

SPORTS





Cincinnati Bearcats Head Coach Luke Fickell says, "I mean, if you're going to have a shot at the title, you've got to beat the champs. This is what we have: We have a shot to beat the champs. Regardless of what the line is, we've said it all year long, 'The best team doesn't always win the game.' " KAREEM ELGAZZAR/THE ENQUIRER

Bearcats don't care about being underdog

Keith Jenkins
Cincinnati Enquire

USA TODAY NETWORK

DALLAS – After a quick break for the holidays, the University of Cincinnati football team got back to business Sunday, landing in Texas and setting its sights on the College Football Play-

In a fleet of red and black buses with the Cotton Bowl, CFP and C-Paw logos wrapped on the side of them, the Bearcats strolled onto the grounds of the Gaylord Texan Hotel and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas, and hopped out with the same confidence they showed while completing the first 13-0 season in program history.

It was almost as if No. 4 Cincinnati had no idea it was a 13.5-point underdog to top-ranked and defending national champion Alabama (12-1) in their College Football Playoff semifinal showdown at the Dallas Cowboys'

AT&T Stadium on New Year's Eve.

"It doesn't matter," UC Head Coach Luke Fickell said. "We know. We have a good idea. I mean, if you're going to have a shot at the title, you've got to beat the champs. This is what we have: we have a shot to beat the champs. Regardless of what the line is, we've said it all year long, 'The best team doesn't always win the game.' That's just the reality. The teams that play the best win the football game."

Fickell's Bearcats, who won the American Athletic Conference championship for the second straight year, have been a double-digit favorite in nearly every game they've played this season, but that hasn't always translated to double-digit victories. Cincinnati had to eke out wins at then-one-win Navy (27-20) and against an upsetminded Tulsa team (28-20) on homecoming.

Fickell said the "greatest lesson" his team learned during the final stretch of

the season was to just focus on getting the victory and not allow itself to get bogged down in the margin of the win

or the outside expectations.

"They wanted us to win this way, and you're favored by this, or you've got to do this. I think it took a toll on us," Fickell said. "I think us kind of getting in our groove the last four games of the season, we kind of put that behind us and said we've just got to be us regardless of if we're favored or if we're underdogs. Do what it is that we do, be us and let's enjoy what it is that we're doing."

What's not behind Cincinnati is CO-VID-19. Sunday was the first public appearance for Fickell and the Bearcats since the College Football Playoff management committee announced a series of new actions it will take to protect the health and safety of athletes as the omicron variant continues to cause a

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Bengals preparing for 'biggest game of the year'

Kelsey Conway

Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach Zac Taylor is right when he said being 4-1 in the division isn't going to cut it this year. The Bengals need to win at least one more game to win the AFC North and clinch a playoff berth.

"We're 4-1 in the division right now, and we need to be better than that this year, quite frankly," Taylor said. "We know how big of a test this Kansas City game is coming up for us this weekend. It's far and away the biggest game of the year for us."

Week 17 brings an interesting scenario for Taylor and his team. If the Bengals win their next game and the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Cleveland Browns on Monday Night Football, the Bengals will win the division before entering Week 18. This would mean quarterback Joe Burrow and the rest of the starters could potentially not play and be given an extra week of rest.

But it won't be easy for Cincinnati as their next opponent is arguably the best team in the NFL right now. The Kansas City Chiefs (11-4) are coming to town as the No. 1 seed in the AFC and have already clinched the AFC West. The Chiefs will be playing for something against the Bengals as they try and hold onto the No. 1 seed which would give them a bye during the first round of the playoffs.

The Chiefs are the measuring stick for every team in the AFC in many ways as they have won two straight AFC championships, six consecutive AFC West titles and Super Bowl LIV under head coach Andy Reid. Quarterback Patrick Mahomes, a former NFL MVP, is getting hot at the right time.

After an underwhelming 3-4 start to the season, the Chiefs have rattled off eight wins. Mahomes' All-Pro weapons Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill are back and continue to play at a high level. The Chiefs rank No. 4 in the NFL in points per game (28.1 ppg).

Many of Kansas City's struggles in the earlier part of the season came on defense. That is no longer the case as the Chiefs are now playing as good as any defense in the NFL. Kansas City ranks No. 4 in scoring defense and are among the league's best at taking the ball away. The Chiefs rank No. 4 in takeaways with 28 so far.

In order for the Bengals to beat the Chiefs, it's likely to come down to three things: Score at least 30 points, don't

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Why the victory over the Ravens was a milestone

Charlie Goldsmith

Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach Zac Taylor addressed the team following the win over the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday, he immediately acknowledged the lone reason to doubt the significance of the Bengals 41-21 win.

The Ravens played with their third-string quarterback and with a starting secondary decimated by injuries. But Taylor told the team he didn't care about that.

"Don't let anyone try to minimize that win,"

It didn't matter that quarterback Josh Johnson, a career backup with no starts since 2018, played the entire game for the Ravens. It didn't matter that Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow recorded his franchise-record 525 passing yards against a secondary with multiple players who have spent most of the year on the practice squad.

On Sunday, the Bengals became the favorites in the AFC North and completed a season sweep over the team that entered the season as division favorites. With the win, the Bengals are now one win away from clinching their first playoff berth since 2015

"That's still the Baltimore Ravens out there playing meaningful football for them," Taylor said. "Our guys shouldn't apologize for one second for the performance they had. I'm dang proud of those guys for having hung in there for the full course of the game, and for handling the adversity we've had over the course of time, too."

Years from now, when the story is written about the 2021 Bengals, it won't mention Johnson or which players the Ravens had available at cornerback. A tour through Bengals history highlights that all that matters is whether the franchise has taken advantage of the opportunity presented to them.

Just like the most successful teams in Bengals history, the 2021 Bengals are taking advantage of the opportunity.

Looking back at some of the most successful Bengals teams, the opposing quarterbacks they've faced in a few key games have turned into footnotes over time.

In 1981, the Bengals broke through a half-decade of looking up at the Steelers with a division clinching win at this exact same point of the season. Earlier this week, former Bengals quarterback Ken Anderson called that game one of the most memorable wins of his career.

Forty years later, it doesn't matter that Steelers starting quarterback Terry Bradshaw was out with an injury for that game. Mark Malone, who threw five interceptions and three touchdowns in three starts that season, was the starting quarterback that day for the Steelers.

The Bengals last playoff win came over the Houston Oilers on Jan. 6, 1991. Houston's quarter-back was backup Cody Carlson, who was making his second start of the entire season in the playoffs. Starter Warren Moon was injured, and Carlson completed just 16 of 33 passes for 165 yards with an interception.

Thirty years later, the fact that Moon was injured doesn't change this game being the Bengals most recent playoff win.

The Bengals have been on both sides of this



Cincinnati Bengals cornerback Eli Apple (20) and free safety Jessie Bates III (30) celebrate a stop in the fourth quarter against the Baltimore Ravens at Paul Brown Stadium on Sunday.

SAM GREENE/THE ENQUIRER

coin before 2021. They've won season-changing matchups against a backup from the other team, and they've lost playoff games when their quarterback was hurt.

The 2015 Bengals team, which had one of the most talented rosters in franchise history, played the stretch run without starting quarterback Andy Dalton. His absence was one detail in the playoff collapse that ended the season, overshadowed by the memories of Jeremy Hill's fumble and the two penalties the Bengals committed on the following drive.

Those facts didn't make the 1981 win less of a breakthrough or the 2015 collapse any less of a disappointment.

For the moment, karma is breaking the Bengals way. At this time last year, Burrow was struggling through taking his first steps post ACL surgery. Now, he has a case as the best quarterback in the AFC North and a top-10 quarterback in the NFL. Against the Ravens, Burrow had a franchise record 525 passing yards and showed how much progress he has made taking shots down the field. On Sunday, the Bengals were missing just three starters: defensive tackle D.J. Reader, linebacker Logan Wilson and right tackle Riley Reiff. Running back Joe Mixon, who left last week's win over the Denver Broncos with an ankle injury, didn't even miss a snap in practice this week. Against the Ravens, Mixon scored two touchdowns and added 135 total yards.

Wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase, who's playing the longest season of his football career, had 125 receiving yards. Wide receiver Tee Higgins, who battled through a shoulder injury early in the year, is now fully healthy and set a career-high on Sunday with 194 yards.

In Bengals history, the breakthrough moments have had no concern about who was healthy and who wasn't. It's been a combination of talent and opportunity. The 2021 Bengals now have as good of an opportunity as any Bengals team in a long time. With the win over the Ravens on Sunday, the Bengals became the clear favorites in the AFC

They're one win away from the division title and have a shot at accomplishing more.

COMMENTAR

What we learned from Bengals 41, Ravens 21



Paul Daugherty
Columnist
Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY

Calling it Ten Things, without numbering it.

Joy in Mudville this AM. The most significant player in the history of the Bengals franchise – said it when he was drafted, will say it when he retires – broke the Bengals record for passing yards. Bengals win in a romp that revealed their strengths, which grow with every game, and one flaw, which needs to be fixed ASAP.

Joe Burrow and Zac Taylor conspired to drop a major butt-whippin' on the Ravens Sunday. You loved it. Why wouldn't you? For weeks and years and decades, you've watched the Men be on the receiving end of Ls such as the one they delivered Sunday to B-more. Turnabout is fair play. If were a Bengals fan, I'd be delighted, too.

They don't pay me for that. I'm not a cheerleader. The pay isn't very good, I'd pull too many muscles and I'd look kinda sketchy in one of those outfits.

What I saw, without the rose-colored shades, exceptional and not so exceptional:

Burrow, given time, playing like he was joy-sticking a video game. Making the Ravens look like everybody's favorite Homecoming opponent, barely a year after a terrible knee injury. Remarkable.

Higgins, Boyd, Chase, quite possibly the best trio of wideouts in the game.

A 19-play drive that resulted in a field goal. Abject domination.

A team that came not only prepared, but out for serious blood. . .

That barring epic collapse, will win the AFC North.

Which should get Taylor a few COY votes.

What else I saw:

The Bengals, ahead in the 4th quarter by 13 and then 21 points, intending to pass the ball on 14 consecutive plays. Ahead 41-21 with 8:02 left, Burrow intended to chuck it six times in a six-play possession that ended with a missed 50-yard field goal. He was sacked twice on that

possession. What if he'd gotten hurt? There wouldn't have been enough daggers on the planet you'd want to throw at Taylor.

This isn't how the best teams do things. One, because opponents remember games such as 41-21 and how it was accomplished. And someday, maybe soon, they will return the favor. The Ravens will play the Bengals when the Ravens have a genuine NFL team, not that traveling emergency room that limped into PBS, and they will make it harder on the Bengals than necessary. John Harbaugh won't have to remind his players next fall of what occurred yesterday. And that'll be on Zac Taylor.

If this were an isolated incident, we'd chalk it up to a young team's giddiness and let it slide. It's more of a trend. Players have said lately how good the team is. Players have congratulated themselves on their great play. Taylor has said no one wants to play the Bengals and that his defense had made the proverbial "statement" after beating a sad Broncos offense a couple Sundays ago.

I don't recall hearing Belichick or Reid say those things. Or Tomlin or Harbaugh, for that matter. Someone asked Harbaugh about the pile-on. "They call their plays, we call our plays," he said. It's called humility.

I understand how a young coach with a young team trying to overhaul an organizational attitude would do what Taylor's doing. And good for him. It's working, at the moment.

But at some point, hopefully soon, the Bengals rein in all this bravado. Or at least save it until they win something. Remember how high we were on them – and how high they were on themselves – at 5-2? At 7-4?

This has been the craziest of seasons. The Bengals are a couple major COVID cases from being the Ravens. They're a couple big hurts from being Cleveland. They are the best team in the worst division in football. That is remarkable, no snark intended. Now, keep your heads down, assume nothing, play the game and let the rest of the world tell you how good you are.

Chiefs

Continued from Page 1B

turn the ball over and eliminate explosive plays on defense. Easier said than done.

"Our guys are going to be ready, and we're going to do a great job of getting rested and getting our best focus," Taylor said. "We've got a huge challenge coming to town, and our guys are going to be ready for it"

Bengals wide receiver Tyler Boyd didn't deny this is the biggest game of Cincinnati's season. Boyd has seen from afar how good the Chiefs have been over the last few years and believes if the Bengals want to contend in late January and into February, they'll need to play their best on Sunday.

"I think they're the best," Boyd said of the Chiefs. "They're the hot team right now in the AFC. They are the top team. You know, like I said, if we can beat them guys, then that will let us know how talented and how far we can take this because they're a great team and they won the AFC championship two years in a row now, so this is definitely going to be a huge statement game for us to go out there and play our best football."



Bengals Head Coach Zac Taylor says, "Our guys are going to be ready, and we're going to do a great job of getting rested and getting our best focus. We've got a huge challenge coming to town, and our guys are going to be ready for it." SAM GREENE/ENQUIRER

Kansas City wins its 6th straight AFC West title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Patrick Mahomes threw for 258 yards and three touchdowns, Byron Pringle caught two of the TD passes, and the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 36-10 on Sunday to clinch their sixth consecutive AFC West title

The Chiefs (11-4) remained a game ahead of Tennessee for first place in the AFC with their eighth straight win. That would give them the conference's lone first-round by and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

Clyde Edwards-Helaire had a touchdown run for Kansas City before leaving early in the second half with a collarbone injury. Darrel Williams and Derrick Gore carried the load the rest of the way with Williams running for 55 yards and Gore adding 43 yards on the ground and three catches for 61 yards.

The Steelers became the first team in NFL history to trail by at least 23 points at halftime in three straight road games. Already on the playoff bubble, Pittsburgh (7-7-1) dropped further behind the Bengals (9-6) in the AFC North.

Ben Roethlisberger threw for 159 yards with a late fourth-quarter touchdown for Pittsburgh, along with throwing an interception and losing a fumble. Najee Harris added 93 yards rushing.

RAIDERS 17, BRONCOS 13: Josh Jacobs rushed for 129 yards and Las Vegas came from behind to defeat Denver and stay relevant in the AFC playoff picture.

With the win, the Raiders (8-7) severely damaged the postseason chances for AFC West rival Denver (7-8), which dropped its third game in the last four.

Las Vegas quarterback Derek Carr completed 20 of 25 passes for 201 yards with one touchdown and an interception. Zay Jones had six receptions for 50 yards and Hunter Renfrow had three catches for 40 yards and one touchdown

COWBOYS 56, WASHINGTON 14: Dak Prescott threw four touchdown passes, DeMarcus Lawrence returned



Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw for 258 yards and three touchdowns in a 36-10 win over the Steelers on Sunday. REED HOFFMANN/AP

an interception for a score and Dallas celebrated clinching the NFC East title before kickoff with a rout of Washington.

The Cowboys (11-4) tied the franchise record for points in a first half while taking a 42-7 lead and frustrating Washington to the point that defensive tackles Jonathan Allen and Daron Payne scuffled on the sideline.

Dallas didn't need to win to add the division title to the playoff berth that was sealed with San Francisco's loss to Tennessee three nights earlier.

Las Vegas' 17-13 victory over Denver took care of that about an hour before kickoff.

Prescott and company didn't seem to care, and scored the franchise's most points, playoffs included, since a 59-14 victory over San Francisco in 1980. Washington (6-9) allowed its most points since 2010 in the most-lopsided loss for either team in a storied rivalry played 123 times.

BEARS 25, SEAHAWKS 24: Jimmy Graham caught a 15-yard touchdown pass from Nick Foles with 1:01 remaining, Damiere Byrd made an acrobatic reception for the 2-point conversion and Chicago Bears (5-10) beat Seattle (5-10).

NFL NOTEBOOK

Panthers send players home after 6 positive

Steve Reed
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina – The Carolina Panthers have sent all of their players home from Bank of America Stadium after six more players tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday.

That brings the total number of Carolina players on the COVID-19 reserve list to 13. Defensive end Brian Burns, linebacker Shaq Thompson, defensive end Marquis Haynes, defensive tackle Phil Hoskins, center Matt Paradis and defensive tackle Daviyon Nixon all tested positive on Monday. Paradis and Nixon were already on injured reserve.

Panthers coach Matt Rhule said the decision to send players home was made "to stem the tide" and get things under control. The team will conduct its meetings virtually until then, and Rhule is hoping to have players back in the building for practice on Wednesday.

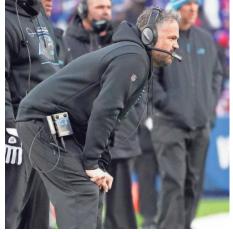
The Panthers lost 32-6 to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday and have been eliminated from playoff contention. They visit the New Orleans Saints on Sunday. Also:

• The Cincinnati Bengals placed backup quarterback Brandon Allen and already-injured cornerback/kick returner Darius Phillips on the reserve/COVID-19 list on Monday. Phillips (shoulder), who was the Bengals' primary kick returner, has been on injured reserve since Dec. 9. Allen has been the No. 2 quarterback behind starter Joe Burrow. The team will likely have to add a quarterback to the roster.

• The Jacksonville Jaguars placed 10 players on the COVID-19 list Monday, including five defensive linemen and two starting offensive linemen. Because left guard Andrew Norwell is unvaccinated, he will be out at least 10 days under NFL protocols and will miss Sunday's game at New England. The other nine players are vaccinated and have a chance to play against the Pats.

• The Tennessee Titans got left guard Rodger Saffold and rookie defensive back Elijah Molden back from the COVID-19 list. They still have two other

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Panthers Coach Matt Rhule said the decision to send players home was made "to stem the tide" and get things under control. GETTY IMAGES

offensive linemen still on the list, and they also put four players – including three starters – on the it, including outside linebacker Bud Dupree, wide receiver Julio Jones, defensive back Buster Skrine and receiver Nick Westbrook-Ikhine. They also put cornerback Caleb Farley, who's on injured reserve, on the COVID-19 list.

• The Cleveland Browns, who have been hit as hard as any team by CO-VID-19 cases the past few weeks, activated eight players, including defensive end Jadeveon Clowney and versatile running back Kareem Hunt. Starting left tackle Jedrick Wills Jr. is also back.

• Tampa Bay, hard hit by injuries on offense, put star wideout Mike Evans on the COVID-19 list, but activated wide receiver Breshad Perriman from it. Evans missed Sunday's game with an injury. Wide receivers coach Kevin Garver also went on the list.

• The Indianapolis Colts placed safety Jahleel Addae, cornerback T.J. Carrie, linebacker Malik Jefferson, running back Marlon Mack and tackle Braden Smith on the list. Smith has been a key member of the offensive line that has helped Jonathan Taylor lead the league in rushing.

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How the Bearcats' defense matches up against the Alabama run game

Bobby Nightengale

Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

When a team has a Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, it's not a surprise the running game isn't the focal point of the offense.

The University of Alabama football team's run game might be the one area where it wasn't dominant in the final weeks of the regular season. The Tide didn't rush for more than 115 yards against each of their last four Southeastern Conference (SEC) opponents, averaging 2.4 yards per attempt in those games against LSU, Arkansas, Auburn and Georgia.

Stopping the run will be integral for the University of Cincinnati Bearcats, which should already have their hands full with quarterback Bryce Young and star receiver Jameson Williams. The Bearcats rank 45th in the country in rushing yards allowed per game (137.5), but they're the 13th-best team in rushing yards per attempt (3.33).

"They are very active, they are very aggressive," Alabama Head Coach Nick Saban said of Cincinnati's defense. "They're a good group. They play a 3-3 stack. They slide over to a four-down front sometimes. They plug a lot of backers. They have a lot of good pressures. They play a lot of man-to-man, but they change it up quite a bit. They play very well together as a team. They don't make a lot of mistakes."

Alabama senior running back Brian Robinson Jr., who has totaled 1,071 yards and 14 touchdowns this year, was slowed a bit in the final two games of the regular season because of a strained hamstring. He totaled 32 carries for 126 yards and zero touchdowns against Auburn and Georgia, two schools that rank among the best run defenses in the country.

"There is a reason they've been in the playoffs seven out of the eight times that they've had the playoffs," Cincinnati Head Coach Luke Fickell said. "Obviously, we all know about their skill. I think sometimes you don't recognize what they've really got up front on both sides of the ball. To me, that's where the big matchups have got to be."

The Bearcats have allowed three 100-yard rushers this season and two of them came in the same game against Tulsa. They've been solid against the run when they've played Power Five opponents, holding Notre Dame to 84 yards on 28 carries (3.0 per attempt). Indiana had 152 yards on 37 attempts (4.1 average) and Georgia was limited to 45 yards on 24 carries in last year's Peach Bowl. Senior linebacker Joel Dublanko is key to their run-stopping efforts with a team-high 106 tackles. When the Bearcats pulled away from Houston in the third quarter of the AAC Championship, arguably their best quarter of football this season, it was Darrian Beavers and Myjai Sanders shutting down Houston's run game.

"They do the things they need to do to have success together as a group and they've got some very talented guys," Saban said.



Alabama senior running back Brian Robinson Jr., who has totaled 1,071 yards and 14 touchdowns this year, was slowed a bit in the final two games of the regular season because of a strained hamstring. He totaled 32 carries for 126 yards and zero touchdowns against Auburn and Georgia. USA TODAY SPORTS

"They've got a good secondary. They've got some guys up front that can rush and have some quickness and their linebackers are very good players. All around, this is a really good defensive team."

If the Bearcats, a 13½ point underdog, can shut down the Tide's rushing attack, it will at least afford them a better chance of aiming their focus on slowing Young.

"I think the legacy of any team is how you finish," Saban said.
"That's how you'll be remembered. So, it's a great opportunity that our players have and now it's time to focus on taking advantage of it."

Underdog

Continued from Page 1B

significant spike in coronavirus

According to the CFP, if any of the four CFP semifinalists is unable to play due to a COVID-19 outbreak, the unavailable team will forfeit, and its opponent will advance to the national championship. If both teams are unavailable, the game would be declared a no contest.

If three teams are unable to play, the lone semifinalist remaining would be declared the national champion.

According to the CFP, there would potentially be an opportunity to reschedule the national championship game but no later than Jan. 14, four days after the original date. If the game can't be played in that window, the team with the COVID-19 outbreak would have to forfeit. If both teams are unable to play, it would be declared a no-contest without a national champion being crowned.

Fickell, who allowed his players to go home for three-plus days to spend time with their families before returning to Cincinnati and then traveling to Texas, said he, his staff and his players are fully aware of the virus but won't "dwell" on it.

"We've got a very mature group that understands what they're here to do and understands that that means they're going to have to have some sacrifices that maybe they wouldn't on a normal six-day bowl trip or five-day bowl trip where they can go out and do some things,' Fickell said. "So we'll be smart about who we're around. We'll be smart about where we're going. But we're going to be us and we're going to continue to do what it is that we've done all year. We've found a way for it to work for us."

Cincinnati has its first practice of the week Monday inside the Cowboys' practice facility.



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Business Booms Despite Pandemic



When sports anchor Tony Rizzo and his wife, Lisa, were ready for a bathroon overhaul, they called Bath R Us to do the job—fast and affordably.

In the short span of 16 months, bathroom remodeling company Bath R Us has gone from a fledgling start-up to an institution. It began with one employee (owner Chad Howman) and has grown to more than 40, with nine service trucks and has just moved to a new headquarters in Medina. The family-owned and operated company began in Cleveland in March of 2020, then expanded into the Columbus, Toledo, and most recently the Cincinnati market

"Last year on March 10, I was sitting by myself in a Chicago hotel room poring over all the materials about bathroom renovation from training with a company whose products I was interested in," says Howman. "I had just left my last job, it was my 40th birthday, I turned on the news and it was announcing the shutdown due to Covid. Not the best timing, right? Yet, I decided to move forward. I believed in serving the niche of luxury bathroom renovation with ultra-durable products that are affordable and beautiful."

Chad Howman founded Bath R Us in March of 2020 to fill a much-needed niche—homeowners who want the luxurious look of marble, quartz, granite, and subway tile, but don't want

Since that less-than-ideal launch date, the formula has proven to be a smashing success, transforming more than 700

bathrooms in the Cleveland and Columbus areas and expanding their business to the Toledo and Cincinnati areas Chad and his wife, Stephanie are proud to have built a team of employees, especially during these challenging times.

"Everywhere you look you hear about the labor shortage and businesses that are suffering and just trying to stay open due to lack of good employees," says Chad. "I feel blessed to have a fine group of people working here, with more apprentices joining us all the time once they hear this is a rewarding place to work."

Quality Materials at Customer Friendly Prices

Howman says many of their customers are getting rid of the tubs in their primary baths in favor of the high-end showers. Therefore he works exclusively with a Chicago-based manufacturer that makes ultra-durable, high-tech, polymer showers and tubs that mimic granite, marble, quartz, and subway tiles. Perfect for any style, the panels are 100% waterproof, man-made, and easy to clean, as there are very few seams, which are fused by caulk, not grout. The product is so well-made, it comes with a lifetime warranty from the manufacturer and a 10-year warranty on

"We selected the best-in-class products," says Howman. "To make the experience easy and convenient for the customer, we come to their home to do our initial consultation, going over samples and ideas

Every one of these modern, durable tubs and showers are custom-built and manufactured right here in the United States. These aren't overlays. A Bath R Us certified factory technician will tear out the existing shower or tub and replace it with your selected options in just days.

"People are bowled over when they find out the showers come with a lifetime warranty and the workmanship with a tenyear warranty," he adds. The construction portion of the job is as painless as the consultation. Most jobs are completed within three to four days.

Say Yes to Less Stress

"People are looking to add a more modern and luxurious spa-like feeling to their bathroom," Howman says. "We can make that happen."

One of the roadblocks to pulling the trigger on a bathroom renovation is the underlying thought of having workers you've never met trampling through your house for who knows how long. Busy folks don't have the time to research, filter, and oversee contractors for a lengthy and overwhelming remodel process, even if it means getting rid of that hideous prefab, builder-grade shower, and oversized Jacuzzi tub that no

Getting the bath of your dreams doesn't have to be a

The professionals at Bath R Us have a winning formula for busy professionals. They produce luxury bathroom rehabs that are budget-friendly in a handful of days at most. The installers are friendly, conscientious, and seasoned. To make selection and planning a snap, they even come to your home for the initial consultation, bringing lots of samples to see how they will look in your bathroom.

In addition to the many style options, customers can choose the type of bath that suits their lifestyle. Tub-to-shower conversions and replacement showers can add true value to your home and walk-in tubs help some older homeowners stay safe.

homeowners stay safe.

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MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Baylor stays No. 1 in AP Top 25, Michigan State up to No. 10

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A combination of cancellations and the holidays made for a quiet week in college basketball.

The latest Associated Press poll reflected the light week.

Baylor remained No. 1 for the third straight week in the poll released Monday, receiving all 61 first-place votes from a national media panel. The Bears (11-0) had 60 first-place votes a week ago and were a unanimous selection this week with a blowout win over Alcorn State and Arizona's loss to Tennessee.

The top five remained the same from last week, with Duke, Purdue, Gonzaga and UCLA behind Baylor.

The Blue Devils were among several ACC teams to postpone games this week due to COVID-19 shelving protocols, games against Clemson on Wednesday and Notre Dame on Saturday.

Arizona dropped three spots to No. 9 after losing for the first time this season, 77-73 at Tennessee last Wednesday. The Wildcats had been one of the nation's best offensive teams during their undefeated start but were smothered by the Vols, scoring 11 points below their season average.

"We weren't able to get a lot of post touches," Arizona coach Tommy Lloyd said. "At the end of the day, there's usually one recipe. The recipe is, toughen up."

Tennessee (9-2) hasn't had much trouble with toughness this season.

The Vols' only two losses were to then-No. 5 Villanova and No. 25 Texas Tech in overtime. Tennessee is 21st nationally in scoring defense, holding teams to 59.3 points, and is forcing nearly 18 turnovers a game.

The Vols jumped on Arizona with an opening 16-2 run and withstood a late run to pull out their biggest win of the season.

"We talked about it being a heavyweight fight, which it was," Tennessee coach Rick Barnes said. "It was a hard-fought win. We knew they would make a push to get back in it."

The Vols have another test coming out of the Christmas break, playing at No. 19 Alabama on Wednesday.

WOMEN'S POLL: A relatively quiet week because of the holidays left the Associated Press women's college basketball poll mostly unchanged.

South Carolina remained the unanimous No. 1, receiving all 30 first-place votes from a national media panel Monday. The Gamecocks staved off another challenge from a top opponent, rallying to beat No. 2 Stanford, 65-61, last Tuesday. Coach Dawn Staley's squad has beat five top-10 teams this season, including the No. 2 team twice.

The Cardinal stayed at No. 2 because of their strong showing against the Gamecocks. Louisville, Arizona and North Carolina State held their spots in the top



Guard Mike Saunders Jr. and the Cincinnati Bearcats men's basketball team will be awarded a forfeit win, and Houston will be assessed a forfeit loss, after Tuesday's game was canceled. SAM GREENE/ENQUIRER

UC men's hoops earns forfeit win; Houston game is canceled

Enquirer News Services

The American Athletic Conference men's basketball game between the University of Cincinnati and Houston scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 28, in Houston has been canceled due to the number of student-athletes available at Houston because of COVID-19.

The game will be considered a no-contest by the NCAA. As per conference policy and for the purpose of conference standings only, Cincinnati will be awarded a forfeit win and Houston will be assessed a forfeit loss.

In light of the changing public health environment, the conference's athletic directors will meet this week to determine if changes need to be made to the league's current policy.

Cincinnati (10-3) returns to action on Saturday, Jan. 1, at home against Tulane. Tipoff is scheduled for

WEDNESDAY'S UC WOMEN'S GAME AGAINST LIPSCOMB CANCELED: The UC women's basketball non-conference matchup against Lipscomb scheduled for Wednesday at Fifth Third Arena has been canceled due to COVID-19 protocols.

The Bearcats will return to action on Saturday, Jan. 1, to tip off American Athletic Conference action on the road at Tulsa. Tipoff is scheduled for 2 p.m. ET, and the game will air on ESPN+.

XU cancels two games in one day

Adam Baum

Cincinnati Enquirer USA TODAY NETWORK

Monday was not a great day if you're a Xavier University men's basketball fan. First, the Big East Conference announced that Xavier's Jan. 4 trip to Washington, D.C., is canceled because of CO-VID-19 issues within Georgetown's program. Then, a few hours after head coach Travis Steele held his pre-game press conference in advance of Tuesday's home game against Connecticut, the league announced that Tuesday's game is canceled because of COVID-19 issues within UConn's program. The league is referring to these games as "canceled," but in reality, they're closer to postponements. Initially, the Big East instituted a forfeit policy if teams were unable to play due to COVID-19, but the league reversed that decision last week as a "result of the recent sudden and significant increases in the number of CO-VID-19 cases nationally and within Big East programs due to the spread of the Omicron variant." Under the new policy, conference games are now canceled in the event a school has fewer than seven scholarship players and one coach available for a game. The conference office will attempt to reschedule those games and in the event it cannot be rescheduled, the canceled game will be designated as a no contest. XU's last game was Dec. 21 at Villanova. With its next two scheduled games canceled, Xavier is looking at 17 days between games until Jan. 7 when XU visits Butler.

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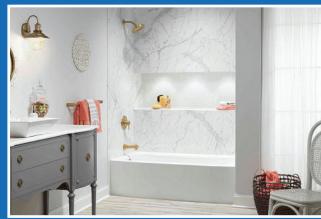




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ARD

LOCA	AL SCOREBO	
_	PRO FOOTBALL Cincinnati Bengals	
Stat	istics after 15 games	
PASSING	ATT. COM YARDSTDINT RATE	
Burrow	481 336 416530 14105.0	
Boyd	1 1 46 0 0 118.8	
B.Allen	4 2 13 1 0 96.9 486 339 3885 31 14 105.7	
TEAM OPPONENTS	486 339 3885 31 14 105.7 567 377 3792 22 12 91.5	
RUSHING	ATT. YARDS AVG LONG TD	
Mixon	280 1159 4.1 32 13	
Perine	54 242 4.5 46t 1	
Burrow	35 108 3.1 12 2	
C.Evans	10 42 4.2 13 0	
Boyd	2 22 11.0 14 0	
Chase	7 21 3.0 10 0	
T.Williams B.Allen	6 13 2.2 6 0 5 -4 -0.8 0 0	
TEAM	399 1603 4.0 46t 16	
OPPONENTS	343 1382 4.0 70t 12	
RECEIVING	NO. YARDS AVG LONG TD	
Higgins	71 1029 14.5 54 6	
Chase	68 1163 17.1 82t 10	
Boyd	63 792 12.6 68t 4 45 461 10.2 55t 5	
Uzomah Mixon	45 461 10.2 55t 5 35 274 7.8 52 3	
Perine	26 186 7.2 23 1	
C.Evans	11 127 11.5 24t 1	
D.Sample	10 73 7.3 19 0	
Mik.Thomas	5 52 10.4 19 0	
Tate	3 39 13.0 18 1	
Irwin	1 25 25.0 25 0	
Morgan TEAM	1 3 3.0 3 0 339 4224 12.5 82t 31	
OPPONENTS	377 4063 10.8 60t 22	
INTERCEPTION		
L.Wilson	4 31 7.8 18 0	
Apple	2 50 25.0 50 0	
Awuzie	2 42 21.0 42 0	
Bates	1 65 65.0 65 0	
Hilton	1 24 24.0 24t 1	
Bell	1 15 15.0 15 0	
Pratt TEAM	1 4 4.0 4 0 12 231 19.2 65 1	
OPPONENTS	14 257 18.4 99t 2	
SACKS	NO.	
Hendrickson		
Hubbard	7.5	
Ogunjobi	7.0	
B.Hill	5.5	
Reader	2.0	
C.Sample L.Wilson	1.5	
Bailev	1.0 0.5	
Bell	0.5	
Pratt	0.5	
TEAM	41.0	
OPPONENTS	47.0	
PUNTING	NO. YARDS LONG BLK	
Huber	56 2635 61 0	
TEAM	56 2635 61 0	
OPPONENTS	67 3021 64 0	
PUNT RETURN		
Irwin Taylor	3 0 31 10.3 15 0 5 0 38 7.6 12 0	
Taylor Phillips	25 0 177 7.1 17 0	
Boyd	1 0 1 1.0 1 0	
TEAM	34 0 247 7.3 17 0	
OPPONENTS	22 0 183 8.3 21 0	
KICKOFF RETU	JRNS NO. YARDS AVG LONGTD	
B.Wilson	13 291 22.4 44 0	
Phillips	8 169 21.1 32 0	
P.Williams	3 52 17.3 25 0 4 68 17.0 25 0	
Taylor Morgan	4 68 17.0 25 0 2 22 11.0 18 0	
Pratt	1 2 2.0 2 0	
TEAM	31 604 19.5 44 0	
OPPONENTS	30 647 21.6 48 0	
	OFF. DEF.	
FUMBLES/RE	COVERIES FUM REC. REC.	
B.Allen	0 1 0	
Apple	1 1 0	
Bates Bell	0 0 1 0 0 1	
Boyd	1 1 0	
Burrow	5 1 0	
Chase	2 0 0	
Flowers	0 1 0	

SCORE BY QUA TEAM OPPONENTS	RTERS	60	1 2) 129) 106		123	6	TOT 410 324
SCORING	TOT F	I ZIIG	REC F	PFT	ΧÞΙ	FG	TOT
McPherson	0	0	0			_	120
Mixon	16	13	3	Õ	0	0	96
Chase	10	0	10	Õ	0	Õ	60
Higgins	6	Ō	6	Ō	0	Ō	38
Uzomah	5	Ō	5	Ō	Ō	Ō	30
Boyd	4	0	4	0	0	0	24
Burrow	2	2	0	0	0	0	14
Perine	2	1	1	0	0	0	12
C.Evans	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
Hilton	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Tate	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
TEAM	48	16	31				366
OPPONENTS	37	12	22	1	30	22	288
FIELD GOALS	1-19	20-29	9 30-	39	40-4	19	50+
McPherson	0-0	4-4		-8			9-11
TEAM	0-0	4-4	4 8	-8	5-	-8	9-11
COLLEGE BASKETBALL							

Pherson M		4-4 4-4					
COLL	EGE E	BASK	ETBA	LL			
STANDINGS							
	ONFEI AG=AL			S			
AMERICA				REN			
		C	G .	A			
				V			

CO-COM ENLIGE ONNIES							
AG=ALL GAMES							
AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE							
	CG AG						
	W	L	W				
UCF	1	0	8				
Cincinnati	1	0	11				
Houston	0	1	11				
East Carolina	0	0	9				
SMU	0	0	9				
Wichita St.	0	0	9				
Memphis	0	0	6				
Temple	0	1	7				
Tulsa	0	0	6				
South Florida	0	0	5				
Tulane	0	0	3				
Tuesday's Games							
Cincinnati 2, Houston	0						

Cincinnati 2, Houston 0	
Wednesday's Games	
Wichita St. at East Carolina, 7 p.m	
MVSU at South Florida, 7 p.m.	
Memphis at Tulane, 8 p.m.	
SMU at Tulsa, 8 p.m.	
Temple at Villanova, 9 p.m.	
ATLANTIC 10 CONFERENCE	
CG	A
W L	٧
Davidson 0 0	10

ATLANTIC 10 C	ONFER	ENC	
	CG		Α
	W	L	W
Davidson	0	0	10
Rhode Island	0	0	8
St. Bonaventure	0	0	8
Richmond	0	0	9
Saint Louis	0	0	8
VCU	0	0	7
Dayton	0	0	8
Fordham	0	0	7
George Mason	0	0	7
UMass	0	0	7
Saint Joseph's	0	0	6
La Salle ·	0	0	5
Duquesne	0	0	5
George Washington	0	0	4
ATLANTIC COAST	CONE	DEN	CE
ALLANTIC COAST	CG	LIVEIV	AG
	W	L	W

La Salle Duquesne George Washington	0 0	0	5 5 4	
ATLANTIC COAST		EREN		
	CG		AG	
	W	L	W	
Duke	1	0	11	
Wake Forest	1	0	11	
Miami	1	0	9	
North Carolina	1	0	9 9 7	
Louisville	1	0	7	
Boston College	1	0	6	
Syracuse	1	0	5	
Clemson	1	1	9	
Virginia	1	1	7	
Virginia Tech	0	2	8	
Florida St.	0	1	6	
NC State	0	1	7	
Georgia Tech	0	1	6	
Notre Dame	0	1	6	
Pittsburgh	0	1	5	
	_			

rittsburgii 0 i
Monday's Games
Brown at Syracuse, late
Tuesday's Games
Notre Dame at Pittsburgh, 8 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Duke at Clemson, 2 p.m.
Florida St. at Boston College, 5 p.m
Virginia Tech at North Carolina, 7 p.
Cornell at Syracuse 7 p.m.

Georgia Tech at Syracuse, ppd. Wake Forest at Louisville, 8 p.m.

BIG 12 CONFERENCE			
	CG		AG
	W	L	W
lowa St.	0	0	12
Baylor	0	0	11
West Virginia	0	0	11
TCU	0	0	10
Kansas	0	0	9
Oklahoma	0	0	10
Texas	0	0	9
Texas Tech	0	0	9
Kansas St.	0	0	8
Oklahoma St.	0	0	7

Okidilollid St.	U	U
Tuesda	ay's Game	es
Alabama St. at Tex	as Tech,	2 p.m.
Northwestern St. a	t Baylor,	8 p.m.
Incarnate Word at	Texas, 8:	30 p.m.
Wednes	day's Gan	nes
Toyac Couthorn at	TCII 4 n	m

icxus southern at ic			
Harvard at Kansas, 8			
North Florida at Kans	as St.,	8 p.r	n.
Morgan St. at Kansas	St., pp	d.	
BIG EAST CO	NFERE	NCE	
	CG		AG
	W	L	W
Providence	1	0	11
Creighton	1	0	9
Xavier	1	1	11
UConn	1	1	10
Villanova	1	1	8
DePaul	0	0	9
Seton Hall	0	0	9
St. John's	0	0	8
Butler	0	0	7
Marguette	0	2	8

deorgetown	0	0
Tuesday's G	ame	S
UConn at Xavier, 7 p.m. Georgetown at Creighto	on, p	pd.
DIO 2211 00112		

BIG TEN CO		ICE				
	CG		AG			
	W	L	W			
Michigan St.	2	0	10			
Ohio Št.	2	0	8			
Illinois	2	0	9			
Northwestern	1	0	8			
Purdue	1	1	11			
Minnesota	1	1	10			
Indiana	1	1	10			
Wisconsin	1	1	9			
Michigan	1	1	7			
Rutgers	1	1	5			
lowa	0	2	9			
Maryland	0	1	6			
Penn St.	0	2	5			
Nebraska	0	2	6			
Tuesdav's Games						

Tuesday's Games
New Orleans at Ohio St., 6:30 p.n
Wednesday's Games
High Point at Michigan St., 3 p.m.
Nicholls at Purdue, 5 p.m.
Delaware St. at Penn St., 6 p.m.
UNC-Asheville at Indiana, 7 p.m.
W. Illinois at Iowa, 8 p.m.
Alcorn St. at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Illinois St. at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.
Florida A&M at Illinois, 9 p.m.

HORIZ	ON LEAG	JE		
	CG		AG	
	W	L	W	
Cleveland St.	2	0	6	
Oakland	2	0	7	
Youngstown St.	2	0	7	
Detroit	2	0	4	
Fort Wayne	1	1	5	
Wright St.	1	1	4	
Milwaukee	1	1	3	
Green Bay	1	1	2	
IIIChicago	0	2	4	
N. Kentucky	0	2	4	
Robert Morris	0	2	2	
IUPUI	0	2	1	1

MID-AMERICAN	CONF	EKE	NCE
	CG		AG
	W	L	W
Ohio	0	0	9
Toledo	0	0	8
Akron	0	0	7
Bowling Green	0	0	7
Buffalo	0	0	6
Miami U.	0	0	6
Kent St.	0	0	5
Ball St.	0	0	5
E. Michigan	0	0	5
W. Michigan	0	0	4
N. Illinois	0	0	3

0 0

Cent. Michigan

F Michigan at Ohio, 7 p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Wednesday's G	ames	
Miami U. at Buffalo, 4 p.n		
Cent. Michigan at Kent S	t., 4:30	p.
Akron at Bowling Green,	7 p.m.	
W. Michigan at Toledo, 7	p.m.	
PACIFIC-12 CONF	ERENCE	
CG		Α
14/	- 1	١.

		CG	All	AG	
		W	L	W	
Southern	Cal	2	0	12	
Arizona		1	0	11	
UCLA		1	0	8	
Colorado		1	1	9	
Stanford		1	1	8	
Utah		1	1	8	
California	a	1	1	8	
Washing	ton St.	1	1	8	
Arizona S	St.	1	1	5	
Oregon		0	2	7	
Washing	ton	0	0	5	
Oregon		Λ	2	2	1

Tuesday's Games				
Sacramento St. at Oregon St., 5:	30 p.m.			
Wednesday's Games				
Washington at Washington St., 1	1 p.m.			
SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE				
CG	AG			

	CG		AG	
	W	L	W	L
LSU	0	0	12	0
Auburn	0	0	11	1
Arkansas	0	0	10	2
Kentucky	0	0	9	2
Tennessee	0	0	9	2
Texas A&M	0	0	9	2 2 3 3 3
Alabama	0	0	9	3
Florida	0	0	9	3
Mississippi St.	0	0	9	3
South Carolina	0	0	9	3
Mississippi Vanderbilt	0	0	8	4
Vanderbilt	0	0	8	4
Missouri	0	0	6	6
Georgia	0	0	5	7

Monday's Games Dallas Christian at Texas A&M. late

weanesaay's Games	
SC State at South Carolina, 3 p.m.	
Florida at Mississippi, 5 p.m.	
LSU at Auburn, 7 p.m.	
Gardner-Webb at Georgia, 7 p.m.	
Missouri at Kentucky, 7 p.m.	
Cent. Arkansas at Texas A&M, 8 p.m.	
Tennessee at Alabama, 9 p.m.	
Arkansas at Mississippi St., 9 p.m.	

HORSE RACING					
Turfway Park Entries					
		rsday, 6:15 p.m.			
1st-\$12,000), 3Y	O up F&M, 61/2f. Miss Getty Up			
ncess Grey C	122	Miss Getty Up	12		
arest Kitten	122	Top Hat Boss	12		
ote Peggy	122	Mrnthehmptns	12		

Princess Grey C	122	Miss Getty Up	122
Dearest Kitten		Top Hat Boss	124
Peyote Peggy	122	Mrnthehmptns	124
Dreamers Drm	122	Rubyinthestars	122
Anna's Mnlight	122	Mini Dress	122
Sweet Ginger	122	Bells of Joy	122
DmplsofVenus	122	•	
2nd-\$27	.000	, 3YO up, 1mi.	
Heat of the Nt	118	Lmnde Stand	114

Dilipisoi velius	IZZ				
2nd-\$27,000, 3YO up, 1mi. Heat of the Nt 118 Lmnde Stand					
Heat of the Nt	118	Lmnde Stand	114		
Mr. Biffle	118	Randello	118		
Slbh Aughty	121	Easton Rocks	118		
Hot Pastrami	118	T J Munnings	118		
Altmeister	118	•			
3rd-\$29,000, 3YO up, 6f.					

3ru-32:	9.000	J. 3 TO UD. 01.				
Drum and Bass	122	StrmsRflction	11!			
Eagle Cap	122	Midnight Shft	12:			
Valley Vista	122	Lucky Position	12			
Insde the Crcle	122	J J's Solution	12:			
Jk Be Nmble	118	HnkyTnkHero	12:			
Poquito Man	122	Trato	12:			
Z Force Majure	122					
4th-\$13,000, 3YO up, 1mi.						
Signsofawrior	121	Setson	12			

4th-\$13	.000	, 3YO up, 1mi.	
Signsofawrior	121	´Setson´	121
Mr. Banyan	118	Al Millon Bob	121
Money Pit	121	Monkey Zone	111
a-Bryton's D J	118	Niagara Gold	123
Mr Zydeco	121	Snake Bite	121
Hesitation Bls	121	a-Big Frank	118
Crwn the Prnce	111	. 3	
a-Coupled.			

a-Coupled.			
5th-\$6	2,00	0, 2YO, 61/2f. Old Beau	
Jr's Gift	112	Óld Beau	11
Q Bond	116	Amrcan Pure	11
Faithful Ruler	119	Newtown	119
Tim Tal	119	Battle Born	11
LveOntheRks	119	Noble Jon	119
Big Hello	119	Shannonrun	11
LaBliza Ngra	119	Swishawish	119

6th-\$64,000, 3Y0 up, 1mi. ng Joe 121 Juulstone 121 FireMrshllBl a-Jolting Joe Jerrid John's Rk 121 Gigging 121 Royne 118 Reward Night a-David's Gem Beatbox

Ranger Fox	118		
a-Coupled.			
7th-\$31	,000	, 3YO up, 1mi. Mne Own Star	
Joyride	118	Mne Own Star	1
Holdtheflight		Eye of the Cat	1
Thirsty Owl	121	Jnita's Exprs	1
Hllorhighwtr		Donegal Bay	1
Captain Fntstic	118	Alpha Dog	1
Science	118		

Captain Fitstic	118	Alpha Dog	12
Science	118		
8th-\$24,0	000, 3	BYO up F&M, 6f. Watermark	
Wicked Kitty	115	Watermark	12
Cuzzywuzzy	122	Leia Organa	12
Waves	122	Hold Me Grl	12
War Tango	122	Annie Bnie	12
Mystic Miss	124	I'm Stylin	12
Croce the T'e	122	Amari S	12

Cuzzywuzzy	122 Leia Organa	1			
Waves	122 Hold Me Grl				
War Tango	122 Annie Bnie	1			
Mystic Miss	124 I'm Stylin	1			
Cross the T's	122 Amari S.	1			
Solesofhershs	122 MissSvlia	1			
DE	O HOCKEY				
PRO HOCKEY					
ECHI STANDINGS					

es	122	noid Me dii		
Tango	122	Annie Bnie		
tic Miss	124	I'm Stylin		
s the T's	122	Amari S.		
sofhershs	122	MissSvlia		
PRO HOCKEY				
ECHL STANDINGS				
DDIOD TO MONDAY'S CAMES				

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Eno					•	
	Nort	h Div	/isior	1		
	GP	W	L	OL	SOL	Pts
Newfndlnd	21	15	5	1	0	31
Trois-Rvres	23	14	8	0	1	29
Adirondack	20	11	8	1	0	23
Reading	19	8	6	4	1	21
Maine	23	8	11	3	1	20
Worcester	20	8	11	0	1	17
	Sout	h Div	/isior	1		
	GP	W	L	OL	SOL	Pts
Jacksonville	27	17	8	1	1	36
Florida	26	14	7	2	3	33
Atlanta	26	12	11	2	1	27
Orlando	26	13	12	1	0	27
Greenville	23	9	10	3	1	22

Central Division						
WESTERN CONFERENCE						
rolina	24	9	13	2	0	2
olk	25	10	14	0	1	2
nville	23	9	10	3	1	2
ndo	26	13	12	1	0	2
nta	26	12	11	2	1	2
da	26	14	7	2	3	3

WESTERN CONFERENCE							
	Centr	al Di	visio	n			
	GP	W	L	OL	SOL	Pt:	
Toledo	24	16	6	0	2	34	
Fort Wayne	24	14	7	3	0	31	
Cincinnati	26	15	11	0	0	30	
Wheeling	24	14	9	1	0	29	
Kalamazoo	23	13	10	0	0	26	
lowa	25	8	13	3	1	20	
Indy	24	8	13	2	1	19	

	Mount					_
	GP	W	L	OL	SOL	Pt
ltah	26	17	8	1	0	35
daho	25	16	8	0	1	33
ulsa	22	12	9	0	1	25
apid City	26	11	12	1	2	25
ansas City	25	11	13	1	0	23
Vichita	25	10	13	2	0	22
llen	20	8	9	3	0	19

Sunday's Games
acksonville 3, South Carolina 1
ansas City 6, Iowa 5
ort Wayne 6, Indy 4
ulsa 4, Wichita 3
alamazoo 3, Toledo 2
incinnati 7, Wheeling 1
lorida 5, Orlando 0
dirondack 5, Worcester 0

PRO BASKETBALL LEADERS THROUGH DECEMBER 26 Scoring G FG FT PTS AVG

	G	ru	ГΙ	P13	AVG	
Durant, BKN	27	291	171	803	29.7	
Curry, GS	31	280	137	864	27.9	
Antetokounmpo,	27	261	189	739	27.4	
MIL						
Young, ATL	29	275	163	791	27.3	
DeRozan, CHI	27	258	184	721	26.7	
LaVine, CHI	28	269	113	735	26.3	
Jokic, DEN	27	275	106	699	25.9	
Tatum, BOS	33	295	163	845	25.6	
Mitchell, UTA	31	290	109	787	25.4	
George, LAC	26	234	103	641	24.7	
Towns, MIN	30	259	144	734	24.5	
Lillard, POR	26	202	132	619	23.8	
Beal, WAS	28	252	105	652	23.3	
Davis, LAL	27	251	117	629	23.3	
Ingram, NO	27	229	116	619	22.9	

G OFF DEF TOT AVG Gobert, UTA 32 109 369 478 14.9 Jokic, DEN 27 69 304 373 13.8 Capela, ATL 30 119 261 380 12.7 Valanciunas, NO 32 114 271 385 12.0 Sabonis, IND

33 110 277 387 11.7 Antetokounmpo, 27 56 257 313 11.6 Ayton, PHO Paul, I Harde Young Murra Lowry

9	SCHEDULE			
COLLE	GE FOOT	BAL	L	
Westbrook, LAL		34	276	8.1
Lowry, MIA		31	255	8.2
Murray, SA		31	272	8.8
Young, ATL		29	269	9.3
Harden, BKN		27	260	9.6
Paul, PHO		32	316	9.9
		G	AST	AVG
	Assists			
Ayton, PHO	24 /0	197	267	11.1

COLLEGE FOOTBALL					
	CHEDULE				
	ORE LISTED FIRST				
	INNATI (13-0)				
49	Miami U.	14			
42	Murray St.	7			
38	at Indiana	24			
24	at Notre Dame	13			
52	Temple	3			
56	UCF	21			
27	at Navy	20			
31	at Tulane	12			
28	Tulsa	20			
45	at South Florida	28			
48	SMU	14			
35	at East Carolina	13			
35	Houston	20			
Dec. 31 at Alabar	na, 3:30 p.m.				
	NBAMA (12-1)				
44	at Miami	13			
48	Mercer	14			
31	at Florida	29			
63	Southern Miss.	14			
42	Mississippi	21			
38	at Texas A&M	41			
49	at Mississippi St.	9			
52	Tennessee	24			
20	LSU	14			
59	New Mexico St.	3			
42	Arkansas	35			
24	at Auburn, 40T	22			
41	Georgia	24			
Dec. 31 Cincinnat					
	HIGAN (12-1)				
47	W. Michigan	14			
31	Washington	10			
63	N. Illinois	10			
20	Rutgers	13			
38	at Wisconsin	17			
32	at Nebraska	29			
33	Northwestern	7			
33	at Michigan St.	37			
29	Indiana	7			
21	at Penn St.	17			
59	at Maryland	18			
42	Ohio St.	27			
42	at Iowa	3			
Dec. 31 Georgia,		•			
	ORGIA (12-1)				
10	at Clemson	3			
56	UAB	7			
40	South Carolina	13			
62	at Vanderbilt	0			
37	Arkansas	0			
34	at Auburn	10			

Kentucky

at Florida

Missouri

Dec. 31 at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.

at Tennessee

at Georgia Tech

Charleston Southern 7

6

17

0

30 34

43

41

45

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THE BACKSTOP

SCOREBOARD



Odds available as of print deadline

	NC/	AAF	
	Tues		
Favorite	Spread	O/U ML	Underdog
AUBURN	1.5	51.5 -125	Houston
LOUISVILLE	1.5	54.5 -120	Air Force
Mississippi St	9.5	58.5-350	TX TECH
NC STATĖ	2.5	59.5 -135	ucla
MINNESOTA	3.5	44.5-205	W. Virginia
	Wodn	vehao	

Spread O/U ML Underd 54.5 -160 44.5 -120 Maryland **OKLAHOMA** 4.5 59.5 -200 Oregon

Thursday Spread O/U ML Underdog 9.5 58.5-350 S. CAROL. 4.5 63.5-200 PURDUE Favorite N. Carolina Tennessee MICHIGAN ST. 55.5 -140 Pittsburgh 41.5 -240 Friday Spread O/U ML Underdo

Wake Forest 14.5 61.5 -600 RUTGERS Saturday Spread O/U Favorite 48.5 -103 Penn St. 45.5 -130 Okla. St. 44.5 -145 Iowa 65.5 -230 UTAH ARKANSAS NOTRE DAME KENTUCKY 15 555-120 OLE MISS Baylor

Favorite

Favorite

NFL Sunday Spread O/U ML 3.5 41.5 -190 Underdog Dolphins TITANS 5.5 7.5 38.5 -270 COLTS 7.5 45.5 -380 4.5 48.5 -210 14.5 41.5 -1400 13.5 45.5 -900 Raider PATRIOTS Jaguars **Buccaneers** 45.5 -170 WASHINGTN 38.5 -320 44.5-1200 45.5 -250 SAINTS BILLS CHARGERS **Broncos** 14.5 44.5-1200 49ERS Texans 7.5 42.5 -380 4.5 49.5 -230 3.5 47.5 -180 6.5 48.5 -300 SFAHAWKS Lions Cardinals RAVENS COWBOYS PACKERS Vikings
 Monday

 Spread
 0/U
 ML

 2.5
 41.5
 -155

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All times EST

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

427 388 264 260 312 Buffalo New England Miami 6 0.600 7 0.500 285 e-N.Y. Jets 4 11 0.267 276 449 South W L T Pct 0 5 0.667 9 6 0.600 4 11 0.267 326 316 401 357 420 248 Indianapolis e-Houston e-Jacksonville 2 13 0 .133 217 396 North
W L T Pct
9 6 0.600
8 7 0.533
7 7 1.500 PF 410 355 301 Cincinnati

Baltimore Pittsburgh Cleveland 7 8 0.467 314 329 West L T Pct 4 0.733 7 0.533 7 0.533 y-Kansas City L.A. Chargers Las Vegas 11 421 8 7 0.533 428 8 7 0.533 408 8 7 0.533 316 7 8 0.467 298 260 Denver NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East W L T Pct11 4 0.733
8 7 0.533
6 9 0.400
4 11 0.267 457 y-Dallas Philadelphia 307 398 318 Washington e-N.Y. Giants South V L T **PF** 442 313 L T Pct 4 0.733 7 0.500 y-Tampa Bay New Orleans 11 7 312 285 8 0 467 400 5 10 0.333 North W L T **PF** 383 384

W L T Pct 12 3 0.800 7 8 0.467 324 372 373 y-Green Bay Minnesota e-Chicago e-Detroit 5 10 0.333 2 12 1.167 265 West W L T Pct 11 4 0 .733 10 5 0 .667 8 7 0 .533 **PF** 416 394 **PA** 326 306 x-L.A. Rams San Francisco 377 334 Seattle 5 10 0.333 e-Eliminated from playoffs x-clinched playoff spot y-clinched division

Thursday's Games Tennessee 20 San Francisco 17 Saturday's Games Green Bay 24, Cleveland 22 Indianapolis 22, Arizona 16

Sunday's Games Atlanta 20, Detroit 16 Buffalo 33, New England 21 Cincinnati 41, Baltimore 21 Houston 41, L.A. Chargers 29 L.A. Rams 30, Minnesota 23 N.Y. Jets 26, Jacksonville 21 Philadelphia 34, N.Y. Giants 10 Tampa Bay 32, Carolina 6 Chicago 25, Seattle 24 Kansas City 36, Pittsburgh 10 Las Vegas 17, Denver 13 Dallas 56, Washington 14 Monday's Games

Miami at New Orleans, late Late Sunday Dallas 56, Washington 14 Washington 0 7 0 7 Dallas 21 21 7 7

First Quarter Dal-Elliott 5 pass from Prescott (Zuerlein kick), 7:42.
Dal-Schultz 9 pass from Prescott (Zuerlein kick), 3:08. Dal–Lawrence 40 interception return (Zuerlein kick), 2:17.

Second Quarter Was-Gibson 8 pass from Heinicke (Slye Dal-Elliott 11 run (Zuerlein kick), 10:34 Dal-Steele 1 pass from Prescott (Zuerlein Dal-Cooper 13 pass from Prescott (Zuerlein kick), :05.

