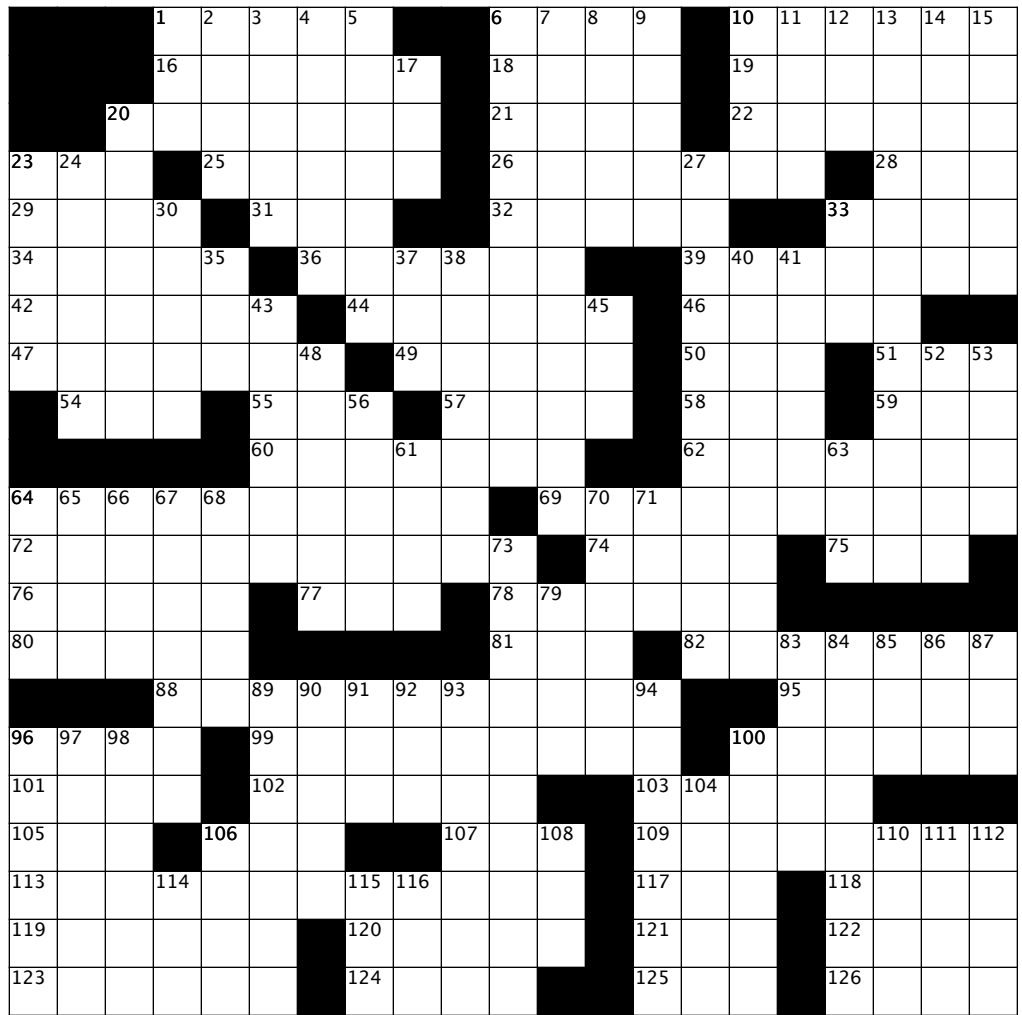


**Bracket Busters**

Ross Trudeau

**ACROSS**

- 1. Choose to lead
- 6. Campus leader
- 10. Archetypal figure slapping the coffee out of a suspect's hand
- 16. More verdant
- 18. "Are you saying \_\_\_ blame here?"
- 19. How stir-fry can be served
- 20. Lowest-ranked March Madness squad
- 21. Avocado pit, e.g.
- 22. Surgical inserts
- 23. Juárez heater
- 25. "Tombstone" brothers
- 26. Ones saying "Ugh, this clue is \*not\* accurate" (jk, love u guys)
- 28. www.crosswordsfromouterspace\_\_blogspot\_\_com
- 29. Biblical bro
- 31. Regret like CRAZY
- 32. Didn't publish ... yet
- 33. Take away for lack of pay, say (nice clue, eh?)
- 34. Make a certain bank donation, essentially
- 36. "C'moon ... p-p-please?"
- 39. "Me Talk Pretty One Day" author David
- 42. Violently remove, as, like, an evil cyborg's CPU heart
- 44. Makes it rain, in a way
- 46. Really very super mad
- 47. Unstated motivations for schemers
- 49. Squad that is not the favorite
- 50. One asked to shake hands without a hand
- 51. Vaxx development site
- 54. Before, before
- 55. "2001" antagonist
- 57. "\_\_\_ Theme" ("Star Wars" musical leitmotif)
- 58. Approx. generated by Waze
- 59. Sell a whopper?
- 60. Raw material for steel
- 62. Green drink
- 64. Hues used in, like, 99% of all early Instagram filters
- 69. It'll help you do the Dew
- 72. Completely drenched
- 74. "Crucifixion of St. Peter" painter Guido
- 75. \_\_\_ of iniquity
- 76. Dried poblano pepper
- 77. Prime meridian std.
- 78. Very scary aerie birds (if you're my 7 lb. cat)
- 80. Finnish telecom giant
- 81. Org. that might flag this puzzle if I include certain terror-related keywords
- 82. Gwen of "No Doubt"
- 88. WordPress service
- 95. Queens diamond hype man
- 96. Timbuktu's land
- 99. One in charge of course corrections?
- 100. Makes arrangements for
- 101. Touched down
- 102. "\_\_\_, Get Thin" (cookbook)
- 103. Adler who bewitched Holmes
- 105. Prefix with conformism
- 106. Profit leader for the Acme Co., it seems
- 107. Drop off for a bit
- 109. Stagnant water collection
- 113. Moniker for squads that regularly pull victory from the jaws of defeat
- 117. Cards outside a bar
- 118. Lament that sounds like a musician who shows up in all the crosswords
- 119. Army special forces commando



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- 120. Swords that show up in, like, all crosswords (it's EPEES ... the answer is freakin' EPEES)
  - 121. Michelle Obama \_\_\_ Robinson
  - 122. Vertebrae-earpits connectors, briefly
  - 123. St. Francis of \_\_\_
  - 124. Mystery writer Gerritsen
  - 125. Playing \_\_\_
  - 126. Letters meaning "Then again ..."
- DOWN**
- 1. 2-time Super Bowl M.V.P. Manning
  - 2. Tres chi-chi
  - 3. The verb "to be," en Español
  - 4. Baby angel emoji, essentially
  - 5. Dwellings with smoke holes
  - 6. Smoother at a work site
  - 7. Green peepers Anson Seabra gets "lost in" in a 2018 ballad
  - 8. Faceplanted
  - 9. Greet silently (and coolly, IMHO)
  - 10. Brownish pear
  - 11. Leafcutters, e.g.
  - 12. "Black-ish" dad
  - 13. Squads that enjoy fairytale endings
  - 14. Army swimmers?
  - 15. Basil-centric sauces
  - 17. Some vaxx site workers
  - 20. Squad that flies under the radar before a competition
  - 23. Big name in hummus
  - 24. Compel

- 27. They're advantageous for racers
- 30. Sierra \_\_\_
- 33. One telling on Family members?
- 35. It doesn't go off
- 37. Small business owner on "The Simpsons"
- 38. 2020 Nobel Laureate in physics Roger
- 40. Writer of lusty prose
- 41. Explorer Vasco \_\_\_
- 43. Biggest island in French Polynesia
- 45. "4 \_\_\_?!" (texter's "Really?")
- 48. Wrap that might have poi on it (if you spill your poi on it)
- 52. Actor Gallagher of "Nicky, Ricky, Dicky, & Dawn"
- 53. Telly option, with "the"
- 56. Squad that's not a safe bet
- 61. "She turned me into a \_\_\_!" (Monty Python line)
- 63. Put the kibosh on
- 64. Bird with a common Mute variety
- 65. Rubik's cube inventor Rubik
- 66. 'Fro groomer
- 67. Suppress
- 68. Set \_\_\_ (define success)
- 70. Prefix with genesis
- 71. Singer Lana \_\_\_ Rey
- 73. Sticks around a campground?
- 79. Tag on some floor model furniture
- 83. Rectify

- 84. Climbing film that won a Best Documentary Oscar
- 85. Wake-up times, briefly
- 86. "Swish" producer on a court
- 87. "How was \_\_\_ know!?"
- 89. Option for a claustrophobe who needs a scan
- 90. Rasp unpleasantly
- 91. Like smokeshows or stud muffins
- 92. Not quite right
- 93. Medium gatherings?
- 94. Engaging in a shit-talking session
- 96. "Ommmmmm ... ommmmmm," e.g.
- 97. Maui howdys
- 98. They come out of the closet when guests arrive
- 100. Knew--just knew!
- 104. Event that the experienced professo to have attended before
- 106. Parts that can get mangled for ballerinas and climbers
- 108. Soccer tie-breakers, familiarly
- 110. Shoot the breeze
- 111. Do \_\_\_ others
- 112. Pit at a metal show
- 114. What turns Professor Lupin into a werewolf in "Harry Potter" movies
- 115. Action taken to get into the pool?
- 116. Gibbon, e.g.