

Jon Jones Claims UFC Heavyweight Title After Putting Ciryl Gane In Submission

JOHN MORAN

Jon Jones is once again a world champion in the Ultimate Fighting Championship. After three years away from the sport, Jones claimed the belt in his first fight back at UFC 285 against Ciryl Gane. 35 year old Jonny "Bones" Jones improved his record to 27-1, and continues to uphold his title as one of the greatest talents to ever to set foot inside of the octagon.

While the UFC community had waited for the return of Jon Jones, it took him only a minute to take down Gane. Jones entered the mounted position and tried hooking in a guillotine choke. Gane fended off Jones's first attempt, but Jones redoubled his attempts and got Gane the second time around, making him submit a little over two minutes into the fight. Jones didn't have a spot of blood on him as he strapped on the belt once again.

Jon Jones isn't a stranger to UFC titles. He is a two-time light heavyweight champion and after this last fight, he is now the third fighter in history to also hold a heavyweight title after holding a light heavyweight one. With eleven successful title defenses, eight of them being consecutive, he is one of the most dominant champions

to ever exist in the sport. He holds the longest unbeaten streak in the history of the UFC, with nineteen wins in a row. All of these records were made many years ago, but Jones' effortless victory over a strong fighter such as Ciryl Gane shows that even in his mid-thirties, Jones is still the same dominant fighter the UFC has been watching for years.

But why hasn't he fought for the past three years? Problems in and out of the octagon have plagued Jones throughout his career. Jones has had near constant run-ins with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the committee that decides what drugs are illegal within sporting competition and conducts tests for said drugs. Over the years, WADA has tested and found Jones to be positive for anabolic steroids, anti-estrogen substances, and aromatase inhibitors, all of which are illegal substances in the WADA's rule-books due to the danger and unfair physical advantages they can bring to fighters. Through his breaches of the rules around illegal performance enhancers, Jones has incurred 27 total months of suspension over his career (specifically, one year and 15 months of suspension, each for different offenses). However, there was one drug test that held implications beyond his UFC career.

In January 2015, a WADA drug test revealed that Jones had tested positive for benzoylecgonine, the primary metabolite in cocaine. This led to large fines levied by the UFC and the WADA. Regarding other criminal records, in April 2015, Jones was involved in a hit-and-run, during which he ran a red light and crashed into the car of a pregnant woman, leaving the scene with her injured. This incident led to Jones being stripped of the UFC light

heavyweight title, which he held at the time, and being suspended by the UFC indefinitely. He didn't return to the UFC for six months. At other points during his career, Jones has been charged with negligent use of a firearm, aggravated DWI, and domestic violence.

Even with all of his personal and legal troubles, Jones has made a return to the UFC, a noticeable one at that. Is the UFC on the verge of another few years of Jonny "Bones" Jones on top?

Is this return title victory a one-and-done, or will Jones hold the belt for some time? No one knows quite yet, and barring more of Jones's frequent suspensions, we won't know until his next fight, which is loosely scheduled for July 8th against Stipe Miocic, another star in the heavyweight division. Until then, our questions will have to wait.



Jon "Bones" Jones in the octagon before his championship bout with Ciryl Gane.

Alcaraz Returns to World No. 1 After Winning Third Masters 1000 Title at Indian Wells

BEN SHIN

On March 19, Carlos Alcaraz, the 19 year old tennis phenom, won the BNP Paribas Open, which is also known as the Indian Wells Masters 1000. He destroyed his competition and overwhelmed his opponent in the final,

not losing a single set out of the six matches he played, becoming the first tournament champion to win the title without losing a set since Roger Federer in 2017. He has now won three Masters 1000 events; Madrid, Miami, and Indian Wells, becoming the ninth youngest person to win both the Miami Open and Indian Wells. Like his country-

man Rafael Nadal, Alcaraz is one of the only people to win at least three Masters 1000 titles as a teenager. At the pace that Alcaraz is winning, he could surpass Nadal's incredible record.

Coming in as the one seed, Alcaraz began his triumph against Thanasi Kokkinakis in the first round and Tallon Griekspoor in the second. He

was able to overpower Kokkinakis, winning 6-3 6-3, as well as Griekspoor 7-6(4) 6-3. Griekspoor gave a good fight against Alcaraz, being just the second person to even take him into a tiebreak. Next, he played Jack Draper, a young, up-and-coming British talent. However, Draper injured his stomach in a prior round and had to retire halfway through the match with a resulting score of 6-2, 2-0. In the quarter-final, Alcaraz faced the eighth seed, Felix Auger-Aliassime. At the time of their meeting, Felix had won all three of their previous encounters. Alcaraz came out firing, beating Felix solidly 6-4, 6-4. In the semi-final, Alcaraz played Jannik Sinner. These two are the best of the new generation, and many consider them rivals. Alcaraz played stunning tennis to Sinner as Alcaraz stayed in control of the match, winning 7-6(4), 6-3, which was coincidentally the same exact score of Alcaraz's second round match.

As for the final, the match might have

been the most one-sided finale in a Masters 1000 level event in a while. Carlos Alcaraz faced Daniil Medvedev in the Indian Wells final, stunning him with a dominating 6-3, 6-2 score. Over the course of the match, Alcaraz hit 18 winners, exceeding Medvedev's five total winners. He also won countless points with his signature drop shot. Before this tournament, Medvedev had won three ATP tournaments in a row. This means that he was playing well, but Alcaraz was simply playing better. When watching the match, it just seemed like Daniil had no way to respond to Alcaraz's game. By winning this match, Carlos Alcaraz has regained his spot as the ATP's world number one as well as another trophy to his collection.



After playing exceptional hardcourt tennis, Alcaraz won the 2023 Indian Wells on March 19, 2023.



Gymnastics Federation Ban of Russian Athletes Crossed the Olympic Qualifying Deadline; Russia Barred from Competing in 2024

CHARLES VEST

If history has taught us anything, it is that humanity will always find a reason to fight with one another. The world caught a glimpse of this habit, once more, through Russia's unjust invasion of Ukraine, an act widely regarded as one done out of petty selfishness, spite, and greed. As such, the world could not sit back and watch. Since direct interference with the war becomes an issue as it could lead to severe international conflicts, several bodies opted to boycott the Russian government in hopes of getting them to pull out of Ukraine. One such organization was the International Gymnastics Federation, the sport's main governing body. The ban was announced in March of last year, shortly after the invasion began, and has continued to be in effect as of the writing of

this article.

Last month, the European Gymnastics Federation was asked by what date the ban must be lifted for the Russian team to be eligible to compete at the European Championships. In response, the head of media wrote, "according to our rules, changes can be made until the draw," in an email sent on March 8. This provides a massive issue for the Russian team, as the draw was held nearly two weeks ago, preventing the team from competing at the European championships they would need to place at in order to move on to the Olympic qualifiers. As a consequence, the Russians will be unable to compete at the 2024 Paris games. Should the ban be lifted in time, however, it is still possible for the athletes to compete in individual gymnastic events if they qualify. But this scenario appears to be highly unlikely as of

right now, because the ban seems like it is going to stay in place until Russia ends the war with Ukraine, and the government has shown no sign of stopping the invasion in the near future.

Though the invasion

itself is universally seen as a cruel act, some believe that the Russian athletes should not have to pay for the decisions of their government. Others believe that, though the people did nothing wrong, the temporary

loss of certain privileges is a necessary sacrifice if it means increasing the chances of the government backing out of Ukraine. As of now, however, all we can do is wait.



The Russian women's gymnastics team celebrating its gold medal at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Paddy "The Baddy" Pimblett Under Fire for his Training...or Lack Thereof

THEO SFIKAS

Professional athletes are almost always tasked with grueling training routines and diets to keep in shape and ready to compete. For almost all athletes, these routines do not just disappear in between games or in the offseason. Instead, they typically become more intense to improve an athlete's physical capabilities and enhance their subsequent performance. When it comes to rigorous offseason training, UFC star and former Cage Warriors Featherweight Champion, Paddy "The Baddy" Pimblett participates in little to none of it.

Pimblett, a 28-year-old mixed martial artist, displays the opposite of physical discipline in the off-season. In between fights, he is known to consistently gain a drastic amount of weight from both having an unhealthy diet and a lack of training. In his own words, Pimblett would rather be "fat and happy than ripped and miserable 24/7." As close as one month before a fight, Pimblett takes on an intense training schedule and diet to lose all the weight that he previously gained.

