



Sports

BASEBALL:

MENZEL HITS FOR CYCLE AS HOOK C DEFEATS NEW HAVEN IN HOME OPENER, 9-4



by Sam Calhoun
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
samuel.calhoun@uconn.edu

Welcome back to Elliot Ballpark, and welcome home to Evan Menzel.

The UConn baseball team (5-7) snapped a two-game losing skid with a 9-4 win over New Haven (0-7) in the home-opener on Wednesday afternoon.

UConn may have experienced a delay this morning due to icy conditions, but the temperature was warm enough for baseball weather, reaching the 50s as the Huskies had their earliest home game in program history, according to the UConn+ broadcast.

New Haven, in its first season at the Division I level and in search of its first win of the season, threatened early in the game, loading the bases up in the first inning before Huskies' starting pitcher Tristan Aasland got out of the jam.

Connecticut, the preseason Big East favorites, is currently without outfielder Tyler Minick, but hopes to have him back soon.

Menzel's All-Big East-level presence was not needed Wednesday as he hit for the cycle, including a two-run inside-the-park homer in his first UConn home game. It was

UConn's first cycle since Brian Esposito on April 15, 1999, per the broadcast.

That eighth inning was as prolific as an inning has been this season for the Huskies' offense, driving in five runs. It proved to be a critical cushion as New Haven rallied to four runs in the ninth inning.

The eighth-inning scoring started with catcher Gabriel Tirado hitting a sacrifice fly to right field to drive third baseman Maddix Dalena in to score. It was the second time in the game that Tirado helped get his team in the scoring column, with designated hitter Cam Righi driving him in with an RBI single in the bottom of the second inning.

Righi had himself a day and was responsible for two of UConn's five runs in the eighth inning. The freshman from Wethersfield, Conn. doubled to right-center field to drive center fielder Nater Wachter across home plate. It was his first-career double and an important one in this game. Later in the inning, 90 feet away from scoring, Righi walked across the plate on a balk.

While Menzel's inside-the-parker will go down as a home run in the box score, the Huskies got one in the air

on a 50-degree afternoon with first baseman Jackson Marshall knocking a two-run no-doubter to deep-center field, his third of the season.

Coming into the game with a 13.50 earned-run average, starting pitcher Tristan Aasland stifled the Chargers' offense after getting out of a bases-loaded jam in the first inning. He finished the game with five strikeouts, two walks and four hits given up in five innings pitched. That included an impressive fourth inning. Despite giving up runners at first and second base, the rightly from Snoqualmie, Wash. struck out the side to keep New Haven scoreless.

The pitching staff totaled nine strikeouts and 12 hits; the latter statistic inflated by the four-run ninth inning. The bats were hot as the temperature was abnormally warm for winter. As a team, the Huskies combined for 12 hits, four doubles, three triples and two home runs. They only struck out a combined six times.

UConn, now 1-0 in the newborn history with New Haven, will now turn its attention to a three-game road trip to Norfolk, Va., taking on Old Dominion before returning to Storrs to host New England rival Boston College.

Jackson Marshall of the UConn Huskies baseball team gifts his bat to a little kid following their game against the New Haven Chargers. The Huskies beat the Chargers 9-4 in their home opener. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER

MENS HOCKEY:

NO. 14 UCONN PREPARED FOR FINAL HOME GAME AGAINST NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

For the final home game of the regular season, the UConn men's hockey team is set to face New Hampshire at the Toscano Family Ice Forum for a week-day Hockey East matchup on Thursday.

"Right now we're 100% focused on UNH and I think they've been playing pretty well here the last month," said Head Coach Mike Cavanaugh on Wednesday. "We know we're going to have our hands full tomorrow with the Wildcats."

This will be the third matchup of the season between the Huskies and the Wildcats. The season series is currently tied 1-1 with both teams having a win on the road. The winner of the season series will be decided with this matchup at the Toscano Family Ice Forum.

For the final weekend of the college hockey regular season, all eyes will be on the Huskies as multiple teams can rise or fall in the standings; No. 13 Boston College, No. 17 UMass and UConn can all finish as high as second place in Hockey East. No. 5 Providence currently sits at the top of the Hockey East standings. For national rankings, UConn currently sits at 15 in the NPI with two games remaining before the start of the Hockey East playoffs.

"It's wide open to win the league [Hockey East]," said Cavanaugh. "No one winning this

league would really shock me. Having played all the teams, I can't say there's one game you go into and say 'you know we can beat this team with our "C" game tonight.' That's not the case."

UConn is coming off a 0-1-1 weekend against No. 17 Massachusetts where they dropped one and tied the series finale. Over the weekend, UConn put up 91 total shots on goal. The Huskies currently hold a 17-10-5 overall record and are 11-8-3 in Hockey East action.

Currently, senior goaltender Tyler Muszelik has arguably been playing some of the best hockey on the Huskies roster. Muszelik is posting a 16-8-5 record with a .928 save % and 2.21 GAA. If the Huskies can figure out some of their defensive woes that have cost some recent matches against UMass and Boston College, the team is in a great spot with Muszelik in the net for these last two regular season games and beyond. With his performances, Muszelik has been named to the Mike Richter Award Watchlist and named a Hobey Baker Candidate.

As for New Hampshire, they are entering this matchup with a 14-17-1 overall record and 8-13-1 in conference play. Senior Morgan Winters leads the Wildcats with 11 goals and 11 assists for 22 total points. Nick Ring follows close being with 8 goals and 14 assists for 20 points. Following this matchup with the Huskies, UNH will close out their regular season slate on Saturday

with a home game against No. 17 UMass.

For the final home game of the regular season for the Ice Bus, puck drop against UNH is set for 7:00 p.m. at the Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, CT. The game will be available to stream on ESPN+.

Ryan Tattle of the UConn men's hockey team celebrates on the ice after scoring a goal. The Huskies are preparing for their final regular season game against the UNH Wildcats Thursday night. PHOTO COURTESY OF @DTFLICKS ON INSTAGRAM

