Daily Sports

MEN'S BASKETBALL: NO. 2 SEED UCONN REMATCHES WITH NO. 3 SEED MICHIGAN STATE IN SWEET SIXTEEN

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In October, no one would have guessed that an exhibition game between UConn and Michigan State would be a preview of a must-watch Sweet Sixteen game.

The Huskies controlled most of that game, defeating the Spartans 76-69 in Hartford, Conn. Connecticut led by as many as 19 points in a foul-infested game that lasted nearly two and a half hours. That was without Tarris Reed Jr. and Braylon Mullins.

Both teams were ranked in the AP Poll then, but they have evolved since.

Michigan State (27-7) grew as a team as the season went on. Jeremy Fears Jr. is one of the best guards in the country, leading the team in scoring and averaging 15.3 points per game. However, his most impressive per-game average is leading the nation in assists, with 9.4 per contest.

That will be a tough assignment for Silas Demary Jr., who is still not at 100% after "gutting it out" in a 73-57 win over 7-seeded UCLA in the second round.

"That matchup I'm looking forward to," Demary said. "I just got to be able to guard him without getting in foul trouble because he's good at drawing fouls. Being smart and staying down and forcing him into tough shots."

Demary said that he feels "a lot better" and is trying to get as close to 100% as possible.

What will be telling is how the frontcourts match up. The Spartans have one of the best frontcourts in the country, led by Jaxon Kohler (12.6 ppg), Coen Carr (12 ppg) and Carson Cooper (11 ppg). Add Upper Marlboro, Md. native Cam Ward (60 FG%) off the bench and this team is not to be trifled with up front.

Meanwhile, UConn (31-5) has a frontcourt that can go toe-to-toe with the Spartans. Reed is peaking at the right time; Alex Karaban is coming off one of the best performances of his career and Braylon Mullins seems to have found his way out of a grueling shooting slump. Not to mention that Eric Reibe comes off the bench and will have a lot of support on Friday night due to his time at The Bullis School in Potomac, Md.



Solo Ball at the second round of March Madness at Xfinity Mobile Arena in Philadelphia, PA on March 22, 2026. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The x-factor will be if Solo Ball can get out of a painful shooting slump. The Leesburg, Va. native is shooting just 27.9% from the floor in the past five games and 21.4% from 3-point range.

On top of the rosters, both of these teams are led by national championship head coaches. Dan Hurley will be in the Hall of Fame one day, and Tom Izzo is already there. The two head coaches have been at the top of their game the past few seasons and share mutual respect.

"Talk about an honor to share the sidelines with one of the greatest coaches and one of the most real coaches," Hurley said after the win over UCLA. "Not a phony in any way and what you see is what you get and he's one of the greatest to ever do it."

"He's as old school a young guy as you can get," Izzo said on Thursday afternoon.

Both of these teams are identical when it comes to turning the ball over. UConn's turnover issue (11.3 per game, 12.6 in the last five games) has haunted the Huskies all year long, while Izzo finds recent play alarming in that category. The Spartans average 11.6 turnovers per game, but that number is up to 12.2 per contest in the last five games.

"Lately we've turned the ball over too much and that's my one worry," Izzo said on the Rick Eisen Show. "Hopefully we can straighten that out."

These two legendary programs have met eight times in regular-season and postseason play, with the two knotted at four games apiece in the all-time series. Michigan State got the best of the Huskies at the 2009 Final Four (in Detroit and Jerome Dyson was out), while Connecticut got revenge in the Elite Eight of the 2014 NCAA Tournament (in Madison Square Garden).

Tip-off from Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C. is set for approximately 9:45 p.m. (30 minutes after the Duke-St. John's game).

Track And Field: Huskies at the Raleigh Relays

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The Huskies are traveling to North Carolina after a spectacular weekend in Myrtle Beach where the men and women won the Alan Connie Shamrock Invitational. At the 2026 Raleigh Relays, hosted by NC State on March 26–28, UConn will compete against top national teams in an attempt to build on a season-opening performance that completely changed the program's record books.

The throwing unit of the Huskies has enormous momentum going into Raleigh. Marshall Potter, a promising freshman, recently won three gold medals in South Carolina by sweeping the discus (51.55m), shot put (18.11m) and hammer throw. Notably, his hammer mark of 60.59 meters is the eighth-best in UConn history.

Last week, Connor Hayford (javelin), Thomas Bannon (javelin) and Alex Krause (hammer) all finished on the podium. Sinclaire Fryer, Ella Karp and Brook-lynn Roberts claimed the top three slots in the women's shot put competition, which was a complete takeover. With top-three results in the discus and high jump, respectively, Gabriela DeFelice and Mackenzie Braunstein demonstrated that the Huskies are formidable in both the rings and the pits.

This Friday in Raleigh, distance events will be the main attraction. Calista Mayer and Brooke Strauss will compete in the 1500m at 3:30 p.m., Sarah Trainor and Loghan Hughes will compete in the 3000m at 5:03 p.m., Sascha Letica will compete in the 5000m at 6:12 p.m., and Chloe Trudel will compete in the 10,000m at 10:05 p.m.



UConn hosts the UConn Dog Fight Invitational in Storrs, Conn. on April, 4, 2025. The sunny day promoted a big crowd which instilled a strong work ethic from the team.
PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS