



# Performative Male Contest brings fits and feminism to Fairfield Way



Contestants pose for photos and show off their outfits. This past Monday on Fairfield Way, a Performative Male Contest was held, gathering many people together where they were asked various questions according to the contest. PHOTO BY MICHAEL FRANOVIC, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Everybody knows what the basic image of a so-called “Performative Male” looks like: A man with matcha in one hand and “The Will to Change” by Bell Hooks in the other, strolling casually down the street with Clairo playing in his wired earbuds. This archetype of man, which has gained notoriety on the internet in recent months, has sparked in equal parts incredible gender discourse and thirst traps as it has taken the world by storm. The University of Connecticut has been no exception to this, as on Monday at 5 p.m., Storrs saw its first-ever

Performative Male Contest. There were many posts that graced the UConn YikYak page on Sept. 2, but perhaps most notably among them was the birth of the idea of a “Performative Male Contest” happening on campus. The original post, which now has over 1,000 updates and 16 comments, only contained a simple image detailing the time, date and location of the fated event alongside a cartoon picture of matcha and some Laufey and Clairo album covers. As campus sat abuzz waiting for the event, little was known about what exactly it would entail. Who was behind the original post? Who would run the competition? Would anyone

actually even show up? It was truly anyone’s guess. Three minutes before the event was slated to start, there weren’t many answers to be found. As loose collections of students stood on Fairfield Way in front of the Homer Babbidge Library, with some clearly dressed to compete, everyone seemed to be waiting for someone to reveal themselves as the organizer and take charge. As the minutes passed, an unexpected answer presented itself. Reem Saood, a third-semester political science and human rights major, took charge of the crowd and herded the contestants into a line. As students saw a clear center of attention, the crowd grew steadily with

more interested onlookers. As around 12 students made their way to center stage, the competition had now begun. Yet, Saood actually had no part in organizing the event, and she had no idea who was behind it all. As she explained after the fact, “I just saw everyone gather in a crowd together and no one was doing anything, so I just decided to be like, ‘Hey Guys!’” Adorning each contestant were various assortments of Labubus, iced matchas, carabiners on each hip, wired earbuds and headphones, Faye Webster vinyl, feminist books such as “The Handmaid’s Tale” and “A Court of Silver Flames” and even two acoustic guitars. Several of the men were carrying tampons and sanitary pads, which they proceeded to throw out into the crowd. Saood went down the line asking the men questions which would test who was truly the most performative of them all, including “Who is your favorite female celebrity?” “What’s your favorite quote about women’s empowerment?” “What’s your favorite part of a woman?” and “What’s your biggest red flag?” Sporadic cheers and boos followed each answer, with some fan favorites being “Michelle Obama” for favorite celebrity and “I don’t talk a lot, only because when a woman of color is speaking... I listen and learn,” for reddest flag. The crowd swelled to roughly 150 at the peak of the event, with contestants being whittled down by progressive rounds of voting. After about 30 minutes, only four remained. Momo Celcis, a first-semester student, stood calm and collected with their Gorillaz t-shirt, pink skateboard and “I heart boobies” belt as they approached the final round. They

described their preparation for the event started “as soon as they saw the ad on YikYak” a week before and the results of that effort were clear. “Unlike a lot of these guys, I’m actually interested in everything and I am biologically a woman, so this just, is second nature to me,” they said about the confidence they had walking into the competition. Another participant in the final four, first-semester student Aidan Minogue, was equally confident going into it, believing that “I just had to be myself and true to who I am.” He swooned the crowd with his bleach buzzed haircut, specially styled with a pink painted circle and cross on the back of his head representing the female sex. Minogue would go on to win the day, receiving the loudest cheer of the final four to secure his victory. As he took in his victory, he spoke out unto the crowd of his grand plans after this. “I believe going forward I can make some big changes... I’m gonna go straight to the government, I’m gonna start protesting, feminine products should be free, no more pink tax, the pay gap should be equalized, I think there’s a lot to work on,” he said. Celcis, who would come second in the end, reflected on the event and its significance afterwards, saying that, “I was so happy to see a bunch of beautiful faces like me. I’m so happy to see so many men, young men interested in feminism and human rights... I’m so happy that they honored women’s voices.” Although it’s still unknown who was behind the contest in the first place, it’s clear that the impact made a mark on many of those who were able to watch it. Now, the only question that remains is when’s the performative masc lesbian competition?

# University senate meeting touches on housing crisis and executive orders

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The University of Connecticut hosted its first university senate meeting of the academic year on Sept. 8 to discuss UConn’s record enrollment, housing and federal executive orders. The university senate meets on the first available Monday of each month in the Student Union, beginning at 4 p.m. Senators include undergraduate and graduate students, professors, directors and other prominent figures of UConn. The senate votes on resolutions, by-laws and other matters to be presented to the board of trustees for approval. All senate meetings are open to the public, although public comment is not permitted. The 2025-2026 senate includes multiple Undergraduate Student Government leaders as senators. Vice President Haritha Subramanian, Comptroller Billy Lipinski and Chief Diversity Officer Phoenix Harper all attended the meeting as senators. USG President Andy Zhang, while a senator, was not in attendance. The senate meeting began at 4:02 p.m., as called by UConn President

Radenka Maric, who attended the meeting virtually. The first order of business was to elect a moderator and a secretary for the year. The senate unanimously elected Del Siegle of Neag’s Educational Psychology department to the role of moderator and Christine North of the Chemistry department to the role of secretary. Both Siegle and North held these same positions for the 2024-2025 academic year. Siegle took over moderation of the senate meeting and began with a land acknowledgement before beginning a 10-minute roll call of senators. After the approval of the minutes, Maric began her presidential report. Maric thanked the senators for their work and noted that the 2025-2026 freshman class is UConn’s largest in history. She added that the university was also able to provide financial aid to over 6,000 students, many of whom are first generation, despite the school’s decrease in federal funding. Senator Andrew Bush asked Maric about May’s “Resolution to Work in Mutual Defense of Academic Freedom, Free Expression, Institutional Integrity, and the

See SENATE, p. 2



Audience member discusses with the speaker at the University Senate Meeting in February of 2024. This past Monday, a University Senate Meeting was held in the Student Union. CRISTIAN WELCOME (FEB. 4, 2024)

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SENATE, cont. from p. 1

Research Enterprise,” which had passed the senate unanimously by voice vote but was not implemented.

“We request that the President, Provost, and Senior Leadership provide updates to the Senate Executive Committee and Senate with a speed and frequency appropriate to the ongoing urgency of the national situation,” the resolution said. The resolution also proposed sharing resources with other public and land grant state institutions.

Chief of Staff to the President Michelle Williams explained that the administration could not support the resolution during this time, as the university instead has been focusing its attention of more pressing issues. Williams called out research and student programs as two of the areas UConn has been focusing on in regard to federal executive orders.

Associate Vice President for Budget, Planning and Institutional Research Reka Wrynn described these decisions as “belt-tightening

activities” that have decreased the university deficit. She said she was “optimistic” about addressing the resolution but that the university has not reached that point.

Chair to the Executive Senate Committee Robert Day was next given the floor for a discussion of the actions the committee had taken over the summer. He noted that the committee has been looking for ways to increase communication between the senate and UConn executives, specifically on topics of budgets and other monetary issues. Day also congratulated former UConn Provost Anne D’Alleva on her new position as the next president of Binghamton University.

“Binghamton will be fortunate to have her as the next president,” Day said.

Day also indicated a need for the senate to draft a resolution on how the university should approach programs designed to address racism. According to Day, these programs are now illegal. This includes a proposed Anti-Black Racism (ABR) course.

Senator Alvaro Lozano-Robledo asked Day if UConn should evalu-

ate the common core curriculum requirement that students take a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion course as a part of the Content Area Four: Diversity and Multiculturalism requirement.

Day stated that, as there are a wide variety of courses offered under Content Area Four that are not all specifically related to DEI, UConn is not worried about the requirement.

Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Nathan Fuerst began a presentation on new undergraduate students at UConn. Fuerst noted that the new class of freshmen at Storrs are the “most diverse” and “most qualified” class in UConn history, with high average test scores and with 27.8% of the class being first-generation students.

Fuerst stated that the Stamford campus had the “largest intake [of students] ever,” while the Hartford campus saw a decline in enrollment compared to previous years, which he attributed to a loss of regional campus housing options.

He added that while UConn will continue to prioritize first year and

transfer students in the housing program, the university still cannot guarantee housing for older students. However, the university hopes to open up permanent housing for Hartford students on Pratt Street next year.

UConn has also seen a decrease in the number of international students enrolling, which Fuerst attributed to the current political environment. He stated that the university has had to offer more financial aid to international students as the market shifts in order to entice them to enroll at UConn.

Senator Beth Ginsberg raised concerns about the amount of space available at Hartford, citing cramped classrooms and an art gallery that was “chopped into a third of what it used to be.”

Fuerst stated that the university will need to do more strategic planning to solve the issue of space in Hartford, but that it is a problem he is aware of.

Fuerst’s team is working with Facilities Operations to improve the amenities of UConn dorms, a change that is “desperately needed” according to Fuerst. This includes

air conditioning and bathroom improvements.

The meeting then transitioned to a presentation from Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of The Graduate School Leslie Shor. She noted that there is a rise in the number of students in the master’s program, but a drop in the number of Ph.D. students, which Shor contributed as possibly being related to budget issues as some departments may not have the money to hire Ph.D. students as teaching assistants.

Shor also raised the possibility of a new problem facing UConn in the form of international visas. The Trump administration proposed a rule change in August, which would limit the amount of time an international student visa would allow, with a four-year cap, according to CNN.

There have been talks of the federal government limiting master’s degree students to two-year visas and Ph.D. students to four-year visas, according to Shor.

After Shor concluded her presentation, Siegle adjourned the senate meeting at 5:20 p.m.

# UConn housing updates 2025-2026 housing contract

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The Sept. 2 email stated three changes to the contract related to both fees and housing eligibility.

One change includes an increase in fees for damage and upkeep of facilities. If a student requests to be let into their dorm after being locked out, they will now be charged \$50. According to UConn Spokesperson Stephanie Reitz, this is double the previous charge of \$25.

Students will also see an upcharge during check-in and check-out. If a student does not return their door key, they will be charged \$150. This is an increase of \$50 from the previous charge of \$100. The charge for an unreturned mail key remains the same at \$15.

According to Reitz, the upcharges were overdue.

“The lock change charge has not changed for nearly 20 years and therefore hasn’t kept up with the increased

labor and equipment costs associated with it,” Reitz said.

The fees go toward staffing these services and the equipment needed to carry out lock changes, according to Reitz.

The email also stated that students who have outstanding balances, bursar holds related to their fee bill or medical holds can be prevented from taking part in the housing process, including housing selection and room changes.

According to Reitz, information about outstanding balances was already included in the contract but was included in the email to add more clarity to the rule.

The housing contract is reviewed every year up until July 1 and is then finalized. Any changes made to the contract after that require UConn to send out an email to students about the change, according to Reitz.

More information can be found in the 2025-2026 housing contract.

# SHaW holds activities this week for Suicide Prevention Month

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The University of Connecticut’s Student Health and Wellness department is holding activities all week to support student mental health and suicide prevention.

September is nationally recognized as Suicide Prevention Month. Within that month, the week of Sept. 7 to 15 is highlighted for suicide awareness.

The events began on Sunday with “Paint the Spirit Rock” at noon. Students were invited to “kick off the week with a message of hope and solidarity,” according to the SHaW website.

Monday hosted “An Evening with Monique Coleman” from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Student Union. Monique Coleman is an award-winning actress recognized for her performance in “High School Musical.”

Coleman “was awarded the first and only United Nations Youth Champion title and traveled to 24 countries to learn about and shine a light on the most pressing issues facing young people globally,” according to SUBOG’s description of the event.

On Tuesday, there was a Food Is Love event at the Asian American Cultural Center. This event centered on food as a cultural expression, particularly within the Asian community. There was an open community discussion during the event, according to the SHaW website.

Today, SHaW is holding a Health and Wellness Fair on the Student Union Lawn from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event features a num-

ber of free activities and amenities for students. Some of these amenities include a five-minute professional massage, flu shots and campus runs, according to the SHaW Instagram.

There will also be a Stomp Out the Stigma Walk from 5 to 6 p.m. This event is hosted by Active Minds and will begin on Fairfield Way. According to Instagram, this event will “help raise mental health awareness” and combat stigma.

While there are no facilitated events on Thursday, there are regularly scheduled Let’s Talk events every day.

“The Let’s Talk: Mental Health Office Hours program provides informal, confidential consultation with therapists from SHaW. Services are free of charge and offered on a first come, first served basis and are about 15-20 minutes,” according to the SHaW website. Specific times and locations for each day can be found on the website.

On Friday, SHaW and Active Minds are presenting a Field of Memories on the Student Union Lawn. University Student Government will plant 1,100 flags to represent college suicide deaths, according to Instagram. UConn Active Minds will be offering information about mental health and suicide prevention at the event.

The final activity for the awareness week will be on Monday, Sept. 15. The event is called “Healing Thru Art” and is hosted by USG and Holistic Huskies. The community-centered painting event will be held from 4 to 6 p.m.

Although the official events end on Monday, SHaW has services for students’ mental health throughout the entire year.

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- ACROSS
- 1 Drink with marshmallows

6 Long-legged birds

10 Belt

14 “We need to talk”

15 Mars rover org.

16 Play charades, e.g.

17 Boat sport for pilots?

19 Reverse

20 Negotiation-ending words

21 Shady plot

22 Xenon, for one

24 Beach sport for the self-absorbed?

27 “Please, I’m on it”

30 Key hit in panic

31 “Gosh!”

32 “Bleeding Love” singer Lewis

33 Younger 51-Down daughter

35 Running sport for academics?

39 Tactics, in gamerspeak

40 Notre Dame Fighting \_\_\_\_

43 Nail salon brand

46 Female sib

47 Stressful parts of French class?

49 Cue sport for children?

52 Belly

53 Like Machu Picchu

54 Ogres

57 Era

58 Combat sport for really tired people?

62 Merit

63 Oscar winner Stone

64 “Zoom-Zoom” automaker

65 Small whirlpool

66 Soccer score

67 Smudge
- DOWN
- 1 Half-\_\_: coffee spec

2 One who gives a hoot

3 Something in need of change?

4 Challenging chem course

5 Ritalin target, for short

6 Confine

7 “That Girl” star Thomas

8 Call upon

9 Proverb

10 Blue character in a mushroom-shaped house

11 Hit the jackpot

12 “All finished”

13 First president’s first name

18 Abound (with)

21 Very old

22 Miss

23 Renaissance faire beverage

25 Solange’s “A \_\_\_\_ at the Table”

26 KGB country

28 Binary digits

29 Meows at the door, perhaps

33 Matching group

34 Land unit

36 Michael of “Shrinking”

37 Coarse file

38 Like some beds and candy bars

41 “Rugrats” dad

42 Pres. after FDR

43 “Ah, it makes sense now”

44 ATM input instrument

45 Proof of legal age, often

47 Like some matters of the heart?

48 \_\_ sandwich

50 Actor DeVito

51 First president born after 1960

55 \_\_ of Maine: personal care brand

56 Midterm, e.g.

58 “I \_\_ to differ”

59 My Chemical Romance genre

60 Secret-protecting doc

61 Long-jawed fish

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141516171819202122232425262728293031323334353637383940414243444546474849505152535455565758596061626364656667

By Alex Stoneman9/10/25

Tuesday’s Puzzle Solved

A C H E A M B E R T S K S  
S O A K B A R R E A P E S  
H O N E Y C R I S P S E E N  
E P S A S K S S T E P  
S T O R M S K I N N Y D I P  
S N E A K D U O R T E  
A H A F L A P U P A  
S P R A Y P A I N T I N G  
L A O S A L T C O X  
I M P A K A E P I C S  
L E M O N S N A P P E A C E  
L U C Y R I C E S O N  
H O S T J U M P A R O U N D  
E V I E O B O E S P A C E  
S E C T T E R S E S L E D

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Level 1 2 3 4

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

Solution to Tuesday’s puzzle9/10/25

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

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](https://sudoku.org.uk).

Crossword

&

Sudoku

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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ‘Dancing with the Stars’

## SEASON 34

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America’s star-studded ballroom is back and the cast is ready to rumba. Last week, “Dancing with the Stars” announced the celebrities that will be taking over our screens for season 34. These stars have been officially paired with their professional dance mentors, and it will be up to America to vote for the best duos every week this fall. With the fate of the Mirrorball Championship winners in your hands, here’s what to expect.

Preseason promotion started early in the year, with the show’s marketing team announcing in the spring that conservationist Robert Irwin and social media influencer Alix Earle would join season 34’s cast on “Good Morning America.” These stars, known for their large following on social media, are both highly anticipated by fans with potential to become well trained by their veteran dance partners, Whitney Carson and Valentin Chmerkovskiy. Although their lack of dance background might lead to a slow start for the stars, their mentors who have been pros for over 10 years may be exactly what they need to be frontrunners.

The show’s high social media presence intends to capture young viewers. Last season held record breaking viewership, and a lot of that attraction may be due to some of the Gen Z pro dancer’s media platforms. The new style of releasing specific cast members ahead of others could be based on multiple marketing strategies developed since last season. Second-year pro Ezra Sosa and third-year pro Rylee Arnold are expected to be popular picks based on the height of their own fanbases. Both pros are matched with performers that have experience in dance in one way or another, as Sosa attempts to make it past the first round with Olympic gymnast Jordan Chiles. Arnold prepares to strike the competition with Pentatonix singer Scott Hoying, although the pair has faced questionable feedback after an interview with Arnold resurfaced.

“For some reason, I had this thought that Robert Irwin was gonna be my partner because I kind of had put it out into the atmosphere,” said Arnold to US Weekly.

Despite her ideal partner turning into her opponent, Hoying appears to be a well-rounded entertainer capable of dominating the dance floor in a potential power duo.

Some big names have also drawn excitement from viewers for being unexpected A-listers, such as actor Corey Feldman joining defending champion Jenna Johnson, maintaining viewership from older demographics. “Boy Meets World” actress Danielle Fishel also has potential to get votes from every demographic thanks to her starring roles in multi-generational television shows. Fishel said in an interview last week that what inspired her to say yes to this season was based on her recent breast cancer recovery.

“After last year having cancer, I just realized, like, ‘I’m not having enough fun,’ or ‘I’m not experiencing enough joy,’” said Fishel to US Weekly. “And the minute this call came in, it sounded like exactly that joy and fun wrapped up into a three-month experience. It’s been a week, and that’s exactly what it’s been — joy and fun.”

Other stars include “The Parent Trap” actress Elaine Hendrix, Fifth Harmony member Lauren Jauregui, reality stars Jen Affleck and Whitney Leavitt, comedian Andy Richter and NBA All-Star Baron Davis. The season will begin on Tuesday, Sept. 16 on ABC.



Teams that will compete on the show ‘Dancing with the Stars’ in hopes of winning. The show has now been airing for 34 seasons. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @DANCINGWITHTHESTARS ON INSTAGRAM



# BRITISH INVASION:

## The ‘battle’ of Britpop

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Welcome to the inaugural column of “British Invasion.” In this column, I will discuss moments in British music history. For my first rodeo, I’ll talk about the “Battle” of Britpop that went down during the week of Aug. 14, 1995, since Oasis, one of the bands involved, is currently touring. To celebrate, I’ll talk about the one time they lost the U.K. No. 1 spot to a song about herbal baths.

First, some background on the two main protagonists of this story. Blur, fronted by Damon Albarn, released their third album “Parklife” the year before, which was met with resounding success thanks to songs like the bi anthem “Girls and Boys,” “Parklife,” which has verses about everyday people and the punky “Bank Holiday,” which is my personal favorite off here.

This album marked the beginning of the “Britpop” genre, as bands like Blur, Suede and Pulp took influence from British guitar pop of the 1960s-1970s and included lyrics commentating on British culture and society of the time.

Oasis, spearheaded by the infamous Gallagher Brothers, was on the other side of the canyon. There was Liam, the band’s cocky, arrogant frontman/lead singer, and Noel, the main songwriter of Oasis, who was also cocky and arrogant. The public loved Oasis, not just for the brash egos of the Gallagher brothers, but for all the stadium rock bangers – do “Supersonic,” “Live Forever” and “Cigarettes and Alcohol” ring a bell? They were all compiled on their 1994 debut album, “Definitely Maybe,” which has the distinction of being the fastest-selling album in the U.K. at the time.

Heading into 1995, Blur and Oasis were the biggest bands in the U.K. and each other’s biggest

competitors. When Oasis went to No. 1 with “Some Might Say,” Albarn went to a label party to congratulate Oasis on their achievement, only to be mocked by a victorious Liam Gallagher. It was an insult Albarn took to heart, and it eroded any friendly feelings he had for them earlier.

Outside of each other, both bands were also under massive scrutiny from media and fans alike for their respective follow-ups. As both bands geared up to release advance singles for their albums in the fall, the media attention was so fierce, NME said, “Yes, in a week where news leaked that Saddam Hussein was preparing nuclear weapons, everyday folks were still getting slaughtered in Bosnia and Mike Tyson was making his comeback, tabloids and broadsheets alike went Britpop crazy.” But what singles would each band bring into the fray?

Blur’s challenger was “Country House,” a novelty song about Blur’s former manager that sounded like a Britpop standard. Oasis’ weapon of choice was “Roll with It,” described by Noel Gallagher as “simple rock ‘n’ roll tune.” With the power of hindsight, these were not the best songs each band had to offer.

“Country House” was slated to be released on Aug. 21, 1995, but those plans went awry once Blur’s management learned that Oasis was pushing up the release date for their new single to the week before theirs. This wouldn’t fare well for Blur, as Oasis was likely to go to number one again and keep it the next week thanks to increased exposure, harming Blur’s chances of getting their first chart-topping single. In response, Albarn decided to push the release date up to go head-to-head with Oasis, thinking Blur would have a better chance at reaching the number one spot.

When this became public, the media hyped up a “Battle of Br-



**Blur, a British music group, posing for their album cover. The album was named ‘Leisure’ and performed well.**  
PHOTO COURTESY OF @BLUROFFICIAL ON INSTAGRAM

itpop” between both bands, believing that whoever was Top of the Pops the next week would be the undisputed kings of the Britpop genre. It also gave editors a reason to put Oasis/Blur in their headlines, in the hopes fans or music enthusiasts would pick it up. It’s half the reason the title of this column has quotes around “battle”: this was a manufactured sensation that both bands didn’t partake in. Because while they had singles released on the same day, the albums were still released during separate months.

So, who became No. 1? With 274,000 copies sold, the winner was “Country House,” by Blur! Their Top of the Pops performance was the victory lap, as when Pulp’s Jarvis Cocker introduced them, he said “They said it’s the taking part that’s

important, not the winning, they’re gonna want a civil war but tonight there’s no denying: Blur are Top of the Pops!” Blur’s Bassist Alex James wore an Oasis t-shirt to antagonize them even further.

But while Blur had won the battle, Oasis won the war. The highly anticipated “(What’s the Story) Morning Glory?” dropped on Oct. 2 and sold like hot cakes worldwide. Any album that contains “Don’t Look Back in Anger” deserves to do so – it’s the magnum opus of Oasis’ career. Blur dropped “The Great Escape” on Sept. 11, and it sold well in U.K. but not anywhere else, nor at the same scale as what Oasis would do a month later.

The ultimate loser in this may be Britpop as a genre, as this represented the peak of the

genre. Oasis continued in their maximalist, stadium rock ways with their third album “Be Here Now” in 1997, but it dropped like a rock compared to Oasis’ first two projects. People didn’t really like the eight-minute Beatlesque pastiches and Liam singing for world peace. Blur would eventually move away from their British influences and into more American ones when they released their self-titled in 1997. Other genres also got popular as well, as bubblegum pop soon came into vogue during the late 90’s.

It’s not like the Britpop mainstays of yesteryear still aren’t around. Oasis is on a stadium tour right now, Pulp was at Glastonbury last June and Blur released a new album two years ago. For all we know, we might have round two on our hands soon.

# DAILY CAMPUS COMIC

BY JASON J. SAMPSON  
CONTRIBUTING ARTIST

Paper Boy Sam

How vocal stimming works:





# Life

@dailycampuslife

## The 2025 dorm decoration experience

by **Samantha Brody**  
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Although classes and clubs at the University of Connecticut have begun to settle in, there's still time to partake in one of the most fulfilling aspects of the early fall semester: dorm decorating!

I've always been the kind of person to fill her time with activities and side projects, so my freshman dorm room was a little lackluster and could have used some spark. This year, I've made it my mission to have the coolest dorm I can, one decorating session at a time.

The first step to having the best-decorated room on campus is to make sure you have the space for it. You'll want to have some wall space for posters, lights and other decorations, so it's important to arrange your room accordingly. As a resident of West Campus, this meant lofting my bed more than five feet off the ground so I could take my desk out of the closet and put it underneath.

Bed lofting is always an interesting experience at UConn, and I didn't have family around to help me this time. Thankfully, my upstairs neighbor and The Daily Campus's Associate Opinion Editor Patrick Minnerly, came by with a mallet and an extra set of helping hands.

For anyone else who lofted their beds to an uncomfortable height, it's a good idea to buy a hanging bedside pouch. You stick it underneath your mattress and let it hang over the side, and those pockets are perfect for

holding your phone and other essentials. You can also attach a charging block, either by tape or Command Strip, to your bedpost so the charging cords can reach your bed.

I'm personally a huge proponent of BYOLS — Bring Your Own Light Source. Lighting and sound are key to crafting the ideal cozy vibe, especially since the fluorescent lights installed in every dorm hall can be harsh and bright at times. I personally have a set of LED curtain lights, which I got at Target for a cool \$17, and those offer a more relaxing environment.

If you've lofted your bed like I have, I highly recommend the curtain lights because you can slip them into that space between your bed in the wall. If you have ones that are long enough, they'll hang down in the area under your bed and can display any posters or art you may have tacked up on that wall. You can also do this with fake leaves or vines, beads or other hanging decorations.

As for sound, I've got white noise in the form of a tower fan. I've yet to start up a record collection, so this is the world I live in for now. For those who do enjoy vinyl, Newbury Comics is selling an exclusive collection of color vinyl, and I'm tempted to grab a few just for the sake of it.

Speaking of Newbury Comics, that's the perfect world for dorm decoration if you're a nerd like me. There are posters and vinyl galore, with all sorts of trinkets, figurines and magnets to spice up your space. The "you need to nerd out" trend going on right now only confirms the idea that



ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXA PAPPAS, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

the weird side of pop culture is in right now.

On the topic of magnets, they're a side of dorm decoration that I don't think everyone has caught on to yet. UConn's metal bed frames and metal stabilizer bars are completely magnetic. If you've got yourself a magnet collection or some drawings to display, that's the place to put it.

Furthermore, the idea of lining my bed frame with sticky notes has started to consume my brain, and I just need the time to execute it. I have plans to get some multi-colored sticky notes that I can cover in doodles and little Zentangles

when I'm bored or don't feel like reading my physics textbook.

If you do decide to paper your walls with art, posters and other decorations, I highly recommend getting the Velcro Command Strips instead of the regular sticky ones. The college dorm room is a temporary one, and Velcro strips mean that you can extend the longevity of anything you hang up. When the time comes to move out, you can easily remove posters from the wall without rips and put them up somewhere else with ease.

And on my final topic: cable management. Finding a place to

tuck away your various cords and cables is essential, otherwise those will clog up your space. My solution in my own dorm was to prop a power strip up onto my bed's stabilizer bar, which sits directly behind my desk. I can shove the cables down into that space between the desk and the wall and pull them out when I need them.

While your college dorm room has a short shelf life, that doesn't mean it's not worth decorating. Having a space that is uniquely yours is the best way to feel comfortable and secure during your time at UConn.

## ‘PURPOSE, PASSION AND PIVOT’: MONIQUE COLEMAN ON SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

by **Michelle Pawlos**  
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"We really are all in this together," said Monique Coleman as she ended her inspiring conversation at the Student Union Theatre on Monday, Sep. 8, for Student Health and Wellness's Suicide Prevention Week. Coleman is an award-winning actress best known for her role as Taylor McKessie in the "High School Musical" movie series. But she's also an incredible advocate for mental health who came to the University of Connecticut to share her story with others.

The event started with a brief introduction by SHaW and SUB-OG, followed by an introduction by Monique Coleman. "I know many of you know me from 'High School Musical', but my story doesn't start there," Coleman began.

From the start, she was vulnerable about her struggles in life. She spoke of breaking her femur at the age of five and having to relearn how to walk — an early life experience that taught her how quickly things can change. Coleman talked about how she was bullied relentlessly in middle school, being shoved in lockers and constantly feeling both lonely and isolated.

"The opening speech was what grabbed my attention," said Liya Edwards, a third-semester biological sciences major. "I was taking notes and writing down the quotes she said. People may think that she's a star, but in reality, she's just a person, and I think her just being so real and vulnerable with telling us her story really touched home for me and got me thinking about my own life."

Coleman described her college years as a period filled with "mental gymnastics." Her col-

lege was competitive, and she felt pressure trying to fight for her spot.

"In the 90s, mental health wasn't talked about," she said. "I was taught that girls should be seen and not heard. So, this moment is healing for me as well."

After returning home from filming "High School Musical," Coleman found a three-day eviction notice taped to her door. While her castmates moved on to new opportunities, she struggled to land auditions. She mentions being proud of her castmates, but when thinking about herself, she felt punished and like she wasn't enough. Coleman then moved on to four lessons that she wanted to share with the crowd.

### It is ok not to be ok

"I used to think struggling meant I was failing." Coleman reminded the audience here that we are all human and struggling is normal.

### Rejection is protection

"For a long time, I thought rejection meant there was something inherently wrong with me," she said. "But sometimes the things we don't get are the things that aren't meant for us."

### Trust yourself — even through the hard stuff

Coleman opened up about a personal betrayal. After launching a production company with a friend, she had her identity stolen and money embezzled by this friend—ironically, during the same period she received an Emmy nomination. "Everything was falling apart behind the scenes, but I had decided not to take legal action and began trusting myself again," she said.

### Give yourself permission to pause

After separating from her husband, Coleman found herself starting over in her 40s. She described writing affirmations on



Actress Monique Coleman posing for a photo on her Instagram. Coleman recently spoke at a UConn mental health event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @\_MONIQUECOLEMAN ON INSTAGRAM

the beach, letting go of her ego, and asking the universe for one thing: "to be surprised and delighted." Days later she received a collaboration that changed her life. She journaled about this experience only to realize that the date marked exactly one year since separating from her husband. Coleman teared up before telling the crowd, "I realized that

my life was just starting."

The event concluded with a brief Q&A session, where students asked Coleman about her travel experiences, how she thinks the industry has changed for Black women and her mental health routines.

"I think the Q and A section stood out to me," said Dayna Mbugua, a third-semester mo-

lecular and cell biology major. "It reminded me once again that you don't know what everyone's going through, so don't judge them. Not everyone knows what I'm going through, so don't judge me."

Monique Coleman's visit to UConn was more than a celebrity appearance — it was a reminder that vulnerability is strength, and healing is possible.



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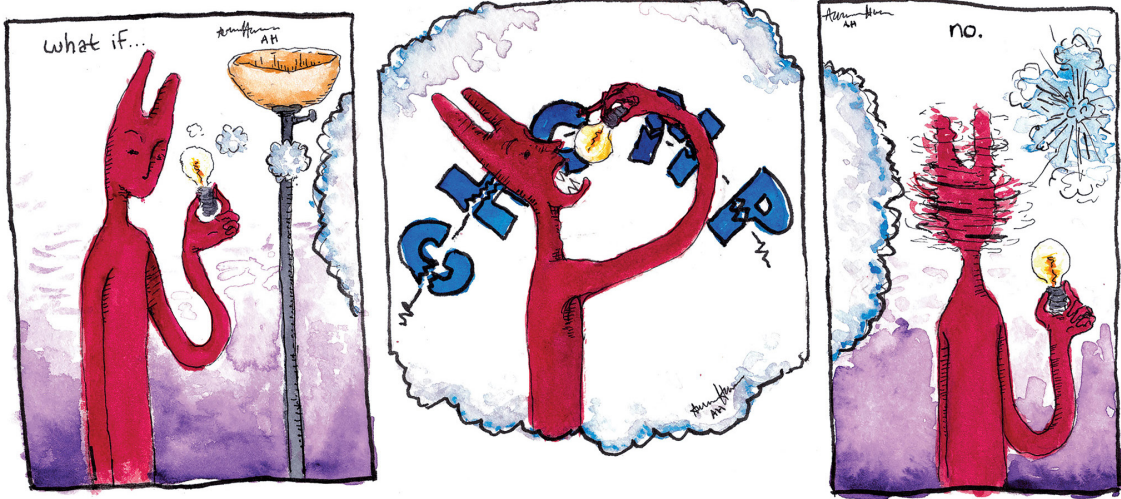
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COMIC BY ASLAN HOFFMAN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Trans people are NOT your enemy, the DOJ is

by Jay Hester  
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The Second Amendment — the right the Constitution gives Americans to bear arms — is a hotly debated topic both within deeply political environments and in casual conversations between regular people. The amendment itself states that America will have “a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state” and that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed”. The intention of this amendment is to keep within the rights of the people to arm themselves against a tyrannical government and those who are actors in tyranny.

The left being generally in favor of common-sense gun laws and control to manage the use of firearms and the right’s staunch advocacy for the possession of guns seems to leave no room for a middle ground. Despite these clear and obvious sides of the debate, recent activities have muddled the waters of what each side truly believes. Do conservatives believe in protecting guns at all costs? Do leftists believe no one should have them at all? It’s more complicated than that, and nothing highlights this more than the Department of Justice’s recent proposal to restrict the use of guns for trans folks.

In light of the recent shooting at a Catholic church in Minneapolis, allegedly committed by a 23-year-old trans person, our federal government has been discussing classifying trans identities as a mental illness and therefore impeding a trans person’s ability to get ahold of firearms. Killing two children and injuring 21 others is an atrocity and reminds us of the necessity of managing the use of firearms and how we can prevent such events in the future. How-

ever, being trans is not what made this horrible event happen and it does not honor the victims to seize this moment for political gain and to spread lies about innocent trans people. Hate will only fan the flames of gun violence that has seen the death of thousands and will kill thousands more.

Regardless of what you believe about guns and the Second Amendment, this is a clear violation of the rights of Americans and is targeting one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in this country. The Bill of Rights does not care who you are, what you look like, what you believe in or what you identify as. These rights are intended to apply to every American citizen, and any attempt at making this no longer true is dangerous, hypocritical and emphasizes the state of regression America is heading toward. While many take advantage of their Second Amendment rights, the government is trying to take them away from those who are most vulnerable.

Let’s take a look at some statistics. According to The Gun Violence Archive, within the last decade, less than 1% of shootings involving four or more people were carried out by someone who identified as transgender. By contrast, Everytown states that “more than 70% of homicides of transgender people involve a firearm, with disproportionate impacts on black trans women.” In the same study, they concluded trans people are two-and-a-half times more likely to be victims of homicide compared to their cisgender counterparts. It’s not difficult to see a correlation here. Trans people, making up only 0.95% of the U.S. population, are far less likely to perpetrate shootings and are far more likely to be victims. However, people like Benny Johnson, an alt-right You-

Tube commentator, want you to believe that the “trans movement is radicalizing the mentally ill into becoming violent terrorists who target children for murder.”

This rhetoric that trans people are dangerous manipulators who intend to cleanse the cis population through gun violence and grooming is not only undeniably false, but also incredibly dangerous. Trans people are already particularly victimized by gun violence. Lies from bad faith actors will only increase the deaths of this population.

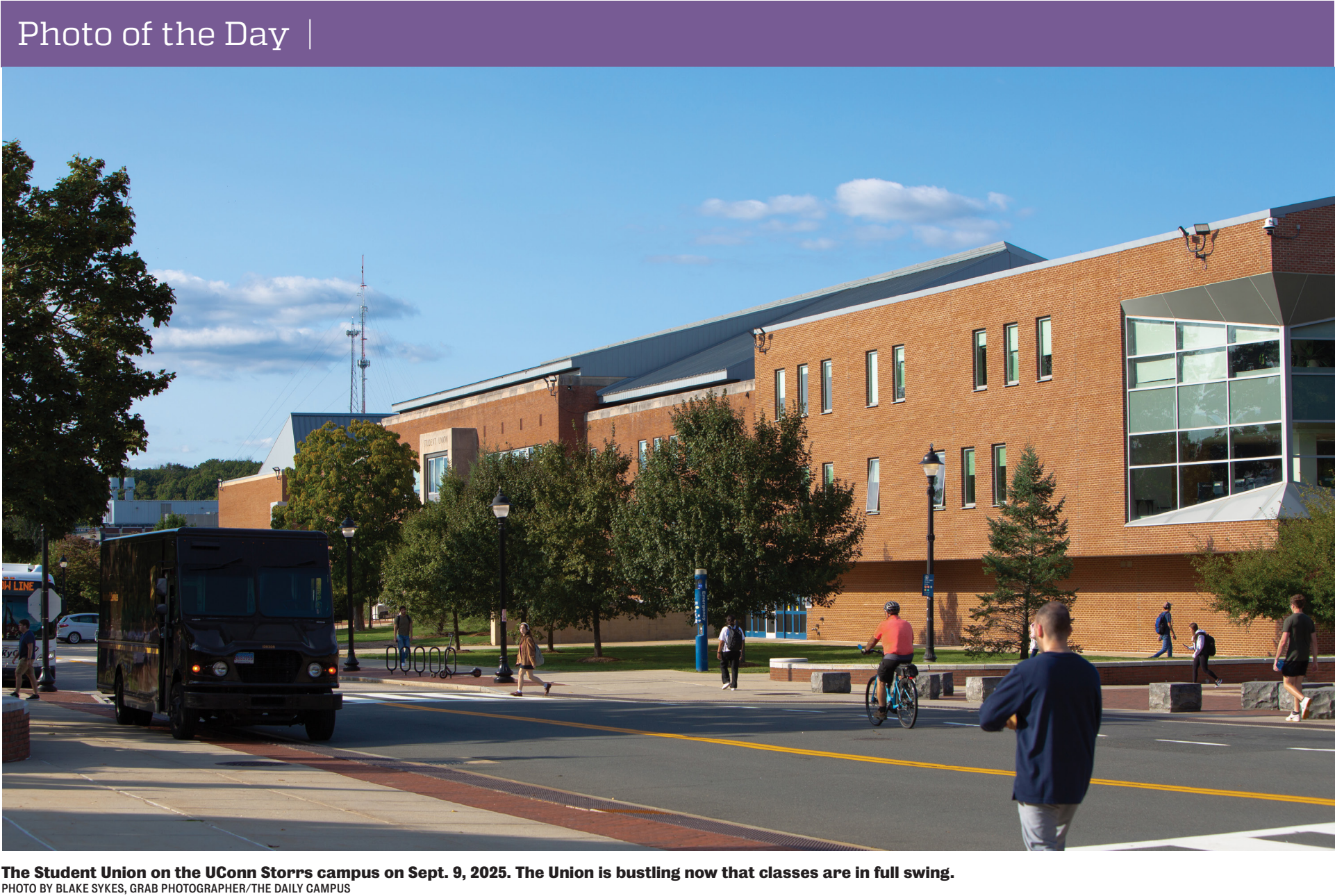
On top of this, the targeting of trans people as supposed violent individuals ignores the larger source of deaths due to a firearm: cis white men. From the Rockefeller Institute of Government mass shootings factsheet, 54.4% of perpetrators are white, and overwhelmingly male at 95.3% as of September 8, 2025. Despite this information about mass shooters and repeated calls to action, conservatives insisted upon protecting the right to bear arms. But now that a single trans person committed an act of violence, it’s gun control as far as the eye can see.

It is clear that this dramatic shift in opinions on gun control laws is not to protect victims or to prevent further violence, but instead to crack down on those the government seeks to marginalize. The right’s “rules for thee but not for me” mindset means that the only group who will have regular access to weapons that are consistently responsible for the murder of innocent and unprotected demographics are those who statistically cannot be trusted with them. Trans people were never and never will be the problem, and at a time where their protection is needed the most, their right to bear arms is being threatened and will likely be taken away.



COMIC BY SAMANTHA HAAS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

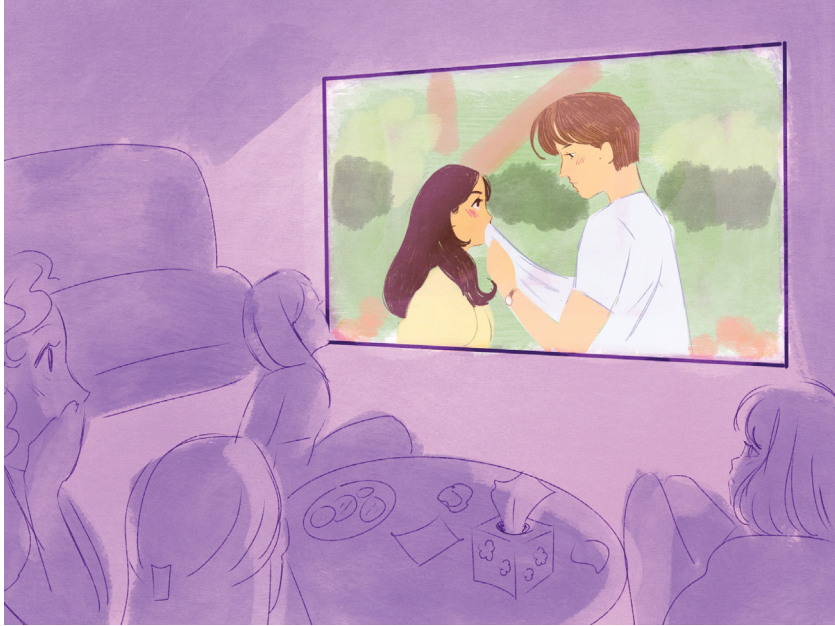




The Student Union on the UConn Storrs campus on Sept. 9, 2025. The Union is bustling now that classes are in full swing.  
PHOTO BY BLAKE SYKES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# “The Summer I Turned Pretty” is a “silly teen show,” and that’s okay

ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXA PAPPAS, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



by Raegan Skelly  
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If you’re anything like me, your social media feed has been bombarded for the past couple of months with clips and discourse surrounding the Amazon Prime Video Series “The Summer I Turned Pretty.” The show follows Isabel (Belly) and her never-ending love triangle with brothers Conrad and Jeremiah as they spend their summers together. Every Wednesday at 3 a.m. Eastern, a new epi-

sode drops, and the internet eats it up immediately. Some of you, like myself, welcomed this social media takeover. Others did not. Some have and will dismiss this show as a “silly teen show” with little to no substance, and they’re not necessarily incorrect, as it can be very surface level. I just think that doesn’t matter — there are more important aspects to deem something meritable than just a meaningful plot — namely watchability and entertainment value, of which it has both. Therefore, I think “The Summer I Turned Pretty” is worth

a watch, especially before it concludes this Sept. 17.

The best aspect of “Summer” is the weekly release schedule. “Summer Wednesdays” have the same effect as the infamous “Euphoria Sundays.” It’s a fun thing to watch and talk about with your friends and seemingly every person on your timeline, too. A new episode every week builds up the anticipation, and you can have a weekly routine that comes with each release. It sounds dumb, but it really is a way to build community, to have a continual shared interest. Some of my favorite conversations I have each week start off with “have you watched the new episode yet?”

In a television environment dominated by HBO dramas, where shows like “The Bear” are nominated in the same category as “Abbott Elementary,” shows that don’t exist just for mature audiences and award notoriety are important. Society loves to discuss the loss of tween and teen culture, but “Summer” is rated TV-14 and is very much made with that demographic in mind. We need shows like this that create this balance, especially with the internet’s love of “adulti-

fying” children and the deletion of content with them at the helm.

“Summer” is also brushed off as a stupid show meant specifically for teenage girls (since its based off a Young Adult Romance book series). People love to dismiss the interests of teenage girls as trivial and frilly, not important because “serious” people aren’t interested in them (i.e. men). Just because something is tailored to its prime marketable audience (teen girls are notoriously committed fans, just look at any boyband or pop girl ever), doesn’t make it fully inaccessible to anyone else. But even if it’s just a show enjoyed by young women, why does that erase its value? Just because something is playful doesn’t make it worthless.

Still, my recommendation for “Summer” doesn’t absolve it of its faults, of which there are many. For one, it isn’t on the same quality level as shows typically celebrated on their weekly release, like “Euphoria” or “Succession.” Obviously, there are no Emmy caliber performances on this show — at times the acting can be flat and the script awkward. But that doesn’t lessen its watch value. Liking something because it’s fun, silly, or lighthearted isn’t anything nefarious. No one needs to “film bro” this teen summer show. It’s not aiming to be a cult classic masterpiece, it’s aiming

to entertain, and it’s more than okay to enjoy it. I am also firmly against the brother love triangle trope and have even written a previous article saying that shows that follow this trope should stop coming out. I still stand by that, but “Summer” is already released, I can’t erase its existence, but I can support it for what it is outside of that trope.

“Summer” may rely too heavily on popular music (having included 19 Taylor Swift songs as of Season 3 Episode 9), probably in the hopes of the inclusion going viral on TikTok (which it does), but one could argue that it’s part of the fun. It also has its fair share of cringy moments like the “Cinderbelly” nickname, the “Team Jellyfish” moniker or when Milo wrote a diss track about Stephen (a real song that you can stream on all platforms). The “Belly” of it all is enough for some people to write the show off completely, which is the case with my older sister, because seriously, why do they call her that? Despite these attributes, the show at its core is a fun summer show. You put it on with your friends every week and shut your brain off, because no matter what you’re going through, Conrad Fisher still has it worse. So no, this show isn’t groundbreaking or God’s gift to television, but that’s precisely the point: it shouldn’t have to be.

