

# CSN World Cup Mini Preview

*Inside: Team USA, WC Favorites, Schedule, Soccer In Our Backyard*

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## COMMUNITY SPORTS NEWS

**BASKETBALL ★ CYCLING ★ RUNNING ★ OUTDOORS**

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#689**



New York/New Jersey Stadium (Met Life) will host the 2026 World Cup championship Sunday, July 19, at 3 p.m. on Fox/Telemundo. PHOTO: SUSANA VERA / REUTERS

## Finally Soccer Takes Center Stage

After months of contentious gripes about FIFA ticket price gouging, transit fares, tourist visas, the focus is now centered on international soccer and the 48-team World Cup, jointly hosted by Canada, Mexico and the U.S., starting June 11.

Four countries, Cape Verde, Curacao, Jordan, Uzbekistan, are making their first appearance.

Brazil is the only country that's played in every World Cup since it started in 1930. This is the 22nd edition. Brazil has won five times, Germany and Italy, four each, Argentina three including 2022. Brazil's last WC championship was 2002.

Brazil's impressive stats: 114 matches played, 76 wins, 19 draws, 19 losses. Goals

scored 237, goals allowed 109, goal differential 129. Pele won three titles (1958, 1962, 1970), making him the only player to have won three championships. The U.S. record overall is 9-8-20 in 11 appearances.

The tournament this year, the largest ever, starts with 12 groups of four battling in the group stage, with the top two teams in each group advancing to the Round of 32, knockout stage, along with eight best third place clubs. Games run through July 19.

Will the big stars Mbappe, Messi, Yamal, Dembele, Kane shine brightly, or will we meet the next generation of soccer super stars?

Soccer fans are reminded to be wary of "unbeatable WC ticket prices." Scams are common.

## WC Broadcast Notes

The 23rd FIFA World Cup June 11-July 19 will be the largest ever, with 48 teams and 104 games in 16 host cities in the U.S., Canada, Mexico.

Fox is the principal WC English broadcaster (70 games) in the U.S. 34 are on FS1. Telemundo has 92 games live in Spanish, Universo 12. All games from the Round of 16 onwards will be on the Fox broadcast network. All WC games will be streamed live in English on Fox One and Spanish on Peacock.

If you have a cable login or subscribe to Fox One, you can watch replays of any match

that aired on Fox. Without a login or subscription, replays are not available. Fox and Telemundo will show every game live, but replays require access to their streaming platforms or cable login.

Fox TV coverage will be simulcast on iHeart radio's network (all games), with key matches including all U.S. games widely available on terrestrial radio.

Key WC match dates to keep in mind:

Group Stage: June 11–June 27.  
Round of 32: June 28–July 3.  
Round of 16: July 4–7.  
Quarterfinals: July 9–11.  
Semis: July 14–15.  
WC Final: July 19.

## Fall Leagues Looking For Teams, And New Players

Chapel Hill, Carrboro, OCASL Soccer are looking for teams and free agents for fall adult leagues and cranking up registration. Leagues start in late August or early September.

Carrboro has co-rec softball (deposit required) and co-rec ultimate, Chapel Hill men's rec softball (deadline Aug. 15, deposit required), co-rec and women's volleyball, bocce.

OCASL, still taking players for summer leagues, will have a full slate in the fall (ocasl@tasl.us). Fees range from \$105 to \$115/player, plus state soccer annual dues. Players must be 18 & older.

Check the registration websites for each organization for details, costs, deadlines, start dates.

## Change In Format Coming In July

CSN will make some format changes for the next edition in July to reduce the editor's workload.

The paper will continue with a monthly feature (like Way Too Early ACC Hoops next month), road and bike race results, local league updates and rec news. The idea is to reduce the number of pages and the amount of content so he can take some time off and travel. Many of CSN's former writers have already retired. The goal is to post the edition about mid month. We'll try this for a few months.

If you're interested in writing about the outdoors—fishing, birding, hunting—let us know at joelcsn1@gmail.

## Local Celebrations For Fourth of July

Fourth of July celebrations in the Triangle will be different this year.

There's no weekend Festival for the Eno in Durham, Chapel Hill has a drone show instead of fireworks and USA 250th birthday

will be highlighted in a Raleigh festival, N.C. Freedom Fest on the Capitol grounds, 10-4, saluting arts, history, nature, culture.

Here are some July 4 free local activities: Carrboro focuses on kids with activities on Weaver Street Market lawn at 9:30 a.m. and People's Parade at 10:50 along Weaver Street to the Town Commons for children's games, contests, food, music.

An Old-Fashioned 4th of July at Horace Williams House, Chapel Hill, 1-3 p.m. features a concert of patriotic music by Village Band. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Lemonade, ice cream follow.

Together We Are America celebrates community, history and culture at River Park downtown Hillsborough 10-9 with crafts demo, live entertainment, music, food.

Chapel Hill has a drone show with 300  
**JULY 4, Continued on page 2**

## Inside: Spring Champs ACC Hoops Soccer In Our Backyard

### Carrboro 4 Miler Saturday, July 4

The first race in the '26 le Tour de Carrboro, Four on the Fourth, takes place Saturday, July 4, at 8 a.m. at McDougle School, Carrboro. It's the only race that day in the Triangle area. Register at runsignup.com.

There are also races at the Carolina Coast July 3 and 4 and in the Piedmont (Kernersville, Greensboro) and WNC on Independence Day. See race options on Page 2 this issue. Freedom 250 on July 4 is not an actual race. It was a placeholder.

### Durham School Aids Sandy Creek Park

Sandy Creek Park (101.7 acres) is a wetlands restoration project in west Durham.

David Anderson's post for the New Hope Bird Alliance:

"Sandy Creek Environmental Park and Wetlands is one of the best hotspots for bird-  
**SANDY CREEK, Continued on page 6**

## NC Road Races

### June 13

Bull City Fit Fun Run 5K, Duke East Campus, 9 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

47th Beaufort Historic Rotary Road Race 5K/10K, downtown Beaufort, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Greensboro Distilling Speakeasy 5K, Greensboro, 9 p.m., [runsignup.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

Run for Shelter 5K/10K, New Bern, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### June 14

Big Run 5K, WMSP, Cary, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### June 20

11th Cordusa 5K, WMSP, Cary, 8:50 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).  
Juneteenth Celebration 5K, Fayetteville, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

NC Blueberry Festival 5K, Burgaw, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).  
Braveheart 5K, Franklin, 9 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

11th Good Hops 5K, Carolina Beach, 8:15 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Mighty Four Miler Waynesville, 7:45 a.m., [raceroster.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

### June 27

40th Ultimate Runner (5 events: 100, 400, 800, 5K XC, 1m), Hanes Park, Winston-Salem, 4:30 p.m., [runsignup.com](#).

N.C. 4th of July Festival Freedom Run 5K, Southport, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### June 28

Independence Beer Mile, 1m novelty run, Kill Devil Hills, 11 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).  
2nd Strengthening the Path 5K, timed/untimed, WMSP, Cary, 8:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

### July 3

3rd 4 for the 4th, 4m, Avalon, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).  
Freedom 5K, Kill Devil Hills Town Hall, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Killer Dunes, 2m, 2 drive, 17&up, 10-16, Jockey's Ridge SP, Nags Head 8 a.m., [itsyourrace.com](#).

### July 4

Four on the Fourth, 4m, first race in le Tour de Carrboro, McDougle School, Carrboro, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).  
13th Firecracker 4 Miler,

Fayetteville, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

31st Rotary Club of Kernersville 4th of July 5K, cash prizes, Kernersville, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Firecracker 5K/10K, Renaissance Park, Bryson City, 7:30 p.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Asheville Independence Day 5K, downtown Asheville, 8 a.m., [raceroster.com](#).

Battle for Independence 5K, The Pointe at Barclay, Wilmington, 7:30am, [runsignup.com](#).

Fun Fourth Freedom Run 5K/10K, Greensboro, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Run White & Blue 7.4m/7.4K, Huntersville, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Tread White and Blue 5K trail, Charlotte Whitewater Ctr, 8 a.m., [whitewater.org/race](#).

### July 11

12th Cantaloupe 5K, Norlina, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

3rd Crack of Dawn Dash 5K/10K, Lenoir, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

YMCA Tri Span 10K/5K, Wilmington, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

### July 18

Beat the Heat 5K, Winston-Salem Fairgrounds, 6:30 p.m., elite race, RRCA national championship, 7:30, [runsignup.com](#).

29th Run/Walk for the Greenway 5K, Salisbury, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Muddy Dash 5K obstacle run, active.com.

### July 19

Your First Mud Run, 2m with obstacles for parents/kids, Garner, wave starts 10/10:30/11 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 25

3rd Socksquatch 8K, Gibsonville, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Biltmore Forest 5K/10K, Asheville, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

12th Meet Me at the Fountain 5K, Forest City, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

Melted Snowman 5K trail, McAlpine Park, Charlotte, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#) by 7/11.

Peach Week Fun Run 5K, Pinehurst, 8:30 a.m., [raceentry.com](#).

### July 29

Firefly 5K, Wilmington, 7 p.m., [runsignup.com](#).

## NC Distance Races

### June 14

5th RAD HM/10K, Pack Square Park, Asheville, 7 a.m., [raceroster.com](#).

### June 20

6th Gateway to the Smokies Ten Miler, Waynesville, 7:30 a.m., [raceroster.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

Run the South HM/10K McAlpine Park, Charlotte, 7 a.m., [raceroster.com](#). 5K Fri nite at 6:15. *Live & Virtual.*

12th Vertical Mile Challenge, 16m/8m, Hiddenite, 8 a.m., [ultrasignup.com](#).

### June 28

Brew Dash Trail Race 12K

/6K, Charlotte Whitewater Ctr, 6:30 a.m., [whitewater.org](#).

### July 8

12th Fleet Feet Pickle, 16m relay, Greensboro to High Point, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 11

5th Common Rush Trail Run, 5m/10m, Harris Lake CP, New Hill, 8am, [runsignup.com](#).

Sizzling Soles HM/6.5m/5K, Mills School Park, Cary, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 25

Christmas in July HM/10K /5K, Jamison Park, Winston-Salem, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

## NC Multi Sports

### June 14

10th She Tris women-only Sprint Tri, South Charlotte, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#). *Live & Virtual.*

### June 17

Brick Endurance Summer Sprint Tri Series, Race 2, Rolling View SRA, Durham, 6 p.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### June 20

3 Little Pigs Sprint Tri, Smithfield, 7:30 a.m., [event.racereach.com](#).

Big Mark Sprint Tri/Duathlon (formerly Trivium Triple Threat), Lake Cammarack Park, Burlington, 7:30 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### June 21

E3 Endurance Jr. Super Sprint Tri, 70.3 Series, Cardinal Swim & Tennis, Greens-

boro, Race 1, youth tri, ages 5-19, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 12

UNC Health Sprint Tri, Knightdale, 250y pool swim, 10m bike, 2m run, 7 a.m., [fs-series.com](#),

### July 25

23rd Kids for Kids Youth Tri, ages 7-10, 11-15, Clemmons, 8 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 26

Smiley Sprint Tri, Clemmons, 7:30am, [runsignup.com](#).

Tri for the Y Sprint Tri, Cannon YMCA, Kannapolis, 7 a.m., [runsignup.com](#).

### July 29

Brick Endurance Summer Sprint Tri Series, Race 3, 400y swim, 11m bike, 2m run, Rollingview SRA, Durham, 6 p.m., [runsignup.com](#).

## NC Bike Rides

### June 13

Tour de Blueberry, 10-50m, Burgaw, 8:30 a.m., [bikesignup.com](#).

Cup N Cone Tour, 25/50m, Panther Creek HS, Cary, 7:30 a.m., [itsyourrace.com](#).

### June 27

6th We Are One EHE Pros-

tate Cancer Walk/Run/Ride, 20-75m, Rocky Mount, 8 a.m., [bikereg.com](#).

### July 4

33rd Firecracker Ride, 30K/60K/100K, CDC Brewery, Holly Springs, 8 a.m., [firecracker.capitalcycling](#)

### JULY 4S, Continued from page 1

synchronized drones from Skyworx 7-9:45 p.m. at Chapel Hill High. Check for shuttle service and parking plans TBA.

One of the area's oldest holiday traditions is the 77th Watts-Hillandale Fourth of July Parade at Oval Drive Park, off W. Club Blvd, 10 a.m. A Children's Independence Day Parade starts at 10 at Durham Central Park downtown. Efland has a July 4 parade starting at 10 a.m.

Frederick Douglass Community Readings 10-11:30 at Stagville, Durham, and 2-4, Century Center, Carrboro.

Fireworks follow the Bulls game at DBAP. They can be viewed from nearby parking decks if you don't have a ticket. Gates open after the sixth inning if seats are available.

Mebane offers backyard games, contests, music, food trucks, fireworks, 5:30-10 at Mebane Arts & Community Center. Bring a blanket or lawn chair.

## County Considers Budget Changes

A public hearing on Orange County's proposed budget and 3.75 cent tax hike focused mostly on funding for the Chapel Hill Library and city and county public schools. Commissioners offered alternatives/suggestions to offset cuts in both, primarily more spending and a bigger tax hike. No decisions were made. They'll tackle the budget again once more before a June 16 vote.

Voters who haven't shared their views on the budget can do so at [ocboce@orangecountync.gov](mailto:ocboce@orangecountync.gov).

### Carrboro Holds Line

Carrboro cut spending and has no tax increase. Employees get a 2.5 percent pay hike.

The town rejected a campaign by 41 Carrboro taxpayers to remove Bolin Creek Greenway phases 3 and 4 (\$20M price tag) from the CIP, saying it is an approved project and critical to the town's Climate Action commitment.

Hillsborough planned to hold the line on taxes but could go with a 2 cent tax hike to meet rising costs. They're planning 3-5 percent merit pay hikes, plus \$1,000 COLA for employees.

Chapel Hill and other local communities dug deep into carryover funds to avoid raising taxes. *J.B.*

## N.C. Music Festivals

### June

10-14, High Country Jazz Festival, Boone & Blowing Rock. 12-13, Charlie Poole Music Festival, Wentworth. 12-14, Cape Fear Blues Festival, The Rusty Nail, Wilmington. 13, Bluegrass in the Grove, Wilmington.

13, Be More Grateful Festival, Charlotte.

13, Buff Mountain Festival, Hot Springs.

18-20, Willow Oak Park Bluegrass Festival, Roxboro.

19-21, Boomerang Music & Arts Festival, downtown

Boone, Fri 5:30-8:30 p.m., Sat noon-8. Free.

25-28, Dex Fest at Cat's Cradle, Carrboro, Local 506, The Cave, Lapin Bleu, Chapel Hill, [etix.com](#).

26-Aug. 2, Brevard Summer Institute & Festival, 50 concerts, Brevard.

26-27, State Annual Singing Convention, Benson.

26-28, NC Hops and Roots Fest, The Plant, Pittsboro, 5 p.m.

27-Aug. 1, An Appalachian Summer Festival, Boone.

28, Singing in Grandfather Mountain, Linville. Free. No alcohol.

### July

3-5, 16th Ocean City Jazz Festival, concerts 5:30 p.m., food trucks, special events, often highlighted on WNCU, North Topsail Beach.

10-Aug. 9, Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival, concerts 5 p.m. Sat/Mon in Highlands; Sun/Tue in Cashiers.

17, Doc & Rosa Lee Watson, MusicFest, 7 p.m., Boone.

17-18, Party on the Mountain, Beech Mountain.

23-25, Ashe Co. Bluegrass & Old Time Fiddlers Convention, Jefferson.

24-25, 9th DownEast Music Festival, 15 local/regional bands, Southern Soul Music, Rocky Mount Sports Complex.

24-25-, Hillbilly Jam, Maggie Valley.

30-Aug. 1, Mountain Dance and Fall Festival, Asheville. High School.

31-Aug. 1, Fly Around Music & Arts Festival, Lansing

## Add To Summer Outdoor Music

Add to the local scene, Fridays on the Porch, 5-8 p.m. at the Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill, with local bands. Food and beverages sold. Series began May 1, runs through June 26, breaks for a bit and resumes Aug. 21 through October. Free.

Saturdays in Saxapahaw, 5-8 p.m. at the Haw River Ballroom. Free.

The N.C. Symphony plays a patriotic pops concert celebrating America 250 on the Village Green at Southern Village, Chapel Hill, Thursday, June 18, at 8 p.m. Conductor is Sophie Mok, Taylor Trayer, vocalist. Admission is free, no ticket required.

## Community News

Carolina Performing Arts at UNC launched "All. Together. Now.," a new multiday arts festival taking place Feb. 18-21, 2027. Designed as a large-scale celebration of art, research and community, the festival will bring people together for four days of performances, conversations and creative experiences.

The Chapel Hill Community Center reopened after replacing the HVAC system and ventilation upgrades. Cost was \$317,000 including design and construction.

Fifth Bee Day is June 13, 9-12 at Durham Central Park, kicking off National Pollinator Week June 22-26.

### Upcoming CSN Issues:

#### Digital Only

July 2026—Way Too Early ACC Hoops

August 2026—Summer Sports

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Deadline 7 days in advance

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## Dave's Not Here Wins In Darts

Dave's Not Here swept six of eight singles matches and rolled 12-4 over Darty Old Men for the spring Triangle Dart League championship in Durham. Dave's was second in the regular season behind DOM.

Singles winners were Bill Jesperson, Matt Ridgeway, Douglas DiMichelle (2), Stuart Baxter (2) of Dave's, with Matt Heimbach and Michael Lovelace winning for DOM. Di-Michelle/Ridgeway, Jesperson/Chris Zaharek scored in doubles. Tom Redick/Lovelace took a doubles win for Darty. Baxter/Zaharek closed it out with Baxter hitting the match dart.

## Summer Hoops

Orange Co. Sportsplex, Hillsborough, holds a summer men's adult men's basketball league. League plays Wednesday-night only July 8-Sep. 9. Cost is \$500/team for ten weeks, free agents \$65. The registration deadline is 7/4. Contact [dwilson@oc-sport-splex.com](mailto:dwilson@oc-sport-splex.com).

## Senior Baseball

Here are standings through mid-May for Central N.C. Central Men's Senior Baseball League:

18+—TriSox 5-0, Rattlers 3-0, Flying Squirrels 4-1, Cardinals 3-1, Raleigh Oaks 2-1, Trash Pandas 2-3, Brews 1-2-1, RDU Bulldogs 1-3, Tigers 0-2, Jays 0-3.

32+—Red Sox 3-0, 32 Giants 2-1, 32+As 1-2, Team Ghost 1-4.

50+—Gray Marlins 5-0, 50 Giants 4-1, Yankees 4-2-1, Senators 3-3-1, Rockies 1-5, 50 Ghost 0-6.

Classic (60+)—45s 4-0, Classic Braves 3-0, Astros 2-0, Bulls 1-1, Classic Red Sox 0-2, Cobras 0-2, Dodgers 0-5.

## Purple Takes Ultimate Title

Top-seeded Purple downed #2 Orange 15-10 to win the Carrboro spring ultimate championship. Purple beat White 15-11 and Orange defeated Kelly 15-10 in the semis. White topped Kelly 15-8 in the consolation.

Purple and Orange both were 7-5 in the regular season.

Purple team rep Andrew Boyer said team MVPs were Christine Brookout, offense, and Chris Denis, defense.

He explained why. Christine was the field captain, called the offensive set, always wide open to get the disc whenever we needed a reset. Chris was always willing to cover a top player, communicated well, forced so many turnovers defending long throws to the end-zone.

## Buckets Edge Dynasty 74-73 In Orange Hoops

Buckets edged Dynasty 74-73 in the Orange County men's basketball spring league finals in Hillsborough as Ricky Council hit the game-winning floater and the Buckets

defense held. It was the seventh championship for Buckets, formerly Dilweg.

Council netted 25 points, AJ Smith 19 to lead Buckets, the fifth seed. Seven players scored. Shayne S. (26) and Jordan Jones (23) led seven scorers for Dynasty, the second seed. Buckets were 5-4, Dynasty 8-1 in the regular season. The game was relatively foul-free. Dynasty had 9, Buckets 7.

## Population Shifts In Triangle Area

According to recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Chapel Hill grew 2.1 percent to 63.6K from 2024 to June 30, 2025. Carrboro lost 1.5 percent to 21K, Pittsboro grew 11.3 percent to 5,100; Hillsborough was up 1.3 percent to 9,800.

Wendell in Wake County was the fastest growing town (17.3 percent) in the state and doubled to 19,687 last year. Nine of the 15 fastest growing N.C. towns were in the Triangle. Seven were in Wake.

Durham added about 4,700 residents last year. At 305,561 it's the fourth largest city in the state behind Greensboro (308,667), Raleigh (596,306), Charlotte (964,784). Charlotte gained 20,731 residents, the most of any city in the country.

Following Hurricane Helene, Asheville had 1,626 fewer residents, the biggest decline reported in the state.

## UNC Ultimate Struggles At Nationals

UNC ultimate teams had a tough time at the D-1 college championships in Rockford, Ill. UNC men (Darkside), the number four seed, went 1-3 in pool play, topped Texas 15-9 for 13th place (20 teams).

Noah Bush (10 goals) was the UNC scoring leader and Josh Singleton had 16 assists, Matthew Barcellos 14. UMass beat Carleton College 15-11 for the championship.

UNC women (Pleiades), the seven seed, went 3-1 in pool play, lost to Oregon 15-14 in prequarters and finished tied for ninth. Leading UNC scorer was Jia Zhoran (10). Bella Russell had 20 assists. Carleton College beat British Columbia 15-13 for the title.

## Sports Club Donates \$10,000 to Schools

For the third straight year, the Chapel Hill Sports Club donated \$10,000 to public school athletic programs in Orange County. Each of the five high schools received \$1,200, four middle schools \$1,000.

The donations were presented at the club's May meeting as school officials, principals, athletic directors and coaches reviewed the past year's successes and growing participation numbers. There was good-natured banter among the speakers over who they did or did not beat this year.

## Community News

Nasher Museum at Duke shows the film "BLKNWS:Terms and Conditions" in the Juneteenth Celebration Thursday, June 18, at 6 p.m. Free but reservations ([eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)) required.

For LEGO fans, Brick Universe Fan Festival, Raleigh Convention Center, downtown June 27-28. Fees charged.

Tomato Day at the Carrboro Farmers' Market is Saturday, July 11, with 70+ varieties, chef samples and special dishes.



## What Might Have Been

Cary and Atlanta were in the mix for the U.S. Soccer Headquarters four years ago when Atlanta's Arthur Blank agreed to provide \$50M for the project and help raise more to build a training center for camps, games and offices near Atlanta.

The \$250M project envisioned by Cindy Parlowe Cone of Chapel Hill, president of the U.S. Soccer Federation, recently opened on a 200-acre campus in Fayette County, Ga., south of Atlanta not far from the airport. U.S. soccer had moved from California to Colorado to Chicago to what is now the Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center. This is the first time U.S. Soccer has had all its functions—from staff headquarters to its entire training, medical and educational center to the home for every one of its 27 national teams in one place.

"We are in service to soccer to make sure the game is growing and make it the most popular participation sport in the country," Tom Norton told Forbes about opening the center ahead of the 2026 men's World Cup, the 2028 Olympics and likely the 2031 women's World Cup in the U.S. He's the general manager of the center.

"The ultimate goal is all of these things are happening at the same time. If there is a tournament, there is also referee education and coaching education. That is the unique thing this space gives. It is all here together."

## Men's College Soccer Going To Split Seasons

The Division I men's soccer NCAA season will be split between the fall and spring with the national tournament moving to the spring starting in 2027-28. The sport's oversight committee adopted the legislation, which is subject to review by the Division I Cabinet in June.

Teams will be allowed to play 18 matches from late August until the Saturday before Thanksgiving and up to 10 matches from mid-February until the start of the NCAA Tournament. Specific dates for the postseason will be determined later. The transfer window will be 15 days in the spring after the College Cup.

The current season covers 10-13 weeks from August through November with the men's College Cup in early December. The schedule is filled with weekend and midweek games, travel and little time for recovery. Schedule limit is 25 games.

There is no movement to change the women's season.

## Ex-UNC Defender Eddie Pope Honored

Eddie Pope, a defender who starred for the United States in three World Cups, won three MLS titles and scored one of the most dramatic goals in American soccer, was inducted into the N.C. Sports Hall of Fame last month with fellow UNC alum basketball legend Tyler Hansbrough.

Pope, who was a two-time All-American at UNC, broke into the national team during World Cup qualifying in the fall of 1996, after having starred for the U.S. Olympic team that summer. A few weeks before his debut, he scored the winning goal in OT, coming forward to head home a corner kick, as D.C. United won the inaugural MLS championship amidst a game-long driving rain.

He played in central defense and was a mainstay of the back line in 1998, 2002 and 2006 World Cups (where the U.S. made a run to the quarterfinals). He is a native of High

Point where he was sporting director for Carolina Core in Eastern Division of MLS Next Pro League from 2024 until he and three other top team officials were let go last month. The team was struggling on the field.

## Courage 7th in NWSL

The North Carolina Courage (4-3-3), winners of three of four in May, are in seventh place in National Women's Soccer League with 18 points. They host Seattle Reign July 4 at 6:30 p.m. at WakeMed SP, Cary.

"Not sustainable in current stadium," say team officials regarding their 10,000-seat home in Cary as they push for public funding for a new venue that would replace WakeMed SP. They're averaging 8,448 fans for five home dates this season including two May sellouts.

Raleigh developer John Kane proposed a 20,000-seat open stadium at Downtown South as part of a \$2B entertainment district on 140 acres near S. Saunders and I-40 interchange south of downtown Raleigh years ago, but conditions changed and stadium plans later were shelved.

## Woods, Carrboro Score Girls State Championships

Here's a recap on area schools:  
1A—#1 Woods Charter d. #8 Central Carolina Academy 9-0, #4 Vance Charter 7-1, #2 Falls Lake Academy 4-0 in regionals over two days, #1 Summit Charter 3-0 for the championship in Durham behind three goals from MVP Lucy Poitras. Halftime was 1-0. Woods completed an undefeated season (22-0) for their first title. They've made the finals four times in five years.

4A—#1 Carrboro d. #17 SW Randolph 9-0, #9 Clinton 8-0, #4 Ledford 3-1 in regionals and Hibriten 1-0 for the state championship in Durham. Amalie Reyes scored the game-winner in the 11th minute on an assist by MVP Ali Stuntebeck. The Jaguars finished 22-1-3 after losing the season opener, claiming their sixth title (2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019), and allowing only two shots by Hibriten.

7A—#20 Cleveland d. #13 Chapel Hill 3-1. 6A—#6 East Chapel Hill d. #11 Gray's Creek 2-0, lost 2-1 to #3 Union Pines.

5A—#17 Cedar Ridge d. #16 Orange 3-0, lost 4-0 to #1 Western Alamance. #9 Seaforth d. #24 S. Granville 9-0, lost 2-0 to #8 Croatan.

## Charlotte 6th in MLS, All Star Game July 29

Charlotte FC won two straight to improve to 6-6-3 (21 points, sixth place) in the East Division of Major League Soccer. The leader had 33.

Games are paused for the World Cup until July 16. MLS has 8 players on Team USA.

The MLS All Star Game will be played Wednesday, July 29, at 8 p.m. at Bank of America Stadium, Charlotte. Voting is under way; tickets available.

## TST Champions

Hernandez United d. Pumas de Alabama 3-2 for the men's championship at 4th (TST) The Soccer Tournament 7v7 event at WakeMed in Cary. It was another record year. Attendance for the tournament was 57,942.

Iowa Demon Hawks d. Simply Futbol FC 2-1 in the women's final and Peluche Hawks d. Sneaky FC 4-3 for the mixed championship. Each winner received a \$1M check.

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# Team USA Looks Solid

John Nieman

As I am sure you have seen, heard or read, this edition of the World Cup will be unique. It's quite clear that since two or three teams from each four-team group will advance, performance in the group stage is vital. Unlike the NCAA basketball tournament, seeding for the knockout rounds will be based not on the team's ranking but on their performance in the group stage. It will be important to feast on the minnows to secure a good seeding.

The US Men's National Team should only have Türkiye to contend with to win the group, but that is certainly not assured. While USMNT should easily prevail over Australia and Paraguay, Türkiye is a fairly strong team, though not as good as USMNT.

Group stage performance will really tell the tale on how the team does in this World Cup. Unlike previous World Cups where we had players playing in the top six leagues, (due to my Netherlands bias, I include the Dutch league with the English, German, Italian, French, and Spanish leagues) now we have established players in these leagues, some of whom are coming off seasons where they will need a good performance in the World Cup to maintain their status.

Front to back this could be the best United States team in history. Traditionally, the US is strong at goalkeeping, but, while still solid, this may be our weakest area. Our three candidates all play in MLS. Matt Freese is the presumptive starter as Matt Turner may be past his prime. They are all dependable but not playing at the level USMNT goalkeepers usually play.

On the field defensively we should be in relatively good shape, Jedi Robinson is one of the best defenders in the English Premier League and Tim Ream—who unfortunately can be counted on for at least one tragic mistake per tournament—provides great leadership and I am really pleased to see that he is Captain.

Hopefully we can have Chris Richards, another English Premier League standout, back from injury and he will provide great play.

Midfield and attack contain several of the players I referred to above. Christian Pulisic, Winston McKennie, Tim Weah, Tyler Adams, Sergino Dest, Folarin Balogun and Ricardo Pepi are solid players if they can play well in this cycle. All of them have something to prove, where in the past, this type of player would be coming to the USMNT with the attitude that they were doing the nation a favor.

Which brings me to Gio Reyna. As someone who has for 74 years of life relied on second, third and sometimes fourth chances, I am really pulling for Gio Reyna to overcome the divisive and destructive behavior he and his family visited upon the team at the last World Cup.

## Moore Square World Cup Soccer Party June 11-14 In Raleigh

Soccer Square Fan Fest is a four-day World Cup soccer party and community fan festival at Moore Square, 201 S. Blount Street, Raleigh, celebrating the opening weekend of the 2026 World Cup, June 11-14.

Among the match broadcasts: Mexico v. South Africa game June 11 will be shown live at 3 p.m.; USA v. Paraguay June 12 at 9 p.m.; Brazil v. Morocco June 13 at 6 p.m.; Netherlands v. Japan June 14 at 4 p.m.

The event will feature match screenings on a large outdoor screen, food trucks, a beer garden, lawn games, and interactive soccer-themed activities every day. On select days, meet North Carolina Courage players for fan engagement.

Soccer Square Fan Fest is free to attend. Food and drink will be available for purchase. No registration required.

I was one who was happy to see his inclusion on the team and the fact that he started against Senegal in the recent friendly was encouraging. There is no doubt that he is one of the most talented players on the roster and I hope that his lack of playing time in Europe is due to an unfair assumption of his character and that he will use this opportunity to show the world who he really is.

Then there is the all-important X Factor: the manager, Mauricio Pochettino. I am not at all bothered by the fact that he and his representatives have been exploring his alternatives after the Cup and I attribute his somewhat "interesting" comments in his press conferences to a combination of cultural and language differences.

What I am really counting on is his success guiding an under-talented Tottenham Hotspur team to the finals of the UEFA Champions League. Tournament play is completely different from League Play, and he showed his ability there.

So, what constitutes success for the US Men's National Team? There's no question that failure to get out of the group would be a disaster. The lowest expectation would be that we would win the group and play well in the first knockout phase, the Round of 32.

A win in the first knockout stage would get us to the round of 16 and I would think that a win in that round or a competitive, well-played loss would mean a satisfactory tournament. A berth in the quarterfinals with a well-played loss in that round would be the minimum for success.

Anything after that would be a huge success and enshrinement for Pochettino and the boys.

Of course, what I really am looking forward to is a well-played, well officiated, sportsmanlike tournament with as little governmental interference as possible.

Hope Springs Eternal.

## 10 Most Valuable Soccer Clubs 2026

The 50 most valuable soccer clubs in the world are worth a total of \$95.5 billion, according to Sportico.

LaLiga's Real Madrid ranks first at \$7.7 billion, while the Premier League's Sunderland and MLS club St. Louis City FC are tied for the final slot at \$675 million. The top 15 richest teams are all in Europe, but MLS landed 18 clubs overall in the top 50, followed by the EPL with 16.

Real Madrid, value \$7.7B, income last year \$1.38B, league, LaLiga.

FC Barcelona, \$6.65B, \$1.088B, La Liga.  
Manchester United, \$6.47B, \$878M, EPL.  
Bayern Munich, \$5.78B, \$971M, Bundesliga.  
Liverpool, \$5.7B, \$926M, EPL.  
Manchester City, \$5.7B, \$914M, EPL.  
Arsenal, \$5.43B, \$909M, EPL.  
Paris Saint German, \$5B, \$945M, League 1.  
Chelsea, \$4B, \$647M, EPL.  
Tottenham Hotspur, \$3.5B, \$743M, EPL.  
Charlotte FC was 34, \$755M, \$93M, MLS.

## Memorable WC Upset Results

1950, U.S. 1, England 0.  
1966, North Korea 1, Italy 0.  
1990, Cameroon 1, Argentina 0.  
2002, Senegal 1, France 0.  
2022, Saudi Arabia 2, Argentina 1.

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## Who Else Could Win It All

John Nieman

With the expanded format, this could be the most wide open World Cup in my lifetime. While everyone is focusing on France, Spain, England and Argentina, it begs the question: Who else is out there and can any other nation make it to the semi-finals?

Spain and France are easily the most talented and almost prohibitive favorites. But that does not always win the day.

Personally I think that England is overrated and has a lot of problems with personnel conflict. While Argentina is more than Messi, it's not that much more that it should be one of the top four favorites.

I believe that having Ancelotti as their manager makes Brazil far more of a contender than Argentina. Brazil may probably surprise a bunch of people if they make it to the semi-final, but I believe that, like Pochettino for the USMNT, Ancelotti is a tournament coach and that, along with a lot of very talented players, could have them go far.

A lot of fans may think that Portugal is just Cristiano Ronaldo and friends again, but they are far more than that and it should not surprise anyone for them to be in the semi-finals.

But what about some of the possible surprises? Morocco was a big surprise in the

last cup and so if they were to put together a good run this time, while being something of a surprise, it would not come as a big shock. Most of Belgium's golden generation have now moved on, but they still possess some talent and a semi-final run would be a huge upset.

Economist Joachim Klement has used a formula that uses FIFA ranking, countries' GDP, weather, and other factors to successfully predict the last three winners of the World Cup. This cycle, he predicts that the Netherlands will prevail over Portugal.

Given that son Jeff, grandchildren Burke and Larkin, and I proudly proclaim our Dutch heritage, I wholeheartedly endorse this prediction. While it is not widely shared, it is also not unthinkable. The Dutch side includes many standout players including Virgil Van Dijk, Nathan Ake, Jeremie Frimpong and Micky van den ven at the back; Ryan Gravenberch, Quinton Timber, and Xavi Simons in midfield; and Wout Weghorst, Cody Gakpo, Brian Bobbey, and Donyell Malen at the top.

Coach Ronald Koeman was a great player in his day, but hasn't really had great success as a coach. A World Cup championship would put him up there with the great Dutch pantheon of coaches which include Cruyff, Michels and Van Gaal.

So when Spain sputters out, and France destroys itself with infighting and England folds as it does every four years, and Argentina runs out of gas and has their goalkeeper ejected, I will be looking to Brazil, Portugal, Morocco, and especially the Netherlands to be in the semi-finals.

And I hear good things about Japan, but I just don't know enough to put them up there. Just really looking forward to an exciting World Cup with a whole bunch of added games.

## Charlotte Defender Ream U.S. Captain, Berhalter On Roster

Tim Ream, 38, one of five center backs for Team USA and team captain, has a Tar Heel connection.

He's a defender with veteran presence and captains Charlotte FC (MLS) where he joined in 2024 after time with Bolton and Fulham (PL), Red Bulls (MLS). Ream was first called up to USMNT in 2010 and has 91 caps and one goal. A native of St. Louis, he played soccer at St. Louis University. He was named captain prior to the exhibition with Senegal in Charlotte. Ream and Pulisic are among 13 returnees from the U.S. team in 2022.

Another U.S. player with a Tar Heel connection is Sebastian Berhalter, 25, a midfielder. He played one season (2019) at UNC before turning pro. He's now with the Vancouver Whitecaps (MLS). His father, Gregg, a UNC alum, was manager of the 2022 WC team and now heads the Chicago Fire (MLS). He's part of FanDuel Network's Coaches' Corner show with former coaches Bruce Arena and Bob Bradley (ten shows) in June.

theathletic.com



## World Cup Favorites

France, Spain, Argentina, England, Portugal are among favorites to win the 2026 World Cup. The WC organizers devised a schedule where the likely leaders won't meet until later rounds.

Heading the list are France, known for attacking depth, led by Kylian Mbappe (12 goals in last two WCs), Ousmane Dembele. They were winners in 2018 and runnerup in 2022 under manager Didier Deschamps who retires after the WC. They take on Iraq, Norway (led by super scorer Erling Haaland), Senegal in Group I.

Mikel Merino, Mikel Oyarzabel, Jeremy Pino power Spain. Luis de la Fuente debuts as manager along with super star Lamine Yamal on the wing when he returns after injury. Spain lost in the WC 22 final and won Euro 24. They play Uruguay, Cabo Verde, Saudi Arabia in Group I.

For England expectations are always high. They are led by the scoring of Harry Kane, Declan Rice. They were second in Euro 24, overwhelming in WC qualifying 8-0, 22 goals scored, no goals allowed, Three Lions are playing more exciting soccer under new manager Thomas Tuchel. They face Croatia, Ghana, Panama in Group L.

## FIFA Men's Soccer Rankings

1. France, 2. Spain, 3. Argentina, 4. England, 5. Portugal, 6. Brazil, 7. Netherlands, 8. Morocco, 9. Belgium, 10. Germany.

WC host countries: Mexico 15, USA 16, Canada 30.

The next rankings update will be published June 10.

## Soccer Notes

USWMNT downed Senegal 3-2 in Charlotte in the next-to-last tuneup before the World Cup. Attendance was 57,741. The U.S. was 4-2 in the last six friendlies ... Three countries have WC base camps in North Carolina: Norway at UNC-Greensboro, Germany at Wake Forest Univ., Scotland at Charlotte FC ... Team USA average player age is 26 years, 332 days, about a year older than the 2022 squad ... A record number (11) referees from Canada and the U.S. including an all-female crew will work the World Cup ... The 2030 World Cup will be jointly hosted by Morocco, Portugal and Spain ... The next FIFA Women's World Cup will be held June 24-July 25, 2027, in Brazil (32 teams) ... Shakira, Madonna, BTS are the first WC Final halftime Show July 19 in New Jersey ... ESPN ranked WC teams from 48 (Qatar) to 1 (France). The U.S. was 22, Mexico 24, Canada 25 ...

Defending WC and 2024 Copa America champ Argentina remains in the mix due to superstar Lionel Messi (sixth WC) and nine returning starters. Only two teams have ever repeated (Italy and Brazil) with World Cup championships. Polished passers and a stingy defense are their hallmarks, They meet Algeria, Austria, Jordan in Group J.

Led by the scoring of Cristiano Ronaldo and manager Robert Martinez, Portugal is a strong challenger. The supporting cast of Joao Neves, Vitinha, Bruno Fernandes gives the club a high ceiling for Ronaldo's finale. They play possession soccer and face DR Congo, Uzbekistan, Colombia in Group K. *J.B.*

## Odds-makers' Picks

*(Sporting News, 6/3)*

Spain 9/2, France 5/1, England 7/1, Brazil 9/1, Argentina 10/1, Portugal 10/1, Germany 14/1, Netherlands 20/1, Belgium 33/1, Norway 33/1.

## FIFA World Cup Appearance Records and Interesting Facts

Most World Cup matches played (all time): Lionel Messi holds this record with 26 matches, surpassing Lothar Matthäus (25) during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Most consecutive World Cups played: Antonio Carbajal (Mexico, 1950-1966) and Lothar Matthäus (Germany, 1982-1998) both appeared in five consecutive World Cups—a feat matched by Messi, Ronaldo, Guardado and Ochoa (2006-2022).

Most knockout-stage appearances: Messi also holds this record, having appeared in the most World Cup knockout matches of any player—a reflection of Argentina's consistent deep tournament runs across his career.

Longest gap between first and last World Cup: Antonio Carbajal of Mexico played his first World Cup in 1950 and his last in 1966—a span of 16 years. Lothar Matthäus matched this from 1982 to 1998.

Most goals AND most appearances: Miroslav Klose's combination of 24 appearances and 16 goals is uniquely dominant—no player comes close to matching both records simultaneously.

Most World Cup appearances scored at: Cristiano Ronaldo is the only male footballer to have scored at five different World Cups—Germany 2006, South Africa 2010, Brazil 2014, Russia 2018, and Qatar 2022.

Most appearances by a defender: Paolo Maldini's 23 World Cup matches for Italy remain the all-time record for any player who spent the majority of their career in a defensive position.

## UNC Outlines ACC Hoops Opponents

The UNC men's basketball team will play home-and-away games in 2026-27 against Duke and Louisville. The outline for 18 conference games was announced by the ACC. Dates will be provided in September.

Carolina will play seven ACC opponents only in Chapel Hill and another seven only on the road. The Tar Heels are not scheduled to play Clemson in the regular season.

The seven ACC teams scheduled to play the Tar Heels only in Chapel Hill are Cal, Georgia Tech, Miami, NC State, SMU, Stanford and Virginia.

Carolina will play Boston College, Florida State, Notre Dame, Pitt, Syracuse, Virginia Tech and Wake Forest only on the road.

This season will mark the first time the Tar Heels are not scheduled to play Clemson in the regular season since 1950-51 and the first time UNC will not play at NC State since 1947. The game at NC State scheduled for Feb. 26, 1947, at Thompson Gym was canceled minutes before the opening tip by the fire marshal due to too many fans in the gym.

Duke plays UNC and Virginia twice, but not Va. Tech. N.C. State plays Cal and Wake Forest twice, but not Syracuse.

