

Daily

Sports

Women's Basketball: No. 6 Huskies back in Hartford to host Tulane

by Jorge Eckardt
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It's happened. The sky is falling. How will the program ever recover?

For the first time since 2007, the UConn women's basketball team is not ranked within the top-five programs in the sport. According to the NCAA, the Huskies spent 253 consecutive weeks inside the top-five, significantly higher than the next longest streak of 96 set by Louisiana Tech.

Yes, at 21-3, UConn is ranked No. 6, and it's something that's been keeping head coach Geno Auriemma up every night.

"I really struggled," Auriemma said. "It was really hard. I went to the drug store, got some medicine, went to go see somebody. They told me, it's OK, it's OK. So I'm crossing my fingers and hoping that this, too, shall pass."

For senior guard Crystal Dangerfield, she took a more optimistic look at the three losses.

"Teams have written us off after our three losses," Dangerfield said. "Those are three really, really good teams [Baylor, Oregon and South Carolina]. If I'm going to lose, I'll to those teams."

Now, going into the final stretch run of the season, it's just a handful of regular-season games and then the Conference Tournament, which is less than a month away. With Sunday's game versus USF, the Huskies officially entered into the part of their schedule where there are only conference games remaining, so next up is the Tulane Green Wave.

Tulane is 12-13 this season but a solid 7-5 in conference play, sitting at No. 5 in the standings.

Their season has been a story of runs, currently on a four-game losing skid after going 8-1 previously.

The Green Wave are led by a junior duo of Krystal Freeman and Arsula Clark, who lead the team with 14.4 and 12.7 points per game, respectively. They are both doing so efficiently as well, as they are each shooting over 44% from the field.



The UConn women's basketball team beat Memphis 94-55 last Friday night at Gampel Pavilion. On Wednesday, they're back in Gampel to host the Tulsa Green Wave.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN LINDSTROM, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Freeman, a 6-foot forward, leads the team in rebounding with 7.4 per game, and Clark, a 5-foot-9 guard, leads the team in assists. They do have some height, with 6-foot-3 Mia Heide playing 20-plus minutes per game and pulling down 5.4 rebounds per game, which is second on the team. They do have

another 6-foot-3 and 6-foot-5 player, but neither of them see the floor for over 10 minutes a game.

As expected, the Huskies are undefeated against Tulsa historically, and in their most recent matchup, UConn won 75-33.

The Huskies have another

home game on Saturday at Gampel Pavilion, their last one on campus this season, and then will be on the road for a week before returning to the XL Center for their final game of the season.

Wednesday's tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the XL Center in Hartford.

Around the American: Men's basketball

by Sebastian Garay-Ortega
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Dramatic finishes and close games have been the story of The American so far this year. With the conference tournament less than three weeks away, however, teams will want to avoid close-calls and slip ups to perform at their best.

Wednesday saw No. 20 Houston defeat the USF Bulls 62-58, improving to 20-6 overall and 4-3 in the conference. Guard Quentin Grimes was an essential contributor to the Cougar offense, putting up 22 points alongside five assists and six rebounds. Moreover, forward Fabian White, Jr.'s 10 points and five rebounds only added onto an already battered Bull team.

Guard LaQuincy Rideau would lead his team in scoring in the losing effort with 21 points. Conference leaders Houston will

look to continue to build momentum against Tulsa on Wednesday, with hopes of securing their place in the tournament.

The Huskies and Mustangs would also battle it out on Wednesday, with SMU prevailing 79-75. They were led by guards Kendric Davis and Emmanuel Bandoumel, who racked up 19 and 13 points, respectively. Forward Feron Hunt also had a big impact, putting up 23 points and grabbing seven boards. Despite UConn's losing effort, they can lean on the performance and emergence of guard James Bouknight, who led the team in scoring with 21 and has been crucial to Dan Hurley's offense. UConn's chances of making the tournament were already slim going into the contest. If they want to have any shot, they will now have to win the rest of their remaining games.

See TULSA, p. 9



The UConn men's basketball team beat the Memphis Tigers 64-61 this weekend in one of multiple notable games in the American Athletic Conference this week.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MAGGIE CHAFOULEAS, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

THIS WEEKEND IN UCONN SPORTS

Women's Basketball

 vs. 
Wednesday
7 p.m.
XL Center

 vs. 

Men's Basketball

7 p.m.

Philadelphia, PA

 vs. 

Men's Hockey

7:05 p.m.

XL Center

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@dodgers

Just getting started. #DodgersST

TWEETS OF THE DAY



Joe Ingles

@JoeIngles7

A guy puts a phone right in my face and says 'selfie, selfie'... I said at least say please. Then says 'you want me to call you sir also'? Seriously, come on man. I have no issue at all having photos with people but at least say please. Especially if I'm with my family.

John Wall (Jason Garrett Fan Page)

@johnwall19515259

You would know. The UConn fan base has massive self esteem issues.

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LEAGUE OF LEGENDS RECAP

by Ashton Stansel
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T1 bounces back in LCK Week 2

After a shaky 1-1 start to the season, reigning League of Legends Champions Korea (LCK) champions T1 quieted most of their doubters in Week 2. A dominant victory over KT Rolster and a solid 2-1 win over Gen.G, a team currently tied for No. 2, helped T1 reclaim their status as a top team. However, questionable drafts still leave question marks over the team's potential.

Cloud9 continue their Domination over the LCS

There is no longer any question that Cloud9 is the best team in North America. They dominated TSM in a brutal 27-minute game on Saturday during which ADC Zven picked up six kills and six assists with no deaths. His reign with support Vulcan, who was 0-0-11 on Saturday, faltered in Monday's game, during which Zven died for the second time this season, but Cloud9 still claimed a dominant win over Evil Geniuses.

"There is no longer any question that Cloud9 is the best team in North America"

Cloud9's strength as a team was on display in their game versus EG. Top laner Licorice dominated Cloud9's old academy top laner Kumo, and mid laner Nisqy crushed fellow EU mid Jizuke on his Cassiopeia, finishing with an 8-1 kda.

G2's fall

It might be somewhat presumptuous to say that G2 has fallen. They're still near the top of the standings in Europe, still last year's second place team at Worlds, still the back-to-back LEC champions. But this week, G2 showed that they are also mortal. They faltered horribly in their game against Misfits as mid laner turned ADC Caps had 7 deaths in the first 15 minutes of the game and ended the game 0-9-4. But despite their loss, it wasn't a bad game from the rest of G2, ignoring top laner Wunder's ill-advised Sona pick.

"But this week, G2 showed that they are also mortal"

It was their second game of the week, this time against Schalke 04. Schalke was 0-7 before the game against G2 on Saturday. They had just gotten through a tough controversy as ADC Forgiven benched himself earlier in the week, prompting them to promote academy ADC Inna to the main roster. Despite this, Schalke fought their way to a victory. They refused to cave to G2's split pushes and base races and matched them blow for blow, claiming victory in just over 40 minutes.

Much of G2's ranking will depend on their performance this week, as they face two bottom-tier teams in Vitality and Excel. Anything less than a 2-0 week will likely mark the end of G2 as the undisputed kings of Europe.

Hey Seanny J: What'd you think of NBA All-Star Weekend?

by Sean Janos
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NBA All-Star Weekend 2020 was undoubtedly a resounding success. We got great shots of Trae Young and Luka Doncic goofing around the Rising Stars game, tons of buzz around the dunk contest and the most competitive All-Star game in recent memory.

Adam Silver and the NBA just took a big W as Rob Manfred and the MLB took a major L for the controversial punishments (or lack thereof) given to the Houston Astros for cheating their way to a World Series trophy.

Sure, there was a little controversy (if you can even use the word for something so insignificant) centered around the ending of the dunk contest, but nothing serious. In the final round, Aaron Gordon dunked over the 7-foot-5-inch Tacko Fall, and the judges gave him a score one point shy of tying Miami Heat's Derrick Jones, Jr. for what is widely viewed as an equal or lesser dunk.

According to one of the judges, Chicago-grown rapper Common, "We [the judges] thought it was going to be a tie. We were like, 'this is a tie.' But somebody didn't do it right. I don't know who it was."

Common himself and WNBA star Candice Parker each gave Gordon's final dunk a 10, exonerating them from making the "mistake." The nines came from Bulls legend Scottie Pippen, Chadwick Boseman, better known as "Black Panther," and former Heat player Dwyane

Wade. Hmm, I wonder who it could've been ...

Honestly, though, who cares if Wade rigged the dunk contest for his former teammate? We saw what might've been the best collection of dunks in a singular showcase in basketball history. Either Gordon or Jones, Jr. would've had the best performance by a ner-up ever. It just sucks for Gor-

than in years past, particularly in the fourth quarter.

This year's format had two interesting wrinkles. The first is that the score reset at the end of each quarter, with the winner of each individual quarter winning a \$100,000 donation to their choice charity. The first quarter went to Team LeBron, the second to Team Giannis and the third was a draw.

The second wrinkle kicked in for the fourth quarter. Each team was given their total score through the first three quarters back on the scoreboard. Then, the score either team would have to achieve to win the game became the leading team's score plus 24, to honor Kobe Bryant. So, Team Giannis led 133-124 with the score needed to win set at 157.

Team LeBron kicked off the fourth with a roaring comeback, in large part due to a 7-point spurt by Kemba Walker. As the scores reached the mid-

forties, the tension in what was

already a pretty competitive game was

kicked up a notch.

All-Stars were actually trying hard in a game that they typically don't. Veterans that didn't start the game like Chris Paul and Kyle Lowry were out there in crunch time in favor of the younger starters. They were making gritty plays, with Lowry taking two charges, one coming on a would-be game

winner by James Harden.

Ultimately, the heightened competition of the game led to the most anticlimactic type of final shot: a free throw. Anthony Davis ended the game at 157-155 with a free throw, and

the same people that praised the All-Star game's quality had that one thing to harp on.

If the All-Star game becomes a game that players actually care about winning, there are going to be fouls, and players are going to shoot free throws. That's just basketball.

So, how do we prevent winning the game on a free throw without giving the defense free-reign to foul? Daily Campus Hall of Famers Bryan Lambert and Matt Barresi weighed in on Twitter:

"Would it be feasible to make it so that you can't end the game on a free throw, but in a situation like that it would subtract points from the other team? The defensive team would still have a deterrent from hacking away, but the game would still have to end on a field goal," Lambert said.

"Exactly what I was thinking. Would be an interesting wrinkle imo," Barresi, winner of the 2019 Most Valuable Barresi award, replied.

I think this is a viable solution to prevent concluding the All-Star game

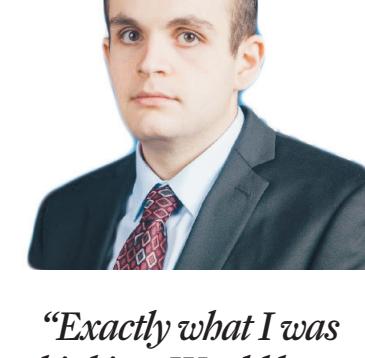
HALL OF FAME



"Would it be feasible to make it so that you can't end the game on a free throw, but in a situation like that it would subtract points from the other team?"

"The defensive team would still have a deterrent from hacking away, but the game would still have to end on a field goal"

BRYAN LAMBERT



"Exactly what I was thinking. Would be an interesting wrinkle imo"

MATTHEW BARRESI

don that it had to be him.

Moving on to All-Star we got one ages. Trivially an that little even fence, com-

the game, for the dition exhibi- featured fort and less de- the level of petition of 2020's All- Star game was mar- ginally higher

from the charity stripe.

After all, it is just an exhibition. You wouldn't end a game of pickup with a free throw (if you even shoot them in pickup). Even in the classic three-person game 21, you have to win with a field goal.

This is just a nitpicky detail, though. As a whole, the new format was unmistakably an improvement, and I would love to see All-Star games just as exciting as this year's in the future.

Point/Counterpoint: Manfred or Goodell, who's worse?

by Mike Mavredakis,
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and Sam Zelin,
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Both the NFL and MLB have huge fanbases, and each one has what it loves and what it loves to hate. For the latter, both can agree on widespread hatred for each league's Commissioner: Roger Goodell for the NFL and Rob Manfred for MLB. This week, Sam Zelin and Mike Mavredakis are here to debate which of these two is the most deserving of all the hate.

Sam Zelin:

Roger Goodell took over from Paul Tagliabue in the summer of 2006, and it's been all downhill from there. Goodell has made it clear over the years that he is in the pocket of the owners, and while, yes, they are the ones paying him, you'd think the person in charge of running one of the most popular sports leagues in the world would be a little more objective. Here, let's go through just a few of the times Goodell has made it blatantly clear that he is never going to be on the side of his players.

First off, in 2013, amid massive criticism of the game of football as a whole due to brain damage of former players, Goodell thought it would be a good idea to put a cap on the amount of compensation that the victims could get from the NFL. Luckily, this totally unethical decision did not make it through the U.S. legal system, and the cap was removed. Next, there's the time he suspended Tom Brady for four games for the DeflateGate scandal and then decided it would be okay to act as the "unbiased arbitrator" in the NFLPA's appeal case. And then, of course,

there's the stance he took on National Anthem protests, where he said that players must either stand or stay in the locker room, with noncompliance being a punishable offense.

The NFL is a business, and if the players are employees of this business, Roger Goodell is a horrible boss. Just to put the icing on the cake, this man makes \$40 million a year, and the highest average salary for a player in his league is \$35 million (Russell Wilson).

I don't know about you,

but I think he should either have to suit up and play for t h a t

money, or we should be talking about a salary cap.

Mike Mavredakis:

While Roger Goodell has been the gold standard for scummy commissioners for over a decade Rob Manfred is right on his tail. Since Manfred took office in January 2015, he has done

everything in his power to make baseball unwatchable.

His introduction of the three-bat-

ter minimum was only his most recent attack on the great game

I grew up watching.

It's a heinous rule that eliminates an element of

strategy from the game in order to save maybe 10 minutes in a game, or 40 if you're a Tampa Bay Rays fan.

His whole philosophy has been to increase the pace of play, so that people

are less likely to turn the game

off for being boring. People who

care about the game won't turn

it off. People turn off the game

because they are hit with a com-

mercial break seemingly every

five to 10 minutes.

Then there's the Houston Astros cheating scandal, which has received widespread, and constant, backlash.

Manfred decided not to punish players

for, among other things, using

cameras to discern the catcher's

signs, and then bang a trash can

to let the hitter know what was

coming. This cheating scandal

likely had a direct impact on

other players' career paths, spe-

cifically young pitchers coming

up from the minor leagues to

face the Astros.

At least Goodell hands out suspensions for cheating scandals, even if they're overblown suspensions. I would like to point out that neither Goodell nor Manfred know what to do about players accused or arrested for domestic violence and

violent crimes — I believe

they should be handed a ban from their re-

spective sports.

Sam Zelin:

I completely agree with the

fact that Manfred has done a bad

job since he took over from Bud

Selig in 2015, but what we're argu-

ing here is who is worse, not whether

or not they're bad in the first place.

Goodell's tenure has been almost a

decade longer, and he's had multiple

chances to improve. Not only has he

botched these opportuni-

ties, but it's arguable that he has

gotten worse over time. The Astros

sign-stealing is Manfred's first big test, and I'm not going to argue that he's dealing with it badly, but Goodell faced a similar situation with Spygate in 2007, and responded with such strict sanctions against the Patriots that they went on to a last place finish in the AFC East. Oh wait, never mind — that was the year that they were a helmet

catch away from the second perfect season ever. Great penalties, Roger! Okay, but if we're going to call that a rookie mistake, Goodell's handling of Patriot

scandal No. 2 in 2015 should have been better. Instead, we got his aforementioned ignoring

of the NFLPA's request for a fair

trial, as he cemented himself as

the judge, jury and executioner

of the NFL. Sure, Manfred

could absolutely build as bad of

a resume in the coming years,

but it's important to remember

that as long as Goodell's in office

he'll be adding to his, and I just

can't see Manfred keeping pace with that.

Mike Mavredakis:

You'd be surprised how much

someone in power can mess

up in five years. Sure Manfred

hasn't had the job for as long,

but he certainly has taken every

chance to do the wrong thing.

Just look at how royally he's

screwed up Player's Weekend,

those black and white jerseys

were atrocious. Then take a sec-

ond to go through his suspen-

sion history.

There's no reason Aroldis

Chapman should have been able to

pitch in the postseason after his

30-game suspension in 2016 for

choking his girlfriend and fir-

ing a gun in his home. There's

no reason he should have a ring

on his finger.

Speaking of championships,

this week Manfred called the

Commissioner's Trophy, which

is given to the winner of that

year's World Series, a "piece of

metal" to ESPN's Karl Ravech.

How disrespectful to the sport

he serves. How tone-deaf can

you be to say that about the tro-

phy named after you?



Images via AP and LinkedIn

Sports

Photo of the Day | Goals on goals on goals



The women's lacrosse team opened their season with a win against Fairfield University with a score of 19-12. Midfielder Sydney Watson (No. 10) led the team in scoring with six goals. Their next home game at the Sherman Family Complex is on Feb. 21 against UMass Lowell. PHOTO BY ERIC WANG, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

UConn in the NBA/WNBA: Walker shines amongst the All-Stars; Husky-for-Husky swap in WNBA

by Richard Goyne
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NBA

With the All-Star Weekend culminating in Sunday's All-Star Game, the only UConn alum involved in the festivities took his opportunity to shine and ran with it ... until he dribbled it out of bounds.

UConn great Kemba Walker started his fourth All-Star Game on Sunday for Team Giannis alongside the reigning MVP, putting up 23 points, with a few assists and rebounds (three of each) sprinkled in as well.

After going 5-for-11 from 3-point land and 9-for-18 from the field, Walker was making a real case to take home the newly christened Kobe Bryant All-Star Game MVP Award, playing well into the minutes restriction he was originally given. Walker claimed it was his decision to play beyond his minutes restriction, and not the fault of coach Nick Nurse.

Unfortunately, in the end, a few late game turnovers and missed 3-pointers took him out of the running, with the award going instead to the Los Angeles Clippers' Kawhi Leonard. However, Walker's 23-point showing was nothing to scoff at, and a good sign for the Boston Celtics that their



Jordan Brand Family Member, Kemba Walker, arrives at the Jordan Brand All-Star Celebration on Friday, Feb. 14, 2020 in Chicago. PHOTO BY OMAR VEGA, AP IMAGES FOR JORDAN BRAND

star point guard has gotten his rhythm back.

Among the other Huskies in the NBA, the Cavaliers' Andre Drummond will be looking to make an impact after playing just two games before the break for his new team.

Drummond is looking to

complete another season as the league's premier rebounder, averaging over 15 per game for the third consecutive season.

The newest member of the Washington Wizards, UConn legend Shabazz Napier, will be looking to carry his ca-

reer-highs in assists (5.1) and points (9.7) per game from Minnesota to his new team where he should see similar minutes in the backup role this time behind Ish Smith.

Finally, Indiana's Jeremy Lamb has recently seen his minutes decrease thanks to

the return of star guard Victor Oladipo to the starting lineup. With a few disappointing efforts going into the All-Star break, the Pacers will be looking for the former Husky to pick it up going into the back-half of what looks to be a promising season for the Pacers, who just got their best player back from injury.

WNBA

Meanwhile during the WNBA offseason, Katie Lou Samuelson was recently dealt from the Chicago Sky to the Dallas Wings, along with a draft pick, for forward Azura Stevens.

The fourth pick in the 2019 WNBA draft played 20 games last season, racking up only 2.5 points per game in her 20 games during an injury riddled season.

Katie Lou now joins her sister in Dallas, as the Wings have added a talented young forward to a team looking to improve upon last season.

Of course, this trade means that former Husky Azura Stevens will be headed to Chicago. The young forward/center only managed to play nine games for her Dallas Wings last season due to a foot injury. The former Husky and All-Rookie will look to make an impact for her new team this coming season.

Which freshmen have helped and hurt their draft stock as the season winds down

by Tamir March
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We're still months away from the NBA draft, but a mere few weeks from the end of the college basketball regular season. Similar to pre-season rankings, draft "experts" compile mock drafts as early as they can, seldom being more than slightly accurate. It's awfully difficult to project draft picks before any of these products have played a college game. We knew that James Wiseman and Anthony Edwards were good in high school, but have they helped or hurt their draft prospects during their (likely) only year in college? This season has been a whirlwind and players everywhere have come into and fallen out of the draft scene.

Anthony Edwards, Stock: Up
Entering this year, everyone was raving about the NBA ceiling of Edwards. He's done nothing to dispel those projections, showing spurts of greatness, highlighted by 33 second half points in Maui



North Carolina's Cole Anthony (2) drives downcourt at Notre Dame's Temple 'T.J.' Gibbs (10) defends during the first half of a NCAA college basketball game Monday, Feb. 17, 2020, in South Bend, Ind. PHOTO BY ROBERT FRANKLIN, AP PHOTO

against Michigan State. He has also been extremely inconsistent, disappearing at times when a weak Georgia team needs him. You can judge him on certain games when he's struggled to shoot the ball, but his willingness to attack downhill cannot be questioned. He passes the eye test with flying colors. He has a jump shot as pure as any (earning Carmelo Anthony comparisons) and off the

chart athleticism. His season has been very up and down but the "ups" have been more than convincing enough for me to believe he's a lock to be the number one overall pick.

Cole Anthony, Stock: Down

Anthony spent the middle portion of this season injured, which is obviously no fault of his own, but he hasn't been able to carry North Carolina when he is healthy.

Granted, this Carolina team is unusually bereft of talent. With a healthy Cole Anthony they are 6-9, which is bad for any ACC team, let alone a blue blood ranked as a consensus pre-season top ten. Anthony is averaging 19.5 points, showing that he isn't a total bust; what is concerning though shooting 35.9% from the floor, including 27.1% from 3. He was nearly a unanimous top 5 pick before the year be-

gan. Now I'd be surprised if he remained in the top 10, despite it being a top heavy draft field. I predict Anthony will go somewhere in the late lottery.

James Wiseman, Stock: ?

Wiseman is an extremely interesting case. He is pretty much still an unknown as he only played three games before being deemed ineligible by the NCAA. Two of those games were against UIC and South Carolina St., so it's difficult to scout from that. It's not as if he disappointed in his short lived college career, averaging 19.7, 10.7 with an unreal 76.9% from the field, but it is such a small sample size. Besides consistent three point shooting, Wiseman has everything you could ask for in an NBA big man; it's just hard to maintain such a high stock without really playing. I really wouldn't be surprised if he goes anywhere in the top five and I don't think anybody would scoff if some team takes a chance on him at one.

See CAREY, p. 9

College freshmen professional outlook ups and downs

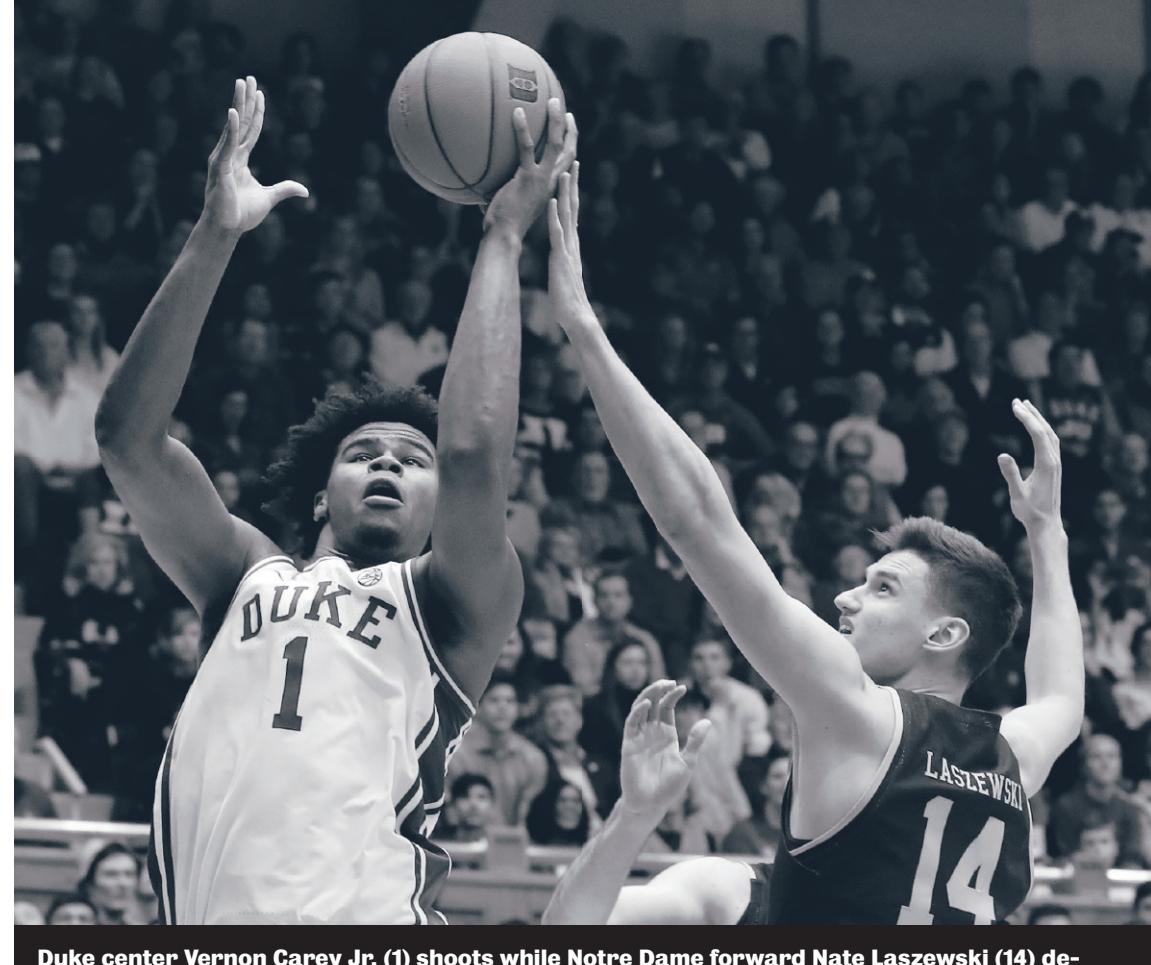
CAREY, cont. from p. 10

Vernon Carey, Stock: Up

Carey is thought of as almost a poor man's Zion Williamson. Slightly taller, same weight both lefties with questions surrounding their shot. Carey isn't the athlete Zion is, but if you look at their numbers at Duke, you certainly see why they draw comparisons. Besides Zion averaging four more points (22.4), the rest of their stats are nearly identical. Shooting extremely well from the two, nine rebounds and two blocks per game. In fact, Carey is shooting a far better 42.9% from the three (on 14 attempts, so take it with a grain of salt). I am not at all saying he will be a surefire or as good as a prospect as Zion. Nobody is, or will be for the foreseeable future. What Carey is though is a more than ready NBA body, with a good touch around the rim and a jumper capable of being developed. I see him anywhere between 15-30 in most mock drafts, but he is easily a top 10 talent.

Isaiah Stewart, Stock: Down

Isaiah Stewart was the ESPN 100 number three recruit headed into his freshman year at Washington. The 6'9" center is slightly undersized for his position, so his ability to stretch the floor and pass was vital to his NBA draft stock. 0.7 assists and 25% from deep isn't convincing many NBA scouts. Stewart and the Huskies started the season on a tear, but that all changed halfway through the season when point guard Quade Green was ruled ineligible by guess who... the corrupt NCAA. Since that point Washington is 1-10 and Stewart has struggled as the team's focal point. His percentage from the field hasn't been terrible, but he has shown an inability to create without Green in the lineup. Stewart would be an easy top 10 pick 15 years ago. But this is a new NBA and Stewart has not shown he fits the mold yet. YET. He still has potential to be a starter one day in a small ball NBA starting lineup. The Rochester native is far from a sure thing though and I don't see a team spending higher than a late first round pick on him.



Duke center Vernon Carey Jr. (1) shoots while Notre Dame forward Nate Laszewski (14) defends during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in Durham, N.C., Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GERRY BROOME, AP PHOTO

Excitement in the American Athletic Conference

TULSA, cont. from p. 12

Tulsa defeated East Carolina 70-56 in Wednesday's final contest. Forwards Martins Igbanu led the Golden Hurricane in scoring with 24 points off the bench, alongside 10 rebounds. Guard Darein Jackson also had a strong impact on both sides of the court, picking up 11 points and five steals. Tulsa now sits at No. 3, half of a game behind Cincinnati.

UCF was unable to avoid the shocker sting, falling to Wichita State 75-58 on Thursday. The difference maker for Wichita would be guard Erik Stevenson's 27 points off the bench. Guard Dexter Dennis also had a positive all-around contribution with five assists and nine rebounds. Guard Matt Milon and forward Collin Smith's 13 points and 12 rebounds were to no avail.

Cincinnati was able to claw itself out of a close contest against the Memphis Tigers to get the 92-86 victory and hold onto second place in the conference. Forward Tre Scott led the team in points with 25 and an astounding 19 rebounds. Guard Jarron Cumberland's 15 points and nine assists, alongside guard Mika Adams-Wood's 14 points, only increased the Tiger onslaught. Despite the loss, forward Precious Achiwa was still able to put up 22 points and grab 17 boards. Guards Lester Quinones and Boogie Ellis had 18 and 19, respectively, as well. The Bearcats will look to stay behind the Cougars, while Memphis will focus on bouncing back.

The pressure only mounted

on No. 20 Houston with SMU pulling off the upset 73-72 win on Saturday. Guards Tyson Jolly and Davis showed up against the Cougars, with 20 and 10 points, respectively. Forward's Isiha Mike and Feron Hunt's contributions only furthered the trail towards victory, putting up a respective 15 points, with Hunt's coming off the bench.

Guard Marcus Sasser had 26 points to keep the game close for the Cougars, along with guard Dejon Jarreau's 15-point contribution off the bench. Houston now hopes to avoid any further slip-ups to ensure they go into The American tournament as the No. 1 seed. The Mustangs sit at No. 4 and will look to continue this form to go into the tournament with momentum.

Saturday also saw Tulsa defeat USF 56-48. Guard Brandon Rachal led the Golden Hurricane in points with 18 as well as six boards. Bull Guards David Collins and LaQuincy Rideau's 14- and 10-point performances were not enough to secure the victory.

Tulsa now sits at 17-8 overall and 9-3 in the conference, while USF falls to 11-14 overall, and 4-8 in the conference.

Sunday saw UConn prevail over Memphis 64-61. Forward Isaiah Whaley took the place of the injured Akok Akok, having an enormous contribution on both sides of the court, with six blocks and seven boards alongside five points. Guards Christian Vital and James Bouknight thrived throughout the match, putting up 23 and 17 points, respectively. Center Josh Carlton also had a big impact on the boards for the Huskies, grabbing 13. Forward Precious Achiwa had 16 points and 13 rebounds, alongside guard Tyler

Harris's 16-point performance off the bench. The journey gets that much harder for UConn, which now has to continue without one of their most influential players, Akok Akok.

No. 15 Villanova defeated the Temple Owls 76-56 on Sunday. The Wildcats, who sit at No. 3 in the Big East, relied on guard Collin Gillespie for most of the team's points, putting up 29 alongside five assists. Forwards Jermaine Samuels and Jeremiah Robinson-Earl also put up 13 and 10, respectively. Guard Quinton Rose had a 22-point performance in the losing effort, with fellow guard Nate Pierre-Louis putting up 16 points and grabbing 10 boards. The Owls now move to 13-12 overall, and 5-7 in the conference. Villanova stands at 19-6 overall and 8-4 in the Big East.

Sunday also saw Wichita State and Cincinnati build on their performances on Thursday to beat Tulane and East Carolina, respectively. The Shockers beat Tulane 82-57 behind guard Dennis's 21 points and nine rebounds, including guard Tyson Etienne's 20-point performance. All of the Bearcats starting five had double digit points in their 70-67 win over the Pirates, with guard Keith Williams and forward Tre Scott's 17 and 14 points, respectively.

The American returns to action on Wednesday, with No. 22 Houston battling it out against a gritty Tulsa squad. SMU faces Tulane, while Cincinnati battles it out against the UCF Knights. Finally, Memphis looks to bounce back against the Pirates. Moreover, UConn will look to continue their winning ways on Thursday as it takes on Temple in Philadelphia.

Ouch: Offshore sports book sets odds for Astros' HBPs

Cleveland right-hander Mike Clevinger, who has been outspoken against the Astros since the cheating scandal emerged, said he doesn't think "it's going to be a comfortable few at-bats for a lot of those boys, and it shouldn't be."

Manfred said there will be no tolerance for such behavior.

"I hope that I made it extremely clear to them that retaliation in-game by throwing at a batter intentionally will not be tolerated, whether it's Houston or anybody else," Manfred said Sunday. "It's dangerous and it is not helpful to the current situation."

But that hasn't stopped speculation that the Astros will be targets of retaliation by upset players.

The Astros were found by Manfred to have cheated during their run to the 2017 World Series and again in the 2018 season.

The investigation found Houston used the video feed from a center field camera to see and decode the opposing catcher's signs.

Players banged on a trash can to signal to

batters what was coming, believing it would improve the batter's chances of getting a hit.

The offshore sports betting website <https://www.SportsBetting.ag> released a variety of prop bets related to the issue of Houston hitters being plunked this week. Behind Bregman, George Springer had the second-best odds of being the Astro to get hit this season.

José Altuve, the 2017 American League MVP, and Carlos Correa also were listed as options to bet on for the Astro who finishes the season with most hit by pitches.

The over/under line for betting with 80 1/2 HBPs this season.

MLB teams were hit an average of

66 times last season, with the New York Mets topping the list at 95.

Bettors can also wager on if the Astros will lead the majors in players hit by pitches this season and on the over/under on how many times an Astro will charge the mound this season, ostensibly after being hit by a pitch.

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Houston Astros infielder Jose Altuve puts on batting gloves during spring training baseball practice Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020, in West Palm Beach, Fla.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF ROBERSON, AP