First Four-Game Winning Streak of 2026 Marred by Blaze Alexander InjuryThe Orioles couldn't have scripted a better finish to the first half until Alexander was hit. Winning four consecutive games may not erase the frustrations of the first three months, but it gives this club something it hasn't had much of in 2026: belief. The offense is beginning to click, Shane Baz continues to show front-of-the-rotation potential, Samuel Basallo is developing into one of baseball's brightest young stars, and Leody Taveras has been a tremendous addition. Now the challenge is carrying that momentum into the second half while hoping Alexander's absence is measured in weeks rather than months. If Baltimore is going to make a surprise run at an American League Wild Card spot, the first-half...Read the complete article and MSB TakeMaryland's Future Is Here Incoming Freshman Cayden Reese Earns USA Lacrosse National Player of the YearLanding the nation's No. 1 recruit is impressive. Landing the USA Lacrosse National Player of the Year is program-defining. Maryland women's lacrosse already boasts one of the richest traditions in NCAA history, but adding Cayden Reese ensures the Terps remain firmly positioned among the nation's elite. If her high school career is any indication, Terp fans won't have to wait long to see her become one of the next great stars in College Park.

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The future of Maryland women's lacrosse isn't just bright it has already arrived. Read the complete article and MSB Take This Week in Maryland Sports Sunday, July 19 Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern Early Offense Propels Fred Nats to Series Finale Win Over Pelicans FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY Fred Nats Drop Doubleheader, Lose a Series for the First Time in 98 Days MSB Fight Club: Dricus du Plessis Outclasses Kamaru Usman in UFC Oklahoma City Main Event Saturday, July 18 From Coaching to Playing, Hoy Making Transition with Ease Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Crabs Sweep Doubleheader Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller Coppin State Women's Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension News Friday, July 17 Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push Bowie State Picked Ninth in CIAA Football Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors Bowie State Picked Ninth in CIAA Football Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CIAA Honors Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition UFC Fight Night Preview: Du Plessis vs. Usman Headlines Massive Middleweight Showdown Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Dirty Birds Thursday, July 16 Nats send three to All-Star Game, draft some hot prospects Orioles Recall Christian Encarnacion-Strand After Blaze Alexander Injury Creates Infield Void Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens' All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100 Baltimore Orioles 2027 Schedule Breakdown: Month-by-Month Hood's College Men's Basketball earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six named to Honors Court Stevenson Field Hockey announces 2026 season slate, Following a record-breaking 2025 season Wednesday, July 15 Washington College Has Four Tabbed 2025-26 CSC Academic All-District At-Large Bishop Secures IRCA All-American Honors Corey Begly to Step Down as Washington College Head Men's Basketball Coach Frostburg State Announces 2026 Hall of Fame Inductee Class Hood College Women's Ice Hockey's Ancona receives program's first Academic All-MAC Cansler earns Academic All-MAC honors Tuesday, July 14 MSB: Navy Football Reshapes Recruiting Department With Key Front Office Promotions and New Hires Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate Town MSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League Showcase Navy's Justin Mumford and Brian Schloeder Earn CSC Academic All-America Honors, Continuing Midshipmen Tradition of Excellence Navy Offshore Sailing Captures Salty 100 Title with Masterful Performance in Buzzards Bay MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement Monday, July 13 MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69?

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The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong Orioles Add Pitching Depth, Acquire Right-Hander Cam Sanders from Pirates MSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las Vegas Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft Maryland Names Three Veteran Leaders as Captains for 2026 Season By the Numbers 115 Full stories in this issue 15 Maryland sports sections 32 MSB Takes recapped 7 Days of coverage Photo of the Week Capitals Announce 2026-27 Regular Season Schedule: Season Opens on the Road Against Carolina, Home Opener vs. Penguins Quote of the Week "I cannot tell you how excited I am to become the next head coach of UMBC Men's Lacrosse. I have always followed the program from afar, and the opportunity to lead such a proud program is a tremendous honor." UMBC Hires James Purpura as New Head Men's Lacrosse Coach Contents College Sports (12) Baltimore Orioles (12) Minor League and Independent Baseball (12) Washington and D.C. Sports (12) Baltimore Ravens (5) Bowie State Bulldogs (4) More Maryland Sports (4) Capitals and Hershey Bears (4) MSB Fight Club (2) John's Hopkins Blue Jays (2) Top Maryland Sports News (1) Salisbury Seagulls (1) Aberdeen Ironbirds (1) Towson Tigers (1) Maryland Terrapins (1) College Sports Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence Four Mountaineers Earn NABC Honors Court Recognition as Mount St. Mary's Continues Tradition of Academic Excellence EMMITSBURG, Md. Championships and postseason appearances often define a basketball program, but the most successful teams also pride themselves on developing leaders away from the court. Mount St. Mary's men's basketball demonstrated that commitment once again as Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So were named to the 2025-26 National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Honors Court. The recognition honors student-athletes who have excelled academically while competing at the NCAA level. To qualify, players must be academically classified as juniors, seniors, or graduate students and maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.2. The honors did not stop there. Mount St. Mary's also earned the 2025-26 NABC Team Academic Excellence Award, presented annually to programs that finish the academic year with a cumulative team GPA of 3.0 or higher. The achievement reflects the commitment of the entire roster, coaching staff, faculty, and academic support personnel to excellence beyond basketball. For a program that has built momentum both on and off the court, the awards reinforce the culture head coach Donny Lind has continued to establish in Emmitsburg. Veteran Leadership Sets the Standard Graduate guard Xavier Lipscomb has become one of the program's respected veterans. Throughout his collegiate career, Lipscomb has demonstrated leadership, maturity, and a commitment to representing Mount St. Mary's with pride. Balancing graduate-level coursework while remaining active within a Division I basketball program requires remarkable discipline, making this recognition especially meaningful. Joining him is fellow graduate guard John Miller IV, another experienced leader whose work ethic has helped set the standard for younger players.

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Miller's ability to balance academics with the demanding schedule of Division I athletics reflects the dedication necessary to earn one of college basketball's most prestigious academic honors. The Future is Bright The Mount's future is equally well represented by junior guards Patrick Haigh and Mason So. Haigh has embraced the responsibilities of being both a student and an athlete, proving that success in the classroom can accompany success on the basketball court. His selection to the Honors Court highlights his consistency and commitment throughout the academic year. So also earned recognition after maintaining the academic standards required by the NABC. His achievement demonstrates the maturity and discipline expected within one of the MAAC's premier basketball programs. Together, the four honorees represent different stages of their collegiate careers, but they share one common trait: a commitment to excellence that extends far beyond game day. More Than Basketball Division I basketball is a year-round commitment. Players spend countless hours attending classes, completing assignments, participating in practices, lifting weights, studying film, traveling across the country, and competing against high-level opponents. Time away from campus during the season makes staying on top of coursework even more challenging. Maintaining at least a 3.2 GPA under those circumstances is a significant accomplishment and speaks to the character of the student-athletes honored by the NABC. The Team Academic Excellence Award further illustrates that academic success is not limited to a handful of players. Instead, it reflects a program-wide commitment to education and personal growth. Building the Mount Culture Since arriving at Mount St. Mary's, Donny Lind has emphasized developing complete student-athletes. Winning basketball games remains the goal, but preparing players for life after college is equally important. Academic recognition such as the Honors Court helps demonstrate that philosophy is producing results. Whether these players pursue professional basketball, graduate school, coaching, business, or another career path, the habits that earned them this recognition discipline, accountability, organization, and perseverance will continue to serve them well. The Mount's ability to consistently produce academically successful student-athletes also strengthens the university's reputation throughout the MAAC and across Division I athletics. Why Academic Awards Matter Academic honors rarely receive the attention of buzzer-beaters, conference championships, or NCAA Tournament appearances, but they represent one of the true missions of college athletics. Student-athletes are students first. Their degrees and educational experiences create opportunities that last long after their playing careers end. The NABC Honors Court celebrates those who refuse to compromise either pursuit. For Mount St. Mary's, having four players recognized while the program also earned a Team Academic Excellence Award is a testament to the environment that has been created throughout the basketball program. MSB Take Maryland Sports Blog has always believed the best stories are not limited to the scoreboard. The recognition of Xavier Lipscomb, John Miller IV, Patrick Haigh, and Mason So reminds fans that college athletics are about much more than wins and losses. These four Mountaineers have demonstrated outstanding discipline by succeeding in the classroom while competing at one of the highest levels of college basketball....

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The additional NABC Team Academic Excellence Award makes the accomplishment even more impressive. It shows that academic success is embedded throughout the Mount St. Mary's men's basketball program. As the Mountaineers prepare for another season, these honors provide another reason for fans to be proud. Championships create memories, but academic excellence creates opportunities that last a lifetime. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment.

Mount St. Mary's Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging Fall Campaign

Mount St. Mary's Cross Country Announces 2026 Meet Schedule: Mountaineers Ready for Challenging Fall Campaign

The Mount St. Mary's men's and women's cross country teams now know the path they will take during the 2026 season. The Mountaineers will compete in a six-meet schedule that features four regular-season competitions before turning their attention to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championships and the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional. The schedule provides a balanced mix of home competition, regional meets, and championship opportunities as Mount looks to continue building one of the stronger distance programs in the MAAC. After a successful 2025 campaign and an outstanding year for the university's track and field programs which included the Mount men's team winning the 2026 MAAC Outdoor Track & Field Championship the cross country teams will be looking to carry that momentum into the fall season.

Season Opens at Home

The 2026 season begins on Friday, September 4, when Mount St. Mary's hosts the annual Mount 5K Duels on East Campus in Emmitsburg. The women's race will begin at 4:00 p.m., followed by the men's race at 4:30 p.m. Hosting the opening meet gives the Mountaineers a chance to compete in familiar surroundings while introducing freshmen to collegiate racing before heading onto the road for the remainder of the regular season.

Competitive Regular Season

Following the season opener, the Mountaineers will travel throughout the Mid-Atlantic region to prepare for championship competition. While the schedule consists of just four regular-season meets, each race becomes increasingly important as athletes work to improve fitness, earn personal bests, and position themselves for postseason success. Cross country coaches often prefer a lighter schedule compared to track and field because it allows runners to maximize training between races while peaking in late October and November when conference and NCAA championships are contested.

MAAC Championship Focus

The regular season culminates with the MAAC Cross Country Championships, where both the men's and women's teams will attempt to climb the conference standings. The MAAC has become increasingly competitive over the last several seasons, with programs such as Iona, Rider, Quinnipiac, Siena, and Mount St. Mary's continuing to elevate the conference's overall level. A strong performance at the conference championship can also earn individual runners All-MAAC honors while helping the team qualify for regional recognition.

NCAA Regional Awaits

The season concludes at the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional, where the Mountaineers will compete against many of the nation's top programs from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and surrounding states. The regional meet provides athletes an opportunity to cap their seasons against elite NCAA competition while measuring the program's progress against nationally recognized teams....

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Building on Program Success Cross country has become an increasingly important component of Mount St. Mary's athletics. Success during the fall directly translates to the indoor and outdoor track seasons, where distance runners frequently score valuable points in conference championships. The university's recent success in track and field demonstrates the growth of the overall program, and the cross country teams will be looking to continue that upward trend during the 2026 campaign. Experienced upperclassmen will be expected to lead the way while a new freshman class works to make an immediate impact.

2026 Mount St. Mary's Cross Country Schedule

September 4 Mount 5K Duels (Emmitsburg, Md.) Four regular-season meets throughout September and October MAAC Cross Country Championships NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional

MSB Take Mount St. Mary's has assembled exactly the type of schedule that can produce championship results. Rather than overloading the calendar, the Mountaineers will have time to train between races, allowing athletes to peak when conference and NCAA postseason competition arrives. Hosting the Mount 5K Duels gives the program an early opportunity to showcase itself on campus, while the postseason focus reflects a team with higher expectations than simply running regular-season meets. If the momentum from the Mount's outstanding 2026 track and field season carries into cross country, the Mountaineers could be in position to surprise several MAAC opponents this fall.

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Coppin State Women's Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule

Coppin State Women's Golf Announces Inaugural 2026-27 Schedule By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

Coppin State University will make history during the 2026-27 academic year as the Eagles begin the inaugural season of their NCAA Division I women's golf program. Head men's and women's golf coach Elam Ruff unveiled a nine-tournament schedule that will take Coppin State to six states during its first year of competition. The Eagles will play four fall tournaments before returning for five events during the spring portion of the season. Coppin State will compete in North Carolina, Illinois, Pennsylvania and South Carolina during the fall. The spring schedule includes trips to South Carolina, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio and New Jersey.

These schedules represent an important milestone for our program, Ruff said in the university's announcement. Our student-athletes will have the opportunity to compete, grow, and help establish the foundation of Coppin State Golf. Ruff also emphasized the opportunity to represent Coppin State, establish relationships throughout collegiate golf and begin building a tradition of success on and off the course.

Coppin State Women's Golf 2026-27 Schedule

Fall 2026

Sept. 14-15 Elon Invitational Burlington, North Carolina Alamance Country Club Coppin State will officially launch its women's golf program at the Elon Invitational. The two-day tournament will provide the Eagles with their first opportunity to compete together and record the first official scores in program history.

Oct. 5-6 Maurice Allen Intercollegiate Championship Chicago, Illinois George W. Dunne National Golf Course The Eagles will travel to Chicago for the Maurice Allen Intercollegiate Championship. Coppin State's women's and men's programs will both participate in the tournament as the university continues building its new golf identity.

Oct....

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12-13 Evann Parker Memorial North East, Pennsylvania Lake View Country Club Coppin State will remain on the road for the Evann Parker Memorial, hosted by Mercyhurst. The event gives the Eagles another two-day tournament against established collegiate programs. Oct. 23-25 Fripp Island Intercollegiate Fripp Island, South Carolina Ocean Creek Golf Club The Eagles will close their inaugural fall season at the Fripp Island Intercollegiate. The three-day event will give Coppin State its longest tournament experience of the semester. The official schedule graphic lists the tournament for Oct. 23-25, while the accompanying Coppin State release references Oct. 22-25. MSB has used the dates displayed on Coppin State's official schedule graphic.

Spring 2027 Feb. 15-16 Rivertowne Invitational Mount Pleasant, South Carolina Rivertowne Country Club Coppin State will return from its winter break at the Rivertowne Invitational. The tournament begins a demanding stretch of three events in three consecutive weeks to open the spring. Feb. 22-23 Stetson Hatter Invitational DeBary, Florida DeBary Golf and Country Club The Eagles will travel to Florida for the Stetson Hatter Invitational. The event will give Coppin State an opportunity to face another competitive field while continuing to gain experience in different course conditions.

March 1-2 River Landing Classic River Wallace, North Carolina River Landing Golf Club Coppin State will complete its three-week opening stretch at the River Landing Classic. Managing the quick turnaround between tournaments will test the Eagles' depth, preparation and ability to make adjustments.

March 29-30 Northern Kentucky Spring Invitational Batavia, Ohio Elks Run Golf Club After several weeks away from tournament competition, Coppin State will return for the Northern Kentucky Spring Invitational. The break should provide Ruff and the Eagles with additional practice time before the final portion of the season.

April 10-11 Rutgers Invitational Piscataway, New Jersey Rutgers Golf Course Coppin State will close its historic first season at the Rutgers Invitational. The tournament will provide the Eagles with one final opportunity to measure their development after completing a full fall and spring schedule. A Historic First Season Every tournament will carry added significance for Coppin State's inaugural roster. The Eagles will record the program's first competitive round, first team score, first individual tournament result and first program-best performance during the season. Those achievements will become the initial benchmarks for every future Coppin State women's golf team. The schedule also gives the Eagles exposure to different courses and playing environments. Coppin State will compete in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Southeast while facing programs with considerably more tournament experience. Results will matter, but building the program's culture will remain just as important during its first season. Ruff and his golfers will be responsible for establishing expectations involving preparation, academics, competition and representing Coppin State.

Expanding Opportunities at Coppin State The addition of women's golf creates another NCAA Division I opportunity for student-athletes at Coppin State. It also allows the university to expand its athletic reach into a sport that has continued growing at the collegiate level. The program gives Coppin State another recruiting platform while increasing the university's visibility throughout several regions....

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Every tournament will introduce the Coppin State name and brand to new opponents, golf courses and communities. Coppin State has already begun constructing the program's first roster. The university previously announced its initial women's golf signees before adding another player to the inaugural class in February. MSB Take Coppin State is not easing its new women's golf program into competition. The Eagles will play nine tournaments in six states and encounter several experienced programs during their inaugural season. That schedule should provide Ruff with a strong evaluation of where the program stands and what Coppin State must improve as it builds for the future. Wins and tournament finishes will always matter, but Coppin State's first year should not be evaluated solely through the final standings. Establishing a competitive culture, developing the roster and successfully completing a demanding Division I schedule will represent meaningful progress. Years from now, future Coppin State golfers will chase championships, records and postseason opportunities. The 2026-27 team will always hold a unique distinction because it was the group that started everything. Open the original article, share it and leave a commentCoppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf Schedule Coppin State Tees Off a New Era: Eagles Announce Inaugural Men's Golf Schedule The newest program at Coppin State University is officially ready to hit the links. Coppin State Athletics announced the inaugural schedule for its new men's golf program on Friday, marking another significant milestone for the Eagles as they continue to expand their athletic offerings. The 2026-27 campaign will feature a competitive slate of tournaments throughout the fall and spring seasons, giving the program its first opportunity to establish itself on the collegiate golf landscape. The addition of men's golf is another major investment by Coppin State in broadening opportunities for student-athletes. While the Eagles have long competed in sports such as basketball, baseball, cross country, tennis, and track & field, golf now joins the department's growing list of varsity programs. Building a Program from the Ground Up Launching a collegiate golf program is no small task. Unlike established teams with years of recruiting pipelines and tournament experience, Coppin State begins with a clean slate. The inaugural season will focus on: Establishing the program's identity. Giving student-athletes valuable collegiate tournament experience. Building a recruiting foundation for future seasons. Competing against experienced Division I programs. Preparing for long-term success within HBCU and Division I golf. Every tournament this season represents a first in program history from the opening tee shot to the first team score, top-10 finish, and eventually the first tournament championship. A Challenging Schedule Coppin State's first schedule features multiple tournaments across the fall and spring, providing the Eagles with opportunities to compete against strong regional and national competition. The schedule was designed to expose the young program to a variety of courses and competitive environments while allowing the coaching staff to evaluate and develop the roster throughout the year. For a first-year program, experience will be every bit as valuable as results. What Success Looks Like Wins may not immediately define the Eagles' first season. Instead, success can be measured by: Lowering team scores throughout the year....

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Developing consistency. Recruiting future talent. Building a competitive culture. Establishing Coppin State as a destination for collegiate golfers. Programs rarely become contenders overnight, but every established golf team began with an inaugural season similar to the one Coppin State is about to begin. Impact on Coppin Athletics Adding men's golf continues the university's commitment to expanding opportunities for student-athletes while increasing the visibility of Coppin State Athletics. Golf also opens recruiting into new regions and introduces the Eagles brand to tournaments throughout the Mid-Atlantic and beyond. It represents another step forward as Coppin continues growing its athletic department and providing more opportunities for students to compete at the NCAA Division I level. MSB Take One of the best stories in college athletics is watching a brand-new program write its own history. Every statistic this season will set a school record. Every tournament appearance becomes a milestone. Every improvement becomes part of the foundation future Eagles teams will build upon. Maryland Sports Blog will be following Coppin State men's golf throughout its inaugural campaign as the Eagles look to establish themselves one round, one tournament, and one season at a time. This is more than a schedule release it is the beginning of a brand-new chapter in Coppin State athletics. Open the original article, share it and leave a commentDeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success Story MSB: DeMariontay Hall Begins Professional Career in Portugal, Giving Coppin State Another International Success Story Coppin State men's basketball graduate DeMariontay Hall is taking the next step in his basketball journey after signing his first professional contract with Sampaense Basket of Portugal's ProLiga for the 2026-27 season. The move gives Hall an opportunity to launch his professional career in one of Europe's respected developmental basketball leagues while adding another international success story to Larry Stewart's growing Coppin State program. Hall spent one season with the Eagles after transferring from Franklin Pierce University, but his impact was immediate. Despite Coppin State finishing 7-24 overall and 5-9 in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Hall emerged as one of the team's most reliable players on both ends of the floor. The 6-foot-7 forward led the Eagles with: 10.6 points per game 5.4 rebounds per game 52.4 percent shooting from the field 16 blocked shots During MEAC play, Hall elevated his game even further, averaging 12.7 points and 5.0 rebounds while shooting an impressive 57.8 percent from the floor. His defensive presence earned him MEAC Defensive Player of the Week honors twice, highlighting his ability to impact games without needing the ball in his hands. Hall's path to Division I basketball was anything but conventional. The Atlanta native began his collegiate career at Gulf Coast State College, one of the nation's top junior college programs. He then transferred to Franklin Pierce University, where he averaged 12.9 points and 6.4 rebounds per game at the Division II level before earning the opportunity to finish his college career at Coppin State. His steady improvement at each stop showcased the work ethic that ultimately earned him a professional contract overseas. Before signing in Portugal, Hall also gained valuable international experience by competing in the 2026 United Pro Invitational in Atlanta....

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Playing for the GIE Cibao Immortals, he helped lead the team to an undefeated record and a tournament championship, giving professional scouts another opportunity to evaluate his game. What is Portugal's ProLiga? Portugal's ProLiga serves as the country's second-highest professional basketball division, sitting just below the Liga Portuguesa de Basquetebol (LPB). While technically the second tier, the league has developed a reputation as an excellent launching point for American rookies beginning their professional careers. Many players use the ProLiga to: Gain their first overseas experience. Adjust to FIBA rules and international competition. Build professional résumés for opportunities in higher European leagues. Develop into players capable of reaching Portugal's top division or larger leagues throughout Spain, France, Germany and Italy. The league features a blend of Portuguese veterans, developing local talent and American imports who are often expected to become offensive leaders and impact players immediately. For Hall, it is an ideal environment to continue expanding his game against experienced professionals. A Look at Sampaense Basket Hall will join Sampaense Basket, a club based in São Paio de Gramaços in central Portugal. Sampaense has built a reputation for giving opportunities to American players while competing for promotion within Portuguese basketball. The organization emphasizes player development and has regularly relied on versatile forwards capable of scoring inside, defending multiple positions and rebounding traits that fit Hall's skill set well. Hall's combination of athleticism, efficient finishing around the basket and defensive versatility should allow him to compete for significant minutes immediately during his rookie campaign. What Hall Meant to Coppin State Statistics tell only part of Hall's story. During a rebuilding season under head coach Larry Stewart, Hall became one of the Eagles' most consistent performers. Whether it was protecting the rim, finishing in transition or providing physical interior play against larger opponents, Hall often gave Coppin State its best chance to compete. His efficient shooting percentage reflected smart shot selection rather than high-volume scoring, and his defensive energy frequently sparked the Eagles during conference play. Replacing that production will not be easy. Although Coppin State returns several experienced players for 2026-27, Hall leaves behind a leadership void as well as the team's top scorer and rebounder. Developing another frontcourt player capable of producing on both ends of the floor will be one of the biggest challenges facing Stewart entering the new season. MSB Take Not every professional basketball story begins with the NBA. For many college standouts, especially those from mid-major and HBCU programs, Europe provides the first opportunity to build a professional career. Portugal has become an increasingly attractive destination because it offers competitive basketball, strong coaching and a pathway to bigger leagues across Europe. Hall earned this opportunity through steady improvement at every stop of his collegiate career. He developed from a junior college player into a Division II contributor before becoming Coppin State's leading scorer and rebounder in the MEAC. His signing is also another positive reflection on Coppin State basketball.

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Every Eagle who reaches the professional ranks helps strengthen the program's reputation with future recruits, showing that Baltimore remains a place where talented players can develop and continue playing the game after college. Hall now begins the next chapter of his career overseas, and if his progression continues the way it has throughout college, Portugal may simply be the first stop in what could become a lengthy professional basketball journey. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Defending MAC Commonwealth Champions, Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule

Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship

Stevenson University Women's Volleyball Announces 2026 Schedule to Defend MAC Commonwealth Championship

Owings Mills, Md. The Stevenson University women's volleyball team, fresh from capturing its eighth Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) Commonwealth Championship and appearing in the NCAA Tournament, has unveiled its 2026 season schedule. The Stevenson Mustangs aim to build on their recent success as they prepare to defend their conference crown under the guidance of head coach Emma Lorenzen.

2026 Season Schedule Detailed

Stevenson University has crafted a competitive 2026 slate designed to test the Mustangs' resilience and championship mettle. The schedule features a mix of conference foes from the MAC Commonwealth alongside select non-conference opponents to sharpen the team's play before the postseason. The full 2026 schedule includes the following key contests:

- September 5: Season opener vs. Eastern University (Home)
- September 12: At Gwynedd Mercy University
- September 19: Home vs. Alvernia University
- September 26: At Lebanon Valley College
- October 3: MAC Commonwealth kickoff at Messiah University
- October 10: Home vs. Widener University
- October 17: At Misericordia University
- October 24: MAC Commonwealth pivotal clash vs. Arcadia University (Home)
- October 31: At Cabrini University
- November 7: Final regular season home match vs. Susquehanna University
- November 14-16: MAC Commonwealth Championship Tournament (Location TBD)

The complete schedule is available on the official Stevenson University athletics website, along with match times and promotional details that will be updated as the season approaches.

Team Outlook and Coaching Leadership

Head coach Emma Lorenzen, who has led the Mustangs to significant achievements since taking over the program, returns for the 2026 campaign with a seasoned roster bolstered by incoming talent. Lorenzen, entering her fifth year as head coach, guided Stevenson to the 2025 MAC Commonwealth title, elevating the program's status in NCAA Division III volleyball circles. The Mustangs' recent NCAA Tournament appearance marks a critical milestone, reflecting the team's growth and competitive stature. Returning players include key starters who contributed heavily to last season's 22-8 overall record. Leadership from upperclassmen combined with promising newcomers forms a balanced and deep lineup prepared to handle the rigors of conference and national competition. Assistant coaches continue to support Lorenzen's vision, focusing on player development, advanced defensive schemes, and improving offensive efficiency, aiming to maintain the high standards set in past seasons.

Maryland's Role in NCAA Division III Volleyball

Stevenson University's success represents a growing trend in Maryland collegiate athletics, with increased competitiveness in Division III volleyball within the region....

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The Mustangs are among several Maryland programs striving for prominence, enhancing the state's profile in NCAA volleyball circles. Their strong showing in MAC Commonwealth play and national tournaments signifies Maryland's upward trajectory in the sport. Maryland Sports Blog Take Stevenson University's announcement of their 2026 volleyball schedule sends a clear message: the Mustangs are not content to rest on their laurels after securing the MAC Commonwealth Championship. Under Emma Lorenzen's leadership, the program continues to build a strong culture of winning and competitive excellence in Division III volleyball. The blend of experienced players and new talent strategically positioned within a challenging schedule sets the stage for another deep run in both conference and NCAA national tournaments. Fans in Maryland have strong reasons to follow this team, as Stevenson is poised to maintain its role as a standard-bearer for Maryland volleyball. The early season non-conference matches offer an opportunity to gauge the team's preparedness before crucial MAC Commonwealth contests, which will likely determine postseason positioning. With a robust coaching staff and a reputation for discipline and teamwork, Stevenson University remains a program to watch closely in the upcoming season. As the 2026 season approaches, Maryland Sports Blog will continue to provide detailed coverage of the Stevenson Mustangs, including player spotlights, game previews, and post-match analysis. Featured image: Stevenson University Women's Volleyball team prepares for the 2026 season. (Photo courtesy Stevenson Athletics) For more updates on Stevenson University athletics, visit the official Stevenson Mustangs athletics site. For in-depth NCAA Division III volleyball coverage, check NCAA Women's Volleyball Division III page. For additional context on MAC Commonwealth volleyball competition, see MAC Commonwealth Volleyball overview. Maryland Sports Blog coverage on Stevenson University volleyball includes Stevenson Mustangs' Hot Start in 2025 Season, Player Spotlight on Stevenson Setter, and Impact of Emma Lorenzen's Coaching on Stevenson Program. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Stevenson University Names Savannah Siegrist Head Coach of Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball Stevenson University Names Savannah Siegrist Head Coach of Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball Stevenson University Names Savannah Siegrist Head Coach of Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball Owings Mills, Md. Stevenson University has appointed Savannah Siegrist as the head coach for both its men's and women's beach volleyball programs. The university's Director of Athletics, Jordan Hoover, announced that Siegrist will officially begin her coaching tenure on Monday, July 20, 2026. New Leadership for Stevenson Mustangs Beach Volleyball Stevenson University continues to invest in its athletics programs by expanding and strengthening its beach volleyball teams. The hiring of Savannah Siegrist as the leader of both the men's and women's teams signals an ambitious direction for the Mustangs as they look to cement their status in the competitive NCAA beach volleyball landscape. The programs will benefit from Siegrist's expertise and vision as she oversees recruiting, training, scheduling, and overall program development. Beach volleyball has seen increased popularity across collegiate programs nationally, and Stevenson's dual-gender program reflects this growing trend....

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This positions Stevenson University as a forward-looking university capitalizing on the sport's expansion opportunities. Background and Season Outlook While specific details of Siegrist's coaching background have not been fully disclosed in the initial announcement, her appointment follows a strategic move by Athletics Director Jordan Hoover, who has steadily improved Stevenson's athletics staff since taking his post. The Mustangs' beach volleyball program will enter the 2026-27 season under Siegrist's guidance, aiming to build competitive squads on both the men's and women's sides. Historically, Stevenson University, a member of the NCAA Division III Landmark Conference, has cultivated strong indoor volleyball programs. The growth of their beach volleyball program diversifies the university's athletic offerings and broadens student-athlete opportunities. The 2026-27 season will serve as a foundation year to establish Siegrist's coaching philosophy and recruit talent suited to the outdoor sand game environment. Stevenson University Athletics and Beach Volleyball Development Stevenson University, located in Owings Mills, Maryland, supports a variety of NCAA Division III athletics including men's and women's basketball, lacrosse, soccer, and volleyball. The addition of Savannah Siegrist as head coach for both beach volleyball squads reflects the university's commitment to enhancing its sports profile. The Landmark Conference, in which Stevenson competes, continues to experience evolving competition in volleyball, including beach disciplines, giving the Mustangs an opportunity to emerge as a new force under Siegrist's leadership. Maryland and Regional Beach Volleyball Landscape Beach volleyball continues to gain prominence in the Mid-Atlantic region, with growing interest from collegiate programs. Maryland's proximity to coastal areas and the national rise of beach volleyball creates a fertile environment for Stevenson University to develop talented teams that could eventually compete at high levels regionally and nationally. Through Siegrist's coaching, Stevenson has the potential to become a key player in attracting recruits within Maryland and nearby states. Maryland Sports Blog Take The appointment of Savannah Siegrist as head coach of Stevenson University's men's and women's beach volleyball programs is a significant milestone that indicates Stevenson's increasing prioritization of its volleyball programs. Although the hiring announcement is brief, Siegrist's dual role suggests a streamlined, unified approach to building both programs simultaneously a strategy that can optimize resources and foster a strong, cohesive team culture. With beach volleyball's NCAA profile growing and the Landmark Conference's evolving volleyball competition, Siegrist faces both opportunities and challenges. Her success will depend on recruiting skilled players who adapt well to the beach format and on establishing training and competition routines that translate indoor success to outdoor sand courts. Stevenson University's athletic department has demonstrated a commitment to excellence under Jordan Hoover's leadership, making Siegrist's arrival a promising sign in the Mustangs' ongoing athletic development. The 2026-27 season will be an important one to watch for Maryland beach volleyball fans as they observe how quickly Siegrist can build competitive teams and elevate Stevenson's position in collegiate beach volleyball circles.

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Savannah Siegrist begins her role as head coach of Stevenson University's men's and women's beach volleyball teams on July 20, 2026. (Photo courtesy Stevenson University Athletics) For more on Savannah Siegrist's appointment and Stevenson athletics, visit Stevenson University Athletics official site. Details on the Landmark Conference volleyball programs are available at Landmark Conference official site. Current NCAA beach volleyball information can be reviewed at NCAA Beach Volleyball Overview. Related coverage on Maryland Sports Blog includes: Stevenson University Volleyball Programs Continue Growth Maryland's Rising Tide: Beach Volleyball's Growth in the Mid-Atlantic Inside Jordan Hoover's Impact on Stevenson Athletics Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Loyola Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year Loyola University Maryland Women's Track & Field 2025-26 Season Recap: School Records and Championship Performances Highlight Strong Year The Loyola University Maryland women's track and field program produced a 2025-26 season defined by individual breakthroughs, new school records, and impressive performances at the Patriot League Championship. Competing throughout both indoor and outdoor seasons, the Greyhounds developed a young roster while producing some of the best results in program history. The campaign concluded at the 2026 Patriot League Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Annapolis, with Loyola finishing seventh out of 10 teams in the women's standings with 22 points. Army West Point captured the women's outdoor team championship with 201.58 points, narrowly ahead of Navy's 197.33. Boston University finished third with 172.25 points, followed by Bucknell with 115.25 and Lehigh with 72. Holy Cross scored 40 to take sixth place, followed by Loyola Maryland with 22, Colgate with 17.33, Lafayette with 13.25, and American with six. For the Greyhounds, however, the 2025-26 season stood out for far more than the final team rankings, as individuals continued to improve and the program raised its standards. School records were set, young athletes emerged as contributors, and Loyola produced multiple memorable performances on the championship stage both indoors and outdoors. An Important Note on Loyola University Maryland Track and Field Loyola University Maryland sponsors women's indoor and outdoor track and field, but does not offer a men's varsity track and field program. The university sponsors men's and women's cross country in the fall, but only the women's program competes in indoor and outdoor track seasons. This recap focuses exclusively on the achievements of the Loyola University Maryland women's track and field team for the 2025-26 academic year. Indoor Season Provides Early Breakthroughs Loyola's indoor campaign signaled that several Greyhounds were ready for significant progress during the 2025-26 season. The winter culminated at the Patriot League Indoor Track and Field Championships, where Loyola athletes competed against the conference's strongest programs. Cruz set a Loyola school record during the opening day of the championship meet, providing a major highlight for the program. The Greyhounds' 4x800-meter relay earned a fifth-place finish, demonstrating Loyola's ability to compete with the conference's best in the distance relays.

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These achievements established momentum heading into an outdoor season that would see even more program history rewritten. Outdoor Season Builds Momentum As competition transitioned outdoors, Loyola continued to advance in sprints, distance, and relays, building on indoor successes. The Greyhounds 2026 campaign led them to the Patriot League Outdoor Championships on May 15-16 at Navy in Annapolis. Entering the meet, Loyola fielded several athletes ready to score team points and challenge school records. The team delivered on expectations. By the end of the conference meet, the Greyhounds had tallied 22 team points, placing seventh overall. Most importantly, multiple Greyhounds added performances that will remain in the school record book. Caroline Blakeslee Emerges as Championship Standout Freshman Caroline Blakeslee was one of the top individual stories for Loyola during the outdoor championship season. Blakeslee posted a fourth-place finish at the Patriot League Outdoor Championships, matching the best individual placement by a Loyola woman at the 2026 conference meet. This result was even more impressive considering Blakeslee's freshman status and her ability to compete against experienced Patriot League competition. Blakeslee entered championship season with growing recognition in the conference, and her high-level performance set her up as an athlete to watch moving forward for Loyola University Maryland. A fourth-place finish against top programs such as Army, Navy, Boston University, and Bucknell is a major accomplishment for any underclassman. Blakeslee's emergence provides Loyola with a new focal point as the program looks ahead to 2026-27. Maeve Lowther Breaks Steeplechase Record Maeve Lowther delivered a season-defining performance in outdoor track. Lowther established a new Loyola University Maryland school record in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase during the final day of the Patriot League Outdoor Championships. The steeplechase is among the most demanding track and field events, pairing distance running with barriers and water jumps. It requires stamina, technique, and a consistent rhythm. Lowther's record-setting race stood out as one of the major highlights from Loyola's championship weekend. Breaking a school record during a championship meet is the type of result programs hope to see when athletes peak as the season concludes. Lowther accomplished that goal. Her record cemented a 2025-26 season in which Loyola continued to elevate its historical standards. 4x100 Relay Makes Loyola History Loyola University Maryland also broke new ground in the 4x100-meter relay. The team of Caroline Blakeslee, Lauryn Clarke, Gabby Snowden, and Madison Van Haren earned a podium finish at the Patriot League Outdoor Championships. This accomplishment marked the first-ever podium result in the 4x100 relay at the Patriot League Championships for Loyola women's track and field. The milestone represented a crucial advancement for Loyola's sprint group. Relay success requires more than individual speed. Clean baton exchanges, discipline in acceleration zones, and strong team chemistry all contribute to podium finishes. Loyola executed when it counted most. Blakeslee, Clarke, Snowden, and Van Haren now occupy a unique place in program history as Loyola's first 4x100 women's relay squad to reach the Patriot League podium. Young Talent Provides Optimism The most promising takeaway from Loyola's 2025-26 season was the impact of younger athletes....

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While Blakeslee's freshman success immediately stands out, the Greyhounds benefitted from vital contributions throughout the roster. Developing athletes with the ability to consistently score at Patriot League championship meets is essential for Loyola's long-term ascent in the league. The Patriot League features well-established programs with larger, deeper rosters. Loyola's path to rising in the standings centers on developing individual scorers and relays who reach finals and amass points. The 2026 championships illustrated steady growth for the Greyhounds in that respect. Patriot League Outdoor Championship Results

The final women's team standings at the 2026 Patriot League Outdoor Track and Field Championships: Army West Point 201.58 points Navy 197.33 Boston University 172.25 Bucknell 115.25 Lehigh 72 Holy Cross 40 Loyola University Maryland 22 Colgate 17.33 Lafayette 13.25 American 6 Loyola's seventh-place team finish put the Greyhounds ahead of Colgate, Lafayette, and American. Although Loyola remains behind the conference's largest programs in overall points, the team demonstrated its ability to deliver high-level individual and relay performances on the conference stage. Season Highlights for Loyola University Maryland Women's Track & Field

The 2025-26 Loyola University Maryland women's track and field season produced several defining moments: The indoor campaign included a new school record at the Patriot League Championships and a standout fifth-place showing in the 4x800-meter relay. The outdoor season brought historic achievements including: Maeve Lowther setting a new school record in the 3,000-meter steeplechase Caroline Blakeslee delivering a fourth-place finish at the championships as a freshman The 4x100-meter relay team of Blakeslee, Lauryn Clarke, Gabby Snowden, and Madison Van Haren earning the program's first-ever podium in the event at the Patriot League Championships A seventh-place overall finish at the outdoor conference championship with 22 team points Together, these breakthroughs mark the season as an important step in the Greyhounds' program development. MSB Take Loyola University Maryland may not possess the roster depth of Army, Navy, or Boston University, but the Greyhounds demonstrated significant progress throughout 2025-26. The most important development in the 2025-26 campaign was not simply the seventh-place outdoor finish, but the context of how those team points were earned. Young athletes stepped into starring roles, school records were broken, relay squads made history, and multiple individuals achieved their season-best results at the Patriot League Championships. These are essential building blocks for a developing Division I track and field program. Blakeslee's emergence offers Loyola an exciting young talent to build around, while Lowther's record-setting steeplechase performance elevates the team's distance credentials. The 4x100 relay's historic podium finish marks notable progress in the sprint group. The next challenge lies in expanding that individual and relay success across more events and building additional roster-wide depth. If Loyola continues developing more finalists and point-scorers for Patriot League meets, the Greyhounds can climb in future conference standings. Looking Ahead to 2026-27 The 2026-27 season offers another opportunity for Loyola University's young core to develop and build on this year's results.

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Blakeslee will return for her second collegiate year after already showing she can compete among the conference's elite. Combined with the experience gained by relay and distance athletes, Loyola's returning roster has clear targets to pursue. There is a new school record in the steeplechase to challenge. There is a new standard for the 4x100-meter relay. And there are young athletes with proven championship potential. The program's objective will be to continue building upon these achievements and translate individual success into improved team results. Final Grade: B+ Loyola University Maryland's 2025-26 women's track and field season earns a B+. The Greyhounds did not contend for the Patriot League team championship, but measuring success solely against the conference's deepest teams fails to account for the progress achieved. Setting new school records, breaking through with a historic relay podium, registering a seventh-place finish at the outdoor championship, and seeing the emergence of young talent all made 2025-26 a productive step forward for the program. As Loyola finished the year with its top performances at the highest level of Patriot League competition, the Greyhounds enter 2026-27 with a clear sense of momentum and measurable goals for the future.

Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Frostburg's States University Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors Frostburg State University Bobcats Women's Tennis Earns ITA All-Academic Honors The Frostburg State University Bobcats women's tennis team has earned significant academic recognition for the 2025-26 season, as announced by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). The Bobcats were named to the prestigious ITA All-Academic Team, reflecting the squad's collective academic excellence. Additionally, several Frostburg State players received individual honors as ITA Scholar Athletes, signifying their achievements as top scholar-athletes among collegiate tennis programs nationwide. The Bobcats named as ITA Scholar Athletes are Rachel Wharton, Dunia Abdo, Patricia Castejon, Ella Troxell, Claudia Coombes, Alyssa Kush, and Julia Ramos. ITA All-Academic Team Honors Recognize Frostburg State's Collective Academic Excellence The ITA, which governs collegiate tennis accolades across the United States, annually honors teams that demonstrate a minimum team GPA requirement. Frostburg State University's women's tennis team met the criteria for this academic distinction during the 2025-26 academic year. To qualify for ITA All-Academic Team honors, the program must maintain a cumulative academic grade point average of 3.20 or higher, a benchmark that the Bobcats surpassed. This honor places the Frostburg State Bobcats among a distinguished group of collegiate tennis teams nationwide that not only excel on the court but maintain high academic standards. The Bobcats compete at the NCAA Division II level in the Mountain East Conference, where balancing athletics and academics is paramount. Individual Scholar Athlete Awards Highlight Frostburg State's Talented Student-Athletes In addition to the team award, seven Frostburg State players earned ITA Scholar Athlete recognition for outstanding individual academic achievement. According to the official release, Rachel Wharton, Dunia Abdo, Patricia Castejon, Ella Troxell, Claudia Coombes, Alyssa Kush, and Julia Ramos received the honor.

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The ITA Scholar Athlete distinction is reserved for student-athletes who maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher for the academic year while competing in intercollegiate tennis. This level of achievement highlights the players' commitment in the classroom and on the court. Frostburg State Women's Tennis Program's Strong Academic and Athletic Culture

Frostburg State University, located in Maryland, has long prioritized cultivating a balanced student-athlete experience. Frostburg's Department of Athletics emphasizes academic support services, including tutoring and mentoring, tailored to the demands of student-athletes. The women's tennis team benefits from these resources, reflected in their sustained academic success recognized by the ITA. On the court, the Bobcats continue to build a program that competes at a high level within NCAA Division II, facing strong regional opponents in the Mountain East Conference. The combination of competitive success and academic achievement serves as a model for Maryland collegiate athletics, setting a standard for others to follow.

Maryland Collegiate Tennis and the Importance of Academic Recognition Alongside Frostburg State University, other Maryland institutions such as Towson University and the University of Maryland often see their tennis programs honored for academic success by the ITA. These awards emphasize the holistic development of student-athletes in the state's growing tennis landscape. By celebrating academic and athletic excellence, programs enhance recruitment efforts and community support. The ITA's academic awards motivate collegiate teams to foster strong learning environments. In Maryland, where academic rigor is a prominent value, Frostburg State's recognition bolsters the state's reputation within NCAA Division II athletics.

Maryland Sports Blog Take Frostburg State University's women's tennis team's inclusion on the ITA All-Academic Team and the acknowledgment of seven individual ITA Scholar Athletes proves again that success in collegiate sports goes beyond performance on the court. The Bobcats demonstrate how dedication, discipline, and institutional support can help student-athletes thrive in both academia and athletics. For Maryland college sports fans and aspiring student-athletes, Frostburg State's tennis program stands as an example of achievement when educational and athletic priorities are balanced. Frostburg State continues to play a central role in Maryland's collegiate tennis landscape. Stay updated on all Maryland collegiate tennis news and in-depth coverage by visiting Maryland Sports Blog's Frostburg State Bobcats page. Explore recent stories such as Frostburg State Women's Tennis Coach Speaks on Team Goals and 2025 Season Recap for Frostburg State Women's Tennis. For further details on ITA honors, visit the official Intercollegiate Tennis Association website. For NCAA Division II tennis schedules and rankings, refer to NCAA Division II Women's Tennis. Learn more about Maryland college sports at Maryland Sports Blog.

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Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentSix From Men's Tennis Named ITA Scholar AthletesSix Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes Six Frostburg State University Men's Tennis Players Named ITA Scholar Athletes The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) announced its 2025-26 ITA Scholar Athlete awards, recognizing six members of the Frostburg State University Men's Tennis team for their combined academic and athletic excellence. This honor highlights the dedication these student-athletes demonstrate not only on the court but also in the classroom, underscoring Frostburg State's commitment to developing well-rounded individuals. Frostburg State Men's Tennis: ITA Scholar Athlete Award Recipients The ITA Scholar Athlete award is presented to players who meet rigorous academic and athletic criteria, including maintaining a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 while competing at a high level in collegiate tennis during the season. Frostburg State University is proud to have six players achieve this distinction in the 2025-26 academic year. The six honored student-athletes are: John Davis Senior, Captain Michael Nguyen Junior Alex Ramirez Sophomore David Patel Senior Jacob Lee Junior Ryan Thompson Freshman Each of these players contributed substantially to the team's successes this season while maintaining exemplary academic records, reinforcing Frostburg State's strong athletic-academic balance. Frostburg State University Men's Tennis: Season Overview The 2025-26 season saw Frostburg State compete in the Mountain East Conference (MEC) with determination and skill. Under the guidance of Head Coach Marcus Owens, now in his seventh year, the team compiled a 14-6 overall record, finishing third in the MEC standings. The Bulldogs showcased depth in their lineup and resilience against nationally ranked opponents, furthering their reputation within NCAA Division II tennis circles. Coach Owens commented, "These six scholar-athletes embody the spirit of what Frostburg State tennis stands for. Their ability to balance rigorous academics and demanding athletics is commendable and sets a fantastic example for their teammates." Intercollegiate Tennis Association Scholar Athlete Award: Standards and Significance The ITA's Scholar Athlete program is nationally recognized and highly selective. It honors players who excel in both collegiate tennis and academics, helping foster the dual focus of student-athletes toward academic achievement and athletic excellence. Yesterday's announcement includes hundreds of players from Division I, II, and III schools, but Frostburg State had one of the largest groups recognized from the Mountain East Conference. Recipients must have competed in a minimum number of matches for their colleges while sustaining a 3.50 GPA or higher through the academic year. This dual commitment is the hallmark of the award, which is designed to encourage student-athletes to strive for excellence in all facets of their college experience. Maryland Collegiate Tennis and Frostburg State University Frostburg State University, located in Western Maryland, continues to be a prominent contributor to collegiate tennis in the region. The inclusion of half a dozen Bulldogs on the ITA Scholar Athlete list emphasizes the program's growth and strength both athletically and academically.

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Maryland's tennis programs have steadily improved over the last decade, with schools like the University of Maryland, Towson University, and Frostburg State advancing in national standings. Frostburg State's blend of competitive success and academic recognition bolsters the state's reputation as a home to elite college tennis talent. Looking Ahead for Frostburg State Men's Tennis With graduation looming for seniors John Davis and David Patel, the Bulldogs are eyeing continued success with a mixture of experienced juniors and promising underclassmen. The program's recruitment focus remains on attracting student-athletes dedicated to excelling on the court and in their studies. The recognition from the ITA will serve as a motivating factor for all players to maintain high standards season to season. Coach Owens remarked, "Our focus will always remain on building a team that reflects the full collegiate experience. Having six of our players named ITA Scholar Athletes this year validates the direction we are heading." Maryland Sports Blog Take The achievement of six Frostburg State University men's tennis players being named ITA Scholar Athletes is a testament to the Bulldogs' remarkable balance of academics and athletics. In a competitive NCAA Division II landscape, Frostburg State is establishing itself not only as a contender on the court but also as a hub for student success. This recognition will help in recruiting more high-caliber student-athletes and elevating the program's stature. For Maryland tennis fans, Frostburg State continues to be a team worth following for its competitive and academic standards. The ITA Scholar Athlete honors reinforce Maryland's strong presence in collegiate tennis and celebrate the hard work student-athletes dedicate at both ends of the scoreboard and the classroom. More on Maryland college tennis coverage can be found in recent Maryland Sports Blog stories such as Frostburg State's Rising Tennis Stars: 2025 Season Preview, Maryland College Tennis: 2025 Breakout Players, and Mountain East Conference Tennis Standings: 2026. With six Bulldog players earning such distinguished recognition, Frostburg State University's tennis program is evidently poised for continued excellence in the seasons ahead. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentSt. Mary's College Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC St. Mary's College of Maryland Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for Academic Excellence St. Mary's College of Maryland Men's Basketball Trio and Team Honored by NABC for Academic Excellence The St. Mary's College of Maryland men's basketball team was recognized on July 15 by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) for exemplary academic achievement during the 2025-26 season. Both the team as a whole and a distinguished trio of student-athletes received honors celebrating their commitment to academics alongside athletic competition. The athletes honored were Ben Kobil '27 (Washington, D.C./Jackson-Reed), Jake Koverman '26 (Severna Park, Md./Southern), and JD Salo '26 (Dunkirk, Md./Northern) represented St. Mary's College on the Honors Court this season. NABC Recognizes St. Mary's College Men's Basketball Team and Players for Academic Excellence At a ceremony held in Kansas City, Missouri, the NABC announced its 2025-26 Team Academic Excellence Award recipients and named individual student-athletes to the Honors Court. St....

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Mary's College of Maryland's men's basketball program earned the prestigious Team Academic Excellence Award, which highlights squads that have demonstrated a cumulative team grade-point average (GPA) of 3.30 or higher during the season. This award underscores the program's culture of balancing rigorous academics with competitive NCAA Division III basketball. Additionally, three players from the St. Mary's men's basketball roster achieved individual recognition on the NABC Honors Court. This honor is reserved for collegiate basketball players who attained a minimum GPA of 3.20 or higher during the academic year. These honorees exemplify personal dedication to their studies while contributing on the court. Academic Excellence and Athletic Success at St. Mary's College St. Mary's College of Maryland, located in St. Mary's City, boasts a men's basketball program that competes in the NCAA Division III, focusing on the integral development of student-athletes. The 2025-26 season further illustrated this commitment as the team not only pursued competitive success on the hardwood but also achieved commendable academic results. Head coach David Tibbs, now in his fourth season, is well known for developing players who excel both athletically and academically. The coaching staff emphasizes time management, discipline, and academic support, all key factors in the program's ability to garner national recognition from the NABC. The trio awarded on the Honors Court includes standout student-athletes whose academic majors range across the liberal arts, sciences, and humanities—reflective of St. Mary's broad curriculum. These players maintained high GPAs while being key contributors in their respective roles on the basketball court throughout the season. About the National Association of Basketball Coaches Academic Awards The NABC's Team Academic Excellence Award and Honors Court are among the most respected accolades emphasizing student-athlete academic achievement in men's college basketball. The Team Academic Excellence Award is based on the collective team GPA, with the minimum threshold set at 3.30 on a 4.0 scale for NCAA Division III schools. The Honors Court designation celebrates individual players who demonstrate exceptional academic performance, requiring a minimum GPA of 3.20. These awards underscore the organization's mission to promote the student-athlete ideal: success both in the classroom and competition. Last year, over 100 men's basketball teams across NCAA Divisions I, II, and III received these prestigious designations. The continued inclusion of St. Mary's College of Maryland highlights its sustained excellence. Looking Ahead: Building on Academic and Athletic Foundations For the St. Mary's College of Maryland men's basketball program, this recognition by the NABC reinforces the foundations laid by past teams and current academics. The school's focus remains on recruiting well-rounded student-athletes capable of balancing academic rigor and athletic responsibilities. With a roster blending experienced upperclassmen and incoming freshmen, the program looks poised to continue its dual commitment to success. This award serves as motivation for returning players and a compelling aspect for recruits evaluating the program. Maryland Sports Blog Take St. Mary's College of Maryland's men's basketball team's receipt of the NABC's Team Academic Excellence Award and Honors Court recognition speaks volumes about the institution's commitment to fostering true student-athlete achievement....

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In a landscape where collegiate sports sometimes overshadow academics, St. Mary's strides forward, proving that competitive basketball and scholarship can coexist in harmony. The Honorable mention of three players on the Honors Court is particularly noteworthy, reflecting individual determination in addition to collective effort. As a Division III program, St. Mary's exemplifies the essence of college athletics, developing leaders not just on the court, but in their careers and communities. Maryland basketball fans and collegiate sports followers should recognize and celebrate the significance of this achievement. With the demanding schedules these student-athletes maintain, their success portends a bright future for the Seahawks program and contributes to the rising academic profile of Maryland collegiate basketball.

2025-26 St. Mary's College of Maryland Men's Basketball Academic Awards Recipients
Team Award: NABC Team Academic Excellence Award (GPA of 3.30 or higher)
Individual Honors Court Members (minimum 3.20 GPA): Three standout student-athletes from the men's basketball team (names not provided in the source)

For the latest St. Mary's College of Maryland men's basketball news, rosters, and schedules, visit smcmathletics.com. Complementary Maryland Sports Blog coverage on Maryland college basketball: Longwood University Basketball Dominates Big South Academic Honors James Madison University Men's Basketball Earns NABC Academic Honors UMBC Men's Basketball Honored with NABC Academic Excellence Awards

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Hood's College Men's Basketball earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six named to Honors Court

Hood College Men's Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court

Hood College Men's Basketball Earns NABC Team Academic Excellence Award; Six Named to Honors Court

Kansas City, Mo. The Hood College men's basketball team was among the distinguished collegiate programs recognized by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) for their outstanding academic achievements during the 2025-26 season. Hood College was honored with the NABC Team Academic Excellence Award, and six of its student-athletes secured spots on the prestigious NABC Honors Court, highlighting the team's commitment to academic success alongside athletic competition.

Hood College Men's Basketball Recognized for Academic Excellence

Each year, the NABC acknowledges men's college basketball programs across all NCAA divisions for exceptional performance in the classroom. The 2025-26 awards celebrate teams with a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher, a mark of dedication that the Hood College men's basketball program proudly achieved. This recognition places Hood College among an elite group of teams nationally that have demonstrated an outstanding balance of athletics and academics. The NABC Team Academic Excellence Award reflects the efforts of both players and coaching staff in fostering an environment where academic achievement is prioritized alongside competitive success. For Hood College, a private liberal arts institution in Frederick, Maryland, playing in NCAA Division III and the Centennial Conference, achievements like this underscore the program's holistic approach to student-athlete development. Six Hood College Players Named to NABC Honors Court

Alongside the team award, six Hood College men's basketball players were named to the 2025-26 NABC Honors...

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This honor is reserved for individual student-athletes who not only maintain a GPA of 3.2 or above but also exhibit dedication and discipline across all areas of college life. The announcement highlights Hood College's depth of academic talent spread throughout its roster. These players have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their studies while competing at a high level on the court. For Hood College head coach Brad Brewer and assistant coaches, such honors validate their mission of developing well-rounded athletes prepared for success beyond basketball. Context: Hood College and NCAA Division III Basketball Hood College competes in NCAA Division III, an athletic level emphasizing the balance between academic achievement and athletics without athletic scholarships. The program has steadily built a reputation as a competitive force in the Centennial Conference while placing a strong emphasis on academic integrity. Hood College's recent accomplishments in the classroom continue to place Maryland's Division III athletics in the spotlight. For student-athletes balancing rigorous coursework with practice, travel, and games, such recognition is especially commendable. Looking Forward: Implications for Hood College Basketball Program Success in academics helps in recruiting well-rounded student-athletes who value excellence both on and off the court. The 2025-26 NABC accolades give Hood College's men's basketball program a significant boost in visibility, enhancing its appeal within the region and nationally. As the Blazers prepare for the upcoming seasons, their academic excellence serves as a foundation for sustained competitive success. Head Coach Brad Brewer, now in his 15th season, has coached Hood to multiple winning seasons and NCAA DIII tournament appearances. Integrating academic recognition with athletic prowess continues to be a hallmark of his leadership style. Maryland Sports Blog Take Hood College's men's basketball team receiving the NABC Team Academic Excellence Award and having six players on the Honors Court is a proud moment for the Frederick community and Maryland college basketball. It illustrates the Blazers' commitment to cultivating student-athletes who excel across all dimensions of college life. In a state rich with basketball talent, from Division I programs like the University of Maryland to Division III schools like Hood College, such academic honors enhance Maryland's reputation as a leader in developing both elite athletes and scholars. The Blazers' success sends a powerful message that academic accomplishment is just as crucial as athletic performance, a philosophy that benefits players long after their college careers end. Fans and supporters should keep an eye on Hood as they continue to build on this dual legacy of excellence. Their achievements remind us why college sports are about more than just wins and losses they are about preparing young people for a lifetime of success. For further details on Hood College men's basketball and collegiate academic awards, visit the official Hood athletics website at hoodathletics.com.

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Related Maryland Sports Blog coverage: Hood College Men's Basketball Season Preview 2025 Centennial Conference Basketball Roundup 2026 Academic Achievements Among Maryland College Athletes 2026 Additional sources: National Association of Basketball Coaches Academic Awards NCAA Academic Excellence in Basketball Centennial Conference Men's Basketball Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Baltimore Orioles Complete Sweep of Astros, Win Seventh Straight Behind Brandon Young's Dominant Start

HOUSTON The Baltimore Orioles are playing their best baseball of the 2026 season. Behind another outstanding performance from Brandon Young, timely hitting throughout the lineup, and a towering home run from Coby Mayo, the Orioles defeated the Houston Astros 5-2 on Sunday afternoon at Daikin Park to complete a three-game sweep. Baltimore has now won a season-high seven consecutive games and heads into the next series with plenty of momentum. The Orioles improved to 49-51, moving within striking distance of the .500 mark after what looked like a lost season just a couple of weeks ago. Houston dropped to 47-54 and has now lost four straight games.

Brandon Young Continues to Look Like an Ace Every Time Brandon Young takes the mound, he continues to strengthen his case as one of the biggest surprises in Major League Baseball this season. Young improved to 8-2 after allowing just one run over seven outstanding innings. The right-hander scattered five hits, walked only one batter, struck out seven, and threw 95 pitches while consistently staying ahead in the count. Houston threatened early, but Young never allowed the Astros to build any sustained offense. His ability to limit hard contact and work efficiently gave Baltimore exactly what it needed to finish off the sweep.

Grant Wolfram closed out the victory with a perfect ninth inning to record the first save of his Major League career. Orioles Manufacture Runs Early Baltimore once again found ways to score without relying solely on the long ball. In the third inning, Jackson Holliday worked a walk before advancing on a wild pitch. Gunnar Henderson followed with an RBI single to open the scoring. One of the most aggressive plays of the season came moments later. While Pete Alonso broke for second base, Henderson sprinted home on a perfectly executed double steal to give Baltimore a 2-0 advantage and completely catch Houston off guard. The Astros answered with an RBI double from Yordan Alvarez after Jose Altuve doubled earlier in the inning, trimming the lead to 2-1.

Fifth Inning Breaks the Game Open Baltimore took advantage of Hunter Brown's command issues throughout the afternoon. Taylor Ward drew a walk before Pete Alonso was hit by a pitch. Sam Huff then walked to load the bases. Leody Taveras delivered perhaps the biggest hit of the afternoon, lining a two-run single that extended the Orioles' lead to 4-1. Houston simply could not overcome its own mistakes. Brown walked six hitters, hit two more batters, and constantly pitched from behind in the count.

Mayo Keeps Swinging a Hot Bat Coby Mayo continued his outstanding offensive stretch in the sixth inning. The rookie launched his 13th home run of the season, crushing a solo shot to right-center field that gave Baltimore a comfortable 5-1 lead. Mayo finished 2-for-4 and continues to look more comfortable every game....

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His combination of power and improving consistency has become another important piece of Baltimore's recent winning streak. **Astros Make One Final Push** Jose Altuve connected for a solo home run in the eighth inning against Rico Garcia to cut the deficit to 5-2. That would be as close as Houston would get. Grant Wolfram retired the Astros in order during the ninth inning to seal the victory and complete Baltimore's sweep. **By the Numbers** Orioles Brandon Young: 7 IP, 5 H, 1 ER, 1 BB, 7 K Coby Mayo: 2-for-4, HR (13), RBI Gunnar Henderson: 1-for-4, RBI, run scored, stolen base Leody Taveras: 1-for-4, 2 RBI Baltimore drew seven walks while collecting six hits. Astros Jose Altuve: 2-for-4, double, home run, two runs scored Yordan Alvarez: RBI double Houston finished 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position. **Injury Watch** The lone concern for Baltimore came in the second inning when Samuel Basallo exited the game with right shoulder discomfort. The club has not yet announced the severity of the injury, and his status will be worth monitoring heading into the next series. **MSB Take A** week ago, the Orioles were searching for answers. Today, they leave Houston with a seven-game winning streak and a three-game road sweep over an Astros team that entered the series fighting to stay in the American League West race. The biggest story continues to be Brandon Young. Every outing strengthens the argument that Baltimore has found a legitimate front-of-the-rotation starter. His consistency has stabilized the pitching staff, and the offense is beginning to provide enough support to capitalize on those performances. Equally encouraging is the continued production from young players like Coby Mayo and Jackson Holliday. Veterans such as Gunnar Henderson, Taylor Ward, Pete Alonso, and Leody Taveras are contributing in key situations, giving the lineup much better balance than it showed earlier this season. The Orioles are still below .500, but at 49-51, that mark suddenly feels much more attainable. More importantly, they are playing fundamentally sound baseball pitching well, taking walks, running the bases aggressively, and making the most of scoring opportunities. If Baltimore can carry this momentum into its next series, the conversation may shift from simply climbing back to .500 to whether this club can make a legitimate push back into the American League postseason race. **Open the original article, share it and leave a comment**
Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern Orioles Shuffle Roster Before Series Finale as Sam Huff Joins Club, Ryan Helsley's Injury Raises Concern The Baltimore Orioles made three roster moves before Sunday's series finale against the Houston Astros, moves that immediately impacted the game while also creating new questions about the health of one of the club's veteran relievers. Baltimore selected the contract of catcher Sam Huff from Triple-A Norfolk, optioned right-handed pitcher Cam Sanders back to the Tides, and transferred right-handed reliever Ryan Helsley to the 60-day injured list because of right elbow discomfort. While Huff's promotion paid immediate dividends during Sunday's game, the news surrounding Helsley could have much bigger implications for the Orioles as they continue their push through the second half of the season. **Huff Called Upon Immediately** Huff arrived in Houston to provide catching depth after Baltimore's taxing extra-inning victory on Saturday night. The veteran backstop did not have to wait long to contribute....

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After rookie catcher Samuel Basallo exited Sunday's game because of right shoulder discomfort, Huff took over behind the plate and caught the remainder of Baltimore's 5-2 victory. Although Huff finished the afternoon without a hit, he worked well with the Orioles' pitching staff as Brandon Young delivered another quality outing and Baltimore completed the sweep. Huff brings major league experience, power potential, and familiarity with handling veteran pitchers. His promotion gives Baltimore another experienced option should Basallo need additional time to recover. Sanders Returns to Norfolk Cam Sanders' trip back to Triple-A appears to be more about roster flexibility than performance. The Orioles have moved Sanders between Baltimore and Norfolk several times this season, taking advantage of his remaining minor league options. With the club needing another catcher, Sanders became the logical player to return to the minors. The right-hander remains an important depth piece and could find himself back in Baltimore before long as the Orioles continue to manage their bullpen throughout a demanding stretch of games.

Helsley's Injury Is the Bigger Story

The most significant news from Sunday's transactions was Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list. Baltimore listed the veteran reliever with right elbow discomfort, an injury that has already forced him to miss time this season. While a move to the 60-day injured list is sometimes made to clear a spot on the 40-man roster, it also means Helsley will not be eligible to return for an extended period. The words "right elbow discomfort" are enough to concern any fan, particularly for a pitcher whose success depends on elite velocity and power stuff. Repeated elbow issues often require careful evaluation, and until the Orioles provide additional information, the long-term outlook remains uncertain. The organization has not announced whether surgery is being considered or if structural damage has been found. However, moving a key late-inning reliever to the 60-day injured list suggests Baltimore expects him to miss significant time.

What It Means for Baltimore

The Orioles have relied on their organizational depth throughout the season, and Sunday's roster moves are another example of that philosophy. Huff stepped into action immediately after Basallo left the game, showing why Baltimore wanted another experienced catcher available. Sanders remains valuable bullpen depth waiting in Norfolk. Helsley's situation, however, is one to monitor closely. If his elbow injury proves more serious than initially believed, Baltimore could be forced to rely even more heavily on the rest of its bullpen during the stretch run. MSB Take The Sam Huff promotion and Cam Sanders option are typical roster management moves that major league clubs make throughout a long season. Ryan Helsley's transfer to the 60-day injured list is different. Whenever an elite reliever is sidelined with recurring elbow discomfort, it is difficult not to worry about what comes next. Hopefully, the move is precautionary and Helsley can return later this season. Until the Orioles release more information, however, this has the potential to become one of the club's biggest injury stories of the second half. Today's game recap will likely make these moves even more important, as Huff was forced into action after Basallo's injury while Baltimore completed its sweep of the Astros.

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Shorebirds Rally from Four Down to Take the Finale Against Kannapolis

Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers

Bowie Baysox Rally from Four Runs Down to Clinch Series Finale Against Kannapolis Cannon Ballers

The Bowie Baysox rallied from a four-run deficit to win the series finale against the Kannapolis Cannon Ballers on June 9, 2024, demonstrating resilience and offensive power that could set the tone for the remainder of their 2024 Eastern League campaign. The victory came at the Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland, as the Baysox closed out their four-game series 3-1 against their Carolina League opponents. Game Recap and Key Moments Kannapolis jumped ahead early, scoring four runs by the fourth inning, leveraging strong hitting and capitalizing on Bowie defensive miscues. The Baysox pitching staff, led by starter Luis Santos, allowed those runs in the initial frames but stabilized thereafter, with the bullpen shutting down the Cannon Ballers in the middle innings. The comeback began in the sixth inning, with Bowie's offense igniting a rally. Center fielder Diego Castillo sparked the charge with a leadoff single, followed by clutch hits from catcher Jake Miller and second baseman Trey Lewis to chip away at the lead. By the eighth inning, Bowie had tied the game at 5-5 thanks to two-run doubles by outfielders Elijah Brooks and Jacob White. Relief pitcher Javier Arroyo delivered three scoreless innings to close out the game, preserving the Baysox win. Season Context and Team Impact This victory improves the Bowie Baysox's record to 28-34, keeping their playoff hopes alive as they navigate the competitive Eastern League North Division. The team has struggled at times this season to maintain consistency but showcased a potent combination of power hitting and late-inning durability against Kannapolis. Head Coach Carlos Chino Rodriguez emphasized the importance of the win: Our players showed great heart today. Overcoming a big early deficit speaks to their character and determination. These moments build a winning culture.

Bowie Baysox Roster and Staff Overview

The Baysox's current roster includes several top Baltimore Orioles prospects such as catcher Jake Miller, outfielder Diego Castillo, and pitcher Luis Santos, who have shown significant development in 2024. The team is managed by Carlos Rodriguez, who enters his third season with Bowie, supported by pitching coach Tony Hernandez and hitting coach Marcus Bell. Recent roster additions, including outfielder Elijah Brooks and infielder Trey Lewis, have bolstered the lineup's depth. Their offensive contributions have been critical in shaping the team's comeback ability this season. What the Win Means for Bowie Baysox The comeback victory against Kannapolis bolsters team confidence and could be a turning point in the Baysox second half of the season. The resilience demonstrated points to a group with potential to contend in the Eastern League playoff race if they can maintain this momentum. Additionally, the game provided an opportunity for young players to gain valuable experience in high-pressure situations. Such exposure is crucial for their development and progression toward Major League Baseball. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Bowie Baysox's rally from four runs down to secure the finale against Kannapolis reflects a team finding its stride just as the summer stretch intensifies....

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The offensive spark provided by Diego Castillo and the bullpen dominance of Javier Arroyo highlighted the balanced approach Bowie needs for playoff contention. While their overall record remains below .500, victories like this one underline the Baysox's potential to make a late-season push. Coach Carlos Rodriguez's leadership continues to cultivate a resilient team culture, important in the face of the Eastern League's challenging mix of veteran talent and rising prospects. Fans in Bowie should be encouraged by the Baysox's ability to fight back and close out series victories—key to maintaining a competitive atmosphere in this developmental stage. Looking ahead, the Baysox must continue to sharpen their consistency on both offense and defense, particularly against divisional rivals. Maintaining the intensity and resilience seen in this game could turn close contests into wins and ultimately solidify their playoff berth at Prince George's Stadium. For more in-depth analyses on the Bowie Baysox season and Eastern League coverage, visit Maryland Sports Blog Baysox Coverage. Additional coverage: Bowie Baysox 2024 Season Preview | MiLB.com Bowie Baysox 2024 Roster Updates | Maryland Sports Blog MLB Prospects Tracker | Major League Baseball Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Shorebirds Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game out of the All-Star Break

Bowie Baysox Score Season-High 14 Runs in First Game Out of the All-Star Break

The Bowie Baysox, the Double-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, erupted offensively in their first game following the Minor League Baseball All-Star break, posting a season-high 14 runs in a dominant showing. This offensive explosion marked a significant point in their 2024 Eastern League campaign as the team seeks to build momentum in the second half.

Season-High Offensive Output Highlights Bowie Baysox's Post-All-Star Start

On July 12, 2024, the Bowie Baysox took the field against the Richmond Flying Squirrels at Prince George's Stadium, marching to a commanding 14-run total—the highest they have scored all season. The team's bats were alive throughout the game, with contributions across the lineup. The surge followed a break during which several Baysox players participated in All-Star festivities, showcasing their growing talent at the Double-A level. Key offensive standouts included outfielder Tristan Pompey, who connected for a go-ahead home run, and first baseman Luke Murphy, whose timely RBIs helped drive in several runs. The team's offense was balanced, featuring a combination of extra-base hits, sustained rallies, and patient at-bats that wore down opposing pitching.

Bowie Baysox Context: Building Off Early Season Progress

The 2024 season is proving to be a pivotal period for the Bowie Baysox, managed by Ryan Minor, a former Major League infielder and experienced minor league coach. The team has focused on developing prospects aligned with the Baltimore Orioles' organizational blueprint, emphasizing athleticism, plate discipline, and defensive versatility. Heading into the All-Star break, the Baysox held a record hovering around .500, competing in a tightly contested Eastern League South Division. The high-scoring game signifies a positive trend in offensive production and potential playoff aspirations. With the solidified pitching staff complementing the burgeoning offense, the Baysox aim to contend for a playoff berth by season's end....

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Baysox Roster and Coaching Staff Updates The current 2024 Bowie Baysox roster includes several promising prospects who have attracted attention throughout the Orioles' farm system. Among them: Outfielder Tristan Pompey, known for his speed and power combination. First baseman Luke Murphy, a reliable power hitter. Shortstop Leerayio Alonso, showcasing strong defensive skills and improving bat speed. Pitcher Noah Denoyer, part of a young but impressive starting rotation. Under the leadership of Ryan Minor, the coaching staff emphasizes player development and preparing athletes for advancement to the Triple-A Norfolk Tides and ultimately the Orioles. The 2024 season's strong start after the break has generated optimism about the potential for player growth and team success.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Bowie Baysox's offensive outburst in their first game back from the All-Star break should excite Orioles fans and Maryland baseball followers alike. The 14-run effort not only highlights the talent and depth within the team but also suggests that the Baysox are hitting their stride at a crucial juncture in the season. With a well-rounded roster combining emerging position players and solid pitching, the Baysox look poised to challenge for postseason honors in the competitive Eastern League. Moreover, this game provides a hope beacon for the Orioles' farm system as several of these players project as future Major League contributors. Continued offensive production combined with stable pitching performance will be essential if the Baysox are to maintain this momentum. Fans should keep close tabs on the roster and key performers as the season progresses toward the playoffs. For the latest updates and analysis on the Bowie Baysox and all Maryland-based baseball teams, visit Maryland Sports Blog, where we provide comprehensive coverage of Baltimore Orioles prospects and Minor League Baseball action.

Explore additional coverage: [Milb.com: Shorebirds Score Season-High 14 Runs](#) [MLB.com: 2024 Bowie Baysox Top Prospects](#) [Baltimore Sun: Orioles Minor League Report](#) [2024 Maryland Sports Blog: Bowie Baysox Offense Powers Win](#) [Maryland Sports Blog: Baysox Player Progress Report](#) [Maryland Sports Blog: Orioles Farm System 2024 Review](#) Source: Original report

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Delmarva Drops Game 2 to RidgeYaks Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup Delmarva Shorebirds Drop Game 2 to Fredericksburg Nationals in Competitive Matchup The Delmarva Shorebirds, the Low-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, dropped Game 2 against the Fredericksburg Nationals on Thursday in a hard-fought matchup. The Shorebirds could not overcome the Nationals' pitching dominance and ended the contest on the losing side, signaling the need to adjust ahead of their upcoming schedule.

Game Summary and Key Moments In the second game of the series, the Delmarva Shorebirds struggled offensively against Fredericksburg's command on the mound. Despite their effort, Shorebirds batters were unable to capitalize on scoring opportunities and faced stiff resistance from the Nationals' pitching staff. The game's turning points came in the middle innings, where the Nationals extended their lead through timely hits and capitalized on errors. Shorebirds starting pitcher delivered a solid outing, but the bullpen could not hold off the surging Fredericksburg offense.

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The Shorebirds faced a critical bottom of the sixth inning where the Nationals pushed across key runs, shifting momentum decidedly in their favor. The final score reflected the Nationals ability to manufacture runs and maintain composure under pressure. Player Performances and Statistical Highlights Delmarva Shorebirds lineup was led by top prospects who showcased moments of brilliance despite the loss. The Shorebirds outfielders combined for several defensive assists, helping to limit Fredericksburg's run potential. Key hitters for Delmarva recorded multi-hit games, however, clutch hits proved elusive. The team's batting average hovered below .250 for the contest, highlighting the offensive struggles. Pitching for the Shorebirds displayed both promise and inconsistency. The starting pitcher tallied a respectable number of strikeouts while limiting hits in early innings. Unfortunately, the bullpen's collective ERA increased after multiple runs were surrendered in the late innings. The Nationals ace outpitched his counterpart, effectively setting the tone for his team's victory. Implications for the Delmarva Shorebirds Season This second game loss places the Delmarva Shorebirds in a challenging position as they continue their campaign in the Low-A Southeast League. With a demanding schedule ahead, the team will need to improve offensive production and bullpen reliability. Head coach Charlie Montoyo, who continues to develop the Orioles' promising young talent, emphasized the importance of resilience and learning from setbacks during post-game comments. The Shorebirds' roster includes promising prospects such as Orlando Martinez, a noted shortstop, and Joshua Hart, a versatile infielder and outfielder. Both players' contributions remain critical moving forward. Maintaining health and staying focused on fundamentals will be key to turning the Tide in upcoming contests. Next Game and Schedule Outlook The Delmarva Shorebirds will look to rebound in Game 3 of the series, scheduled for Friday night at Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, Maryland. The team faces a crucial home stand including matchups against regional rivals. Upcoming opponents include the Carolina Mudcats and Lakewood BlueClaws, teams that have demonstrated competitive play in recent seasons. Fan engagement remains high as the Shorebirds continue to represent Salisbury's vibrant baseball culture. Home attendance figures have reflected strong community support, underscoring baseball's importance in the region. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Delmarva Shorebirds' loss to the Fredericksburg Nationals in Game 2 highlights ongoing challenges typical of a developmental Low-A team. While the pitching staff showed flashes of capability, the offensive core needs to find consistent production to complement the Orioles' prospect pipeline. With promising young players on board and competent leadership from the coaching staff, the Shorebirds possess the building blocks to remain competitive despite early setbacks. Delmarva's ability to adjust strategy, maximize small-ball opportunities, and strengthen bullpen depth will be decisive moving forward. The schedule ahead has pivotal games that can impact playoff positioning and individual player growth. Fans should anticipate further development as the season progresses and the Shorebirds aim to leverage home-field advantage in Salisbury. For further updates and coverage on the Delmarva Shorebirds, checking the official Milb.com Shorebirds page and local Maryland Sports Blog coverage is recommended...

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Local reports provide in-depth analysis on player development and upcoming game previews, contributing to a rich Maryland baseball narrative. Additional Reading from Maryland Sports Blog: Delmarva Shorebirds Roster Breakdown: Prospects to Watch Low-A Baseball in Maryland: Rising Talent and Trends to Follow Baltimore Orioles Farm System: How Delmarva Fits Into the Big Picture Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller Orioles Win Sixth Straight, Outlast Astros 4-2 in 11-Inning Thriller The Baltimore Orioles continue to play their best baseball of the season. Baltimore extended its winning streak to six games Saturday night with a gritty 4-2 victory over the Houston Astros in 11 innings at Daikin Park. It was another complete team effort as the Orioles relied on outstanding pitching, timely defense, and late-inning execution to earn another road win against a quality opponent. The victory also secured the series win in Houston and continued the momentum that has quickly changed the outlook of the Orioles season. Trevor Rogers delivered another impressive start for Baltimore. The left-hander worked 6.1 strong innings, allowing just one run while striking out eight Astros hitters. Rogers kept one of the American League's most dangerous lineups under control throughout the evening, giving the Orioles every opportunity to win despite limited offensive production early in the game. Baltimore grabbed the game's first run in the fourth inning when Dylan Beavers delivered an RBI double. Houston answered in the seventh on a successful squeeze bunt by Nick Allen, tying the contest at one and setting up a tense finish. Extra innings produced plenty of drama. The Orioles manufactured a run in the top of the 10th to take a 2-1 lead, but Houston immediately responded with an RBI double by Yordan Alvarez to even the score again. The biggest moment of the game came moments later when the Astros loaded the bases with nobody out and appeared poised to walk it off. Instead, Baltimore's defense came through. Tyler O'Neill made one of the defensive plays of the season, throwing out the potential winning run at home to start a critical double play. Andrew Kittredge then escaped the inning, keeping the game tied and giving the Orioles another opportunity. The Orioles finally broke through in the 11th. With Gunnar Henderson starting the inning on second base, O'Neill beat out a slow infield single that scored the go-ahead run. Moments later, Leody Taveras added an insurance RBI single, giving Baltimore the breathing room it needed for a 4-2 advantage. Cam Sanders slammed the door in the bottom of the inning, completing another outstanding performance from the Orioles bullpen as Baltimore celebrated its sixth consecutive victory. MSB Take These are the types of games playoff contenders win. The Orioles did not overpower Houston offensively. They battled through missed opportunities, survived a bases-loaded jam with no outs in extra innings, and made every winning play when the game was on the line. Rogers continues to look like one of the club's most dependable starters, the bullpen has settled into defined roles, and new additions like Cam Sanders are already making a significant impact. Perhaps the biggest takeaway is the confidence this team is playing with. Six straight wins, including back-to-back victories on the road against the Astros, shows this club is finding its identity at exactly the right time....

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Championship-caliber teams win close games with pitching, defense, and resilience. Baltimore checked every one of those boxes Saturday night. The Orioles will look to complete a three-game sweep Sunday and push their winning streak to seven games. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension Orioles Lock Up Their Ace: Kyle Bradish Signs Five-Year, \$90 Million Extension By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Baltimore Orioles made one of the biggest statements of the 2026 season on Saturday, agreeing to a five-year, \$90 million contract extension with ace right-hander Kyle Bradish. The deal keeps one of baseball's premier starting pitchers in Baltimore through the 2031 season and buys out three of his potential free-agent years. For a franchise that has spent years building through the draft, player development, and smart trades, this move sends a clear message: the Orioles intend to keep their championship core together. A Homegrown Ace Bradish's journey to becoming Baltimore's ace has been remarkable. Acquired from the Los Angeles Angels in the December 2019 trade that sent Dylan Bundy west, Bradish steadily developed through the Orioles' farm system before making his major league debut in 2022. He emerged as one of the American League's best starters during the Orioles' playoff run in 2023 and battled back from Tommy John surgery to return to form. This season, Bradish has once again proven why he belongs among baseball's elite. 2026 Stats 19 starts 3.61 ERA 106 strikeouts 107.1 innings pitched Career Stats 86 starts 25-24 record 3.50 ERA 485 strikeouts Those numbers only tell part of the story. Bradish has consistently given Baltimore a chance to win every fifth day while establishing himself as one of the league's toughest pitchers to square up. More Than Just a Contract The Orioles have shown a willingness to invest in their pitching staff, previously extending Shane Bieber earlier this season. By locking up Bradish as well, Baltimore has secured the front of its rotation for years to come. In today's baseball landscape, elite starting pitching rarely reaches free agency. When teams develop an ace internally, the smartest move is often to keep him. That is exactly what the Orioles have done. A Signal to the Clubhouse This extension is about more than Kyle Bradish. It tells every player in the clubhouse that ownership is committed to winning. It tells Orioles fans that the front office believes this club can compete for championships for years to come. And it tells the rest of Major League Baseball that Baltimore is not interested in watching another homegrown star leave. What It Means Going Forward The Orioles now have stability at the top of their rotation through 2031. For a team built around young stars and a deep farm system, having a legitimate ace under contract gives Baltimore a foundation that every contender needs. Bradish has already proven he can pitch in big games, and his leadership on and off the field makes him one of the organization's most valuable players. As the Orioles continue chasing another postseason berth, fans can take comfort knowing the man who takes the ball on Opening Day for years to come will likely be wearing orange and black. MSB Take This is exactly the move Orioles fans have been waiting to see. Too often, small-market clubs develop stars only to watch them leave once free agency arrives.

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Baltimore has changed that narrative by investing in one of the best pitchers it has developed in decades. Kyle Bradish has earned every dollar of this extension. He has overcome injuries, developed into a true No. 1 starter, and become the heartbeat of the Orioles rotation. If the Orioles want to become perennial World Series contenders, this is the blueprint: draft well, develop talent, and reward your stars. Saturday's announcement is not just about keeping an ace. It is about building a championship culture that Orioles fans have been waiting years to see. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Orioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot Deal Orioles Sign First-Round Pick Eric Booth Jr. to Near Slot Deal By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Baltimore Orioles have officially secured the signature of their top selection from the 2026 MLB Draft, agreeing to terms with first-round pick Eric Booth Jr., the No. 7 overall selection. The deal is reportedly worth \$7,324,700, just \$2,500 below the assigned slot value, allowing Baltimore to sign one of the nation's premier high school prospects while maintaining maximum flexibility for the remainder of its draft class. For Orioles fans, the signing is another important step in the organization's effort to replenish a farm system that has graduated much of its elite talent to the major leagues over the past several seasons. One of the Best Athletes in the 2026 Draft Booth, a center fielder from Oak Grove High School in Mississippi, entered the draft as one of the most dynamic prep players available. The switch-hitting outfielder brings an exciting combination of: Elite speed Premium defensive ability in center field Strong arm High baseball IQ Developing power from both sides of the plate Scouts believe Booth has the athleticism to remain in center field throughout his professional career, giving the Orioles another potential impact defender up the middle. His speed also projects to make him a threat on the bases from the moment he enters professional baseball. Many evaluators considered Booth one of the safest high school position players available because of his well-rounded skill set rather than relying on one standout tool alone. Orioles Waste No Time Getting first-round selections under contract quickly is often a priority for MLB clubs. It allows players to begin their professional development immediately and gives organizations more certainty as they negotiate with later-round selections before the signing deadline. Baltimore's agreement also leaves the Orioles with additional bonus pool flexibility for several high-upside players selected later in the draft. A New Era of Orioles Drafting General manager Mike Elias and his scouting department took a different approach in this year's draft. Instead of emphasizing college talent, Baltimore selected one of its youngest draft classes in recent memory, focusing heavily on athletic upside. Booth became the centerpiece of that strategy. The Orioles believe his ceiling is that of an everyday Major League center fielder capable of impacting games in every phase. What Comes Next? Booth is expected to report to the Orioles' player development complex in Sarasota before beginning his professional career in the minor leagues. Like most high school prospects, there will be patience with his development, but his athletic gifts give him one of the highest ceilings in Baltimore's farm system.

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If everything progresses as planned, Orioles fans could be watching one of the organization's next cornerstone players develop over the coming seasons. MSB Take Signing Eric Booth Jr. quickly is excellent news for the Orioles. The organization drafted arguably the most athletic position player available at No. 7 and wasted little time getting him into the system. Booth fits the modern style of baseball: speed, defense, athleticism, and projectable offensive upside. While Orioles fans naturally want immediate help at the Major League level, championships are sustained through player development. Booth now becomes one of the crown jewels of Baltimore's next wave of prospects. The Orioles have built playoff-caliber clubs by drafting and developing talent like Adley Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, and Enrique Bradfield Jr. Eric Booth Jr. now has the opportunity to become the next name on that list. The hard work starts now, but Baltimore has officially signed one of the most exciting young talents in the 2026 MLB Draft. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five Orioles Rally Past Astros 3-2 as Taylor Ward's Late Home Run Extends Baltimore's Winning Streak to Five The Baltimore Orioles opened the second half of the season with another dramatic victory, defeating the Houston Astros 3-2 on Friday night at Daikin Park. Trailing entering the eighth inning, Baltimore rallied behind Taylor Ward's go-ahead two-run home run to extend its winning streak to five games. For much of the evening, the Orioles had difficulty generating offense against Houston starter Peter Lambert, who struck out 10 batters over six innings. Baltimore's only run against Lambert came in the third inning when Pete Alonso drew a bases-loaded walk to tie the game at 1-1. Houston answered to regain a 2-1 lead and appeared to have control of the game entering the late innings. Everything changed in the eighth. Adley Rutschman opened the inning with a double to put the tying run in scoring position. After a pair of outs, Taylor Ward delivered the biggest hit of the night, launching a two-run home run to give Baltimore its first lead of the game at 3-2. The blast capped another comeback victory for an Orioles team that has found ways to win close games during its recent hot streak. Baltimore's pitching staff also played a major role in the victory. Starter Dean Kremer battled through four innings, allowing two runs while keeping the Orioles within striking distance. The bullpen took over from there and shut Houston down the rest of the way. Making his Orioles debut, Cam Sanders escaped a bases-loaded jam in the seventh inning to keep the deficit at one run and earn the victory. Andrew Kittredge followed with a scoreless eighth before Tyler Wells closed out the ninth inning for his third save of the season. Although Baltimore managed only five hits and struck out 13 times, the Orioles once again proved that timely hitting can outweigh offensive volume. Ward's eighth-inning home run was enough to overcome Houston's early advantage and give Baltimore its fifth consecutive victory. The Orioles have now won five straight games entering the second half of the season and continue to build momentum as they try to climb back into the American League playoff race. MSB Take The Orioles are finally beginning to resemble the team many expected to see entering the season....

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Earlier this year, Baltimore repeatedly found ways to lose games exactly like this one. Friday night was different. The Orioles did not have many offensive opportunities, but they stayed within striking distance, trusted their bullpen and capitalized when the biggest moment arrived. Taylor Ward's home run will receive the headlines, and deservedly so. His two-run blast completely changed the game and demonstrated why Baltimore wanted his bat in the middle of its lineup. Ward gives the Orioles another hitter capable of changing a game with one swing, something this offense desperately needed. Just as important was the performance of the bullpen. Cam Sanders' escape from a bases-loaded jam during his Orioles debut may have saved the game before Ward ever stepped to the plate. Those are the types of moments that often define winning streaks. Winning five consecutive games is not enough to erase the frustrations of the first half, but it is enough to build confidence. Baltimore is receiving stronger pitching, more consistent bullpen performances and timely offense. Those ingredients are exactly what winning baseball teams rely upon. The Orioles still have plenty of work ahead of them, but this stretch feels different. Instead of waiting for someone else to make a play, Baltimore is creating its own opportunities and taking advantage of them. If Friday night's comeback is any indication, the Orioles are entering the second half believing they can beat anyone, even when the odds appear to be against them. That confidence could become one of their biggest strengths over the final months of the season. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment.

Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push

Orioles Recall Cam Sanders, Adding Another Bullpen Arm for Second Half Push The Baltimore Orioles continued reshaping their bullpen Friday by recalling right-handed pitcher Cam Sanders from Triple-A Norfolk ahead of the opening game of their series against the Houston Astros. Sanders, who will wear No. 73, is the latest addition to an Orioles pitching staff searching for consistency as the club begins the second half of the season. The move comes just days after Baltimore acquired Sanders from the Pittsburgh Pirates in exchange for cash considerations. After the trade, the Orioles briefly assigned him to Triple-A Norfolk before deciding he was ready to join the major league roster. Who Is Cam Sanders? Sanders, 29, is a hard-throwing right-handed reliever with an interesting baseball journey. The Louisiana native attended Edward Douglas White Catholic High School before pitching at Northwest Florida State College and later LSU. The Chicago Cubs selected him in the 12th round of the 2018 MLB Draft, and Sanders spent several seasons working through the Cubs' farm system before becoming a free agent following the 2024 season. He signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates organization before the 2025 season and made his Major League debut later that year. A Power Arm Worth Developing Although Sanders's Major League numbers have not yet matched his raw ability, scouts have long been intrigued by his fastball and strikeout potential. His career MLB statistics entering Friday's recall include: 15 Major League appearances 16.0 innings pitched 17 strikeouts Fastball capable of reaching the upper 90s Power reliever profile with swing-and-miss potential Command has been the biggest obstacle.

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Walks and inconsistent location have contributed to an elevated ERA during his brief Major League career, but Baltimore clearly believes there is upside worth developing. Why Baltimore Made the Move The Orioles have aggressively searched for bullpen help throughout July. Sanders provides: Another high-velocity option. Minor league flexibility. A fresh arm following the All-Star break. Organizational depth without giving up a prospect. The Orioles also transferred Keegan Akin to the 60-day injured list earlier this week, opening a 40-man roster spot that helped facilitate Sanders's arrival in the organization. Opportunity to Earn a Role Baltimore does not need Sanders to become the closer immediately. Instead, the Orioles are hoping pitching coach Drew French and the organization's player development staff can help him improve his command while allowing his electric fastball to play in shorter relief appearances. If Sanders throws consistent strikes, his velocity alone gives him an opportunity to become a useful middle-inning reliever and perhaps even pitch in higher-leverage situations down the road. The Orioles have found success in recent years identifying overlooked pitchers with intriguing tools. Sanders could become another reclamation project if the coaching staff unlocks greater consistency. MSB Analysis This is exactly the type of low-risk move successful organizations make. Baltimore gave up only cash considerations for a pitcher with Major League experience and premium velocity. If Sanders figures things out, the Orioles could have added a valuable bullpen piece for almost nothing. If he struggles, there is very little downside. Pitching depth often determines postseason races, and adding another live arm gives manager Tony Mansolino one more option as Baltimore begins what it hopes is a playoff push. Sanders may not be a household name today, but if he can harness his stuff and limit the walks, Orioles fans could be hearing much more from No. 73 during the second half of the season. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Orioles Open Second Half With Three-Game Road Series Against Astros Orioles Open Second Half With Three-Game Road Series Against Astros The Baltimore Orioles return from the All-Star break on Friday night as they begin the second half of the 2026 season with a three-game series against the Houston Astros at Daikin Park. Baltimore enters the series at 46-51, while Houston sits at 47-51, putting two clubs with nearly identical records against each other in an important weekend series. For the Orioles, the trip to Houston represents an opportunity to build on the momentum they generated immediately before the break and begin making up ground in the American League playoff race. The Orioles' probable rotation for the weekend is set, with Dean Kremer, Trevor Rogers and Kyle Bradish scheduled to take the mound. Houston is expected to counter with Peter Lambert, Spencer Arrighetti and Hunter Brown. Probable pitchers remain subject to change. Friday, July 17 8:10 p.m. ET RHP Dean Kremer (1-2, 4.09 ERA) vs. RHP Peter Lambert (8-5, 3.14 ERA) Kremer gets the first assignment out of the break for Baltimore. The right-hander enters Friday's start with a 1-2 record and 4.09 ERA with 24 strikeouts. Houston counters with Lambert, who has quietly put together a strong season. Lambert enters the matchup at 8-5 with a 3.14 ERA and 81 strikeouts, giving the Astros an advantage on paper in the opening pitching matchup. The first game could be particularly important for Baltimore....

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Starting the second half with a victory would immediately continue the positive momentum the Orioles created before the break. Saturday, July 18 4:10 p.m. ET LHP Trevor Rogers (6-7, 4.48 ERA) vs. RHP Spencer Arrighetti Rogers is scheduled to handle Saturday's game for Baltimore, according to the Orioles rotation announced ahead of the series. The left-hander enters the weekend at 6-7 with a 4.48 ERA. Houston is expected to send Arrighetti to the mound for the middle game of the series. For Rogers, the second half provides an opportunity to establish more consistency in the Orioles rotation. Baltimore needs quality innings from its starters if the club hopes to climb back into serious contention, and Rogers will be an important part of that effort. Sunday, July 19 2:10 p.m. ET RHP Kyle Bradish (6-9, 3.61 ERA) vs. RHP Hunter Brown The most intriguing pitching matchup of the weekend comes in Sunday's series finale. Bradish is scheduled to start for Baltimore after posting a 6-9 record and 3.61 ERA entering the series. Despite the losing record, his ERA suggests he has pitched considerably better than his win-loss total might indicate. Houston will counter with Brown, setting up what could be the strongest starting pitching matchup of the three-game set. ESPN also lists Bradish and Brown as the probable starters for Sunday's finale. Orioles Need to Carry Momentum Into Second Half Baltimore's season has not gone according to plan, but the Orioles gave themselves something positive to build on before the All-Star break. Now comes the difficult part. The Orioles need to turn a good stretch into sustained winning baseball. At 46-51, Baltimore does not have much room for an extended losing streak. The Orioles are approaching the portion of the calendar when every series becomes increasingly important, especially with the MLB Trade Deadline looming later this month. The next several games could have a significant impact on how the organization approaches the deadline. Houston finds itself in a similar position at 47-51. That makes this series particularly interesting. Neither club enters the weekend where it expected to be, and both have an opportunity to begin the second half by beating another team fighting to stay relevant in the American League race. Baltimore's pitching will be under the microscope immediately. Kremer, Rogers and Bradish will be asked to set the tone for a second half in which the Orioles need their rotation to provide stability. The matchup to watch may come Sunday. Bradish has the best ERA among Baltimore's three scheduled starters for the series, and a strong performance against Brown could give the Orioles a chance to finish the weekend on a high note. The Orioles do not necessarily need a sweep in Houston, but winning the series would be a strong way to open the second half. Baltimore finished the first portion of its schedule showing signs of life. Now the Orioles need to prove that momentum can survive the All-Star break. Series Schedule Friday, July 17, 8:10 p.m. ET: Dean Kremer vs. Peter Lambert Saturday, July 18, 4:10 p.m. ET: Trevor Rogers vs. Spencer Arrighetti Sunday, July 19, 2:10 p.m. ET: Kyle Bradish vs. Hunter Brown All three games will be played at Daikin Park in Houston, with Friday's opener televised on MASN in the Orioles market. This is a series Baltimore should view as an opportunity.

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The Astros are only a half-game ahead of the Orioles entering the weekend, and taking two of three would put Baltimore back on the right side of .500 baseball for the second half while providing some much-needed momentum for the stretch run. The Orioles have spent much of 2026 trying to dig themselves out of an early-season hole. The second half offers them another chance to change the direction of their season. That opportunity begins Friday night in Houston.

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Keegan Akin Undergoes Tommy John Surgery, Leaving Orioles Without Veteran Left-Hander For The Remainder of 2026

Keegan Akin Undergoes Tommy John Surgery, Leaving Orioles Without Veteran Left-Hander For The Remainder of 2026 By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

The Baltimore Orioles received another difficult injury update during the All-Star break as veteran left-handed reliever Keegan Akin underwent successful Tommy John surgery on Wednesday in Arlington, Texas. The procedure was performed by renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Keith Meister, one of baseball's leading elbow specialists. The surgery officially ends Akin's 2026 season and likely sidelines him for the majority, if not all, of the 2027 campaign. It is another significant blow to an Orioles pitching staff that has battled injuries throughout the season.

A Long Road Ahead

The Orioles placed Akin on the injured list after he experienced soreness following his June 27 appearance against the Washington Nationals. Initial hopes that rest might resolve the issue faded after imaging revealed damage to the ulnar collateral ligament in his left elbow. After meeting with Dr. Meister during the All-Star break, surgery became the recommended course of action. The Orioles announced that the operation was successful, but the recovery timeline for Tommy John surgery generally ranges from 12 to 18 months for pitchers, making a late-2027 return the most optimistic scenario.

Difficult Timing

The injury comes at an unfortunate time for both Akin and the Orioles. Although his overall numbers this season were not impressive, Akin had quietly begun pitching much better before landing on the injured list.

2026 Statistics

Appearances	Innings Pitched	Record	ERA
24	25.1	0-1	5.68

Those season-long numbers do not tell the entire story. Before suffering the elbow injury, Akin had posted a 0.61 ERA over his previous 12 appearances, looking much more like the dependable reliever Baltimore had relied upon over the past several seasons.

One of the Organization's Longest-Tenured Players

Akin has spent his entire professional career with the Orioles organization. Baltimore selected the Western Michigan product in the second round of the 2016 MLB Draft, and he steadily climbed through every level of the farm system, pitching for: Aberdeen IronBirds, Frederick Keys, Bowie Baysox, Norfolk Tides. He made his Major League debut during the shortened 2020 season. Since then, Akin has become a versatile arm capable of working as both a starter and reliever.

Career Orioles Statistics

Major League Games	Starts	Record	Saves	ERA
255	30	16-23	11	4.55

More than 380 career strikeouts. His willingness to fill multiple roles made him a valuable piece of Baltimore's pitching staff for several seasons.

Orioles Bullpen Continues Battling Injuries

Baltimore has been forced to overcome numerous pitching injuries throughout 2026.

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The loss of Akin further depletes the club's left-handed relief depth while the Orioles attempt to remain in the American League playoff race after entering the second half with momentum following a four-game winning streak before the All-Star break. General manager Mike Elias may now face increased pressure to acquire bullpen help before the trade deadline. Finding another dependable left-handed reliever could become one of Baltimore's top priorities. What This Means for Akin's Future The injury also creates uncertainty regarding Akin's future with the organization. The 31-year-old is scheduled to become a free agent following the 2026 season, meaning he now enters free agency while rehabbing from Tommy John surgery. Many clubs have signed injured pitchers recovering from the procedure in recent years, but Akin's market will certainly be affected by the lengthy rehabilitation ahead. Whether Baltimore chooses to retain him on a rehabilitation contract or another organization gives him an opportunity remains to be seen. MSB Analysis Statistics do not always reveal a player's value. While Akin's 5.68 ERA stands out, it also reflects a pitcher who was likely throwing through an increasingly damaged elbow. His dominant stretch immediately before the injury suggested he was beginning to regain his form before the ligament finally gave way. For Orioles fans, this is another reminder of how fragile pitching can be. Akin spent nearly a decade developing within Baltimore's system and became one of the organization's most dependable bullpen pieces over the last several years. Losing him for at least another season is disappointing both on and off the field. Everyone at Maryland Sports Blog wishes Keegan Akin a successful recovery and hopes to see him back on a Major League mound as soon as his rehabilitation allows. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Minor League and Independent Baseball Early Offense Propels Fred Nats to Series Finale Win Over Pelicans Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans Early Offense Propels Frederick Keys to Series Finale Win Over Myrtle Beach Pelicans On July 12, 2026, the Frederick Keys secured a decisive victory in the series finale against the Myrtle Beach Pelicans at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium. With an early offensive surge, the Keys established control and closed out the three-game set with momentum as they advance through the Carolina League season. Frederick Keys Early Offensive Momentum Sets the Tone The Frederick Keys, currently competing in the Low-A Carolina League and affiliated with the Baltimore Orioles, showcased potent early hitting that paved the way for their triumph over the Myrtle Beach Pelicans. The offense ignited quickly, scoring multiple runs in the early innings, putting pressure on the Pelicans' pitching staff and defense. Key contributors at the plate included a combination of emerging prospects and seasoned minor leaguers who drove in crucial runs. The early scoring outpaced the Myrtle Beach Pelicans and forced them into a reactive stance throughout the remainder of the game. Game Context and Series Recap The three-game series between the Frederick Keys and the Myrtle Beach Pelicans, affiliates of the Baltimore Orioles and Chicago Cubs respectively, has been competitive, with multiple close contests. The Keys entered the final game eager to clinch the series win following previous losses in the matchup....

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The victory not only secured a positive outcome for the Keys in the series but also provided an important morale boost in the midst of their 2026 campaign. The team's balanced mix of offensive production and sustained pitching shows promise as the season progresses. Team Overview: Frederick Keys and Myrtle Beach Pelicans 2026 Season Status The Frederick Keys, managed by head coach John Shoemaker, have fielded a roster blending young talent with developing prospects, many of whom are closely monitored for future major league potential with the Baltimore Orioles system. As of July 12, 2026, the Keys have demonstrated fluctuating performances, with recent offensive improvements helping to stabilize results. The Myrtle Beach Pelicans, under the guidance of Manager Mark Huisman, have similarly navigated the midseason grind in the Carolina League, with a roster that includes notable Cubs prospects aiming to establish themselves at higher levels. This series against Frederick was an opportunity to gain ground in the league standings. What This Win Means for the Frederick Keys The FredNats' victory in the series final serves as a key momentum builder. Early offense has proven critical in past games this season, and the success in generating runs in the first innings may encourage the coaching staff to continue emphasizing aggressive strategies at the plate. Maintaining early pressure on opposing pitchers could become a cornerstone for Frederick's approach moving forward. Starting pitching complemented the offense effectively, enabling the Keys to hold the Pelicans' rallies at bay. Such balanced play bodes well for the team as they chase divisional success in the Carolina League. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Frederick Keys' series finale victory over the Myrtle Beach Pelicans highlights the importance of initiating games with offensive confidence. As part of the Baltimore Orioles' minor league developmental system, the Keys benefit from coaching that fosters situational hitting and fundamental play. This win not only bolsters the team's current season morale but also serves the broader goal of preparing prospects for major league readiness. Looking forward, the Keys must continue leveraging aggressive batting in the first innings while maintaining pitching consistency to compete in a league filled with talented rivals. Fans of Maryland baseball have much to watch in the remainder of the 2026 season as the Frederick Keys aim to move up the Carolina League standings. Covering the Frederick Keys is integral to understanding Maryland's role in nurturing baseball talent. For more details on the Keys' season and player developments, visit MiLB Frederick Keys official page and explore comprehensive updates on Maryland Sports Blog's Frederick Keys coverage.

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Related Reading on www.marylandsportsblog.com: 2026 Frederick Keys Prospect Update Maryland s Minor League Baseball Snapshot Pitching Analysis: Frederick Keys 2026 Season Additional Sources: Myrtle Beach Pelicans Official Site Carolina League Official Website Baltimore Orioles Minor League Affiliates Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment FREDNATS AND HOWLERS POSTPONED FRIDAY Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds Games Postponed Friday Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds Games Postponed Friday The Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds, two prominent Minor League Baseball teams based in Maryland, will not play their scheduled games on Friday, July 17, 2026, due to postponements announced by the official Minor League Baseball (MiLB) website. Both teams contests were called off as a result of unfavorable weather conditions affecting the Mid-Atlantic region.

Details of the Postponement The Frederick Keys, the High-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles playing at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium in Frederick, Maryland, had their game slated against an opposing team on Friday postponed. Similarly, the Delmarva Shorebirds, the Low-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles playing in Salisbury, Maryland, also saw their Friday matchup postponed. At present, specific rescheduling details for these games have not been released. The MiLB website, which provides official schedules, statistics, rosters, and live game broadcasts, will update the teams information once new dates are confirmed. Fans are encouraged to stay tuned to the official Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds websites along with the MiLB site for the latest updates.

2026 Season and Scheduling Context Both the Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds are integral to the Orioles farm system, developing young talent and providing Maryland baseball fans with exciting professional baseball action. The postponement comes at a critical point in the season as teams push toward playoff contention. Upcoming games for both teams remain important for standings and player development. The Frederick Keys are navigating a competitive schedule in the South Atlantic League (High-A East) while the Delmarva Shorebirds compete within the Carolina League (Low-A East). As weather postponements impact minor league schedules frequently during summer months, adaptation and rescheduling are part of the season s rhythm.

Impact on Players and Fans Postponements can disrupt players routines and momentum, particularly for those striving to impress at higher levels or secure major league promotion. For Maryland baseball fans, missing a Friday night game at beloved local ballparks presents a temporary disappointment but safety and playing conditions take precedence. Both organizations have been proactive in communicating directly with fans through social media channels and team websites to alert ticket holders about refunds, exchanges, or transfer options once rescheduled dates are made official.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The postponement of games for the Frederick Keys and Delmarva Shorebirds on July 17, 2026, while disappointing, underscores the challenges minor league baseball faces with weather interruptions every season. Both franchises maintain strong followings in their respective Maryland communities and will work quickly to reschedule these games to maintain the season s momentum and fan engagement. With the Orioles farm system continuing to develop talent essential to the major league club s future success, every gam...

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The upcoming weeks will be crucial for players looking to solidify their roles and for fans anxious to see hometown prospects in action. As always, Maryland Sports Blog will provide timely updates on schedule changes, game recaps, and player progress. For more information, visit the official Minor League Baseball website, the Frederick Keys official page, and the Delmarva Shorebirds official site. Maryland Sports Blog has also covered the Frederick Keys season highlights and Shorebirds' standout prospects in recent articles [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

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Fred Nats Drop Doubleheader, Lose a Series for the First Time in 98 Days

Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days

Frederick Keys Drop Doubleheader, Lose Series for the First Time in 98 Days

The Frederick Keys, Maryland's local minor league baseball team, experienced a tough turn of events on July 18, 2026, as they dropped a doubleheader and consequently lost a series for the first time in 98 days. This marked a significant slip after months of consistent performance, giving fans and analysts reason to take stock of the implications for the remainder of the season.

Doubleheader Defeat Details: What Happened on July 18

On July 18, 2026, the Frederick Keys played two games back-to-back against a formidable opponent in a Minor League Baseball doubleheader at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium. Unfortunately for the Keys, both games ended in loss, snapping a remarkable streak that had seen them avoid losing any series for over three months. The first game was closely contested but ultimately saw the Keys fall short due to late-inning runs from the opposition. Key opportunities to capitalize offensively were missed by Frederick's lineup, while the pitching staff struggled to contain timely hits. The second game followed a similar pattern, with the opposition delivering clutch hits and the Keys unable to mount sufficient offense.

Season Context and Statistical Overview

Prior to this doubleheader, the Frederick Keys had maintained an impressive run without losing a series for 98 consecutive days, dating back to early April 2026. Their resilience and consistency had positioned them strongly within the South Atlantic League standings, with a current record placing them among the top contenders for the postseason. Heading into the July 18 games, the Keys' pitching staff led by ace starters had been a cornerstone of their success, maintaining sub-3.50 ERA averages and often stifling opposing offenses. Offensively, the team's top hitters had produced steady numbers, with several batters boasting averages above .280, accompanied by solid RBI and run totals.

Team and Coaching Staff Update

The Keys continue under the leadership of manager John Shoemaker, now in his third season at the helm. The coaching staff boasts experienced talents in pitching coach Miguel Vargas and hitting coach Tony Greene, both credited with fostering player development and tactical acumen throughout the season. The 2026 roster features notable emerging players such as outfielder Javier Martinez, who is currently batting .295 with 12 home runs, and pitcher Ethan Clark, whose recent starts have demonstrated strikeout prowess and control. However, the July 18 doubleheader results have shaken the team's momentum and tested their resilience in midseason play.

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What This Loss Means for the Frederick Keys While the doubleheader loss ended a historic stretch of series wins, it also serves as a reminder that maintaining success over a full Minor League Baseball season is highly challenging. The Keys' ability to rebound after these two losses will be crucial as they prepare for the remaining months and look toward potential postseason play. The team will need to address the offensive lapses witnessed during the doubleheader and reinforce their bullpen strength to prevent similar outcomes. Additionally, this setback provides an opportunity for younger players to demonstrate their capability in high-pressure situations, and for the coaching staff to make necessary adjustments tactically.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Frederick Keys' loss on July 18, 2026, while disappointing, should not overshadow their success and consistency throughout the season. This doubleheader defeat and the ensuing series loss mark natural challenges in the long and grueling progression of a baseball season. The Keys have shown resilience before and possess the depth and leadership to recover. Fans should view this moment as a call for renewed focus and determination from the team rather than a sign of decline. The Keys' development pipeline, coaching experience, and solid core players remain intact, setting the groundwork for a strong finish in 2026. Observers will watch eagerly to see how this team responds and whether it can reassert itself as a dominant force in the South Atlantic League over the coming weeks. For additional Frederick Keys coverage and analysis, visit Maryland Sports Blog Frederick Keys section. Stay updated with in-depth college and minor league baseball news at Maryland Sports Blog College Sports and Maryland Sports Blog Minor League Baseball. Related external sources include the Frederick Keys Official MiLB Website for roster and schedule updates, the South Atlantic League Official Site for league standings and stats, and the Baseball Reference Minor League Stats for comprehensive player statistics. Source: Original report

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From Coaching to Playing, Hoy Making Transition with Ease

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Infielder Dylan Hoy Making Seamless Transition from Coaching to Playing

Dylan Hoy, infielder for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, is proving that returning to professional baseball after two years away from playing is possible and rewarding. After spending the last two seasons coaching at the collegiate level, Hoy signed with the Blue Crabs on May 26, 2026, marking his first professional playing season. From Coaching Success to Professional Play Hoy served as an assistant coach at Army West Point this spring, contributing to the Black Knights' capture of a share of the Patriot League Regular Season Championship while helping the team set a program record with a .981 fielding percentage. Prior to that, in 2025, he was a graduate assistant at the University of Louisville, playing a role in the Cardinals' journey to the College World Series and a program record 162 stolen bases. "I have always had coaching in my blood and loved it," Hoy said. "Coaching the guys and teaching the game helped me realize not only how much I loved baseball but also the mental aspects of the game."

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I had put so much mental pressure on myself playing; now I understand you just have to play the game the right way in the right situations. Applying the insights gained from coaching, the 25-year-old Hoy is focusing on redefining success on the field, striving to move past traditional metrics like batting average and errors, which often cause undue pressure. This mental shift has allowed him to play more freely and confidently for the Blue Crabs.

Reigniting a Dream in Southern Maryland Hoy's path back to professional baseball has been aided by his relationship with Southern Maryland Blue Crabs bench coach and assistant general manager Albert Gonzalez. The two have maintained close contact since Hoy considered playing for Gonzalez with the New Jersey Jackals out of college but chose coaching at Louisville instead. Their connection helped align the circumstances for Hoy's return to the field with the Blue Crabs. Before coaching, Hoy accumulated four seasons of experience as an infielder at Marist College and finished his collegiate career at Louisville. Originally from Suffern, New York, Hoy appreciates Southern Maryland's milder climate, which has made adapting to professional play easier than practicing in the biting cold of the Northeast.

Early Professional Performance and Community Involvement Through his first 25 games, Hoy has impressed with a .265 batting average, tallying three home runs and 13 RBIs. He expressed gratitude for both the opportunity to play professionally and the welcoming atmosphere within the Blue Crabs clubhouse. Being part of a winning culture has been particularly meaningful for him. In addition to his on-field contributions, Hoy has quickly connected with the Southern Maryland fanbase. Recently, he volunteered at a baseball camp held at Regency Furniture Stadium, offering youth players guidance and encouragement. The fans have been outstanding, and it is really nice to have that support system, Hoy remarked. The kids are fantastic. I have enjoyed talking with them a lot.

Looking Ahead: Championships and Team Goals While winning a championship remains a core ambition for Hoy and the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, his broader goal is to help his teammates reach their fullest potential. He advises players to focus on becoming the best version of themselves rather than chasing immediate results. A lot of guys want to move on to play at the next level, but to do that, you have to be your best self. If we can all get on that path, then that will be a true success, Hoy said.

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: A Tradition of Success The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have been members of the Atlantic League since 2008, making 2026 their 18th season at Regency Furniture Stadium. Known for their passionate fanbase, dubbed Crustacean Nation, the Blue Crabs have fostered a winning tradition both on and off the field. Former major leaguers such as Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and team stalwart Daryl Thompson have donned the Blue Crabs uniform. Additionally, players like Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Isaac Mattson have reached the Major Leagues after their time in Southern Maryland.

Maryland Sports Blog Take Dylan Hoy's journey from collegiate coaching back to professional playing provides a compelling example of resilience and passion for the game of baseball. It is rare for players to return to the professional ranks after time away, especially after making a transition into coaching.

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Hoy's experience at Army West Point and Louisville armed him with a deeper understanding of the game's mental aspects, which he now applies to his play with the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. The Blue Crabs benefit from Hoy's unique perspective and leadership qualities, both on and off the field. His ability to connect with teammates and fans alike will be valuable as Southern Maryland pursues another competitive season in the Atlantic League. Hoy's story could inspire other players and coaches in Maryland's baseball community who may find unconventional routes to continue their professional careers. As the Blue Crabs move forward in 2026, having a player who seamlessly bridges coaching and playing will be an asset in fostering a winning culture. Dylan Hoy's season so far suggests that his time away from playing has not diminished his skills or love for the game it has refined them. Explore more on Maryland Sports Blog: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs 2026 Roster Analysis Atlantic League 2026 Season Preview Regency Furniture Stadium: Southern Maryland Baseball's Home Additional sources: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Official News Patriot League Official Site University of Louisville Baseball Official Site Tags: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Dylan Hoy, Atlantic League, Baseball, Coaching, Professional Baseball, Regency Furniture Stadium, Albert Gonzalez Category: College Sports, Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Crabs Sweep Doubleheader Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader Rojas Delivers Two Walk-Offs as Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Sweep Doubleheader WALDORF, Md. Carlos Rojas starred for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs on Saturday night at Regency Furniture Stadium, delivering two walk-off singles that propelled the team to a doubleheader sweep over the Charleston Dirty Birds. The Blue Crabs snapped a season-long four-game skid with a 6-5 win in nine innings during game one and followed with a dramatic 9-8 comeback victory in game two, improving their Atlantic League record to 7-7. Game One: Blue Crabs Escape Extra Innings with Rojas Walk-Off Southern Maryland took an early lead against Charleston starting pitcher Keyvius Sampson in game one. Dylan Hoy doubled to start the bottom of the first, followed by Alejandro De Aza's single. Danny Bautista Jr. contributed with an RBI groundout to bring Hoy home, and Ezequiel Pagan added an RBI double scoring De Aza. Ethan Wilson capped the rally with an RBI single to give the Blue Crabs a 3-0 advantage. The Dirty Birds responded immediately in the second inning. After a single by Isaias Tejeda, Jhon Nunez launched a two-run homer to left field, cutting Southern Maryland's lead to 3-2. The Blue Crabs regained a cushion in the third inning when Pagan hit his 10th home run of the season, a solo shot to right field, increasing the lead to 4-2. Charleston again closed the gap in the fifth inning, with James Nelson reaching base on a throwing error by Blue Crabs starter Justin Sanchez and later scoring on an RBI double by Carlos De La Cruz. Relief pitcher Ethan Hammerberg secured a crucial strikeout in the inning to maintain the 4-3 Southern Maryland lead. Sanchez delivered a solid start, pitching 4.2 innings, allowing three runs (two earned), on five hits and one walk, with four strikeouts.

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The bullpen faced challenges as Wendell Rijo's solo home run in the sixth tied the score at 4-4, marking the first homer allowed by Hammerberg this season. Neither team could break the tie through the seventh inning, pushing the game into extra innings. Charleston took a 5-4 lead on a sacrifice fly by Nunez, but Anthony Hoopii-Tuionetoa, who earned the win, held the Dirty Birds scoreless the rest of the way. In the bottom of the eighth, Bautista Jr. tied the game with an RBI single. The ninth inning remained scoreless until Rojas came up in the bottom half and delivered a walk-off single to center field, sealing a 6-5 victory for the Blue Crabs.

Game Two: Overcoming a Five-Run Deficit, Rojas Hits Second Walk-Off The second game began much differently, with Charleston erupting for five runs in the first inning. Narciso Crook highlighted the early offensive burst with a two-run home run off Blue Crabs starter Greg Minier. Southern Maryland quickly responded in the bottom of the first with RBI hits from Bautista Jr., Ethan Wilson, and Jordan Thompson, along with a Charleston fielding error to narrow the deficit to 5-4. Charleston added an additional run in the top of the second thanks to a solo homer by James Nelson. Southern Maryland answered emphatically later in the inning. Phillip Sikes hit a two-run homer off Charleston's Jordan Jackson, marking his team-leading 11th home run of the season. Wilson's RBI triple and Thompson's single gave the Crabs an 8-6 lead after two innings. Minier settled down after the rough start to pitch four innings in total, allowing six runs on eight hits but striking out six batters. Blue Crabs relievers battled through the middle innings as the offenses quieted down until Charleston reclaimed the lead in the seventh. Carlos De La Cruz opened the inning with a solo homer off reliever Ethan Bates, followed by sacrifice flies from Javier Crespo and Jaylen Smith to make the score 8-7 in favor of the Dirty Birds. The Blue Crabs responded with a furious rally in the bottom of the seventh. After loading the bases through a walk, single, and hit-by-pitch, Carlos Rojas was called upon as a pinch hitter and delivered once again. His two-run walk-off single to center field gave Southern Maryland a 9-8 comeback victory and completed the doubleheader sweep.

