

2016 MOST IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN SPORTS



10

DISPLACEMENT

In a year of what could have been, when Serena Williams tied Steffi Graf for the most consecutive weeks as the world No. 1 female tennis player at 186, Angelique Kerber displaced Serena as the world's No. 1 ranked player. While Williams defeated Kerber to win Wimbledon this year; Kerber was crowned US Open and Australian Open champion to become the first woman other than Williams to win 2 slams in the same season since Justine Henin did so in 2007.

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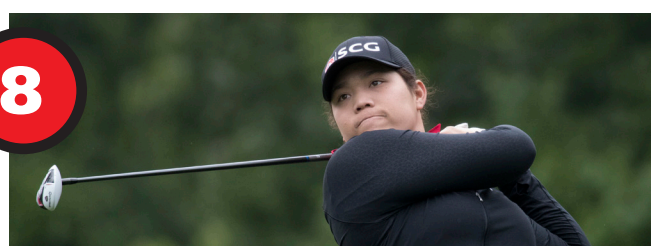
SAVIOR

San Jose, California, a long-time mecca for soccer and home to a dedicated soccer only professional stadium thanks to developer Lew Wolff; became the third and final destination for this year's Women's College Cup. After Orlando's new soccer stadium fell behind development, the Cup moved to North Carolina. However, when Governor Pat McCrory signed legislation that excluded gender identity and sexual orientation from local and statewide anti-discrimination protections, the NCAA made a third move, bringing the Cup to San Jose. When the championship match was played, University of Southern California beat West Virginia 3-1.

Photo Credit: ISiPhotos.com/Maciek Gudymowicz



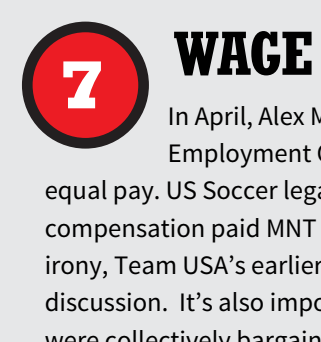
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THAI FIRST

Ariya Jutanugarn, who at the age of 11 in 2007 was the youngest player ever to qualify for an LPGA Tour event; became the first golfer, male or female, from Thailand to win a major championship when she won the 2016 Women's British Open. Jutanugarn, who finished the year ranked No. 1, also won three consecutive tournaments on the LPGA this year, becoming the first player in LPGA history to do so.

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WAGE GAP

In April, Alex Morgan and four teammates filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against the US Soccer Federation demanding equal pay. US Soccer legal representatives responded by saying "any differences in the compensation paid MNT and WNT players are driven by factors other than gender." In a case of irony, Team USA's earlier than expected departure from the Rio Olympics quieted down the discussion. It's also important to note that the pay, terms, and conditions the team is protesting were collectively bargained in an agreement that expires on December 31, 2016. The court of public opinion is likely the team's best option to push for better terms in the next CBA.

Photo: Past teammates like Abby Wambach are also raising the WNT gender pay gap issue and seeking to build support at events like Watermark's Conference for Women in 2016.



Photo Credit: Amy D. Love



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SMASHING RECORDS

At 19 years old, Katie Ledecky not only won four golds and a silver at the 2016 Rio Games, she set commanding world records in the 400-meter and 800-meter freestyle events. As athletes look towards the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020, Ledecky is expected to defend her records.

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FORTY-NINE & COUNTING

In 2016, USA women's basketball remained truly dominant on the Olympic stage. Team USA won its sixth straight gold medal and its 49th straight game in the Olympics. Coach Geno Auriemma has led the US squad since 2009. During this time, his teams have won the 2010 and 2014 World Championships and the gold medal at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

Photo Credit: Amy D. Love

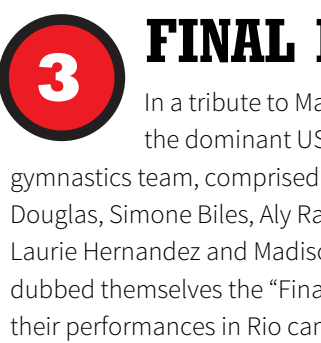


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NEVER GIVE UP

Sprinter Allyson Felix had sought to repeat with a double gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics in the 200m and 400m. However, an injury prior to the Olympic Trials changed the course of her competition. In Rio, after an initial disqualification in the 4x100, Team USA won double golds in the 4x100 and 4x400. Along the way, Felix also picked up a silver in the 400m. Felix's overall Olympic total is nine, six golds and three silvers, tied for the most by a female track athlete.

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FINAL FIVE

In a tribute to Marta Korolyi, the dominant US women's gymnastics team, comprised of Gaby Douglas, Simone Biles, Aly Raisman, Laurie Hernandez and Madison Kocian, dubbed themselves the "Final Five" as their performances in Rio came to a close. At the end, the US won the competition by an unbelievable margin of more than 8 points. Team USA also had three of the top all-around gymnasts in Biles, Raisman, and Douglas, but given competition rules, only 2 could advance for the coveted individual title.

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BETTER THAN A PERFECT 10

The UConn Huskies, led by Geno Auriemma for 32 seasons, tied the UCLA Bruins men's basketball team in 2016 when they secured their 11th NCAA Division 1 National Championship, capping a women's record four in a row.

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1

SEEING DOMINANCE & ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: SIMONE BILES

Simone Biles dominated the world scene in gymnastics for the past three years and lived up to the pressure in Rio, becoming the most decorated American female gymnast in a single Olympics by winning four golds (team, individual, floor, and vault) and a bronze (beam).

Biles domination was evident as she was the only one of Team USA's five members to compete in all four events for the team title. Biles level of difficulty and dominance in the floor routine contributed to Team USA beating the second place finisher by a greater margin than the second place finisher to the last and eight place finisher in the team competition.

Given her sheer separation from the field of world athletes in her sport, Simone Biles is recognized for the number one moment and as REAL SPORTS sportsperson of the year for how she handled the pressure and led her team.

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