Third Quarter 0 blocked punt return (Zuerlein kick), 6:06.

Fourth Quarter Dal-Turner 9 pass from Rush (Zuerlein kick), 14:16. Was-Bates 13 pass from K.Allen (Slye kick), 2:46. A-93,482.

First downs 14 28 497 **Total Net Yards** 257 Rushes-yards 20-85 28-108 Passing 172 389 1-21 **Punt Returns** 2-14 Kickoff Returns 1-20 0-0 2-40 Interceptions Ret 0-0 Comp-Att-Int 15-32-2 30-42-0 Sacked-Yards Lost 5-16 3-11 Punts 7-44.0 4-53.5 Fumbles-Lost 1-0 2-0 Penalties-Yards 1-13 3-15 31:31 Time of Possession 28:29

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS RUSHING–Washington, Patterson 9-33, Gibson 6-29, Carter 1-15, Williams 3-9, Heinicke 1-(minus 1). Dallas, Elliott 9-37, Pollard 8-34, Prescott 4-21, Clement 4-18, Rush 2-0, Lamb 1-(minus 2).

PASSING–Washington, Heinicke 7-22-2-121, K.Allen 8-10-0-67. Dallas, Prescott 28-39-0-330. Rush 2-3-0-70. RECEIVING—Washington, McLaurin 3-40, Brown 2-53, Bates 2-45, Gibson 2-29, Humphries 2-4, Milne 1-14, Carter 1-5, Williams 1-2, Seals-Jones 1-(minus 4).
Dallas, Schultz 8-82, Cooper 7-85, Lamb 4-66, Turner 3-82, Gallup 2-53, Pollard 2-16, C.Wilson 2-10, Elliott 1-5, Steele 1-1. MISSED FIELD GOALS-None.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

EAG LE				
Atla	ntic Div			
Brooklyn Philadelphia Boston Toronto New York	W 22 17 16 14 15	16 17 16 18	Pct .710 .515 .485 .467 .455	GI - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Sout	heast Di	visio	1	
Miami Washington Charlotte Atlanta Orlando	W 21 17 17 15 7	13 16 17 17 27	Pct .618 .515 .500 .469 .206	31/ 31/ 1/
Cen	tral Div			
Chicago Milwaukee Cleveland Indiana Detroit	W 20 22 20 14 5	10 13 13 20 27	Pct .667 .629 .606 .412 .156	GE 1/ 11/ 16 16
WESTER	RN CONI	FEREN	ICE	
South	nwest D			
Memphis Dallas San Antonio New Orleans Houston	W 20 15 14 12 10	14 17 18 22 23		GI - - ! 8
North	nwest Di	ivisio	n	

GB Utah 23 16 17 19 16 15 13 12 Oklahoma City 20 .375 Pacific Division W L GB Pct Golden State 27 26 17 6 6 16

L.A. Lakers 16 18 .471 11½ 13 21 .382 14½ Sacramento

Sunday's Games Miami 93, Orlando 83 Cleveland 144, Toronto 99 Memphis 127, Sacramento 102 Philadelphia 117, Washington 96 Oklahoma City 117, New Orleans 112 San Antonio 144, Detroit 109 Chicago 113, Indiana 105 Denver 103, L.A. Clippers 100

Monday's Games Houston at Charlotte, late Chicago at Atlanta, late Boston at Minnesota, late Utah at San Antonio, late Memphis at Phoenix, late Dallas at Portland, late Brooklyn at L.A. Clippers, late

Tuesday's Games Milwaukee at Orlando, 7 p.m. Philadelphia at Toronto, 7:30 p.m. Washington at Miami, 7:30 p.m. Cleveland at New Orleans, 8 p.m. L.A. Lakers at Houston, 8 p.m. New York at Minnesota, 8 p.m. Denver at Golden State, 10 p.m. Oklahoma City at Sacramento, 10 p.m

NHL

Monday's Games All Games Postponed

Tuesday's Games Montreal at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m. Columbus at Chicago, ppd Arizona at San Jose, 10:30 p.m. Vegas at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Monday Quick Lane Bowl: Western Michigan 52, Nevada 24

Military Bowl: Boston College vs. East Carolina, canceled Birmingham Tuesday Bowl: Auburn vs. Houston, ESPN, noon

First Responder Bowl: Air Force vs. Louisville, ESPN, 3:15 p.m. **Liberty Bowl:** Mississippi State vs. Texas Tech, ESPN, 6:45 p.m. Holiday Bowl: North Carolina State vs. UCLA, Fox, 8 p.m.

Guaranteed Rate Bowl: Minnesota vs. West Virginia, ESPN, 10:15 p.m.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Men's AP Top 25

Mens AP 109 25
The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Dec. 26, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking

9	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Baylor (61)	11-0	1525	1
2. Duke	11-1	1448	2
3. Purdue	11-1	1371	3
4. Gonzaga	10-2	1335	4
5. UCLA	8-1	1296	
6. Kansas	9-1	1233	
7. Southern Cal	12-0		
8. Iowa St.	12-0		
9. Arizona	11-1		
10. Michigan St.	10-2		
11. Auburn	11-1	826	
12. Houston	11-3		13
13. Ohio St.	8-2		
14. Tennessee	9-2		
15. Seton Hall	9-1	716	15
16. LSU	12-0		17
17. Texas	9-2		16
18. Kentucky	9-2		20
19. Alabama	9-3		
20. Colorado St.	10-0		
21. Providence	11-1		
22. Villanova	8-4		23
23 Xavier	11-2	237	18

24. Wisconsin 25. Texas Tech 9-2 207 24 9-2 121 25 Others receiving votes: Illinois 72, Oklahoma 62, West Virginia 52, Loyola Chicago 39, UConn 34, Michigan 7, Colorado 5, San Francisco 4, Wake Forest

4, Iowa 2, Davidson 2, Minnesota 1, Creighton 1, Memphis 1.

Women's AP Top 25 The top 25 teams in The Associated Press women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Dec. 26, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking

Record Pts Prv

1. S. Carolina (30)	12-0	750	1
2. Stanford	8-3	688	2
3. Louisville	10-1	676	
4. Arizona	10-0	671	4
5. NC State	11-2	637	
Maryland	10-3	545	
7. Tennessee	10-1	534	7
8. Indiana		525	
9. Michigan	11-1	517	9
10. Baylor	9-2	485	10
11. UConn	6-3	463	11
12. Texas	9-1	453	12
13. Georgia	11-1	402	
14. Iowa St.	11-1	391	13
15. Duke		303	
16. Georgia Tech		262	
17. Notre Dame		197	
18. BYU		180	
19. LSU	11-1		21
20. Kentucky	7-3		22
21. lowa	6-3	121	15
22. South Florida		117	
23. Texas A&M	10-2		
24. North Carolina	11-0	85	25
25. Ohio St.	9-2	84	24
Others receiving	votes: 0	klaho	ma

78, Colorado 59, Florida Gulf Coast 55, Nebraska 45, DePaul 22, Mississippi 3, Missouri St. 2.

TRANSACTIONS

Monday's Transactions FOOTBALL **National Football League**

ARIZONA CARDINALS – Activated OL Rodney Hudson from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Re-signed DL Matt Dickerson to the practice squad.

ATLANTA FALCONS – Placed Brandon Copeland , Dorian Etheridge, WR Tajae Sharpe and OLB James Vaughters on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Activated CB Jimmy Smith, OLB Pernell McPhee and OL Jaylon Moore from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed S Tony Jefferson on the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list. Released OL Adrian Ealy from the practice

squad.

CAROLINA PANTHERS – Placed DEs Brian Burns, Marquis Haynes, LB Shaq Thompson, DTs Daviyon Nix, Phil Hoskins and DB Matt Paradis on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Activated QB Matt Barkley from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Waived K Alex Kessman from the practice CHICAGO BEARS – Activated WR Allen

Robinson, CB Jaylon Johnson, S Tashaun Gipson, TE Jesse James and RB Ryan Nall from the reserve/COVID-19 list. CINCINNATI BENGALS – Placed QB Brandon Allen and CB Darious Phillips on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Signed LB Austin Calitro to the active roster.
CLEVELAND BROWNS – Activated DE
Jadeveon Clowney, G Drew Forbes, S
Ronnie Harrison Jr., CB Troy Hill, RB
Kareem Hunt, DT Malik McDowell, T

Jedrick Wills Jr. and LB Mack Wilson from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed LB elijah Lee on the reserve/COVID-19 list. DETROIT LIONS – Activated QB Jared

Goff from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed WR Josh Reynolds on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed QB Steven

reserve/COVID-19 list. Activated S Nate Meadors from the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list.

GREEN BAY PACKERS - Placed G Ben Braden, LBs Tipa Galeai, Ty Summers and WR Amari Todgers on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed DL R.J. McIntosh on the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list.

