West Virginia University students, faculty and local residents gave speeches and held up signs in front of the Mountainlair on Monday to protest Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Demonstrators displayed Ukrainian flags and handed out pamphlets while others spoke about how the war has already affected their families.

“We are together, and we know what is right,” said Khrystyna Pelchar, WVU political science and history student from Ukraine who organized the event. “We are here today, and we express our support for Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine.”

She said that the protest was aimed at gaining the attention of students, administrators and supporters of democracy at the University to influence U.S. involvement in the Ukrainian war effort.

“The world and Europe’s fate is being decided now in Ukraine. Please raise your voice and support us, support the strict economic and financial sanctions against the aggressor,” Pelchar said during the demonstration. “Step in with the U.S. choice to be with us on the side of truth and righteousness.”

Pelchar said that Americans should be concerned with the invasion of Ukraine because what Russia has done is a crime against the world. She said that the U.S. can help by providing Ukraine security assurance, namely by closing the airspace over Ukraine to prevent Russian air force attacks.

“Russia is not merely attacking Ukraine now, it is attacking all of humanity, it is attacking democracy, and you American people are free and we are defending our freedom now, you should understand us,” Pelchar said.

To help provide humanitarian aid to Ukrainian citizens, donate to United Help Ukraine.

Pelchar was one of the many protesters who spoke on behalf of their family members who are still in Ukraine.

“It was not a coincidence that I talked to my mother on Feb. 23, the last day we had peace in Ukraine, and she told me, ‘Khrystyna do not be afraid for my life, do not be afraid for our family, please, be afraid for our nation,’ Pelchar said.

Galyna Voitiuk, a protestor who spoke at the demonstration, is from Kyiv, where her family still lives. She said her son is in a medical unit fighting back.

Voitiuk’s daughter-in-law and mother, who can barely move, help refugees. She said Ukrainians are not sitting and waiting for Russia but fighting back.

“I have never in my life been proud as much as now, and I have never in my life prayed as much as now,” she said. “Pray for all Kyiv, not only for my son.” Serhiy Bahdasariants wears two watches at all times: one with the time in West Virginia, one with the time in Ukraine.

“I watch this watch when my mom is sleeping,” he said. “I am watching internet, I am searching for all the news about bombardings, about attacks, I am tracing where Russian military goes to wake up my mom on time so that she can go and hide in bomb shelter with my family.”

Bahdasariants is an exercise physiology student at WVU from Ukraine and has studied in the U.S. for three years. He said if there is anything he has learned from Americans, it is that they always help others and will not be silent in the face of aggression.

“There is not a single American that is afraid of Putin...of his regime,” he said. “We are standing here to fight him. We are standing here to sign those petitions and end the war in Ukraine.”

Bahdasariants said that while it is easy for Americans to log onto the internet and sign petitions, it is much harder for Ukrainian soldiers to give their lives for democracy. He said it is hard for him to be a Ukrainian abroad because he would like to join the army to help his home country fight against Russia, but instead he is protesting as a way to do whatever he can to help.
The DA is student-run and editorially independent from West Virginia University. All content decisions in the DA are made by students without prior review by the University.

CRIME REPORT

FEB. 25
12:32 a.m. | Warning
WVU Seneca Hall
Public Intoxication.

FEB. 26
4:39 p.m. | Resolved
WVU Coliseum
Fall Greater than 10 Feet.

FEB. 26
4:59 p.m. | Investigation
College Park
Domestic Dispute.

FEB. 26
10:03 p.m. | Warning
Newton Avenue
ABCC Violation.

FEB. 27
8:24 a.m. | Inactive
WVU Dadisman Hall
Destruction of Property.

FEB. 25
12:32 a.m. | Warning
WVU Summit Hall
ABCC Violation.

FEB. 25
10:07 p.m. | Unfounded
WVU Braxton Tower
Drug Incident.

FEB. 25
10:35 p.m. | Warning
University Park
Drug Incident.

FEB. 26
12:48 a.m. | Warning
WVU Brooke Tower
ABCC Violation.

FEB. 26
3:29 a.m. | Warning
WVU Seneca Hall
Public Intoxication.

The potholes in Morgantown are just a giant obstacle at this point

Every year about this time there are enough potholes around Morgan-town to expose the beautiful brick roads that have been paved over with asphalt. It makes me sad.
Health inspectors keep finding violations at WVU dining halls

BY TRENTON STRAIGHT
NEWS EDITOR

Inspectors continue to find health code violations in West Virginia University dining halls as officials from the school and dining contractor Sodexo say they are working to improve food safety.

In follow-up inspections after the initial reports, they found over 30 additional violations between Feb. 8-17. Earlier this month, the Daily Athenaeum reported that health inspectors had found dozens of health code violations in the dining halls this academic year.

The inspectors found violations at each of the University’s three major dining facilities where thousands of students eat every day.

Health inspectors classify violations in three categories: priority, priority foundation and core violations.

“WVU Dining Services and Sodexo take the findings of each inspection very seriously and respond to each observation — regardless of criticality — with the same degree of urgency,” Sodexo spokesperson Tiffany Peden said in an email. “However, the majority of violations from recent inspections of our dining halls fall within the core violations or priority foundation violation categories. These categories typically are less critical and do not pose an immediate health hazard or carry a high-risk of causing foodborne illness.”

“In instances where a critical violation is identified, the issue typically is addressed immediately. WVU Dining Services and Sodexo remain vigilant in addressing any safety concerns across our dining locations. We also are committed to operating with transparency, seeking feedback from students and guests and providing the best possible service for our campus community.”

Two Sodexo executives met with the University Board of Governors two weeks ago to discuss the health violations at campus dining facilities.

At the meeting, Sodexo Vice President Carty McCullen said the company hired a food safety supervisor this month and is in the process of hiring a food safety manager, as well as providing additional training for employees.

Sodexo also began a series of discussions a few weeks ago where students can share concerns with the dining hall general managers.

“Student feedback to date has been overwhelmingly positive, and we plan to continue holding these events weekly for the remainder of the spring semester,” Peden said.

Health officials conducted an inspection of Hatfields on Feb. 8 after receiving a public complaint a week before. Two of the 10 violations discovered were repeat infractions from an inspection in October 2021, according to publicly available reports from MCHD.

“The storage area wall is leaking a liquid onto the wall surface and ceiling tile,” one inspector observed. “It was found that upstairs at the coffee station that product is leaking coffee onto the floor then being absorbed into the wall to the downstairs storage area.”

Other infractions included cream cheese being stored at room temperature, soiled utensils and food contact surfaces in need of cleaning.

Six of the 10 violations were corrected during the inspection, according to MCHD.

Health officials returned a week later and found four violations hadn’t been corrected. Sodexo was instructed to clean and sanitize a deli cart, a cooler with “visible food particles” and a holding unit in the pizza area.

On Feb. 9, inspectors visited Café Evansdale and found that food was being stored next to Sterno chemical fuel, a dishwasher was broken and several pieces of equipment and surfaces were unclean.

“A procedure is needed for timely cleaning of the affected area on a regular basis,” an inspector wrote about the dining hall’s equipment, walls and ventilation system.

Inspectors found several violations at Summit Café that same week, most of which included unclean equipment and surfaces in the dining hall. In March, the Board extended Sodexo’s contract with WVU until 2033. WVU first began outsourcing food services to the company in 2018.

WV lawmakers move bill to ban university COVID vaccine mandates

BY JULES OGDEN
BREAKING NEWS EDITOR

West Virginia lawmakers are moving a bill that would limit state universities’ ability to require students, faculty, or staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

“A state institution of higher education may not require proof of vaccination as a condition of enrollment or for entering upon the premises,” states West Virginia House Bill 4012. There would be a carveout for federal vaccine requirements.

The bill prohibits proof of vaccination from being required upon entering any state or local governmental office, entity, or department agency, a hospital, or a state institution of higher education unless otherwise required by a federal law or regulation. The legislative text also specifies that students cannot be required to be vaccinated to enroll in a state institution of higher education.

In September 2021, WVU faculty passed a resolution in favor of a campus-wide vaccine mandate during a rare special meeting of almost every faculty member. The vote was 1,094-185 in support of the mandate.

The Student Government Association also passed a resolution in support of a vaccine mandate.

Despite the strong encouragement of the faculty and students, university administrators have repeatedly said they are not mandating the vaccine but are strongly encouraging all students, faculty and staff to receive one.

The bill will also allow any person harmed to sue for injunctive relief.

WV HB 4012 was initially introduced to the House by Delegate Chuck Horst. Chuck Horst, R - Berkeley, on Jan. 24. It was sent to the House Committee of Health and Human Resources the same day.

The bill will now be sent to the West Virginia Senate after it passed the House 80-16 earlier today.

Justice served: Governor bans sale of Russian vodka

BY DUNCAN SLADE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice has directed the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration (ABCA) to cease the purchase and sale of all Russian produced liquor until further notice.

The Governor also directed the WVABCA Commissioner to order and make Ukrainian made liquor brands available for purchase by licensed retail liquor outlets depending on their availability, according to a press release.

West Virginia currently distributes four brands of Russian liquor: Russian Standard, Beluga Vodka, Moskovskaya, and Hammer & Sickle Russian Vodka.

The WVABCA estimates that there are approximately 73 cases of Russian liquor in the State’s warehouse, according to a press release.

The Governor also requested that the West Virginia Retailers Association remove Russian liquor from their shelves and not sell the products until further notice.

All other brands of liquor that are sold in West Virginia, including those branded with Russian names for marketing purposes, are purchased from distilleries not located in Russia.
“It is very hard to hear from your mother that your hometown where you grew up is being bombarded, that your family, that little kids are being killed,” he said. “My brothers and sisters, my Ukrainian brothers and sisters, my fellow citizens are being killed because of Putin, because of his regime.”

Olga Bruyaka, an associate professor in the Chambers College of Business and Economics, said that Russia is not just invading Ukraine, but they are also attacking the freedom and love that Ukrainians have for their country.

“Our country is bleeding because of a madman’s ambition to restore great Russia,” she said. “But hear this, no country’s great if it invades, manipulates and takes advantage of other countries and people — what great Russia?”

Bruyaka said that if the “price” for peace is to destroy Ukraine and allow Russia to take over, then Ukrainians will continue to fight. She calls on the U.S. government to help Ukrainians.

“Send your prayers, but also send arms, send volunteers, send hope. Together we stand strong,” she said. “Long live free Ukraine, Slava Ukraini.”

Slava Ukraini translates to mean Glory to Ukraine and was repeated many times during Monday’s demonstration.

Pamphlets were given out at the demonstration asking supporters to petition the U.S. government to close the airspace over Ukraine and block Russia from SWIFT, a crucial global banking communication platform. Supporters were also asked to make donations to the Ukrainian military.

Erik Herron, professor of political science at WVU, said that he spoke with a student who has returned to Ukraine who is working in refugee relief, military hospitals and other defense efforts on the front lines. He said that American democracy is “fraying,” and that the U.S. should take inspiration from Ukrainians who are fighting to protect a democracy they have had for a much shorter time.

“We should be more like Ukrainians everyday, and we should fight for our own democracy and help Ukraine fight for its,” Herron said.

The demonstration concluded with everyone banding together, arm in arm, singing the Ukraine national anthem.

PHOTOS BY DUNCAN SLADE

A man holds a sign during a demonstration in support of Ukraine in front of the Mountainlairr at West Virginia University.

The DA Date Show

Date show airing Friday, March 4 tune in on Facebook.com/DAonline

PHOTOS BY DUNCAN SLADE
Mental health foundation honors life of WVU student Eric Domanico

BY RACHEL LIBERT
CORRESPONDENT

In 2020, the parents of Eric Domanico created a foundation to honor the life of their son as well as provide mental health resources to musicians in need.

The late WVU student and saxophonist took his own life in the summer of 2020.

“He was loved by everyone,” said Ash Elswick, WVU student and close friend of Domanico. “He lit up a room when he walked in.”

Domanico was recognized for his talents, earning a full ride scholarship to WVU as a member of the marching band and a student in the School of Music.

Entering WVU as a freshman, Domanico had a bright future but struggled with his mental health.

At the height of the pandemic, Domanico’s fight with mental health became more challenging and he took his own life in July 2020.

Elswick, along with Domanico’s friends and family, wanted to carry on Domanico’s legacy. The Eric Domanico Foundation was born, focusing on the mental health of musicians and those in creative arts.

“Creative students usually do tend to have more of a sensitive, emotional side because they’re in the arts, expressing themselves in that sort of outlet,” said Elswick who serves as the foundation’s public policy advocate. “There are studies that show that musicians are more sensitive when it comes to mental health.”

While the foundation has primarily focused on fundraisers to give back to music students, they have recently shifted their focus to raising awareness of depression and suicide rates, calling it “mental wellness.”

“We are trying to instill programs in K-12 schools and colleges to teach you how to handle anxiety, and just bring more awareness,” Elswick said.

“We are working with people in the state legislature to help them write bills to advocate for mental health and have programs in schools.”

The foundation also runs social media campaigns to raise awareness and bring together musicians from around the world.

The hashtag #PlayWithEric has been a large contributor to their fundraising while shining a spotlight on the art of saxophone.

Jeffrey Siegfried, assistant professor of saxophone at WVU, was responsible for the idea of the movement.

Saxophonists from all over the world submitted videos playing “Irish Tune from County Derry”, a piece that Domanico played in his saxophone quartet.

Eric Domanico was a remarkable, kind, funny, intelligent, and caring young man who studied saxophone at WVU,” said Siegfried. “The Eric Domanico Foundation came together to commemorate his life with a collaboratively music video involving all the saxophonists whose lives he touched and others whose lives he would have touched had he lived.”

Along with the #PlayWithEric movement, the foundation hosted a concert in 2020 to raise funds. Their website, www.playwitheric.com, features a link to their GoFundMe, as well as other resources to make donations and volunteer.

The website also features several resources for those struggling with mental health. It highlights resources specifically for musicians’ well-being, like the Music Minds Matter organization.

Eric’s passion for music is evident in the legacy he left behind. One of his legacies is his Spotify account. Although he had numerous playlists, one remains the favorite of his friends and family.

“Before he passed, he changed the bio to ‘Positive Vibes Only...’ I kind of just became a thing,” said Elswick. “He loved music, listened to everything. It’s 57 hours long.”

The Eric Domanico Foundation gives scholarships to musicians on college campuses across the country.

For information about the 2022 scholarship award, go to www.playwitheric.com.

WVU student becomes internet famous by Squishmallow collecting

BY SABRINA SIEGAN
STAFF WRITER

The world welcomed many new trends during these past few years of the pandemic. Squishmallows, one such craze, took TikTok by storm during the early months of 2021.

Squishmallows can be described as super soft, cute and cuddly plush toys that come in a variety of looks and sizes.

They are essentially Beanie Babies for Gen Z.

Leah Swift, a freshman at WVU, is the dorm room Squishmallow collector that some may recognize around campus.

For her, Squishmallow collecting started in October 2020.

“I started seeing videos on my ‘For You’ page on TikTok about Squishmallows,” said Swift, “I saw that they’re being sold at places like Five Below and stuff like that. I went to Five Below, and I found my first Squishmallow. I kept seeing more and more videos, and more and more stuff on TikTok.”

This early influx of videos on TikTok not only brought Squishmallows into the limelight, but also helped to inform collectors on what new stuffed animals were out there.

“So, whenever I would go out and I would see one, I would just buy it if I saw it. Even if I didn’t really like it,” said Swift.

Those serious about their Squishmallow collection often stay up to date on the current available market of plushies and often will buy whatever they can get their hands on.

“I would know the names, the release dates, you know, the prices, it was an addiction,” said Swift.

Oftentimes Squishmallows, more so the rare ones, will accrue value as years pass and they are no longer sold. Much like any other collectible item.

One of Swift’s favorite Squishmallows has a much higher resale value then when she first bought it.

“I paid $20 for it, retail, when I found it in the store in January of 2021. And it’s now worth $250 if I were to resell it. So, I don’t want anything to happen to it,” said Swift.

Many Squishmallows TikTokers claim to be ‘Squishmallow hauls.’ Swift has a similar story.

“So that I started making videos just like random. You know, I went to the store to day, this is what I found, said Swift.

“About April 2021, I had one video that just kind of blew. I don’t know why it just did. Every video I made after that got more views than the one before. Then before I knew it, I had almost 400,000 followers, and like 150 stuffed animals in my room.”

This explosive growth of her account led to Swift’s ability to join the creator fund and has elicited offers for paid sponsorships. While her account now serves as a source of income, it has placed some stress on herself and her hobby.

“Now with school, I upload maybe three times a week, like filming videos, editing them, coming up with concepts for videos, making time in my day to film them. And you know, I get comments all the time. Like ‘Why aren’t you as active as you used to be,’ you know, like, ‘We miss your videos,’ and I’m like, ‘I’m a full-time college student,’ said Swift.

Swift’s TikTok account, @leahswift, currently has 373.3K followers.

“So it’s definitely more stressful for me than it used to be. But I still love doing it or I would just stop completely, but I don’t think I’ll ever be able to stop completely.”

Her love of Squishmallow collecting is more so rooted in comfort and the thrill of it all.

“I think it’s just a comfort thing, or just, you know, the hunting for them, like the idea of being able to collect as many as you can,” said Swift.

“it keeps me occupied around again and as always there are plenty of ways to spend it. If you’re looking to get in touch with your inner WVU fan, have a night out or support a good cause you are in the right place.

1 Men’s basketball vs TCU

Get in the game spirit this weekend and head to the Coliseum on Saturday, March 5 at 2 p.m. to see WVU’s men’s basketball team face Texas Christian University. This will be the last home game for men’s basketball this season.

In addition to seeing the game, you will also get to watch as the 2022 Mountaineer Mascot winner is announced.

2 Comedy at Morgantown Brewing Company

Head over to Morgantown Brewing Company on Friday, March 4 for live comedy by comedian Mary Santora. This performance will also feature Pittsburgh’s Senna Stone and Justin Powers.

Doors will open at 7 p.m. and the show will begin at 8 p.m. Entry will cost $10. Morgantown Brewing Company is located at 1291 University Ave.

3 Mohigan Idol

Go to the Metropolis Theater Saturday, March 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. to support the WVU Medicine Children’s Hospital at the 2022 Mohigan Idol. This annual event is organized by Morgantown High School Student Council and features performances by Monongalia County students.

Since the first Mohigan Idol in 2011 the event has raised $140,000 for the Children’s hospital.

More information about the event including how to donate can be found at https://www.mohiganidol.com/
Editor: Luke Morgan
lim00002@mix.wvu.edu

OPINION

Ukrainians need WVU’s help

SUBMITTED BY SERHII BAHDASARIANTS

Editor’s note: The letter below is a submitted letter and does not reflect the editorial stance of the Daily Athenaeum. Interested in submitting a letter? Fill out our form.

Trigger warning: This article describes Russian aggression in Ukraine and urges WVU to act.

The situation in Ukraine escalates rapidly. The Ukrainian community of Morgantown and the people of Ukraine need your help in informational spaces and social media.

As a proud WVU student, I ask our media and other resources not to treat the Russian invasion as a distant war on a different continent. It is happening in the heart of Europe. This is an unprecedented full-scale invasion in a democratic country that is forced to defend itself alone. Ukrainian people are dying for their independence and, without any exaggerations, to prevent World War III. They need your proactive position on social media and donations to fight Russian aggression and stop Russian terrorists’ massacres.

I urge WVU officials to take three simple steps that will make a huge difference:
1. Inform and educate WVU students on the Russian invasion, create a task force that will describe the conflict proving an unbiased view and cite firsthand sources. Check for the reputability of these sources on social media (Facebook and Twitter are actively marking Russian media’s false claims). Please, the University should compose and send this information in an official email to all our students.
2. Lead students by example by showing your proactive position on social media accounts. Do not stand aside, do not look away from the military invasion, and be remembered as a university that did everything possible to promote international law, security, and humanity itself.
3. Distribute links for donations to the Ukrainian Army that represents a democratic shield between Russian terrorists and the countries of Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The links are available on the official site of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine.

Do not wait. War does not take a break. The hours you wait cost Ukraine innocent lives.

Act now!

Serhii Bahdasarians is a Kyiv-born Ukrainian and a third-year PhD student, who traveled all the way to West Virginia in 2019 to study Bio-Medical Sciences. He creates new AI (artificial intelligence)-based models to improve rehabilitation from stroke or other neurological diseases. He is a member of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine and a member of the Ukrainian Society of Neurologists.

Correction: ‘WVU, the college that makes you pay for being disabled’

BY LUKE MORGAN
OPINION EDITOR

Editor’s Note: Last week, the DA published an opinion article entitled “WVU, the college that makes you pay for being disabled” with several factual errors. The following information was provided by WVU in response to the original piece and summarized here.

The University explained that students have never been charged to receive accommodations or equal access to the classroom at WVU. Doing so would be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as state and federal laws: “[N]o individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation.”

The University explained that the WVU Office of Accessibility Services authorizes disability-related accommodations based on medical documentation provided by the student. This may include, but is not limited to, psychological testing. At WVU, psychological testing and diagnoses are provided by Carruth Center rather than The Office of Accessibility. OAS does not assess, diagnose, or provide treatment for any condition.

Students who register with the Office of Accessibility Services are eligible for accommodation based on their individual needs, as supported by medical documentation. This individualized approach, as required by law, is utilized with students on the autism spectrum, as it is for students with other disabilities.

The MindFit program is an enhanced academic support program separate from the Office of Accessibility Services. MindFit tutoring is available to all students at WVU who wish to improve their classroom performance, regardless of disability status. It does not remove barriers to equal access in the classroom and is not an accommodation offered by OAS as suggested in the previous article. Therefore, it is legal to charge students for tutoring services since the program is not an accommodation. Additionally, MindFit does not and has never had a sensory room built for calming students. It does have a few reduced-distraction study spaces. Development of programming and services for students on the Autism Spectrum are ongoing and involve OAS and other campus stakeholders.

Neither the Office of Accessibility Services at WVU nor MindFit has ever had any affiliation with Autism Speaks.
Meet Otis. Otis is the sweetest boy. He loves to watch birds from the window sill, cuddle with his mom and his favorite human food is pizza crust. Otis doesn’t do many tricks, but he loves a good game of fetch and chasing ice all over the kitchen.

Submit your favorite pet photo at danewsroom@mail.wvu.edu
West Virginia women's hoops outlasts Oklahoma State, 60-56

By Wesley Shoemaker

After a strong second quarter, the Mountaineers were able to step up late and overcome the Cowgirls in the second half of the game. After going into halftime with a six-point lead, West Virginia gave up the lead with just 4:17 left to play. The Mountaineers would battle back late through, closing out the Cowgirls and winning their second straight game.

West Virginia opened the game going through Kari Niblack. Niblack scored six points in the first quarter to go along with three blocks. Niblack put West Virginia up 4-0 after a layup and then another layup following a cross-court pass from Madisen Smith. She would then again score two free throws late in the quarter, tying the game at 11-11, before West Virginia would take a 13-11 lead into the second quarter.

"It was big because we were struggling to score," West Virginia head coach Mike Carey said of Quinerly's performance before the half. In the second half, Martinez and Niblack combined for 12 of West Virginia's 26 points, while the pair also had 14 rebounds.

"I thought Kari did a great job and Esmary did a great job in the second half when we started playing a two-man game with them two," Carey said.

At the end of the third quarter, West Virginia held a nine-point lead. The Mountaineers and Cowgirls both struggled to score in the third quarter, with neither team scoring a basket until almost three minutes in.

In the fourth quarter, Oklahoma State hit a three-pointer on their first possession to take the lead to six, and then cut it to four before the fourth quarter was even a minute old. Just under three minutes in the fourth quarter, Niblack was collided with by an Oklahoma State player. She was forced to leave the game, and Oklahoma State was able to make their run. The Cowgirls cut the Mountaineer lead to one while Niblack was not on the floor, and then took the lead with just over four minutes to play.

"I thought we slowed it down," Carey said of Oklahoma State's late run. "There for a while when they made that run, I couldn't get anybody to reverse the ball. I didn't want to waste timeouts so that is why I kept yelling; you know, reverse the ball."

West Virginia would respond with a 7-0 run of their own, with Niblack scoring four of the seven points. West Virginia would finish the game, allowing Oklahoma State to score only five points over the last 4:17, while the Mountaineers scored 10 points in that same span.

West Virginia has two games left on their regular season schedule, with the first one coming on Wednesday on the road against Kansas State. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m.
WVU swim and dive shines in Big 12 Championship with 11 medalists

BY LIAM BELAN
SPORTS WRITER

The West Virginia men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams finished with 11 total medals after the conclusion of the Big 12 Swimming and Diving Championship on Saturday in Morgantown, W. Va.

In the final standings, the men finished in third with a team score of 788 points, while the women finished in fourth place with a score of 502.5 points. It was Texas who became back-to-back champions in men’s and women’s competition, posting 1,033 and 1,083 points, respectively.

David Dixon earned the Mountaineers’ gold medal in the men’s 200 butterfly, finishing with a time of 1:43.64. PJ Lenz and the women’s 400 freestyle relay team earned silver medals for West Virginia while Justin Heimes, Paige Dressel, Mia Walters, and the men’s 400 relay team finished with bronze medals.

Owen Johns (301.85) put up an NCAA-Zone qualifying score from the men’s platform and helped contribute to the best performance in program history. Meanwhile, William Mullen managed to break the men’s 1650 program record held by Craig Cooper since 1983. Mullen finished the event in fourth with a time of 15:21.57.

“Really proud of these teams. They fought all the way till the end,” West Virginia coach Vic Riggs said. “Our season and lifetime best times are through the roof. Will [Mullen] broke a 39-year-standing record in the mile, David [Dixon] won the 200 fly and the women’s relay finishing second made for a great way to finish out our week.”

The 200 backstroke saw the Mountaineers gain two bronze medals. Dressel finished in third with a time of 1:57.43, while Heimes took third with a finish at 1:45.79.

The 100 freestyle A-final saw Jacqueline McCutchan finish in sixth with a finish at 1:57.43, while Heimes took third with a finish at 1:45.79.

The men’s side of the 100 free saw five Mountaineers claim eight of the spots in the B-final. Max Gustafson (44.33) won the event, Connor McBeth (44.39) took second place, Braden Osborne (44.75) placed fourth, Roanoke Shirk (44.9) slid in at fifth, and David Snider’s 45.34 was good for eighth.

In the 200 breaststroke B-final, West Virginia’s Tatum Peyerl (4th - 2:19.49), Mathilde Kaelbel (6th - 2:20.32), and Shelby Gervling (8th - 2:22.6) all participated. On the men’s side, Joe Schaefer (6th - 1:58.9), Reilly Keane (7th - 2:00.27), and Fausto Huerta (8th - 2:03.69) raced in the A-final.

The 200 butterfly earned two medals for the Mountaineers, as Walters (2:01.34) finished in third for the women while Dixon (1:43.64) paced the men.

McCutchan, Hansen, Minezawa, and Zortea won silver for West Virginia in the 400 freestyle relay, finishing at 3:20.24. The men’s team consisting of Gustafson, Osborne, Shirk, and McBeth finished in bronze with a time of 3:25.87.

A few of the men on the squad will return to action in the NCAA Last Chance Meet in Columbus on Sunday, March 6 to try and qualify for the NCAA’s.
BY CAMREN GANDEE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The No. 25 WVU baseball team has gotten off to a strong start in the 2022 season, as its new-look roster full of up-and-coming freshmen and established transfers have paved the way to a stout 6-2 start.

The Mountaineers (6-2, 0-0 Big 12) have done it all in this young season, getting consistent long ball, running rampant on the base paths, and using power pitching to lead them in success.

J.J. Wetherholt is just one of these new names that has made an early impact. In his first week of play the freshman has been lighting up the box score and is tied for first baseman Grant Hussey. Despite somewhat cool-off recently, the West Virginia native leads the team in on-base percentage (.500), including an astounding nine stolen bases (80.6%), including an assist and consistent stolen bases at a high pitch clip, and are not afraid to lay down the occasional sacrifice bunt.

As a team they have stolen 25 bases on 31 attempts (80.6%), including a astounding nine stolen bases in a 5-4 win against the Charlotte 49ers on Friday, Feb. 25. In that contest they also scored the game-deciding run on a ninth inning squeeze bunt.

The West Virginia pitching staff has seen significant turnaround in the last year, with many of the team’s big name arms, like ace Jackson Wolf, leaving the program and moving up to the big leagues.

However, Mazey and the Mountaineers coaching staff were able to revamp that part of the roster in the offseason with the insertion of multiple new pitchers. These additions have paid dividends in the early going of 2022 as the starting rotation begins to take shape.

Ben Hampton, a freshman left-hand, is just one of the names that has established his spot in the starting rotation. In his first two starts Hampton has logged 17 strikeouts with a 2.53 ERA in 10.2 innings of work.

Hampton leads the team in strikeouts and innings pitched, while also posting a WHIP of 0.84 and holding opposing hitters to a .171 batting average.

Righty Chris Sleeper is another freshman who has proven himself valuable in the starting role. In his first two starts, Sleeper has shown signs of consistency with a stout ERA of 1.00 in nine innings of work.

The New York native has also recorded six strikeouts with a 1.22 WHIP and a .206 opponent batting average in his brief body of work.

WVU has gotten production from their new faces not only in the starting rotation, but in the bullpen as well. Trey Braithwaite, who transferred to WVU from the Navy baseball team in the off-season, has been a welcome addition to the team’s pen.

Despite having just two relief appearances thus far, Braithwaite has been nearly-perfect in three innings of work. The fifth-year senior has struck out four batters while allowing no runs, no hits, and 0.64 WHIP.

With the offense seemingly clicking on all cylinders, the Mountaineers are hopeful that their pitching staff will continue to limit opposing lineups and post consistent innings to give their batters a chance.

The WVU baseball program, which just snuck into the most recent addition of the Perfect Game Top 25 poll at the 25th spot, will continue to develop their roster full of up-and-coming freshman talents and transfers.

Mazey and the Mountaineers are back in action this Friday, March 4 as they travel to Minnesota to face the Gophers. First pitch in U.S. Bank Stadium is set for 8 p.m.
Monday in Morgantown - Monday in Morgantown is a weekly news podcast aimed at keeping you caught up on all the events on campus at West Virginia University. Each Monday, a new episode detailing all the news you might've missed will be released.

Women in Science and Medicine Podcast - The Women in Science and Medicine podcast features discussions with female scientists within West Virginia University and other institutions. In this series, we'll share the achievements and insights from some of the country's top female scientists and learn from their experiences to understand how they came to be passionate about science and overcame any obstacles in their paths. This podcast is offered by West Virginia University's Office of Research and Graduate Education.

Hosted by Sydney Wentz and Chloe Snodgrass, the “Are You Still Watching?” podcast discusses TV shows, past and present, the impact they've had in pop culture and the mark they've left on our society. New episodes are available every Friday! This podcast is a product of the Daily Athenaeum, West Virginia University's Independent Student Newspaper, and produced by WVU Student Media.

In this podcast series, we’ll share the achievements and insights of West Virginia University graduate students and faculty. We’ll discuss their experiences and how they came to be passionate about their research. We’ll also talk about life beyond the lab and academy. GradLife 601: Research and Beyond is sponsored by the WVU Provost’s Office of Graduate Education and Life and hosted by Dr. Nancy Caronia, a Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of English at West Virginia University.

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