

MJ vs NASCAR: Basketball Legend Took It Personal

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Michael Jordan has sued NASCAR for being a monopoly. This lawsuit pits the NASCAR Teams, 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports against the France Family who own NASCAR the organization. This is an important trial because it will decide whether the France family will keep having such a strong grip on the NASCAR world.

NASCAR has been a family business since 1948 created by the France family. The France family has made NASCAR into an incredibly successful sport generating \$1.7 billion revenue in 2024. Teams for a long time have complained that they don't get a fair share of the revenue causing around 75% of total teams to consistently lose money. In 2016, the France family introduced a charter system where the teams buy a charter that guarantees entry into 38 cup series and a larger share of NASCAR's TV revenue. It was pitched as becoming an NBA team as though they are part of the NASCAR organization and it costs \$20 million dollars every year to buy one of these charters. The charter system's revenue split would be 10% to NASCAR, 25% to teams, and 65% to the tracks. Which at first glance seems like a fair deal, but NASCAR owns half of all the tracks that are raced on. The ones that they don't own have an exclusive contract with NASCAR, so no other organization can hold races on those tracks. In reality, it was a way to chain the teams to NASCAR, so they can't go anywhere else making them more reliant on them. The system that the France family built does not allow a path for the teams to get ahead and on average a team loses \$2.2 million per car. Since the introduction of the charter system 11 teams have gone out of business and no longer compete in NASCAR. Any team that com-



Photo Credit: AP Photo/Bruce Dill

plaints about these terms can be cut at the whim of the France family.

When the charters were back for renewal only two teams did not sign, which was Front Row Motorsports and 23XI Racing. 23XI Racing is a very successful NASCAR team that is co-owned by Michael Jordan and Denny Hamlin, together they have won 9 cup series. After not signing the Charter, Jordan filed an anti-trust lawsuit against NASCAR to break them up. NASCAR tried to stop Jordan's team from racing, but Jordan got a preliminary injunction which allows them to continue competing. A lot has come out of the lawsuit about how they use their monopolistic powers to have control over the teams. For example, a way for them to extract money from the teams is they have the cars have certain parts that can only be acquired through NASCAR. Allowing them to charge whatever for these parts. Once the cars have these NASCAR parts they are not allowed to race in any event that's not NASCAR. While the lawsuit is ongoing, they have already been classified as a monopoly by the courts. US District court judge Kenneth D. Bell says, "Formula 1 and IndyCar are not substitutes. Therefore, NASCAR fully controls which race teams

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can compete at the highest level of stock car racing-effectively, it has a 100% market share.”

There are two ways that this trial can end. If Jordan wins, NASCAR will have to pay 300 million in damages, completely change the charter system so teams get a higher percentage of revenue, and sell the tracks they own, so they are owned by independent operators and potentially create competition in this market. Alternatively, if the France family wins 23XI racing and Front Row motorsports will be blacklisted and the status quo will continue with NASCAR even doing more abusive treatment to the teams. It only took Michael Jordan to take this unfair deal personal to shake up the NASCAR world.

Homo for the Holidays: A Festive Drag Show

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Iconic drag queen known as The Bearded Lady, or Divinity Holeburn, visited the Bondurant Auditorium on November 16th for a night full of festive, raunchy fun. The Asheville, North Carolina native told tales of her childhood, growing up in the south, and what life was like being closeted in the church. She opened the show with a parodied version of “It’s The Most Wonderful Time of the Year”, a classic originally sung by Andy Williams. Divine put her own spin on the Christmas hit, singing to the crowd “It’s The Most Wonderful Time to be Queer”. Divine went on to sing several other holiday songs, including lyrics for the audience to sing along. With each song she included some raunchy and fun lyric changes to spice things up. Divine told several stories about her family, her childhood, and her home back in North Carolina. She reminisced about growing up queer in the church, told the story of Jesus’ birth (using Lion King puppets), and talked about some of the traditions that her family followed while she was growing up. Overall, Divine put on an incredible show, and had an amazing stage presence. She included the audience in her performance and even brought three members of the audience up on stage to dance with her. We hope to see her again next holiday season.

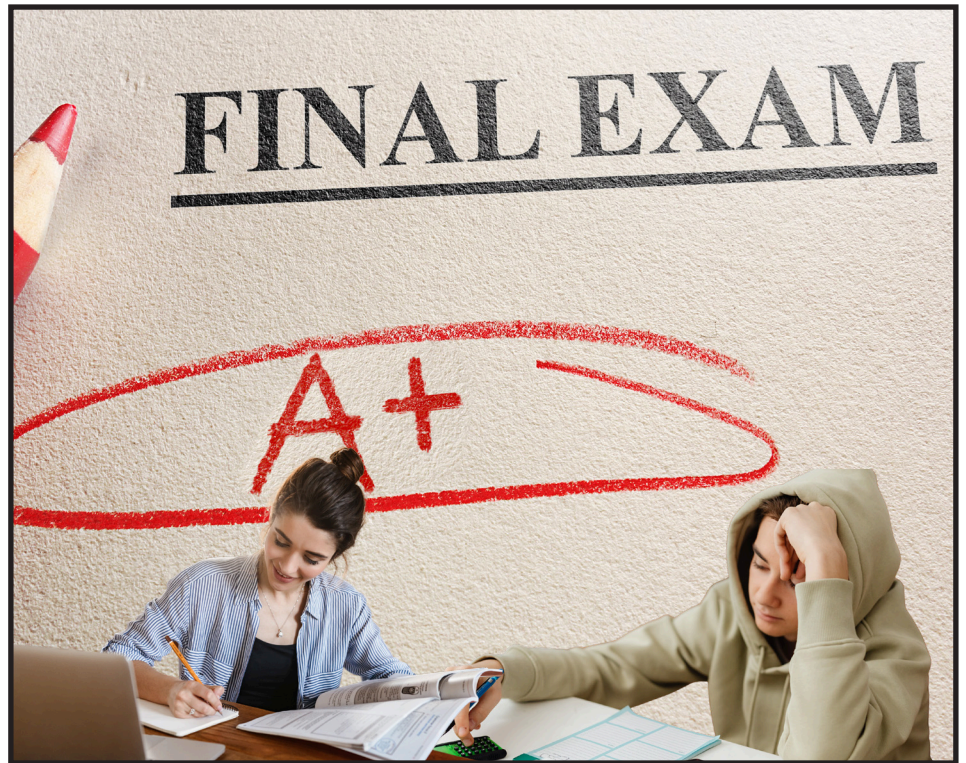
the Tartan's Tips for Finals Week

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Finals season is in full swing, and it can be easy for students to get consumed by the projects, presentations, and papers with approaching due dates. This two-week period in between holiday breaks can cause stress among the student body; a semester's worth of burnout plus the loss of motivation from the previous week off doesn't blend well. However, there are a few ways to combat the finals-induced anxiety and exhaustion, because even when it doesn't seem like it, personal well-being is just as important as your final exam grade.

It is important to take care of your physical health. It can be easy to let the simple things slip when the pressure is high, so make sure you're eating, hydrating, and sleeping enough. These are all correlated to academic performance, so make sure to eat when you're hungry and sleep when you're tired instead of pushing yourself to the limit. Keeping up with your physical health gives you more energy when you do study and will also prevent a post-finals crash.

Secondly, find ways to keep your mind at peace. I know it seems impossible, but it can often be a crucial part of your success. Find ways to unwind after the long days of studying and test-taking. Whether it be reading, participating in a hobby, or simply spending



time with friends, it's important to do things you love in addition to the hours of work.

Finally, some study tips. One of the most important aspects of studying is where you choose to do it. The environment around you directly effects your productivity; your space reflects your mind! A good study-space can include proper lighting, a tidy space, and comfortable seating. It is equally important to eliminate distractions from your surroundings like cell phones, TVs, etc. However, many find it helpful to study with music playing. Studies have also shown that music helps to calm the mind and produce more effective work when studying, especially instrumental music. Lastly, don't forget to take breaks. Studying for hours on end may seem like the most efficient option, but really, it can be counterproductive as your mind can wear tired, making it easier to forget information.

Native American Heritage Month is Over, Here's How You Can Still Support the Community

By: LIZ VILLA
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November is often associated with Thanksgiving, the holiday that consists of family gatherings and the sharing of a big meal. However, November is also Native American Heritage month; although November has come to an end, there are still many ways you can support the ever-present Native American community.

One of the simplest ways to show support for Indigenous community is to stop referring to the second Monday in October as “Columbus Day,” but rather its more recently adopted name, “Indigenous Peoples’ Day.” This offers support to the Native community, rather than supporting Christopher Columbus, who initiated the brutal colonization of the Indigenous people beginning in the late 15th century.

A more involved way to support the Native American community is to donate time or money to organizations like Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA), who offer year-round support of all kinds to Native Americans living in Tribal communities. PWNA accepts one-time as well as monthly donations of any amount, which go towards programs and resources including leadership training, education, scholarships, health services, nutrition training, emergency relief, and care for children. Donations also help supply families with clean water and nutritious food, which many Indigenous communities are lacking.

Tribal communities are uncomfortable places to live, often overcrowded, under-



2019 Virginia Tech Spring Powwow Photo Credit: crazycrow.com

funded trailer parks with little to no transportation available to the people living there. Children are often unable to celebrate normalized western holidays such as Christmas and Halloween, due to limited access to things like holiday food, candy, costumes, and decorations.

This year, PWNA is accepting donations as well as in-person volunteers to help fill holiday stockings for elders and youth living in these Tribal communities. Even small donations are extremely helpful, but if you are unable to donate, word-of-mouth and social media advertising for these programs, as well as similar ones, help others realize the necessity of supporting Native American communities.

Just because November is over, that does not mean that this community must be forgotten until next year. Support Native American causes and organizations both in your area and online, as these people are the foundation of America.

How Gacha Games Make Billions Upon Billions

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Mobile games are far more profitable than other traditional styles of gaming like console and PC. At the forefront of that profitability are Gacha Games, such as Uma Musume making \$2 Billion, Fate/Grand Order making \$7 Billion, and Genshin Impact making an estimated \$10 Billion. There are only a few ways mobile games can make money, one of those is by putting ads in the game, which is generally an annoyance for players, and the other are in-game purchases. Gacha Games have perfected both of these methods by implementing lottery style methods that adds excitement to the mix. How they've achieved this is through manipulation of their user base.

The first method they try to get players to spend is by including bonuses for first time sign ups. When players are putting their information in, that is known as a stop moment and that's the biggest barrier gacha designers face. Once players have broken that barrier they have actually broken themselves. What they are trying to do is for players to put in their credit card information and save it, so the friction and barriers are no longer there making it easier to spend money on the game.

The second method is buying battle passes that require daily login. Players will get awarded just for opening the game. It only takes a human being 50 repetitions to make something into a habit. Gacha's want to become a daily part of a player's life no different than the habit of brushing your teeth. They will push these battle passes a lot in the beginning and generally be a good deal dollar for in-game currency, so that it's even more enticing.

The third method is social proofing, so gacha's will make community forums where players can share what they've won. People



Photo Credit: uma-musume-pretty-derby.fandom.com

are more likely to share the highlights than their low moments. This causes players to think that it's even more possible when other people have what they want. An important truth to keep from players is that the majority of people do not spend money on the game. That truth is a cancer for Gacha's revenue stream and it can crumble their game.

The fourth method is consistently changing the Meta. The Meta is usually the characters that are best to play with at any given time. They need to continuously change it, so players never have a perfect team and are never able to feel satisfied. Players must always be chasing perfection and satisfaction even though they will never get it. They will be spending money on endless items for the character they want.

Only when all these methods are combined and utilized against a player can they become a whale. A whale is a player who spends an extravagant amount of money on in-game purchases. The term whale originates from the casino industry and Gacha games use the same psychological tricks that the casino industry utilizes to make billions of dollars every year.

Opinion: President Donald Trump's Grace Period is Over

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As the end of the year comes to a close, the president's honeymoon grace period will also end. The honeymoon period for a President is a period where the president has a favorable time in the public's mind, and are generally able to push their agenda easier than they would in their later term. This is because the public has not formed a complete opinion as the president is a new person they have not heard of and will give them a chance. Trump is an exception to the rule because of his previous term and his consistent ability to be in the public's ear for more than a decade. The American public knows who Trump is and it may not be to his benefit. The last couple of presidents have enjoyed an average initial approval rating of 60% at the beginning of their term, and after a year had passed the approval rating dropped an average of 14% points.

Donald Trump's approval rating started at 47%, far lower than even his first presidency term. Though the president is in his grace period that has not stopped support from plummeting as even favorable polling towards him like Fox News has shown him underwater with voters. The #1 reason is because of the economy, when Donald Trump was on the campaign trail he said that he would bring the cost of living down "day one" and that has not happened. In fact, contrary to what he says grocery prices are up and the people feel it in their wallets and are having to go into debt for the bare necessities.

The handling of the Epstein files has not been favorable towards him either. As one of the promises made was they were gonna release the Epstein files in full with-

out censorship. That has not been the case at all and most likely because he is in the files. He vehemently denies any involvement with Epstein even though there is a history of being buddy-buddy with one another. In an email talking about Trump, Jeffrey Epstein says, "I have met some very bad people, none as bad as Trump. Not one decent cell in his body... so yes- dangerous." In a 2018 text message he writes, "... I am the one [person] able to take him down." Now, a bill has passed in congress to release the files, but many believe it will be a very skewed version released.

The Government Shutdown that now seems even more pointless hurt the average person most as they could not receive the government assistance they needed. The reason I call it pointless is because the government shutdown started because ACA tax credits/ obamacare was expiring and republicans did not want to revitalize them, so then began a 43 day shutdown breaking Trump's previous 35 day shutdown record. Now, Trump is telling republicans in congress to pass a bill that extends Obamacare because he does not have a plan to reduce healthcare for the average American.

Republicans lost major elections in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City, and the redistricting of California. They don't hold the leads they used to because voter's lives are not getting easier, they're getting harder. Voters will flock to new ideologies when the old ways stop working. The only worry to have is that Trump has authoritarian tendencies and may attempt to acquire more power through congress. He would need the support of Congress, but politicians are cowards and risk averse by nature.

RU Interested in Being An RA? Recruitment is Open

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Behind every residence hall is a team of Residence Assistants, or RAs, working to support students everyday. These RAs play a much bigger role on campus than most students realize. From helping with move-in day to being the first person students turn to during emergencies, RAs are the backbone of residence hall and apartment life. They balance being a student and a leader while creating a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for everyone in their building. Each year, Housing and Residential Life selects roughly 95 RAs, and strategically places each of them in a building based on each candidate's strengths and where they would best accompany students. Being an RA is an important job. **Associate Director of Residence Life, Stephanie Hovsepien**, shares that, **"I sincerely believe the RA position is the most important student position on any college campus. RAs help students build community and find their place here at Radford. They inform and take students to campus events, they are a resource when students don't know where to go for assistance, they facilitate conversations between roommates who are struggling to live together and help them complete a roommate agreement, and they walk the buildings to ensure safe and comfortable living environments. RAs are friends and mentors, educators and mediators, helpers and crisis responders."** Through all of these responsibilities, RAs shape the everyday experience of residential life and leave a lasting impact on the students they support.

While administrators highlight the importance of RAs, **Ty Hairston**, a current RA offers insight into what the job is and shares his experiences. **"From my personal experience as an RA, I've learned how rewarding it can be to make an impact on people. Some of the**



best moments come from the small interactions, helping a resident through a challenge, seeing them get comfortable on campus, or watching your community come together. I've learned how important it is to stay organized and balanced, because you're juggling school, life, RA responsibilities, and any other extracurricular activities that you participate in all at the same time." Hairston's experiences are what inspire many students to consider applying for the RA position. The RA Application for the 2026-2027 school year is open until January 20th, 2026, on the Housing Portal. To be eligible, students must have lived on campus for one academic year and maintain a 2.0 semester GPA and a 2.5 cumulative GPA. RAs are compensated through a scholarship that pays for their housing assignment and meal plan. For students interested in learning more about the RA position, the last Interest Session will be held on Tuesday, January 20th, at 5:00 P.M. in Cook 107.

Highlander Highlights: Women's Basketball Upsets Navy in Double Overtime, Men's Team Picks Up Win Number Four

By: BRANDON WHITAKER

Women's Basketball

The Highlanders hosted Navy on December 4th resulting in a thrilling double overtime win, 97-84. The High's found themselves down 45-57 heading into the 4th quarter. They went on an 17-8 scoring run to tie the game up at 65 with 1:55 remaining. Anna Stromberg hit the go ahead shot with 1:09 left in the game but later on, coming off of a timeout one of Navy's players was able to bank in a hook shot with 0.9 seconds on the clock to send the game to its first overtime period. In the second overtime period it was Radford's turn to make some magic happen as Joi Williams made a fadeaway three pointer on the right wing with three seconds left on the clock to tie the game once again, 78 all. In double-overtime Radford aggressively attacked the paint. Cate Carlson took the first lead of the period with a layup followed by two free throws from Joi Williams. Carlson made two more free throws and then hit the dagger, a three pointer to put Radford up 91-84. The High's held Navy scoreless for the final 1:20 and secured the win. **Joi Williams scored a career high 36 points off the bench in the contest, the highest scoring output since Shannan Wilkey scored 36 in 1994.** After the game **Head Coach Mike McGuire** commented on the resilience of his team, **"This is my 13th year here, and this has got to be one of the top games I've been a part of at the Dedmon Center.** Probably outside of our (Big South) championship game in 2019. Just the heart that both teams played with. The will to win that was demonstrated tonight was awesome. For our ladies to stay in the game. They just stayed the course. I think we got down 17. **For us to battle back from that and find a way to win is just incredible..."**



#4 Joi Williams ties the game Photo Credit: Radford Athletics @radford_wbb on Instagram

Men's Basketball

Last week the men's basketball team split a pair of home games, losing to Southern Mississippi on December 3rd and securing a win against Saint Francis University on December 7th. The Highlanders kept the game close throughout the first half, heading in to halftime down 29-31. Southern Miss adjusted their gameplan and held a 10+ point lead for the majority of the second half. In the final minute **Del Jones** hit two three pointers just beyond the Radford logo at center court but the late effort wasn't enough to complete the comeback. Against Saint Francis, Radford got out to a 13 point lead in the first half and shot 7/15 from three including three deep bombs from junior guard **Lukas Walls**. In the second half the Highlanders ran away with the game and played great defense holding SFU to just 24 points. **Jaylon Johnson** finished the game with a season high 18 points and 7 assists while Walls also had his best scoring day of the year so far with 14 points.