Duquesne agrees to get police body cams

Kellen Stepler
editor-in-chief

Responding to demands from Dannielle Brown, mother of Marquis Jaylen “JB” Brown who fell to his death out of a Brottier Hall window in October 2018, Duquesne University announced Friday that they had purchased body cameras for their police officers, which they expect to arrive in three weeks.

The announcement came three days after Brown’s most recent protest on campus.

The advocacy group, #Justice4JaylenBrown, released a statement Tuesday, Sept. 29 noting the “recent victory” in the campaign for justice for JB.

“It is clear that Duquesne University officials decided to acquire body cameras as a direct result of Ms. Brown’s tireless advocacy, despite Duquesne’s attempts to distance itself from her cause,” #Justice4JaylenBrown’s statement said.

In a Sept. 25 statement, the university said it funded the camera program and that the first-year cost is $90,000; then costing $45,000 annually thereafter. Duquesne is working with the union that supports the public safety officers to “complete the due diligence relative for acquiring the cameras for use.”

“While city and Duquesne police officers have interviewed multiple witnesses who have shared the same account relative to what happened on that evening when Marquis “Jaylen” Brown tragically died, and we believe without a doubt that our officers acted in the most prudent manner possible, we believe that body cameras are a public safety and community relations best practice,” according to the news release.

The university noted that they had been looking into body cameras before JB’s death.

“While Ms. Brown welcomes recent steps towards acquiring body cameras, Duquesne’s attitude toward the #Justice4JaylenBrown movement has been less than ideal. Ms. Brown has time and time again asked Duquesne for a seat at the table to help make Duquesne a safer environment for its students. The advocates’ statement notes that Duquesne’s announcement of ordering body cameras comes a day after her attempted donation to assist in funding body cameras was declined. Dannielle Brown, on day 89 of her hunger strike, has been protesting Duquesne’s handling of the death of her son, Marquis Jaylen “JB” Brown, in October 2018. She has issued three demands of Duquesne: for her to be given access to the file on JB’s death to conduct her own investigation, that Duquesne requires its officers with body cameras and increased crisis-intervention training.

The advocates’ statement says that Brown has been “clear and consistent about her three simple demands.” They write that her first demand, releasing all information related to JB’s death allowing her to conduct an independent investigation, has not been met — contrary to Duquesne’s claims.

“Her investigator has never been given full access without stipulation to all Duquesne University records relating to the incident that took her son’s life,” the statement says. “Duquesne has only offered Ms. Brown access to files from an internal investigation led by its own legal team. The statement says that Brown is hopeful that Duquesne will make good on its recent announcement that it has ordered body cameras, there has been nothing but empty promises from Duquesne to date. “Ms. Brown looks forward to opportunities to foster dialogue with the school to translate its words into meaningful action,” it says.

The statement provides an update to her third demand, for the university to train campus law enforcement officers in de-escalation and to respond appropriately to mental health crises among its students; and that “appropriately trained law enforcement officers should have been fully alert and prepared to intervene to prevent a person acting erratically from posing danger to himself or others.”

Duquesne’s news release also addresses recent statements made by the university regarding Brown violating COVID-19 conduct policies, after events on Sept. 12 and Sept. 22.

“While Duquesne has worked to respectfully accommodate Ms. Brown’s right to share her message, and very much wishes to reach closure for all concerned in this tragic matter, the university cannot tolerate non-compliance with our safety measures or disrupting our students’ academic pursuits,” according to the statement by university officials. #Justice4JaylenBrown’s statement noted that Brown “practices strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at her events, including mandatory mask wearing by all participants, the use of hand sanitizer, and the sanitization of all equipment after each use.”

“Not a single COVID-19 case has been reported as a result of attending any of Ms. Brown’s events, including her 24/7 stay at Freedom Corner,” the statement said.

The advocacy group also responded to Duquesne’s concerns of disrupting students’ education, writing that, students call the Brown’s presence “inspiration.”

“Ms. Brown is sympathetic to the stresses and demands students face while they study, which is why she has voluntarily reduced her hours near campus and has conducted noise tests to ensure the bullhorn she uses while protesting cannot be heard inside the university’s library or nearby buildings. Duquesne’s students continue to stand with Ms. Brown and lead protests and actions alongside her, amplifying her demands — to assist in funding body cameras, there has been nothing but empty promises from Duquesne to date.”

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Duquesne agrees to provide body cameras to all Duquesne Police officers, as demanded by Dannielle Brown.

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COURTESY OF WESA

The arts scene brings joy to the Pittsburgh area
Duquesne agrees to Dannielle Brown's demand for body cams

from CAMS — page 1

Dannielle Brown and her supporters hope this will increase police accountability.

All Duquesne Police officers will soon be equipped with body cameras. Dannielle Brown was a student at Duquesne University when she took her first steps toward getting body cameras for her campus police. It began during the winter of 2018. Brown has been invited to a remembrance for JB who died on the same day in 2018. Brown has been invited to participate in the event.

Duquesne said that by asking the court to move the legal process forward, they hope that the traditional methods of obtaining evidence and testimony “will allow all of the evidence to be obtained by Ms. Brown through a fair, open, and comprehensive process, thus allowing her to find the answers she seeks so she and the university can reach closure in this tragic matter.”

Brown said in the release, “What started as a quest to get answers in my son’s death has evolved into a national campaign to change the way institutions of higher education interact with students — especially students of color — their parents, and particularly in times of crisis.”

Duquesne announced on Tuesday the First of a Monthly Prayer for Unity service taking place this Sunday, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m. on Rooney Field. Check-in will begin at 6:30 p.m., and all attendees must show a Duquesne ID and have their temperature checked before entering the event. The service, led by Duquesne chaplain Fr. Bill Christy, will last 10-15 minutes.

Following the service, there will be a remembrance for JB who died on the same day in 2018. Brown has been invited to attend.

Battle for academic freedom and Shank’s reinstatement rages on

from SLUR — page 1

We are aware that administrative officers consulted a duly constituted faculty body prior to imposing the suspension,” the letter says.

Gabriel Welsch, vice president of marketing and communications at Duquesne, said that Duquesne appreciates that the situation with Shank has “engendered strong feelings and arguments about what actions should be taken.”

“The university is engaged in the process of considering the matter in accordance with the rules outlined in Duquesne’s faculty handbook,” Welsch said. “We are sure the AAUP appreciates that it is important that all parties respect the process and the time it takes to complete.”

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Duquesne Technology Lab explores blockchain and AI

Colleen Hammond  
news editor

As the world continues to change at a lightning pace, one Duquesne student organization is trying to prepare campus and young professionals for the future.

The Duquesne Technology Lab, a student group aimed at researching and studying emerging technologies, has taken up residence on campus. The group, started by computer science and accounting student Daniel Adebimpe, is one of the first of its kind in the country.

"Through the faculty support, I found this student organization and was ecstatic to make history at Duquesne," Duquesne Technology Lab vice president Hunter Mueller said.

"Personally, not having a financial or tech background, blockchain and cryptocurrencies are highly complex and not easily understood, Adebimpe and his vice president Hunter Mueller hope their group will bridge the informational divide between ordinary students and those in the financial technology sector.

"It’s just a system that can give two people trust," Adebimpe said. "Although blockchain is currently primarily used in the financial sector to complete cryptocurrency transactions, Adebimpe and Mueller say the technology has many other applications that could change the way a large section of industries operate.

"The technology and secured platforms will be utilized in industries like healthcare, business, music/arts, and many more as people begin to become more aware," Mueller said.

According to Adebimpe, in the world of healthcare, blockchain technology could help give patients greater access to their medical data and allow for doctors to securely share patient information across a much larger network of practitioners.

Adebimpe also believes blockchain technology could change the way Americans vote in the coming years.

"Eventually, we will be able to vote digitally on these immutable ledgers so there’s full transparency and quick election results," Adebimpe said.

These changes, Adebimpe noted, will only be accelerated due to the pandemic. This technology could become more mainstream as Americans move to a cashless society to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 through paper money. This technology has also been used to help hospitals communicate with each other and institute contact tracing protocols, according to Adebimpe.

Our world has gotten so complex," Adebimpe said. "Government and big institutions can’t fix the problems we face today.

Adebimpe thinks the decentralized, unregulated aspects of blockchain could help remedy some of the global problems that are "too big" for large, established financial institutions and even major world governments.

Adebimpe hopes this group will prepare students and Duquesne for the ever changing and increasingly problematic future.

Adebimpe was inspired while working an internship with a financial technology company. He soon developed a passion for emerging technologies with a variety of applications and decided to start a student organization to study and discuss them.

"I really see blockchain as a technology that could change the world," Adebimpe said.

As the group progressed in size and interests over the summer, Adebimpe decided that the group should expand their focus to include other "disruptive" technologies. The group was then renamed and rebranded as the Duquesne Technology Lab. Their focus now includes research and ethical discussions of artificial intelligence, 3D printing, nanotechnology and cryptocurrencies in addition to blockchain.

"Having the ability to develop a system at Duquesne that could then be integrated at corporations in the Pittsburgh area down the road is very exciting," Mueller said.

As members of the group, students have the opportunity to research and study cutting edge technologies through the group’s industry partners. The Duquesne Technology Lab has currently paired with multiple blockchain and advanced technology companies based in California such as Block Venture, Definity, and Chaintouch.

Adebimpe said he is hoping his work on blockchain and with the group will help develop a “more inclusive financial landscape.”

“We need to enter the new paradigm of synthesis after analyses,” Adebimpe said.

Adebimpe and Mueller are seeking to increase interest and membership in the club within the next year, as well as further develop their relationships with emerging industry partners.

“I am most excited to research the platforms already out on the market at other businesses and schools and make it our own at Duquesne and more effective to build a greater network,” Mueller said.

Campus COVID-19 Update: Three new positive cases reported at Duq

Duquesne COVID-19 Data

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More information on COVID-19 prevention and treatment can be found at duq.edu/covid or at cdc.gov.
Meditation goes mainstream as a growing number of Americans practice mindfulness

In the age of 24-hour connectivity and a craving for instant gratification, the reality is that today’s world continues to inflict a heavy toll on our everyday lives.

The relentless desire for achievement and greater wealth at the expense of our well-being is a deeply rooted tendency in Western culture that is the culprit of our society’s mental health problems.

With anxiety and stress related diagnoses disturbingly becoming the norm in the U.S., the evidence is continuing to build that our fast-paced, interconnected society has inflicted severe psychological damage across the population, young and old.

As a result, within the past decade, Americans are increasingly on the search for balance in life: the equilibrium between absolute peace and rock-bottom; a moment where you can reach a period of calmness.

In search of this “equilibrium,” people are turning to mindfulness, an increasingly on the search for meditation and mindfulness in the palm of our hands.

Hailed by many as the “fastest growing wellness activity in the U.S.,” mobile devices provide immediate access to meditation right in the palm of our hands.

As a college student, my experience is that meditation allows me to decompress after a busy day of checking items off a never-ending-to-do-list while managing the constant pressure of conceiving an appropriate post-graduation plan.

In a world consumed by a cacophony of distractions from social media and hectic career paths, I recommend that more people take advantage of the widespread availability of meditation to navigate stress, add much-needed balance to life and focus on moment-by-moment experiences.

Noah Wilbur
opinion editor
Third-party votes are wasteful in 2020’s highly contested election

ALYSE KAMINSKI
staff columnist

America is less than 50 days away from the election, which is terrifying. It has obviously been an interesting four years to put it lightly, and I am personally ready to live in an America where Donald Trump is no longer president.

If you think anything like me, you’re probably disappointed that Joe Biden is the Democratic nominee.

So many young people wanted a more progressive candidate, like Sen. Bernie Sanders, to go up against President Trump, but alas, as I read and learned in Dr. Coopie’s Political Parties and Interest Groups course, “The party decides.”

I beg you, if you are on the fence, vote for Joe Biden. Voting for Kanye West or Jo Jorgensen, for example, is a waste of a vote. It is that simple. You might as well either not vote at all, or vote for Trump if you are going to vote for anyone who is not Biden.

You may be thinking, “but I want to vote my conscience.” I totally understand. I respect that. But don’t have the right to vote how you please.

However, our country has been so polarized by President Trump, that you either need to vote one way or the other. There is no middle-ground right now.

While we are being failed by our government’s bipartisan system, this is not the election to spearhead a third-party movement. There is so much on the line for so many people. Transgender rights, fair housing, the climate and so much more are issues that need to be addressed in the next four years, and Trump cannot be the leader addressing these issues.

He’s had four years to prove himself worthy of being the President of the United States. Instead, we received a pandemic with no end in sight and a culture where being politically incorrect is in vogue.

I am personally seeing a lot of this uncertainty of who to vote for from straight, white males. If you fall into this category, please read this carefully — you are only unsure because Trump has never attacked an aspect of your identity.

As a woman, I am fearful for the next four years because we live in a country run by a man who would undate his daughter and grab women without their consent.

I am worried that Planned Parenthood will be defunded, as Trump has recently written about doing. I am worried about what another four years of Trump in the Oval Office will do to our strong culture of being scared of powerful women.

And that’s not even the worst of it. I acknowledge my privilege as a white woman. I know that if I were of a different race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status, I would be much more nervous about this election.

Please let Trump’s response to the recent Black Lives Matter protests remind you of his thoughts and feelings on Black people. He literally said, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts,” and don’t try to twist this. He meant it the same way Police Chief Walter E. Headley meant it during the race riots of 1967.

This election will be written about in history books. Our future children and grandchildren will ask us about this one and say, “Which side were you on?” Do you really want to say that you cast a vote that in the long-run, did not matter?

If you vote for a third-party candidate, you are actively allowing Trump to continue being the president. If you don’t like Trump, you need to settle for Biden — especially if you claim to care about the minority groups and environment around you.

Colleen Hammond
news editor

In an age of Instagram beauty moguls and endlessly filtered images, the notion of body positivity is almost an unattainable goal.

Internet users across the western world have felt an increasing pressure to have the “perfect body” in recent years as images of stick-thin models and wildly muscular influencers have taken over social media.

It seems that every second spent on social media is yet another reminder of how the average person will never look, sound or be as attractive as the internet facade.

According to the National Association of Anorexia and Associated Eating Disorders, 9% of the U.S. population will develop an eating disorder within their lifetime. This equates to roughly 28.8 million Americans suffering from these conditions.

Since the advent of social media, eating disorder experts have noted that the perpetual bombardment of filtered images and “perfect bodies” has greatly contributed to a rise in eating disorders in the U.S.

Children, mainly girls, as young as 11 have been reported to struggle with their relationship with food, dieting, exercise and their bodies because of their early exposure to unrealistic body standards.

However, a Danish TV show is doing their part to combat body dysmorphia and insecurity in children’s appearances.

The show Ultra Strips Down, takes an unconventional approach to educating children about their bodies.

The show, which is available through Ultra, the on-demand children’s channel of the Danish national broadcaster, features a host speaking to a room full of children aged 11-13 when five adults come into the room and disrobe in front of the children. The children are then allowed to ask any questions they have about the bodies they see in front of them.

This removes some of the taboo and awkwardness from discussing puberty. It also expands children’s perception of what a “normal” body should look like.

While the average American is probably scandalized and appalled by this idea, the show has been a huge success in Denmark, even winning an award for best children’s program at the Danish TV Festival.

To help ensure the safety of the children throughout the filming and production of the show, the “models” are carefully vetted to make sure no one with malicious intentions is near the children.

In addition, the children who compose the live studio audience spend weeks in school discussing the show both before and after. They are well prepared for the event and are frequently asked throughout the filming process if they are comfortable and if they would like to leave.

Children are also encouraged to participate by the host who frequently reminds the children, “Remember, you can’t do anything wrong,” and “There are no bad questions.”

Audience participation helps guide the dialogue and encourage children to feel comfortable in their own bodies. The show uses “real people” models with a variety of body types.

Although Danish children are culturally more comfortable with nudity than American children due to the practice of nude beaches in Denmark, “Ultra Strips Down” aims to eliminate the taboo of nudity and place it in an educational context.

Unfortunately the American market is not ready for such a radical step like “Ultra Strips Down.” However, the existence of the show should open our eyes to how we educate American children on body image.

For some reason, standard American education does not include even the most basic of anatomy lessons for middle school children. American culture has so hypersexualized nudity that even nudity in anatomy textbooks is often heavily censored to avoid showing genitalia.

While there is nothing wrong with waiting until children mature to their pre-teen years to have these discussions, the complete avoidance of the topic altogether is proving detrimental to young people.

Without this education and judgment-free discussion, young Americans are taught that their bodies are something to be ashamed of. This shame mixed with the false iconography of “perfect-bodied” Instagram models is a recipe for disaster. We are placing our children at a great disadvantage by avoiding discussion of normal bodily functions.

The American education system needs to adopt a system to educate young people on their bodies in a stress-free nonjudgmental space. American culture needs to stop intrinsically associating nudity with sexuality and encourage all young people to be comfortable in their own skin.

Although a TV show of adult nudity may seem drastic, it is just one example of how western countries need to bridge the divide between youth and adulthood by permitting curiosity and discussion around the human body.
Kane you feel the love tonight: A Duquesne love story

KELLEN STEPLER
editor-in-chief

ells are a common occurrence on the Bluff. Church bells, the 6:15 bell — even wedding bells.

On average, Duquesne’s Chapel hosts about 50 to 60 weddings per year, according to Debbie Kostosky, campus minister and liturgy coordinator at Duquesne. This year, thanks to the coronavirus, there have only been nine weddings in the chapel. Kostosky said that all weddings scheduled during the months of March through June had to be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

To get married in the Chapel, either the bride or groom must be a current student, employee or alumni of the university, and either must be Roman Catholic. The suggested donation for the Chapel is $200, and couples must provide a priest or deacon for the ceremony.

Because Duquesne is not a parish, the couple must write a brief letter to the Diocese of Pittsburgh marriage office stating why they have chosen the Duquesne Chapel for their wedding rather than their home parish.

“Couples write how special their connection is to the campus and the chapel itself,” Kostosky said.

For Ashley Geese — now Kane — coordinator for student involvement and diversity services at Duquesne, and Anthony Kane, director of the office of diversity and inclusion, it was only fitting to get married at the place where they met. The couple got married in the chapel Sept. 19, 2020.

They met working in residence life — Ashley and Anthony Kane got married in the Chapel on Duquesne’s campus, where they first met.

Ashley came to Duquesne in 2016 and Anthony started working in 2013. They never directly worked together, but Ashley recalls when she began working at Duquesne, she was welcomed into a friendship group with everybody that worked in residence life. Their relationship began to flourish from there.

“He actually was the first person to be my backup, so if I needed anything; I had him, so it was a cool, like, ‘first type’ to see how supportive he was. But at that point we were still just friends,” Ashley said.

But Duquesne wasn’t just a place for them to work — it was also a place for them to continue their educational careers. Anthony earned his doctorate in 2019 in Educational Leadership, and Ashley earned her master’s in higher education administration.

“Some of our biggest supporters and people who were a part of our day were affiliated with the university,” Anthony said.

Ashley noted that she and Anthony actually both got baptized and confirmed in the Chapel. Anthony grew up a couple blocks away, Kane grew up a couple blocks down the road on Forbes Avenue, while Ashley is from the Forest Hills area.

Kostosky said that with COVID-19 restrictions, couples are permitted to have 25 people in the chapel for a wedding, and the people attending are to wear masks. However, the ability to have the wedding livestreamed was “super accommodating,” Ashley said.

“Whenever we weren’t so sure what was going to happen with the numbers and the capacities of everything, we always knew that we at least had [the livestream] if it just had to be the two of us and our priest,” Ashley said.

“With the streaming capabilities we had, people [had] watch parties and [were] watching all over the country,” Anthony said. “That’s what makes a Duquesne wedding special, because they’re bringing everyone together, regardless of what their faith background is, or their personal background or their life background.”

Captured on the livestream was one of the “most surreal” moments of Anthony’s life: Ashley walking down the aisle. Hands on his head and overcome with raw emotion, he said that he didn’t think he could try to react that way again.

“It was just my natural reaction,” Anthony said. “I tried to hold it back and fight it, but there was no use at that point. I was like, you know what, I’m just going to let it all out.”

Ashley said that it was awesome to get married at a place that held so many memories of them.

“Even though we didn’t start our lives academically here, it’s safe to say we’re finishing them here, and just being able to see how much one place could do for us as a couple,” Ashley said. “It just so happened to me to work, and just flourished into marriage, and hopefully a big family one day.”

Pittsburgh music fans ride in style to drive-in concert

Katia Faroun
features editor

Atending a concert during a pandemic sounds the opposite of safe, but Pittsburgh music lovers have found a way to make it work.

Masked up and in the safety of their cars, Butler County alt-rock fans braved the rain and arrived at the Starlight Drive-In Tuesday night for a different type of show: a concert.

With style and creativity that only the pandemic can inspire, alternative rock band Mt. Joy successfully entertained the crowd, earning responses of applause, cheers and car horns.

The band released its second album, “Rearrange Us,” in early June and had scheduled a tour for the 2020-2021 season. As COVID-19 concerns grew back in March, the group had postponed the final shows of its tour with folk band The Lumineers, and postponed the start of its own tour. After hosting a few virtual concerts at the end of the summer, Mt. Joy launched its drive-in tour with a show in Philadelphia on Aug. 26, and continues to rearrange (pun intended) its shows to be COVID-friendly.

Cars and trucks started filling the outdoor lot near Evans City as soon as the “doors” opened. Attendees dressed in Coachella-style concert attire gathered in small groups in their trunks, on blankets and lawn chairs, armed with buckets of fries and classic concession stand food.

Despite the fall weather, the atmosphere was that of a warm summer night. Pittsburgh-based Kahone Concept took the stage as the sun began to set and warmed up the crowd with a few singles, ending with one of their recent and most popular songs, “Maybe.” Lead guitarist and vocalist Ben Orrick successfully drew in the crowd with his space buns and memories of a 7th grade date in Butler County.

The rain began to fall just as Mt. Joy walked on stage — but it didn’t dampen the crowd’s spirits. Audience members danced in front of their cars and in the beds of their trucks as the band opened the night with the first track of their debut album, “I’m a Wreck.” Live recordings were streamed on the big screens, providing those parked in the last row with close ups of the band.

Lead singer Matt Quinn’s relaxed presence reflected the carefree atmosphere of the crowd. Commenting on difficult and nonideal circumstances regarding the pandemic, he thanked the attendees for continuing to support artists in this time and for adapting to the situation. He filled gaps in between songs with anecdotes of growing up in Pennsylvania and the fact that he only brought one sweatshirt with him on tour.

Heavy synth and guitar solos characterized the smooth transitions between each song. Long breaks created explosive entrances into their hits “Astronav” and “Dirty Love,” with keyboardist Jackie Miclaus and guitarist Sam Cooper earning the spotlight. Newer songs like “Let Loose” and “Strangers” pulled attendees from the shelter of their trunks and umbrellas to dance in the rain and, well, let loose.

Before moving into the first-album track “Sheep,” Quinn reminded the crowd of the importance of voting, especially with the upcoming election and on the night of the first Presidential Debate.

As the night came to a close, the sound of steady rainfall filled the brief silence after each song. The band ended their set with a mash-up of their song “Julia” along with 2000s hits “Silent All The Time” and “Sister Sun Sunshine” and “Clinton Eastwood.”

Mt. Joy left the stage to cheers and honking from the crowd, before returning to play their hit single “Silver Lining” during the encore. Even over the sound of the music and the rain, the crowd could be heard shouting along.

With the continuation of the pandemic and no sure sight of normalcy on the horizon, Mt. Joy continues to release revised tour schedules in order to safely accommodate fans during their shows. But despite the difficulties that are thematic of quarantine and isolation, the artists vocalized their stronger appreciation for music and the delight that comes with enjoying music as a community.

The pandemic can put a halt to the majority of activities, but leave it to music lovers to find loopholes within social distancing and sanitation in order to put on a good show.
Henne: Where do Pirates go from here?

LUKE HENNE
staff writer

As another autumn descends upon Pittsburgh’s North Shore, fans of the Pittsburgh Pirates are left wondering what they watched this past summer and where the team is headed from here.

Following an 8-6 loss to the Cleveland Indians on Sunday, the Pirates closed the abbreviated 2020 campaign with an MLB-worst 19-41 record (.317 winning percentage), securing a sub-.500 record for the fourth time in the past five seasons and a top-10 draft pick for the second consecutive year.

The empty seats at PNC Park did not miss much, as a season littered with losing streaks, inconsistency, injuries and inexperience all contributed to the dismal campaign. So, what went wrong (and right) for the Pirates in 2020, and where do they go from here?

Lack of Superstar Production:

Perhaps the biggest contributor to the Pirates’ season was their inability to depend on reliable talent. Arguably the lineup’s five biggest bats saw their production drop off from the previous campaign. Bryan Reynolds, who batted .314 (good for seventh-best in the National League) with just 121 strikeouts during his full rookie season in 2019, saw his average plummet to .189 while striking out in over 30% of his at-bats. Kevin Newman, another stellar rookie in 2019, saw his average fall from .288 to .224, while his extra-base hits fell from 38 to just six.

Josh Bell, a participant in the 2019 MLB Home Run Derby and the team’s main source of power, was nowhere to be found this year. Following a career year in which Bell hit .277 with 37 home runs and 116 runs batted in, Bell hit just eight home runs and drove in 22 runs while seeing his slugging percentage slide from .569 to .364. All three of these bats were expected to be key contributors, but all three miserably failed to live up to expectations.

Limited Production from Offseason Acquisitions:

Following the hiring of new general manager Ben Cherington and new manager Derek Shelton, the team was tasked with overhauling the roster and building for the future.

This process began in January, when the team dealt longtime center fielder Starling Marte to the Arizona Diamondbacks before signing his replacement in Jarrod Dyson; Dyson hit .237 with the Pirates before being dealt to the Chicago White Sox at the trade deadline.

Derek Holland, a veteran pitcher, was brought in to eat innings for the pitching staff. He did that by pitching 40.2 innings, but he managed just a 3.67 earned run average in the process.

One promising acquisition this season was David Bednar, who hit .339 with nine runs batted in before a broken jaw and concussion ended his season just two weeks after it started.

Although the talent brought in at the trade deadline was shaping up well, the team simply did not get enough production from the signings it made this past winter.

Abundance of Injuries to Key Pitchers:

The Pirates were already thin on talent and depth to begin with entering the 2020 season, but injuries simply derailed the pitching staff. Jameson Taillon and Chris Archer, arguably the team’s two best starting pitchers, missed the entire season while recovering from respective surgeries.

The bullpen was dealt devastating blows, as well. Kyle Crick, who posted a spectacular 2.39 earned run average with 65 strikeouts in 60.1 innings pitched two seasons ago, pitched in just 5.2 innings this season while dealing with a shoulder strain.

Michael Feliz, who posted a career-best 3.09 ERA in 2019, did not have the chance to replicate his past success, as he pitched just 1.2 innings before right forearm discomfort ended his season.

Keone Kela, who registered a spectacular 2.12 ERA in 2019 and became the team’s closer following the September 2019 arrest of Felipe Vazquez, pitched in just two innings this season while dealing with both the coronavirus and right forearm tightness. Kela, who is now a free agent, has likely pitched his last game for the Pirates.

In short, a thinned out pitching staff did not get any help in terms of staying healthy this season.

Despite all of the adversity from the 41-loss campaign, however, there were many bright spots and building blocks to move forward with.

Unexpected Bright Spots:

Many atypical superstars produced at a high level for the Pirates this season.

Erik Gonzalez, who missed much of the 2019 season due to a collarbone injury, recorded a career-high 10 home runs and 22 doubles in 2020 despite playing in just 55 games. His .277 average was good for sixth-best among the team.

In buying out the final year of the 38-year-old’s contract, the Rangers will save $3.7 million in cap space for next season. Lundqvist is now a free agent.

The Rangers traded veteran defensemen Marc Staal and a second-round draft choice to Detroit in the last week in another cap move.

Since joining the team in 2005—06, Lundqvist has won the Vezina Trophy (2011—12), led the Rangers to the Stanley Cup Final (2014) and been selected to the All-Star Game five times. He also helped Sweden win gold at the 2006 Turin Olympics.

Lundqvist tweeted a thank-you after the move and many friends congratulated him, including tennis great Roger Federer.

“15 years ago, I played my first game for @NYRangers I came here with high hopes and big dreams but in my wildest imagination, I could never have pictured the amazing ride that lay ahead...,” he wrote.


On This Day in Sports History:

On Oct. 1, 1975, Muhammad Ali defeated Joe Frazier in the “Thrilla in Manila.” The boxing match was the third and final meeting between Ali and Frazier in the ring; Ali won by TKO. The fight is widely regarded as one of boxing’s most prolific matches of all time.

Pittsburgh pitcher Joe Musgrove throws a pitch during a September game against the Cleveland Indians. Musgrove finished the abbreviated season with a 3.86 ERA, and struck out 55 batters through 39.2 innings.

New York Rangers cut long-time goalie Lundqvist

The “King” of Madison Square Garden has been deposed.

The New York Rangers bought out the contract of star goaltender Henrik Lundqvist on Wednesday, parting ways with one of their greatest players in franchise history after 15 mostly spectacular seasons.

“Few players have been as important to the Rangers franchise as Henrik Lundqvist, and we are incredibly grateful for all he has done for our organization,” said James J. Dolan, executive chairman and CEO of MSG Sports.

“Over his 15-year tenure, he not only established himself as one of the best goaltenders to ever play the game, he has also been one of hockey’s fiercest competitors and most effective ambassadors. He will always be a part of the Rangers family.”

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NCAA Football AP Top 25 — Week 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
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<th>Overall</th>
<th>Streak</th>
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<td>vs. Virginia</td>
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<td>W1</td>
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<td>1-1</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>at Vanderbilt</td>
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<td>W1</td>
<td>at SMU</td>
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Hebda: NBA Finals will be fun, but expect Lakers to prevail

JACOB HERDA
staff writer

There was a time when watching Los Angeles Lakers or Miami Heat in the NBA Finals would not come as a shock. That time is long gone.

For the first time ever, two teams who did not even make the playoffs the previous year will be meeting for the title. The Lakers are among the league’s most storied franchises, but they have not qualified for the playoffs since 2013. Despite all the drama surrounding their crosstown rivals, the Clippers, it is LeBron James & Co. representing the West.

The Heat are a far more unlikely opponent. They defeated the Bucks and Celtics, two popular picks for the Finals, to get here.

Miami found itself in the postseason as recently as two years ago, but they haven’t been relevant in the championship picture since James’ 2014 departure from the roster, when he led the Heat in free agency to rejoin the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Now, the Heat and Lakers square off to cap an already unforgettable postseason.

Every Finals provides intrigue and suspense, but this one feels different. The storylines alone will get your heart rate up. Miami is facing the franchise he won two titles with, and this will be his ninth Finals appearance of the last decade. If you want to win it all, you still need to get past LeBron.

Erik Spoelstra, his former coach, has worked absolute magic under the supervision of the legendary Pat Riley. Many figured he would flounder without James, but he finds himself back on the big stage for the fifth time.

Anthony Davis, who just 18 months ago appeared to be trapped in basketball purgatory with the Pelicans, could very well be the Finals MVP.

Spoelstra’s team may not have the best players on the court, but their depth allows for some flexibility. The Lakers need their stars to perform, but Miami can adapt if someone has a bad night.

Miami must capitalize if and when one of the Laker stars struggle. By his standards, LeBron did not play well for most of the Conference Finals. Davis has been phenomenal, but this is new territory for him.

For the Heat to stay competitive, they will need to be opportunistic in these situations. As we saw against Denver, even at 35, LeBron can turn it on at any moment. On the rare occasion that he falters, Miami must be ready to pounce.

I wouldn’t count on that happening, though, at least not in four different games. LeBron is yet to falter when it truly matters, and you cannot neglect him unless he is sidelined with an injury.

As fun as these playoffs have been, I do not expect much in the way of drama on the court. The storylines are interesting, and the matchup is historic, but Los Angeles should handle Miami deftly.

Finals Predictions:
Hebda — LAL def. MIA, 4-1
Sports Editor Adam Lindner — LAL def. MIA, 4-2

Finals MVP Predictions:
Hebda — LeBron James
Lindner — LeBron James

COVID-19 outbreak pushes Titans-Steelers game back

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Titans have at least one more day to see if the team’s coronavirus outbreak is under control before their game with the Steelers is rescheduled for Monday or Tuesday.

Only one new positive test result came back Wednesday, a day after the Titans had three players and five team personnel test positive for COVID-19. More daily test results are upcoming.

The league announced the postponement from Sunday afternoon on Wednesday. The Titans hope to be allowed back inside control before their game with the Steelers is rescheduled for Monday or Tuesday.

The Titans believe that didn’t happen. Players had a few extra days of practice before the game.

There really isn’t much question as to what the formula is. Depending on James and Davis to continue their output and hope for the occasional good game from a role player. That plan has worked well thus far, so there’s no reason to change course now.

Then again, Miami has been an underdog in every series, at least on paper. Nevertheless, they keep finding ways to win. Their success is largely thanks to incredible team play. There is no definitive star on this team.

To put it in perspective, the Heat have six players averaging at least 10 points per game. The Lakers have three.

Butler is the soul of this team, but Goran Dragic is averaging the most points. Rising star Bam Adebayo is the rebound and assist leader.

The Heat have put forth an admirable team performance, but most expect the talent of Los Angeles to win out. LeBron is averaging a near triple-double, while Davis leads the team with nearly 30 points per game.

No one would have been surprised if the Lakers had pulled away, but Spoelstra’s team made sure that didn’t happen. The Heat have been a resilient outfit, providing an exciting Finals the league was hoping for.

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Miami sharpshooter Tyler Herro, pictured during the Eastern Conference Finals against the Boston Celtics, has been an incredible revelation as a rookie for the Heat — especially this postseason.

Nevada Daily Mail photos

October 1, 2020-20201001-wv-sports-2.jpg

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Socially distant comedy show gives Pittsburgh a fresh breath

After a year like this, everyone could use a good laugh. Luckily, thanks to the efforts of Arcade Comedy Theater, Pittsburgh can experience the fun and joy of stand-up comedy in a safe, socially distant environment once again.

As a result of the changes to daily life in the pandemic, Arcade Comedy Theater began adapting their shows to accommodate for new safety measures. Their new outdoor shows are held in a small urban park known as “The Oasis.” Located on Seventh Avenue, just down the block from the Benedum Center, this small concrete park is transformed into a cozy, intimate space surprisingly free of city noises.

Audience members are separated at socially distant tables by their reservations. Each table and chair is cleaned before the guests’ arrival, and hand sanitizer is available at every table. All audience members and performers are required to wear masks at all times.

As if these shows couldn’t be more appealing, the staff, audience and performers actually abided by all predetermined guidelines.

Sunday night featured headliner comedian Erik Escobar whose darker, edgier style perfectly juxtaposed his very notice-able social media presence with his southern drawl. His biting statements about his Mexican upbringing brought rich laughter, and the room fell silent as Stephenson expertly acknowledged the hardships and loss associated with 2020, while not letting despair have the last laugh. His set was refreshing and almost cathartic.

For the first time for many in the audience, the horrors of 2020 seemed small and laughable. Although it was a moment of laughter and fun, it was clear this meant much more than a joke to many audience members present.

The true show stealer came with the second performer, Pittsburgh local and Arcade Comedy veteran, Brad Stephenson. His nearly seven minute bit on his sister’s eccentric funeral in West Virginia left the audience keeling over with laughter.

While the subject of his sister’s death a few short months ago may seem anything but funny, Stephenson expertly acknowledged the hardships and loss associated with 2020, while not letting despair have the last laugh. His set was refreshing and almost cathartic. There was a noticeable, general sigh of relief as Stephenson finished his set.

In addition to the gut-busting content, Arcade at the Oasis also features a variety of music and improv acts designed to keep audiences constantly coming back for more. The week of Oct. 4, Arcade at the Oasis will feature a “Level-Up Stand-Up” evening and “Knights of the Arcade,” a Dungeons and Dragons inspired improv show. A wide variety of Pittsburgh comics and performers are set to take the socially distant stage this fall. Outdoor comedy and improv classes are also slated for this season.

Arcade Comedy Theater plans to continue these outdoor events as long as weather and COVID-19 restrictions permit. Tickets are just $15 and can be purchased ahead of time online or at the entrance to the Oasis.

More information on Arcade at the Oasis shows and ticket sales can be found at arcadecomedy-theater.com.

UPCOMING RELEASES

The Righteous

Mariah Carey

Friday, Oct. 2

US + THEM

Roger Waters

Friday, Oct. 2

Pink Floyd’s co-vocalist and lyricist Roger Waters releases Live album of his 2017-2018 tour, now available on Apple TV, DVD and Blu-Ray.

MICRO REVIEW

Construction on Campus

Since the beginning of the fall semester, construction on Szelob Street has hindered students from getting to class on time with the university’s communication. The emails being sent to the students are slow and untimely.

Music students and Des Places residents are left to hike in circles with the uncertainty of which entrances are blocked at what time, which is not only a physical hassle but makes students late as well.

Clarification on this subject would be greatly appreciated on behalf of the student body.

—Capri Scarcelli
The Rolling Stone modernizes list of chart-topping favorites

Music is generational; as artistic sound continuously evolves, so does our perception of what constitutes a good album.

On Sept. 22, The Rolling Stone revamped their beloved “500 Greatest Albums of All Time” music list, modernizing it for cultural/gender inclusivity with a broader scope of genres.

First published in 2003 with slight revisions in 2012, The Rolling Stone has now added 154 new albums, 86 of which were released within the 21st century.

“The classics are still the classics, but the canon keeps getting bigger and bigger,” The Rolling Stones said.

Over 300 artists, songwriters and producers were chosen for the judging panel, which included contemporary artists such as Beyoncé, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift, and H.E.R., as well as classic rockers like Stevie Nicks, Gene Simmons, Adam Clayton, and members from The Kinks and The Velvet Underground, all of whom were included on the list.

According to The Rolling Stone, each judge individually submitted a top 50 album list, wherein they were placed together as a general consensus amongst the panel to choose the best of the best.

The article is broken up into 10 segments, showcasing the albums counting down to no. 1 in subcategories of 500-451 all the way to 50-1.

Each album is presented with the artist, title of the album, picture of the album cover, and a detailed description of the album’s production and impact on its respective musical era.

At first glance, readers could recognize that The Beatles’ 1967 album Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, lost its reign of slot number one—the alleged greatest album of all time. Through decades of influence being considered the most experimental album of classic/psychedelic rock history, the album is now considered 24 on the list.

In its place, Motown phenom Marvin Gaye’s What’s Going On was bumped up from 8th to 1st for its heavy political undertones and darker themes surrounding the death of duet partner Tami Terrell and the horrors of his brother being stationed in Vietnam. This album, according to Rolling Stone critics, is especially prevalent in its time with the current sociopolitical sphere surrounding racial injustice and the yearning for peace.

Since music is far more accessible in this era with streaming services such as Apple Music and Spotify, various up-and-coming artists have made their way to the top 100 of the list, illuminating a rise in soft pop, hip hop, rap and independent artistry.

This executive decision to modernize the list allowed for a melting pot of diversity in genre, with albums juxtaposing one another in perfect harmony throughout the decades.

For instance, seeing Elvis Presley’s 1976 The Sun Sessions and Frank Ocean’s 2016 Blond side-by-side truly shows the advancements music has made throughout time, and how developmental each genre has become in order to continuously put out new content for listeners; most importantly, however, is that generations from now, music is properly acknowledged for its classic roots.

Rock, though dominated primarily by aging white men, has historically built the foundation of what music is today. Thus, it is important to honor timeless works like the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds and Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of the Moon while also making way for Kanye West’s My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, as well as many more reputable works put out by modern artists.

According to Consequence of Sound, The Rolling Stone’s original top 50 list only included twelve artists of color and three women in its top 50 segment.

Now, with better representation, listeners can celebrate Joni Mitchell’s Blue at slot number three along with Prince’s Purple Rain, Stevie Wonder’s Songs in the Key of Life and Lauryn Hill’s The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill all in the top 10 of the list.

With times changing, so does the music. The Rolling Stone’s “500 Greatest Albums of All Time” gives hope for the growth of music today, tomorrow and forever.

Machine Gun Kelly on track for first no. 1 album

Cleveland, Ohio— Machine Gun Kelly’s first rock album could put him where rap hasn’t so far. His latest effort, “Tickets to My Downfall,” released Friday, is on pace to debut at No.1 on the Billboard 200 chart.

MGK’s first pop-punk album is on track to move 80,000 to 90,000 equivalent album units, according to Hits Daily Double. That puts it ahead of new releases from SuperM, Joji and Deftones, among others, as well as holdover releases from Pop Smoke and Taylor Swift.

“Tickets to My Downfall” has seen an unprecedented promotional push for MGK. Much of that has to do with his relationship with Megan Fox, which became public as the album’s lead single “Bloody Valentine,” for which Fox appeared in the video, arrived.

Follow-up singles “Concert for Aliens” and “My Ex’s Best Friend” have performed well on the charts. MGK also appeared in two films this year, including BFF Pete Davidson’s “The King of Staten Island” and Netflix’s Project Power alongside Jamie Foxx.

Earlier this month, Machine Gun Kelly performed during the MTV Video Music Awards pre-show. Later in the night, he won Best Alternative Video for “Bloody Valentine.”

Such buzz earned MGK features in The New York Times, Variety and the cover of Kerrang! Kellz also made appearances on Howard Stern’s SiriusXM show and “The Kelly Clarkson Show.”

First-week sales numbers have been known to shift. So, expect updates throughout the week.

However, further boosting potential “Tickets to My Downfall’s” chances is the popularity of the album track “Forget Me Too” featuring pop star Halsey, which was trending on Apple Music over the weekend. The song is also one of two tracks from the album (“My Ex’s Best Friend”) in Spotify’s top-20.

As of Monday morning, MGK was No.2 on the iTunes album chart, just behind Carrie Underwood’s holiday album “My Gift.” But MGK’s biggest competition could be New York rapper Pop Smoke, who was murdered in February. Pop Smoke’s posthumous album “Shoot for the Stars, Aim for the Moon” has been a streaming juggernaut for several weeks.

Machine Gun Kelly’s previous high-charting position for an album is No.4, which he accomplished with his first two albums “Lace Up” and “General Admission,” respectively.
Byard said.
The Titans are working to bring in a new long snapper, a crucial position for a team that has won all three games inside the final two minutes on a field goal. That player will have to go through the NFL’s testing protocol first. Replacing Jones also won’t be easy, but defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons is off to a strong start.

For the Steelers, the only change is that the schedule pushes back a day or two. They host the Eagles on Oct. 11, when the Titans are scheduled to host Buffalo.

“We know we’re going into an environment that had the outbreak, but we feel like if we do what we’re supposed to, we’ll be fine,” Steelers cornerback Mike Hilton said.

Cleveland Browns center JC Tretter, the president of the players’ union, said the outbreak was a reminder that everyone must be more vigilant despite low testing numbers across the league.

“It’s easy to fall into a sense of ease or relax on some of the protocols,” he said Wednesday. “But the protocols are what’s keeping us going, making sure that we’re making the right decisions. ... We have been going really smoothly for a long time and now there was some expectation that this was eventually going to happen. It’s tough to keep the virus completely out.”

And the Titans are the NFL’s first team tasked with finding a way to adapt and play through the league’s first COVID-19 outbreak.

“It’s not ideal, but we have to find a way,” quarterback Ryan Tannehill said. “We have to be able to overcome adversity. It’s just a different type of adversity. We’ve done it throughout this season so far a few weeks in and showed our mental strength that we can find a way to win games, and this is just another challenge along that road.”
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