

Photo of the Day |



The Connecticut Huskies and the Marquette Golden Eagles compete during a women's lacrosse game in Mansfield, Conn., on Saturday, April 25, 2026. The Huskies defeated the Golden Eagles 6-5 on Senior Day. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

LATO'S LENS:
THE BEST OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL IN LATO'S LENS

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I joined The Daily Campus as a junior in the fall of 2024 in hopes of utilizing my passion for sports to hone my writing skills for law school. Although I thought I was a good writer to start with, I was quickly humbled when I received my first article back, covered in too many edits to count.

Since then, I've written dozens of articles ranging from UConn men's hockey, soccer and softball previews and recaps to my weekly column, Lato's Lens, where each week I analyzed the biggest storylines in college football and basketball. I also earned the title of staff writer, which was a huge milestone in my DC career.

Flashforward to now: I'm currently a senior with a little over a week left until I walk across the stage at Gampel Pavilion, writing my last ever addition of Lato's Lens. Although it's bittersweet, I'll forever cherish my experience working amongst some of UConn's finest writers and sports fanatics.

After a bit of reflection, it's only fitting to take one final look back at some of the best moments in college football and basketball during the era of Lato's Lens. So here you go:

“The Shot”

Every UConn men's basketball fan who's watched the team over the last 30 years can re-

call a game or moment that defines their love of the program. Whether that be Scott Burrell's pass to Tate George in the 1990 Sweet 16 against Clemson, or Kemba Walker's dagger three-pointer in the 2011 Big East quarterfinals, the list goes on and on.

Another “UConn Moment” happened in this year's Elite Eight when freshman Braylon Mullins drilled the eventual game-winning logo three with 0.4 seconds left to stun the top-seeded Duke Blue Devils. The Huskies were down by as much as 19 points in the first half and clawed back to win the game, etching a third Final Four appearance for head coach Dan Hurley and senior captain Alex Karaban.

Although the two-seeded Huskies would go on to lose in the national championship game to Michigan, Mullins' shot to send his team to the Final Four will forever ring in college basketball fans' minds, especially for myself, who was tackled to the ground by one of my friends as the ball went through the net.

The 2025-26 Indiana Hoosiers

Head coach Curt Cignetti and the Indiana Hoosiers stunned the nation this past college football season after winning the 2026 College Football Playoff National Championship game by a score of 27-21 over Miami, capping off an undefeated season. Many, including Texas head coach Steve Sarkisian, thought a season like theirs was nearly im-

possible given the new 12-team playoff era, but Indiana quickly proved them wrong.

The headline for this Hoosiers team turned out to be California transfer quarterback Fernando Mendoza, who became the first player in program history to win the Heisman Trophy. I always laugh when I think about that, since I gave Mendoza a B+ rating as a transfer in a previous Lato's Lens article.

For being a college football junkie, seeing Indiana's rise from underdog to college football powerhouse was one of my favorite storylines in all of sports. This was especially true because of the humble Mendoza, who capped off his legendary season by being selected first overall in this year's NFL Draft.

The 2025 UConn Women's Basketball National Championship

As a UConn student, watching now-Dallas Wings point guard Paige Bueckers play was truly inspiring, especially considering the adversity she faced throughout her storied UConn women's basketball career. From major injuries to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, she quite literally went through it all.

It was only fitting that she walked away from the program last season with a dominant victory in the 2025 NCAA Women's Basketball National Championship game against her archnemesis, the South Carolina Gamecocks, adding a 12th national title to Geno Auriemma's leg-

endary résumé.

I love a good “feel-good” story, and that's exactly what happened with Bueckers — made even more special by the fact that it occurred during my time as a student. UConn students are truly some of the luckiest sports fans in the world.

“Ole Miss Madness”

At the beginning of the season, I never thought in a million years that Lane Kiffin would ever leave his perch as head coach of the Ole Miss Rebels, especially after leading the program to an 11-1 regular season in 2025 and an appearance in this year's College Football Playoff. When he did so for conference rival LSU, I was shocked — especially given how unusual the timing was.

What happened after his exit was incredible, to say the least. After being promoted from defensive coordinator to head coach, Pete Golding led the Rebels on a miraculous postseason run with wins over Tulane and Georgia, highlighted by quarterback Trinidad Chambliss' stellar play. Watching the team perform so well despite such an unfortunate circumstance was remarkable, while also giving fans an exciting preview of what's to come, considering most of Golding's squad will return in 2026.

To whoever lines up against the Rebels next season: watch out.

“The Game” 2024

If you've paid any attention

to Lato's Lens over the past two years, you're probably well aware of my feelings toward the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry game. Although the Buckeyes got the best of the Wolverines in this year's rendition of “The Game,” this wasn't the case for the 2025 national championship team, whose one of two blemishes that season came at the hands of Michigan.

The 2024 Wolverines, quite frankly, were not a vintage Michigan team. They entered the game with a 6-5 record and former walk-on, cancer survivor Davis Warren at quarterback, who had struggled throughout the year. Meanwhile, the No. 2 Buckeyes were 10-1 and steamrolling their way toward a Big Ten title game appearance and College Football Playoff berth.

And then it happened. The Michigan defense stifled the high-octane Buckeyes offense, holding them to just 10 points in a stunning 13-10 victory that knocked Ohio State out of Big Ten title contention. The upset shocked college football fans everywhere, spoiling what could have been Ryan Day's second victory against “the team up north.”

For obvious reasons, this one had to make the list. I wrote about it extensively in my column, and it's only fitting that I finish my career as a Daily Campus sports writer by talking about one of my favorite editions of “The Game” in recent memory.



Indiana Hoosiers entering the field. Fernando Mendoza is the key player in the frame. PHOTO COURTESY OF @LISAMBEBOU ON PINTEREST