



Young Democrats of Connecticut Gather in West Hartford to Shape Future of The Party

by **Ben Gingold**
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Numerous chapters of the Young Democrats of Connecticut met in West Hartford to discuss the future of their party on Sept. 25. Gov. Ned Lamont was one of numerous political speakers who attended the event in anticipation of the upcoming midterm elections.

The event was organized by the Young Democrats of Connecticut, a branch of the Young Democrats of America, to raise funds for new strategies to get young people voting. According to their website, The Young Democrats of America is the largest youth-led partisan political organization nationwide.

With over 20,000 chapters spanning across 50 states, this volunteer organization mobilizes young Democrats to participate in the political process. The average age of these volunteers is between 18 to 36, with a focus on engaging youth voters who would otherwise be uninterested in politics.

Multiple political candidates running for the first congressional district rallied trying to reach young voters for the upcoming primary. Ruth Fortune, Luke Bronin and John Larson, all running for the first congressional district, were in attendance. Larson, who has served as congressmen for the first district for 20 years, was in attendance for the first portion of the event.



Ryan Rosario, president of the College Democrats of Connecticut, with Gov. Ned Lamont during a fundraiser on Sept. 25, 2025. They met at a conference with different chapters of the Young Democrats of Connecticut in West Hartford. PHOTO BY BENJAMIN GINGOLD, CONTRIBUTOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Fortune, a former undocumented immigrant from Haiti, spoke about the experiences she faced as an immigrant in the United States. She discussed undocumented immigrants in Connecticut and the hardships they face. Bronin, the former mayor of Hartford who bailed the city out of a bankruptcy crisis, spoke about the affordability crisis in America and the housing crisis affecting young adults.

These three politicians, along with other politicians in attendance like Sen. Rich-

ard Blumenthal and Lamont, used this event as an opportunity to speak with the constituents who make up the next generation of their party. The congressional candidates addressed their concerns for the future, touching on the Democratic party losing young voters to Republicans. This concern was backed up by data from insurancejournal.com, showing that the voter population is getting older.

In an exclusive interview at the event, Lamont discussed what he believed was essential

in engaging young voters in future elections.

“You have to make life a lot more affordable,” Lamont said. “Easier for you to get an education, easier for you to start a family, easier for you to buy your first home and start a business.”

In Connecticut, youth voters often have low turnout in both local and state elections. In the Hartford area alone, nearly half of eligible youth voters did not cast a ballot. According to CTData.org, “individuals aged 18-29 experi-

ence the lowest voter registration rates.”

In stark contrast, older Connecticut voters are more likely to show up and vote. Data from CTData.org and Data.ct.gov show that in the 2016 election, elderly voters had some of the highest turnout rates. This highlights a challenge the Democratic Party must face: how to engage more young voters.

When asked about the turnout of his first fundraiser, Young Democrats of Connecticut President Allan Cunningham called it “widely successful in terms of funds but also in terms of building a community.”

The event “got over 50 young people on the ballot across Connecticut,” according to Cunningham.

“We’re talking with people, we’re making connections, and young people are meeting the politicians that represent them,” Cunningham said.

Ryan Rosario, president of the College Democrats of Connecticut, said, “Look around, you see not only the future of the Democratic Party, but the future of Connecticut, here in this room.”

People young and old united under one common goal of progress and change within the Democratic Party at the conference.

“We have to find young voters where they are,” said Rosario, “We can’t depend on consultants to lead us to the solution for political apathy amongst young people”.

A mayor-elect in Germany is found with serious stab wounds. Investigators see no political motive

The newly elected mayor of a town in western Germany was found with life-threatening wounds on Tuesday. Investigators said there was no evidence of a political motive and that they suspected a family connection to the attack.

Iris Stalzer was elected mayor of Herdecke on Sept. 28. She is a member of the center-left Social Democrats, the junior party in Germany’s conservative-led national government.

Stalzer was found at her home with life-threatening wounds shortly before 1 p.m., police and prosecutors said. The 57-year-old was taken to a hospital by helicopter.

They didn’t comment on the nature of the wounds, but the leader of the Social Democrats’ parliamentary group in Berlin, Matthias Miersch, told reporters Tuesday afternoon that “we heard a few minutes ago that newly elected Mayor Iris Stalzer was stabbed in Herdecke.”

A later statement from

police and prosecutors said that, as things stand, “there are no indications of a politically motivated act,” adding that a family connection was “presumed.”

It didn’t elaborate but said that the victim’s children were still with police to clear up what happened.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Stalzer was the victim of “an abhorrent act.” He wrote on social media that “we fear for the life of Mayor-elect Iris Stalzer and hope for her full recovery.”

Stalzer, who beat a candidate from Merz’s center-right Christian Democrats in a runoff vote to win election, is due to take office on Nov. 1. Herdecke is a town of about 23,000 people in western Germany’s Ruhr region, between the cities of Hagen and Dortmund.

Stalzer’s website says she married with two teenage children. It says she has spent almost her whole life in Herdecke and has worked as a lawyer specializing in labor law.



Police officers stand at a street in Herdecke, Germany, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2025, after the newly elected mayor of Herdecke, Iris Stalzer, has been found critically injured in her apartment. PHOTO COURTESY OF AP NEWS

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AUDIT FINDS GOVERNOR’S OFFICE VIOLATED VEHICLE LOGGING, INVENTORY RULES



Gov. Ned Lamont signing an agreements on Sept. 25, 2025. The governor’s office failed to follow state policies regarding timesheets, vehicle usage and asset monitoring according to a recent audit. PHOTO COURTESY OF @GOVNEDLAMONT ON INSTAGRAM

by Patrick Boots
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Gov. Ned Lamont’s office repeatedly failed to follow state vehicle usage monitoring, asset management and timesheet rules, a new state audit revealed.

“Our methodology included reviewing written policies and procedures, financial records, and other pertinent documents,” the report states. “We also obtained an understanding of legal provisions that are significant within the context of the audit objectives, and we assessed the risk that illegal acts, including fraud, and violations of contracts, grant agreements, or other legal provisions could occur.”

Auditors John Geragosian and Craig Miner, along with Michael Koonz and Jaimey Makie, compiled the report regarding the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years.

They found that Lamont’s staff did not adequately maintain daily mileage logs and monthly reports for vehicles under their care. The governor’s office was assigned three state vehicles, according to the audit, with one for Lamont’s use and the other two as a “pool” with no single assigned operator — to be used for state business only. They also noted that vehicles were not parked overnight at state-approved locations on dozens of occasions, as required by state policy.

The auditors cited a lack of management oversight for the violations.

“To address this matter the

Office of the Governor (OTG) has developed policies and procedures...clarifying the permissible use of motor vehicles for state business,” the governor’s office said in response to the findings. “These guidelines will ensure all employees understand their responsibilities and the limits of vehicle use.”

The audit’s findings follow an investigation earlier this year that concluded Lamont’s then-chief of staff, Jonathan Dach, misused a state vehicle as his personal car and drove recklessly for nearly two years.

The governor’s office also misreported property, including not being able to locate or not accurately recording the location of 15 items, worth over \$30,000 collectively — and failing to log certain assets electronically in a state database.

They also listed over 90 in-service laptops and computers, even though the office only had approximately 30 employees.

“Without accurate inventory records, there is an increased risk that inventory can be lost or stolen and go undetected,” the auditors said. “It could also lead to the Office of [the] State Comptroller reporting inaccurate asset information in the state’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.”

The OTG response said that laptops are replaced “at the end of their warranty period,” but that decommissioned devices may be used by interns, fellows or by staff during repair and service. They said that a number of laptops have also been transferred to the state’s office of workforce strategy, and others

ers are being retired but were not represented on the inventory.

“We formed our conclusions based on the asset locations and status according to the office’s inventory records and the Core-CT Asset Management module at the time we performed our testing,” the auditors said.

The report also found Lamont’s office negligent in approving timesheets, having approved time without direct knowledge of employee work hours and locations and without written procedures.

“We agree with the finding that during FY23 and FY24 not all timesheets were approved by an individual with direct knowledge of employee work hours,” the agency said in response.

The office said that in their previous regimen, approvers were able to verify the accuracy of timesheets with employees’ supervisors “as necessary, when the approver lacked direct knowledge.”

“To avoid the need for that verification step, OTG has resumed the practice of having supervisors approve timesheets for employees they supervise... [and is] in the process of developing written timesheet approval procedures to reflect this practice,” the office said.

The audit also follows up on a prior report’s recommendation that the governor’s office should ensure that the state’s Office of Workforce Strategy complies with reporting requirements, since OTG was administratively responsible for their output.

A 2023 state act moved administrative oversight of workforce strategy away from the governor’s office, instead to the state’s Department of Economic and Community Development, alleviating their responsibility on the matter, the audit said.

“We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, [which] require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives,” Geragosian and Miner said. “We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.”

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The Daily Campus

- ACROSS**
- 1 Annoy
 - 4 Bridge action
 - 7 Floated in the air
 - 13 “Good Grief” director Levy
 - 14 Pros
 - 16 Iggy the Beanie Baby, for one
 - 17 Big fuss
 - 18 Noodle with a sarashina variety
 - 19 “Well, that came out of nowhere”
 - 20 Peddles pearls of wisdom?
 - 23 “Never mind, I guess”
 - 24 New prefix
 - 25 Sword handle
 - 28 Observes casual Friday at the office?
 - 32 Single-celled organism
 - 35 “___ Te Ching”
 - 36 Legend-ary achievement?
 - 37 Fin. neighbor
 - 38 Music box?
 - 40 Emoji alternative
 - 42 “Kings & Queens” singer Max
 - 43 Like some faces
 - 45 Settings for some TV dramas
 - 47 Many a suitcase
 - 49 Gains barbers’ equipment?
 - 52 “Can I get a ___?”: “I messed up”
 - 53 ___ Tomé and Príncipe
 - 54 Athlete Ledecky who went viral by swimming with a glass of chocolate milk on her head
 - 58 Microsoft virtual work gathering, and what can be found in 20-, 28-, and 49-Across
 - 61 Wyndham chain
 - 64 Viral post
 - 65 Sully
 - 66 Exposure therapy target
 - 67 Garment worn under a dress
 - 68 One who sounds just like you
 - 69 Sitcom about a couple living in a haunted house

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| 69 | | | | | | | 70 | | | | 71 | | |

By Amie Walker & Amanda Rafkin 10/8/25

- DOWN**
- 1 State that’s home to the Museum of Clean
 - 2 Weather tracker
 - 3 Not just assumed
 - 4 Low-pitched brass instrument
 - 5 Screen symbol
 - 6 Prove false
 - 7 Pipe cleaner center
 - 8 “___ All Along”: “WandaVision” spinoff
 - 9 Like some small candy bars
 - 10 Small amount
 - 11 Musician Brian
 - 12 Beaver project
 - 15 Most wise
 - 21 Expensive Japanese beef
 - 22 Evacuation kit
 - 26 Following the rules
 - 27 Treasure ___
 - 29 Humphrey the Beanie Baby, for one
 - 30 French wine valley

Tuesday’s Puzzle Solved

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- 31 Screen symbol
- 32 Mystery writer?
- 33 Boxing pro
- 34 Give a speech
- 39 Rainbow producer
- 41 Permanently
- 44 Papers needed for some trips?
- 46 Involuntary muscle movements
- 48 Future DA’s exam
- 50 Make changes with a collaborator
- 51 Large citrus fruit
- 55 Multiplied by
- 56 “I’m ___”: “You blow me away”
- 57 “Snowy” bird
- 59 Smallish batteries
- 60 Give off
- 61 D&D, for one
- 62 “That hits the spot”
- 63 Cow sound

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Solution to Tuesday’s puzzle 10/8/25

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

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

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“OZZY: NO ESCAPE FROM NOW” CELEBRATES THE LIFE OF A LEGEND



SINGLE COVER FOR “WAR PIGS - CHARITY VERSION” BY JUDAS PRIEST AND OZZY OSBOURNE. OSBOURNE PASSED AWAY ON JULY 22, 2025. PHOTO COURTESY OF @OZZYOSBOURNE ON INSTAGRAM

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**
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A new Paramount+ documentary, “Ozzy: No Escape From Now,” looks into the final chapter of heavy metal icon Ozzy Osbourne’s life. Directed by Tania Alexander, the film follows the final years of Osbourne’s life through both his eyes and the eyes of his family through a series of sit-down interviews and candid footage of his family life as he attempts to navigate his declining health and desire to continue his work. While the film is presented as the story of the events leading up to his farewell concert, it feels more like a celebration of life than anything else.

From being forced to cancel a European tour to being unable to perform in full at his

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, Osbourne continuously had more doors closed on him due to his health to the point where he began to lose optimism about his future. On a personal level, many of us can relate to the experience of this happening to a loved one — seeing someone who we remember as a vibrant, energetic person having their spark fade away. It’s why Osbourne’s decline makes such an emotional connection with the audience; it’s a slip that most of us have witnessed and will experience.

The film can take on a melancholic mood at times, as even when you are shown positive developments in Osbourne’s life, you know how the documentary is going to end. This wasn’t the case when the documentary was filmed, as it was in the editing process when Osbourne passed away in late

July. Throughout the documentary, we see Osbourne’s condition slowly deteriorating with health issues including Parkinson’s disease and blood clots in his legs making his day-to-day life unbearable. He says multiple times how heartbroken he is that he can’t do the things that he wants to, including performing and going back on tour one last time. His desire to be on stage without limitation and make a final connection with his fans is genuine.

Known as the “Prince of Darkness,” Osbourne’s persona and infamous public life aren’t necessarily important to the telling of the story. His firing from Black Sabbath is a loosely recurring theme and he makes jokes about his past usage of recreational drugs, but the focus is more on who is now than who he was at

that point in his life. There is no need to recap or even fully touch on these moments to contextualize his importance because we understand that through how his family and friends interact with him. His entire family stays by his side until the end and famous musicians talked often about the impact that he had on their careers and lives.

Sharon Osbourne and his children all perfectly encapsulate the love that they hold for Osbourne and what his humor and dedication meant to their own well-being. Symbols of rock music such as the members of Metallica, Billy Idol, Chad Smith from the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Black Sabbath co-member Tony Iommi all appear in the documentary and, through either their words or actions, show how much impact Os-

bourne’s life has had on their own.

The documentary is a look into how a legend such as Osbourne, in the end, is no different from anyone else. He struggles and feels pain as much as anyone and relies on the support of family just as we all do. The thing that sets Osbourne apart is that, until the very end, he pushed through his limits to continue to try and provide for his fans. He felt that they deserved a proper farewell and he fought to give them one. This is the type of documentary that isn’t as much about telling a story as it is about celebrating the life of an icon loved by many. With that in mind, Alexander couldn’t have done a much better job at demonstrating why Osbourne mattered to so many people.

4.2/5 Stars

SPOOKY BINGES: TRUE HAUNTING

by **Maanya Pande**
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If you’re looking for something spooky to build up anticipation for Halloween, Netflix’s new documentary series “True Haunting” might be the perfect binge — just maybe not the “truest” one.

The five-episode docuseries, executive produced by horror legend James Wan (whose previous projects include “The Conjuring” and “Insidious”), dives into two real-life paranormal cases that supposedly defy explanation. The first three episodes, titled “Eerie Hall,” follow a group of students who move into an old building with a sinister backstory. The final two, “This House Murdered Me,” track a family who believes their home is literally trying to kill them.

The stories themselves sound like something you’d hear whispered at 2 a.m. — creepy, mysterious and just believable enough to drive home the fear. But what makes “True Haunting” stand out from the flood of ghost-hunting shows online is the cinematic quality. This isn’t shaky camera footage and grainy night vision. Every shot feels carefully composed, featuring soft lighting, ominous sound design and slow, deliberate pacing that keeps you on edge.

Each shot is intentional and meant to provoke a reaction. The camera lingers in the doorways a little too long, shadows move when they shouldn’t and

the score knows exactly when to make your heart jump. The result is a documentary that feels like a horror movie — which I feel is a strength but also serves as a weakness in the documentary.

On one hand, “True Haunting” is gorgeous to look at. The reenactments are hauntingly well done, with actors and sets that could easily fit into any high-budget ghost film. The interviews are emotional and intimate, giving the people behind the stories space to talk about the trauma of being haunted, doubted and disbelieved. You get a real sense of how these experiences — real or imagined — affected their mental health and relationships. There’s empathy here, not exploitation.

But the “true” part of “True Haunting” starts to get blurry pretty fast. The series walks a fine line between documentary and dramatization. I felt that it leaned too far into the cinematic side and makes you forget you’re supposed to be watching a factual retelling. The reenactments are so visually rich that they almost overshadow the actual witnesses’ voices. It’s easy to lose track of where testimony ends and storytelling begins.