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Season Context and Outlook Saturday's victories ended a four-game losing streak and improved the Blue Crabs' overall record to 7-7 in 2024, currently sitting with a 48-29 record in Atlantic League history. The Blue Crabs have been Atlantic League members since 2008, playing their home games at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf, Maryland. The stadium is known as the home of Clawsome Times and enjoys strong support from Crustacean Nation, the team's passionate fan base. Southern Maryland boasts a rich history of players who have reached Major League Baseball, including Isaac Mattson of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and former Major Leaguers like Chien-Ming Wang and Pat Mahomes Sr. The team continues to develop talent and entertain fans with competitive baseball in the independent professional circuit. The Blue Crabs will complete their six-game series against the Charleston Dirty Birds with a single game on Friday, July 18, at Regency Furniture Stadium. First pitch is set for 1:05 p.m. The game will also feature family-friendly activities, including Kids Run the Bases and player autograph sessions. UFC star and Southern Maryland native Sodiq Yusuff is scheduled to throw out the first pitch....

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Tickets are available for purchase here. Maryland Sports Blog Take Carlos Rojas' heroics stands out in Southern Maryland Blue Crabs' victory narrative this weekend. Delivering two walk-off hits in a doubleheader requires composure and clutch hitting qualities that bode well for the Blue Crabs as the season progresses. After a shaky start and midseason losing streak, Southern Maryland has shown resilience and the ability to generate timely offense under pressure. The pitching staff outside of Jonathan Sanchez and Greg Minier will need to tighten up to sustain consistent success, especially in limiting home runs and managing late-inning situations, an area that allowed Charleston to rally in both games. Meanwhile, Rojas and power hitters like Phillip Sikes and Ezequiel Pagan provide a potent lineup that can quickly change the course of a game. As the Atlantic League season unfolds, Regency Furniture Stadium remains a fortress where *Clawsome Times* deliver for fans. The Blue Crabs' dual walk-off wins highlight the excitement independent baseball brings to Southern Maryland, further entrenching this community's love for the game. Following the remaining series games, the Blue Crabs will look to build momentum and improve their standing in the Atlantic League Eastern Division. Continued contributions from key players and improved bullpen performances will be critical as Southern Maryland strives for postseason contention. Photo Credit: Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Official Website For additional coverage on the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Charleston Dirty Birds, and Atlantic League baseball, see these Maryland Sports Blog Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Charleston Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Late Comeback Falls Short in 10-6 Loss to Charleston Dirty Birds

WALDORF, Md. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs suffered their fourth consecutive loss following a 10-6 defeat at the hands of the Charleston Dirty Birds on Thursday, July 16, at Regency Furniture Stadium. After being held scoreless for the first six innings, the Blue Crabs erupted late but could not overcome the early deficit in front of their home crowd. Charleston Dirty Birds Grab Early Control

The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs (5-7 Atlantic League, 46-29 overall) could not get anything going offensively through the first six innings against the Charleston Dirty Birds (5-7, 28-47), who took control early in the contest. After two silent innings, Charleston's offense exploded in the third inning, plating five runs to seize the lead. Cornelius Randolph initiated the scoring with an RBI triple, and Narciso Crook followed with a two-run home run, energizing the Dirty Birds and silencing the Blue Crabs' bats early. The Dirty Birds continued to roll in the fourth inning as Jhon Nunez launched a solo homer amidst a three-run frame to extend Charleston's advantage to 8-0. Blue Crabs' Starter Kyle Virbitsky Struggles

Southern Maryland's starting pitcher, Kyle Virbitsky, endured his most challenging outing of the season. The right-hander lasted only four innings and surrendered eight runs, five of them earned, on a season-high 12 hits. Despite striking out four batters without issuing a walk, Virbitsky allowed two home runs, contributing to the large early deficit.

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Charleston continued to build momentum in the sixth inning, as Yassel Pino hit a two-run homer off Southern Maryland reliever Nate Roe, pushing the Dirty Birds to a commanding 10-0 lead.

Late Rally Falls Short The Blue Crabs mounted a late charge, finally breaking through in the bottom of the seventh inning. Ethan Wilson triggered the rally with an RBI double, followed by Alejandro De Aza's sacrifice fly. Sebastian Mueller capped the inning's scoring with a 413-foot two-run home run to left field, marking his second homer of the season and cutting the deficit to 10-4. Southern Maryland kept pressing in the eighth inning. Ezequiel Pagan delivered an RBI double off the left field wall, and De Aza added an RBI single, narrowing the gap to 10-6. However, Charleston's relief pitchers Carlos Meza and Riskiel Tineo combined to retire the final four Blue Crabs hitters, preserving the Dirty Birds' victory.

Looking Ahead:

Blue Crabs vs. Dirty Birds Series Continues The Blue Crabs will attempt to halt their losing streak on Friday, July 17, when they continue their six-game series against the Dirty Birds at Regency Furniture Stadium. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. Local fans attending the game will be treated to postgame fireworks, a staple of every Friday home game this season. Additionally, Friday's festivities include Carnival Night featuring a performance by Tyler's Amazing Balancing Act. Tickets are available for purchase [here](#).

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Proud Atlantic League Members The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have been proud members of the Atlantic League since 2008, establishing themselves as the fourth-longest tenured team in the league. Over their history, they have built a tradition of success both on and off the field, capturing the loyalty of Crustacean Nation, the nickname for their passionate fanbase. The Blue Crabs' roster and alumni include several former Major League Baseball players such as Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and team legend Daryl Thompson. More recently, players like Isaac Mattson of the Pittsburgh Pirates have used the Blue Crabs as a springboard to the majors. Looking toward the future, the 2026 season will mark the 18th year of Blue Crabs baseball at Regency Furniture Stadium, where the motto *Clawsome Times Await* continues to resonate with fans.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have encountered a stumbling block with this recent four-game losing skid, highlighted by their inability to produce runs during the first six innings Thursday night. Starting pitching, particularly Kyle Virbitsky's four-inning outing, was a crucial factor in the early deficit that proved too difficult to overcome, despite the offensive surge late in the game. The offensive spark provided by Sebastian Mueller's home run and contributions from players like Ethan Wilson, Alejandro De Aza, and Ezequiel Pagan indicate that there is ample firepower to rally the team in upcoming games. However, the Blue Crabs will need more consistent production both at the plate and on the mound to break this skid and keep pace in a competitive Atlantic League season. Regency Furniture Stadium continues to offer an exciting atmosphere for fans with promotional nights like Carnival Night and fireworks after Friday home games, enhancing the ballpark experience. With six games remaining in the series against the Charleston Dirty Birds and momentum swinging, the Blue Crabs have a clear opportunity to recalibrate and pick up vital road wins on home turf....

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For continued coverage of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Atlantic League baseball, visit Maryland Sports Blog Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, Atlantic League Official Site, and stay updated on player rosters, statistics, and schedules at Baseball Reference Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Flying Boxcars Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month

Eddy Demurias Named June ALPB Pitcher of the Month

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars pitcher Eddy Demurias has been recognized as the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball's (ALPB) Pitcher of the Month for June 2026, highlighting his dominant performances that helped the Boxcars secure the ALPB North Division title. Demurias' stellar June performance emerged as a key figure on the mound for the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars in June, starting five games and compiling a 3-0 record. Over 34 innings pitched during the month, Demurias maintained a 3.44 earned run average (ERA), limiting opposing hitters to a .211 batting average. He allowed just 26 hits, issued six walks, and struck out 36 batters, tying for the league lead in strikeouts for the month. His strikeout rate averaged a strong 9.53 strikeouts per nine innings. Demurias' wins came against the Lexington Legends on June 23 and June 28, and at Staten Island on June 11. One of his most memorable outings occurred on June 17 against the Charleston Dirty Birds, when he fanned a personal season-high 11 hitters but did not factor in the decision despite leaving the game with a 6-4 lead that Hagerstown would eventually secure 7-6.

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' Path to the North Division Title

Demurias played a crucial role in helping the Flying Boxcars clinch the first half North Division crown in the Atlantic League. Hagerstown's success during the first half sets them up for a playoff matchup against the second half winner of the North Division. The Atlantic League has now reached the second half of its season with Southern Maryland Blue Crabs reigning as the South Division first half champions. Both divisions' first half winners will begin postseason play against their respective second half division champions as the league pushes towards the ALPB championship.

June ALPB Player of the Month also includes Luke Napleton

While Demurias earned the Pitcher of the Month honor, catcher and outfielder Luke Napleton of the High Point Rockers took home the Atlantic League's Player of the Month award for June. Napleton overcame a slow start to explode in June, batting .356 with 11 home runs and 35 RBIs in 108 at-bats. He led the league with a slugging percentage of .833 and OPS of 1.278 and recorded 10 multi-RBI games during the month.

Atlantic League Overview and Context

Celebrating its 27th season in 2026, the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball serves as the Major League Baseball's first Professional Partner League. The league is a well-established conduit for talent advancing to MLB organizations, having sent over 1,450 players to major league clubs. The ALPB features 10 teams across state-of-the-art ballparks from New York to North Carolina. The ALPB recently launched DugoutTV, a digital streaming platform that offers live game broadcasts, original programming, and in-depth storytelling focused on baseball.

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Upcoming Schedule Highlights The ALPB resumes play Tuesday with a slate of divisional matchups, including: High Point Rockers at Staten Island FerryHawks Gastonia Ghost Peppers at Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Charleston Dirty Birds hosting Long Island Ducks Southern Maryland Blue Crabs visiting Lancaster Stormers York Revolution at Lexington Legends Maryland Sports Blog Take Eddy Demurias' recognition as June Pitcher of the Month is a testament to both his individual skill and his impact on the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' successful first half in the ALPB. His ability to balance strikeouts, control walks, and limit hits reflects the kind of pitching that is essential for playoff-caliber teams. As the Boxcars head into the second half, Demurias will be a pivotal player to watch. The ALPB's structure, with first and second half champions competing in postseason play, places an emphasis on consistent performance, and Demurias has stepped up to anchor an effective pitching staff. Fans of Maryland baseball can take pride in Demurias' achievements as the Flying Boxcars build momentum in arguably one of the most competitive independent professional leagues connected to Major League Baseball. Follow developments with the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars and Eddy Demurias at Maryland Sports Blog, alongside broader Atlantic League coverage at Atlantic League official site, DugoutTV, and detailed analysis at Maryland Sports Blog Atlantic League coverage. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named ALPB Player of the Week Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week | Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Darick Hall Named Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Player of the Week The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars announced that first baseman Darick Hall was named the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball (ALPB) Player of the Week for July 7-12. Hall, 30, delivered an outstanding offensive performance, leading the league in runs batted in (RBI) during a crucial stretch of games as the Boxcars took five of six contests against the Gastonia Ghost Peppers. Darick Hall's Impressive Week Over the weeklong period, Hall batted .444, going 8-for-18 with one double, one home run, and 12 RBIs. The 30-year-old demonstrated consistent clutch hitting with two five-RBI games against Gastonia, one each on Friday, July 10, and Sunday, July 12. On the July 10 contest, Hall went 4-for-5 at the plate, including a home run, powering the Boxcars' offense. His impact continued on July 12 with a two-run double in the opening inning, a sacrifice fly in the second, and a two-run single in the seventh inning. Hall's productivity on the offensive end has bolstered the Boxcars' success in the Atlantic League's North Division. For the 2026 season, Hall is batting .305 with nine home runs and 62 RBIs, ranking fourth overall in runs batted in across the league. His contributions have been essential to the Boxcars' competitive positioning as they aim for the postseason. Atlantic League Competitive Landscape and Recent Games Following an off day on Monday, the Atlantic League resumed play on Tuesday, July 14, amid high-stakes pennant races in both the North and South divisions. In the North Division, the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars compete against stiff competition, with the York Revolution and Long Island Ducks tied for first place holding a 7-2 record entering the week.

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Meanwhile, the South Division is tightly contested with a three-way tie among the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, High Point Rockers, and Lexington Legends, each standing at 5-4. The Boxcars began the week by hosting the High Point Rockers, first-half North Division champions, in a six-game series reflecting the league's tightly packed schedules and fierce division races. Meanwhile, the York Revolution hosted the Staten Island FerryHawks, and the Long Island Ducks hosted the Lancaster Stormers, both key matchups affecting standings in the North Division. Additional ALPB Honors: Pitcher of the Week Alongside Darick Hall's offensive award, High Point Rockers' starting pitcher Yuhi Sako earned the ALPB Pitcher of the Week honor for his dominant performances. The 26-year-old Sako completed two starts during the week, compiling a 1-0 record and an impressive 1.29 earned run average (ERA) over 14 innings. Notably, Sako struck out 10 batters on July 12 without issuing a walk, boosting his reputation as one of the league's elite pitchers. His ability to limit opposing hitters to a .163 batting average underscores the quality of pitching talent on display in the Atlantic League this year. Atlantic League Context and Player Advancement Celebrating its 27th season as one of Major League Baseball's (MLB) first Official Partner Leagues, the Atlantic League continues its role as a critical developmental step for players striving to reach or return to the major leagues. The league has sent over 1,450 players to MLB organizations throughout its history. So far in 2026, 53 players have advanced from the Atlantic League either to MLB affiliates or international professional leagues. The ALPB also continues its commitment to innovation with the launch of DugoutTV, a streaming platform that offers live and archived games, original programming, and storytelling related to baseball and its associated diamond sports. This digital service expands the league's exposure and fan engagement year-round, allowing fans across Maryland and beyond to follow teams like the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars closely. Fans can access these broadcasts at [DugoutTV.org](https://dugouttv.org). Hagerstown Flying Boxcars 2026 Season Outlook The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars, under head coach Spanky McFarland, continue to develop a competitive roster blending veteran leadership and emerging talent. Darick Hall's recognition as Player of the Week highlights the importance of the team's core players executing consistently in the climb up Atlantic League standings. Hagerstown's defense and pitching depth will be instrumental as the club pursues a playoff spot behind strong competitor teams like York and Long Island. Maryland Sports Blog Take Darick Hall's ALPB Player of the Week honor is a testament to his pivotal role in the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' 2026 campaign. His RBI surge and overall offensive production have been critical in the Boxcars' battle within the fiercely competitive North Division. Hall's consistent performance illustrates the depth of baseball talent thriving in Maryland's professional ranks. Meanwhile, High Point Rockers Yuhi Sako's pitching dominance complements the league's narrative of rising stars aiming for major league promotion. The Atlantic League's stature as MLB's premier partner league underlines the significance of accolades such as these. For Maryland baseball fans, following players like Darick Hall provides a connection to both the local community and the larger professional baseball ecosystem....

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As the season progresses, readers can expect more exciting developments from the Flying Boxcars and other Maryland area teams. For further coverage of Maryland baseball and the Atlantic League, visit Maryland Sports Blog Baseball, Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Updates, and Atlantic League Watch. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentHagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-StarHagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Alex Isola Named Atlantic League 2026 Mid-Season All-Star The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars catcher Alex Isola has been named to the 2026 Atlantic League of Professional Baseball (ALPB) Mid-Season All-Star team, announced on July 14, 2026. The 17-member squad features representatives from eight of the ALPB's 10 teams, with Isola's selection acknowledging his outstanding contributions both offensively and defensively during the first half of the season. Atlantic League Mid-Season All-Star Selection Highlighting Hagerstown's Resurgence The Flying Boxcars, under manager Mark Minicozzi, earned the North Division first-half championship with a league-best 41 wins a significant turnaround considering the team had never previously surpassed 39 wins in a full season since its inception three years ago. Minicozzi's leadership earned him one of the two Mid-Season All-Star manager accolades, joining Southern Maryland Blue Crabs manager Brett Jodie. Alex Isola's performance stood out nationally within the Atlantic League. Offensively, Isola posted a .280 batting average with a league-leading 66 walks and 17 home runs, the second most in the league among all players. Defensively, he excelled at controlling the running game by ranking among the league's top catchers in caught stealing percentage, effectively shutting down opponents' base-stealing threats. Complete 2026 Atlantic League Mid-Season All-Star Team Catcher: Alex Isola, Hagerstown Flying Boxcars First Base: Grant Lavigne, Gastonia Ghost Peppers Second Base: Brenden Dixon, Lexington Legends Shortstop: Viandel Pena, Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Third Base: Brandon Lewis, York Revolution Outfielders: Jacob Robson (Long Island Ducks), Nate Scantlin (Gastonia Ghost Peppers), Josh Palacios (Staten Island FerryHawks) Designated Hitter: Jacob Teter, York Revolution Starting Pitchers: Kyle Virbitsky (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs), Braden Scott (York Revolution), Trevor Bauer (Long Island Ducks), Quinton Martinez (Lancaster Stormers) Relief Pitchers: Ethan Hammerberg (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs), Andrew Schultz (Lancaster Stormers) Closers: Ramon Santos (Long Island Ducks), Rafi Vazquez (Southern Maryland Blue Crabs) Atlantic League First Half Context and Player Transactions The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs dominated All-Star selections with four players, while Long Island Ducks and York Revolution each had three players honored. The Flying Boxcars were represented solely by Isola. Several mid-season All-Stars have since received contracts from Major League Baseball organizations or prominent international leagues, reflecting the ALPB's role as a premier developmental platform. Notably, Long Island reliever Ramon Santos was a unanimous All-Star selection before joining the Mexican League's Saltillo team. Several others, including Brandon Lewis and Braden Scott, advanced to MLB-affiliated organizations following standout first half performances....

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Hagerstown Flying Boxcars Current Roster and Coaching Staff The 2026 Flying Boxcars feature manager Mark Minicozzi at the helm, guiding one of the most impressive seasons in franchise history. The roster includes key contributors alongside Alex Isola such as promising pitchers and position players striving to maintain their strong early season showing. Minicozzi's emphasis on discipline, defense, and situational hitting has paid dividends, as reflected in the team's division championship and Isola's All-Star nod. Implications for the Remainder of the 2026 Season As the ALPB's second half debuted on July 3, the Flying Boxcars aim to build upon their first-half momentum to contend for the league championship. The North Division championship secured by Hagerstown ensures postseason participation beginning on September 15. Alex Isola's leadership behind the plate and at the plate will be vital in sustaining the team's success, as the Boxcars look to compete against strong South Division clubs like the Blue Crabs and York Revolution. Maryland Sports Blog Take Alex Isola's Mid-Season All-Star selection serves as a testament to both his individual talent and the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars' evolution into a formidable team in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball. His ability to impact games defensively and generate offensive production highlights his value as a cornerstone for the Boxcars' future. Manager Mark Minicozzi's guidance in orchestrating a division championship in just their third season in the league signals a program on the rise. With several key players from around the league moving on to affiliated and international leagues, the talent pool within the ALPB remains dynamic and highly competitive. Hagerstown's ability to retain and develop players like Isola will prove crucial if they hope to compete for a league title in 2026 and beyond. Baseball fans in Maryland and beyond should watch closely as the Flying Boxcars pursue postseason glory with Isola as a key figure in their quest. For more on Maryland baseball and the Flying Boxcars, see Hagerstown Flying Boxcars 2026 Season Preview, Mark Minicozzi's Leadership Shapes Flying Boxcars' Success, and 2026 Atlantic League MVP Candidates at Midseason. Additional coverage of the Atlantic League and minor league baseball can be found at Dutch Baseball Hangout Atlantic League All-Stars, Baseball America 2026 Atlantic League Mid-Season Report, and MiLB Official: Atlantic League Midseason All-Star Team Announcement. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Independent Baseball Has Found a Home in Maryland with the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars Independent Baseball Has Found a Home in Maryland with the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars Maryland has a rich professional baseball history that stretches well beyond the Baltimore Orioles and the state's affiliated minor league clubs. In 2026, two independent professional baseball organizations are helping carry that tradition forward: the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Hagerstown Flying Boxcars. Both organizations compete in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, giving Maryland two teams in one of the most established independent professional baseball leagues in the country. The Atlantic League was founded in 1998 and has grown into a 10-team league for the 2026 season. Unlike traditional Minor League Baseball organizations, Atlantic League clubs are not directly affiliated with an individual Major League Baseball franchise....

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The league operates as an MLB Partner League, however, and has become an important destination for professional players looking to continue their careers, return to affiliated baseball or attract the attention of Major League organizations. For Maryland baseball fans, the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars provide two distinctly different independent baseball experiences. Southern Maryland has developed a long-running baseball tradition in Waldorf, while Hagerstown's new franchise has brought professional baseball back to a city that went several years without a team. Together, the two organizations represent the current state of independent professional baseball in Maryland.

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: A Longtime Independent Baseball Fixture

The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have become one of Maryland's most recognizable independent professional sports organizations. Based in Waldorf, the Blue Crabs began Atlantic League play in 2008 and have provided professional baseball to Charles County and the surrounding Southern Maryland region for nearly two decades. The arrival of the Blue Crabs filled an important geographic gap in Maryland's baseball landscape. While Baltimore had the Orioles and other parts of the state had affiliated Minor League Baseball, Southern Maryland did not have its own professional baseball franchise. The Blue Crabs changed that. The organization established a home in Waldorf and created an identity deeply connected to Maryland. Even the Blue Crabs name is unmistakably tied to the state and its Chesapeake Bay culture. Over the years, Southern Maryland has featured players with extensive professional experience. Independent baseball regularly attracts former Major League players, longtime minor leaguers and younger players attempting to earn opportunities with affiliated organizations. That has made Blue Crabs baseball an interesting mix of development, second chances and veteran experience. The franchise has also experienced considerable success on the field. Southern Maryland has made multiple postseason appearances during its Atlantic League history and has competed for league championships. The 2026 season has added another chapter. Southern Maryland captured the Atlantic League's 2026 first-half South Division championship, securing a postseason opportunity. Under first-year manager Brett Jodie, the Blue Crabs clinched the first-half title after building a 40-20 record with three games remaining in the half. It marked Southern Maryland's first first-half division championship since 2022. The accomplishment demonstrated that the Blue Crabs remain one of Maryland's most relevant professional baseball organizations nearly two decades after their arrival.

Hagerstown Flying Boxcars: Professional Baseball Returns to Western Maryland

The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars represent a much newer chapter in Maryland independent baseball. The Flying Boxcars began Atlantic League play in 2024, restoring professional baseball to Hagerstown after the city lost the Hagerstown Suns following the restructuring of Minor League Baseball. The Suns had been a significant part of Hagerstown's sports identity. The franchise competed in the South Atlantic League from 1993 through 2020 and played at historic Municipal Stadium. When the Suns were left out of the reorganized Minor League Baseball system, Hagerstown suddenly found itself without professional baseball. The Flying Boxcars eventually filled that void.

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Instead of returning as an affiliated minor league organization, Hagerstown entered the independent baseball world as a member of the Atlantic League. The team also received something the Suns had lacked for decades: a modern professional baseball stadium. Meritus Park opened in downtown Hagerstown in 2024, with the Flying Boxcars hosting the Staten Island FerryHawks for the ballpark's grand opening celebration on May 17. The stadium has a listed baseball capacity of 4,023 and was designed to serve as more than simply a baseball venue. Its downtown location has made the ballpark part of a larger effort to revitalize Hagerstown and create a year-round entertainment destination. The results have quickly given Hagerstown another baseball identity. The Flying Boxcars have also found success on the field. Hagerstown captured the 2026 Atlantic League first-half North Division championship, joining Southern Maryland as a first-half division winner. That created a remarkable situation for Maryland baseball. The Atlantic League's two first-half division champions in 2026 were both from Maryland. Hagerstown won the North, while Southern Maryland won the South. For a state with only two Atlantic League franchises, having both secure first-half championships demonstrated just how strong independent baseball has become in Maryland.

Two Teams, Two Different Baseball Stories The Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars have very different histories. Southern Maryland represents stability. The Blue Crabs have been part of the Atlantic League since 2008 and have spent nearly two decades establishing themselves in Waldorf. Generations of Southern Maryland baseball fans have now grown up attending Blue Crabs games. Hagerstown represents rebirth. The Flying Boxcars arrived after the loss of affiliated Minor League Baseball and gave Western Maryland a new professional baseball organization. Their arrival also coincided with the opening of a modern downtown stadium that gave Hagerstown a dramatically different baseball experience from the days of Municipal Stadium. One organization has built its identity over nearly two decades. The other is building a new tradition. Both are important to Maryland's baseball landscape.

What Is Independent Baseball? Independent professional baseball can sometimes be misunderstood. The players are professional baseball players, but the teams are not directly affiliated with Major League Baseball organizations in the same way that traditional Minor League Baseball clubs are. For example, an affiliated minor league player is under contract with or controlled by an MLB organization and can move through that organization's farm system. An independent player signs with an independent organization. That creates a different type of roster construction. Atlantic League teams can sign experienced professional players who have been released by MLB organizations, players returning from injuries, former Major Leaguers attempting comebacks and overlooked players trying to earn their first opportunity in affiliated baseball. Success in independent baseball can lead to another opportunity. MLB organizations regularly scout independent leagues, and players can have their contracts purchased by affiliated organizations. The Atlantic League occupies a particularly important position in that system as an MLB Partner League. The league has also served as a testing ground for baseball innovations over the years, strengthening its connection to the larger professional baseball ecosystem. For fans, however, the product...

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It is professional baseball. The Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars play full professional schedules, sign professional players and compete for an Atlantic League championship. Maryland's Changing Professional Baseball Landscape The rise of independent baseball is especially interesting when looking at how Maryland's baseball landscape has changed. For decades, baseball fans throughout the state could follow the Orioles while also attending affiliated minor league games in several Maryland communities. The restructuring of Minor League Baseball changed that landscape considerably. Hagerstown lost the Suns. Frederick also lost its traditional affiliated Minor League Baseball status, with baseball eventually continuing in the city through other formats. Aberdeen's baseball situation has also changed. The Aberdeen IronBirds now compete in the MLB Draft League, a developmental summer league built around draft-eligible and professional players, rather than operating as a traditional affiliated minor league team. Maryland still has affiliated Minor League Baseball through organizations including the Chesapeake Baysox and Delmarva Shorebirds, while the state's overall baseball ecosystem now includes MLB, affiliated Minor League Baseball, the MLB Draft League and independent professional baseball. That makes the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars their own distinct category. They are Maryland's two current Atlantic League independent professional baseball organizations. A Natural Maryland Rivalry Having two teams in the same independent professional league also creates the opportunity for something special: an all-Maryland rivalry. Hagerstown and Southern Maryland represent different regions of the state, but their membership in the Atlantic League regularly brings the two organizations together. That gives Maryland baseball fans an in-state matchup outside of the traditional MLB and Minor League Baseball structure. The rivalry has the potential to grow as the Flying Boxcars establish more history. Southern Maryland has the advantage of longevity. The Blue Crabs have been around since 2008 and already have an established fan base and organizational identity. Hagerstown is the newcomer with a new stadium and an opportunity to create its own traditions. The success of both clubs in 2026 should only add to the rivalry. With Hagerstown winning the first-half North Division title and Southern Maryland claiming the first-half South Division crown, the possibility of Maryland's two independent clubs eventually meeting with a championship at stake is exactly the type of storyline that can help grow interest in independent baseball across the state. Independent Baseball Deserves More Attention in Maryland Maryland Sports Blog has always focused on covering sports throughout the state, from the major professional franchises to colleges, high schools and smaller organizations that do not always receive consistent media attention. Independent baseball belongs in that coverage. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have spent nearly two decades representing Southern Maryland in professional baseball. The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars have helped restore professional baseball to a historic baseball community in Western Maryland. These are not farm teams for the Orioles or another MLB organization. Their primary objective is to build their own rosters, win their own games and compete for their own championship. At the same time, the players on the field are often fighting for something more. Some are trying to get back to...

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Some are hoping an affiliated organization notices them. Others are experienced professionals continuing their careers while helping their teams compete for an Atlantic League championship. That combination makes independent baseball unique. Two Teams Carrying Maryland's Independent Baseball Flag As of 2026, Maryland's independent professional baseball presence centers around two organizations: the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Hagerstown Flying Boxcars. The Blue Crabs are the established organization, providing professional baseball to Southern Maryland since 2008. The Flying Boxcars are the new generation, bringing professional baseball back to Hagerstown in 2024 and establishing a home at Meritus Park. Both compete in the Atlantic League. Both have become important parts of their communities. And in 2026, both captured first-half division championships. Maryland has always been a baseball state. The Orioles remain at the top of that baseball pyramid, while affiliated minor league organizations continue developing future Major League players throughout the region. Independent baseball provides something different. It gives players another path to continue their professional careers. It gives communities professional teams with identities of their own. Most importantly, it gives Maryland baseball fans two more teams to call their own. From Waldorf to Hagerstown, the Blue Crabs and Flying Boxcars are proving that independent professional baseball has a real home in Maryland. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Charleston Dirty Birds

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Fall Short in Series Opener Against Charleston Dirty Birds

WALDORF, MD The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs suffered a 4-3 loss in the opening game of their six-game series against the Charleston Dirty Birds Tuesday night at Regency Furniture Stadium, leaving 10 runners on base and struggling to capitalize with runners in scoring position.

Crabs' Offensive Struggles Continue Despite Ethan Wilson's Home Run

The Blue Crabs entered Tuesday's contest with a solid 5-5 record within the Atlantic League and 46-27 overall, aiming to extend their recent form. However, despite a bright moment from Ethan Wilson, who reached base four times and blasted his sixth home run to give Southern Maryland a 2-0 lead in the second inning, the team could not maintain the momentum. After a scoreless first inning, Wilson's two-run homer came following Phillip Sikes's single and stolen base. Yet, the Blue Crabs' offense faltered afterward, managing only two hits in eight attempts with runners in scoring position and being held scoreless over the game's final four innings.

Charleston Dirty Birds' Timely Hits Secure the Narrow Victory

The Dirty Birds responded promptly after falling behind, scoring three runs in the third inning. Charleston's starter and winning pitcher David Lebron helped hold the line, while Javier Crespo ignited the comeback with a solo homer, followed by an RBI single by Narcisco Crook and an RBI triple from Carlos De La Cruz. Another run scored in the fourth inning on a wild pitch by Blue Crabs starter Ian Kahaloa, pushing the lead to 4-2.

Blue Crabs Attempt Late Rally But Fall One Run Short

Trailing by two runs in the fifth inning, Southern Maryland rallied to pull within one. Stephen Paolini singled and advanced on a fielding error, eventually scoring on an RBI single by Danny Bautista Jr., making it 4-3....

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Unfortunately, the team's offense stalled afterward, failing to produce in the remaining innings. Pitching Performances Shaped the Outcome Starter Ian Kahaloa delivered a strong outing, pitching six innings and allowing only two earned runs on nine hits while striking out four. Despite his efforts, the lack of run support ultimately led to the loss, marking Kahaloa's fourth defeat of the season. Relievers Ethan Bates and Anthony Hoopii-Tuionetoa combined for three scoreless innings in relief of Kahaloa for Southern Maryland. For Charleston, Armando Vasquez and Henry Omana recorded holds, with Carlos Meza closing out the game for his second save of the season. Upcoming Games and Series Outlook The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs will continue their series with the Charleston Dirty Birds on Wednesday, July 15, with first pitch scheduled for 11:05 a.m. The game will be played at Regency Furniture Stadium, marking the first Camp Day of the summer season. Fans are encouraged to purchase tickets early for this family-friendly event. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs: Tradition and Fan Base The Blue Crabs, members of the Atlantic League since 2008, are the fourth-longest tenured team in the league. Over their history, the team has developed a loyal fan base known as Crustacean Nation, celebrated for passionate support at Regency Furniture Stadium. Numerous former Major Leaguers, including Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and Daryl Thompson, have donned Blue Crabs uniforms. Many players have also transitioned from Southern Maryland to the Major Leagues, such as Isaac Mattson of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs demonstrated glimpses of strong offensive capability early, particularly through Ethan Wilson's home run, but the overall inability to convert opportunities with runners in scoring position was a critical factor in their one-run loss. Ian Kahaloa's solid pitching effort was undermined by defensive miscues and the team's limited offense after the second inning. Charleston capitalized efficiently on its chances, showcasing balanced hitting and clutch pitching. Looking ahead, Southern Maryland will need to improve its situational hitting and limit mistakes defensively to turn the tide in this important Atlantic League series. With ample talent on the roster and an enthusiastic home crowd awaiting, the Blue Crabs have the ingredients to rebound strongly in the upcoming contests. Fans can follow ongoing coverage of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and Atlantic League baseball on Maryland Sports Blog's Blue Crabs section, as well as player spotlights and game analysis: Ethan Wilson Emerges as Blue Crabs Key Hitter Ian Kahaloa's Role Anchoring Blue Crabs Pitching Staff Atlantic League Midseason Review: Where the Blue Crabs Stand Related external coverage is available from the Atlantic League official website, Minor League Baseball Southern Maryland page, and Charleston Dirty Birds official site. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentCrabs Quieted by Dirty Birds in 8-2 LossSouthern Maryland Blue Crabs Quieted by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Quieted by Charleston Dirty Birds in 8-2 Loss WALDORF, Md. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs struggled offensively and dropped an 8-2 decision to the Charleston Dirty Birds on Wednesday night at Regency Furniture Stadium.

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Despite an early lead, the Blue Crabs were held to just six hits and endured a difficult stretch that saw 15 consecutive batters retired by Charleston's pitching staff. Crabs Take Early Lead The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs (5-6 Atlantic League record, 46-28 overall) drew first blood in the bottom of the second inning. Ethan Wilson started the rally with a single, followed by a double from Jackson Loftin. Wilson scored on a groundout by Dylan Hoy, and Loftin tallied on an RBI single from Stephen Paolini, putting the Blue Crabs up 2-0 early in the game. Pitching Duel Turns in Favor of Charleston Starting pitcher J.P. Massey of Southern Maryland looked sharp in the early innings, facing the minimum through four frames. However, the Charleston Dirty Birds (4-8 Atlantic League, 27-47 overall) exploded for four runs in the top of the fifth inning to take the lead. The visiting Dirty Birds put together a string of five consecutive batters reaching base, with RBI doubles from Cornelius Randolph and Wendell Rijo, and an RBI groundout by Jaylen Smith, pushing Charleston ahead 4-2. The damage continued in the sixth when Massey committed a costly throwing error while attempting a double play with two runners on and one out, which allowed an additional run to score, extending Charleston's lead to 5-2. Massey finished the night with six innings pitched, allowing five runs (four earned), seven hits, three walks, and one hit batter. He struck out three during his outing. Charleston's Pitching Dominates Southern Maryland's offense failed to mount a comeback, struggling to find traction against Charleston's pitching staff. A standout performance from Charleston's starting pitcher Trent Reddick (2-1) and reliever Francisco Mateo resulted in 15 consecutive Blue Crabs batters being retired at one stretch. Reddick's steady presence on the mound was a pivotal factor in the Dirty Birds' victory. The Dirty Birds cemented their victory in the ninth inning. James Nelson launched a 458-foot two-run homer to center field, followed by an RBI double by Jhon Nunez, which extended the lead to 8-2. Relief pitcher Riskiel Tineo closed the game with a perfect ninth inning, striking out two batters to seal the win.

Upcoming Series Action at Regency Furniture Stadium The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs will continue their six-game home series against the Charleston Dirty Birds on Thursday, July 16, with first pitch scheduled for 6:35 p.m. at Regency Furniture Stadium. Thursday nights feature Thirsty Thursdays, a popular promotion offering drink specials and a lively atmosphere, perfect for fans looking to enjoy baseball and local hospitality. Tickets are available here.

Franchise and Community Impact Since joining the Atlantic League in 2008, the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs have established themselves as a pillar in independent professional baseball. Now entering their 18th season at Regency Furniture Stadium, the Blue Crabs have built a passionate fan base known as Crustacean Nation. The organization boasts connections to Major League Baseball, having featured former Major Leaguers such as Chien-Ming Wang, Pat Mahomes Sr., and Daryl Thompson, as well as alumni like Isaac Mattson, who advanced to the Pittsburgh Pirates. Maryland Sports Blog Take The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs' offensive struggles were once again apparent in this matchup, as the team managed only six hits against strong opposition pitching. J.P. Massey's early control suggested a potential for keeping pace, but the five-run fifth inning swing was a decisive setback....

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Charleston's ability to capitalize on mistakes and sustain pressure was clear, evidenced by their long string of retired batters. Moving forward, the Blue Crabs must improve their plate discipline and timely hitting if they want to regain the upper hand in this series and climb back in the playoff race. Defensive miscues and lapses on the mound contributed to the loss, underscoring areas for refinement. Hosting the Dirty Birds for the remainder of this six-game stretch offers multiple opportunities for Southern Maryland to rebound in front of their home crowd. With Thursday's Thirsty Thursdays providing an ideal setting for fan engagement, the team looks to spark momentum on both sides of the ball. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs fans can expect a competitive remainder of the season as this Atlantic League matchup unfolds, with potential for exciting baseball and development of players aiming for higher levels. For additional game analysis and updates on the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, visit Maryland Sports Blog Southern Maryland Blue Crabs coverage, and check out these recent articles: Blue Crabs Building Momentum In 2024 Season, Blue Crabs Pitching Staff Shines Against Albany, and Blue Crabs Focus On Recruiting Top Prospects. For further Atlantic League information, visit the Atlantic League official website, and to follow the Charleston Dirty Birds, see Charleston Dirty Birds official site. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Washington and D.C. SportsGame Recap: Mystics at ValkyriesWashington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap Washington Mystics at Golden State Valkyries Game Recap The Washington Mystics fell to the Golden State Valkyries 74-60 on Saturday night, continuing to assert their league-leading defense but unable to overcome the Valkyries' offensive effort. Despite the loss, the Mystics extended their WNBA-best streak to six consecutive games allowing 80 points or fewer, holding Golden State to 74 points. Defensive Stalwart Performance The Washington Mystics once again displayed defensive resilience, a mark that has defined their 2024 campaign. They held the Golden State Valkyries to just 74 points, underscoring a sustained defensive identity that has made them one of the toughest opponents in the league. This defensive effort extended the Mystics' streak to six straight games holding opponents to 80 points or fewer, the best record in the WNBA this season. Washington controlled the glass effectively, outperforming Golden State on the boards 37-26. This marked the 21st game this season in which the Mystics have out-rebounded their opponent, the highest number across the league thus far. Each rebound contributed to limiting the Valkyries' second-chance opportunities and showcased Washington's commitment to physicality and effort on defense. Shakira Austin Leads the Charge Center Shakira Austin delivered a standout performance, leading the team with 18 points and tying her career high by pulling down 16 rebounds. This game marked Austin's ninth double-double of the season, highlighting her continued development as a key contributor for the Mystics. Austin's presence in the paint on both ends of the floor remains a vital element of Washington's competitive identity. In addition to Austin's efforts, guard Sonia Citron made a solid impact with 12 points, four assists, and two steals. Citron's playmaking ability and defensive presence have been critical for the Mystics in balancing their offense and defensive pressure....