# Climate change isn’t your fault, but it is your fight

by Tamara Segal | CONTRIBUTOR | SHE/HER/HERS | tamara.segal@uconn.edu

ing, but we are all stakeholders in our common future.

By now, we all (hopefully) know all about the fast-encroaching dangers of climate change, and how nearly everything we do contributes in some way. Admittedly, it’s a difficult reality to live with, and more often than not we try to ignore it and just live our lives as we please. It’s normal to feel the urge to do so, to feel powerless and desensitized and to wonder if anything you do makes a difference. But what is not normal and what should not be normalized is stopping there. Despite the helplessness we have come to feel surrounding the climate crisis, there is truly so much that we can do — or, perhaps, not do — to flip the script.

It’s all about your mindset. You don’t have to see the glass half empty and draining fast; you can choose to see, instead, that in every choice you make, there is the potential to do better and work to-

ward a truly green future.

Maybe you buy things second-hand, like a microwave or an iPad, to reduce the environmental toll of mining and e-waste. That means you’re guarding against both deforestation and habitat loss as well as the pollution of air, land and water with heavy metals like lead and mercury. Or maybe you make sure to only take what you’ll eat at the dining hall, because food waste is a large contributor to climate change. Then, you’ll be pleased to know that you’re preventing the unnecessary release of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere and avoiding further deforestation and pollution associated with agriculture.

But whatever it is that you’re capable of, it has to be something. It’s not a new argument — but one that is always relevant — that we will get somewhere if, and only if, we all take purposeful steps in the right direction. And you’ll find that if you think just a little about the environmental impact of your actions before you make them, you’ll

see a myriad of ways to reduce it.

And truthfully, it doesn’t really matter whether everyone follows you exactly or not. None of us are going to make the exact same choices, since none of us have the same abilities nor limitations. For example, despite the countless significant environmental benefits of switching to a plant-based diet, it’s not always affordable, or even possible. If anything, though, this is only more reason to do what you can, since not everyone is privileged with the opportunity to do so. It all comes down to finding pride in the choices you make and in the fight you fight.

And you are not alone in that fight. Humanity is a machine of many parts: the more people that change their habits, the more our output will be altered. When you do good, so too will others around you, because it’s inspiring and contagious. This is truly the far-reaching, paradigm-shifting power of your actions: their impact on the

actions of everyone else.

Clearly, one person filling a reusable water bottle won’t save the Earth, but shifting attitudes that delegitimize and drastically reduce single-use plastics will get us pretty far. And the solar panels on top of Science One won’t curb global carbon emissions, but establishing renewable energy as the standard for new developments could.

The moral is simply that our actions are much bigger than we are, and we have so much more power than we give ourselves credit for. If and when we finally use it, just imagine what we’ll accomplish.



# Wilker’s Weekly: Patriots Week 1 preview

**by Graham Wilker**  
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After an exciting offseason filled with new signings, high draft picks and a new coaching staff, the New England Patriots took on the Las Vegas Raiders in their first game of the season. Despite being favored to win by three points, New England put in a very disappointing performance, losing 20-13 against one of the few teams that struggled as much as them last season.

The Patriots’ performance was poor, particularly on offense. All things considered, Maxx Crosby was kept quiet: his one sack wasn’t a make-or-break for the Patriots. Instead, the downfall of New England came through their run game, or lack thereof. Rhamondre Stevenson’s seven carries led to just 15 yards, and if TreVeyon Henderson’s 14-yard run is omitted, he comes in at just 3.3 yards per carry. Antonio Gibson saw just one touch.

The Patriots were far more effective at passing the ball. Drake Maye was streaky as usual and had some bad misses, including a first down miss to Hunter Henry. Maye was 30/46 with 287 yards and a touchdown to Pop Douglas. The passing offense was bailed out on a fourth down by what, in my opinion, was a weak pass interference call on Raiders’ cornerback Kyu Blu Kelly. Kayshon Boutte was tremendous, recording 103 yards from six catches. He was the only consistent chain mover, but Henry and Stefon Diggs each played solid roles. Henry had four catches for 66 yards, while Diggs nabbed six balls for 57 yards. Rookie Kyle Williams had a late catch

that was the first of his career. The passing game was far better, but there was little to no support from the run game at all. Andy Borregales’ 40-yard field goal miss didn’t help the team’s cause either.

As a whole, the play calling from Josh McDaniels was incredibly disappointing. A third-and-one pitch to Stevenson was stuffed, and a fourth-and-one deep shot was only remedied by the previously mentioned not-so-obvious pass interference. The sheer number of unsuccessful first down runs was maddening, and the play calling didn’t change following their continued lack of success. Despite all the hype McDaniels’ return has gotten, it seems

like more of the same overly conservative play calling that has led to uncompetitive post-Brady offenses in the past.

Defensively, the Patriots stood up admirably against the run. Raiders’ Ashton Jeanty, the No. 6 pick, took 19 carries for 38 yards, an abysmal two yards a pop. Exclude the first drive, and he dips under one-and-a-half per touch. Zamir White’s three touches were for just eight yards. The defensive line and linebackers looked stout.

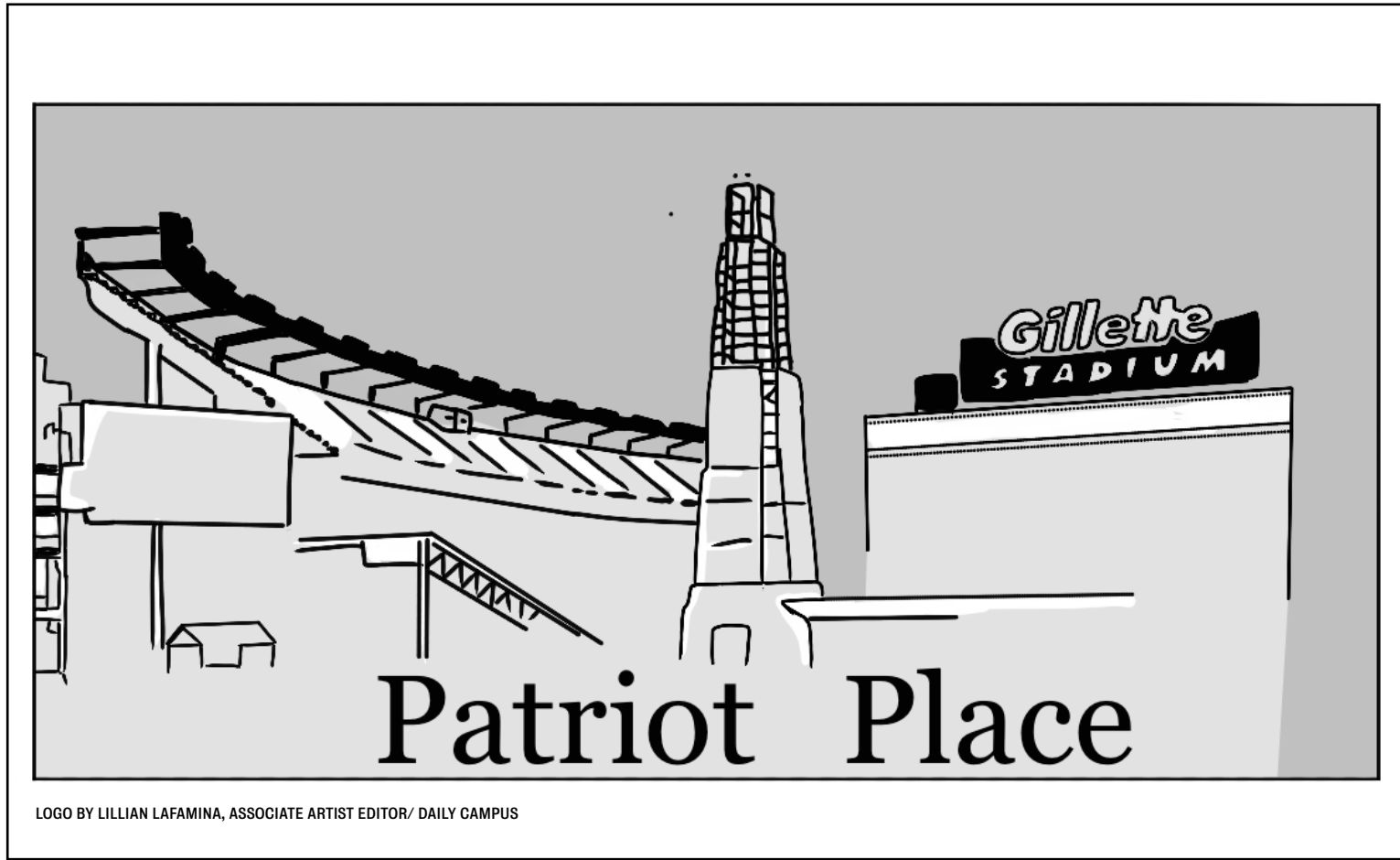
Geno Smith, as odd as it might be for Patriots fans, is a legitimate starting quarterback. The veteran has come a long way from his Jets days, where his tenure was plagued with interceptions and off-

field immaturity. He passed for 362 yards and found Tre Tucker for a touchdown. The interception he threw to Jaylinn Hawkins was tipped, and the Pats had no answer to his connection with either Brock Bowers or Jakobi Meyers, who totaled 200 yards. Carlton Davis struggled throughout, recording a 57.7 PFF grade and giving up a game sealing deep ball to rookie Dont’e Thornton on third-and-20.

The Patriots will face off against the Dolphins on Sunday, Sept. 14 at 1 p.m. Miami is one of the few teams that had a more disappointing week than New England did, allowing 33 points to the Daniel Jones led Colts, 20 in the first half, and not scoring their

eight total points until late into the fourth. The Dolphins had 41 first half yards.

Nonetheless, the Patriots went 0-2 against Miami last season, and if Week 1 is any indication of the Patriots’ future, that may repeat itself. Christian Gonzalez will likely return for Week 2 to pair with Davis at cornerback, so the team should have the corners to handle their talented receiver corps. While the Week 1 loss hurts, getting back on track with a divisional win would be a major step in the right direction for New England. As of now, I feel that a win is in the cards, but not confidently. For now, I’d wager the Patriots get the best of their division foe, 21-14.



# The Clippers Conundrum

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The NBA season hasn’t started yet, but money’s been an issue. Just as teams have had to navigate the salary cap, a bombshell like this gets dropped.

Journalist Pablo Torre explains, in a YouTube video, that Kawhi Leonard reportedly signed a \$28-million endorsement deal with Aspiration, a tree planting/FinTech venture backed by Clippers owner Steve Ballmer. The deal paid Leonard \$7 million a year, but he did little to no promotional work. The only way the contract from the company could be voided was if Leonard was no longer playing for the Clippers, as he was the company’s priority, being paid more than any other celebrity endorsement combined.

If the company had not filed for bankruptcy, this would probably never have been found out. Under the name “KL2,” Leonard is listed on the bankruptcy document. The NBA has strict rules in place against under the table deals like this. The situation has been likened to the Joe Smith case involving the Timberwolves, where they forfeited draft picks and incurred heavy fines.

Since the initial break, even more has come out: specifically, former Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban publicly defended Ballmer, saying he is “not that dumb.” Cuban and Ballmer both believe the company scammed them. Cuban criticizes Torre for focusing on the NBA rather than the potential scam.

In the comments of the interview Torre does with Cuban, many commenters remark on the fact that both men, being owners and billionaires, have

a lot to do with the defense. It’s hard to believe that the sixth richest man on the planet was conned by a startup company, especially to that degree. The national media, notably ESPN, has expressed a lot of sympathy towards Ballmer and animosity towards Torre, through the general tone of the sit-down interview done on SportsCenter, or Leonard, notably Stephen A. Smith on ESPN’s First Take.

The current situation can take one back to a highly talked-about time: 2019 free agency. Taking a turn back on Leonard’s time with the Clippers: the summer of his arrival was a chaotic one. The year’s free agency class saw major moves like Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving to the Brooklyn Nets. Leonard had wanted to play with another star of his caliber and the match with him and Paul George had analysts placing the Clippers highest in the tiers of contention.

In hindsight, it seems that a bunch of chaos had yet to be unveiled. Immediately following the Toronto Raptors’ title run, Leonard’s camp played the long game.

Leonard’s uncle and advisor, Dennis Robertson, made a series of unreasonable and illegal requests to teams, particularly the Raptors and the Lakers. According to an ex-employee of the Clippers, the team had been planning for years to recruit Leonard, which had “leapt well beyond the bounds of the NBA constitution.”

Rumors emerged from his camp about requests for houses, private planes and ownership stakes, raising questions about what was going on. Although the NBA has not proven this, it changes the tone and conversation around the issue, as at least two former employees of the organization have sued because of this.

The real nail in the coffin,

though, is that when it comes to basketball, the Clippers haven’t achieved much since then. In Kawhi’s first year, they reached the Western Conference semifinals in the bubble, where they lost a 3-1 lead to the Nuggets. The following year, in 2021, they made it to their first Conference Finals ever, but Leonard partially tore his ACL, and they lost to the Phoenix Suns in six games.

After missing the playoffs in 2022 due to losing the play-in game to the Pelicans, they lost in five games to the Phoenix Suns in 2023, in six to the eventual Western Conference champion Dallas Mavericks in 2024, and in seven to the 2023 champion Nuggets in 2025—three consecutive first-round exits. Leonard only played two games in the 2023 playoffs before tearing his meniscus. In 2024, he played two games before knee inflammation sidelined him, and he dealt with a nagging right knee injury throughout the season and playoffs.

On one hand, Leonard’s peak greatness cannot be undermined or disrespected. On the other hand, we haven’t seen that performance due to injuries—creating a sense of both sympathy and frustration among some Clippers fans, national media, and probably some Clippers staff. It’s an unfortunate turn of events. This scandal is muddy at best, and if true, it will likely have profound implications for the Clippers as an organization.

That being said, a key point of discussion is: what will the NBA do? With all the strict crackdowns on gambling in the NBA, especially this summer, the league takes salary cap manipulation and the integrity of the game seriously. Something in a similar vein took place regarding the New York Knicks in their 2022 acquisition of Jalen Brunson, in which the Knicks lost a sec-



**Bradley Beal of the LA Clippers attempting a shot at the Kaiser Permanente Training Center. Clipper’s owner Steve Ballmer has faced some controversy surrounding his tree planting/FinTech venture, Aspiration. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @LACLIPPERS ON INSTAGRAM**



Photo of the Day | Men's Soccer



UConn men's soccer vs. Colgate on Sept. 7, 2025. The Huskies won, 3-0. PHOTO BY FRANCESCA BAZIL, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# The March to April: ACC Basketball Preview Part I

**by Jake McCreven**  
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The Atlantic Coast Conference's slump the past four seasons has sent five teams to the Final Four (the most out of any league during that span) and eight to the Elite Eight, while simultaneously producing 31 NBA Draft selections and a National POTY.

Yet the conference has been marred in mediocrity, subject to wide-stream criticism for its painfully average overall finishes and its tournament team's premature exits come March.

The conference hasn't finished with a ranking higher than fifth at KenPom since the COVID-stricken 2020 season (4). It hasn't claimed a national title since Tony Bennett and the Virginia Cavaliers won it all in 2019. That's before the COVID-19 pandemic — or, let me rephrase, prehistoric.

Its ever-so-slow dilapidation can be characterized by the fall of

its middle-tier programs: Virginia, Louisville, Florida State, Notre Dame and Miami combined for 14 NCAA Tournament bids from 2016-2019. They've made the tournament a combined five times since 2022.

The conference's supposed solution? Fatten up. It swelled to 18 teams last year, welcoming in Cal, Stanford and SMU. None of them made the NCAA Tournament, as the ACC sent a measly four teams to the big dance — the SEC nearly quadrupled that number.

**Coaching Changes**

Three veteran coaches stepped down at various points last season.

Virginia's Bennett most notably retired three weeks before the Cavaliers' opener, citing the state of college basketball for his abrupt departure.

Jim Larranaga guided Miami's 448 wins, a Final Four in 2023 and a No. 5 finish in the 2013 AP Poll, resigning in mid-December with 54 more wins than any oth-

er coach in program history.

Florida State's Leonard Hamilton stepped down after 23 years at the helm in Tallahassee. He retired with twice as many wins as any other Seminole coach and eight of the program's 18 NCAA Tournament appearances.

That's a lot of history heading out the door. In fact, the conference has hired 14 new head coaches since 2021 — replacing 10 national titles and 32 Final Fours.

Ryan Odom (UVA), Jai Lucas (Miami) and Luke Loucks (FSU) are the heirs apparent at their respective programs.

Odom, who's coached all over the Division I landscape, landed his first "Power" conference job with the Cavaliers. Since he took over Charlotte in 2014, Odom sports a career record of 201-117, reaching the NCAA Tournament three times. He's off the heels of his best coaching job, guiding VCU through a thorny A-10 conference by claiming its regular

and post season titles.

Lucas landed his first head coaching gig this spring after the Canes tapped him from Duke, which had promoted him to associate head coach in 2023. Lucas is regarded as one of the country's premier recruiters.

Loucks spent four years at Florida State as a player before jumping to the NBA level, where he has elevated in role each year since 2016. Loucks won two NBA championships during his time in Golden State and immediately ushered in a winning pedigree.

A fourth coach, Kevin Keatts (NC State), was fired. After bringing the Wolfpack to the Final Four in 2024, Keatts notched the second-lowest win total of his coaching career in 2025. The Wolfpack finished 12-19, winning just five conference games while stumbling to a 16 place finish in the ACC.

The Wolfpack went to the mid-major level in search of his replacement. McNeese State's

Will Wade was poached after — or, maybe, before — the Cowboys' win over Clemson in the NCAA Tournament.

Wade brings in winning experience at the collegiate level, previously heading LSU during its stretch of three NCAA Tournaments in four seasons. He's made it to March the last four years he's coached, winning two games in that span.

**Transfer Portal and Recruiting**

Duke spearheaded the national recruiting trail, edging Houston's four-prospect class (95.4) to finish with Rivals' top-ranked group (97.2). Linchpin Cameron Boozer is a projected top pick in the 2026 NBA Draft and was Jon Scheyer's top get. The Blue Devils have finished with a top-two recruiting class every year since 2014, according to Rivals' industry ranking system.

SMU and Notre Dame also finished with top 10 classes nationally. The Mustangs finished with four four-stars while the Irish welcome three of their own.

NC State (No. 12), North Carolina (No. 15) and Miami (No. 21) finished with top 25 classes. It's the Tar Heels' lowest finish since 2021 (Rivals).

Syracuse led the conference in the transfer portal according to On3 Sports. Florida State finished second, welcoming seven new faces to Tallahassee. NC State used the portal the most, receiving commitments from eight players. Virginia and North Carolina finished at the bottom of the conference, with UVA suffering 11 portal exits under its regime change.

As is the case with every conference in college basketball, there are transfers to keep tabs on. Here are a few that could make a run for an all-conference team: Darrion Williams (TTU to NCST), Henri Veesaar (UA to UNC), Carson Towt (NAU to ND), Tre Donaldson (UM to Miami).

**All-Conference...**

First Team: G Markus Burton (Notre Dame), G JJ Starling (Syracuse), G Mikel Brown (Louisville), F Cameron Boozer (Duke), F Darrion Williams (NCST)

Second Team: G Isaiah Evans (Duke), G Braeden Shrewsberry (Notre Dame), G Donald Hand (BC), F Nick Davidson (Clemson), F Carson Towt (Notre Dame)

Freshman Team: G Dame Sarr (Duke), G Mikel Brown (Louisville), F Shelton Henderson (Miami), F Cameron Boozer (Duke), F Caleb Wilson (UNC).



Players from Virginia Tech's men's basketball team on the court after a win in March 2025. The team competes in the Atlantic Coast Conference. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @VIRGINIASPORTS ON INSTAGRAM



# Sam's Section:

## Week 2 Top 25 as South Florida takes on third-straight AP-ranked opponent

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Week 2 saw some shake-up in the rankings, with formerly ranked teams Arizona State, SMU and Florida falling to unranked opponents.

That paved the way for new teams to be ranked for the first time this season.

Ohio State (2-0) remains No. 1 after a 70-0 rout over Grambling. Quarterback Julian Sayin set the Ohio State record for completed passes to start a game. They will face in-state foe Ohio (1-0) on Saturday at 7 p.m. on Peacock.

LSU (2-0) follows at No. 2 after a 23-7 win over Louisiana Tech. Props to the Tigers' defense as they held Louisiana Tech to just 154 total yards. LSU will look to remain undefeated with SEC rival Florida (1-1) on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on ABC.

Penn State (2-0) stays put at No. 3. Their slow start did not hurt their chances of beating Florida International, 34-0. They will take on FCS opponent Villanova (1-0) in an in-state battle on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. on FS1.

Miami (Fla.) (2-0) holds at No. 4 in the rankings after a 45-3 win over Bethune-Cookman. Quarterback Carson Beck broke the program record for consecutive completions (15). They have a tall task ahead as they take on red-hot South Florida (2-0) on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. on The CW.

Oregon (2-0) jumps ahead of Georgia for the No. 5 spot as they handed Oklahoma State head coach Mike Gundy his largest loss as the Cowboys' head coach. The Ducks beat the Pokes, 69-3. They begin Big Ten play at Northwestern (1-1) on Saturday at noon on FOX.

Georgia (2-0) drops to No. 6 with a poor offensive show-

ing heading into SEC play. In a weather-delayed 28-6 win over Austin Peay, quarterback Gunnar Stockton failed to find the end zone. That will not cut it against Tennessee (2-0) on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. on ABC.

Texas (1-1) comes in at No. 7 as quarterback Arch Manning responded to the criticism from their season-opening loss to Ohio State. Manning had five total touchdowns in a 38-7 win over San José State. They continue their non-conference slate with UTEP (1-1) on Saturday at 4:15 p.m. on SEC Network.

South Carolina (2-0) jumps up to No. 8 in the latest rankings despite a struggling performance from the offense. The Gamecocks were rescued by Vicari Swain, who returned two punts for touchdowns in a 38-10 win over South Carolina State. They begin SEC play with Vanderbilt (2-0) on Saturday at 7:45 p.m. on SEC Network.

Illinois (2-0) is now No. 9 in the rankings after the Fighting Illini impressed in the second half to defeat Duke, 45-19. They should take care of business this weekend as they host Western Michigan (0-2) on Saturday at 7 p.m. on FS1.

Florida State (2-0) rounds out the top 10 after scoring on 10 straight drives and had 70 points through three quarters. They are off this week, but host Kent State (1-1) on Sept. 20 at 3:30 p.m. on ACC Network.

Oklahoma (2-0) moves up to No. 11 due to a massive 24-13 win over Michigan. They head on the road to face Temple (2-0) on Saturday at noon on ESPN2.

Clemson (1-1) drops to No. 12 after escaping with a 27-16 win over Troy. They begin ACC play at Georgia Tech (2-0) on Saturday at noon on ESPN.

South Florida (2-0) boosts



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/ DAILY CAMPUS

up to No. 13 after upsetting Florida in the Swamp. Their biggest test is the next one as they visit Miami (Fla.) (2-0) on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. on The CW.

Iowa State (3-0) jumps ahead to No. 14 with a rivalry

win over Iowa last weekend. They visit Arkansas State (1-1) on Saturday at 4 p.m. on ESPN2.

Notre Dame (0-1) drops to No. 15 due to being off for Week 2. They are back this week to host Texas A&M (2-

0) on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on NBC and Peacock.

Alabama (1-1) stays at No. 16 with an easy 73-0 rout over UL Monroe. The competition gets tougher, with the Tide hosting Wisconsin (2-0) on Saturday at noon on ABC.

Michigan (1-1) drops to No. 17 following a 24-13 loss to Oklahoma. Quarterback Bryce Underwood needs to be unleashed in these types of games. Perhaps that can start with Central Michigan (1-1) on Saturday at noon on Big Ten Network.

Tennessee (2-0) moves up to No. 18 with a 72-17 win over East Tennessee State. Georgia (2-0) comes to take on the Volunteers on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. on ABC.

Ole Miss (2-0, 1-0 SEC) slides up to No. 19 after beginning SEC play with a 30-23 win over Kentucky. They continue the road to Atlanta, hosting Arkansas (2-0) on Saturday at 7 p.m. on ESPN.

Texas A&M (2-0) improves to No. 20 in the rankings with a 44-22 win over Utah State. They have a massive game this week with a visit to Notre Dame (0-1) on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on NBC and Peacock.

Indiana (2-0) comes in at No. 21 with a 56-9 win over Kennesaw State. They host Indiana State (2-0) on Friday at 6:30 p.m. on Big Ten Network.

Texas Tech (2-0) earns the No. 22 spot after a 62-14 win over Kent State. They host Oregon State (0-2) on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. on FOX.

Mississippi State (2-0) comes in at No. 23 after a huge 24-20 win over Arizona State. They host Alcorn State (0-2) on Saturday at 6 p.m. on ESPN+ and SEC Network+.

Auburn (2-0) debuts at No. 24 after a 42-3 win over Ball State on Saturday. They host South Alabama (1-1) on Saturday at 12:45 p.m. on SEC Network.

Utah (2-0) wraps it up at No. 25 following a 63-9 rout over Cal Poly. They visit Wyoming (2-0) on Saturday at 8 p.m. on CBS Sports Network.



GRAPHIC BY SAM CALHOUN, STAFF WRITER/THE DAILY CAMPUS





# Sports

# MEN'S SOCCER:

## HUSKIES TAKE ON CROSS-BORDER FOE IN MIDWEEK CLASH



UConn men's soccer team takes on the Univeristy of Rhode Island at Morrone Stadium on Saturday, April 13. UConn beat URI 3-1 after a rainy game.  
PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by **Tyler Lato**  
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The undefeated UConn men's soccer team (4-0-2) looks to continue their winning ways this Wednesday in a midweek out-of-conference matchup with Brown (2-1) at Stevenson-Pincince Field in Providence, Rhode Island.

Fresh off a decisive 3-0 victory over Colgate on Sunday, the Huskies are playing some

of their best soccer early in the season. The team has only allowed two goals in six games so far and this couldn't have been accomplished without the help of Pittsburgh transfer Kyle Durham. The redshirt sophomore goalkeeper has recorded 28 saves and four shutouts, becoming the centerpiece of UConn's balanced defensive attack.

On the other hand, senior forward and San Diego State transfer Austin Brummett leads the team in goals (5) and

points (10). The addition of Brummett to an already experienced UConn roster cannot be underscored, as he's one of the primary reasons the Huskies are so hot thus far. Not to mention, newcomers Preston Alesio (Beacon Falls, Connecticut) and Xavier Pérez (Barcelona, Spain) have received significant minutes in the Huskies' six games and should be expected to amass even more this Wednesday.

Now, let's take a look at their

opponents.

Brown, who competes in the Ivy League, is led by head coach Chase Wileman (third season). The Bears posted an 8-8-1 record in 2024 — including a 6-2-1 mark at home — and are currently 2-1 this season. They remain competitive in the league year after year and should present a challenge for the Huskies.

Mads Peterson (Odense, Denmark) is a player to watch for the Bears. The senior mid-

fielder/defender leads the team in nearly every offensive category, including goals (3), shots on goal (5), points (6) and game-winning goals (1). Keep an eye on this highly coveted international prospect; he might do some damage Wednesday night.

Kickoff is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. This Big East-Ivy League crossover matchup should be a good one, featuring two experienced squads looking to continue their early-season success.



UConn men's soccer team takes on the Univeristy of Rhode Island at Morrone Stadium on Saturday, April 13. UConn beat URI 3-1 after a rainy game.  
PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS