‘Pathological Taco Ballers’ Claim Victory in UMass Amazing Race’s Return to Campus

By: Wei Cai ‘20

Team ‘Pathological Taco Ballers’ featuring members, Tyler Movsessian, Dan Kimmit and Mike Kim were awarded first place at Friday night’s competition.

AMHERST – Nearly 130 participants between 43 teams, clad in neon pink t-shirts, competed in the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Amazing Race. After taking place in downtown Amherst last semester, the race’s Friday night return to campus sought to foster team building, problem solving and camaraderie.

The competition – sponsored by the UMass Police Department and Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success in conjunction with the Men and Masculinities Center – featured 12 pit stops on campus starting in Wilder Hall. Upon successfully completing each pit stop’s challenge, participants were given clues leading to their next destination.

With orientation commencing around 7:30 p.m., Lt. Thomas O’Donnell – who is also an event coordinator – laid out the ground rules. Contestants were prohibited from running and sabotaging other teams. However, the most important rule was to “have fun.”

But before participants could descend upon the campus, they were greeted by their first puzzle. Using the decoder, the contestants battled patchy drizzle and made their way to the first destination: The W.E.B. Du Bois library.

Just south of the library, participants were running around the Fine Art Center’s Art Gallery in an effort to figure out how many flags on display had stars.

Despite the competitive atmosphere, Sam Adelsohn, Charley Buckley and Andrew Esten – all members of “Du Bois Are Back in Town” – were calmly moving about the gallery. “We’re just here to have fun,” said Buckley.

Invoking excitement from passersby, contestants had little time to spare; the longest stretch was the leap from the Berkshire Dining Commons to Totman Gym, located near the Northeast Residential Area.

Reigning champions, “Lauren’s Bishes,” former champs last year, also returned for another chance to defend their title. At the Recreation Center, Patrick Kelley and Lauren Bishop were cheering on teammate Seth Conklin who was completing a series of lunges. According to Kelley and Bishop, the team was “a little behind,” but sought to make up time as they went.

Michael Zola, a volunteer at the Recreation Center pit stop, had only one piece of advice for the contestants: “Play hard and try your hardest to win,” said Zola.
In the end, the top three finalists were recognized. First place team was “Pathological Taco Ballers,” second place team was “Gotta Blast” and third place team was “Lauren’s Bishes.”

The first-place winners Tyler Movsessian, Mike Kim and Rory Milsark were overwhelmed with excitement and tired from the challenges. “[The win] feels really great,” said Kim. “We’re brothers now.”

However, according to Kim, their first-place fate was not immediately known. Second place team, “Gotta Blast,” finished first. Due to a miscommunication, “Gotta Blast” was accidentally given an advantage. Despite that, team members Nuge Nguyen, John Cusick and Devin Caulfield said they were still proud of their performance.

Third place team, “Lauren’s Bishes,” was recognized in the end as well. “It was a very solid performance,” said Kelley. While they placed third this year, Conklin noted that they will return next semester for another shot at the title.

The top three finalists were awarded gift cards as prizes for winning, and all participants were invited to enjoy wings and pizza after the competition.