

WHAT HAPPENED TO TK?

Quinnipiac allegedly fired women's lacrosse coach Tanya Kotowicz for playing an injured athlete. But internal documents — and the athlete's dad — say she didn't.

By **CAT MURPHY**
 News Editor

Competing narratives are beginning to emerge surrounding the mysterious departure of Quinnipiac University women's lacrosse head coach Tanya "TK" Kotowicz.

Quinnipiac Athletics announced in January — seven weeks before women's lacrosse's 2024 season opener and seven months after the end of the team's winningest season since 2011 — that Kotowicz was "leaving the program."

The Jan. 3 press release did not elaborate on the seventh-year head coach's unexplained departure.

Ten minutes after the women's lacrosse account posted the release to X — the platform formerly known as Twitter — Quinnipiac rugby head coach Becky Carlson called the university's official statement "outrageous and not the whole story."

"The coach didn't 'leave the program,'" Carlson wrote in her repost. "The truth will come out."

Carlson declined to clarify what she meant by this.

However, documents reviewed by The Chronicle indicate that Quinnipiac terminated Kotowicz following a two-month internal investigation into allegations that she forced an injured player to compete in an October 2023 offseason scrimmage.

This documentation — a combination of email correspondences, text message exchanges, screenshots and video evidence — also raises serious questions about the veracity of these



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South Quad, diversity and vandalism: What to know about Olian's interview with student media

By **KATIE LANGLEY**
 Editor-in-Chief

In her annual interview with student media, Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian discussed the biggest headlines of the academic year, from monumental construction projects to concerns around diversity, inclusion and vandalism.

Here's what you need to know from the Feb. 9 sit-down with the university's ninth president.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND FACULTY TURNOVER

Olian addressed questions about the recent turnover within Quinnipiac's diversity ranks and the overhaul of the former Department of Cultural and Global Engagement.

Six employees in the DCGE and Title IX offices have resigned in the last year.

Amid Wayne Gersie's resignation as vice president for equity and inclusion after just five months at Quinnipiac, Olian announced the creation of the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

In a Dec. 7 email to students, faculty and staff, Olian noted that OIE would assume the responsibilities of DCGE, minus study abroad and international student and scholar affairs — which are now overseen by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Student Affairs, respectively.

Olian attributed the turnover to a variety of reasons during the Feb. 9 interview, including family situations and outside opportunities.

"People have options, and one of the great lessons in management that I've learned is that when you attract great people, you want to create an environment in which they think, and believe and experience growth," Olian said. "And when you think and experience growth, people have options to move on."

David Fryson, who Quinnipiac tapped as in-

terim vice president of equity and inclusion following Gersie's resignation, was tasked on Dec. 7 with transiting DCGE into OIE. Olian said on Feb. 9 that hiring is Fryson's "first order of business" in the interim role.

"I recognize that it's been a blow that we have to effectively rebuild the (OIE) office," Olian said. "We have some carry(over) in the Office of Inclusive Excellence, but there has been some turnover."

And since then, Fryson has appointed one key administrator to the Office of Inclusive Excellence, naming Patricio Jimenez as Quinnipiac's permanent Title IX coordinator in a Jan. 31 email.

Jimenez, a Syracuse University Title IX investigator who is slated to start at Quinnipiac on March 11, will be the third person in the role in just over a year and the first to hold the title of permanent coordinator since Dennis Kwarteng's January 2023 resignation.

Three of the roughly seven positions in the new office have been filled, Olian said.

VANDALISM AND HATE INCIDENTS

The news of desecration in campus communal spaces marked the fall 2023 semester. First, there was widespread vandalism in the Ledges Residence Hall spanning the fall semester, then an alleged Halloween arson in Dana English Hall. And in November, amid the Israel-Hamas war, officials found two swastikas carved into the York Hill Campus' mail lockers.

In her hour-long interview with student media, Olian condemned the vandalism and Nazi hate symbols.

"I view the swastikas as vandalism and also hate speech, frankly, and I view the vandalism in Ledges as disgusting behavior, as

much disrespectful of other students and other staff who have to clean it up as it is against the university," Olian said.

Though university officials have identified three since-suspended students who they believe to be responsible for the arson in Dana, they have yet to publicly identify suspects in the swastika and Ledges vandalism investigations. Notably, the Department of Public Safety has documented incidents of vandalism in The Ledges as recently as Feb. 9.

In response to vandalism in the Ledges, the Office of Residential Life announced Jan. 17 that officials had installed cameras in the corridors of the dorm building. This came after the introduction of an anonymous tip line intended to help identify perpetrators of the ongoing vandalism.

"I ask fellow students if they have any information, help us remove that from our community," Olian said on Feb. 9.

The tip line can be reached at (203-528-6201).

SOUTH QUAD

The ongoing South Quad construction — part of the university's 10-year Master Facilities Plan — was a large focus of the Feb. 9 interview.

The university unveiled the official names of the South Quad dorm building and academic center in late January. A new School of Business will accompany The SITE (science, innovation, technology and exploration) academic building and The Grove Residence Hall in the \$293 million South Quad.

With the new buildings, Olian said the university's goal is to "blur the lines between school and work" by creating career-oriented spaces and encouraging communication between upper and underclassmen.

The 417-bed Grove dorm will be open to stu-

dents from all class years, a feature Olian said she hopes will foster mentorship.

"Sometimes you say to yourself, 'Well I wish I had known that when I came in (to college),' " Olian said. "That element could be removed by sharing what you do know (and) how you learned."

The Grove will house students starting in August 2024 while The SITE and the new School of Business are slated to open in May 2025.

Olian ended the interview by encouraging students to come to her office hour sessions.

"I encourage the dialogue constantly with the university, the university administration, faculty and staff," Olian said.



CAT MURPHY/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian told student media on Feb. 9 that a variety of factors contributed to recent turnover among diversity officials.

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TK from cover

accusations and about the safety of some of the university's athletic training practices. Neither Kotowicz nor her attorney, Felice Duffy, responded to The Chronicle's media inquiries. Quinnipiac Athletics spokesman Nick Solari — the fiancé of now-interim women's lacrosse head coach Jordan Christopher — did not respond to repeated requests for comment. But using these documents as well as source interviews, The Chronicle has compiled the following timeline of the events surrounding Kotowicz's departure:

“The coach didn't ‘leave the program.’”

**– Becky Carlson
QUINNIPIAC RUGBY
HEAD COACH**

BEGINNING OF THE FALL 2023 OFFSEASON: ISSUES EMERGE

Quinnipiac women's lacrosse did not have a full-time athletic trainer assigned to its team at any point during Kotowicz's tenure as head coach, despite what Athletics officials had apparently promised her when she was hired in 2016. Instead, internal emails indicate that, during the fall 2023 offseason, the team worked with four different athletic trainers on a rotating — but often random — basis. A fifth athletic trainer oversaw this rotation and served as the team's administrative liaison.

Even then, women's lacrosse often practiced without a trainer in attendance. Internal memos show that women's lacrosse practices lacked athletic training coverage so frequently that Kotowicz was issued a walkie-talkie to communicate with the training room when no trainer was present.

A team source independently verified the content of an internal email alleging that, on at least one occasion, a member of the women's lacrosse coaching staff used their personal vehicle to transport an in-

jured player to the training room because an athletic trainer was unavailable.

A university source alleged that this issue is not exclusive to women's lacrosse, but rather is a department-wide concern.

The documents suggest that the athletic training procedures — or lack thereof — often caused confusion and miscommunication among the training staff and the team's coaches.

Case in point, the women's lacrosse team reportedly did not have a shared injury report document prior to the beginning of the 2023 offseason.

But a screenshot found in an internal memo indicates that the lack of coordination among the team's training staff led to the implementation of not one but two separate injury report spreadsheets last fall.

The Dec. 4 screenshot shows that the two Microsoft Excel documents — one named “Women's Lacrosse Injury Report 23-24,” the other named “WLAX Injury Report 2023-2024” — had been created by different team trainers.

While the first injury report had been edited approximately five days before the screenshot was taken, the latter of the two documents had been inactive for over two weeks.

And unlike the first injury report, this document's most recent editor was not an athletic trainer — according to the screenshot, it was a Quinnipiac information security analyst.

Information security analysts are typically responsible for monitoring networks and investigating cybersecurity breaches.

Two things are not clear: why an information security analyst was examining the women's lacrosse team's injury report on Nov. 17, and whether this examination was conducted as part of the university's investigation into Kotowicz.

The Chronicle was unable to access either injury report.

EARLY OCTOBER 2023: KOTOWICZ RAISES CONCERNS

An email reviewed by The Chronicle shows that Kotowicz contacted more than a half-dozen members of the sports medicine department in early October to voice concerns about a pattern of miscommunication between the women's lacrosse coaching staff and the athletic training staff.

In the Oct. 3 email, Kotowicz identified inconsistencies and ambiguities within the team's injury protocols. Athletes, she said, were being cleared to play in games without having practiced.

Kotowicz, pointing out the need for improved clarity surrounding the team's injury reporting system and return-to-play procedures, advocated for a more consistent system of communication between her



COURTESY OF QUINNIPIAC ATHLETICS

Internal documents obtained by The Chronicle cast doubt on the accusations that reportedly led to the termination of Quinnipiac University women's lacrosse head coach Tanya Kotowicz.

and sports medicine.

The team's fifth athletic trainer — the one who oversaw the women's lacrosse team from an administrative standpoint — reached out to Kotowicz that evening to try to establish a streamlined system of communication surrounding return-to-play.

Dan Smith, Quinnipiac's head athletic trainer, replied to Kotowicz's email the following day, though documentation of the email chain shows his response was only vaguely relevant to her concerns. Instead of addressing the communication aspect of athlete injury management, the athletic training administrator spoke only to the necessity of a gradual return-to-play protocol.

MID-OCTOBER 2023: THE INCIDENT

Roughly three weeks after Kotowicz began voicing concerns and advocating for additional athletic training support, one injured women's lacrosse player entered the final stages of the return-to-play protocol.

The week of Oct. 16, one of the team's athletic trainers informed the injured player that she must fully participate in two practices to play in the team's Oct. 22 offseason tournament at Adelphi University.

Video evidence reviewed by The Chronicle proves that the player in question fully practiced on both Oct. 20 and Oct. 21. However, the trainer who set the conditions of her return did not attend the latter practice.

Kotowicz also later alleged in an internal memo that none of the team's four athletic trainers traveled to the Oct. 22 contests in Garden City, New Jersey. The fa-

<p>Oct. 3, 2023:</p> <p>Quinnipiac women's lacrosse head coach Tanya Kotowicz raises concerns with sports medicine about miscommunication surrounding athlete injuries.</p>	<p>Oct. 4, 2023:</p> <p>Dan Smith, head athletic trainer, responds to Kotowicz's email but largely skips over her concerns.</p>	<p>Oct. 22, 2023:</p> <p>Women's lacrosse travels to an away tournament without an athletic trainer. A women's lacrosse player returning from injury — who video evidence shows cleared the return-to-play protocol — scrimmages and is re-injured.</p> <p>Miscommunication among the team's multi-person athletic training staff leads to confusion over whether she was cleared to play. Smith asks to meet with Kotowicz about athlete injury management.</p>
<p>Nov. 2023:</p> <p>Kotowicz continues raising concerns about athletic training protocols. She again identifies communication issues among the team's five athletic trainers and alleges that the team's duplicate injury reports are not always accurate and do not always match. Women's lacrosse practices lack athletic training coverage so frequently that Kotowicz receives a walkie-talkie to communicate with the training room.</p>	<p>Nov. - Dec. 2023:</p> <p>A human resources official calls the athlete and asks if Kotowicz forced her to play. She denies this. Kotowicz meets on Dec. 4 with human resources. In a follow-up email, she alleges that officials denied the existence of two separate injury reports and concluded that the player had not cleared the return-to-play protocol. Kotowicz sends human resources documents that disprove this narrative of events.</p>	<p>Jan. 2024:</p> <p>Quinnipiac terminates Kotowicz and asks her to sign resignation paperwork. She refuses.</p> <p>Athletics announces that Kotowicz is “leaving the program.”</p>

INFOGRAPHIC BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

ther of the athlete in question — who agreed to speak to The Chronicle on the condition that his daughter's identity remain anonymous — verified this claim.

“The big thing is a trainer didn't even go to the tournament with the team,” the athlete's father, who attended the tournament, wrote in a text message statement to The Chronicle. “Which is odd.”

It's more than just odd — it might go against NCAA recommendations.

“Each member school has a legislative responsibility to provide medical care and coverage for its own student-athletes who are participating in sanctioned athletic activities, regardless of whether the events are occurring on campus or at another location,” NCAA guidance states. “Despite common historical practice, (a) member school should not assume that a host school will agree to take on those responsibilities for its visiting student-athletes.”

But while institutions legally must provide medical care to their student-athletes, NCAA policies are relatively flexible about how they go about doing that.

To put it another way: visiting teams can travel without their own medical staff. They just need to verify that the host school's medical staff can accommodate them — and it is not known if Quinnipiac did that in October.

Regardless, an internal email indicates that, while on the 88-mile bus ride to Adelphi, the player in question asked Kotowicz if she was allowed to play. And because there was no trainer on the bus to confirm the player's status, Kotowicz checked the injury report and told the athlete that she was listed as cleared to play “as tolerated.” A university source verified that coaches do not have the ability to edit injury reports.

A screenshot of an Oct. 22 text message exchange shows that the athlete messaged the relevant trainer around the same time — just after 6:15 a.m. — to see if she was cleared to play in the three-game tournament. The trainer returned the player's message approximately two hours later, telling her they didn't “believe so” because she had not practiced fully.

Although the player later said she noted the discrepancy between Kotowicz's response and the trainer's response, the documents obtained by The Chronicle suggest that she simply assumed a different trainer — one who knew she had, in fact, fully practiced twice that week — had cleared her to play.

However, the player never relayed this information to the trainer with whom she was texting. Instead, she sent the trainer a final text at 9:15 a.m. asking if she could warm up and play in the tournament for a few minutes. The trainer never responded to this message.

The athlete's father stressed that it was Kotowicz, not his daughter, who expressed hesitation about her playing in the three-game tournament.

Kotowicz, he said, repeatedly told his daughter that she did not want her to risk re-injury in a meaningless offseason tournament.

But the player's dad, who attended the Oct. 22 tournament and encouraged his daughter to play, said she was practically “begging” Kotowicz to put her on the field.

“We were trying to get her on the field as well,” he said.

The athlete warmed up before the first and second games, but it was not until the final minutes of the latter game that Kotowicz allowed her to play.

Although the athlete was on the field for less than 10 minutes, she texted the Quinnipiac trainer just after 2 p.m. to tell them she was experiencing pain again.

“I told you that you shouldn't have played,” the trainer responded.

This is a misrepresentation of what the trainer had actually told her, though. The trainer's 8:15 a.m. text — “I don't believe so since we did not practice fully” — was not only less definitive than a clear “no,” but

“I don't want her taking the fall for something that, from our perspective, didn't happen.”

– Father of the involved athlete

also based on the false belief that the athlete had not practiced.

The player told the trainer that, according to Kotowicz, “the thing said as tolerated.” But when the trainer replied, they refuted this claim.

“The injury report does not say as tolerated it says you are out for games,” the trainer told the player.

This trainer owned one but not both of the team's injury report documents. It is unclear if the injury report the trainer was referring to was the same one Kotowicz had checked on the bus that morning.

A later email indicates that Smith — the head athletic trainer who had largely ignored Kotowicz's concerns in early October — texted her just before 6 p.m. on Oct. 22 to request a meeting on athlete and injury management.

Less than 10 minutes later, when Kotowicz apparently took a screenshot of the full injury report, the player at the center of the incident was not listed as cleared to play “as tolerated” — as Kotowicz had told the athlete she was that morning — but instead as “out.”

A university source declined to provide the screenshot to The Chronicle, citing privacy laws.

Kotowicz reportedly met with Smith that week, though it is unknown what occurred in this meeting.

“The reason TK was fired was bullshit.”

– Father of the involved athlete

NOVEMBER 2023: KOTOWICZ CONTINUES CHALLENGING ATHLETIC TRAINING PROTOCOLS

Documents indicate that Kotowicz reached out to sports medicine officials once again in early November to voice concerns about a lack of athletic training coverage at team practices and away games.

The exact details of this meeting are unclear. However, in a subsequent email chain, Smith dismissed what he understood as a request for athletic training coverage at all team activities. Quinnipiac sports medicine,

he wrote, only covers home games during the offseason — not training or away games.

But Kotowicz alleged in a follow-up email that she had only requested a radio from athletic training to ensure she could contact the training room during practice if necessary. She also reportedly asked to be copied on the athletic training room's staff schedule so she would know beforehand which trainers were available and when, noting that she had been locked out of the training room on more than one occasion.

Kotowicz reached out for a third time less than two weeks later, this time to more directly challenge the safety of not having a trainer assigned to all team activities and to raise concerns about the injury report's frequent inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

She pointed out — just as the father of the athlete involved in the Oct. 22 incident had — the potential dangers of not having a Quinnipiac athletic trainer available at offseason practices, on the bus and at away contests.

And because the team's four trainers rotated in and out, Kotowicz claimed the athletic training staff was rarely on the same page. At times, she said, the lack of streamlined communication meant one trainer would have updated information about a player's eligibility status that another trainer would not.

Likewise, she alleged that the team's two injury reports — two separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets owned by two different athletic trainers — sometimes contained outdated or erroneous information and occasionally did not match one another.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023: INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY

The involved player's father confirmed that a Quinnipiac human resources representative contacted his daughter in November to discuss what transpired on Oct. 22.

He alleged that the official who spoke with his daughter only seemed interested in the answer to one question: Did Kotowicz “force” her to play injured?

The athlete refuted this allegation, her father said. And a text his daughter sent to the trainer after being reinjured on Oct. 22 — “I really wanted to try because I felt good in warm ups” — would seem to corroborate this.

“TK did nothing wrong,” her father told The Chronicle. “We love TK.”

But while the university investigated Kotowicz's role in the incident, the player's father questioned why no athletic trainer traveled with the team that day — and whether Kotowicz would have been fired if one had.

“How can a D1 program not provide a trainer for a team playing (three) games?” he wrote in a text message statement to The Chronicle. “If a trainer was present would this have happened?”

And yet, he also made clear that neither he nor his daughter holds the university responsible for her injuries.

“Injuries happen,” he wrote. “We do not blame anyone for her getting hurt the first or second time.”

Representatives from the university's human resources department reportedly met with Kotowicz for a second time in early December to discuss the findings of their investigation.

What exactly was discussed in the Dec. 4 meeting is unknown.

However, documentation obtained by The Chronicle indicates that Kotowicz emailed a human resources official shortly after the apparent meeting to refute accusations of wrongdoing.

Kotowicz alleged, among other things, that university officials denied the existence of two separate injury reports and concluded that the involved player had not fully practiced twice.

There is no known record of the injury report from the morning of Oct. 22, making it impossible to verify Kotowicz's claim that the injury report initially cleared the involved athlete and was later changed to list her as “out.”

Regardless, video footage of the team's Oct. 20 and Oct. 21 practices proves that the athlete satisfied the terms of the return-to-play protocol, and there is no evidence to suggest Kotowicz forced her to play.

JANUARY 2024: THE TERMINATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

The university terminated Kotowicz on Jan. 2. Because most Quinnipiac coaches are not under contract, Connecticut law provides the university the right to terminate their employment “at will” — that is, without providing a reason.

Athletics administrators apparently informed her on Jan. 2 that the department planned to release a statement the following morning announcing her “resignation.”

Kotowicz pushed back, reportedly refusing to sign the resignation paperwork because she was not, in fact, resigning — she was being fired.

In the wake of her dismissal, Kotowicz took to Instagram to share a 70-second video compilation of the more than two dozen messages of support she had received from her former athletes.

“I am so sorry it ended like this,” one such message included in the Jan. 4 post said. “I hope you know once we win that MAAC Championship it will be for you.”

Officially, it appears that the university terminated Kotowicz for playing an injured athlete.

But even that athlete's father, describing the university's investigation as a “witch hunt,” said he believes Quinnipiac had a pre-existing desire to fire Kotowicz and used a false narrative of the Oct. 22 incident as a pretext.

“The reason TK was fired was bullshit,” he said. “I don't want her taking the fall for something that, from our perspective, didn't happen.”

Opinion

A cease-fire in Gaza will cause more harm than good

By **NICHOLAS PESTRITTO**
Staff Writer

Content warning: Descriptions of extreme violence and sexual assault

In 1947 the United Nations adopted resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan, with the goal to separate the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. This was the starting point of the major conflicts between Israel and Palestine, and with the creation of Hamas in 1987, the conflict only got worse. Now the solution to these ongoing clashes is currently at the forefront of the world's political realm.

Why should Israel and the U.S. try to bargain with Hamas to achieve a cease-fire? The answer is simple: they shouldn't. There is no point in advocating for a cease-fire when your enemy has broken — or refused to agree to — a truce over the conflict's long history.

For a successful cease-fire, both sides need to agree to it and believe that it serves their interests. To get both of these sides to get what they want in such an agreement would be almost impossible.

A cease-fire in this conflict would be irresponsible and would only cause more terror for many years to come. Hamas is so incredibly unlikely to uphold its end of a cease-fire agreement and will only use it to restock on weaponry and remain committed to the obliteration of Israel, as noted in the beginning of the 1988 Hamas Covenant.

