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UConn faculty concerned with university's communication on budget situation

by Jenna Outcalt
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
jenna.outcalt@uconn.edu

University of Connecticut faculty have expressed concerns about the communication from the university regarding the current budget cuts. Professors have been receiving their information through their department heads, although different departments receive different information depending on how heavily the cuts will affect them.

"We're really struggling to understand the scope of the effects of this budget plan because it's being enacted department by department," said Sam Sommers, an assistant professor in residence in the English Department at UConn Waterbury.

According to Sommers, graduate students are already seeing the effects of the budget cuts, such as graduate students being unable to present their research at conferences. Sommers predicted that undergraduate courses will be disappearing by the upcoming fall semester.

University spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said in an email that the university is working to keep the UConn community informed during this constantly changing situation.

"The university will continually share updates about our appropriations and our budget as information becomes available. There are a variety of ac-

tions the university can take to manage our budget based on the resources available to us; at this point, it would be too soon to speculate on specific actions it may take," Reitz wrote.

Reitz also said that the university was sending videos and messages from UConn President Radenka Maric, as well

answer questions about the budget. According to Reitz, four more town halls are scheduled to take place in person in March. Two will be held at the Storrs campus and the other two will be held at the UConn Health Campus in Farmington. The first in-person town hall held in Storrs will be on March 4 at noon.

An email from the UConn Labor Coalition asked staff and faculty to write and call in to the president's office to protest the message and request a retraction. The email called the message "offensive and false."

"This statement showcases that the administration's priori-

ensuring UConn's success, just like the university community.

"Contending with budget challenges is never desirable, but the goal is always open transparency about them and to work together to manage them as well as possible, while continually advocating for UConn as a vital asset for the State of Connecticut and its future," Reitz said.

Some departments are now being informed that the cuts to their budgets could be as high as 19%. According to Sommers, the university formed the current budget plan with the assumption that the school would receive more money from the state than initially proposed by Governor Ned Lamont's state budget for the next fiscal year. The final budget must be signed into law by the governor by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

In an open letter to the governor published in the Hartford Courant, faculty expressed their alarm over the proposed budget. The letter was written by Manisha Sinha, the Draper Chair in American History at UConn, and was signed by 48 other endowed chairs and distinguished professors at UConn.

"The proposed budget cuts would destroy graduate programs and high-level research and scholarship in nearly all departments in the university and eventually its well-known sports programs. That in turn will have a direct impact on students of all levels," the letter said.

"The proposed budget cuts would destroy graduate programs and high-level research and scholarship in nearly all departments in the university and eventually its well-known sports programs. That in turn will have a direct impact on students of all level."

MANISHA SINHA, DRAPER CHAIR IN AMERICAN HISTORY AT UCONN

as holding multiple town hall meetings to keep the faculty and students informed about changes in the budget situation.

"The Provost and her budget team have also held multiple meetings with academic deans, campus deans, department heads, and associate deans, and the University Senate has been kept apprised of the status of the budget discussions," Reitz said.

Two virtual town halls took place on Jan. 24 and Feb. 21 to

"The university is continually communicating with the community about our budget situation and will continue to do so," Reitz's statement said.

Faculty and staff also pushed back against a recent message from President Maric's office saying that "it is a good time to be a Husky." The message outlines the bond-funded infrastructure investments authorized in the governor's budget proposal.

ties are not with their employees or students even though time and again they push the message that 'investing in UConn and our students is an investment in Connecticut, its people, and its future,'" the email said.

According to Sommers, no official retraction or follow-up occurred after the response to the message from staff and faculty.

Reitz said that UConn leadership was passionate about

URBAN COMMUNITIES EVENT TODAY

by Hallie LeTendre
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
hallie.letendre@uconn.edu

Today in Hartford there is a free event which University of Connecticut students interested in urban farming and agriculture are urged to attend.

From 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. the Emerging Communities: Urban Farming and Agricultural Cooperatives in Connecticut event will be taking place.

Located in the Hartford Times Building, the event will provide students with the opportunity to get more information about fields relating to urban farming, agricultural cooperatives and food sustainability, as indicated by the event webpage.

"The event is an opportunity for groups and organizations seeking to improve the overall quality of access to good food to come together and engage with UConn students," assistant professor in residence Stacy Maddern said. "Emerging Communities is a tabling event that extends information from urban farmers, land

acquisition advocates, and agricultural organizations to students interested in careers that help to better their communities."

Additionally, students can learn about internships, partnerships and volunteer opportunities at the event.

"I believe UConn students need to understand their role in community development and that getting involved with local food growers will help them to understand the sources and deficiencies determining access to food and how it relates to the health of their communities," Maddern said.

It is not required to attend the entirety of the event, as students are able to come and go as they please or based on their schedules.

"The intent is for students to be exposed to the opportunities available to them and to create an avenue in which they can become more vital participants in their communities. That can take 10 minutes, it can take an hour," Maddern said.

For those who can't make today's event or those who are not studying urban and community studies, but want to get involved, UConn provides several beginner courses regarding the subject.



Maddern suggested that interested students start with Urban 2000. "This will give them an idea of what to expect from the major or minor. I would also encourage them to explore offerings in geography where there are similar subjects with a great deal of crossover with urban and community studies," Maddern said.

The Kellogg Dairy Center is a free-stall facility capable of accommodating over 100 milking animals. The Kellogg Dairy Center was built in 1991, funded by a bequest from by Frances Osborne Kellogg, a woman industrialist and dairy farmer from Derby, Conn.

PHOTO BY JORDAN ARNOLD, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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News

Biden hopes cease-fire, hostage deal to pause Israel-Hamas war can take effect by next Monday

(AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that he hopes a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas that would pause hostilities and allow for remaining hostages to be released can take effect by early next week.

Asked when he thought a cease-fire could begin, Biden said: “Well I hope by the beginning of the weekend. The end of the weekend. My national security adviser tells me that we’re close. We’re close. We’re not done yet. My hope is by next Monday we’ll have a ceasefire.”

Biden commented in New York after taping an appearance on NBC’s “Late Night With Seth Meyers.”

Negotiations are underway for a weeklong cease-fire between Israel and Hamas to allow for the release of hostages being held in Gaza by the militant group in return for Israel releasing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. The proposed six-week pause in fighting would also include allowing hundreds of trucks to deliver desperately needed aid into Gaza every day.

Negotiators face an unofficial deadline of the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan around March 10, a period that often sees heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

Meanwhile, Israel has failed to comply with an order by the United Nations’ top court to provide urgently needed aid to desperate people in the Gaza Strip, Human Rights Watch said Monday, a month after a landmark ruling in The Hague ordered Israel to moderate its war.

In a preliminary response to a South African petition accusing Israel of genocide, the U.N.’s top court ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in the tiny Palestinian enclave. It stopped short of ordering an end to the military offensive that has triggered a humanitarian catastrophe.

Israel denies the charges against it, saying it is fighting in self-defense.

Nearly five months into the war, preparations are underway for Israel to expand its ground operation into Rafah, Gaza’s southernmost town along the border with Egypt, where 1.4 million Palestinians have sought safety.

Early Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said the army had presented to the War Cabinet its operational plan for Rafah as well as plans to evacuate civilians from the battle zones. It gave no further details.

The situation in Rafah has sparked global concern. Israel’s allies have warned



A woman rides a scooter past a graffiti calling for the return of the hostages kidnapped during the Oct. 7 Hamas cross-border attack in Israel, in Kfar Saba, Israel, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. PHOTO COURTESY OF OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

that it must protect civilians in its battle against the Hamas militant group.

Also Monday, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayeh submitted his government’s resignation, and President Mahmoud Abbas is expected to appoint technocrats in line with U.S. demands for internal reform. The U.S. has called for a revitalized Palestinian Authority to govern postwar Gaza ahead of eventual statehood — a scenario rejected by Israel.

In its Jan. 26 ruling, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to follow six provisional measures, including taking “immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance” to Gaza.

Israel also must submit a report on what it is doing to adhere to the measures within a month. The Israeli Foreign Ministry said late Monday that it has filed such a report. It declined to share it or discuss its contents.

Israel said 245 trucks of aid entered Gaza on Sunday. That’s less than half the amount that entered daily before the war.

Human Rights Watch, citing U.N. figures, noted a 30% drop in the daily average number of aid trucks entering Gaza in the weeks following the court’s

ruling. It said that between Jan. 27 and Feb. 21, the daily average of trucks entering was 93, compared to 147 trucks a day in the three weeks before the ruling. The daily average dropped to 57, between Feb. 9 and 21, the figures showed.

The rights group said Israel was not adequately facilitating fuel deliveries to hard-hit northern Gaza and blamed Israel for blocking aid from reaching the north, where the World Food Program said last week it was forced to suspend aid deliveries.

“The Israeli government has simply ignored the court’s ruling, and in some ways even intensified its repression,” said Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine director at Human Rights Watch.

The Association of International Development Agencies, a coalition of over 70 humanitarian organizations working in Gaza and the West Bank, said almost no aid had reached areas in Gaza north of Rafah since the court’s ruling.

Israel denies it is restricting the entry of aid and has instead blamed humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza, saying large aid shipments sit idle on the Palestinian side of the main crossing. The U.N. says it can’t always reach the crossing because it is at times too dangerous.

In some cases, crowds of desperate Palestinians have surrounded delivery trucks and stripped them of supplies. The U.N. has called on Israel to open more crossings, including in the north, and to improve the process.

Netanyahu’s office said that the War Cabinet had approved a plan to deliver humanitarian aid safely into Gaza in a way that would “prevent the cases of looting.” It did not disclose further details.

The war, launched after Hamas-led militants rampaged across southern Israel, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking roughly 250 people hostage, has caused vast devastation in Gaza.

Nearly 30,000 people have been killed in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry which does not distinguish in its count between fighters and noncombatants. Israel says it has killed 10,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Fighting has flattened large swaths of Gaza’s urban landscape, displacing about 80% of the territory’s 2.3 million people, who have crammed into increasingly smaller spaces looking for elusive safety.

The crisis has pushed a quarter of the population toward starvation and raised fears of imminent famine, especially in the northern part of Gaza, the first focus of Israel’s ground invasion. Starving residents have been forced to eat animal fodder and search for food in demolished buildings.

“I wish death for the children because I cannot get them bread. I cannot feed them. I cannot feed my own children!” Naim Abouseido yelled as he waited for aid in Gaza City. “What did we do to deserve this?”

Bushra Khalidi with U.K. aid organization Oxfam told The Associated Press that it had verified reports that children have died of starvation in the north in recent weeks, which she said indicated aid was not being scaled up despite the court ruling.

Aid groups say deliveries also continue to be hobbled by security issues. The French aid groups Médecins du Monde and Doctors Without Borders each said that their facilities were struck by Israeli forces in the weeks following the court order.

Goldenberg reported from Tel Aviv, Israel, Chehayeb from Beirut and Miller from New York. Associated Press writer Josef Federman in Jerusalem and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

The Daily Campus

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ACROSS

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- 6 Stuff in a trough
- 10 Sea blue
- 14 Winter X Games host city
- 15 Word before or after man
- 16 Reynolds of "Boogie Nights"
- 17 *Manga series also known as "Mach GoGoGo"
- 19 Latvia's capital
- 20 Condensed, for short: Abbr.
- 21 Measuring stick
- 22 Nodded
- 23 Trusty mount
- 25 "Loki" voice actress Strong
- 27 Team on a movie set
- 29 *Captain Morgan product
- 34 ___ Fables
- 37 "Cornflake Girl" singer Tori
- 38 United
- 39 Molecule in some vaccines
- 40 Ceiling beams, or a three-word hint for the answers to the starred clues
- 42 Hullabaloo
- 43 AOC, for one
- 44 Bassoon cousin
- 45 MLB team with Mr. and Mrs. mascots
- 47 *Iced bun, e.g.
- 50 "Alita: Battle Angel" star Salazar
- 51 Having no loose ends?
- 52 "To reiterate ..."
- 55 Malfunction, as a copier
- 58 Guilty and not guilty
- 60 Relieved (of)
- 63 Suitable for cacti
- 64 *Yuletide excursion
- 66 "You can't have it!"
- 67 Normandy city
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- 70 Calligrapher's collection
- 71 Give an address

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- 4 Family tree word
- 5 Actor Braugher
- 6 Spills the tea, maybe
- 7 Garter trim
- 8 Paycheck fattener
- 9 ___ capita
- 10 Using one's passport, say
- 11 Pop ___
- 12 Hard-to-resist impulse
- 13 Just slightly
- 18 Have regrets
- 22 Black tie optional, say
- 24 Only even prime number
- 26 Oak nut
- 27 Swiped items
- 28 Extend, in a way
- 30 Dev of "Slumdog Millionaire"

- 31 Beverly Hills shopping destination
- 32 Storage rentals
- 33 High-minded org.?
- 35 Expert advice
- 36 Buffalo hockey pro
- 41 Meal regimen
- 46 Med scan
- 48 Technique-building piano pieces

- 49 Supine protests
- 53 ___-AFTRA
- 54 Lenten symbol
- 55 Door part
- 56 Opera highlight
- 57 Money maker
- 59 Chive kin
- 61 Lightbulb, metaphorically
- 62 Help ___
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- 65 Jay-Z genre

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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'AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER'

adaption brings new and long-time fans on an epic adventure



by **Molly Daigle**

CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
SHE/HER/HERS
molly.daigle@uconn.edu

On Feb. 22, a live-action adaptation of the hit animated series, "Avatar: The Last Airbender" released on Netflix. The new eight-episode series was highly anticipated by long-time fans of the original series, while still drawing in a new wave of fans to its epic fantasy world.

"Avatar: The Last Airbender," takes place in a world of people who can control — or bend — different elements (fire, water, earth and air) and live in respective elemental nations. However, the fire nation declared war on the other nations, wiping out the airbenders and laying siege on the earth kingdom and water tribes. However, one airbender survived the attacks — Aang, played by Gordon Cormier. Aang is the avatar, a master of all four elements and is destined to save the world.

Aang is accompanied in his adventures by a young wa-

terbender, Katara (Kiawentiio Tarbell) and her brother Sokka (Ian Ousley). Together, they journey across the world to save the northern water tribe from an impending fire nation attack, as well as to find a waterbending master for Aang to begin his vital training in mastering the four elements — all while trying to avoid numerous fire nation agents. Prince Zuko — a prince banished from home by his father, Fire Lord Ozai, until he can successfully capture the avatar — is the main threat to Aang and his friends.

The new live-action adaptation certainly captures many of the beloved elements of the original series, such as many of its casting choices. One of the truly note-worthy performances came from Dallas James Liu, who plays Prince Zuko. His performance, as well as Paul Sun-Hyung Lee's, who plays Uncle Iroh, are truly spectacular and felt accurate to the original characters. This was especially prominent in a flashback scene where Zuko offers his condolences to Iroh at the funeral of his son, Lu

Ten. The scene was one filled with raw emotion and provides a strong contextual layer to the bond forged between Zuko and his uncle that continues to develop throughout the series.

Another noteworthy performance comes from Yvonne Chapman, who portrays Avatar Kyoshi. Chapman does a fantastic job at portraying her character, especially in a scene when she takes over Aang's body to help him in protecting Kyoshi Island, driving an intense level of intimidation and fear into both those on screen and viewers. Her role in this scene was one of the main highlights of the second episode.

Many of the series' special effects were truly breathtaking. I sincerely enjoyed seeing what the new adaptation had in store for the variety of creatures featured in the show. Aang's loveable flying bison, Appa, stole the show in numerous incredible scenes that effectively captured the original show's epic nature. Many of the elemental bending scenes were also well-ex-

ecuted, and made many of the fight scenes feel immersive and epic, though some of the slow-motion action scenes felt a little overused at times.

There are also many hidden details that long-time fans of the show are sure to pick up on and enjoy, my favorite being the inclusion of the cabbage merchant. However, with this being an adaptation, this new version has certainly taken its own spin on the original series. Many episodes and storylines were combined into each episode, which made certain parts of the show feel a bit rushed or exposition-heavy. This can be somewhat expected in only an eight-episode adaptation.

The adaptation also features the addition of numerous scenes that were not featured in the original show, such as the fire nation wiping out the airbenders. This scene was incredibly powerful and terrifying at points, and gave context to many main aspects and motivations of the story. In addition to numerous other scenes — such as the opening moments of the first episode which also

explicitly featured the fire nation's immense brutality — these scenes highlight the fact that this show takes on a more mature adaptation of the original story. There were also heavy references to the second season of the original series, such as with the addition of Azula (Elizabeth Yu), Zuko's sister, who had a more prominent role in the adaption's season one storyline compared to the original show.

Overall, the new "Avatar: The Last Airbender" adaptation was a fairly good representation of the original animated series, while still taking on the story in its own way. It features numerous amazing performances, effects and action-packed scenes that revive the original show's epic tone. Although it isn't perfect, it does a wonderful job at capturing many of the important aspects of the story and creates a world that allows for long-time and new fans alike to take on the adventure.

Rating: 4.2/5



IMAGES COURTESY OF DGLPRODUCTIONS ON DEVIANTART

'HIDEO KOJIMA: CONNECTING WORLDS:'

how a game director made an all-encompassing artwork

by **Mert Metin**
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
mert.metin@uconn.edu

After being teased for streaming services at the 2023 Game Awards show, the hour-long documentary on Hideo Kojima was released on Disney+ and Hulu on Friday, Feb. 23. The documentary looks behind-the-scenes for the first project Kojima Productions released since their establishment, interviewing the founder, Kojima, and others involved in the making of "Death Stranding."

"Hideo Kojima: Connecting Worlds" was directed by Glen Milner, who has also worked on other previous behind-the-scenes documentaries. Milner himself said that he wanted to do this documentary to, "... capture Kojima-san's

thought process and philosophy behind the game..." To understand his passion through multiple perspectives, the documentary also includes interviews with many musicians, actors, directors and game designers to give their stories on what it was like working on this project and how they personally view Kojima.

Observing the studio's growth from its start to now, the documentary does a good job chronologically showing their progress on "Death Stranding" and the moments that made it what it is. However, an unfortunate side to this is that Kojima didn't get to talk about his past with Konami Studios where he had been originally working since 1986. Due to his nondisclosure agreement, he also did not speak about the many exceptional games he released while working with them, such as "Metal Gear." Even though the documentary doesn't go

into Kojima's past as a game designer, it does talk about the many important moments in his childhood that led him to be who he is now, all done through an anime medium where his early life is recreated. From the impact of the death of his restrictive father to venturing around the Japan World Exposition in 1970, he got the chance to harbor many different cultures in his mind. This helped him with work in the game industry, which most of the people who knew him had no faith in.

The studio's first project, "Death Stranding," takes on a unique approach to video game design in the current era of gaming, where most people expect person-to-person competition or a sort of leaderboard race. However, Kojima wanted to go against this, because he believed in creating a world where the many players work together by expanding and building upon the world the developers gave them.

The documentary also goes over how Kojima was influenced by his parents growing up in Japan during World War II and reading many books about war. He felt unhappy showing those who commit violent acts as a hero, giving them a sense of valiance. Instead, he wanted the players to be motivated by doing the given tasks by delivering packages to those in need and helping this fictional community of a post-apocalyptic America improve. Many people even now joke about Death Stranding as being an "Amazon Simulator" due to the simple package delivery aspect of the gameplay. However, the game is much more than that due to its convoluted story and impressive world-building. "Death Stranding" may not be for everyone, but I do think it has parts that everyone would enjoy due to the many gaming genres it reaches out to, showing that Kojima did reach his goal.

Helping Kojima's mission, "Death Stranding" coincidentally released four months before lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a game where people can feel the presence of one another without seeing them, those who played felt comforted and less isolated than they might have felt otherwise.

To finish off, the cinematography and editing of the documentary were well done, which was a step up from the average documentary. The animated shots weren't over the top but did add an enjoyable flair. There was also a use of older footage of Japan which was well utilized. It was interesting to learn about the process a director and game studio might experience when working on a game of this magnitude.

Rating: 4/5

MICAH HEUMANN DISPELS MYTHS ABOUT THE VALUE OF HUMANITIES DEGREES

by **Desirae Sin**
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
desirae.sin@uconn.edu

The University of Connecticut hosted a presentation by Micah Heumann, the director of the Office of Undergraduate Research on Monday, Feb. 26. His discussion was geared towards showing students how valuable majors in the humanities are, despite what your extended family members may say when you tell them that you are studying psychology.

Heumann stated the goal of his presentation was to “break down the myths and replace them with facts,” when it comes to what major students should choose. Previously, Heumann was an advisor for the ACES program, or the Academic Center for Exploratory Students. For undergraduates who haven’t decided what their major is, this is the program that they are assigned to. Oftentimes, he’d see students choose majors solely based on the job they want, but Heumann stated “employers just don’t care what your major is.”

Then, he recounted his visit to Silicon Valley, Calif. There he attended conventions of various tech companies including Facebook, Turbotax and Apple. From his discussions with those in attendance, he was surprised to find that a large number of people involved with these companies majored in things

like art history, philosophy or even creative writing. Heumann described what exactly employers look for. When they are reading applications, they don’t really care about what your specific major is, but instead ask, “Why did you do what you did?” Heumann said. They are looking for the specific reasons why you are interested in a job with them, and how flexible you can be.

The most important thing to employers is not necessarily your technical skills, but your transferable skills. Heumann defined transferable skills as “skills and abilities that are relevant and helpful across different areas of life: socially, professionally and at school.”

Some examples of this are critical thinking, time management, teamwork and communication. Technical skills would be aspects that involve you needing to know how to use certain tools, computer programs or a general trade. While technical skills are important, what employers want to know is how you can help everyone in their company, not just your individual ability.

Humanities degrees are valuable because they prepare students to be well-rounded, while specific majors like the medical sciences or mathematics do not. A story that Heumann recounted was during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was speaking with a friend after receiving their booster shots, but his friend commented on how they got a

bruise from the needle. Heumann didn’t experience this, and reminded the audience that there are many doctors or physicians who still believe the notion that African-Americans have tougher skin than white Americans. A belief steeped in racism and eugenics. “We haven’t properly educated our doctors,” Heumann stated. “Classes in the humanities balance your knowledge and understanding.”

To gain these important skills, Heumann encouraged students to get involved with internships or research projects at UConn. “You probably won’t hit these skills in a lecture hall,” Heumann commented. This means that even if you attend class every day and get good grades, it doesn’t make you very appealing to employers. You need experiences that display your ability to work well with others and that you can adapt.

Students can either reactively or proactively search for opportunities. Reactive searching is “applying to posted opportunities and established programs,” while proactive search-

ing is “actively seeking out opportunities and building relationships,” according to Heumann. Research projects can be found through department, faculty or lab websites. Lincus is also another avenue for students to find opportunities. It allows students to put in keywords related to what they want to see, and it shows any faculty involved with those concepts. It’s also useful because it shows which faculty are connected to each other from these labs, and how much their research is geared towards these keywords.

To end the presentation, Heumann mentioned OUR

Funding Programs at UConn that are open to undergraduates, no matter what their major. These include the BOLD Women’s Leadership Network, Change Grants, SHARE Virtual Summer Apprenticeships and the UConn Idea Grant. Many students have conducted research on topics outside of their major, which is a good sign to employers. “They don’t care what you’ve studied, but what you’ve done,” Heumann said. “I want to show you that a humanities degree is just as valuable as a biomedical degree, what matters is what you do with it.”

“I want to show you that a humanities degree is just as valuable as a biomedical degree, what matters is what you do with it.”

MICAH HEUMANN,
DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

'PACIFIC DRIVE' IS A DEADLY AND MYSTERIOUS ROAD TRIP WITH GREAT TUNES

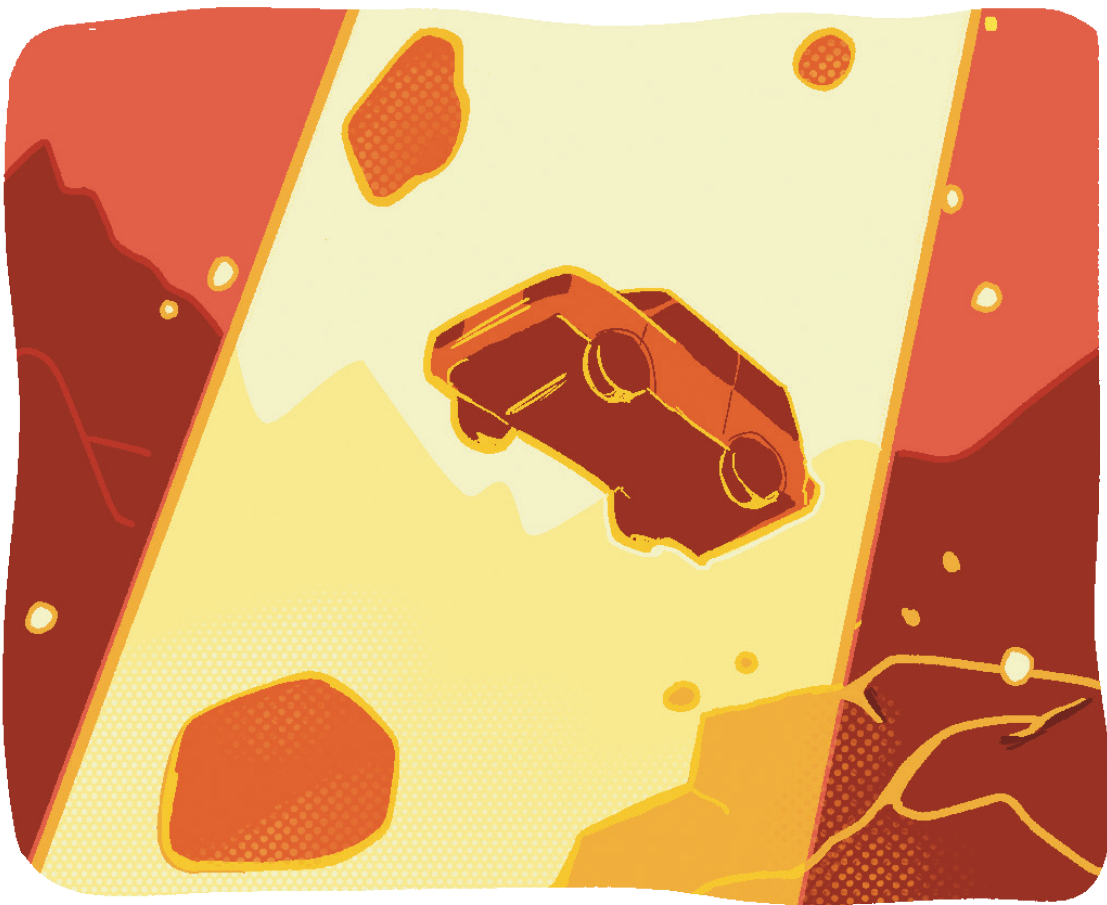


ILLUSTRATION BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by **Mert Metin**
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
mert.metin@uconn.edu

Developed by Ironwood Studios, Pacific Drive was released on Feb. 22 on Playstation and PC. Being Ironwood Studios’ first game, its presence was unexpected, but due to the successful demo and open communication with potential fans, they were able to get a sizable community excited for the release of the game. In addition, “Pacific Drive” was published by Kepler Interactive, who has made a presence in the last few years by helping release unique and

well made indie games that have taken off to impressive degrees.

Pacific Drive is a game where you start off as a delivery driver for a company called ARDA. During the job you are transported into a hazardous forest. After finding a scrappy car in a shed, you have no choice but to enter it for safety. Greeted by two voices over the car radio calling themselves Francis and Tobias, you are given no choice but to listen to them to survive. After reaching a temporary base of operations, you meet another character, Oppy, and the game’s cycle begins.

The simple idea is that you must explore zones laid out before

you on a projector map, by doing so you gain access to farther lands by exploring the closer areas first — with some landmark spots mixed around the map too. The objective is to gather materials and documents left behind by the people who used to live in a town that is within the Olympic Exclusion Zone where the game takes place. This zone is the result of a failed government plan of getting a town near the ARDA facility to experience a new technology under supervision.

Similar to the gameplay of Raft and The Long Drive, you must scavenge and collect parts from the surroundings to improve your vehicle. Researching better parts

allows you to craft them for better protection against the dangerous environment around you. One of the more impressive aspects of “Pacific Drive” is the variety in the upgrades: some are simple and have been done before, while others are unique to the game and its creatively designed hazards. These hazards can range from malicious debris to explosive dummies that appear out of nowhere.

The game lasts around 20 hours, creating an immersive driving experience with a lot of fun gimmicks and niche design details that make me appreciate the game more. One rare detail about the car I found to be well implemented was the functioning mirrors. While most racing/driving games don’t make mirrors very clear or usable, Pacific Drive helps you watch out for dangers from whichever angle they might decide to approach you from. Another fun activity is customizing your car with paint and other accessories you find in the zone. It’s rewarding to personalize the vehicle before riding off into another road trip. To accompany you during trips, the in-game radio comes with many music tracks specially made for the game that make it all the more enjoyable.

While “Pacific Drive” did initially release with some minor issues and bugs, the developers have been working since to fix all of the problems a player might come across. Having released

three updates already, they’re improving the experience for all.

One amusing thing about the game is how easily it could have been turned into a horror game. With terrifying ambient noises and dark environments, the game doesn’t directly try to scare you, but cleverly uses the atmosphere to make you feel uncomfortable. This only builds upon the feeling of urgency that you have to get out of the zone as soon as possible.

While the gameplay loop does eventually get boring like most survival games, the developers have clearly done a lot in terms of trying to cut down on the unnecessary design choices some other games have done. In addition, if you simply decide to follow the story to the end without caring for much else, you can speed through the game, as it lets you explore wherever you wish if you have the locations accessible. “Pacific Drive” is definitely my favorite survival game to come out in a long time. It’s great to see that Ironwood Studios was able to bring back a sense of freshness into the genre.

**RATING:
4/5**



Life

@dailycampuslife

Crusade the galaxy in ‘BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC: ARMADA 2

by Desirae Sin
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
desirae.sin@uconn.edu

Welcome back to The Backlog, where we review video games based on a certain genre or word each month. We are finally closing out our “strategy” games for February with a game that takes the cake for being the most tactical out of them all, “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2.”

This is an abrupt shift from the games we’ve covered so far. “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2” is part of the Warhammer 40k franchise and available cross-platform through Steam, the Windows Store and GOG. It was released in 2019 as a sequel to “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada” that was released in 2016. The sequel builds upon the first game’s mechanics and includes more factions, so I opted to review the second one as opposed to the first. “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2” is based around real-time space battles. Players command a fleet of ships from their chosen faction and must duke it out with enemies either online or through the campaign.

For background, “Battlefleet

Gothic: Armada 2” is an extension of the Warhammer 40k universe. In the simplest description, the story takes place in the 41st millennium where war is the only constant. Humanity — or the Imperium of Man — is constantly battling against alien species like the Orks, Necrons, Tyranids and even other humans. What makes the Imperium of Man so complicated is that they are composed of militarized chapters, or groups of various Space Marine soldiers that act as the Emperor’s fighting forces. These Space Marines have very straightforward goals: surviving and purging heretics. Heretics are anybody who is either not a human or not on the Imperium’s side. If it seems like a very xenophobic mindset, that’s because it is. Many of these Space Marines can be equated to Space Nazis. The most popular of these chapters are the Ultramarines, which are essentially the default starter chapters for many players. They are the easiest to learn and use in both the video games and in the table-top games.

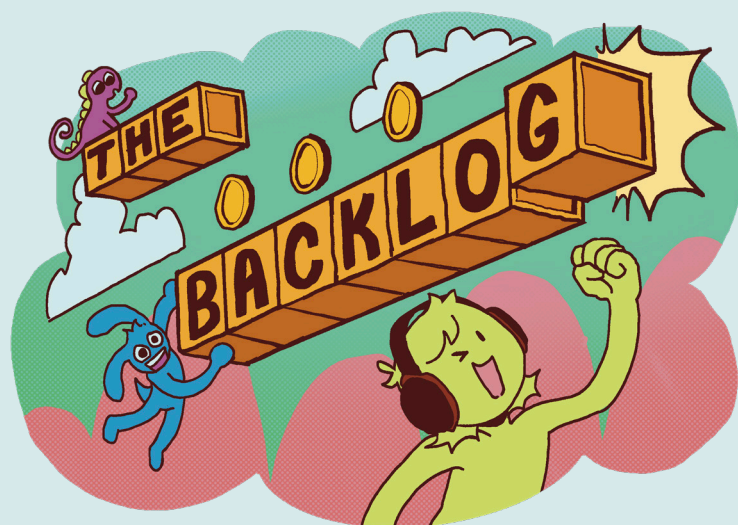
The Warhammer 40k universe is vast and contains a lot of lore, but it’s best understood in the context of being a wargame, where players build their forces

and do everything they can to win battles in space and take over planets for resources.

As far as mechanics go, “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2” contains some of the most intricate and realistic systems I’ve ever experienced. It doesn’t just have space-ships with a health bar, but also includes fuel, morale and various other features that must be considered. What makes it so interactive and realistic is that the ships can be damaged in segments, so if something like the generator is damaged then the shields cannot be activated. Not to mention, if the morale of a ship decreases enough, the crew may resort to mutiny and abandon their posts or leave the battle entirely. While the battle system can seem daunting, the format is actually on a 2D plane, so it’s easy to chart out ship paths and turret directions.

This can seem very complicated for beginners, but I find that the battles become simpler as they progress. Players will find that they have to change their tactics often or change their factions based on their enemies. What works on one group may not work on another.

The graphics are also where “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2”



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

excels, although I would argue that a physics-heavy game like this requires a strong PC or console to be played well. My laptop that lacks a graphics card is not an option for something like this—it can barely run the “Sims 4.”

While there is a lot of content to play through and unpack in “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2,” the campaigns are generally straightforward, and rely on the lore of Warhammer 40k. I do have to commend the voice actors for the characters’ dialogue. They are able to deliver epic

one-liners, along with the unintelligible screams of cosmic horrors beyond our comprehension.

Overall, “Battlefleet Gothic: Armada 2” is a great simulation of galactic warfare, but it can quickly become dull. It can get especially frustrating when competing with other players, but this is not a unique experience. For many gamers, I can see how it wouldn’t feel very compelling to play this for long, especially if you find the act of balancing your armada a tedious task.

Rating:



‘Metamorphose’: Making sense of life and death with an orchestra ensemble

by Lilith Rampertab
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
SHE/HER/HERS
lilith.rampertab@uconn.edu

On Thursday, Feb. 22, von der Mehden Recital Hall hosted an orchestral concert, titled “Metamorphose: UConn Symphonic Wind Ensemble.” The ensemble’s warming up was audible from the audience. The best way to describe it is as an impressive wall of sound.

The conductor, Dr. Janet Song Kim, entered the stage, and without a word, the concert began with a short trumpet solo that eventually grew into a brass section solo. When the full band started playing, the trumpet was front and center. The snares and cymbals made the composition stand out even more, as they provided a triumphant undertone to the already victorious sound of the rest of the band. The flutes later stuck out as being incredibly gorgeous. They

reminded me of “Morphogenetic Sorrow” and “Blue Bird Lamentation” from the “Zero Escape” soundtrack.

Kim explained that the composition is titled “Life Anew” and that it was composed by a current UConn student and ensemble member Mark Paine. As the program states, “It is dedicated to Richard F. Hunihan II, a loving grandfather gone too soon.” Paine wanted to celebrate Hunihan’s life with “Life Anew.”

Kim then introduced a two-movement composition by Viet Cuong entitled “Diamond Tide,” which started with the woodwinds and xylophone. The cymbal control was enamoring, as the musicians would crash the cymbal and then mute it just to crash it again with the other percussive instruments.

There was a short pause to represent the transition between movements. Tubular bells and other metallic percussive instruments played at first, and then the brass came

in. Then there was a flute solo followed by an extremely loud moment that felt like a metaphorical punch to the face. The aggression didn’t stop there. Even the moment of respite had aggressive undertones.

After “Diamond Tide,” Kim introduced guest conductor Dr. Henry Dorn and recollected how she met him at a music-based workshop. “There is intention behind everything he writes,” Kim said. Seeing the two conductors hug made many audience members smile. Dorn delved into the deep and urgent subject matter surrounding his composition “Transitions.” “This piece isn’t supposed to be beautiful,” Dorn said. He explained how this piece represents when his mother passed away from cancer one month after visiting him.

There was a franticness to the composition which reminded me of “Human Story 3” by James Ferraro if it were even more anxious. The rendition could make someone physically flinch with its at-

tack notes. The woodwinds then made a weird feedback sound that resembled a flatline. There was then an ambiguous moment that sparked feelings of fighting back or despairing that was then resolved by confident horns. This composition was a potent and human potpourri of painful emotions.

Kim returned to introduce “Symphony No. 4” by revealing how bittersweet the performance of this composition was for her because of the loss of composer Glen Adsit, who recently died from cancer. She acknowledged how oddly the theme of the life cycle fit together with these four compositions in the name of coping with grief. It then became clear that “Diamond Tide” could not only represent the metamorphosis of diamonds, but also the transition between life and the afterlife. She then showed a clip of a video where Adsit was speaking with the Hartt Wind Ensemble.

There was a moment with a

melodic percussive instrument similar to a xylophone which reminded me of “Ten Songs For Humanity” by James Ferraro. Then there was a brief avant-garde jazz section and then a sound that resembled a cross between a whale call and a soft air raid siren. The conductor’s vigor in waving the baton to showcase the intensity of the piece was admirable. The performance was awarded by a standing ovation.

To anyone who enjoys music or has an open mind, I recommend supporting these musicians and the valuable things they portray. If you’re sensitive to loud noises, however, I would be cautious about attending these events, as the orchestra can get loud and intense. Von der Mehden Recital Hall will host another show on April 11, 2024. All von der Mehden events are free for UConn students with a valid ID.



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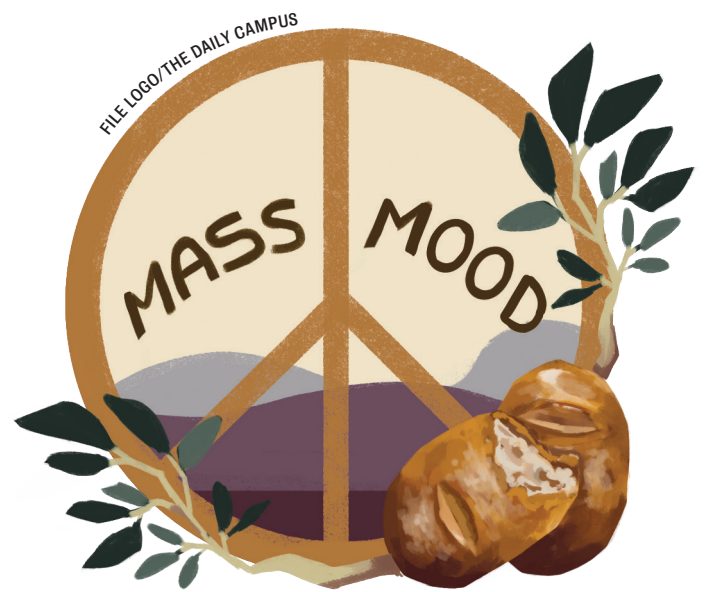
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COMIC BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

MASS MOOD



LESSONS FROM A TRIP TO INDIA



A corporate office in Manyata Tech Park, Bengaluru. Over the past three decades, Bengaluru has seen rapid growth in the size of the population and economy due to overseas investment in the technology sector. PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

by Nell Srinath
OPINION EDITOR
THEY/THEM/SHE/HER
nell.srinath@uconn.edu

Coming off a 10-day visit to India for the first time in over half a decade, I have a lot to take in and not quite enough time to do so.

The visit was for my cousin's wedding, the first in my close family. The events spanned nearly a week and allowed me to engage with, even as an onlooker, an incredible culture from which I've long been distant. I got to enjoy elaborate and vivacious wedding parties, eat mind-blowing food and experience the (legal) union of two remarkable families. I'm still reeling from all the ecstasy of encountering and being in community with so many people, new and old, and truly enjoying the country in a way I never could have imagined as an angsty, aloof high school-age teenager. I'm truly floored by the short time I spent there — even if I have to do some academic damage control this week — and I hope my experience can be a testament to the inimitable experience of traveling home for all (hashtag) diaspora kids still looking to "get in touch with their roots."

Yet, my unforgettable visit to Bengaluru and New Delhi has not been without difficult tensions between individualistic enjoyment and the catastrophic state of the country and world around me. The

first and most profound time I experienced this was actually almost 5,000 km outside of India. During my 12-hour flight to Abu Dhabi, our plane flew directly over the Sinai peninsula in Egypt — roughly 200 km away from the city of Rafah, Gaza, which the Israeli government is seriously flirting with invading as part of their ruthless assault in the Gaza strip. Flying over a human tragedy that the International Court of Justice rules was plausibly a genocide is enough to make your stomach drop all 40,000 km to the ground below, especially when you're en route to a wedding which is, to be frank, an inherently hedonistic affair.

This isn't to undercut the significance of the event itself (seriously, congratulations family), nor to make a genocide about my own privileged western guilt. Rather, I want to highlight a reality that not enough people recognize, let alone internalize and practice in their politics: the world is increasingly divided into the immiserated and the comfortable; the exploited and beneficiaries of exploitation (passive and active).

The drive out from the newly suped-up Kempegowda International Airport, also known as T2, in Bengaluru put this inequality in plain (or perhaps plane?) sight. The ₹13,000 crore (\$1.6 billion) airport terminal lights up the city around it. The sprawl in the surrounding highways are rife with billboards for luxury vehicles and high-end real estate. Yet, a 15-minute walk

from T2, a slum area lies in the village of Kithaganar. One hour out from T2, the wealthy neighborhood of Whitefield, containing a tech park, luxury housing and numerous malls, looms over slums that house migrant workers and students. The slums of Thubarahalli and Kundalahalli are vulnerable to weeks-long power outages, and residents are often evicted due to improper disposal of solid waste via trash burning — despite the fact that trash burning is allegedly contracted out through the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the city agency responsible for waste management and other civic services.

2,000 such slums — characterized by the UN as having a lack of durable housing, sufficient space, clean water, proper sanitation and protection from displacement — exist throughout the megacity, whereas the government lists fewer than 600, suggesting significant undercounting. Some estimates indicate that as much as 23% of Bengaluru's population of 12 million live in slum areas, marking the extreme inequality that exists within the "Silicon Valley of India."

Liberalization of the Indian economy — referring to the priva-

tization of state-owned enterprises and opening up of the economy to foreign private investment — is often lauded by western-dominated financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for the country's rapid development and the alleged elevation of millions out of poverty. Two major manifestations of this are the tech boom, spurred by globalization in the form of offshoring and responsible for tripling Bengaluru's population since the 1990s; and India's burgeoning real estate industry, financed by billions of dollars in foreign investment topped by Canada and Singapore.

Yet the massive wealth brought about by international finance and real estate capital have done little to ameliorate the extreme poverty that persists throughout the country. Glass, steel and concrete monstrosities forming high-rise apartments in New Delhi and corporate headquarters in Gurugram serve as monuments to the deepening divide between upper and middle classes. This affects masses of impoverished migrant workers, farmers, children, mothers, tribal peoples (also known as Adivasis) and peoples from oppressed castes.

To briefly parse through the other social issues inflaming India during my stay — such as deadly police responses to farmers protests in Punjab and to protests by indigenous Kukis in Manipur — would be a disservice to their importance. India is indeed as fractured as any other country boiling above the flames of global capitalism, religious nationalism, patriarchy, casteism and occupation (in the case of occupied Kashmir). For all the complicated feelings I have about vacationing in this powder keg of social contradictions, I realize that guilt is not necessary or useful as the motive force for change. Far more important is rejecting a society in which the comfortable or lavish lifestyles of relatively few are only possible because a great majority are chronically exploited, displaced or disenfranchised.

Next time I visit India — hopefully soon — I don't want to hit the tarmac with the imperialistic intention of white-knighting democracy, equality and secularism into the country. However, for what little it's worth, I do have every desire to continue learning from and supporting the people there who are educating and struggling for a better world.



A road sign installed by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike. The BBMP is a government agency responsible for providing amenities and infrastructural maintenance to the Greater Bengaluru metropolitan area. PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

Study Break

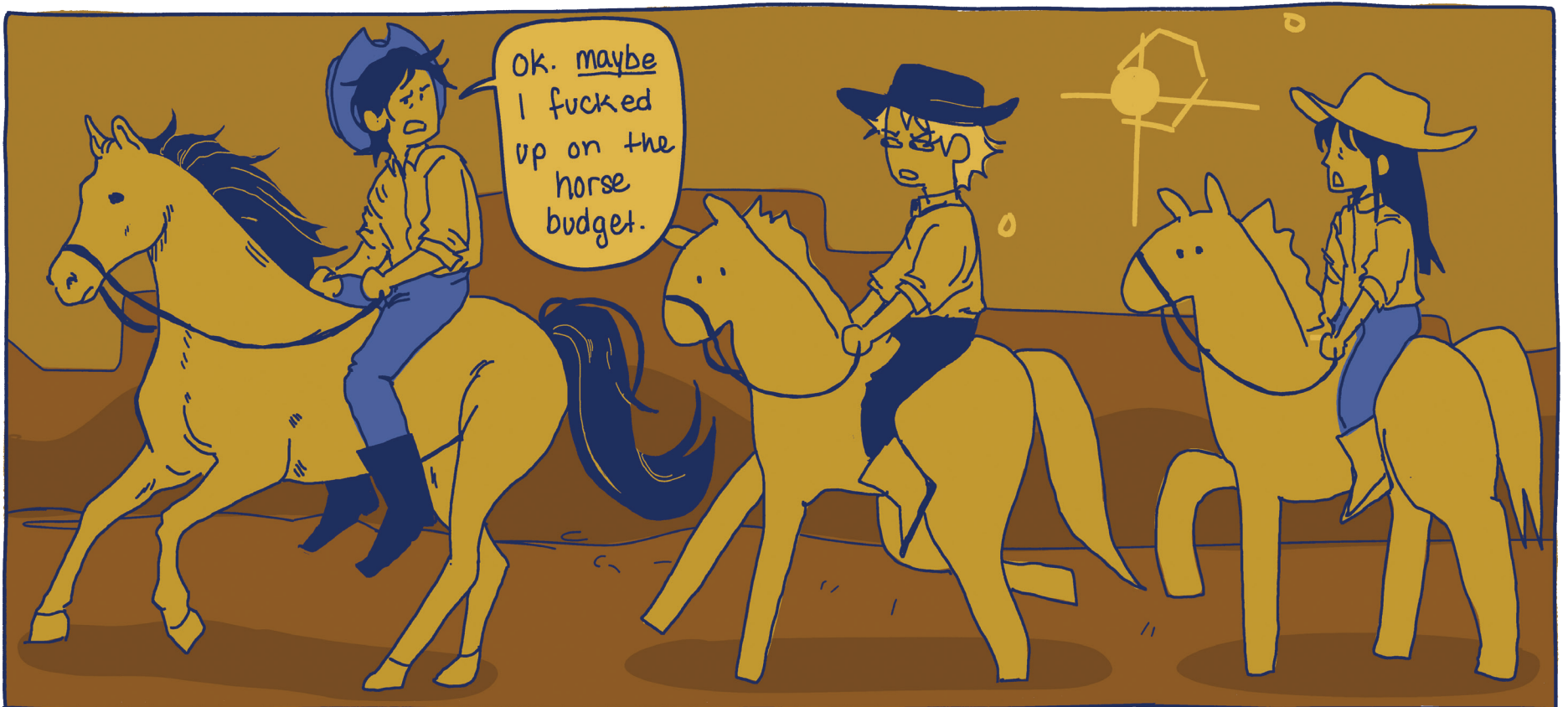
Photo of the Day | Huskies take it home



The Toscano Family Ice Forum is home to the UConn women's ice hockey team. With a win over Boston University, the Huskies became the Hockey East Regular Season Champions for the first time in program history. PHOTO BY BLAKE SYKES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



COMIC BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



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

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FLIP THE PAPER UPSIDE-DOWN FOR THE ANSWER!

THE PUCK DROP: RANGERS' MATT REMPE'S MONSTROUS FIRST WEEK IN THE NHL

by Avery Becker
SHE/HER/HERS
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
avery.becker@uconn.edu

At the second game in the 2024 Stadium series, where the New York Rangers played the New York Islanders, a hockey player made history as the first player to make his NHL debut at an outdoor NHL game.

That player was 21 year old Calgary native, Matt Rempe. The forward was called up to the Rangers' team after veteran Blake Wheeler went down with a leg injury, causing him to miss the rest of this season. The 6-foot-7 Canadian began his 2023-2024

season playing 43 games for the

Hartford Wolfpack. During that period, he notched eight goals and four assists. Even though he was not a focal point of his team's attack, he certainly was on the defensive end. The 2020 NHL draft pick was a player known around the AHL to throw some punches, notching 16 fights in his first two seasons in the AHL.

"I play a hard, physical game that runs on adrenaline, so I'm going be juiced up to the max. I think I'd be buzzing out there. How can you not be going, with all the fans and playing outdoors? Like, this is pure hockey. It's unreal," Rempe said ahead of the game.

About one minute and 29 seconds into the game, Rempe got into a fight with the Islanders' veteran Matt Martin on his first NHL shift with the Rangers. Although both players traded punches back and forth, neither one of them went down onto the ice before the referees had to come and break it up.

Not only was Rempe's NHL debut or the Rangers' 6-5 comeback win in overtime significant, but it was also the sixth year anniversary of his father's death.

The Calgary native's week did not stop there, though.

In just his fourth game with the Rangers, he dropped the gloves again with Philadelphia Flyers' go-to fighter, veteran Nicolas Deslauriers, just three minutes into the first period.

The fight between the two lasted for an uncommon 37 seconds.

To really seal the deal for the team, Rempe scored the

game-winning goal, putting the score at 2-1.

