

NEWS	SCENE	OPINION	SPORTS
SCSJ serves students and Omaha community 2	New Jays explore clubs at Skutt Shutdown 4	Real winner of Lip Sync: it's not who you think 6	VB splits results over weekend in Madison 7
CU alumnus receives award 30 years post-grad3	'Man's Best Friend' delivers bold pop sound 5	Is Swift's engagement really breaking news? 6	MSOC shows progress despite scoreless draw 8

# Bowl to basket: Mein Bowl replaced by Slim Chickens



Students move through the line and order their meals at the new Slim Chickens restaurant inside Wareham Court at the Skutt Student Center.

**With the recent switch in eateries, students weigh convenience, variety and whether the new option meets their on-campus dining wants and needs.**

LILIAN GARDNER  
News Editor

When students walked into the Skutt Student Center this semester, one familiar option was gone. Mein Bowl, the build-your-own stir-fry station, had closed — and in its place now stands Slim Chickens, a Southern-inspired chain serving chicken tenders, wings, sandwiches and wraps.

This move represents one of the biggest changes to Creighton University's dining lineup in recent years. For some students, it came as a surprise, yet for others, it was a welcome update.

"I didn't go [to Mein Bowl] that often, maybe once every other week," College of Business Sophomore Easton Yamane said. "I liked having Chinese food as an option, but I think Slim Chickens will be more popular overall — just not really for me."

Popularity is a common theme among student reactions. Mein Bowl offered customizable rice, noodle and protein bowls, but many students said the quality was inconsistent.

"Sometimes the food tasted like it had been sitting out for hours," College of Arts and Science Sophomore Diego Vasconcelos said. "Slim Chickens feels fresher, and I've noticed the lines are even a little longer than Mein Bowl's used to be."

Vasconcelos said Slim Chickens stands out because it feels familiar while still offering variety.

"Honestly, I like Slim Chickens more than Mein Bowl," he said. "Chicken is safe — you can't go wrong with it. It's like a mix between Chick-fil-A and Cane's, with tenders, sandwiches, sauces ... this will probably be my go-to."

The restaurant, which has locations across the Midwest, offers chicken baskets, wraps, wings and Southern-style sides such as mac and cheese, fried pickles and Texas toast. At Creighton, many students say the mac and cheese bowls are already becoming favorites.

Employees behind the counter are also adjusting to the change. Chevonnie Reed, who works at Slim Chickens, said she enjoys the job and has already noticed strong student interest.

"Honestly, I think it's a fun experience," Reed said. "The chicken tenders are really good, and the mac and cheese bowls are popular too. The team here works well together, and it feels a lot more relaxed than other food jobs I've had, like Chick-fil-A."

Reed also offered insight into why Mein Bowl may not have lasted.

"They said [it] wasn't really doing enough, or maybe people weren't cleaning good enough, or the food wasn't always the best," she said. "I never went myself, but I never saw a line there. People just didn't go."

Still, some students say the loss of Mein Bowl creates a gap in campus dining. With its closure, Creighton loses one of its few Asian-inspired food options, leaving behind mostly American, Mexican and sandwich-style restaurants. Vasconcelos said Panda Express could fill that role better.

"Whenever I go to Panda Express, there's always a huge line," he said. "It's fast, it's hot and people like it. That could work here."

For now, Slim Chickens is drawing steady lines in Skutt. And while some students already prefer it over Mein Bowl, others say they'll stick with other options.

Students say they're curious to see whether it becomes a permanent favorite or just another short-term stop in Creighton's rotating dining lineup.

# Class of '29 sets record enrollment

WALTER LOVELY  
News Reporter

Creighton University's class of 2029 is the largest undergraduate class in school history with about 1,250 students.

Despite the large size, the university is not admitting more students than in the past. Rather, more people are accepting their offers to attend Creighton. In fact, Abby Maresh, the associate director of admissions, said that the university admitted fewer students this year.

"We just had a class that was really excited about what Creighton had to offer this year, which is awesome. ... A lot of things went right this year," Maresh said. "We had a big student athlete class as well, which is exciting. But we didn't change anything big strategy wise."

The class size — 1,250 people — is a rough estimate. The census that will clarify this data is taking place after today, Sept. 5, as it is the last day to withdraw from the university, according to Maresh.

"Our goal isn't to be a 25,000-student university," Maresh said. "We operate really, really well where we're at, and our brand and identity of being a Jesuit Catholic institution [means] being a school that is very, very committed to being personalized for students. That doesn't work at a 25- or 50,000[-student] institution."

She clarified that the enrollment goal is set by the university board and leadership.

The size of the undergraduate enrollment rises and falls over time; it's never linear, but overall, Creighton has maintained a growing class size, whereas the opposite is happening at other universities, Maresh said.

Due to the 2008 financial crisis, Maresh explained, families had fewer children or chose to wait to start having kids. So, now, there are fewer freshmen enrolling at universities compared to previous years; many secondary education programs have less students than in past years expressing interest in their institutions and accepting offers to attend their schools. This nationwide problem is deemed the "enrollment cliff" and, despite this cliff, Creighton was still able to admit their largest class to date. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions declined 12% between 2010 and 2020.

Creighton has also not changed any overall tactics when it comes to recruitment, Maresh said, and more than half of students come from 10 major metro areas.

The size of the class of 2029 is a source of pride for the university and the admissions office, as a lot of time and effort is put into making sure that recruitment is not only done well, but also in a way that honors the university's Jesuit value of "cura personalis," or care for the whole person.

"I think our admissions office does an exceptional job living out 'cura personalis'... and I think that shows in the relationships we build with students," Maresh said. "And I think that really resonates with families when it's easy to send out a mass email, but we pride ourselves on getting to know every-one one-on-one."



# SAS-sy about Swift

## Office celebrates celebrity engagement

SHELBY SEU  
Assistant News Editor

Creighton University’s Student Accessibility Services and Student Support Services faculty hosted a celebration for the engagement of the Kansas City Chief’s tight end, Travis Kelce, and an internationally acclaimed American singer-songwriter, Taylor Swift.

“The world was celebrating the engagement, and we felt that it would be an amazing way to build community in our new space on the second floor of [the] Old Gym. Silly and fun,” the assistant director of Student Accessibility Services, Gillian Trost Price, said via email.

Through the joint effort of the two departments on Friday, Aug. 29, the faculty were able to utilize Microsoft Teams to advertise the event while Trost Price created a digital flyer to accompany the party’s announcement.

“It was a last-minute decision. And when I mean last-minute, it was a couple days before we decided we were going to throw it just because it’s a good way for people to get together. It puts people in a good mood” Director of Student Accessibility Services Carrie Brink, Ph.D., said.

The engagement celebration consisted of food and crafts with 40 faculty members from across Creighton’s campus. From the Department of Housing to the Heider College of Business, Creighton staff and faculty members utilized their lunch hour to converse with their colleagues over customized popcorn and colorful friendship bracelets.

“There was a build-your-own popcorn bar with candy toppings, since Travis popped the question. There were also friendship bracelets, Taylor Swift music and Travis Kelce NFL highlights on loop,” Trost Price said via email.

According to Brink, the celebration was inspired by their friends in a school district in Kansas City as their staff hosted a theme day in honor of Kelce’s and Swift’s announcement.

“We actually, as a department, talk[ed] about it because some other friends outside the state were having a theme day at their place of employment. And I thought that was a great idea. So, I was sharing about that and then the idea took off from there,” Brink said.

Though the event was hosted for fans of the two American celebrities to celebrate their engagement announcement together, it also served as a time for Creighton faculty members to interact with one another.

“It was great. I feel it was very kind of warming. It was nice. And I get to see many friends around campus and enjoy the popcorn and make bracelets,” Assistant Director of Student Support Services Naim Jamilzada said.

As another year begins at the university, Brink said, cultivating connections plays a significant role when it comes to engaging with the Bluejay community.

“I think there’s nothing more important than having relationships, especially with your colleagues. ... I think it’s important to have that sense of belonging. And that’s where the importance of relationships comes into play,” Brink said.

# Jays serve with SCSJ

ELIZABETH JONES  
Editor in Chief

Creighton University’s Schlegel Center for Service and Justice (SCSJ) works to engage students in service and advocacy in the Omaha community and beyond.

Their mission statement is: “The SCSJ seeks to awaken hearts and lives and solidarity to build a more just world. We invite students to do this through service, community, reflection [and] building a more just world,” according to their webpage on the Creighton University website.

The SCSJ offers students many local service opportunities, according to their webpage. Some of these opportunities involve weekly commitments with a community partner while others are drop-in weekly service opportunities. They also send students on Service and Justice Trips across the country during fall and spring breaks. SCSJ Assistant Director Cristina Hiddleston said these trips were started in 1983.

“[The SCSJ] is one of the big things that has reframed everything in my life, to be honest,” College of Arts and Sciences Senior Philip Richardsen, a local community engagement team leader, said. “It’s given me my best friendships ever. It’s given me an incredible ability to lead and speak up for myself and for others. But I think most of all, I want to do well by the people who do well for me. Omaha treats Creighton students so well ... that it’s so nice to give back in a small but meaningful way.”

This is a sentiment that others involved in service with the SCSJ, including College of Arts and Sciences Junior Eliza Loecke, agree with. Loecke is another local community engagement team leader — about 40 to 45 students fill these leadership roles, according to Loecke and Richardsen — and a coordinator for one of this semester’s Service and Justice Trips.

“I coordinate going to the Omaha Public Schools [every week] and working with people

that are learning English,” Loecke said. “... You’re instantly going to have a community with the people you go and do service with. I’ve met some really great people, and even in the office we have such a culture of welcoming everyone. And, I think further, you just learn more about yourself, you learn about how you handle challenges, you learn about the people around you and just the experiences that people have that are so different from yours.”

In addition to service, the SCSJ focuses on advocacy.

“I think also a big part of the SCSJ is working to understand and discover the root causes behind a lot of the problems that are evident in society,” Local Community Engagement Team Leader Kathryn McGovern, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, said. “And so, instead of just doing service, we’re also looking at different social analyses and reflections that talk about the deeper root problems. And then we always engage in advocacy to ... work to change those systems, which is a big part of the two feet of love in action, a very Catholic Jesuit idea.”

The SCSJ is heavily impacted by Creighton’s Catholic Jesuit tradition.

“One of the biggest things is [the Jesuit value] men and women for and with others,” McGovern said. “So, the way we frame our reflection and service is very much in a community-oriented mindset. We’re not going in trying to change or fix problems or assuming we have the answers, but very much emphasizing solidarity and living alongside the people we’re serving.”

Students who want to get involved with the SCSJ can stop in their office located in upper Brandeis Hall.

“I think it should be on everyone’s bucket list to do something with the SCSJ,” Richardsen said. “It changed the way I looked at everything, you know. Things stopped being about building a resume, and they started being about being an agent of hope, of love and change in my communities. And that made my time so much more fulfilling.”



# Weekly Campus Safety Report

This is a selection of incidents chosen by the Editor in Chief and is not a comprehensive weekly report. The full report is compiled in the Daily Crime Log which anyone can access in the Public Safety office located at 2222 Burt St.

- 1

August 1 - 5:57 a.m.  
Public Safety responded to the construction site located by the Ryan Athletic Center for a report of an unclothed male laying in the site masterbating. OPD transported the male to CHI-CUMC. Ban and Bar was issued.
- 2

August 14 - 3:48 p.m.  
A staff member, conducting a guided campus tour for new students, reported observing two individuals engaged in sexual activity in Criss II, room L62.
- 3

August 23 - 6:31 p.m.  
Public Safety observed a Fizz post that contained information regarding a hit-and-run accident that occurred in lot G36.
- 4

August 30 - 4:31 p.m.  
A power strip under the Public Safety fire dispatch desk shorted out and caught fire. Damage was contained to the power strip.



# All roads lead back to Creighton

From class of '96 to 2025, Cliff Brunt returns to CSDJ



PHOTO COURTESY OF LESLIE SCHULTE

Thirty years after he graduated from Creighton, alumnus Cliff Brunt returns to campus as the 2025 Alumni Merit Award honoree and spends time sharing his expertise with current CSDJ students.

LILIAN GARDNER  
News Editor

When Cliff Brunt, of Creighton University’s class of 1996, walked back into the classrooms of Creighton’s Department of Computer Science, Design and Journalism (CSDJ) this spring, he said it felt like “stepping right back into the room where it all started.”

Memories of late nights on the Creightonian staff, advice from mentors who believed in him and the spark that launched a decades-long career in sports journalism all came rushing back.

Nearly 30 years after graduating, Brunt returned to campus not as a student but as the 2025 Alumni Merit Award honoree for the College of Arts and Sciences.

For the Associated Press sportswriter — who has covered three Olympic Games, the NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder and some of the biggest moments in athletics — the recognition carried with it an overwhelming sense of gratitude for where it all began.

Clifton “Cliff” L. Brunt II has taken his Creighton education from the classrooms of the Hitchcock Communications Center to press boxes around the world.

Brunt, who covers not only the Oklahoma City Thunder, but also the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University athletic programs and the Women’s College World Series, says his journey began in Omaha classrooms long before Creighton.

He credits Omaha North High School journalism teacher and Creighton alumnus Michael Krainak with steering him toward the field.

“I got a C in his class because I wasn’t really interested in turning stuff in. I could write, but I didn’t turn things in,” Brunt said. “One day, he pulls me aside and says, ‘Why weren’t you in my class today?’ I said, ‘I don’t have your class.’ He said, ‘Go down to the office and get your new schedule.’ He had changed my schedule and put me in his journalism class. That’s how it started.”

By the time he graduated high school, Brunt was a state champion in sports news-writing. At Creighton, he found the guidance he needed to turn that early spark into a career.

“I wouldn’t have been in a position to speak to you guys if it hadn’t been for Dr. Wirth,” Brunt said of his longtime mentor and former journalism chair. “Y’all wouldn’t even know who I was if it wasn’t for Dr. Wirth. She pulled me to the middle and said, ‘Okay, you’ve got potential, but you’ve got work to do.’ She really helped me stay grounded and focused and gave me a good foundation to grow after I left Creighton.”

That foundation has carried Brunt through more than two decades in journalism, from the Omaha World Herald to the Associated Press.

“No matter how many times I go to the Olympics, it still feels like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Brunt said. “You get to see the best of the best laying it all on the line to do what they love.”

But some of his most meaningful stories trace back to Omaha. He points to his 2001 project on the decline of Black participation in baseball and his later work chronicling the life of Marlin Briscoe, the first Black quarterback to start a game in modern professional football — and an Omaha native.

“I had a tough time finding Marlin when it came time to write the story,” Brunt said. “Good old Uncle John — my Uncle John Cooper — knew everybody in Omaha in the Black community. Less than two hours later, I had the number. And I had Marlin on the phone.”

**“It’s always humbling to go back to places that formed you. I didn’t know that when I was a student ... that the things that have happened since then would be possible. To be in this position now to tell my story, and to have people actually listening, was pretty special.”**

**-Cliff Brunt  
Creighton Alum '96**

Brunt interviewed Briscoe in 2018 on the 50th anniversary of his first NFL start and later wrote his obituary.

“That was a great honor,” Brunt said. “The care that has to be taken in doing it — I take that very seriously.”

The path hasn’t always been easy. A first-generation college graduate, Brunt said financial pressures and imposter syndrome were major hurdles.

“It was uncharted territory for our family,” he said. “There was the financial roadblock, the uncharted territory roadblock, the imposter syndrome roadblock. I overcame it be-

cause I wanted a better life. I thought about the kids I would have someday and wanted them to have better opportunities than I had.”

That perseverance made the Alumni Merit Award ceremony especially meaningful. Brunt described how his wife and fellow Creighton alumna, Christina Mushi-Brunt, their daughters and even college friends from out of state surprised him by attending.

“My wife kept it a secret the whole time,” Brunt said. “They really kind of sprung that on me. Good friends, great friends who traveled a great distance to make it extra special.”

Returning to the same Creighton classroom where he once sat as a student brought his journey full circle.

“It’s always humbling to go back to places that formed you,” he said. “I didn’t know that when I was a student ... that the things that have happened since then would be possible. To be in a position now to tell my story, and to have people actually listening, was pretty special.”

As the conversation came to an end, Brunt paused to reflect on what it meant to be back in the pages of The Creightonian.

“This is, this is incredible. This is absolutely insane and something that I never could have seen. I’m just so happy to, in any capacity, contribute to The Creightonian, but in this particular way, it’s extra special,” he said.

Brunt hopes Creighton students take away the same lesson that has guided his career: connections matter.

“People who believe in you — that’s what you want to build,” he said.



# Jays swarm Skutt Shutdown



SAM GIANFRANCISCO/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Skutt Shutdown is an event where freshmen have the opportunity to join Creighton University's student clubs and organizations. Students could make walking tacos and create new friendships.

## EMMA O'DWYER Scene Reporter

Creighton University's annual Skutt Shutdown featured about 120 clubs and invited students to a night of activities. The event's goal was to build student engagement and community at the forefront, and the event was "a great opportunity to be able to find a place that you feel like you belong on campus," Jacob Maddox, assistant director for programming at the Student Leadership and Involvement Center, said.

The Creighton Students Union was the main facilitator for the event, which according to Maddox, is the biggest student involvement fair on campus.

Skutt Shutdown offered students the opportunity to make a change locally and na-

tionally, by joining groups like the Students for National Health Program.

The president of this club, Erika Germinario, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, noted its upcoming partnership with OneWorld Community Health Centers which supports "anybody who is interested in making change."

The wide variety of clubs allowed students like Adora Anora, a freshman in the College of Nursing, to meet new people and sign up for "things that are more artsy and geared toward" her interests.

"I'm just ... signing up for anything that sounds fun or has good vibes, honestly," Allison Ramirez, freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences, said.

Joining clubs a not the only highlight of Skutt Shutdown. It is also the opportunity to

**"Meeting new people and ... meeting all the new freshmen and hearing their perspective on things ... [and] getting more people to join the club [was my favorite part]."**

**-Erika Germinario  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Class of 2026**

meet fellow Creighton students.

"Meeting new people and ... meeting all the new freshmen and hearing their perspec-

tives on things ... [and] getting more people to join the club [was my favorite part]," Germinario said.

Joining a club is just the beginning for further involvement in the goals the clubs are formed around.

Along with its bustling environment and tables of clubs, Skutt Shutdown also featured giveaways, bungee-jump trampolines, rides and other activities by the library. Walking tacos and ice cream were also provided to snack on, which many did while waiting in line at the flower bouquet bar.

The Mall and the Kiewit Fitness Center Spine also held tables and activities which, in addition to the waves of students flowing through Skutt, created an event packed with excited students and clubs alike.

# Mediterranean restaurant spices up Omaha

## LAUREN PACICCO Social Media Editor

Clio is a mezze-focused Mediterranean restaurant in the Old Market district of downtown Omaha. It's the kind of place built for passing plates to be shared with family and friends alike.

The menu has great items like hummus and warm pita, salads, grilled meats and vegetables. The food is bright and herb-y, with textures and flavors that leave everyone wanting just one more bite.

When the hummus platter arrives, it

sets the tone for the meal. The hummus is smooth, lightly topped with olive oil and sumac, and accompanied by labneh, smoky baba ghanouj and sweet-pepper muhammara. Warm, homemade pitas come straight from the Dutch oven — soft and easy to tear — so the table eases into a natural share-and-pass rhythm for the meal.

Crispy potatoes follow the hummus, earning their spot as a must-order. They're hot and crackly on the outside, soft in the middle and balanced by an amazing lemon aioli. A little bit of za'atar is added, and a sprinkle of a little bit of cheese gives the potatoes that

savory, herb-filled flavor that keeps people going back for just one more. They're the kind of side that behaves like an entrée. Order a second plate just to be safe!

Chicken kabobs round out the spread with straightforward grilling done well. The meat is smoky with a gentle char, seasoned without being overpowering. The meat exudes hints of garlic, coriander and, possibly, paprika and citrus. This dish is paired with rice, a simple tomato-cucumber-herb salad and a tzatziki-style dipping sauce that is very similar to what is served with Clio's other meat options. The plate tastes satisfying and fresh — a main

dish that fits the shared-plate aesthetic.

Clio's atmosphere and interior design match the food: relaxed, friendly and unhurried. The servers guide their guests with great advice on what to order and what they might like based on their — or the group's — personal preferences, all without crowding. Smart suggestions are offered and keep things moving at a comfortable pace. By the time someone mentions dessert, you're doing that familiar calculus — one last piece of pita, a final potato, a final scoop of hummus — already talking about when you'll come back.



# Carpenter kills expectations, no tears here

CHLOE CARRILLO  
Assistant Scene Editor

Sabrina Carpenter released her 7th studio album, “Man’s Best Friend,” on Aug. 29, and it was instantly accepted as an iconic popstar moment by fans of the genre.

The lead single, “Manchild,” dropped earlier this summer, sparking speculations on Carpenter’s next move. Sticking to her empowering-pop vibe, “Manchild” seemed to be a callout to behaviors she had experienced in some of her previous relationships.

While the album cover and title may lead some to believe that Carpenter would only cater to those in a relationship or aspiring to be in one, that couldn’t be more incorrect. Each song provides a different and deep commentary on Carpenter’s experiences, all while providing catchy choruses and her iconic popstar feel. With some acoustic, some synth and some traditional pop, the album is worth a listen.

Following the lead single, which was also the album’s first track, “Tears” is the first taste of the upbeat-yet-brutally-honest-pop-queen that many fans know Sabrina to be. The lyrics are filled with irony and comedy — things that Carpenter uniquely incorporates into her lyricism. The whole song — which has an accompanying music video starring Emmy-Award winning actor Coleman Domingo in drag makeup and costume — says that if you do the bare minimum in a relationship, you’ve got Carpenter’s heart.

Each song has its own unique theme and sound, all while creating a cohesive album that features Carpenter’s signature flare and brutally honest expression.

In “Sugar Talkin,” Carpenter calls out a partner, telling him to “put your lovin’ where your mouth is,” and to stop going through the motions to have a meaningful connection. “Never Getting Laid” and “When Did You Get Hot?” both have similar sounds, but “Never Getting Laid” stars Carpenter pettily wishing someone a forever of not finding another partner, and “When Did You Get Hot?” describes a surprise attraction.

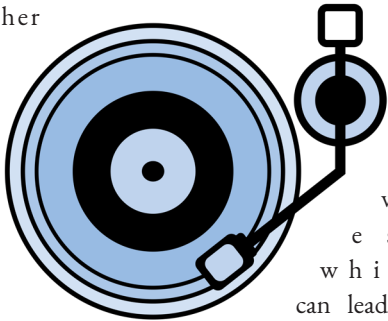
“We Almost Broke Up Again Last Night” and “Don’t Worry I’ll Make You Worry”

feature slower acoustic sounds. “We Almost Broke Up Again Last Night” shows just how rocky relationships can really be, especially when a failing relationship keeps dragging on. “Don’t Worry I’ll Make You Worry” goes into Carpenter’s toxic tendencies in relationships, and how unique she is, compared to other partners.

The most upbeat and fun songs on the album include “Tears,” “Nobody’s Son,” “Go Go Juice,” “House Tour” and “Goodbye.” “Nobody’s Son” talks about how Sabrina feels hopeless in her romantic life, and how there isn’t anyone left for her to believe in. “Go Go Juice” talks about how heartbreak can lead some- one to other

vic- e s , w h i c h can lead to s o m e embarrassing phone calls. “House Tour” is a song about giving a romantic partner a house tour, in which Carpenter and her partner get to know one another better. According to Carpenter, there’s no metaphor intended. The album ends with “Goodbye.” The song has an ABBA-like feel, and describes how once you say goodbye to Carpenter, you won’t get another chance to say hello.

No matter the situation, Sabrina Carpenter has a song for it. If you prefer slower acoustic songs, she has a couple of songs you’d like, but if you’re in the mood to dance, she has those too. “Man’s Best Friend” is worth the listen, whether you are a superfan of Sabrina, or just looking for something new to listen to in the pop realm.



# ‘Jaws’ anniversary

CAMERON ELIAS  
Scene Editor

Two famous notes scared the world. People have become more vigilant sighting fins in the water ever since a score of shark attacks struck Amity Island one fictional summer. “Jaws” continues to captivate the imagination and fear of audiences everywhere.

The legacy of “Jaws” stretches from the box office to the beach. Even today, certain boat sightings of great white sharks may usher someone to say one of the movie’s most famous line: “You’re gonna need a bigger boat.” Audiences everywhere remember seeing the famous great white shark appear and Chief Martin Brody’s (Roy Scheider) ashen face piercing the screen.

However, it is a wonder “Jaws” ever made its way to the big screen in the first place. In the National Geographic’s documentary “Jaws @ 50: The Definitive Inside Story,” it is revealed that the movie struggled during production. The movie almost didn’t hit theaters, but Steven Spielberg, along with the rest of the movie crew, persisted.

“The film I thought would end my career,” Spielberg said in the documentary, “is the film that began it.”

The movie was a blockbuster. It revolutionized horror films. Even though shark attacks are nothing new, attack stories enrapture audiences. Ship captain Quint (Robert Shaw) delivers the haunting — but true — story of the USS Indianapolis in the film as a survivor. The ship was torpedoed after delivering the atomic bomb, leaving the crew vulnerable in shark-infested waters. “So, 1,100 men went in the water, 316 men came out,” Quint said. “The sharks took the rest.”

Such shark attack stories detailed in “Jaws” instigate fear in audiences — so much so that some went out to hunt sharks following the movie’s premier. The movie has also had the opposite effect, boosting awareness of shark conservation over the years. Now, there are shark shows, such as Discovery’s “Shark Week” and National Geographic’s “Shark-Fest,” that educate audiences about recent shark research, shark behavior, shark attack survival skills and the shark diet, which does not include people.

Even though “Jaws” has stimulated both fascination for and fear of sharks, the movie teaches lessons of courage and civic responsibility. Even when summer comes to an end, “Jaws” keeps audiences afraid to go to the beach.

September 6 Saturday	<b>Puppy Yoga and Meditation</b> 10:00-11:00 AM <i>KFC</i> <b>Brandeis Kitchen Food Packaging</b> 11:00-11:30 AM <i>Brandeis Dining Hall</i> <b>Native American Round Dance</b> 1:00-6:00 PM <i>Skutt Ballroom</i> <b>Crescendas Auditions</b> 12:00 PM <i>LECA 210</i>
September 7 Sunday	<b>Volunteering at Ronald McDonald House</b> 3:00-4:00 PM <b>Students Against Trafficking Informational Meeting</b> 3:00-4:00 PM <i>HLSB 404</i> <b>Homecoming: Kickoff</b> 6:00-8:00 PM <i>Brandeis Quad</i>
September 8 Monday	<b>Salsa Practice</b> 6:00 PM <i>Graves LL28</i> <b>IMIG Picnic</b> 5:00-8:00 PM <i>Harper Ballroom</i> <b>Letters of Love Event</b> 7:00-9:00 PM <i>Harper Building</i> <b>Homecoming: Movie on the Lawn</b> 7:30-10:00 PM <i>KFC Lawn</i>
September 9 Tuesday	<b>Homecoming: Tournament</b> 6:00-8:00 PM <i>Skutt</i> <b>AMWA Creighton Speaker Panel and Networking Event</b> 6:00-8:00 PM <i>Creighton Health Sciences Campus</i> <b>FLP Seminar</b> 7:30-8:30 PM <i>Harper 4067</i>
September 10 Wednesday	<b>Cookies and Conversations with a Counselor</b> 10:00-2:00 PM <i>Skutt Table 3</i> <b>Be A Smart Cookie</b> 12:30-3:00 PM <i>Reinert Library Atrium</i> <b>Back to School Roast</b> 5:00-7:00 PM <i>Davis Square Hall</i>
September 11 Thursday	<b>Survivors Circle</b> 2:00-3:00PM <i>VIP Center Rise Room</i> <b>Dance Jamz Class</b> 7:00-8:00 PM <i>Graves LL28</i> <b>Homecoming: Hypnotist</b> 7:00-9:00 PM <i>Harper Auditorium</i>
September 12 Friday	<b>WERQ It Out for Mental Health: Dance for Awareness</b> 1:00-2:00 PM <i>TBA</i> <b>Fresh Fruit Friday</b> 1:00-2:00 PM <i>KFC Spine</i> <b>Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament</b> 8:00-9:00 PM <i>St. John’s</i>



# The real winners of Lip Sync

RYAN BEATTY  
Opinion Writer

I remember the way my jaw dropped when I attended Creighton University's annual Lip Sync competition as a freshman in 2022, unaware of what I was walking into. The walls were practically shaking from the drumming of students' feet and the chants that rang off each wall. I was enthralled. How could I not be?

I never ended up participating in Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL), but that night was probably the most convinced I had ever been that I should. I've returned to Lip Sync every year since then.

I'd bet the same feelings are true of many. You can see how much each fraternity and sorority cares about their performances — and how fun it is for the upperclassmen viewers to compare them. I've taken on that task, along with many of my friends. Together, we compiled a list of each performance, ranked them and discussed who we thought should win.

We agreed with the panel of judges who chose Theta Phi Alpha as the sorority winners. We disagreed, however, on their decision to name Beta Theta Pi (Beta) the fraternity winners, despite their highly-coordinated number. There was one clear winner in our eyes: Sigma Phi Epsilon (Sig Ep).

Sig Ep had that "wow factor" that we believe Beta did not possess. Beta was clearly well-rehearsed. Each member knew what they were doing, and it was rare to spot a mistake.

But Sig Ep had something different. They had that jaw-dropping effect that is hard to produce after the already-dizzying experience of entering the arena. I found myself shocked by the synchronized efforts of each Sig Ep member — leaping up from a prone position in sequence to create a spectacular "wave" effect.



JONAH LAGRANGE /THE CREIGHTONIAN

**Above: Sig Ep's performance made jaws drop with an appearance from a Pitbull character.**

**Below: Beta poses with the victors' trophy after winning the contest with their synced moves.**

The performance included props like a shower curtain for Becky G's "Shower," and a segment that led members of Sig Ep into the crowd before quickly returning to make the beat drop in Pitbull's "Fireball" (complete with an appearance from someone actually dressed as Pitbull).

All of these factors made for a number that was creative, thrilling and, above all, "wowing." This was, in our opinion, not as true of Beta's performance.

In the end, we acknowledged that we are not the judges on the Lip Sync panel. We do not know why Beta took the win.

We never will. Was Sig Ep disqualified for breaking rules? Perhaps their airtime in the aforementioned "wave" move constituted a violation. Were the judges more focused on the precision that made Beta's performance seem well-prepared than the "wow factor" my friends and I thought essential to secure a win? Maybe.

Regardless, Lip Sync accomplished its task as it does every year: it gave the freshmen a glimpse into FSL life, provided some fun and reminded us of the spirited Creighton community that welcomes all of its students.

# Confidence crisis at Creighton

ANNA SCHMEER  
Opinion Writer

Over the course of the past year, I've become much more talkative. In middle school, I was the girl who was forced to sit next to the chatty students so they would be quieter; I barely raised my hand in class, even if I knew the answer to a question. I would walk around with headphones in and music loud enough to drown out anyone who tried to stop me, even if just to say hi. But I've come out of this phase of life — now I'm the one who stops people to say hi! I love talking to random people for a short time, creating a fun moment we can reminisce on later. Sometimes a conversation in a bathroom could change your life. Life is full of small connections; you don't always need to have a long, deep discussion to have an enjoyable moment with someone.

However, an issue arises when I talk to someone who mistakes my immediate forwardness as an invitation or an indication that I am seeking a relationship that extends beyond the one we currently possess. Don't get me wrong, I think everyone is seeking lasting, meaningful relationships, and I almost always welcome that development later on. I don't want to feel like I have to stop being friendly or I need to be on the lookout for anyone who may want to take advantage of my kindness or openness.

I find it important to foster confidence in myself and other women; we are living in a crisis of confidence. The book "The Confidence Gap" by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman talks about how a vast majority of women tend to undervalue their abilities and downplay their achievements. We are expected to be meek and humble all the time. So, when we are not fitting into that mold, a quick conversation is often misconstrued as an invitation. This is not a universal reaction, but it is a common one. Many women in my life have experienced the confidence gap in one way or another, whether it is a fear of speaking up in class or a fear of an unwanted advance from a stranger.

I'm not saying you shouldn't shoot your shot with someone you just met, but I think misunderstanding the intention of a short, simple conversation is not a good foundation for any form of relationship.

I find myself at a bit of a crossroads: I can either change myself to fit the societal expectations of not talking to strangers unless you want something from them, or...what? The world changes and suddenly everyone has the ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes and can recognize when they make them uncomfortable? These options are both unattainable. Regardless of the outcome, I will continue to enjoy my middle school role reversal. Who will be the silent one forced to sit by me next?

# Stop consuming, start living

CECE SLADOVNIK  
Assistant Opinion Editor

When is the last time you did your laundry, went for a walk, washed the dishes or completed any other menial task without background music? How often do you put on a show or movie on the TV, only to end up scrolling on your phone the entire time? With the popularity of wireless headphones and the perpetual proximity to our phones, it is easier than ever to be constantly entertained. The overconsumption of media we have become accustomed to is destroying our brains and lives, and I think we need to shift our habits.

During certain periods of my life, I have put in headphones as soon as I woke up and not taken them out until I had to, sometimes for most of the day. Though it is fun to feel like you have a soundtrack to your life or constantly be learning new things from podcasts, the value of silence is increasingly discounted. Our brains are not meant to be

constantly stimulated. To be fully ourselves, we need time to think and process things on our own. Having more periods of silence throughout my day makes me feel more at peace and in control. Additionally, when you stop constantly distracting yourself, you might start noticing more of the nice things going on around you. Scrolling through Instagram in the checkout line of the grocery store may lead you to miss a funny exchange between the people in front of you. Walking down the Mall with headphones in, you may miss your friend trying to say hi. While doing things in silence no longer comes naturally, intentionally limiting the noise in our lives could yield unexpected, positive results.

A few months ago, I saw this quote: "We are not meant to know this many people exist, let alone what they're all thinking." It made me laugh at the time, but this is a thought I keep coming back to when wanting to limit my media consumption. Being exposed to other perspectives and opinions is important, but oftentimes the online noise

goes beyond education and creates a false reality where insignificant things seem life-or-death. We need to turn off the distractions and start thinking for ourselves about what we believe in.

To combat the onslaught of information we are exposed to at any given time, we must change our habits. Notice when you are picking up your phone and think of something else to do instead. Whether it's creating something, talking to a friend or simply being entertained by our own thoughts, replacing the time we spend consuming media with slower and more meaningful activities will help us live better lives.

This week, don't wear headphones while doing an activity you normally wear them for. Have only one screen on at a time. Resist the urge to scroll during an in-between moment and learn to be entertained by the world around you instead. Our lives will begin when we stop acting as consumers and start acting like individuals.

# Celebrity engagement: a breaking news dilemma

TOMMY CARRAUX  
Opinion Writer

The New York Times is one of the largest newspapers in the world, with as many as 100 million users visiting its website or app every week. I have been a long-time reader of the Times because I believe it is held to a high standard of authenticity due to its large following, which comes with intense scrutiny and fact-checking. Despite having a slight political bias, I find that the Times can remain more neutral and factual than most other news sources. For this reason, I trust the Times as my most-frequent news source.

Last Tuesday, when I got a Breaking News

notification from the New York Times app, I assumed something serious had happened. My initial thought, before I opened the notification, was either news about Ukraine, Russia, Gaza, the Federal Reserve or another mass shooting, all of which are tragically common these days.

So, when I saw that Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce were engaged, as announced on Instagram, I felt a bit disturbed that this classified as Breaking News. I understand a newspaper must have some sort of pop cultural element to it to stay relevant, but a celebrity engagement being deemed urgent and requiring immediate coverage seemed a bit much. I

thought it should have come from TMZ or Buzzfeed, not The New York Times.

What made this even more impactful for me was when, the following day, there was a tragic shooting at a Catholic school not even 25 miles from my home, at a church I had visited as a child. I learned of this the same way as Taylor Swift's engagement: a Breaking News notification from the New York Times.

Taylor Swift is an icon for many, a revolutionary of music and a pop culture sensation. But her engagement is not breaking news. However, the Times gave this event the same level of urgency as the tragedy at Annunciation Church in Minneapolis.

The worst part is, I wasn't shocked. It seems too common for businesses today to sell out their purpose for more ad revenue or user engagement. I will never look at the words "Breaking News" in the same way. The phrase has become so common and devalued by click bait that I feel desensitized to it.

I am horrified at what happened at that church. I have never had a shooting so close to my home, especially not at a place I have visited. And still, the New York Times chose to place this tragedy at the same level of urgency as the engagement of Taylor Swift.



# VB splits opening weekend in Madison

SUSAN BREUGGEMAN  
Assistant Sports Editor

This past weekend, No. 12 Creighton volleyball opened its season at the Opening Spike Classic in Madison, Wis. taking on No. 5 Texas and No. 14 Kansas.

In their first match, the Bluejays battled hard against Texas but ultimately fell in straight sets, 25-21, 25-19, 26-24.

Texas’ size and strength at the net proved difficult to overcome, as the Longhorns’ blocking presence made it tough for Creighton to score consistently.

“We talked as a team and we need to work on being more consistent from point one to point 25 ... we have to control what we can control, and if they get a good swing and we roll it right back, we say, ‘Hey we can get the next one,’” senior middle Kiara Reinhardt said.

The matchup carried extra weight for the Jays, as Creighton dethroned the reigning back-to-back national champions in four sets in last year’s Sweet 16. But this year, Creighton’s squad looks different, and the focus is now on proving the new roster can compete at the same level.

The Jays graduated seven seniors last spring, including star players in outside hitter Norah Sis and setter Kendra Wait. Creighton also lost longtime head coach, Kirsten Bern-

thal-Booth, who accepted a position with the LOVB professional volleyball program.

With new leadership under Head Coach Brian Rosen, Creighton has no plans of backing down.

That resilience showed in the Bluejays’ second match of the weekend, when they bounced back with a statement win against Kansas.

“I think overall they bounced back to be aggressive today. It could’ve been easy for them after Friday and [the] consecutive sweeps to kind of ho-hum into this weekend, especially against a team as good as Kansas ... I think they trust how good they are, we know how good we can be,” Rosen said.

Creighton began to separate midway through the first set. A kill from sophomore Jaya Johnson extended the lead to 11-7, forcing Kansas to call timeout. The Jays pulled away from there, with Reinhardt adding another kill to make it 21-16. She finished the match with 11 kills and two blocks.

“I thought Kiara offensively gave us so many points in big moments. We knew they were going to commit to our pins so we wanted to take advantage of the one-on-one in the middle,” Rosen said.

An attacking error by Kansas sealed the first set for Creighton 25-17 — their first set win of the season after back-to-back sweeps.

“Getting swept twice is not a good feeling

so we were obviously frustrated, but I think in the locker room yesterday we were like, ‘We need to come together as a team’ ... and I think we did that today. We focused on one point at a time,” junior Eloise Brandewie said.

The second set started similarly, with sophomore libero Saige Damrow sparking the Jays with her serving and defense to put them up 10-9.

“I have a lot of confidence, but it’s coming from my teammates. We’re in such good positions all around the court it’s making my job so easy,” Damrow said.

Creighton pulled away late, and senior Ava Martin’s kill set up set point at 24-20. A Kansas service error handed the Jays a 2-0 lead.

The Jayhawks responded in the third, staying even until an ace from Damrow gave Creighton an 11-10 edge. But Kansas fought back and ultimately closed out the set 25-21.

“Grit is our word, and I thought she [Damrow] showed a lot of that to make plays and continue to give our team a chance,” Rosen said.

The fourth set played out much the same way. Kansas led for most of the frame, but Creighton clawed back to tie it at 19-19 after a long rally ended with a kill by junior Destiny Ndam-Simpson.

“I honestly think we’re such a scrappy team ... and it comes from our blocking. We are getting such good touches and we’re

able to run down balls that not many teams would,” Damrow said.

Despite the late push, Kansas held on 27-25, forcing a decisive fifth set.

Creighton started slowly, trailing 0-3, but quickly regrouped to take the lead. Junior defensive specialist Sydney Breissinger entered the game and served a 9-0 run to pull the Bluejays out ahead in the winner-takes-all fifth set.

“I thought we did a better job today letting a point go and moving to the next one,” Rosen said.

From there, Brandewie took over at the net, combining blocking and hitting to extend Creighton’s lead to 11-7.

“I think Jaya [Johnson] did a great job of setting up that block, and it was pretty easy for me just to close, so I owe it all to my pins,” Brandewie said.

The Jays closed out the set — and the match — on a Ndam-Simpson kill, sealing a 15-12 win in the fifth and Creighton’s first victory of the season. It also marked Rosen’s first win as head coach.

Creighton now heads west for the Trojan Invitational in California. They’ll face San Diego today before taking on UC Santa Barbara and USC. The first serve is set for tonight at 6:00 p.m. CT.

# Bluejays fall in back-to-back road tests

AIDAN FLAIRTY  
Sports Reporter

After starting the season with a roller coaster of emotion, including a thrilling 2-1 road win over the Kansas City Roos and a heart-breaking 1-0 loss at the hands of Iowa State, the Creighton women’s soccer team went on a very difficult road trip. First, the Bluejays faced the Western Michigan Broncos in Kalamazoo, Mich. before traveling to face the No. 3 Duke Blue Devils in Durham, N.C.

Against the Broncos, the Bluejays took four shots in the first half, including a near score from LSU transfer midfielder Torri Gillis that was saved by Western Michigan goalkeeper Reagan Sulaver.

Gillis had another chance in the 25th minute, connecting on a header off a free kick from Ella Offer that drifted just wide. Creighton controlled possession for stretches of the opening half and looked the more dangerous team, but the match was still tied 0-0 at the break as both defenses held firm.

In the second half, the Bluejays struggled to keep up. Creighton gave up the first goal

of the match when Western Michigan’s Abby Werthman scored at the 63:06 mark with assistance from Mikayla Coore-Pascal and Justina L’Esperance. Werthman’s shot came from just outside the box and slipped past keeper Alyssa Zalac’s reach.

The Bluejays tried to respond with pressure of their own, but couldn’t convert their limited chances. Later, the Broncos extended their lead to 2-0 at the 79:59 mark when Drew Martin found the back of the net off a pass from Avery Peters and Werthman. Creighton couldn’t find a goal in the closing minutes, and the match ended as a 2-0 loss for the Bluejays.

“Where we’ve been having difficulty is with our consistency in the second half of games,” Head Coach Jimmy Walker said.

Three days later, the Bluejays took on No. 3 Duke in Durham. The Blue Devils entered the match unbeaten at 3-0, coming off wins over No. 11 Penn State and No. 8 Arkansas, and were fresh off a College Cup appearance in 2024 where they dropped only one game all season.

Duke controlled possession for most of the

first half, recording nine shots and forcing the Creighton backline to defend constantly. Zalac and the Bluejays’ defense held their ground, keeping the match scoreless through the first 45 minutes. Zalac came up with multiple saves to keep Creighton in it, including a diving stop midway through the half.

The pressure finally broke early in the second half when Avery Oder scored in the 51st minute off an assist from Kat Rader after a failed clearance in the box, giving Duke the 1-0 lead. Creighton had a few late pushes to equalize, with shots from Ariana Mondiri and Tejia Murray-Powell, but couldn’t find the back of the net. Duke closed out the match with a 21-2 edge in shots and a 14-2 advantage in corner kicks, while Zalac tallied six saves to keep the scoreline close.

“That was probably the best we’ve ever played since I’ve been the head coach,” Walker said. “... I know we’ve got nothing to show for it, but that’s a team that’s lost one game in two years. We almost pulled off probably the biggest upset in college soccer.”

Walker also credited Zalac’s performance as a key reason the Jays were able to hang with

one of the nation’s top teams.

“We know every game she plays she’s going to produce one or two big saves. She’s just that good,” Walker said.

The Bluejays are currently sitting with a 1-4 record, with their lone victory coming on the road against the Kansas City Roos. Next up, they take on No. 8 Arkansas on Friday at Morrison Stadium in the 13th Annual Soccerfest.

“We’ve got arguably one of the toughest schedules in the country this year, and we’ve put that together to test these girls,” Walker said.

Creighton’s upcoming match against Arkansas will be their first home match since August 21 and the first of four straight matches at Morrison.

“It’s going to be huge to be back. The girls love playing at home,” Walker said. “Man, it is going to be an exciting one for us on Friday if we come to play.”

Kickoff against the Razorbacks is set for 5 p.m. tonight at Morrison Stadium.

## SPORTS THIS WEEK AT HOME

Saturday Sept. 6	Sunday Sept. 7	Monday Sept. 8	Tuesday Sept. 9	Wednesday Sept. 10	Thursday Sept. 11	Friday Sept. 12
				Women’s Soccer vs. Omaha 5:00 p.m. Morrison Stadium  Men’s Soccer vs. Omaha 7:45 p.m. Morrison Stadium		Volleyball vs. No. 3 Louisville 8:00 p.m. D.J. Sokol Arena



# Creighton still in search of first win after scoreless draw

ABBIE GALLANT  
Editor in Chief

A scoreless draw in their home opener could be frustrating — four matches with no wins — but the Creighton men’s soccer team saw it as a step forward. Yes, they wanted to see their hard work result in a win, and of course they wanted to deliver that victory in front of their home crowd. But instead of hanging their heads, the Bluejay staff and goalkeeper spoke of progress, patience and the belief that results will follow.

Welcomed back to Morrison Stadium on Sept. 1, the Bluejays were looking for a breakthrough against Tulsa. Yet, the night played out much like the rest of their season so far — solid defensive stands, bursts of offensive rhythm and near-execution in the final third but no finishing touch.

Creighton controlled possession for much of the opening 30 minutes, holding strong on defense while pressuring Tulsa’s backline. Several offensive sequences threatened a breakthrough, but missed passes and strong defending kept the score even. In the final 15 minutes, Tulsa seized control, firing six shots and testing goalkeeper Matthew Hudson, who, with help from his defenders, kept the Bluejays level at halftime.

With the score stagnant at 0-0 after the break, Creighton applied offensive pressure, outshooting Tulsa 9-4 in the second half. Though the Golden Hurricane managed four more shot attempts, Creighton dominated late, earning six corner kicks in the final 10 minutes and creating several near-chances. The match ultimately ended scoreless and the Bluejays dropped to 0-2-2 on the season.

Despite the 0-0 result, Creighton is focused on growth. Here are three key takeaways from Head Coach Johnny Torres and goalkeeper Matthew Hudson on what went right, what they can build on and why the team remains optimistic.

**#1- It’s one step forward, every day. That’s Hudson’s perspective on the scoreless result.**

Despite falling just short of the go-ahead goal and their first win, Hudson remained optimistic about what the Bluejays have in store, especially with the tangible progress shown in the team’s clean sheet. And it’s true; the Bluejays have certainly made strides since they stepped on the pitch for their first regular season game at FAU. Every match, the team has become more comfortable with one another and the style of play that Torres expects them to execute. And while the shots might not have fallen this game, Hudson’s first clean sheet of his college career indicated this prog-

ress. The redshirt freshman’s composure and his backline’s renewed focus kept the Bluejays tied at a tidy 0-0.

“We did it together,” Hudson said about how he executed the clean sheet. “Obviously, we had a little bit of a rough start, but [the] big thing is just being together as a unit, especially with a lot of new faces, making sure we’re compact together ... I couldn’t have done [it] without my team.”

Even more important than the clean sheet against a high-caliber team like Tulsa was what it signaled for the season as a whole: progress.

“We had a tough three road games. They didn’t go our way, but you know, we build every game. We got our first clean sheet. Hey, that’s one step forward. Now, next, we look to Friday ... we’re looking to win games too [and] just keep building step by step, day by day,” Hudson said.

The theme of progress has been echoed repeatedly early in the season, as the Bluejays focus on building chemistry, refining their style of play and trusting the process.

**#2- It would be worrisome if the chances weren’t manifesting themselves, Torres said. Now, it’s just about converting on them when they come.**

Torres may not have wanted his home debut with the new roster to end in a scoreless draw, but he emphasized that the Bluejays still created opportunities. In the second half against Tulsa, the Bluejays outshot the Golden Hurricane 9-4 and earned six corner kicks, with five different players taking shots. None of these chances paid dividends, but they illustrated the promise this team shows in the attacking third, especially when multiple Bluejays are contributing to the pressure up front.

“The important thing is that we’re still creating chances,” Torres said. “I thought we were doing a good job to break in lines vertically rather than playing on the perimeter, whether there’s filtered passes through defensive lines or we’re beating people off the dribble.”

But converting on these opportunities starts with set pieces, which seemed to be Creighton’s biggest advantage and greatest frustration. Each corner and free kick offered a prime chance to take the lead, but none

found the back of the net.

Not only did converting on set pieces prove challenging, but Creighton’s inability to convert in the offensive third also came thanks to a multitude of fouls that created turnovers. Throughout the match, the Bluejays fouled 21 times while Tulsa only racked up 13.

It is one thing to be aggressive on the ball and fight for possession, but when each turnover grinds the developing offensive sequence to a halt, sustaining momentum in the offensive third is nearly impossible.

Thus, the Bluejays faced the perfect storm in their scoring struggles, with fouls cutting possessions short at critical moments and set pieces narrowly missing, leaving them still chasing the decisive finishing touch.

Torres is right—the Bluejays created plenty of opportunities, but turning those chances into goals and limiting fouls as much as possible are crucial next steps if Creighton wants to get a tally in the win column.

**#3- Freshmen are settling in, confidence is growing and Torres understands that’s the spark that can change matches.**

You can teach all the fundamentals you want, but without confidence on the field, fundamentals don’t translate into results — and that’s exactly the challenge Torres is navigating as he tries to get his new roster in sync.

But as matches have gone on, the freshmen on the team have gotten more comfortable on the pitch, beginning to make impacts on play, a promising sign for the team’s future.

Midfielder Ayden Kokoszka offered a glimpse of his talent with a strong play on the left side, while first-year defender Brian Edelman and midfielder Lucas Cavalcante made their presence felt in key moments.

The common thread? An increased sense of belief in themselves and the team, nurtured by Torres and his staff through deliberate reminders of each player’s value.

“We just have to continue to coach them up, continue to explain to them that we still believe in what they bring. As long as they believe in the game plan and our system and believe in themselves, things are going to fall. And that’s what I told them after the game. That was the message,” Torres said.

Thus, belief is the key — when the freshmen trust themselves and the system, their promising contributions can become the game-changing plays that deliver a breakthrough for the Bluejays. The question is how fast this belief can manifest itself on the field.

With four straight home matches ahead, the Bluejays will first look to take that ‘step forward’ mentality and turn it into results as they host No. 15 Denver for Socctoberfest today at 7:45 p.m.

“Denver’s one of the best in the business. [It’s] no coincidence why they were in the Final Four last year... They’re well organized. They have a lot of energy. They’re not afraid to roll up their sleeves and defend..., claw and get after it,” Torres said. “They’re quite dangerous on the transition too, so it’ll definitely be a tall order... but one that we’re up for.”

