

Sports & Entertainment

Pres. Trump and Roger Goodell announce NFL 2027 Draft set for D.C. from sports page 1

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Over the course of the three-day event, D.C. will host a slate of Draft activities, including a variety of community events, the Draft Concert Series and the NFL Draft Experience – the ultimate free fan festival. that invites fans to participate in immersive exhibits, challenge their skills in interactive games, take photos with the Vince Lombardi Trophy; enjoy the youth-focused Play 60 Zone; shop exclusive NFL merchandise; and score autographs from current players and Legends.

“The NFL Draft is one of the biggest moments in sports—and we’re incredibly proud to help bring it to Washington, D.C.,” said Josh Harris, Commanders Managing Partner. “It will bring hundreds of thousands of visitors, millions of viewers around the world, and generate jobs, tax revenue, and meaningful economic impact across the city. The Draft is a powerful reminder of how sports bring people together – and we’re honored to play a role in that. Since we started this journey less than two years ago, we’ve seen an NFC Championship Game, an agreement to return to RFK, and now the NFL draft in Washington. Thank you to President Trump for your leadership, to Mayor Bowser for your partnership, and to Commissioner Roger Goodell for your support in bringing the Draft back to the nation’s capital. We

“We are excited to bring the 2027 Draft to Washington, D.C., a city rich in history and national pride. With the support of President Trump, the Commanders, Events DC, and Mayor Bowser we’re looking forward to delivering an unforgettable experience as we celebrate the next generation of NFL stars.”

look forward to welcoming the football world to Washington in 2027. Today is a great day for the DMV, and I can’t wait to see what the future brings.”

“This is a historic occasion for Washington, DC, and we are absolutely honored to host the 2027 NFL Draft,” said Events DC President and CEO Angie M. Gates. “The NFL Draft will provide football fans with an unforgettable experience, while showcasing all that makes Washington, DC a world-class destination and the Sports Capital. We look forward to working with our partners and community to deliver a world-class event that reflects the dynamic spirit of our city.”

Since 2015, the NFL Draft has continued to grow as one of the most-watched events in sports, with over 3.5 million fans attending festivities in person. The 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit attracted a record-breaking 775,000 fans. Most recently, more than 600,000 fans attended the 2025 NFL Draft in Green Bay, matching Nashville’s record in 2019 for the second-highest attendance in Draft history.

Watch for The Mid-South Tribune's Juneteenth/Fourth of July Special Edition

Grizzlies name Tuomas Iisalo new head coach from sports page 1

on July 7, 2024, as the lead assistant coach following a decorated coaching career in Europe.

Before coming to Memphis, Iisalo captured the 2023-24 EuroCup championship and EuroCup Coach of the Year award in his first season as head coach of Paris Basketball. The architect of the top offense in competition history, Iisalo led Paris to a 20-1 record and the title in the club’s second EuroCup season.

Iisalo was named the 2024 LNB Pro A Coach of the Year after leading Paris to the French Leaders Cup title and French LNB Pro A Finals. In addition, he was selected as head coach of Team World in the LNB All-Star Game. Paris’s 25-game winning streak across competitions stands as the longest ever in the French League.

Previously, Iisalo won consecutive Bundesliga Coach of the Year awards in his two seasons (2021-23) as head coach of Telekom Baskets Bonn in Germany. He was named the 2023 Champions League Coach of the Year

The first Finnish-born coach in NBA history, the Helsinki native played his entire 14-year professional basketball career in Finland and won the 2009 Finnish Cup with Espoon Honka before beginning his coaching career as head coach of Tapiolan Honka in 2014. He also played 57 games for the Finnish men’s national team.

after leading Baskets Bonn to the 2023 Champions League title. Iisalo also coached five seasons (2016-21) in Germany for Crailsheim Merlins.

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Watch for The Mid-South Tribune’s Agriculture Special Edition.

Respect farmers and the work they do to fill America’s tables, refrigerators, freezers!

Grizzlies highlight four Memphis nonprofits to receive grants from the NBA Foundation from sports page 1

locally based organizations.

"This grant will support our ongoing mission to equip young people in our community with both artistic and professional skills," Executive Director of Contemporary Arts Memphis Derek Patterson said. "The result is curated portfolios and strong college applications that will lead to greater scholarship opportunities."

"Peer Power is 20 years in now, serving young people in high school and middle school here in the Memphis area, and we're looking forward to not only utilizing this investment to expand the work that we do with the Uni-

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versity of Memphis, but bring LeMoyn-Owen College into this as well," Peer Power Chief Executive Officer Cortney Richardson said. "We're excited to

support Memphis' only HBCU, support their students, expose our high school students in Memphis to LeMoyn-Owen and continue the impact made possible by the NBA Foundation and the Memphis Grizzlies."

"We are super proud to partner up with the Grizzlies and the NBA in order to further the hard work that we do for the community and make sure that Memphians who are excited to get into the tech space have a rapid low-cost path to achieving that goal," Tech 901 Executive Director Aaron Lamey said.

"This grant will empower City

Year Memphis to continue the vital 'heart work' it began over a decade ago, strengthening school programs that have proven to enhance students' academic and personal development," City Year Memphis SVP and Interim Executive Director Jeremy Hill said. "The additional funding will directly support initiatives that schools have identified as especially impactful."

