Daily Sports

MEN'S HOCKEY:

NO. 14 UCONN OPENS UP NCAA TOURNAMENT AGAINST NO. 3 MICHIGAN STATE

by Ava Inesta
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
ava.inesta@uconn.edu

Following their bid to the Worcester Region, the UConn men's hockey team will kick off the NCAA Tournament against No. 3 Michigan State. The match is set for Thursday, March 26, at 1:30 p.m. at DCU Center in Worcester, MA.

"We're focused on the present, we're focused on Michigan State," said senior captain Ryan Tattle.

"We're all so happy to be here. We're so grateful for the opportunity to put on the UConn jersey every day. We just want to keep fighting, keep fighting to get another day, another week together."

This is UConn's second-ever appearance in the NCAA Tournament and second consecutive. Last season, the Huskies defeated Quinnipiac 4-1 for the first time but then fell to Penn State in overtime in the Allentown regional final.

Following the Hockey East Tournament, the Huskies hold a 20-12-4 overall record.

The Huskies have continued to receive contributions from all four of their lines. Following the Hockey East semifinal game, all four lines from UConn have combined for 20 or more goals. Friday's semifinal matchup marked the 146th game played by seniors Tom Messineo and Tabor Heaslip. Neither senior missed a game during their four-year career with the Ice Boys and set the program record for most games played in the Hockey East era. This proves that one of the best attributes a player can have is availability.

Tattle leads the Huskies with 32 points, and junior Joey Muldowney tops the team with 17 goals. Tattle currently has 19 assists, and junior Jake Richard is not too far behind with 17.

Goaltender Tyler Muszelik has been a statement player for UConn all season long. Following the Hockey East Tournament, the senior goaltender holds a .927 save percentage with a 2.21 average. He has been the anchor to the Huskies defense and will be a key to their chances of making a run to the 2026 Frozen Four.

"I think if we play a complete 60-minute game, going all four lines, I think it's going to be tough for any team to beat us in the country," said sophomore Mike Murtagh.

The Spartans are the top seed in the region but No. 3 overall in the tournament. The Worcester region also includes No. 6 seed Dartmouth and No. 12 seed Wisconsin.

Michigan State is entering the tournament with a 25-8-2 overall record after securing their third consecutive Big Ten regular season championship. They led the conference with 51 points, topping both Michigan (49) and Penn State (41). MSU finished as the Big Ten leaders in goals against average (2.23), save percentage (.927), power play percentage (.309) and penalty kill percentage (.803) during conference matchups. Michigan State was third in scoring at 3.67 goals per game through 24 contests.

A strong suit of the Spartans is their power play as it leads the nation at a .353 percent success rate since Jan. 1, going 18-for-51 over the last 17 games. Michigan State's 4.0 goals per game since the same date ranks fourth in the country.

MSU's top line forwards include senior Daniel Russell, senior Charlie Stramel, freshman Porter Martone. The three have generated 130 points this season on 54 goals and 76 assists. They are combined +86 on the ice with Stramel leading at +30 to Russell's +29 and Martone's +27. Those Spartans are the fourth-highest scoring trio participating in the NCAA Tournament.

The road to the 2026 NCAA Tournament Frozen Four starts now. UConn will commence tournament play on Mar. 26 against No. 3 Michigan State. Puck drop is set for 1:30 p.m. in Worcester, MA. The game is available to stream on ESPN2 and on the radio on the UConn Sports Network - FOX Sports 97.9 FM.



Tyler Muszelik of the UConn Huskies men's hockey team blocks a shot from a player on the University of Michigan Wolverines. UConn faces off against Michigan State University in the first round of the NCAA tournament tomorrow night.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @HOCKEY_EAST ON INSTAGRAM.

BASEBALL:

UConn drops midweek matchup to Quinnipiac at Elliot Ballpark

by Ava Inesta
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
ava.inesta@uconn.edu

After sweeping a doubleheader to close out their spring break trip in San Jose, Calif., the UConn baseball team returned to Storrs for a midweek matchup against in-state foe Quinnipiac at Elliot Ballpark.

On a bright and sunny day in Storrs, the Huskies fell to the Bobcats 9-3.

"We got out coached, out pitched, out defended, out hit," said Head Coach Jim Penders following the loss to Quinnipiac. "There's not much else to say. When you play in-state teams they're going to be especially ready to go – that's on me, I got to get our team ready to go."

The game started off with what looked like strong pitching for the Huskies. Graduate student Austin Trumpour got the start in the circle and opened the game with a 1-2-3 inning.

The second inning ended with Trumpour having two strikeouts. The third inning is where the tables turned as Quinnipiac broke out their offense and gained a 3-0 lead.

Redshirt freshman Drew Smith came out of the bullpen for the fourth inning and stranded two Bobcat runners on the base to keep the Huskies chances alive mid-game.

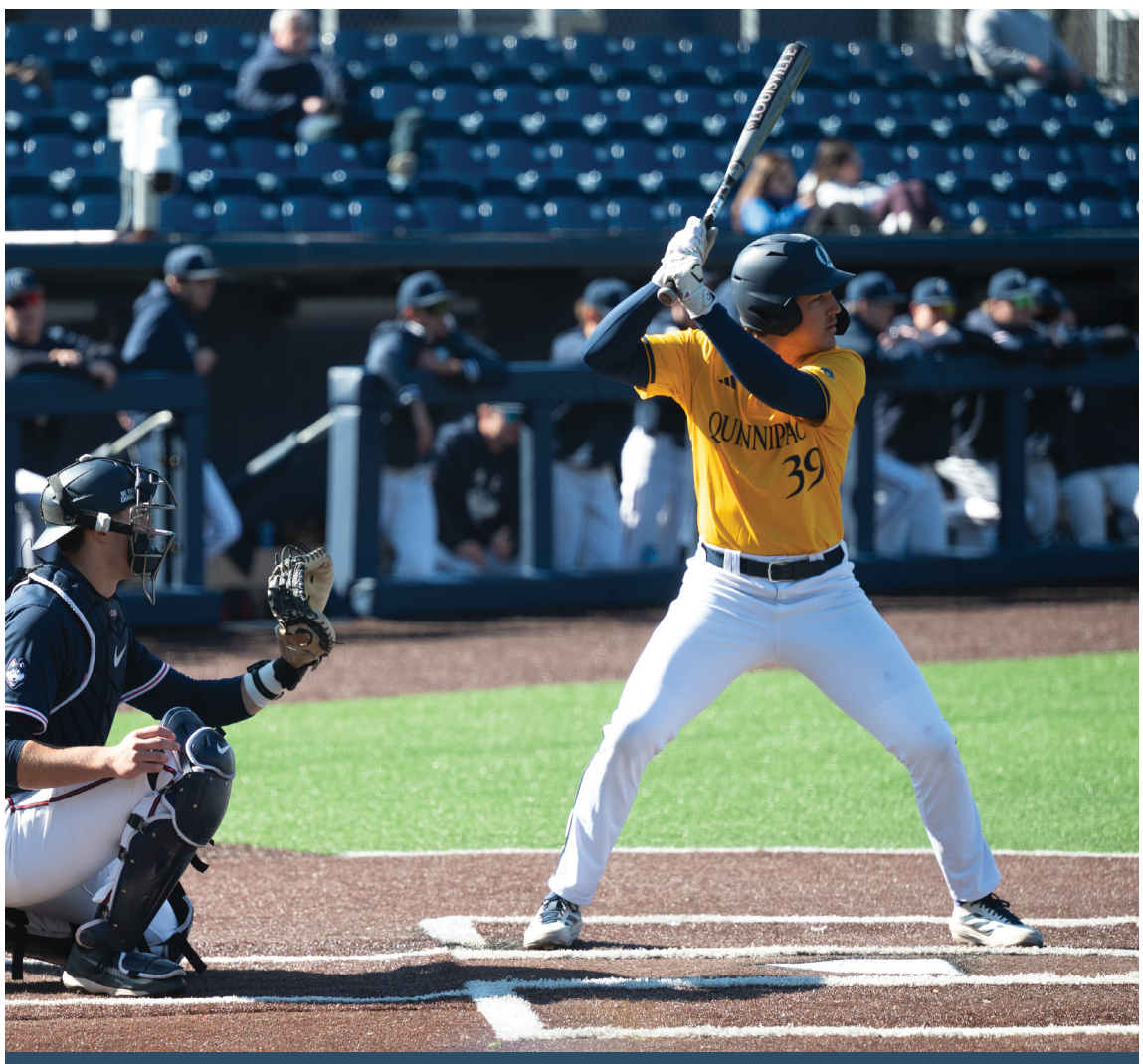
In the bottom of the fifth inning, Nater Wachter stepped up to the plate and hit an RBI single to score freshman Cam Righi to get UConn on the board.

In the top of the sixth, Quinnipiac added more runs to extend their lead to 5-1 over UConn. However, the Huskies' next offense splash came in the bottom of the frame after Righi blasted a two-run homer, his fourth of the season.

Unfortunately for the Huskies, that would be their last offense of the day as Quinnipiac scored three more runs and never looked back. UConn fell to Quinnipiac with a final score of 8-3. Hook C holds a 12-14 overall record following the midweek matchup with Quinnipiac.

"You've got to tip your cap," said Coach Penders during the postgame. "We gave them a little confidence and they took it. So tip your cap to Quinnipiac – they played a lot better than we did."

This weekend, UConn will look ahead to Big East conference action, starting with a series against Xavier at home at Elliot Ballpark. The three-game series will open on Friday, March 27 at 3:05 p.m., continue on Saturday, March 28 at 2:05 p.m. and wrap up on Sunday, March 30 at 12:05 p.m. All games will be available to stream on ESPN+.



The UConn Baseball team put up a hard fight against Quinnipiac, falling to the Bobcats 3-8. This was the Hook C's third home game of the season, despite being well into the spring season.
PHOTO BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS