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Thursday, December 14th

“LOL” At BC



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Pro-Palestine Protests Continue Amid Calls For Prez Anderson's Resignation



Pro-Palestine protesters holding signs and a sack to represent children who have been killed in Gaza at a walkout on Nov. 29. *Kate Dempsey*

By Kate Dempsey
Managing Editor

Pro-Palestine protesters interrupted a meeting between CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez and the Board of Trustees on Monday, Dec. 4, to oppose the Chancellor’s and Brooklyn College President Michelle Anderson’s statements regarding Palestinian organizing across CUNY. According to the organizers of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the goal to interrupt the meeting was to stop “the repression of CUNY organizing in solidarity with Palestine liberation,” and to advocate for Palestinian students who they felt CUNY administrators failed to acknowledge and left out of official statements. “The statement issued by CUNY Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez on October 11th set the

tone and context for the subsequent statements and actions across CUNY, including John Jay,” a protester read at the meeting. “In the 457 words of the Chancellor’s statement, the words ‘Palestine’ or ‘Palestinian’ did not appear once. The statement makes one point entirely clear: CUNY’s administration values some lives at the expense of others.” The protest also comes amid continued efforts to advocate for President Anderson to step down after a coalition of 19 BC clubs released a joint letter on Oct. 25 criticizing the president’s statement ahead of the protest held on Oct. 12. In this statement, President Anderson shared that BC would be working to increase the presence of campus security, adding that there would be no penalties for students deciding not to go to campus that day.

To the coalition, the response from administration “Unjustly [associated] Palestinians, our student organizations, and communities with violence [...] Such statements pose a substantial risk of inciting violence and harassment in our community,” which was also read at the Board of Trustees meeting. As part of their continued demonstrations, ahead of the meeting, protesters organized a “die-in” on Nov. 14, consisting of people laying on the ground on BC’s East Quad to represent those killed in Gaza, a death toll that has now reached over 15,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Protesters held signs reading, “Never forget, this campus has a history of Islamophobia; they illegally infiltrated, surveilled, and attacked Muslim students,” referencing NYPD’s infiltration of Muslim student clubs from 2011 to 2015, as reported by The Gothamist. Protesters also held up a large banner covered in painted red handprints to look like blood reading, “Anderson, your silence speaks volumes.” As President Anderson made her way over to the meeting, protesters chanted, “President Anderson you can’t hide; we charge you with genocide.” The theme for the November Faculty Council meeting was “belonging”—specifically, how BC faculty can come together to cultivate a sense of belonging for all students. At the meeting, however, students voiced that the protests stood in the way of that feeling.

“I came here today as a representative of the Jewish community [...] Last month, at the previous Faculty Council, a group of students were invited to speak and presented as if they spoke for the student body. I, as an Arab Jew, am here to say that those students do not represent me,” said a student at BC. “How can we feel like we belong when our professors target Jewish students in classrooms? [...] How can we feel like we belong when our campus is littered with false propaganda, which continues to put targets on our back?” Similar to the Faculty Council meeting held on Oct. 18, students and faculty expressed concerns about professors talking about Israel and Palestine in the classroom. In the letters, both Israeli and Palestinian students expressed concerns of potentially facing repercussions on grades for advocating. On the other hand, some professors expressed the importance of continuing dialogue at the school. “It’s so essential to have freedom of speech in the university. We have to be able to talk about these things. People on both sides are saying they are not in favor of free speech because the other side doesn’t deserve the right to speak. We need to hear these messages and respond to them [...] If we can’t discuss it, we have to cut back freedom of speech in the classroom. The university is in trouble,” one professor said at the meeting, which was met with disagreements from other faculty claiming that the issue

at hand should be kept my administration outside of the classroom. installed a wudu station for Muslim students, and I've advocated for having classes off on Eid," President Anderson said. "And this is personal for me. My husband is a Muslim Arab. Mustafa and I have been particularly passionate and inspired by the collaboration between Muslim and Jewish students that has evolved in the student government over the last number of years."

In the comments from the administration and I've advocated portion of the meeting, President Anderson addressed claims made about her since the Oct. 12 protest, referring back to the Oct. 18 explanation that the SJP protest was moved off campus by SJP who decided to not go through with permits from Student Affairs. President Anderson also refuted again that she had contact with Councilwoman Inna Vernikov prior to the protest and failed to denounce Vernikov's actions, stating she already did so at the last meeting, referencing an article published by The Vanguard on Oct. 25. The president's last comment expressed how she has advocated for Muslim students, including her personal connection to the issue.

"The final claim was that I'm biased against Muslim students. This is false. The fact is that as a president, I've been a strong supporter of Muslim students, I've supported and attended the students' iftars, and I've advocated for Muslim students, including her personal connection to the issue."

"We stand here today to expose the Brooklyn College administration's clear bias and President Anderson's clear bias, disregard, and outright discrimination of the Palestinian and Muslim student body of Brooklyn College," said a protester at a walkout organized on Nov. 29.

At the meeting disrupted on Dec. 4, organizers echoed that CUNY administration needs to do more to hear Palestinian students and not "selectively protect" others. As the semester comes to an end, it remains to be seen what on-campus organizing will look like come spring. This is a developing story. The Vanguard will report on updates as they are made available.



Protesters hold up a banner to protest President Anderson at a “die-in” on Nov. 14./*Kate Dempsey*

Editors’ Note

As we wrote in our last editors’ note, here at The Vanguard, we are fully committed to the principles of facts and fairness in reporting so that students can make informed decisions about the world around them. We believe that it is our responsibility to be a voice for the voiceless and uplift those who are marginalized.

Our editorial staff is made up of Palestinian, Jewish, and other voices originating from different backgrounds. As such, we decided to choose a writer with no cultural, religious, or ethnic ties to the issue at hand. The objective of our coverage is to report on recent developments at Brooklyn College without including any personal underlying opinions about the matter.

We will continue to foster the greater understanding and empathy that the situation demands by using the power and privilege that we have been afforded. We would like to honor those who have lost their lives in pursuit of this, and look to the future where the media can become a beacon of hope once again.

Signed,

Serin Sarsour, Editor-In-Chief
Kate Dempsey, Managing Editor
Shlomie Katash, News Editor

Mayor Adams, Comptroller Clash Amid NYC Budget Woes



L to R: NYC Mayor Eric Adams and Comptroller Brad Lander./New York Daily News

By Shlomie Katash
News Editor

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander announced on Nov. 30 that he would be stripping Mayor Eric Adams of his emergency power to authorize spending on contracts for migrant services without prior approval. The move comes on the heels of Adams notifying the city of mass budget cuts, which he pins on the growing financial needs of the migrant crisis. Lander’s office can now review and potentially deny any contract the Adams administration agrees to. While Adams may still override the decision, Lander hopes the complete process will bring about more transparency surrounding the ballooning deals, a concern he has warned

of since September. Lander claimed that at least 70% of city agencies failed to meet transparency guidelines when it came to reporting emergency migrant spending. “When New York City faces an emergency, agencies must manage unexpected circumstances as nimbly and efficiently as they can,” said Lander, per City and State New York. “However, agencies navigating emergency procurements should not defer reporting deadlines and must adhere to guidance around transparency, accountability, and greater cost efficiency when stewarding city dollars.” Questions regarding the city’s migrant services contracts, which Lander claims have exceeded \$1.3 billion since January 2022, have been

especially prominent since The New York Times reported on the poor care offered to migrants by the for-profit contractor DocGo, health services that cost taxpayers \$432 million. Adams claims that Lander’s decision will only worsen the conditions for migrants by handcuffing the city’s ability to swiftly respond to the crisis. However, Lander’s office maintains that it will still be able to respond to contract requests in a prompt and timely manner, removing the risk of any substantial delay. “Our office responds to requests for prior approval in an expeditious and efficient manner given the urgency that often surrounds emergency needs,” a spokesperson for Lander said. “Requesting prior

approval is only one step of many when an agency is seeking to use the emergency procurement method and our office regularly works with the agencies to review such requests and we do consider the time-sensitive nature of those requests.” As temperatures plunge, the city has been forced to continue grappling with finding a way to fulfill their legal requirement to house the countless asylum seekers fleeing their dire conditions at home. The issue has dominated the political landscape as Adams has repeatedly blamed the migrant crisis for straining the city’s budget, necessitating massive cuts among NYC’s agencies, including for education, libraries, and police departments. Opponents of Adams, though, have claimed

the mayor is obfuscating the true sources of the city’s financial distress. “It’s important for New Yorkers to understand that while these budget gaps are real, they’re not solely due to the migrant crisis. The end of federal COVID stimulus funds, a resilient but static economy, and commercial real estate challenges also play a big role,” said Council Member Justin Brannan, who chairs the city’s Finance Committee. Underscoring doubts regarding Adams’ mass spending and slashing, the City Council announced on Dec. 11 that it would be soon reviewing Adams’ proposed budget revisions, arguing that his cuts are unnecessarily harsh and ultimately ineffective.

“Latinos Out Loud” Filmed Live At The Whitman Theater



Rachel “La Loca” Strauss-Muniz, her crew, and students from BC’s Multi-Camera Television Production class on the set of “Latinos Out Loud” on Dec. 5./*Rami Mansi*

By Rami Mansi
Staff Writer

The award-winning and positively infectious podcast “Latinos Out Loud” recorded last week’s taping in front of a live audience of New Yorkers and members of the Brooklyn College community alike inside the campus’s Whitman Theater on Dec. 5. The Puerto Rican and Latino Studies (PRLS) Department partnered up with the Television, Radio and Emerging Media (TREM) Department to welcome back BC alumna and host of “Latinos Out Loud” since its creation in 2015, Rachel Strauss-Muniz, professionally known as Rachel “La Loca.”

“Latinos Out Loud” is a podcast with a mission “to move Latinos forward, by making them LOL,” Strauss-Muniz explained at the event.

Strauss-Muniz is a New York native market researcher turned comedian who is as charismatic as she is a Leo. From sketch

comedy and stand-up to hosting her podcast, Strauss-Muniz has made a name for herself, having the confidence of a true performer and the energy of a Bulldog. Strauss-Muniz has even been invited to teach a new course at BC in the spring revolving around radio and podcasting.

Audience members were in for a treat as this episode of “Latinos Out Loud” featured three different guests. The opener, “Michelladonna,” was a Baruch and Cornell student turned comedian. The queer Latina performer opened the episode up and rattled the audience in the best way possible with hilarious remarks to get them ready for the following hour-and-a-half-long journey.

During the opening minutes of the podcast, Strauss-Muniz had an introductory shout-out session where she gave credit where credit was due and acknowledged the audience, her team, and crew, who was almost entirely made up of students from a TREM class at BC called

Multi-Camera Television Production, among others.

“It was really exciting to be part of a real live show!” said Yariana Baez, a student in the class. “Speaking for myself, being a stage manager was nerve-racking but exhilarating because I got to work directly with the talent and the director. Overall, it gave me a taste of what the real deal would be like. I loved it!”

The first segment that audience members witnessed was with Frank Nibbs, cited “Frankspiracy News,” a segment that discusses various conspiracy theories. For this episode, the theory presented was that Santa was a shaman and made his reindeers fly by giving them the drug “magic” mushrooms. With proof being the constant approach of red mushrooms in various films, books, and other forms of entertainment, the evidence was surprisingly quite substantial.

The next guest was a comedian who’s been performing for 15 years. Starring in Jimmy

Kimmel’s Vegas comedy club, Disney’s “Dashing Through the Snow” film, and the live shows of “America’s Got Talent,” Gina Brillon graced the podcast with her quick wit and enthusiasm.

With two empowering female comedians taking the stage, listeners already knew they were in for a good listen. Brillon and Strauss-Muniz enthralled audience members and went off of each other’s energies perfectly. Reflecting on their shared experiences of motherhood and being women of color in a white male-dominated field, Strauss-Muniz asked Brillon for tips for “the young Gina’s” of the world and what she would tell her younger self.

“We don’t lose; we win or we learn,” Brillon said. “You can tell me ‘no,’ and I’ll come every week until you say ‘yes.’” With stories to share and emotions to bare, Brillon lit up the stage and enlightened BC with her energy and words of motivation.

With laughter and emotions resonating

with all of the audience members, the filming was enjoyable on all sides of the camera. One of the production team members was The Vanguard’s very own managing editor, Kate Dempsey, who was entrusted with the role of camera number one operator.

The production class excelled in their abilities to work with each other and create a successful episode. “It’s one thing to work hard, another to see your work pay off in front of you, especially in just one semester,” said student Mara Matos, who operated camera five. “It was one thing to work on such a cool show with a great host and incredible guests, but it was another to be surrounded by such talented and hardworking students and staff. To be a student trusted to take on such work was beyond rewarding, and I feel it was a real bonding experience amongst the students, one I’m truly grateful for.”

Finishing the episode with the fast-paced game that sponsored the episode, Strauss-Muniz and Brillon played a fun game of “Get Loud,” the Latin-cultured game that strongly resembles “Heads Up.” Strauss-Muniz then left the audience with warm regards and excitement for the next episode, which was filmed in the same location with different guests just an hour later.

With a memorable audience and powerful momentum carried throughout the episode, Brooklyn College was graced by the energy of Rachel “La Loca” Strauss-Muniz and the entertainment that is “Latinos Out Loud.”

BC's Usman Chohan, Documentary Chosen For Doc NYC Festival



Usman Chohan (left) with Hakki Akdeniz (right) at the screening of “Slice of Goodness” on Nov. 16./*Young Cheong*

By Kate Dempsey
Managing Editor

Champion Pizza may seem like just your average go-to spot when you need something to eat, but to many, the allure lies behind the person who runs the pizza chain: Hakki Akdeniz. The first-generation immigrant turned Instagram superstar may just be running a business, but in “Slice of Goodness” by Brooklyn College senior Usman Chohan, viewers get a firsthand look at the entrepreneur’s everyday life. The documentary was selected for Doc NYC, America’s largest documentary festival, and was screened on Nov. 16.

For Chohan, the documentary had its beginnings last semester in Video Storytelling, a course offered in the Television, Radio and Emerging Media Department by Professor Irina Patkanian. The assignment was a narrative documentary: telling a story without the filmmaker telling the story, which is different from a news documentary where

it is very evident what the story is. Chohan chose Akdeniz after meeting him at a Ramadan event, where the star was giving out free pizzas to those breaking their fasts. From there, the relationship between them grew and eventually became a collaborative project.

“He’s very humble enough that he doesn’t, you know, say, ‘Oh, you’re a student filmmaker. I don’t want you to interview me.’ In many ways, he was encouraging me to take certain shots and film certain ways; he was kind of a very active person and collaborating on this film,” Chohan told The Vanguard.

Those who know briefly of Akdeniz’s story know that upon arriving in America, he was homeless and living on New York City’s streets for a number of years. After saving up some money, he was able to get his own place and eventually open “Hakki’s Pizza,” later renamed “Champion Pizza” due to many calling him by the nickname “Champ.”

30.7 million followers and six stores later, Akdeniz’s story has captivated many,

which is why Chohan chose him as the subject of his documentary.

“I always felt that this story was such a compelling story because, you know, to start in a new country with very little English to what is two decades ago and being homeless, to go having a pizza chain stores that often gives back to the community,” Chohan said. “In a way, people like that underdog story, and I felt that it may have had a chance.”

Boosting Akdeniz’s large following is his elaborate dough-tossing skills (think Salt Bae, but for pizza), and his charitable work, which often includes giving away free pizzas to hundreds of homeless people. But even with this larger-than-life online persona, Akdeniz is shown in the documentary as never forgetting his humble roots.

“People they say, ‘Hakki, dude, you know, like you become famous now. You big on social media.’ You know what? I don’t care, it’s nothing man. You have to have it here, if you have in your heart over

here that’s an international language. You just have to be a good human being,” Akdeniz told Chohan in the documentary.

Even with such a large following online that seems to document Akdeniz’s whole life, viewers of Chohan’s documentary get to experience what everyday life is like for the star.

“I purposefully chose the title ‘Slice of Goodness’ for the reason is that no, it’s not going to tell them about all of his life, it’s like a slice of his life,” Chohan explained. “It’s a portion of what you see, like him managing the pizza store, him managing the presence on social media, and just, you know, being an all-around genuine, kind person.”

For Chohan, being selected for Doc NYC is part of his own humble beginnings of being a journalist, hoping to one day be an on-air reporter. At the festival, where Akdeniz joined him on stage, Chohan had the opportunity to show his work and represent the only CUNY-

affiliated documentary selected for 2023 amongst several private institutions.

“Yes, it was my film. Yes, it was my idea to do it. But to represent Brooklyn College and the CUNY system, going head-to-head with all these private institutions was a really good symbol of that just because you go to a public university or public college doesn’t mean that you can’t make great work.”

To Chohan, shadowing Akdeniz in his life (with a few delicious slices of free pizza along the way) was a rewarding experience, and being selected for Doc NYC demonstrated reciprocity of uplifting one another’s voices.

“I really didn’t care about winning, I just wanted to showcase my work,” Chohan said. “I wanted to get on stage and introduce myself.”

HASA, Cultivating Cultural Unity At BC



Courtesy of @bc_hasa via Instagram

By Reima Choute
Features Editor

The Haitian American Student Association (HASA) is a Brooklyn College club dedicated to creating a safe space for Haitian-American students on campus and exposing the Haitian culture to everyone who is willing to learn. Established on the principles of education, unity, and cultural celebration, HASA stands as an integral part of the campus community.

“At HASA, our mission is to educate, promote unity, and lead people to learn about our culture, whether that be our lifestyle, music, food, or language. We want to demonstrate that and share it with current and new members,” said Fabiola Saintelien, the president of HASA and a junior at BC.

Haiti is a Caribbean country located on the island of Hispaniola, sharing the

island with the Dominican Republic. Haiti has a rich history that includes being the first independent Caribbean country when it won its independence from France in 1805. Since then, the citizens of Haiti have faced a lot of inequality and hardships regarding political and environmental issues. Brooklyn is home to a large Haitian community with Newkirk Avenue – one stop away from Brooklyn College on the 2 and 5 train lines – being renamed as Little Haiti.

Saintelien shed light on the club’s revival earlier this year in March, with the Haitian Studies Institute (HSI) playing a pivotal role in its reactivation. “HSI sought out four individuals who would be willing to revive this club as it was a necessity, and it has shown to be one as students started to gravitate towards the club and its mission,” said Saintelien.

Louckenson Dorestil,

vice president of HASA, emphasized the club’s commitment to building connections with other student organizations, such as Women of Color (WOC), Black Student Union (BSU), African Student Union (ASU), and Caribbean Student Union (CSU). Collaborative events between the different clubs this semester, such as their multicultural night that featured a traditional Haitian konpa choreographed routine, were a means to showcase the rich diversity present on campus.

“Our primary goal is to expose our student body to Haitian culture and bridge the gap between native students and first-generation Haitian Americans,” said Dorestil. “This semester, HASA hosted our first ‘Taste of Haiti’ event, introducing Haitian dishes and the traditions behind them.” This event included a history lesson on these dishes, as well as games

that challenged students’ knowledge of Haitian Creole and their memory.

Looking ahead, HASA plans to continue its positive momentum into the new semester, with a discussion of hosting a talent show next semester being up in the air. Emphasizing their openness and collaborative efforts, HASA wants to continue bringing other Brooklyn College clubs together for more opportunities to have fun and support one another.

The impact of HASA extends beyond cultural celebrations. “Our meeting in December with HSI, joined with Democratic District Leader Edu Hermelyn and Adam Gaynor from Plan A Advisors, where we discussed matters on meeting the needs of the students and devising a plan that will support student learning and providing opportunities to students that will align with their career path,” Saintelien

said, noting that HASA aims to be an asset to students in developing their careers and planning their futures.

HASA stands as a beacon of cultural pride. The club, with its rich history and diverse events, invites all students to join in the appreciation of Haitian culture and find a home away from home within its welcoming embrace. Interested students can connect with HASA on Instagram @bc.hasa or through email at bc1804@gmail.com to become a part of the unfolding cultural journey at Brooklyn College.

“Going into a new semester, people can expect to see an appreciation of Haitian culture, getting to celebrate Haitian Flag Day, and more of bringing Haiti to BC!” President Saintelien said, looking forward to the future of the club.

Nikita Tumanov, A Rising Star In The BC Conservatory Of Music



Courtesy of Nikita Tumanov

By Paulina Gajewski
Arts Editor

The influx of students interested in the arts at Brooklyn College keeps a steady flow of endless perspectives and new creative outlets on campus. Exhibits and performances, in which artists may display an arrangement of their skills and passions, are kept alive by the hard work and dedication of such students. Nikita Tumanov, a junior at BC and an integral member of the BC Jazz Ensemble, shares his testimony to the importance of music in one's life. Every semester, Tumanov performs with the Jazz Ensemble, directed by Ronnie Burrage, an American drummer who also taught at BC in the past. Jazz, with its swing and blue notes, polyrhythms, and harmonically syncopated melodies, is no simple feat. Its affinity for

improvisation allows Tumanov and other jazz musicians to play around with and form new tunes. This then allows them to participate in the Composer Concerts, which the BC Conservatory of Music puts on to showcase original music. Tumanov and his colleagues have formed a jazz trio which plays in various shows throughout the semester. Tumanov is also a classically trained pianist whose heart lies in playing solo. This passion is exhibited in his shows at the various "Afternoons at the Piano" concerts that the school holds. "It has been the greatest pleasure to participate in the concerts alongside other pianists," Tumanov told The Vanguard. "Performing and sharing music is really what makes you get better as a musician." Tumanov and his jazz ensemble have also played in shows around the city.

Most musicians begin practicing at a young age, which can easily discourage some people from such crafts. Tumanov had not touched a keyboard until he was 18, a point at which he felt it was too late to start playing. "What attracted me to the world of music is the endless capacity of the human soul that music can possess," he said. However, Tumanov noted that this is also one of the challenges he faces because other musicians his age are already beyond well-experienced and have a solid foundation for their careers. For most musicians, performing on stage provides the most beneficial experience. Tumanov describes a performance as a relationship between the artist and the audience. He gets to take part in the experience of serving the art and the power of it to the audience,

and receiving energy from those listening. Tumanov highlighted that his greatest inspiration comes from all around him, whether it be from people, places, or new experiences. His piano mentor, Jeffrey Biegel, reworks the way Tumanov thinks about his craft from a philosophical point of view. Tumanov also provided Alexandra Lewis, the deputy director of graduate studies for the Conservatory of Music, as a staunch inspiration for professionalism. "And the biggest mentor for me," Tumanov said, "is the stage. It's the place where you can rely on yourself, learn about yourself. It tests your instincts." A significant portion of preparing for live shows is simply by practicing. Most musicians at BC are meant to utilize practice rooms. Since his freshman year, Tumanov has witnessed clear changes in the Conservatory.

When he first entered BC, Conservatory students were using the Buchwald Theater and the practice rooms in the Tow Center. Since the building was placed under new management, students have been able to use the building less and less. Tumanov shared that his weakness and his strength are one in the same, and both have to do with his work ethic. His work ethic allows him to excel in his craft, but at the cost of becoming easily burnt out. Though he believes a quiet, undisturbed space is integral to his practice sessions, he also enjoys practicing while being surrounded by like minds. "The best part of playing music," Tumanov said, "is the ability to share your heart with other people."

Farewell From Serin Sarsour, Vanguard's Editor-In-Chief



Courtesy of Tony Lipka

By Serin Sarsour
Editor-In-Chief

When I think about my time at The Vanguard, I don't think about the sleepless nights (although, believe me, there were many). I think about how rewarding it felt to pick up a copy of the issue of the week. I knew that what I was holding in my hands was the physical representation of the hard work of an amazing team doing their due diligence to keep their community informed while representing the student body. And that made up for all of the sleepless nights.

As a proud Muslim Palestinian woman who was born and raised in America, witnessing the unjust reportage of my people has been a driving force in my desire to be a voice for the voiceless and prevent the spread of misinformation. I'm so grateful that I was able to get my start as an aspiring journalist at The Vanguard.

To my parents, Samer and Shahnaz Sarsour. Thank you for believing in me and trusting me to follow my passion instead of going down a more traditional path. I think about every one of your sacrifices every day; I have not and will never take them for granted. You both are the reason why I am the person I am today, and I cannot express the

love and appreciation that I have for you enough. (My dad always wanted to see his name in a newspaper, so here you go, baba!)

To Mera and Alina, my not-so-little sisters. Thank you for providing me with the emotional support and laughs I needed to get me through those long, stressful days. I love you both very much, and I look forward to giving you another one of my unsolicited hugs again soon (you know you love them!)

To Kate Dempsey, my partner-in-crime and Managing Editor. I can't thank you enough for all of your support. You always know what I'm thinking before I even say anything and it blows my mind every time. What can I say, I guess this partnership was just meant to be. You are not only an incredibly talented writer, but you are also an incredibly genuine person and friend, which is hard to come by these days. I am so excited to see what the future holds for The Vanguard when you take over as Editor-in-Chief next semester. I know you're going to do amazing things because, well, you're Kate Dempsey!

To Gabriela Flores and Michela Arlia, the O.G. vangirlies. Thank you for having faith in me and doing everything in your power to ensure that I was prepared to take on such a hefty

responsibility this semester. I've always admired the time, care, and effort you have both put into this paper, and I hope I did you two justice because following your leadership was definitely not an easy task.

