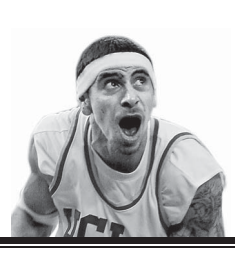


GamePlan

TODAY'S BEST BETS

Watch: UCLA at Washington State
Lorenzo Mata, right, and the second-ranked Bruins can wrap up the Pac-10 title with a victory over the 13th-ranked Cougars in Pullman, Wash. Prime Ticket has the action at 7:30 p.m.



Go: Ducks at Kings
The first-place Ducks can improve to 5-1 against the last-place Kings this season with a victory. The Kings collected a 4-3 shootout victory when the teams last faced off. Staples Center, 7:30 p.m.

TALK BACK

'If the Angels had been loyal to Darin Erstad, they wouldn't have to question whether their center fielder took steroids or not.'

ROB ROHM
ORANGE



Talk to us

We want your comments on sports personalities, games and news. Please send your thoughts to sports@ocregister.com or fax to 714-796-6765. Please keep comments to 25 words.

TOP OF THE 2ND: TV-RADIO



REGISTER FILE PHOTO

IN ESPN SPOTLIGHT: The Arena League's five-year multimedia rights deal kicks off Sunday on ESPN on ABC. ESPN2 will carry the Avengers at Orlando on March 12.

5 GAMES OUT

Clippers

Thu 3-1	Sat 3-3	Mon 3-5	Fri 3-9	Sun 3-11
SEA 7:30	IND 7:30	S.A. 7:30	G.S. 7:30	DET Noon
TNT	KTLA/5	PT	PT	

Information: 323-224-1448

Lakers

Fri 3-2	Sun 3-4	Tue 3-6	Wed 3-7	Fri 3-9
SAC 7:30	PHX 12:30	MIN 5:00	MIL 5:00	PHIL 4:00
FSN	KABC/7	KCAL/9	KCAL/9	KCAL/9
ESPN				5:30-(D)

Information: 310-426-6031

Ducks

Thu 3-1	Fri 3-2	Sun 3-4	Wed 3-7	Fri 3-9
LA 7:30	SJ 7:00	NSH 5:05	PHX 7:05	EDM 7:05
FSN	PT	KDOC	PT	KDOC

Information: 877-945-3946

Kings

Thu 3-1	Sat 3-3	Tue 3-6	Wed 3-7	Fri 3-9
ANA 7:30	NSH 1:00	CHI 5:30	CLM 4:00	DET 4:30
FSN	PT	FSN	PT	PT

Information: 888-546-4752

UCLA basketball

Thu 3-1	Sat 3-3			
WSU 7:30	WASH 11:00			
PT	KCBS/2			

Information: 310-206-3302

USC basketball

Thu 3-1	Sat 3-3			
WASH 7:00	WSU 4:00			
PT	PT			

Information: 213-740-4672

CSF basketball

Sat 3-3				
UCD 7:00				

Information: 714-278-2783

UCI basketball

Thu 3-1				
LB ST. 7:05				
KVMD				

Information: 949-824-9467

CSF baseball

Fri 3-2	Sat 3-3	Sun 3-4	Fri 3-9	Sat 3-10
RICE 7:00	RICE 6:00	RICE Noon	E. CAR. 2:00	E. CAR. 11:00

Information: 714-278-2783

UCI baseball

Fri 3-2	Sat 3-3	Sun 3-4	Tue 3-6	Fri 3-9
WASH 3:00	WASH 2:00	WASH 1:00	USD 6:00	NEV 6:00

Information: 949-824-5000

Home - - Away

ESPN perfect fit for Arena League

ESPN has more platforms these days than a strip-club dressing room. The total is 15 and counting, and they all include "E-S-P-N" in some form.

But the only letters that matter to ESPN's newest partner, the Arena Football League, are "PR."



MICHAEL LEV
THE REGISTER

The Arena League is about to become the latest beneficiary of ESPN's public-relations prowess. As Arena League commissioner David Baker said: "ESPN's brand is ingrained in sports fans. ... There is no better partner to help continue the AFL's growth."

He wasn't just saying that for effect; it happens to be true. Nobody promotes its product more thoroughly than the marketing machine known as ESPN.

The Arena League's five-year multimedia rights deal kicks off Sunday with regional coverage on ABC — sorry, ESPN on ABC. ESPN2 will carry regular Monday night games starting with the Avengers at Orlando on March 12. ESPN, ESPN2 and ABC will share playoff coverage.

The lead announce team will be Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic — co-hosts of ESPN Radio's "Mike & Mike in the Morning," which is heard in nearly 400 markets. They often will broadcast their show on-site and frequently will talk AFL, greatly increasing the league's exposure.

"When we first started doing our show, we were in one market. Now it's just under 400. That's what ESPN can do for the Arena League," Golic said on a conference call this week. "ESPN can make people go, 'Oh, I'm going to check this out.'"

That's precisely where the NHL miscalculated. By leaving ESPN for OLN (now Versus), the NHL lost an invaluable promotional outlet (several, actually). Yes, hockey was something of a second-class citizen at ESPN, and it's Versus' premier product. But would you rather be the mayor of Boise, Idaho, or a city councilperson in Los Angeles?

Regarding Versus' relative obscurity and ESPN's minimal hockey coverage, NBC NHL analyst Brett Hull told USA Today: "People don't even know that we're on. That's a huge problem."

One the AFL no longer has.

AROUND THE DIAL

Fox Sports Net again will provide supplementary AFL coverage. The Avengers are scheduled to appear seven times on FSN West and Prime Ticket. ...

Prime Ticket will televise the CIF-Southern Section Division I-AA boys basketball championship between Mater Dei and Artesia of Lakewood at 6:30 p.m. Saturday. ...

The first of four spring-training versions of "Angels Live" airs at 10 p.m. Sunday on FSN. "Dodgers Live" will be on Prime Ticket at the same time. ...

ESPN Deportes will carry a Spanish simulcast of Saturday's NASCAR Busch Series race in Mexico City. ESPN2 has the English telecast. ...

Sometimes ESPN goes a little too far. Its college basketball "Championship Week" stretches from March 1 to March 11. So much for the Roman Calendar. ...

And sometimes ESPN is a little too East Coast-oriented. Six of its first eight "Monday Night Baseball" games feature the Yankees, Mets or Red Sox, including Yankees vs. Red Sox on May 21. ...

The latest edition of HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel," premiering at 10 p.m. Monday, includes Frank DeFord's piece on new Chicago Cubs manager Lou Piniella. ...

Sunday's game between Wisconsin and Ohio State, ranked Nos. 1 and 2 at the time, was CBS' highest-rated college basketball game of '06-07. ...

Smart Interactive Idea No. 1: The NBA has launched a channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com/nba), including a place for fans to submit clips of their best basketball moves. ...

Smart Interactive Idea No. 2: Starting today and continuing throughout the offseason, fans can select NFL Network's Tuesday night programming via "Viewers' Choice" at nfl.com.

Remote Patrol

DON'T MISS

• Today, 7:30 p.m.
Ducks at Kings
FSN
Burke wouldn't be any fun on 'Deal or No Deal'

• Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Sacramento at Lakers
FSN, ESPN
Kings to bring back Christie as enforcer. Jackie Christie

• Sunday, 1 p.m.
Duke at North Carolina
KCBS/2
Always enthralling, even without screaming Vitale



DON'T BOTHER

• Saturday, 1 p.m.
Notre Dame at Rutgers
ESPN
Scarlet Knights ask Schiano, above, to coach hoops, too

• Saturday, 7 p.m.
Angels at Colorado
FSN (delayed)
Spring-training baseball - i.e., nap time!

ON THE AIR TODAY

Sport	Time	Event (D-delay; T-tape)	TV	Radio
Baseball	10 a.m.	Exhib.: Dodgers vs. Atlanta		KFWB/980
	Noon	Exhib.: Angels vs. Kansas City		KSPN/710
	Noon	Exhib.: San Diego vs. Seattle		XPRS/1090
College basketball	4 p.m.	Virginia Tech at Virginia	ESPN	
	4 p.m.	G. Washington at Charlotte	ESPN2	
	6 p.m.	Memphis at UTEP	ESPN	
	6 p.m.	N. Carolina at Georgia Tech	ESPN2	
	7 p.m.	UC Irvine at Long Beach St.	KVMD	KUCI/88.9
	7 p.m.	USC at Washington		KDIS/1110
	7:30 p.m.	UCLA at Washington St.	PT	KLAC/570
	9:30 p.m.	UCLA at Washington (D)	PT	
Golf	6:30 a.m.	Johnnie Walker Classic	Golf	
	Noon	PGA Honda Classic	Golf	
H.S. basketball	8 p.m.	Div. I-AA Girls: Brea Olinda vs. Santa Margarita (T)	Cox/3	
Hockey	7:30 p.m.	Ducks at Kings	FSN	KTLK/1150 KLAA/830
Horse racing	Noon	Aqueduct		PT
Motor sports	9 a.m.	Busch Stater Bros. 300 (T)	Speed	
	Noon	Nextel Auto Club 500 (T)	Speed	
Pro basketball	5 p.m.	Cleveland at Dallas	TNT	
	7:30 p.m.	Clippers at Seattle	TNT	KSPN/710
Soccer	4 p.m.	Champions Cup: D.C. United vs. CD Olimpia	FSC	
	6 p.m.	Champions Cup: Houston vs. Puntarenas FC	FSC	

For complete listings, please see TV Register. Satellite times might differ. Check with your service provider.

THE LINE

NCAA basketball	Favorite	Line	Underdog
UCLA	1	at Wash. St.	USC
at Wash. St.	3		UC Irvine
at LB St.	10 1/2		
Memphis	10	at UTEP	
N. Carolina	6	at Georgia Tech	
Nevada	2 1/2	at Utah St.	
at Virginia	2	Va. Tech	
at UCSB	5 1/2	Pacific	
at Cal Poly SLO	6	CSUN	
at Stanford	10 1/2	Arizona St.	
Arizona	3	at Cal	

NBA	Favorite	Line	Underdog
at Seattle	4	Clippers	
at Dallas	8 1/2	Cleveland	
at Portland	6	Charlotte	

ALSO TODAY

- Women's college tennis: Long Beach State at UC Irvine, 11 a.m.
- Horse racing: Thoroughbreds at Santa Anita, first post 1 p.m.
- College baseball: Westmont at Biola, 2 p.m.
- College baseball: La Sierra at Chapman, 2:30 p.m.
- College baseball: Cal Baptist at Concordia, 2:30 p.m.
- Women's college water polo: UC Irvine at UCLA, 3 p.m.
- Women's college basketball: UC Davis at Cal State Fullerton, 7 p.m.
- Horse racing: Quarter horses at Los Alamitos, first post 7:15 p.m.
- Men's college basketball: GSAC Tournament: Fresno Pacific at Concordia, 7:30 p.m.
- Men's college basketball: GSAC Tournament: Biola at San Diego Christian, 7:30 p.m.

Blues' Rucinsky undergoes hip surgery

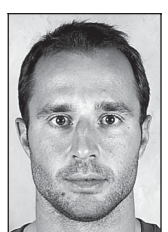
FROM REGISTER NEWS SERVICES

NHL NOTES

The St. Louis Blues' Martin Rucinsky is out indefinitely following hip surgery.

The forward, who missed eight games because of the injury, had a torn labrum in his left hip repaired. Rucinsky, injured Feb. 6 against Toronto, will be evaluated again in the next week.

Rucinsky, 35, has 12 goals and 21 assists in 52 games this season.



Rucinsky

CHEERLEADER LAWSUIT

Madison Square Garden must turn over notes and e-mails from an internal investigation into a former New York Rangers cheerleader's claim that at least one member of management was a sexual predator, a judge said.

U.S. District Judge Robert W. Sweet ordered MSG to produce the documents to learn the merits of Courtney Prince's claim. But Sweet said

MSG lawyers wouldn't have to turn over materials aimed at building a defense against the claims.

Sweet also said in the order that MSG must provide him with all internal claims or complaints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment filed between Jan. 1, 2002 and Dec. 31, 2004.

Prince, 29, the former captain of the Rangers' cheerleading squad, sued MSG in October 2004. Prince said she was fired Jan. 22, 2004, after she warned fellow cheerleaders that at least one member of management was a sexual predator.

A lawyer for Madison Square Garden did not immediately return a telephone message for comment. MSG has said it believed "the allegations are unfounded."

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has recommended that MSG have its employees undergo sexual harassment discrimination training and pay Prince \$800,000 in damages.

Sanchez collects first victory with Mexico

By MIGUEL A. MELENDEZ
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

SAN DIEGO • The Mexican national team didn't need this victory as much as Coach Hugo Sanchez did.

El Tricolor made it look easy against the Venezuelan national team with easy scoring resulting in a 3-1 romp in front of a record soccer crowd of 63,328 at Qualcomm Stadium on Wednesday.

The previous soccer record at Qualcomm was 56,000 in 1994, when Mexico played Bulgaria in another

international friendly.

Sanchez began his campaign for coach of the Mexican national team long before El Tricolor qualified for the 2006 World Cup.

He promised results and an expeditious qualification for the World Cup. But after a lot of talk and promises, the Mexican national team recently fell flat on its face in Sanchez's debut in a 2-0 loss to the U.S. in Glendale, Ariz., which is why this victory was one he needed.

Whether the Federacion Mexicana de Futbol (FMF) would have pres-

sured Sanchez had there been another loss is uncertain, but certainly he would have had some explaining to do.

The Venezuela national team wasn't a strong opponent so there isn't much validation in the victory. But Mexico could prove it's a strong contender if it includes marquee matchups against better teams in this U.S. tour.

Mexico midfielder Andres Guardado sent a blistering shot from the

top of the 18-yard box and into the inside of the right post for the first goal at the 25-minute mark.

Nine minutes later, Fernando Arce caught an outlet pass with his left foot and from 7 yards out sent a hard shot toward the right post and into the back of the net.

Cuauhtemoc Blanco made it 3-0 with a second-half penalty kick. Venezuela finally scored on Daniel Arismendi's goal from close range off a pass from Evelio Hernandez in the 83rd minute.

Sanchez's lineup was tweaked a bit

and included new players, notably former Chivas USA forward Francisco "Paco" Palencia.

He did not start but came in to replace Blanco at the 83-minute mark, and accomplished his goal of being called up to the national team after a long absence because of his disagreements with former coach Ricardo Lavolpe.

Palencia, who donned the captain band, achieved his goal after leaving Major League Soccer after only two seasons in favor of the Mexican League's Primera Division.

SOCCER