Despite his confidence, however, Pimblett has contradicted his own words by admitting he wants to "not

look too fat." Perhaps he does not truly enjoy being fat or, more likely, does not enjoy looking fat. The criticism Pimblett receives is built on the belief that he is not dedicated nor disciplined enough to become a truly great fighter. Pimblett has openly stated that his goal – and what he believes the goal of others should be – is to simply enjoy life. While he does not enjoy "looking fat," he simply "enjoys being fat." He enjoys the carefree, happier lifestyle it brings him. As for his critics, Pimblett's success in the octagon and his rise in popularity among fans speaks for itself. Up to this point, his off-season routines have not obstructed him from becoming the well-known fighter he is today, but we have yet to see whether or not they will stop him from reaching his full potential.

THE

GOAT



GREATEST OF ALL TIME

A NEW PUBLICATION

SHOWCASING IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS AND OP-EDS



TRADITIONAL SPORTS



FANTASY SPORTS



ESPORTS

SHARE YOUR WRITING

WRITE ABOUT WHAT INTERESTS YOU

BE PART OF A TEAM

CONTACT KEVIN NIU
YNIU25@ANDOVER.EDU



Shohei Ohtani Tops CBS List Of Players For 2023: Is 2023 The Ultimate Season For Ohtani?

JOHN MORAN

Japan has just brought the World Baseball Classic title home, a title which came largely on the back of their two-way megastar, Shohei Ohtani. The Los Angeles Angels ace, who plays for Japan in the WBC, threw heat and smashed balls throughout the spring series against some of the world's best ball players. Across his 23 plate appearances, he posted 10 hits (tied for most in the WBC) and a .606 on base percentage (5th best). While these hitting stats alone would make the 28-year-old one of the best players in the world, his play out in the middle of the diamond is just as strong. Ohtani struck out 11 batters while only walking 2, all while maintaining an incredible 1.86 earned run average across 9.2 innings pitched, the most out of any pitcher in the tournament. This second statistic makes Ohtani a talent unlike any seen throughout the entire history of baseball, but you already know this; CBS

does too.

In CBS's most recent top players list, Ohtani placed as the best player in Major League Baseball, above players like Angels teammate Mike Trout, who he struck out on three swinging strikes, an occurrence that has only happened to Trout 24 times out of a total of 6,174 MLB plate appearances. Ohtani also beat out home run record breaker Aaron Judge, and young NL MVP candidate Juan Soto. While CBS has Ohtani atop the pyramid going into his sixth season, CBS analysts only placed him at sixth after his 2021 AL MVP winning season. So, what is the reason for this and why wasn't he placed into that top list spot in 2022?

The reasons behind it are many. The first is that Ohtani's career has been plagued by injury. Being a two way player of his caliber, injuries are much more likely, displayed by the fact that he missed 55 games of the 2019 season due to surgery and has struggled with smaller issues throughout the 2020 season. The

increased risk of injury prompted CBS analysts to be more cautious in ranking him as sixth in 2022. However, his high placing for this season stems from a variety of positive reasons.

Throughout the course of the 2022 season, Ohtani improved in almost every way. After his absolutely historic 2021 season, which he concluded with 46 home runs and a 3.18 ERA, he only got better. While his home run count dropped in 2022 to 'only' a count of 34 (still good enough to tie for eighth in the league), his contact improved significantly, leading to his average improving .016 points to a .273. This contact improvement has the potential to lead to a greater home run season this year.

His command over the ball also increased greatly over the offseason leading up to 2022, allowing his ERA to improve from the 2021 number of 3.18 to an absolutely stunning 2.33, while also pitching another 36 innings in the 2022 season (from 130.1 to 166). Not only that, his strikeout to walk

ratio was strong in 2022, with 219 SOs to only 44 BBs. These stats all go to show one thing: Ohtani killed it in 2022, on both sides of the ball. With all of this improvement in a singular year from 2021 to 2022, one can only think that Shohei Ohtani's trajectory will continue on to even more meteoric heights. Ohtani is poised for yet another record setting season this summer. He has made improvements in all the right places, building upon an already incredible foundation. With the added momentum of a great

victory in the WBC for his home country of Japan, as well as his own performance throughout the tournament, he will have the wind in his sails as he comes into the 2023 season. Ohtani is about to show us again why he's here, and I can't wait to see him do it.



Two NBA Titans Joel Embiid and Nikola Jokic Create a Third Straight MVP Race.

HARRY MURPHY

Led by two time reigning MVP Nikola Jokic, the Denver Nuggets began the season on fire and stayed on pace for 60 games, propelling Nikola Jokic to become an early-season favorite for the NBA MVP. While the Nuggets still remain atop their conference, they now have fewer wins than the Giannis-led Bucks and only one more win than the Joel Embiid-led 76ers. With wins

being out of the equation as a distinguishing factor, the three main candidates have to go head to head in a battle of statistics for MVP.

A common gripe for Nikola is using the idea of "voter fatigue" as a way to discredit his MVP candidacy. Voter fatigue is essentially a concept stating that voters get tired of voting the same player MVP multiple years in a row, so a player is unlikely to win the award more than two years consecutively. However, using

a flaw in the voting system is not a valid reason to discredit a qualified player's eligibility for an award. Other than that, Nikola Jokic is having a historic NBA season. Along with leading the Nuggets to the first seed in the Western Conference, Jokic is essentially averaging a triple double, becoming only the third player in NBA history to do so. He has been a tantalizing and uber efficient scorer from all three levels this season, dominating opposing players from

inside and outside the three point arc. In addition to scoring, Jokic is the best passer in the league, and his playmaking is leading the Nuggets to a top three offense in the NBA. The main and fatal flaw of Jokic is his defense. While advanced statistics say that he is a good defender, the numbers can be unreliable because they are determined using mostly plus minus lineup numbers, which are contingent on many different factors other than his performance. He is exposed in the pick and roll constantly, and also one of the worst rim-protecting bigs in the NBA. His steal and block numbers are inflated due to his gambler mentality on the defensive side of the ball and as a center, it is much harder for him to hide on the defensive side, so his lackluster defense is a glaring hole in his MVP candidacy.

On the contrary, Joel Embiid is coming off of two seasons as the runner up behind Jokic in the MVP race, and has led the Sixers to a top three seed in the Eastern Conference once again. His scoring dominance has been on full

display yet again this season, averaging 32 points per game with great efficiency, and dominating from the free throw line. While his three point percentage dipped from last season significantly, he is still a respectable threat from behind the arc. While his playmaking has improved, it remains far from Jokic, especially because James Harden takes much of the offensive burden off of Embiid. Jokic has the edge offensively, but Joel Embiid makes his case on the defensive side of the ball as he is one of the best rim protectors in the entire NBA, and has the capability to switch on occasion.

This season is shaping up to have yet another close MVP race between Jokic and Embiid (not to mention Giannis), and much of the decision will be based on voter preference. Jokic is the clearly better offensive player and Embiid is the clearly better defensive player, so it is up to how the voter interprets value on the basketball court.





The Controversy Behind NHL's Pride Night



ANNABEL CURRY

It seems like the National Hockey League (NHL) has been the center of controversy recently, especially regarding “Hockey is for Everyone” nights and Pride jerseys. Organizations started incorporating Pride Nights in 2016. In the past few years, every team has held a special night, some wearing colorful jerseys. These nights include anything from rainbow tape, auctions, and donations, to the New Jersey Devils including a drag performance in between periods.

This controversy started with Ivan Provorov on January 18, 2023. He refused to join his team in warm-ups donning a jersey made for the event. He later cited his Russian Orthodox beliefs saying, “I respect everybody, and I respect everybody’s choices. My choice is to stay true to myself and my religion. That’s all I’m going to say.” He was supported by coach John Tortorella in this decision.

Nine days later, the New York Rangers fully canceled their event – even after public promotions – with little explanation. However, they did donate to the Ali Forney Center. The formal statement was, “Our organization respects the LGBTQ community and

we are proud to bring attention to important local community organizations as part of another great Pride Night. In keeping with our organization’s core values, we support everyone’s individual right to respectfully express their beliefs.” In addition to the Rangers, the Minnesota Wild and Chicago Blackhawks fully canceled their Pride Night, this time to protect Russian players. The concern for Russian players relates to Russia’s strict Anti-gay laws. In December 2022, Russia made it “illegal to spread ‘propaganda’ about ‘nontraditional sexual relations’” in all media, including social media platforms, advertisements and movies.” This is a real concern, especially for players with family in Russia or who often return home. However, in a time when LGBTQ rights are being threatened, it is important to show strong support for members in your community.

In addition to full teams and Provorov, several players have boycotted the jerseys. Ilya Lyubushkin for the Buffalo Sabres did not participate for Russian safety reasons. The Sabres proceeded with the night, but said they understood the concern for the safety of his family and himself.

Similar to Provorov, several players have sat out for religious beliefs.

James Reimer from the San Jose Sharks refused to participate due to his Christian faith. The Staal brothers from the Florida Panthers refused for the same religious beliefs. In addition, Eric Staal claimed that he had never participated in a Pride Night – or even worn a Pride jersey – but was found wearing one with photographic evidence. This became extremely controversial during his recent refusal to participate.

While the problems and protests have been the center of attention this season, several teams have hosted great Pride Nights. A good example of this is from the best team in the league, the Boston Bruins. Led by veteran Brad Marchand, the players and organization went all out. Not only did the players use the regular rainbow tape, they also auctioned them off and donated the proceeds to Boston Pride Hockey. They partnered with the “You Can Play” project and Captain Patrice Bergeron had a box for his own organization, Patrice’s Pals. Patrice’s Pals works with hospitals and organizations to bring kids to the game. It includes a luxury sweet and a personalized scoreboard message. These are only a few of the amazing additions to the night.

This is the impact of Ivan Provorov and the NHL’s leniency in holding

organizations accountable. Players had no previous issue putting on a jersey for 20 minutes during warmups until one player said “no.” This circle of homophobia is exactly why Pride Nights are needed. From individual players to full organizations, the NHL is sending a message.

I believe that there is a misunderstanding about the meaning of Pride Night. To wear the jerseys is not to say that you

are necessarily supportive, but to say that “we as a team and organization, want to ensure everyone feels welcome to the sport.” Especially within a sport and community that has a reputation for homophobia, it is important for the people at the highest level, the leaders, to show their support towards everyone being welcomed.



The people who brought this issue together:

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Kevin Niu

MANAGING EDITORS

Daniel Seong

Amy Oku

SECTION EDITORS

Leilani Glace

Claire Cheng

Tianyi Gu

SECTION HEADS

Luke Williamson

Anthony Yang

Leo Sim

CREATIVE DIRECTORS

Rishi Rane

Theo Sfikas

SENIOR WRITER

Harry Murphy

Charles Vest



Champions League Quarter-Finals: Can Real Madrid Win Back-to-Back?



Karim Benzema celebrates his goal for Real Madrid in the Champions League round of 16 tie against Liverpool.

ALEX LEE

Football's elite European competition, the UEFA Champions League, makes its return on April 11. Following the draw in March, a combination of blockbuster ties and underdog stories should make for a memorable set of quarter-final games. Let's look at each game and some predictions on who will advance to the semi-finals.

S.L. Benfica vs. Inter Milan

Benfica returns to the quarter-finals for the second consecutive year, but after a disappointing result against Liverpool last season, they will look to advance to the semi-finals of the UCL for the first time in their club's history. Benfica currently sits ten points clear at the top of Portugal's first division and as of right now, seem unstoppable. Inter's performances, on the other hand, have worsened in recent weeks. This is their first time in the quarter-finals since the 10/11 season. While Inter's defense has been particularly strong this season under manager Simone Inzaghi, the threat of Benfica's intense style of play will prove to be too much for Inter Milan to handle. Benfica also has one of the most in-form strik-

ers in Europe, Gonçalo Ramos. Ramos has seven goals and three assists in his 12 Champions League appearances this season, and if he is as sharp as he usually is during their match, Inter will struggle.

Prediction: S.L. Benfica

Manchester City vs. Bayern Munich.

The most anticipated tie this year. Manchester City is looking to finally get their hands on European silver, but Bayern will not be an easy opponent. Bayern recently won the competition in the 19/20 season. They are in second in the Bundesliga, but their main focus will be on this matchup against Manchester City. Bayern's team is characterized by their immense experience combined with exciting young talents, such as Jamal Musiala. Their squad also features two ex-Manchester City players: João Cancelo and Leroy Sané. Manchester City do seem to be hitting their stride at the perfect time in the season, winning all of their last seven competitions. They should have a relatively full squad, with the expected return of Erling Haaland from injury. However, their recent collapses in previous UCL campaigns cannot be ignored. They conceded three late goals to lose to Real Madrid

last year, and also had notable defeats in 19/20 and 18/19 against Lyon and Tottenham, respectively. Another key aspect of UCL ties that is often ignored is which team plays the second leg at home. In this case, that team is Bayern. This means that even if they lose at Manchester City they will have the opportunity to more easily mount a comeback, just as Real Madrid did. There is no doubt that Manchester City on paper should be the clear favorite, but the intricacies of the competition will certainly make the tie more complicated than it appears. In order for City to go through, they will need to either completely put the tie away in the first leg, or have the composure and organization to hold on in Munich and not let Bayern stage a comeback.

Prediction: Manchester City

AC Milan vs. Napoli.

An all-Italian tie featuring possibly the most exciting team in Europe this year, Napoli. Napoli has run away with the Serie A trophy this season, sitting 19 points clear of second place and 23 points ahead of Milan. Napoli's aggressive playstyle, made possible by stars Victor Osimhen and Kvara Kvaratskhelia, has completely overwhelmed teams this year. Napoli picked up all

three points in their last game against Milan in a 2-1 away win in September. This is the furthest Napoli has ever gotten in the Champions League, though. Additionally, Napoli is also largely composed of young players who do not have experience in these high pressure games. Milan, in comparison, has had great success in the competition, although it was a long time ago. Despite this lack of experience from Napoli's team, Milan will still be able to cope with Napoli's electrifying, attacking prowess. When Osimhen and Kvaratskhelia were on the top of their game, no one was able to stop them this season, and Milan could find the tie quickly out of reach if they are not careful.

Prediction: Napoli

Real Madrid vs. Chelsea.

In this highly anticipated match, the current champions are put head-to-head against 20/21 winners, Chelsea. Real Madrid dumped Chelsea out of the competition last year following an impressive comeback at the Santiago Bernabéu, so Chelsea will be especially careful to not repeat the past. This year, Chelsea has had a poor season in the Premier League, barely staying in the top half of the table. Chelsea has little hope of catching up to compete for a top four

spot, so all of its attention should be on this clash against Real Madrid. Chelsea has shown glimpses of success under manager Graham Potter, but following its recent big spending transfer windows, Chelsea should really be doing better. If Chelsea is to have a chance in this game, new signings Enzo Fernández and João Félix will have to rise to the occasion. They have been key in recent weeks, rescuing points for Chelsea, but this will be their first big test in the Champions League. Like Chelsea though, Real Madrid is having a subpar season in La Liga for their standards. They are 12 points behind Barcelona, but at the same time, they are also fully focused on this UCL game. Although the league seems to be out of reach, they are still almost the same squad as last season, led by Karim Benzema and Vinícius Júnior. Real Madrid's domination in this competition cannot be understated, and even against a Chelsea team playing to its full ability, the bets are greater on Real Madrid to get the job done over two legs.

Prediction: Real Madrid



Dillion Brooks and Ja Morant: Charges On and Off the Court

PAPA PAINTSIL

The Memphis Grizzlies are a dominant young team in today's NBA. Led by Ja Morant, the Grizzlies are currently ranked as the second-best team in the Western Conference and many fans think that they have a good chance of making it to the finals. Unfortunately, Ja Morant and Dillon Brooks have recently introduced some internal problems that could negatively affect the Grizzlies' playoff run.

Wannabe Gangster

Ja Morant's recent presence in the news can only be seen as troubling by Grizzlies fans. On March 4, an Instagram Live post depicted the young superstar flaunting a pistol in a crowded area. Morant did not seem oblivious to his actions at the time. In fact, the post was released from Morant's own account. Not only were his actions a massive blow to the NBA's reputability, but he was also very close to landing himself behind bars. The previously mentioned events took place shortly after an away game against

the Denver Nuggets, so many officials believed that he brought the firearm on the team plane. If he was found guilty of this, Ja Morant could have received up to a 50-game suspension. Thankfully, it has been proven that the weapon did not belong to Morant, so his suspension was short-lived. According to Morant himself, he has also been going to counseling to "get help and work on learning better methods of dealing with stress and [his] overall well-being."

While Ja Morant's success in the NBA should not be ignored, NBA fans cannot afford to give him a free pass for these wrongdoings. According to Adam Silver, the commissioner of the NBA, "Ja's conduct was irresponsible, reckless, and potentially very dangerous. It also has serious consequences given his enormous following and influence, particularly among young fans who look up to him." Younger NBA fans look up to their players, so it is very obvious for the NBA to want its players to have a positive influence on social media. It can also be noted that Morant is only 23 years old, but with his massive media presence,

he should have done better to keep his controversial hobbies in a more private setting.

Public Enemy #1

Dillion Brooks has caused problems throughout the entirety of the NBA. He has accumulated the most technical fouls in the league, been ejected from two games (as of April 3rd), and has lost around 253,242 dollars in fines. His reputation as a dirty player is talked about more than his basketball ability, but that hasn't stopped him from starting petty arguments with other players.

One of Brooks' most notable feuds this season came about during a Cleveland Cavaliers game. After Donovan Mitchell, the Cavs' star player, came down to the ground after missing a layup, Brooks was seen hitting him in his private area. The two players got into a brawl on the court, and they both ended up ejected from the game. In a post-game conference, Mitchell exclaimed, "That's just who he is. We've seen it a bunch in this league with him. Quite frankly, I've been busting his [expletive] for years." Donovan Mitchell and other play-

ers around the league simply do not respect Brooks as a player; his antics are viewed by sports analysts as his way to stay relevant and hide his mediocre basketball abilities.

Brooks' most recent offense has further cemented his reputation as a terrible person and a bad basketball player. He has somehow discovered a way to make even the most innocent of accidents into an act of aggression. While chasing

for a loose ball during a game against the Miami Heat, Brooks accidentally crashed into the cameraman table. However, Brooks decided to push the cameraman back to the ground. The cameraman received substantial injuries from this encounter, so Brooks was fined 35,000 dollars. Many NBA greats are looking down upon Brooks' actions, and fans shouldn't encourage his behavior either.



Ja Morant (left) and Dillon Brooks (right) have led Memphis to a record of 51-31 this season.

Erling Haaland Becomes Youngest Player to Reach 30 UCL Goals

ALEX LEE

On March 14, Erling Haaland surpassed Kylian Mbappé by becoming the youngest player to reach 30 goals in the UEFA Champions League. In just 63 minutes, Haaland registered five goals against German side RB Leipzig, equalling the record for the most goals scored in a Champions League game. The game finished 7-0 to Manchester City, comfortably sending them through to the next round of the competition, where they will meet FC Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals. This proved to be a historic night for Haaland, becoming Manchester City's most prolific scorer in a single season. His next three brought his goal count to 33, with 10 of those coming at Man City, 15 at Borussia Dortmund, and 8 at RB Salzburg. He now has 42 goals in 37 games this season for City, averaging just over 1.13 goals per game. In his current form, it is almost inevitable that he will find the back of the

net in each game he plays. But what allows him to be so successful in front of goal?

In order to understand his success, it is important to first look at his physical characteristics. Haaland stands at a towering 6' 4", making him a significant aerial threat for defenders. He is also incredibly quick, reaching a maximum speed this season of 36.22 km/h, the fourth fastest in the Premier League. This combination of power and pace makes him a nightmare for the opposition's defense. If they try to play on the front foot and be aggressive, all it takes is one ball to slip through and Haaland will be impossible to catch. If the other team decides to sit deep and let Manchester City keep the ball, players like Kevin de Bruyne and Riyad Mahrez have the ability to deliver a cross for Haaland to latch onto.

While there are a number of strikers who can compete with Haaland in terms of physical prowess, Haaland separates himself from the rest

with his elite anticipation and ability to read the game. Physical strength cannot be fully utilized if the player does not take up the correct positions on the field; this is what makes Haaland so good. He has an innate ability to read the flight or bounce of the ball, and connect perfectly with it almost every time. He is constantly aware of his surroundings, so when the

time is right, he can break away from the defender and get free in the penalty area. While many believe Haaland is just getting fortunate when the ball bounces right at his feet, it is in fact the result of his astounding movement and experience, something so rare in a striker of his age.

The heights Haaland is reaching at just 22 are truly breathtaking. Each

week, he is in the spotlight with all the pressure on him, yet it does not seem to affect his game. Many young players suffer due to excessive media coverage, but Haaland keeps on scoring. With each goal, Haaland continues to break records and set a new standard for Europe's next generation of goal scorers.



Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring Manchester City's fifth goal in their 7-0 victory against RB Leipzig.