



DEFENSE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN WOLVES' OPENING WIN OVER SAINTS

TUCKER COLE
Contributing Writer



Photo: Tucker Cole, *The West Georgian*

Despite some early struggles with tackling and third-down stops, it was West Georgia's goal-line defense that earned the team a 21-19 home opener victory over the Limestone University Saints on Thursday, Aug. 31.

"We played very well on the goal line, and that was the difference in the game," head football coach David Dean said after the win. "We did not tackle well, but of course, their running back was very good."

Limestone running back Tre Stewart had 213 all-purpose yards in the game and seemed to be open in the flat for a first down all game long.

"He was exactly what we thought he'd be and hard to bring down, but I'm proud of our defense because they made the stops when they had to," Dean said.

Holding onto a one-point, 7-6 lead in the third quarter, the Wolves defense stood tall on two consecutive drives inside their own five-yard line, first as senior safety, Deontae Overstreet had a third-down pass breakup that resulted in a missed field goal, and second as linebacker, Amos Dahn had two consecutive stops to force a turnover on downs.

Two drives that were a few yards away from 14 Limestone points resulted in none.

The Wolves' defensive success translated to the other side of the ball.

Dahn's goal-line stop resulted in a 99-yard, 11-play scoring drive for the Wolves offense, capped by Rajaez Mosely's second rushing touchdown of the night.

All three of West Georgia's touchdowns came on the ground, with Mosely ending the night with 77 yards and two touchdowns and Wesley Kennedy III rushing for 169 yards and one score.

The Wolves were up 14-6 at the start of the fourth quarter, but it was not long before the defense had to make another goal-line stand, this time on a two-point conversion. The Wolves sank their teeth into the Limestone offensive front and stopped the run, sustaining the UWG lead at 14-12 with just over six minutes left in the game.

With this two-point cushion, Kennedy put the game away on offense, spinning off a tackle for an 82-yard touchdown run to put West Georgia up by two scores, 21-12.

Limestone constructed one final scoring drive to cut the Wolves' lead back down to 21-19, but Kennedy rushed for one more first down to run out the remainder of the clock.

Looking back to the first quarter, the Wolves' defense kept them in the game from the start. After their opening possession stalled at the 50-yard line, a sack by Keondre Williams gave the

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Wolves another shot.

That was when sophomore quarterback Ben Whitlock finally got in rhythm, connecting with receiver LaPerion Perry on two sizable throws to put the Wolves in Saints territory. Mosley took it the remaining distance, ending with a six-yard touchdown run for a 7-0 lead.

Although the game got close, the Wolves did not trail after that point.

This past weekend, the Wolves went on a long road trip to Texas A&M in Kingsville, Tex. where they fell 20-17, cutting their record to 1-1 on the season.

The Wolves' next game will be at Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss. for an 8 p.m. kickoff on Saturday, Sept. 16th.

The next home game for West Georgia will be Saturday, Oct. 7th at 6 p.m. against the West Alabama Tigers.

TAILGATING: SOME KIND OF FUN FOR EVERYONE

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Contributing Writer

Tailgating is a place where alumni and football fans in the area can participate in the college football tradition, involve their children, or meet up with old college friends prior to the game. However, tailgating can even be fun for the casual fan, a group of students wanting to show their school spirit, or even someone wanting to try something new.

While there were a few tents that were exclusive to University of West Georgia alumni, the core focus was the students. On Thursday Aug. 31, the season opener was deemed "The Red Out Game". In light of the festivities, T-shirts were given out that read 'Beat Limestone'.

Red and blue tents housed several organizations. There were different tables for different services and activities for students and families to engage in. Guests were encouraged to take a stencil that read "UWG Wolves" to paint on a miniature canvas. Some students even decided to start throwing around a

football and have a cornhole tournament.

There were an assortment of inflatables. There were bouncy castles with slides and even an inflatable goal to kick field goals in. Tailgating is definitely not just a place for fraternities and sororities with the occasional group of typical students.

Plenty of students who did not have an obligation to come out for the tailgate, came due to their own curiosity to check out the fun.

Food was served, which included burgers, chicken tenders and fries. Aside from the normal concessions, there was even a Kona Ice Truck that was rented for the home opener festivities.

Not only was it my first time at a Wolves football tailgate, and game, but it was also Junior Raigan Van Pelt's first time. Even though it was her first time, she was brave enough to even convince her friends to come out with her.

"I told them they've gotta come out because we've never gone to a tailgate or a



Photo: Neveah Brown, *The West Georgian*

football game," said Van Pelt. The tickets are free so you might as well come."

On the other side of the coin though, many students may not know about these tailgates. Some are even hesitant to come because they may not have a huge group of friends, but there was certainly a lot of participation from the student body despite the unpopularity of attending tailgates.

"I guess since it's the first game and everything," said UWG Senior Matthew Smith.

Tailgates are traditional and mainly synonymous with but not exclusive to high school, college and professional football games. Nevertheless, tailgates are enjoyable for those not only looking to enjoy the football game but also get out and be social.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

COME ON, BARBIE, LET'S GO PARTY!

GIANNA WILCOX
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Barbie was the movie of the summer. The star-studded comedy-drama debuted on July 21st in theaters all around the world. This bright and colorful film follows Stereotypical Barbie and her friend Ken as they live in Barbieland. However, when strange things start happening to Stereotypical Barbie, they must journey to the Real World. In the Real World, Barbie and Ken have different experiences and come to terms with what it is like for men and women in the real world.

The film is fun and entertaining but also brings up real issues men and women face in life. It makes you laugh, cry, and think. There are so many things that make this a great film. For one, the eye-catching pink aesthetic of the set, props, and wardrobe are everything. Pink is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "Barbie."

The pink set, the pink clothes, and the pink accessories make it look like a real Barbieland. It is almost as if they took the Barbie playsets and enlarged them to make the set for this film. That is how realistic it all looks. Also, the props have the same plastic look as the real Barbie toys. For example, the rollerblades that Ken holds up in the car on their way to the Real World look exactly like the toy rollerblades. Everything looks so authentic. The authenticity of the movie's presentation helps develop the plot even further.

Speaking of the plot, it is the best thing about the film. Although it is a movie

about a beloved children's toy, it isn't necessarily aimed at kids. This movie is about the realities of being human, no matter your gender. When Barbie and Ken get to the Real World, they immediately realize there is a difference in the way that people are looking at both of them. Barbie feels uncomfortable and anxious with everyone's eyes on her, while Ken relishes the attention. Barbie, and to some extent Ken, learn what it means to be human.

The film exhibits the complicated experience of being a woman in this day and age. When Barbie gets back to Barbieland to find that all the other Barbies have been brainwashed by the Kens, she feels hopeless and unlovable because she's no longer "Stereotypical Barbie" pretty. This leads America Ferrera's character, Gloria, to launch into a monologue about the impossibility of being a woman.

That monologue makes the movie, and it makes the point of how hard it is to be a woman without seeming preachy. It also helps undo the brainwashing, allowing the Barbies to reclaim Barbieland from the Kens.

Although the movie primarily focuses on the female experience, it also touches on how the patriarchy harms men and women. Once the Barbies reclaim Barbieland, Stereotypical Barbie's Ken is unsure of who he is without her. Barbie explains to him that it's okay for him to just be Ken. The patriarchy, and Ken's idea of it, made him think he has to be something specific



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

and always in connection to Barbie. He felt like he couldn't just be himself.

Therefore, the tagline, "She's everything, he's just Ken," has multiple meanings. Barbie has to be "everything" because she is a woman. However, she is also "everything" because this is Barbieland, and it's all about Barbie. Ken is "just Ken" in the sense that he's allowed to be himself. However, he is also "just Ken" because this isn't about him.

Despite what the Internet dude-bros say about this film, Barbie is a great movie. It's a fun and colorful rollercoaster ride filled with laughter, tears, and thought-provoking statements. It delivers a real message about the hardships of being human wrapped in shiny, pink packaging to make it more palpable for viewers. It's not just a movie for women but rather a

"HEARTSTOPPERS" SEASON 2: ACCURATELY DEPICTS MENTAL HEALTH ON NETFLIX

LANCE GOINS
Contributing Writer

Netflix's "Heartstoppers" Season 2 stands out as a beacon of realism in a world where entertainment frequently sensationalizes drama and romance while shedding awareness on the crucial issue of mental health. This well-liked British series, which is based on Alice Oseman's graphic novels, returns with a moving timely examination of the difficulties young people confront.

Season 2 of "Heartstoppers" renews the endearing romance between Nick Nelson and Charlie Spring as they experience the highs and lows of adolescence. The show, which is set at an all-boys school, expertly explores the difficulties of coming out and first love while gently incorporating the value of mental health.

What genuinely distinguishes "Heartstoppers" is its constant

dedication to accurately portray mental health. The characters are shown with the utmost authenticity as they battle their respective demons. These difficulties involving Charlie's anxiousness and Nick's battle with depression are conveyed in a way that is both familiar and sympathetic.

The show bravely debunks myths and prejudices in a time when stigma against mental illness still exists. The show challenges viewers to address the complexity of mental health and understand that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness, through the adventures of its characters.

The program also serves as a teaching tool, informing viewers gradually about the various dimensions of mental health. The candid depiction of therapy sessions

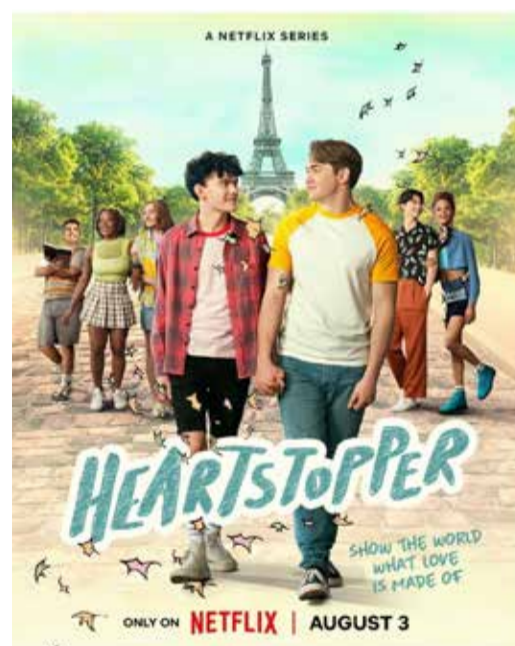


Photo courtesy of Netflix

and discussions about medications is a useful tool that promotes empathy and understanding.

The significance of such programs cannot be emphasized as the globe struggles with an escalating mental health crisis. Season 2 of "Heartstoppers" has the potential to change everything, especially for young viewers who are having mental health issues. It conveys a powerful message by portraying the

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characters' hardships in an honest and sympathetic way: You are not alone, and it's important to ask for help.

The second season's performances by the cast are nothing short of extraordinary. The actors that play Charlie and Nick, Joseph Alcott and Kit Connor, incredibly deepen and authentically portray their roles. Their chemistry is undeniable, which makes their love story even more heartbreaking.

Along with the incredible performance from the actors, another achievement is the writing in "Heartstoppers" Season 2. The series' emotional resonance is

preserved. Alice Oseman, who also wrote the original material, masterfully ties in the issue of mental health. The flawless pace makes it possible for viewers to have a deep emotional connection to the characters.

The second season has generated debates all over the world. Discussions regarding acceptance, mental health and the need for more shows like this are trending on social media. It has effectively closed the gap between advocacy and entertainment, proving that television can act as a potent change agent.

The second season of "Heartstoppers" is a surprise in

a society where issues related to mental health are frequently ignored. It serves as a reminder that the fundamental elements of our well-being are love, acceptance, and support. This Netflix treasure has earned a particular place in viewers' hearts by addressing the complexity of mental health. The series has a lasting effect that goes well beyond the screen and not only amuses but also educates. "Heartstoppers" Season 2 is a testament to the value of honest storytelling and the transformative potential of representation in a field overwhelmed in content.

LIVING WEST

ALETE IS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW MEMBERS

MICAH NOEL
Contributing Writer

As the first-ever class of the Academic Law Enforcement Training Exchange (ALETE) graduate, interest forms for the upcoming training have become available. This program, commonly called ALETE, is exclusive to The University of West Georgia and is provided in the summer for undergraduate students. Applicants will be contacted in the early spring, allowing them a chance to bridge the gap between graduation and law enforcement opportunities.

ALETE is the first program of its kind here in the state, and it is the only undergraduate program to work directly with the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC). If the training is completed, participants can receive a Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) certification, bypassing the state-mandated training requirement.

Typically, a career in law enforcement begins shortly after graduation. After being accepted by an agency, a new hire must complete their basic mandate training. This training, lasting 12 weeks, is required by law and is paid for by the agency.

"So, your agency would pay you your salary, benefits, travel, meal per diem," said Program Director and Assistant Professor of Civic Engagement and Public Service Dr. Dave Ayers. "Let's say an agency hires a person, and they

go 10 -12 weeks and then fail. So, all that money they pay them, they just lost."

Another pattern is if a university already provides a training academy within its curriculum. The usual 12-week training now spans over four years, meaning the policing "basics" are forgotten by the time students graduate. ALETE provides a typical training model with the convenience of completing it alongside a degree.

"The agencies are really supportive, because the students get to have the opportunity to complete this in school," said Dr. Ayers. "When they come out of The University of West Georgia they get their bachelor's degree and they are mandated."

Students interested in the program can expect an easy first step as the interest form only asks for their name and contact information. Students will then be contacted to complete the application process through the University's Police Department.

"The actual application process is rather lengthy because you have to apply to not only GPSTC but you have to apply to POST," Dr. Ayers said. "We start it so early because the process takes at least two months."

Participants will be expected to take a Physical Aptitude Test (PAT)

when the application is completed.

"The obstacle tries to resemble some of the things officers may encounter on the job," said Dr. Ayers.

The half-court obstacle course includes hurdles like jumping through a window frame, jumping over a ditch, and dragging a 150-pound dummy.

Following the PAT, students will begin training, hoping to graduate in early August. Beginning in May, training is classroom-based. June starts hands-on training, bringing students down to GPSTC's main campus in Forsyth, Ga. The training concludes with a final test encompassing everything participants were taught for the past 12 weeks.

"It's basically like a full-time job," said Dr. Ayers. "You got to look at it as an investment."

If students pass, they participate in graduation that concludes with a job fair, including agencies like the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Natural Resources and The Department of Community Supervision. All the 11 graduates of last year's program left graduation with job offers.

Dr. Ayers provides some advice for students who are still skeptical about taking the leap.

"The decision you're making today... to take part in this and to go through this training," said Dr. Ayers. "You might not know it, but the things you're doing now may lead to saving somebody's life."

For more information, visit the ALETE page on the university's website.



Photo: Michael Noel, *The West Georgian*

THE BIG SIX: UWG INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE PAVES THE WAY TOWARD BECOMING

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Contributing Writer

During his Presidential Address earlier this semester, University of West Georgia President Brendan B. Kelly, Ph. D shared The Big 6 as an institutional initiative outlining the type of educational opportunities UWG wants to provide for its student body.

The Big Six is divided into two categories. It allows students to connect with professors, staff, coaches and others who care about you as a person. It also gives students an opportunity to participate in experiential learning opportunities.

The Big Six is designed to pave the way for becoming,” said Dr. Kelly. “Becoming is about what you grow to be.”

The Big Six is a new way of life here at The University of West Georgia and the faculty and staff encourage students to be engaged.

“It is the students responsibility to connect with a professor who makes learning exciting and fun,” said Dr. Betsy Dahms Chief Diversity Officer for Academic Affairs. “I think students need to feel empowered to reach out to their professors either in class or during office hours. All faculty have office

hours, and are available after class or online. Students need to set up appointments with faculty members to let them know they would like to get excited about the subject as well.”

All this new information can be very confusing so there can be a lot of questions that can be answered.

“Beginning at a level of self-awareness there are a series of questions the student must ask themselves,” said Dr. Dahms. “Such as, where they are right now, who they are as a person, what are their strengths, their areas of growth, what are their dreams for what kind of career and life they want to have? Then the student must determine the steps needed to attain those dreams.”

“Becoming is an ever-evolving process,” Dahms continues. “We’re always becoming better people, we’re always becoming more compassionate, always becoming more aware of the world and our place in it.”

The diversity of course offerings at UWG affords the student body countless opportunities for personal and educational growth within the campus setting. Many

course offerings extend beyond campus learning as well. Study Abroad Programs and internships provide experiential learning by allowing students the opportunity to experience growth outside of the campus learning environment.

During the development of the Strategic Plan, the Steering Committee noticed five themes repeatedly found their way to the forefront of discussion. Identity, belongingness, connectedness, race/diversity and academic excellence. Of the five themes,



Photo courtesy of UWG

belongingness and connectedness continued to present themselves prominently during these discussions.

Dr. Kelly defines belongingness as, “That feeling of being connected to a community, being a part of something.” He defines connectedness as “being connected to others in that community.”

The Big Six initiative helps the student identify and capture feelings of belonging and connectedness, as well as create opportunities to build healthy working relationships that will serve them while in the UWG learning community and then extend into their chosen life and career well after graduation.