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UCONN WINS, ADVANCES TO SWEET 16

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Even though it happened 31 years later, UConn finally got revenge on UCLA. The 2-seeded Huskies (31-5) knocked out the 7-seeded Bruins (24-12), 73-57, to advance to a third Sweet Sixteen in four years.



Alex Karaban proved why he belonged in the Huskies of Honor on Sunday night. The two-time NCAA champion led UConn with a career-high 27 points on 9-of-16 shooting, including four 3-pointers. He had 11 points in the first half, but he helped control a slow start to the second half with the Huskies' first eight points of the half.

Silas Demary Jr. returned to the floor after missing the NCAA Tournament opener against 15-seeded Furman with an ankle sprain suffered in the Big East Championship loss to St. John's. While clearly not 100%, he provided depth in the backcourt and played a role like what Tarris Reed Jr. did in the Black Friday win over Illinois. Malachi Smith started over Demary, with the latter coming into the game at the 14:15 mark of the first half.

UConn started the game poorly on both ends of the floor as the first 12 minutes saw Connecticut shoot 4-for-16 from the floor with seven turnovers. The Huskies made 8 of their last 10 shots with just one turnover in the last eight minutes of the first half to go up 38-33 at the midway point.

Jayden Ross was the ultimate x-factor in this game, scoring 9



UConn men's basketball playing UCLA in the Round of 32 in NCAA's 2026 March Madness tournament. The Huskies won the game 73-57, moving onto the next round.
PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

points in the first half (XX for the game) and playing solid defense on UCLA star point guard Donovan Dent. He struggled to stay on the court in the second half due to foul trouble, including a challenge from Dan Hurley that ended up in an even worse outcome.

Braylon Mullins found his 3-point shot in the final minutes of the first half after starting the NCAA Tournament 0-for-10. The freshman phenom ended up hitting back-to-back 3-pointers in the final three minutes of the half and finished the game with XX points on X-of-XX shooting.

Tarris Reed Jr., coming off a historic first-round game, followed the performance with a 10-point, 13-rebound double-double.

UConn went on a 14-0 run at one point, the largest run this season. A 9-0 run, including a technical foul called on UCLA head coach Mick Cronin, helped the Huskies get out to their largest lead of the game (13).

Connecticut has now evened the overall series at one game apiece, both of which came in the NCAA Tournament.

The Huskies will take on 3-seeded Michigan State, another Big Ten opponent, in the Sweet Sixteen in Washington, D.C., on Friday night.

$154 million grant awarded to support rural health care

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On March 3, Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont announced that the state was receiving $154 million from the Rural Health Transformation Program federal grant to change rural healthcare within Connecticut, according to a press release.

"This investment allows us to tackle those challenges head-on — from expanding mental health services and building a stronger health care workforce to modernizing our technology infrastructure and connecting residents to the services they need," Lamont said. "This is about making sure every corner of Connecticut has the opportunity to thrive."

The grant is part of Section 71401 of what is known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act." The bill appropriates about $10 billion per fiscal year for a program that supports the provision of health care in rural areas.

There are stipulations of the uses of the grant money according to the CMS Rural Health Transformation website being used for at least three of the ten potential allocations of the grant.

Some of the allocations can be, "[promoting] sustainable access to high quality rural health care services" or "promoting evidence-based, measurable interventions to improve prevention and chronic disease management."

Mehul Dahal, the chief policy advisor at the Connecticut Department of Social Services, talked about the projects that the grant will go towards.

"One of the projects looking for approval is the expansion of a 23-hour health crisis line run by the Department of Mental Health and Addition Services," Dahal said. "The grant is looking to set rural communities up for success providing base line supports, updates to tech systems, renovations, including other infrastructure."

All the projects are available to be viewed online, according to Dahal.

The grant's definition of rural goes by the one provided by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, according to Dahal. There are 78 towns and cities within CT that are classified as rural, according to the Connecticut State Office of Rural Health.

Within these areas, only four areas — Plymouth, Cornwall, Warren and Bethany — have only basic health services with no first responder or paramedic services, according to the Rural Health in Connecticut's June 2022 survey from DataHaven. All other areas have first responder services, paramedic services or both.



Blank paperwork relating to health care. Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont recently announced that the state has received a grant to support rural health care PHOTO COURTESY OF FLICKR

Dahal said that the Department of Social Services is looking to the future to see how these programs will perform.

"[The Department of Social Services is] looking to set up pilot programs to and look to see how effective these programs are... to then look for other sources of funding," Dahal said.

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