

# 30 GREAT MOMENTS ON ESPN & ESPN2

## 1981

March 19

Danny Ainge goes the length of the court in the final seconds to score the winning basket in a 51-50 BYU victory over Notre Dame in an NCAA basketball tournament regional semifinal game.

## 1982

December 29

In the Liberty Bowl, Alabama defeats Illinois 21-15 in Paul "Bear" Bryant's final game.

## 1983

March 17

During ESPN's NCAA basketball tournament coverage, cut-ins catch buzzer-beater game-winners by Maryland's Len Bias (vs. Tenn.-Chattanooga), Ohio University's Robert Tatum (vs. Illinois State) and Purdue's Steve Reid (vs. Robert Morris).

## 1984

December 21

BYU defeats Michigan 24-17 in the Holiday Bowl to complete an undefeated season and win the national championship.

## 1987

Jan./Feb.

Live, late-night telecasts from Australia turn into a national phenomenon as Dennis Conner recaptures the America's Cup from Australia. The telecasts (featuring YachtCam's debut), bring unprecedented attention to ESPN and the sport. The U.S. entry, *Stars and Stripes*, defeats *Kookaburra III* 4-0.

March 12

Dick Vitale, in the studio for first-round NCAA Tournament coverage, vows to stand on his head if Austin Peay upsets Illinois. Final score -Peay 86, Illinois 67. Later that evening, an upside down Dick keeps his promise.

May 29

Freshman Robin Ventura of Oklahoma State gets a hit in his 57<sup>th</sup> consecutive game, breaking Joe DiMaggio's record for organized baseball.

## 1989

October 17

ESPN provides the first live, national coverage from San Francisco following the earthquake at the World Series.

## 1990

June 29

Oakland's Dave Stewart and Los Angeles' Fernando Valenzuela both throw no-hitters in ESPN games.

## 1992

November 15

The season-ending Hooters 500 turns into one of the most historic days in NASCAR history: in his final race, Richard Petty crashes, only to dramatically return with two laps remaining; Jeff Gordon makes his Winston Cup debut and the season championship goes to Alan Kulwicki over race-winner Bill Elliott by 10 points, the closest finish ever.

## 1994

March 4

At the inaugural ESPY Awards, Jim Valvano, just weeks before losing a valiant battle against cancer, gives a dramatic speech in accepting the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage and announces he and ESPN would establish the V Foundation for Cancer Research.

March 23

ESPN2 televises Vancouver at Los Angeles and the Kings' Wayne Gretzky scores his 802<sup>nd</sup> goal, breaking Gordie Howe's record.

June 17

Playing in his final U.S. Open and on his "home" course in Oakmont, Pa., Arnold Palmer receives a thunderous ovation as approaches the 18<sup>th</sup> green. Following the

telecast, ESPN televises the opening game of the FIFA Men's World Cup tournament, being played for the first time in the U.S. Later that day, ESPN provides live coverage as the Los Angeles police department conducts a "slow speed chase" of O.J. Simpson in his white Ford Bronco.

### **1995**

September 6

Cal Ripken breaks Lou Gehrig's "unbreakable" record with his 2,131<sup>st</sup> consecutive game played. Ripken homers in the game and President Clinton joins Chris Berman and Buck Martinez one inning in the booth.

### **1996**

August 29

Tiger Woods makes his professional debut at the Greater Milwaukee Open.

### **1998**

September 7

Mark McGwire ties Roger Maris' record with his 61<sup>st</sup> home run of the season in a Chicago Cubs at St. Louis game.

### **1999**

June 29

At the X Games, skateboarding legend Tony Hawk successfully completes the first "900" – two-and-a-half twists in the air – during the fifth annual X Games. Called the greatest achievement in alternative sports history.

### **2000**

Sept. 12

Jeremy Schaap interviews former Indiana University basketball coach Bob Knight live on ESPN, the first television interview since he had been fired on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **2001**

March 16

Annika Sorenstam becomes the first woman ever to shoot a 59, in the second round of the Standard Register Ping in Phoenix.

### **2002**

December 6

Down 27 after three periods, the Los Angeles Lakers pull off the second-biggest comeback in NBA history, outscoring the Dallas Mavericks 44-15 in the fourth quarter (21 by Kobe Bryant) to win 105-103.

### **2003**

June 11

Six Houston Astros pitchers combine for a no-hitter at Yankee Stadium on ESPN2, the first time the Yankees had been no-hit in New York in 41 years.

October 30

In his NBA debut, Cleveland's LeBron James – the former high school sensation and #1 draft pick – scores 25 points with six rebounds and nine assists as the Cavaliers lose in Sacramento, 106-92.

### **2005**

March 22

Tennessee women's basketball coach Pat Summitt wins her 880th game, passing Dean Smith's Division I record. The 75-54 win over Purdue in a second-round NCAA Tournament game was aired on ESPN2 and ESPNU; joined by ESPN, ESPN Classic, ESPNEWS and ESPN Deportes for the final moments and post-game celebration and interview.

### **2006**

September 25

The New Orleans Saints return to the Superdome for the first time in more than a year, since Hurricane Katrina, and defeat the Atlanta Falcons 23-3.

### **2007**

- January 1 Bob Knight wins the 880<sup>th</sup> game of his career, the most of any NCAA Division I men's basketball coach, surpassing Dean Smith with a 70-68 victory over New Mexico.
- August 4 Barry Bonds hits his 755<sup>th</sup> home run, in San Diego on ESPN2, tying Hank Aaron's record. On August 7, he breaks the record with his 756<sup>th</sup>, also in a game added to ESPN2. To document his assault on the record ESPN (2) and ESPN2 (8) add 10 Giants games.

## **2008**

- January 18-19 ESPN2 sticks with live coverage of the Australian Open through two scheduled breaks, resulting in 14 hours, 43 minutes of consecutive live tennis (Friday at 9:54 p.m. – Saturday 12:37 p.m.), no doubt the longest live sports telecast in U.S. history. It was followed by a scheduled reair until 5 p.m., resulting in 19+ straight hours of tennis. The action was highlighted by three five-set matches: James Blake winning 4-6, 2-6, 6-0, 7-6, 6-2 over Sebastien Grosjean; Roger Federer outlasting Janko Tipsarevic 6-7, 7-6, 5-7, 6-1, 10-8; and Lleyton Hewitt ousting Marcos Baghdatis 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-3 in a match that ended at 4:32 a.m. in Melbourne. The fifth sets were aired commercial-free.
- April 19 Danica Patrick wins the IndyCar 300 at Motegi, Japan, the first woman to win a major open-wheel race, aired live on ESPN Classic.
- September 21 ESPN televises the final game at Yankee Stadium, with extensive multi-platform coverage before and after New York's 7-3 victory over Baltimore. In the booth, Jon Miller and Joe Morgan were largely silent during the ninth inning and during the post-game ceremony, allowing fans to enjoy the moment as if they were in attendance.

## **2009**

- February 9 In an exclusive interview with Peter Gammons, Alex Rodriguez of the New York Yankees admits to having used performance enhancing drugs while a member of the Texas Rangers (2001-2003).