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JGS NEWSPAPER

JGS TIMES: WHERE KNOWLEDGE MEETS HEADLINES



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INTERVIEW WITH MR. LAWLOR

BY: JASMINE SINGH,
MUNIO KIARE,
& JASLEEN KAUR

Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING AT JAMAICA GATEWAY TO THE SCIENCES?

A. THIS IS MY 10TH YEAR AT JAMAICA GATEWAY OF THE SCIENCES. I DID WHAT'S CALLED A LEAVE REPLACEMENT BEFORE FOR A YEAR IN A DIFFERENT SCHOOL. BUT YEAH, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF MY TENTH YEAR RIGHT NOW, WHICH SEEMS CRAZY. IT'S GONE BY SO FAST.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY TEACHING AFTER JAMAICA GATEWAY TO THE SCIENCES?

A. THERE'S A LOT. UH, ONE THING THAT STICKS OUT EVERY YEAR IS THE FRESHMAN MIXER, IT'S FUN TO SEE THE FRESHMAN FIRST KIND OF START TO HANG OUT WITH EACH OTHER. HUH, ALSO GOING TO WASHINGTON DC THIS YEAR WAS A FUN MEMORY, A LONG TRIP, A LONG JOURNEY ON THE BUS, BUT THAT WAS A GOOD TRIP. THE TRIP TO THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM TOO. THOSE FIELD TRIPS ARE ALWAYS VERY FUN AND MEMORABLE..

Q. QUESTION THREE, WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN INITIATING A NEWSPAPER CLUB?

A. BEFORE ME THERE WERE OTHER TEACHERS THAT WORKED ON IT. MY FIRST YEARS, JUST KIND OF TO START DOING SOMETHING AS A TEACHER. I WAS LIKE, YOU KNOW, MAYBE I'LL JUMP ON. I WORKED ON THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER AT MY HIGH SCHOOL WHEN I WAS A STUDENT. AND THEN WHEN MRS. FREEZE WHO RAN IT LEFT THE SCHOOL, I TOOK IT OVER FROM THERE AND I'VE JUST BEEN RUNNING IT SINCE.

Q. IF YOU WERE NOT A TEACHER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

A. WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I WANTED TO BE A PROGRAMMER OR A GRAPHIC ARTIST FOR VIDEO GAMES. I LOVE VIDEO GAMES. AND I TOOK A FEW CODING CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE. I WAS PRETTY GOOD AT IT I FELT, BUT THEN BY COLLEGE THERE WERE A LOT OF MATH REQUIREMENTS AND IT JUST WAS NOT FOR ME. I DIDN'T WANT TO SIT AT THE DESK NINE TO FIVE EVERY DAY. IT SEEMED SORT OF DRAINING, SO I WAS I STARTED TUTORING AFTER SCHOOL IN HIGH SCHOOL FOR SOME EXPERIENCE AND I FELT LIKE I WAS PRETTY GOOD AT IT AND I WORKED AT A SUMMER CAMP AND I LOVED IT AND I THOUGHT, YOU KNOW WHAT, MAYBE TEACHING OR WORKING WITH KIDS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. LAWLOR

BY: JASMINE SINGH,
MUNIO KIARE,
& JASLEEN KAUR

Q. WHAT IS ONE GOAL THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE? GOAL?

A. MHH, M-M-LIFE? TEACHING? TEACHING? IT DOESN'T MATTER. DOES IT MATTER? I'VE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE MET SOME OF THEM. UHH AS A TEACHER, JUST TO HAVE A LONG, FRUITFUL CAREER IN YOU KNOW, NEVER I GUESS A GOAL IS GONNA BE A BIT CORNY, BUT I DON'T CARE. SO JUST NOT TOO LONG TO NOT BECOME SICK OF A JOB, TO ENJOY IT EVERY DAY AS MUCH AS I CAN, AND TO WORK 40, 50 YEARS AND, YOU KNOW, NOT REGRET IT.

Q. IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT THIS SCHOOL, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

A. I WOULD- UHH, ONE THING IS TOUGH. I DEFINITELY WISH THE STUDENTS HAD LOCKERS BECAUSE I ALWAYS FEEL BAD YOU GUYS HAVE TO CARRY YOUR JACKETS AROUND. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE WHAT'S CALLED AN ADVISORY PERIOD WHERE YOU MEET EVERYBODY AND MEET WITH A TEACHER FOR LIKE 15 MINUTES EVERY DAY, YOU KIND OF LIKE THAT TEACHER FOLLOWING YOU FOR THE FOUR YEARS. UHH THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED. I KNOW THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN TALKED ABOUT, THAT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE UHH AND MAYBE MAKE MAYBE UPDATE THE FACILITIES A LITTLE BIT, YOU KNOW, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT A BIT OLD ON THE INSIDE, SO SOMETHING REFRESHER WOULD BE NICE.

Q. WOULD YOU EVER GO CLEAN SHAVEN?

A. YEAH, LIKE SHAVING YOUR BEARD OFF. IN THE SUMMER I WILL. OH, BUT NOT IN SCHOOL; EVER AGAIN? AND IN THE SUMMER, I JUST DO A RESET, BUT YEAH.

Q. ARE YOU A TRUE TRISH?

A. MOST OF MY GREAT GRANDPARENTS ARE FROM IRELAND, EXCEPT ONE WHO'S FROM NORTHERN ITALY. SO LIKE, I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE ALONG THE ISLAND ARE TRISH AND OR ITALIAN, I'VE THE LAST ONE THAT IS THE LAST ONE. OH UHH? ALL RIGHT, COOL.

Q. ARE YOU ED SHEERAN'S COUSIN?

A. YES, HE'S MY DAD.



Nyquiry:

Nyquiry Crazy Teacher stories

By Nyisha
Parsons

5

Teacher's Responses:

Mr. Lawlor (Global 1 and AP Government)-

"In first year teaching as a leave replacement teacher in Long Island, a student that went to that school drove a Hummer, which is a really nice car. On the other hand I had my quaint little Nissan Sentra, and the student that I was teaching said, "Wow Mr. Lawlor you're so smart but yet you drive such a bad car."

Mr. Frenchman (GYM)-

"I had a kid rip up my grade book in my last school and the Dean apologized on his behalf. The Dean said, "Michael said that he was sorry" and in the background through the phone I could hear Michael screaming about how he wasn't sorry."

Mr. Skabry (Global 1, Global 2, and Drama)-

"On a field trip of my first year teaching the Coach buses broke down, so the students and I had to hike down the highway until another random Coach bus came and picked us up. Then we used that Coach bus to go to our activity"

Ms. Khan (10th grade English and AP Lang)-

"The last day before Christmas break in 2023 we had a different schedule for the day because of the holidays, and so there were only ten kids in my eighth period AP class. So we ended up singing karaoke and BTS songs."

Dr. French (Physics and Engineering Teacher)-

"One time before the new wood floors came in I was walking out of Mr. Tai's room to go to Mr. Sykes' room and I saw poop by the elevator door. A student had pooped on the floor right by the elevator."

Mr. Pizzo (Geometry, College Now Mathematics)-

"So in my first year of teaching in the first hour of parent teacher conferences a dad called his son a mother*** for not going to extra help. That happened at my previous school."**

Cobra Kai VI: Part III

By Jenny Rosendo

The sixth and final season of Cobra Kai, has concluded the spin-off show from the iconic trilogy of the 80s, The Karate Kid (1984). Cobra Kai began in 2018 as a continuation of the lives of Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) and Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka) by rekindling their karate teachings to their children and pupils. On February 13, 2025, Netflix released part three of season six of Cobra Kai, ending the show and journey of Cobra Kai. After hours and years of fighting each other and even together, the ending of Cobra Kai is concluded with their final battle together, unifying to win in the Sekai Taikai together.



To recap, the last five episodes were released in the finale part, “Part III” of the finale season, with a total of three parts released mirroring the three original films. The season ends with Cobra Kai winning the Seikai Tekai. Johnny won in the Sensei’s tournament against a new dojo ran by Terry, Tory winning in the girls division and Miguel doing a last minute switch to Cobra Kai finally making a comeback.

Overall, watching the final season over was incredibly enjoyable. While before, Cobra Kai past seasons felt intense and interesting to see the writers and creators expand the Miyagi Cinematic Universe but as well as a little silly and unserious at other times. As a die-hard Karate Kid fan, the final season felt as a final wave goodbye to Johnny and his journey. The movies were all about scrawny little Daniel fighting back against Johnny and his corrupt sensei but Cobra Kai took it as an expansion to Johnny and the ending had so many unexpected scenes. What was seen as silly attempt of Johnny trying to get revenge against Daniel for his life while mentoring a new kid, Miguel turned into a “karate war” with onscreen deaths from it.

While Cobra Kai had many dramatic scenes like a karate soap opera, Cobra Kai, like the Karate Kid films, discusses uncomfortable realities of the treatment of many Japanese Americans living in internment camps. One of the main concerns regarding Daniel LaRusso is finding out Mr. Miyagi had killed a man before. Terry Silver painted as a lie to Daniel turned out to be act of self defense as Miyagi’s late wife’s stolen jewelry, taken from an internment officer. Even though the show focused on Johnny and Miguel, it still manage to expand on the character Mr. Miyagi is and his hardships that were healed with humor and training with Daniel, just as Johnny’s was.

Another great thing was the full circle the show completed. Even though Miyagi-Do and Eagle Fang combined, the original Cobra Kai came back and won but with the students not of Kreese but Johnny himself. The training scenes of season were so beautiful, Chozen and Johnny both being antagonists of Daniel but now all united together and training together. One of the most beautiful scenes was the montage Johnny and Daniel had on the beach, the first place they’ve met being a place of their union and now, respect.

In the final scene of the show Johnny gets up to use the bathroom and Daniel notices a fly buzzing around him and remembers one of his lessons with Mr. Miyagi – a man who can catch a fly with a pair of chopsticks can accomplish anything. Daniel attempts to capture it until Johnny appears, squashing the fly with his bare hands. Daniel is surprised but amused, smiling and realizing that even after all the crazy changes in their lives and relationship, some things remain and the same and he continues to love “classic Johnny.”



Music Review

By Anusurja Nath

Nirvana is undoubtedly one of the most prominent rock bands of all time. Their sheer influence on the rock music scene is unseen. Not only that, but their unique sound and raw songwriting made them completely take over the world at the time. Released in 1991, Nirvana's *Nevermind* wasn't just an album—it was a cultural earthquake that reshaped the music industry and defined a generation. The first thing listeners experienced the moment they started playing the album was the intro guitar riff to the song “Smells Like Teen Spirit”, a riff that would go on to define the whole 90s era of music. But the tracklist is not only limited to that.



Songs like “In Bloom” and “Come as You Are”, the latter being another major hit, show Nirvana’s ability to make melodic yet heavy anthems. On the other hand, “Polly” and “Something in the Way” reveal lead singer Kourt Cobain’s vulnerability and insecurities. What makes *Nevermind* a timeless classic is its ahead-of-the-time production and Cobain’s cryptic yet deeply emotional lyrics, which touch on the themes of depression, self-doubt, and alienation. This is why even 30 years later, *Nevermind* remains a landmark in the history of rock music and the main propellor of grunge rock, influencing many other artists and bands such as Blur. It captures the youthfulness of the early 90s and stands as a reminder of the golden age of music for generations to come and is a must-listen for anyone



2024 was a massive year for the music industry. Fans were left breathless by the sheer number of albums released by almost every mainstream artist one can name. However, if we were to name someone with the best year, it would undoubtedly be Kendrick Lamar. With his monstrous win in his feud with Drake earlier in the year, Kendrick was already on top of the world. Diss records such as “Not Like Us” took Kendrick to new places. If there were a time to drop an album, this would be the only right time. Hence, dropping *GNX* helped quench the thirst of eager fans worldwide. Kendrick Lamar's surprise release, *GNX*, marks a triumphant return to the forefront of hip-hop, showcasing his lyrical power and versatility.

Unlike some of his previous works, this album possesses some of the more confrontational, dark, and gritty songs and production styles. Since the whole feud with Drake, Kendrick has shown a preference for modern West Coast-style hip-hop beats, and this album is filled to the brim with them. Lyrically speaking, he addresses a lot of his peers and solidifies his high position in the rap hierarchy. The song “Squabble Up”, which was a track he had teased before the release of this album, features bouncy production, unique samples, and confrontational lyrics being delivered in a celebratory manner. Another major highlight of the tracklist is the song “TV Off”, where Kendrick collaborates with producer DJ Mustard and delivers shots against toxic media influences (and of course the meme “MUSTAAAAAARD”). Meanwhile, Luther with SZA shows a softer and R&B-influenced side of the record while the song *Reincarnated* is a homage to the Hip-Hop legend Tupac. In summary, *GNX* stands as a bold and assertive addition to Kendrick Lamar's discography. While not his best work, it easily surpasses Kendrick's 2022 project *Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers*, and takes its place among the top 3 of his discography.

Music Review Continued 8

By Anusurja Nath

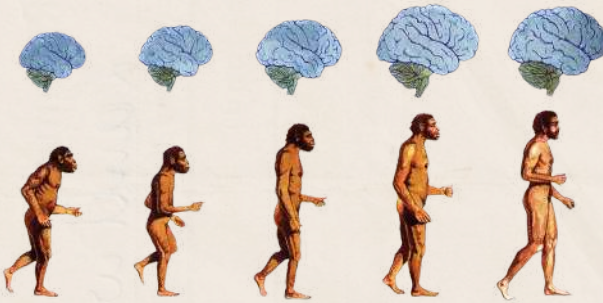
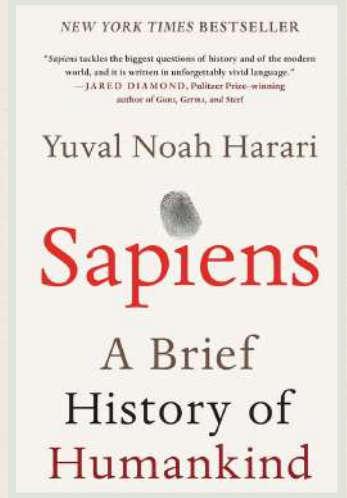


Hurry Up Tomorrow was one of the most anticipated records to be released this year. Not only was this the third and final installment of the trilogy with *After Hours* and *Dawn FM*, but also it is supposed to be The Weeknd's final album, who is one of the largest artists in the modern music scene. Not only is this album a satisfactory conclusion to this trilogy, but it can very well be argued that this record is The Weeknd's best album. Lyrically, *Hurry Up Tomorrow* delves deep into themes of fame, personal turmoil, and redemption. The Weeknd reflects on his journey, addressing past traumas and the complexities of his life. In terms of production and sounds, this is arguably The Weeknd's most versatile project up to date. Songs like "Baptized in Fear" follow the smooth, slow R&B direction he is known for, while songs such as "Open Hearts" follow the classic 80s sound we have heard in *After Hours*. On the other hand, the big single to the album "Timeless" featuring Playboi Carti is a large rap crossover with modern trap beats and synths, offering a catchy vibe to the listeners. Additionally, songs like "Sao Paulo" and "Cry For Me" have the Brazilian trap essence in them with lots of hard kick drums and aggressive bass. On top of all that, the Weeknd beautifully crafts this album by making each song smoothly transition into the next one with the centralized theme of performing in a concert or a show with a lot of crowd cheering soundscapes in the background. In addition, the last song of the album beautifully transitions into the first song The Weeknd had ever released, effectively allowing the listener to experience his career all over again. Overall, *Hurry Up Tomorrow* offers a series of 22 tracks that long-term fans and also new ones will undoubtedly enjoy.

Book Review: Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari

By Zaara Rumjhum

How would you describe humankind? Maybe saying “homosapiens” or “creatures with extraordinary abilities” who walk on the surface of the earth would be too less to describe them. However, the complex structure and description of humans and how they dominate the earth is defined in this book called “Sapiens”. It explores the history of Homo sapiens from the early days of hunter-gatherers to the present. This book combines anthropology, history and philosophy to give us an understanding of ourselves: humans.



The book is divided into four categories that discuss cognitive, agricultural and scientific revolution as well as the unification of humankind. Harari writes about the detailed progress of humans based on money, religion and nations and how we all are bound by those. The book has its own strength like: it's a well researched human history while weakness could be that it could be a bit controversial or oversimplified regarding religion particularly.

As a person who read this book, I could say that you get to know a lot about humans and how everything progressed. While as a person having belief and faith in a religion, it can spark debates for them as it did for me a bit. Although learning is a good way to have critical thinking on all these matters that surround us today and that have been around us for decades. I suggest it is a must-read book for anyone interested in history, philosophy and anthropology or simply curious about human nature.

Piquant

By: Sharnali Zaman

Reviews



This year's most renowned and favorite fast food restaurant is now being put to the test. Will it pass the Piquant review? Sharnali takes on Dave's Hot Chicken right in time for Saint Patricks Day! Dave's Hot Chicken has 7 spice levels, there most spiciest one known as the reaper. They originally started up in a parking lot and went viral due to instagram. They now have more than 700 locations in the development pipeline, with restaurants across the globe!

Dave's slider with pickles, slaw, and Reaper spice level - 8/10

The slider was really spicy, and as someone who loves spicy food, I appreciated the kick. The bun could have been toasted a bit more, but the sauce added a balanced flavor to the slider. You have to add the honey—it takes the slider to the next level!

Mac & Cheese - 7/10

The mac and cheese at Dave's Hot Chicken has a nice kick of black pepper and a mix of cheeses that make it taste gourmet. It's a great side that goes really well with their spicy chicken. Just keep in mind, it's pretty rich, with one serving having around 1,200 calories

Cheese Fries - 4/10

The cheese fries were not crispy and were a little too soggy. They were just regular fries with cheese, nothing too special about them.

Kale Slaw - 8/10

The Kale Slaw in the chicken sliders adds a nice, refreshing crunch that helps tone down the heat from the spicy chicken. It could use a little more salt, but overall, it's a great addition to the slider. It really elevates the whole thing and works well with the flavors.

Oreo Top Loaded Shake - 10/10

The shake has a smooth vanilla base, topped with lots of crushed Oreo pieces that give it a nice crunch and a rich chocolate flavor. You can also add Oreo pieces or crumbled M&Ms for an extra \$2 to make it even more customized. I would definitely repurchase if I'm craving a sweet treat!"

Regular Lucky Charms Top-Loaded Shake - 7/10

The Lucky Charms Top-Loaded Shake at Dave's Hot Chicken is definitely a bit overhyped. The main issue is that there's just not enough of the Lucky Charms cereal to really make it stand out.

Tony Rants About Legends Z-A ¹¹



Pokémon, a game based around discovery, battle, and friendships with unique and special monsters, has just removed a key and integral part of its tradition. Legends Z-A has completely removed the aspect of discovery by making it the first time a Pokémon game is limited to a single city, A SINGLE GOSH DARN CITY. Lumiose city isn't even that exciting, considering how in the trailers' depiction of it is just an enlarged version of what it was in the old XY games. The trailers also lack to show any possibility of future or past versions of a game but instead the current version of Kalos.

I suppose one could argue that the new Wild Areas and the fact that Pokémon could technically spawn anywhere as a part of discovery and exploration. In my opinion and most likely a lot of others, it's a complete and utter excuse of cutting out so much of the unique areas of Kalos like the Reflection cave, Route 13 the Desert, Snowbelle city, and Anistar City. In my opinion, this might be the most disappointing looking trailer for Pokémon I've ever seen, as the all the hype from the first trailer made everyone assume a new historic Kalos game would come out. The hype around another Legends game after Arceus being a major hit made people anticipate and hope for so much just to be disappointed with a game around modern Lumiose city and NOTHING else.





The Minute Good things

Despite the countless things Nintendo did wrong with Pokémon Z-A, there are still a few decent aspects to it. The biggest thing being the new way of combat, where the players have to dodge and move with their Pokémon to avoid damage and use attacks. This new game style is so much more exciting than the old Pokémon format, where you click a move and do turn by turn combat. This also happens to make combat feel more strategic as one could technically set up hazards (Stealth rock, spikes, toxic spikes, sticky web) and just run around in circles until the other Pokémon dies. Although in practice sounds nice, if Nintendo ever did decide to make Pokémon Z-A a competitive format with actual players, then games will be much less of a strategic use of moves but whoever could cheese the other player in the most brain dead ideas.



Another thing that seems interesting is the return of mega evolution, as it's one of the mechanics that I personally enjoyed the best. Mega evolution takes a Pokémon and just turns them up several notches and has been a staple to competitive Pokémon. Seeing them return is incredibly nice, especially in free view, which would seem much cooler than the birds-eye view in previous generations.

I also suppose the more combat orientated side of Legends Z-A is nice. The game is more focused on combat to progress in story as the game revolves around doing battles at night to increase one's League rating, but that's not the most interesting of ideas as it's essentially copying the battle frontier.



The Rise of Microtransactions in EA Games: A Timeline

By Jeffery Ortiz & Ryan Hamilton

Microtransactions can be defined as:

In-game purchases that offer cosmetic items, in-game currency, or gameplay advantages.

Electronic Arts (EA) is a dominant force in the gaming industry with titles like Madden, Fifa and Apex Legends. Yet, in recent years, EA has gained a reputation for its use of microtransactions. Overall, microtransactions do help video games make a profit. Yet, many companies like EA use this business model to gain as much money as possible from their player base.



2009

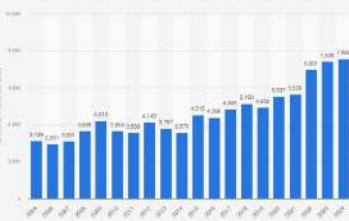
EA first experimented with microtransactions in FIFA Ultimate Team, which is an EA live multiplayer version of football. In FIFA, players are able to buy card packs to improve their teams. Now, usually you are able to buy packs if you play the game enough, but what many players realize is that buying a pack for \$5 is better than spending two hours of that play for a pack instead. This addition was highly profitable as EA had a net revenue of \$4.2 billion in 2009, which is a 15% increase from \$3.665 billion in 2008. The success of this system of monetization led EA to implement these types of systems in other franchises, such as Madden.



2013-2016

At this point, microtransactions were both used in single-player and multiplayer experiences. For example, in Battlefield 4 (2013) EA introduced Battlepacks, a loot box-style system that has weapon attachments, and skins. Also, in Mass Effect 3 (2012) and Dragon Age: Inquisition (2014) also have microtransactions in which players could buy in-game currency to unlock better equipment and character upgrades. Lastly, EA began integrating a tiered premium model in The Sims 4 (2014), offering expansion packs, game packs, and stuff packs, each at different price points.

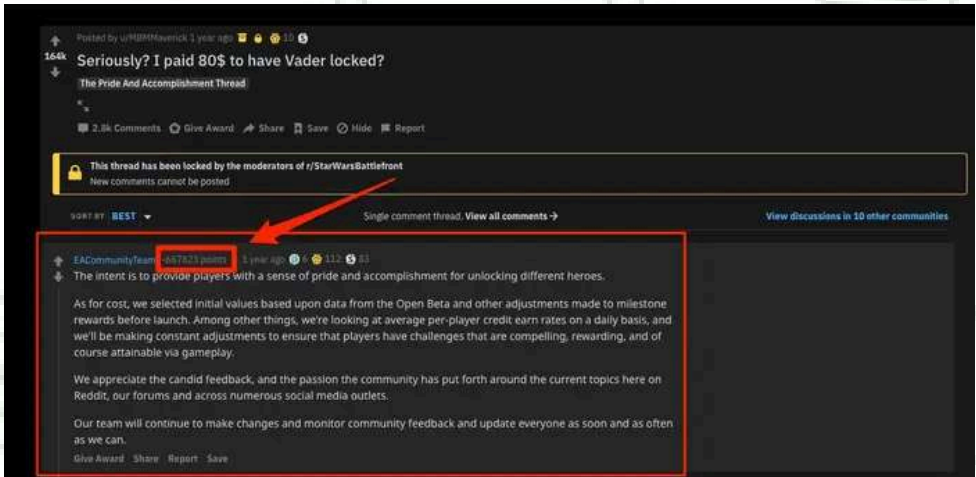
Net revenue of Electronic Arts from fiscal 2005 to 2024 (in million U.S. dollars)



Source: Electronic Arts Financial Reports
Additional Information: Electronic Arts Fiscal Year 2024 (in million U.S. dollars)

SOURCE: ELECTRONIC ARTS

2017: Star Wars Battlefront II Controversy



One of the most famous controversies EA had to deal with was the **Star Wars Battlefront II controversy (2017)**. When the game initially launched, it featured a loot box system that required either a ridiculous amount of playtime or real-world money to unlock key characters like Darth Vader. Many people hated this system, in which they gave much backlash to EA. Now, EA's response to this became an infamous Reddit comment, which became the most downvoted post in the platform's history. This controversy led to big changes, with countries like Belgium classifying certain loot box mechanics as gambling and banning them outright.

2018-2021: Damage Control and Adjustments

Due to the **Battlefront II** backlash, EA adjusted its approach to microtransactions. The company restructured **Battlefront II's** progression system, making characters unlockable through gameplay rather than microtransactions.



Conclusion

During the last 15 years we have seen EA use microtransactions and even other companies are using this system of microtransactions as well. However, it has seen a change mostly in the Free-to-play titles like Apex Legends thrive under cosmetic purchases, while sports franchises continue to push digital card pack sales.

Honey:

By: Nabil Sarker

The Rise and Fall

Honey is a web browser extension with a purpose to help people find coupons for their online shopping.

It was founded in 2012 by both Ryan Hudson and George Ruan with a reason for finding and using the coupons, while the service is free.

Rise:

During 2018-2019, different content creators like MrBeast, MoistCritical, Marques Brownlee and more, were getting sponsored by Honey if they promoted it.

During 2017, Honey introduced a cashback system similar to other online browsing websites like Amazon called "Honey Gold" which helped its users even more.

Additionally, when people make a purchase with Honey, whatever link they accessed from a content creator (like from MrBeast), that content creator will get paid a commission/percentage of what the purchase is.

During 2020, after Honey's success with bringing more users with the help from content creators, advertisements and more, this caught the attention of PayPal which bought Honey for 4 billion dollars.

Controversy:

Around December 2024 to January 2025, a video from a YouTube channel named "MegaLag" came out with a video called "Exposing the Honey Influencer Scam".

People have reported that Honey was not providing the users with coupons despite the fact that Honey was constantly searching for coupons.

Additionally, some people have noticed that before they make a purchase with Honey's help, they inspect the page in order to see what Honey is doing. Honey kept the money for themselves rather than pay a commission to a content creator where the customer has used the link provided by the affiliate links.



The Hamilton Review

The Hamilton Review is basketball's most reliable, trustworthy analysis of games, standings & predictions of the current NBA season. Here's the mid-season updates of what the playoffs might look like!

Playoff Predictions:


Eastern Conference


1. Cavaliers
2. Celtics
3. Knicks
4. Bucks
5. Magic
6. Pacers
7. Pistons (Play-In Tournament)
8. Hawks (Play-In Tournament)
9. Heat (Play-In Tournament)
10. Bulls/Nets (Play-In Tournament)

 - Conference Winners

 - Playoff Lock

 - Playoffs BUT At Risk For Play-In

 - Play-In Lock

 - Play-In BUT At Risk Of Missing Playoffs

Western Conference

1. Thunder
2. Grizzlies
3. Nuggets
4. Lakers
5. Rockets
6. Timberwolves
7. Clippers (Play-In Tournament)
8. Mavericks (Play-In Tournament)
9. Warriors (Play-In Tournament)
10. Kings/suns (Play-In Tournament)

Strategies & Catastrophes

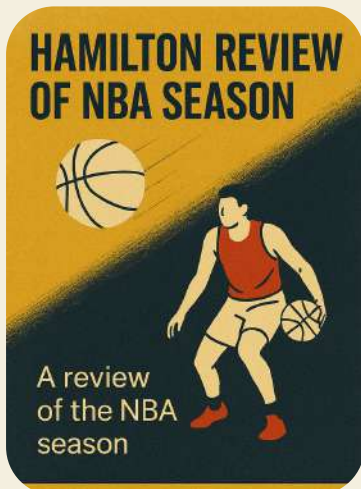
“Strategies & Catastrophes” covers the dichotomy between NBA teams that are strategizing & surprising the league with their performance this season. While other NBA teams are in a catastrophic state & are extremely disappointing with their current performance throughout the season so far. Here's some of our picks!

Houston Rockets

The Houston Rockets are in a similar situation in the West, currently being well over .500 & beating all of their matchups in a competitive Western conference. Offensive powerhouses such as Jalen Green & Alperen Sengun are able to put up amazing playmaking & scoring performances against some of the toughest teams in the league. This is backed by defensive anchors such as Amen Thompson who can triumph over smaller offenses. Despite barely missing the play-in last season, the Rockets are on track to be a terror in the West in the future.

Detroit Pistons

The Detroit Pistons are currently on a strong stretch towards this second half of the season with players such as Cade Cunningham & Malik Beasley becoming successful in the Pistons offensive game. Going from a team who tied for the longest losing streak in NBA history with 28 consecutive losses to a potential playoff contender in one year is impressive.



Phoenix Suns

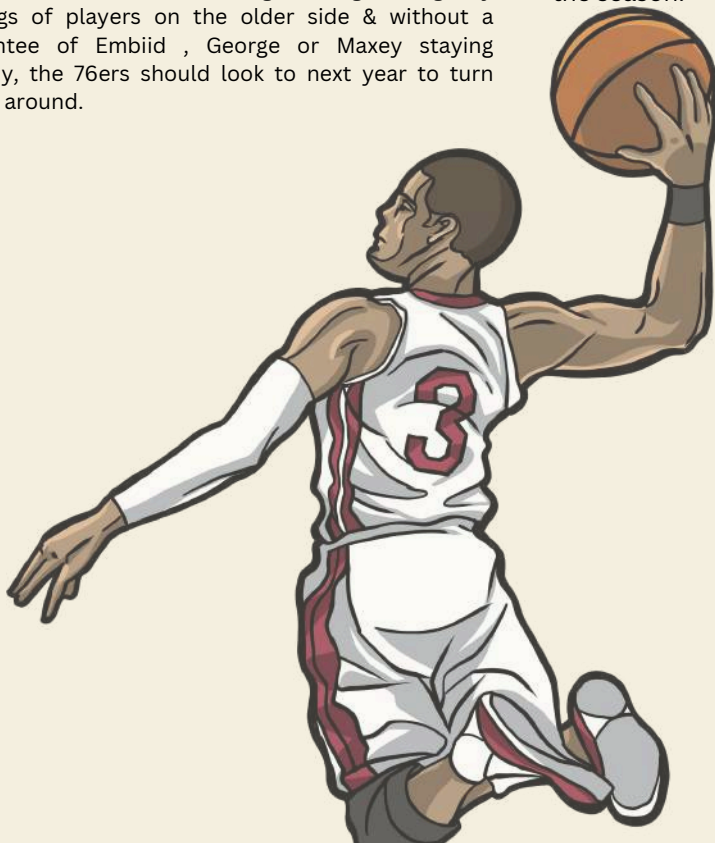
The Phoenix Suns are suffering a similar dilemma to the 76ers where as they had an immense amount of firepower & scoring capability on paper, yet they are sitting in the bottom-half basin of the Western Conference. Led by Devin Booker, Kevin Durant & Bradley Beal; the Suns have dropped to a new low with their struggling depth due to a weak bench unit & subpar defense which can no longer keep up with the competitive Western conference. The Phoenix Suns is another example of the dying "big three" era in the NBA where teams would trade away their entire future for a player or two to win a championship, but it seems that depth & team chemistry is what make championship teams work in the current stage of the NBA. From the disappointing end from last season with a first-round exit to the Timberwolves, the Suns have dropped even further & need to turn it around to make a late-season playoff push.

The pure firepower this team has on paper

The injuries, the culture & the decision making by the front office & players have led to a beyond disappointing record, pitting them to the bottom of the Eastern conference. Despite having a former MVP in Joel Embiid, a former all-star in Tyrese Maxey & a potential hall-of-famer in Paul George, the 76ers have struggled & lost games with only the real highlight being the rookie of the year (before he got injured) Jared McCain. The 76ers failure to meet expectations this season has shown the danger of big free agency signings of players on the older side & without a guarantee of Embiid, George or Maxey staying healthy, the 76ers should look to next year to turn things around.

Philadelphia 76ers

The Philadelphia 76ers started the year as one of the favorites in the Eastern Conference. With the acquisition of Paul George over the offseason & drafting a top 20th pick in Jared McCain, the 76ers were destined to be contenders for the season.



Club World Cup 2025 : Groups, teams, schedule, and times for FIFA tournament in USA

Nayem Alfi, Awais Syal



FIFA Club World Cup 2025 the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 is coming to the United States, and it's going to be huge. For the first time ever, the tournament will be hosted in the U.S., and with a new expanded format, bigger prize money, and some of the best teams in the world, this event is bound to be unforgettable. Not only is it going to be a massive spectacle for soccer fans, but it's also going to have a huge impact on the growth of soccer in the U.S.



Bigger Than Ever

The 2025 edition of the FIFA Club World Cup will feature 32 teams, a big jump from the usual 7. This new format means more matches, more teams, and more excitement. Clubs from all over the world will compete, including the champions of each of FIFA's six continents Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, North America, and Oceania. On top of that, the host country will send its own domestic champion to represent the U.S., making it a truly global event.

Some of the top teams already confirmed are Real Madrid, Manchester City, Boca Juniors, and Al Hilal, among many others. There's no shortage of talent, and fans are going to see some of the best players in the world, including Lionel Messi, Kevin De Bruyne, and Kylian Mbappé, going head-to-head.



Who's Playing?

The 32 teams are going to come from all over the globe, representing the best of the best. From Europe, we've got powerhouses like Real Madrid and Manchester City. South America is represented by teams like Flamengo and River Plate, while Asia will send teams like Al Hilal and Ulsan Hyundai. In North America, LAFC and Monterrey are looking to make their mark, and in Africa, you've got clubs like Al Ahly and Wydad AC. Even Oceania has a team to show off with Auckland City. And, of course, the host country's champion Inter Miami will represent the U.S. after their victory in the 2024 Major League Soccer season.

Big Money, Big Trophy The prize pool for this tournament is massive \$1 billion. The winning team is going to walk away with \$100 million, which is a pretty big incentive to go all out. The runners-up will also get a good chunk of money, and the other teams will earn varying amounts depending on how far they make it.

The winners will also get the famous FIFA Club World Cup Trophy, a beautiful award designed by Tiffany & Co. It's a symbol of global football success, and it's something every club wants to get their hands on.

Where It's Going Down

The tournament will run from June 14 to July 13, 2025, and will be held in 11 cities across the U.S. Some of the biggest venues like MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, and Hard Rock Stadium in Miami will be hosting the matches. These world-class stadiums are perfect for an event like this, and the fans are going to get an incredible experience.

The U.S. is known for hosting major sports events, and the FIFA Club World Cup will be no different. With top-notch facilities, passionate fans, and an electric atmosphere, it's going to be a great time.

Overall

The 2025 FIFA Club World Cup is going to be a game changer for U.S. soccer. With more teams, bigger prizes, and some of the best players in the world, it's going to be an event fans won't want to miss. The tournament will not only put soccer front and center in the U.S. but will also help the sport continue to grow and thrive here. For anyone who loves football, this is one tournament you won't want to miss.

Bashar Al Assad

By Aman Fatima

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“We are humans—simply humans, no more, no less”

- Mazen Al Hamada

The Sednaya prison known as The Human Slaughterhouse is a horrifying place. Something no human, ever should have to experience no matter the crimes they've committed. This prison was created under Bashar Al Assad. The intention was to punish people who committed crimes at first, but ever since 2011 when the civil war began, people were forced to make false confessions if they were protesters or even documented anything negative about Assad's regime. The ways people were tortured in this prison are things that the human brain can not comprehend or imagine. When you think of a torture cell, the worst thing you could think of is, ripping out someone's nails or hanging them but that is nothing compared to what the people in this prison have faced. There was also a hydraulic press used to crush dead prisoners at Sednaya Prison.



People have been tortured inside of that so-called prison for decades!! The longest person that has been inside of that prison named “Raghid Al Tatari” was in that prison for 43 years (as long as the prison has existed) simply because he as an airforce pilot refused to bomb Hama, targeting innocent civilians under Assad's regime. There were kids in that prison that were born inside and never left. They never saw the sky, grass or anything besides the small rooms with no windows and barely any space to lay down. Usually the babies that were born inside that prison due to assault were killed as soon as they were given birth to, in front of their mothers. The officers working inside of this prison admitted that the sole purpose was in fact not to punish but to humiliate and cause pain to these civilians.

On December 8th, opposition forces took control of Homs, declaring that Assad's regime had fallen. Assad had fled the country to Russia and sought asylum to stay there. The government tried to shut the forces but the forces overpowered them eventually taking over.



On December 9th, the primary opposition force Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (an Islamic political/paramilitary (a force similar to military force)), announced that the prisoners from Sednaya Prison have been freed. They then also published a list of prison staff that escaped, who have now become wanted in Syria. Later, the opposition was able to enter Damascus and take over there as well.

A specific person who was held in this prison is Mazen Al Hamada. In 2011, Hamada was imprisoned and tortured in the Sednaya Prison for about 2 years because he participated and took pictures of an anti-government protest. After he was let go, he got an asylum in the Netherlands where he shared the torture and complications he suffered. Later, in 2020 Hamada was secretly abducted/imprisoned by the Syrian Intelligence upon his return to Syria. On December 9th, 2024 his body was discovered in the Sednaya Prison showing clear signs of torture and beatings.

Mazen Al Hamada and his two nephews smuggled baby formula to help out families in need due to the shortage of supplies because of the ongoing civil war in Syria. Soon after this, he and his nephews were arrested. Hamada's nephews were later killed in detention, at the ages of only 6 and 10. Later, Hamada was forced to falsely confess to the charges of being a terrorist, possessing weapons and killing regime soldiers. When he refused to lie, he was tortured by guards physically, mentally and sexually in horrible ways that can not be comprehended. Eventually he confessed to all accusations besides them being false.



In early 2013, he fell incredibly sick and was sent to a nearby military hospital called 601 which other detainees referred to as another slaughterhouse. In transit, Hamada was once again physically assaulted and was told to forget his name and that from now on he is the number 1858. There Mazen saw detainees being tortured to death, corpses piling up in the bathrooms and hospital staff beating patients to death. Hamada was violently tortured. He suffered physical, mental, and sexual abuse, and sustained permanent physical and psychological injuries from his detention in regime prisons and injuries that made having children impossible.

In September 2013, Hamada was sent to court and ordered his release. Since he was still wanted by the intelligence services, he became an asylum seeker in the Netherlands. He wanted to help the people of Syria so he did interviews and decided to let the world know what was happening, unfortunately the world failed him. Hamada was approached by people from the Syrian embassy who were close to the Assad regime. He was lured back to Syria by being threatened that they would kill his family but if he came back they would release detainees. Hamada wrote that he was ready to sacrifice himself to save others. He was declared "missing" although the Syrian intelligence had detained him the second he stepped foot into Syria.

Trump's First 100 days

Donald Trump returned to the White House in January 2025 after winning the 2024 presidential election, making history as the first former president to serve two non-consecutive terms since Grover Cleveland.

His first 100 days have been busy, with policies focused on immigration, the economy, and energy. Trump wasted no time signing executive orders to undo Biden-era policies, especially on border security and energy independence.



The economy has also been a big focus for Trump. He announced new tax cuts for businesses, aiming to boost American manufacturing and job creation. The stock market responded positively, however since the establishment of tariffs the stock market has erased two years of gains. However, opponents questioned whether these tax breaks would primarily benefit the wealthy. Trump defended the plan, saying it was about creating opportunities for all Americans.

Energy policies have shifted dramatically under Trump's leadership. He pushed for more oil and gas drilling, arguing it would reduce energy costs and make America less dependent on foreign oil. Environmental groups expressed concern, warning about the long-term impact on climate change. Still, Trump remained firm, saying his policies put American workers first.



Overall, Trump's first 100 days have been a mix of praise and criticism. Supporters see him as delivering on his promises and putting "America First" back on the agenda. Opponents, meanwhile, accuse him of prioritizing divisive policies. As the next phase of his presidency unfolds, the country is watching closely to see how his leadership shapes the future.

By Malaika Thorpe

TARIFFS

By Lavashnee Surujparasad

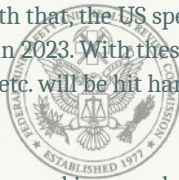
What is a Tariff and what is its purpose?

Tariff is a tax on imported goods and services. So certain items coming into the country may get a tax on it when coming into the country. The main purpose of a tariff is to increase revenue (the money coming into the country), protect domestic or country based industries, and to promote trade. However, this also would cause companies to charge more for products being imported into the country.

Tariffs imposed by President Trump

Tariff on autos, chips and pharmaceuticals

Within the first two months of Trump's second term the President has issued many tariffs on countries and items. For example, President Trump plans to impose a 25% tariff on auto imports (cars and/or car parts), semiconductors (chips), and pharmaceuticals. Much of the cars bought in the US are being imported from foreign countries. Chip manufacturing has been mainly done in Asian countries due to the cost to make these chips. Along with that, the US spent more than \$176 million on drugs or pharmaceutical imports in 2023. With these tariffs countries in Europe and Asia like Germany, China, Ireland, etc. will be hit hard.



Prices increase

With tariffs now on items that are used in everyday products companies will have to increase prices. For example with the 25% increase in tariffs on semiconductor/chips, it will cost a company more money to import the chips into the country or try to make it here. This in return will cause products with a semiconductor like a laptop to be more expensive or the price to increase to make up for the more money companies will lose. With prices increasing inflation will follow and gradually increase due to the standard of living beginning to cost more.

Conclusion

Not only will countries, in which these products are imported from, be hurt greatly from these tariffs but also the companies that depend on these imports. Companies now have to decide if they want to spend the money to import the products or spend even more money to build a US factory. Companies will have to go from a cost efficient way of making goods to spending more money than expected to create an area that can create products that can be sold. Companies have to create a new plan and incorporate these tariffs into it.