If you’re someone who likes hard evidence — including audio recordings, camera footage and scientific analysis — you might find yourself a little disappointed. The series offers fragments of proof but leans more heavily on atmosphere than documentation. It’s less about proving ghosts exist

and more about showing what it feels like to believe they do. And for viewers who love ambiguity, that’s actually pretty effective.

The pacing is another mixed bag. The first case, “Eerie Hall,” feels well-developed and gave time to get to know the people involved and feel the dread build up slowly. But the second, “This House Murdered Me,” is wrapped up in two episodes, leaving it feeling a bit rushed by comparison. The tension and emotional payoff don’t land quite as hard.

Still, there’s something powerful about the way the series centers human belief and fear. It’s not trying to convert you into a ghost believer; it’s exploring what happens when people experience something beyond their understanding. Whether the hauntings are supernatural or psychological almost doesn’t matter — the show treats its subjects with care and curiosity instead of mockery.

So, should you stream it? If you’re into the kind of horror that crawls under your skin and stays there, absolutely. “True Haunting” is beautifully made, eerie without being gory and grounded. But don’t watch it expecting smoking-gun pieces of evidence.

“True Haunting” is less a documentary about ghosts and more a story about people haunted by the need to be believed. It may not make you a believer, but it’ll definitely make you keep the lights on for a little longer than usual.

Rating: (4/5)



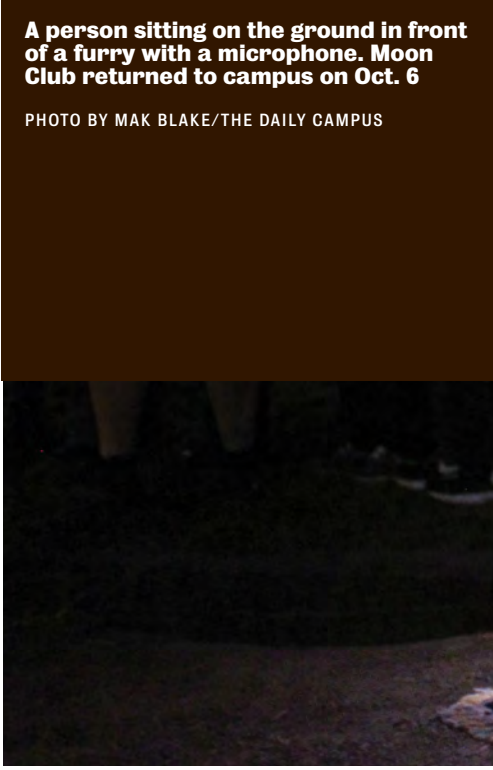
Poster for new Netflix series “True Haunting.” The five-episode docuseries was released on oct. 7, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @BESTMOVIE21BIZ ON INSTAGRAM

Moon Club reunites the UConn alternative scene



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



A person sitting on the ground in front of a furry with a microphone. Moon Club returned to campus on Oct. 6
PHOTO BY MAK BLAKE/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by **Bonnibel Lilith Rampertab**
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What do emos, scene people, goths, metalheads, alternatives, queer people, trans people, Mexican Spiderman, furies, esoteric furies reading tarot cards, therians, astronomers, cosplayers and other people rejecting the status quo have in common? Hating the sun and loving the moon's glow enveloped in darkness, of course.

The University of Connecticut's mysterious and infamous Moon Club, a club celebrating the beauty of the full moon outdoors while congregating with others — especially the weird and interesting characters of UConn who consider it beloved — returned from a yearlong hiatus under her loving gaze on Monday, Oct. 6.

The club was previously shut down due to administrative pressure over alleged rowdiness, litter and drug usage on university property at their meetings. To circumvent this, Moon Club decided to only host sober gatherings without live music. The previous Moon Club meeting was at the Great Lawn, but this meeting took place on the Student Union lawn.

Entering the lawn, you could see clusters of people gathered around talking to each other with alternative music playing on a speaker. There was a couple in goat and dragon-like furry headpieces with lanterns reading tarot cards. There was also a telescope free for anyone to use to admire the eternal beauty of the moon. Incredibly noticeable are the visually distinct variety of people, such as the wide array of furies, generally alternatively-dressed people and even a few cosplayers.

Though this idea of gathering under the full moon just to talk and party as well as the type of people it attracts may seem odd to some, attendees spoke to the welcoming and comforting power this club has for others. Talking to the attendees of Moon Club highlights this universal fact.

You might have seen a Spiderman in a sombrero walking around campus before — his name is Mexican Spiderman. The anonymous hero inside of the costume said in an interview about his double life, "It's definitely weird but sometimes a blessing because I have to keep my identities separate. I want to make sure

everyone feels happy and welcome."

He also said that when someone tells him how happy he makes them feel, it makes his whole week better. Mexican Spiderman loves to meet new people and get to know them. "Every day I meet someone new."

"I was always a big fan of Spiderman; one Halloween I was Spiderman and my dad said, 'Why don't you become Mexican Spiderman?' he said. Thus a local hero was born.

The furry subculture dressed in costumes that make them look like anthropomorphic animals called "fursuits" at Moon Club stick out like a sore paw. You could see them eager to socialize with other attendees and dancing just like everybody else.

One of these Moon Club furies, Ash, said, "I came because my friends came." He said that it was "pretty fun. Socializing, having a blast." Another Moon Club furry, Bow, said, "I was here my freshman year. I missed this club. I get to howl at the Moon." Kodi, another furry, said Moon Club near the beginning of the meeting was "a

chill gathering."

Beep, a seventh semester puppetry arts major and werewolf, said, "I'm glad that Moon Club is back. In puppet arts classes you're with the same people so it's nice to meet people outside your major."

There was a cosplayer of the visual novel character Nagito Komaeda from the "Danganronpa" murder game series with company, including someone dressed up as a deer. This crowd didn't even go to UConn but rather other colleges around eastern Connecticut. This cosplayer said about Moon Club, "It's kind of just a tradition. Even if we can't make it [we] celebrate the moon [as] an excuse to hang out at night together."

There are also a ton of people at least sympathetic to alternative culture. Mal, a third semester psychological sciences student, called Moon Club "strange but cool." She said that the purpose of Moon Club was that you could find "likeminded people."

Louisa, a seventh semester molecular and cell biology major, said, "It's a nice community. Everyone brings their own thing." They then cited a bagpipe player at a previous Moon Club meeting as an example.

They continued, "There's a lot of queer people too. It kind of died out my freshman year so I'm glad it's back." Bridget, a seventh-semester sociology major, said, "It[s] so inclusive here. It's where the alt heads can come together. It feels like such a safe space."

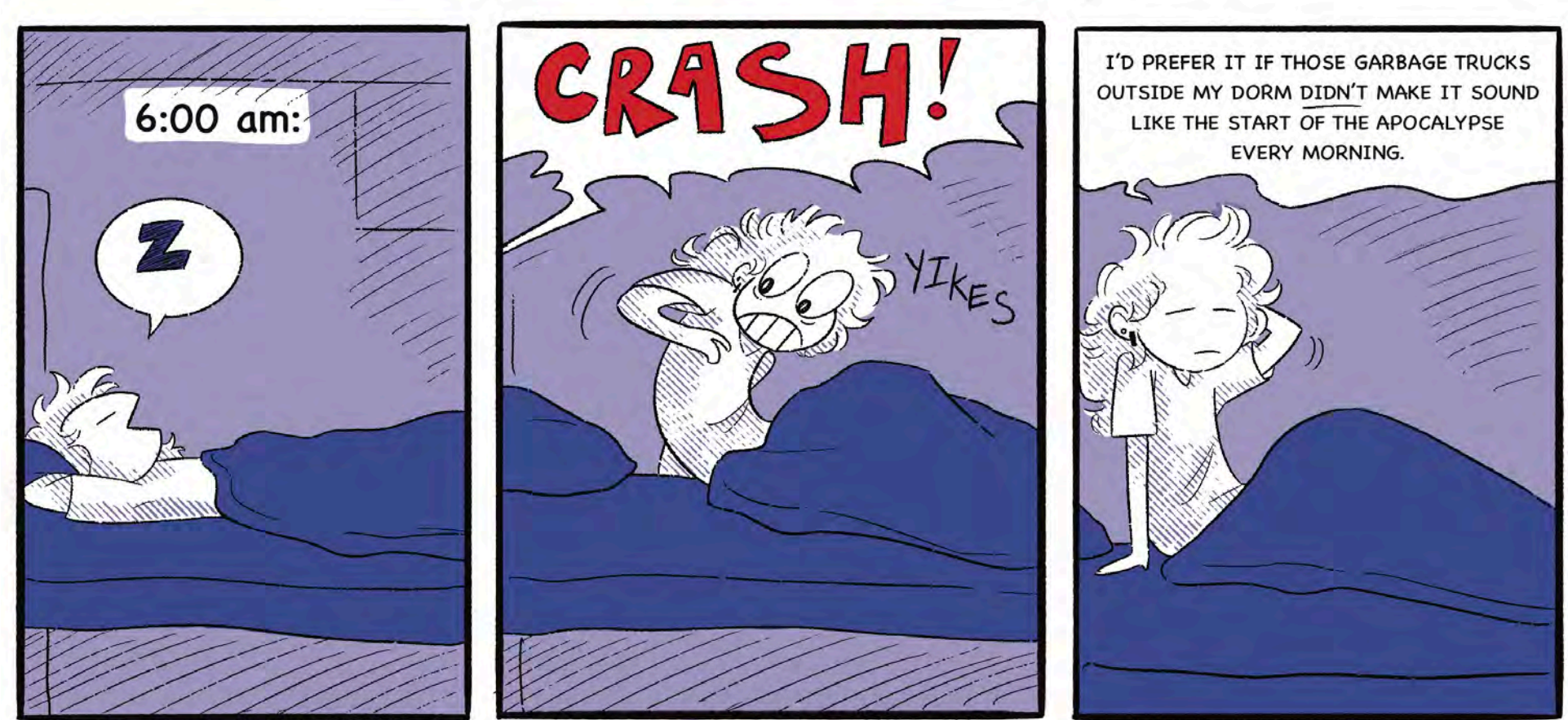
Moon Club president Angelina Lyras, also referred to as "Moon Mommy," gave a speech starting with praising not the moon but rather the community of Moon Club and their patience with getting the club up and running again.

"The moon told me she's happy to see us," Lyras said.

She then introduced the other e-board members, the tarot card readers and the person who brought the telescope. Lyras also established that the event is sober and that only smoking and vaping are tolerated only in designated areas.

Over the hiatus, the Moon Club e-board made a logo sample and got a free tote bag for a raffle.

"I love the moon because I believe she serves as one of our biggest symbols of unity as a society," said Lyras. "Despite all of our differences as people, at the end of the day, no matter where you are in the world, we all look up at the same moon."



COMIC BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Life

Beautifully Broken: A powerful reflection of life, loss and hope

Jaren Buchanan after an event with first responders in Bardstown, Kentucky on Sept. 17, 2025. Buchanan speaks at events to raise awareness for mental health and suicide prevention.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @K9JARED ON INSTAGRAM



by Nick Sorokobi
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“Beautifully Broken,” a documentary directed by veteran filmmaker Daniel Herzog, was screened on Monday, Oct. 6 at the Student Union Theatre. The screening was followed by a Q&A session led by Herzog and Jared Buchanan, the film’s main subject.

Buchanan’s story is as somber as it is uplifting. In March 2013, his father, Paul Buchanan, a veteran police officer with the East Hartford police department, tragically committed suicide after a lengthy battle with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. This event did and still profoundly affects Jared, his brother Benjamin and their

mother Patricia. But in a powerful message he left to his family before he passed away, Paul encouraged his family to “make my death an issue so you can help others like me.” And that’s exactly what Buchanan, now a mental health counselor and motivational speaker, did.

Since then, he has completed numerous marathons and ultramarathons across some of the world’s most grueling terrains, pouring all of his energy into raising awareness for mental health and suicide prevention in memory of his father.

“Suicide is a tough topic to talk about,” Buchanan told the audience before the screening. “But the point of this film is to let people who are suffering

know that you are not alone and you will always have people there for you.”

A former Marine Infantry veteran, Buchanan’s transformative path for healing has involved conquering 100 and 200+ mile races. Along the way, he experienced even more hardship when on Veteran’s Day in 2019, he was hit by a Chevy Tahoe while jogging in Manchester, Connecticut. This only enhanced Buchanan’s determination to inspire people and change lives.

In 2023, he took on the most arduous race of his career, the Cocodona 250, which is an innervating ultramarathon covering 250 miles of vast terrain in Arizona, with an estimated elevation gain of roughly

40,000 feet. Buchanan’s preparation for the race, his experiences during the event and the aftermath of the Cocodona are what’s being followed in “Beautifully Broken.”

“I wanted to make a film that showcased not just Jared’s advocacy and passion for this issue but also displayed all the hard work and time he put in for this marathon in memory of his father,” Herzog, who directed the film, said during the Q&A session. “Jared is one of the most upbeat, positive people I know, so making this film with him was really fun and rewarding.”

Through this transformative process, Buchanan has not only been able to heal personally but also heal his

relationships with other people. According to the documentary, Buchanan and his younger brother had a hostile relationship growing up due to their conflicting personalities, and they even stopped speaking for a period of time. “I’m probably the only person who’s felt every emotion imaginable towards Jared,” Ben says in the documentary. But Jared Buchanan’s remarkable strides as a runner have helped Ben see the other side of his older brother.

“We text each other almost every day, we’re really close,” Jared Buchanan told the audience members. “Which, is the most important thing a person needs when they’re suffering: peo-

The Student Union on the Storrs campus. “Beautifully Broken” screened at the SU Theater on Oct. 6.
PHOTO BY BLAKE SYKES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



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

Moroccans GenZ212 Protests:

WHY ARE THEY HAPPENING?



Fire at a building in Morocco. Some of the youth-led protests in Morocco have turned violent.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @MODERNNOTORIETY ON INSTAGRAM

by Jannat Zouhad
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Morocco is a country known for many things: beautiful beaches, the Sahara and renowned cuisine. But in recent years, Morocco has also become known for its soccer team. During the 2022 World Cup, Morocco made headlines as it became the first African country to make it all the way to fourth place. National pride exploded and united Moroccans from all over the world. In a country where patriotism is heavily valued, it was not hard to get swept up in the mo-

ment. As a Moroccan American in the diaspora, I watched every game with bated breath. In class, I proudly would boast about how my country was “the greatest in the world.” When Morocco qualified to host the 2030 World Cup in a collaboration with Portugal and Spain, I, along with the general Moroccan public, was overjoyed. It felt like a step forward towards greatness for Morocco. In reality, it was anything but that. The Moroccan Government has invested approximately \$5 billion into the infrastructure for the World Cup 2030. This includes

renovating five existing stadiums and investing \$500 million into the Hasan II stadium, which is set to be the biggest soccer stadium in the world after its completion. While this is sure to bring international attention and praise, it is at the cost of the average Moroccan citizen. Hospitals are underfunded with scarce equipment and low staffing. This crisis was only emphasized after the recent deaths of the eight young women at the Hasan II Regional Hospital in Agadir after receiving cesarean operations. In addition to this, there is also the case in Zagora where a young woman and her

newborn died due to the lack of an anesthesiologist and an intensive care unit. When I was five, my late grandmother was slowly dying from leukemia. The illness had already spread throughout her body, yet the hospitals insisted she was fine. My older cousin oversaw transporting her from the house to her frequent hospital trips. She told us about how the hospitals are cruel to patients. Nurses sat filing their nails while ignoring pleas for help, and doctors argued with sick patients and worried family members. There were expensive fees from a hospital that provided no care. It was not the illness that killed her, but the mental hardship from staying at a hospital that failed her. When my grandfather fell sick last year, my mom took him to Yale New Haven Hospital. At the end of his visit, he looked at her and said, “I used to think you lived in a foreign place, but I have realized I have been the foreigner in my country all along.” Schools are also underfunded, with only 36% of Moroccans who are enrolled in primary school going on to complete secondary education. With the lack of teachers, classes are often overcrowded, so students are unable to get the care and attention that they may individually need. Many are also unable to go to school due to how expensive necessities like books and uniforms are. Creativity is not encouraged in the average Moroccan public school, with curriculum being memorization-based. This leads to unemployment rates in Morocco nearly, with 40% of jobs being extremely hard to find without being connected. Despite most of the Moroccan world living in near poverty and suffering, Aziz Akhannouch, the prime minister of Morocco, is reported to have a net worth of \$1.6 billion. He went to school for business at the Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec. He was able to afford a school outside the country and experience high-quality education, helping him become a successful businessman, an opportunity many Moroccans do not have. Despite returning to Morocco and becoming the Prime Minister, he has done nothing but give out false promises. Moroccans living in poorer areas still do not have homes after the 2023 earthquake that destroyed thousands of houses. Many have taken to living in tents with horrible conditions, especially during the cold rain and sleet. These people are not taken seriously and instead, more money gets poured into making life better for tourists. The Moroccan youth have had enough of this. Since Sept. 27, young Moroccans have organized protests across the country from Casablanca to Agadir. I am proud of the GenZ212 youth protests happening in my home country. They used social media such as Discord and TikTok to bring attention to these protests and emphasized that they want these protests to be peaceful. Despite the protests being peaceful, there were many arrests. Any sign of dissent is criminalized and speaking ill of the corrupt government could land you years in prison. How can you continue to be peaceful when your speech is being taken away? Are you expected to just take every blow? This is the reality of Morocco. The Moroccan government is a government of false promises. They teach their youth to be patriotic, never question authority and stay silent no matter what. You should not love a country just because it is the one you were born in. True patriotism does not mean staying loyal to a government that never has your well-being in mind. Real patriotism is wanting the best for those who live in that country. They brainwash you by equating criticism with bringing shame to your country. Yet it is not I who is bringing shame, but rather a government that shuts its eyes as people beg for rights. I love Morocco. I am not ashamed of where I am from, nor am I a traitor as many would like to believe. I do not criticize it out of malice but rather out of hope. To love your country is not to stay silent but to be the loudest in the room, crying for change.

The American dream is dead

by Filip Dukovski
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The image of the “American Dream” that was envisioned and sold to Americans during the post-World War Two economic boom is now considered a core image of American culture. However, this image of a man who owns a nice home, has a wife, two kids and a dog all able to survive off a single income is becoming unachievable for most people. It’s clear now that the American Dream is dying, or maybe it’s already dead. To understand why this is happening, it’s important to chart what changes in the American economy have led to the position we’re in now. One of the first things that got us here is the growing gap between productivity (how much money is made from workers) and compensation (wages and job benefits) over the past few decades. From 1948-1979, produc-

tivity grew to 118% and compensation grew to 107%, compared to 1979-2019 where productivity grew 59%, but compensations only grew by 13%. This is because back in the 1970s, policy makers worked to dismantle the policy to make sure compensation went up along with the growth of productivity. These included things such as excess unemployment being tolerated to avoid inflation (which was very high in the 70s), tax rates on top incomes being lowered and deregulation of businesses. Productivity stayed on relatively the same course of growth, while most of the money went straight to shareholders. On a related note, wages stagnated for the bottom 90% of earners from 1979 to 2013, only growing a mere 15%, while the pay for the top 1% grew by 138% from 1979 to 2013. This, alongside the inflation we have experienced over the past 50 years, leads to serious wealth inequality. Since the last time the federal minimum

wage was increased in 2009, the minimum wage has lost 30% of its value and the federal minimum wage is now below the poverty line of \$15,650 per year. This means that people making minimum wage do not have the spending power to provide for themselves, others or put money into savings. The second thing that got us here is the issue with the housing market. As of April 2025, private equity firms own at least 8,200 apartment buildings and around 2.2 million units, which amounts to 10% of the total housing market. Additionally, institutional investors (private equity, hedge funds, etc.) may control 40% of the single-family homes market by 2030. This large change in ownership since the 2008 recession has meant higher housing costs for buyers and renters (the average cost for rent is \$2,050 a month). This means the average American cannot afford rent comfortably. One of the core pil-

lars of the American dream fantasy, owning a home, is now almost unreachable. Finally, the third thing that got us here was the rising inflation post-COVID. During the pandemic, consumers were spending less and saving more money. Once the lockdowns started to ease, people were spending more money, but the companies could not keep up with demand since they reduced how much they would produce. This inevitably led to higher prices for goods. The most important example: food prices have increased 23.6% from 2020-2024, outpacing overall inflation of 21.2% during that same time period. This means that now the price of essential goods is now getting too expensive and with this final bubble popping, life in America is becoming unaffordable for most people. With all these factors coming together over the past half century, life is becoming unaffordable

and wealth inequality is more apparent. From the average workers’ wages not sufficiently growing since the 1980s to the prices of homes and rent experiencing whopping increase over the past two decades, people are unsatisfied and suffering from the cost of living. It is clear the American Dream is dead, and what’s left is to understand what these above economic factors have in common and why they all seem to be getting worse for the average person. In the second half of this article to come, we will see why these changes are part of a declining system that purposefully does not serve the needs of the people; a system that is determined by oligarchy, where you will have less ability for ownership, where the richest people in America will have unregulated power over politics and where people’s existence will be merely data. This system is capitalism, and it killed the American Dream.



UConn students walking around downtown Storrs on Tuesday, Oct. 7. The weather was beautiful on this warm, October day. PHOTO BY HANNAH GRIMES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The necessary place history and art have in teaching

by **Bonnibel Lilith Rampertab**
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Art is the past, present and future of human thought expressed creatively. History is the study of the past through documents and artifacts used for informing our present and changing the future. When you mix these two disciplines, the result is a contextualization of humanity's ideas, emotions, struggles and passions that everyone could learn from. It's important to everyone engaging with either of these subjects to understand how they relate, so as to inform and supplement our experiences with both. Art, history and education are all fundamentally connected and are at their best when brought together to teach people about the world.

Art and history go hand in hand. They could even be interchangeable in some scenarios depending on your lens. History, in any capacity, informs art whether we're talking about a genre directly inspired by the past like steampunk or a genre speculating the future like cyberpunk. Likewise, art has the potential to help shape politics, culture and history in overt or covert ways. You can't have art nor history without human experiences.

The connection between art and history become most apparent in education, where historical research and syntheses are digested through the usage of art as teaching tools. From the literature we read, the videos we watch, the music we listen to, the visual art we see, the assignments we write, the speeches we prepare and a plethora of other artistic mediums, all of it is art and students can benefit from learning about, as well as from, art.

Teaching art has many benefits for students beyond just boosting academic grades, such as helping the students express themselves creatively and critically, explore identities and get in touch with the ethos of the past recording for experiencing in the future. These classes are considered fun and a break from the more academic classes.

History classes, on the other hand, are stereotyped as "boring." This is largely in part due to the state curriculum's design not meeting students where they're at or making the subject material engaging, instead opting to make them read a broad textbook.

What can help resolve this social epidemic of boring history classes

tainting the good and engaging name of well-researched history? For starters, using art about and from the eras you're teaching about to help students visualize and gain a deeper, more emotional understanding of the material and ultimately gaining information from them. Creativity and innovation are absolutes within history as the world tends to bend towards progression, helping bridge the gap between the past and those who will shape our future.

On the flipside, history ties into teaching the arts since, especially at a young and impressionable age, you're helping them contextualize not only the art but also the cultural impact it has on people in the past and even present. You cannot truly and fully appreciate a piece of art without understanding what caused its existence and where it fits in history.

For example, the popular play "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller was an allegory for American McCarthyism and the red scare, which was a mass hysteria during the Cold War about various people, including creatives, being communists or left-wing and stifling and persecuting them. Many of them were put on trial for supposedly being Soviet spies or communist sympathizers. This knowledge brings new light on this historical fiction play on the Salem Witch Trials and highlights a pattern shown in history then expressed through artistic means. This is just one of many instances of art and history compounding.

Knowing how art is made not only helps you appreciate the work behind it but also teaches many life lessons about the world and art's influences on people since artists create art that builds upon past works to make something new. It's impossible to truly appreciate a piece of art in a vacuum, and learning more about history and its impact on art helps people improve and become more socially conscious.

Art is a human phenomenon existing for a reason that deserves to be preserved for the sake of the future's ability to learn from it just like history. Art and history could become sincere allies in teaching and even in general when moments feel bleak to remind us that there were people before us who felt and experienced similar things. Everyone can learn, especially from these two mediums, for the purpose of potentially changing the world.

Is Taylor Swift past her prime?

by **Amber Greene** | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | SHE/HER/HERS | amg23053@uconn.edu

Everyone knows her, many love her: Taylor Swift. She is probably the pinnacle of A-list celebrities because, whether you listen or not, there is no hiding that she is a mega pop star. Yet, the release of her new album "The Life of a Showgirl" received extremely valid harsh criticism from fans, critics and casual listeners alike. While Swifties say she is still at the height of her career, I believe her best works might be behind her.

In the past five years, Swift has released 10 albums, including re-recording her classic albums and a whopping five additional original albums. Songwriting and producing an album of any length takes time, even years for some artists. She embarked on her global Eras Tour, which reminded fans of the power of her discography and is responsible for her current massive following of dedicated fans. The rapid release of about two albums per year could make us forget a time when that was not the case.

In 2020, she released two of her best albums that fit into the alternative genre, "Folklore" and "Evermore." The two albums had a storyline following a teenage love triangle and were both secretly recorded and released within 24 hours of their announcement. "Folklore" is jokingly called the forgotten album, but it is worth mentioning the lack of praise it received given how authentic its lyricism felt. The time and genuine passion that she spent on these projects shine through the lyrics and reflect her lifestyle at that time. Swift was a lot more vocal about her beliefs on social media in 2020 including calling out President Donald Trump, activating for LGBTQIA+ rights and endorsing Joe Biden during his presidential run. At the time, she was in the fourth year of her relationship with famously politically outspoken actor Joe Alwyn, so it b e g s

the question: was the music of this era a reflection of

tion of who she truly was or just who she was dating at the time?

Since then, her release of "The Tortured Poets Department" was announced, she accepted a Grammy, had months of press tours and announced various vinyl pressings. "The Life of a Showgirl" was announced in a similar way on Jason and Travis Kelce's "New Heights" podcast with a press junket to match. The difference in the rollouts of these albums shows a shift in her mentality of releasing content just to put things out, and not deliberately and carefully working on it to be good quality. Her work on these past two albums do not just reflect the person she has become, but the people she has surrounded herself with. The complete 180 from her incredibly private relationship with Alwyn to attending Kelce's football games, publicly hanging out with his severely right-wing friends and her silence during Trump's second term signify how much she adjusts to what will benefit her at that time.

As someone who used to be an avid listener of projects like "Folklore" and "Evermore," this new album seems to fall flat in several categories, but most jarringly in the lyrics. In her new album there is a disappointing lack of imagery and connections, replaced with lyrics like those off the song "Wood" that put her life with her fiancé on display. When discussing her song "mirrorball" on "Folklore" in an interview, she explained the lyrics compare a person who feels that they need to put on a show for others like a shining disco ball. This is a connection that gay audiences made to them being in the closet or coming-out. While not necessarily queerbaiting, Swift has clearly shifted to resonate more with straight audiences since it is what is commercially received the best. It is sad to see that in the years-long battle between quality albums and monetary manifestations of success, she has picked the latter.

Maybe Swift has always been a sign of the times or maybe these two albums show that whoever she once was is long gone. Her legacy as an artist with undoubtable hits will live on, without putting out more subpar albums just to add them. I hope that more artists will choose authenticity over what sells and stay true to the people who got them that far and themselves.



PHOTO COURTESY OF @TAYLMRGE13 ON X

POINT COUNTERPOINT: WHO SHOULD BE THE 2025 AMERICAN LEAGUE MVP?

by **Gavin Friedman**
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Gavin: Aaron Judge
It's impossible to overlook the incredible season New York Yankees right fielder Aaron Judge had in 2025. Judge finished the season with a .331 batting average, 1.144 OPS and 9.7 WAR, leading all of MLB in each statistic. Not only did Judge lead MLB in these categories, but he did so by large margins proving that he was truly on a different level from everyone else this season. Judge hit an impressive 53 home runs, good for fourth most in MLB and second most in the American League. This impressive feat also broke the record for most home runs hit by a batting champion in MLB history, previously held by Mickey Mantle who hit 52 home runs in his triple crown season in 1956. Judge has proven to be someone who can hit for power and average, which has become uncommon in recent years. Judge was in a tight race for A L

MVP with Seattle Mariners catcher Cal Raleigh as the regular season came to a close. Raleigh hit 60 home runs, two short of the American League record. Judge may have been beaten in home runs and RBIs, but he is ahead of Raleigh in every other important statistic and he's still in the top five in MLB in home runs and RBIs. Raleigh certainly showed he's a great power hitter, but he didn't hit for a batting average anywhere close to Judge, nor was he able to get on base as consistently. Judge had a .457 on base percentage which led the MLB by a whopping 58 points. On the other hand, Raleigh had a .359 on base percentage which simply isn't on the same level as what Judge did this season.

Judge was a key part of the Yankees' success this season, as he has been for basically his entire career. He made several exceptional plays in right field such as a home run robbery on July 11 against the Chicago Cubs. His ability to get on base better than anyone was a crucial piece of the Yankees' offense. When the

Yankees offense was struggling, Judge served as a spark to get the rest of the team going. He is also a batter that pitchers are understandably afraid of. Judge got an AL leading 124 walks which contributed to him having an on base percentage far greater than anyone else.

When deciding on this year's AL MVP, there may be some voters that are too focused on Raleigh's 60 home run season. It's certainly an impressive achievement that's only been done a handful of times, but Judge beat out Raleigh in almost every other statistic while still placing top five in MLB in home runs. Judge is a unique player in baseball where he can consistently beat a pitcher in many ways, whether that's with a basic single or smashing a ball out of the park. Judge can do it all and he's more than deserving of his third MVP award.

Raiyan: Cal Raleigh
Nobody truly expected the absolutely historic season that Seattle Mariners designated hitter and catcher Raleigh would have in the 2025 MLB regular season. He was the main force

propelling the Mariners to a 90-72 record and a guaranteed spot in the ALDS, the first time the Mariners have achieved this feat since 2001.

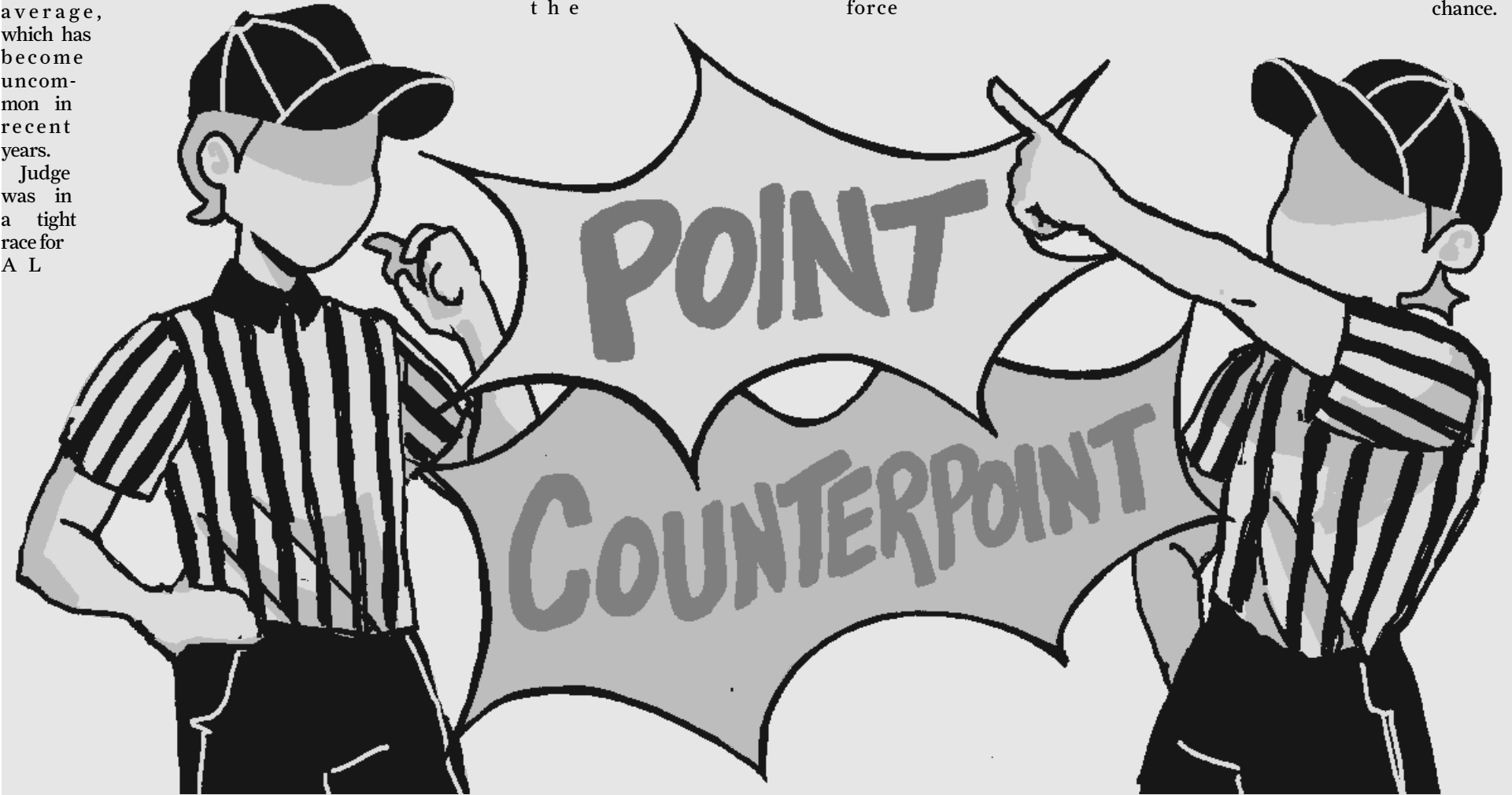
Raleigh hit 60 home runs, joining an elite group of hitters to have 60 or more in the regular season, becoming the first ever catcher in this group. Also, 60 is notably larger than Judge's total of 53. Each home run was scored around an average of every 9.9 ABs, which leads the league, according to Pro Baseball Reference. He also had 125 RBIs, an OPS of .959, a SLG of .589, an OBP of .359, 161 wRC+ and 7.3 WAR. Though Raleigh only leads the MLB in RBIs, he is generally highly ranked in many statistical categories, especially when considering only the AL.

We all know, however, that stats do not tell the full picture, and that is especially true for Raleigh. It may be difficult to hear for some, but the fact that he was a good catcher is a major advantage over Judge's exceptional regular season out fielding. The physical and mental toll that playing catcher entails is difficult to elucidate properly, but most

baseball players would agree it's one of the hardest positions to play on defense.

Catchers do a lot of work in lowering the runs and general stats of opposing hitters, something that cannot be clearly recorded on a stat sheet. Raleigh's true value to the Mariners is therefore difficult to truly define, but it is assuredly understated and under recorded. Ultimately, Raleigh excellently played a difficult position that limits opponents' offense while producing outstanding offensive numbers himself. Outside of Raleigh's upcoming seasons, we may never see such a brilliant performance from a catcher ever again. It is a year worth crowning with an MVP award.

One final area in which Raleigh far exceeds Judge is nicknames. Though Judge's most popular moniker is a misspelling of his name that would constitute a crime in most places, Raleigh has been fittingly named "Big Dumper." If the esteemed members of the Baseball Writers Association of America take a truly holistic view of this MVP race, Judge may not stand a chance.



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS



UConn defeated Creighton 3-0 at Joseph J. Morrone Stadium. Kyle Durham, the goalie, achieved his fifth clean sheet of the season with a career-high 10 saves.
PHOTO BY LUISA MASSASSO, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS.

THE FANTASY FORECAST: A MIX OF MIDTERMS AND LINEUPS

by Chase Cassidy
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We are halfway through the fall semester, excluding finals week, and have completed nearly a third of the NFL season! What does this mean exactly? Well, this signals a critical point for both academic and Fantasy Football success. So, if you're looking to turn around your grades or maintain that 4.0, make sure to hit the library. And if you're seeking a fantasy comeback or want to continue that win streak, then check out this week's Fantasy Forecast.

The Valedictorians: Players in the 1 Spot

As we head into Week 6, injuries and upsets have caused several teams to completely fall apart. Although, if you look at the backfield of the Denver Broncos, you'll see that running back J.K. Dobbins has been as steady as a rock. The fifth-year player has put up consistent fantasy performances all season and will look to continue that this Sunday against the New York Jets. His 20-carry, 79-yard performance this past week against a hardy Philly defense suggests he'll have a walk in the park against

the Jets. If Dobbins is one of your players, make sure he finds the starting lineup.

Check the headlines from last Sunday night's game, and most will read something about ice melting in Maye. This clever pun alludes to the New England Patriots quarterback Drake Maye and his gritty showdown against the Buffalo Bills. The nail-biter highlighted all of Maye's capabilities and boosted the team's confidence as they look to battle a 1-4 New Orleans Saints.

While Boston celebrates the glitz and glamour of beating Josh

Allen, they do so without running back Antonio Gibson, who suffered a torn ACL in the second quarter. This means fantasy users can expect to see more passing plays, making Maye a desirable start.

The best thing a team can wish for is an easy win after a bye week. For the Green Bay Packers, that may just come true in Week 6 as they welcome the Cincinnati Bengals to Lambeau Field. If Cincinnati's secondary has taught fantasy users anything, it's that opposing wide receivers have a good chance

to secure easy targets and rack up their points. This means that Green Bay's wide receiving corps, Romeo Doubs and Christian Watson, should have a field day against the Bengals. In addition to the lackadaisical opponent, Jayden Reed being on the IR means Doubs or Watson must find your lineup this Sunday.

The Low GPAs (Gridiron Performance Average)

The Carolinas are always looking for more tourists to walk along their white sand beaches and explore the Appalachian Mountains. They should also add a new starting QB to that list, as Bryce Young is not getting the job done. The Alabama alum has coughed up seven turnovers this season, four through the air and three on the ground. Apart from a breakout game early in Week 2, Young has yet to exceed 13 points in fantasy. As the Panthers clash with the Cowboys this Sunday, fantasy users should stray from Young and seek other options.

Sandcastles, cornbread and the Bengals' offensive line all have something in common: they crumble easily under little pressure. While this has been an issue in Cincinnati for years, the O-line is showing its faults in full this season. This makes it hard for anyone in the backfield to do their job and, more importantly, harder to do it well. RB Chase Brown has fallen victim to this, and his fantasy records reflect that. The Bengals must face the Packers, who will be fresh off a bye and equipped with defensive star Micah Parsons. If you haven't done so already, sit Chase Brown and look for alternatives.

Few NFL players can play past the age of 30. Even fewer dare to go past 40. In his ninth season, Cooper Kupp is showing he is no exception. The 32-year-old veteran is failing to display the fantasy performances he once did for the L.A. Rams. As the Seattle Seahawks' number two wide out, Kupp has yet to score a touchdown all season or break double-digit receptions in a game. The Seahawks will look to go 4-2 this Sunday against the fairly matched Jacksonville Jaguars. If Kupp is sitting in your flex spot, perhaps it's time to retire him to the bench and start someone else.

As always, best of luck Huskies.



Ja'Marr Chase of the Cincinnati Bengals and Derrick Henry of the Baltimore Ravens. Chase and Henry were on the Fantasy "buy low" list for trading going into Week 5.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @FANTASYFOOTBALLTODAY ON INSTAGRAM

THE RENAISSANCE OF BYGONE QUARTERBACKS FROM MAC JONES’S PERSPECTIVE



Mac Jones of the San Francisco 49ers. Jones is a quarterback that has gotten better with age.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @MACJONES_10 ON INSTAGRAM

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Kicking off Week 5 of the 2025 NFL season on Thursday, the injury-ridden San Francisco 49ers were in a classic western showdown with the Los Angeles Rams at Sofi Stadium. To win this game — one in which practically everyone counted them out — the 49ers needed to show up big. Ironically, it was one injured player who made the biggest difference: backup quarterback Mac Jones.

In a 26 - 23 overtime win to take possession of first place in the NFC West, a battered Jones had a career night, throwing for 342 yards and two touchdowns with a 67% completion percentage, posting a final passer rating of 100.9. 142 of the yards were to wide receiver Kendrick Bourne, who Jones previously threw to during his New England tenure.

Fans and media pundits immediately compared Jones’s career to that of quarterbacks Baker Mayfield, Sam Darnold and Jared Goff. These were all seen as “mediocre or worse” quarterbacks who found success later in their careers. This trend in quarterback performance has captured recent NFL discourse since people have generally moved on from quarterbacks that didn’t immediately take off. The idea that a quarterback could somehow develop into a star after a few years of bad tape was foreign, at least up until now.

It isn’t difficult to see why Jones gets placed on a list of supposedly ameliorated quarterbacks. Outside of a solid rookie campaign in 2021 with the Patriots, between 2022 and 2024, Jones was one of the worst quarterbacks in the league. During this time, he was continuously benched by former Patriots head coach Bill Belichick and traded to the Jacksonville Jaguars where he was mediocre at best. Many thought his career might’ve been over, and

the narrative that he never had starter capability in the first place ramped up. Therefore, his 2025 resurgence to a level of play that has so far succeeded his rookie season has come as a welcome surprise to many.

The cause of such a career arc among these quarterbacks is threefold, and Jones perfectly encapsulates them all. One of the obvious answers is simply the talent surrounding the quarterback. During his rookie year in New England, the position players around Jones were underrated impact players such as Bourne, Jakobi Meyers, Rham-

ondre Stevenson, Damien Harris and Hunter Henry. According to PFF, his connection with Bourne that season was the fourth most prolific in the league, averaging a passer rating of 137.8 when targeting him. Jones also benefited from a top ten offensive line that season. Currently, on the 49ers, Jones is paired with star backs Christian McCaffrey and Kyle Juszczyk, wide receiver Ricky Pearsall and once again, Bourne.

Between his rookie year and the current season, some of that positional and line talent was lost and certainly contributed to his decline. However, this doesn’t

completely explain the fall off, given that the difference in talent was not big enough to produce the abysmal seasons his offenses produced in 2022 and 2023, and the mediocre 2024 season. A second key factor to career success that fills this gap is coaching, more specifically, the scheme Jones was playing in.

During his rookie season, Jones shined under New England’s offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels. Jones is excellent at quickly executing short and intermediate throws to dink-and-dunk down the field and was able to connect on occasional deep shots if available despite having what fans called a “noodle-arm.” Combined with a strong running game that opponents were forced to respect and a vintage Belichick defense to rely on, Jones led one of the NFL’s best offenses that season. In 2025, Jones now finds himself with head coach Kyle Shanahan, whose 49ers employ a West Coast offensive philosophy emphasizing exactly the concepts that made Jones successful in his rookie year.

In 2022, McDaniels left the Patriots organization and his replacement was Belichick’s longtime friend and defensive assistant Matt Patricia. It was a shock to no one when the offense, including Jones’s play, heavily regressed that season. The team struggled

with basic fundamentals: blocking was horrendous and seemingly destroyed Jones’s internal clock, and the offensive scheming was so bad that after a home loss to the Bills, Kendrick Bourne publicly expressed frustrations with the coaching staff. Later on in Jacksonville, he continued to suffer from poor coaching under offensive coordinator Press Taylor and head coach Doug Pederson.

In his final season with the Patriots in 2023, Jones actually did have a solid offensive coordinator in Bill O’Brien, who previously had coached Tom Brady to some of his best personal seasons. Despite this, Jones’s numbers fell even harder, and he was eventually benched for good. This is because coaching is not a one-dimensional job — a good understanding of “x’s and o’s” and fundamentals is half the battle. Being motivational and stimulating confidence is the other half, and is the final key factor explaining quarterback resurgence, especially for Jones.

It’s no secret that by 2023, Belichick’s relationship with many in the Patriots organization had been deeply strained, killing the atmosphere in New England. MassLive’s Mark Daniels would eventually report that support given to Jones by coaches was practically nonexistent. A quarterback cannot possibly succeed under such conditions, and a legendary coach such as Belichick undoubtedly knows this. Recent behavior coaching at the University of North Carolina indicates that perhaps he just doesn’t care anymore.

After defeating the Rams, Jones told the media that pregame, Shanahan was “pissed” that the 49ers were underdogs. He told Jones to “let it fly,” to which he responded, “You don’t have to tell me twice.” Though quarterbacks nowadays have renewed their careers for various reasons, with Jones, it was a combination of them all, but none more important than finally getting a coach who believed in him.



Mac Jones throwing a football. Jones’ performance has improved under head coach Kyle Shanahan.

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Daily

Sports

PATRIOT PLACE:

PATRIOTS WEEK 5 OVERVIEW AND WEEK 6 OUTLOOK

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The Patriots just had their biggest win in maybe a half decade. The last few seasons haven't been overly kind to the Patriots. Over the last two years, they won a combined eight games, and while Mac Jones offered some hope during his rookie season, his second year's 8-9 record saw the Patriots begin their losing ways. Ever since their win over the Rams in the Super Bowl in February 2019, the Patriots have been looking for their marquee win that would see them get back on track. They've had six starting quarterbacks since that win, but it seems the most recent one will be theirs for a long time.

Drake Maye's performance in New England's 23-20 win over the Bills on Sunday Night Football was the best of his career. On the surface, it looks strong, but not awe-inspiring: sub-300 yards, no touchdowns and his worst completion percentage since Week 1. Surely his game against Miami with three touchdowns and having completed 82.6% of his passes meant more? Or perhaps last week against the Panthers: a 155.6 passer rating was the best of his career. This game proved there is more to football than just watching the box score.

Aside from Maye's incredible display, his WR1 put on a show: Stefon Diggs followed his first 100-yard game as a Patriot against Carolina with a ten catch, 146-yard performance against his former team. The two clearly have elite chemistry, and that isn't a localized belief anymore: the Patriots offense has a bona fide star at both quarterback and receiver.

It's difficult to describe just how much this game meant to Mike Vrabel and the Patriots' fan base. While they technically beat the Bills last year in Week 18, a Joe Milton vs. Mitch Trubisky and Mike White showdown isn't exactly something to gloat about. Sitting at 2-2 going into the game with a pair of bad losses to the Raiders and Steelers, the Patriots needed a big performance against the Bills, and that's exactly what they got. Had they been blown out,

questions would've been asked of everyone involved. Thankfully, they'll avoid that sentiment for the foreseeable future, barring a total collapse over the rest of the season.

Aside from Maye and Diggs, the offense has their ups and downs. The running backs once again struggled, with TreVeyon Henderson leading the group with just 24 yards (4.0 per carry). Rhamondre Stevenson fumbled in the first quarter, one of three across both teams in the opening fifteen minutes. Stevenson also found the end zone for both of the Patriots' touchdowns with just seven carries for 14 yards. The killer for the offense was Antonio Gibson's injury: it was revealed he tore his ACL and is out for the season.

Defensively, Marcus Jones may have ascended to be the team's CB2 over the more highly paid Carlton Davis. Jones has been incredible as a slot man, and his coverage of Keon Coleman early in the game was outstanding despite a height difference of eight inches. His red-zone interception was the defensive play of the game. Christian Gonzalez came up with

The New England Patriots against the Miami Dolphins on Sept. 15, 2025. The Patriots won, 33-27.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @PATRIOTS ON INSTAGRAM



ing Coleman on Buffalo's penultimate drive, which forced a field goal. It was interesting to see Jack Gibbens get an extended run at linebacker even with the return of Jahlani Tavai from IR. Robert Spillane and

Christian Elliss remained the top two, but Gibbens wasn't all the far behind. Tavai played five of his fifteen snaps on the defensive line, specifically on the edge. **Could this be his new role as a depth piece?**

The main area the team struggled with was penalties. While a pass interference from Gibbens on James Cook was hurt late in the game, three more notable penalties came to mind. Back-to-back unnecessary roughness calls on young defensive linemen Cory Durdan and rookie Joshua Farmer cost the team thirty yards, and a false start from Vederian Lowe negated a Maye sneak for a first down on 3 & 1. Thankfully for the three, the Patriots won, and we'll forget about those penalties soon enough. The final piece to mention is the special teams: punter Bryce Baringer was crushing the ball, consistently pinning the Bills inside their own 15-yard line. Rookie kicker Andy Borregales has found his groove, as he is 13/13 in his last three games across all his kicks and his 52-yard game winner looked like it might have been

good from 65. Looking forward to next week, the team has little reason not to be as confident as ever. They'll go down south to New Orleans to take on the Spencer Rattler-led Saints. They are 1-4 but also are coming off their first win of the season after knocking off Jaxson Dart's Giants.

The Saints as a whole aren't a very good team, hence their 1-4 record. They played the Bills close in Week 4, but in the end still lost by two scores. Rattler throws for less than 200 per game, Alvin Kamara rushes for under four per carry and Rashid Shaheed leads receivers with 57 yards per game. Chirs Olave leads them in catches with 33.

Defensively, former Wyoming Bison Carl Granderson has been a nice surprise. After having a career best 8.5 sacks in 2023, the defensive end dropped back to 5.5 in 2024. He has 4.5 through five games this year. Bryan Bresee is also a name along that defensive line, as he was a first-round pick from Clemson in 2023. Cam Jordan, at 36-years-old, is still playing too.

Brandin Cooks features as the team's WR3, one of three former Patriots on the roster. The Saints made some deals with Mike Vrabel and company this offseason, as they sent Davon Godchaux and Ja'Lynn Polk to Bayou country for day late round picks. Polk is ineligible to play due to his being on IR, but Godchaux is doing exactly what he did in New England: take up a roster spot.

The Patriots are favored by 3.5 points, but I'd expect them to play far better than that. Keeping Olave quiet and limiting the deep threats that Shaheed and Cooks will be a task, but I'd expect a dominant Patriots win. A score of 28-10 feels reasonable, but it could easily be an even larger blowout.



Stefon Diggs smiling on the field. The Patriots played the Buffalo Bills on Oct. 5, winning 23-20.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @PATRIOTS ON INSTAGRAM

