

The Daily Campus



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USG Chief Diversity Officer ticket profiles

by **Samantha Brody**
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Voting for candidates running for positions in the Undergraduate Student Government closes today on UConn at noon. This year, two candidates are running for the position of Chief Diversity Officer. Below are their profiles.

Sadaf Zarei

Sadaf Zarei is a mathematics and economics major and a computer science minor in her sixth semester at the University of Connecticut. She is also an international student from Iran, which has helped form her platform and her ideas for UConn, she said.

"This role is essentially important because it is there to let students of every walk of life, every religion, every color, every sexual orientation, to know that no matter what, there is a place within the USG structure that cares for them," Zarei said.

Zarei noted that while she believes USG has a thriving internal culture that promotes international students, she hopes to improve the organization's outreach capabilities. The CDO is meant to advocate for the causes and cultures of the students on campus and help increase the mobility of students from underrepresented backgrounds, she said.

"It is really good that we care about diversity but also the missing element has been em-

powering people within different diverse backgrounds to increase their social mobilities," Zarei said. "If elected, that will be something that I am very keen on advocating."

Zarei specifically mentioned granting international students access to alumni counsel, legal advisory and work opportunities at UConn. International students can primarily only work on-campus student jobs, and Zarei hopes to help connect students with possible employers, Zarei said.

"There are not many resources available to students of different backgrounds," Zarei said. "If there were to be a change, the top priority should be perhaps giving people of different backgrounds connections to the alumni of their respective background."

Zarei said other universities have done this practice before, and she hopes to extend it to UConn. On the topic of legal advisory, while USG and the Office of the CDO have already begun the process of setting up a system for students, Zarei hopes to continue this initiative.

"If elected, I would definitely be doubling down on that and that initiative," Zarei said. "And I would work tirelessly to enhance it."

Syna Patel

Syna Patel is a fourth-semester political science student based on the Storrs campus. Patel was previously living and studying at the Waterbury cam-

pus last year and conducted a semester abroad in Florence, Italy before arriving at Storrs this spring.

I've met with so many people and while everyone is so different I've seen that they all have one unique thing in common, which is inclusivity and belonging. Everyone has a sense of that," Patel said. "With meeting all these different people and kinds of people, I've seen, what really stands out is the sense of belonging that people have."

Patel noted that she sees a CDO as someone who is meant to inspire a sense of belonging on campus. If a student were to experience harassment or encounter ICE on campus, she said she wants there to be availability for students to address these issues.

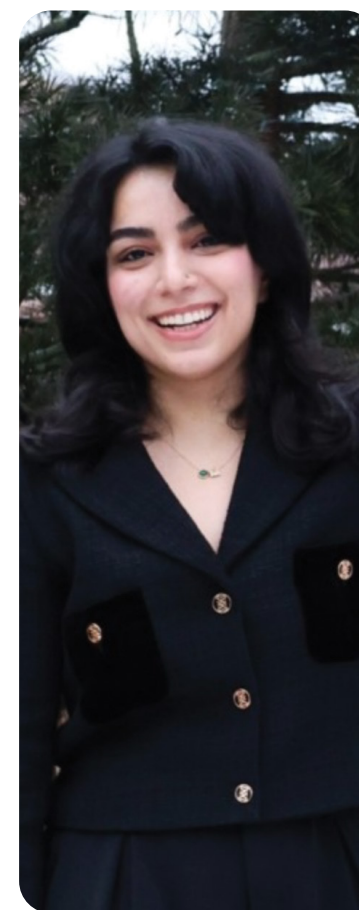
"I feel like I do a really good job in my personal life on making sure that people belong," Patel said. "Because I've felt that I haven't belonged for a very long time. I'm Indian, my background, I'm always like — I never feel like I am Indian enough, so I understand the inclusivity portion of it. I feel that I could do a really good job of bringing that to other people."

Patel noted that she's discussed with the Chief Diversity Officer of her mother's company to see what kind of events and duties the position holds.

"I've had meetings with her, I've talked to her about it," Patel said. "I've seen some of the



Syna Patel is a political science major from the Waterbury campus running for the Chief Diversity Officer position in USG. Patel wants to be someone that students can go and talk to should they ever need to. PHOTO BY SYNA PATEL ON LINKEDIN



Sadaf Zarei is running for USG Chief of Diversity Officer in this year's USG election. She is also an international student from Iran and hopes to help others feel more included on campus no matter your background. PHOTO BY SADAF ZAREI ON LINKEDIN.

events she's done and I've attended them. And I've seen how well they change people's perspectives, there's so many friendships that have been made throughout these events."

Friendship is an important part of her platform, Patel said. Finding community can be especially difficult when a student is new or has recently transferred, and even more so if a student is only enrolled in

large classes, she said.

"I want everyone to have that one person," Patel said. "Whether that be me or be someone else, that they can go to and be like 'hey, I've had a really hard day, and I just need someone to talk to. I just need a friend right now.' And that's kind of my goal; I just want everyone to leave UConn knowing that they've felt like they belonged."

USG Comptroller profiles

by **Ayyan Tamjeed**
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Voting for the University of Connecticut Undergraduate Student Government Elections opened on March 3 and close today at noon. Here are the profiles for the two people running for comptroller for USG.

William "Billy" Lipinski

William "Billy" Lipinski, a sixth-semester political science and public administration student, is the current comptroller and seeking reelection for a second year. The year before, he was the inventory director under the previous comptroller.

Working with his inventory specialist last year, Lipinski "completely transformed the inventory reporting system ... and streamlined the audit system for RSOs (Registered Student Organizations)," Lipinski wrote in an email.

As comptroller this year, Lipinski says he is proud of the work his team has done funding Tier-II organizations with a reduced budget.

"We're working with a \$133k budget cut for Tier II funding, and we're lasting just as long as last year, which signals a shift in policy application and implementation," Lipinski said.

Lipinski says he has "improved our fiscal transparency and advocacy." He cites the club sports funding town hall he and his team hosted earlier this semester and the weekly emails sent to RSO's regarding the status of the funding system as evidence.

If reelected, Lipinski hopes

to make USG's two budgets — the programmatic and operating budget — more flexible so that committees can hit the ground running.

"Next year, knowing now what I know, I want to try to make our budget more flexible so that we have to make less amendments and can promote more flexible programming," said Lipinski.

Lipinski and his team have made several changes to keep finances transparent in USG this year. From conducting a mid-year budget review, updating the Tier-II funding website and conducting in-person funding training with select RSO's at their weekly meetings.

Next year, Lipinski hopes to overhaul the Tier-II funding training, film videos for funding updates and expand the in-person training.

One of Lipinski's favorite parts of working as comptroller has been meeting with committee directors and RSO's to deliver their event ideas.

"Working with the committee directors is one of the biggest parts of my job in USG ... we're constantly making changes to our budgeting to ensure that we can deliver on the ideas of our senators," Lipinski said. "I love meeting with RSOs. I've met with so many groups to discuss event ideas and how USG can support them. That's a culture I want to make sure extends into next year."

As for USG's interactions with Tier-II organizations, Lipinski is looking to streamline the funding process and be a representative for them to the UConn administration.

"What RSO leaders sometimes don't know right off the bat is that USG is also at the mercy of our advisors and the university's purchasing policies," Lipinski said. "[We want to] advocate on behalf of RSOs and be the liaison for them at the admin purchasing level so that they can get what they need."

When asked why he's running for a second term, Lipinski said "I feel as though I'm best prepared to execute. You can ask anyone in USG: this year, fiscally, has been one of the best years for USG. And while I didn't do it alone, I ask



William Lipinski is a reelection candidate for comptroller for the USG. He has already served as comptroller, looking to maintain his position. PHOTO BY WILLIAM LIPINSKI ON LINKEDIN

you to give me one more year of leadership so that I can continue fighting on behalf of you, the UConn undergraduate student body."

Andrea Perez-Meneses

Andrea Perez-Meneses, a fifth-semester economics major, currently serves as a multicultural and diversity senator and engagement coordinator, working to keep other senators accountable and honest.

One of Perez-Meneses' goals is to make USG finances more transparent by potentially implementing a live portal for students to see where their money is going or holding office hours



Andrea Perez-Meneses is one of the candidates running for the Comptroller position in this year's USG election. She hopes to bring in new perspectives and fresh ideas to the council. PHOTO BY ANDREA PEREZ-MENESE ON LINKEDIN. POSITION/THE DAILY CAMPUS

for RSOs to come meet with funding staff and ask questions.

"There are different times throughout different days that these orgs can come down to the USG office and talk to us ... it's not fair if you need advice and you have no one to go to. I feel like that defeats the whole purpose of our work. We should be there to help you; we should be there to work with you," Perez-Meneses said.

Perez-Meneses believes that clearer funding checklists and access to financial resources could go a long way to improve the funding process for Tier-II organizations.

"These clearer checklists would improve how they get their money and help them understand what steps exactly they need to take in order to receive this funding," Perez-Meneses said. "I know we already have some, but I feel like they're not as clear as we would like for them to be," Perez-Meneses said.

Perez-Meneses also thinks that now is the time to bring in new leadership into USG to provide new perspectives on the current systems and policies.

"It's good to bring in fresh perspectives. It's the job of new leadership to evaluate all these current systems with the intention of improving them," Perez-Meneses said. "I feel like a fresh perspective would be a big benefit to the overall structure of USG. We're getting new presidents, a lot of our upperclassmen are leaving, this is also a perfect opportunity to make a transition."

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ROUNDTABLE | PAGE 6

Who will be the next face of UConn



POLITICS | PAGE 7

Trump's Iran war is an unnecessary and directionless disaster



BASEBALL | PAGE 12

Menzel hits for cycle as Hook C defeats New Haven in home opener, 9-4

Read the USG Debate recap article at dailycampus.com

News

FIVE ALUMNI TO BE INDUCTED INTO UCONN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

by Sara Bedigian

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The University of Connecticut School of Business will induct five alumni into its Hall of Fame next month.

The Hall of Fame was established in 1983 to recognize business alumni with significant career success, industry involvement and community service. This year, Melissa Cummings, Robert Giglietti, Kevin Kulak, Edward Lange and Eme-ka Okafor will be inducted.

Cummings, who received her MBA in 1998, said her time at UConn laid the foundation for her future career.

"I served as the President of the Graduate Business Association, worked in the Admissions office at the then West Hartford campus, spent time with faculty and enjoyed UConn life," Cummings said.

She said UConn's MBA program was one of the few at the time that offered healthcare management, which fueled her 30-year career in the industry.

Today, she serves as the executive vice president and chief operations officer at Progyny Inc., a benefits-management company specializing in fertility, family building and women's health solutions. She previously served as the executive vice president at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

To current UConn students, she said take advantage of the alumni network.

"Don't be afraid to reach out to alumni and seek to learn more about particular career paths that you might be considering."

Giglietti, a first-generation college student who graduated with an accounting degree in

1992, said UConn gave him the leadership opportunities and the ability to interact with individuals, get support and build camaraderie.

He said these are the soft skills that are sometimes taken for granted but are essential in the real world.

"It helped prepare me to be a stronger business leader in the long term," Giglietti said. "The technical skills will only take you so far and then it really turns into leadership skills that really accelerates your career."

Outside of his classes, he was a part of the accounting society and a fraternity, which also strengthened his leadership skills, he said.

Today, Giglietti is a leader in the business industry, serving as the chief accounting officer for GE Aerospace. He frequently returns to UConn, speaking at business classes and mentoring students, he said. He also funds a need-based business scholarship.

"If I didn't have this opportunity to go to such a great university, I wouldn't be what I am today," Giglietti said.

His college advice to students is this: get out of your comfort zone.

"Get involved in as much as you can," he said. "It will differentiate you as you go to look for a job in the workforce."

While both Cummings and Giglietti share their induction this year in common, they also have another similarity — both are huge UConn basketball fans and season ticket holders.

One of UConn men basketball's own will be inducted into the Business Hall of Fame this year too. Okafor, who was a member of the 2004 NCAA national championship team,

graduated with his degree in finance in three years. He was the second overall pick in the NBA draft and the 2004 NBA Rookie of the Year.

UConn recognized Okafor this year by retiring his No. 50 jersey on Feb. 18 during half-time of the Creighton game at Gampel Pavilion.

Today, he works as a commentator and analyst in men's college basketball, appearing on ESPN, CBS and Fox Sports.

Lange is an MBA graduate and current adjunct professor at the School of Business. He works with students in the Hillside Ventures STEM Fund and serves on the School of Business Dean's Advisory Cabinet.

Before retirement, Lange held executive leadership roles in the multifamily and senior housing sectors. His final executive role was CEO of real estate firm MAXX Properties from 2016-2021, according to UConn Today.

Similar to Lange, Kulak is also invested in his alma mater, currently serving on the Board of Directors at the UConn Foundation. He graduated from UConn in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

Kulak is an executive vice president at Voyager Technologies. In his profile with UConn Today, he said he enjoys innovation and building new businesses. He founded Fizio Health, a Connecticut-based company serving orthopedic and physical therapy patients.

To date, 150 alumni have been inducted into the UConn Business Hall of Fame. This year's Hall of Fame Induction & Celebration will be at the Hartford Marriott Downtown on April 24.



Five very successful alumni of UConn's school of business will be inducted into the UConn school of Business Hall of Fame. This event will occur on April 24, 2026 at the Hartford Marriott downtown. PHOTO BY @UCONNALUMNI ON INSTAGRAM.



The UConn School of Business is located in a central part of the Storrs Campus. Five alumni will soon be inducted into the UConn School of Business's Hall of Fame for their admirable careers following their graduation. PHOTO BY @ROSEMYERSTH ON PINTEREST.

STUDENTS PROPOSE DISABILITY CULTURAL CENTER ON CAMPUS

by Mikayla Bunnell

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Two students at the University of Connecticut are taking charge to start a disability cultural center at the Storrs campus with support from the Board of Trustees and the Undergraduate Student Government.

Mia Giancola, a sixth-semester social work and sociology student, and Gabriella DiSalvo, an eighth-semester student with an individualized major of disability studies in media and food culture, have proposed starting the new cultural center to help people like them connect with one another and have a safe space to be themselves on campus, something many Huskies feel is a long time coming.

"I think students are being really vulnerable and just saying, 'hey, no one's really sat down and let me talk about this before... I want a place where I can

talk about these issues, because I don't know anyone else like me,'" Giancola said. "So I think what we need is a space where people can say, 'hey...you're like me. I just met you, and you're like me.'"

Giancola said that there are about 7,000 students registered with UConn's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at the main Storrs campus and regional campuses in Hartford, Waterbury, Stamford and Avery Point.

But she says this number is not representative of all students with disabilities at UConn.

Giancola said that some students might not want to seek support from CSD services, but they still deserve support on campus in other ways, like through a cultural center.

Giancola imagines the center having two separate rooms. One room would be "low stimuli, low noise" to give students a break from the loudness of the Student Union and the Homer

Babbige Library, she said.

Students also suggested low lighting, puzzles, fidget toys and mats to let students lay comfortably on the floor, something she said can be particularly helpful for students with chronic pain or other invisible disabilities — or even someone who just needs a quiet place to cry.

The other room would be more of a communal space, allowing students to meet each other and providing a space for students to share their experiences.

At a USG Student Senate meeting on Feb. 11, DiSalvo, who serves as a diversity senator, proposed the cultural center to her fellow senators.

She said it would be a dedicated space for both disabled students and the allies of disabled students to gather and form mentorships, allyships, advocacy and connections with each other. The senators passed the resolution unanimously.

Giancola sent out a survey to

students through the CSD to gauge interest in the cultural center. The survey got 904 responses, with 89% of respondents supporting the center. She and DiSalvo shared these findings with the Board of Trustees at their meeting on Feb. 26.

At the meeting, DiSalvo shared stories about struggling to find accessible transportation for her wheelchair to urgent care during a snowstorm because UConn's service shut down during a school cancellation.

She hopes that a disability cultural center would help connect students with more resources to avoid situations like that.

Giancola said that presenting at the Board of Trustees meeting was "a really impactful moment," and that the board seems very receptive and ready to move quickly on opening the center.

The biggest issue right now, Giancola said, is finding space.

"The problem is there's no space, like, anywhere," she said. "I think we want it to be in the Union. We need a big space, because we have wheelchair users, and we also need a quiet space... not visually overstimulating."

In her proposal to USG, DiSalvo mentioned including accessible desks and "a layout designed with disability in mind."

Giancola and DiSalvo are hoping to run the space like a typical cultural center, offering paid student employment. Giancola said she's already had some students ask her if they could apply to work there, even though they aren't set up yet. She said she hopes the employment aspect will help students take the center more seriously.

"I don't think people see disability as a culture. And hey, we are a culture," Giancola said. "I feel seen in a way I never had before. I just think people are so proud to be recognized."

The Daily Campus

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UConn Medical Clinic Club will host free clinic this weekend

by Ariana Mohamed
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The University of Connecticut Medical Clinic Club will host its annual free medical clinic on March 7 and 8 starting at 6 a.m. at the Windham Senior Center.

Cameron Costa, an eighth-semester physiology and neurobiology major, is the president of and a community host group lead for the Medical Clinic Club. "The Medical Clinic Club is an undergraduate student organization dedicated to improving access and affordability of healthcare in Windham County and surrounding regions," Costa said in an email.

The club partners with Remote Area Medical (RAM), a Tennessee-based nonprofit organization that provides free medical, dental and vision care through mobile clinics across the country, Costa wrote in an email.

The free clinic requires no identification and is open to anyone, free of charge, he said in an email.

The clinic will close once it reaches capacity each day, Costa said in an email.

According to Costa, some services provided by the clinic include consultations with primary care providers to discuss health concerns, dental cleanings, cavity fillings, and tooth extractions and comprehensive eye exams and, if indicated, custom-made prescription glasses

provided on-site.

While follow-up care is not guaranteed to be free, the clinic will provide information on local healthcare offices accepting new patients, according to Costa. If a provider at the clinic recommends follow-up care, the team will assist patients in connecting with the appropriate resources.

The clinic aims to target the Windham community, Costa

said.

"Windham County is especially a very high need population," Costa said.

The county has one of the highest percentages of people living below the poverty line and very high rates of food insecurity, Costa said.

The club starts planning the free clinic during the fall semester through gathering volunteers, reaching out to donors

and recruiting the clinic, Costa said.

"Usually, we have about 400 volunteers across the three days," Costa said.

He said he advises students to join the organization on UConn if they want to get involved. The organization made a flyer to help students who want to volunteer.

The organization requires students to pay dues that help with transportation costs, meals and a free t-shirt, he said.

"We have about a \$20,000 operating budget each year, and we fundraise all that money ourselves," Costa said.

He said the free clinic aims to help all in the community.

"The goal is just sort of see as many people as we can," Costa said.

The club started hosting free clinics in 2024 and in that year they were able to help 212 patients and provided \$150,000 in free medical care, Costa said.

Last year they were able to help 196 patients and provided \$142,000 in free care, he said.

In the past, the clinic has been held at Windham Middle School, but the club changed the location to be more accessible to people who don't have means of transportation, Costa said.

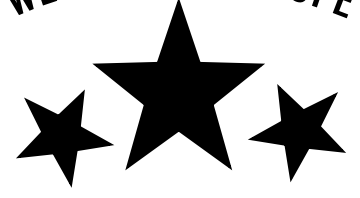
The club hosts different general information events throughout the semester, all leading up to the clinic in March, he said.

After this free clinic, the organization will be transitioning the club into a nonprofit, Costa said.



Community members of Windham county line up awaiting free treatment and check ups from volunteering doctor's and practitioners in the area. This free pop-up clinic is aimed to help the high-need area. PHOTO BY @UCONN.MEDICALCLINICCLUB ON INSTAGRAM.

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



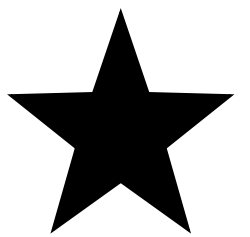
by Maleena Muzio
 March 1 to March 7

Welcome back to the weekly horoscope! This horoscope is based on predictions made by AstroStyle or astrostyle.com. Keep reading to hear what to expect as the week unfolds.

Overview

It's time to say goodbye to procrastination and hello to productivity! This week you will set goals for yourself and stick with them — no matter how daunting they may seem.

Wake-up calls, clarity and the elimination of bad habits are going to come full and center. Take risks, be bold and lean into the sparks of courage you may feel this week.



Aries

March 21 - April 19
 Your creativity will be unleashed in late-night moments.

Taurus

April 20 - May 20
 Keep your communication skills up to par and don't be afraid to take romantic risks.

Gemini

May 21 - June 20
 Doors of opportunity will open for you.

Cancer

June 21 - July 22
 Continue learning as much as you can — your education will serve its purpose soon.

Leo

July 23 - Aug. 22
 Take the time to understand your own feelings, but remember: you do not owe anyone any explanations.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
 Luck is finding its way to you; do not be afraid of the current pressure you may be under.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 23
 Set healthy habits and goals for yourself — they can be small but valuable.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 21
 An intense relationship and spiritual clarity are on its way.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
 Time to ditch being a homebody — step outside and regain productivity.

Capricorn

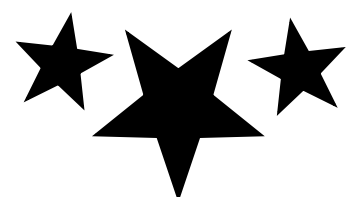
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
 Say hello to strangers; unexpected connections may result.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
 Hard work and dedication to a project will pay off soon.

Pisces

Feb. 19 - March 20
 Competition may be your motivation — lean into that energy and accomplish your goals.



THE DAILY CAMPUS

ACROSS

- 1 Rx orders
- 5 Accumulate
- 10 Jacksonville team, familiarly
- 14 Farmland unit
- 15 Valletta's island
- 16 HarperCollins romance imprint
- 17 Electrician's favorite method of payment?
- 19 Was dressed in
- 20 Vicinity
- 21 "You ___ my day!"
- 23 Chef-training sch. in Hyde Park
- 24 Floating
- 25 Electrician's favorite exercise?
- 27 "Au contraire, ___ frere"
- 28 The WNBA's Sky, on scoreboards
- 30 Tease
- 31 Nav. rank
- 32 Shucks
- 35 Fly like an eagle
- 36 Like an electrician's favorite sweater?
- 39 California valley that was one of the first American Viticultural Areas
- 42 Flight part
- 43 Craze
- 46 Make true
- 49 Chinese philosophical concept
- 50 "Is that ___?"
- 51 Like an electrician's favorite eyeglasses?
- 54 Game with a caller
- 56 Game with a chaser
- 57 Move like molasses
- 58 Lounged around
- 59 Perched on
- 61 Electrician's favorite shopping venue?
- 63 Caffeine-rich nut
- 64 Trademarked refrigerator
- 65 French cheese with a rind
- 66 Notable periods
- 67 Some Slavs
- 68 Min. divisions

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17			18						19			
20					21			22		23		
24				25					26			
27			28	29			30					
31			32			33	34		35			
36								37	38			
39	40	41			42					43	44	45
46			47	48		49				50		
51					52	53			54	55		
56			57					58				
59		60		61		62						
63				64					65			
66									67			

By Susan Gelfand 3/5/26

DOWN

- 1 Knotty craft
- 2 Level
- 3 Creatures on the flags of Wales and Bhutan
- 4 Calligraphy stroke
- 5 "Could not agree more"
- 6 Big name in laptops and lipstick
- 7 San Antonio field trip destination
- 8 Scarecrow contents
- 9 Make melancholy
- 10 Mandible
- 11 Toast spread
- 12 Silverback, for one
- 13 Puma, for one
- 18 "Heard"
- 22 Quaint preposition
- 25 Contents of some weekly organizers
- 26 Dominic of "Downton Abbey; The Grand Finale"
- 29 Center of activity
- 33 Lead-in to "It Go" and "It Be," in song titles
- 34 Manta ray kin
- 36 Sugar stalk
- 37 "Hedda" writer/director DaCosta
- 38 Asimov collection first published in 1950
- 39 Fresh perspective
- 40 Cockpit occupant
- 41 Covered walkway
- 43 Fuss and feathers
- 44 Sporting a halo
- 45 Absent-minded scribbles
- 47 Strange sight in the night sky
- 48 Reads for errors
- 52 Sky blue
- 53 Olympic track unit
- 55 Sonnet line quintet
- 58 Binoculars part
- 60 Faux
- 62 Arcing throw

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

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Solution to Wednesday's puzzle

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Life

New Benton Exhibit Showcases “New Eyes on Horsebarn Hill”

by **Elijah Polance**
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Of the many memorable outdoor spots at the University of Connecticut's Storrs campus, few are as popular and inviting as Horsebarn Hill. The landscape offers a scenic overlook of the campus, nearby ice cream at the Dairy Bar, easy access to the Fenton Tract forest area and farm animals galore.

Something less visible, however, is the abundance of history brimming within the area and how the hill has changed over time. But an ongoing exhibition at the William Benton Museum of Art, “Raid the Archive: New Eyes on Horsebarn Hill,” is making the hill's past more apparent.

The exhibition showcases artwork by UConn MFA students inspired by Horsebarn Hill-related materials from the university's Archives and Special Collections. The students also curated artifacts from the archives that were put on display alongside their artwork. According to the Benton's website, the exhibition was made available to the public on Jan. 20.

Avery Nielsen-Webb, a second-semester MFA student who specializes in photography, was one of the students featured in the exhibition. He said the project was the result of a class led by art professor Janet Pritchard in the fall 2025 semester.

The class met once a week for three hours and included the entire cohort of five MFA students in their first semester and two MFA students in their third semester, Nielsen-Webb said. The process of poring through the archives to find information about Horsebarn Hill took a lot of time, but since his practice focuses on where research and environmentalism intersect art, Nielsen-Webb said the project worked with his artistic interests.

“I felt very comfortable doing this project,” Nielsen-Webb said. “I know for some people it's more of, like, an artistic project, but for me it was more of bringing history into art with a little bit of science.”

