



## Deion “Coach Prime” Sanders Named 2023 Sports Illustrated Sportsperson of the Year

November 30, 2023

*Three-Time Sportsperson Honoree LeBron James, Football Hall Of Famer Jerry Rice, And More Pay Tribute To Sanders In Series Of Essays*

*The University Of Colorado Head Football Coach To Be Celebrated In Boulder, Co. at Star-Studded Event On December 6, Alongside Season Two World Premiere Screening of The Prime Video Hit Series “Coach Prime”*

*The Sportsperson Of The Year Issue Is On [Pre-Sale Now](#) And Newsstands December 14*

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 30, 2023-- Today, *Sports Illustrated* (SI) revealed Deion Sanders, the University of Colorado Buffaloes head football coach and Pro Football Hall of Famer, as the [2023 Sportsperson of the Year](#). Sanders’s blend of unparalleled athletic accomplishments and transformative impact on the football program, school, and community of Boulder transcends sports and ripples throughout the culture.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20231130338445/en/>



Photography credit: Jeffery A. Salter/Sports Illustrated (Photo: Business Wire)

previous *Sports Illustrated* cover stories. This time around, SI details how Sanders has brought new life to the Colorado campus and helped transform a community. Among the entourage joining Sanders on this year’s Sportsperson of the Year cover are the University of Colorado Chancellor Philip DiStefano, Athletic Director Rick George, 99-year-old superfan Peggy Coppom, Sanders’s children Deion Jr., Shedeur, Shelomi, and Shilo, longtime manager and SMAC Entertainment Co-founder/CEO Constance Schwartz-Morini, trusted advisors Ray Forsett and Sam Morini, and a crowd of dedicated Buffs fans.

### Other Sportsperson of the Year Issue Features:

Over the past year, “Coach Prime” rebuilt Colorado, turning a team that won one game in 2022 into one of the country’s most popular programs and biggest audience draws. Online team store sales have skyrocketed, and every home game at Folsom Field saw a sold-out crowd for the first time in school history, boasting record-setting viewership. Off the field, the Prime Effect was felt in the Colorado admissions office—first-year, Black, and nonresident applications have all surged at the school—and in the Boulder community, where football success has sparked an economic boom for local businesses.

The strides made in Boulder alone don’t fully explain why Sanders is SI’s 2023 Sportsperson of the Year. According to SI senior writer [Pat Forde](#), his use of the transfer portal, his recruiting prowess and his embrace of NIL opportunities for his players are all changing the paradigm of what it takes to build a national-profile college football program. The Sanders journey is just beginning to remake the college football landscape.

“Deion Sanders dominated the sports conversation in 2023 as a transformative figure not just in Colorado, but for the entire realm of college sports,” said Stephen Cannella, Editor in Chief of *Sports Illustrated*. “On and off the field, he represents a new model for the modern college coach. The Sportsperson of the Year honor, a distinction for some of the most legendary figures in sports over the past seven decades, is now enriched by the addition of Deion to its roster.”

The annual [Sportsperson of the Year Issue](#) goes on sale Thursday, December 14 with pre-sale orders available now. On the evening of Wednesday, December 6, SI will honor Deion “Coach Prime” Sanders with the 2023 Sports Illustrated Sportsperson of the Year Award, alongside the season two world premiere screening of *Coach Prime* on the University of Colorado campus in Boulder. The hit docuseries from SMAC Productions transports fans inside the locker room and onto the field for the 2023 season and premieres on Prime Video on December 7.

### On the Cover

Going back to November 1989, Sanders has headlined six

- **23 for 23:** In the years to come, what will we think about when we think about 2023? SI's 23 people, moments, and trends that made this year a memorable one sparked debate, revolutionized their positions, and stirred GOAT conversations. Simone Biles, Travis Kelce, A'ja Wilson, and even the Eagles' Tush Push are featured and anticipated to shape memories for years to come.
- **Fifi Does It All:** 2023 [SportsKid of the Year](#), Fifi Garcia, isn't content to dominate in just one sport. Softball, soccer, volleyball, or basketball keep her on the move non-stop. In an age in which two-way players like Ohtani have redefined what an athlete can do, Garcia has pushed the boundaries of how good a kid can be at multiple games.

**Also in this issue:**

- **One Hot Mess:** Once again, the year in sports was filled with sublime moments of brilliance—and this stuff, too, from Steve Rushin.
- **A fond farewell** to several luminaries—and SI cover subjects—the sports world said goodbye to in 2023.
- **What A Ride:** Take a look back at Brawn GP with Mark Bechtel as a reminder that Formula One wasn't always as predictable as it is today.
- **Worm Warfare:** All about the secret weapon Rice used during the football season: sideline gummy treats.
- **Train Day:** This issue's "Full Frame" is a flashback to the 2009 Sportsperson of the Year Issue photoshoot with Derek Jeter. SI provides readers with a quick look back to that peaceful day in the Bronx on a Friday morning in November outside of the Yankee Stadium subway stop.
- **Baddest Beats:** As we close out the year, Mark Bechtel provides a snapshot of the "worst beats" in college sports of 2023.

Since the inception of Sports Illustrated in 1954, the SI *Sportsperson of the Year* award has recognized an athlete, coach or team who best represents the spirit and ideals of sportsmanship, character and performance. Recent honorees include Stephen Curry, Tom Brady, Serena Williams, Megan Rapinoe, and LeBron James. Sanders is just the seventh coach to receive the honor, joining legendary leaders Pat Summit, Mike Krzyzewski, Don Shula, Dean Smith, and John Wooden.

For media interested in covering the Dec. 6 event in Boulder, Co., please contact [SI@dkcnews.com](mailto:SI@dkcnews.com).

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