

North America's Run at League of Legends Worlds and What to Expect for Semifinals

SEAN PARK

North America's League of Legends Championship Series (LCS) is no stranger to NA's underwhelming performance on the world stage. The region's highest finish in the League of Legends World Championship (Worlds) was back in 2018, when Cloud 9 finished as semi-finalists. However, this year's 3-15 record, holding back all three teams at the group stage, is by far the worst finish the region has ever experienced in its history, leading to many doubting the LCS's future.

However, Cloud 9, the LCS's first seed, grabbed a win against Europe's Fnatic. Despite having to use substitute bot laner Muhammed "Kaori" Hasan due to their starter's absence, Evil Geniuses (EG) beat G2 Esports, Europe's greatest organization, finally obtaining revenge for their 0-2 shut-down against them at the MSI tournament 4 months ago. EG also broke NA's 8-year record of losing to Europe in a best-of series in their previous 3-1 against MAD Lions in the play-in stage.

Meanwhile, the conclusion of the Worlds' quarterfinals on October 23rd, left NA with four semi-finalists: T1, JD Gaming (JDG), DRX, and Gen G. It was surprising that there were three teams from Korea's LCK, and only one team from China's LPL, as many thought of the latter to be the better league in the past.

On October 20th, JDG beat Rogue, Europe's last hope in Worlds, for a clean 3-0 shut-down. This ends the Worlds journey for the West, although not many were surprised with this result. Rogue was considered to be the weakest team in the quarterfinals, while JDG were seen as the tournament's prospective winners. Although Rogue tried to find chances to get back into the game, the gap in the overall strength and macro of the teams became evident, leading to JDG winning all the crucial teamfights.

The following day hosted a rematch from MSI between T1 and Royal Never Give Up (RNG), the greatest organizations from their respective regions. Four months ago it was

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David Popovici: His Steep Rise to Greatness

WOORI LEE

"If there's one person on the planet who will go below [the world record], it's Popovici," was the words of legend Michael Phelps regarding an emerging phenom.

David Popovici has been making his case as the most feared swimmer of his discipline that the world has ever witnessed. But what makes him even more impressive is that his ambitious eyes resonate in the body of a still developing teenager ready to take on the world.

Born and raised in Romania, Popovici fell in love with the elegance of water at the age of 5, devoting his unwavering attention and care into the pool. Perfecting and correcting every day, he has a naturally hydrodynamic body, possessing a gangly 6'3" frame as well as large hands and feet. Dominating the freestyle swimming scene in his nation from the start, he quickly rose past the competition in a commanding fashion and landed himself in international junior meets as young as 10 years

old. Later, his talent and hard work landed him in international competitions like the Olympics.

After entering the 2020 Tokyo Olympics with the top time in the world of 47.30—a newly minted world junior record in the 100m freestyle—expectations were sky-high for this 16-year old sensation. Unfortunately, Popovici fell to his nerves and lack of experience, finishing 7th in the 100 and just outside of medal contention in the 200m freestyle. But his performance at the Olympics propelled him forward.

Fast forward a year is when everything changed for the self-proclaimed 'Skinny Legend'. A historic summer to say the least. First beginning with the biannual swimming world championships, he topped the field of the 100m and 200m freestyle races as just a 17 year old, obliterating two world junior records in the process. A few more impressive competitions illustrated his continual dominance, establishing 8 of the top 10 times of 2022.

The cherry on top to his summer had to be his world record

in the 100m freestyle at the 2022 European Championships, which further proved his unmatched superiority in the pool. Beating a 13 year old world record previously held by Brazilian swimmer Cesar Cielo, his time of 46.86 bests every other swimmer. Along with a slew of remarkable performances, he went on to re-break his own world junior record in the 200m freestyle, touching in 1:42.97. Needless to say he surely has gotten a few more years of growth within him, as most professional male swimmers reach their prime in their early twenties.

Popovici eloquently preys on his opponents, slashing through the water with power. For the future, he seems to have grand plans in mind. "I wanted to go as fast as possible and it looks like I did it. A fantasy now might be a 45 [second time]."

The million dollar question now is what is left in store for Popovici. Will he be able to perfect his stroke even more to break his numerous records and get down to that 45 second time? Or will he fall into the trap of his fame and lose touch with his passion?



Real Madrid Go Top of the Table as Liverpool End Manchester City's Unbeaten Run

ALEX LEE

Featuring possibly the two most anticipated league games of the year, October 16 was highly anticipated amongst soccer fans. The first game was the 185th El Clásico between Real Madrid and Barcelona, which kicked off at 10:15 a.m. at the Santiago Bernabéu. After that was Liverpool vs. Manchester City, two of the biggest clubs in the Premier League.

Real Madrid and Barcelona entered the game level on points, but it was Real Madrid who managed to take all three points after a dominant performance in front of their home crowd.

Despite Barcelona controlling the majority of possession in the early stages of the game, Real Madrid struck first through Karim Benzema in the 12th minute. The Barcelona defense was caught

out with a high line, allowing Vinícius Júnior to run through and get a shot off. Ter Stegen made an initial save, but Benzema calmly finished from the rebound. Barcelona had their chances in their first half with Robert Lewandowski and Ousmane Dembélé, but just ten minutes before halftime, Federico Valverde doubled Real Madrid's lead in spectacular fashion. The goal adds to a wonderful start to his season in La Liga.

After a halftime talk that presumably looked very different for both teams, Barcelona came out looking more comfortable. Xavi, the Barcelona manager, used all five of his available substitutes, most notably Ferran Torres and Ansu Fati for Raphinha and Dembélé. The goal finally came for Barcelona in the 83rd minute from substitute Ferran Torres. Lewandowski flicked on a pass from Fati which left Torres with an open net at the back post. This positive

run of play was in vain for Barcelona though, as Rodrygo's penalty eight minutes later sealed the win for Los Blancos.

A man of the match award for Karim Benzema in this game set up the perfect week for him. The day after the game, he won the Ballon d'Or, the game's most prestigious individual award in soccer, while also scoring in Real Madrid's mid-week win against Elche Club de Fútbol (Elche CF).

There was no time for people to catch their breath with the Liverpool vs. Manchester City game kicking off just over an hour after El Clásico. Both managers made bold decisions in their team selections and formations. The game's importance was enough to have both managers Jürgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola stray from

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Mohamed Salah of Liverpool celebrates with Jordan Henderson after scoring the first goal — Tottenham Hotspur vs. Liverpool, UEFA Champions League Final, Wanda Metropolitano Stadium, Madrid — June 1, 2019

Start Sits for Fantasy Football Week 8

LUKE WILLIAMSON

This week, I'll go over Dameon Pierce, David Montgomery, Tee Higgins, and a few others. This article is meant to help you decide whether or not they should have a spot on your fantasy football roster. Let's get into it.

First off, we have Kenneth Walker. A big waiver wire target after he became the RB1 in Seattle, Kenneth Walker put up a whopping 29 points in PPR against the Chargers on Sunday. He is clearly the Seahawks guy moving forward, playing 52 of the teams 71 snaps. Some might still be hesitant to start Walker because he played a team that's allowed a lot of yards to running backs and has not been the RB1 for long, but because he is on such a dynamic offense, you can expect high numbers in week eight.

Now, Tee Higgins may be the WR2 in Cincinnati, but on good weeks he has WR1 value. This will be a good week for the Bengals, who have begun to heat up after dropping 35 points on the Falcons. The Bengals are not going to slow down this week. They are going up against divisional rivals, the Cleveland Browns, who have already allowed opposing teams to score at least 30 points three times. There has only been one time that the team playing the Browns scored less than 20 (week 3 against the Pittsburgh Steelers). Tee Higgins may have had his ups and downs, but against sub-par defenses he has been very strong and I would expect some production this week.

Lastly, I want to talk about some quarterbacks. Sometimes you have an injured QB1, or someone you don't trust (Tom Brady), so you're looking for another option. Because you can find solid QB starts among the free agents, these guys are available in most leagues. Some middle-of-the-pack quarterbacks I suggest this week are Daniel Jones and Tua Tagovailoa. Daniel Jones was great on Sunday against the Jaguars (29 points), and has been doing really well against bad defenses. This week the Giants are playing the Seahawks, who have allowed an average of 26.6 points against opposing teams this year (fifth worst). Switching to Tua, the matchup is great for him. He is playing the Lions this week and looked healthy against the Steelers. The Lions have allowed the most points in the NFL with an average of 32.3, and should not fare better against the high powered offense the Dolphins run. Miami is a pass heavy team with great receivers and an awesome matchup, so despite qualms about Tua's skill or health I recommend starting him.

Now let's look at some guys you probably shouldn't start. Starting off, Dameon Pierce. This might come as a surprise because averaging 15.8 points, he has been a stud and even put up 26 points in week 4. However, it is important to consider the attributes of the teams Pierce has played against when assessing his skills. Some of the teams

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Antonio Brown Exposes Himself in Dubai

Antonio exposes himself to hotel guests in Dubai, adding but another name to his long list of transgressions.

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Halftime

Welcome to Halftime!, the GOAT's comedy section that draws on the latest news in sports to make jokes, and funny headlines.

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Arsenal or Manchester City?

Arsenal will not be able to provide a worthy title challenger to Manchester City this Premier League season.

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Carlos Alcaraz, the New World No.1

At only 19 years old, Carlos Alcaraz impressively rises to the world No.1 ranking.

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NFL



Tua Tagovailoa's Scare Raises Questions About the NFL's Concussion Protocol.

QUINN C. NOVICK

Tua Tagovailoa, the Miami Dolphins' young star quarterback, suffered a devastating injury on Monday night against the Cincinnati Bengals. The Hawaii native and Alabama alum received his injury after getting sacked by Cincinnati defense Josh Tupou.

Although the young star's incident may appear isolated, it is true that many different NFL players have gotten injured. From severe spinal and cranial injuries, the onset of injuries resulted in a 'fencing response' scene with Tua's hands on the ground after getting tackled by the pass-rusher for Cincinnati. Unfortunately, the NFL has had a history of poor concussion protocols, and Tagovailoa's situation may bring further clarity, or perhaps more questions to the NFL's response.

Upon Tagovailoa's fall in Cincinnati, the Miami training staff followed the directed NFL protocol, and he was rushed to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. He was later cleared

to travel back to Miami.

One week before the incident, Tagavailoa had suffered a severe injury in his game against the Buffalo Bills. He was diagnosed with a back injury, yet passed all concussion protocols. In response, the NFL Player's Association had asked for a review of the NFL's concussion protocol, following the incident that Tagavailoa suffered.

Although the actual scene of Tagavailoa's injury was managed appropriately, he was hit hard the week before, leading to the question of him being taken to the sideline. Miami followed the NFL guidelines and cleared Tagavailoa to take the field. Although Miami did follow the proper NFL guidelines, questions remain if Tagavailoa's injury on Monday night was solely isolated to his fall, or if there remains questions from his previous injury. Regardless, this puts the ever-problematic and allegation-filled NFL in a minefield of potential charges and lawsuits.

It is unclear whether the NFL's concussion protocol will change, and if so, to what effect? Only time will tell in order to determine the outcome of the concussion protocol within the league.

Week 8 Start & Sits

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he has done best against; the Bears, Jaguars, and Raiders; do not have strong defenses or run protection. The Titans have a very strong rushing defense, allowing the fourth least rushing yards per game with an average of 96.8. That stat is good, but it is even better when you consider that in the last three games, the Titans have allowed an average of 48.7 rushing yards, the least in the NFL by 17 yards. In the last three weeks, they have played 2021 rushing yard leader Jonathan Taylor twice as well as the solid Commanders running back Antonio Gibson. Dameron Pierce is alright, but the Titans run protection is better.

For our wide receivers of the week, sit anyone on the Packers. Many fantasy managers have wondered who the WR1 in Green Bay is, and who they should start. While there have been good weeks, there is no clear favorite for Aaron Rodgers, and every time someone has played well they have done badly soon after. Rodgers may be the 2021 MVP, but coming off three tough losses to the Giants, Jets, and Commanders, I wouldn't trust him or any of his targets. This week the Packers are playing the Buffalo Bills, arguably the best team in the entire league, so if you have any

wide receivers from Green Bay, put them on your bench.

David Montgomery has been on the fence as a fantasy starter the entire year. Averaging 10.4 points and with a projected 13.1, he has been mediocre (it is important to note this average has been brought down by his 1.1 point week 3 game where he was injured). This is true, but, for the David Montgomery managers out there, don't start him. This week the Bears are playing the Cowboys, who have a great defense and have been solid on the ground. Dallas is second (to Tennessee) in rushing touchdowns allowed, with the opposing team only running for 0.3 a game. Montgomery's good weeks have depended on touchdowns, but the Bears' weak offense will likely struggle to get many this week, so sit their mid-tier running back.

To recap, Kenneth Walker and Tee Higgins are some good skill players to start, and at quarterback Jared Goff and Daniel Jones should do well this week. On the other side, I have very little faith in the Packers' receiver core, and running backs Dameron Pierce and David Montgomery are both looking at tough weeks.



Out with Race-Based Brain Testing in the NFL, in with New and Improved Compensation

MAX LANGHORST

The NFL has assumed less cognitive ability in its former Black players than in any other racial group during brain testing, preventing adequate testing results. Their system, used to test for dementia, was originally developed for two groups of people: Black football players and everyone else. It was done in this separated way in order to account for differences in socioeconomic background, and experts say the system was not intended to demean Black football players. Black players argued that since the testing assumed they had lower cognitive function to begin with, it was harder to show the brain injuries incurred during their time in the league, invalidating their injuries. Because dementia testing offers players the opportunity for monitoring and compensation, the severity of the NFL's behavior is inexcusable.

After months of court negotiations between the NFL and the lawyers of retired Black NFL players Najeh Davenport and Kevin Henry, a proposal for equitable cognitive testing has been drafted. The lawsuit follows the outrage on "race-norming" dementia testing. Although the judge has not approved the proposal, the document holds potential for significant rami-

fications in the NFL. As the proposal offers the opportunity for test retakes in order to confirm prior diagnoses, the primary goal aims to racially-neutralize and reduce bias in the cognitive tests. Additionally, the proposal reduces the disparity in compensation through concussion funds between Black and White football players. The concussion fund, which was established in 2017, paid out \$821 million to 2,000 former players for different brain injuries including: early and advanced dementia, Parkinson's disease, and Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS).

The NFL agreed to change their race-based policy in June. Under the new agreement, the NFL does not admit to any wrongdoing and does not release any information about players who have been paid. Retiree Ken Jenkins added his input regarding the NFL's lack of advocacy and said, "if the new process eliminates race-norming and more people qualify, that's great, [but we] want full transparency of all the demographic information from the NFL — who's applied, who's been paid."

In approving the proposal, the NFL risks losing money in turn to provide former players adequate reimbursements after their career-ending brain injuries.

Christian McCaffrey Starts with 49ers; Panthers Start Over

THEO SFIKAS

On Friday, after a six-year-long run with the Carolina Panthers, running-back Christian McCaffrey went from coast to coast in a trade with the San Francisco 49ers. Due to McCaffrey being such an elite player, it comes as no surprise that he has sparked interest from other teams in the NFL. However, it may shock some to find that the football star has only been traded for a few second-day draft picks. Although the trade seems unfair, it was a necessary decision.

The Panthers organization is currently in shambles and is, without a doubt, among the worst teams in the NFL. The team's quarterback, Baker Mayfield, is too worried about making commercials to notice the fact that, as of week seven, he has only completed four touchdown passes with another four interceptions thrown into the mix. That's also why PJ Walker, the team's second string quarterback, has secured the start in week

eight against the Atlanta Falcons. The Panthers' wide-receiver one, DJ Moore, has amassed a grand total of two touchdowns this season. Even with their upset against Grandpa Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, there is no silver lining in sight for the team. With a two and five record, it comes as no surprise that the Panthers' management decided to figuratively hit the reset button.

Getting rid of McCaffrey allows for an additional 48 million dollars worth of cap space to be used to better benefit the team. The 16 million dollars he received annually from the team also happened to make McCaffrey the highest paid running-back in NFL history. With Chubba Hubbard as the Panthers' number one running back, it would be great to see the team look for a short-term replacement for McCaffrey, or even strengthen their wide receiver core that currently consists solely of an average, at best, DJ Moore. If used correctly, this may allow the team to clinch a playoff berth sometime in the next coming years, which will mark the first time since the 2017 season.

NFL Star Antonio Brown Caught Exposing Himself to Hotel Guests in Dubai

CHARLES VEST

A shocking event unfolded earlier this year as Antonio Brown, the 34-year-old all-star NFL wide receiver from Miami, exposed himself to horrified guests at the Armani Hotel in Dubai. Brown, who was completely naked, was caught on camera huddling with several women near the edge of the pool. He then proceeded to lift himself up out of the water, getting far too close for comfort to one of the women. Despite initially laughing off the encounter, the woman quickly began to exhibit signs of distress and swam away from Brown.

A second video revealed Brown's continuous harassment of the woman. In the footage, he was caught stealing another guest's neck scarf and proceed to sneak up behind the woman and wrap it around her head. Fortunately, she was able to rip the scarf off before he was able to tie it. But Brown wasn't done with his appalling actions, as he then proceeded to lift the woman out of the water before spiking her back in head first— as if she were an object to be thrown around. One spectator even commented that Brown was "Waterboarding her." Still remaining calm, the woman wiped her eyes and swam over to the other side of the pool. No action was taken to help the woman.

The video, however, didn't end there. Leaning against the edge of the pool, Brown reached down and took his genitalia out of the water, continuously flaunting his privates in the woman's direction and making lewd remarks such as, "You want it?" all the while. Eyewitness reports say that the woman, who was visibly upset about the incident, complained to the hotel staff about Brown, and he was asked to leave the premises shortly after. One hotel staff commented that this was not the first complaint they had received about Brown, as several other guests had made them aware of similar incidents.

Brown is no stranger to controversy. In 2018, he got into hot water with his team at the time, the Steelers, when he threw furniture out of his 14th-floor apartment, nearly hitting an infant child. He was also booked for speeding, going over 100mph down a suburban road. In 2019, Brown's former trainer filed a lawsuit against him claiming three separate instances of sexual assault. The case was eventually thrown out, as it fell outside of the statute of limitations. That same year, a second woman accused him of further sexual misconduct. 2020 was no better a year for the wide receiver, as he was charged with burglary of a vehicle, battery, and criminal



mischief. He had to serve 100 hours of community service and undergo a 13-week anger management program.

The numerous instances of Brown's misconduct lead me to ask if, or more accurately when, Brown will strike next. Is his future with the league in peril? Will the star have to face prison time? Stay tuned with The GOAT as Brown's absurd life continues to unfold.



Miscellaneous

Sunday, October 16 Soccer Recap

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their usual formations and opt for something unfamiliar. Manchester City was an understandably strong favorite, enjoying an unbeaten start to the season, compared to Liverpool who had struggled to get going.

Once the game kicked off, it was everything people could have hoped for. Anfield's electric atmosphere brought energy into the game. Manchester City dominated the chances in the first half,

with the constant threat of the star summer signing, Erling Haaland. Up until this point, Haaland had only not scored in one Premier League game, and it seemed like no team could stop him. However, at halftime, the score remained 0-0.

In the 53rd minute, Manchester City finally thought they had found their breakthrough. A rebound fell kindly to Phil Foden, who smashed the ball in from close range. However, the video assistant referee (VAR) reviewed the play and called a foul. The goal was revoked, reviving An-

field's hope.

The chances went back and forth, until in the 76th minute, when Alisson Becker sent a long-range punt through to Mohamed Salah. Despite missing a similar chance earlier, Salah made no mistake on his second opportunity, finishing past Ederson, and causing Anfield to erupt. Late game frenzies and a Klopp red card were not enough for Manchester City to get back into the game, and it was Liverpool who were victorious.



Erling Haaland celebrating after scoring during the Matchday four Premier League match between Manchester City and Crystal Palace in the Etihad Stadium on August 27, 2022

North America's Run at Worlds and Semis Analysis

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RNG who claimed the victory in a full set 3-2 win, setting a record for back-to-back MSI wins. Both teams, however, were seen as being far weaker compared to their performance in the spring season. T1 started out the series by taking the first set effortlessly, despite some early kills from RNG. However, the next game, clever ganks from RNG's jungler Yan "Wei" Yang-Wei set T1's star top laner Choi "Zeus" Woo-je behind, making him start the game with 0 kills and 6 deaths despite being on his signature champion Jayce. While a couple cleverly dodged ganks from mid laner Lee "Faker" Sang-hyeok bought T1 some time, things were starting to look dire. They were 6 kills, 7,000 gold, and 3 dragons behind, while RNG had already claimed the dragon soul. However, a miracle teamfight led by bot laner Lee "Gumayusi" Min-hyeong wiped out RNG in front of the elder dragon, leading T1 to claim both the objective and the top spot of Game 3 at the 26-minute mark.

Saturday hosted a domestic derby, with two Korean teams Gen G, favorites for the tournament, and DWG Gaming (DK), the 2020 world champions as well as last year's runners-up, facing off. In the first two games, DK decided to leave

Yuumi, the most OP champion in the meta, open, allowing Gen G's support Son "Lehends" Si-woo, one of the world's best Yuumi players, to easily claim the win in both sets. However, what looked like another 3-0 sweep quickly progressed into a full set when DK struck back on games 3 and 4, with bot laner Seo "deokdam" Dae-gil on his signature champion Aphelios. In the crucial game five, DK drafted a very unorthodox mid-jungle duo of Syndra and Kayn, while Gen G sought to draft for a more balanced late-game teamfighting composition with Gnar and Viktor. This draft paid off, as in the last teamfight Gen G defeated DK, advancing into the semifinals.

The following day brought the only upset of this stage. Edward Gaming (EDG) claimed a narrow victory during the first game against Kim "Deft" Hyuk-kyu's DRX, but DRX retaliated in the subsequent game when Deft teleported into EDG's base and took down their towers. However, just as Deft was about to fire the last auto attack that would take town EDG's nexus and finish the game, the inhibitor magically respawned, fortifying the nexus. EDG quickly took down the isolated Deft and ended the game, overcoming a gold difference of 10,000. Victory slipped out of DRX's hands, and they were suddenly at matchpoint. However, similarly to DK, DRX managed to

win games 3 and 4. The final game to decide the winner of the series was surprisingly the most one-sided, with mid laner Kim "Zeka" Geon-woo stepping up on his signature pick Sylas and grabbing four solo kills in a row against EDG mid laner Lee "Scout" Ye-chan, last year's Worlds MVP, and finishing the last team fight with a quadra kill. It was a stunning loss for the defending world champions, as well as Deft's first semi-finals since 2014, and his last before his retirement in 2023.

The semi-finals starting October 29 features T1 against JDG. The match is predicted to be quite even, with all eyes on T1's rookie star Zeus and JDG's Bai "369" Jia-Hao, the best top laner in the world. While JDG's carry jungler Seo "Kanavi" Jin-hyeok is in very good form, T1's bot lane consisting of bot laner Gumayusi and support Ryu "Keria" Min-seok have bounced back from their slump in the summer season, being the only two players to maintain a double-digit KDA in the tournament. On the other hand, LCK's first seed Gen G are projected to be clear favorites against fourth seed DRX, having defeated the third seed DK. For DRX, it is up to how many leads Zeka can gain against Gen G's midlaner Jeong "Chovy" Ji-hoon, the best mechanical player in the world. Regardless of predictions, both are expected to be very high quality games starring the best



2023 NBA Draft. Why Victor Wembanyama?

HARRY MURPHY

The French phenom Victor Wembanyama had already been described as "generational," even before he became eligible in the 2023 NBA draft. Given his alien size and skillset—especially for his age—such descriptions may not be that large of a reach.

Born on January 4, 2004, in Le Chesnay, France, Wembanyama is just 18 years of age. His 9 points, 5 rebounds, and 18 minutes per game in France's Pro A league seems unexceptional to an NBA fan, but those numbers earned him two Pro A Young Player of the Year awards. Those awards were earned due to his stellar defense, averaging nearly 4 blocks per 36 minutes.

His play in the French first league was not the source of his

insane social media presence. His hype became worldwide when he led France to a finals berth in the U18 Fiba World Cup, showcasing his skills on National TV and almost defeating the United States to take home gold. Fans were immediately enamored because a 7'3 kid moving like he was on offense and defense had never been seen before. His international fame earned his team, Metropolitan 92, a two-match series against the G-League Ignite, a squad full of 2023 draft talent, including projected number two pick Scoot Henderson. Victor went on to dominate both games, averaging 36.5 points, 4.5 blocks, hitting 9 threes across the two contests, and taking home one win in the process.

Despite such exceptional playing, some of Wembanyama's attributes have worried analysts. The first is his small frame and

Will Arsenal be a Worthy Title Challenger in this Premier League Season?

HELIOS HONG

Having just missed out on the top four champions league spots in the previous Premier League season, Arsenal Football Club spent the summer continuing the project of signing and building a squad of young talents set forth by their coach Mikel Arteta. In the summer transfer window, the club contracted both Gabriel Jesus and Oleksandr Zinchenko from Manchester City for a combined 75 million pounds. In addition to improving first-team choices, the club also increased squad depth, a big factor in their collapse at the end of the previous season. The club purchased goalkeeper Matt Turner to replace the outgoing Bernd Leno, and they signed Fabio Vieira from Futebol Clube de Porto (FC Porto) to provide another option for club captain Martin Odegaard. All of these purchases proved to be an important reason for their tremendous success in the current Premier League season.

Two-time defending champions Manchester City Football Club had a very different summer transfer window. With the signing of Erling Haaland from Borussia Dortmund, the club spent the summer refreshing the squad with new additions and many departures. Some of the biggest departures include Gabriel Jesus and Oleksandr Zinchenko to Arsenal F.C., Raheem Sterling to Chelsea F.C., and Fernandinho back to Brazil. These departures were supported by several new signings including Calvin Phillips to replace Fernandinho, Sergio Gomez to replace Zinchenko, and Manuel Akanji to strengthen the defense. According to many critics, this squad of new players and less depth could be a vulnerable spot that many other Premier League clubs can exploit.

However, their lack of squad depth is overshadowed by the star of this Premier League season, Erling Haaland himself. Haaland has scored 17 goals in 11 games (as of Monday, Oct. 24, 2022). If Haaland continues to score goals at this rate, he will have scored 58 goals by the end of the current Premier League season, shattering Mohamed Salah's record of 32 goals in a single season by 26 goals. A massive reason

for Haaland's success in the front end of the pitch is the good service he gets from the middle of the pitch. Manchester City has a whole range of creative midfielders and wingers who can both supply Haaland with simple tap-ins in front of the goal and create moments of brilliance themselves. These include wingers Phil Foden, Riyad Mahrez, Jack Grealish, new signing Julian Alvarez, and midfielders Ilkay Gundogan, Rodri, Kevin de Bruyne, and Bernardo Silva. This incredibly well-oiled squad of talented individuals continues to prove a massive issue for opposing sides in the Premier League.

Even though Manchester City is currently enjoying a successful, high-scoring season, people cannot stop talking about Arsenal, who are currently two points ahead of the defending champions in the Premier League table. Arsenal is enjoying an impressive run of form, winning four of their last five Premier League games and winning 13 of their 15 games across all competitions this season. The creative front three of Gabriel Jesus, Gabriel Martinelli, and Bukayo Saka, supported by Martin Odegaard, Granit Xhaka, and Thomas Partey, shared 13 goals and nine assists, and their goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale produced four clean sheets, joint-third in the Premier League this season.

However, I believe that Arsenal will not provide a long-term title challenger for Manchester City. All throughout last year, Arsenal was criticized for not being able to bounce back quick enough after a loss. Factors including having a relatively inexperienced squad and an inexperienced head coach contribute to this failure. If Arsenal were to experience a dip in form anytime this season, it is unknown whether they will be able to recover quick enough to keep pace with Manchester City. From past seasons, we can see that Manchester City does not drop many points in a season, with an average of 22.4 points in the last five seasons. With the attacking brilliance of Erling Haaland, one can only assume that they will be dropping fewer points this season. Therefore, if Arsenal were to win the title this season, they would have to be almost perfect throughout all 38 games of the season.

