

# ESPN The Magazine: The Final Masthead

What's your favorite *Mag* story ever? That's the excruciatingly hard question we put to our staff. Their answers ...

**1** "How They Do in Oxford," an essay by Kiese Laymon (Oct. 26, 2015) on Ole Miss football and the stains of the Confederacy, gives me chills every time I reread it, for how daringly it embraces uncomfortable truths about racial injustice.

**2** "Ode to the Girl on a Wheel," by Nikky Finney (Oct. 31, 2016). Look, we printed a freaking poem, a testament to the ways we experimented with storytelling. This line still rattles in my head: "... the lanky girls, who uncrossed their legs, who rode by emancipated on their wheels ..."



**3** "The Mismatch," Tom Friend's Tommy Morrison story from our first issue (March 23, 1998), because it served notice both to *Sports Illustrated* that they had competition, and to young writers (like me) that there was a home for the ambitious stories we dreamed of writing.



**4** The reporting in "The Enablers of Larry Nassar," by John Barr and Dan Murphy (Feb. 5, 2018), revealed to the world secrets that too many were hiding. Commissioning illustration for sensitive topics is always tough, but Mark Smith gave me his best here. I was proud to work on this one.

**5** Dan Le Batard's cover profile of Kimbo Slice (June 2, 2008), who, if you were to believe the internet, was a terrifying backyard brawler, but in reality was a man simply fighting to bring himself up out of homelessness and grow as a human being.

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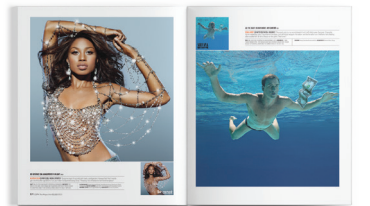
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**6** Steve Wulf's essay following 9/11 [Oct. 1, 2001] is still the most moving piece we have done. His words reminded us that heroes had always been among us and that with time we could, and had to, move forward.



**7** I loved the photo feature in which we asked athletes to re-create classic album covers (Feb. 18, 2013). I had just started my career here, and it was incredibly exciting to be working on such a smart concept.

**8** "Blaze of Glory," by David Fleming (Sept. 30, 2013). The Packers were saved from ruin by the insurance money collected after their training facility burned down in 1950. Aaaaand ... they might have torched it themselves. One part whodunit, one part history lesson, Flem examined the NFL's present through a little-known event in its past.

**9** "Revis, Party of One," Mina Kimes' Darrelle Revis profile (Aug. 31, 2015). Revis was always an intriguing player to me as a Jets fan, and I felt like Mina's story gave me far more insight into him as a person.



**10** "The Secret History of Tiger Woods," by Wright Thompson (May 9, 2016). Tiger's real-life saga is better than any scripted sports drama ever. Right when we were thinking "what's next," Wright unearthed something special from the past that blew all of us readers away.