

Brevard students connect in snowy conditions

Zoe Hughes
Managing Editor

Late Friday night, Jan. 30, Brevard finally got some good powder.

Just a week prior, Brevard was covered in a layer of ice, leaving almost every walkable surface a slippery mess. The ice stuck around for only a day, but it had caused students to yearn for snow.

Students woke up that Saturday morning to find the campus blanketed by white, fluffy snow. People were immediately outside. There were spur-of-the-moment snowball fights, a small army of snowmen littered across campus, and lots and lots of sledding.

At almost any point during the day on Saturday, students and local families could be spotted screaming and laughing on their way down a hill at Brevard. Many students did not have

sleds, so they got creative: trash can or dumpster lids, kayaks, canoes, and cookie sheets. Really, anything they could get their hands on could be used as a sled.

The camaraderie felt during this weather phenomenon was not unlike the time post-Hurricane Helene. Students and the Brevard community seem to be able to use the special weather circumstances as a chance to get outside together.



A snowman sits on the wall outside of Jones Library.



(above) Editor-in-Chief Autumn Jones, Managing Editor Zoe Hughes, and junior Zoe Herber enjoy the snow—photo by Ashlyn Baumann.



Back row, left to right: Managing Editor Zoe Hughes, junior Abby Nuñez, senior Mary Vallentine, and senior Mikayla Zvekan prepare to push front row, left to right: junior Madi Norris, alumna Ashlyn Baumann, junior Zoe Herber, and junior Gina Drouse.



Junior Madi Norris (left) and senior Mary Vallentine (right) make snow angels—photo by Ashlyn Baumann.



Cyclists prepare to ride down a snowy hill.



Brevard students have an impromptu snowball fight outside Myers Dining Hall—photo by Zoe Hughes.

Senior cyclist Matthew Leliveld jumps King's Creek on skis

Madeleine Pollock
Copy Editor

On the snow day on Saturday, Jan. 31, senior business major and cyclist Matthew Leliveld jumped over King's Creek on his downhill skis.

"It's always been a thing for people on the bike team to jump the creek, usually on a bike," Leliveld said. "But then we got some snow, and I was like, well, I've got my skis, we have snow, and we have a creek, so may as well see what I can do. See if I die or not."

Leliveld and some of the other cycling team members spent the snowy afternoon building up a jump on the side of the creek closest to Jones Residence Hall.

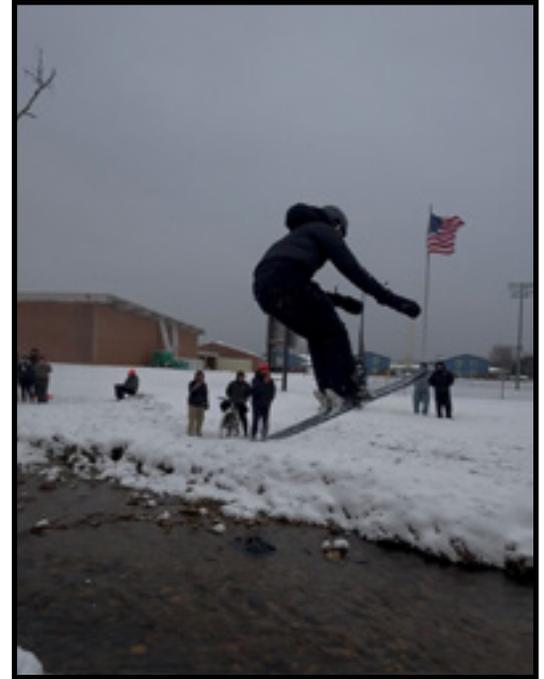
"The snow was really bad for building the lip, so I didn't know if we were going to get it big enough to actually jump the creek," continued Leliveld. "I thought I was just going to blow through it and end up in the water."

After a couple of run-ins, Leliveld and his friends decided that it would be good to go. They got one of the freshman boys, Walker Cottingham, to tow Leliveld in with his car so he would have enough speed.

"We tied some bike cable locks to his bike rack, and he towed me in behind his car," says Leliveld. "It was pretty sick."

Leliveld jumped King's Creek twice, amassing a solid crowd of students, cyclists, and community members who happened to be walking by. "The landing was pretty harsh because it was super flat. I was just really trying not to end up in the water in front of everyone."

"I'd be really stoked to do it again if we got more snow," says Leliveld. "I'd want to build a bigger jump so I could maybe flip the gap."



Above: Matthew Leliveld mid-air.

Below: Matthew Leliveld starts towards the mound after he gains momentum by being towed by a teammates' car.



THE CLARION

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Beyond the highlights: How Morgan's Message is changing the game for Brevard athletes

Autumn Jones
Editor in Chief

Every year, social media fills with photos of female athletes in action, captioned with “National Girls and Women in Sports Day.” While we celebrate the physical wins, it’s important to remember that the mental wins matter just as much, if not more.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day wasn’t always the widespread celebration it is today. It was first chartered by Congress in 1987, originally to honor the memory of Olympic volleyball player Flo Hyman. Hyman was a pioneer for equality in women’s sports who died of Marfan’s Syndrome in 1986.

Since then, the day has evolved into a nationwide movement led by the Women’s Sports Foundation. It serves as a reminder of the massive progress made since Title IX was passed in 1972. As of 2022, women make up 44% of all NCAA athletes (compared to 15% pre-Title IX, when fewer than 30,000 women played college sports), according to the Women’s Sports Foundation. But as we celebrate the fact that women are finally on the field, a new question has emerged: How are they doing while they’re out there?



President Lillie Teague and junior Sofia Harden stand with their poster explaining Morgan’s Message and the organization’s goals.

Morgan’s Message is a nonprofit organization that aims to eliminate the stigma around mental health within the athletic community. The organization was born out of tragedy: in 2017, Duke University women’s lacrosse player Morgan Rodgers endured a dream-shattering knee injury. During her 12-month recovery, she felt isolated and her self-worth plummeted. Battling in silence, she kept friends and family in the dark and died by suicide in 2019 at the age of 22.

Today, student-athletes at Brevard are working to ensure no one else feels that same isolation. However, the legacy of “toughness” in women’s sports can sometimes be a double-edged sword.

For many female athletes, the pressure to be “strong” often acts as a barrier to seeking help. “I believe that the emphasis on being empowered and tough makes it more difficult for women in sports to admit when they are struggling,” says Abigail Kelly, a freshman on the BC volleyball team. “I think some women see admitting to struggles as weak, which should not be the case at all.”

Madi Norris, a junior on the women’s lacrosse team, echoes this sentiment, describing the internal conflict of leadership. “I think there’s a wall to being vulnerable because as a female athlete, I feel the pressure of needing to show being empowered and also empower my teammates,” Norris explains.

Brevard’s chapter president, Lillie Teague, a junior on the women’s soccer team, believes the solution lies in changing how we define “grit” on the field.

“Instead of measuring ‘toughness’ by how much a female athlete can endure, Morgan’s Message expands its definition by including self-awareness, honesty, and willingness to support yourself and teammates emotionally, not just physically,” Teague says.

While the conversation has evolved since NGWSD began in 1987, Teague notes that progress is still “uneven.” While awareness has grown, the stigma hasn’t disappeared. The goal of the chapter is to ensure that empowering female athletes includes protecting their mental health as much as celebrating their stats.

The chapter at Brevard didn’t start by accident. It began in the 2021-22 season following a Zoom call with the lacrosse team. Cassidy Hutto, currently the women’s lacrosse assistant coach and the chapter’s original president, saw a void that needed filling.

“As mental health became more and more prevalent, it became clear that something like Morgan’s Message needed to be on campus because we didn’t have anything like this,” Hutto says. The goal was to create a space where students could learn, relax, and find peers who understood their unique struggles—especially during a time when many students didn’t yet feel comfortable utilizing traditional campus counseling.

Though the organization is focused on athletes, the mission extends to the entire Brevard community. Teague emphasizes that non-athletes play a vital role in this movement. “When non-athletes get involved, it reinforces that mental health is a community issue, not just an athlete issue,” she says.

As for Teague herself, leading the charge while maintaining her own performance is a balancing act. “I’ve

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Beyond the highlights

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learned that I can't support others effectively if I'm running on empty," she admits. By setting boundaries and relying on a support system of mentors and friends, she models the very "self-awareness" she advocates for.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day is a celebration of how far

women have come since Title IX. But as Morgan's Message reminds us, the next frontier of progress isn't on the scoreboard—it's in the locker rooms, the classrooms, and the quiet moments between games where athletes finally feel safe enough to say, "I'm not okay."

Campus Life now accepting applications for RA positions for the 2026-2027 academic year

The Residence Life Program at Brevard College is a vital component of the educational program and academic support services of the college. Our mission is to provide a living-learning environment for all resident students, in accordance with the mission of the college. The goals of the residence life program include: providing individual and/or group educational and development opportunities, offering well-maintained facilities, and offering responsive, efficient, and effective management of services and resources.

The Resident Advisors (RAs) are students who serve as members of the Residence Life staff and are directly supervised by a Hall Director. RAs interact frequently and communicate often with resident students. Therefore, they have an outstanding opportunity to contribute to the residents' development and education through community building. In

varying degrees (depending on position), they are also responsible for implementing programs, assisting with various housing procedures, and enforcing policies.

Housing staff are expected to be sincerely interested in the welfare of students regardless of their race, sex, gender, gender identity, disabling condition, political affiliation, veteran status, religion, ancestry, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or marital status. They are expected to encourage all residents to be constructively supportive by actual involvement in the overall Residence Life Program.

If you think you would thrive in this leadership role, please apply!

Fill out the application and include two references (form attached in your BC email sent from BC Housing).

Applications are due by Feb. 20. Current RAs must reapply.

Seven tears, one semester: Inside the ACL injury wave sweeping college athletics and Brevard College

Ivelysse Leighton
Staff Writer

During the Fall 2025 semester, at least seven Brevard College student-athletes tore their anterior cruciate ligaments (ACLs).

On a small Division III campus, that number feels less like a coincidence and more like a warning.

I became one of those seven when I fully tore my ACL, along with other ligaments in my knee, during my senior year of softball. One moment, I was competing, doing a movement I had practiced without a thought countless times;

the next—and the final chapter of my collegiate athletic career—was over. Surgery followed. Rehab followed. Then came the harder part: sitting with the reality that my body had failed me in a system that rarely slows down.

What happened to me is no longer rare. Across the country, ACL injuries are rising at alarming rates, especially in collegiate athletics—and especially among women. Seeing this trend play out nationally is concerning. Watching it unfold on your campus makes it impossible to ignore.

A National Issue, a Local Reality

Sports medicine research has long shown that

ACL injuries disproportionately affect female athletes, who are estimated to be two to eight times more likely to tear an ACL than male athletes in comparable sports. Factors such as biomechanics, neuromuscular control, hormonal influences, and training load all contribute. Yet ACL tears are not exclusive to women, nor are they limited to contact sports.

The pattern was evident across Brevard this fall as athletes from soccer, football, women's basketball, cheerleading, and softball experienced ACL tears—many during routine, non-contact movements.

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Seven tears, one semester

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Women's basketball player Somer Johnson tore her ACL early in the season. "I was driving to the rim, I then planted to pass," she said. "My left knee gave out."

Soccer player Owen McCabe described a similar moment when he experienced his injury during a routine play. "I was dribbling, and then I lost the ball off my heavy touch. The ball got stolen, so then I tried to cut on my left leg to turn upfield. I then tore my ACL."

For Rue, a cheerleader, the injury happened during a basic skill. "I went for a toe-touch, and when I came down, I dislocated my knee, and I heard a loud pop. I went straight to the floor and pulled my leg in. I just remembered, hold it, but then walking it off because I thought I didn't tear it."

These injuries didn't come from reckless plays. They came from movements athletes perform daily—reinforcing what research shows about ACL vulnerability.

The Moment Denial Ends

Across interviews, athletes described disbelief when they realized what had happened.

Rue admitted she initially minimized the injury. "I didn't really think it was too serious when it happened because I was in denial that I tore it."

Football player Robert Lee Dorsey Jr. recalled the fear that followed. "I thought everything was over and that my goal was unachievable now."

Soccer player Amberlyn Hernandez, who has torn both of her ACLs, described the emotional weight immediately. "For both of my tears, my first thought and emotion was heartbreak and disbelief. I had felt like everything I had worked for and had known had been taken from me."

Recovery: Physical Progress & Mental Weight

While ACL recovery is often described in timelines, athletes emphasized that the mental toll is just as significant as the physical work.

Rue explained how recovery affected daily life. "Physically really well but slow at the same time... now my mental health is being affected because I didn't feel like I would be the same or walk the same. It will mess with your mind being in class or not being able to make it to class."

Johnson echoed the emotional challenge of being sidelined. "The hardest part is watching and seeing my team continue without me."

Soccer player Owen Cuervo described losing his primary emotional outlet. "I would use soccer as my outlet to express myself. Whenever I was angry, sad, or happy. It was my therapy."

McCabe reflected on the long, uneven nature of recovery. "They just take forever, every person's injury is different, and it's better to think of the long-term milestones instead of the day-by-day feelings."

Identity, Distance, and Support

ACL injuries often reshape how athletes see themselves and their place on a team.

Rue described feeling disconnected after missing major events. "I feel like I'm more distanced from the team because I had to miss major events, so I feel kind of left out."

"I thought everything was over and that my goal was now unachievable."

—Robert Dorsey

McCabe explained how his role shifted. "Well, my role on the team is now a glorified team manager, but I still feel like a member of the team."

Dorsey spoke candidly about how injury changed support. "For someone with my injury, I didn't really get any support from coaches... once you get hurt or once you're not of any value to people anymore, they kind of see you as invaluable."

Others reflected on growth beyond sport. Hernandez shared, "Being an athlete and playing soccer has only been a piece of who I am today, as I have so much more to offer to the world than my ability to play a sport."

Why This Matters

Research shows that neuromuscular training programs—focusing on balance, landing mechanics, and controlled deceleration—can

significantly reduce the risk of ACL injury. Yet these programs are not consistently implemented across collegiate athletics.

Seven ACL tears in one semester should prompt reflection, not resignation. At Brevard, as across the country, athletes are training harder than ever—but prevention, recovery, and long-term health must be prioritized just as seriously as performance.

As a senior whose collegiate career ended in a rehab room rather than on the field, I know how quickly everything can change. These injuries are not isolated incidents. They are connected—and they deserve attention before more athletes are forced to learn this lesson the hard way.

ACL injuries may be common. They should never be treated as inevitable.

Looking Forward: Recovery, Resilience, and Hope

While the physical and emotional toll of ACL injuries is undeniable, many Brevard athletes emphasized that recovery has also brought growth, perspective, and optimism for the future.

Hernandez described how rebuilding her body has changed her outlook. "Celebrating small wins is what keeps me going. Envisioning myself playing on the field again, not to prove anything to others, but to feel the ball at my feet, moving freely, while I laugh and simply live in the moment, while playing with my friends."

Johnson shared that despite the challenges, her recovery has been steady and motivating. "So far, the recovery process has been pretty smooth. I am almost 3 months post op, and I have been pushing through most of the physical challenges."

McCabe expressed confidence in his return. "I know that I will be good when I come back, so I'm ready to show people who have never seen me play or made assumptions about how I play."

Through their journeys look different, each athlete is moving forward—rebuilding strength, redefining identity, and finding resilience in the process. Their recoveries serve as a reminder that while ACL injuries may disrupt seasons, they do not define the athletes who endure them.

As these student-athletes continue to heal, their stories offer hope—not just for a return to sport, but for a deeper understanding of patience, perseverance, and the value of long-term health.

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Spring
2026



3:30-
5 PM



CTL Classroom
Jones Library

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Space: Looking to the future while remembering past tragedies

40 years after Challenger, we're heading back to the moon

John B. Padgett
Contributor

Space exploration has been in the news a lot lately, remembering a tragic anniversary and anticipating a new mission: we're going back to the moon for the first time in over 50 years.

Last week, we marked the 40th anniversary of the space shuttle Challenger disaster. The spacecraft lifted off on what would have been its 10th space flight at the Kennedy Space Center on the morning of Jan. 28, 1986. Just 73 seconds into the flight, at an altitude of 46,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean, one of the solid rocket boosters exploded, causing the shuttle to disintegrate, taking the lives of all seven crew members on board.

This was not the first time American astronauts had died in the space program. In 1968, three astronauts perished when a fire swept through their Apollo command module during a ground test, setting the planned moon missions back more than a year as engineers fixed the problems that had led to the fire.

The Challenger disaster was, however, the first time astronauts died in flight during a mission.

Challenger was noteworthy for another reason: For the first time, a U.S. space mission included a civilian crew member—in this case, a teacher, Christa McAuliffe, who was selected out of 11,000 applicants for a planned "Teacher in Space" program designed to inspire students, honor teachers, and spur interest in mathematics, science, and space exploration. Millions of school children around the country watched live as the shuttle lifted off, only to be horrified seconds later when the rocket boosters careened wildly out of control after the explosion.

McAuliffe was 37 years old.

For anyone alive at the time, the Challenger disaster was a watershed moment in American history. I was a sophomore in college at the time, and I distinctly remember a classmate telling me after a morning class, "The space shuttle blew up." I was on my college newspaper staff, and our newspaper office had a TV, so I spent much of the rest of that day watching live news reports about the tragedy.

I can also vividly recall President Ronald Reagan's live address from the Oval Office that evening, in which he consoled a grieving nation, praised the Challenger crew for their bravery and sacrifice, and famously said they had "slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God."

Challenger was not the only American space mission to end in tragedy. On Feb. 1, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia burned up when re-entering the atmosphere after an otherwise successful mission. It was later determined that several heat-resistant tiles had broken off during launch. As with the earlier

Challenger disaster, seven astronauts lost their lives on board Columbia. The perils of space flight are important to remember, especially as we steadily move toward new missions that are intended to transport humans back to the moon and eventually to the planet Mars.

NASA's Artemis program is the first stage in these space exploration missions. Its long-range goal is to establish a permanent human base on the moon. The first launch, dubbed Artemis I, in November 2022, sent an uncrewed capsule to orbit the moon and return safely to Earth.

Now, Artemis II will attempt to do the same, but with four humans on board. Last month, NASA rolled the massive Space Launch System rocket, topped with an Orion crew module, to launchpad 39B, and on Monday of this week, the space agency performed a "wet dress rehearsal" loading liquid propellants into tanks to test their integrity. During the test, a liquid hydrogen leak prompted NASA to postpone the mission until at least March 6, 2026.

When Artemis II does eventually launch, it will be the first time humans have left low Earth orbit since Apollo 17, the last moon landing mission, in December 1972. The Artemis mission will be noteworthy also in that one of the four crew members is Canadian—the first NASA lunar mission to have an international crew.

Given all that is going on now, it's hard to fathom just how unifying America's space program was once upon a time. No matter what one's politics were, there was a distinct national pride over the achievements of the American space program, and there was a palpable grief shared by millions when those triumphs turned to tragedy.

As we prepare to take the next bold step in crewed space exploration, I hope we can once again come together as a nation and a world in celebration of human achievement.



Infographic about the Artemis II mission from NASA.

Weathering the storm: inside the Tornados' rollercoaster 2025-26 Campaign

Tyler Mabry
Contributor

Brevard College men's basketball is now approaching the end of the season, with just six games to go in the 2025-2026 campaign.

The Tornados are still led by coach Lee Burgess, who has been at the helm for 13 seasons. His program has had a sort of rough year, with only one win in the conference up to this point. While it has not been a great year in terms of the program's record, the players have shown real promise, despite a rollercoaster of a season.

Senior forward Jadon Carnes eclipsed 1,000 career NCAA points Jan. 11 in the game against North Carolina Wesleyan, making him only the sixth Tornado player in the school's history to reach that mark. Jadon is also fourth in points per game in the entire conference at 16.4 per contest.

While Carnes continues to leave a lasting legacy at Brevard, it's also easy to say that about senior guard KK Horton. Residing in Asheville, N.C. KK has been one of the key pieces for the Tornados, averaging 11 points per game and 3.7 assists. Horton has been with the Tornados for five seasons, committing to coach Burgess and the program.

Another player who has been a star for the Tornados is Twain Wilson. Wilson, from Columbia, S.C., played basketball in Hawaii at Leilehua

High School before coming to Brevard. After winning USA South rookie of the year in his freshman season, Wilson is putting together another strong campaign. Averaging 16.3 points per contest while shooting an efficient 49.7% from the floor, including 37.9% from three-point range, the sophomore guard is producing at a very high level.

"We started strong, guys were willing to sacrifice their own personal stats for the team," Wilson said. "Once we got to our winter break, we were in a good spot, but when we got back, it didn't feel the same.

"It's as if we slowed down over the break. We had that tournament in Atlanta right after we had gotten back on campus, and that first game there was not a good showing from us," he continued.

"A couple of things make [this season] tough," Wilson replied. "The main thing is that we're a smaller team, so these other teams with substantial size advantages are really tough to deal with since we're so small."

To make the conference tournament later this month, the Tornados will have to sweep Greensboro College and continue to battle every day. "We can't let off the gas because when we do, we get diced up on the floor," Wilson said.

The path to the conference tournament won't be a walk in the park, but it's not impossible.

Upcoming athletics



Men's basketball vs Methodist

Feb. 7 @ 2 p.m.



Women's basketball vs Mary Baldwin

Feb. 9 @ 2 p.m.

Baseball vs Guilford College

Feb. 11 @ 2 p.m.

