Opinion

Photo of the Day |



A student shops official merchandise at the UConn Bookstore on Sunday. The bookstore launched a collaboration with Starter, a sports clothing brand, last month. PHOTO BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Why Mike Tomlin's Minecraft world matters

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Former NFL head coach Mike Tomlin is all over the news, and it isn't for anything controversial, disputed or contentious. Tomlin's recent fame actually has nothing to do with the sport or team he coached for 18 years, but a Minecraft world he's been building for the past 12. Objectively, this is hilarious. For a man whose average win percentage is only slightly over .500 (.628), you'd think in all his free time during his coaching years he'd be scheming or plotting new strategies to get more decisive regular season wins, but alas, he's been spending his downtime in a world of square and cubes. The whole endeavor is slowly being put on display on his new YouTube channel. The first episode of his showcase, ROOFTOPS, PENTHOUSES, AND URBAN LIVING, sits at over 3 million views at the time of me writing this. As absurd as this entire thing is, I have to say, I really like it.

Tomlin's previous job must be considered one of the highest pressure in America. On television once a week, the outcome of his decisions directly correlated to the amount of scrutiny the ruthless internet placed upon him. The NFL draws in over 20 million viewers every week, and that number only grows as international appeal skyrockets. The man, simply, is always being watched, judged and literally viewed. For a man worth 40 million dollars, you would think he would invest that money into other ventures to distract himself from the world at large. But the man chose Minecraft, and this should speak volumes to anyone watching.

Creative ventures have long been the human approach to calming down and taking a beat. For many, art, photography and music are distractions from work life. Primarily, mediums are used to insert joy in an often-monotonous world. When we were cavemen, we doodled to pass the time, and when my professors' lectures get boring, I doodle to pass the time. Often, the aforementioned mediums are typically creative ventures, but Tomlin's Minecraft extravaganza challenges that strategy, and proves that we can find creativity in more modern, unconventional ways. Minecraft is a game made for children and yet Tomlin inadvertently reminds us to find joy in ways unusual and fun, even in a stressful work life.

Nobody can ever be too old or rich to stop being creative, and nobody lacks the resources to be creative as well. No one can be "too serious" for creativity. We let children get excited over videogames and the building of fictitious worlds, so why can we not let adults as well? Internships are an important aspect of college life (connect with me on LinkedIn please), but if that is your only focus, you're surely missing the bulk of your young adult years.

I really don't like it when people whine about how "uncreative" they are or how art never came to them, because that lumps creativity into one pocket. Tomlin has clearly proven that the world lends itself to many pursuits beyond the traditional ones.

Art, evidently, should not be something that we do merely to get graded on or to prove that we can in fact make art, but because it is intrinsic to a better life. Life is stressful, and art can be a simple solution to that.

In the era of AI, the urge to be creative feels limited to only the art majors and those who go out of their way to create. It's ironic that a form of communication so human has been dwindled to a medium for the bored or seriously committed.

To stay creative, in any venture from painting to Minecraft, is simple proof that the indomitable human spirit is alive and well. We are creatures born to be creative, and it would be foolish to let the machine take away something so natural. When push comes to shove, it's more important that we find fun ways to stay whimsical than just give up completely.

Mike Tomlin's Minecraft world, as silly as it is, gives me immense hope. It gives me hope that even with all the pressures and hardships of the work environment and problems of the day, we can still be reminded to be creative souls, as intended.

As so many Huskies begin to enter the "real world" and job markets, I hope they see Tomlin and rejoice in the fact that money is important, but being creative and taking time for your own needs is equally imperative.

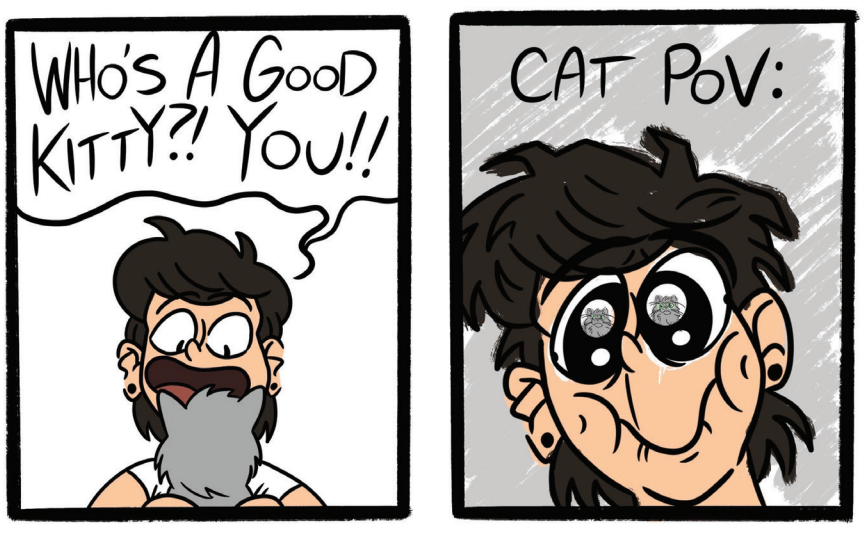
Thank you, Coach Tomlin, for the reminder to stay creative, and thank you for probably sending hundreds of kids back into yet another two-week Minecraft phase.



Minecraft characters Steve and Alex spill out of a graphic. The two characters, popular in Minecraft since 2009, are present in Tomlin's Minecraft world.

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Comic



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