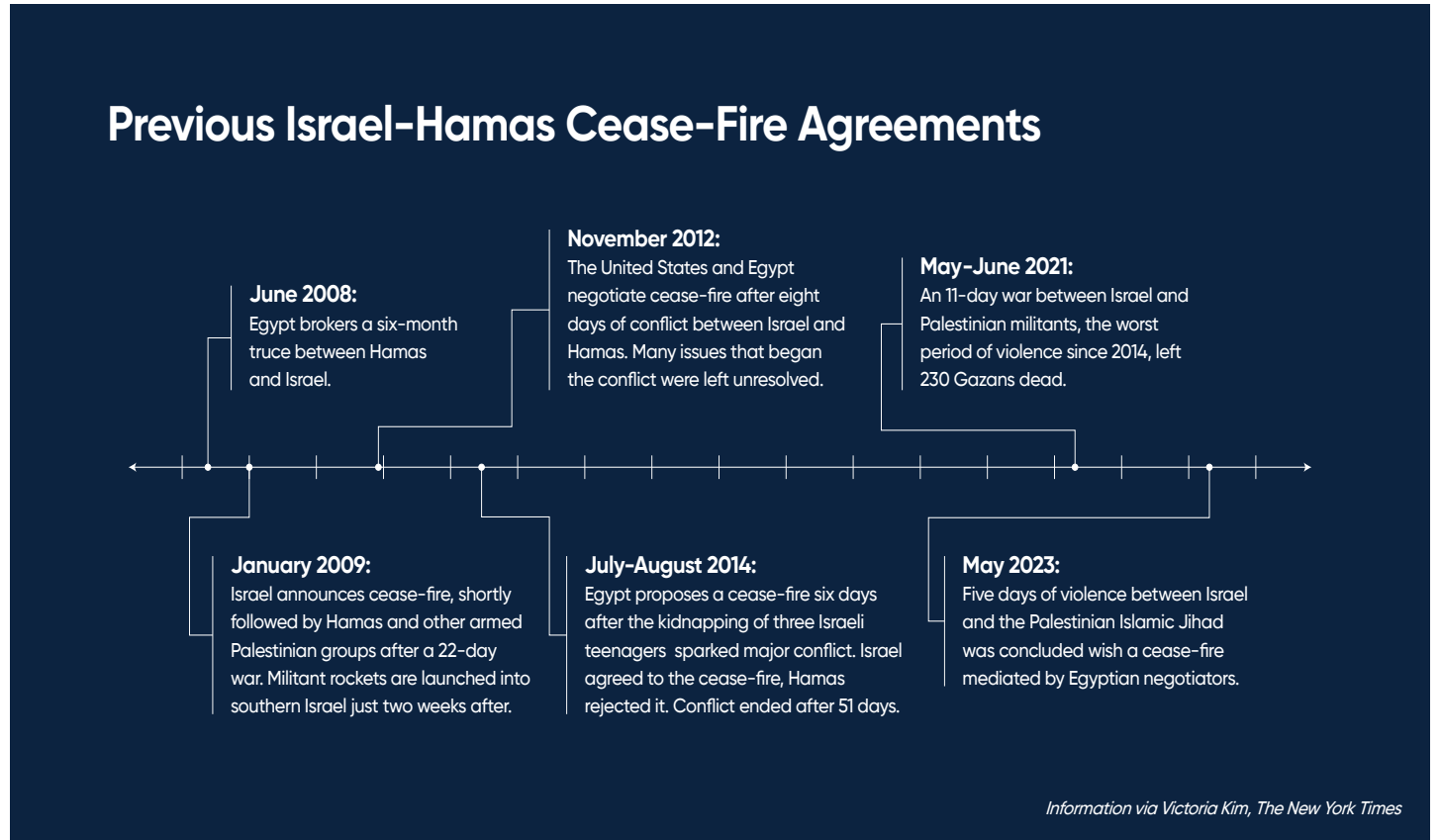
On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas militants fired upon Israel from the land of the Gaza Strip, the Red Sea and from the air.

Israeli authorities said Hamas militants killed over 1,200 Israeli civilians and kidnapped 250 Israeli civilians during this attack, per the Associated Press.

Along with that, an investigation by The New York Times uncovered at least seven separate geographic locations where Israeli women appeared to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.

The idea of cease-fires — and Hamas breaking them — is not new. This is a dangerous trend that goes back almost two decades.

An 11-day war between Hamas and Israel in June 2021 was seen as the worst flare-up of violence between the two in years. It ended with a



cease-fire agreement that was then broken by militants less than a month later after they sent incendiary balloons into southern Israel.

In a 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel, the violence started with the kidnapping of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank. Israel then attacked Gaza. Egypt proposed a cease-fire that Israel agreed to but Hamas rejected. The sides attempted nine total truces before the conflict finally ended after 51 days.

During the 22-day conflict with Israel in 2009, Hamas and other militants agreed to a cease-fire. Just two weeks afterward, those same militants launched rockets into southern Israel.

Several world leaders have voiced their opposition to the idea of a cease-fire, making it more than clear that a cease-fire is not the best solution.

In a Nov. 14, 2023 op-ed for The Atlantic, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

wrote: "A full cease-fire that leaves Hamas in power would be a mistake. For now, pursuing more limited humanitarian pauses that allow aid to get in and civilians and hostages to get out is a wiser course."

This could not be a more accurate statement and it is more than obvious that putting a cease-fire in place and leaving Hamas alive and well in Gaza will cause drastic and fatal consequences for both sides.

In a statement last November, President Joe Biden rejected calls for a cease-fire, according to The Guardian, and in a late December call with Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu, Biden did not ask for Israel to negotiate a cease-fire with Hamas.

When it comes to the U.S. supporting Israel, other forms of support are needed — monetary support is clearly not ideal. The White House's emergency sale of weapons to Israel, for example, will help Israel more

than just monetary funds. Actions taken by the White House like these need to continue, rather than monetary contributions.

Israel and Hamas have always fundamentally disagreed with one another, but inducing a cease-fire between the two at this moment would be a tragic mistake. The U.S. must support the elimination of Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East.

Most of the world has seen war between Israel and Hamas for decades, but if there is a cease-fire enacted, Hamas will likely regroup, gather more materials and attack Israel again.

Historically, Hamas has shown it will continue to break cease-fire agreements, and it is clear that if a cease-fire agreement is reached, that will almost guarantee that future conflict will only be pushed back. Supporting Israel's war against Hamas until its leadership and systems are destroyed will be the best way to fully secure and restructure the region.

Stop watching the personal lives of celebrities

By **SYDNEY KLASS**
Staff Writer

With the rise of social media platforms, the personal lives of celebrities are constantly exposed. Whether it be the divorce of two well-known actors or a singer stealing someone else's husband, artists no longer have private lives.

Putting celebrities on pedestals doesn't do anyone any good. If they're expected to be perfect, the second they make one wrong move, everyone will turn on them, especially when their personal lives are constantly dissected and put on blast by sources all over the internet.

Besides stopping the fixation on their lives, separating the art from the artist is incredibly important. Even if a musician involves their personal life in their work, it shouldn't take away from the fact that they've made a good song. Similarly, an actor not being the greatest person doesn't diminish their talent.

Over the past few months, rumors have swirled around the relationship between musician Ariana Grande and actor Ethan Slater.

They met on the set of the movie adaptation of "Wicked" in late 2022, and Grande has since been accused of breaking up his family.

Slater was previously married to and had a child with Lilly Jay. Even with stories and rumors about Grande supposedly being a homewrecker plastered all over social media, no one really knows if anything is true.

Everyone that's bashing Grande is also bashing her fans, even if they casually listen to her music. She's been called a homewrecker and her fans have been called "embarrassing" for continuing to support her.

Grande has been popular since her "Victorious" days, and just because she possibly ruined a family doesn't mean her fans are going to stop listening to her music altogether. A lot of her fans are casual listeners, so why should they be considered bad people just because they don't want to stop enjoying her work?

Even if the whole story turns out to be true, Grande doesn't care that others think she's a bad person. She's a multimillionaire with thousands of loyal fans who will continue to stream her music. Her new single "yes, and?"

already has over 160 million streams and she has an album coming out in May. No matter how many people dislike and spread rumors about her, she'll still be successful.

Popular celebrities are always being put on a pedestal and are expected to be perfect.

Artists like Taylor Swift are constantly worshiped and expected to do no wrong, so it'll only make it worse when they do make a mistake. As well as Swift's relationship with NFL star Travis Kelce constantly being addressed in the media, interviewers ask the pair personal questions and invade their privacy. Swift's private life is being exposed, which gives haters more ammunition to use against her.

Ripping apart the personal lives of celebrities to get people to stop following them doesn't do anything. Calling out artists and claiming they are bad people won't stop everyone from supporting them.

Ariana Grande might not be the greatest person, but when the music is good, you just have to put the rumors aside and say, "yes, and?"



ILLUSTRATION BY SHAVONNE CHIN

Opinion

Why is Biden out of touch with younger Americans?

By **GENEVA CUNNINGHAM**
Contributing Writer

With the 2024 presidential election on the horizon, President Joe Biden is grappling with a large-scale loss of faith in his efforts. Young people aren't happy, especially when it comes to his administration's stance on the Israel-Hamas War.

Biden's approval rating stands at 26% among young voters — ages 18 to 29 — and at 37% overall among registered voters, according to a December 2023 poll from The New York Times and Siena College.

Over the past couple of years, Republican propaganda has painted Biden as a senile old man with dementia. Creative? Yes. Credible? No. Biden's supposedly deteriorating mental condition is not what makes him out-of-touch with younger voters — his age is.

As an 81-year-old man, some Americans think Biden holds some outdated beliefs, and that's why he has an edge with older voters. By vying for the interests of older Americans, Biden can effectively secure the moderate Democratic vote while possibly persuading on-the-fence Republicans.

However, Biden is grappling with hits from both sides: from the right, he's too liberal, and from the left, he's not progressive enough on issues like immigration and the environment.

In the case of the Israel-Hamas War, Biden's support for Israel is strategic.

Adults ages 50 and older are more sympathetic with Israel, according to Gallup. Biden is looking for support among baby boomers, and missing the mark on supporting Palestine's long-deserved autonomy.

Biden said he doesn't want to see civilians die as a result of the violence in Gaza, AP reports. However, Biden's administration has held strong on efforts to further bolster Israel in the conflict.

The congressional review process ensures that Congress must be notified 15 calendar days before an arms sale. However, on Dec. 9, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued an

"emergency authority," which effectively bypassed the typical 15-day review period. In this "emergency" invocation, the U.S. sent nearly 14,000 120-millimeter tank ammunition cartridges to Israel, CAP20 reported.

Rapidly supplying Israel with heavy-duty weapons compromises the Biden administration's policies on human rights and protection. While the Department of State identified credible reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings and detentions of Palestinians, Biden continues to back Israel.

The Biden-Harris administration has previously advocated for American Indigenous communities, emphasizing efforts to put an end to hate crimes and incidents. If Biden is so preoccupied with restoring autonomy to Native people while holding people accountable for hate crimes in the U.S., why is his aim to further arm Israel's atrocities against Palestinians overseas?

On the Israel-Hamas War, Biden's approval rating stands at 20%, per the New York Times

and Siena poll. Further, 65% of young Americans are opposed to sending more military aid to Israel, via the Quinnipiac University Poll.

Perhaps it is Biden's eye on older voters or his hypocritical democratic ideology, but young people are seeing through it.

Concerns over the Biden administration taps into a larger ideology: that the political system, which demographically represents the older generation, is outdated and not concerned with the hopes of younger voters.

This ideology can be dangerous, especially considering that Biden is most likely facing former President Donald Trump — an insurrectionist.

If young voters do not feel seen or heard, they might make decisions that spite Biden, resulting in a repeat of the 2016 election. I'm not saying that voters will definitively support Trump because Biden has not committed himself to his promised progressive causes. However, I am saying that young voters might skip

out on the election entirely because they are being dismissed.

On the topic of Palestinian autonomy, students all across the country are banding together to support Palestine through protests and boycotts against certain corporations that back Israel, like McDonald's and Starbucks. Moreover, students are calling for a cease-fire — at a minimum.

Perhaps the criticism and disapproval from youth can light a fire under Biden's administration, causing him to be more attentive and thoughtful before he bypasses Congress to fuel acts of brutality.

As a young voter myself, I want to see the Biden administration call for a cease-fire. At the very least, this would halt some of the violence Palestinians are experiencing in Gaza.

Secondly, I want to see America show up in a meaningful way to support the Palestinian people as they pursue sovereignty from Israel and autonomy as a whole. Financial aid to struggling communities, businesses and infrastructure decimated by the attacks would be life-changing for survivors, and help Palestine build a strong foundation of self-determination.

I also think it is important that Biden amend his stance on human rights and protection. I want to be a constituent of a government that advocates for those who have been and continue to be harmed at the hands of state-backed violence. I don't want to see a president who simply condemns hate crimes at a local level, then further arms hate crimes at an international level. As a voter, I want to know that my representation is showing up with meaningful contributions to establish a sense of worldwide peace.

Further, the younger generation is not powerless. When voters push the boundaries beyond simple compliance and use their voices meaningfully, we tend to see change. By using my voice, I am defying Biden's hypocrisy and rallying along with pro-Palestinian youth protesters, inciting change in a way that is authentic to me.



JACK SPIEGEL/CHRONICLE
U.S. President Joe Biden speaks during an event in the White House Rose Garden on April 21, 2023.

American flair is detrimental to Formula One racing

By **RYAN JOHANSON**
Copy Editor

The average speed of a Formula One car is 231.4 mph. America is trying to change the speed in the sport — not in cars, but in expansion.

Formula One is a high-speed, high-action race where 20 drivers split between 10 teams compete across 21 countries in the pursuit of the drivers' and teams' championships.

The motorsport's expansion to the U.S. is at least in part due to the wild success of "Drive to Survive." The 10-episode Netflix docuseries is a backstage pass to Formula One, giving us an inside look at the thrilling, real-life drama behind the racetrack. By humanizing the drivers, revealing the intense rivalries and showcasing the high-stakes nature of the sport, it has made Formula One into more than just a race.

The addition of "Drive to Survive" has brought more viewership to the sport, which led to new U.S. races in Las Vegas and Miami on top of Austin, Texas, which has been on the calendar since 2012. The Las Vegas and Miami races both debuted on the race calendar in the last two seasons in 2023 and 2022, respectively.

One aspect "Drive to Survive" hones in on is taking the fans into the eyes of the drivers pre-race.

Pre-race is a time for the 10 teams to look over race strategy with their race engineer, complete reaction drills and get in the zone, whether it is listening to music or meditating,

While there are pre-race driver introductions in all races on the calendar, the flashiness of Miami and Las Vegas takes these introductions and makes them more of a show.

In races outside of Vegas and Miami, the driver introductions are quiet. Each driver's name is announced from a PA system, while they walk onto the grid and stand next to their cars, providing fans with an opportunity to see them.

The 2023 Miami Grand Prix pre-race festivities, including performances from rappers LL Cool J and will.i.am, left many dissatisfied, myself included.

The drivers weren't even interested in the shenanigans. If the drivers showed a slight look of interest in the pre-race introductions, maybe it would change my mind. I became dissatisfied with the length of the introductions. I wanted to get to the race — the whole point of race weekend.

While these types of introductions are new to the sport, they happen minutes before the race and the added distraction causes problems within the paddock.

McLaren driver Lando Norris said after the Miami Grand Prix that none of the drivers liked the pre-race introductions, stating that drivers already do publicity for fans and that pre-race is when they need to focus.

During the Miami Grand Prix weekend, Verstappen said after the race that while he knows the entertainment value of the introductions, he pre-

fers to talk to his engineers and get ready to drive.

I agree with Norris and Verstappen's take on the pre-race introduction because racing requires more focus than any other sport. A single misstep in the car could jeopardize both the driver's and the car's well-being and result in millions spent on repairs, so maintaining the right mental focus is crucial.

It's hard to ignore the shift in Formula One with the inclusion of races in flashy locations. While the intention might be to attract a broader audience and elevate the appeal of the sport in America, the emphasis on showy locations

seems to overshadow the traditional racetracks that have been integral to the sport's legacy. It's essential to create a balance between expanding to America and making sure the sport stays to the traditional ways.

The recent criticism from drivers like Norris, highlighting the distracting nature of the introductions, brings the need for a reevaluation of the American approach to the sport.

It's time for Formula One to consider a more balanced and race-focused introduction. Addressing these concerns can enhance the overall racing experience for both drivers and fans alike.



PHOTO VIA MORIO/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Formula One runs three races in the U.S. Austin, Texas, Miami and Las Vegas (none pictured.)

Arts & Life

'Mr. & Mrs. Smith' is the perfect target

By **ZOE LEONE**
Arts & Life Editor

The line between love and hate has always been a thin one. And in the world of film and TV, when espionage, gunfire and bloodied knuckles can be just as romantic as any other meet-cute, there's perhaps no better example than "Mr. & Mrs. Smith."

The original "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" was released in 2005 and quickly elevated to cult-film status thanks to its leads, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. The duo played Jane and John Smith, respectively, who are in a failing marriage of convenience in an attempt to hide their identities as assassins from each other. However, once they get assigned to kill each other, their charade begins to unravel as their lives get thrown on the line.

Prime Video's 2024 series "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" quickly makes it clear that this is not a reboot of the film. While the show does follow Jane (Maya Erskine) and John (Donald Glover) Smith, this iteration of the ultimate spy couple starts with them knowing each other's secret identities straight from the start; in fact, they're actually working together.

But while the Smiths might be attending missions for a mysterious and altruistic espionage company, the reality is that they don't know each other. The condition of creating new lives full of luxury and danger is that they must leave their real identities behind, in favor of an inconspicuous married life.

It's clear from the beginning few minutes of the first episode that Jane and John have a spark, but the possibility of it either burning out or blowing up makes it even more enticing. The push-and-pull between cold and calculated Jane and outgoing and overbearing

John creates a simmering tension that pulls you in from their first meeting.

The relationship between the Smiths is the driving force behind what makes "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" so ridiculously good. The plot is fairly slow-moving; each episode generally focuses on a singular mission or event in their lives, with time jumps used as a reference for the months passing between the two.

And while it would be very easy for this formula to drag on, the allure of watching Jane and John break apart and smash the pieces of their relationship back together is more than enough to keep the eight-episode season interesting. The scenes between the couple are heady, teetering on the ever-delicate balance of loving to kill people together and together killing the person they love.

The last episode takes a turn, however, and completely rips apart the previous flow of the show. It's fast-paced and high-stakes, the kind of television that pulls you to the edge of your seat and fills your stomach with anxiety-riddled butterflies. But when the final minutes fade away to the credits, it's impossible not to be white-knuckled and desperately waiting for more.

One of the pillars of the original "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" is without a doubt its sexiness. The femme and homme fatale appeal of 2005's Jane and John is what much of the film banks on to push its plot along. And while Erskine and Glover are certainly not a chore to watch (especially not in the show's incredible wardrobe), the seductiveness of the series comes just as much from the stars' chemistry as it does their appearances.

Every argument is charged, every glance



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA RIHA

feels intentional. As the show progresses, it grows harder to determine whether the Smiths are about to kiss or kill each other. But its unpredictability is what makes the show so enticing.

The success of the series is largely thanks to Erskine and Glover's stellar performances. However, the series was first announced with Phoebe Waller-Bridge attached as both Jane and an executive producer, before leaving the production due to creative differences. And while Erskine was not originally slated to play Jane, it's hard to imagine the series without her starring in it.

Erskine is perhaps most well-known for playing a fictionalized version of her middle-school self in the critically acclaimed "PEN15." Videos from the series of her jazz scatting at the dinner table or making fun of a classmate

whose mom died have gone viral on TikTok, which makes her 180 from comedy to drama all the more impressive.

Glover's soft-hearted version of John brings an unexpected warmth to the show. Where Jane is driven and mission-focused, John tails behind as his dedication to the human connection leaves the couple vulnerable — both to failed missions and their feelings for each other.

It's still up in the air whether or not "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" will return for a second season, but with the series' success — it was the No. 1 show on Prime Video in 130 countries, according to Deadline — the possibility for the Smiths' return looks promising.

While the future of Jane and John is unclear, the series as it stands is a testament to some of the best of what TV has to offer. After all, the couple that kills together, stays together.

QU students go for the gold at SPB Mario Kart Tournament

By **QUINN O'NEILL**
Staff Photographer

Quinnipiac University's Student Programming Board hosted its second-annual Mario Kart Wii tournament on Feb. 10, with students competing for prizes in the Mt. Carmel Auditorium. The day included many festivities for the students, including coloring, racing remote control cars and, of course, playing lots of Mario Kart Wii. Every student who wanted to participate received a ticket and a number. Once their number was called, they competed against three other contestants for a chance to move on in the tournament and battle for Mario-themed prizes.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

From left, Aidan Southworth, Julianna Mazzella, Nicholas Nardi and Jackson Giuricich race to the top of the leader board at the SPB Mario Kart Wii tournament.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

Item boxes from the Mario video games are displayed before gamers lock in for the competition.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

Sophomore film, television and media arts major Tyler Butt watches intently, as this race determines who he will play next.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

The Mario Kart steering wheel became the go-to way to weave past opponents en route to a first-place finish during the tournament.

Noah Kahan proves nothing lasts 'Forever'

By **AMANDA MADERA**
Copy Editor

Have you ever listened to an artist who perfectly captures every gut-wrenching feeling you've ever had? Noah Kahan has no issue writing with brutal honesty, and his album "Stick Season (Forever)" — which released on Feb. 9 — explores wistfulness and yearning.

I began listening to Kahan in October 2022, when "Stick Season" first came out. The album instantly earned a special place in my heart, and since then I have explored his entire discography.

Out of all his albums — and three versions of "Stick Season" — "Stick Season (Forever)," which comprises the 14 original tracks plus eight deluxe tracks and eight collaborative tracks, is definitely my favorite.

The original "Stick Season" album catapulted Kahan into stardom and the mainstream media. Kahan is now No. 1 on the Hot 100 Songwriters Chart as of Feb. 8, according to Billboard.

In his newly released version, Kahan added two more collaborations to the list. "You're Gonna Go Far (With Brandi Carlile)" and "Paul Revere (With Gregory Alan Isakov)" made me love this new version of the album compared to the original.

Although "(Forever)" still includes every original song and deluxe track, Kahan is extremely in tune with his fans and continued to give us new content and expand "Stick Season."

"You're Gonna Go Far" was one of my favorite songs before the collaboration, so it took me a few listens to appreciate what Carlile added to the song.

This song emphasizes that it's OK to leave home and begin your own journey. You shouldn't feel guilty for taking time to find

yourself and to accomplish amazing things.

Kahan picks and chooses which songs to change the lyrics of on collaborations, but on "You're Gonna Go Far (With Brandi Carlile)," Kahan decided to keep the original lyrics and have Carlile sing the second verse.

My favorite part of this new version are the harmonies and background vocals from Carlile. She made the song feel comforting and even though I never heard of her before this, I could tell she added her own style to her verses.

The lyrics "If you wanna go (if you wanna go) far/ Then you gotta go (then you gotta go) far/ You gotta go far" close out the song and have always been my favorite. You can feel the sense of encouragement from both artists as they urge listeners to follow their dreams.

I have always thought of "Paul Revere" as an underrated song. Since its release on the deluxe version of the album titled "Stick Season (We'll All Be Here Forever)" on June 8, 2023, the song became one of my favorites.

Despite this, I've never really heard anyone talk about it on social media until Kahan released the version collaborating with Isakov.

As someone who grew up in New England, this song always spoke to me. I've thought about this song to mean struggling to fit in with a place where everything always stays the same.

Kahan and Isakov passionately sing "But I'm in my car, and I see the yard/ And the patch of grass where we buried the dog/ And the world makes sense/ Behind a chain-link fence/ If I could leave, I would've already left." I especially love this part of the song because you can hear the frustration in both of their voices.

Collaborating with Isakov was definitely

the right move for "Paul Revere." I love his work and immediately knew that he would make this song even better.

I'm a sucker for love songs, and Kahan effortlessly puts feelings of attachment, devotion and weakness into words.

The release of the long-awaited track "Forever" was the perfect way to end the era of "Stick Season." Kahan teased his fans with snippets of the song on social media before ultimately releasing it on Feb. 9.

I find this track to be the most romantic. It expresses how despite having feelings of insecurity in a relationship, the narrator promises to grow and heal with their partner and live happily ever after.

Kahan's ability to use instruments in his favor to convey his emotions make him unlike any other artist to me. Every time I thought "Stick Season" couldn't get any better, he found ways to lyrically and stylistically enhance the album twice more.

In a world where indie-folk has been made to be a broad genre, Kahan found his own voice. Compared to popular indie-folk artists such as Lord Huron, The Lumineers and Hozier, you can find distinctions just by listening to instruments and lyrics.

As this chapter comes to a close, Kahan's music will "Forever" have "All My Love," and I'm excited for what he has in store next.

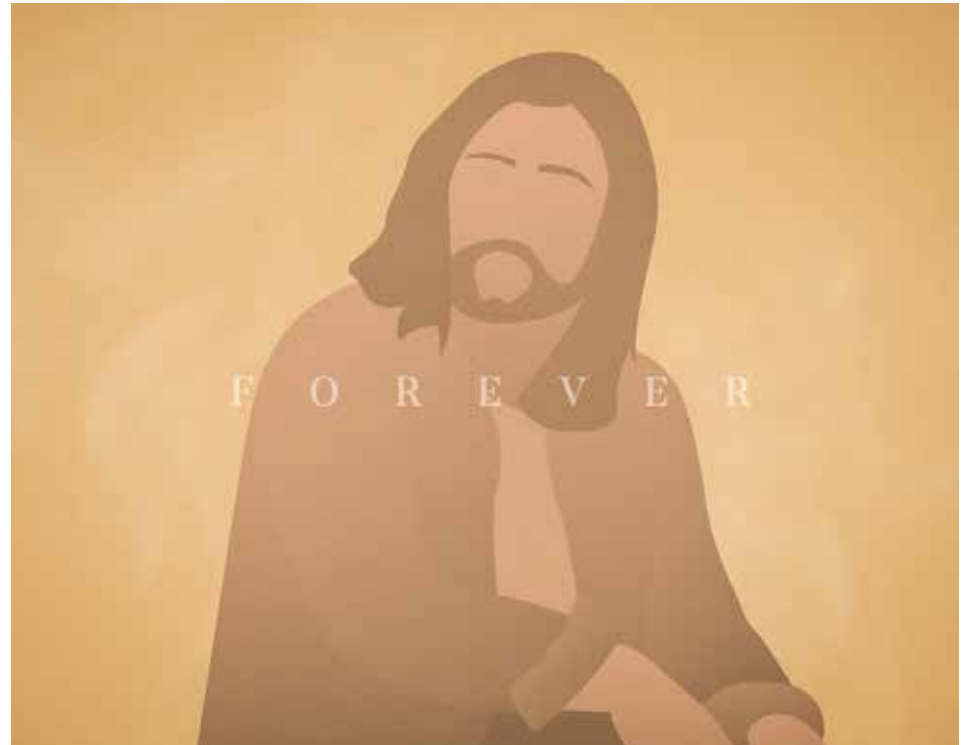


ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

'The Bachelor' effect: How TV changes the idea of love

By **GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN**
Staff Writer

This winter brings the 28th season of "The Bachelor" to viewers who crave love at first sight and a world full of drama and endless tears. This year's bachelor strays from the show's conventional model, bringing in personality as well as looks. Could this be the best bachelor yet?

Joey Graziadei is a 28-year-old tennis coach from Royersford, Pennsylvania. On social media, fans claim he is "written by a woman" — a nice guy just looking for love after his failed chance as runner-up on the 20th season of "The Bachelorette."

The audience calls this season's bachelor a rare commodity: a man full of green flags. Praised for his sensitivity and kindness, Graziadei listens and validates the women's feelings, wiping away so many tears. No wonder they think he is the love of their life.

In just three episodes, many contestants have already decided that Graziadei is the man of their dreams. After the initial impressions, many of the girls confessed that when they found out Graziadei was going to be the bachelor, they knew he was the one for them. As a new watcher of the show, I was confused; how could they know he was the one before talking to him?

The women on "The Bachelor" put Graziadei on a pedestal. They obsess over him and fight for his attention in any way they can, from jumping over a wedding table for a seat next to him, to pelting each other in a game of "paint battle royale," to even cutting off personal conversations for more time with him — all to get a rose and make it to the next day.

These catty fights make grown women look like teenagers. This show pits women against each other, which is, in part, what makes it so entertaining — marveling at how insane these women are to drop everything in their lives for a possible chance at love against 32 other women. Some of them cause fights just to draw attention to themselves and vent to Graziadei about the other girls.

This new season brings in a unique element of drama: two sisters. Contestants Lauren and Allison Hollinger came in together and initially kept it a secret that they were family, pretending not to know each other and let the best sister win. But to be honest with Graziadei, they revealed the truth. Jealousy and failed attempts to be each other's wingwoman caused older sister Lauren to cut her journey short.

The age range of the contestants has also

been one of the primary sources of drama in the season so far. Ranging from 23 to 31, these women also vary in maturity levels. One "fight" that has lingered for two episodes is an argument between contestants Maria Georgas and Madina Alam about Alam being "too old" for Graziadei, playing on each other's insecurities to get into the spotlight.

This argument was blown out of proportion. Women looking for attention called Georgas a bully and tried to label her the "mean girl" in the house. However, to me, she is one of the most authentic women. Strong, independent and forward, she knows what she wants. She even pulled the iconic move of slipping into something more comfortable after the group date, stunning Graziadei in the second episode.

One of the most interesting elements of the 22-year-old program is that, by the end of the

season, some women realize they are not quite a match and lose interest. The change is subtle, but soon, the women solely care about media attention and future opportunities.

Side by side, the only difference between "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette" is the gender. But "The Bachelor" is far more popular, according to Variety. This past year, "The Bachelor" has remained the most watched out of the two, with the season 27 premiere yielding just under three million viewers. Meanwhile, season 20 of "The Bachelorette" recorded only two million viewers. One explanation for this difference is that women can be just as aggressive as men but in more clever, sneaky and fascinating ways — making for better television.

At its core, "The Bachelor" is misogynistic, antifeminist and, frankly, humiliating to women. The show forces both gender stereotypes and social expectations on women. The women turn against each other, insult each other and even engage in physical altercations — all for a man. It's degrading and patronizing in the ways it portrays women.

So why do we continue to watch this so-called trashy television? Guilty pleasure? Do people just love love? This reality show draws people in with gorgeous women who will do anything to win, willing to embarrass themselves and throw each other under the bus to get ahead, all to be the one who wins the guy everyone wants.

Whatever the appeal of "The Bachelor," this week brought in even more drama with a double feature playing on Feb. 12 and 13 — giving viewers double the chances to witness pointless drama, love lost and love gained.



ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Female powerhouses dominate 2024 Grammys

By **GINA LORUSSO**
Staff Writer

Great food, good company, flowing drinks and performances of a lifetime are all in store for just one night each year. This isn't just your average dinner party — it's the Grammy Awards. Aside from the yearly claims about which musical artists were robbed, there were plenty of historical and empowering moments to highlight from this year's premiere.

The 2024 Grammys yielded nearly 17 million views, becoming its most-watched installment since 2020, according to the Associated Press. This year, for the first time ever, all televised awards were presented to a female artist. With performances from stars like Miley Cyrus, Billie Eilish and SZA, it was a can't-miss event.

In one glorious moment — one that marked a significant milestone in her career — Cyrus won her very first Grammy for Best Pop Solo Performance for “Flowers.”

Mariah Carey presented the award as Cyrus fawned over sharing a stage with the “Songbird Supreme.” Cyrus' performance of her hit was so enthusiastic that even Oprah Winfrey stood and sang along. To express her excitement, Cyrus — strutting across the stage in a dazzling vintage fringe Bob Mackie dress — changed the lyrics of “Flowers” to “Started to cry, but then remembered I just won my first Grammy.”

This was a huge moment for those who grew up with Cyrus and her character, Hannah Montana. As a kid, I watched her journey to stardom, and intense feelings of nostalgia came pouring back when she accepted her award.

When she accepted the award, Cyrus thanked her producers, team and family before ending with: “Thank you all so much. I don't think I forgot anyone ... but I might

have forgotten underwear. Bye!”

As any Cyrus fan would say, she's just being Miley.

Another artist who has also played an important part in the music industry since the early 2000s is the one and only Taylor Swift.

Making history once again, Swift graciously accepted the award for Album of the Year for “Midnights,” making her the only person to win this category four times. Swift, who now has 14 Grammys in total, is one of those artists who genuinely enjoys her job and adores her fans, giving Swifties even more reason to love her.

“For me, the award is the work,” Swift said. “All I want to do is keep being able to do this. I love it so much.”

When she won Best Pop Vocal Album for “Midnights” earlier that evening — hitting lucky No. 13 in Grammy wins — she announced her 11th studio album, “The Tortured Poets Department,” which will be available on April 19. Many fans thought she was going to announce “Reputation (Taylor's Version)” but got something much more shocking instead.

On the younger side of the industry, Billie Eilish continued to grow her trophy collection with an additional two Grammy wins.

Eilish won Song of the Year and Best Song Written for Visual Media for “What Was I Made For?” from the “Barbie” soundtrack

— and deservedly so. Accompanied by her brother Finneas on piano, Eilish performed the ballad while replicating the outfit of the 1965 “Poodle Parade Barbie.”

When “Barbie” came to theaters last summer, the song brought an incredibly emotional touch to the film, causing women everywhere — including me — to reflect on moments of self-discovery. While she wrote this song for the film, Eilish found inspiration within pieces of her own journey to find her purpose in society and passion in music.

The standing ovation after Eilish's performance perfectly embodied the impact this song has had.

And — surprise, surprise — the most wins of the night also went to a woman who won her first Grammy and three additional awards.

Phoebe Bridgers tallied up four total wins, winning Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for her feature on SZA's “Ghost in the Machine” and Best Alternative Music Album with her band, boygenius, for “the record.” boygenius also won Best Rock song and Best Rock Performance for “Not Strong Enough.”

The brilliant energy in the room didn't go unnoticed.

“There's a band that has already won today called ‘boygenius,’” Trevor Noah, the Grammys host, said. “It's three women. That's how good a year it is for women.”

There was one outstanding artist who had

never been awarded for her own work up until the 2024 Grammys.

Neo-soul artist SZA racked up the most nominations — nine — and won Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for “Ghost in the Machine” with Phoebe Bridgers, best R&B Song for “Snooze” and Best Progressive R&B Album for “SOS.”

She performed a vocally beautiful but thrilling samurai-like rendition of “Kill Bill,” inspired by the Quentin Tarantino film. SZA is one of the only artists who has the type of charisma to sing a song about homicide but still look sweet and innocent while doing it.

The Grammys isn't just about pop music — we obviously can't forget about the biggest country stars.

For the first time in four years, Tracy Chapman returned to the stage to perform a duet with Luke Combs to her 1998 hit “Fast Car.” There wasn't a dry eye in that room — it was simply spiritual.

As his favorite childhood song, Combs released a cover version last year, introducing new audiences to Chapman's work. Combs' cover caused a massive resurgence of interest in the song, topping the country music charts shortly after its release. Combs could have easily performed solo, but he instead decided to give credit where it was due and gave one of the greatest female artists the recognition she deserved.

The 2024 Grammys was a monumental year for women in the music industry. The incredible performances and history-making moments showed what these women are capable of.

This year's defying moments proved that, despite the ongoing challenges facing the music industry, women are still making waves and dominating the game.

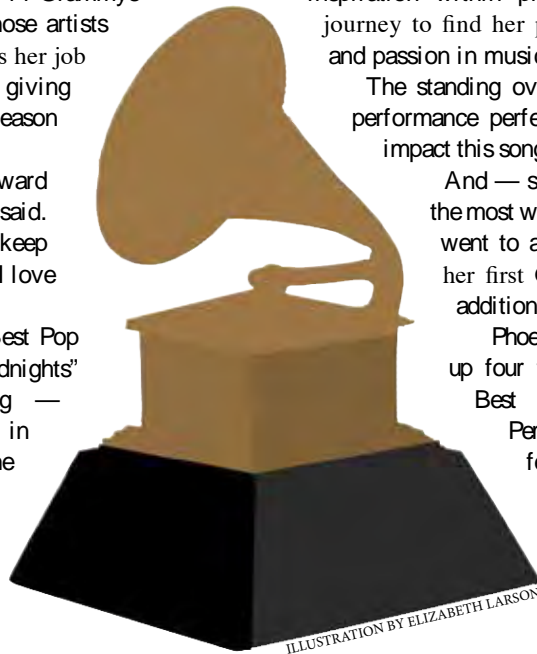


ILLUSTRATION BY ELIZABETH LARSON

Breaking down Austin McBroom's Snapchat breakdowns

By **KRYSTAL MILLER**
Associate Arts & Life Editor

Austin McBroom and Catherine Paiz from the popular family vlogging channel The ACE Family shocked the world on Jan. 11 when they announced their divorce after seven years of marriage.

The couple has been creating daily vlogs of their three children, along with prank and challenge videos, since 2016. However, the family has also been involved in several controversies, including multiple lawsuits and McBroom giving his child a lollipop from a sex shop.

As an outsider, the couple seemed inseparable, an ideal family despite their online mistakes. I never would've expected them to get a divorce. Their Instagram pages are flooded with smiling family photos and extravagant trips — I wouldn't have guessed it was falling apart behind the scenes.

Since the divorce announcement, McBroom has taken to Snapchat to vlog his random activities on his story. TikTok users have turned his meltdowns and conversations into memes. Though the memes are hilarious, I don't agree with what he's doing.

On Feb. 6, I opened my Snapchat to see McBroom — a fully grown man — sitting outside the mall, scooping lemonade and horchata into red Solo Cups with his bare hands inside five-gallon jugs.

McBroom decided to do this in the pouring rain, wearing socks and sandals, a tan jacket and a cowboy hat. He begged people just

trying to go about their day to donate to his fundraiser for himself. Knowing he probably doesn't need the money makes it extremely uncomfortable to watch.

While making the lemonade, he cut the lemons with scissors and dumped in a ton of sugar, clearly showing he was not doing this seriously, but rather for entertainment value. I find it pathetic that he is acting like he needs this money when there are other people out there who could actually use it.

This “poor person” act seems to be a common trend for McBroom — that same week, after getting into an argument with a CVS employee, he mocked people in the service industry. He pretended to be apologetic and posted a video of himself interviewing for a position at the corporation. McBroom is making millions, so I believe he does not actually have any plans to work at CVS.

McBroom has also claimed he has been living in an RV in his now ex-wife's backyard. However, Paiz denied that McBroom was staying on her property. So, while he is likely staying somewhere else, he has continued to film from the RV — which he still manages to flex on viewers like it's a mansion.

He has been acting like he has nowhere to live, and posted on Jan. 30 about temporarily moving in with DDG and Halle Bailey. DDG and McBroom made a song together about him missing Paiz, though, so it seems like it's just part of his act.

I do think this is mostly for views and money, especially when Snapchat influencers make anywhere from \$500 to \$10,000 per post, according to Shopify.com. At the same time, if this divorce is real — and it seems like it is to me — this could also be a way for McBroom to distract himself from the situation.

I also wonder if there were money troubles that contributed to their divorce. In 2021, the couple's \$10 million mansion was foreclosed, but they claimed they were scammed by a contractor.

There is also speculation that the reason for divorce is the possibility of McBroom cheating on Paiz. Influencer Tana Mongeau

claimed he cheated back in 2021, but McBroom has denied this accusation.

I don't believe that the divorce could be as mutual as the couple has claimed on Instagram for them to make such a drastic change to their lives, especially with children involved.

I do feel for both Paiz and McBroom, who have had their careers and marriage destroyed in front of millions. Paiz has been posting with her friends, and — from what I can tell — seems happy compared to McBroom. For the sake of their kids, I hope McBroom stops posting these gimmicky Snapchats so everyone can heal and move on from the situation.



ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Ye and Ty Dolla \$ign's 'Vulture 1' soars past expectations

By **MICHAEL PETITTO**
Staff Writer

Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, and Ty Dolla \$ign released their collaborative album, "Vultures 1," on the early morning of Feb. 10, coincidentally on the 20-year anniversary of Ye's first studio album "The College Dropout."

The unconventional album rollout saw the rap duo hold four different listening parties for the project in Miami, Las Vegas, New York and Chicago. After promised release dates of Dec. 15, Dec. 30 and Jan. 12, the album was released to initial praise from fans, reaching No. 1 on iTunes within hours of its release. It also clinched the No. 1 spot in 109 countries in just four days.

The 16-track project meshes different production styles, along with star-studded features including Playboi Carti, Quavo, Lil Durk and more. If you're looking for something specific out of Ye from this project, you should come out pleased.

Looking for the old Kanye? Look no further than "Burn," a track that sees the Chicago native go back to his roots lyrically and of his sound from his sophomore album "Late Registration." If you're looking for "Yeezus"-inspired material, the vulgar and intense "Hoodrat" has you covered tenfold.

As for the chemistry between the two rappers, Ty Dolla \$ign's heavenly vocals and bridges mix greatly with Ye's verses and choruses. The album clocks in at just under an hour, which gives the listener ample time to get adjusted to the unique style of the duo.

Many fans questioned whether or not Ty Dolla \$ign could hold his own on the project, or if he would just be cast aside with Ye getting all the limelight. Not only did Ty Dolla \$ign hold his own, but on some of the songs he was even the highlight. The rapper's fantastic hook on "Do It" and verse on the title track "Vultures" are high points on the project.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the entire project is that of Ye's 10-year-old daughter, North West. West's feature on "Talking" went viral in December when her father first previewed music for the project. The line, "It's your bestie, miss miss Westie" was impossible to escape from if you use TikTok or Instagram. Miss Westie indeed did impress on her first-ever release, and I wouldn't be opposed to seeing her feature on another one of her father's songs, or even release a song of her own.

The highlight of the album is "Carnival," which features Rich the Kid and Playboi Carti. The high-energy, intense and anthem-like song can be compared to Travis Scott's "FE!N" from his 2023 album "Utopia." Don't be surprised the next time you go to the gym and you hear this song blasting from someone's headphones.

Originally, there was potential for the song to be left off the project after Ozzy Osbourne protested on social media the use of a sample from Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" being used on "Carnival." On X, formerly known as Twitter, and Instagram, Osbourne claimed to have never approved the sample and wanted nothing to do with Ye.

"@KANYEWESTASKEDPERMISSION TO SAMPLE A SECTION OF A 1983 LIVE PERFORMANCE OF 'IRON MAN' FROM THE US FESTIVAL WITHOUT VOCALS & WAS REFUSED PERMISSION BECAUSE HE IS AN ANTISEMITE AND HAS CAUSED UNTOLD HEARTACHE TO MANY," Osbourne posted. "HE WENT AHEAD AND USED THE SAMPLE ANYWAY AT HIS ALBUM LISTENING PARTY LAST NIGHT. I WANT NO ASSOCIATION WITH THIS MAN!"

Ye would end up switching the sample and instead replaced it with a bridge from his 2010 song "Hell of a Life," which just so

happens to interpolate "Iron Man."

Osbourne's post refers to months of controversy surrounding a series of social media posts and interviews where Ye made a series of comments referencing what is generally regarded as harmful Jewish stereotypes and voiced praise for Nazis. The rapper, however, denies that he is antisemitic and has addressed the claims in both interviews and his music — including this album.

Not every unique action Ye attempted on his new project worked, however. On the track "Paid," the Chicagoan uses high-pitched voice inflections that didn't suit my ears well. However, the song itself is redeemed with a chorus from Ty Dolla \$ign that will lift you out of your seat with its celestial hooks.

On the final track, "King," the Chicago rapper mentions just a few of the many labels people have put on him over the past decade.

"Crazy, bipolar, antisemite" and I'm still the king / Still the king, still / They thought headlines was my kryptonite, still the king, still the king."

Overall, "Vultures 1" is a great listen that reminds you of the old Kanye while at the same time giving the listener a unique project with different items to offer.

Ye has become known as an unreliable source for his own album releases, spanning from his 2018 promise of the futuristic-sounding (an unreleased) album "Yandhi," so take this with a grain of salt. But according to the man himself, volumes two and three of "Vultures" are expected to release on March 8 and April 5, respectively.

"Vultures 1" doesn't take itself too seriously; it's a fun, enjoyable listen that allows someone to get an entire view of Ye's artistic ability along with Ty Dolla \$ign's incredible hooks and vocal range. So if Ye's music is still on your radar, his newest project is something worth checking out.



JASON PERSE/FLICKR/GLENN FRANCIS/WWW.PACIFICPRODIGITAL.COM/PHOTOILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Don't say 'ugh' to UGGs: The 2000s-era boots are back in style in 2024

By **JACKLYN PELLEGRINO**
and **KRYSTAL MILLER**

In the colder months, there's no better feeling than slipping on fluffy UGGs over some cozy socks and walking out the door. It has been a staple in both of our routines since we were younger.

Just when UGGs were about to be a trend of the past, celebrities and influencers started wearing new platform UGGs — and we are both fully on board. Like other 2000s trends that have made a comeback, these shoes still have the same comfort and elegance they had years ago.

UGG released the platform-style boots in 2020, right as fashion trends started shifting toward comfier clothing. Many say the shoes are ugly, but we both disagree. There are so many ways to style them adorably, and the platform in particular gives them a unique twist.

In 2023, Deckers Outdoor Corporation, which owns UGG, made \$1.9 billion. We are not surprised — on TikTok, people have been posting about how they've saved their old UGGs in anticipation of their resurgence.

This trend also shows how the same shoe has been in and out of style for two decades, so it really doesn't matter what you want to wear. If you like UGGs, or any other item of clothing, just wear them. Who cares what anyone else thinks about it?

Growing up and seeing celebrities and

fashion influencers wearing the shoe made them an iconic symbol that every little girl knew about. Wearing the shoes made you feel like you fit in because everyone was always talking about them. Even though we like the style of the UGG, this definitely played a role in choosing to originally purchase them.

We both remember getting our first pairs of UGGs in middle school in really bright colors like blue and hot pink. Opening the brown box to see the new pair of boots inside — their fur clean and fresh — was always something we looked forward to on holidays and birthdays. And given their resurgence, the tradition is still alive today.

Beyond the platform UGGs, the ultra mini UGGs have also skyrocketed in popularity recently. Several celebrities have worn them, including Kendall Jenner and Selena Gomez. However, the ultra minis are the least fashionable out of all the styles, and they are particularly hard to get on and off. And yet, the brand has both styles to thank for its resurgence in sales.

Some have even taken scissors to their mid-length and tall UGGs to turn them into ultra minis. Paired with a chic pair of baggy sweatpants, you wouldn't even be able to tell the difference.

The boots seemingly used to be waterproof — we've even worn ours in the snow from time to time — but with the newer models, a drop of water seems to discolor the shoe. Despite this,

the company has added rain boots and snow boots to its line over the years.

Some of UGG's most popular colors seem to always be out of stock. The black- and chestnut-colored boots are nearly impossible to get during peak season. To get one of these colors in your size in time for fall, you have to order them months in advance.

The shoes are pricey, ranging from \$150-\$200, but the investment is definitely worth it because they last for years, even decades.

Over the decades, the UGG brand has expanded to include clothing and even home accessories, such as bedding, pillows, throw blankets and rugs — all featuring its super soft material. So, even if you aren't a fan of the boots, UGG offers something for everyone.

Whether you decide to buy UGG boots to fit in, to twin with your favorite celebrity or just to rock the classic cozy look of your middle school days, you definitely won't regret the purchase.



ILLUSTRATION BY KLARA DHANDILI

Quinnipiac softball aims to end 11-year losing streak by focusing on fundamentals

By **RYAN JOHANSON**
Copy Editor

With a 17-25 record in 2023, Quinnipiac softball extended its program's losing season streak to 11.

The Bobcats sat at .500 on April 8, 2023, after splitting a doubleheader with Mount St. Mary's. It seemed like they were headed toward progress, but inconsistent hitting over the next month had the team finishing the last 14 games with a 3-11 record to place 10th in the MAAC.

This season, MAAC coaches picked Quinnipiac to finish No. 9 in the conference coaches' poll. One thing that head coach Hillary Smith is focusing on for team growth and postseason contention are the small details.

"Details (are) what we are all about," Smith said. "We want to make the MAAC tournament ... but every day we focus on the fundamentals and the details."

Despite being projected to finish near the bottom of the conference, the Bobcats have bright spots in the team, like preseason All-MAAC sophomore outfielder Mary Fogg. In her first year, Fogg finished with a .381 batting average, a .420 on-base percentage and swiped nine bases — all team highs.

"Everybody knows a lot about Mary now,"

Smith said. "Usually, (sophomores) have something called the sophomore slump, but Mary's not going to have that."

Fogg's .381 batting average is influenced by a unique skill in her arsenal: slap hitting. Slapping — a technique when players chop at incoming pitches rather than swinging — is used to put runners in scoring position.

With teams now keyed in on how to pitch to Fogg, she has been working on new skills to avoid the sophomore slump.

"Mary right now is learning to hit away," Smith said. "She did good (in the preseason), I think (she) even hit one off the fence in the fall. So we're excited to see her add that tool."

Fogg, while coming off an All-MAAC season, knows the start of the season is important for success throughout the year.

"If you can control your start, you can control your finish," Fogg said. "Having just as strong of a start as we do at the end and keeping that throughout each practice, each game and throughout the whole season."

Alongside Fogg is a potent one-two punch of junior pitchers Sydney Horan and Jaclyn Gonzalez. Pitching is one of the strengths of this Bobcats team, with Quinnipiac having the

MAAC's second-lowest team ERA (2.89).

"I think our pitchers are a huge strength," Smith said. "Syd and Jackie have been our workhorses ... I'm excited to see them as juniors."

A sixth year awaits graduate Hannah Davis, who has 121 games under her belt as Quinnipiac's top catcher. There's a simple reason why she returned to Hamden.

"Honestly, it's the girls and the coaches, just the atmosphere I love," Davis said. "I don't want to leave. I'm already regretting it like I know (the end of the season is) still months away but there's always that thought in the back of my mind like, 'dang this is my last go around.'"

For a coach who is "not the biggest fan of the transfer portal," Smith brought in two new transfers, sophomore outfielder Noelle Reid (Winthrop) and junior infielder Ella McGalliard (Miami-Ohio).

"You'll see both of them out there this year," Smith said.

The Bobcats started their non-conference schedule on Feb. 10, splitting in the Lion Classic with a win against UMass Lowell and a loss to Texas A&M-Commerce. Thanks to a strong all-around performance on Saturday, freshman pitcher/infielder Lauren Hilliard was named the

MAAC Rookie of the Week. The Bobcats have a long wait until their next series, a collection of games in Madeira Beach, Florida, against Monmouth, Albany, Southern Indiana, St. Bonaventure and Western Michigan from March 1-3.

Then the Bobcats travel to Norfolk, Virginia, as a part of the Norfolk State Invitational. Quinnipiac will face its first Power Five opponent since 2022 in Syracuse. The Bobcats also have two games against UNLV before finishing off the Invitational against the host school Norfolk State.

The second Power Five school on the Bobcats' schedule is Boston College on March 17 after a doubleheader against Hampton. Quinnipiac later heads down Whitney Avenue on Apr. 3 to face off against Yale.

"We love playing Yale, it's always a high-energy game," Smith said. "It's very intense for us. They're right down the street ... I feel like it's just a pride thing."

In the wake of a challenging 2023 season with a determination to turn the tide, the Bobcats aim to defy expectations. Facing Power Five teams should prepare Quinnipiac for the MAAC season in pursuit of a conference title.



Senior midfielder Evan Perry battles the elements in a February 2022 game against Bryant.



Sophomore outfielder Mary Fogg was named to the 2024 Preseason All-MAAC Team.

New faces look to propel men's lacrosse back to MAAC Tournament

By **MICHAEL PETITTO**
Staff Writer

Quinnipiac men's lacrosse has one goal in mind: a conference championship. But an influx of youth and staff changes stand to test the team this season.

Last year, the Bobcats made it to the MAAC tournament, falling to No. 3 Marist 29-19 in the first round. The 10-goal loss may be the motivation Quinnipiac needs to get over the hump — and Bobcats head coach Mason Poli agrees.

"It's been a great preseason so far," Poli said. "Being 7-7 last year has left a little hunger in the boys' belly; our message has been to compete daily. It's going to be big heading into week one having a full squad and a full depth chart and to be able to put our best product on the field Saturday."

The new season looks promising for the Bobcats, with the team picked No. 5 in the MAAC preseason coaches poll. Quinnipiac also featured four players in the preseason All-MAAC team, including graduate at-

tacks John DeLucia and Jake Tellers, senior midfielder Steven Germain and sophomore midfielder Ryan Downing. However, many of the faces trying to win it all will be new.

Of the 50 active players on the roster, 15 are freshmen.

"We've all been practicing together for months," DeLucia said. "In these last two weeks you could just tell there's a different excitement and intensity in the locker room, we're all ready to go."

Despite being a young program, Quinnipiac is still vying for a conference championship. With proper coaching and development, any of those 15 athletes could become productive at their positions.

However, former MAAC Faceoff Specialist of the Year Demetri George will be difficult to replace. George ranked 25th nationally in face-off win percentage throughout men's NCAA Division I last season.

Not only does Quinnipiac's roster look different, but its coaching staff also

changed heading into 2024.

The team announced the promotion of Casey Eidenshink to associate head coach and the hiring of Ian Farley to execute assistant coach duties in the offseason.

Eidenshink has experience with the team, being with the Bobcats for four seasons. While Farley has the official title of "assistant coach," he was hired to be the team's offensive coordinator, according to Poli, effectively taking over Eidenshink's old position.

In the press release announcing Farley's hiring, Poli praised his new playcaller.

"We are very excited to welcome Ian Farley to the Quinnipiac men's lacrosse program as our offensive coordinator," Poli wrote on Oct. 30. "Ian brings with him a wealth of knowledge and a tremendous passion for the game. His commitment and dedication to the profession will help strengthen our program and assist us in supporting our student-athletes."

Just a few days before the Bobcats' first

matchup of the season, team captain Trevor Douglas detailed how much he believes in the bonds that the team shares.

"It's awesome to have so many familiar faces to be around," Douglas said. "We spend so much time together that by now the whole team feels like a whole bunch of brothers."

The Bobcats took their chemistry to their first game of the year against St. John's in a 17-11 victory on Saturday.

DeLucia brought the scoring prowess with a hat trick to reach 100 points for his career. Junior goaltender Mason Oak's fantastic defense not only earned him MAAC Defensive Player of the Week, but also helped Quinnipiac start the season undefeated.

The season just started — the Bobcats still have 12 games left before postseason play — but the goal remains the same. With youthful energy, collectiveness between the veterans and the "intensity in the locker room," men's lacrosse's championship aspirations are sky high.

New field, new team

Where Quinnipiac baseball stands entering 2024



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

The Quinnipiac baseball team opens up its 2024 schedule with a three-game, non-conference road series against Liberty this weekend.

By **AMANDA DRONZEK**
Associate Sports Editor

GlobeLife Field opened in 2020. Three years later, the Texas Rangers won their first-ever World Series.

Quinnipiac baseball may not be destined for the World Series, but it enters 2024 on a new field with a new set of expectations.

Quinnipiac Athletics announced renovations for the baseball field following a historic 30-win season in 2023, tying the program record for most wins in a season. The new facility includes a turf field, updated dugouts and fencing.

"It's brought a new life to the program," assistant coach Trey Stover said. "Most of the renovations and funding came from (alumni). It just goes to show the culture and the team aspect that we have going on."

Senior catcher Keegan O'Connor called the field, "a long time coming." The same goes for the Bobcats' success in 2023.

Quinnipiac had its first postseason run in four years cut short during the MAAC semifinals after a 12-4 loss to Fairfield, and like most teams who get a taste of the postseason, the Bobcats want more.

"Two years prior were not winning seasons, (they) were not what we wanted," O'Connor said. "(Last year) showed us the hard work that we put in really pays off and we're continuing to do that today."

GAINS, LOSSES AND RETURNS

To have another winning season, Quinnipiac needs to harness what it already has in its arsenal.

"We have a lot of our lineup returning,"

graduate right-handed pitcher Jimmy Hagan said. "(We're) trying to continue building that year in and year out."

The Bobcats welcome back O'Connor, an All-MAAC and NEIBA All-New England first-team catcher. In 2023, the Massachusetts native hit .342 and had a .987 fielding percentage behind the plate.

Additionally, seniors, infielder Sebastian Mueller and outfielder Jared Zimbaro, red-shirt senior infielder Sean Swenson and graduate student outfielder Braydon Seaburg resume their roles as veterans in the lineup.

Quinnipiac's biggest loss lies with center fielder and NCBWA Preseason Second Team All-American Anthony Donofrio, who left from the MAAC to the ACC after transferring to the University of North Carolina following a stellar senior season. Donofrio boasted a .364 average with 16 home runs, 64 RBIs and 31 stolen bases from the two-spot.

"Whether he's in a Quinnipiac navy blue or UNC light blue, he was always an All-American in our book," Stover said.

It's hard to replace a one-of-a-kind talent like Donofrio. But Stover and the coaching staff believe they've brought in "the right pieces" to fill the void.

Outfielder Gabe Wright, a sophomore JUCO transfer, has the potential to do that for Quinnipiac with his speed in the field and power at the plate.

"We think he brings a different element to the game," Stover said.

Although Wright can bolster Quinnipiac's lineup, the Bobcats must also match the presence of former second baseman Kyle Maves and former right-handed pitcher Kevin Seitter.

Senior infielder Matt DeRosa will step into Maves' shoes at second base, which will be difficult to fill. In 2023, Maves had a .358 batting average on 82 hits and was the runner-up in runs scored for the Bobcats. He also holds the program record for stolen bases.

Replacing Quinnipiac's No. 1 pitcher is another story. Former All-MAAC First Teamer Seitter left an imprint on the mound that will be difficult to replace. Seitter threw 88 innings in 2023, ending his senior year with a 1.96 ERA in the MAAC.

The Bobcats had their work cut out for them in the offseason, but they've also managed to snag multiple strong players through the transfer portal. Add in Quinnipiac's returning roster, and it has a competitive squad to build off of in 2024.

THE BATTER'S BOX

Besides O'Connor's bat, Mueller, Swenson, Zimbaro and Seaburg are set to continue their hot streaks from 2023.

Swenson hit .315, racking in 38 RBIs and nine home runs while Zimbaro led the Bobcats in at-bats (237) and runs (60), capping off his junior year with a .278 average. Seaburg batted .256 with 34 hits in 133 at-bats. Quinnipiac gained another strong bat through the transfer portal in junior shortstop Dominick Proctor. During his time at Bryant and Stratton College in Virginia, Proctor had a .315 average.

To carry the offensive momentum from 2023, the Bobcats have to be disciplined at the plate.

O'Connor echoed Quinnipiac's mantra in the batter's box: "two-strike fight." The Bobcats look to take more pitches and prolong at-bats.

"That's our senior leader," Stover said of

O'Connor. "It goes to show when a guy like that trusts and does what the coaching staff is doing, the rest should just follow suit."

THE ROTATION

Two sure starters are returning to the mound in 2024: Hagan and junior righty Mason Ulsh. Hagan went 1-3 with a 4.76 ERA in 2023, while Ulsh recorded a 5.31 ERA in 20 appearances.

"We have six guys built up to be starters," Stover said. "When you have that much talent on the same level and no one's taking the step forward yet, why not build them all up to be 'that guy' and wait for someone to take the role?"

Graduate student righty Sam Favieri, sophomore rightys Aaron Zenus and Andrew Rubayo along with freshman righty Raymond McNaught are expected to battle to fill the rotation.

Harnessing the talents of an experienced pitcher like Favieri, combined with young blood from Zenus, Rubayo and McNaught, may give Quinnipiac's pitching staff the depth it has been searching for.

The Bobcats have the opportunity to test their rotation against Liberty on Feb. 16 with a season-opening three-game series.

THE BOTTOM LINE

With mostly veterans commanding the field and experienced hitters in the box, Quinnipiac surely has another shot at a postseason run. As Mueller said, "The standard is higher now."

And with a brand new field, the standards have jumped even higher.



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Women's lacrosse 'ready to rally' following coaching change seven weeks before season

By **MICHAEL LAROCCA**
Opinion Editor

It is rare for a college program of any kind to lose its head coach less than two months prior to its season opener. Yet, that's the situation Quinnipiac women's lacrosse finds itself in.

Quinnipiac Athletics announced Jan. 3 that Tanya Kotowicz, the Bobcats' boss since 2017, was "leaving the program." Then-associate head coach Jordan Christopher immediately took the reins as interim head coach.

Kotowicz was allegedly fired for playing an injured athlete during the team's fall season, an investigation by The Chronicle found. However, internal documents and interviews conducted by The Chronicle cast doubt on the university's narrative of the incident in question and raised questions about Quinnipiac's athletic training practices.

The Bobcats' 2023 season was their most successful under Kotowicz. She led the team to a 10-8 record, the most wins for Quinnipiac in a single season since 2011, when it went 13-5, won the NEC and earned a berth in the NCAA Tournament. The Bobcats have not been back to the tournament since.

Things were just starting to click. Where does the team go from here?

"We're just looking forward," graduate student and captain defender Melissa Murphy said. "We can't change what has happened. We're going to take what we've learned from our coaching staff in the fall and carry it into the spring. Just rally. I think we're ready to rally."

Christopher concurs.

"(The team's) mindset has been ready to win

a MAAC championship," she said. "I think it helps that I'm not new to them. It's a different role for sure, but it's a similar face and a similar message, and they're ready to compete."

And among the team's 32-person roster, there are familiar and fresh faces alike. The Bobcats are returning top scorers like sophomore attacker Mia Delmond and stout defenders like senior Julia Steneck. The program also brought on five freshmen and four transfers, the most notable of which being graduate student defender Corinna Lyon.

After four years with national powerhouse Loyola Maryland, Lyon arrived in Hamden and quickly earned a spot as captain alongside Murphy, senior midfielder Kalie Moore and graduate student midfielder Amy Nicoloff.

"(Lyon) just understands people and wants to get to know people," Christopher said. "She knew that her task was going to be hard, incorporating herself into a new team for this fifth year. But she just has completely embraced it from the moment she stepped foot on this campus."

However, the most crucial loss Quinnipiac faces ahead of its campaign is that of the reigning MAAC Goalkeeper of the Year Kat Henselder, who was the full-time backstop for the Bobcats for the last three years.

Losing Henselder to graduation can potentially provide a spark to the keepers who are looking to carry on her legacy. The defenders must also adapt to the idea that someone new is going to be their last line of defense.

"We were lucky that we had Kat obviously, but not much has changed with the way we operate as a defense," Murphy said.

"Luckily (two of the three) other goalies have watched Kat throughout their years. They all go through the same practices every single day. So I see potential in them."

The battle for the starting goalkeeper spot this season will be between junior Lindsay Mazzucco and seniors Hadley Bosworth and Rebekah Lenoble.

Mazzucco saw action in six games in 2023 as Henselder's backup and Lenoble played in 17 games total between her two previous schools, George Washington and Presbyterian.

"Every goalkeeper has a unique set of skills," Christopher said. "All three of them have done some really good stuff in this pre-season... I wouldn't say that we know for sure who's going to be our starting goalkeeper right now, which is good. We want that competition all over the field, not just in net. But I think they're doing a really good job of supporting each other but competing as well."

The keepers will be guided by new assistant coach Allyson Baribault, who was hired on Aug. 31.

"She was a goalkeeper herself, so she has some expertise there," Christopher said. "(She's) getting a little bit more involved on our defensive end now too, which is good, but goalkeepers are her primary focus."

When everything comes together, Quinnipiac might have one of the more talented rosters in the conference. However, it begs the question: How much talent does it take to beat tradition?

MAAC women's lacrosse is in the midst of one of its great dynasties. Quinnipiac's cross-state rival Fairfield is looking to cap-

ture its sixth-straight title in 2024. And since 2011, only Fairfield and Canisius have called themselves champions, with both teams winning six championships each.

For the Bobcats, that leaves winning the MAAC as a lofty goal, but any team, and person, should have smaller goals on the way to glory.

"Most people talk about a win-loss record. For us, I think it's the growth of this program and the progression that we can make," Christopher said. "There's a couple teams in our conference that we haven't beaten in some of these kids' time here. I think that's a good metric for us right now."

Those two teams are Fairfield, who Quinnipiac is winless against in 15 attempts, and Niagara, who the Bobcats are 1-10 against. That lone win came in March 2002. Quinnipiac plays both Fairfield (April 10) and Niagara (April 24) on the road this season.

The Bobcats were picked to finish No. 4 in the conference's preseason poll, behind both Fairfield (first) and Niagara (third). With off-season drama potentially playing a role in Quinnipiac's expectations this season, the team's first chance to silence the doubters will come on Feb. 21 when it travels to play its Whitney Avenue rival Yale.

The loss of Kotowicz might have been a shock to the team and the Quinnipiac community at first, but to reiterate what Murphy said, "We can't change what has happened."

For now, there's nothing left to do besides play the games and work to win the Bobcats' first MAAC title.