Daily Sports

Women's Basketball:

No. 1 UConn clinches 25th Big East regular season title

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For a program that uses its 12 national championship trophies as doorstops deep within the innards of its home arena, winning the Big East Regular Season Championship doesn't come with much hoorah for the UConn women's basketball team.

It's status quo, after all, even if Wednesday's 83-69 victory over second-place Villanova (21-6, 14-4) gave the Huskies (28-0, 17-0) their 25th Big East regular season crown and 61st conference title overall.

There are still things to "clean up," as Geno Auriemma cryptically alluded to last week.

Getting spunky freshman Blanca Quiñonez back from a nagging shoulder injury will certainly help in those janitorial endeavors... eventually, at least.

But after missing six consecutive games, Quiñonez will need time to readjust to the lineup – that was evident early on Wednesday. The freshman subbed in for Serah Williams at the 6:12 mark and turned the ball over twice before the first media timeout.

Quiñonez's early woes contributed to UConn's sloppy offensive start, which Villanova took advantage of to take a lead into the first media timeout.

Luckily the top-ranked Huskies have Naismith candidates Sarah Strong and Azzi Fudd to lean on in times of offensive hardship. The two potential All-Americans combined for 14 of UConn's 19 first quarter points and were the catalysts in the Huskies' come-from-behind effort in the first half.

Strong and Fudd combined for 46 points on 19 field goals, 15 rebounds, eight assists and seven steals in the come-from-behind win over the conference's second best team, looking every bit the part of the all-world duo they've been billed as.

But Villanova, much like Marquette did on Saturday, instituted an early breakneck tempo in an attempt to outnumber the Huskies in transition. The Wildcats pushed the ball in transition and forced Connecticut bigs to burn fouls under the rim, leading to open looks from the perimeter for Jasmine Bascoe and forward Denae Carter.

The Wildcats, despite a moribund 17 first half turnovers (partially offset by 12 UConn giveaways), led by three points at the break after Bascoe notched her 18th point of the half at the charity stripe.

Outside of herculean efforts from Strong and Fudd, the Huskies struggled to produce offensively; Villanova was denying passes to bigs down low and trapping on passes to the wing.

It was Ashlynn Shade who helped dig Connecticut out of its 5-point hole early in the second quarter, slicing to the elbow and hitting on contested elbow jumpers to whittle the deficit.



UConn women's basketball team playing a home game against the Creighton Blue Jays at Gampel Pavilion. The Huskies dominated the game, winning 94-44. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Shade, one of two Huskies to appear and start in all 28 games so far this season, finished with 13 points on 5-of-11 shooting and corralled six boards in 37 minutes.

But the Wildcats, headed by Bascoe, would punch back after every Husky make, both from 3 and at the rim. Villanova led for over 16 minutes in the first half and never allowed UConn to settle offensively, pressuring the ball and double-teaming Strong. The Cats took a 40-37 lead into the locker room and held UConn to a 13-of-32 mark from the field and minus-5 mark on the glass (22-17).

It took Fudd less than 15 seconds to tie the game out of the half on a catch-and-shoot 3-pointer from corner. It took KK Arnold, UConn's most energetic defender, 10 more seconds to grind down the shot clock and force Bascoe's most wayward response of the night on the ensuing possession.

Strong and Shade added two tough buckets on the next two Husky possessions, Williams finished an and-1 opportunity at the rim, and Connecticut had its largest lead of the night (7) less than two-and-a-half minutes into the second half.

And it would last – and grow – without Strong, who exited before the third quarter media timeout after picking up two fouls in eight seconds to give her four personals.

That's when Quiñonez came alive. A driving lay-in from the freshman at the 5:23 mark extended Connecticut's lead back to six, and after Shade added two at the charity stripe, Quiñonez found the bottom of the net again with a powerful step-thru to force a Villanova timeout.

But it was Fudd who threw the haymaker – ironically on the offensive glass, of all places. The graduate plucked Arnold's missed free throw out of the air and hurled it to Allie Ziebell, who canned a triple to extend UConn's lead to double digits for the first time all night in the final minute of the third.

The Huskies never surrendered the lead after that, flexing it to as large 21 points and running away from the pesky Wildcats with bottlenecking defensive pressure, ultimately downing the Wildcats SCORE.

UConn is next in action Sunday, when Providence comes to Gampel Pavilion for Senior Day at 12 p.m.

Men's Basketball:

No. 6 UConn falls to Creighton at home for second consecutive year

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Dan Hurley called for Gampel Pavilion to be a "mad house" after a disappointing showing from his home crowd against Georgetown on Saturday.

While Hurley got the live environment he was hoping for, it was not enough, as No. 6 UConn suffered its second conference loss of the season to Creighton, 91-84.

The Huskies (24-3, 14-2) fell to the Blue Jays (14-13, 8-8) at their on-campus venue for the second year in a row. UConn has never pulled off a regular season sweep over Creighton.

The Blue Jays did not shy away from the raucous crowd. Creighton exposed the Huskies' defense on the wing and consistently got downhill to the basket. The Blue Jays shot 47.6% from three with 10 makes from beyond the arc.

Josh Dix and Nick Graves led the scoring effort with 19 and 18 apiece. Head coach Greg McDermott called it a "perfect game" from his offense.

UConn's undoing came during a nine-minute stretch in the second half where the team made just two shots on 16 attempts. The lull allowed Creighton to turn a four-point deficit into a 10-point lead with 41 seconds left in the game.

One of the Huskies' biggest struggles this season has been fouling. Solo Ball got into foul trouble in the first half which kept him from finding a rhythm, after finishing with twenty in each of his past two games.

Braylon Mullins had Gampel Pavilion in a frenzy. The five-star freshman laced his first triple of the night just before halftime to tie the game 45-45. He picked up right where he left off after the break with another three pointer to take the first lead of the second half.

Mullins continued to unleash a barrage of three pointers, each generating a louder pop than the last.

Tarris Reed Jr. was unstoppable in the first half, missing just one of his seven attempts from the field. Creighton was able to shut him down in the second half. Reed was held to just two points after halftime, totaling 15 on the game.

Hurley has recently challenged his bench to step up and earn its minutes. The Huskies' second unit is averaging just over 13 points per game since the start of conference play.

Malachi Smith got the crowd on its feet in the first half. He buried a three to tie the game with 09:22 to play in the first half after Jayden Ross snapped a pass to the corner. Smith found Reed in the paint on the next possession, who finished through contact to take the lead and force Creighton to call a timeout.

UConn's bench posted 15 points in the first half. Ross and Eric Reibe each contributed six points to the effort before the break. The reserves could not replicate that success in the second half, going scoreless.

UConn will get back on the road this weekend when it takes on Villanova. The Huskies previously survived an overtime finish with the Wildcats in January at PeoplesBank Arena.

That game tips off at 5:30 p.m. and will be available on truTV and TNT.



UConn Men's Basketball plays Creighton University at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. On Feb 18, 2026. The crowd hyped up the team throughout the entire game. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS