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HAUNTED HEEP BACK TO CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN TODAY

by Kevin Guinan
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The sixth annual Haunted HEEP hike will give thrill-seekers a chance to be frightened by University of Connecticut students today at the Hillside Environmental Education Park (HEEP).

The Office of Sustainability's website says the Halloween themed trail walk has been hosted by the department annually since 2020. Students will set their displays up from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on the red trail of the HEEP before visitors are allowed to enter from 7 to 9:30 p.m., according to Aminieli Hopson, an intern with the Office of Sustainability.

"It's been a fun way to foster collaboration across the university, students to each other, and introduce the campus to the history/availability of our hiking trails on campus," said Hopson in an email.

Hopson added that the first 100 attendees receive free Haunted HEEP t-shirts. While the event is free for everyone, guests will need to sign a waiver

to enter and have the option to buy items from food trucks.

About 81% of students who attended last year's Haunted HEEP were first time visitors to the Hillside Environmental Education Park, according to the Office of Sustainability website.

The Hillside HEEP was formed after the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection required UConn to evaluate pollution emanating from the university's landfill in 1998, according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human services health consultation.

The UConn Landfill Remediation Project followed the evaluation. The project created the HEEP and student commuter C-Lot, according to the Office of Sustainability website. The remediation was completed in the summer of 2008, which is when the HEEP first opened.

Organizations volunteering to create what the organizers called "scare stations" include EcoHouse, Marching Band, Society of Women Engineers, Woodsmen Club and more, according to the Office of Sustainability Instagram.

Hopson described how at the

beginning of each semester the Office of Sustainability does outreach for the Haunted HEEP to allow a diverse array of participants a chance to create their scare stations.

"Through this process we create scare stations with unique personalities, where students submit requests to work with their student organizations, friend groups, learning communities, or individually submit a form and get paired with other individual volunteers," Hopson said.

The sixth Haunted HEEP will have a total of 17 sponsored scare stations with names like "murder tent" and "exorcism," according to the Office of Sustainability Instagram.

The webpage for the Haunted HEEP said that over 1,200 people attended the event last year with 91% intending to return to the trails on their own in the future.

The Weather Channel is predicting temperatures to be slightly below 50 degrees around 7 p.m. today. The Haunted HEEP waiver advises attendees to dress warmly and bring shoes they can get muddy.



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CHAINSAW MAN | PAGE 6
Chainsaws, romance and a talking shark: Chainsaw Man



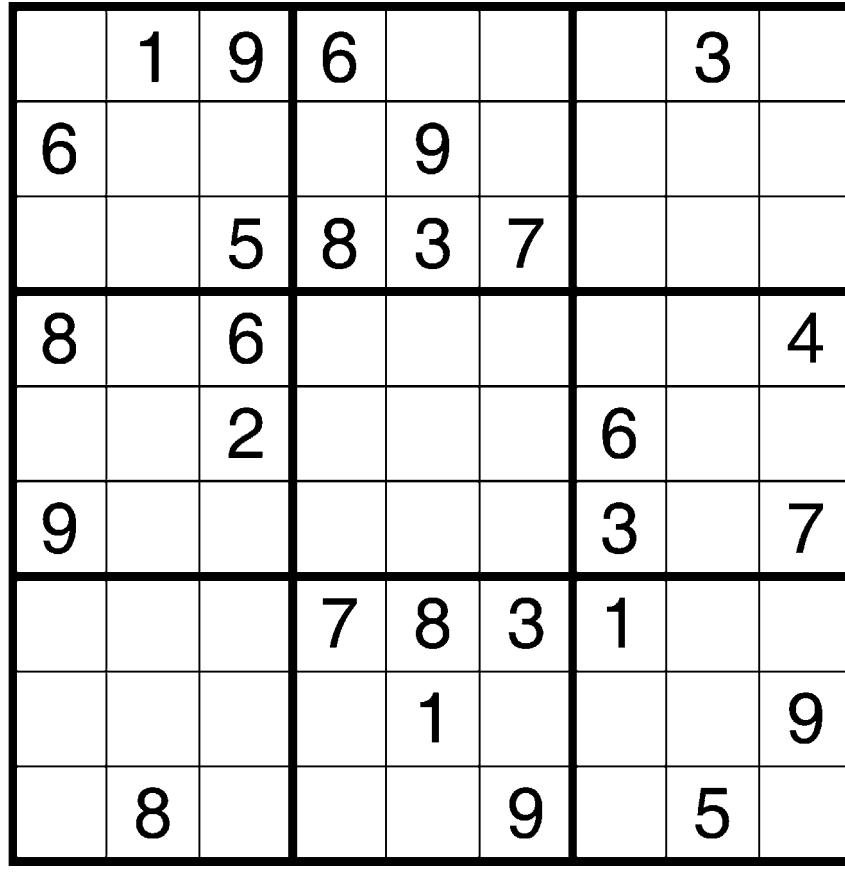
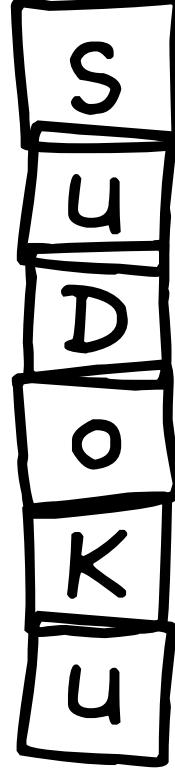
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Loving The Lounge: Why community thrives in Werth



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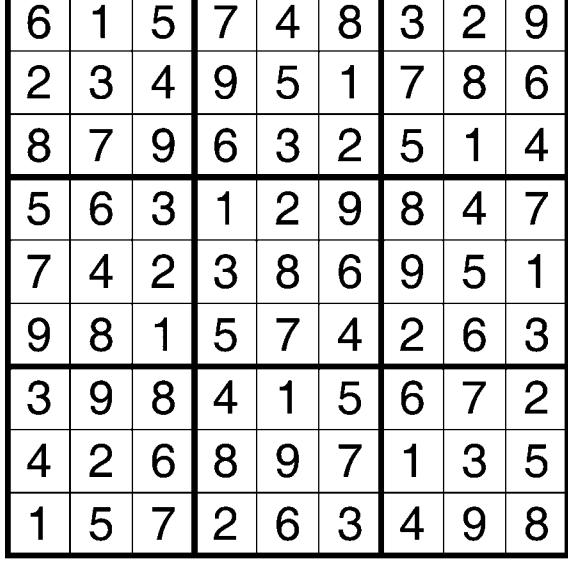
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Level **1 2 3 4**

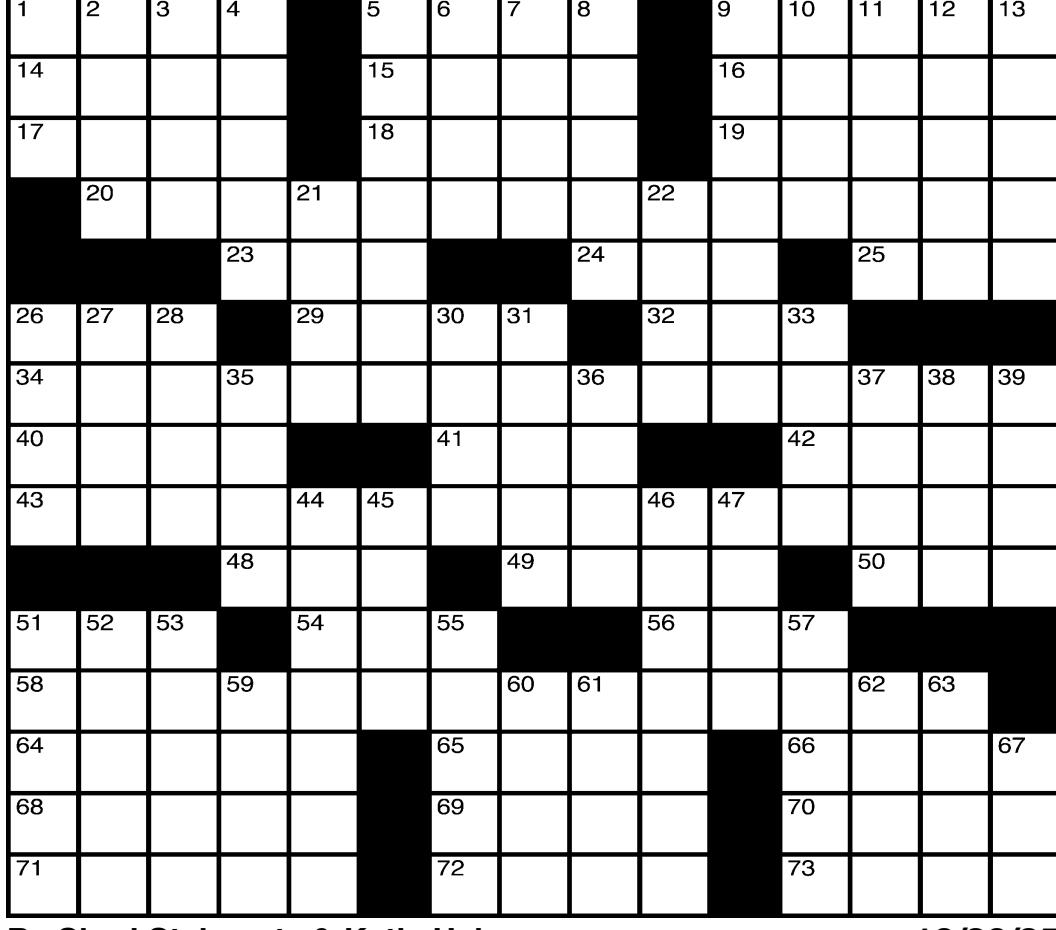
Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit from 1 to 9. For strategies on solving Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.

Solution to Tuesday's puzzle



ACROSS

- 1 Dreary
- 5 Shock
- 9 Improvises vocally
- 14 Currency in 20 countries
- 15 Desire
- 16 Like days long ago
- 17 Has—
- 18 Cornhusker st.
- 19 McDonald of "The Gilded Age"
- 20 Winner of the first Olympic gold medal in men's snowboard slopestyle
- 23 Not even
- 24 Pilot's approx.
- 25 Dads
- 26 —la-la
- 29 Problem in one's pants or pantry
- 32 Burro
- 34 "White Christmas" co-star
- 40 Where to see the big picture?
- 41 "Rudy" coach Parseghian
- 42 Erté's style
- 43 "Peanuts" character with a tendency to sleep through class
- 48 Soccer fan's "Bravo!"
- 49 Tennis great Arthur
- 50 Michigan's — Locks
- 51 Wee
- 54 Rocket ending
- 56 Speed Wagon automaker
- 58 Shampoo brand that claims to be "plant obsessed," and what 20-, 34-, and 43-Across all have
- 64 Like sun bears and pandas
- 65 —Seltzer
- 66 California roll ingredient
- 68 Italian soccer great Maldini
- 69 —back
- 70 Like a fairy tale duckling
- 71 Fragrant compound



By Sheri Steinmetz & Katie Hale

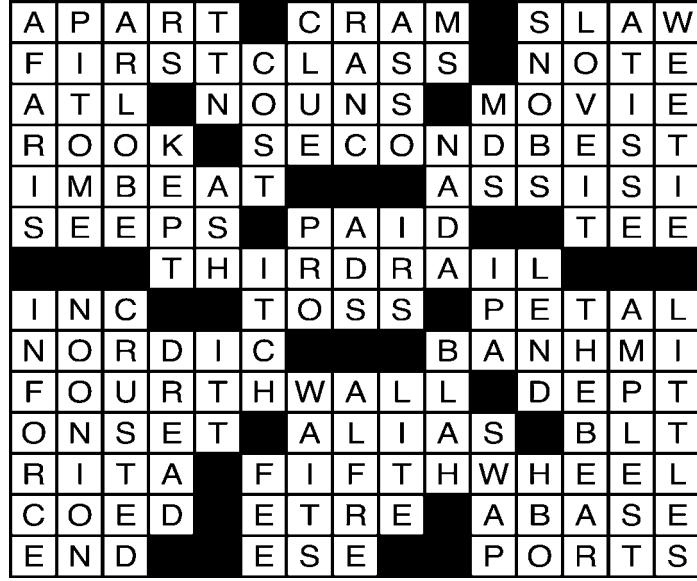
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72 Postseason honorees, briefly

73 Memorization technique

DOWN

- 1 Food blogger Perelman
- 2 Feels bad about
- 3 Geometric calculation
- 4 Salsa hand drum
- 5 Outdated term for noncoding genetic material
- 6 Cookie with many specialty flavors
- 7 Pride Month letters
- 8 Not wordy
- 9 Scoundrel
- 10 Country —
- 11 Tally
- 12 — firma
- 13 Glitches
- 21 Red-coated cheese
- 22 List ender
- 26 Klutz's move, perhaps
- 27 "Ben-Hur" setting
- 28 "Hurry!" letters
- 30 Peak transport
- 31 Lebanon neighbor
- 33 Bubbly beverage
- 35 Convention center event
- 36 Tuna holders
- 37 Brooklyn B-ballers
- 38 Start for -derm or -plasm
- 39 Toy on a string
- 44 " — Rigby"
- 45 Rod's partner
- 46 Duds
- 47 Hammer head
- 51 Rhombus, e.g.
- 52 Southwestern flattops
- 53 Eliciting many laughs
- 55 Domain
- 57 Happen
- 59 Packed hay
- 60 Many an Eastern European
- 61 YouTube ad option
- 62 Therefore
- 63 Shaker filling
- 67 "Toodles!"

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

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WHERE TO CATCH LIVE MUSIC THIS HALLOWEEN

by Dan Stark

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We've made it to the most anticipated weekend of the year: Halloweekend! University of Connecticut students are spending this week getting their costumes together and finalizing their plans for Friday and Saturday night. And for those still looking for somewhere to go to show off your spookiest costume, look no further than the many great shows happening this weekend, because who doesn't love a good mosh pit? Here's a look at the best places to catch live music in Storrs and across the Nutmeg state this weekend.

Friday 10/31: The Dog Pound

"Haunted Husky Horror Show Vol. II" - Storrs

Another week, another dynamite lineup at The Dog Pound, Storrs' preeminent basement venue and gathering place for live music. On Friday, Oct. 31, the venue will be hosting its "Haunted Husky Horror Show Vol. II," featuring a spook-tastic lineup. The four-band lineup includes Braintree, who Storrs audiences may remember as the winner of WHUS Radio's Battle of The Bands in February 2025, and Foundations of Wednesday, who have been making frequent appearances in Cowtown. Joining them are the Latchkey Kids, a New Jersey-based punk band, and Pretty Bitter, a quintet from

Washington, D.C.

Doors open at 5 p.m., music starts at 6 p.m. and admission is \$10. No parking is available on site. For the address, message @thedogpound on Instagram.

Friday 10/31: "Psycho Girl" double album release show - Bridgeport

Album release shows tend to be some of the most fun shows to go to, and this show on Friday, Oct. 31, at The Stack in Bridgeport, Conn., turns the energy up to 11. The show will commemorate the release of new albums by Girlysona, a Connecticut-based musician known for their bedroom-pop inspired sound, and Psycho Brat, a New Haven-based punk band. Joining them on the bill is Venus Kiss and Process.

Doors open at 7 p.m., music starts at 8 p.m. and admission is \$10. All ages are welcome to attend.

Saturday 11/1: Unmagnolia release party - Manchester

If you've recovered from your night out on Friday and ready to hit the town again, then look no further than this show at The Workspace in Manchester on Saturday, Nov. 1, that will serve as the release party for the newest issue of Unmagnolia, a Connecticut-based gothic community zine. The four-band lineup features Overloden and Lootbug, two staple bands of the Storrs scene. Rounding out the lineup is New York City-based pop punk band 2/14 and Mr. Beast Death 2030, a hardcore band from Hoboken, N.J.

Music starts at 6 p.m. and admission is \$10.

Saturday 11/1: "Drown In Sound" - Oakdale

In the Connecticut DIY scene, there's no shortage of unique venues, including the Camp Oakdale Pavilion in Oakdale, Conn., which is the site of the "Drown in Sound" show hosted by Stolen Sign Records on Saturday, Nov. 1. The five-band lineup features Remedies and Indigo Folly, two bands that have established themselves in the Storrs scene, as well as nu metal-inspired band Symposia. Joining them on the bill is Nightfall and Grinding Wheel.

Music starts at 4:30 p.m. There is no fixed ticket price, but all donations will go to the Connecticut Humane Society.

The band, Death Valley Sun Troopers, performing at The Dog Pound in Oct. 2024. The singer is dressed as Shrek for the performance.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @THEDOGPOUND ON INSTAGRAM.



'Don't Date Brandon': More than a con man

by Manya Trivedi

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Paramount Plus' new documentary "Don't Date Brandon" is more than just a discovery of a con man: it's a powerful testament to two women's unity and bravery. What started as a story about one manipulative man, Brandon Johnson, evolves into a story of women that took their trauma into awareness.

The documentary follows the story of Athena Klingerman, Johnson's first ex-wife and mother of his child, and Amber Rasmussen, Johnson's second ex-wife, discovering their parallel experiences of lies, manipulation and physical abuse by Johnson. Johnson wove elaborate stories together to maintain control over the women in his life, from claiming he was always flying in private jets for Nike to fabricating messages in a coparenting app to keep Klingerman and Rasmussen from ever speaking

to each other. His tactics were simple: pit women against each other, lie about "crazy" things the other woman did, and reinforce the narrative that the other woman was "just jealous."

Eventually, Klingerman and Rasmussen were able to see through Johnson's manipulation; the lies started adding up to both, making them realize they were never married to who they thought they were.

But what makes "Don't Date Brandon" stand out is not what Johnson did himself, but instead how the two manage to untangle it together. Once they realized Johnson's manipulation, they knew they had to speak publicly to ensure other women can realize the red flags in their relationships. This creates a more positive and empowering story dynamic as we see the two women investigate and dig deep into their relationships with Johnson, realize the flaws and finally find their voices by creating a podcast that saved another

woman from death.

In comparison to other documentaries of this nature, this story is far from predictable. The filmmakers utilized elements such as suspenseful music and panoramas to transport viewers into the scene and try to feel like they were in Klingerman and Rasmussen's shoes. In terms of reception, some people might say that the documentary fails to include all the important details from the podcast, but I argue that all the necessary information is put into to paint an almost full picture of the 18 years that Johnson was committing his crimes.

At its core, "Don't Date Brandon" highlights how awareness can help break cycles of abuse.

The documentary doesn't sensationalize pain and fear but instead celebrates how many women were able to escape from a horrifying situation. It's available to watch on Paramount Plus and spans three episodes of around 50 minutes.

4/5

Brandon poses with a pug. The series was released on Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PARAMOUNTPLUS ON INSTAGRAM.



The series was promoted in Times Square, New York City. The series was initially about one manipulative man and evolved into a story of women that took their trauma into awareness.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @THEAMBERRASMUSSEN ON INSTAGRAM.





ROUNDTABLE: HALLOWEEN CANDY TIER LIST

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

No matter what you're doing for Halloween, there's sure to be candy involved, as well as many debates about the best sweet treats. Today, writers from The Daily Campus Life section share their thoughts on their favorite and least favorite Halloween candies, organized from S-tier to F-tier.

by Karla Perez
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I'm a sour candy lover through and through, which is why I'm placing AirHeads Xtremes Rainbow Berry Candy — specifically the belts — as my S-tier Halloween candy. I'm one of those annoying people that claims no candy is sour enough for me, but this one comes close.

My A- and B-tier candy choices are Twix bars and M&Ms. These options are interchangeable, however. They're both reliable, not too sweet and come in all sorts of varieties, so you won't get bored. Both are #2 in my heart.

My F-tier candy category includes anything with nuts. I'm a bit biased though, as I'm one of those weaklings that can get taken out by

a walnut. That's natural selection, my friends. Happy Halloween!

by Ayyan Tamjeed
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Anyone who likes Twix bars is a good person in my book, barring any other criteria. It would also be my choice for an S-tier candy on Halloween. The crunch you hear when biting into one of these tasty chocolate delicacies is auditory heaven — and don't get me started on the ice cream bars.

A candy that sits in the B-tier category would be a 3 Musketeers chocolate bar. It's certainly a rich, filling and fluffy nougat chocolate bar, but I'm the kind of person who likes some crunch in his chocolate, and the fluffy insides of a 3 Musketeers bar give

me nothing to work with.

Finally, I would leave Werther's originals at the bottom of a bin in F-tier. This is mostly because I hate toffees and how it sticks in your mouth for eons yet tastes like spoiled soap. If you're staying in my mouth for that long, have some flavor.

by Govind Raman
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The best candy to me is the 100 Grand bar. The caramel-filled chocolate bar by Nestlé combines the crunch of a Crunch Bar with the flavor of a Twix, creating the perfect balance of texture and sweetness. Its underrated status only makes it feel more special, easily earning its spot in S-tier.

In A-tier, I'd place Sour Patch Kids. They strike the ideal sweet-to-sour ratio and are one of the few fruity candies where every flavor tastes good. The only reason they don't make S-tier is because they always end up shredding the roof of my mouth.

Almond Joys land in B-tier. While many dislike them, I've grown to enjoy the distinct coconut flavor that sets them apart. If you haven't tried one in a while, go in with an open mind this Halloween.

F-tier belongs to the bitter and disgusting black licorice; they're simply awful.

by Max Muller
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I'm gonna start by putting Airheads in the S-tier. There

are a lot of ways that you can eat them, but my personal favorite is to wad them up by holding one end of the wrapper and then whipping it back and forth until it's a dense ball of sugar.

Next, I'm putting Big League Chew in B-tier. I love all the flavors, but they give you way too much for it to come in a non-resealable container. I always had to use a binder clip to save whatever I didn't want to finish.

To finish, I'm putting Reese's peanut butter cups in F-tier. I don't hate the idea of chocolate mixed with peanut butter, but the execution is terrible. The "peanut butter" inside tastes nothing like peanut butter and the chocolate cup doesn't make up for it.

HOW TO DECORATE YOUR DORM FOR HALLOWEEN!

by Maanya Pande
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Halloween is one of the most exciting times of the year to get creative with your space, and your dorm is the perfect place to show off your spooky side. Whether you're going for cute and cozy fall vibes or an all-out haunted house look, there are plenty of easy ways to transform your dorm without breaking the bank. With a little creativity, your room can be the most festive one in the hall.

Your dorm door is the first thing people see, so make it count. Think of it as your canvas for all things spooky. You can wrap it in black or orange paper, hang fake cobwebs

across the top or tape up bats and ghosts made from construction paper. A classic idea is to turn your door into a character — like a mummy, pumpkin or Frankenstein — using cheap materials like toilet paper, tape and paper cutouts. Amazon sells door decorating kits that make this step super easy and dorm-friendly. Look for options that use removable adhesive so you don't damage the door when it's time to take everything down.

Lighting is key to creating a Halloween atmosphere. String lights are a dorm must-have year-round, but for Halloween, swap your usual warm lights for orange, purple or green ones. Amazon has plenty of options, from

pumpkin-shaped fairy lights to LED strips that can change colors with a remote. You can hang them around your bed frame, window or even your desk area to add an eerie glow. Since UConn dorms don't allow candles, you can use flameless LED candles for a flickering effect that's completely safe. The right lighting can instantly make your space feel cozy, mysterious and festive.

CVS also has several options for last-minute decorations. They have a general selection of skeleton and pumpkin decorations, as well as colored lights to set the mood. My personal preference is Amazon, though, because you can find better deals.

I truly believe spiders represent Halloween. Few decorations can capture the Halloween spirit like spiders. Fake spiders are cheap, easy to use and perfect for adding subtle spookiness to your dorm. Scatter them across your desk, stick them on your wall with removable adhesive or place them in your fake cobwebs. Amazon has plenty of bulk spider packs, so you can decorate every corner of your room without spending much. For an extra effect, pair your spiders with mini skeletons or rats to make your dorm feel like a haunted lair.

Once your door, lights and spooky details are in place, fill in the rest of your room with Halloween accents — think

small pumpkins, themed pillows or a Halloween blanket for your bed. You can also decorate your mirror with Halloween stickers or window clings. Amazon makes it easy to find affordable and reusable options, so you can store them for next year.

Decorating your dorm for Halloween doesn't have to be complicated. With a few creative touches and the convenience of Amazon's fast shipping, you can turn your space into a festive and spooky retreat. Whether you're hosting a movie night, hanging out with friends or just enjoying the Halloween season, your dorm will feel perfectly haunted in the best way.



ILLUSTRATION BY RHIANNON WALLACE, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Student decorating with cheap or DIY decorations. Small ghost figurines decorate a room.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEXAS_FOTOS ON PIXABAY.



Daily

Life

Chainsaws, romance and a talking shark: Chainsaw Man

by Logan De la Rosa

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Following its debut in Japan, "Chainsaw Man – The Movie: Reze Arc" hit theaters worldwide starting on Friday, Oct. 25. Aside from continuing the long-standing anime tradition of having an unnecessarily long title, the film serves as a direct continuation of hit "Chainsaw Man" anime, adapting the fifth and sixth volumes of the series' manga source material. Currently sitting with a crisp 96% Tomatometer score and 99% Popcornmeter score on Rotten Tomatoes, the film has clearly struck a chord with critics and casual audiences alike. But why has the film had such a positive reaction, and is it worth seeing for someone who's never heard of "Chainsaw Man" before now?

Written and illustrated by Tatsuki Fujimoto, the original Chainsaw Man manga began publishing in 2018 in the Weekly Shonen Jump magazine. The series follows a homeless teenager named Denji as he navigates life in a world terrorized by supernatural beings known as Devils, each of which gains its power from a human fear. After discovering and befriending the injured Chainsaw Devil, Denji begins working as an amateur devil hunter, tracking devils and exterminating them for money. However, after a tragedy, the Chainsaw Devil sacrifices itself to save Denji, bonding itself to him and creating the human-Devil hybrid, Chainsaw Man.

As you might be able to tell, Chainsaw Man is a bizarre narrative. Like much of Fujimoto's other work, it's a series that's built around being entirely unpredictable. In fact, that short introduction written above only applies to the first chapter of the manga. Its narrative is constantly shifting, with new plot points, antagonists and world-altering events being introduced on nearly every other page.

However, "Chainsaw Man" is a series that feels very deliberate in its chaos. Reading it feels a lot like riding a roller coaster. There are constant dips and turns, but each was placed there deliberately to enhance the narrative and push the ideas Fujimoto wants his readers to understand.

Outside of his ability to write a well-structured narrative, Fujimoto excels best at crafting memorable characters, despite their often-short panel time. There's a reason why a character like Poochita, the Chainsaw Devil that Denji adopts, is now being sold on popcorn buckets despite only existing for the first

chapter of the manga.

Taking all these things into consideration, it's no-wonder that the 2022 anime adaptation by studio MAPPA achieved almost immediate critical and commercial success in Japan and globally. However, this initial Chainsaw-mania quickly died down soon after season one concluded airing, with the adaptation's continuation only now coming out three years later. So now, with "Chainsaw Man" hype revving up once again, how's the movie itself?

For starters, the film itself looks fantastic. Featuring almost entirely hand-drawn animation, it's clear that MAPPA has gone to great lengths to bring justice to the original manga illustrations by Fujimoto. Compared to season one, the film does a substantially better job at recreating Fujimoto's art, almost exactly capturing the intense facial expressions and action his panels are known for. Moreover, the general art style of the film screws much closer to Fujimoto's distinct stretchy, energetic renderings compared to the animation of season one of the anime.

Additionally, narratively, "Chainsaw Man – The Movie" is just as tight. Fujimoto is known in the manga industry for being a huge film buff, often working in movie references into his artwork and stories. However, his stories tend to utilize narrative structures found in film, and his art itself often mimics cinematic shots and sweeping camera movements.

As a result, the Reze Arc of the manga translates extremely well to film, as it was effectively always written in one's format.

This stands out compared to other anime films like "Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba – To the Swordsmith Village," which comparatively works much worse as a film as it's composed of normal television episodes compiled together to fit a film's runtime.

Overall, "Chainsaw Man – The Movie: Reze Arc" is a spectacular follow up to the "Chainsaw Man" anime and a must see for fans of the series. But is it worth seeing for someone that's never heard of "Chainsaw Man" before now? That's a tougher question. The film itself continues the plot of season one, so it'd be best to start with the anime if you're interested in the film. However, it's a wild series, and unless you can stomach some visceral violence and chaotic storytelling, it's probably not for you. But if it sounds like it's up your alley, take a look. You might just get swept up in Chainsaw-mania too.

Rating: 5/5

"Poster for the newly released movie. The movie was released exclusively in theaters on Oct. 24, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @CHAINSAW_EN. ON INSTAGRAM



A still taken from an episode of "Chainsaw Man."

PHOTO COURTESY OF @CRUNCHYROLL ON INSTAGRAM





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COMIC BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Loving The Lounge:

WHY COMMUNITY THRIVES IN WERTH



A large, sunlit common area with lounge seating in the Werth Residence Hall at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Conn., on Monday, Oct. 27, 2025. The building features floor-to-ceiling windows and a "UCONN" logo on a support pillar. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Tamara Segal

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Last weekend, my floormates and I spent the night in at the Werth lounge, half of us doing homework and the other half watching "Borat." On other nights we might have a birthday party, a Wii Party tournament or even filming a video podcast about our favorite Mexican food. Whatever it may be, though, there's an undeniable sense of togetherness. Such is the simple beauty of the Werth lounge.

In college, despite being surrounded by people, it's easy to feel isolated. Maybe you don't connect with your roommate, you don't make friends in your classes or you feel too shy to talk to the people on your floor. This phenomenon of isolation has only worsened with the pervasion of technology. Idle moments where friendships used to form naturally — like the few minutes before class starts or in the dining hall — are increasingly squandered as

people spend this time scrolling through social media, listening to music through their headphones or any other number of activities that render them preoccupied and unapproachable. And when you get back to the dorm, it's easier than ever to just rot in your room instead of venturing outside, since the Internet has no shortage of activities to bury yourself in. To some, it can feel impossible to connect with — or even find — the people around you.

This isn't just a personal observation. In 2023, former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared a loneliness epidemic, detailing that "approximately half of U.S. adults report [experience] loneliness, with some of the highest rates among young adults." And while technology can be a tool for connection, it can also detach us. Murthy's report highlighted that technology "displaces in-person engagement, monopolizes our attention, reduces the quality of our interactions and even diminishes our self-esteem."

This leaves communities fragmented, with "only 16% of Americans [reporting] that they felt very attached to their local community" in 2018. Yet all hope is not lost. Colleges by nature have limitless potential for building community. All it really takes is little foundational moments that can set friendships and connection into motion. For example, in the first week of the year, I was eating alone at the dining hall when a girl I hadn't met before introduced herself and asked if she could sit with me. It was a lovely encounter, and all the more precious because it's exactly the kind of thing that is so rare nowadays.

We can foster these instrumental interactions with a little intentional design, and that's where the lounge comes in. I'm not exaggerating when I say that living in Werth has entirely shaped my college experience, specifically because of this important space on my floor. I met my first and closest friends there, and I shudder to think of how every-

thing might have been very different without it. The best part of college is undoubtedly the people that you meet, bond with, open up to and learn from, and the Werth lounge happens to be designed to enable exactly that connection.

First, it is dedicated to our floor specifically, establishing a microcosm that forges a sense of connection between floormates. Plus, being the one and only space of its kind on the floor ensures that it's where any and all the action will be. This ties closely with the proximity principle in social psychology, where relationships are more likely to form when people are closer together.

Furthermore, its central location on the floor and the large glass walls make the room open and welcoming, inviting passers-by to wave as they walk by or come in and join in the fun. The furniture isn't anything fancy, but it's comfortable. The TV kind of works, and that's enough. This allows for a series of spontaneous interactions,

while providing a lighthearted and pleasant environment where you can freely let your guard down — the other two conditions that sociologists say are crucial for making friends.

Unfortunately, many dorms don't have lounges or have only one for the entire building. Other dorms used to have lounges but have seen them transformed into quads to create more beds for our growing enrollment. And some dorms, like Connecticut Hall, have many open spaces — so much so that they fail to really bring people together. So, if the University of Connecticut ever wondered how to ensure students feel connected on campus, designing spaces with the intention of drawing people together would be a great place to start.

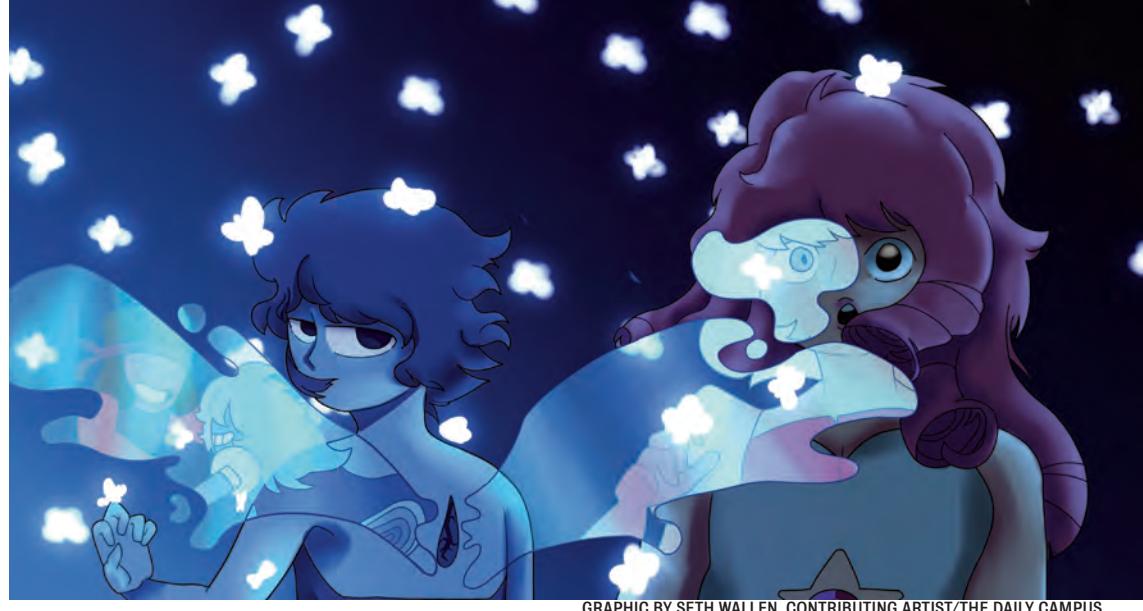
All in all, the lounge is nothing special — just a room that helps us find one another — and yet that's all it needs to be extraordinarily special. Even though the lounge won't singlehandedly solve the universal problem of loneliness, it's Werth a whole lot.

Photo of the Day |



UConn Students playing Ultimate Frisbee on Oct 28 at the UConn Storrs Campus. Although it has gotten colder, that has not deterred students from spending time outside. PHOTO BY BLAKE SYKES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

'Steven Universe' is underappreciated thematically



GRAPHIC BY SETH WALLEN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Spoilers for "Steven Universe." Content warning for romantic abuse.

If you grew up with Cartoon Network in the 2010s, you're probably familiar with the part-rom-com, part-drama sci-fi, slice-of-life coming-of-age animated series "Steven Universe." The entire controversy surrounding this show would take an extensive amount of time to properly unpack regardless of opinion (and people already did so online on both sides of this argument), but it's worth seriously exploring the nature and content of this show. A lot of the criticisms are valid — especially near the end of the show — but despite some of its blunders, there are some excel-

lent ideas in the show. Many people who hate "Steven Universe" likely don't receive well to the comforting appeal of the show, which is understandable. However, for the thematic risks taken, especially for a kids' cartoon, "Steven Universe" is underappreciated, whether you like the show or not, for how it depicts many sides of relationships.

Before we can get into the themes of "Steven Universe," we need to understand this show's plot. The series follows the adventures of a kid named Steven in the small coastal town of Beach City. His primary caretakers are the Crystal Gems: Garnet, Amethyst and Pearl, who are extraterrestrial life-forms that go on mysterious missions that Steven eventually goes on too.

The main conflict of the show comes when it's eventually re-

vealed that there are more gems out there and that the Crystal Gems come from this space base called "Homeworld," where the fascist Diamonds rule over the other gems. They practice a caste-like system where gems are created for specific purposes and taught dogma. If they're "defective" or defiant to the Diamonds' rule, they're "shattered," or killed.

Against this backdrop, the show heavily explores the different relationships between its characters, romantic or otherwise. It especially focuses on the nature of these relationships as they cross boundaries in real categories like gender or plot-specific ones such as the aforementioned caste systems. When these divisions are combined with the central conflict of the series, it attempts to show different maladaptations and emotional struggles

that come as a result.

An infamous example of this could be found in the character Lapis Lazuli. In the show, Lapis was imprisoned for centuries in a mirror. When freed, the main villain at the time named Jasper coerces Lapis to "fuse" with her, meaning becoming a singular entity and an allegory for, debatably, getting close relationship-wise. Lapis uses her power to chain their fusion to the bottom of the sea so that they wouldn't destroy Earth. Lapis later says that she "misses" Jasper after they broke the fusion.

This relationship between Lapis and Jasper was mutually toxic, with both of them constantly abusing each other when fused. This reflects both the cycle of abuse and "reactive abuse," or a defense reaction to prolonged abuse where the one getting abused reflects that same negativity onto the abuser to abuse them according to the Marriage Recovery Center's article "When the Victim Becomes the Abuser."

Lapis' abuse didn't end there. Her perpetuation of trauma with Jasper led to her becoming emotionally abusive and incredibly toxic treatment of Peridot, who was only trying her best to be amicable in her own way. If the abuse wasn't cyclical with Jasper, it certainly was with Peridot.

Lapis, like Jasper in "Steven Universe Future," deserved a better redemption arc that acknowledged how badly she treated these two gems, making amends with her past in a proper way and managing her emotional trauma. Lapis is an example of a complex character who deserved more time to develop.

The show also talks about different types of obsession based emotional connections, such as limerence or codependency. Limerence is an involuntary attachment that becomes obsessive — the type of love that Pearl has for Pink Diamond in the caste system, where Pearl served her. Pearl's character arc included moving on from Pink

Diamond and focusing on herself.

Something slightly more explored especially in "Steven Universe Future" is Steven's conflict in identity and guilt for what someone you're related to did or experienced. This struggle doesn't only represent existential crisis but also generational trauma in the sense that past struggles have been brought into the present. Pink Diamond left all her problems for Steven and the Crystal Gems to figure out and, through her actions, she hurt the ones she loved.

The healthiest relationship in "Steven Universe" by far is between Ruby and Sapphire, who fuse to become Garnet and changed the landscape of children's media. Their love story is formulaic but holds a ton of symbolism, being a watershed moment for normalizing queer representation in youth programming. Their wedding shared an episode with a major plot development so that the episode couldn't be skipped.

Furthermore, the themes of managing codependency (in "Future") and issues from Pearl actively tricking Garnet to fuse with her and the Pink Diamond reveal making them split being resolved in healthy and rational ways involving dialogue between the two in the series is incredibly important especially for younger minds.

Whether you love or hate "Steven Universe" with its flaws and missed opportunities, it's hard to refute its historical and cultural significance. The show explores an incredible breadth of themes without exploring them to the extent it should. Still, "Steven Universe" laid the groundwork for many other shows after it and made audiences aware of topics considered difficult for many to properly explain to a child. There's a lot to appreciate with this show idea-wise and especially in the realm of relationships which could be built upon in official continuations or fan projects, ultimately starting dialogues about these topics.



COMIC BY ALEXA PAPPAS, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Paper Boy Sam

Where's Jason? We have a meeting!

He's taking a day for himself!

He's taking a day for himself!



He's taking a day for himself!

He's taking a day for himself!

SPORTS SPECTRUM: DALLAS MAVERICKS DON'T INSPIRE CONFIDENCE

by Seth Wallen

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While not in injury purgatory anymore, the Dallas Mavericks are still feeling the side effects.

The Mavericks are among many teams affected by injuries, one of those being Kyrie Irving, who is expected to return from a torn ACL in January 2026. Despite this, on paper, they were expected to be a middle-of-the-pack team in a competitive Western Conference.

With the No. 1 overall draft pick, Cooper Flagg, on their roster, expectations were higher. But even with him, the team doesn't inspire much confidence. On paper, they should have a strong defensive presence with Anthony Davis, Derek Lively, PJ Washington and Daniel Gafford as solid front-court pieces.

However, their 1-3 start shows some shakiness. As of Oct. 28, their defensive rating is 12th in the NBA — an improvement after trading Luka Doncic — and while defense can help win championships, offense is what wins games. That said, their offense is ranked near the bottom of the league in efficiency and looks disjointed.

One of their main issues is that they lack a true point guard, and many say it's a disservice to Flagg that the Mavericks keep running him out there at point guard — a position he hasn't played since high school. D'Angelo Russell, the de facto starting point guard until Kyrie returns, has not met expectations, with low shooting percentages, particularly from the perimeter.

Even during the play-in against the Kings last season, this offense was missing something: someone who could get the ball to their teammates. Strangely enough, that was Luka Doncic, because when you perform so well on offense,

defensive lapses can be hidden. To defend the Mavericks, their first game was against Victor Wembanyama's historic performance, facing the reigning champion Oklahoma City Thunder. They also lost to the Washington Wizards before beating the Toronto Raptors. What hurts more is that Doncic has been on a tear to start the season — through two games, he's averaging 46 points on a 69% effective field goal percentage, with 62% from the field and 31.8% from three-point range.

Aside from the immediate present, there's also the future window. General Manager Nico Harrison described the future as, from the day of the trade, "three to four years." If that's the window for contention, using a three-year outlook, it's often tough to compete while focusing on young talent — the Thunder managed it, but that core had grown up together.

The Denver Nuggets, as I wrote before, fired both their coach and general manager based on disagreements about contending with Nikola Jokic and developing young talent.

The New York Knicks opted to forgo that notion entirely last year, trading five first-round picks for Mikal Bridges. Their first-round draft pick, Pacome Dadiet, played the fewest minutes of any first-round pick that year.

Teams with prominent youth, like the Philadelphia 76ers (VJ Edgecon, Tyreese Maxey, Jared McCain), Brooklyn Nets (Egor Demin, Nolan Traore, Danny Wolf) and Washington Wizards (Bub Carrington, Kyshawn George, Alex Sarr) are often towards the bottom of the league in power level.

To add salt to the wound, after 2027, the Mavericks only control two picks (2029 from the Lakers and 2031, their own); they do not control any of their picks due to swap rights and complex three-team deals.

The moves made sense when you had a generational star, but now, it'll really bite them because they don't inspire confidence to contend with the Thunder, Nuggets or really any

team that would be an automatic playoff team. They have the potential to upgrade through the trade deadline, and since this is the beginning of the season, things are always subject to

change. This upcoming month, they have a relatively middling schedule, going against teams like the Indiana Pacers, Detroit Pistons, Houston Rockets and the Pelicans.



Cooper Flagg going for a two-pointer on Oct. 27, 2025. The Dallas Mavericks lost 101-94 against Oklahoma City Thunder.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @DALLASMAVS ON INSTAGRAM.

WILKER'S WEEKLY: PATRIOTS WEEK 8 OVERVIEW AND WEEK 9 OUTLOOK

by Graham Wilker

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The New England Patriots advanced to 6-2 on the season, after taking down the Cleveland Browns 32-13 on Sunday, pushing the squad to their fifth straight win. It's been an incredible October for New England, as they finished the month 4-0 with wins over the Bills, Saints, Titans and Browns. Drake Maye continued to build his MVP case in this matchup, totaling 332 yards to go along with three passing touchdowns to a single interception. He now has 17 total touchdowns for the year to only three picks. His 18/24 stat line shows his continued accuracy, as he completed 75% or more of his passes for the fifth game this year.

The game started off slow for New England, as they trailed after the first quarter, 7-3, thanks to a Dillon Gabriel touchdown pass to fellow rookie tight end Harold Fannin. Another tight end, David Njoku, would get in the end-zone for the Browns later, but after the ensuing failed two-point conversion, the Browns wouldn't score again. The half ended without a Patriots touchdown, but they led going into the locker room, 9-7.

As I predicted in my preview of the game, it was a sloppy contest that saw the defense prevail in the first half, but the third quarter was a different story. The Patriots' offense exploded, scoring 21 points. Hunter Henry walked into the endzone, Stefon Diggs caught a screen and ducked in for his first TD as a Patriot and Kayshon Boutte found paydirt on a deep ball yet again. The main concern from this game was the team's inability to stop Myles Garrett despite chips from the tight end. Will Campbell struggled tremendously, allowing three sacks.

As mentioned, the offense was excellent in the third

quarter, but two players showed signs of a breakout. Mack Hollins led the team in both catches and yards: he came into the game with 11 catches on the year and nabbed seven for 89 yards. TreVeyon Henderson showed everyone what he's capable of, rushing for 75 yards on just 10 carries. A late fumble inside the five-yard-line was disappointing and is something he'll need to clean up, but it was certainly nice to see him able to utilize his speed to break off some big runs. There's little doubt he's a boom or bust player: of his 10 carries, three went for 18+ yards, while three went for two or less. He's far more efficient than Rhamondre Stevenson, who had 14 carries for 34 yards (2.4 YPC) and averages just 3.4 yards a carry.

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This was the fourth game he had 2.5 yards per carry or less this season.

Defensively, the team looked sound against a bad Browns offense. They kept their elite run defending streak alive, holding Quinshon Judkins to nine carries for 19 yards, 2.1 per carry. The Patriots have yet to allow a 50-yard rusher this season. Gabriel came into the day without a career interception but left with two: one a throw right into the hands of Robert Spillane that set up Diggs' first Patriot touchdown, and a second that Jaylinn Hawkins nabbed with one hand, a miraculous play.

The defensive line had a very solid day despite the Browns' poor offense, and Spillane was a force in the run game. Christian Gonzalez looked great both in coverage and as a tackler, and a good pass rush paired with downfield coverage even forced an intentional grounding from Gabriel that led to a safety — the only points the Patriots would score in the fourth quarter. Of Cleveland's 12 drives, the Patriots had two interceptions, forced a turnover on downs twice, forced four punts, saw a missed field goal, and added

a safety. The defense did their job in a big way despite an inferior opponent.

The Patriots will look to improve to 7-2 next week as they'll take on the Atlanta Falcons, who are coming off a brutal loss against the Miami Dolphins, who notched their second win of the season against the Georgians. Kirk Cousins led the unit last week with Michael Penix out, but both Penix and star wideout Drake London are set to play against the Patriots, two major additions to their lineup. Atlanta has played well in spurts, but as a whole, they've been an inconsistent team. They've scored more than 22 points only twice, and despite an offense that features four top-eight picks (Penix, Bijan Robinson, Kyle Pitts, London), they haven't been able to find their stride. They rank 28th in PPG and have scored 20 points across their last two matchups against the 49ers and Dolphins.

Robinson has slowed down since his herculean performance against the Bills, as he's rushed for just 65 yards across the last two games. The Dolphins held him to just 2.8 a carry. Bottling up opposing run games hasn't been an issue for the Patriots this year, but that will be a key tenet of their gameplan against the Falcons, even more so than normal. Gonzalez will have the responsibility of covering London, while Hawkins and rookie Craig Woodson will likely be tasked with covering Pitts. The Patriots have struggled against tight ends this year: Brock Bowers and Dalton Kincaid went over 100 yards, and four other tight ends have scored touchdowns against them this year. Kyle Dugger will likely return to the gameday roster this week, which should offer some security at the position.

Defensively, Atlanta is solid, 13th in the league in PPG. They struggle against the run, coming in at 22nd in the league and allowing 126.4 yards per

game. The Jessie Bates and A.J. Terrell secondary however, is spectacular. Their 149.1 pass yards allowed per game is the fewest by a landslide. 2024's leader in the category, Tennessee, allowed nearly 180 pass yards a game. Rookies Xavier Watts and Billy Bowman have been stellar pieces to the defensive backfield, while former first-round pick Mike Hughes and Dee Alford shore up the position. First-round picks Jalon Walker and James Pearce Jr. are contributors, but 2023 third-round Zach Harrison leads the team

in sacks with 3.5. Ex-All-Pro and 2022 Pro Bowler Jamal Agnew is the team's return man, and former Patriot Parker Romeo is Atlanta's kicker.

Atlanta poses a bigger threat than the Patriots have faced over the past three weeks, but given the team's wild inconsistency and lack of offensive output, I'd expect New England to push the win streak to six in a row and move to 7-2. Penix and Co. will be a challenge, but I'd expect a hard-fought game to end in the Patriots outscoring their NFC South opponent 27-17.



Stefon Diggs celebrating mid-game with the Cleveland Browns. The New England Patriots won 32-13 against the Cleveland Browns on Oct. 26, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PATRIOTS ON INSTAGRAM.

Sports

Photo of the Day |



University of Connecticut field hockey faces off against Duke in Storrs, CT on October 19, 2025. Despite their best efforts the Huskies lost 0-1.

PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS.

THE BIG APPLE: NOT-SO GIANTS FALL IN PHILADELPHIA; KNICKS START OUT SEASON 2-1

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The Giants went into Philadelphia with steam coming out of their ears after their collapse in Denver a week ago. New York started off the game well, managing to score a touchdown early on to tie the game at 7.

However, once I saw the Eagles run the tush push, I knew that it was going to be the talking point from the game.

It was 4th and 1. Jalen Hurts snapped the ball and was thrown forward by his line to gain a first down. Before the play was whistled, Hurts reached the ball out to gain an extra yard. Giants edge rusher Kayvon Thibodeaux snatched the ball out of his hands. He fell on top of the ball, and the Giants' defense began to celebrate.

Giants ball, with a chance to take the lead.

The referees came together and announced that there was no fumble on the play and Hurts was rewarded with forward progress.

I, along with every Giants fan, was screaming at my TV. Why is this play not a fumble?

Hurts clearly wasn't down and was trying to gain extra yardage. You're telling me that our defense can't try to steal the ball from him?

Giants head coach Brian Daboll was at a loss for words, confronting the referees as well as throwing the challenge flag when told there was nothing to challenge.

Every NFL fan, including Eagles fans, knew that the referees made the wrong call. Even the announcers were confused about the call.

This play better have been the last straw for the tush push.

If Week 8 couldn't have gotten worse for the Giants, star rookie running back Cam Skattebo suffered a gruesome ankle injury, ending his season instantly. The former Arizona State Sun Devil was one of the few bright spots on this Giants team. The energy that he brought day after day was unmatched. A brutal blow for New York as they move forward this season.

The New York Jets picked up

their first win of the season over the Cincinnati Bengals, 39-38, in a high-scoring thriller. They nearly blew the game, in Jets fashion, at-

tempting a trick play to score the winning touchdown.

Justin Fields pitched the ball to running back Breece Hall; Hall proceeded to run out and throw to the endzone for tight end Mason Taylor. Taylor leaped over the defender to catch the ball for the touchdown.

The Jets then stopped Joe Flacco and the Bengals on the final drive. It was not pretty, but the Jets finally got into the win column.

The first week of a new era for the New York Knicks. It featured two wins against the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Boston Celtics. They dropped Sunday's matchup against the Miami Heat.

Head coach Mike Brown did something us Knicks fans haven't seen in years: played the bench. In the first half of the opener, we saw 11 players on the court. Brown utilized the bench, which led to fresh legs for many, resulting in a Knicks win against a Cavaliers team that had dominated them the previous season.

In their first two games, the Knicks looked ready, playing like a cohesive team and executing their plays effectively. However, Sunday's game in Miami looked like

the complete opposite. The bench was not playing to their fullest potential; they couldn't seem to hit a shot. The Knicks were a step too slow, while the Heat made every big shot.

Looking ahead to this week, the

Knicks take on Milwaukee, have two games against Chicago and wrap up the week against Washington.

If the Knicks can gain their footing, they can come on top in all four of these games.



New York Giants rookie Cam Skattebo. Skattebo suffered ankle injury that ended his season early.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @NYGIANTS ON INSTAGRAM

DELAYED TAKEOFF: JETS FINALLY EARN FIRST WIN OVER BENGALS

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The New York Jets entered Week 7 as the only winless team in the NFL, sitting at a dismal 0-7 record.

The team would be facing off against the Cincinnati Bengals in Week 8, and as usual, things were looking bleak for New York.

Star wide receiver Garrett Wilson was ruled out for a second straight week, and star cornerback Sauce Gardner was ruled out a few days before the game as well.

Additionally, receiver Josh Reynolds was placed on injured reserve, meaning the Jets, already thin at receiver, would be forced to play with their third and fourth options as their top two. Quarterback Tyrod Taylor was slated to make his second start of the year.

This came after Justin Fields' poor Week 7 performance and subsequent benching, making it seem like his days as a starter may be over.

Owner Woody Johnson kicked Fields while he was down, deflecting any blame on head coach Aaron Glenn by saying "the offense is just not clicking, and you can't run the ball if you can't pass the ball."

Taylor was then ruled out with a knee injury.

Then, despite Johnson's comments, the ball was back in Fields' hands, giving him an unexpected additional chance to keep his starting hopes alive.

Cincinnati, on the other hand, entered the game at 3-4, meaning the game's outcome would likely determine the direction of their season.

Following a Bengals' opening drive field goal, the Jets found themselves at 4th and 1 on their own 37-yard line. Glenn chose to go for it.

The Jets attempted a Breece Hall rush, but Cincinnati saw right through it, forcing a turnover on downs. They would go on to score a touchdown on that same drive. After only ten minutes, the Jets already trailed 10-0.

By the half, it was 24-13 Bengals, and things only worsened in the third quarter, with New York trailing 31-16 heading into the final 15 minutes.

New York put up a touchdown and two-point conversion, but Cincinnati answered right back, making it a 38-24 lead with 10:21 to go.

The Jets managed to make it a one-score game on a Hall touchdown, with Glenn opting to risk a two-point conversion to make it a six-point game.

The attempt was initially ruled unsuccessful, but on review it was determined that Isaiah Davis was in the end zone,

and the Jets were now only down 38-32.

Cincinnati just needed to kill time and kick a field goal to lead by two scores, but two incompletions and a Will McDonald IV sack stopped them dead in their tracks, forcing a punt.

The Jets played smart football, just aiming to move the chains and keep the game going, killing almost five minutes before the two-minute warming.

And right out of the two-minute warning, standing at the Bengals' four-yard line, Fields tossed the ball to Hall, who then threw a touchdown pass to rookie tight end Mason Taylor for Taylor's first career touchdown, and a lead-taking score on the ensuing Nick Folk extra point.

It all came down to the last drive.

With former Jet Joe Flacco at QB for Cincinnati, just under two minutes on the clock, and how the Jets' season has gone this year, it seemed almost inevitable that the Jets would blow the game.

Cincinnati moved well to start the drive, making it to their own 44. On a 3rd and 9 play, Flacco tried a pass, but was almost intercepted by safety Malachi Moore. So, in storybook fashion, it would all come down to one 4th down play.

With both sides holding their breath, Flacco hiked the ball. His pass went out to Andrei Iosivas,

who couldn't come up with it.

The Jets had stopped the Bengals, and regained possession on the turnover on downs. Fields took a knee, signaling victory formation for his team.

The game was over and the seemingly impossible had happened: the 2025 New York Jets won a football game, 39-38.

Despite the win, the season has still been a trainwreck for the Jets and the franchise still holds the longest active play-off drought of any major North

American professional sports team.

Heading into their bye week, there are many questions for the Jets. Fields, who wasn't supposed to play, could have just given himself not only another chance with the Jets, but possibly another chance in the NFL altogether.

But for now, all that can be done is celebrate, because if these Jets have shown anything, it's that this could be their only win all year.



Jermaine Johnson and Will McDonald recreate a Dragon Ball Z pose on Oct. 26, 2025. The New York Jets won 39-38 against the Cincinnati Bengals.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @NYJETS ON INSTAGRAM

MEN'S HOCKEY EAST ROUNDUP: WEEK 4

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We're already a month into the college hockey season, and Week 4 did not disappoint. This week, I'll be going through the action-packed weekend and some of the first month's key takeaways.

Merrimack has been making noise this year, and they started their weekend doing so again. The Warriors took down No. 6 Quinnipiac, with sophomore Nick Pierre plotting two goals in a statement victory.

There is still room for improvement for Merrimack, though, as they followed that up with a 5-2 loss to LIU. The game saw 15 minor penalties and a major penalty between both teams, with unusual throwing equipment minor for LIU's Blake Langos.

New Hampshire took on the same two teams as Merrimack, just on opposite days. Felix Gagnon scored the overtime winner on Friday for the Wildcats, but they'd be shut out by Quinnipiac on Saturday.

UMass Lowell took care of business in Mercyhurst, sweeping the weekend with scores of 4-0 and 4-3.

Lowell's counterpart team, UMass Amherst, had a trickier weekend, heading to Omaha and finding a series split with the Mavericks.

UMass forward Jack Musa scored two goals in the series, bringing him up to six in the first seven games of the season, and helping him take a three-point lead in the Hockey East points race.

Hockey East welcomed No. 7 Denver to Boston to take on Boston College Friday and Northeastern Saturday.

Denver routed the Eagles in a 7-3 win, with no Pioneer

scoring more than one goal. BC's slow start to the year only continues to grow.

Although on Saturday, Denver couldn't keep up the scoring. Despite outshooting Northeastern 35-14, the Pioneers couldn't even squeak one past Husky netminder Lawton Zacher, who's been stellar this year.

A transfer from Brown, Zacher has been the main reason the Huskies are 3-1, and just barely missing the polls this week.

Providence visited St. Thomas this weekend, drawing 2-2 in game one and dominating game two for a 7-4 victory.

Maine hosted Colgate, and things didn't exactly go their way. The Black Bears dropped game one 3-2 and only won

game two after falling 2-0 early, before rallying back to win a Max Scott overtime goal.

Albin Boija, Maine's star goalie last year, has had a rough start, barely hovering over a .900 save percentage. Maine has been one of the best teams in the nation in terms of shots against, but Boija hasn't looked like himself all year. It's still very early, but a situation worth keeping an eye on.

Hockey East only had one conference matchup this weekend, and it was between two heavyweights in No. 4 Boston University and No. 9 UConn, in a home-and-home weekend contest starting in Boston.

Game one quickly got out of control for both netminders, but it was an especially rough day for BU's Mikhail Yegorov.

Yegorov let in 6 goals on 26 shots, and he would eventually be pulled for Max Lacroix.

UConn would take game one in a statement 8-4 victory in Agganis arena, with Ethan Whitcomb and Kaden Shahan both recording three assists.

Game two was a very different tale, with a lot less scoring. While both teams played mostly even overall, the Terriers played just enough better to take the game 3-1 and earn a series split.

BU's Owen McLaughlin scored three goals on the weekend, totaling four points across both games.

The top of Hockey East's goaltending has been shaky to start the year. As mentioned before, Yegorov and Boija have struggled a bit and UConn's

Tyler Muszelik hasn't been playing at his best potential either.

Any one of those three getting back on track could change their team's dynamic entirely, potentially propelling one of them to the top of the nation.

Goaltending elsewhere hasn't faltered, as Vermont's Aiden Wright and Merrimack's Max Lundgren have shined through the first month of the campaign.

Merrimack earned two votes in the polls this week, so Lundgren's efforts may start to be recognized by the college hockey world a lot more soon.

Six Hockey East teams are on the polls this week, with BU leading at No. 5 nationally.

BU, BC and Maine have been falling in the polls the past few weeks, so the early trends point to UConn as the favorite to win Hockey East. While the Huskies have split all three series, they've only played currently ranked teams, and they've had mostly big wins and only close losses. But the door is wide open.

This week, Northeastern and Boston College will play an intra-Boston home-and-home series and Providence and Lowell play a home-and-home series, as well.

Vermont will head west to New Hampshire for a set, and UConn will host Harvard and Merrimack.

But most importantly, BU will travel to Maine for a two-game series between two heavyweights, marking the second straight week BU is tested by Hockey East's best.

UMass is the only team not playing intraconference, as they'll be hosting Cornell.

With conference play starting to heat up, Hockey East contests should get real interesting, real quick.



UConn men's hockey takes on Northeastern at Toscano Ice Forum on February 28, 2025. The Huskies secured a 5-2 win.

PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

PREDICTING THE 2025-26 YANKEES OFFSEASON: THE CURRENT ROSTER

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This is part one of a two-part series that will focus on predicting offseason moves for the New York Yankees during the 2025-26 offseason. Part one will focus on in-house matters, including free agency, arbitration and 40-man roster maneuvering.

Free Agents: Yankees players set to reach free agency include Paul Blackburn, Cody Bellinger (plans to decline \$25 million player option), Paul Goldschmidt, Trent Grisham, Tim Hill (\$3 million club option), Jonathan Loaisiga (\$5 million club option), Amed Rosario, Austin Slater, Luke Weaver, Devin Williams and Ryan Yarbrough.

Outside of Aaron Judge, Bellinger was the Yankees franchise's most valuable player in 2025. Putting up a 5 WAR season while bouncing between the outfield and first base, Bellinger posted 29 home runs and 98 RBIs towards the top of the lineup. Retaining him to play left field should be at the top of New York's offseason checklist.

Grisham posted a breakout season in 2025, working his way up to the leadoff spot in the lineup while providing diminished but average defense in center-field. Despite a power surge at the plate — hitting 34 home runs — that kind of production is not sustainable when comparing the mark to his nine doubles. It would be wise for New York to let him walk in favor of giving Jasson Domínguez more playing time at his natural position. Grisham will receive and reject the qualifying offer from the Yankees and depart in search of a long-term deal.

Weaver had a roller coaster of two seasons in New York. The right-hander worked his way up from long relief to a high-leverage role by the beginning of May 2024 and eventually became the closer late in the season. His performance took a step back in 2025 and he never returned to form after missing over a month in the

middle of the year with a hamstring strain. He will hit the open market looking for a role as a starting pitcher and the accompanying payout, something New York will not offer.

Following his elimination from the postseason, Devin Williams said that he was "definitely open" to a new deal with the Yankees this offseason, according to Randy Miller of NJ.com. Despite the apparent willingness on the part of the player to keep his market as large as possible, a split between the two sides after a season in which Williams struggled to the worst showing of his career and lost the closer role is probably in the best interest of both parties.

Goldschmidt started the season hot but saw his production tail off towards the middle of the year. Given the emergence of Ben Rice, his presence is no longer necessary.

The team holds 2026 options over both Loaisiga and Hill. Loaisiga suffered a flexor strain late in the season while recovering from an unrelated injury and did not return. The Yankees will likely decline his option. Hill led the team in appearances and maintained an ERA of just over three. \$3 million is more than fair for the durable groundball specialist.

Rosario came over from the Washington Nationals in a deadline deal that sent reliever Clayton Beeter and prospect Brown Martinez. The 29-year-old served as a platoon infield option against lefties while also quickly becoming a clubhouse leader and would be a good choice to serve the same bench role in 2026.

Slater saw very little playing time in pinstripes, in part due to an early August hamstring strain less than a week after being acquired from the White Sox, and was left off the playoff roster.

The same is true of Yarbrough, who found some success early in the season at the back end of the Yankees' rotation but suffered an oblique strain in late June and pitched

in only three more games. He, too, missed out on the playoff roster. While Yarbrough is more likely to be brought back to soak up innings, neither should be expected to return.

Blackburn took Yarbrough's role after signing late in the season following a release from the New York Mets. The 31-year-old made the playoff roster as a long relief option but will most likely depart to look for a bounce back rotation role with a rebuilding club.

Final contract predictions: Cody Bellinger (5 years, \$150 million), Amed Rosario (1 year, \$3 million) and Tim Hill (\$3 million option picked up).

Contract values based on Spotrac projected market values.

Arbitration: Players who will be eligible for salary arbitration (with salary predictions) include David Bednar (\$9 million), Jake Bird (\$1 million), Jose Caballero (\$1.9 million), Oswaldo Cabrera (\$1.2 million), Jazz Chisholm Jr. (\$10.2 million), Jake Cousins (\$841,000), Fernando Cruz (\$1.3 million), Camilo Doval (\$6.6 million), Scott Effross (\$800,000), Luis Gil (\$2.1 million), Ian Hamilton (\$941,000), Mark Leiter Jr. (\$3 million), Clarke Schmidt (\$4.9 million) and Anthony Volpe (\$1.9 million).

Bednar, Caballero, Chisholm Jr., Cruz, Doval, Gil, Schmidt and Volpe are all locks to be retained through arbitration.

Cabrera is also almost certainly a lock to receive an offer but may give the front office a bit more hesitation than the others due to his season-ending ankle injury suffered in May and the presence of fellow utilityman Caballero.

Bird was atrocious in his first half season in New York, but the Yankees gave up enough prospect capital and the \$1 million figure is low enough that he'll be given another chance.

Cousins missed all of 2025 recovering from Tommy John surgery and will miss a large portion of 2026 as well. It makes little sense for the Yankees to dedicate a 40-man spot

to the right-hander throughout the offseason, though a reunion on a minor league pact could make sense.

Effross struggled immensely in his first full season back from Tommy John surgery, pitching to 8.44 ERA in the majors and a 6.37 at Triple-A, and will likely be looking for employment this offseason as a result.

Hamilton saw a reduction in the effectiveness of his fastball in 2025 and spent a large part of the season in Triple-A. An agreement at a lower figure to his arbitration estimate is possible, but the Yankees could otherwise find bullpen depth for cheaper than the current figure.

Leiter Jr. is the highest profile non-tender candidate for New York, with a combination of poor performance and injury dropping him from leverage reliever to off the roster for the American League Division Series. In an offseason where the Yankees will have to rebuild much of their bullpen, a split with Leiter would be an obvious start.

Final non-tenders: Cousins, Effross, Hamilton and Leiter Jr.

Arbitration figures based on projections from MLB Trade Rumors

Rule 5 Draft: Notable minor leaguers that are currently eligible to be taken in the December include Elmer Rodriguez-Cruz (MLB Pipeline No. 97), Spencer Jones (MLB Pipeline No. 99), Chase Hampton (MLB NYY No. 8), Brock Selvige (MLB NYY No. 10), Brendan Beck (MLB NYY No. 11), Jace Avina (MLB NYY No. 24), T.J. Rumfield (MLB NYY No. 25), Eric Reyzman (MLB NYY No. 26), Harrison Cohen (MLB NYY No. 30), Allen Facundo, Geoffrey Gilbert, Justin Lange, Omar Martinez and Hueston Morrill.

Both Rodriguez-Cruz and Jones are locks to be protected, being featured at the backend of MLB Pipeline's season end top 100 list.

Hampton is currently recovering from February 2025 Tommy John surgery after missing the majority of 2024 with injury. Despite two consecutive

lost seasons, the right-hander appeared on multiple top 100 prospect lists going into 2025 and will also be added to the 40-man.

Selvige was selected to the 2024 All-Star Futures Game but struggled in 2025, especially in the latter half of the season. The Yankees still seem to value him, despite the struggles, as he remained put while other Rule 5-eligible starter Trystan Vrielink was dealt in the trade to acquire Doval.

Since being drafted in 2021, Beck has only appeared in parts of two minor league seasons. Still, he put up 24 upper level starts in 2025 and provides cheap depth.

The Yankees clearly like what Reyzman brings to the table, giving him seven spring training appearances following a breakout 2024 minor league campaign. The right-hander regressed in 2024 but offers the plus slider that New York favors in relievers. The same is true of Cohen, who has both a plus slider and cutter and has pitched to cumulative ERAs below 2.00 each of the past two seasons.

Rumfield was left unprotected for the 2024 Rule 5 Draft. He put up a 2025 Triple-A statline that was nearly identical to his 2024 performance and is now a year older. The same outcome should be expected for this offseason.

Avina is a contact-oriented bat that profiles more as organizational depth and seems unlikely to be selected. Martinez offers upper minors depth at catcher but also likely won't hear his name called.

Facundo and Lange have both seen their stock dip over recent years due to injury but could be of interest to other teams. Morrill and Gilbert both had breakout seasons in relief roles, but both pitched most of the season in High-A, where they were slightly above the league average age.

Final 40-Man Additions: Rodriguez-Cruz, Jones, Hampton, Selvige, Beck, Reyzman and Cohen (39 players).



Sports

MEN'S BASKETBALL: HUSKIES SWEEP PRESEASON SCRIMMAGE SLATE WITH WIN OVER MICHIGAN STATE



University of Connecticut men's basketball takes on University of Michigan at People's Bank Arena on October 28, 2025. This is the first men's exhibition game since the arena has been remodeled.

PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Matt Dimesch

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Though the record books will never know it, the No. 4 UConn men's basketball team curbed No. 22 Michigan State on Tuesday night.

The preseason matchup gave the college basketball world a chance to see how two of the sports most storied programs stacked up ahead of their 2025-26 campaigns.

The Huskies were without two of their presumed front court starters.

Preseason All-Big East First Team selection Tarris Reed Jr. did not participate due to a hamstring injury that has plagued him throughout UConn's scrimmage slate. Meanwhile, the team announced on Friday that Preseason Big East Freshman of the Year Braylon Mullins suffered an ankle sprain that will sideline him for six weeks.

Eric Reibe was called on once again to fill the gap at the five spot in place of Reed. The freshman center had eight points and six rebounds in UConn's scrimmage against Boston College on Oct. 13.

Hurley expressed on Monday before the game that he was a "little worried" about Reibe going up against an experienced Spartans front court, which featured two returners from last year's Big 10 regular season champs, Coen Carr and Jaxon Kohler.

Reibe made his presence felt early on, rejecting two shot attempts and snatching four rebounds in the first four minutes of action. However, foul trouble limited Reibe's playing time in the second half.

Solo Ball was named to the Jerry West Award Preseason Watch List on Tuesday morning, an award given to the best shooting guard in the country.

Ball showed UConn fans that he was selected for good reason. While he was not shooting the three to his usual standard (14%), the third-

year guard consistently finished at the rim on his way to a first half-leading 12 points.

He spearheaded the winning effort alongside Alex Karaban. They each finished the game with 18 points.

Michigan State got production out of its starting point guard Jeremy Fears Jr. The Huskies faced his brother, Jeremiah Fears, in the first round of last year's NCAA Tournament when he played at Oklahoma.

Fears was one of the best passers in the league last season, leading the Spartans in assists with 5.4 per game. He ranked No. 9 in the country with an assist rate of 38.9%, according to KenPom.

The 6-foot-2 guard has come alive as a scorer in the preseason, tallying double digit scoring outings in both Michigan State's scrimmages. He averaged just over seven last season.

Silas Demary Jr. made his debut in Husky threads on Tuesday night, after missing the scrimmage with Boston due to a calf injury. He was selected to the Preseason Watch List for the Bob Cousy Award on Monday, an honor given to the best point guard in the country.

Huskies' fans eagerly waited to see him in action, and he did not disappoint. Demary ignited UConn's offense in the opening minutes, knocking down two triples to grab an early seven-point lead.

He finished his inaugural outing for the team with nine points and three assists but found himself in foul trouble as well with five on the game.

UConn led from the opening bucket and didn't look back, securing a 76-69 victory, and sweeping its pair of scrimmages going into the regular season.

The team will turn its attention to a game the record books will remember, as the Huskies will embark on their quest for seven against New Haven on Monday night.

Tip-off is set for 7 p.m. at Gampel Pavilion and can be streamed on ESPN+.



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