

Daily

Sports

Heartbreak in D.C.: Huskies fall in OT to undefeated Georgetown

by Jacob Sondik
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Going into their conference matchup with Georgetown, the UConn women's soccer team looked to build on their biggest win of the season last Sunday, as they traveled to the nation's capital to take on the Hoyas on Thursday afternoon.

The Huskies (3-2-1, 1-2-1 Big East) were forced to battle from behind from the jump, as senior forward Jenna Menta gave UConn a taste of its own early goal medicine that they used to win their last two games, notching her third goal of the season four minutes in. The offensive struggles were a theme for the Huskies in the first half, registering one shot, but still were only outshot 3-1 in the first half as Georgetown went cold immediately following the Menta goal. Goalkeeper Randi Palacios bounced back from the early mistake, saving the other Georgetown shots in the half to keep the deficit at one as the game went to half.

Palacios' afternoon was just getting started, as the Hoyas pestered the UConn goalie with shot after

shot, notching 11 in the second half alone, outshooting the Huskies 11-5, and 15-6 overall in the game. This has been a continuous trend for Georgetown, significantly outshooting their opponents on the season 104-26, an offensive attack that has led to their undefeated start. Along with their suffocating offensive attack on the back of players like Menta and sophomore forward Gina Vicari, the Hoyas came into the game with UConn on the back of star goalkeeper Alyssa Navarette, who had pitched clean sheets in the first six games to anchor a strong defensive unit.

However, Navarette did not start for Georgetown on Thursday, with Lauren Gallagher taking her place instead. After pressing deep into the second half, UConn did what no other team had been able to do against Georgetown thus far in 2021: They put one in the back of the net. The goalscoring for the Huskies thus far has been a collective effort, with different players stepping up each time UConn needed a big goal. This time, it was Jaqueline Harnett for the Huskies, as the sophomore defender notched her first goal of

the season in a much-needed equalizer for her visiting Huskies to even up the game at 1-1 at the 75-minute mark.

UConn would push the undefeated Hoyas into extra time, but only got one shot off the rest of the game following Harnett's strike, as Georgetown's defense locked down to put pressure on Palacios, who had stepped up for the Huskies time and time again throughout the game, and the season. Despite her best efforts, extra time belonged to Menta.

The senior from Somers, New York took matters into her own hands to keep her Hoya squad unbeaten, breaking the hearts of Palacios and the Huskies with her second goal of the game five minutes into extra time, simultaneously snapping the UConn two-game winning streak and pushing their record to 7-0 and 5-0 in conference play. The Huskies will look to bounce back and avenge their early season defeat on Sunday afternoon, as they return home to face the Providence Friars at Joseph J. Morone Stadium to try and hand their Big East rival their second loss of the 2021 campaign.

Field hockey takes down Quinnipiac

by Karthik Iyer
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The UConn Huskies routed the Quinnipiac Bobcats in commanding fashion. The 6-0 victory helped significantly bolster the team's morale after the loss against Liberty University.

The offense kicked into gear early and struck often on the Bobcats' home turf in Hamden, Conn. The first goal was scored at the 9:55 mark by Claire Jandewerth who now has seven on the season. Sophie Hamilton and Aiyi Young displayed great passing and teamwork to feed Jandewerth for the assist. Just a few minutes later with 13:28 on the clock, Hamilton would create some instant offense herself, scoring the second goal of the game unassisted. This goal was the first of her hat trick that led the Huskies in scoring. Erica Solomen also came up big with a score of her own at 26:17 as the recipient of another great pass by Jandewerth.

The Huskies showed out this game. As a team, they racked up 30 shots, 20 of which were on goal. This was in comparison to the Bobcats mustering up just one shot on goal that was saved by Cheyenne Sprecher. Following yesterday's win, Sprecher has now saved 13/19 goals and

helped the Huskies maintain three shutouts this season thus far. A big shoutout must go to the defense as well. UConn also led 14-0 in penalty corner opportunities.

One of UConn's strengths this season has been controlling the tempo of the game and shifting the game to the opposition's side of the field through constant ball pressure and crisp aggressive passing. This knack has allowed UConn to keep the defense in position when the occasional mistake happens on the offensive side of the ball. This has allowed UConn to outshoot opponents by an average of 10.1 shots per game. While UConn already connects on a remarkable 55.7% on their shots, their shooting accuracy gets buffered by the fact that UConn is able to generate this many more goal scoring opportunities than their opponents. This means that a rare poor shooting performance may not definitively ensure a loss. These extra shots ultimately lead to more goals scored and the rest is history. The key is to maintain this pressure against top-tier conference competition. UConn is more than capable.

The Huskies get back to the turf on Sunday, March 21 at 3 p.m. to play Saint Joseph University.

Men's Basketball: Huskies to take on Terps in first round of NCAA Tournament

by Jorge Eckardt
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It's been five years, but the UConn Huskies are finally back in March Madness. After a 15-7 season, including an 11-6 Big East regular-season record and trip to the semifinals in the conference tournament, UConn is a No. 7 seed.

The Huskies find themselves in the East region, taking on the No. 10 Maryland Terrapins in the first round.

"We had two goals going into the season, two major things we wanted to accomplish," UConn head coach Dan Hurley said. "First year back in the Big East we wanted compete at the top of the league. We were able to do that in the regular season ... and then making the NCAA Tournament were really our two main goals for the year. That was a big step forward for our program."

Maryland finished the season 16-13 overall with a 9-11 record in conference play, good for No. 9 in the Big 10. The Terps picked up one win in the conference tournament, beating Michigan State before falling to Michigan, who ended up as the No. 1 seed in the East region.

The Terps' season has had its ups and downs. They've picked up some good wins, including a pair against tournament team Michigan State, one against tournament team Rutgers and one against tournament team Purdue. The best one of all one came against Illinois, now the No. 1 seed in the Midwest region.

However, they've also had their fair share of bad losses. The Terps lost both games vs. Penn State, who finished No. 11 in the conference



Connecticut's Isaiah Whaley, rear, and James Bouknight react during the second half of the team's NCAA college basketball game against Creighton in the semifinals in the Big East men's tournament Friday, March 12, 2021, in New York. PHOTO BY FRANK FRANKLIN II, AP

and lost one to Northwestern who finished No. 12.

The Terps are one of the shorter teams UConn will play this season, regularly running out a starting-five with no player taller than 6-foot-7. In fact, they have just two players on the roster who are 6-foot-9 or taller, and neither of them see any significant playing time if any. Galin Smith, who is 6-foot-9, averaged just 14.2 minutes per game this season — and less than that during the Big Ten Tournament. Chol Marial, who is 7-foot-2, averaged just 6.5 minutes, and hasn't seen the court in over a month.

The Terps rely on a lineup with five players all between either 6-foot-5 and 6-foot-7 in height.

"It's definitely not the type of conventional team you see," Hurley said.

Eric Ayala leads them in scoring, averaging 14.9 points per game on 43.4% shooting from the field and 33.5% shooting from three. Aaron Wiggins (no relation to Andrew) is right behind him, averaging 14.0 points per game on 43.3% shooting from the field and 32.9% shooting from 3.

Nick Albicocco, a writer for the University of Maryland's student newspaper "The Diamondback," shared some thoughts over email on how Ayala and Wiggins are the key to the Terps' chances.

"If Aaron Wiggins and Eric Ayala are shooting well, the Terps will win," Albicocco said. "The two wild cards in my opinion is the play of Donta Scott and the ability to limit Bouknight. The Terps often lack a quality third option and need Scott to step up if Wiggins or Ayala struggle. If he provides at least 12-14 points, Maryland will have a legitimate chance of winning."

Donta Scott — who stands at 6-foot-7 and is the de facto center

of the group — is the only other Terp to average in the double digits, putting up 10.9 points on 49.5% shooting from the field and 43.4% shooting from 3. He also averages 6.1 rebounds, a team-high.

Darryl Morsell, the only senior out of the starters, averages 9 points per game on 48.8% shooting from the field and 26.0% shooting from 3. Morsell also leads the team with 2.8 assists per game and took home Big Ten defensive player of the year honors.

"He has the ability to lock up or at least limit Bouknight and make it a long night for any UConn player," Albicocco said. "While he's not an offensive star, he's much more of a threat than he was as an underclassmen."

Hakim Hart rounds out the starting five, averaging 7.1 points on 44.0% shooting from the field and 33.7% shooting from three.

Jairus Hamilton, the sixth-man

and the only other Terp to see over 20 minutes of action per game, is the tallest of the bunch at 6-foot-8. Hamilton averages 6.8 points per game on 45.7% shooting from the field and 43.9% shooting from 3.

Out of the six main players on Maryland, all of them can shoot the 3 — they do so to varying degrees of effectiveness — but they've all taken at least 50 on the season.

If UConn's going to win, they're going to need to abuse their height advantage. If both Isaiah Whaley and Adama Sanogo start, UConn will have two players standing 6-foot-9 on the court together. Tyler Polley, also 6-foot-9, is a lock to come off the bench, and Josh Carlton, who is 6-foot-11, will also likely see some decent minutes as well.

Aside from R.J. Cole, UConn even has tall guards, with James Bouknight standing at 6-foot-5 and Tyrese Martin standing at 6-foot-6, right on par with the entire Maryland lineup.

UConn's outside shooting has been inconsistent this season, but they have an opportunity to pound the ball inside vs. Maryland and really take advantage of the height they will have.

"The best way the Terps try to counter UConn's height advantage is by starting Galin Smith at the 5 and Donta Scott at the 4," Albicocco said. "These two, along with Jairus Hamilton, are the tallest players in UMD's rotation since Coach Turgeon removed 7'2" Chol Marial from the rotation. The Terps will still be at a height disadvantage but it's their best chance of matching up with UConn."

If the Huskies are to advance, they would face the winner of the matchup between No. 2 Alabama and No. 15 Iona.

UConn SCOREBOARD

Men's basketball



Saturday, 7:10 p.m.
West Lafayette, IN

UPCOMING GAMES



Baseball, Friday, 3 p.m.
Storrs, CT



Women's volleyball, Friday, 6 p.m.
Storrs, CT

Instagram icon

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



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Ghost Mike Toscano
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Since Jim Calhoun took over the program in 1986, UConn does not have a losing record in any round of the NCAA tournament.

R64: 18-2
R32: 14-4
Sweet Sixteen: 10-4
Elite Eight: 5-5
Final Four: 4-1
National Championship: 4-0

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Baseball: Huskies look to end skid this weekend vs. St. Joseph's

by **Danny Barletta**
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The UConn baseball team enters this weekend in a really tough spot. The team sits at 4-10 on the year and has lost its last five games, including a brutal four-game sweep last weekend by Texas Tech.

You can try to excuse the losses to Texas Tech all you want, saying that the Red Raiders are a top-10 team in the country, and while that may be true, being swept in a four-game series is brutal. Especially when you take into account how they lost that final game: back-to-back-to-back home runs in the bottom of the 10th inning. Just brutal.

Two things can happen after a weekend like that. The team can fall down a rabbit hole and let the season turn for the worst, or the team can pick itself back up and use that series as an example for what not to let happen again. Judging by the character of the players and coaches, I think the Huskies will do the latter, and that starts this weekend against St. Joseph's (4-0).

The Hawks started their season just over a week ago and have only played four games, but they're undefeated. So even though this team may not have the stature of Texas Tech, UConn is going to have to play really well to beat them.

The Hawks have some really good bats. They've scored in double figures in three out of their four games, and they've hit 11 home runs in that span. St. Joseph's has a team batting average of .321 and there are more hitters batting over .300 to this point (eight) than under (six). That doesn't bode well for a UConn pitching staff that has been, for lack of a better word, really bad.

The UConn pitchers have a com-



In this file photo, UConn baseball takes home a 9-1 win against Central Connecticut State University. This weekend, the Huskies will take on St. Joseph's. PHOTO BY BRANDON BARZOLA, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

bined 5.78 ERA, and last weekend it was even worse. That isn't good enough to win most games at this level. And against players like Brandon Drapeau, Nate Thomas, Brendan Hueth and Luca Trigiani — all of whom are batting at least .389 with seven home runs combined — it really won't be good enough. Both the starters and the relievers for the Huskies need to get better on the mound. That's where it begins.

Offensively, UConn really hasn't been too bad, especially in the last couple of weekends. Kyler Fedko finally found his groove after a slow start, Zach Bushling and Kevin Ferrer have been swinging the bat really well and the stalwarts of the lineup like Reggie Crawford and Pat Winkel are always danger-

ous. They should be able to do well this weekend against a St. Joseph's pitching staff that also has an ERA in the 5.7 range.

The Hawks have won their games so far despite their pitching staff, not because of them. If the Huskies can get ahead early in the games this weekend, that will be huge to give their pitchers a cushion. Both these teams come in with similar track records this season: dangerous lineups and lackluster pitching. Something has to give this weekend, and the Huskies are hoping it's a turnaround for them.

The games will be at 3 p.m. on Friday, 2 p.m. on Saturday and 12 p.m. on Sunday at Smithson Field in Philadelphia. The games can be watched on ESPN+ or listened to on MIXLR.

MEN'S SOCCER PREVIEW: UCONN LOOKING TO END SHUTOUT STREAK, GET A WIN AT HOME VERSUS ST. JOHN'S

by **Ben Berg**
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It's been over a month since the UConn men's soccer team (1-2-1, 0-2-1 Big East) won a game, with their last victory being a 3-0 shutout of Sacred Heart on the opening day of the season. Now, UConn is preparing to host the St. John's Red Storm (4-4, 2-4 Big East) on Saturday, March 20 with the hopes of getting back in the win column.

Historically, the matchup between the Huskies and the Red Storm has been relatively even. UConn holds an all-time record of 14-16-5 versus St. John's with a 4-5-1 record in their last ten meetings. That being said, UConn has lost two consecutive games to their division rival, including when the Huskies were shut out 2-0 versus St. John's earlier in the season. However, UConn's 12-6-1 home record versus St. John's is reason for optimism.

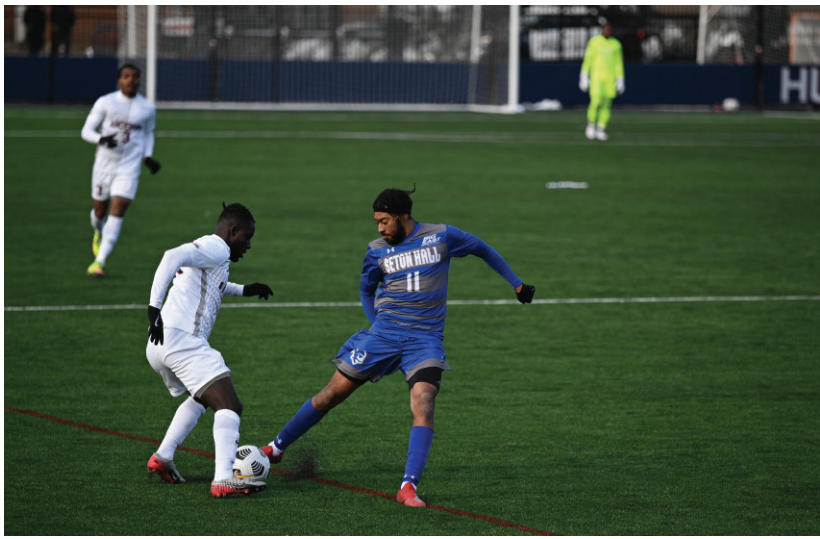
The primary reason UConn finds themselves on an 0-2-1 slide

since opening day is they've struggled mightily putting the ball in the net. They've been shut out in three straight games and haven't scored in 285 minutes of game action. Sophomore Ben Awashie is the only UConn player with multiple points this season (two assists).

Another reason UConn has only one win on the season is because they've played only four games compared to St. John's eight. They have not played since March 6, while the Red Storm have played four games since then.

St. John's also finds themselves in somewhat of a backslide, having lost two straight games by a combined score of 4-2. However, if UConn wants to have any chance of winning, they will need to contain junior midfielder Tani Oluwaseyi, who has a remarkable 13 points this season, including five goals.

Saturday's game will begin at 2 p.m. Eastern at the Joseph J. Morrone Stadium.



In this photo, the UConn Huskies are held to a 0-0 draw by the Seton Hall Pirates during an intensely cold afternoon on March 3. This weekend, the Huskies will host St. John's. PHOTO BY KEVIN LINDSTROM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Women's Basketball: Huskies kick off tournament run with matchup against High Point

by **Conner Gilson**
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The moment everyone has been waiting for is finally here. It's time for March Madness. And call it COVID-brain or the Paige Bueckers effect, but after earning a No. 1 seed for the first time in three years, many believe this UConn roster has what it takes to go the distance.

But a team can't make it anywhere in this tournament if they don't take care of business early, which is exactly what the Huskies (24-1, 18-0 Big East) will need to do when they take on the No. 16 High Point Panthers in their opening round matchup Sunday night.

UConn will have to do it without head coach Geno Auriemma as he recovers from a positive COVID-19 test he received last Sunday, but assistant head coach Chris Dailey boasts a perfect 10-0 record in Auriemma's absences, and will be coaching a Huskies group that believes it's playing its best basketball as of late.

Coming off a dominant performance in the Big East Tournament that saw UConn outscore their opponents 234-119, the Huskies are clicking on all cylinders at just the right time.

Paige Bueckers leads the way for this team on the offensive end, pacing UConn in points (19.7), assists (6.1) and steals (2.3) per game. Along with her Big East Freshman and Player of the Year Awards, the freshman also earned the Big East Tournament's Most Outstanding Player honor after putting up an average of 19.3 points and five assists in UConn's three games.

Bueckers — who was also just named a finalist for the Naismith



Connecticut's Paige Bueckers, right, dances over to teammates while celebrating an NCAA college basketball game win in the Big East tournament finals against Marquette at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn, in this Monday, March 8, 2021, file photo. Bueckers has made The Associated Press All-America first team, announced Wednesday, March 17, 2021. PHOTO BY JESSICA HILL, AP

Player of the Year Award — controls this offense on a nightly basis, but even when she has off nights (which are few and far between), the Huskies have the depth to cover for her, with

Christyn Williams (15.8), Olivia Nelson-Ododa (12.5) and Aaliyah Edwards (10.2) all able to put up points in bunches.

What makes this UConn team so special, however, is their defense.

In their last 14 games since losing against Arkansas back in late January, the Huskies have given up more than 60 points to opponents just three times while holding opponents under 50

eight times. This is in large part due to the defensive prowess of Williams and Nelson-Ododa.

Williams has established herself as one of the better on-ball defenders in the Big East and perhaps the nation, holding St. John's, Villanova and Marquette's top scorers to a combined 12 points on 5-33 shooting in the conference tournament. Auriemma lauded Williams' effort, saying the Huskies are a championship team if the junior can continue to play defense like that.

And on the rare occasion players get by Williams, Nelson-Ododa is there to clean up the mess. Leading UConn in rebounds (7.8) and blocks (1.8), the junior has proven herself to be one of the best rim protectors in the country, forming an impenetrable force when combined with Williams' perimeter D. Both will need to be clicking against a red-hot High Point team.

The Pirates have won nine of their last 10 games — including a Big South Tournament win that earned them the No. 16 — scoring at least 70 points in eight of them. On the offensive end they are led by Skylar Curran, who leads the team in scoring (17.9) and rebounds (7.2), while Jensen Edwards paces the team on defense with just under a steal per game.

Both offenses have the ability to get rolling early — High Point puts up over 72 points per game — but the Pirates' tallest active player stands at just 6-foot-2, so look for UConn to take control of the interior with 6-foot-5 Nelson-Ododa and 6-foot-3 Edwards running the show.

This game will serve as a fine test for the Huskies as they attempt to make a run toward national title No. 12. Tipoff for this one is set for 8 p.m. Sunday night and can be viewed on ESPN.

Photo of the Day | Oh look a snowflake



The Huskies won 5-0 against Seaton Hall with two of five goals scored by midfielder Jessica Mazo (6) on March 14, 2021. PHOTO BY ERIN KNAPP, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Softball: Huskies return to Big East play against Creighton

by Cole Stefan
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For the first time in eight seasons, the Huskies will be playing a Big East conference game. The long-awaited return starts with a team that was not in the Big East when they left in the Creighton Bluejays.

The Huskies (7-9) will look to gain more momentum after beating the winless Rhode Island Rams 10-7 on Wednesday afternoon. The offense got going early and the defense maintained the lead for the rest of the way.

Sophomore Meghan O’Neil pitched that entire game and has shown strong improvements this season. O’Neil has started seven games, going 4-2 with a 3.04 ERA on 14 walks and 19 strikeouts through 53 innings of work so far.

Working alongside her to create a dangerous stable is freshman Payton Kinney, who could possibly be in Rookie of the Year conversations. Through nine starts in 12 games, Kinney is 3-7 with a 2.93 ERA having gone 59.2 innings so far. In those 59.2 innings, Kinney has walked 32 and struck out a whopping 58 batters, which is tied for the lead in the conference.

Each pitcher has allowed over 30 runs, but about 25 of them have been earned against some serious competition. In addition, each pitcher has thrown four complete games and has allowed five home runs. Look for them to dominate the opposition right from the start.

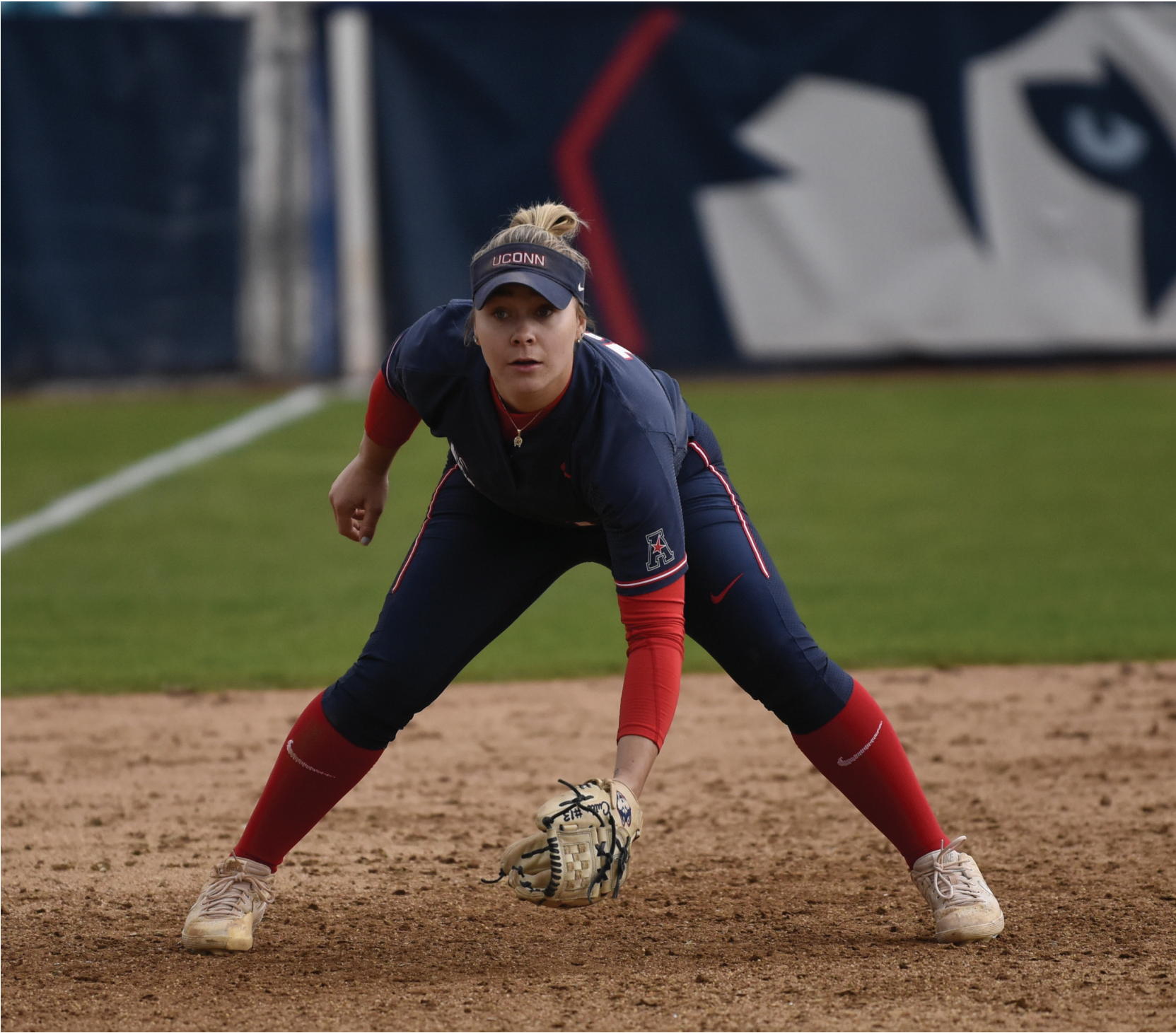
On the offense, the tale of the tape has been both veteran experience at the top of the lineup and the plethora of freshman filling out spots when necessary. In Wednesday’s win over the Rams, the Huskies started five freshmen.

Starting with the veterans, red-shirt junior Hollis Wivell’s red-hot bat is leading the way with a .357 batting average. Speed is also the name of the game as her nine stolen bases on 10 tries is second on the team to junior Aziah James, who has stolen 12 bases on 13 tries.

James’ speed makes her a solid second hitter in the lineup behind leadoff slugger Reese Guevarra. Guevarra, a senior, is second among qualified hitters on the team with a .322 average and has plated in seven runs on 19 hits, the latter of which leads the team.

Senior Brianna Marcelino is also playing a strong part as her four home runs, 11 runs batted in and 13 runs lead the team. She is a power bat that many teams must look out for as this senior is raking this season.

As for the freshmen to look out for, Taylor Zatyk and Jana Sanden



In this file photo, UConn softball takes home a 2-1 win against Quinnipiac University. This weekend, the Huskies will take on Creighton in their return to Big East play. PHOTO BY BRANDON BARZOLA, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

have been the main stars on this squad as they have played in every game. Together, they have 29 hits and 16 runs batted in. Also look out for Lauren Benson and Madisyn Estorga to get some consistent playing time this weekend as well.

The Bluejays (6-5) meanwhile, have played less games, but could be a dangerous team to look out for. For starters, the Bluejays, coming off a strong series against the Providence Friars, have 11 freshmen and six sophomores that give them serious depth for the future.

Leading the way offensively by a wide margin however is senior Ashley Cantu. Her .514 batting average (that is not a typo) leads the entire conference and is miles ahead of the next best player in sophomore Kailey Wilson, whose

.368 average is next in line while her three homeruns and 12 runs batted in lead the team. Wilson is currently on a 10-game hitting streak. Out of the 19 hits that Cantu has so far, she has legged out two triples and driven in five runs.

Some other Bluejay hitters to look out for are sophomore Sam Alm (.344), freshman Cayla Nielsen (.333) and sophomore Kiara Mills (.320), all of whom have brought serious production to the plate whether that is with power or with hitting for average.

The Bluejays have this strong mix of hitting, but what about on the mound? The Bluejays have three solid pitchers they can rely on to start one game each this weekend. This stable is something to keep an eye out for in the weeks to come.

Up first is sophomore Mikayla Santa Cruz, whose 2.67 ERA is the lowest on the team. Santa Cruz, who is 2-1, has thrown two complete games and allowed 13 runs (seven earned) on 21 hits through 18.1 innings pitched. She has also struck out 15 and walked 17.

Next is senior Parker Boyd, who has been a workhorse this season. She has started six games and has thrown a complete game in half of those starts. Through 35.1 innings, she has a 4.16 ERA having walked 18 and striking out 29 batters despite allowing 23 runs (21 earned).

Finally, there is freshman Jena Lawrence, who is starting to make a name for herself this season. She has been used mainly as a relief pitcher but has started one game this season and she may add a second this weekend. Through 11.2

innings, Lawrence has allowed 10 runs (eight earned) for an ERA of 4.80 while walking seven and striking out nine.

One could say that the pitching is relatively equivalent for both teams and could possibly be a matchup to look out for.

Unlike previous weekends, this is the only team the Huskies will face before heading back for their first home games of the year. The Huskies lost their previous matchup with the Bluejays back in 1991 and will look to take a 3-1 series lead after this weekend.

The Huskies will take on the Bluejays in a doubleheader on Saturday with the first game starting at 1 p.m. EST and the second game starting at approximately 3 p.m. EST. The two teams will wrap up their series on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. EST.

Women’s Lacrosse: UConn looks to rebound vs. Marquette

by Evan Rodriguez
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After a devastating end to their four-game win streak, UConn is looking to rebound Friday at 5 p.m. against the Marquette Golden Eagles. This is the Huskies’ first match against the Golden Eagles since 2018 when Marquette took the win in a 15-14 final score.

In their previous matchup versus UMass, UConn took a disappointing 15-14 overtime loss with the deciding goal in that game scored with just two seconds left in overtime. The Huskies are undoubtedly determined to redeem themselves against Marquette in this matchup.

This game will be UConn’s official return to the Big East Conference after playing the last two seasons in the American Athletic Conference. This will be a set of two games the Huskies will play against Marquette, with the second game occurring on Sunday at 1 p.m.

After a brilliant performance against UMass that included four goals, Kate Schafer was named the Big East Attacker of the Week and will look to replicate that fantastic performance. After a small two-goal performance, senior Sydney Watson will look to continue to impress in this matchup vs. Marquette. Watson continues to lead

the Huskies in points this season with 25 and draw controls with 57. Landyn White has been vital for the Huskies this season with a Big East-leading 52 saves.

Marquette, like UConn, was also on a solid winning streak before falling to No. 19 Louisville. The Golden Eagles are in the same position as the Huskies and are looking to redeem themselves. Megan Menzuber is the leading point scorer this season for the Golden Eagles at 27 and assist leader at eight. Menzuber will undoubtedly be a tough cover for the Huskies defense and a primary target in coach Meredith Black’s game plan. Lydia Foust is another dangerous weapon on Marquette’s offensive game plan at 20 points on the year, and Caroline Steller is only one behind at 19. Sophia Leva has been very effective for the Golden Eagles, at 45 saves on the year, and will be tough to score on for the Huskies. Without a doubt, Marquette should pose a significant threat for UConn in this two-game matchup.

With UConn and Marquette being neck and neck in offense this season, this game should come down to draw controls and defense. In draw controls, UConn most certainly has the upper edge thanks to Watson. To win this difficult matchup, the Huskies will need their defense to step up against a difficult Marquette offense.



In this file photo, UConn women’s lacrosse battled to a 12-11 victory over No. 22 UMass on March 7, 2021. This weekend, UConn will take on Marquette. PHOTO BY MATT PICKETT, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Celtics Weekly Report: 40 games in, trade deadline looming, and the Time Lord’s time?

by Dylan Haviland
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Welcome back to the Weekly Celtics Report. After a short break, we return to talk about the plight of our Boston Celtics through 40 games, the looming trade deadline and the arrival of a possible 6-foot-8 hero.

20-20 through 40

Yes you read that right, the Boston Celtics are 20-20 through 40 games this season. Many analysts had the Celtics as a top-10 team this year heading into the season following an impressive Eastern Conference championship run in the bubble. However, 40 games into a 72 game season, the Celtics sit perfectly at .500 on the season, and despite both Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum being All-Stars this season they still struggle to score and defend when it matters most. In the games against the Utah Jazz and the Cleveland Cavaliers this week, the Celtics lost the game in the fourth quarter, where their defense fell apart and was unable to produce stops, while their offense fell into the same Brown and Tatum isolation plays that we have seen all year. This season in the fourth quarter, the Celtics have the second-lowest net rating in the NBA, only above the same Cavaliers that they just lost to on Wednesday.

While I’ve been panicking all season about their play, 40 games is more than enough of a sample size to prove to me that this team is not good enough to be a top-four team in the eastern conference, let alone good enough to be a winner in this league. This team doesn’t have the chemistry they need to make a deep run in the playoffs, and even general manager Danny Ainge agrees. On his weekly interview Thursday on 98.5 The Sports Hub’s “Toucher and Rich,” Ainge noted that “it just seems like we don’t have a lot of characteristics of a really good team, for sure, we have some talented guys but our team right now is not playing as well as we had hoped.” With the March 25 trade deadline approaching, the C’s need to decide if they are going to be aggressive and make an impactful trade at the deadline, or resign themselves to an average team and wait for the offseason to make their moves.

The shadow of the deadline

If the Celtics decide to be aggressive at the deadline, they have plenty of options to bring in. With a his-



Houston Rockets forward Anthony Lamb (33) and center Justin Patton (26) battle with Boston Celtics center Tacko Fall (99) for the ball during the second half of an NBA game Sunday, March 14, 2021, in Houston. PHOTO BY BRETT COOMER, AP

torically large trade exception, and some young pieces that might interest some rebuilding teams, I would hope that the Celtics are players for big names in the coming weeks.

I have been on the Harrison Barnes train all season, and even more so now with the Kings looking awful and the deadline rapidly approaching. This would be the best time for Ainge to steal Barnes from Sacramento, as the Kings forward has been great off the bench this year for them, averaging 16.6 points, 6.2 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game. His 36.7% shooting from 3 this year is also impressive, and add to that his good defense and the Celtics will finally have a good bench wing to help relieve some of the pressure for Brown and Tatum.

Another name linked to the team as of late is Orlando Magic center Nikola Vucevic. The All-Star center has averaged 25 points, 11.6 rebounds and 3.7 assists per game on a terrible Magic team ravaged by injuries. While his value is high, I do believe it is possible to get him to Boston, where he would thrive as a

playmaking big who can pick and pop with Brown and Tatum and provide outside shooting with his 41% shooting from three.

Finally, Atlanta Hawks forward John Collins could be a great fit for a young Celtics team in need of height. The 6-foot-9 forward has been averaging 18 points and 7.8 rebounds per game while shooting 53% from the field and 37.3% from 3. While his playmaking value is much lower than Barnes or Vucevic, he brings a level of defense that is much higher than either of them, and against bigs like Joel Embiid and Giannis Antetokounmpo in the East, his skills would prove valuable for a team in need of frontcourt defense.

While all of these trades would be significant upgrades over what the team has now, there is no promise that Ainge will pull the trigger on a trade before the deadline. The last time he made an in season trade, let alone a deadline deal, was the 2015 season, so we will have to wait and see if this season’s performance has changed his strategy in any way.

It’s time for the Time Lord

I would like to start off this section by giving a sincere thanks to Daniel Theis and Tristan Thompson for their services this season, but with all due respect, it’s time for the Time Lord to take over.

Robert Williams III has been on a tear in the second half of this season, providing rebounding, defense, absurd blocks and energy on both ends and even playmaking. While Theis is a better shooter than him undoubtedly, he is outperformed in nearly every other category. Williams has a knack for knowing when to cut off of a screen and roll, and his incredible athletic ability means he is a constant lob threat over the top. In limited minutes this season, he’s averaging nearly two blocks a game and what feels like a million alley oops, but that is not all. As we saw Wednesday against the Cavs, Williams and Pritchard were key to breathing life back into the lazy and uninterested Celtics and played a key part on both ends of the floor in the C’s nearly leading a great fourth quarter comeback. He gives the stars an

energy that no one else on the team except for Marcus Smart can, and he forces the ball to move around even when Brown and Tatum enter hero mode. In only 16 minutes a game this year, he’s averaging 7.5 points, 6.4 rebounds and 1.2 assists with 1.7 blocks per game. If we look at his per-36 numbers, where we increase his minutes and assume the same output for 36 minutes a game, his stats would elevate to 16 points, 13.7 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 3.7 blocks per game. Now this is probably a high estimate on what his production would be, but even if his stats were slightly lower than this it would be a huge improvement over the production they are getting from either Theis or Thompson at center.

That will be all for this week’s edition of our Celtics report. Next week we’ll look at the start of a brutal stretch of five games in seven days for the Celtics, including a matchup against the No. 3 Milwaukee Bucks, as well as break down any trades or non-trades as we approach the trade deadline.