

Aitana Bonmatí Shines as Spain Wins Its First Women's World Cup

ALEX LEE

On July 20, the inaugural game of the Women's World Cup kicked off in Auckland, New Zealand. Following one month of games across New Zealand and Australia, Spain was crowned champion of the Women's World Cup for the first ever time on August 20. A 29th-minute goal from left-back Olga Carmo-

na fired Spain into an early lead. Spain then missed a penalty in the second half, but it was not enough to change the outcome of the game, and Spain went on to close the game out to win 1-0.

However, Spain's road to glory started almost a month earlier against Costa Rica. Spain started their campaign sharp, scoring three goals in the first 27 minutes, including a goal

from Aitana Bonmati, who was later recognized as Player of the Tournament. They continued their good form into their second game, thrashing Zambia 5-0. Despite this, their winning start ended abruptly due to an impressive performance from Japan in their final group stage game. Japan's high-energy pressing style was too much for Spain to handle, and Spain would ultimately lose 4-0. Despite not

ending the group stage well, Spain still secured a spot in the knockout round, facing Switzerland in the round of 16.

Spain didn't let their setback against Japan affect the course of the tournament or damage their mentality. They went into the tournament ranked 6th in FIFA's world rankings, so despite not being favorites, they were still predicted to do well. Spain manager Jorge Vilda made several adjustments to his team going into the game against Switzerland, which proved to work out as Spain won 5-1 convincingly. Bonmati registered two goals in the match and was awarded the Player of the Match. Following their victory over Switzerland, Spain drew the Netherlands for their semi-final match-up. The Dutch would prove to be a real test for Spain, with many viewing them as one of the favorites to win the entire tournament. They did not let this change their possession-based play style though, scoring first through a penalty. The Dutch soon equalized, sending the game into extra time. With only nine minutes remaining, Salma Paralluelo

beat several defenders before curling a shot towards the far post, flying past the goalkeeper. This frantic ending sent Spain into the final for the first time in the country's history, where they would go on to win the tournament. Spain's win was followed with a celebration by the team and the country as a whole. Spain's top goal scorer, Jennifer Hermoso, called the moment "the best feeling of [her] life," recognizing the difficulty of their achievement.

This victory was historic for Spain and the sport in many ways. Spain joined Germany as the only country to win both the men's and women's World Cup, demonstrating the country's deep connection to the game. Spain is also currently the U17 and U20 World Cup champions, meaning that Spain is obviously doing something right. Their future remains bright, with rising stars such as Paralluelo and young talents like Bonmati ensuring that Spain will continue to find success in later tournaments.



Farag celebrates after beating World No.1 Diego Elias and winning his fourth World title.

Can Tyreek Hill Surpass 2000 Receiving Yards?

ADRIAN WERNER

Among all the records that exist in the NFL, 2,000 receiving yards in a single season stands out among the crowd. It has never been done before in the regular season, the closest being Calvin Johnson in 2012 when the Detroit Lions wideout reached 1,964, just 36 yards shy of the mark. One interesting caveat in Tyreek Hill's favor is the 18 week (17 game) season added in 2021. Assuming Hill plays every game, he would need to average just 118 yards per game to pass 2000.

"I will break 2,000 yards next year," Hill said on his "It Needed To Be Said" podcast, a part of the Vocal Podcast Network, in July. "2,000 yards was on my bucket list to get before I leave this league, 2,000 yards and another Super Bowl, and we getting that. Believe that."

Speaking from training camp, Hill doubled down on his unprecedented goal and explained how he'll reach it. "The quarterback play that we have is amazing, as you can see Tua [Tagovailoa] has been delivering all training camp, and the way that our head coach and our OC [Offensive Coordinator] design plays for us is ridiculous,"

Hill said on NFL Network. "My job is really easy; I just got to stay healthy, I just got to keep my attention to detail and just know where to be at on the field at all times for my quarterback. Then I'll be able to make those plays to get where I want to be at, which is 2K [yards]."

Hill has been volatile throughout his eight-year NFL career, with some off-field issues and a very up-and-down stat line. Despite this, Hill has always stayed healthy, not missing a game since the 2020 season. He is known for using his speed on big plays and deep downfield shots but also has a very low floor against better defenses. This was already revealed this season when, after catching for 215 yards in a shootout victory against the Los Angeles Chargers in Week 1, Hill struggled for only 40 yards against a better New England Patriots secondary. This put him behind pace after just one game, but he redeemed himself in week 3 with 157 yards, setting the tone early with a 54-yard touchdown reception on the game's third play.

Last season, Hill averaged 108.3 yards when his starting quarterback, Tua Tagovailoa, was healthy. Unfortunately, Tua suffered multiple concussions, causing him to miss five games throughout

the year. Hill struggled to rack up yards while Tua was out, hitting 55 once in five games. Had Tagovailoa been healthy all year and Hill kept his average steady, he would have been good enough for a league leading 1,841 yards.

Last year's leader, though, was Minnesota Vikings' Justin Jefferson. Jefferson's numbers have been increasing rapidly since entering

the league. He is the clear number one receiver on his team, which benefits him in terms of targets but also forces teams to double him as the main threat. Jefferson currently leads Hill in both targets and yards by a small margin, though both are on pace for over 2,400 yards.

It will be interesting to see these two receivers go head to head down the

stretch, and if one or both can stay healthy, we may be in for a record-breaking season.



Tyreek Hill is a star wide receiver for the Miami Dolphins.



Aaron Rodgers Tears Achilles Tendon: What Does This Mean for New York Jets?

MARIO CALVO

On September 11, on just the fourth play of a Monday Night Football game against a division rival in the Buffalo Bills, New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers took a sack on a first and ten at the Jets 43-yard line. He then had to be helped off the field. What ensued afterward would be a night of every emotion in the book for Jets fans. From being down 13-3 going into halftime to taking the lead with 1 minute 48 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, to undrafted wide receiver Xavier Gipson completing a 65-yard punt return touchdown, it was a game to remember for some Jets fans. For others, however, this would be a night defined by one sentence from Head Coach Robert Saleh following the game: “The MRI is probably going to confirm what we think is going to happen, so prayers tonight. But it’s not good.”

It was not. Rodgers suffered a torn Achilles tendon from the incident on the field. Despite repeatedly committing himself to the rehabilitation process and hopefully returning in what is now the unlikely event of a Jets playoff berth, this severe injury could be career-ending for Rodgers given his age.

This is the nightmare scenario for the Jets fans. As someone who has rooted for this team for their entire life, it is not the injury itself that pains me, it is all

the hope that I had coming into this season of having a future hall-of-fame quarterback possibly lead the team to the playoffs for the first time in over ten years suddenly getting ripped out of my grasp in the span of one freak play that kills me. Enough of me, though, it might be better to just look more into the broader implications of Aaron Rodgers’ injury:

“The Jets are not going to win the Super Bowl.”

Plain and simple, to compete with AFC (American Football Conference) heavyweights including the Buffalo Bills, Kansas City Chiefs, Cincinnati Bengals, and Baltimore Ravens, a great defense alone is never going to be enough to win games against tough opponents. Barring a major improvement in quarterback play from Zach Wilson or any other quarterback the Jets may bring into the mix, the offense might not be enough for them to compete deep into the season.



New York Jets athletic trainers examine Aaron Rodgers following a sack against the Buffalo Bills.

The Jets need to step up in every phase of the game to remain relevant. The defense speaks for itself with names including cornerbacks Ahmad “Sauce” Gardner and DJ Reed, safety Jordan Whitehead, linebackers Quincy Williams and C.J. Mosely, and a strong defensive line with fan-favorite Quinnen Williams, John Franklin-Myers, Jermaine Johnson, and Carl Lawson. The offense is loaded with talents including wide receivers Garrett Wilson, a resurgent Randall Cobb, Alan Lazard, and returning running back Breece Hall. However, the offensive line, a unit berated throughout the offseason and partially blamed for Rodgers’ injury and Zach Wilson’s poor

play, will need to step up to ensure better quarterback play throughout the season.

The Jets could bring in another quarterback, but not quite yet. Apart from Rodgers, previously mentioned Wilson is the only other starting-caliber quarterback on the roster. The question is: if the Jets should bring in a capable veteran to aid Wilson should his struggles continue? Names including Carson Wentz, Matt Ryan, Nick Foles, or Case Keenum could float around the Jets front office, but the transition would not be seamless, and any of these options would take time to adjust to a new offense.

In short, there is no nice way to put this unfortunate situation the Jets find them-

selves in.

As a Jets fan myself, I am still left wondering if this team is truly cursed. For the first time in my life, I felt as if the football season was going to be the highlight of my weekend every weekend of the fall. Unfortunately, though, that happiness did not last long. The best thing to do at this point is to wait and see what happens for the next 13 weeks of the season.

Team Europe Falls to Team World in a Disappointing 13-2 Loss

BEN SHIN

The Laver Cup was held in Vancouver this year, with Team World taking the victory. The event is a team-style tournament where players from Europe compete against opponents from across the world.

Roger Federer created the tournament in 2016, and it has become very popular amongst the tennis community. There are three days of competition and 13 points are needed to win the event. Each day has both doubles and singles matches, with a different amount of points awarded per win on different days. For example, on day one you get one point per victory, on day two you get two points per victory, and so on. This format keeps the tournament exciting, and it makes each match important. In the past, Team Europe

has dominated the competition, winning the first four meetings. Until last year, Team World had never been close to winning. In previous years, Team Europe was stacked with players including Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer, and multiple top ten players. Team World, however, pulled out a surprising victory after several close matches.

This year, Team World was attempting to defend their title. Headlining Team World were three Americans: Frances Tiafoe, Ben Shelton, and Taylor Fritz. All three of them had great seasons this year and were expected to lead Team World to victory. On the other hand, Team World had Andrey Rublev, Casper Ruud, and Gael Monfils — all fantastic players in their own right. The matchup was expected to be close because the teams seemed, on paper, to be evenly matched.

On the first day, Team World swept Team Europe 4-0. Ben Shelton beat Arthur Fils in a solid 7-6(4) 6-1 match, and his teammate Francisco Cerundolo won his match 6-2 7-5. In the night session, Team World dominated, winning both a singles and doubles match. In the doubles match, Americans Tommy Paul and Tiafoe put on a show by winning in a thrilling third-set tiebreak.

After a disappointing day one for Team Europe, they looked to get their first points on the second day. Fritz, however, beat out Rublev in two clinical sets 6-2 7-6(3). After Taylor’s match, Team World was up 6-0 and only needed seven more points to win. Finally, Ruud won a match against Paul 7-6(8) 6-2 to get onto the scoreboard. During the night, though, Team World showed no mercy, winning the singles and doubles



Ben Shelton and Francis Tiafoe celebrate after sealing the Laver Cup title for Team World.

match again, making the score 10-2.

On the final day, the chances of winning for Team Europe were slim to none. They needed to win all four of their matches to get their hands on the trophy. Both teams put out their best pairs; for Team Europe, it was Rublev and Hubert Hurkacz, and for Team World,

it was Shelton and Tiafoe. This match went to two tiebreaks, but, in the end, Team World came out victorious, finishing 7-6(4) 7-6(5).

The 2023 Laver Cup was a disappointing show for Team Europe. Hopefully, they can come back next year with Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz to give them a chance at winning.



Dominance of Red Bull and Max Verstappen: Why It's Good for the Sport

BRANDON HORNE

With Round 16 of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship having just been completed, it's time to take a look at the historic level of dominance from Max Verstappen and Red Bull Racing. Two weeks ago, Verstappen set an astounding record that may never be equaled: ten consecutive race wins. Ten years before, another Red Bull driver, Sebastian Vettel, set a record that many believed would never be touched: nine consecutive race wins. However, Verstappen's dominance quite easily surpassed that of Vettel's. His absolute mastery over the rest of the paddock was on full display over this ten race span. In Spain at the Spanish Grand Prix, Verstappen asked his race engineer, "What's my fastest lap?" to which his race engineer responded, "A [1:17.3]. Like I said, you've been given a black and white flag [(for violating track limits)], so we cannot afford anything." Essentially, if Verstappen had made the smallest mistake, he may have gotten a penalty, so his engineer wanted him to slow down and stay cautious. He was then told that the fastest lap of the race was set by his teammate, Sergio Perez, on a new set of tires with a Drag Reduction System (DRS) enabled. Verstappen then proceeded to annihilate Perez's fastest lap for the race, with old tires and without DRS, showcasing his rule over the rest of the field.

With this historic run,

many have complained about Formula 1 becoming boring. However, I believe that this is not the case. While this level of high performance is unheard of, the Singapore Grand Prix proved that there is still room for other cars and teams to win. Both Bulls were knocked out in Q2, and the race was undoubtedly the most thrilling of the year, showing everyone the competitiveness still present in the sport. Many fans forget that the fundamental principle of Formula 1 is engineering, specifically from the teams. It is not about the drivers. The idea that Formula 1 revolves around the drivers is an affectation created by the media and exacerbated by television, specifically by shows such as "Drive to Survive." People have forgotten that this is not much different from the dominance of Mercedes from 2014-2021, and of Red Bull from 2010-2013. This is just the next generation of domination. The engineers at Red Bull Racing, particularly Adrian Newey, have done an excellent job of engineering a masterpiece, and they should not be criticized or hated for doing so.

The argument that such dominance is "bad for the sport" is also quite false. While many newer fans, particularly those who learned of Formula 1 through the Netflix documentary series "Drive to Survive," believe that this is hurting the sport, it is quite the opposite. If anything, this just reinforces how integral engineering is to the sport itself. From



Max Verstappen celebrates winning ten consecutive races at Monza, setting a new Formula 1 record.

the very beginning, the fastest driver was not always the one that won the races and the championships. The fastest car nearly always won the races, championships, and took the glory from the engineering done behind the scenes.

For example, let's take a look at the career of another superstar Formula 1 driver, Kimi Raikkonen. Raikkonen, nicknamed the "Ice Man," was known for his icy-cold persona and refusal to warm up his tires, was one of the fastest drivers in F1 history. This was particularly the case during his prime, around 2005 to 2008. The Ice Man was rapid in his McLaren from 2005 to 2006, but, due to the car's unreliability, he was unable to win a championship. During the times his engine did not explode on track, he dominat-

ed — taking poles, wins, and fastest laps galore. However, frequent DNFs (Did Not Finish) doomed him to second place in the championship in 2005, and fifth in 2006. He was able to win his one and only Driver's Championship in 2007 with Ferrari, winning by one point due to the poor teamwork at his former team, McLaren, and their drivers, Fernando Alonso, and the rookie Lewis Hamilton. If Raikkonen had the fastest and most reliable car from 2005 to 2008, it is very possible he would be a four time World Champion.

To sum it up, Verstappen and Red Bull's utter domination of the 2023 Formula 1 season is not bad for the sport. On the contrary, it represents a team that has done the very best work possible, following the guidelines for how their car can

be built. In addition, there are very promising signs for fans who love a multiple car battle for the championship. McLaren has brought drastic upgrades to their car, and have scored multiple podiums in the past few races. They continue to progress and improve, and represent one of the many threats to Red Bull in the future. In addition, Mercedes, the eight-time Constructor's Champions, always lurk in the background, with their own ultra competitive engineers. In conclusion, Verstappen's dominance should not be viewed as a loss for the sport, but rather as an incredible feat of engineering. If you are not a fan, there are other teams to support and the future of the sport to look forward to.

Speed to Sidemen Charity Match, a Domino Effect That Brought Soccer to America

BEN DEGANI

On March 4, 2022, IShowSpeed, a very quickly rising social media star, said three words that would go on to change the view of soccer by millions of Americans. In America, at the start of

2022, interest in soccer had reached an extreme low. The number of people searching for soccer fell to record lows and had an interest score of 12/100 on "Google Trends." But with the World Cup less than a year away and America due to host the next one, Speed

may have just provided the kickstarter that the sport needed.

In his live streams, Speed would engage in much more soccer-related content, marketing the sport to those who may have never seen it in such a light before, including himself. Speed would continue integrating soccer into his daily content, and it would become well-received among his fan base. This would then go on to attract the attention of the popular United Kingdom soccer/comedy group known as Sidemen. Composed of many popular YouTubers from the UK, a nation where soccer is already very popular, they found much better success when using soccer as the soul of their content. They have also made their fair share of waves as a solid percentage of their viewers are Ameri-

can.

For the past few years, the Sidemen have hosted the Sidemen Charity Match. Taking place in the UK, the Sidemen Charity Match is a soccer match that brings together popular soccer YouTubers from all over the platform to go head-to-head while also collecting donations for charity. When deciding who to invite, it was a no-brainer for Speed to be involved as he was one of the most popular and staggering soccer personalities on the internet. As ridiculous as it sounds, Speed may even be bigger amongst the youth than American soccer player Christian Pulisic. The Sidemen Charity match was a massive success as it raked in millions of views and raised two million pounds for charity. I even personally watched it with my dad and uncle, two of the

most hardcore soccer fans I know. I went into the match expecting them to be insulted by these semi-unathletic young adults displaying their subpar skills. However, they found it hilarious and were amazed at how decent these guys were. The next thing you know, my whole family was huddled around the TV. It was honestly a fantastic experience to watch it with them.

With all that being said, it's unsure where the trajectory of American interest in soccer is going to go. With many influencers continuing to push the captivating sport to the furthest edges of the world, it's safe to say the marketing for soccer, football, or whatever you may call it, is in good hands.



IShowSpeed stands over KSI after tackling him to the ground.



The Prime Effect - Colorado Already Seeing Success with New Head Coach Deion Sanders

ZACH GODSEY

At the end of 2022, the University of Colorado Boulder decided to gamble on one of the most well-known names in football by hiring former NFL defensive back, Deion Sanders as their head coach. Prior to Colorado, Sanders had been the head coach for Jackson State University, coaching notable players such as his two children—Shedeur and Shiloh Sanders—and the number one recruit in his class: Travis Hunter. Sanders did not come inexpensive, signing a five-year, 29.5 million dollar contract with Colorado. However, his value has already started to show, as the team, having gone 11-1 last season, has started this season 3-0.

Given that this change has come about almost overnight, it is important to investigate what exactly is causing this monumental shift within the Colorado football program. For Sanders (also known as Coach Prime), it all starts with a shift in the culture. He no-

tably told much of the Colorado roster to “jump in the [transfer] portal” after not exhibiting the level of discipline that he required in his program, leading to the transfer of more than 50 athletes from the program. Perhaps more importantly, these spots were then filled with higher-level talent who were attracted by Coach Prime. While some may see this as cutthroat, such decisions often pay off. In his view, this overhaul was essential for the team’s long-term success. He explained his philosophy in a candid interview with “60 Minutes,” saying, “I think the truth is good for kids.” For Sanders, being straightforward and unapologetic about the standards he expects is crucial to instilling discipline and commitment in his players.

In addition to Sanders’ brutal honesty, he has emphasized the importance of accountability and consistency, often never appearing to be satisfied with the quality of work he sees. He has constantly emphasized that the journey toward excellence is an ongoing one.



Deion Sanders and his son, Shedeur Sanders, are already making waves in Colorado.

Under Sanders’ guidance, the Buffaloes have not only become a more disciplined team but also a more cohesive one.

In addition to the cultural transformation, Coach Prime’s extensive knowledge of the game, drawn from his decorated NFL career, has been invaluable to the team’s development. As a man with two Super

Bowl rings under his belt, he knows the ins and outs of football better than almost anyone. Furthermore, Sanders’ reputation as a coach has helped recruit top-tier talent locally and nationally, drawn by the prospect of one of the most famous names in football.

The Colorado Buffaloes’ strong start to the 2023-24 season looks to be just the

beginning of an exciting new era under Coach Prime. His impact is already very prevalent, and the future of Colorado football is bright.

The Brock Purdy Experiment: Could Anyone Play QB For The 49ers?

JOHN MORAN

The 49ers are yet to lose a game in which Brock Purdy both started and finished. Purdy’s record for games he has played in all sixty minutes stands at 10-0. The only game he has started in and lost was last season’s loss to the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFC Championship, in which he was sidelined after completely tearing his UCL. The 49ers would lose that game and, therefore, their Super Bowl hopes, but Purdy is right back to top form this season, with three more wins to add to his seven from last season.

However, questions have been raised about his success. No one says he hasn’t been successful, but when a seventh-round pick plays the way he does, there has to be another reason. How could every single scout in the league miss out on a talent like that? Right? What is the anti-Purdy side of sports media saying?

They are saying that the 49ers roster is so dominant that it doesn’t matter who plays quarterback. Some believe

that you could throw in just about any back-up in the league, and they would be putting up All-Pro numbers, and to be honest, there is some truth to that. The 49ers are dominant. They have Christian McCaffrey, who, when he isn’t injured, is a consensus top-three running back in the league, putting up over 1,300 rushing yards and 1,000 receiving yards in an incredible 2019 season with the Carolina Panthers. The receiving group includes George Kittle, the 2nd best receiving tight end per Professional and a top-tier blocker. Brandon Aiyuk is currently the top-ranked receiver per Pro Football Focus (PFF), and Deebo Samuel, their receiver-half-back hybrid, is a top twenty player per PFF. This pass-catching unit is most likely the best in the league, and that isn’t even mentioning the 49ers’ incredible defense, including top ten linebackers Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw, as well as 2023 Defensive Player of the Year Nick Bosa.

There are certainly outside reasons for Purdy’s success at the quarterback position; many quarterbacks

would do well on the 49ers. But there is evidence to suggest that Purdy is succeeding at least partially on his own merit. Jimmy Garoppolo, a quarterback with incredible numbers in terms of completion percentage and two 3,800-plus yard seasons in the past, barely beat Purdy on the stat sheet in the 2023 season, which was when Purdy had his NFL debut. Garoppolo averaged 251 yards, 67% completion, and 1.75 touchdowns per game before his un-

fortunate injury exit, while Purdy averaged 235 yards, 67% completion, and 2 touchdowns per game throughout the same season. Garoppolo is an established quarterback who has had general success wherever he’s been but Purdy was able to nearly match him in performance.

It is the opinion of the author that Purdy is a legitimate talent who has been winning games at least partially due to his own merit. He absolutely has a stacked roster

around him, and that certainly contributes greatly. But he is performing better than most would. Of course, his sample size is only eleven games. So, who really knows this early in his career? We will continue to find out over the course of the 2023-2024 NFL season.



Brock Purdy handing the ball off to star running back Christian McCaffrey.



Stop Hurting Players: It's Time for Artificial Turfs to Go

AJAY MISTRY

Fans and players alike have been campaigning for the removal of artificial turf on NFL fields for many years. Players have expressed how much they dislike playing on grass. Travis Kelce once stated: "I think it's silly. The ground's harder when you hit it, more concussions happen on turf because of how the players' helmets hit the ground. Some cleats grab more, some cleats sit on top of the turf differently to make it more of an unstable surface." Players want grass fields instead of turf fields. Why? Because of the abundance of injuries on artificial turf fields. The executive director of the NFLPA, Lloyd Howell, even mentioned, "The data is clear that grass is simply safer than artificial turf. We know there is an investment to making this change, there is a bigger cost to everyone in our business if we keep losing our best players to unnecessary injuries."

On artificial turf, players experience non-contact knee injuries at a 32 percent higher rate, non-contact lower extremity injuries at a 28 percent higher rate, and

an astounding 69 percent higher rate of non-contact foot/ankle injuries, as opposed to grass. Knee and ankle injuries in particular can destroy a player's career. Running Backs in particular aren't paid a lot of money because of the amount of ankle and knee injuries they suffer. Injuries also jeopardize the legitimacy of the NFL. In Super Bowl 56, Odell Beckham Jr. tore his ACL after an intense start to the game. To make it worse, Odell's torn ACL was non-contact on artificial turf. Odell was on pace for over about 200 yards, if he accomplished this feat, the Bengals may have never had a chance to win, and Odell would've won Super Bowl MVP over Cooper Kupp. Odell's injury is one of the biggest what-ifs in recent Super Bowl memory.

