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ANNUAL INTERNSHIP FAIR TODAY

by **Hallie LeTendre**
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SHE/HER/HERS

The University of Connecticut's annual internship and co-op fair will be held today for interested students to attend.

The goal of the fair is to promote available entry-level opportunities and more for UConn students in a variety of majors and fields of study.

"UConn students who have participated in at least one experiential learning opportunity such as an internship or co-op have reported a 16% increase in positive outcomes post-graduation," the fair's webpage says.

Additionally, fair organizers hope that this opportunity acts as a place where students who are not sure about next career steps can go to get some guidance and clarity.

This year's fair will be held in the Student Union third floor from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Students can browse the fair and talk with this year's employers any time between the four hour window.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNCAREER ON INSTAGRAM

Employers who will be at the fair offer a range of positions including internships, co-ops, full-time and part-time jobs.

"The UConn Internship & Co-op fair allows you to connect with employers from dozens of industries who are specifically interested in hiring UConn students for internship and co-op opportunities," the fair's webpage says.

Students interested in attending the fair can log in to its website with their UConn credentials followed by a list of demographic- and experience-related questions.

Based on individual student answers, the Handshake powered website will list the employers and jobs that will be at the fair with positions that best suit you.

To register and see the full list of employers, students can go to the provided link. The fair website says that employers are continually being added to the list.

It is recommended that students dress in business casual attire and bring copies of their resumes.

AWARD-WINNING ACTOR NIA LONG INSPIRES UCONN STUDENTS WITH INSIGHTFUL DISCUSSION ON HOLLYWOOD'S CHALLENGES

by **Amaree Love**
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For the students who missed it, on Feb. 1, award-winning actor Nia Long came to talk to UConn students about her trials and tribulations in Hollywood. Long engaged students in a discussion, sharing her firsthand experiences navigating the complexities of the entertainment industry as a black woman in this event—scheduled on the first day of Black History Month. Long's talk provided a rare glimpse into the world of acting and enriched students with her insight into gender dynamics

and diversity in Hollywood.

Sophomore student and political science major, Phoenix Harper, took the stage to introduce Nia Long, highlighting her credentials as a four-time NAACP Award winner and her notable roles in iconic films and shows such as "Boyz n the Hood," "Friday," "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" and "Made in America."

During the engaging conversation, Harper questioned Long on her journey into acting and its impact on her character. Long said, "It was wonderful because I got to learn about myself and trusting my emotions and understanding them." She attributed her

entry into acting to her proficiency in portraying emotional scenes, a skill she developed through classes with actress Betty A. Bridges.

"...I want this industry to get to a place where it's not black anything and its just artist because that is what we are."

NIA LONG

The conversation also touched upon Long's high

school connection with Regina King, an accomplished actor with accolades including an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award and four Primetime Emmy Awards. Long emphasized the importance of her single mother's influence, citing financial challenges as a driving force to pursue acting.

"My mother as a single mom, didn't have a lot of money and I felt if this is a way I can make money and use all these extra tears I seem to have then, this could be a good thing," Long said.

Harper asked Long about the changes she has observed in the industry over time as a black woman. Long expressed

a desire for an industry where distinctions based on race are obsolete, advocating for an environment where artists are recognized for their craft rather than their ethnicity. She candidly discussed facing daily microaggressions and highlighted the need for collective action to break generational curses and foster respect in the industry.

"Everywhere I go I get asked this question, and it's not a bad question, but it's concerning because I want this industry to get to a place where it's not black anything and its just artist because that is what we are."

See NIA LONG, p. 02

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News

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"I have been through a lot of things in this industry and deal with microaggressions probably daily," Long said.

"I have been through a lot of things in this industry and deal with microaggressions probably daily."

NIA LONG

Long urged students to set an example for the next generation, emphasizing the role of young leaders in shaping a more inclusive and respectful future. Reflecting on her career, Long admitted to feeling stuck in repetitive roles, even contemplating quitting. She shared her belief that success comes not from

pushing too hard but from trusting in her faith and finding joy in one's pursuits.

"I almost quit, I know what it feels like to be poor so I'm not driven by money but by the things that make me happy," Long said.

She spoke of generational curses, and how we should represent and teach the people around us to respect others, and if we all come together as a community one action can enrich the world we live in.

"Trying to push things too much, you are not trusting and doing the things that make you happy."

NIA LONG

"Set an example for the kids, they are the next leaders."

Long later announced her upcoming role as Katherine Jackson, the mother of Mi-

chael Jackson, describing the character as a force within

"Sometimes your purpose finds you if you listen and it's just the way the universe works."

NIA LONG

the Jackson family. She emphasized the importance of living truthfully in the role, embodying the essence of the character.

"Trying to push things too much, you are not trusting and doing the things that make you happy," Long said. "Sometimes your purpose finds you if you listen and it's just the way the universe works."

Nia Long's visit offered valuable insights into the challenges and triumphs of a distinguished career in Hollywood. Her words resonated as a call to action for aspiring artists and advocates for positive change in the entertainment industry.



PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONN.AACC ON INSTAGRAM

Justice Department proposes major changes to address disparities in state crime victim funds

(AP) — The Justice Department proposed changes Monday to rules governing state-run programs that provide financial assistance to violent crime victims in order to address racial disparities and curb the number of subjective denials of compensation.

The proposal from the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime, a major overhaul to how states across the U.S. currently handle victims compensation claims, comes less than a year after an Associated Press investigation exposed that Black victims were disproportionately denied in many states — often for subjective reasons rooted in implicit biases that are felt across the criminal justice system.

If adopted, the changes would bar states from considering a victim's criminal history and eliminate some of the most subjective reasons for denials in many states.

"Certain populations may be more likely to have criminal history due to unjustified disparate treatment in the criminal justice system or due to criminal conduct induced through force, fraud, or coercion, such as unlawful acts that traffickers compelled their victims to commit, and this can result in unjustifiably disproportionate denial of

claims for those populations," according to the proposal.

Thousands of Americans each year turn to the state-run victim compensation programs that provide financial assistance to victims of violent crime. The money is used to help with funeral expenses, physical and emotional therapy, lost wages, crime-scene cleanup and more.

But the AP found last year that in 19 out of the 23 states willing to provide racial data, Black victims were disproportionately denied compensation. In Indiana, Georgia and South Dakota, Black applicants were nearly twice as likely as white applicants to be denied. From 2018 through 2021, the denials added up to thousands of Black families each year collectively missing out on millions of dollars in aid.

Thousands of people are denied compensation every year for often subjective reasons that scrutinize victims' behavior before or after a crime. The AP found that Black victims were nearly three times as likely to be denied for these reasons, including a category often called "contributory misconduct" where programs sometimes, without evidence, accuse victims of causing or contributing to their own victimization.

The proposed changes would strictly limit when a state program can deny a person for misconduct including requiring that states put into law or policy what is specifically considered contributory conduct and the process they use to decide if it is being applied in a denial. The proposal also clarifies that state programs should not claw back money victims receive from crowdfunding sources such as GoFundMe among other changes.

"Why make things difficult when someone is already going through a hard time? I'm thankful that [the proposal] has happened because murders are still taking place. You know, parents are still going to have to bury their children."

PAMELA WHITE

Pamela White, whose son Dararius Evans was killed in 2019, was initially denied compensation by Louisiana's program because officials blamed her son for his own death. She received few details of how the state came to that conclusion and had to take out a personal loan to cover his funeral expenses while she appealed the decision. She eventually won.

White said Monday that she was happy to hear about the proposed rule changes from the federal government.

"Why make things difficult when someone is already going through a hard time?" White said. "I'm thankful that (the proposal) has happened because murders are still taking place. You know, parents are still going to have to bury their children."

Over the last decade, several states have passed laws or made administrative regulation changes to limit some of the most subjective kinds of denials. Other states have passed laws expanding access to the funding or adding covered expenses.

But the state-level changes have resulted in piecemeal and uneven access for victims, where the victim of a crime might be eligible for compensation help in one state but denied in another.

Advocates have pushed for federal rule changes that would require state programs to all adhere to a victim-centered approach to considering claims. The proposals would do that in several areas including the bar on considering previous criminal histories and removing administrative hurdles like barring most requirements for notarized portions of applications.

Many of the items in the proposal Monday give states more room to expand services and approve claims. The proposal would allow states to apply a broader definition to medical or mental health expenses to allow people in rural areas with fewer licensed providers to find care or to allow for Native American healing practices to be covered expenses. The proposal would allow for a broader definition of who would be eligible to include people beyond a close familial relationship to a victim and allow for states to create broader definitions of allowable property damage expenses that contribute to victim safety.

The publication of the proposed rule changes opens a 60-day public comment period. It can take several months to process those comments and submit final rule changes.

The Daily Campus

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- 14 Emotionally distant
- 16 Weigh station rig
- 17 Four Corners state
- 18 Ancient Greek region
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- 23 Barbecue chef's spice concoction
- 24 "Barton Fink" director Joel
- 25 *Male minister
- 31 Step before a "big kid bed"
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- 34 Compete
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- 53 Weaving machine
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- 55 Spring's opposite, in tides
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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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By Madeline Kaplan
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African American Cultural Center

by Desirae Sin
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The African American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut held a workshop for advising students on financial decisions—specifically when it comes to the stock market—on Monday, Feb. 5. Eric Judge, a UConn alumni and a financial advisor at Edward Jones, gave advice for prospective students who sought to earn money through investments.

He began the discussion by describing why the United States is unique when it comes to the economy. Judge stated the fact that the democratic system set up the system so that companies thrive is why the stock market is a major component of the economy. When getting into finances and investments,

Judge advised students to “look at where you’ve been and where you’re trying to go” when it comes to their financial situation. Stocks and investments must be thought of in the long term, not as a quick way to earn money.

For those who are not familiar with stocks, there are two types. Common stock and preferred stock, the main difference being that for common stock, shareholders have voting rights whereas preferred stocks give none. Yet both of these stocks can allow you to earn money in two ways: through capital appreciation and dividends, according to Judge. The first aspect is what most people think of when thinking about the stock market, where traders buy stocks at as low a price as possible, and sell them for a higher price later on. Yet dividends are meant for “when

you are waiting to sell your stocks, you get dividends as regular returns on your investment,” Judge explained.

When looking at which companies to buy stock in or invest in, Judge highlighted three strategies for looking at investments. Quality, diversification and considering a long-term perspective. The quality refers to the quality of the company and how secure you feel they are. Diversification is the idea that you should not put all your eggs in one basket, or do not invest solely in one company. The long-term perspective is about how well you think these companies will do in the future, these should be considered in 10 year increments, not just within a year or two.

At the workshop, analyses of two companies were given to the audience: an analysis of Apple Inc. and Alphabet



University of Connecticut's African American Cultural Center holds a financial planning workshop at the Student Union on February 5, 2024. Students were able to learn about financial management, 401ks, and more. PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA MEIDINGER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

holds a talk on financial planning and stocks

Inc., also known as the parent company of Google. These reports were done by research analysts who “look at sales and profits and try to estimate how well these companies will do in the future,” Judge stated. He went on to remind the audience that these are in no way recommendations for them to invest in these companies, he was simply using them as examples because of how large they loom in their respective markets. As a warning for students who are eager to start investing, Judge said that “you can lose everything in investing,” if you are not careful.

The difference Judge highlighted in his examples is the fact that Apple provides dividends to their investors, while Google does not. “If you are a part owner, you get part of the profits,” is what Judge stated was the case for some stocks. Some compa-

nies like Google do not give dividends back to investors, instead they must rely on their ability to choose proper times to sell their shares and get the highest payout.

There are differences between each type of stock, ranging from aggressive, small and mid capital, large capital, income and cash. An example of aggressive capital that Judge used was Bitcoin, or cryptocurrency. The value of these stocks change dramatically in very short periods of time. Judge reminded the audience that these values are not inherent. Using a one dollar bill and a sheet of paper, Judge asked the audience what the difference between them was. “Society gave the dollar value, while they didn’t for the paper,” Judge said. “Today the challenge is to be widely accepted to have value.”

When it comes to diver-

sification, Judge explained how stocks and industries can be divided. Apple and Google would be considered technology, and there are other categories such as retail, real estate, healthcare and more. When one of these areas does well, it does not necessarily mean that another area will do well too. It’s best to spread your investments over many industries and not relying on capital through one, Judge advised.

To conclude the workshop, Judge explained to students that the value of goods and capital changes. He brought up inflation and stated that “a dollar today will probably be more valuable than tomorrow.” By investing in stocks with compounding interests, Judge told students that “when you do investing well, your money starts to work for you.”



University of Connecticut's African American Cultural Center holds a financial planning workshop at the Student Union on February 5, 2024. The center has several other information sessions and workshops planned, which can be found on the event calendar on their website.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA MEIDINGER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Life

@dailycampuslife

Risk it all in



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

"BUCKSHOT ROULETTE"

by **Desirae Sin**
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Welcome back to The Backlog, where we review video games based on a certain genre or word each month. We closed out January and ended our time with the word "fight," now we look into games based around the word "strategy." For the first edition of February, we are diving into the internet's newest sensation, "Buckshot Roulette."

Warning! This game contains dark imagery and themes related to death and suicide.

Developed by Mike Klubnika and published on itch.io in 2023, "Buckshot Roulette" is a tabletop horror game based around the dangerous game of Russian roulette. The twist is that you are using a 12-gauge shotgun against a dealer who never loses his smile. The game is a simple point-and-click style, not requiring good motor skills but instead good strategy and sheer luck for the player.

"Buckshot Roulette" can also be played online without having to purchase and download it, but it only costs \$1.20 and it would allow Klubnika to produce more indie games.

The game's introduction is quite memorable, the player wakes up in the dirtiest bathroom on Earth and leaves to find that they are in some sort of nightclub with an addictive beat. It captures the feeling of overlooking a raging club whilst heading towards your potential demise. The soundtrack was released on Spotify, Bandcamp and Soundcloud by the developer and is available for everyone to enjoy.

As you kick your way into the door down the hall, you come across the Dealer, your opponent in this dangerous game. First, you must sign your name on a general release of liability form, ensuring that you are partaking in the game of your own free will and understand the risks. The general rule is that for each round, a certain number of shotgun

shells — either live or blank — are loaded into the gun in a random order. You can decide to shoot the Dealer and reduce his number of defibrillator charges, or choose to shoot yourself on the chance that it is a blank and you gain an extra turn. While dark and unnerving, "Buckshot Roulette" has gained popularity due to its retro aesthetics and difficulty.

As you progress to the second and third stages, you gain items between rounds that can help you. The magnifying glass lets you see the current round in the chamber, the hand saw doubles the damage of your next shot, the cigarette pack gains you an extra charge, the handcuffs skip the opponent's turn and the beer racks the shotgun to get rid of the current round in the chamber. While these all sound useful, be mindful that the Dealer also gains these items and has no qualms about using them on you.

The Dealer is an interesting antagonist. He doesn't

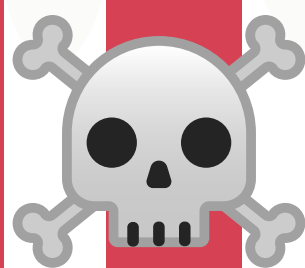
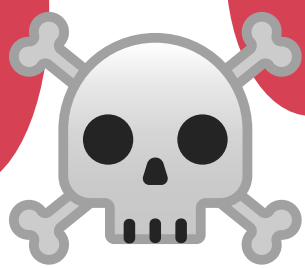
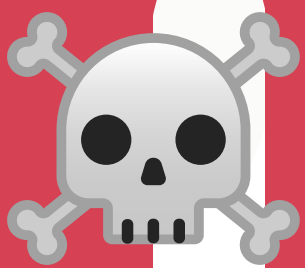
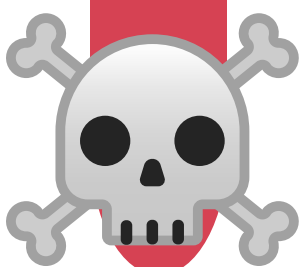
necessarily have a vendetta against the player but he does his best to defeat the player. One interesting thing about his character is how honorable and nice he is, despite the fact that he's pointing a shotgun at your face. When you use the handcuffs on him, he takes them and shackles himself, thus showcasing how principled he is. Even though he has a creepy smile, there is nothing to indicate that he hates the player, he is only doing his job as the Dealer.

There isn't a strong storyline behind "Buckshot Roulette," but there is a bit of an implication for the world that it exists in. As you gain items, you come across a general release of liability form covered in blood, signed by God. While not overtly stated in exposition or clearly, the player can assume that God played the game and lost to the Dealer. This seems to be proven correct if you lose the game, and you are sent to heaven. When you arrive it appears empty with

spikes everywhere, insinuating that God is no longer there.

Understandably for an indie title, "Buckshot Roulette" is a short experience. Getting through the game could take around 20 to 30 minutes, depending on how lucky and skillful you are. However, for the price, I would say that it was a well-spent \$1.20. There has also been a recent update to the game to make it more difficult if you choose to swallow the pills in the restroom when you awaken. This activates the "Double or Nothing" mode. Everything becomes more difficult with randomized shells, items and health counts. Not to mention the fact that dying completely once will reset your progress. But what makes this mode worth the danger is that you are given the option to receive your winnings after the original three rounds, but you can engage in a fourth to double your winnings instead. This mode is for those who feel they are on a hot streak and like to cheat death.

Rating:





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COMIC BY VAN NGUYEN, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

HOW ACTIVISTS LET THEIR OWN MOVEMENTS DIE OUT



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

Author's note: This article is the first of two columns about the challenges of activism and organizing.

Running an activist organization of any kind isn't easy; unfortunately letting it run into the ground, leaving behind a scorched path of petty grievances, discarded institutional knowledge and innumerable disillusioned organizers, is shockingly simple.

Many politically active young people in the United States keenly remember the atmosphere of the country following the police murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Amidst the widespread grieving and righteous anger surrounding police killings of Black people in America — horrific stories that were surfacing or resurfacing at skyrocketing rates that summer — was also a tempting optimism that we as a country would finally "do something" about the white supremacy in America, which activists and journalists located everywhere from policing to public health.

Just as unforgettable was the influx of grassroots organizations popping up throughout Connecticut, bringing Black Lives Matter chapters or new, community-based racial justice organizations to towns and cities across the state to hold protests and, ostensibly, build

numbers to mount a sustained movement against systemic racism. Shaped just as much by social and economic insecurity sent into overdrive by the COVID-19 pandemic, local and national organizations alike took to "mutual aid" with the intention of meeting the needs of people left behind by the state and an increasingly unequal economy. These took — and for those that lasted, still take — the forms of food distribution tables, community fridges and even volunteer-run grocery delivery services for vulnerable people. As Amanda Arnold writes for The Cut, this "solidarity-based support" unites communities "against a common struggle, rather than leaving individuals to fend for themselves." This outlook proffers a vision of production, exchange and consumption that ultimately seeks to provide an alternative to the capitalist economic model (more on that later).

National coalitions with radical and exciting proposals for reshaping our institutions away from policing arose as well. The Cops Off Campus Coalition, for example, united nearly 60 student and statewide organizations from around the country around the demands of removing all forms of policing from campuses and, eventually, society; returning colonized land

back to Indigenous nations in North America and dismantling the police- and military-industrial complexes that enforce colonialism; and decommodifying higher education by way of free tuition, food and housing, devolving power from university administrators to students and employees and paying fair wages for all university workers.

Backed by hundreds — if not thousands — of scrappy, inspired activists and seasoned organizers around the country, it wouldn't have been unreasonable to have believed at the time that we were witnessing a watershed moment in the history of this country; one that would leave a permanent footprint on our political and economic landscape. But nearly four years, more than 1.1 million deaths to COVID-19 and at least one militarized police training compound later, most of these formations have fizzled out to mere fractions of their former activity, if they even still exist at all. Case in point, the Cops Off Campus Coalition has been in radio silence since 2022 despite its scathing critiques of policing, colonialism and higher education still being important to discuss and debate today.

Mutual aid, similarly, has not made a dent in the capitalist mode of production, let alone posed a viable alternative to it; rather, it has become a less effective version of the charitable non-profit or church-based food distributions that its adherents so radically contrast themselves to ("Solidarity, not charity").

Bolstered by the unbridled energy for organizing and protesting (mostly the latter and far less of the former) spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and movement for Black lives, but without disciplined and active local support or a coherent ideology and strategy, most of the movement-based activism that came out of 2020 didn't have a leg to stand on. If the urgency of a global pandemic or unprecedented urban uprisings weren't enough to build lasting impactful political structures, then we can consider ourselves helpless before ongoing crises like the genocide in Palestine or climate change — that is, unless we go through a period of critical reflection about what went wrong in 2020 and beyond. For more on the ideological and strategic failures of the past four years of organizing, keep an eye out for next week's edition of "Mass Mood."

Opinion

Photo of the Day | Out and about



Several students play games and enjoy the outdoors on the lawn in front of the William Benton Museum of Art on the UConn Storrs campus. The building is home to both the public museum and The Beanery cafe.
PHOTO BY OLIVIA RILEY, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Culture Shock is a column for underrepresented and marginalized UConn students to anonymously discuss their stories and experiences as members of those groups at UConn.

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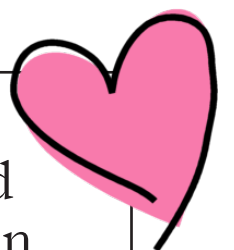
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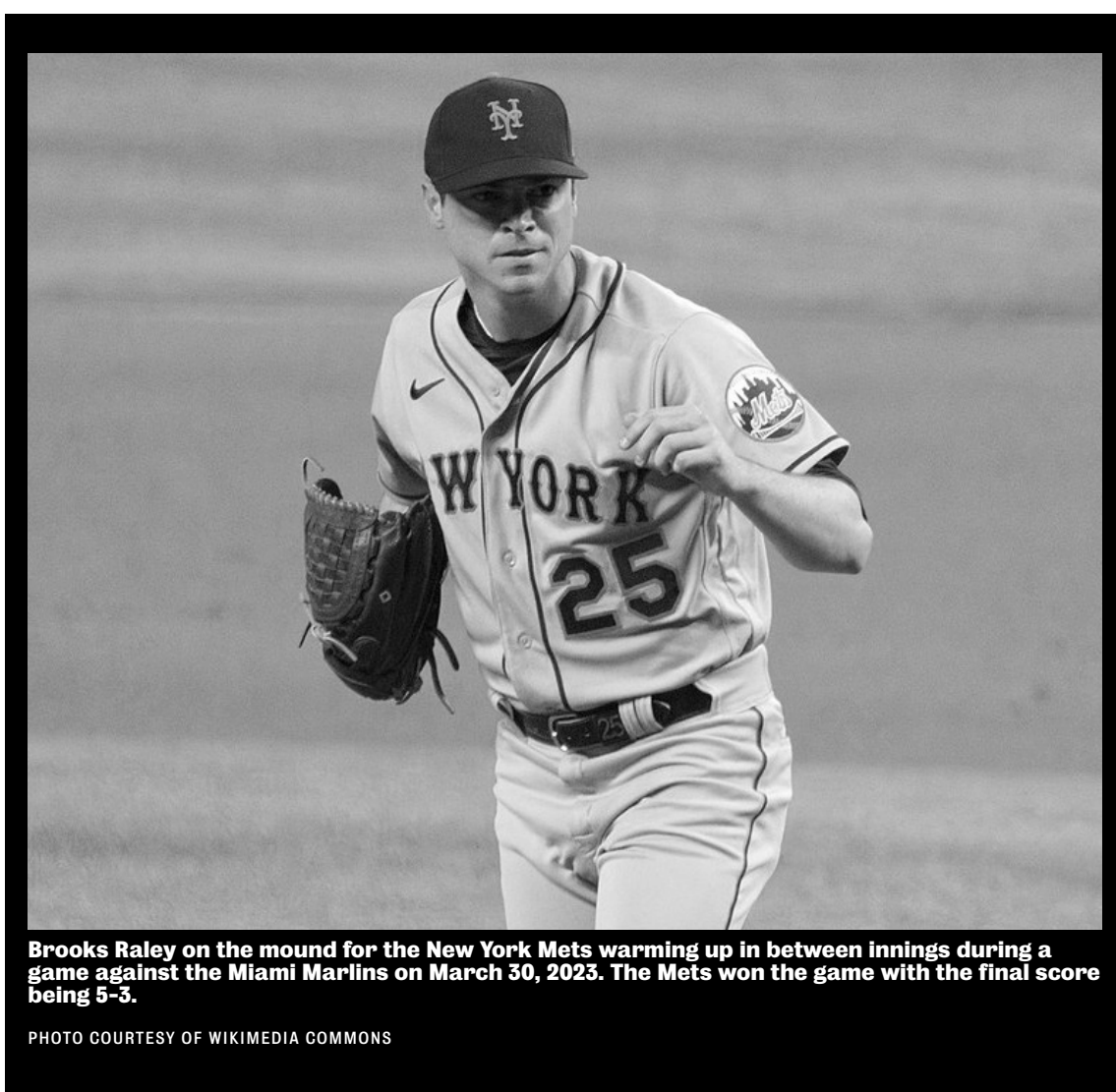
Evaluating the Mets' DH options for 2024

by Dan Stark
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The 2023 New York Mets season was one of the most disappointing seasons in the franchise's 62-year history.

After coming into the season with World Series aspirations and amassing the largest payroll in Major League Baseball history, the team finished 4th in the National League East with an abysmal 75-87 record. A major part of why the Mets failed to win games was a lack of production on offense, particularly from the designated hitter position. This effort was spearheaded by Daniel Vogelbach, who in 104 games posted a statline of .233/.339/.404 with 14 home runs and 48 RBI. With Vogelbach getting non-tendered in November, it is unclear who the Mets' starting DH will be at the start of the 2024 season. But the free agent market still has plenty of players who would bring both consistency and power to the position that the Mets desperately need. We'll also consider some potential in-house options. Here's a look at the Mets' best options to be their starting DH in 2024.

Jorge Soler
If New York wants to make a wild card push this year, Soler is the way to go. In 2023 with the Marlins, Soler had his best season since 2019 and was selected to his first All-Star Game. Soler, 31, went yard 36 times and drove in 75 runs with a slashing line of .251/.341/.512. Though he's not the most consistent hitter, his raw power would make him the perfect candidate to



Brooks Raley on the mound for the New York Mets warming up in between innings during a game against the Miami Marlins on March 30, 2023. The Mets won the game with the final score being 5-3.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

bat behind Pete Alonso in the 5-hole, providing the superstar slugger with the support that Mets fans have been dreaming of for years. The biggest question surrounding Soler would be his contract, as it's been rumored that he's seeking a two to three year deal with an annual value over \$20 million. It has also been rumored that the Toronto Blue Jays and Boston Red Sox are both heavily interested in him. Soler would be the most expensive DH option the Mets could pursue, but Steve Cohen has proved time and time again that he's willing to spend whatever it takes to win.

J.D. Martinez
Martinez is a name Mets fans have wanted for years, and they have a great opportunity to sign him this offseason. The 36-year-old signed a one-year, \$10 million contract that proved to be the biggest steal of the 2023 season. Martinez is coming off a monstrous campaign that rivaled his best years in Boston in the late 2010s, bashing 33 home runs and 103 RBI with a sparkling statline of .271/.321/.572 in 113 games. For his efforts, he was named the starting DH for the National League in the All-Star game. Like Soler, Martinez would be perfect for the 5-hole

behind Alonso and provide a menacing 4-5 punch. His contract would also likely be similar to Justin Turner's one-year, \$13 million deal he just signed with Toronto, though Martinez could want at least \$15 million after the year he had. Regression with age is also a concern with DH, as his 2020-2022 seasons saw him regress before rebounding in 2023. But if he can keep driving in bombs and maintain his power-hitting ways, Martinez would fit right at home in New York.

Mark Vientos
If the Mets decide against pursuing any of the three free

agents above, then the young Vientos would be the top in-house option. Vientos, 24, struggled in his limited at-bats last season, but showed flashes of great potential in his increased playing time in September. Mets fans clamored all last season for Buck Showalter to "play the kids!" and give Vientos and other young Mets more playing time. If New York wants to commit to developing their young players, 2024 is the perfect year to give Vientos the opportunity to prove himself in the major leagues with consistent at-bats as their starting DH.

Francisco Alvarez
Though the Mets' 2023 campaign was a massive disappointment, the emergence of rookie catcher Francisco Alvarez was one of the few bright spots for the team. He established himself as the team's no. 2 power hitter, hitting 25 highlight-reel worthy bombs and driving in 63 runs. However, Alvarez struggled with consistency, as he was great in May and July and below-average in June and August. If New York rolls with Vientos as their primary DH, Alvarez should fill the role on any of Vientos' days off so he can get more at-bats to fuel his development. His defense improved greatly as the 2023 season progressed, and more at-bats by DH'ing on his days off from catching would work wonders into making him more consistent at the plate.

If Alvarez can do so, he would fill the 5-hole behind Alonso nicely and potentially make a push for the All-Star game this year.

Bridget's Bulletin:

The Enhanced Games, one of sports greatest modern dilemmas

by Bridget Bronsdon
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With the 2024 Summer Olympic Games on the horizon, a new and highly controversial form of professional athletics has entered the arena.

The Enhanced Games, founded by Dr. Aron D'Souza, claiming to be "the Olympics of the future" is a competition in which athletes are free to use performance-enhancing drugs. Featuring five different events; athletics, aquatics, gymnastics, strength, and combat, the games are facing serious scrutiny from athletic professionals and organizations across the globe.

On The Enhanced Games website, the company places a strong emphasis on "embracing science." The website reads, "We believe that science is real and has an important place in supporting human flourishing. There is no better forum for highlighting the centrality of science in our modern world than elite sports," states company president Dr. D'Souza.

In order to "embrace science," the corporation has eliminated drug testing and does not require athletes to announce the substances they have taken. However, athletes will undergo an initial health screening to ensure they are in proper health and condition to compete. The screening will include a cardiac and brain health inspection, blood work, and several other medical procedures. Despite the

protocol still being in the developmental stage, there are serious concerns from all angles of the sports industry.

While the website claims that "sports can be safer without drug testing," the pushback continues to be strong. According to Forbes, critics contend that the games "put athletes' health at risk and undermine the integrity and fairness of sporting competition."

The games' website also includes statistics from athletes who have used performance-enhancing drugs.

The site reads, "The following individuals

ran a 9.78s time in 2002. The current world record holder for the event is Usain Bolt with a 9.58s time.

There is also serious disagreement regarding the facts of the matter. On The Enhanced Games website, they claim "44% of athletes already use performance enhancements." However, a study published in the Drug and Alcohol Dependence journal stated that the amount of performance-enhancing drug users for both amateur and professional athletes is only between 2-4%.

This major discrepancy not only calls into question the legitimacy of the games but also the establishment as a whole. Many professionals in the sports and health arena have voiced their concerns and have adamantly argued against the games.

"The Enhanced Games aims to be the safest international sporting event in history. We embrace the inclusion of science in sports, and we fundamentally believe that the choice to use enhancements is a personal one," the website reads.

Despite this testament to safety, Travis Tygart, CEO of the United States Anti-Doping Agency, isn't so sure. Tygart told CNN the contest is "farfetched," stating that it's "a dangerous clown show, not a real sport." Tygart also took a legal perspective. "It's also likely illegal in many states on account of the legal status of some performance enhancers like anabolic steroids, which can help boost muscle mass," he told CNN.

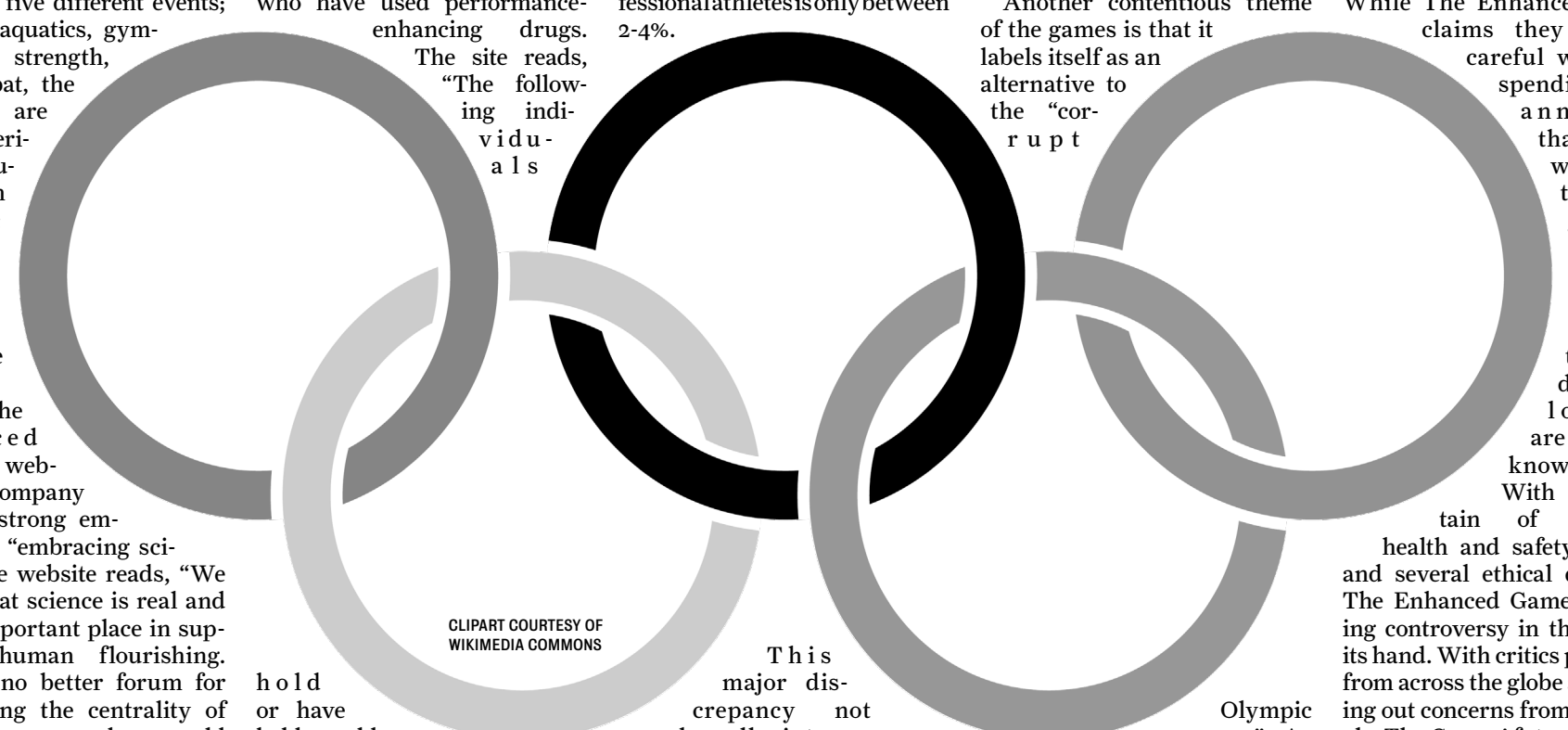
Another contentious theme of the games is that it labels itself as an alternative to the "corrupt

might bring an extreme harm to young generation[s] of athletes who mistakenly could believe in benefits of [the] Enhanced Games," he states.

The effect on younger generations is one that should not be taken lightly. The promotion of this drug use not only sends mixed signals but could encourage unsafe practices for today's youth.

As a whole, the safety, health and ethical concerns have poured in from all angles. While The Enhanced Games claims they will be careful with their spending and announced that they will hold their games at a Division 1 campus, both the start date and location are still unknown.

With a mountain of concerns, health and safety scrutiny and several ethical dilemmas, The Enhanced Games is holding controversy in the palm of its hand. With critics pouring in from across the globe and pointing out concerns from every angle, The Games' future is highly uncertain and largely debated.



CLIPART COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



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

Sports

Photo of the Day | Women's hockey



UConn takes the win over Providence 2-1 after going into overtime on Saturday Feb. 3 in Storrs, Conn. UConn women's hockey is currently ranked no. 11.
PHOTO BY JORDAN ARNOLD, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



UConn women's swim take a dominant win against CCSU with a score of 245-55 at the Wolff-Zackin Natatorium on Feb. 2, 2024. Their record is now 7-3.
PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Women's Swim and Dive: Hot start leads the Huskies to blowout win over Central Connecticut

by **CJ Dexter**
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On Friday, the UConn swim and dive team returned home for their first meet at Wolff-Zackin Natatorium since Oct. 21 to face off against Central Connecticut.

Looking to shake off their loss against New Hampshire in their previous outing, the Huskies got off to a hot start with wins in the 200-yard medley relay, the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard backstroke. From there, they never looked back as they rolled to a 245-55 win over the Blue Devils.

The matchup between these in-state foes was never in doubt, as Connecticut prevailed in the first 15 events of the match.

The first of three pool records was set by sophomore standout Ella Epes in the 100-yard butterfly event, as she finished with a 54.46. Junior Maggie Donnelly set the second pool record in the 100-yard backstroke with a 54.48 stamp and graduate student Meghan Byrne set the pool record with a 2:03.73 time in the 200-yard individual medley.

One of the few bright spots for the Devils came on the 400 free relay, where the group of

Katrine O'Leary, Gabby Spaciano, Kelly Stotler and Shannon Welcome went for a season-best time of 3:33.17.

"Great team win tonight. It's great to be back home in front of our parents and spectators. Raucous crowd with an in-state rival coming to town. Really proud of our team and how we competed from start to finish," coach Chris Maiello told UConn Athletics after the win. "... Excited about our three special swimmers with those pool records. Credit to those girls for working really hard, always."

Now sitting at 7-3 on the season, the Huskies got out to a 2-0 start with wins over Southern Connecticut State and Georgetown before going on a mini, two-game skid against Villanova and Northeastern. Saturday's home win over the Blue Devils comes on the heels of their 152-147 loss at New Hampshire, and previous victories over Bucknell and Rhode Island.

The Huskies will conclude their regular season this Saturday for a Senior Day home meet against the Providence Friars before the Big East Championship on Feb. 28. The first race is slated for noon and results and coverage can be found on uconnhuskies.com.

The Puck Drop:

The NHL to return to Olympics in 2026; Boston to host international NHL tourney in 2025



Team MacKinnon and Team McDavid faced off on Feb. 3, 2024 in an NHL All-Star Game. Team McDavid took the win by a single point.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @NHLBRUINS ON TWITTER

by **Avery Becker**
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It was announced on Friday, Feb. 2 that NHL players will be able to play in the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and the 2030 Winter Olympics in the French Alps.

The last time NHL players were allowed to participate in the Olympics was back in 2014.

When the time came around for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics, the NHL, NHLPA, IIHF and IOC were not able to come to an agreement. In the past, the NHL had concerns about players participating in the NHL, such as injury issues and marketing issues because of the sponsorships that the Olympics have.

Back in 2020, the NHL and NHLPA came to a collective agreement that players would be able to play in 2022 and 2026, but there wasn't an agreement quite yet among the NHL, IIHF and IOC.

Up until six weeks before the 2022 Winter Olympics, NHL players were planning to participate, but a reversal occurred. The NHL wanted the Olympics to break back on the 50 games canceled from the regular season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After Gary Bettman made this announcement on Thursday, fans across the league were excited to see their favorite players internationally, and so were the NHL players themselves.

Some notable names from the last time they played in the Olympics include the Washington Capitals' Alex Ovechkin, who played in three Olympic games with his Rus-

sian team, playing fourth, fifth and sixth respectively. Another player is the Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby, who was a two-time gold medalist in the Olympics.

After Bettman's announcement, Crosby said he'd love to participate in 2026 and further noted, "It's something you have to earn, though. It's not something that's given to you. If you're representing your country, then you've got to earn it."

If Ovechkin and Crosby played in the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, the Penguins star would be 38 years old and Ovechkin would be 40, making him the second-oldest player to participate in the games after fellow Russian player, Igor Larionov.

Another remarkable player, Connor McDavid, has never been able to play in the Winter Olympics as he was only 17 when players were still allowed, making him too young.

Now, McDavid has an opportunity to play hockey internationally.

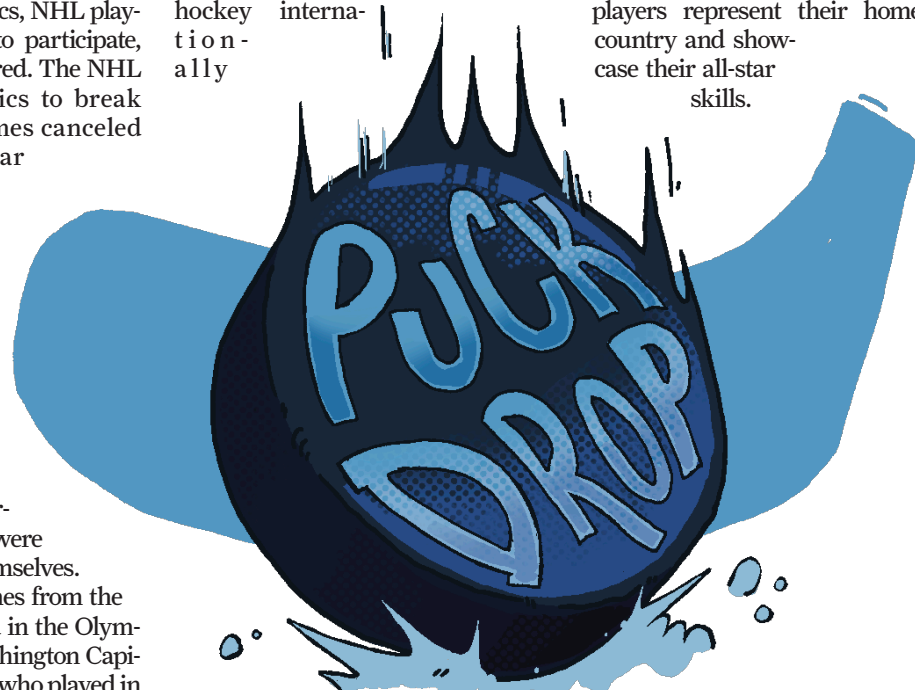
twice in a matter of two years.

The NHL announced on Friday at the NHL All-Star Games that in 2025, instead of their annual NHL All-Star Game, they will hold international games. These players will come from four countries, the United States, Canada, Finland and Sweden, and compete in games from Feb. 12 through Feb. 20.

The players from these nationals will face off in Boston and Montreal.

After the announcement, McDavid said, "I feel like it's important for hockey as we continue to try to grow the game internationally and at home. I think it's a great thing. It's an exciting schedule, something that people can look forward to." He further noted how he has been "vocal" about this issue for quite a while now.

2025 and 2026 are set to be an exciting few years for NHL fans. With these international games so close to us in Boston, it's a perfect opportunity to see our favorite players represent their home country and showcase their all-star skills.



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

BEHIND THE BALLOT:

MAYHEM IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, TOP 10 LOSSES GALORE

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

STUDENT MEDIA POLL RANKINGS

1. UCONN

2. PURDUE
3. HOUSTON
4. KANSAS
5. TENNESSEE
6. UNC
7. ARIZONA

8. ILLINOIS
9. MARQUETTE
10. AUBURN
11. WISCONSIN
12. KENTUCKY
13. ALABAMA
14. IOWA STATE
15. BAYLOR
16. CREIGHTON

17. DUKE
18. SOUTH CAROLINA
19. TCU
20. BYU
21. DAYTON
22. SAN DIEGO STATE
23. UTAH STATE
24. COLORADO STATE
25. FAU

As March gets closer, the madness in college basketball is only continuing. This week, we had four matchups between teams in the top 10 and they didn't disappoint. Headlining the set was Houston vs Kansas at the Phog, in a contest where Kansas came out victorious. Purdue also continued their dominance, with a win over Wisconsin. Tennessee's week was a bit of a mixed bag, with a loss to South Carolina—a team that everyone is losing to—and a win at Kentucky. The top 10 seems to reshuffle every week, as no squad can find consistency, barring UConn and Purdue.

Even North Carolina, winners of 10 straight games, bit the dust against KenPom 126th Georgia Tech. With so few teams winning the games they're supposed to, it's not difficult to move up a few slots just by beating inferior ones. As a briefer, the Student Media Poll 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 five most interesting teams from this week's action: two high achievers, two low and one wild card team of note.

HIGH ACHIEVERS

No. 18 South Carolina: A few voters were ready after last week to move the Gamecocks into the top 25, but I wanted to wait another week. Suffice to say, here they are. SC had a mediocre start to their season, beating all their KenPom sub-40 opponents, but sustained a loss to Clemson on the road. Their Southeastern Conference play didn't open too well either, getting blasted by No. 13 Alabama and losing close to a so-so Georgia squad. Since then, they've won five straight, including triumphs over No. 12 Kentucky and at No. 5 Tennessee. Their metrics are weak, but on paper, it's impossible to ignore their place in the top 25. They have just three losses and two of the best wins in college basketball. Their next big chance comes on Valentine's

Day at Auburn, but until then, they need to hold strong at home.

No. 4 Kansas: It was a relieving week for Kansas, who desperately needed to get back on track after going 3-3 in their previous six. They were on our list of disappointments last week after that poor stretch, but that's really how the top 25 has been this year. With four losses on the campaign, there aren't many teams with a better top five argument than the Jayhawks. They just welcomed No. 3 Houston to Allen Fieldhouse and won convincingly—and also hold a victory over No. 1 UConn. That part of their resume makes it easy to push them back into the top echelon. However, Kansas will need to prove they can do it on the road, with their best such win coming against KenPom 99th Indiana.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

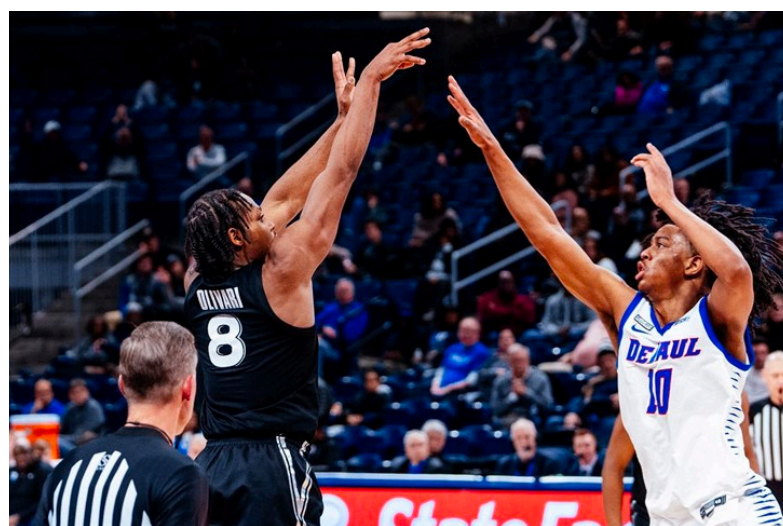
No. 12 Kentucky: The past two weeks have not been very kind to the Wildcats. In that span, they've lost three of four, including two at home. Their defeat to now No. 18 South Carolina is making more sense as the Gamecocks play more, but Florida, who followed their win with a loss at Texas A&M isn't anything special. Kentucky squandered a big chance to get right at home versus No. 5 Tennessee, as Rob Dillingham's 35 point explosion wasn't enough. The pieces are there for the Wildcats and they face a bizarre nonconference game against Gonzaga. Previously, the contest had looked like a must-win for the Bulldogs, but it appears that both sides need this one. Kentucky is still holding on to an early season win over No. 6 UNC, but can't afford to let their remaining top 10 matchups slip away.

Unranked Texas Tech: Tech still maintains a 5-3 record in conference, but this week was their worst all season. After understandably losing to No. 19 TCU on the road, the Red Raiders hosted—and lost to—unranked Cincinnati. The Bearcats certainly aren't world beaters either, having lost five of their previous seven. Even though Texas Tech does still have a solid 16-5 record, they have a gauntlet ahead. Four of their next five come against the nation's top 20 teams, two on the road. If they emerge 4-1 from that set or better, then they'll be back into the rankings without much conversation. If they go under .500, then they could be looking closer to the bubble than they have all season.

