

THE INSIDE PITCH 2026 June Edition

THE PERFECT GAME FOUNDATION® is a 501(c)(3) Non Profit that was created in April of 2011 to assist those who aspire to a working career in sports.

Welcome to The Inside Pitch for June published by Sanah Hathiramani with an introductory piece by Bob Costas!

Today you'll hear from The Inside Pitch Publisher Sanah Hathiramani along with regulars Ben Hoffman with Ben's Byline and Julia Boller with Julia's Corner.

You will also hear from Cade Cricchio in 'In Her Own Words' and Zach Jacobson about his Senior Project with The Inside Pitch.

TPGF Golf '26 work continues and we're excited about the Auction Items, new prizes and the always World Class TPC Potomac Golf Course! Again this year TPC Potomac golf professional Derek Stenson managing our event — Thank You Derek!

Here are a few words about TPGF and the Tournament from Hall of Fame Broadcaster Bob Costas:



Sign Up Now! July 13, 2026 TPC Potomac! TPGF Golf # 14! There are still a few playing spots left in the field and the Auction is shaping up very nicely!

If you're a hockey fan you'll find in the Auction an authentic Caps game jersey autographed by the Great 8 - the NHL greatest scorer in history! Ovi!!

The Perfect Game Foundation began work on April 1, 2011 with the Mission to help those who have chosen a career path in sports. To date, TPGF has had the privilege of helping over 400 Fellows from all over the Country as they began (or continued) their journey.

In Their Own Words

Cade Cricchio



Hi all! As of lately, I graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor's in finance and marketing. The close of this chapter is especially bittersweet as I hang up my tennis racquets for the first time. Picking up my first racquet at age four, playing fourteen years of junior tennis across the country, and having an incredible college tennis experience the past four years has prepared me for this next step.

I will be interning this summer at the United States Tennis Association under the U.S. Open as a Digital Strategy and Partnerships Intern in Purchase, NY. I will be supporting the team that handles efficiency and innovation on the U.S. Open apps. Thank you to Del Wilber and the connections within TPGF that have led to this internship. Following this summer, I will begin graduate school at SMU beginning in August. I am grateful for the opportunities The Perfect Game Foundation offers and cannot wait to get started with the U.S. Open this month.

Zack Jacobson



Hello. I am Zach Jacobson, a Senior at McLean School. I am currently working for TPGF for my senior project.

The reason why I wanted to work for TPGF for my senior project is that a career path in Sports Media is my focus and there is a large amount of knowledge and experience to be gained in that field working at TPGF. Meeting some great people will be an additional bonus!

As for my plans, I will be attending St. Bonaventure in the fall where I will majoring in sports media. So far I have had a lot of fun working for TPGF, and I can't wait to put more of my work into this newsletter.

Here is 'Zach's Angle'

Expectations coming into the season:

The Nationals went into the 2026 season, ready for another year of the rebuild. Coming into the season, the Nationals made a lot of changes throughout the organization.

It started when, In the middle of the 2025 MLB season, the Nationals fired their Manager, Dave Martinez, and their General Manager and President of Baseball Operations, Mike Rizzo. This would kickstart many changes throughout the organization, going into the offseason.

In the offseason, they hired 33-year-old Blake Butera to be the manager, making him the youngest manager in the MLB since 1972. They hired an entirely new coaching staff around Butera as well with the exception of Assistant Pitching Coach and former National Sean Doolittle. They also hired Paul Toboni as the President of Baseball Operations, and they hired Ani Kilambi as the General Manager. All three of them are in their 30s and they all have the same type of 'new-school,' heavily analytics-focused approach to the game. As for roster moves, the major trade of the offseason was trading away All-Star pitcher Mackenzie Gore for prospects Gavin Fien, Alejandro Rosario, Devin Fitz-Gerald, Yeremy Cabrera, and Abimelec Ortiz.

Trading away their All-Star pitcher, along with the lack of other major additions to the team, signaled that the Nationals would not win many games this year; however, Despite low expectations the Nationals are currently sitting in third place in the division with a winning record. Why is that? Well, it sure helps that they have the most total runs scored across the entire league.

Most runs scored:

The two largest contributors to the Nationals' offensive success are, of course, James Wood and CJ Abrams. They both have an OPS well into the 900s. James Wood leads the National league in Runs, Walks, OBP, and OPS, and CJ is 3 RBI's away from leading the league in that category.

One major change that Butera has made since becoming the manager, is a consistent change in the batting order, having Wood bat leadoff every game, and having Abrams bat in the middle of the lineup, usually cleanup. For most games in 2025, CJ would leadoff, and James Wood would bat second, but James Wood led off a little bit too and performed extremely well when doing so. Looking at the decision now, it makes total sense. James Wood gets on base at an extremely high clip, and CJ hits for a high Avg., which allows for several opportunities to drive in runs. Obviously, this plan has resulted in the Nationals scoring the most runs in the league as a team, James Wood scoring the most runs in the league individually, and CJ driving in more runs than almost anybody else. Another reason why Butera doesn't want to have Abrams and Wood batting back to back in the lineup is that they are both lefties and teams could take advantage of that late in games by bringing in their lefty from the bullpen to face them two. But now, Butera usually puts two righties in between Wood and Abrams so that out of those four spots in the batting order, they will have an advantage for at least two of them, especially when you include the element of pinch-hitters.

Of course you can't score the most runs in baseball with contributions from only two players. Players such as Curtis Mead and Daylen Lile have made significant contributions as well, batting above league average. Outside of Wood and Abrams, the Nationals have had success platooning players. Joey Wiener, for example, has been destroying lefties, with an OPS of 1.199 against them. Having the depth to be able to have the platoon advantage most of the time is a huge weapon that Blake Butera and the Nationals use.

Most runs allowed:

Unfortunately for the Nationals, outside of the offense, they are not doing too well. They lead the league in both runs allowed and errors as a team. Two of their offseason additions in Zack Littell and Miles Mikolas each have an ERA well above five, as well as Jake Irvin, who is coming off a season where he gave up the most Earned Runs and Home Runs in the league. In addition to the starting pitching struggles, the bullpen has struggled to find guys who can be relied upon. The Nationals had the second worst bullpen in 2025, and they traded away their best bullpen arm in Kyle Finnegan at the trade deadline, and their second best arm in Jose A. Ferrer in the offseason. As for defense, despite having elite defenders in Jacob Young and Nasim Nuñez, the Nationals still lead the league in errors by a significant margin.

Over the next couple months, Nats fans will hope for improvement in the pitching and defense, but regardless, they should feel good about the direction of this team, now that there has been more development of the young players.
See you next month!

Ben's Byline



Hello, my name is Ben Hoffman, and I'm a 19 year old freshman at James Madison University. In my last article, I covered the NBA playoffs, and this month I'll be focusing on the 2026 French Open. One of tennis's biggest tournaments has already brought excitement, intense matches, and major surprises as the world's best players compete on the clay courts of Paris.

One of the biggest storylines entering the tournament was the absence of Carlos Alcaraz, who withdrew from the French Open because of a wrist injury. Alcaraz was one of the favorites to win the tournament, so his absence completely changed the competition and opened the door for other players to make deep runs in the bracket.

The tournament has already featured several shocking upsets. Both Novak Djokovic and Jannik Sinner were eliminated earlier than expected, surprising tennis fans around the world. Their exits have made the men's side of the tournament even more unpredictable, with younger players and underdogs now having a greater chance to compete for the championship. On the women's side, Iga Świątek continues to look strong on clay as she pushes toward another French Open title.

The atmosphere at the French Open has been electric as players battle through long matches and difficult conditions in hopes of reaching the finals. Clay courts make every point more challenging, forcing players to rely on endurance, strategy, and mental toughness. With so many surprises already taking place, the 2026 French Open is shaping up to be one of the most

Julia's Corner



Hi, Julia Boller here, a freshman at Virginia Tech. Instead of “Julia’s Captures” for this month, I will be writing about the NBA finals, and specifically the Spurs and Thunders series, as we are approaching Game 7 at the time this was written.

This series has had so many viewers on the edge of their seats, and has been such a thriller of a series. Two star-studded teams go head to head: the Thunder with Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and a bench roster that has outscored their opponents to extremely great lengths vs. the Spurs with the magician Victor Wembanyama himself, De’Aaron Fox and a young roster full of talent.

These two teams have faced horns and had such close games, despite there being conflict between the coaches, referees, and the teams. Jared McCain has been very clutch these playoffs, having some huge games for the Thunder these playoffs, with two 20+ points games to lead the Thunder to victory. Shai is leading the remaining players in the playoffs in points per game and assists per game, averaging 27 and 8. Victor Wembanyama has broken all sorts of records in these playoffs, such as most blocks in a single game with 12, and most points by a center in their first playoff run, with 372 points thus far.

I am really excited to see how the playoffs shake out, as this Game 7 is a must watch tomorrow!

Sanah's Sentiments



As summer kicks off in the Big Apple, sports fans are fired up and honestly, it's hard not to be. The Knicks making it to the semifinals has the whole city buzzing. Whether you think they deserve it or not, the energy is undeniable. You see it in the merch on every corner, you hear it in every conversation, and when game time hits, the screams coming from apartments and bars make it feel like the whole city is watching together.

And then there's the World Cup, coming to New York City in less than three weeks. For a city this diverse, this loud, and this passionate, it's the perfect match. Soccer has a way of pulling the whole world into the same moment and NYC, where every culture and background already coexists on the same subway car, feels made for it.

I'll be honest, I love both basketball and soccer. But what I'm most excited about this summer isn't any one game or result. It's that feeling you get when a city of millions, all with somewhere to be and something pulling them in different directions, stops and gets loud about the same thing. Sports do that. And this summer in New York, we're getting it twice!

[Sign Up Now!](#) July 13, 2026 TPC Potomac!! TPGF Golf # 14!

Auction Items, Mulligans, Prizes for Putting, Closest to the Pin, Long Drive and a Special Hole in One Contest!



The Perfect Game Foundation | PO Box 3314 | McLean, VA 22102 US

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