The Prospector, January 17, 2023

UTEP Student Publications

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Behind the faces at the Border

An immigrant from Haiti helps a child walk over the mud as they cross to the United States border seeking asylum.

The Prospector

BY ERIK ACOSTA
The Prospector

Within the past few months, the city of El Paso has been experiencing a significant migration influx. Historical numbers of migrants have crossed the southwest border with no place to go, generating a humanitarian crisis and a debate over border control security and Title 42. The Trump-era public health policy, Title 42, was first implemented in 2020 to expedite asylum seekers from the country and was due to expire last year but won a temporary ruling from the Supreme Court. Given the circumstances, El Paso has been experiencing a significant migration influx. Like many migrants arriving in El Paso, alongside his seven month-pregnant wife, is Mauricio Ramos who has been in the U.S. for the past four months without a job. “The reason I came here is because of the living situation in Venezuela and I wanted to provide a better life for my wife and family,” Ramos said. “Now that we are here, I am the one supporting my family but I'm struggling because there is no work and I'm having a hard time adjusting to this life. My hands feel tight because I have no job, I can't advance or speak the language here, but I feel grateful for all the help and support that I have been getting from the people in El Paso.”

Staying at the Opportunity Center located at 1208 Myrtle Ave, they have been providing Ramos with medication and exams for his pregnant wife. “I feel frustrated because I don’t have the means to provide for my wife,” Ramos said. “I can’t provide a better living situation and better food that she needs and deserves.” Though unable to provide, Ramos mentions his wife’s pregnancy is going well.

As the unknown looms over Title 42, many have criticized it as a violation and an illegal restriction on human rights, a barrier preventing unauthorized immigration and simply not serving its purpose.

Others have countered that the immigration system is the root of the overall problem. As migrants sleep on a mattress with only a single pillow, covered in dirt and stains, they cover themselves up with a single piece of torn up newspaper piece or blanket. Covered in worn out clothing, many of migrants say they come in search of better life for themselves and their families.

“It was hard going through the jungle; the cold, the hunger but I am grateful, and I thank God that I am here, I want to get a job and establish my life here in the United States,” said Josue Rafael another migrant coming from Venezuela. “I have been having food and shelter that I need for every day but went through a lot of cold at night—time which was very frustrating, I thought I was going to die.”

see MIGRATION on page 4

Mexico is starting the new year on a bad note

BY MARIA L. GUERRERO DURAN
The Prospector

Only a few hours into the new year, the Centro de Reinserción Social No. 3 (CERESO) was raided, resulting in the successful escape of the Mexicles gang leader, Ernesto Alberto Piñon de la Cruz, also known as “El Neto.” Several sources estimate between 24 to 30 other prisoners took advantage of the chaos and escaped. The riot took the lives of 10 prison guards and seven prisoners.

As a response and prevention of further altercations, 191 prisoners were transferred to different prisons. Those transferred were prisoners charged with high impact crimes, such as homicide, kidnapping, rape, organized crime and gun possession, according to Milenio Noticias.

People in Juarez expressed their fear on social media as the city became paralyzed from the shock. Claudia Hernandez, a 23-year-old student in Ciudad Juarez shared her experience, where a shooting took place outside of the building she works at.

“Several bullets hit the windows of the buildings next to us,” Hernandez said. “It was stressful since we didn’t know at what time we would be able to get out and go home. It wasn’t until the evening that the gunshot stopped that we were able to leave, and you could see how everything was closed and the streets were empty.”

She also shares how scary it is to see the police and the SWAT team driving around the city.

“You’re obviously always with that fear that at any moment a shooting can start,” Hernandez said.

As the situation progressed, the governor of Chihuahua, Mauro Campos released a statement on social media Jan. 5, informing the public of the capture and alleged death of “El Neto.”

see CERESO on page 3
BY CRYSTAL HINGA
The Prospector

The UTEP Student Media and Publications Department is happily announcing that they have filled their assistant director position. The new Assistant Director, Crystal Hinga is slated to serve as the new editorial advisor for the student media team and assist the students in reaching new heights.

I was born and grew up in Columbus, Mississippi, a city known as “The Friendly City.” One of my favorite memories of the small town where I grew up is going back home sometimes, going to the local Walmart with my grandmother and bumping into classmates I grew up with or seeing a couple of cousins.

I left Mississippi after high school and pursued my degree in communication at the University of Memphis where I enjoyed a lot of barbecues, met lifelong friends, and made Memphis my second home. I began my broadcast career in the same city at WMC-TV. I started behind the scenes as a production assistant, advanced my way into a full-time photographer and videographer for about two years, and finally made my debut on air as a weekend reporter.

Memphis is also the city where I realized, eventually in my media career, that I would love to work with students someday to make sure they are well prepared for the media industry when they graduate college. When I graduated and started in the industry, I felt like I was not thoroughly prepared and had to learn as quick as possible in order to stay afloat.

I decided to leave Memphis after a few years to continue my career as a breaking news reporter in Savannah, Georgia. I covered a wide range of news from political stories, crime, hurricanes, sports and even light-hearted fun stories. One of my biggest and most memorable stories in Savannah was team coverage of the C-130 military plane crash in 2018.

Savannah, Georgia is also the city I will always remember as it is where I met my husband when we were both at the beginning of our careers. We married in Savannah and have two beautiful, busy children. We also recently added another family member to our home; a New Zealand White bunny named Copper.

While my career in broadcast news began to take a lot of time away from my family, I realized I was ready to progress from news and tap into the leadership realm of media.

In 2019, I was granted the opportunity to lead college media students as the Assistant Director of Student Media at Georgia Southern University. Immediately, I immediately fell in love with the field, helped launch media programs and led students to award-winning work. I am super excited to be living out my purpose and manifesting my dream of leading students into the media industry with much experience.

My husband’s career as a Black Hawk Pilot landed my family in El Paso in 2021. While the borderland is a different living experience than the places we have lived, we have grown to love the city, the people, the culture and all the experiences. While my husband continues his pilot career at Fort Bliss, I could not be more grateful to finally be a part of the El Paso community and have a new student media family to lead and produce content with.

When I am not marathon training, I will likely be spotted in the student media office editing, planning, pitching, creating content with the new team.

CRYSTAL HINGA is the editorial advisor and may be reached at crystalhingac@gmail.com. She welcomes any and all opinions, including criticism.

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Student Media and Publications welcomes its new adviser

BY CRYSTAL HINGA
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Blue Origin helps UTEP prepare for lift off

BY AVERY ESCAMILLA-WENDELL
The Prospector

UTEP’s very own Sun City Summit Rocket Team announced its new sponsorship by Blue Origin on Jan. 3. Blue Origin was founded by Amazon owner, Jeffrey Bezos. Here is what the Blue Origin sponsor will bring to the team.

The rocket team started up in 2021 and is composed of students who are majoring in engineering or have an interest in aerospace engineering who work on building and testing rockets to allow aspiring engineers to gain experience working with advanced technology.

Jonathan Cucinelli, senior mechanical engineering student, is the team lead for the group.

The team competed at the 2022 Spaceport America Cup, a nation-wide collegiate competition where university students design, build and launch rockets. Although not taking home any monetary prize to the rocket team, “(With) those opportunities that they provide, you could go anywhere with things and it’s something the other teams don’t have per se,” Cucinelli said.

According to the Blue Origin’s website, it states the mission is to “Increase access to space through reusable rockets.” The company says it is working today to create that future by developing reusable launch vehicles in-space systems that are safe, low cost and serve the needs of all civil, commercial and defense customers.

Jesus Leon, a junior mechanical engineering student, is a member of the rocket team. At the time, he was working on his rocket in hopes of earning his level-one certification on the team.

“It’s really fun because you get to (get) hands-on experience, and you get to think about (and) like wonder when you’re building it. How does certain stuff get into place and how everything works together,” Leon said.

“Being able to get that connection with people from Blue Origin who are (a) company who a lot of the people from El Paso work (with) is a great opportunity.”

As for future projects, the team and Blue Origin have a few coming up including “Daedalus” which is exploring further out in areas where rocketry has not been discovered.

According to Cucinelli a part of the sponsorship received, would be going to getting in touch with actual technical advisors that would be coming by the end of the month.

Anyone interested in joining does not need to be an engineering student at UTEP but should be interested and passionate about Aerospace.

To get in contact with the Sun City Rocket Team email them at rocketteam@utep.edu.

Culiacan was then blocked not only by land but by air too. The main access roads were blocked by the military and airlines cancelled flights from and to Culiacan, leaving civilians trapped in the middle of fire and gunfire.

Ovidio was eventually found and arrested, Jan. 5, in a small town called Jesús María. Despite this being considered a win for the Mexican military forces, the town of Jesús María, has reported that its citizens are suffering from PTSD.

“As both stories unfold, it has been advised that civilians stay cautious and informed in case of a new state of emergency arise and curfews are imposed to the public.”
Do UTEP residents feel safe on campus?

BY AVERY ESCAMILLA-WENDELL

The Prospector

After the recent deaths of four UTEP College of Health and Biomedical Sciences students that occurred Nov. 13, 2022, the safety of student residents in housing comes into question. Housing and Residence Life, the Dean of Students Office and the UTEP Police Department are three of the many resources UTEP provides for students; there are three different properties: Miner Heights, Miner Village and Miner Canyon. Housing and Residence Life is the key to what specific safety protocols and measures are put in place to protect student residents. Do students who live on campus feel safe?

UTEP Housing and Residence Life ensures the safety of student residents living on campus. A recent interview with Director of Housing and Residence Life, Ray Gordon and Associate Vice President and Dean of Students Catie McCorry-Andalis stated how both departments have their own ways of conducting safety protocols and helping students feel safe.

“I’m very proud of how safe our institution is and how safe our residence halls are, but they’re safe because we have a caring community who looks out for each other.”

Joahls Romero said he faced emotional turmoil after fleeing his country, as she went days without food, sleep and clean clothes. She says she and many migrants continue to struggle as they face new challenges inside the U.S.

“The journey from Venezuela to here has been tough because we didn’t have resources or anywhere to go eat, we didn’t have any clothes or anywhere to do our necessities, it was very hard.” Romero said. “I have been feeling sad cause I’m away from my family, so it’s been hard this whole situation.”

As migrants continue to come in and out of El Paso, they share gratitude for what they have received when staying in the borderland. However, when it comes to finding a job, many say it has been difficult.

“It’s overwhelming because we don’t have enough space. It is heartbreaking when you get a family coming in and you have to deny shelter because you are at capacity,” says Outreach Coordinator, Nicole Torres.

“All of the shelters here are in contact with one another and we are all trying our best to help them, but we are definitely all at capacity.”

In the downtown area, men, women and even children are seeking asylum, near the Sacred Heart Church at 602 S Oregon St. where hundreds of migrants are camping out. The church, which has been housing and feeding migrants since the start of the crisis has also reached capacity, that many migrants are forced to sleep on the sidewalks outside.

Even though the border is being guarded and secured by authorities, reports indicate that more than 100 migrant families cross it every day and on average around a thousand have done so in recent months.

“I do not see things getting better, although they are doing an amazing job at stopping people from coming over the border,” Torres said. “There is still an abundance of people that are still crossing over.”

While housing the migrants has presented itself as a challenge, it has not stopped the Sacred Heart Church and the community from offering services and donations. Having El Paso be at the center of a humanitarian crisis, the church and locals have shown the world how resilient El Paso is by showing kindness and humility to these refugees.

“The community has been more involved in the sense that they have been giving more food, bringing more water and clothes, that is what the community has been doing,” said Director of Religious Formation at Sacred Heart Church, Efren Loya-Gomez. “Our shelter started from zero we didn’t have a lot of stuff and asking the community what we needed, they started moving. That is how El Paso is. Anyone here would help anyone.”

City officials urged President Joe Biden to visit the city of El Paso to see firsthand the humanitarian crisis that is currently ongoing; which resulted in his presence this past Sunday Jan. 8.

