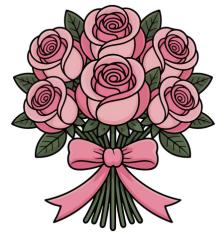




TIGER TIMES

Valentines Edition

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Easy planning: Local date night ideas

By Ashlyn F.
Voice Reporter

Planning the perfect date night doesn't have to mean a long drive or a lot of planning. This article is about uncovering hidden gems and is fantastic for dates right in our own backyard. We'll dive into everything from the movies and mini golfing, making these spots unique experiences that will make your next date night unforgettable, all without leaving the County.

The Movies

Going to an AMC theater is a popular date night option because it combines comfort, nostalgia, and an immersive entertainment experience that is hard to replicate at home. One of the best things about going to the movies is their plush reclining seats, allowing couples to fully relax, "sink into comfort," and sometimes even cuddle by putting up the armrests to enhance the romantic feel. The picture and sound quality make the movies feel more like an event than just a movie. Having a darker, quieter theater allows for a distraction-free date that helps you focus entirely on the film and each other. I would recommend going early afternoon (12 p.m.-3 p.m.), or late-night, post-dinner hours after 8 p.m. If you're looking for recommendations, the two most classic love stories are coming back to the screen, such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Pretty in Pink*. These two are perfect to watch during the Valentine's Day season.



Ice Skating

Ice skating is also an excellent date night idea because it's a classic winter activity with an accessible, local venue that caters to all skill levels, from beginners to experienced skaters. The shared experience of gliding on the ice, perhaps holding hands for balance, creates opportunities for laughter and connection. It's a reminiscent and engaging way to spend time together, fostering a sense of fun and togetherness that can strengthen bonds. They are open from November to March, and you can even skate for free daily from dusk to dawn.



Putt Club

The Putt Club is also a good date night because it combines interactive entertainment with a full-service restaurant, featuring 18-hole indoor and outdoor courses. The venue offers a lively atmosphere, featuring unique activities like duckpin bowling, Krazy Darts and an arcade, making it perfect for both active and casual dates. This variety makes it ideal for both energetic couples looking for an adventure and those who prefer a more relaxed, casual outing. Friday and Saturday nights are the best times to go from 11 a.m.- 10 p.m.



Letter from the Editor

Valentine's Day has always been my favorite holiday. My family tells me it's my favorite because my birthday is a few days later, which isn't entirely untrue, but the real reason I love Valentine's Day is because it gives everyone a reason to slow down and celebrate something we don't always appreciate--love.

And, not only romantic love, though I do love my Valentine wholeheartedly.

At Illini Bluffs, love looks like friendship that endures through stressful weeks of testing. It looks like teachers who care enough to create and hold space for their students, and push them to be better. It looks like teammates, cast members, club officers and classmates who always show up--to games, to performances, for meetings and, most importantly, for each other.

While being the Editor-in-Chief, I've had the honor of witnessing a whole different type of love: the love of storytelling. Every article in every one of our Editions was written because someone believed that it was a story worth telling. Let that sink in. Our staff spends hours writing, interviewing, editing and designing because we believe that this school and every person in it matters. We publish our Editions with the hope that there is something in it for everyone, and, if there isn't, I encourage you to join our newspaper and create something that does interest you.

If you take anything away from my letter, I hope it's this: love doesn't always come in grand movie-esque moments; sometimes it's quiet, sometimes it's being supportive, sometimes it's simply choosing to care.

As you read the Valentine's Edition of the Tiger Times, I hope you feel proud of the community we all share, and I truly hope you find something that interests you.

Thank you,
Addy D.
Editor-in-Chief



The past 100 years: How love has changed

By Emma M. and Emma H.

Voice Reporters

Love has always played a big part in people's lives, but how we express and experience it has changed dramatically over the years. From formal courtships and handwritten letters of the early 1900's to the fast-paced, over-the-phone romances of today, each era adds to the timeline of the timeless story of love.

Love in the early 1900s was defined by strict social etiquette, courtship, chaperones and a transition toward romantic love rather than practical partnerships. Respectable women were chaperoned by older relatives when in the company of men. This connects with the "calling" system, which allowed men to visit women at home with parental permission. The courtships I mentioned previously primarily emphasize respect, formality, and family involvement. Couples would meet in person, often at public events such as dances or church gatherings, and they typically communicated through handwritten letters or face-to-face conversations. Marriage was regarded as a significant life milestone, and romantic relationships were generally more private and conservative than they are today.

This era valued commitment and long-term partnership with love intertwined with social expectation

In the mid 1900's, love was often viewed through the lens of traditional values and clear social rules. Couples would take it very slow, and often met at church, school, or through mutual friends. They would talk for several months and wait for a substantial period before being "official". When couples did get together, they typically went on formal dates, exchanged handwritten love notes, went to drive-in theaters, and had milkshakes and fries. Couples often went on drives, window-shopped, and attended fairs. Many people married young and, after World War II, started families upon returning home. They often adhered to social norms in which women stayed home to care for children, while men worked to provide for their families and wives.

During the 70's and 80's, love became more expressive and diverse, reflecting the cultural changes of the era. The 70's embraced the spirit of freedom and individuality, with people discovering new forms of relationships and challenging traditional norms. Music played a significant role in shaping romance

during this period, particularly in the rock and disco genres. The 80's continued this trend but also brought a vibe of glamour and passion, with love stories prominently featured in movies and pop songs. Overall, love during these decades was characterized by both personal freedom and emotional connection.

While the 70's and 80's made an impact on love, the 90's and early 2000's really made love into what it is today. Many couples would meet at malls, bowling alleys, or movie theaters, and in some cases, couples could meet on dating shows or in the early days of the internet. If you met on the internet, it would be through AOL, Match.com, and instant chat rooms like ICQ and AIM. Many teens met at malls, schools, out with friends or through the internet. Many couples went quickly, dating within two months and making it official within six. Often hanging out with friends, at the parents' house or eating out together.

From the 2010s to today, love has been deeply influenced by digital technology and evolving social values, compared with the 1900s, when people wrote handwritten love letters. Now, all it seems to be is getting a simple

text. Dating apps and social media have become central to how people meet, communicate, and build relationships, accelerating connections but sometimes making them more short-term. There's a stronger emphasis on authenticity, self-expression, and inclusivity, with society embracing a broader spectrum of identity and relationship styles. At the same time, many seek meaningful, lasting connections amid this fast-paced modern life. This era reflects a blend of tradition and innovation, in which love adapts to new forms of connection while still valuing emotional depth.

Love over the decades has evolved alongside society, reflecting changing values, technology, and cultural shifts. From the formal courtships of the 1900's to the digital connections of the 2010's, love has remained a powerful force that adapts to the times while continuing to inspire deep emotional bonds. Each era brought its own unique ways of expressing and experiencing this feeling, showing us that as the world changes, the desire for connection and understanding remains timeless. This journey through love's history highlights how it both shapes and is shaped by the world around us.

Love through the looking glass: The origin of V-Day

By Jaclyn Y. and Cas W.

Voice Reporters

The origins of Valentine's Day, the day on which love is celebrated and thought of. Most people share chocolates or even flowers with their loved ones, but this day was the death of St. Valentine. A Martyr and priest who, during the third century in Rome, would marry young couples, as he saw unfairness from Emperor Claudius II. As the Emperor was not letting young men marry as he saw them more fit for war, of course, St. Valentine's actions were seen by the Emperor, and he was thus sent to prison, where he cured his cellmate's daughter's illness. Later, he had sent a letter to her signed "from your valentine." on the paper, which would become

a common phrase for letters in the 19th century or messages in the modern day. On February 14th, 270 AD, he was sentenced, marking the day as his death, but to the people it is now known as St. Valentine's Day.

During the 5th century, St. Valentine's Day was a feast day to celebrate the martyr, allowing people to pray for the loss of the priest. It was later in the mid 19th century when cards became more mass-produced, leading to more people participating less by buying cards and gifts, rather than making handmade or even making an effort. In the 20th century, it became more processed as it reached a \$24 billion market, by promoting candy, flowers, and jewelry, making it the

most commercially shifted holiday in the US.

As the world may slowly forget about St. Valentine, his legacy will continue through this holiday, even as it is slowly transitioned to a more

commercialized day. People still show love in various ways during this month, showing that love never dies; it just needs to find a different way to express itself through the years.



Seventeen years of love

By Emmi W.
Chief Graphic Designer

Life can be complicated and stressful, but coming home every day to an animal so excited to see you with a wiggling butt and jumping up to give you kisses makes all the bad things go silent.

I moved houses in 2015. The owner of the house was going into a nursing home and needed someone to take care of his dog. We met April, a small West Highland Terrier, the happiest dog we've ever met, and we instantly clicked. We got her for free with the house when we bought it.

The day I met her, I knew she was my soul dog. She grew up with me until I was 17. I would dress her up, paint her nails, cuddle and dance with her. If I were having a bad day and came home crying, she would check on me and lie with me until I stopped.

We got her when she was 7 years old. Unfortunately, we had to put her down on Sept. 27, 2024. She was 17 years old, approximately 136 years old in dog years.

We took her to our vet and decided that we needed to let her suffering come to an end. That was the hardest day ever. Going home that day with all her toys still on her bed and her food bowl still in the same spot as usual, but no April. This was very hard on my family and me.

We were used to our routine with her for 9 years, and then it was over. It has now been a year since she passed. We still miss her dearly and think of her all the time.

We have a shelf with a printed picture of her, her paw print, her collar, and an old Christmas ornament with her picture on it. Above the shelf hangs a portrait of April that a family member painted and surprised us with.

Since she passed, I've decided that on my 18th birthday, I'll get a tattoo in honor of her.

It's a fine line tattoo of the outline of her ears, and at the bottom, her name in cursive connects it. It will be on the inside of my left bicep, right above my elbow.

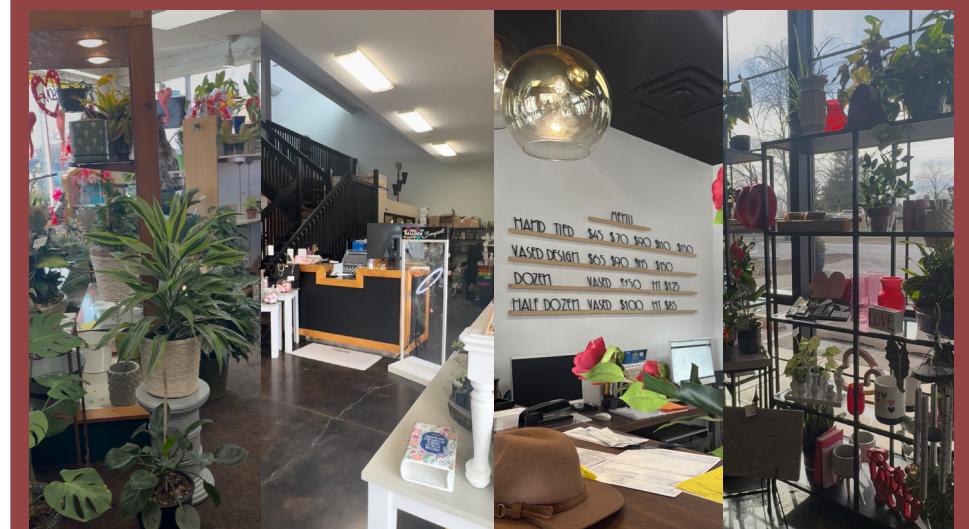
Now I will have April with me for the rest of my life.



Flower finds: Shop them local

By Lillian K. and Mallory S.
Managing Editor and Copy Editor

When individuals have the chance to go shopping, they often tend to forget about local shops that make a living off of our business. Looking towards Valentine's Day, let's explore some local flower shops in the area that meet the needs of many people. Within a day of driving, we paid a visit to a total of four flower shops throughout Central Illinois.



Le Fleur: Washington, IL

Mallory and I started our day off with a fun drink from Black Sheep Coffee and made our way over to Washington, Illinois. Instantly being welcomed into the environment, flower designer Amy gave up some insights and details about the business called, Le Fleur. Amy started assisting with events within the shop when she was a teacher. Almost four years later, you can find not only her, but also her smile, putting together beautiful flower pieces throughout the facility. We chatted a bit with Kim and even played with the poodle, which was named Lily. After discussing the rundown of the place, we asked her what made Le Fleur stick out from other flower shops in the area, and her response was rather heartwarming. She informed us that they have a lot of fun and put a lot of pride into their work, and are often known for their signature striped black and white ribbon, but most importantly, every design is followed with an "every detail matters" mindset.

Beck's: East Peoria

Moving on to the next destination, "Beck's" was on our radar. Walking into the bright yellow building with beautiful artwork on the side in the city of East Peoria, we got to know multiple employees within the walls of the flower shop, but we really had an amazing opportunity to get to know Rhonda. Rhonda was a member of the 4H program for 12 years, and we learned that her favorite flower was an australian. The employee started her career as a florist back in 1988 and made her way to the top as a master floral designer, gaining her Wire FTD Certification. The designer's grandma always shopped at Beck's, and she believes that the store is full of opportunities and has a great line of flowers, making it a great business to support.

Gp Miller Floral: Peoria Heights

GP Miller Floral is located in Peoria Heights and has much to offer its customers. The flower shop had multiple owners, and to add on, one of the owners, Gretchen, explained her story and how she became involved with the flower business. Before I dive too deep, Glen is one of the other owners who started the whole business. Gretchen informed us that back in 2018, Glen was moving into Peoria, and she had a degree in computer programming and web design. Glen needed a partner, so she became more involved in the industry by helping design the website, and the shop became busier and busier, which led her to learn flowers. The Co-owner made note that the facility's event space helps them stick out compared to other shops, while focusing on keeping the space clean and green.

Floratory: Peoria Heights

Moving on to our last destination, the owner is actually a former student of Illini Bluffs High School. Lindsey, the owner of the Floratory, wasn't working when we stopped, but her mother, Peggy, gave us the insights! Peggy started by informing us how the business came around, and it is quite interesting. One day, Lindsey called her mom and asked her if she wanted to work in a flower shop, and her reaction was priceless. "What do you know about flowers" said Peggy. From there, the local shop became what it is today. The designer informed me that the business is very custom and more than willing to put together customer designs. The mother informed that she used to be part owner, but as time went on, she retired and enjoys the facility only a couple of days a week!



Debate: Should the kiss cam be continued?

No: Get rid of them

By Carson B.

Voice Reporter

In my personal opinion, I believe that kiss cams are outdated and should be taken out of sports games. This sports game tradition is believed to have started in the early 1980s, and it is definitely showing its age. Kiss cams can be invasive and uncomfortable for the people on the screen.

Kiss cams can be a huge invasion of people's privacy. You do not know what is happening in someone's life or what is going on between them and their significant other. They could have had an argument minutes before, or one of the people could be uncomfortable sharing such an intimate moment with a stadium full of people. This is especially true for people who practice a religion, like Islam, that looks down upon public kissing. But it's not just uncomfortable for couples, but also for family members.

A kiss is an intimate and big step in a relationship, and we should let people display that when they want to, and not peer-pressure them into sharing something personal with thousands of other people. It's an invasion of privacy and people's personal lives, and can make someone very uncomfortable when they're simply trying to watch a game. I'm not saying we should get rid of the Jumbotron altogether, but the kiss cam is an outdated practice that I think sports games could do without.



