Daily Sports

Big East Baller Update

No. 5: St. John's jumps UConn as league's best team

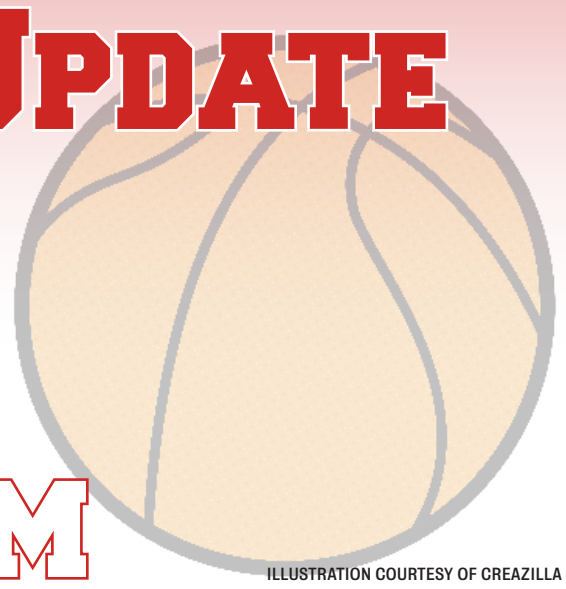


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On Friday night, St. John's got the best of UConn in the most anticipated game of Big East play. Although the Huskies are still ranked higher and remain in first place by a half game, the Johnnies have proven they remain the team to beat.

Weekly Awards

Player of the Week: Jaylin Sellers, guard, Providence (28.5 ppg, 4 rpg, 1 apg, 3.5 spg, 60.7 FG%, 56.3 3P%, 82.4 FT% in two games)

Sellers earns Big East Player of the Week honors after leading Providence to a 2-0 week with wins over Butler and DePaul. The graduate student from Columbus, Ga., shot 17-of-28 from the field in the two games, including a 36-point performance against Butler. The Friars won in a double overtime thriller, with Sellers making 11–of 20 shots, with six of the baskets from beyond the arc. Sellers was just as efficient in the win over DePaul, scoring 21 points on only eight field goal attempts.

Freshman of the Week: Acaden Lewis, guard, Villanova (18.5 ppg, 6 apg, 3 rpg, 2.5 spg, 60.9 FG%, 50 3P%, 55.6 FT% in two games)

Last week, I claimed that Marquette's Nigel James Jr. was a lock for the Big East All-Freshman Team. Joining him on that team is Lewis, a frontrunner for Big East Freshman of the Year. He shone in a 2-0 week for Villanova, including a 26-point performance against Georgetown, a season-high for the highly touted freshman from Washington, D.C. To make his performance even more impressive, 17 of those points came in the back end of the second half. Following that, Lewis had an 11-point, six-assist performance in a home win over Seton Hall.

Best game last week

Sellers leads Providence to double overtime win over Butler, 97-87

The Friars may be in the midst of a dismal season, but this win will be remembered for years to come. Sellers, as mentioned above, had a career-high 36-point performance. In addition to that, Stefan Vaaks had 20 point and Ryan Mela had a 14-point, 10-rebound double-double. Vaaks tied the game on a free throw with 21 seconds to go. Butler had a chance to win it, but Finley Bizjack missed both free throws to send the game to overtime. In the winding seconds of the first overtime, Mela fired a pass to Nilavan Daniels, who knocked down a corner 3 to give Providence the lead with 18 seconds left. In a one-point game, Butler's Michael Ajayi missed the first free throw and made the second to force a second overtime period. The Bulldogs would run out of gas in the second overtime, with the Friars outscoring Butler 15-5.

Best games this week

Providence at Seton Hall (Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Peacock)

Providence is coming off a perfect 2-0 week, while Seton Hall is eager to rack up wins to put itself on the right side of the bubble. Providence is not a quality win, but Seton Hall's bubble might burst if the Friars upset the Pirates at The Rock on Wednesday night.

No. 17 St. John's at Providence (Saturday, 1 p.m., TNT/truTV)

The Friars are pesky, which makes this game especially tough for St. John's. The Red Storm are coming into the week red-hot (this is being written before the Xavier game). Two incredibly talented teams, plus Rick Pitino's annual homecoming to Providence. This will be a fun one to watch.

Villanova at Creighton (Saturday, 2:30 p.m., FOX)

UConn, St. John's and Villanova have separated themselves as the only teams likely to go to the NCAA Tournament. However, Creighton can do some damage to their resumé on Saturday. This is not Greg McDermott's best team, but most teams find the Creighton road game to be one of the toughest, regardless of how good the Bluejays are.



The UConn Huskies take on the St John's Red Storm at Madison Square Garden in New York City on Feb. 6 , 2026. Despite a close game, the Huskies lost 72-81.
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