Later in an interview with ABC, Rempe said that Deslauriers challenged him at warmups, and he obliged.

Then, the next day, Rempe got into another fight against the Columbus Blue Jackets' Mathieu Olivier in their first shift. Just like the fight against Deslauriers, it was a proposition given at warmups that he could not refuse.

Even though the Rangers lost this game 4-2 and the Blue Jackets collapsed their 10-game winning streak, Rempe assisted Adam Edstrom's goal in the second period.

"Very eventful first week. I'm loving it...I want to bring that physicality, that edge to the team, bring speed, fly in there, bang bodies, go to the net and I think I'm doing that. I'm having so much fun." Rempe remarked in an interview with ABC.

With players like captain Jacob Trouba, the Rangers are known to be an incredibly physical team. Even with the loss of Wheeler, the forward adds that extra depth they need as the team works towards the playoffs and games against teams who are as equally physical.

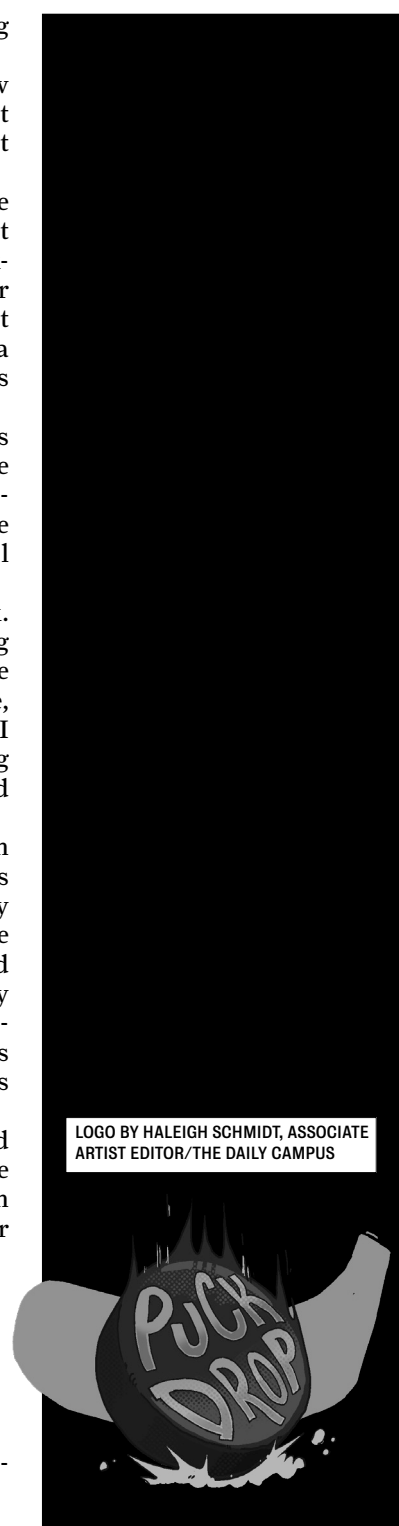
"Rempe came in here and provided exactly what we wanted him to do," head coach Peter Laviolette said after Rempe's first game.

With such an impactful first week in the NHL, it will be exciting to see what else Rempe will have in store for Ranger's fans for the rest of the season.

Prepare to have your popcorn ready.



CLIPART COURTESY OF OPENCLIPART



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

Which Olympic basketball teams does Team USA need to watch out for?

by Juliana Bravo
SHE/HER/HERS
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
juliana.bravo@uconn.edu

When thinking about dominant basketball squads on the international scale, the first country that comes to mind has to be the United States. The U.S. basketball team has brought home the gold medal in the past four Olympics. In fact, the U.S. has won 16 of the 19 Olympics they've appeared in. It's no secret why or how they've won. American players make up a majority of the NBA and such careful cultivation of a "dream team" allows Team USA to come out on top.

However, the NBA has also seen a surge in international players in recent years. Players born outside the U.S. or who have ties to international countries make up 23.5% of the NBA.

With that being the case, an important question to ask is whether this will be the year other countries prove their dominance in the Olympic basketball games.

With the recent announcement of Team USA's 41-player pool, including players like LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Anthony Davis and Joel Embiid, it'll be no surprise if they can power through the 2024 Paris Olympics.

France, Japan, South Sudan, the United States, Canada, Germany, Serbia and Australia have already been selected to appear in the Olympics. While not every country has announced their player pool yet, three teams are already looking strong enough to put up a fight against the Stars and Stripes.

FRANCE

Playing in their home country, it's certain that this team will have a winning mentality. In the 2020 Olympics (played in 2021 due to COVID-19),

USA and France played for the gold medal. While the U.S. came out on top with an 87-82 win, the French players put up a strong fight.

Victor Wembanyama, the top pick of the 2023 NBA draft, has proved to be an incredible player. He's currently averaging 20 points per game while also doing incredible things on the floor, most recently recording the league's first 5x5 game since 2019. At 7-foot-4 and an 8-foot wingspan, his versatility allows him to play center or power forward.

Bilal Coulibaly, selected seventh in the 2023 draft and a former teammate of Wembanyama, is averaging 8.3 points but 26.9 minutes per game so far for the Wizards. He's becoming more comfortable on the court with every game he plays.

Evan Fournier, a shooting guard for the Pistons, has also expressed interest in playing for France. He played in the 2020 Olympics, averaging 25 minutes and 17 points per game. However, he's been on and off the court this season, dealing with injuries and personal situations that might jeopardize his Olympic participation.

Center Rudy Gobert has played in the last two Olympics and is interested in playing for France in 2024. While he's not having the best season of his career, the three-time NBA All-Star's Olympic experience will help France's younger players.

France's strengths lie in their center and defense position, a department Team USA has been known to lack. With the possible addition of Wembanyama and Coulibaly, France's offense will improve too, giving them as good a shot to knock off Team USA as they've ever had.

CANADA

Canada last appeared in the Olympics basketball in 2000, when they found themselves

in seventh place. However, the team has significantly grown since then. They might not have the Olympic experience that Team USA has, but their player pool is strong.

Some of their most notable players include Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, a point guard with undeniable talent. Currently averaging 31.2 points and 34.5 minutes, the NBA MVP candidate's ability to knock down shots will prove helpful in the Olympics against the USA's offensive dominance.

Jamal Murray, another point guard, is averaging 47% from the field and 40.6% from three, improving his career stats. He also helped out Denver's championship win, averaging 26.1 points and 39.9 minutes during the playoffs.

Dillon Brooks' hustle and 39 points against the USA in the recent FIBA Cup also proved him to be a necessary component for Canada. The Rockets wing will be crucial in helping make winning plays for the Canadian side.

Despite not playing

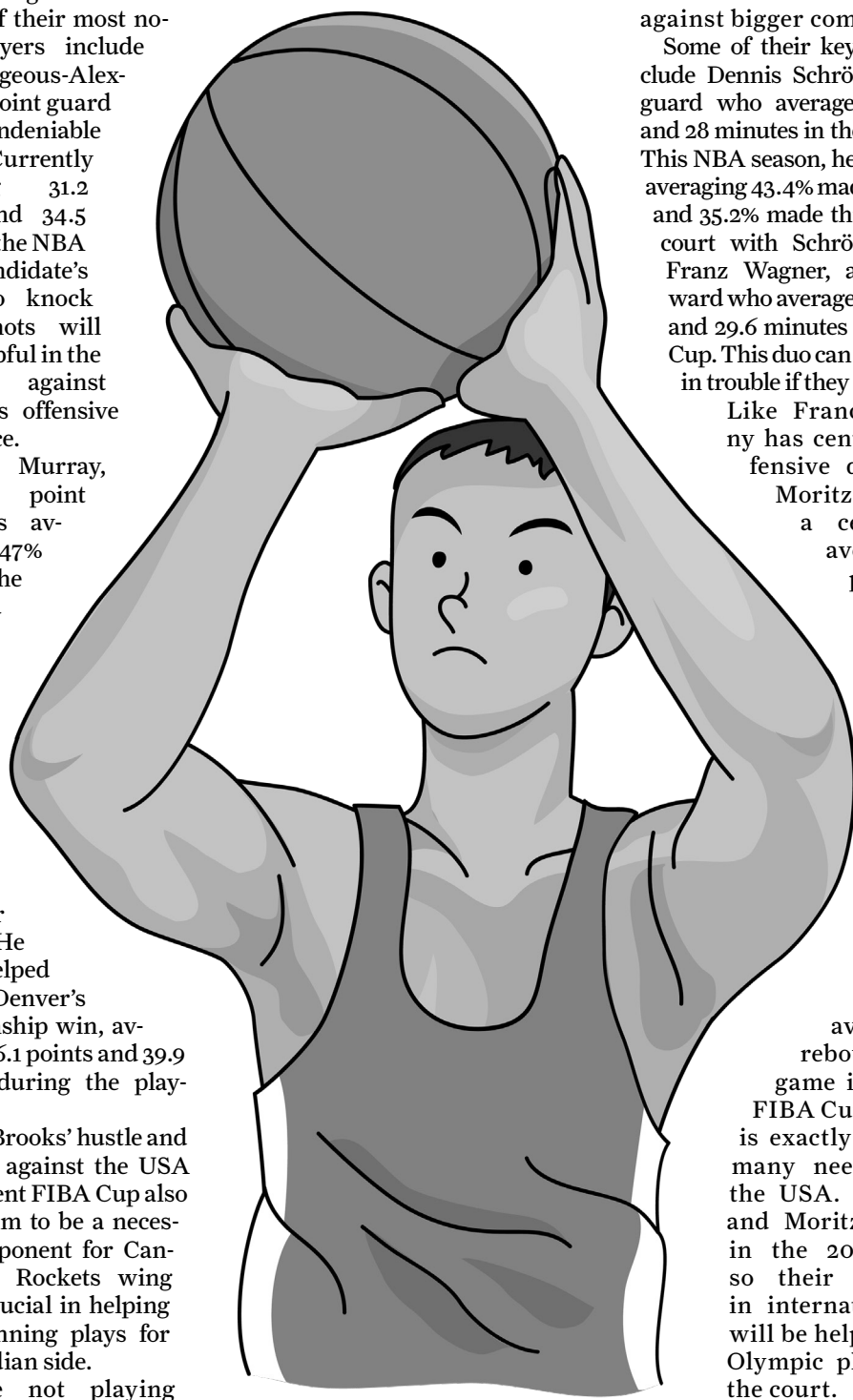
together or in the Olympics, once they get comfortable on the court, their offensive strength can become a threat against the USA.

