



Secretive Tolland detention center plans paused

by Jenna Outcalt
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Plans for a juvenile detention center in Tolland were put on hold until further evaluations could take place, according to a press release from Connecticut General Assembly.

Town officials in Tolland claimed that they were kept in the dark about the original plan to build the detention center, sparking concern and outrage. State Rep. Tammy Nuccio of Tolland said she was “furious” about the secrecy in a Feb. 12 Facebook post.

“I’m sure there were meetings and tours in our town, and I was not notified,” she said. “It is common practice to always let other legislators know when you will be in their town, that common practice was circumvented and intentionally kept from your duly elected delegation.”

Tolland Town Manager explained how he found out about the plan and told the community he would continue investigating why the land purchase and plans were so obscured.

“Because this project was initiated without public awareness and completely in secrecy, the residents of Tolland have not had — and may not have — any opportunity to provide input and concerns,” Foley said in a Feb. 11 Facebook post. “The lack of transparency by the State of CT surrounding a project of this magnitude in such a critical area of our Town has been very disappointing, to say the least.”

“Let me be clear: this is not over. But this pause gives us the opportunity to fully examine what this facility would mean for Tolland before any final decision is made.”

REPRESENTATIVE NUCCIO

The land the state is at-



The Connecticut State Capitol building in Hartford. Tolland town officials plan to further evaluate a new juvenile detention center that the state has planned to build in the town.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SAGE ROSS ON FLICKR

tempting to purchase is along Tolland’s only main commercial corridor, “in close proximity to daycares and elementary schools,” according to the press release.

The press release stated the plan for the juvenile detention center was paused after a meeting between the Tolland legislative delegation, town officials, representatives of the Judicial Branch and state officials. Foley said in his post that the town’s concerns were more than a case of “not in my backyard” because “one could argue that this is not our backyard — it’s our front yard.”

“This is an important step forward for transparency and for the residents of Tolland,” the delegation said in a joint statement. “While this issue is far from resolved, we now have the opportunity to thoroughly examine what this facility would mean for our town before the state proceeds with any purchase. The voices of our residents must be heard in the process before any final decision is made,



The location where a new juvenile detention center is expected to be built. The State of Connecticut did not alert the municipality of Tolland of its plans.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CT INSIDER ON FACEBOOK

and we will make sure they are heard loud and clear.”

The press release said town officials will be requesting further review on matters such as economic impact, safety assessment and infrastructure effects. It also

said local lawmakers were promised more transparency from the state government as the project moves forward.

Nuccio said in a Feb. 18 Facebook post that she would “continue to fight to make sure Tolland is heard loud and

clear every step of the way.”

“Let me be clear: this is not over,” she said. “But this pause gives us the opportunity to fully examine what this facility would mean for Tolland before any final decision is made.”

NAUTICAL BOWLS IN STORRS TO CLOSE ON FRIDAY



An açai bowl offered by Nautical Bowls. The store’s final day before permanently closing will be this Friday.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF @NAUTICALBOWLSSTORRS ON INSTAGRAM

by Mikayla Bunnell
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Nautical Bowls Storrs, a smoothie bowl shop in Downtown Storrs, will be closing this Friday, according to an announcement from the store.

Nautical Bowls Storrs, a franchise store run by a local Mansfield family, opened in early 2024. They serve “superfood” açai and pitaya bowls with a variety of fruit and granola toppings, and smoothies.

The store announced its closing last week with posts on their social media and a message to those on their mailing list.

“This space was never just four walls and a counter. It was early mornings with familiar faces, kids picking their favorite toppings, conversations in line that turned into friendships, and the quiet moments where someone told us we made their day a little better. That’s what we’ll carry with us,” the store

wrote on its Facebook page.

Upon opening, Nautical Bowls Storrs became a quick partner of University of Connecticut Athletics, appearing outside of Gampel Pavilion to give free samples and bringing women’s basketball player Ice Brady to the store to help host a Grand Celebration event in April 2024.

Nautical Bowls often did fundraisers for clubs and or-

ganizations in the area, including at UConn. Some organizations include UConn Panhellenic, UConn Club Track, HuskyTHON and UConn Black Students Association.

The store is one of two smoothie bowl shops in Downtown Storrs. Just a few steps away is Playa Bowls, which also opened in early 2024.

Nautical Bowls Storrs will remain open for its regular hours for the rest of this week: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and Thursday and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday.



The exterior of the Nautical Bowls store in Storrs, Conn. The store will be closing Friday, Feb. 27 after opening in early 2024.

PHOTO BY OLIVIA DICKSON, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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WE ARE NOT THE
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News

Trump tariffs stalled by Supreme Court decision

by Jenna Outcalt

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The Supreme Court ruled on Friday that President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs were unconstitutional in a 6-3 decision.

Trump had imposed many of his tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which gives the president the power to regulate importation in states of emergency. The coalition of plaintiffs suing Trump for the tariffs argued that IEEPA does not allow the president to control taxation, which includes tariffs.

In their decision, the Supreme Court ultimately agreed that IEEPA "does not authorize the President to impose tariffs."

In the summary of the case from Chief Justice John Roberts, Justice Neil Gorsuch and Justice Amy Coney Bar-

rett, the court said Trump's interpretation of IEEPA would "represent a transformative expansion" of presidential power over taxation.

"It is also telling that in IEEPA's half century of existence, no President has invoked the statute to impose any tariffs, let alone tariffs of this magnitude and scope," the justices wrote.

"IEEPA merely allows the President to impose tariffs somewhat more efficiently to deal with foreign threats during national emergencies."

JUSTICE BRETT KAVANAUGH

The summary also noted that IEEPA was not at all explicit about tariff powers, even though it mentioned importation.

"Had Congress intended to convey the distinct and extraordinary power to impose tariffs, it would have done so expressly, as it consistently has in other tariff statutes," it said.

Roberts, Gorsuch and Barrett, who typically lean conservative, all voted to strike down the tariffs, along with more liberal justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

In the majority opinion written by Roberts, the court said IEEPA was not explicit enough to extend the president taxation powers.

"Based on two words separated by 16 others in Section 1702(a)(1)(B) of IEEPA—'regulate' and 'importation'—the President asserts the independent

power to impose tariffs on imports from any country, of any product, at any rate, for any amount of time," Roberts wrote. "Those words cannot bear such weight."

"I'm ashamed of certain members of the court, absolutely ashamed for not having the courage to do what's right for this country."

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

Justices Brett Kavanaugh, Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas dissented. Kavanaugh wrote in his dissent that using IEEPA to impose tariffs did not grant "any new sub-

stantive power" to Trump.

"Since the Founding, numerous statutes have authorized—and still do authorize—the President to impose tariffs and other foreign import restrictions," he wrote. "IEEPA merely allows the President to impose tariffs somewhat more efficiently to deal with foreign threats during national emergencies."

Trump called the decision "deeply disappointing."

"I'm ashamed of certain members of the court, absolutely ashamed for not having the courage to do what's right for this country," he said in a press conference.

On the same day the decision came out, Trump announced on Truth Social that he had instated global 10% tariffs on all countries. These tariffs have a 150-day time limit. It is still unclear whether businesses will be able to argue for refunds for tariffs they had already paid.



U.S. president, Donald Trump holding a signed executive order. Trump has expressed disappointment that the Supreme Court has ruled against his imposed tariffs. PHOTO COURTESY OF WTVC-TV NEWSCHANNEL 9 NEWS ON FACEBOOK

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DAILY

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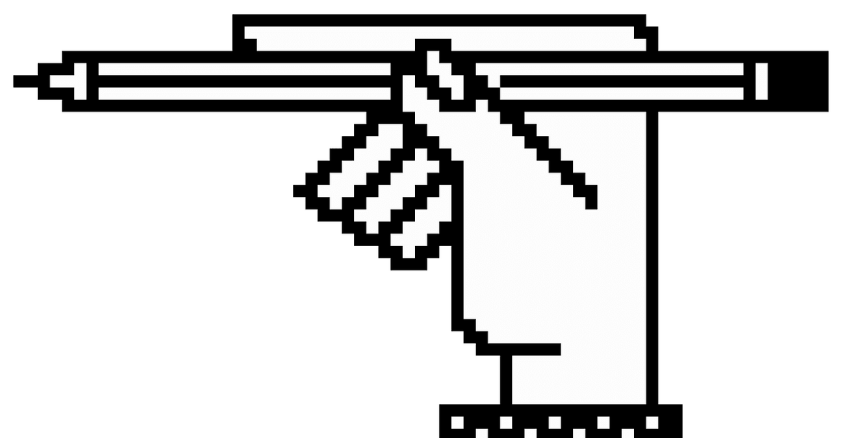
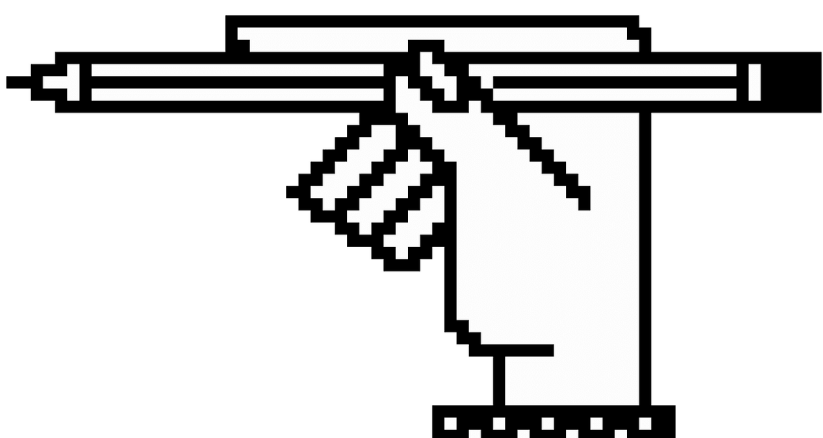
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CHILL PILL

NOT EVERYTHING NEEDS CLOSURE

by **Ky'Lynn Monts**

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We were taught to believe that every ending should come with clarity. The final conversation. A clean explanation. Something that we can look back on and say, “this is where it ended, and this is why.” I mean, we see it all the time in movies where the girl leaves the guy because she realizes her true value. Closure has been sold to us as emotional responsibility, proof that we have processed things correctly and that we have handled loss the “right” way.

But real life is not at all that considerate.

Welcome to Chill Pill, a bi-weekly column every Wednesday about slowing down in a world that rarely lets us do as college students. Here, we will talk about balance, burnout and the small things that can make college life feel a little less overwhelming.

Sometimes people leave without any explanation. Some relationships fizzle out slowly, without the dramatic final moment. Sometimes friendships dissolve slowly — you forget that the last message was sent months ago, and neither of you notices that it has become your last. Some versions of yourself vanish without any warning, and you never get a chance to say goodbye to the person you used to be.

And what we are left with are questions that we do not have the answer to.

Closure has a strange pressure to be chased, as if healing cannot begin without it. We

over-analyze conversations in our heads, draft messages in our notes that we will never send and imagine alternative endings where everything that is thought about is said out loud. We spend time convincing ourselves that if we learned why, it would be so much easier to move on. But when the understanding does not arrive, we are left longing for it until it shows up.

Still closure is not always a door that opens — sometimes it's a door that has never existed.

Not every loss comes with meaning attached. Not every lesson comes neatly underlined. Sometimes things end because they do what they do. Sometimes people change in ways that no longer align with us. Sometimes the timing is not quite right, and it doesn't matter how much emotional intelligence you have; it won't be enough to fix it. And there is a lot of grief that comes with accepting that. Because closure promises peace. Letting go without it feels as if we failed at something that was out of our control. It's like walking away mid-sentence, like leaving a slice of pizza half eaten or a song unfinished. It can feel irresponsible, unresolved or even wrong. We worry that once we have stopped searching for answers, we've given up too easily.

But maybe moving forward is not the answer at all. Maybe it is all about how to live with open ends.

Many of the most formative moments in our lives do not come with explanations. We do not always know why we

were chosen, why vomiting stopped working or why someone couldn't meet us where we were. Yet life keeps moving. We continue to become. If we were to wait for closure, it could turn into a way of halting our own growth. Like holding our breath for a signal that may never come. There is a quiet strength when deciding to stop asking questions that sometimes hurt more than they help.

Now this does not mean to start pretending like you do not care, or to rush the healing phase and invalidate your own feelings. But what it does mean is to acknowledge that some clarity comes from distance, and some may not come at all. It means allowing yourself to say, “I do not fully understand what happened, but I know how it made me feel and that is enough”.

Closure, when it happens, is a gift. But it is not a necessity.

We can honor what something meant to us without fully understanding why it ended. We can miss people and still accept that they are no longer part of our lives.

We can hold gratitude and disappointment at the same time.

Not everything needs closure to be real. Endings don't need to make sense to matter. Sometimes chapters exist simply because they shaped us, and that is enough to turn the page. And maybe that is the kind of acceptance that doesn't arrive at all at once, but comes in slowly, like learning to live with unanswered questions without letting them define you.

That, too, is a form of peace.



Two UConn students conversing on the Student Union Mall. Despite the heavy snow, spring solstice, March 20, is just around the corner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UCONN ON FACEBOOK

'Taylor Tomlinson: Prodigal Daughter'

BRINGS COMEDY TO AI, LOVE, RELIGION, DEATH AND SEXUALITY

by Jaylyn Davis
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On Feb. 24, stand-up comedian Taylor Tomlinson's fourth comedy special, "Prodigal Daughter," was released on Netflix. The comedy special takes place in a church, and it features numerous topics, including religion, death and sexuality. Throughout the special, Tomlinson makes hilarious jokes that produce laughter within the massive audience.

Tomlinson began the special by thanking everyone for coming, even though they didn't have to come since "AI is getting good." Building on that statement, Tomlinson mentioned that her phone's auto-correct feature consistently capitalizes the letter G in God. Because of that, Tomlinson jokingly asserted that AI loves God. She then declared that she doesn't use AI platforms like ChatGPT because she's not ready to have a relationship with a robot yet.

Following her discussion on AI, Tomlinson talked about relationships in general. She described a time she sat on the couch with her lover, and she asked him if he would break up with her if he were to find out she was his cousin. After her lover said, "yes," Tomlinson texted three couples that same question. They all responded, "Do we have to tell anybody?" From that response, Tomlinson facetiously declared that is what love looks like.

Moving on, Tomlinson discussed religion. By using satirical humor, Tomlinson made references to Bible stories, including Noah's Ark. She also described her experience in being religious as a child and becoming less religious as she got older. One part of the discussion that stuck out to me was her comparison between the story of Jesus's birth and the story of

Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. She declared that the story of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection from the dead is better than the story of Jesus's birth, which I feel like is debatable since Jesus's birth is as important as his crucifixion and resurrection.

After religion, Tomlinson talked about death, which is generally a dark subject. However, with her jokes and satirical humor, the concept became comical for the audience. The first thing Tomlinson talked about in her death discussion was writing her will. While she's young and not at risk of dying, she wrote her will, so she could determine who inherits what when she dies. Besides her will, Tomlinson mentioned her mother's ashes and how her father gave them to her grandmother when he remarried.

The last thing Tomlinson talked about in her comedy special was sexuality, with a special emphasis on bisexuality. She joked that straight men are difficult to communicate with and that she's been to couples therapy a few times when she dated men. She also talked about her personal experiences in dating women, asserting that they're better than her experiences in dating men.

To close the comedy special, Tomlinson said that she feels grateful for her role as a church comedian for her stand-up comedy career. Afterwards, she gave a preview of her upcoming Prodigal Daughter Tour by playing a clip that contains a series of jokes from her previous comedy shows.

Overall, the comedy special was very amusing. I love comedy, so this was an excellent thing to watch. My only concern is that audiences might've disliked some parts of the comedy special, especially the way Tomlinson jokes about God and religion.



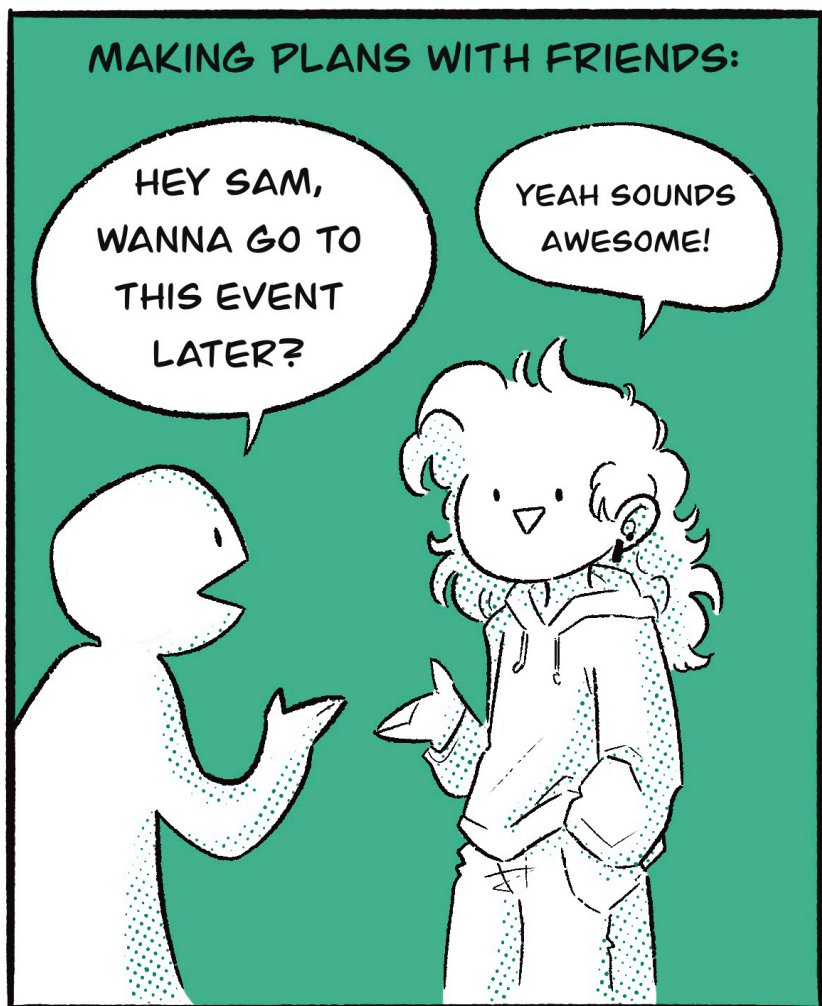
Taylor Tomlinson posing for her new Netflix special "Prodigal Daughter." Tomlinson joked about a variety of topics in the stand-up show held within a church. PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR TOMLINSON ON FACEBOOK

Rating: 4.5/5



Taylor Tomlinson on stage during her new Netflix special "Prodigal Daughter." The special gave a preview for Tomlinson's upcoming Prodigal Daughter tour. PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX IS A JOKE ON FACEBOOK

COMICS





Life

FOUR 2026 MOVIE RELEASES TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR

by **Pierce Colfer**
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We're only two months into 2026 and the year is already shaping up to be a great one for movies. Blockbusters like "Project Hail Mary" and Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" may have already caught your eye, but there are dozens of smaller projects that might not have found their way to your feed yet. Here are four movies to keep on your radar as the year progresses.

Digger, directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu - Oct. 2

"Digger" is an upcoming black comedy directed by four-time Oscar winner Alejandro G. Iñárritu. Accompanied by the logline "a comedy of catastrophic proportions," the movie stars Tom Cruise as Digger Rockwell, the most powerful man in the world who "embarks on a frantic mission to prove he is humanity's savior before the disaster he's unleashed destroys everything," according to the movie's IMDb description.

Iñárritu previously won back-to-back Oscars for Best Director in 2015 and 2016 with "Birdman" and "The Revenant," but since then his career has been quieter. He's only released one movie since 2022's "Bardo," which received mixed reviews and only one nomination at the Oscars for its cinematogra-

phy.

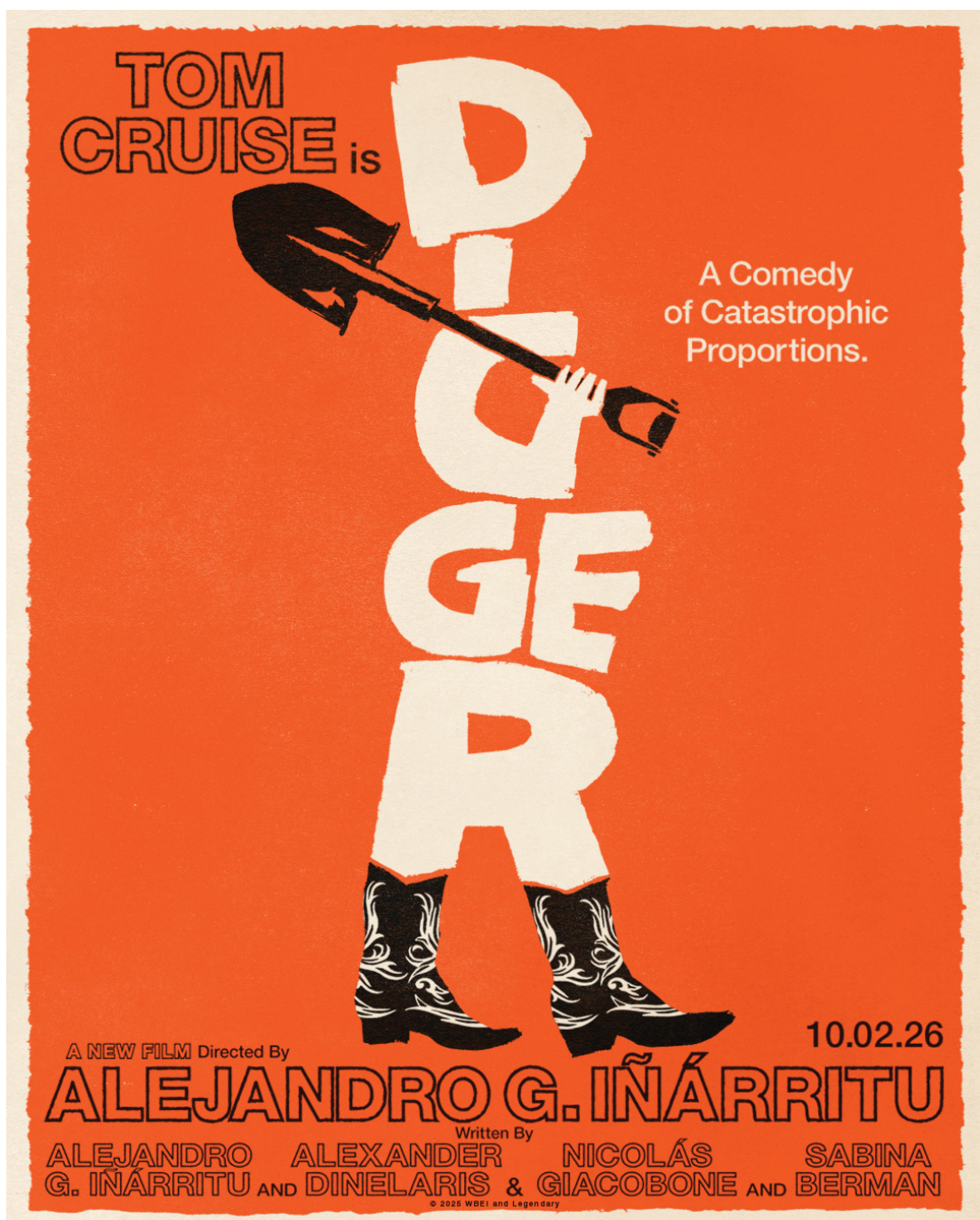
However, "Digger" looks like it might be Iñárritu's return to form. The movie boasts an impressive \$125 million budget and is being produced by Warner Bros. Pictures, who are coming off the backs of two major successes in "Sinners" and "One Battle After Another." The supporting cast surrounding Cruise will include Jesse Plemons, John Goodman, Sandra Hüller, Michael Stuhlbarg, Sophie Wilde and Riz Ahmed.

When Iñárritu's newest film hits theatres in IMAX on Oct. 2, it will be up for the audience to decide whether he has another hit on his hands, or if he's dug himself into a deeper hole.

Wildwood, directed by Travis Knight - Oct. 23

"Wildwood" is an upcoming stop-motion animated fantasy film produced by Laika Studios, the studio behind other stop-motion movies like "Coraline," "ParaNorman" and "Kubo and the Two Strings." Based on the 2011 children's novel of the same name, "Wildwood" follows Prue McKeel, who goes to a magical forest near Portland, Oregon to save her infant brother Mac.

"Wildwood" will be Laika's sixth film and their first since 2019's "The Missing Link." The seven-year gap marks the longest time between releases for the studio, and based on



A poster for the new Alejandro G. Iñárritu movie, "Digger", starring Tom Cruise. The movie is expected to premiere on Oct. 2nd, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM CRUISE ON FACEBOOK

what director Travis Knight has said, it's not hard to see why. In a 2024 interview with Empire Magazine, Knight said that the film was "incredibly ambitious" and "the hardest thing we have ever done," describing epic battles and aerial sequences.

The movie stars Peyton Elizabeth Lee as McKeel,

alongside a voice cast that includes Carey Mulligan, Mahershala Ali, Awkwafina, Angela Bassett and Jacob Tremblay.

As soon as Laika released "Coraline" in 2009, they became a staple of stop-motion animation in the industry. All five of their previous films were nominated for the Oscar for Best Animated Feature, though the studio has never produced a winner in that category. "Wildwood" could be the movie to finally bring the trophy home for the studio.

Clayface, directed by James Watkins - Oct. 23

"Clayface" is an upcoming body horror film and the third movie to be released as a part of James Gunn's DC Universe, following "Superman" and "Supergirl." Based on the DC Comics villain of the same name, the movie follows Matt Hagen, an actor who, after his face gets disfigured, turns to a scientist who transforms his body into clay.

Releasing "Clayface" as the third movie in the rebooted DCU is undeniably an interesting choice. The character has much less notoriety than many other DC characters, and Clayface's primary adversary, Batman, hasn't even appeared in any DCU projects yet.

On top of that, the movie isn't being marketed as a superhero film, but instead as a body horror film. "Clayface" was written by Hossein Amini and Mike Flanagan, the man behind the Netflix horror series "The Haunting of Hill House" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," and is directed by James Watkins, known for his horror movies "Eden Lake" and "Speak No Evil."

Gunn must have a lot of faith in "Clayface" to be putting a body horror film led by a lesser-known character so early on the DCU's slate. With an October release, the movie will be a great horror flick to get you into the Halloween spirit and to give you a taste as to what the DCU has in store for its audience.

Wild Horse Nine, directed by Martin McDonagh - Nov. 6

"Wild Horse Nine" is an upcoming thriller film directed by Martin McDonagh. The film stars John Malkovich and Sam Rockwell as CIA agents who are sent on a mission to Chile in 1973, with Steve Buscemi and Parker Posey in supporting roles. Not much is known about the film at the moment; Malkovich and Rockwell's characters will face a "trust-testing" journey from Santiago to Easter Island, according to an article from Deadline, but that's about all the information that's available at the moment.

Even with such little known about it, any movie from McDonagh is one to look out for. He got his start as a playwright, before winning an Oscar in 2004 for his short film "Six Shooter." Since then, he's directed five feature length films, including "In Bruges" and "The Banshees of Inisherin," earned himself six more Oscar nominations and has become known for his absurdist dark humor.

With an early November release date, McDonagh is likely positioning the film to make a big presence at the Oscars next year, so keep your eyes and ears peeled for more information about "Wild Horse Nine," and mark your calendars for Nov. 6.



On set for the upcoming movie "Wild Horse Nine." The movie is set to release in theaters Nov. 6, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES ON FACEBOOK



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Opinion

The Daily Campus

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► Editorial

Why the media shouldn't cave to the FCC



Brendan Carr, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC has put out statements leading a wave of self-censorship by broadcasters.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF OCCUPY DEMOCRATS ON FACEBOOK ON FACEBOOK

On Feb. 17, Stephen Colbert was intending to conduct an interview on "The Late Show" with James Talarico, a Democratic candidate for one of Texas' Senate seats. Before the show aired however, Colbert received word from CBS that the interview could not go on. Ostensibly, CBS' refusal to air the interview was due to new guidelines from the Federal Communications Commission about the "equal time" rule, which requires networks to give candidates running for political office an equal amount of time on the airwaves. This incident sets a dangerous precedent for how media companies may interact with the Trump administration, continuing a damaging trend of self-censorship. The Editorial Board believes that this self-censorship under government pressure is detrimental to press freedom and editorial independence.

To examine CBS' decision, we must first dig into the legal underpinnings of "equal time." The rule was established in the Radio Act of 1927, when radio was the dominant medium of airwaves. The equal time rule means that if a political candidate received airtime on a network, other candidates could legally ask for a similar amount of time on that network. The rule was supposed to ensure that all candidates were given a fair shake in the new media environment. But there were problems with the rigidity of the law, and in 1959, Congress carved out several exceptions from the rule. These excep-

tions included documentaries, breaking news coverage and bona fide news interviews. For decades, talk show programs such as "The Late Show" were considered part of this bona fide category by the FCC.

Trump's FCC, led by Chairman Brendan Carr, has recently upended these guidelines. On Jan. 21, the FCC released a public notice that the agency "has not been presented with any evidence that the interview portion of any late night or daytime television talk show program on air presently would qualify" for bona fide status. It's important to note that this notice, which runs contrary to longstanding precedent, did not fully state that programs like "The Late Show" would lose their exception. Instead, it left media companies to fill in the gaps.

When CBS banned Colbert from having Talarico on his show, even preventing the candidate's picture from being shown onscreen, it set an example that corporations would gladly take over where the FCC left off. Rather than risk incurring the wrath of Carr's agency, CBS' lawyers chose to avoid the issue altogether and censor one of their own programs.

Self-censorship has the potential for great harm to the media landscape. One facet of this harm is an increasing inability to hold the government accountable. CBS is no stranger to this. In December of 2025, the network abruptly pulled a "60 Minutes" seg-

ment detailing abuse allegations at CECOT, an El Salvadoran prison that Trump sent migrants to. Sharyn Alfonsi, correspondent for the story, blasted the decision as a "political" calculation. Even though it aired a month later, initially pulling the story meant that CBS stopped itself from being a watchdog. If other media outlets follow suit, it is likely that less abuse in government will be exposed.

Another issue lies in the federal government's newfound sense of power over the media. Carr did not have to enforce his new guidelines or make a ruling on whether CBS violated the equal time rule, because CBS did the hard work for him. Given the network's self-censorship, the FCC knows they might only have to make a threat rather than act on it. The implication of government pressure is what led to CBS' decision-making. Now that its new guidance and political pressure have been legitimized, the FCC has continued its censorship crusade, opening a probe into ABC's daytime talk show "The View" for interviewing Talarico on Feb. 2.

The Editorial Board believes that the decision to self-censor, as CBS did, only leads to more dangerous outcomes for press freedom. Caving to the FCC invites further attempts by the federal government to encroach on the independence of news outlets. Instead, members of the media should stand up for themselves and defy potential censorship.

Op-Ed: Why UConn needs a disability cultural center

by **Bonnibel Lilith Rampertab**
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Recently, the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) sent a survey to their clients by sixth-semester social work and sociology student Mia Giancola gauging for the interest of a disability cultural center on the Storrs campus. This proposition has been a long time coming. Disabled students tend to feel silenced, invisible and largely unaccounted for on campus. For these students to feel more supported and comfortable on campus, the Board of Trustees must listen to Giancola's advocacy for the disabled UConn community with the first step of establishing a disability cultural center at their meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 25.

Let's define disability briefly before we continue this dialogue. As there are legal, social and medical definitions of disability, combining these perspectives is important as none of them exist in a vacuum. Disability is an umbrella term covering a wide range of physical and mental conditions that are viewed as impairing to the person and their ability to navigate through activities in society according to the Center for Disease Control. This includes aspects such as mobility, sensing, cognition, emotional, biological and chronic conditions. Disability can fundamentally influence your worldview as a result, making it a cultural identity instead of only just a diagnosis.

Disabled people are taught to internalize ableism and think they're the problem explicitly and implicitly. They are taught not to accept these parts of their identities but rather to loathe themselves based on how the world treats them. As disability is more than just diagnoses but rather identities and cultures with a rich history of resistance and advocacy via activist movements and self-expression, it would be in UConn's best interest to listen to the push led by disabled UConn students to establish a disability cultural center to ensure that support for disabled students doesn't end with accessibility support and other accommodations.

Why do these misconceptions about disabled people persist? It all begins with ignorance snowballing into forms of bigotry. To understand this, we need a critical and intersectional lens, as identities do not exist in isolation and run concurrently to each other. We've seen bigoted ideologies towards other marginalized identities — such as in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and religion — in their general goals to be treated with equality, equity and the pursuit of mutual understanding. Cultural centers have been proven to build communities to combat this pervasive bigotry with immersive cultural celebration

and education.

As such, a disability cultural center would help fight misconceptions, discrimination and general ignorance about disability culture as proven with previous cultural centers. This institutional affirmation would be another step in the mission for disability advocacy and equity, giving important resources that demonstrate the importance of the social lives and cultures of disabled UConn students.

CSD offers a different sort of support for UConn students. They provide accommodations but aren't primarily engineered for building a disabled community culture. They support students in different ways from the cultural center structure of providing comfortable socializing space for UConn students centered about education. A disability cultural center would also be crucial for the success of disabled students for social advocacy and community-building instead of solely accommodations that help with mobility and learning.

Having a social life is evidently important to college students and disabled students aren't exempted from this. A disability cultural center would be integral for disabled students to be motivated to finish their degrees while fighting ableism with a support system they know they can rely on and advocate for them. They can also celebrate a culture they can associate with instead of feeling ashamed. This would help everyone through further ensuring inclusivity on campus and providing programming geared for educating on disability culture.

There have been other Disability Cultural Centers established across the country that are still operating to this day and serving the social needs of disabled students. This is a tried-and-true structure that has already made positive impacts on disabled students at the locations they are available. This is not a new movement, but a movement in dire need of being understood, supported and seen as a culture that one should be proud of.

Disability isn't the only thing that defines the disabled. It plays a role in their worldview and is part of their identity, but they are also more than this single factor. As disabled students have experienced ableism anywhere but even at UConn in overt and covert ways, a great first step for administration to do to meet the social needs of disabled people is to bring a disability cultural center to the Storrs campus and hopefully inspire more of these across the state and country in the future to give disabled college students spaces that affirm these aspects of their identity and keep improving themselves not only as students but also full human beings.

Opinion

Photo of the Day |



Bands compete in WHUS Radio's Battle of the Bands on Feb. 21, 2026 at Rome Ballroom. Vices Inc, Part of the Problem, Elizabory and West of the Gate all competed, but attendees voted West of the Gate the winner. PHOTO BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Alt, Gay and from New Jersey:

U.S. WOMEN'S FIGURE SKATERS SMASH STEREOTYPES

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Ciao and welcome back to Girl, Uninterrupted! As a resident sports-aphist, I've become incredibly invested in this year's winter Olympics, thanks to the U.S. women's figure skating team. Alysia Liu, Amber Glenn and Isabeau Levito, a.k.a. "the Blade Angels", a.k.a. "alt, gay and from New Jersey", have broken boundaries in winning gold and re-defining what it means to be a skater. The trio have connected with audiences internationally on an unprecedented level, primarily because of their unashamed senses of self.

Alysia Liu: Alt

Taking home the U.S.'s first gold medal for women's figure skating since 2002, Alysia Liu made history. Out of the hundreds of athletes competing at this year's Olympics, Liu instantly connected with audiences and I'm inclined to believe that her personal branding played a part. Halo-striped hair, smiley piercing and fun-patterned tights instantly differentiate her from the clean pastels expected of a figure skater.

With the "clean girl" aesthetic dominating, it's refreshing to see a successful young woman (an athlete representing the United States, at that) who's unafraid to show up completely as herself. Figure skating is an especially significant platform to show up in: music choice, costume and overall appearance have a weight in judges' decisions. Rather than shy away or dull down her appearance, Liu welcomes perception. "I want [the audience] to see my hair, my dress, my makeup, the way I skate," she said in an interview. "I want people to see everything about me." Her success comes as a slap in the face to everyone who's uttered the sentence "you won't get anywhere in life with that hair/piercing/tattoo".

Aside from her alternative appearance, Liu is an inspiration thanks to her unique mindset. She returned to the Olympics for the love of the game after taking a hiatus to live as a normal teenager. Genuine passion is such a rare motivator in higher level athletics and Liu serves as the perfect example of what sportsmanship should be. She chooses her own music and outfits, cementing her performances as an extension of herself and her art



LOGO BY ALEXA PAPPAS STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

rather than existing solely to be judged.

Amber Glenn: Gay

Amber Glenn made history as the first openly queer woman to figure skate at an Olympics. She continued breaking boundaries after taking home the gold alongside Liu in the team event. Glenn's decision to come out publicly should not be minimized. Again, figure skating is a subjective event, a fact Glenn herself is acutely aware of. "It's not whoever crosses the finish line first wins," Glenn said. "Part of it is up for discussion. It's up to that person's opinion. So of course I was scared that I'd be looked at as less feminine, less graceful." Despite facing backlash, Glenn posed with a pride flag after competing in the women's free skate championships and remains outspoken about her identity.

Aside from serving as an inspiration for LGBTQ+ ath-

letes, Glenn is also a strong advocate for mental health. She's been incredibly open about her struggles with depression and anxiety, ensuring that younger athletes know it's possible to succeed while facing mental health challenges.

Isabeau Levito: from New Jersey

She's beauty, she's grace, she's the image of a classic figure skater. At 18 years old, new Jersey native Isabeau Levito is the youngest member of the U.S. women's figure skating team. Recovering from an injury earlier in the season, Levito was unable to compete alongside Glenn and Liu in the team event and placed twelfth overall. She's received less press but remained a constant beacon of support for her fellow Blade Angels.

Levito doesn't come with as strong of an identifier as "alternative" or "queer." What's the significance of "from New Jersey" anyway? As a proud New Yorker, I'm inclined to scoff, but I won't.

Levito's draw comes in the fact that she's able to simultaneously uphold the perfect graceful figure skater image while being a normal teenager. On the ice, she's professional, downright magical and impeccable skilled. In her free time, she's anything but an ice queen. Most notably, Levito posted a TikTok about her favorite memory in the Olympic village: hijacking a golf cart between the hours of 2 and 4 in the morning. Ultimate chaos executed through the vessel of a four-wheeled vehicle? That, my friends, is the spirit of New Jersey.

The Blade Angels

Unabashedly showing up for oneself on an international platform is the utmost test of self-confidence. Gold medals aside, the Blade Angels cemented their place in U.S. history purely through their authenticity. I have faith that they've inspired generations of young athletes and young women to come - they've certainly inspired me.



Alysia Liu jumping in the air following her gold-winning figure skating routine at the 2026 winter Olympics. Liu, representing the United States, is currently attending UCLA. PHOTO COURTESY OF @VANITYFAIR ON INSTAGRAM

THE MIRACLE ON ICE: HOW 1980 UNITED A NATION

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It was Feb. 22, 1980, and Team USA took the ice against the Soviets in the Medal Round of the Olympics. The game would later be titled “The top sports moment of the 20th century” by Sports Illustrated in 1999.

How exactly did they get there? The answer was nothing short of a miracle.

It all started with the Olympic committee selecting a coach who knew how to build a championship team. The selection came down to a Minnesota coach, Herb Brooks, after leading Minnesota to three NCAA championships in 1974, 1976 and 1979.

Brooks was a top-tier coach who convinced the committee that the traditional style of American hockey would not be enough to defeat the successful European teams. He suggested a new approach mixing speed and conditioning, similar to the Europeans and the toughness of the Americans.

Brooks was also the final player to be cut from the 1960 Olympic team that went on to win gold. This added another level of personal drive to win on the world’s biggest stage.

When drafting his team, Brooks focused on players that fit his new hybrid-style approach instead of the best overall players. This caused a lot of tension between Brooks and the committee as he was doing it his own way and without the committee’s approval.

He later silenced the crowd

after he led team USA to multiple wins on the Olympic stage in Lake Placid, N.Y. in 1980.

The Winter Olympics took place in America during high tensions between the USA and the Soviets. The political tensions rose between the two countries, especially after the

heavy favorites once again in Lake Placid. The Soviets consisted of professional-level players, meanwhile the United States was comprised of more amateur players on the collegiate level, being the youngest team in the tournament.

Both squads went undefeated

Defeating Japan 16-0 to start the tournament and then winning 17-4 against the Netherlands and 8-1 against Poland, their box scores did not even look like hockey results. They easily cruised past teams before meeting up with the United States in a game that redefined

With just one period left to play, the Americans had 20 minutes to pull off the greatest upset in sports history.

The stands were filled with hopeful Americans chanting “U-S-A” anytime they could in hopes of gaining some momentum. A power-play goal by Mark Johnson gave Team USA hope as they tied the game 3-3 early in the third period. At about halfway through the period, team captain Mike Eruzione scored the go-ahead goal to put Team USA up 4-3. All they had to do was maintain the lead for the final minutes.

The final seconds ticked down as broadcaster Al Michaels delivered one of the most famous calls of all time:

“Do you believe in miracles? Yes!”

Two days later the Americans rallied back from a 2-1 deficit to defeat Finland 4-2 and take home the gold.

The movie *Miracle* was released in 2004 starring Kurt Russell as Brooks following the 1980 Olympic events.

Brooks passed away in August 2003, with the film paying tribute to him with the line:

“This film is dedicated to the memory of Herb Brooks, who died shortly following principal photography. He never saw it. He lived it.”

Forty-six years later on the exact day, Feb. 22, Team USA claimed their first gold medal since; defeating Canada 2-1 in an overtime thriller.

The miracle may have started nearly half a century ago, but the legacy continues every time the stars and stripes rise above Olympic ice.



Team USA celebrates their win against the USSR. This “miracle” win took place in the 1980 Winter Olympics.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CBS SPORTS ON FACEBOOK

nuclear arms race, the Space Race and the race for better and more advanced technology. This competition trickled down to hockey as any win over the opposing side showed strength.

The Soviets controlled the ice for many years, winning five of the six previous Winter Olympic Games before 1980 and were

in the group stage with Team USA pulling off a shocking 2-2 draw against Sweden and then a monstrous 7-3 win over a second place favorite Czechoslovakia. Even though the Americans showed hope defeating top teams, the Soviets were doing the same and doing it much better.

hockey in America.

The United States still entered as heavy underdogs but soon asserted themselves as true competitors, staying with the faster Soviets and staying in the game. The score was tied 2-2 after the first period and the second period ended 3-2 in favor of the Soviets.

MONEYBALL WEEKLY: THE BOSTON BRUINS’ DEADLINE PREVIEW

by **Jack Yadlon**
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Nine days remain before the NHL trade deadline. When this happens, no more trades can be sent in for the remainder of a team’s season. Many teams who are in good standing to make a run at the playoffs will beef up their rosters, while the bottom of the barrel will sell off parts that don’t fit their timeline.

The Boston Bruins have been in both of these positions in the last few years. The 2022-23 season saw the Bruins finish with the best record ever and they’d accordingly ship two of their first-round picks at the deadline to acquire Dmitri Orlov and Tyler Bertuzzi for a cup run.

The ensuing playoffs ended up being one of the worst endings to a team’s season ever, blowing a 3-1 series lead to the eight-seed Florida Panthers and making their accomplishments almost entirely pointless. Both players left in free agency, and captain Patrice Bergeron retired, leaving the Bruins in a bad spot for the future.

The Bruins did make the playoffs the following year but fell yet again to the Panthers, this time in the second round.

Last year was a total change of pace from the success they were not far removed from. Linus Ullmark was traded prior to the year due to cap reasons and head coach Jim Montgomery was fired a quarter of the way in. The deadline was a fire sale, with Brad Marchand and Brandon Carlo as two notable names

moved. Just two years after trading away two firsts at the deadline, Boston was the team coming away with two firsts.

The polarizing recent history of the Bruins has continued on this year. The team sits fifth in the Atlantic and seventh in the East, but they are a victim of their confer-

surrounding their plans is that they’ll be set to buy. With their recent history of playoff failures, this likely will be a lot less aggressive in terms of rentals and instead focused around long-term solutions.

The Bruins rank in the top ten in terms of goals scored but sit just outside the bottom ten of goals against. While

are expected to sell at this deadline, and they hold the most valuable piece at this year’s deadline in center Vincent Trocheck. With three years left on his deal after this season, Trocheck would fit well as a second-line center who can provide defense and scoring for years to come. The Rangers also have

team.

The trade for these two would come at a large cost. Trading seventh overall pick James Hagens would be a drastic move for Boston, but something would have to give. Fraser Minten and Matt Poitras could be options alongside a plethora of draft capital.

Philadelphia Flyers’ Rasmus Ristolainen is seen as another option on the blue line. With another year under contract after this year Ristolainen works with the timeline and would cost less than Schneider.

The Chicago Blackhawks could look to shed the contract of Ryan Donato, who signed a four-year deal after a breakout season with the team but has since fallen back to earth.

The St. Louis Blues and Vancouver Canucks hold two long-term big-time center options in Robert Thomas and Elias Pettersson. Both have clauses that they’d need to waive to facilitate a trade but could lock down the center role for the long-term.

Justin Faulk is another Blue who could be an option. Lackluster play makes him an option on the cheaper side but would also provide only a small upgrade from Andrew Peeke.

The Bruins will have many options at this year’s deadline to bolster their backend. The worry to not overspend still exists, but the drive to win a cup with Pastrnak complicates that. The Bruins will likely buy more supplementary than go all-in, but they remain a team to watch for a big splash.



The Boston Bruins during a team practice. The team sits fifth in the Atlantic and seventh in the East.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON BRUINS ON FACEBOOK

ence. While the top five of the league has three western teams, the top ten contains seven east teams, with the Bruins at tenth.

The gap between the Bruins and those directly above them is not large, but they have ground on those behind them. The general sentiment

some of this has come from starting goaltender Jeremy Swayman struggling and Joonas Korpisalo struggling even more, the defense has also been an issue and will likely be the focus of the deadline.

One of the obvious suitors in a trade would be the New York Rangers. The Rangers

blueliner Braden Schneider. Schneider is a right-handed defenseman, a position that New York already has a surplus of and may be in line to draft more of in June. Schneider is young and plays as a more defensive player, and with years of control left, he would also fit into this Bruins

Sports

Photo of the Day | Women's Basketball



The UConn Women's Basketball team takes on Providence at Gampel Pavilion on Sunday, February 22nd, 2026. Senior players and managers were honored after the game for their dedication and work to the program.

PHOTO BY ELLA GORHAM, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

WILKER'S WEEKLY: BEST FITS FOR THE TOP 25 NFL FREE AGENTS

by **Graham Wilker**

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The 2026 NFL offseason promises to be an interesting one, with several big-ticket players potentially moving elsewhere prior to the start of kickoff in September. While the trade market and NFL Draft promise to have their own storylines, the next item of business for teams will be free agency. ESPN released their list of their top 50 free agents, but we'll focus on the top 25 and their best fits in free agency.

No. 1 | ED Trey Hendrickson, Cincinnati Bengals

Best Fit: New England Patriots
The Patriots made a shocking Super Bowl appearance this year but ranked 22nd in sacks during the regular season. They have the cap space and need for a star edge defender.

No. 2 | WR George Pickens, Dallas Cowboys

Best Fit: Dallas Cowboys
Pickens being tagged and eventually re-signed seems all too obvious at this point. Javonte Williams was inked to a

3-year extension this week, so it seems a lock Pickens will at least initially return to Dallas (tag and trade?).

No. 3 | C Tyler Linderbaum, Baltimore Ravens

Best Fit: L.A. Chargers
The Chargers need to keep Justin Herbert protected. They allowed the second-most sacks in the league this year, and while the return of Rashawn Slater and Joe Alt in 2026 will be huge, adding Linderbaum would ensure Jim Harbaugh can play the power football he loves.

No. 4 | QB Daniel Jones, Indianapolis Colts

Best Fit: Indianapolis Colts
Jones revitalized his career in Indy, and I wouldn't expect either party to move on despite his torn Achilles.

No. 5 | ED Jaelan Phillips, Philadelphia Eagles

Best Fit: New York Jets
The Jets had the second-fewest sacks per game in the league last year, and Will McDonald is the only proven edge talent they have.

No. 6 | WR Alec Pierce, Indianapolis Colts

Best Fit: Buffalo Bills
The Bills desperately need a

weapon on offense. James Cook is an elite back, but Khalil Shakir and Dalton Kincaid are not Super Bowl caliber weapons. Pierce led the league in yards per catch (min. 10 catches).

No. 7 | RB Breece Hall, New York Jets

Best Fit: Kansas City Chiefs
I personally don't think the Chiefs are in a position to take Jeremiah Love at No. 9. Instead, they have the opportunity to use a rare top ten selection on another position of need and land free agency's top back.

No. 8 | OT Rasheed Walker, Green Bay Packers

Best Fit: Cleveland Browns
All five starters across the Browns' line are free agents, so now they have the chance to hit the reset button. Adding Walker on the left side and potentially Utah's Spencer Fano at No. 6 would offer their QB of the future solid bookends.

No. 9 | ED Odafe Oweh, L.A. Chargers

Best Fit: Baltimore Ravens
As weird as it would be for Oweh to be traded midseason from the Ravens and return just a few months later, it

would make sense. The Ravens need help on the edge, and HC Jesse Minter just coached Oweh for the latter half of the season in L.A., where he had 10.5 sacks in 13 games.

No. 10 | OT Braden Smith, Indianapolis Colts

Best Fit: Las Vegas Raiders
The Raiders need to build a wall to protect Fernando Mendoza. Kolton Miller is a very good left tackle, but DJ Glaze allowed 10.5 sacks this year on the right side.

No. 11 | DL John Franklin-Myers, Denver Broncos

Best Fit: Tennessee Titans
Franklin-Myers was on Robert Saleh's Jets back in the day, and Tennessee needs upgrades up front. Jeffrey Simmons is fantastic, but Sebastian Joseph-Day is an impending free agent. JFM is an upgrade.

No. 12 | CB Alontae Taylor, New Orleans Saints

Best Fit: Buffalo Bills
Christian Benford is a legit CB1, but the Bills have had to rely on an older Tre' White as their CB2. They'd likely have to choose between Pierce and Taylor, but the current Saint would be an excellent addition

to their defense.

No. 13 | LB Quay Walker, Green Bay Packers

Best Fit: Miami Dolphins
The Green Bay to Miami one will be popular this offseason, I'm sure. Jordyn Brooks is an excellent linebacker, but pairing him with Walker would make for one of the strongest defensive spines in the league.

No. 14 | CB Riq Woolen, Seattle Seahawks

Best Fit: New York Jets
Aaron Glenn needs to improve the defensive backfield, and Woolen may be the player that helps them do that. He plays with an edge, sometimes to a fault, but his size and athleticism are what you look for in a cornerback.

No. 15 | WR Mike Evans, Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Best Fit: Tennessee Titans
I find it hard to believe Evans will leave Tampa, but if he does, Tennessee would make a lot of sense. Elic Ayomanor and Chimere Dike are building blocks, but neither are No. 1 weapons. Evans may not be either at this point, but he'd give Cam Ward a veteran option in the short-term.



George Pickens during a game where he plays for the Dallas Cowboys. With the end of Super Bowl LX, NFL teams look to rebuild for next season.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PICKENSNETWORK ON INSTAGRAM

No. 16 | CB Jaylen Watson, Kansas City Chiefs

Best Fit: Las Vegas Raiders

No. 17 | QB Malik Willis, Miami Dolphins

Best Fit: Miami Dolphins

No. 18 | RB Kenneth Walker, Seattle Seahawks

Best Fit: Minnesota Vikings

No. 19 | LB Devin Lloyd, Jacksonville Jaguars

Best Fit: Las Vegas Raiders

No. 20 | TE Isaiah Likely, Baltimore Ravens

Best Fit: New England Patriots

No. 21 | WR Romeo Doubs, Green Bay Packers

Best Fit: Denver Broncos

No. 22 | ED Khalil Mack, L.A. Chargers

Best Fit: L.A. Chargers

No. 23 | TE Kyle Pitts, Atlanta Falcons

Best Fit: Tennessee Titans (Reports on 2/23 that he's expected to be tagged)

No. 24 | RB Travis Etienne, Jacksonville Jaguars

Best Fit: Arizona Cardinals

No. 25 | SAF Bryan Cook, Kansas City Chiefs

Best Fit: Minnesota Vikings

ELLIOT'S WEEKLY TIP-OFF: THE FINAL COUNTDOWN: BUBBLE TEAMS, TITLE HOPES AND MUST-SEE MATCHUPS

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Another week of college basketball means another week of must-watch games.

Feb. 25 pits No. 15 St. John's against No. 6 UConn. The Huskies have now lost three straight to the Red Storm dating back to last season.

Dan Hurley's squad fell short to Creighton on Feb. 18 but rebounded well on the road against a tough Villanova squad. They will need that same energy to take on the Johnnies in Hartford.

The defending national champion, the Florida Gators, will travel to Texas in a big showdown in the SEC. The Gators are riding a seven-game winning streak including wins over ranked Alabama and Kentucky. The Gators are looking more likely to defend their title after an inconsistent start to the season.

The Longhorns are on the bubble with a win against No. 7 Florida helping their case to be a First Four in. Three of their final four games are against Quadrant one teams, making their road much more difficult. However, with wins against these opponents, they can only build their case on why they should be playing in March.

No. 25 Vanderbilt is also a team near the bubble, but in a higher ranking than Texas. The Commodores should be a lock when it comes to March with a 21-6 record on the season. They will face Georgia who is fighting for a spot in the bubble as well and will be playing for a lot on Wednesday night.

No. 20 Arkansas will also have a tough game against Texas A&M

as the Aggies are fighting for a bubble spot as well. The Razorbacks should already be a lock in the tournament with a strong resume on the season; however, a few late slip-ups could put them lower than they want to be.

Feb. 26 has a big top 15 showdown between No. 8 Purdue and No. 13 Michigan State. Both

runs in the tournament. Their talent will be tested sooner with both teams looking for an advantage over the other.

On Feb. 27, No. 3 Michigan will look to bounce back against a top ranked opponent after falling short against No. 3 Duke. The Blue Devils were able to hold off and secure the victory, defeating the top

ment, even with Michigan's lead over the rest of the conference.

Feb. 28 has a whole slate of top 25 matchups which are sure to spoil some team's flow.

No. 11 Virginia will travel to newly ranked No. 1 Duke. After Duke's big victory over Michigan, they will look to keep the hot streak going against ranked oppo-

would go on to lose the next one at home against Texas Tech, before bouncing back and defeating No. 23 BYU and No. 2 Houston.

The Jayhawks are coming off a big win as well, defeating Houston 69-56 on Monday. Both squads sit on top of the Big 12 and are looking for that final push before post-season play. The powerhouses are hoping to make deep runs in March and are both showing potential to play in Indianapolis.

Also in the Big 12, No. 4 Iowa State will host No. 16 Texas Tech for their only meeting of the season. Both teams are also near the top of the Big 12 at 10-4 in conference play. This game will be pivotal for momentum and getting on track before the Big 12 tournament begins.

Later in the night, No. 22 Tennessee will host No. 17 Alabama for the top ranked SEC opponents. Both teams are 10-4 in conference and 20-7 on the season. They both pair up well against each other, with Tennessee taking the win earlier in the season 79-73. That game was played in Tuscaloosa, so Tennessee will be the home team this time around.

To round out the SEC, No. 7 Florida will host No. 20 Arkansas for the other matchup between top SEC opponents. The top four teams will face each other on Saturday making for a good day to watch some SEC ball.

All talent will be on display this week as the final push to March continues. Teams will hope to separate themselves from others and build up their chances of making runs in their respective conference tournaments.

We are just three weeks away from the start of Madness, get ready to witness some history.



UConn Men's Basketball plays Creighton University at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. On Feb 18, 2026. The crowd hyped up the team throughout the entire game.

PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

squads are 22-5 this season and 12-4 in the conference. This matchup is bound to come down to the wire with both teams showing big strides this season along with a few hiccups. The ranked Big Ten teams have multiple Quad one wins and are looking to make deep

ranked Wolverines 68-63.

This matchup will be a big one for both schools with both teams sitting atop the Big Ten. Michigan has been perfect all season dropping only two games, one in conference. This top 10 matchup might reshape the Big Ten tourna-

ments. Virginia is also heating up, winning eight straight.

No. 2 Arizona will host No. 14 Kansas, this time in Arizona. The two powerhouses met at Allen Fieldhouse at the beginning of the month, which gave Arizona their first loss of the season. They

HUSKIES IN THE PROS

by **Tyler Pruneau**
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Stephon Castle:

To finish the 2026 NBA Rising Star games, Castle averaged five points, 1.5 rebounds and three assists per contest for Team Melo.

In a combined total, the guard played 9.5 minutes, banking four of eight (50%) shots from inside the arc, missing two triples and going two-for-two from the free-throw line.

Following the 2026 All-Star weekend, the 21-year-old continued his baffling performances. In the San Antonio Spurs' previous three meetings, the former Husky has posted 15-plus points.

In the franchise's 114-103 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Monday, Castle notched a double-double, registering 16 points, four boards and 11 assists.

Within 30 minutes, the Georgia native swished six of 15 (40%) field goals, went one-for-one from deep and nailed one of three (33.3%) free throws.

During the post-game press conference, Spurs' Head Coach Mitch Johnson acknowledged the second-year player's incredible defense.

"I thought his game plan, execution and competitiveness, while being physical and trying to move his feet and show his hands, was ex-

cellent," said Johnson.

Up next, the Spurs will travel to face the Toronto Raptors tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. Fans can tune into the matchup on The Sports Network.

Donovan Clingan:

In the Rising Star clashes, Clingan teamed up with Castle for the first time since winning the 2023-2024 NCAA National Championship.

In the pair of outings, the 7-foot-2 center contributed 7.5 points, 1.5 rebounds and a block within 10 minutes per bout for Team Melo.

In a combined total, the Connecticut native went three-for-three from the floor and knocked down three of seven (42.9%) three-pointers.

After the All-Star weekend, the 22-year-old has continued his rim-protecting madness for the Portland Trail Blazers.

As of now, the former Husky ranks No. 2 with just over 4.6 offensive rebounds and sits at No. 3 with 11.5 boards per contest.

Not to mention, Clingan lands at No. 1 with a little over 13 contested shots per showdown.

Additionally, the second-year player lands at No. 3 with just over four second-chance points and places No. 12 with almost 1.5 blocks per battle.

In the Trail Blazers' most recent 92-77 triumph over the Phoenix Suns on Sunday, it

is worth noting that Clingan secured his thirtieth career double-double.

Within 31 minutes, the center accumulated 23 points, 13 boards, three assists and four blocks.

Last night, the Trail Blazers faced the Minnesota Timberwolves and will host the Chicago Bulls tomorrow at 8 p.m. Fans can watch the matchup on KUNP 16.

Cam Spencer:

In his first Rising Stars appearance, Spencer participated in a contest against Team Vince.

Within nine minutes, the off-the-bench player tallied five points, three rebounds and two assists for Team T-Mac. The Maryland native went one-for-one from the paint and drained one of two (50%) shots from downtown.

When it comes to producing offense for the Memphis Grizzlies, Spencer has seen more opportunities since the team traded Jaren Jackson Jr. to the Utah Jazz on Feb. 3.

In the former Huskies' fifteenth 2025-2026 season start versus the Sacramento Kings on Monday, the guard struggled to find points.

Within 22 minutes, the guard posted seven points, three boards and three assists. From the field, the 25-year-old splashed two of four (50%) shots and punched in one of three (33.3%) long-range tries.

Next up, the Grizzlies will

stay on the road to take on the Golden State Warriors tonight. Tipoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on NBC Sports Bay Area.

Tristen Newton:

Similar to Spencer, Newton appeared in his first Rising Stars game, representing Team Austin.

In the squad's 40-34 fall to Team Melo, the former Husky faced challenges to net the ball.

Within eight and a half minutes, the Florida native finished with two points, a rebound and four assists. From short range, the 24-year-old connected on one of three (33.3%) shots.

While Newton's Rising Star performance did not go as planned, the guard redeemed himself against his former G League team, the Iowa Wolves, on Sunday.

In the Rio Grande Valley Vipers' nail-biting 117-115 win, Newton led the team with 26 points, five rebounds, three assists and five steals.

Within 34 minutes, the back-to-back NCAA champ buried four of 14 (28.6%) field goals, one of four (25%) deep shots and converted nine of 10 (90%) free throws.

Last night, the Vipers began a two-game series with the San Diego Clippers, which will conclude tonight at 8 p.m. on NBALeague.com.

Liam McNeeley:

Since sustaining a left ankle

sprain versus the Cleveland Charge on Jan. 30, McNeeley has not returned to action.

Currently, the rookie's injury status is listed as out.

Jordan Hawkins:

For the first time in nine games, Hawkins saw five minutes of court time while facing the Kings on Feb. 9.

Within five minutes, the guard drilled two of three (66.7%) floor shots for six points.

Since then, the 23-year-old played in back-to-back meetings for a combined total of six minutes but ended with zero points on Friday and Saturday.

The New Orleans Pelicans hosted the Warriors last night and will travel for a two-game series with the Jazz, beginning Thursday. Tipoff is scheduled for 9 p.m. on Gulf Coast Sports.

Andre Jackson Jr.:

Similar to Hawkins, Jackson Jr. is still receiving limited minutes from the Milwaukee Bucks.

In the franchise's 122-94 loss to the Raptors on Sunday, the former Husky contributed two points and three boards. Within seven minutes, the New York native sank one of four (25%) two-pointers and botched his lone three-point attempt.

The Bucks took on the Miami Heat last night and will host the Cleveland Cavaliers tonight at 8 p.m. on FanDuel Sports Network.



Sports

MEN'S BASKETBALL:

NO. 5 UCONN, NO. 15 ST. JOHN'S MEET IN HARTFORD IN HIGH-STAKES BATTLE

by Sam Calhoun
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The 2023-24 season saw UConn win its first Big East regular season title since the 2005-06 season and its first outright title since the 1998-99 season. Last season, St. John's won its first regular-season title since the 1991-92 season and its first outright title since the 1984-85 season.

On Wednesday night in Hartford, the two will play for what could be the deciding game for this season's Big East regular-season title.

"We can't afford to lose another game in the regular season in the Big East if we want to win the league," Dan Hurley said on Saturday.

The No. 6 Huskies (25-3, 15-2 Big East) suffered a setback last week when they were stunned by Creighton in a raucous crowd in Storrs, Conn. They bounced back with one of the most complete games of conference play, a 73-63 win at Villanova, leading by as many as 21 points.

"We played elite-level defense, and we were pretty sharp on offense when we got shots on goal," Hurley said. "Obviously, the turnover situation reared its ugly head, but I just thought we rebounded the ball, we guarded, we played offense at a high level and our depth kicked in. That's kind of like bulletproof basketball right there."

That "elite-level defense" was a massive improvement from recent games. According to Stathead's Katie Sharp, before the win at Villanova, UConn had four of its five-worst defensive performances in the previous four games. Sharp also noted that the 91 points scored by Creighton were the most points allowed by UConn in a home conference game since Feb. 1, 2003's loss to Boston College, when the Eagles scored 95 points.

The offensive distribution was terrific on Saturday, though. UConn had nine players with at least 4 points, two rebounds and one assist. According to Sharp, that is the only time over the last 15 seasons when this has occurred.

The bench scoring was terrific, with 22 points from the reserves. The center position stood out against a double-double machine in Duke Brennan; both Tarris Reed Jr. and Eric Reibe feasted, combining for 19 points, 11 rebounds, four assists and four blocks on 8-of-10 shooting. Reed had 12 points and six rebounds on 5-of-10 shooting against St. John's, while Reibe was a non-factor with just 2 points in five minutes due to foul trouble.

"I think Tarris played his best game as a UConn player versus Villanova," Hurley said. "Hopefully something clicked with Tarris after the Creighton game, because his ball screen defense, his rim protection, his screening, his post-ups were all the best that they've been since he's been here."

Braylon Mullins had a career-high 25 points in the loss to Creighton, which earned him Big East Freshman of the Week honors. He put up 11 points on 4-of-8 shooting against the Red Storm in New York City.

But all eyes will be on the performance of Silas Demary Jr., who is expected to

be on the All-Big East First Team when the regular season ends. Despite finishing the St. John's game with 18 points, seven rebounds and five assists on 7-of-11 shooting, the former Georgia Bulldog turned the ball over nine times. Last time out, Demary had 9 points and six assists, but turned the ball over seven times. For UConn to get back in the race for the Big East regular season title, he must take care of the ball much better than he has been lately.

"He's a great player, we've got great respect for him," St. John's head coach Rick Pitino said on Tuesday. "He's one of the premier guards in the country. It's more the style [of St. John's defense] than anything else; it's not his weakness."

No. 15 St. John's (22-5, 15-1 Big East) is one of the hottest teams in the country with a 13-game winning streak, with only one loss since the calendar flipped to 2026. It is the longest streak since a 19-game winning streak during the 1984-85 season, which included 14 consecutive wins in Big East play.

That included a signature win at home over Connecticut, where Zuby Ejiofor proved that he is the front-runner for Big East Player of the Year. That will be a tall task for Tarris Reed Jr., as Ejiofor averages 15.9 points and 7.2 rebounds per game on 53.4% shooting. He was a beast in the first meeting, putting up 21 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists on 6-of-10 shooting.

"The guy's tenacious," Hurley said on Tuesday. "He's probably one of the most tenacious players in the country."

The Red Storm control their own destiny for back-to-back regular season titles, which has not been done since the 1985 and 1986 seasons, the latter of which was not outright.

While Ejiofor is having an elite season, Bryce Hopkins has been just as impressive. He was named the Big East Player of the Week after averaging 19 points and 10 rebounds to go with 1.5 assists and 1.5 steals per game in the last two games. In the first meeting against the Huskies, Hopkins had 14 points and six rebounds on 4-of-7 shooting.

Pitino told reporters that Ian Jackson, who did not play in the 81-52 blowout win over Creighton, will play against the Huskies. Jackson suffered a right ankle sprain on Wednesday night against Marquette and averages 10.4 points per contest this season.

It will be a battle between two top-15 defenses. As of writing, UConn ranks 13th in defensive efficiency on KenPom while St. John's ranks 15th. UConn has a significant upper hand offensively, ranking 23rd in terms of efficiency, while the Johnnies are 45th.

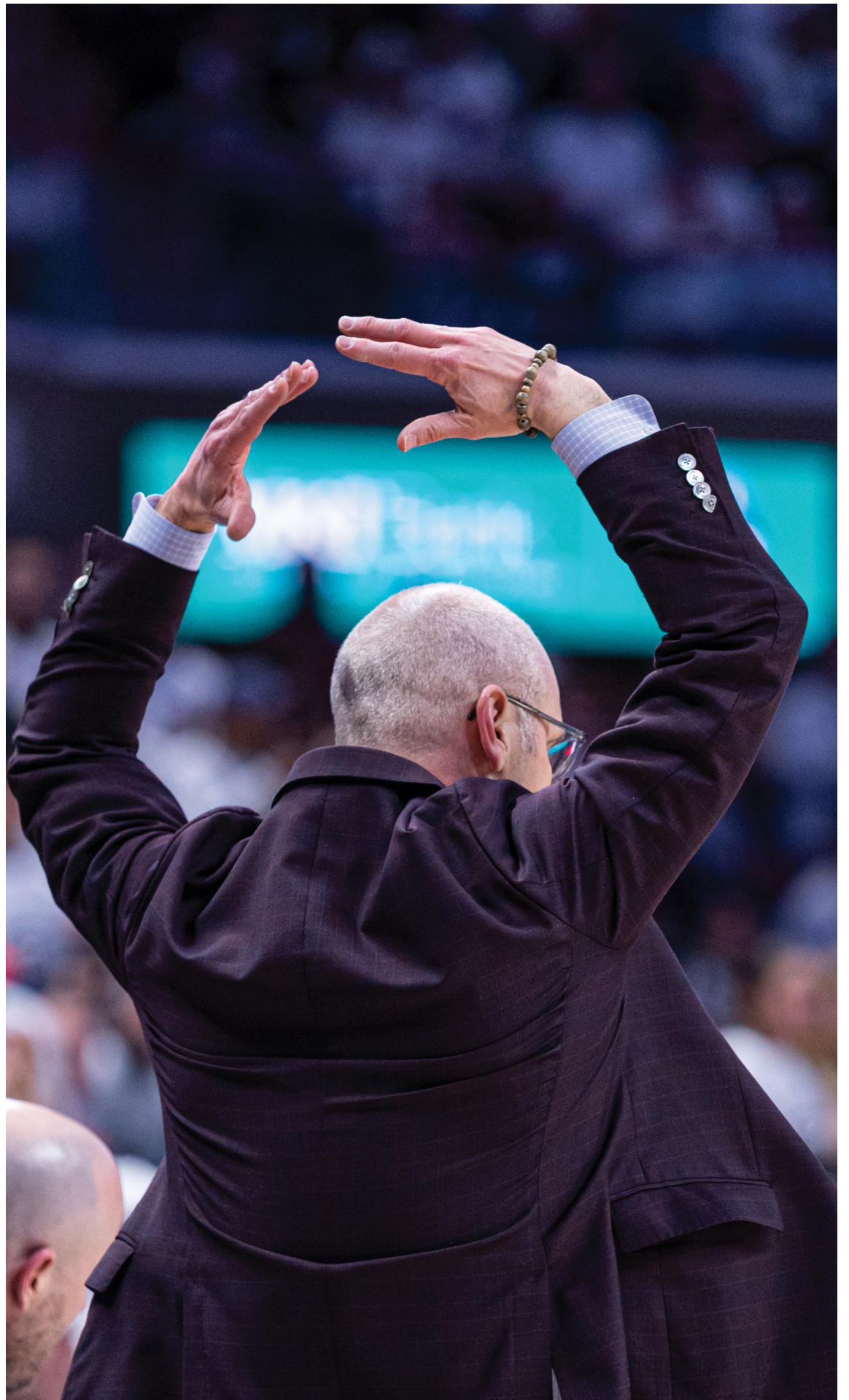
The team is dealing with some bumps and bruises, and there might be a player on the injury report before the game on Wednesday.

Tip-off from PeoplesBank Arena is set for 7 p.m. and can be watched on NBC Sports Network (for YouTube TV subscribers) and Peacock. It is a stripe-out theme, and fans are encouraged to wear the colors matching their section.



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PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/DAILY CAMPUS



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