

THE SPRESS

February 27, 2026

* CURLING

* NFL FREE AGENCY

* FIGURE SKATING

Read Across America

Cassie Oxford



The Cat in the Hat, a beloved childhood character

National Read Across America Day is celebrated annually on March 2nd in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday. The National Education Association created this event to encourage young children to take joy in reading and bring the love of reading back into schools. According to the National Education Association, Read Across America is celebrated through schools, libraries, and communities to make reading fun and accessible through special events, guest readers, and diverse book challenges.

National Read Across America Day, formerly known as Dr. Seuss Day, is celebrated on Dr. Seuss's birthday because of his impact on children's literature through works such as "The Cat in the Hat" and "Green Eggs and Ham," among many other iconic books. Dr. Seuss's books are known for their rhythmic, whimsical, and imaginative stories, with colorful themes that add excitement to every page turn. While people may not remember every Dr. Seuss book in its entirety, his name is still nostalgic among those who grew up reading his books.

Every year during National Read Across America Week, students of the South Park High School Interact Club take a trip to the Elementary Center each day to read to students of each grade level. By doing so, the high school students foster a love of reading in young minds and create a fun, learning environment for them. For example, Kate Seitz, junior, participated in National Read Across America Day and felt that "it was a lot of fun seeing how excited all of the kids were." The purpose of this day is to share the love for reading, so seeing the kids all excited and joyful to read is what it is all about. Additionally, Amelia Yasher, sophomore, was also a part of the group of Interact students who read to the elementary students. She said that she loved reading and interacting with the kids because "little kids are so much fun." Kids are full of imagination and wonder, so books are the perfect outlet for them to engage in their creativity.

Not only is reading a tool for creativity, but it also enhances one's comprehension and critical
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Tyreek Hill possibly going back to the Chiefs

Devin Kelly

Former wide receiver Tyreek Hill was recently released by the Dolphins. Drafted in the 5th round back in 2016, he was the 156th overall pick by the Chiefs. In his six seasons with the Chiefs, Hill had 479 receptions for 6,630 yards and 56 receiving touchdowns. He played 91 games and was part of the 2020 Super Bowl winning team. For the past four seasons, however, he had been playing for the Miami Dolphins. In the last four seasons with the Dolphins, Hill had 340 receptions for 4,733 yards and 29 touchdowns in 54 games.

While some argue Hill isn't as good as he used to be, "The Cheetah" is known for being really fast, one time clocking 23.34 mph. Formerly the highest paid speed hit ever in NFL history, this season he endured a season-ending knee injury and ACL tear.

Hill spent the last four seasons in Miami and had one more year remaining on his contract. However, coming off serious injury in 2025, the Dolphins opted to cut him ahead of the 2026 season. Hill will enter free agency, where he figures to draw plenty of interest on the open market.

After being released by the Dolphins, he was messaged by former Chiefs teammate Chris Jones in a tweet saying "@cheetah it's time". Is "The Cheetah" going to be reunited with Patrick Mahomes? A lot of Chiefs fans are eager to see that happen.

Jones and Hill were teammates in Kansas City from 2016 to 2021 and won a Super Bowl together in 2019. Now that Hill is set to hit unrestricted free agency for the first time in his career, he is likely to land with the San Francisco 49ers, the Buffalo Bills, or the Kansas City Chiefs. Jones is obviously hoping to bring The Chiefs out of their dismal performance last season and back to glory, and he's hoping Hill will help make that happen.

Will Hill return to his former fame as "The Cheetah" in Kansas City or start a new legacy somewhere else? Stay tuned, as this is one player that everybody's watching.



Mahomes and Hill the last time they played together in 2021

Read Across America (con't)

Cassie Oxford

thinking skills. By encouraging the love of reading within young children, they will most likely turn it into a hobby of their own, allowing them to retain knowledge and expand their vocabularies more quickly.

With National Read Across America Day being a week away, whether you are in the Interact Club or not, feel free to take the opportunity to read to children and bring back the love of reading into childhood. After all, according to Dr. Seuss, "the more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

IMPORTANT DATES

February 27: Polar Plunge

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

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

March 8: Daylight saving time starts

March 17: St. Patrick's Day

March 26: End of third quarter

March 27: No school

Chess on ice

Jeremy Oxford

The stone is thrown... it slides gently across the sheet, slowly colliding with the opponents' stone. Another granite stone is tossed as the athletes frantically sweep in front of the stone, forcing its way to the center of the target.

Curling is one of many unique sports that not many people talk about. It originated in 16th-century Scotland and is a 500-year-old sport. Curling is referred to as the "roaring game." This nickname describes how the 44 pound granite stone slides against the ice, making a low roaring sound after being rolled. The team with the stone closest to the center circle, or the button, wins the end, and that team receives one point for every stone that is closer to the center than the other team's best stone. Most people might think curling is only an Olympic sport, but there are surprisingly a lot of curling clubs worldwide that compete.

So, what is so special about curling that makes it so entertaining to watch or play? There are tons of different opinions on what is the best thing about curling that makes it so fascinating. Mrs. Sciullo, Spanish teacher, says "the strategies the athletes use are so interesting," and she also believes it's the only sport she "might have a chance at doing well." Finding inspiration from curling athletes really lets you receive the motivation and determination to try it yourself. Mr. Rieck, Social Studies teacher, on the other hand, says the best thing about curling is that "it is WAY more difficult than it looks," and that the "amount of coordination and balancing that is required is astonishing." The skills required to play at a professional level of curling truly contribute to your success in the sport.

Whether you have played or only watched curling, it's a real attention grabber once you turn your tv on. Mrs. Sciullo says she's planning on going to the "Pittsburgh Curling Club" to obtain lessons on the sport. Mr. Rieck shares that he's been on the ice "25-30 times" in his life, and he also says that once, he was with an "Olympic gold medalist that represented the USA." It is really cool how a simple sport such as curling can grow someone's dreams into realities.

It is generally considered rare for the public eye to watch curling outside of the Olympics; however, both Mr. Rieck and Mrs. Sciullo share that they occasionally watch curling outside the Olympics. Curling has experienced a severe rise in popularity due to its appearance in the Olympics, and this motivates others to try it on their own. So, if you ever want to experience the fascinating sport of curling, you can visit the Pittsburgh Curling Club or even Sliders Ice Curling in the Pittsburgh area to learn the specific skills of how to be a pro curler.



A fresh start

Kolby Kostelnik



One thing everyone looks forward to in the NFL offseason is free agency. Free agency is the annual offseason period starting in March when players with expired contracts can negotiate and sign with any team. Teams use their remaining salary cap space to negotiate with the players. Salary cap space is the remaining amount of money a professional sports team has available to spend on player contracts under a league-mandated maximum limit. So who's worth reaching into the vault for this year?

The number one free agent available is Daniel Jones. Jones played last season with the Indianapolis Colts at the quarterback position. After a rough start to his career with the Giants, Jones had a great bounce back year with the Colts. Even though he is coming off a torn achilles, he will still be wanted by many teams.

The second best free agent available is Devin Lloyd. Lloyd played last season with the Jacksonville Jaguars at the linebacker position. After coming off a pretty good season, Lloyd should draw interest from many teams if not re-signed by the Jaguars.

The third best free agent available is Trey Hendrickson. Hendrickson played last season with the Cincinnati Bengals at the defensive end position. With all the contract issues he's had with the Bengals this season, we could be seeing Hendrickson in a new uniform next season.

The fourth best free agent available is Tyler Linderbaum. Linderbaum played last season with the Baltimore Ravens at the center position. Linderbaum is a young, reliable offensive lineman, so if not re-signed, teams will definitely get into a fight for him.

The fifth best free agent available is Kenneth Walker. Walker played last season with the Seattle Seahawks at the running back position. After watch-

ing Walker win Super Bowl MVP, it should be Seattle's main interest to sign him to a big contract. If by chance Walker does not get re-signed, there's a good chance he's the first guy off this list to go.

The sixth best free agent available is Odafe Oweh. Oweh played last season with the Los Angeles Chargers at the edge rusher position. Another young talented player that should draw a lot of interest if not re-signed.

The seventh best free agent available is Alec Pierce. Pierce played last season with the Indianapolis Colts at the wide receiver position. Pierce is one of the best deep threat receivers in the league because of his great hands and incredible speed. It would be no surprise if he gets a huge payday this offseason.

The eighth best free agent available is Malik Willis. Willis played last season for the Green Bay Packers at the quarterback position. He backed up Jordan Love for most of the season, but when Love went down with injuries Willis stepped up and got the job done. Teams in need of a quarterback will be fighting over this guy.

The ninth best free agent available is Jaelan Phillips. Phillips played last season for the Philadelphia Eagles at the defensive end position. With the Eagles just trading for him this past season, he should be re-signed but if not, he's another guy that will draw a ton of interest.

The tenth best free agent available is Breece Hall. Hall played last season for the New York Jets at the running back position. Hall is another young player with incredible skills. He will definitely cause fights around the league if not re-signed by the Jets.

The free agency window opens March 11 and ends on July 22. With all the incredible superstars available, this should be a very interesting offseason for all NFL fans.

Olympic figure skating wrapped

Kate Seitz



Shocking upset in men's singles

Ilia Malinin, the self-proclaimed “Quad God” and favorite to win gold, ended in eighth place after a disastrous free-skate. Going in, commentators noted that Malinin could afford to make mistakes and still medal, but as his program progressed with fall after fall, there came the question of just how many. His lead from the short program was nowhere near good enough, unfortunately, for Malinin plummeted from first place to eighth, making Mikhail Shaidorov from Kazakhstan the Olympic gold medalist. Shaidorov’s medal is the second ever gold for Kazakhstan in the Winter Olympics. Despite the crushing defeat, Malinin still displayed immense sportsmanship by immediately congratulating and hugging the Kazakhstani champion. Some spectators have theorized that there was something wrong with the Olympic ice during the free skate, due to the unusually high number of competitors who fell or lost momentum during that event, although this has not been confirmed and the results are not being challenged. After the fact, Malinin has come out and spoken about the pressure and mental health challenges that come from competing at such a high level. Malinin was the poster boy for the United States figure skating team, and tons of pressure to win the gold was placed upon him because of that. Malinin has stated that the stress of it all had gotten the best of him, and in an emotional performance during the exhibition

powerful message about the troubles that come from living under the public eye and the crushing weight of expectation. Despite his struggles this time around, Ilia is eager to try again for the gold during the next Winter Olympics cycle.

Ice dance controversy

During the ice dance finals, U.S. ice dance pair and married couple, Madison Chock and Evan Bates, skated a perfect program, but still came in second to the French pair Laurence Fournier Beaudry and Guillaume Cizeron. Many spectators believe that the U.S. team should have won, especially after the French duo made a significant mistake on their twizzles, and the judges have been under much scrutiny. While five of the nine judges placed the U.S. team as the gold medalists, French judge Jezabel Dabouis scored the skaters from his country 7.71 points higher than the U.S. pair, creating an outlier that significantly skewed the results. It is worth mentioning that it is common for judges from one nation to rank their skaters higher than is usual, as the American judge Janis Engel gave the highest marks to the U.S., but that scoring has been put under less scrutiny because they scored the French team around the average of all the other judges. Both fans and

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Olympic figure skating wrapped (con't)

Kate Seitz

several other Olympic ice dance pairs agree that Chock and Bates should have won gold, and their loss was subject entirely to nation-bias. The U.S. figure skaters decided to not formally appeal the results, but have called for significant reforms to the figure skating judging system going forward.

Amber Glenn's comeback

Amber Glenn, the reigning U.S. national champion, was considered a top contender for the gold going into her Olympic short program. Glenn was nearly perfect in the short, but ultimately ended up bailing on a required element for the short program, and was penalized heavily for it. Glenn was crushed as she saw she had been placed in 13th, all but destroying her chances for a medal. During the free skate, however, she made an astonishing comeback. While she still fell short of a medal, Glenn performed an incredible program, good enough to launch her up into fifth place. Her story is a bittersweet one. Despite knowing it was highly unlikely for her to medal after her costly mistake in the short program, Glenn gave the performance of her life in the free skate and showed everyone that she was still a capable and highly accomplished skater.



Alysa Liu ends women's figure skating medal drought

Where Glenn fell short, Alysa Liu flourished. After retiring from figure skating at the age of 16 due to intense pressure, training, and strict rules, Liu rediscovered her love of the sport and decided to come back for the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics. This time around, she said she would be skating for herself, training when she wanted, eating what she wanted, and picking her own music. Everything was on her own terms, and it showed in her skates. Instead of crippling under intense pressure and expectations like many of her fellow Olympians, Liu skated with ease and a palpable sense of joy. She was rewarded for her efforts with the Olympic gold medal, making her the first female figure skater from the U.S. to do so since 2006. And her win means something bigger than that. It shows that athletes don't have to starve themselves or suffer under intense pressure to win a gold, and hopefully more will follow Liu's lead going forward.