



## UConn team takes first place in national food marketing competition

by Jenna Outcalt  
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A team of three students from the University of Connecticut placed first in a food marketing competition that took place in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 12.

The team consisted of John Daly, Jacob Timchak and William Hiers III, three students from the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. It was put together by assistant professor Cristina Connolly, who previously worked with teams for this competition at California Polytechnic State University.

Hiers, a senior environmental economics major, said it took some time for the team to coordinate and work cohesively, but they soon became “a really complementary team.”

The Food Distribution Research Society, who held the competition, sent each team a real food marketing problem to consider, and each team had to submit a 10-minute video proposing a solution to that problem. The top three teams were

then invited to the Food Distribution Research Society conference to present their solutions in person and answer questions from the judges.

The team from UConn was assigned to create a solution for a company from Uzbekistan, Metin LLC, looking to expand their international market beyond Russia. Their solution will be sent to Metin LLC for their consideration.

Hiers said they analyzed different markets and products to “filter out what the best markets and the best products were for them.” The team ultimately proposed a plan recommending that the company sell dried fruits to the United Kingdom and fresh fruits to China.

Hiers said that one of the team’s advantages was the variety of strengths among the three members.

“We had different ages, we had different interests, sort of different backgrounds, definitely different majors, so it was a lot of that diversity that was able to pull us together,” Hiers said.

According to Hiers, the team’s diverse skills and interests gave them an advantage in the com-

petition, such as Timchak’s skills in videography.

“Even though that’s not his major, he was great at directing us, directing the camera, you know, making sure the video presentation was really polished,” Hiers said. “John is very technical and very analysis-oriented and then I obviously am the people person because I just love to talk.”

Hiers also said that he believed their success could partially be attributed to the way that they analyzed the big picture of their problem instead of focusing on specifics.

“We were doing analyses that other groups hadn’t even thought of, and then when we got that feedback, we sort of doubled down and said, ‘OK, how much more in-depth can we do this?’” Hiers said.

According to Hiers, the team had a month to prepare their in-person presentation after their video was selected as one of the finalists. Hiers also said that the team was under the assumption that the presentation would also

be 10 minutes long until two weeks prior to the conference, when they found out that they would have to fill 20 minutes.

“About two weeks into it, we were ready to go with our 10-minute presentation when we got some documentation that said we had 20 minutes, plus a 10-minute Q&A,” Hiers recalled.

Hiers said that the presentation was in a more intimate setting than they expected, with only the team, their advisor and the three judges present. He also said that the judges seemed critical during the Q&A session.

“I definitely would have to say we were in a bit of shock when we found out we won,” Hiers said. “It did not seem like the judges were really leaning our way.”

In addition to their solution being sent to Metin LLC, the team received a plaque and a \$1,000 cash prize to split between the three of them.

“What we did was work really, really, really hard, and do a good job, and thankfully we came away with a prize for it,” Hiers said.

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WILLIAM HIERS



John Daly, William Hiers III and Jacob Timchak holding their first place plaque at the food marketing competition in Washington D.C. on Nov. 12, 2023. The trio also received a \$1,000 cash prize in addition to having their solution sent to Metin LLC.

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## News

# UCONN TAKES STATUS AS REIGNING NCAA CHAMP, NO. 1 IN AP TOP 25 INTO TOUGH WEEK OF BIG EAST PLAY

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A week full of upsets helped reigning national champion Connecticut push to its first No. 1 ranking in The Associated Press men's college basketball poll since 2009.

The Huskies' first week at the top won't be easy, either.

UConn hosts No. 18 Creighton on Wednesday to headline the week's AP Top 25 national schedule, then visits Villanova — which has wins against currently ranked teams North Carolina, Texas Tech and Creighton — on Saturday.

UConn (15-2) has won five straight since falling at Seton Hall, a game that saw 7-foot-2 sophomore Donovan Clingan go down to a foot injury. Coach Dan Hurley said after Sunday's win over Georgetown that Clingan is getting close to a return, saying he's not fighting symptoms from multiple days of workouts.

Clingan is averaging 13.9 points, 6.3 rebounds and 2.0 blocks.

"The only way he's out there versus Creighton is if this thing continues to progress and we feel like he has had enough practice time," Hurley said, adding that Clingan likely would see "spurts" off the bench when he first returns.

#### BIG 12 TESTS

The Big 12 has a national-best eight teams in the AP Top 25, so the league dominates the slate of ranked-vs-ranked



UConn guard Tristen Newton, left, is fouled by Georgetown guard Jay Heath in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024, in Hartford, Conn.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JESSICA HILL/AP



UConn forward Alex Karaban reacts in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Georgetown, Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024, in Hartford, Conn.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JESSICA HILL/ AP

matchups for the week.

That includes No. 20 BYU, No. 24 Iowa State and No. 25 Texas Tech, in particular.

The Cyclones and Red Raiders are two of five new teams into this week's poll, and they each have two games against ranked opponents this week.

Iowa State visits BYU on Tuesday, then visits No. 19 TCU — a third new entrant to Monday's poll from the Big 12 — on Saturday. Texas Tech goes on the road to tussle with fifth-ranked Houston on Wednesday, then returns home to face BYU on Saturday.

#### RISING IN THE SEC

No. 13 Auburn (14-2) has won nine straight games since falling at Appalachian State in early December, including a 3-0 start in the Southeastern Conference. The Tigers' week includes a visit from No. 22 Mississippi (15-1), with Chris Beard's Rebels having lost only to Tennessee this season.

#### ROAD TESTS

No. 2 Purdue gets another shot at handling the test of playing on the road with a high ranking.

