



Final Four power rankings: How do remaining squads stack up?

SPORTS, 1B

NEWPORT • MIDDLETOWN • PORTSMOUTH • JAMESTOWN • TIVERTON

The Newport Daily News

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2026 | NEWPORTRI.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

'Every kid is a success story'



Liam Barahona, right, hits the ball with RhodySquash's coach and director, Omar El Kashef, on March 17. LILY SPEREDELOZZI/SPECIAL TO THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Retail mogul sued for funding Epstein

Wexner spokesperson: No basis for claims

Max Filby
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

A group of women have filed a lawsuit against Ohio retail mogul Les Wexner and his foundation alleging the billionaire helped to fund his former financial adviser Jeffery Epstein's crimes.



Wexner

The lawsuit, filed March 30 in New York State Supreme Court, claims Wexner and the Wexner Foundation paid Epstein \$200 million or more over the 20 years or so of their business relationship.

"(Due) to the Defendants' enabling and conspiracy, Epstein built a vast and sophisticated sex trafficking network which he used ruthlessly to commit acts of gender-motivated violence upon Plaintiffs, causing them significant and lifelong injuries," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit went on to accuse Wexner of transferring his home at 9 E. 71st St. in Manhattan to Epstein so that he could commit acts of violence against the women named as plaintiffs in or around the years 2000 and 2001. Wexner, however, sold the townhouse to Epstein for \$20 million in November 1998, records show.

A spokesperson for Wexner called the allegation that the L Brands founder gave Epstein \$200 million "untrue." The spokesperson said Epstein was paid for wealth management services he provided to Wexner and that Wexner had "no knowledge of Epstein's wrongdoing."

"The Wexners have tremendous sympathy for the victims of Jeffrey Epstein's horrendous crimes. The complaint, however, fails to state any factual basis for asserting a claim against Mr. Wexner," a Wexner spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "The claims appear to be based upon ownership of a house Mr. Wexner sold years prior to the time of the allegations. There is no basis for the claims, which will be vigorously defended."

See LAWSUIT, Page 5A

Middle-schoolers learn life skills in an unlikely place: a squash court

Lynne Sullivan
Providence Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

At first glance, it looks like a regular after-school program. Kids trickling in off buses. Snacks are being made and offered. Some quiet time for homework. A book discussion. Plans for community service.

And then, "Pop. Pop-pop-pop." It's the sound of squash balls echoing off the walls of the De Ramel Family Squash Center at the Newport County YMCA in Middletown.

A bunch of kids playing squash as part of an after-school club - only in Newport, right?

But it's much more than that. RhodySquash is an after-school program for school children in fourth through eighth grade in financial need on Aquidneck Island. The program focuses on building academic and athletic skills while teaching children values and involving them in community events and volunteering opportunities. This April, RhodySquash is celebrating three years at the Newport County YMCA and is at capacity, with 16 participants.

See SQUASH, Page 6A



Kailey Varao, a coordinator for RhodySquash, helps Salah Fajri with his math homework after practice. LILY SPEREDELOZZI/SPECIAL TO THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

"To give this access to the kids and through it you can start to create a better life ... that's what we do."

Sandy Oxx,
RhodySquash coordinator

How RI's courts are using facial recognition to track people



while law enforcement is prohibited from access the database, security footage captured by the system could be available to law enforcement under "extenuating circumstances."

OATINTRO/GETTY IMAGES

Katie Mulvaney
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rhode Island's court system has been using AI-assisted facial recognition tools to track and monitor court visitors who may become a security issue, but free speech advocates worry about how the data is being used.

Concerns about courthouse and judicial security led to the courts adopting the FaceMe software program starting in 2024, with facial recognition cameras

at court entrances and exits, according to Lexi Kriss, spokesperson for the Rhode Island Judiciary.

The technology identifies and tracks certain "monitored" individuals within the courthouse.

Here's what to know about it:

FaceMe developed by a Taiwanese company, relies on AI technology to identify people

The courts piloted the facial recognition program at a cost of \$2,940 a year

through CyberLink Corp.

CyberLink is a Taiwan-based company that bills itself as the world leader in multimedia software and AI facial recognition technology. The company developed and owns over 200 patented technologies, including FaceMe.

The facial recognition software can be used with the judiciary's video surveillance system to verify the identity of an individual from a digital, photographic or video image.

See TRACKING, Page 4A

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to newportri.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 181 | No. 67
To subscribe 866-758-3408
©2026 \$2.50



14119 00002 4