



The Guardian

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Another Successful SJR Christmas Concert



Michael Schroll and Dylan Gutowski sing at the concert

By Patrick Schonbachler '26

On Thursday December 5, the holiday season came alive with a spectacular display of music by SJR during the Christmas concert. The performance brought together the chorus and band, offering a heartwarming collection of Christmas classics and contemporary holiday songs.

The concert was a celebration of the season, and a powerful reminder of the joy that music can bring to all audiences. From the first note to the last, the evening sparkled with a sense of holiday magic that was felt by everyone in attendance.

As the audience filled the Inserra Theatre, the atmosphere was brimming with excitement. The stage was decorated with a large Christmas tree, setting the perfect tone for the evening. The chorus, a group of skilled vocalists, stood at the front, while the band took their places.

The combination of the warm holiday decorations and the anticipation in the air made it clear that this would be a great performance.

The evening began outside, where the Chorus opened up by welcoming Christmas through the SJR Christmas tree lighting in front of the school.

They sang several carols in front of the audience, who were given hot chocolate at the celebration. The concert began with “Welcome, a Seasonal Greeting” sung by the

chorus with breathtaking harmony. Their voices resonated throughout the venue, filling every corner with warmth and emotion. One of the standout moments was the rendition of “Joy to the World,” where the band brought the song to life in an exciting and fresh way.

The chorus added their powerful voices to the mix, creating a joyful and festive atmosphere that had the audience clapping along. The band’s performance of “Carol of the Bells” was another highlight. With its intricate, fast-paced rhythm, the musicians displayed their technical prowess. There were also many soloists from the Chorus, such as Joseph Lizzi, Elijah Jackson, Nick Pantano, and Jack Meyers. The band also had a solo with Dylan Guitowskis “Silent Night” solo on the piano.

During the middle of the show, we had a special visitor from the North pole who promised a snow day, and warned us of being late to school.

The energy of the concert was heightened by the enthusiastic response of the audience. From the first song to the last encore, attendees were visibly moved by the powerful blend of voices and instruments. During the Feliz Navidad (which both the chorus and band did), the chorus invited the audience to join in on a spirited rendition of it, fostering a sense of community and connection. It was clear that the magic of the evening extended beyond the stage and into the hearts of everyone present.

As the concert drew to a close, the stage was bathed in the warm glow of the holiday lights. The final piece, “Joy to the World,” showcased the full might of the chorus and band in a triumphant display of vocal and instrumental power. The performance left the audience standing in applause. It was a fitting end to an evening that captured the true spirit of Christmas—joy, togetherness, and the beauty of music.

The Christmas concert at SJR was a beautiful celebration of holiday music, bringing together the voices of a talented chorus and the dynamic sound of a multi-instrument band. It was an unforgettable experience that left everyone eagerly anticipating next year’s holiday season.

Review

Four of the Best Christmas Movies



Kevin and Wet Bandits in Home Alone

By Ciaran Henry '27

When the holidays roll around many magical things come back every year, whether it is the lights, the music, the gift giving and receiving, or the overall atmosphere. Arguably the best part of the season are the Christmas movies. Thousands of Christmas movies have been made during many time periods and in many places. These include Hall-mark love stories, children's fairy tales, horror stories, and thought provoking stories with important messages.

In my opinion, four movies stand out in particular because of the spirit they bring to Christmas and the messages they share.

The first top Christmas movie is *It's a Wonderful Life*. This movie was released in 1946 and was directed by Frank Capra. It tells the heartwarming story of George Bailey, a man who learns the true value of his life thanks to the intervention of an angel named Clarence. One of the most notable quotes from the story is, "Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings." The movie highlights themes of selflessness, family, and the impact one person can have on a community. Its emotional depth and important message make it a Christmas staple.

Another top Christmas movie is *Home Alone*. It was released in 1990 and was directed by Chris Columbus. The story of little Kevin McCallister, who is accidentally left home alone during Christmas and has to protect his house from burglars, this movie is comedic with a serious message. It also captures the chaos and charm of family life during the holidays.

One memorable quote from the movie is "You can be too old for a lot of things, but you're never too old to be afraid." This movie is one of the main go-to movies during the festive season.

A Christmas Carol is a popular holiday novel that has many different film adaptations. They include the 1951 classic, *Mickey's Christmas Carol*, and *The Muppets Christmas Carol*.

The film portrays Scrooge's transformation from a miserly, cold-hearted man to a warm and generous one after being visited by three ghosts. It embodies the themes of redemption and the importance of compassion, making it a quintessential holiday film that remains poignant and powerful after all these years. Throughout the whole novel or film, the quote that sticks out to me the most is, "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."

One final movie that will forever be a Christmas classic is *Elf*. The story, directed by John Favreau, has quickly become a modern holiday classic thanks to Will Ferrell's performance as Buddy, a human raised by elves at the North Pole who sets off to New York City to find his real father. Its clever humor, festive energy, and heartfelt moments make it a favorite for viewers of all ages. One quote that summarizes Christmas spirit is, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear." The movie also emphasizes the importance of love, family, and the childlike joy of Christmas, making it perfect for the families.

These four movies are just some of the many unforgettable classics during the Christmas season. Some honorable mentions are *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, and *A Christmas Story*. Christmas movies hold a special place in our hearts, and they are a special part of holiday traditions.

They capture the spirit of the season, from the warmth of family gatherings to the spirit of giving and the joy of festive celebrations. An important thing to remember while watching them is that Christmas movies often reflect the religious aspects of the holiday by highlighting themes of faith, redemption, and the birth of Jesus Christ.

Many films incorporate nativity scenes, carols, and messages of hope and peace that align with the celebration of Jesus' birth. These elements help to remind us of the deeper spiritual significance of Christmas amidst the festive cheer.

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These Songs Highlight the Importance of Christmas



Silent Night

The meaning of the song Silent Night as a picture

By Logan Dratch '26

In this issue of the Guardian, Patrick wrote an article about the Christmas concert and Ryan wrote an article about the meaning of Christmas, so I wanted to write an article that connects the two and explains how famous Christmas songs represent the true meaning of Christmas.

"Silent Night" is one of the most beloved Christmas carols, written in 1818 by Austrian priest Joseph Mohr and musician Franz Xaver Gruber. The song's simple yet profound lyrics capture the peacefulness and holiness of the night of Christ's birth. "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright" reflects the serene atmosphere surrounding the Nativity, while "Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child, holy infant so tender and mild" emphasizes the purity and significance of the Holy Family. "Silent Night" is a Christian song that serves as a reminder that Christmas is not just about gifts, but about reflecting on the miracle of Jesus' birth, which brought salvation and hope to the world. The carol's calm, reverent tone encourages prayer and contemplation, inviting listeners to experience the peace and love of Christ in their hearts. It serves as a celebration of God's grace, humility, and redemption, making it central to Christmas liturgies and celebrations. This timeless carol captures the spirit of Christmas, reminding us to reflect on the true meaning of the season and embrace the message of love, peace, and joy.

"Do They Know It's Christmas?" was released in 1984 by Band Aid, written to raise funds for famine relief in Ethiopia. The song highlights the contrast between Western Christmas celebrations and the suffering of people in impoverished regions, many of whom may not even know that people ask for Christmas gifts or have large feasts. With the line "Feed the world, let them know it's Christmas time," the song encourages listeners to reflect on their own abun-

dance and be grateful for what they have, while recognizing that others are struggling to survive. It calls for compassion and generosity, urging people to share their blessings with those in need. While Christmas is typically a time of excess and celebration, the song reminds us to keep in mind the hardships others face around the world. "Do They Know It's Christmas?" has had a lasting impact, becoming a symbol of global solidarity and charitable action, especially during the holiday season. It continues to inspire efforts to help those less fortunate and serves as a reminder of the power of collective action to make a difference in the world.

"Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, released in 1971, was written as part of their broader anti-war activism. The song, a protest against the Vietnam War, calls for peace and global unity. With iconic lyrics like "War is over, if you want it," it encourages listeners to reflect on their role in promoting peace and ending conflict. The song extends its message beyond the Vietnam War, advocating for peace in every aspect of life. The joyful spirit of Christmas contrasts with the harsh realities of war, urging listeners to confront the violence in the world. The line "And so this is Christmas..let's stop all the fight" challenges people to consider their contributions to making the world a better place. "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" has become a timeless holiday anthem, reminding us of the power of collective action and the need for a more peaceful world. Its significance goes beyond its anti-war roots, offering a universal message of peace, love, and hope, making it an essential part of the Christmas season.

"O Holy Night," written in 1847 by Placide Cappeau, is a deeply moving Christmas carol that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Its lyrics emphasize the spiritual awakening and redemption brought about by Christ's arrival. "Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth" contrasts the darkness of sin with the light of Christ's birth. The powerful line, "Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!" invites believers to respond with reverence and humility to the divine gift of Christ. The carol reflects the joy, awe, and hope that accompany the realization of God's love and the promise of salvation through Jesus. "O Holy Night" also touches on themes of redemption and the transformative power of Christ's presence in the world. In a Catholic context, the song is a call to embrace the spiritual renewal that Christ's birth offers. The lyrics encourage Christians to reflect on the significance of the Nativity and to recognize the hope, peace, and grace that Christ brings to the world, making it a timeless anthem of faith and devotion.

Not only are these Christmas songs a perennial favorite in millions of households across the world, but they also exemplify the true meaning of Christmas. They celebrate the birth, life, and legacy of Jesus, promote spending time with loved ones, and encourage us to be grateful for everything that we have.

The True Meaning of Christmas



Jesus Christ surrounded by Mary, Joseph and the 3 Kings at his birth

By Ryan McCabe '26

Christmas is a holiday that brings joy and excitement to people all over the world, but its real meaning goes beyond the decorations, gifts, and big meals. While these traditions are part of the celebration, the true spirit of Christmas is about love, kindness, and thinking about others.

Christmas is a time to reflect on values such as faith, hope, and generosity, and to embrace the idea of helping and caring for each other. The true meaning of Christmas is not about material things or just having a good time, but about spreading love, peace, and goodwill to everyone.

At the heart of Christmas is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. For Christians, this is the most important part of the holiday. The Bible tells us that Jesus was born in a humble stable in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph.

His birth was celebrated by angels and shepherds, and it was seen as the arrival of a savior sent to bring hope and salvation to the world. Christmas marks the moment when God became human in the form of Jesus, and His life and teachings are a reminder of God's love for all people.

The story of Jesus' birth shows that love doesn't come in the form of wealth or power, but in humility, kindness, and selflessness.

Even for those who do not follow the Christian faith, Christmas has become a global celebration of generosity, kindness, and community. Giving gifts is one of the main traditions during Christmas, and it is often seen as a way to reflect the love that Jesus showed to others. When we give,

we are not only showing our appreciation for the people in our lives but also sharing the same spirit of giving that was present at the first Christmas.

Just as the Wise Men gave gifts to the baby Jesus, we are encouraged to give to others—not just presents, but also our time, attention, and care. The true meaning of Christmas is about giving from the heart, without expecting anything in return, because it is a way of showing love and kindness to those around us.

Christmas is also a time to focus on family and the people we care about. It's a time to gather together, to reconnect with loved ones, and to feel a sense of belonging. The holiday season gives us the chance to strengthen relationships, fix any broken bonds, and create new memories with the people who matter most.

The warmth of being with family, enjoying meals together, and sharing in the joy of giving and receiving gifts all help to bring people closer. In a world where people are often divided by differences, Christmas is a reminder that we are all connected as human beings. It's a time to build relationships, to celebrate togetherness, and to focus on love and understanding, rather than division.

At its core, Christmas is also about peace. The teachings of Jesus emphasize the importance of peace, forgiveness, and love. Christmas is a time to forgive past wrongs, to let go of anger, and to make peace with ourselves and others. It's an opportunity to extend compassion to those who are struggling, and to become agents of change who bring peace to the world. In this way, Christmas reminds us to contribute to the well-being of others and to work towards creating a more peaceful world.

Another important aspect of Christmas is gratitude and generosity. It's a time to think about the things we are thankful for and to recognize the needs of others. For those who have less, Christmas provides an opportunity to give back, whether through donating money, giving gifts, or simply offering support and kindness. The act of giving during Christmas not only helps others but also enriches our own lives. In a world where many people face hardships, Christmas encourages us to look beyond our own needs and to open our hearts to those who are struggling.