## Basketball Notes

Top transfer classes from BustingBrackets.com (ACC schools only): Louisville 1, Miami 4, Duke 6, UNC 9. Honorable Mention: Pitt and N.C. State ... Former UNC players Deon Thompson and Brandon Robinson joined Michael Maleone's staff at UNC ... Three ACC schools, Louisville, Miami, Notre Dame, will be part of 24-team Players Era Championship Thanksgiving tournament where they'll play multiple games in Las Vegas and get NIL checks ... Plans for the Diamond Cup, an eight-team event involving UNC, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan among others, are being considered for the start of the '27 season. Teams would play an exhibition and regular season contest at neutral sites with reported million dollar payouts, according to CBS Sports Network. One of the folks behind the idea reportedly was former St. John's Athletic Director Mike Cragg, who spent more than 30 years with Coach K at Duke ... Way Too Early pre-season rankings from the Associated Press: Florida 1, Michigan 2, Duke 3, Virginia 10, Louisville 11, Miami 20, UNC 23 ... Duke hired Alexander Powell, former director of basketball innovation for Portland Trail Blazers, as executive director of basketball, and KJ Conklin, formerly of G League Austin Spurs, as assistant coach ... UNC hosts Arkansas and Duke plays Florida in the ACC/SEC Challenge...

## Community News

Watch Parties for the Carolina Hurricane Stanley Cup road games will be held at the Lenovo Center, the team's home arena, in Raleigh (and most every tavern in the region). Parking is free. Event cost is \$10/person, tickets required, with proceeds to Carolina Hurricane Foundation.

Chatham County celebrates America 250 Saturday, June 27, 10-2 indoors at the Chatham Ag Center on US 64W with music, performances, food trucks, activities for kids. Free.

Alliance for Historic Hillsborough has two Revolutionary Era Walking Tours on July 4, starting at the Visitor Center downtown, 10-12 and 2-4 p.m. Tickets are \$20 plus tax at zeffy.com.

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## NICA Race 6, Finale

Three area cyclists scored firsts at NICA Race 6, at Anglers Park, Danville, VA. There were 540 riders for the tenth season finale. Here are the top local finishers:

5th grade boys: Kai Hastings, Smith MS, second, 1 lap, 16:02, 45 finishers.

6th grade girls: Birdie Pedroza, Chatham Co. Chaos, second, 1 lap, 15:38, (17).

7th grade boys: Atticus Oakes, McDougle MS, second, 1 lap, 14:40; Owen Foster, Chatham Co. Chaos, third, 14:57 (63).

JV2 girls: Olivia Foster, Chatham Co. Chaos, first, 2 laps, 31:06 (21).

JV3 girls: Emma Paul, East Chapel Hill High, second, 1 lap, 18:06 (11).

MS-A boys: Gramm Walters, Chatham Co. Chaos, fourth, 2 laps, 27:29 (27).

Varsity boys: Jesse West, East Chapel Hill High, first, 4 laps, 50:46 (19).

Varsity girls: Ada Watson, Chapel Hill High, first, 4 laps, 54:19 (6).

Points results in this race only: high schools, leader 2173, East Chapel Hill, eighth, 1973, Chapel Hill High, 12, 1850, Chatham Co. Chaos, 28, 983; Smith MS, 27, 481.

Middle schools: leader 2057; Chatham Co. Chaos, third, 1979; Smith MS, 27, 1074; Orange Co. Comp. 28, 911; Phillips MS, 29, 655; Culbreth MS, 21, 434.

Overall final series results for high schools: winner 12,748 points; Chapel Hill High, eighth, 11,679; East Chapel Hill, 12, 11,160; Chatham Co. Chaos, 23, 7,567; Orange Co. Comp. 35, 3,569; Smith, 37, 2,931.

Middle schools, winner, 12,166; Chatham Co. Chaos, tenth, 10,884; McDougle, 22, 8,202; Orange Co. Comp, 25, 6,594; Smith, 27, 6,513; Culbreth, 30, 4,289.

## Groman Second At College Nationals

Adrian Groman, 3:23:39, UNC Cycling, finished second in the road race at the USA Cycling Collegiate Road Nationals in Madison, WI. WT was 3:21:22 (84 finishers).

His teammates: Owen Cole, UNC Cycling, 9, 3:28:53, +7.31; Will Swofford, UNC Cycling, 39, 3:31:41, +10.18; Cadence Stephens, 80, 3:42:00, +20.56.

In the criterium (89 riders), Stephens, 11, 1:18:32. WT was 1:18:32. Groman, 21, 1:18:32, +0; Swofford, 70, 1:20:56, +2.23; Cole, 71, 1:20:56, +2:23.

UNC Cycling was first in the team time trial (CSN, May 2026), and was 15 overall among 72 teams in omnium points (76) for the season. They earned 36 points in CX and 40 in road race, but none in track or MTB. The leader had 226.

## Swofford, Cole Post N.C. TT Wins

Will Swofford (50:08) and Owen Cole (41:39), both of Chapel Hill, posted wins in Eddie Merckx cat 1-4 novice and M cat 1-2 races at Carolina Cycling Association Time Trial Championship in Wade.

Brian Attis, 47:57, Chapel Hill, was first in M cat 1-4 Masters 50+.

### Winston Race

Oliver Jensen of Chapel Hill was third M cat 3/4 at Winston-Salem Gears & Guitars. (11 finishers).

## New Bern Ride For MS

The annual Bike MS—Historic New Bern Ride is back Sep. 19-20, a change in date.

Cyclists of all levels will ride scenic routes from 30 to 100 miles on flat roads, with a special gravel option available on Saturday through Croatan National Forest. All rides start from Union Point Park. Riders can save 15 percent on registration by using discount code joinme at bikems.org.

Bike MS: Tour to Tanglewood takes place Sep. 26-27 in Clemmons.

## Hill Leads Age Groupers

Alex Hill, age 19, of Hillsborough had the best time (1:06:29) for age groupers at Triangle Sprint Triathlon, New Hill (248 finishers, up from 226 in 2025). Hill was first 16-19.

Chapel Hill award winners: Mac Warwick, second 25-29, 1:29:04; Will Arnold, second 35-39, 1:26:39; Terence Costello, first 45-49, 1:12:49; Leroy Brace, Mebane, second 60-64, 1:32:34; Reilly Jermyn, Hillsborough, first 16-19, 1:21:36; Ashley Arey, second 40-44, 1:37:06; Kristen Stolka, Carrboro, second 45-49, 1:32:38; Elizabeth Skiba, first 50-54, 1:23:31.

Allison Lo Piccolo, Pittsboro, was second female in advanced division (12), 1:14:38. WTs were 1:06:20 and 1:12:16. Distances were 750m swim, 15.7m bike, 5K run.

## Running of the Bulls 8K

Megan Cooke (31:09) of Hillsborough was first masters female at the 18th Running of the Bulls 8K in Durham. WTs 25:03 and 28:02. There were 1411 finishers, down from 1430 last year for the area's last big race of the spring.

Award winners from Chapel Hill included Lindsay Lucier, first 30-39, 31:49; Erica Brecher, third 40-49, 35:01; Joaneke Fleischauer, Hillsborough, first 60-69, 39:31; Kerry-Ann da Casta, second, 41:55; Sharon Roggenbuck, Hillsborough, first 80+, 1:20:48; W. Clough, first 12&U, 36:03; Neal Duncan, third 20-29, 27:50; Nate Le Tavec, second 30-39, 28:10.

## Run To Remember

Local age group winners at Run to Remember 6 miler in Cary (41 finishers) were Theresa Reece, Chapel Hill, 65-69, 55:08; Sharon Roggenbuck, Hillsborough, 85-89, 1:40:42; Johannes Renselink, Mebane, 60-64, 1:07:15. WTs were 47:28 and 55:08.

## Godiva Honors

The Carolina Godiva TC honored three at a May awards banquet in Chapel Hill:

Male Runner of the Year—Andy Snipes, Durham; Female Runner of the Year—Laura DeWald, Carrboro; Volunteer of the Year—Ben Barker, Durham.

## Hecker First In Ten Miler

Lisa Hecker (1:34:43) of Mebane took first at seventh Zen Squirrel Trail Ten Miler at Briar Chapel, Chapel Hill, and Katharine Potsakham (1:36:34) of Chapel Hill second. Men's WT was 1:42:14 (76 finishers, up from 34 last year).

Age group winners from Chapel Hill: Michele Palapoli, Hillsborough, 30-39, 2:01:54; Lauren Georges, 40-49, 2:01:11; London Crowling, 14-19, 1:27:55; Daniel Gundler, Pittsboro, 50-59, 1:35:07; Alan Reed, Carrboro, 60-69, 2:55:03.

### 5 Mile Results

Matt Straub (32:54) of Carrboro and Becca Krouse (43:15) of Chapel Hill were the 5 mile winners (110 finishers, up from 84). Curtis Wheeler (34:42) of Chapel Hill and Marianne Elefant (45:40) of Cary were second. Kim Ritola (45:50) of Chapel Hill was third.

Age group leaders Kimberly Kylastra, 60-69, 1:00:20; Kathy Pettiss, 70+, 1:30:31; Hansen Su, 50-59, 39:15; Ed Pettiss, 70+, 1:01:13.

Chapel Hill runners Ben Whitney (15:39) and Leigh Denick (20:01) were the leaders in the 2m (51).

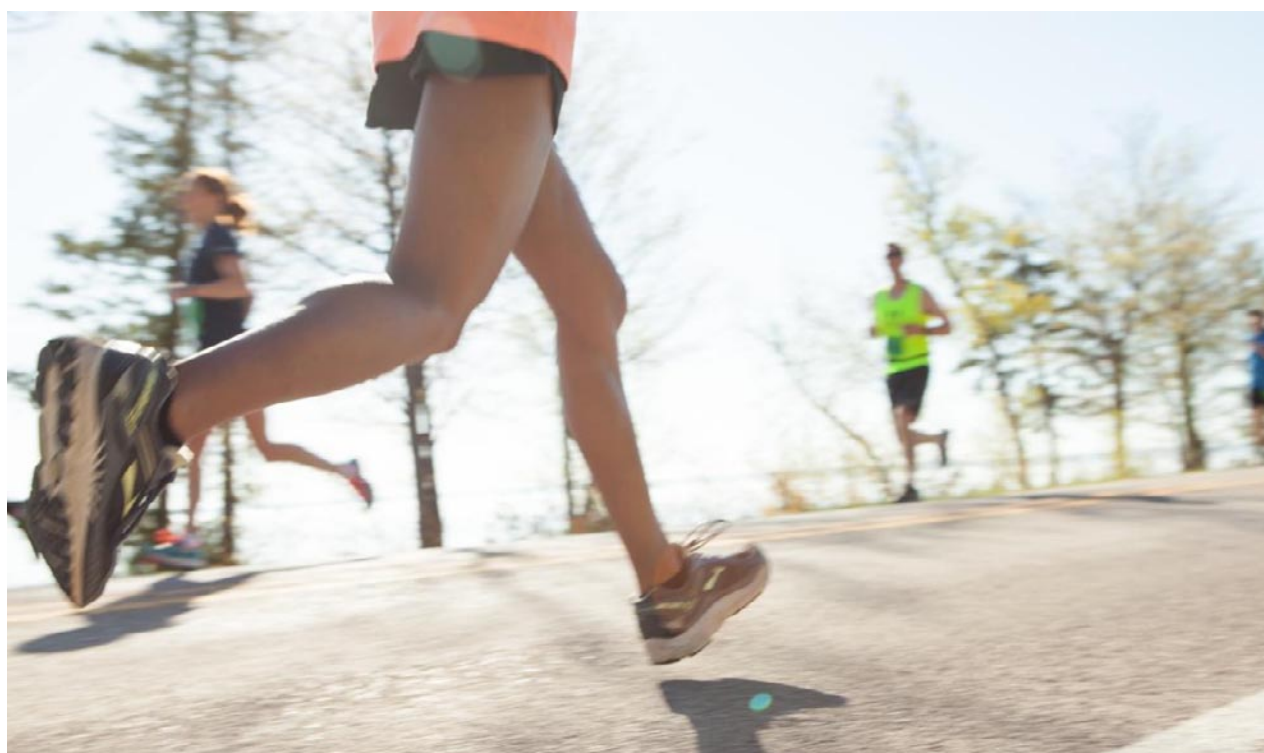
## Open Water Challenge

Jordyn Homoki (1:04:09) of Chapel Hill was third woman at Triangle Open Water Challenge 2.4 miler at Vista Point, Jordan Lake. WTs were 50:31 and 57:42 (33 finishers). Water temp was 73 degrees May 2, about the same as last fall's Open Water Championship. This year it will be Oct. 4 at Vista Point.

Jonathan Dunkman, Chapel Hill, was first 40-44, 1:06:14; Kasey Linton, Chapel Hill, third 20-24, 1:25:54.

Jenna Halenda (30:30) of Chapel Hill, was third woman in the 1.2 miler (48). WTs were 25:01 and 28:29.

Chapel Hill award winners: Michael Cotton, first 20-24, 30:48; Allison Lopiccio, Pittsboro, first 30-34, 33:41; Scout Correa, first 20-24, 34:42; Ashley Arey, first masters female, 35:45; Evan Hill, Hillsborough, first masters male, 35:35; Damien Fages, second 50-54, 42:02; Melanie Brouillette, second 25-29, Okshya Shama, second 40-44, 1:01:56.



## Running News

Jason Liss (19:46) of Chapel Hill was the men's winner at Lookin for a Cure 5K in Durham (90). Bailey Webb of Hillsborough was first 40-49, 24:44.

Jack Jun (19:05) and Laura Bendz (23:57), age 13, were the winners at Bee Amazing 5K in RTP (225). Hometowns N/A.

Jayden Boom (18:36), age 15, of Pittsboro and Kelsey McCeney (21:36) were the winners at the Memorial Day 5K in Siler City (175 finishers).

Sage Hengen (17:56) of Carrboro was the men's winner at Stride for Service 5K in Elon (62 finishers).

Neal Duncan (16:17) of Chapel Hill took first at Run for Love 5K at Dix Park, Raleigh (1667). Naomi Hirsch (21:35) of Chapel Hill was first 19&U.

Myungcheol Kwon of Chapel Hill was second 40-49, 1:49:02, at 7th Lake Norman Forest Run HM in Statesville (197). WT was 1:31:22.

Luke Moland of Chapel Hill was second 50-54 at Badin Lake Sprint Tri (65). WT was 1:03:18.

## Miller Scores In Brick Tri

Matthew Miller (46:14) of Chapel Hill was the leader at first Brick Endurance Summer Series Sprint Tri in Durham (68 finishers). Women's WT was 46:52 for 400y swim, 11m bike, 2 m run at Rolling View SRA at Falls Lake.

Leading Chapel Hill finishers: Michael Cotton, 50:49; Simone Veale, 51:53; Craig Helms, 1:00:36; Greta Leitz-Najarian, 1:02:27. Race 2 in the series is June 17 at 6:30 p.m.; race 3 July 29.

## DiChiara Leads Big Run 5K

Jeffrey DiChiara (17:09) of Chapel Hill was first male at the Big Run 5K in Hillsborough (262 finishers, down 3 from last year). Aidan Scott (17:46) of Chapel Hill was second and Caleb Wyninger (18:30) of Hillsborough third.

Women's winner was Mia Paolina (18:55) of Burnt Hills, NY, with Abbigayle Morrell, Hillsborough, 19:56, second, and Ella McCall, 16, of Hillsborough, 20:23, third.

Chapel Hill age group winners: Elore Minter, Chapel Hill, 11-19, 21:42; Lincoln Gallaher, 11-19, 18:51; Elefthérios Mainas, Carrboro, 30-39, 21:50; Ashley Patterson, Pittsboro, 40-49, 22:41; Joseph Stone, Hillsborough, 40-49, 21:40; Stephanie MacKenzie, Hillsborough, 50-59, 23:20; Stephen Greeham, 50-59, 22:58; Andreas Maetgel, 60-69, 24:22; Joan Boone, Efland, 75+, 44:21; Rich Will, Pittsboro, 70+, 28:28.

## Bull Moon 5K Scratched For 2026

Bull Moon 5K, a summer twilight race in Durham, is not happening this year, organizers said.

Durham Bulls increased their price to use the stadium concourse (and host the event) from \$500 to \$5,000 and it is not economically viable, said race director Bruce Bokish of Precision Race, adding "that's a shame."

Last year's race and block party raised money for MS Events, The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, ALS United North Carolina and the fight against neurological diseases. Previous races supported Habitat for Humanity and included a bike ride that was discontinued last year.

## Early Fall Distance Races In Triangle

### September

12, Cane Creek Mtn. Run, HM/10K, Snow Camp.

### October

4, Cary Greenways Tour M/HM/10K/5K.

4, Historic Hillsborough HM/5K.

10, ATT 10/4m, Apex.

17, Rootrock Trail Run HM/10K/5K, Briar Chapel, Chapel Hill.

18, Bull City Race Fest HM/5m, Durham.

25, RDC M/HM/10K/5K, Durham

## High School DQ Overruled

A high school runner's disqualification for celebrating a state championship-clinching victory as he crossed the finish line in Greensboro was overturned.

The N.C. High School Athletic Association ruled that the Mallard Creek High School boys' track team will be recognized as class 8A co-state champions (with Durham's Jordan HS), and also co-winners of the pivotal 4x400-meter relay race from which athlete Nyan Brown had been disqualified.

"We are grateful for the decision," Mallard Creek principal Jared Thompson said in a statement in which he praised appeals board panelists and NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker "for their thoughtful deliberation, professionalism, and commitment to ensuring a fair and principled outcome."

## Old Chatham Hosts Girls Jr. Nationals



Old Chatham Golf Club in Durham will host the 77th USGA Girls Jr Championship July 13-18. The tournament is for girls U19 with a handicap index of 9.4 or less.

Volunteers are needed for the tournament. Check the club's website to sign up.

### SANDY CREEK, Continued from page 1

ing in Durham, as well as a great place to walk and view nature. Most of you are aware there was an effort to build a five-story apartment complex (140 units) on Pickett Road, abutting and uphill from the Park.

"It would have been a terrible disruption to Sandy Creek and that whole area. Many of us worked to stop the rezoning, but it passed 4-3 by Durham City Council in March 2025, and a developer began planning a project there. But the project stalled.

"And now we have learned that the neighboring Durham Academy has just closed on purchasing the 16 acre property!

And thus saved it from development. There will be some minor work there, but without disruption to this environmentally sensitive area, and nothing like what might have happened. This is a wonderful outcome and I know we all share a sense of relief and are very thankful to Durham Academy."

**ADVERTISE YOUR RACE HERE**  
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## Free Fishing Day July 4

On July 4, anyone in North Carolina—residents or visitors—can fish for free in all public waters, including coastal waters, from midnight until 11:59 p.m., without needing a state fishing license. All other fishing regs apply, such as length and daily possession limit.

A license is required for all fishers 16 and older on all other days.

### Fishing Pier Repaired

The fishing pier at University Lake, Carrboro, was repaired and rebuilt following damage from Chantal last summer. The lake operates Friday-Sunday 6:30-6, for fishing and boating (no gas engines), and will be open holidays Juneteenth, July 4 and Labor Day.

### Lake Michie Closed

Durham's Lake Michie closed June 5 due to low water levels. They will reopen for fishing and boating when the lake level rises to a safe level, city officials said.

## City Rec Facilities Modify Schedules

Chapel Hill recreation facilities will have new hours starting July 6:

Community Center, 10-6 Mon-Fri, 9-6 Sat, 12-5 Sun.

Homestead Aquatic Center, 6-8 Mon-Thu, 6-7 Fri, 10-6 Sat, 12-5 Sun.

Hargraves Center, 10-8 Mon-Fri, 9-6 Sat, 12-5 Sun.

AD Clark outdoor pool, Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5.

Teen Center, 4-9 Mon-Sat, closed Sun.

Hours were adjusted to better meet the community's needs, based on previous usage. They'll open a little later, close a little earlier, city rec officials said, and they expect to save \$70,000 over the next budget year.

Most facilities will be closed Juneteenth, July 4 and Labor Day.



TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY

## Old Creedmoor Nature Preserve

The Old Creedmoor Nature Preserve, 65 acres with 4 miles of mountain bike and hiking trails north of NC 98 between Wake Forest and Durham near Falls Lake, opened in late May as Triangle Land Conservancy's eighth outpost.

The land conservancy paid \$1.6 million for the property—projected as another rural

subdivision—with money from two government funds: the City of Raleigh Watershed Protection Program and the Wake County Open Space Program. Another \$312,000 came from TORC (Triangle Off Road Cyclists), the state's Great Trails grant program, The Caterpillar Foundation and The Barnhill Family Foundation to improve the trail network and build a gravel parking lot, according to the N&O.



## Archery Zone Plan Proposed

NCWRC invites the public to comment on a proposal that would change a 711-acre tract in the northern portion of the Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land from general game land to archery zone.

A public input meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, at the Butner Town Hall, 415 Central Ave. NCWRC staff will accept public comments and answer questions during the meeting. No registration required.

The property is owned by the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture. The change reflects an increase in farm operations and expansion of the department's adjacent Umstead Beef Unit Research Station. The archery zone designation limits hunting to archery equipment and falconry only.

## Carolina Panthers

Here's the NFL schedule, with 3 prime-time games and four pre-season contests, for the Carolina Panthers:

Preseason, Aug. 6, Hall of Fame Game, Arizona, Canton, OH, 8 p.m., NBC; Aug. 15, at Buffalo, 1 p.m.; Aug. 21, at Jacksonville, 7:30 p.m.; Aug. 28, Houston, 7 p.m. Three preseason games are on Panthers TV Network.

Regular Season, Sep. 13, CHICAGO, 1 p.m., Fox; 20, at Atlanta, 1 p.m., Fox; 27, CLEVELAND, 1 p.m., Fox.

(Sun) Oct. 4, DETROIT, 8:20 p.m., NBC; 18, at Philadelphia, 1 p.m., CBS; 25, TAMPA BAY, 1 p.m., Fox (Thur) 29, at Green Bay, 8:15 p.m., Prime Video.

Nov. 8, DENVER, 1 p.m., CBS; 15, at New Orleans, 1 p.m., Fox; 22, BALTIMORE, 1 p.m., Fox; (Mon) 30, at Tampa Bay, 8:15 p.m., ESPN.

Dec. 6, at Minnesota, 4:25 p.m., CBS; 13, NEW ORLEANS, 1 p.m., CBS; 20, Cincinnati, 1 p.m., Fox; TBD, Week 16, at Pittsburgh.

Jan. 3, SEATTLE, 1 p.m., Fox; TBD, Week 18, TBD, ATLANTA.

Panther opponents had a .521 win percentage last season.

## Outdoor Notes

### HUNTERS HONORED

Two local hunters were honored at the Dixie Deer Classic in Raleigh for prize-winning deer taken in Chatham and Orange County last year.

Corey Frye's Chatham Co. buck, scored at 156 6/8, won Best By Bow N.C. Non Typical Male Award. Megan Seevers won Best By Muzzeloder N.C. Typical Female Award for her Orange County buck, scored at 140 3/8.

### BODY RECOVERED

Chatham County authorities recovered the body of a Chapel Hill man from Jordan Lake near the NC 751 bridge last month. The body was identified as David Schultz, 24. An investigation continues.

### SUMMER PROGRAMS

Raleigh's Lake Wheeler offers learn the fishing basics for adults Aug. 1, 9-11:30 a.m., family fishing instruction July 11 and Aug. 8. Classes are \$10 each. Register at WebTrac/Raleigh. Lake's open Juneteenth and July 4.

### JORDAN CLEANUP

Jordan Lake SRA holds a summer cleanup Sunday, June 28, 6-8 p.m. at Seaforth swim beach and is looking for volunteers to help collect trash prior to the holiday weekend. If you plan to attend, email halle.talcott@ncparks.gov (preferred, not required).

### DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Orange/Durham/Chatham/Wake counties are facing extreme drought conditions (57.2 percent of state) in early June, 36.2 percent extreme drought, 6.2 moderate drought.

OWASA Water Watch reported local reservoirs were 81 percent full June 1, despite limited rainfall.

### FISHING FESTIVAL

The Fintastic Fishing Festival will be held Saturday, June 13, at the Pechmann Fishing Education Center in Fayetteville, as part of the National Fishing & Boating Week celebration. Families with children 15 and younger are invited to enjoy a full day of fishing fun, hands-on learning and outdoor adventure.

With over 12 interactive exhibits and demonstrations, this is a good way to learn about fishing and the role anglers play in conserving North Carolina's fisheries.



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# Another View, Mine John Nieman

Let the games begin!

We need an entertaining and exciting World Cup in this country now more than ever. Unfortunately, it is being put on by FIFA, without doubt the most corrupt sporting organization in the world and always has been. It is no wonder that it is in syncopatic rhythm with the most corrupt United States administration in the history of our great country.

Instead of taking advantage of an opportunity to popularize soccer in the one large industrial nation where it is not the most followed sport, FIFA has instead decided to use this as an opportunity to grab as much cash as possible from the elites who have no interest in the sport. Thus depriving the general public in the United States and the sporting fans of the world of the opportunity of witnessing this great event in person. And that is with the full support of our government.

And the vision of President Trump parading around lift-

## UNC Football 12 Noon Kickoffs

Welcome to 12 noon football games.

UNC will play TCU at 12 noon Aug. 29 in Dublin, Ireland (ESPN); host East Tennessee State, Sep. 12 at 12 noon, ACC Network, and travel to Clemson, Sep. 19, for a 12 noon kickoff, ESPN. That's three for three.

Carolina football will celebrate the 100th season of Kenan Stadium with a series of special events, facility enhancements and fan experiences to honor 100 years of one of the most picturesque venues in the country. The 100th season celebration will pay tribute to some of the most memorable moments at Kenan, as well as provide fans with an upgraded experience on gamedays.

Among the biggest upgrades will be two new Daktronics videoboards on the east and west end of the stadium, as well as a new sound system with state-of-the-art speakers.

## June Standings

### Chapel Hill Co-Rec Volleyball

Team Aiden 7-0, Volleyballs 6-1, YMCA Aces 4-3, Notorious DIG 4-3, How I Set Your Mother 4-3, STCCU Stuffu 2-5, Spence Perry 0-7.

### Chapel Hill Women's Volleyball

Spikeopaths 5-1, Triangle Thunder 4-2, Volley LLamas 3-3, Kiss My Ace 0-6.

Final

### Carrboro Co-Rec Softball

Speakeasy Spirits 9-3, Street Walkin Cheetahs 8-4, Fighting Squids 5-7, Haw River Chuggernauts 2-10.

### Carrboro Co-Rec Ultimate

Purple 7-5 14, Orange 7-5 14, Kelly 6-6 12, White 4-8 8.

### Ocasl@tasl Soccer, Spring

**Over 30**—Mountain Goat FC 8-1-1 25, Tugboat Depot 7-2-1 23, The Federal 7-1-2 22, Still Limpin 3-1-6 10, Durham FC 2-1-7 7, Matienzo FC 0-0-10 0.

**Anderson Over 40**—Federal 4.0 8-1-1 25, Beercelona 8-0-2 24, Stroke City 6-1-3 19, Old Castle United 4-1-4 13, Boca Seniors 3-1-5 10, Boot Room FC 2-0-7 6, Wrexhams-tring 0-0-9 0.

**Over 50 (8v8)**—Athletico Decrepito 6-2-1 20, TarDrewblers 5-2-2 17, Grey Sabbath 4-2-3 14, Old Riders 0-0-9 0.

**Studdard Rec 2A**—Head Game Strong 5-0-1 15, Chapel Hill FC 4-0-2 12, College United FC 2-0-4 6, Tar Devils B 1-0-5 3.

**Studdard Rec 2B**—Unicorns FC 4-0-2 12, Sporting Rose 3-0-3 9, Hilary Chi 2-1-3 7, Baby Ballers 2-1-3 7.

**O'Hara Rec 3**—Aztecs FC 8-0-2 24, Noir FC 7-0-3 21, A athletic Tri 5-0-5 15, The Diamond Dogs 4-1-4 13, Hot Pants FC 3-0-6 9, Black Sabbath 1-1-8 4.

## Community News

Barbie Game Day. Carolina Blaze plays Utah Talons July 27 at Durham Bulls Athletic Park at 2 p.m. It's the last of a three-game set with Utah at DBAP in AUSL (softball) and part of a signature series. Fan Fest starts at 12 noon. Other game dates are July 25-26.

Ayers Saint Gross of Baltimore is the leading candidate to design the Carolina North satellite campus. They've done work for Emory, Rice, Ohio State and the National Aquarium, and will negotiate fees with UNC to design the former Horace Williams Airport property (230 acres) near MLK Blvd. and Estes intersection for the new campus. If UNC doesn't agree on fees, they could move on to another firm, the N&O reported. A basketball arena is no longer part of the project.

ing up the hallowed trophy both worries and disgusts me.

But I had the same great concerns before the World Cup in Russia, with its authoritarian rule and prior to games in Qatar with their human rights and discriminatory policies. And yet, when the matches started, all of that disappeared because of the beautiful game. As we say over and over, especially in these turbulent times of cultural divide here in this country, sport provides us with an escape from it all. This column space and this publication is all about that.

And so enough of my doom and gloom. I am confident—at least, hopeful—that all these concerns will disappear when the first ball is kicked.

This could and should be a wonderful event. Personally, I applaud the expansion to 48 teams. The opportunities given to some of the lesser teams to have an impact on the tournament will be exciting not only for their fans but for fans in general.

There are at least, in my opinion, 10 teams who could win the Cup. Would it really be a shock for either France or Spain or Argentina or Brazil or Portugal or Germany or England to win the tournament? And wouldn't it be something for an African team to prevail? Morocco or Senegal could make a decent run, given the format. And this could be the year that the Netherlands finally prevail. The group stages will be so important because seeding in the knockout phases will tell the tale. If the strong European teams face each other early in the knockout rounds, an outlier will be given a wonderful opportunity.

## Media Sportswatch Joel Bulkeley

Fox Sports will use nine broadcast teams for World Cup 26 games at 16 sites.

John Strong (play-by-play) and Stu Holden (analyst) will do Team USA games for the third consecutive WC. Ian Darke and Landon Donovan are the number two team. Darke is well-known in the U.S. as a soccer voice from England, and Donovan a popular former U.S. star.

I'm not familiar with many of the other crews. I know some of the individual broadcasters. They are a mix of U.S. and international voices. I haven't seen a game assignment list either.

Other teams: Derek Rae and former keeper Robert Green, Daren Fletcher and Owen Hargreaves, Jacqui Oatley and Warren Barton, Ian Crocker and Danny Higginbotham, Mark Scott (making his WC debut) and Cobi Jones, former U.S. player, Tyler Terens and Maurice Edu, veteran JP Delacamera and Lori Lindsey.

Fox plans 340 hours of WC coverage. That's 208 hours for games and the rest for studio programs, pregame, postgame, ancillary shows. These add little for soccer fans, with many ads and few insights. They are geared for first-time viewers and generally boring.

Fox has some big names on the payroll—Thierry Henry (France), Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Norway), Clare Seedorf (Netherlands), Carli Lloyd (U.S.) and blowhards like Lexi Lalas, Clint Dempsey. Hosts are Rebecca Love, Rob Stone and others. They have several reporters for the easy stories and Tom Rinaldi for the tougher ones, plus rules analysts.

Telemundo/Peacock operate differently. The top team is Andres Cantor and Omar Zeron, with another person hosting from the game day stadium (Cantor/Zeron with Alejandro Berry on site for US/Paraguay); Number two team is, I believe, Jose Luis Lopez Salido and Jorge Calvo who will do Mexico-S. Africa, with Miguel Gurwitz hosting from the field. Number three is Luis Omar Tapia and Diego Balado.

They have a number of entertainment and music, culture specials scheduled in connection with the WC.

One of the most interesting pre-WC stories was from the Washington Post on how FIFA developed "super" grass for the 2026 tournament.

The Top 100 Players were ranked by Fox Sports in a January story (no byline). Top 5 were Yamal, 2 Mbappe, 3 Kane, 4 Dembele, 5, Olise. No. 100 was Pervis Estupinan (Ecuador).

Credit Shelby Swanson of the N&O for continued interesting stories on UNC sports like Roy Williams being the voice for North Carolina's PitchCom that calls the pitches and makes fielding adjustments for UNC baseball. Williams, a UNC baseball fan of long standing, has been the voice in the ear for two seasons. It replaced hand signals by the coach which often were stolen by the opposing team.

Here are some news tidbits related to previous CSN stories where a lot more information was needed but not available for additional reporting.

There is a real and well-founded concern that the travel, the weather, and the field conditions can all play a significant role in the outcomes. Will it advantage South American and African teams? Will a historically-strong American team take advantage of home field and make a significant run? We have seen from the success of Paris Saint-Germain that a well-coached team without renowned superstars can dominate. While I am personally supporting the USMNT and the Netherlands, I really like a team like Brazil's chances.

For those of us who rely on sport to whisk us away from our current societal malaise, many have the added benefit of the NBA Finals and the Stanley Cup wrapping up just at the start of the World Cup.

I'll turn 74 years of age this month. I remember Willis Reed coming out of the locker room to inspire the Knicks to their championship. Sports fans of my generation can click off the starting five of Reed, Walt Frazier, Dave DeBusschere, Dick Barnett, and Dollar Bill Bradley in my high school senior year of 1970 and it only hit closer to home when Dick Barnett was replaced by Winston-Salem State's Earl The Pearl Monroe.

And the possibility of a Stanley Cup potential championship team just a few miles down the road in Raleigh makes this just a wonderful summer to forget all of the junk around us.

I haven't mentioned my teammates with Dynamo in this space recently. I can thankfully report that they are still allowing me to play soccer with them. I hasten to add that it might be easier for them now that I have been transformed through the magic of Zepbound. During my almost 40 years of writing this column the Index has registered as high as 308. And so it is with pride and incredulity that I can post:

*Fat Boy Index: 241.*

Let the games begin!

The two Savannah Banana baseball games at Kenan last month generated \$17M in direct economic benefit from visitor spending.

Duke's Dec. 21 men's basketball game with Michigan on Amazon Prime may be played at the Miami Marlin baseball stadium rather than MSG in New York to avert TV rights dispute with Fox. It's an enclosed stadium.

Greg Olsen, the Fox #2 NFL analyst behind Tom Brady, won a Sports Emmy for broadcast excellence. Another award winner was "Not So Fast, My Friend" for outstanding extended sports special from ESPN on broadcaster Lee Corso. Emmys were awarded in 47 categories for 2025 programs.

Five new red wolf pups were born in Durham.

NFL QB Russell Wilson retires and joins the CBS studio NFL show with Kyle Long, whose dad is on the Fox pregame show. Former Steeler coach Mike Tomlin joins NBC as studio analyst.

Former UNC player Caleb Wilson was selected by the NBA as player correspondent for the Finals on ABC. He was one of five players named.

The golf cart barn at Chapel Ride golf course, Pittsboro, was destroyed by fire last month.

Several area golf courses including Oconeechee in Hillsborough are charging convenience fees (3 percent) to use credit cards for green fees. That's a 3 percent price hike.

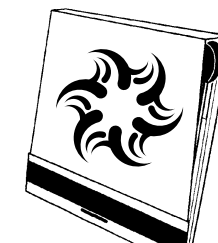
The President plans to spend \$1.7M for fireworks in Washington, D.C., on July 4. The money came from National Park Service admission fees, the Post reported, while NPS maintenance needs total in the millions.

Former WCHL reporter Draggan Mihailovich, the executive editor of 60 Minutes, was among the talented folks fired in the CBS shakeup.

News Emmys were awarded. 60 Minutes won two—outstanding hard news short form, The War in Gaza, and outstanding extended breaking news coverage, The Fires, before the pro-Trumpers fired much of the show's staff.

The exciting Canes chase for the Stanley Cup is bringing a lot of smiles to the Triangle.

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# World Cup Groups

Group A: Mexico, Korea Republic, South Africa, Czechia.  
 Group B: Canada, Switzerland, Qatar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.  
 Group C: Brazil, Morocco, Scotland, Haiti.  
 Group D: USA, Australia, Paraguay, Turkey.  
 Group E: Germany, Ecuador, Ivory Coast, Curacao.  
 Group F: Netherlands, Japan, Tunisia, Sweden.

Group G: Belgium, Iran, Egypt, New Zealand.  
 Group H: Spain, Uruguay, Saudi Arabia, Cabo Verde.  
 Group I: France, Senegal, Norway, Iraq.  
 Group J: Argentina, Austria, Algeria, Jordan.  
 Group K: Portugal, Colombia, Uzbekistan, DR Congo.  
 Group L: England, Croatia, Panama, Ghana.

## Group Stage TV Schedule

The group stage runs Thu, June 11 to Sat, June 27. All 72 matches air on FOX or FS1 in English. Telemundo and Peacock cover Spanish. Universo carries 12 simultaneous matches in the final match days. Times below are Eastern.

### Thursday, June 11

Mexico vs South Africa	A	3:00 PM	FOX, Tubi	Telemundo, Peacock
South Korea vs Czechia	A	10:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Friday, June 12

Canada vs Bosn&Herz	B	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
USA vs Paraguay	D	9:00 PM	FOX, Tubi	Telemundo, Peacock

### Saturday, June 13

Qatar vs Switzerland	B	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Brazil vs Morocco	C	6:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Haiti vs Scotland	C	9:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Sunday, June 14

Australia vs Türkiye	D	12:00 AM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Germany vs Curaçao	E	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Netherlands vs Japan	F	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Côte d'Ivoire vs Ecuador	E	7:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Sweden vs Tunisia	F	10:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Monday, June 15

Spain vs Cabo Verde	H	12:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Belgium vs Egypt	G	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Saudi Arabia vs Uruguay	H	6:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Iran vs New Zealand	G	9:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Tuesday, June 16

France vs Senegal	I	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Iraq vs Norway	I	6:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Argentina vs Algeria	J	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Wednesday, June 17

Austria vs Jordan	J	12:00 AM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Portugal vs Congo DR	K	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
England vs Croatia	L	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Ghana vs Panama	L	7:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Uzbekistan vs Colombia	K	10:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Thursday, June 18

Czechia vs South Africa	A	12:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Switzerland vs Bosn&Herz	B	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Canada vs Qatar	B	6:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Mexico vs South Korea	A	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Friday, June 19

USA vs Australia	D	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Scotland vs Morocco	C	6:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Brazil vs Haiti	C	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Saturday, June 20

Türkiye vs Paraguay	D	12:00 AM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Netherlands vs Sweden	F	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Germany vs Côte d'Ivoire	E	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Ecuador vs Curaçao	E	8:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Sunday, June 21

Tunisia vs Japan*	F	12:00 AM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Spain vs Saudi Arabia	H	12:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Belgium vs Iran	G	3:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Uruguay vs Cabo Verde	H	6:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
New Zealand vs Egypt	G	9:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Monday, June 22

Argentina vs Austria	J	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
France vs Iraq	I	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Norway vs Senegal	I	8:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Jordan vs Algeria	J	11:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Tuesday, June 23

Portugal vs Uzbekistan	K	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
England vs Ghana	L	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Panama vs Croatia	L	7:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Colombia vs Congo DR	K	10:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock

### Wednesday, June 24

Switzerland vs Canada	B	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Bosn&Herz vs Qatar	B	3:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Scotland vs Brazil	C	6:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Morocco vs Haiti	C	6:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Czechia vs Mexico	A	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
S. Africa vs S. Korea	A	9:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock

### Thursday, June 25

Curaçao vs Côte d'Ivoire	E	4:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Ecuador vs Germany	E	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Japan vs Sweden	F	7:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Tunisia vs Netherlands	F	7:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Türkiye vs USA	D	10:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Paraguay vs Australia	D	10:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock

### Friday, June 26

Norway vs France	I	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Senegal vs Iraq	I	3:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Uruguay vs Spain	H	8:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Cabo Verde vs Saudi Arabia	H	8:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
New Zealand vs Belgium	G	11:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Egypt vs Iran	G	11:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock

### Saturday, June 27

Panama vs England	L	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Croatia vs Ghana	L	5:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Colombia vs Portugal	K	7:30 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Congo DR vs Uzbekistan	K	7:30 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock
Jordan vs Argentina	J	10:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Algeria vs Austria	J	10:00 PM	FS1	Universo, Peacock

## Knockout Stage TV Schedule

### Round of 32\*\* (June 28 – July 3)

Match 73 (Sun, June 28)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 76 (Mon, June 29)	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 74 (Mon, June 29)	4:30 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 75 (Mon, June 29)	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 78 (Tue, June 30)	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 77 (Tue, June 30)	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 79 (Tue, June 30)	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 80 (Wed, July 1)	12:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 82 (Wed, July 1)	4:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 81 (Wed, July 1)	8:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 84 (Thu, July 2)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 83 (Thu, July 2)	7:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 85 (Thu, July 2)	11:00 PM	FS1	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 88 (Fri, July 3)	2:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 86 (Fri, July 3)	6:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 87 (Fri, July 3)	9:30 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Round of 16 (July 4–7)

Match 90 (Sat, July 4)	1:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 89 (Sat, July 4)	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 91 (Sun, July 5)	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 92 (Sun, July 5)	8:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 93 (Mon, July 6)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 94 (Mon, July 6)	8:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 95 (Tue, July 7)	12:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 96 (Tue, July 7)	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Quarterfinals (July 9–11)

Match 97 (Thu, July 9)	4:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 98 (Fri, July 10)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 99 (Sat, July 11)	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Match 100 (Sat, July 11)	9:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

### Semifinals, Third Place, Final (July 14–19)

Semifinal 1 (Tue, July 14)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Semifinal 2 (Wed, July 15)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Third Place (Sat, July 18)	5:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock
Final (Sun, July 19)	3:00 PM	FOX	Telemundo, Peacock

\*Tunisia vs Japan on June 21 is the 1,000th match in FIFA World Cup history.

\*\*The Round of 32 is brand new. It never existed at any previous World Cup.

See the CSN World Cup Mini Preview online at [community-sports-news.com](http://community-sports-news.com).