



Student returns to UConn after being stuck in UAE during war

by Kevin Guinan
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Evan Rhault, a fourth-semester political science major, returned to the University of Connecticut Storrs on Monday after being stuck in Dubai amid the war between the United States, Israel and Iran.

Rhault and his friend Ryan Rivera Cabrera, both from Woodstock, Conn., served as chairs for a Model United Nations conference hosted by Italian company WSC Italia. Rhault said he was aware of the tensions between the U.S. and Iran before the trip but didn't expect the United Arab Emirates to be a target.

“We could hear the explosions, and the closest thing that they hit to us was about, I believe two miles away.”

EVAN RHAULT

“I didn't think that would affect us at all in the UAE, which has nothing to do with the conflict,” Rhault said. “We expected it to, maybe, disrupt the airspace... we didn't expect Iran to start striking the UAE.”

Dubai's international airport, the Burj Al Arab hotel and Palm Jumeirah Island were damaged in retaliatory attacks by Iran, according



Evan Rhault (left) and Ryan Rivera Cabrera (right) speak as chairs of a Model U.N. conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, before air travel shut down because of Iran strikes and trapped him in Dubai.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EVAN RHAULT

to a March 1, Reuters article. Israel and the U.S. launched strikes on Iran two days after nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and Iran ended without a breakthrough, according to Al Jazeera. “We could hear the explo-

sions, and the closest thing that they hit to us was about, I believe two miles away,” Rhault said, referencing the Dubai international airport. “They hit the airport a couple of times, as well as the U.S. Consulate and some hotels.”

Despite being nervous his hotel could be next, Rhault said he was overall “pretty okay” and thankful to be home safe.

“I wasn't getting much sleep when the attacks started coming in, so just being back is the most stress relieving thing,” Rhault said, adding how his schedule was also crazy before the war broke out with the Model U.N. conference.

When the war broke out after the Model U.N. conference finished, Rhault said the UAE defense forces gave him a decent sense of security.

“The UAE has a really good defense system... the first couple of nights we were able to see missile interceptions in the sky,” Rhault said.

Rhault didn't feel secure in every aspect, though. One example he gave was the fact that him and Cabrera were the only two Americans that were part of the conference.

“Telling us to fly out as soon as we can with airspace that is shut down is useless.”

EVAN RHAULT

“After they hit the [U.S.] Consulate, we were like, we could potentially be targets,” Rhault said, describing how the strike gave them a sense of urgency to find a way to fly home.

Rhault said he and Cabrera were contacted by the offices of Connecticut officials Rep. Joe Courtney, Sen. Chris Murphy and Sen. Richard Blumenthal on arranging a flight home. Rhault said the offices didn't help much in their return. “They all say the same

thing... enroll in this STEP program so that you get updates, take shelter, fly out as soon as you can,” Rhault said. “Telling us to fly out as soon as we can with airspace that is shut down is useless.”

Rhault said the Model U.N. conference was mostly made up of Italian students who got flown out of the UAE by the Italian government as conflict escalated. He compared that response to the one he received from Connecticut.

“That was something extremely upsetting to us, that we can see that the Italian government will fly out its citizens, but our government doesn't care enough to do anything for us at all,” Rhault said.

The process for Rhault and Cabrera to return home was difficult. Rhault said they had no luck finding a flight until Cabrera explained their situation to staff at the hotel they were staying at.

“They said, call this number. Everybody who's called this number has gotten a flight. We'd had about 400 people tell us to call numbers during our time, normally they were all dead ends, but he called this one anyway for some odd reason. It was a direct person at Emirates HQ or something,” Rhault said.

Rhault said the person Cabrera was directed to call by hotel staff got the pair on the first flight from Dubai to the John F. Kennedy Airport in the U.S.

Rhault met Cabrera his junior year of high school through Model U.N. and said navigating their return strengthened their relationship.

“It got to the point where during the Model U.N. end, it was a lot of bickering back and forth like brothers, but as soon as the war happened we kind of forgot about that,” Rhault said. “I'd definitely say our bond is a lot stronger.”



Evan Rhault (left) and Ryan Rivera Cabrera (right) speak as chairs of a Model U.N. conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, before air travel shut down because of Iran strikes and trapped him in Dubai.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EVAN RHAULT

News

Humanitarian convoy to Cuba sets sail March 21

by Angel De Jesus
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The Nuestra América Convoy will set sail for Havana on March 21 to bring humanitarian aid to Cuba.

The convoy is being organized by “an international coalition of individuals and organizations,” according to its website. Some of the organizations backing the movement include the U.S. Peace Council, the People’s Health Movement and the National Lawyers Guild.

The convoy is asking participants to provide humanitarian aid such as dry goods, baby food, over-the-counter medicine and batteries among other things. The aid will be brought to a designated collection point, which has yet to be announced, before March 21 to be shipped to Cuba according to the convoy’s website.

Nuestra América means “Our America,” in Spanish, referencing the 1891 essay of the same name written by José Martí, a Cuban Nationalist who advocated for Cuba’s independence throughout the 19th century. In the essay, Martí called for unity among the nations of Latin America against the Spanish crown but also warned of the United States’ increasing influence in the region.

“Trump is very much in favor of the Donroe Doctrine,” said David Adler, an organizer of the convoy in an interview

with AJ+, “which aims to dominate the entire hemisphere in the name of the United States.”

President Donald Trump said the U.S. would be interested in a “friendly takeover” of Cuba in a comment obtained by NBC News in February. On Feb. 28, Mike Hammer, the U.S.’s highest diplomat in Cuba, said the “dictatorship will end,” in an address reported on by the Miami Herald.

The convoy charged the Trump administration with “strangling” Cuba, calling the U.S. trade blockade criminal.

Cuba has been subject to an embargo from the United States since 1962 that has restricted trade with the nation, making it dependent on other countries for support. Much of this support came from the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991, launching the island nation into a “special period” marked by a search for new sources of support.

Cuba once relied on Venezuela for oil until its oil industry came under the control of the United States with Venezuelan Leader, Nicholas Maduro’s capture on Jan. 3.

Since then, Venezuela has been under an “oil quarantine,” Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a Jan. 4 interview with Margaret Brennan of CBS News. This quarantine refers to the seizing of sanctioned oil shipments on ships from Venezuela Rubio explained. “That’s a tremendous

amount of leverage that will continue to be in place until we see changes that not just further the national interest of the United States, which is number one, but also that lead to a better future for the people of Venezuela,” Rubio said.

Then on Jan. 29, Trump signed an executive order that vowed to impose tariffs on any country that “directly or indirectly sells or otherwise provides any oil to Cuba,” putting the country in a tougher position than before.

Venezuela’s oil industry being under U.S. control and this executive order have made it difficult to make up the gap in Cuba’s oil supply. Then, on Feb. 10, El País reported that Cuba announced it had run out of fuel for commercial flights, further straining its already dwindling tourism sector.

United Nations human rights experts denounced the executive order on Feb. 12, calling it “a serious violation of international law and a grave threat to a democratic and equitable international order.”

“We hope that this initiative in defense of the fundamental rights of the Cuban people will also be an opportunity to forge an international movement in favor of a hemisphere based on the principle of sovereign equality and full respect for international law,” Adler said.

Adler also helped organize the Global Sumud Flotilla which sought to break Israel’s

blockade on the Gaza Strip and bring humanitarian aid to its residents last year. The 42 boats

that formed the flotilla were captured and its crew detained by Israel in early October.



The official social media poster for the Nuestra América Convoy to Cuba. The humanitarian aid convoy is set to sail to Havana on March 21st.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PROGINTL_EN ON INSTAGRAM



A Cuban flag waiving in Havana, Cuba. A humanitarian aid convoy is set to sail to Havana on March 21st.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHIAS OBEN PEXELS.COM

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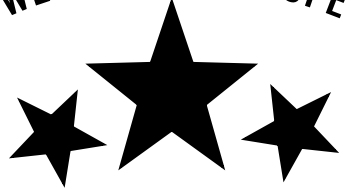
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Games

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



by Maleena Muzio

March 8 to March 14
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

Honesty will serve you well in situations this week that may have been put on the backburner. Be true to yourself and the answers you have been looking for will come into view. First, you may have to meditate and take a step back from the situation before decisions can be made, though.



Aries

March 21 - April 19
Get a jump start on your projects and relieve all of your stress.

Taurus

April 20 - May 20
Take that leap of faith and trust your decision-making process.

Gemini

May 21 - June 20
You're in luck — money or rewards may come your way if you commit to your plans.

Cancer

June 21 - July 22
Do some soul searching and treat yourself to some hard-earned self-care.

Leo

July 23 - Aug. 22
Your desires and manifestations are coming to you. Keep making those vision boards and writing down your goals!

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
A new friendship or relationship will blossom — be prepared for strengthened connections.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 23
Leave self-doubt behind. Your comeback season has arrived.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 21
Get the clarity you need before you proceed with projects or decisions.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Show up for the people you care about most — you won't regret it.

Capricorn

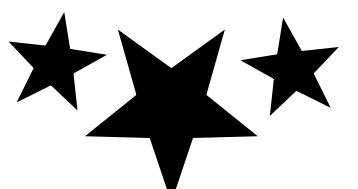
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
Positive shifts in energy are near. Ditch those bad old habits and remove yourself from negative scenarios.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Be your true, honest self. The right people will stay by your side.

Pisces

Feb. 19 - March 20
Creativity and important approvals are approaching.



