THE WEEKLY CHOWDAH:

Pro football is coming to Rhode Island

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Brown University football team runs onto the field. Brown lost 14-10 to Harvard on Sept. 25, 2026.
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The United Football League (UFL), America's spring football league formed back in 2024, announced the addition of four new teams to the sport on Sept. 23. Rhode Island was among these four and, along with a new team in Colorado, will begin their inaugural season in the spring of 2027. The other two will be located in Utah and Oklahoma and begin their first seasons in 2028.

Rhode Island's football team will play in the newly built Centreville Bank Stadium, located a short drive north from central Providence in Pawtucket. The stadium is the current home for Rhode Island FC, a second-division team in the United Soccer League. It currently has a capacity for 10,500 fans.

Even thought it was built primarily for soccer, the stadium began hosting the University of Rhode Island's home football games this season and very recently held the Harvard vs. Brown rivalry matchup on Sept. 25.

Plans and designs for the team's name, logos, jerseys and other branding will be announced on Oct. 18 at a live launch party at the stadium. Later in the year, the league will hold an expansion draft to allow Rhode Island and Colorado to form a roster of players to prepare for the upcoming season.

The team's arrival to the Ocean State marks the first foray spring football has made in the New England football market in its short existence. For Rhode Island specifically, it's the first time a professional football team has been based in the state since the Providence Steam Roller of the nascent National Football League folded in the 1930s.

In an interview with Rhode Island media outlet NBC 10 WJAR, UFL co-investor Mike Repole stated he was "excited to bring a team to New England," mentioning later on in discussion with reporters that Pawtucket was "the right market, with the right fans, with the right venue."

The interview highlights how Rhode Island also had a personal connection with him and other UFL investors. He mentions that he used to live in the area and thus has a good understanding of the sports culture of the city and broader state.

Further analysis of Pawtucket makes it clear why UFL investors think Pawtucket, Rhode Island was the perfect location for a new UFL team compared to other cities in New England.

Given Rhode Island's proximity to the larger New England cities of Hartford and Boston, the state is often overlooked when it comes to professional or semi-professional sports teams. Even worse, if they are given a team, they are at risk of being moved elsewhere. The most infamous example of this was the cherished Red Sox Triple A affiliate Pawtucket Red Sox, who moved to Worcester in 2015 after 50 years in Rhode Island.

Many Rhode Islanders tend to heavily support any teams they currently have, partly because of their state pride and partly because of the aforementioned phenomena. As mentioned, Repole and other investors understand this well, either from personal experience or from analytics. Regardless, this means that putting a new football team in Pawtucket was one way to guarantee early support.

Competition was also a factor in determining location. Cities like Boston, Hartford and Worcester already have well-established pro and college teams that locals spend their time and attention supporting. Adding a new football team to these areas, especially in eastern Massachusetts, would mean potential fans would have to find even more time to actively support another team.

Since Rhode Island only has two major semi-professional teams, Rhode Island FC and the Providence Bruins, there was far less competition for attention compared to other places. An additional plus is that if new fans from those aforementioned cities wanted to see a game, it's only a relatively simple drive or train ride from those cities to Pawtucket.

Stadium economics also plays a key role. Pre-built, smaller stadiums built for soccer or college sports, at least to Mike Repole, seem to generate the most success for UFL teams at the moment.

Repole points towards the recently formed Louisville Kings UFL team as an example. In its first year at Lynn Family Stadium, they averaged 11,195 fans a game in a venue that typically only holds 11,700. Centreville Bank holds a similar capacity, exists for similar purposes and is located in a city similar to Louisville. It's not hard to see the connection.

Given the instability of spring football, it will be interesting to see how long the team lasts. However, it's clear that if they were trying to maximize the chances of the team lasting in the region and bolstering the league's success, basing it in Pawtucket, Rhode Island seems like the best bet. One way to ensure its success is to go watch their opening game in person this spring, or by tuning into the game on FOX.

Figure Skating heads to Georgia for the Trialeti Trophy

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Figure skating is in full swing with the upcoming Trialeti Trophy taking place this Wednesday, Sept. 30 through Saturday, Oct. 3.

In the competition, all four major skating categories are competing with some big names competing in the women's division.

For the men's singles category, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan will send two skaters each while Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Italy, Ukraine and the USA are sending one.

Alex Labovich and Vasil Barakhouski of Belarus will be the only skaters making their international senior debut in the men's singles category, although Barakhouski skated at the junior level earlier this year.

Of the twelve skaters, Georgia's Nika Egadze and Ukraine's Kyrylo Marsak went to the 2026 Winter Olympics where they finished 10th and 19th, respectively.

For the women's singles category, Russia, Canada, Georgia and the USA will send two skaters while Belarus, Armenia, Estonia, Israel, Lithuania and Turkey will be sending one skater each.

Inga Gurgenidze of Georgia will be making her senior international debut. She has skated in the Junior Grand Prix series though with her highest score being 171.12 at the Batumi JPG on Sept. 26th.

Of the 14 women competing at the Trialeti Trophy, Belarus' Viktoriia Safonova, Russia's Adeliia Petrosian, Estonia's Niina Petrokina and Georgia's Anastasiia Gubanova went to the Olympics. At the Winter Olympics Safonova ended 26th, Petrosian finished sixth, Petrokina got seventh and Gubanova placed ninth.

For the pairs category, Russia is bringing three pairs, the USA are bringing two and Georgia and Ukraine are bringing one each. No pairs will be making their international debut.

Out of the seven pairs competing, only one went to the 2026 Cortina Winter Olympics where Georgia's Anastasiia Metelkina and Luka Berulava finished second.

Finally, there is the ice dance category where 20 pairs of skaters will be competing.

Of the 20 pairs, Russia and France have three pairs, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Canada and Hungary have two and Brazil, China, Georgia, Italy, Switzerland and Ukraine have one each competing.

Out of those pairs, Belarus's Viktoryia Plaskonnaya and Uladzislau Sytsik, Russia's Varvara Zhdanova and Timur Babaev-Smirnov, France's Alisa Ovsiankina and Maximilien Rahier will be making their senior international debuts.

Meanwhile Russia's Elizaveta Shichina will be making her senior international debut, although her partner Pavel Drozd already made his in 2019.

On Thursday, the competition will start with the women's short program, ice dance's rhythm dance and the men's short program.

On Friday, ice dance's free dance and men's free skate will take place before the victory ceremonies for both categories. There will also be the pairs short program.

On Saturday, the women's free skate and pairs free skate will take place, with the victory celebration shortly after.

The only way to watch the Trialeti Trophy is by going to Ice Stars TV. For $27.85, you can access the live feed and replays after the event.



USA Figure Skaters compete at the 2026 Solo Dance Final. The team sent one skater for the men's singles category for the upcoming Trialeti Trophy competition.
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