

FIFA signs Saudi deal with PIF backing Club World Cup

BY GRAHAM DUNBAR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — FIFA took another Saudi Arabian investment Thursday for the U.S.-hosted Club World Cup, announcing a top-tier commercial deal with the kingdom’s sovereign wealth fund, which holds majority ownership of one of the 32 teams playing.

The Saudi state’s Public Investment Fund (PIF) is the 75% owner of Riyadh club Al-Hilal, one of four teams in the national league it has controlled since 2023. PIF also created the LIV Golf project.

FIFA said PIF was an official partner of the June 14-July 13 tournament being played in 11 American cities, though the value of the deal was not stated.

Saudi state money also is effectively funding the Club World Cup broadcasting deal that has largely backed the \$1 billion tournament prize fund being shared among the 32 teams, including Al-Hilal, which will get an



The FIFA club World Cup trophy sits between President Donald Trump and FIFA President Gianni Infantino during a FIFA task force meeting on the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the East Room of the White House on May 6, in Washington.

entry payment of \$9.55 million.

FIFA announced a global broadcast deal for the Club World Cup with streaming service DAZN in December, two days before confirming Saudi Arabia as host of the men’s 2034 World Cup.

A widely speculated Saudi investment in DAZN, reported to be around \$1 billion, was confirmed several weeks later.

FIFA also signed Saudi state oil company Aramco to a World Cup sponsor this year.

The U.S. is hosting the first 32-team Club World Cup which will

played every four years by teams that won an edition of a continental club championship, or ranked highly by results over the four-year qualifying period. Inter Miami, with star player Lionel Messi, was invited by FIFA to represent the host nation.

Al-Hilal won the Asian Champions League in 2021 and was drawn by FIFA in a group with Real Madrid, Pachuca and Salzburg.

The Club World Cup has become a personal project of FIFA President Gianni Infantino, who has built close ties since 2018 to Saudi Arabia and its Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the chairman of PIF.

The gold Club World Cup trophy has spent much of this year at the White House with U.S. President Donald Trump, who is scheduled to present it to the winning team at the final at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Trump also has worked closely with the LIV Golf tour.

Finals preview: Shai nears milestone, blowouts likely

BY TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

OKLAHOMA CITY — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander has a chance to make a whole slew of history in these NBA Finals.

The Oklahoma City star is the first reigning MVP who’ll play in the finals — they start Thursday night when the Thunder play host to the Indiana Pacers — since Golden State’s Stephen Curry in 2016. He could become the first player to win a scoring title and an NBA title in the same season since Shaquille O’Neal did it for the Los Angeles Lakers in 1999-2000.

And sometime in Game 1 or Game 2, Gilgeous-Alexander will likely hit another milestone.

He comes into this series with 2,960 points this season — officially, anyway, more on that in a second — between the 82-game regular-season slate and now the post-season.

With 40 more points, he will record the 25th instance of a 3,000-point season when combining the regular season and the playoffs. The most recent to do it was Luka Doncic, who had 3,005 points for Dallas last season.

If the NBA Cup championship game counted statistically, which it doesn’t, Gilgeous-Alexander would only need 19 more points for 3,000. He had 21 in that OKC loss to Milwaukee at Las Vegas in December, but those points don’t count toward his season total.

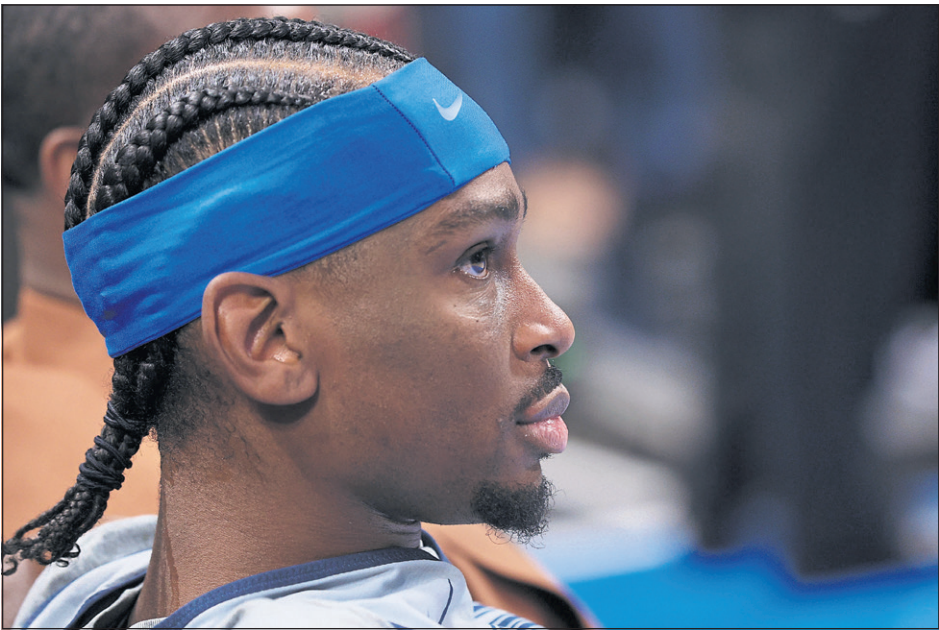
Michael Jordan had 10 seasons with at least 3,000 points, Wilt Chamberlain had five and nine other players — Bob McAdoo, Elgin Baylor, James Harden, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kevin Durant, Kobe Bryant, Rick Barry, Shaquille O’Neal and Doncic — have one.

4 Canada

For the second consecutive year, there are four Canadians in the NBA Finals.

Last year, it was Oshae Brissett for Boston and AJ Lawson, Olivier-Maxence Prosper and Dwight Powell for Dallas.

This year, it’s Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Luguentz Dort for Okla-



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander watches during practice, Wednesday, ahead of Game 1 of the NBA Finals basketball series against the Indiana Pacers in Oklahoma City.



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander speaks during a news conference on Wednesday, ahead of Game 1 of the NBA Finals basketball series against the Indiana Pacers in Oklahoma City.

homa City, along with Benedict Mathurin and Andrew Nembhard for Indiana.

“I played against Andrew when I was 9 years old,” Gilgeous-Alexander said. “It’s been an amazing journey. To see him having success, my own success, obviously Lu’s success, Ben’s success, it’s special. It’s hard to even wrap your head around. ... For us to make it to this stage, is a testament to our hard work, our character, people around us that helped us get here. It’s been a blessing. It’s been super fun.”

Dort said he hopes Canadians enjoy seeing four of their own in the finals.

“Obviously we represent our teams here,” Dort said. “But at the end of the day we represent our country as well.”

And it’s certain that Montreal will get a title: Dort and Mathurin are both from there.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for me, Lu, the whole Montreal city,” Mathurin said. “I think it’s a great step in the right direction just to be able to go against each other. You know, Lu’s a great friend of mine. I would call him brother right now, but we’re enemies.”

Finally, the finals, for James Johnson

Indiana’s James Johnson has been in the NBA for 16 seasons. He has played for 10 different franchises. He has played under 11 different coaches.

He has finally made the NBA Finals.

las-Miami series in 2011 were decided by 10 points or less.

Since then, those games are rare.

Out of the last 73 NBA Finals games, starting with the 2012 Heat-Thunder matchup through last season’s Boston-Dallas series, the average margin of victory has been 12.4 points per game.

There hasn’t been an instance of more than three consecutive single-digit finals winning margins in that stretch, and 45 of the 73 games have been decided by at least 10 points.

And there have been only six games in the last 12 finals decided by three points or less — while 10 have been decided by 20 points or more.

Record drought between overtimes

There hasn’t been an overtime game in the NBA Finals since Game 1 of the 2018 series between Golden State and Cleveland.

The seven-year drought and counting without a finals overtime game is the longest in NBA history. There was a six-year stretch from 1984 through 1990 without an OT finals game, but never seven — until now.

The division champion quirk

If Oklahoma City wins the NBA title, it will mark the 13th time in the last 14 seasons that a division champion has wound up winning the finals.

The only exception in that span was Golden State in 2022. Before that, the last team to not win their division but win the NBA title was Dallas in 2011 — coached by current Indiana coach Carlisle.

Playoff pool totals

The Thunder and Pacers are playing for the NBA championship, the Larry O’Brien Trophy and about \$5 million.

Technically, \$5,002,359. That’s what one team will get added to its share of the league’s annual playoff pool by winning the NBA Finals this season.

The total pool this year, which will be divided by the 16 playoff teams, is \$34,665,698.

The Thunder have already secured no worse than \$7,418,145 from the pool. The Pacers have secured at least \$6,160,260.

The bonus pool is typically split in some way among players and staff from the playoff teams.

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NOTICE OF MECHANICS LIEN:
Swope Hyundai of Elizabethtown, 1104 N., Dixie Hwy, Elizabethtown, KY 42701 gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles.
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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC
The City of Elizabethtown will hold a public hearing to receive citizens' comments on the upcoming 2025-26 Community Development Block Grant program year as well as the 2025-30. Consolidated Plan.

Notice is hereby given that the City of Elizabethtown's draft of the 2025-26 CDBG Action Plan and the 2025-30 Consolidated Plan will be available for public review. This plan outlines the proposed uses of the federal funding received from HUD for eligible community development activities which will be used to benefit areas and persons of low to moderate-income. The plan includes information related to: the 2025-26 CDBG Program Year Action Plan including funding (\$208,167) and potential activities; substantial amendment to previous plan to dedicate remaining 2022 CDBG funds for sustainability/property acquisition activities (\$150,000); 5-year strategic plan; performance measures; compliance certifications; and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Report; housing & homeless needs; housing market analysis. These documents will be available for public review on the City of Elizabethtown's webpage (www.eltownky.org) during a thirty-day comment period that will run from June 17 thru July 17, 2025.

The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 17th at 5 PM ET at City Hall, 3rd floor conference room, 200 West Dixie Avenue, Elizabethtown, KY 42701. The meeting is accessible for individuals with disabilities; language interpretation or other accommodations can be provided if needed.

All related public comments, questions, request for meeting accommodations should be submitted to: Melissa Harrell-Nepi, City of Elizabethtown, Department of Planning & Development, PO Box 550, Elizabethtown, KY 42702-0550 or by email at melissa.harrell-nepi@elizabethtownky.gov.

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