

# STONIE'S SPORTS HANDICAPPING

## GREEKS IN THE NEWS

### **Calathes**

The name Nick Calathes is a common name to Greeks around the world. His grandparents moved to Florida from the island of Lemnos. Twice named



Florida Mr. Basketball while in high school, Calathes proceeded to stay in-state for college and play for the Florida Gators for two seasons in 2008-2009. After two solid seasons in Gainesville, Calathes seemed destined for the NBA, but instead signed with Greek Basket League powerhouse Panathinaikos. In his first year there, he was a key contributor to the Trifylli's Greek League Championship. In the Euroleague's 2011 playoffs, Calathes emerged as a true star and helped lead Panathinaikos to the Euroleague title with a win over Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Calathes then proceeded to win his second straight Greek League title, was an All Greek League First Team and Defensive Team, as well as being named Eurobasket's Most Improved Player of the Year. After spending one season in Russia for VTB United League team Lokomotiv Kuban Krasnodar, where he was named season MVP, Calathes finally returned to the USA, where he signed a one-year contract with the Memphis Grizzlies. A solid 2014 season in Memphis had Calathes ready to take the NBA by storm, but he tested positive for a drug-masking agent named Tamoxifen, though there was no evidence that Calathes ever took performance-enhancing drugs. Leaving a bitter taste in his mouth, Calathes left Memphis and rejoined Panathinaikos in 2015 for three years and \$7 million. He led Panathinaikos to two Greek Cup titles, as well as the Greek League Championship in 2017. Calathes agreed to a contract extension with the Trifylli in 2018; but, last month, he was back in the news after the cancellation of the 2020 season when [he inked a new three-year deal with Spain powerhouse Barcelona.](#)



## Bosgana

If you're not familiar yet with the name Elena Bosgana, you better get used to



it. The 17-year-old basketball prodigy has already been called up to the Greek National Team after averaging 19 points, eight rebounds and four assists in the FIBA U16 Women's European Championship.

Bosgana will spend this season with the National Team before moving to the USA next season as [a top recruit for the Stanford](#)

[Women's Basketball Team](#) and Hall of Fame coach Tara VanDerveer. The poise of the 17-year-old left hander, as well as her versatility, will fit in perfectly in Palo Alto with only the WNBA in her sights.

## Antetokounmpo

Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo is absolutely not one who needs an introduction. The middle son of five boys is a virtual lock to win his second straight MVP this season (-2400 to win), but right now he's more interested in his Milwaukee Bucks Eastern Conference First Round Playoff Series. His brothers, however, are starting to get noticed themselves. Older brother Thanasis is a teammate of Giannis in Milwaukee and, while Thanasis doesn't play a lot, he's getting more and more playing time.

The youngest of the Antetokounmpo brothers, however, is starting to make a name for himself in Europe. Seventeen-year-old Alex just signed a three-year deal with Spanish club UCAM Murcia. Alex turned down multiple offers to play college ball in the USA and instead decided to go professional in





Europe. This makes him eligible to be drafted by the NBA as soon as next summer.

While Alex absolutely has his eyes on joining his two brothers in the association, he's only 17, so even a three-year stretch in Europe would not be the worst thing for his development.

## ***THOUGHTS AND HUNCHES, MAKING MONEY IN BUNCHES, AND SUCKER PUNCHES***

### ***NBA Playoffs***

Speaking of the Antetokounmpo brothers, Giannis and Thanasis' Milwaukee Bucks dropped game one of their First Round Series with the Orlando Magic before bouncing back and taking game two. At press time, the Bucks are 12-point favorites to beat Orlando today and still sit at +333 to win the NBA Finals. The problem the Bucks have is that in the Eastern Conference, Boston (+1200) and defending champion Toronto (+900) both look hungry and ready. One of those two will be gone, though, by the time they meet Milwaukee, if they advance.

The Western Conference Playoffs tipped off with a bang last week, too, as both the Los Angeles favorites.....Lakers (+333) and Clippers (+250).....lost an early game. But while upsets will happen in early round series, there's no reason to believe that the Lakers and Clippers aren't on a collision course to meet in the Western Conference Finals.

## ***Major League Baseball***

As MLB reaches its halfway point in the 2020 shortened season of madness, some things are becoming clear... like how a simple five-game win or loss streak can easily change the fortunes of any team. Over the course of a season, though, the cream generally rises to the top and we need to look no further than the preseason favorites -- New York Yankees (+350) and Los Angeles Dodgers (+380) -- as the clear teams to beat. The Yankees look to have a tougher road in the American League as red-hot teams like Oakland (+1400), Minnesota (+1000), rejuvenated Houston (+1400), Tampa Bay (+1500), and Cleveland (+2000) are all capable of knocking off the Bronx Bombers. The Dodgers' path in the National League may only include the Cubs (+1500), the Braves (+1300), and the defending champion Nationals (+1500), as they all seem to be jockeying for position.

## ***The Curious Political Case of Football***

The NFL season is just weeks away from kicking off, and, while the season is going to go ahead, there are still plenty of questions regarding fans. The defending Super Bowl Champion Chiefs have already said they want up to 30% fans in their 76,000 seat Arrowhead Stadium. Other NFL teams have said absolutely no fans. Either way, the season kicks off September 10th in Kansas City, with or without fans, and the NFL, for the most part, has done a good job of managing the minor outbreaks of positive COVID19 tests.

College Football is a different story altogether, and, while this column is not nearly long enough to discuss the political side behind it all, the facts are that the Pac-12 and Big 10 Conferences have opted out of the season citing player safety concerns. The ACC, SEC, and Big 12 all are planning on going ahead with their seasons, with many choosing to allow 25% fans. With high school football already kicked off in most states and the NFL coming, it's hard to imagine why the Pac-12 and Big 10 won't let their players play. The answer could be as simple as looking at whether the state you live in has a Democrat or Republican Governor. The players and parents of many players are beginning to fight back for their right to play. This is a story that will continue as we move forward, and we will keep you updated and will not get political, regardless of how hard politicians and the media are trying to politicize it. In the meantime, walk slowly and wisely to the ticket window with your wagers and GOODLUCK2YA!

- Stonie

## AUTHOR BIO



Stonie is an Oakland-born, but currently Nashville-swingin' sports nut who may only be half-Greek, but was raised in the Greek Orthodox Church in Oakland. A devout Prince Fan who has attended 78 live shows, ALL of Stonie's posts will be published in purple to honor the Purple Yoda. Fascinated by sports gambling and thrilled that it is finally becoming legal, Stonie breaks down sports and looks to give you an edge on your way to the ticket window.