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A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY PRODUCTION

The Recorder

NOVEMBER 17TH 2026 VOLUME 139, ISSUE VIII

Central to Expand Into Newington After Purchasing Former Data Center

by Liam McCusker
News Editor

Central has expanded with the purchase of the former Raytheon data center at 25 Holly Drive in Newington for $3.6 million but is revisiting its plans for how the property will be used.

The purchase was made in collaboration with the CCSU Foundation Inc., A nonprofit organization that supports Central and made the purchase with available unrestricted funds. The organization allocates funds through institutional and academic enrichment, scholarships and research, according to CCSU's website.



The former data center will be transformed into a future Central campus space. Liam McCusker

Jennifer Destefani, executive director of the CCSU Foundation and vice president of institutional enrichment, said the decision to purchase the property from Staypoint, a real estate company in Hartford, was made based on what the university felt was the best way to expand the campus.

"The university was looking to potentially expand campus and it's not too far from campus," Destefani said. "The applied learning piece is extremely valuable as well, so it was a great opportunity that the foundation could pursue at the time for the university."

Destefani added that while the original plan for using the property was to expand the Applied Learning and Industry Corridor, or Innovation Hub, it is currently uncertain what the property will be used for, and discussions are underway with Central's interim president Kimberly Kostelis' office and the Central Foundation board to figure out what the next steps are.

"We're revisiting everything with our new president," Destefani said. "We don't know exactly what's going to go in there as of right now."

The project also received $850,000 in federal funding through the 2026 fiscal year after a $5.06 million funding

***DATA** continued on page 2*

For Central Commuters, Finding a Place in Campus Life Isn't Always Easy

by Ny'Asia Martin
Lifestyle Editor

For some students at Central, getting involved in campus life means more than just showing up to class. But for students who commute, finding the time to attend events, join organizations, and build friendships can be difficult.

While Central offers opportunities specifically for commuter students, three students shared different experiences when it comes to feeling connected to the campus community.

Central senior Olivia Lusitani said they don't feel deeply connected to campus because they don't have much time or interest in staying after class.

" I do not feel completely connected to the campus community as a commuter because I don't really have time or the desire to stay on campus besides going to class," Lusitani said.

Outside of class, the junior comes to campus twice a week for club soccer but doesn't participate in other organizations or activities. However, Lusitani doesn't believe commuting has taken away from the college experience.

"I don't think I'm missing out on the traditional experience. I still feel like I'm getting the traditional experience because I have to come on time to class, complete assignments and balance outside life with school."

The senior also said they appreciate the opportunities Central provides for commuters, including campus events and commuter-specific activities, even if they don't personally take advantage of them.

For Junior Religh Ruot, commuting has made a noticeable difference in their connection to campus. Having previously lived on campus, the junior said the experience is different now that they travel to school.

"I think it's hard to stay connected because as a commuter you go to class and you go home," Ruot said.

Ruot explained that commuting can make it harder to participate in campus activities, especially for those who live farther away, some students travel 30 to 40 minutes or more to campus and may not want to make another trip later in the day.

Ruot also said balancing school and work often takes priority over campus involvement.

"When you are a commuter, you have to be able to manage the time you have to balance school and personal life."

Junior Anna Melendez offers another perspective. Although they make an effort to stay involved in campus activities, scheduling can make that difficult.

" I think I get most of the same benefits and opportunities, but it's more difficult to actually attend activities and make friends," Melendez said.

Melendez explained that they sometimes spend at least six hours on campus waiting for events or club meetings to begin. For example. They finish class at 10:20 a.m. on Mondays, but the Pre-Law Society doesn't meet until 5 p.m.

Late events can also be difficult to attend. Melendez pointed to Devils Den events, which begin at 10 p.m. on Thursdays, as an example of activities they have skipped because they don't want to drive back to campus so late.

Despite these challenges, all three students recognized that Central provides opportunities for commuters. However, students also suggested scheduling could make a difference. Ruot specifically praised the university's commuter breakfast and the information shared about campus events on social media.

However, students also recommended holding more events earlier in the day. Ruot suggested holding more events earlier in the day, while Melendez suggested planning activities around times when more commuters are already on campus.

For commuter students, being part of a campus community isn't necessarily about having more events available. It's also about having the time and opportunity to actually be there.

ABOUT US

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PRINTED BY:
VALLEY PUBLISHING COMPANY

CENTRAL

SCAN HERE FOR OUR LINKS

DATA *continued from front*

request was submitted by U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes, D-5th District, according to the Hartford Business Journal. Central officials say they are exploring every avenue of the building's future.

"The Central Foundation is exploring the option of selling, leasing and/or gifting the building to Central at a future date," Central Associate Vice President of Communications and Media Jodi Latina said. "There has been no decision yet on what will be housed in the building. Those discussions are ongoing."

Destefani said the purchase will provide opportunities for students and faculty no matter what the building is used for.

"From an educational standpoint, no matter what goes in there, students as well as faculty will have full involvement," Destefani said. "We're eager to explore innovative programming opportunities for the space that deepen our connection and engagement with the surrounding community."

Destefani noted that there is currently no timeline for when renovations and development of the property will begin, but university officials are working to come up with a plan.

Destefani said the university will also be speaking with Newington officials regarding the building's use. "We're really excited to expand our campus into Newington," Destefani said.

Central Named to Princeton Review Mental Health Honor Roll

The Princeton Review has named Central Connecticut State University to its third annual Mental Health Services Honor Roll for 2027. Central is one of only two Connecticut schools and 76 schools nationwide to receive this designation.

The Honor Roll recognition is part of an annual project that The Princeton Review conducts in partnership with the Ruderman Family Foundation, an internationally recognized organization that works to end the stigma associated with mental health.

Schools that earn the Honor Roll designation are those that demonstrate a strong commitment to their students' mental health and well-being. The selections for 2027 were based on data from The Princeton Review's 2026 Campus Mental Health Survey, which asked administrators at 739 colleges 77 questions about their school's counseling, mental health and wellness services for students. The Princeton Review also surveyed 56,000 students across 300 colleges about their awareness of their school's mental health services.

"This distinction is very important, because we want every student to know that they belong here, that they have a community behind them, and that support is available when they need it," says Central interim President Kimberly T. Kostelis. "This recognition reflects the work of our faculty and staff and Central's overall commitment to creating a campus environment where students feel supported, valued and empowered to reach their full potential."

The Princeton Review Mental Health Services Honor Roll list for 2027 is posted on the Princeton Review's website in alphabetical order. View the criteria for Honor Roll designation at https://www.princetonreview.com/mental-health-on-college-campus/methodology/.

The Princeton Review project also works to promote awareness of campus mental health services among college applicants and students attending colleges. The company reports information about the surveyed school's mental health services in its profiles of the schools on PrincetonReview.com as well as in its annual Best Colleges guidebook.

The Princeton Review is an education services company known for its tutoring, test-prep, admission services, books and other learning resources. Headquartered in New York, N.Y., it is not affiliated with Princeton University.

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Star Trek III: The Search for Spock: A Review

by Liam McCusker
News Editor

Four decades after its debut, Star Trek III: The Search for Spock is a breathtaking film to watch.

Directed by Spock's actor, Leonard Nimoy, the film builds directly off the previous movie, Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, where Spock sacrifices himself and goes into a radiation filled chamber in order to restore the USS Enterprise's warp drive so the crew can escape from the USS Reliant which is in the process of self-destructing.

Following Spock's death, Admiral James T. Kirk and the rest of the crew leave his body on a planet called Genesis. The Enterprise then heads to the space dock, but Kirk soon finds out that something is wrong with Dr. Leonard McCoy. As the ship enters the space dock, Kirk finds McCoy in Spock's quarters and McCoy is talking as though he himself is Spock. Kirk is later informed by Spock's father Sarak that Spock has a living spirit, also known as a katra and the two find out that Spock transferred his katra to McCoy before entering the radiation-filled chamber.

Kirk's son, David Marcus and Lt. Commander Savick are serving on the USS Grissom which is working on Genesis when they read life signs on the planet. They are then sent down to the planet by their captain to investigate. When they find a Vulcan child on the planet, they are able to determine that Spock's body has been regenerated. Since he has transferred his katra to McCoy, he is unable to speak. However, a group of Klingons, led by Cmdr. Kruge, who are also interested in Genesis, arrives at the planet and destroys USS Grissom before David and Savick can return with Spock. The Klingons later beam down to the planet and take them prisoner.



Theatrical release poster art by legendary artist Bob Peak. imdb.com

Kirk asks Starfleet for permission to return to Genesis so that he can bring Spock and McCoy to Spock's home planet Vulcan, in order for his katra to be returned to him. When this request is denied, Cmdrs. Sulu and Chekov ask Kirk what the word is. Kirk replies, "The word is no. I am therefore going anyway."

Chekov and Sulu along with Cmdr. Scott and Lt. Uhura help Kirk to take the Enterprise and return to Genesis even though Kirk tells them that they don't need to do so. They, like Kirk, risk termination and possible court martial to save Spock.

They are unaware that the Klingons are after Genesis. The Klingons successfully neutralize the Enterprise by destroying its engine. Kirk makes contact with Kruge who orders his officers to kill David in order to show Kirk the Klingons will not stop until he has surrendered the Genesis project. Kirk agrees to allow the Klingons onto the Enterprise, but he and his crew secretly activate the self-destruct sequence so the ship won't fall into Klingon hands and they flee to Genesis. The majority of the Klingons are killed.

Kirk and his team then locate Savick and Spock. Spock is aging rapidly like Genesis, which is also beginning to self-destruct due to errors in its creation. Kruge then beams down to the planet seeking revenge on Kirk for the deaths of his crew. Kirk's crew is sent to the Klingon vessel.

Kirk and Kruge then fight as Kirk is infuriated by the death of his son and the destruction of the ship he commanded for decades. He is able to neutralize Kruge and is beamed to the Klingon vessel with Spock.

When the crew arrives at Vulcan, a ceremony is performed where a woman returns Spock's katra to him. After Spock regains his consciousness, he asks Kirk why he came back for him. Kirk replies, "Because the needs of the one outweighed the needs of the many."

Ultimately, Star Trek: III The Search for Spock gives viewers a chance to look at a group of crew members who are also family and willing to do anything for one another. Its emotional depth and well-written story is likely why it has stayed popular for many decades.

CAMPUS EVENTS THIS WEEK

TUE

Totes & Bracelets
Student Commuter Association
Tuesday 11/17 @ 3:00 PM
Wells Street Lounge, Student Center

Holiday Family Drama Workshop
LGBTQ Center
Tuesday 11/24 @ 6:00 PM
Hilltop Café, Room 101

WED

ASL Mosaic with Harvey Corson
Wednesday 11/18 @ 5:30 PM
Student Center, Room 126

Native American Heritage Month
Mosaic
Wednesday 11/18 @ 1:30 PM
Wells Street Lounge, Student Center

THU

Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil
Campus/Community Engagement
Thursday 11/19 @ 5:00 PM
Student Center Circle

The Pep Effect
Pep Squad
Thursday 11/19 @ 7:00 PM
Alumni Hall, Student Center

FRI

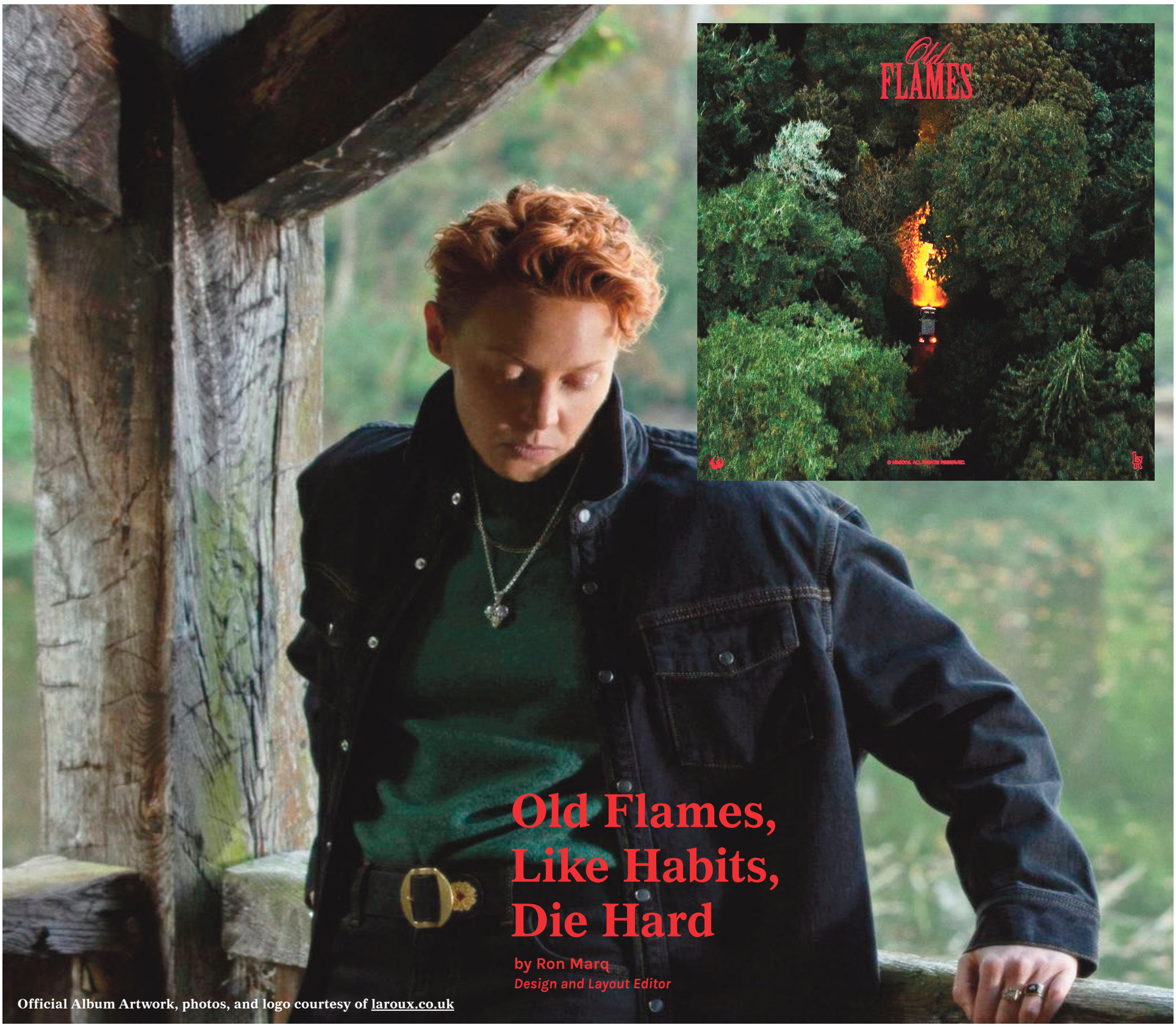
Thanksgiving Pizza Party
Best Buddies
Monday 11/23 @ 3:00 PM
Wells Street Lounge, Student Center

The Grown-Ups
Central Theatre
Friday-Saturday 11/19-20 @ 7:00 PM
Sunday 11/21 @ 2:00 PM
Black Box Theatre, Maloney Hall

MON

Diwali
Commuter Student Association
Monday 11/23 @ 6:30 PM
Alumni Hall, Student Center

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind
Japanese Language Learning Club
Monday 11/30 @ 5:00 PM
AAAPI Center, Burritt Library 205



Old Flames, Like Habits, Die Hard

by Ron Marq
Design and Layout Editor

Official Album Artwork, photos, and logo courtesy of laroux.co.uk

You might know Elly Jackson better as 'La Roux', the English new wave synth-pop singer famous for her 2009 hit 'Bulletproof'. In the years since, Elly has released three more albums and come into her own identity, not just the flamboyant mysterious persona like that of David Bowie, Eurhythmics and Prince. While her self-titled debut album brought her stardom, her sophomore album Trouble in Paradise took a sultrier and more laidback route while still retaining her effervescent vocal style even now becoming a solo artist from a former duo. When she independently dropped her third album 'Supervision' one month before the COVID-19 lockdowns began, it was her most personal work to date.

Followed up by a hard reset of her life over the past few years, 'Old Flames' gives an even deeper look into the artist's psyche. Sun-soaked tropical chords intermingle with 90s and early aughts R&B brandishing themes of love, lust, loss and rebirth. Jackson has since broken out of her cage, from the pitfalls of being a woman in the music industry, to creative differences with her label, and the state of her heart.

La Roux

Old Flames 'Intro' opens with the sounds of a rainy drive, probably in the jeep featured on the album cover, accompanied by a future track on said album then culminating by simply singing "Old flames burn out'. 'Cabin Fever', with a flipped Letta Mbulu and Peleton instructor sample, highlights the internal rumination one goes under when criticizing oneself only to find the criticism came from others. 'Lose Myself' is an anthem to the true self one allows themselves to be once freed from other's criticism, it's also Elly's conscience telling her to stop smoking weed. 'Falling' alludes to the falling out of love in a relationship, much like Jackson did with her former long-term partner told her she was 'being too dramatic' after suffering a panic attack in 2017. 'To Make Our Love' speaks on maintaining the semblance of love after an infatuation phase, even if both parties don't agree to.

'Your Lover' speaks on a fictional lover who wants Elly but can't commit, even if the feeling to stay together is mutual. 'Final Fantasy' feels like the most sexually charged song on the album, about a partner who makes advances, but not nearly enough for Elly. 'Night Vision' kind of feeds off the previous track; crooning on the lack of presence from an absent-minded partner who won't reciprocate. All Elly can do is imagine them at night. 'I Just Keep Crying' entails the frustration of trying to fix a one-sided relationship. 'Babyline' is about coming back to yourself despite others and being in your own way. The final reprise of 'Old Flames' solidifies not only the intro, but the vibe of the entire album - a testament to choosing oneself and leaving the past behind.

The musicality of this record feels very similar to Ed Sheeran's style of delivery and songwriting with some UB40 inspired beats, but from a fresh and androgynous perspective. It's a thoughtful and powerful body of work worthy of seeing performed live and owned on physical media. With over 17 years in the game, Elly 'La Roux' Jackson has proved that her abilities, heart, and influence are in fact, bulletproof.

8/10

MARVEL TELEVISION

VISIONQUEST

by Nicole Toimil
Contributor

In a complicated moment in time where Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) permeates every aspect of life, VisionQuest (2026), a new series on Disney+, managed to balance speaking about A.I. without letting it trample over the importance of human creation.

VisionQuest is the third and final installation of the WandaVision trilogy. The audience follows White Vision (Paul Bettany) on his journey to discover who he is by trying to understand who he was. On his quest, he meets Thomas Shepherd (Ruaridh Mollica), a Scottish boy who believes himself to be one of Vision's sons. Inside Vision's head, which is technically a computer, reside six other personified A.I. systems. These characters help Vision understand what it means to be human, and to live among them while being equally removed and confounded by the behaviors of humankind. As the primary characters, the audience is meant to understand and grow fond of them by recognizing them as people, not as computers.

At a point in contemporary history where people are speaking to A.I. as if they are human companions (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.), Vision speaks back to them to understand human nature. From a human standpoint, A.I. seems to be the next logical advancement; a thing that will do all the critical thinking so that humans do not have to. Vision understands there is beauty and imperfection in humanity that computers and robots, no matter how advanced, cannot create. When asked about what Vision sees in a painting, he discusses the "mathematics of paint," while his genocidal counterpart Ultron (James Spader) responds how "[he doesn't] see the pain and confusion, or anger or grief?"

While Vision proves immensely useful for calculation and battle strategy, there is a clear lack of understanding of creation and art. With the release of episode four, "Malware," the creators of the A.I. programs ponder the lasting consequences and effects it has when it is unmanaged. Katerina Wells (Mary McDonnell), the CEO of the fictional company that researched and created the blueprints for a functioning A.I. system, acknowledged its unforeseen consequences and the ethics of creating a machine that has the potential to do so much damage.

While she expressed guilt, she also said "we can't undo what we've done. We can only hope to make it better." Despite how integral A.I. is to the plot and the characters, the production of the show did not utilize it at all. With practical effects and build sets, VisionQuest's production relied on a human touch and creativity. Highlighted the ability to produce art without relying on the systems it is based on.

Though the creators of the show did not intentionally do this, the miniseries provides a timely and interesting commentary when people are attempting to find their footing in a world where technology seems to be rapidly outgrowing the masses.



James Gunn & Peter Safran Replaced as DC Studios CEOs ...Why?

by Nicole Toimil
Contributor

Co-CEOs James Gunn and Peter Safran were replaced by former Marvel executive Jeremy Latcham as CEO and Chief Creative Officer of DC Studios. This comes after the Warner Bros. - Paramount merger Oct. 6, 2026. Their replacement is meant to take effect Dec. 1, 2026.

This news comes in the middle of the first chapter of DC's cinematic universe (DCU), Gods and Monsters. With the release of Superman (2025), Supergirl (2026) and the theater release of Clayface (2026) only three weeks ago, the news comes as a surprise after hardly a third of the projected projects for the first chapter of the DCU have been released. This has left fans wondering what will happen with the projects in late production. Man of Tomorrow (2027) is still scheduled to release July 9, 2027, and Gunn will continue another unspecified DC project; executive decisions on the future of the whole of the DCU are still in the air.

Fans have been expressing concern at the sudden change, as well as who replaced the former co-CEOs. Jeremy Latcham was a Senior Vice President of Production and Development for Marvel Studios and has been accredited as an assistant producer for Iron Man (2008), a coproducer for Iron Man two (2010), and an executive producer for The Avengers (2012), Guardians of the Galaxy (2014), Spider-Man: Homecoming (2017) and others. While these movies were well received, DC fans are concerned at the removal of the R-rate that Gunn and Safran have integrated into recent DCU projects.

Projects such as Clayface (2026), Peacemaker and Lanterns earned their R-rating, and fans are concerned about the continuation of certain projects. Lanterns remains in limbo, awaiting confirmation or cancellation for another season despite it being a commercial and critical success. Creature Commandos, an animated tie-in, was renewed for season two in December of 2024, its release scheduled for 2027. So far, no additional announcements have been made. Latcham has a history of PG-13, family-oriented movies and while this may cause concern for the fans who have been enjoying a more mature direction in storylines, the concern does not end there.

Superman (2025) was a success critically, though the film sparked an intense debate across the internet. Its audience draws parallels between the two warring countries in the movie and the Israel-Palestine conflict, and its parallels with the Gazan borders.

DC Studios has been under ownership of Warner Bros. since 1969. Paramount merged with Skydance on Aug. 7, 2025, shortly after the release of Superman (2025). Skydance is a multimedia company run by CEOs David Ellison and Ynon Kreiz. In 2026, Warner Bros. and Paramount completed their merger Oct. 6. Shortly after, on Oct. 22, it was reported Elon Musk invested $1 billion into Skydance and Gunn and Safran were announced to be replaced Nov. 6. Fans are wondering if these events are related, considering their history and the speed changes occurring.

It is no secret Elon Musk regularly engages with Israel's politicians and technology, and it is not out of character for him to make an investment in an Israeli-owned company. However, the timing, money, and Musk's association with big politicians such as Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, have made fans take a closer look at the happenings of the companies.

Movies are reflective of reality, and they serve as commentary on the world. Movies are simultaneously an escape, and also a means to understand and deconstruct the world in a manner that is easily digestible. Regardless of politics, art has a right to be expressed freely, without potential censorship by conglomerates.



DID YOU KNOW?
Thanksgiving Break starts Wednesday, November 25?

What Stonehill and Le Moyne's Departures Means for the NEC Conference

by Andrew O'Sullivan
Sports Editor

In the modern world of collegiate sports, with media rights deals and NIL dominating the financial landscape, discussion of NCAA conference realignment has been a near-constant topic.

Most of this discussion, however, is about the major conferences everybody has heard of. This obviously makes sense, as most noncollege sports fans really only know about the big brands, so when moves like Texas to the SEC or Oregon to the Big 10 happen, it creates seismic shifts in how college sports are viewed, talked about and most importantly, invested in by major companies.

However, the power conferences aren't the only ones to be affected. The smaller conferences have seen just as much shuffling around as any other league, and such changes can be found very close to home.

Officially known since 2025 as just the NEC Conference, the formerly and commonly still referred to Northeast Conference is one of the smallest in Division 1 and was formed back in 1981 with 11 member schools. Out of the original 11 in the NEC, there are technically only three remaining as full member schools: Fairleigh Dickinson University, Wagner College and Long Island University (although LIU Brooklyn was the original member before merging their athletics with LIU Post in 2019).

Since the 1990s, the NEC has been one of the most consistently fluid conferences in NCAA DI, bringing in schools to replace old ones only to have those new schools leave and be replaced by new ones of their own. Quinnipiac, Mount St. Mary's, Sacred Heart, Bryant, Robert Morris, Monmouthand Merrimack are all former institutions currently in other conferences full-time, while St. Francis University is now in DIII and St. Francis College (no relation) completely dropped athletics in 2023.

As a result of many of the more "established" schools leaving, the NEC in recent years has become home to a lot of northeastern schools looking to transition into Division I from DII, such as Stonehill College, Mercyhurst University, the University of New Haven, and Le Moyne College, all of which joined the conference within the decade. Another recently added school was longtime D1 vagabond Chicago State University.

However, news broke Oct. 22 that Le Moyne College would be officially moving to the Metro Conference effective July 1, 2027.

This move was quite surprising to me personally, as Le Moyne had only joined DI back in 2023 and had just exited the traditional DII to DI "transitional phase" this past offseason. Its athletic director, Phil Brown, spoke about strong Catholic identity and more basketball focus as the main reasons as to why the Dolphins would be leaving the NEC.

I had initially penned what you are now reading as an op-ed regarding what this means for the conference and what it can do in the wake of Le Moyne's departure specifically. I ended it with an optimistic message that not many other schools would probably leave, and that it was, to quote an exact sentence I wrote about two weeks ago, "unrealistic to think that the departure of Le Moyne would cause a mass exodus of schools from the NEC."

And then Stonehill College announced Nov. 13 that they would also be leaving the NEC for the Metro.

Whoops. Well, what now?

Stonehill leaving is an even bigger red flag for the NEC than Le Moyne. Sure, you can chalk their departures up to just wanting a better fit in DI: Both Le Moyne and Stonehill are Catholic institutions, as are most of the Metro schools, and the Metro has more schools in a smaller area to ease travel concerns, but Le Moyne at least wanted to be in a conference with more of a basketball focus as opposed to football. Stonehill has both, and they still made the same jump.

Regardless for the reasons given for abandoning ship, it's still a bad look for the conference now sitting at just seven member schools for the 2027-28 year.

This, of course, brings up an interesting thought experiment: who can the NEC get to replace Le Moyne and Stonehill? Every time a member school has left the conference, a new school comes in as a replacement, so who could be next #NECtion star?

The race for replacement is made even more interesting because of one sport: football. Le Moyne doesn't support a football team, and the Metro isn't a football conference, so Stonehill could realistically stick around as an NEC associate member such as Robert Morris and Duquesne. With Chicago State's brand-new football team that debuted earlier this year already confirmed as a full NEC member in 2027, we could see a 10-team NEC on the gridiron.

So, where could they look to add from?

Keeping with the tradition of the decade, the NEC could easily add any DII schools looking for higher-level athletics. The previous conference targets of the NEC were the Northeast 10 Conference and Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference, the former being the home of Le Moyne, Stonehill and New Haven with the latter being the home of Mercyhurst.

Both conferences have quite a few solid applicants.

Assumption University in Worcester was a founding member of the NE10 Conference and one of the consistently strongest schools in their league, and their athletic facilities are decently up to low DI level, as well as being a natural Bay State replacement for Stonehill.

Another school with a similar pedigree is Pace University, which would add a fourth school in the NYC area for the NEC. Nonfootball Adelphi on Long Island, directional CT rival Southern Connecticut, and suburban Boston school Bentley could also work thanks to their larger enrollment and monetary backing but aren't as likely as the first two.

However, the NE10 will likely have a stronger grip on their member schools in the wake of current member Saint Anslem College announcing their transition to DIII for the 2027-28 academic year. If the NE10 is out, why not look at the Keystone State?

Mercyhurst came from the tight-nit PSAC, and another school from PA could easily make the jump as a western NEC member if they deem the move worth it. CFB sickos the world over would unite in joy over DI Slippery Rock or Indiana University (no relation to the state), and other large & successful schools like Kutztown or West Chester could also be solid additions, with the latter school giving the NEC a close link to Philadelphia.

Elsewhere, candidates start to thin out. Both the neighboring East Coast Conference and Central Athletic Collegiate Conference don't sponsor football, so taking schools from either of those conferences could be seen as a risk unless the NEC is able to get a third affiliate member for football. Looking westward, many schools in the Midwest that have the money to make the jump are quite small and affiliated with churches misaligned with NEC schools, which may affect these programs from wanting to take the risk.

Ferris State is a great example of the latter. The Bulldogs, based out of Big Rapids, Mich., are currently on a 41-game winning streak as of publication and are four-time defending DII champions. If they became NEC members they could honestly outcompete half the conference alone. But why would they move up? DII doesn't require the same spending and if they wanted more exposure the NEC may not be their target anyway. That's the biggest hurdle for the conference in general: getting big schools to care.

Could the NEC go a different route and take in a school that's already Division I? It's not entirely out of the question. Rider University has been in the Metro for years, but recent monetary downturn could mean they could slip down to DII, but the NEC could be a reasonable DI landing spot since the school is in New Jersey and is an affiliate NEC member in field hockey. Other affiliated schools that could feasibly make a full jump as well, like Cleveland State, Detroit Mercy, and Niagara (another DII rumored institution), although most of these full moves are relatively unrealistic.

However, now that two NEC schools are bowing out, we must unfortunately entertain the nuclear option: could the NEC completely dissipate? Honestly, I still have my doubts.

Despite all the recent realignment controversy across DI, it's rare for a conference to completely disappear. The only Division I conferences to go extinct completely this decade were all sport-specific, such as the beach volleyball exclusive Coastal Collegiate Sports Association that went under in 2025, College Hockey America and the Atlantic Hockey Association both in 2024, the Mountain Rim Gymnastics Conference in 2023, and the Southland Bowling League in the same year.

Even in a truly extreme situation like with the PAC-12s vaporization, the conference is still technically alive, which makes me think the NEC will likely come out the other side relatively in one piece.

If worst comes to worst, could schools like LIU, Central, FDU and Wagner survive in other conferences? Probably. Central and potentially New Haven could easily bring the Nutmeg State back into the America East Conference, and the three New York schools could easily be scattered amongst the Metro and CAA. Mercyhurst and Chicago State could easily join the Patriot or Horizon Leagues closer to home.

If the NEC does cease to exist in its current form, there's always the idea that it could still exist as a football-only conference, and there's evidence of this working elsewhere in the FCS. The Coastal Athletic Association has been a staple of midmajor DI since 1979, but the legally different but related Coastal Athletic Association Football Conference has been in existence in 2007, mostly as a home for Eastern seaboard schools with football teams in conferences that don't.

The NEC could easily poach a collection of AmEast and Metro and trade a few affiliates of their own to make essentially a northeastern power conference for football, with former NEC rivals like Bryant, Sacred Heart and Merrimack back again in a stronger division.

On Saturday, Stonehill women's volleyball played their final game as NEC Conference members as they faced the Blue Devils in New Britain. I spoke to CCSU Women's Volleyball coach Alyssa Broccoli about how the team has been as a conference opponent, and she gave credence to the Skyhawks for always being a good opponent.

"It's not like we ever play them and it's easy. We knew coming in today that it was gonna be tough and intense," she said.

Whatever the future may hold for the NEC, it will obviously have to be in reaction to whatever other conferences are doing, as have been the case throughout the Realignment Era. As I've mentioned multiple times throughout this long-winded spiel, no, I don't think the NEC will be going anywhere any time soon. It occupies a very specific space in DI as a perfect location for DII schools and the smallest DI programs to survive in a competitive atmosphere, and on occasion the schools can shock the NCAA world like when #16 upset #1 Purdue in March Madness in 2023.

I have been wrong before and I could be wrong again. My bias could be clouding my judgment because I don't want to lose my beautiful NECtion. But objectively, the NCAA needs conferences like the NEC. Not every conference can be a Big 10 or SEC, the smaller divisions and leagues are integral to the structure of college sports, despite what College GameDay wants you to think. Do you even think Pat McAfee could tell you what state Central Connecticut is in?

Hopefully this too shall pass, and it will survive into the future as a conference as strong as it was before. Because in the NEC, it just means more.

Central Women's Soccer Wins NEC Title, NCAA Tournament Bid In Tense Shootout

by Andrew O'Sullivan
Sports Editor

They had been in this situation before. A mere four days ago the Central Connecticut women's soccer team played a full 110 minutes scoreless against the visiting Wagner Seahawks before the game went to a penalty shootout, with the Blue Devils taking the victory 3-2 and punching their ticket to the NEC Championship Game.

On Sunday, their most important game of the season was tied through 110' and came down to penalties once again.

Sunday's shootout didn't come so easy. The 1-1 game devolved into nine agonizing rounds of penalties between #1 Central and the visiting #2 Fairleigh Dickinson Knights, which included two close shaves for the visitors: one penalty missed after clanging into the upper crossbar and barely bouncing outside the line, and another went through Central goalkeeper Melina Ford, despite her getting two hands on the ball.

However, the fears of the Blue Devils were washed away when Rebecca Deveruex drilled the winning penalty, sealing a record 14th NEC Tournament title for the team and an automatic bid to the NCAA Women's Soccer Championships.

The game up to that point had been an almost constantly aggressive affair, as Central struck first 10' deep, as Riley Powers recovered and buried a blocked shot from her teammate Rachel Wygant in a scrum near the goal.

The Knights, not to be outdone, were able to draw the lead back a mere four minutes later as Candela Espana exploited a break in Central's defense to take a ball all the way down the field and beat Ford in a one-on-one.

For the rest of the first half, both Central and FDU had multiple chances to take the lead, all of which were stopped either by the opposition's defense or goalkeeper, including an impressive save by Ford in the 40th minute.

Following half time, Ford again saved a potential FDU goal before both schools traded possession back and forth with no breaks. A free kick in the 88' for Central nearly broke the stalemate but barely missed the mark of the goal, and the full 90 ended level at 1-1, sending the game to extra time for the second game in a row.

The first of two 10-minute periods almost ended within the first minute, as Central had a chance that was blocked by the Knights in their own box. FDU then missed two chances of their own, complimented by a misplaced shot on goal by Powers.

In the second period, FDU dominated time of possession but struggled to produce any shots. The period would be stopped after FDU's Elena Cvetkovic went down hard, but following the incident no goals would be scored.

Melina Ford and the Blue Devils then persevered through nine rounds of penalties, which included successful conversions by Emma Radoncic, Sadie Passante, Powers, Eve Girardi, Wygant, Isabella Destefante and Deveruex, who delivered the final blow.

Ford made two direct saves defending Fairleigh Dickinson's penalty shots.

After the game, Ford was named Most Valuable Player of the NEC Tournament, following 13 total saves across the two games played. Her teammates, Isabella Cambio, Alex Rhodes and Passante were all named to the NEC All-Conference Team.

Head coach Mick D'Arcy oversaw his 11th NEC Tournament title this past weekend, his first since 2023. He was "thrilled" for his team and would contrast the elation of Sunday in comparison to last year's "heartbreak" in the championship game.

"It's a great feeling, something we've been working for all year round." To come back and win a game like this against a great [FDU] team is really special."

"We kind of went back and forth, there were chances both ways," he said, characterizing FDU and Central as two evenly matched teams in the final.

"I thought it was one of the best finals we've had in recent years. They're very good, but we created plenty of chances against them as well. Thrilled to be able to do it in the shootout."

D'Arcy also didn't single out any player for their success, chalking up the win to a massive team effort.

"The whole lot of them, how can you pick just one today? They've all been fantastic."

Goalkeeper Melina Ford casually and simply felt "really good" following her MVP-winning Tournament run. She would explain some of her main keys to that success.

"Really just the practice every day, our coaching staff and our teammates working together, we've been here since July but it's all worth it. This is exactly what we train for everyday"

With 11 combined rounds of penalties all in win-or-go-home games over the past week, Ford was under serious pressure to play well and rose to the occasion, and she would disclose some of the ways she was able to perform when the lights were at their brightest.



Central's Women's Soccer Team after their win.
Steve McLaughlin Photography

"[I've] been in this position a couple times, did it my freshman year. We practice pens a lot; I practice my composure basically on the daily."

She also gave credit to her teammates and coaches, with particular credence granted to her fellow seniors, who were freshman on the team the last time Central won the NEC title.

"They're all amazing. And the coaches. I wouldn't be where I am without them, the team wouldn't be who they are without them, they're a big part of why we won today.

"The seniors have been through so much together, we've won together before, it's such an amazing moment."

The NCAA will be livestreaming their selection process for the 2026 Women's Soccer Championship on Monday, Nov. 16. Central will likely be a road team against a higher seeded opponent, with Craig Meyer of USA Today projecting that the Blue Devils will face the #2 Michigan State Spartans in the Wake Forest regional first round.

Coach D'Arcy, regardless of the opponent, is confident in his team to perform well on the biggest stage.

"We'll have to wait and see. It's a privilege to be able to go to the tournament, and whoever [we get], we'll be ready."

WEEKLY SCOREBOARD

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - CENTRAL - 60 | COPPIN STATE - 78

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12
WOMEN'S SOCCER - CENTRAL - 0 (3) | WAGNER - 0 (2)
MEN'S SOCCER - CENTRAL - 0 | FDU - 2
MEN'S BASKETBALL - CENTRAL 79 | SACRED HEART 75
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - CENTRAL 45 | RIDER 56

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13
MEN'S + WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY - NCAA REGIONALS [MEN 31ST OVERALL, WOMEN 31ST OVERALL]
WOMEN'S SWIMMING + DIVING - 8 INDIVIDUAL WINS
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL - CCSU 3 | STONEHILL 0

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL - CCSU 3 | STONEHILL 0
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - CENTRAL 48 | UMASS 96

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
MEN'S BASKETBALL - CENTRAL 72 | QUINNIPIAC 67
WOMEN'S SOCCER - CENTRAL 1 (7) | FDU 1 (6)

CENTRAL ATHLETIC SCHEDULE

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
11/16 • vs Colgate • 7 PM
11/18 • @ UMass Lowell • 6 PM
11/22 • vs Vermont • 2 PM

WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING
11/20 • Harold Anderson Invite

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
11/20 •@ #1 LIU • 2 PM

FOOTBALL
11/21 • vs Duquesne • 12 PM

MEN'S BASKETBALL
11/17 • vs Vermont State • 7 PM

CROSS COUNTRY
11/21 • NCAA Championships

Standout Seniors Propel Volleyball to First Postseason Berth Since 2018

by Andrew O'Sullivan
Sports Editor

Tremendous" was the turn of phrase used by Central Women's Volleyball head coach Alyssa Broccoli to describe her two standout seniors, Olivia Keckler and Anja Milosevic.

The two players contributed heavily to Central's sweep

of the visiting Stonehill Skyhawks on Friday and Saturday, as the Blue Devils clinched the number four seed in the NEC Volleyball Tournament. Saturday's regular season finale was also Senior Day for the team, as Keckler and Milosevic were both honored pre-game with their teammates and families.

Central came into the weekend following a sweep of Le Moyne the previous Saturday, and two victories against Stonehill would lock up a spot in the postseason regardless of fellow eight-win conference member New Haven did in their game against FDU. On Friday, Central and Stonehill began the first set close before Adele Mayer delivered two kills to begin a Blue Devil run that would eventually lead to a victory, 25-18. The two sides again began Set two equally matched, with the points never erring by more than two for the entire set. Hanley Schmidt, Madison Fulgencio and Keckler would be among the top Blue Devils in the set as they barely took the win with a tight final score of 25-23.

The third set was, again, competitive, with Stonehill in hot pursuit. Schmidt and Mayer would continue to contribute heavily as Central maintained a consistent yet slim lead, eventually pulling away right at the end as Madison Fulgencio delivered two consecutive kills to end the game, winning set three for CCSU 25-21. Central continued their momentum over to Saturday and kicked off the second game with a kill by Mayer. Stonehill, again, stayed in tandem, taking a lead early before having it broken by CCSU's attack of Keckler and Breanna Ginley. The set remained close until late, when Milosevic took control for the Blue Devils, notching an impressive save and set-ending kill to give Central their fourth straight set victory over the Skyhawks.

The second set began with Central leading again, and Stonehill was generally unable to keep up as Keckler, Ginley, and Milosevic would give the Blue Devils a lead as big as seven points before the Skyhawks started to reel the gap back in, cutting the lead down to just four points after multiple Central errors. Stonehill's comeback would be put down, however, as Central survived the second set to win 25-20. Milosevic and Ginley took the reins in the third set as Central took an early lead that was eventually dissipated at the hands of Stonehill, with play switching sides during the middle portion of the set often. Despite a recovery of a ball hit off the ceiling that led to a seemingly significant kill, an overturned call in favor of CCSU seemed to dispel any momentum going forward for the Skyhawks. Keckler, Ginley, and Milosevic would record three consecutive kills to end the game as Central won the third and final set 25-19.

The victory punched CCSU's ticket into the postseason, and with New Haven's loss to Fairleigh Dickinson later the same day, would lock in the Blue Devils as the fourth Seed. This is the team's first post-season appearance since 2018, and the first under Broccoli's head coaching tenure. While unclear on the seeding at the conclusion of Saturday's game, Broccoli regardless had a concrete plan going forward in the postseason, which would begin with rest as "some of our girls are beat up." "[The] expectation is that it's gonna be a much tougher match than it is today but nothing is really to be really different than what our game plan has been from the beginning, which is to be aggressive at all ends," she would say. "It's probably gonna be really challenging but that doesn't mean we're gonna let up."

Central's game against Stonehill on Saturday was the Skyhawk's final volleyball game in the NEC Conference, as the school announced earlier that week that they would be moving to the Metro Conference full-time in 2027. Broccoli would describe Stonehill as a consistently tough opponent, and one that usually put up a competitive fight, especially this weekend. "I'm really just worried about us. I always anticipate teams coming out even harder the next day, especially if they lose. We did a really good job of being in control the whole match." She would also praise her two seniors massively. Broccoli mentioned that she has known Olivia Keckler since she was 14 years old, and how much she has watched her grow as a player and a person over the years. "She was one of my first recruits; she's been here since I got here. It's great to see her grow up over the past three years and really become a phenomenal player and leader." "It's really sad to see her go," Broccoli lamented, emphasizing Keckler's place on the team as a star rotational player.

Anja Milosevic's senior season was grounded for weeks due to a bout of appendicitis, but the Serbian has nonetheless been another important asset to the team. "She's been a significant success. We didn't have her in the beginning of conference play and as you can see she's super valuable in terms of running the offense, but also her leadership." Broccoli likened her to a quarterback and mentioned that it would be tough to lose her. "She commands the court, her personality is infectious, and she makes everybody around her better." With the regular season concluded, Central will be on the road for the NEC Tournament. The team will face number one LIU at the Steinberg Wellness Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. Friday, Nov. 20.

Two In-State Rivals, Two Wins for Men's Basketball

by Dylan Romagnoli
Staff Writer



Guard Victor Payne [15] during Sunday's game against Quinnipiac.
Steve McLaughlin Photography

After starting the season with a 0-2 record, Central's Men's Basketball has rattled off three straight wins, most recently two comeback wins over Sacred Heart University and Quinnipiac University this past week. The Blue Devils got their weekend started early with a 79-75 win over Sacred Heart on Thursday in Fairfield. The game was headlined by a 35-point, eight rebound performance by Central guard Raphel Laurent and a 17-point second half comeback. Laurent's 35 points was the 6th most points scored by a division one player so far this season. The Pioneers commanded the first half with a 16-2 run in the middle of the half and a 14-0 run that spanned from the end of the first half to the start of the second half. Four Pioneers scored double figures in the game, senior guard Griffin Barrouk led them in scoring with 19 points, Jojo Wallace contributed 16 points off the bench, Jaden Slaughter scored 14 and Jaylen Robinson dropped 12 points with eight rebounds. Central would battle back, closing the gap throughout the second half, eventually going on a 20-6 run which allowed them to take the lead and seal their second win of the season. Laurent was one of three double figure scorers for the Blue Devils, he was joined by junior guards, Victor Payne who contributed 15 points and Jhace Johnson who added 12 points.

The Blue Devils finally returned to Detrick Gymnasium for their home opener against the Quinnipiac Bobcats on Sunday. Laurent continued his hot shooting, leading all scorers with 27 points as Central won the game 72-67. The Bobcats lead by 13 with 2 minutes left in the first half, forcing another Blue Devil comeback effort. Sophomore forward Keith McKnight led Bobcats scorers with a 20-point double-double, grabbing 11 rebounds, he was joined by Tayeshawn Cunningham-Pemberton who scored 16 points and Tai Turnage with 10 points off the Bobcat bench. Central started a 10-2 run with one minute left in the first half, which continued until the start of the second half. Central capitalized off turnovers, scoring 18 points off 15 Quinnipiac turnovers. The Blue Devils took control in the second half, outscoring the Bobcats 39-28 with the help of Sophomore guard Ashton Reynolds, who scored eight of his 10 points off the bench in the second half. The 3-2 Blue Devils stay at home against Vermont State Lyndon on Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 7 P.M. at Detrick Gymnasium.

CENTRAL 79 | SACRED HEART 75 (AT WILLIAM H. PITT CENTER IN FAIRFIELD, CT)
CENTRAL 31 48 — 79 | **SHU** 31 48 — 75
CENTRAL: RAPHEL LAURENT 13-24 4-4 35, VICTOR PAYNE 6-8 0-0 15, JHACE JOHNSON 4-9 2-2 12, DANIEL JAMES 2-5 0-1 5, JAMES JONES 1-3 2-5 4, DAVID SMITH 1-1 0-0 3, RODDY JONES 1-3 0-0 3, ELIJAH PARKER 1-4 0-0 2, JAYDEN MOTT 0-2 0-0 0, RASHAWN TIBBY 0-1 0-0 0. TOTALS: 29-60 8-12 79.
SHU: GRIFFIN BARROUK 6-15 2-2 19, JOJO WALLACE 4-9 6-6 16, JADEN SLAUGHTER 6-10 0-0 14, JAYLEN ROBINSON 6-11 0-0 12, KENDRICK CURTIS 3-7 0-0 7, DJ BROWN 2-3 1-2 5, SAMSON REILLY 1-3 0-0 2, JO VAN BUGGENHOUT 0-0 0-0 0, ABDOU YADD 0-1 0-0 0. TOTALS: 28-59 9-10 75
THREE-POINT GOALS: CENTRAL 13-32 (RAPHEL LAURENT 5-11, VICTOR PAYNE 3-5, JHACE JOHNSON 2-6, RODDY JONES 1-3, DANIEL JAMES 1-2, DAVID SMITH 1-1, ELIJAH PARKER 0-2, JAMES JONES 0-1, RASHAWN TIBBY 0-1); SHU 10-25 (GRIFFIN BARROUK 5-13, JADEN SLAUGHTER 2-2, JOJO WALLACE 2-3, KENDRICK CURTIS 1-3, SAMSON REILLY 0-2, ABDOU YADD 0-1, DJ BROWN 0-1)
RECORDS: CENTRAL 2-2 (0-0 NEC), SHU 2-2 (0-0 METRO)

CENTRAL 72 | QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY 67 (AT DETRICK GYMNASIUM IN NEW BRITAIN, CT)
CENTRAL 33 39 — 72 | **QUINNIPIAC** 39 28 — 67
CENTRAL: RAPHEL LAURENT 9-16 6-11 27, ASHTON REYNOLDS 4-5 2-4 10, DANIEL JAMES 2-4 1-3 7, JHACE JOHNSON 2-10 3-4 7, VICTOR PAYNE 2-7 0-0 6, ELIJAH PARKER 1-1 3-6 5, RASHAWN TIBBY 2-4 0-0 5, DAVID SMITH 1-5 0-0 3, JAMES JONES 1-3 0-0 2, JAYDEN MOTT 0-1 0-0 0, MATT GOODWIN 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS: 24-56 15-28 72
QUINNIPIAC: KEITH MCKNIGHT 8-15 4-7 20, TAYESHAWN CUNNINGHAM-PEMBERTON 6-9 1-2 16, TAI TURNAGE 2-9 4-4 10, LUCAS SEKASI 3-5 0-0 6, ALI DIOUF 1-4 2-2 4, NAS HART 1-4 0-0 3, BRAYLAN RITVO 1-1 0-0 3, NEDAS CHOLEVINSKAS 1-3 0-0 3, HOLDEN PIERRE-LOUIS 1-1 0-0 2. TOTALS: 24-51 11-15 67
THREE-POINT GOALS: CENTRAL 9-23 (RAPHEL LAURENT 3-4, VICTOR PAYNE 2-7, DANIEL JAMES 2-2, DAVID SMITH 1-4, RASHAWN TIBBY 1-2, JHACE JOHNSON 0-4); QUINNIPIAC 8-23 (TAYESHAWN CUNNINGHAM-PEMBERTON 3-6, TAI TURNAGE 2-8, NAS HART 1-1, NEDAS CHOLEVINSKAS 1-3, BRAYLAN RITVO 1-1, LUCAS SEKASI 0-2, KEITH MCKNIGHT 0-1, ALI DIOUF 0-1)
RECORDS: CENTRAL 3-2 (0-0 NEC), QUINNIPIAC 2-3 (0-0 METRO)