

Close, but Never Crowned: Arsenal's familiar collapse returns

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Hello and welcome back to another edition of the Full 90. In this week's issue, I wanted to talk about the current Premier League title race. In previous issues, I have frequently alluded to the fact that the current Premier League leader, Arsenal, has been prone to slipping up when it matters most in England's top flight. For all the progress under manager Mikel Arteta, Arsenal continues to carry a familiar yet frustrating reputation in the Premier League. In recent years, the Gunners have become a team that can compete with the best and lead the table but not finish at the top. The 2025-26 season has brought more of the same for the London side, having spent over 200 days at the top of the league, yet slipping at the most critical point of the season.

Fans have begun to realize this isn't a one-off collapse; instead, this tendency to choke has become cyclical. In the business end of the season, Arsenal tends to hesitate and repeatedly falter in defining moments. In pivotal games, the Gunners tend to hide or cower from the challenge, with the latest example coming in a 2-1 defeat to rival Manchester City last Sunday.

In a match with extremely high implications, fans around the globe watched what could be a title-deciding fixture within England's top division. City struck first through a moment of brilliance from the young Frenchman Rayan Cherki, who



Former player of the Arsenal Player F.C., Alexandre Lacazette, on the field after a win against the Magpies in 2020. Arsenal F.C. is currently second in the Premiere League after Manchester City. PHOTO COURTESY OF @ARSENAL ON INSTAGRAM

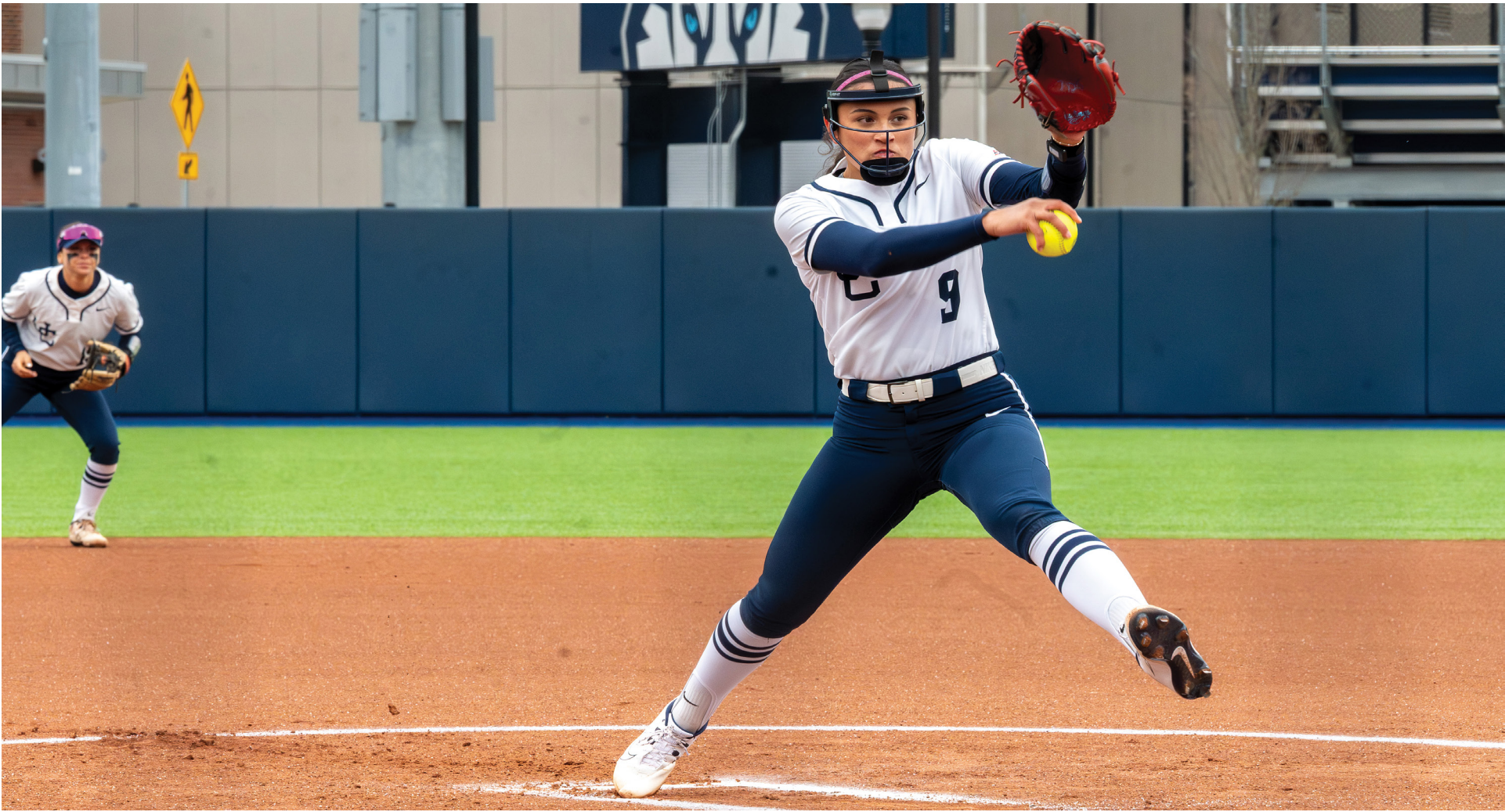
displayed magisterial skill to dance his way through the Arsenal box and dispatch a calm finish into the bottom left corner. Arsenal responded quickly with a goal from German striker Kai Havertz seconds later. After the chaos, the game fell into a familiar script for Arsenal and their supporters. The Gunners created some chances, even hitting the inside of the post through a snapshot from Eberechi Eze, yet couldn't deliver the goal to lead the game. Arsenal lacked a lethal attack; meanwhile, in the 65th minute, Man City's goal machine, Erling Haaland, did exactly that by outmuscling his defender and scoring the winner, shifting the entire trajectory of the title race.

For Arsenal, this isn't just a loss — it's a full-blown psychological slap in the face. Once again, they had the opportunity to assert dominance and essentially guarantee themselves the league but instead handed the initiative to a Manchester City team that, in recent weeks, has been thriving on it. Arsenal has hit a rut, and the timing could not be any worse, while this City team seems to be riding this massive wave of confidence with no signs of losing their footing.

The consequences from this game were immediate, with the players' reactions when the final whistle blew telling the whole story. The defeat allowed Manchester City to close the gap to just three points with a game in hand, and after Wednesday's win against Burnley, they have jumped into first place in the Premier League. With five games remaining, the title race has flipped. What once looked like Arsenal's title to lose now feels like City's to control. Even when level on points, City's attacking edge and experience gives them a decisive advantage in goal differential. A more concerning note for Arsenal and their supporters is their current run of form. Multiple losses in recent weeks across major competitions suggest potential fatigue and fragility during the most important part of the season.

The title is no longer in Arsenal's hands. Even if they match City point for point, they will need to rely on the Manchester side to slip up, which is not a favorable gamble given their form and consistency over the concluding third of the season. For Arsenal, the path onward is very simple: win out and remain hopeful that City will falter. However, this hope may be fleeting given the experience and talent Manchester City possesses with a large sum of their players having already won the Premier League before. If this season ends without a title, it will reinforce a harsh truth: until Arsenal proves they can deliver in these defining moments, they will remain simply contenders, but not champions.

SOFTBALL: UCONN TO HOST BIG EAST RIVALS IN THREE-GAME WEEKEND SERIES



UConn softball plays against Hofstra University at Burrill Family Field on April 22, 2026. This is one of four home games left for the Huskies' regular season. PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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The UConn softball team (23-24, 13-5) will host the Creighton Bluejays (26-21, 14-4) in a three-game series clash over the weekend.

The Huskies are favored to win, as they own a dominating 15-5 record against the Bluejays dating back to the 1991 season.

In the 2025 campaign, Connecticut took a 2-1 series triumph on the road and defeated Creighton twice in the 2025 Big

East Tournament. In the Huskies' pair of victories during the regular season, the team accumulated a combined total of 30 runs. Defensively, UConn conceded 18 runs and shut Creighton out in game three.

Paving the way for the reigning Big East champs, Grace Jenkins thrived. In 12 at-bats, the junior contributed five runs, five hits, a home run, three walks and seven RBIs.

Trailing behind her, Kaitlyn Breslin registered eight runs, six hits, four walks and 11 RBIs in eight at-bats. Not to mention, the right fielder went yard twice

for a grand slam.

On the mound for Connecticut in game one, Sydnee Koosh and Stella Kiemele struggled. Collectively, they let up 16 hits, 18 runs, 17 earned runs and six walks with just one strikeout.

As for game three, Payton Kinney pitched a complete game (five innings). The Florida native allowed just four hits, two walks and retired two players.

Compared to Creighton, Sydney Seville, Sydney Potter and Kaelan Schultz sparked the Bluejays' offense in game one, posting 13 of the squad's 17 RBIs.

As for games two and three,

generating runs was not easy, but they managed to squeak out a seventh-inning comeback to stop UConn from claiming the sweep. Between the final two outings, Creighton racked up just six RBI's and left 12 runners on base.

In the team's lone win, Kenzie Schopfer pitched for seven innings and coughed up seven hits, six runs, six earned runs and three walks with four strikeouts.

Heading into the weekend, the Bluejays are coming off a three-game sweep versus the St. John's Red Storm. It is worth

noting that in the program's past 10 meetings, the team has notched an 8-2 record with six wins earned on the road.

For UConn, the squad looks to continue their momentum after mercy ruling Hofstra Pride 11-3 in five innings. One player to keep an eye on is Cat Petteys. In two at-bats, the infielder knocked two hits for three runs, three RBIs and walked twice. Additionally, Petteys homered in the bottom of the first inning.

To watch the series, fans can tune into ESPN+ at 3 p.m. on Friday, 4 p.m. for Senior Day on Saturday and noon on Sunday.