

Sports & Entertainment

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Sen. Blackburn introduces Helping Undergraduate Students Thrive with Long-Term Earnings (Hustle) Act



Sen. Marsha Blackburn

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 8, 2025 – U.S. Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) introduced the Helping Undergraduate Students Thrive with Long-Term Earnings (HUSTLE) Act, which would create first-of-its kind name, image, and likeness (NIL) tax-advantaged investment accounts for student athletes, require trustees to provide financial education, and establish regulations to prevent abuse.

In 2021, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) allowed student-athletes to profit

“College athletes are now earning billions of dollars from their name, image, and likeness—and rightly so. We must empower these students to safeguard their financial future and protect themselves against rogue agents,” said Senator Blackburn. “The HUSTLE Act would allow college athletes to invest their earnings in a tax-advantaged account that grows over time, strengthen financial education, and create safeguards to prevent exploitation by dishonest agents.”

from their name, image, and likeness, which has now become a multibillion-dollar marketplace. With these NIL agreements opening the door to new economic freedoms, the HUSTLE Act would ensure college athletes have strong protections, clear guidance, and financial literacy to help them better navigate the world of college

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New Tiger head coach is Charles Huff, a well-known and respected figure in the college sports world

Huff brings over 20 years of experience with stops at Alabama, Mississippi State, Penn State, Vanderbilt, Buffalo Bills and Tennessee State; and worked with Football Hall of Fame Coach Nick Saban and with future NFL Superstars Najee Harris and Saquon Barkley.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., December 8, 2025 – Charles Huff has been named the 26th head coach in Memphis football history, Senior Vice President and Director of Athletics Dr. Ed Scott announced Monday, Dec. 8. Huff, a well-known figure in both collegiate and professional football, spent the 2019-20 season as College Football Hall of Fame coach Nick Saban’s associate head coach and worked with future NFL superstars Najee Harris and Saquon Barkley.

Huff brings over 20 years of coaching experience with stops at Marshall (2021-24), Alabama (2019-20), Mississippi State (2018), Penn State (2014-17), Western Michigan (2013), the Buffalo Bills (2012), Vanderbilt (2011), Hampton (2010), Maryland (2009) and Tennessee State (2006-08).

“We are extremely excited to welcome Charles Huff as the next head football coach at the University of Memphis,” Scott



Coach Charles Huff

said. “Early in our search process, Coach Huff quickly rose to the top of our list as a dynamic leader with a proven track record of building strong, competitive programs. He brings a championship mindset, tremendous drive, and more than 20 years of experience working alongside some of the top coaches in college football. We are eager to get him to Memphis and begin this next chapter for our football program. “We are also excited to welcome his wife, Jessica, and their three

sons, B.J., Beau and Blaze to Memphis.”

Huff comes to Memphis after serving as the head coach at Southern Mississippi where he turned the Golden Eagles from a 1-11 team in 2024 to a bowl eligible 7-5 team in just one season. It was the program's best regular-season record since 2019 and his six-win turnaround with the Golden Eagles was one of the biggest improvements in the FBS this season.

“I am excited to welcome Charles Huff to the University of Memphis as our next head football coach,” Dr. Bill Hardgrave, University of Memphis President said. “As a proven winner who knows how to build a championship team, Charles brings a strong blend of on-field success, recruiting excellence and player development.”

Changing the narrative of South-

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Meet some of BIHMST Sports Correspondents



William M. Larsha, Jr.



Ashley Braun Gendek

BIHMST Travelers, join correspondents William M. Larsha, Jr. and Ashley Braun Gendek in their sports coverage of The University of Memphis Tigers, Memphis Grizzlies, TN Titans, Southern Heritage Classic, and more!

Jeffery Simmons named Tennessee Titans Club winner for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award by Nationwide

National Award Winner Announced at NFL Honors on Thursday, Feb. 5 Before Super Bowl LX

NASHVILLE, TENN. – Dec. 4, 2025 – The Tennessee Titans announced that Jeffery Simmons has been selected as the team’s club winner for the 2025 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide. The Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide is the league’s most prestigious honor, recognizing players who excel on the field and demonstrate a commitment to making a positive impact beyond the game.

Simmons becomes the first Titans player since Kevin Carter (2002-05) to be nominated for

this prestigious award for three consecutive years. Simmons founded the “Give Em a Reason Foundation,” which aims to inspire youth empowerment through sport, by way of self-esteem building and opportunity creation as part of his commitment to helping the community. “Give Em a Reason” intends to serve as the answer to many kids’ questions of “why” when they are looking for a reason to have hope and carry on through adversity.

Since being drafted by the Titans in 2019, opposing offenses around the NFL have felt Simmons’ impact on the field. His goal has always been to make an even greater impact off the field with the youth in the community. “A lot of guys on this team do a

lot of work out in the community and for me to be nominated three years in a row, that means so much to me and is truly an honor,” Simmons said. “This award is the biggest award in the NFL, and it just shows no matter what’s happening on the field, our community needs us, and that’s what I see when I see the award. I see the Nashville community. It’s not just for me; it’s for everyone that I try to impact each and every day through the game of football. Everything I do, I do it from the heart. I enjoy doing what I do, and I look forward to continuing my work with the youth in the community.”

“The night we drafted Jeffery, he committed to making an impact

on the Titans organization on and off the field. We could not ask for a more dedicated and passionate player, which is why we are thrilled to announce Jeffery Simmons as our Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominee for the third consecutive season,” said Titans controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk. “Jeffery has displayed tremendous leadership as a five-time team captain and continues to be a cornerstone of this team. As impressive as he is on the field, it is his unwavering commitment to positively impacting youth in both Nashville and his hometown that earns him this honor. We are grateful for all he has done for the Titans and our community.”

As part of the work with his foundation, Simmons has part-

nered with countless non-profits and community engagement programs around Nashville and his hometown of Macon, Miss., such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee, Rally on the Runway, Backfield in Motion, Seacrest Studios, MNPS HERO program, Fund Recovery, Reach Unlimited, Noxubee Titans, and the Nashville Juvenile Detention Center. In addition, he hosts an annual Thanksgiving turkey drive, Christmas shopping spree, youth football camp and community day in his hometown. Simmons remains committed to serving the youth and acting as a source of inspiration for those battling adversity. Whether it is a cancer diagnosis, poverty, incarceration, or any other obstacle, Simmons wants to instill a belief of hope in the next generation.

All 32 club winners will be rec-

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- Harlem Globetrotters & Stria Announce Official Footwear *see sports-Ent. 5* ***
- #12 Ja Morant Treats Fans to Tickets on 12/12 Against Utah *see sports page 4* ***
- Sec. of War Hegseth Outlines New National Defense Strategy... *see sports-Military 2* ***
- Finley Lavin Named to First Team by United Soccer Coaches... *see sports-Ent. 5* ***
- Gov. Sarah Sanders Sends Arkansas Guards to D.C. *see sports-Military 3* ***
- Cong. Van Drew’s Statement on Medal of Act... *see sports-Military 3*

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Tennessee Titans visit San Francisco 49ers since 2017

Tennessee Titans (2-11) vs. San Francisco 49ers (9-4)
Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025 • 3:25 p.m. CST • Levi’s Stadium • Santa Clara, Calif. • TV: FOX/WZTV-17

NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Titans (2-11) travel to San Francisco this week for the first time in eight years to face the 49ers (9-4). Kickoff at Levi’s Stadium (capacity 68,500) is scheduled for 1:25 p.m. PST/3:25 p.m. CST on Sunday, Dec. 14.

The last matchup on Dec. 17, 2017 was the first and only time the Titans have visited Levi’s Stadium, which opened in 2014. The 49ers earned a narrow 25-23 victory. More recently, the Titans hosted the 49ers at Nissan Stadium on Thursday night, Dec. 23, 2021, and won by a final score of 20-17. In 15 all-time meetings, the 49ers hold a 9-6 advantage.

The contest will be regionally televised on FOX, including Nashville affiliate WZTV FOX 17. The broadcast team includes play-by-play announcer Adam Amin, analyst Drew Brees and reporter Kristina Pink.

Fans in Nashville can stream live

Titans games on mobile devices with NFL+, which offers access to local games and all primetime games on phones and tablets. Out of market, fans can watch every Sunday afternoon game with Sunday Ticket. More information on ways to watch NFL games can be found at nfl.com/ways-to-watch.

The Titans Radio Network and Nashville flagship 104.5 The Zone carry all Titans games across the Mid-South with play-by-play announcer Taylor Zarzour, analyst Dave McGinnis, executive producer Rhett Bryan, game-day host Lucas Panzica, and sideline reporters Amie Wells and Will Boling.

The Titans battled the Browns last week in Cleveland on a 33-degree afternoon with snow flurries. The Titans running game, led by running back Tony Pollard, accounted for 184 yards, which was the team’s best rushing total in a game since a 184-yard collective rushing effort against Houston on Dec. 24, 2022. Pollard established a career high with 161 rushing yards and scored two touchdowns, leading the Titans to a 31-29 win.