For more information on the Grizzlies, visit grizzlies.com, 'like' Memphis Grizzlies on Facebook or follow @memgrizz on Twitter/X and Instagram

Chuck D receives first-ever Soulsville Foundation Power of Music honor... from sports-Ent. 5

noted. "His activism and role as a music historian have fueled the knowledge and self-determination of a generation and exemplify the Power of Music Honors."

The Power of Music Honors award, to be presented annually, will recognize visionaries who use music as a catalyst for innovation, activism, and empowerment, celebrating those who create opportunities, foster wellness through artistic expression, and spur cultural movements that impact future generations.

As a social justice champion and cultural innovator, Chuck D's recognition as the inaugural honoree embodies the bold spirit of

Memphis and Stax Records' recording greats, setting a powerful precedent for future awards that honor artists and organizations driving real-world change through music.

Legendary "Soul Man" songwriter (and producer, singer, philanthropist, and Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee) David Porter presented the award at the ceremony. Soul singer Talibah Safiya performed, and current Stax Music Academy students entertained guests with "Respect Yourself" and Stax artist Johnnie Taylor's "I Am Somebody."

Inspired by the legacy and impact of Stax Records — in its heyday a community force that created

jobs, engaged youth, launched careers, fostered Black entrepreneurship and served as a powerful agent for change — the Power of Music Honors is intended to elevate Stax and the Soulsville Foundation's status as a national leader in music education and cultural preservation. It's also a perfect fit for Memphis, globally renowned as a city where music has always played a central role, intersecting with — and nurturing — activism, economic growth and cultural resilience.

From civil rights anthems to socially conscious hip-hop, Memphis music has always represented empowering change.

With this award, the Soulsville Foundation continues strengthening Memphis' reputation as a hub where music is about more than making art — it's also about improving lives.

The Power of Music Honors event also supports the Soulsville Foundation's endeavors, including its Music Employs program and the Stax Music Academy, which is now celebrating its 25th anniversary. These initiatives provide young musicians with hands-on industry training, mentorship, and career development, ensuring that future generations have the tools to succeed in music or any other career they pursue.

NBA Foundation and Chicago Bulls support The Dovetail Project for young fatherhood ... from sports page 1

Since its establishment in 2020, the NBA Foundation has distributed \$140 million in grants, benefitting thousands of underserved young people with the resources, mentorship, and skills needed to succeed across the United States and Canada.

Through this investment, The Dovetail Project aims to enhance its infrastructure, equipping fathers aged 17-24 with essential skills, tools, and opportunities for career and post-secondary advancement, enabling them to be effective parents for their children, families, and communities.

"For over 77 years, the NBA has brought families together to create memories, bonding mo-

"... We're deeply grateful to the NBA Foundation and our hometown team, the Chicago Bulls, for partnering with The Dovetail Project to support our mission of providing fathers with employment opportunities and parenting resources, empowering them to be engaged dads and strong leaders in their communities," Sheldon Smith, Founder of The Dovetail Project, said.

ments, and spaces for fathers and families to connect through basketball. We're deeply grateful to the NBA Foundation and our

hometown team, the Chicago Bulls, for partnering with The Dovetail Project to support our mission of providing fathers with employment opportunities and parenting resources, empowering them to be engaged dads and strong leaders in their communities," Sheldon Smith, Founder of The Dovetail Project, said.

A Chicago-based, internationally-recognized fatherhood organization that gives young men the skills and support they need to be better fathers for their children and better men in their communities. Since 2009, over 700 fathers have graduated from Dovetail's signature curriculum-

based program in parenting skills, life skills, and felony street law. The program also connects each graduate with a job, GED or trade and provides ongoing case management support. The 29th class is set to graduate June 2025. More info at <https://thedovetail-project.org/>.

Created in August 2020, the NBA Foundation drives economic opportunity for under-resourced youth, ages 14-24. The Foundation invests in local and national organizations that promote school-to-career and workforce development opportunities. For more information, visit nba-foundation.com.

Ashton Hardaway returns to Memphis to play for father, Penny Hardaway ... from sports-Ent. 5

was rated a 4-star recruit and the No. 94 player in the country by On3. He was listed as the 21st-best power forward in the nation and the 18th-best prospect out of the state of California.

Hardaway made headlines his senior year of high school when he moved to the West Coast to join powerhouse Sierra Canyon to play alongside Bronny James and Justin Pippen.

He played his junior season at Duncanville High School in Duncanville, Texas where he averaged 10.0 points, 2.8 rebounds, 1.3 assists and 1.2 steals per game while leading his squad to a 35-1 overall record and a No.

1 ranking in the state of Texas. He helped the Panthers claim their third 6A state title in a row after defeating McKinney High School 69-49 in the championship match.

Hardaway's return adds depth and experience to the Tigers' frontcourt heading into the 2025-26 season as Memphis looks to build on its championship season.

He becomes the seventh player the program has signed to the 2025 recruiting class, joining Daniel Vieira-Tuck, Felipe Patino, Quante Berry (Temple), Dug McDaniel (Kansas State), Aaron Bradshaw (Ohio State)

and Julius Thedford (Western Kentucky).

For complete information on Memphis Tiger Men's Basketball,

visit www.GoTigersGo.com and follow the team's social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.



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