Sports

Photo of the Day |



The Huskies ahead of their game vs Villanova on Jan. 15 at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. The game ended with a final score of 99-50, securing the win for UConn. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Big Apple:

What is wrong with the New York Knicks?

by James Badeau
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It is safe to say that it is time to hit the panic button for the New York Knicks. New York has dropped nine of its last 11 games, with its most recent loss being an embarrassing home defeat to the Dallas Mavericks.

The boo birds were out on MLK Day at halftime when Dallas was leading the Knicks 75-47. Cooper Flagg was getting everything he wanted early on. The number one pick in the 2025 draft put up 18 points and seven rebounds in his MSG debut.

"I'd be booing us, too," said Knicks' Captain Jalen Brunson postgame.

Brunson has a history of being hard on himself in press conferences, and this one is no different.

The home crowd let Karl-Anthony Towns know he was underperforming as he was walking to the bench late in the fourth quarter.

"You come to MLK Day here at The Garden, and tickets are three times the price, and to come here and spend your hard-earned money... I'd be disappointed too." Towns told reporters postgame.

Towns' name has been mentioned ahead of the trade deadline. The Knicks have discussed potential trades with teams such as the Magic, Hornets and Grizzlies, per Steve Popper.

It is an off year for the 30-year-old, yet he is second in the league in rebounds per game. Towns is shooting a career low 46.7% from the field. His defense has been a struggle for his entire career, and defense is what New York needs to succeed.

I don't expect Towns to be traded anytime soon, despite the struggles. Why trade a generational talent the year after making your first conference finals in 25 years? It is the midway point of the season, which means there is plenty of time to fix these mistakes. New York is sitting in third place in the Eastern Conference, a game and a half behind the Boston Celtics, but also the same distance from being in the Play-In.

Knicks fans need to realize that slumps happen. Losing to teams like the Kings, Mavericks and Hawks doesn't sit well with the fans, knowing that they are a championship caliber team.

Head Coach Mike Brown has been criticized during this stretch, even by individuals within the Knicks organization, for his behavior in the Jan. 15 loss to the Golden State Warriors.

After another disappointing loss, Brown was seen giving hugs and catching up with his former players, including Draymond Green. Earlier in the game, Green committed a flagrant foul on Towns. The two players have a negative history with each other, so this play looked more personal than the game.

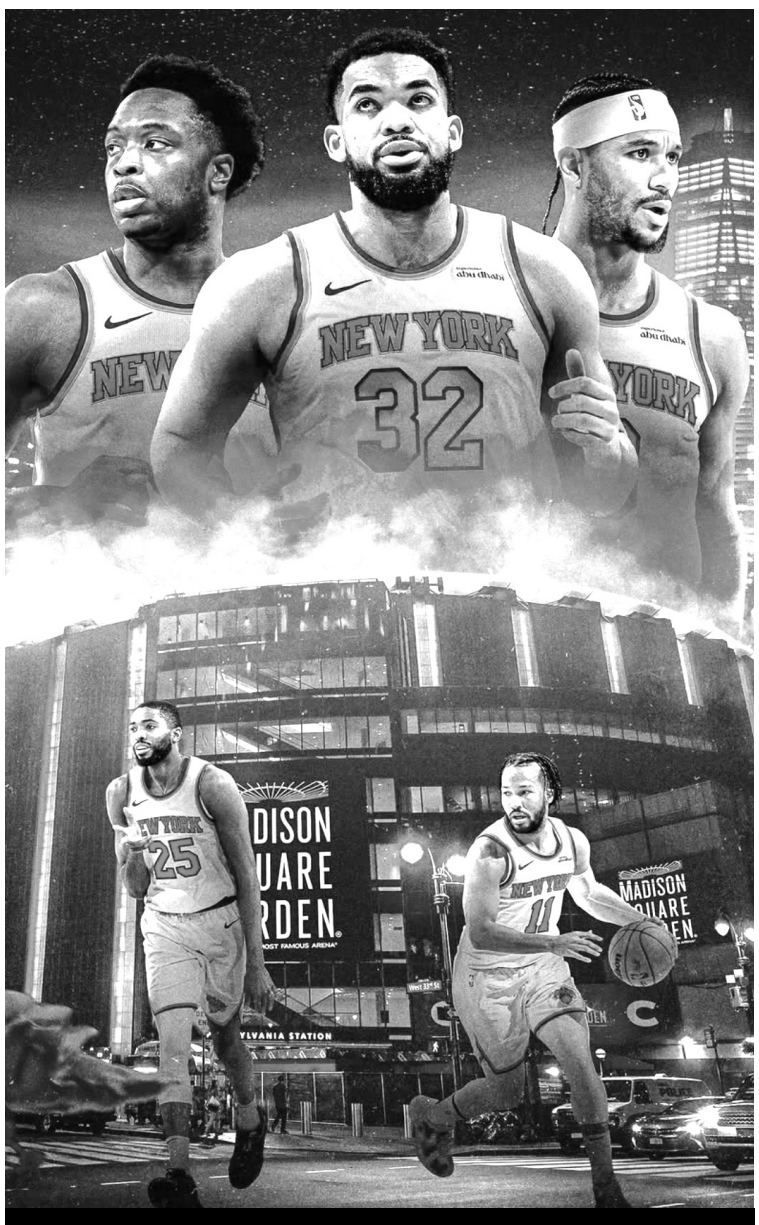
Seeing a head coach showing signs of positivity or happiness with the opponent, especially after losing, doesn't sit right with the fans.

"Lock in and do your f---ing job," is what Brown told his team at halftime.

The job is not getting done. Since the new year, the Knicks are bottom five in the league in offense and defense. Why is that? New York has been fully healthy for the majority of this time. Josh Hart and Brunson missed a combined 10 games during this stretch.

The embarrassment against Dallas was one of the first games all season where the Knicks were at full strength, yet they still got throttled by a struggling Mavericks team.

Let's hope that this is nothing more than a slump, and the Knicks get back to form sooner rather than later.



The New York Knicks pictured in a graphic in front of Madison Square Garden. Players are visibly disappointed due to the results of their season.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @FLYTE_DESIGNS ON INSTAGRAM

COLETTE'S COMMENTARY:

BREEZE SURGES, HIVE BATTLES GROWING PAINS IN EARLY UNRIVALED ACTION

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Unrivaled began their second season on Monday, Jan. 5, debuting two new teams, the Breeze Basketball Club and Hive Basketball Club.

Breeze features a young crew including Paige Bueckers, drafted as the No. 1 overall pick in the WNBA. Hive features a mix of younger and more experienced players from the league, including No. 2 overall pick Kelsey Mitchell.

Since Unrivaled kicked off its second season, Breeze has already proven to be a dominant team with strong performances to begin the season. On the other hand, Hive has struggled to gain momentum but still shows promising talent.

Breeze is currently ranked No. 3 in Unrivaled with a 3-2 record, just behind Laces and Rose, the defending champions of the league.

The team consists of Bueckers, Cameron Brink, Kate Martin, Dominique Malonga, Aari McDonald and Rickea Jackson, with Noelle Quinn as the head coach. The team began with a 2-0 start but suffered two consecutive losses to Rose and Vinyl.

The squad quickly bounced back with a dominant 83-64 win over Mist. The win solidified why Bueckers was the No. 1 pick in the league.

Bueckers scored 37 points and contributed eight rebounds and five assists, showcasing the completeness of her game. Brink was also dominant, contributing 18 points, with Malonga contributing defensively with nine rebounds.

The win also featured an individual achievement for Bueckers with a win of the Inaugural Unrivaled Free Throw Challenge. To be included in the competition, players had to compete in a minimum of three of the first five games and have a minimum of six free throw attempts. Bueckers made 13-of-13 of her free throws over the first five games, giving her the top percentage and number of free throws, outperforming other players who shot perfectly but with fewer attempts. Bueckers received a cash prize of $50,000 for the win. Hive is currently ranked No. 7 with a 1- 4 record, just ahead of Lunar Owls, who are currently ranked last in the league. The team consists of Mitchell, Sonia Citron, Saniya Rivers, Ezi Magbegor, Monique Billings and Natisha Hiedeman with Rena Wakama as the head coach. The team shows early potential with blocks and steals but has struggled with poor shot selection leading to giving up easy baskets despite a talented roster.

The team displayed their potential in a close 78-75 win over Rose, delivering Rose their first loss of the season and locking in their first and currently only win of the season. Multiple players shot in the double figures, with Mitchell leading with 24 points, overpowering Rose's team leader Chelsea Gray. Rose largely relied on Gray in the game, who recorded 36 points, but the win was truly a team effort for the Hive with Rivers, Citron, Magebegor, Billings, Rivers and Mitchell all in the double digits.

The team struggled in the following game against Phantom. The Hive struggled to make three-pointers and defend a dominant Phantom duo of Aliyah Boston and Kelsey Plum. The team also struggled to build chemistry together, despite four individuals scoring in the double digits. Even with the struggles of the Hive, their individual successes and dominant wins display that they are not a team to be counted out.

The Unrivaled season has just begun with an exciting start, leaving each of the eight teams with at least one loss to start the season. As the season goes on, Breeze will look to keep their spot at the top of the league, while Hive will look to find momentum building off their win against Rose.