

ARRICK WILSON, SPORTS EDITOR

A NEW ERA OF VCU MEN’S BASKETBALL:

Ryan Odom introduced as new coach



Ryan Odom.
Photo by Arrick Wilson

Black and gold balloons fall from the Stuart C. Siegel Center, as the crowd chants, “let’s go, VCU.” A new period of VCU basketball has begun.

After former VCU head coach Mike Rhoades accepted the open job at Pennsylvania State University, VCU hired Ryan Odom, according to VCU Athletics. Odom sees the duty to continue the program’s success, he said.

“I don’t view this as an opportunity, I view this as a responsibility,” Odom said. “The tradition of excellence that has existed here at VCU is second to none — what coach wouldn’t want to coach here.”

Odom, a Durham, North Carolina native, was previously the head coach of Utah State University and has garnered seven postseason appearances in his coaching career, according to VCU Athletics.

Odom takes over a program that captured the 2023 Atlantic 10 Conference regular season and tournament championships.

VCU Vice President and Director of Athletics, Ed McLaughlin hired Odom and is a believer in Odom’s coaching to win in the postseason.

“There’s no doubt in my mind we’re going to win a national championship

here, and I believe Ryan Odom is the guy to get it done,” McLaughlin said.

Odom aligns with VCU’s culture and coaches with a sense of “integrity” and “joy,” McLaughlin said.

“Through conversations with Ryan [Odom], it became clear that he really lined up everything that makes us who we are at — VCU,” McLaughlin said. “He does it with empathy. He does that with integrity. He does it with appreciation, and most importantly, joy.”

Odom was the coach of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County when they defeated the University of Virginia in March Madness of 2018, becoming the first win by a No. 16 seed over a No. 1 seed in tournament history, according to VCU Athletics.

Currently, there are seven VCU players in the transfer portal, according to Verbal Commits. The transfer portal is a database of every player who is interested in transferring from their current program to another institution, according to ESPN. Odom is optimistic even while having players in the portal.

“If it’s a situation where someone wants to go elsewhere, then now my job is to put the pieces together,” Odom said. “We’ve got to put the pieces together. Figure out who’s staying — figure out who’s moving on, and that’s the nature of college basketball right now.”

Odom may have to figure it out without the A-10 Player and Defensive Player of the Year, VCU guard Adrian “Ace” Baldwin Jr. who is in the portal.

Even though losing a long-time coach is a tough loss, VCU students and fans alike are optimistic about the new coach.

Taylor Betke, a VCU interdisciplinary studies sophomore, is hopeful for the future of VCU basketball, even after losing a tenured coach, she said.

“It’s unfortunate to have someone who’s been here for quite some time to leave and someone who’s definitely made such an impact,” Betke said. “It poses that like a threat or so of some players leaving, but — we can only hope for great things to come.”

Delaney Slavik, a VCU kinetic imaging sophomore and member of the Row-

dy Rams, said it is tough to see coach Mike Rhoades go but is happy to see a new coach at the helm.

“It kind of sucks that he’s leaving,” Slavik said. “It’s very exciting to have coach Odom coming in, see the new coaching changes and how that’s gonna go. I think the teams can do great this year.”

John Miller, a VCU kinesiology freshman, said Odom’s past postseason success makes him optimistic about this upcoming season.

“I know a lot about the new coach coming in. He came from UMBC,” Miller said. “I hear he’s a good leader. He got UMBC passing UVA, which is a good thing for our programs since we couldn’t make it past the first round this season.”

Odom said he is ready to get started at the helm of VCU’s program.

“I can’t wait to get going,” Odom said. “I can’t tell you how excited we are to get to work and we’re going to win championships too.”

Ryan Odom’s timeline, according to VCU Athletics

- 1992–1996**
Four-year starting point guard at Virginia’s Hampden-Sydney
- 1997**
Administrative assistant at the University of South Florida
- 1998-99**
Assistant coach at Furman University
- 2000**
Assistant coach at the University of North Carolina at Asheville

- 2001-03**
Assistant coach at American University
- 2004-10**
Assistant coach at Virginia Tech
- 2011-14**
Assistant coach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- 2015**
Assistant head coach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

- 2015**
Interim head coach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- 2016**
Head coach at Lenoir–Rhyne University
- 2017-21**
Head coach at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- 2021**
Head coach at Utah State University

Ryan Odom speaks at VCU press conference.
Photo by Arrick Wilson



Stories of the week
NATIONAL: Kentucky gunman killed five people and injured eight at a Louisville bank.
INTERNATIONAL: China sanctions two U.S. organizations for hosting Taiwan leader in recent travels.

‘A time for the community’:

How students are celebrating Ramadan



Students enjoying iftar together. Photo courtesy of Muslim Students Association

HOLLYANN PURVIS
MANAGING EDITOR

Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. “Common practices include fasting, increased prayer and devotion, fostering community, engaging in religious education, and celebrating with various cultural events,” Ghadikolaei stated in an email. Though Muslims observe Ramadan globally, there are cultural and regional differences in its celebration, according to Ghadikolaei. “Despite these differences, the fundamental spiritual significance and purpose of Ramadan remain consistent across cultures and regions,” Ghadikolaei stated.

Ramadan follows the lunar calendar, with its dates changing by approximately 10 or 11 days each year, Ghadikolaei stated. The holiday commemorates the beginning of the Qur’anic Revelation. “Muslims fast during Ramadan to thank

God for his favors, perfect their manners, and control their behaviors and egos,” Ghadikolaei stated. “Fasting across these three monotheistic religions aims to establish a strong relationship with God and seek forgiveness.”

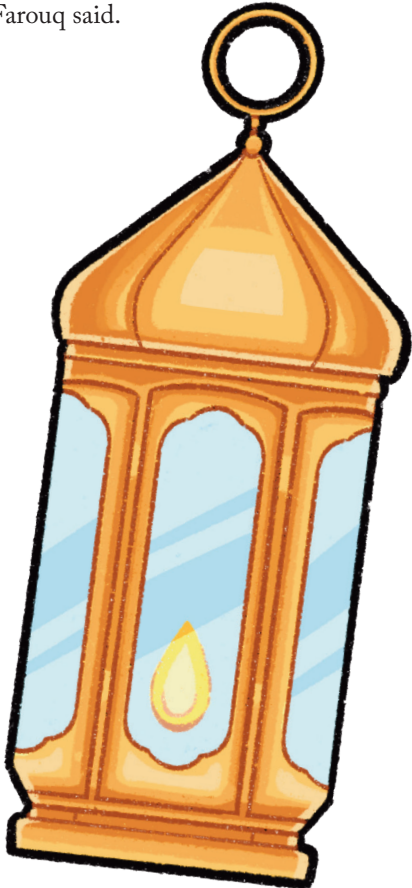
“

Common practices include fasting, increased prayer and devotion, fostering community, engaging in religious education, and celebrating with various cultural events,”

Samaneh Oladi Ghadikolaei
assistant professor in VCU’s School of World Studies

Two things to accomplish during Ramadan is to engage with the Qur’an and go deeper than just abstaining from food and water, according to Kamran Farouq, VCU biology student and Muslim Students Association general body member. “MSA has helped us do that,” Farouq said. Farouq said the organization is

“very flexible” and he has had a positive experience throughout his involvement with MSA. “Last year and especially this year, I’ve just really been able to make a lot of friends, have all of my religious and spiritual needs kind of accommodated for, especially in this month,” Farouq said.



Ramadan is a holy and significant month for Muslims worldwide, according to Samaneh Oladi Ghadikolaei, assistant professor in VCU’s School of World Studies. Throughout the entirety of the month,

A normal day during Ramadan begins with Suhoor, the meal eaten before sunrise, according to Ayesha Paracha, president of the MSA. After that, it's the "same thing as normal routine," just without food or water, Paracha said.

“

Last year and especially this year, I've just really been able to make a lot of friends, have all of my religious and spiritual needs kind of accommodated for, especially in this month.”

Kamran Farouq
VCU biology student and MSA member

Iftar is the meal eaten after sunset to break the fast, according to Paracha. MSA at VCU hosts iftars two to three times a week during Ramadan, with a combination of catered meals and potlucks.

The day-long fast is usually broken by drinking water and eating dates, Paracha said.

“It's traditionally what people break their fast with,” Paracha said. “But there's also just a lot of health benefits in dates, and then the same thing with water, you want to hydrate right away.”

The meals' funding comes from local Muslim families affiliated with the Islamic Center of Virginia, along with VCUDine,

the Student Government Association and any students who want to donate something small such as dates or water, Paracha said.

“MSA tries to cater to all the different cultures so we switch up what we tend to have for the meals,” Paracha said. “Sometimes we have middle eastern food, sometimes we have South Asian food; we just switch it up from time to time to cater to everyone's culture.”

MSA also has a partnership with VCUDine in which breakfast bags are provided for Muslim students to pick up at night, Paracha said. This allows students to have food to eat before sunrise the next day while dining halls are still closed.

Muslim students who sign up for breakfast bags without a dining plan are still able to receive iftar meals through VCUDine on days MSA doesn't cater, Paracha said.

“Everybody's kind of setting similar goals and working together towards those goals and everyone's just helping each other out through the month,” Paracha said.

Ramadan ends during Eid al-Fitr, the holiday that marks the end of the month-long fast. Despite many students going home for the holiday itself, MSA plans to host a banquet the following week to celebrate this occasion, according to Paracha.

“Ramadan is really a time for the community. A lot of people come together at that time, and especially with the MSA, one of the things that is really nice about Ramadan is we have the biggest turnouts, and we have the most people come together,” Paracha said.

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Ayesha Paracha
president of MSA



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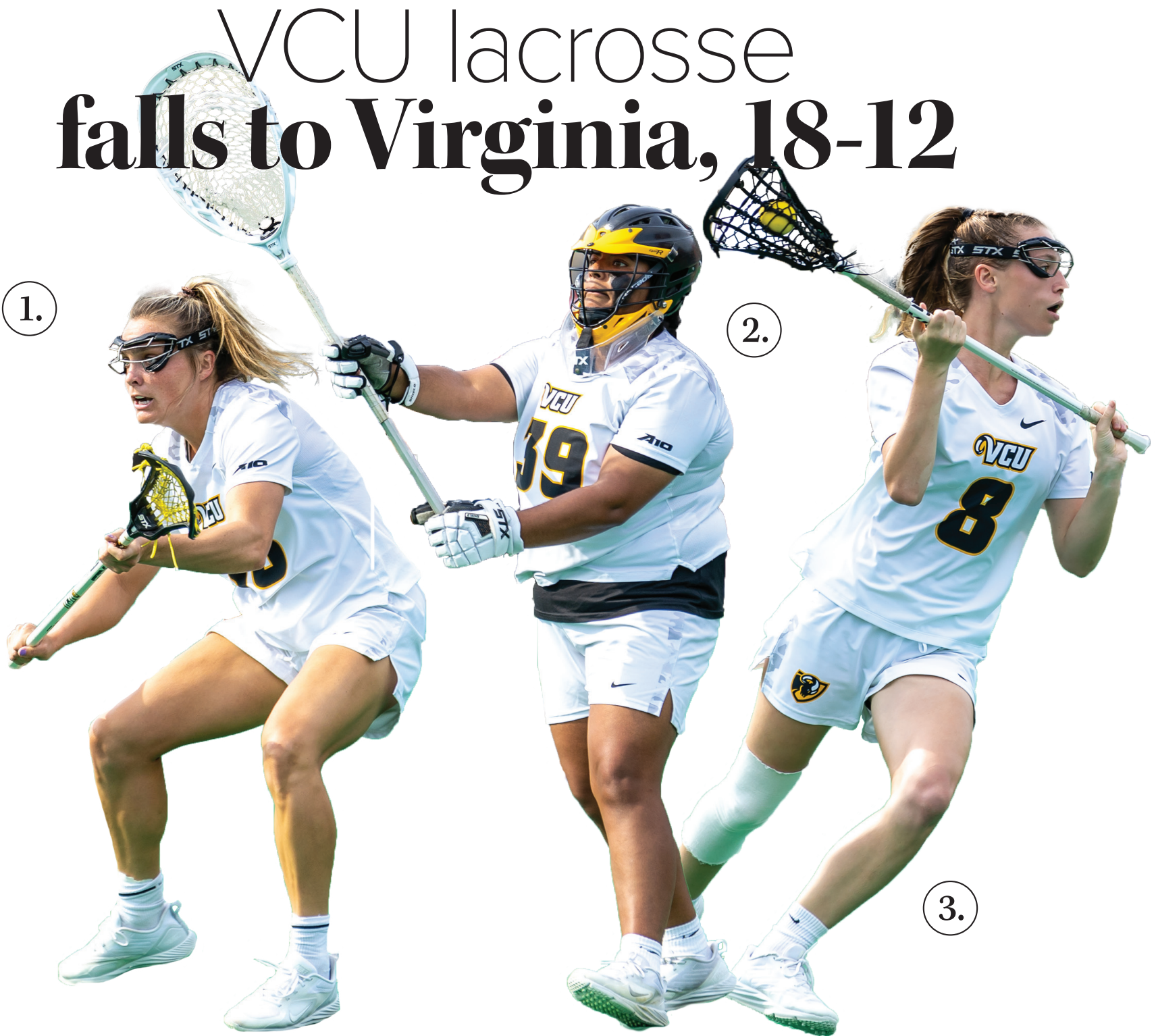
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Stat of the week
VCU track athletes, seniors Jakob Vollbrecht, Emmanuel Waller and freshman Kayelyn Tate all earned Atlantic 10 weekly awards, according to VCU Athletics.



THAILON WILSON
Staff Writer

VCU women’s lacrosse lost against the No. 12 ranked University of Virginia Cavaliers in a high scoring inner-state matchup between both schools.

UVA is about an hour away from VCU, so fans donning the blue and orange came to cheer on the Cavaliers in an away game at Cary Street Field. However, they weren’t the only fans, as the Rams also had a good turnout of fans of all ages who came to cheer on the Rams.

VCU women’s lacrosse head coach Nicole Flores said it was nice to have fans who wanted to see VCU clash against a fellow Virginia school in a competitive match.

“The crowd makes an environment, so the more you can hear the fans, you can get a rally going,” Flores said.

Everyone took their seats after the National Anthem played, and the first quarter of the matchup went underway.

With the game just starting, VCU senior attacker Meghan McLaughlin scored the first goal of the game with 14 minutes left in the first quarter to give the Rams the early 1-0 lead against the Cavaliers.

The crowd cheered for the black and gold, but shortly after UVA junior midfielder Mackenzie Hoeg scored to equalize the game and made the score 1-1 with 12 minutes left in the first quarter.

The passing continued until one of the

tall attackers entered the middle right in front of the goal in position to shoot and score.

After catching the ball, the attacker used the momentum of the pass and their sprinting to tap the ball into the net in quick succession.

This strategy helped UVA sophomore midfielder Abby Manalang to score another goal.

The Rams and Cavaliers continued to go back and forth in scoring until the final whistle of the first quarter blew with the game tied up at 5-5.

VCU senior attacker Julianna George had two goals in the first quarter. Julianna George said the opportunities to score appeared and she wanted to slot them away.

“When we see the opportunity, just make sure we took full advantage and put it away,” Julianna George said.

In the second quarter, UVA was able to amass a huge lead by starting off the second quarter on a 5-0 run for the first 11 minutes of the second quarter to give them a 10-5 lead.

Julianna George and VCU junior midfielder Kelsey McDonnell scored two goals to lessen the lead but at the end of the first half, UVA was up 11-7.

In similar fashion to the second quarter, UVA continued to have a high scoring output in the third quarter.

This alongside their ability to minimize the goal scoring efforts of the Rams led them to go on a 4-1 run which gave them a comfortable 15-8 lead going into the fourth quarter.

The trend of the fourth quarter went back to being a dogfight between the Rams and the Cavaliers with VCU sophomore attacker Mia George scoring the first goal of the quarter with 11 minutes left in the game.

“I think we had very good matchups and working with other people on the team created more opportunities that we were able to finish.”

Kelsey McDonnell
VCU junior midfielder

UVA graduate student attacker Ashlyn McGovern scored right afterwards to increase the lead back to 16-9 with nine minutes left in the game.

VCU junior midfielder Kelsey McDonnell scored her third goal of the game seconds afterwards to lower the UVA lead to 16-10.

McDonnell said the matchups for her and Julianna George were advantageous and the opportunities the team provided allowed them to score these goals.

“I think we had very good matchups

and working with other people on the team created more opportunities that we were able to finish,” McDonnell said.

At the end of the high-octane back and forth game, the lead that the Cavaliers garnered during the second and third quarter was too much to come back from and UVA defeated VCU, 18-12.

Flores said the game was a fun one for the team to have played against a ranked opponent and earned some confidence heading into the final push of the season.

“I think this game in particular is so much fun, because you know for us it’s a win-win,” Flores said. “We got to play a ranked team and tried our best, but I think it gives us confidence going into our final A-10 games.”

1. Emma Barder blocks an opponent attempting to score
Photo by Andrew Hill

2. Redshirt Meghna Dawar passes to a teammate to progress the play against UVA.
Photo by Andrew Hill

3. Mason Whitmore looks to pass the ball.
Photo by Andrew Hill

PRESS BOX

CT sports staff picks NBA playoff



CT SPORTS STAFF

The NBA playoffs are one of the most exciting times in basketball. Read along for NBA finals predictions from The Commonwealth Times sports staff.

The NBA playoffs will officially start on April 15, after the winners of the NBA Play-In Tournament are set.

The NBA Play-In Tournament is when teams with seventh through 10th highest winning percentages from the western and eastern conferences earn opportunities to acquire a playoff spot. These four teams fight to earn a playoff spot, according to the NBA.

Predicting who will go home with the Larry O’Brien Championship trophy can be tricky, but our staff at The Commonwealth Times tried to predict the winners.

Arrick Wilson’s pick

The Phoenix Suns will take home the NBA championship. After acquiring future Hall of Famer, forward Kevin Durant in a blockbuster midseason trade with the Nets, the Suns have been my front runners since. When you’re looking at the Suns, they almost look perfect.

The Suns are a four-head behemoth led by Durant and future Hall of Famer guard Chris Paul. These two pieces yet alone are scary. You have one of the greatest playmakers in NBA history with Paul and one of the great scorers ever with Durant.

The Suns also have two rising superstars guard Devin Booker and center Deandre Ayton. Booker has cemented his place in the NBA as one of the best shooting guards in the league, averaging 28 points, 4.6 rebounds and 5.5 assists, according to ESPN. Ayton on the other hand is a great interior player for the Suns, averaging a double-double.

Yes, the Suns do have their weak spots, including their bench being lackluster and overall defense. The Suns traded forwards Mikal Bridges, Cameron Johnson, Jae Crowder and NBA draft picks in exchange for Durant, according to ESPN. These departures do worry me; they were key roles and defensive players for the Suns, but I still have my money on the team from Phoenix.

With Durant, Paul, Booker and Ayton, the Suns will be raising the title soon.

Bersabeh Kemaw’s pick

Many teams are competing for this spot, but the Milwaukee Bucks will ultimately take home the NBA championship.

The Bucks not only have star player Giannis Antetokounmpo, who is averaging 31 points, 11 rebounds and 5 assists per game, they also have a good offense, placed at number eight in the league, according to Fansided.

In addition to having a good offense, the Bucks defense is No. 1 in the NBA, according to the NBA.

Stability and skills are two things the Bucks have on both sides of the ball, so they won’t have to worry too much about their opponents. The Suns will be the best contenders for the finals, alongside the Bucks, but with the lack of defense on the Sun’s end, their time will be cut short by Antetokounmpo and the rest of the Bucks.

Thailon Wilson’s pick

The strongest contenders to make it out of their conference as conference champions to face off in the NBA finals is a repeat of the 2021 finals matchup between the Phoenix Suns and the Milwaukee Bucks

The Suns are currently sitting as the fourth seed in the Western Conference, but don’t let their seeding fool you. The Suns have been a completely different team since they traded for former Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant.

As long as Durant is healthy, he will be the catalyst for the Suns to make it out of the West again this year.

After the Suns make it to the finals, that’s when the real challenge begins because they will be facing the Bucks

with Giannis Antetokounmpo behind the helm.

Antetokounmpo has history with the Suns in a magical playoff run averaging 35.2 points, 13.2 rebounds and five assists per game, according to StatMuse.

With the Sun’s lack of interior defense and the massive depth the Bucks have alongside Antetokounmpo’s dominance, the Bucks will once again topple the Suns and hoist up the Larry O’Brien Championship trophy.

Andrew McGhan’s pick

The Milwaukee Bucks will win the NBA championship. They have been great all season and they don’t have any glaring weaknesses that can be exposed in the playoffs.

The Bucks have the best record in the NBA with 58 wins and 22 losses, according to the NBA. They also have the highest win percentage in the league with .725.

The team has major depth on their roster; they have six players averaging double figure points, according to Basketball-Reference.

All the top teams in the western conference teams have glaring weaknesses. The Denver Nuggets lack rim protection. The Phoenix Suns lack depth and defense since trading for Kevin Durant in the middle of the season. The Lakers lack offensively due to the middle season trades and amount of injuries they had over the second half of the season.

The Boston Celtics and Philadelphia 76ers can’t match up with the Bucks. Boston’s defense isn’t what it was like in the early part of the season and the 76ers don’t have consistent bench scorers to keep up with the Bucks offensive output.

Due to the glaring weaknesses in all the top teams, the Bucks will win because they are the most complete team.



Illustrations by Killian Goodale-Porter

GAME RESULTS

APRIL 5

WOMEN’S LACROSSE - VS. VIRGINIA
LOST 18-12

APRIL 6

WOMEN’S TENNIS - AT EAST CAROLINA
LOST 4-3

APRIL 7

MEN’S TENNIS - AT EAST TENNESSEE STATE
WON 6-1

MEN’S BASEBALL - AT SAINT JOSEPH’S
LOST 5-3

APRIL 8

MEN’S BASEBALL - AT SAINT JOSEPH’S
LOST 12-3

WOMEN’S LACROSSE - VS. GEORGE WASHINGTON
LOST 17-13

APRIL 9

MEN’S BASEBALL - AT SAINT JOSEPH’S
WON 11-7

MEN’S TENNIS - AT CHARLOTTE
WON 4-0



Illustration by Liv Weatherford

On this day
NASA launched its first space shuttle, or Space Transportation System, 'Columbia,' into orbit.

AFROX fashion show captures the essence of Black culture

NATALIE BARR
Staff Writer

Daisy Palmer, a senior psychology student, saw a post on a model's Instagram story and decided to attend the BLK Runway's AFROX show.

"The graphic design, the representation of Blackness, the eccentricism of it all just really gravitated towards me," Palmer said.

“It works with the symbolism that I was trying to show for the piece of clothing, which goes all the way back to slavery times. I cut up the front and back of the garment to show the treatment we got during slavery and started putting the blood all over it, and I think that really showed through, too.”

Yan Shabazz, designer

Palmer believes a show like this is important for an industry like fashion, which is still predominantly filled with white designers and models, she said.

"Blackness and Black uniqueness is the start of everything, and we need to be represented into these spaces," Palmer said. "It's great to just see people represent these spaces well."

Kayla Feliciano traveled from Charlotte to support her friend, BLK Runway director LA Ricks, whom she's known since high school, Feliciano said.

"I can't wait to see what she does, she's so creative. I know she's gonna put her own spin on it, but I've been following her Instagram," Feliciano said. "I just love how she's showcasing the designers, putting their stories forward."

Feliciano hopes this show, focused on Black creatives, will have a big impact on the way people view fashion and the industry, according to Feliciano.

"It's not just white people that are doing things. It's Black people, too," Feliciano said. "A lot of the fashion that we have that's showcased by white creators was originally done by Black creators."

I just love it. I'm so excited for her."

Friends and family surrounded designer Yan Shabazz after he presented his first collection at BLK Runway's AFROX show; Shabazz knows his "big plans" will be accomplished, he said.

"I love my family and my friends, they showed through," Shabazz said.

Shabazz's collection "Black Church" was featured in the AfroCentric section of the show, inspired from the role Black churches have had throughout history,



Kayla Marie



1. Mira walks the runway during the BLK Runway spring fashion show, wearing Monochromatic Diaspora, styled by JULESTYLEDTHIS, as part of the Afro Futurism category in the ICA fashion event on April 8. Photos by Arrick Wilson

according to Shabazz. Every detail, from the makeup, the designs and gestures displayed at the end of the runway, had meaning to the overall message for his collection, he said.

"All my models are telling a story when they walk to the end of the show," Shabazz said.

"They all had a gesture they were given to do and that tells the different story about the Black people in the church and how we act around other people."

Sketches started over winter break, designs began spring semester and two new looks made a week before show day, he said. An accidental cut from scissors during a final backstage fitting changed the garment, but it added to the overall meaning, according to Shabazz.

"It works with the symbolism that I was trying to show for the piece of clothing, which goes all the way back to slavery times," Shabazz said. "I cut up the front and back of the garment to show the treatment we got during slavery and started putting the blood all over it, and I think that really showed through, too."

Shabazz wanted to make his family



Erin

Event uplifts, showcases local artists in intimate setting

PEGGY STANSBERY
Staff Writer

The VCU Barnes and Noble transformed into a Tiny Desk Concert as local Richmond artists shared their authentic experiences by playing music, sharing their story and answering questions to an intimate audience.

The Activities Programming Board’s lecture department presented the APB Tiny Desk Concert, a “new and different” type of lecture, on April 8, according to Malcolm Small, APB’s co-coordinator of lectures.

The event highlighted three local artists from varying genres of music: Moneá, 10k. Zuri and Kidz at Play.

Small wanted to create a lecture-style event that was a different interpretation of a lecture — that being music and sound, especially since Richmond is a “creative hub” with a wide variety of music and creators, he said.

“I think the music scene in and of itself embodies a lot of what Richmond and VCU is kind of about in terms of versatility and variety,” Small said.

Many creatives in Richmond fly under the radar, Small said. He hopes the Tiny Desk Concert provided Richmond local artists with a platform and avenue to expand their followings and expose people to their music.

“Given the stature that VCU has and APB has, I just think it’s really important to kind of use that platform to uplift as many people around here as possible,” Small said. “And then really just tap people into new things.”

Small hopes the event becomes annual because many people could benefit from it every year, and it can expose the students to local artists, he said.

“When you go to a school like VCU, and you’re in this area, you really kind of have to take advantage of what you have around you,” Small said. “The best that the school can do, in my opinion, is to just do our best to expose students to new things.”

Hip-hop and R&B artist Azzuri Fleming, artist name Zuri and 10k.Zuri on streaming platforms, performed songs more personal to her on Saturday due to the intimate nature of Tiny Desk Concerts, she said.

“I really liked the intimacy of it,” Fleming said. “I’m not trying to be as perfect

or as unflawed. It’s just kind of like a go-with-the-flow kind of thing.”

Fleming participated at the Tiny Desk Concert because she takes advantage of any opportunity she gets to perform and felt honored to be a part of it, she said.

“I love performing,” Fleming said. “So the more I do it, the more I fall in love with it.”

The world inspires Fleming’s music; she feels that anything can inspire her to write due to her sporadic creativity that “strikes at any time,” she said. She hopes

her music conveys her feelings because music is part of her process of helping her get through life, Fleming said.

“Sharing your feelings and stuff through art touches people a lot more than I think we acknowledge as people,” Fleming said.

Richmond’s music scene has provided Fleming with both good and bad experiences due to the city’s smaller size, Fleming said. The smallness has caused a lack of opportunities but has also included a supportive community of artists who lean on each other, she said.

Fleming hopes people enjoyed “what Richmond’s music scene has to offer” at the event, she said.

Neo-soul, alternative RnB and experimental artist Moneá Allen, who performed her original songs on Saturday, has found the Richmond music scene to be really supportive as well, Allen said.

“There’s a lot of talented musicians, singers, songwriters and rappers,” Allen said. “It’s a very talented city. I’ve learned so much on my journey about music, music theory and things like that. It’s really cool to be in the scene.”

Allen’s music revolves around her spiritual journey, manifesting and self love, she said.

“I talk about my journey and how you know that things are hard, but it’s okay,” Allen said. “To hopefully give some type of warmth to the listener to know that whatever they are going through it’s okay because we all go through it.”

She conveyed the messages of self-love that she preaches in her songs at the Tiny Desk Concert, with the intent that people could take those messages home with them, Allen said.

Allen hopes the audience was in the present with one another at the event and went home with a new favorite Richmond artist, she said.

Local band, 10k. Zuri, performing for the Tiny Desk Concert.
Photos by Teairrah Green



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2023

Friday, April 28th
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Art by Rebecca Hagy
Senior at VCUarts

CT Opinions

RACHEL SPILLER
Contributing Writer

GENERATION Z, THOSE BORN BETWEEN mid-to-late 90s and early 2010s, is the first generation to have grown up with easy access to information and communication through technology.

They are also more socially conscious and open-minded than previous generations, making them stronger advocates for equality, justice and inclusivity.

For years, HIV and STIs have been stigmatized, while people living with them were highly discriminated against and ostracized from society. Past generations had less access to information on these viruses, which ultimately led to misinformation and stereotypes.

With the rise of social media, people in today's age are more comfortable with sharing their experiences and stories with the world, and it can be a very helpful tool for education.

Zach Willmore, a 19-year-old student from California, was recently diagnosed with HIV and since has been vlogging his experience on TikTok. With over 1.5 million followers, his platform has helped increase awareness and education on the virus, debunking many myths that have been circulated around it throughout the years.

"This honestly feels like the ends of the world to me," Willmore said in the first

Gen Z may have the power to end long-running stigmas

video posted to his HIV vlogging series, to which he quickly retracted weeks later after learning more about his diagnosis.

An HIV diagnosis is not the end of the world, but a path to a new beginning. With proper treatment and medication, those living with HIV can lead long and normal lives. Recent advancements in science and technology have even allowed those living with it to be undetectable and untransmittable, meaning they cannot sexually transmit the virus to others.

Since his diagnosis, Willmore has gained a more positive outlook on the news, while also informing an entire new generation of people who know little to nothing about the basics of HIV and STIs.

Willmore has also received an overwhelming amount of backlash since sharing his story on the internet. One Twitter user stated "you were born too late to explore the earth, too early to explore the stars, but just in time to see zoomers vlog their HIV diagnosis."

A series on TikTok has done more in educating me on HIV than I ever received in school. Public schools do not teach nearly enough as they should on sex education, and in my experience most of what's taught

is just biased opinions and scare-tactics.

Sex education in schools is important for people to learn safe-sex practices, preventative measures and have a better understanding of the risks that come with being sexually active. Oftentimes, parents would rather their children have "the talk" at school than at home, but when that talk is biased, how much good can it do?

This semester, I had the opportunity to take CreateAthon at VCU, where students work with local nonprofit organizations to create an advertising campaign. My given nonprofit, the Nationz Foundation, assists in the advocacy and education in the Richmond LGBTQIA+ community on HIV, STIs and public health.

Around the same time I began working on this project, Willmore announced his diagnosis and began his on-going series of living with HIV. This was pretty crazy timing, being that I was just beginning to learn more about this topic for research. These two resources have taught me more about HIV and STIs than anything I had previously learned and have also allowed me to share knowledge with those who are unaware.

Quote of the week

"Your anger is a gift you give to yourself and the world that is yours. In anger, I have lived more fully, freely, intensely, sensitively, and politically. If ever there was a time not to silence yourself, to channel your anger into healthy places and choices, this is it."

— SORAYA CHEMALY



Illustration by Abigail Gleeson

Using social media as a tool to spread awareness on topics such as these helps implement education, prevent misinformation, and reminds us that we are all people, no matter our status.

While social networks can still have damaging effects, using it as a tool for education is a step in the right direction for upcoming generations. Gen Z has the power to change the way people use social media for the better, end stigmas and become more educated overall.

ARIELLE ANDREWS
Contributing Writer

IN HBO'S "THE LAST OF US", THERE is a haunting scene where main character Ellie brutally stabbed a man over and over again — relentless and animalistic in her pursuit. Normally, this sort of thing would be seen as disturbing, but this moment is not. It's cathartic.

Ellie is a young girl. Her victim? An adult cannibal who attempted to groom and manipulate Ellie into being eaten by his cult.

Ellie's revenge was profound. A glorious display of female rage that neither fetishized nor downplayed her righteous anger. Even in a show taking place in a post-pandemic apocalyptic world, many of us still understand what it's like to be angry at a man. To be angry at a system that consistently demeans and preys upon women.

In the past few years, we've seen remarkable examples of female anger in the media. From Pearl's maniacal outbursts in the 2022 film of the same name to the revenge story, "Promising Young Women," the angry and liberated woman is provocative and trendy.

Last year, in the article "Are women getting angrier," BBC reported that women are angrier than they were ten years ago. The women they surveyed described higher levels of stress and anger than even the men they talked to.

This trend can clearly be seen online. TikTok edits of female rage explode on the platform with millions of likes. Feminist audio clips like "Labour" by Paris Paloma go viral with 33,000 videos made under it. Its lyrics like "All day, every day / Therapist, mother, maid" appeal to a rageful demographic.

Many people have celebrated these outbursts as pivotal to the feminist movement. Female rage is lauded as necessary and precious. But how effective is female rage, really?



Illustration by Lily Robinette

FEMALE RAGE IS TRENDY, but it won't save you from misogyny

The function of anger is evolutionary. Anger makes us aggressive, in feelings and behaviors, and motivates us to fight back when threatened. It also provides a certain release of heavy emotions.

To this end, female rage is empowering. It is the beautiful collective release of years of anguish and distress. It pushes fem-identifying people into action and has bred many waves of feminism.

Do you want to relieve some stress? Get angry. Protest inequalities or kill injustice? Get angry. Generate collective interest and awareness? Get angry. Do you want to change the world? Well, you're going to have to do a lot more than get angry.

Feminists have the troubling position of being in opposition to misogynists. Female rage is shunned at worst and fetishized at best. Women have had many things taken from them, but the right to rage against their oppressors was the first to go.

Many male misogynists have spent their whole lives angry. It's a "manly" emotion. A source of pride. The patriarchy has spent

its entire legacy raging against women in particular.

So, what happens when a woman rages against a man?

A man who does respect her will not be moved. This man will rage against her. This man with his legions of privilege, power and confidence will believe he will win.

I am not implying that women are not strong enough to rage against their oppressors, but that their oppressors will rage back. Violence against women has increased by 25-33% globally, according to a 2021 report published by the American Journal of Emergency Medicine.

In the Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan, Sara Abdula attributed this to the recent surge of the "Manosphere."

"A loosely related coalition of far-right and anti-feminist online communities and includes incels, men's rights movements, pick-up artist culture and other forms of political activism in the pursuit of male

hegemony (domination/leadership)," Abdula stated.

It must be said that the harshest victims of misogyny are those that challenge the status quo.

If women aspire to intimidate their oppressors, female rage will not help them. As women get angrier, so do misogynists. This tactic will become a futile one as you will not be able to outrage them and often, it won't prevent violence from befalling you.

Female rage is necessary, but it will not save you from misogynists.

The question then becomes: What will?

I cannot offer a better solution. Misogyny is fueled by supremacy, rage and disinformation. Unfortunately, it exists within all of us. You will not be able to convince extreme misogynists with science or facts. You will not be able to out-rage them.

Yet, don't lose hope.

"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed," said Steve Biko, a South African Black liberationist.

Too many women have convinced themselves they cannot win against misogyny. This is where rage has both empowered and failed us.

We need to feel liberated. We need to get educated. We need to find solutions and carry out plans of action. We need to tirelessly seek our emancipation from the patriarchy.

Our best bet is to shame misogynists. Continue to challenge, educate and refuse to support them. Decenter their narrative and take our power; it belongs to us as much as it does anyone else.

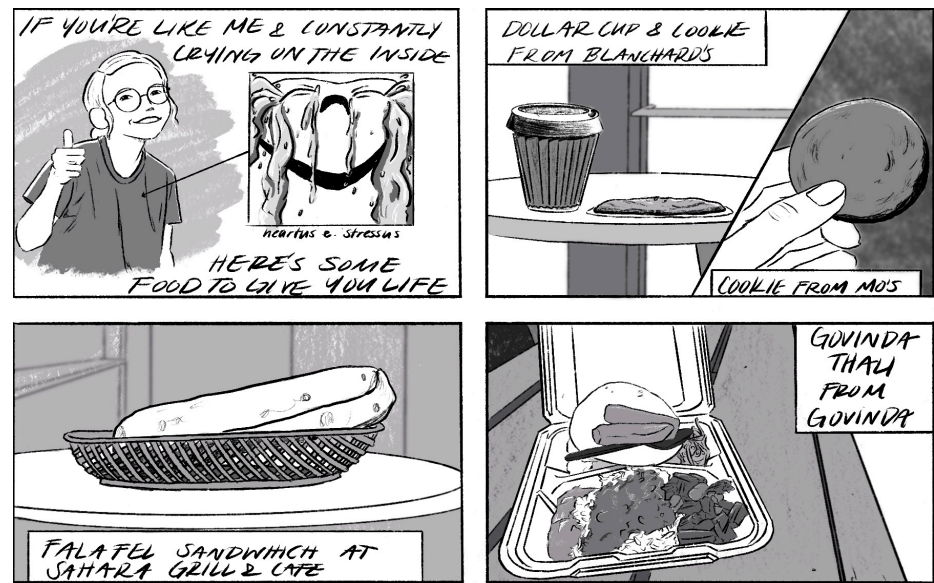
I leave you with this. I want us to look at the plague of patriarchy and get angry. I need us to get angry. Then I need us to ask: what's next?

CT Comics

Hammock by Killian Goodale-Porter



Food to distract you from the impending doom that is the end of the semester by Ollie Hoffmaster



What Do I Do Now by Anthony Duong



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CORRECTION

Clarifications and Corrections for "VCU releases its 2021-22 fiscal year report." The report was VCU's annual report, not VCU's fiscal year report. The original article also stated that VCU made \$3.7 million in revenue and \$4.6 million in total, the numbers are not accurate. An interviewee said "Out-of-state tuition is the highest of any Virginia school. I think we need to understand why," this is not accurate either. UVA, William & Mary and VMI have higher out-of-state tuition than VCU. Another interviewee said "If we're spending that much money, some of it could be allotted towards housing. We have a whole new STEM building," this is also incorrect. Construction of the new STEM building is not funded by VCU students' tuition or VCU's budget. The building was paid entirely by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Los Angeles Times

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- ACROSS

1 Contemporary

8 Place to grab a pint

11 Smitten Kitchen blogger Perelman

14 Butterfingers

17 Quaint desktop item

18 Not to be trusted

19 Lyrical

21 AC meas.

22 Trouble for an orthodox rabbi?

24 Place to clean up

26 Appearance

27 Trouble with the sewer line?

29 Fighting

31 “Hallelujah” songwriter Cohen

33 Unfeeling

34 Black-footed pet

36 Public relations effort

37 “Mm-hmm”

39 Thermometer type

43 Rideshare predictions, briefly

44 “But to no ___”

46 Frosty coat

47 Bingham of “Baywatch”

48 Jewelry retailer Alex and ___

49 Makeup pencil target

50 Perfume name

51 Sparkly threads

52 Guinness superlative

54 Lasting impression

56 Quran scholar

58 Inflation fig.

59 Ragtime legend

60 Port-of-Spain’s island

62 Playwright’s prize

63 Jazz singer Carmen

65 Trouble in a candy store?

67 Sharpens

68 Interstate H-1 locale

69 Zoological kingdom

70 TWA rival

72 Slugger’s stat

73 Write online

74 Warmhearted

75 Comebacks

78 Squeal

80 Gathering clouds, say

82 Boxing champion’s prize

83 Word of support

84 Dried poblano

85 Part of Q.E.D.

86 ___ parade

88 Open some

89 Cowardly Lion

90 Green shot

91 “How’ve you ___?”

92 Djibouti language

94 Calvary inscription

96 Tony Stark’s alter ego

99 Tire holders

100 Trouble for a barista?

104 World’s largest peninsula

106 Keeps safe

107 Trouble with an alibi?

112 Afflict

113 “Whoa ... that’s food for thought”

114 Oddball

115 Long and slippery

116 Melancholy

117 Farm area

118 UV-blocker rating syst.

119 Like tea leaves

DOWN

1 Deluge refuge

2 Failed fudge, maybe

3 Thrilling pair?

4 Some expensive sweaters

5 “___ Fideles”

6 Maryland athlete, for short

7 Kick out

8 Dental care suffix

9 “Tracey Takes On ...” comedian

10 How some musicians play

11 Blue

12 Santa portrayer in “Elf”

13 Lobster soup

14 Soprano woodwind

15 The whole shebang

16 Stew

18 Pixar’s Pearl and Hank, e.g.

20 Bud

23 Winter fishing tool

25 Converted, in a way

28 “It is a tale / Told by an ___”: Macbeth

29 Prudential alternative

30 Trouble with a movie promo?

32 Zilch

34 Achievement

35 Anklebones

38 Tie the knot

40 Trouble with a Bronx cheer?

41 Crushes the final

42 Monet flowers

45 Says nay

46 Meddles

47 “The Things They Carried” writer O’Brien

49 Tony winner Neuwirth

50 Sanchez who voiced Dora the Explorer

51 Just a ___

53 Island feast

54 Originate (from)

55 Sounded like a loose floorboard

57 Got older and wiser, perhaps

61 GarageBand device

62 Oberlin’s state

63 ___ Kombat: video game franchise

64 Beach shelter

66 Lose it

67 Power measure

69 Drink in a mug

71 Tennis great Monica

73 Rain-___ gum

76 Freshwater ducks

77 Dress of draped silk

79 “___ Shop”: Macklemore & Ryan Lewis hit

81 Theme

82 Twofold

85 The Dave Clark Five, e.g.

86 Farm area

87 Comment

88 Friendly

90 Consumer Reports data

91 Proof of purchase

93 Colorful songbird

95 Have to have

97 Hazards

98 Scruffs

100 IRS form experts

101 Solo often sung in Italian

102 Soufflé recipe word

103 Glimpse

105 Cy Young winner Saberhagen

108 “That sounds painful”

109 Guff

110 Make (out)

111 Club ___
- Back Issues by Gary Larson & Amy Ensز
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 116 | | | | | | 117 | | | | 118 | | | | 119 | | | | | |
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- Sudoku
- By The Mephام Group
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL
- 1

2

3

4
- Complete the grid so each row, column, and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk
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