

# SEO best practices for Tentpole Events

Indy 500, Cicadas and Softball,  
Baseball College World Series

**Presented by**

DOT Leadership

**GANNETT**

# Tentpoles

Tentpoles are **major events** that represent **right-to-win opportunities** for newsrooms.

To **earn authority and search rank** on the topic, extensive **planning and collaboration is necessary** in advance to identify top keywords and audience questions. We can anticipate how to answer these queries with content, earning big wins as interest in each question peaks.

## Tactics for tentpoles:

- Searchlight Conductor keyword research
- Provide guidance on target top keywords and use in headlines strategically
- Publish early and often in the lead-up, during and after the event



# Indy 500

**The goal:** To be No. 1 in search results for Indy 500 coverage on race day.

**The site:** Indianapolis

**Top keywords from searchlight:** “Indy 500” (**110,000 monthly search volume**)

**Headline:** [Indy 500 live updates: Helio Castroneves holds off Alex Palou for historic fourth win](#)

**Pageviews:** 422,000

**Search percentage:** 90%

**Subscriptions:** 19

INDY 500

## Indy 500 live updates: Helio Castroneves holds off Alex Palou for historic fourth win

Scott Horner and Matthew Glenesk Indianapolis Star

Published 6:45 a.m. ET May 30, 2021 | Updated 3:51 p.m. ET May 30, 2021

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-  [Indy 500 live updates: Helio Castroneves holds off Alex Palou for historic fourth win](#)   
May 30 Scott Horner +1 sports  8.6%  GOOGLE 90.7%
-  [Indy 500 final running order: How each driver finished in 2021 race](#)   
May 30 Rob Peeters sports  10.6%  GOOGLE 86.5%
-  [Print out or save this guide to the Indy 500 starting lineup](#)   
May 27 IndyStar Sports sports  18.3%  GOOGLE 61.7%
-  ['Driving me insane!': Race fans frustrated with TV commercials during Indy 500](#)   
May 30 Rashika Jaipuria entertainment  8.1%  GOOGLE 51.7%
-  [Scott Dixon is the Indy 500 pole position winner. Here's the full starting lineup for 2021](#)   
May 23 Scott Horner sports  13.9%  GOOGLE 52.2%

# Indy 500

**Midwest DOT** and **IndyStar** journalists were all equipped with extensive keyword research using both **Google Trends** and **Searchlight Conductor**.

SEO best practices were clearly detailed and easy to follow.

This aligned both the DOT and newsroom to aggressively target the strongest possible keywords to **show authority** and **earn search rank**.

Since early April, the Indy Star drove more than **550 new digital subscriptions** linked to Indy 500 content and more than **2.5 million article views**.

## Monthly Keyword Search Volume

indy 500	110k
indianapolis 500	27K
indycar	74k
ims	40.5K

## INDY 500 OPTIMIZATION CHECKLIST

Link to digital content budget: <https://bit.ly/3oyWj5s>

### PAGE TITLE

Avoid front loading every page title with the same keywords, as that makes all stories look too similar to readers. Instead, [practice keyword diversity](#) across Indy 500 coverage, making sure each story showcases its unique value near the front of the page title. You can incorporate more broad SEO keywords in the latter part of page titles.

**BEST:** If there is a breakout term on Google Trends, try to frontload with that keyword and include the phrase Indy 500 in a latter part of the headline/page title. Aim to keep the headline in a complete sentence whenever possible, and rarely use the **Keyword: Headline** format.

**Examples of targeting sub-topics by incorporating breakout keywords into the page title:**

[Indy 500 tickets](#) are still available

[Scott Dixon](#): What to know about Indy 500 driver

**Examples of setting your story apart from similar stories by targeting specific questions:**

Where do I park at Indianapolis Motor Speedway [for Indy 500](#)?

What channel is Indy 500 on?

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** We want to reserve the page title that frontloads/targets the main keyword term (Indy 500) for our live blog. All other content should target sub-topic keywords or trending searches.

# Cicadas

**The goal:** Answer key questions around a rare phenomenon with how it impacts me and my neighborhood.

**The site:** Cincinnati

**Top keywords from searchlight:** Cicada (**550K monthly search volume**), Cicadas 2021 (**33K**), Brood X (**18K**)

**Top Headline:** [Brood X: What is the life cycle of the cicadas and how long will they be around](#)

**Pageviews:** 101,000

**Search percentage:** 81%

**Subscriptions:** 3

## Brood X: What is the life cycle of the cicadas and how long will they be around

**Sarah Brookbank** Cincinnati Enquirer

Published 10:18 p.m. ET May 18, 2021 | Updated 9:57 a.m. ET Jun. 8, 2021

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# Cincinnati covered wide variety of trending questions

## Cicada Brood X is coming in 2021. What does that mean for Greater Cincinnati?

**Sarah Brookbank** Cincinnati Enquirer  
Published 9:41 p.m. ET Jan. 27, 2021

**Question: *How does this impact me?***  
**Results: 36,700 page views**  
**Search: 78%**

## Now that the Brood X cicadas have emerged, when will they be gone? Here's their life cycle

**Sarah Brookbank** Cincinnati Enquirer  
Published 7:18 a.m. ET May 24, 2021 | Updated 9:21 a.m. ET May 24, 2021

**Question: *When will it end?***  
**Results: 30,000 page views**  
**Search: 58%**

## Could those holes in your yard be Brood X cicada mounds? Here's what to look for

**Sarah Brookbank** Cincinnati Enquirer  
Published 9:50 p.m. ET Apr. 19, 2021 | Updated 9:29 a.m. ET Apr. 20, 2021

**Question: *What am I looking at?***  
**Results: 38,600 page views**  
**Search: 48%**

# IndyStar also answered key Cicada questions early and often

**Your trees may be at risk from the tens of millions of cicadas. Here's how to protect them.**

**Sarah Bowman** Indianapolis Star

Published 6:08 a.m. ET Apr. 14, 2021 | Updated 8:01 a.m. ET Apr. 26, 2021

**Question: *How do I prepare?***  
**Results: 39,600 page views**  
**Search: 69%**

**No, they won't bite: Debunking 8 common myths about cicadas and the incoming Brood X**

**London Gibson** Indianapolis Star

Published 6:02 a.m. ET Apr. 13, 2021 | Updated 8:03 a.m. ET Apr. 13, 2021

**Question: *What are they, what do they do?***  
**Results: 14,900 page views**  
**Search: 47%**

**How long is cicada season? And what happens to them? Here are some answers.**

**Scott Horner** Indianapolis Star

Published 8:52 p.m. ET Jun. 8, 2021 | Updated 5:02 p.m. ET Jun. 9, 2021

**Question: *How long will it last?***  
**Results: 9,500 page views**  
**Search: 85%**

# Results pages when we answer the right questions

brood x cicadas cincinnati



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About 441,000 results (0.49 seconds)

## Cicadas are here in Cincinnati.

The 17-year **Brood X cicadas** are coming out of the ground and out of their shells. They can't fly until they turn their final color, black and gold, and harden. Photographed May 24, 2021 in Blue Ash. A **cicada** attaches itself to a blade of grass in Forest Park Monday, May 24, 2021. May 24, 2021

<https://www.cincinnati.com/news/2021/05/19/cicada...>

## Cicadas 2021: Brood X emerges in Cincinnati. See our photos

About featured snippets Feedback

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2021/05/20>

## Brood X cicadas have emerged in Cincinnati; what to expect

May 20, 2021 — **Brood X cicadas** have emerged in **Cincinnati**; what to expect ... After months of waiting and a delay due to unseasonably cold temperatures, the ...

cicadas



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About 31,600,000 results (0.98 seconds)

## Top stories



NJ.com

2021 cicadas still making lots of noise in some N.J. towns as the invasion peaks

4 hours ago



IndyStar.

Is your dog snacking on cicadas? Here's how to keep them safe until the insects disappear

5 hours ago



AP AP News

Cicadas foil timely takeoff of press plane for Biden UK trip

2 hours ago

cicadas



## Top stories



IndyStar.