WILD CARD

The Mountain West: Listed by KenPom as the seventh best conference in the country, the Mountain West has been super strong

this year—and it's starting to cannibalize. This week alone, No. 22 SDSU beat No. 23 Utah State, Boise State beat former No. 24 New Mexico, No. 24 Colorado State beat SDSU and SDSU beat Utah State. That's why it's getting hard to differentiate between their top five. I have three Mountain West teams ranked—all in the 22-24 range—but one could make an argument to rearrange them in any order. Boise State took New Mexico out of the rankings with a win over them but don't yet have a strong enough resume to get on the correct side of the top 25. Fortunately for the Broncos, they play Utah State and Colorado State this week. Wins in both games will surely take them into the rankings, as the Mountain West looks to capitalize on a rich top of the conference.



Quincy Olivari of the Xavier Musketeers dominates the court against the DePaul Blue Demons on Feb. 3, 2024. Named the Big East Player of the Week, the Xavier's guard scored nearly half of the team's points.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @BIGEASTMBB ON TWITTER



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Big East Baller Update No. 8: Olivari, Castle shine to open up February

by Sam Calhoun
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The Big East is over midway through the regular season, with most of the league down to nine games left on schedule. The Big East Player of the Year race is heating up, with one player exploding in the two wins for his team last week. Creighton, one of the top teams in the conference, saw themselves fall at home on Friday night.

Enough chit-chat. Let's get down to business on this edition of Big East Baller Update.

Player of the Week: Quincy Olivari, G, Xavier (33 PPG, 8.5 RPG, 3.5 SPG, 11-20 3PT in two games)

This one was a no-brainer considering how impressive Olivari was last week. The Rice transfer recorded 43 points and brought down ten boards in the Musketeers' rout over DePaul. 43 points, a career-high for the Big East leading scorer, is the most in a Big East contest since DePaul's Max Strus put up the same number against St. John's in 2019. Earlier in the week, the 6-foot-3, 200-pound guard finished with 23 points, seven

rebounds and four steals in an 88-77 win at home against St. John's. Welcome to the Big East Player of the Year conversation.

Freshman of the Week: Stephon Castle, G, UConn (20.5 PPG, 4 RPG, 1 SPG, 53.8 FG%, 4-6 3PT)

UConn fans have been waiting for the team's five-star freshman to look like a top-5 pick. That is what Castle performed like in the Huskies' two wins over Providence and St. John's. In the Huskies' road win at St. John's on Saturday, the Covington, Ga. native recorded a career-high 21 points, shooting 58.3% from the field. No player is even remotely close to Castle in the Big East Freshman of the Year race. It is Castle's to lose.

Top Games No. 9 Marquette takes down Villanova behind career night from Kolek

Before the teams faced off at the Finneran Pavilion on Tuesday night, Hall of Fame head coach Jay Wright hyped up the crowd, hoping his Wildcats could upset the defending Big East champions. Villanova looked to break their longest losing streak in 13 years, but Marquette had other plans. Tyler Kolek, the reigning Big East Player of the Year, drilled five 3-pointers, scoring a career-high 32 points to extend the Golden Eagles' win streak to five. Villanova went on a 34-10 run, making its 20-point deficit disappear and instead putting the Wildcats in front, but Kolek's answers squandered any chance for the three-time national championship

program. Forwards TJ Bamba and Eric Dixon had 24 points each to lead Villanova.

Butler upsets No. 13 Creighton in Omaha, 99-98

It was a high-offense battle between the Bulldogs and Bluejays on Friday night. Jahmyl Telfort and DJ Davis combined for 48 points, including a season-high 26 points for Telfort, helping the Bulldogs extend the win streak to four. Butler shot 62.5% in the second half and scored 13 3-pointers against the Big East's top 3-point defense. Baylor Scheierman and Steven Ashworth had 26 points each for Creighton. Four of the Bluejays' five starters scored at least 20 points, as Trey Alexander and Ryan Kalkbrenner finished with 22 and 20 points, respectively. Butler freshman Boden Kapke hit two massive free throws to give the Bulldogs a three-point lead. Following two made free throws by Alexander, Butler failed to inbound the ball successfully and turned the ball over following a jump ball. With 0.5 seconds remaining, Alexander's pass to the hoop was in time, but Kalkbrenner could not tip it in to escape with a victory.

Upcoming Games No. 19 Creighton at Providence (Wednesday, 8:30 p.m., FS2)

Two 18-point scorers on average face off as Scheierman and Providence guard Devin Carter face off at the Amica Mutual Pavilion on Wednesday night. On Jan. 6, Kalkbrenner recorded a 22-point double-double as the

Bluejays held on after nearly blowing an 18-point lead in the second half. Providence only lost by nine in Omaha without star forward Bryce Hopkins, who is out for the season. The Friars tend to upset teams at home, but it will be a game to watch as both teams battle for positions in the Big East standings.

Providence at Butler (Saturday, 2 p.m., FS1)

Butler is on a winning streak right now, with four straight victories, including a road win against Creighton most recently. Butler is statistically the best offensive team in the conference, averaging 81.6 points per game. Statistically, Providence is the second-best defensive team, allowing 66.5 points per game. Expect a close battle at the historic Hinkle Fieldhouse on Saturday afternoon.

St. John's at No. 7 Marquette (Saturday, 6 p.m., FS1)

Two preseason All-Big East First Team players will face off in Milwaukee as Kolek takes on St. John's center Joel Soriano, a double-double machine who leads the Big East in rebounds with 9.7 per game. Despite the team's battles, St. John's has lost four of the last five games, while Marquette is on a winning streak. St. John's guard Daniss Jenkins had performed well despite the losses last week, averaging 22 points in the past two games, including an excellent first half against Connecticut on Saturday. With every game being a battle to move in the standings, this one will be on my screen on Saturday.



Sports

MEN'S BASKETBALL:

Huskies take on Butler in late night showdown

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It's no secret that the No. 1 UConn men's basketball team is on top of the college basketball world following its thrilling win over the St. John's Red Storm. But with the fast-paced world of college basketball, it's time to look ahead to its latest matchup with Butler at the XL Center at 8:30 p.m..

Sitting at No. 5 in the conference, Butler is certainly not a team to be played with and this Huskies team is well aware. In the first matchup between these two programs, the Huskies were able to grab a seven point victory at one of the most hostile environments in college basketball, Hinkle Fieldhouse. Even though they were without Donovan Clingan, the team really showed its depth with four players cracking double

digits in the scoring column. Fast forward to Feb. 6 and the leading scorer from that massive win is one of the biggest storylines surrounding this matchup.

Alex Karaban has clearly established himself as one of the key pieces of this roster on both ends of the floor. On Jan. 5, he accumulated 20 points, five rebounds and was key in the absence of Clingan when the pre-season All-American was out with an injury. Fast forward to Connecticut's Jan. 31 game against Providence, the sophomore forward tweaked his ankle against the Friars but was able to come back and tough it out. But things certainly weren't 100% for Karaban and his absence in UConn's previous win against St. John's despite warming up for the contest made his status up in the air for Tuesday.

Coach Dan Hurley provided

an update regarding his star sophomore on Monday ahead of the game against Butler.

"Alex is where we kind of hoped he'd be. He was able to participate the past few days. We'll see how the ankle responds to today's practice and hopefully, he's ok," said the Huskies coach.

Hurley also added that Karaban was almost a full participant in practice and will be a morning/shootaround time decision.

Since that tough loss to the Huskies, the Bulldogs have remained a tough matchup throughout the conference with wins over Marquette and Creighton. Their only two losses were incredibly tough games as well, falling to Seton Hall at home and Xavier on the road. The stats certainly back up their play before this one, as they're a top 50 team in KenPom.

To get those numbers, they've had to get plenty of production

throughout their lineup and they certainly have. Pierre Brooks has been the top scoring option for this squad at 16.5 points per contest and his 43.1% mark from beyond the arc is a dangerous option for this Butler roster. Jahmyl Telfort provides another scoring option for this roster at 14.4 points per game and DJ Davis is not far behind at an even 14 points per contest, including the highest free throw percentage in the country at 96%. Don't forget about center Jalen Thomas, who's been the leading shot blocker and rebounder for this roster.

