

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:

NO. 1 UCONN STEAMROLLS GEORGETOWN 84-52 IN HARTFORD FINALE

by Jake McCreven

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The next item on a long list of lasts for Azzi Fudd and the UConn women's basketball team's senior class has been checked.

Well, two items, actually (or more, depending on how thorough your list is).

UConn blitzed Georgetown (13-15, 6-13) 84-52 in its Hartford finale, bringing it within one game of a fourth consecutive undefeated regular season in Big East play and extending its winning streak to 46 games.

The 32-point shelling of the Hoyas gave Connecticut its 30th win of the season and 16th at home. This particular Thursday night game in Hartford had a kicker to it, however: it was the senior class's last regular season home game as Huskies, which, oddly enough, happened after Senior Day.

Unlike Saturday's 81-38 detonation of Providence, when the Huskies built a 25-point lead by the second quarter media timeout, UConn found itself down in the opening minutes to a Georgetown team that just couldn't miss from 3.

The Hoyas found the bottom of the net on four of their first eight 3-point attempts, including a stretch of three in a row that was rivaled only by Fudd on the other end.

The graduate wing accounted for eight of UConn's first 12 points, matching the Hoyas' 3-point barrage with three of her own from behind the line and a pair of elbow jumpers in

the opening seven minutes.

It was the start of what became Fudd's 10th 20-point game this season and second in Hartford. As she checked out for the final time in PeoplesBank Arena as a Husky with a minute remaining in the third quarter, her game-high 24 points and 9 made field goals (including six 3-pointers) warranted a fitting standing ovation.

Georgetown answered her early haymakers, though, punching back after every UConn run with four of five in a row to end the first quarter down only one point.

Then Sarah Strong – as she inevitably does – got going from the paint. And the perimeter. And on defense.

Strong rattled off 11 of her 13 points in the second quarter, including a pair of 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions that pumped the Huskies' lead up to seven in the matter of 50 seconds.

And it was all Connecticut from there. Three Huskies enclosed on unsuspecting Hoya ball handlers in the backcourt and forced wayward passes that Strong picked off and cashed in at the hoop. Kayleigh Heckel got in on the team picture in the paint with two elbow jumpers of her own, which raised Connecticut's lead to 14 by the midpoint of the second period.

On the first possession out of the break and in danger of turning the ball over a 14th time, Darnell Haney was forced to burn a timeout after Khadee Hession got trapped by Fudd and Allie Ziebell in the coffin corner. That same possession

ended with KK Arnold at the free throw line after she was fouled on a coast-to-coast lay-in.

The Huskies completely smothered a reeling Georgetown offense in the second quarter, holding the Hoyas to a 2-of-14 mark from the field and forcing eight turnovers – a defensive stand that was emblematic of a 23-point halftime gap.

The second half offered much of the same. Georgetown turnover, UConn score; Georgetown airball, UConn 3-pointer; Georgetown shot clock violation, UConn lay-in.

It snowballed for the Huskies, who with a lineup comprised mostly of reserves, stretched their lead to as large as 36 in the third quarter. UConn forced

23 Hoya turnovers, which it cashed in for 26 points, and held Georgetown to a 32% (16-of-50) mark from the field.

Connecticut's attention now turns to a date with St. John's (21-9, 11-8) at Madison Square Garden on Sunday for the last game before post season play begins in Uncasville next weekend.



UConn women's basketball team plays against Georgetown at PeoplesBank Arena on Feb. 26, 2026. The Huskies won with a final score of 84-52. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

SAM'S SECTION: ONE LAST HOME GAME FOR

KARABAN, REED, SMITH, KOROMA, MILLENDER

by Sam Calhoun

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Saturday's meeting with Seton Hall will be an emotional one.

It will mark the end of an era for Alex Karaban, the winningest player in program history. After going through the Senior Day ceremony last year, the two-time national champion returned to Storrs for one last dance.

It has been a long journey for Karaban. He enrolled midway through the 2021-22 season and redshirted while practicing to get a head start leading into his redshirt-freshman season.

"I'm trying to enjoy every second I have left in this jersey and with this program," he said after a 32-point win over No. 15 St. John's on Wednesday.

He did not even start that first game he played in. In the 85-54 rout over Stonehill, the Huskies' lineup was Tristen Newton, Nahiem Alleyne, Jordan Hawkins, Samson Johnson and Adama Sanogo. Johnson ended up suffering a foot injury after 17 minutes and did not return to the floor until Jan. 22, 2023. This forced Dan Hurley to elevate Karaban to the starting lineup. In every game that he has been healthy for, Karaban has remained the starting power forward ever since.

"When I first came to UConn, I was worried about playing," Karaban said after becoming the winningest player in program history. "To have my name at the top of that list is special. I'll forever be blessed for all the teammates I've had; I'll forever be blessed to play for the best coaching staff that's made it easier to get those wins, too."

Karaban was among the best freshmen in the Big East that year, averaging 9.3 points per

game, shooting 47.6% from the floor, 40.2% from deep and 80.9% from the free throw line. He was a crucial piece in the Huskies' quest for a fifth national championship. Just look back at the halftime buzzer-beaters he had against Gonzaga and Miami (Fla.) during that run.

He could have left after that first season. He could have left after his redshirt-sophomore season, averaging 13.3 points on nearly 50% overall shooting as he helped the Huskies complete the back-to-back championship hopes. Everyone remembers where they were during that 30-0 run in the Elite Eight against Illinois, seeing Karaban dunk on the fast break.

Even though the 2024-25 season was a roller-coaster, including some of the lowest moments in Karaban's decorated career, he still could have gone to the NBA.

But, through all of that, he stayed. He stayed despite all the NBA talk and the current state of college basketball. It is a rarity, with virtually every team now utilizing the transfer portal and NBA teams targeting freshmen and sophomore prospects with sky-high potential.

"I know the NBA can be here next year and in the future," Karaban said in October. "But you can't really get your years back at UConn, with how much love the coaches and fans have given me."

The fans will honor Karaban on Saturday with a "Karabaner." Organized by the Husky Ticket Project, fans are invited to write messages on a giant banner from 10 to 11 a.m., thanking him for everything he did throughout his career.

He is no stranger to the festivities. He went through Senior Day last season, coincidentally against Seton Hall, after graduating from UConn in three years with a degree in economics.

Academically, he is expected to earn a certificate in nonprofit management once his college career is all said and done.

Karaban is not the only player who will go through Senior Day this weekend. Tarris Reed Jr., Malachi Smith, Dwayne Koroma and Alec Millender are all being honored in their final game at the Harry A. Gampel Pavilion.

Reed is coming off arguably the best game of his career: 20 points, 11 rebounds, six rebounds, three assists and two steals on 9-of-14 shooting. He may not have been in Storrs as long as Karaban has, but the "Kodiak Bear" has become a fan-favorite in his two seasons as a Husky.

"I was a little kid dreaming, never in a million years I thought I would be playing here at UConn, so it's a blessing to play along these guys," Reed said on Wednesday. "It's all I could ever dream for and pray for. So, [I am] forever grateful."

Then there are the players who just came in this year: Malachi Smith, Dwayne Koroma and Alec Millender.

Smith, coming in from Dayton, slid into the role that Hassan Diarra was in during the 2023-24 season, backing up Silas Demary Jr. at point guard. He came in clutch in some of the Huskies' most crucial games. There was the game at Madison Square Garden against Illinois, where he had 14 points and nine assists while knocking down all three of his 3-point attempts. The win at home against Providence saw him notch double figures for the second time this season, finishing with 12 points and seven assists while connecting on all four 3-pointers.

Koroma has not seen as much playing time lately, but he was a massive help in the non-conference portion of the season. While the stats may not tell the

story, the Le Moyne transfer held his own in the paint against some of the nation's best centers: Arizona's Motiejus Krivas and Kansas's Flory Bidunga. While Reed missed a handful of those non-conference games while dealing with injuries, Koroma stepped up and came off the bench to provide some crucial minutes while Eric Reibe was on the bench.

Then, there is Millender. He has not played many games this season, but his locker room and bench presence alone have pro-

vided the team with a spark in some of the thrilling wins this season. His impact on the team, especially in terms of the team's chemistry, is better shown off the court, with him serving as commissioner of a Dynasty Deep Dive league on EA Sports' College Football '26.

Saturday marks the end of an era, but the journey is not over. There are still three championships to play: the Big East regular season title, the Big East Tournament and the national championship.



UConn men's basketball takes on Villanova at PeoplesBank Arena on Jan 24, 2026. Both teams were tied 61-61 at the end of the second half, but the Huskies toppled the Wildcats in overtime, winning 75-67. PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS