



A PLACE TO PLAY



CULTURE QUIZ

By **JARED MITCHELL**
Editor

Art, Entertainment & Lifestyle

1. Which celebrity had multiple New York City streets closed for a private event at the start of July?

- A. Matt Damon
- B. Taylor Swift
- C. Jennifer Aniston
- D. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

2. What gaming brand recently announced they would be phasing out physical media by the start of 2028?

- A. Playstation
- B. Nintendo
- C. Xbox
- D. Steam

3. Which streamer ended their multi month hiatus on July 6th?

- A. Pokimane
- B. KaiCenat
- C. HasanAbi
- D. moictr1tikal

4. Which summer film was re-released in theaters with an extra 15 minutes of footage?

- A. "Obsession"
- B. "Minions & Monsters"
- C. "Disclosure Day"
- D. "Backrooms"

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS ON PAGE 11



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AT TWO-BIT BISTRO, THE AUDIENCE BECOMES THE BAND

By **ALEESA CAMPBELL**
Reporter

A recurring “Jazz Jam” takes place on Wednesdays at Two-Bit Bistro in Ogden. The weekly jazz session is hosted by Alan and Pepper, starting at 7 p.m. and lasting until close. Community members are encouraged to join the jam, whether that be singing, or playing an instrument.

The Two-Bit Bistro was formerly known as Two-Bit Street Café. Ownership later transferred to Andrew Shorts, a longtime staff member of Two-Bit Street Café. After the lease ended in 2023, Two-Bit Street Café closed its location at 126 25th St in Ogden and moved to 2510 Washington Blvd.

The bistro is an intimate sit-down restaurant with a bar on the main floor for customers 21 and older. The upstairs area is known as the “Blue Door,” and the main area where most customers dine is the “Capone Lounge.”

Two-Bit Bistro is renovating a smaller building that is connected to the front waiting room by a flight of stairs. The building also has access to Washington Boulevard. The restaurant hopes to have quicker service, while maintaining an intimate atmosphere with baked goods and other menu items.

Rather than performing on an elevated stage, musicians stand close to the tables, creating a warm atmosphere where audience members feel welcomed to join in and converse with the musicians.

This bistro is inside the Bigelow Hotel, formerly known as the Ben Lomond Hotel, which retains much of its original architecture dating to its opening in 1927.

Those who wander into Two-Bit Bistro can explore more of the historic hotel by walking to the back of the bistro, where the well-known “TWO-BIT STREET Café” sign hangs. Many also enjoy exploring the hotel’s lobby and ballrooms.

Some speculate the bistro is haunted since it’s housed inside the historic hotel. Taevyn Bitner, a Two-Bit staff member, said his experiences while working at Two-Bit Bistro have convinced him the rumors are true.

“I don’t think that there’s a single employee who works here who hasn’t had something weird happen,” Bitner said, adding that certain lights flicker at unusual rates.



The Two-Bit Bistro on a sunny day.

The Two-Bit Bistro hosts multiple recurring live jazz events. The New Ogden Jazz Group performs every Friday, while the Jack Durbano Trio performs at the bistro’s “Brunch & Jazz” event on Sundays.

Saturdays offer a wider variety of genres musicians play. The performance depends on availability. Some days may feature jazz artists, others may feature artists and bands specializing in other genres.

A house band performs every Wednesday and leads the casual evening “Jazz Jam,” encouraging audience members to participate in the session. The weekly event has fostered a local music scene, with musicians returning

each week to play together.

Some members of the house band include Alan on the keyboard, Jack on guitar, Pepper on bass guitar and MacCrea on drums. After opening the night, they call out to audience members in between songs to join the jam.

The atmosphere is inviting and laid-back, helping regulars and newcomers alike take part.

There is no mandatory dress code and musicians of any skill level are welcomed to play along, creating an inclusive environment.

Many musicians bring their instruments to the bistro and periodically play throughout the night. Some leave between songs, while

others arrive to take their place.

An audience member asked if they could sing and was quickly invited up into the group of musicians. The group playing instruments followed the singer’s lead, playing a melody to match their tone and lyrics.

Musicians cycle throughout the night, sitting at nearby tables for food and drinks between songs. Some artists share instruments, such as the drums, to give other artists a chance to play while they take a break.

“We’ve amassed quite a decent handful of people who will kind of pop up and down playing that we didn’t reach out to and have just kind of made themselves at home,” Bitner said.

Local musician Chris Anderson plays the trumpet, guitar, mandolin and sings. He has also played the piano since he was eight years old.

On July 8, Anderson played the keyboard, occasionally switching over to his trumpet. He said many musicians switch from freestyle jamming to playing tunes students learn in school.

“Pepper gets us going on the freestyle stuff,” Anderson said. “He gets us jamming, just making music based on listening and experience.”

The weekly jam sessions have drawn a community of local musicians and regular music-goers. Two-Bit Bistro has expanded its online presence through social media, particularly on Instagram and Facebook.

Cassin Billalobos, an employee at Two-Bit Bistro who sang in a past “Jazz Jam,” said she enjoys listening to live jazz at work.

“It makes work go by quicker and it makes it more enjoyable,” Billalobos said. “I love seeing them play live.”

For Bitner, the musicians who fill the bistro each week are what make the experience special.

“I absolutely adore all the shows that we have here,” Bitner said. “I don’t think we’ve had a single artist or group, not just on Wednesdays but throughout any of our show nights, that I have not been completely blown away by.”

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GAVIN OLSON | The Signpost

EN TWO-BIT BISTRO EL PÚBLICO SE CONVIERTE EN LA BANDA

Traducido Por
VICTORIA HERNANDEZ FLORES
Co-Editora

By **ALEESA CAMPBELL**
Reporter

El recurrente "Jazz Jam" toma lugar los miércoles en el Two-Bit Bistro en Ogden. La sesión semanal de Jazz es presentada por Alan and Pepper, comenzando a las 7 p.m. y terminando a la hora de cerrar. Miembros de la comunidad son incentivados a unirse al jam, lo cual puede ser cantando, o tocando un instrumento.

El Two-Bit Bistro fue anteriormente conocido como Two-Bit Bistro Café. La propiedad después fue transferida a Andrew Shorts, un empleado que llevaba mucho tiempo trabajando en el Two-Bit Street Café. Tras la finalización del contrato de alquiler en 2023, el Two-Bit Street Café cerró su local situado en el número 126 de la calle 25 de Ogden y se trasladó al 2510 de Washington Blvd.

El Two-Bit Bistro es un restaurante íntimo con un bar en el piso principal para clientes de 21 años de edad o mayores. El área de arriba es conocida como el "Blue Door", y el área principal para la mayoría de los clientes es el "Capone Lounge".

Two-Bit Bistro está renovando un espacio más pequeño que está conectado por el área de espera principal por unas escaleras. El edificio también tiene acceso a Washington Boulevard. El restaurante espera que puedan tener un servicio más rápido manteniendo el ambiente íntimo con productos horneados y otros productos del menú.

En lugar de actuar en un escenario elevado, los músicos se sitúan cerca de las mesas, creando un ambiente acogedor en el que los asistentes se sienten invitados a participar y charlar con ellos.

Este bistró se encuentra dentro del Hotel Bigelow, anteriormente conocido como Hotel Ben Lomond, que conserva gran parte de su arquitectura original, que data de su inauguración en 1927.

Quienes van al Two-Bit Bistro pueden explorar más a fondo este histórico hotel caminando hasta la parte trasera del local, donde cuelga el famoso letrero "TWO-BIT STREET Café". Muchos también disfrutaban recorriendo

el vestíbulo y los salones de baile del hotel.

Hay quien especula con que el bistró está embrujado, ya que se encuentra dentro del histórico hotel. Taevyn Bitner, un miembro del personal del Two-Bit, afirma que sus experiencias mientras trabajaba en el Two-Bit Bistro le han convencido de que los rumores son ciertos.

"No creo que haya ni un solo empleado que trabaje aquí al que no le haya pasado algo

Este evento semanal ha fomentado una escena musical local, con músicos que regresan cada semana para tocar juntos.

Entre los miembros de la banda residente se encuentran Alan al teclado, Jack a la guitarra, Pepper al bajo y MacCrea a la batería. Tras dar comienzo a la velada, entre canción y canción invitan al público a unirse a la jam session.

El ambiente es acogedor y relajado, lo que

Los músicos se van turnando a lo largo de la noche, sentándose en mesas cercanas para comer y beber entre canción y canción. Algunos artistas comparten instrumentos, como la batería, para dar a otros la oportunidad de tocar mientras ellos se toman un descanso.

"Hemos reunido a un buen grupo de gente que va y viene tocando, a la que no habíamos contactado y que, de alguna manera, se ha sentido como en casa", dijo Bitner.

El músico local Chris Anderson toca la trompeta, la guitarra y la mandolina, y además canta. También toca el piano desde que tenía ocho años.

El 8 de julio, Anderson tocó el teclado, pasando de vez en cuando a la trompeta. Comentó que muchos músicos pasan de improvisar libremente a tocar piezas que los alumnos aprenden en el colegio.

"Pepper nos anima a improvisar", explicó Anderson. "Nos anima a tocar juntos, simplemente haciendo música basándonos en lo que oímos y en nuestra experiencia".

Las sesiones de improvisación semanales han atraído a una comunidad de músicos locales y asiduos a los conciertos. El Two-Bit Bistro ha ampliado su presencia en línea a través de las redes sociales, especialmente en Instagram y Facebook.

Cassin Billalobos, una empleada del Two-Bit Bistro que cantó en una anterior "Jazz Jam", dijo que le gusta escuchar jazz en directo mientras trabaja.

"Hace que el trabajo pase más rápido y lo hace más agradable", dijo Billalobos. "Me encanta verlos tocar en directo".

Para Bitner, los músicos que llenan el bistró cada semana son los que hacen que la experiencia sea especial.

"Me encantan todas las shows que tenemos aquí", dijo Bitner. "No creo que haya habido un solo artista o grupo, no solo los miércoles, sino en cualquiera de nuestras noches de shows, que no me haya dejado completamente boquiabierto".



La barra del interior de Two-Bit Bistro.

raro", dijo Bitner, y añadió que algunas luces parpadean a ritmos inusuales.

El Two-Bit Bistro acoge múltiples eventos recurrentes de jazz en directo. El New Ogden Jazz Group actúa todos los viernes, mientras que el Jack Durbano Trio toca en el evento "Brunch & Jazz" del bistró los domingos.

Los sábados ofrecen una mayor variedad de géneros musicales. La actuación depende de la disponibilidad. Algunos días pueden actuar artistas de jazz, mientras que otros pueden contar con artistas y bandas especializadas en otros géneros.

Una banda residente actúa todos los miércoles y dirige la velada informal "Jazz Jam", animando al público a participar en la sesión.

anima tanto a los habituales como a los recién llegados a participar.

No hay un código de vestimenta obligatorio y se invita a músicos de cualquier nivel a tocar con ellos, creando así un ambiente inclusivo.

Muchos músicos traen sus instrumentos al bistró y tocan de forma intermitente a lo largo de la noche. Algunos se marchan entre canción y canción, mientras que otros llegan para ocupar su lugar.

Un miembro del público preguntó si podía cantar y enseguida fue invitado a subir al escenario con el grupo de músicos. El grupo que tocaba los instrumentos siguió el ritmo del cantante, interpretando una melodía que se adaptaba a su tono y a la letra.

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MONSTER JAM FINALS ROAR THROUGH SALT LAKE CITY WITH PHOTO FINISHES

By **GRAYSON FREESTONE**
Editor

Salt Lake City has become a hotbed for major sporting events. Last year, they hosted the X Games and the Red Bull Soap Box Race. This year, it was the Monster Jam World Finals at Rice-Eccles Stadium July 2-4.

The event featured 28 monster trucks competing in different events. Festivities kicked off each morning with pit parties where fans could meet, take pictures with drivers and trucks and participate in different activities like driving a short loop in a monster truck. Children weren't left out of the fun, either. They had a dedicated area to play.

The opportunity to meet and build relationships with the drivers is what many fans love most. Long-time fan Bob Nicodemo and his family travel all over the country to participate in the events. His favorite part is how kind and interactive the drivers are with his son, Bobby.

"He goes up to them, they're like, 'Hey Bobby, what's going on?'" Nicodemo said. "So that's really nice."

The New Jersey-native family has traveled to most events over the past 15 years.

The main event came in the evening when everyone packed into the stadium to watch ear-piercing trucks race one-on-one and compete in a freestyle competition.

Drivers were split into two groups, with half competing on Friday and the other half competing on Saturday. The racing competition was single-elimination with the trucks racing over jumps and ramps, finishing with an in-the-air finish line.

Bobby's favorite truck, JCB DIGatron, carved through Friday's racing event and inched out El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes in a photo finish for the opportunity to take on Saturday's winner for the championship.

Each night, fans stuck around for what was arguably an even more chaotic freestyle event. Drivers were tasked with putting on stunts for a final score determined by the average score of the judges and fans.

Initially, Mayhem seemed to have the event on lock with a stunning performance. He was seen climbing on top of his muscle-car-inspired truck and raising his hands. The crowd shook Rice-Eccles Stadium by stomping on the bleachers in unison. Shell Shock'ed then seemed to have almost taken down the stadium with flips, high jumps, and an incredible one-wheeled recovery as the timer hit zero.

He edged out Mayhem's 8.739 score with an 8.769, and the crowd loved it.

Day 2's mania took the drivers to a final day of competition on the Fourth of July.

Fan-favorite Grave Digger carved up his racing competition by taking down Grave Digger Grandma in Round 2, Classroom Crusher in the Semi-Finals and Krazy Train in the Finals.

The Championship Race finished the one-on-one races. The Finals winners faced off, with Grave Digger defeating JCB DIGatron.

The runner-ups of each day then competed in the Bronze Medal Race, with Krazy Train taking down El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes.

The second day of freestyle saw JCB DIGatron dominate with a stunning 9.097 score. The top three scores of the World Finals each came out of Saturday's action, with Son-uva Digger and El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes finishing second and third overall with scores of 8.996 and 8.784, respectively.

Altogether, it was a three-day event that had Salt Lake buzzing. The loud trucks, fireworks and fiery competition made it a special holiday for fans.

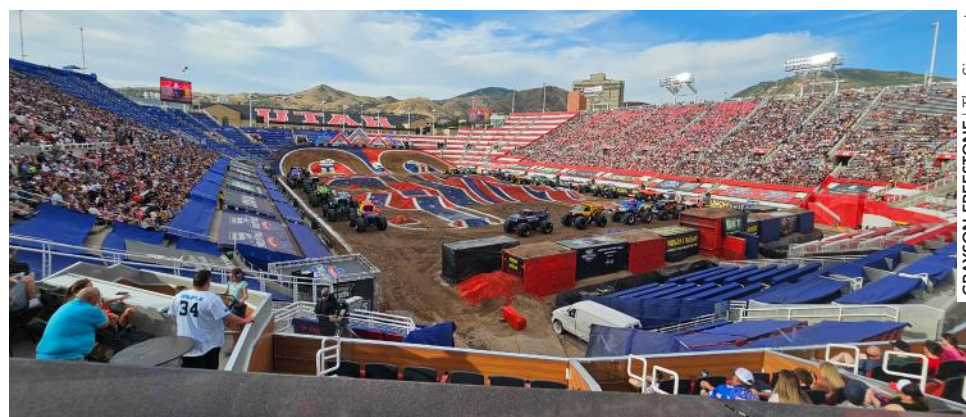
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TOP RIGHT: Fireworks go off at the 2026 Monster Jam Event held at Rice-Eccles Stadium on July 3.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Tristan England represents for the JCB DIGatron at the 2026 Monster Jam Finals, on July 3.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Monster trucks line up on display to the crowd before the main event begins at the 2026 Monster Jam Finals on July 3.

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LAS FINALES DE MONSTER JAM RUGÉN A TRAVÉS DE SALT LAKE CITY CON ACABADOS FOTOGRÁFICOS

Por **GRAYSON FREESTONE**
Editor

Traducido por
NELLY HERNANDEZ TEJADA
Directora Editorial

Salt Lake City se ha convertido en un hervidero para grandes eventos deportivos. El año pasado fueron los anfitriones de los X-Games y el Red Bull Soap Box Race. Este año fue el Monster Jam World Finals en el Rice-Eccles Stadium del 2 hasta el 4 de julio.

El evento tenía 28 monster trucks compitiendo en diferentes eventos. Las festividades comenzaron cada mañana con pit parties donde fans se reunieron, tomaron fotos con los conductores y monster trucks, y participaron en diferentes actividades como manejar una pequeña vuelta en un monster truck. Los niños también se divirtieron, tenían un área para jugar.

La oportunidad para conocer y formar relaciones con los conductores fue lo que más les gustó a los fans. Un fan de mucho tiempo, Bob Nicodemo y su familia viajan por todo el país para participar en los eventos. Su parte favorita es la amabilidad e interacción de los conductores con su hijo, Bobby.