To Samia Afsar, my Capstone companion. I miss you endlessly. Even though you're now about 7,246 miles away (yes, I looked it up), I will never forget all of the laughs, secrets, and inside jokes we shared last semester. I only wish that we are reunited very soon, my love. Thank you for getting me out of my shell and being my other half for the time I was blessed to have gotten to spend with you. You truly are one of a kind. Those 7,246 miles have nothing on our special bond!

To the outstanding team I had the absolute privilege of working with this semester, including Shlomie Katash, Paulina Gajewski, Jason Lin, Oscar Docavo, Tony Lipka, Francesca Saladino, Rami Mansi, Shea Stevenson, Emmad Kashmiri, Reima Choute, Avi Wizwer, Nidhi Mahadevan, and Nitu Farhin. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to this paper. Going to our weekly budget meetings and getting to speak with you all and hear your great story ideas was the highlight of my Thursdays. I wish you all the very best.

To the astounding staff I had the honor of working alongside while I was Features Editor for my first two years at The Vanguard, including John Schilling, Owen Russell, Radwan Farraj, Kaylin Guzman, and Brie Underwood. Thank you for welcoming me with open arms and supporting me in any way you could. I especially want to thank Matt Hirsch because he was the one who sent me Gaby's way in the first place when I told him I wanted to join the school paper but had no idea where to even start. You rock!

To the professors who have assisted me in completing my JAMS and TREM education at Brooklyn College, including Michelle Lipkin, Maisie McAdoo, Brian Dunphy, Victoria Manna, Irene Sosa, Helen Pfeffer, Annie Byrnes, Turner Cowles, and Jason Moore. Thank you for pushing me to gain the skills necessary to be ready to face the intimidating field that is journalism. I especially want to express my gratitude to The Vanguard's faculty advisor and mentor, Dr. MJ Robinson. I cannot thank you enough for the guidance and knowledge you have bestowed upon me during my time at BC.

To my friends over at WBCR, including Alexandria Woolfe, Miad Abdelgadir, T.S. Richards, Josh Narisma, Diana Bautista, Damien

Ovalle, Luis Flecha, and Jessica Lowery. I applaud you all for the amazing content you continue to push out. Thank you for always showing your support for both me and The Vanguard.

To the key people who have helped The Vanguard stay afloat, including Jessica Bradley and Mia Vialva at Central Depository, our printer Linco and the kind people who drop off the issues every week, and the leaders of BC's Undergraduate Student Government. Thank you for all of your assistance.

To all of the friends I have made at Brooklyn College (you know who you are). Thank you for making those four and a half hour-long classes pass by a little bit faster. I'm so grateful that I got to spend my years at BC with you, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for us!

Last but certainly not least, to our readers. Thank you so much for taking the time to read our issues (I hope you got something out of it). Without you, The Vanguard would not have the privilege of continuing on with its legacy.

I remember having this conversation with my best friend in my freshman year at BC where I was talking about "climbing the ladder" at my school's paper and eventually becoming the editor-in-chief. Little did I know that was exactly what was going to happen. Shoutout to you, Melissa Romano! Even at the height of a pandemic where nothing was certain, one thing was for sure: you've always believed in me.

If you made it this far (kudos to you, you're awesome!), I just want to advise you that taking risks and joining clubs pays off. If I didn't send that email two and a half years ago and joined The Vanguard, I would not be the writer or person I am today.

I am so blessed to have had The Vanguard be a large part of my college experience. Not only have I gained knowledge and willpower, but I've also gained a community and memories that I will cherish forever.

With much love and gratitude, this is Serin Sarsour signing off for the last time. Stay tuned because it's only going to get better from here!

Farewell From Shea Stevenson, Vanguard's Opinions Editor



Courtesy of Tony Lipka

By Shea Stevenson
Opinions Editor

This is my last issue as Opinions Editor for The Vanguard, a title I never figured I'd hold, and one that I'm incredibly lucky to have been handed. My thoughts as I go are mostly already said in my "Why I'm Leaving BC" piece, except for one important detail that happened about a week after I wrote it: I am not actually leaving BC. That decision is spearheaded by lots of personal factors that amount to "I can't physically get to any other campus five days a week." Everything I said in that piece is still true, except that I could not predict the future – even for a couple of days.

In other words, it would be nice to leave, but it seems for now that this is it. This is the case for a lot of students here.

The inadequacies of the school are stomachable because... where else am I going to go? But we deserve a school that's nice. I think most of us, at this point, understand that. But to review: The reason your school is decaying is that the entire CUNY system is decaying, and the system is decaying because it is being strangled of its funding, on purpose, day after day and year upon year. It's being strangled because the city makes investors happier that way. The city, as a side note, has investors. You don't know any of them. Your school used to be free! In living memory! That is not absurd to demand, and it is eminently possible for the city to give, but they don't think they have to. And not only free, but free with food. Free with working elevators. Free

with paper towels in the bathrooms. Imaginethat. BC's redemptive factor is that there are, in fact, people in these buildings, and many of them are intelligent, interesting, and even sometimes friendly. I love the faculty that I know, and I love the people I've met, and I think there is opportunity here for people who have the means to chase it.

This idea too often gives the system itself credit, as if the people were a function of the school and not the ones that allow it to survive, the school more often a function of the people. It is not the buildings or the bureaucracy or the website or even the pool tables and the Farmer's Fridge vending machines that make BC decent. It is that there are indeed cool people here. They often work against

the infrastructure to be here, in fact. It is rewarding to write for The Vanguard because it allows you to talk (albeit one-sidedly) to "The People." The People, if you're reading this, thanks. I hope that there was at least a day where you picked up a paper and flipped to this section and thought, "Hmm. Neat." That's all I ask. It would be nice if, perhaps, on the wings of our words, the school could get funding and/or the students could mobilize towards a righteous cause (I have more hope for this recently than in the past, having seen many righteous student displays in spite of, say, outsized police presence). But I digress.

There aren't many words for goodbyes here. I hope that my work for The Vanguard speaks for

itself; if I had anything left to say to you, dear newspaper reader, I'd stay. If something comes to me, I'll return. But this piece has everything I think you need to know. The rest is superfluous. Your school ought to be better. I want to tell you that much.

Gabriela, Michela, and Owen (erstwhile editors): you're the best. I'd have been an intern someplace else without you, probably in the English Department where I belong, and not sticking my fingers in the school's journalism.

So, to The People: I'll be around, but I won't be here on this paper, as you're surely so used to seeing me. Pay attention because everything is dying, and only we can fix it. Thanks again, and I love you.

Farewell From Reima Choute, Vanguard's Features Editor



Courtesy of Tony Lipka

By Reima Choute
Features Editor

This semester, I joined The Brooklyn College Vanguard as the Features Editor, as I have always had a passion for writing both creatively and professionally. I transferred to BC in the spring of last year after initially deciding to leave the state for college to attend the University of Virginia. As someone who

grew up in Brooklyn, I have always wanted to leave. This prompted me to seek that freedom and newness once I graduated high school. I was able to see a new state, study abroad for a semester, and travel

throughout Europe. I quickly realized that I did not actually know what I wanted to do, and I did not feel like that campus was where I was meant to be. I went on spring break, and shortly after, the COVID-19 pandemic happened, causing me to stay home and have time to think. While it was also a very stressful period filled with uncertainty all around the world, I felt comfortable in that uncertainty to figure out what it is that I really wanted in life. I took a semester off, and after all of this contemplating, I decided to transfer to BC. It was close to my home and it had a beautiful campus. Since attending BC, I have felt like this was where I was meant to be all along. From my first communications class to joining my first club (Stuck in the Library), I felt like I was finally a part of something and that I somewhat knew what I wanted to do. I am so thankful for those opportunities to explore my creativity and contribute to the BC ecosystem. Being a features editor opened up so many doors for me and challenged me in ways I did not expect. Being in my final semester, things have been difficult, and at times, overwhelming, but The Vanguard kept me on track knowing that every week, there was a story to write and people waiting to read it. I am extremely grateful for Serin and Kate for helping me find stories and accommodating to my busy schedule as a full-time student and full-time intern. They made me feel supported and let me know that I was not alone in this journey. The Vanguard is such an integral part of BC, and I hope to see it grow and prosper as there are many students who have a lot to say, and this is one of the best places to say it. We can continue to make a difference and be the change that we want to see in the world through our words. Words are more powerful than we may think, and I hope that we all can continue to use our words to inspire one another and change the world. Thank you, Vanguard, and thank you, Brooklyn College!

Farewell From Francesca Saladino, Vanguard's Layout Editor



Courtesy of Tony Lipka

By Francesca Saladino
Layout Editor

When first applying to work for The Vanguard, it was an impulse email and I wasn't sure if it would work out, but there was no harm in trying. I sent the email,

and while being abroad, I got the job and was ecstatic about this new opportunity with no idea what was in store for me.

When typing this farewell letter, it felt unreal. I cannot believe it has been four months working for The Vanguard as its layout editor. I am very grateful to have gotten this opportunity, and I have used it as a learning experience. My time at The Vanguard has been unlike any other job. There have been times where I've stayed up late to get my job done and times that I'd listen to music trying to get the layout done. After all the late nights of editing, going to school the next day and seeing the paper I worked so hard on in Boylan and throughout campus has made me feel accomplished in my work on the layout, which, in turn, has kept me motivated throughout the semester. First off, I want to say how grateful I am to have had this opportunity to work for The Vanguard. I'm also grateful for Serin and Kate, who have helped me get used to my job and supported me. This job has allowed me to learn a lot about how layout editing works, as well as time management skills, and I will be using this job as the next building block in my career. I wish everyone continued success and growth in The Vanguard and beyond.

Opinion: The Overload Of Streaming Platforms



Courtesy of Variety

By T’Neil Gooden
Staff Writer

Every two months, there appears to be a new streaming platform on the market that only has two shows that pique our interests, drawing us into an endless abyss of monthly subscriptions. America’s favorites are Netflix and Hulu because of the variety they contain. However, there are more popping up every time we blink our eyes. These streaming platforms are killing the entertainment industry due to their high-priced outlets manipulating the minds of their viewers to pay more money. There are over a dozen streaming platforms out there, with Americans paying an average of \$39 per month, according to Forbes. All of these platforms spread the content that people love amongst themselves. This is the tactic that has caused many people to end up paying for all these platforms and the need for personalized content. Companies like Max, Disney+, Peacock, Paramount+, Apple TV+, Discovery+, Quibi, and many more, are all fighting

for your eyes, pulling you to the old-timey films that tugged at your heartstrings and the new action and thriller movies the platforms created themselves. Platforms making original and personalized content believe that this is the way they can take your money and keep it since they’re continuing to create movies and TV shows with all the emotions and drama that you want to see. Streaming platforms didn’t start this way. Netflix was once eight dollars a month, and now, the premium subscription is \$20 a month. This total is for one streaming platform with limited shows. This is just the beginning of the never-ending inflation of streaming platforms giving you the shows that semi-satisfy your desires. Sports channels are starting to use the same strategy as Netflix, creating subscriptions with high prices for your personalized consumption. There are now ESPN+, NBA+, and Tennis Channel+, which have a limited amount of sports available on each channel. ESPN+ is primarily used to watch football, NBA+ is used for basketball, and Tennis Channel+ is

used to watch behind-the-scenes content and the lifestyles of tennis athletes. The prices that follow these channels have caused a lot of uproar from those who are being restricted from viewing because of their economic capabilities. Tennis Channel+ and ESPN+ are \$109.99 per year and take away primetime games from cable to try and push viewers to subscribe. NBA+ has been doing the same by removing highlighted games from cable and filling their streaming platforms with these matches. NBA+ has the highest yearly subscription with viewers paying \$149.99. These streaming platforms have popped up in the last two years and it is becoming outrageous. The prices that correlate with these channels are absurd. These streaming platforms are made for those who have a steady flowing income for subscriptions to be used consistently. Many families of four or more have been steering away from these subscriptions as they have become out of budget. Streaming services are becoming luxury items

that have been excluding those who do not have the money to constantly pour into the companies. These companies use the bundling method to trick their viewers into paying a subscription that they believe is “cheaper.” These streaming platforms come together to grab viewers and provide them with three streaming platforms at an attainable price for a limited time when reading the fine print. The bundling method allows companies to spread the money that they gain from viewers equally amongst themselves. The companies that have been doing this bundling method are ESPN+, Hulu, and Disney+ for \$14.99 monthly with ads. The catch that these companies have made to increase their profits is adding tiers of what streaming platform you can get with your bundle and if you are paying for content with or without ads. Recently, the lowest tier that was created was Disney+ and Hulu for \$9.99 a month with ads. The tiers continue to grow with the addition of ESPN+ to the bundle, making the price \$18.99 a month without

ads. The tiers continue to grow if you want all three streaming platforms without ads and so on. There is no discount or better prices when it comes to streaming platforms as they all have a company to build and profits to make. Streaming services continue to grow as inflation continues to be a dominant force in our country. The ultimate goal when it comes to paying for streaming platforms is to choose wisely and is based on shows that you will continue to watch and enjoy even two years into being a subscriber. Jumping on a streaming platform for one or two shows that have a plot will not benefit your mental and economic lifestyle. It’s always free to cancel, but you will never get the money you have put into these platforms back.



