

# The Daily Campus



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## How UConn decided who got housing and who was waitlisted

by **Liliana French**  
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The Daily Campus obtained documents through a freedom of information request which discussed statistics on who was waitlisted for housing and information about how the University of Connecticut prioritized housing.

UConn ended guaranteed on-campus housing for sophomores, juniors and seniors on Dec. 17, 2024. Many students who applied for housing on campus were placed on a housing waitlist.

Statistics on who got housing Assistant Vice President for Student Life Cynthia Costanzo emailed administrators to share housing data, stating that it was information that UConn was not sharing publicly. According to the April 2 email, 1,270 students were on the Fall 2025 waitlist, with 451, or 36%, applying before the housing deadline.

Costanzo's email said that housing demand increased 11.25% from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 due to high enrollment in Fall 2024. At a September 2024 Board of Trustees meeting, UConn's Chief Financial Officer Jeffrey Geoghegan stated that UConn was at 103% demand for housing, according to The Daily Campus.

This problem does not appear to be solely because of a larger freshman class this year. Costanzo stated that 444 more continuing undergraduates applied for housing in 2025 than in 2024. She also stated that an additional 200 commuter students applied for housing in 2024 than in 2025.

Costanzo called the 175 upper division students who applied on time on the waitlist as it stood on April 2 the "priority #1 group" to receive housing and stated that they could begin receiving housing offers in late April. The 198 students who were commuters at the time the email was sent were described as "unlikely" to get housing in Fall 2025.

The emails stated that the 44 students who had lived on campus for eight or more semesters were a group that "historically [does] not receive housing" and it said that those students were "unlikely" to receive housing for Fall 2025.

Senior Director of Government Relations Joann Lombardo emailed state Rep. Gregg Haddad May 6 in response to questions he asked about UConn's housing situation. Lombardo said that there were about 1,500 students on the waitlist and that UConn was still receiving housing applications over 50 days after the deadline.

"We also recognize that the waitlist is inflated, as some stu-

Rising Juniors/Seniors:	174
Applied for Housing After the Deadline:	831
Commuter Students ( <i>typically are not offered housing</i> ):	194
Regional Campus Students:	183
Students Who Have Lived on Campus for 8+ semesters ( <i>typically are not offered housing</i> ):	43
Campus Change Students Who Had Previously Lived on the Storrs Campus:	52

Table includes data on who was placed on a housing waitlist copied over exactly from Lombardo's May 6 email. TABLE COURTESY OF A UCONN FOIA REQUEST

dents who are currently on the waitlist have not yet changed their status in our portal accordingly," Lombardo said. "Residential Life does not remove students from the waitlist until they confirm that they no longer wish to seek on-campus housing or are offered housing."

Lombardo said that housing demand increased by 1,172 applications from Fall 2024-2025.

"We anticipate that all rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors identified in the category of 'continuing undergraduate' residential students who applied for housing before the deadline will secure on-campus housing prior to the start of the Fall 2025 semester," Lombardo said.

Her email said that 680 rising juniors and seniors had initially been placed on a waitlist. All rising sophomores who remained on the waitlist were housed, according to Lombardo.

University Spokesperson Stephanie Reitz commented on UConn's housing situation.

"UConn had no waiting list for on-campus housing by the first few days of the semester; all students [who] were applied and were eligible had received offers," Reitz said.

Reitz did not say if this was because students on the waitlist found housing off-campus and withdrew from the waitlist or if they were granted on-campus housing.

### How housing was decided

Lombardo's email stated that students who applied after the deadline, UConn Hartford students, previous commuters and students who had lived

on campus for eight semesters were automatically placed on a waitlist. Students with an active SHAW hold were also waitlisted for public health reasons. The email said that applications were approved until the preset capacity was reached, and that applications received after capacity was reached were waitlisted.

Freshmen at the Storrs campus are required to live on campus for two semesters and are guaranteed housing if they apply before the deadline. Freshmen who enroll in Spring 2026 are only required to live on campus for one semester, according to UConn's 2025-26 housing contract.

UConn President Radenka Maric emailed Republican state Sen. Stephen Harding and Republican Leader Pro Tempore of the Senate Henri Martin on March 24 in response to questions regarding housing. Maric said that in Fall 2025, UConn expected to house 13,900 students at Storrs.

"UConn guarantees housing for transfer and campus change students (those moving from a regional campus to Storrs for the first time) if the application deadline is met," Maric said.

Reitz commented on UConn's off-campus housing options.

"UConn is housing a record number of almost 13,400 students at Storrs, including in units leased this year at The Oaks," Reitz said. "The housing, which is at full capacity, includes some areas where lounges were converted into living spaces to help meet demand. The opening of The Standard at Four Corners also helped ease demand as some students chose to rent there

for the new academic year."

Maric's email said that housing offers for waitlisted students would depend on availability during the spring and summer. She said that students on the waitlist were encouraged to access UConn's Office for Off-Campus and Commuter Student Resources.

"Last year, the University was able to offer housing to those on the wait list as other students' plans changed and beds became available," said Maric. "We anticipate the same trend this year, given the off-campus options and the regular 'melt,' or reduction of students, that occurs at the start of a new semester," Maric said.

Maric said that she thought that the change was made in a transparent fashion and that students and parents were notified Dec. 17 and Dec. 18.

"Factors that would prioritize students for housing were additionally outlined in the communication," Maric said. "Lastly, students were encouraged to apply early."

The housing change was recommended by Student Life and Enrollment leaders and approved by Maric in consultation with her cabinet, according to Maric. Maric said that on Dec. 14, 2024, updates were made to the housing contract regarding priority and guaranteed housing.

On Dec. 17, 2024, students received an email stating that UConn would no longer guarantee on-campus housing for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

"Although all students may apply for housing, eligibility to live in residential housing is not guaranteed and is based

on multiple factors including space availability, primary campus designation, academic standing, and academic status," the Dec. 17 email said.

The email said that housing availability could be limited due to high demand. The email also said that all Hartford and Avery Point students would be automatically waitlisted for housing and would not be approved until all Storrs campus applications were resolved.

"If the demand for housing is high, students who apply closer to the deadline date may be placed on a waiting list," the email said.

Students were not notified of the possibility of this change prior to it being made. UConn sent an email the previous year stating that they were ending guaranteed on-campus housing for sophomores, juniors and seniors, but retracted it later the same day.

Martin and Harding asked Maric for her reaction to criticism that UConn was accepting too many students without considering the impact this could have on current students.

"The University is being encouraged to grow enrollment in order to meet workforce demands and grow revenues," Maric said. "There are challenges to growth including on campus housing supply. However, as UConn currently houses 65% of the student community, UConn is serving more students by percentage than any large institution in the country. UConn has responsibly worked to support off campus development and expand support services that will connect students and families to secure off campus alternatives."

UConn's housing contract provides a list of criteria that can get a person automatically placed on the waitlist after applying for housing including: commuter students, Hartford and Avery Point students, students who apply after the deadline or apply after all available spaces are filled, graduate students, non-degree students and students who declined housing when they first attended the Storrs campus.

The contract states that housing is available at the Hartford and Stamford campuses, but housing there is limited.

"Students who are on the waiting list for any of the criteria mentioned above, but have approved accommodations through the Center for Students with Disabilities for on campus housing will be considered first priority on the waiting list," the housing contract says. "Every effort will be made to meet accommodations of students who are being offered housing in collaboration with appropriate offices and based on space availability."

## Fed. judge dismisses Trump's \$15 billion defamation suit against The New York Times

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A federal judge on Friday, Sept. 19, dismissed President Donald Trump's \$15 billion

defamation lawsuit against The New York Times. Just four days after the suit was filed, Judge Steven D. Merryday of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida dismissed the case and ordered

the administration to refile the 85-page complaint in 28 days at no more than 40 pages. Merryday dismissed the case based on the structure of the complaint without discussing the merits — the actual content

— of the case. Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure says that complaints must be a "short and plain statement... showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." It must also be "simple, concise, and direct."

Merryday acknowledged that some complaints are longer than others but said Trump's complaint is "improper and impermissible" at

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Birdbrain Science talks about brains!

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A right wing anime

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## News

## TRUMP, cont. from p. 1

its current state. The complaint alleges “only two simple counts of defamation,” with the first count not appearing until page 80 and the second on page 83. Merryday said that complaints should not be used for political gain or public relations.

“A complaint is not a megaphone for public relations or a podium for a passionate oration at a political rally or the functional equivalent of the Hyde Park Speakers’ Corner,” he wrote.

The first 79 pages of the complaint consist of Trump’s defamation claims against the Times, four Times reporters and the publishing company Penguin Random House. Trump claims the Times and the publishing company published three articles and a book, respectively, “at the height of the election season to inflict maximum electoral damage” to Trump in the last presidential election. At the same time, the beginning of the complaint calls the election an “overwhelming victory... the greatest personal and political achievement in American history.”

The complaint says that Penguin Random House published the book “Lucky Loser: How Donald Trump Squandered His Father’s Fortune and Created the Illusion of Success” by Susanne Craig and Russ Buettner on Sept. 17, 2024. Trump claims the book was full of “malicious” falsehoods. Then, the

suit brings up a Times article published an article about the book Sept. 14, 2024, called “The Star-Making Machine That Created ‘Donald Trump,’” also by Craig and Buettner.

The next Times article mentioned is “For Trump, a Lifetime of Scandals Heads Toward a Moment of Judgment” by Peter Baker, published Oct. 20, 2024. Finally, on Oct. 22, 2024, the Times published “As Election Nears, Kelly Warns Trump Would Rule Like a Dictator” by Michael S. Schmidt. Trump claims that these four works are just part of a “decades long” malicious defamation pursuit of the president, saying, “Defendants chose politics over truth.”

The

plaint then goes into the content of the Craig and Buettner book and article, which Trump says tries to “falsely and maliciously tear down [his] worldwide reputation for success” including his “magnificent real estate achievements,” his two presidential election wins and his “re-

performance” as the host of reality TV show “The Apprentice.”

The complaint says that Craig and Buettner make it seem like Mark Burnett, co-creator and executive producer of “The Apprentice,” “discovered” Trump for the role of host and made him famous, even as the complaint claims “Trump was already a mega-celebrity and an enormous success in business.”

The complaint says Craig and Buettner “clung” to this fact, making it seem Burnett’s decision “was on par with Christopher Columbus discovering the New World.”

The rest of the complaint talks about various instances in which the news media published “wrong and partisan criticism” of Trump, while also talking

Trump’s “singular brilliance” and “well-known successes.” It talks about the “magnificent Trump Tower...[and] other iconic properties” that Trump owns. As a public official, the only way Trump would be able to win this libel case — if he refiles it — is by proving actual malice.

The actual malice standard was established in 1964 in Supreme Court case New York Times v. Sullivan. In a unanimous opinion, the court ruled for the Times and said that in order to win a libel case, public officials must prove that the work was published knowing the information was false, or with a reckless disregard for the truth.

To win this case, Trump would have to prove that the Times, its reporters and Penguin Random House knew their articles and book, respectively, were false upon publication or that publication happened with reckless disregard for the truth, meaning the reporters and the companies made little to no attempts to confirm the information or do additional reporting. A spokesperson for Trump’s legal team said in a statement that they intend to refile this lawsuit.

“President Trump will continue to hold the Fake News accountable through this powerhouse lawsuit against The New York Times, its reporters and Penguin Random House, in accordance with the judge’s direction on logistics,” the statement said.



President Donald Trump’s lawsuit against The New York Times was dismissed due to his “improper and impermissible” complaint structure.” Trump was suing the Times for \$15 billion.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY @REALDONALDTRUMP ON INSTAGRAM

## Nation News: ICE facility shooting, Trump’s attack on the United Nations, and government shutdown looming

by Linda Alilattene

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### Shooting at Dallas ICE facility

On Wednesday, Sept. 24, a gunman opened fire inside an ICE detention facility in Dallas, killing one detainee and critically injuring two others before dying from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Authorities identified the suspect as 29-year-old Joshua Jahn, who friends described as ‘not interested in politics’ but has been labelled by the FBI as “anti-ICE.”

While the shooting initially appeared indiscriminate, investigators later suggested it was politically motivated after recovering remaining ammunition engraved with the phrase “ANTI-ICE” and a note left by Jahn saying, “Hopefully this will give ICE agents real terror, to think, ‘is there a sniper with AP [armor piercing] rounds on that roof?’”

This pattern of behavior was previously seen from the shooter of Charlie Kirk, who engraved anti-fascist remarks

onto his cartridges and wrote an alleged note proclaiming his intentions to “take out Kirk.”

In response to the recent shootings, Trump issued a statement on social media calling for an end to political violence, arguing “this violence is the result of the Radical Left Democrats constantly demonizing Law Enforcement, calling for ICE to be demolished, and comparing ICE Officers to ‘Nazis.’”

Trump’s statement to the UN The 80th United Nations assembly recently convened on Tuesday, Sept. 23, highlighting pressing global issues such as the ongoing war in Ukraine, international statements of recognition of Palestine as well as other significant issues regarding the world climate.

In President Donald Trump’s address to the UN, he questioned the summit leaders, “What is the purpose of the United Nations?” and said, “It’s empty words, and empty words don’t solve war. The only thing that solves war and wars is action.”

Trump went on further to claim that “in a period of just

seven months, I have ended seven unendable wars,” briefly mentioning the Gaza War and the Russia-Ukraine and professing that he has “been working relentlessly, stopping the killing in Ukraine. I thought that would be—of the seven wars that I stopped.”

In the topic of global secu-

rency, Trump raised concerns over the threat of creating biological weapons and the international safety violations it poses, with hopes of his administration initiating a “lead an international effort to enforce [the] Biological Weapons Convention.”

The majority of Trump’s

speech revolved around a call for tighter border control, criticizing the UN of “not solving the problems it should—too often, it’s actually creating new problems for us to solve” in respect to international uncontrolled migration.

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**NATION, cont. from p. 2**

In his criticism, Trump reprimanded the UN, accusing them of “funding an assault on Western countries and their borders,” bringing to attention the aid given from the UN to migrants mov-

ing to the West from developing and third world countries. Migration and clean energy were two of the Trump’s main topics, contending the clean energy movement and claiming,

of a potential government shutdown occurring within the next week have intensified. Disagreements have been occurring between congressional Republicans and Democrats, with both sides insisting on having the spending measure affirm their needs.

“The carbon footprint is a hoax, made up by people with evil intentions, and they’re heading down a path of total destruction.” He further discussed how Europe’s actions regarding reducing the carbon footprint were “nonsense” and that those calling for reduced environmental pollution are a part of a “global warming hoax.”

Democrats have been arguing the importance of addressing health care within the measure, while Republicans have been affirming the need for creating only a short-term measure, contending that the desires of the Democrats would only increase spending.

Trump concluded his speech almost 57 minutes later, calling for the nations in attendance to “defend free speech and free expression. Let us protect religious liberty” and promising, “We’re going to make our countries better, safer, more beautiful. We’re going to take care of our people.”

Sen. Tammy Baldwin claimed that “the president said really boldly, don’t even talk to Democrats... that’s obviously his signal he wants a shutdown.”

**Government shutdown looming**  
Amid political turmoil in Washington D.C., discussions

There has been no leniency from either side, giving credence to the idea that mass federal firings and furloughs are around the corner.



President Donald Trump at Charlie Kirk’s funeral in Arizona on Sunday, Sept. 21. Kirk’s shooting re-entered the news on Wednesday, Sept. 24, after a gunman in Dallas is believed to have similar motives. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY @REALDONALDTRUMP ON INSTAGRAM

# Celebrate Mansfield Festival to bring live music, crafts and food to Downtown Storrs

by **Karla Perez**  
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The 22nd annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival will take place on Saturday, Sept. 27, from 2 to 8 p.m. in Downtown Storrs.

Community Puppet Pageant will commence. The pageant, titled “Prehistoric Mansfield,” is a story produced by the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry in collaboration with UConn’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. It will showcase the wildlife and animal kingdoms from thousands of years ago that once roamed what is now Mansfield, Conn.

a student there, I’d always walk past the square in Storrs Center and think ‘Man, I’d like to play that band show someday.’”

According to the website, this festival is a low-waste event, meaning that Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. has asked the businesses and organizations at the event to promote activities that will generate little to no waste. As part of this effort, visitors are asked to bring their own bags

and reusable water bottles. There will also be stations to dispose of trash, recycling and compost set up around the festival site and operated by some of the 160 event volunteers.

ing to an email to residents of the Oaks on The Square.

The email also stated there will be road closures from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on all of the aforementioned roads as well as Elsie Marsh Way and the west access road behind Huskies Restaurant & Bar.

This event is free to the public. Visit the Celebrate Mansfield Festival website for a map of the event and a full rundown of the performances.

What started in 2004 as a small community gathering in the parking lots of Downtown Storrs has grown into an event welcoming between 3,000-4,000 people from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, according to the event’s website and Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Patterson.

Patterson said that there may be opportunities for audience participation during the pageant even if members could not attend the puppet-building workshops earlier this month.

According to Patterson, the festival welcomes over 80 booths this year offering crafts, activities for all ages and food. Patterson says there is a large expected attendance as the festival falls on the same weekend as the University of Connecticut’s family weekend.

A lineup of live music will perform throughout the day beginning at 2:15 p.m., opening with E.O. Smith Drumline. The UConn jazz students will follow at 3 p.m.

“We see all ages, all walks of life,” said Patterson. “People who live in town, people in neighboring residences. We draw people from all over Connecticut. It’s really fun to see all the different people just having a good day in Downtown Storrs.”

Local band Ruby Leftstep, a group who has performed several times before in the Mansfield area, takes the stage at 5 p.m. UConn Drumline is set to follow at 6 p.m.

For families with young children, there will be a “Kids Zone” on Wilbur Cross Way with activities, games and performances specifically catered to young audiences, according to a press release for the event.

All Night Boogie Band, a blues and rock ‘n’ roll group from Burlington, Vt., headlines at 6:30 p.m. and performs until the event’s closing. The group’s guitarist, UConn journalism class of 2022 journalism graduate Brendan Casey, said he looks forward to returning to his alma mater and performing some of the band’s newest tunes.

At 2:30 p.m., the annual

“It feels good to go back and play,” Casey said. “When I was



Tents set up at Mansfield’s annual Celebrate Mansfield event. Rides and vendors come to celebrate the town of Mansfield. PHOTO COURTESY LAUREN STONE

## DAILY SUDOKU

Solution to Thursday’s puzzle

9/26/25

4	5	7	2	1	3	8	6	9
1	8	3	4	6	9	7	5	2
6	9	2	8	7	5	3	1	4
2	1	4	7	5	8	9	3	6
9	3	6	1	4	2	5	8	7
5	7	8	9	3	6	2	4	1
7	4	9	3	8	1	6	2	5
8	6	1	5	2	7	4	9	3
3	2	5	6	9	4	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](http://sudoku.org.uk).

## Sudoku By The Mepham Group

Level **1** 2 3 4

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

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## Life

# Previewing the Jorgensen Center's October Schedule

by Dan Stark

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The Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is the University of Connecticut's premiere venue for arts and entertainment on campus. Each semester, the intimate theater hosts a variety of events and performances that allow students to see comedy shows, music and more at affordable prices. The venue's October schedule continues this tradition, with an array of shows that Storrs students will not want to miss. Here's a look at those who will be taking their talents to Storrs this upcoming month.

## Wednesday, Oct. 1: An Evening with Dan Hurley

You'd be hard-pressed to find a UConn student who doesn't know the name Dan Hurley, but finding those who know about his life story

would be more difficult. To commemorate the release of his upcoming book "Never Stop: Life, Leadership, and What It Takes To Be Great" that he co-wrote with Ian O'Connor, Hurley will take the stage at the Jorgensen on Wednesday, Oct. 1, at 7 p.m. for "An Evening with Dan Hurley" to talk about the book and participate in a Q&A session moderated by ESPN's Molly Qerim. Tickets are \$35 for UConn students and \$40 for adults, and admission includes a copy of the book.

## Saturday, Oct. 4: Take Me As I Am - A Joni Mitchell Tribute with Rainee Blake

Rainee Blake, an Australian-born singer-songwriter, is coming to the Jorgensen on Saturday, Oct. 4, at 8 p.m. for "Take Me As I Am," a show dedicated to honoring the music of Canadian singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell.

Blake will spend the evening in character as Mitchell on a night in 1976 after she returned from a cross-country road trip where she wrote most of the album "Hejira." Tickets are \$10 to \$30.

## Thursday, Oct. 9: Cedric Burnside

Cedric Burnside, a Grammy Award-winning guitarist and singer-songwriter, is bringing his talents to the Jorgensen on Thursday, Oct. 9, at 7:30 p.m. A blues musician, Burnside has focused most of his work in the subgenre of hill country blues, which emphasizes droning groove, minimal chord changes and atypical song structures that go beyond the traditional 12-bar blues format. Tickets are \$45.

## Friday, Oct. 17: Ray Chen

Calling all classical music enjoyers of UConn - you're not going to want to miss when

Ray Chen takes the stage on Friday, Oct. 17, at 8 p.m. Chen is a virtuoso violinist known for his intensity and command of the instrument. His performance, where he will be accompanied by Julio Elizalde on piano, will feature a program that includes works by classical composers Ludwig van Beethoven and Johan Sebastian Bach, as well as jazz composer Chick Corea. Tickets are free for UConn students and \$40 for adults.

## Saturday, Oct. 18: An Evening with Jacob Collier

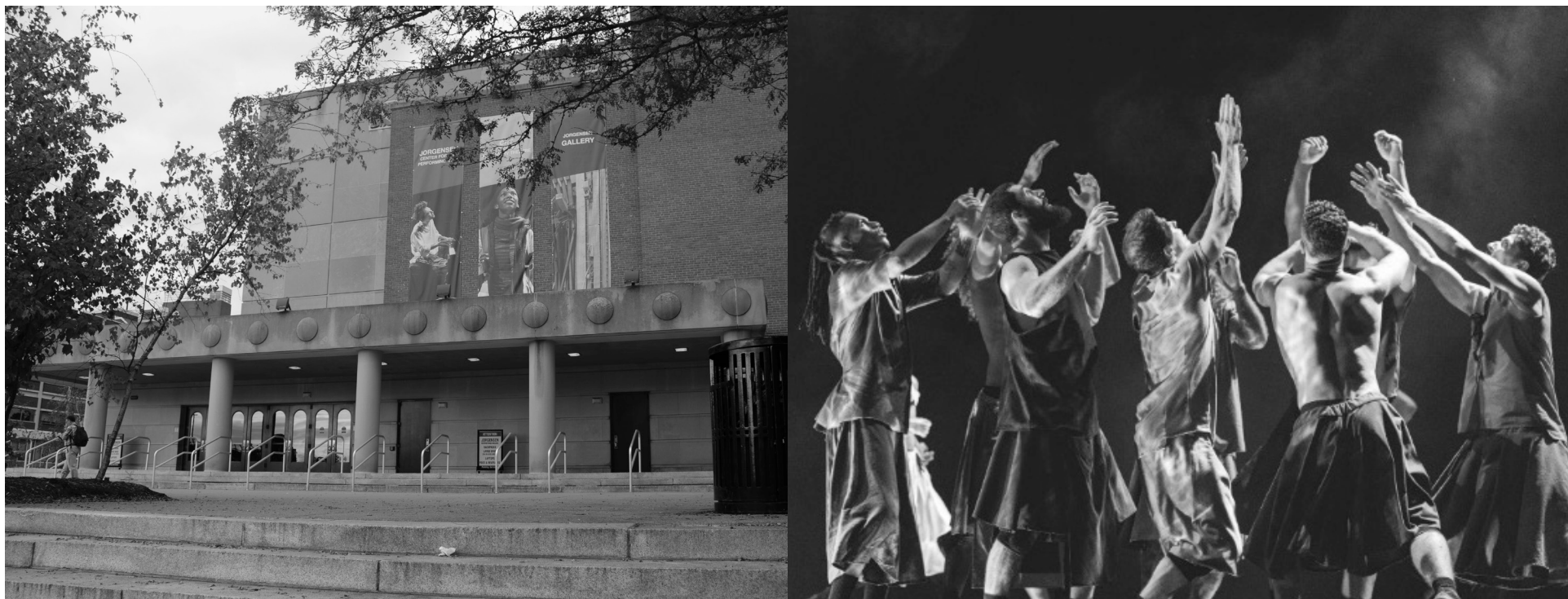
Jacob Collier is everywhere in the music industry. As a singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and producer, the seven-time Grammy Award-winner has collaborated with a plethora of artists, including Coldplay, John Mayer, Shawn Mendes, Quincy Jones and Joni Mitch-

ell to name a few. Now, he'll be in Storrs on Saturday, Oct. 18, at 8 p.m. for "An Evening with Jacob Collier" at the Jorgensen. Tickets are \$20 to \$65, though availability is limited.

## Thursday, Oct. 23: Compagnie Hervii Koubi - Sol Invictus

Closing out the Jorgensen's packed October schedule is a performance by Hervii Koubi's dance company on Thursday, Oct. 23, at 7:30 p.m. Koubi is a French-Algerian choreographer whose work combines influences from urban and contemporary dance movements, as well as elements of martial arts. His company's current show, "Sol Invictus," features male and female dancers performing with hip-hop elements. Tickets are \$10 to \$40.

Tickets for each event can be purchased online at [jorgensen.uconn.edu](http://jorgensen.uconn.edu) or at the box office.



The Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is hosting multiple shows in October. These shows include musical performances and speaker events.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ERIKA ECHEGOYEN & @JORGENSENUCONN ON INSTAGRAM.

# Innovation Zone Holds SOAP-MAKING Skillshare

by Michelle Pawlos

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Varieties of scents filled the IZone Makerspace room at Werth Tower on Wednesday, Sept. 24, as students came in to make their own soap bars. Hosted by the Innovation Zone and facilitated by maker specialist Britney Nguyen, this event was the perfect way to destress in a calm environment.

"We have a large variety of different smells, we have one 24-set of typical essential oils that include lavender, rosemary, scents like that," said Nguyen. "Then we have our weird scents, it's a twelve-pack of really random scents. We have one called baked milk. We also have over 24 colors for students to choose from and around 30 different types of molds."

The event was open to 12 students and registration was required prior to the event. The soap-making process itself took around one to two hours, but the event ran from 4 to 8 p.m., so students were welcome to come in later if they were busy until a certain time.

"Honestly, I always wanted to do more of the creative events and incorporate more crafty things," said Nguyen. "I feel like doing that will bring in more people to come in because a lot of times people are more intimidated coming in to learn how to make a cutting board or a coaster, but soap making is just relatively easy."

Nguyen gave a brief introduction to the Innovation Zone, explaining to students about each of the three spaces, including the Makerspace room where they were for the soap-making event. Nguyen then passed around scents, colors and molds so participants could start looking at

what they would like to use.

Students also had the option to use shea butter or an alternative for those who may be allergic. With all the color, scent and mold possibilities, students were able to create two soap bars.

"One of the most enjoyable parts for me has been meeting other people who are in different majors and different years from me," said Aoife Niles, a first-semester animal science major.

The soap-making process began with two students going at a time, as there were two burners available, giving other students the opportunity to mingle with one another while they waited.

**"With midterms coming up, events like this one are perfect for attending and de-stressing."**

Nguyen asked the participants if they had a preference for background music, ensuring they enjoyed the experience to its full potential. Participants also asked about her experience joining the Innovation Zone and what the process was like for those interested in joining as well.

While the soap was forming in its mold, students were able to leave and return if they wanted to get dinner or get something else done during that time. Many chose to stay and continue talking to the new people they met.

"We do have a lot of student outreach events called skillshares, and we typically have two per month each semester," said Nguyen when asked about other events that the Innovation Zone holds. "The one before this was fairly light wall designs, we also have Halloween piñatas, fall

picture frames, gingerbread houses and something that we like to do towards the end of the semester is a Bob Ross paint night."

After around 45 minutes, students were able to take their soaps out of the molds and see their creations. The Skillshare concluded with Nguyen handing out goodie bags provided by her and the Innovation Zone for participants to put their soap bars into.

Upcoming October events include making your own cutting board on Thursday, Oct. 16, from 6 to 10 p.m., and Saturday, Oct. 18, from 2 to 6 p.m., as well as Halloween piñatas on Monday, Oct. 27, from 4 to 8 p.m.

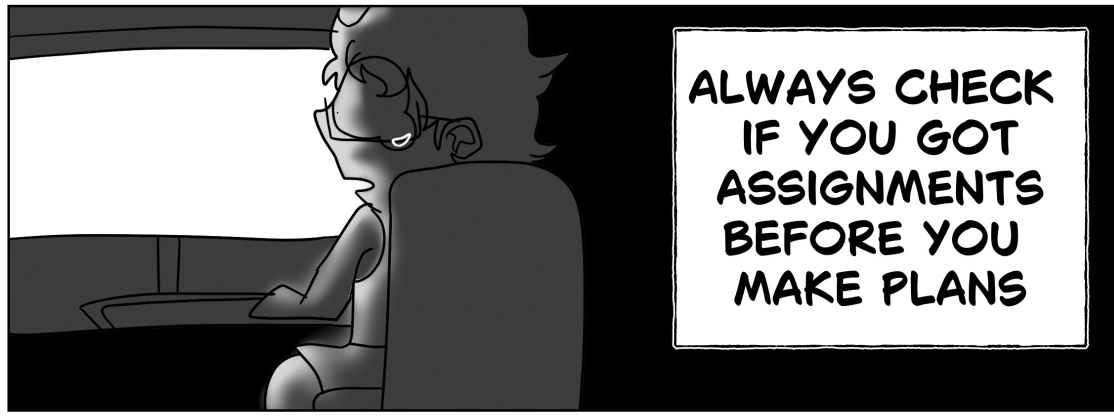
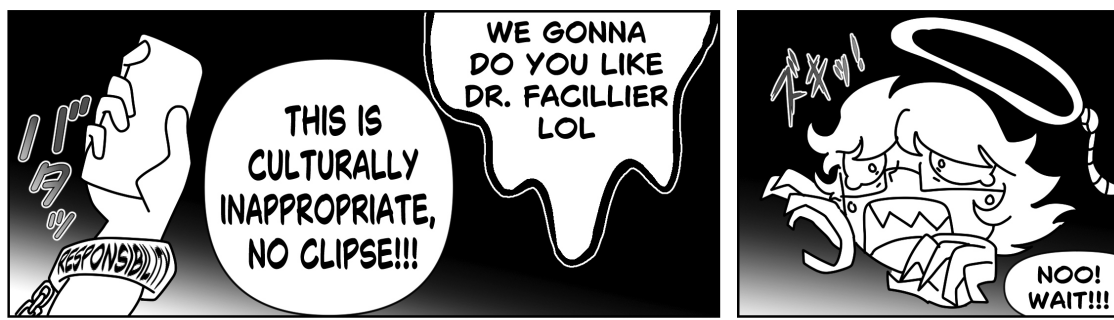
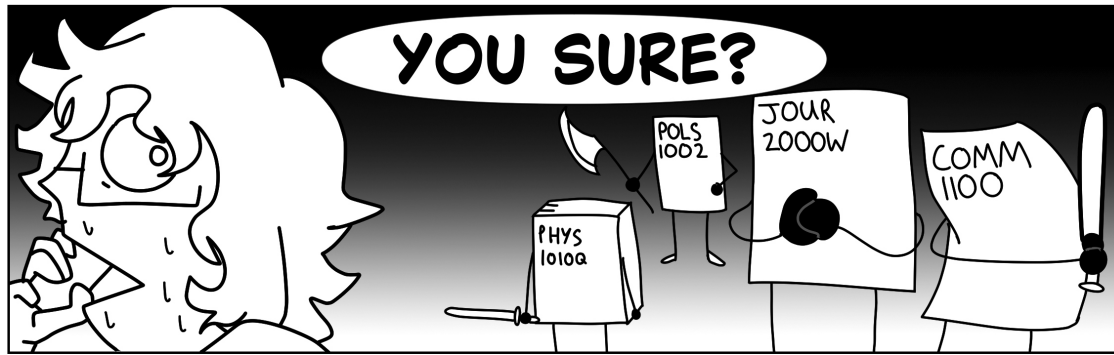
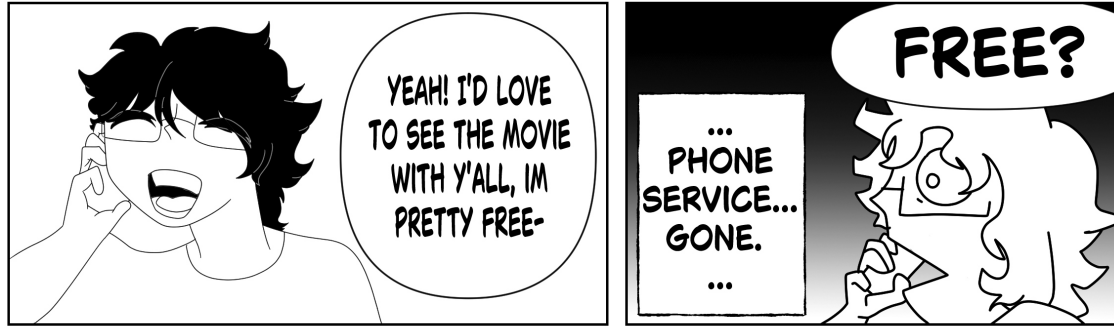


Maker specialist Britney Nguyen hosted a soap-making workshop on Wednesday, Sept. 25. A group of 12 students spent the evening learning to make soap.

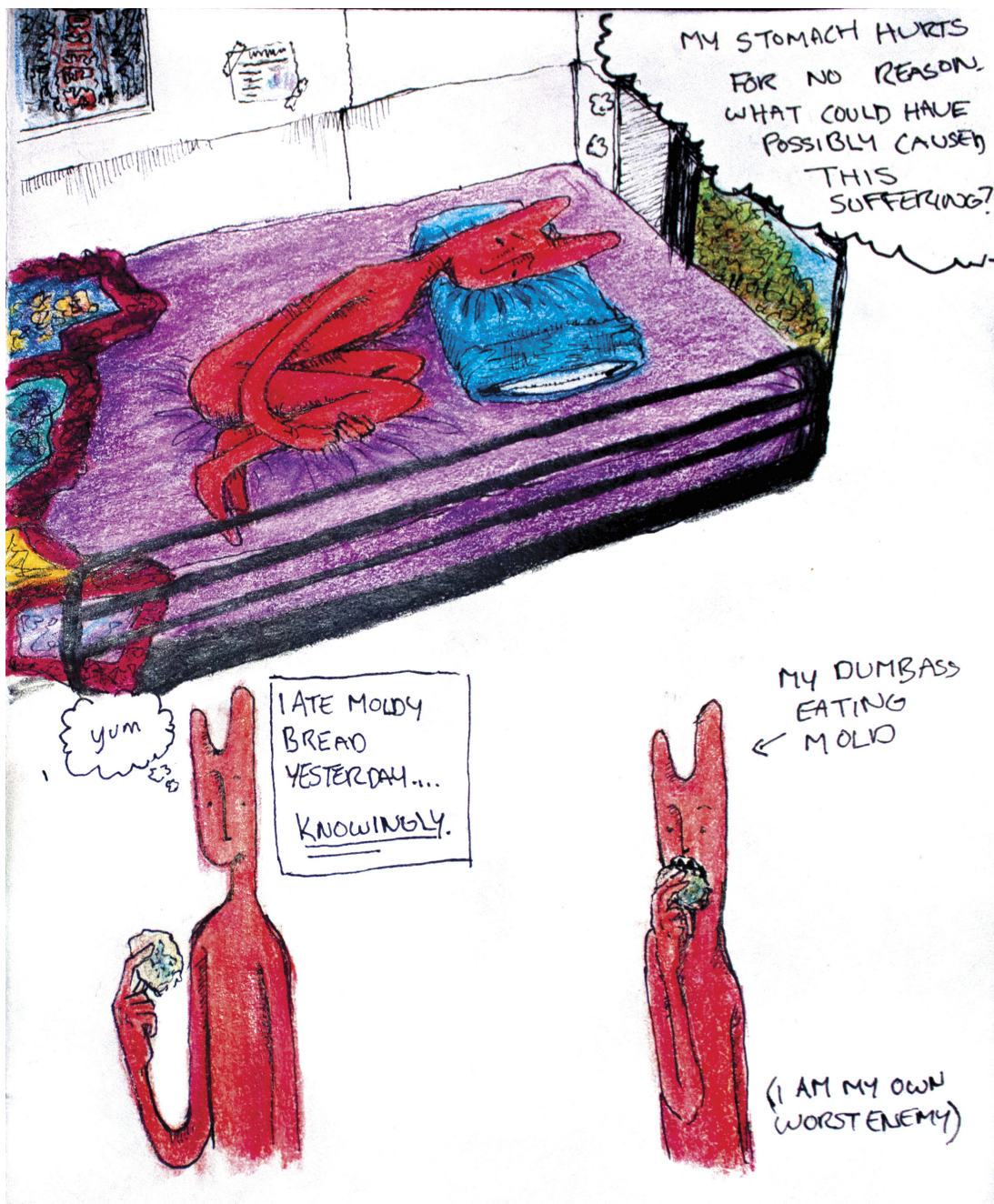
PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNINNOVATE ON INSTAGRAM



# THE DAILY COMICS!!



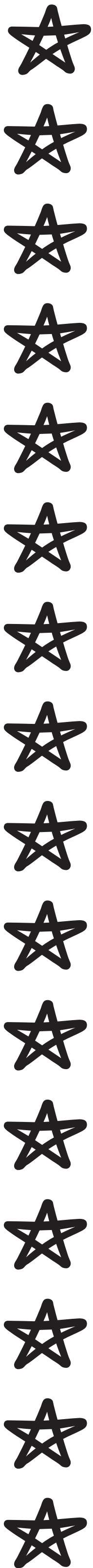
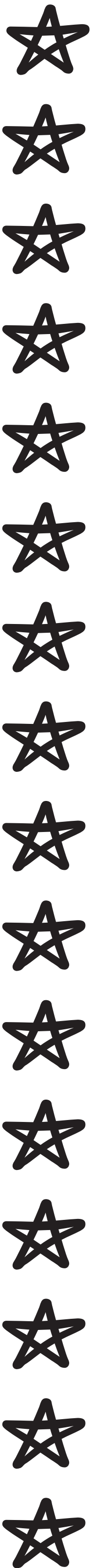
SETH WALLEN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



ASLAN HOFFMAN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



CARTOON BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS





# Life

## Birdbrained Science: Your Brain, the Gardener

by **Gabrielle Wincherhern**  
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Welcome back to Birdbrained Science! Last time, we touched on the ‘bird’ aspect with migration and today, we’ll cover some brain stuff — let’s talk about pruning.

I think there are some delightful comparisons to be made between plants and the brain (for example, dendrites, which are shaped like tree branches and named accordingly), and one of these comparisons is the process of pruning. In plants, this

**“I think there are some delightful comparisons to be made between plants and the brain”**

process involves removing dead or dying parts so that a plant can focus its energy on strengthening its healthy parts. Brains also undergo pruning, although in this case it’s not branches that get pruned — rather, synapses get pruned. A synapse is the place where different neurons communicate with one another — in other words, the place where two different neurons can form connections with each other.

We are born with an absolutely absurd number of neurons — around 100 billion at birth — which is 15% more than the number we get as an adult. Since neurons can have multiple synapses, this means that at birth, we have a high number of synapses alongside our many neurons. Somehow,

“We are born with an absolutely absurd number of neurons — around 100 billion at birth — which is 15% more than the number we get as an adult.”

we still gain more — for the first few years of our lives, our brains just keep making synapses, opening up infinite potential for connections to be made. As Harvard neuroscientist Jeff Lichtman puts it, “...you start out wired up for every possible contingency.”

Around adolescence, however, that trend stops; instead, synaptic pruning begins. Although the exact process isn’t fully understood yet, microglia (brain cells that eat debris and damaged and diseased cells in the brain) appear to play an important role. They seem tuned into the happenings of synapses and neurons, wrapping around the neurons that are activated more often

**“While it sucks to cut old connections, it ultimately may be for the best.”**

and have also been observed swallowing synaptic material.

However it happens, we know that once synaptic pruning occurs, some neuronal connections are lost forever. Pruned brains generally seem to be less flexible. This is why it’s much easier to learn a language before puberty; the connections to learn new languages are still open then.

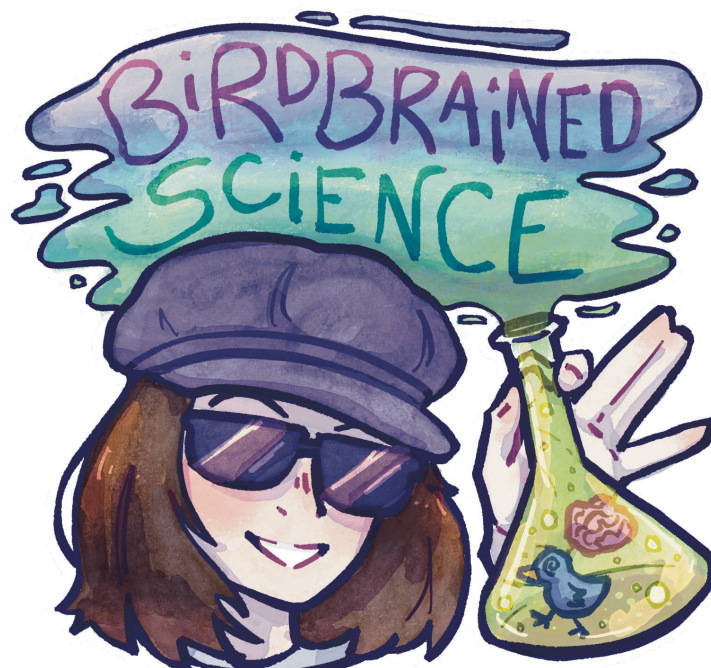
But if synaptic pruning leads to the loss of cool things like the ability to easily learn new languages, why do our brains prune synapses? Similarly to plants, it’s thought that this kind of pruning allows the brain to redirect its resources towards strengthening and specializing important connections, rather than feeding underutilized ones. Studies have shown that pruning may lead to improved task performance. Additionally, lack of synaptic pruning might be bad for you — impaired synaptic pruning may be linked to several disorders such as autism, schizo-

**“it’s okay to let go of old connections and just focus on the ones that matter the most as you mature.”**

phrenia and epilepsy. “What you’re left with is a narrow system,” Lichtman explains, on the brain post-pruning. “But it’s tuned exactly to the world you found yourself in.”

While it sucks to cut old connections, it ultimately may be for the best. It’s not easy to function if you’re constantly holding onto every connection you’ve ever made, and it can take your energy away from more important ones.

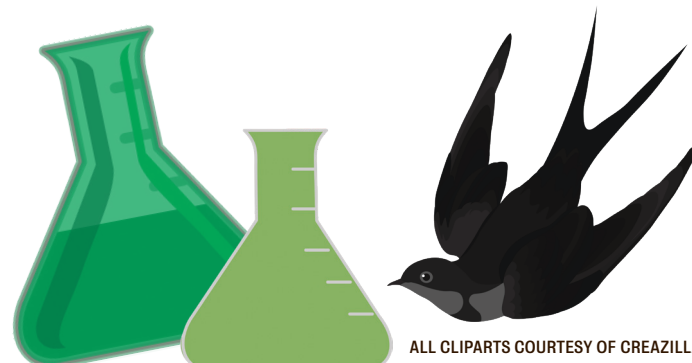
So if our brains (and plants!) are anything to go by, it’s okay to let go of old connections and just focus on the ones that matter the most as you mature. Not every connection is always going to serve you, and you are simply not built to give to every connection forever.



LOGO BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



CLIPART COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS



ALL CLIPARTS COURTESY OF CREAZILLA

## Cocaine Quarterback: When is it Wrong to Root for the Underdog?

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**  
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“Cocaine Quarterback: Signal-Caller for the Cartel” is a three-part docuseries on the story of Owen Hanson, a former University of Southern California football player who went from dealing pain killers to his teammates to becoming a wealthy cocaine trafficker. Directed by Jody McVeigh-Schultz, the Prime Video release begins in a similar vein to other stories of athletes who have lost their careers to drug addiction.

This isn’t the story of a star athlete who wasted a life of success and fame due to his vices; instead, it’s one of an underdog who beat the odds and built his own success. That success just happens to come from finding ways to smuggle cocaine in Australia. It should feel morally wrong to sympathize

After being left be-

hind by his mother at a young age after his parents divorced, Hanson threw himself into volleyball. He earned a scholarship to USC, where his coaches eventually told him he wasn’t strong enough. This sparked his first foray into steroids, and the connections earned through this led to him walking onto the USC football team and providing his teammates with various pain killers. Seeing teammates

like Matt Leinart and Reggie Bush move onto the NFL forced him to search for his own path to success. He found that success by becoming a bookie and eventually laundering money for the cartel.

The storytelling in the series is a nice reflection of how Hanson is feeling at each point of his story. The first episode, which mainly focuses on his early life and time at USC, is fast-paced and expresses how quickly his life was moving at that point. It is a succinct and efficient telling of the foundations of his life that allows us to understand his later decisions.

Episode two is a lot busier. It is the first time the audience gets exposed to the full scale of money laundering and the consequences of working for the cartel that were foreshadowed in the prior episode. The plotlines in this episode can be hard to follow, as there are many jumbled threads that would all be a worthwhile story on their own. Despite the confusion that this causes, it is also effective because it reflects the complex situation Hanson was dealing with at the time. The viewer goes through the same perplexity that Hanson and it puts the viewer in his shoes.

In episode three, the flow becomes clean again once he gets out of trouble with the cartel and starts making more money. There is a shift in the mood and the story becomes brighter as viewers observe Hanson partying and flaunting his

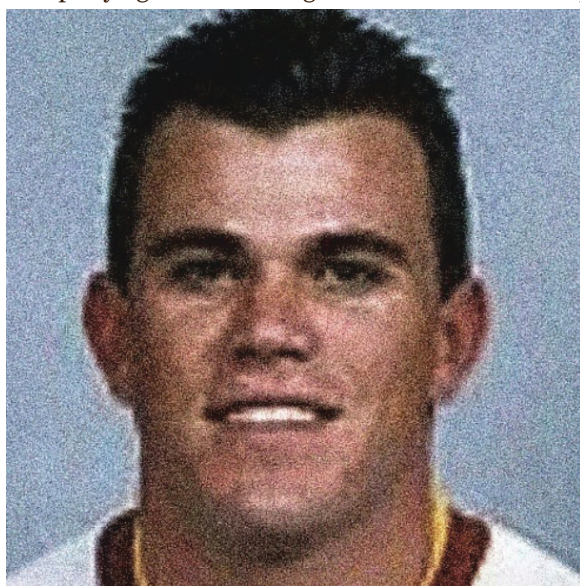
money. The atmosphere gradually darkens until the point where Hanson is arrested and sentenced to over 20 years in prison. The transformation is so subtle that you don’t really feel it until it is over and Hanson has no way out.

One of the most unique storytelling devices used by McVeigh-Schultz comes at the start of each episode. Instead of jumping immediately into the plot, the beginning of each episode presents a parody of different documentary styles. Episode one evokes an NFL Films-style opening, with the narrator discussing USC football and introducing us to Hanson the football player. Episode two’s Discovery Channel nature documentary-style opening sets the mood for an episode that will mostly take place in Australia. The History Channel-style opening in episode three, featuring religious references, sets the stage perfectly for the impending downfall of his empire. These introductions set the theme for what the focus of each episode will be.

At the end, after being released from prison early for his cooperation in another case, Hanson is shown talking to a group of young football players about his life choices and what led him to that point. It is the first time since his arrest that we see Hanson smiling and seemingly enjoying himself. It brings us back to the first episode, where Hanson’s whole journey of drug dealing and crime began simply because he was desperate to become a better volleyball player in any way possible. It’s moments like this that demonstrate why “Cocaine Quarterback” is so enjoyable; it’s a story that could happen to anyone.

In some ways, that title is misleading. Hanson wasn’t a quarterback; he was a backup. Hanson wasn’t a sports star, nor was he rich. He was a normal guy who, in the push to continue doing something he loved, got in over his head and saw no way of turning back.

**Rating: 3.5/5**



“Cocaine Quarterback: Signal-Caller for the Cartel” was released on Amazon Prime on Thursday, Sept. 25. The show focuses on Owen Cassie, a college football player-turned-drug dealer.

PHOTO COURTESY @THEOFFICIALKID ON INSTAGRAM



# Opinion

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IMAGE COURTESY OF CRUNCHYROLL ON YOUTUBE

# ANALYZING BLUE LOCK

## Japan's right-wing soccer anime

by Tomas Hinckley | OPINION EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | tomas.hinckley@uconn.edu

First aired in 2022, the Japanese soccer anime "Blue Lock" immediately took both the sports and anime worlds by storm. The show follows the soccer-obsessed protagonist Isagi Yoichi through an experimental project, known as Blue Lock, meant to create the world's best striker who will revolutionize the Japanese soccer world. To do this, the visionary mind behind the project, a coach named Jinpachi Ego, brought together 300 young players and gave them a simple goal: destroy each other and do whatever it takes to come out on top. He urges the growth of each player's 'egoism,' the singular individualistic drive to prove themselves as the best and ignore everything else, as the necessary factor in surviving Blue Lock and eventually making Japan a leader in international football.

As far as most sports anime go, this basic synopsis of the show is already incredibly antithetical to

the typical tropes of the genre. It's easy to see how different it is from the messages laid out in its predecessors like Haikyuu, Koruko's Basketball or Ao Ashi, which primarily focused on teams of characters growing and solving problems together. The importance of this subversion of expectations is not to be taken lightly, as it's worth noting how this represents real life cultural trends. Specifically, I will argue that the

huge popularity of this show reflects growing right-wing sentiments both in the United States and Japan.

To understand the basis of "Blue Lock's" extreme right-wing ideology, it's necessary to take apart Jinpachi Ego's project and how it conceptualizes success. For a more detailed analysis of Blue Lock's philosophy, YouTube

Explanation Point has a great video diving deeper on the subject. The overview is that the central ideological message of Ego, as the main driver of the plot, is that success comes from

extreme competition against and domination of all others. The show delves into extremes on this point in how it portrays this message. Ego demands complete obsession from all his players, pushing them to conceptualize success as life and losing as death. He makes frequent comparisons between each player and "warriors," using the terminology of murder and violence to describe competition on the field. Those who lose the battles in Blue Lock, as well as those who exist in the "normal" soccer world, are described as being less than trash and meant to be discarded by the strong. The examples go on, but what they reveal is the intensity of the philosophy of the series and how it pervades into every aspect of it.

It's also worth stating that this all could've been a very poignant message about the pervasive nature of far-right leaders and their ability to corrupt, if only Ego was the villain. However, the series largely presents his vision as being "correct" and all the players gladly follow it. Even when characters are harmed by Blue Lock, like Rensuke Kunigami, whose entire personality was broken after losing and getting expelled from the project, this is largely painted as being a personal failure of his "ego." He is only able to reenter the plot after undergoing reprogramming that rids his personality of all altruistic sentiments. This is presented as a "good thing" that makes him a better player.

As for what this says about culture, it's time to address where this show comes from and the main audiences that it is meant for. "Blue Lock" is a shonen manga/anime, which means it is primarily meant for young male audiences. Although primarily a Japanese medium, it has taken up a large following across the world, owing in large part due to its association with the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which had its play-offs at the same time as the airing of "Blue Lock's" first season. The United States has been no exception to this, with large swaths of the show's fans of the anime being American teens.

The show's ideology takes on an added significance given broader ideological trends and structural forces in these areas. It is exceptionally clear that the United States currently is undergoing a far-right, fascist takeover in the form of President Donald Trump. Japan, for its part, has seen prominent growths of nationalist politics in recent months as well. These



two countries are also both hyper-capitalist economic powers, which heavily influences their cultural values. Capitalism, an inherently right-wing, individualistic cultural force, has similar idealistic messages about the nature of competition as those found in "Blue Lock." It is an economic model based on hierarchy and beating out others on the way to the top. And it is inherently tied to the cultural products, such as ideology, politics and storytelling, that come out of a given place.

This results in an understanding of "Blue Lock" as a coercive force meant to imbue in young male audiences certain values based in far-right hyper-capitalist ideals. It is, in harsh terms, propaganda that promotes an extremely individualistic mindset where defeat is death, conquering others is the purpose of life and people are only meant to be used to serve an "Egoist's" goals. It is a work that supports dominant ideologies and structures, bringing them subtly to youth through fiction.

An important caveat to this is that "Blue Lock" is not necessarily all these things because the author is a far-right fascist, or that everyone who enjoys the show is already on their way to becoming fascist. This is about its position within a broader structure that informs how people interact with media, ideals and culture. As far as that is concerned, it's worth being able to critically analyze its message and the audience's interaction with it. Although I firmly disagree with the message of "Blue Lock" and how it views the world, I still like it and will continue to read it. There is still value to its story and interacting with it despite whatever philosophy it may promote, because the meaning of a story is ultimately in the hands of the reader. In that sense, it is worth seeing what positive can come from a deeper understanding of the type of mindset that currently dominates our world. In all its raw fervor, intensity and destructive passion, "Blue Lock" is a ripe opportunity to do that.



CUTOUT, SOCCER BALL, AND LOGO COURTESY OF CRUNCHYROLL ON YOUTUBE

## Opinion

## Huskytalk | What is the most performative thing a man can do?



**“Wear those stupid ass pants.”**  
Zachary Gromulat  
Computer Science & Engineering  
Third Semester



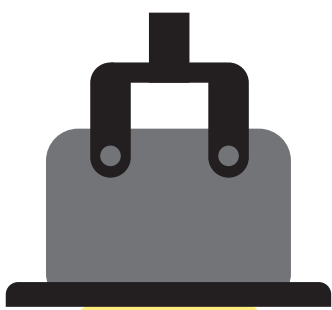
**“Cry at night because period cramps exist.”**  
Kai Lee  
Biomedical Engineering & Math Minor  
Third semester



**“Wear a single diamond stud earring.”**  
Grant Donnelly  
Mechanical Engineering  
Third semester



**“Dress to impress.”**  
Amare Nieves  
Finance  
First semester



## We love artists a little too much

by Sophie Shugrue

CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | SHE/HER/HERS | hdc24004@uconn.edu

Want to become a fan of a musical artist? It seems that these days, all you have to do is live and die for them.

Okay, it's not that dramatic. But lately, it seems that every fanbase has a certain parasocial element to it. Parasocial fans translate love for the art that is created into love for the artist themselves and think that they know every facet and detail of their thought processes, intentions and experiences. Because their art evokes certain feelings, fans presume they have a certain closeness with the artist they adore. The result is that often fans excuse bad behavior from artists, defending their favorite artist from any and all criticism even if their actions are harmful or illegal.

Instead of just enjoying the art that is produced, people become so invested in the lives of artists that they act like their personal defenders. Earlier this week, clips from Kanye West's new documentary, "In Whose Name?," surfaced on social media sites. While lauded as a musical and stylistic genius by fans, West has been openly struggling with bipolar disorder without the use of medication since 2016. In the documentary clips, West can be seen screaming at his former mother-in-law, Kris Jenner, and telling her that he would "rather be dead than on medication." The documentary comes after West made antisemitic comments in 2022, ending his partnerships with Adidas and Balenciaga. Rather than seeing West's behavior for what it is - a result of his declining mental health - his fans have continuously enabled this behavior, rationalizing that since they consider him to be the greatest artist of all time and that he can do no wrong.

Parasocial relationships aren't just about enabling transgressive behavior. When Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce became engaged in August, they chose to share that milestone with their many fans on Instagram. The result was millions of strangers congratulating them on social media. Swift has

openly shared her struggles with relationships in her music, and now that she has found "the one", millions of fans are sharing the joy with her. Maybe it's inspirational - maybe Swift's own story is proof to fans that even with trials and tribulations, finding love is still possible. But it's also true that through following her career, some fans have come to think of Swift as a friend and want to celebrate her engagement like one.

So, what is behind the increase in parasocial relationships? According to the National Library of Medicine, the rise can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. With people across the world being restricted from physical contact and real-life social interactions, many learned to have meaningful interactions on social media. This has bled into interactions with musical artists, amongst other celebrities. Even five years after the pandemic, parasocial relationships persist and result in social isolation, loneliness and negative influences from problematic public figures such as West.

But why do they persist? Does a lack of reciprocity in relationships persist today, making it much easier to form relationships with strangers online? Is society in general so lonely that it must make up for it with unfulfilling, one-sided interactions?

The solution is unclear. While psychologists can spout tips and tricks, such as forming boundaries with social media use, further cultivating relationships with real figures in one's life and engaging in community activities and events, ultimately it is up to the individual to solve their own parasocial tendencies. In the advent of relatable influencers and artists that seem emotionally available, it is a feat that is becoming increasingly difficult.

Ultimately, fans need to look inwards and reflect on why they have formed parasocial relationships in the first place, which could culminate in seeking professional help. We should remember that in the end, it is the art we know and love so deeply, not the artist themselves.

## Beyond the Ballot:

Why we must rebuild bipartisan environmentalism

by Colin Hamilton  
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In his first hundred days in office, President Donald Trump took 145 actions undoing clean air, water and climate laws. He has since ordered Environmental Protection Agency scientists to stop publishing their research, fired climate experts in droves and has subjected meteorologists to political loyalty tests. His Interior Department, once a hallmark of American environmentalism, has stripped protections from over 245 million acres of public land, while implementing new rules allowing the removal of endangered species' habitat. These rollbacks are not isolated policies; they represent a coordinated attack on science, conservation, and the very idea that the government should safeguard public health. The Trump administration is waging a silent war on environmentalism and is actively dismantling decades of bipartisan progress. Urgent action is needed to reverse this trend.

*These shifts in policy are so shocking because of how sharply they depart from previously bipartisan environmental policy.*

In just a few years, Washington D.C. has shifted from a protector of environmental policy to an obstacle. Trump's dismantling of American environmentalism has been swift and unprecedented. On his inauguration day, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, making it the only country to have ever done so. He has abandoned clean energy projects on public land and threatened to block any on private land. In the past few weeks, he and his administration have fired thousands of employees from the EPA, the Interior Department, the Department of Energy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

*Hope is not lost, however. Despite these reversals in policy, the American people remain ahead of their leaders.*

These shifts in policy are so shocking because of how sharply they depart from previously bipartisan environmental policy. While the current political cycle in the United States encourages partisan thinking when it comes to environmentalism and public health, preserving our lands and pursuing public health was not always a ballot box issue. The EPA, created to protect both human health and the environment, was established by both Democrats and Republicans and signed into law by Richard Nixon. Similarly, the Clean Air Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act both had bipartisan support, and both were signed by Republican presidents (George W. Bush and Gerald Ford, respectively).

Beyond public health, America's modern day conservation movement was also once bipartisan. Theodore Roosevelt, one of the Republican Party's great figures, created the modern-day National Park system, following in fellow Republican Ulysses S. Grant's legacy. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, for its part, includes numerous conservation benefits, such as the Klamath Basin, Delaware River Basin and Lake Tahoe restorations. These examples make Trump's reversal of policy even more jarring; they contradict not only established environmental science, but his own party's tradition of stewardship.

Hope is not lost, however. Despite these reversals in policy, the American people remain ahead of their leaders. In a recent poll, 60% of Republicans, 59% of Independents and 86% of Democrats suggested they would have a more favorable impression towards their member of Congress if they pursued natural climate solutions. The same poll found a 91% consensus across parties to provide a financial incentive to conserve natural areas, while 89% approved of building a year-round workforce to restore

coastlines, forests, farmlands and other natural areas.

Grassroot support for bipartisan environmentalism already exists. Americans want to take pride in their wild spaces and live clean, safe lives. Across party lines, Americans agree that they want a nation that they can be environmentally proud of. This makes Trump's policies not only reckless, but a betrayal of his party's and his voters' values. Environmentalism aligns perfectly with conservative ideals of stewardship, responsibility, and national pride.

*Rebuilding environmental bipartisanship is not optional - it is the only way to safeguard America's health, land and values from reckless leadership.*

Even fiscally, pro-environmental policy advances Republican goals. In 2023, the National Parks Service contributed \$55.6 billion dollars to the American economy and supported over 415,000 jobs. This number has decreased after Trump's recent mass firings of NPS's staff. Worldwide, nations with stronger environmental policies have also been found to have stronger economies and efficient industries.

If the United States is to reclaim its legacy as a global leader in conservation and global health, it cannot afford to let environmentalism continue to be a casualty of partisanship. Trump's rollbacks reveal not just an assault on policy, but a denial of shared values that once united Americans across the aisle. Protecting clean air, safe water, and public lands is not a Republican or Democratic issue - it is an American issue. The public already acknowledges this; it is time for American leaders to act accordingly. It is time for them to reach across the aisle to protect not only our public lands and health, but also our American values. Rebuilding environmental bipartisanship is not optional - it is the only way to safeguard America's health, land and values from reckless leadership.



Washington D.C., the site of many environmental policies and decisions. In his first hundred days in office, President Donald Trump took 145 actions undoing clean air, water and climate laws. PHOTO COURTESY OF @VISITWASHINGTONDC ON INSTAGRAM

# Field Hockey: Huskies look to reignite season against Liberty

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**

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After taking one of two games on the road last weekend, the UConn field hockey team (3-4) will travel to Lynchburg, Va., on Friday, Sept. 26, to take on the No. 5 Liberty Flames (5-1). The Huskies will look to improve their record in Big East play to 2-0 following a win over Villanova last Saturday. The game will take place at 6 p.m. on the Liberty Field Hockey Field.

After coming into the season ranked in the top 20 by ESPN and projected to win the Big East, UConn has scuffled to a losing record over the season's first month. UConn has especially struggled against ranked opponents; all four of their losses came against teams currently ranked in the ESPN top 20. That includes a loss last Sunday, Sept. 21, to No. 8 Princeton. The Flames will be the highest ranked team that UConn has faced so far.

The Huskies have had trouble scoring consistently, being shut out twice and scoring three or more goals only twice. They currently sit outside of the top 50 in the NCAA Division I in goals scored per game, with less than two. Coach Paul Caddy has relied heavily on production from freshmen contributors this season; seven out of the Huskies' 12 goals on the season have been scored by freshmen. Lene Bunjes, Abby Davidson, Emma Larit and Pien Prins have all notched at least one score. Prins is tied with senior captain Julia Bressler for the team lead with three.

Senior midfielder Sol Simone has helped to facilitate that inexperienced offense, as she leads the team with four assists and has also chipped in a goal. The 2024

Big East Midfielder of the Year had a quiet road trip this past weekend after a strong start to the season. A

potential bounce back from her against Liberty will be key to UConn's chances.

Liberty comes into Friday undefeated at home, with their only loss coming at the hands of undefeated No. 2 North Carolina. The Flames traveled to Connecticut last weekend to play Quinnipiac in their first Big East matchup of the season, beginning conference play with a 2-0 win over the Bobcats. Liberty ranked second in the Big East preseason poll behind only UConn and received two first place votes. They are currently the highest ranked team in the Big East, according to ESPN.

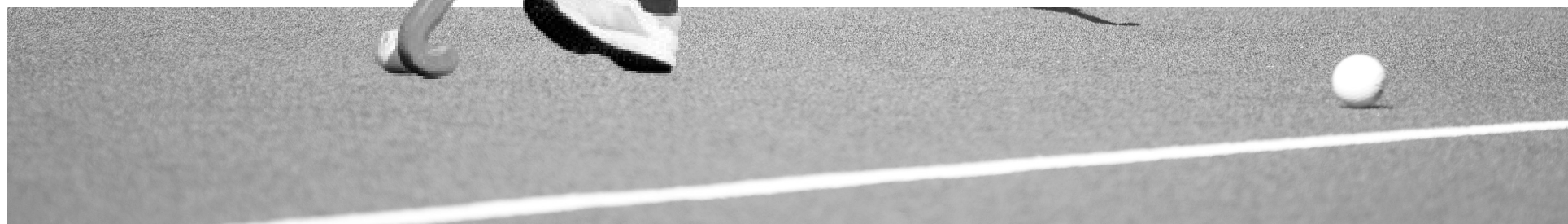
has two goals on the season. Sophomore forward Josefina Tomasi and freshman defender Morena Giacosa are tied for the team lead with three goals.

Freshman goalkeeper Diane Saint Martin has been instrumental in Liberty's success. The French national is top 20 in the country in goals against average with 1.339 per game. The rookie's best game came against UNC,

in which she made eight stops while allowing only two goals. She has saved 71.4% of shots faced this season and an even better 83.3% over Liberty's last three matches.

Historically, UConn has a 10-6 program record against Liberty. The first two matchups between the programs came in 2016, making 2025 the tenth season in which they will face off. The Huskies are currently on a two-game winning streak and will look to extend that streak as they try to get their season back on track.

Senior forward Lou Combrinck was named the 2025 Big East Preseason Offensive Player of the Year and currently



The UConn field hockey team is facing off against Big East foe Liberty on Friday, Sept. 26. The team is currently 2-0. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# The Full 90: Beyond Messi & Ronaldo: Ballon d'Or and the dawn of a New Era

by **Will DeLetto**

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The Ballon d'Or is football's most illustrious individual award; to win it means to be immortalized in football history forever. Essentially, voters get together to decide who should be considered the player of the year. A large pool of nominees are considered until finally, the most elite footballer on the planet is awarded the prize and is etched into footballing history for generations to come. The French Footballing Federation created the award in 1956, and the winner of the inaugural award was Englishman Stanley Matthews of Blackpool FC. Matthews is still the oldest player to win the award, having been 41 at the time.

In the 21st century, we have seen the award revolve around one of football's all-time duopolies. Between 2008 and 2018, no other player won the award except Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. This dominance was something viewers had never seen in the sport: two men at the highest level of football battling each year to be crowned the best player in the world. In the span of a decade, Ronaldo and Messi each accumulated five total Ballon d'Ors. However, the debate over who was the greatest footballer ever was settled when Lionel Messi won an additional three awards in 2019, 2021 and 2023.

This year's ceremony took place on Monday, Sept. 22, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France. Footballing icons of the past and present walked the red-carpet event dressed to the nines, reveling in the football history that surrounded them. The rivalries, derbies and drama of football are left

aside for the occasion, and the sport's best all meet within this ceremony. The French international Ousmane Dembele was gifted with the award and immortalized in history among a tough and talented nomination pool. Dembele led French giants Paris Saint-Germain's attack and supplied a total of 51 goal contributions in all competitions. Dembele's 35 goals and 16 assists helped him receive this award.

Domestically, he aided in his club's stellar success in the 2024-2025 campaign by becoming a vital part of PSG's team that won a continental treble, which includes winning Ligue 1 (French League), Coupe de France (French Cup) and the UEFA Champions league. All these factors aided in his achievement;

The most important takeaway I had from the award this year is its symbolic mark-

ing of a new era in football. For years and years, it was always the same: Messi or Ronaldo, who's going to win the Ballon d'Or? These two athletes' playing styles were engraved into the game for years. Now, we have something new: 18-year-old Lamine Yamal. Yamal, coming in second place behind Ousmane Dembele, is a clear sign of a new era. The teenage prodigy who plays for Barcelona leads a long line of runners-

up who have broken onto the scene in recent years. These footballers seem to have a certain youth, flair and vibe about them that screams of a new age of football. The fluidity with which these athletes play reminds fans of the mavericks of the past, like Ronaldinho Gaucho and Zinedine Zidane.

Tor many fans, was the first year where the Ballon d'Or wasn't easy to guess beforehand. It was a toss-up, with the list of nominees all demonstrating unbelievable levels of class and talent throughout the previous season. Messi and Ronaldo are clearly legends of the game; however, this new influx of talent, skill and ability is a very promising sign of a new era to come. For the first time, it seems as though fans feel safe, the competition is fierce and youthful, and the game is in the right direction. Football is not the same without Messi and Ronaldo, but all good things must come to an end. In the past, this idea has been difficult for fans to comprehend. Football without these two men leading is something many fans my age are not entirely familiar with. Nevertheless, I feel in good hands knowing the future of the sport is led by young, exciting talent who dazzle before our eyes, who take risks and who respect and appreciate the game we all love.

Football is being reimagined before our eyes, from a youthful explosion of talent to revolutionary tactics. The game is being rewritten for a new, exciting generation. This isn't just the next step for football; it's a transformation. A new era is destined for the world's game, and it is rapidly nearing its future. And this is only just the beginning.



Ousmane Dembélé won the 2025 ballon d'Or this week. The win ushers in a new era of football after Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo dominated the award for a long time. PHOTO COURTESY OF BALLONDOROFFICIAL (VIA INSTAGRAM)

## Sports

## Photo of the Day |



The UConn softball team battles Franklin Pierce on Sept. 20, 2025. The game was the second of seven exhibition games, with the last scheduled for Oct. 12, 2025.

PHOTO BY NORA MARIANO, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## Isabella Suhy: Digging deep

by Amita Akshinthala

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Nearly 700 miles from home, a determined libero waltzed into the UConn Volleyball Center, ready to dig at whatever was thrown at her, literally.

At 5-foot-5, junior Isabella Suhy is the definition of an underdog. Back in high school, every time she walked into the gym she was met with the same question that fueled her fire: “Are you going to be the worst one here today?”

Originally from Toledo, Ohio, where the volleyball scene is not nearly as big as in places like Texas, Suhy knew she’d have to outwork everyone else. “Toledo is not like Texas,” Suhy explained. “To go Division I, you have to be the first in the gym, last out.” Living by that mantra, she finished her senior year as an All-American letterwinner.

However, Suhy’s journey to the court wasn’t straightforward. Growing up, she played a slew of sports from soccer to basketball, loving the competitive aspect more than the games themselves. Her mom, though, was adamant about her finishing each season, teaching her to embrace both her skills and shortcomings before moving on to the next challenge.

Then came volleyball.

At age 13, Suhy fell in love with the sport after watching a friend’s older sister play. Absorbed by this new fascination, she tried out for her first club team, but unfortunately did not make it.

Before she even stepped foot on the University of Connecticut’s campus, Suhy had a commitment post ready – she just had a feeling. She then got an offer when touring, and it was official within five minutes.

“I was offered on campus and took it immediately,” Suhy said.

From that moment, Suhy embraced every role her team needed. Whether it was bringing grit and joy to every practice or posting a career-high 14 digs in a single game, she leaned into her quickness and determination.

Off the court, her confidence continues to radiate. Suhy has been adamant on the motto of dressing for the job she wants. From her bold makeup looks to vivid personality on the court, she leaves nothing behind.

“Getting ready is a sign of respect to myself,” Suhy stated. Her style reflects her belief in herself and makes it clear she means business.

Her biggest makeup tip, you may ask?

“I dab my face, don’t wipe.” Suhy said.

And she approaches life the same way.

“After not making my first club team, I was distraught,” Suhy admitted. But once again, her mom stepped in with words that stuck: “We don’t raise quitters.”

From then on, Suhy knew what she had to do. She made the club team the second time around, immediately setting her sights on the collegiate level. She studied play styles from idols like Lexi Rodriguez and memorized statements from Kobe Bryant and Diana Taurasi until they became part of her own mindset. Suhy never wipes away her mistakes, only dabbing and adjusting until she gets it right.



With her achievements tallying and her grit palpable, Suhy cemented herself as a key contributor both on and off the court. She launched “Play It Forward,” a drive donating UConn athletic gear, and has taken on the unofficial role of team hype-woman.

She’s got that dog in her – a husky – and the season has only just begun.

But as Suhy reminds herself, “The job’s not done... not until I play my last college game.”

**Junior Isabella Suhy has had to overcome numerous obstacles to get to where she is now on the UConn Volleyball team. She shared her story with writer Amita Akshinthala this week.**

PHOTO COURTESY @ISABELLASUHY ON INSTAGRAM.VARD

## UConn volleyball hits the road for two Big East conference matchups



by Alex Klancko

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A week after dominating non-conference play, the UConn volleyball team takes on DePaul and Marquette this weekend in two Big East matchups.

Three Huskies had strong performances at the UConn Classic with seniors Emma Werkmeister and Audrey Rome and junior Grace Maria named to the UConn Classic All-Tournament Team. Rome was also named Big East Defensive Player of the Week for her performances against Brown, Marist and Sacred Heart.

Werkmeister averaged 3.22 kills, 2 digs and 0.89 aces per set. Maria averaged 2.33 kills and 1.22 digs per set and Rome achieved 15 blocks during the UConn Classic last weekend.

UConn will matchup against DePaul on Friday, Sept. 26, with UConn leading DePaul 10-5 since October 2007. The Huskies will then meet with Marquette on Sat-

urday, Sept. 27, with a record of 3-13 since November 2006.

UConn got swept by DePaul and Marquette 3-0 in their previous matchups last season.

DePaul enters the matchup 7-4 with losses against Illinois State, UTSA, Lindenwood and UIC. Marquette enters the matchup 6-4 with losses against San Diego University, Ball State, No. 7 Wisconsin and No. 12 Minnesota.

DePaul is on a one game win streak while Marquette enters the contest on a one game losing streak.

An opposing player to look out for is DePaul freshman, Morgan Stewart. Stewart has 167 points and 138 kills on the year in just 11 games. The freshman is also a strong defender with 94 digs, 10 receptions and 23 blocks.

An opposing player to look out for is Marquette senior, Natalie Ring. Ring has 202.5 points and 79 kills on offense while also having 67 digs and 15 blocks of defense.

UConn opened the season 11-1. Their only loss of the year was to Yale, 3-2.

Since then, the Huskies have bounced back immensely with a 3-2 win against Fairfield and sweeps against Northeastern, Brown, Marist and Sacred Heart.

Werkmeister has been one of the Huskies’ strongest players on attack, accruing 196 points and 159 kills in just 12 games. Grace has also been on fire this season from attack, achieving 130.5 points and 106 kills.

Defensively, McKenna Brand, Doga Kutlu and Rome have excelled. Brand has notched achieved 163 digs and 8 receptions, Kutlu has 103 digs and 13 blocks and Rome has 39 blocks across 12 games.

Werkmeister has also been great defensively with 84 digs, 15 receptions and 13 blocks.

The match versus DePaul will be in Chicago, IL at 8 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 26, and the match versus Marquette will be in Milwaukee, WI on Saturday, Sept. 27, at 7 p.m.

Viewers can watch the games online on ESPN+.

The UConn volleyball team is hitting the road for two Big East conference matchups this weekend. The team faces DePaul and Marquette.

PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS.

# Men's Soccer: Huskies host Villanova in primetime Big East matchup

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The UConn men's soccer team will be back in action on Saturday, Sept. 27, as they take on Big East rival Villanova. The Huskies are coming off their first loss and one of the most challenging games of the season so far. The Huskies played a very tough Bryant team that gave them struggles both defensively and offensively.

The Huskies currently lead the Wildcats with an all-time series record of 16-4-1.

Villanova enters the contest at 2-3-3, with wins over Rider, where they had their most shots in a game this year, and St. Joseph's. The Wildcats' most impressive and notable game came against DePaul, where they were able to force a draw. In that game they were able to control the pace of the game and keep their fouls minimal as they forced a draw

versus a DePaul squad.

UConn's Austin Brummett and Balthazar Saunders will both look to stay hot as they lead the team with six and three goals, respectively. Sabri Hanni will also look to share the ball and score when needed for a UConn offense. UConn goalie Kyle Durham has also been phenomenal this year and will aim to continue his momentum as he has given up less than a goal per game on average.

The Huskies have also been good with penalties on the year, as they have 10 compared to their opponents 18. UConn will look to keep this up to earn tactical advantage at home.

Villanova's offense is powered by Sam Nyenka, who shined in their win over Rider with four points, and Fynn Lahrson, who have combined for five goals this year. Despite this, the Wildcats have struggled to get chances inside the

box. Villanova also has a split goalie system, as both Sebastian Cutler Dejesus and Alex Yagudayev have played four games so far this year. Cutler Dejesus leads the two in save percentage at 0.808 so he will likely get the nod in this one.

UConn has a chance to start a run as they head into the bulk of Big East play. This will be an essential conference matchup for the Huskies. The game will begin on Saturday, Sept. 27, at 6 p.m.



The UConn men's soccer team is facing off against Villanova on Saturday, Sept. 27. The Huskies currently own a 6-1-3 record.  
PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR / THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Football: UConn battles old friends against the Buffalo Bulls

by Tyler Pruneau  
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The UConn football team (2-2) travels to clash with the Buffalo Bulls (2-2) on Saturday, Sept. 27, in hopes of securing its first away game victory.

The Huskies are favored to win, as the team owns a 14-2 record versus the Bulls. However, UConn owns a 0-2 record when on the road in the 2025 season. The two programs last met in 2024, where Connecticut defeated Buffalo 47-3 at Rentschler Field.

In last season's matchup against Buffalo, UConn dominated offensively, as quarterback Joe Fagnano threw 11 of 19 (57.9%) completions for 217 yards and three passing touchdowns. Wide receiver Skyler Bell shined downfield, hauling in six receptions for 153 yards and making three endzone appearances.

In the backfield, running backs Cam Edwards and Mel Brown collectively gained 152 rushing yards and crossed the goal line twice. With Brown sidelined for six to eight weeks after breaking his collarbone versus the Delaware Blue Hens, Victor Rosa should see snaps.

"There are so many variables that go into it," said head coach Jim Mora at Tuesday's press conference. "The situation in the game, who's hot, what you're trying to get done. It's just very hard, yet we know that Victor [Rosa] is a very important part of this offense."

In the mid-September contest against Delaware, Rosa finished the day rushing for 40 yards and for one touchdown. Last weekend against the Ball State Cardinals, the redshirt junior saw only three carries for five yards.

In 2024, Connecticut

sacked Buffalo quarterback C.J. Ogbonna three times and snatched an interception.

The Huskies' offensive line has protected Fagnano well, conceding three sacks this year. On Saturday, the Bulls' defense will test the pass protectors, as the squad ties for No. 1 in the country with 16 sacks.

Additionally, changing possessions is one of the Bulls' specialties, as they force at least one turnover per match. In last weekend's 21-17 loss to the Troy Trojans, the Bulls snagged a fumble and an interception.

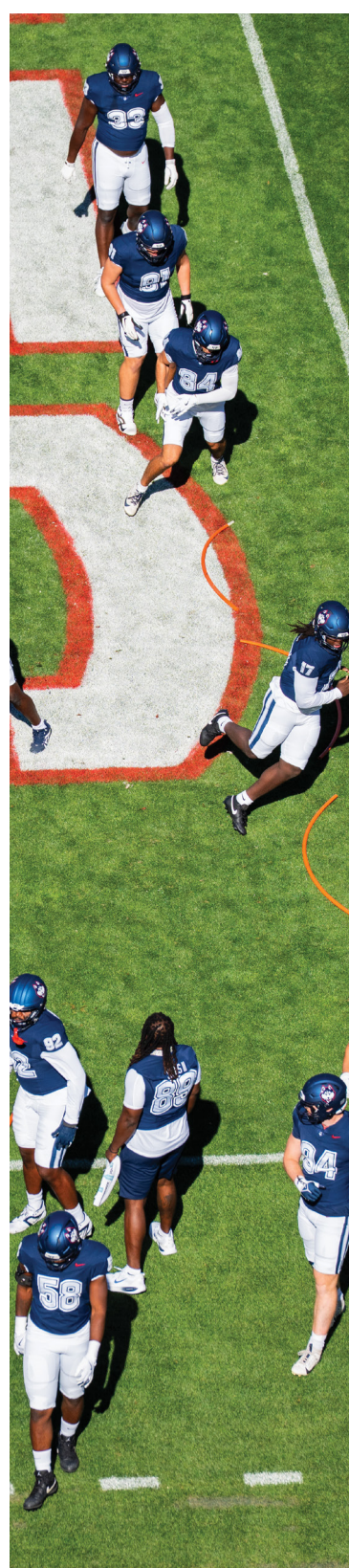
Offensively, watching out for running back AJ-Jay Henderson is a must. The New Jersey native could stay hot, as he's crossed the goal line in three consecutive matchups.

UConn will see familiar faces, as quarterback Ta'Quan Roberson (2022-2023) and Jashaiah Gathings (2024) previously played for the Huskies.

"He's throwing the ball very well," said Mora when discussing Roberson's potential. We know he's got the legs to run. He looks like he's very comfortable in this offense."

So far, the senior has thrown 662 yards for five touchdowns and two interceptions, with a completion percentage of 57.5%. As for Gathings, he has caught 11 receptions for 107 yards.

Husky fans can tune into the matchup on ESPN+, with kickoff scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27.



With three weeks into the season, Uconn Football hopes to secure its first away game win. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR / THE DAILY CAMPUS



# Sports

## Women's Soccer: UConn heads to Washington D.C. to take on Georgetown in Big East matchup

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The UConn women's soccer team is heading to Washington D.C. for a matchup with No. 20 Georgetown on Sunday, Sept. 28. The Huskies (5-2-2) are coming off a 1-1 draw at home to No. 23 Xavier, with the Huskies' goal coming from sophomore forward Farrah Stephens-Martin in the 56th minute. UConn extended its unbeaten streak to six matches, with its last loss coming exactly one month before Sunday's contest.

Georgetown (6-2-2) is coming off a dominant 3-1 win at home against Seton Hall on Wednesday night.

This will be the 23rd matchup between the Big East foes. Their last matchup came in November of last season, where UConn shut out the Hoyas, 2-0. Although the Huskies lead the all-time series 13-8-1 and won the most recent matchup, they have struggled lately, managing just two wins in the last seven meetings.

On the road this season, the Huskies are 2-1-1, as the Hoyas are 2-1-1 at home.

Georgetown's key win of the season was their 1-0 victory over (at the time) No. 10 South Carolina. The Hoyas handed the Gamecocks (8-1-2) their only loss of the season. Although UConn has a similar record to Georgetown, the Huskies must be on their game to take down the Hoyas, as they have beaten one of the top programs in the country.



The UConn women's soccer team is taking on Georgetown in Washington D.C. on Sunday, Sept. 28. The Huskies currently own a 5-2-2 record. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/ THE DAILY CAMPUS

### Players to Watch:

Maja Lardner, Georgetown, Graduate Student, Forward

Lardner leads the team in scoring with seven goals. The graduate student scored five goals in her first four games. Coming off a goal against Seton Hall, the Huskies need to contain Lardner from setting the tone for Georgetown, not allowing her to score a goal in a second straight game.

Shay Montgomery, Georgetown, Senior, Midfield

Montgomery leads Georgetown in assists with five coming off a goal in her last two contests. The midfielder can both score and share the ball. The Huskies must make sure they keep Montgomery at bay.

Chioma Okafor, UConn, Senior, Forward

Okafor leads the Huskies in goals scored with three. The speedy forward will be all over the field Sunday night. Don't be surprised if she puts the ball in the back of the net.

Taylor Jenkins, UConn, Sophomore, Midfield

Scoring against Maine and St. John's, Jenkins fired four shots against St. John's and none against Xavier. Jenkins will look to get back in the scoring column against Georgetown.

UConn established early dominance in the series, winning the inaugural matchup in 1995 by a 4-0 margin before recording a dominating 12-0 victory the following year. The Huskies went on to open the rivalry with eight consecutive wins, conceding only two goals during that span.

## Baseball: Hook C returns to the field for annual alumni game

by Thaddeus Sawyer  
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The UConn baseball team will take the field for their first game of the 2025 fall season on Sunday, Sept. 28, against a group of returning Huskies in their annual alumni game. The game will take place at Elliott Ballpark, with first pitch slated for 3 p.m. After missing the NCAA tournament for the first time in seven seasons in 2025, head coach Jim Penders will have plenty of questions to answer as the fall gets underway. 22 of the 43 players on the fall roster are newcomers to the team and the fall will be spent trying to get an idea of what their exact fits on the 2026 squad will be.

2025 Big East Player of the Year and offensive leader Ryan Daniels was selected in the 11th round of the 2025 MLB Draft by the Minnesota Twins. The second basemen led the Huskies in batting average, on-base percentage, slugging percentage, OPS and RBIs. He was also second on the team in home runs and his departure leaves a glaring hole in the middle of UConn's lineup.

The outfield picture is also unsettled, as Caleb Shpur, Beau Root and Sam Biller all graduated, while Aidan Dougherty transferred to the University of Washington. Shpur, Root and Dougherty were each in the top five on the team in batting average, while Biller had the third highest slugging percentage and home run total. Incoming Southern New Hampshire transfers Jackson Marshall and Nater Watcher each had an OPS over .950 last season and could be big pieces to solving the out-

field puzzle.

UConn's group of returning players is headlined by shortstop Rob Rispoli and corner infielder Tyler Minick. Rispoli started all but four games for the 2025 Huskies and got on base at a .473 clip, second behind only Daniels. The redshirt sophomore was named to the All-Big East first team in his rookie campaign and will look to build on that success as a mainstay at the top of UConn's lineup.

Splitting his time almost evenly between first and third

base, Minick was the team's second-best hitter in 2025. The rising junior came in third on the team in batting average at .355 and led the team in home runs with 22. That production was good for a 1.162 OPS and a spot on the All-Big East second team. The 2026 MLB draft prospect will look to continue to build his stock with another strong season.

The Huskies are also returning catcher Connor Lane, who started 31 games in 2025. He will be joined behind the plate by Catholic University of

America transfer Steve Thomas, who hit over .400 last season with the Cardinals, as well as freshman Cam Righi and returner Gabriel Tirado.

First baseman Maddix Dalena will return after missing most of last season with a wrist injury. The redshirt junior came into 2025 as the Big-East Preseason Player of the Year. If he can recapture his form from 2024, in which he slashed .242/.359/.511, he could quickly find himself at the heart of UConn's order.

While much of the UConn

lineup is currently uncertain, the same can be true of the pitching staff. Thomas Ellisen, who led the team in starts in 2025, transferred to Georgia University over the summer. Redshirt junior Oliver Pudvar, who started twelve games last season, has the most experience of any returner and is likely to be a member of the weekend rotation. The same is true of junior Charlie West, who ended last season as a starter and finished with a sub-three ERA.

Greg Shaw III, who made six strong starts this summer as a member of the Valley Blue Sox in the New England Collegiate Baseball League, could make a jump from the bullpen to the rotation. Incoming transfers Justin Lessing (Middlebury) and Joe Talarico (Santa Barbara City College) each finished their most recent full collegiate seasons with sub-2.00 ERAs. Newcomers Austin Trumpour (SNHU) and Charlie Hale (Endicott) also have substantial experience as starters.

The Huskies will also be on the search for a new closer, as 2025 saves/ERA leader and All-Big East second teamer Brady Afthim graduated and was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds. Shaw III led the 2025 team in relief appearances with 25 and could be a prime candidate for a high leverage role should he not be used as a starter. Sean Finn, who also pitched to a 3.00 ERA out of the bullpen last season, could also get looks in the later innings.

A roster of returning alumni for the game has not yet been released, but former players who have attended in recent years include Charles Nagy, Kyler Fedko and Willie Yahn, among others.



The UConn baseball team begins their fall 2025 season on Sunday, Sept. 28. The Huskies will play in the Alumni annual game at Elliott Ballpark. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/ THE DAILY CAMPUS