

The cost of a contender

A deeper look at UConn basketball's revenue and spending surge

By Alex Putterman
STAFF WRITER

More than ever, UConn basketball is big-time.

It's big-time on the court, of course, where the defending-champion women's team enters this year's NCAA Tournament as the No. 1 overall seed and the men's team, with two titles already under Dan Hurley, are a seri-

ous threat to win another.

But it's also big-time off the court, data from UConn's annual NCAA financial statements shows, having experienced a recent surge in ticket sales and overall operating revenue — while also paying the coaching salaries necessary to compete at the highest level and incurring far higher expenses than a decade ago.

Despite concerns in years past that the athletic department's finances are unsustainable, UConn has been clear about its desire to compete with the best basketball programs in the country, even at a significant cost, and has been rewarded with three national titles in as many years.

Here is some data that helps explain the situa-

tion further.

Ticket revenue

Since receiving essentially no ticket revenue during the pandemic-disrupted 2020-21 season, UConn basketball has seen a surge over the past few years.

On the men's side, ticket revenue has more than doubled, as the once-em-

UConn continues on A4



Courtesy of Joe Buglewicz

The UConn Huskies are introduced before an NCAA men's basketball game against the Columbia Lions at Harry A. Gampel Pavilion on Nov. 10 in Storrs.



Courtesy of Save the Sound

A volunteer holds small pieces of trash collected during a cleanup in 2025.

Cleaning up the Sound

Over 11,500 pounds of trash removed from beaches, lakes and parks

By Austin Mirmina
STAFF WRITER

Nearly six tons of trash was removed from beaches, lakes and parks in Connecticut and New York in 2025, according to new cleanup data from Save the Sound.

Volunteers collected a total of 11,541 pounds of litter — roughly the weight of two large SUVs — during cleanups at coastal and inland sites across the Long Island Sound region

last year, the environmental nonprofit said.

The most common types of trash found were cigarette butts (18,321); food wrappers (10,741); bottle caps (12,718 plastic and metal caps combined); and small plastic pieces (8,067). Those same items have topped the list for the past nine years, according to Save the Sound.

"Cleanups like these have many environmental benefits, such as removing items that

can leach chemicals into the ground and our waterways and preventing discarded fishing lines from entangling wildlife," said Annalisa Paltauf, a cleanup coordinator with Save the Sound. "It has a real impact, brings people together, and encourages good stewardship of our region."

Volunteers collected 11,383 pounds of trash in 2024.

During cleanups, volunteers track the garbage they pick up using the Clean Swell

app or by tallying items on paper worksheets.

Environmentalists say trash left behind can seriously harm wildlife, and in some cases be fatal. Animals that live in and around Long Island Sound can become entangled in fishing line, nets, balloon strings and other debris. They can also mistake plastics, cigarette butts and Styrofoam for food.

Balloon debris continues to be a problem. Save the Sound

Sound continues on A6

'This field does not pay enough'

CT homelessness workers struggle with low pay, high burnout, report says

By Alex Putterman
STAFF WRITER

As homelessness surges in Connecticut, it's not only the people without housing who are struggling.

It's also the people who serve them.

A new report from the Bridgeport-based Housing Collective found high levels of dissatisfaction among homelessness response workers, a third of whom said they had run out of food in the past year and 60% of whom said they had put off medical care in that time. While 78% said they believe they are doing worthwhile work, 64% said they had considered leaving their job in the past year.

"Connecticut's homelessness response system depends on a workforce that is currently underpaid, overworked and at high risk of turnover," the report said. "Staff remain deeply committed to the mission, but financial hardship and job strain are undermining retention and system capacity."

To counter the problem, the report recommends improved pay and working conditions for employees in the homelessness response system, increased staffing levels, additional training opportunities, and new housing development aimed at these and other workers.

"This is something we're see-

Worker continues on A6

Everything fading to gray in CT

It's the 'in color' from homes to new developments in the state

By Robert Marchant
STAFF WRITER

Take a drive through Connecticut and one color stands out — or rather, fades into the background: gray.

From the REI sporting goods stores in Milford and Norwalk to Heights Crossing in Darien and the new Delamar Hotel in Mystic, neutral palettes abound, evoking an overcast Connecticut day with leaden skies. Once famous for barnyard red, the region's landscape has shifted toward shades with names like "antique pewter," "sea wind" and "iced marble."

Gray continues on A4

Plans for Dorothy Hamill Ice Rink win preliminary approvals

By Robert Marchant
STAFF WRITER

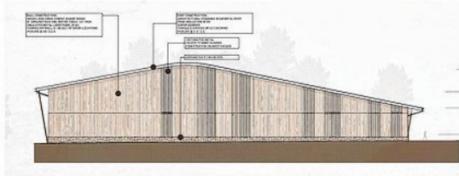
GREENWICH — The Planning & Zoning Commission gave preliminary approvals for plans to replace the outdated Dorothy Hamill Ice Rink with a new one nearby.

The preliminary approvals from the commission, pending

a final site plan to be submitted at a later date, granted municipal improvement status and endorsed the general concept of the project with site-plan approval. The vote was unanimous.

The current plan was modified from an earlier version that did not advance after the

Rink continues on A6



Courtesy of SLAM Collaborative

The Planning & Zoning Commission has granted preliminary approvals for a new skating rink at the Eugene Morlot Memorial Park in the Byram neighborhood of Greenwich, depicted in this rendering.

