



The Tusker Tribune



SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

Issue Number 23

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

Spring 2021

Full-Time School: Helping or Hurting Students?



**By Gianna Doherty
Tusker Tribune Staff**

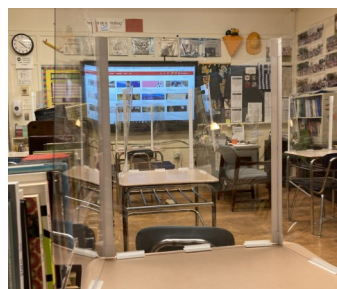
Somers Middle School and High School students recently just stopped their hybrid-learning and started Full-Time in person learning. Now that there are many kids back in the building, hallways are much more crowded and so are classes. There are also plastic dividers on each desk, causing some students to look through six dividers just to see the screen.

However, it is easier to learn in school for most students and it is also easy for teachers to teach when their students are in person as well.

There is an option for students to stay fully e-learning, but it is quite annoying to have 20 kids in person and then only two on Zoom because most of the time the teacher ends up repeating information or having to reteach something to the few kids on Zoom.

Hopefully now it will be easier for kids to live a somewhat normal life. With all teachers and staff vaccinated and kids less likely to get Covid-19, it has made it safe for our school to do this.

The past 2 weeks have been a rough adjustment for everyone. Hopefully, as we go on things will continue to feel more and more normal.



A student's view through the plastic desk dividers

How and Why are the New York Knicks This Good This Early?



**By Benji Cutler
Tusker Tribune Staff**

As a New Yorker myself, I am technically allowed to root for the New York Knicks. This season and especially right now, I probably should and probably will because of how good they have been. Ever since December 22, 2020, the start of the 2020-21 NBA Season, the New York Knicks went from the laughing stock of the NBA for decades to a top seed in the stacked Eastern Conference which includes the Brooklyn Nets, Philadelphia 76ers, Milwaukee Bucks, Boston Celtics, etc.

By the way, this was without making any dramatic changes to their roster in the off-season or at the Trade Deadline! How did they do this, why are they the most surprising team in the league by far this year, and what should you expect out of the Knicks for the rest of the season and the years to come? I will answer all of that today and will explain the New York Knicks' incredible and surprising success that has given millions of Knicks fans a chance to enjoy their team play again.

As of April 26, the Knicks are 34-27, the 4th seed in the East and are on a 9-game winning streak. One of the main reasons for this suc-

cess is signing Coach of the Year candidate Tom Thibodeau. Thibodeau signed with the Knicks in July of 2020 heading into this season. Before Thibodeau, New York had gone through 8 head coaches since 2009.

They hired David Fizdale, Mike Miller, Kurt Rambis, Derek Fisher, and Jeff Hornacek, but failed to make the Playoffs even once since 2013. However, with Thibodeau's winning mindset rather than tanking and rebuilding, New York has been very successful and will almost certainly be playing in a 7-game series in May.

By trading Kristaps Porzingis in 2019, it freed up lots of cap space for the Knicks to go crazy in that upcoming offseason and build a successful team, even though the fans were very upset with the move.

However, instead of potentially signing Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving (they coincidentally signed with the other New York team), they signed Taj Gibson, Bobby Portis, Wayne Ellington, Reggie Bullock, Elfrid Payton, and Julius Randle. They also drafted RJ Barrett with the 3rd pick, who had a very underwhelming rookie season for the Knicks. At the time and for the 2019-20 season, this was a horrible offseason for the Knicks. The Knicks went 21-45 and were the 12th seed in the East.

Continued on Page 3



Sibling Rivalry Rises to an Entirely New Level



By Emma Gordon
Tusker Tribune Staff

16-year-old Sienna looked up at the home that she hasn't seen since her parents sent her to the dumb all-girls boarding school 30 miles away.

"I make *one* evil robot that tries to murder the principal, and *this* is what I get?" she would usually think. However, ever since she's taken over the secret identity of *Techno Pulse*, Sienna doesn't have the time to complain about such foolishness. She needs to figure out what next tech she can make to destroy her rival, *The Masked Warrior*, so Sienna could continue her evil reign. And this dumb family dinner to celebrate the holidays isn't going to help. She could be working in her evil lab right now! But, whatever.

Sienna fixed the position of her duffel bag, shoved her hands into the pockets of her black sweat-shirt, and dragged her feet to the front door. She stuck her finger onto the doorbell, and only a few seconds later, her smiling mother answered the door.

Sienna noticed her mom's short red hair had turned only grayer since she's been gone, and her pale face only more wrinkly.

"Oh, my baby's back!" her mom squealed, pulling her daughter into a hug, and rubbing her hand down Sienna's black-dyed hair.

"Mom," Sienna rolled her eyes and tore herself out of the hug, "I'm not a baby anymore, I'm 16 years old!" she shouted behind her as she walked into the house.

Everything in the house was just as tacky as usual to Sienna. The dumb flowery walls, the shaggy, stupid carpeting, the sound of the AC whizzing in the background.

Except for the smell of her dad's chicken pot pie, that could never get tacky to Sienna.

She dropped her bag on the floor and slumped into the kitchen, still in defeat from when *The Masked Warrior* somehow defeated her 500-foot robot with one sword over the weekend.

"Megan! Come downstairs, your sister's here and dinner's ready!" mom shouted up the stairs to her younger daughter.

Meanwhile, upstairs, 15-year-old Megan snapped her head up from her phone at the sound of her name.

"Coming mother!" She shouted from her desk. She looked back at her phone to quickly answer her nosy friend.

DJ: I really wish u were with us over the

weekend. Where were u?

Megan bit her lip and reluctantly typed back.

Megs: Busy with stuff.....

DJ: Well, you do that every weekend.

When can we actually hang out again?

Megan lied.

Megs: I promise, this weekend.

DJ: Wanna go to the Pizzeria tonight?

"Megan! The food's not getting any warmer and your sister's not getting any younger!" Megan's mother shouted from outside the door

Megs: I can't.

DJ: Y not? It's Friday!! XD

Megs: My sister's home, gtg

DJ: KK, tell her I say hi!

Megs: Kk, bye!

DJ: Bye! Xx :)

Megan shut off her phone and placed it face down on the table. She walked past the finished

homework on her desk and pushed it into more of a neat pile. She took a step backwards to make sure that it was neat enough when suddenly, she tripped over the sword hidden underneath her desk.

The sword started to buzz and whir, causing Megan to panic and throw a blanket over it.

"Everything okay in there?" Megan's mother asked.

In a panic, Megan threw a blanket over the sword and ran to her door and opened to see her mother waiting a little impatient at this point.

"Yes. Sorry mother." Megan answered breathlessly.

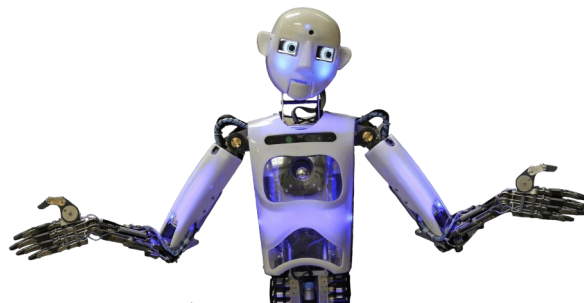
"It's fine, now come downstairs," mom answered in her

cheerful way and made her way down the steps, not noticing Megan not following her.

Megan quickly peeked into her room to make sure that the sword couldn't be seen, and stared blankly at her room for a bit, thinking about what had happened over the weekend. And, of course, her mind always whizzing back to who her evil nemesis truly was. She then followed her mother down the stairs.

Megan felt the nice soft carpeting on her feet and traced her hand along the pretty flowery wall as she hopped down the steps.

Once she got downstairs, she hummed to the sound of the AC and walked through the hallway—past Sienna's duffel bag—and into the kitchen, where Sienna already was, waiting for her.



Continued on Page 3

Nicks

From Page 1

They didn't even make the Disney-world Bubble, which explains how bad they were.

All of these players seemed like failures and a waste



of a contract for New York, except for one man. His name is Julius Deion Randle, A.K.A. Julius Randle or Dr. J by Knicks fans. He has turned this team around with the help of RJ Barrett, Derrick Rose, Immanuel Quickley, Obi Toppin, Mitchell Robinson, Nerlens Noel, and of course, Coach Thibodeau.

Randle has blown the competition away for the Most Improved Player award this season and has made it a one-man race. Last season, he put up a solid 19.5 PPG, but it didn't seem like he was helping the Knicks franchise that much or leading them to close to enough wins for the Playoffs. This season, his production has been so much better and it actually has a true purpose for the team. He's putting up an astounding 24 PPG, 10.5 RPG and 6 APG. He's also shooting a career high 42% from the 3-point line. The second highest 3-point percentage he's had in a season is only 34%!



That type of jump rarely occurs in the NBA, especially for a power forward/center.

Along with Randle and Barrett leading the way on offense, Nerlens Noel has been an underrated defensive star in the Big Apple, and has led the Knicks to the 4th best defensive rating in the entire league! He's ranked 1st in defensive plus-minus, 2nd in block percentage for the entire NBA, and is only on a \$5M contract. That should be a steal in everyone's eyes although he has been very under the radar this season.

Finally, what should you expect from the Knicks in the Playoffs and for the seasons to come? Well, there isn't really a true answer for this because anything could happen, but just know that the Knicks are on the rise once again and that they are not a team to mess with anymore, especially with up-and-coming star Julius Randle wearing that blue, white and orange jersey and Tom Thibodeau on the sideline.

Rivalry

From Page 2

"What took you so long? We've been waiting hours!" her father joked as he took the chicken pot pie out of the oven, with his signature bright yellow oven mitts.

"Sorry, I was just texting DJ," Megan explained as she sat down across from Sienna. "She's still a bit upset that I couldn't go to the movies with everyone over the weekend."

Sienna perked up. "Why couldn't you?" she asked, with a smirk on her face; hoping that her goody-two-shoes little sister finally got in trouble.

"Meg here was studying at the library for the entire weekend, for some dumb science test or something," dad explained as he set the chicken pot pie down on the counter. "You know you don't actually need to study for those things, right? You're so smart, you probably would've gotten the same grade without even opening a textbook!"

"Well, I mean... I got 100, right? So, it must be working!" Megan answered, flustered, trying to think up of an excuse for her badly constructed lie. Sienna looked at her skeptically.



"What did you do over the weekend Sienna?" their mother asked as she got the lemonade out of the fridge.

"Oh, uh..." Sienna reluctantly answered as she remembered the battle that took place in the city over the weekend. "Nothing much."

The next 45 minutes and 27 seconds (What! A narrator has to keep track!) went by pretty uneventfully. The family of four just continued to eat dinner and chat, the parents feeling proud that their family finally felt complete with both their daughters there. Sienna was lost in thought about her next evil plan, and Megan was also lost in thought; staring off and still trying to figure out who was hiding behind her nemesis' mask. Maybe if she did, she could find a weakness; a crack in Techno Pulse's robotic armor.

"Well! This was nice," mother interrupted the awkward silence that had taken over. "Megan, how about you take Sienna up to her room and help her unpack."

"Yeah!" The father chimed in. "And how about we make some dessert, too! It is a special occasion!"

"I know where my room is." Sienna whined as she got up and rolled her eyes. The glare that her mother gave her basically translated to: "Sienna. Go with your sister. NOW."

Megan, also being able to understand her mom's glare, got up too and followed her sister through the hallway and up the stairs.

Continued on Page 4

Rivalry

From Page 3

"Great, just great!" Sienna thought, as she clutched her bag. "Now how am I going to think up of a good evil plan for the next battle if mom and dad force me to be followed around the house by my little sister!"

She stomped up the stairs, 2 steps at a time.

Megan followed, pitter-pattering up the stairs closely behind her. "Alright, fine!" She thought to herself. "I'll just have to stay up late again to research on who could possibly be building this technology. Techno Pulse has to be somebody really old, right, nobody really young could be creating these robots! Oh- who am I kidding! Why am I even thinking about this right now! This is Sienna's day! I'm being so insensitive!"

The two sisters finally got up the stairs and down the hall to Sienna's somehow still messy room. They stood awkwardly in silence, as any pair of opposite-in-every-way sisters would after not seeing each other in months.

"So... I'm in my room now." Sienna said, trying to get Megan out of her room so Sienna can finally draw up plans for her next blow towards the Masked Warrior.

They stood there for a few more seconds, Sienna figuring out another way to get her sister out of there without being too rude.

"I always forget how hot it is in your room," Megan finally spoke up, pulling her shoulder-length red hair back into a ponytail with a hair tie.

"Oh, yeah." Sienna awkwardly laughed and rolled up the sleeves of her sweatshirt.

Megan's eyes quickly darted to the deep cut that ran across her sister's arm.

"What happened?!" Megan asked alarmedly pointing at it.

"Oh, I fell. You know, clumsy old me!" Sienna lied through her teeth, quickly rolling her sleeve back up. "More like fell onto *The Masked Warrior's Sword*," Sienna thought.

"But, Sienna was never clumsy." Megan thought. "And even if she did, I don't think her falling could give her a cut like that. Unless she fell on a really sharp stick, or knife or..."

Suddenly, millions of thoughts started pouring—no—were forcefully dumped into Megan's head. "It's in the same spot that I had cut Techno Pulse in with my sword. She's the only one that I've ever seen make robots as futuristic as the ones that attacked me over the weekend. No won-



der the shoes Techno Pulse wore at that battle during DJ's birthday party looked so familiar." No! But, it couldn't be! Techno Pulse... Was Sienna! But why would she do all those things in the first place? Rob banks? Invade malls? Steal candy from babies? "It can't be a coincidence." She thought, as her face got redder and redder.

Her entire body shook. Her fists clenched—honestly ready to punch her sister in the face. Now, imagine this from the point of view of Sienna: Your sister suddenly goes unnaturally quiet for a minute, so you decide to actually start to unpack. And when you check to make sure she's still alive, you suddenly see her shaking in anger; with a face that looks like a 5-year-old who's not allowed to get a candy bar.

Sienna opened her mouth to say something, but suddenly heard from a cheery voice downstairs: "Girls! Desert's ready! Come down before your father eats it all!"

"We're coming!" Megan shouted down at her, in a tone of voice that did not sound like her at all—but one that Sienna had somehow recognized, but she didn't know where from.

Megan then turned to her as if she was about to say something, but then stopped and instead gave her a glare that someone would save for their worst enemy; and then turned around and stormed out of the room.

"What's her problem?" Sienna thought with a look of disgust as she threw a few more shirts into her drawer and shut it closed. And then—it hit her where she had heard that kind of voice from. From when they were battling in the City Square, magic sword to robotic sword.

"Hey! Can't you do this somewhere else?" a man from a bagel shop had cried as they fought in the street. "You're scaring away my customers!"

"Well, I'm sorry! But I'm trying to save your life here!" the Masked Warrior had shouted at the man as she tried to fend Sienna off. Which gave her the perfect chance to throw them into a brick wall. She thought it was funny at the time... "But it can't be!" She thought to herself. "I need proof!"

Sienna sprinted as quietly as she could down the hall and into Megan's room, which was neat as usual. Except for a blanket hastily thrown on the floor next to her desk. She closed the door behind her and picked up a tiny corner of the blanket, revealing the edge of an all too familiar golden sword that began to buzz excitedly at the sign of life.

Sienna dropped the blanket and stepped back, her heart sinking and her eyes widening. "No, no, no, this can't be!" she whispered to herself. Megan... is the Masked Warrior?



Thanks to Eva Nevsky for this cool painting of a Russian Nesting Doll.

The Tusker Tribune will publish artwork and comics, as well as stories. Please send artwork as jpg files to DPappas@somersschools.org



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The Tusker Tribune is the online Somers Middle School Student Newspaper. It is published weekly (except during school vacations) on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from:

Somers Middle School, 250 Route 202, Somers, NY, USA.

Any SMS student is eligible to write stories. If interested, please e-mail Advisor Dean Pappas at DPappas@somersschools.org.

Website:

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

Fun Facts About Elephants



**By Mischa Berek
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Did you know that elephants are the largest land animals, and that their tusks are

teeth?

Speaking of teeth, elephants are constantly eating food. They eat so much that they can spend up to three quarters of their day eating.

Another fun fact is that they communicate through vibrations.

Elephants can also communicate through body language, touch, and scent. These are a few fun facts about elephants.



My Advice for Fifth Graders Coming to SMS Next Year



**By Smera Thekkenmar
Tusker Tribune Staff**

As a 6th grade e-learner, starting Middle School was definitely a big change this year. But what makes this experience easy is the teachers and staff at SMS. Each grade has a counselor to whom you can reach out to as well.

Since I was going to be remote learning, I wasn't sure if the whole process would go smoothly or if I would miss out on things. The first couple of days, one gets used to their schedule and finds all the different courses on Schoology. Schoology is the platform we use for our classes and clubs. If we have trouble navigating online or in campus, all we need to do is just ask any teacher for directions.

All the SMS teachers are very nice and ready to help and answer any questions we might have.

They give us enough time to transition to the new schedule and atmosphere. This makes adjusting to the new school atmosphere a lot more easier. If one is going to be a remote learner, a major thing that helps us stay in focus is to have a designated place in our home with no distraction. I get ready every day for school as if it were a regular in-person class.

Also, it's good to be prepared with our work for class. The more subjects in school, the more homework we get. Pro tip: Put aside one hour just to focus on homework and study. If we spread out our work and procrastinate, we're likely to forget about it.

Overall, middle school doesn't seem to be as scary as I thought it to be. It's all thanks to the wonderful SMS teachers and staff.