Similar to Karaban's status, Posh Alexander is also up in the air. He attempted to play in Butler's previous game against Creighton, but a nagging foot injury prevented him from gracing the hardwood. Alexander has proven that his presence on the court is massive for this Bulldogs roster as the steals and assist

The UConn men's basketball team goes up against the Providence Friars on Wednesday Jan. 31, 2024 in a gut wrenching game at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs Conn. The Huskies came out victors once again after a long game with a nine point advantage, with Stephon Castle leading the points with 20 total.

PHOTO BY SIHAM NEDLOUSSI, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



The Weekly Reed: Where I think these MLB free agents will sign

by **Noah Reed**
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This off-season for baseball has been one of the strangest in recent history. The Dodgers went out and signed the Avengers, adding over \$1 billion to their future payroll and deferring almost all of it. Other than that, teams have been relatively quiet. Sure, there have been some moves, but most of the top free agents remained unsigned before pitchers and catchers are supposed to report. With that being said, here are my top three remaining free agents and where I think they'll be playing in 2024.

Blake Snell, LHP

Coming off his second Cy-Young award in his career, Snell is looking for a massive payday and to be fair, he probably deserves it. Snell earned a 2.25 ERA, an ERA+ of 182 and a H/9 of 5.8, all of which led the entire MLB. However, there are concerns about his health and ability to go deep into games that make some teams hesitant. In 2023, he reached 180 innings which is the second most he's had in a single season. Despite that, it was only the 24th best mark reached by a pitcher in 2023. Last year was also the first time Snell had pitched in over 30 games since his first Cy-Young back in 2018. Still, having two Cy-Young awards is a resume that not a lot of pitchers have and can be easily used as a bargaining tool.

As for landing spots, Seattle, Baltimore and San Francisco stand out to me. As a Seattle native it was reported that Snell might want to go to his hometown team, so I don't want to rule it out. While they traded for Anthony DeSclafani to dump Robbie Ray to the Giants, they flipped him to the Twins for Jorge Polanco reopening a spot in the rotation. Baltimore has a new ownership group, one that came right in and dealt for Corbin Burnes on their second day. Improving the rotation is what they need to do, and Snell could be their guy. I still think he'll end up in the Bay playing for the Giants. San Francisco acquired Jordan Hicks and Robbie Ray to strengthen their rotation, a guy like Snell (especially with Ray recovering from Tommy John) adds an ace to lead the team. San Francisco missed out on Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto; Snell adds back the star power they didn't get.

Cody Bellinger, OF/1B

Bellinger's market seems a little more straight forward. The 28-year-old was the NL Comeback Player of the Year with the Chicago Cubs, also winning a Silver Slugger award and a top-10 finish in the MVP voting. His OPS+ drastically improved from 81 to 133 from 2022 to 2023 and his one-year prove it deal with Chicago could not have gone any better. On top of being young and his regular season success, Bellinger has the postseason

experience that any team should want. In each of his first six seasons, Bellinger and the Dodgers made the playoffs. He won the NLCS MVP award back in 2018 and has played in three world series, winning in 2020.

A return to the windy city looks to still be in the cards, but don't be surprised if the Philadelphia Phillies make a surprising move. Multiple outlets have determined the Phillies as a surprise team, having only added Aaron Nola this off-season. Bellinger could really bolster their defense in center field, an area they struggled in a sea-son ago.

Meanwhile, the Cubs would love to have Bellinger back in their everyday lineup, especially with the additions that they made. Returning Bellinger helps make their other acquisitions stand out and improve upon last year. Along with a new manager in Craig Counsell,

Chicago went out and got Shota Imanaga, Michael Busch, Yency Almonte and Hector Neris. Ultimately, I think he'll return to the Cubs and the team will be back in the postseason because of it.

Jordan Montgomery, LHP

A pitcher who has been the model of consistency is none other than Jordan Montgomery. The lefty is entering his first free agency after winning a world series ring with the Rangers in which he played a vital role in. As for 2023, Montgomery finished with an ERA+ of 138 in 32 starts, the third straight season he earned above a 100 ERA+ and managed to get over 30 starts.

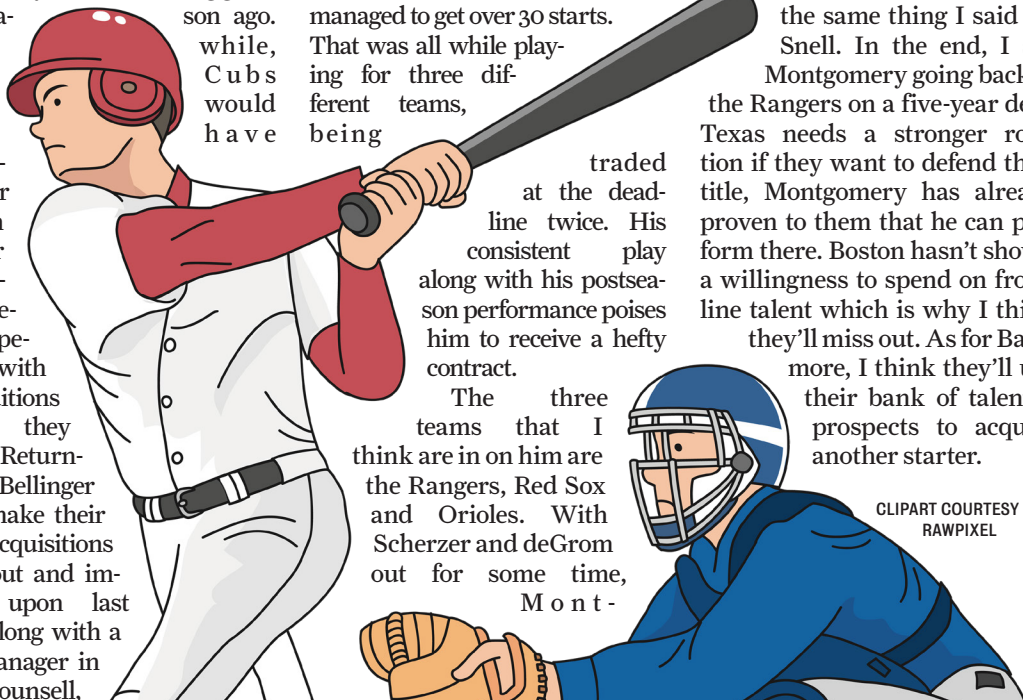
That was all while playing for three different teams, being

traded at the deadline twice. His consistent play along with his postseason performance poises him to receive a hefty contract.

The three teams that I think are in on him are the Rangers, Red Sox and Orioles. With Scherzer and deGrom out for some time, Mont-

gomery can be a staple in the rotation along with Nathan Eovaldi. There's familiarity there having just played for the Rangers which can play a role in his decision. Boston can fix a lot of their issues by signing Montgomery. The issue in Beantown lately has been the need for starters not going deeper into games. Signing Lucas Giolito, a known innings eater, is a good start, but Montgomery adds more consistent results to the front of the rotation that needs to be better

in 2024. Baltimore is the other location based on the same thing I said for Snell. In the end, I see Montgomery going back to the Rangers on a five-year deal. Texas needs a stronger rotation if they want to defend their title, Montgomery has already proven to them that he can perform there. Boston hasn't shown a willingness to spend on front-line talent which is why I think they'll miss out. As for Baltimore, I think they'll use their bank of talented prospects to acquire another starter.



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WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS WEEK

UConn SCOREBOARD



Women's Basketball
Sunday

Upcoming Games



Men's Golf
Big East Match Play
Today and Tomorrow
West Palm Beach, Fla.

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@jonanthanthehusky
All's fair in love and Storrs...
Sincerely, The Chairdogs of UConn Nation

TWEETS OF THE DAY

UConn Students
@UConnStudents
STUDENTS!! It's a WHITE OUT for the rest of @UConnMBB's home games! Make sure you show up wearing white

Tyler DeLuca
@TylerDeLuca
We gotta start having "those" conversations about Hannah Hidalgo
The UConn game felt like the signature moment we can point to and be like "this is the National Player of the Year"

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