From The Bay To Brooklyn: Aleah Rafat Is The Bulldogs' Californian Comet



Courtesy of Aleah Rafat

By Oscar Docavo
Staff Writer

College athletes face a lot of pressure as they juggle their mental and physical health and are expected to excel both in the classroom and on the field. Aleah Rafat does that three times over throughout the entire school year. As a junior majoring in journalism and media studies, Rafat plays volleyball, basketball, and softball for Brooklyn College. Living up to a standard that most CUNY athletes can only dream of, Rafat

has won individual accolades while assisting the Bulldogs in winning three championships: two for the women's basketball team and one for women's volleyball. With one CUNY Athletic Conference title in volleyball and two in basketball, Rafat firmly cemented herself as a Bulldogs legend before she was even an upperclassman. Rafat became a Bulldog because she took a leap of faith, a decision that changed the landscape of BC sports. Calling Rafat a star is not entirely accurate. To

the Bulldogs, Rafat is one of one. If anything, she's more like a comet, which is much less common than a star. Her team and opposition experience the duality of a comet when they encounter Rafat. Her team sees a leader, champion, and an irreplaceable teammate; a beacon of light shooting through the sky. Her opponents, however, feel the effects of a comet hitting the ground when it falls to Earth: panic and then collision marked by scorched ground. Rafat is an outside hitter

in volleyball, a forward in basketball, and plays first base in softball. Rafat likes to say that she's been playing sports since she was "out of the womb." That is not far from the truth as she has two former athletes for parents, so sports came naturally to Rafat. Although she started playing softball a little later than she did playing volleyball and basketball, she has been competing longer than most.

Born in Alaska but raised in San Martin, California, Rafat's father was the first and most important coach of her childhood. "Looking back at it now, he's the best coach that I've ever had," Rafat said, crediting her vast volleyball skill set to the mentorship of her father.

During her high school years in California, Rafat earned first-team all-league honors as a junior and senior after transferring to Live Oak High School. In basketball, she helped guide the Acorns to their first league championship in years. In volleyball, she was key to Live Oaks defeating their bitter rivals at neighboring Sobrato High School for the first time in years.

Originally, the hometown hero thought she would be attending college in her home state, in her element at the beach. At almost the last minute, Rafat decided to take her talents to Brooklyn College. "This is the time to experience something completely different," Rafat told herself before moving to a city she had never been to before. Never afraid to step outside of her comfort

zone, Rafat was dropped off into the unknown in the summer of 2021.

When Rafat came to Brooklyn College, the school was still reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With almost every class online, Rafat found comradeship in the West Quad Building, forging instant connections during her first semester with volleyball and basketball teammates who would soon become her family at the college.

Rafat took to CUNYAC volleyball like a swan to water in her very first semester. Rafat dictates play for Brooklyn College while keeping opponents in constant fear of her powerful serve. Bulldog volleyball legend and fellow outside hitter senior Ashley Fung recalled the immediate impact her teammate of three years had on the conference. "She came from the West Coast to NY, had no prior knowledge regarding the opponents in CUNYAC, and still made older players look silly," Fung said. If they didn't know about the new girl from California, they did now.

Rafat made the CUNYAC Rookie of the Week award her own during the 2021 volleyball season, bringing home the award practically every week, eventually winning CUNYAC Rookie of the Year. Rafat credited the tough competition she faced in California at the high school and club level as the reason for her dominance at Brooklyn. Since then, she has also added back-to-back CUNYAC second-team all-star awards to her resume, the honors coming in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Rafat almost never rests during volleyball season as she is on the court

every play of a game.

Rafat’s finest moment in her collegiate volleyball career was recording a double-double with 16 kills and 16 digs as the Bulldogs defeated Hunter College in the 2021 CUNYAC final. It was the first time Hunter had lost the final since 2014. Rafat was honored with the team of the tournament honors alongside Fung. “She truly was the missing puzzle piece that Brooklyn needed to win a championship and make history,” Fung told The Vanguard.

Top 10 in almost every significant CUNYAC offensive category, Rafat will be the undisputed leader of the volleyball team next fall. She will be hunting for her 1,000th kill in a Bulldog uniform next season, which would make her the second Bulldog to ever do so.

Rafat highlighted that the secret to her big-game heroics was having her teammates as her motivation. “On any sports team, you’re not winning for yourself. You’re doing it for your teammates,” she said.

As soon as volleyball season is over, Rafat joins the women’s basketball team. The three-time defending champions use Rafat in a variety of roles. She is a post player who takes advantage of the length that comes with her 5’11 height, and she can be brought on as a defensive specialist. Opponents do not leave Rafat open beyond the arch as she can bank a three-pointer with a splash that is worthy of the Golden State.

Former Bulldogs star Megan Campbell has

been coaching Rafat all three years of her college basketball career, two as an assistant and now as the head coach. “She [Rafat] just brings an energy and a passion to our team. Good day, bad day, she puts that aside for those two hours and she’s come to give you everything she’s got,” Coach Campbell said. On top of that, Coach Campbell noted that Rafat is stepping up as a real leader on the team. She is always involved in the huddle and talking to or cheering her team on.

In the 2023 CUNYAC basketball final, Rafat was brought in off the bench to smother any chance of a John Jay College comeback. In both CUNYAC finals against John Jay, Rafat was seen fighting for rebounds, sinking clutch free throws, and destroying her opposition’s hope for a comeback with her defense.

“It comes down to competing for your teammates. We’re gonna win together, we’re gonna lose together. But at the end of the day, this is a program that sets us up for success,” Rafat said while describing what makes BC basketball so special. Rafat is currently injured, but she is working hard to get back on the court and lend her efforts to another title push as the Bulldogs’ National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament dreams continue.

Rafat is a solid softball player, as well. With a good on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS) of .471 compared to the rest of CUNYAC in 2023 and a top-10 fielding percentage



Courtesy of Aleah Rafat

of 0.974, Rafat finds ways to stand out even in her third-best sport. With a quick and powerful swing, most CUNYAC pitchers may find themselves wary of pitching to Rafat.

Though Rafat makes everything work in the end, she noted that it is not easy to maintain such a strong work ethic. “I can’t even say I prioritize sleep,” she said. However, Rafat’s dedication and willingness to improve both in the classroom and on the court is apparent. “[It’s] hard to tell Aleah is juggling so much. She comes to class, participates, and has improved in her ability to shoot and edit

[video],” BC Professor and Spectrum News NY1 Reporter Victoria Manna said, highlighting Rafat’s improvement as a video editor and natural ability in front of the camera.

Rafat wants her legacy to be remembered as a teammate who did it all for the people around her, especially those she will be handing the torch to after she graduates next year.

“I came in to make a difference for them [her teammates] because at the end of the day, it’s not gonna be about me because no matter what I accomplish, whatever I’m leaving, but I’m leaving doing all these things so these younger girls

can succeed,” said Rafat.

Bulldogs fans have at least one season of Rafat left in each sport: volleyball, basketball, and softball. If history is any indication of the future, Rafat will be at the heart of the Bulldogs’ success, winning with her hair braided and shining her trademark smile of victory.

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BC Sports Recap (Dec. 6 – Dec. 9)

Women’s Basketball Pummels Abington Before Falling To Top 10-Ranked Smith



BC’s women’s basketball team playing against Penn State-Abington on Dec. 6./BC Athletics

By Oscar Docavo
Staff Writer

Brooklyn College’s women’s basketball team scored a season-high points tally in an 85-74 victory against Penn State-Abington on Wednesday, Dec. 6, inside of the West Quad gymnasium. “I think we’re starting to trust our teammates a little bit more and just get familiar with our offense and the style of play,” said Head Coach Megan

Campbell, highlighting the team’s growing chemistry. With five different Bulldogs scoring double figures in points, the team is looking to build off of the victory. The game was even until halfway through the first quarter. As seniors Ericka and Sarah James started to get comfortable, Brooklyn went on a 9-2 run that set the tone for the rest of the game. The second quarter was the Bulldog show as Brooklyn got a lot of work from guards,

sophomore Dior Dorsey and junior Alina Estrella. Dorsey scored eight of her 13 points in the second quarter. The sophomore is emerging as a key contributor to this Bulldog team. Junior Mary Dolgin and senior Ayomide Adeoye made their presence felt on both ends of the court. The two forwards scored on and blocked the Lions’ panicking players. Though Abington outscored Brooklyn 18-15 in the third quarter, the Bulldogs maintained a 15-point lead. Abington never truly had a chance to catch Brooklyn. Seemingly, every Bulldog had a good night. Brooklyn’s bench outscored Abington’s 24-2. Brooklyn also outshot their opponents 50.8% to the Lions’ 35.7%. Sarah James scored a season-high 13 points, as well as two steals and six rebounds. Her sister, Ericka, was everywhere for the Bulldogs during the game, playing a team-high 40

minutes. Ericka also scored 12 points and grabbed eight rebounds to boot. Quarterbacking a great deal of the Bulldogs’ amazing play was first-year player sensation Estrella. Estrella led the team in scoring and assists with 16 and 11 respectively. Coach Campbell has asked a lot of Estrella this season, and she has answered. “She’s really stepped into the role and embraced it and is really succeeding. She’s doing a great job for us,” Coach Campbell said. The Bulldogs’ sternest test of the season thus far came on Saturday, Dec. 9. Brooklyn welcomed Smith College to the West Quad Building for a meeting they knew would be a challenge, which resulted in the Pioneers winning 73-46. Smith College came into the game as the tenth-ranked team in all of Division III basketball. The Bulldogs started off extremely strong,

giving fans hope when they took a 6-4 lead in less than five minutes. However, it was rough sailing from there on out as Smith College showed why they are ranked as a top 10 team in the nation. At halftime, Smith College had a 41-22 lead over Brooklyn. Eventually, Brooklyn started to claw their way back into the game. At one point, Brooklyn cut the score back to 60-43. Just as it seemed like there might be a comeback, the Pioneers pulled away and won the game. Dorsey led the team in scoring with 10 points. The sophomore guard is earning the new minutes she has been receiving.

Men’s Basketball Team Falls 1-10



BC’s men’s basketball team playing against NYU on Dec. 9./BC Athletics

By Sean Markisic
Staff Writer

The Bulldogs went out on the road and took on

New York University on Saturday, Dec. 9. The Bulldogs took yet

another loss this season, this time losing 111-66. The Bulldogs were 25-53 from the field for the game and only had three players score in double figures. Meanwhile, NYU went 42-79 from the field and had multiple players contribute to the winning effort. NYU scored eight quick points and had a commanding 31-12 halfway through the first half. The Bulldogs trailed at the end of the

first half 59-31. From there, the second half wasn’t much kinder to the team as they gave up a 10-1 run and then went on to trail by 50 midway through the second half. The Bulldogs chipped away at the lead and ultimately ended up losing by 45 points. Aaron Davis was a standout performer for the Bulldogs that night, scoring 13 points on 5-8 from the field.

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NY Yankees Conclude 2023 MLB Season



Courtesy of MLB.com

By Avi Wizwer
Sports Editor

As the New York Yankees concluded the 2023 Major League Baseball

(MLB) season, many fans were disappointed as the standards and expectations of one of the best organizations in all of MLB were not met. With a record of 82-80, the Yankees just barely avoided their first losing season since 1992. Despite having 31 winning seasons, their drought of a World Series is now

5,026 days and counting. A good start to the season was easily derailed by their star player Aaron Judge struggling with injuries. A team that usually exceeds expectations in their offensive game soon struggled when their captain went down. Players like Giancarlo Stanton, DJ Lemahieu, and Anthony Rizzo were unable to carry the load offensively. As a whole team, the batting average was .227, which placed them fourteenth in the American League. The Yankees were batting with players like Michael King becoming a great addition to the team, posting a 1.88 earned run average (ERA) over eight starts, which helped the Yankees' pitching staff. Gerrit Cole finally stepped back into form, posting a 15-4 record and 2.64 ERA in 33 starts, leading the league in ERA and an outstanding winning percentage of .789. This showed the dominance of one of the MLB's best starting pitchers. As the Yankees were unable to make the playoffs, they started off the 2023 MLB off-season with an incredible win by securing star Juan Soto, a 25-year-old outfielder, who has had a wonderful 2023 season. He averaged a monstrous .275 batting average with 35 home runs and a total of 109 runs batted in while playing in 162 games. Ranking ninth in the majors in on-base plus slugging, this is where Soto can help the Yankees. It was a seven-player package deal that included Soto, and the Yankees received outfielder Trent Grisham. San Diego received King, Jhony Brito, Randy Vasquez, starting pitching prospect Drew Thorpe, and catcher Kyle Higashioka.

See You In The Spring!

