

**Men's soccer program celebrates
golden weekend
(pg. 16)**

**Students
travel to
Morocco to
study geology
(pg. 2)**

**AI's potential
to save the
world
(pg. 5)**

**Fashion-
forward or
Hypebeast?
(pg. 10)**

Venus in Morocco

Over the summer, students travelled to Morocco for a geology conference but faced financial difficulties

Liam Rockliffe

Staff Writer



Five students from MRU travelled to Morocco over the summer to study geology and represent the university at an international conference. Photo courtesy of Holly Bley

Venus is a fascinating planet. It's a gigantic volcanic structure, which means it is mostly igneous rocks—rocks formed from lava. Venus' composition gives us more information about igneous rocks than we could ever hope to gain from our own planet, due to a very large amount being covered by water and top layers of ground.

Back in June of this year, Katherine Boggs, a professor from Mount Royal University's (MRU) Geology program, brought a group of five students from MRU to Morocco for an international conference. This conference mainly pertained to large igneous provinces and geological dykes (a large slab of rock slicing through another rock) on Venus.

Two of the students, Jerry

Democy and Lovleen Dhami, said each of the students attending the conference had to complete their own research in mapping Venus' geological conditions. Being able to attend the conference was a once in a lifetime opportunity for them to compare notes with other specialists in the field and improve their own research methods.

Of course the trip to Morocco was not strictly business, as the students were able to venture on camel-back through the Moroccan desert, visit coastal towns, and truly experience the immense difference in culture between Canada and Morocco. Dhami's favourite part of the trip was the tour of Essaouira, a coastal town in Morocco. She said this experience changed her life

forever. Democy's favourite part of the trip was the camel expedition, as it was unlike anything any of them had experienced before.

"Best trip of my life"—Dhami

Both students wished they could have stayed longer, but classes and cash are a constant battle for university students.

In a field trip, the students learned about the Berbers, the Indigenous peoples of Morocco and their lasting impression on the country. They also learned about three different main points of the Marrakesh mountains on an incredibly intimidating hike. Collecting geological samples, the students learned about the geological history of Marrakesh,

which relates highly to Venus' geology. The field trip also covered ancient hieroglyphics that are carved into the mountains.

Struggle to finance

At the conference, the students interacted with professors from all over the world, including some professors from Yale University. MRU had the most noticeably young students—being all undergraduates, they made a very strong impression on the other masters and PhD level students, as well as professionals in the field. The trip provided MRU students with the ability to network with upstanding people in the industry.

This trip cost the students between \$4,000 and \$6,000 each, which includes a \$2,200 round trip flight, food, lodging, and extracurricular activities throughout the trip.

Through SAMRU, some students obtained \$700. Boggs managed to obtain \$310 from the Science department. However, it was only available if you were actively a member of the faculty.

Democy received zero funding from the school despite being an MRU student. He also works full-time and therefore did not qualify for any additional funding.

The students also applied through the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists for \$3,000 but received no response. The

group says that they would have used this money for accommodations.

However, by reaching out to the co-head of the International Venus Group, the students were able to find residence in a bungalow for ten dollars per-person per-night, though according to Dhami and Democy's description, the stay was heavily disturbed by peacocks.

Democy states that trips like these are "a must" in the field of geology, to learn about different geological conditions in different parts of the world.

"Having funding specifically for students who wish to participate in international conferences and represent one's academic institutions puts the university's name out there," he said.

Boggs and other faculty fought incredibly hard for the students to receive funding.

With a maximum receivable of \$1,010, as well as being incredibly difficult to receive, MRU covered only 20 percent of the cost, despite the students representing MRU at an academic conference where other prestigious universities and scholars attended.

Additionally, the trip was barely advertised by MRU despite being a considerable endeavour.

Despite the financial struggles, it was a trip everyone will remember forever and will benefit the students and the university for years to come.

Calgary cadets plant 100 trees to memorialize RCAF

James Windler

Staff Writer

This past October, Calgary's Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) cadets planted 100 trees to memorialize the RCAF ahead of their 2024 centennial.

The memorial, which is open to the public, is located in the southwest Calgary community of Garrison Green at 2816 Dallaire Ave. S.W. in AD Ross Park.

The tree planting is part of a Canada-wide initiative to pay respect and memorialize all the people who served in the RCAF. More plantings are scheduled ahead of the 2024 Remembrance Day.

Captain Aaron Niles, strategic planner and public affairs officer for the RCAF 2024 Centennial Team spoke on the inspiration of the Canada-wide tree plantings.

"This started when I was reading the paper and saw an article talking about Trees for Life where they planted over two million trees across communities across the highest heroes, each one in commemoration of a person who served Canada since Confederation," said Niles.

"When I saw that story, I was inspired. I thought it'd be really awesome to get the centennial team to do something similar to commemorate and celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force."

Once Niles had an idea of what his vision for the tree planting would look like he reached out to Trees for Life with his pitch.

The organization loved the idea and after further discussions, a plan was put in motion to start planting 100 trees at locations all across Canada.

Niles, who's in charge

of coordinating the tree planting all across the country gave Calgary a shoutout in particular for their willingness to get involved right from the start.

"I've been quite impressed with the level of support that we've been getting from cities and communities like Calgary specifically," said Niles.

"I remember having a phone call with them and then a month later they came back and were like, 'Yep we love the idea, we bought the trees, picked a perfect park for you that has historical relevance to the Royal Canadian Air Force, so whenever you guys are ready to go, we can start planting.'"

Remembrance Day being forgotten?

The tree planting across

Canada is one of the many things the centennial team has planned ahead of Remembrance Day 2024.

They'll be hard at work trying to get as many Canadians involved as possible, as the country has seen a significant decrease in Remembrance Day involvement in recent years.

A survey titled "Remembrance Day 2020: Another Casualty of COVID-19?" was done by Ipsos and it looked at the impact COVID-19 had on Remembrance Day.

In the survey, it was found that 71 per cent of Canadians intended to wear poppies, down 14 per cent from 2019. Additionally, only 28 per cent planned to attend a Remembrance Day ceremony, down 13 per cent from 2019.

Canadians' knowledge of the history involving the

Canadian military was also discussed in the survey.

It was found that only 59 per cent of Canadians think they know more about Canadian military history than American military history, which is down eight per cent from the year before. Additionally, 71 per cent of Canadians believe Remembrance Day will become smaller as time progresses.

With the centennial nearing, Niles hopes that Canadians will be able to come together to buck the trend of fewer and fewer people getting involved with Remembrance Day activities.

"I would encourage the public, regardless of age, to participate in the meaningful initiatives towards the centennial," said Niles.

He recommends attending events such as airshows,

joining the eSports led video game initiative by the RCAF game force, and following the RCAF on social media for current information.

Lastly, Niles recognizes all the hard work that's being done across the country and in Calgary, saying that he was moved with all the people that chipped in to make Remembrance Day as great as possible.

"I want to reiterate my gratitude and thanks to the cadets and the City of Calgary for supporting this project," said Niles. "By planting these trees we're not only celebrating the past but also growing a better future for all."

"I hope that we're able to plant more trees going forward so we can help to create a better, more sustainable future of Canada that everyone can enjoy."



100 trees were planted in AD Ross Park as a greater Canadian wide initiative to memorialize the RCAF. Photo by James Windler

THE REFLECTOR

Issue 5, Volume 62

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Publishing Editor: Mikaela Delos Santos**Managing Editor:** Ivar Bergs**News Editor:** Julie Patton**Features Editor:** Emma Duke**Arts Editor:** Isabella West**Sports Editor:** Matthew DeMille**Photo Editor:** Megan Creig**Layout Editor:** Emily Kirsch**Web Editor:** Jed Mabazza**CONTRIBUTORS:** Bella Coco, Noel Ormita, Noah Wilson, Iyan Velji**STAFF WRITERS:** Liam Rockliffe, James Windler, Gurleen Jassal, Zach Payne, Zafir Nagji**Cover:** Megan Creig

No More Pipelines Act: Here's what it means

Bella Coco

Contributor

On Friday, Oct. 13, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government's impact assessment law (also known as the *Impact Assessment Act*) for major project approvals is unconstitutional. The ruling brought Alberta a huge victory for projects such as the coal mines and the oil sands after years of fighting and unrest from the Alberta government and its residents.

What is the Impact Assessment Act?

The act, also well known as Bill C-69 or the "No More Pipelines Act"—infamously dubbed by former Alberta premier Jason Kenney—is a legislative body that allows the Government of Canada to process the assessment and the impacts of large designated projects.

Projects that require assessment are large endeavours, such as pipelines, mines, highways, or nuclear facilities to name a few. Out of the 32 projects in the assessment process, 20 are under assessment by the old *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) legislation.

On Oct. 13, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Arif Virani, and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, both stated their acceptance and respect for the Supreme Court's decision.

Additionally, they both committed to address the projects affected by the ruling, and to provide guidance to the Indigenous partners involved.

In a news release by the Government of Canada on Oct. 26, Guilbeault announced guidance by the Canadian government on the

interim work on Bill C-69.

"The Supreme Court of Canada's opinion on impact assessment means we now have clarity to better align the IAA to areas of federal jurisdiction while continuing to protect the environment," Guilbeault wrote. "The Government of Canada is doing its part and looks to the provincial governments to do theirs, so we can work together to protect the environment and advance sustainable development in Canada in the spirit of cooperative federalism."

What does this mean for Alberta?

Alberta has been at odds with the federal government long before the *Impact Assessment Act*. The topic of calls for climate action has been a controversial topic in Alberta as the majority of the province's wealth is from the oil and gas industry.

At a news conference following the ruling, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith celebrated Alberta's win from the Supreme Court decision.

"We are extremely pleased with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision confirming the unconstitutionality of the federal government's destructive *Impact Assessment Act*," Smith said.

In addition, Smith stated how the *Impact Assessment Act* was responsible for Alberta losing billions of dollars in multiple sectors of the economy.

"Today's ruling represents an opportunity for all provinces to stop that bleeding, rebuild investor confidence, and track those jobs back into our economies," Smith said.



Alberta has fought against the Impact Assessment Act since 2019, and now celebrates victory with the Supreme Court Ruling. Photo courtesy of Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press

"Today I am pleased to say Alberta is once again open for business."

For Alberta, the No More Pipelines battle was about money just as much as it was about dominion.

According to Canada Supreme Court Judgements, classifying the legislation was a challenge as the "environment is not a head of power." The Canada Supreme Court Judgements touched on the importance of environmental protection, and while Parliament has the power to step in to preserve protection, Parliament also "has the duty to act within the...framework laid out in the Constitution."

After review of the legislation, five out of the seven judges found the act unconstitutional.

What exactly makes the Impact Assessment Act unconstitutional?

According to an opinion written by Chief Justice Richard Wagner—who wrote for the majority—the *Impact Assessment Act* sought to "regulate activities within provincial jurisdiction," deeming the act unconstitutional.

The "special projects" aspect of the act remained unbalanced, as federal jurisdiction for said projects were not regulated.

"Environmental protection remains one of today's most pressing challenges. To meet this challenge, Parliament has the power to enact a scheme of environmental assessment," Wagner wrote. "Parliament also has the duty, however, to act within the enduring division of powers framework laid out in the Constitution."

Wagner wrote that both levels of government—provincial and federal—can provide leadership for environmental protection.

The Reflector, with an on- and off-campus circulation of 5,000, is the independent voice of the students of Mount Royal University. It is published fortnightly during the academic year (Sept. to April).

The Reflector is editorially autonomous and financially independent from all other governing bodies at Mount Royal University.

The Reflector welcomes newsworthy submissions from all students and community members. While the right of editorial comment is reserved for editors of The Reflector, opinion pieces may be submitted as letters to the editor, and may be published on the editorial page as such. The Reflector reserves the right not to publish submissions deemed by the Publishing Editor to be offensive.

Complaints arising from the content of the paper should be directed to the Ombudsboard. This board has been established as a mediator between the Reflector Publications Society staff and its readership.

All decisions of the Ombudsboard are final and binding on both parties. Letters to the Ombudsboard must be sent in confidence, care of the Reflector Publications Society, to the Reflector Publications Society office.

Submissions and letters to the editor should be a maximum of 500 words, typed, double-spaced, and contain the writer's name and phone number. No unsigned letters will be published. Only in exceptional cases, at the discretion of the Publishing Editor, will writers' names be withheld. The Reflector reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity.

Contents are copyright © 2023. No material may be reproduced without express written consent.

All opinions contained within this paper are those of the individual authors, and not necessarily those of the Reflector Publications Society. For more information, contact The Reflector office at:

the reflector

Wyckham House
Mount Royal University
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6

All depts.: 403.440.6268

Fax: 403.440.6762

TheReflector@TheReflector.ca

How AI could change the world

Iyan Velji

Contributor

When it comes to artificial intelligence or AI, many people are only familiar with OpenAI's massively popular chatbot, ChatGPT, or perhaps Google's AI chatbot Bard. Despite this, AI's capabilities can go far beyond suggesting recipes, writing code and finishing university essays. Researchers, companies, and organizations have been utilizing the burgeoning technology to advance medicine, clean up the planet and even explore the cosmos.

One potential major application of artificial intelligence is in cancer research.

Research from May of this year led by the Harvard Medical School and the University of Copenhagen found that an AI algorithm could detect pancreatic cancer up to three years before diagnosis at a rate more accurate than previous population-wide estimates. This could eventually lead to better detection and earlier treatment which could potentially save lives.

In August 2023, a Swedish study found that when AI systems were used alongside human radiologists, they detected breast cancer at a rate 20 per cent higher than humans working alone.

Beyond merely detecting cancer, AI could play a pivotal role in curing the currently incurable disease.

At the University of Toronto, researchers were able to use Google Deep Mind's AlphaFold AI software to discover a remedy for a common type of liver cancer in just 30 days.

A separate study

spearheaded by researchers at the University of California San Francisco and IBM found that AI can help guide T Cells, a type of white blood cells, in seeking out and destroying harmful cancer cells without stopping. In the future, this type of technology could make regenerative medicine, a field focused on the body healing itself, a more viable possibility.

It's not just cancer that AI can assist in curing.

There is promising research in AI's ability to detect Alzheimer's, according to the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, researchers from the New York Stem Cell Foundation and Google Research found that AI can distinguish between healthy and unhealthy cells with Parkinson's disease.

In addition to saving human lives, artificial intelligence could play an instrumental role in saving the planet.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, renewable energy solutions can provide 90 per cent of the carbon dioxide emissions reductions necessary to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Luckily, AI can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of renewable energy solutions to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, help identify ideal sites, forecast weather changes and reduce the likelihood of outages and blackouts.

AI can also be utilized to help improve and optimize the development of new solar technologies, according to

researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University.

A final noteworthy domain where AI is becoming increasingly relevant is the field of astronomy.

AI has the potential to play a crucial role in safeguarding the Earth from asteroid threats. In 2022, an AI asteroid discovery algorithm known as Heliolinc3D was able to identify an asteroid expected to approach Earth within a distance of 225,000 kilometers. Researchers plan to use the algorithm to look for thousands of potentially dangerous asteroids at the Vera C. Rubin Observatory.

Beyond assisting humans with simple observation of the night sky, AI could become instrumental in helping us physically explore the cosmos.

Earlier this year, NASA was able to utilize commercially available Generative AI software to design lightweight spaceship components that study space, devices that examine the Earth's atmosphere, space telescopes and even Mars sample missions.

AI can also provide emotional companionship to space explorers as they journey to the moon, Mars, and beyond. In 2018, Airbus and IBM partnered with the European Space Agency to create an AI companion named CIMON for astronauts on the International Space Station.

Even though AI has shown great promise in fields as varied as cancer treatment to exploring the cosmos, it remains imperative to properly regulate the

technology to ensure that it is used for beneficial purposes.

According to IBM, AI must be developed with three fundamental principles in mind: respect for individuals working with AI, ensuring AI is used for good instead of harm and fair distribution of the technology among all people.

On Aug. 28, 2023, the US Military announced a new initiative called "Replicator" that aims to deploy thousands of AI drone ships, planes, ground vehicles and other weapons in less than two years. The United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross have called for world leaders to set clear restrictions on autonomous weapons systems before

2026.

Another frightening use of AI has been in the creation of revenge and child pornography. In August 2023, the top prosecutors in all 50 American states urged Congress to study how AI could be used to exploit children and craft the necessary legislation to guard against it, according to *AP News*.

Finally, it will be crucial to ensure that artificially intelligent systems do not perpetuate harmful human biases such as racism and sexism.

If AI is developed responsibly and with good intentions in mind, it might just prove to be a game changer for humanity, the world and beyond.



Space exploration is becoming easier with AI technology. Photo courtesy of Iyan Velji, generated by AI platform DALL-E 3

MRU's reading week

Liam Rockliffe

Staff Writer

Mount Royal University (MRU) hosts its reading week over Canadian Thanksgiving weekend. MRU was the first Albertan institution to have a reading week, with SAMRU petitioning for it since 2009—which got us reading day—and eventually in 2017, our fully fledged reading week.

Although starting the trend of reading weeks in Alberta, MRU's reading week differs from other institutions' reading weeks by a considerable margin. One whole month from Thanksgiving, the University of Calgary's (U of C) reading week

will be happening this Remembrance Day until Nov. 18.

Reading week is often a fiery topic of conversation for MRU students, many arguing that it takes place too early. I talked to SAMRU's REC VP Academic and current MRU student, Tala Abu Hayyaneh regarding the placement of MRU's reading week.

An early decision

Reading week at its core is a time to set yourself up for success before the onslaught of midterms and to refer yourself to student support—before it's too late. The academic

schedule isn't something that's created overnight and everyone behind the scenes has put serious thought into the schedule. The October reading week fits better into the instructional days required by the university programs, as seen by the U of C. Having their reading week during November extends the final exam period into our precious winter holidays.

Being a student herself, Abu Hayyaneh understands both sides of the reading week debate. Having reading week early lets the students plan and manage time effectively; the alternative for her is a break

right in the middle of the stress and chaos, where your whole break either goes to studying—or prioritising your mental health. If the fall reading week was placed in November, it would be aligned with the add/drop deadline. This could affect decision making, as well as group work—which is common in November.

Abu Hayyaneh states that comparing MRU to the U of C does MRU an injustice as they are not in the same position. As a small independent university, MRU has the ability to not follow the status quo.

An argument for the alignment of reading weeks

between MRU and the U of C is that students with friends between the two universities could align their time to go on trips, study together, and most importantly, party. But with the reading week being during heavy exam times, could friends still hang out? Or would everyone be too burdened with exams and papers?

Perhaps the U of C should be the one to change their reading week to align with MRU's schedule.

To provide your thoughts on MRU's reading week schedule, email me at lrock248@mtroyal.ca



Show us your artwork and win \$1,000!

What could healthcare look like in your rural community in 20 years?

If you or your family are from Rural Alberta, the Future of Medicine Art Contest invites you to share your perspective through artwork for the chance to make a difference, be published, and win \$1,000!

Contest open: Oct 10 to Dec 1, 2023

fomacalberta.ca

FoMAC
FUTURE OF MEDICINE ART CONTEST

Submission deadline: **December 1, 2023**

A night full of MRU Alumni stars

Noel Ormita

Contributor

The annual Outstanding Alumni Awards recognized seven alumni who continue to showcase the spirit of Mount Royal University (MRU) beyond campus grounds through their professional careers and work in the community.

Tia Hagen, president of MRU Alumni Association, described this year's recipients as engaging and inspirational advocates. She added why it's important to continue to recognize alumni success.

"These recognitions go beyond mere accolades; they serve as inspiration for current students who see that those who came before them have achieved remarkable success and have made a positive impact," Hagen said. "Recognizing alumni deepens our relationships and keeps us connected to one another."

Beginning with different

The night started more inspirational than you would expect. Instead of a music or dance performance, the reception was met with spoken word. The night began with a performance from Calgary's sixth poet laureate, Wakefield Brewster, who moved the audience with his beautifully crafted narration "The Difference".

'In our world, we are all often led by those with vision. Attempting and assisting one and all of us to see a combination of clairvoyance and crystal clarity,' he said. 'For it is who you are that shows us all whom we may be.'

The ambient lighting and elegant furniture set up added to the energy of the room full of gratitude and pride.



Steve Kootenay-Jobin receiving the Outstanding Alumni Award on Nov. 2 at Ross Glen Hall. Photo by Noel Ormita

A night to remember

Steve Kootenay-Jobin, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 2015 and a Liberal Arts and Science diploma in 2011 from MRU, continued his connection with the university working as an Indigenous housing and events coordinator with the Iniskim Centre.

Tom Buchanan, who nominated Kootenay-Jobin for the award, praised the awardee's commitment and community involvement throughout the years.

"Steve is a relentless advocate for Indigenous students as he is deeply devoted to his community and his professional work. This bridge has been critical for Indigenous," Buchanan said.

Deep roots with MRU campus

Kootenay-Jobin has his long-time connection to

MRU, dating back to when the institution was still Mount Royal College and his mother would bring him and his siblings on campus as she attended classes in the social work program.

"When there was no babysitter for my brothers and I, we used to come to campus and wait outside in the hall while my mom attended class," he said. "When it was nice out, we would go and play around the pond."

After a lack of confidence academically and financial barriers, Kootenay-Jobin believed his post-secondary journey would be cut short after returning in 2007. Regaining confidence through completing prerequisites in the Aboriginal Education Program and with the institutional transition of Mount Royal from a college to a university, he knew the next step after receiving a certificate was a diploma and then a degree.

"I knew this was an

investment in my future. I applied with confidence and my last two years as a student on campus were some of the best years of my life," he said.

Meaningful work on campus

During his last semester in the sociology program in 2014, Kootenay-Jobin joined the Iniskim Centre.

"This year is historic as this is when the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released and MRU began the work towards a path of decolonization and Indigenous on campus," said the award recipient.

"I felt like the institution aligned with my vision of a better future. A more equitable future that focused on truth, healing and creating equitable opportunities for Indigenous Peoples."

Kootenay-Jobin left MRU to lead the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology's (SAIT) Chinook Lodge as

manager of Indigenous student supports. But he has always considered this campus as his home and is open to return to MRU again one day as an Elder in residence.

Kootenay-Jobin is the first Stoney Nakoda recipient of the award but he hopes his story inspires other Indigenous youth to pursue post-secondary education.

"I truly believe that education is healing and that it is a tool that no one can ever take away from you."

Shine bright like a diamond

The MRU community continues to grow every year with new and graduating students who keep a life-long connection to the campus outside of their classrooms.

"Remember that you always belong here," Hagen said. "You may be crossing the stage and stepping into the next chapter of your life, but at any time, you can get reconnected to the university."

Kootenay-Jobin says there's no one degree that will gain you recognition or success in the future.

"We are all diverse individuals with unique histories and experiences that when combined with education gives us the ability to develop skills and critically think, whether that is being innovative or solving problems," he said.

Attending the awards night and listening to the recipients as they share their experiences, I am reminded about what it takes to be a leader in my chosen field and in the community.

"Passion is the biggest exemplar of a successful person," Kootenay-Jobin said.

YOUR STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

CULTURES
OF MRU

November Programming



Scan the QR code or
visit **samru.ca/cultures**
to view the full schedule.

Transgender Day
of Remembrance

Join SAMRU in honouring the lives of transgender and two-spirit individuals who were lost this past year to anti-transgender violence.

November 20, 2023

11 am – 2 pm

Memorial space located
in the Gallery (Z224)

12 pm

Ceremony on the second
floor of Wyckham House



fresh routes

mobile

grocery
storeBring your
own bag!

Mondays, 11 am – 1 pm*

*No markets during Reading Break, exams, or holidays.

Wyckham House
Food Court



samru.ca/events



@samrubuzz

samru.ca

An evening you won't forget with Dermot Kennedy

Noel Ormita

Contributor

Whether you are a long-time fan or a new one, you could sing along to at least more than one Dermot Kennedy song. The concert, held at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Oct. 21, began with two opening acts, Edmonton-based folk singer Martin Kerr and indie pop band, Valley.

Around the same time last year, Kennedy was the opening act for Shawn Mendes' Wonder Tour in Calgary where he sang "Kiss Me" and "Something to

Someone" as a sneak peek to the *Sonder* album launch.

His setlist began with "Blossom," which according to Kennedy, is a song about being scared of future goodbyes. The *Sonder* album, released in November 2022, highlights the artist's vulnerability and mastery of his emotions captured through words.

"This album is about the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own," Kennedy said at the

Calgary concert.

The selected tracks were diverse, from hit songs like "Power Over Me" which has more than 350 million streams on Spotify to one of his newer songs "Any Love" which has Kennedy's favourite lyric, "Someone I was seen by, someone who was so mine."

Highlight of the night

In the second half of the night, he sat down with a

keyboard and talked to the audience. It was like a one-on-one conversation, where even though you may be in the worst seats in the house, you can still imagine him talking right to you.

"Close your eyes or don't close your eyes but throughout this song just relive your best day for me," Kennedy said as he sang his song "Rome." The crowd was silent for a moment as he sang the lyrics, 'I just want to be there again.'

It was followed by a two-minute applause and fans stomping on the stands of the Saddledome after he performed "Innocence and Sadness."

My two cents on a heartfelt night

Kennedy's songs and energy remind me of artists like John Legend, Adele and Sam Smith. Every word he sings is intentional and helps you reveal parts of your soul that for a long time, haven't had a voice.

This was my third time seeing him perform. The first time I discovered him, he opened for Shawn Mendes in Calgary. His ability to

engage with his audience doesn't need a world-class production. In fact, he wore a plain black shirt and pants playing his guitar with no theatrics on stage. It's been a long time since an artist gave me chills when I saw them perform—he did it the first time, a second time in Vancouver, and again in Calgary.

My favourite track from this album is "Better Days" because it gives you a dose of hopefulness during dark moments in life. Whether you're having a rough day, grieving a loss and wanting to have those Drake moments, or you feel confident and want to conquer the world with cautious optimism, there's a soothing sense of relatability in his songs.

Dermot Kennedy displays a melancholic, raw and raspy tone that swallows your sadness and transforms it into a sweet tune. It's a type of authenticity and powerful storytelling that has been lacking in the music industry for a long time.

The *Sonder* Tour heads to Australia and New Zealand before drawing the curtain in Europe in 2024.



Dermot Kennedy is an Irish singer-songwriter best known for singles like "Outnumbered," "Power Over Me" and "Giants." Photo courtesy of Live Nation

OUT'N ABOUT

ARF'S Holiday Fundraiser

The Alberta Animal Rescue Foundation is hosting a pet gear sale, bake sale, online auction and holiday pet photos on Nov. 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at their facility. Check out their Facebook for more information.

Remembrance Day Service

The Military Museum will be hosting a Remembrance Day service on Nov. 11 at 10:30 a.m. For those unable to attend in person, the service will be live-streamed on the Military Museum's Facebook page beginning at 10:20 a.m.

Headphone Disco

Tailor your night out with the option of swapping between two live DJs at SAMRU's silent disco party. This event is on Nov. 16 at West Gate Social from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. MRU students can RSVP now on the SAMRU website.

The Calgary European Film Festival

With more than 25 films from numerous European countries, this film festival comes to Calgary's Globe Cinema from Nov. 3 to 12. Tickets available at calgaryeuropeanfilmfestival.ca.

Is it rap merch or a luxury brand?

Are your OVO's really hype, or are you just a Drake fan?

Mikaela Delos Santos

Publishing Editor

At what point are certain rapper brands considered luxury? Yeezy's, October's Very Own (OVO), Golf Wang—is it rapper merch, or is it an actual brand?

These were some of the questions I asked myself as I observed the people at the OVO warehouse sale in Calgary.

If you aren't familiar with OVO, it's a Toronto-based brand by artist Drake. I won't lie, I had been rolling my eyes from the very moment I stepped foot inside the warehouse where the sale was held.

I had to go through three different security checkpoints before actually getting in. In the first line they asked me if I was wearing OVO merch, the second one was a coat check, which is actually convenient, but it was the third one that really annoyed me. I had to put my phone in a little gray bag that would make it impossible for me to use while I shopped around.

Come on. How conceited of a brand can you be that a phone is such a threat for your leftover clothes no one wanted to pay full price for?

Anyway, I do have to state that this event is not an exclusive OVO pop up. It was held by an event management company.

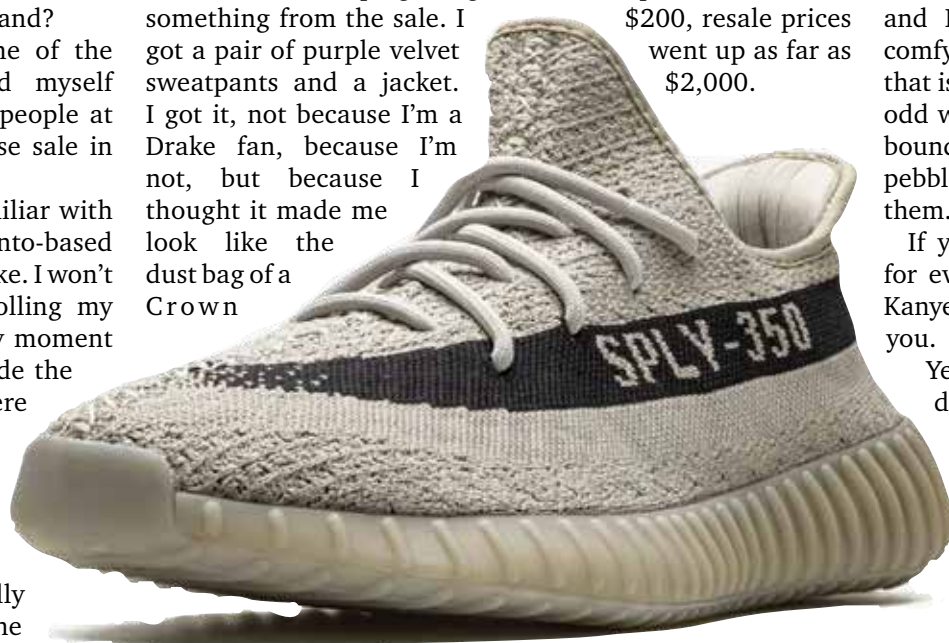
Maybe it's them I should criticize, but overall, OVO just tries way too hard to be lavish. It's easy to see through their ego and it bothers me how many people just accept it. \$170 for a hoodie with a little owl label! My set of Costco hoodie and sweatpants feels just as comfortable for half the price. And everyone knows I'm a Costco member

too. A much better flex than being a Drake fan, am I right?

I will let you know though that I ended up getting something from the sale. I got a pair of purple velvet sweatpants and a jacket. I got it, not because I'm a Drake fan, because I'm not, but because I thought it made me look like the dust bag of a Crown

and was boosted by ribbed rubber for soles.

According to *HighSnobiety*, while its retail price was around \$200, resale prices went up as far as \$2,000.



In 2020, the brand released the Foam Runners—an equivalent to Crocs.

According to *Fast Company*, the alien-like

foam abstraction is made with environmentally friendly algae. I personally knew someone who owned the abominations of a shoe, and I won't lie, it's kinda comfy. If you're standing still that is. I don't know if it's my odd walking gait, but you're bound to trip and collect pebbles at your toes wearing them.

If you wear and go crazy for every Yeezy release and Kanye spiels, I'm worried for you.

Yeezy consumers are driven by Kanye's cult of personality—Yeezy is also just expensive rap merch.

Back in middle school, the popular kids at my school wore this turquoise blue shirt that said 'GOLF' on them. I thought it was a cool shirt, but I never knew what was so special about it. It wasn't until I discovered Tyler the Creator that I realized it's

his fashion brand.

I actually like GOLF. There's a uniqueness that doesn't feel like bragging but rather, a genuine showcase of identity.

It's quirky, colourful, and fun—just like Tyler and his audience. Some of his apparel does go for \$150, but it's definitely better than paying for a simple hoodie with a tiny logo. GOLF also has a good balance of eccentric wearability. You can pair it with pretty much anything you have in your closet.

Not gonna lie, GOLF had its run. I don't really see anyone past middle school wearing GOLF. What I really like about the brand is that it can be independent of its own identity even without Tyler the Creator.

So, I can say that GOLF is an actual brand and not just expensive rap merch. It just so happens that a rapper started it.



Kanye West first released Adidas Yeezy sneakers in 2015, followed shortly by the mega-popular Yeezy Boost 350 V2 later that same year. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Royal Whisky. I thought it would be funny to go as that for Halloween. In my opinion, OVO is pretty gag material.

Overall, OVO as a brand is for wannabe Drake's. The price and quality ratio reminds me of Toronto's housing market—really overpriced for the bare minimum.

Although, OVO is good to wear to trick people into thinking you're not from Alberta. It's also good to mention that Drake's label is also named October's Very Own. Hence, my take? OVO is just overpriced rap merch.

We all know Kanye, a musical genius turned... I don't even know. Aside from his shenanigans, he's also known for his brand Yeezy. I remember how everyone went crazy for the Yeezy Boost 350 V1, released back in 2015. It was fashion forward—literally. Its silhouette slanted forward

A creative way for action

Gurleen Jassal

Staff Writer

A production that is coming to Calgary aims to raise awareness and spark discussion about the pressing issues surrounding climate change and is an essential component of the Climate Change Theatre Action.

All Good Things Must Begin is a collaborative piece between Downstage and the Immigrant Council of Arts Innovation. This provocative performance will hit Calgary from Nov. 17 to 19 at the Motel Theatre, Arts Commons.

The production is a selection of short plays that were inspired by American science fiction writer, Octavia Butler, in her journal entries in “All Good Things Must Begin.”

Through its gripping plot and engrossing narrative, the production seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the environmental concerns we face and the urgent need for cooperative efforts. The play encourages environmental stewardship and sustainable habits in an attempt to motivate audiences to take meaningful action toward mitigating the consequences of climate change and safeguarding our planet for future generations.

Climate Change Theatre Action launched in 2015 as a global festival showcasing short plays about the climate crisis.

Iranian artist and co-director of the play Saeid Asgarian hopes to use art as an outlet for spreading his message. Asgarian is passionate about spreading awareness and wants to use the medium of art to convey how urgent it is to combat climate change. In addition to highlighting the transformational power of

art in igniting important debates about sustainability and the global climate catastrophe, Asgarian’s artistic vision captures the spirit of collaborative action.

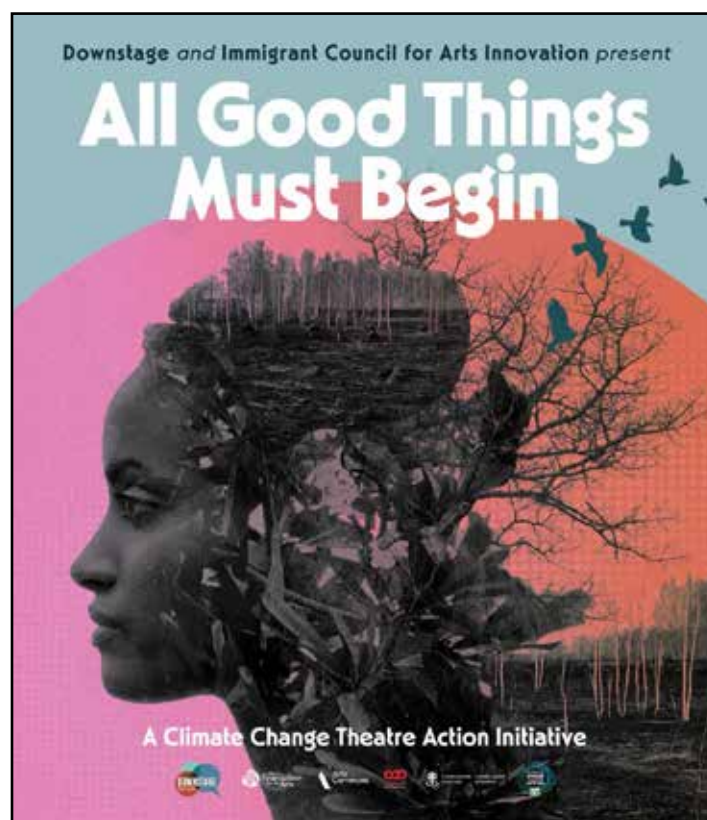
“All of this is about climate action. I believe it’s a really important issue for our society. I also think this project can help our society to have more awareness about this [climate change] issue and its effect on our nature and our working environment,” explained Asgarian.

This play is split into two separate parts, each providing the audience with a different kind of interaction. While the second section promotes active engagement and creates a dynamic interplay between the audience and

the production, the first part offers an immersive artistic performance that enables viewers to immerse themselves in a thought-provoking tale. By using this dual structure, the play enriches the entire experience and amplifies the impact of the climate change message while also captivating the audience with its artistic expression and fostering a deeper connection and debate.

All Good Things Must Begin hopes to leave a positive impact on viewers, creating a helping hand on the climate crisis that they are facing today. A creative way of a serious topic hopes to leave a lingering impact on viewers.

Tickets are on sale now on the Arts Commons website.



***All Good Things Must Begin* is a selection of short plays, inspired by science fiction writer, Octavia Butler. Photo courtesy of Arts Commons**



While *1989*, the album, not the year, has been viral since its release in 2014, Taylor Swift has aimed even higher with her re-record of the most-awarded pop album in history. With the launch of *1989 (Taylor's Version)*, I was delighted with the improvement in production and vocals. After nine years, Swift’s differences in the original tracks of the re-record are loud, playful, and in your face. However, a fan favorite from *1989*, “Style,” was the most disappointing track on the record. The intro, which contributed to its popularity and love from the fans, was arguably butchered out of style. What was an iconic guitar intro is now painfully electric and

bass boosted to the moon and to Saturn. But aside from the change that angered an entire fanbase, the vault tracks truly put *1989 (Taylor's Version)* above all of her released re-records. Upbeat tracks like “Now That We Don’t Talk” and “Is It Over Now?” had me dancing and trying to pretend that the break-up lyrics weren’t painful to hear, while the lovely, dreamy sound of “Slut!” was a pleasant surprise of a love song, where Swift claims her devotion for an old flame. All in all, I found *1989 (Taylor's Version)* to be a national treasure and beyond my wildest dreams.

—Bella Coco



If Olivia Rodrigo’s debut album, *SOUR*, was an album of heartbreak and mourning, then *GUTS* is an album of freedom and relatability. Rodrigo swapped the slow, sad, lovesick anthems for loud, honest and charmingly liberated ballads. Starting out with a bang, Rodrigo’s opening track, “all american bitch,” is a refreshingly pop-punk masterpiece that expertly shines a light on simply being a girl and the box that comes with it. The record’s first hit single, while not a personal favorite, “vampire” had the devastated feel of “driver’s license” and the anger of “brutal” and “good 4 u,” all hit tracks from *SOUR*. However,

the track felt like a waste of a single, where songs like “ballad of a homeschooled girl” and “bad idea right?” had the potential to go even farther on the charts and through the hearts of fans. Each song from the *GUTS* album was meant to be sung or screamed, which further cements Rodrigo’s spotlight on A-list pop. While *SOUR* paved the way for the young and up-and-coming pop star, *GUTS* secured her title as the newest, relatable pop princess with her clever lyricism and satisfying pop songs.

—Bella Coco

De-influencing from trends

Mikaela Delos Santos

Publishing Editor



At 8:30 on a Monday, I found myself zoning out in class, staring too intently at my Yeti tumbler. It was a big cup in this ugly navy colour. My parents got it as a little freebie with one of their purchases and they thought I might want it, which of course I did.

As I looked around in class, I realized that clearly, I was a trend too late. Everyone else had big white Stanley tumblers and it got me thinking. For some reason, so many people fuss about the vessel that stores their water or coffee.

I'm glad to say that I haven't been fazed by the water bottle trends. Think of it this way,

the steel and the packaging of these different brands could all come from the same manufacturers. You're paying \$50 for an original when you could find a dupe for half the price at Marshalls or Winners. In three to five years, will this still be trendy? Will you have space for all of these accumulated products in the long term? These considerations don't just apply for water bottles but they also apply to every 'trendy' product that TikTok and Instagram persuades you to buy.

This is prominent in the beauty community. Pre-TikTok, beauty YouTubers were a crazy force in pushing out products to their fans. It was riddled with so

much competition that it had constant drama in the industry. More often than not, the YouTubers themselves were the ones who brought the theatrics.

Now, the TikTok beauty community has made its own reputation in promoting products. Back in the summer of 2023, TikTok influencer Mikayla Nogueira received backlash for giving fake reviews and not disclosing ads on her videos. This led to a lack of trust within the community and target audiences.

In fact, known YouTuber, Manny MUA reveals the tactics used within the beauty community. Apparently, if a TikTok influencer is too overly positive with their reviews, it is very likely that they are

trying to garner a brand's attention so that the brand will 'buy' their video to turn into a paid sponsorship. If you were to dive into most of these TikTok influencer's videos, some of them actually have videos on their account of products that they previously reviewed in a negative light, while currently endorsing. After finding this out, a lot of people have concluded that influencers are more likely to do so because their video hasn't been 'bought.'

But at the end of the day, products, brands and marketers are just going with their main goal of making a profit. It is up to the consumer to be wise and cautious with the brands they buy and the influencers they follow.



@samrubuzz

samru.ca

November 16
8 pm at West Gate Social

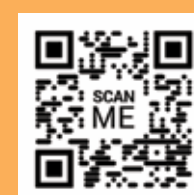
**Headphone
Disco**

**FREE EVENT,
HEADPHONES
PROVIDED!**

**CHOOSE FROM
2 AMAZING DJS
ALL NIGHT LONG**



All Ages
Food & Drink
**RSVP to secure
your spot**
(MRU students only)



18+ gov't issued ID required for bar service.
Please do not drink and drive.

samru.ca/events

The bipolarity of the Calgary Flames

Zach Payne
Staff Writer

To say the Calgary Flames have had a rough opening month of the season is putting things mildly. Instead, they have quite literally been one of the worst teams in the NHL since the start of this season's campaign.

Following their Oct. 29 loss to the Edmonton Oilers at the 2023 Heritage Classic, the Flames sat second to last in the league with only the San Jose Sharks having a worse record than them. For reference, at the time of writing this article the Sharks have a winless record of 0-9-1.

Yet, despite the terrible start, the numbers suggest the Flames have actually been a somewhat solid team when it comes to the underlying statistics. Sitting in the middle of the pack in most major statistical categories, the Flames should—in theory—be a more consistent and stronger club to face.

So, what gives?

What is going wrong for the Flames right now, and, more importantly, is this a fixable issue?

Starting with the problem itself, we first have to examine the Flames in all facets of the game: five-on-five, special teams and goaltending.

With the majority of games being played at even strength, five-on-five is the most crucial area of the

game. So, naturally, that is the area you want a team to play their best hockey at.

So far this season, the Flames are eighth in the NHL in shot attempt percentage (54.14 per cent), 12th in expected goals for percentage (51.57 per cent) and 14th in high-danger chance percentage (52.2 per cent). Succeeding in these categories typically reflects teams that do a good job of controlling play while at five-on-five.

The fact that the Flames are in the top half of the NHL in all three impressions, signals that they are a better team than their recent results suggest. But, despite having solid control play analytics, the Flames sit in the 23rd spot in goals (12) and are tied for last in goals against at even strength (24).

Usually, this kind of disparity means one of two things: either the shooting talent is not capitalizing on chances or goaltending is holding a team back.

For the Flames, it's been both.

The hefty problem for Calgary so far, is that they aren't getting enough routine saves from their netminders. Flames goalies have the lowest medium and low-danger save percentages (74.55 and 93.24 per cent, respectively) in the NHL. Meaning, too many low-quality looks are finding

their way to the back of the net.

Yet, while the Flames struggle to get routine saves, Jacob Markstrom has also been one of the best goalies against high-quality looks.

It's a truly perplexing case. A team that is getting good goaltending is also a team not getting enough routine saves.

That being said, this is not a back breaking issue. Yes, it's a concern, but the goaltending 'voodoo' haunting the Flames is not alone responsible for the poor start.

So, what else is there?

Quite frankly, the lack of an ability to score in any capacity.

Calgary currently sits 29th in the league in scoring, notching a measly 2.13 goals per game. The Flames also rank 31st in shooting percentage, with only 6.7 per cent of their shots hitting the back of the net.

Unlike the goaltending issues though, there is a very clear answer to this problem. The Flames are not getting to the dangerous areas of the ice enough.

Per the new NHL EDGE player and puck tracking data site, the Flames are shooting way too much from the perimeter and not nearly enough from the low slot and around the net.

The Flames' style of play

still reflects that of former bench boss Darryl Sutter and his out-of-date coaching methods—a volume-based offensive approach of shooting as much as possible and trying to take advantage of rebounds and traffic in front.

C'mon, Calgary. It's no longer 2004.

Calgary's offensive approach represents a bygone era of pounding the puck on net from the point. That brand of hockey quite simply does not work anymore. Scoring around the league has been trending up for years now, and the Flames don't have a strategy

that conforms to the new philosophies. Firing low-percentage shots under the idea of 'get pucks and bodies to the net' is nowhere near as effective as spreading opposing defences out and penetrating inside to create high-quality looks.

It's a tough pill to swallow, but the Calgary Flames are simply not a good hockey team. Do they deserve the title of 'second worst in the league?' No, probably not. But, they are a lot closer to a basement dweller than a playoff contender.

Sorry Flames fans, but it might be time to close this chapter of Flames hockey and start rebuilding for the future.



Swedish goaltender Jacob Markström, goalie for the Calgary Flames, declined signing to the Oilers in 2020.
Photo courtesy of Tlop2000/Wikimedia Commons

#S

16, number of points that separate the seventh and tenth placed teams following the Brazilian Grand Prix

-13, the Calgary Flames goal differential in their opening 11 games of the regular season

15, points scored by first-overall draft pick, Victor Wembanyama in his NBA debut

11-2-1, MRU's men's soccer record at the conclusion of the regular season

Rejuvenated Oilers extinguish the Flames in the 2023 Heritage Classic

Noah Wilson

Contributor

Through their first eight games of the regular season, the Edmonton Oilers had a measly record of, 2-5-1. Considering the high expectations that were set on the team coming into this season, it's been quite a disastrous start to say the least. Inconsistent goaltending, costly defensive woes, and, most recently, a minor injury to franchise forward Connor McDavid have all been factors in the Oilers' disappointing start to their latest campaign.

But, the 2023 Heritage Classic—held on Sunday, Oct. 29—turned a new page for the Oilers. With McDavid back in the line-up following a brief, upper body injury, the rejuvenated Oilers came out the gates flying as they dominated the game from puck drop all the way to the final horn.

During the seventh running of the Heritage Classic, the Oilers looked like the squad everyone in the hockey world projected them to be in early October—a top team in the NHL.

Why the sudden uptick in scoring prowess, you ask? Well, many could credit this

surge in performance from McDavid's presence on the team.

Without their captain in the lineup, the Oilers looked like a team that lacked an identity. In just two games without McDavid, the Oilers endured a blowout loss to the Minnesota Wild, allowing their opponents to score five goals in the third period and resulting in a 7-4 defeat.

They followed up their squandered loss to the wild with a lifeless loss to the New York Rangers. A game where their offence—which is a strength with this team—was put to a screeching halt. With all the scoring depth the Oilers have on the roster, this is a team that should be able to deal and bend when faced with injuries, not crumple and break. Yet, they did the latter at the start of their season.

It will also be crucial to get their bottom-six forwards going, as they have been incredibly stale so far. As of Nov. 2, Derek Ryan, Dylan Holloway, Ryan McLeod, Mattias Janmark, Adam Erne and Connor Brown have all combined for zero points. That is simply not good enough if this team is going

to find any sort of long-term success this season. It is clear that the Oilers management feel the same way as they have sent forward Erne down to their American Hockey League affiliates, the Bakersfield Condors and

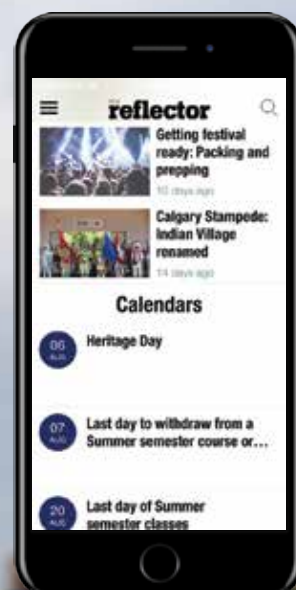
called up savvy veteran Sam Gagner to hopefully bring a spark to the third and fourth lines.

If the bottom-six can step up their game, the team would have a more feasible time surviving any more absences

from McDavid.

Albeit, watching the Oilers try and dig themselves out of their early-season, 2-5-1, hole will be an entertaining one. And, perhaps, we will finally get to see if this team is truly a 'one-man show.'

The Reflector Newspaper app available now in your favourite app store



Get The Reflector Newspaper app available in the App Store and in Google Play. It has all of the up-to-date news and information to enhance your Mount Royal University experience



View QR code in photo app

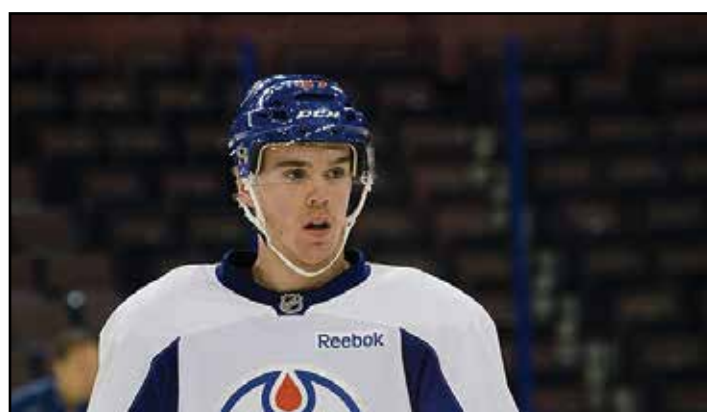


Download on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google Play

Phone graphic by Rafael Fernandez - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=51218006



Connor McDavid, captain of the Edmonton Oilers, was injured in the teams' recent matchup against the Winnipeg Jets. Photo courtesy of Connor Mah/ Wikimedia Commons

Six NBA teams that everyone should tune into this season

Zafir Nagji

Staff Writer

With the 2023-24 NBA season already a few weeks under way, teams are starting to settle into their 82-game rollercoaster ride. As the season commences, fans are also looking forward to finding an exciting team to watch while seeing which teams will contend for the coveted Larry O'Brien Trophy in June.

However, it's impossible to keep up with all 30 squads at the same time while keeping up with an already jam-packed university schedule. So, with the help of this guide, fans looking to tune into some NBA action can learn about six must-watch clubs that they should keep their eyes glued to this season.

The last team to win the NBA Finals from the Eastern Conference was the 2020-21 Milwaukee Bucks, who beat the Phoenix Suns in a six-game series. Since then, injuries have plagued the team, causing them to time and time again fall short in earlier playoff rounds. Now, with a fully healthy team and newly-acquired, superstar, point guard Damian Lillard, the Bucks are looking to remind fans why they were so dominant years ago.

If you ask us, Giannis Antetokounmpo is still a top-three player in this league as he averaged 31.1 points, 11.8 rebounds and 5.4 assists per game during the 2022-23 season. Meanwhile, their latest acquisition, Lillard—who has never played with a force as dominant in driving to the basket as Antetokounmpo is—still averaged 32.2 points, 4.8 rebounds and 7.3 assists per game last year. Not to mention a 71-point game against the Houston Rockets.

This combination of

outside scoring from Lillard, who's known to hit shots from beyond 30-feet away, and Antetokounmpo, who routinely leads the league in points in the paint, is set to improve the efficiency of an offense that already had no trouble putting up big point totals.

Winning is not the only aspect that creates entertainment for basketball fans; some teams, even though they have little to no chance of winning the championship in a given year, manage to produce the most exciting action due to the raw talent of their players.

In this year's Eastern Conference, the team that fills this role best is the Indiana Pacers. Their young point guard, Tyrese Haliburton, finished fourth in the league in assists while making the NBA All-Star team last season. When his dynamic playmaking abilities are met with the plethora of young talents around him, such as Canadian players Andrew Nembhard and Benedict Mathurin, and three-point shooting, rim-protecting center Myles Turner, it creates a beautifully flowing offense that is liable to outshoot and outscore any team on any night.

On the other hand, the NBA's Western Conference is much more competitive than the East as there are more teams that are good enough to make the playoffs than the number of available berths.

However, the team that stands out as a candidate to make the NBA Finals for the second year in a row is the Denver Nuggets. Led by a combo of Canadian guard Jamal Murray and Serbian-sensation Nikola Jokic, the

team is almost exactly the same as their ring-winning squad. Minus the efforts of two-way guard Bruce Brown, that is.

To keep the championship chemistry alive, the Nuggets retained the shooting talents of two-time NBA Champion Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and extended the contract of their young, scoring machine, Michael Porter Jr.

When the games get tight in the fourth quarters, expect this team's superstars to come alive and play bigger as the lights get brighter. Making them a force to be reckoned with come playoff time.

There are so many other exciting squads in the West to pay attention to as well, but if there was one that could be considered most worth watching, it would have to be the Sacramento Kings.

Sure, they may not have the individual star talent that Steph Curry's Golden State Warriors, Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving's Dallas Mavericks

or Kevin Durant, Bradley Beal and Devin Booker's Phoenix Suns have.

They certainly do not have the historical pedigree that LeBron James and Anthony Davis's Los Angeles Lakers have. But, what they did have last season, was the highest offensive rating in the league. Meaning, that per 100 possessions, no team was able to average as many points as the Kings.

With one of the fastest players in all of basketball, De'Aaron Fox, and his squad of run-and-gun, three-point specialists coached excellently by Mike Brown, this team is electrifyingly exciting in every single game they play.

Plus, Fox won the first-ever Jerry West NBA Clutch Player of the Year award as he created some of the most exciting basketball for fans to watch by elevating his play in clutch moments. All the while he managed to average the second-most points in the fourth quarter last season.

Some honourable mentions for this list include, the Boston Celtics with their dynamic duo of Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown and the Cleveland Cavaliers with Donovan Mitchell. Mitchell also recorded a 70-point game last season.

The Los Angeles Clippers, who recently acquired former MVP, James Harden, now can be seen as a super team worth paying attention to. Harden now joins the court with former MVP, Russell Westbrook, 2019 Finals MVP, Kawhi Leonard and the smoothest scorer in the league, Paul George.

The New Orleans Pelicans should also be on hoops fans' watchlists, as Zion Williamson looks to finally have his first full healthy season, meanwhile the San Antonio Spurs' highly-reputed draft pick Victor Wembanyama is a larger-than-life, freak of nature that will leave any fan's jaw on the floor after every play he makes.



Victor Wembanyama scored a career high of 38 points when the San Antonio Spurs faced off against the Phoenix Suns on Nov. 2. Photo courtesy of Getty Images

MRU men's soccer team seizes golden opportunity in Canada West final

Matt DeMille, Sports Editor & **Zafir Nagji**, Staff Writer

For the past two seasons, MRU's men's soccer program has been on the precipice of collegiate history. But until this season, the team couldn't get over a consistent roadblock—a win in the Canada West semi-final match to claim their spot in the championship. With third-place finishes in both the 2021-22 season, MRU's men's program looked like they were cursed when it came to the playoffs.

And, while the team boasted yet another outstanding regular season campaign, the odds that the Cougars could vie for a gold medal was still doubtful to some.

Going into their quarterfinal matchup on Saturday, Oct. 28 against the Thompson Rivers

University Wolfpack (TRU), the MRU's men's soccer team sat atop the Canada West Prairie Division standings with a near-perfect, 11-2-1 record. Thanks to a series of mind-blowing seasons from players like forward David Schaefer and goalkeeper Aidan Dumoulin, the team looked to break a three-year curse of fantastic regular seasons ended by bronze-medal finishes.

The field was covered in ice and snow and the weather was cold and unforgiving, but Cougars forward Joshua Flaksman didn't let the less-than-ideal temperatures stop him from scoring, as he put his team up, 1-0, in the 34th minute of the game. Just 11 minutes into the second half, the Wolfpack would return the favour with a goal from midfielder Akwasi Agyekum. The game stayed in a 1-1 draw at the conclusion of regulation time, meaning extra time was needed.

With no scoring in the first half of extra time, the Cougars entered the final 15 minutes desperately looking for one of their players to take matters into their own hands. And, that's when Cougars midfielder Nikolas Myroniuk sent a corner kick, with just minutes to go in the game, spiraling to teammate Miguel Da Rocha, who headed the game-winning goal into the back of the net. Da Rocha's goal was a critical one, as it advanced the men's program to the semi-final round where they would compete to break their bronze-medal curse.

In their semi-final matchup, the Cougars were paired up against the high-octane, offensive squad hailing from British Columbia, the University of Victoria Vikes. And, in a similar fashion as how they ended their quarter-final match with TRU, the Cougars were on the hunt. Four minutes into the match, Canada West Defensive Player of the Year Caden Rogozinski buried a rebound goal to give his team an early, 1-0 lead. The Vikes wouldn't be able to respond until 83 minutes later, when they capitalized on a penalty kick to tie the game, sending the match into overtime for the second-consecutive game.

The Cougars, who weren't interested in taking part in a third-straight, bronze medal game, scored two goals in extra time thanks to two-time overtime hero, Miguel Da Rocha, and midfielder Mowbray Beghin. Both of whom came into the game as substitutes. The pivotal, semi-final triumph broke the Cougars' bronze-medal curse, advancing the men's program to the Canada

West gold medal game on Saturday, Nov. 4 at Mount Royal Field.

Following their semi-final match triumph, Cougars head coach Ryan Gyaki praised his team for getting over their recurring roadblock.

"We are just so proud for the boys and for the university. You know, we get so much support from the university and the boys put so much effort in. So, we're just so happy that we can reward them with a championship game" said Gyaki.

On Saturday, it was evident that the Cougars wanted more than to simply compete in their first championship match—they desperately craved a title.

Facing off against the University of British Columbia (UBC), the visiting Thunderbirds were expected to test the strength of Mount Royal's character. Heading into their Saturday showdown, the Thunderbirds were looking to capture their sixth-straight Canada West Championship.

But, the half-decade long feat didn't seem to be a concern for the Cougars.

The team took to the field methodically. Utilizing short passes to move the Thunderbirds defense around while clearing space to make deep runs up the field. And, in the 26th minute, they were rewarded as defenceman Ethan Keen buried a goal off of Joshua Flaksman's rebound.

Keen's first goal of the Canada West playoffs wound up being the only goal of the game, despite the Thunderbirds having the ball for much of the game. Thanks to great work from 2023 Canada West Defensive Player of the Year,

Caden Rogozinski, and the flawless goalkeeping from rookie Aidan Dumoulin, who earned his conference-record 11th clean sheet of the season, the Cougars built up an impenetrable defense that couldn't be punctured by UBC.

So, when the referee blew his whistle to signify the end of the game, it didn't take more than a matter of seconds for fans to topple the fences and flood the field to celebrate their team's first win in school history.

But, none was happier than the Cougar of the Game, Joshua Flaksman, who admitted that his first Canada West championship was an accomplishment that was acquired by monumental commitment by him and his teammates.

"We deserve it honestly. We've been working since August 1, [since the] pre-season. Everyday, the lads show up. We're in the gym, we're training in the field, everyone's always giving their all and, honestly, I think we deserve [the championship]. We've been working so hard for this" said

Flaksman.

The Saturday afternoon win was also a day that Gyaki had been waiting seven years for.

"It's an incredible feeling [and] a bit surreal," Gyaki admitted.

"To try and just qualify for playoffs seemed so hard, then to win a playoff game seemed so hard, to win the prairie division seemed impossible. And now, to have won the prairies four years in a row and now finally have won Canada West, it feels pretty good."

The job isn't over for the Cougars either. Another, more prestigious title, is now within arms reach for the team. From Nov. 9-12, the Cougars will represent MRU and Canada West as the first-seeded team at the 2023 U SPORTS National Championship in Sydney, N.S.

The Cougars' opening, quarter-final match will be held on Thursday, Nov. 9 against the eighth-seeded, Ontario University Athletics finalists, the York University Lions.



MRU Cougars defeated UBC Thunderbirds 1-0 to win Canada West championship. Photo by Megan Creig