



AP Photo/Chris Carlson  
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 there."

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



AP Photo/Frank Franklin II  
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.



AP Photo/Robert Franklin  
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 Friday in 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 TO 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 Tournament.

She had 23 points and 21 rebounds against UCLA

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

<b>Wednesday</b>	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 Irrigon), 2 p.m.
	Pendleton vs. Roseburg (Red Lion Buckaroo Classic), 4:30 p.m.
	Weston-McEwen vs. Irrigon (Riverside/Irrigon Tournament), TBD
<b>Thursday</b>	McNary vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium Tourney), 6 p.m.
<b>Friday</b>	Vernonia at Heppner (DH), 1 p.m.
	Aloha vs. Hermiston (Volcano Stadium Tourney), 4:30 p.m.
<b>Saturday</b>	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

<b>Wednesday</b>	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.
<b>Friday</b>	Echo vs. Kennedy (at Union), 9 a.m.
	Vernonia at Heppner (DH), 1 p.m.
	Echo vs. Colton (at Union), 3 p.m.
	Steyton at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m.
	Rainier at Mac-Hi, 6 p.m.
<b>Saturday</b>	Pilot Rock vs. Bonanza (at Union), 9 a.m.
	Weston-McEwen vs. Colton (at Union), 11 a.m.
	Junction City at Mac-Hi, 2 p.m.
	Pilot Rock vs. Colton (at Union), 3 p.m.
	Yamhill-Cariton at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m.
	Weston-McEwen at Union, 5 p.m.

#### PREP TRACK AND FIELD

<b>Wednesday</b>	Mac-Hi at Holder Relays (Yakima), 10 a.m.
	Pendleton at Hanford (WA), 10:30 a.m.

#### PREP LACROSSE

<b>Wednesday</b>	Hermiston at Selah (WA), 7 p.m.
------------------	---------------------------------

#### COLLEGE BASEBALL

<b>Wednesday</b>	Yakima Valley at BMCC (DH), 1 p.m.
<b>Saturday</b>	BMCC at Wenatchee Valley (DH), 1 p.m.

#### COLLEGE SOFTBALL

<b>Thursday</b>	Carroll at EOU (DH), 11 a.m.
<b>Friday</b>	Carroll at EOU (DH), 11 a.m.
	BMCC at Spokane (DH), 2 p.m.
<b>Saturday</b>	BMCC at North Idaho (DH), Noon

### Basketball

#### NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE

#### Atlantic Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
x-Toronto	55	20	733 1/2
x-Boston	51	23	689 3/4
x-Philadelphia	43	30	589 1/2
New York	27	48	360 28
Brooklyn	23	51	311 31 1/2

#### Southeast Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
Washington	41	33	554 1/2
Miami	40	35	533 1 1/2
Charlotte	34	41	453 7/8
Orlando	22	51	301 18 1/2
Atlanta	21	53	284 20

#### Central Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
x-Cleveland	44	30	595 1/2
x-Indiana	44	31	587 1/2
Milwaukee	39	35	527 5
Detroit	34	40	459 10
Chicago	24	50	324 20

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### Southwest Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
y-Houston	61	14	813 1/2
San Antonio	43	32	573 18
New Orleans	44	32	573 18
Dallas	23	51	311 37 1/2
Memphis	20	54	270 40 1/2

##### Northwest Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
Portland	46	28	622 1/2
Oklahoma City	44	31	587 2 1/2
Utah	42	32	568 4
Minnesota	42	33	560 4 1/2
Denver	40	35	533 6 1/2

#### Pacific Division

<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pct</b>	<b>GB</b>
y-Golden State	54	20	730 1/2
L.A. Clippers	40	34	540 14
L.A. Lakers	32	41	438 21 1/2
Sacramento	24	51	320 30 1/2
Phoenix	19	56	253 35 1/2

#### 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 81 at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

#### 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

At The Alamodome, 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 p.m. (ESPN2)

### Hockey

#### NHL EASTERN CONFERENCE

##### Atlantic Division

<b>GP</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>OT</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>
x-Tampa Bay	51	21	4	106	273	217
x-Boston	75	47	17	110	249	194
Toronto	76	45	24	7	97	257
Florida	74	39	28	7	85	226
Montreal	77	28	37	12	68	196
Detroit	77	28	38	11	67	193
Ottawa	76	28	39	11	63	207
Buffalo	76	24	40	12	60	177

##### Metropolitan Division

<b>GP</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>OT</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>
Washington	76	45	24	7	97	240
Pittsburgh	77	43	28	6	92	253
Columbus	77	43	29	5	91	222
Philadelphia	77	38	25	14	90	232
New Jersey	76	40	28	8	88	229
Carolina	77	34	32	11	79	215
N.Y. Rangers	76	33	35	8	74	221
N.Y. Islanders	77	32	35	10	74	246

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### Central Division

<b>GP</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>OT</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>
x-Nashville	76	49	16	110	245	193
x-Winnipeg	76	47	19	10	104	255
Minnesota	76	42	24	10	94	233
St. Louis	76	43	28	5	91	212
Colorado	76	41	27	8	90	242
Dallas	77	39	30	8	86	218
Chicago	77	31	36	10	72	217

##### Pacific Division

<b>GP</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>OT</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>
x-Vegas	76	48	21	7	103	254
San Jose	77	44	23	10	98	238
Los Angeles	77	42	28	7	91	224
Anaheim	77	39	25	13	91	218
Calgary	77	35	32	10	80	205
Edmonton	77	34	37	6	74	224
Vancouver	77	28	40	9	65	201
Arizona	76	26	39	11	63	190

#### 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.
Arizona at Vegas, 7 p.m.

### Soccer