Bills’ Damar Hamlin unites communities beyond Buffalo

By Yusra Alsadam
Staff Reporter

On January 2, 2023, Damar Hamlin went into cardiac arrest during the Bills vs. Bengals game in Cincinnati, Ohio and was rushed into the emergency room. Hamlin’s condition was severe, not being able to breathe on his own and in a coma. This unexpected incident has given people a different lens not just in the world of football, but morally as well.

The 24-year-old was drafted in 2021 as a safety. He was filling in for Micah Hyde who was injured this season.

According to Billy Witz and Jenna Vrentas who wrote “On His Way to the N.F.L., Damar Hamlin was Determined to Give Back,” Damar Hamlin grew up in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, played football and attended the University of Pittsburgh. The support of his hometown influenced him to help others. He spoke at several youth football camps in order to help guide other youngsters who wanted to head in the same direction that he took.

In an article from AP News titled “Fans give millions to Damar Hamlin’s toy drive for kids,” author Tim Reynolds states that Damar Hamlin

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SEM’s Coach of All Trades: Jimmy Dref

As the bowling season comes to a close, we can reflect on Jimmy Dref, our coach of all trades.

Born in Buffalo, NY, Jimmy has played nearly every well-known sport in the books. From football to diving, Jimmy has hit baseballs, shot basketballs, golfed, swam and skied all through high school. “I’m a natural athlete,” he said. “That doesn’t mean I’m a great athlete, that just means I’m a natural athlete.”

Now, he still plays golf and bowls, but not competitively. He shared his stats: highest score in bowling was a 280, and lowest in golf was a 67.

Beyond sports, Jimmy spent time in Florida during college, attending the University of Miami with an affinity for Greek Life, surfing, and farming avocados. He recounts the hand-sized spiders that would catch you as you’d ride your tractor between the trees. From 1981 to 2006, far before his years of coaching, Jimmy lived in Long Island selling Christmas trees, a far cry from cheering on high school girls as they hit a golf ball or throw a strike. Jimmy began his coaching career at Elmwood Franklin, where he first coached basketball, baseball, and softball.

Though he doesn’t quite recall exactly when or how he began at SEM, he said, “I love to coach because I love sports and I want to see you guys, you know, get excited and get into it — it’s fun!”

And that reigns true. Faith ‘24, from the bowling and golf team, says “he’s an amazing coach,” and Katie ’24 says Jimmy is the reason she stuck with golf.
**A Memorable Time in New York with The New York Times**

**BY ELLE NOECKER**
Assistant Editor

To write for *The New York Times* is an honor that most journalists can only ever dream about. To be a contributor to one of the most prestigious newspapers in the world is nearly the highest career achievement a journalist can reach. Although they have not had any official publications in this particular newspaper (yet) two SEM juniors and co-presidents of Buffalo Seminary’s own newspaper, *The Monocle*, had the rare opportunity to experience the *New York Times* life firsthand.

This past summer of 2022, Mary Goetz and Katie Rooney ’24 were selected to attend *The School of New York Times* program in the Fordham at Lincoln Center campus in New York City where they acquired knowledge to kick start their journalism journey—a career in which both girls are interested in pursuing. Ironically enough, if it wasn’t for newspapers, Katie and Mary might not have ever gotten word of this opportunity!

An aunt of Katie’s read about the program in a newspaper and spread the message to Katie’s father who then shared the news to Katie who excitedly informed Mary. The pair knew that they could never pass up this opportunity and soon entered the competitive selection process which included an application of two 300 word essays and a few letters of recommendation. Did they get accepted? *drum roll*...of course they did! The duo stayed in dorms together as roommates over their two weeks in NYC and spent the fortnight taking classes in college classrooms, listening to guest speakers, and going on field trips, and when they weren’t in class, they went on adventures in the Big Apple.

In the words of Mary, “The schedules were the same for everyone in our class, so Katie and I spent basically all our time together. We woke up, went to our class that went from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a break for lunch, then we were free for the rest of the day with a curfew of 10-ish.”

What exactly did that free time after class consist of? “Nearly every day Katie and I went out to dinner after our classes and one night we went to a rooftop movie at a hotel to watch *Romeo and Juliet* with Leonardo DiCaprio which was pretty awesome,” Mary recalls as one of her favorite moments (and that sure is pretty awesome!). When asked about the coolest thing they learned during this experience, both girls had interesting and unique answers.

For Katie, she found it enthralling to learn about interviewing people on the street, and how practicing the act has helped her confidence. “It was pretty intimidating at first because a lot of people don’t want to be interviewed, but we went to different locations in New York like the One World Trade Center and a park in Brooklyn to interview people about different stories we were writing,” Katie explains. She continues to describe how being “forced to go out and talk to strangers about real topics helped me to grow more confident with it and I actually ended up enjoying it and finding it really interesting to hear different people’s opinions on issues I was reporting on.”

On the other hand, Mary’s answer was “just the process of getting a story.” During the two weeks, the girls were assigned stories to write, however, “when we spoke to the speakers that were brought in, they talked about just hearing or seeing something interesting and beating it down until they had the facts for a story,” Mary explained. Both of these skills are key aspects to journalism that Katie and Mary were enthusiastic about having the chance to learn about.

Katie and Mary walked away from this experience with invaluable takeaways about journalism and life. Katie mentioned that she now feels more “open to new things, such as new people and experiences.” She described how being in a different environment impacted her perspective and encouraged her to step out of her comfort zone. “I think that I learned a lot from my class and trying out different techniques of reporting which I hadn’t used before. I also think that I just learned from being around new people in a new city,” Katie added.

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More specifically to journalism, Mary shared that her biggest takeaway was “the writing and editing process. Being able to condense nearly five sentences into one and a half sentences and still maintain your voice and point.” When reflecting on the overall experience, both girls found it—understandably—impossible to choose just one favorite memory. “Just waking up and being in New York, getting a coffee, going to class, everything,” Mary recollects as some of her best memories. For Katie, she “just loved being in New York!”

While in NYC, Katie particularly enjoyed how “there was always so much to do even after I got out of my class for the day. I also really enjoyed meeting new people who came from all around the world. Being in such a cool place with them allowed me to become pretty close with new people and I loved exploring the city with them doing things like going out to eat and shopping.”

To have the opportunity to learn from a program of world-class journalists was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the juniors. The lessons they learned and skills they gained will stay with them as they continue on their paths as writers and in life. Mary has been certain that she wanted to be a journalist for as long as she can remember and that “the ultimate goal is always the New York Times because of its reach and legitimacy.”

In respect to the New York Times, Katie reflects that “it was an amazing opportunity to get to learn through a program associated with them.” A general takeaway from this experience was that taking risks will take you somewhere, and to fearlessly pursue what you love! “It was really just an incredible experience for me and I think for everyone else involved. Katie and I grew as writers and as friends [as] roommates together for two weeks. If you’ve ever got an opportunity for a summer program of anything you might enjoy, especially if you travel for it, DO IT,” Mary exclaimed.

With the support of SEM and our school’s strong writing program, Katie and Mary were able to take what they learned from school, apply it to their talents, be accepted into this selective program, and build even more on their skills. Needless to say, this duo of juniors most definitely shared a memorable and worthwhile time in New York learning from The New York Times.

On an atomic level, they all are made up of hydrogen and oxygen. However, in terms of shape, snowflakes are all different from one another. Their shapes evolve as it falls from clouds, so no two could ever be identical. The basic shape of a snowflake depends on factors such as temperature and the moisture level.

The technical name for a buildup of snow and ice hanging over a roof is ice dam. They form as a result of the warmer temperatures of your house melting the snow. The water, then, refreezes and builds up on the edge of your roof.

Although freezing water is one of the most widely known instances of science, snow truly is one of the most beautiful phenomena in winter. There’s nothing quite like stepping on freshly fallen snow and listening to the crunch beneath your boots. The mystery of snow is uncovered. Science - there’s an explanation for everything.
“[I] was just thinking about how the players must feel.”

Hamlin from front would help out his mother, Nina, from time to time at her daycare center, Kelly and Nina’s Daycare Center. In December of 2020, he started a toy drive to help needy children on GoFundMe with a goal of $2500. With the number still increasing, he has now made $9 million with the support of millions of NFL fans, teams and players, and people who just wanted to support his cause.

Hamlin’s incident brought attention to the idea of morality and gave people a different perspective on how they see football. It reminds us not only how dangerous professional sports can be, but also how they can take a toll on one’s mental and emotional health.

Grace Heidinger ’18, a reporter for the Buffalo Bills and SEM alumna, said that at the moment, her utmost priority was waiting for updates about Hamlin and knowing if he was okay. Her feelings of fear and confusion distracted her from any lingering thoughts about the game. Grace also said that she had never seen any injury like Hamlin’s before; much like everyone else, this was a great shock to her and her coworkers. “I truly believe that this will go down as one of, if not the scariest sights and situations in professional sports history,” she said.

To get more of a focus on the value of community, Grace shared stories about the community supporting Damar Hamlin’s charity and has written about Damar Hamlin’s life, not just as an NFL player, but also as a person. As a reporter, she thinks that her perspective has changed in a way that makes her value the importance of solidarity during this difficult situation.

When asked how her view of football has changed, Genevieve Manuele ’26, SEM freshman, said that she loved to see the unity of the teams in supporting Damar Hamlin’s recovery. When Genevieve heard about the unfortunate scene, she thought that it was a great shock, but she also really admired the way everyone was supportive of Hamlin, stating “all of sudden seeing everyone kind of together was really nice and sweet.”

Mrs. Greene, one of SEM’s history teachers, had the same thoughts of this incident being so unexpected, but she also said that it gave her a more human view of the players. She said, “It didn’t really change my perspective on the game, [I] was just thinking about how the players must feel.” More specifically, she talked about how the players go out on the field everyday, knowing that they might get injured. Her view of football has changed by seeing it not just as a source of entertainment, but also as an actual, serious career.

Hamlin has made people see football through his eyes and has created a sense of a tight-knit community within the world of football. •
This year, Buffalo Seminary’s boarding program has housed students from countries all over the world including Taiwan, Spain, Afghanistan, Chile, and Kenya among others. However due to the weather over winter break, only nine residential students were able to return to their homes. The cost of flights and total travel time proved challenging for many, including even those who did make it home such as exchange student Jule Schuepphaus from Germany who said, “it was pretty good seeing my family and friends, however it was pretty short, as I only had one and a half weeks for break.” Of the remaining nine, three traveled elsewhere and six stayed in Buffalo. So where did everybody go?

The answer: most of the residential students who stayed in Buffalo over winter break were hosted either by faculty members or their fellow students’ families. The Director of Residential Life, Alex Valdez, referred to the process as a “well-oiled machine.” In fact, according to Kaya Fitzpatrick ’24, who hosted Angela Gracia Garcia ’24 from Spain, “involving the school, the process was simple. The school reached out to my mom about having Angela stay with us, and they were able to organize the living arrangement over email. They then informed Angela’s parents that she was staying with us.” This arrangement proved very successful and allowed students to enjoy a well-deserved break from school while celebrating different traditions with their host families.

Yet this wasn’t just any old holiday season. The historic winter storm that swept through the Western New York area was one that stunned even native-Buffalo residents, let alone the students who had never seen snow before coming to Buffalo. Outside, it was a post-apocalyptic winter wonderland of sorts, with cars and houses buried under massive amounts of snow, trapping many inside. Angela ’24 remarked, “it was crazy just because it was the first time that I ever saw that amount of snow. It was really cold but at the same time it was very pretty outside.”

Regrettably, this also meant missing out on some personal holiday traditions that make that time of the year so special, especially when so far away from home. However, students ultimately persevered. Kaya ’24 explained, “with the blizzard, it made it difficult to leave the house. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to go to my grandma’s house on Christmas Eve or Christmas day, which has always been a tradition in my family. I was excited to share that with Angela too.” She continued, “We eventually got to my grandparents’ homes for delayed celebrations, which was fun. Angela was able to meet my family on both sides, and we were able to hang out with friends who were in town for Christmas festivities. We went to buy gifts together, cooked meals with my family, and spent time with my cousins.”

Overall, while many residential students were stuck in the snow far from home, they still had the unique opportunity to spend time with a new family and make new memories that are sure to last a lifetime.
SEM and Nardin Join Forces for Indoor Track

Indoor Track season this year unless it combined with another school, and we were lucky enough to be able to join Nardin’s Indoor Track team. Most of the team didn’t know each other—we were almost all complete strangers at the beginning—but by the end, we all were hoping for another combined season.

As a Nardin team member put it, “I really didn’t know what to expect when I heard we would be running with SEM. We have a new coach this year, and I wasn’t sure what was going to happen, but I actually really liked running together.”

The coaches and athletes had a relationship like no other. Coach Streety’s chair at each meet was iconic; when you wanted to find him, you need only scan the floor for a folding chair and there he was. Coach Hoffman’s willingness to talk to you during a hard workout, and the encouragement the coaches provided for us all when we worked our hardest, was truly motivational.

The team shattered almost every school record, from the 3000m run to the 55m hurdles, 11 in total, by the end of the season. The strength of the team was unmatched, and it’s likely why we aren’t racing together in the spring. Through the long workouts and even longer meets, the team got closer, bonding over the love/hate relationship we all have with the sport. Inside jokes, impromptu saxophone concerts, and late starts to relays worked to create a team environment that brought everyone back every day.

The season has ended, but the friendships we made will persist. When we see the Nardin team at meets, we won’t be running for the same team, but still, we’ll cheer them on like we are.

Lunar New Year 2023

By Andrea Alave

Indoor Track this year was anything but conventional; from the practices on a soccer field to the hours spent at meets, the SEM team had a season that was different from every other. We ran not in our usual bright red singlets, but in dark green, as Nardin Gators.

The combined team may have come as a shock to many as SEM and Nardin appear to be polar opposites. Green versus red, a Catholic school versus a secular school, but the team, lovingly nicknamed the GatorHawks, came together as if from the same school. And this team was a force to be reckoned with on the track.

Sports teams allow for students of different grades to get to know each other. This year, the Indoor Track team allowed for not only different grades but also different schools to become, in the words of one of the athletes, “one big happy family.” SEM wasn’t going to have an Indoor Track season this year unless it combined with another school, and we were lucky enough to be able to join Nardin’s Indoor Track team. Most of the team didn’t know each other—we were almost all complete strangers at the beginning—but by the end, we all were hoping for another combined season.

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By Fiona Murphy
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Celebrities like Emma Chamberlain, Rihanna, Harry Styles, and Bella Hadid are a few of the top trendsetters for 2023. These are just a few of the words that students at SEM used to describe fashion. Trends go in and out so quickly, and that makes it difficult to find a balance between following those trends and keeping your style unique. One student said it particularly well, “you need to dress for yourself. If you like something, just wear it. It doesn’t matter if you’re wearing it to school or prom or anywhere.”

Everyone has different opinions on what styles are good or bad, so it’s impossible for everyone to like one specific style. Beanies - 11 students; cargo - 10; leather - eight; corsets - seven; loafers - five; crochet/knitted clothing - four, the list goes on. There are so many things that can change fashion in a specific time: the weather, the area you live in, even movies, songs, and so much more. Some specific things in the media that had a huge effect on fashion this past year include shows like Emily In Paris, Bridgerton, and Stranger Things, movies like Don’t Worry Darling, Blonde, and Elvis; plus celebrities or influencers like Emma Chamberlain, Bella Hadid, the Kardashians, Rihanna, Harry Styles, and more. All of this demonstrates how much can vary year to year.

In fact, most trends end up resurfacing. Typically, trends tend to come back every 20 years (currentboutique.com). Some examples from the past year are the return of low rise jeans, platform shoes, cutouts, and even certain brands such as Dr. Martens. This just goes to show that you shouldn’t only wear styles that are popular or trendy, you should wear what you like and what makes you feel good, because chances are that style or item is going to become popular again.

However, if you feel like you really need a different change of wardrobe, don’t just throw it away. In America alone, it is estimated that 11.3 million tons of textile waste end up in landfills every year, 2,150 clothing items per second (earth.org). So in the past couple minutes or so that you have been reading this article, about 250,000 clothing items have ended up in landfills. The “throwaway culture” has gotten significantly worse over the past few years. This is mainly due to an increase in the fast fashion industry, where the clothing is either cheaply made and falls apart or it just goes out of style and the owner doesn’t like it anymore.

This all goes to show why buying sustainable clothes that we actually enjoy is so important. We can donate clothes to local thrift stores and we can buy clothing from thrift stores to help limit our own waste. There are many local stores that we can shop at including Goodwill, Paloma Exchange, Savers, Amvets, and Salvation Army. SEM even offers community service at Goodwill where we can help a good cause. If we don’t make a change in the way the fast fashion industry is going right now, the negative impact will continue to grow.

By Sasha Wechsler
Staff Reporter

Experimental, Unique, Individual: SEM Fashion Trends Spring 2023