GERMANY

Germany proved itself strong against some solid opponents in the 2023 FIBA Cup; though they'll have to rework their strategies against bigger competition.

Some of their key players include Dennis Schröder, a point guard who averaged 19 points and 28 minutes in the FIBA Cup. This NBA season, he is currently averaging 43.4% made field goals and 35.2% made threes. On the court with Schröder will be Franz Wagner, a small forward who averaged 16.8 points and 29.6 minutes in the FIBA Cup. This duo can put the USA in trouble if they get hot.

Like France, Germany has center and defensive depth with Moritz Wagner, a center who averaged 11.9 points and 17.6 minutes in the FIBA Cup and Johannes Voigtmann, who averaged six rebounds per game in the 2023 FIBA Cup. That duo is exactly what Germany needs against the USA. Voigtmann and Moritz appeared in the 2020 games, so their knowledge in international play will be helpful as new Olympic players take the court.



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Sports

Photo of the Day | Farewell #32



Richard "Rip" Hamilton stands in front of a home crowd at Gampel Pavilion as his number gets retired on Feb. 24, 2024. He is the fourth basketball player at UConn to receive this honor. PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The Weekly Reed:

Addressing the court storm problem

by Noah Reed

HE/HIM/HIS
STAFF WRITER
noah.reed@uconn.edu

The past couple months have put a spotlight on court storming in the college world, especially with this weekend's fiasco at Wake Forest. We've seen players like Caitlyn Clark of Iowa and Kyle Filipowski of Duke be involved in altercations on the court due to storming that has put player and fan safety at risk. It's divided people across the nation, with plenty of people petitioning to eliminate it entirely. Media members like Jay Bilas of ESPN have even gone as far as proposing the idea that fans should be detained on the court to stop future court storming events. Some have offered the solution of taking away a home game for the team the following year. This has caused such a ruckus in not just college basketball, but the college sports community for years. But what can actually be done to stop future problems?

To start off, I think banning it would lead to more issues than anything else. Telling college students that they can't do something only makes them want to do it more. Instead of making it safer, it would probably make it more of a mess than it already is, so it does not seem like a viable solution. Banning it also ruins a part of the game. Court storms allow

players and fans to create a once in a lifetime experience and have been around for decades. As Keyshawn Johnson said on Undisputed Monday morning, court storming is a part of the fabric of college sports, for both football and basketball. Taking it away just seems like a soft move as there are ways to fix it to ensure it is safely done.

What I've seen online that I tend to agree with is giving players a 30 second shot clock to get off the court and get into the locker room. It allows players plenty of time to avoid the masses rushing onto the court and still allows the home team the ability to have a moment with their fans. Getting fans to abide by those rules is not going to be the easiest task in the world, but the NCAA has already let this situation get out of hand. If fans can't comply with the 30 second countdown to allow players to get to safety, that's when the heftier punishments should be enforced.

With all this being said, this is not a responsibility that should fall onto the visiting players and coaches to get off the court as fast as possible. That's just how it's been for years because the NCAA, as much as they might not want to seem it, enjoy court storms as they bring national recognition. Because of this, the problem has gotten worse and has caused the injuries of fans and players.

As for the schools them-

selves, I think Stephen A. Smith brought up a good point about how schools don't want to spend the money on security to protect the visiting players. The NCAA can play their role by requiring a certain level of security to protect the visitors in situations where they are expecting a court storm. If a school doesn't comply, they get fined, simple as that.

There are countless instances of where court storms have been unproblematic, but it falls on the NCAA and the schools to protect their players. Take for example Creighton this past week. In their win over UConn, security was able to get the Huskies off the court safely and basically roped off half of the court to protect them while their team celebrated the win. No one got hurt because they had plenty of security and a good plan of action.

While this issue will be debated on for the weeks to come, it'll be interesting to see what the NCAA decides on as their course of action. It's getting to the point where they need to respond with something, but the NCAA doesn't have the best track record with doing that. (They should also get new AP Poll voters while they're at it. How is Purdue ahead of UConn??)

So no, don't get rid of court storms. Be better at protecting the players who bring in your revenue so that players and fans can enjoy the game the way it's been for years.

Big East Baller Update No. 11: Big East Tournament seedings begin to form

by Sam Calhoun
HE/HIM/HIS
STAFF WRITER
samuel.calhoun@uconn.edu

It is the last week of February, with March beginning on Friday. UConn currently has a two-game lead over Marquette in the Big East standings. The Huskies can clinch at least a portion of the regular season title if they beat Seton Hall on Sunday. If Creighton beats Marquette on Saturday, the title is all theirs.

In this edition of Big East Baller Update, we recap the last full week of February, where teams continue to fight for a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

Player of the Week: Kam Jones, G, Marquette (34 PPG, 1.5 RPG, 1.5 APG, 2 SPG, 71.9 FG%, 70.3P%, 88.9 FT%)

In a 105-71 win over DePaul on Wednesday, Jones finished with a career-high 34 points, shooting 80% from the floor while drilling eight 3-pointers. The Memphis, Tenn. native matched his point total, hitting six 3-pointers and shooting 64.7% overall as the Golden Eagles beat Xavier 88-64 on Sunday. He became the first Big East player to score at least 34 points in back-to-back league games since former Marquette guard Markus Howard recorded 35 points against Xavier and 42 points at Georgetown.

Freshman of the Week: Stephon Castle, G, UConn (12 PPG, 4 RPG, 1 APG, 33.3 FG%, 100 FT%)

Death, taxes and Castle being named the Big East Freshman of the Week. The Covington, Ga. native had 14 points and six rebounds as the Huskies earned a bounce-back win from a brutal loss at Creighton. When the conference released its weekly awards on Monday, Castle collected his ninth honor as Big East Freshman of the Week, one short of the Big East record, belonging to Syracuse legend Carmelo Anthony.

Top Games
St. John's bounces back by

defeating Georgetown 90-85

St. John's needed to bounce back following a gut-wrenching loss to Seton Hall on Feb. 18. Penn transfer guard Jordan Dingle led the team in a game where the Red Storm never trailed. The Valley Stream, N.Y. native had 22 points, shooting 8-13 from the floor. Three of head coach Rick Pitino's players scored at least 15 points, with RJ Luis scoring 19 and Daniss Jenkins scoring 15. Jenkins scored 11 of his 15 points in the first half. Luis scored 15 in the second half. For Georgetown, former Illinois guard Jayden Epps led the way as one of the best scorers in the conference. The Norfolk, Va. native posted 31 points, while

sneak into the NCAA Tournament as a bubble team. Big East Player of the Year candidate Devin Carter had a near triple-double in Cincinnati, Ohio, finishing the game with 22 points, 11 rebounds, seven assists and a whopping four blocks.

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



The UConn men's basketball takes a hard earned win against Villanova on Feb. 24, 2024 at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. Guard Cam Specer scored nearly a third of the Huskies 78 points during the game.

PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

sophomore guard Rowan Brumbaugh finished the game with 15 points and seven assists.

Providence erases 9-point deficit in first half to beat Xavier, 79-75

Xavier dropped to 13-13 following the Musketeers' loss to Providence on Wednesday night, ending any possibility they could

have lost 15 games in a row, but the scoring distribution was there for the Blue Demons. Elijah Fisher, Da'Sean Nelson and Jalen Terry all finished with 16 points.

Upcoming Games
Providence at No. 5 Marquette (Wednesday, 7 p.m., FS1)

It will be a battle between two of the best guards in the Big East

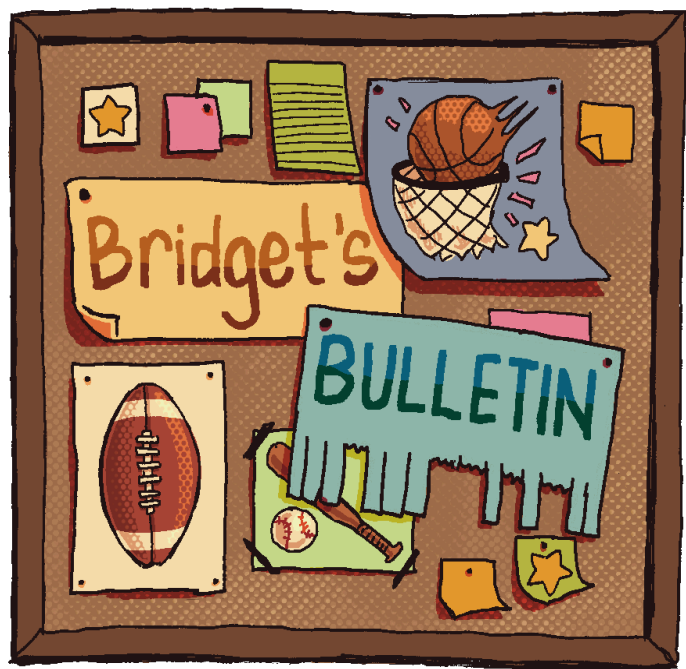
as Carter and Marquette's Tyler Kolek battle in Milwaukee, Wis. Providence had the Golden Eagles' number at the Amica Mutual Pavilion on Dec. 19, upsetting Marquette 72-57. Marquette head coach Shaka Smart and his team are seeking revenge and come into the game with Jones leading the team in scoring in the past three games. If Providence were to complete the sweep and upset Marquette, it would tremendously help their resume for the NCAA Tournament. However, only Butler has come into Fiserv Forum and taken down the Golden Eagles this season.

Seton Hall at No. 12 Creighton (Wednesday, 9 p.m., FS1)

It will be back-to-back must-watch games in the Midwest region in the Big East. Following Providence and Marquette's showdown, Seton Hall looks to improve its tournament resume as they visit Omaha, Neb. to take on Creighton. For Creighton, they had a bittersweet week. Last week, the Bluejays made history as they upset then-No. 1 UConn, the program's first win against an AP No. 1 team. They could not spoil St. John's Senior Day as the Red Storm took down Creighton by 14 points on Sunday. On Jan. 20, the two teams faced off at the Prudential Center in what was a Big East classic, with Creighton winning in triple overtime.

