

THE RECORDER

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Mayoral Race in New Britain Heats Up

By **Elijah Hernandez**
Co-Editor-In-Chief

After a reign of 12 years, Mayor Erin Stewart is stepping down, and the title of Mayor is back up for grabs.

On Nov. 4 the polls will be open, and for New Britain voters they will choose between Republican candidate Sharon Belion-Saavedra, and the Democratic candidate Bobby Sanchez.

Both candidates have extensive resumes in Connecticut politics and emphasize their involvement specifically with New Britain.

Saavedra and Sanchez have been residents of New Britain for more than a decade, so their ties go beyond just being elected officials.

Some of the issues they plan to tackle if they become mayor are ones that are imperative to improving living quality in New Britain.

If Sanchez is elected, the priorities include lowering taxes, creating affordable housing

and allocating more resources to New Britain schools.

“We have to look at the policies on affordability. People cannot afford the apartments they are living in because taxes are up. We have to cap taxes,” Sanchez said. “Also, the school system. Money has been coming at the state level, but at the city level it’s been flat funded for so many years. We have a lot of catching up to do. I want to see all of our children succeed.”

The emphasis on schools stems from the idea that New Britain schools are underperforming compared to the rest of the state.

“Our school system is still at the bottom when it comes to statewide. Out of 169 towns, we’re 168; that’s not good,” he said. “I’ve had conversations with high school students, and they keep on telling me we need a new high school. That’s on my agenda, building a new high school. I’m the type of



Photo Credits NBC Connecticut; the two candidates representing the Republican and Democratic party respectively

See *Race* on Page 2



Count Kaiser's Halloween Spirit on Campus



By **Nicolina Coronis**
Staff Writer

Ghosts, ghouls and Blue Devils! Central Connecticut State University students are getting ready to welcome Halloween with open arms.

Let's take a look at some of the Halloween festivities that have hit CCSU during the week of Halloween.

CCSU organizations brought the Halloween spirit this year, with the Commuters Organization kicking things off by handing out Halloween candy grab bags commencing the start of trick-or-treating traditions.

Phi Delta Theta got the scare started at the drive-in movie night featuring the classic horror film "It." This was made possible with the help of other campus organizations like the CCSU Car Club, Student Government Association and Central Activities Network.

At that event the Catholic Club ran a bake sale to raise money that will go to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) support and research. But the Catholic Club didn't stop there. The club also hosted a Halloween party and welcomed costumes and desserts of all kinds. The Catholic club as a collective mention that was the start of many future Hallow-

een events to come and shares their excitement to be a part of it.

The Central Access Success Academics group hosted a Halloween-themed Jeopardy. This event offered free snacks and candies as you put your Halloween knowledge to the test.

The CCSU Computer Science club hosted the "Nightmare on Main Street" in October. This event featured coding challenges and snacks.

The Psychology Club offered an unconventional fun

See *Count Kaiser* on Page 5



Photo Credits Nicolina Coronis, The Recorder; Newman Club's stand in support of ALS

About

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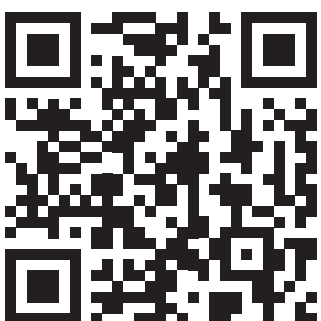
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SCAN FOR OUR LINKS



Race Continued

person who loves change. For the betterment of our community, that's something that I'd really like to entertain."

For Saavedra, her main focus, if she's to become mayor, addresses mitigating the challenges presented by the government shutdown.

"The first week in office I'd meet with all newly elected officials and all my department heads to talk about the current status of any projects or services going on, what is the impact of government shutdown and/or any cuts coming from the federal or state government," she said. "Then we would triage based on priority of needs. I am hoping the government shutdown ends soon and that we will avert a major crisis on a local level."

She has been getting in touch

with the community by meeting them face to face in their homes.

"Door knocking, door knocking, door knocking, lots of door knocking," she said. "A good ground game is really important to meeting voters where they're at. That's been the backbone of my campaign; that direct voter contact."