Carlos Alcaraz: The Next Generation of Men's Tennis

BEN SHIN

Born in El Palmar, Murcia Spain, on May 5, 2003, Alcaraz began playing tennis at the age of four. He was inspired by his father, Carlos Alacaz Gonzalez, a former top 40 player in Spain, and one of his countrymen, Rafael Nadal. At the age of 15, Carlos went professional by playing International Tennis Foundation (ITF) Future events and Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) challenger matches. He won three titles on the ITF circuit and four titles on the Challenger tour. He played his first ATP event in Riodegenero in 2020, winning his first round match against Ramos Vinolas, but falling short to Federico Coria in the second round. He made his Australian Open debut when he was just 17 years old, making him the youngest participant in the tournament.

In July of 2021, he won his first ATP 250 event after crushing 35 year old Frenchman Richard Gasquet in two sets, scoring 6-2, 6-2 at the Croatia Open Umag. Alcaraz held nothing back, losing only 15 points on his serve and wrapping up the match in 77 minutes. In winning the tournament, Alcaraz became the youngest champion in Umag history and the third-youngest ATP titlist since 2000, joining Kei Nishikori and Rafael Nadal. The tournament showed that Alcaraz had incredible talent, warning the rest of the tour to watch out his potential.

Alcaraz then won his first ATP Tour Masters 1000 tournament at the Miami Open, defeating Casper Ruud in the finals. The accomplishment was a huge moment in the young player's career as the win propelled his ranking into the top ten. Before that, he was very close to winning the Indian Wells Tournament, beating Cameron Norrie out for a spot in the semifinals in three close sets. In the semifinals, Alcaraz played against the legend Rafael Nadal, and falling short in three sets scoring 4-6, 6-4, 3-6.

Yet, the loss did not faze Alcaraz. In fact, the teen achieved incredible results at the Madrid Open in 2022, which was almost two months after his loss at Indian Wells. In his quarterfinal match, he beat the legend himself: Nadal. He was the first teenager to ever beat Nadal on clay. The next day, he defeated Novak Djokovic, the top seed at the tournament. He became the first player to ever beat Djokovic and Nadal back to back on clay, at only 19 years old. In the finals, he played against Zverev, which Alcaraz won 6-3, 6-1. In winning the Masters 1000 tournament, he jumped to number six in Men's Tennis Rankings.

Alcaraz continued to win, even at the US Open, which is arguably one of the biggest tennis tournaments in the world. In his first three rounds, he beat his opponents in straight sets. In his fourth round match against Marin Čilić, the 15th seed, he won in a close five-set battle scoring 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, which lasted four hours. In his quarterfinal match, Carlos played yet another young talent, Yannik Sinner. Carlos won the first set 6-3, but dropped the next two sets 6-7(9), 6-7(0) and was on the verge of losing. Sinner had a match point in the fourth set, but Carlos fought back and eventually took the set 7-5. After a long five hours and fifteen minutes, the match ended shortly before 3:00 a.m., with Alcaraz winning the last set 6-3. Two days later, Carlos Alcaraz faced American player Frances Tiafoe for a spot in his first Grand Slam final. Alcaraz played another intense five set match against the American 6-7(8), 6-3, 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-3. In his first grand slam final, Carlos faced the Norwegian tennis player Casper Ruud. Alcaraz led their head to head record 2-0. Alcaraz started the match strong winning the first set 6-4, but surprisingly dropped the second set 2-6. However, he persevered and dominated with his forehand, winning the next two sets 7-6(1) and 6-3. The grand slam final improved his ranking, earning the title: the new number one men's tennis player in the world.

scarily low weight for his size. Scouts are worried he may be pushed around once in the NBA, convinced that he will not hold up with the physicality. Additionally, he has had multiple injuries, especially in the lower half of his body, which is a common concern for seven-footers, ending the career of many notable players.

Fans and scouts have chosen to overlook the injury concerns due to the rarity of his build with guard-like ball handling and shooting. Wembanyama has been given comparisons to many NBA superstars, notably Kevin Durant, Rudy Gobert, and Giannis Antetokounmpo. For all these reasons Wembanyama is already the clear number-one pick in one of the most stacked draft classes in recent memory.