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After life-altering shooting, Battie earns Auburn degree



Auburn running back Brian Battie is honored during a senior day ceremony before Auburn's Nov. 22, 2025, game against Mercer at Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, Alabama. JAKE CRANDALL/ ADVERTISER

Ex-player, parents talk about road to graduation

Emma Moon
Sarasota Herald-Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brian Battie didn't entertain the conversation at first. He was too focused on healing, mentally and physically, and

grieving what was lost. On May 18, 2024, Battie was shot at Tallywood Centre Plaza in Sarasota, where he was taken to Sarasota Memorial Hospital in critical condition. His brother, Tommie Battie IV, was pronounced dead at the scene. Brian, who was shot in the head, remained in the hospital for three months with a traumatic brain injury. He couldn't talk or walk and had to rely on a

ventilator. The Auburn running back and Sarasota High graduate lost his brother and his football career in one night. Two long years later, Brian, 24, will graduate from Auburn on Saturday, Aug. 8, with a degree in interdisciplinary studies. But it took him a year after the shooting to make the decision.

See **BATTIE**, Page 7A



Democratic gubernatorial candidate David Jolly, a former GOP congressman, and longtime Trump critic, speaks after holding a rally outside the Capitol on June 10. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Will Jolly be the Dem who breaks through?

Party with long losing streak has high hopes

James Call
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

David Jolly stood before an Orlando ballroom of Florida Democrats recently and delivered a message that would have sounded far-fetched a couple of years ago. "I'm telling you, folks, if the election were tonight, we would win this race," the former Republican congressman told hundreds of Democrats from across Florida who had gathered at the Democrats' annual Leadership Blue conference on July 18. Jolly casts the GOP frontrunner - President Donald Trump-endorsed U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Naples - as the candidate of a Tallahassee establishment that has dominated Florida government for three decades. No Democrat has won Florida's governorship since Lawton Chiles in 1994. Since then, Republicans have won eight consecutive gubernatorial elections, claimed every statewide elected office, built supermajorities in the Florida Legislature and amassed what is now a voter-registration advantage of 1.5 million voters. The GOP has transformed a state where the 2000 presidential election was decided by fewer than 600 votes into a Republican stronghold that President Donald Trump has won three times, the last in 2024 by a 13-point (or 1.4 million-vote) margin.

See **DEMOCRATS**, Page 3A

Cyclosporiasis case-count goes up in Manatee

Wade Tatangelo and C. A. Bridges
Sarasota Herald-Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

Cases of the potentially debilitating parasitic infection cyclosporiasis, which can cause explosive diarrhea, have risen 20% in the Sarasota-Manatee

region, according to the latest Florida Department of Health data updated Aug. 6. While Sarasota County's case count has remained at four since May 1, Manatee County's total has increased to eight, up from six a week ago. Cases were reported for the first time

in Charlotte County, just south of Sarasota County, as well as in Baker and Indian River counties, according to Florida Department of Health data updated Aug. 6. Broward County saw the largest in-

See **CYCLOSPORIASIS**, Page 4A

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