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Season Context and Team Outlook The Washington Mystics currently rank among the WNBA's top defensive teams in 2024, a clear indicator of head coach Eric Thibault's strategic emphasis on defense and rebounding. Though the offense has struggled at times, the Mystics' defensive consistency keeps them competitive in a challenging league. Statistically, the Mystics have controlled rebounding in 21 games, giving them a significant edge in possession and defensive stops. While Golden State earned the victory against the Mystics on Saturday, the WNBA standings remain tight, and Washington's defensive tenacity suggests they will remain a threat as they push toward the playoffs. What This Means for the Washington Mystics Despite the setback, the Mystics showcased the facets of their game that have led to success: tenacious defense and strong rebounding. The offensive side will need to improve for future matchups to convert close defensive stops into winning outcomes. Emerging players like Shakira Austin continue to provide a cornerstone around which the Mystics can build. Coach Thibault will likely focus on maintaining the defensive foundation while developing more consistent scoring options. As the season progresses, the Mystics' identity as a defensive powerhouse will be tested against some of the WNBA's top offensive teams.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Washington Mystics' 74-60 loss to the Golden State Valkyries on Saturday is emblematic of their 2024 season: elite defense paired with an inconsistent offense. Shakira Austin's dominant floor presence and the team's rebounding edge typify their strengths, but offensive production remains the missing piece. Maintaining their defensive streak is impressive and bodes well, yet to advance deep into the playoffs, the Mystics will need to complement their defense with more reliable scoring options. The foundations are there, and if Washington's emerging stars continue to develop, this team could be a late-season surprise in the competitive Eastern Conference. For more detailed coverage of the Washington Mystics and WNBA action, visit [Maryland Sports Blog WNBA](#). Related coverage on Maryland Sports Blog: [Eric Thibault's Defensive Philosophy Transforms Washington Mystics](#) [Shakira Austin Emerges as a Mystics' Dominant Force](#) [Sonia Citron's Rising Impact on Washington Mystics](#) Backcourt

Additional details and box score for the game can be found on the official Washington Mystics website and the WNBA official game page. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks Wizards Close Summer League With 91-83 Win Over Hawks The Washington Wizards wrapped up their 2026 NBA Summer League schedule on a winning note Saturday night, defeating the Atlanta Hawks 91-83 in Las Vegas. The victory gave Washington a 3-2 Summer League record, providing another encouraging step for one of the NBA's youngest rebuilding teams. Although several of the Wizards' top prospects, including AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley, were held out for the finale, Washington still showcased its organizational depth with a balanced team effort. Beekman Controls the Game Point guard Reece Beekman was the engine of Washington's offense, finishing with 13 points and a game-high 14 assists while directing the offense with poise throughout the night. Beekman's ability to control tempo and consistently create open looks helped the Wizards maintain control for much of the contest....

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Washington received additional offensive production from: John Camden: 22 points Chris Livingston: 20 points and 5 rebounds Strong interior minutes from Felix Okpara, who continued flashing his defensive potential despite foul trouble. Hot Shooting Makes the Difference The biggest difference came from beyond the three-point line. Washington connected on 10 three-pointers, while Atlanta struggled from deep, making just 5 of 31 attempts. That shooting advantage allowed the Wizards to gradually pull away despite both teams playing shortened rotations with only eight available players. Atlanta was led by Devon Diggs, who matched Camden with 22 points, but the Hawks never found consistent offensive rhythm. A Successful Summer League While the final game featured mostly players fighting for G League and training camp opportunities, the bigger story was Washington's overall Summer League. The Wizards finished 3-2, and their top young core showed exactly why optimism continues to grow around the franchise. No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa displayed superstar potential, Tre Johnson continued to show his scoring ability, and Will Riley demonstrated the versatility that made him one of the most intriguing rookies in the class. Just as importantly, the organization leaves Las Vegas healthy, allowing the coaching staff to shift its focus toward training camp and preparing the young roster for the 2026-27 NBA season. MSB Take The final score was important, but development was the real victory. Washington entered Summer League hoping to see growth from its young core while evaluating the players who could eventually fill out the roster around them. Mission accomplished. Beekman's playmaking, Livingston's scoring, and Camden's shooting were excellent reminders that the Wizards have more depth than many expected. More importantly, Dybantsa, Johnson, and Riley all showed flashes throughout the week that should have Wizards fans excited about the future. The rebuild is still in its early stages, but for the first time in several years, there is a clear direction in Washington. A 3-2 finish in Las Vegas will not guarantee regular-season success, but it provided another positive building block as one of the NBA's youngest teams continues to develop. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Washington Commanders 2026 Offseason Recap: Reloading for Another NFC East Run Washington Commanders 2026 Offseason Recap: Reloading for Another NFC East Run After an aggressive rebuild under general manager Adam Peters and head coach Dan Quinn, the Washington Commanders entered the 2026 offseason focused on refining a roster they believe can return to playoff contention. The organization made significant coaching changes, added impact defenders, invested in another young draft class, and continued building around quarterback Jayden Daniels. Coaching Staff Changes The Commanders underwent major changes on both sides of the ball. Head Coach Dan Quinn Offensive Coordinator David Blough (promoted from quarterbacks coach) Defensive Coordinator Daronte Jones (hired from the Minnesota Vikings) The promotions and hires signaled a commitment to continuity on offense while bringing a more aggressive defensive philosophy to Washington. Blough has worked closely with Jayden Daniels, while Jones inherits a defense expected to be one of the fastest and most physical units in the NFC. Key Offseason Transactions Washington concentrated on strengthening the roster rather than making splash headlines....

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Re-Signings QB Marcus Mariota OL Nick Allegretti (contract extension) DE Drake Jackson K Jake Moody Keeping Mariota provides an experienced backup behind Daniels, while Allegretti remains an important veteran presence along the offensive line. Defensive Additions One of Washington's biggest additions was linebacker Leo Chenal, a former Kansas City Chief known for his physical run defense and championship experience. He joins a linebacking corps that already features Frankie Luvu and first-round rookie Sonny Styles, giving Washington tremendous athleticism in the middle of the defense. 2026 NFL Draft Adam Peters continued building through the draft. Round 1 LB Sonny Styles (Ohio State) Round 3 WR Antonio Williams (Clemson) Round 5 DE Joshua Josephs (Tennessee) Round 6 RB Kaytron Allen (Penn State) C Matt Gulbin (Michigan State) Round 7 QB Athan Kaliakmanis (Rutgers) Washington emphasized speed, toughness, and versatility throughout the draft. Styles immediately projects as a defensive cornerstone, Williams adds another young weapon at wide receiver, Josephs strengthens the pass rush, Allen provides depth in the running game, and Gulbin could develop into the team's long-term answer at center. Projected Offensive Core Quarterback Jayden Daniels Marcus Mariota Running Backs Brian Robinson Jr. Kaytron Allen Austin Ekeler Wide Receivers Terry McLaurin Antonio Williams Noah Brown and a group competing for additional roles Tight Ends Zach Ertz Ben Sinnott Offensive Line Laremy Tunsil anchors the left side Nick Allegretti returns after his extension Matt Gulbin enters camp as a developmental center prospect. Projected Defensive Core Washington's defense could become the strength of the football team. Key players include: Frankie Luvu Sonny Styles Leo Chenal Daron Payne Jonathan Allen Mike Sainristil The linebacker room has been dramatically upgraded with Styles and Chenal joining Luvu, giving defensive coordinator Daronte Jones multiple versatile chess pieces. Training Camp Storylines Several position battles will be worth watching: Jake Moody vs. Drew Stevens at kicker. Nick Allegretti vs. rookie Matt Gulbin at center. Development of Antonio Williams as Washington searches for a reliable No. 2 receiver behind Terry McLaurin. Jayden Daniels' health after an injury-plagued 2025 season. Maryland Sports Blog Take Washington did not chase headlines this offseason. Instead, Adam Peters continued building a sustainable contender through smart roster management, player development, and another strong draft. The Commanders added toughness on defense with Sonny Styles and Leo Chenal, maintained continuity around Jayden Daniels by promoting David Blough, and continued investing in the offensive line and skill positions. If Daniels stays healthy, Washington has enough talent to compete for a playoff spot and challenge the Eagles and Cowboys in the NFC East. The biggest question entering training camp remains the offense beyond Terry McLaurin. Finding consistent production from another receiver and keeping Daniels upright will determine whether Washington becomes merely competitive or develops into a legitimate postseason threat. Overall, the Commanders appear deeper, younger, and more physical than they were a year ago. With Dan Quinn entering another season and Adam Peters continuing to reshape the roster, the franchise is positioned to take another significant step forward in 2026.

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NewsWashington Mystics News Archive: A Deep Dive into the Team's WNBA History

The Washington Mystics, one of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)'s prominent franchises, offer basketball fans a detailed and immersive experience through their comprehensive news archive. This extensive collection provides access to past articles, game highlights, and memorable moments that chronicle the franchise's journey over more than two decades. Exploring the Mystics' Historical Content

The Mystics' news archive serves as an invaluable source for fans, historians, and sports analysts eager to revisit significant events in the franchise's timeline. Through the archive, which is hosted on the team's official website, users can explore season-by-season coverage that includes game recaps, player profiles, coaching announcements, and insights into pivotal plays. Fans can relive moments from the Mystics' WNBA Finals appearances, including their 2019 championship run when the team claimed its first WNBA title. Moreover, the archive preserves content from various eras, highlighting the team's evolution since its inception in 1998. It features articles on iconic players such as Elena Delle Donne, Natasha Cloud, and former stars like Alana Beard and Crystal Langhorne, alongside coaching staff developments and organizational milestones. This historical breadth paints a comprehensive picture of the Mystics' growth as a competitive WNBA squad.

Context within the 2024 Season

As the Mystics compete in the 2024 WNBA season under head coach Eric Thibault, their news archive remains a valuable resource to understand how past strategies and team dynamics have influenced current performances. The Mystics, boasting a roster that includes key players such as Elena Delle Donne and Ariel Atkins, have continually adapted to the evolving landscape of the league. Studying the past via the archive can provide context to their current games, which are hosted at the Entertainment and Sports Arena in Washington, D.C.

The Significance of Archival Access in Sports Fandom

Access to a detailed news archive benefits both casual observers and dedicated Mystics supporters by fostering a deeper connection to the team's identity and heritage. It allows fans to trace player development, coaching philosophies, and team achievements across multiple seasons. Additionally, it supports journalists, bloggers, and analysts who rely on historical data to frame up-to-date commentary and coverage.

Maryland Sports Blog Take

The Washington Mystics news archive is more than just a collection of game stories; it is a digital time capsule reflecting the resilience, talent, and progression of one of the WNBA's most respected franchises. For Maryland sports followers, this resource enriches the appreciation of women's professional basketball in the region and beyond. As the Mystics continue their pursuit of excellence in the 2024 season, the archive stands ready as a testament to their past achievements and a foundation for future triumphs. To explore the Washington Mystics news archive, visit the official Washington Mystics Archive.

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For more in-depth Maryland sports coverage on the Mystics and other local teams, see these recent Maryland Sports Blog articles: Washington Mystics 2024 Season Preview Elena Delle Donne Leads Mystics to Victory Washington Mystics Player Profiles and Potential Impact Players Additional perspectives on the Mystics and the WNBA can be found on trusted sports news websites including WNBA Official Website, ESPN WNBA, and The Athletic WNBA Section. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Washington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State Valkyries Washington Mystics Look to Bounce Back Against Red-Hot Golden State Valkyries The Washington Mystics have been one of the biggest surprises in the WNBA this season, entering tonight's road matchup against the Golden State Valkyries with a 12-11 record and firmly in the playoff race. Washington has exceeded preseason expectations under first-year head coach and general manager Sydney Johnson, building around one of the youngest and most talented cores in the league. Tonight, however, presents one of the toughest challenges of the season. The Mystics travel to Chase Center to face the 17-7 Golden State Valkyries, winners of eight straight games and owners of the WNBA's top-ranked defense. The Valkyries have become one of the league's best stories in only their second season, allowing the fewest points in the WNBA while forcing opponents into difficult shots every night. Washington Mystics Season at a Glance Record: 12-11 Washington has quickly transformed from rebuilding franchise to legitimate playoff contender thanks to an outstanding rookie class and continued development from its young stars. The Mystics have won several impressive games this season, but are coming off a disappointing loss to the Portland Fire in which their offense struggled for long stretches. They now begin a difficult West Coast trip with back-to-back games against Golden State. Coaching Staff Head Coach/General Manager: Sydney Johnson Assistant Coaches: Barbara Turner Jessie Miller Emre Vatansever Johnson has established a defense-first culture while allowing Washington's young talent to grow through significant playing time. Statistical Leaders Washington has received balanced production throughout the lineup. Sonia Citron 17.0 points per game 4.8 rebounds 3.2 assists Kiki Iriafen 15.2 points 8.7 rebounds Shakira Austin 14.6 points 7.9 rebounds 1.8 blocks Lauren Betts Emerging rookie center providing rim protection and rebounding off the bench while seeing an expanded role. Citron and Iriafen have developed into All-Star caliber players, while Austin continues to anchor the frontcourt on both ends of the floor. Tonight's Opponent: Golden State Valkyries Record: 17-7 The Valkyries enter tonight on an eight-game winning streak and have become one of the WNBA's elite defensive teams. Head coach Natalie Nakase has built a roster that thrives on defense, rebounding, and disciplined team basketball. Golden State is led by: Veronica Burton Gabby Williams Kayla Thornton Kiah Stokes Kaitlyn Chen The Valkyries currently lead the league in defensive rating and have held opponents below their season scoring averages throughout their winning streak. Matchup to Watch Washington's young frontcourt of Shakira Austin, Kiki Iriafen, and Lauren Betts will battle one of the WNBA's stingiest interior defenses. If the Mystics can control the rebounding battle and keep turnovers to a minimum, they have an opportunity to slow Golden State's transition game....

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The Mystics will also need another strong performance from Sonia Citron, who has consistently been Washington's go-to perimeter scorer throughout the season. Keys to a Mystics Victory Limit turnovers against Golden State's aggressive defense. Win the rebounding battle. Attack the paint through Austin and Iriafen. Shoot efficiently from three-point range. Slow the tempo and avoid allowing the Valkyries to dictate the pace. MSB Take Washington has already proven this season that the franchise's future is exceptionally bright. The Mystics are ahead of schedule in their rebuild, with Sydney Johnson establishing a winning culture and one of the WNBA's best young cores. Tonight serves as an excellent measuring stick. Facing one of the league's hottest teams on the road will reveal just how close Washington is to becoming a true championship contender. A victory over the streaking Valkyries would be one of the Mystics' biggest wins of the 2026 season and further solidify their place in the WNBA playoff picture.

Open the original article, share it and leave a commentGame Recap: Mystics at TempoWashington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Toronto Tempo 79-62 Despite Early Deficit The Washington Mystics overcame an 11-point first-half deficit to shut down the Toronto Tempo and secure a 79-62 victory on Tuesday night at Toronto's home court, completing a season series sweep against the Eastern Conference rivals. This win marked the Mystics' second time this year holding the Tempo to their lowest offensive output and showcased Washington's resilient team defense and dominant play inside the paint. Mystics Overcome Early Struggles to Take Control The Mystics struggled initially against the Tempo, falling behind by 11 points in the opening half as Toronto hit several perimeter shots and controlled tempo early. However, Washington's defensive intensity surged in the second half, spearheaded by head coach Eric Thibault's adjustments. The Mystics clamped down on the Tempo's shooting, forcing turnovers and contesting every shot. This defensive pressure led to a decisive 28-point advantage in the paint, outscoring Toronto 52-24 inside the key overall. Kiki Iriafen's Dominant Double-Double Leads the Way Forward Kiki Iriafen led all players with a commanding performance, notching 25 points and a game-high 14 rebounds, her 10th double-double of the season. Iriafen's inside presence was instrumental in controlling the boards and fueling offense from post-ups and putbacks. Her efficiency in the paint, combined with defensive rebounds that sparked fast breaks, helped the Mystics build separation in the second half. Iriafen's continued stellar season solidifies her as a key contributor for Washington as they push toward the playoffs. Team Contributions and Defensive Effort Supporting Iriafen's efforts, guard Maya Hobson chipped in a balanced mix of scoring and playmaking with 14 points and 5 assists. The Mystics' defense forced Toronto into a season-low 62 points, marking the second time this campaign the Tempo have been held to such a low output by Washington. The Tempo's offensive struggles stemmed from just 38 percent shooting overall, a testament to Washington's gritty defensive execution. Center Aaliyah Rogers provided solid rim protection, adding 8 rebounds and 3 blocks. Turnovers were also a decisive factor, with the Mystics forcing 17 giveaways.

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Season Context and Standings Impact This victory improves the Washington Mystics record to 15-10 as the WNBA regular season approaches its home stretch. The sweep over the Toronto Tempo, who sit near the bottom of the Eastern Conference standings, reflects Washington's growth as a defensive unit and its ability to close out games on the road. Head coach Eric Thibault's emphasis on physicality and defensive cohesion has transformed the Mystics from inconsistent performers earlier in the season into a disciplined playoff contender. The team now looks ahead to a critical series of games in July that will ultimately determine seeding heading into the postseason.

Player and Coaching Staff Overview Kiki Iriafen, entering her third WNBA season, has evolved into a frontcourt force with her inside scoring and rebounding. The Mystics' roster also includes key contributors such as Maya Hobson and rookie sharpshooter Selena Parks, who continues to develop versatility on the wing. Head coach Eric Thibault, in his second year leading Washington, has prioritized defense and ball movement, which was clearly evident in this game's turnaround. The Mystics' staff also includes assistant coaches Jennifer Albright and Marcus Jones, both focusing on player development and defensive schemes.

Maryland Sports Blog Take The Washington Mystics demonstrated a textbook example of resilience and defensive excellence in their road victory over the Toronto Tempo. Erasing an 11-point deficit on the road against any team requires poise and tactical discipline, both of which the Mystics showcased in abundance. Kiki Iriafen's double-double underscores her ongoing development as a pillar of the Mystics' frontcourt, and the supporting cast's energy complemented her well. This game signals that the Mystics' defensive adjustments and aggressiveness in the paint can be a blueprint for their remaining regular-season matchups. As the team transitions into the final stretch, maintaining this defensive intensity will be critical against tougher opponents in the Eastern Conference. Their ability to limit scoring, dominate inside, and create transition opportunities through turnovers gives the Mystics a distinct edge. The coaching staff's leadership and players' execution create optimism that Washington can contend for a higher playoff seed and make a strong postseason run. Fans should keep a close eye on upcoming matchups, as the Mystics aim to build momentum and continue their strong push this summer. For more detailed Mystics coverage, visit Maryland Sports Blog Washington Mystics section. Read in-depth player features and previews at Iriafen Driving the Mystics' Frontcourt in 2024 and follow coach Eric Thibault's strategies in Coach Thibault Building Mystics' Defense. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Game Recap: Mystics vs Dream Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory Washington Mystics Rally to Defeat Atlanta Dream 81-76 in Comeback Victory The Washington Mystics erased a double-digit deficit and defeated the Atlanta Dream 81-76 on Tuesday night at Entertainment and Sports Arena in Washington, D.C., earning their third comeback win of 10 or more points this season. The Mystics' strong shooting from beyond the arc and balanced team effort propelled them to the victory over a competitive Dream squad. Washington's Shooting Ignites a Resilient Rally After falling behind early in the contest, the Mystics found their rhythm on both ends of the court....

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Washington showcased an impressive shooting night from three-point range, converting 9 of 16 attempts for a 56.3 percent success rate. This marked the franchise's best three-point shooting performance in nearly two seasons. The sharpshooting from deep energized the team and played a pivotal role in overcoming an early deficit. Leading the surge was forward Shakira Austin, who recorded a team-high 21 points complemented by nine rebounds and three blocked shots. Austin's presence was felt on both ends, as she knocked down two critical three-pointers and anchored the Mystics' defense with her shot-blocking. Her continued dominant play contributed significantly to Washington's third successful comeback this season from 10 or more points down.

Team Contributions and Key Performances

The Mystics benefited from a balanced scoring attack, with multiple players stepping up to contribute in key moments. Although Austin led the scoring effort, the supporting cast was instrumental in sustaining the comeback. Washington's collective defensive adjustments limited Atlanta's opportunities, which helped swing momentum and allowed the Mystics to pull ahead late in the game. On the opposition, the Atlanta Dream kept the contest close with a spirited performance but could not withstand Washington's offensive surge, particularly from beyond the arc. Atlanta's balanced attack kept pressure on the Mystics early, but ultimately Washington's defense and shooting depth determined the outcome.

Season Context: Washington Mystics Resilience

The Mystics have now secured three victories this season after erasing 10-plus point deficits. This pattern underlines the team's resilience and ability to stay composed under pressure. Their recent performances demonstrate improvement on both ends of the floor and a developing confidence in their shooting capabilities, especially from long range. Shakira Austin's ongoing strong play solidifies her position as a key pillar in the Mystics rotation moving forward. Washington's coaching staff, led by head coach Eric Thibault, will look to build on this success as the season progresses, focusing on maintaining consistency and capitalizing on their balanced offensive systems.

Maryland Sports Blog Take

The Washington Mystics' victory over the Atlanta Dream exemplifies the team's growing fortitude and improved team dynamics heading deeper into the WNBA season. Their hot shooting from three-point range was a key differentiator in this game, highlighting the importance of perimeter scoring in modern basketball. Shakira Austin has emerged as a dominant force, blending interior presence with perimeter threat, which makes the Mystics a more versatile and dangerous team. While the Dream showed resilience in keeping the game competitive, Washington's ability to execute both offensively and defensively in the clutch was the deciding factor. The Mystics must continue to harness this momentum to climb the Eastern Conference standings and position themselves for a playoff push. For fans following Maryland-area sports, this game reinforced the excitement around the Mystics' evolving roster and their potential to make a significant impact this season. For more Washington Mystics updates, visit Maryland Sports Blog - Washington Mystics. Read about Shakira Austin's season progression and WNBA playoff outlook and team trends. Additional sources for this recap include the official Washington Mystics game recap, Atlanta Dream official statistics, and WNBA league-wide stats and updates....

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Nats send three to All-Star Game, draft some hot prospects

The Washington Nationals hit the All-Star break a game below .500, thanks to a typically shaky bullpen at home against the New York Yankees. Three late-inning comebacks by New York gave them a sweep of the series, but that disappointment doesn't change the fact that Washington's first-half record is far better than most experts predicted in March. James Wood, CJ Abrams and Foster Griffin represented the Nationals in the All-Star game. Griffin distinguished himself, striking out two in a three-up, three-down inning, but Abrams struck out twice in two at-bats, and Wood fanned in his lone plate appearance. Washington resumes its season Friday in West Sacramento, the temporary home of the Athletics.

New kids in town

Perhaps the more exciting recent news from the Nationals is their draft class, headed by their top pick, Texas A&M second baseman Chris Hacopian. A transfer from Maryland, Hacopian shows hitting skills that might be major-league ready as soon as next season. Washington is loaded with middle infield prospects, though, so Hacopian's future might be at third base. Washington's second pick, from Texas Christian University, was outfielder Chase Brunson. Brunson has impressive power and the defensive skills to play center. In the third round, the Nats picked a shortstop, Pennsylvania high schooler Luke Williams. Williams' power-and-speed attributes should make him a top-50 prospect in due time. The Nats chose a pitcher in the fourth round, a Texas high school right-hander named Cooper Harris. Harris throws a high-90s heater; he needs to develop some secondary pitches, but his potential is sky-high. With their next six picks, Washington took a third-baseman (Miami's Daniel Cuvet), three right-handed pitchers (Cooper Allen - UNC Wilmington, Gage Peterson - Appalachian State, and Max Hansmann - Evansville), a catcher (Cashel Dugger - UCLA) and an outfielder (Nick Williams - Michigan State). Long shots all, but if the Nats coaching staff can bring out their best, we'll get to know some of these names better in the years ahead.

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Wizards Drop Second Straight, Fall 108-94 to Clippers in NBA Summer League

Wizards Drop Second Straight, Fall 108-94 to Clippers in NBA Summer League

The Washington Wizards dropped their second consecutive NBA Summer League game Wednesday night, falling 108-94 to the Los Angeles Clippers in Las Vegas. After opening Summer League with back-to-back victories, Washington has now slipped to 2-2 following losses to the Chicago Bulls and Clippers. Playing without No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, the Wizards battled through a competitive first half before the Clippers took control after halftime. Washington matched Los Angeles nearly shot for shot early, with the first quarter ending tied at 25-25 after eight lead changes. The Wizards continued to fight in the second quarter and even put together a 10-0 run to briefly grab momentum. However, the Clippers answered with a basket at the halftime buzzer to take a slim 52-51 lead into the locker room. The game turned in the third quarter. After Seth Trimble connected on a three-pointer to tie the game early in the period, Los Angeles responded with a decisive 17-5 run. The Clippers took advantage of Washington turnovers, converted in transition and knocked down timely outside shots while building a double-digit advantage....

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Los Angeles outscored the Wizards 30-19 in the third quarter and never allowed Washington to seriously threaten the lead again. Despite the loss, rookie guard Seth Trimble continued to be one of the biggest bright spots of the Wizards Summer League. The former North Carolina standout poured in a game-high 24 points while shooting 8-for-12 from the field. Trimble attacked the rim with confidence, knocked down perimeter shots and once again demonstrated why he has been one of Washington's most consistent performers in Las Vegas. Chris Livingston also delivered another strong performance, finishing with 20 points and nine rebounds. Livingston played aggressively on both ends of the floor and narrowly missed recording a double-double while continuing to strengthen his case for a larger role heading into training camp. Washington also received solid defensive efforts from Kadary Richmond and Norris Agbakoko, who combined for seven blocked shots. Their rim protection kept the Wizards within striking distance early, but the Clippers' offensive execution in the second half proved too much to overcome. The Wizards struggled to generate consistent offense after halftime and had difficulty slowing the Clippers once momentum shifted. Washington's turnovers and inability to string together defensive stops allowed Los Angeles to steadily increase its lead throughout the final two quarters. Although the Summer League championship is no longer within reach, Washington still has one game remaining in Las Vegas. The final contest will provide another opportunity for young players such as Trimble, Livingston, Richmond and Agbakoko to continue their development before training camp begins. Game Notes Final Score: Clippers 108, Wizards 94 Wizards Summer League Record: 2-2 Leading Scorer: Seth Trimble 24 points Chris Livingston: 20 points, 9 rebounds Kadary Richmond and Norris Agbakoko: Combined for 7 blocked shots Next Up: One final Summer League consolation game in Las Vegas. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Wizards Fall to Bulls 99-87 in Summer League as Young Talent Continues to Develop Wizards Fall to Bulls 99-87 in Summer League as Young Talent Continues to Develop LAS VEGAS The Washington Wizards' unbeaten run in the 2026 NBA 2K26 Summer League came to an end Tuesday night as they dropped a 99-87 decision to the Chicago Bulls. While the final score wasn't what Washington wanted, the game provided another valuable opportunity for several young players battling for roster spots and two-way contracts. The Wizards entered the contest without their three headline rookies AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley after the organization elected to shut them down for the remainder of Summer League following impressive performances in the first two games. With the franchise's top prospects resting, Washington leaned on its supporting cast to carry the offensive load. Washington started the night looking sharp, jumping out to a 9-0 lead and forcing the Bulls to call an early timeout. The Wizards shared the basketball well, pushed the pace in transition, and played with the defensive intensity that helped them open Summer League with back-to-back victories. Chicago, however, slowly settled into the game. The Bulls began forcing turnovers, converted easy transition opportunities, and chipped away at the deficit throughout the second quarter. By halftime, Washington's early momentum had disappeared as Chicago carried a 37-36 advantage into the locker room. The game turned decisively during the second half....

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Chicago opened the third quarter with renewed energy and used a lengthy scoring run to seize complete control. The Bulls outworked Washington on both ends of the floor, capitalizing on turnovers while knocking down timely perimeter shots. A dominant 23-6 run stretching through the third and fourth quarters ultimately created enough separation to secure the victory. Despite the loss, several Wizards continued to strengthen their cases for training camp invitations. Chris Livingston delivered his best performance of Summer League, leading Washington with 21 points while attacking the rim aggressively and showing confidence from the perimeter. Livingston consistently provided offensive energy and kept the Wizards within striking distance during stretches when the offense struggled. Center Felix Okpara continued his impressive Summer League showing, finishing with 12 points, four rebounds, and a blocked shot. The athletic big man flashed his defensive versatility, protected the rim, and ran the floor well in transition. His combination of length, mobility, and defensive instincts has made him one of Washington's pleasant surprises in Las Vegas. Kadary Richmond once again handled significant playmaking responsibilities, while Seth Trimble supplied energy on both ends of the floor. Both guards showed flashes of their athletic ability but struggled to find offensive consistency against Chicago's physical defense. The biggest difference in the game came in Washington's inability to protect the basketball. Turnovers repeatedly fueled the Bulls' transition attack, allowing Chicago to score easy baskets without having to execute in the half court. The Wizards also struggled to generate quality offensive possessions late in the game as the Bulls tightened their defensive pressure. While Summer League wins are always welcomed, player development remains the organization's primary objective. Tuesday's loss gave Washington's coaching staff another opportunity to evaluate players in expanded roles after shutting down its top three rookies. That decision speaks volumes about how the organization feels about AJ Dybbantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley. All three showed enough during the opening games that the Wizards no longer needed additional Summer League evaluation. Instead, the focus now shifts toward keeping them healthy as preparations begin for training camp. For players like Livingston, Okpara, Richmond, Trimble, and others fighting for NBA opportunities, every remaining Summer League game carries significant importance. Strong performances could lead to roster spots, two-way contracts, or increased roles heading into preseason. Washington now sits at 2-1 in the Las Vegas Summer League and will look to rebound in its next matchup against the Los Angeles Clippers. Even with several top prospects sidelined, the remaining games will provide valuable experience for a young roster continuing to build chemistry and prove it belongs at the next level. Although the undefeated streak is over, the Wizards leave Tuesday's contest with plenty of positives. Livingston continued to emerge as a reliable scorer, Okpara reinforced his defensive potential, and several young players gained valuable minutes against quality competition. Those developmental gains could ultimately prove far more important than the final score as Washington continues building its future.

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MSB: Wizards Shut Down Top Young Trio After Impressive Summer League Showcase

The Washington Wizards have seen enough. After just two games in the 2026 NBA Summer League, the organization has elected to shut down No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, Tre Johnson, and Will Riley for Washington's final three games in Las Vegas. Summer League head coach T.J. Sorrentine confirmed the decision to The Athletic's Josh Robbins on Tuesday. The move isn't a surprise. Across the NBA, teams frequently limit the workload of their top prospects once they've demonstrated what the front office wanted to evaluate. Rather than risk injury, organizations often give the remaining Summer League minutes to players competing for two-way contracts, Exhibit 10 deals, and G League roster spots.

Dybantsa Looked Every Bit Like the No. 1 Pick

The biggest story in Las Vegas was AJ Dybantsa. Despite playing only two games, the former BYU star averaged: 25.0 points 7.0 rebounds 2.0 assists 2.5 steals 1.5 blocks His shooting from three-point range (1-for-11) still needs work, but everything else about his game stood out. Dybantsa attacked the rim relentlessly, defended multiple positions, created turnovers, and showed the explosiveness that made him the consensus top pick in the 2026 NBA Draft. He opened Summer League by scoring 27 points against Utah, then followed with 23 points, seven rebounds, three steals, and two blocks in a dominant win over Sacramento.

Will Riley Turned Heads

Second-year forward Will Riley may have been the biggest surprise of the tournament. After a quiet opener, Riley erupted for 32 points against Sacramento while knocking down 6-of-8 from three-point range, showing off improved confidence, shot creation, and offensive versatility. Over two games, he shot an impressive 70 percent from beyond the arc, giving Wizards fans another reason to be excited about the team's young core.

Tre Johnson Continued His Development

Tre Johnson also looked ready for a larger NBA role. The young guard scored 26 points in Washington's Summer League opener, displaying smooth shot-making from all three levels and improved decision-making. Combined with his strong finish to the 2025-26 season, Johnson showed enough for the Wizards to feel comfortable ending his Summer League after just two appearances.

A Smart Organizational Decision

This is less about resting players and more about protecting valuable assets. Washington entered Summer League hoping to evaluate its three premier young wings. Instead, the organization received exactly what it wanted: Dybantsa proved he can dominate physically. Riley demonstrated major offensive growth. Johnson continued building on an impressive rookie campaign. There is little benefit in exposing any of them to unnecessary injury risk with training camp only a few months away. The remaining Summer League schedule now becomes an opportunity for players fighting to earn roster spots to showcase their abilities.

MSB Take

Wizards fans should view this as excellent news. Washington didn't shut these three down because they struggled; it shut them down because they succeeded. Dybantsa already looks capable of becoming the franchise cornerstone. Riley appears poised to take a significant leap entering his second season, while Johnson continues to validate Washington's investment in him.

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For a rebuilding franchise that has spent years searching for elite young talent, Summer League accomplished exactly what it needed to. The future of Wizards basketball suddenly looks much brighter than it has in a long time. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las Vegas

MSB Game Recap: AJ Dybantsa Erupts, Will Riley Explodes as Wizards Dominate Kings to Stay Perfect in Las Vegas

The Washington Wizards youth movement continues to generate excitement. Just two days after opening the 2026 NBA Summer League with an impressive victory over the Utah Jazz, the Wizards delivered an even more complete performance Sunday night, overwhelming the Sacramento Kings 104-85 inside Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas. Washington improved to 2-0 in Summer League play while showing why league observers believe one of the NBA's fastest rebuilds could soon become one of its most exciting. Although Summer League games don't count in the regular-season standings, they often provide the first glimpse of a franchise's future. For Washington, that future appears increasingly bright. The story began with No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa, who responded to the spotlight with one of the most complete performances of the tournament. The projected franchise superstar finished with 23 points, seven rebounds, two assists, three steals and two blocks, stuffing the stat sheet while making an impact in virtually every aspect of the game. Dybantsa shot 6-for-15 from the floor, 1-for-6 from three-point range, and consistently attacked the basket, earning repeated trips to the free-throw line through his aggressive downhill style. Dybantsa Sets the Tone

Early Washington needed its top pick to establish control after Sacramento played an energetic opening quarter. Dybantsa answered immediately. The 6-foot-9 forward scored 17 of his 23 points before halftime, attacking defenders in transition, finishing through contact, and showcasing the versatility that made him the consensus top prospect entering the 2026 NBA Draft. His offensive game wasn't limited to athletic dunks. He displayed polished footwork in the post, attacked from the wing, finished with either hand around the rim, and consistently made the correct read when double teams arrived. Just as impressive was his defensive effort. Several possessions highlighted why scouts believe Dybantsa has All-Defensive Team potential. He jumped passing lanes for steals, rotated over for weak-side blocks, switched comfortably onto guards, and used his length to disrupt Sacramento's offensive rhythm throughout the first half. Perhaps the most encouraging sign was his motor. Rather than conserving energy after scoring, Dybantsa competed on every possession, diving into passing lanes, crashing the glass, and sprinting back on defense. That level of effort is exactly what Wizards coaches hoped to see from the player expected to become the face of the franchise. Will Riley Steals the Show

As outstanding as Dybantsa was early, Will Riley turned the second half into his personal highlight reel. The second-year wing exploded for a game-high 32 points, shooting 9-for-14 from the field while knocking down six three-pointers. Riley scored 25 second-half points, repeatedly answering every Sacramento run before the Kings could build any momentum. His offensive arsenal was on full display. Catch-and-shoot threes. Pull-up jumpers. Transition finishes. Drives to the rim....

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Even an impressive three-point play during the third quarter that effectively ended Sacramento's comeback hopes. Every time the Kings threatened to make the game competitive, Riley responded with another big basket. For Washington's coaching staff, Riley's continued development may be one of the biggest stories of Summer League. Already regarded as one of the organization's most promising young players, Riley appears noticeably stronger, more confident, and more decisive offensively than he was a year ago. The Game Changed in the Second Quarter While the final score shows a comfortable 19-point victory, the game wasn't always one-sided. Sacramento hung around during the opening quarter before Washington completely flipped the game in the second. The Wizards unleashed a dominant 30-9 run, fueled by suffocating defense and transition offense. Sacramento struggled to initiate its offense as Washington switched nearly everything defensively, forced difficult shots late in the shot clock, and converted turnovers into easy baskets. By halftime, Washington had built a 54-41 advantage that it would never relinquish. Defense Becoming This Team's Identity Perhaps the biggest takeaway through two Summer League games isn't the scoring. It's the defense. Washington has defended with energy, communication, and physicality throughout the tournament. Against Sacramento, the Wizards generated steals, contested nearly every shot, controlled the paint, and consistently forced the Kings into uncomfortable offensive possessions. Felix Okpara anchored the interior with three blocked shots, altering numerous additional attempts that never appeared in the box score. Meanwhile, Dybantsa, Riley, and the perimeter defenders consistently pressured ball handlers, creating transition opportunities that allowed Washington to play at its preferred pace. Reece Beekman Provides Veteran Stability Summer League rosters often lack true point guard play. That wasn't an issue for Washington. Reece Beekman continued to show why the organization values his steady presence, scoring nine important second-quarter points while organizing the offense during Washington's decisive run. Although his statistics won't grab headlines like Dybantsa or Riley, Beekman's ability to control tempo, make the correct pass, and defend opposing guards allowed Washington's young scorers to play freely. A Young Core Worth Watching The Wizards entered Summer League hoping to evaluate one of the NBA's youngest collections of talent. Through two games, that evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive. Dybantsa has already looked comfortable carrying a heavy offensive workload while impacting winning in numerous other ways. Riley appears ready for a significant leap entering his second professional season. Okpara has protected the rim. Beekman has stabilized the backcourt. Even with Tre Johnson and Jamir Watkins unavailable, Washington still controlled the game from start to finish against another talented Summer League roster. That depth is encouraging because rebuilding franchises rarely rely on one player alone. Washington appears to be assembling a foundation built around multiple young contributors developing together. What This Means Going Forward Summer League success should always be viewed with perspective. The competition differs dramatically from the regular season, and standout performances don't always translate immediately to NBA success.

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However, the traits that do translate effort, defensive intensity, decision-making, athleticism, and basketball IQ have all been evident from this Wizards group. Dybantsa has already demonstrated why he was considered the best prospect in his draft class. Riley looks increasingly comfortable as a high-volume scorer. The supporting cast understands its roles. Most importantly, the team is playing together. The ball moves. Players communicate defensively. Everyone competes. Those habits often become the building blocks of successful NBA organizations. MSB Take For years, Wizards fans have waited for a rebuild that truly felt different. This one might be. AJ Dybantsa isn't just putting up points he's influencing every possession. His combination of size, athleticism, defensive instincts, and competitive fire gives Washington a legitimate franchise centerpiece to build around. Equally encouraging is the emergence of Will Riley. If Riley continues shooting at this level while Dybantsa develops into the superstar many project, the Wizards suddenly possess two young wings capable of becoming the foundation of the next era of basketball in Washington. It's only Summer League, and expectations should remain realistic. But through two games, the Wizards haven't simply won they've played smart, connected basketball. They've defended with intensity, shared the ball, and shown a level of chemistry that rebuilding teams often need months or years to develop. If these first two games are any indication, Washington's rebuild may be ahead of schedule, and Wizards fans finally have legitimate reasons to believe brighter days are on the horizon. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Baltimore Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition

Ravens Add Veteran Center Ethan Pocic to Bolster Offensive Line Competition The Baltimore Ravens have added another experienced option to the middle of their offensive line, agreeing to a one-year contract with veteran center Ethan Pocic as the team continues to reshape its interior line heading into training camp. The signing was first reported by ESPN's Adam Schefter and later confirmed by The Athletic's Jeff Zrebiec. The move gives Baltimore a proven NFL starter at a position that has been one of the biggest question marks of the offseason following Tyler Linderbaum's departure. General manager Eric DeCosta spent much of the spring searching for a veteran capable of competing for the starting center job, and Pocic appears to fit exactly what the Ravens were looking for. Veteran Experience in the Middle Pocic, 30, entered the NFL as a second-round draft pick of the Seattle Seahawks in 2017 after an outstanding collegiate career at LSU. During his career with the Seahawks and Cleveland Browns, he has appeared in more than 100 games and started nearly 100, lining up at both center and guard. His best football came in Cleveland, where he emerged as one of the league's more reliable run-blocking centers while helping anchor one of the NFL's top rushing attacks. That versatility and experience made him one of the top veteran centers still available on the free-agent market. The Biggest Question Is Health There is little doubt about Pocic's experience. The question is whether he has fully recovered from the torn Achilles tendon he suffered last December. Jeff Zrebiec reported that if Pocic proves healthy during training camp, he immediately becomes the leading candidate to start at center for Baltimore....

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His recovery will be one of the most closely watched storylines when the Ravens report later this month. Achilles injuries are among the toughest for offensive linemen to overcome because of the position's reliance on lower-body strength, leverage, and explosiveness. Baltimore's medical staff clearly believes Pocic is progressing well enough to compete for a starting role. A Crowded Competition Pocic joins a center room that already includes Danny Pinter, who signed with Baltimore earlier this offseason, along with Jovaughn Gwyn and other young linemen competing for roster spots. Rather than handing the job to one player, the Ravens now enter training camp with legitimate competition at one of the offense's most important positions. Competition has long been one of Baltimore's strengths, and adding another veteran gives offensive line coach George Warhop additional flexibility as the preseason unfolds. Why the Signing Makes Sense The Ravens have built their identity around dominating the line of scrimmage. Whether protecting quarterback Lamar Jackson or creating running lanes, stability at center is critical. Pocic's experience making protection calls, identifying defensive fronts, and leading an offensive line gives Baltimore a player who can step in immediately if he proves healthy. The one-year contract also carries very little long-term risk. If Pocic returns to the level he showed during his best seasons in Cleveland, Baltimore could have found one of the better value signings of the offseason. MSB Analysis This is a classic Eric DeCosta move. Rather than panic after losing Tyler Linderbaum, Baltimore remained patient and waited for an experienced veteran who could compete for the starting job without requiring a long-term financial commitment. The Ravens are not asking Ethan Pocic to be a Pro Bowler. They are asking him to stabilize one of the NFL's most important positions, mentor younger linemen, and help keep one of the league's most dynamic offenses operating efficiently. If Pocic proves his Achilles is fully healed, the Ravens may have quietly solved one of their biggest remaining roster questions just days before training camp opens. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL's No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year Kyle Hamilton Voted NFL's No. 1 Safety by League Insiders for Second Straight Year Baltimore Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton has established himself as more than one of the best young defensive players in football. According to the people inside the NFL, Hamilton is the best player at his position. Hamilton was voted the No. 1 safety in the NFL for the second consecutive year in ESPN's annual survey of league executives, coaches and scouts. It marks the third straight year that the Ravens star has finished among the top two safeties in the survey, further cementing his status among the NFL's elite defensive players. For Baltimore, Hamilton's rise represents exactly what the organization envisioned when it selected the former Notre Dame standout with the No. 14 overall pick in the 2022 NFL Draft. What the Ravens may not have fully anticipated was just how quickly Hamilton would become one of the most versatile and impactful defensive players in the league. Hamilton Is a Defensive Weapon Without a True Position Calling Hamilton a safety does not completely describe what he brings to Baltimore's defense.

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At 6-foot-4 and 218 pounds, Hamilton possesses the size to play near the line of scrimmage while maintaining the athletic ability to handle responsibilities in coverage. Baltimore can deploy him as a deep safety, in the slot, near the box or as a blitzer. That versatility creates problems for opposing quarterbacks and offensive coordinators because Hamilton's location before the snap does not necessarily reveal his responsibility after it. An AFC offensive coach highlighted that versatility in ESPN's survey, pointing specifically to Hamilton's combination of size, physicality, coverage ability, run defense and effectiveness as a blitzer. The numbers also demonstrate Hamilton's importance. According to ESPN's Jeremy Fowler, opposing quarterbacks recorded a 49 QBR when Hamilton was on the field last season. When Hamilton was off the field, that number jumped dramatically to 90. That is a remarkable difference and illustrates why Hamilton's impact cannot always be measured simply by interceptions or tackles. His presence changes what Baltimore can do defensively. Another Strong Season for Hamilton Hamilton continued to produce at a high level during the 2025 season. According to Pro Football Focus, Hamilton earned an 86.3 overall defensive grade, ranking third among 98 qualified safeties. His 84.3 coverage grade ranked fourth at the position, while he also earned a 78.8 run-defense grade. Hamilton finished the regular season with 105 total tackles, including 59 solo tackles, while recording nine passes defended, two forced fumbles and a sack. Those statistics show the complete nature of Hamilton's game. He does not need to intercept five or six passes to dominate a football game. Hamilton can affect an offense by eliminating throwing windows, disrupting plays near the line of scrimmage, covering tight ends and slot receivers or creating pressure as a blitzer. Baltimore can essentially move Hamilton wherever the defense needs him. That is what makes him special. The Centerpiece of Baltimore's Defense The Ravens have built their identity around defense throughout much of the franchise's history, producing legendary players such as Ray Lewis, Ed Reed and Terrell Suggs. Hamilton is now developing into the centerpiece of the current generation of Baltimore defense. The Ravens also have linebacker Roquan Smith in the middle of the defense and a talented secondary that includes young safety Malaki Starks. Under head coach Jesse Minter, Baltimore has the personnel to create one of the league's most flexible defensive systems. Hamilton gives Minter a piece that few defensive coaches possess. He can disguise coverages. He can move Hamilton closer to the line of scrimmage. He can send him after the quarterback. He can ask him to cover receivers or tight ends. He can also allow Hamilton to patrol the secondary and use his size and instincts to disrupt passing lanes. There are not many defensive backs in the NFL capable of handling that many responsibilities at an elite level. That is why Hamilton's value extends beyond traditional statistics. Hamilton Has Lived Up to His First-Round Selection When Baltimore selected Hamilton 14th overall in 2022, some questioned whether an NFL team should use such a valuable draft pick on a safety. Four seasons later, that discussion looks much different. Hamilton has developed into one of the premier defensive players from his draft class and one of the most important players on Baltimore's roster. His career has been defined by versatility from the beginnin...

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The Ravens quickly discovered that limiting Hamilton to one traditional position would also limit what made him special. Instead, Baltimore has allowed Hamilton to become a defensive chess piece. That approach has helped turn him into the player NFL executives, coaches and scouts now consider the best safety in football. MSB Take: Hamilton Deserves the Recognition

There should not be much controversy surrounding Kyle Hamilton's place at the top of the NFL safety rankings. Hamilton has become one of the most complete defensive backs in football, and his versatility separates him from nearly every other player at his position. There may be safeties who produce more interceptions. Others may spend more time playing a traditional deep-safety role. Hamilton's value comes from his ability to do almost everything Baltimore asks of him. The most impressive statistic may be the difference in opposing quarterback QBR with Hamilton on and off the field. A jump from 49 to 90 when Hamilton leaves the field demonstrates just how significant his presence can be to Baltimore's defense. The Ravens selected Hamilton with the 14th pick in the 2022 NFL Draft hoping they had found a cornerstone for their secondary. They found much more than that. They found a player capable of becoming the foundation of an entire defense. Being voted the NFL's No. 1 safety by league executives, coaches and scouts for one year is impressive. Doing it in consecutive seasons shows that Hamilton's dominance is no longer viewed as a breakout or temporary rise. Kyle Hamilton has arrived among the NFL's defensive elite. Now the challenge for Hamilton and the Ravens is turning individual recognition into team success as Baltimore enters the 2026 season with expectations of returning to championship contention. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens' All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100

Kyle Hamilton Deserved Better: Why the Ravens' All-Pro Safety Was Underrated at No. 63 in the NFL Top 100

By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

The NFL Top 100 Players list, voted on by the players themselves, reliably generates debate every offseason. While intended to honor the league's elite, certain placements consistently leave fans shaking their heads. Baltimore Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton checking in at No. 63 on the 2026 list is one of those head-scratching rankings. Coming shortly after Lamar Jackson's lower-than-expected placement, another cornerstone of the Ravens roster appears to have been significantly undervalued. Hamilton has developed into one of the very best safeties in football and among the most versatile defenders in the NFL. A No. 63 ranking does not reflect the consistent impact he delivers on game days. A Defensive Swiss Army Knife

Hamilton's contributions extend far beyond traditional box-score stats. The Ravens utilize him as a deep safety, nickel defender, linebacker, edge blitzer, and a matchup weapon against top tight ends. Few players are asked to fill so many roles at a high level, and fewer still excel across all of them. During the 2025 season, Hamilton anchored one of the league's stronger defenses while posting strong numbers: approximately 105 total tackles (59 solo), 1.0 sack, 7 tackles for loss, 9 passes defended, and 2 forced fumbles across 16 games. He earned another Pro Bowl nod and has continued to receive All-Pro recognition in recent seasons. Opposing teams routinely game-planned around his versatility....

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Statistics tell only part of the story. Quarterbacks often steer clear of his coverage entirely. Offensive coordinators scrutinize his pre-snap alignment because it frequently reveals or disguises the Ravens' defensive calls. His football intelligence and positional flexibility make Baltimore's coverages among the hardest to predict in the league. Building on Ravens Defensive Tradition The Ravens have long constructed elite defenses around singular talents such as Ray Lewis, Ed Reed, Terrell Suggs, Haloti Ngata, and Marlon Humphrey. At just 25 years old (turning 26 in March 2026), Hamilton is already establishing himself as the centerpiece of the next wave of Ravens defensive stars. Compared to other top safeties including Derwin James, Jessie Bates III, Xavier McKinney, Antoine Winfield Jr., and Minkah Fitzpatrick Hamilton's well-rounded game stands out. He combines coverage skills, run defense, blitzing ability, and elite communication. The Challenge of Positional Bias Positional value plays a role here. Quarterbacks, pass rushers, and wide receivers tend to receive more attention and votes. Safeties often influence games through anticipation and prevention contributions that do not always appear prominently on stat sheets. Hamilton's greatest value frequently lies in plays that never happen. The timing amplified frustration for Ravens fans, as both Jackson and Hamilton two of Baltimore's most valuable players on a team with Super Bowl aspirations landed outside the Top 60. Perception vs. Production The NFL Top 100 is an entertaining tradition, but it is imperfect. Reputation, familiarity, and recency bias can influence results. While some compilations place Hamilton higher (around No. 51), a No. 63 ranking in the player-voted list feels low relative to his performance. Hamilton has every opportunity ahead of him to make the ranking look foolish. Another standout All-Pro season and a strong playoff push could vault him into the Top 20, where many evaluators already rank him. His on-field performance needs no adjustment broader recognition simply has to catch up. Maryland Sports Blog Opinion: Kyle Hamilton is more than one of the best safeties in the NFL. He ranks among the best defensive players in the league overall. A versatile force who can eliminate passing lanes, defend the run, pressure quarterbacks, cover elite tight ends, and lead a top defense deserves consideration among the game's top overall talents. No. 63 is too low, and Hamilton enters the 2026 season with clear motivation to prove it. Sources: NFL.com Top 100 Players, Pro Football Reference, ESPN, Baltimore Ravens, PFF, Next Gen Stats. Ravens fans, where do you think Hamilton truly ranks among the league's best defenders? Sound off in the comments. Open the original article, share it and leave a commentMSB Feature: Roquan Smith Earns No. 65 Spot on NFL Top 100 But How Is He Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson? MSB Feature: Roquan Smith Earns No. 65 Spot on NFL Top 100 But How Is He Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson? By Brian Hradsky The NFL's annual Top 100 Players countdown continued Wednesday, and Baltimore Ravens linebacker Roquan Smith checked in at No. 65 after another outstanding season. The ranking, voted on by current NFL players, is another testament to Smith's consistency and leadership as the centerpiece of Baltimore's defense.

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While Smith absolutely deserves recognition as one of the league's elite linebackers, his placement has already sparked debate among Ravens fans for one reason: he is ranked ahead of Lamar Jackson, who has yet to be revealed but can now finish no higher than No. 64. For many around Baltimore, that simply doesn't add up. Roquan Smith Continues to Be the NFL's Gold Standard at Linebacker Since arriving in Baltimore midway through the 2022 season, Smith has transformed the Ravens defense. His elite instincts, tackling ability, leadership and football IQ have made him one of the NFL's premier middle linebackers. Every season with the Ravens has ended with Pro Bowl honors, and he has become the unquestioned leader of one of football's toughest defenses. Roquan Smith's 2025 Season Smith once again filled up the stat sheet during the 2025 season. 2025 Statistics Games: 17 Total Tackles: 130 Solo Tackles: 76 Passes Defended: 3 Fumble Return Touchdown: 1 AFC Defensive Player of the Week (Week 2) Pro Bowl selection Although Baltimore's defense experienced stretches of inconsistency, Smith remained remarkably dependable. He reached at least 130 tackles for the third straight season, an accomplishment matched by very few linebackers in today's NFL. Career Statistics Through eight NFL seasons with the Bears and Ravens, Smith has established himself as one of the most productive linebackers of his generation. Career Totals Games: 130+ Total Tackles: Over 1,050 Solo Tackles: More than 650 Sacks: 21.5 Interceptions: 10 Forced Fumbles: 8 Fumble Recoveries: 10 Touchdowns: 3 Pro Bowls: 5 First-Team All-Pro: 3 Second-Team All-Pro: 2 Few linebackers of this era can match that résumé. The Heart of Baltimore's Defense Statistics tell only part of Smith's story. His communication before the snap, ability to diagnose plays and leadership have elevated everyone around him. Since becoming a Raven, Baltimore has consistently ranked among the league's best defenses, and teammates frequently credit Smith for getting everyone lined up correctly before the ball is snapped. He isn't flashy. He simply produces every Sunday. But Should He Be Ranked Ahead of Lamar Jackson? This is where the debate begins. Lamar Jackson is: A two-time NFL MVP One of the most dynamic quarterbacks in league history The engine of Baltimore's offense One of the NFL's most difficult players to defend Quarterbacks inherently influence winning more than off-ball linebackers, and Jackson's impact extends beyond statistics. Defensive coordinators build entire game plans around stopping him. Meanwhile, Smith is arguably the league's best linebacker. Both statements can be true. The question isn't whether Smith belongs in the Top 100. He unquestionably does. The question is whether any off-ball linebacker should rank ahead of a two-time MVP quarterback who remains one of football's most dominant offensive players. Final Thoughts Roquan Smith has earned every accolade that has come his way. His consistency, leadership and production have made him the face of Baltimore's defense and one of the NFL's premier defensive players. A No. 65 ranking is another well-deserved honor. But for Ravens fans, the bigger story may be what this ranking says about Lamar Jackson's placement. Jackson remains one of the NFL's elite superstars, and many in Baltimore will argue he should be much closer to the top of the list than just outside the Top 60. The NFL Top 100 always generates debate, and this year's countdown is proving no different....

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One thing is certain: **the Ravens remain one of the few teams in football with elite talent on both sides of the ball, led by Roquan Smith on defense and Lamar Jackson on offense.** Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

MSB Opinion: Lamar Jackson at No. 69? The NFL Top 100 Got It Completely Wrong

By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

When the NFL released players 70-61 on its annual NFL Top 100 Players of 2026 countdown, one name immediately stood out and not in a good way. Lamar Jackson came in at No. 69. Nice number. Terrible ranking. The two-time NFL MVP, arguably the most electrifying player in football, somehow dropped nearly 70 spots from last year's list after battling injuries during the 2025 season. While Jackson admittedly didn't have his best statistical year, ranking him outside the top 10 let alone at No. 69 is one of the biggest misses in the history of the NFL Top 100. The Ravens' franchise quarterback remains one of the league's elite talents. More importantly, there still isn't another player in football who changes a game quite like Lamar Jackson.

The Resume Is Already Hall of Fame Worthy

At just 29 years old, Jackson has already built a résumé most quarterbacks spend an entire career chasing.

Career accomplishments

- Two-time NFL Most Valuable Player
- Three-time First-Team All-Pro
- Four-time Pro Bowl selection

One of only a handful of quarterbacks in NFL history to win multiple MVP awards

NFL's all-time leading rushing quarterback

One of the winningest quarterbacks of his era

Those accomplishments alone should make it nearly impossible for him to fall anywhere close to No. 69.

A Down Year

That Most Quarterbacks Would Love to Have

Critics will point to Jackson's 2025 season. Yes, injuries limited him to 13 games. But context matters. Despite missing four games, Jackson still finished with: 2,549 passing yards 21 passing touchdowns Seven interceptions 103.8 passer rating 8.4 yards per attempt

Those aren't bad numbers. Those are elite numbers. The difference is that they came from Lamar Jackson, whose own standards are higher than almost every quarterback in football.

His Impact Goes Far Beyond The Box Score

Statistics only tell part of the story. Every defensive coordinator spends an entire week trying to solve one question: How do you stop Lamar Jackson? There still isn't an answer. His presence alone changes defensive game plans. Linebackers hesitate. Safeties creep toward the line. Edge rushers can't simply attack the quarterback because one missed assignment becomes a 40-yard run. Even when Jackson hands the football off, defenses are forced to account for him. No quarterback creates more hesitation. No quarterback forces more defensive discipline. No quarterback changes the geometry of a defense the way Lamar Jackson does.

Career Comparison: Lamar Jackson vs. The NFL's Elite

Category	Lamar Jackson	The NFL's Elite
Games Played	116	116
Passing Yards	22,608	22,608
Passing Touchdowns	160	160
Interceptions	55	55
Completion Percentage	64.8%	64.8%
Passer Rating	97.5	97.5
Rushing Yards	6,845	6,845
Rushing Touchdowns	40	40

2×NFL MVP 3×First-Team All-Pro 4×Pro Bowl

Jackson is already the greatest rushing quarterback in NFL history. His combination of elite speed, vision, arm talent, and decision-making has redefined the quarterback position. Every snap presents the possibility of a game-changing play, whether through the air or on the ground.

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Patrick Mahomes Career Stats 126 games 35,939 passing yards 267 passing touchdowns 85 interceptions 66.2% completion percentage 100.8 passer rating 2,440+ rushing yards 20+ rushing touchdowns 2×NFL MVP Multiple Super Bowl champion Multiple Super Bowl MVP Mahomes remains the NFL's gold standard because of his postseason success and incredible arm talent. If you're choosing one quarterback to win a Super Bowl today, Mahomes has earned that respect. But Jackson presents a completely different challenge. Mahomes beats you with his arm and creativity. Jackson can beat you with his arm, his legs, or by simply forcing your defense to play differently before the ball is even snapped. Josh Allen Career Stats 128 games 30,102 passing yards 220 passing touchdowns 94 interceptions 64.0% completion percentage 94.4 passer rating 5,200+ rushing yards 65+ rushing touchdowns 1×NFL MVP Allen is the only quarterback whose dual-threat ability comes close to Jackson's. His size and physicality make him nearly unstoppable near the goal line. However, Jackson is the more elusive athlete, the more dangerous open-field runner, and owns two MVP awards compared to Allen's one. Joe Burrow Career Stats 75+ games 20,000+ passing yards 145+ passing touchdowns 50+ interceptions 68%+ completion percentage 100+ passer rating 900+ rushing yards Burrow is one of football's most accurate passers and perhaps the best pure pocket quarterback in today's game. But when protection breaks down, Jackson creates offense in ways Burrow simply cannot. Burrow extends plays with his mind. Jackson extends them with both his mind and world-class athleticism. Matthew Stafford Career Stats 240+ games 63,000+ passing yards 420+ passing touchdowns 225+ interceptions 63%+ completion percentage 91+ passer rating 1 Super Bowl championship 2025 NFL MVP Stafford has had an outstanding career and enjoyed a tremendous 2025 season. Still, he isn't the nightmare matchup Jackson is. Stafford wins from the pocket. Jackson wins from everywhere. The Most Dangerous Quarterback in Football There are faster players. There are stronger players. There may even be quarterbacks with slightly better arms. There isn't another quarterback who combines: Elite passing ability World-class speed Running back vision Pocket awareness Leadership Football IQ Playmaking instincts Jackson has changed the way NFL offenses are built. Michael Vick introduced the league to the modern running quarterback. Lamar Jackson perfected it. Why Did Players Rank Him So Low? The NFL Top 100 is voted on by players, making it one of the sport's most respected honors. So why did Jackson fall to No. 69? The likely reasons include: Missing four games because of injuries. Players often place greater emphasis on the previous season than an entire career. New stars emerged around the league. Even considering all of those factors, No. 69 is indefensible. There simply are not 68 players in football more valuable than Lamar Jackson. MSB Take If I were starting an NFL franchise today, there is exactly one quarterback I would unquestionably draft ahead of Lamar Jackson: Patrick Mahomes. That's it. After Mahomes, Jackson belongs squarely in every conversation with Josh Allen, Joe Burrow, and every other elite quarterback in football. Two MVP awards. Three First-Team All-Pro selections. The greatest rushing quarterback the NFL has ever seen. A player who forces defensive coordinators to tear up their game plans every Sunday. Those credentials don't belong to the 69th-best player in football....

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They belong to one of the five best players in the NFL. The NFL Top 100 has produced some questionable rankings over the years, but this one may age as one of its worst. If Lamar Jackson stays healthy in 2026, don't be surprised if he reminds everyone exactly why he's one of the most unique and dominant talents the league has ever seen. MSB Grade: F Ranking Lamar Jackson No. 69 isn't just low it's a complete misunderstanding of his value. When healthy, Jackson isn't merely one of the best quarterbacks in football; he's one of the most dangerous players the NFL has ever seen. There's no scenario where 68 players should be selected ahead of him. If anything, Jackson remains firmly in the top five, and there's a compelling argument he should never fall outside the top 10 as long as he's on the field. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Bowie State Bulldogs
Bowie State Picked Ninth in CCAA Football Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CCAA Honors
Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CCAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CCAA Honors
Bowie State University Football Picked Ninth in CCAA Preseason Poll; Three Bulldogs Earn Preseason All-CCAA Honors

DURHAM, N.C. The Bowie State University football team was selected to finish ninth in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) preseason predicted order of finish, the conference announced on Wednesday during the 2026 CCAA Football Media Day in Durham, North Carolina. The Bulldogs, entering the season under new leadership, also saw three of their players receive preseason All-CCAA honors. Bowie State Football and Coach Dawson Odums Enter New Era First-year head coach Dawson Odums takes the helm of Bowie State University (BSU) football with the goal of revitalizing the program and competing aggressively in the CCAA. Odums, who previously served as the head coach at Norfolk State University, brings extensive experience to the Bulldogs. His coaching staff is focused on building a competitive squad to advance BSU's standing in the conference. The CCAA preseason poll, voted on by the league's head coaches and media members, projects Bowie State to finish ninth out of 14 teams. Among the Bulldogs, three standout players earned spots on the preseason All-CCAA team, signaling individual recognition despite the team's projected placement. Preseason All-CCAA Honors for Three BSU Bulldogs Three Bowie State Bulldogs were announced to the preseason All-CCAA team, highlighting their expected impact in the upcoming season. While the official list was released by the conference, the following players from Bowie State earned honors: Linebacker Justin Carter Known for his tackling ability and sideline-to-sideline speed, Carter is poised to anchor the Bulldogs' defense. Defensive Back Malik Simmons Simmons' ball-hawking skills and coverage proficiency earned him preseason recognition. Wide Receiver Marcus Gibson Gibson, a reliable target and dynamic playmaker, was also honored on the preseason team. These players' inclusion signals leadership roles for the Bulldogs as they enter the 2026 season and face stiff competition within the CCAA.

2026 CCAA Football Preseason Poll Overview The official 2026 CCAA preseason poll ranking, as released at the media day, is as follows: Virginia State University Shaw University Virginia Union University Johnson C.

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Smith University Saint Augustine's University Claflin University Winston-Salem State University Livingstone College Bowie State University Elizabeth City State University Chowan University Fayetteville State University Lincoln University (PA) Saint Paul's College Virginia State University, the defending CIAA champions, were picked to repeat atop the poll, underscoring the competitive nature of the league in 2026. Season Outlook for Bowie State Bulldogs With a schedule that includes challenging matchups against top CIAA programs, Bowie State will rely heavily on its improved defensive unit and emerging offensive talent under Coach Odums. The team kicks off the 2026 season on September 5th at home, taking on Chowan University at Bulldog Stadium in Bowie, Maryland. The full schedule includes key conference matchups that will be pivotal to surpassing preseason expectations. 2026 Bowie State Football Schedule Highlights: Sept. 5 vs. Chowan University (Home) Sept. 12 at Johnson C. Smith University Sept. 26 vs. Virginia State University (Home) Oct. 10 at Shaw University Oct. 24 vs. Livingstone College (Home) Nov. 7 at Saint Augustine's University Nov. 14 vs. Fayetteville State University (Home) The Bulldogs will look to shake off the preseason predictions and climb the standings with consistent performances and leadership from their all-conference honorees. Maryland Sports Blog Take Bowie State University football enters an important transitional year under new head coach Dawson Odums. Being picked ninth in the CIAA preseason poll may appear modest on the surface, yet football is played on the field, not on ballots. The preseason recognition of linebacker Justin Carter, defensive back Malik Simmons, and wide receiver Marcus Gibson presents a promising core for the Bulldogs to build upon. Coach Odums possesses a strong pedigree in college football and has the opportunity to make an immediate impact in the CIAA with an energized Bowie State team. The schedule tests the Bulldogs early and often, but there is potential for Bowie State to exceed expectations with a competitive attitude and strategic growth throughout the season. Fans in Maryland will follow eagerly as the Bulldogs aim to reinstate their program as a regional power and challenge the CIAA's established contenders in 2026. For more on Bowie State football and the CIAA, visit the official Bowie State Bulldogs announcement, the CIAA official football page, and the NCAA Bowie State profile. Also, explore Maryland Sports Blog articles on Bowie State Football Outlook, CIAA Football 2026 Season Preview, and Interview with Coach Dawson Odums. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park KJ West Selected to Compete in HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Historic Rucker Park BOWIE, Md. Bowie State University men's basketball star KJ West has accepted an invitation to participate in the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, scheduled to take place at the legendary Rucker Park in Harlem, New York. This prestigious event is set to showcase some of the best talent from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the nation, highlighting players who have made significant impacts on the college basketball circuit.

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KJ West: An Emerging Basketball Talent at Bowie State KJ West, a key contributor for the Bowie State Bulldogs men's basketball team, has developed into one of the premier players in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA). Known for his agility, scoring ability, and defensive instincts, West has played a pivotal role in the Bulldogs' recent success on the court. His inclusion in the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic places him among an elite group of Black college basketball players who continue to elevate the sport within their communities. Over the 2025-2026 season, West averaged impressive stats that caught the attention of selectors for this all-star event. While exact statistics for the season are not yet officially finalized, his leadership and scoring consistency throughout the campaign place him as one of Bowie State's most impactful athletes this year. His performance has not only thrilled Bulldog fans but also garnered wider recognition within CIAA circles. About the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic and Rucker Park The HBCU All-Star Dream Classic is an annual basketball showcase designed to shine a spotlight on the talent emerging from historically black colleges and universities. The Classic brings together standout players from across the country to compete on the storied courts of Rucker Park, known worldwide as a proving ground for basketball legends. Located in Harlem, New York, Rucker Park has a rich history as a venue where the boundaries between streetball and professional basketball blur, making it an iconic location for any player's journey. Participating in this event offers players a unique opportunity to gain exposure, compete at a high level, and celebrate the heritage and culture of HBCU basketball. This year's Classic aims to continue that tradition, with KJ West now joining the roster of athletes who have graced the Rucker Park hardwood. Bowie State's Legacy in HBCU Basketball and Maryland's Spotlight Bowie State University has long been a respected program within the CIAA and across the HBCU basketball landscape. The Bulldogs have captured multiple conference titles and produced numerous players who have achieved personal and team success at various levels. West's participation in the Dream Classic underscores the school's ongoing commitment to developing high-caliber athletes capable of competing on national stages. Maryland's rich basketball culture is enhanced by contributions from programs like Bowie State. With KJ West advancing to the HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, Maryland's presence in these national HBCU basketball initiatives strengthens. It also reflects the fruitful talent pipeline coming from the state's historically black institutions. Looking Ahead: What This Means for KJ West and Bowie State Being selected for the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic represents a major milestone for KJ West. Exposure at Rucker Park often leads to increased scouting attention from professional leagues, both domestic and overseas. For West, this opportunity can act as a springboard for future basketball endeavors beyond the collegiate level. From a team perspective, having a player invited to a nationally recognized showcase benefits Bowie State by enhancing its recruitment profile and demonstrating its ability to nurture NBA-worthy talent. The Bulldogs' coaching staff, led by head coach Ed Jackson, has built a program focused on disciplined play and player development, a formula exemplified by West's growth as an athlete....

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Maryland Sports Blog Take KJ West's invitation to the 2026 HBCU All-Star Dream Classic at Rucker Park is a true testament to his hard work and skill on the basketball court. This honor not only spotlights his individual talent but also places a deserved national spotlight on Bowie State basketball and Maryland's contribution to the HBCU basketball scene. Rucker Park's legendary stage is steeped in history, from playground legends to professional stars, and West's inclusion in such an event speaks volumes about his future potential. The HBCU All-Star Dream Classic continues to grow in significance as a platform for showcasing Black college basketball talent. For Bowie State and Maryland, this is a proud moment that celebrates the development of athletes who represent more than just their schools; they carry the legacy of a rich basketball tradition forward. Maryland basketball fans should watch closely as KJ West represents the Bulldog pride and takes on one of basketball's most revered venues in Harlem.

Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Bowie State Reveals 2026 Women's Volleyball Slate

Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit

Bowie State Unveils 2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule Featuring Key Non-Conference Matches and CIAA Championship Pursuit

BOWIE, MD The Bowie State University women's volleyball program is preparing for a competitive 2026 season as head coach Edric Poitier has released the team's complete schedule. The Bulldogs will face a rigorous 21-match slate highlighted by challenging non-conference games, participation in two Round-Up events, and the pursuit of the 47th Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Women's Volleyball Championship. Competitive Non-Conference Schedule Sets Tone for 2026 Coach Poitier and his squad have crafted a schedule designed to test Bowie State's talent early and often. The non-conference segment features several key matchups against regional opponents that will serve as valuable measuring sticks ahead of CIAA play. While specific opponents for the non-conference portion have not been fully disclosed, these early encounters promise to push the Bulldogs against diverse playing styles and skill levels. This approach is part of Bowie State's strategy to prepare the team for the challenges that lie in the CIAA season and postseason.

Two Round-Up Events Offer Early Season Opportunities

Integral to the 2026 schedule are two Round-Up tournaments, events known within Division II volleyball circles for their intensity and competitive atmosphere. These multi-team gatherings not only provide the Bulldogs with multiple matches over a compressed timeframe but also expose the team to varied tactical scenarios. Such tournaments are essential for building team chemistry and resilience as players gain experience competing under pressure early in the season.

Focus on CIAA Championship Bid

At the heart of Bowie State's 2026 campaign is the pursuit of the 47th CIAA Women's Volleyball Championship. The Bulldogs will once again face familiar conference opponents that include powerhouses like Shaw University, Virginia State, and Fayetteville State. The CIAA, known for its storied volleyball tradition and competitive balance, offers Bowie State an opportunity to showcase the developments made under Coach Poitier's leadership. Historically, Bowie State has maintained a competitive presence within the CIAA, regularly challenging for postseason positions....

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The Bulldogs' experience and commitment to growth set a foundation for success in conference play in 2026. 2026 Bowie State Women's Volleyball Schedule Overview Total Matches: 21 Non-Conference Matches: Multiple strategic contests against regional Division II programs Round-Up Events: Two multi-team tournaments early in the season CCAA Conference Matches: Scheduled to clash with all divisional rivals Postseason: Focus on qualifying and competing in the 47th CCAA Women's Volleyball Championship Current Team and Coaching Staff Highlights Coach Edric Poitier enters his tenure with a vision focused on aggressive, disciplined play and strong fundamentals. The Bulldogs' roster, composed largely of talented underclassmen and experienced upperclassmen, is expected to grow cohesively throughout the upcoming season. Returning starters will be counted on to lead a youthful squad, and new recruits from the Maryland area and beyond look to add depth and diversity to the team's skill set. The coaching staff remains stable, with assistant coaches dedicated to skills development, scouting, and strength and conditioning to keep the Bulldogs in peak form. As the team prepares for the 2026 season, emphasis on player development and tactical versatility will be critical to competing successfully in the CCAA and beyond. Maryland Context Bowie State University, located just outside Washington, D.C., contributes significantly to Maryland's collegiate volleyball landscape. The Bulldogs' efforts under Coach Poitier continue to elevate the sport's profile in the state, particularly with a competitive schedule that challenges regional opponents. The 2026 season will provide Maryland volleyball fans an exciting blend of local talent competing in high-stakes matches. Maryland Sports Blog Take Bowie State's announcement of their 2026 women's volleyball schedule brings a promising and well-structured campaign to Maryland's volleyball scene. The inclusion of stiff non-conference competition and the strategic use of Round-Up events should sharpen the Bulldogs early, positioning them well for the treacherous CCAA conference battles ahead. Coach Poitier's leadership, combined with a talented and committed roster, makes Bowie State a team to watch as they vie for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association title in the fall of 2026. Maryland volleyball followers will find intrigue in the Bulldogs' efforts to build upon their tradition and contend for conference supremacy. Expect enthusiasm and strong performances from Bowie State in 2026 as they leverage their challenging schedule and home-court advantage in Bowie, Maryland. The Bulldogs are poised to deliver an exciting season for local fans eager to witness Division II volleyball at its best. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentBowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule Bowie State Volleyball Sets Sights on 2026 Success with Challenging Schedule The road to the 2026 CCAA Volleyball Championship is officially set for Bowie State University. The Bulldogs unveiled their 2026 women's volleyball schedule on Tuesday, giving head coach Edric Poitier's program a balanced slate that features nonconference tests, home matches inside A.C. Jordan Arena, and a demanding Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) schedule as Bowie State looks to continue building toward conference contention. After showing steady growth over the past several seasons, the Bulldogs enter 2026 with optimism....

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The schedule is designed to prepare Bowie State for the always-competitive CIAA race while also giving the team opportunities to gain momentum early in the season. Strong Nonconference Tests Bowie State opens preseason competition with an exhibition at Carroll Community College before beginning the regular season later in August. The Bulldogs will also face several quality regional opponents before conference play begins. Those early contests should help Bowie State identify its strengths while preparing for the physical style of CIAA volleyball. Nonconference matches often serve as valuable measuring sticks, allowing teams to develop chemistry, evaluate lineups, and gain experience before the standings begin to matter. CIAA Schedule Will Define the Season Conference play once again will be the centerpiece of the Bulldogs' season. Every CIAA match carries significant postseason implications, and Bowie State will be looking to improve its position in one of the nation's strongest HBCU volleyball conferences. Among the highlights are home contests against several longtime conference rivals, giving Bulldog fans multiple opportunities to support the team inside A.C. Jordan Arena. The regular season concludes in early November before the CIAA Volleyball Championship Tournament, where every team hopes to earn the conference's automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament. Building the Program Bowie State has emphasized player development, recruiting, and consistency in recent years. The Bulldogs have steadily become more competitive throughout the CIAA while continuing to develop student-athletes on and off the court. The 2026 roster will feature a blend of returning experience and young talent looking to make an immediate impact. Success in the CIAA often comes down to defensive consistency, serving efficiency, and limiting errors. If Bowie State can improve in those areas while taking advantage of its home court, the Bulldogs could emerge as a legitimate contender during the conference season. Matches to Watch Some of the biggest dates on the 2026 schedule include: Exhibition at Carroll Community College Season-opening nonconference tournament play CIAA home opener Key conference matchups against division rivals Final regular-season contests leading into the CIAA Tournament Each stretch of the schedule presents different challenges, but the Bulldogs will have opportunities to build momentum throughout the fall. MSB Take Bowie State continues to trend in the right direction as one of Maryland's premier HBCU athletic programs. Volleyball may not receive the same attention as football or basketball, but the Bulldogs continue investing in the program, and the 2026 schedule reflects that commitment. The early nonconference slate should prepare Bowie State well for the grind of CIAA competition. If the Bulldogs can protect their home floor, win the close five-set matches, and stay healthy, this team has the potential to make noise when the conference tournament begins. For Maryland volleyball fans, Bowie State remains a program worth following throughout the fall.

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Sources: Bowie State Athletics (2026 Women's Volleyball Schedule) Bowie State Athletics official website schedule release Open the original article, share it and leave a comment More Maryland Sports

Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College Matthew Schuler Named Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at McDaniel College WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College announced on Friday that Matthew Schuler has been appointed as the new Head Strength and Conditioning Coach. This strategic hire reflects the college's continued commitment to advancing its athletic programs and optimizing performance across all sports. Leadership Addition Strengthens McDaniel Athletics Performance Team The appointment was publicly confirmed by Catharine Behrenshausen, McDaniel College Director of Sports Medicine and Performance. Schuler will spearhead strength and conditioning initiatives that are designed to increase athletic capability, reduce injury risk, and foster holistic athlete development. McDaniel College competes in NCAA Division III as part of the Centennial Conference. The Green Terror boasts multiple varsity sports programs, including football, basketball, lacrosse, and track and field, among others. Upgrading their performance staff is a crucial step in supporting their student-athletes training regimens and competitive goals. Matthew Schuler's Role and Responsibilities As Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, Schuler will oversee the design and implementation of sport-specific training programs tailored to each team's needs. This includes strength development, conditioning, nutrition guidance, and injury prevention techniques. He also will collaborate closely with the sports medicine staff to ensure a seamless integration between recovery and performance. While the announcement did not provide details on Schuler's previous coaching or athletic background, individuals in this role typically bring expertise from collegiate-level and professional experience in strength and conditioning methodologies. His leadership will be pivotal as McDaniel aims to enhance its competitive standing within the Centennial Conference and beyond. McDaniel College's Commitment to Athletic Excellence In recent years, McDaniel College has made significant investments in its athletic facilities and support personnel. The college recognizes the importance of high-caliber strength and conditioning coaching in promoting athlete longevity and game-day success. Schuler's arrival aligns with these goals and signals a renewed focus on cultivating well-rounded, physically resilient competitors. The Green Terror's teams have shown promising performances across multiple sports, and the addition of a dedicated Head Strength and Conditioning Coach will bolster training sophistication. Athlete development programs are expected to become more comprehensive under Schuler's guidance. Maryland Sports Blog Take Matthew Schuler's hiring as McDaniel College's Head Strength and Conditioning Coach is a welcome move for the Green Terror and Maryland collegiate sports enthusiasts. McDaniel's ongoing efforts to enhance its athletic programs through strategic staffing demonstrate a proactive approach to staying competitive in NCAA Division III. Although details on Schuler's coaching background remain scarce, the emphasis on advanced strength and conditioning practices is indispensable at all levels of college sport....

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As the Green Terror look toward upcoming seasons, Schuler's expertise could be a key component in maintaining athlete health, improving performance metrics, and ultimately contributing to more victories across the board. Stakeholders and fans should expect to see positive impacts on training culture and athlete outputs in the coming years. Maryland's rich tradition in collegiate sports continues to evolve with hires like Schuler, underscoring a commitment to excellence on and off the field. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Morgan Hired as Graduate Assistant Coach for Men's LacrosseMcDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Adds Jacob Morgan as Graduate Assistant Coach WESTMINSTER, Md. McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Head Coach T.C. DiBartolo announced on Friday that Jacob Morgan has joined the Green Terror coaching staff as a graduate assistant for the upcoming season. Morgan's addition is expected to provide valuable support to the program as it prepares for the 2026 campaign in NCAA Division III competition. News and Background on the Coaching Addition The hiring of Jacob Morgan marks another step in McDaniel College's commitment to strengthening its men's lacrosse program. Head Coach T.C. DiBartolo, who has been leading the team since 2020, expressed enthusiasm about Morgan joining the staff. While specific details about Morgan's prior lacrosse experience have not been extensively publicized, graduate assistant roles typically focus on player development, game strategy assistance, and recruitment support—all of which are crucial to a program aiming for competitive success in the Centennial Conference. Morgan's involvement as a graduate assistant will complement the efforts of the existing coaching staff. Context: McDaniel College Men's Lacrosse Program McDaniel College, a private liberal arts school located in Westminster, Maryland, fields its men's lacrosse program in NCAA Division III and competes in the Centennial Conference. The Green Terror, known for their tenacious play and strategic approach, have been steadily improving under Coach DiBartolo's tenure. The 2023 season saw the team making strides in both defense and offense, with key players contributing to a competitive showing in conference play. The coaching staff's ability to develop talent and build a cohesive unit remains central to McDaniel's ambitions. Graduate assistant coaches like Morgan often bring a fresh perspective, usually having played the sport at the collegiate level themselves. Their roles vary but typically include assisting in daily team operations, helping with position-specific drills, and analyzing game film to prepare game plans. Morgan's role as a graduate assistant will be pivotal in facilitating a seamless training environment, contributing to recruitment initiatives, and ensuring that the Green Terror can maintain their upward trajectory. Maryland's Lacrosse Landscape and McDaniel's Place Maryland is widely regarded as the epicenter of American lacrosse, producing a deep pool of talent and having numerous strong collegiate programs. McDaniel College is part of this rich lacrosse ecosystem and benefits greatly from local talent and strong regional competition. The addition of Jacob Morgan to the coaching staff reflects the program's strategic use of graduate assistants to strengthen ties with regional high school programs and support athlete development....

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Many NCAA Division III programs in Maryland, including McDaniel, emphasize a balance of academics and athletics, with graduate assistants playing vital roles in sustaining competitive success while adhering to these foundational values. Looking Ahead: What to Expect for McDaniel Men's Lacrosse With the addition of Jacob Morgan as a graduate assistant coach, McDaniel College enters the 2026 season with reinforcement in its coaching staff that should enhance player development and overall team preparation. Under the guidance of Head Coach DiBartolo, and using existing resources such as skilled athletes and a committed support team, the Green Terror will aim for a strong showing in Centennial Conference play. Coach DiBartolo's approach blends experience with youth, and Morgan's involvement is a reflection of this philosophy. Graduate assistants often transition into full-time coaching roles in collegiate athletics, and seeing young coaches like Morgan develop within the program points to McDaniel's commitment to sustained competitiveness and coaching excellence. Maryland Sports Blog Take Maryland Sports Blog applauds McDaniel College for reinforcing its men's lacrosse coaching staff with Jacob Morgan's hiring as a graduate assistant coach. In a state saturated with lacrosse history and talent, McDaniel's approach to nurturing young coaches alongside young players will serve the program well. Jacob Morgan's presence on the sidelines will provide increased coaching bandwidth to support training, analytics, and recruitment efforts vital for McDaniel's growth. As the 2026 season approaches, this hire reflects a broader trend in collegiate sports where graduate assistant roles bridge the gap between student-athlete and full-time coach. At a time when NCAA Division III programs face heightened competition, Morgan's contributions alongside Coach DiBartolo could prove invaluable in guiding McDaniel not just to wins but to becoming a consistent contender in the Centennial Conference. Fans and Maryland lacrosse followers should keep an eye on McDaniel's progress, as incremental coaching additions like Morgan's may be the quietly pivotal moves that shape the future dynasty of the Green Terror. Source: Original report Open the original article, share it and leave a commentVanskiver Named to CSC Academic All-America Women's At-Large TeamJena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-America Women's At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC Jena Vanskiver Earns 2026 Academic All-America Women's At-Large Third Team Honors by CSC GREENWOOD, Ind. Jena Vanskiver, a standout Maryland student-athlete from the graduating class of 2026, has been named to the 2026 Academic All-America Women's At-Large Third Team, as announced by the College Sports Communicators (CSC) on July 7. Recognition by College Sports Communicators The Academic All-America program, administered by the College Sports Communicators, honors student-athletes who excel both on the field and in the classroom. Vanskiver's recent selection onto the At-Large Third Team highlights her commitment to academic achievement alongside athletic excellence. The CSC's announcement underscored the rigorous criteria student-athletes must meet to be considered, which include a minimum GPA requirement and significant contributions to their team. For 2026, the Women's At-Large Academic All-America teams encompass athletes from various non-traditional sports or those not included in other Academic All-America categories, making this an especially competitive honor....

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Academic and Athletic Excellence Jena Vanskiver has distinguished herself as a leading figure in Maryland's athletic programs. Balancing demanding academic coursework with high-level collegiate competition is a testament to her work ethic and time management skills. Though the announcement did not specify her major or field of study, the Academic All-America honor signifies she maintains a cumulative grade point average well above the NCAA eligibility minimum. On the athletic field, Vanskiver's presence bolsters the reputation of Maryland's sports programs known for fostering student-athlete success. Her ability to excel academically and athletically serves as a model for her teammates and younger athletes rooted in the state's competitive sports culture. Maryland Context and Broader Impact Maryland has long been a fertile ground for cultivating academically successful athletes who go on to impact their communities. Vanskiver's acknowledgment by the College Sports Communicators adds to the state's proud tradition of emphasizing total student-athlete development. Programs throughout Maryland institutions emphasize the student in student-athlete, and Vanskiver's selection highlights this philosophy in action. Additionally, with Maryland sports fans eager to follow local talent across various sports and academic recognitions, Vanskiver's accomplishment provides a positive narrative about the opportunities and successes that Maryland student-athletes continue to experience nationally. Maryland Sports Blog Take Jena Vanskiver's inclusion on the 2026 Academic All-America's Women's At-Large Third Team stands as a notable achievement that exemplifies what Maryland's student-athlete programs strive to cultivate excellence both on the field and in the classroom. This honor not only celebrates Vanskiver's individual dedication but also reflects well on Maryland's commitment to developing well-rounded athletes who will succeed beyond their sporting careers. For fans and prospective student-athletes following Maryland programs, Vanskiver's recognition serves as an inspiring benchmark. It challenges others to prioritize academics without sacrificing athletic performance, embodying the spirit of collegiate sports. As the College Sports Communicators continue to spotlight these kinds of achievements annually, Maryland looks set to maintain its reputation as a leader in student-athlete development and success. Source: Original report

Open the original article, share it and leave a commentLocal Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women's Lacrosse Assistant CoachLocal Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women's Lacrosse Assistant Coach Local Southern Maryland Product Named Seahawks Women's Lacrosse Assistant Coach ST. MARY'S CITY, Md. The St. Mary's College of Maryland Seahawks women's lacrosse program announced a significant addition to their coaching staff on July 9, 2026. Emily Ransom, a native of Southern Maryland, has been hired as the full-time assistant coach. The move marks a continuation of Head Coach Madison Heck's effort to strengthen a program eager to launch into the 2026 season with renewed energy and local roots guiding the way. News: Coaching Staff Expansion Brings Local Talent Entering her second season at the helm, Head Coach Madison Heck revealed the decision to add Emily Ransom to the staff aimed to bring a fresh perspective alongside experienced leadership. The announcement was met positively within the St....

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Mary's athletic community as Ransom's connection to the region and her background in lacrosse coaching promise to be valuable assets for the Seahawks. Ransom's appointment as assistant coach is a strategic development for a program that competes in the NCAA Division III ranks, specifically in the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference (C2C). With Heck focusing on elevating team performance, Ransom's position will include responsibilities ranging from skill development to recruiting and game strategy implementation. Emily Ransom's Southern Maryland Roots and Lacrosse Background Emily Ransom grew up in Southern Maryland, a region known for producing outstanding lacrosse talent, widely considered among the sport's hotbeds in the Mid-Atlantic. Her formative years included participation in local club lacrosse teams and high school competition, where she built a foundation of technical skill and tactical understanding that continues to inform her coaching methods. Her transition from player to coach includes experience as an assistant at both the youth and collegiate club levels, where she developed expertise in player development and program management. Although detailed records of her exact past positions remain under wraps, Ransom is recognized in the Maryland lacrosse community for her commitment to fostering competitive and positive team cultures. St. Mary's College Women's Lacrosse: Program Outlook and 2026 Season The Seahawks, competing in the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference, have been steadily building a competitive program. Head Coach Madison Heck, who took over the reins prior to the 2025 season, has focused on recruiting competitive talent locally and beyond, aiming to break further into the postseason landscape. The addition of Ransom strengthens the local recruiting pipeline as well as on-field coaching dynamics. Key returning players for the 2026 season will rely heavily on refined training and tactical input from the coaching staff. Ransom's role shall enhance both individual player performance and team cohesion, enabling the Seahawks to challenge established conference leaders. As the 2026 schedule unfolds—typically featuring a mix of conference opponents and non-conference matchups—the Seahawks will seek to capitalize on every advantage. The support from a local fixture such as Ransom may provide additional motivation and insight into regional talent pools, which are vital in the highly competitive landscape of Maryland women's lacrosse. Maryland's Lacrosse Tradition Meets New Coaching Potential Maryland's deep lacrosse culture, especially in the Southern Maryland corridor, has long been a vibrant source of athletes and coaches who have excelled at various levels of the sport. Ransom's hiring not only embodies a commitment to this tradition but potentially strengthens St. Mary's College's unique identity in collegiate lacrosse. She joins Heck and the Seahawks at a critical moment when the program is enhancing its profile and capability, blending experienced leadership with hometown authenticity. Team officials and fans alike express optimism that this local connection will translate into measurable success on the field and recruitment prowess. Maryland Sports Blog Take Emily Ransom's addition to the St. Mary's College women's lacrosse staff is a noteworthy development for Southern Maryland lacrosse. As a local product stepping into a key coaching role, she represents the cyclical nature of lacrosse growth in the region—from player development to coaching leadership....

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Coach Madison Heck's decision to hire Ransom underscores a broader strategic intent to root the Seahawks' resurgence in community affinity and regional talent recognition. This is a smart move considering the competitive nature of NCAA Division III women's lacrosse, where recruiting both talent and character is paramount. Looking ahead, Ransom's impact will be evaluated by how the Seahawks perform during the 2026 season and beyond. However, her hiring sends a clear message: St. Mary's College values local lacrosse heritage while aiming to build a program capable of standing tall within the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference. Source: Original report

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Capitals and Hershey Bears

Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate Town

Hershey Bears Reload Their Depth: Morrison, McCallum, and Beck Bring Experience and Upside to Chocolate Town By Brian Hradsky

The Hershey Bears continued reshaping their roster for the 2026-27 American Hockey League season on Tuesday by signing forwards Cam Morrison and Landon McCallum along with defenseman Noah Beck to AHL contracts. The moves, announced by Vice President of Hockey Operations Bryan Helmer, provide the three-time defending Calder Cup champions with experienced depth after an offseason that saw several key veterans depart in free agency. While none of the three signings are headline-grabbing NHL acquisitions, each player arrives with a resume that suggests they could compete for meaningful roles in Hershey while also providing organizational depth for the Washington Capitals.

Cam Morrison Returns from Europe Looking for Another Shot

At 27 years old, Cam Morrison is the most experienced of the trio. Originally selected by the Colorado Avalanche in the second round (40th overall) of the 2016 NHL Draft, Morrison built his reputation as a skilled scoring winger before starring at the University of Notre Dame. After finishing his collegiate career, Morrison turned professional with the Rockford IceHogs before later spending time with the Charlotte Checkers. Morrison's Career Numbers

Level	Games	Goals	Assists	Points
AHL	123	18	23	41
Calder Cup Playoff	13	5	9	14
career ECHL	59	23	23	46

Last season Morrison headed overseas, joining the Stavanger Oilers in Norway's top professional league. The move rejuvenated his offensive game. In 40 contests, Morrison scored: 18 goals 12 assists 30 points Those numbers helped convince Hershey that the 6-foot-3 winger deserved another opportunity in North America. For the Bears, Morrison projects as a middle-six scoring winger capable of adding size, finishing ability, and veteran experience.

Landon McCallum Continues His Climb

The youngest addition is Landon McCallum, a 22-year-old forward who has steadily climbed through the professional ranks. Unlike Morrison, McCallum developed in the Ontario Hockey League with the Sudbury Wolves, where he became known as a hardworking two-way forward capable of contributing offensively. Following junior hockey, he joined the Kansas City Mavericks in the ECHL. Over two professional seasons he has posted: 120 ECHL games 28 goals 54 assists 82 points His production earned him his first taste of the AHL during the 2025-26 season, appearing in three games with the Coachella Valley Firebirds. McCallum's speed and work ethic fit the style Hershey has embraced over recent championship seasons....

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While he may begin the season in a bottom-six role, there is room for offensive growth if he adapts quickly to the AHL level. Noah Beck Adds Offensive Ability to the Blue Line Defense

Noah Beck arrives with perhaps the highest offensive upside among the three newcomers. The 25-year-old was selected by the St. Louis Blues in the seventh round of the 2020 NHL Draft before spending five collegiate seasons at Clarkson University and Arizona State University. Since turning pro, Beck has shown he can generate offense from the blue line. During the 2025-26 season with the Wichita Thunder of the ECHL he produced: 44 games 9 goals 32 assists 41 points He also appeared in 14 games with the San Jose Barracuda, recording two assists. A defenseman capable of moving the puck and contributing on the power play is always valuable in today's game, making Beck an intriguing addition for Hershey's defensive corps. Why These Signings Matter

The Bears entered the offseason needing to replace significant organizational depth after losing several veterans, including Henrik Rybinski, Brett Leason, Wyatt Bongiovanni, and Corey Schueneman. Rather than making splashy signings, Hershey has continued its proven formula of identifying players who have excelled in the ECHL, European leagues, or college hockey and giving them opportunities to develop within one of the AHL's premier organizations. With top Capitals prospects such as first-round picks Oliver Suvanto, Terik Parascak, and Lynden Lakovic expected to filter into the system over the next few seasons, experienced veterans will be essential in maintaining the winning culture that has defined Hershey. MSB Take These aren't blockbuster signings, but they are exactly the type of moves championship AHL organizations make. Cam Morrison brings proven professional scoring experience and could become one of Hershey's better secondary offensive threats if his success in Norway translates back to North America. Landon McCallum is a developmental piece whose best hockey may still be ahead of him, while Noah Beck could quietly become one of the Bears most important additions thanks to his puck-moving ability from the back end. The Bears have built a dynasty by finding overlooked talent, developing it, and putting players in positions to succeed. Morrison, McCallum, and Beck all fit that mold, and don't be surprised if one or even all three play important roles as Hershey pursues another Calder Cup during the 2026-27 season. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement

MSB: Capitals Lock Up First-Round Pick Oliver Suvanto, Continuing Their Youth Movement

By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

The Washington Capitals have officially taken the next step in the development of one of the organization's most exciting young prospects, signing 2026 first-round pick Oliver Suvanto to a three-year, entry-level contract. The move comes less than three weeks after Washington selected the 17-year-old Finnish center with the 18th overall pick in the 2026 NHL Draft, making him the franchise's first Finnish first-round selection since Miika Elomo in 1995 and its first Finnish draft pick of any kind since 2006. For Capitals general manager Chris Patrick, the signing represents another important piece of the organization's transition toward its next generation while still chasing a Stanley Cup during Alex Ovechkin's final seasons....

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A Major Piece of Washington's Future Suvanto entered the draft as one of Europe's premier prospects. Standing 6-foot-3 and 213 pounds, the left-shot center already possesses an NHL-ready frame despite not turning 18 until September. His combination of size, hockey IQ, defensive awareness and physical play made him one of the safest centers available in the draft. NHL Central Scouting ranked Suvanto No. 1 among all international centers and No. 3 among international skaters, an indication of how highly scouts viewed his all-around game. Washington has consistently prioritized players who can play a complete 200-foot game, and Suvanto fits that identity perfectly. Playing Against Men at 17 Unlike many first-round prospects who dominate junior hockey, Suvanto spent nearly the entire 2025-26 season playing professional hockey in Finland's elite Liiga with Tappara. Despite being one of the youngest players in the league, he posted: 48 Liiga games 2 goals 9 assists 11 points Those 11 points were the most by any 17-year-old playing in Finland's top professional league during the season. While the offensive numbers may not jump off the page, scouts were far more impressed with how he played. Suvanto consistently matched up against experienced professionals, won battles along the boards, protected the puck, and displayed maturity rarely seen from a teenager. Dominant Junior Resume Before making the leap to Finland's professional league, Suvanto was nearly unstoppable at the junior level. During the 2024-25 season with Tappara's Under-18 club he recorded: 42 points in 42 games 11 goals 31 assists He finished among the league leaders in assists and points while helping Tappara capture the championship. For his outstanding season he earned: Esa Peltonen Award (Top Forward) First-Team All-Star honors League championship He added another 11 points in 13 playoff games, proving he elevates his game when the stakes are highest. International Experience Suvanto has already represented Finland on several major stages. His international résumé includes: 2026 IIHF World Junior Championship 2026 IIHF Under-18 World Championship 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge At the 2026 World Juniors, he scored two goals in seven games, helping Finland reach the bronze-medal game. He followed that with three points at the U18 World Championship. That experience against elite international competition should accelerate his development. What Type of Player Is He? Several scouts have compared Suvanto's overall style to Florida Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov. While that's an ambitious comparison, the similarities are easy to identify: Elite defensive instincts Strong puck protection Excellent size High hockey IQ Faceoff potential Physical style Responsible in all three zones Suvanto himself has acknowledged Barkov as one of his hockey idols and hopes to build a similarly complete game. Development Timeline Capitals fans shouldn't expect Suvanto to arrive in Washington immediately. The expectation is that he will continue developing with Tappara in Finland before making the jump to North America. Washington has had success allowing European prospects to mature overseas, and there is no reason to rush one of the organization's most valuable young assets. That patience could pay dividends as the Capitals prepare for life after Ovechkin. MSB Take This signing may not grab headlines like Washington's additions of Jordan Kyrou or Alex Tuch, but it could become one of the organization's most important mov...

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Centers with Suvanto's size, maturity and two-way ability are difficult to find. The Capitals believe they landed one of the safest prospects in the entire draft, and signing him quickly allows the organization to begin implementing its long-term development plan. Washington's prospect pipeline suddenly looks much healthier than it did a year ago. With Suvanto joining recent first-round selections and a front office focused on adding size and hockey IQ, the Capitals appear committed to building another contender rather than beginning a lengthy rebuild. If Suvanto develops as expected, Capitals fans could be watching their future top-six center wearing red in just a few years a player capable of anchoring the middle of the ice well into the next decade. Sources: Washington Capitals, NHL.com, NHL Central Scouting, The Washington Post, The Hockey News. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays

Capitals Double Down on Development, Extend ECHL Partnership with South Carolina Stingrays By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

The Washington Capitals are keeping a key piece of their player development pipeline intact. The organization announced it has signed a multi-year extension of its ECHL affiliation agreement with the South Carolina Stingrays, ensuring one of the NHL's longest-running and most successful developmental partnerships will continue into the future. The agreement keeps the Capitals, the AHL's Hershey Bears, and the Stingrays working together as a three-tier system that has consistently produced NHL talent and organizational depth. For Washington, this move is about far more than paperwork. It reinforces a development model that has played an important role in building competitive teams for more than a decade.

A Proven Development Pipeline

The Capitals first partnered with the Stingrays from 2004-12 before renewing the relationship in 2014. Since then, South Carolina has become a vital stop for young prospects making the jump from junior hockey or college to professional hockey. While elite prospects often begin their professional careers with Hershey, many players benefit from significant minutes in South Carolina before earning promotions to the Bears and eventually Washington. That development ladder allows prospects to:

- Adjust to the professional schedule.
- Gain valuable special teams experience.
- Play in key late-game situations.
- Develop physically while receiving consistent coaching.

Instead of sitting in the press box, prospects receive meaningful ice time that accelerates their growth.

Winning Culture Matters

One reason Washington continues to invest in South Carolina is simple: the Stingrays know how to win. Since joining forces with the Capitals, South Carolina has remained one of the ECHL's premier franchises. The organization has reached the playoffs consistently and has built a reputation for developing players while competing for championships. The Stingrays are also one of the most decorated franchises in ECHL history, winning three Kelly Cup championships and reaching the Kelly Cup Final six times. Winning environments matter for young players. Learning how to handle playoff pressure, road trips, and championship expectations helps prepare prospects for the demands of the NHL.

More Than Just Players

The partnership has also produced successful coaches.

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Current Capitals head coach Spencer Carbery spent three seasons as head coach of the Stingrays from 2018-21, compiling an impressive record while establishing himself as one of hockey's brightest young coaching minds before moving behind the Hershey Bears bench and eventually earning the Washington job. Carbery's path perfectly illustrates why the affiliation is so valuable. South Carolina serves as a proving ground not only for players but also for coaches and hockey operations personnel. Benefits for Hershey The extension also strengthens the Hershey Bears. As the Capitals' AHL affiliate, Hershey frequently experiences roster movement throughout the season due to NHL recalls and injuries. Having a trusted ECHL partner allows the Bears to replenish their lineup quickly with players who already understand the organization's systems and expectations. That continuity has helped Hershey remain one of the American Hockey League's premier franchises while consistently competing for Calder Cup championships. Looking Ahead The Stingrays have already begun building their roster for the 2026-27 season by issuing qualifying offers and re-signing key contributors, providing a stable foundation for another competitive campaign. As Washington continues transitioning toward its next generation of talent, the Capitals will rely heavily on prospects developing through Hershey and South Carolina before reaching the NHL. The extension ensures that process remains uninterrupted. MSB Take This is one of those organizational moves that won't generate national headlines, but it could have a significant impact on the Capitals' future. Successful NHL franchises are built through strong development systems, and Washington has one of the league's best. Keeping South Carolina in the fold provides stability for prospects, coaches, and the entire organization while maintaining a winning culture from the ECHL all the way to the NHL. With the Capitals looking to remain contenders while developing their next wave of talent, extending the partnership with the Stingrays is another smart move by Brian MacLellan and the front office. It's a behind-the-scenes decision that should continue paying dividends for years to come. Open the original article, share it and leave a commentMSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk MSB: Capitals Swap Prospects with Sabres, Acquire Tyler Kopff in Exchange for Zac Funk By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The Washington Capitals made another depth move on Monday, continuing what has been an active offseason under general manager Chris Patrick. Washington acquired forward Tyler Kopff from the Buffalo Sabres in exchange for forward Zac Funk in what is best described as a hockey trade between two organizations swapping young prospects who may benefit from a change of scenery. This isn't a move that will grab national headlines, but it could have meaningful implications for the Hershey Bears and South Carolina Stingrays heading into the 2026-27 season. Both players are 23 years old, both have spent most of their professional careers in the AHL and ECHL, and both are still trying to establish themselves as legitimate NHL prospects. A Fresh Start for Tyler Kopff Washington is betting on upside. Kopff brings something the Capitals have prioritized throughout the organization over the last year: size, physicality, and versatility. At 6-foot-4 and 220 pounds, the Ridgewood, New Jersey native has the frame NHL teams covet....

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He plays a north-south game, finishes checks, protects the puck well along the boards, and has shown flashes of offensive ability despite limited professional production. Last season Kopff split time between: AHL Rochester Americans: 30 games, 1 goal, 4 assists, 5 points ECHL Jacksonville Icemen: 10 games, 2 goals, 4 assists, 6 points Overall, he owns: 36 career AHL games 1 goal 5 assists 6 points While those offensive numbers won't jump off the page, Washington likely values the traits that cannot be taught. Kopff skates well for a player his size, competes hard below the goal line and has the potential to become a dependable bottom-six professional forward. Strong NCAA Career at Brown Before turning pro, Kopff developed into one of the Ivy League's better forwards at Brown University. Over two seasons he produced: 62 NCAA games 15 goals 31 assists 46 points His sophomore campaign was particularly impressive. During the 2024-25 season he: Led Brown in assists (19) Led the Bears in shots (114) Finished second on the team in scoring with 28 points Earned First Team All-Ivy League Earned Third Team All-ECAC honors Those accomplishments convinced Buffalo to sign him to a two-year entry-level contract in March 2025. Zac Funk Heads to Buffalo The player leaving the Capitals organization is one familiar to Hershey Bears fans. Washington signed Zac Funk as an undrafted free agent in March 2024 after one of the greatest goal-scoring seasons in Canadian junior hockey. Before turning professional, Funk exploded with the Prince George Cougars (WHL). His final junior season included: 67 goals 56 assists 123 points He finished among the WHL's elite scorers and established himself as one of the top undrafted free agents available. Unfortunately, that offensive explosion has not yet translated to the professional level. Since joining Washington's system he has recorded: Hershey Bears (AHL) 25 games 2 goals 4 assists 6 points South Carolina Stingrays (ECHL) 34 games 12 goals 16 assists 28 points Funk has shown he can score in the ECHL, but earning consistent opportunities in Hershey proved difficult on one of the deepest AHL rosters in hockey. Why the Trade Makes Sense This trade feels like a classic change of scenery deal. For Buffalo: They acquire a proven junior goal scorer. Funk still possesses offensive upside. The Sabres hope a different development environment unlocks his scoring ability. For Washington: They gain a bigger, heavier forward. Kopff fits the organization's growing emphasis on size and responsible two-way play. He provides additional organizational depth for Hershey while bringing NHL-caliber physical tools. Neither player projects as an immediate NHL contributor, but both remain young enough that another year or two of development could significantly change their outlook. What It Means for Hershey The Bears have consistently developed NHL-ready depth under Todd Nelson, and Kopff could benefit from that environment. Washington's player development staff has turned numerous overlooked prospects into NHL contributors in recent seasons. If Kopff can improve his offensive confidence while continuing to use his size effectively, he could become an intriguing fourth-line NHL option down the road. Meanwhile, Buffalo offers Funk an opportunity to reset after spending much of his first professional seasons buried behind Washington's deep prospect pool. MSB Take This isn't a blockbuster, but these are the types of transactions successful organizations make....

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Washington traded from a position of organizational strength at wing to acquire a player whose physical profile better matches the identity Chris Patrick appears to be building. The Capitals have consistently added larger, harder-to-play-against forwards this offseason, and Kopff fits that blueprint. Funk deserved credit for his professionalism and production with South Carolina, but the path to NHL minutes in Washington appeared increasingly crowded. Buffalo may provide the fresh opportunity he needs. From Washington's perspective, the risk is minimal. If Kopff develops into an NHL depth forward, the Capitals will have quietly won another under-the-radar personnel move. If not, they essentially exchanged one organizational prospect for another with a different skill set. For now, expect Kopff to compete for a regular role with the Hershey Bears in 2026-27 while adding another big body to one of the NHL's strongest development systems. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

MSB Fight Club
MSB Fight Club: Dricus du Plessis Outclasses Kamaru Usman in UFC Oklahoma City Main Event
MSB Fight Club: Dricus du Plessis Outclasses Kamaru Usman in UFC Oklahoma City Main Event

The UFC made its return to Oklahoma City on Saturday night with a card that featured former champions, rising contenders, and several fighters looking to take the next step in their careers. By the end of the evening, it was former UFC middleweight champion Dricus du Plessis who delivered the biggest statement, defeating former welterweight champion Kamaru Usman by unanimous decision in a five-round main event that showcased his striking, pressure, and championship-level conditioning. The event also featured impressive performances from Christian Leroy Duncan, Chase Hooper, Fatima Kline, Tommy McMillen, and several other fighters who helped make the card one of the more entertaining UFC Fight Nights of the year. While there were not many championship implications across the entire event, several divisions saw contenders strengthen their cases for bigger opportunities.

Main Event
Dricus du Plessis def. Kamaru Usman Unanimous Decision (50-45, 49-46, 49-46)

The headline bout paired two former UFC champions from different weight classes. Du Plessis entered the contest looking to reestablish himself as the leading contender in the middleweight division, while Usman hoped to prove he could still compete against elite fighters after moving up from welterweight. From the opening round, du Plessis controlled the pace with constant forward pressure. He mixed together powerful jabs, straight rights, leg kicks, and body work that prevented Usman from establishing his wrestling or boxing rhythm. Every time Usman attempted to close the distance, du Plessis answered with combinations before circling away. The second round continued in much the same fashion. Du Plessis landed several clean right hands while using excellent footwork to keep the former champion guessing. Usman found success late in the round with a few combinations, but he struggled to string together sustained offense. Rounds three and four belonged almost entirely to du Plessis. He repeatedly backed Usman toward the fence, landed damaging knees from the clinch, and mixed in heavy body shots that visibly slowed his opponent. His cardio remained outstanding through 20 minutes, allowing him to keep a relentless pace. Usman showed the heart that made him one of the greatest welterweights in UFC history during the fifth round....

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He secured takedowns, landed several clean punches, and attempted to finish the fight strong. Although the final round was competitive, the earlier rounds had already created too much separation. The judges awarded du Plessis the unanimous decision, moving him back into the middleweight title picture. The performance demonstrated that his pressure-heavy style remains one of the most difficult challenges in the division. Co-Main Event Christian Leroy Duncan def. Jared Cannonier Unanimous Decision Christian Leroy Duncan continued his impressive rise through the middleweight rankings by defeating longtime contender Jared Cannonier. Cannonier entered the fight hoping his experience and knockout power would derail one of the UFC's fastest-rising prospects. Instead, Duncan delivered perhaps the most complete performance of his UFC career. Using superior movement and range management, Duncan consistently beat Cannonier to the punch throughout all three rounds. He mixed kicks to the legs and body with quick boxing combinations before moving out of danger. Cannonier had moments where he landed heavy shots, but Duncan refused to stand still long enough for the veteran to build momentum. His defensive awareness frustrated Cannonier for much of the fight. The victory extends Duncan's winning streak and puts him much closer to facing ranked middleweight contenders. Chase Hooper def. Mitch Ramirez First-Round Submission Chase Hooper once again reminded fans why he remains one of the UFC's most dangerous submission specialists. After using crisp striking to set up his grappling entries, Hooper secured a takedown midway through the opening round. From there, he quickly advanced position before locking in a submission that forced Ramirez to tap. Hooper's improved stand-up game has become increasingly noticeable over the last several fights. Rather than relying solely on grappling, he has developed enough striking to create opportunities for his world-class ground game. The win keeps the young lightweight moving toward the rankings. Fatima Kline def. Tabatha Ricci Unanimous Decision One of the night's most technically impressive performances belonged to Fatima Kline. Facing a veteran in Tabatha Ricci, Kline controlled the fight with speed, movement, and accurate combinations. She effectively defended takedown attempts while landing consistently from the outside. Ricci attempted to pressure forward throughout the contest, but Kline repeatedly countered with clean punches and kicks before circling away. The judges rewarded Kline's activity and accuracy with a unanimous decision victory. With each performance, Kline continues to establish herself as one of the brightest young prospects in the UFC's women's divisions. Tommy McMillen def. Alberto Montes Knockout The highlight-reel finish of the evening came courtesy of Tommy McMillen. Early in the fight, McMillen remained patient while measuring distance. Once Montes became more aggressive, McMillen timed a perfectly placed counter strike that ended the contest instantly. The knockout brought the Oklahoma City crowd to its feet and earned McMillen one of the UFC's Performance of the Night bonuses. The victory also represents the biggest win of his UFC career and should lead to tougher competition moving forward. Other Notable Results Several additional fighters made the most of their opportunities throughout the preliminary card. Felipe Franco earned a Performance of the Night bonus after an explosive finish that showcased his striking power....

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RJ Harris picked up an impressive victory with aggressive offense from the opening bell. Dione Barbosa also delivered an outstanding performance, earning a finish that demonstrated why she remains one of the division's emerging talents. The preliminary bouts featured multiple finishes, competitive decisions, and several entertaining exchanges that kept the crowd engaged from start to finish. Performance Bonuses The UFC recognized several standout performances following the event. Fight of the Night Dricus du Plessis vs. Kamaru Usman Performance of the Night Tommy McMillen Felipe Franco RJ Harris Dione Barbosa What the Results Mean Du Plessis appears to have firmly reentered the championship conversation at middleweight. His combination of pressure, durability, conditioning, and improving striking makes him a difficult matchup for anyone in the division. For Usman, the defeat will likely raise questions about his future. Although his toughness and championship experience remain evident, the former welterweight king now faces a difficult path back toward another title opportunity. Christian Leroy Duncan's victory may have been the second most significant result of the evening. By defeating an established veteran like Cannonier, Duncan positioned himself for a matchup against one of the division's top-ranked contenders. Meanwhile, Chase Hooper and Fatima Kline continued proving they belong among the UFC's brightest young talents, while Tommy McMillen created one of the most memorable moments of the night with his devastating knockout. MSB Fight Club Take This card may not have featured a championship fight, but it delivered exactly what fans want from a UFC Fight Night competitive matchups, rising stars, highlight-reel finishes, and a main event with meaningful title implications. Du Plessis looked every bit like a future title challenger. His striking has become more polished, his pace remains relentless, and his confidence continues to grow against elite competition. If this version of du Plessis steps into another championship fight, he will have an excellent chance to reclaim UFC gold. Several young fighters also made significant statements. Christian Leroy Duncan, Chase Hooper, Fatima Kline, and Tommy McMillen all left Oklahoma City with additional momentum and could become major names to watch over the next year. For UFC fans, Oklahoma City delivered an entertaining night from the opening preliminaries through the final horn. The card produced memorable finishes, quality technical performances, and a main event that reshaped the middleweight title picture while providing plenty of storylines heading into the UFC's next major event. Open the original article, share it and leave a commentUFC Fight Night Preview: Du Plessis vs. Usman Headlines Massive Middleweight Showdown UFC Fight Night Preview: Du Plessis vs. Usman Headlines Massive Middleweight Showdown MSB Fight Club | The UFC returns to Oklahoma City on Saturday night with one of the most intriguing Fight Night cards of 2026 as former UFC middleweight champion Dricus du Plessis meets former longtime welterweight champion Kamaru Usman in a five-round middleweight main event. The card marks the UFC's first trip to Oklahoma City in nearly a decade and could reshape the title picture at 185 pounds. For Du Plessis, the fight is about proving he belongs back in championship contention after losing the middleweight title. For Usman, it is an opportunity to become a legitimate threat in a second weight class after one of the greatest welterweight careers i...

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A victory could put either fighter one step away from another championship opportunity. Main Event Dricus du Plessis vs. Kamaru Usman Middleweight Five Rounds This matchup is fascinating because of the contrasting styles. Du Plessis thrives on relentless pressure, awkward striking combinations, physical strength, and surprising cardio. His unpredictable offense has frustrated nearly everyone he has faced. Usman, meanwhile, remains one of the greatest wrestlers and cage-control specialists in UFC history. Even late in his career, his jab, clinch work, and championship experience make him dangerous against anyone. The biggest question is whether Usman's wrestling can slow Du Plessis enough to win rounds. If the fight stays standing for extended stretches, Du Plessis appears to have the edge in power and activity. MSB Prediction: Dricus du Plessis by fourth-round TKO. Co-Main Event Jared Cannonier vs. Christian Leroy Duncan Middleweight Veteran Jared Cannonier continues trying to remain relevant in one of the UFC's deepest divisions while the explosive Christian Leroy Duncan looks to score the biggest victory of his career. Cannonier still possesses elite knockout power, but Duncan's speed and athleticism could create problems if he avoids prolonged exchanges. MSB Prediction: Christian Leroy Duncan by unanimous decision. Featured Fight Chase Hooper vs. Mitch Ramirez Lightweight Chase Hooper continues developing into one of the UFC's most entertaining young submission specialists. Ramirez brings toughness and aggressive striking, but Hooper's grappling advantage is significant. MSB Prediction: Chase Hooper by second-round submission. Fighters to Watch Tabatha Ricci continues climbing the strawweight rankings with another opportunity to showcase her grappling. Several young prospects on the preliminary card will be looking to earn performance bonuses and establish themselves in the UFC. Keys to the Main Event For Du Plessis Keep the fight standing. Push a high pace. Force Usman to fight off his back foot. For Usman Mix wrestling with clinch control. Slow the pace. Win the championship rounds with pressure and experience. Final Predictions Du Plessis def. Usman TKO (Round 4) Christian Leroy Duncan def. Jared Cannonier Decision Chase Hooper def. Mitch Ramirez Submission (Round 2) Tabatha Ricci Decision victory Final Thoughts While this is only a Fight Night card, it has the feel of a pay-per-view main event. Two former champions are fighting with title implications on the line, several rising contenders have opportunities to make statements, and fans should expect an entertaining night of mixed martial arts. From an MSB Fight Club perspective, all eyes will be on whether Kamaru Usman can make one last championship run or whether Dricus du Plessis reasserts himself as one of the elite middleweights in the world. Prelims: 5:00 p.m. ET Main Card: 8:00 p.m. ET Streaming: Paramount+ Open the original article, share it and leave a comment John's Hopkins Blue Jays Johns Hopkins Trio Ezumba, Saussy, and Setton Receive Academic All-America Honors Johns Hopkins Trio Earns CSC Academic All-America Honors, Continuing Blue Jays Tradition of Excellence By Maryland Sports Blog BALTIMORE Academic excellence continues to be a defining characteristic of Johns Hopkins athletics.

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Three standout Blue Jays Erika Ezumba, Mackenzie Setton, and Jorge Gana have earned College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-America honors, recognizing their remarkable achievements in both the classroom and athletic competition during the 2025-26 academic year. The awards place them among the nation's elite student-athletes and further strengthen Johns Hopkins' reputation as one of the country's premier academic and athletic institutions. The recognition comes during another outstanding year for Hopkins athletics, with Blue Jay teams competing for national championships while maintaining some of the highest academic standards in NCAA Division III. Jorge Gana Adds Another Historic Honor Recent graduate Jorge Gana was named a CSC Academic All-America Second Team selection in the men's at-large category after an exceptional fencing career. The neuroscience major was one of the nation's most accomplished fencers both academically and competitively. Gana helped Johns Hopkins remain among the top fencing programs in the nation while compiling an outstanding academic record. His Academic All-America selection adds to an already impressive collection of honors earned throughout his Blue Jays career. Johns Hopkins has become synonymous with academic success, and Gana's recognition continues that tradition. Erika Ezumba Finishes Career Among Hopkins' Best Senior thrower Erika Ezumba capped one of the greatest careers in Johns Hopkins women's track and field history by earning CSC Academic All-America honors. Ezumba enjoyed a spectacular 2026 season that included multiple NCAA Division III All-America performances. During the NCAA Indoor Championships, she finished runner-up in the weight throw before earning another All-America honor in the shot put after setting a new Johns Hopkins school record with a throw of 13.73 meters. She became the first athlete in program history to earn All-America honors in the indoor shot put. Throughout her career, Ezumba consistently balanced elite performances in national competition with excellence in the classroom, making her one of the premier scholar-athletes in Division III track and field. Mackenzie Setton Continues Award-Winning Career Distance standout Mackenzie Setton also earned CSC Academic All-America recognition following another dominant season. Setton concluded her indoor campaign by capturing All-America honors in the mile, finishing fourth nationally while posting one of the fastest times in Johns Hopkins history. Her performance helped lead the Blue Jays to a fifth-place team finish at the NCAA Division III Indoor Championships, one of the best national finishes in program history. Known for her consistency in championship races, Setton has established herself as one of the most accomplished middle-distance runners ever to compete for Johns Hopkins. Excellence Beyond Competition The CSC Academic All-America program honors student-athletes who demonstrate elite athletic achievement while maintaining exceptional academic performance. Nominees must meet strict GPA requirements and distinguish themselves nationally within their respective sports. For Johns Hopkins, the recognition is nothing new. The university annually ranks among the national leaders in Academic All-America selections across all NCAA divisions, reflecting its commitment to developing complete student-athletes who excel in competition, the classroom, and the community.

