

Seattle Mariners right fielder Ichiro Suzuki, of Japan, fields a ball hit by Colorado Rockies' DJ LeMahieu during the fifth inning of Tuesday's spring baseball game in Scottsdale, Ariz.

## Mariners unsure whether Suzuki will start season on DL

Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. The Seattle Mariners are monitoring Ichiro Suzuki's strained right calf to determine whether he'll be on the opening day roster or the disabled list.

Suzuki went 0 for 3 with a walk and played seven innings in left field Tuesday in the 5-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

"I don't think he's quite at 100 percent yet," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "He's moving much better. He feels better out there. We'll see how he feels tomorrow and make a decision from there."

Suzuki is hitless in 10 at-bats with two walks and five strikeouts since signing on March 7.

"Unfortunately the leg injury with Ichiro slowed him down in the number of at-bats he can get and the comfort level he's got," Servais said. "It's more about just getting him healthy and making sure he's good to go when the bell rings on Thursday. The leg is what worries me. making sure he can move around and there's nothing he's guarding against in left field. Being able to cover the ground, he needs to get to out there. You can't protect him in the field. It's a big league game, a play in the outfield can sway the game one way or another, so you want to make sure he's very close to 100 percent when you put him The 44-year-old made

a nice running catch to the left-center gap to retire pinch hitter Pat Valaika to end the fourth with the bases loaded.

Suzuki is a 10-time All Star with 3,080 hits in 17 years in the majors.

Servais said they would further evaluate Suzuki in a workout Wednesday, a day ahead of the opener against Cleveland.

"I've very hopeful that Ichiro is going to be able to go," Servais said.

If Suzuki goes on the disabled list, a spot would open for utility player Taylor Motter.

"If Ichiro is not ready to go, Motter gives us a ton of flexibility," Servais said.

Notes: Rockies manager Bud Black said LHP Zac Rosscup has an issue with the middle finger of his pitching and will likely begin the season on the disabled list. If so, RHP Antonio Senzatela would be in the bullpen. ... Black said RHP Jon Gray, LHP Taylor Anderson and RHP German Marquez will start the first three games against Arizona.

NOTES: The Seattle Mariners are expected to sign Jayson Werth to

#### NCAA WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

# Even among women's hoops elite, UConn's excellence stands out

By DAVID BRANDT Associated Press

Even among the elite in women's college basketball, UConn stands out.

The Huskies are back in the Final Four for an 11th straight season, breaking a tie with John Wooden and the UCLA men's program for the Division I record. UConn beat defending national champion South Carolina 94-65 on Monday night to earn the trip to Columbus, Ohio.

Notre Dame, Louisville, Mississippi State — all outstanding programs — will try to block UConn's path to a fifth national title in six seasons.

"I think the field is maybe the strongest I've seen in a long, long time, maybe ever," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said on Tuesday. "And the fans are in for a treat. I don't know if the coaches are, but certainly the fans are in for a treat."

All three of the other teams may be capable of knocking off the Huskies, but there's no doubt Auriemma's group is a huge favorite. UConn has won 147 of its past 148 games going back nearly four full seasons.

The only loss during that span was against Mississippi State in overtime during the national semifinals last season. Morgan William hit a jumper at the buzzer in overtime that ended UConn's 111-game winning streak.

But even the Bulldogs can appreciate how special UConn's run of 11 straight Final Fours has been.

"It's a level of excellence never before seen in the game of basketball, not just women," Mississippi State coach Vic Schaefer said.

UConn (36-0) will face Notre Dame (33-3) in one national semifinal while Mississippi State (36-1) plays Louisville (36-2) in the other game on Friday. All of the four teams are No. 1 seeds, which is just the fourth time in tournament history that's happened.

UConn has dominated the women's game so thoroughly the past several seasons that some have questioned if it's bad for the sport. Louisville coach Jeff Walz dismissed that line of thinking.

"No, it's not bad for the game," Walz said. "Nobody was saying when John Wooden was winning 10 in



Connecticut's Gabby Williams (15), center, celebrates with teammates after a regional final against South Carolina at the a women's NCAA college basketball tournament Monday, March 26, 2018, in Albany, N.Y. Connecticut won 94-65.



At left, Connecticut head coach Geno Auriemma gestures during a Dec. 19 game against Oklahoma, in Uncasville, Conn. At right, in a Jan. 14file photo, Notre Dame head coach Muffet McGraw yells to players during the second half of a Jan. 14 game against Boston College, in South Bend, Ind. The women's Final Four is an exclusive group, with all four No. 1 seeds advancing to the national semifinals for just the fourth time. UConn and Notre Dame meet in a semifinal of the women's Final Four on Fridayin Columbus, Ohio.

a row and all that stuff that UCLA was bad for the men's game. It's really just a shame that people can't enjoy and appreciate how good they are. I mean, it's pretty darn impressive."

A few more things to watch at the women's Final Four in Columbus:

RECRUITING UCONN: When reflecting on UConn's 11 straight Final Fours, Auriemma said one of the hardest parts of maintaining success is recruiting the right players who can handle the expectations: "You come to Connecticut, and you look up on those walls when you come to our practice facility, and you look around and you go, all right, well, I'm going to be here four years. Well, what in God's name can I accomplish that hasn't already been done? If you're in awe by that, or you're intimidated by that, then you're not going to be successful here and we're not going to be successful."

**FACING MCCOWAN:** Mississippi State's 6-foot-7 Teaira McCowan — who was a third team AP All-American — has been outstanding for the Bulldogs during the NCAA Tourna-

She had 23 points and 21 rebounds against UCLA

Points Standings
Through Mar. 25
1. Kyle Busch, 257; 2. Martin Truex
Jr., 249; 3. Ryan Blaney, 233; 4. Joey
Logano, 232; 5. Brad Keselowski, 226;
6. Denny Hamlin, 217; 7. Kevin Harvick,
212; 8. Clint Bowyer, 210; 9. Kyle Larson,
195; 10. Kurt Busch, 177; 11. Aric Almirola, 171; 12. Erik Jones, 152; 13. Austin
Dillon, 148; 14. Alex Bowman, 145; 15.

Paul Menard, 139; 16. Ryan Newman, 135; 17. Jimmie Johnson, 121; 18. Chase Elliott, 115; 19. AJ Allmendinger, 110; 20. William Byron, 108.

BASEBALL

MLB — Promoted Tony Reagins to executive vice president of baseball & softball development.

American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Reassigned
OF Cedric Mullins, OF Alex Presley, INF
Luis Sardinas, LHP Josh Edgin and LHP
Joely Rodriguez to minor league camp.
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Claimed LHP
Jek Leathersich off weivers from Pitts.

Jack Leathersich off waivers from Pitts-

burgh and optioned him to Columbus (IL).
Traded OF Rob Refsnyder to Tampa Bay for cash considerations. Received RHP Jordan Milbrath (Rule 5 selection) from Pittsburgh and assigned him to Columbus. Signed INF Adam Rosales to a minor league contract and assigned him to Milbrath (Rule 5 selection) from Pittsburgh and Signed Him to Columbus.

tract and assigned him to Columbus.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Announced 1B/

DH Kennys Vargas cleared waivers and was assigned to Rochester (IL). Optioned OF Zack Granite to Rochester. Reassigned C Williams Astudillo, INFs Taylor Feath-

erston and Gregorio Petit, and C Bobby Wilson to minor league camp. SEATTLE MARINERS — Reassigned OF Kirk Nieuwenhuis to minor league camp. TAMPA BAY RAYS — Reassigned C Curt Casali and OFs Johnny Field and Brandon

Snyder to minor league camp.
TEXAS RANGERS — Reassigned RHP
Steve Delabar, C Brett Nicholas and OF
Destin Hood to Round Rock (PCL). Reassigned RHPs Chi Chi Gonzalez, Shawn
Tolleson and Edinson Volquez and LHP

Anthony Gose to minor league camp.

Antiony Gose to minor league camp.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Signed

INF Ketel Marte to a five-year contract.

Sent RHP Albert Suarez outright to Reno

(PCL). Placed RHP Randall Delgado and RF

**Transactions** 

Major League Baseball

in their Elite Eight win. Walz said facing McCowan on Friday will be a huge challenge: "I'm hoping (Mississippi State coach Vic Schaefer) decides to drive the bus and makes a wrong turn somewhere. So if we can have that happen, I'll feel much better."

THE GOOD AND THE BAD: Mississippi State is often remembered for its upset win over UConn in the Final Four last season. What is less remembered is that in 2016, the Bulldogs had a terrible experience against the Huskies, losing 98-38 in the Sweet 16. Schaefer ruefully recalled that day when discussing UConn's excellence: "You know, they talk about their offense and how good it is, but let me tell you, they are really good defensively. Trust me. I got held to 38 one time." NOTRE DAME'S

UNLIKELY RUN: Notre Dame might be the most unlikely Final Four participant of this year's quartet. The Irish were a No. 1 seed despite losing four players over the season to knee injuries. Said coach Muffet McGraw: "We keep shaking our heads. I think I'm kind of torn between crying and laughing. It means so much. There's so much emotion because of what we've been through. The resilience of this team, how they just are relentless in pursuit of their goal. They didn't ever quit or question whether or not we could do it.'

#### **SCOREBOARD**

#### Local slate

#### PREP BASEBALL

Wednesday Scio at Riverside, 10 a.m. Putnam at Pendleton (Red Lion Buckaroo

Classic), 11:30 a.m.
Joseph at Pilot Rock, 12 p.m.
Stanfield vs. Kennedy (Riverside/Irrigon Tournament), 1 p.m.
Heppner vs. Willamina (at Irrigion), 2 p.m.

Pendleton vs. Roseburg (Red Lion Bucka-roo Classic), 4:30 p.m. Weston-McEwen vs. Irrigon (Riverside/ Irrigon Tournament), TBD

**Thursday** McNary vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium Tourney), 6 p.m.

Friday
Vernonia at Heppner (DH), 1 p.m.
Aloha vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium Tourney), 4:30 p.m.

Saturday
Aloha vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium
Tourney), 11:30 a.m.
Joseph at Mac-Hi (DH), 12 p.m.
McNary vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium
Tourney), 2 p.m.

#### PREP SOFTBALL

Wednesday
Echo vs. Willamina (at Riverside), 10 a.m.
Knappa at Riverside, 10 a.m.
Grant Union at Irrigon, 1 p.m.
Knappa at Irrigon, 3:30 p.m.
Kamiakin (WA) at Pendleton, 4 p.m.

Friday
Echo vs. Kennedy (at Union), 9 a.m.
Vernonia at Heppner (DH), 1 p.m.
Echo vs. Colton (at Union), 3 p.m.
Stayton at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m. Rainier at Mac-Hi, 6 p.m

Saturday
Pilot Rock vs. Bonanza (at Union), 9 a.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. Colton (at Union), Junction City at Mac-Hi, 2 p.m. Pilot Rock vs. Colton (at Union), 3 p.m.

#### Yamhill-Carlton at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m. Weston-McEwen at Union, 5 p.m. PREPTRACK AND FIELD

Saturday Mac-Hi at Holder Relays (Yakima), 10

#### Pendleton at Hanford (WA), 10:30 a.m. PREP LACROSSE

#### **Wednesday** Hermiston at Selah (WA), 7 p.m.

### COLLEGE BASEBALL Wednesday Yakima Valley at BMCC (DH), 1 p.m.

Saturday BMCC at Wenatchee Valley (DH), 1 p.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL Thursday Carroll at EOU (DH), 11 a.m. Friday Carroll at EOU (DH), 11 a.m. BMCC at Spokane (DH), 2 p.m. Saturday BMCC at North Idaho (DH), Noon

### Basketball

NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE

L Pct GB x-Toronto 20 .733 — 23 .689 3½ x-Boston 30 .589 11 48 .360 28 51 .311 31½ v-Philadelphia

**Southeast Division L Pct GB** 33 .554 — Washington 1 1½ 3 1½ 3 7½ 18½ 20 35 .533 41 .453 51 .301 53 .284 Charlotte Orlando Atlanta 34 22 21 w L Pct GB

**Central Division** 30 .595 31 .587 35 .527 x-Cleveland x-Indiana Milwaukee Detroit 31 .587 35 .527 40 .459 50 .324 WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division
W
y-Houston 61
San Antonio 43
New Orleans 43
Dallas 23

L Pct 14 .813 32 .573 32 .573 51 .311 51 .311 37½ 54 .270 40½ Memphis Memphis La Northwest Division W L Pct GB 28 .622 — 31 .587 2½ 32 .568 4 Portland Oklahoma City Utah Minnesota 33 .560 41/2 35 .533 61/2

Pacific Division L Pct GB y-Golden State 20 .730 — 34 .540 14 41 .438 21½ 14 y-Golden State 54
L.A. Clippers 40
L.A. Lakers 32
Sacramento 24
Phoenix 19
x-clinched playoff spot

y-clinched division **Tuesday's Games** Washington 116, San Antonio 106 Toronto 114, Denver 110 Houston 118, Chicago 86 Miami 98, Cleveland 79 Portland 107, New Orleans 103 Dallas 103, Sacramento 97 Indiana 92, Golden State 81 Milwaukee at L.A. Clippers, Wednesday's Games

Brooklyn at Orlando, 4 p.m.
Cleveland at Charlotte, 4 p.m.
New York at Philadelphia, 4 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Portland at Memphis, 5 p.m.
Boston at Utah, 6:30 p.m. L.A. Clippers at Phoenix, 7 p.m. Dallas at L.A. Lakers, 7:30 p.m.

NCAA Men's Tournament FINAL FOUR San Antonio **National Semifinals** 

Saturday, March 31 No. 11 Loyola of Chicago (32-5) vs. No. 3 Michigan (32-7), 3:09 p.m. (TBS) No. 1 Villanova (34-4) vs. No. 1 Kansas (31-7), 5:49 p.m. (TBS)

NCAA Women's Tournament FINAL FOUR At Columbus, Ohio National Semifinals

Friday, March 30 Mississippi State (36-1) vs. Louisville (36-2), 4 p.m. (ESPN2) UConn (36-0) vs. Notre Dame (33-3), 6

#### Hockey

NHL EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division GP W L OT Pts GF GA 21 4 106 273 217 17 11 105 249 194 24 7 97 257 216 28 7 85 226 224 37 12 68 196 245 38 11 67 199 239 39 11 63 207 270 GP W L
x-Tampa Bay 76 51 21
x-Boston 75 47 17
Toronto 76 45 24
Florida 74 39 28
Montreal 77 28 37
Detroit 77 28 38
Ottawa 76 26 39 Buffalo 76 24 40

12 60 177 250 10 74 246 279

WESTERN CONFERENCE Central Division
GP W
x-Nashville 76 49
x-Winnipeg 76 47 OT Pts GF GA 11 109 245 193 10 104 255 200 Minnesota 76 42 St. Louis 76 43 10 94 233 215 5 91 212 198 Colorado Dallas 76 41 27 77 39 30 77 31 36 8 90 240 222 8 86 218 210 10 72 217 238

Chicago 77 3 GP W **L OT Pts GF GA** 21 7 103 254 205 x-Vegas 76 48 77 44 xVegas 76 48 21 7 103 254 205 San Jose 77 44 23 10 98 238 209 Los Angeles 77 42 28 7 91 224 190 Anaheim 77 39 25 13 91 218 208 Calgary 77 35 32 10 80 205 234 Edmonton 77 34 37 6 74 224 250 Vancouver 77 28 40 9 65 201 248 Arizona 76 26 39 11 63 190 242 NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for pretrime loss

overtime loss. x-clinched playoff spot

Tuesday's Games
New Jersey 4, Carolina 3
N.Y. Islanders 4, Ottawa 3
Detroit 5, Pittsburgh 2
Winnipeg 5, Boston 4, SO St. Louis 3, San Jose 2, OT Nashville 2, Minnesota 1, SO Dallas 3, Philadelphia 2, OT Columbus 7, Edmonton 3 Vancouver 4, Anaheim 1 Wednesday's Games

Florida at Toronto, 4:30 p.m. N.Y. Rangers at Washington, 5 p.m. Philadelphia at Colorado, 7 p.m.

Soccer

MLS EASTERN CONFERENCE **T Pts GF GA W L** 0 Columbus 10 10 6 0 4

Montreal Orlando City 0 5 2 2 WESTERN CONFERENCE

T Pts GF GA W L Sporting K.C. 2 1 Vancouver 2 1 Los Angeles FC 2 Minnesota United2 FC Dallas 1 0 Houston LA Galaxy Real Salt Lake1
San Jose 1
Colorado 0
Portland 0 0

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point Friday, March 30 Real Salt Lake at Toronto FC, 5 p.m. Saturday, March 31

Saturday, March 31 New York at Orlando City, 10 a.m. Los Angeles FC at LA Galaxy, 12 p.m. Vancouver at Columbus, 12 p.m. Portland at Chicago, 3 p.m. Atlanta United FC at Minnesota United, New York City FC at San Jose, 5 p.m.

5:30 p.m. New England at Houston, 5:30 p.m. Philadelphia at Colorado, 6 p.m. Montreal at Seattle, 7 p.m.

**PGATOUR** HOUSTON OPEN

Site: Humble, Texas. Course: GC of Houston (Tournament Course). Yardage: 7,457. Par: 72. Purse: \$7 million. Winner's share \$1,260,000.
Television: Thursday-Friday, 1-4 p.m. (Golf Channel); Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-Noon (Golf Channel), 12-3 p.m. (NBC).

Defending champion: Russell Henley.
Last week: Bubba Watson won the Dell
Technologies Match Play and Brice Garnett
won the Corales Puntacana Resort and
Club Championship.
FedEx Cup leader: Justin Thomas.

LPGA TOUR

ANA INSPIRATION
Site: Rancho Mirage, Calif.
Course: Mission Hills CC (Dinah Shore
Tournament Course). Yardage: 6,763. Purse: \$2.8 million. Winner's share \$420,000

Television: Thursday-Friday, noon-4 p.m., 7-9 p.m. (Golf Channel); Saturday-Sunday, 5-9 p.m. (Golf Channel). Defending champion: So Yeon Ryu Last week: Eun-Hee Ji won the Kia **Auto Racing** 

NASCAR Cup Series Upcoming Schedule April 8 — OReilly Auto Parts 500 at Texas

Motor Speedway, 11 a.m. (TV: FS1)

April 15 - Food City 500 at Bristol

(PCL). Placed RHP Handail Delgado and I Steven Souza Jr. on the 10-day DL. CINCINNATI REDS — Announced LHP Justin Nicolino cleared waivers and sent him outright to Louisville (IL). COLORADO ROCKIES — Optioned C Tom Murphy and OF Raimel Tapia to Albuquerque (PCL). LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Claimed RHP Cen. Mazzari from the Chicago.

RHP Cory Mazzoni from the Chicago Cubs and optioned him to Oklahoma City (PCL). Designated OF Trayce Thompson for assignment.
MIAMI MARLINS — Optioned RHP Brian

Ellington and OF Magneuris Sierra to New Orleans (PCL). PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Signed INFOF Alexi Amarista to a minor league

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Selected the contract of LHP Derek Holland from Richmond (EL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Selected the contract of C Miguel Montero. Placed RHP Koda Glover on the 60-day DL. Placed 2B Daniel Murphy and RHP Joaquin Benoit

on the 10-day DL

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
NBA — Fined Portland G-F Evan Turner
\$10,000 for making an inappropriate gesture on the playing court during a March 25 game at Oklahoma City. Women's National Basketball Association WNBA — Announced the resignation of

chief operating officer Jay Parry, effective April 30. Promoted Ann Rodriguez to chief operating officer.

FOOTBALL

National Football League
CHICAGO BEARS — Re-signed CB Sherrick McManis to a two-year contract.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Released QB

TENNESSEE TITANS — Agreed to terms with QB Blaine Gabbert and QL Xavier Su'a-Filo. HOCKEY

National Hockey League CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Agreed to terms with D Blake Hillman on a two-year contract through the 2018-19 season. As-signed F Matthew Highmore to Rockford NEW YORK RANGERS — Assigned G

NEW YORK NANGERS — ASSIGNED & Alexandar Georgiev to Hartford (AHL). PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Reassigned G John Muse to Reading (ECHL) from Lehigh Valley (AHL). WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Recalled G Pheonix Copley from Hershey (AHL). **SOCCER** 

Major League Soccer LOS ANGELES FC — Signed M Andre

Horta.
PHILADELPHIA UNION — Named Dick Schreuder assistant coach COLLEGE

COLLEGE
ARIZONA — Announced sophomore G
Rawle Alkins has declared for the NBA
draft.
CLEMSON — Fired women's basketball

coach Audra Smith.

DUKE — Promoted men's assistant
basketball coaches Nate James and Jon
Scheyer to men's associate basketball head coaches. FLORIDA STATE — Announced men's

sophomore basketball G CJ Walker is leaving the program.

LOUISVILLE — Named Chris Mack

men's basketball coach.

MEMPHIS — Named Kevin Clune senior defensive assistant. MINNESOTA — Named Bob Motzko

mminicsOII.A — Named Bob Molzko men's hockey coach. NEBRASKA — Announced G James Palmer Jr. and F Copeland Jr. have de-clared for the 2018 NBA Draft. NEW MEXICO — Announced senior F Connor MacDougall and junior F Jachai Simmons will be leaving the men's bas-

simmons will be leaving the men's bas-ketball team. SAINT ANSELM — Named Jordan Soft-check offensive coordinator. TEXAS — Junior G Kerwin Roach has declared for the NBA draft.

declared for the NBA draft.
UALR — Named Darrell Walker men's
basketball coach.
WASHINGTON STATE — Announced
G Malachi Flynn says he will transfer to
another men's basketball team.