"Se les acerca, ellos dicen, 'Oye Bobby, ¿Qué onda?'", dijo Nicodemo. "Así que eso está muy bien".

La familia de New Jersey ha viajado a bastantes de los eventos por 15 años.

El evento principal fue en la tarde cuando todos se acumularon en el estadio para ver cómo los ruidosos camiones competían uno contra uno y participaban en una competencia de estilo libre.

Los conductores se dividieron en dos grupos, la mitad compitió el viernes y la otra mitad el sábado. La competición de carreras fue eliminatoria, con los camiones saltando por rampas y terminando con una línea de meta en el aire.

El camión favorito de Bobby, el JCB DIGatron, destacó en la competencia del viernes y superó al El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes en un final de fotografía para ganarse la oportunidad de enfrentarse al ganador del sábado para el campeonato.

Cada noche, los fans se quedaban para lo que podría considerarse un evento de estilo libre aún más caótico. Los conductores tenían que realizar acrobacias para obtener una puntuación final determinada por la media de las puntuaciones de los jueces y los fans.

Al principio, Mayhem parecía tener el evento en sus manos con una actuación impresionante. Se le vio subirse a lo alto de su camioneta, inspirada en los "muscle cars", y levantar las manos. La audiencia conmocionó el Rice-Eccles Stadium al pisotear en unísono las gradas. Shell Shock'Ed pareció entonces a punto de derribar el estadio con volteretas, saltos de gran altura y una increíble recuperación sobre una sola rueda justo cuando el cronómetro llegaba a cero. Superó por poco la puntuación de 8,739 de Mayhem con un 8,769, y al público le encantó.

La emoción del segundo día llevó a los conductores al último día de competencia el 4 de julio.

Grave Digger, el favorito de los fans, logró imponerse a sus rivales al derrotar a Grave Digger Grandma en la segunda ronda, a Classroom Crusher en las semifinales y a Krazy Train en la final.

El Campeonato Race puso fin a las carreras uno contra uno. Los ganadores de las finales se enfrentaron, y Grave Digger derrotó a JCB DIGatron.

Los subcampeones de cada día compitieron a continuación en la carrera por la medalla de bronce, en la que Krazy Train se impuso a El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes.

En la segunda jornada del estilo libre, JCB DIGatron dominó con una impresionante puntuación de 9,097. Las tres mejores puntuaciones del final mundial se obtuvieron el sábado, con Son-uva Digger y El Toro Loco Stars & Stripes terminando en segundo y tercer lugar, con puntuaciones de 8,996 y 8,784, respectivamente.

En total, fue un evento de tres días que mantuvo a Salt Lake conmovido. Los camiones ruidosos, los fuegos artificiales y la reñida competencia lo convirtieron en unas vacaciones especiales para los fans.



ARRIBA DERECHA: Dos monster trucks se colocan para competir en la final de Monster Jam 2026, el 3 de julio.

CENTRO DERECHA: Chris Koehler y su monster truck Mayhem animando al público en la final del Monster Jam 2026, el 3 de julio.

ABAJO DERECHA: La monster truck, Velociraptor, en el sol durante el evento previo para la final de Monster Truck, el 3 de julio.

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THE FINAL FOUR: RANKING THE WORLD CUP SEMIFINALISTS

OPINION

By **BRAYSON BROWN**
Reporter

With the World Cup slimming the teams down to the final four teams in the semifinals, which teams are the clear favorites, and which have narrowly scraped by? Based on each team's performance throughout the tournament, here are my rankings of the remaining teams.

4. England

The English have had an interesting tournament, winning most of their games by one or two goals. England has yet to display the dominance expected of the team.

The team won a hard-fought battle against Mexico 3-2 to advance to the quarterfinals before edging Norway 2-1, but will it be enough to get past the 2022 World Cup champions, Argentina?

3. France

The French national team was the runner-up at the 2022 World Cup. The team has an estimated \$1.66 billion squad at this World Cup. They have the reigning Ballon d'Or winner in Ousmane Dembele, as well as the tournament's second-leading scorer, Kylian Mbappe, with seven goals.

France has wreaked havoc throughout the tournament, scoring 14 goals. It defeated Morocco in a 2-0 in the quarterfinals after, but barely bested Paraguay in a slim 1-0 in the round of 16. Does France have what it takes to return to the Final, or will Spain get the best of them?

2. Argentina

The reigning World Cup champions have

played a solid tournament, but their recent performances have raised questions about the solidity of their defense and goalkeeping.

After two close knockout-stage games, and 3-1 win over Switzerland, one thing is certain: Argentina has shown resilience. The team also

has the tournament's top scorer, Lionel Messi, who has eight goals at age 39.

Does Argentina have what it takes to win back-to-back titles, the first since Brazil in 1958 and 1962?

1. Spain

Spain started out with a 0-0 draw with Cape Verde, and many questioned whether it was the powerhouse it once was. But Cape Verde proved to be a formidable foe, and Spain struggled to finish its chances that day.

Since then, the team has won five straight games, and until its match against Belgium, had not been scored on once. They also defeated France twice in both the Euros and Nations League.

Their defense is strong, and their youthfulness is visible, with 18-year-old Lamine Yamal taking the spotlight for the team's offense, and 19-year-old Pau Cubarsi on defense. Although young, the team has what it takes to win the tournament. That's why Spain sits atop



KAI PFAFFENBACH | Reuters



BRETT DAVIS | Imagin Images

TOP: Spain's Mikel Merino celebrates scoring their second goal against Belgium on July 10.

BOTTOM: Argentina's Lionel Messi is thrown in the air in celebration by teammates after the match as Argentina qualify for the quarter finals of the World Cup. Captured July 7.



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OPINION: STOMPED BY THE BELGIAN BOOT

OPINION

By **KYLE GREENAWALT**
Editor

The United States Men's National Team (USMNT) was finally kicked out of the 2026 FIFA World Cup by the country of Belgium. Belgium had beaten the United States just months earlier in an international match that ended with a final score of 5-2, so the loss in the knockout stages shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone. So why was it?

The 2026 FIFA World Cup has brought a lot of attention to the world of soccer recently in the US. The Economist Magazine even reported that soccer has overtaken Baseball in popularity and The Guardian reporting that the USMNT's match was the most watched telecast since the Super Bowl. With all these eyes now towards the sport this was the opportunity for the USMNT to show the world what the U.S. was capable of when it comes to sports.

With all of the hype around the United States making it into the knockout stage, there was new life brought into soccer in the U.S., and the soccer community wanted to make sure everyone enjoyed and felt welcomed.

For Utah, America First Field, where both the Utah Royals and Real Salt Lake play, was hosting a free watch party at the stadium, so old fans and new ones could meet one another and join together to cheer on their nation's team.

The atmosphere was much like most other sporting events you may attend. There were two areas to watch the match as it unfolded. Some sat on blankets outside the front gates and watched the game on TVs while others watched the game from stadium seats.

The sun was relentless that evening with a high of 95 degrees and the only reprieve being some clouds that would cover the blazing setting sun.

As summer heat beat down on fans, we watched as the national anthems began. Rather than quieting down for the anthem of Belgium, most people continued finding their seats and purchasing food from vendors in attendance. When "The Star-Spangled Banner" began, however, a roar shook the stands. Fans stood at attention, with hand on heart, belting out the national anthem of the country they were proud to be watching perform on the world stage.

As kick-off started, the game was a back-

and-forth. Spectators watched the ball being passed between players and between teams until silence and upset cut through the audience as Belgium scored their first goal within the first 10 minutes of the match.

Hope was not dead. Fans continued to cheer on every offensive play, defensive attempt and successful stop for the next 25 minutes. That was until one drive down the pitch when a foul against the U.S. allotted a free kick just outside the box.

Tension grew, and fans excitedly watched as Malik Tillman prepared to take the free kick near the same spot he scored on the same game that put the nail in the coffin against Bosnia and Herzegovina. He reared back and scored again as the ball fell into the back of the net past the Belgian goalkeeper. Cheers roared out and sets were left behind as the excitement of the fans cheered throughout the stadium and beyond the gate.

However, that excitement quickly dwindled. Belgium would go on to score another goal after three minutes, placing the U.S. behind 2-1 into halftime.

At the start of the second half there was anticipation, a hope, that the U.S. could outdo their past failures and show the aggression we've seen from games in the past, but that fell on deaf ears as the U.S. performed blunder after blunder, slowly sinking their fans back into their seats.

Fans began to leave early after the fourth and final goal by Belgium, making the score 4-1, disappointed and ashamed of the team they so proudly came to see.

As the 2026 World Cup comes to an end for the U.S., many talk about the tragic loss. Many feel they saw a disorganized team and had expected more from the USMNT.

The rise of soccer was promising this year. Social media posts fostered a feeling of hope that U.S. citizens wished to hold on, but that was slowly crushed with a Belgian boot. Whether soccer will recover with its popularity or fall back into mediocrity isn't known, but sports are about community and this one seems to be growing.



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TROY WAYRYNEN | Magn Images

TOP: The view of the watch party from inside the America First Field stadium on July 6.

MIDDLE: Fans crowd around the screen as they cite the Pledge of Allegiance at the America First Field World Cup Watch Party on July 6.

BOTTOM: Soccer Football - FIFA World Cup 2026 - Round of 16 - United States v Belgium - Seattle Stadium, Seattle, Washington, U.S. - July 6, 2026 U.S. fans inside the stadium before the match.

UTAH RESTRICTS FIREWORKS USAGE DUE TO HISTORIC WILDFIRE RISK

By **ELLIE LEES**
Reporter

Due to historically high wildfire conditions, Utah operated under a statewide default ban on personal fireworks on Independence Day. The ban was put into effect by an executive order from Gov. Spencer Cox and was in place from June 25 to July 5.

Fireworks were banned on all federal and state-owned lands and unincorporated sovereign lands. Mayors throughout Utah were allowed to designate safe discharge zones for their cities, despite the state's default of a full, personal fireworks ban.

Some fireworks stands closed early, leaving tents empty long before the holiday. Those that remained open did so because of contracts with fireworks companies.

"We're about 92% down, maybe 93% in

sales compared to previous years," Jared Bunch said, who runs a fireworks stand with his son.

Bunch said the losses in sales also impacted his ability to hire employees.

"We would lose way too much money just having them here," Bunch said.

Other vendors reported seeing a similar 90% loss in revenue compared to the previous year. Even in cities where personal fireworks were allowed in safe zones, vendors saw a decrease in revenue.

"The first few days, they were pretty similar and once the 3rd hits, I usually see a pretty big spike in sales," Travis Frye said, adding he started working at the stand to support his newborn twins.

Frye said the expected surge never materialized. He also said carrying fewer fountains than usual also affected sales.

Multiple fires ignited across Utah with causes linked to Fourth of July fireworks celebrations. Brigham City, which did not participate in the statewide ban, had four fires start as a result of personal fireworks use.

Several more fires started in various cities due to both permitted and illegal fireworks use. Fires were reported in Provo and Kaysville because of fireworks, and an investigation is still underway in Layton, where fireworks were found in the area.

Utah permits vendors to be active from June 24 to 25 for Pioneer Day celebrations. Cox's executive order on June 25 put firework stand vendors in a difficult position, as many had already begun setting up shop or could not back out of corporate contracts.

It has not been decided whether a statewide ban will be put into effect again for Pioneer Day on July 24. Utah is still very high risk for

wildfires.

Utah's wildfire season runs from July to October, putting the holiday in a period of greater risk, amid historic heat.

So far, more than 365 thousand acres have burned, with several fires still burning. Over 75% of wildfires in Utah are ignited due to human activity. Officials are looking into conditions, but guidelines for celebrations are not yet made clear.

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Colorful fireworks exploding in the sky.

CULTURE QUIZ

By **JARED MITCHELL**
Editor

Art, Entertainment & Lifestyle

- 1. B:** Taylor Swift. Swift married NFL superstar Travis Kelce on July 3rd at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The New York City Police Department shut down numerous streets around the venue in anticipation of the high-profile event, limiting access to New York residents and altering commutes.
- 2. A:** Playstation. On July 1, Playstation published a press release announcing that starting in 2028 they will no longer be producing physical discs for new releases on their gaming consoles. According to Sony, Playstation's parent company, the decision was made in order to adapt to consumer trends.
- 3. B:** KaiCenat. The massively popular twitch streamer announced in January that he would be taking a break from content creation due to burnout. On July 6, he returned to Twitch with a stream announcing the winners that would be apart of his "Streamer University," the second iteration of the event where KaiCenat and other creators help up and coming creators build their brand and fanbase.
- 4. D:** "Backrooms." The hit A24 film directed by Kane Parsons received a new release in theaters that contains an extra 15 minutes that plays after the film's original credits roll adding new scares and lore to the horror film.

ANSWERS FROM PAGE 2

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