



June 21, 2023

**NOMINEES ANNOUNCED FOR 'THE 2023 ESPYS PRESENTED BY CAPITAL ONE,' AIRING  
JULY 12 AT 8 P.M. EDT/PDT ON ABC**

**Nikola Jokić, Patrick Mahomes, A'ja Wilson, Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese  
Among Top Nominees**

**Fan Voting Now Open on ESPYS.com**



**WHAT:** ESPN announced the nominees for “The 2023 ESPYS presented by Capital One,” and fan voting is now open.

**WHERE:** A list of “The 2023 ESPYS” nominees is available [here](#), and fans can cast their vote at [ESPN.com/ESPYS](https://ESPN.com/ESPYS).

More information is available in the complete [“The 2023 ESPYS” Media Kit](#).

**WHEN:** Voting is now underway, and all categories will close at 8 p.m. EDT on Sunday, July 9, 2023.

**“THE 2023 ESPYS” NOMINEE FACTS AND FIGURES:**

- In **Best Athlete, Women’s Sports**, three-time nominee Mikaela Shiffrin returns to face off against three newcomers in the category: A’ja Wilson, Sophia Smith and Iga Świątek.
- LeBron James enters the **Best Record-Breaking Performance** category for the first time after breaking the NBA all-time scoring record, where he is joined by F1’s Max Verstappen, Novak Djokovic and Mikaela Shiffrin.

- Aaron Judge and Lionel Messi earn their first nomination for **Best Athlete, Men’s Sports**. They join two-time nominees Nikola Jokić and Patrick Mahomes.
- Making her sixth straight appearance in **Best WNBA Player**, Candace Parker joins back-to-back nominee Skylar Diggins-Smith. Rounding out the category is A’ja Wilson and Breanna Stewart.
- Nikola Jokić is the lowest-drafted player (41<sup>st</sup> overall in the second round in 2014) to win the NBA Finals MVP, passing Dennis Johnson, who was drafted 29<sup>th</sup> overall in 1979. Nikola earned three ESPY nominations this year to add to his previous three nominations.

“The 2023 ESPYS” will broadcast live on Wednesday, July 12, at 8 p.m. EDT/PDT on ABC from Los Angeles. The star-studded ceremony will relive the highlight moments of the year, honor leading athletes and performances, and bring together the sports industry’s fan favorites and biggest stars.

The complete list of 2023 nominees is below.

Top celebrities from sports and entertainment will gather to recognize nominees and honor winners in categories such as **Best Athlete, Men’s Sports; Best Athlete, Women’s Sports; Best Breakthrough Athlete; Best Record-Breaking Performance; Best Championship Performance; and Best Comeback Athlete.**

Per tradition, “The 2023 ESPYS” will also showcase the achievements of inspiring and courageous athletes who embody the spirit of “The ESPYS” through three pillar awards: the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage, the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance, and The Pat Tillman Award for Service presented by MassMutual. Recipients for all three awards will be announced next week. The show supports ESPN’s ongoing commitment to The V Foundation for Cancer Research, launched in 1993 by ESPN in partnership with the late Jim Valvano.

-- ABC --

#### **Media Contacts:**

ESPN

Jay Jay Nesheim | [jayjay.nesheim@espn.com](mailto:jayjay.nesheim@espn.com)

Isabelle Lopez | [isabelle.m.lopez@espn.com](mailto:isabelle.m.lopez@espn.com)

#### **ABC Entertainment**

Michaela Zukowski | [Michaela.Zukowski@abc.com](mailto:Michaela.Zukowski@abc.com)

#### **Media Credentials:**

To request credentials for “The 2023 ESPYS,” please apply [here](#).

#### **2023 ESPYS NOMINATIONS:**

**BEST ATHLETE, MEN’S SPORTS**

- Nikola Jokić, Denver Nuggets
- Aaron Judge, New York Yankees
- Patrick Mahomes, Kansas City Chiefs
- Lionel Messi, Argentina

#### BEST ATHLETE, WOMEN'S SPORTS

- Mikaela Shiffrin, Ski
- Sophia Smith, Portland Thorns
- Iga Świątek, Tennis
- A'ja Wilson, Las Vegas Aces

#### BEST BREAKTHROUGH ATHLETE

- Caitlin Clark, Iowa Women's Basketball
- Brock Purdy, San Francisco 49ers
- Angel Reese, LSU Women's Basketball
- Julio Rodríguez, Seattle Mariners

#### BEST RECORD-BREAKING PERFORMANCE

- Novak Djokovic wins his 23<sup>rd</sup> Grand Slam title, defeating Casper Ruud in the French Open final, breaking a tie with rival Rafael Nadal for the most major singles trophies in the history of men's tennis, which dates to the 1800s
- LeBron James surpasses Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for NBA career scoring record
- Mikaela Shiffrin breaks the record for the most World Cup victories with her 87<sup>th</sup> win
- Max Verstappen wins the Mexican Grand Prix, breaking the record for most wins in a season

#### BEST CHAMPIONSHIP PERFORMANCE

- Leon Edwards, UFC, defeats Kamaru Usman by fifth-round KO to win UFC welterweight title, handing Usman his first UFC loss.
- Nikola Jokić, Denver Nuggets, 2023 NBA Finals MVP.
- Lionel Messi, Argentina, 2022 World Cup Final, scored two goals and scored in the penalty shootout to win Man of the Match, and he won the Golden Ball as FIFA's Best Player of the Tournament.
- Rose Zhang, LPGA, defeated Jennifer Kupcho in a two-hole sudden-death playoff, making history by winning by becoming the first woman in 72 years to win her first professional start.

#### BEST COMEBACK ATHLETE

- Jon Jones, UFC — Jones' first fight in the UFC since 2020. He was last seen in action against Dominick Reyes, where he defended his light-heavyweight championship at UFC 247. While Jon Jones was plotting a move to the heavyweight division, he and the UFC president did not see eye-to-eye over fighter pay. Jones felt that he needed to be paid more for a move up to the heavyweight division, which resulted in him delaying his return.
- Jamal Murray, Denver Nuggets — Murray missed the entirety of last season due to a torn ACL in his left knee. He suffered the injury in a game against the Golden State Warriors on April 12, 2021, and didn't play in the 18 months since then.
- Alyssa Thomas, Connecticut Sun, 2022 WNBA Comeback Player of the Year — Thomas missed all but six games last season while recovering from a torn Achilles tendon. The eight-year veteran started all 36 of Connecticut's games in 2022 and was an All-Star earlier this season. She leads the team in assists (6.1), steals (1.7) and minutes played (32.1).
- Justin Verlander, Current New York Mets / Houston Astros, 2022 NL Comeback Player of the Year — After being limited to only six innings in 2020 and missing the entire '21 season due to Tommy John surgery, the Astros' ace returned this season to go 18-4 with a 1.75 ERA, the lowest by any AL pitcher since Pedro Martinez posted a 1.74 ERA in 2000.

#### BEST PLAY

- Michael Block with a Hole-in-One!, GOLF
- Justin Jefferson with the Catch of the Century, NFL
- Ally Lemos with the perfect corner to tie the National Championship game, NCAA
- Trinity Thomas' Perfect 10 Tying the All-Time NCAA Record, NCAA

#### BEST TEAM

- Denver Nuggets, NBA
- Georgia Bulldogs, NCAA Football
- Kansas City Chiefs, NFL
- Las Vegas Aces, WNBA
- Louisiana State Tigers, NCAA Women's Basketball
- Oklahoma Sooners, NCAA Softball
- Vegas Golden Knights, NHL

#### BEST COLLEGE ATHLETE, MEN'S SPORTS

- Zach Edey, Purdue Men's Basketball
- Duncan McGuire, Creighton Soccer
- Brennan O'Neill, Duke Lacrosse
- Caleb Williams, USC Football

#### BEST COLLEGE ATHLETE, WOMEN'S SPORTS

- Jordy Bahl, Oklahoma Softball
- Caitlin Clark, Iowa Women's Basketball
- Izzy Scane, Northwestern Lacrosse
- Trinity Thomas, Florida Gators Gymnastics

#### BEST ATHLETE WITH A DISABILITY

- Erica McKee, Sled Hockey Team
- Zach Miller, Snowboarding
- Aaron Pike, Wheelchair Racing and Cross-Country Skiing
- Susannah Scaroni, Wheelchair Racing

#### BEST NFL PLAYER

- Nick Bosa, San Francisco 49ers
- Jalen Hurts, Philadelphia Eagles
- Justin Jefferson, Minnesota Vikings
- Patrick Mahomes, Kansas City Chiefs

#### BEST MLB PLAYER

- Paul Goldschmidt, St. Louis Cardinals
- Aaron Judge, New York Yankees
- Shohei Ohtani, Los Angeles Angels
- Justin Verlander, Houston Astros

#### BEST NHL PLAYER

- Jonathan Marchessault, Vegas Golden Knights
- Connor McDavid, Edmonton Oilers
- David Pastrňák, Boston Bruins
- Linus Ullmark, Boston Bruins

#### BEST NBA PLAYER

- Jimmy Butler, Miami Heat
- Joel Embiid, Philadelphia 76ers
- Nikola Jokić, Denver Nuggets
- Jayson Tatum, Boston Celtics

#### BEST WNBA PLAYER

- Skylar Diggins-Smith, Phoenix Mercury
- Candace Parker, Chicago Sky (Current Las Vegas Aces)
- Breanna Stewart, Seattle Storm (Current New York Liberty)
- A'ja Wilson, Las Vegas Aces

#### BEST DRIVER

- Brittany Force, NHRA
- Kyle Larson, NASCAR
- Josef Newgarden, IndyCar
- Max Verstappen, F1

#### BEST UFC FIGHTER

- Leon Edwards
- Jon Jones
- Islam Makhachev
- Amanda Nunes

#### BEST BOXER

- Gervonta Davis
- Devin Haney
- Claressa Shields
- Shakur Stevenson

#### BEST SOCCER PLAYER

- Aitana Bonmatí, Spain/Barcelona
- Erling Haaland, Norway/Manchester City
- Lionel Messi, Argentina/PSG
- Sophia Smith, USWNT/Portland Thorns

#### BEST GOLFER

- Wyndham Clark
- Nelly Korda
- Jon Rahm
- Scottie Scheffler

## BEST TENNIS PLAYER

- Carlos Alcaraz
- Novak Djokovic
- Aryna Sabalenka
- Iga Świątek