Why do teams even use artificial turf? Right now, 14 of the 30 NFL stadiums use artificial turf because of the low maintenance it requires. Artificial turf costs 6-10 thousand dollars a year to maintain, while grass costs 18 to 44 thousand. However, grass is much cheaper to install, costing 400 to 820 thousand dollars to install compared to arti-



Former Rams WR Odell Beckham Jr. Tears his ACL on turf field after a grueling first half.

ficial turf cost of 750 thousand to 1.35 million dollars. But at the end of the day, is artificial turf a good long term investment with all of the injuries that occur? No. According to Forbes, there is a "significantly greater deceleration impact on turf than on grass." This means turf fields create a harder surface for players to land. In 2021, the NFL had to dish out 1 billion dollars to current and former players due to concussion settlements, and there is no doubt that

future deals will be made costing the NFL more money. With 20 percent of concussion resulting from the player hitting their head on the playing surface, there is no doubt that playing on turf can lead to concussion and eventually, CTE. So even if the NFL completely disregarded player safety, it doesn't make any financial sense for the NFL to keep turf fields.

At the end of the day, the NFL is a business that needs to make money. If a star

player gets injured, ticket and merchandise sales decrease. Nobody wants to buy jerseys of players that don't play, and no fan wants to watch their favorite team without their star quarterback. Plus, after a star player is injured, the NFL might have to pay large sums of money to players through injury settlements. The NFL needs to make the change to natural grass fields and take care of their players.

Will USA Basketball Make a Comeback at the 2024 Olympics?

HARRY MURPHY

Historically, international basketball competitions have been dominated by the U.S., winning gold in seven of the last eight Olympic games. International basketball has never had the same success as other sports like soccer; however, with the recent uptick in international star power in the NBA, questions are beginning to rise about the USA's title as the best basketball nation in the world.

This year, the U.S. lost to Canada in the third-place

game, finishing the tournament in fourth place. While the roster consisted of star power players like Jalen Brunson and Anthony Edwards, there were notable omissions of USA Basketball's most talented and tenured players: Steph Curry, Kawhi Leonard, Kevin Durant, LeBron James, Anthony Davis, Jimmy Butler, Jayson Tatum, Damian Lillard, and more. NBA stars are already burdened with a long schedule, and the premise of beating up on poor teams with little incentive does not entice players, but redemption does.

After losing the 2004 Olym-

pics to Argentina and Manu Ginobili, the U.S. returned in 2008 with arguably their best team ever. The team featured all the league's best, LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Dwyane Wade, Carmelo Anthony, and Dwight Howard headlining the star-studded roster. Coined the 'Redeem Team' they ran through the 2008 competition and took home gold. In a similar phenomenon, Donovan Mitchell-led Team USA lost in the quarterfinals of the 2019 FIBA World Cup. The next year, Kevin Durant, Jayson Tatum, and Devin Booker led the USA to the Olympic Gold, redeeming the previous year's failure.

It appears this well-documented trend is going to repeat itself in next year's Olympics. The biggest stars in the world will now have the motivation to represent their country again, and the Olympics have always been a bigger draw than the FIBA World Cup. According to esteemed NBA insider Shams Charania, LeBron James has expressed genuine interest in playing in the 2024 Olympics. Generally, where LeBron goes, the rest of the league follows. For example, according to Patrick Beverley, the NBA bubble in 2020 being agreed on by the players was very reliant on the decision of LeBron James.

Even if the U.S. comes out with a reboot of the 2008 redemption team, their experience in the Olympics will be far from a cake walk. NBA Stars are featured on international teams like France's

Rudy Gobert, Canada's Shai Giguere Alexander, Serbia's Nikola Jokic, Slovenia's Luka Doncic, Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo, Cameroon's Pascal Siakam, and Germany's Dennis Schroeder. Smaller Balkans and Slavic countries, have the advantage of having played together the majority

of their lives, building invaluable team chemistry. Finally, the Olympics follow many of the FIBA basketball rules which benefit players that are used to them, such as players in the Euroleague. Although talent cannot be beat, it will be interesting to see how the 2024 Summer Olympics turn out.



USA Basketball failed to win a medal in the 2023 FIBA World Cup.

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