THE DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Initials associated with the pride flag
- 5 Apple download
- 11 Round vegetable in a pastizz
- 14 Potatoes, in Indian cuisine
- 15 National flower of Mexico
- 16 Video meeting annoyance
- 17 Olympic National Park attraction
- 19 L.A.'s Melrose, e.g.
- 20 Like a comfortable flight
- 21 Young lady
- 22 Tournament advancements
- 23 Writing tip?
- 25 Financing figs.
- 27 Owner without a partner
- 34 Impersonate
- 35 A bit
- 36 Cussed
- 37 Creative sparks
- 39 D.C. MLBer
- 40 City on the Nile River
- 41 Hint of color
- 42 "Queer as Folk" actress Gill
- 44 Flesh and blood
- 45 Benson Lee coming-of-age film set in South Korea
- 48 Lean (on)
- 49 Fox Sports soccer analyst Holden
- 50 Faulty fireworks
- 52 "SNL" broadcaster
- 55 "The Creation of Adam," for one
- 60 "___ you kidding?"
- 61 Goatee alternatives
- 63 Spoil
- 64 Whirlpools
- 65 Challenge for a cross-country runner
- 66 Thrilling pair?
- 67 Classify
- 68 See 2-Down

DOWN

- 1 Young lady
- 2 With 68-Across, grab and not let go of

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By Joe Marangell

3/11/26

- 3 Tie with a slide clip
- 4 List heading
- 5 Pet-tracking implants
- 6 Clumsy person
- 7 Fluffy rug
- 8 Word in some trattoria dish names
- 9 One of 36 surrounding the Lincoln Memorial
- 10 Faux ___
- 11 Seeks victory at all costs
- 12 Roof part
- 13 Suggested range on a game box
- 18 Eclectic online digest
- 22 Cold one
- 24 "Wuthering Heights" novelist
- 26 Tuscan city
- 27 Sink of "Stranger Things"
- 28 Unexecuted market directives
- 29 Fantasy sports groups
- 30 Nebraska city with North America's largest indoor swamp

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

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3/11/26

- 31 Broadway star Bernadette
- 32 Red-haired primate
- 33 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame rapper MC ___
- 37 Part of TGIF
- 38 Buy alternative
- 43 Infomercial imperative
- 46 Church councils
- 47 Offended, say
- 50 Sir counterpart
- 51 Eurasian range
- 53 Future flowers
- 54 Muse of history
- 56 Reverberate
- 57 Protected area in a soccer game
- 58 Gaul or Breton
- 59 Nobel Peace Prize city
- 61 Lighthouse view
- 62 Pay-___-click

Level **1** **2** **3** **4**

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Solution to Tuesday's puzzle

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9	6	8	7	3	2	1	4	5
1	3	5	4	9	8	6	2	7
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The official start of spring is less than nine days away, and there is something beautiful about the first warm day after a long winter that just feels magical. The air feels lighter, the sun is out for just a tad bit longer and everything feels calm again. People are outside with their hammocks propped between two trees, windows open, music playing a little bit louder than before as campus slowly begins to wake up.

And after months of cold mornings, snow days and grey skies, spring quietly reminds us that things can change.

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

The world doesn't rush this process, but rather it happens slowly, naturally and right on time. Flowers push through the ground after being buried for months. The trees that once hung lifeless begin to grow small green buds again. And in a lot of ways,

our lives work in the same manner.

Sometimes we move through semesters that feel heavy. Weeks where everything feels overwhelming, where we are unmotivated, tired and unsure of what comes next. There are assignments, expectations and the constant feeling that you should always be doing more. But spring reminds us that life isn't meant to stay in winter forever.

Just like the seasons, we are always changing. Growth doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it is small. Sometimes it is simply getting through a hard week, trying again after something that didn't work out or even giving yourself a chance to relax.

And maybe that is the little lesson that spring brings with it: starting again does not have to be a big moment.

We often think that starting over needs to be dramatic. A huge decision. A moment when everything clicks into place suddenly. But more often than not it does not look like that at all. Most beginnings are quiet. They look like choosing to get out of bed on a day where you would have rather slept in. Sending the text or having a conversation that you've been putting off. Letting yourself

laugh a little easier after a week that felt heavy. And in today's case, sit outside for a few minutes just because spring is right around the corner.

These are small and unnoticeable shifts.

Spring does not rush itself and neither do the things that grow with it. Flowers do not bloom overnight and trees do not become green again in a single afternoon. It does happen slowly — one warm day at a time.

Maybe our lives work in that same way too.

Not through huge transformations but through the small moments where we allow ourselves to try again. To believe that things can get lights. To soften a little.

And maybe that is what makes spring feel so hopeful.

It reminds us that nothing stays cold forever. That even after long stretches of grey skies and cold mornings, warmth will find its way back. So maybe this season isn't asking you to reinvent your life or partake in a "spring reset." Maybe it is asking you to begin again in small ways. Step outside. Let the sun sit on your face a little longer than usual. Take a breath.

Because sometimes starting again isn't loud or dramatic.

Sometimes it is just the first warm day after winter.



Two friends enjoying the warm weather by Swan Lake. Spring is the perfect season to clear your mind and start fresh.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @UConn ON FACEBOOK

Spring break book recommendations for every destination

by Sarah Barker
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With spring break finally right around the corner, you're probably finalizing your packing list or figuring out what you plan to do with an entire week off. Even if you're not much of a reader, a perfect way to entertain yourself with no classes is to pick up a book. So, whether you're staying in Storrs or going to Puerto Rico, I've compiled a list of books I'd recommend based on where you're going for break.

If you're going to the beach (or any body of water), you should read "Same Time Next Summer" by Annabel Monaghan.

When I think of beach reads, I think of romance books — they're easy reads that you can probably devour in one sitting, and this fits the bill perfectly. It's a second chance romance about a woman named Sam who goes home to Long Island to look at a possible wedding venue and ends up reuniting with the boy who broke her heart when she was 17. Oh, and she's engaged to a different man.

It has a dual timeline, so you get to see these characters fall in love twice: once as messy teens and then again as adults. All around it's a fun summer romance that would be perfect for reading near any body of water, but most defi-

nately the beach.

If you're going home, you should read "Project Hail Mary" by Andy Weir.

Being home from break is obviously very nice because you're away from campus and you're probably happy to be eating home-cooked meals, but it can also get boring. That's why this book is so perfect because it's a bit on the long side (almost 500 pages), so having a week of no distractions is the best setting to start reading. Additionally, the movie adaptation is releasing on March 20, so if you finish the book, you'll be set to go watch it.

The book follows Ryalnd Grace, who is sent into space to save humanity. The thing is, he doesn't remember anything. Even if you're not a big fan of science fiction, this book is very accessible, and a pro-tip: check out the audiobook because it is very well done.

If you're staying at UConn, you should read the Shady Hollow series by Juneau Black.

No matter the reason, if you're staying on campus over break, I'm recommending this six-book series, which is perfect for escaping Storrs in a different way. Six books might sound daunting, but they are at most 250 pages each, so you can definitely fly through these.

The series is set in Shady Hollow, a small town where woodland creatures live in harmony

until bodies start dropping and Vera Vixen (a fox, in case you were wondering) has to solve the case. Tell me you don't want to read cozy mysteries where all the characters are critters. These books are what I imagine living in the world of "Fantastic Mr. Fox" to be like.

If you're going somewhere abroad, you should read "Evenings and Weekends" by Oisín McKenna.

It doesn't matter what country you might be traveling to; although this book takes place in London, this literary fiction debut takes you into the lives of three friends over the course of one hot weekend in June. If you're a Sally Rooney fan, you'll love this, but even if you're just interested in looking at other young adults living messy lives, this'll be the book for you. It's a story about friendship and secrets, and it really resonated with me as a girl in her early 20s who has no idea what she's doing.

If you're going on a road trip (or have a long car ride/train ride), you should read "The Road to Tender Hearts" by Annie Hartnett.

I'm a car sleeper and an Amtrak dissociater, but if you're looking for something a bit more productive for a longer trip, this book is perfect. It's about a man who wins the lottery and decides to drive from Massachusetts to Arizona to try and win back the love of his



The book "Same Time Next Summer" by Annabel Monaghan propped in the sand. The book follows a character searching for a wedding venue on Long Island, reuniting with a past lover. PHOTO COURTESY OF @BADONPAPERPODCAST ON INSTAGRAM

life. He's accompanied by his adult daughter and his estranged grandchildren on his journey. This book is funny, chaotic and heartbreaking at the same time. It's another that also has a great audiobook.

I will personally be getting into "The Haunting of Hill House" by

Shirley Jackson, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Ken Kesey, and "Our Missing Hearts" by Celeste Ng because that English minor grind never stops. Even if you don't read any of these books, still pick one up over break! We're in a literary crisis, after all!

POKÉMON WINDS AND POKÉMON WAVES: Predictions for the 10th generation!

by Sarah Cartagena
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We have finally reached the 30th anniversary of the Pokémon franchise — and you know what that means: Nostalgia central! Thousands of fans who have grown up playing, watching and reading media from the franchise are regaining interest once again with the recent announcement of games such as Pokémon Pokopia and the mainstream dual styles games - Pokémon Winds and Pokémon Waves.

The 10th generation mainline games were announced last month during a Pokémon Presents presentation on Pokémon Day, which is a celebratory day that commemorates the release of Pokémon Red and Blue. There is still much left unknown about this new generation for Pokémon, so we'll be tackling predictions and hopes from the fandom!

Will Pombon's final evolution stand on its hind legs?

There's one thing that is really having fans speculate and talk, and that's if the new starter Pokémon, Pombon, will evolve to stand on its hind legs or not. The majority are hoping for it to maintain its four-legged form, as Pokémon has a history of having their four-legged starters

turn into two-legged ones.

Fan art predictions surrounding all three of the starters have been circulating throughout social media platforms, mostly depicting Pombon on its four legs. We can only hope that Pombon breaks the curse of the standing starter Pokémon that has notoriously affected Fennekin's final evolution, Delphox.

Will Winds and Waves be affected by "Dexit"?

Before the release of Pokémon Sword and Shield (the eighth generation of Pokémon), each game had the capability of holding every Pokémon in the national Pokédex. Each game had a full list of Pokémon that could be found within it, while the national Pokédex was a full list of every Pokémon ever made.

Sword and Shield were the games to alter this dynamic drastically. It was announced that the game would not include the hundreds of Pokémon that you could normally transfer into any game. Outraged fans deemed this event "Dexit."

The question is, will Winds and Waves follow through with Dexit? My prediction is yes. As much as I hate to say it, Dexit is here to stay. With the amount of Pokémon created throughout the past 30 years, I doubt the creators would want to recreate sprites for forgotten and barely used

Pokémon.

What will the next legendary Pokémon typing be?

New legendary Pokémon, a very rare and powerful type of Pokémon, have yet to make their debut for the new games. Legendary Pokémon are usually used on the games box art and are mascots. Naturally fans have started up various conspiracies and ideas for what they will look like and especially what type they'll be.

A Pokémon's type is what defines its elemental nature, abilities, strengths and weaknesses. There are currently 18 types, including fire, water and grass. The legendary for Pokémon Winds is speculated to be a Flying-type Pokémon, while it is presumed that Waves will star a Water type. We can only wait to see what type of combinations these legends will possess, but I hope to see a Flying-Fighting type in Winds along with a Water-Ghost type in Waves.

What Pokémon will be featured on the box art?

A prediction that has been gaining traction is the possibility of Mr. Windychu and Mrs. Wavychu, two costume/cosplay Pikachus, being box art Pokémon. Even though these two aren't the usual legends, this wouldn't be the first time we see a non-legendary mascot. The Let's Go



A snapshot from the first trailer for Pokémon Winds and Waves. Fans are speculating what the new legendary characters will look like.

PHOTO COURTESY OF POLYGON ON FACEBOOK

Pikachu and Let's Go Eevee games included Pikachu and Eevee as box art mascots, as well as the original Red, Blue, Green and Yellow games featuring Charizard, Blastoise, Venusaur and Pikachu. There could very well be a possibility for Pikachu and Eevee to star on the box art because of the amount of promotion they've gotten.

A new Eeveelution?

The franchise has not seen a new Eevee evolution since the release of Pokémon XY's Sylveon in 2013. Currently, there are eight official Eeveelutions (Vaporeon, Jolteon, Flareon, Espeon, Umbreon, Leafeon, Glaceon and Sylveon) covering Water, Electric, Fire, Psychic, Dark, Grass, Ice and Fairy types. Eevee has yet to evolve into 10 Pokémon types, including Normal, Fighting, Poison, Ground, Rock, Bug, Ghost, Steel, and Dragon.

Winds would be a great opportunity to introduce a

Flying-type Eevee evolution but would present an advertising issue. If a Flying-type Eeveelution was introduced, many consumers could be more drawn to purchasing the Winds version instead of Waves. To avoid this issue, the creators could release a Bug-type evolution, as the game is set in a tropical climate. For now, we can only speculate about the possibility of a new Eeveelution joining the Eevee squad.

That's all for predictions regarding the next and tenth generation of mainline Pokémon games! Until its projected release next year, the fandom can only hope for a new generation filled with good plotlines, new Pokémon and an overall exhilarating and fun adventure! For more information on the future games, visit the Pokémon Winds and Waves website, at <https://windswaves.pokemon.com/en-us/>.



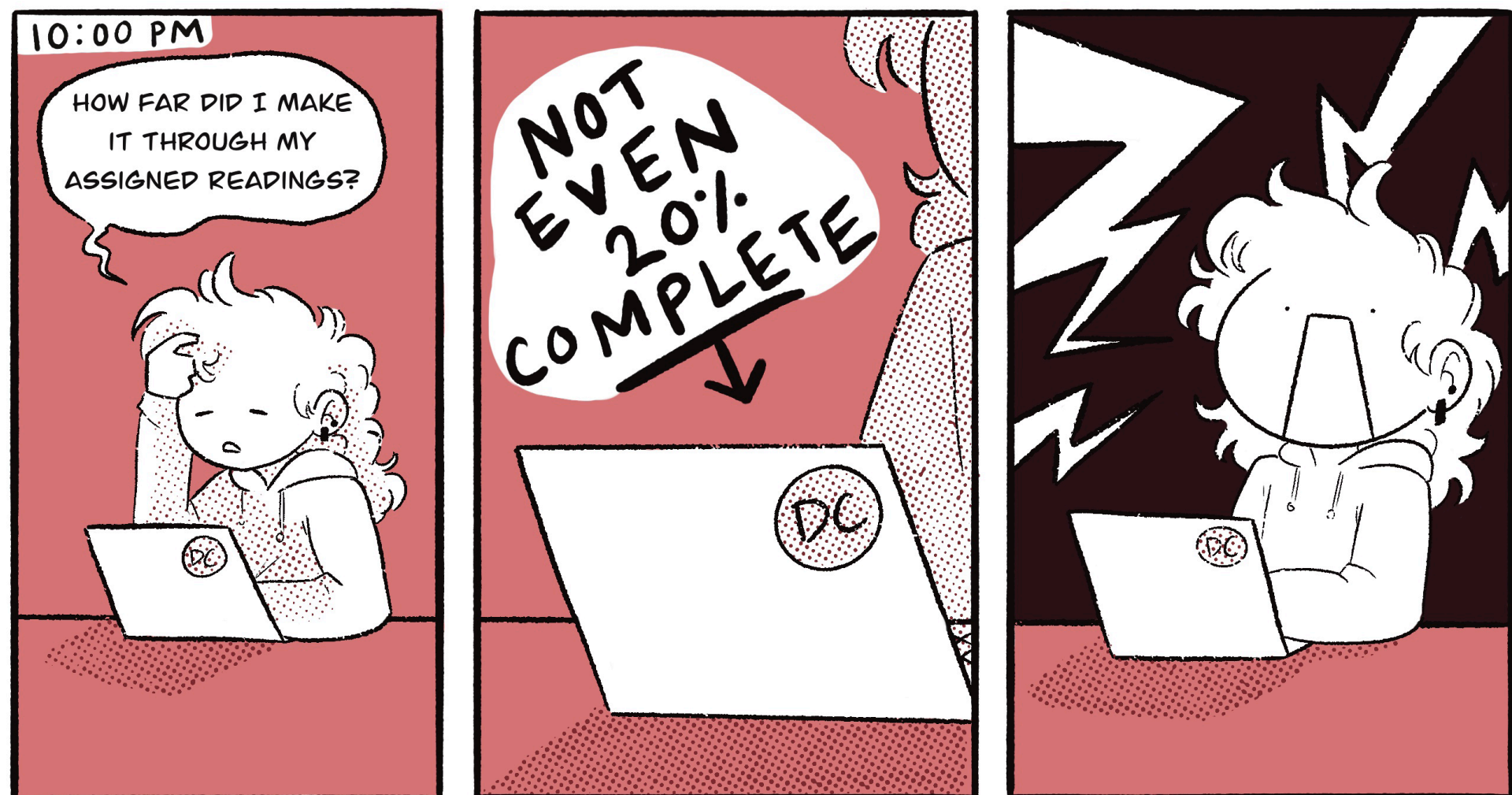
A snapshot from the first trailer for Pokémon Winds and Waves. With the game's impending release, fans are making predictions for what they might see.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRAMES OF STORY ON FACEBOOK



Life

COMICS



CARTOON BY SAM HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

THE UCONN BANANAS: UNDER THE PEEL

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**
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Anyone in attendance at the Women's Big East Championship on Monday at the Mohegan Sun Arena probably saw a yellow island amongst a sea of blue and red in the stands.

A closer look would have revealed a small group of students standing by the University of Connecticut Pep Band wearing not a common jersey or t-shirt, but yellow suits.

What started as a Halloween costume back in 2023 has become something of a Connecticut sports phenomenon, attracting the attention of UConn basketball stars, coaches and celebrities.

"It is addicting. It's so addicting," said Nolan Busalacchi, a fourth-semester economics and political science student.

Busalacchi is part of an exclusive group known as the "UConn Bananas," a small yet mighty cohort who attend UConn basketball games dressed as, you guessed it, bananas. The Bananas sit in the front of the student section, standing the entirety of the contest with the sole purpose of getting the student section more involved in the game and hyping up the players.

Though the group is now 15-plus deep, it started as a far smaller idea.

"We wanted to do something to stand out at the games and that was stupid enough," said Noah Hill, a sixth-semester sports management student. "So, we started bringing the banana costumes." Hill was amongst the group of students that originated the idea for basketball games in 2023.

Over time, the idea grew to sleeping overnight outside of Gampel Pavilion to get seats closer to the court. Hill said that he first thought of the idea as a way to avoid waking up early just to find themselves further back in line.

"If we think there's a non-zero chance that anyone...will be sleeping out, we will be sleeping out because missing out on the first spot in line makes it 10 times more stressful trying to get front row [seats]," Busalacchi said.

The longest they have ever waited outside for a game was 36 hours for the men's team's home game against Arizona in November, getting there around 8 a.m. on Tuesday for the 7 p.m. Wednesday start time, Busalacchi said.

The group's antics have left them as cult heroes in the student section, with kids and adults alike asking to try on the banana suits. The walk-around mascot

version of Jonathan the Husky has sported his own banana suit at times. Beyond the attention off the court, they've been noticed from the court as well.

When Dan Hurley called out UConn fans following the atmosphere of Gampel Pavilion during the game against Georgetown University on Valentine's Day, he made sure to point out that not everyone was included in that criticism.

"The Banana gang under the basket sent me a message saying, 'Hey coach, we're really sorry. We'll do better.' The least of our problems are the Bananas. The Bananas are doing their part," Hurley said, according to Storrs Central.

The Bananas have also garnered interest from the Huskies themselves, as evidenced by the sea of signatures plastered across the fronts of their suits. Players like injured women's guard Morgan Cheli have reached out to them on social media. Even UConn alum and donor Marc D'Amelio gave the Bananas a shout out on X.

"I saw [men's team center] Tarris Reed out in public," said Bella Tomaino, a sixth-semester communications major and another member of the bananas. "I just said 'Bananas love you.' He embraced us and looked at me, put his hand out to do like a heart and was like, 'no, truly we appreciate you guys.'

'We love you.' He was like, 'y'all's energy is unmatched, especially in warmups,' and that helps us."

The Bananas' reach has also touched down outside of basketball, as they made appearances at both the Fenway Bowl in December 2025 and the Women's Hockey East Championship on Saturday, March 7. Hill said that the group has talked about attending baseball games in the future. Busalacchi mentioned both men's and women's hockey along with softball and football, wanting to support new head coach Jason Candle in his first season.

"We've been so wrapped up with basketball season right now that it's been hard to go anywhere else because the games have just been back-to-back to back-to-back," Busalacchi said. "So now that that's going to start freeing up, it'll give us an opportunity to go to other sports, because we do want to show support for all the athletes."

For now, however, the Bananas' focus is solely on UConn's two basketball teams, both of whom are looking to make runs lasting into April.

The Bananas hope their attendance at the Women's Big East Tournament is just the start of their travel this postseason. Looking to attend the Men's Big East Tournament and potential Final Fours for both teams, the Bananas launched a GoFundMe with a goal of raising \$2,000. As of the time of writing, they are 71% of the way there, currently sitting at \$1,410.

Multiple Bananas have taken creative measures in an attempt to rack up more donations. Upon hitting one of the group's goals, Busalacchi and Tomaino ran a 5K around the halls of their dorm on Friday, March 6.

Jacob Gilson, a sixth-semester elementary education and history student and fellow banana, will make his contribution by running a milk mile — running a mile around a track while stopping to drink milk every one-fourth of a mile.

Beyond the fun challenges, the Bananas say there is a deeper purpose behind the fundraising. Any extra money raised will be donated to the Husky Ticket Project, an organization that provides under-privileged members of the community with tickets to enjoy the UConn game day experience, according to its website.

Tomaino also said that the ba-

nanas would also be interested in doing future fundraisers with the Husky Ticket Project or other organizations.

"We want to give back just as much as other people have given back to us," Tomaino said.

However, under the suits and newfound relative fame, beyond the camping out and fundraisers, the Bananas remain at their core a group of students passionate about the Huskies and ready to give their all in whatever student section they may find themselves in.

"You know us, we're all 'goofy-ahhs,'" Hill said.

"That's a quote," Gilson responded.



UConn Men's Basketball plays Creighton University at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. On Feb 18, 2026. The crowd hyped up the team throughout the entire game. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Opinion

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Your headlines are misleading you about Iran

by Colin Hamilton | STAFF WRITER | HE/HIM/HIS | cjz24004@uconn.edu

Two weeks ago, the United States and Israel launched missile attacks into Iran's capital, Tehran, during active negotiations surrounding the country's nuclear program. The move ignited the U.S.'s fourth war in the region since the turn of the century. Media coverage was swift; just three days into the conflict the BBC published the headline "At least 153 dead after reported strike on school, Iran says." Almost simultaneously, The New

York Times ran a near-identical headline: "Iran says dozens are killed in strike on school." Both articles were in reference to the reportedly accidental bombing of a school by U.S. armed forces, who were meant to be targeting a nearby military base. Yet in their description of the attack, both publishers failed to use impartial language. Instead, their biased rhetoric served only to warp reader perception on the issue.

raeli City" mentioned in the article — as being near Jerusalem, a UNESCO world heritage site home to the Jewish and Christian faiths. This detail was almost entirely irrelevant to the article, and Jerusalem was never under real threat. Instead, this addition acts as inflammation in the eyes of the audience — creating the sense that Iran poses an aggressive moral and religious threat to the rest of the world.



An airstrike hits building in Iran. The United States in tandem with Israel have begun launching strikes on Iran with the aim of toppling their regime.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AFP NEWS AGENCY ON FACEBOOK

The symmetry of language between these two headlines is no coincidence: both contain diction designed to warp reader perception on the issue they cover. Consider the shared emphasis on "Iran says." Both articles use this phrasing in such a way that it detracts from the validity of the claim. At the time of publishing, the tragedy had already been confirmed by multiple sources, including the UN. Despite this, the language introduces doubt: can the reader trust Iran? The BBC builds on this skepticism. Their use of "reported" underlines that it is a claim by a foreign country, one that is villainized in their position as the U.S.'s enemy. For their part, the NYT introduces "Iran says" as a separate clause, disengaging it from the rest of the headline as a way of separating the victim from the crime.

unprofessional quantification is highly inappropriate in a scenario which had by then already reached 153 civilian casualties.

The rhetoric of these headlines is even more shocking when compared to two other headlines put out by the same news agencies on the same day: The NYT's "9 Killed in Israeli City near Jerusalem after Iranian Missile Strike" and The BBC's "Nine Dead in Missile

Attack on Israel as Iran Strikes Region." Both of these articles go out of their way to name the actor, Iran, with the victim, Israel. Both provide strong coverage finds its roots in the western media's long depiction of Iran and the rest of the Middle East as an inferior people, and a threat to the western world — a bias known as orientalism. In his book titled after the same issue, Edward Said notes that in almost all media "the Arab is always shown in large numbers," with most depictions representing "mass rage and misery, or irrational gestures." These depictions reached a peak during the invasion of Iraq, when the nation was falsely depicted as holding a threat over the western world with weapons of mass destruction. As a result of these portrayals, the U.S. rushed into a costly foreign conflict, only to discover that the weapons it had sought to destroy never existed at all. 20 years later, the U.S. is again lashing out in fear of the nuclear capabilities of a Middle Eastern nation. Once again, this claim is largely substantiated by the media's appeal to the U.S.'s oriental bias.

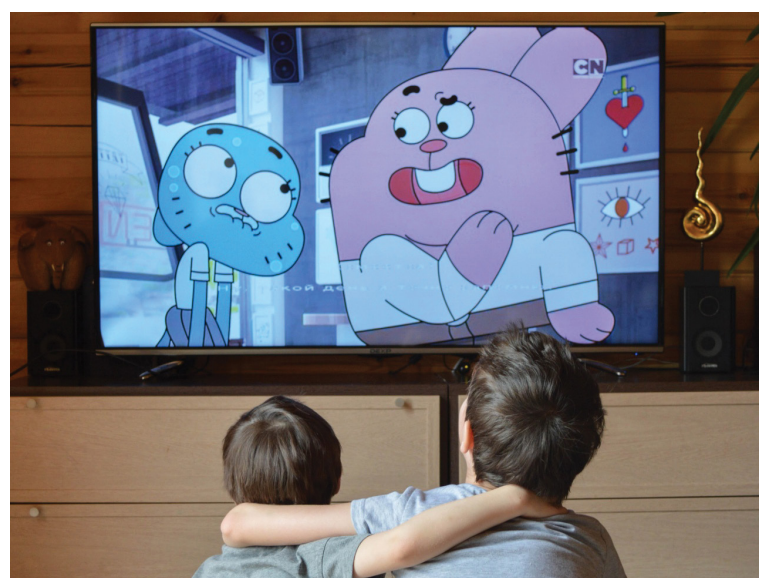
As the war on Iran continues to escalate, oriental accounts of the war are likely to rise in prevalence as a convenient tool of propaganda. The BBC and NYT are not alone in their bias, whether purposeful or not. CNN, Fox News and many more news agencies have shown the same use of language in their headlines. News agencies must remember their obligation to publish fair and unbiased reporting. As for readers, we must remain conscious of the rhetoric we consume. It is our responsibility to recognize misleading narratives and to hold those that publish them accountable.

News agencies must remember their obligation to publish fair and unbiased reporting. As for readers, we must remain conscious of the rhetoric we consume.

It is our responsibility to recognize misleading narratives and to hold those that publish them accountable.

action nouns and verbs, with "strike" and "missile" being specified to provide a factual and emotional feel, creating a sense of loss and sympathy which is not present in their headlines covering similar civilian deaths against Iran. The NYT goes on to specify the death toll in this article, further underlining a difference between their coverage of two different tragedies occurring on two different sides of the war. The NYT also labels Beit Shemesh — the "Is-

Both headlines also leave the perpetrator of this potential war crime unknown — despite U.S. involvement being mentioned in the ensuing articles. This omission shifts blame away from the U.S. in the minds of the audience. The tragedy is allowed



Children watch "The Amazing World of Gumball." This children's show can be viewed as entertainment rather than educational. PHOTO COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS

How diverse sources of media still teach us life lessons

by Ayden Mirabella

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Think about your favorite character; it could be one such as Indiana Jones, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Kurt Wagner, SpongeBob, Rango or any other character. Now, think of the storylines, side characters and villains that follow them. All these characters face problems that can be mirrored in our own lives. We can learn a lot from viewing diversities of media with a bit more nuance just by being open to it.

When someone views media that has been deemed non-educational, based on the notion that educational TV directly teaches people facts, motor skills or socializing, many are quick to dismiss the entire thing as mindless without realizing that there are messages behind it. Take for example the first SpongeBob movie. To many, it is just another story about SpongeBob going on an adventure, but if we take a closer look, we can pull out themes such as self-discovery, what it means to block out naysayers and the power of having each other's backs. These can be pulled out because they are prevalent throughout the entire media from beginning to end. It does not matter that SpongeBob is a children's cartoon or that he is not real; it is important for people to see that their favorite characters also go through the same struggles as they do.

This is important for young children especially. People will put on PBS Kids or National Geographic and think that characters or shows they really aren't. I say, that if kids show interest in a show that is deemed un-educational, it is important for parents to watch the show as well and to help pull out and relay the show's valuable life lessons to their kids. Take for example the original 90's X-Men TV show. Many children who had interest in the X-Men

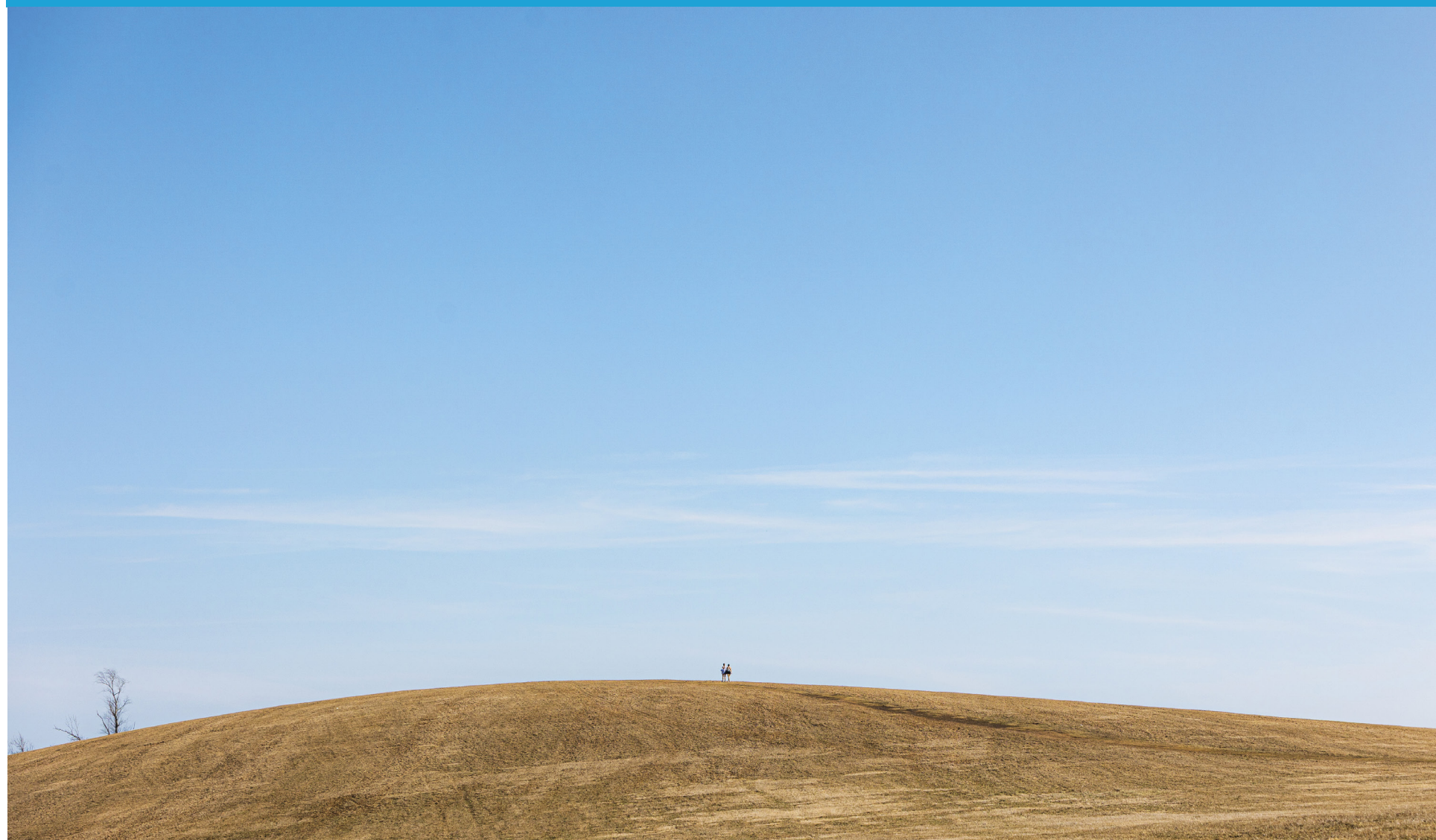
would prefer to watch that show rather than a something on National Geographic in order to see their favorite characters. If parents sat with their children to watch, they could see various lessons throughout the show. A parent could pull out Nightcrawler showing forgiveness to Mystique and summarize the importance of forgiveness that would otherwise not get through to the child. It also creates a bonding experience between a parent and child because that child will look forward to watching their favorite show and being comfortable discussing it with their parents. This can lead to a better bond that is often lost today as everyone gets increasingly divided by work, school and countless other distractions brought about by everyday life.

Another important thing is for parents to help teach their child the ability to dissect deeper messages in media. If a parent shows their child "Indiana Jones" they can highlight that not only is Dr. Jones a cool protagonist, but he can help a child understand problems. If a child can see how Dr. Jones deals with having an absent father, then they can have the confidence to deal with major problems they may face in addition to sympathizing with others. If their favorite character suffers from a certain problem, a child will be more sympathetic towards others who also may struggle with the same problems. Having a role model that is not invincible from their surroundings can provide the necessary perspective to overcome challenges in the world.

The next time you are at the movies or at home watching TV, remember to be on the lookout for the lessons of life because they can come from just about anyone. Even if that person is a young sponge, a blue guy who smells like sulfur or a college professor who is secretly a treasure hunter, never let those life lessons be lost.

Opinion

Photo of the Day | The sun returns to UConn



Students walk up Horsebarn Hill after 74-degree weather melted the season's remaining snow and ice in Storrs, Conn., on Tuesday, March 10. Warm spring temperatures drew students, locals, and alumni outside to walk, run and enjoy the afternoon. PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Have we lost the point of International Women's Day?

Last Sunday marked the 115th anniversary of International Women's Day. What was once a widespread opportunity to push for progress has dwindled down to a calendar marking acknowledged more in the spoken word than in action. For many, the general sentiment of celebrating International Women's Day seems limited to reposting inspirational Instagram graphics and celebrating the women in our lives. Sure, we say "Happy Women's Day" and maybe buy each other flowers or coffee, but that's hardly enough. In the spirit of its founders, International Women's Day should be honored with an emphasis on action, unity and progress.

International Women's Day was created not merely as a celebration, but a call to action. In 1910, Germany's Clara Zetkin proposed an International Women's Day at Copenhagen's International Conference of Working Women. Working women's protests in New York had inspired America's National Women's Day a year prior, and Zetkin's vision emphasized women around the globe rallying to end discrimination. One hundred women from 17 countries unanimously approved the idea, and International Women's Day was born.

The first International Women's Day was

celebrated on March 19th, 1911. Over one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to vote, work, hold public office and more. Less than a week later, on March 25, New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire claimed the lives of over 140 working women. This tragedy, which impacted primarily Jewish and Italian immigrants, sparked a demand for working women's rights. Subsequent International Women's Day celebrations emphasized labor legislation to honor the victims.

Much progress has been made over the last century. Born into their rights to vote, work and hold public office, younger generations of women — especially in America — have begun to feel as though all our battles have been won. However, to merely celebrate how far we've come is to invite complacency. From "pink tax" and wage gaps to horrific incidents of femicide and violence, we are incredibly far from perfect. This isn't to say that we should not celebrate the rights we have and the progress we've made, so long as there's an acknowledgement of the further advancements that can be worked towards.

Aside from calling attention to problems within our country, we must not forget to look beyond our borders. It's crucial to celebrate the women in our lives and those who came before us, but it's just as important to celebrate our sisters across the globe. We gravitate towards honoring those close to us because it's easy, but very rarely does the easy path come without sacrifices. Merely focusing on what's in our line of sight leaves out millions of women. Some live in war zones; some lack the right to edu-

ca-tion and the workforce. Their struggles may be different from our own or exactly the same. Regardless of the nature of their suffering, distance is no excuse to ignore the hardships of others, especially on a day emphasizing unity across the world. Not a single nation has closed the legal gap between men and women. This movement was born out of solidarity, and it must remain that way. This Women's History Month, remember the women who sacrificed multitudes to get us where we are now. Remember the invisible sacrifices made by the women close to you, and remember the battles being fought by those far away. Remember these women and fight in their name. Attend a rally, donate to charities, educate yourself on the struggles of others across the world. Complacency is unacceptable until we've achieved gender equality worldwide.

by
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Clara Zetkin, the founder of International Women's Day. Last Sunday marked the 115th anniversary of the day which recognizes women and their contributions to society.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



LOGO BY
ALEXA PAPPAS,
STAFF ARTIST/THE
DAILY CAMPUS

SAM'S SECTION: BOOZER, HOIBERG HEADLINE PART 1 OF MAJOR CONFERENCE AWARD PICKS

by Sam Calhoun
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Champ Week is here and it is now time to hand out awards.

In this week's edition of Sam's Section, I will go over my award picks for the ACC and Big Ten, with the Big 12 and SEC coming soon.

ACC

Player and Freshman of the Year: Cameron Boozer, forward, Duke (22.7 ppg, 10.2 rpg, 4.1 apg, 1.5 spg, 58.3 FG%, 40.7 3P%, 78 FT%)

Spoiler alert: Boozer will be my pick for National Player of the Year. For the first time since Jay Williams in the 2000-01 and 2001-02 seasons, Duke will have back-to-back National Players of the Year. Boozer has dominated the ACC, ranking second in scoring, leading the league in rebounds (and the only one averaging over 10 per game) and box plus/minus (+559). Since KenPom implemented its current format of the rating system in 2013, Boozer has the highest Player of the Year mark out of all players. He will be a contender for the No. 1 pick in June's NBA Draft.

Defensive Player of the Year: Maliq Brown, forward, Duke (3 drpg, 1.9 spg, 0.5 spg)

I was going to give this award to Syracuse's William Kyle III, but his team's below-average defense holds his case back. Enter Brown, who has anchored the No. 1 defense on KenPom. This could have easily gone to Boozer or Dame Sarr, but Brown has come off the bench and made a massive impact on the team's defense. He leads the ACC in steal percentage (5.9%) and tied for seventh in Hakeem percentage (sum of steal and block percentage; 9.2%) with Boston College's Jayden Hastings. There are few better guard defenders than Brown in college basketball.

He would start for nearly every team but is lethal off the bench for Duke.

