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# Student wins a scholarship to study in Washington, D.C.

by Kathleen Cochran  
Asst. News Editor

Elizabeth Smith, a fourth-year student, won the DeJoy-Wos Family Foundation scholarship to study at George Mason University and intern with the American Legion for summer 2022 in Washington, D.C.

The scholarship allows students to live in Washington, D.C., for the summer and intern at a program that matches what issues they want to focus on. They also get to hear from speakers and attend policymaking meetings.

Smith was born and raised in the Nava Reservation in New Mexico and moved to North Carolina when she was in eighth grade. She is majoring in sociology with a minor in criminal justice, and she will attend graduate school in fall 2023 for a master's in criminal justice.

"I remember the night I got the email because they had told me that I

got accepted to the program and the scholarship in the same email," Smith said. "I was eating dinner, and I had my phone. Then, the email notification popped up. [I] opened it, and the first line [said]: 'You've been accepted to [The Fund for American Studies] on a full scholarship.' Then I was like, 'Wow, I didn't think it would happen.' I was very surprised but also very grateful to have the opportunity."

Smith was one of nine students selected for this scholarship from the North Carolina and Estonia areas. Each of the nine students received \$100,000 in scholarships and financial assistance to attend The Fund for American Studies summer program.

Every applicant for the Fund for American Studies summer program provided their resume, interests,

future career goals, internship location and personal political beliefs for the application.

The application process has five categories from which applicants can choose: business and government relations, international affairs, economics and public policy, journalism, and leadership in the American Presidency. Each of these categories requires a different application process for the program.

Smith is interested in public policy, so she was a part of the business and government relations category.

"I had to give three issues on public policy. [For example], what I would introduce if I were a congressman or senator," Smith said.

Each student in the program studies at George Mason University and holds an internship with a prominent organization within their field of interest. Smith chose to intern with the American Legion.

The American Legion is a nonprofit organization that works to help war veterans and their families when in need and guides them after service.

Part of the application process is when the students are paired with where they will be interning for the summer. Smith states that the people with her application worked with their partners and found her four matches with public policy. She interviewed all four and chose the American Legion based on their interview questions and professionalism.

"I'm passionate about giving back to our veterans," Smith said. "It allows me to be a servant here to the ones who served the country and learn more about public policy."

Smith studied public policy and internship seminar and introduction to

economics at George Mason University. While taking classes, Smith worked almost 30 hours a week and experienced Washington, D.C.

"It's been busy," Smith said. "There's been a lot of opportunities. It's exposed me to many different perspectives. When you come to D.C., I feel like you get dumped in a melting pot of many different political beliefs. It's fun to live in D.C."

Smith also shared her interning experiences at American Legion.

"Interning at the American Legion is interesting in itself and what you do and how you interact with the different portfolios in helping veterans," Smith said. "About two weeks ago, we received an email or a letter from an incarcerated veteran in the California State Prison. So, we had to contact the Veteran Affairs justice outreach specialists to ensure that they can help him with whatever needs he wants and to ensure that he gets taken care of."

Smith heard about this opportunity from the emails the career center sends to the students weekly.

"I saw an email that said 'Do you want to live in D.C.?' and that piqued my interest," Smith said.

Smith read more about the application process and how much the program costs. Then, she reached out to her program advisor, Lainey Carlton, who put Smith in touch with a scholarship opportunity from Lewis DeJoy for students in North Carolina.

"[I] did not think I would get it," Smith said. "In my head, I was like, 'Well, if I do get accepted, I would need a scholarship because there's no way I can make it without one.'"

**Read more online at [ninertimes.com](https://ninertimes.com)**



Photo of Elizabeth Smith in Washington, D.C.  
courtesy of Elizabeth Smith

# Housing update Aug. 23

141 STUDENTS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN OFF-CAMPUS LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

by Jessica Ceballos  
News Editor

**Updated: This article has been revised to reflect recent changes in housing as of Aug. 23.**

One hundred forty-one students have been placed in their expanded university housing.

The student's temporary living arrangements are as follows: 91 students at The Edge apartments, 26 students at the Sonesta Select hotel and 24 at the Holiday Inn hotel, according to Buffie Stephens, director of issues management and media relations.

According to Stephens, the housing demand has lowered from 440 students to 356, to 300, to 141 as of Aug. 23. The number of students has dropped due to cancellations and students who found other living arrangements.

There are Residential Advisors with the students in each of the locations. According to the fall 2022 expanded university housing website, Housing and Residence Life (HRL) will actively work to ensure students are afforded the opportunities to meet and connect with fellow students while in expanded living circumstances.

Faith Huffman, second-year, elected to comment about the situation with

housing. Huffman reached out to the Dean of Students via email on Aug. 23 but has not heard back.

"As off-campus students that applied to be placed on campus, it is not our fault the University ran out of housing and still let students apply," Huffman said. "We were sent multiple emails throughout the summer telling us to be patient and [that] we would be assigned soon. Someone knew then that there was not enough housing and did not notify any students until almost a month before school [started]."

"College is stressful enough; learning the college you attend out of state does not have housing doubles the stress," Huffman said.

Huffman stated in her email to the dean that she could not attend Gold Rush events between classes because of the time it takes to get on campus and back to the hotel via the shuttle.

On the fall 2022 expanded university living website, the shuttle is supposed to run every 30 minutes. However, Huffman states it takes about 40-45 minutes to get on and off campus.

"The least, I feel, the school could do is two shuttles, every 15-20 minutes, seeing

as how we were thrown here," Huffman said. "The whole process is a lot and makes it extremely time-consuming and hard for no reason."

Huffman shared her experience of getting food from on-campus.

"...it should not take me three hours from start to finish. Another point I want to add is that not a single piece of food is offered in the hotels, so we do have to [make] the 3-hour trip," Huffman said. "[They also] canceled our meal plans and did not notify us until after school started."

In addition to missing campus events and taking three hours to get food, Huffman talked about finance issues. She spoke about not having all the payments aligned to pay on time and getting a loan to afford the extra costs.

"I honestly feel like we were thrown here and that no one cares about how wrong they are doing us," Huffman said.

The Niner Times spoke with Student Body President Tatiyana Larson and Chief of Staff Christian Rios about what the SGA is doing to help the students by working with HRL to have a place to live for the upcoming semester.

"One of the things that I'm personally

pushing for that I brought up in our discussion is to make sure this doesn't happen again," said Rios. "So maybe look at that timeline. Maybe make it a little earlier. Maybe instead, [don't] put in the contract 'we are guaranteed to give you housing' because this is giving more problems."

"HRL's miscommunication during this time, in particular, shows how a lack of accurate and timely communication with students can be extremely problematic," said Larson. "Not only due to the financial stress it places on students and their families, but because of the lack of transparency and distrust it breeds among the student body. Accountability will undoubtedly need to improve going forward, and we will work to ensure those conversations are happening consistently and in a timely manner."

According to HRL via Stephens, "UNC Charlotte is committed to providing all of our students in University housing a safe, supportive and positive experience. We appreciate their patience as we worked through the final details for expanded housing and move-in. We welcome all our students back to campus and look forward to a great year."

## E-scooters are now under the LEAP Mobility program

by Sunnya Hadavi  
Editor-in-Chief

UNC Charlotte's e-scooter and bikes are back for use under the new LEAP Mobility program. Following the switch to LEAP Mobility from Gotcha Powered by BOLT, students must download the LEAP Mobility application on mobile devices.

The change from Gotcha Powered by BOLT is due to unresponsiveness between the company and UNC Charlotte's Parking and Transportations Services (PaTS).

"[Gotcha Powered by BOLT] was usually very prompt and always on time. We noticed a meeting that was canceled with no email stating why but did not think much of it," PaTS

Assistant Director for Transportation Michael Christenbury said. "They started canceling everything, stopped communicating, would not respond to emails."

The Niner Times reached out to Gotcha Powered by BOLT for a comment and received no response.

In a tweet sent out on July 26, PaTS originally announced that Gotcha Powered by BOLT is no longer providing its service and was not expected to return in the foreseeable future. An update was also included in the July 28 Niner Insider newsletter email.

"The Chancellor made it clear that she wanted us to do just about anything to

make sure these bikes and scooters were available and came back in the fall," said PaTS Director Doug Lape.

According to the numbers from PaTS, 27,464 e-scooter and bike rentals were purchased between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. The fall 2021 semester alone had 2,824 bike rentals and 14,561 scooter rentals.

Following the cancellation of Charlotte's contract with Gotcha Powered by BOLT, all e-scooters and bikes left fell under the ownership of Charlotte. LEAP Mobility reached out to PaTS and offered to move the existing bikes and e-scooters onto their program

Lape told the Niner Times, "[LEAP

Mobility] is a short-term fix. It is really just for the fall semester to allow us time to release a formal RFP and go after another provider, which could be anyone like Spin, Lime, Bird [or] whoever is out there can bid on it. At that point, we would replace the bikes and scooters with theirs, but that process takes way longer than 30 days."

The Gotcha e-scooters were first implemented on Charlotte's campus in March 2020 and offered a new method for quick transportation between buildings. Issues with the program have appeared in other cities as well, such as Richmond, Virginia, as reported by the East Bay Times.



# The Supreme Court's ruling removes judicial power from Indigenous courts

by Jessica Danesi  
Opinion Editor

On June 29, 2022, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that limited the abilities of Native American courts. The ruling declares that the state can prosecute crimes committed against Native American victims by non-Native American perpetrators within Native American territory. This means that the power to prosecute will likely defer to the state. Some Native Americans are upset about this ruling since it removes power and sovereignty from Tribal Nations. They believe that crimes committed in tribal land should be under the jurisdiction of Indigenous courts. This decision is yet another example of the United States government stripping freedoms from Native Americans.

Three years prior, in 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that the Eastern half of the land in Oklahoma is within a Native American reservation. This ruling was *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, which decided that the state could not criminally prosecute crimes that occurred on Native American land without the consent of the Native American tribes. This case was a victory for Indigenous activists, though it is important to note that from a legal standpoint, this ruling only affected tribes within Oklahoma.

"The Supreme Court today kept the United States' sacred promise to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of a protected reservation," the Muscogee Creek Nation said in a statement regarding the 2019 ruling. "Today's decision will allow the Nation to honor our ancestors by maintaining our established sovereignty and territorial boundaries."

However, the Supreme Court's recent actions through *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta* (2022) restrict the freedoms of Indigenous courts that were placed in

*McGirt v. Oklahoma*. Page Freeman, a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and president of the Native American Student Association here at UNC Charlotte, believes this recent ruling "chips away at tribal sovereignty."

The sovereignty of Tribal Nations that are federally recognized is acknowledged by the United States government, though all Tribal Nations are inherently sovereign. *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta* displays the government's infringement upon the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's authority and ability to self-govern. Indigenous sovereignty is essential, considering everything the United States government has done throughout this country's history to strip them of their rights and autonomy.

Moreover, the Supreme Court seems to be heading in a more conservative direction. This ruling is not the only recent example that suggests this shift. Other conservative-leaning rulings that transgress upon Indigenous peoples' freedoms may be enacted in the upcoming future. For instance, *Brackeen v. Haaland* is a case that will be heard in fall 2022. This case could potentially overturn the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which prioritizes placing Native American children in the foster system to be adopted by Native American families. Should this act be overturned, it would mean that Native American children are likely not to be as connected to and educated about their own culture, something they are most definitely entitled to.

The United States government has enacted some rulings and acts that positively impact Native American communities, such as *McGirt v. Oklahoma* and the ICWA. Still,

some Native Americans feel that the government has not done enough, especially considering how new actions could be detrimental to Tribal Nations.

"The government hasn't done nearly enough to give justice to the Indigenous people of this country," said Page Freeman. "[*McGirt v. Oklahoma*] was nowhere near enough to rectify the horrors that Native communities have faced at the hand of the United States government."

In the future, Freeman hopes to see more Indigenous people included in the United States government so that their voices can be heard on a national level. "I hope to see the US government recognize every Tribal Nations' right to rule their land as they see fit instead of doing everything in their power to attack tribal sovereignty and destroy Native communities more than they already have," said Freeman. "It seems like

our government is going in the wrong direction when it comes to interacting with tribal communities, and that needs to change."

Ultimately, the freedoms and rights of Native Americans must be protected and recognized by the United States government. The voices of Indigenous people deserve to be amplified, and Tribal Nations should be able to self-govern and prosecute non-Native Americans for crimes committed on tribal land. While some positive reforms have been implemented in the past, new changes such as *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta* are intruding upon Tribal Nations' authority. Hopefully, the government will take more action to support indigenous communities in the near future. With this being one of the many prominent Supreme Court cases in the past few months, it's all the more crucial to get out and vote this November.



Graphic of Muscogee (Creek) Nation flag and U.S. flag  
by Zoya Zalevskiy

# Big nights for Big Time Rush

## BOY BAND RETURNS FOR PERFORMANCES IN MAJOR CITIES

by Bethany Ivan & Jade Suszek  
Asst. Arts & Culture Editor & Asst. Photo Editor

Summer got even hotter with the return of the beloved boy band, Big Time Rush. Along with their surprise reunion after a seven-year hiatus and the release of several new songs, the group announced their summer tour, Big Time Rush: Forever Tour, earlier this year.

The band's big nights consisted of crazy antics personalized by every venue they played. Throughout the night, the boys' connection that we saw on their self-titled television show matched the energy that we saw on stage. It was like watching an episode of the show.

The night opened up with viral TikTok celebrity and budding singer Dixie D'amelio. She greeted fans sweetly with a smile while performing a variety of her songs off of her new debut album, "a letter to me," which included her song, "Someone to Blame." She also beautifully sang a powerful rendition of Carrie Underwood's song, "Before He Cheats," where the crowd chimed in.

Once D'amelio left the stage, Big Time Rush began to perform. They played a mixture of their new and old songs that fans have grown up on. The concert opened

with "Windows Down" and ended with "Boyfriend." Throughout their set list, they also performed their latest singles, such as "Never Giving You Up" and the latest song of the summer, "Honey."

While singing songs that pertain to their early 2010s era, they performed the boy band dance moves we all saw and potentially learned in the television show. To spice up the songs we already grew up with, we were graced by beautiful harmonies. The harmonies were extremely prevalent in "No Idea."

The boys gave an acoustic rendition of their widely known break-up song, "Worldwide," where they also picked several fans from the audience to be their 'Worldwide girls.'

Big Time Rush's tour kicked off in major cities and took place in cities in our home states: Charlotte, N.C., and Atlanta, Ga.

### Charlotte, N.C. July 16 - Bethany Ivan

When I got to the music venue, there were so many fans that went all out in Big Time Rush merchandise as well as posters that had either references to the show or wished one of the band members, James



Photo of Charlotte BTR concert  
by Bethany Ivan



Photo of Atlanta BTR concert  
by Jade Suszek

Maslow, a happy birthday. As soon as the Big Time Rush curtain dropped and revealed the boy band, I couldn't believe that they were right in front of me! As the boys moved throughout the stage during the performance, they greeted our side of the venue multiple times. Starstruck, I kept waving at them in awe, and fortunately, they smiled and waved back at me. At one point, James came to our side of the venue and threw his towel at us. All of us in the crowd dove and fought for it. Towards the middle of the concert, the boys and the stage crew brought out a cake for James while the whole amphitheater sang him "Happy Birthday." One of the most memorable moments of the concert was when the band performed "No Idea," which sounded angelic. Throughout the night, the boys proved to their fans that they were back and better than ever.

### Atlanta, Ga. July 24 - Jade Suszek

Fans at the Atlanta show did not fail to show up in amazing themed outfits. Many people were wearing the tree hats the boys made in the show to sneak around. I even saw a girl with a shirt with Gustavo's face, which was hilarious. Once the boys came on stage, their outfits were on point, even though band member

Kendall had a wardrobe malfunction in which he had so much energy he ripped his pants. Logan, James and Carlos played on this the rest of the show, which showcased their brotherly connection.

Throughout the show, the boys would play off their personalities and specifically used all possible resources of the venue. Their songs had choreographed lighting that sparkled through the crowd and the trees at the outdoor amphitheater. When Big Time Rush came into the crowd, I was in Logan's section of the venue. When fans started chasing him, he resorted to the roof and treated it like his own runway during their song "Paralyzed."

My favorite performance from the night was "Stuck," but an honorable mention would be "Halfway There." During "Stuck," the colored lights, pink and green, were relaxing, and looking through the crowd to see all the phone flashlights waving in the air like fireflies truly made it memorable. Big Time Rush's songs truly have set an extremely high bar for my love life, to say the least.

Overall, the nights felt like we were extras filming content for their show. Though we weren't chosen to be their Worldwide Girls for the night, their whole fan base always will be.





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More details coming soon

[edabroad.charlotte.edu](http://edabroad.charlotte.edu)

### International Education Week

Monday, November 14 to Friday, November 18  
Multiple events

[oip.charlotte.edu/IEW](http://oip.charlotte.edu/IEW)

Please visit [oip.charlotte.edu/resources](http://oip.charlotte.edu/resources) for more details on a number of cross-cultural and educational events the Office of International Programs hosts each semester. We welcome your participation.

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Attend **International Coffee Hour**

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# DEAR NINER TIMES,

## How do I get organized this semester?

by Emily Kottak  
Arts & Culture Editor

Another semester is beginning, which brings excitement, stress and busy schedules. When a new semester begins, it can feel like making a New Year's resolution. "I'm not going to procrastinate this semester. I'm going to stay organized and on top of all my work." This thought has gone through many of our minds, but how do we actually stick to this?

Here are some tips to help stay organized and prepared for the curveballs that lie ahead this year:

### 1. Invest in a planner

I know many people find planners useless, but trust me, they are essential. This year, I got myself a bigger planner than usual, so I have even more space to mark important events and dates in the calendar and keep track of assignments and my to-do's each day throughout the week. Even a digital planner or calendar can be helpful!

### 2. Have a clean and minimal workspace

Having a lot of clutter in your desk area or workspace can cause added stress and

make it challenging to get work done. I try to keep things very minimal at my desk by having only my whiteboard calendar, a small plant, a few pictures and my desk lamp. It makes me feel much more put together to have all the extra space for my laptop, papers, books, etc.

### 3. Study with other people to hold yourself accountable

Studying with friends can be super helpful, but it can also make it difficult to actually get work done if you find yourself socializing the whole time. So

instead, create a specific plan/outline of what you all want to study and accomplish together during your study time, and it will make it easier to work through the content and information.

### 4. Don't forget to refuel

As college students, our days can be very long and spread out. Make sure that throughout the day, you are taking care of yourself. Instead of turning to energy drinks and coffee each time you feel worn out, drink some water, eat a healthy and balanced snack, and see how you feel.

## August film recap

by Jack Hale  
Staff Writer

August is always a strange month in the movie theater. Summer is winding down, so there aren't many big blockbusters, and it isn't quite time for the award season. This usually leaves us with some fairly lackluster films, which is why it was easier to compile most of the major releases this month. And while there were certainly a few films that were as lackluster as I expected, there were also a few that I enjoyed quite a bit. So here are my thoughts on all major August releases.

### "Bullet Train"

After five assassins find themselves on the same train, their missions start to blend together. It's hard to deny the comparisons to "Pulp Fiction" due to the funny and witty dialogue, multiple storylines coming together and jumping across the timeline. However, that is far from a bad thing since "Bullet Train" pulls all of this off very well. It is easily one of the most fun movies of the year, with great action scenes, a terrific cast and hilarious moments spread throughout. The film does drag a bit, and they could have

shaved off 15 minutes or so the runtime.

Rating: 8/10



### "Prey"

A group of Native American hunters must try and protect their tribe from one of the first Predators to land on Earth. The original "Predator" is one of the all-time greatest action movies, and while I can enjoy a couple of the sequels, none have come close to their predecessor. That was until "Prey" was released. While it's still not better than the first installment, it is a worthy addition to the franchise. Taking modern

technology and placing the Predator 300 years into the past is an incredible idea, and it was so much fun watching them try to find ways to defeat this new enemy. The lead actress, Amber Midthunder, is fantastic, and the cinematography is absolutely gorgeous throughout the film.

Rating: 7.5/10



### "Day Shift"

Before his wife and daughter move across the country, a lowly vampire hunter is on the clock to earn \$10,000 in only a week. The latest Netflix original starring Jamie Foxx and Dave Franco offers some fairly entertaining

and impressive action sequences.

Unfortunately, the story is as basic as it gets, and the film has little to no emotional weight. However, I appreciate that there is originality to the film and the world-building the film attempts. I was never entirely bored, but I was also never engrossed in it. "Day Shift" is fine to put on in the background so you can pay attention to the action scenes.

Rating: 6/10



**Read more at [ninertimes.com](https://ninertimes.com)**



# A guide to game day

## WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE ATTENDING CHARLOTTE ATHLETIC EVENTS

by Joey Ellsworth  
Asst. Sports Editor

The Charlotte sports season is just around the corner, and there are many things students should know before attending any 49er athletic events on campus.

### What to know before attending

The most important thing to be aware of is the fan code of conduct when attending any sports event. Sportsmanship and respect are essential, which the 49ers expect spectators, coaches and players to follow. Supporting the participants and officials makes the gameday experience more enjoyable.

Profanity, intimidating actions and racial or sexist comments at officials, student-athletes, coaches, team representatives or other fans are prohibited. Fans must follow instructions from security, ushers, police and other authorized personnel. Students should follow campus protocols at all times.

Weather can affect attendance at outdoor events, so checking the forecast will be helpful in preparation before a game. If it is hot and humid, dress cool, bring sunglasses and wear sunscreen. Take a sweatshirt, insulated jacket or a blanket if it is a cold day. Bad news for rainy days: umbrellas are not permitted. However, a poncho is a suitable alternative.

### What to bring

Backpacks of any kind, purses, fanny packs and others are not allowed. Only clear bags, diaper bags or small clutch purses are permitted in the venue.

The most important thing to bring to any event is the ticket, but students need not worry about paying or ordering a ticket. Charlotte student tickets are free because student IDs are preloaded with a ticket.

Items that might prove helpful are water bottles, cameras, seatbacks/seat cushions

and bug spray. Regarding water bottles, only empty, translucent plastic bottles of 32 ounces or less are allowed at the stadium. Campus venues will have bottle-filling stations that are available for use.

Most students have cameras on their phones, but some camera equipment is not permitted. Cameras with lenses less than four inches are allowed. Flash photography, stand, tripods and video cameras are banned in the stadium.

Outdoor food and beverages are not allowed, but concession stands or stations are set up at all sports events. Make sure you bring a debit or credit card, as all concession sales are cashless.

The Fan Food App is a helpful tool for those buying from concession stands. FanFood allows you to order concessions straight from your phone. You'll be notified when it's ready and can bypass the line, so you miss less of the on-field/on-court action.

There is no re-entry rule at all sporting events, so ensure you have everything you need before entering.

### Prohibited items

- Outside alcohol and illegal drugs
- Balls and frisbees
- Any forms of weapons (fireworks, firearms, explosives, mace, pepper spray or other weapons)
- Glass or aluminum bottles
- Laser lights and pointers, selfie-sticks
- Outside food and beverages
- Personal heaters
- Pets (service animals permitted under ADA guidelines)
- Stadium seats with armrests, folding chairs
- Strollers, infant carriers/seats
- Radios or speakers
- Use of tobacco products or e-cigs

within 100 feet of the facility

- Any item deemed unsafe, suspicious or inappropriate by event staff

### Parking/tailgating

Parking passes are required to park on campus for gameday. Parking passes can be purchased online. If you choose to tailgate, there are specific policies you must follow.

Tailgating is permitted in officially designated areas only on dates of on-campus gamedays, opening four hours before the event and closing up to two hours after. Such sites will be identified with signage the day before tailgating events. If your vehicle is still in the designated tailgating spots by midnight, your vehicle is subject to being towed. Tailgating during the game or halftime is not permitted.

Propane and charcoal grills are permitted when tailgating but under certain conditions. To see these

conditions, check the tailgating policies from the office of legal affairs.

Beer and unfortified wine are the only alcoholic beverages allowed at a tailgate, but the sale of liquor or underage drinking is not permitted. If you are noticeably intoxicated during an event, you may be asked to leave by a University or State official.

The most important thing is to enjoy yourself. These policies are not only to ensure the safety of Charlotte's students but also to make campus sporting events as fun as possible.



Charlotte fans attending Charlotte football game  
by Chris Crews

# The man who motivated Michael Jordan

## HOW THE 49ER WHO BEAT OUT ONE OF BASKETBALL'S GREATS HAS MADE HIS MARK ON AND OFF THE COURT

by Bryon Foster  
Sports Editor

Yes, the story is true: basketball great Michael Jordan didn't make the varsity team as a sophomore at Wilmington's Laney High School. Leroy Smith Jr., who went on to become a Charlotte 49er, did.

Jordan recalled the moment in his basketball hall of fame induction speech in 2009 with Smith in the audience.

"There's Leroy Smith, and you guys think that's a myth," Jordan said during his speech. "Leroy Smith was a guy when I got cut; he made the team, the varsity team."

"He's here tonight. He's still the same six-seven guy, and he hasn't gotten any bigger, and his game is about the same. When he made the team, and I didn't, I wanted to prove, not just to Leroy Smith or to myself, but to the coach who actually picked Leroy over me. I wanted to make sure you made a mistake, dude."

Jordan's success and life are well documented. Smith, who played for Charlotte in the 1980s, has become known as the man who motivated him.

Smith recently sat down with *Niner Times* to discuss his life's journey.

Jordan and Smith became friends and teammates at Trask Elementary School. Smith, now 59, was born in Philadelphia and moved to Wilmington in 1972. One of his earliest memories was when a coach approached him to play for the eighth-grade team.

"I hadn't played competitive basketball up to that point, and it wasn't my focus," said Smith, who was six feet tall at the time. "My eighth-grade coach was definitely my inspiration to get started."

At Laney High, Head Coach Clifton Herring wanted both Smith and Jordan to try out for the varsity team. Smith credits his height for his selection.

"I was always a tall, gangly, slender kid and was taller than most of my

teammates," Smith said. "You looked for your last name when they posted the roster, and I could find my name, and Michael sadly didn't make the team."

Jordan, who stayed at the junior varsity level, developed his game and had an outstanding season. Smith played sparingly off the bench for the varsity team. Jordan moved up the next season.

Smith said there was a defining moment he knew Jordan was exceptional.

"In a game, our point guard Todd Parker threw a lob to Michael, and he caught the ball with one hand and dunked it," Smith said. "The crowd went crazy, and in my mind, I knew he was going to be special."

fell in love with it," Smith said. "The staff believing in me helped, and it was great to have people you looked up to believing you could do great things."

After Pratt left the program, the 49ers posted abysmal 8-20, 9-19 and 5-23 records. Smith said the adversity and challenges were instrumental in helping him mature into a better player and person.

"Losing does things to you. You question yourself as a player and an individual," said Smith. "Those teams were forged in the fire, and I will always be grateful for Charlotte. If I had to choose again, I would do it all over."

Smith graduated from Charlotte and

understand what being a professional is all about," said Smith. "It was a privilege and an honor to play."

After he retired from the sport, Smith worked for Asics Tiger, handling basketball marketing. Smith then moved into television, selling programming for BET and USA networks.

Smith worked his way up the ranks at USA before NBC Universal bought it. He became vice president of sales and marketing for NBC and was recognized as one of the most influential Black men in cable. He is now the co-founder and president of a tech startup and a Hollywood film company. Smith currently lives in North Carolina with his wife of 30 years and is a father to three children.

"My journey outside of basketball has been a blessing," said Smith. "Every job that I have had, I have loved."

In 2009, Nike ran an advertising campaign about Smith, "the man who motivated MJ." Smith is the only player to have a Nike signature shoe without playing in the NBA. They're called the Air Jordan 1's Leroy Smith edition.

"The campaign came up in 2009 right before he (Jordan) was going to be inducted into the hall of fame," said Smith. "The campaign is out there forever, and it is awesome to be able to pull it up and show my grandchildren I was connected to one of the greatest."

Smith is now looking at the legacy he hopes to leave and his impact on those around him.

"When people think of Harvest Leroy Smith Jr., I want them to think of someone who was loyal, dedicated, a hard worker who wasn't perfect but was committed to the process," said Smith.

"I want people to think of me as the guy who will try everything once and the good things twice."



After high school, Smith took the next step in his playing career, playing for Charlotte from 1981 to 1985. He said Head Coach Mike Pratt and assistant Melvin Watkins were instrumental in bringing him to Charlotte.

"I liked the history of Charlotte and how they made it to the Final Four in 1977, and when I went to campus, I

then traveled overseas to play basketball professionally. He played in England, Germany, Japan and the United States. Smith played for Hemel & Watford Royal in England, TuS Bramsche in Germany, Kumagai Gumi Bruins in Japan and the Westchester Golden Apples of the United States Basketball League.

"It was a great opportunity for me to



# What to watch for in Charlotte Athletics for 2022-23

## HERE IS WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE UPCOMING YEAR

by Bryson Foster  
Sports Editor

As a new athletics season approaches, all teams' excitement and expectations are high. After historic seasons for multiple programs, the ceiling will only get higher for Charlotte athletics. Here is an inside look into the five things you need to watch for in the upcoming athletic year:

### 5. The continuing emergence of both tennis programs

Both men's and women's tennis had historic seasons that saw both teams have runs to the final of the Conference USA (C-USA) Championship tournament. Both seasons consisted of win streaks and impressive performances against some of the best in the nation.

The men's tennis team finished the season 17-7 while boasting a nine-game win streak, defeating No. 60 UTSA, No. 72 Liberty and No. 74 East Tennessee State. The 49ers reached No. 47 in the national rankings before losing the C-USA title game to No. 18 Middle Tennessee. Next season, the team returns seven players, including superlative award winner Stefanos Savva. Expect this team to be a force under fourth-year Head Coach Kyle Bailey as they look to continue their success.

The women's team had an all-time season posting 19 wins and being invited to the ITA 2022 Kick-off weekend for the first time. The team went on a tear, winning eight-straight games while peaking at No. 51. The 49ers, led by Ruxi Schech and Rocio Safont took to new heights before a loss in the C-USA title game to No. 33 Old Dominion.

The future is bright for both squads as they continue to put themselves on the map.

### 4. New look for Charlotte soccer programs

Both soccer programs will enter into new eras in the coming year. The year will be highlighted by new coaching

hires and changing conferences.

The women's team is coming off a solid 7-5-4 record with wins over Gardner Webb and Wofford. Legendary Head Coach John Cullen decided to retire after 131 wins in 13 seasons at Charlotte. Cullen, who led the 49ers to an NCAA tournament appearance in 2016, passes the reigns over in 2022 as the team prepares to enter new territory. Former High Point coach, Brandi Fontaine, will be the new coach for the team.

The men's squad will move from the C-USA to the American Athletic Conference (AAC) as an affiliate member for the 2022 campaign. The 49ers, who reached the NCAA tournament last season, will face some new faces in Memphis, SMU and defending American champs Tulsa. The team will start a new soccer age as a member of one of the emerging power conferences.

### 3. Who will emerge for men's basketball?

The men's basketball team finished the 2021-22 campaign with a 17-14 overall record and was 10-8 in conference play. The 49ers are losing their top three scorers from a year ago, and the big question is who will take the next step this season?

The team relied on junior guard Jahmir Young for a chunk of their production the last three seasons. He averaged 19.6 points, 5.9 rebounds and 3.7 assists. Young decided to enter the NBA draft but announced he would be keeping his collegiate eligibility to transfer to Maryland. Transfers Austin Bulter and Clyde Trapp combined for an average of 21.6 points per game a year ago, which paired nicely with Young.

The 49ers have a plethora of young talent who shined in spots throughout the season. Jackson Threadgill, Aly Khalifa and Robert Braswell IV will look to take the next steps in their game to produce at a high level. The team also added Virginia transfer Igor Miličić Jr., Missouri State



Charlotte football team celebrating in the huddle  
photo by Chris Crews

transfer Lu'Cye Patterson and Tarleton State alum Montre Gipson to their ranks.

The options are endless, and it is shaping up to be an intriguing year for the 49ers.

### 2. Charlotte football to take on top programs in primetime matchups

The Charlotte football team has some marquee matchups on their schedule for the 2022 season. A year ago, the team started the season on a high note by beating power-five opponent Duke at home in Jerry Richardson Stadium. The 49ers will try to re-capture that magic in 2022.

The 49ers open the year against C-USA rival Florida Atlantic on Saturday, Aug. 27, in Boca Raton, Fla. Charlotte will return home to face William & Mary and Big Ten foe Maryland on Saturday, Sept. 10. The team will play their second power-five team of the season in SEC program South Carolina, which former Heisman favorite Spencer Rattler will lead.

The team then opens up their final season in the C-USA before heading to the AAC at home against the UTEP Miners on Saturday, Oct. 1. Throughout their conference schedule,

the 49ers will face UAB, Western Kentucky and Louisiana Tech.

### 1. Women's basketball looks to defend their C-USA crown

The Charlotte women's basketball reached the NCAA tournament for the third time in program history in 2021-22. The 49ers made it over the hump giving Head Coach Cara Consuegra her first appearance in the tournament. The team finished the season with a 22-10 record and was 15-3 in conference play.

The 49ers had a slow start posting a 1-4 record through the first three weeks of play. Once the C-USA play started, Charlotte rattled off multiple winning streaks that catapulted the team to first place in the conference. In the C-USA tournament, the squad kept things going, defeating Rice, North Texas and overcoming a 14-point deficit to clinch the automatic bid over Louisiana Tech. The historic season came to an end with a loss to the No. 3 seed in the Bridgeport region Indiana.

Charlotte is set to defend their C-USA crown in 2022-23 and will look to taste championship gold once again.



# THANK YOU!

We hope you had a wonderful Move-In experience this year! Many thanks to all the Move-In Crew volunteers who made it happen:

- Alpha Chi Omega
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- Alpha Kappa Psi
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