

WHITE PINE PRESS

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Aurora Borealis Over Grand Traverse Bay

NMC News In Brief

Big Little Hero Race to be followed by Generation Celebration

Students enrolled in Northwestern Michigan College's (NMC) Professional Communications class and Audio Tech students invite the community to the first-ever Future Generation Celebration immediately following the eighth annual Big Little Hero Race on Saturday, April 22, underneath the big white tent behind North Hall on NMC's main campus. The free music festival begins at noon and runs until 7 p.m. Food options, games, and activities are also available. This event is family friendly.

Registration for the Big Little Hero Race is still going on at biglittleherorace.com. The race is an experiential learning project to raise funds towards NMC College for Kids scholarships for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan. Last year's event raised \$5,000 for scholarships. Participants are encouraged to come in their favorite superhero costumes. Complete race details are at biglittleherorace.com.

Second Annual NMC ELI Learning Symposium May 1-4

The second annual Northwestern Michigan College Experiential Learning Institute Learning Symposium will celebrate learning from May 1-4 at the Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center (TJNIC) on NMC's main campus.

This symposium is a celebration of learning, with a variety of engaging activities and events for attendees to participate in. Throughout the event, attendees can browse poster displays and artifacts showcasing the innovative and high-impact projects that students have been working on across all academic areas at NMC.

For a complete schedule of events, visit nmc.edu/experiential-learning/learning-symposium.html. These events are open to everyone, and anyone interested in experiential or high-impact learning is encouraged to attend.

GLMA Hosts Open Ship Saturday, April 22

The community is invited to the Great Lakes Maritime Academy's "open ship" showcasing the training ship State of Michigan from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 22. The event will include self-guided tours of the T/S State of Michigan, interaction with current maritime cadets, and an opportunity to learn more about the Great Lakes Maritime Academy (GLMA), careers in maritime, and U.S. Navy commissioning options.

Tours will begin at the pier security gate entrance on the north side of NMC's Great Lakes campus, 715 E. Front St. Low-heel, closed-toe, soft-soled shoes are highly recommended. The event will occur rain or shine.

For more information contact GLMA at maritime@nmc.edu.

Audio Tech Hosts Open House Friday, April 14

NMC's audio tech program is holding an open house at their recording space in Founders Hall on Friday, April 14 from 3-10 p.m.

All are welcome to come and see the recording space, mix rooms, and live-streaming setup. Aspiring musicians and music lovers are encouraged to stop by and check out what students in the program have access to year-round: electric guitars, acoustic bass guitars, Steinway B grand piano, hi-fi professional grade speakers, 4K Blackmagic cameras, and more!

The open house will be held in Founders Hall on Main Campus, next to the Health and Science Building and behind the Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center.

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If you would like to learn more, contact faculty adviser Jacob Wheeler at jwheeler@nmc.edu or design adviser Monica Cole at mcole@nmc.edu.

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Spring Break: Meant For Study or Stupor?

Sara Bagley
Staff Writer

Spring break is a time for many students to take off for vacations, catch up on sleep or work, or simply relax and spend time with friends and family. Homework assigned over break, however, can impact students' plans for fun.

While every professor is different, some, like Mary McKeon-Jacob, an American Sign Language (ASL) instructor at NMC, find assignments necessary to keep the class and content on track. Since ASL is both an asynchronous online course and a late start class, McKeon-Jacob and her students have less time to accomplish the course content.

"We already lose a couple of weeks, and I also want students to 'keep their head in the game' over break," she said. "As a language class that leads to language acquisition, a steady stream of the language is necessary, so I provide a source for that over the break."

The work she assigns over the break is intentionally lighter than the normal coursework assigned throughout the semester, and is meant to only take students an hour or two over the course of the week, versus the normal workload of around four or five hours per week.

"I view spring break as a time of rest, or vacation, or family visits. I do not give extra work, but I do give 'light' work," McKeon-Jacob said. She aims to ensure students get time to enjoy themselves and relax on break while still practicing the language.

"If they need to wait until the day before break ends to do the assignment, that is fine! I've had a few students contact me to ask if they can have a few more days to do it, as they are traveling, for example. No problem!"

Rachael Harrell, who teaches Basic Acting and Acting II at NMC, also stressed that spring break is for rest and enjoyment. "My hope is that it is a time for rest, self-care, and maybe some fun or travel. It also allows time for catching up if a student got behind for any number of reasons during the semester," she said.

Harrell, who is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work (MSW) through Michigan State University (MSU), understands the challenges of balancing working full time with schoolwork. "It is a part-time program, but the load and homework are significant," she said. As a student, Harrell took advantage of MSU's spring break.

"I need [the] 'break' in order to stay on top of my workload. So, while I promote my students taking a break, I also think that having discipline is important. It depends on your personality and ways of coping with stress, but I don't think that it is a good strategy to come back from spring break feeling behind in a way that won't take less than a week to catch up."

While Harrell encourages her students to take advantage of the time off and get some rest and fun in, she acknowledges that her students likely have responsibilities to attend to over the break. "Spring break is almost always a time when we are working on a play or a project that will be performed later in the semester," she said. She hopes her students use their time to

continue to memorize lines and stage direction to continue the momentum the class has built.

Brian Hurst, an English major at NMC, is looking at spring break with a heavier workload on his plate.

"I'm bogged down by upcoming large projects in every class, as well as a few smaller assignments that are past due," he said.

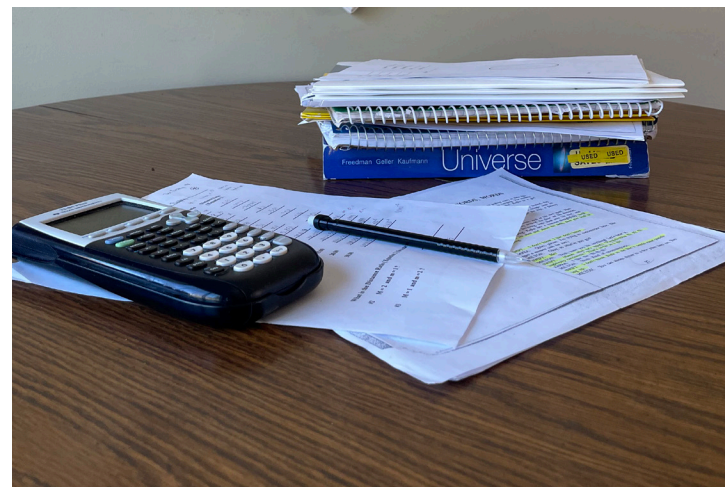
Hurst, like many students, was hoping to use spring break as a time to catch up after a grueling first half of the semester. "This is the time of year when things tend to pile up on me. You have one bad week mid-semester, and the whole next month just feels like you're treading water."

His experience is not uncommon among college students. As the end of the academic year and finals loom in front of summer, students are ramping up for even more work at the end of the semester. Course workloads often increase and decrease around the same times, making it more difficult to stay on top of everything.

"I don't agree with homework being assigned over spring break," Hurst said. "It should be a time to catch up and reset yourself to finish the semester strong. It's also really important to be able to just let go for a few days and focus on your own life."

Other students, such as Taylor Silvers, might assign homework as a professor, but nothing too straining; perhaps a film and reflection, or something similar. Silvers is not facing much homework from her four classes, but can see how homework over the break can be beneficial.

"If the homework is vital to your career, then yeah, it's necessary if you really want to achieve your goal," Silvers said. Overall, she too thinks that spring break is much-needed time off. "I think the purpose of spring break is to relax, and have a time to unwind."



Bagley's own Spring Break workload

Photo Credit/
SARA BAGLEY

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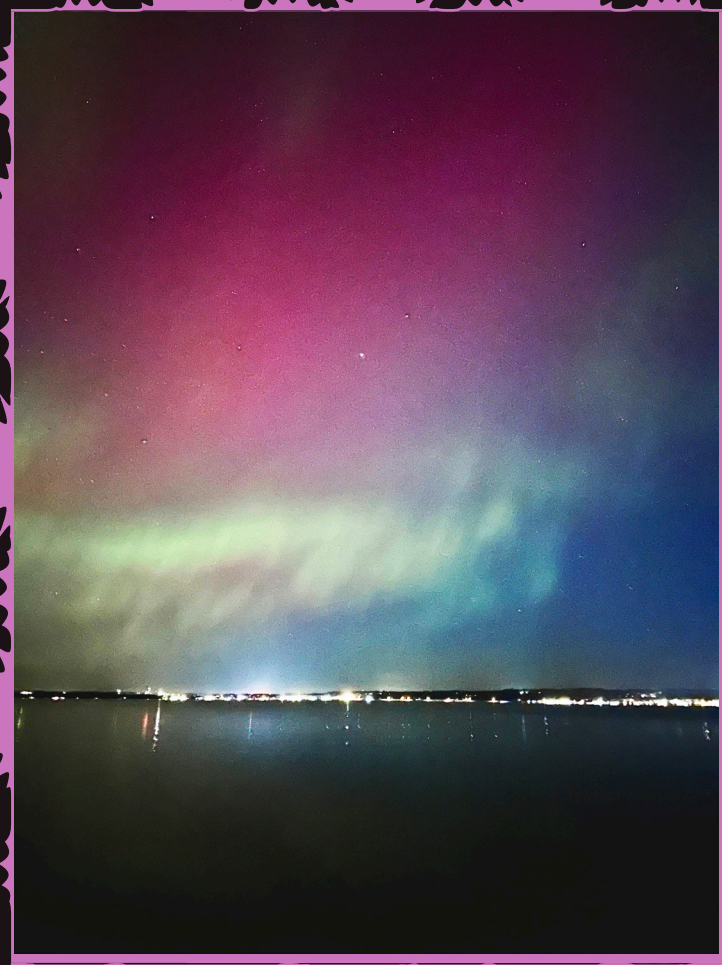
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Northern Lights in TC



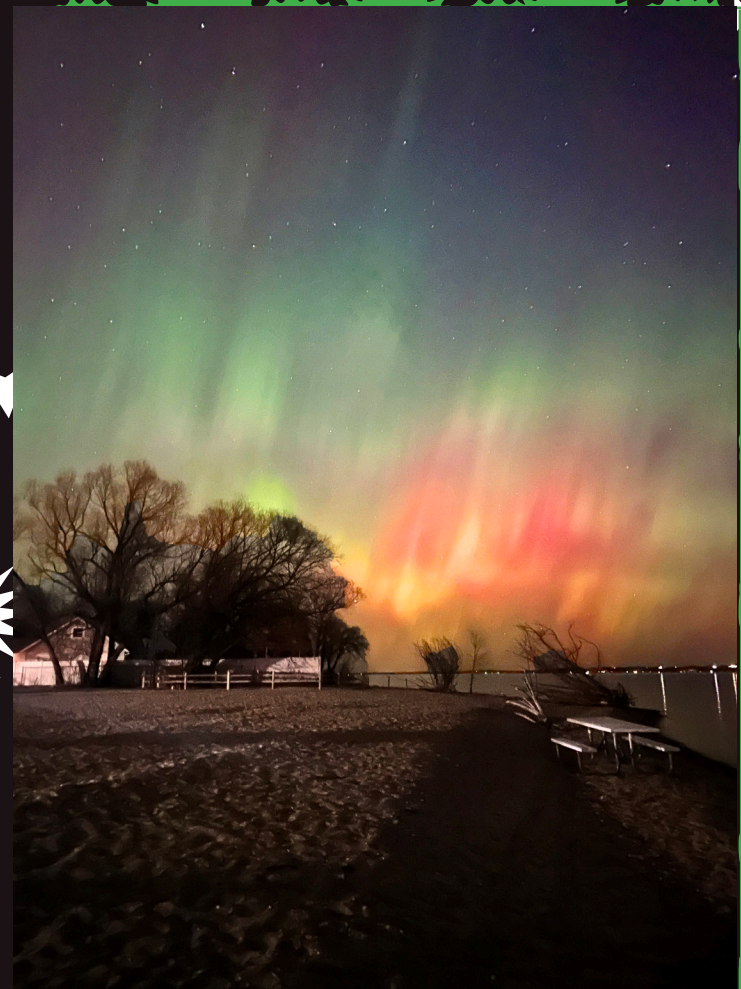
On March 23 around 11 p.m., the aurora borealis, or the northern lights, were visible in Traverse City. The beautiful phenomenon is caused by solar gas that collides with the Earth's magnetic field and creates a colorful light show in the sky. The earliest recorded sighting of the northern lights dates back to around 568 BCE, where mention of them is found on a Babylonian Clay tablet.

This year is set to be a remarkable year for viewing the lights, as the 11-year solar cycle is reaching solar maximum. The 25th solar cycle started in 2019, and as we inch closer to solar maximum, predicted in 2025, the lights will become more frequent, more active, and are likely to be seen further south as well.

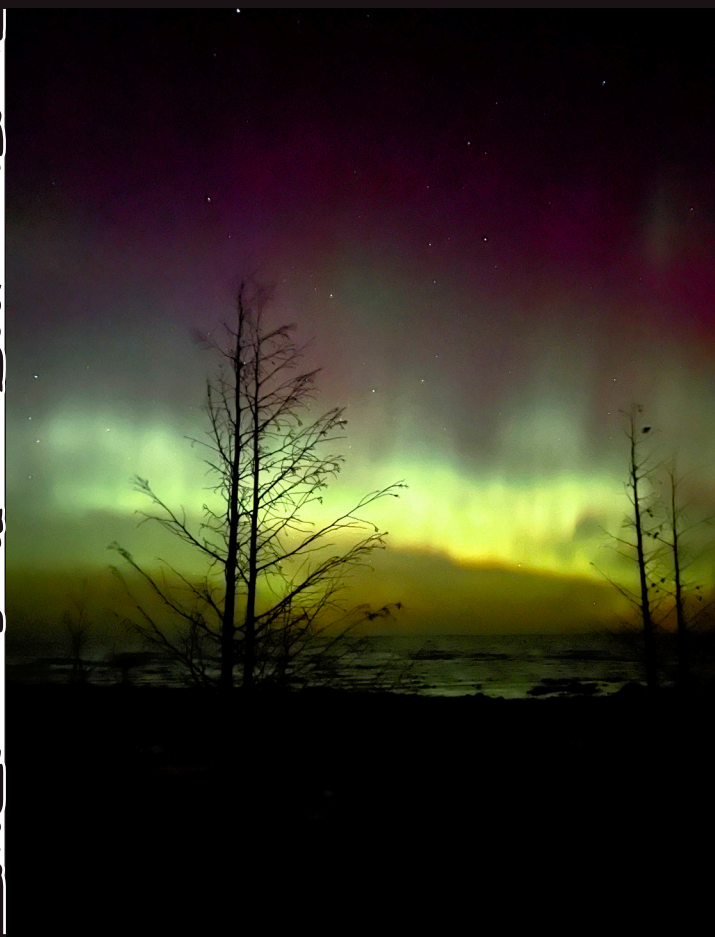
If you missed the last show, fear not! April, October, and November mark the height of light season, so there is plenty of time as the year goes on. To best see them, experts recommend patience, some technology, and warm clothes.

There are apps that track and predict the lights, like the Northern Lights app, that allow users to enter their locations to find the best possible dates and places to see the lights in their area. They also track weather conditions and geomagnetic conditions to let users know if a cloudy night will block their view and allow them to plan for times when the geomagnetic activity that causes the aurora borealis to occur is highest.

For light hunters, patience is key. Often the lights are most visible on very dark nights or closer to the equinoxes. While the March 23 lights were visible at 11 p.m., once the moon sets the activity and brightness of the lights increases. This often means waiting until the moon sets to see the full flare. Depending on the time of year, that could be anywhere from 3 to 4 a.m. Light hunters should make sure to bring some warm clothes or some coffee if they want to catch them at their peak!



Gabbi Chavarria
Editor in Chief



The (Less Than) Super Mario Bros. Movie

Jacob Pszczolkowski
Production Manager

When the “Super Mario Bros. Movie” was announced as an Illumination Entertainment production, nobody expected greatness. I personally dreaded Illumination’s artistically bankrupt ideas that would cover their vacuously trite work with a coat of Mario paint. When the first trailers dropped, my attitude changed. The beautiful color, loving homage to the 1980s “Super Mario Bros. Super Show”, and overall non-Illumination feel got my hopes up that maybe Nintendo managed to steer the studio to a decently satisfying production.

The final product is a mediocre disappointing mix of both.

The “Super Mario Bros. Movie” does have its strengths. Both Brooklyn, NY and the Mushroom Kingdom are gorgeously rendered, with all the bright color and flair expected from the whimsical world of Mario. Bowser is played wonderfully by Jack Black who steals every scene in which he appears. The movie is delightfully stuffed with genuine homages to the history of Mario and Nintendo as a whole. Unfortunately, I don’t have much more to praise in this film.

The story starts off decently strong, establishing the brothers as upstart plumbers looking to prove themselves against a world that expects them to fail. After a detour through their first job, they find themselves transported to another world—the Mushroom Kingdom, a technicolor dreamland under threat from an evil King Bowser. For the next hour, the “Super Mario Bros. Movie” takes a massive hit to its quality. Luigi, half of the titular duo, has less screentime than the overall unimportant Toad. Having been separated from Mario and fallen into Bowser’s custody, Luigi is condemned to spend the rest of the film in Bowser’s dungeon with his fellow prisoners. Licensed music plagues the film, pulling in popular songs entirely too often (as in at least six times) with little to no thematic relevance. Characters fail to establish any real reasons for their choices and actions. Why does Toad follow Mario into such dangerous situations? Why does Princess Peach, a competent leader and fighter, bring the woefully incompetent Mario—who she met mere minutes ago—along on missions of life-or-death importance? The middle of the movie rushes from action setpiece to action setpiece with next to nothing in the way of character development or explanation in between.

The final 15 minutes of the movie are about as enjoyable as the beginning, but cannot save the complete void of emotion and thought that makes up most of the film. Being a “Kid’s Movie” is no excuse for failing to successfully execute even the most basic of Hero’s Journey structures. The “Super Mario Bros. Movie” is a fun watch with a large group of friends to joke around with, but your time and money would be better spent on other films.



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GVSU student completing internship at worksite to enhance project management skills

Michele Coffill
Grand Valley State University

Jonah Malaski works two jobs, including one as a project manager for a restoration company.

Malaski is pursuing a bachelor’s degree from Grand Valley State University in integrative studies along with a certificate in project management and leadership. He said his classes greatly complement his daily job responsibilities.

“To better understand the definitions and the rhetoric surrounding project management has been a great benefit to me,” Malaski said. “I know the reasons behind the job flow. I’ve gained a lot through my classes, it’s really provided me with a concrete structure.”

Malaski is finishing an internship at his workplace, Lake Effect Restoration, that correlates with his position as project manager. His responsibilities include managing job sites and working with homeowners to ensure their needs are met. The company uses a mobile app to track projects. His other job is as a foreman for a tree trimming company in Leelanau.

“In the internship, I hope to accomplish learning about how far my capabilities can be pushed, especially communicating with others in several settings and how much I can manage at a time while maintaining high quality results,” he said.

After graduating from high school, Malaski enrolled at Northwestern Michigan College. “I wanted to stay in the area and save money,” he said.

After completing his associate degree from NMC, Malaski transferred to GVSU to earn a bachelor’s degree through the University Center. This allowed him to work full-time and balance school while earning his degree locally.

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Jonah Malaski expects his GVSU bachelor’s degree and certificate in project management will help in whatever is next in his career, including his current

Disability Support on Campus: A Student's Perspective

Sara Bagley
Staff Writer

Northwestern Michigan College has a long list of resources designed to maximize student success. NMC's Disability Support services are

fundamental to the success of students that find they need accommodations to succeed in college. While disability support is most commonly aligned with learning disabilities relating to reading, writing, or math, that's not the only type of support that's offered by the program.

Leanne Baumeler, the Coordinator of Disability Support and Student Conduct Specialist at NMC, stressed that conditions outside of just formal learning disabilities can affect learning. "A student with a closed head injury or mental health condition, for example, can experience barriers to their learning that an accommodation plan (along with other interventions) could address," Baumeler said. "I work with any student who has been diagnosed with something that is significantly impacting one or more life major activity."

Baumeler has worked with students dealing with ADHD, depression, personality disorders, physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), blindness or low vision, and hearing loss.

Gaining access to the support requires legwork on the students end. "It is important that the student can submit documentation or proof of the condition," Baumeler said. "There are guidelines on what the documentation needs to include which I cover with the student when we meet."

In order to provide services to students, they must self-identify to her office and meet certain criteria, like providing documented proof of a condition, before they can move forward with an accommodation plan.

"Accommodations are determined by reviewing the documentation of the disability and interviewing the student about how that diagnosis is impacting their access to NMC's programs and services," Baumeler said. "Some common accommodations include longer time on tests and quizzes,



Disability support display in Osterlin Building

Photo Credit/SARA BAGLEY

testing in a reduced distraction area, permission to record lectures, access to lecture slides, just to name a few."

She encourages students to communicate with their instructors about their needs and take advantage of NMC's many resources, such as tutoring, the Writing and Reading Center, and the Math Center when they need extra support.

One student at NMC, who wished to remain anonymous, is pursuing an associates degree in Science and Arts (ASA) and has firsthand experience with the struggle of juggling mental health conditions and being a college student.

"I mainly deal with ADHD and autism, along with PTSD," he said. For this student, it can be difficult to keep up with schoolwork at times. He reached out to Disability Support, but the accommodations he was offered did little to help him succeed in class.

"I spoke to Baumeler last semester to see what accommodations were available to me, specifically seeking

assistance for severe memory problems due to ADHD and PTSD," he said. The student made it clear to Disability Support that anything using audio or sound, like a recording device, would not help as he has issues with hearing and auditory processing.

"She gave me a pen that supposedly was going to record audio from the lectures and replay it. I never got to figure out how the pen worked as it was password locked and I was never provided with a password for it."

The student also raised concerns surrounding the accessibility of the services. Because Disability Support services require documented proof, often in the form of a medical diagnosis or doctor's note, the services aren't accessible to those who need them the most. "Not everyone can get documentation or a diagnosis," the student said.

Beetle Noble, an NMC student in his first semester, said the challenges that he faces as a student with learning disabilities have always made school difficult for him.

"I have ADHD, and various mental illnesses that have affected my school life," he said. "I always have a hard time getting everything turned in on time. Teachers have always been super understanding and helpful when I do reach out for help."

Noble stays on top of his schoolwork by using what he called the 'tomato timer' method. "I will work for 20 or 30 minutes and then take a 10-minute break. It gives my brain a chance to recharge and refocus, then repeat the process until it is done."

While Noble has not worked with Disability Support, he intends to look into it if he continues to take classes at NMC.

Leanne Baumeler can be reached at LBaumeler@nmc.edu for students seeking disability support and/or accommodations, and more information can be found at nmc.edu/disabilitysupport.

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How NFL Combine Can Make Athletes Rich

Aidan Pool
Staff Writer

The National Football League (NFL) Combine is a three-day event in which college football athletes, hoping to hear their name called during the NFL draft, go through a series of drills and athletic testing. NFL teams use the Combine as an opportunity to talk to these prospects and see how athletically gifted they are, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and discuss how they could potentially fit in on their team. Athlete's performance in the Combine is the marker for not only if a college athlete gets drafted, but when.

Athlete's performance in the Combine, or how an athlete tests, determines not only whether the athlete will get drafted into the NFL, but when they will be picked. The NFL Combine happens in seven rounds; the closer an athlete is to the first round, the more desirable they are.

For hopeful college athletes that aren't sure whether or not they'll get drafted, testing well in the Combine is essential. For those athletes that are more sure they will be drafted to play for the NFL but aren't sure where in the draft they will be, performing well in the Combine is just as crucial. The NFL implemented a ruling in the 2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement, a massive contract between the owners and players dictating how league revenue and other financial aspects of the league are divided, that regulated rookie contracts. Before the agreement, some draftees were making more money directly out of college than players that had real time league experience. To appease the NFL owners and coaches wary of signing an unseasoned player for millions of dollars, the Collective Bargaining Agreement changed the way NFL contracts were written.

Before the 2011 decision, draftees would freely negotiate their contract with no restrictions after they had been selected, meaning a player could drive up their value during the negotiation process. The rule change made it so that final contracts would be predetermined with the draft pick, eliminating negotiations. In 2010, the first overall selection, Sam Bradford, a quarterback playing for the Oklahoma Sooners, struck a \$78 million contract. In 2020, after the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the LSU Tigers' Joe Burrow received a \$37 million contract.

With the emphasis that NFL teams and draft officials put on the Combine, performing well in the drills is essential. Drills in the combine can vary from bench presses to vertical leaps, but the most infamous drill that can make or break a player's draft stock is the 40-yard dash which measures a player's straight line speed.

In 2017, University of Washington wide receiver John Ross III was projected to be a late first round pick, but when he broke the record for 40-yard dash with a time of 4.22 seconds, Ross jumped up to the ninth overall selection, securing a rookie contract for \$17 million.

A year later, Orlando Brown, Jr., who played for the Oklahoma Sooners, ran one of the slowest 40-yard dash times ever at 5.85 seconds. While offensive linemen are not expected to run nearly as fast as Ross, Brown's time in the pivotal event sunk his draft stock, or value, down to the third round.

The Combine doesn't make or break a player's career though, or even serve as a good indicator of how a player will perform on the field. Both Ross and Brown's performances in the Combine had little indication of what kind of player they would be. Ross, for example, struggled with injury problems through his first four years in the league and became an afterthought. Brown, Jr., has gone on to become a well regarded offensive lineman. In March, he received a four-year, \$64 million contract, ironically enough from the Cincinnati Bengals, the team that fell in love with Ross at the Combine.

While the Combine isn't a perfect predictor of an athlete's performance on the field, it can help to inflate their salaries.



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