

Anatomy of the Tampa Bay Times

Not all newspapers use the same jargon, but there is agreement on most terms. On Page 1 you'll find many devices designed to draw in prospective readers. Here's a look at some common elements found on Page 1 of the Tampa Bay Times.

PAGE 1

FLAG

The newspaper's name (also called the nameplate)

HEADLINE

The story's title or summary, in large type above or beside the story

LEAD IMAGE

A large photo, graphic or other design element aimed at grabbing the reader's eye

CUTLINE

Information about a photo or piece of art (also called a caption)

BYLINE

The writer's name, often followed by other credentials

JUMP LINE

A line telling the reader where to find the rest of the story

BLURB

A smaller, secondary headline that helps summarize the story

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A guide to the paper's contents

ISSUE NUMBER

The Times started with Vol. 1 in 1884. This issue is Vol. 142, No. 346

250!
Tampa Bay Times
FLORIDA'S BEST NEWSPAPER | tampabay.com | ***** Sunday, July 5, 2026 | \$3.75

***** TURNING 250 *****

Patriotism views vary in Fla.



Children hand out candy as part of the Gulfport Fourth of July Community Parade and Family Fun Day on Saturday. MORE PHOTOS, 1B-17A.
(Photos by ASHLEY NEYRA / Times)

From pillows to politics to blowing stuff up, Tampa Bay weighs in on the nation's big day.

BY CHRISTOPHER SPATA, CAMILA JOSE GOMEZ AND PAIGE STEVENS
Times Staff Writers

Last year, New Port Richey's Teagan "Pure Joy" McCoy looked up at the American flag mounted to his pickup truck with PVC pipe and felt he wanted to do something.

"I grabbed our colors," he said, "and I just started running." McCoy ran for miles alongside U.S. 19 with his flag flapping above and his destination — literally, and figuratively — unknown. "I felt like I was Forrest Gump, just running, spreading positivity."

When a video of McCoy got attention on social media, he tried to "go bigger" by running with his flag along Bayside Boulevard in Tampa. He kept going, and soon had dozens of people running with him regularly, all carrying flags.

On Sunday, the 22-year-old will celebrate America's 250th birthday by leading "the largest flag run in New York City history," where he expects hundreds of patriots running with him through Central Park. The No. 1 rule for those joining him, as always, is no politics. See AMERICA, 3A



JROTC member Ollie Flounary, 16, stands during the national anthem at the Gulfport event.

He believes they were starved for something.

In your own words
Tampa Bay shares words of liberty.
PAGE 5A

Bombs bursting in air
Check out the Tampa Bay Times' Fourth of July poster page in the e-Newspaper.

Fireworks, heat, hot dogs and politics: America celebrates 250th birthday

BY STEVEN SLOAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The 250th anniversary of American independence is colliding with a country gripped by political polarization and a heat wave bearing down on millions of people across multiple states as celebrations got underway Saturday throughout the United States.

The signing of the Declaration of Independence, one of history's most celebrated articulations of democratic ambitions, is being marked in myriad ways.

President Donald Trump planned to speak on the National Mall before what was being billed as a historically enormous fireworks show that would rain down on millions of people across the U.S. as the chiseled images of four of his most prominent predecessors loomed behind him.

Fireworks were scheduled to be set off See CELEBRATION, 2A

His 11.99 GPA may have been a record. It might never happen again

But he says there are more important things in life. Increasingly, schools and colleges seem to agree.

BY DIVYA KUMAR
Times Staff Writer

When Vaibhav Bhaskar was in fifth grade, his teacher asked the class to come up with alliterations to put on their name tags: *Brilliant Bob, Kind Karley*.

Bhaskar, 17, remembered being stuck. His teacher told him to go with Valetictorian Vaibhav.

He remembered writing the words down.

"It was so big on my name tag, but I didn't even know what it meant," he said. "It's really easy to start chasing something before you even know what it actually means, right?"

So began a quest that landed this year's Steinbrenner High School valedictorian an 11.99 grade point average, believed to be the highest in school history, and likely a district and state record. See GPA, 11A

Thunderstorms likely
8 a.m. Noon 4 p.m. 8 p.m.
83° 86° 91° 86°
90% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

Correction
Police found a 9mm Taurus near Silas Sampson's Toyota Camry after he crashed in Ybor City last November. A story on the front page of the June 29 edition misstated where the gun was found.

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Inside the newspaper, the graphic elements become more subdued, less decorative. They're there to inform and guide readers, not sell papers.

Here are some typical elements used on inside pages:

HEADER

A label used for packaging stories or features with a common theme

SPORTS

tampabay.com/sports/

*** Wednesday, July 8, 2026 | 1C

FOLIO

Includes the page number, date and the newspaper's website

PHOTO CREDIT

A line giving the photographer's name and/or wire service the photo came from

BLURB

A smaller, secondary headline that helps summarize the story

GUTTER

The white space vertically dividing elements on a page

TEXT

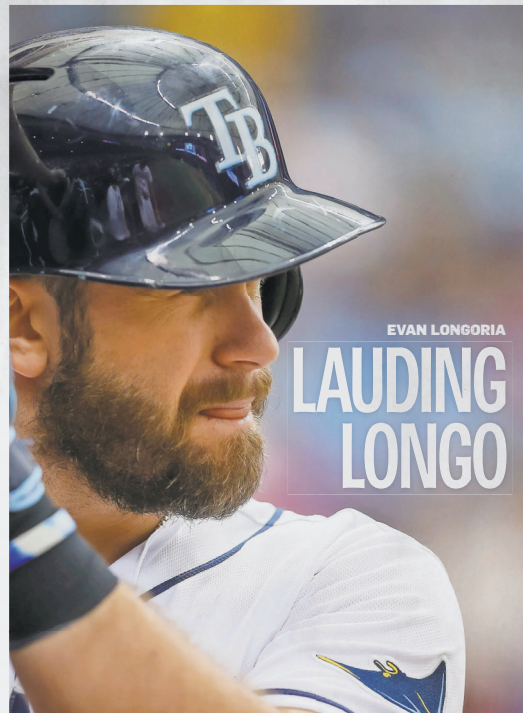
Type in a standard size and font (the Times uses 9.5-point Miller type), set in five columns (or legs)

CUTOFF RULE

A line used to separate elements on a page

HEADSHOT

A small photograph (usually just the face) of someone in the story



Evan Longoria will be inducted into the Rays Hall of Fame on Saturday and have his No. 3 retired on Sunday. (Times, 2007)

As Evan Longoria reflects on what made him a Rays icon ahead of his team Hall of Fame weekend, former colleagues lavish him with praise as a player and person.

BY MARC TOPKIN
Times Staff Writer

Tonight

vs. Yankees, 6:40, Tropicana Field
Streaming: Rays.TV (see mybaseball.com/watch for more options) Radio: 95.7FM, 620-AM

Evan Longoria returns to Tropicana Field this weekend as the guest of tremendous honor, being inducted into the team Hall of Fame on Saturday, followed by the larger achievement of having his No. 3 retired on Sunday.

There will be much recounting of his many accomplishments over 10 seasons with the Rays, accomplishments that made him the greatest player in franchise history.

The Game 162 homer in 2011. His 2008 rookie-year playoff run. Three All-Star selections. Three Gold Gloves, a Silver Slugger and a Rookie of the Year award. Six top-20 finishes in the American League MVP voting.

How did he get here? What made him great? Ask Longoria, 40 and three seasons into retirement, and he says it was a determined effort to prove himself. Longoria went from being an undersized high schooler in Southern California who wasn't among the 1,480 players drafted in 2003

See RAYS, 4C



Julien BriseBois has never been shy about making bold moves, but he has taken a more measured approach this offseason. (JAMES ORLANDO/TIMES)

Lightning moves make sense

GM Julien BriseBois has balanced needs for the long term with the win-now demands.



JOHN ROMANO
Columnist

Two years ago, the Lightning had an obvious 5-on-5 issue that needed fixing. The year after that, they had a noticeable shortage of spunk that needed addressing.

So, tell me, what was the Lightning's biggest problem going into this offseason?

The power play? A lack of speed? A dearth of faceoff wins? Personally, I think it was perception.

You see, there is a tendency to look at four consecutive flops in the playoffs' first round as one continuous story of disappointment. As if the Lightning have been standing still for four years while the rest of the NHL has passed them by.

In reality, the 2025-26 Lightning may have been the best team Tampa Bay has put on the ice since the 2020-21 Stanley Cup champions. And yes, that includes the 2023-24 team that lost to Colorado in the Stanley Cup Final.

That's why it was so fascinating to watch the offseason unfold the past couple of weeks. The Lightning chased Columbus defenseman Zach Werenski in a trade who wouldn't want the reigning Norris Trophy winner — but ultimately settled on something different that will make the 2026-27 team look a lot like last year's.

And trust me, that ain't a bad thing. The 2025-26 Lightning were fourth in the league in goals scored and third in goals allowed. They had a .546 points percentage that matched the 2004 team that won the Stanley Cup and was

See ROMANO, 5C

MLB DRAFT

In Rays' view, 'a lot of different options'

They pick second in the first round. But they're looking at the higher-talent picture.

BY MARC TOPKIN
Times Staff Writer

Rays scouting director Chuck Ricci has known White Sox counterpart Mike Shirley for a while and enjoys his company. It's just that over the past few months, they have spent an extraordinary amount of time together.

That's because the Sox hold the No. 1 pick in the MLB draft that starts Saturday, and the Rays — thanks to some draft-lottery luck — pick second.

The general industry consensus is that three players have separated themselves at the top of the class — UCLA shortstop Roch Cholowsky, Texas prep shortstop Grady Emerson and Georgia Tech

catcher Yahn Lackey — and from a slightly larger second tier. "Let's just put it this way. I've been at a lot of games with Mike Shirley throughout the spring," Ricci said Monday night. "We've known each other for a long time, and I think the relationship has even grown this year."

The Rays' decision on who to pick second — with a \$10,027,000 slot value — will depend on what the White Sox do ahead of them. And, Ricci said, they figure to get a heads-up before the start of the draft Saturday afternoon.

But there is also no guarantee that the Rays' decision will be limited to one of the two the Sox don't take. They could have someone else ranked higher or could see a benefit in taking a lesser-ranked player who would agree to a



UCLA shortstop Roch Cholowsky is considered one of the top three players available in the draft. (AP, 2024)

smaller bonus and use that saved money on lower-round picks who would seek high bonuses. They have an overall draft pool of \$19,009,300.

"You don't want to ignore the obvious, but you also don't want to shortchange anyone else," Ricci said. "We've cast a wide net the entire time. Obviously, it's coming

MLB draft

Rounds 1-4, 12 p.m. Saturday; Rounds 5-20, 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Philadelphia

TV/streaming Saturday HBO/Peacock (12:30 p.m.), MLB Network, mlb.com, MLB TV, MLB+ (2:30-4:30); mlb.com, MLB TV, MLB+ (4:30-7:45). Sunday mlb.com, MLB TV, MLB+ (11:30 a.m.-7:30).

Rays' first-day picks: Round 1 (No. 2), Competitive Balance Round A (33), Round 2 (49), Round 3 (85), Round 4 (115)

down to the wire, but we still have a good amount of names we're working through, and there's a lot of different options. You never want to lock on to any one player too soon."

The Rays have 21 picks overall, with five Saturday, including a competitive-balance pick (No. 33) they got from the Orioles in the Shane Bieber trade. Their other first-day picks are Nos. 49, 85 and 113. See DRAFT, 5C