Nielsen-Webb's piece is one of the first on display upon entering the exhibition. At first, it may just look like a large, gray tapestry with a series of numbers filling the space. But it is actually the written out values of each colored pixel of an archival picture. In the photo, Albert E. Moss, who taught at UConn in the early 1900s, is adding a dam to the Fenton River, Nielsen-Webb said.

“Archivists are like, ‘You can't steal any of these items or they're going to get copyrighted,’ and I was like, ‘Watch me,’” Nielsen-Webb said. “So basically, I did steal it pixel by pixel but I completely reinvented it.”

Nielsen-Webb said he took into account the photo's original context and wanted to make parallels between dams and archives that “some people can access, some people can't access.” He also said he was “relating code and data to more of a flow, kind of like a river.”

The artwork component was a helpful stepping stone for other projects in progress about forests that use data centers, Nielsen-Webb said. For his curated archival materials, which each student had their own section for, with a description they wrote, he selected photos of work being done to the Fenton River.

On an adjacent wall in the exhibit, a very different scene plays out with the archival materials. Photos of students posing with cows sit on the wall while glass milk bottles, a UConn Dairy Club T-shirt and other cow-related memorabilia rest in a glass case. Second-semester MFA student Alex Heard, who focuses on sculpture, curated the cow-related materials, called

their area the “cow corner.”

“It was like as many things as I could find with cows on them that felt kind of both aesthetically and conceptually consistent with the word, just pile it in,” Heard said. “The idea of the show being a ‘raid the archive’ situation where we're more or less open to take as much or as little from the archive and present it in this kind of new context was pretty exciting because you could kind of just keep going.”

Heard, who lived in Ohio before coming to UConn, said they were not familiar with Horsebarn Hill before the project. They said that when they familiarized themselves with the hill before the archival research process, the cows and other organisms were captivating.

“The things that I latched onto the most was that sort of decision to seek out magic that was surrounding us if we so chose to and sort of zeroing in on that resolution of fauna,” Heard said. “And then the kind of greater landscape of the like hill, thinking about the sky, the ground and then everything that happens between those things.”

Heard's piece, titled “Landscape with Cow,” explores this idea in the form of a vertical sculpture with three main parts. At the bottom is a mound of soft materials in the shape of many four-leaf clovers. Above it is a black-and-white cow print pattern, and even higher is a blue and white cow print pattern that represents the sky. Heard connected all three components with a stick they found on the hill.

“It is meant to be sort of referencing the idea of an abstract painting crossed with a landscape painting in the form of a sculpture,” Heard said. “So it's sort of like a sign post, a map, a protest sign, all coalescing in art that looks like a cow.”

Heard said they were inspired by archival newspapers, some

of which are on display, that covered protests in 1999 against plans to construct a Pfizer research facility on Horsebarn Hill.

The other second-semester MFA students had different approaches to their art. McKayla Bensheimer made an Indigenous American-inspired quilt, while Kate Greenwell created two stacks of handmade paper — one with the word “here,” the other with the word, “there” — that could be taken by visitors. Bahar Ejtemaei made a series of black-and-white acrylic paintings depicting sustained life when the Farwell House, which used to be near the Jacobson Barn, burned down in 1976.

Shuning Wang, one of the second-year MFA students featured in the exhibition, said she went into the project with an already-established appreciation for Horsebarn Hill.

“In this project, I was inspired by just standing on the top of the hill, feeling the wind and thinking back into the archival materials we'd read,” Wang said. “And it inspired me, feels like a story is flipping the book pages itself within the wind.”

Wang captured the movement of the wind by photographing a piece of paper held in the air while at the top of the hill. She then made her own paper — something she said she enjoys because of how paper's flexibility and fragility relate to human beings — that mimicked the pattern. Old newspapers were used to make the paper material, Wang said, and some cutouts were visible in her project.

“While making the process, I also reprint some of the archival material and have it half-shown on the paper,” Wang said. “So the paper pop on that gives me a layer of time that I'm feeling during this project.”

Rosely Htoo, the other second-year MFA student in the exhibition, said the program was a helpful opportunity to

combine her interests in photography, maps and making books.

“I was looking at a lot of [maps] and then someone was telling me about the topography, and I was like, ‘I love that,’” Htoo said. “While doing the research I noticed the elevation changed throughout the years. I was like, this is interesting, that little change in the number.”

Htoo ended up making a book that sets the contour lines of the hill alongside photographs of fingerprint markings, which look similar next to each other. She said juxtaposing contour lines with fingerprint markings shows a shared sense of identity.

“We were talking about identity, right?” Htoo said. “Like how a landscape has an identity, but also how we are identified with that landscape. But then our fingerprint carries our identity, right? So it's making that connection of identity within identity within identity.”

Htoo also said the program was the first time she practiced making wooden frames, which she used for the large topography maps on display.

The students said that despite working in different mediums, the project was collaborative, especially when they were looking through the archives. They also said they spent a lot of time coordinating with archivists and Benton curators to ensure the research and exhibition phases of the project went smoothly.

“This was a great opportunity for us as burgeoning professionals to interface with a venue like a museum where they're going to handle the objects in a much more litigious way than any given pop-up gallery,” Heard said.

According to the Benton website, the exhibit will remain open until Aug. 2. The website also lists the Benton's open hours and any upcoming events ran in conjunction with “Raid the Archive: New Eyes on Horsebarn Hill.”

‘Project Hail Mary:’ Have the Stars Aligned for this Adaptation?



The promotional poster for the highly anticipated sci-fi movie, ‘Project Hail Mary.’ This film starring Ryan Gosling will be released on March 20, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @IMTONAA ON INSTAGRAM.

by **Logan De la Rosa**
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On March 20, 2026, the highly anticipated “Project Hail Mary” arrives in theaters. Directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller — known for past hits like “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,” “21 Jump Street” and “The LEGO Movie” — as well as featuring a reported \$248 million budget and star Ryan Gosling as its lead, the film is shaping up to potentially be one of the year's biggest hits.

The movie itself is an adaptation of the 2021 novel of the same name by author Andy Weir, known primar-

ily for his novel “The Martian,” which received a film adaptation in 2015. Like “The Martian,” “Project Hail Mary” is a work of hard science fiction, featuring a narrative that attempts to remain as scientifically plausible as possible. Considering that, it might come as a surprise that “Project Hail Mary” is receiving such a high-budget adaptation. In today's current pop culture landscape, hard sci-fi is an unpopular genre for mass audiences, even when it manages to have the occasional hit like “The Martian” or “The Expanse.” However, looking at the novel itself, it soon becomes clear why its film adaptation might be de-

serving of a dream budget and creative team.

For starters, “Project Hail Mary” is innovative in that it never wastes its reader's time. The book opens with its protagonist waking up from a coma, fighting to remember his past life, only to soon realize that he is alone on a spaceship traveling far beyond Earth. From there, he must do his best to figure out who he is and what the significance of his current journey is. After this gripping introduction, the book continues along at a steady pace, alternating between flashbacks of the protagonist's — whose name is soon revealed to be Ryland Grace — memories of Earth and the current day as he works toward figuring out his mission. This narrative structure does a fantastic job at keeping readers engaged, with Weir drip-feeding just enough information to keep the plot progressing steadily while preserving certain core mysteries as long as possible.

Moreover, Weir's prose does an excellent job at keeping the story's scientific elements palpable for readers. Written from the first-person perspective of Grace, the book shies away from dense descriptions and instead opts for maximum efficiency in storytelling. While some critics of Weir's work dislike this approach — often citing it as coming across as amateurish — it is equally arguable that it is one of the book's biggest strengths. Through his light prose, Weir uses Grace to communicate lofty scientific concepts like relativity, orbital mechanics and language acquisition to readers clearly and in a way that is immedi-

ately understandable. This in turn makes the narrative approachable to as wide an audience as possible, with readers not having to fear their potential lack of knowledge being a barrier to enjoying the story.

Additionally, outside of efficiently conveying the science half of its sci-fi, “Project Hail Mary” also does a great job at its fiction side, particularly in crafting likable characters. Grace himself is especially great as a protagonist, with him managing to be both an incredibly competent scientist and a massive dork. Looking at its film adaptation, it's clear why Ryan Gosling was chosen for the role, as Grace's personality could be summarized as combining the overt goofiness of Gosling's role as Ken in “Barbie” (well, maybe not quite to that caliber of goofiness) with a bit of the understated sadness he had in more mature films like “Blade Runner: 2049.”

Furthermore, a certain character — unfortunately, spoiled by the film's recent trailers — may or may not become incredibly relevant to the story midway through. This character in particular, without going into too much detail, proves to be one of the story's best additions, with their presence adding a strong emotional throughline to piece that makes its conclusion surprisingly impactful.

So, the book itself is a solid read, but will it translate well to screen? Overall, it has the makings of an excellent film, with one or two caveats. For starters, Weir's writing, while great as a total package, is a little uneven at points. Not all, but much of the humor in

the novel felt fairly forced. At points it verges on what is known online as Reddit or Marvel comedy, which — for those not chronically online — is effectively just sarcastic humor that is unnecessary at best and painfully unfunny at worst.

Moreover, while not a flaw with the novel's writing, its story structure does not adhere to the traditional “rising action leading to massive climax” that most blockbusters feature. As a result, if the current narrative is followed beat for beat, the film might drag a bit towards the end or feel underwhelming for some viewers.

However, considering the talent of its directors Lord and Miller, the film has a solid chance of ironing out both of those potential flaws. The two have proved to be excellent at writing comedic dialogue in their “Jump Street” films, as well as being equally capable of crafting edge-of-your-seat finales with the “Spider-Verse” movies. With some rewriting of the existing humor and a minor reshuffling of the story's progression, “Project Hail Mary” could be a superb film.

Putting everything into perspective, a lot has certainly managed to go right for “Project Hail Mary” thus far. It has a great core narrative to work with, a solid leading actor that matches the protagonist's character and a pair of legendary directors at its helm. Whether or not it sticks the landing, there's still another two weeks before the film releases. Until then, we will just have to wait and see if the stars have truly aligned for “Project Hail Mary.”

Trendsetter

New Fad NeeDoh Fuels Dangerous Internet Challenge

by Maleena Muzio | ASSOCIATE LIFE EDITOR | SHE/HER/HERS | maleena.muzio@uconn.edu



Imagine this: you are 10-years old, and your art teacher or summer camp counselor takes out a bottle of glue and shaving cream — you instantly know what you are about to make.

The DIY slime craze may have died many years back (with occasional in and out phases), but a very similar item has recently become extremely popular: NeeDoh.

NeeDoh is best described as a dough-filled thermoplastic rubber sensory toy — think stress ball meets clay-like butter slime. Many of them are shaped like foods or objects, being somewhat translucent. Some of the most popular NeeDoh toys are the “Nice Cube” and “Gummy Bear,” which of course come in a series of different colors.

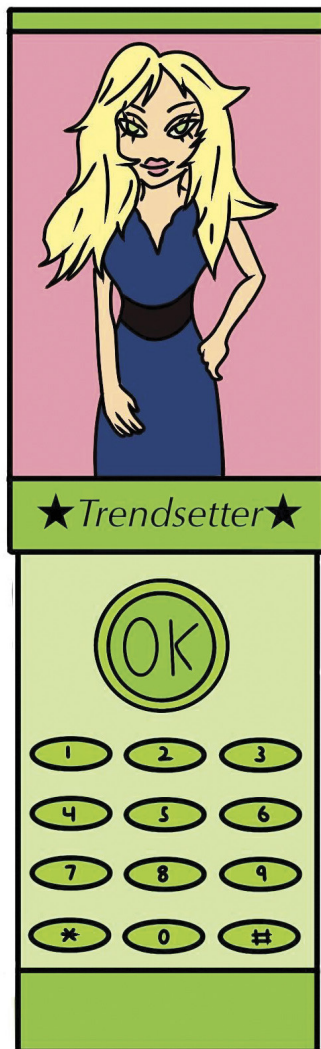
Fidget toys became extremely popular after the onset of slime-making and the comeback of the fidget spinner in 2016-2017, with the rise of the “squishy” shortly after. It is safe to say that NeeDoh is another fad of the 2016 revival.

People are even cutting their NeeDoh toys open to make putty, and while labeled as non-toxic, this is not recommended. Unfortunately, there are more similarities to the slime craze than maybe originally thought.

Flashing back to the 2010s, slime was often made with the chemical borax, which posed many problems for children. Along with being a skin irritant, in the worst cases causing chemical burns on skin and eyes, if borax is ingested by children it can result in severe vomiting, diarrhea, shock and even death, according to an ar-

ticle updated by Healthline in 2023.

Cutting open NeeDoh can result in similar skin irritation,



but a more dangerous trend has emerged in which children are microwaving their toys to make them more squishy or pliable.

Caleb Chabolla, a 9-year-old from Plainfield, Ill., experienced second-degree burns

on his face and hands after he microwaved his NeeDoh, according to an article updated by CBS News on Feb. 2.

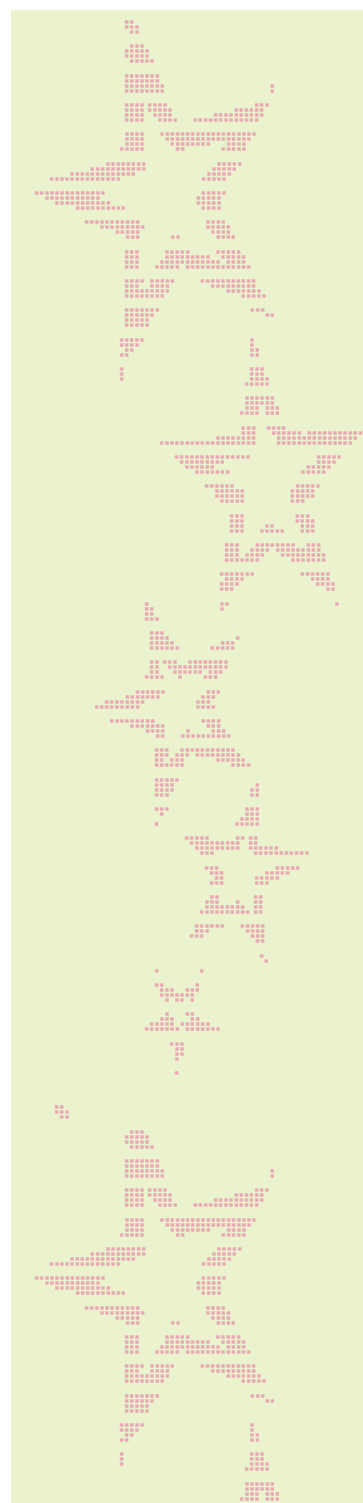
Loyola Medicine, the hospital Chabolla was treated at, said four other patients were treated for burns from NeeDoh, according to CBS.

Schylling, the company that produces NeeDoh, has since issued a warning against microwaving, heating or freezing their toys.

According to CBS, a TikTok USDS Joint Venture spokesperson said the app redirects users looking for dangerous challenges to their SafetyCenter, and that videos promoting danger violate the app’s guidelines and are removed by the platform when found. However, kids still came across the challenge.

This is not the first time a dangerous challenge has spread over social media, however. A less positive moment from the late 2010s, but a defining incident nonetheless was the “Tide Pod Challenge.” Children and teens on various social media platforms were eating the laundry detergent-filled pods, and suffering severe health complications, often resulting in hospitalizations. Ingesting Tide Pods can also notably cause death.

While fads and trends can be intriguing to children, they can also be extremely dangerous if blindly followed. NeeDoh is just one example of a DIY project or challenge ending horribly wrong. However, if you still want a “Nice Cube” after reading this, I wish you luck trying to get your hands on one and remind you to be safe!



Spring Cleaning Your Wardrobe: How to Dress for the Spring Weather

by Eva Nyquist
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Heavy rain, midterms and 60-degree weather on the horizon — spring is in the air!

Winter in Storrs has been nothing short of cruel, with snowstorms every other weekend and dirty slush and salt covering our shoes. It also seems to plan to stick around, with snow on the forecast and temperatures still firmly rooted in the low 40s. But after months of thick puffer jackets, fuzzy hats and snow boots, there’s some relief in our near future.

Spring is arriving fashionably late this year, so you should arrive fashionable, too. Here’s how.

Dress in layers

Layers are both fashionable and practical. The weather in spring is unpredictable, ranging from high 30s to low 70s all in one day, so you’ll want to be prepared for anything, especially if you can’t stop by your dorm to change between classes. You might feel sick of layering by now — after all, those bulky puffers might have you feeling like a snowman — but spring (no pun intended) for light layers and you’ll be fine.

Mix and match your basics

There are a few spring staples you absolutely can’t go without. First, of course, is the tank top. You can layer these under pretty much anything for some invisible warmth, or even over a t-shirt for that classic Y2K style. Next is the plain crewneck; while not as flexible as the tank top, it provides a nice base for the outfit, especially with a white shirt peeking out under the collar (layers!).

And you should always have at least one zip-up hoodie. Ready to serve at every

temperature, the zip-up is an easy piece to incorporate into an otherwise plain outfit, and zipping it up at different lengths can change your entire appearance.

The most crucial staple I would have to recommend, though, is the timeless flannel button-up. You can pair it with almost anything and

a statement. As for shoes, Converse and any tennis shoe have a good spring vibe.

Find your aesthetic — or let the trends find it for you

Maybe jeans and a boxy tee aren’t your style — understandable! Spring allows for versatility and encourages all sorts of aesthetics. If you

pricey. A budget-friendly alternative is a bomber jacket or jean jacket; they’re lightweight, easy to store away on the go and simple to style. If you’re particularly stylish, the trenchcoat is a unique and fun choice for a final layer. Don’t forget a raincoat!

Also in revival is the 90s and early 2000s t-shirt-over-long-

terns. Spring is a very bright and airy season, so opt for pastels and generally light colors. Light-wash jeans are a good pick for any outfit, especially if you’re planning to wear a darker top. If you’re into the earthy tones, go for lighter greens and tans. If you’re more into darks, try out navy or forest green.

Patterns can be tricky to style, which is why I recommend having a lot of plain pieces to layer. However, there is one pattern that always works in spring: gingham. Whether it’s a gingham button-up or gingham dress, it’ll always look great in springtime — probably because of the association with picnics.

Stripes usually work well, too. Here’s a tip on striped pieces: look at how close the lines are to one another. The closer the lines, the harder it’ll be to style — but inversely, if the lines are too far apart, you’ll just look like a grid. Find a nice middle ground for optimal styling. Polka dots, although very susceptible to becoming “tacky,” are also a fun option for a blouse or sundress. If you’re truly daring, you can tackle the floral pattern and get quirky with your tops (or bottoms!).

Don’t be afraid to reinvent yourself

Spring is all about new beginnings, so give yourself the grace to explore a new beginning for your style, too. If you’re worried about whether a piece works for you or if an outfit is too “out there,” phone a friend or just... give it a try. If something makes you happy to wear, there’s no reason you shouldn’t wear it.

Don’t fear getting creative! The good thing about an outfit is that you can always change out of it and you never have to wear anything that was part of it again. Spring for the stars!

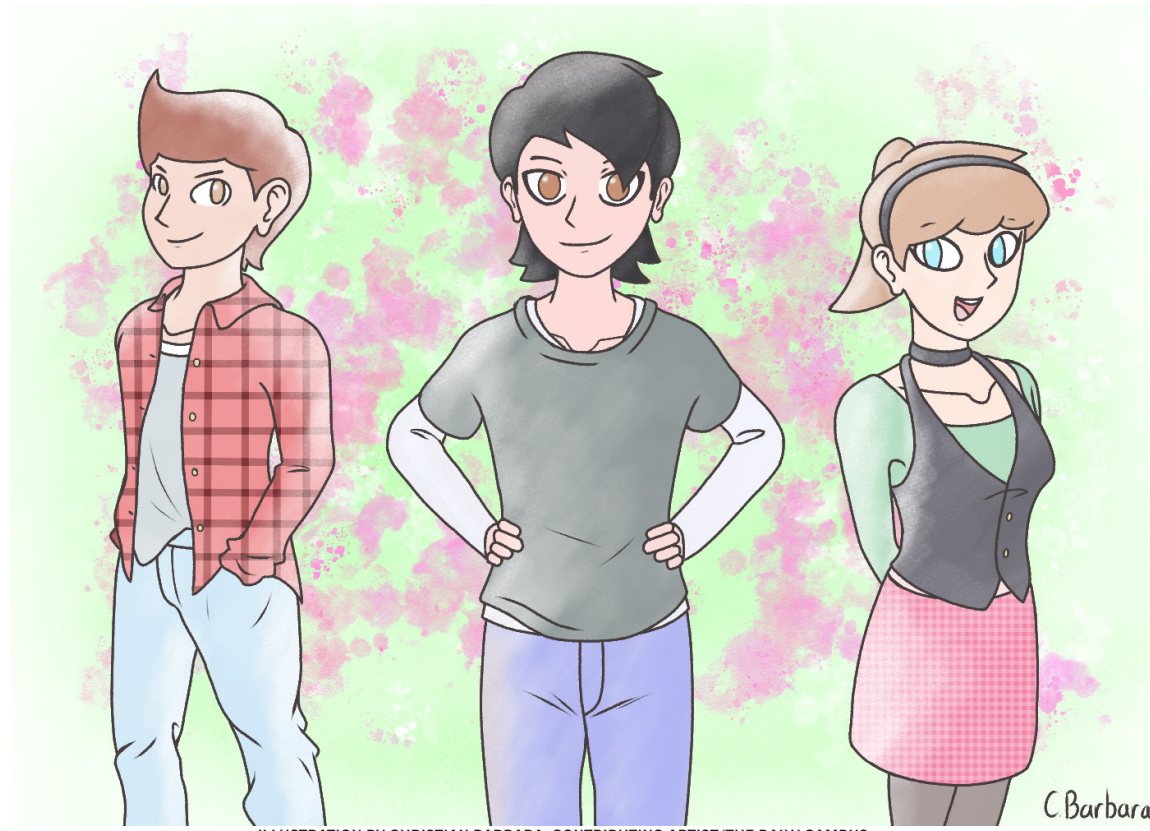


ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIAN BARBARA, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

wear it over, under or around the waist. Lately, short-sleeve button-ups worn over waffle-knit long-sleeves have been making a comeback — a classic combo perfect for the mid-range temperatures of spring!

You can’t forget about pants and shoes, either. Jeans are trending and for good reason; some linen trousers or leggings are more comfortable options that will elevate your outfit. When it gets warmer, try out some long jorts — which, I know, can be hit or miss, but it doesn’t hurt to try, and they always make

like flowy, frilly pieces, it’s time to break out your skirts and blouses; if you like more earthy, vintage pieces, pick up some corduroy pants and a grandpa sweater. The cottagecore aesthetic is in season! If you’re more into the “clean” aesthetic, go for a nice polo or some linen pieces that’ll give you breathability on the hotter days.

We’ve all seen the Carhartt jacket trend floating around and rest assured it’s still in style. But as we all have learned from scouring Depop, Carhartts are rare and

sleeve combo. Any kind of tee (plain, patterned or graphic) over a long-sleeve is the perfect match to thrust your style into the stratosphere. The key to making it look like skateboarder streetwear instead of, say, Sheldon Cooper’s wardrobe, is to keep the long-sleeve a muted neutral tone or at least make sure the colors are complementary. Clashing a royal blue long-sleeve with an emerald green graphic tee won’t do you any favors.

Coordination is key

Now that we’re on the subject, let’s talk colors and pat-



Life

ROUNDTABLE

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT FACE OF UCONNIC?

IT'S OFFICIAL — UCONNIC IS UPON US! NOW THAT SUBOG CONCERTS HAS BEGUN PROMOTING THE NIGHT ON THEIR INSTAGRAM, AND AFTER THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF MALCOLM TODD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE UCONNIC HEADLINER IS ANNOUNCED. PREVIOUS FACES HAVE INCLUDED ROSS LYNCH, SWAE LEE AND FLIPP DINERO, BUT WHO WILL BE THE NEXT HEADLINER?

by Maleena Muzio
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I have noticed a few trends when it comes to UCONNIC Headliners; being that they are typically smaller rappers or indie musicians (with the exception of Ross Lynch last year). This year, with the recent breakthrough of so many smaller artists, it is hard to come up with a confident prediction for who the performer will be.

Two predictions from @storsschicks on Instagram specifically caught my eye: Malcom Todd and Renee Rapp.

Todd blew up a few years ago on Tik Tok and is known for his Mac Demarco meets Steve Lacy indie-bedroom pop sound. One of his most popular songs is "Roommates" from 2020 — what better song is there to perform at a college campus? "Chest Pain" is also incredibly popular, and I don't doubt that would be on his setlist.

Rapp, on the other hand, most famous for her Broadway role as Regina George in "Mean Girls" and appearance on "The Sex Lives of College Girls," recently became a pop diva. My guess is that she would perform songs like "Leave Me Alone" and "I Think I Like You Better When You're Gone" from her 2025 sophomore album "Bite Me."

by Thaddeus Sawyer
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After last year's success of The Driver Era (featuring former "Austin & Ally" star Ross Lynch), it's not hard to read the tea leaves and figure out who SUBOG is targeting this year.

Last year's choice was clearly a litmus test to see how UConn students would respond to a former Disney star before committing the big bucks to an even bigger celebrity

Forget Sabrina Carpenter, Olivia Rodrigo or even older stars Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez. What UCONNIC needs is Dove Cameron. The former "Liv and Maddie" lead is still at the level where UCONNIC could make sense but is famous enough that she would be an upgrade over the past few artists.

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As a second semester student, I'm not very familiar with UCONNIC and what artists are chosen to perform there. However, if I were to make a prediction on who's going to perform at UCONNIC this year, I would base it on current music trends and interests within the UConn community.

One trend that's currently prevalent on campus is the 2016 theme. I've read articles that talk about people being nostalgic of that year, so I wouldn't be surprised if an artist who was famous in that year will perform at UCONNIC. Some notable artists from that year are the Weeknd and Drake. If the Weeknd is selected to perform, he might sing some of his hits from 2016, including "Star Boy (feat. Draft Punk)" and "Die for You." If Drake is chosen to perform, then he might sing some songs from his 2016 album, "Views." A few songs he might choose could be "One Dance (feat. Wizkid & Kyla)" and "Controla."

The 2016 theme is ubiquitous on campus, but I've heard students talk about albums that were released within the past few years. One album I heard is "The Life of a Showgirl" by Taylor Swift, so it's possible that Swift could be chosen to perform at UCONNIC. If she's chosen, then she might play songs from "The Life of a Showgirl," including "The Fate of Ophelia" and "Opalite."



The Top 5 Roller Coasters in New England for 2026

by Sean Aitken | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | HE/HIM/HIS | sean.aitken@uconn.edu

March has arrived, which means we get college basketball, warmer temperatures and spring break. Some head south for spring break but those who stay in New England prepare for the warmer weather — which means amusement park season begins.

New England has a solid collection of parks and, more specifically, rollercoasters. While we wait for everything to defrost, it's the perfect time to count down the top five rollercoasters in New England heading into 2026

No. 5: Phobia Phear Coaster — Lake Compounce

Our first coaster on the list comes from Lake Compounce in Bristol, Conn. New England's only operating launch coaster, Phobia Phear Coaster. Opened in 2016, Phobia Phear Coaster is a Premier Rides "Sky Rocket II." It's one of only 10 Sky Rocket IIs in the world, with the next closest Sky Rocket II being Tempesto at Busch Gardens Williamsburg in Virginia.

Phobia has one inversion and reaches a top speed of 62 mph. What makes Phobia great is its swing launch: starting backwards is a great sensation, alongside the airtime you get when you reach the top and the way you almost crawl through the inline twist.

No. 4: Wildcat — Lake Compounce

For number four on the list we go about 500 feet away to Wildcat, also at Lake Compounce. Wildcat is entering its 99th season this year. For such an old ride, it's amazing it still runs so well. The coaster actually struggled for a time, with some even calling it one of the worst and most unpleasant coasters in the world. However, the ride was closed in 2023 for the entire season so it could be retracked by the manufacturing company Gravity Group. The company installed their gravity grid patented pre-cut vertically stacked track. It reopened in 2024 almost completely retracked.

Following the 2024 season, Gravity Group finished their retracking and today, the coaster is smooth as glass. A perfect coaster for the whole family, once they reach that 48 inch height requirement, of course!

No. 3: Superman the Ride — Six Flags New England

For number three we head north to Agawam, Mass. for Six Flags New England. Su-

perman the Ride has been a coaster marvel since its creation in 2000. Made by the Swiss rollercoaster manufacturing company Intamin, Superman has racked up many accolades over the years. It has won the Amusement Today Golden Ticket Award for "Best Steel Roller Coaster" five times, most recently in 2009.

Superman has a height of 208 feet and reaches 77 mph, making it the fastest coaster in New England. Superman is a great ride packed with great elements and speed. The only downside is uncomfortability of the restraints. If they changed the restraints, it would most likely top the list to be the best roller coaster in New England.

No. 2: Boulder Dash — Lake Compounce

For number two we are heading back to Bristol, Conn. for Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce, a wooden coaster marvel built in 2000 alongside a mountain. Boulder Dash has had its fair share of awards winning Amusement Today Golden Ticket Award for "Best Wood Roller Coaster" five separate times, most recently in 2016.

Boulder Dash has seen some criticism for being too rough in the last few years, but similarly to Wildcat, the company Gravity Group has come in to re-track it. The difference is they've added their patented "Titan Track" which adds steel to wooden roller coasters. Boulder Dash is a one-of-a-kind rollercoaster that runs alongside a mountain and reaches 60 mph. A night ride on Boulder Dash is an absolute must!

No. 1: Wicked Cyclone — Six Flags New England

Finally our number one coaster is Wicked Cyclone at Six Flags New England, a hybrid roller coaster manufactured by Rocky Mountain Construction. The original Cyclone closed in 2014 and was converted to Wicked Cyclone and opened up the following year. The conversion turned the fully wooden Cyclone into the steel-wood hybrid coaster we have today.

Wicked Cyclone is not the tallest or fastest, but it packs a punch with all its elements. It stands 109 feet tall and reaches 55 mph, all while navigating three inversions. A perfect glass-smooth experience, Wicked Cyclone is the best roller coaster in New England.



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



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Patrick's Politics:

Trump's Iran war is an unnecessary and directionless disaster

by Patrick Minnerly | ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | patrick.minnerly@uconn.edu

In America, we like to think of ourselves as negotiators for the world. If there's a conflict going on, we're often involved in the talks. But the sudden strikes on Iran this past week have once again shown that the United States' favorite word of choice is the missile. Our language is spoken with the roar of bombs and dead strewn among the rubble. This language has been delivered in a ramble, with few clear objectives beside destruction and ruin. Trump's war with Iran – and it is a war, declared or not – was fully avoidable, and it outlines the price of unthinking aggression.

Trump's war with Iran – and it is a war, declared or not – was fully avoidable, and it outlines the price of unthinking aggression.

The war, which has already seen more than 1,000 Iranians and six American service members killed, clearly did not need to happen. The situation escalated recently when a large military buildup of U.S. forces began in the region. As a result, tensions were high, but negotiations were still ongoing right before the war started. As munitions rained onto Iranian territory in the dead of night, fired from both US and Israeli forces, nothing had yet been established about why. It was only later, after explosions had echoed around Tehran and other cities, that Trump and his administration offered any explanation for the strikes.

The explanations were, to say the least, conflicting. Secretary of State Marco Rubio claimed that Israel was planning to take military action against Iran, and the US decided to strike Iran as well before they could think about retaliating. However, in Trump's telling, it was his "opinion" that Iran was going to attack first, and Israel was brought into the conflict by the U.S. If the foremost directors of government foreign policy are unaligned on why the conflict began, that signals a dire lack of cohesion on the administration's part.

On the war's objectives, the Trump administration is equally if not more confused. Shortly after the attacks began and Iran's leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed, Trump posted, "This is the single greatest chance for the Iranian people to take back their Country." Trump's statement heavily implied the goal of regime change. This would mean the U.S. anticipates Iran's government being overthrown as a result of the strikes, eliminating the Islamic fundamentalist regime that has existed since 1979. Trump also implied America's desire to influence

who becomes the next leader of Iran, but then said that "most of the people we had in mind are dead," killed by the joint Israeli-U.S. strikes.

The impetus for regime change rests on the assertion that Iran was close to having the capability to make a nuclear weapon. This has been a major concern for the U.S. for several years and came to a head last June, when America and Israel both tried to take out Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities. Then, Trump claimed that Iran's nuclear capabilities were "obliterated." But in the past few weeks, the adminis-

tration has changed its tune. Steve Witkoff, Trump's lead negotiator in the talks with Iran, said on Feb. 23 that Iran was "a week away" from being able to develop nuclear bomb material. No evidence has been brought forward to support this notion, and the government's scattered reasoning for starting the war has only muddied the waters.

But we knew already that Trump is obsessed with the twisted idea of "strength," and the war is an extension of that desire for a show of force. What matters is whether Trump will face restrictions on his dangerous thirst for blood-soaked and ruinous conflict.

This disjointed attempt to alter Iran's government echoes the grave mistakes of past American policy in the Middle East. The most famous example involves former President George W. Bush, who invaded Iraq and toppled its dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003 because of supposed evidence that the country was making "weapons of mass destruction." It was later determined that these WMDs did not exist and that the basis for the war was false. Similar to Khamenei, Hussein was a brutal autocrat who repressed the population but killing Hussein did not fix Iraq's situation. Instead, the American invasion created a vacuum of power only filled with military force, and the war dragged on for almost nine years. More than 100,000 Iraqi civilians were killed, along with thousands of U.S. and allied troops.

The American experience in Iraq taught the lesson that basing a war on flimsy claims, especially when that war is focused on completely changing nation's government, does not end well. Despite Trump's promises in the present day

that the Iran conflict will not last long, the administration is already warning that the military effort is just beginning. The Pentagon also announced that additional American casualties should be expected. In other words, the U.S. will soon be mired in another unnecessary and senseless war in the Middle East that costs many lives.

As bad as Bush's war (and associated war crimes) turned out to be, Trump's attack on Iran is held up by even less legitimate support. Despite significant expansion of the president's power to take military action in recent years, conducting such a barrage of strikes and killing a nation's leader should certainly be above the threshold for needing a declaration of war. Yet asking for a formal declaration or even congressional approval has rarely even been discussed by the administration. Trump did not notify Congress nor many of our allies, simply choosing to recklessly strike out on his own, endangering the lives of U.S. troops, as well as American and Iranian citizens. On the first day of the conflict, a girls' elementary school in Iran was struck, resulting in the deaths of dozens of

children. On March 2, three American jets were accidentally shot down by Kuwait, an American ally in the Middle East. At the same time, Americans in several affected countries have been unable to leave, since there was no indication war was imminent. These events demonstrate the haphazard and indiscriminate nature of the attacks; our allies don't even know where we're operating, our own citizens are stranded by our choices and we don't seem to care where our bombs fall.

Trump's entire approach to conflict with Iran has been deeply disjointed. We know from Iraq's example that such a war, focused as it is on regime change, is doomed to fail. He has put lives on the line unnecessarily and without thought, all for the flimsiest of justifications. But we knew already that Trump is obsessed with the twisted idea of "strength," and the war is an extension of that desire for a show of force. What matters is whether Trump will face restrictions on his dangerous thirst for blood-soaked and ruinous conflict.

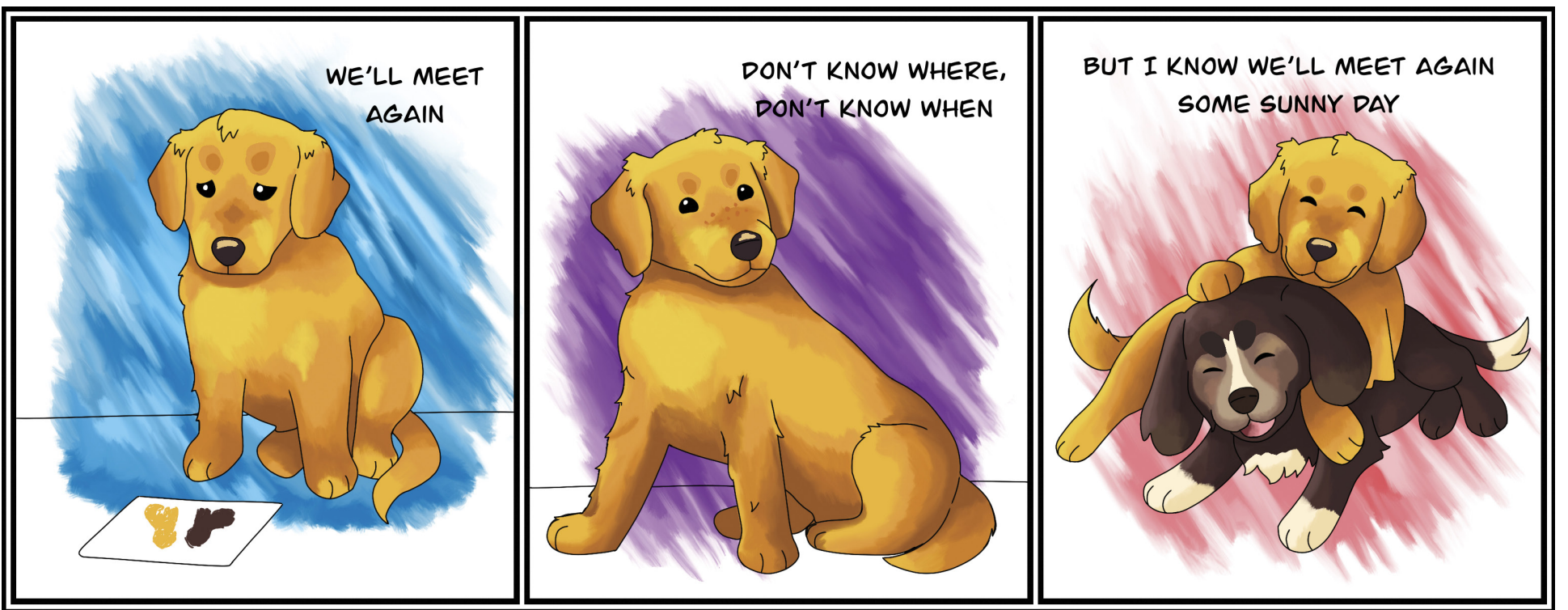
Opinion

Photo of the Day | Horse at the Horsebarn

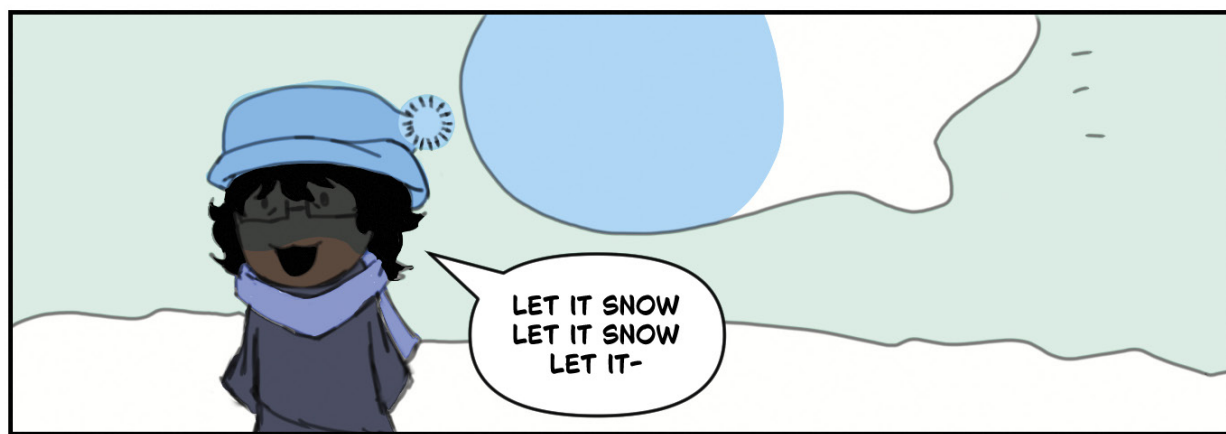


A student walks with one of the horses from Horsebarn Hill on March 4, 2026. There are many students who are involved with spending time and helping care for the horses. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

the daily campus comics



BY RAYFORD BROMLEY
CONTRIBUTING ARTIST



BY SETH
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THE MISSING PAIGE:

What about Bueckers' absence warranted Auriemma's comments on Sunday?

by **Jake McCreven**
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Less than 20 minutes after UConn smushed St. John's to finish the regular season as the country's lone undefeated team Sunday, Geno Auriemma shook his head incredulously when asked his thoughts on the narrative that this year's team is better than last's.

"I don't like that narrative," Auriemma admitted. "I don't know that you take one of the top five players in the WNBA off your team and say you're better. I don't know how I can justify saying that."

Auriemma's rare unrestrained praise of Paige Bueckers, last year's team leader, prompted a follow-up from the venerable head coach.

"There are a lot of times when I watch us play and I say, 'that wouldn't have happened if we had Paige,'" he added. "There are things that happen that maybe are not obvious or ascertained by other people, but we know, on the coaching staff, we know."

Auriemma's cryptic acknowledgment that this season's 31-win wagon, buoyed by the All-American efforts of Azzi Fudd and Sarah Strong, isn't as deadly as the one that limped out of South Bend and Knoxville with losses last year is, for the 41-year veteran, less of a complaint and more of an honest reckoning.

"Now, that doesn't mean they're not capable of playing at a real high level that matches what that team did last year - maybe that's in the cards for them, I don't know - but we're a much different team than we were last year," he concluded.

"But right now, to say that we're a better team than we were last year, I don't buy that."

It's hard to find any glaring discrepancies between the two teams... superficially, at least.

Both rank first nationally in defensive rating (points allowed per 100 possessions) and weathered a top 35 strength of schedule laden with top 10 foes in non-conference play. Both teams rank first in the country in field goal percentage and are top 2 in true shooting percentage, respectively. Both teams rank first in NET Rating on CBB Analytics and, through the end of the regular season, top Bart Torvik's T-Rank system.

In fact, the 2025-26 squad averaged more points (88.5 to 81.7) and allowed fewer per game (68.5 to 75.2) in regular season play. It's hardy and - for now - healthy nine-man rotation has given it a defensive backbone that helped force 212 more turnovers (774) than field goals allowed (562), according to Puneet Nanda on X.

"We have a few more players [than last year] that we can trust and put on the court," Auriemma said. "That's why I said I think we're different. We have a different way of playing; we have different options."

Peel back the analytical veneer, however, and the deeper-seated problems Auriemma alluded to on the podium Sunday rear their ugly head.

"None of those guys that I bring off the bench are Paige," Auriemma said bluntly.

That they aren't, and it's unfair to expect them to match the sheer production of Bueckers' 40-point explosion when the team was reeling against Oklahoma in the Sweet 16 last March.

Remember, last season's team enjoyed the luxury of deploying Bueckers, Fudd and Strong - what could end up being one of the best trios in the history of the sport - on the court at the same time, all of whom acted not only as offensive batteries but as team leaders and late-game maestros.

So yes, while Fudd - who's progressed to become a top-shelf defender on top of her unrivaled 3-point prowess - and Strong - a candidate for National Player of the Year - both return to spearhead the Huskies' NCAA Tournament run, Connecticut will inevitably lack Bueckers' "it" factor Auriemma described in earnest last season.

And even if (or perhaps when) Fudd and Strong compensate for Bueckers' absence in the NCAA Tournament from a scoring perspective, having three All-American caliber players is always better than having two.

But, as Auriemma said, these Huskies are different, which allows them to go a full rotation deep into the bench, play at a faster tempo offensively and lean on their hyper-aggressive defensive mindset to build insurmountable leads before the end of the first quarter.

It's worked so far, as evidenced by an opening night win over now-top 10 Louisville, a 32-point blitzing of Ohio State, a 26-point shelling of Iowa in Brooklyn and a 30-point detonation of Tennessee. If these Huskies are capable of running the table, however, something Auriemma alluded to was a possibility Sunday, they'll have to do it without the player that defined last season's run.



Paige Bueckers cheers for teammates along with Azzi Fudd during a game at UConn. Bueckers is considered an all-time player for this program, making it difficult to replace her presence on the court. PHOTO COURTESY OF @05UCONN10 ON PINTEREST

DROPPIN' DIMES:

RANKING ALEX KARABAN'S FIVE BEST HOME GAMES AT UCONN

by **Matt Dimech**
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Alex Karaban committed to continue his basketball career in Connecticut on Aug. 2, 2021. Four and a half years later, Karaban played his last game in the Basketball Capital of the World.

The two-time national champion played in 66 home games for the Huskies. He put together a 90.9 winning percentage between Gampel Pavilion and PeoplesBank Arena. In honor of his final home game, let's rank the five best home performances of Alex Karaban's career.

HM. BYU - Nov. 15, 2026

Alright, I know this wasn't actually a home game. But it did take place at TD Garden, less than 30 miles from Karaban's home in Southborough, M.A. The arena has also been referred to in the past as Storrs North, so I'm giving it an honorable mention.

Karaban finished the game with 21 points in a four-way tie for the team's leading scorer in a high-octane 86-84 finish. He knocked down three consecutive three-pointers as BYU clawed back into the game in the second half, finishing a perfect 4-of-4 on the night.

It was UConn's first win over a ranked opponent this season.

5. Villanova - Dec. 28, 2022

Karaban gave UConn fans a glimpse of things to come during his redshirt freshman season. The Huskies had coasted to a 13-0 record, entering the game as the No. 10 team in the country. Villanova offered the Huskies their first real test.

While it was Jordan Hawkins who led the Huskies in scoring with 22, Karaban posted 15 points in the winning effort. He knocked down three critical three-pointers to suppress the Wildcats' chances of taking the lead. The game was emblematic of what would be Karaban's ca-

reer to come: he didn't need to dominate the ball to leave an impact on the game. He provided stability and was the connector in Dan Hurley's offense.

4. Xavier - Dec. 18, 2024

The 2024-25 season was a roller coaster ride for Karaban and the Huskies; between injuries, uncharacteristic losses and shooting slumps. But the team's overtime win over Xavier in Hartford was certainly a high.

Karaban was the hero for UConn overtime. He scored seven of UConn's 14 overtime points to put the game away in a 94-89 final. He scored 20 points in total and made several key stops on the defensive end which included three blocks. Xavier head coach Sean Miller credited Karaban for his clutch performance during the post-game press conference.

"I don't know if college basketball has ever had a better winner," Miller said.

3. Georgetown - Jan. 14, 2024

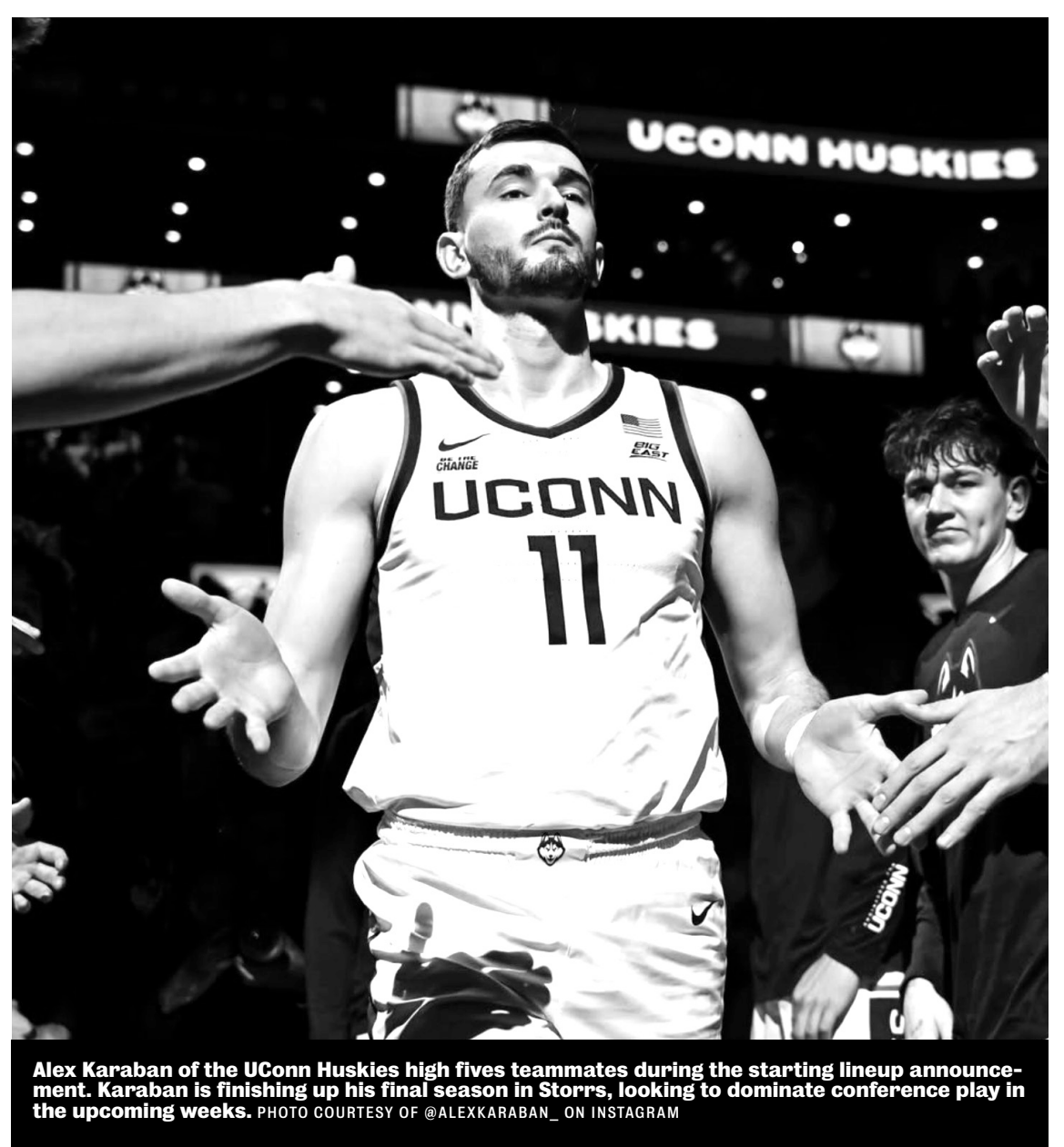
Karaban put on a dominant scoring clinic 80-67 win at the then-XL Center. The Huskies were without their starting center, Donovan Clingan, which forced the Huskies to resort to a "small ball" lineup.

He shot out of a cannon in the first half, burying five three pointers before the intermission. He knocked down another in the second half, finishing with a career high six made threes. The performance also marked his career-high in points with 26. He was 9-of-13 from the field and 6-of-8 from three.

The win powered UConn to the No. 1 sport in the AP Poll.

2. Marquette - Mar. 5, 2025

UConn was in desperate need of a victory over No. 20 Marquette as March began last season. The Huskies were ranked outside of the top 25 as they jockeyed for position in the Big East standings. They were looking to



Alex Karaban of the UConn Huskies high fives teammates during the starting lineup announcement. Karaban is finishing up his final season in Storrs, looking to dominate conference play in the upcoming weeks. PHOTO COURTESY OF @ALEXKARABAN_ ON INSTAGRAM

complete a season sweep over a team that had been ranked in the top 25 all year.

Karaban stepped up and scored 16 second half points, which included a personal 7-0 run. He received a pass on the wing with just 23 seconds remaining and UConn clinging to a one-point lead. He stepped into a deep three pointer, icing the dagger and securing the 72-66 victory in a raucous Gampel Pavilion.

He finished the game with 21 points.

1. Seton Hall, - Feb. 27, 2026

Karaban saved his best for last. He scored a season-high 23 points in his senior day game against Seton Hall at Gampel Pavilion. Karaban became the first active player in program history to be named into the Huskies of Honor.

UConn trailed eight late in the second half. Karaban hit

back-to-back threes amid a 10-0 kill shot for the Huskies. He was nearly perfect from deep, knocking down 5-of-6 attempts from beyond the arc. Karaban played all 40 minutes and sank the two free throws that secured his 60th career victory at home.

The win was one final reminder of why he is the winningest player in program history. He led one final Husky Chant before stepping off his home court one last time.

Droppin' Dimes



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAEMINA STAFF ARTIST/ THE DAILY CAMPUS

Sports

Photo of the Day |



The UConn Huskies play against the St. Johns Red Storm at Madison Square Garden in NYC, N.Y. on March 1, 2026. The Huskies won with a final score of 85-49.
PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The Weekly Power Play:

The NHL Trade Deadline is here, Five players to keep an eye on

by **Nicole Caruso**
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With the NHL Trade Deadline set for Friday, March 6 at 3 p.m. EST, here are five key players that have a high chance of being moved around before then.

Brayden Schenn, C, St. Louis Blues

The St. Louis Blues captain has had quite the underwhelming season. With just 24 points so far this season, Schenn has struggled to generate offense for his squad. Last season, the center was at talks of being traded prior to the Blues' 12-game winning streak, which earned them a spot in the playoffs. Currently sitting in last place in the Central Division, the Blues should consider trading Schenn, who still has two years left of his 6.5-million cap

hit contract. The Blues would likely seek out a first-round draft pick along with a defenseman to help their struggling blue line.

Nazem Kadri, C, Calgary Flames

Despite saying in past months that he wanted to stay a Flame, it seems Kadri is ready to be traded according to TSN Hockey Insider Darren Dreger. Kadri, who has 10 goals and 39 points in 56 games so far this season, is a pending unrestricted free agent, carrying a cap hit of \$7 million. The former Stanley Cup winner with the Colorado Avalanche in 2022 is rumored to be reunited with his old team. The Avalanche, who have close to \$8 million in cap space, should look to bring in another strong forward, such as Kadri, who has been on the Avalanche before. Should they add Kadri, he will be a strong

asset to their already strong offensive lines.

Evander Kane, RW, Vancouver Canucks

Kane is a pending UFA with an expiring deal with the Canucks. The Vancouver native missed all of last season due to multiple injuries but currently has 26 points this season. There is a possibility that the Canucks would retain half of his salary, which would allow a team eyeing Kane to avoid spending a lot for the veteran player. Kane has playoff experience, having reached the Stanley Cup with the Edmonton Oilers, making him a good option for teams that are likely to advance to the playoffs.

Zach Whitecloud, D, Calgary Flames

Despite being recently acquired in January, Whitecloud could be a good player for the

Flames to trade. The defenseman has gained significant ice time since joining the Flames from the Las Vegas Knights. Also in that trade was Rasmus Andersson, who was sent to Vegas. The Boston Bruins were linked to Andersson but ultimately lost out. Whitecloud could be a strong option for Boston to acquire as the defenseman could add serious depth towards their defense.

Connor Murphy, D, Chicago Blackhawks

Murphy's name has been mentioned across past years to be traded, but Chicago has yet to make it happen. This year, he is an unrestricted free agent, so if there is any time to trade him, it would be now. The veteran is a strong defenseman for the team among a number of younger players making up Chicago's

defense. Murphy leads Chicago in blocked shots and would be impactful for teams struggling to keep the puck out of their net. w

These are just a few of the many players that have a chance of switching jerseys this season. NHL Network will provide all day coverage on Friday, with live updates available on the NHL App as well



LOGO BY ALEXA PAPPAS, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

LOMBARDI LINEUP:

DON'T COUNT OUT THE AZZURRI

by **Ryan Lombardi**
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Just three years ago, a scrappy Italian squad surged past the World Baseball Classic group stage after stunning upset wins over Cuba and the Netherlands. Although they fell at the hands of the eventual champion Japan, that performance laid the groundwork for the future of Italian baseball.

As the 2026 WBC quickly approaches, Italy finds themselves in a similar underdog position. Slotted into a group alongside the United States and Mexico, the Azzurri are once again being counted out. But this time, the narrative is different.

The 2026 tournament marks the WBC coaching debut for former Yankees catcher Francisco Cervelli, taking over the mantle from Hall of Farmer Mike Piazza. Cervelli has also brought in a familiar face, longtime teammate Jorge Posada, to the coaching staff.

Following the same vision as Piazza, Cervelli is committed to developing the game of baseball in Italy. "We want to be able to have Italian players play and have people in Italy watch the games and see somebody that is from their neighborhood, from their city, from their region," Cervelli said.

For years, Italian baseball has faced recurring criticisms that

the roster was based on Italian Americans rather than home-grown talent. Some critics have mockingly referred to them as "Team New Jersey."

However, this year may begin to change that narrative. The 2026 roster may begin to bridge MLB and Italian Serie A talent to create a team that's both competitive and representative of mainland Italy.

In 2024, Verona native Samuel Aldegheri became the first MLB pitcher born, raised and developed in Italy. His path to the big leagues has pioneered a new wave of native Italian talent brewing in the domestic Serie A league. Aldegheri is expected to be Italy's third starter, unlike past years where many of the Italian-born players were relegated to low-leverage roles.

He isn't alone. The most intriguing wildcard on this team is Serie A superstar Gioacchino Lasaracina. After posting a ridiculous 1.030 OPS over three seasons in Italy and leading the national team to a silver medal in the European Baseball Championship, Lasaracina recently signed a contract with the Toronto Blue Jays. This WBC could serve as his first true audition on the world stage.

Though despite the influx of native talent, the heartbeat of the team remains Royals first baseman Vinnie Pasquantino. Known in his early years as "The Italian Nightmare", he is

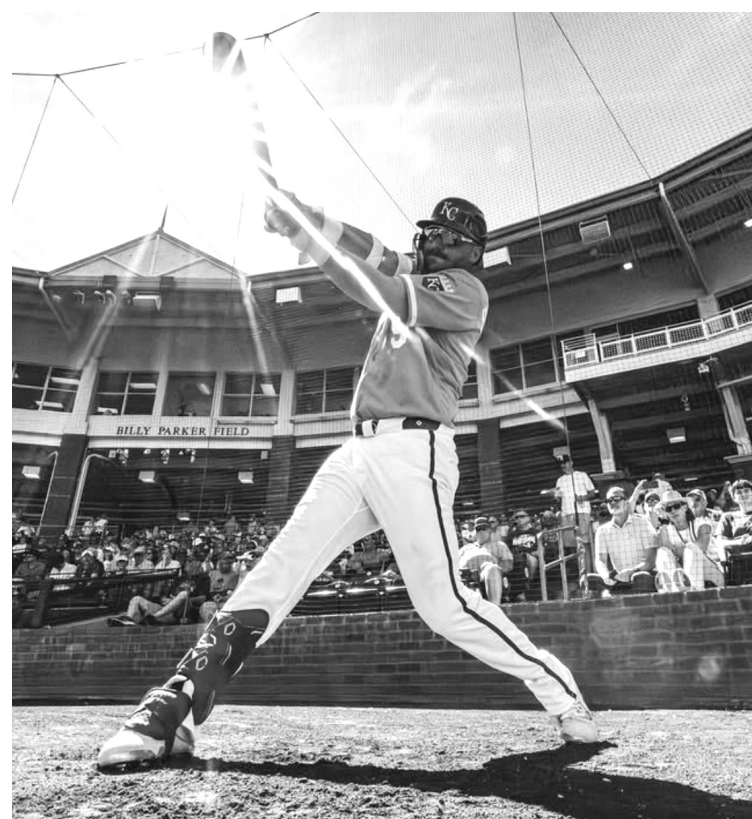
coming off his best season yet, crushing 32 home runs and driving in 113 RBIs.

Cervelli has put his full faith in Pasquantino. "We're going to build this around you. This is your team," the manager told him. Since then, the Royals star has embraced the role of an active recruiter to build this year's squad. "The guys that are on the fence, he gives them a call," noted Posada.

This year's roster may be Italy's strongest ever, especially with former Cy Young finalist Aaron Nola as the ace of the rotation. The lineup includes underappreciated talents like Dominic Canzone and Jakob Marsee, alongside electric youngsters like Jac Caglianone and Kyle Teel. On top of that, the bullpen is deep with MLB talent like Matt Festa and Ron Marinaccio. That kind of depth is crucial to make a run in such a top-heavy tournament.

According to ESPN, Italy is currently tied for the ninth-best odds to win the tournament, alongside Cuba and Colombia. But for this group, just being there isn't enough. "It's not just to participate. It's to win," Cervelli insisted.

The Azzurri are no strangers to uphill battles in the WBC. In the 2013 tournament, they faced a similar situation drawing the USA, Mexico and Canada in the same group. After a dramatic victory over Mexico, however,



Vinnie Pasquantino of the Kansas City Royals swings at the incoming pitch. Pasquantino is recognized as a leader of the National Italian baseball team competing at the World Baseball Classic starting Thursday.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @JASONHANNAPHOTO ON INSTAGRAM

Italy cruised past the group stage. They were ultimately eliminated after narrow losses to finalists Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, but proved that Italy should not be taken lightly.

For Pasquantino the mission is bigger than just a trophy, though. "We look at this like we're holding the torch for Italy right now," he said in a recent

interview. "The hope would be to build some sort of excitement over there, and they take the torch from us."

Until then, they'll continue to play with the signature flair that defines Team Italy. When asked about the team's unshakable confidence, Pasquantino responded "That's 'cause we're Italian. The vibes are always high."

BRAYDEN'S BREAKDOWN:

ONE BUBBLE TEAM TO WATCH FROM THE POWER 5 CONFERENCES

by **Brayden Gorski**
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As the calendar turns to March, all eyes are on college basketball. Whether you have been watching since November or just watched your first game this weekend, it is a time when the sports world comes together for the month-long spectacle.

Unfortunately for some teams however, they are fighting for their tournament lives on the infamous bubble. The bubble, used by all bracketologists, but in this case, it will be ESPN's. The worldwide leader in sports has eight teams on the right side of the bubble, along with eight teams on the wrong side of the bubble.

Here are teams on both sides of this bubble as conference championship week looms.

Big East: Seton Hall

The lone bubble team in the Big East has fallen outside of the "Next Four Out" category after Saturday's loss to UConn. Not all hope is lost for the Pirates as Friday night's matchup against 18 ranked St. John's gives them a chance to boost their resume before the Big East Tournament next week.

Shaheen Holloway's team will most likely be a 4 seed in the Big East Tournament. If they can

get past their first opponent, they will have 1 seed St. John's or UConn to deal with in the semi-finals. A win over one of these teams will not only help their resume but send them to the Big East Championship finals where anything can happen.

Seton Hall will rely on the veteran leadership of AJ Staton-McCray, who made the NCAA tournament a few years ago with Samford and Adam "Budd" Clark who led Merrimack to an NEC regular season championship last season.

Big Ten: Ohio State

In a tremendous year for the Big Ten, Ohio State's tournament hopes are hanging on for dear life. A massive win over eighth ranked Purdue on Sunday, OSU has moved into the "Last Four In" according to ESPN.

All the Buckeyes losses are to NCAA tournament teams, besides an early season loss to Pittsburgh and a midseason loss to Washington. Wins over Wisconsin, USC and West Virginia should go a long way going into Selection Sunday.

Bruce Thornton is trying to will his team to March Madness. The senior who has played all four years at Ohio State is averaging 20 points per game, including scoring 27 in a February win against Wisconsin. Will

he go his whole collegiate career without making the tournament, or will the Buckeyes hold on to their spot?

SEC: Texas

Year one under Sean Miller has the Texas Longhorns on the doorstep of an NCAA tournament appearance. Sitting at 18-11 with a bunch of quality wins and losses to tournament teams, the Longhorns could make noise in March. In an SEC that is almost as good as last year when they got 14 teams into the tournament, Texas has a 9-7 record in SEC play. With wins over Missouri, Texas A&M, Alabama and then undefeated Vanderbilt, Texas can clinch their spot with a win over number 20 ranked Arkansas on March 4, or a few wins in the SEC tournament.

Dailyn Swain followed Miller from Xavier to Texas and the move paid off for the junior. The 6-foot-8 guard leads the team in scoring (17.7 PPG), assists (3.1 APG) and field goal percentage (55.4%).

ACC: California

Saturday's loss to Pittsburgh sent the Golden Bears to the "Next Four Out". Sitting in eighth place in an above-average ACC, Cal must beat Georgia Tech and Wake Forest to even have a chance for an at-large bid. The Golden Bears will most

likely face an NCAA tournament team in round two of the ACC tournament, an opportunity that they must take advantage of.

Dai Dai Ames is California's leading scorer with 16.4 points per game. The junior had 19 at home against UNC in Cal's biggest win of the season. If Ames can provide the offense while Lee Dort (7.7 rebounds and 0.9 blocks per game) and Justin Pippen (1.8 steals per game) can anchor the defense, the Golden Bears have a chance against the cream of the crop in the ACC.

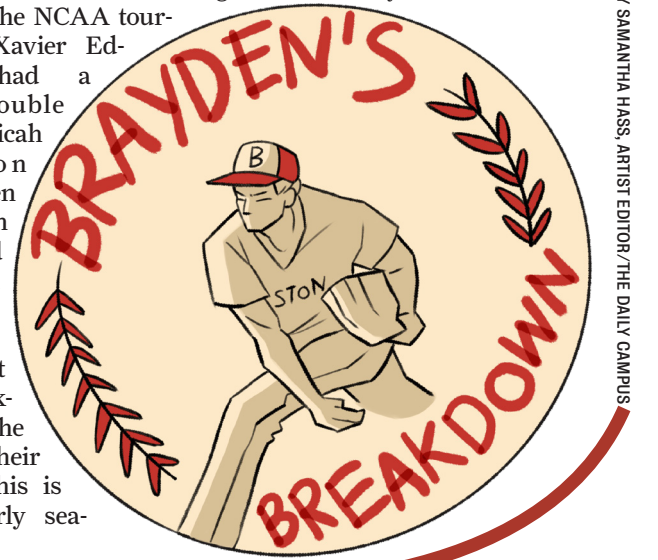
Big 12: TCU

Tuesday night's win on the road against Texas Tech may have clinched the Horned Frogs a spot in the NCAA tournament. Xavier Edmonds had a double-double while Micah Robinson and Jayden Pierre both pitched in with double figures.

But when looking at the rest of their resume, this is where early sea-

son victories come into play. Along with a 10-7 conference record, TCU beat defending National Champion Florida and tournament lock Wisconsin before Big 12 play began. They have also picked up some great Big 12 wins, including against then fifth ranked Iowa State and twice beating a strong Oklahoma State squad.

The Big 12 is a top conference in college basketball, and a 10-7 record is nothing to scoff at. The Horned Frogs were sitting in "Last Four Byes" before taking care of Texas Tech. They should hear their name called as a ninth or 10th seed on Selection Sunday.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

SPORTS SPECTRUM:

NBA'S MOST VALUABLE IS THE LEAST INJURY PRONE

by **Seth Wallen**
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It is a general consensus among both casual and diehard NBA fans that there are two players above the rest when it comes to the most valuable player award: Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic.

Both players, considered a tier above the rest of the NBA, are no longer competing against each other. They're competing against a stipulation: a game requirement.

Established in the 2023-24 season's Collective Bargaining Agreement, in order to qualify for accolades, including MVP, Defensive Player of the Year and All-NBA teams, players must have played at least 65, or about 80%, of the 82 games in an NBA season, logging at least 20 minutes in all of those games.

This has opened a conversation regarding the rule and the implications of it.

Should the rule be done away with?

The rule can be seen as punishing the unlucky MVP-caliber players who have injuries that keep them out longer than expected. In addition, certain players' contracts include bonuses if they make an All-NBA team or win DPOY or MVP, meaning a player could be missing out on extra money.

There is also this point that the athletes who would be getting the awards in place of those disqualified would be changing the course of NBA history, as concurred by Eric Koreen of The Athletic and Golden State Warriors center Draymond Green.

To Green's point, he lost the 2015-16 DPOY to current Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, who only played 64 games. Under today's rules, Leonard is ineligible for the award, and that season is effectively erased from the history books.

While it is not intended to be a knock on players like Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham, many are not comfortable with the idea of players in that tier (alongside Boston Celtics forward Jaylen Brown) winning that award because of injuries that Gilgeous-Alexander, Jokic and San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama had no control over.

Changing the course of NBA games over a missed game over the threshold seems counterpro-

ductive, as it sends the message to stars that their injuries can cut them loose at any moment.

With the league investigating the Utah Jazz in seeing if injuries are legitimate, it creates an air of hostility.

However, it comes at the cost of ignoring the physical strain the game brings, and the league's best players, like Warriors guard Stephen Curry and Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, who have already been disqualified.

Green also noted in January of last year that Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, who has a litany of injury concerns, had felt "forced" to play the game against the Warriors due to not wanting to be disqualified for the awards.

If the sentiment is to be believed, it wouldn't be too hard to insinuate that many players who have a chance to win that award also feel the same and, as is common in sports, will play despite the injuries that may exacerbate into something even worse. It is an act of putting the league's best talent at risk even if that was not the intention.

Load management, spurred by Leonard in late 2019 when he signed with the Clippers, is often believed to be the primary reason as to why the rule was instituted.

Teams were resting healthy stars during high-profile national TV games to save them for the playoffs, further contributing to what can be considered a lack of regard for regular season matchups.

They seemed to operate on the principle that if something can go wrong, it will go wrong. With that notion, stars were being sat out every other game, creating both a frustration for fans at home and fans that spent money to come and see their favorite players play.

The rule essentially acts as a product guarantee; if the players want to gain these bonuses and for the sake of the fans, they must show up at least about 80 percent of the time.

When it comes to what is valuable, for many, it is time. The league seems to apply this to the MVP voting process, in which those who can show up consistently can provide more value to their team than those who don't.

This also preempts the small sample size arguments; stats can be inflated, after all, and they need time to be flattened out.

A lot of NBA fans often ex-

trapolate corporate America practices to a professional sports league such as the NBA, often stating that if one were to show up to work less than 80% of the time, they would be fired.

Athletes are dealing with larger expectations, as comes with the larger sums of money they are paid. A physically intensive 'job' is the one they work where, despite their often-superhuman abilities, they are still putting their bodies and careers on the line every time they lace up.

However, the fired for 80% attendance argument ignores the physical reality of the sport. In a corporate setting, an employee can 'work through' a minor ailment. In the NBA, playing through a 'minor' injury can lead to a career-ending catastro-

phe.

It's important to note that in most cases, players who win MVP play around 70 games.

Bill Walton (1977-78) was the only MVP in an 82-game season to win while playing fewer than 65 games, with just 58. He is an anomaly, however, because the Portland Trail Blazers went 50-10 with him and 8-14 without him. To voters, those 58 games were so impactful that it won him the award outright.

Other low game counts, like Karl Malone (40; 1999) and LeBron James (62; 2012) are all the result of lockouts and shortened seasons. The standard has been 70 games.

The conversation has picked up recently specifically because of Jokic's abnormal extended ab-

sence. He missed a stretch from late December to the end of January, which makes it the longest extended absence of his career. Many doubt if the conversation would be occurring if he were still eligible.

In conclusion, the NBA's rule is an attempt at a compromise. It's gatekeeping based on a lottery of health. When a rule dictates accolades that can make or break a player's Hall of fame case, the history of the game starts to change.

With that, though, comes the inherent risk of players being more susceptible to career-altering injuries. The rule treats a torn ligament and a 'scheduled rest day' the same, and that's where the comparison falls apart.



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, guard for the Oklahoma City Thunder, stands among coveted trophies to be won in the NBA. He is considered a top-tier player that is deserving of the Most Valuable Player award. PHOTO COURTESY OF @DXRIUSZN ON PINTEREST



Sports

BASEBALL:

MENZEL HITS FOR CYCLE AS HOOK C DEFEATS NEW HAVEN IN HOME OPENER, 9-4



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Welcome back to Elliot Ballpark, and welcome home to Evan Menzel.

The UConn baseball team (5-7) snapped a two-game losing skid with a 9-4 win over New Haven (0-7) in the home-opener on Wednesday afternoon.

UConn may have experienced a delay this morning due to icy conditions, but the temperature was warm enough for baseball weather, reaching the 50s as the Huskies had their earliest home game in program history, according to the UConn+ broadcast.

New Haven, in its first season at the Division I level and in search of its first win of the season, threatened early in the game, loading the bases up in the first inning before Huskies' starting pitcher Tristan Aasland got out of the jam.

Connecticut, the preseason Big East favorites, is currently without outfielder Tyler Minick, but hopes to have him back soon.

Menzel's All-Big East-level presence was not needed Wednesday as he hit for the cycle, including a two-run inside-the-park homer in his first UConn home game. It was

UConn's first cycle since Brian Esposito on April 15, 1999, per the broadcast.

That eighth inning was as prolific as an inning has been this season for the Huskies' offense, driving in five runs. It proved to be a critical cushion as New Haven rallied to four runs in the ninth inning.

The eighth-inning scoring started with catcher Gabriel Tirado hitting a sacrifice fly to right field to drive third baseman Maddix Dalena in to score. It was the second time in the game that Tirado helped get his team in the scoring column, with designated hitter Cam Righi driving him in with an RBI single in the bottom of the second inning.

Righi had himself a day and was responsible for two of UConn's five runs in the eighth inning. The freshman from Wethersfield, Conn. doubled to right-center field to drive center fielder Nater Wachter across home plate. It was his first-career double and an important one in this game. Later in the inning, 90 feet away from scoring, Righi walked across the plate on a balk.

While Menzel's inside-the-parker will go down as a home run in the box score, the Huskies got one in the air

on a 50-degree afternoon with first baseman Jackson Marshall knocking a two-run no-doubter to deep-center field, his third of the season.

Coming into the game with a 13.50 earned-run average, starting pitcher Tristan Aasland stifled the Chargers' offense after getting out of a bases-loaded jam in the first inning. He finished the game with five strikeouts, two walks and four hits given up in five innings pitched. That included an impressive fourth inning. Despite giving up runners at first and second base, the righty from Snoqualmie, Wash. struck out the side to keep New Haven scoreless.

The pitching staff totaled nine strikeouts and 12 hits; the latter statistic inflated by the four-run ninth inning. The bats were hot as the temperature was abnormally warm for winter. As a team, the Huskies combined for 12 hits, four doubles, three triples and two home runs. They only struck out a combined six times.

UConn, now 1-0 in the newborn history with New Haven, will now turn its attention to a three-game road trip to Norfolk, Va., taking on Old Dominion before returning to Storrs to host New England rival Boston College.

Jackson Marshall of the UConn Huskies baseball team gifts his bat to a little kid following their game against the New Haven Chargers. The Huskies beat the Chargers 9-4 in their home opener. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER

MENS HOCKEY:

NO. 14 UCONN PREPARED FOR FINAL HOME GAME AGAINST NEW HAMPSHIRE

by Ava Inesta
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For the final home game of the regular season, the UConn men's hockey team is set to face New Hampshire at the Toscano Family Ice Forum for a week-day Hockey East matchup on Thursday.

"Right now we're 100% focused on UNH and I think they've been playing pretty well here the last month," said Head Coach Mike Cavanaugh on Wednesday. "We know we're going to have our hands full tomorrow with the Wildcats."

This will be the third matchup of the season between the Huskies and the Wildcats. The season series is currently tied 1-1 with both teams having a win on the road. The winner of the season series will be decided with this matchup at the Toscano Family Ice Forum.

For the final weekend of the college hockey regular season, all eyes will be on the Huskies as multiple teams can rise or fall in the standings; No. 13 Boston College, No. 17 UMass and UConn can all finish as high as second place in Hockey East. No. 5 Providence currently sits at the top of the Hockey East standings. For national rankings, UConn currently sits at 15 in the NPI with two games remaining before the start of the Hockey East playoffs.

"It's wide open to win the league [Hockey East]," said Cavanaugh. "No one winning this

league would really shock me. Having played all the teams, I can't say there's one game you go into and say 'you know we can beat this team with our "C" game tonight.' That's not the case."

UConn is coming off a 0-1-1 weekend against No. 17 Massachusetts where they dropped one and tied the series finale. Over the weekend, UConn put up 91 total shots on goal. The Huskies currently hold a 17-10-5 overall record and are 11-8-3 in Hockey East action.

Currently, senior goaltender Tyler Muszelik has arguably been playing some of the best hockey on the Huskies roster. Muszelik is posting a 16-8-5 record with a .928 save % and 2.21 GAA. If the Huskies can figure out some of their defensive woes that have cost some recent matches against UMass and Boston College, the team is in a great spot with Muszelik in the net for these last two regular season games and beyond. With his performances, Muszelik has been named to the Mike Richter Award Watchlist and named a Hobey Baker Candidate.

As for New Hampshire, they are entering this matchup with a 14-17-1 overall record and 8-13-1 in conference play. Senior Morgan Winters leads the Wildcats with 11 goals and 11 assists for 22 total points. Nick Ring follows close being with 8 goals and 14 assists for 20 points. Following this matchup with the Huskies, UNH will close out their regular season slate on Saturday

with a home game against No. 17 UMass.

For the final home game of the regular season for the Ice Bus, puck drop against UNH is set for 7:00 p.m. at the Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, CT. The game will be available to stream on ESPN+.

Ryan Tattle of the UConn men's hockey team celebrates on the ice after scoring a goal. The Huskies are preparing for their final regular season game against the UNH Wildcats Thursday night. PHOTO COURTESY OF @DTFLICKS ON INSTAGRAM

