Sports

Photo of the Day |



The UConn Huskies playing against Creighton at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn. The Huskies won 100-51. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR

Brayden's Breakdown:

ARE THE CHARLOTTE HORNETS FOR REAL?

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Discussing the Charlotte Hornets and their franchise failures is all fun and games until they blow your favorite team out by 29 on their home court.

LaMelo Ball's team did just that to the Boston Celtics on March 4. The balanced scoring attack saw four players in double figures along with a team 3-point shooting percentage of 39%. Ball himself had 18 with four three pointers, including multiple ridiculous step back treys.

Head coach Charles Lee departed from the Celtics after their 2024 championship to assume the head coaching duties in Charlotte. A move that was met with skepticism after a 19-63 2024-25 season, Lee and company have proved the doubters wrong. The Hornets sit in 10th place in the Eastern Conference with a record of 33-33, but are just 2.5 games behind the 8 seed and 3.5 games behind the 7 seed.

Their record does not tell the whole story, however. The Hornets are 21-4 when they start a lineup of Ball, Kon Knueppel, Miles Bridges, Brandon Miller and Moussa Diabate. That lineup had 74 points against Boston last week.

Knueppel is in a heated race for Rookie of the Year with former Duke teammate Cooper Flagg. The sharpshooter averages 19.2 per game, including 20 against the Celtics. He is shooting 43.7% from three on eight attempts per game, an unreal percentage for any player let alone a rookie. The 20-year-old will be instrumental if Charlotte makes a run but is also the future of the franchise.

After only playing 27 games last season, Miller has been great in 48 games this year. The former second overall pick is averaging 20.6 points per game and over 1 steal per game. He had 18 points on 8 of 13 shooting against Boston, including some ferocious dunks. His health will be a key to the future in Buzz City.

Diabate is one of the best stories in the NBA this year. After being let go by the Clippers and playing 71 games in Charlotte last year, the Michigan product has emerged as a valuable NBA player. He is averaging 8 points and 8 rebounds per game on 63.8% shooting along with a block and 0.7 steals per game. He has not had a 20-point 20 rebound game yet, but it will come soon, potentially when Charlotte needs it the most.

Bridges is the longest tenured Hornet, averaging 17.5 points per game in his seventh season. Bridges also grabs 6 rebounds per game while shooting 44.4% from the field. If he can contribute these stats on a nightly basis, he will be a massive help to the Hornets.

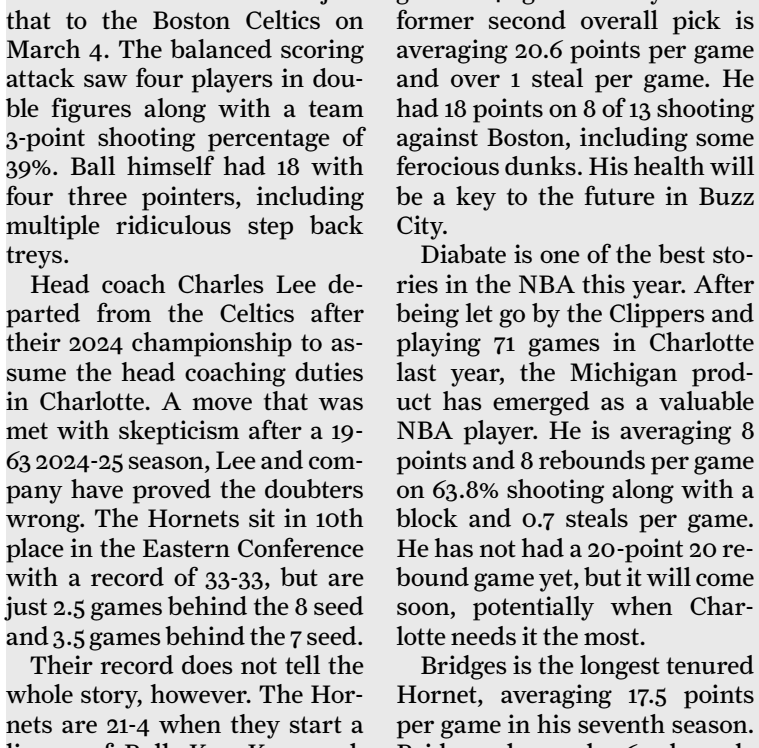
All these players along with the recently acquired Coby White. In 6 games coming off the bench, White averages 12.3 points and 4 assists per game. He also has some postseason experience with Chicago and will be a valuable depth piece for Charlotte.

This is all said without mentioning how valuable Ball really is to this team. Considered an all-star snub by many, Ball scores 19.3 points per game and dishes out 7.3 assists per game. His shooting percentages are a career low, but he makes up for it with his playmaking ability. He is the star of this team and they go as he goes.

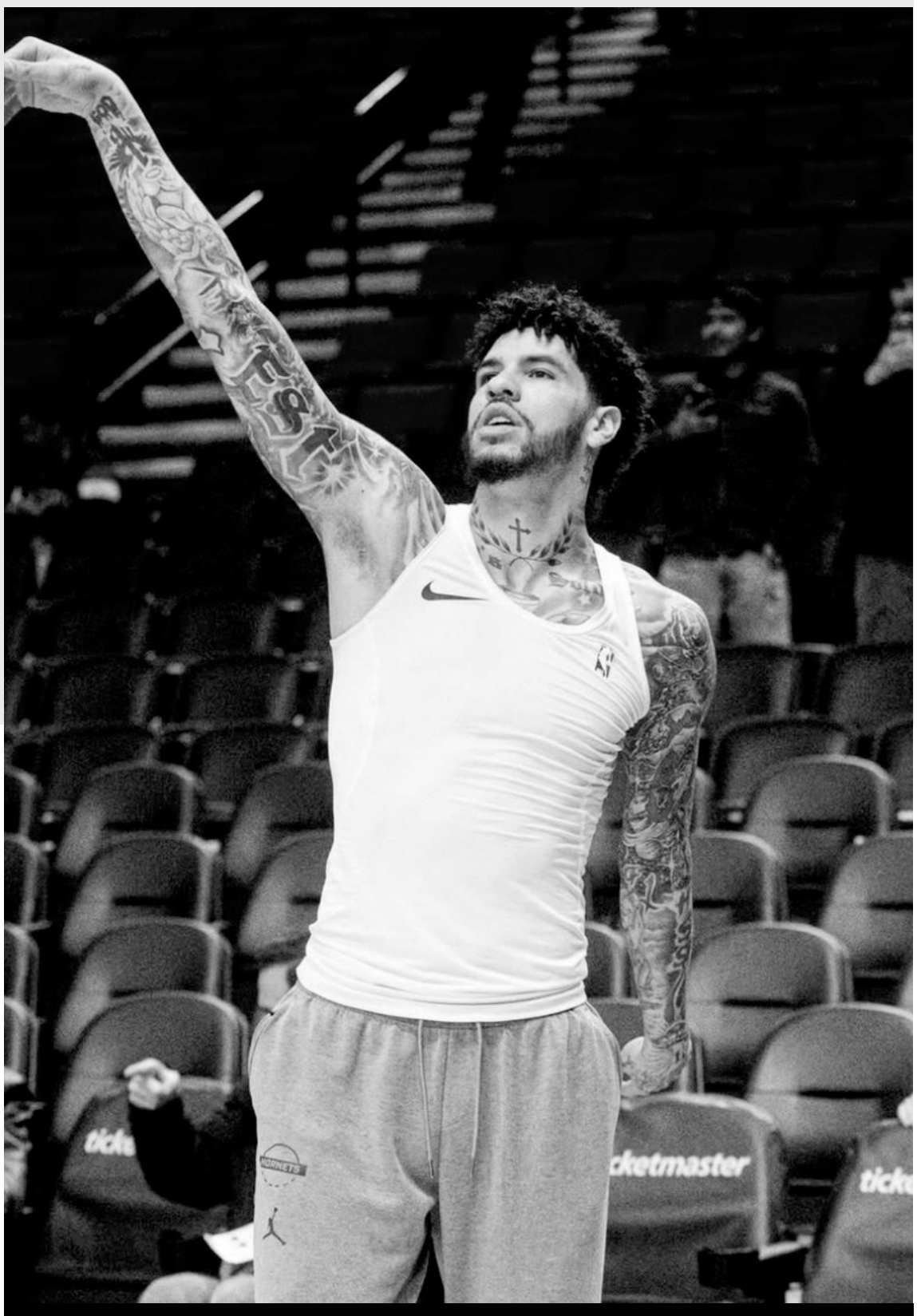
With 16 games left to play, this Hornets team has time to make a run. Lee and his team are still young, but the experience they are gaining now is vital for the future of the franchise.

Top seeded teams like the Pistons and the Celtics have had trouble with this team all season and could be a first round matchup. In a seven-game series, the Hornets and their 37.8% 3-point percentage can keep them in the series.

The Hornets may not even make the playoffs, but if they do, they will be trouble for the team they face.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Players on the Charlotte Hornets, a professional NBA team. The team recently had an incredibly close win over the Trail Blazers, winning 103-101.

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