

# THE SPRESS

March 13, 2026

\* POLAR PLUNGE

\* SHREK MUSICAL

\* NFL COMBINE

## Anna Duncan places 5th



On Friday, March 6, 2026, Anna Duncan competed at the PIAA Individual Wrestling Championship in Hershey, PA. This was Anna's third time competing at the state-level competition. She placed fifth overall in the state of Pennsylvania in her weight class!

### Back on track

Jeremy Oxford

The new track season is now in full swing. With practices starting on March 4, athletes and coaches are back on track to compete to the best of their ability and attempt to make it to the WPIAL Championship this season. The team had their "Blue vs White" scrimmage on March 10, and now they're looking toward their first scrimmage against other teams, such as Elizabeth Forward and McKeesport, on March 18. With the scrimmages coming and going, the team's first official meet is on March 25 against Carlynton and Burgettstown.

With one of the most popular sports of South Park High School at over 60 athletes, there are many different motivations for why people choose to participate in the sport. Emelyn Schlater, junior, says she originally joined Track & Field because she thought it would help her "stay in shape," and now she does Track & Field because she "enjoys the sport." On the other hand, Dalya Jabra, junior, wanted to "learn something new." She was also "bored of not doing anything active," and was interested in joining a sport with her friends. Some students might join for the fun

of it while others join to stay active and show their competitive sides.

There are numerous events in Track and Field. This is why so many people come out to participate in the sport because they're given a plethora of opportunities to call themselves an athlete on the team. Schlater would like to do the "triple jump and try the 200m dash, along with the 400m dash and long jump." Jabra is interested in "throwing, javelin, discus, shot put, maybe pole vault, and long jump." The different answers of the two students show if someone does one throwing event, they're most likely going to stick with those types of events. If an athlete wishes to participate in four events, like both students interviewed, that athlete will receive a letter, which shows their commitment and high performance done throughout the entire Track & Field season.

Whether it's the challenging practices or engaging track meets, athletes have their own reasons for

*Continued on page 2*

## Back on track (con't)

Jeremy Oxford

liking the sport. Jabra likes “how supportive, helpful, and social everyone is.” Schlater agrees by saying “the supportive environment” is her favorite thing. Schlater also enjoys “the feeling of winning, setting new personal records, and running relays.” Track & Field has a strong team component to it, and it’s a good way to gain friendships and help others along the way.

Some athletes on the team also have a love-hate relationship with the sport because they sometimes complain about the practices or meets they are required to attend, but they still push through and talk highly of the sport. Jabra says her least favorite thing about the sport is “the workouts.” She shares that she’s “always sore and exhausted.” Schlater says her least favorite thing is the “pre-meet nerves.” She mentions that she “always wants to do well,” so she “gets really nervous.” Track meets can be really nerve racking because they aren’t the same as practices. It’s also really easy to get sore and tired from running and working out for hours.

With Track & Field up and running, it’s now the athletes’ jobs to stay in shape and continue to work hard in order to make it far in the season. Make sure to leave it all on the track!



Emelyn Schlater and Dalya Jabra relax before a track meet

## An athlete’s job interview

Kolby Kostelnik

You just finished your last College football season ever. You were the star player on the team, but now that’s in the past and you’re currently jobless. Good thing your first interview is just around the corner, the NFL Combine.

The Combine is an annual, week-long showcase in Indianapolis where top college prospects perform physical, medical, and mental tests for NFL coaches, GMs, and scouts. It acts as a critical job interview to evaluate talent before the NFL Draft.

We see players every year in the Combine make a huge name for themselves, but who were those players this year?

Jeremiyah Love is one of the best running back talents we’ve ever seen. He played college football at Notre Dame. He is declaring for the draft as a Junior in college. Everyone knew he was going to be a star, but his Combine performance really backed up that statement. Love ran a 4.36 40-Yard dash, which is the same as Jahmyr Gibbs and even faster than Bijan Robionsons - two of the best running backs in the NFL. All NFL general managers project he’s going to be a star in the league.

Omar Cooper Jr., a redshirt junior wide receiver from Indiana, made a name for himself at this year’s Combine. Cooper was projected to be drafted anywhere from the second round all the way down

### IMPORTANT DATES

**March 17: St. Patrick’s Day**

**March 26: End of third quarter**

**March 27: No school**

**April 3-7: No school**

**April 9-10: Drama Club presents “Shrek” at 7:00pm**

**April 11-12: Drama Club presents “Shrek” at 2:00pm**

## An athlete's job interview (con't)

Kolby Kostelnik

to the fourth round, but after his Combine performance, he's now being rumored to go late in the first round. Cooper ran a 4.42 40-Yard dash and had a 37" vertical jump. Many general managers will not sleep on this guy.

The defensive players also came to play during the Combine. Dillon Thieneman turned some heads at this year's Combine. Thieneman played safety at Oregon, and he is declaring for the draft in his junior season. Thieneman ran a 4.35 40-Yard dash and had a 41" vertical. Thieneman may be a little small standing at six feet tall and weighing in at 201 lbs, but he always brings the boom. He knows the game like the back of his hand. It would be a shock to see him fall out of the top twenty in the draft.

By far, the best Combine performance we've had this year was Sonny Styles. Styles is a linebacker from Ohio State. He has the most experience out of all these guys because he declared for the draft after his senior season. He's six foot five and weighs 244 lbs. Even though he's that big, he still ran a 4.46-40 Yard dash and recorded a 43.5" vertical jump. Styles is a freak athlete that just solidified himself as a top ten pick.

The NFL Combine starts a new beginning for so many athletes trying to make a name for themselves. They all have one dream and that's to make it to the league. We'll have to wait until April 23-25 to see if this happens.



## Addi's music catalog: 7

Addi Youchum

This past month, I have had Beach House's album, "7" on repeat, specifically the songs "Lose Your Smile" and "Lemon Glow". The album was released in May 2018 and has a dreamy, calming vibe with a similar sound to the band Slowdive. I love this album because I feel it's so much more instrument heavy and unique compared to their other albums that just use their usual formula of electric keyboards and calming, simple vocals.



Beach House is a Baltimore based indie band formed by Victoria LeGrand and Alex Scally. They have eight released albums, with their latest being "Once Twice Melody" in 2022. Beach House is well-known for their songs "Silver Soul" and "Space Song". Artists such as The Weeknd have sampled "Gila," looping "oh" that is used in the song's lyrics, and the melody in his song "Loft Music," as well as the beat of "Master of None" in "The Party & The After Party."

In "7," "Pay No Mind" stands out to me. This song almost sounds like it's in slow motion, and kind of gives us a break from the fast beats and layered vocals in this album. The slow motion also adds to the nostalgic or evocative atmosphere. This song describes the pain of a fading relationship. Lyrics like "Baby at night when I look at you, nothing in this world keeps me confused" explains how love feels fleeting, or that it's an escape in a chaotic world. "It's painful but do what you must, takes time to know" illustrates that growth is painful.

I have listened to Beach House for years, since middle school and I think their music shaped the music taste that I have now. They carry such a big range, from calm, simple songs like "Wildflower" to complex, "heavier" songs such as "The Hours." If you feel stuck and need something new to listen to, I recommend this album.

## War in Iran

Devin Kelly



### What remains of an Iranian building after attack from the U.S.

February 28, 2026. 1:30am. Bombs. Iran. War. What? What's happening? Many were shocked; but others were not surprised by the news coming out later that morning of an attack.

Donald Trump ordered combat operations against Iran on February 28, 2026, as part of a joint military offensive with Israel known as Operation Epic Fury. Iran's death toll soared, as estimates of those killed by strikes rose from 800 to 1,500 people within five days.

This is not the first conflict occurring in the area, however. Israel and Iran have transitioned from pre-1979 allies to bitter enemies, with tensions rooted in ideological hostility after Iran adopted an Islamic regime. Additionally, in 1979, Iran began ramping up their nuclear program. While they said it was for peaceful purposes, Israel feared it would be used against them for regional dominance. To combat Iran's nuclear program, Israel has done everything possible to disrupt Iran's nuclear efforts, fueling the tensions even more over the last four decades. Since 1985, Iran and Israel have been in a proxy war, with hostilities intensifying over the last two years. In June 2025, Iran and Israel were engaged in a 12 day war where Israel severely damaged Iran's nuclear program, and Iran retaliated heavily. In the end, over 600 people were killed.

The U.S. got involved in the 12 day war on day nine due to the potential threat of Iran using nuclear weapons. The U.S. supported and conducted their own strikes against Iran's nuclear sites. However, within three days, a ceasefire was orchestrated. While tensions between the countries were still high, fighting was temporarily over.

On February 28, Israel and the U.S. joined forces to not only take out Iran's nuclear program but also their leadership. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, supreme leader of Iran, was killed in an airstrike along with other crucial members of Iran's leadership. The attack and leadership takedown did not sit well with Iran, launching hundreds of missile and drone attacks on U.S. bases and U.S. allies across the Middle East in retaliation, Dubai and Bahrain being heavily targeted.

Many are left to wonder what will happen next. Will a formal war declaration occur? Will our country be attacked on U.S. soil? In an interview for Time Magazine on March 5, President Trump was asked if it is reasonable for Americans to have concerns about being attacked at home. Trump said, "I guess." He added, "like I said, some people will die...When you go to war some people will die." Iran has also publicly stated that they are prepared for a possible ground invasion by U.S. troops. With Iran declaring a new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of Ayatollah, many are expecting the worst, but it's too soon to predict what that is quite yet. With developments happening daily, the conflict is certainly at the forefront of news headlines.

## Freezin' for a reason

Cassie Oxford



It was 40 degrees and sunny, the perfect weather for jumping into ice-cold water. Although it was a bit chilly, the heat of the sun turned what could've been a total nightmare into a refreshing splash of cold fun.

On February 27, members of the South Park High School Bocce team, along with a few other students in the Circle of Friends club – adding up to a total of 32 people from South Park High School – travelled to Pittsburgh during the school day for the annual Polar Plunge. Seventeen other schools participated in this event, with over 300 students attending. Needless to say, the place was packed with many students who were ready to be “freezin’ for a reason.”

The Pittsburgh Polar Plunge is an annual fundraising event held at Acrisure Stadium, where participants brave chilly, ice-cold water to raise money for Special Olympics Pennsylvania. According to Special Olympics, every dollar raised helps support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. In addition to plunging in pools, the Pittsburgh Polar Plunge features music, dancing, and food, as well as a fun T-shirt for everyone who participates.

Each school comes to the Polar Plunge with a different theme. For example, South Park High School chose neon as its theme this year, so stu-

dents and staff wore bright colors that could be seen from a mile away. Students and staff were decked out in neon shirts and shorts, and were even given glow sticks to light up their outfits.

The line to plunge was long, which built anticipation among those taking the plunge. Aubrey Tabak, junior, said that “waiting in line to jump” was her least favorite part of the Polar Plunge, but other than that, it was fun. Unlike last year, the weather was nice, and the sun was shining, so the idea of jumping into ice-cold water didn’t seem as bad as it might have if the temperature had been much colder. Still, the water was freezing, but it was nothing the plungers couldn’t handle.

Tabak participated in the Polar Plunge to “vow to help stop bullying of our special needs community.” Additionally, Bailey Vietmeier, senior, plunged to raise “money and awareness for Special Olympics.” No matter how scary the plunge may be, it is all for a good cause, so it is worth facing your fears and getting out of your comfort zone.

Reese Katich, junior, said her favorite thing about the Polar Plunge was “getting to do it with [her] friends.” Knowing that you are not alone and supported by many makes the experience so much better. Vietmeier’s favorite thing about the Polar Plunge is seeing “how every school dresses up in a theme.” The dedication of each

*Continued on page 6*

## Freezin for a reason (con't)

Cassie Oxford

school's outfits and costumes exemplifies their excitement and readiness to plunge, making it a fun experience rather than a nerve-wracking one.

When given the option to participate next year, Tabak would absolutely love to, so she can see the people she supports “branch out and be brave.” Katich would also love to because “it is for a great cause.”

Whether you have thought about doing the Polar Plunge before, or even if you haven't, it is a fun experience that everyone should try at least once in their lives. Not only is it pushing you way out of your comfort zone, but it also raises money for a very good cause, making it worth it in the long run. So, next year, maybe give the Polar Plunge a try, because you could end up loving the thrill of it.

## The show must go on

Bailey Rorison

Are you looking for something to do with your family? The drama club has been hard at work on producing the 2026 musical, so why should you look forward to this production? Well, aside from supporting your fellow students, this production of “Shrek” has so many fascinating parts that it is a must see.

To start with the most obvious fact, “Shrek the Musical” has so many wonderful songs that at least one will tickle your fancy. From the recognizable “I’m a Believer” to the swing style of “Forever” to the spaghetti western style of “The Ballad of Farquaad”, there is a song that is bound to interest anyone who comes to the show. And the song lineup isn't the only thing that will make this musical amazing. Alongside the help of our school's Mr. Sisley, the actors have been doing amazing work and progress on getting the songs to be enjoyable to the ear. Even at a high school level, the actors are giving their all to make the music sound fantastic. Additionally, the students in the pit are working overtime to get all of the backing music to sound amazing to help bolster



Lucas Goralski and Robbie Reinheimer race for the plunge

the voices of our wonderful singers.

But the music isn't everything. The actors have also been hard at work learning various dances for each and every song. The dance captains have been doing an amazing job at memorizing all of these complex movements to help those that might be slightly less coordinated. However, by the time the show is ready to be seen, rest assured that even the least coordinated members of the cast will be able to amaze the audience. One of the most notable dances is the tapdancing mice and what a spectacle that will be for everyone.

The script chosen by Mr. Baker wonderfully embodies the charm and hilarity that was the original movie of “Shrek”. The actors have worked extremely hard to bring the show to life for the enjoyment of the audience. If you loved the original movie, then you will absolutely adore this adaptation of “Shrek”<sup>1</sup>. No matter how important the role, the drama club has made sure that the audience will be transported to the amazing world of “Shrek”.

However, everything that goes into these pro-

## The show must go on (con't)

Bailey Rorison

ductions are not solely the actors. Members of the drama club are hard at work to get the set done in time for opening night. One of the most notable set pieces may be Fiona's tower, or possibly the ever iconic door to Shrek's home. These set pieces are big and took an incredible amount of time and work from many of the students in the drama club. And remember, all of the sets are done by the students in the drama club, no adults help on the building process besides Mr. Baker and his wife's guidance. So when you come and see all of the amazing technical work, just remember that your fellow students did that. And this show, the drama club doesn't just have a set to build,

but also puppets. Students have their nose to the grindstone to create the iconic characters like the dragon and Gingy, the gingerbread man for this production.

And of course, no show is complete without the costuming done by the amazing Mrs. Masa. She has brought the show to life with her handiwork on all of the costuming. All of the outfits look absolutely amazing, especially considering the tight budget the drama club has to work with.

Make sure you check out "Shrek the Musical" being performed live in the high school auditorium. Show dates are April 9 and 10 at 7:00pm and April 11 and 12 at 2:00pm.

