



The Ferris State Torch

95 YEARS OF ILLUMINATING THE TRUTH

Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of Jan. 28 - Feb. 4, 2026

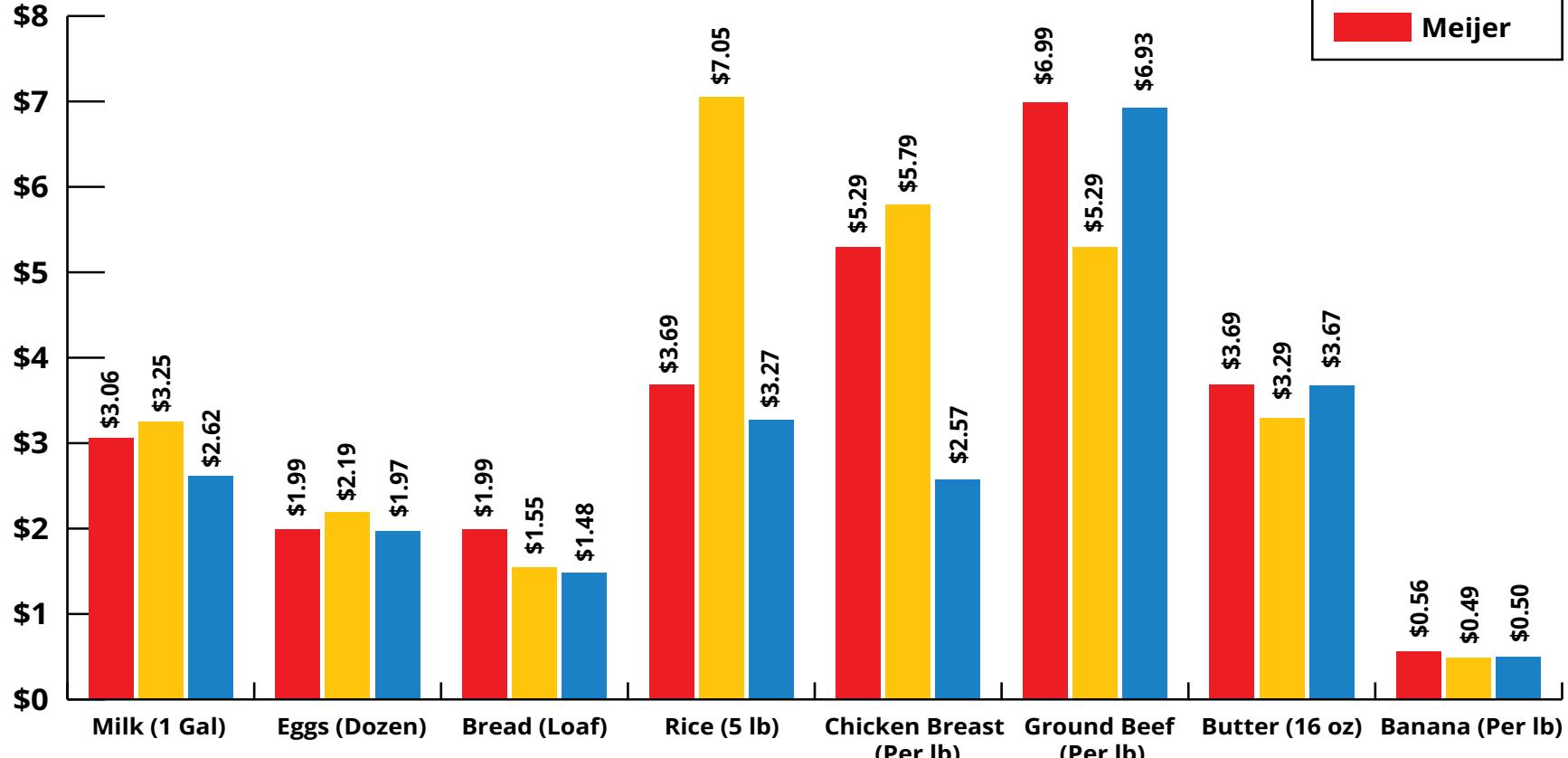
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Grocery price trends in Big Rapids

What will \$100 buy you in Big Rapids?

Price Comparison of Staple Food Items in Big Rapids Grocery Stores

Walmart
Aldi
Meijer



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Gannon Thomas
Freelance Contributor

\$100 used to go a lot farther. A full cart of groceries, a tank of gas and enough change to pick up fast food on the way home. Now, for many Ferris students, \$100 is gone before they reach the checkout line.

Inflation drives up the prices of everyday goods and Ferris students continue to feel the squeeze. Prices of everyday goods continue to rise, which has made many Ferris students rethink spending habits and make tough financial decisions when doing something as simple as buying groceries. This article will examine the prices of groceries at local stores to determine how far \$100 really goes in Big Rapids.

The prices of everyday ne-

cessities continue to rise due to a multitude of factors, like inflation, supply chain shortages, tariffs and trade policies. Most Ferris students notice this rise when checking out the most basic goods at the grocery store. Staples like milk, eggs and bread have all seen price increases.

Television digital media production sophomore Bryce Dysard has taken these price fluctuations into consideration. The rise in prices has changed how goes about preparing meals throughout the week.

"With prices going up, the less I buy," Dysard said. "Recent price increases have been shaping my shopping habits to be on the lighter side. It's almost better to go out to eat for my fiancé and I then to get meals for a week and make them at home."

When asked about his weekly total, Dysard described how little his budget actually gets him, even with frugal shopping practices.

"I'm usually spending around \$200-\$250. You would think that gets a lot, but honestly, it doesn't."

With prices going up students are forced to make difficult choices about how they financially adapt to these new prices

So what does \$100 really buy you in Big Rapids? Let's compare some grocery staples at a few different stores from around the community: Aldi, Meijer and Walmart.

These prices add up fast. A simple week's worth of food, milk, eggs, bread and some protein already adds up to around \$30-\$40, depending on where you shop and that's before fruits and vegetables.

If you add in things like cereal and pantry goods, your total quickly can pass \$100.

These price booms are shaping people's grocery orders and habits. Most people may find themselves switching away from name brands or even taking more advantage of sales. No matter the case, inflation is affecting most Ferris students' shopping habits.

These high costs of groceries in Big Rapids mirrors the statewide trend of price increases. Comparatively, at each location, these brands' prices are similar at all Michigan locations.

State and even nationwide inflation continues to surge and many students feel the struggle to keep up with climbing prices. While the cause can be traced back to various factors, one thing

is for certain: Budgeting and financial decision making are skills that are now more important than ever. When in the grocery aisle, it's important to focus on your needs before your wants, which sounds simple but can help you save money where it matters.

Construction management sophomore William Somsel talked about how prices have altered how many times he is actually going out and shopping in order to save money.

"Higher prices has definitely affected my shopping, I try and limit going to the store no more than once a week," Somsel said.

Cutting back on shopping isn't the only strategy that Ferris students have to combat rising store prices. Students have multiple resources to help them save money.

Students could choose to shop at budget friendly stores like Dollar General. Or, they can visit the campus food pantry which is available for all students located on the first floor of the DEC. Buying in bulk is also a simple way to save money as well as substituting brands for cheaper alternatives, a little research can go a long way to save a buck.

For Ferris students, \$100 just doesn't go as far as it used to. Rising grocery prices have made budgeting more difficult and have forced students to make hard choices.

While strategies like shopping smarter and utilizing local and campus resources can help lift the burden of inflation, \$100 dollars simply doesn't buy what it used to.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrate Black History Month with the Torch, in our BHM 2026 Special Edition. Read more into this year's theme, 100 years of Black commemorations. Featuring stories from staff writer, Davaria Pharr and guest pieces from Ferris students. Learn more about the cultural importance and impact of Black History Month and what this month means from different perspectives. **Starting on PG. 7**

News

Blase Gapinski | News Editor | gapinsb@ferris.edu

Michigan

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Ann Arbor, Mich - 19-year-old University of Michigan student Lucas Mattson has been found dead after a day-long search, after being reported missing on Friday. Mattson was reported missing at 4:30 pm on Friday, and was considered to be in danger because he was last seen walking by himself in a t-shirt and jeans around 1 am Friday during the bitter cold. In an update on Saturday night, Ann Arbor Police said his body was found "following an extensive coordinated search effort" with the University of Michigan Police Department. There had been no signs of foul play or trauma at this time, and the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner's Office will determine the cause and manner of death.

National

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Minneapolis, Minnesota - On Saturday, Jan 24, a U.S. Border Patrol Agent shot and killed Alex Pretti, who was an intensive care unit nurse at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Minneapolis. Pretti had been at a protest against agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement when officials say he "approached" Border Patrol agents with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun, but officials did not say if he was brandishing it. Family members say Pretti owned a handgun and had a permit to carry a concealed firearm, but his family said he was not known to carry it.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania- The City of Philadelphia filed a federal lawsuit on Thursday against the Trump administration over the National Park Service's removal of the slavery memorial at the President's House in the city. The exhibit memorialized and honored the lives of the nine people enslaved there by George Washington. The city argues that by removing the panels that told the stories of the enslaved people, the NPS violated various congressional laws as well as a 2006 agreement NPS made with the city and laid out the terms for building the exhibit, which opened to the public in 2010.

Global

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Tokyo, Japan - Amid a worsening relationship between Japan and China, Japan has decided to send back two twin Pandas, Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei, leaving Japan without Pandas for the first time in half a century. China first sent Pandas to Japan in 1972 as a gift to mark the normalization of diplomatic ties between the two wary neighbors.

Updates on new Jim Crow Museum

As renovations progress, here's what students can look forward to inside the museum

JIM CROW MUSEUM

**BE PART OF HISTORY:
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January to August, 2026 (2-hour shifts on various dates) | Jim Crow Museum

Scan the QR code to register

Photo courtesy of the Jim Crow Museum

Those looking for hands on experience with the museum can sign up using the QR code above.

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

On Dec. 24, 2024, Ferris State University announced that it would be building a brand-new 22-million-dollar Jim Crow Museum in place of the old one.

The museum was originally established in 1996 and founded by Dr. David Pilgrim, who donated his collection of racist artifacts to the university.

The museum was later built and opened to the public on April 26, 2012, in the lower level of the Flite Library.

It all started with a simple conversation between Dr. Pilgrim, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion and Strategic Initiative, and Cyndi Tiedt, the collections manager of the Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State.

Tiedt and Pilgrim wanted something that people could interact with in the museum.

With the intention of bringing more impact and awareness to the history of what Jim Crow means, it was easier said than done.

"We realized that without

growing this space in many different ways, the collection is just too large to be safely housed here," Tiedt said.

She explained that a variety of people have reached out regarding things like tours and diversity training but they can't do any of that because the museum isn't able to fit much more than 15 people in the room.

She decided it was time to take action on the matter at hand, focusing not only on external changes but also on a rebrand of what the museum stands for.

She talked about how the focus of the current museum is directed towards hateful artifacts and anti-black rhetoric. Going forward, the museum will have a more holistic and celebratory focus, highlighting Black excellence and achievement.

"We realized this is our chance to not only take better care of the artifacts but to empower voices and landmark legacy as well," Tiedt said.

She described that the work she is doing alongside Pilgrim stays the same, but

the goal is to make the world a better place and evaluate what can be done to play a role in that process.

That isn't all; there are more changes to come in the near future.

Students can look forward to seeing more interactive elements in the museum. Some key features include interactive timelines and an artifact explorer.

"It's about getting more information about the artifacts to visitors' fingertips in the exhibit," Tiedt said.

She mentioned that the main purpose of the museum is to help people navigate tough discussions on the matter.

But it doesn't stop there; the museum was designed to get people thinking critically about the past and how it's relevant today.

"I want people leaving with the understanding of what actually happened and how did we get this far, but more importantly, what can we do now to make a change?" Tiedt said.

Students who are interested in getting a chance to

explore the museum in more depth can get hands-on volunteer experience, helping the museum prepare to move.

All volunteers are trained on the day and will have staff or other student employees to help them out.

Students can benefit not only personally but also educationally.

"We've run the volunteer program for three weeks now, and the thing I've noticed is that it's giving students hands-on experience with museum work," Tiedt said.

She was impressed with the conversations being had while packing up and mentioned how the discussions were organic and authentic in regard to the impact that this history has on students' personal lives.

In her words, students are guaranteed to have fun and maybe even make friends while learning.

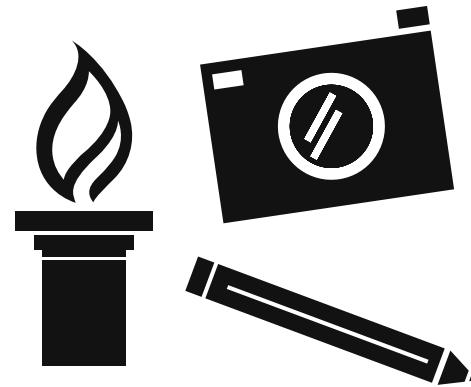
More information regarding updates and volunteering opportunities will be available via the Jim Crow Museum's website.

Why work for the Torch?

The Ferris State Torch is an entirely student-run publication created by students and for students. We publish 27 Wednesdays throughout the academic year and serve as a platform for student voices. From covering campus news to community stories, our mission is to inform, engage and represent the Ferris community while giving students hands-on experience in journalism and media. We pride ourselves on welcoming any student who is interested in working for the Torch, regardless of prior experience in writing or media. Whether you are an experienced writer or someone looking to try something new, the Torch provides an inclusive learning environment where students can grow their skills at their own pace. Our staff members gain real-world experience in reporting, interviewing, editing and photography while learning the core values of journalism, including accuracy and integrity. Reporters for the Torch have the freedom to choose what they want to cover, from campus news and Ferris athletics to student organizations, events and issues that matter to the community. Working for the Torch is an opportunity to build your portfolio, develop professional skills and actively contribute to campus life while being part of a collaborative, student-led team.

Positions we have open include:

- Copy Editors
- Photographers
- Reporters (Freelance and full-time)
- Section Editors (News and Managing Copy Editor)



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Culture

Tate Zellman | Culture Editor | zellmat@ferris.edu

Expressing campus ups and downs

Students state their likes and dislikes about campus



Photo by: Tate Zellman | Culture Editor

Students at Ferris seem to prefer areas where they are able to converse with peers or work on assignments.

Tate Zellman
Culture Editor

With everything that college life has to offer, students spend most of their time on campus, which allows them to get to know the area around them and form their own likes and dislikes.

As students progress in their college careers, they can discover which places on campus they like to go the most. Since Ferris is not the largest college campus, students can navigate most of it by walking.

Communications sophomore Marryn Sorus is a fan of how the campus is laid out.

"I like how the campus is set up," Sorus said. "I really

like the David Eisler Center. It's a great place to study and hang out with friends. I also really like how convenient the campus is to where everyone can walk where they need to go."

While some aspects of the college campus are convenient, every campus has its own issues. Sorus mentioned one of her dislikes that can potentially be an issue for all students.

"I really don't like the parking situations," Sorus said. "I feel like it's really annoying that we can't park in the commuter lots."

"I like how much activity there is to do here," Burton said. "The Rankin Center you can go into for free. There's also disc golf in which people can play. There's outside

lot is far away, but we have a commuter lot that's close by that's only for commuters. The parking is just very weird to me and I don't like it."

Living on campus, students have opportunities to keep themselves active and to find things that they enjoy doing.

Computer science freshman Brody Burton has done various types of activities to keep himself active, and is appreciative of the level of activity the campus has to offer.

"I like how much activity there is to do here," Burton said. "The Rankin Center you can go into for free. There's also disc golf in which people can play. There's outside

run. I like how there's a lot of things you can keep busy with."

In contrast, Burton mentioned some of the things he disliked about what the campus has to offer. He brought up things that he found unimproved or things that don't make sense.

"In the state of things to do, I wish the pool were open longer because the pool hours are horrible," Burton said. "The Quad closing on the weekend really sucks for some of my friends, and it also sucks that it closes a whole hour earlier compared to the Rock. Now that it is winter, the sidewalks are hit or miss. They'll either be all ice and all slush, or they'll be

clear."

Some students don't have specific things that they like or dislike about campus. But instead of various factors that impact the way they view campus life.

Design freshman Garrison Babcock finds the overall community to be one of the best aspects of campus.

"I like how open and inviting the campus is," Babcock said. "Coming here for the first time, I was greeted with smiles and invitations to so many RSOs. I really enjoy how things are laid out and the overall involvement students have on campus."

When talking about dislikes, Babcock is hoping for more variety when it comes

to food.

"I wish there were more of a variety at the Rock," Babcock said. "I wish we had more international dishes instead of American spin-offs of the dish. More options and healthy protein-heavy foods would be amazing."

While life on campus is never going to be perfect, all recommendations to adjust campus can be taken into account. Everything about campus is never going to 100% satisfy every student. But with not everything being perfect, students can use what they like about campus to find more joy during their college careers.

Snow day stories

Students share winter storm memories



Photo courtesy of Aubrie Patrick

Aubrie Patrick (back) and her younger sister enjoying a snow day by building a set of snowmen.

Grace Heethuis
Culture Reporter

Last week on Friday, Jan. 23, the university shut down due to dangerously cold temperatures, leaving students no choice but to get cozy and enjoy a rare moment of rest during the semester.

Students participate in a variety of activities on snow days, some even daring to brave the frigid temperatures that await them outside their dorm rooms.

Junior elementary education major Lydia Mervar is one student who does not fear the frightful weather outside.

"My friends and I like to

go sledding on snow days," said Mervar. "My favorite snow day activity is making baked goods while watching a movie."

Indoor activities are a favorite amongst students who like to relax in the comfort of their warm houses and dorms, but outdoor activities can be enjoyed with enough layers.

Many students have always enjoyed outdoor snow day activities, even as kids. There is no shortage of days when school is canceled in Michigan due to inclement weather.

Sophomore English major Aubrie Patrick reminisced about her favorite memories

on snow days when she was younger.

"Whenever we'd have snow days in school, my siblings would always pull each other around on sleds hooked up to our four-wheeler," Patrick said. "One of my best snow day memories are when we'd have a year with lots of snow and my parents would plow it into a large hill and we'd make a snow fort or igloo to play in."

Snow day activities that students reported doing as children are much less common favorites among students as adults. Many of them enjoy spending time indoors out of the cold.

"Now that I'm older, my

favorite thing to do on snow days is snuggle up with my puppies and watch shows and drink lots of coffee and tea," Patrick said.

Despite the cold weather, many students can still be spotted at coffee shops around Big Rapids, enjoying time with friends. Not much stops the students from enjoying each other's company.

Students are not the only ones who enjoy when class is canceled. Big Rapids locals can recall many entertaining stories of students' activities on their off days.

United Methodist clergy person from the Wesley House, Kim Bos, told a story about what she observed

Ferris students doing on their snow day.

"In 2025, during 'snowmageddon,' school was cancelled for the following day at like 4 pm the day before, meaning we all had time to plan," said Bos. "I went to the Meijer for a few things for our house, and while I was there waiting for a deli order,

I watched six frat boys try to figure out how big of a fish they could afford to buy from the fish counter with their pooled cash and have it still fit on their grill."

Ferris students have gotten very creative with their snow day festivities over the years, leaving locals very entertained by their shenan-

igans.

"This is what they were doing with their snow day—trying to grill a giant fish," Bos said. "I wish I could remember which frat it was because I would love to know how that turned out."

From enjoying the crisp, cold air of the outdoors by speeding down a hill on a sled to grilling gigantic fish with friends, Ferris students have found many ways to enjoy a little downtime.

Their activities may vary greatly, but students certainly don't miss an opportunity to spend time with their closest friends and make memories they can enjoy for the rest of their lives.

Media minute

“Animal Crossing” welcomes new 3.0 update



Photo courtesy: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Goodman shows off “Animal Crossing” news stand she decorated in game, inspired by working for the Torch.

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

“Animal Crossing: New Horizons” was released for Nintendo Switch on March 20, 2020. The game was the fifth instalment of the “Animal Crossing” franchise, bringing a more decorative design feature to the game.

After the game’s release, it quickly became the new cozy game with online features, allowing players to play online with friends during COVID-19. The game made a profit of over 1.8 billion during the first year of its release, becoming the best-selling game of the year.

So what’s all the hype about? The game opens at the Nook Inc. airport, where you meet Timmy and Tommy, who walk you through the need-to-know about deserted island life. The game gives you options to name, customize and select your deserted island map before you board the plane.

Upon landing on the island shores, via seaplane, you meet your two random starting villagers and Tom Nook as you make your way to resident services. Once roll call has been gone through Tom welcomes you to the island

and tells you to speak to either Timmy or Tommy to pick up your tent.

Playing through the tutorial, you’re able to name your island and have officially been given the title of island representative, because why would anyone else be but you? After the tutorial, the game syncs to your real time and date, a common feature in the franchise. However, if you think your vacation on a tropical island starts now, you’d be wrong.

After Tom Nook rudely wakes your character up, he gives you a Nook Phone, courtesy of Nook Inc., to help with island life. Those who are familiar with the franchise, however, know that nothing Tom Nook does for your character is free. That’s right, if you’re using video games as an escape from real life, you might want to avoid “Animal Crossing” as you will find yourself with a seemingly never-ending amount of debt to Tom Nook.

Besides your debt, you are also in charge of improving, decorating, selling land and helping everyone else on your island. Since the game is synced up to your Switch system, the game is meant to be a slow-play game where you

get on every day and do your daily tasks before logging off.

Following the months after the game’s initial release, Nintendo announced what was said to be the last update for the game. The update added new features such as diving, treasure islands, Brewster and Brewster’s café. Additionally, Nintendo released the “Happy Home Paradise DLC.” This additional content explores the concept of vacation islands, allowing you to decorate vacation homes and facilities for villagers, earning Poki, which works as money on the island.

After this update, which was said to be the last, the game eventually died down in interest among players over the years. That is, until November of 2025, when Nintendo announced a new 3.0 update plus a small switch two game upgrade. The update later came out earlier this month, on January 25, 2026.

The 3.0 update features a wide variety of new features, such as a new hotel on your docks pier, multicrafting, slumber island decorating, storage increases, furniture, clothing and a bunch of other small quality of gameplay

improvements.

The Switch Two upgrade, running about \$5.00 introduces a megaphone feature, 12-player online play and other small improvements such as optimized graphics.

Currently, Nintendo has not made an official statement as to whether this new update will be the final update for the game or if they have more surprises down the road. But after five years of no new con-

tent, players are enjoying this free update, with many players booting back open their islands again and some even restarting the game.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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100 YEARS OF BLACK COMMEMORATIONS



This year's Black History Month theme is "100 Years of Black Commemorations". The Torch editorial staff used this theme to help create overall content ideas, as well as graphic and layout work for this edition.

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THE ROOTS OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

THE IMPACT AND INNOVATION OF BLACK CULTURE THROUGH THE YEARS



Photo courtesy of Wikicommons

Carter G. Woodson, creator of Black History Month

Davaria Pharr News Reporter

Black History Month is an annual celebration that highlights African American history and achievements throughout the month of February.

Black History Month was invented by Carter G. Woodson. Born in 1875 to enslaved parents in Virginia, he was an African American

pioneer, historian, author and journalist known as the "Father of Black History."

He created Black History Week in 1926 because Black people were left out of history. In the education system, only white historical figures were taught in the classroom, when African Americans had a major role in building the United States of America.

This week eventually

evolved into Black History Month in 1976.

African Americans had a significant impact on areas like music, art, fashion, literature and social movements.

Frederick Douglass, born in 1818, escaped slavery and used his personal story to advocate for freedom, voting rights and equal protection under the law. He delivered speeches, wrote books

and lobbied politicians, challenging systemic oppression.

Douglass laid the foundation for civil rights movements today, proving that African Americans could fight for legal and social equality.

Ella Fitzgerald, born in 1917, was one of the first Black women to sing and perform jazz in segregated venues. She broke racial barriers by challenging laws and social norms that prevented Black entertainers from playing in front of mixed audiences.

She paved the way for some of the entertainers we see today, like Michael Jackson, born in 1958.

He broke racial barriers in 1983 as the first Black artist with heavy rotations on MTV. He forced the music industry to recognize that Black entertainment could be global and mainstream with his hit "Billie Jean."

He combined R&B, pop and dance, setting new standards for the entertainment industry.

All of these influences led to present-day movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013, using social media, viral campaigns and public protest to highlight police brutality and systemic racism.

The Black Lives Matter movement initially started in response to the shooting and murder of a 17-year-old Black man, Trayvon Martin in 2012.

Martin was walking to the local corner store through his

father's fiancée's neighborhood where he was visiting his father.

On his way back home from the store, George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old white neighborhood watch volunteer, saw him as a threat and shot and killed Trayvon Martin on Feb. 26, 2012.

Daniel "Dapper Dan" Day, born in 1944, created luxury streetwear rooted in Black culture. He remixed logos from brands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton at a time when mainstream Black fashion and creativity were ignored.

Day opened a Harlem boutique and designed for hip-hop artists, making Black style visible and influential. He proved Black designers could have global trends.

Paving the way for the present-day brands that dominate the fashion industry, such as Baby Phat by Kimora Lee Simmons in 1999, Apple Bottom Jeans by Nelly in 2003, and Rocawear by Jay-Z and Damon Dash in 1999.

The impact of Black Culture is relevant from the past to the present. From fashion, music and social movements, Black culture laid the foundation for the trends we see today.

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

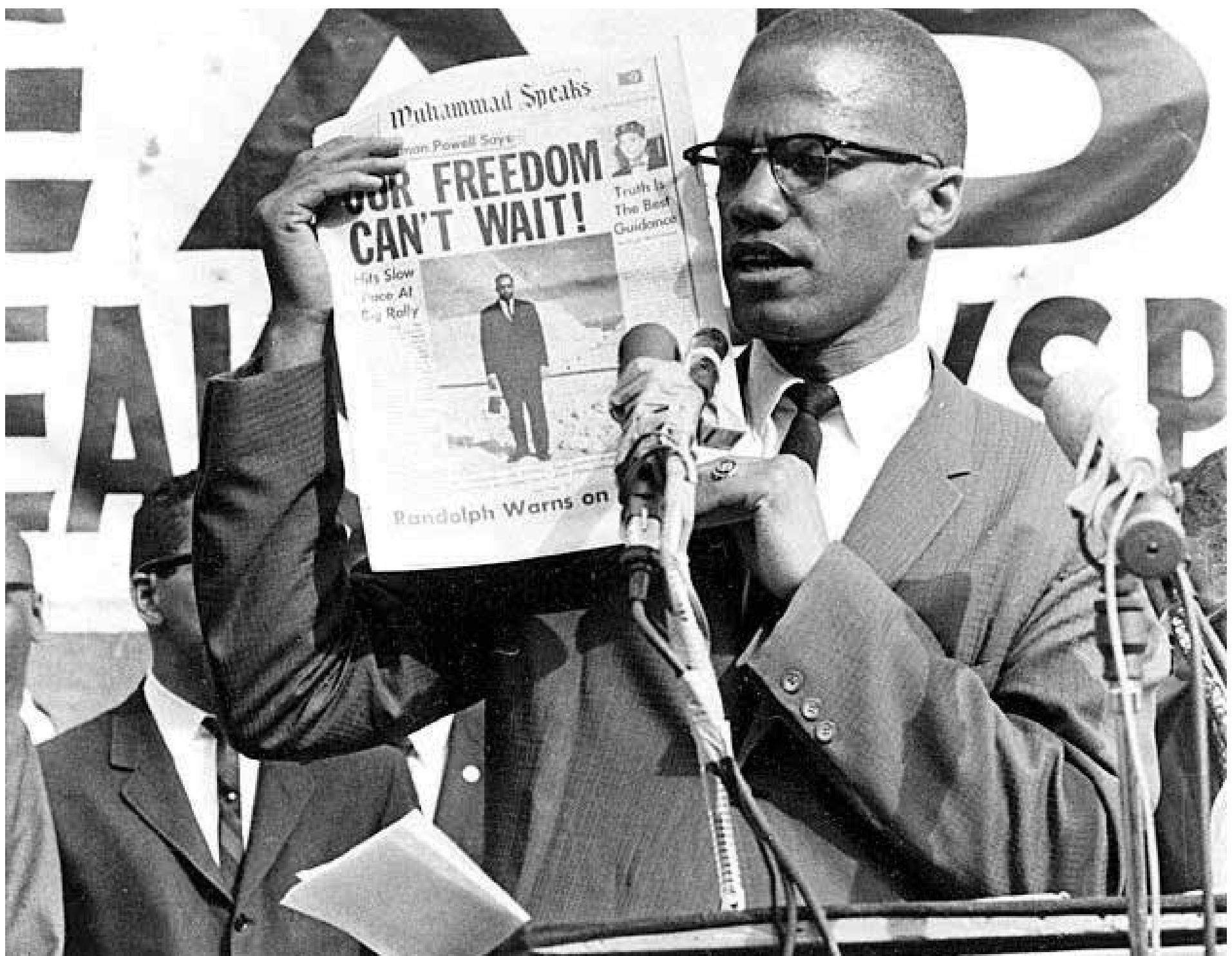


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Malcolm X, who guest writer Allah Wisdom mentions looking up to while growing up.



Nicholas Allah Wisdom
Guest Writer

I didn't grow up looking up to Martin Luther King Jr. I couldn't relate to his story. My father wasn't a pastor and I wasn't a church boy.

My role model was Malcolm Little, otherwise known as Malcolm X. He was my father figure, almost because I didn't see what a positive role model looked like. Malcolm X grew up with a deceased father and a mentally disabled mother. I could cling to that. My father was killed when I was one year old and my mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a child.

Malcolm X was a man who came from a similar background to mine, who didn't smoke, drink or fornicate. He was intellectually inclined. I wasn't a physically talented child; I was intellectually superior. Everybody was twice my size growing up, but I was twice as smart.

I grew up a nerd, but there aren't any role models like that in the hood. Malcolm X was a guiding light to read,

study, pray and find God. When everyone around you plays football or basketball, they get all the attention. I wasn't overlooked, I was unlooked over, as I called it.

Academics aren't something that is praised highly in the Black community. I couldn't look up to Kobe or LeBron; I sucked at basketball. Football was cool, but it wasn't paying my mother's bills. King didn't even like marching, nor did we keep his dream alive.

King's mother was killed at his family's church by a Black man. I believe in Malcolm X's ideology of economic freedom over political freedom. You give a man a fish, and he eats for a day. You teach a man how to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.

I don't believe marching will get us anywhere. If we want respect, we have to earn it. We cannot fight the same system that we rely on. If we were to go out and do it for ourselves, then we would gain more respect from other ethnic groups.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH FIGURE SKATING AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Photo courtesy of Savanna Jones

Jones (middle) competing with her team for a figure skating competition.

Savanna Jones
Guest Writer

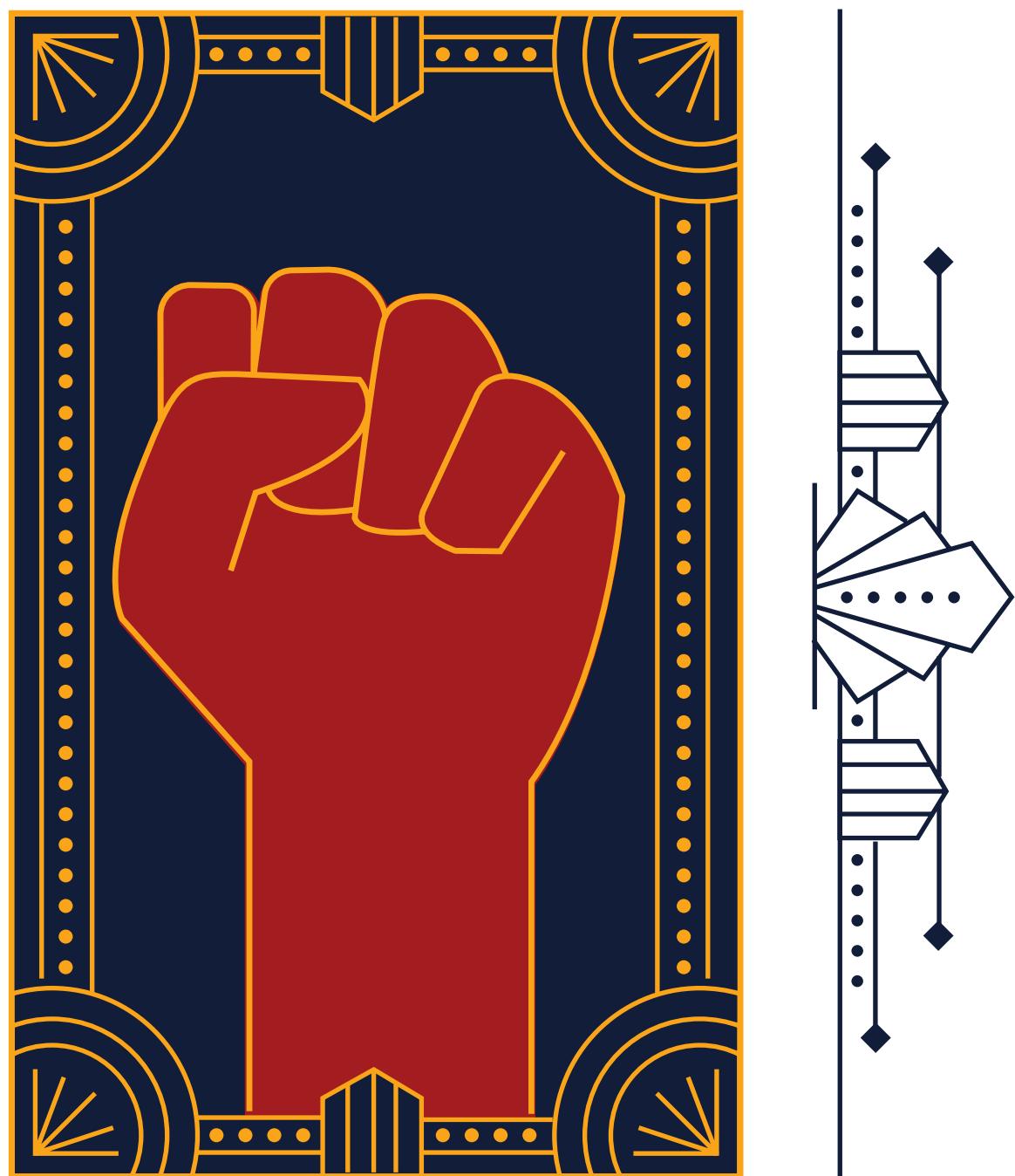
When I was six years old, my grandmother put me in a winter get-up, snowpants and all, took me to an ice rink and placed me in skating classes. At that age, I was too young to realize everyone around me in those classes was white. As I learned more skills, I decided to join the skating rink's synchronized skating team, which consisted of roughly 15 skaters. I stayed on this team for about six years until COVID-19 hit, when I switched to a different skating team for a year. When I swapped back to my original team, I had adapted a completely new mindset on how different it is to be a Black figure skater, especially on a team.

Figure skating was originally a sport that only white people played. The exception was one person in the 1930s, Debi Thomas. She started to figure skate, even with the segregation laws in place. Once the laws were lifted, she was able to compete in competitions, making it all the way to the Olympics. Even after this success, the sport has remained a primarily white-dominated sport. In my experiences, being the only Black person on an all-white team proved to be challenging. The way I had to wear my hair, the shade of lipstick I had to use and the

color of tights I had to wear. These differences did not look as good on me as they did on the other girls on my team; however, there were also many positives to this as well.

At the rink I skated my whole life, we would perform ice shows twice a year, which the public was invited to. There were many times when I had a Black girl and her mother come up to me to say I did a good job. They would then ask if the rink taught figure skating. Since my coaches knew me so well, they allowed me to help teach the kids learning basic moves. When I went in after a show, it always made me happy to see that same little girl in a class trying to learn.

Black History Month always reminds me that I was fortunate enough to have opportunities like this and that it's vital to bring more diversity to figure skating. People of color can see that they belong not just on the ice, but everywhere. It reminds me that it's important to remember this history of Black figure skaters, who paved the way for the start of bringing more diversity into the sport, such as Thomas and Mabel Fairbanks, the first Black woman inducted into the US Figure Skating Hall of Fame and Starr Andrews, the first woman to win a medal after 35 years.



Sports

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One final hurrah

Senior foward talks final season



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Center Mya Hiram is averaging 11.4 points per game and 6.8 rebounds a game in the 2025-26 season

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

In her senior season, forward Mya Hiram hopes to make the most of her final year playing basketball.

Born and raised in Onsted, Mich., Hiram didn't want anything to do with sports. Being one of the tallest in her grade and coming from a sports family where her dad played football at Michigan State, she tried out for travel baseball. She was coached by Ferris State men's basketball player Joey Cabana's mom, Suzanne. She looked at Hiram and decided to coach her in her travel basketball team.

Up until sixth grade, Hiram didn't pick up a basketball until she got into travel basketball, which she says is where she got a lot of her skill from, and even received some college offers even before she played in a high school game.

Hiram talked about her experience throughout high school.

"So, I grew up in a small town," Hiram said. "I think it was like me and two other girls in my grade who played any kind of sport besides running. We had a lot of runners in my grade, but I grew up in a really small town and played a lot of other small schools, and high school was

a lot of fun. I went to Onsted High School, and the only other person that got a lot of attention for basketball was Austin Davis, and he played for Michigan."

Hiram got her first offer from Ferris during the summer going into her sophomore year, before she even turned sixteen. Hiram loved everything about Ferris, from knowing some of the girls and being friends with some of them as well as loving the environment it offered. She loved how Ferris was family-focused, and everyone was super gritty and got along.

Hiram was recruited by former head coach Kendra Foster, who ended up leav-

ing before her freshman year and was replaced by Kurt Westendorp. The two had a two-hour conversation with Hiram about how he still wanted Hiram to play for the Bulldogs. That, along with liking the small town of Big Rapids, is why Hiram stayed.

Hiram's favorite part about Ferris is her teammates.

"These are girls that are going to be my bridesmaids," Hiram said. "These are girls I call on to cry to, to share small accomplishments about. Nothing makes me happier than just being able to celebrate each other. We take birthdays so seriously. Two of our girls got engaged over the summer, and so we

take celebrating that super seriously. It's just knowing that I have thirteen girls there to back me up and that I can share these moments with. They make every day worth it, and it's the girls on the team that make this choice one I would make a million times over again."

In her senior year, Hiram is just trying to stay in the moment and keep connecting with the girls on the team, whether she only played with them for one year or has played with them for five years. One of the girls that Hiram will play with for only one year is freshman guard Charlotte Miller.

Miller talks about how Hi-

ram is a good leader for the freshmen.

"She is an amazing leader and role model for the freshmen and I," Miller said. "She always looks out for us and is just a great teammate. She holds us accountable and pushes us to get better every day."

Hiram graduated last May with her degree in dental hygiene and works part-time as a dental hygienist after getting her license over the summer. Once the season is over, Hiram wants to travel and spend time with her family after missing a lot of moments due to being a college athlete.

Basketball to finish off long homestand

Bulldogs basketball looks to take on Wayne State and Purdue Northwest



Photo by: Clark Vance | Photographer

Tae Boyd drives towards the paint while taking on a Grand Valley defender during their match up at home

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Ferris men's and women's basketball have a full week of tough matchups, with both teams welcoming the Wayne State Warriors and the Purdue Northwest Pride.

Men's looks to gain some momentum in the final month of the season, while women's looks to keep up the momentum they have.

Women's

Ferris women's basketball has had a successful month up to this point, having a 7-1 record with their only loss coming on Jan 19 to No.1-ranked and reigning national champions in the Grand Valley State Lakers.

Throughout January, Ferris has outscored its opponents 485-386 in their six victories. In the seven games this month, the team is convert-

ing 44.5% of its shots, while shooting 36.9% from beyond the arc.

This week, the No.19-ranked Bulldogs (15-4, 8-2 in GLIAC) will take on the Wayne State Warriors (13-5, 8-2 in GLIAC) in the first of two matchups this coming week. The Warriors come into the game 6-2 in the month of January while holding a one-game lead on second place in the division on the Bulldogs.

Wayne State is led by one of the better players in the GLIAC, junior guard McKenna Ferguson. Ferguson does her damage from beyond the three-point line, having a GLIAC leading 45.9% three point percentage, while averaging 16.1 points per game.

The Bulldogs are led in scoring by senior Kadyn Blanchard. Blanchard is averaging 15.9 points per game,

5.4 rebounds per game, and 2.1 steals per game. She is also now the all-time career Ferris women's basketball scorer.

Blanchard spoke about the upcoming game against the Warriors, and the challenges that she expects to face.

"Wayne State is a tough matchup for us," Blanchard said. "I think the keys for us are to play together and get the looks we want. Also, we have to make sure we are dictating what they do on the offensive end with our defense and to be the stronger team, as it's always a battle with them."

The second matchup of the week comes against the Purdue Northwest Pride (3-15, 1-9 in GLIAC), who come into the game riding a seven-game losing streak.

Purdue Northwest is led in scoring by senior forward Alyssa Cole, who is averaging 13.4 points per game on 40% shooting, 6.9 rebounds per game, and 1.5 steals per game.

Men's

Men's comes into their week with a 5-3 record in January after a rocky start to their season, where they started 4-5. They look to pile up some wins coming into the final month of the season. Senior Brandon Claerbaut spoke about the season up to this point.

"I feel good about our season so far," Claerbaut said. "We started off slow, but as a team we've definitely gotten closer and have been getting better each day. It's nice having three straight home games that we need to build on. If we continue to stay confident and build

together, I believe we can string together a strong finish to the season."

Men's first matchup will also come against the Warriors (8-8, 5-5 in GLIAC), with the Warriors coming into the game on a two-game losing streak.

Wayne State's leading scorer coming into their game is junior guard Jordan Briggs. Briggs is averaging 16.7 points per game on 43% shooting, 3.1 assists, and 1.3 steals per game.

One of the Bulldogs' standout players is the junior transfer from Melbourne, Australia, Justin Asi. Asi did not play his first full game until Dec 6, since then he's averaged 9 points per game on 48.6% shooting, while shooting 51.5% from beyond the three-point line.

Then, Purdue Northwest (7-10, 3-7 in GLIAC) comes

to Wink Arena for the two teams' second matchup of the season, with the last game resulting in a 73-68 Bulldogs victory.

A standout player for the Pride would be senior forward Kyle Ross, who is averaging 15 points per game on 57.8% shooting, while averaging 7.5 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game.

Ferris women's basketball will take on the Wayne State Warriors on Saturday, Jan. 31 at 1 pm at Jim Wink Arena, then the men's team has a tip-off scheduled for 3 pm. Then women's will face off against the Purdue Northwest Pride on Monday, Feb. 2 at 5:30 p.m., with the men's tipoff scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Hockey looks to snap losing streak

Bulldogs to take on Minnesota State



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Forward Gavin Best fights off a Lake Superior defender while maintaining control of the puck.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After losing a close overtime game against Augustana on Jan 17, the Ferris State Bulldogs hockey team looks to get their first win in almost two months.

It just so happens that the Bulldogs (4-22, 3-15 in CCHA) will be welcoming the Minnesota State Mavericks (12-8-5, 8-6-3 in CCHA) to Ewigleben Arena and look to get that first win since Dec 6. In that game, they took down the Mavericks 4-3.

Since their last win, Ferris has been outscored 46 goals to 20, allowing on average 4.6 goals per game during their 10-game losing streak. This is the longest losing

streak for the Bulldogs since the 2018-19 season, when the Bulldogs lost 11 games in a row.

Head coach Brett Riley believes his squad can gain some momentum against the Mavericks and is encouraged by the way his team has been playing as of late.

“Despite a challenging stretch and some adversity recently, we were encouraged by the way we played on night two against Augustana,” Riley said. “Battling back from a three-goal deficit to earn a point against

another top 20 team, in their building, says a lot about our group. We need to build off that effort, but there’s a strong belief in our locker room, our focus is on con-

tinuing to stack good days, play winning hockey, and let that momentum carry into next weekend and the stretch ahead.”

Ferris has a long history against Minnesota State, spanning back to the 1992-93 season. The Bulldogs have an all-time record of 13-41-2 against the Mavericks but have a 2-2 record against them in the last two seasons.

The Bulldogs come into the matchup being led on the ice by senior forward Gavin Best, who, on the season, has nine goals, which is tied for the most on the team, eight assists and 17 points. Senior forward Josh Zary is right behind Best. Zary also has nine goals on the season, while having five

assists and 15 points for the season.

In the crease for the Bulldogs, it has been a duo between sophomore Martin Lundberg and junior Hobie Hedquist. So far this season, Lundberg played in 14 games and has a 2.98 goals against average, an .884 save percentage and has a 2-10 record. For Hedquist, he has also started 11 games, while having a 3.93 goals against average, an .883 save percentage and a 1-9 record.

The Mavericks will come into the weekend against the Bulldogs 2-6-2 in their last 10 games, while riding a three-game losing streak. Losing two games against Michigan Tech by scores of

3-1 and 4-1, before losing to St. Thomas the weekend before by a score of 4-2.

Minnesota State is led by senior forward Tristan Lemyre, who has 10 goals, 10 assists and 20 points on the season for the Mavericks. While in the crease, they are led by one of the better goalies in the CCHA in senior Alex Tracy. Tracy has the second-best goals against average in the division with a 2.06, while having the fourth best saves percentage with a .924 and having an 11-8-5 record.

Best believes the team is making strides and believes that the challenges that have come their way have been beneficial to the team.

“Despite the results in the

second half of the season, we feel that we are taking steps as a group,” Best said. “We’ve been challenged in many ways this year, and hopefully that will serve us very beneficially down the stretch. Minnesota State is a very strong team that we respect, yet we know we can handle them, as we showed earlier in the season.”

The Ferris State Bulldogs will take on the Minnesota State Mavericks at Ewigleben Arena on Jan 30 at 7:07 pm, with the second game coming the next day, with the puck drop slated for 6:07 pm.