In the current political climate, being a Republican or a Democrat comes with added connotations that are inherent.

But for the candidates, they believe bipartisanship will be the key to success if they are elected as mayor.

"As you know this country is really going through a lot at the moment and it's the Republican party that's running things. This big Beautiful Bill that they talk about at the federal level is going to devastate many people in our community," Sanchez said. "I'm going to go in with a fresh mind, an open mind, whether you're Republican,



Photo Credits Sharon Beloin-Saavedra, her involvement with the community is something she prides herself on

Democrat or whatever, we're going to sit down, were going to talk, we're going to compromise, we're going to make thing happen for New Britain."

"Once you get elected to the Board of Education, you don't see Rs or Ds. We're working for the betterment of the students and the system," Saavedra said. "It was a great training ground to work cross party isles as just individual people, not really working in a party. I've had a really good track record of working bipartisan, seeing my mentors work cross party lines was very instructive to me."

Saavedra and Sanchez were both asked what their expectations were for Election Day, and they shared a similar sentiment.

"My expectation is to win because I've worked so hard," Saavedra said. "I'm a lifelong person here in New Britain, I will be out standing at the polls. But I do not disappear

if I don't win. My expectation is for voters to come out, and for me to respect the will of the people, whichever way the vote comes out. I will always be in New Britain, I will always be a presence in this community and I will always fight for New Britain."

"I feel good. I've been hearing some really good things at the door. I think people are ready for a change," Sanchez said. "The democrats who were supporting Mayor Stewart want to see what I can bring to the table. They've been listening to my message, and they've liked what I've been saying. We'll see, we won't know until the polls close at 8 p.m."

Early voting for New Britain residence will take place until Nov. 2, and to find out more information on where or how to vote, visit www.MyVote.ct.gov, or if you have any questions, you can reach out to elections@ct.gov.

Photo Credits Connecticut House Democrats; Rep. Bobby Sanchez was on Campus

Have a story that needs to be told?
Tips or ledes that should be investigated?
Email us at elijahh@my.ccsu.edu
or fill out the contact form on our website
centralrecorder.org

Turning Point USA Hosts a Talk on Empowering Gen Z to Fight to Preserve American values

By Nicolina Coronis
Staff Writer



Photo Credits Nicolina Coronis, The Recorder; guests and speakers which attended the talk

The Central Connecticut State University chapter of Turning Point USA hosted an open discussion on traditional American values on Oct. 28.

Featured guests were Republican speakers Joey Catanzaro, a candidate for the Plainfield Board of Education; Republican Alan Colombie, and state Rep. Joe Hoxha.

The event focused on the importance of youth participation in local elections. Local-level elections are not gaining enough attention from the younger generation, such as Gen

Z, according to the speakers. “The more local, the more important it is,” said Hoxha. “It affects you,” Catanzaro added.

Local level elections are currently happening in Connecticut for positions such as the mayor, the board of education and town council members.

Full of encouragement, the speakers urged students to go out and register to vote. By getting involved in their town’s local elections, they contribute to deciding what kinds of policies

would affect their school district. “Policy is what you do once you’re elected to office ... politics is how you get elected to office,” said Hoxha.

Questions were welcomed from students and led to conversations about the steps it takes to become a candidate.

The group emphasized the importance of getting involved and volunteering in your town.

“Start small. Speak to your local politicians, wheth-

er they are a Democrat or a Republican,” said Hoxha.

Waving signs in the center of town with the politician that you support was described as a great way to meet new people and connect.

“Sign waving shows strength and unity. You get the people that will roll their window down, give you the finger...but if you see that on campus or in life...don’t be afraid...and don’t stoop to their level. The best thing you can do is just be yourself,” said Colombie.

Ian Howe, president of CCSU’s chapter of Turning

Point USA, said the turnout and outcome was refreshing.

“It was great hearing from people that actually practice local politics and learning about how you can make a change in your community,” said Howe.

This Weeks Campus Events

WFCS 107.7 FM Bolier Room Set, Oct. 30, 7 p.m.

Student Center 108

CCSU Women’s Club Volleyball Tournament, Nov. 2, 8 a.m.

CCSU Rec Center

Fall Into Registration Tabling, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.

Student Center Lobby

Crochet and Chick-fil-A, Nov. 4, 6 p.m.

CAN Office



Photo Credits Nicolina Coronis, The Recorder; Guest speakers talking about mobilizing Gen Z

Commuter Column

Early, Lucky, or Late: The War on Parking At CCSU

By Nicolina Coronis
Staff Writer

If parking at Central Connecticut State University were a sport, commuters would be the varsity athletes. For those early morning classes, students find themselves circling the parking lots and garages, eagerly waiting for someone to leave so that they can finally snag a spot.

CCSU has multiple parking garages that are shared between faculty, commuters, and residents. Of that demographic, 70% of the student body is made up of commuters.

The parking garages typically fill up by 9 a.m., and those tight parking spaces leave no room for error when it comes to squeezing into that last parking spot.

Commuters at CCSU weighed in with their parking experiences, from running late to classes looking for a parking spot or even getting tickets from campus police for parking in the wrong areas.

Abigail Grier, a freshman, said she's seen the difficulty of finding parking at Central within her first year, especially around 9 a.m. She uses Uber to get to school, but when driving with friends, it's challenging to secure a spot.

"If you have 9 a.m. [classes], that is horrible because you definitely have to go up and down the floors just to find parking," Grier said.

It is common for students to be late to class because of the time spent trying to find parking. In addition to the challenge of finding

parking, students are also concerned about the safety of their car when fitting around the narrow corners of the parking garage.

Grier said tight spaces and large vehicles make an already difficult task even more challenging.

"Sometimes people drive too close, so you have to go wider, but there's not that much space or even people that drive trucks. You try to stay close to the side but can't because they need more room to maneuver," she said.

These challenges are part of the commuter experience, and Grier is not the only student who has experienced these problems at CCSU. As more students share their stories, one thing is clear. At CCSU, finding a parking

spot is like a daily gamble, and the odds are not in your favor.

Alexandra Chudz, a junior, has noticed these issues.

She normally has to park in the garage that is farthest from her classes to find parking.

"The Willard parking garage is always packed," she said. "I spend five to 10 minutes looking for a parking spot."

She admits that finding a parking spot has made her late to class on multiple occasions and suggests that a commuter-only parking garage may help ease this parking panic.

Outside of the daily parking struggle, students also have to

worry about parking tickets. As Chudz said, "I got a warning, but my friend recently got a ticket because she didn't know where she could park."

CCSU categorizes its parking situation by colors. The spots with the yellow stripe are designated for faculty and staff. Red is for commuters and visitors. Green is for dorm students. Each vehicle in a parking garage should be registered and display a decal corresponding to its color.

Chudz has to adjust her schedule to what's realistically available when looking for parking.

"My commute is really close [10 minutes], which makes it easier, but I still leave 30 minutes early to find a spot," she said.

Letter to the Reader

Dear reader,

Earlier this month, one of the torchbearers of exquisite journalistic practices had its flame extinguished by the very institution it calls home. Indiana University first started with the firing of the Student Media Director Jim Rodenbush after he refused to censor the work of the students to appear more appealing to investors during their Homecoming weekend.

This wasn't the end of it. Soon after, the Indiana Daily Student was then barred from publishing any print copies of its newspaper.

The regression of these First

Amendment rights is concerning, not just as a co-editor-in-chief of our university's newspaper, but as a young journalist navigating the current political climate while trying to honor the same journalistic standards that have guided me since my first article.

Fortunately for the paper you are currently reading, we are independent from the university, while simultaneously the university supports our best interests by doing what they can to protect our rights.

Now more than ever, picking up the paper or visiting our website substantiates our existence and reinforces our credibility.

Thank

The staff at The Recorder and at the IDS put an immense amount of time and effort into the productions you read, and for all that to be taken away puts student journalists across the nation in a very precarious situation.

With that being said, our reporting will never deviate from the truth, and we will continually seek it out to report it. On behalf of The Recorder, we stand in solidarity with the IDS as they continue to make enormous strides for journalism, posting stories

you.

daily on their website amid the deterioration of their rights.

Participation is key to helping protect our establishment. If you have any suggestions on stories we should be covering, ways we could offer more transparency or ways to better incorporate more of the community, or any question or comment you have, we greatly appreciate it. We are a campus paper so any input that we receive is taken very seriously.

The paper is intended to be for you.

Next Wednesday, The Recorder will be hosting a Talk to the Ed-

itors discussion where everyone is invited to come to the Student Circle. We'll be there to answer any questions you may have.

The events that happened to the IDS isn't something that will make us shy away from doing the great work. If they are still moving forward, it would be a disservice to them if we weren't as well.

Wonderful wishes,

Elijah Hernandez

C o - E d i t o r - I n - C h i e f



Wednesday, Oct. 29

Indiana Daily Student

Student-led journalism since 1867



Er

Campus News ▾ City News ▾ Sports ▾ Arts ▾ Opinion ▾ Black Voices Features Community Hub ▾ Q



'Sheer, naked power grab': Rep. Matt Pierce talks redistricting at town hall



Count Kaiser Continued

way to relieve stress at their “Smashing Pumpkins” event.

Tonight, and the night of Halloween, have plenty more events to come.

Things heat up at the Boiler Room set as campus radio station 107.7 FM “The Edge” hosts a Twitch livestream and encourages students to come in their best costumes. The event will be held on Oct. 30, from 7 to 10 p.m. in Student Center room 108. This set includes live DJs, food and spooky vibes.

The Ballroom Dance Club will host a “Salsa Spooktacular” with a photo booth and costume contest on October 30th from 10 p.m. to midnight at the Semesters Cafe during the Devil’s Den at 10 event.

The Inter Residence Council will host “Fall Fest” on Oct. 31 from 1 to 4 p.m. in the mid-campus parking lot, featuring a pumpkin patch and coffin decorating.

These are just a few of the Hal-

loween festivities that Central has planned. Student life during Halloween looks like going out and enjoying outrageous amounts of candy for some students.

CCSU student Ny’asia Martin celebrates Halloween to the fullest.

“I plan to celebrate Halloween by going to parties with my friends, watching scary movies and going trick-or-treating,” said Martin.

Traditional Halloween is still alive at CCSU.

She particularly enjoys the ambiance of campus during this time of year.

“My favorite part about Halloween at CCSU is definitely the costumes. I see a lot of funny ones, and I always tell myself that one day I’ll have the confidence to go outside in a costume, but it’s super fun and festive to see people in them,” said Martin.

Martin takes part in the spooky events CCSU has to offer as a way to get her mind off classes.

“I have seen a lot of different

activities advertised such as a drive-in theater that’s showing the movie “IT” a spooky little murder mystery game with Kaiser...I’m actually going to attend the drive-in movie because it is a part of a fundraiser for ALS and also I just think that it would be a pretty cool experience...I just think it would be a perfect opportunity to be able to hang out with my classmates,” she said.

Many students like Martin take advantage of the festivities that the clubs at CCSU put together. CCSU events assist in creating a strong sense of community.

“I think that Halloween is bringing the community together because it’s a holiday that a lot of people celebrate, and I know that it’s really big, especially within the college community,” she said. “CCSU hosts all of these events so you know it’s always super festive and always super fun and I think a lot of people come out to them.”



Photo Credit Psychology Club; the official poster for their Halloween themed event

Q: What are your plans this Halloween?

Student Highlights of the Week

By Jameson Lynch
Social Media Editor



Isaac Mancini

“For Halloween I’m going to be at work, but right after work I’m getting into costume. I’m going to be Mr. Clean. Most people will probably be like ‘oh so you’re going to do a bald cap?’ No! I’m committing to the bit and I’m going to shave my head bald it’s going to be great!”



Jacob Derewonko

“For Halloween this year I’m going to be working. I’m going to be covering some of my buddies that have kids so they can go out trick or treating with their kids.”



Noah Decker

“For Halloween this year I’m probably going to invite my girlfriend over, we are going to chill at the dorm and watch a scary movie.”

“My favorite part about Halloween is the vibe of it, the spookiness and the darkness and all the Halloween lights and decorations.”

Ali Saleh

“For Halloween, this upcoming Thursday, this week the 30th there’s going to be a salsa spooktacular hosted by ballroom dance club and that’s a great way to celebrate this time of year.”



Joses Diaz

“For Halloween this year I’m just going to be hanging out with my cousins this year. They’re middle school aged, I’m 31 so I’m taking them trick or treating and give their parents a break for a little bit.”



From Overlooked to Undeniable: How Two Transfers Helped Revive CCSU Basketball

By Marcus Saunders
Co-Editor-In-Chief

With seven seconds remaining in Central Connecticut State's Northeast Conference semifinal game against Fairleigh Dickinson University, and the Blue Devils clinging on to a two-point lead, Jordan Jones made Central's biggest play in 18 years.

FDU star Terrence Brown had the ball with the chance to tie or take the lead and decided to pass, but Jones anticipated the play and swooped in for a steal. Jones got fouled with 4.6 seconds remaining and immediately raised his hands to hype up the home crowd. He stepped up to the free-throw line and calmly knocked down two free throws to seal the game and send CCSU to the NEC Championship for the first time since 2007.

While Jones, who scored six points in overtime, was the hero to end the game, his teammate Devin Haid set the tone in the first half. The junior guard shot 3 of 4 from 3-point range and 7 of 8 from the field, helping the Blue Devils take a 17-point lead into halftime. Neither of the Blue Devils stars is selfish about his stats.

"It doesn't matter who [is scoring], it [still] feels good," Jones said after the game. "I could've had 0 points today and would've been happy if we got the win."

Being a star in a Division I conference wasn't familiar territory for Haid or Jones. They didn't let their obstacles stop them from achieving their dream, and they didn't let their lack of being ranked determine their basketball careers. They took different paths, but both ended up at Central.

Jones' Journey: From Division II to CCSU

Jones, a native of South Carolina, attended South Florence High School and then transferred to Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate, which is a private high school in Darlington.

During the summer after his junior year, he got looks from Division I schools, including Charleston Southern, Radford and Siena, during his AAU season with TMP, a top AAU team in Charleston, South Carolina. But then, during his senior year of high school,

the COVID-19 pandemic threw a wrench into his recruitment. Colleges shut down and recruits weren't allowed on campus.

"Covid 2020 really messed a lot of opportunities up," he said. "They shut down a lot of camps, open runs and official visits that I had."

Jones knew that he had to pivot, and he was offered a full ride to Coker College, a Division II school in Hartsville, South Carolina, that was only 30 minutes away from his home. He was drawn to the school because of how much

the head coach at Coker, Jarred Merrill, was invested in him.

"He was going through some health issues at the time, but in his hospital bed he was looking at film [and] calling me," Jones said. "And he had never seen me play before, so it just happened to be a really good situation for me."

Jones believed that he was a Division I-caliber player. In high school he went up against future NBA stars like Ja Morant and Zion Williamson. His time at Coker was preparing him for the next level.

"If I would've got thrown into that [Division I] early off, I definitely would've been developed," Jones said. "But being at Coker gave me time to focus on how to get on the court and how to actually play — like how to be a good player and how to learn how to be a college point guard."

He spent his first three college seasons at Coker. During his junior season he averaged 15 points, 6.5 assists and 4.1 rebounds per game — and ranked sixth in assist-to-turnover ratio (1.85), sixth in assists and third in steals (2.59) in all of Division II basketball.

field, 36.9 percent from three-point range and was named to the All-Mountain East Conference Second Team. Despite his success and accolades, his goal was still to get to Division I.

Doubling Down on the Doubters

"I've always been underrecruited and overlooked," Jones said. "But that just gave me that chip on my shoulder just to go out and just prove everybody wrong every time."

Even though Jones was getting invited to basketball camps in high school, he still felt like he was being underrated. When he played in gyms with multiple courts, and the people who ran the camps put him on the side courts early in the morning, while the best games that drew the most scouts were showcased on the main courts in the middle of the day.

But slights like that didn't deter him — they just made him work harder.

"It's easy for somebody to talk down on somebody that they've never seen how hard they work," he said. "Nobody really understands the grind that we put into this type of stuff, so they are on the outside looking in."

Jones saw other players who got a lot of attention on social media get recruited.

"[People] think that all the players with all of the hype are going to succeed," he said. "The ones that are going to succeed are the ones that have been working the whole time."

Because he was overlooked during his recruitment, Jones didn't have a dream school. And all he wanted was an opportunity to play somewhere. Jones believed that going to a small school and being someone who didn't usually play above the rim played a part in why he was overlooked. He knew that if coaches saw film of him, he was going to get a chance. And he knew that if he got a chance — from anyone, anywhere — he was going to shine.



Photo Credit Steve McLaughlin; Head Coach Patrick Sellers and Assistant Coach Ben Wood

He also scored a career-high 30 points against Lincoln Memorial, which was the ninth-ranked Division II team at the time.

Haid's Path: From Community College to CCSU

After graduating from Wooster [Ohio] High School in 2017, Haid worked at Walmart while he waited for an opportunity, and he never stopped working on his game. He did not start playing college basketball until 2022, when he attended Cuyahoga Community College.

"I just never had any offers out

of high school, so I was just working out and playing with friends and stuff, but I was never part of a real program," he said. "So going back to Cuyahoga Community College got me the opportunity."

In his freshman season at Cuyahoga, he averaged 20 points, 7.1 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game and made the All-Ohio Community College Athletic Conference First Team and the All-Region Second Team. He learned a lot from his experience there.

"It was all just about proving myself on [that] level," Haid said.

"So that's where I started out at, and I proved myself there, and then just kept going up."

For his sophomore season, he decided to transfer to Notre Dame College, a Division II private school in South Euclid, Ohio.

"The competition was a little different, and the playstyle was different," he said. "It was a little more faster, but I feel like I adjusted pretty well."

Haid averaged 15.9 points, 5.6 rebounds and 2.4 assists per game in his sophomore season. He also shot 49.4 percent from the



Photo Credit Steve McLaughlin; Devin Haid (2) and Jordan Jones (23) leading a timeout huddle

“There was a time when I was emailing coaches out of high school,” he said. “Emailing and DMing them on Instagram just trying to get somebody to look my way.”

Jones knew that he would have to lower his expectations and start at a Division II school due to him being overlooked by many scouts.

He came to the realization in his senior year in high school when his AAU team played in the Under Armour National Tournament. College coaches didn’t show much interest in him.

“I was like [the] third option for a lot of these teams,” Jones said. “They was talking to me, but they wasn’t giving me much attention.”

The way his AAU season worked out, he knew that he was going to have to take a different journey, and he talked about how he would be an emergency plan for Division I schools if they weren’t able to get the players that the coaches wanted.

“They wasn’t trying to get me on the campus to come visit,” he said. “Players would have had to not come to their school for them to give me offers. The way that it was going, I knew I was probably going to have to just work. It’s a ladder.”

‘I Feel Like I Should Have Got A Look’

Growing up in Ohio, Haid’s dream was to play at Ohio State. He also felt like he was overlooked in high school but acknowledges that not many people from his high school make it big somewhere else. He wasn’t surprised by his lack of recruitment, but he knew that he was special — and he loved the game of basketball.

“I wanted to go play college basketball, but I didn’t get the opportunity, nor did I get any offers,” he said. “I just had to stay with it and prove to [coaches] that I wanted to do this.”

Although it hurt to not get any looks from coaches, he believed that he should have gotten an opportunity out of high school to play college basketball and still plays with a chip on his shoulder because of it.

He wished he could have proved his doubters wrong earlier in his career, but he’s just happy that he was able to get to the level he wanted to play at even if the journey wasn’t how he expected.

“I feel like I should have got a look, definitely,” he said. “But everything happens for a reason.”

Making the Adjustment to Division I

After Jones’ junior season, he knew that he was ready to make the jump to Division I, so he decided to enter the transfer portal.

This time around, he was getting attention from a number of Division II schools and some Division I programs, including Tarleton State, Texas Rio Grande Valley, William & Mary, Siena and CCSU.

Central head coach Patrick Sellers checks the transfer portal every day that it updates, and when he saw that Jones played at Coker College and was from his hometown, he was intrigued and decided to look deeper. Sellers’ best friend, Larry Johnson, knew Jones’ father, Lacie Jones, and connected the two.

Once Jones and Sellers got to know each other more, Sellers invited him to visit to CCSU. The coaching staff worked him out, and — impressed by the coaching staff’s dedication to building a relationship with his family — he committed a couple of weeks later. That relationship remains strong.

“You can get into a situation where you meet the coaches and they tell you one thing just to get you [to] the school, and then they’re a whole different set of guys,” he said. “But these guys [are] special.”

Jones compared his “gritty” experience at Coker to a juco college, noting how it did not have many resources. When he transferred to Central, he acknowledged that it was a lower Division I school, but he was just grateful and appreciative to be there.

Even still, the transition was not entirely smooth for Jones. The CCSU team practiced every day for five weeks in the summer. At the end of the session the coaching staff told Jones that there were certain areas of his game that they would like him to work on during his time back home.

“[They told me] everything that I was lacking, everything that I was doing wrong, spots where I needed to just do better,” he said. “I went home, and I was working on it every day.”

As soon as he returned to South Carolina, he got to work.

“I got a key to my high school gym so I’m in there every day working on it by myself [on] late nights and early mornings,” he said.

Once everyone returned to campus, the coaches were impressed with how quickly he developed his game. He was better in all of the areas that the coaches told him that he needed to work on. They were not pleased with his performance during his summer sessions and told him that they might have to move on from him and that they had considered moving on from him.

“They still had guys [ahead of] me, but I still was trying to prove to them that I was good enough to at least be on the team,” he said.

In 2023-24, Jones’ first year at Central, he averaged 13.1 points, 3.6 assists, and 3.5 rebounds per game and led the Blue Devils to a shared Northeast Conference regular-season championship with Merrimack.

He was granted a fifth year of eligibility because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in the 2024-25 season, he upped his game even more. He averaged similar numbers, but the team overall won more games. He was named NEC Player of the Year. He also helped lead Central to a regular-season title with a conference record of 14-2 and to the NEC Championship Game.

Haid decided to leave Notre Dame College and enter the transfer portal a second time. He knew that he was good enough to play at the Division I level and thought that after his sophomore season it was the right time to do so. Ryan Olander, a CCSU assistant coach, saw Haid’s film and really liked him as a player, so he told Sellers about him.

Once again, a connection helped Sellers get in communication with Haid. The father of one of the players he coached at FDU was good friends with Haid’s junior college coach, Aaron Nixon, so he put Sellers and Haid in touch, and that led to him committing. Haid and Nixon still speak with each other frequently.

Haid said that Central was the right Division I school for him to transfer to because he had great conversations with the coaching staff where they told him what was going to happen, and they were true to their word.

Central was also coming off a winning season, with Jones returning for his fifth season of college basketball, it made it even more enticing to Haid.

Like Jones, Haid also struggled to make the transition to Division I. He started the season off slowly, but Sellers told him to keep working and told him that things would get better, and that’s exactly what happened.

Haid finished the 2024-25 season averaging 14.2 points and 5.6 rebounds per game while shooting 49.3% from the field. He was also named to the All-NEC Second Team and was named NEC Player of the Week five times while also being a key piece in the run all the way to the NEC championship game.

Sellers said that he expected both Haid and Jones to produce similarly to how they did at their Division II schools, and he knew that their offensive system of a spaced-out offense would work well with them.

“Jordan could go [to] any school in the country, and he would be one of the top guys athletically anywhere. He’s a fast, quick-twitch athlete,” he said. “Devin was a big-time shot-maker. He’s really good at just putting the ball in the hoop from all different angles — threes, mid-range, inside the hoop.”

Haid and Jones are both on the move — again — chasing their next challenge. Haid entered the transfer portal and will play his senior season at the University of South Florida. Jones graduated in May and is currently playing professionally in Slovakia for the Nitra Blue Wings.

So Sellers and Central will have to reload again. But the success of Haid and Jones has encouraged Sellers to look for more Division II players in the transfer portal. He added that it is not just CCSU but all over the country more programs are looking at the Division II level, and a bunch of good former Division II players have contributed in the NCAA Tournament.

He emphasized that good players can come from anywhere.

“It doesn’t matter where you go nowadays,” Sellers said. “Guys can play.”



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A Preview Into What the Men's Basketball Team Has In-Store For the 25-26 Season

By **Matthew Berube & Mekhai Ouellette**
Contributors

After one of the most successful seasons in program history, the Central Connecticut State men's basketball team enters the 2025-26 campaign with some high expectations—and a few new questions.

The Blue Devils finished 25-7 overall and 14-2 in conference play last season, capturing the regular-season title for the second year in a row and recording their best year under head coach Patrick Sellers.

"It's fun to be a part of it. I went to school here — this is home for me, Sellers said. "It's been a lot of fun coming to work every day, working with guys and watching them grow."

A loss in the Northeast Con-

ference championship to Saint Francis (Pa.) kept the Blue Devils out of the NCAA tournament for the 18th straight year. But this season, a new-look Central squad will try to change that.

"It's a new season — 10 new guys — it's a new team. Everyone's excited," Sellers said.

Central opens the season against Vermont State Johnson, a Division III school that finished 11-17 last year. The Blue Devils faced them last season and cruised to a 117-68 victory with Darin Smith Jr. leading all scorers with 23 points in the matchup.

With plenty of new faces, the Blue Devils will look to make a statement early.

Along with Vermont State Johnson, Central will face another Division III program, Johnson and Wales (R.I.), on Nov. 7. The Blue Devils hope to make a statement in their two upcoming games.

Those games lead to a tough nonconference schedule, featuring road matchups at Seton Hall, Rutgers and Boston College — three programs from power conferences that will test CCSU's depth right away.

"We want to win. The last couple years we've played teams in the bigger leagues. We've competed with them," Sellers said. "And we're going to give everything we got."

Between those headline games, CCSU will also take on several mid-major opponents, including Quinnipiac, UMass, Sacred Heart, Fairfield and Northwestern.

Central's identity this season will be unselfish basketball, with the pure goal of winning games and building chemistry with one another. Sellers wants to set the standard of "we, not me" basketball.

He measures success beyond the scoreboard by their teamwork, and their wins are a by-product of what they do as a family and as a program.

The Blue Devils placed second in the NEC Preseason Coaches' Poll, with LIU unanimously selected to finish first.

The NEC is projecting a big jump from Smith, who was named to the 2025-26 NEC Men's Basketball Preseason All-Conference Team. Last season, the 6-foot-7 forward averaged 6.8 points and three rebounds per game while shooting a scorching 46.3% from beyond the arc in only 18.1 minutes per game.

The Blue Devils need his continued growth if they want a chance to return to where they were last season.

Although much of the team is comprised of different players, with a similar schedule to last season, the team should finish around .500 with a record of 18-12. A lot of the competition they play will be close matchups, but if they can find a way to gain momentum, they'll be a tough squad to beat.



Photo Credit Steve McLaughlin; CCSU's Men's Basketball roster for the 25-26 season



CCSU SCHEDULE



Women's Soccer

November 2 – @ Delaware St. at 4 PM

Women's Swimming & Diving

October 31 – @ Southern Conn. St. at 5 PM

October 31 – vs. Wagner at 5 PM

Men's & Women's Cross Country

November 1 – NEC Championships at 11 AM

Men's Soccer

November 2 – @ Mercyhurst at 3 PM

Women's Volleyball

October 31 – vs. Mercyhurst at 6 PM

November 1 – vs. Mercyhurst at 4 PM

Men's Basketball

November 3 – vs. Vermont State John

Women's Basketball

November 3 – @ Bryant at 6 PM

Football

November 1 – vs. LIU at 12 PM