THE END OF SEMESTER MINI ISSUE:
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SPORTS REPORT

With the fall sports season coming to an end, let's see how our sports team fared this year. It was an exciting season for many of our sports teams with many freshman who came right out of high school ready to make an impact in their respective sports. We can't forget about the seniors who were looking to make their finals season memorable. After a year where SUNYIT won the NEAC championship in 3 sports, the expectations were high for SUNY POLY. Let's recap their seasons.

The women's soccer team has put up a very impressive season considering they barely had enough players to make a team. Their 9-9-2 record was very impressive. It was an impressive season from senior Kristina Strang and junior Erica Maisonet when they led their team to the NEAC tournament. The two played so well they were named to the All NEAC second team. Considering that Kristina is the all-time record holder with an amazing 38 goals, she definitely earned her second All NEAC second team honor. Of those 38, she scored 15 of them this year. Erica Maisonet also received her second all conference second team honor this year. With a record of 6-11-2, it seemed that SUNY POLY had a completely different team from the champions they had last year. This record was not enough for the team to make it to playoffs. But some good came out of this season. Coach Peterson Jerome coached 4 players who made all NEAC teams. Two senior captains, Ben Toach and Brett Gruener, were named to these team. Ben Toach was named to the All NEAC second team. He played stellar defense and also showed offensive proficiency with 3 goals and 3 assists. Brett Gruener received third team All NEAC honors due to his tremendous defense and never quit play. Also on the third team were sophomore, Nick McBride and Cameron Prime. Their play is very hopeful for their futures on the team and their play will need to be great next year if they hope to get back to the NEAC tournament.

The women’s volleyball team is also coming off a NEAC championship from last year. However, they have lost many seniors who led them to that point as well. Even though they lost a lot of their firepower from last year, there has been a lot of promise from this shorthanded team. Their record of 16-18 and 7-5 in the conference was enough from them to secure them a chance to repeat for the championship. No one on this team was named to any all-conference teams but they were solid all around with many girls leading many different stats for the team. One of the huge bright spots for the team was the development of Emma Larson who ranked third in the nation for service aces after the first 26 games. Another nationally ranked player for the team was libero Erika Reakes, who was tenth in the nation for digs. This team has a lot of potential in the NEAC conference with their record and with new coach Dan Liberto in charge, it would be a huge statement if this team made some noise in the NEAC tournament November 7th at Gallaudet University.

Finally, and certainly not least, the men’s cross country team has had a spectacular season. Even though they lost 4 of their top 7 members from the previous year, they put together a great season mainly due to the standout performances from the freshmen athletes and the leadership of their senior members. Not enough can be said about the magnificent coaching done by coach of the year (for the second year in a row) Bill Tylutki. He took a great group of freshmen and prepared them for the grind of a college season from the start. This team went to the NEAC race ready for anything. Even though the team faced many injuries throughout the year, by the time NEACs came, they were all ready for business. The team won the NEAC championship for the second year in a row for the first time in the school's history. The team had 3 runners in the top 5 and 6 runners in the top 21. Graduate student Jordan Sirtoli finished first for SUNY POLY. Captain of the team, Cody Russell finished third just narrowly edging out rookie of the year Greg Bogdan. Sophomore Joseph Gabe Acey finished tenth overall to receive All NEAC second team honors for the Wildcats. Freshman Oliver Crain and Andrew Jeselson both obtained third team all NEAC honors; Oliver finishing seventeenth and Andrew finishing twenty first. This standout season is not over yet. It will come down to how the team does at the regional meet that will take place at the University of Rochester November 15th.
Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

Call of Duty is one of, if not the, biggest gaming franchises to ever be created. The games, published by Activision, come out yearly and sell millions of copies each. This year marked a change from the standard two year development cycle between Infinity Ward and Treyarch adding a new developer into the mix known as Sledgehammer Games. It’s been noticed that sales of the Call of Duty games have been decreasing over the past few years, but Sledgehammer intended to change that with Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare.

Advanced Warfare is the best Call of Duty game to really try to change up the games formula. The series has always pretty much been a run and gun type of game, but Advanced Warfare added something called the Exo Suit to your character. It gives you new abilities like cloaking, generating a temporary shield, and the ability to jump extra high. While most abilities don’t change game play too much, the extra high jumping and ability to dash have had a significant impact on how the game plays out. No longer are you stuck to the ground and stairs for how much more of the game takes place in higher up areas with you jumping and dashing through abandoned cities in the Middle East as well as parts of America. No longer are you running around the ground and hiding in buildings as you are now busy scaling buildings and running from roof to roof. Prior to playing the game my initial worry was that the newly implemented mechanics would make the game feel too much like Titanfall but Sledgehammer really did a good job. The Exo System in Advanced Warfare manages to accomplish the same high ground feeling set by Titanfall but still manages to feel original in its execution.

As far as stories go, the Call of Duty franchise has always been over the top and Advanced Warfare is no different. In order to avoid spoilers I won’t discuss it too much. The story is set in a future America, in which a private company called Atlas has dedicated themselves to becoming the most powerful company in the world, creating weapons, technology and even King the Middle East. The plot actually plays on a lot of current issues in the world and rolls the story out in a relatively believable way. The story is solid, and the cast is incredible. Obviously the big name in the game is Kevin Spacey and his role is suited perfectly for him. That said all characters in the game are well done and both look and sound great including the ever incredible Troy Baker from hits such as Bioshock Infinite, The Last of Us and Batman: Arkham City just to name a few as the protagonist. Advanced Warfare continues to keep up the trend of ridiculousness ever present in Call of Duty games with more explosions, vehicle crashes, bridge collapses and all the overall insanity you’ve come to expect. Interestingly the most interesting points in the game for me were actually a few short instances in which you are forced to stealth your way through situations. It was a nice change in pace for the executed in a very well done manner.

It seems however that the most important aspect of the game to most players is multiplayer. The online modes feel especially well done in Advanced Warfare. When it comes to game types you have the same selection as you would always have in the Call of Duty games plus a new mode called Uplink. In the end most game modes consist of getting the most kills, or getting the most of captures or deliveries. It’s all about winning and Advanced Warfare makes sure to allow you to go into war in whatever way you want. There is a nice selection of weapons which continue to unlock as you progress through the ranks. Unlike most Call of Duty games Advanced Warfare uses the Score Stream System enabling you to call in special systems like a UAV, a missile strike or what amounts to being a space laser by obtaining a set number of points via kills or captures. The maps are all very well designed and are absolutely great fun to play on. Overall I’ve got to say I’ve been enjoying the maps in Advanced Warfare more so than any of the Call of Duty games since the original Modern Warfare. Of course the game keeps up with the tradition of its challenges and rewards system that you’ve come to expect without much change. The biggest issue I’ve had among the multiplayer is the lag but if you’ve been a longtime player of COD multiplayer that shouldn’t really surprise you.

The last feature in the game is a mode called Exo Survival. A co-op survival game type consisting of 25 rounds of waves of enemies, each round increasing the enemy size. While I haven’t sunk much time into Exo Survival it seems to be your standard wave killing game mode. There isn’t much change to the gameplay other than the addition and use of your Exo suit. It’s saddening that Zombies, the more popular survival game mode, wasn’t included in Advanced Warfare. There is some hidden content indicating that Zombies may make a return as downloadable content but it’s disappointing to see the mode missing from the base game.

To close the review off I have to say I was really surprised by Advanced Warfare. I went into it expected to be disappointed and it turned out quite the opposite. Call of Duty Advanced Warfare is a visually stunning and completely enjoyable game. From the amazing crafted story to the incredibly well built online multiplayer, Sledgehammer Games has created an amazing game. It’s been the most enjoyable Call of Duty game I’ve played since the original Modern Warfare and it’s a game that I hope sets the standard of quality for any and all Call of Duty games to come.

[9/10]
Will the Gay-Straight Alliance Create Controversy?

Written by Abram Bismarck  Designed by Zachary Walker Handzel

Sharp-eyed students will have noticed an eye-catching poster on walls toward the end of October. It’s hard to miss when it has enough color to make a peacock jealous. Now, those colors are justified, as the poster is advertising a new club on campus called “Gay-Straight Alliance.” The concept is straight forward in concept: they want to create a safe zone for students of all sexual orientations. This is reflected in how meetings are a “hush zone,” where what is said inside the room is not meant to make it out into other conversations. This gives students a place to be more open with a small group of students they can trust, without having fear of personal details becoming campus rumors.

In fairness, we are seeing this strained professionalism pop up everywhere on campus. After the "R.I.B.S" incident of Spring 2014, most student organizations got a taste of what happens when they say the wrong thing. Regardless of one’s personal take on the case, it is clear that students are more cautious about how they approach anything official. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that we will see controversy happen with the Gay-Straight Alliance anytime soon. Though, there might be one a few years down, after the memory of "R.I.B.S" fades from the student body.

Simple analysis of the situation shows that this is not something likely to happen. If anything, both clubs will approach each other in strained acknowledgement. The heads of both know what could be lost by irrational in-fighting. Rather, it is more plausible that a student unconnected to either would be the biggest proponent of a controversy. However, this situation, given the lack of anything valuable to lose, would be confined to external disputes.

It has been 6 years since North America has seen a new Digimon video game and an even longer 10 years since any Digimon fighting games. Well luckily Bandai Namco decided to put an end to your hopes of a new Digimon game by releasing Digimon: All Star Rumble for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. All Star Rumble is a fighting game which feels like it was trying to make the most of playing Digimon games with their own unique Digimon feel. It certainly isn’t the most original game, nor is it executed as well as it could have been but it is more than exciting to see the Digimon franchise returning to video games in this hemisphere.

Digimon: All Star Rumble has a story mode and a rumble mode, with the exact same game play at its core. The story mode puts you through a story that follows the Digimon world, from different perspectives. The stage type plot no matter what Digimon you choose to play as. The only differences you’ll see in the story from playing as different Digimon is different level bosses. Each level consists of running through a very linearly designed level fighting off extremely weak enemies and collecting loot in the way of credits and Digicards. The Digicards can be attached to your character giving you a random percent to gain whatever ability said card may possess each time you hit your opponent. The only downside is that the Digicards are the only item that is valued relatively pointless other than to get you enough credits to buy more Digicards but quite honestly even the cards feel somewhat pointless. The computer AI isn’t all that difficult as it is and so you will not really encounter an enemy in which the Digicards will be of that much help. Each level ends with a boss battle, which is really just the standard fight that the game revolves around. A battle stage will load designed off of what world level you just ran through. The battle stage will usually have some sort of unique feature, like running through specific points in the round or lava that will flood the map, as well as power ups which will spawn after a specific amount of time. The power ups can range from missiles, to an instant digivolve to a health boost. The bosses consist of the other Digimon that are in the game and completing their level and beating them will unlock them as a playable character. You will need to complete the game on multiple settings to unlock all 12 characters. After completing the story mode with a specific character you will also unlock alternate forms of digivolve. Additionally voice acting and graphics are not the best but fit the Digimon universe almost perfectly. Unfortunately, voice lines are limited and hearing the same quote constantly can be a bit bothersome.

The Rumble mode is what is really enjoyable by taking the battle stages from story mode and giving it to free battle up to four other players either locally, online, or against computer. Rumble mode is certainly the true core of the game and it was definitely a good time playing and competing against friends. There are multiple game modes ranging from timed, to set number of lives, to a bomb mode, to hold nothing. While the game modes differ in minor ways they are still all "fight to win" game types so unfortunately the selected game type won’t change gameplay too much but there are still some minor options. You can choose any Digimon from the list of what you’ve unlocked, choose what evolution form you’d like to use, and use any cards you’ve unlocked which gives the game some more variation. Unfortunately, the gameplay is far from flawless and occasionally you’ll even find yourself attacking the air. Overall, though the fighting was flawed it was entertaining to say the least.

The truth of the matter is Digimon: All Star Rumble is far from a perfect game, but it was certainly nice to see a new Digimon game arrive. Half of me believes that All Star Rumble was a way to gauge interest in Bandai Namco’s upcoming Digimon Story. Cyber Sleuth, a game that is being petitioned to be released here in America. Overall I’d say if you’re new to the franchise, it’s not a game for you, but if you’re a long-time fan of the franchise, Digimon: All Star Rumble is what you’ll want and at its low $40 price tag it will be well worth your money.
Thanksgiving Night

By Elias Papatheodorou

‘Twas the night of Thanksgiving, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The turkey was done, the pies were diminished;
The gravy, sides, and snacks were all finished.
But chairs and couches sat empty and bare
No home was resided, and all without cheer.
See, the people had feasted and then they had risen
To shop at the sales that the markets had given.
They called it “Black Friday,” though the night was still Thursday;
Markets of madness for miles opened early.
And there stood the people, away from their homes
Huddled and cuddled in lines cold as gravestones.
This was their doing, their wallets had spoken
They cried for these stores on this night to be open.
They famished for deals and they hungered for savings,
The shops smelled the money and sated their cravings.
Our Spirit of Christmas looked weak and infirm,
Grim shoppers had muttered, “Early bird gets the worm!”
All of a sudden their wait was completed,
Some preferred death than to go home defeated.
The shop doors had opened, the hour had came
Survival of the fittest was the name of this game.
Pushing and shoving was heard from afar
Fights broke out with shouts of, “WorldStar! WorldStar!”
Fingers were trampled as they rushed to the shelves,
Some lost control while some protected themselves.
In the midst of the mayhem stood a mother and son;
Her spirit was full but her savings were done.
Determined to make her boy happy and proud,
“Where is your toy?” She asked him aloud.
The boy was modest and refused her request,
But his mother was sure to make his childhood the best.

She knew that her son had his heart set
And tonight was the best deal that she had seen yet.
She pulled him towards the aisle as she eyed a great smile,
His grin was wider than it had been in a while.
His gleaming eyes lit a powerful stare;
A marvelous look revealed his toy sitting there.
He turned on his step and lofted his treasure
But soon saw a sadness his heart couldn’t measure.
There stood a girl no older than himself;
Her heart dropped as he lifted the last toy off the shelf.
Proving that the Spirit of Christmas had not lain to rest,
Its battered old heart beat warm in its chest.
He handed the toy without hesitation,
The girl’s sullen face took a bright alteration.
His mother looked on with tears in her vision,
Her heart had melted with her son’s kind decision.
“This place is too crazy, this occasion’s too tough,
But I have you, Mom, and that’s more than enough.”
“I’m proud of you, honey, let’s go get ice cream,
This night is no more than a marketing scheme.”
They turned towards the door and headed away,
When they saw that same girl and her parents, ready to pay.
Walking towards the night with his head held high,
The boy wished her a “Happy Thanksgiving!” and bid all a goodbye.
CAMPUS CANDIDS
Happy Holidays SUNYIT! Enjoy your break and we’ll see you next semester!