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UC’s fourth annual Celebration of Lights

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With the holidays coming up, there’s no better time to celebrate culture, community and diversity. Ursinus College prides itself not only on the diversity of the campus but in the way that the school celebrates and respects all of the cultures.

On November 14, 2019 the “Students Today Alumni Tomorrow” group held its 4th annual Celebration of Lights event. It took place in Bomberger Auditorium. The event showcased various religions and celebrations.

The preparation was definitely not easy, but the STAT team did a remarkable job. “Some examples of the things I did to help were making sure guests had pamphlets, passing out and the lighting of the candles, reserving seats for the multiple participating parties, making sure we had tables for the food and activities,” said second-year Jo Bolda.

“While as a STAT member, we are all involved in the planning processes of many of the large events on campus, we do have more focused groups that delve deeper into the individual planning of specific events. The Celebration of Lights, in particular,

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What do painted eggs, 10.1 surround sound, your great grandmother’s swim suit, and a comfortable red chair have in common? Nothing frankly, except that they are all currently in the Berman Museum of Art.

This past week, the Berman kicked off its 30th Anniversary with a bang, opening a total of five new exhibitions to the public. The topics of these exhibitions range from metallic sound-producing sculptures to tackling how and what labor we value as a society, giving museum-goers a truly immersive experience.

The third floor gallery houses Stephanie Rowden’s “The Collection Speaks,” a dual experience of visual sights and audio meant to inform a close reading of the works on display. This exhibition, curated by Rowden, takes a few pieces out of the more than 8,000 works in the Berman’s vaults, bringing them into the light for viewers to draw new relationships between them and conclusions about them.

Two related shows are on display in the front and main gallery of the museum, and you will definitely hear the show before you see it. The well-lit front gallery is home to “The Tool-bag Years,” drawings and paintings by David Scher. These small vignettes about the lives of laborers feature activities often thought of as mundane, such as hammering a nail or climbing a ladder. When brought into the setting of a museum, these windows into others’ lives are meant to instill the idea that physical labor is no less important than intellectual labor.

The main gallery has been transformed into a pseudo-workshop, complete with dozens of wooden saw horses. The floor has been covered for overhead projects to display a bird’s eye view of the original performance, accompanied by surround sound speakers giving viewers the...
falls to the Traditions Committee,” Bolda said. The event provided traditional holiday snacks. The event had representatives from different cultures and religions present about what they celebrate, as well as how they celebrate. “I think my favorite part would have been watching the musical performances as well as getting to learn about the different holidays celebrated this time of year,” second-year student Rachel Conhod said.

The all female a cappella choir, B’Naturals, performed Rise Up by Andra Day.

Senior Miriam Thomas reflected on her experience performing at her final Celebration of Lights event.

Head of the Traditions Committee for STAT, Brianna Valerio, delegated tasks to members of the committee and was the go-to person for planning.

Valerio explained the process of who would be interested in the event.

“We reached out to groups who participated in the event before to see if they’d want to participate again and also reached out to new groups who have never participated before to see if they’d want to be a part of it,” she said.

“I’m happy we got to bring so many cultural traditions to light during a time of year where some groups might not feel as represented as others. Celebration of lights has showed me that building community starts with the appreciation of a different perspective,” she said.

Valerio expressed her enthusiasm in regards to the event.

“Celebration of Lights is a beautiful event that I enjoy attending every year! I was so excited about the positive outcome this year and I really enjoyed it because the love and appreciation shown by the audience and everyone who participated was palpable,” she said.

The event was extremely inspiring and informative due to the way it was conducted. By having such a broad spectrum of cultures and religions, students were really allowed to engage and connect with the different traditions.

“I definitely don’t feel safe after what happened. But even before that I didn’t feel safe. I’d hear from other people they would get called racist stuff.”
- Emelyn Rodriguez, 2022

“I feel somewhat safe walking on Main Street. A little more nerve wracking when there’s only two cars passing by. It depends on the time of day. But overall, somewhat.”
- Tori Williams, 2020

“Pretty safe but not after recent news.”
- Nicole Kosar, 2020

“It depends on the time of day. I don’t feel safe walking at night. I don’t feel safe overall. I usually just bike and it’s less of a chance for people to grab me.”
- Janice Partee, 2020

“I personally feel relatively safe but I know things are different because the aggressors are typically people that look like me.”
- Donovan Erskine, 2021

“I’ve never felt unsafe walking down Main Street. However, I attribute that to the fact that I’m relatively tall, white, and male. The most I’ve ever experienced is people yelling at me from their cars but I’ve never felt like I was in any danger.”
- Coulson Hearn, 2020
Missy Bryant named new Dean of Students

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Last week, Dean Missy Bryant was introduced as the Dean of Students after serving as interim dean of students since July.

Bryant received her undergraduate degree in History at Susquehanna University. She also received her master’s degree in the same subject at the University of Alabama.

She has been at Ursinus for nine and a half years. She has been the co-director of the Institute for Student Success since it was created in 2017.

As co-director, she focused on student success and retention efforts. She worked directly with students on a daily basis and gained an understanding of the various challenges students experienced on campus.

Prior to coming to Ursinus, Bryant served as the Director of New Student Orientation and Student Support at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

In her new position, Bryant will oversee residence life, wellness, and continue her work with the office of student affairs and academic affairs.

Bryant discussed her enthusiasm to continue to work as an advocate for students.

“In my new role I will work with my student affairs colleagues to ensure that our policies, programs, and initiatives promote inclusive community and student success,” she said.

2020 Commencement speaker announced

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This past week Ursinus College’s 2020 commencement speaker was announced: Novelist Min Jin Lee, author of “Free Food for Millionaires” and “Pachinko.” Lee is a first-generation American and student. Her novels are both critically acclaimed and award-winning.

This past week Ur-sinus College’s 2020 commencement speaker was announced: Novelist Min Jin Lee, author of “Free Food for Millionaires” and “Pachinko.” Lee is a first-generation American and student. Her novels are both critically acclaimed and award-winning. I got together with Professor Meredith Goldsmith in Academic Affairs to discuss the selection process and how they knew Lee was the right choice.

Q: Who is typically involved in choosing the commencement speaker?

A: For the past few years, we send out an open call right after graduation to the Ursinus community asking for nominations. Then the list is sent to the Campus Planning and Priorities Committee. This committee consists of staff, faculty and typically a student rep.

Q: What are the qualities you look for in a commencement speaker?

A: We always want to look for someone who is a compelling speaker, a meaningful life story. We also tend to look for someone who has a meaningful student experience as well. For example, last year Rhiannon Giddens spoke on how she was conflicted while in school and how that lead her to where she is today. As far as this year is concerned, Min Jin Lee was a first-generation who ended up at Yale studying history and then became a novelist.

Q: How does the process work typically speaking? How far out do you start meeting, how do you find candidates, etc…

A: It really has to be done a year in advance, we actually cute it really short this year by starting in the summer but it’s just so hard to think about graduation that far in advance. By June we had already generated a list. We had about six to eight people in consideration and we went through it as a committee and people made selections. We all just really liked Min Jin Lee and I called her agent and she just happened to be free. We got so lucky!

Q: How did the committee decide on Min Jin Lee for the 2020 commencement speaker? What stood out for her?

A: Since she’s an author that really stood out to us, we hadn’t had an author in a number of years. We all just really liked Min Jin Lee and I called her agent and she just happened to be free. We got so lucky!

Q: Was there a particular reason Min Jin Lee was selected for the class of 2020 in particular, does her story resonate with the class in the eyes of the committee?

A: Well since it’s the 150th, we really wanted the speaker to be special. We also have an increasing number of students who are first-gen, and since Min Jin Lee is also first-generation it seemed like a good fit. It’s also a moment where immigration is in the news and since she’s an immigrant, so there are a lot of reasons why she was the perfect fit for us.

Min Jin Lee will be speaking Saturday, May 16, 2020, at 10 a.m. on the lawn outside of the Berman Museum of Art on the Ursinus campus.
In Dr. Nzadi Keita’s Philly X course, “Philly Word,” students are able to immerse themselves in Philadelphia’s vast literary culture. During the duration of the ongoing fall course, students have been reading works by Philadelphia writers, as well as curating blogs and vlogs about their experiences. The course involves engaging in interviews with various figures steeped in the Philadelphia writing scene, as well as visiting different events in the city.

The class is made up of four students total. One of the students in “Philly Word,” Senior Amanda Turcios, shared the excitement that comes with a course that strays away from being your average lecture course. “My favorite part about taking Philly Word with Dr. Keita is that there is always something new going on. There’s never a stagnant set of routines that we do, and our classes are never boring,” Turcios said. “I’ve learned so many things outside of the classroom through attending literary events, which makes my experience feel more well-rounded.”

Turcios expressed how Dr. Keita, the instructor for the course, is “filled with so much knowledge it’s always interesting to hear her speak about whatever topic she has her mind set on. Turcios said, “She gives us different kinds of writing prompts that trigger the creative side of your brain, so the writing that we do as a class doesn’t feel like your standard academic essay.”

Dr. Keita, who is Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of African American/Africana Studies at Ursinus, was born in Philly. Being a Philadelphia resident, Dr. Keita explains the main differences between teaching on campus compared to in the city. “I drive not 60, but ten minutes to take a 15-minute subway ride downtown. I’m a native, so when I’m here, I’m deeply at home—visually, emotionally, spiritually, and of course, physically—so while Ursinus is my Collegeville home, I’m more centered in Philly,” Keita said. “This particular course also centers me in my ‘parallel life’ as a writer.”

“The students have encountered people in my community who write, publish, educate, cultivate, and advocate for Philly’s literary life,” Dr. Keita went on to explain. “These encounters have been intentional, through contact with our guest speakers, and incidental, as when we ran into two of my neighbor-friends, attending the new U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo’s reading at the Free Library. Those neighbors were Sonia Sanchez, literary activist and legend, who was Philly’s first Poet Laureate, and Yolanda Wisher, who followed Sanchez in that post.” Joy Harjo’s reading was held on Nov. 13, and marks one of the group’s many events across the city.

Dr. Keita also likes how teaching allows not only the students, but her to experience more of Philadelphia’s literary culture. “A very sweet and productive difference is that I am walking far more than I do when teaching in Olin and going to many more readings that I would be too tired to attend after an hour of driving,” Keita said.

New York City native Turcios likes having class in Philadelphia since it feels like being back home. “Having class in Philadelphia makes it so much more easier to be independent in terms of how my schedule functions,” Turcios said. “For all three of my classes: Race and Ethnicity in Philadelphia, Philly Word, and Philly 101, we mostly go on trips to events that are around the city. It’s much better than sitting in a classroom in the suburbs.”

Unlike a lecture class at Ursinus, Turcios explains how the courses of Philly X allow her to experience an environment that goes beyond the classroom. “We go to shows, poetry readings, parties, lectures, bars, film screenings, cultural centers, and that’s only to name a few. I learn better when I’m in an atmosphere that’s active and lively, instead of quiet and dormant.”

When asked to pick a favorite moment from the course so far, Dr. Keita found it hard to choose just one. “It’s a six-way tie between the literary walking tour my students conducted, the heart-wrenching reading/talk by Lamont Steptoe, the expansive conversation with Larry Robin, publisher of Moonstone Press, the uplifting visit with Chris Rogers at the Paul Robeson House, the vibrant insights of Kalela Williams from the Free Library, and the exposure to both prizewinning memoirist Sarah Broom and the first Native American U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo,” Dr. Keita explained.
GSA reflects on semester’s exciting events

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This semester, the Gender Sexuality Alliance has held numerous events and open meetings on campus. The Gender Sexuality Alliance, also known as GSA, is the organization that raises awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and works towards equality and inclusion. They work to include everyone from the Ursinus community regardless of whether they are queer, straight, or questioning.

The organization has had many exciting events and advancements since the beginning of the semester. For example, the former Rainbow Resource Center has been renamed “Radiance.” It is located in the Student Affairs Office in Lower Wismer, to represent its purpose of allowing students to radiate light and live their authentic selves. Another major event run by the GSA was its bi-semester event “Gayla” that took place in October. Many members of the Ursinus community showed out to have a good time in a safe space. Other fun events that allow students to do this occur during the weekly GSA events on Tuesday at 8 pm in the IIE. So far there have been events where students could hang out and tie-dye shirts, make friendship bracelets, and decorate pride cupcakes.

In addition to these exciting events, GSA also conducts discussions on important topics such as LGBTQ+ Identities and history, feminism, and Transsexual history. During these discussions, students are allowed to share their personal experiences and ideas on how to make the Ursinus community more inclusive and safer for everyone. An exciting exhibit that was recently brought to the Ursinus community with the help of GSA is “The Long Road to Equality” traveling exhibit ran by the LGBT Center Central PA History Project. The exhibit, which ran from Nov. 4 to Nov. 15 in Myrin Library, highlighted the efforts of LGBTQ+ activists in Pennsylvania throughout history.

Overall, the future of the GSA looks bright according to president Cynnie Ercole who explains how in the future they would “like to see lower classmen join the executive board if they want to be involved so we can keep our traditions lively.” Ercole went on to say that, additionally, “LGBTea Time will recur next semester which will be a discussion/event each month.” Ercole further talked about how another big event that will come up next semester is the Pride event and march, similar to the one that took place last spring semester.

Claude Wolfer, treasurer of the GSA, explains how “[their] favorite event was the pride event last spring, because for the first time [they] truly felt like the whole campus was involved and showed up for the LGBTQ+ community. There were students who weren’t regular GSA meeting attendees who came up to the tables and went to the events; there were faculty and staff who came up, asked questions, and took pins; and the faculty presentations were really meaningful and reassured me that professors are making an effort to support queer students. We have a new executive board this year but we’re definitely going to bring this event back.”

If you would like to hear more about GSA and their upcoming events you could follow their Instagram page @gsa_ursinus or their twitter @GSA_Ursinus. Weekly meetings are at 8 pm in the IIE, located in Lower Wismer.

### Happening on Campus

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Claude Wolfer, treasurer of the GSA, Courtesy of GSA Ursinus
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Recently, viral videos surfaced on social media displaying police arresting New York subway riders for fare evasion. These brought attention to police tactics and created an open discussion about how low-income riders and people of color are more often subject to punishment. In response, protests in New York City have begun targeting arrests for subway fare evasion.

At the beginning of September, Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) hired 500 people for its police force. The agency hoped for the new hires to help NYPD officers deal with fare evasion and the homeless. According to the agency, prior to the new hires, 2,700 city officers were already assigned to the transit system. The increase in policing on public transportation disproportionately impacts poor communities of color. In 2016, subway stations with the highest rate of fare evasion were located in predominantly black neighborhoods near the border of Brownsville and East New York.

In 2017, a report conducted by the Community Service Society found arrests for fare evasion often involved young black men in subway stations located in high-poverty black neighborhoods. From the MTA data of arrests, most of those who are fined or arrested for fare evasion in New York are black or Hispanic.

To arrest someone for fare evasion when they’re trying to get around the city can have severe, life-long consequences besides facing jail time. People don’t jump the turnstile or crawl underneath them simply because they feel like it. This issue has to do with the increasing fare over the past few years, and the fact that people simply can’t afford it.

For the MTA, fares account for 38% of their annual earnings. Although the system is expected to reach a $1 billion operating budget deficit by 2023, it has enough money to hire new officers and install cameras focused on fare evasion. According to a report by the Citizens Budget Commission, the annual cost for one new officer is $93,000 for the first year. All 500 officers and 81 supervisors will cost $56 million in the first year.

The anger from commuters doesn’t stem just from the treatment of marginalized groups by police but the frustration with the lack of efficiency of the subway system. The MTA is known for train delays, breakdowns, service changes, and expensive fare prices.

The MTA is pouring money into services they believe will improve the community but they’re doing more harm than good. New Yorkers have been advocating for better transportation service but have received the total opposite. They’ve put the majority of their money, in the already expensive and gentrified city, towards a system providing everything but reliable train service.

“Harriet” is a triumph of a biopic

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Sometimes when I’m about to watch a biopic, my opinion tends to lean towards the cynical. What ways is this movie going to sashay away from the more upsetting elements of the past this time, or else exploit those elements to the point where they feel almost fetishized? I’ll admit, going into 2019’s “Harriet,” I was not especially excited to see a movie about one of the most overlooked historical figures, for fear it would water down her power and perseverance.

Luckily, “Harriet” did not water the title character down so much as it let her rise, like Miriam’s well. The film surprised me with its touching yet gripping take on Harriet Tubman. Without a doubt, the actor playing Harriet - Cynthia Erivo, known primarily for her Broadway performance as Celie in “The Color Purple” - owned this movie. This also explains why she sings so well - there are multiple diegetic scenes of Erivo singing spirituals in order to convey a message to the slaves covertly without the plantation owners knowing.

Harriet herself goes through every emotion in the book as she is forced to run, swim, trek for miles, and even learn to shoot in order to gain freedom. But she isn’t stoic or cold - Tubman is allowed to feel the pain and heartbreak of all the difficult choices she makes, and allows that pain to become the bravery she needs to carry her people further into the promised land (aka good ol’ Philly).

In many ways, this film is a religious experience; we see Tubman receive premonitions that she explains to William Still (Leslie Odom Jr, aka Aaron Burr from the musical Hamilton) are from the Lord himself. Still, in perhaps the only joke in the movie, he writes “possible brain damage” in his notepad in response. However, her premonitions are proved right time and time again, allowing us to see that God really is on the side of our protagonist. The spirituals sung by the slaves relate directly to the events of the Bible, and Tubman with the runaways crosses the river in much the same way the biblical Moses does.

I shouldn’t have to say this, but in case any Joss Whedon fans are reading, this is not by any definition a comedic or quirky take on Tubman’s story. Director Kasi Lemmons treats the script with dignity, grace, and compassion. This is not a story that should be told lightly, and I never once got the sense that the film was holding anything back.

Overall, I was genuinely impressed by the honest and powerful take on injustice. This movie never both-sides itself - the farm owners are self-righteous monsters, and they deserve everything they get. I hope more people go see this one, because I think a movie like “Harriet” is really needed at a time where history is told by those who would like certain things forgotten. But forgetting injustices too often leads to those same injustices happening again. This movie does not let you forget - and that’s exactly what it ought to do.
chemistry this group has is incredible. We have been a close team in past years, but there is something particularly special about this group. With a smaller roster, everyone has a very important role that is needed to help us win a championship.” Now, being that the team’s energy is the best that it has ever been, McTamney is glad to see the group coming together for the rest of the season. “We have a real family and everyone loves playing with one another. Our team is fired up for the season because of the talent we have and we understand that we are one of the best teams in the league.”

With the season up and running, there are high hopes for the future. “Our future goals are to lead the offensive categories in the league like field goal percentage and free throw percentage. We want to lead many defensive categories and prove to people we are a two-way team,” states McTamney. He also has hopes looking even further down the road to the end of the season. “We also want to win a Centennial Conference championship and continue to play in February in the NCAA tournament.”

In order to make these goals happen when it comes to game time, McTamney states that, “it starts by coming to practice and working on these things. We need to have the mental focus in practice to learn from mistakes and correct them.” Olsheski also explains the depth that they go through and the preparation that goes into working towards some goals. “We work backwards from winning a centennial championship. To do so, we prepare by scheduling tough games early in the season. We play nationally ranked Randolph Macon this weekend. Playing tough tournament games now will prepare us for tough playoff games in February.”

With the main goal of winning a Centennial Championship, these players are excited to show what they have been working towards. In addition, with the rest of these goals in mind, and the energy of the team on a constant incline, the UC men’s basketball team has high hopes for the rest of their season. Go Bears!

kind of impact I think I have is a motivational one. With my success and my hard-working attitude, I can show that it really is all about hard work and it motivates the guys to push themselves.” The two freshmen are forming into a leadership role as the Bears will definitely look to lean on them in the future and use them as assets to take home many more championship belts this season.

The Bears also had three other place-winners at the Brawl with sophomore Gary Nagle (174) and junior Jason Carter (197) taking third and junior Ray Calderiaio (133) finishing fourth.

The mentality for Bears freshmen Adams and Marchesano is truly impressive for college wrestling newcomers. Their winning and team-first mentality truly has an impact on the way they and their teammates perform.

Adams, who clinched the championship at the 125-pound weight class was a dominant force on the mat in his path to his second victory of the season. The rookie posted two pins, a tech fall, in his path to victory at the Fall Brawl. Adams encountered Elizabethtown’s Austin Jones whom he defeated in just 2:17. Adams also defeated Johns Hopkins’ Brent Lorin in the semifinals by a point difference of 16-5. Adams explains that “winning my second championship was very cool and made me want to win more especially wanting to win more belts and eventually a national title.”

Marchesano, another rookie Bear, dominated the 149-pound bracket on his path to claiming the second championship belt for the Bears. Marchesano commenced his championship run of the Fall Brawl by shutting out Elizabethtown’s Shane Strausser 16-0. After a pin and a 12-7 victory, Marchesano defeated Delaware Valley’s Evan Widing by a 4-0 margin. Marchesano states that “it felt amazing to win my first championship, also it felt very motivating, it makes me want to work harder to better myself and to become the best wrestler in the country.”

The Bears wrestling team will look to build up to their centennial conference matches that begin in January. “We just have to keep the momentum going. We have had a strong couple of weeks so far and everyone’s getting more confident in their skills and ability which is helping in the long run” Adams says. If the Bears continue the way they are, they surely will peak at the right time and be a dominant force in the conference.

Scores as of Monday, November 18

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SPORTS

Opening Tourney is a Slam Dunk for Men’s BB

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The Ursinus College men’s basketball team took their season-opening tournament, The Dutch Burch Tip-Off, into their own hands by defeating Lycoming College 85-76 this past Saturday. This feat, which had not been accomplished since 2016, is a big deal for this men’s team.

The Bears knew the game was not going to be an easy win, so they made sure to do their homework before the tournament. “They have talent on their roster, so going into the game we knew we were going to have competition. We prepared for their talent and not having seen a win in this tournament since he has been here, this is one that McTamney will not forget.”

McTamney, now in his senior season, has been able to see this team grow and become closer and closer as a team each year. “As a senior, I would say this year has been the greatest year in terms of a connected team. Everyone has a team-first mentality and everyone just wants to work and get better,” states McTamney. Olshevski was also in agreement with McTamney, stating, “The

Sophomore Luke Olshevski also talked about how he knew, coming into the tournament, that Lycoming would be tough. “Personally I was most worried about playing Lycoming because they have some great talent and are now being coached by Mike McGarvey who has his jersey retired in our gym. We knew that they were going to show up ready to compete, and they did just that.”

Freshman Wrestlers Headline Fall Brawl

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There truly is nothing like debuting in your sport with the support of your home crowd. And what a weekend it was for the 2019 Bears wrestling team. All the hard work in the weight room and on the mats was showing as the Bears hosted the 2019 Fall Brawl on November 9th. The wrestling team showed out in their second tournament of the season and by the looks of it, it could be a very good season for the Bears.

Wrestling is not just a sport for these athletes. It represents a whole lot more for each and every one of them. The brotherhood and comradery that this team has pays off in their success on and off the mats. Led by coach Joe Jamison and captains Freddy Corradetti and Derek Gulotta, the Bears lean on and compete for each other in order to achieve their common goal of winning in each and every tournament. The Fall Brawl tournament showed other schools in the area that the 2019/2020 Bears are a force to be reckoned with. After an individual title the previous week at the season-opening Messiah Invitational, Terry Adams, a rookie wrestler, racked up another championship title for the second weekend in a row. Another Bears rookie, Shawn Marchesano, accompanied Adams in taking home a championship belt for the Bears at the Fall Brawl. The futures for these two rookies look extremely bright. Adams states that “The

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Upcoming Games

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