Yes: Keep them

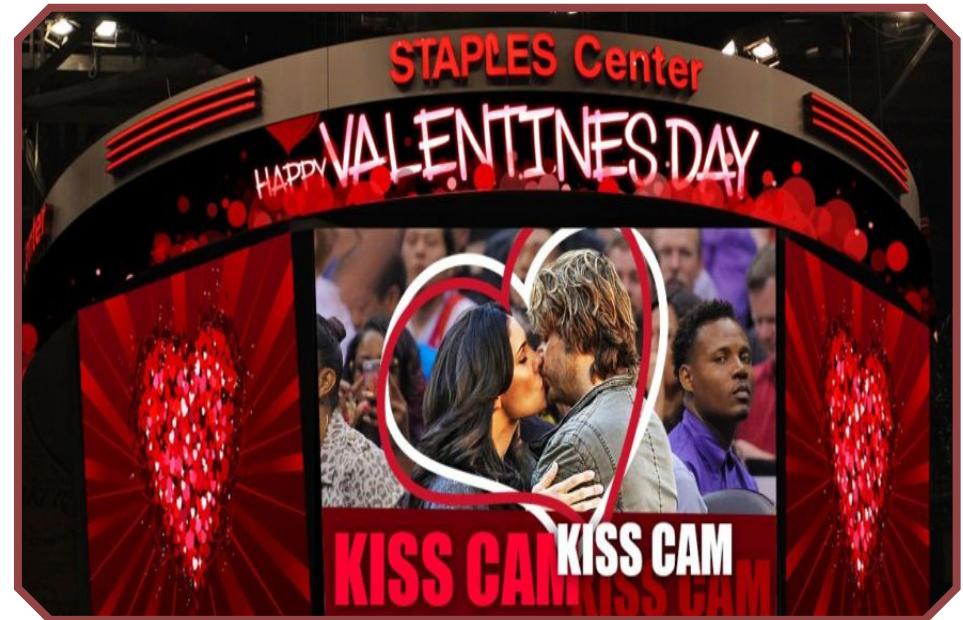
By Gabby G.

Voice Reporter

People like to argue that the kiss cam is too invasive, but I believe that's the point; it is supposed to be fun. If you don't want to be on the kiss cam, then don't go to the game. If you already have the attitude of not wanting to be on the kiss cam, then literally don't come; nobody would like you to be there with that attitude. And, if you genuinely don't want to kiss the person you're with, then just don't when the camera pans over to you.

Kiss cams bring people together. They make relationships happen, and they can create adorable meet-cutes. It's a great thing to do during timeouts and halftimes. Especially when the game isn't very entertaining, it brings them back into the game. Also, a lot of people enjoy being on the big screen, so for some people it could be the greatest moment of their lives. It blends the tension of the game with the excitement of the possibility of being on the big screen.

Some people are just not very smart and don't realize that if you don't want to kiss someone, you have the right not to. All in all, kiss cams have way more positives than negatives, and if you don't like them, then you're just a debby downer. Kiss cams are a silly, playful joke, and they make the game so much more exciting.



One-on-one: Is Valentine's Day overrated?

By Josie P. and Shayley D.

Graphic Designer and Voice Reporter

IT'S OVERRATED!

I say this because, to me, it suggests that there is one specific day they should treat you well, when in reality, they should always treat you well. What I mean is, for a guy, you should plan date night and buy flowers because you want to, not because you feel like you have to. The girl should reciprocate the same love by treating them equally and buying gifts just because she wants to. A relationship should be equal and not depend on one person over the other for everything.

See, for me, I want to get rid of this day because I want to go out and have fun, not because it's what I'm supposed to do. That takes the fun out of going out. Therefore, Valentine's Day is 100 percent a Hallmark holiday to get people to buy cards, candy, gifts and take people out.

See, if I were going to do something on this day, I would want to stay home, make dinner and watch a movie, which I do all the time. But it shouldn't be what you do with your time; it should be who you spend it with, because the people you spend your time with and who you give your heart to are the ones who really matter. Especially if you have young impressionable kids who learn from how you act.

Many elementary kids feel that this day is for adults. They say that the only good thing they get out of the day is the big boxes of chocolates at the store. Therefore, I asked them why they thought this holiday was for adults. They said because it's a day with lots of kissing and loving that person.

So, in reality, what is this day teaching kids? That they have to show people they love them one day a year. They are to get gifts and be taken out. They are to do the same for the people they love, but only specifically on Valentine's Day, NO! That's not what we should be teaching them. We should teach them to appreciate and love the people they love every day.

NO IT'S NOT!

I don't think Valentine's Day is overrated because, yes, it's only one day a year, but that day doesn't have to be just for couples; it can be for friends and family as well. You can still have fun even on Valentine's Day.

You can stay home and watch a movie and have dinner as a date, or spend time with the people you love, like friends and family. Valentine's Day is not just for adults; it can be for kids as well. You can get something for your kids or siblings and show them that you love and care about them.

This day can teach kids that it's not just about the love you have for a partner, but the love you have for friends and family who are close to you, and the love that other people have for you altogether.

Love is in the air: Best couples in sports

By Ella D.
Voice Reporter

This year, couples in sports have been nothing short of absolute power matches. From high recognized basketball player, to world-renowned track stars, these couples are the blueprint of a "perfect couple." I listed the three that are, in my opinion, the best of the best.

Paige Buekers and Azzi Fudd

Paige Buekers and Azzi Fudd are a classic best friends-to-lovers story. Paige just completed her rookie year in the WNBA with the Dallas Wings after being the number one pick overall in the 2025 draft. While Azzi is still at UConn, this will be her last year, and she is preparing to possibly be selected first overall in the 2026 WNBA draft. The two met in the 2017 basketball camp when they were 15 and 14; from there, the rest was history. Fast forward to 2019, Paige committed to the historic University of Connecticut women's basketball team, where she broke countless records through her college career. When it came time for Azzi to make a commitment to a college, Paige was determined to get her to UConn. She even made a slideshow of why she should go there and presented it to Azzi's family. Paige was successful. The two became teammates but got little playing time together due to many season-ending injuries, including them both tearing their ACLs. Then, in the 2024-2025 college season, both were determined to win a national championship. They were able to play together, and, against all odds and despite a few losses, they won it. In July of 2025, the two officially announced their relationship through an interview Paige did during WNBA All-Star Weekend.



A'ja Wilson and Bam Adebayo

Although this features another WNBA player, this couple still deserves to be featured on this list. Another classic Friends to lovers trope A'ja and Bam were friends many years before their relationship turned romantic. Both are professional basketball players with A'ja being considered one of the best players to ever play in the history of women's basketball, recording an average of 23 points a game accompanied by 10 rebounds this past season while playing for the Las Vegas Aces. In 2025 She received a statue at The University of South Carolina along with getting her Jersey retired. Bam got drafted in 2017 to the Miami Heat as the fourteenth overall pick where he averages 18 points and 10 rebounds per game. Rumors started to emerge when he attended one of her games in 2023, after that rumors quieted down for a bit until it came time for the 2024 Summer Olympics, which both were competing at. During the olympic games both won gold medals and were spotted together multiple times. In early 2025 it finally seemed people could confirm they were dating when they were spotted together at a restaurant in Beverly Hills. Although they have kept their relationship private for the most part, they are constantly seen supporting each other through showing up to each other's games and Bam wearing A'ja's signature shoes on the court.



Hunter Woodhall and Tara Davis

Although these two may not have been in the headlines recently they are too cute not to include on a best sports couples list. Hunter and Tara gained attraction online during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Tokyo where Davis is seen running to her husband and embracing him first thing after winning gold for the first time in her career. These two are both track stars, which is where they met in 2017 at a high school track meet. Hunter is a paralympic gold medalist. Hunter was born with a rare birth defect causing him to have to have both legs amputated at just 11 months old. Defying all odds he was determined to follow his heart and pursued his passion of track. Tara competes in the Women's long jump and shares her journey on social media, along with all the adventures these two go on together. Hunter and Tara first met, as stated above, in February 2017 at a high school track meet their senior year. They then started dating in June of 2017. The couple then had to endure a long-distance relationship while attending colleges states apart. Their relationship stayed strong though where they then got engaged in 2021 then married in October of 2022. These two capture peoples hearts everyday with their wholesome videos together bringing joy to peoples hearts.



Staff Picks: Best Love Song of All Time



"Bless the Telephone"
by Labi Siffre

By Anna C.
News Editor

If you're looking for a soft, cute, and universal love song, this is the one for you. Bless the Telephone is a slow acoustic that completely captures the feelings of love. My favorite thing about this song is that you can take it and relate it to anyone you really love in your life.



"Home" by Edward Sharpe
& The Magnetic Zeros

By Serina S.
News Reporter

For me, what makes this song the best love song of all time is my grandparents. They sing this song every time they host a house party on karaoke. They've been together for over 20 years and their story inspires me. The love they share is very strong, i've never even heard them argue a day in my life.



"Can't Take My Eyes Off You" by Frankie Valli

By Carson B.
Voice Reporter

It's iconic. It has stood the test of time and just makes you feel good. Also, it goes along the iconic scene from "10 Things I Hate About You" which is a cult classic. It's a dream prom proposal for most girls you encounter. Plus it gives nostalgia for all those "Just Dance" kids out there.

Scan this to listen to
our Valentine's playlist



Fans who LOVE their teams

By: **Sara F.**
Sports Reporter

While couples celebrate their love on Valentine's Day, die-hard sports fans show unwavering devotion to their teams, proving that love comes in many forms, including in the stands. IB is no exception to this, with many students, including Christian, Sydney, Ryan and Connor, who all show their pride for their team.

Christian M. - The Chicago Blackhawks

Senior Christian M. is a devoted fan of the Chicago Blackhawks; his love began at a very young age, growing up with family members who are also fans. According to Christian, the experience of watching them is like no other, "even though they suck right now" because "their stadium is awesome." The United Center definitely makes it an experience, but the players make the game worth watching.



Ryan W. - The Chicago Cubs

Ryan has been a Cubs fan his whole life, watching and cheering them on through their highs and lows. Ryan recalls his favorite memory with the Cubs, "When they won the 2016 World Series, that was a time to remember," said junior Ryan. 2016 was the prime time for Cubs players; one such player is Ryan's favorite, "My favorite player is definitely Chris Bryant."



Sydney N. - Oracle Redbull

Sydney has recently developed her love for F1 races, teams and drivers. She has a few favorites for these races: "My favorite team is Oracle Redbull, and my favorite driver is Charles Leclerc," said junior Sydney. Sydney hasn't been able to go to any races yet, but she said, "We have plans to go to a race this summer."



Connor F. - The Indiana Colts

Connor has been through it this season with the Colts, starting quarterback gets hurt, "Desperate times call for desperate measures, and he was able to fill the role the team needed," junior Connor said, but he has been watching the Colts for a bit, or at least 2020. Connor said, "I started watching because of a player from Wisconsin named Jonathan Taylor."



Lavi T. - Ohio Buckeyes

Levi has been an Ohio fan his whole life; his dad is a huge Ohio fan, so naturally, so was Levi. He mainly follows their basketball and football programs. "Their football is always so much fun to watch, and basketball either makes me happy or depressed," Levi said. Their football program is always good, and usually top contenders in basketball. Levi also mentioned his favorite football player was "Jeremiah Smith and A.J. Hawk," Levi said.



The BF playbook

By **Anabelle R.**
Sports Reporter

In every professional sport, there is a playbook you need to follow to do well in the game. In football, there are offensive and defensive plays. Just like sports, dating has a playbook that every boyfriend needs to follow to be a good one. In the following, I'm going to give you a step-by-step guide on how to do well and "win the game."

An important part of a playbook is when you're in an intense game, and the tension is up, you need to stay calm and stick to what you know. The same thing goes for when you're in an argument. You don't have to say you're always right, but you have to stay calm. When you're in a situation like that, you have to remember it's you and your team against the enemy. Your enemy in the situation is the problem, not each other. You're not going to blame your teammate for the loss; it's a team effort. It applies to the relationship, too; it's a team effort to win.

When you're getting ready for a game, you watch film of the other team. You watch what their habits are and what they love to do in the game. When you're dating, it's similar to watching a game film. You find out the things they like: their favorite drink, favorite color and favorite sweet treat. Those small things are going to be able to get you out of the dog house and win the game. If you see those items and get her something "Just because," you're going to win the game with tactics. When you are texting dry the night before, when you can't go to an event in her life, or when you can't hang out with her that week, get her some of her favorite things; her favorite drink or flowers can go a long way in making a girl happy.

Every good sports fan knows that the best offense is usually the best defense. Playing defensively is protecting what is yours. You have to defend your girlfriend, and if you don't someone will score. If you can't protect what's yours and make them the first priority, someone else is going to get brownie points and win your game. So you have to play good defense and keep your girlfriend as your top priority.

Last but not least is offense. Offense is a huge part of a game; you can't win a game without scoring. Date night is an offensive play; if you plan and execute it right, you will score brownie points and overall win the game. Planning the date includes picking the time, location or activity. You need to put effort into it. Don't make the night where she has to choose everything. You can't go wrong by telling her where and when you are picking her up!



Valentines Day boxes from the Elementary School



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