The Boilermakers lost last week at Nebraska to fall out of the No. 1 ranking for Monday's poll. Coming off a home win against Penn State, Purdue goes on the road Tuesday to face in-state Big Ten foe Indiana then visits Iowa on Saturday.

#### WATCH LIST

Last week's line of upsets knocked five teams out of the poll, including Gonzaga for the first time since 2016 to end a 143-week streak of poll appearances.

While that group lingers just outside the Top 25, Seton Hall and Grand Canyon could be teams to watch going forward.

The Pirates (12-5) have home games against St. John's and Creighton this week to build some momentum toward potentially their first AP Top 25 appearance under second-year coach Shaheen Holloway.

As for the Antelopes (16-1), their only loss came against South Carolina in November and they've won 13 straight. They have a home game against Utah Valley and a trip to Seattle this week to stay unbeaten in the Western Athletic Conference.

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Study Break

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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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# Just one strike later: Emmys 2024 fashion

by Clyde D'Souza | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | HE/HIM/HIS | clyde.d'souza@uconn.edu

Originally scheduled for September 2023, the 75th annual Emmy Awards were postponed to an action-packed week in mid-January as a result of the strikes led by the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and the Writers Guild of America. Just over a week after the 2024 Golden Globes, stars could once again be seen gracing the red carpet, sporting a fruity ensemble of outfits.

Amongst the outfits, a balance was notable between elegant blacks and whites and bright colors. Despite the mid-winter date, stars were far from bleak. Receiving an award for her role as a supporting actress in the hit comedy series “Ted

Lasso,” Juno Temple donned my personal favorite outfit of the night: a sheer, shiny, polka-dot top and a dark black Vera Wang dress, separated by an umbrella-like piece. The actress also carried a dazzling red clutch in the shape of a heart, which lit up the snowless January evening as the single pop of color in the outfit.

Perhaps one of the biggest names at the awards was “The Bear,” a show starring Jeremy Allen White as a new chef returning to Chicago to manage a family sandwich shop after receiving training in the world of fine dining. The show took the award for best comedy series, and its actors dressed the part.

White's pair of black trousers below a white jacket punctuated by a solid black bow tie is a daring suit for any man, but the star's confidence and build made the Giorgio Armani design work.

Hired as a sous-chef in “The Bear” to help White's character set the restaurant right, Ayo Edebiri could be seen in a black leather dress Monday evening. The piece managed to be elegant in its dark color and reflective sheen, and simultaneously catch eyes all around. What was especially unique about the design was that the leather material, being stiff to an extent, kept the dress from falling straight to the ground; there was a natural bell shape to the dress that added a certain vivacity to Edebiri's appearance.



IMAGES COURTESY OF IMDB



CARTOON BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Success for “The Bear” didn’t stop there, though. Playing a loyal second-in-command to White’s character was that of Ebon Moss-Bachrach. The actor’s classic black suit and tie were a refreshing combo amongst the flashy designs of the night.

One of the most talked about shows of late 2022 and 2023 was “Wednesday.” Jenna Ortega’s dark and reserved depiction of Wednesday Addams stood in contrast to her bright outfit, whose greens and purples were quite the opposite of grim.

Resembling Ortega in demeanor and costume-contrast, Aubrey Plaza sported a dazzling gold gown with a humongous, playful sewing needle through the top. The needle was complete with the bead at the top,

which characterized the outfit as both daring and cute. For her work in “The White Lotus,” the actress received a nomination for outstanding supporting actress in a drama series.

Plaza’s co-star in “The White Lotus,” Jennifer Coolidge won the award instead. The highly experienced actress made an anticipated appearance in a sheer Etro dress, whose black frills resembled a dark shroud.

Despite the circumstances of their postponement, the Prime-time Emmy Awards were a hit in terms of fashion. Much more can be said about the dashing actors and actresses whose plethora of outfits reflected the diversity of entertainment which they represented — but for now, there’s no doubt they left viewers speechless.





# Life

@dailycampuslife

# UDA COLLEGE NATIONALS: THE SUPER BOWL OF DANCE

by Karla Perez | ASSOCIATE LIFE EDITOR | SHE/HER/HERS | karla.perez@uconn.edu

No matter what side of social media you're on, you've likely seen at least one video about the 2024 Universal Dance Association College Nationals that took place this past weekend. Before diving into the history made this year, let's review what this competition is and how it's done.

The UDA was founded in 1980 by Jeff Webb and Kris Shepherd to host competitions and clinics for high school and college dancers. All college dance teams in the United States can enter to compete in the College Nationals competition. College dance teams may enter themselves to perform in a maximum of two out of three categories: hip-hop, jazz and pom. The performances must adhere to strict requirements to avoid point deductions regarding components such as time length, costume and tricks.

Look up videos of this competition and you will notice trends in each performance: intense facial expressions, impressive synchronicity, gorgeous jazz costumes that sparkle, hip-hop costumes that make you want to become a part of the team you're watching perform, exceptionally enthusiastic audience participation and the list goes on. These characteristics make this particular competition so special to the dance community, for

it is no easy feat to become part of a college dance team. Many of these dancers grew up with the dream of joining reputable dance teams and having the opportunity to dance at UDA. These are just a few of the reasons why you may hear current or former dancers call this their "Super Bowl."

Now let's get into the performances. I'll start with the "Big 3" that the internet can't stop talking about.

First, the University of Minnesota Dance Team captivated the attention and stole the hearts of many with their jazz performance to "Dream On" by Aerosmith. The jaw-dropping element of their performance showcased the group of 20 dancers simultaneously executing a turn sequence that went straight into a side aerial (essentially a cartwheel with no hands) and landed back into the same turn sequence. Since this competition was a weekend-long event, teams had to perform their numbers multiple times if they continued on through the following rounds. The Minnesota Dance Team made it all the way to the finals, meaning they had to complete this stunt three times, and they did so (almost) flawlessly each time.

Next to the scene was the Ohio State University Dance Team, who performed their heartfelt jazz number to "My Way" by Frank Sinatra. This performance combined athleticism and artistry through the traditional tricks, turns and musicality, but also through elements such as using the costumes as props and thinking of less as more. The dancers used their ties as bands to extend their legs and used their vests to translate emotion and add an extra visual component to the piece. It was also clear that the choreographer did not try to fill every second of the song with intricate choreography. At UDA College Nationals, many schools do this, which, while challenging to execute and exciting to watch, can pave the way for repetition. Moments of stillness in a dance that conveys profound emotion can separate it from the rest, therefore making it all the more memorable.

Finally, the Louisiana State University Dance Team once again broke the internet with another one of their iconic hip-hop performances. This year, the Tiger Girls brought a Michael Jackson tribute performance in which they executed traditional and modernized versions of some of the late singer's

most iconic movements. One thing LSU dancers are known for is their groove, and they did not miss a single opportunity to use it in this dance. The most memorable moment of their performance was when the entire team formed a diagonal line and all together did the renowned Michael Jackson hip thrusts. Both the crowd and myself audibly screamed when this happened.

As you could probably guess from my descriptions of the performances, these teams scored extremely well in the competition. Minnesota took second place in the jazz division while Ohio State swept first (a controversial outcome) and Louisiana State took first place in the hip-hop category.

Here are some of the teams that, while not holding the same power over the internet that the above three teams did, still had exceptional performances.

The Washington State Dance Team performed an emotional jazz routine to "Leave Me Slowly" by Lewis Capaldi. At some points, almost every syllable Capaldi sang had its own move assigned to it. At others, the dancers took time to execute near-flawless techniques in leg extensions and tricks.

The eye-catching moment was when all the dancers did a turn on a single knee with the other leg extended out behind them. Again, viewers see a crossover between athleticism and artistry.

Another impressive piece came from the University of Central Florida Dance Team's performance to "The Search" by NF. Many may categorize NF's music in a hip-hop genre, but this execution created an enticing show. The elements worthy of appreciation in this number were the intricacy of the movements and the use of formations and the body to create interesting visuals for the audience. It was like watching a picture create a picture.

Finally, I must give praise to our very own UConn Dance Team who entered a hip-hop performance. As usual, our Huskies took control of the stage with high energy that made audiences smile and want to join them in their show. Fortunately, we get to see more of their talent as the basketball season continues!

Many of this year's UDA College Nationals performances can be found on YouTube and other social media platforms if you, like me, are not off the high of the weekend.



A dance team competes in the DIA Hip Hop Finals of the UDA College Nationals competition. The UDA College Nationals competition was founded in 1980 and is open to all college dance teams in the United States. PHOTO COURTESY OF @VARSITYSPIRIT ON INSTAGRAM



A dancer is featured downstage while her team dances behind her at the UDA College Nationals competition. At this competition, college dance teams may enter themselves into any two of three categories: jazz, hip-hop and pom. PHOTO COURTESY OF @UDADANCE ON INSTAGRAM



# Opinion

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CARTOON BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

### ► Editorial

# AN ANALYSIS OF UCONN'S 10-YEAR PLAN

## PART 2: WHAT'S IN A GRADUATION RATE?

The University of Connecticut Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new 10-year strategic plan for the university on Dec. 6, 2023, according to UConn Today. The plan is in service of three goals: "promoting holistic student success," "expanding research impact" and "powering a thriving Connecticut."

Progress on the plan, headed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and containing four working groups concerning student success, research, local impact and implementation, will be measured against four Key Performance Indicators. As The Daily Campus Editorial Board previously discussed, these will include achieving a six-year graduation rate of 90%, obtaining \$500 million in research funding, increasing the size of the university endowment to \$1 billion and reaching carbon neutrality by 2030.

Although the plan sets its sights on ambitious long-term goals, the implications of achieving them could not be more relevant to the lives of UConn students today. This is especially true of the first goal of increasing the rate at which students complete their degrees. In order to support each student's "success journey," the plan incorporates a strategy to "facilitate an enriching student learning experience and timely and equitable academic progression for all students... from when they first arrive until they graduate." The "priority actions" in this vein include increasing student engagement with extra-curriculars, increasing financial literacy and students' ability to "financially navigate" UConn, improving career readiness and bolstering students' learning through teaching, experiential opportunities and other support systems.

These methods, however vague, nonetheless provide a statement of intent to make sure students have what they need to see their undergraduate and graduate careers through to completion. At the same time, UConn must do its part to combat decreasing college affordability in order to meet these goals that extend beyond financial aid.

Economic factors are integral to understanding college graduation rates. Statistically, students from low-income backgrounds are eight times less likely to graduate than high-income students, in no small part due to the high cost of tuition and insufficient grants and scholarships. Further, students who work full time, independent students (which includes people who are married, military veterans, over the age of 24 or otherwise not supported by a parent), part-time students and students who live off campus are all far less likely to complete their degree within six years than their counterparts.

Each category above is extra vulnerable to tuition increases. Students working more than 12 hours per week to support their education, for example, will have their work and curricular balance further disrupted if they need to earn more to afford school. The number of students who live off campus because they cannot afford on-campus housing will only increase as the cost of living on campus increases as well.

With cost being such an integral component of graduation rates, the Editorial Board holds that UConn needs to find ways to put its money where its mouth is. In some respects, the university is on the right track. Between fiscal years 2024 and 2025, UConn's expenditures on financial aid are expected to grow by nearly 10%, outpacing current levels of inflation significantly. However, on a longer scale, the total amount distributed in financial aid increased only 6.9% between 2021 and 2023, while the number of students receiving aid increased by 14.5%.

While it may appear that more students receiving financial aid is a positive, it is not sustainable for a growing student population to put a strain on the university's financial resources. This would result in a greater number of students who receive insufficient aid by grants or loans (not even accounting for the median-income students who fall through the cracks altogether). The solution is not financial aid, but to increase affordability for all students.

At the same time, the Editorial Board is not short-sighted enough to think that the administration can snap its fingers and reduce the cost of attending UConn — however, it's certainly not blameless. We fully understand that greater state and federal support is needed to make higher education accessible to all, if not broader systemic change that places human welfare over wars and tax cuts for the wealthy altogether.

# GREEN DAY HAS ALWAYS BEEN POLITICAL

by Dan Stark | ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | daniel.stark@uconn.edu

Green Day is easily one of the most successful and influential punk rock bands in the history of the genre. Though some punk fans and legendary punk figures have derided the band's pop-punk sound as being too commercial and mainstream, their commercial sound has allowed them to turn politically charged songs into anthemic hits. Green Day has always been an inherently political group, a trend that has only increased since 2004. But in the wake of a recent "controversial" performance, the band has been the target of conservative outrage and misunderstanding.

For context, Green Day performed a nationally-televised set on "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve" during which lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong changed a lyric in their 2004 hit "American Idiot" from "I'm not a part of a redneck agenda" to "I'm not a part of the MAGA agenda." Though Donald Trump didn't directly comment on the lyric change, Green Day provoked the ire of many conservatives, who attacked the band by calling them "pro-big government" and accusing them of "selling out." Even insecure, wannabe memelord Elon Musk stuck his beak in by saying, "Green Day went from raging against the machine to milquetoastedly raging for it." What conservatives fail to realize is that not only is Green Day a political band, but they have always been against conservatism and the Republican party. The "American Idiot" lyric change wasn't just to fit in with the "woke mob" as the Fox News outrage machine would call it, but rather a representation of what the band has stood for for decades.

Speaking of "American Idiot," conservatives must have never listened closely to the lyrics of the song, because if they did, they would probably be even more outraged at the band. Released as the lead single for their 2004 rock opera magnum opus "American Idiot," the song attacks the fearmongering and agenda-pushing conducted by conservative media during the administration of Dick Cheney — I still refuse to acknowledge George W. Bush as president — at the height of the "brutal and unjustified invasion of Iraq" as Bush himself once said. Lyrics like "Now everybody do the propaganda and sing along to the age of paranoia" and "Welcome to a new kind of tension, all across the alien nation, where everything isn't meant to be okay" are direct shots at Fox News and conservative talk radio hosts who spewed the conservative agenda at the time to weaponize the fear of conservatives. For

a song that lacks any subtlety in its damning condemnation of conservative media and calling its viewers "idiot America," it's shocking how conservatives in 2024 failed to recognize this when they took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to complain about the recent lyric change.

In addition to its title track, the album "American Idiot" also features the hit single "Holiday," another politically-charged anthem. "Holiday" specifically focuses on the Iraq War and the misinformation surrounding the role of the United States in the war. Armstrong proudly "beg[s] to dream and differ from the hollow lies" being spread about the justification of the war from both government officials and the aforementioned conservative media machine. The bridge of the song also features a parody of a representative in Congress trying to shut down any criticism of the war with the lines "Pulverize the Eiffel towers who criticize your government" and "kill all the f\*gs that don't agree." What's so haunting about these lyrics is that what was written as parody in 2004 sounds like actual lines that would be spoken on the House floor 20 years later. The hyperbole of a line like "Sieg Heil to the president gasmen" in 2004 now translates to your average Marjorie Taylor Greene statement of her dearly beloved former president Trump.

While conservatives are acting like the band's "MAGA agenda" line came out of nowhere, they have blatantly ignored the fact that the band has been anti-Trump since 2016, which I still refuse to believe was eight years ago. Armstrong has been using "American Idiot" to go after Trump by yelling "F\*ck you Donald Trump!" during performances, something far more blatant than their recent lyric change. The band also went after Trump in the music video for their 2017 song "Troubled Times," which featured images of the 2017 Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally and Trump's failure to condemn those involved. Yet, as is the case for the rest of the examples discussed, none of these were even considered by conservatives mad at the "MAGA agenda" line.

Considering Green Day's history of politically-charged themes and criticism of the modern American right, conservatives mad about the band's recent performance need to realize that they have always been against them and always will be. Conservatives can complain on X all they want about how the band should keep politics out of music, but as long as they're still a band, Green Day will continue to be a political group.



FILE ILLUSTRATION/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# StudyBreak

Photo of the Day | Snowy Storrs



An unattended snow plow sits vacant after a long day of snow at the University of Connecticut. The University of Connecticut canceled all classes occurring after 2:00p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024.  
 PHOTO BY EVAN RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



CARTOON BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The Daily Campus  
**COOL**

# SAM'S SECTION: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR ALL BIG-EAST MBB TEAMS

**by Sam Calhoun**  
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The Big East has been exciting to watch to begin 2024, with Marquette falling to Butler last week and Seton Hall's unexpected rise in head coach Shaheen Holloway's second season.

There's a lot to look forward to in these final three months of the college basketball regular season. One month into Big East play makes a good time to look at the resolutions each of the teams have going into this new year.

**UConn:  
A healthy frontcourt**

It's no secret that the defending national champion's most anticipated player coming into the 2023-24 season was center Donovan Clingan. The 7-foot-2 giant was one of the most efficient players off the bench in the entire country during his first year and currently averages 13.9 points per game this season. However, he has been sidelined since the Huskies' Big East opening loss at Seton Hall. With backup center Samson Johnson getting into foul trouble and the limited playing time first Youssouf Singare receives, head coach Dan Hurley has been forced to play small ball at times this season. Clingan's status is up in the air coming into tonight's game against No. 18 Creighton and center Ryan Kalkbrenner.

**Seton Hall:  
Taking care of the ball better**

Seton Hall has surprised everyone in the Big East, being one of the top teams in the conference standings. Other than inconsistency from the 3-point range, the biggest worry the team has is their turnovers. The Pirates rank dead last in the Big East in turnover percentage (22.6%). Outside of their massive win over Connecticut, Seton Hall has had more turnovers than each of its Big East foes heading into this week and hasn't turned the ball over fewer than 10 times in conference play. It's hard to imagine the

Pirates getting away with being careless with the ball going forward.

**Creighton:  
Consistent offense in Big East play**

Creighton is a threatening team on both ends of the floor, especially offensively. They are an offensive threat due to their tremendous starting lineup that includes Kalkbrenner and guards Trey Alexander and Baylor Scheierman. The Bluejays are coming off their second-worst offensive outing of the season, during which they shot 36.7% from the field and 22.2% from downtown. Head coach Greg McDermott's squad dropped their first two conference games to Villanova and Marquette, failing to break 70 points in each. If they want to reach their full potential, their offense has to become more consistent.

**Villanova:  
Their star guard being healthy**

Justin Moore is two seasons removed from being a second-team All-Big East player, averaging 14.8 points per game and starting in all 36 of Villanova's games. Since that season's conclusion, the 6-foot-5 senior has been riddled with injuries, missing a significant amount of time last season and five games so far this season. Forward Eric Dixon has been impressive this season, but the Wildcats could use a healthy star guard moving forward.

**St. John's:  
Consistency from 3-point range**

As of writing, St. John's is seventh in the Big East in 3-point percentage, shooting a combined 31.7% during Big East play. The common denominator of the Red Storm's two Big East losses is a poor 3-point percentage. In their loss to Creighton, the Johnnies shot 18.2% from long-range and shot 22.2% against UConn. In only one of their wins in conference play did St. John's shoot under 35% from downtown. In the team's 16-point win over But-

ler, the Red Storm shot 28.6%. If they want to grow as a team in Hall of Fame head coach Rick Pitino's first season in Queens, they need to improve from the perimeter.

**Marquette:  
Better 3-point shooting**

Marquette came into the 2023-24 season predicted to repeat as Big East Champions. However, the Golden Eagles have dropped two of the team's last three games and have five losses already this season. That's two less than the team's magical 2022-23 run. Marquette ranks last in Big East play in 3-point percentage with 27.8%. Only one of the team's Big East losses saw head coach Shaka Smart's squad shoot well from 3-point range. The other two losses? Marquette's best long-range shooting performance was 20% at Providence.

**Xavier:  
Zach Freemantle healthy**

One of the best forwards in the Big East last season was Xavier's Zach Freemantle. Not only was he a threat inside the paint with his 6-foot-9 height, but he could stretch the floor and shot 63.6% from 3-point range in the 22 games he played in. The Musketeers were lethal offensively, which at some points made them the best team in the Big East. Freemantle has yet to play a game this season. That has made head coach Sean Miller's team more guard-reliant and less balanced in both the backcourt and frontcourt than last season. Xavier finished last season as the fourth-best 3-point shooting team in the country. As of writing, they shoot 34.6% from beyond the arc, which ranks 128th in the country.

**Providence:  
Bryce Hopkins healthy**

Providence's Bryce Hopkins is right up there with some of the best forwards in the conference. Since he suffered an injury in the team's tough loss at home to Seton Hall, Providence has heavily relied on star guard Devin Carter and has not won a game since Hopkins' injury.

He's out for the year, so it's safe to say Providence is looking forward to the junior's return to the floor next season.

**Butler:  
Pulling away in close games**

Butler has looked more impressive this season than they have been the past few years, beginning with a 10-2 record. However, they have not fared well in Big East play, posting a 2-4 record so far. Butler had chances to pull away and win in almost each of their four Big East losses. They lost in overtime at Providence and held their own at home against UConn and Seton Hall. That 2-4 start could have easily been 5-1.

**Georgetown:  
Progress towards its return to national relevance**

It has been a while since Georgetown was feared in the Big East. Outside their magical Big East Tournament run in 2021, it has nearly been a decade since the Hoyas earned a spot in the NCAA Tournament. That was the last time Georgetown was ranked in the AP Poll. They were as high as No. 21. Since John Thompson III's departure following the 2016-17 season, the Hoyas have yet to see themselves in the national spotlight. With former Providence head coach Ed Cooley taking over following the end of Patrick Ewing's stint as head coach last season, Georgetown fans have hopes that the 2022 Naismith College Coach of the Year will bring them back to the program's glory days.

**DePaul:  
A Big East win**

DePaul finished the regular season last year on a 12-game losing streak and has not won a Big East regular season game since January of last year against Xavier. The 3-13 Blue Demons are having yet another forgettable season so far. The team's only wins have come against South Dakota, Louisville and Chicago State. Here's to hoping head coach Tony Stubblefield can turn things around.



UConn men's basketball takes on DePaul at Gampel Pavilion on Jan. 2, 2024. The Huskies took an easy win, finishing the game 85-56.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY MOLLER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



## Sports

## Photo of the Day | Hurley's Huddle



Coach Dan Hurley talks to his players during the team's match against DePaul at Gampel Pavilion on Jan. 2, 2024. The Huskies took an easy win, finishing the game 85-56.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY MOLLER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# THE PUCK DROP

## BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

by Avery Becker  
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The first time a woman ever played hockey professionally was in 1992, when goaltender Manon Rhéaume played for the Tampa Bay Lightning in an NHL exhibition game. She faced nine shots and let just two through, taking the first step in a long period of growth for women's hockey.

Since then, women have made a constant effort to play at the professional level.

Canada was the first country to establish a professional league just seven years later in 1999. The National Women's Hockey League, run by the Ontario Women's Hockey Association, allowed women of any age to play hockey at the highest level. Throughout the league's history, it changed names various times and even expanded to include American teams. Beginning in 2009, they established their version of the Stanley Cup called the Clarkson Cup, which was donated to the NWHL by former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. The Montréal Stars were the inaugural winners.

In 2015, the United States created their own NWHL, also known as the PHF (Premier Hockey Federation), with a budget of \$2.5 million. Including one team from Canada, the participating squads included the Boston Pride, the Buffalo Beauts, the Connecticut Whale, the Metropolitan Riveters, the Toronto Six and the Minnesota Whitecaps. Created by Dani Rylan, it was the first women's league to pay its players their own salaries.

The PHF went strong until June of 2023, when it was bought out by Billie Jean King Enterprises and the Mark Walters Group. Before this occurred, however, they partnered with the Professional Women's Hockey Players Association.

For both Walters and King, their main goal behind this partnership was to create a women's hockey league that encompasses all of North America, unifying all the leagues as one. Their goal was achieved on Aug. 29, 2023, when they

announced the brand-new Professional Women's Hockey League. They also announced the inaugural teams from Boston, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, New York and Minnesota.

Not only did this announcement go down in the history of women's hockey, but the inaugural draft that took place on Sept. 18 did as well. 23-year-old Minnesota native Taylor Heise was the first ever pick, selected by her home state's team.

"It's my home, everyone that I

**"I'm just really honored I'm going to be able to play and to show the little girls that anything is possible if you just keep working hard."**

**TAYLOR HEISE,  
MINNESOTA PWHL FORWARD**

love is there and it's the state of hockey," noted Heise in an interview with CBC Sports after being drafted. "I'm just really honored I'm going to be able to play and to show the little girls that anything is possible if you just keep working hard."

Since the PWHL started its season in the beginning of 2024, the level of interest has been staggering. In Ottawa's debut, they had 8,318 fans come see them play. Just three days later, Minnesota crushed that with 13,361 fans in attendance at the Xcel Energy Center. Nearly every single game so far has boasted sellout crowds, showing that this league is taking the world by storm.

If fans can't make it to a game or their local television does not broadcast their favorite team, the PWHL livestreams each game on their YouTube channel. This makes it one of the most viewer-accessible leagues in sports, which is a fantastic strategy for building its future.

Their rulebook is also unique compared to the NHL's, including the 3-2-1 rule. This means that each team will earn three points for a regulation win, two

points for an overtime or shootout win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss and zero for a loss in regulation. They also are allowing body checking, which is a first for a women's league.

Sarah Nurse, forward for Toronto PWHL, stated in an interview with the NHL Network, "I'm proud of everybody who has worked so hard to get this off the ground."

At the draft, founder and former tennis star Billie Jean King stated, "It's not about a moment, it's about a movement."

The players are there to show the younger generation of women that the future of breaking the glass ceiling of sports is right here and right now.

This is only the beginning.



(Above) Taylor Heise (second from right) poses at the PWHL inaugural draft on Sep. 18, 2023. Heise, a 23-year-old Minnesota native, was the first-draft pick.

(Below) Manon Rhéaume is pictured on ice playing for the Tampa Bay Lightning. In 1992, Rhéaume played goaltender at an NHL exhibition game and made history as the first woman to play in a professional hockey league.

(ABOVE) PHOTO COURTESY OF @PWHL/FACEBOOK  
(BELOW) PHOTO COURTESY OF @RAREVNTG/INSTAGRAM





LOGO BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Which athlete/coach had the best 2023?

**by Connor Sargeant**

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## Erling Haaland

While he lost out on the coveted Ballon d'Or, there is no doubt in my mind that Erling Haaland had the best 2023 out of anyone in professional sports. After all, just take a look at his resume for the year. In his first year with Manchester City, the Norwegian took England by storm, breaking the Premier League scoring record with well over a month to go in the season. Not to mention, all of Europe felt his offensive prowess as he set the record for most goals in all club competitions by an EPL player in a season with 52. His striking ability was so remarkable that it elevated his club to a historic level. Haaland led City to their first treble in club history, winning the Premier League, FA Cup and UEFA Champions League. How could anyone in sports have a better season, let alone rookie year in the English top flight? What he did in 2023 was not only great but historic, and how could you ask for a better year?

**by Evan Rodriguez**

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## Dan Hurley

While Dan Hurley's month of January wasn't the most ideal start to 2023, he certainly turned it around and then some for the rest of the year. Aside from the fact that the Huskies head coach managed to bring home an NCAA men's basketball championship of his own in April, he also had an extremely promising offseason ahead of the 2023-24 season. Not only did he bring back the talents of Tristen Newton, who's established himself as one of the top guards in the country, but he also grabbed Rutgers transfer Cam Spencer, an essential part of this current Huskies lineup. While most teams would have had a steep dropoff after losing the level of talent that Hurley did from last season's roster, instead remained as a top team in the country. With the Huskies recently being named No. 1 in the AP Poll, 2024 looks like more positives are on the horizon for Hurley.

2023 was a loaded year in the sports world and with that success, there came some highlight performances. Whether that was with a particular athlete carrying his team to the championship or a coach putting the sports world on notice with incredible leadership, there are certainly plenty of selections to choose from. In this week's Daily Campus sports roundtable, our team of writers will aim to select their pick for which athlete or coach had the best 2023.

**by Stratton Stave**

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## Travis Kelce

In the world of sports and beyond, it's unclear if someone had a better 2023 than Travis Kelce. The tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs got off to a hot start as the leading receiver in his second Super Bowl victory. Arriving at the top of the NFL is about as good as a year can start, but his social brand skyrocketed by his antics off the field. He's gained immense popularity thanks to his relationship with popstar and icon Taylor Swift. Though there are some who despise the U of Cincinnati alum for making the NFL's social media a part-time Swift fanpage, it's impossible to argue his impact on growing the sport. More new eyes are on the league than ever before, which warrants Kelce's spot as the star of 2023.

**by Cole Stefan**

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## Cole Ragans

2023 was a big year for people named Cole. Quarterback Cole Welliver committed to the University of Connecticut; New York Yankees ace Gerrit Cole finally won a Cy Young Award and Kansas City Royals southpaw Cole Ragans had his breakout season. Ragans did not have a strong start to 2023: the 2016 first-round draft pick out of high school went 2-3 as a reliever with an ERA above five. Once he got traded to the Royals for closer Aroldis Chapman, however, Ragans turned into an ace. The Florida native started all 12 games he appeared in, pitching into the sixth inning all but twice and producing a quality start eight times. Both Texas and Kansas City won this trade in the short term as the former won the World Series, but Ragans' upside will give the latter the edge down the line. The 26-year-old's production in Kansas City across a full season might not just make him an All-Star, but one of the league's top left-handed starting pitchers alongside Justin Steele, Jesús Luzardo and Blake Snell.

**by Sean Ahern**

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## Noah Lyles

When one thinks of the most successful athletes, they often look to the big four sports, but I would like to mention Noah Lyles and how he lit the track on fire in 2023. The 26-year-old became a six-time world champion after claiming gold in the 100-meter, 200-meter and 4x100 relay team at the 2023 Budapest World Championships. It is a feat that has not been accomplished since the great Usain Bolt, coincidentally the man Lyles is chasing down to claim the 200-meter world record. Lyles separated himself from the rest of the sport with the new sponsorships and publicity he enjoyed in 2023, one being his own series streamed on Peacock in August. The three-time USA Track and Field Athlete of the Year had a nearly flawless year and he's already ramping up to claim a gold medal in the 2024 Paris Olympics.



# Sports

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

### No. 1 UConn ready for stiffest Big East competition yet in No. 18 Creighton

by **Connor Sargeant**

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Fresh off their fifth win in a row, the UConn men's basketball team will look to continue its reign of Big East dominance with its tallest in-conference task yet: the No. 18 Creighton Bluejays.

A significant question mark heading into Wednesday night's showdown is the status of Donovan Clingan. The Huskies have missed the 7-foot-2 big man since he went down with a foot injury on Dec. 20 at Seton Hall. As head coach Dan Hurley put it, we will be "on Cling Kong watch," as the Bristol native is a game-time decision. Even if he does come back, he will more than likely come off the bench with a reduced workload.

While Clingan's backup, Samson Johnson, has done an excellent job taking over the reins in the Huskies' starting five, it hasn't always been pretty. Johnson has had his struggles asserting himself as a driving force on the boards. Take his Jan. 2 performance against DePaul. Despite playing 23 minutes, the Togo native only came

away with one rebound, with Hurley noting postgame that "[Johnson] needs to grow and become smarter when people are being physical with him."

Even when Johnson is on his A-game, foul trouble has been a massive issue for him throughout his extended time on the court. It's prevented him from making a bigger impact for this Huskies roster and if the redshirt junior looks to take the next huge step in his game, that's certainly an essential problem to fix.

When neither Clingan nor Johnson are at the five, there is a real question mark as to what head coach Dan Hurley's best move is. One option is to put in first-year Youssouf Singare, but he'll need some more development before seeing extended minutes with the Huskies. We have also seen variations of a "small ball lineup" with 6-foot-8 power forward Alex Karaban trying his luck as a center, and it has been a quality solution. The team's current lineup without Clingan will face its toughest challenge yet in the paint on Wednesday.

That challenge comes in the form of Ryan Kalkbrenner. The veteran college big man stands at 7-foot-1 and is amidst an excel-

lent offensive season, averaging 16 points on 64% shooting and over seven rebounds per game. How Connecticut's big men game plan for the Missouri native will ultimately be the deciding factor.

Another Bluejays player for Huskies fans to look out for is Baylor Scheierman. The Nebraska native can torch opponents from all over the floor, averaging 18 points per game on an excellent 43.6% from the field, including 37% from deep. Not only can he shoot, but Scheierman is also a creative passer. This could spell trouble for the Huskies, who have occasionally been vulnerable against the pick-and-roll. Especially with Kalkbrenner's presence, this facet of the game could present a sizable challenge for the Huskies.

Another headline for Wednesday night is that fans 21 years old and over at Gampel Pavilion can partake in \$2 Beer Night, which could spell trouble for Creighton. In last season's Feb. 22 matchup against Providence, UConn ran the same promotion, and the effects were palpable. The extra rowdy Storrs crowd acted as a sixth man on the court for the Huskies, and Friars head coach Ed Cooley admitted postgame that the liquored-up fans



UConn men's basketball takes on DePaul at Gampel Pavilion on Jan. 2, 2023. The Huskies took an easy win, finishing the game 85-56.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZACHARY MOLLER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

played a role in his side's 87-69 loss.

Wednesday has massive implications for both programs. UConn and Seton Hall sit atop the Big East conference, with Creighton trailing the two programs by one game apiece. In a conference as loaded as the Big East, looking ahead to the in-conference tournament is never too early. Every game matters and a top placement will make a difference on the path to being crowned Big East champions.

The Huskies are college basketball's No. 1 for the first time in 13 years, and this is a chance for them to extend their lead over everyone else. Inversely, the Bluejays are trying to continue their four-game winning streak and play up to their preseason expectations, when they were ranked eighth in the nation. The action will ensue this Wednesday at 7 p.m., and with the extra rowdy crowd sure to pack Gampel Pavilion, you won't want to miss it.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

### No. 9 Huskies to face Seton Hall on the road

by **Stratton Stave**

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As the sun begins to set later and students begin the spring semester, one thing becomes clear: the No. 9 UConn women's basketball team is hitting their stride. Even as they continue to sustain hits to their rotation with a non-stop barrage of injuries, they've never looked as good this season as they do right now.

After starting the season 4-3 and putting themselves at risk of exiting the AP Top 25, they've found consistency in a lineup primarily composed of first-years and seniors. The mix of youth and experience has helped them to a 10-game winning streak, with four coming against ranked opposition.

The Huskies are slated to hit the road for the fourth time in five games on Wednesday, this time against Seton Hall. The Pirates have been solid in the first year of the post-Lauren Park-Lane era, who elected to use her COVID year to transfer to Mississippi State. The 1,905 points and 698 assists that she amassed over her career left large holes to fill, and all said, they've done a pretty good job doing so.



Aaliyah Edwards prepares to take a free-throw shot on Dec. 31, 2023. The Huskies won 95-64, their victory earning them a spot in the AP Top 25.

PHOTO BY EVAN RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Given that it's impossible to replicate all of the production in one player, different contributors have helped in their own way. Sophomore Micah Gray has done her best to add scoring to the backcourt, posting 13.7 points per game on 35% shooting from downtown.

In terms of everything else that Park-Lane contributed, Amari Wright has it covered.

Though not a scorer, Wright adds excellent passing and is currently 12th in the nation at 6.2 assists per night. Seton Hall also boasts a stingy defense that allows the 15th fewest points in the country. Wright is the leader there too, averaging 2.5 steals.

Even with their backcourt by committee, the Pirates' scoring is led by forward

Azana Baines. The Jersey native isn't the biggest, but she pours in over 15 points and six boards. Even with the Huskies' short frontcourt depth, the size that they do have will be helpful in containing Baines.

Seton Hall's results in non-conference play were encouraging. Aside from a loss to a good Columbia squad, their two other defeats came in double overtime at No. 25 Princeton and by 10 on a neutral floor to No. 8 USC. Even more impressive was their 30-point steamrolling of No. 23 UNLV. Things were looking up for them until they dropped a home contest to Providence, a squad that UConn recently beat by 44. And a game to Villanova. And another to No. 23 Marquette, who the Huskies walloped by 31. This leaves them at 3-3 in the Big East, with all their wins coming over bottom-four squads.

Based on these results, it shouldn't be too tricky for Connecticut to pull out with a win. A large margin is also likely. With Azzi Fudd, Ayanina Patterson and most recently Aubrey Griffin out for the year, coach Geno Aurieemma is left with seven players he is willing to put on the floor.

At the bottom of that seven is Ice Brady, who clearly looked the weakest in the team's first 16 games. She showed flashes here and there, but nothing that indicated she could be the answer to UConn's frontcourt depth problem. With an excellent performance against St. John's that saw her post 17 points, Brady seems to be making progress. Seton Hall isn't going to challenge her in a way that'll emulate nationally ranked competition, but it'll be a nice opportunity for the forward to continue her momentum. The Huskies desperately need the redshirt first-year to overperform if they want to contend for a title.

Another player to watch is Paige Bueckers. In her two career games at Walsh Gymnasium, the former national POTY is averaging 24 points and has been on a tear lately. She's shooting 48% from beyond the arc this year and scores 19 points per game. With the development of Nika Mühl and KK Arnold, she's had to do less in the passing department, but has remained her unselfish self while still getting her own.

The matchup can be viewed regionally on SNY and will tip off at 8:30 p.m..

#### WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS WEEK

#### UPCOMING GAME



vs.



Men's Basketball  
7 p.m. Saturday

#### INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@uconn  
Top Dogs.

#### TWEETS OF THE DAY



AJ

@uconnfan2021

Really niche but I love that commentators and coaches are calling us "Connecticut" more than "UConn" that's how you know we are back.

Mark Osborne

@mosbornenyc

The best thing about #UConn being ranked No. 1 is that they've won THREE national championships since the last time they were atop the AP poll.

#PACKTHERENT

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