

Daily

Sports



HUSKIES SEND BLUE DEMONS BACK TO HELL

For the story, see p. 11

UCONN SCOREBOARD

Men's basketball
Saturday



94

60

UPCOMING GAMES



Men's basketball, Friday, 9 p.m.
Madison Square Garden



Baseball, Friday, 3 p.m.
Lubbock, TX

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@uconn
It's gameday in @thegarden! #BETourney
#BleedBlue

TWEETS OF THE DAY

UConn: It's Coming

@NoEscalators

Dave Benedict is basically one of those people who takes a paper clip and starts trading with people and three weeks later they have a house

Hannah Withiam

@HannahWithiam

Patrick Ewing saying "this is my house" after Georgetown's upset of Villanova at MSG is everything.

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Men's Basketball: Huskies take care of business with team effort in Big East quarterfinals

by **Danny Barletta**
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In 1978, Ace Frehley, the guitarist for the rock band Kiss, released a song called "New York Groove" that became a big hit. The chorus of the song goes, "I'm back, back in the New York Groove." Well, that should be the theme song for the UConn men's basketball team after Thursday's 94-60 win over DePaul.

Playing in their first Big East Tournament game at Madison Square Garden since 2012, the Huskies (15-6) made a statement in their return, utilizing their entire roster to win in dominating fashion. Three different players scored 14 points to lead the Huskies: R.J. Cole, Adama Sanogo and Tyrese Martin. Martin also led the team with 10 rebounds for his second double-double of the season.

"Right now, we're just clicking on all cylinders," Cole said after the game. "We have a lot of weapons. That's our strong point. We have a lot of depth. We have a lot of scorers on our team, and right now we're all stepping up."

Literally every player stepped up on Thursday night, as four different players scored in double figures and all 12 Huskies who checked in scored, even walk-on Andrew Hurley (head coach Dan Hurley's son) who knocked down a 3-pointer for the first points of his career.

UConn dominated DePaul (5-14) on the glass 53-32 and grabbed 24 offensive rebounds, which led to 19 more shot attempts than DePaul. That was a key difference, especially in portions of the game when the Huskies weren't shooting extremely well.

"We were tenacious on the glass," Hurley said. "To dominate [DePaul] on the glass the way we did, the way they go after the ball, it's a huge part of who we are. It's a huge part of our identity. Defense and rebounding."

On the defensive end, UConn forced DePaul to play some really poor basketball. The Blue



Connecticut's Isaiah Whaley (5) defends against DePaul's Kobe Elvis during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in the Big East men's tournament Thursday, March 11, 2021, in New York. PHOTO BY FRANK FRANKLIN II, AP

Demons turned the ball over 15 times and shot just 37%.

The game was a little sloppy out of the gate, but UConn always seemed to have control. The Huskies went on multiple runs in the first half to keep the game out of reach from the Blue Demons, the last of which was a 9-0 run capped off by a Cole-to-James Bouknight alley-oop to put UConn up 38-20 with five minutes left in the first half. DePaul would score just two more points the rest of the half, and UConn went into halftime up 45-22.

The second half started with a highlight reel 360 dunk from Martin, and that really set the tone for the rest of the game. The Huskies maintained their dis-

"We feel the excitement. Our fanbase is one of the best in the country, and we're just happy that we're giving them something to be excited about in March again. It's been a while."

DAN HURLEY

tance, and a true team effort resulted in a 34-point win in the Big East quarterfinals. UConn fans had been waiting for a night like Thursday for a long time.

"We feel the excitement," Hurley said. "Our fanbase is one of the best in the country, and we're just happy that we're giving them something to be excited about in March again. It's been a while."

The one concerning part of the game for the Huskies was Bouknight being carried off the court into the locker room in the second half. But Hurley said it was just bad cramps and he should be ready to go for Friday's game.

Next up, the Huskies face their first real test of the tournament with the No. 2 seed Creighton Bluejays, who have already beaten UConn twice this season. But that doesn't mean anything in March.

"We're a different team, we're at full strength," Martin said. "We're probably one of the hottest teams in the country right now, so to beat us, you're going to have to do a lot of things. I don't think that a team right now is gonna do that."

Friday at 9 p.m. on FS1 in what will be UConn's 14th ever appearance in the Big East semifinals, we will get to see if UConn is really back in its New York groove.

Baseball: Huskies set for 4-game series at No. 9 Texas Tech

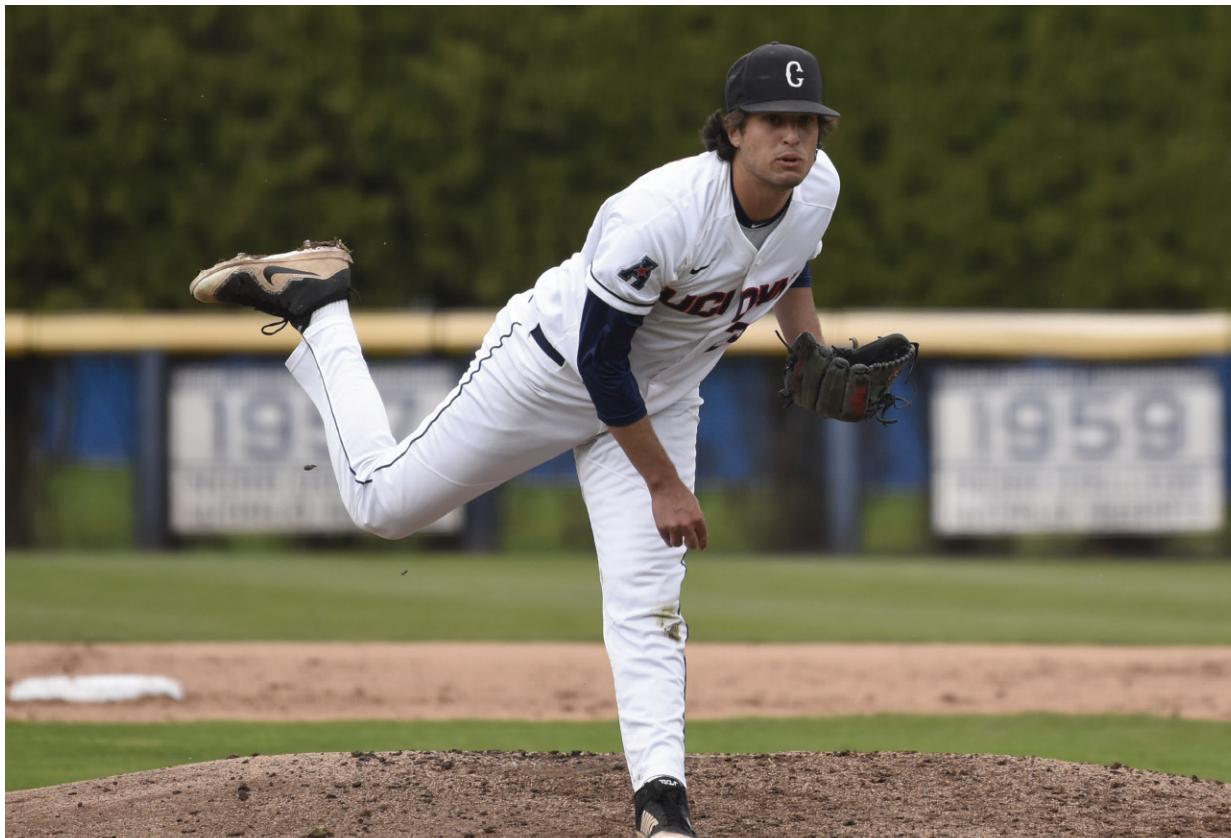
by **Danny Barletta**
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The UConn baseball team split a four-game series in South Carolina last weekend against three solid teams, and it's not getting any easier this weekend. The Huskies will head down to Lubbock, Texas to play No. 9 ranked Texas Tech for four games in four days, from Friday to Monday.

The Huskies (4-6) have had a bit of a rough start to the season, but they've been competitive in every game, as none of their losses have been by more than two runs. Meanwhile, the Red Raiders (10-3) are on fire. After losing three games to start the season against No. 8 Arkansas, No. 6 Ole Miss and No. 7 Mississippi State, Texas Tech has rattled off 10 straight wins, including two this week over Gonzaga.

The Red Raiders have a scary lineup. They're hitting .292 as a team and have five guys hitting over .300. They also have 19 home runs as a team, which is tied for eighth-most in the country. Their best hitter this season has been second-year freshman Jace Jung, who is batting .404 with an absurd 1.367 OPS in his team's first 13 games. He also leads the team with 19 hits, six home runs and 23 RBIs. He will be a bat that UConn's pitching staff will need to be weary of. One of the other top bats for Texas Tech is third-year freshman Cal Conley, who's batting .339 with three home runs and 15 RBIs.

On the mound, left-hander Patrick Monteverde, a grad transfer



In this file photo, UConn baseball takes home a 9-1 win against Central Connecticut State University. This weekend, UConn heads down south to take on No. 9 ranked Texas Tech. PHOTO BY BRANDON BARZOLA, GRAB

from Seton Hill in Pennsylvania, has been their top arm. He has made three starts and has yet to allow a run in 18 innings pitched, notching two wins so far and 23 strikeouts. Another lefty, Mason Montgomery, has also been effective in his three starts, letting up just one run each outing for a 1.80 ERA.

Despite the discrepancy in records, UConn should be able to match up well with Texas Tech. In Friday's game, the Huskies

will look for Ben Casparius to follow up his great outing from last week with another one. He went eight shutout innings, striking out 11 against Miami (Ohio). It will obviously be much tougher to replicate those numbers against a top 10 team, but the Huskies need a good outing from him if they're going to make some noise this weekend.

The reason for that is beyond Casparius, the Huskies haven't gotten great production from

their starters. Joe Simeone has struggled a little bit as the Saturday starter with a 4.91 ERA, and while Austin Peterson has been pretty decent in his two Sunday starts so far, against a lineup like Texas Tech, UConn is going to need more. Monday's performance against Coastal Carolina was a disaster on the mound, so the Huskies need to find more depth especially from their starters in order to have success. UConn also needs a little more

consistency at the plate. Christian Fedko and Reggie Crawford have been awesome, batting .317 and .310, respectively, and Crawford has been killing the ball, slugging five home runs so far this season. But beyond these two, it's kind of been a question mark of who is going to step up. Zach Bushling had a really good series last weekend, and Erik Stock and Pat Winkel have been good, but top to bottom, guys need to be putting better at-bats together. They also need guys like Chris Winkel and Kyler Fedko to break out of their early season slumps.

This is going to be a tough series for the Huskies. There's no doubt about that. But a successful showing against one of the best teams in the country would be a huge confidence boost for a team that's stumbled a little out of the gate. It could turn their season right around. Head coach Jim Penders has been notorious for wanting to play the best teams in the country because "in order to be the best, you have to play the best." This weekend is a prime example of that. If the UConn pitching staff can figure itself out and the bats come alive like we've seen flashes of, this could be a really interesting series.

As far as history between the two squads, there isn't much. The Huskies and Red Raiders have played just one time before, back in February of 2013 in a 1-0 UConn win in 11 innings.

This weekend's games will be at 3 p.m. on all three days, and they can all be seen on ESPN+ or listened to on 91.7 WHUS.

Sports

Photo of the Day | Keep your head on the ball



UConn women's soccer picks up a 1-0 victory over the previously undefeated St. John's University Red Storm on a sunny afternoon in Storrs. Huskies senior Yamilee Eveillard scored the game-winning goal off a header in the 11th minute to help UConn improve to 3-1-1 on the season. PHOTO BY MATT PICKETT, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Women's Soccer: UConn, Eveillard conquer Red Storm, notch home victory

by Jacob Sondik
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Itching to get its first conference victory since their return to the Big East, the UConn women's soccer team (3-1-1, 1-1-1 Big East) took on a red-hot St. John's squad (5-1, 2-1 Big East) that was looking to garner a sixth win in a row. Unfortunately for the Red Storm, UConn and Yamilee Eveillard had other plans as they returned home from a two-game road trip to defend home field on a beautiful Thursday afternoon at Joseph J. Morrone Stadium.

Immediately, the senior from Valley Stream, NY pushed the pace, registering multiple shots in the early minutes of the game off of corners and breakaways that saw her getting past the Red Storm defense with relative ease. After missing the mark with a header, Eveillard nailed a header off of a beautiful assist from sophomore midfielder Jessica Mazo mere minutes later to give the Huskies the early 1-0 lead.

Fresh off of dominating in their first five games by outscoring their opponents 13-2, St. John's offense did not go away quietly once falling behind. Following the Eveillard



UConn women's soccer picks up a 1-0 victory over the previously undefeated St. John's University Red Storm on a sunny afternoon in Storrs, CT. PHOTO BY MATT PICKETT, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

score, the Red Storm had several chances at the net, but the UConn defense continued to bend, not break. An outstanding effort led by breakout star Jacqueline Harnett shut down top goal scorers Jessica Garziano and Zsani Kajan, who came into Storrs combining for seven goals and 18 shots on goal.

St. John's seemed to have the momentum towards the end of the first half of play, continuing to put the pressure on the Husky defense, with several attempts from

their midfielders and forwards that forced pressure on goalkeeper Randi Palacios, notching a save in the first half. However, once the second half was underway, Thursday afternoon belonged to the Huskies.

Refusing to take their foot off of the gas, UConn continued to pressure St. John's with the lead, with several shots coming from exciting newcomers Lucy Cappadonna and Jaydah Bedoya. Bedoya came inches from padding the Husky lead

midway through the second half, but her shot careened high off of the cross bar before landing out of play. UConn was able to push the pace energized by booming kicks from Kess Elmore and Jada Conte, who put UConn in a position to pad their lead and boost their prospects of emerging victorious. While the Huskies primarily controlled the second half, there was no shortage of equalizing attempts out of the undefeated Red Storm.

Palacios had the save of the game

in the 71st minute, as she met and turned away a point-blank shot that flew in off the foot of Kajan. This was the most crucial of Palacio's five saves on the day, notching her fourth clean sheet of the season and second in a row following the draw last time out against Villanova, allowing the Huskies to hold on and continue their home success that is so crucial in the 2021 campaign.

The Huskies were able to hold on for the final 20 minutes of play, handing the Red Storm their first loss in Big East conference play and first overall after starting their season 5-0. After a winless road trip that saw UConn lose and draw, the victory for the Huskies is their first conference win in their return to the Big East, a potential early season-defining victory that will have UConn thick in the competition for a conference crown.

The Huskies look to keep their undefeated record and momentum going at home, as they battle the Seton Hall Pirates at Morrone on Sunday at 12 p.m. For St. John's, they will look to bounce back next time out as they continue their road trip in the nation's capital, taking on the Georgetown Hoyas at Shaw Field on Sunday afternoon.

Women's Lacrosse: Huskies look to continue rolling on the road against UMass

by Nicholas Hellinghausen
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The Huskies (4-1) are coming off an exceptional week, picking up home victories against the University of Albany (4-2) and No. 22 UMass (2-2). Sydney Watson greatly contributed to these impressive victories, tallying 10 goals and 24 draw controls over the course of the two games. The sensational performances by Watson earned her the IWLCA co-offensive player of the week.

The Minutewomen won their only home matchup this season 16-7 against UMass Lowell. In that game, UMass got off to a scintillating start, racking up 14 goals in the first half. Stephanie Croke led the team in scoring against UMass Lowell, recording four goals. A concern for the Minutewomen, however, is that they were only able to generate

two goals in the second half of that game. UMass has gotten off to exceptional starts in all four of their games this season, but have only once produced more than three goals in the second half. When their opponents make adjustments at halftime, the Minutewomen seem to freeze and not execute their game plan as efficiently. UMass will have to play a more complete game if they want to get revenge on the spectacular UConn squad on their home turf.

Watson has been responsible for scoring 21 of the Huskies' goals this season, approximately 28.4% of all UConn's goals in the first five games of the year. She'll look to continue her stellar performances when they travel to Amherst for Game 2 against the UMass Minutewomen. In the first game versus UMass, Watson recorded six unassisted goals, including the tiebreaker in OT.

The Huskies concluded the game against UMass with four more groundballs and three more draw controls. UMass, on the other hand, finished with two more shots on goal and five fewer turnovers.

Game 2 between UConn and UMass will likely be another nail-biter, as both teams are tremendously talented.

Not much separated the two squads on the stat sheet after game one, and I expect that to be the case again on Saturday.



UConn women's lacrosse played a close game and ultimately won 14-11 against University of Albany on March 4, 2021. The game featured five ties and UConn pushed through to the win at the end with junior Lia LaPrise scoring two out of six goals in the second half. PHOTO BY MAGGIE CHAFOULEAS, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

UConn face Providence in team's first ever Hockey East quarter final on home ice

by Tim Keaten

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It has been three years since the Huskies have seen a Hockey East playoff game. The team was set to play the University of Maine at the Alfond Arena last season, but the championship was cut short due to the season's cancellation at the hands of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last time the UConn team threw their hat into the ring for the Hockey East title was during the 2017-18 season when the team finished fifth in the conference. They were knocked out by Boston University and haven't been able to climb back until now.

Things look to be different for the Huskies this year, though. The program has undergone a massive rebuild for a team like this and are now fielding some serious talent and skill. UConn has almost nothing to speak of for college postsea-

son experience, but some of the key freshmen they have brought on this season bring some amount of that with them. Hudson Schandor, John Spetz and Cassidy Bowes all have experience suiting up for postseason games during their time in the junior leagues, experience that is extremely important for a team like UConn. Only three Huskies, seniors Adam Karashik, Brian Rigali and Zac Robbins, have any amount of experience with NCAA postseason play, meaning this will be a first for a massive chunk of the team.

The Huskies are facing constant season opponent Providence College one last time in a single elimination game to move forward in the tournament. Seeds No. 4 and No. 5, the two teams have been battling for the fourth place spot in Hockey East all season long, making this an exciting quarter final matchup for both teams.

There really is no way to predict how this game will go, with both teams being so closely matched and

postseason play having a dynamic shift in feel. The Huskies have beaten the Friars twice this season on home ice, once in December and the last regular game of the season last week. The team lost a game to Providence at an away game in early February. If the Huskies are able to keep up their aggressive style of play and goalkeeper Tomas Vomacka is able to play a good game, UConn have a serious shot at pushing through to the semifinals.

When asked about postseason play, head coach Mike Cavanaugh said, "I don't think there's any difference in how we prepare. We've been playing pretty much the same way all year long. I don't think it makes sense or it would behoove us to completely change our style of play at this point of the season. You dance with the girl you brought, right?"

I know I'll be watching the game this Sunday at 3:30 p.m. on SNY, cheering along in my Huskies jersey, and you should be too.



In this file photo, UConn defeats BU in overtime in the XL Center. This weekend, UConn will host a Hockey East quarterfinal game for the first time in program history when Providence comes to town. PHOTO BY KEVIN LINDSTROM, PHOTO AND VIDEO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

UCONN FIELD HOCKEY TO TAKE ON LIBERTY THIS WEEKEND



In this file photo, the Huskies defeated Fairfield 2-1 in sudden death overtime at the Sherman Family Sports Complex in 2019. This weekend the Huskies will take on Liberty University down in Philadelphia. PHOTO BY KEVIN LINDSTROM, PHOTO AND VIDEO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Tim Keaten

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erty beat out the Monarchs 4-1 and 2-0 that weekend to win the series. The UConn Huskies are coming off of their 3-0 game against the Providence College Friars (0-3).

The last time the two teams met was on Oct. 26, 2019 for a Liberty home game in Lynchburg, where the Huskies beat Liberty 6-3. The teams have played one other time, during the 2016 Big East field hockey championship game, where the No. 1 ranked UConn beat Liberty 3-2.

The Lady Flames are coming off a two-game win against Old Dominion (4-3) at home last weekend. Lib-

McDermott, No. 17 Creighton rout Butler 87-56 in Big East

NEW YORK (AP) — With coach Greg McDermott back on the bench after a one-game suspension, No. 17 Creighton cruised into the semifinals of the Big East Tournament with an 87-56 victory against Butler on Thursday night.

The second-seeded Bluejays (19-7) advanced to face Connecticut or DePaul on Friday night at Madison Square Garden. Creighton is in the semifinals for the third time since joining the conference in 2013 and first time since 2017.

Damien Jefferson scored 11 points in the first eight minutes and Marcus Zegarowski led the Bluejays with 18.

Bryce Nze had 21 points to lead No. 10 seed Butler (10-15), which trailed by 33 in the second half after edging seventh-seeded Xavier 70-69 in overtime Wednesday night.

McDermott was suspended for the final game of the regular season for making racially insensitive remarks to his players. The 57-year-old coach created a firestorm for twice using the term "plantation" as part of an analogy urging team unity after a recent loss.

The university suspended McDermott indefinitely after he coached the team in a loss last week at Villanova. He missed the season-finale victory at home against Butler on Saturday and was reinstated earlier this week.

Five Black Creighton players explained in a short pregame video Saturday why they were hurt by McDermott's words. Zegarowski, who didn't speak in the video, said after the game that McDermott made a mistake but loves and supports all his



Creighton head coach Greg McDermott talks to his players before an NCAA college basketball game against Butler in the Big East conference tournament Thursday, March 11, 2021, in New York. PHOTO BY FRANK FRANKLIN II, AP

players.

McDermott's return went off drama-free as he led his team to an easy victory in a mostly empty MSG, pulling his face mask up and down to periodically give directions.

Creighton scored the first seven points and was never seriously challenged. The Bluejays led by 18 in the first half.

Zegarowski made two 3-pointers within the first two minutes

of the second half and Creighton was up by 20.

BIG PICTURE

Butler: The Bulldogs beat Creighton in mid-January at home, but lost the last two meetings by a combined 51 points. Butler finished with a losing record for the first time since 2013-14, its first season in the Big East.

Creighton: The Bluejays' only real issue came in the first half when Jefferson caught some

friendly fire under the basket. He and teammate Alex O'Connell turned into each other and collided face first. Both players went to the floor and stayed there for a few minutes.

Jefferson had a bloody nose. O'Connell came away in better shape, but both left the game to get checked in the bench area.

Blood had to be mopped from the floor where Jefferson went down. He re-entered after the

under four-minute timeout with a big white wad of what appeared to be gauze or tissue plugging his right nostril.

Didn't seem to bother him much. Jefferson dropped in a corner 3 with 1:18 left in the half to make it 42-24.

UP NEXT

Creighton was a combined 3-0 against UConn and DePaul this season, beating the Blue Demons twice.