

# The Roar

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Page Editor: Grace Nunn

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Photo courtesy of Nasa.gov

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Photo courtesy of Woodlot

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Photo courtesy of Steam Pipe Trunk Distribution Venue

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Photo courtesy of Pixabay

Excited for March Madness? Check out a preview on Page 9.

# Biden's First Days in Office

By Kate Carpenter  
*@kate\_carp|Editor*

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. was inaugurated into the Presidential office on January 20, 2021, at just around noon alongside the first woman Vice President, Kamala Harris. Even on their first day in office, they had already begun to make several huge executive orders and announcements in regards to COVID-19,



Photo courtesy of United States Mission Geneva

the environment, and most notably racial and gender/sexuality based equality reform.

On Biden's first day in office, he rejoined the United States with the WHO (the World Health Organization) after former President Donald Trump announced that he would be pulling the country out of it on July 7, 2020. Biden's first days in office were largely focused on dealing with America's response towards the pandemic. In addition to rejoining the WHO, Biden announced a

federal mask mandate that would require masks to be worn on all federally owned property and by all federal employees and contractors. Biden has also promised that he would work on speeding up the process of delivering COVID vaccines to as many people as possible.

Another key item that Biden focused on was the environment. One of the first orders he signed was to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord after Trump had left it in November 2020. The Paris Climate Accord aimed to curb global warming and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by imposing a few restrictions on industries known to cause the most harm to the environment. The United States must undergo a 30-day waiting period, but after that time is up, they will be officially rejoined. Biden also announced that he would be canceling the building of the "Keystone Pipeline," a network of pipes that would transport fossil fuels such as crude oil across the country at a faster rate than previously possible. The effects of this pipeline could have been potentially detrimental to the environment if crude oil or any other type of oil were to ever leak out of the pipeline.

A key point of Biden's campaign was the promise to pass legislation protecting different minority groups. In the past few weeks, Biden signed orders that would extend and restore rights to transgender students. These included allowing

transgender students to use the restroom or lockerroom of their gender identities; something that Trump and his education secretary Betsy DeVos were outspokenly against. Additionally, Biden aims to permanently instate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, a program that would protect children from deportation if they were brought into the country unlawfully at a young age. Biden promised during his campaign for President



Photo courtesy of shannonpatrick17

that he would end Trump's Muslim travel ban that prevented those from several Muslim countries from entering the United States. This ban was one of Trump's first executive actions back in 2016, and one of the first things Biden undid upon entering the White House.

Any President's first 100 days in office (known as the *honeymoon period*) are known to be the most influential days in any President's term in office, and it is clear that Biden and Harris have big plans for their first 100 days.

# GameStop Catastrophe Explained

By Aaron Krabacher  
*@aaron\_krabacher|Staff Writer*

A few weeks ago, the stock market, which is the buying and selling of shares of publicly traded companies, hit a bump in the road. Certain stocks including GameStop, AMC Entertainment, and Nokia all had sudden spikes in stock. Each of these stocks more than doubled for a daily gain of 100



percent. To put this in perspective, the S&P 500, a collection of the all the biggest companies in the United States, increases about 7 percent per year. To explain this large jump in stock prices, there are a few elements of the stock market that people must understand. The problem began with hedge funds.

Hedge funds are large groups of investors that use highly risky tactics in order to increase their wealth. Most of these investors are very wealthy, and use many of these stock market strategies to make them even more wealthy. One of these strategies is known as a short. Shorting a stock essentially means that these large hedge funds are betting on stocks to go down in value. Once the stock decreases in value, the hedge funds make a massive profit. All of the companies listed above have either fallen out of favor or have been replaced by newer technology which is the reasoning behind the hedge funds pouring money into shorts against these companies. The real reason for the drastic increase in stock price of these companies began on Reddit, which is a discussion website. Reddit users saw what these hedge funds were doing, and wondered if they could mobilize enough people to buy these stocks to hurt the hedge funds. Under the subreddit *r/wallstreetbets*, people began to rally behind this idea, buying up these stocks and sending their values through the roof.

Many people backed the idea from Reddit because of their disapproval of short selling stocks. Elon Musk, the CEO of

Tesla, was one of the many people who took part in the rise of stocks, specifically in GameStop. Because of Tesla's large debt to equity ratio, many people shorted Musk's electric car stock, which turned out to be a mistake, as the stock has risen nearly 1600 percent in the last 10 months. Nevertheless, Musk sees shorting a stock as the complete opposite of how the system of free market capitalism should work.

In response to the stock increases, Robinhood, a financial service, blocked the buying of GameStop stock because of the massive losses for the hedge funds. Many people were outraged by this decision, claiming that the blocking favored the rich people who owned the hedge funds, protecting their wealth at all costs. A few days later, mostly because of the extreme backlash, Robinhood was forced to reopen the trading of GameStop stock. To no one's surprise, the stock continued to rise, forcing hedge funds to remove their short selling investments to avoid bankruptcy.

This redistribution of power in the stock market reinforces the idea that the people still hold quite a bit of power in the market. Not only this, but the internet can be a viable source of mobilization of many people in a short period of time.



Photo courtesy of Hermann



Photo courtesy of Paul Sableman

# Farmers Protest in India

By Zakari Griffiths

@lovelandroah Staff Writer

Since October, farmers in India have been protesting against the new government legislation which threatens their very livelihoods. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shifted India's focus towards neoliberalism, opting to privatize large industries and deregulate the market; he hopes to double the economy by 2024 in this way. But, as we've seen from the global neoliberal system thus far, the only freedom it brings is the freedom of capital, the only prosperity it lends is to Wall Street and multinational corporations. Deregulation and privatization only serve to further impoverish and weaken the working class. The new laws will deregulate the agricultural sector, allowing huge agricultural corporations to buy up the sector and drive prices into the ground far below the current rates, devastating the class of farmers.

Over half of India's population of 1.3 billion are small farmers; they operate on an average of about three acres of land, and are completely dependent on the profit their crops yield. That being said, these hundreds of millions of farmers are not living comfortably, even in the absence of

the new legislation. 76% of the rural farming population cannot afford nutritious meals; even if they were to spend one-hundred percent of their income on food, (so, excluding rent, transportation, health, education, clothing, etc.) 66% of the rural farming population would still be malnourished. Placing this within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, it starts to make sense why the Indian government would decide to pass the legislation now: the rural population are on their knees, suffering under the weight of the pandemic and the economic crisis. There's no doubt that Parliament saw the weakened state of the farming-class, and decided that the advancement towards a neoliberal economy would go smoothly now, at a time when the possibility of opposition seems low. It reminds one of the Winston Churchill quote, "Never let a good crisis go to waste."

But the Indian government was wrong. Farmers have turned out en masse to protest the new legislation, pouring in from all over the country to New Delhi, the capital. Over 250 million of them arrived at the outskirts of the capital, often traveling in tractor convoys, demanding the repealing

of the laws. The Indian authorities responded by setting up roadblocks on major highways, using barbed wire, spikes, and vehicles to halt the progress of the protestors toward New Delhi. As a result, the farmers have set up virtual towns, with vendors, makeshift medical facilities, and tents; they refuse to move until their demands have been met.

Unfortunately, the government has responded aggressively. One protestor said, "India is my country, and Delhi is the capital of my country. I am not even allowed to enter my capital city. This is in spite of farmers never doing any hooliganism. Our whole movement has been peaceful. They also showered us with water cannons. We were also beaten." Tear gas and water cannons have been used repeatedly against the peaceful protesters, and there have been around 100 reports of farmers going missing, (assumedly at the hands of the government) and 120 people have been arrested.

These laws will devastate the livelihoods of the farmers, even more than usual; only time will tell if they'll be repealed, as the standoff continues.



Photo Courtesy of wikimedia.com



Photo Courtesy of nbcnews.com

## Perseverance, NASA's Newest Rover, lands on Mars

By Laurel Gibbins

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On February 18, 2021, at 3:48 pm, NASA's newest rover entered Mars' atmosphere. Seven minutes later at 3:55 pm, the rover touched down on the Red Planet. The landing was watched closely from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). The rover, named Perseverance, was launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 7:50 am on July 30, 2020. After a seven month journey through space at 48,625 mph, Perseverance landed at the Jezero Crater, where evidence of water that once flowed on Mars has been found. According to *NASA.gov*, Perseverance's mission features four science objectives. The first, and arguably the most important, is looking for habitability. Perseverance will be looking for past environments that would have been capable of supporting microbial life. The second is seeking biosignatures. Perseverance will be looking for evidence of past microbial life in rocks that have been known to preserve evidence of life. The third

is caching samples. Perseverance will be collecting rock and soil samples. The fourth one is preparing for humans. Perseverance will be testing oxygen production in the Martian atmosphere.

Perseverance joins a long line of Mars rovers. The first Mars rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, landed on Mars January 3, and January 24, 2004, respectively. Both of these rovers were geologists and found evidence that Mars once had water and conditions that could have sustained microbial life at one point in time. The original mission was only meant to last ninety days, however, Spirit lasted until 2010 and Opportunity lasted until 2019. In July of 2018, a planet wide dust storm covered Mars. This was bad news as Opportunity used solar panels as its main power source. July 10, 2018 was the last time Opportunity communicated to Earth. After months of trying to communicate with Opportunity, NASA declared the mission completed on February 3, 2019. Opportunity lasted fifteen years. Curiosity landed on Mars on August 5, 2012 and is still going strong. Curiosity has spent 3023 sols on Mars ( a sol is one day on Mars). According to

*NASA.gov*, Curiosity's mission is to answer the question, "Did Mars ever have the right environmental conditions to support small life forms called microbes?" All of the Mars rovers have helped scientists understand what past and current conditions on Mars are like to hopefully determine if life exists or has ever existed on Mars.

NASA has compared the design of Perseverance to the human body. Perseverance has a "body" that protects the computer, electronic, and instrument systems (the "organs"). Perseverance has a "brain," the computer. The computer has memory and a processor. There are twenty-three "eye," cameras, that will take pictures to send back to earth. The "arm" will allow Perseverance to collect samples during its time on the surface of Mars. Perseverance also has six wheels, two microphones (this is the first time we will be able to hear the sounds of Mars), an electrical power source, and three antennae for communication.

Perseverance is an impressive feat of engineering, science, and technology. NASA and science fanatics are excited to discover what mysteries Mars has kept hidden from humans for billions of years.



Photo Courtesy of nasa.gov.

Perseverance shows first picture on Mars. Perseverance took this picture right after landing.



Photo Courtesy of nasa.gov

# Dear Abby Column

By Grace Nunn

@gracegumn | Editor

February 4, 2021, I had the pleasure of sending out a Google form asking for students to anonymously send in questions. The result was definitely worthwhile. Some questions weren't so serious but genuinely made me laugh. One question led to the editors having a debate during class, others weren't even questions. Regardless, I plan to answer most, if not all of the questions in the next few issues of the school year.

"Was Helen Keller real?" This question led to some intense thinking. I recalled learning about her in Honors English 10, and I do remember being skeptical as most teenagers are. When you truly think about it, it's hard to imagine that someone who is deaf and blind can learn to speak, write, get a degree, become a lecturer--alas, she did all that (apparently). Now, I'm not here to say her disabilities aren't real and say it isn't possible but, I seriously am having a hard time to figure out how it was possible. She somehow learned the alphabet, by touching

lips when people spoke or writing on the hand but how would she know that an L, is an L or that L has the "llll" sound? Supposedly she learned all this at a young age, but it still baffles me. I won't throw away her struggles just like that, but I am skeptical. So anon, my answer to this question is: probably?

"I need advice on asking someone to prom." Well, I may not be experienced enough to help you out with this, but I will say a few things. If you know that person well, you should know whether they'd feel uncomfortable being asked in front of a bunch of people or not. That is where I think you should start. After you got that down, a good bet is to relate the "asking to prom" part to something that person likes. Everyone does it but I think it shows that you know the person well enough and you know what they like. Those little puns I see are always so creative. I hope this advice helped you, but as I said before: I have never asked or went to prom haha.

"Can I eat paint?" This question was probably sent in as a joke, but I'm going to answer it for you. No, do not eat paint, especially "oil-based paints" according to www.



Photo Courtesy of mentalfloss.com

poison.org. If you couldn't tell by the name of the website, paint is poisonous, so don't eat it, please...

"The best classes to take at Loveland High School?" I can suggest a few that I enjoyed! It all depends on what you personally like though! I've really enjoyed all the required History and English classes, so far. World History, APUSH, and APGOV. And also, Honors English 9, 10, and AP Lang. I think AP Lang especially has been pretty fun! The BEST class to take though is Journalism, so I better see you sitting in Mr. Hutzel's room next year.

# Horoscope for Aquarius

By Skylar Lundeen

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Staff Writer

Aquarius is the 11th zodiac. This zodiac sign is eccentric and incredibly unique. The birthday range of this sign is January 20th-February 18th which is right in the middle of winter. Aquarius is an independent air sign. What makes an aquarius so special is the way they think because they are able to view situations from an outside perspective. When evaluating a situation, they are able to put their emotions aside to assess the situation even if they are involved. They are the most independent sign of the zodiac but tend to lack motivation to get things done.

Aquarius' have strengths and weaknesses. Being original, analytical, and incredibly smart are all traits

of an aquarius. They are more likely to be a hippy than any other zodiac sign because of their eccentric yet easy going personality. Uncompromising behavior and being temperamental are common weaknesses aquarius signs have. They thrive around groups of people even though they can be extremely shy at first.

Aquarius' are known for being a rebel against society's rules. They do not like being constrained or controlled in any matter so it might be a shock to find out they are normally firm science believers. They think outside the box. Charles Darwin and Dmitri Mendeleev were brilliant scientists who had aquarius in their birth chart. Their creative outlook on life leads them to invent and experiment with technology. Aquarius' do not like to be



Photo Courtesy of stylecaster.com

disappointed or let down so a breach in their experiments could lead to extreme rage. They are brilliant.

## Loveland Dairy Whip

2021 Opening Day  
February 26th



Spring Hours  
2 pm - 9 pm

611 W Loveland Ave  
Loveland, OH  
513-683-0992  
www.TheLDW.com

# Coup In Myanmar

By Zakari Griffiths

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After a coup in 1962, the country of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) was under the control of a military government until 2011. It was in the latter year that the military finally implemented parliamentary elections and other governmental reforms, turning the country into something resembling a representative democracy. The people of Myanmar were able to finally have a taste of democracy, and used their newfound political agency to vote for the leader of the “National League for Democracy” (NLD) party, Ms. Aung San



Photo courtesy of Smart Atlas



Photo courtesy of BBC

Suu Kyi in 2015. Ms. Kyi is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and activist, having fought against the military regime throughout the 1990's while under house arrest, and is seen as a beacon of hope and democracy for the people of Myanmar, and across the world. The relations between the NLD and the military regime have been incredibly tense over the past few years, with both the civilian/governmental sphere and the military/police inhabiting their own virtual factions and sharing power. But what was supposed to be a gradual transition to a republic descended into instability and uncertainty for the integrity of the few freedoms that had been granted.

Devastatingly, this period of quasi-democracy was short-lived—on February 1st, the military carried out another coup against the democratic establishment, detained Ms. Kyi along with other elected officials, and seized power of the state.

Parliament was scheduled to hold their first session after the November 8th election, in which the NLD won by a massive 83 percent of the votes. This never happened, as Senior General Min Aung Hlaing (the leader of the military) made still unproven claims that the election was fraudulent, and proceeded to enact the coup. The military moved in to arrest cabinet ministers, opposition politicians, activists,

writers, and civilian leaders (including Ms. Kyi). The military announced that they had declared a state of emergency, and would retain power for a year; they seized control of the country's infrastructure, shut-down telecommunications and the internet in most regions, and suspended most T.V stations except the military-owned Myawaddy station, where the coup was announced.

Despite the dire circumstances, the people of Myanmar have risen up in huge numbers in protest of the coup; they understand the urgency and the implications of the situation, having lived under military rule for almost half a century, and refuse to return to that awful state again. The Myanmar military has cracked down hard on dissent in the past, the most recent one being in 2007 when they murdered peaceful monks and students, but so far the response has been largely peaceful. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in cities across the country, carrying NLD flags and signs demanding the release of Ms. Kyi and the restoration of democracy. One protestor, Ko Nyi Zaw, stated that “I don't care if they shoot because under the military, our lives will be dead anyway. Before we die completely, we have to protest.”

The hope for a democratic republic in Myanmar is not lost, and the people will not stop fighting until the threat of a military regime is crushed. The world stands with the people in solidarity.

## Opposition Leader's Arrest Sparks Russian Protests

By Sean Behling

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On January 17th, 2021, Putin critic Alexei Navalny returned to Russia from Germany and was immediately arrested. This sparked mass protests calling for his release all throughout Russia. These protests have not only been sparked by Navalny's arrest, but also by claims that he made about the corrupt nature of President Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin (a term used to refer to the government in Russia; similar to referring to the American government as “The White House”).

Alexei Navalny is a Russian opposition leader as well as an anti-corruption activist, who opposes Vladimir Putin's more-than-20 year rule (The Wall Street Journal). Back in August of 2020, Navalny collapsed on a flight over Siberia and was rushed to the hospital. After he recovered

a bit, he was moved to Berlin for more treatment. Tests were conducted by the German government to find out what happened. The tests detected traces of Novichok, a Soviet-era nerve agent that is not accessible to the common public. Navalny blames the Russian government and accuses them of trying to poison him, claims that the Kremlin has ultimately denied.

Navalny returned to Russia after the five months he spent recovering in Berlin. Upon arriving, Navalny was detained and arrested for violating a suspended sentence that had been given to him in 2014. Navalny had been placed under probation for the crime of embezzlement and was supposedly jailed due to multiple violations of this probation. Since Navalny's arrest, he has been tried in court for violation of his probation. He was sentenced to



Photo courtesy of BBC

three and a half years in prison. However, because of the time Navalny spent under house arrest, he is expected to spend closer to just about two years and eight months in prison instead.

There are some accusations made by Navalny about why he was actually arrested. Some of these accusations talk about the recent claims he had been making about Putin and the Kremlin. One of his more recent influential accusations against Putin happened before he was jailed with the release of the film Putin's Palace. This film revolves around the connection between President Vladimir Putin and a palace allegedly being built for him. “Mr. Navalny accuses Mr. Putin of running an administration riddled with corruption, and recently released a YouTube video featuring an opulent Black Sea palace which, he alleged, was a Russian billionaires' gift to the president. More

than 100 million people have watched the video,” (BBC). This caused mass outrage throughout much of Russia's population. This outrage, combined with Navalny's arrest, led to large protests throughout most of Russia calling for Navalny's release.

These protests continued on, with thousands of protestors being arrested throughout the rest of January. Following the scale of these arrests, Navalny's allies announced on February fourth that they were going to put a halt to their large-scale demonstrations. They instead chose to shift their focus towards the Russian parliamentary elections taking place this September, and in trying to unseat the ruling United Russia party loyal to Putin.

For now, it remains to be seen if any major developments will take place. One thing is for sure though, this event will not simply go away without any aftermath or consequences.



Photo courtesy of ABC News

# Dating during COVID Season

By Grace Nunn

@gracegunn | Editor

With COVID, and the need to stay socially distanced, it has been difficult for the singles to get out there and meet, and even if they have, it is risky to go out on dates. COVID may have calmed down some since the initial spread, but it is still out there. So, if you are planning on getting back into the dating world, stay safe and wear your mask!

Generally, you'd think that dating statistics soar during February since it's the month of love. However, surprisingly, breakups spike during February, especially during Valentine's Day (refinery29.com)! Apparently, a lot of people realize that they do not like their significant other enough to get them a gift during Valentine's Day, and so they break up with them.

The opposite of this statistic has surprisingly happened because of COVID, with a huge surge in online dating, and therefore, dating in general. Especially after Christmas and in time for the new year, with people prepared to "find

love" in 2021.

Along with this surge in online dating is the introduction of "slow dating," where people are taking the time to talk to someone before trusting them enough to meet in public according to arklathhomepage.com. Applications like Bumble, Match, Tinder, and Hinge have had a record growth in usage after the beginning of the pandemic. "2020 was a record-setting year for the online dating industry, which saw dramatic growth since the start of the pandemic" (wsav.com).

Of course, those apps cannot be used by high-schoolers since the age minimum is typically 18. So this information does not really pertain to us, but I asked students to send me their thoughts on dating during COVID, how it has gone, tips, or any other information.

**Maria Schultz (10)** had some advice for everyone that I think you should hear, "It's always good to love yourself first before you try and love someone else," and, "always prioritize your mental health before getting into a relationship!"

**Meakah Little (11)** also had some advice when she wrote, "Communication is key. If you don't talk, it falls apart." I completely agree with the both of them; your mental health is extremely important! Sometimes, you aren't in a good enough mindset for a relationship, and that is okay!

**Caroline Top (11)** told me about her personal experience with dating during the COVID year, saying that, "I've been trying to date and almost had relationships happen, but COVID affected it."

**Isa Abrinica (11)** who had a bit of comedic relief for all of the singles out there, told me that she told a guy that had a crush on her that she liked her neighbor and when this guy confessed to her, he had his ex bring Abrinica the confession note. A wild story that I cannot share in full, but trust me when I say it was very interesting.

Don't worry if you didn't have a Valentine this year; it is especially hard with COVID, and we are only high-schoolers after all! I hope everyone had a good Valentine's Day, with or without a date. I hope you treated yourself to some chocolate! Stay safe out there!



Photo courtesy of Tech Junkie.



Photo courtesy of Google Play.

## My Experience with Loveland Robotics

By Sean Behling

@lovelandroar | Staff Writer

Aren't clubs great? They allow us to meet new friends and explore new interests. However, this is only when you know what club to join. For quite a while, I wasn't really in any clubs or on any teams. I just didn't know what interested me. Now, however, I am a part of Loveland Robotics FTC Team 5040 "Nuts and Bolts." How did I get to this point? Well, let me tell you about my experiences with Loveland Robotics. Back in middle school, I wasn't interested in any clubs. But one day my mom told me about First Lego League, which was a lego robotics program that our school had a team for. I got to the tryouts and recognized somebody. I saw the person who sat in front of me in Spanish class. Eventually, we both joined FLL Team 4075. How FLL works is you put legos together with a small lego robotics controller in the middle to build a robot that completes certain tasks based around a yearly theme (Hydrodynamics, Space, etc.).



Photo courtesy of KudosWall.

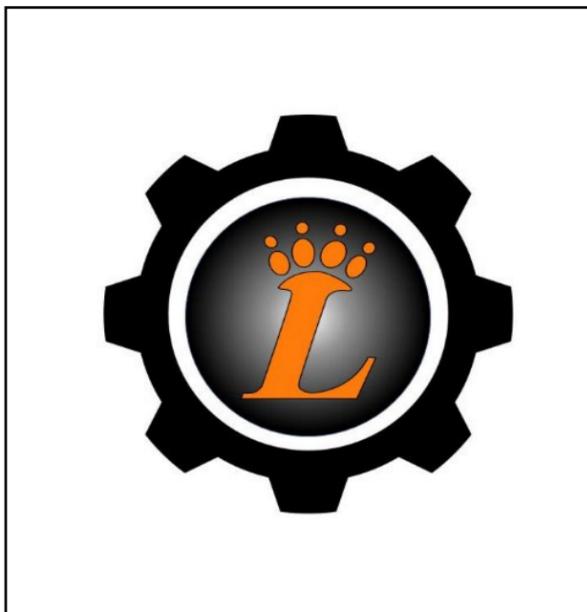


Photo courtesy of @LRobotBoosters

The more tasks you complete, the more points you earn. Besides the actual robot aspect, FLL teams are also told to research a problem related to that year's theme and provide a possible solution. This gives the kids who participate experience in problem solving, research, and creative thinking. Remember how I mentioned that someone I recognized from my Spanish class also joined the team? Well, we're still friends today and it's no exaggeration to say that we became friends because of that FLL team. If we hadn't both been a part of that robotics team, he would still just be the person who sat in front of me in Spanish that one time. FLL gave us a reason to talk to each other and allowed us to become friends. Fast forward through a total of two years of FLL in the 7th and 8th grades and we get to high school. My parents really wanted me to join a club and be a part of something, but I didn't know what to choose. Then I noticed that there was an FTC Team for the high school, which

is a program made by the same people who made FLL. FTC works differently from FLL in that robots are built out of actual metal and professional materials instead of Legos. Another change is that instead of researching a problem and thinking up a solution, teams must market themselves to raise money for their team on their own. This gives team members business and marketing experience. One thing people forget about the Loveland Robotics teams is that you don't have to be an engineer, or a coding wizard to join. There is other stuff that they need besides that, and you learn that during the first couple of weeks, so it's not really something to worry about. My older brother was actually a part of the robotics team at that time, so I decided I'd give it a shot. I managed to get in on a trial basis and proved that I would be a valuable team member. Loveland Robotics is a very fun and rewarding thing to be a part of. There are multiple different teams for Loveland Robotics at the high school, so why don't you try out?

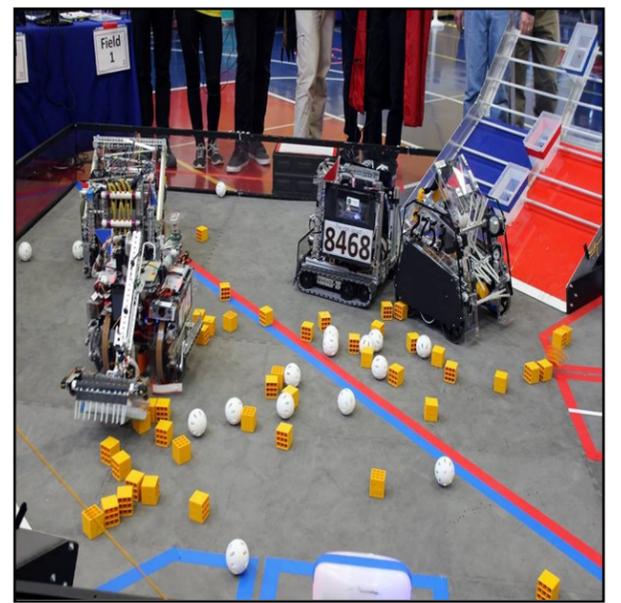


Photo courtesy of Penn State University.

# Valentine's Gift For Your S/O

By Skylar Lundeen

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According to some students, gifts are an important part of Valentine's Day. While some people enjoy receiving meaningful gifts, others prefer expensive and flashy presents. The difference between the two completely depends on the giver and recipient. Another type of gift someone could consider for their partner is a dinner or an invitation to an event.

**Julia Parker (11)** decided to get her boyfriend, **D'marqo Johnson (11)**, some of his favorite things including, "a box of his favorite snacks and candy and drinks and a framed picture of him and I." Parker seemed enthusiastic about the present she's getting for him. Correspondingly, Johnson is getting Parker a similar gift. He says that he got her, "a Chick-fil-a teddy bear and her favorite candies." The couple claims that they know each other very well and want to make each other feel special during the holiday by getting gifts they know the other will appreciate.

**Evan Patterson (10)** and **Peyton Sprankles (9)** also got each other gifts for the romantic holiday. Patterson said that he got his girlfriend a "considerably large teddy bear." Sprankles also explained her similar gift idea when she said, "I'm getting him a basket with candy and chocolates and a little stuffed bear." The match seems to have the same general idea: getting each other teddy bears.

**Alexia Vallee (11)** and **Rylan Mills (11)** both have romantic options on their minds. Vallee has an idea that



Photo courtesy of Walmart.com



Photo courtesy of Giftcards.com

she believes Mills will love. She says, "I am going to make him a basket with some of his favorite things and a sweatshirt and also a Spotify plaque with our song on it." Vallee explains that her thoughtful idea will blow Mills' idea out of the water; he said he's "taking her out to dinner and bringing flowers." The pair both agreed that they will love their gifts no matter what they are.

**Maddy Johns (10)** is dating a student at Moeller High School. For Valentine's Day, she shares that she is getting him, "a Chick-fil-a gift card, chocolate, and a card; we are going to Tony's Steakhouse for dinner." Johns says that she is looking forward to the romantic holiday and spending time with her boyfriend.

**Zeke Marasco (10)** explained that he got his girlfriend, who goes to Little Miami High School, a few items he thought she would enjoy. "I got her flowers and a customized blanket with pictures of us on it," Marasco says. Marasco said that he thinks his girlfriend will really enjoy the gift because it is sentimental to both of them.

Similar to Johns and her boyfriend, **Brody Merz (10)** and **Nicole Pedicini (11)** plan to spend their holiday together at Tony's Steakhouse. Merz's gift consists of "a squishmallow and a dinner date." He claims that his girlfriend, Pedicini, will enjoy the date and her gift.

Valentine's Day is a celebrated holiday among couples and families. Getting meaningful gifts for a boyfriend/girlfriend is common during the month of February. February 14th is a celebration of love and during this time, many people show care and compassion to people they are close to.

## Valentine's Day Chocolate Review

By Laurel Gibbins

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According to thedaily.com, every year, Americans purchase an average of fifty-eight million pounds of chocolate in the week leading up to Valentine's Day. This is hardly surprising; in the United States, the quintessential Valentine's Day gift includes chocolate, flowers (usually roses), dinner at a fancy restaurant, and possibly jewelry. Even though chocolate is extremely popular this time of year, it is not created equally. Here are the best, and worst, chocolates that are seen on Valentine's Day.

**5. Dark Chocolate:** In my experience, people either love dark chocolate or they hate it. There is no in between. Dark chocolate is the purest form of chocolate available, but at a cost. Dark chocolate is bitter and it is truly an acquired taste. So, if you ever find yourself going on a first date on Valentine's Day, do yourself a favor and do not bring your date dark chocolate, unless they have specifically told you that they love dark chocolate.

**4. Anything with the name Hershey's on it:** Hershey's is one of the most iconic chocolate brands in the world. When most people think of chocolate, they think of Hershey's. Hershey's is a less expensive option, however it is easy to understand why. Hershey's chocolate is severely lacking. It is easy to tell that the quality of the chocolate is not that good. The rich chocolate flavor is just not there.

**3. Heart Shaped Boxes of Chocolates:** Heart shaped boxes of chocolates are what most people think of when they think of Valentine's Day Chocolates. These boxes often feature an assortment of different flavored chocolates, and although that can be a positive thing, it is also their downfall. No matter the quality of the chocolates, it is inevitable that at least a third of the box will be left uneaten because some of the flavors of chocolates are absolutely disgusting. Heart shaped boxes of chocolates are a good option when you want to have variety, and when you want to be basic.

**2. Dove Chocolate:** Dove chocolate is very similar to

Hershey's chocolate, but Dove is much higher quality. Valentine's Day Dove chocolate comes in bags of little bit size heart shaped chocolates which makes for an impressive display. Dove chocolate is very smooth and rich - the perfect chocolate. This is a good option for someone who wants a good high quality chocolate without spending too much money.

**1. Lindt Chocolate:** Lindt chocolate is some of the highest quality of chocolate money can buy. The company's claim to fame are their LINDOR Truffles. These truffles come in fourteen different flavors ranging from original milk chocolate to citrus. Lindt chocolate is on the expensive side, but I think it is well worth it - especially on Valentine's Day. This is a good option for someone who really wants to impress their date.

Your choice in chocolate really does say a lot about you. If your first date happens to be on Valentine's Day, your date's first impression of you will most likely be the gifts you bring to them. So, choose your chocolate very wisely.



Photo courtesy of Country Mercantile



Photo courtesy of Amazon.com



Photo courtesy of Crazy Outlet Candy Store

# Super Bowl Commercial Breakdown

By Aaron Krabacher

@aaron\_krabacher | Staff Writer

During the Super Bowl, it is well known that when the game goes to a commercial break, viewers stay engaged because of the very entertaining commercials that follow. The exorbitant price of these advertisement slots drive companies to create their best commercials that will create a buzz around the country. This year, a 30 second commercial was valued at approximately \$5.5 million.

Doritos used well-known actor and producer, Matthew McConaughey to market their new 3D Doritos, which look much different than their original Dorito chip. McConaughey was seen inside of a vending machine as a 2D character, but when he ate the new chip, he instantly became three dimensional and smacked into the glass inside the vending machine full of the new snack. Doritos is well known for their comedic advertisements in the Super Bowl and they have continued that trend during Super Bowl 55. State Farm combined multiple celebrities



Photo courtesy of Chron.com

Matthew McConaughey stuck inside a Doritos vending machine. This was the first time McConaughey appeared in a Super Bowl commercial.



Photo courtesy of Forbes.com

Famous rapper, Drake, showing off his acting skills in the State Farm commercial. He was introduced as “Drake from State Farm.”

including starting quarterback for the Kansas Chiefs, Patrick Mahomes, quarterback for the Green Bay Packers, Aaron Rodgers, actor Paul Rudd, and musician Drake to make their commercial. The commercial played off of several previous State Farm commercials including Aaron Rodgers’ discount doublecheck and the Jake from State Farm commercial. The commercial first shows Patrick Mahomes’ backup for the commercial and flashes to Paul Rudd who clearly does not know how to throw a football anything like Patrick Mahomes. Sitting next to Mahomes is Jake from State Farm, who claims that he doesn’t even have a backup. It then cuts to Drake from State Farm, a play on words, to repeat Jake’s slogan of “Like a good neighbor State Farm is there.” The notoriety of the celebrities featured in the advertisement stirred up conversation on many social media platforms in the following days.

Certain businesses found other ways to advertise during the Super Bowl without spending the \$5.5 million for the advertisement slot. A few hours before the game, Buffalo

Wild Wings tweeted that “Everyone who retweets this gets free wings if the game goes into overtime.” Pepsi followed up in the comment section by saying, “We’ve got a cold can to help clean those fingers,” piggybacking off of Buffalo Wild Wings’ original deal with the people of Twitter. While the game ended up being a lopsided 31-9 for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, both Buffalo Wild Wings and Pepsi used their social media platforms to draw attention to both of their companies.

Though only a few examples were listed, it was fairly obvious that most advertisements leaned towards the lighter side when advertising instead of the more serious advertisements that people had seen in the past. Many believe that this is because of the many poignant things happening around the United States today. Companies felt that their advertisements needed to be a break from the depressing everyday news of a country living through a pandemic. All in all, many of the advertisements succeeded in this goal, and drew lucrative attention to their new products while the consumers were entertained by the commercials.

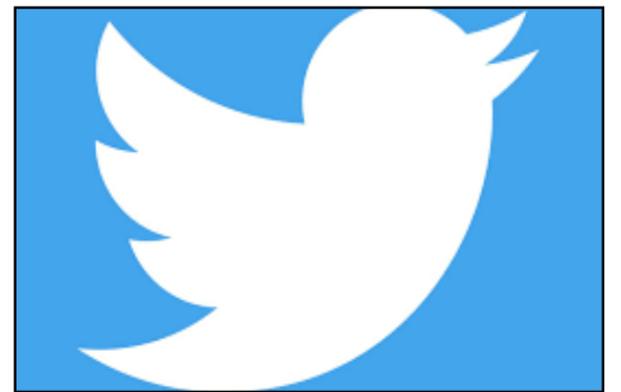


Photo courtesy of Twitter.com

Many companies use Twitter to help advertise their brand. Buffalo Wild Wing’s Super Bowl tweet surpassed 200,000 retweets on Sunday.

# EA Sports Announces Return of NCAA Football Franchise

By Sam Neiger

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When EA Sports came out with NCAA Football 14 back in 2013, fans were just as excited as they had been since the first college football video game came out back in 1993. The series was discontinued so that EA could focus its sports budget on more lucrative franchises such as Madden and FIFA. However, almost as soon as the game was taken off the market, fans were up in arms trying to get EA to reinstate the game. NCAA Football had been a popular title, so it remained high on the priority list of the developers at EA.

After teasing the game in the last few issues of Madden, EA got a good response from fans, as well as the college licensing directors. After fans began to really pick up the intensity in their quest for the game in recent years, it became apparent that it was only a matter of time before EA Sports reintroduced the franchise.

On February 2nd Daryl Holt, the vice president of EA



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Denard Robinson appears on the cover of NCAA Football 14. This was the last yearly edition made by EA, up until this year.

Sports, announced that the franchise would be brought back.

However, there is no release date yet for NCAA Football as of now, but EA Sports made it clear that it would not be this year. The contents of the game are still unclear. Since the announcement has been made, fans have made their voice clear, telling EA to change as little as possible in terms of the gameplay in hopes that it will be just like the games of the past decades.

One drawback to the announcement can be found in the fine print. EA said that the game will only be compatible with next generation consoles. This means only those with a Playstation 5 or an Xbox series X will be able to enjoy college football virtually. However, by the time the games are released, many more gamers will have a next generation console as Xbox and Playstation start to phase out their old models. For those who don’t want to spend the money on the new consoles, they are simply just stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Perhaps another change that could upset what has been a very loyal fanbase is the game’s name. While the name NCAA Football always got the point across; EA feels that they could better build a brand around a new name. Instead of expressing a little more creativity however, the executives decided on EA Sports College Football saying that the name could be changed eventually to something with a little more pizzazz by the time the game is released.

Right now the main focus for EA Sports is reestablishing a relationship with the Collegiate Licensing Company if they are going to accurately and fairly represent every player and team. Plus, with the upcoming rule changes in the NCAA in terms of compensation for player name and likeness, EA is going to need to make sure they aren’t biting off more than they can chew from a financial standpoint.

Regardless of the minute details that will follow in the coming year, college football fans and gamers alike can rejoice that they will once again be able to play this game for years to come.



Photo courtesy of TMZ.com

EA is changing the name from “NCAA Football” to “College Football.” The VP of EA clarified the change to being a new and open college football game.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Electronic Arts is the sports video game company behind many professional sports games. The multi-billion dollar company was started in 1982.

## '80s Hip-Hop: Its Modern Influence

By Aaron Morton

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Introduced in the late 1970s in the economically depressed South Bronx section of New York City, hip-hop has evolved, and in the process tremendously impacted Western culture. Through the early '80s, MCs and DJs emerged and brought popularity to the eccentric scene. Graffiti and breakdancing, two of the initially popular aspects of hip-hop culture, were very short-lived in American pop-culture. What lasted? The electric vibrations of MCs such as Eric B. and DJs like Grandmaster Flash. Into the late '80s, the innocent vibrations of the early '80s became a vehicle to address more serious topics. Rappers like Public Enemy and the very popular group of young rappers, NWA aggressively called out social injustices, particularly police brutality against the Black community. Even with the proportions of their popularity, the artists of the 90th decade of the 1900s couldn't imagine the influence they would have on the music community and American society.

On a social level, America is enthralled in

misunderstanding, leading to division and dissent. With this misunderstanding between different races and socio-economic classes, the political climate especially has evolved, fueled by the media, into a topic of polarization and alienation.

While some rappers have altered their styles to fit the mold of modern pop culture, certain artists have taken advantage of their skill to address many of the issues this country, in this case a microcosm of the globe - faces. Rappers Kendrick Lamar and Vince Staples have used their flow to paint a picture of their childhoods and lifestyles, and simultaneously shed light on the vast community of adolescent kids who live those same lives. Their rhymes highlight the environmental differences across varying demographics in the U.S. and the roots of different milieus in the estrangement between the nation's predominant races.

Political rap, where the lyrics are focused on the current political issues, has become an efficient way to comment on America's political shortcomings and successes. Rapper and producer Joyner Lucas released a song in

November 2017. In the song titled, "I'm Not Racist," Lucas explores the contrast in the lives of black and white people in America and the apparent disconnect between cultures. He presents the perspective of both sides, including prevailing stereotypes formed about the two races.

Rappers that fit the mold of the modern day hip-hop rapper (rather than that of pop rappers) draw heavy influence from the lyricism, metaphors, and imagery that permeated '80s hip-hop. Since the time of the 1980s, rap music has been about storytelling. Artists told many stories about their everyday lives, and used it as a form of art to express the truths about their lives or address what they were going through at the time. Narratives were poetically created with characters, conflict, and climax leading to a smooth flow of imagination for the listener.

The story-telling ability of different rappers has been useful in addressing different ideas and issues, utilizing rhythm and flow to accomplish the intended effect of sensory relaxation and pleasure - typically referred to as 'vibing.' As long as this sensation thrives within the listener, hip-hop will forever live on.



Photo courtesy of rockhall.com



Photo courtesy of justrichest.com



Photo courtesy of revolt.tv

## Netflix: What To Watch This Season

By Kate Carpenter

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We are already a few months into the new year, and you may be finding yourself rather bored with the shows currently on Netflix, but fear not, I have compiled a list of the shows coming to the platform throughout February, March, and April.

The 2010 film *Inception* will be coming to the streaming service on **February 1st**. This film is a psychological thriller, and a definite must see if you enjoy mind-bending movies.

It may no longer be Christmas season, but it's always the right time to watch the 1980's classic *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, and starting on **February 1st**, you can watch it on Netflix any time you want.

Additional shows and movies coming

throughout February include: *Inception*, *Zac and Mia*, *iCarly* (seasons 1-2), *To All the Boys: Always and Forever*, *Lara Jean*, *The Conjuring* (movies 1 and 2), several seasons of the hit game-show *Wheel of Fortune*, and many more.

*Moxie*, starring Hadley Robinson and *Parks and Recreation's* own Amy Poehler will be coming to Netflix on **March 3rd**. The movie follows a young girl who finds inspiration to anonymously protest sexism at her school after finding out her mother was heavily involved with feminist movements in the past.

Other shows coming to the platform in March include:

**March 1st:** The 2011 rom-com *Crazy, Stupid, Love* starring *The Office's* Steve Carell, and a Nelson Mandela biopic called *Invictus* will both be soon joining

Netflix.

**March 4th:** Season 1 of *Pacific Rim: The Black*, an anime set in the same universe as the incredibly popular *Pacific Rim* franchise

**March 12th:** *Yes Day*, a comedy following two parents who find that they can no longer say "no" to their kids

**March 15th:** The Turkish drama *Struggle Alley* follows a man working to aid impoverished people across his city.

Netflix has yet to release a definitive list of the shows and movies coming to the platform in April, but there are a few shows rumored to be joining the platform throughout the month. These include the fantasy series *Shadow and Bones* based on a series of novels by Leigh Bardugo, *Things Heard and Seen*, a horror film, and potentially the 3rd season of the hit show

*Dead to Me*.

If you are looking for other, older shows or movies, here is a list of some of my favorites from the past few years. *New Girl* (7 seasons), *Julie and the Phantoms* (1 season), *The Magicians* (5 seasons), *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (based on a true story), *Scott Pilgrim VS the World* (comedy), and *Into the Wild* (based on a true story.)

Especially during the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic, it is important that you stay home as much as possible meaning that this is the perfect time to binge watch copious amounts of movies and TV shows. Netflix has options for everyone ranging from hilarious comedies to movies for when you need a good cry.

There are plenty of new movies and TV shows out there for you, so, stay home and binge safely.



Photo courtesy of moviehdwallpapers.com



Photo courtesy of netflix-news.com

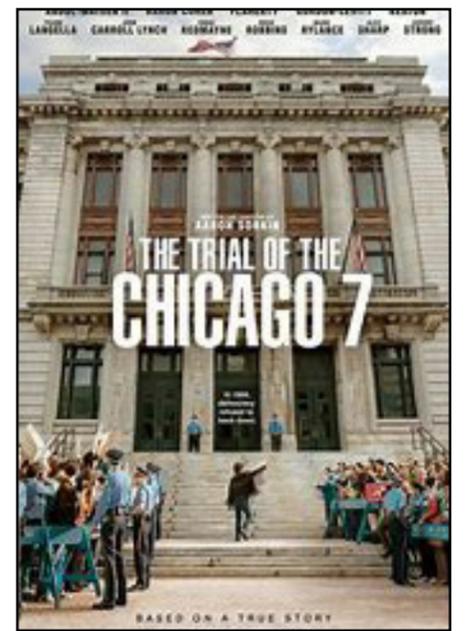


Photo courtesy of thedigitalfix.com

# Super Bowl 55 Recap

By Adam Luneack

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The 55th NFL Super Bowl was played Sunday, February 7. This year's big game featured the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, led by future Hall of Famer Tom Brady, and the defending Super Bowl Champions, the Kansas City Chiefs. Brady and the Buccaneers dominated the whole game, and won 31-9. Leading up to the game, the spread was pretty even and many thought it could go either way. Tom Brady was looking to add the 7th ring to his collection, but this time with a new team. Brady had spent the past 20 seasons playing for the talented New England Patriots under coach Bill Belichick. During his time with the Patriots, Brady amassed six Super Bowl titles, four Super Bowl MVP awards, and three NFL MVP awards. Despite playing for a new team this year, many expected Brady to do what Brady does best- win big games.

Despite many fans thinking this was going to be his last season, Brady surprised everyone by stating, "We're coming back," in his post-game interview. On the other

side, the Chiefs have emerged in the past few years as one of the best squads in the league. Led by the young star quarterback Patrick Mahomes, it was hard to count this team out. Not to mention the wide receiver trio of Tyreek Hill, Sammy Watkins, and Mecole Hardman is always a struggle for defenses. This was not how it played out, however.

All game long, Patrick Mahomes was running away from linebackers or juking out the defensive linemen. He never had a protected pocket to throw from, giving him less time to find his receivers. This aspect proved to be crucial for the Chiefs as Patrick Mahomes ended up throwing two interceptions from trying to escape a collapsing pocket. Aside from the skilled defense of Tampa Bay, Brady had a career night, throwing for 200 yards and three touchdowns and also winning the Super Bowl MVP.

Even though most of the media attention was Brady after the game, one vital reason for the team's success was from the longtime teammate of Brady, Rob Gronkowski. The 6'6" tight end caught two touchdowns on six catches in the

victory. After coming out of retirement and winning his fourth ring in the NFL, some thought that he would finally call it a career but nope, Gronk said he was here to stay for another year with the team. Gronkowski asserted this in his post-game interview with the CBS commentators, "I loved being here with so many great players in a great organization- I don't see any reason why I won't be back."

From the opposite standpoint, where do the Chiefs stand after this loss? Well, Chiefs fans won't have to worry about their MVP quarterback going anywhere as he signed a 10 year contract with the team, worth \$503 million, keeping him in Kansas City through 2031. After taking the Chiefs to back to back Super Bowls, Mahomes' first loss was a hard one. "(It was) the worst that I think I've been beaten in a long time," he told NFL media after the game. Even though Super Bowl 55 wasn't as close as football fans thought it would be, the Chiefs and Buccaneers both played great games and we will likely see both teams play well next season.



Photo courtesy of Oregon Live

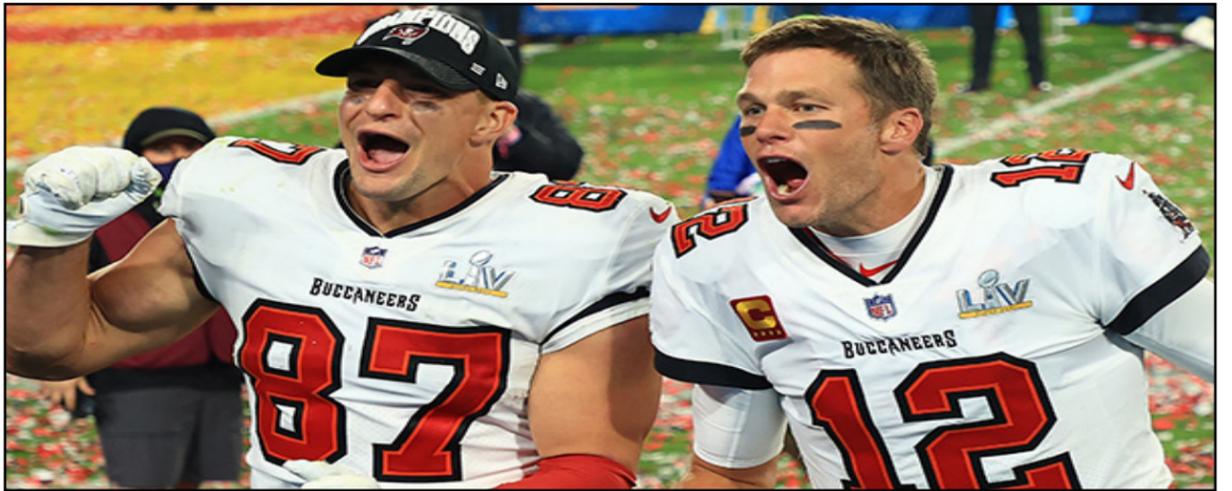


Photo courtesy of Sporting News

## Tom Brady: Super Bowl Champion and NFL Legend

By Aaron Morton

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| Staff Writer

In 2002 as the New England Patriots faced off against "The Greatest Show on Turf" (aka St. Louis Rams) in Super Bowl XXXVI, the young quarterback, who would eventually be debated as potentially the greatest athlete ever, only tallied one touchdown pass that game, an eight-yarder to David Patten in the second quarter.

Two decades after that first championship, Brady lays the claim of most Super Bowl rings in NFL history. Overall, he has appeared in a record nine Super Bowls, winning six. Those six Super Bowl victories included four MVP awards, another NFL record. His 10th appearance was scheduled for Super Bowl LV against Patrick Mahomes and the electric Chiefs squad.

But this Super Bowl, potentially the final one of his career, was different. For the first time in his career, Brady led a team that does not hail from New England. In a bold off-season decision, Brady headed down south to Tampa

Bay to join Bruce Arians and the Buccaneers. His decision was followed by much controversy. A certain career critic of Brady, Max Kellerman had this to say after the Patriots AFC Wildcard loss to the Titans in 2020, "Brady should retire... he won't, but he should. He's reached his peak and now, he's going to fall off the cliff." Since missing the playoffs, Brady has silenced all of his critics, including Max Kellerman. The long-time ESPN analyst formally apologized to Brady in October stating, "I was wrong, Tom Brady never fell off a cliff."

This year, Brady's statistics mirrored that of a rising star rather than a creaky veteran. Brady has completed 401 passes in his way to comfortably sitting at 3rd place in passing yards (4,633) and 2nd place in passing touchdowns (40.) The 43-year old field general has been alive for every victory in Tampa Bay franchise history (The Bucs went 0-14 in 1976, their inaugural season). Many people question not Brady's greatness, but how he's been able to maintain it. However he's doing it, the

Houdini of quarterbacks has led the Buccaneers to a 14-5 season, defeating the Green Bay Packers on January 24th in the NFC Championship game.

In the Super Bowl, Brady showed that he indeed never fell off a cliff. The Bucs came out firing in the first half, gaining a 21-6 lead. From then on, the Buccaneers never looked back - maintaining offensive fluidity led by Brady's 3 first-half touchdowns passes. Long story short, the game ended in a shellacking - the final score 31-9. Jim Nantz keenly pointed out in the post-game that Brady, "isn't quite ready to pass the torch to young Mahomes." Brady finished the game 21/29 for 201 yards to accompany his 3 touchdowns. Along with these stats, Brady grabbed his fifth Super Bowl MVP award and his seventh Super Bowl victory.

Although Tom Brady was already solidified as one of the greatest athletes of all time, February 7, 2021 was one more reason for him to own the title of the G.O.A.T. The question is... what's next for TB12?



Photo courtesy of The Denver Post



Photo courtesy of Fortune

# Committed Seniors at LHS

By Adam Luneack

@lovelandroar | Staff Writer

The 2021 graduating class is very talented, academically as well as athletically. I took the time to interview many of the students who have committed to schools for athletics. I asked them why they chose their schools, and their post-college plans.

**Brock Perkins (12)**- Bluffton University, baseball, major- business (maybe psychology)

"I liked the coaching and the atmosphere at Bluffton."

"My goal after college is to probably get my masters or become a coach."

**Miya Brines (12)**- University of Iowa, track, major-business

"I chose Iowa because it has an at home feeling and I liked the team chemistry."

"My goal for after college is to keep pursuing my track career."

**Gabe Ogdan (12)**- University of Indianapolis, football, major- exercise science/ pre-PT

"I chose UIndy because it was a great fit for me and having college fully paid for has always been a dream of mine."

"My goal after college is to win a national championship and get my doctorate in PT."

**Jake Zicka (12)**- Xavier University, baseball, major-marketing

"I chose Xavier because it was close to home and had a good sense of community throughout the campus."

"My goal after college is to hopefully go on and continue playing baseball. If not, I would want to start my own marketing firm or continue the family business."

**Spencer Rodriguez (12)**- Clark State College, baseball, major- undecided

"Clark State gives me the best chance to get to the next level."

"My goal after college is to play baseball professionally."

**Carly Wilhoite (12)**- University of Tampa, lacrosse, major- psychology

"I chose Tampa for the beautiful campus, warm weather, academics, and athletics."

"My goal after college is to become a cognitive psychologist and conduct studies on the brain to better understand it."

**Hanna Wenger (12)**- Central Michigan University, lacrosse, major- business/ marketing

"I chose CMU because I fell in love with the team culture and it gave me the opportunity to play at the division 1 level."

"My goal after college is to find an enjoyable job in the

business marketing field."

**Jenna Batsch (12)**- Kent State University, basketball, major- undecided

"I chose Kent because I loved the coaching staff, the facilities, and the campus."

"My goal after college is to get a successful job in whatever field I choose and to eventually start a family."

**Sherron Peacock (12)**- Tiffin University, bowling, major- business

"I chose Tiffin because its close to home and they have a good business school."

"My goal after college is to get my business degree or to pursue my dream of becoming a Young Life leader."

**Zach DeWitt (12)**- University of Findlay, football, major- business/ sports management

"I fell in love with the coaching staff and the atmosphere created from the school and team."

"My goal after college is to work in the sales department of a major sports franchise."

**Josey Storm (12)**- Notre Dame College, lacrosse, major- business

"I chose this school because the team had such a great personality and bond."

"My goal after college is to open some type of business and travel."



Photo courtesy of Loveland Digest

Carly Wilhoite strides through the middle of the playing field surveying for an open teammate. The 2020 season was cancelled due to COVID.



Photo courtesy of Craig Baucke

Sherron Peacock (right - 92) and Gabe Ogdan (Left - 91) celebrate a sack. The Tigers cruised past Holmes 48-14.

## March Madness Preview 2021

By Sam Neiger

@lovelandroar | Staff Writer

Late February means that the college basketball regular season is winding down. Teams have entered the home stretch, looking for key wins to impress the country in hopes of finding themselves in the NCAA tournament in March.

March Madness has long been one of the pinnacles of sporting events in American culture, right at the top of the list with the Super Bowl, the World Series, and the NBA Finals. Every single game has the possibility of pure chaos and raw emotion. Anything is possible as seen in the 2018 first round upset of sixteenth seeded UMBC over the



Photo Courtesy of Forbes.com

Jalen Suggs rises above a defender to drain a jumpshot. The Zags came into this season as a national powerhouse.

top-seeded team in the tournament, Virginia. Everything about the tournament is a sports fan's dream, from the bracketology to the games themselves, to the weekends spent at the local sports bar from sunup to sundown. And with the tournament canceled last year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, fans are ready once again to experience the madness.

So which teams have the possibility to be Cinderella stories, and which blue blood programs have a true shot at making the title game?

The Gonzaga Bulldogs are no stranger to the NCAA tournament, and they will certainly be considered one of the front-runners for this year's tourney, too. The Zags might find themselves in a much weaker conference than some of the other big programs, but their out of conference schedule tells fans all they need to know about Gonzaga's potential. Significant victories against ranked opponents Kansas, West Virginia and Iowa as well as landslide victories over in-conference opponents leave the Zags as the favorite going into the NCAA tournament despite the fact that they've struggled to make deep tournament runs in the past with Mark Few as head coach.

Another serious contender for national champion is the Baylor Bears. Last season, Baylor would have been one of the frontrunners for a one-seed, but this year they are virtually a lock. The Bears find themselves in a much more competitive conference than the Zags, The Big 12, which makes their resume all the more challenging, and the fact that through February 6th they are still undefeated, all the more impressive. One of the most convincing wins came back on February 2, when Baylor beat an in-state rival, the Longhorns of Texas by a score of 83-69. Baylor's record and resume might make them the favorite to win



Photo Courtesy of Streeter Lecka

The 2019 March Madness champions Virginia University raise the NCAA Division 1 championship trophy. The Cavaliers finished the season 35-3.

the national championship this year.

But what about teams close to home? One Ohio team finds themselves with an exceptional position in the most competitive conference in the country, and that is Ohio State. The Buckeyes have put on a great performance so far this season, rising as high as seventh in the nation in the AP poll, and find themselves in contention for a one seed in the tournament come selection Sunday. However, the story for the Buckeyes, as is the story for many teams, is whether or not they will be able to compete with Gonzaga and Baylor late in the tournament, and into the national championship.

Whatever the case may be, there are some fascinating storylines in this year's tournament that will help to cap off one of the oddest college basketball seasons in history.