

Sports & Entertainment

Hardt named to Preseason American All-Conference Team ... from sports page 1

tabbed as the preseason favorite with 144 points and 12 first-place votes. Coaches were not permitted to vote for their own teams. A full list of members from the preseason all-conference team as well as the coaches’ poll are below.

2026 American Conference Volleyball Preseason Coaches’ Poll (first-place votes)

1. Rice (12)	144
2. Tulsa (1)	120
3. South Florida	117
4. Wichita State	111
5. Florida Atlantic	106
6. North Texas	78
7. UTSA	73
8. East Carolina	71
9. Charlotte	64
10. Memphis	45
11. Temple	36
12. Tulane	26
13. UAB	23

2026 American Conference Volleyball Preseason Player of the Year

Jill Hanson, So., MB, Tulsa

2026 American Conference Volleyball Preseason All-Conference

Angeles Alderete, 5th, OH, East Carolina
Taryn Gilreath, Jr., S, East Caro-

lina
Olivia Hart, Jr., OH, Florida Atlantic
Amanda Hardt, Sr., OH/RS, Memphis
Loredana Fouonji, 5th, MB, North Texas
Kaia Mateo, Sr., S, Rice
Aaliyah Smith, So., OH, Rice
Arissa Smith, Sr., MB, Rice
Laila Ivey, Sr., OH, South Florida
Christiana Greene, Jr., OH, Temple
Avery Burks, Sr., OH, Tulane
Jill Hanson, So., MB, Tulsa
Olivia Vance, Sr., OH, Tulsa
Jordan Heatherly, Sr., S, Wichita State

Season Tickets Available Now
The 2026 season tickets are now on sale. Fans can purchase season tickets by visiting www.go-tigersgo.com

Season tickets start at \$75 plus fees with general admission chairback and floor seating options available. If you are interested in Libero Row floor seating, please contact the Memphis Athletic Fund at maf@memphis.edu for more information.

For complete information on Memphis Tigers Volleyball, visit www.GoTigersGo.com and follow the team's social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

Grizzlies announce mini-plans now on sale for fans

MEMPHIS, Tenn., August 25, 2026 – The Memphis Grizzlies are celebrating the upcoming season with two 10-game mini plans for the 2026-27 season. The Marquee Matchup Plan and Weekend Plan, starting at \$26 per game, are on sale now at grizzlies.com/plans and allow fans the opportunity to lock in the best seats for the biggest matchups of the 2026-27 season. Full mini plan details, visit

Grizzlies.com

Fans who want to support the Memphis Grizzlies and purchase 2026-27 season tickets can do so now by going online to grizzlies.com/tickets. For more information on the Grizzlies, visit grizzlies.com, ‘like’ Memphis Grizzlies on Facebook or follow [@memgrizz](https://twitter.com/memgrizz) on Twitter/X and Instagram.

Email sports and entertainment news to MSTsports@prodigy.net

Ekep Nkwelle’s releases album “Caged Bird” inspired by poet Maya Angelou out on Sept. 25th ... from sports-Ent. 5

Speaking about the album announcement and its meaning, Nkwelle stated, “‘Caged Bird’ archives songs of suffering and survival...”

namic band for years: traditional and vibrant, studied and spontaneous, familiar yet surprising. The resulting nine songs show an artist transcending genre with veteran polish and a totally original perspective. Speaking about the album announcement and its meaning, Nkwelle stated, “‘Caged Bird’ archives songs of suffering and survival. I hope to provide expressions of necessary lament while equipping listeners with tools we, as humans, have always used to overcome in our lifelong pursuit of freedom and happiness: faith, art, and community.” A song about surviving heartache, “Early One Mornin’” is a track that is a fan favorite and has captivated audiences at sold-out performances around the world. Discussing the track, Nkwelle said, “I love how liberating this song feels. Breakups are often painful and disempowering, but this one is healing because it affirms strength and reminds us that one foolproof way to survive a bad relationship is simply to jump ship!”

Nkwelle has quietly become one of the most compelling new voices in jazz today, having performed at the world's most storied stages—such as Newport Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, and North Sea Jazz Festival—and collaborated with legends including Wynton Marsalis, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Russell Malone, and Cyrus Chestnut. All before the age of 27 and without an album of recorded music.

The singer's love of jazz developed while attending D.C.'s Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where she received classical vocal training. A performance by her peers of "Sophisticated Lady," though, proved transformative. "Oh man, I think that I really belong in this space," she remembers thinking, dazzled by the big band swing — and less than a decade later, she was fronting the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. At the time, she dove into the music, coming up with reverence for Sarah Vaughan and Natalie Cole as she began taking jazz courses and gigging around the capitol at bars like Jojo's and Mr. Henry's. Mentored by local jazz legend Davey Yarborough, Nkwelle entrenched herself in the jazz tradition as she was finding her place within the music's next generation. She continued her

World’s No. 1 Jameson announces multi-year partnership as the official Spirits Sponsor of the National Football League



World's No. 1 Irish Whiskey1 Invites Fans of America's Most-Watched Sport2 to Toast to the Game, Celebrate Friendship and Elevate Every Gameday Ritual Together

