



# USA TODAY SPORTS™



**Staying on track**

**Warriors lurk as pest in West, 2C**

STEPHEN CURRY BY KELLEY L. COX, USA TODAY SPORTS

## Slow start

Tiger Woods is off the pace at Palm Beach, 7C



USA TODAY SPORTS

### SPORTSLINE

**Basketball/NBA ▶ 2, 9C**

Indiana 101, Milwaukee 96  
Washington 134, Toronto 129 (3OT)  
Miami 108, New York 82

Brooklyn at Denver

**Hockey/NHL ▶ 5, 9C**

New Jersey 5, Columbus 2  
N.Y. Islanders 5, Toronto 4 (OT)  
N.Y. Rangers 2, Chicago 1  
San Jose 7, Philadelphia 3  
Montreal 6, Pittsburgh 5 (SO)  
Detroit 6, Ottawa 1  
Washington 5, Florida 4  
Nashville 3, Tampa Bay 2  
Phoenix at Winnipeg  
Carolina at Dallas  
Los Angeles at Calgary  
Minnesota at Edmonton

**FIRST WORD**  
HE REPORTED THAT HE DAMAGED HIS OWN CAR AND DIDN'T NEED ANY POLICE HELP OR REPORT."

Sgt. Mark Clark of the Scottsdale, Ariz., police department, on the Dolphins' Richie Incognito smashing his own Ferrari with a bat.

**TODAY'S NAMES TO KNOW**  
DEMARCUS COUSINS, RYAN BRAUN, JIMMER FREDETTE



BUSHWACKER BY ANDY WATSON, BULLSTOCK PHOTOS

**MAGIC NUMBER**

**\$125,000**

Money per second to be awarded to the winner of Saturday's Professional Bull Riders Dr Pepper Iron Cowboy V if he covers champion bull Bushwacker for eight seconds during the Bad Boy Mowers Million Dollar Ride.

**LAST WORD**

"WHEN YOU LISTEN TO HIM TALK, IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S SERIOUS, DEDICATED AND THINGS LIKE THAT. BUT IT'S LIKE LISTENING TO A REPRESENTATIVE FROM NORTH KOREA. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE."

Promoter Bob Arum, on whether former middleweight champ Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. has become more dedicated to his craft.

Edited by Reid Cherner

**USA SNAPSHOTS®**

**Largest margins of victory in NBA**

Cleveland 148, Miami 80, Dec. 17, 1991	68 points
Indiana 124, Portland 59, Feb. 27, 1998	65
Los Angeles Lakers 162, Golden State 99, March 19, 1972	63
Syracuse Nationals 162, New York Knicks 100, Dec. 25, 1960	62
Golden State 153, Indiana 91, Nov. 2, 1991	62

Source Basketball-Reference.com  
MATT COOPER AND PAUL TRAP, USA TODAY



GEOFF BURKE, USA TODAY SPORTS

**EMERGING TEAM** Virginia heads into a showdown Saturday with Syracuse leading the Atlantic Coast Conference.

# ROARING INTO MARCH

## Season of parity sets up wild finish for college hoops

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Heading into the 2013-14 college basketball season, attention focused on how new playing rules would be officiated and how one of the most anticipated freshman classes would fare. Although concern about the rules changes has subsided somewhat and the freshmen — Duke's Jabari Parker, Kansas' Andrew Wiggins and Joel Embiid, Kentucky's Julius Randle, Syracuse's Tyler Ennis and Arizona's Aaron Gordon — have had fabulous seasons, both story lines have been overshadowed by upperclassmen-oriented teams.

No. 1 Florida is riding a 20-game winning streak, No. 2 Wichita



PETER G. AIKEN, USA TODAY SPORTS

**EMERGING PLAYER**  
Sophomore Ron Baker is the second-leading scorer for unbeaten Wichita State.

State is 30-0 and No. 10 Creighton is led by player of the year front-runner Doug McDermott, a senior who leads the country in scoring at 26 points a game — including nine games of 30 or more.

"I think the freshman talent



LUKAS KEAPPROTH, PRESS-GAZETTE MEDIA

**EMERGING CINDERELLA**  
Wisconsin-Green Bay and Keifer Sykes are looking beyond the Horizon League.

has provided a spotlight to the game that's really interesting," ESPN analyst Jay Bilas said. "I thought the talent level was going to make the teams better, though. What we've seen is a lot of good teams, but no team that's really great and separated themselves. What we've really seen is a lot of parity. Every team seems to have a vulnerability, which makes it a fun year to watch."

March is upon us, the time when teams and their fans brace themselves for brackets, bubbles, buzzer-beaters and Cinderellas.

"The tournament is a fascinating event, because so many little things can make a difference regardless of who you're playing," said Saint Louis coach Jim Crews, whose team's 19-game win streak ended Thursday. "Whether it's boxing out or one extra pass, the game doesn't understand rankings or numbers. Any team can win. All it takes is getting there."

■ **ON 4C** March Madness primer

## Yankees need vintage Jeter

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USA TODAY Sports

TAMPA Derek Jeter, serenaded by rousing ovations from New York Yankees fans and mobbed by reporters at his locker before Thursday's exhibition game, can see it coming.

Fans will want to display their affection and appreciation everywhere he goes. They'll want to revel in his marvelous exploits of the last 18 seasons. And not a day



ROBINSON CANO BY USA TODAY SPORTS

**THE CANO SHOW**  
Jeter's old running mate finds an ally in Seattle, 8C

will go by when reporters or camera crews won't be waiting for him.

Jeter realizes everyone has good intentions, but he has no plans to be part of any elaborate goodwill tour, year-long retire-

▶ **STORY CONTINUES ON 8C**

## Junior's Hall spot already secured

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PHOENIX Even if he never wins again, Dale Earnhardt Jr. will make the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

His second Daytona 500 victory Sunday sealed his spot. Those wins are among 20 in his Sprint Cup career to go with two Nationwide Series championships and six berths in the Chase for the Sprint Cup. This year will make seven.

Off the track, his contributions have been even greater. He's been the face of NASCAR for the majority of his 15-year Cup career, even when the success didn't come. Earnhardt is the 11-time reigning most popular driver, as

▶ **Drivers, crews get first real look at new rules, 3C**

voted on by fans.

The combination of those achievements will be enough to satisfy Hall voters at some point. And if the 39-year-old keeps racing for another decade, which is possible, his numbers will only get better.

Of course, the knock on Earnhardt is he isn't his seven-time champion father, who was a member of the Hall's first class enshrined in 2010.

In fact, Earnhardt hasn't won a Cup championship at all; maybe he never will. While many people will argue that a championship is necessary — for example, Mark Martin, eligible for the first time this year, was left off the ballot despite having 40 wins — Earnhardt is worthy of consideration.

▶ **STORY CONTINUES ON 3C**

A STYLISH COMPETITION WITH A FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC

TIGER WOODS  
WORLD-RANKED #1

ADAM SCOTT  
WORLD-RANKED #2

HENRIK STENSON  
WORLD-RANKED #3

PHIL MICKELSON  
WORLD-RANKED #4

Feb 27 - 28 on The Golf Channel. March 1 - 2 on NBC.

Check local listings for times. PGA National Golf Resort & Spa, Palm Beach Gardens, FL. [www.thehondaclassic.com](http://www.thehondaclassic.com)