

Talents shine at annual talent show—but where is the rest hiding?

Elli Clark
Staff Writer

A party needs to be sent out to find the talented people of Brevard College who have hunkered down around campus. Where are you, and why were there so few performers on stage at the school talent show on Monday, Sept. 14?

We must commend the six people/groups who showed up to give it their all on stage, blessing us with their music and dancing, both coordinated and not. It takes guts to get up there in front of a crowd, but they did and in return received a series of applause and hollers from their audience.

Congratulations go out to Sincere Cuttino, who gave the crowd a very beautiful and striking cello performance. Breaking the three-year winning streak of singer Gonzola Olvera Moreno, Cuttino stole the win. Moreno can't be disregarded, though, for his incredible singing had the crowd cheering and waving lights in the air as he weaved through the stands with a followcam.

Other performances included the long-standing tradition of freshman soccer girls who did a variation of the 'Mean Girls' Jingle Bell Rock while dancing in fat Santa costumes, a lovely acoustic guitar song by Sam, and Wyatt playing an almost melancholic song on the electric guitar. One of the most engaging productions of the night included the softball girls' Justin Bieber-inspired dance with sparkly suits and a sizzling romance between Justin and Nado the White Squirrel. They have a good thing going on there.

To the talented people who did not sign up, you missed out on what could've been quite the show and instead sentenced us all to a very short night that felt like it ended before it had even started. If the reasons for these absences were due to uncertainty and self-doubt in your talent abilities, forget about that!

What is a school talent show but the opportunity to make a fool of yourself in front of a crowd? Or even better, take your audience by surprise by showing them something they never thought you were capable of. We want to see the singers, the dancers, and the musicians, but if we're being real, we want to see the talents that aren't revealed or put to use on a regular basis. Where were the magicians? What about celebrity impressions or stand-up comedians? Surely there is someone on campus who can do some mean tricks with a hula hoop or jump rope.

The performance of all performances would have been a juggler! Even if they didn't have a large roster of juggling tricks up their sleeves, they would have been a hit. There was this person on Reddit—if you trust them as a credible source—who said their two friends did a juggling gig for their talent show, but since they didn't know how to do much, they had to be creative and get comedic.

The anonymous Reddit user said that "one went up there and did his act, kind of the usual comedy-juggling routine where he starts with one, then two, then juggles two with one hand while moving his other hand up and down with a ball in it, that kind of thing. Then he does three balls... But

then he called for a "volunteer" from the audience (his friend) to teach him how to juggle. Of course the friend already knew how to juggle. So every time the "teacher" turned his back, the "student" would do the trick perfectly. Then when the teacher turned around, the student made a big show of how inept he is at juggling.

Fun no? It could be a pretty sweet addition!

So, please, Brevard College students, gather up some courage to step onto the stage at the next talent show and broadcast your skills—jaw-dropping or not.



(Above) Winner Sincere Cuttino performs on his cello—photo by Kendall Hubbard.



(Above) Audience members wave their flashlights to Gonzola Olvera Moreno's performance—photo by Kendall Hubbard.

Brevard College Theatre presents 'Around the World in 80 Days'

Brevard College Theatre will present "Around the World in 80 Days," adapted by Mark Brown from the classic novel by Jules Verne, to kick off the College's 2026-27 theatre season. Performances are scheduled from Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 1–3, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 4, at 2:30 p.m. in the Morrison Playhouse at the Paul Porter Center for Performing Arts on the campus of Brevard College.

This quintessential adventure story will feature seven Brevard College student actors: Nell O'Brien '27, Tallulah Fish '28, Madison Norris '27, Devian Anderson '28, Jonathan McNabb '29, Logan Hislop-Boccanfuso '29, and Kevin Taylor '29.

Directed by faculty member Dan Toot, "Around the World in 80 Days" sees Phileas Fogg take to the seas,

lands, and skies to circumnavigate the globe in a kinetic and fun-filled theatrical adaptation of Verne's novel. Train heists! Elephant rides! Frontier gun battles! With seven actors playing more than 39 characters, the audience will experience one of literature's classic adventure stories while witnessing the impressive speed and agility of an ensemble of student actors, with technical and design support from the entire Brevard College Theatre company.

The show runs 90 minutes with no intermission. Ticket prices are \$5 for students, faculty, and staff and \$15 for the general public. Tickets can be purchased online at onthestage.tickets/brevard-college/seasun or at the door, if available.



Student actors rehearse for the upcoming Brevard College Theatre presentation of "Around the World in 80 Days."

Brevard College to host fifth annual sidewalk art competition Oct. 3

The public has a rare opportunity to see artists bring their work to life when Brevard College hosts its fifth annual Sidewalk Art Competition on Saturday, Oct. 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in front of the Sims Art Building and the Spiers Art Gallery on the BC campus. The College warmly invites neighbors, families, and art lovers of all ages to the free festival that features a one-of-a-kind live art competition.

Brevard College students, alumni, and regional high school students will use chalk to create artwork on campus sidewalks, transforming concrete into brilliant gallery walls. Competitors will craft live, large-scale chalk masterpieces on-site, vying for more than \$1,000 in cash awards and prizes.

Beyond admiring the live art, visitors can enjoy a family-friendly festival atmosphere with an array of attractions. The festival will feature artists' booths, live music and

entertainment, as well as outdoor games including cornhole and giant Jenga. The event also features kids' activities, most notably a hands-on kids' chalk zone where young artists can unleash their imaginations in a dedicated interactive play space.

"This event is a fantastic opportunity for our students to step outside the studio and share their passion directly with our neighbors," said Brevard College faculty member and event organizer Sean Parrish, who modeled the event after a cherished tradition formerly held at the Transylvania County Library. "It's free, full of energy, and a great way to spend a fall day in Brevard together."

The competition will take place in front of the Sims Art Building and the Spiers Art Gallery on the Brevard College campus. Visitors should enter campus via North Campus Drive off North Broad Street.



Students creating artwork at last year's Sidewalk Art Competition at Brevard College.

Multiple Brevard businesses close their doors: Henry's joins the growing list

Madeleine Pollock
Managing Editor

In the past six months, multiple Brevard businesses have closed their doors. In April, the popular coffee shop Quotations ceased operations. In July, Next Venture Outdoors went out of business. And this week, Henry's—a breakfast spot near campus—joined the list.

Community members have taken to the Facebook group “We Are Brevard” to communicate their frustrations with iconic local spots disappearing. Many users appear fearful about what this could mean for the future of shopping and dining in the City of Brevard.

Henry's closes

After being in operation for 27 years, Henry officially closed on Sept. 12. One user wrote on Facebook, “The absolute last of the good fast food left in Brevard!! It is over!! No more good southern food left in this area!!”

Many community members shared fond memories of breakfast at the establishment, reflecting on traditional Southern favorites like biscuits and gravy.

Tony Stewart, the owner of Henry's, chose to close the diner slowly and quietly, as its dining room has not been consistently open since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The news of their official end was broken via a small sign in the window that read: “Thank you, Brevard, for 27 years! We love and appreciate all the memories, support, and friendships grown over the years! We will miss you all!

Take care, and God bless you and yours!”

It is currently uncertain what will become of the building or whether another business will be moving in. But this lot across from Topsy Taco and the campus now houses multiple vacant buildings.

Next Venture Outdoors shuts down

In July, to another outpouring of support from the community, Next Ventures closed permanently. It was Brevard's only dedicated second-hand outdoor store, selling a plethora of outdoor equipment like bikes, rock climbing gear, camping equipment, among many other things.

In a post on their Facebook, they shared the following statement: “We are very sad to announce that after more than 10 years, Next Venture Outdoors will be permanently closing its doors. We want to thank everyone who has made this such a special place! The customers who have supported us through the years and the friendships we have built will always have a special place in our hearts. Thank you for being a part of a wonderful and successful business!”

Stores like DD Bullwinkels and Headwater Outfitters help to fill the outdoor gear niche; however, more affordable access to outdoor recreation equipment has been on the decline in Brevard since Next Venture has been gone. There is currently a for-lease sign in the building window, so it seems unlikely that any businesses will be moving in anytime soon.

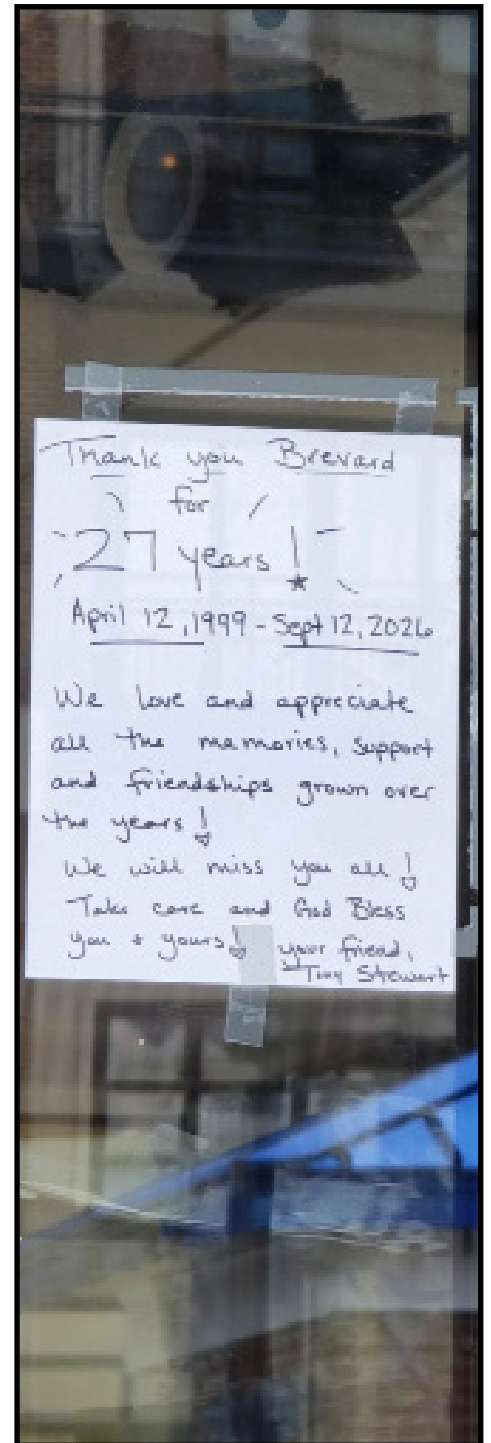
Quotations becomes Fable Restaurant

Quotations coffee shop closed permanently in mid April, with the owner taking to Facebook to explain that health issues stopped her from being able to run the business. She wrote, “It's heartbreaking to leave behind something I love so much, but after two hospital visits and struggling to walk, I have to prioritize my health so I can be there for my sons. I know some of you may feel let down, and for that, I'm truly sorry.”

The establishment is now owned by Samuel Lake, a Michelin-trained chef from South Carolina who worked at a Michelin-starred kitchen in Galway, Ireland. He opened Fable Restaurant in June, which serves “Seasonal, chef-driven Appalachian cooking with housemade sandwiches, supper, Sunday brunch, and a thoughtful café and wine program,” according to their website.

The former Quotations owner said on Facebook that the new owner is “a great guy who will take good care of this place. All staff will have the opportunity to continue working if they'd like—no one gets left behind.”

New beginnings aren't necessarily bad, but they do take some getting used to. Despite the loss of these local businesses, Brevard still has a lot to offer in terms of shopping and dining, and this allows new businesses to bring fresh ideas to Brevard!



The sign at Henry's that announced they were closing—photo by John Padgett.

Sydney Sweeney's 'sports betting' ad receives backlash from athletes

Harleigh Reece
Contributor

Sydney Sweeney released her “Just Sports” marketing campaign ad, and it seems as if it would have been better if she had just kept this one in the drafts.

Sweeney stars in a campaign titled “Just Sports” for Novig, a zero-commission sports prediction and betting platform in which she is an equity investor and strategic partner. In the commercial, Sweeney appears nearly or completely nude, using items like footballs, basketballs, tennis racquets, and hockey gear to strategically cover her body while playfully repeating phrases about focusing on “just sports”.

Student-athletes at Brevard seem to come to a consensus about the ad.

“This ad is giving other people the wrong impression of women’s sports,” Brooke Harrah, a freshman on the softball team, said.

Emily Hoxit, also a freshman on the softball team, agreed, adding, “This ad could have set women’s sports back years.”

The ad has also sparked criticism over the way it combines sports with the sexualization of women. Senior communication major Kaleia Hartman offered a nuanced look at the campaign’s framing and accountability. “The ad was leaning more towards gambling rather than women in sports, but it’s so misleading

because Sydney Sweeney is still very much naked with different sports balls covering her private parts,” Hartman said. “I can see why so many women are upset about it because she’s still using sports and her naked body to cater to the male gaze when it’s still hard for women to be taken seriously when it comes to sports and competing.”

Hartman noted that while the responsibility lies largely on the brand’s shoulders, actors still make conscious choices. “I can definitely understand both sides—I just think it’s complicated because why does a woman need to be naked when talking about sports, which is already a male-dominated field. Because then that’s when it’s turned onto the brand and marketing team, which I think should be getting more of the backlash; Sydney Sweeney is just ‘doing her job.’ But then it gets to a point—she could’ve just not taken the role. Which is why I think it’s so complicated.”

The ad was meant to emphasize that the platform focuses solely on sports trading rather than expanding into pop culture or politics, and the ad was supposed to be “simple and playful.” Reporters say this ad was supposed to be a “memorable conversation piece during the busy NFL season kickoff.”

This ad might have had good intentions, but it came off in the wrong way and gave everyone the wrong impression of what they “wanted”

to portray.

Alongside Brevard athletes, multiple pro athletes have also spoken on the ad, such as Sofie Fella, a Chinese-German rugby player, who said, “Female athletes can be role models for girls and women because they manage to ‘untangle’ from society’s ideals of beauty and femininity. And that’s why that Sydney Sweeney ad is so disrespectful to every female athlete in the world.”

Skyle Nicolson, a world champion boxer, stated: “There is a big difference between looking ‘sexy’ because you do sport compared to using sex to sell ‘sport.’”

Olympic swimmer Ariarne Titmus also chimed in, saying the campaign was “a kick in the face to every woman who has dedicated her life to perfecting her craft.”

Historically, women’s sports have been overshadowed by men’s athletics, facing setbacks from persistent, outdated beliefs even as visibility has grown. Women’s sports are about performing well for yourself and your teammates, not about looking good.

Female athletes spend their lives perfecting their craft to compete and excel—not to be viewed as showing off their bodies. Athletic competition should be a space to showcase hard work and enjoy competing, not a place where women are continuously sexualized.



Sydney Sweeney's ad—photo from the Hollywood Reporter.

Sunrise Walk held in honor of Suicide Prevention Month

Brevard's chapters of Morgan's Message and The Hidden Opponent held a Sunrise Walk on Sept. 13. Starting bright and early in front of the Jones Library and ending at the Ives-Lemel Family Field, the walk's purpose was to bring suicide awareness to our campus. A social media post by Morgan's Message shared that a "sunrise reminds us there is always a new day."



Photos by Kendall Hubbard.

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On campus or off campus? Students share their living experience

Gavin Natt
 Contributor

For college students, where they live can affect their college experience. Some students choose to live on campus because they want to be close to their classes, while others choose to live off campus for more space, freedom, and privacy.

Connor Kahill, a Brevard College student who lives on campus with a roommate, prefers the immediacy of campus life. "I like living on campus because I get to meet new people and be close to everything going on around campus," Kahill said. "Sometimes we don't get along and disagree on things, and it makes it awkward sometimes."

Even with those problems, Kahill believes living on campus is worth it. He said students get to experience more of what college has to offer when they live on campus.

On the other hand, some students prefer living off campus, like senior Jake Lauer.

"I love living off campus because the apartments are nicer than the dorms and I'm living with my friend," Lauer said.

One downside for Lauer is having to travel to campus every day. He said the commute can get annoying. Especially when he has to make the trip multiple times for classes and—in Lauer's case—practices.

Even with the commute, Lauer said he thinks living off campus is worth it. "You have way more freedom in living in a nicer place," he said.

There is not one choice that is best for every student. Some students may enjoy being around campus all the time, while others may prefer having their own space away from school. In the end, it depends on what each student wants from their college experience.

A Brevard student's guide to local swimholes

Liam Smith
Staff Writer

It's getting incrementally cooler here at Brevard College, which means the rivers aren't getting any warmer. This is an ideal time to take advantage of the numerous swim spots in the beautiful forest we live near. These could also be opportunities to see cool creatures or animals, like salamanders or bears. Leaf season is fast

approaching so keep these scenic spots in mind for leaf looking as well!

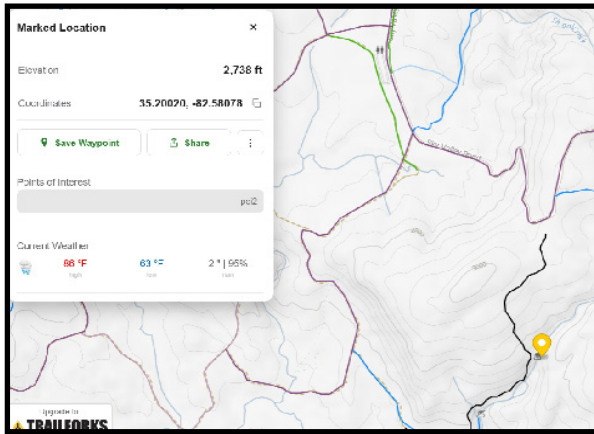
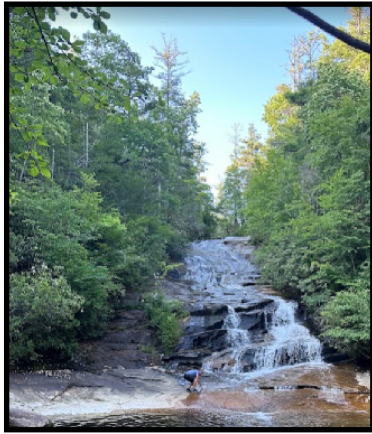
These locations all require a car to reach a trailhead or trail entrance, and vary in hiking time. Of course, part of being a responsible visitor of Pisgah National Forest or DuPont includes being prepared: carry water, food, and be ready for emergencies. And leave no trace—don't litter, pick up other trash, and don't alter trails.

Some locations require tricky trail navigation,

and it is easier to get lost in Pisgah and DuPont, as some of these spots are just off trail. Personally, two apps I have on my phone are Strava (easy to record activities like hikes, but it stops working in bad cell service) and TrailForks (great for seeing trail difficulty, and it still works in bad cell service). Both apps are free and can be used without a subscription fee!

Upper Grassy Creek Falls

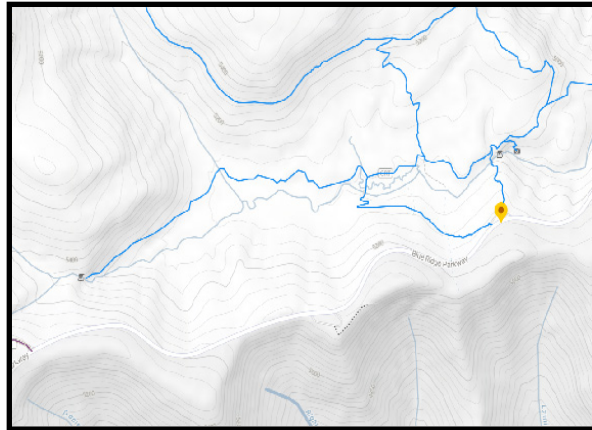
This waterfall and swimming hole are in DuPont State Forest, which is accessible on Sky Valley Road. The first option is to park at "Guion Farms Parking Area," which means that the hike-in is around 1.5 miles/2.4 km. The other option is to park at the red location pin in the screenshot, or "Grassy Dam Trail" on Google Maps; this is a 25-minute drive from campus. There is a small parking pull-off facing a trail gate which leads straight down to the waterfall—this will be around 0.6 miles/1.7 km instead. The trail is rated Black because of approximately 350ft/106m in elevation drop in a short distance, as it can reach over 25% gradient in some spots. Generally, round-trip, the hike could take around or less than one hour even from the Guion Lot.



Red Pin: Trailgate parking. Yellow Pin: Waterfall/Swimming hole.

Upper Graveyard Field Falls

This spot is located in the Blue Ridge Parking Lot, and it does require a longer hike. From the parking lot, you'll see signs for "Graveyard Fields Loop Trail"; both ways are scenic and take roughly the same time; then, to get to the falls, take "Graveyard Fields Upper Falls Trail. Though both are rated as a Blue trail because it follows a flat, meandering river on an easy trail, some portions of the hike will be done on a boardwalk, but as the trail nears the waterfall, there are some more technical features with rocks and roots. From the parking lot, the hike will be around 300ft/91m and 1.6miles/2.6km, which takes about one and a half hours round-trip.

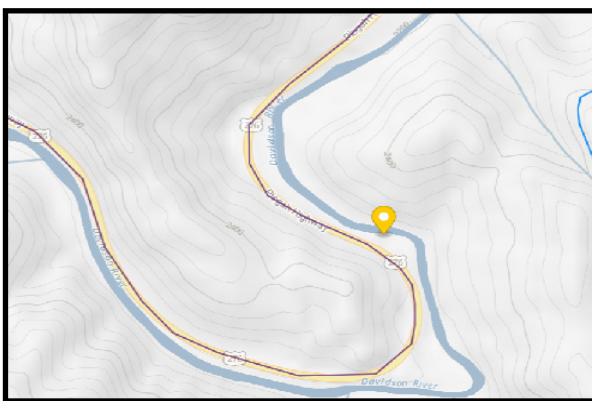


Yellow Pin: Graveyard Fields Parking Lot. Red Pin: Waterfall

Davidson River on U.S. 276 N.

This is a swim spot that requires less than 45 seconds of hiking, as it is right next to the road. There are two small pull-offs on the left side of the road as you drive into the forest. If you miss them, there is the Shut-In Picnic Area immediately after to turn into. This section of the Davidson River is typically warmer as it sits in the sun and is further from the source of the river. It takes about 15 minutes to get to by car, and typically the pull-offs are emptier after 4 p.m.

Be sure to take advantage of the lasting warm weather for the rest of September and October. This is also a reminder that in November the Blue Ridge Parkway will close as it gets snow and ice! Unfortunately, there is no established date, so just stay vigilant as the weather gets cold.



Yellow Pin: Small Pull-Off and trail access to the river

Freak of The Week: The Wingless Mountain Grasshopper

Tom Webb
Staff Writer

The Wingless Mountain Grasshopper, *Booneacris glacialis*, is a small species of grasshopper indigenous to the eastern mountain ranges of North America. What makes this species unique is that even in the grasshopper's adult life stage, it does not possess wings. This evolutionary trait is believed to aid in preventing the grasshopper from being carried off the mountain top by strong winds.

Typically, when a grasshopper leaps, it also spreads its wings and uses them to flutter further than it would just from normal jumping. Now, when that grasshopper leaps and spreads its wings in a notoriously tall, windy environment, it may not land where it expects to. This created a selective pressure which is believed to have favored grasshoppers that either did not fly or did not have wings, which over time led to the Wingless Mountain Grasshopper developing into its own species.

One issue with this theory, and the wingless mountain grasshopper in general, is that the species is critically understudied. North Carolina sits at the very bottom of its native range, and the remoteness of its habitat makes it an organism that is often overlooked. This species is subject to a lot of speculation, and it seems like this grasshopper has never been extensively researched.

When researching for this article, only a small

handful of papers discussed the grasshopper, one of which just mentioned that it had been found for the first time since 1912 on Prince Edward Island in Eastern Canada, but still not detailing anything about the species besides its physical appearance. Another described its male reproductive structures in an article, but not much beyond that.

All of this is to say, take this freak with a pinch of salt, and a large dash of curiosity. There is clearly a lot that isn't known about the species beyond firsthand accounts and speculation, but that should change. This species and its evolution in its habitat should be studied further, if not because it in and of itself is an interesting species, then because of the fact that studying how it evolved gives us insight into the life history in these high elevation areas.

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I FOUND THE FREAK MYSELF!!!—photo by Tom Webb

Q C R Z S H P T E V R V I C N
T E P S E Q A Z Y X N W N A P
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W L E V J D M O R K Z R S Z I

Word search fun!

Find the words, listed below, on the word search, to the left.

Procrastinate

Lecture

Dormitory

Caffeine

Dining Hall

Graduation

All Nighter

Syllabus

Midterms

A look into the 2026 women's soccer season

Jordyn Turner-Butler
Contributor

Your returning USA South Women's Soccer Champions are looking to continue their success as the 2026 season is kicking into gear. Last year the team finished with a historic 16–0 regular season record, and an 18–1–1 record when it was all said and done. Now the team looks to replace, refuel, sustain, and elevate from that success and bring a mix of experience and new faces to drive this 2026 run.

The Tornados will be led by head coach Juan Mascaro Jr. If that name sounds familiar, then you have probably heard of his father, Juan Mascaro Sr., who led the Tornados last year to their undefeated regular season and their USA South Championship. Mascaro Sr., who has since transitioned to Technical Director, is handing the keys to his son, keeping it in the family.

Mascaro Jr. is a Brevard College alum and the second head coach in the program's NCAA Division III era, according to bctornados.com. Mascaro Jr. served four seasons as Associate Head Coach. Before joining the women's pro-

gram, Mascaro Jr. served as an Assistant Coach for Brevard College men's soccer and gained additional collegiate coaching experience at Emory & Henry University.

With this being his first year as a head coach, there are some growing pains that might be expected, even being the son of the great Mascaro Sr. The team so far in the season will not be repeating their 16–0–0 regular season record, as through the first two weeks of the season, they are sitting at 2–0–2, tying games with Oglethorpe and Carolina universities. However, they are still looking to continue their 21-game non-losing regular season streak.

The Brevard Tornados are starting their 2026 camp with a mostly US-based roster, which could seem odd compared to some other college programs that have multiple international students. Luckily for the Tornados, they have a strong squad packed with American firepower.

Notably, the Tornados have star goalie senior Abby Nunez behind them again this season. Nunez received USA South Goalie of the Year honors as she also made the USA South First Team All-Conference and was also awarded

USA South Defender of the Week three times. She started in all 16 games and led the conference in goals-against average with 0.36 and save percentage with 90.2%. Along with her is Senior defender MK Smoak.

In 2025, Smoak received All-Conference nominations for the third season in a row and is looking to make history as a player to win All-Conference every single year. The team is likely feeling the loss of last season's senior points leader, Mikayla Zveken, who graduated in May. But this means that Junior Kinlee Mozley is looking forward to taking over in that category and is in prime position to make another USA South All-Conference team.

With all this being said, even though it may not be the same historic start to the season as last, the Tornados are still the favorite and are in the driver's seat to repeat as the USA South Champions. Time will tell if Mascaro Jr. will be as successful as, or more than, his father when it comes to the postseason. We will just have to wait and see, and make sure to come out and support your Brevard Tornados as they take on Salem College Wednesday!



The women's soccer team huddles up before their game against Guilford College on Sept. 12—photo by Isabella Zambuto.