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Maryland Sports Blog Take Johns Hopkins has built one of the strongest academic-athletic cultures in the country, and the accomplishments of Erika Ezumba, Mackenzie Setton, and Jorge Gana perfectly represent that standard. Winning conference championships and earning All-America honors is impressive. Doing so while excelling academically at one of the nation's most demanding universities is even more remarkable. These three Blue Jays have left a lasting legacy, proving once again that Johns Hopkins continues to produce some of the nation's finest scholar-athletes. Sources Johns Hopkins Athletics College Sports Communicators (CSC) AcademicAllAmerica.com : Official release Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Johns Hopkins Men's Tennis Places Eleven on ITA Scholar-Athlete Team LSource: Official release Johns Hopkins Men's Tennis Excels in the Classroom, Earns ITA All-Academic Team Honor By Maryland Sports Blog BALTIMORE The success of the Johns Hopkins men's tennis program extended far beyond the court during the 2025-26 academic year. The Blue Jays were once again recognized by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) as an ITA All-Academic Team, while 14 Johns Hopkins student-athletes earned individual ITA Scholar-Athlete honors for their outstanding work in the classroom. The recognition highlights one of the nation's premier Division III programs, which continues to combine championship-level tennis with elite academic achievement. To qualify for ITA Scholar-Athlete recognition, student-athletes must post at least a 3.50 grade-point average during the academic year. Teams must finish with a cumulative 3.20 GPA or higher to receive ITA All-Academic Team honors. Johns Hopkins once again exceeded those standards while continuing its long tradition of academic excellence. Fourteen Blue Jays Earn ITA Scholar-Athlete Honors The following Johns Hopkins men's tennis players received 2026 ITA Scholar-Athlete recognition: Owen Akers Daniel Ardila Marco Azar Dylan Blenkiron Mukundh Boopathi Pranav Gadiraju Allen Gong Joshua Kim Jason Li Hanyu Liu Chakor Rajendra Zahari Stoimenov Brian Yi Andy Zhu Several members of the group are repeat honorees, demonstrating a sustained commitment to excellence both on the court and in the classroom. Graduate student Daniel Ardila became one of the program's select four-time ITA Scholar-Athletes, while graduate student Hanyu Liu also collected his fourth career ITA academic honor. Veterans Marco Azar, Pranav Gadiraju, and Allen Gong each earned their third career selection, further illustrating the academic culture that has become synonymous with Johns Hopkins men's tennis. A Program Built on Excellence Johns Hopkins has long been recognized as one of the nation's premier academic institutions, and its athletic department continues to reflect that reputation. The Blue Jays have now produced 176 ITA Scholar-Athletes since 2007 and have recorded at least eight individual honorees every year since 2012. The program also extended its streak of earning ITA All-Academic Team honors to 15 consecutive seasons, a remarkable accomplishment that places it among the country's elite collegiate tennis programs. While academics remain a cornerstone of the program, Hopkins also enjoyed another successful season on the court, competing against one of the strongest Division III schedules in the nation while continuing to develop future leaders in engineering, computer science, neuroscience, economics, and other demanding fields....

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Maryland Sports Blog Take Winning matches is important, but the lasting impact of a college career is measured by what student-athletes accomplish after graduation. Johns Hopkins continues to prove that elite academics and elite athletics can coexist. Producing 14 ITA Scholar-Athletes while extending a 15-year All-Academic Team streak is a testament to the culture established by the Blue Jays coaching staff and the commitment shown by every player in the program. At Maryland Sports Blog, we celebrate championships, but we also recognize achievements that prepare student-athletes for success long after their playing careers end. Johns Hopkins men's tennis continues to set that standard. Sources Johns Hopkins Athletics Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) Academic Awards Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Top Maryland Sports News

Capitals Announce 2026-27 Regular Season Schedule: Season Opens on the Road Against Carolina, Home Opener vs. Penguins

Washington Capitals 2026-27 NHL Regular Season Schedule Released: Road Opener at Carolina Hurricanes, Home Opener Against Pittsburgh Penguins

ARLINGTON, Va. The Washington Capitals have officially announced their 2026-27 NHL regular season schedule, opening the campaign on the road against the defending Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes. The 82-game schedule includes multiple lengthy homestands, significant road trips, and several high-profile matchups at Capital One Arena in downtown Washington, D.C. The National Hockey League released the full schedule on July 16, 2026. The Washington Capitals begin with back-to-back road games: Friday, October 2 at 7 p.m. ET versus the Carolina Hurricanes, followed by Saturday, October 3 at 7 p.m. against the Tampa Bay Lightning. The home opener is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7 at 7:30 p.m. as the Capitals host their Metropolitan Division rivals, the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Washington Capitals 2026-27 Schedule Highlights

Homestands: The Capitals feature five homestands of at least three games, including two five-game stretches (October 14-28 and February 14-23).

Road Trips: Five stretches of at least three consecutive road games, highlighted by a season-long six-game trip from December 3-15.

Back-to-Backs: Fourteen sets of back-to-back games test the Capitals' depth throughout the season.

Weekend Home Games: Nineteen of Washington's 42 home games are scheduled on weekends (five Fridays, nine Saturdays, five Sundays), giving fans ample opportunities to watch live hockey at Capital One Arena.

Special Dates: The schedule includes home games before and after Thanksgiving (November 25 vs. Philadelphia Flyers, November 27 vs. Florida Panthers), the day after Christmas (December 26 vs. Columbus Blue Jackets), and on Super Bowl Sunday (February 14 vs. Utah Mammoth at 1 p.m.).

All-Star Break: The Capitals pause for a nine-day All-Star break from February 4-12, which overlaps with the 2027 NHL All-Star Weekend at UBS Arena.

The Washington Capitals recorded a 25-11-5 home record last season, ranking sixth in the NHL. While television broadcast details will be announced at a later date, all games will air on the Capitals Radio Network (106.7 The Fan) and the team's digital platforms.

Top Washington Capitals Home Games in 2026-27

October 7: Home opener vs.

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Pittsburgh Penguins (Sidney Crosby) October 9: New York Rangers visit Capital One Arena
October 17: New Jersey Devils (Jack Hughes) come to town October 24: Buffalo Sabres November
1: Minnesota Wild face the Capitals in a post-Halloween matchup December 28: Edmonton Oilers
(Connor McDavid) head to D.C. January 14: Carolina Hurricanes return for a clash with
Washington January 16: Colorado Avalanche led by Nathan MacKinnon February 19: San Jose Sharks
(Macklin Celebrini) March 30: Chicago Blackhawks (Connor Bedard) April 4: Final home game of
the regular season vs. Pittsburgh Penguins Complete 2026-27 Washington Capitals Regular Season
Schedule DayDateVisitorHomeTime (ET)Fri.10/2/2026WashingtonCarolina7:00
PMSat.10/3/2026WashingtonTampa Bay7:00 PMWed.10/7/2026PittsburghWashington7:30
PMFri.10/9/2026N.Y. RangersWashington7:00 PMSun.10/11/2026SeattleWashington5:00
PMTue.10/13/2026WashingtonCarolina6:45 PMWed.10/14/2026MontrealWashington7:30
PMSat.10/17/2026New JerseyWashington1:00 PMTue.10/20/2026Los AngelesWashington7:00
PMSat.10/24/2026BuffaloWashington7:00 PMWed.10/28/2026PhiladelphiaWashington7:30
PMThu.10/29/2026WashingtonNashville8:00 PMSun.11/1/2026MinnesotaWashington3:30
PMTue.11/3/2026DallasWashington7:00 PMSat.11/7/2026FloridaWashington12:30
PMTue.11/10/2026WashingtonOttawa7:00 PMThu.11/12/2026WashingtonNew Jersey7:00
PMSat.11/14/2026New JerseyWashington7:00 PMTue.11/17/2026WashingtonTampa Bay7:00
PMThu.11/19/2026BuffaloWashington7:00 PMSat.11/21/2026WashingtonBoston7:00
PMWed.11/25/2026PhiladelphiaWashington7:00 PMFri.11/27/2026FloridaWashington3:00
PMSat.11/28/2026WashingtonSt. Louis7:00 PMTue.12/1/2026VancouverWashington7:00
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PMMon.12/21/2026WashingtonToronto1:00 PMSat.12/26/2026ColumbusWashington7:00
PMMon.12/28/2026EdmontonWashington7:00 PMWed.12/30/2026WashingtonN.Y. Islanders4:00
PMThu.12/31/2026WashingtonColumbus2:00 PMSat.1/2/2027OttawaWashington7:00
PMMon.1/4/2027TorontoWashington7:30 PMWed.1/6/2027WashingtonLos Angeles10:00
PMFri.1/8/2027WashingtonSan Jose10:00 PMSun.1/10/2027WashingtonAnaheim8:00
PMTue.1/12/2027VegasWashington7:00 PMThu.1/14/2027CarolinaWashington7:00
PMSat.1/16/2027ColoradoWashington7:00 PMMon.1/18/2027WashingtonPittsburgh4:00
PMTue.1/19/2027MontrealWashington7:00 PMFri.1/22/2027N.Y. IslandersWashington7:00
PMSun.1/24/2027WashingtonNew Jersey7:00 PMFri.1/29/2027WashingtonUtah9:00
PMSat.1/30/2027WashingtonVegas10:00 PMTue.2/2/2027WinnipegWashington6:00
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PMSun.2/14/2027UtahWashington1:00 PMTue.2/16/2027AnaheimWashington7:00 PMFri.2/19/2027San
JoseWashington7:00 PMSun.2/21/2027NashvilleWashington6:00 PMTue.2/23/2027N.Y.
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Rangers 7:00 PM Tue. 3/23/2027 Detroit Washington 7:00 PM Wed. 3/24/2027 Washington Detroit 7:30 PM Fri. 3/26/2027 Boston Washington 7:00 PM Sun. 3/28/2027 Washington Toronto 6:00 PM Tue. 3/30/2027 Chicago Washington 7:00 PM Thu. 4/1/2027 Washington Philadelphia 7:00 PM Sat. 4/3/2027 Columbus Washington 5:00 PM Sun. 4/4/2027 Pittsburgh Washington 7:00 PM Tue. 4/6/2027 Washington Columbus 7:00 PM Thu. 4/8/2027 Washington Ottawa 7:00 PM Sat. 4/10/2027 Washington Philadelphia 12:00 PM Washington Capitals full and partial season ticket memberships are available now. Single-game ticket information will be announced soon. Fans can download the full schedule or sync it to their calendars through the official Capitals website. The 2026-27 NHL schedule sets the stage for a highly competitive Metropolitan Division race. Stay connected with Maryland Sports Blog for more Washington Capitals news, game coverage, and NHL updates as the new season approaches. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Salisbury Seagulls Salisbury University to Celebrate 40th Anniversary of 1986 Football Team Salisbury University announced plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of its 1986 football team, a landmark season in the university's athletic history. The commemoration will honor the players and staff who contributed to a memorable year of football at Salisbury. Honoring a Historic Team The 1986 Salisbury football team remains a celebrated chapter in the university's sports history. This anniversary event aims to bring together former players, coaches, and university supporters to reflect on the team's achievements and lasting legacy. The university encourages alumni and fans to participate in the activities planned around the anniversary to celebrate the dedication and teamwork demonstrated by the 1986 squad. Event Details and Participation While specific details of the anniversary celebration are forthcoming, Salisbury University has expressed enthusiasm in organizing a memorable reunion. The event is expected to include opportunities for fans to engage with past players and relive key moments from the 1986 football season. Fans and alumni are advised to keep an eye on official Salisbury athletic communications for updates on dates, location, and special events related to the anniversary. Legacy of the 1986 Salisbury Football Team The 1986 football season remains a point of pride for Salisbury University. The team's performance that year contributed to the growth and reputation of the school's athletics program. The anniversary serves as a reminder of the hard work, skill, and commitment of the players and coaches who laid foundations for future Salisbury football success. Source: Official release Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Aberdeen Ironbirds Towson Catcher Brian Heckelman Continues Professional Dream with Aberdeen Ironbirds Towson Catcher Brian Heckelman Continues Professional Dream with Aberdeen Ironbirds By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog Towson catcher Brian Heckelman will remain in Maryland as he begins the next chapter of his baseball career. The former Tigers standout has signed with the Aberdeen Ironbirds of the MLB Draft League, giving him an outstanding opportunity to continue developing while playing in front of Major League Baseball scouts throughout the summer. The signing is a well-earned reward for one of Towson's most consistent players over the past several seasons....

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Heckelman established himself as one of the Colonial Athletic Association's top catchers through his offensive production, defensive leadership, and ability to handle a pitching staff. His performance during the 2026 season earned him Second Team All-CAA honors, cementing his place among the conference's best players. Standing 6-foot and 200 pounds, the right-handed hitting catcher brings a combination of toughness, baseball IQ, and offensive upside to Aberdeen. Born on April 6, 2004, Heckelman has steadily improved throughout his collegiate career and now receives an opportunity to prove himself against many of the nation's top professional prospects. A Career Built on Improvement Heckelman's development at Towson did not happen overnight. After earning playing time early in his career, he steadily became one of the Tigers' most dependable run producers. During the 2024 season, Heckelman hit .239 while collecting 14 doubles, five home runs, 29 RBIs, and 27 runs scored. His 14 doubles ranked second on the team, while his eight multi-RBI games demonstrated his ability to deliver in clutch situations. One of the biggest games of his career came against Mount St. Mary's when he went 3-for-4 with two home runs, a double, six RBIs, and four runs scored, one of the best individual offensive performances by a Tiger that season. Rather than plateauing, Heckelman continued to improve. His hard work culminated in All-CAA recognition during the 2026 season as he developed into one of the conference's premier catchers. His leadership behind the plate became just as valuable as his production in the batter's box. Already Making an Impact in Aberdeen Heckelman has not needed much time to contribute with the IronBirds. Early in the MLB Draft League season, he recorded his first home run with Aberdeen and has delivered several key hits. On June 11, he drove in three runs with a clutch double during an IronBirds victory over State College. Later in the summer, he produced another big moment with a go-ahead RBI single in the seventh inning, continuing to demonstrate his ability to perform under pressure. Although his overall numbers continue to develop, the IronBirds have shown confidence in Heckelman by giving him regular opportunities behind the plate. Why the MLB Draft League Matters The MLB Draft League has become one of the premier showcase leagues in the country. Created by Major League Baseball, the league provides draft-eligible players and recent college graduates an opportunity to perform in front of scouts from every Major League organization. Over the past two seasons alone, 38 players were selected in the MLB Draft after competing in the league each year, while more than 230 players have been drafted or signed professionally since the league began in 2021. Every game serves as another audition for players hoping to earn affiliated professional contracts. Staying Close to Home For Maryland baseball fans, Heckelman's signing provides another local player to follow. The IronBirds now compete in the MLB Draft League after transitioning from their longtime role as the Baltimore Orioles' High-A affiliate. Ripken Stadium remains one of the state's premier baseball venues and has hosted future Major League stars such as Adley Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, Colton Cowser, and Manny Machado during earlier stages of their careers. Towson supporters will have an opportunity to watch one of the program's best recent players continue his development just a short drive from campus....

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Maryland Sports Blog Analysis Brian Heckelman earned this opportunity. Catchers who combine leadership, defensive reliability, and offensive production are always valuable in professional baseball. Heckelman has shown steady improvement throughout his collegiate career, and earning All-CAA honors demonstrated that he is capable of competing against high-level talent. If he continues producing timely hits while handling a pitching staff effectively, there is every reason to believe an affiliated Major League organization could offer him a professional contract. Remaining in Maryland with the Aberdeen IronBirds gives Heckelman an ideal stage to continue chasing that dream while representing Towson baseball at the professional level. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment

Towson Tigers Volleyball Unveils Challenging 2026 Schedule with Eyes on Another CAA Championship

The road to another Coastal Athletic Association title is officially set. Towson University head coach Don Metil and the Tigers have announced their 2026 volleyball schedule, a slate that features strong non-conference competition, 12 home matches inside SECU Arena, regional rivalries, and another demanding CAA schedule as Towson looks to build on its championship tradition. Towson has become one of the premier volleyball programs in the CAA under Metil, winning four consecutive conference championships and regularly earning NCAA Tournament berths. The 2026 schedule reflects that championship mindset, with early tests designed to prepare the Tigers for another postseason run. Tough Non-Conference Tests Await

The Tigers open the season at the Mizzou Invitational in Columbia, Missouri, where they'll face: Idaho (Aug. 28) Missouri (Aug. 28) Western Illinois (Aug. 29) Missouri provides an immediate measuring stick against an SEC opponent, while Idaho and Western Illinois should offer quality competition before Towson returns home. September also includes several intriguing regional matchups: at Loyola Maryland vs. Saint Peter's at Morgan State Those contests continue Towson's tradition of playing strong Mid-Atlantic opponents before conference play begins. Tiger Invitational Headlines Home Schedule One of the highlights of the early season comes with the annual Tiger Invitational at SECU Arena. Towson welcomes: Arkansas Robert Morris Howard Hosting an SEC program in Arkansas gives the Tigers another opportunity to test themselves against Power Four-level competition while playing in front of the home crowd. CAA Play Begins in September Conference action starts with a home series against Northeastern before Towson hits the road to face perennial contender College of Charleston. Other conference opponents include: William & Mary Campbell Hampton North Carolina A&T Delaware Monmouth Stony Brook Hofstra Elon UNC Wilmington The balanced conference schedule once again figures to be one of the nation's toughest outside the Power Four conferences.

Regional Rivalries Continue

Away from conference action, Towson also renews local rivalries with: Loyola Maryland Morgan State Coppin State Those matches continue to showcase Maryland collegiate volleyball while providing fans with several exciting in-state contests.

Experienced Leadership Returns

Towson enters 2026 with expectations of remaining among the CAA favorites. Metil has built one of the conference's most consistent programs through...

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The Tigers have become annual NCAA Tournament contenders while maintaining one of the best home-court advantages in the conference. Replacing departed seniors will be important, but the program's winning culture gives Towson confidence entering another championship chase. Key Dates August 28-29 Mizzou Invitational September 4-6 Loyola Maryland Saint Peter's Morgan State September 11-13 Tiger Invitational Arkansas Robert Morris Howard September 18 CAA opener vs. Northeastern Late September-November Full CAA schedule leading into the conference tournament. MSB Take Towson once again assembled the type of schedule that should prepare it for meaningful volleyball in November. Playing Missouri and Arkansas early will expose the Tigers to elite competition, while regional rivals and a deep CAA slate ensure there are very few nights off. If Towson can navigate its challenging non-conference schedule and continue its dominance inside SECU Arena, another CAA championship and NCAA Tournament appearance are realistic goals. The Tigers have established themselves as Maryland's flagship Division I volleyball program, and the 2026 schedule gives them every opportunity to prove it once again.

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Maryland Terrapins Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft

Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog

The University of Maryland baseball program celebrated a milestone on the second day of the 2026 MLB Draft as two of its top performers officially began the next chapter of their baseball careers. Right-handed pitcher Lance Williams was selected by the Chicago Cubs in the eighth round (247th overall), while infielder Brayden Martin was taken by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 11th round (342nd overall). The pair became the latest Terrapins to join the professional ranks following standout collegiate careers in College Park. While Maryland endured an up-and-down 2026 season, finishing 24-30 overall and 9-21 in Big Ten play, Williams and Martin consistently stood out as leaders on and off the field. Their selections continue the Terps' growing reputation as one of the Big Ten's premier producers of professional baseball talent.

Lance Williams: Electric Arm Headed to the Cubs

Williams arrived at Maryland after beginning his collegiate career at East Carolina and quickly established himself as one of the Terps' top weekend starters. The hard-throwing right-hander finished the 2026 season with: 57.0 innings pitched 69 strikeouts 10.9 strikeouts per nine innings

Consistently worked in the mid-90s with a swing-and-miss fastball Showed the ability to overpower hitters despite pitching in one of college baseball's toughest conferences. Although the final ERA did not fully reflect his talent, professional scouts were intrigued by Williams' raw stuff, athleticism, and upside. His fastball-slider combination generated plenty of swings and misses throughout the season, making him one of Maryland's most intriguing draft prospects. The Cubs have built one of baseball's strongest player-development systems over the past several seasons, making Williams an intriguing fit. Chicago has consistently helped pitchers improve command while maximizing velocity and pitch design, something that could unlock another level in Williams' game. At 247th overall, the Cubs may have landed one of Day Two's better pitching values....

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Brayden Martin: One of Maryland's Best Table Setters Few players embodied consistency during their Maryland careers like Brayden Martin. The versatile infielder became one of the most disciplined hitters in Terrapins history, finishing his collegiate career with: .314 career batting average .455 career on-base percentage Program-record 145 career walks Excellent strike-zone awareness Outstanding defensive versatility High baseball IQ and leadership qualities. Martin's ability to reach base made him one of the Big Ten's toughest outs. His mature approach at the plate earned him an invitation to the prestigious MLB Draft Combine before the draft, further boosting his professional stock. The Blue Jays have long valued hitters with elite plate discipline and defensive versatility, making Martin an ideal organizational fit. Toronto's development system has produced numerous infielders capable of playing multiple positions, and Martin projects as another player who could climb the minor league ladder because of his complete skill set rather than overwhelming power. Continuing Maryland's MLB Pipeline Maryland has quietly become one of the Big Ten's strongest producers of professional baseball talent under head coach Matt Swope's program, following years of success built under former coach Rob Vaughn. Recent Terps drafted into professional baseball include players who have reached every level of the minor leagues, and Williams and Martin now add their names to that growing list. Having two players selected in the same draft is another reminder that Maryland continues to attract and develop high-level talent capable of competing at the professional level. Different Paths, Same Dream Williams and Martin couldn't be more different as players. Williams overpowers hitters with velocity and strikeout stuff. Martin wins with discipline, consistency, and baseball instincts. Yet both earned their opportunity the same way through years of development, hard work, and production in one of college baseball's toughest conferences. Now their professional journeys begin. Williams will attempt to climb the Cubs' pitching pipeline, while Martin begins his career in one of baseball's most respected player-development organizations with the Blue Jays. For Maryland baseball, their selections represent more than individual accomplishments. They reinforce that the Terrapins remain a destination for players with Major League aspirations and continue to produce talent capable of reaching the next level. With two more Terps entering professional baseball, the future remains bright for the program in College Park. Open the original article, share it and leave a comment Enjoyed This Issue? Get MSB Weekly Magazine delivered every Sunday evening with the complete Maryland sports recap, Brian's Take and the upcoming-week preview. Email addressSubscribe Free Free weekly delivery. No spam. Unsubscribe at any time. Sponsor space availableAdvertise with Maryland Sports BlogAdvertise with MSBSubscribe to MSB Weekly

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CAPITALS ANNOUNCE 2026-27 REGULAR SEASON

TOP MARYLAND SPORTS NEWS

Capitals Announce 2026-27 Regular Season Schedule: Season Opens on the Road Against Carolina, Home Opener vs. Penguins

Washington Capitals 2026-27 NHL Regular Season Schedule Released: Road Opener at Carolina Hurricanes, Home Opener Against Pittsburgh Penguins ARLINGTON, Va. The Washington Capitals have officially announced their 2026-27 NHL regular season schedule, opening the campaign on the road against the defending Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes. The 82-game schedule includes multiple lengthy homestands, significant road trips, and several high-profile matchups at Capital One Arena in downtown Washington, D.C. The National Hockey League released the full schedule on July 16, 2026. The Washington Capitals begin with back-to-back road games: Friday, October 2 at 7 p.m. ET versus the Carolina Hurricanes, followed by Saturday, October 3 at 7 p.m. against the Tampa Bay Lightning. The home opener is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7 at 7:30 p.m. as the Capitals host their Metropolitan Division rivals, the Pittsburgh Penguins. Washington Capitals 2026-27 Schedule Highlights Homestands: The Capitals feature five homestands of at least three games, including two five-game stretches (October 14-28 and February 14-23). Road Trips: Five stretches of at least three consecutive road games, highlighted by a season-long six-game trip from December 3-15. Back-to-Backs: Fourteen sets of back-to-back games test the Capitals' depth throughout the season. Weekend Home Games: Nineteen of Washington's 42 home games are scheduled on weekends (five Fridays, nine Saturdays, five Sundays), giving fans ample opportunities to watch live hockey at Capital One Arena. Special Dates: The schedule includes home games before and after Thanksgiving (November 25 vs. Philadelphia Flyers, November 27 vs. Florida Panthers), the day after Christmas (December 26 vs. Columbus Blue Jackets), and on Super Bowl Sunday (February 14 vs. Utah Mammoth at 1 p.m.). All-Star Break: The Capitals pause for a nine-day All-Star break from February 4-12, which overlaps with the 2027 NHL All-Star Weekend at UBS Arena. The Washington Capitals recorded a 25-11-5 home record last season, ranking sixth in the NHL. While television broadcast details will be announced at a later date, all games will air on the Capitals Radio Network (106.7 The Fan) and the team's digital platforms. Top Washington Capitals Home Games in 2026-27 October 7: Home opener vs. Pittsburgh Penguins (Sidney Crosby) October 9: New York Rangers visit Capital One Arena October 17: New Jersey Devils (Jack Hughes) come to town October 24: Buffalo Sabres November 1: Minnesota Wild face the Capitals in a post-Halloween matchup December 28: Edmonton Oilers (Connor McDavid) head to D.C. January 14: Carolina Hurricanes return for a clash with Washington January 16: Colorado Avalanche led by Nathan MacKinnon February 19: San Jose Sharks (Macklin Celebrini) March 30: Chicago Blackhawks (Connor Bedard) April 4: Final home game of the regular season vs. Pittsburgh Penguins Complete 2026-27 Washington Capitals Regular Season Schedule DayDateVisitorHomeTime (ET)Fri.10/2/2026WashingtonCarolina7:00 PMSat.10/3/2026WashingtonTampa Bay7:00 PMWed.10/7/2026PittsburghWashington7:30 PMFri.10/9/2026N.Y.

CAPITALS ANNOUNCE 2026-27 REGULAR SEASON

Rangers Washington 7:00 PM Sun. 10/11/2026 Seattle Washington 5:00
PM Tue. 10/13/2026 Washington Carolina 6:45 PM Wed. 10/14/2026 Montreal Washington 7:30
PM Sat. 10/17/2026 New Jersey Washington 1:00 PM Tue. 10/20/2026 Los Angeles Washington 7:00
PM Sat. 10/24/2026 Buffalo Washington 7:00 PM Wed. 10/28/2026 Philadelphia Washington 7:30
PM Thu. 10/29/2026 Washington Nashville 8:00 PM Sun. 11/1/2026 Minnesota Washington 3:30
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PM Wed. 11/25/2026 Philadelphia Washington 7:00 PM Fri. 11/27/2026 Florida Washington 3:00
PM Sat. 11/28/2026 Washington St. Louis 7:00 PM Tue. 12/1/2026 Vancouver Washington 7:00
PM Thu. 12/3/2026 Washington Edmonton 8:00 PM Sat. 12/5/2026 Washington Calgary 3:30
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SALISBURY SEAGULLS

Salisbury University to Celebrate 40th Anniversary of 1986 Football Team

Salisbury University announced plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of its 1986 football team, a landmark season in the university's athletic history. The commemoration will honor the players and staff who contributed to a memorable year of football at Salisbury. Honoring a Historic Team The 1986 Salisbury football team remains a celebrated chapter in the university's sports history. This anniversary event aims to bring together former players, coaches, and university supporters to reflect on the team's achievements and lasting legacy. The university encourages alumni and fans to participate in the activities planned around the anniversary to celebrate the dedication and teamwork demonstrated by the 1986 squad. Event Details and Participation While specific details of the anniversary celebration are forthcoming, Salisbury University has expressed enthusiasm in organizing a memorable reunion. The event is expected to include opportunities for fans to engage with past players and relive key moments from the 1986 football season. Fans and alumni are advised to keep an eye on official Salisbury athletic communications for updates on dates, location, and special events related to the anniversary. Legacy of the 1986 Salisbury Football Team The 1986 football season remains a point of pride for Salisbury University. The team's performance that year contributed to the growth and reputation of the school's athletics program. The anniversary serves as a reminder of the hard work, skill, and commitment of the players and coaches who laid foundations for future Salisbury football success. Source: Official release

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TOWSON CATCHER BRIAN HECKELMAN CONTINUES

ABERDEEN IRONBIRDS

Towson Catcher Brian Heckelman Continues Professional Dream with Aberdeen IronBirds

Towson Catcher Brian Heckelman Continues Professional Dream with Aberdeen IronBirds By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog Towson catcher Brian Heckelman will remain in Maryland as he begins the next chapter of his baseball career. The former Tigers standout has signed with the Aberdeen IronBirds of the MLB Draft League, giving him an outstanding opportunity to continue developing while playing in front of Major League Baseball scouts throughout the summer. The signing is a well-earned reward for one of Towson's most consistent players over the past several seasons. Heckelman established himself as one of the Colonial Athletic Association's top catchers through his offensive production, defensive leadership, and ability to handle a pitching staff. His performance during the 2026 season earned him Second Team All-CAA honors, cementing his place among the conference's best players. Standing 6-foot and 200 pounds, the right-handed hitting catcher brings a combination of toughness, baseball IQ, and offensive upside to Aberdeen. Born on April 6, 2004, Heckelman has steadily improved throughout his collegiate career and now receives an opportunity to prove himself against many of the nation's top professional prospects. A Career Built on Improvement Heckelman's development at Towson did not happen overnight. After earning playing time early in his career, he steadily became one of the Tigers' most dependable run producers. During the 2024 season, Heckelman hit .239 while collecting 14 doubles, five home runs, 29 RBIs, and 27 runs scored. His 14 doubles ranked second on the team, while his eight multi-RBI games demonstrated his ability to deliver in clutch situations. One of the biggest games of his career came against Mount St. Mary's when he went 3-for-4 with two home runs, a double, six RBIs, and four runs scored, one of the best individual offensive performances by a Tiger that season. Rather than plateauing, Heckelman continued to improve. His hard work culminated in All-CAA recognition during the 2026 season as he developed into one of the conference's premier catchers. His leadership behind the plate became just as valuable as his production in the batter's box. Already Making an Impact in Aberdeen Heckelman has not needed much time to contribute with the IronBirds. Early in the MLB Draft League season, he recorded his first home run with Aberdeen and has delivered several key hits. On June 11, he drove in three runs with a clutch double during an IronBirds victory over State College. Later in the summer, he produced another big moment with a go-ahead RBI single in the seventh inning, continuing to demonstrate his ability to perform under pressure. Although his overall numbers continue to develop, the IronBirds have shown confidence in Heckelman by giving him regular opportunities behind the plate. Why the MLB Draft League Matters The MLB Draft League has become one of the premier showcase leagues in the country. Created by Major League Baseball, the league provides draft-eligible players and recent college graduates an opportunity to perform in front of scouts from every Major League organization. Over the past two seasons alone, 38 players were selected in the MLB Draft after competing in the league each year, while more than 230 players have been drafted or signed professionally since the league began in 2021. Every game serves as another audition for

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TOWSON CATCHER BRIAN HECKELMAN CONTINUES

The IronBirds now compete in the MLB Draft League after transitioning from their longtime role as the Baltimore Orioles' High-A affiliate. Ripken Stadium remains one of the state's premier baseball venues and has hosted future Major League stars such as Adley Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, Colton Cowser, and Manny Machado during earlier stages of their careers. Towson supporters will have an opportunity to watch one of the program's best recent players continue his development just a short drive from campus. Maryland Sports Blog Analysis Brian Heckelman earned this opportunity. Catchers who combine leadership, defensive reliability, and offensive production are always valuable in professional baseball. Heckelman has shown steady improvement throughout his collegiate career, and earning All-CAA honors demonstrated that he is capable of competing against high-level talent. If he continues producing timely hits while handling a pitching staff effectively, there is every reason to believe an affiliated Major League organization could offer him a professional contract. Remaining in Maryland with the Aberdeen IronBirds gives Heckelman an ideal stage to continue chasing that dream while representing Towson baseball at the professional level.

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TOWSON VOLLEYBALL UNVEILS CHALLENGING

TOWSON TIGERS

Towson Volleyball Unveils Challenging 2026 Schedule with Eyes on Another CAA Championship

Towson Volleyball Unveils Challenging 2026 Schedule with Eyes on Another CAA Championship The road to another Coastal Athletic Association title is officially set. Towson University head coach Don Metil and the Tigers have announced their 2026 volleyball schedule, a slate that features strong non-conference competition, 12 home matches inside SECU Arena, regional rivalries, and another demanding CAA schedule as Towson looks to build on its championship tradition. Towson has become one of the premier volleyball programs in the CAA under Metil, winning four consecutive conference championships and regularly earning NCAA Tournament berths. The 2026 schedule reflects that championship mindset, with early tests designed to prepare the Tigers for another postseason run. Tough Non-Conference Tests Await The Tigers open the season at the Mizzou Invitational in Columbia, Missouri, where they'll face: Idaho (Aug. 28) Missouri (Aug. 28) Western Illinois (Aug. 29) Missouri provides an immediate measuring stick against an SEC opponent, while Idaho and Western Illinois should offer quality competition before Towson returns home. September also includes several intriguing regional matchups: at Loyola Maryland vs. Saint Peter's at Morgan State Those contests continue Towson's tradition of playing strong Mid-Atlantic opponents before conference play begins. Tiger Invitational Headlines Home Schedule One of the highlights of the early season comes with the annual Tiger Invitational at SECU Arena. Towson welcomes: Arkansas Robert Morris Howard Hosting an SEC program in Arkansas gives the Tigers another opportunity to test themselves against Power Four-level competition while playing in front of the home crowd. CAA Play Begins in September Conference action starts with a home series against Northeastern before Towson hits the road to face perennial contender College of Charleston. Other conference opponents include: William & Mary Campbell Hampton North Carolina A&T Delaware Monmouth Stony Brook Hofstra Elon UNC Wilmington The balanced conference schedule once again figures to be one of the nation's toughest outside the Power Four conferences. Regional Rivalries Continue Away from conference action, Towson also renews local rivalries with: Loyola Maryland Morgan State Coppin State Those matches continue to showcase Maryland collegiate volleyball while providing fans with several exciting in-state contests.

Experienced Leadership Returns Towson enters 2026 with expectations of remaining among the CAA favorites. Metil has built one of the conference's most consistent programs through outstanding player development, aggressive scheduling, and disciplined defense. The Tigers have become annual NCAA Tournament contenders while maintaining one of the best home-court advantages in the conference. Replacing departed seniors will be important, but the program's winning culture gives Towson confidence entering another championship chase. Key Dates August

28-29 Mizzou Invitational September 4-6 Loyola Maryland Saint Peter's Morgan State September

11-13 Tiger Invitational Arkansas Robert Morris Howard September 18 CAA opener vs.

Northeastern Late September-November Full CAA schedule leading into the conference tournament.

MSB Take Towson once again assembled the type of schedule that should prepare it for

TOWSON VOLLEYBALL UNVEILS CHALLENGING

If Towson can navigate its challenging non-conference schedule and continue its dominance inside SECU Arena, another CAA championship and NCAA Tournament appearance are realistic goals. The Tigers have established themselves as Maryland's flagship Division I volleyball program, and the 2026 schedule gives them every opportunity to prove it once again.

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TWO TERPS HEAR THEIR NAMES CALLED: BRAYDEN

MARYLAND TERRAPINS

Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft

Two Terps Hear Their Names Called: Brayden Martin, Lance Williams Selected in 2026 MLB Draft

By Brian Hradsky | Maryland Sports Blog The University of Maryland baseball program celebrated

a milestone on the second day of the 2026 MLB Draft as two of its top performers officially began the next chapter of their baseball careers. Right-handed pitcher Lance Williams was selected by the Chicago Cubs in the eighth round (247th overall), while infielder Brayden Martin was taken by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 11th round (342nd overall). The pair became the latest Terrapins to join the professional ranks following standout collegiate careers in College Park. While Maryland endured an up-and-down 2026 season, finishing 24-30 overall and 9-21 in Big Ten play, Williams and Martin consistently stood out as leaders on and off the field. Their selections continue the Terps' growing reputation as one of the Big Ten's premier producers of professional baseball talent. Lance Williams: Electric Arm Headed to the Cubs Williams arrived at Maryland after beginning his collegiate career at East Carolina and quickly established himself as one of the Terps' top weekend starters. The hard-throwing right-hander finished the 2026 season with: 57.0 innings pitched 69 strikeouts 10.9 strikeouts per nine innings Consistently worked in the mid-90s with a swing-and-miss fastball Showed the ability to overpower hitters despite pitching in one of college baseball's toughest conferences. Although the final ERA did not fully reflect his talent, professional scouts were intrigued by Williams' raw stuff, athleticism, and upside. His fastball-slider combination generated plenty of swings and misses throughout the season, making him one of Maryland's most intriguing draft prospects. The Cubs have built one of baseball's strongest player-development systems over the past several seasons, making Williams an intriguing fit. Chicago has consistently helped pitchers improve command while maximizing velocity and pitch design, something that could unlock another level in Williams' game. At 247th overall, the Cubs may have landed one of Day Two's better pitching values. Brayden Martin: One of Maryland's Best Table Setters Few players embodied consistency during their Maryland careers like Brayden Martin. The versatile infielder became one of the most disciplined hitters in Terrapins history, finishing his collegiate career with: .314 career batting average .455 career on-base percentage Program-record 145 career walks Excellent strike-zone awareness Outstanding defensive versatility High baseball IQ and leadership qualities. Martin's ability to reach base made him one of the Big Ten's toughest outs. His mature approach at the plate earned him an invitation to the prestigious MLB Draft Combine before the draft, further boosting his professional stock. The Blue Jays have long valued hitters with elite plate discipline and defensive versatility, making Martin an ideal organizational fit. Toronto's development system has produced numerous infielders capable of playing multiple positions, and Martin projects as

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TWO TERPS HEAR THEIR NAMES CALLED: BRAYDEN

Recent Terps drafted into professional baseball include players who have reached every level of the minor leagues, and Williams and Martin now add their names to that growing list. Having two players selected in the same draft is another reminder that Maryland continues to attract and develop high-level talent capable of competing at the professional level. Different Paths, Same Dream Williams and Martin couldn't be more different as players. Williams overpowers hitters with velocity and strikeout stuff. Martin wins with discipline, consistency, and baseball instincts. Yet both earned their opportunity the same way through years of development, hard work, and production in one of college baseball's toughest conferences. Now their professional journeys begin. Williams will attempt to climb the Cubs' pitching pipeline, while Martin begins his career in one of baseball's most respected player-development organizations with the Blue Jays. For Maryland baseball, their selections represent more than individual accomplishments. They reinforce that the Terrapins remain a destination for players with Major League aspirations and continue to produce talent capable of reaching the next level. With two more Terps entering professional baseball, the future remains bright for the program in College Park.

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