Ultimately, the true meaning of Christmas is about embracing the values of love, kindness, and selflessness that bring people together. It's a time to celebrate the things that unite us, no matter our differences.

Whether through religious traditions, family celebrations, or helping others, Christmas is a chance to focus on what really matters in life: love, peace, and making the world a better place. By living out these values, we honor the true meaning of Christmas and carry its message of hope and love throughout the year.

Recent News in Space

By Alex Amato '26

A Journey of Success and Struggle Space exploration is experiencing a renaissance, driven by government agencies and private companies alike. SpaceX, NASA, Rocket Lab, and Blue Origin are at the forefront, achieving remarkable milestones while grappling with the inherent challenges of venturing into space. The successes are awe-inspiring, but the losses remind us of the complexity of reaching for space.

SpaceX's Starship, designed for interplanetary travel, has achieved groundbreaking progress. Earlier this year, a test flight demonstrated Starship's capability to reach orbit, affirming its potential for missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. The spacecraft's reusability and immense payload capacity are central to SpaceX's vision of making space travel affordable and accessible. There have been a total of 6 flights so far of the SpaceX Starship, each proving the rocket more capable than before.

For the first time in history, SpaceX caught the "Super-heavy" booster with its "Mechazilla" crane system. The rocket flew up, detached the Starship which went into orbit, and the lower half, the booster, performed a return-to-launch sequence where it softly landed in the crane's arms. This incredible feat proves SpaceX is definitely advancing as planned, and it is a company that has the capability to make big changes in the industry.

However, success has not come without setbacks. A highly anticipated test flight ended abruptly when an anomaly triggered Starship's automated self-destruct system. The explosion scattered debris over the Gulf of Mexico, raising environmental concerns and prompting a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation. These failures, while disheartening, have provided critical data for refining the design.

Despite regulatory delays and criticism about the company's rapid development pace, SpaceX remains determined, with future launches planned to support NASA's Artemis program and push the boundaries of interplanetary exploration.

Rocket Lab, a New Zealand-based aerospace company, has emerged as a notable competitor in the space industry. Its Electron rocket has become synonymous with reliable small-satellite launches, and the company recently achieved a milestone by recovering a booster for reuse.

Plans for the medium-lift Neutron rocket have also bolstered investor confidence, with Rocket Lab's stock soaring in recent months. This Neutron rocket will be at the top of its market, providing the safest and most efficient form of sending medium load payloads into orbit.

The company is planning on developing the rocket to safely carry high risk payloads that are at very high value. Howev-

er, the road has not been entirely smooth. Earlier this year, an Electron rocket failed during launch, resulting in the loss of a commercial satellite payload. While Rocket Lab quickly identified and addressed the issue, the incident highlighted the challenges of scaling operations in a competitive market dominated by SpaceX's larger reusable rockets.

Rocket Lab's success story is one of perseverance and innovation, but the company must continue to prove its reliability as it expands into larger payload missions.

Blue Origin, founded by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, aims to establish itself as a leader in suborbital and orbital missions. The company's New Shepard rocket has provided successful spaceflights for both research and tourism, capturing public imagination. Additionally, Blue Origin has secured a NASA contract to deliver science instruments to the Moon under the Artemis program, signaling its growing influence. Once the Blue Origin rocket launches and the program is rolling, it will be a big competitor to the well known and well established SpaceX.

Yet, Blue Origin has struggled with delays and setbacks. A booster malfunction on an uncrewed New Shepard mission led to a temporary suspension of flights. Development of its New Glenn rocket has also been slower than anticipated, frustrating stakeholders eager for progress. Recently, a hot-fire test (which is where the rocket is stationary and the engines are ignited for test) failed to ignite any of the seven engines.

Moreover, allegations of a toxic workplace culture and safety concerns have cast a shadow over the company's reputation. While these issues have not derailed its ambitions, they underscore the challenges of scaling operations while maintaining quality and morale.

The modern space race is a blend of extraordinary achievements and sobering challenges. SpaceX's Starship launches demonstrate the potential for interplanetary travel, but failures remind us of the steep learning curve.

NASA continues to inspire with its scientific discoveries and lunar ambitions, even as it grapples with budgetary and logistical hurdles. Rocket Lab showcases the promise of small-scale innovation while navigating the complexities of expansion. Blue Origin's successes in space tourism and Moon contracts are tempered by delays and internal controversies.

Together, these organizations highlight the dual nature of progress in space exploration. Each success brings us closer to realizing humanity's extraterrestrial dreams, while each failure offers lessons that strengthen the foundation for future endeavors. The journey to the stars is a challenging one, but as history has shown, the rewards are well worth the effort.

Mass of Immaculate Conception of Mary



Counter Clockwise from top right (All pictures right to left)

SJR Chorus sings at mass

Father gives his homily during mass

Michael Bautista '26 receives the Eucharist

Thomas McCarthy '25 gives out the Eucharist

Father during the Liturgy of the Eucharist

Photos taken by Kooper Urbanski '26





SJR Winter Sports Media Day



Counter Clockwise from top right (All pictures left to right)

Jimmy Sloan '25 holding a basketball

Group of SJR wrestlers in a pyramid

Michael Bautista '26 spins a football

Jahmir Joseph '25 ready for senior year

Brothers Chaz Gray '27 and Tahj Gray '28 pose for photo

All photos taken by Jack Iglesias '27



Pro Sports

A Young Jets Fan - A Life of Torment



Aaron Rodgers upset after failing to break the curse on the New York Jets franchise

By Cathal Donohoe '26

As a Junior in High School I have yet to experience a Jets playoff game, and I have not witness the Jets finished above .500 since I was in 2nd grade. Being a fan of the Jets has been pure torture and disappointment.

Here are 5 of my least favorite things I have experienced as a Jets fan:

1 - Rodgers Tears Achilles on 4th Play of Jets Career

The 2022 season was a roller coaster of events and after missing the playoffs, the Jets traded for 4x MVP Aaron Rodgers, finally a competent starting quarterback in New York! That offseason was the most hyped I have witnessed for any team, I thought the 12 year playoff drought would be snapped with Rodgers at QB. But 4 plays into his Jets career Rodgers tore his achilles forcing the Jets to start Zach Wilson, again. That year they circled through 3 different quarterbacks and missed the playoffs going 7-10, another year of torment and season full of hope disappeared in just 4 plays.

2 - Beating the Rams and Browns in 2020 to miss out of Trevor Lawrence

The 2020 Jets season was famous for the "Tank for Trevor" year. That year it seemed they were losing games on purpose to try and land the 1st overall pick for a generational QB prospect Trevor Lawrence. Cheering against your team was hard but I was fully on the tank for Trevor wagon. I wanted them to go out and lose because I knew the future would be bright with the Clemson QB. The tank was going as planned, the Jets started 0-13 but in just 2 games that hope was over, they beat the Rams and Browns, 2 playoff teams and fell back to the 2nd overall pick and had to settle for

Zach Wilson and we all know how that went - terrible.

3 - The Hiring of Adam Gase

On January 6th, 2019, I texted a friend "Hopefully Mike McCarthy and not Adam Gase" talking about the Jets head coaching search, and 3 days later...the Jets hired Adam Gase. From that point on I knew we were ruined, in Gase's first year we went 7-9 and missed the playoffs, the next year however we went 2-14 and had the worst offense in the NFL. The Gase tenure was beyond that record, he ruined players like Sam Darnold, Le'veon Bell and forced Jamal Adams out of NY.

4 - The Disappointment of the 2024 Season

With Aaron Rodgers fully healthy and the Jets having the most talented roster they have had probably ever it was destiny the Jets would break their 13 year playoff drought, but that was the opposite. The 2024 season has shown the dysfunction that goes on in the Jets organization from letting one man control what decisions are made (Aaron Rodgers), firing GM and Head Coach mid year and losing in disappointing fashions every week. The 2024 Jets were supposed to be the ones that broke the curse and take the team to the playoffs for the first time since 2010, but that won't be happening.

5 - The fall of the 2022 Jets

The 2022 Jets were something special, they were young, they were energetic and they were fun to watch. By Thanksgiving the Jets were 7-4 and at the top of the Wild Card race and just 3 wins away from heading to the postseason, but like every year it ended in disappointment. The Jets lost 6 in a row and ended the season with a 7-10 record adding to the disappointment of being a Jets fan.

With a new era of Jets football around the corner I just hope they can get it right this time around.



Upset Jets fan with paper bag over his head written infamous Jets slogan "Same Old Jets"

Pro Sports

New York Mets Sign Juan Soto to a Historic Contract



Juan Soto and his future teammate Francisco Lindor

By Cathal Donohoe '26

Juan Soto is shuffling his way from The Bronx to Queens, as he signs a record-breaking 15-year, \$765 million deal with the New York Mets.

After weeks of negotiations, the Mets have landed the 26-year-old outfielder, outbidding the New York Yankees, Toronto Blue Jays, Boston Red Sox, and Los Angeles Dodgers.

The 4x All-Star is the exact player the Mets have been targeting for a long time: a superstar to complement Francisco Lindor. Soto was the MVP runner-up in 2024 and played a huge part in the Yankees' World Series run.

This signing is a historic move for the Mets and shows that the tides are finally starting to shift in New York. For a long time, we've seen superstar Mets players leave for the Yankees, such as Doc Gooden, Darryl Strawberry, Carlos Beltrán, and David Cone. But with the Mets finally stealing a star player from their crosstown rivals, it shows that maybe the Mets are the team of New York.

To add to that, it's not like the Mets went and outbid the Yankees by a significant amount. The Mets only offered \$5 million more than the Yankees. Is \$5 million a big difference in a \$765 million deal? No.

He chose the Mets based on more than money; he signed with the Mets because of the future of the team, the culture, and a better chance of winning a ring.

Furthermore, from the perspective of New York's changing landscape, we are seeing a shift in the Yankees' culture. A big question to ask is, when was the last time the Yankees

lost a superstar in free agency? The answer is: it's been a long time.

For the Mets, this signing fills a void in their lineup at left field. As of now, the Mets will have Soto, José Siri, and Brandon Nimmo in the outfield, Vientos at first base, Baty at third, Lindor at shortstop, Alvarez at catcher, and the option of Luis Ángel Acuña, Mauricio, Jett Williams, or McNeil at second base. There's a chance that Brett Baty could be moved out of third base, with Vientos taking his spot, if the Mets are able to re-sign Pete Alonso. If they re-sign Alonso, he would take over at first base.

Now, for the rest of free agency, the Mets are not done, especially with the richest owner in baseball, Steve Cohen. A couple of top priorities for the Mets should be re-signing Pete Alonso and pitcher Sean Manaea, beefing up the bullpen, and the signing of Soto will be a big lure for bringing back players and attracting new ones.

Longtime Mets broadcaster Gary Cohen chimed in after the record-breaking deal. As a long-time fan and someone who has had a close eye on this team for over 30 years, he had high praise for the move made by Steve Cohen and company.

"It is the biggest and most important transaction the Mets have ever made. The only one that is in the same ballpark is the trade for Mike Piazza in 1998," said Gary Cohen.

With the Mets coming off an NLCS appearance, a new standard has been set for this team. And with the signing of Soto, that increases the standard set in 2024 to a World Series-or-bust standard for the Mets in 2025 and beyond.



Juan Soto in the New York Mets Orange and Blue colors

SJR Wrestling Ready for the 2024-2025 Season



Seniors Vincent Paino, Ryan Burton and Adrian DeJesus

By Cathal Donohoe '26

After a highly successful 2023-2024 wrestling season, the sky's the limit for the Green Knights wrestling team. Coming off a state championship appearance, the team returns 7 wrestlers who placed in states, and now for the 2024-2025 season they are looking to improve into something bigger.

The Green Knights are stacked across all weight classes but for the best returning wrestlers starts at Charlie Esposito, who finished in 6th place last year in the state championships, over the offseason Esposito has also been ranked 16th in the nation.

Moving up from there, Junior Johnathon McGinty wrestled at 106 pounds freshman year and 113 pounds sophomore year, freshman year McGinty placed 5th in states and last year he placed 2nd and he is ranked as the 2nd 113 pound wrestler in the country.

Junior Mikey Baustista is coming off a season where he placed 4th in states last year at 120 pounds, Baustista is also a 2 time district champion, and a 1x region champion.

At 126 pounds is senior Vincent Paino who recently committed to Purdue University, Paino placed at states his sophomore year when he placed 5th.

From there is 2 time state champion Senior Adrian DeJesus who is coming off an undefeated season in 2023-2024 where he was a district champion, region champion and state champion at 132 pounds. The Cornell commit will now be looking to replicate his Junior year performance but better.

“Doing the same thing we did last year, working hard in the wrestling room keep lifting each other up and encouraging each other to keep pushing”

“There are tough times in that wrestling room, many times we are doubting ourselves so we always look to each other to push ourselves up and pressure each other to go harder,” said DeJesus

At 144 pounds the Green Knights will have Senior Jimmy Sloan who in his 3 years at the varsity level he has been a 3 time district champion, and placed 2 times at states. At 165 pounds the Green Knights have Junior Joseph Paretti who came in 2nd in Districts and 1st in Regions in 2024.

A key piece for the Green Knights the past 2 years has been Senior Ryan Burton. The Virginia Tech commit has had a very decorated high school career, becoming a 2 time region champion, 3 time district champion, 1x state champion, Escape the Rock champion, Beast of the East champion, 2 time BCCA champion, 2024 USAW Men’s junior freestyle national champion and that is just scratching the surface. Burton has been ranked the #1 175 pound wrestler in the country and the #7 pound for pound wrestler in the country.

“I am just focused on re-climbing that hill and getting back to the top, I had a lot of success last year but I am looking to re-climb and get back to where I was,” said Ryan Burton when asked about his outlook for this season.

At 190 pounds the Green Knights have senior Kaleb Jackson, a Brown commit who recently placed 6th in states. Last season Jackson placed 1st in Districts and 3rd in regions as well as placing 6th in the Beast of the East tournament.

Over the offseason, senior Anthony Harris, an Oklahoma commit, transferred from St. Peter’s Prep to SJR, landing the Green Knights a key piece at the 215 pound weight class. During his time with the Marauders, Harris was a 2 time Region champion, 1x District champion and a state finalist as a sophomore.

“I am super excited to be here. It is my senior season and I am expecting to do the most,” Harris said.

Last year the Green Knights finished with a 12-1 record and fell short of Delbarton in a State Championship rematch from the year prior. But now this year the Green Knights are ranked the #1 team in New Jersey and #3 team in the country, and the team is ready to turn the page and look forward to 2024 and 2025.

The Green Knights will begin their 2024-2025 season on the road at the Escape the Rock tournament starting December 20th.

SJR Basketball Team Preview



Jahmir Joseph '25 dribbles ball up the court

By Pierre Smith '26

SJR Varsity basketball is kicking off its season December 19th at Ridgewood at 4:00. The home opener is Saturday the 21st against Demarest. This is a great opportunity to come out and support the basketball team for the first home game of the season.

The Varsity team has four returning starters: Jahmir Joseph, Alex Mazzella, Chaz Gray, and Anthony Pacciarelli. The team is made up of predominantly juniors and seniors. Both Chaz and Alex are sophomores who played considerable roles last year on varsity as freshmen. The only freshman currently on the team is Tahj Gray. SJR also received a number of transfers this year including juniors Tom Diomedi and Pierre Smith, as well as the sophomore Julian Paradise. Tom, a transfer from Montclair High School, played on varsity for two years. Pierre Smith is a transfer from Don Bosco Prep who plays football and basketball. Sophomore Julian Paradise recently transferred to SJR from Bergen Catholic.

Some key games on the schedule to look out for are against Don Bosco Prep, Bergen Catholic, Rutgers Prep. All three of these teams are ranked in the top 20 in the state for basketball. The Green Knights play the #11 ranked Ironmen January 1st as well as the last game of the regular season on Feb. 20.

Without Dylan Harper, Bosco is looking considerably more vulnerable this year. SJR also plays the one of the highest ranked teams in the state Bergen Catholic multiple times throughout the year. The Green Knights are scheduled to

face Bergen in the regular season January 16th and February 11. With the postseason and tournaments, there is always the possibility that we could see Bergen or Bosco one or two additional times. St. Joes also plays Rutgers Prep January 11 at Hackensack HS in the Mel Henderson Showcase. Additionally, the team is looking to make a deep run in both the Bergen Jamboree which begins January 30th as well as the NJSIAA tournament which starts on February 28th.

The team played its first scrimmage this Wednesday against East Side High School. The scrimmage was almost canceled due to the rainstorm that hit the area. Fortunately, the game was not called off. The final score was 38-40 with East Side coming out on top. SJR got off to a slow start but was leading by 1 going into the half with a score of 21-20.

Going into the game, the emphasis was on defensive pressure as well as making sure the offense was moving properly. The shooting wasn't spectacular but there are always kinks to be worked out at the beginning of a season. Now that we have gotten the first game butterflies out of the way, we are ready to get into the rhythm of the season.

I will be covering our basketball teams for the Guardian for the duration of the season. I look forward to keeping you up to date on the action, scores, and news from the games on all three levels at SJR.

Throughout the season I will be highlighting different players as well as interviewing coaches. You will get to know the players who make up the varsity, JV, and freshman teams. The support of the student body, especially at home games is crucial for the team's morale. Go to as many home games as you possibly can. It's going to be a great season.



Alex Mazzella '27 drives to the basket

SJR Hockey Off to a Strong Start



SJR hockey team on the ice before first game

By Dante Mangarelli '26

The Green Knights have advanced to a solid 2-1 record early in the season, building momentum with back-to-back victories after a tough opening loss.

Ranked as the No. 13 team in the state, they faced a challenging opponent in their first game against the highly ranked No. 2 Ironmen. Despite the setback, the Green Knights bounced back in style, dominating their subsequent match ups.

Their most recent win, an 8-1 triumph over Gloucester Catholic, marked their first win in Gordon Conference play. In this dominant performance, Connor White, Donovan Gretchen, Gregory Zimmer, and Hunter Beanland each scored goals. Goalies Gabe Florio and Liam Moloney shared duties in net and allowed just one goal in total, showcasing exceptional defensive coordination.

The team's offensive prowess was evident as they outshot their opponents by an incredible 67 to 7 margin. Supporting the scorers were Max Juneau, Dante Mangarelli, Shane Tobin, Paul Giblin, Kyle Kondratowicz, Joseph Ciardullo, and Nick Mas, all recording assists. Eric Cadou provided two assists, and Ryan Beanland led the team with an impressive three assists.

The Green Knights continued their winning streak on December 10th with a well-fought 4-2 victory against Iona Prep. Goals in this match were netted by Logan Hughes, Connor White, and Shane Tobin, with Jason Juneau and

Paul Giblin assisting their teammates. Tobin and Kondratowicz each tallied two assists, contributing significantly to the win. Once again, Gabe Florio stood out with his stellar performance in goal, making 15 crucial saves to secure the victory. These back-to-back wins have showcased the team's ability to work cohesively and adapt to challenges, underscoring their depth and skill in both offensive and defensive play.

Looking ahead, the Green Knights are preparing to take on Seton Hall Prep in their next game at Codey Arena in West Orange, New Jersey. The Pirates are 1-2 to start the season; however, they are also 1-0 in Gordon play.

The boys are hoping to extend their win streak to three games heading into their fifth match. Following this, on December 18th, the team will face Pope John, who has started the season 3-0 and is 2-0 in the Gordon Conference. These upcoming games will be crucial as the Green Knights aim to solidify their position atop the National Division, earning a coveted spot in the conference playoffs.

The team is undoubtedly gaining confidence and demonstrating that they are a force to be reckoned with as the season progresses. Their recent performances are a testament to their hard work, strategic playmaking, and determination to rise in state rankings.

With a mix of experienced players and emerging talents, the Green Knights have shown the ability to adapt their strategy to counter various opponents effectively. As they prepare for increasingly competitive matchups, their focus remains on maintaining momentum and achieving their long-term goals.



Goalie Gabe Florio '26 pregame