No. 5 Marquette at No. 12 Creighton (Saturday, 2:30 p.m., FOX)

One of the most anticipated games in Big East play is almost here as two of three ranked teams go head-to-head for the first time since a thriller on Dec. 30. This game features arguably the two best backcourts in the conference. Marquette wants to stay alive as they try to catch up with UConn in the standings, but it won't be easy. Only Villanova has upset the Bluejays at the CHI Health Center in Omaha, Neb.



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

by Bridget Bronsdon
SHE/HER/HERS
STAFF WRITER
bridget.bronsdon@uconn.edu

The road to the Paris Olympics became a bit more clear for the American track stars after this past week's USATF indoor championships. With some of the world's fastest athletes competing for the same titles, the stakes have never been higher. With the Olympic Trials and the Paris Games right around the corner, the USATF Indoor Championships gave several athletes a final chance to perform on the big stage before the Games.

From the sprinters, newcomers and veterans had mere milliseconds to defend their titles and set new records. Aleia Hobbs, defending champion of the 60, held her title as she came roaring down the straightaway for a season-best 7.02 time. While the 60 event is not held at the Olympics, Hobbs may make an appearance for the 100 as she is currently ranked No. 19 in the world. The Paris qualifying time for the 100 has been set to 11.07 and Hobbs' personal best is 10.81.

While Hobbs demonstrates some promise, chances are she will go directly against defending champions Teahna Daniels and Javianne Oliver if she makes it to Paris. Daniels earned a silver medal in the 2020 Tokyo Games for the women's 4x100

relay and finished seventh in the women's 100. As for Oliver, she also earned a silver in the 4x100 and finished 13th in the 100.

As for the 400, Alexis Holmes is showing promise. Holmes is currently a world record holder due to her performance in the women's 4x400 and is making incredible strides in the open 400. Holmes is currently ranked No. 22 in the world in the 400 with a personal best of 50.32. As for her competition, she may be going directly against USA's Allyson Felix, arguably the most decorated track and field female athlete with seven golds, three silvers and one bronze. In the 2020 Games, Felix ran a 49.46 and took home the bronze. While Holmes' time is right behind her, one second makes all the difference in the sprinting game.

If Holmes ran her personal best in Tokyo, she would have taken home seventh place.

Brian Faust will be another contender to watch as he shattered a personal record in the men's 400 with a 45.47 earning a first-place trophy and his first national title. Adidas athlete Jacory Patterson followed just one millisecond behind with a 45.48. Since every split second matters on the track, the two will need to put their nose to the grindstone as the top 2020 Tokyo finishers all ran about a second faster.

As for the longer distance races, the 800 was the event to

The Road To Paris: How the USATF indoor championships affect the Paris Olympics



Kellie Wells (USA), right, competes in the women's 100m hurdles semifinals during the 2012 London Olympic Games at Olympic Stadium. The competition took place on Aug. 7, 2012 in London, UK.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KIRBY LEE ON FLICKR

watch with Bryce Hoppel leading the way. This was Hoppel's fourth straight title as he has been a dominant player since 2020. In Tokyo, Hoppel finished fifth in the semifinals but was ultimately knocked out and did not make it to the finals. Although Hoppel's Tokyo time is roughly two seconds faster than his most recent performance in the indoor championship, he remains No. 8 in the world.

If Hoppel keeps his times down and work ethic up, chances are he will be making an appearance in Paris for a chance at a top finish in the 800.

In the men's 3000, Yared Nuguse had all eyes on him as he just narrowly beat out Olin Hacker by about one sec-

ond. Nuguse, who is currently No. 2 in the world for the 1500 will be a hot contender in several events. The Notre Dame alumni earned bronze in the 2021 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for the 1500 and appears to be on a trajectory to success.

On the field, the pole vault put Katie Moon in the lime-light. Moon, who is currently No. 1 in the world is arguably the strongest contender for the Paris Games. At the indoor championships, Moon vaulted a season-best of 4.80.

The 32-year-old made a stunning appearance in the Tokyo Olympics as she took home the gold with a 4.9 vault. Moon will most likely be returning to the Olympic Games

for another chance at victory.

The men's pole vault was equally as intense as Olympic silver medalist Christopher Nilsen took home the win with a 6.00 vault. Nilsen, currently No. 3 in the world, already has the Olympic Games on his resume as he took home the silver in Tokyo with a 5.97 vault.

As the Olympic Games hang in the back of all track and field athletes' minds, they only have about four months left to prepare. The trials are scheduled for June 21-30 at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field.

For some, the indoor championships provided an opportunity to scope out the competition and for others, it sealed the deal for the Paris Games.



Sports

BEHIND THE BALLOT:

A new top team and a lack of consistency

by Stratton Stave | HE/HIM/HIS | SPORTS EDITOR | stratton@uconn.edu

How is March already arriving this Friday? It feels like yesterday we were in the early portion of the season, watching teams compete in their midseason tournaments that define the way we view which conferences are strong/weak. But here we are. Houston is my new No. 1 after a pair of fantastic wins, while UConn dropped to No. 2 with a road loss to Creighton. Purdue didn't necessarily impress with a pair of mediocre wins, but those three teams have truly separated themselves.

A handful of teams picked up exceptional wins—think Creighton and Washington State over No. 4 Arizona—but they both followed them up with a disappointing defeat. The dual-

ity of these teams made moving squads in the 10-20 range very difficult, since they have such similar-quality resumes. That's why No. 11 Illinois blowing a 7-point lead late against a poor Penn State team only dropped them three spots. Or No. 16 Baylor falling three slots after losing a pair. The top 25 is just a mess once you leave the top three—and even that's not simple.

As a briefer, the SMP is a weekly basketball poll, voted on by student journalists from around the country from a variety of different college newspapers. Let's take a look at the rankings and the six most interesting teams from this week's action: two high achievers, two low and two wild card teams of note.

STUDENT MEDIA POLL RESULTS

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. HOUSTON | 10. AUBURN | 18. SOUTH CAROLINA |
| 2. UCONN | 11. ILLINOIS | 19. ST. MARY'S |
| 3. PURDUE | 12. ALABAMA | 20. SAN DIEGO STATE |
| 4. ARIZONA | 13. DUKE | 21. WASHINGTON STATE |
| 5. IOWA STATE | 14. KENTUCKY | 22. UTAH STATE |
| 6. MARQUETTE | 15. CREIGHTON | 23. OKLAHOMA |
| 7. KANSAS | 16. BAYLOR | 24. TEXAS TECH |
| 8. TENNESSEE | 17. TCU | 25. GONZAGA |
| 9. UNC | | |

HIGH ACHIEVERS

No. 1 Houston: It's tough to argue against the Cougars as the team of the week and their pair of excellent victories propelled them past UConn and Purdue. They defended home court against No. 5 Iowa State and then survived No. 16 Baylor in overtime after blowing a 17 point first half advantage. Then jumping the previous top two teams is nothing against UConn and Purdue, but more of a nod to Houston's recent surge. Their losses don't raise any eyebrows and these two victories are their best of the year. The Cougs should be able to take care of business over the next few games against a trio of teams in the bottom half of the Big 12, before they host No. 7 Kansas in their finale.

No. 22 Utah State: The Mountain West has been a rotating door of teams succeeding, then falling to others within the conference. It seems that any team within the top five or six of the MW has a chance to go on a nice run in the NCAA tournament. But let's focus on the Aggies. USU is now atop the conference, thanks to a convincing win over No. 20 San Diego State. Yes, they lost to Colorado State last week, but that was last week and it was an away game. The Mountain West is a brutal conference to try to compete in and they haven't come out unscathed, but Utah State is battle-tested. Their reward for surviving several top teams is playing the league's underbelly, with three easy games over KenPom sub-200 teams.

WILD CARDS

No. 15 Creighton: With four teams in the 11-15 range plus No. 8 Illinois losing at least one game this week, Creighton looked poised to leapfrog many squads ahead of them after beating then No. 1 UConn. It was a commanding effort, dare I say a blowout, that came to the tune of 50% shooting from deep. A signature victory that they needed. All they had to do after was go to Madison Square Garden and best St. John's, who is on the wrong side of the bubble. They lost by 16 instead, another great demonstration of how inconsistent college kids can be from one night to the next. As such, they move up just one spot to No. 15, missing a grand opportunity.

No. 21 Washington State: The Cougars put themselves in a near-identical position to Creighton, surviving No. 4 Arizona on the road even without much from star Myles Rice. Riding the adrenaline of their win, WSU broke their streak on the road against an Arizona State team that entered below .500. The Cougars reached highs this week that most teams never experience and also hit unthinkable lows given their highs. They ended up staying relatively stable in the rankings, missing a tremendous chance. With this said, don't be shocked if Washington State makes a run in the tournament. They're built like a team that has the tools to pull off some upsets and will be a sleeper to get to the Final Four.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

No. 16 Baylor: Calling Baylor a disappointment this week might be a bit of a stretch. They played two games that are objectively tough to win. The first came on the road against BYU, a team that is just on the wrong side of my top 25. The other was at home against Houston, the best team in the country. That's why I didn't punish the Bears too much, only dropping a few slots. Last week Baylor beat No. 23 Oklahoma and West Virginia. If you swapped the BYU game and the WVU game, that's one loss per week and people are hardly blinking. I don't see Baylor winning a champion-

ship, but I'm not concerned about them long term.

Unranked Colorado State: The Rams were the latest victim of the gauntlet that is the Mountain West, traveling to a good New Mexico team and barely losing. Then a less solid UNLV team caught them as they were reeling from the defeat to the Lobos. An 0-2 week as a squad ranked No. 22 just isn't enough to stay in the rankings, especially if both losses are to unranked opposition. The good news is that Colorado State isn't in any danger of missing the NCAA tournament, but will need to rebuild momentum with just three games left.



No. 2 UConn regains their dominant posture with a 78-54 win against Villanova in front of an ecstatic home crowd at Gampel Pavilion on Feb. 24, 2024. The win was an important turning point after the tough loss against Creighton on the road earlier in the week.

PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS