



USG debate touches controversial issues ahead of elections

by **Samantha Brody**

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This year's student executive branch debate was held by the University of Connecticut's Undergraduate Student Government on Feb. 24. It was held in the Student Union Theater and featured candidates running for the positions of president, vice president, comptroller and chief diversity officer.

The night began at 6:30 p.m. with the chief diversity officer debate, which was followed by the debate for the comptroller and a combined debate for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The event lasted a little over three hours.

The debate was run by USG Chief Justice Andy Lanza and Elections Oversight Commissioner Ella Bennett.

Although the majority of the candidates as well as USG promoted the debate on their respective Instagram platforms, the room remained less than half full. By the time the presidential and vice-presidential debate began, there were an estimated 50 audience members in the theater.

Lanza opened the night by outlining rules for the debate. For both the chief diversity officer and comptroller debates, candidates would have the opportunity to present both an opening and closing argument of five minutes each. In between, the debate's moderator would ask the candidates questions, and each candidate would have two minutes to respond. Candidates were reminded when their time was running short, and the order of which candidates responded was randomly selected and rotated throughout the debates.

The presidential and vice-presidential debate operated on very similar rules, although the candidates were given seven minutes for opening and closing arguments, as opposed to five.

Bennett moderated the chief diversity officer debate, which included candidates Phoenix Harper, Michaela Chigwedere and Angelo Montes-Diaz. Pages

for all candidates can be found on the USG website.

Harper is a sixth-semester student majoring in political science and business management, Chigwedere is a second-semester student majoring in political science and Montes-Diaz is a sixth-semester student also majoring in political science. Harper is also the current acting chief diversity officer for USG.

The chief diversity officer debate lasted about an hour. Bennett asked the trio three questions related to the position and known issues before moving on to three student-submitted questions. Topics included accessibility, discrimination, advocacy and issues that students face on campus.

The event then transitioned to a brief recess, with pizza provided by USG. Bennett soon returned to the podium for the comptroller debate, which consisted of one candidate: William "Billy" Lipinski. Lipinski is a fourth-semester student majoring in political science and is the current Inventory Director for USG within the Office of the Comptroller.

Despite being the only candidate, Lipinski's debate followed the same rules as the chief diversity officer debate and included three student-submitted questions as well.

"Ultimately, my campaign, I'm running on transparency. I'm not a copy and paste of the current comptroller," Lipinski said during his opening speech, referring to comptroller Sydney Whittaker as he stressed the importance of rotating the person who holds office. "I'm very excited to provide a fresh take on the office of the comptroller."

Lipinski was asked questions related to the USG budget, Tier-II funding and the relationship between the senate and the comptroller. The debate Tier-III organization Nutmeg Publishing on the recent decision to grant extra funding to The Nutmeg to aid yearbook production, a decision that Lipinski supported.

After another break, Lanza took over control of the podium to act as the moderator for the



Students participate in the Undergraduate Student Government executive branch debate on Feb. 24. This debate gives students a chance to hear from candidates running for office in the upcoming USG elections." PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

final debate. The presidential and vice-presidential candidates ran on a joint ticket and answered debate questions together, and it was up to their discretion as to who would answer each question or if they would both answer it.

The platforms running were John Guthrie and Isabelle Cola, Nicholas Kafka and Smith Bernard, Ahmad N. Al Zouabi and Nina Lemash and Andy Zhang and Haritha Subramanian.

Guthrie and Cola are both sixth-semester students, Guthrie majoring in political science and history and Cola in political science with a minor in psychology. Guthrie is a Hilltop Apartments Residential Senator in USG. Throughout the debate, the pair focused heavily on transparency and communication between students and USG.

"The end goal of this campaign is to put all of you forward and look at all of you as equal," Guthrie said during his closing speech.

Kafka and Bernard are also juniors and are both involved in USG; Kafka is a North Campus senator and Bernard is an academic senator for the Academic Center for Exploratory Students. Both are transfer students and often discussed making USG more accessible for students.

Kafka expressed a desire "to

make a student government that works for students, not against them."

Al Zouabi is a sixth-semester student studying chemical engineering while his running-mate Lemash is a fourth-semester student studying philosophy. Al Zouabi is the current Chief of Staff in the USG's executive branch, and Lemash is the Deputy Speaker of the Senate for USG. The pair often promoted ideas relating to increasing the power of student voices.

"I've been committed to advocating for students, increasing funding and amplifying voices that often go unheard," Al Zouabi said during his opening statement.

Zhang and Subramanian are sixth-semester students, Zhang majoring in economics and environmental sciences and Subramanian majoring in music, political science and women's reproductive health. They shared ideas on budgeting and focused on sustainability and communication.

"We want to run a campaign that is built on advocacy, transparency and trust," Zhang said after Subramanian began their opening statement.

In the same style as the previous debates, Lanza asked seven questions, four of which were submitted by students. The top-

ics included conflict resolution, budgeting and Tier-II funding, working with administration and accessibility.

The debate was fairly civil throughout. Candidates often agreed on certain ideas but outlined different plans for implementing them. The only visible moment of conflict occurred during the last question, which was focused on a recently formed USG committee. The committee is focused on a referendum on UConn divestment in the military industrial complex.

During the debate, Guthrie labeled the referendum as biased, but did not see it as a USG-related issue. Bernard asked Lanza for an opportunity to rebuttal before stating that he and Kafka had heard student concerns about a lack of safety and inclusivity, and the committee was meant to increase student voice. This was the only case of a student requesting a rebuttal of a statement made by another student.

Lanza ended the debate by thanking the audience and reminding students to vote in the upcoming USG elections.

Voting for USG begins on March 4 at noon and closes on March 6 at noon, according to Lanza. He also noted that the debate will be posted on the USG Instagram for students to watch, but did not specify when.

Israel-Palestine expert Norman Finkelstein to hold Thursday lecture in Student Union

by **Liliana French**

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Prominent activist and political scientist Norman Finkelstein will hold a lecture about the genocide in Palestine in the Student Union Theater from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday.

The lecture, "Where We Are and Where We Go From Here," is co-sponsored by the UConn Muslim Students' Association, UConn UNCHAIN, EcoHusky, UConn Students for Justice in Palestine, the Connecticut Palestine Alliance and the Northeast Connecticut Gaza Peace Group, according to a press release.

Finkelstein has had a 40-year career in academia but has not held a steady academic posi-

tion since being denied tenure by DePaul University in 2007, according to The DePaulia. He has written over 10 books, according to his website.

Dylan Steer, an eighth-semester environmental studies and political science student discussed arranging the lecture. He said that it started when he and student Tomas Hinckley has a class with sociology professor Phoebe Godfrey. Godfrey had a connection to Finkelstein and thought that they may be able to bring him on campus, according to Steer.

"We got into contact with the people she knew and slowly but surely, we started to think about what the event could look like and try and reach out to them," Steer said. "It's been a few months in the making."

Steer said they began to plan the meeting in the fall. He discussed Finkelstein's advocacy.

"He is especially outspoken on the issue because he's a child of Holocaust survivors," Steer said. "He's Jewish himself and he grew up in New York and he has said many times that he sees a lot of similarities between the people of Palestine, particularly in Gaza, [...] and what his parents told him."

Steer said that the primary goal of the event is education.

"It's a huge deal to get someone of his caliber on our campus," Steer said. "I think he's a great person to teach people about this issue who don't necessarily know much."

The lecture will raise mon-

ey for the United Nations Relief Works Agency. A Tiltify page states that their goal is to raise \$1,000.

"We were discussing a few different groups for charity, but we thought UNRWA was a pretty non-controversial pick since it's a UN organization," Steer said. "It's been operating for many, many years, and the work that it does in Gaza [...] it's educating the children of Palestine, providing basic needs like housing, food, water and it's really been critical in supporting the population."

Steer said that organizers were hoping to get a turnout of about 300 people.

"We're trying to engage a pretty big network to get people to come to this," Steer said. "Because Norman Finkelstein,

he doesn't really make too, too many, like public appearances, lectures and that kind of thing."



Headshot of activist and political scientist Norman Finkelstein. Finkelstein will hold a lecture called "Where We Are and Where We Go From Here" in the Student Union Theatre on Thursday, Feb. 27." PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

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HuskyTHON Day of Strength aims for \$375,000 fundraising goal



PHOTOGRAPH FROM @HUSKYTHON ON INSTAGRAM

by **Patrick Boots**
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On Wednesday, Feb. 26, the University of Connecticut community will partake in the HuskyTHON Day of Strength in an effort to raise \$375,000 to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC). This year's theme, "Change the Tide," represents the goal

of improving the trajectory of children's health.

The annual event, which encourages students to raise at least \$144 each, is the organization's largest fundraising "push day" of the year according to its Vice President of Communications Izzy Casais. The figure is in honor of the 144,593 unique patients seen by CCMC last year — and is the heaviest fundraising goal the

organization has set out to beat yet.

"Our strength comes from the 'miracle children,' who continuously inspire us with their incredible resilience as they fight their own battles at Connecticut Children's," HuskyTHON spokespersons say. "On the Day of Strength, we aim to show these children just how much hope they give us."

The Day of Strength will

include a variety of activities to help promote fundraising, including limited-edition merchandise sales and the ability to earn incentives based on their fundraising. The check-in hub will be based in Student Union room 104, with advice, photo opportunities and a display of the incentives students can aim to win.

"If showing your strength this DOS wasn't reason enough, maybe these incentives will give you that extra boost," the group said in an Instagram promotion aimed at students.

For every \$144 that participants raise, they'll be entered to win free food from Mooyah Burgers and Fries for a year, the announcement says. Fundraising in the order of \$300 or more makes one eligible to win a vacation at the St. James Club on the Caribbean island of Antigua, and the day's top fundraisers will win a number of other prizes including items signed by sports stars and floor tickets to the UConn Music Festival hosted by SUBOG.

One new aspect to the Day of Strength this year is a new "After Dark" event to be held in the Student Union Ballroom, kicking off at 7 p.m. until midnight. Updates on fundraising efforts will be provided in addition to other opportunities to win prizes, plus refreshments provided in-kind by Haven Hot Chicken, Gansett Wraps and from the New England Coca-Cola bottlers. The group also announced that they will show the TV broadcast of the night's men's basketball broadcast alongside a Dan Hurley look-alike competition, with the audience-selected winner receiving a \$50 fundraising match.

At midnight, the total raised for the day will be revealed in a musical send-off on the ballroom stage.

It all leads up to the HuskyTHON "Night-Of", the 18-hour dance marathon held in the Greer Field House — this year on Saturday, March 8. Student participants create teams, many affiliated with student clubs and organizations, and spend time with CCMC patients and families for the day.

According to Casais, HuskyTHON is the largest member in the Miracle Network dance marathon organization, which sponsors similar fundraising events for children's hospitals nationwide. The effort is entirely student-run and claims the title of the largest student organization at UConn.

"HuskyTHON is the light that guides us home, it is an unstoppable force aimed at the sole mission to ensure that no child goes without the care they deserve. We will continue our dance marathon until there is a day when no child, or family, has to endure the hardships that come with childhood illness," says a message from HuskyTHON Executive Director Jylian Esposito.

Last year, over 4,000 participants in the Day of Strength surpassed the fundraising goal of \$315,000, contributing to the HuskyTHON grand total of over \$1.7 million.

Student registration and more information can be found on the HuskyTHON webpage at huskython.org, or you can text "HUSKYTHON" to 51-555.

Ukrainian Student Association holds candlelight vigil commemorating three years of invasion

by **Joey Gottlieb**
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Students gathered in front of the Student Union Monday night to hold a candlelight vigil commemorating the lives lost in the last three years of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Students arranged electric candles on the sidewalk and delivered speeches throughout the vigil.

The vigil comes following a meeting of Russian and U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia last week attempting to open peace talks that excluded the

Ukrainian government, according to a New York Times article. President Donald Trump said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "better move fast" to secure peace "or he is not going to have a country left" a day after the meeting according to the Times. Trump also called Zelenskyy a "dictator without elections" following a statement made by Zelenskyy saying the American president was "caught in a web of disinformation" of Russia's design, according to the Times.

The service began with the Ukrainian national anthem,

followed by remarks from Ukrainian Student Association President Kate Koval and Vice President Stephania Korenovsky. Both speakers held back tears while delivering their remarks.

"You'd think after three years it would be easier to talk about this. It's not," said Korenovsky in her opening remarks, her voice choked by tears.

In a statement to the Daily Campus, Koval explained the motivations behind the vigil.

"We are organizing a vigil to commemorate the last three years of the full-scale

invasion [of Ukraine]. Today we have to think and pray for the lives that were lost, all the cities that were bombed and all the lives that were destroyed. It's very important because it's another chance for us to remind the UConn public that the war is still going on in Ukraine," she said.

She further echoed Zelenskyy's concerns over misinformation.

"This year there have been a lot of misinformed accusations that have been made by the U.S. government. The world really does feel upside down and it's important to

keep fighting for the truth and educating the UConn community," Koval said.

Speeches from Koval and Korenovsky were followed by several students sharing their experiences and grief over the last three years of invasion. One student from Ukraine delivered her speech entirely in her native Ukrainian language.

Koval closed her statement to the Daily Campus with a rallying cry for students.

"We might be far away from Ukraine, but we are doing everything we can to help Ukraine achieve victory as soon as possible," she said.

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Study Break

			2				6	1
		2		1				7
	1	3						
				5		7		6
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4		6		7				
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8				3	7	1		
2	6				1			

Solution to Tuesday's puzzle

2/26/25

9	8	4	3	1	6	7	5	2
5	3	1	2	7	9	8	4	6
6	2	7	5	8	4	1	9	3
8	7	2	4	9	1	6	3	5
4	5	3	6	2	8	9	1	7
1	6	9	7	3	5	2	8	4
7	1	6	9	5	3	4	2	8
2	9	5	8	4	7	3	6	1
3	4	8	1	6	2	5	7	9

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.

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SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- 1 Mosque leader
 - 5 Get ready quickly?
 - 9 Tapioca pearls
 - 13 Zilch
 - 14 Sweeping stories
 - 16 Russian mountain range
 - 17 At the amateur comedy night, the omelet chef had the audience ___
 - 19 Deli spread
 - 20 ___ facto
 - 21 Hear about
 - 23 Industrious insect
 - 24 ... the personal trainer had the audience ___
 - 28 Scented accessory
 - 29 Oscar winner Stone
 - 30 Guacamole or baba ghanoush
 - 31 Vacay
 - 32 "And for my ___ trick ..."
 - 34 Warning letters in a subject line, maybe
 - 37 Part of MYOB
 - 38 With 51-Across, ... the professional bowler had the audience ___
 - 40 "It just clicked!"
 - 42 Org. with ergonomic guidelines
 - 44 ___ Liberty
 - 45 Neither/___
 - 46 Little devil
 - 48 Stinger in a swarm
 - 50 CBS show with the theme song "Who Are You"
 - 51 See 38-Across
 - 55 Pay stub letters
 - 56 Home to the Hockey Hall of Fame
 - 57 Dark side force
 - 59 Word with deep or dive
 - 60 ... the tailor had the audience ___
 - 65 Silent performer
 - 66 Edmonton NHL player
 - 67 "I'm all ___!"
 - 68 "No sweat!"
 - 69 One of Canada's First Nations
 - 70 Recipe that may call for a bay leaf

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
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59						60		61	62	63			64
65						66						67	
68								69				70	

By Rebecca Goldstein

2/26/25

- DOWN**
- 1 Company abbr.
 - 2 Helicopter carrying the Vice President
 - 3 Films that have been formatted to fit a smaller screen, e.g.
 - 4 Apples that are inedible
 - 5 Tired initials?
 - 6 Aired
 - 7 Caviar bit
 - 8 Theoretical physicist Wolfgang
 - 9 Negative charges?
 - 10 Chimp relative
 - 11 Boggy biome
 - 12 Floating
 - 15 Toss a coin?
 - 18 Region known for Wagyu
 - 22 Growing old
 - 23 Beagle's bowlful
 - 25 "Yeah, guess again"
 - 26 Catch a whiff of
 - 27 Withholding information?
 - 33 Current-ly?
 - 35 "Well, I'll be!"
 - 36 Question from behind a closed door

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

P	I	C		E	N	D	P	I	N		S	P	I	L	L								
A	N	Y		T	O	R	I	N	O		H	O	W	I	E								
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R	O	L	O		U	M	A		S	E	R	E	N	E									
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G	E	E	S	E					R	E	D	E	E	M		O	N	E					

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2/26/25

- 38 Japanese broth dish
- 39 Trading letters
- 41 Dry as the desert
- 43 "I'm home, dear"
- 47 Al fresco dining area
- 49 Soft "Hey, you"
- 51 Potential reply to 36-Down
- 52 Early mobile phone manufacturer
- 53 Haircuts that may not be noticeable
- 54 Type of chemical bond
- 58 Numbs, maybe
- 61 High-end camera initials
- 62 Undershirt, for one
- 63 Fury
- 64 NNE opposite

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Life

EAR 2 DA SKY: THE FEARS OF YOUNG LOVE ON SOLANGE'S 'TRUE'

by **Hayden Cromer**

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Welcome to Ear 2 Da Sky! Each week, I will be going over topics within music culture and reviewing albums and EPs across genres, eras and artists that are submitted by readers like you and listeners of my radio show, ear 2 da ground, every Wednesday at 11 p.m. on WHUS 91.7 FM! For this week's submission, I got the chance to sit down and listen to Solange's "True" EP.

"True" was Solange's first EP, which was released on Nov. 27, 2012. This EP sort of acted as a bridge between her 2008 album "Sol-Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams" and her 2016 album "A Seat at the Table." The project clocks in at just under 28 minutes with seven tracks, which took three years to fully produce. Production was done by Dev Hynes, who is more popularly known as Blood Orange.

It took three years for a multitude of reasons, one of those being Solange's mental well-being. It was said that she suffered multiple breakdowns throughout the recording process due to everything she was pouring into this project. In a 2010 interview with Vibe, she said that she "literally gave up [her] sanity for a while to do this record."

After sitting through this EP a few times, there's a lot of introspection paired while posing itself with dance-album-type production. This

is incredibly apparent in track one, "Losing You." It's the most popular song on the project, as it was released as a single prior to the EP and has seen an internet resurgence with the help of TikTok. Solange opens the song by asking a simple but loaded question: "Tell me the truth, boy, am I losing you for good?"

Throughout the track, she fights with coming to terms with the end of her relationship with her lover while reminiscing about what they used to have. In the final chorus, she interjects her own singing, sort of acting as a verbal push and pull. One version of Solange is blaming him while the other is blaming herself.

Track two is "Some Things Never Seem To Fucking Work," a staunch reminder of the thematic darkness of the lyrics and bright pop sound. This song is about the butting heads of young love, personal growth and the eventual drifting apart. The track is assumed to be about Solange and her ex-husband Daniel Smith's relationship, as they got married at 17 and 19, respectively.

The chorus follows a decline in the relationship where they are longing for simpler times, followed by verse two, in which Solange talks about the simplicity in young — and possibly blind — love. "Remember when you kissed me / At Jimmy John's when I was 17 / Convinced myself you were the shit / Convinced myself you loved me," she sings. Towards the

end of the song, Hynes is featured delivering a spoken-word-esque piece contemplating this past relationship, echoing sentiments like: Was it worth it? Was it just boredom? Was it all a mistake?

Getting the opportunity to reflect on this album, there was a lot that stuck with me. I wholeheartedly believe that Hynes and Solange could have been an unstoppable force in 2010s music if they didn't fall out. I say this as you can get bits and pieces of "True" throughout all of Solange's works after the EP.

Another thing is the juxtaposition between production and lyrics. Obviously, I have not made anything on the level of Solange — or either Knowles sister as a matter of fact — but I do understand the desire to satirize your emotions to be able to sit with them comfortably. In this case, it's depressing lyrics over a beat you would hear in the club.

While it is hard to make a truly "timeless" album, I would like to say that this project is definitely a sound of the time from the overall production to the way Solange's vocals are mixed, but that doesn't stop it from being a good album. I don't think art has to be timeless to be good, but I think great art is. "Losing You" toes the line of both. It's just so refreshing.

If you want to submit something to my radio show, ask for advice, hear your music on the radio and possibly even see an album or EP you submitted get reviewed in the paper, submit it here: <https://bit.ly/ear2dasky>

RUBY LEFTSTEP DELIVERS AGAIN WITH 'BITTER END'



Ruby Leftstep performs live in New Hartford, Conn. The band surprise-released their newest single, "Bitter End" on Feb. 21.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @RUBYLEFTSTEP AND @MOLLIELEWIS_PHOTOGRAPHY ON INSTAGRAM

by **Dan Stark**

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It's always a fun day when a local band releases a new single. It's even more fun when that single is a surprise release, which is exactly what Ruby Leftstep did on Friday, Feb. 21. The New Hartford-based alternative rock band announced the release of their latest song, "Bitter End," while performing in Storrs at The Dog Pound. This is their first release since "The Comedown" which came out last October. Bitter End is a continuation of the bright, jangly-alt rock sound that has defined the band, and the results are spectacular.

The four-minute track opens with a few seconds of people chatting and laughing, setting the scene presumably at a party. The music properly starts with some muted guitar chords while singer Dylan Hrinda jumps in with the vocals, where a sense of place is established with the opening line "There's way too many people in here." This is a common scene for college students, making it easy for the listener to immediately immerse themselves in the song.

The lyrics then zoom into what appears to be an interaction between the singer and someone at the party, presumably a romantic interest. It seems to be an emotional one, shown in the line "I feel the passion burn like cigarettes." As the party continues around the two, where "the scene pours out into the street," the pair are still focused on each other. Hrinda observes that "In through the window we're so picturesque, don't we make such a pretty scene?"

There's a certain nervous energy during the first half of the song as Hrinda delivers the lines with twinges of uncertainty. This is on full display with the repeated line "Is this where I'm meant to be, am I getting warm?" This is complimented musically by a mid-tempo arrangement that features held-out sustained guitar chords in the choruses and shorter, staccato hits between verses. The music absorbs the listener with a sound that makes them feel like they want to sink into it like a bed

after a long day.

Around the two-minute mark, the main beat stops, giving way to a solo guitar arpeggio by lead guitarist Thom Busemeyer. The arpeggio leads into a build-up section, a technique that the band has mastered and maybe does better than any band in Connecticut right now. Eddie Dahill's drums slowly fade back in with deliberate tom-tom eighth notes pushing the section towards its dynamic peak, ending with cymbal hits before going back into the main riff.

The second half also brings a lyrical shift to the song where Hrinda directly addresses his counterpart. The lyrics take a more serious shift than before, shown in the line "Well I have you now and so unaware, Brooke had died on a folding chair." Now, I don't know who Brooke is, but you can interpret that this is a friend of who the singer is talking to that committed suicide. This is a tough loss to grapple with and Hrinda fully understands that, saying "I found out what you're living in and there's no way you're coming home." As he sings these lyrics over the buildup, Hrinda continues to hit higher notes, matching the intensity of the band behind him.

Similar lyrics continue after the buildup where Hrinda continues to hit high notes, but is now accompanied by the band playing at full volume behind him. This section also features a trumpet part, adding a countermelody to the vocals. After briefly going back into the main riff, the band wraps up with three final hits, with Dahill's cymbals ringing out into silence at this abrupt conclusion.

Like the band's previous work, the production is once again impeccable. It's rare to hear drums sound that good in a song that's self-produced, but Dahill and the band have become masters at it. The layers of guitars and bass never become too much for the listener, instead covering them in a warm blanket of sound. It's a great entry to the band's ever-growing list of dynamic singles and they've shown no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

Rating: 5/5 Leftsteps

RATING: 3.5/5

LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



LIFE ROUNDTABLE:

WHAT RESTAURANT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OPEN IN STUDENT UNION?

The University of Connecticut's Student Union is the place where many students grab their meals on a daily basis, though the options leave a bit to be desired. Earth, Wok & Fire is consistent by most accounts but not incredible, while Market Café doesn't offer many filling meals. Considering we just got Bear's, once had a Wendy's and currently have a Subway, there are many possibilities for what restaurants could arrive at the Union, but which would be the best? Let's see what the Life section thinks!

by Abby Krim
SHE/HER/HERS
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I'm taking the basic college kid answer and saying I wish there was a Taco Bell in the Union. I feel that a late-night Taco Bell run with my friends would heal me. I also just think that it's an affordable option that a lot of students would love. The only downside would be that, like Subway, I doubt Taco Bell would take points. This poses the question: Do we really need another restaurant taking up a spot in the Union where we have to spend real money?

by Ayyan Tamjeed
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LET THERE BE PANDA EXPRESS!

OK, but to expand, I love Panda Express. Back when my mom and I were living in California, we'd eat at a Panda Express at Stanford University. It was the only place I knew in Palo Alto where two people could get a meal for less than \$20—and a good meal at that. My mom would go for the orange chicken, but I was a fiend for the teriyaki chicken. The fried rice was stellar. And I'll repeat myself again, I could get a bowl of this stuff for less than \$20. If a Panda Express opened in the Student Union and I could use flex passes on meals, all 75 would be gone in a week.

by Mikayla Murphy
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For my own selfish reasons, I want a McDonald's to go in the Union. I will admit the food is mediocre, but I've missed the fries and chicken nuggets since coming to college. It would be something quick and easy that I'd be able to get in between classes. It's also cheap, and as a college student who has all their money going towards their fee bill every semester, I think having a more affordable food option in the Union could go a long way.

It would also give students a better ice cream option that doesn't require a walk to the Dairy Bar or a swipe into a dining hall. In an ideal world, McDonald's would also take points and flex passes, but like Subway, I'm not sure if it would. Either way, I wholeheartedly believe a McDonald's should go in the Union. McDonald's fries, how I miss you.

by Noa Climor
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Oh man. This is a tough one. Niche reference — kidding — but I would love a Chopt location on campus. I am a big fan of their grain bowls, and the closest one is in my hometown of West Hartford, which is nowhere near Storrs. The thing is, I am writing this as a regional campus student.

I can go to my Chopt whenever I want, but once I transfer to Storrs, it's over, and I will be forced to think of it fondly rather than being able to actually go. If anyone does come by a location, I would say that their lemon crush bowl is wonderful, and I recommend adding extra pickled onions because you can never have enough.

by Samantha Brody
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I'd double down on the Taco Bell idea if it wasn't for the fact that the Union already serves burritos and other burrito-related items, so it's not super necessary. I'm vehemently opposed to Burger King and not a fast-food person, so where does that leave the Union?

Here's the thing — they could put anything in the Union and I wouldn't care — as long as there's a flex pass option. I have so many of these! They're doing nothing! Otherwise, a Dairy Queen. I'm a sucker for a good Blizzard.

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON J SAMPSON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS





Life

@dailycampuslife

THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.
 THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.
THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.
 THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.
 THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.

IAN MACERAN

by Dan Stark

HE/HIM/HIS
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One of the defining features of grunge and alternative rock as a whole is its dynamic singers. Mighty frontmen like Kurt Cobain, Eddie Vedder and Scott Weiland have defined the genre with their soaring vocals inspiring thousands—maybe millions—of young singers along the way. Ian Maceran is no exception.

Maceran is a singer-songwriter and the frontman for The Rotting Twentys, a Storrs-based alternative rock group that has been one of the busiest bands at the University of Connecticut this year. He is known for his high vocal range, which is one of the most distinct parts of the group's sound.

Maceran started singing in high school after his mom made him take choir. He wasn't thrilled about it at first, but soon came to love it. He recalled one instance where he impressed his classmates with a performance of his, a moment that inspired him to keep pursuing it.

"For our midterm, my teacher had us do a solo, so I did 'Can't Help Falling in Love,' and my voice had this really good vibrato," he said. "And I looked at everyone's faces and

they had their jaws dropped."

From there, he practiced consistently to increase his vocal range to hit higher notes, singing songs by artists like Ed Sheeran and Bruno Mars to do so. Everything changed when Zeke Rivera, the guitarist of The Rotting Twentys, introduced Maceran to Alice in Chains and other grunge bands last year. It was the first time he had listened to this style of music and he quickly embraced it, wanting to emulate those artists in his singing.

"I really fell in love with Alice in Chains and Layne Staley's singing style, so I tried to learn the same techniques," he said. "The same thing goes with Linkin Park singer Chester Bennington."

Maceran started The Rotting Twentys during the winter of 2024. He was inspired to do so after the death of his friend Paulie Leparik, a beatmaker known for collaborating with rapper Lil Peep. Leparik's death struck him and gave him a renewed sense of wanting to start up a musical project. He said that "I had no idea what I was doing, but I was trying to do anything similar to him," Maceran said.

"He would always ask me to come over to do music stuff, but I never would because I

was afraid that I wasn't good enough," he said. "When he passed, I realized he really lived his life to the fullest."

Maceran reached out to Rivera to play guitar and assembled the rest of the lineup before making their live debut last February at the spring summit of UConn's Filipino American Student Association, where they played a four-song set. Though the band was still figuring out their sound, Maceran said that the show was "the best time that we played together" at that point and "it was better than any rehearsal."

Since that first show, the band has focused on writing more original songs. He explained that the group takes a very collaborative approach to songwriting, which usually starts with an idea by Rivera that Maceran and the rest of the band will add to.

"[Rivera]s really good at coming up with the chorus and all that," he said. "I come up with lyrics and melody pretty quick, and then we give it to our drummer and bassist."

Of the songs the band has written so far, one that stands out the most is "Jaded," their first original. The song had a different origin than most ideas, as it was Maceran who came up with the initial concept. He recalled that it came

together quick, as he wrote it during a 15-minute lunch break while at work. He quickly sent it to Rivera, who was immediately impressed. Now, the song is a regular part of the group's live repertoire at shows.

Maceran and his bandmates have been some of the hardest working men in the scene since September, as the group has played on a consistent schedule in the Storrs area. Shows they've played include on-campus SUBOG's Sunset Fest and WHUS Radio's Battle of The Bands, as well as multiple appearances at Corleone's bar in Willimantic. He took note of the sense of community that he has felt playing shows, noting "I love meeting the other bands, the people hosting and the people who are watching the shows."

One of the shows that stood out to him the most is when the band played at The Dog Pound in October, the pre-eminent basement venue in Storrs, as he loved the environment there and the crowd energy that night.

"I really liked that basement-underground feel, it really felt like a home," he said. "The feedback from our songs as great and we finally finished playing, [the crowd] shouted so loud, I was so happy to do it."



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



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Tate McRae is 'So Close' to pop stardom—or is she already there?

by Julia Gillego | SHE/HER/HERS | CONTRIBUTOR | julia.gillego@uconn.edu

If you're on the hunt for a new album to blast on your way to class, look no further. Pop sensation Tate McRae released her new album "So Close to What" this past Friday. McRae has been making waves with her distinct sound, pulling inspiration from early 2000s aesthetics while adding her own modern edge. As an artist, she perfectly blends dance-driven pop with raw, emotional storytelling, proving once again why she's one of the most exciting voices in pop today. With 31.7 million streams on its first day on Spotify (half of which were my contribution), McRae continues to solidify her place in the industry.

McRae never fails to showcase her ability to produce hit after hit, actively filling the spot of past pop princesses like Britney Spears (minus the scandals). Spears, during the beginning of her whirlwind career, captivated audiences of the late '90s-2000s with dance moves and vocals that I could only execute behind the safety of my shower curtain. Spears' ability to merge highly choreographed performances with catchy hooks and just the right amount of personal intrigue made her the defining pop star of her time. She thrived as pop's ultimate performer, carefully crafting bangers that kept the pop genre alive. Much like Spears, McRae is stepping (or should I say, dancing) into this lane alongside her predecessor for this generation. McRae isn't breaking the mold—she's owning it. In a time when pop music is struggling to find its identity, maybe that's exactly what the genre needs. She's keeping the heart of pop beating, taking those innovations from Spears and claiming her rightful place in the spotlight. This album

effortlessly plays like a love letter to 2000s pop, with shimmering production and a tight track list built for replayability.

But don't get it twisted: McRae isn't just a carbon copy of past pop stars. She modernizes the formula by blending Y2K nostalgia with a Gen Z perspective, creating a sound and image that feels both familiar and fresh. McRae has a unique tone that people want to listen to: her vocal delivery—breathy yet powerful, intimate yet anthemic—sets her apart, leaving the audience always wanting more. Her lyricism is reflective of the generation: the anxieties of social media-driven relationships and lyrics that put complicated "situationships" into song. Fans don't just hear her music, they see themselves in it. Beyond the music, her visuals lean into contemporary fashion aesthetics with a twinge of Y2K, making her presence feel distinctly of-the-moment. Low-rise silhouettes, sporty-chic ensembles (in other words, a fabulous, be-dazzled hockey uniform) paired with glowy, show-stopping makeup making her effortlessly cool. Whether she's performing on stage, starring in a music video or casually going to Pilates with Jake Shane and Glen Powell, McRae's brand feels unmistakably her own. McRae is also bringing to the table what the pop scene has been lacking: she's a performer, a distinc-

tion that separates true pop stars from fleeting viral sensations. Her background as a dancer gives her a unique performance edge, something many modern pop stars have abandoned. Her sleek ability to translate emotion into movement, paired with clean pop production, makes her one of the most exciting mainstream acts today.

It's also important to note that pop has been needing a new It-Girl. With the rise of social media

platforms, anybody thinks they can break into the industry now. I see it all over my For You page: over-autotuned TikTokers begging for streams on their less than mediocre songs. McRae is proving that there's still a place for the classic pop star—someone who can dominate radio, sell out arenas and deliver performances that feel larger than life. Her trajectory suggests she could be one of the defining voices of this era, not because she's the most experimental, but because she understands pop's most essential rule: people want songs they can sing, dance and cry to—all at the same time.

This creates an important distinction between her and other pop artists, because while McRae thrives in refining the pop formula, others are focused on reshaping it entirely. For example, artists like Billie Eilish and Charli XCX have taken a more avant-garde approach to pop, pushing boundaries with unconventional production choices and genre-blurring experimentation.

Eilish, with her hushed vocals and minimalist beats, challenges the idea that pop must be high-energy to be impactful. Meanwhile, XCX leans into hyper-pop, crafting distorted, chaotic soundscapes that feel like the future of the genre. These artists offer an alternative to McRae's sleek, nostalgia-infused style, proving that pop is far from rigid.

But here's the thing: pop needs both. Innovation and

consistency are what keep the genre alive. Too much experimentation and pop loses its accessibility; too much repetition and it risks growing stale. McRae thrives because she understands the foundation of pop music—memorable hooks, danceable beats and universal themes—while artists like Eilish and XCX ensure the genre keeps evolving. This balance is what makes pop one of the most dynamic and enduring genres in music history.

With this no-skip album, McRae effectively takes major inspiration from the early 2000s. The album features three of her singles, "It's ok I'm ok," "2 Hands" and "Sports car;" high-energy hits that each have their own cinematic music videos that transport audiences to that era. One of my favorites has to be "Purple lace bra," with its orchestral intro, captivating beats and a bridge that I've mentally created choreography to. Safe to say, it's been on repeat since Friday.

Overall, as a rapidly emerging artist, McRae makes statements about the staying power of pop music. She is constantly bridging the gap between nostalgia and modernity, proving that the genre doesn't need reinvention to be exciting—it just needs artists who understand its essence. McRae reminds us why we fell in love with pop in the first place: its ability to make us feel something, to move and to relate. Whether you're belting out the lyrics in your car, getting lost in the choreography or finding pieces of your own life woven into her songs, McRae's music is here to stay. Pop isn't dead—it just found its new leading lady.



IMAGE COURTESY OF @POPSPECTATOR ON TWITTER

Roundtable: Oscars Nominations Hot Takes

This Sunday, countless motion picture participants will be vying for an award at one of the most star-studded awards shows of the year, "The Oscars." Each year, the voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences nominate and select a winner in various categories, honoring the actors, films and production teams that defined the year. "The Oscars" are always bound to stir up conversation, so this week, the Opinion section answers: **What is your Oscars hot take?**

by Tomas Hinckley
OPINION EDITOR

Maybe I'm just a big hater (true and real), but frankly I just don't want "Emilia Perez" to win. This isn't some anti-woke tirade against the first openly trans women to be nominated for Best Actress, but that movie was just bad. It's a musical, but the music does not sound good. It's supposed to be a progressive film, but many have criticized the representation of transness in it. Also, I just find it really funny how some characters are talking in non-Mexican Spanish accents for the entirety of the movie while the movie is supposed to be set in Mexico. Specifically, the Spainard accent is super distinct among all dialects, so it's a bit of a jarring change for those with the ears to hear it. Plus, this movie had an audience score on Rotten Tomatoes of 16%, which I know isn't everything, but like, that's bad.

by Evelyn Pazan
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR

I don't know how "hot" of a take this is, but I am of the conviction that "Wicked" should win the majority of what it is nominated for this year, particularly the awards for best costume design and Ariana Grande for best supporting actress. Paul Tazewell did an incredible job designing costumes for "Wicked." Galinda's ditsy persona would not be complete without her pink frilly dressing gown, and the dressing gown wouldn't have been complete if anyone else was wearing it. Grande performed her role flawlessly, balancing humor, power and just enough likeability to do everyone's favorite musical justice. What was almost a three hour movie transported me into another world.

by Patrick Minnerly
WEEKLY COLUMNIST

It's a fact that Denis Villeneuve's "Dune 2" was already snubbed, despite getting a nomination for Best Picture. As a major fan of science fiction, "Dune 2" was everything I wanted and more, building off the first "Dune" movie and bringing an enormously satisfying end to a story that previously proved difficult to adapt from the book version. What ever happens, this movie deserved all of the nominations. Instead, it got five – a full eight less than Oscars frontrunner "Emilia Perez." Villeneuve wasn't even nominated for Best Director, when anyone who watched "Dune 2" clearly saw his genius directing, whether it was beautiful cinematography or expertly crafted emotional moments. Also, no Best Actor nomination for Timothee Chalamet's performance as Paul Atreides? Come on.

by Raegen Skelly
CONTRIBUTOR

I need Jesse Eisenberg to win Best Original Screenplay for "A Real Pain" more than anything else. I will admit, I usually tend to only take interest in acting nominations or Best Original Song, but this year is different. I think Eisenberg is severely underrated; people always say he plays the same character, but he has been in so many good movies. He and Kristen Stewart should be in serious contention for the best acting duo of all time (please watch "Adventureland"). Besides my affinity for his acting performances, he also really deserves this win. "A Real Pain" is such a good portrayal of grief and Kieran Culkin's performance may be the highlight, but there is no performance to be had without the script. I would also adore a Timothee Chalamet win for "A Complete Unknown" because he may just be the most likeable guy in Hollywood (and I'm still mad he wasn't nominated for "Little Women").



Opinion

Photo of the Day | A peaceful winter night



The beautiful UConn Storrs campus in Storrs, Conn. Students could be found wearing shorts or a winter jacket on Feb. 25, 2025 due to the increase in temperature. PHOTO BY BLAKE SYKES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

THE DAILY CAMPUS COMICS COMIC OF THE DAY



AVERAGE STUDY SESSION:



BY SAMANTHA HASS ARTIST EDITOR



Patriot Place: One defensive free agent the Patriots could target at each position

by **Graham Wilker**
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Defensive Tackle: Tershawh Wharton (Kansas City Chiefs)

Wharton has put together a very nice season in 2024, finishing with 6.5 sacks and totaling 33 pressures by the end of the regular season. He's a very skilled pass rusher, but struggled against the run, posting a 44.3 PFF grade, ranking him 161 out of 219 eligible defensive tackles. The Patriots ranked last in the NFL in sacks per game last season and desperately need to add players who can get after the QB. Christian Barmore's return is sure to help with that, but that shouldn't excuse them from going after a player like Wharton. Pending free agents Deatrich Wise and Daniel Ekuale are aging and have become less effective with time. Wharton would add a much-needed boost to the Patriots' pass rush.

Edge Defender: Chase Young (New Orleans Saints)

While I linked the Patriots to a potential Josh Sweat deal in my Scouting the Super Bowl article, I opted to switch things up with Chase Young this time around. Young is two years younger than Sweat, which could lead a currently uncompetitive team to be more attracted to a longer-term deal. The former second overall pick hasn't been the perennial DPOY candidate that was promised, but his career hasn't been anything to scoff at. He put together a 5.5 sack year in New Orleans in which he recorded 66 pressures, seventh in the league. At just 25, though, he'll likely be one of the most sought-after players on the market at his

position. I'd expect at least \$15 million a season to come Young's way. Should the team find a way to grab Abdul Carter with the No. 4 pick and sign Young, they could have one of the best and most youthful edge duos in football.

Linebacker: Zach Cunningham (Denver Broncos)

A former player of Mike Vrabel's in Tennessee, Zach Cunningham has struggled with injuries throughout his career, and this past season was no different. He hasn't played a full season since 2020 and recorded stats in only two games with Denver this past season - a disappointing reality given his 85 total tackles with the Eagles in 2023. Cunningham was released along with former franchise left tackle Taylor Lewan

by the Titans to save cap space in 2022, but there doesn't seem to be any bad blood between him and Vrabel. Cunningham managed to play only 10 games with the team due to injury from 2021 to early 2023, when they cut ties. The linebacker could compete for a backup role with pending restricted free agent Christian Elliss behind Ja'Whaun Bentley and Jahlani Tavai, if signed. However, the team could look for younger options than the 30-year-old.

Cornerback: D.J. Reed (New York Jets)

It'll be a battle between D.J. Reed and Charvarius Ward for the highest paid cornerback in free agency, and the Patriots should absolutely be a part of that battle. While there's a chance they'll prefer to

go to a playoff team, money talks. Christian Gonzalez showed some top-tier play last season, but Marcus Jones struggled as the full time slot. Jonathan Jones is a pending free agent, and split time between outside corner, slot, and free safety. Gonzalez didn't tend to travel during the first half of last year but eventually had to. Adding Reed would alleviate Gonzalez from the need to be perfect, and would aid in stopping Miami's deadly Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle duo.

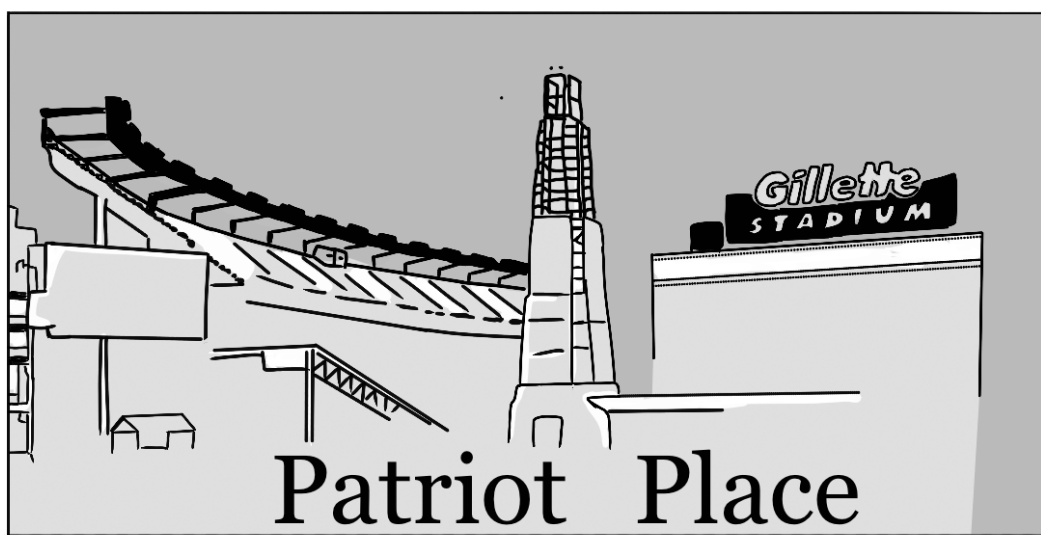
Defensive Back: Siran Neal (Miami Dolphins)

Versatility was a hallmark of some great Patriots defensive backfields of the past, and elite special teams have been a consistency throughout the past two decades. Siran Neal checks both

boxes. Since entering the league from Jacksonville State in 2018, the now 30-year-old has played both as a safety and cornerback. In a defensive backfield that wasn't elite last season, there were a handful of young players who showed some ability down the stretch, including Alex Austin, Isaiah Bolden, and, in the final game, the 6-foot-4 Miles Battle, who registered an 80.4 PFF grade in his single game. Adding another defensive back may seem redundant, but more experience and versatility is never a bad thing.

Safety: Jevon Holland (Miami Dolphins)

Barring a major restructuring of several contracts, Miami's in a bit of a cap hell right now. Since they are \$11 million in the negative with no obvious cut candidates, they'll have to rely on the good will of players like Tua Tagovailoa, Bradley Chubb and Tyreek Hill to keep a team that went 8-9 last season together. While I'd expect Miami to find a way to franchise tag him, Holland should be the number one defensive player on the Patriots free agent board without a doubt. Jabrill Peppers had legal issues throughout last season and Kyle Dugger has struggled to cover tight ends downfield despite his \$70 million contract. Jaylinn Hawkins' effort was admirable, but he isn't a realistic long-term option at the free safety spot. Holland has caused the Patriots a lot of problems over the past few seasons, and they could stand to benefit greatly from adding an incredible player and leaving the Dolphins with a hole on their roster. As nice as it would be to add Reed, the addition of Holland may benefit the team even more.



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR / THE DAILY CAMPUS

Sam's Section: Flagg and Broome headline positional award picks

by **Sam Calhoun**
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March is approaching and it's becoming clear who the best player at their respective positions in college basketball is.

College basketball legends have won the positional awards given out by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, including UConn's Kemba Walker, Shabazz Napier and Tristen Newton.

In this week's Sam's Section, I will go over my picks for the positional awards in college basketball.

Bob Cousy Award (nation's best point guard): Mark Sears, Alabama (18.9 ppg, 4.8 apg, 3 rpg, 41.2 FG%, 35.3 3P%, 84.1 FT%)

Sears is coming off a season where he was a consensus second-team All-American leading Alabama to its first Final Four appearance in program history. While his averages are down from last year, he has been a major reason the Crimson Tide are considered one of the top teams in the country. He averages 23.4 points per 40 minutes. There were some games where he did more cardio than scoring, including wins over Illinois and LSU. However, he has torched the SEC, averaging 19.7 points per game. He has led the Crimson Tide in scoring key wins including over Houston, Creighton, Texas A&M and Kentucky. Sears could become the first SEC player to win the Bob Cousy Award since Kentucky's Tyler Ulis during the 2016-17 season, as well as the second since the award's inception in 2004.

Jerry West Award (nation's best shooting guard): PJ Haggerty, Memphis (21.3

ppg, 5.6 rpg, 3.7 apg, 2 spg, 49.7 FG%, 42.4 3P%, 78.8 FT%)

Memphis has a nasty backcourt with Haggerty and Tyrese Hunter, but the Tigers would not be consistently in the AP Top 25 this season without Haggerty. The Crosby, Texas native is at his third school in as many years, spending the first two seasons of his career at TCU and Tulsa, respectively. He ranks sixth in the country in scoring and has managed to help his teammates produce offensively as well, ranking in the 91st percentile in assists per game. Only once has Haggerty failed to score 12 points or more, which shows just how important his production has been for Head Coach Penny Hard-

away's squad. He helped Memphis win big games over Missouri, UConn, Michigan State, Clemson and Ole Miss. With this award, Haggerty would become the second player in the American Athletic Conference (AAC) to win the award. Houston's Marcus Sasser won the award during the 2022-23 season.

Julius Erving Award (nation's best small forward): Cooper Flagg, Duke (19.5 ppg, 7.7 rpg, 4 apg, 1.6 spg, 1.1 bpg, 48.6 FG%, 37.3 3P%, 81.8 FT%)

This is an easy decision. Despite being a freshman, Flagg has emerged as one of the two players in contention for national player of the year. He has been incredible for the Blue Devils and has taken full

advantage of a weak Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), averaging 21.8 points per game in league play. Flagg has shown up when his team needs him, especially in wins over Arizona, Auburn, Louisville and Illinois. Only once has a Duke player won this award: Wendell Moore Jr. during the 2021-22 season. Flagg is on track to become the second national player of the year to win the Julius Erving Award (Michigan State's Denzel Valentine in 2015-16).

Karl Malone Award (nation's best power forward): Johni Broome, Auburn (18.6 ppg, 11.1 rpg, 3.4 apg, 2.6 bpg, 50.7 FG%, 30.3 3P%, 61.9 FT%)

The other national player of the year candidate is Broome,

who is the best player on the best team in college basketball. After a season that put him on the All-American third team (AP, USBWA, NABC, Sporting News), Broome's stock skyrocketed in every stat besides field goal percentage and 3-point percentage. He is one of 11 players averaging a double-double in college basketball. Only Baylor's Norchad Omier and UAB's Yaxel Lendeborg on the Karl Malone Award top 10 list also averaged a double-double. Broome has delivered top-tier performances in numerous blockbuster games, including wins against Houston, Iowa State, Memphis, Purdue, Missouri, Tennessee, Ole Miss and Alabama. He would become the first SEC player to win the award. If he pulls away from Flagg in the national player of the year race, he will join Duke's Zion Williamson and Dayton's Obi Toppin as the only Karl Malone Award recipients to be named college basketball's best player.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award (nation's best center): Ryan Kalkbrenner, Creighton (18.7 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 2.8 bpg, 1.5 apg, 66 FG%, 41.5 3P%, 71.5 FT%)

Kalkbrenner has emerged as one of the greatest players in Creighton men's basketball history. The fifth-year senior has a chance to win Big East Defensive Player of the Year for a fourth time. The Florissant, Mo. native has seen nearly every major stat category improve from last season except for blocks per game and 3-point percentage. He has never been in an All-American team in his five-year career, but that will change this year. Only one Big East player has won this award in the past: Seton Hall's Angel Delgado during the 2017-18 season.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR / THE DAILY CAMPUS

Sports

Photo of the Day |



UConn men's basketball plays St. John's in Gampel Pavilion on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. The Huskies lost to the Red Storm 62-68.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

MEN'S BASKETBALL:

UConn hosts Sorber-less Georgetown in old-school rivalry

by Sam Calhoun

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Following a devastating loss at St. John's on Sunday, the UConn men's basketball team (18-9, 10-6 Big East) host conference rival Georgetown (16-11, 7-9 Big East) at the XL Center in Hartford, Conn. on Wednesday night.

The major headline of this game is Georgetown center Thomas Sorber. The freshman from Trenton, N.J. has emerged as one of the best freshmen in college basketball, averaging 14.5 points per game. UConn did an excellent job containing Sorber in their first matchup against the Hoyas this season, holding him to nine points on a 3-9 shooting.

The Huskies won't have to worry about the Hoyas' big man in the rematch from Jan. 11's game in Washington, D.C. On Tuesday morning, the program announced that Sorber suffered a left foot injury on Saturday that required surgery, ruling him out for the rest of the 2024-25 season.

This was heartbreaking news for the potential Big East Freshman of the Year, as the Hoyas reached 16 wins for the first time since the 2018-19 season.

Georgetown will have to rely on their backcourt to get the job done. Micah Peavy earned the Big East Player of the Week award in my latest Big East Baller Update. He averaged 25 points, 9.5 rebounds, 5.5 assists and five steals in two games last week while shooting 61.5% from deep. In a blowout win over Providence, the Texas native became the first Division I player to finish a game with 30 points (career-high), seven rebounds, seven assists and six steals since 2014. He leads the team in scoring with 16.1 points per game.

In the three-guard backcourt, Jayden Epps and Malik Mack also produce double-figure averages. Mack, who spent his first season at Harvard, leads the team in assists per game (4.5). Epps is coming off a 22-point outing on Sunday. Georgetown has had someone score at least 21 points in each of the last five games.

With Sorber out for the year, expect Drew Fielder to slide into

the center position in the starting lineup. In his second season with the Hoyas, the 6-foot-11 sophomore averages seven points per game and has started all 26 games. However, his role will increase.

Who will replace Sorber in the starting lineup? Head Coach Ed Cooley may turn to Kentucky transfer Jordan Burks. Burks started in Georgetown's loss at Creighton on Sunday and will serve as a true power forward for the Hoyas. The sophomore from Decatur, Ala. averages 4.4 points per game and shoots 57% from the field.

A key player off the bench for Georgetown could be Curtis Williams Jr. The sophomore from Detroit, Mich. tallied 15 points on 4-6 shooting from the field and a perfect 4-4 free-throw shooting performance.

UConn's offense has hit a low point, ranking in the 25th percentile in offensive rating for the last five minutes. The true shooting has been poor, down to 51.3% in the last five games (11th percentile).

Alex Karaban led the Huskies in scoring with 17 points at Madison Square Garden, with most coming in the second half. He drilled three 3-pointers in a row before St. John's Head Coach Rick Pitino called timeout.

The last time Karaban hit three or more 3-pointers in a game was during the first meeting against Georgetown, when he scored 19 points including four made 3-pointers. The Huskies' eight-point win was without Liam McNeeley, who was named the Big East Freshman of the Week on Monday.

Connecticut holds a nine-game winning streak against the Hoyas. Georgetown's most recent win was on Jan. 14, 2017. The last time UConn dropped a game against Georgetown at home was Feb. 27, 2013. UConn holds a 39-36 lead in the all-time series dating back to the 1958-59 season.

Cooley has faced UConn 14 times in his career, including his time at Providence. He is 4-10 against the Huskies but holds an 8-7 record against UConn Head Coach Dan Hurley.

The 76th edition of the UConn-Georgetown rivalry will tip off at 6:30 p.m. on FS1.



UConn men's basketball plays St. John's in Gampel Pavilion on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. The Huskies lost to the Red Storm 62-68.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Sports

THE FIVE 2025 MLB PITCHING BREAKOUT CANDIDATES

by Ryan Lombardi | HE/HIM/HIS | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | ryan.lombardi@uconn.edu

With the Major League Baseball regular season returning in less than a month, spring training is in full swing and players are working to show their potential. After looking at candidates who could break out at the plate, it only makes sense to discuss who fans should keep an eye on this season. With new, young talent emerging and hyped-up prospects returning from injury, here are five pitchers that are poised to have big seasons.

Gavin Williams, Cleveland Guardians

Cleveland always seems to develop talented pitching, and 25-year-old Gavin Williams feels like the perfect candidate this time around. This will be Williams' third year in the league, following a solid showing in 2023 with a 3.29 ERA over 82 innings. Williams had a sophomore slump last season with an ERA of nearly five in less innings, missing some time with an elbow injury in the middle of the year. As he hopes to pitch a full season in the MLB, Williams has already displayed plenty of promise. He has a fastball that tops out in the triple digits, which he improved upon velocity-wise last season and added some movement as well. He also introduced a cutter last season, which he refined for much of the latter half of the year and which should result in weaker contact from hitters. On top of his high velocity, Williams ranks among the top in extension, meaning he releases the ball farther from the mound than most pitchers. This means that his 100+ mph fastball seems even faster for hitters, making him a nightmare for opposing lineups. His slider and curveball looked great in the minors, but have yet to really translate to the majors, which is a key area of im-

provement, alongside working on his command. If there's any team that can help him improve, it's the Guardians, as they did with Shane Bieber and Triston McKenzie. A healthy offseason in the Cleveland pitching lab could be just what Williams needs to take the next step.

Brandon Pfaadt, Arizona Diamondbacks

The Diamondbacks' rotation looks stacked this season with its addition of Corbin Burnes, and who's likely to be their fifth starter is former top prospect Brandon Pfaadt. You may remember him as the game one starter in the playoffs for Arizona in 2023, where he was solid during that World Series run. Going into his third year in the majors, Pfaadt has struggled, although the right-handed pitcher saw improvements in his first full season last year. However, his glaring 4.71 ERA last season doesn't show the full picture, as when you look at his Fielding Independent Pitching (FIP) of 3.61 and expected ERA (xERA) of 3.75 (metrics that exclude the impact of team defense), the numbers show that at least part of his struggles were just bad luck, unfortunate defense, or a mix of both. Pfaadt has proven his ability to limit walks, and he strikes out batters at an above average rate, he just needs to find better results on balls in play. A new pitching coach alongside four proven pitchers ahead of him could be just what he needs to grow to his true potential this year.

Nick Lodolo, Cincinnati Reds

27-year-old south paw Nick Lodolo has had three seasons impacted by injury, and he is still yet to reach a qualifying season. He posted a strong 3.66 ERA over

103 innings in his first season but struggled mightily the next year with his season cut to just 34 innings with a calf injury. He returned in 2024 with another underwhelming season, which was once again cut short, this time with a finger injury. His underlying numbers, however, show that he may see more success in the future. Like Pfaadt, Lodolo's 3.95 FIP and 3.72 xERA suggest that he may have been a little unlucky. He has above average strikeout rates and forces a good amount of ground balls, but he also gives up a lot of hard contact, although these numbers have slowly improved each season. Just from watching Lodolo pitch you can see he has ridiculous horizontal break on his pitches, making him a potential nightmare for hitters. The Reds have said that he had a productive offseason, is getting even stronger and is in better physical shape than any of his past seasons. If this is finally the season he can stay healthy, Lodolo's metrics are plenty reason to believe he will take huge steps in 2025.

Shane Baz, Tampa Bay Rays

The former Rays top prospect, Shane Baz, has been waiting for his moment for years now. Baz had a few appearances in 2021 and 2022 before missing the 2023 season due to Tommy John surgery. He returned for 79 innings last year, where he looked solid, posting a 3.06 ERA. That season he improved upon his curveball, able to get whiffs in the strike zone at an impressive rate. However, he also saw his previously devastating slider become less effective, unable to get nearly as many swings and misses. It's possible this was just a grip issue after being

out for so long, since his other pitches still had plenty of spin. If that's the case and his slider returns to form, Baz could easily establish himself as a top pitcher. For the first time in a long time, he has positive momentum coming off the end of last season and a healthy offseason to refine his mechanics. As long as he stays healthy, it looks like a good bet for Baz to finally have the breakout season the Rays have expected for years.

Jared Jones, Pittsburgh Pirates

Last year was mostly overshadowed by fellow rookie Paul Skenes taking the league by storm, but Pittsburgh also got a solid debut season from Jared Jones. Prior to the All-Star break, he already looked like he was breaking out, sustaining a 3.56 ERA before missing a few months to injury. He didn't look the same after returning, causing his ERA to balloon over 4 to end the season. However, if his first half was an indication of what he can do while healthy, Jones could see a Spencer Strider-esque breakout as a high-velocity, high-strikeout starter. Jones also revealed that he's been working on a two-seam fastball over the off-season, a much-needed addition to his previous two-pitch arsenal. His main struggle last season was consistency- a few ugly starts really hampered his stats. When his pitches weren't working, he got hit hard. A two-seamer could be an effective pitch to force weaker contact when nothing else is working, which can help prevent those disastrous outings. Assuming his late-season struggles were due to the injury, Jones could be a dangerous pairing with Skenes and Mitch Keller at the top of the Pirates rotation.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE: HUSKIES TO TRAVEL TO CAMBRIDGE AFTER HUGE WIN OVER MANHATTAN

by Julia Sasso
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After notching a massive 19-2 win against Manhattan on Saturday, the No. 23 UConn women's lacrosse team will head to Cambridge, Mass. to take on the No. 24-ranked Harvard.

The program is coming into this matchup on a high, notching their season-high of goals scored in their matchup against Manhattan, but also with senior Riley Daly being named Big East Defensive Player of the Week. The senior defender accumulated five draw controls, three ground balls as well as two caused turnovers in their win last weekend.

Daly leads the team with 23 draw controls and is second in both ground balls with 10 and caused turnovers with six.

This will be the second time the programs come face to face and for the first time in 16 years. The last time these two squads faced against one another, Harvard took a close victory with the score being 14-12 in Storrs, Conn.

Much like the Huskies, Harvard comes into this match with full confidence after an upset win over No. 15 Navy, 11-9, their first win over a top-15 opponent in 12 seasons.

In this win, Harvard's Grace Mullahy led the way with three of the 11 goals. Mullahy leads the team in scoring with 10. The midfielder has also accumulated 17 shots on goal in the last three games and currently stands with a .810 shot on goal percentage.

Another instrumental player for the Crimson's offense is senior Caroline Mullahy who leads the team with 10 assists, three of these assists coming from their last match against Navy. Mullahy also scored a goal in the match, making it her fourth of the season.

The team will also bring strong defensive players, including junior Despina Giannakopoulos, who caused six turnovers in their last match. Giannakopoulos leads the team overall with nine caused turnovers and 10 ground balls.

Another essential player to the Crimson's defense is senior goaltender Lizzie Francioli, who made eight saves in the second half of the Navy game. She is also the leading goaltender with 24 saves so far this season.

Harvard and UConn come into this matchup evenly matched, both only having one loss in their season. Harvard currently stands with a 2-1 record having only lost to No. 24 Drexel University, who UConn beat in their season opener. On the other hand, UConn stands with a 3-1 record, after losing their match to No. 18 James Madison two weeks ago.

Both programs enter this matchup hoping to continue their positive momentum as they get ready to start conference play. The Huskies hope for redemption after their 16-year-old loss to the Crimson.

Face-off is set for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at Jordan Field in Cambridge, Mass. Husky fans can tune into the match on ESPN+.

UFC: RETURN TO SEATTLE LEADS TO EIGHT OF TWELVE FIGHTS FINISHED EARLY

by Cameron Cruz | HE/HIM/HIS | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | Cameron.Cruz@uconn.edu

After a 12-year hiatus, the UFC returned to Seattle, Wash. this past Saturday, and it did not disappoint. The former double champ Henry Cejudo returned to the octagon to take on popular 27-year-old bantamweight contender Song Yadong in a five round Main Event fight. For the domain event, Anthony "Fluffy" Hernandez returned to action to take on fellow ranked middleweight contender Brendan Allen in a three-round bout. This card had plenty of other notable names like rising stars Jean Matsumoto, Ibo Aslan and Puerto Rican veteran Rob Font.

Following a total of seven cancelled fights, UFC Seattle still found a way to sell out the Climate Pledge Arena and be one of the most entertaining Fight Nights so far this year. What UFC fans go crazy for is a finish, whether it's a knockout or submission. This weekend, there were a total of 12 fights combined between the main card and preliminary fights; eight out of the 12 bouts ended via knockout or submission. The prelims consisted of seven total fights leading up to the main card, and not a single one of them entered the third round, let alone went to the judges' scorecards for decision. The one finish on the main card came from the fighting nerd himself, Jean Silva.

After a historic night that saw an astounding 67% finish rate, here are some of the best finishes.

Ion Cutelaba vs. Ibo Aslan

This three-round light heavyweight bout was supposed to be a step up in competition for Aslan, who held a career record of 14-1 and was riding a six KO/TKO win streak into the fight.

Aslan was a -220 favorite, set to take on veteran Ion Cutelaba, who was 2-3 in his last five fights, owning a career record of 18-10-1. Both of these athletes are notorious for their knockout power and were expected to come into this fight hunting for a win by knockout. However, there was also a high possibility that this fight would eventually reach the ground.

