

Fundamental Victory

Stocks snapped their three-week losing streak on several strong earnings reports. For the week, the S&P 500 Index was +2.7%, the Dow was +0.7%, and the NASDAQ was +4.0%. Within the S&P 500 Index, the Technology, Consumer Discretionary, and Industrial sectors led the advance, while the Materials, Health Care, and Communication Services sectors trailed. The 10-year U.S. Treasury note yield increased to 4.668% at Friday's close versus 4.614% the previous week.

Equity fundamentals were victorious over economic news for the week. The March Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index was +0.3% month-over-month and 2.7% higher year-over-year. Core prices, which exclude food and energy, were +0.3% month-to-month and +2.8% year-over-year. This was slightly more inflationary than expectations. The advance reading on first quarter Gross Domestic Product showed a 1.6% annual growth rate. This was below expectations of 2.4% and a deceleration from 3.4% growth in the fourth quarter of 2023.

There are two significant economic events for this week, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) rate decision on Wednesday and the April Employment Report scheduled for Friday. CME Fed Funds futures are predicting no change in monetary policy at the FOMC meeting. The current probability for an initial rate cut is in September.

We are at the midpoint of the first quarter earnings season with 46% of companies in the S&P 500 Index having reported. For the coming week, an additional 175 in the S&P 500 Index are scheduled to report earnings. The current first quarter consensus forecast for the S&P 500 Index is 3.5% earnings growth with revenue growth of 4.0%. Full-year 2024 earnings for the S&P 500 Index are expected to grow by 10.8% with revenue growth of 4.9%.

In our *Dissecting Headlines* section, we look at the CME Fed Funds futures.

Financial Market Update

	<u>Weekly Return</u>	<u>YTD Return</u>		<u>Weekly Return</u>	<u>YTD Return</u>
S&P 500 Index	2.7%	7.4%	Aggregate Bond Index	-0.1%	-2.7%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	0.7%	2.0%	U.S. Dollar Index	-0.2%	4.5%
NASDAQ 100	4.0%	5.6%	WTI Crude Oil	0.9%	17.0%
Russell 2000 (Small Cap Index)	2.8%	-0.8%	Gold	-2.2%	13.2%
International Stocks (MSCI ex-US)	2.4%	2.8%	Real Estate (US REIT Index)	1.3%	-6.8%

Sources: S&P Global, FactSet

Dissecting Headlines: Fed Funds Futures

Fed Funds futures are financial contracts tied to the direction of short-term interest rates. Since these are contracts where market participants have money at risk, they better represent the insight of market participants than the opinions of economists or analysts. The most widely quoted contracts are traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the CME's collective value of contracts can help measure current probabilities for changes in the Federal Reserve's monetary policy as it pertains to the Fed Funds target rate.

Current probabilities, as collected by the CME's FedWatch Tool, predict no change in short-term interest rates by the FOMC at its meeting this week. The current probabilities are 97.1% that no change in interest rates occur and 2.9% that rates could ease by 0.25% at the meeting. Since the interest rate contracts and probabilities are based on trading from market participants, they can change dynamically as new information becomes known. Significant changes to Fed Funds futures for forward months could happen based on the FOMC's meeting statement this week. Further changes could occur as additional economic data, such as Friday's Employment Situation Report for April, is released.

Current probabilities for an initial easing in the Fed Funds rate for June is 11.5%, for July it is 31.6%, and for September it is 61.7%. This is why we refer to September as the meeting with the current probability for an initial interest rate cut. The current probability that the Fed Funds rate could be 0.50% lower by December is 44.8%.

Watching Fed Funds futures can provide real-time insight into the market's outlook for direction of short-term interest rates.

The NovaPoint Team



Joseph Sroka, CFA, CMT / Chief Investment Officer / jsroka@novapointgroup.com

Joe has over 20 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to founding NovaPoint, he was a portfolio manager at Spectrum Advisory Services and GMT Capital in Atlanta, and Epoch Investment Partners in New York. He has also worked as an equity research analyst at Merrill Lynch and ABN Amro. Before beginning his investment career, Joe was an Infantry officer in the U.S. Army. Joe holds a BS from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He is both a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and a Chartered Market Technician (CMT).



Alan J. Conner / President and Chief Compliance Officer / aconner@novapointgroup.com

Alan has over 20 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to founding NovaPoint, he was a fixed income manager at both Spectrum Advisory Services and a private family office. Alan was also with the Bank Group division of Countrywide Capital Markets where he developed balance sheet strategies for depository institutions. He holds a BS in Banking and an MBA in Finance from Nova Southeastern University. Alan is an endurance athlete and three-time IRONMAN finisher.



Frederick Wright, CFA / Managing Director & Portfolio Manager / fwright@novapointgroup.com

Frederick has over 30 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to joining NovaPoint, Frederick was a Partner and Investment Advisor at Brightworth where he advised high net worth investors. Frederick began his investment career in 1991 at Balentine & Co where he rose to Partner. He also co-founded and served as Chief Investment Officer at Wright Investment Management and at Smith & Howard Wealth Management. Prior to beginning his investment career, Frederick served as an Engineer officer in the U.S. Army. He holds a BS from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from Emory University. Frederick is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).



Larry Dixon, EA / Tax Managing Partner / ldixon@novapointgroup.com

Larry leads NovaPoint's accounting, tax and outsourced CFO business. He built his previous company, Atlas Solutions, as a solo entrepreneur before merging into NovaPoint CFO. Larry began his career as a Field Artillery officer in the United States Army. Larry earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he was a four-year letterman on the football team. Larry is a certified Enrolled Agent, recognized by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service.



Steven Chrysosferidis / Vice President / schrysosferidis@novapointgroup.com

Steven is a Vice President at NovaPoint. Prior to joining NovaPoint, Steven's financial experience includes corporate finance at The Home Depot, contributing on Seeking Alpha, and leading investments in real estate projects. Prior to starting his business career, he served in the U.S. Army as a Special Forces Medic with 1st Special Forces Group. Steven is currently attending the Georgia Institute of Technology, Scheller College of Business for his MBA. He also has a Master of Science in Finance degree from Auburn University and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree from Georgia Southern University. He is currently a member of a local Special Forces Association Chapter.

NovaPoint Capital LLC (referred to herein as "NovaPoint" or "the Company") is registered with the SEC as an investment adviser, but registration does not imply any certain level of skill or training. The information contained in this document has not been filed with, reviewed by or approved by any regulatory or self-regulatory authority.

Not an offer of advisory services or securities: This document is limited to the dissemination of general information about the services provided by the Company and is provided for informational purposes only. This document is intended for residents of the United States only and the information contained herein does not constitute and should not be construed as an offering of advisory services or an offer to sell or solicitation to buy any securities or other financial instruments in any jurisdiction in which such offer or solicitation, purchase or sale would be unlawful under the securities, or other applicable laws of such jurisdiction. Nothing contained in this document constitutes tax, legal or investment advice. Responses to any inquiry which may involve the rendering of personalized investment advice for compensation or effecting or attempting to effect transactions in securities will not be made absent compliance with state broker-dealer, investment adviser, broker-dealer agent or investment adviser representative registration requirements, or applicable exemptions or exclusions from such requirements.

Investment risk: The Company makes no representation, and it should not be assumed, that past investment performance is any indication of future results. Moreover, wherever there is the potential for profit there also is the possibility of loss. Certain of the Company's strategies may involve investments that are illiquid, are subject to a substantial risk of loss and are not suitable for certain investors.

Limitation of liability: While the Company uses reasonable efforts to include accurate and up-to-date information in this document, errors or omissions sometimes occur. The Company makes no warranties or representations as to the accuracy of this document. Opinions expressed herein are subject to change without notice. Under no circumstances shall the Company or any party involved in creating, producing, or delivering this document be liable for any direct, incidental, consequential, indirect, or punitive damages that result from the use of the information contained in this document, even if the Company's authorized representative has been advised of the possibility of such damages. Applicable law may not allow the limitation or exclusion of liability or incidental or consequential damages, so the above limitation or exclusion may not apply to you.

Trademarks and copyrights: All trademarks, service marks, trade names, logos, and icons are proprietary to the Company. Nothing contained in this document should be construed as granting, by implication, estoppel, or otherwise, any license or right to use any trademark displayed in this document without the prior written permission of the Company or such third party that may own the trademarks displayed in this document. Your use of the trademarks displayed in this document, or any other content in this document, except as provided herein, is strictly prohibited.