Sixth Man of the Year: Tru Washington, guard, Miami (Fla.) (11.9 ppg, 4.1 rpg, 1.7 apg, 1.9 spg, 45.7 FG%, 36.4 3P%, 73 FT%)

This could easily have been Brown as well, but Washington has come off the bench and averaged double figures in scoring this season. The New Mexico transfer has helped Miami earn

Okorie and Boozer. He is one of five players nationally, as well as the only guard, to average at least 21 points and six rebounds per contest this season.

Coach of the Year: Jon Scheyer, Duke

Duke showed nearly zero drop-off from a tremendous run to the Final Four last season, despite losing the majority of its starting lineup. The Blue Devils have played one of the nation's

Player of the Year: Yaxel Lendeborg, forward, Michigan (14.7 ppg, 7.2 rpg, 3.2 apg, 1.4 bpg, 1.2 spg, 50.8 FG%, 34.3 3P%, 82.7 FT%)

Lendeborg transferred to Michigan after playing at an All-American caliber level at UAB and he has not skipped a beat since arriving in Ann Arbor. If you want to see just how tremendous he is, look at the Wolverines' regular-season finale against Michigan State, putting

to lead the Big Ten in Hakeem percentage at 14.3%. The Big Ten awarded Michigan's Aday Mara for this, but Ivisic has anchored Illinois to a much better defense than earlier in the year.

Freshman of the Year: Keaton Wagler, guard, Illinois (17.9 ppg, 4.9 rpg, 4.3 apg, 1 spg, 44.7 FG%, 41 3P%, 80.7 FT%)

This was not even a close one, with Wagler elevating himself to be one of the top picks in the upcoming NBA Draft. He is one of the many freshmen on the Wooden Award watch list, but the only freshman from the Big Ten on the list. Forget winning Freshman of the Year; Wagler certainly could have won Player of the Year.

Sixth Man of the Year: Braden Frager, forward, Nebraska (11.7 ppg, 3.9 rpg, 0.9 apg, 48.9 FG%, 34.8 3P%, 82.4 FT%)

Frager was one of the best freshmen in the Big Ten and he only started two of the 29 games he has appeared in for Nebraska. If Nebraska is to make a run this month, Frager's production is critical.

Coach of the Year: Fred Hoiberg, Nebraska

An absolutely easy decision. Nebraska was picked to finish 14th in the Big Ten preseason poll. Where did the Cornhuskers finish? Second. Two years after leading Nebraska to its first NCAA Tournament appearance in 10 years in 2024, the Cornhuskers are having their own version of the "Dream Season" that UConn had in 1990. Spoiler alert: Hoiberg is my National Coach of the Year pick as well.

All-Big Ten Team:

- G - Jeremy Fears Jr., Michigan State
- G - Keaton Wagler, Illinois
- F - Pryce Sandfort, Nebraska
- F - Yaxel Lendeborg, Michigan
- C - Aday Mara, Michigan



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

a double bye for the ACC Tournament and secure a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

Most Improved Player: Juke Harris, guard, Wake Forest (21.7 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 1.7 apg, 1.3 spg, 45.2 FG%, 33.8 3P%, 77.6 FT%)

Harris came off the bench in 30 of the 31 games he played his freshman year, averaging 6.1 points per game. His sophomore season saw these numbers skyrocket, ranking top 15 in scoring in the country and third in the ACC behind Stanford's Ebuka

toughest schedules and secured the No. 1 spot in the AP Poll after beating Michigan in late February. Scheyer becomes the first Duke coach to win this award since Mike Krzyzewski in 2000.

All-ACC Team:

- G - Ebuka Okorie, Stanford
 - G - Boopie Miller, SMU
 - F - Malik Reneau, Miami (Fla.)
 - F - Cameron Boozer, Duke
 - F - Caleb Wilson, North Carolina
- Big Ten**

up a season-high 27 points on 8-of-12 shooting (five of which were from 3-point range). He has proven to be unguardable throughout Big Ten play. While his numbers are nothing compared to what Boozer has done at Duke, Lendeborg is the best player on arguably the best team in the country.

Defensive Player of the Year: Zvonimir Ivisic, center, Illinois (3.5 rpg, 2.2 bpg)

Ivisic's 7-foot-2 height cannot be taught and he used that size

THE RODRÍGUEZ-NARVÁEZ SWAP: ONE SEASON LATER

by Thaddeus Sawyer
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Following the turn of the century all the way up to 2020, the two teams made just a single deal: swapping infielders Kelly Johnson and Stephen Drew in a one-for-one move at the 2014 trade deadline. It was the first trade between the two rivals in over 15 years.

The last trade before that took place in 1997. Brian Cashman was named general manager in 1998, meaning it was Cashman who waited those 15-plus years before authorizing his first deal with the Red Sox.

That changed in 2021. Needing to shed salary, the Yankees dumped reliever Adam Ottavino to the Red Sox along with prospect Frank German for cash considerations. Two years later, the Yankees made a minor but still notable move early in the 2023 season to reacquire outfielder Greg Allen, who was on a minor league deal with Boston, for prospect Diego Hernández.

The biggest swap yet came prior to 2024, when Boston shipped former fan favorite Alex Verdugo to the Bronx in exchange for reliever Greg Weissert and pitching prospects Richard Fitts and Nicholas Judice.

Verdugo struggled at the plate in his one season in pinstripes but was a defensive juggernaut in left during the Yankees' World Series run. Weissert developed into a key member of the Red Sox bullpen, while Fitts debuted before being part of the Cardinals' return in the Sonny Gray deal earlier this offseason.

While that was the first trade with lasting impact on the franchises since arguably the Sparky Lyle trade in 1972, it may end up residing in the shadow of the most recent deal between New York and

Boston.

On Dec. 11, 2024, the Red Sox acquired Carlos Narváez from the Yankees in exchange for Elmer Rodríguez and international signing bonus pool money.

For the Red Sox, the need for a catcher was blatant. Connor Wong received the bulk of the playing time in 2024 for the second straight season. The then 28-year-old, the final direct piece of the Red Sox return in the 2020 Mookie Betts trade, showed

free agency at season's end.

Narváez made his debut in 2024, receiving a six-game cup of coffee due to injuries at the major league level.

Narváez, who had been with the Yankees since signing as an international free agent in 2015, had just 15 major league plate appearances to his name at the time of the trade but had a long track record of minor league success.

Across 497 career minor league games over eight seasons, Narváez batted an even

Ben Rice also making his debut. Upper-level prospects Rafael Flores, Jesús Rodríguez and J.C. Escarra were also waiting in the wings.

Defensive specialist Jose Trevino was still on the roster at the time, though he was traded just over a week later to the Cincinnati Reds in exchange for reliever Fernando Cruz (Rodríguez's current Team Puerto Rico teammate in the World Baseball Classic).

At the time, Cashman told

rounder who had eclipsed 20 appearances and 80 innings for the first time in his career in 2024. The right hander reached High-A for the first time that year, making seven starts to a 3.77 ERA.

A season later, the long-term consequences of the trade are still not yet known, but the results look promising for both teams.

Narváez claimed the everyday catcher spot for Boston thanks to both an exceedingly poor season from Wong and an impressive first half at the plate for himself.

In his rookie season, Narváez hit .241 with 42 extra base hits. He was at his best prior to the All-Star weekend, slashing .273/.347/.439 prior to the break and .187/.233/.387 following. He was also worth 1.7 dWAR on the year.

Rodríguez transformed into a top 100 prospect, working to a 2.58 ERA over three levels 150 innings, making it all the way to Triple-A. The now 22-year-old came in at No. 82 on MLB Pipeline's pre-season top 100 prospect list.

The pair almost got the chance to face each other on the field for the first time last week, as the Red Sox and Team Puerto Rico played an exhibition game in preparation for the tournament. Rodríguez got the start, while Narváez was slated to start at DH. While Narváez got scratched due to a back spasm, according to Tim Healy of the Boston Globe, both teams will be hoping for the sake of their own player that they will have plenty more chances to face each other.

Rodríguez may be hoping for that himself.

Yeah, it would have been fun," Rodríguez said to Mac Cerullo of the Boston Herald. "You don't see that often, we play against each other like that, and it will probably be my first time facing him, but we'll probably face each other in the long end."



Connor Wong, a catcher and infielder for the Boston Red Sox.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @WINY RADIO FACEBOOK

offensive improvement. He lifted his batting average up 45 points and hit a career-high 13 home runs.

Still, Wong's defense regressed from 1.9 dWAR in 2023 all the way to -0.5 in 2024 and hit about 50 points lower against right handers than he did lefties. His back-up, Danny Jansen, was largely a non-factor after arriving from the Toronto Blue Jays at the trade deadline and hit

.250 with an OPS of .746. However, his main calling card was his major-league-ready defense. Widely regarded as an above average framer, he represented a higher-ceiling defensive alternative to Wong.

The Yankees were trading from an organizational strength. Former first-round pick Austin Wells had just posted a 2.5 WAR in his full season in the big leagues with

Yankees reporters, including Bryan Hoch of MLB.com, that teams were inquiring about that log jam.

"Our development system has produced a lot of catching," Cashman said. "We've had a lot of people hit us on our catching. It doesn't mean we'll do anything or not, but it's nice. We're definitely having people ask us about it."

In Rodríguez, the Yankees were acquiring a 2021 fourth

Sports

Photo of the Day | Women's Tennis



UConn women's tennis team takes on Cornell University at Magic Lincer Tennis Club in Manchester, Conn. on March 7, 2026. UConn lost to Cornell with a score of 3-4. PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

SOFTBALL: HUSKIES COMMENCE CONFERENCE PLAY WITH 2-1 SERIES WIN OVER ST. JOHNS

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Softball Huskies commence conference play with 2-1 series win over St. Johns.

The UConn softball team began Big East Conference play on the road with a three-game series against the St. John's Red Storm on Sunday, March 8 and Monday, March 9, marking the start of conference competition for the Huskies.

After splitting the doubleheader on Sunday, the Huskies responded with a 4-1 victory on Monday to claim the series' victory and begin conference play with a record of 2-1.

UConn opened the series with a 5-3 win in game one of Sunday's doubleheaders. Freshman pitcher Caprice Bohmer had her ninth start of the season, earning her second win and allowing three runs on four hits while striking out in three for three innings. Both teams showed their strength early,

loading the bases in their first at-bats, but neither could capitalize on this opportunity. At the top of the third inning, the Huskies quickly gained momentum, scoring three runs on four hits. Junior outfielder Kaitlyn Breslin drove in the first run with a single to center field and then sophomore catcher Heidi Barber added two more runs with a single to the left to give UConn a 3-0 lead.

The Huskies extended their lead in the fourth inning when sophomore infielder Cat Petteys hit a solo home run, her fourth of the season. St. John's began to find their strength in the bottom half of the inning, cutting the Huskies lead by scoring three runs to cut bringing the score to 4-3. Graduate student pitcher Jessica Walter entered in relief to shut down the Red Storms growing momentum, tossing four scoreless innings and allowing just one hit. The Huskies ensured their victory with a late run when seniors outfielder Kaitlyn Kibling scored junior infielder Caylee De

Meo.

The second game of the doubleheader was an all-out offensive battle, with St. John's ultimately earning the 11-10 victory to even the series. UConn opened scoring in the second inning when Barber brought home De Meo. The Huskies then went on a run in the third inning, scoring six runs and sending all nine batters to the plate. Senior Haley Coupal started the run with an RBI single followed by De Meo's three-run home run. Barber extended the dominance of the inning with a two-run homer to give the Huskies a 7-1 advantage.

Despite the Huskies dominant lead, the Red Storm were not faltered, responding with five runs in the bottom of the third inning, closing the Huskies lead to just one run. The Huskies then responded with a two-run home run by Petteys in the sixth inning that extended the Huskies lead 10-6.

The Red Storm quickly rallied with a grand slam in the bottom

of the sixth inning, tying the game 10-10. St. John's ultimately completed the comeback with a walk-off single in the seventh inning to split the doubleheader.

UConn responded in Monday's series finale, defeating St. John's 4-1 to secure the series victory. The Huskies took the lead early on thanks to aggressive offense by Breslin and Petteys. In the fourth inning, UConn added three more runs with sophomore infielder Bella Cruz and Kibling opening the frame with back-to-back singles. Senior infielder Savannah Ring later drove in Cruz after a St. John's throwing error before Coupal had a base-loaded walk to extend the lead further. Breslin finished the inning with a run that brought home Ring to bring the lead to 4-0.

Walter started the game pitching before Bohmer delivered four scoreless innings of relief, allowing four hits and striking out four. Sophomore pitcher Amber Bretton and Walter combined to close out the game, lim-

iting the Red Storm to just one run.

Petteys led the Huskies offensively throughout the series, recording multiple hits in consecutive games and hitting two home runs during Sunday's doubleheader. Ring also dominated extending her hitting streak to seven games.

The Huskies returned to Storrs on Tuesday, hosting the Stonehill Skywalks at Burrill Family Field. First pitch was scheduled for 4 p.m. The two programs last met on Oct. 1, 2022, when the Huskies secured a narrow 3-2 victory at Stonehill. The Skyhawks enter the matchups still searching for their first win of the season with a record of 0-9.

With the series win, UConn begins conference play with momentum as their program looks ahead to the remainder of the Big East schedule. The Huskies will continue Big East play with a weekend series against Seton Hall. Husky fans can tune into these matchups on FloSports.

GUNS UP, WOLVES DOWN: WHAT'S LEFT TO CLAIM IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE?

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With Matchweek 30 on the horizon, fans of the English Premier League continue to shift their focus from the usually exciting top of the table to where the action really lies; the bottom. What is typically a tumultuous point in the season for title contenders seems much more docile this time around, with league leaders Arsenal and Manchester City the only real teams in contention for the cup.

What is much more interesting than the boring but effective brand of footy that Arsenal is producing is the pile of clubs at the far end of the board fighting to stick around for next year. Two

of these clubs are too far out of the race for redemption. Downright terrible Wolverhampton Wolves and hopeless Burnley are almost sure to be playing EFL Championship ball in a couple months' time, with the latter a healthy nine points behind West Ham who currently sit seventeenth. Although West Ham are in jeopardy as it stands, it's very hard to see the table remaining this way in the weeks to come.

Remarkably, Nottingham Forest shares a point tally of twenty-eight with West Ham and lies only a single point shy of an atrocious Tottenham Hotspur. The illustrious history of both Forest and Spurs defines their less than acceptable standings in the table right now. Tottenham, a nearly one-hundred-fifty-year-old club

who has won seventeen domestic trophies and two league titles, was most recently relegated in the 1976-77 season. Despite their impressive roster, they are hurt by a combination of poor squad depth, inconsistent managerial stints and unwillingness to spend large money in the transfer market. The fact that they are winless in their last eleven Premier League games is enough to tell you that at least one cog in the machine is faulty.

Nottingham Forest on the other hand, who boast a trophy cabinet similar in size to Spurs, have never faced the prospect of relegation from England's top-flight division. The downfall of this side on the surface shares a lot of resemblance to what Tottenham is currently struggling with.

However, one thing that Forest does have is players on hand, and this could be of vital importance in the remaining eight weeks of the season. A successful season for either team at this stage would simply look like staying up, and with fresh Forest legs looking for playing time at a point where surrounding teams struggle with injury, each player has a chance at being a major contributor to survival.

Another interesting notch of the Premier League table is the dogfight to claim European qualification. The first two Champions League spots will almost undoubtedly be allotted to Arsenal and Manchester City, but that still leaves two more golden tickets for next season. Manchester United and Aston Villa currently

sit in those spots with a shared fifty-one points; United sitting a place higher as a result of having scored six more goals in all league matches than Villa.

Any sense of security however is an illusion as Chelsea and Liverpool follow closely behind with forty-eight points apiece, and Liverpool's final four matches come against United, Chelsea, Villa and Brentford, all of whom immediately surround each other in the top half of the table. It looks like a lot is still yet to be determined in the final few weeks of the campaign. While neutral fans of the Premier League may not get the dramatic title race they hope for this season, they can be sure to get their fix of chaos as the campaign barrels towards finality on May 24.

BASEBALL: UCONN FALLS TO BOSTON COLLEGE EAGLES IN HIGH SCORING MATCHUP

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After a rough start to the first inning with Boston College racking in three runs, the Huskies could not find a way to rally back falling to the Eagles 26-19. UConn attempted to find their way back in later innings but ultimately fell short due to committing four errors.

Boston College infielder Nick Wang had a standout performance against the Huskies with four runs, two hits and five RBIs. The Eagles continued to dominate across the game with the Huskies struggling to field the ball.

Tristan Aasland took the mound for the Huskies to kick off Tuesday's game but only pitched one inning of work due to Wang and Esteban Garcia bringing in three runners to homebase for their squad.

In the second inning, the Eagles added to the scoreboard, bringing in five runs. Ty Mainolfi had a two-run single and Wang brought in another run in with a sacrifice fly. Luke Gallo also earned an RBI single to bring the score to 8-0 with the Eagles heading into the top of the third.

Colin Larson kicked off the third for the Eagles with his first two-run homer of the season with a line drive to center field.

Tyler Minick returned to the lineup for UConn after missing several games and aided in avoiding a shutout for his squad, bringing in an RBI single. Chris Polemeni brought Minick to home plate

with an RBI double to close out the inning with the Huskies on the scoreboard.

Boston College racked up four more runs in the top of the fourth, which ended with Easton Masse reaching first from a UConn error. This brought Garcia home from second base.

After a quiet fifth and sixth inning for UConn, the Eagles continued to dominate, bringing in another eight runners to home plate.

Nater Wachter hit an RBI single for UConn bringing in two runners to give the Huskies some momentum in the bottom of the sixth. UConn was able to get another three runs on the board to enter the seventh inning with nine runs.

UConn responded with an impressive eight runs in the bottom of the seventh with Jackson Marshall, Evan Menzel and Minick leading the pack.

A scoreless eighth inning on both sides left both teams searching for more runs to close out the ninth. Wang did just that for the Eagles with a three-run homer.

Minick was the catalyst in trying to cut the Huskies deficit, bringing in three runs, hits and RBIs.

Rob Rispoli led the Huskies in runs (4) adding to his season total of 14.

Next up, the Huskies will shift their focus to a weekend series against the University of Portland. The series will kick off on Friday at 9 p.m. EST and continue on Saturday at 4 p.m. EST. The two teams will close out the series on Sunday with a start time at 3 p.m. EST.



UConn baseball goes up against Boston College at Elliot Ballpark on Tuesday, March 10, 2026. The warm weather brought out a crowd to support the Huskies at their game.

PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

ELLIOT'S WEEKLY TIP-OFF: ONE WEEK UNTIL MARCH MADNESS; THE TOURNAMENTS YOU CANNOT MISS THIS WEEK

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We have officially entered the post-season.

This past Sunday marked the end of the regular season, and next Sunday starts the best three weeks of the college basketball calendar.

Selection Sunday falls on the Ides of March this year – a day that will make its own kind of history. The committee will have their work cut out for them this season with teams all over the place with good wins and bad losses. For instance, UConn looked to be the final one-seed for the bracket, but following an upset loss to Marquette they are now projecting a two-seed.

Florida is the new favorite for the final top-seed, next to Duke, Arizona and Michigan. This list is not official as conference tournaments can shake up the rankings, but some are almost a guarantee.

The most notable conferences to watch are the big five.

The ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, SEC and Big East will all be on display this weekend.

For the ACC, the top favorites to take home the crown are the No. 1 team in the country, Duke. The Blue Devils have been near perfect this season at 29-2 and have only lost one game in conference. The loss came to rival UNC on a last second buzzer-beater a few weeks ago. However, the Blue Devils got the last laugh and took down the Tar Heels 76-61 to end the regular season.

The Big Ten has Michigan standing above the pack at 19-1 in conference play after slipping to Wisconsin about mid-

way through the season. Since then, the Badgers have been taking down ranked teams left and right, including their regular season closer beating Purdue on the road 97-93. If you are looking for a potential underdog to win the Big Ten or make a surprising run in March; Wisconsin might be your team.

In the Big 12, Arizona takes the top spot at 16-2 in conference play and ranked No. 2 in the country. Houston is close behind but went on a three-game losing streak in the middle of February against the top three teams in the conference. The tough schedule could show their struggle to take down ranked opponents consistently. It took Arizona a while before their two-game blunder, but have since won six straight, including four against ranked opponents. They are starting to get hot at just the right time, showing just how dangerous they can be.

The SEC has had all sorts of ranking mixes this season. Defending national champion Florida was on top until their rough start to the season. Other teams such as Alabama and Vanderbilt took more of the spotlight in the first half of the season, but it has since returned to the defending champions. Florida has ended their season on an 11-game winning streak and sealed the SEC regular season crown. They will have to fight for the SEC championship with Alabama and Arkansas close behind along with a three-way tie between teams for fourth place in the conference.

Lastly, the Big East is always sure to bring some scrappy basketball to Madison Square Garden. The Red Storm will be No. 1 in the conference tournament following UConn's loss to

Marquette. The rematch between St. John's and UConn looks promising but as anyone knows the Big East can get physical and anything can happen in March. Villanova is the three seed and the last projected Big East team to make March Madness. They will look to help their bid into the tournament with a solid performance in the Big East this week.

As conference tournaments tipoff this weekend, the final teams make their case for a spot in March. For some, they look to make their case on why they belong. As for others, it is all about building momentum before madness.

The madness is coming – this week will decide who gets to be in it.



UConn Men's Basketball celebrates their seniors in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 28, 2026. The Huskies defeated the Pirates as they played their last game in Gampel of the 2025-2026 season.

PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Sports

WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOCKEY NCAA TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

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We are only 11 days away from crowning a women's collegiate hockey national champion. Only 11 teams remain in contention for this title.

Ohio State, Wisconsin and Minnesota all hail from the WCHA and make up three of the nation's top four teams. The conference final saw Ohio State take down Wisconsin to claim the one seed in the tournament.

Wisconsin and OSU have been the only finalists for the last three years and the only national champions in the last six, with 16 of 24 total champions coming from them or Minnesota.

The AHA tournament stakes involved more than just those playing. Due to the system that college hockey uses to decide NCAA berths, Mercyhurst could only make the tournament with a conference title win over Penn State. With a loss, Minnesota Duluth would instead qualify.

Though the Lakers fought well, the Nittany Lions were too much to handle, and Mercyhurst fell, letting Duluth in.

Coming into the ECAC semifinals, Quinnipiac, Princeton and Yale had already clinched NCAA appearances. In the conference final, Quinnipiac took down Yale.

Hockey East's title game featured both the Northeastern and UConn Huskies. Though Northeastern was the one seed, the closure of Northeastern's 115-year-old Matthews Arena forced the game to instead be played at UConn's Toscano Family Ice Forum.

It was a goaltending duel between Tia Chan and Lisa Jonsson

that could not be decided in regulation time.

In the second overtime frame, Kyla Josifovic capitalized on a rebound off a Claire Murdoch shot to score and win the title for UConn.

The NPI gap between the two was too large for UConn to overcome with one game, so despite the win Northeastern still earned the final bye.

The NEWHA does not have a ranked team, meaning the winner between Franklin Pierce and St Anselm would bid steal from the 11th team in the NPI. Franklin Pierce claimed this title and punched their first ever tournament bid and the final overall bid to set the field.

Three first round games will be played tomorrow on the sites of the highest seeded team in each regional. Due to avoiding intra-conference matchups, some of the seeding doesn't match NPI.

Even though it doesn't matter because games are played elsewhere, all three "home teams" of the first round hail from Connecticut.

Yale and Minnesota Duluth kick off the action at 6 p.m. for the Ohio State regional in a battle between two Bulldogs. These two teams have never played one another.

Eve Gascon of Duluth and Samson Frey of Yale ranked seventh and tenth in the nation in save percentage, with Yale forwards Jordan Ray and Carina DiAntonio

ranking eighth and ninth in points per game.

Duluth's offense is middle-of-the-pack nationally, an anomaly compared to their fellow tournament goers. Their defense does not rank in the top ten, and their comparative lack in both metrics lines them up for struggle.

The second game kicks off an hour later between UConn and Princeton for the Penn State regional. The two hadn't played in ten years before UConn swept a two-game set this past October. Now, they meet again with their seasons on the line.

The two rank fourth and fifth in defense nationally, setting up a game where every goal counts. Chan was the only goalie to finish

in the top ten for the Patty Kazmaier award and is undoubtedly the best goalie in the country, meaning that she could steal any given game.

A UConn-Penn State hockey rivalry could be on the horizon if UConn advances, as the schools' men's teams met in the playoffs last year and could do so again.

The Wisconsin regional begins with Franklin Pierce and Quinnipiac at 8 p.m. in yet another first ever matchup.

Franklin Pierce did not play a game against a ranked opponent this season, and as such they head into the tournament as heavy underdogs. Goaltender Jill Hertl's .955 save percentage was the best in the country, making her a potential game changer and the largest source of hope for the Ravens' upset dreams.

Minnesota hosts Northeastern in the only regional with no first round matchup, as these two play in the second round.

Minnesota's Abbey Murphy finished with the best points-per-game nationally, a reflection of Minnesota's second-best offense. With an offense like that, it makes sense that the reason for them only being fourth overall is due to a weaker defense.

Northeastern is more balanced, with the twelfth best offense and seventh best defense. The matchup will be dependent on the ability of Minnesota to score regardless of the brick wall in the opposing net.

The winner of the Minnesota regional plays the winner of the Ohio State regional, while the winner of the Wisconsin regional plays that of the Penn State regional.

The national title game is on March 22. Seven teams look to become first-time champions, while four seek an additional title.



UConn women's hockey forward Claire Murdoch versus the Merrimack Warriors at Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 21, 2026. Murdoch, a current fourth semester student, hails from Toronto, Canada. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

MEN'S COLLEGE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT SEASON

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On most people's minds right now in the college sports world is March Madness. But in addition to the nationally covered basketball phenomenon, the college hockey season is at its peak. Tournaments are winding down, and the field is closer to being set. Thirty-eight teams remain in national title contention, a number that will shrink to 16 over the next two weeks.

Today will see the start of the Big Ten and Hockey East tournaments, the only two tournaments yet to start due to their exclusively single-elimination nature.

Boston University will host Vermont while Merrimack hosts UMass Lowell. Northeastern will host New Hampshire in Boston College's Conte Forum due to the closure of Matthews Arena.

Providence, Massachusetts and UConn are the first three seeds and will await the winners of these games. Providence will play the lowest seeded of the three and UConn will play the highest.

Boston College will host Maine in the second round as the four and five seed.

Providence has an NCAA ticket, with UConn, Massachusetts and Boston College potentially able to get at-large bids. For everybody else, the conference title is the only way.

Michigan hosts Notre Dame, Penn State hosts Minnesota and Wisconsin hosts Ohio State for three other matchups today coming from the Big Ten. The winners will be reseeded alongside Michigan State for the semifinals Saturday.

All of the top four seeds will make the NCAA tournament, while Notre Dame, Minne-

sota and Ohio State will only qualify with conference wins.

Friday begins the ECAC quarterfinals, which will all be four game sets. Quinnipiac will host Clarkson, Cornell will host Harvard, Dartmouth will host Colgate and Princeton will host Union. The winners will be reseeded for on campus, single-elimination semifinals the following weekend.

Quinnipiac, Dartmouth and Cornell will receive at large bids regardless of outcome.

The AHA semifinals also start on Friday in three-game fashion, with Holy Cross at Bentley and Robert Morris at Sacred Heart.

The AHA does not have any ranked teams, meaning they will bid steal from whatever team finishes 16 in NPI due to

the autobid their conference winner will receive.

This also means that the conference tournament is the only way for any of these teams to qualify and a series loss is the end of the season.

Many eyes are on the NCHC Frozen Faceoff, featuring four of the top eight teams in the nation. On Saturday, four teams will faceoff to determine the conference title game the fol-

lowing week in a single-elimination fashion. No. 2 North Dakota hosts No. 8 Minnesota Duluth while No. 4 Western Michigan hosts No. 6 Denver in two incredible games that will culminate in an even better championship game.

The CCHA is where things get interesting in terms of NPI. Augustana will play St. Thomas and Minnesota State will play Michigan Tech in single-game semifinals on Saturday to determine the conference finals.

Why this is more complicated than the other conference comes down to where these teams all slot in NPI. Augustana currently sits at 13 with a solid lead over Massachusetts at 14. St. Thomas sits at 15, Minnesota State at 17 and Michigan Tech at 19, with little difference between teams next to each other from 14 to 21.

Any of the bottom three who loses in the first round is out. Augustana losing would drop them, but their season would become reliant on the results of UMass, UConn, St. Thomas and more.

For whoever makes the final, a win would grant them the autobid. For Augustana, a loss in the title game likely still earns them an at-large bid. For St. Thomas, it comes down to how UMass and UConn do. For Minnesota State, there is still a scenario where they lose in the final and get in if most things go right. And even for Michigan Tech, a finals loss could still result in a tournament bid.

By next week, things will be far more ironed out in terms of who's in and who's out. At most, 28 teams will be alive after the week, and as few as 20 can remain.

All of the conference finals will take place on March 21, and the field will be set and released on March 22.



UMass and UNH men's hockey teams face each other on March 7, 2026. UMass is in contention for this year's national title. PHOTO COURTESY OF UMASS HOCKEY ON FACEBOOK