While Cutelaba is a striker with a history of wins by KO/TKO, he also has a wrestling background. If he was looking to take this fight to the ground, it was going to be a huge test for Aslan's wrestling and take-down defense. The bell rang to start the first round, and these two men wasted no time delivering devastating blows to each other. It was not until 2:52 in the first when Cutelaba threw a huge right hand, stunning Aslan. This led to Cutelaba immediately shooting a double leg takedown and quickly locking in the arm tri-

angle to secure the win by submission.

Ricky Simon vs. Javid Basharat

The three-round bantamweight bout was held between 32-year-old Ricky Simon and 29-year-old betting favorite Javid Basharat. Simon held a 20-6 record before this fight and was off the heels of three straight losses to ranked contenders Yadong, Mario Bautista and rising star Vinicius Oliveira.

Heading into this matchup, Basharat was 3-1-1 in his last five, most recently coming off a unanimous decision loss. Looking to find his way back into the win column, he matched up with Simon and his aggressive striking style. Three years younger and three inches taller, Basharat had some advantages coming into this fight. However, when he got into the octagon, the fight did not end as he hoped. After out-striking Simon 21 to 18 in total strikes and 20 to 11 in significant strikes, it looked like Basharat had taken the first round.

Nevertheless, with 1:05 left in the first round, Simon threw a beautiful one-two and connected with a huge right hook that knocked Basharat out cleanly. After a couple of hammer fists, the referee called an end to the fight via KO/TKO. One huge connection and one big underdog victory for Simon.

Jean Silva vs. Melsik Baghdasaryan

One of the most anticipated matchups on this Fight Night card was the featherweight bout between fan-favorite Silva and Melsik Baghdasaryan. Coming into this fight, most fans had a feeling Silva was going to add another win to his resume, but how? The rising star came into this fight riding a three-fight UFC win streak, all by the means of KO/TKO, and was looking to improve with yet another win.

Baghdasaryan's most recent fight came in July 2023, and after an almost two-year absence, he was tasked with stopping one of the best UFC featherweight prospects in the world. After a one-sided first round, it looked as if Baghdasaryan was going to survive and go into the second down 10-9 on the judge's scorecard.

However, Silva planned otherwise. With 55 seconds left in the round, he threw a brilliant one-two, connecting with a powerful right hand, dropping Baghdasaryan to the ground. Silva believed that was all that was needed to end the fight, but UFC Referee Kevin Macdonald argued otherwise. Silva quickly got on top of Baghdasaryan and after a couple seconds of ground and pound, Macdonald called a stop to the fight, declaring Silva the winner by KO/TKO.



Sports

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY:

NO. 9 UCONN SKATES TO A TIE WITH NO. 10 BOSTON UNIVERSITY, LOSES SHOOTOUT

by **Matt Dimech**
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The No. 9 UConn men's ice hockey team tied No. 10 Boston University in overtime on Tuesday night before dropping the shootout.

This highly anticipated top ten matchup posed major implications on the Hockey East standings, with both teams vying to improve their position with the playoffs drawing near. This was just the second time these teams have faced off this season, with UConn (17-10-4, 9-8-4) losing back in October, 4-2. This game marked the Huskies' sixth consecutive game coming away without a win against the Terriers (18-12-2, 12-8-2).

UConn earned an early power play after a slashing penalty by the Terriers. Second-year Joey Muldowney took a quick shot out of the face off second-year Jake Richard scooped the rebound and flicked it into the back of the net.

claim a 1-0 lead for the Huskies. Richard picked up right where he left off on Friday night, where he scored two goals including the overtime game winner against Maine. This was Richard's 12th point in his last seven games.

"Our line is playing really well right now, I think our team is playing really well right now, we just gotta keep it going," Richard said to ESPN+ broadcast in between periods.

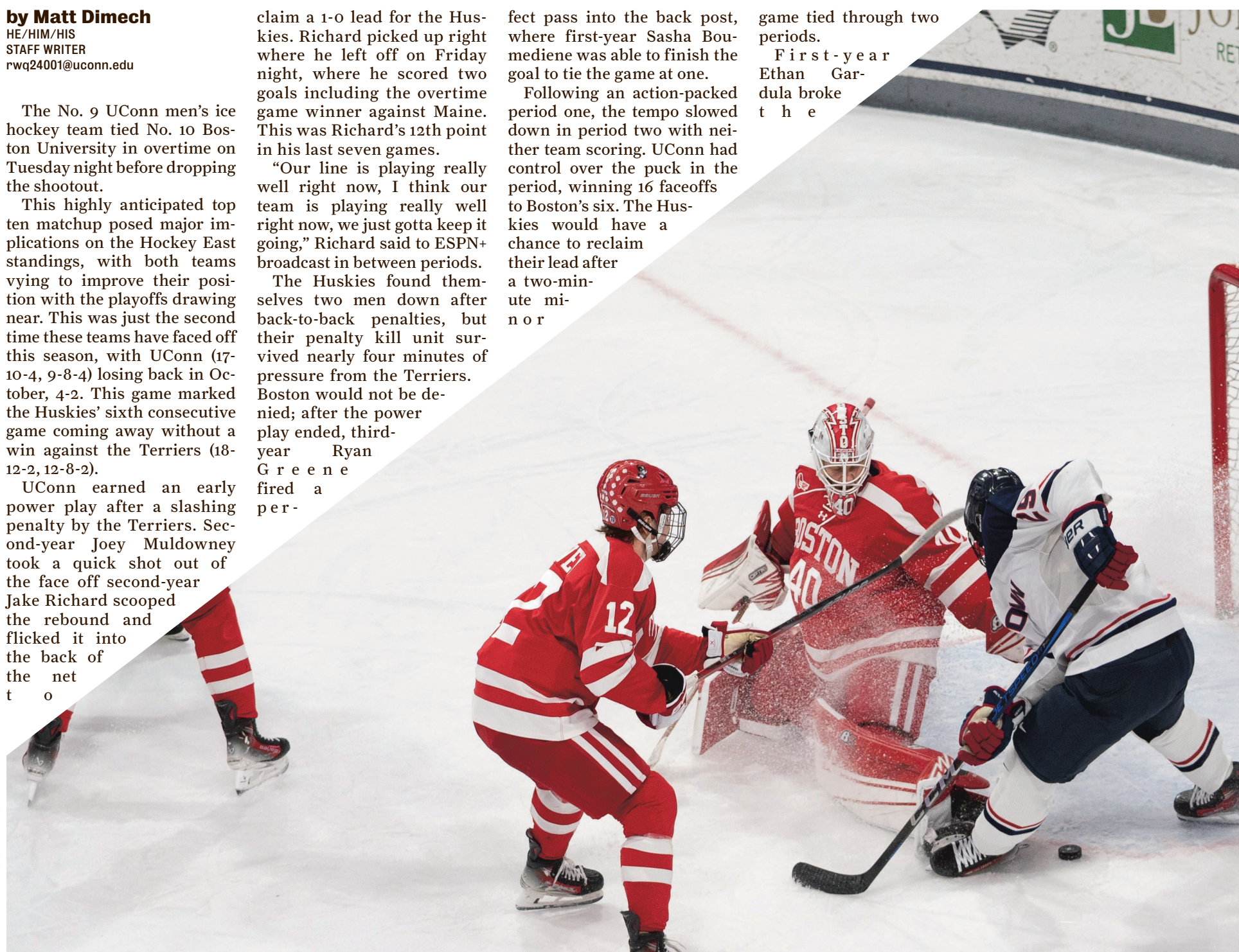
The Huskies found themselves two men down after back-to-back penalties, but their penalty kill unit survived nearly four minutes of pressure from the Terriers. Boston would not be denied; after the power play ended, third-year Ryan Greene fired a per-

fect pass into the back post, where first-year Sasha Boumediene was able to finish the goal to tie the game at one.

Following an action-packed period one, the tempo slowed down in period two with neither team scoring. UConn had control over the puck in the period, winning 16 faceoffs to Boston's six. The Huskies would have a chance to reclaim their lead after a two-minute minor

game tied through two periods.

First-year Ethan Gardula broke the



UConn men's hockey plays Boston University in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 25, 2025. The game ended in a tie in overtime, 2-2.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



gave them a man advantage for the final minute and 20 seconds of the period. This time it was the Terriers' penalty kill unit that got the job done, thwarting the UConn powerplay and keeping the

stalemate in just over four minutes into the third period, chipping the puck high over the netminder after a feed from first-year Kai Janviriya. Double penalties on UConn and Boston created a four-on-four situation. Boston first-year Cole Hutson showed off his stick skills, slipping the puck through a UConn defenseman's legs before burying the equalizer in front of the net. The score remained locked at two apiece in regulation, sending the game to overtime.

In the overtime period, Hut-

son broke a way and got a one on one in front of the goal again, but this time third-year Tyler Muszeliik made held his position in goal and kept the game alive. Both teams were too evenly matched, leaving the game to be decided in a shootout.

Boston won the shootout 2-0, awarding them the extra point towards the Hockey East Standings. The Terriers are now just two points shy of the second place University of Maine. With the game finishing as a tie in overtime, UConn climbed to 31 points over Providence College for fourth place in the rankings. The Huskies will be back in action on Friday as they prepare for their final home game of the year against Northeastern University.

The puck drop is scheduled for 7 p.m. from the Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, Conn.