HOUSTON TEXANS – Placed RB David Johnson and LB Neville Hewitt on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed RB Paul Quessenberry on the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS – Placed S Jahleel

Addae, CB T.J. Carrie, LB Malik Jefferson, RB Marlon Mack and T Braden Smith on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed CB Chris Wilcox on the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Placed RB James Robinson on injured reserve. Placed TEs Dan Arnold, Luke Farrell, Chris Manhertz, DTs Malcolm Brown, DaVon Hamilton, DE/OLBs K'Lavon Chaisson, Lerentee McCray and OLs Andrew Norwell and Jared Hocker on the reserve/COVID-19 lsit. claimed LB Jamir Jones and RB Mekhi Sargent off waivers from Los Angeles Rams.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS – Placed DB

Chris Harris Jr. CB Michael Davis. Ss Nasir Adderley, Alohi Gilman, EDGE Emeke Egbule, OL Senio Kelemete and DL Andrew Brown on the reserve/COVID-19

MIAMI DOLPHINS – Promoted Ts Roderick Johnson, Adam Pankey and RB Jordan Scarlett from the practice squad to the active roster.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS – Placed Olisaemeka Udoh on t reserve/COVID-19 list.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS – Signed DL Ethan Westbrooks and LB Justin March-Lillard. NEW YORK GIANTS - Placed OL Matt

Peart on injured reserve. Placed DB Julian Love on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Released C Evan Boehm from the practice squad. Placed DB Ka'dar Hollman on the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES – Placed DE Derek Barnett, CB Andre Chachere and DE Tarron Jackson on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed TE Noah Togiai on the practice

squad reserve/COVID-19 list. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS – Placed DE L.J. Collier on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Activated TE Ryan Izzo from the practice squad reserve/COVID-19 list.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS – Activated

WR Breshad Perriman from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed WR Mike Evans on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

TENNESSEE TITANS – Activated G Rodger Saffold and DB Elijah Molden from the reserve/COVID-19 list. Placed OLB Bud Dupree, CB Caleb Farley, WR Julio Jones, DB Buster Skrine and WR Nick Westbrook-Ikhine on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Signed OL Cedric Ogbuehi to the practice squad. Released DB Nate Brooks from the practice squad.
WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM —
Activated LB Cole Holcomb, C Tyler Larsen and G Brandon Scherff from the reserve/COVID-19 list.

ON THIS DATE

Dec. 28

1947 – The Chicago Cardinals behind Elmer Angsman's two 70-yard scores and Charlie Trippi's 44-yard TD run and 75-yard punt return beat the Philadelphia Eagles 28-21 for the NFL title on a frozen Comiskey Park field.

2008 – The Detroit Lions lose to the Green Bay Packers 31-21, making them the first team to go winless through a 16-game

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ex-UC Bearcat Tre Scott scores first NBA points for Cavaliers

Tre Scott, the former University of Cincinnati men's basketball standout forward, scored his first NBA points on Sunday during the fourth quarter of the Cleveland Cavaliers' 144-99 win against the Toronto Raptors.

Scott finished the game with six points on 3 of 6 from the field with two rebounds, one steal and one block in nine minutes of action.

The Cavs called up Scott from the NBA G League's Cleveland Charge last week after he signed a 10-day deal with the team. He is among nine players from UC, Xavier or a Greater Cincinnati high school on NBA rosters.

Scott's UC teammate, Jarron Cumberland, signed a 10-day contract on Sunday with the Portland Trail Blazers via the NBA's Hardship Exception after being named the MVP of last week's NBA G League Winter Showcase.

Scott scored 15 points on 6-of-9 shooting from the field – including 3 of 5 from 3-point range – with six rebounds, two assists and one steal in 30 minutes in his NBA G League debut for Salt Lake

City in February. The Utah Jazz announced Scott's signing last December.

Phoenix L.A. Clippers

Scott, 25, wasn't selected in the 2020 NBA Draft after redshirting and playing four seasons at UC. He signed in October 2020 with Leones de Ponce of the Puerto Rican Baloncesto Superior Nacional. As a senior for the Bearcats, Scott averaged 11.4 points, 10.5 rebounds, 2.2 assists and 1.5 steals in 33.7 minutes per game. He was named 2019-20 American Athletic Conference (AAC) Defensive Player of the Year, AAC Most Improved Player, first-team all-AAC and earned the league's Sportsmanship Award. Scott told The Enquirer that the pandemic prematurely ending his college career "will haunt me for the rest of my life because it's a question that I'll never get to answer."

Dave Clark Cincinnati Enquirer USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio State WR Wilson will skip Rose Bowl, enter NFL Draft

Ohio State University wide receiver Garrett Wilson is skipping the Rose Bowl to enter the NFL draft.

Wilson made the announcement Monday in a statement on Twitter at the

same time the Buckeyes were at Disneyland to celebrate their New Year's Day game against Pac-12 champion Utah.

"This journey has been a lifetime in the making and after careful consideration, today, I am excited to start the next chapter by declaring for the NFL Draft," Wilson wrote.

Wilson, a 6-foot, 192-pound junior, is regarded as a potential first-round selection. He had 70 receptions for 1,058 yards and 12 touchdowns, ranking second on the team in each category for the potent Buckeyes passing attack. He caught 23 touchdowns in his three seasons at Ohio State.

Wilson is the first of several notable underclassmen for No. 7 Ohio State (No. 6 CFP) to make his future plans public. That group includes defensive end Zach Harrison and offensive tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere. Other seniors, including wide receiver Chris Olave and defensive tackle Haskell Garrett, could also decide to bypass the game, which marks Ohio State's second trip to Pasadena in the past four seasons.

NBA changes COVID protocols, shortens path to return to play

NBA players who test positive for CO-

VID-19 now have a quicker path to return to play, after the league completed a significant update to its health and safety protocols on Monday.

The biggest change: Isolation periods for players who test positive may now be significantly shortened – down to six days from what has been the customary 10 – provided those players are asymptomatic and meet other testing standards. Teams were told of the new protocols Monday in a memo sent by the league, a copy of which was obtained by the Associated Press.

That memo was sent on the same day that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cut isolation restrictions for Americans who catch the coronavirus from 10 to five days. CDC officials made that move saying that evidence shows people with the coronavirus are most infectious in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop. The NBA also relied on data, telling teams that the updated protocols "reflects analysis of testing data that the league and its infectious disease experts and epidemiologists have gathered throughout the pandemic." The changes were made in agreement with the National Basketball Players Association.

2:55 p.m.

NRCSN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

UPCOMING



Jan. 9 at Cleveland, 1 p.m. Wed. MBB vs. Missouri, 7 p.m.

Sun. vs. Kansas City, 1 p.m.



Thurs. WBB at Auburn, 8 p.m. Fri. MBB vs. High Point, 12 p.m. Wed. MBB at Buffalo, 4 p.m.

Wed. WBB vs. Ohio, 7 p.m.



Wed. vs. Greenville, 7:30 p.m. Fri. vs. Greenville, 6 p.m. **Jan. 7** vs. Fort Wayne, 7:30 p.m.



Tues. MBB vs. Connecticut, canceled Wed. WBB vs. Butler, 2 p.m. Fri. WBB vs. Providence, canceled

Sat. MBB vs. C. Michigan, 3:30 p.m.



Tues. MBB at Houston, canceled Wed. WBB vs. Lipscomb, canceled Fri. FB vs. Alabama, 3:30 p.m.



Tues. FB vs. Air Force, 3:15 p.m. Wed. MBB vs. Wake Forest, 8 p.m. Thurs. WBB vs. Bstn Clige, 7 p.m.



Tues. MBB vs. NO, canceled Fri. WBB at Michigan, 12 p.m. Sat. FB vs. Utah, 5 p.m.



Thurs. MBB vs. Green Bay, 7 p.m. Fri. WBB at IUPUI, 2 p.m. Sat. MBB vs. Milwaukee, 2 p.m.

ON THE AIR

Premier League: Liverpool at Leicester City

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN)		
Sacramento St. at Oregon St.	5:30 p.m.	PAC-12N
Notre Dame at Pittsburgh	8 p.m.	ACCN
Lehigh at Maryland	8:30 p.m.	BTN
COLLEGE FOOTBALL		
The Birmingham Bowl: Houston vs. Auburn	12 p.m.	ESPN
The First Responder Bowl: Air Force vs. Louisville	3:15 p.m.	ESPN; 1530-AM
The Liberty Bowl: Mississippi St. vs. Texas Tech	6:45 p.m.	ESPN
The Holiday Bowl: UCLA vs. NC State	8 p.m.	FOX
The Guaranteed Rate Bowl: West Virginia vs. Minnesota	10:15 p.m.	ESPN
IIHF HOCKEY (MEN)		
World Junior Championship Group Stage: Switzerland vs. U.S., Group B	4:30 p.m.	NHLN
World Junior Championship Group Stage: Austria vs. Canada, Group A	7 p.m.	NHLN
NBA BASKETBALL		
Washington at Miami	7:30 p.m.	NBATV
Cleveland at New Orleans	8 p.m.	BSOH
Denver at Golden State	10 p.m.	NBATV
SOCCER (MEN)		·
Premier League: Tottenham Hotspur at Southampton	9:55 a.m.	NBCSN

FUN

ZITS by Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



BABY BLUES by Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



I CALL IT "NOONTIME SURPRISE." WHAT THAT PEMEMBER THE TIME MEANS IT'S GROCERY SHOPPING DAY. SHE GAVE US GRAHAM CRACKER AND GRAPE SANDWICHES?

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

WNCHTIME!



GREGI MOTO MALKER NO PROBLEM 12/28

GARFIELD by Jim Davis







THE MIDDLETONS by Ralph Dunagin & Dana Summers



GET FUZZY by Darby Conley







PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis





NON SEQUITUR by Wiley Miller



PICKLES by Brian Crane









ZIGGY by Tom Wilson & Tom II



"DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE, DAD... 'CAUSE IT JUST STARTED SNOWIN' AGAIN!"

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston





NO, I INSIST YOU COME INSIDE AND PUT YOUR FEET UP!

SIGH THEY WON'T LET ME DO ANYTHING

HI & LOIS by Greg & Brian Walker





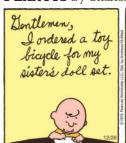
BLONDIE by Dean Young



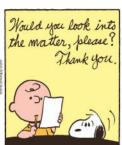




PEANUTS by Charles Schulz









RED AND ROVER by Brian Basset







FRAZZ by Jef Mallett















SPEED BUMP by Dave Coverly

YEAH, NO, I ONLY

FIST-BUMP THESE DAY

MARMADUKE by Brad & Paul Anderson



"I wish he woudn't play with his food."

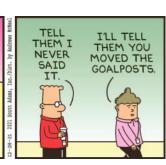
DILBERT by Scott Adams

WHAT'S THIS I

HEAR ABOUT YOU WANTING TO REPLACE OUR NETWORK WITH

A KNOTTED ROPE?





WUMO by Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler

