



The Tusker Tribune



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Winter 2021

Ready to Return To School?



At right, 8th grader Emily Mladenovic works at a desk that features the new individual plastic barriers that will be installed on each classroom desk, with desks spaced three feet apart, as the school district arranges to have the majority of students return for in-person learning. There is a tentative goal of implementing this plan after the spring break.



Is the NBA All-Star Weekend Getting Worse?



By Benji Cutler
Tusker Tribune Staff

This weekend, on Sunday, March 7, all of the NBA All-Star Weekend Events are taking place. The Skills Challenge and 3 Point Contest are taking place at 6:30 P.M. EST, the All-Star Game is taking place at 8:00 P.M. EST, and the Dunk Contest will take place at the halftime break of the All-Star Game. In the past, these events have had several legendary moments, including Vince Carter's 360 windmill and arm in the rim dunks, Michael Jordan's free throw line dunk, Larry Bird doing the 3 Point contest with his warmup gear and celebrating the win before his last shot went in, 5'7" Spud Webb beating his teammate, Dominique Wilkins in the dunk contest, and many more. However, in the last couple of years, these events just have not been the same. Today, I will individually analyze each All-Star event other than the Skills Challenge and discuss why it is better or worse than it once was and how it can become better.

All-Star Game

To start off, we will begin with the main event every year, the All-Star Game. In the NBA, there are 2 conferences, the Western and Eastern. They have always competed against each other. In the NBA Finals, in legendary rivalries and in previous All-Star games. You have Bird vs Magic, Kobe vs the Celtics big 3, Michael Jordan vs Karl Malone and John Stockton, LeBron vs Curry when LeBron was on the Cavaliers, and so many more incredible duels. With the new format of the All-Star game, we can't see that. The new format, which is two captains drafting the All-Star starters and reserves, both east and west, is so different that many people do not enjoy it.

On the other end, some people enjoy rivals teaming up for one game. However, ever since 2012, which includes every year with the new format, the highest amount of people watching in a single year worldwide was in 2013, with about 8 million people. Since then, the ratings have gradually decreased to a record low of 6.8 million people in 2019. Only in a 7-year span, 1.2 million people around the world decided to not watch the All-Star Game that isn't East vs West anymore. I'm not saying that is the only reason, but some people enjoyed watching potential Finals Match-ups like LeBron vs Kobe or Michael Jordan vs Kobe or LeBron vs Curry.

Even though the addition of a Kobe Bryant themed pickup game in the 4th quarter in 2020 may interest more people, there will likely not be as many people watching the All-Star Game now as there were previously.

NBA ALL-STAR GAME RATINGS, VIEWERSHIP, PAST 20 YEARS
1999 game canceled by owners
SportsMediaWatch.com



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However, what the NBA could do is keep the starters separate by conference and have two captains pick the bench from the pool of All-Star reserves. Then, the most popular duels from both conferences will still be going at it and there can still be a modern element to the game.

3 Point Contest

Next up is the 3 Point Contest. This one isn't as popular or different than it has been, but there have been a few changes that have made the contest feel odd. First, last year, the NBA added two Mtn Dew shots that are 6 feet behind the 3-point line and are worth 3 points. They also added a rule that lets the shooter choose one rack of their choice that is all "money balls", which are worth 2 points. Those additions could make the contest more entertaining, but it is different.

Another huge part of the event is the participants. Recently, some of the participants either aren't big names or aren't the best shooters in the league. For example, last year, players like Davis Bertans and Devonte' Graham were participating. Those aren't big names or the best shooters. In 2018, Wayne Ellington and Eric Gordon were participants. My point is most people don't know who some of these players are! I think what they should do to make the contest the best it can be is put in the top 4 non-All-Star 3-point shooters based on percentage of 3-pointers made, and 4 All-Stars that are great shooters, since half will be big names that are great shooters and half will be the actual best shooters in the league, technically. I think that would make more people want to watch their favorite players go at it with the true best shooters in the NBA.

Dunk Contest

Finally, we have the Dunk Contest. The Dunk Contest, in my opinion, is the event that should be by far the best and most entertaining, but that's not what the outcome has been recently. It has been disappointing, not as entertain-

ing as it once was and has just been boring in general. The main reason for that is the participants and the players who win. To lay it out for you, from 1984-2000, we had Dunk Contest winners like Michael Jordan, Dominique Wilkins, Vince Carter and Kobe Bryant just to name a few. Those are just some of the winners, imagine what the participants looked like! From 2001 to 2020, the only eye-catching names are Jason

Richardson, Dwight Howard, Blake Griffin and John Wall. Those are great players, but they aren't fan favorites like the previous four are. I could understand if some fan favorites like LeBron James don't want to be in the Dunk Contest, but to make the event more entertaining and have more people watching, you need to have superstars or at least multiple All-Stars. That is a big problem in many people's eyes with the Dunk Contest.

Next, we have the scoring system. Last year's dunk contest was a perfect demonstration. In the final round, Derrick Jones Jr. and Aaron

Gordon were facing off to be crowned as the 2020 Dunk Contest Champion. The final round was intense, and went back and forth until the final dunk for each player. Derrick Jones Jr. scored a 48 on a windmill dunk a little bit above the free throw line. People thought it was definitely over for Jones Jr. Because Gordon was getting 50 after 50 every dunk. Aaron Gordon's final dunk was a two-handed slam over 7'5" Tacko Fall! Now everyone knew it was over! Until, 3 judges gave Gordon a 9 to drop his score to 47. People call this dunk one of the greatest of all time, and it didn't earn him the win because the final round was going on for too long? This is a huge problem that could either be fixed by changing the scores system or the judging system.

These are my thoughts on how All-Star Weekend could improve, because the All-Star events take place this Sunday, starting at 6:30 P.M. Est, on TNT! Below will be the participants for each event, but other than that, be sure to have fun and enjoy watching the 2021 NBA All-Star festivities this Sunday!



An Exhausting Field Trip



By Jayden Reynolds
Tusker Tribune Staff

I should have been in school that day. It was a Monday, and it was very sunny, and warm, and I decided to stay home. And of course, there was an unexpected field trip, and the trip was to Canada, so it was a big trip. And I found out about this two minutes before they were going, so I had to pack a bag, get dressed, get in the car, start the car, go to the airport, all in two minutes. Impossible sounding, right?

But then, out of nowhere, a camel with rocket jets came out of the sky and picked me up to take me there.

Afterwards, however, when it was time to leave, the camel disappeared and the plane had already left, so I walked like for 69 hours to get home.



Hoping for Another Florida Vacation



By Jonathan Rivera
Tusker Tribune Staff

When I was little, I only went to Florida once. I remembered how fun it was—so many rides, food and many other things. I really wanted to go this year, but since COVID hit, you could not do anything.

We could've gone but nothing was open. When we went last time, we rented this house, we had a pool and everything, we played games, soccer, football and watched movies. We had their pizza, and it was very good.



I think my favorite part was when my uncle went fast, and we got pulled over. He was so nervous, it was hilarious.

If we ever go again, there is a fair that I want to go to again because the cookies there were really good and the rides were probably an 8 on a scale of 1-10.

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<https://www.somersschools.org/Page/11489>

This Was NOT the Day to Miss School!



By Damien Zherka
Tusker Tribune Staff

I should have been at school that day in third grade, because there was a big party in my class and there were donuts and all types of food and candy.

I didn't know that there was going to be a party in my class, and all the kids got to go to recess all day. They didn't have to do any work, and they were able to watch a movie, and everyone received a free Xbox, a free puppy, and a check for \$999,999,999,999,999.

I missed all of that. In addition, the kids went on a field trip to a football game, and then went to a baseball game. After that, they attended a UFC fight, and they ended the day at Reis Park, where they ate pizza, and cake.

And I missed all of it.



Disney World Trip Will be Great



By Bledin Rexhepi
Tusker Tribune Staff

I'm filled with hope. You know why? I am going to Disney World. I can go on all the fun rides. I will have a lot of fun. I think it will take a little while to get on one ride because Disney World, most of the time, is always busy, especially on the holidays.

I will eat lots of great food and enjoy it with my family. I will see lots of Disney characters. I will watch the fireworks at the end of the night. I will walk around and see lots of adventurous things. I will see lots of people having fun with their families. I might go on some of my favorite rides.

When I go there, I will never forget anything. This will be a journey that I will never forget for the rest of my life.



Staying Home From School Is Really Boring



**By George Sullivan
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I should have been in school that day. I wanted to go, but my parents made me stay home. They were all sick, but I wasn't. But I begged to go to school.



Then my parents said no, and I got all sad because it was so boring staying home, having nothing to do while I'm home.

I went outside and got bored, and then thought of the homework I had that I didn't do because I wasn't going to school.

Then I went back outside and got bored and was angry because I was stuck in my room, playing on my iPad, bored.

I had the worst day of my life and I will tell my parents you should regret this decision a lot because it was horrible.

Restless Dog Caps a Tough Day



**By Noah Hechler
Tusker Tribune Staff**

My phone lit and began to buzz. It was my mom, I had no clue what she wanted. It was midnight and she woke me up.

I was wondering why she was calling me so late so I began to worry and feel scared, but I had to pick up so I did and she said, "Noah, I'm really tired and I have not had a good day and I'm not in a good mood."



She kept going on and on about how bad the day was and then I knew something bad was going to happen, but then she got to the point and she just added that the dog was restless, and barking, and she wanted me to take her out.

My heart was relieved. I thought I was going to be in so much trouble, but then I said, "Sure mom."

So I went in her room, gave her a hug, and said, "Sorry for your bad day," and took my dog and walked her. When I returned, I allowed her to sleep in my room. She promptly went right to sleep near my face, but I didn't mind because she is so cute.



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NEWSPAPER CLUB



TUSKER TRIBUNE

A Sleepover and a Talk with The Police



**By Joseph Guerrido
Tusker Tribune Staff**

My phone lit and began to buzz. It was the boys texting that they wanted to hang out at Bobby's house, have a sleepover party with all the boys, and have some weekend fun. So the group of boys start getting to Bobby's house one by one, filling the whole house up, going in the pool, riding dirt bikes and skateboards, and having a fun time.



Then we went on a walk around Bobby's town, and we were just walking and talking, and then this police car pulled up alongside of us because they thought we were up to no good. I guess it was because there were

like 25 of us.

So Bobby started talking to the police, asking why they thought we did something wrong. The officers said it was because they had heard from someone in town that kids were knocking on doors and then running away. At one point, the police saw five boys, so they chased them but didn't get them. Bobby said none of us had anything to do with that, and that the police could talk to his mom to back that up.

Later, the police found the five boys, hiding in Bobby's yard, so the police apologized for accusing us.

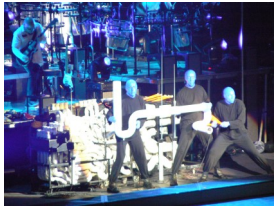
A Trip to See Blue Man Group



**By Nick Goncalves
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I should have been in school that day, but my mom took my family to the city and my mom brought her friend from high school with us.

As we were walking to the theater my mom told us about, we still didn't know what show we were going to watch.



Then, out of nowhere, my brother throws up over my mom's friend. So then we go to CVS to get medicine, and my mom asked my brother, "Do you want to go home? We can go another day to see the show."

My brother said, "We can go."

When we get there, it was the Blue Man Group show. There were things getting thrown and there was paint everywhere, along with loud drums being played.

It was interesting, but when we were done and going home, my sister started to cry because she didn't feel good. So it might have been better if I had gone to school.

Making a Championship Prediction



**By Tristan Iglesias
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I wish I could tell you why I was so sad to win the football championship. It was not happy tears; they were real.



While I was happy to win, I was just very sad to see my brother upset and crying because he never won a championship, and he has been trying for almost six years to win one. I had only been trying for three years. It make me said to see him in the car because he never won.

So, I chose to go talk to him and said,

"You'll win next year. I promise. We'll just have to practice more and go outside a lot to make sure we get better."

He said to me after that "it's fine I just can't win."

And after he said that, I said to him, "You'll never know if you can't win if you stop trying, so let's go". So, he listened to me and we went to go hang out and he promised me that he will practice more next year.

Computers Can Be Terrifying



**By Emily Mladenovic
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Of all the things that I have ever been afraid of, my computer terrified me the most. You never know who's watching through cameras or through apps.

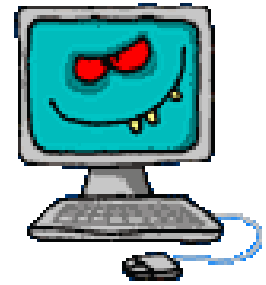
Theres always someone there. People can also hack into your computer and find what you're searching up and expose you if you're doing something embarrassing.

People hack, take your credit card number and buy a bunch of items, and take money from your card. The internet judges you. If you post a good photo, people write "ugly", "cow", "photoshop", etc.

The internet doesn't have a filter. They say what they want when they want. They cancel people for everything and anything. For example they cancelled Lana Del Rey because her music didn't empower women.

It doesn't matter what she writes about in her song; it's not even ours.

The internet also can give us false information. Anyone can go onto Google and put random stuff on there and we would believe it.



The Thrill of Meeting A Challenge



**By Julianna Maffei
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I am filled with hope, but my bones are jittery. I have been waiting for this day to come, but now that it's finally here, I don't want to find out the results.

Whatever happens will make a huge difference in my life. The email is coming out in one minute and I can feel the sweat build up on my palms. I have been training for field hockey my whole life and if I don't make it on this team, I wouldn't know what to do. It's my dream! I'm shaking all over and I can feel butterflies flying around my insides.

My muscles feel tense, so I try to relax myself by taking deep breaths. I refresh my page, and there it is. The email that can change my life. Do I click on it now, or do I wait? I don't think I can wait much longer so I tap on the email and my stomach drops when I notice that I got in!

My face forms a huge smile and my heart starts racing. I did it!



A Rude Wakeup Was Only The Beginning



**By Ryan Hunter
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I should have been in school that day.

That day was the worst day of my life and it all started when I woke up.

So I have this annoying sister named Karen and this morning, she was in a bad mood because mom would not buy her the doll she wanted. Now, that is bad for me because when she is in a bad mood, she can, and I quote, "take a house down."

So when my mom said to wake me up, she threw off my comforter and yelled at me to get up, which was not the wake-up I wanted. So, I got up,

went downstairs and ate breakfast and left for school. Once I got on the bus, some kids behind me started kicking my seat until the bus stopped.

Now I did not know why, but it looked like the bus popped a tire. So we had to wait while the bus driver fixed the tire. Then, the kids started to kick my seat again, and then I remembered the test!

I had a math test today and if I missed it, I would not graduate, so at that moment, I ran off the bus and ran to school. Luckily, school wasn't that far, so I had a shot to make it there if I ran full speed. But

you see, I failed PE, and to add on top of that, my school had a policy that if you are not there by 9 AM, you can't come in. It was for some attendance thing, so let's just say odds were not in my favor.



A Frustrating Time On Zoom



**By Kate Seeger
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I should have been in school that day. My mom wanted my whole family to stay home because it was close to the holidays, and we wanted to see my grandparents for Christmas.

We did not want to get them sick. So one day I was on Zoom and we were supposed to have a Spanish test, then a math test. So I was on Zoom and my Spanish teacher did not let us in until like 30 minutes after the class.

We got in and I could not hear her. She was



very glitchy and she kept freezing. So my teacher and the kids on Zoom had to talk through the chat in Zoom. She said to leave the Zoom and that there wouldn't be a test. I was so happy!

Then I asked my friend who was in class if we had any work, and she said, "No, we're just playing review games."

I was happy, but mad at the same time because I wanted to review. The same thing was happening with math, except we did not play a review game. I really wanted to review for the test.

Lots of Snow Made for A Great Winter



**By Andrew Underkoffler
Tusker Tribune Staff**

This winter, we got a lot of snow, and that filled me with hope because I thought we'd never have school again. They would never get the roads clear.

Of course, if that happened, we'd have to go to summer school, after the snow melts.



Still, I'm not really sad because we got a lot more snow this winter than last winter and I had a lot of fun skiing and snowboarding. I also tried some stepper trails in order to get more speed, and that was

really good.

We didn't go to Thunder Ridge this year, but we did go to Vermont, so that was a lot of fun.

Editor's Note: Many of the stories in this issue are based on prompts that our writers were given. Some of the prompts include:

- *I should have been in school that day.*
- *We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.*
- *They're asking me to remember.*
- *It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking 13.*
- *It began on the night we died on the Kamikaze roller coaster.*
- *The days of the week meant nothing to him.*
- *I am not a category.*
- *Of all the things that I have ever been afraid of, my computer terrified me the most.*
- *All my life, I've been an outcast and a freak.*
- *Imagine you are alone when a smiley, happy clown appears.*
- *It was a nice day for a funeral.*
- *I only went there once.*
- *I wish I could tell you why.*
- *I keep the things that scare me secret.*
- *I'm filled with hope.*
- *My phone lit and began to buzz.*