Why there may not be many cicadas in Hamilton County

6 hours ago



Detroit Free Press

Brood X cicadas have begun emerging in Michigan. But the big show is yet to come.

4 hours ago



CUT

Bad News: Cicadas Pee a Lot

1 hour ago



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# NCAA postseason: Arkansas baseball run

**The goal:** To be the source for the latest news on Arkansas baseball's postseason run.

**The sites:** Fort Smith

**Top keywords from searchlight:**

Arkansas baseball (**40K monthly search volume**),  
NCAA Tournament (**673K**)

**Headline:** [Arkansas baseball advances to regional championship with win over Nebraska](#)

**Pageviews:** 102,337

**Search percentage:** 91%

**Subscriptions:** 2

-  Arkansas baseball advances to regional championship with win over Nebraska [↗](#)  
Jun 05 Francisco Rosa sports  4.6%  GOOGLE 91.2%
-  How to watch Arkansas Razorbacks vs. Nebraska baseball on live stream in NCAA Tournament [↗](#)  
Jun 04 Erik Hall sports  6.0%  GOOGLE 73.9%
-  How to watch Arkansas vs. Nebraska baseball on TV, live stream in Sunday's regional final [↗](#)  
Jun 05 Erik Hall sports  8.3%  GOOGLE 86.6%
-  Arkansas advances to super regionals behind huge performance by Kevin Kopps [↗](#)  
Jun 07 Francisco Rosa sports  6.1%  GOOGLE 94.5%
-  Arkansas baseball overcomes 3-0 deficit to beat NJIT in Fayetteville Regional opener [↗](#)  
Jun 04 Francisco Rosa sports  4.8%  GOOGLE 90.4%
-  How to watch: Arkansas baseball vs. New Jersey Institute of Technology in NCAA tournament [↗](#)  
Jun 04 Fort Smith Times Record sports  9.5%  GOOGLE 91.1%
-  Arkansas Razorbacks vs. Nebraska Cornhuskers baseball video highlights, score in regionals [↗](#)  
Jun 05 Erik Hall sports  3.7%  GOOGLE 68.9%

**Top 7 stories: 355,317 page views**

# NCAA postseason: FSU softball's 'miracle' run

**The goal:** Connect loyal audiences with the information they need to join in the moment.

**The site:** Tallahassee

## Top keywords from searchlight:

FSU (**110K monthly search volume**), NCAA Tournament (**673K**)

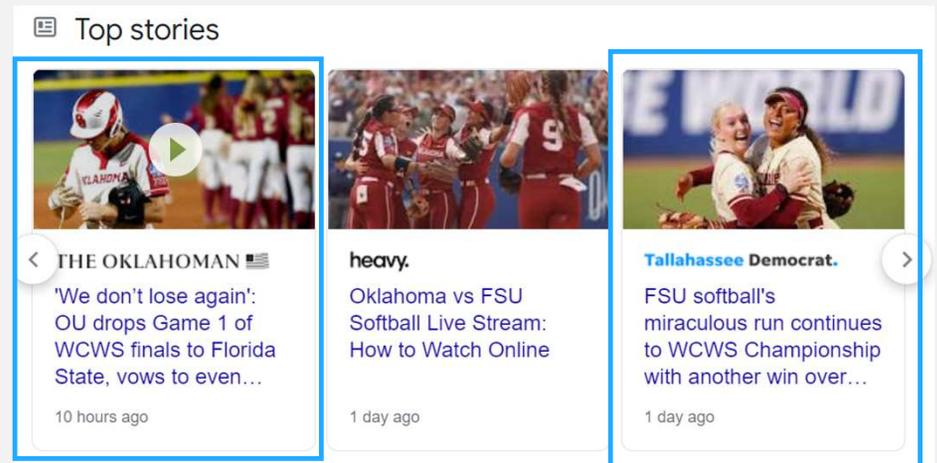
**Headline:** [How to watch Florida State softball vs. Oklahoma in Women's College World Series on TV, live stream](#)

**Pageviews:** 37,700

**Search percentage:** 81%

**Subscriptions:** 6

Top stories



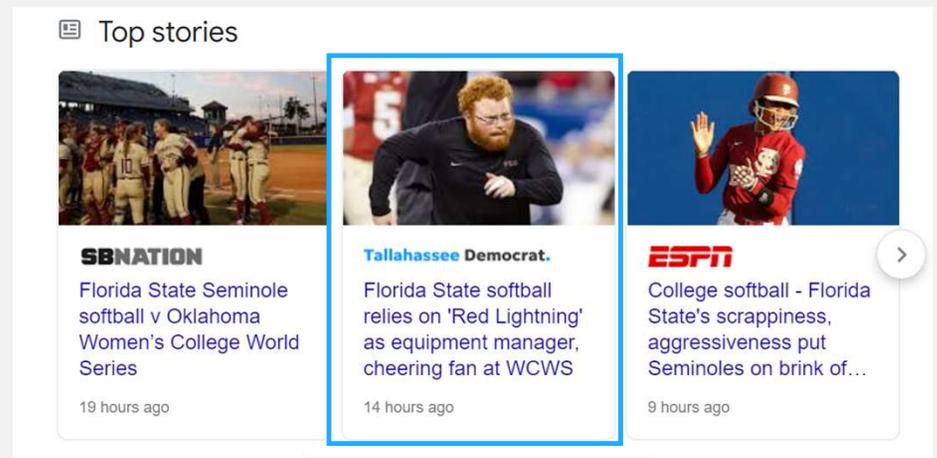
The screenshot shows a news feed titled "Top stories" with three items. The first item is from "THE OKLAHOMAN" with a play button icon, titled "'We don't lose again': OU drops Game 1 of WCWS finals to Florida State, vows to even..." and posted "10 hours ago". The second item is from "heavy." titled "Oklahoma vs FSU Softball Live Stream: How to Watch Online" and posted "1 day ago". The third item is from "Tallahassee Democrat." titled "FSU softball's miraculous run continues to WCWS Championship with another win over..." and posted "1 day ago".

THE OKLAHOMAN  
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How to Watch Online  
1 day ago

Tallahassee Democrat.  
FSU softball's  
miraculous run continues  
to WCWS Championship  
with another win over...  
1 day ago

Top stories



The screenshot shows a news feed titled "Top stories" with three items. The first item is from "SBNATION" titled "Florida State Seminole softball v Oklahoma Women's College World Series" and posted "19 hours ago". The second item is from "Tallahassee Democrat." titled "Florida State softball relies on 'Red Lightning' as equipment manager, cheering fan at WCWS" and posted "14 hours ago". The third item is from "ESPN" titled "College softball - Florida State's scrappiness, aggressiveness put Seminoles on brink of..." and posted "9 hours ago".

SBNATION  
Florida State Seminole  
softball v Oklahoma  
Women's College World  
Series  
19 hours ago

Tallahassee Democrat.  
Florida State softball  
relies on 'Red Lightning'  
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cheering fan at WCWS  
14 hours ago

ESPN  
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State's scrappiness,  
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Seminoles on brink of...  
9 hours ago

# NCAA postseason: Alabama softball run

**The goal:** Connect loyal audiences with the information they need to join in the moment.

**The site:** Tuscaloosa

**Top keywords from searchlight:**

Alabama softball (**14.8K monthly search volume**), College World Series (**4.4K monthly search volume**), World Series (**450K monthly search volume**), NCAA Tournament (**673K**)

**Top Headline:**

[2021 NCAA Women's College World Series softball tournament bracket, schedule, game times](#)

**Pageviews:** 56,709

**Search percentage:** 74%

## 2021 NCAA Women's College World Series softball tournament bracket, schedule, game times

**Erik Hall** The Tuscaloosa News

Published 11:47 a.m. CT Jun. 1, 2021 | Updated 8:17 p.m. CT Jun. 6, 2021

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40 Photos

[VIEW FULL GALLERY](#)

**Top 10 stories for June on Tuscaloosaneews.com are Alabama softball. They combined for 281,000 page views and all but one earned more than 70 percent from search.**

**Thank you.**

**GANNETT**