NEW YORK — Jameson, the world's no. 1 Irish whiskey, announced a multiyear partnership designation as the Official Spirits Sponsor of the National Football League. The collaboration marks a major expansion of the brand's cultural commitment to sports fandom, bringing the smoothness of Jameson to millions of football fans as they gather weekly with friends in neighborhood bars across the country starting this fall. The global partnership gives Jameson exclusive marketing rights and designations across the league's most prominent marquee events. Jameson will take center stage as the Presenting Sponsor of the high-profile Super Bowl Tailgate Concert, embedding the brand directly into the ultimate pregame ritual of the world's biggest sporting spectacle. Additionally, Jameson will introduce custom, on-site fan engagements and branded bar spaces at the interactive Super Bowl Experience fan festival, the NFL Draft and key

league moments throughout the year. "Football is a sport driven by passion, ritual and unforgettable community connections – values that lie at the very heart of Jameson," said Colin Kavanagh, chief marketing officer of Pernod Ricard North America. "As the league's popularity continues to expand globally, we're thrilled to step in as the Official Spirits Sponsor of the NFL. Whether you're raising a glass at a hometown tailgate, watching from a local neighborhood bar, or tuning in from across the globe, Jameson is proud to elevate the fan experience and toast to every major moment of the season." Beyond major domestic events, the multiyear agreement carries vast international implications, securing official global league rights (excluding Brazil and Mexico) to spread Jameson's welcoming Irish spirit. With the NFL set to play a record-breaking nine games across four continents, seven countries and eight stadiums, Jameson will serve as official sponsor across four NFL International Games per year, deploying premium on-site activations, in-stadium ribbon board features, pitch-side LED boards and elite hospitality footprints to engage with growing inter-

national gridiron fanbases. “We are incredibly excited to welcome Jameson into the NFL family as our Official Spirits Sponsor," said Renie Anderson, executive vice president and chief revenue officer of the NFL. "Jameson is a world-class brand known for bringing people together, making them the perfect partner to enrich our fan engagement. From the excitement and energy of the Super Bowl to the global reach of our International Games, this partnership will help connect fans and create new experiences all around the world.” The collaboration will also come to life across broadcast, digital and social channels, utilizing custom media integration and footage in partnership with NFL Films to deliver storytelling designed specifically for the modern football fan. Furthermore, the league-wide partnership will foster the expansion and growth of existing NFL team partnerships – anchoring localized fan opportunities, co-branded consumer sweepstakes and dedicated neighborhood activations directly within key markets including the Arizona Cardinals, Baltimore Ravens, Green Bay Packers, Minnesota Vikings, New York Giants, New York Jets, Philadelphia Eagles and

Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Through premium ticket access packages, legendary behind-the-scenes stadium tours and custom hospitality, Jameson is geared up to deliver 20 unique consumer experiences across the NFL Scouting Combine, NFL Draft and the Super Bowl via sweepstakes, ensuring the faithful fan is always positioned at the very center of the action. Fans are encouraged to follow [@JamesonUS](https://twitter.com/JamesonUS) and visit the official Jameson digital channels to stay updated on upcoming NFL sweepstakes, localized market events and signature matchday cocktail recipes throughout the season.

About Jameson Irish Whiskey Jameson is the world's most awarded and bestselling Irish whiskey, ranked in the top 4 global whiskey brands and number 9 in spirits worldwide. Leading the Irish whiskey category with a 67% market share and having experienced 30 years of consecutive growth up until 2019, Jameson reached unprecedented sales of 10.4 million cases in 2022. Triple distilled, every bottle of Jameson is distilled and matured at the world renowned Middleton Distillery in County Cork, Ireland.

ing message a vital, new sound.

Caged Bird Tracklist

1. His Eye Is on the Sparrow
2. Caged Bird
3. Night Song
4. Amazon Farewell
5. Good Morning, Heartache
6. Early One Mornin’
7. The Sad Ones
8. The Creator Has A Master Plan
9. See See Rider

Tour Dates

Fri, Aug. 28 - New York, NY - Charlie Parker Jazz Festival w/

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
Sat, Sep. 5 - Southwest, DC - DC JazzFest
Sun, Sep. 20 - Lake George, NY - Shepard Park
Fri, Oct. 16 - Sun, Oct. 18 - New York, NY - Dizzy’s Club
Sun, Nov. 1 - Lausanne, Switzerland - JazzOnze Plus Festival
Sat, Nov. 7 - Cartagena, Spain - Cartagena Jazz Festival
Sun, Nov. 8 - Málaga, Spain - Malaga International Jazz Festival
Tue, Nov. 10 - Madrid, Spain -

Madrid International Jazz Festival
Wed, Nov. 11 - Amsterdam, Netherlands - Bimhuis
Thu, Nov. 12 - Rijksvorsel, Belgium - Concertzaal De Singer
Fri, Nov. 13 - Sat, Nov. 14 Paris, France - Le Duc des Lombards
Sun, Nov. 15 - London, United Kingdom - Ronnie Scott's
Wed, Nov. 18 - Athens, Greece - Dimitris Mitropoulos Hall
Sat, Nov. 21 - Rockport, MA - Shalin Liu Performance Center
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