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Queen's death raises questions about decolonization efforts

Matthew Hillier
 Staff Writer



Queen Elizabeth II has reigned for 70 years, and is considered to be the longest reigning monarch in history. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Although Canada, the monarch of England and other Commonwealth countries are currently mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth II who ruled from Feb. 6, 1952 until Sept. 2 this year, many are also initiating conversations surrounding the Queen's legacy in terms of colonization.

A national period of mourning is currently under

effect in Canada for the Queen, designating Sept. 19 as its day of mourning wherein several provinces have closed school and work, except Alberta.

The City of Calgary is holding events to commemorate her life in the atrium of the Calgary Municipal Building. In addition, notable Calgary landmarks will be lit up in

royal blue to commemorate the late monarch, these locations include Olympic Plaza from Sept. 10 to 19, Reconciliation Bridge from Sept. 15 to 19, and the Calgary Tower on Sept. 19. The City Hall will ring its bell 70 times to mark the reigning years of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The massive outpoured support and recognition of grief during this period is unprecedented. Among some of those concerns are the actions that will be taken to decolonize England's commonwealth countries. This becomes more apparent now that more attention and focus is on both the royal family and the politics and practices that they currently hold and have held, which have contributed toward colonization.

When the former Queen took her throne in 1952, over a quarter of the world population was under the British Empire's rule.

India and other various South Asian countries are requesting the return of the 400 million dollar Koh-i-noor diamond sitting on the crown. Mou Banerjee, a professor of South Asian history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, expressed in an interview with *NPR* what these jewels represent to India.

"We essentially have to respect her for her very long service, but as the monarch, she cannot be disentangled from [the] colonization of

South Asia... The jewels represent a history of coercion, subjugation, loot, loss, grief," Banerjee states.

In addition, Moses Ochonu, a professor of African studies at Vanderbilt University, in an interview with *NPR*, brought attention to the deep effects of colonization that are still in effect in his home continent of Africa.

"There is a sense in which Britain has never fully accounted for its crimes. It's her dual status as the face of colonialism, but also a symbol of decolonization that defines how she is perceived in many former British African colonies," Ochonu quotes.

Less than a year before she passed, Barbados removed her as its head of state and became a republic. According to *BBC*, King Charles III (then Prince of Wales during the ceremony), has acknowledged "appalling atrocity of slavery" that the country has endured.

The royals have seen pushback at home in the U.K. as well. One man was arrested for breaching the peace in the UK after calling Prince Andrew, Duke of York a "sick old man" during the Queen's funeral procession after reports of the Duke's recent sex crime allegations and ties to late child sex trafficker Jeffery Epstein.

Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent

and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and the U.K. are currently the only ones out of the 56 countries under the Commonwealth banner who have recognized King Charles III as their monarch.

In an interview with *NBC News*, Matthew Smith, a professor of history at University College London who directs the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership commented on why he thinks many are upset following this period of mourning.

"I think when people voice those views, they're not thinking specifically about Queen Elizabeth, They're thinking about the British monarchy as an institution and the relationship of the monarchy to systems of oppression, repression and forced extraction of labour, and particularly African labour, and exploitation of natural resources and forcing systems of control in these places. That's what they're often responding to. And that's a system that exists beyond the person of Queen Elizabeth."

Beyond the question of the former Queen's efforts against and towards decolonization and the monarch's role in both the U.K. and its Commonwealth countries, many are asking how the current English government and the monarchy will address these issues now that their 'face' is gone and with the far less popular King Charles III as the replacement.

Kenney resigns, UCP finds a new leader out of 7 candidates

Leonardo Galindo

Contributor



The main candidates of the UCP leadership from left to right; Bill Rock (withdrawn), Rebecca Schulz, Travis Toews, Todd Loewen, Danielle Smith, Rajan Sawhney and Leela Aheer. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The United Conservative Party (UCP) of Alberta has been in the midst of a tumultuous leadership race to choose its next party leader upon Premier Jason Kenney's resignation in May this year after a leadership review determined Kenney fit to be a leader at only 51.4 per cent. Seven candidates have put their names forward with a variety of platforms ranging from inflation relief programs to an act making Alberta autonomous and more.

In that leadership review, voters were asked "do you approve of the current leader?" According to *CBC*, out of the 34,298 votes cast, 51.4 per cent of voters approved and 48.6 per cent disapproved.

Here are the leading candidates.

Leela Aheer

Leela Aheer began her career in politics in 2015 when she was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Chestermere-Rocky View. Her most recent political positions have been as MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore and as Alberta's Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and the Status

of Women, a position she held until July 8, 2021, when she was reshuffled after publicly criticizing Jason Kenney.

The two main policy proposals she is running with, Fiscal Resilience and Alberta Justice, are aimed at addressing the 'Fiscal Roller Coaster' affecting the provincial economy and refocusing the mandate of the Alberta Justice System, particularly in regards to legal aid funding.

Rebecca Schulz

Rebecca Schulz began her political career in Saskatchewan in 2009 as a staffer in former Premier Brad Wall's office. She entered Alberta provincial politics in 2019 when she was elected MLA for Calgary-Shaw and served as Cabinet Minister for Children's Services.

Her campaign's rhetoric contains messaging to 'unleash' Alberta's full potential, beat Rachel Notley's NDP and assert Alberta's place in confederation. Schulz's key policy priorities include a 100 Day Provincial Rights Strategy which will pursue the establishment of an Alberta Pension Plan, Alberta Employment Insurance and

Alberta Revenue Agency and pursue further reforms to reduce Federal-Provincial overlap. Her priorities also include revamping the healthcare system to empower front-line staff and proposals to combat the rising cost of living.

Rajan Sawhney

Rajan Sawhney was an MLA for Calgary-North East, first elected in 2019. She has held two cabinet positions as Minister of Community of Social Services and more recently as Minister of Transportation. Before politics, Sawhney worked as an oil and gas economist for 20 years.

Sawhney's notable policy proposals are the Civil Society Act, strengthening the powers of the Intergovernmental Affairs Ministry and re-indexing social assistance programs and tax brackets to inflation. She has been a sharp critic of Danielle Smith's "Sovereignty Act" claiming that the legislation is unconstitutional and will drive investment out of the province.

Brian Jean

A notable figure in Canadian politics, Brian Jean has held several positions at the Federal

level as a Member of Parliament (MP) with the Conservative Party of Canada for Fort McMurray-Athabasca from 2004 to 2014.

Brian Jean has been the most outspoken critic of Jason Kenney. He spoke out during a legislative question period to suggest that Kenney's leadership is failing to fight for a fairer deal for Alberta in confederation.

Based on this, it is not surprising that Jean's election platform is all about "Autonomy for Albertans," particularly highlighting the Autonomy for Albertans Act. The proposed legislation contains a series of measures - including negotiations to amend the constitution - in order to increase provincial autonomy away from Ottawa.

Todd Loewen

Todd Loewen is an Independent MLA for Central Peace-Notley originally elected in 2015. He was kicked out of the UCP caucus for causing 'divisive actions' that contributed to internal party fractures.

His main priorities are

protecting Alberta's energy and agricultural sectors from the federal government's environmental policies. Particularly, his platform makes note of the federal government's 30 per cent reduction in fertilizer usage and how this will affect Alberta agriculture. However, a careful reading of the federal target implies that only emissions intensity from fertilizers should be reduced, not fertilizer use in itself.

Travis Toews

Accountant, rancher and business-owner-turned-politician Travis Toews is a leading figurehead in the leadership race. He was elected in 2019 as MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti and appointed Minister of Finance and Minister of the Treasury Board by Kenney.

Out of all the candidates, he has received the most endorsements from the UCP caucus. Toews has proposed policies for supporting Alberta farmers, introducing inflation relief programs and creating a stronger provincial healthcare system.

Danielle Smith

Danielle Smith served as leader of the Wildrose Party from 2009 to 2014 until she made a historical move to cross the floor to join the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta. She served as MLA for Highwood until announcing her leadership bid.

Smith's campaign has brought her national attention due to her front-running policy proposal: The Alberta Sovereignty Act. The legislation, which has not been drafted thus far, would assure the authority of the provincial legislature to refuse to enforce certain federal laws that violate jurisdictional rights guaranteed under the constitution or that infringe upon the Charter of Rights of Albertans.

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day at MRU

Noel Ormita

Contributor

With Sept. 30 marking the second annual National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, there will be no classes but Mount Royal University (MRU) and the Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) have planned activities starting Sept. 22 for students and faculty to partake in.

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to wear an orange shirt on campus on Thursday. Orange shirts are available for purchase at the Campus Store for \$30.

Around campus, students will find activities that encourage them to learn, recognize and reflect on the cultural history and social implications of our past. The Cultural Inclusion Centre will have free recurring events like the Indigenous Crafting Circle on Sept. 28 and Drum, Dine and Discuss on Sept. 29 to learn about and celebrate the rich Indigenous

culture present in nearby communities.

The office of indigenization and decolonization, in collaboration with the Iniskim Centre, hosts multiple events through Sept. 22 to Oct. 4 as part of the Journey to Indigenization to commemorate not just National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, but also the Red Dress campaign to remember and seek justice for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Through this period, students can engage in conversations with Indigenous leaders and speakers visiting the MRU campus like Elder Roy Bear Chef who will read *You Hold Me Up*, a children's book about reconciliation, to kids at the Mount Royal Child Centre.

An 'Every Child Matters' march will take place on Sept. 29 starting from the



Orange Shirts are available for purchase at the Cougars Campus Store. Photo by Noel Ormita

East Gate Courtyard to the Centennial Garden on campus to recognize and honour residential school survivors and the children who never found their way back home.

The day will wrap up with the Cougars Men's hockey game who will play against the University of Alberta in honour of the National Day

of Truth and Reconciliation where the audience is encouraged to wear an orange shirt.

Students who wish to seek support can reach out to and visit the Iniskim Centre which offer resources like Student Success Program, Indigenous Housing Program and Medicine Trail Program, Naato'ohsokay.

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SAMRU tackles food insecurity on campus through accessible cupboards

Noel Ormita

Contributor

Mount Royal University (MRU) students coming back this fall will notice a new addition on campus. The Student's Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) has started an initiative called SAMRU Care Cupboards where students can acquire free snacks and hygiene supplies through pantries displayed in different areas of the campus. It aims to be a long term solution to combat food insecurity on campus.

A research study done by MRU nursing and general education students, along with the rising popularity of community pantries, started the whole idea of the Care Cupboards. The report looked at the food insecurity present on MRU's campus a few years ago.

Students can still access other programs at Wyckham House like the free breakfast program, campus food bank services for larger items, and referrals to Calgary

Food Bank. With the Care Cupboards, students can go to any of five locations around campus and take what you need with comfort. They are located on the main floors of EA Building, EB Building, Riddell Library, second floor of B-wing and in the Cougars Concourse between recreation and wellness.

SAMRU Care Cupboards are stocked with fruits, granola bars, juice and fruit gummies to enjoy and are replenished twice a week.

Students will also find other hygienic essentials like masks, condoms, pads and tampons.

According to SAMRU Support Services Manager, Lisa Antichow, the produce available in the cupboards are bound to change depending on what's available and what's been donated.

To make requests, comments and concerns, and to make donations, each Care Cupboard has embedded contact information on the side.

features

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Let's talk about equity, diversity and inclusion

Associate VP of EDI office plans to bring student-centred change

Emily Kirsch

Contributor



Dr. Moussa Magassa worked at UVic for 16 years and has been at MRU since late May. Photo by Emily Kirsh

Dr. Moussa Magassa has only been here for four months and has big plans for Mount Royal University (MRU). As the Associate Vice President of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for MRU, Magassa wants to build off of all the work that has previously been done at the university, and centre the experiences and voices of everyone in the school community.

After working for 16 years at the University of Victoria (UVic) as the principal strategist of community engagement, equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism education, Magassa arrived

at MRU in May 2022. With additional experience teaching social justice and intercultural communications, Magassa is ready and eager to take on his new role as associate vice president here at Mount Royal. He says MRU's student-centred approach to learning is what drew him here.

Words like equity, diversity and inclusion seem to fly around the post-secondary sphere a generous amount, but what do they mean? Magassa says the three concepts are connected, and one cannot truly exist without the others. To Magassa, equity is about breaking down barriers. The

path to equity is paved in fairness and ensuring everyone is on the same level.

"Diversity explores the differences between peoples, not only in the negatives but also the positives," Magassa explains. "It is to acknowledge that we can be different, but we all contribute positively."

As for inclusion, he explains that it's constructed by co-creation.

"You hear a lot of people say that inclusion is being invited to the party and being allowed to dance. But what if the music is driving me crazy?" Magassa

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Tenille Townes wins the CCMA Awards

Laine Shepley

Contributor



Tenille Townes accepting one of her awards at the CCMA's. Photo by Laine Shepley

This summer I had the opportunity to work for Corus Entertainment where I was offered the chance to see the Canadian Country Music Awards (CCMAs). As a country music fan myself, I was excited to go to this event. Seriously, I was raving about this event to all of my friends for days. I love the energy that surrounds Canadian country music.

Unlike the American country music scene that has a tendency to be surrounded by politics and negativity, Canadian country has its own unique culture that is rooted in pride, support and love. I was looking forward to being in a room surrounded by people that not only loved these Canadian artists, but fully supported them.

Canadian artists are often overshadowed compared

to American counterparts, especially in the country music scene. There are multiple Canadian country artists that are extremely talented, for example, Paul Brandt, Dean Brody, Brett Kissel, etc. I really believe in supporting local artists, especially those from our home province that is so heavily influenced by country music.

The lineup for this year's CCMA's is proof that Canadian artists are starting to break the mold as many performers such as High Valley, Dallas Smith, etc. are household names across both Canada and the U.S.

Although I was most excited to see Tenille Townes, Jade Eagleson was on my list of performers to see as well. With his hit songs like "Got Your Name On It" and "She

Don't Know," I was expecting him to take home an award this year, however, I may be a little biased as my love for him goes a little farther than just his music. Unfortunately, he was overshadowed by other artists this year, but I still think his performance beat out the majority.

Townes, on the other hand, is on her way to breaking this barrier as she got her start in Nashville, Tenn. and is played across both Canadian and American radio stations.

Townes has been making waves in the Canadian country music industry with her raw lyrics, catchy melodies and bluesy guitar. Seen as Alberta's sweetheart, not only was her performance of "Girl Who

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This time you get to pick

Growing up to choose your friends, and your family

Abbie Riglin

Photo Editor



An illustration of Abbie Riglin's chosen family. Illustration courtesy of Faith Sumastre

Family, by definition, is described as a group of individuals who are “all the

descendants of a common ancestor.” In other words, blood related.

From a young age it is expected of us to stay close and rely on the people we share

blood with. Our parents are our caregivers, and our siblings are our friends and playmates. On holidays we are expected to hug and kiss aunts and uncles, and let our cousins steal our toys. Even after all this we are expected to love and like them above all else. “It’s just what family does,” they’ll say.

There is also a cultural aspect to staying connected to family, as it is expected of a child to give back to their parents once they come of age by taking on the financial and caregiving roles their parents had while raising them.

But like most things, there are exceptions to the rule. Sometimes parents don’t show up, siblings can be bullies, and aunts and uncles don’t respect personal boundaries.

According to a 2020 Stats Canada report, 25 per cent of violent crime victims were abused by a family member.

I became one of these victims at a young age.

I struggled for a long time for who to blame, but I eventually realized that the only person who could be at fault was my abuser, even if they were family.

In recent years, I’ve learned about the concept of chosen family, which is exactly what it sounds like. Instead of following the expectation of respecting blood, I get to choose those who respect me back. I’ve come to the realization that family can be

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Didn’t Care” inspiring, she was also one of the most successful Canadian Country Music Awards winners this year.

Townes’ fans know that she’s a humble celebrity, but that didn’t stop her from walking onto the CCMA stage in a powerful dark sequin romper that had everyone turning their heads. The crowd erupted with pride and love whenever Townes took the stage. It was apparent that their support goes further than just her music and her fans are definitely supportive of her personality as the audience was ecstatic to simply hear her speak.

Seeing Townes take the stage with grace, beauty and modesty reminded me of a young Shania Twain. Her ability to captivate an audience with just her words is similar to the impact that Twain has fostered across her fans. Townes is a genuine Canadian country artist that seems to not only enthrall her audience with her voice, but also with her motivating words. I wouldn’t be surprised to see Townes

take the stage at the Grammy awards in a couple of years.

It is well known that Townes made her successful career out of hard work and dedication that hasn’t faltered. She is an artist that young Canadian girls will look up to for generations, just like Twain. Townes’ authenticity, originality and genuine love for country music will keep pushing her far in this industry and will continue to motivate more aspiring country artists.

Although she has already previously won several awards on her path to fame— 14 CCMA awards to be exact— Townes proves that she is a consistent winner at the CCMA as she took home multiple awards this year. Townes left the award show with songwriter of the year, singer of the year and album of the year.

She tops her achievements off with a beautiful speech that captivated the audience from start to finish. Through many heartfelt words Townes is quoted saying that she has “never, ever, felt the love that she has from the fans and the country music community.”

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illustrates.

“Inclusion is not just being invited; it is the act of co-creating that invitation.”

He ends the analogy by saying that asking what people want to do to make them feel included is a step in the right direction.

“...You can’t create inclusion for me; you have to work with me to create,” Magassa said.

But EDI is an intersectional topic, Magassa clarifies, and there’s more to it than just equity, diversity and inclusion.

“[EDI] connects to other things like cultural competency, cultural intelligence, accessibility...,” he remarked.

He explains further that for the premise of EDI to be successful, all of these considerations must work in tandem to create a more welcoming environment for everybody. For Magassa, the work towards greater EDI needs to centre the voices of the people who are concerned in the first place, without excluding the voices of their allies.

“...It is also about an

integrated and collaborative approach. So you need to be sure that you work with everyone.” Magassa adds.

In speaking with Dr. Magassa, he compliments the university’s current effort towards EDI but acknowledges that there is still work to be done.

“We need to bring all this good work together, centre it, hear the voices, the experiences of everyone, and then flesh out the best practice that we can all share,” he explains.

Stepping into his new role as associate vice president, Magassa is working to develop an EDI strategy for the whole university. His primary approach is to educate faculty and students on creating an inclusive and welcoming experience for all. Under his leadership, Magassa wants to work with the student body openly and organically.

“The changes [students] want to see are not changes that are against the institutional goal,” Magassa says. “And those challenges can’t be ignored. And they have to be addressed.”

Emphasizing his desire to build institutional and student relationships, Magassa wants the campus community to know that his doors are always open.

“They can come and talk to me as a peer; they can come to talk to me as someone in this position and who is working for them and everyone else on campus.”

Magassa notes that EDI is everyday work and simply being patient and understanding. He says, “the best way is always to be a critical thinker.” Magassa explains that embracing EDI is being conscious of our everyday actions.

“Sometimes you might just pause before you call someone a name...and then say to yourself, maybe today I’m going to ask them how they want me to address them.”

Dr. Magassa emphasizes that EDI work relies on the work of everyone in the community and how small actions can make a significant impact.

“EDI is about us as human beings, and it is a gift we give each other. It is not about us. It is about all of us.”

Adventures in Portugal: My two-week trip

Emma Duke

Staff Writer

This past June 2022, my family traveled to Portugal for 16 days. Twenty-five years prior, my parents made Portugal a two-day-stop on their honeymoon, but my dad got sick with food poisoning and they missed seeing the whole country.

Since they didn't get to experience the true beauty of the country the first time they went, my dad wanted to surprise my mom with a trip to Portugal for their 25th wedding anniversary, and they brought me and my siblings! I wanted to share my experience traveling to Portugal by sharing some memorable moments and lessons I learned.

Late nights, wine

I cannot emphasize enough how many times we'd walk into a restaurant at six or seven o'clock and it would be completely empty, and then we'd walk home at 10 p.m. and pass bustling streets and restaurants. There was a wine bar near our Airbnb (which we made more than one trip to), and every single time we passed it, no matter the day of the week, people would be sitting outside drinking wine at 11 p.m., midnight and onwards.

This is so unlike the experience in Calgary and North American culture. I urge you to visit Stephen Ave on a Sunday night and experience the emptiness of it. It would come as a shock to both of us

if you saw groups of friends on the El Furniture Warehouse patio at 11 o'clock on a weeknight. It was extremely enjoyable and a learning experience to be surrounded by this culture for a moment's time. It's a culture in which work and life are much more balanced, in which alcohol is to be savoured instead of abused, and in which conversation and friendships are prioritized and cherished.

The man with the saxophone

One of my favorite memories of the trip happened in a little fishing town an hour outside of Lisbon called Cascais. My three sisters and mom went to explore the shops, and I stuck with my dad and brother who wanted to walk around the several beaches in the area. My dad wanted to see a particular area, and my brother and I followed. We had been walking for about 40 minutes in direct sunlight. It was exhausting, and we couldn't believe that this spot my dad had wanted to see would possibly be worth this much walking, to be honest.

When we arrived, we immediately realized that we were mistaken. This was worth all of it. We stood atop of a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. A man also stood on the cliff, playing the saxophone. I had seen him before, in a popular shopping area in the heart of Lisbon, but I couldn't hear him above the noise of people

shuffling between shops that day. He was wearing a pair of sunglasses that day in Lisbon, and he wore the same pair in Cascais, along with a t-shirt and jeans.

We must have sat there for an hour and listened to him while looking out at the glistening water. When he finished his set, we clapped and sat through it again. He smiled at us and gave us a small nod of his head. He never opened his mouth to speak, only to blow through his mouthpiece on his saxophone, and it is odd to think that one of my favorite moments from the trip happened with a person whose voice I never heard.

We didn't want to leave. There was something so serene about this moment. I remember purposefully looking around me to make sure I remembered this, telling myself, "When it's finals season and I am incredibly stressed, this is where I'm going to want to be."

Cinnamon sangria, sleep

We spent two days at the beach. Both days, we left our Airbnb at around 10 in the morning, and didn't return to the Airbnb until 12 hours later. At the beach, after a game of paddle ball and some swimming, my sister and I went to the restaurant that sat above the water. We ordered red sangrias that had cinnamon sticks inside and cinnamon powdered foam on top and sat for a long time, raving about



The man who played a saxophone on top of a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Photo by Emma Duke

the Sangria and the cute boys on the beach, and for some time, just sitting in silence.

We played more games, went back to the restaurant bar and came back with lime beers, and I let my four siblings bury me in the sand. If you ever have the chance to speak to them, they might tell you that a memorable moment from that day was me standing in the ocean, forcing water into my bra to get the sand out of my clothes.

Visiting Portugal was unforgettable, and my experiences in the country reminded me to cherish conversation, to savour moments, and to prioritize the ones I love. Traveling reminds me that the universe is bigger than myself, that the world

is vast. It is not the universe who holds onto our past but ourselves. No one in Portugal, or France, or India knows about the embarrassing thing you did in class last week. The world is bigger than you and me, and we can rewrite our stories.

I am also reminded that we can travel to a place, where nothing is familiar to us, but in every new place, we are connected to others because of our shared humanity. We all cry. We all laugh. It is my belief that we should all, if and when we are able, take advantage of every opportunity to travel, to experience a world that is not our own, to meet people, learn social customs and try new food, to create memories in places that will stay, long after we have gone.

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whatever the hell you want it to be.

Before, I lived in fear of not being accepted for who I was. I struggled with aspects of physical touch, and most of all I found it hard to trust people. It hasn't been until very recently that I have been able to make meaningful emotional connections with people.

But by surrounding myself with a chosen family that respects me and allows me to live without consequences, I have been able to learn what my boundaries are. I've allowed myself to realize that I can create them with whoever, including blood related family members.

When I experienced an emotional connection and trusted someone for the first

time, it was with my best friend. Truthfully, it was the scariest thing I ever felt. For the first time I was allowed to feel vulnerable and I wasn't shamed for it. But it spiraled into me becoming a person I was proud of, because allowing yourself to be vulnerable allows you to connect truthfully. For the first time I could open up, I wasn't scared of getting

hurt, and I had love that was unconditional.

This was more than I had ever experienced with many of my blood relatives so naturally I asked myself the question, 'why can't I choose my family too?' It has been a hard journey, but I've learned that it's okay to let go of those who don't positively affect your life. You may not be able to change your blood, but that's okay.

My family might look a little different, but for me, my family is intentional. For me, my family is my parents, my sister, my partner and my friends. For me, my family is those who choose to stay.

"We've all done this — created our mix-and-match families, our homemade safety nets."

— David Levithan, *Two Boys Kissing*



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Do you have questions, complaints, concerns, or compliments? Let us know!

Scan the QR code or email us at info@samru.ca.



samru.ca

Check out SAMRU's PRIDE CENTRE

Find us in Z211 on the second floor of Wyckham House Student Centre for community support resources, a free library, free prophylactics, as well as referrals and in-centre expertise on topics related to relationships, identity, and sexual health.



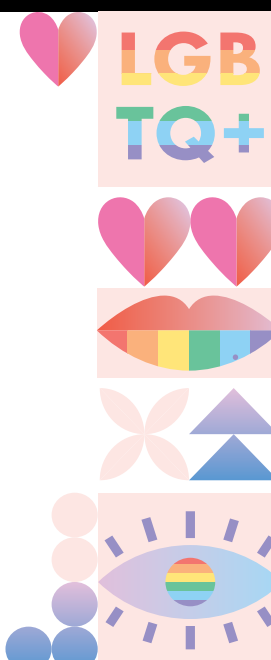
Programs Include:

- ♥ Wellness Wind Down
- ♥ Rainbow Post
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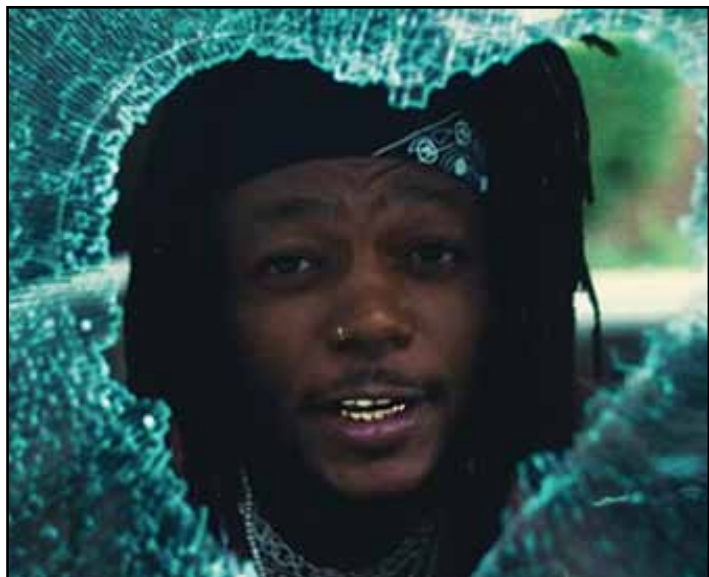


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Why you should pay attention to JID

Spencer Yu
Staff Writer



JID has worked with countless big stars recently and was featured on Doja Cat's latest album, Planet Her on track "Options." Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Destin Choice Route, more commonly known as JID, has been touted as one of the best rappers to come out of the 2010's for his unquestionable ability on the mic. With his latest release, *The Forever Story*, he shows that not only is he capable of putting out one of the best rap albums this year while working to evolve himself as not only an artist but as a person.

Introspection is not an uncommon theme in the hip-hop genre with big-name artists like Kendrick Lamar and J. Cole. Artists often rap about themselves in a manner of self-reflection to give the listener a better understanding of them as a person and perhaps to have

a moment of catharsis. Often telling stories of their brightest and darkest moments to paint a picture.

Route does this in spades, telling experiences from him being a struggling artist, being with his siblings, all the way to him being the successful rapper that he is now. What I really like is how he is able to not only execute multiple flows and voices while penning some incredible bars, but he is able to do it so casually. It is very clear Route is very confident in his ability and he doesn't need to strain himself to show it.

If he continues on this trajectory of self-improvement, I feel that in a few years we would be championing Route

as one of the greats as we do with rappers like Lamar and Cole.

The Forever Story isn't a particularly cinematic album compared to some of the rap albums of the last decade, however, it more than makes up for that with the fantastic production throughout. This is Route at his best and it is evidently clear with the beat switches and excellent use of samples on tracks like "Surround Sounds."

The thing I love the most about this album is how much variety it offers. Aggressive songs with 808's that just punch through like on the track "Raydar" to a more mellow jazz-inspired beat with the track "Can't Make You Change," there is a song here for every type of rap fan and there is not a single song on this album that is worth skipping— it is that well executed.

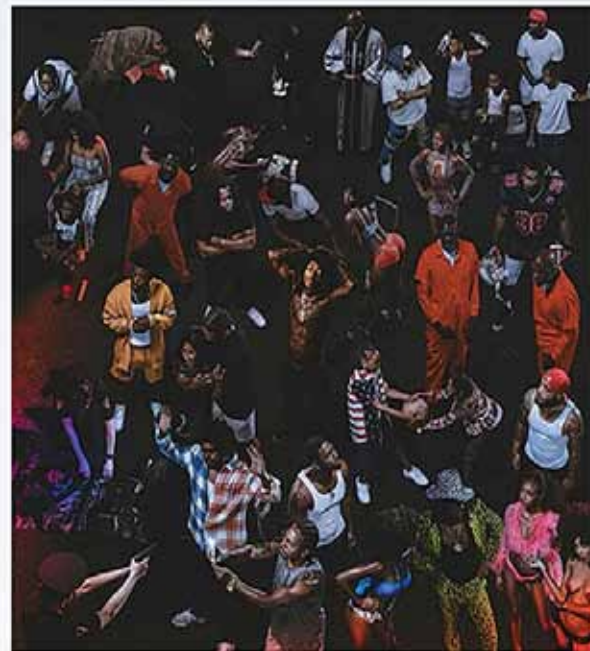
This album also features a very wide variety of features including fellow Dreamville members Ari Lennox and hip-hop duo Earthgang. Alongside some fairly big names including 21 Savage, Yasiin Bey (known more commonly as Mos Def), Lil Durk, Lil Wayne and Kenney Mason. While all of the features performed admirably, a standout for me personally is Bey's verse on the track "Stars." Not only is he able to tell a story of the unfortunate parts of the rap star lifestyle but he blends it with arguably the best wordplay on the album. My

personal favourite line is "VVS is very vertebrae snappin' lights flashin'."

Normally when I review an album I set aside a section to give some critiques as to how I think the album can be improved but there isn't one that I can reasonably offer. Personally, I prefer albums that are under an hour long but even here it warrants the extra length due to how unique and how well produced each track

is. Maybe it could have been more cinematic but then again, it doesn't need it. It is a very dense and well put together package.

The Forever Story is everything a modern rap album should be. A massive variety of sounds, epic rapping, good features, well-told stories and well-produced beats. If you don't like this album you don't like rap music, period.



JID ended his promising football career after an injury ending career at the age of 22. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

OUT'N ABOUT

CIFF 2022

Are you a film buff? This event is for you! Celebrate over 200+ films showcased from Sept. 22 to Oct. 2, single tickets are only \$14!

Beakerhead

Experience a night filled with science, technology, engineering art and math at Century Gardens located in Downtown Calgary on Sept. 24 to 25, admission is free!

Block Party 2022 at Deerfoot City

Bust out your roller skates and take advantage of this outdoor roller skating rink at Deerfoot City only until Sept. 30.

New Blood: A Story of Reconciliation

Watch *New Blood*, a theatrical performance in Arts Commons on Sept. 30 to learn more about residential school survivors.

Why you should add Contemporary Calgary's Free First Thursdays to your calendar

Danielle Steele

Staff Writer



An art installation by Chris Curreri. Photo by Danielle Steele



A gallery attendee admires a series of paintings from Robert Houle's exhibit: *Red is Beautiful*. Photo by Danielle Steele

Contemporary Calgary's Free First Thursdays are drawing much attention from the community. The event takes place every first Thursday of the month at absolutely no cost for gallery admission starting from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Visitors who might be busy during the day can enjoy a late afternoon of cocktail drinks and music as they explore the unique art exhibits on display.

Contemporary Calgary also offers a social space for the event's attendees. The gallery's second floor features a pop-up cocktail bar from Sugar Water and music by DJ Hot Sauce Boogie. Sugar Water describes its bars as transformative: combining a vintage, speakeasy aesthetic with specialty cocktails. The pop-up bar, paired with Hot Sauce Boogie's fast-tempo music, enhances a typically tranquil gallery into an environment well-suited for a night out in the city. Hot Sauce Boogie begins playing from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m., while Sugar Water's pop-up bar is open from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

While attending Free First Thursdays, it is encouraged to walk through the gallery's exhibits. Contemporary Calgary's current exhibits showcase two Canadian artists: Robert Houle and Chris Curreri. Both artists' work provides a unique perspective.

Houle's exhibit, titled *Red is Beautiful*, provokes thoughtful discussions on colonization and Canada's traumatic history of abusive residential schools. As a residential school survivor, Houle's mixed media artwork expertly tells his

personal, spiritual and emotional journey while identifying as both Ojibwa and Catholic.

As expected, Curreri's collection, titled *That, There, It*, similarly portrays the unique perspective of a queer individual. Through a series of installations and photographs, Curreri challenges the sexual identity.

While enjoying Free First Thursdays at Contemporary Calgary, visitors have the pleasure of meeting some of the gallery's welcoming volunteers. Volunteers not only monitor the exhibits, but they are known to engage visitors in educational, and often insightful, conversations. Volunteers are very well versed in the artists and collections being displayed at any given time, therefore anyone attending Free First Thursdays are welcome to discuss, question, or engage alongside the volunteers.

The last day to enjoy the gallery's current exhibits will be on Sept. 18. According to Contemporary Calgary employees, new exhibits will not be available to the public until Oct. 13. Therefore, Free First Thursdays will resume on Nov. 3.

Although Houle and Curreri's collections will soon be relocated from the museum, Contemporary Calgary never fails to showcase impactful Canadian artists. Technically skilled artwork with the addition of Sugar Water's pop-up cocktail bar and music by Hot Sauce Boogie, makes Free First Thursdays an inviting experience and well worth the wait.

5 Indigenous-made films you have to see at CIFF 2022

Abbie Riglin

Photo Editor



CIFF screens films of every genre, selected from our backyard and around the world. Photo courtesy of Michael Grondin

The Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is back this year from Sept. 22 to Oct. 2 with another selection of amazing films spanning from shorts to global categories. In lieu of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, on Sept. 30, here are five Indigenous-made films showing at CIFF 2022.

1. *Bones of Crows*

A psychological drama that tells the story of Aline Spears, a Cree matriarch, as she experiences starvation, cultural assimilation, racism and sexual abuse over generations within the Canadian residential school system. Continuing into a story of resilience, Spears uses her culture and language during

World War II to make great contributions until she can return home and face her abusers.

Bones of Crows will also expand onto CBC's silver screen in 2023 for a five-episode mini-series. Directed by: Marie Clements
Starring: Grace Dove, Alyssa Wapanatâhk, Michelle Thrush, Phillip Lewitski.

2. *Buffy Sainte-Marie: Carry it On*

The documented story of the life, music and activism of Indigenous singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie. With her first hit, "Universal Soldier", a hard-hitting accusation of those who blindly follow orders, Sainte-Marie became an instant sensation and inspiration to both her fans

and other musicians.

Buffy Sainte-Marie: Carry It On explores the lesser-known details of Sainte-Marie's life within her art and activism in a well-researched memoir. Directed by: Madison Thomas
Starring: Joni Mitchell, Robbie Robertson, Taj Mahal, Alanis Obomsawin, Tantoo Cardinal, Jackson Browne, George Strombolopolous, John Kay, Jeremy Dutcher

3. *Dark Nature*

Directed by Calgary-based Métis director Berkley Brady, *Dark Nature* stars a female lead cast in a psychological thriller.

The story follows a survivor of domestic violence named Joy who joins her

Continues on Pg. 12



Two Door Cinema Club is an Irish band well known for their earlier works and quickly became staples in the 2000's Indie scene. Recently, Two Door Cinema Club's sound has evolved to alt-rock-pop which bears resemblance to Glass Animals' *Dreamland*.

Keep on Smiling is a punchy and relatively fun 12-track album. "Messenger Ad (Intro)" sets the tone for the rest of the album, the ominous-sounding instrumental goes on for a bit too long for my liking. Although tracks like "High" and "Everybody's Cool" are reminiscent of their older work and seem like fan favourites from discussions on social media, it seems that many fans are disappointed

and miss the old sound of Two Door Cinema Club. The other tracks found on *Keep on Smiling*, unfortunately, sound overproduced and are uncomplimentary to the band's deeper lyrics that just get drowned out by all of the beats and synths.

While *Keep on Smiling* was a reasonable attempt to develop their sound to explore other genres, perhaps revisiting their roots once again may be beneficial to find where they fit best. For that reason, I give this album a B-.

— Astrid Cunanan

Special

Lizzo

Nice Life/Atlantic

Score: A+



Following up her 2019 album *Cuz I Love You*, Lizzo hit us in the face with *Special*, which is home to tracks like "About Damn Time" and "2 Be Loved (Am I Ready)". It may be a surprise to some that this is only the star's second album. After her debut album, Lizzo managed to become a household name. And it is completely deserved. The artist has been paying her dues in the industry for years and when it paid off, it paid off big.

Over the past three years she has starred in a Golden-Globe-nominated film, *Hustlers*, started (and won an Emmy for) her own reality show, *Watch Out For The Big Grrrls* and started her own clothing line. Though it's clear fans adore her music, her music career came second

to business endeavours in the past couple of years. But god are we glad she's back, taking over the charts, the radio and (most importantly) TikTok audios. "About Damn Time" made a splash on TikTok as the single immediately became a fan favourite, with everyone and their mom joining in on the dance trend. There was some drama surrounding certain lyrics on the track "Grrrls" but as the queen she is, Lizzo quickly apologized and corrected the missteps. *Special* is a fun album full of popified hits. It's exactly what we all need after we've all "been home since 2020."

— Emme Larkins

Continued from Pg. 11

friend's therapy group on a retreat in the Canadian Rockies. Eventually, reality and delusion are confused, due to an experiment led by the group's leader, Dr. Dunnley.

Directed by: Berkley Brady
Starring: Hannah Emily Anderson, Madison Walsh, Roseanne Supernault, Helen Belay, Kyra Harper

4. Ever Deadly

The story of Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq. *Ever Deadly* explores Tagaq's intimate relationship with the Nuna—the land. The land is a living, breathing organism that is present within her improvised performances showcased beautifully in the documentary through concert footage intertwined with sprawling scenery in Nunavut.

Directed by: Chelsea McMullan, Tanya Tagaq
Starring: Tanya Tagaq

5. Rosie

Rosie tells the story of an orphaned, Indigenous girl in 1980s Montréal after she moves in with her Aunty Fred who is more than reluctant to take her in. Fred, an artist making art out of trash, has just lost her job and is on the edge of eviction. She introduces Rosie to her two best friends Flo and Mo, glamorous, gender-bending street workers.

Together the three show Rosie their street-smart ways, and Rosie shows them what they were missing. *Rosie* is a story of finding home in the most peculiar places and it shows just how people you never expected can become your chosen family.

Directed by: Gail Maurice
Starring: Mélanie Bray, Keris Hope Hill, Constant Bernard, Alex Trahan, Josée Young, Brandon Oakes, Jocelyne Zucco, Arlen Aguayo Stewart

CIFF 2022 also features a selection of Indigenous-made short films.



This year the Calgary International Film Festival happens during Sept. 22 - Oct. 2. Photo courtesy of Michael Grondin



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How the Calgary Flames stack up to the rest of the Pacific Division

Looking ahead to the 2022-23 NHL Season

Matthew DeMille
Contributor



Can the Calgary Flames' new-look squad help them defeat their provincial rivals, the Edmonton Oilers and Connor McDavid? Photo courtesy of All-Pro Reels/Wikimedia Commons

The 2022-23 NHL season is less than a month away and Calgary Flames fans are finally breathing a sigh of relief, as their team is coming off their most hectic and historic offseason to date. The Flames' tumultuous summer began after their second round loss in the 2022 Stanley Cup Playoffs to their rivals, the Edmonton Oilers, and was later followed up by the exit of

superstars Johnny Gaudreau and Matthew Tkachuk.

But before the dust of Gaudreau's and Tkachuk's departure could even settle, Flames general manager (GM), Brad Treliving, was able to adjust his club's trajectory from a full fledged rebuild back to a Stanley Cup contender. This came in the acquisition of forward Jonathan Huberdeau and defenseman Mackenzie

Weegar, among other assets, from the Florida Panthers as an exchange for the already outbound Tkachuk. The Flames would continue to bolster their forward core as they signed former Colorado Avalanche and Stanley Cup Champion Nazem Kadri to a seven-year contract while dealing long-time Flame Sean Monahan to the Montreal Canadiens.

With so many bodies coming

and going from the Flames roster this offseason, it is hard to determine if the team is at a better or worse position than they were in the season prior. That being said, the Flames should fare rather well among their Pacific Division rivals. The loss of Gaudreau and Tkachuk will be less detrimental than originally thought, however it is unlikely that they will finish atop the Pacific Division this season.

The new recruits should give the Flames enough firepower to comfortably clinch a playoff position and finish either second or third in their division.

This is how the rest of the division should shake out.

Locking it down

Season after season, Edmonton's goaltending situation has been a laughing stock across the entire NHL. It is hard to take a team seriously when their crease is guarded by Mikko Koskinen and 40-year-old Mike Smith. With Smith shelving himself on the Oilers' long-term injured reserve and possible retirement imminent and Koskinen departing to HC Lugano of Switzerland's National League, the Oilers were in the market for a new goaltender. Under the age of 40, of course.

The answer came in former Toronto Maple Leafs starter, Jack Campbell. With Connor McDavid at the helm, Leon Draisaitl, Zach Hyman, Evander Kane and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins in close proximity, and a competent and reliable goaltender between the pipes, the Oilers

Continues on Pg. 14

#S

0, Losses the Cougars men's soccer team has so far this season.

24, Home-Runs Bo Bichette has scored this year.

1, The Calgary Flames' position in the Pacific Division standings last season.

7, Number of finishes during UFC's last Fight Night event.

Continued from Pg. 13

have made themselves a real threat across the entire league. The Pacific Division is theirs to lose at this point.

The Los Angeles Kings are making a gradual return to their Stanley Cup winning form we saw in the 2011-12 and 2013-14 seasons. During the offseason, the Kings signed Swiss forward Kevin Fiala to a seven-year deal following a trade with the Minnesota Wild. Fiala, who posted a career-high of 85 points last season, is an excellent addition to Los Angeles' top six. The forward group will be rounded out by Adrian Kempe and Alex Iafallo, who—like Fiala—had notable performances last season.

Ahead of the 2022-23 season, the Kings are forecasted to pose an average age of about 26.5 years. With a team that young, it looks like the Kings may have locked up a top three spot in the Pacific Division for this year and the years to come.

The underdogs

Abysmal. That's the word that first comes to mind when discussing the inaugural season of the Seattle Kraken. It was expected, however. It would be hard to replicate the success the Vegas Golden Knights found in their first season as a franchise. Nonetheless, Kraken GM Ron Francis is avoiding a similar season in their second go-round.

Oliver Bjorkstrand and Andre Burakovsky were brought in to put some pucks in the opposition's net and to help a drowning forward group. Jared McCann, the leading scorer for the Kraken, scored a measly 50 points in 74 games last season and fell well under the point-a-game mark. The new additions will also be joined by potential 'Rookie of the Year' nominee Matty Beniers and Shane Wright—the projected first overall pick in the 2022 NHL Draft who fell to fourth. Don't be surprised to see the Kraken rise from the deep and secure themselves a wildcard spot this season.

The Vancouver Canucks have their eyes set on a bounceback season having missed the playoffs by five points last April. Internal

issues plagued the team early into the season, as both GM Jim Benning and head coach Travis Green found themselves without work in early December.

Top line center J.T. Miller is coming off a career-high 99-point season, while his linemates Elias Pettersson and Brock Boeser are expected to increase their production totals after they struggled to create any sense of offense last year. Replacement GM Patrik Allvin also made a respectable splash in free agency this summer, landing the highly touted forward Andrei Kuzmenko from the KHL and former Toronto Maple Leaf, Ilya Mikheyev. With the exception of Quinn Hughes, the biggest concern facing the Canucks now is their defensive lineup. As for their odds to make the postseason, there's a 50/50 shot.

Swing and a miss

The future is bright for the Anaheim Ducks, just not the immediate future. In recent seasons, Ducks management have parted ways with many of their veteran skaters, including longtime captain Ryan Getzlaf, to make room for their young, up and coming talent. Troy Terry, Trevor Zegras, and Jamie Drysdale have already broken through the ranks and will lead the fairly fresh faced team in the coming—and hopefully future—seasons.

The three will soon be joined by Mason McTavish, who recently won a World Junior Championship. The Ducks may be a force to be reckoned with in due time, but for now they will offer little competition within their division this season.

Having missed the playoffs for the third consecutive year, the San Jose Sharks cleaned house over the summer and relieved both their GM Doug Wilson and head coach Bob Boughner of their duties. Under the new management of Mike Grier as GM and David Quinn as head coach, the team had a rather active free agency period but failed to gain much traction against other teams in their division. Expect the Sharks to miss the playoffs for the fourth year in a row.

The glory days for the Vegas Golden Knights have come and gone and their Cinderella

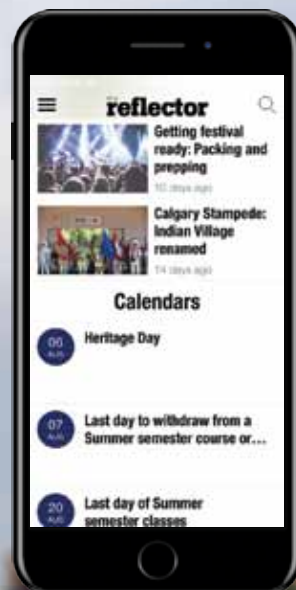
story phase has reached the end of the page. After cashing in on his sweepstakes last season, the entirety of the Golden Knights success is riding on an otherworldly performance by Jack Eichel. Otherworldly and free from injury, mind you.

Yet, it's not just Eichel's health that is a wildcard for the Golden Knights. Captain Mark Stone missed significant time last season after injuring his back and starting goaltender Robin Lehner will miss the entire 2022-23 season after undergoing hip surgery. The slew of long-term injuries, inadequate asset management and the loss of their starting goaltender will presumably leave the Golden Knights out of the playoff picture.



Veterans like Rasmus Andersson can still help lead the team to the playoffs. Photo courtesy of TloP2000/Wikimedia Commons

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UFC 279: The wildest 48 hours in MMA history

Josh Werle
Sports Editor



UFC 279 didn't have a title fight, yet it was still one of the wildest events in company history. Photo courtesy of Andrius Petrucenia/Wikimedia Commons

The world of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is always entertaining. The most notable MMA organization, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) puts on events almost every Saturday of the year. Unlike other major sporting organizations, the UFC doesn't have an offseason. The MMA giant run their events year-round, which means there is rarely ever a lack of content for fans of the sport. Throughout the years there have been a number of backstage brawls, fighters who miss weight and last-minute opponent changes, but these mishaps typically don't occur all at once. Until now.

UFC 279 marked the last fight of superstar Nate Diaz's contract, who stated that he had zero plans of re-signing and wished to try his hand at a different combat sport. Diaz has been a staple of the UFC for 15 years. He has been popular with fans due to his antics both inside and outside the cage, as well as his "gangster" persona.

Diaz won the fifth season of the UFC's Ultimate Fighter reality show in 2007, and has been competing ever since.

For all that he's done for both the sport and the UFC itself, Diaz should have gotten a proper goodbye and faced another legend of the sport, but the organization had other plans. The UFC matched Diaz up with top-five Welterweight contender Khamzat Chimaev, who the oddsmakers gave a 92 per cent chance of defeating Diaz. After 72 hours of turmoil in the final days leading up to the event, it wasn't Chimaev who Diaz was staring at across the cage, it was fellow MMA veteran Tony Ferguson.

The backstage brawl

On Sept. 8, just over 48 hours before the event, a press conference was set to take place which involved the six featured fighters on the card. Diaz, Chimaev, Ferguson, Li Jingliang, Daniel Rodriguez

and Kevin Holland were set to take the stage and answer questions from the media. The original matchups were Diaz vs Chimaev, Ferguson vs Jingliang and Rodriguez vs Holland, but only Rodriguez and Holland actually made it to the stage.

UFC President Dana White announced shortly that he had to cancel the press conference, and that a brawl had broken out backstage involving numerous fighters and their respective teams. Luckily none of the athletes were seriously injured, and the event was not in jeopardy. This was only the tip of the iceberg though, as less than 24 hours later disaster struck again.

The weight miss

Chimaev and Diaz were scheduled to square off in the welterweight division, meaning that you would have to weigh in at no more than 171 pounds the Friday morning before the fight. Usually if a fighter misses their weight by one or two pounds,

they get fined a percentage of their purse and the fight continues as scheduled.

On the morning of Sept. 9, reports emerged that Chimaev was presumably going to miss weight, and it wasn't going to be by a small amount. Chimaev ended up stepping on the scale 7.5 pounds heavier than his contracted weight, and because he was in the main event, this put the entire production at risk of cancellation. Queue the Dana White magic. Some forget that White and his team put on the first sporting event after the initial COVID-19 lockdowns, and he also made use of a private island in the United Arab Emirates so that the UFC could still run events for fighters who lived outside the United States. White answers to nobody, and when it comes to his events he calls the shots.

The switch-up

Holland and Rodriguez, whose fight got finalized three weeks prior to the event, had

their fight set at a catchweight of 180 pounds. This ended up being a saving grace for the event, because one of them could then compete against Chimaev because the weight discrepancy was only a few pounds.

White and his team got to work on the Friday afternoon, and miraculously were able to keep the event intact. In order to do this though, all six of the main fighters would see an opponent change on just over a 24-hour notice. Diaz stayed in the main event, and fought Ferguson, while Chimaev took on Holland. Jingliang was matched up against Rodriguez, who weighed in 10 pounds heavier than him. This was the most confusing of the three matchups, considering the weight discrepancy, it is shocking that the athletic commission allowed it to happen.

In the end, the event was saved, and arguably, the matchups were better than they were before. Diaz got the proper send off he deserved, as he submitted Ferguson in the fourth round of their fight. Chimaev got to settle the bad-blood he had with Holland, easily submitting him in the first round. Jingliang ended up losing a close split-decision to Rodriguez, which some fans were very unhappy about.

Although White and his team deserve some credit for taking a terrible situation and turning it into a better event overall, the fighters are the ones who deserve all of the credit. Without them accepting an opponent change on just over a 24-hour notice, none of this was possible. Styles make fights, and MMA athletes prepare for weeks studying their opponents. Having an opponent change a day before the event is virtually unheard of, let alone having three fights changed on the same card. UFC 279 is an event that will go down in history, and I'm confident that we may never see another scenario quite like this.

Cougars men's soccer team remain unbeaten halfway through season

Josh Werle

Sports Editor



Cougars players celebrate after a hard-fought win. Photo by Josh Werle

The Mount Royal University Cougars men's soccer team has gotten off to a fantastic start to their 2022 campaign. At the time of writing, the team ranks in seventh place in the U SPORTS top-ten overall rankings. This ranking is based on the team's ELO—a system that calculates a rating based on player stats and performance—which is 1652.52. In their divisional rankings, the Cougars sit comfortably in first place of the Canada West Prairie Division. At the time of writing, the Cougars sit at 19 points while their closest competition, the University of Alberta Golden Bears, sit at 13.

The team currently sits at a record of 6-0-1, highlighting how they have been able to achieve all of these accolades during the first half of the

season. At exactly the halfway point, the Cougars remain unbeaten, and will look to continue their hot streak and make a run at a championship. Mohamed El Gandour, the team's leading scorer, continued his scoring streak this past weekend with a goal in each of the squad's games. El Gandour scored the lone goal in the Cougars' 1-0 victory over the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds, and opened the scoring in a 2-0 victory over the Trinity Western Spartans. He holds a five-game scoring streak, and sits at eight goals in seven games played.

The Cougars' success comes not only from incredible offensive output, but also from stellar defense and goalkeeping. Sterling Kerr, the team's tenured goalkeeper, has

only allowed four goals against in seven games this season. With 585 minutes of net time, Kerr has only needed to make 23 saves, highlighting how strong the defensive effort has been thus far.

Overall, the Cougars seem poised to have success in the second half of the season, and are showing no signs of slowing down. Offensively the team is firing on all cylinders, while the defense is shutting down their opponents. If the Cougars' adversaries happen to make it to the net, the goalkeeping has been stellar and the coaching staff has managed every player on the field effectively. After a blazing hot first half, the Cougars should be able to continue pushing and easily hold the top spot in their division over the next seven games.



Cougars coach Ryan Gyaki guiding his team to victory. Photo by Josh Werle



Cougars players discussing their path to victory. Photo by Josh Werle