Along with President Biden, bipartisan senators came a day after to see this crisis firsthand. Even New York mayor, Eric Adams who is dealing with his own version of this crisis, has visited the border to see the problem firsthand, to hopefully get federal help for both New York and border cities.

As many migrants are being transported to other cities like New York, Denver, Chicago and Washington D.C., they face the continuation of the problem at the border especially, uncertainty.

Which is why so many across the country and especially here in El Paso remain uncertain if what will ever be a quick resolution to the long-standing problem, or when a solution will come at all, but for now the city of El Paso continues to stay alert while drowning in a sea of immigration problems.

by avery escamilla-wendell

The Prospector

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Two people sleep under a makeshift hut made from donated blankets from the American Red Cross Association. Photo by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector

A group of immigrants from Haiti receives face masks after turning themselves into an official of the Customs and Border Protection. Photo by Jose Ivan Favela/The Prospector

MIGRATION fram cover

Despite the weighty matter of migration, migrants say those who are migrating to this country lack a voice to express or be heard.

“I’m asking not just El Paso but everyone else in the United States to support and not reject us,” Rafael said. “We have professions that we studied in our countries, and we want to provide for this country and become better people who help the community.”

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El Paso’s newest ice cream parlor has finally opened its doors to the community. Howdy Homemade Ice Cream Parlor’s grand opening was Dec. 3, 2022, and since then the “Heroes” have been serving every scoop with a smile.

“The best part about working at Howdy Homemade is seeing how our heroes are making an impact in our community without knowing it,” said chief manager of Howdy Homemade, Poppy Martill. “And seeing how they excel every day because they love what they do. They inspire me on a daily basis.”

Unlike any other ice cream shop, Howdy Homemade serves unique flavors, but also inspires young people who have disabilities to follow their dreams and gives them the confidence to apply for jobs and acquire skills to succeed in them.

The company originated in Dallas and was created by a man named Tom Landis in December of 2015.

The company’s mission is to create more jobs for people with intellectual and developmental differences using the power of smiles and delicious ice cream.

“We came to Howdy Homemade because we had heard about it from Fitfam on Instagram and we thought it was such a good idea,” said customer Marissa Rascon-Arriaga. “The ice cream is really good, and the ice cream shop has great customer service too.”

The ice cream shop has lots to offer, such as tasty flavors that include Dr. Pepper chocolate chip, dark chocolate chipotle and birthday cake, which they make themselves in a suite next door to the shop. Customers can get their ice cream with various toppings and cones.

“So far business has been going pretty good,” Martill said. “We are very excited because we see how people enjoy the environment and they love the ice cream. Our heroes are capable of anything, they just needed an opportunity to actually make it. I’m very proud of our heroes and I am very blessed to be working with them. It’s been an amazing journey so far.”

Available merchandise includes hats and shirts to help you match the Howdy Heroes. Howdy Homemade also caters for various events as well.

“My favorite part of working at Howdy Homemade is serving ice cream and becoming good friends with the people I work with,” said Howdy Homemade Hero, Evan Vourazeris. “People should come to Howdy Homemade because it will inspire them, and it will fill their heart with joy with all of the different flavors of ice cream. Whatever you like, we will serve you.”

Howdy Homemade is located at 601 N. Oregon St. in the Rodrick Artspace lofts.

Hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, visit howdyhomemade.com/ElPaso/ or visit Howdy Homemade on Instagram @howdyhomemadeelp.

Alyson Rodriguez is a guest contributor and may be reached at aerodriguez20@miners.utep.edu; @alyson_rod1127 on Twitter.
Light up your life at the ‘illuminated’ exhibit

BY ELISHA NUNEZ
The Prospector

Unique patterns on plexiglass and mylar cut-outs cover the walls, decorated in bright colors from the overhead lights. Proximity-based speakers make noises when you get close to the artwork and bright neon colors emanating from the paint are just a few things to look forward to at “illuminated.”

It is an exhibition entirely put together by Las Cruces-based artist, Isadora Stowe. “So ‘illuminated’ is an on-site specific installation by artist Isadora Stowe. It kind of combines painting silkscreens, floating mylar, plexiglass silhouettes, and video projections and hydroponic sounds to kind of create a very immersive experience for visitors,” said Claudia Preza, an assistant curator at the El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA).

“You can see her work; the sounds and see movement. So, it’s a very kinesic sort of an exhibition.”

Raised in a household with an artist father, Stowe was always surrounded by art. “He always had me in the studio, always with the sketchbook or art supplies,” Stowe said.

During her years in high school, Stowe created all sorts of artwork. From an art residency overseas to obtaining both a BFA and MFA in Art at New Mexico State University, Stowe explained how she did not choose art, but that “art chose her.” Stowe’s latest exhibition is Neon colors come to life, reminiscent of a phenomenon found in humanity echoing back at us. Also, who we are. So, it’s this sample of uniqueness, Stowe explained how she did not choose art, but that “art chose her.” Stowe’s latest exhibition is Neon colors come to life, reminiscent of a phenomenon found in humanity echoing back at us.

“illuminated” is full of various non-artistic materials like mylar and plexiglass, or acrylic.

The “illuminated” exhibit brings paintings, screens, lights, and sounds to display an interactive experience to guests. It also features the use of various non-artistic materials like mylar and plexiglass, or acrylic.

The designs and even the mylar cutouts, all of which were based on local flora, fauna and various cityscapes, are there to create a sense of familiarity with the visitors. To go with said designs, there are overhead speakers that go off when you are near the artwork. They play sounds recorded by Stowe on her various trips, from casual hiking outings to her time in Mexico City. “There’s a ton of (sound) collections, and then they’re all placed together to create this kind of universe,” Stowe said.

“Kind of like when sound was blasted out into the universe, to come out about what we are, who we are. So, it’s this sample of humanity echoing back at us. Also, the imagery in the show is also universal imagery that’s been made surrealistic. It’s all these things that we see in our everyday lives, but they’re kind of placed together in more of a chaotic sense.”

The exhibition first made its way to the EPMA last October and will remain there until March of 2023. For more information about the exhibition and hours of operation, visit epma.art. Stowe will be hosting talks and workshops as well.

“illuminated” is a special bioluminescent surprise for guests who have a blacklight. Photo by Jasmin Campoya/The Prospector

“illuminated” is an exhibit created by Isadora Stowe and is up for display at the El Paso Museum of Art. Photo by Jasmin Campoya/The Prospector

*Special release

RUBIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS
Spring 2023 Exhibitions

Opening Reception
January 19th, 3-5 PM

Study is What You Do with Other People. 2023 UTEP Faculty Biennial
Laura Turner: Immersive Abstractions
Genius LOC Exhibit Series

Read more about it on

theprospectordaily.com

In the second installment of Director Ryan Johnson’s ‘Knives Out’ series, “Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery” offers a dramatic change in tone from the first film. Though this movie is not a direct sequel to its predecessor, the one commonality they share is the inclusion of World’s Greatest Detective, Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig). The series follows Blanc using his skills as a renowned private investigator to unravel the truth behind the cases he has been hired to cover. “Knives Out follows the untimely death of crime author Harlan Thrombey (Christopher Plummer) where his entire dysfunctional family becoming suspect to his passing... Photo courtesy of Netflix media releases
Charlotte, 26-25, with just over played the Miners within one point Boyd completed a hook shot that continued to push the 49ers after first quarter with a score of 19-15. guard Erin Wilson, the Miners quarter of the game. changing the lead late into the first period thanks to a jumper going up 10-4 midway through forward Elina Arike. forward Adhel Taci and sophomore guard Avery Crouse, sophomore junior guard Jazion Jackson, junior guard Erin Wilson shoots a basket against the Charlotte 49ers at the Don Haskins Center, Jan. 16. Photo by Joel Molina/The Prospector Charlotte did not hold back as the line by Crouse which tied the game along with a three-point shot by senior guard Sabine Liao to put the Miners up 31-28 with three minutes left in the half. Layups by Arike and Taci extended the team’s lead 35-31. Charlotte managed to tie the game thanks to a three-pointer and jumper in the last minute of the half and reclaimed the lead thanks to a layup by Charlotte sophomore guard Ayesha Wade to close out the half. The score at halftime was 38-36. The Miners started sluggish going into the second half but bounced back to take the lead thanks to a Crouse three-pointer midway through the third quarter. The defense forced six turnovers during that stretch which led to the critical three-pointer. Charlotte did not hold back as the team took the lead back once again with 2:25 left in the third quarter. Two free throws from Jackson tied the game at 50 a piece. After a Charlotte trip to the free-point line, the 49ers managed to walk away with a 51-50-point lead to close out the third quarter. The first two minutes of the fourth quarter were quiet for both sides as Charlotte only scored on a layup to give the 49ers a two-point advantage. The Miners responded by scoring two layups including one by Taci to place the Miners ahead 54-53 once again. UTEP continued to score as they pushed its lead to five points with a little over five minutes left in the game. Both teams continued to fight as the clock ticked down with neither team backing down either. UTEP managed to regain the lead thanks to a trip to the free throw guard Ethan Hargrave of Charlotte, 26-25, with just over 2:25 left in the third quarter. Two free throws from Jackson tied the game at 50 a piece. After a Charlotte trip to the free-point line, the 49ers managed to walk away with a 51-50-point lead to close out the third quarter. The first two minutes of the fourth quarter were quiet for both sides as Charlotte only scored on a layup to give the 49ers a two-point advantage. The Miners responded by scoring two layups including one by Taci to place the Miners ahead 54-53 once again. UTEP continued to score as they pushed its lead to five points with a little over five minutes left in the game. Both teams continued to fight as the clock ticked down with neither team backing down even UTEP wins seventh home game by EMILIANO RIVAS VALENZUELA The Prospector The UTEP Miners women’s basketball team (12-4, C-USA 5-2) faced the University of North Carolina at Charlotte 49ers (7-9, C-USA 3-4) Monday, Jan. 16 at the Don Haskins Center. The Miners entered this game second in Conference USA (C-USA) standing behind Middle Tennessee, who is undefeated in conference play with six wins. UTEP is coming off a home loss to the Rice Owls where the Miners fell 75-62. This would break UTEP’s home winning streak of six games. Before that loss, UTEP had won four of its last five games placing the team only two games behind Middle Tennessee in C-USA. The opposing 49ers have not had the most successful conference play going 3-3 prior to Monday’s game. Charlotte is coming off a 64-50 loss to UTSA, a game where not a single player managed to earn double-digit points. Charlotte is currently in the middle of the C-USA standings and tied with Florida International and tied with Florida Atlantic. This game’s starting lineup consisted of junior guard N’Yia Boyd, junior guard Jazion Jackson, junior guard Avery Crouse, sophomore forward Adrih Taci and sophomore forward Elinia Arike. The Miners started out strong going up 10-4 midway through the first period thanks to a jumper by junior forward Thanaya Marks. The 49ers managed to comeback by scoring 12 unanswered points, changing the lead late into the first quarter of the game. After two scores from junior guard Erin Wilson, the Miners closed the scoring gap but could not reclaim its lead at the end of the first quarter with a score of 19-15. Both teams started out competitively, keeping the score within five points. The Miners’ offense continued to push the 49ers after Boyd completed a hook shot that placed the Miners within one point of Charlotte, 26-25, with just over five minutes left in the game. UTEP managed to regain the lead thanks to a trip to the free throw KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN! Only rain should go down the storm drain. Properly dispose of hazardous wastes, pesticides, and fertilizers. Call UTEP EH&S to schedule waste pickups.
NBA midseason recap and MVP predictions

BY EMMANUEL RIVAS VALENCUELO
The Prospector

This NBA season continues to push the limits of offense as several players have made headlines across the league with jaw-dropping statistics. Leeds and Cowboys guard Donovan Mitchell blew past Dallas Mavericks forward Luka Dončić in points scored during a game where he dropped 71 points against the Mavericks forward. Irving tends to average extraordinary numbers so far this season, averaging 25.4 and 95.5 percent on free throws this season averaging 25.4 and 95.5 percent on free throws. Both Durant and Jokic have put up extraordinary numbers so far this season averaging 25.4 and 30 points per game respectively. Durant shot 60.1 percent overall, 39.8 percent on three-pointers, and 95.9 percent on free throws over the course of 20 games. Jokic meanwhile leads the NBA in triple-doubles with nine, five of which came in December alone.

The issues for the two veterans may hold them back for the title. Durant has been an "X" factor for the Nets but has also benefited greatly from his teammate guard Kyrie Irving. Irving tends to average just shy of 26 points per game. For Jokic, the problem arises off the courts as opposed to on the court as he is coming off two straight MVP seasons and is shooting for a third. The "dark horse" in this race is Dončić as he has put up incredible numbers so far this season. The Swedish guard is averaging 34 points per game, along with 8.7 assists per game, fourth in the NBA.

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NBA safety discussion continues after Hamlin injury

BY MEAGAN GARCIA
The Prospector

When it comes to the NFL, the question of player safety and advance knowledge of injuries continues to be a growing concern in the league. As the season progresses, injuries have continued to occur, with several high-profile incidents capturing the attention of fans and the media.

Recently, the topic of player safety has been brought to the forefront following an emergency that occurred Jan. 2, during a Monday Night Football game between the Buffalo Bills and Cincinnati Bengals. Bills’ safety, Damar Hamlin, was involved in a routine tackle that resulted in him collapsing and going into cardiac arrest. He received immediate medical attention on the field, including CPR, and was later transported via ambulance. He was then rushed to UC Medical Center in Cincinnati and treated to stabilize his critical condition. One main concern following his accident is how the NFL and NFLPA (NFL Players Association) plan to prevent further serious injuries like this going forward.

According to the NFL, there are safety protocols in place and protective gear assigned to athletes to mitigate the medical risks of playing football. The NFL has implemented the Player Safety Advisory Panel, which submits formal recommendations directly to the Competition Committee and the Commissioners. The analysis covers all injuries impacting players, including concussions and ACL/MCL tears, and considers how protocols and rules changes are making an impact on player safety.

One of the first articles on the website states that “it is impossible to respond to sudden cardiac arrest on the field. There is even a special protocol ‘Detection Challenge’ led by the NFL and Amazon Web Services where the company invites experts in cardiology to help with measuring the time, duration and frequency of heart attacks. When the legal plays or designated uniforms are violated, the players receive penalizations like fines depending on whether it is the first or second offense. Even if this creates an incentive for athletes to adhere to the safer methods of playing football, the environment of the sport itself leaves much room for incidents regarding safety.

In Hamlin’s case, although there is still no personal update as to what caused his cardiac arrest, cardiologists are speculating that he suffered from a rare phenomenon known as commotio cordis.

This is when a person falls into cardiac arrest after being struck in the chest over the heart during a critical point in a heartbeat. It may seem like a freak accident, but there have been plenty of injuries to this extent that have been suffered while playing football. In 2016, then Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown suffered from a concussion after being tackled by Bengals linebacker Von’Tuie刹. In 2017, Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker, Ryan Shazier, became paralyzed after making a headfirst tackle against Bengals linebacker Josh Malone.

Despite having rules and gear set to protect each player’s safety, the NFL and NFLPA still have a long way to go in research and care. The company remains to be just that: a company. The doctors and scientists that make calls to the athletes’ health have all been appointed by people within the NFL. The company has its own medical and engineering advisors as stated on its website.

How can an informed and unbiased decision about player safety be determined from the inside? Finding a safe way to play the game is the ultimate goal for athletes and fans alike.

Where Hamlin’s first words after waking up in the hospital were, “did we win?” The more pressing matter came from his medical team’s response, “Damar you won. You won the game of life.”

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**Images courtesy of the arts & culture editor and may be reached at erivas7@miners.utep.edu.

Epileptic seizures in the sports arena and may be reached at www.fanrivas.eu; @ emanuelrivas on Instagram

TOP: Junior guard Jaxson Hayes played offense against Tania Davis from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte at the Don Haskins Center Jan. 16.
BOTTOM: Sophomore forward Elina Arike reaches for the ball as a University of North Carolina-Charlotte player also goes for it at the Don Haskins Center Jan. 16.