

THE SPRESS

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* OLYMPICS

* GRAMMYS

* SNOW DAYS

Soaring through the season

Kolby Kostelnik



The boys' basketball team after clinching the section

You walk into the South Park gym. Shoes squeaking. Players yelling. Fans chanting. The final buzzer hits, and the Eagles win another game to continue their amazing season.

Basketball is one of the most popular winter sports. The South Park basketball team has rolled along and dominated throughout the regular season. The team finished with a 19-3 record and placed first in the section. The team won their first section title since 1998, and with playoffs just around the corner, this will be a huge energy booster.

There seems to be such a big difference between this year's team and last year's team. While they lost some good seniors last year due to graduation, it does not seem to have impacted this team. Leadership and hard work are definitely the reason for that. Xavier Singleton, sophomore, identified the biggest differences between the seasons. He says he thinks the team is more energetic than last year. He says this is due to the "young players being energetic and supporting the older players". Singleton also feels like this has been

the closest he's ever been with his teammates. He even said "they all feel like brothers to me." Lastly Singleton says the best thing they have done this season was "taking accountability when they were wrong."

Leland Stone, sophomore, also feels that the team is "more energetic than last year" because everyone is motivated and ready to play. Stone also feels closer to his teammates because "we communicate better and spend more time supporting each other during practices and games." Finally, Stone also says the leadership has "pulled everyone together" by setting positive examples and keeping the team motivated during tough moments.

This all shows how much leadership can change a team. Having good leaders on your team affects everyone because the rest of the team will follow their lead. Having captains who always take accountability, are responsible, and take care of everyone on the team is how great teams are built. The playoff bracket will be announced soon, with South Park hoping to dominate in the postseason.

Say it ain't snow

Jeremy Oxford

Sidewalks are piled in heavy snow, mounds taller than people. What has caused this catastrophic weather to devour certain areas of the U.S? Many places are being shut down, and people are taking major caution wherever they go, due to the snowstorms and bone-chilling temperatures.

The recent winter storm, Fern, in the U.S originated in the northern part of Texas and some part of eastern New Mexico and moved northwest, making its way through almost every state. Many weather channels are calling this winter storm historic due to its severe impact, though not all states got the same amount of snow and temperatures. New Mexico, part of where the winter storm started, ended up receiving the most snow at 31 inches with a low temperature of -6° F. Locally, the state of Pennsylvania got around 12 inches of snow with low temperatures of -16° F. Because of the major cold and the high amounts of snow, many states had a shortage of salt for the roads or driveways. This made it very difficult to travel and keep the roads safe for everyone.

Due to the heavy snowfall and extremely cold temperatures, the South Park District, along with multiple other schools in the Pittsburgh area, closed down for a week straight. This put everyone learning virtually, whether they enjoyed it or not. On January 26, South Park closed completely without a virtual day, which gave students the opportunity to enjoy the snow. Tuesday and Wednesday of that week kicked off the virtual learning experience for the week, and most students thought it to be very easy and simple to complete their assignments. When the end of the school week hit, students and teachers' thoughts of enjoyable virtual days faded as they became tired of having to do everything online, which was difficult for teachers to educate their students on new material.

So how many people actually enjoy this cold weather? Along with the struggles of virtual learning, there are many other things people appreciate or dislike about the magical snowfalls outside. According to EMI Research Solutions, approximately 56% of people either like or love the snow. Xavier Haduch, sophomore, and Axel Shawley, freshman, both say they enjoy the snow and cold weather that we've been experiencing. With enjoyment of the freezing

lot of other people who might not appreciate the winter season. The heavy amounts of snow might remove the activities you normally do, but adapting to the sudden change in weather by going sledding with your friends or simply building a snowman outside can really help alleviate your seasonal depression.

People living in these weather conditions have many different reasons why it could be good or bad. Haduch says the best part of this snowy weather is "the pretty scenery." However, he also adds that the worst part is "the hazardous driving conditions" for the many people who drive. These impacts, positive or negative, really set the tone of whether or not you enjoy the cold, snowy weather.

Overall, the main impact of peoples' opinions on the snowy weather comes down to how it affects their daily lives. Whether it's a school cancellation or being forced to stay off the roads, these simple things can easily flip the switch in your mind into if you love the snowy weather or not.



Tall mounds of snow piled up on the sidewalks

Sisters before misters

Cassie Oxford

Need an excuse to hang out with your girls? Galentine’s Day is the perfect opportunity to do so. There is nothing better than having all your friends together to celebrate one another, with snacks and beverages and, of course, fun activities too.

While Galentine’s Day isn’t an official holiday, it was introduced by the beloved character Leslie Knope on the television show “Parks and Recreation,” which popularized the holiday. Usually celebrated the day before Valentine’s Day, it is a day for women to celebrate their friendships by gathering and sharing platonic love, countering Valentine’s Day’s traditional theme of romantic love. After all, who needs a man when you have your girls?

Galentine’s Day can be celebrated differently depending on each group. Some have different foods, beverages, activities, music, and more. Some people, like in the show “Parks and Recreation,” even do gift exchanges. However it is celebrated, the meaning of Galentine’s Day remains the same to everyone who celebrates.

Students at South Park High School have even celebrated Galentine’s Day with their friends. For example, Bailey Vietmeier, senior, has done activities like baking, eating, and games, while Kennedy Salvino, senior, has “gone out for dinner at Bravo dressed up.” Whether you hang out at someone’s house or go out, the party’s location depends on your own preferences. If you like staying in the comfort of your own home and want to invite a few friends, then hosting a Galentine’s at your house is the perfect option. However, if you enjoy going out and want to invite a lot of friends, going out to eat or doing a fun activity is the best option.



Galentine’s Day represented in an episode of the TV show “Parks and Recreation”

That’s the beauty of Galentine’s Day – there’s no right or wrong way to celebrate. How you celebrate is based on what you and your friends like to do together. You could do something as simple as binge-watching movies, or you could go all out and go on a road trip together. Galentine’s Day only comes once a year, so celebrate however you and your friends want to.

Galentine’s Day is coming up quickly, on February 13th. If you have celebrated before and want to celebrate again, or if you have never celebrated and want to do it this year, it’s not too late to plan a hangout with your friends.

Team USA: Team win

Kate Seitz



Team USA figure skaters took home the gold during the first weekend of the 2026 Olympics in a narrow victory against Japan. Going into the final team event—the men’s free skate—the two nations had been tied, so the pressure was on for the United States’s Ilia Malinin and Japan’s Shun Sato. Malinin skated first, putting on an amazing performance, though it was not without its flaws. The figure skater fell early into his routine, but made up for it by improvising and adding another jump not long after. Malinin had struggled with nerves in his previous short program skate and didn’t place as well as fans had hoped, but this time around he managed to score an impressive 200.03, which was just what the US

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America's biggest night in music: The Grammys

Devin Kelly



Bruno Mars singing at the 2026 Grammys

Bad Bunny wears a bulletproof vest, Trump threatens to sue, and Justin Bieber performs in his boxers. While some of these things might not have been on your 2026 bingo card, chances are they weren't all on your bingo card for the same night.

The 68th Grammy Awards took place on February 1, 2026, at Crypto.com Arena and was hosted by comedian Trevor Noah. Noah started the night by taking some jabs at politicians and criminals alike, but then spent the majority of his opening monologue acknowledging the night's biggest musical artists.

This year's Grammy Awards made history with Bad Bunny becoming the first artist to win Album of the Year for an all-Spanish-language project with "Debí Tirar Más Fotos". Additionally, Kendrick Lamar broke records as the most-awarded rapper, winning Record of the Year for "Luther" and five total awards. Lamar also led the nominations with nine. Women were not left out of the top honors, though, as Olivia Dean was named Best New Artist.

The evening was also packed full of performances from music's top artists. Post Malone performed a tribute to Ozzy Osbourne, and Justin Bieber performed "Yukon" as a one-man show, not only playing guitar but doing so in his boxer shorts. Bruno Mars and Rosé sang a duet together: "APT", and Reba McEntire made her Grammy performance debut, performing at the award show for the first time after almost 40 years in the music industry.

joke that Trump deemed defamatory. Additionally, after the controversy regarding Bad Bunny performing the half-time show at the Super Bowl, he received many threats, forcing him to wear a bulletproof vest to the Grammys, which he stated he'd wear for the remainder of February.

With the 68th Grammy Awards in the books, it's on to the next award show. The Emmy Awards are just around the corner, with many more talked-about moments to come.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 14: Valentine's day

February 16: Presidents day

February 16: No school

February 27: Middle school musical - 7:00pm at SPEC

February 28: Middle school musical - 7:00pm at SPEC

March 8: Daylight saving time starts

Team USA: Team win (con't)

Kate Seitz

needed. Japan's Shun Sato then took to the ice and executed several quad jumps of his own in a clean routine. The wait for Sato's score was intense, as it would be the determining factor in which team would take the gold, but ultimately Sato's skate had only been good enough for a 194.86. Malinin had a much higher technical score than Sato, which gave him the victory despite his early stumble. The US figure skating team beat Japan 69-68, winning the second gold medal for the USA in the 2026 Winter Olympics.



Ilia Malinin is the son of two Olympic figure skaters: Tatiana Malinina and Roman Skorniakov. Nicknamed "Quad God", Malinin is the only figure skater in history to successfully land a quadruple axel in competition. As of the 2026 Olympics, he is also the first person to perform a backflip in competition legally - Surya Bonaly famously landed it back when it was banned - and has shown it twice in his recent skates. He remains a favorite to win the gold medal in men's singles, and fans are eagerly awaiting his quadruple axel, which he has yet to show in this Olympic cycle.



After competing in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Alysa Liu announced her retirement from figure skating at the age of 16. Four years later, however, she returned to the Olympics once again with Team USA. Finishing second in the team

event's women's singles, Liu is a strong competitor for gold going into the individual competitions.



Another strong skater for the women's side of things on the U.S. team, Amber Glenn recently won the 2026 title over Liu with a 233.55 score. She experienced some trouble during her free skate, later reflecting that she "physically did not feel [her] best out there", but despite it all, she remains a competitor for an individual medal later.



A veteran ice dance duo, married couple Madison Chock and Evan Bates have been a cornerstone of Team USA's success for years, being multiple-time world medalists and Olympic veterans. After delivering an incredible skate in the recent team event, they remain top favorites to win the 2026 Olympic ice dance gold.

Recent releases

Addi Yochum

“I Am” by Lexa Gates

Lexa Gates, a growing rapper from Queens, New York, released her sixth studio album, *I Am*, in January. She has gained some popularity from her performance art pieces she does to promote her albums. Back in October 2024, she promoted her album “Elite Vessel” by locking herself in a glass box in Union Square for 10 hours. For “I Am,” she walked on a life-sized hamster wheel for 10 hours. In this 18 track album, she uses lots of 60s and 70s samples like “Are You Lonesome Like Me” by The Feminine Complex in the second track “Ight, and “Tell Me You’ll Wait” by Bohannon in the 16th track, “Latency.” I believe this album really brings attention to her talented production and her unique voice.

“Don’t Be Dumb” by A\$AP Rocky

A\$AP Rocky released his fourth studio album since 2018, “Don’t Be Dumb” last month. Before, he released singles like “HIGHJACK” and Grammy-nominated “Taylor Swift” in 2024. In this album, he uses samples like “Sinking” by Clairo in “DON’T BE DUMB/TRIP BABY,” and includes features from DoeChii and Tyler, the creator. A\$AP also collaborated with director Tim Burton, who created the album artwork. After nearly 8 years, A\$AP proved that he has still got “it” with this album.

“HEADLIGHT/PERFECT WORLD” by Quarters

Quarters, a New York City born band released this single in January. These songs both share a rock sound, and bring strong vocals and layered guitars. Their album releasing in March, “I HOPE THIS ISN’T THE END OF THE WORLD,” includes this single, along with their single released in November of 2025, “STAR/PLUMMET.” Quarters has about 350 thousand monthly listeners, but I believe they will grow after this album and their tour this spring. I think they have a very unique sound compared to other rock/indie bands, and I’m surprised more people don’t listen to them.

“Aperture” by Harry Styles

Is Harry Styles back? After a 3 year disappearance from the music world, he released the song “Aperture” last month. Harry styles released “Harry’s House” in 2022, and completed “Love On Tour” in the summer of 2023. In December, he posted a video on youtube titled “Forever, Forever” which featured concert footage. Then, in January, he officially announced his new album, “Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally” on instagram, and then he released “Aperture” as a single. This song has a calm, electro-pop sound, with a somewhat melancholy feeling. After waiting nearly four years, this album and tour will be a big deal to fans who grew alongside him.



“Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally.” by Harry Styles