SPORTS

The Big Apple:

Yankees fall short, Giants surge and Knicks finding their footing

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Alright, it's been a while since we last talked about New York sports. What's new since the last time The Big Apple was published?

Per usual, the Yankees used invisible bats in the American League Division Series after eliminating the Red Sox in the Wild Card series. The Giants are still at the top of the NFC East with a record of 4-2-1. The Knicks, who raised the championship banner on Oct. 20, are off to a shaky 2-4 start. Maybe it's a championship hangover?

It wasn't a surprise that the Yankees offense missed the bus to Tropicana Field in the first two games of the ALDS. Getting no-hit into the eighth inning of Game 1 and 4 hits in Game 2 is the recipe for going down 2-0 in a series. Just like last season against Toronto, the Yankees watched as their opponents celebrated on their field. Seeing this team lose in the same way every season is getting a bit old; changes need to be made. General Manager Brian Cashman and Head Coach Aaron Boone are set to return for the 2027 season, and my question is: why? They are wasting the talent of Aaron Judge, who has just one World Series appearance in his 10 seasons as a Yankee. I am starting to feel bad for the three-time American League MVP at this point; he simply has no help. Until Cashman and Boone are out of town, I expect the team to come up short in the playoffs yet again.

Wow, who would have expected the NFC East to play out the way it is right now? The Giants sit alone in first at 4-2-1, Dallas is in second at 3-5, Washington is in third at 2-4-1 and in dead last are the 2-6 Philadelphia Eagles. I can say I was right; JJ McCarthy looked phenomenal when he was under center for the Giants. Compared to Jameis Winston, McCarthy's playstyle is more like Jaxson Dart's, which may be why the offense seems to have improved with McCarthy as the starter. As it stands, the Giants are favorites to win the division, which they last won in 2011. They face the Eagles and Commanders the next two weeks. If they can win both, their chances of winning the division shoots miles high.

Shifting over to the hardwood, the reigning NBA champion, the New York Knicks, have started out with a rocky 3-4 record. Two of those losses were to LeBron James and the Philadelphia 76ers. Their wins come against Brooklyn, Detroit and a comeback win against Chicago. It doesn't take an expert to see that the Knicks haven't played like their normal selves. Mikal Bridges in particular looks rough, averaging just 6 points on 30% field goal shooting. Am I worried? Absolutely not. This same Knicks team started out similarly last season, and we all know what happened. It will be only a matter of weeks until the team gets back on track and starts winning more games.



Jalen Brunson of the New York Knicks on the court going against Dennis Schröder on the Brooklyn Nets. The Knicks won 103-90 against the Nets on Nov. 2, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @NYKNICKS ON INSTAGRAM

Men's Basketball:

Four takeaways from UConn's season opener



No. 4 UConn men's basketball faces Gardner-Webb on Monday, Nov. 2, 2026, at PeoplesBank Arena in Hartford. The Huskies defeated the Runnin' Bulldogs 86-46 in their regular-season opener, earning head coach Dan Hurley his 200th win at UConn. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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HARTFORD — The UConn men's basketball team's 2026 season is officially underway.

The Huskies opened their season Monday night, walloping Gardner-Webb by 40 points in an 86-46 victory. The win, Head Coach Dan Hurley's 200th at UConn, marked the ninth-straight season opening victory of Hurley's tenure.

As the No. 4 Huskies prepare to head to Boston Friday to face No. 16 Michigan in their first real test of the regular season, here are four takeaways from Monday night.

Even off the bench, Landrew played starter minutes

Unsurprisingly, six Huskies played 20 minutes or more Monday.

The expected starting five of Silas Demary Jr., Braylon Mullins, Jayden Ross, Nik Khamenia and Na'jai Hines each hit that mark, as did freshman Colben Landrew.

After starting the Huskies' first two exhibition games, Landrew entered off the bench against Purdue when Mullins returned from an undisclosed injury.

The same was true against Gardner-Webb, though that didn't stop the Big East Preseason Freshman of the Year from finishing fourth on the team in both points and rebounds while showcasing an eye-catching blend of speed and physicality in the paint.

After the game, UConn Head Coach Dan Hurley called Landrew's physical strength and ability to brush off defenders while driving to the rim "a special quality." Hurley added that Landrew would have seen even more action in a closer contest.

"We've obviously got the six starters there," Hurley said. "Colben played 21, almost 22 minutes tonight. If it was a close game, he'd be always in that 24 to 25 range."

Hurley wants more from the five

UConn has been spoiled when it comes to centers over the past half a decade.

Adama Sanogo's three-year run culminated with an NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player award. Donovan Clingan followed that up the next year by becoming an NBA Draft lottery pick. Tarris Reed Jr. developed into a first rounder two years later, while Samson Johnson helped bridge the gap.

From Clingan backing up Sanogo and so on, each center had a year to adapt to UConn's system before becoming the full-time starter.

Sophomore transfers Hines and Oskar Giltay won't have that same luxury. Instead, they are being immediately pressed into action in a nonconference schedule for the ages.

"The thing with those two guys is they're 19 years old and they're young," Hurley said. "We need them to keep getting better.

They're scratching the surface. We're not where we need them to be, but we've got such monster games coming up that we don't have much time to wait."

While the pair managed a collective final line of 7-for-11, 19 points, 15 rebounds and five blocks, Hurley said that their combined numbers were better than he felt about their performances.

Hurley highlighted offensive rebounding and low-post offense as areas of needed improvement.

"I'm disappointed overall," Hurley said. "It's rare that you'll see UConn miss 29 shots and only get nine of them back.

We played in a national championship game last year versus the Monstars, and we got [22] offensive rebounds [in that game] versus Michigan. So, I'm concerned about the offensive rebounding."

Machowski's rotation spot is in limbo

Through UConn's three preseason games, shooting guard Nils Machowski averaged 16 minutes, playing double-digit minutes in each contest. Against Gardner-Webb, the senior saw the floor for just six minutes.

While Hurley hinted at times throughout the preseason that the team could potentially operate with a rotation as deep as 10 if forward Egor Amosov demonstrated enough to earn regular season playing time, Monday painted the picture that Machowski would be the odd man out should Hurley instead opt to shrink that pool to eight.

The reduction in minutes may be in part due to Machowski's struggles from three-point range. Through the three exhibition games and the season opener, Machowski has gone just 2-for-9 (22.2%) from deep. Though the sample size is unquestionably small, that percentage is still a far cry from the 38.2%-mark Machowski posted from three at Wofford last season or his career percentage of 36.5%.

Hurley emptying the bench in the final minutes of the contest also partially contributed to a lower minute total but Friday's contest against Michigan will give a clearer insight to Machowski's role moving forward.

"We're still kind of giving people a look," Hurley said. "Now, whoever's earned that top eight, top nine potentially, those will the people that play in Boston."

Hurley's entrance is still being fine-tuned

Maybe the right song has yet to be suggested. Perhaps it's the blaring hockey goal horn drowning out anything else that could possibly make a sound within a one-mile radius.

That second possibility may be a tad hyperbolic.

Either way, after walking out to the court with "Many Men (Wish Death)" by 50 Cent blasting down from the loudspeakers at PeoplesBank Arena prior to tipoff, Hurley said after the game that he wasn't sure if the elaborate entrance introduced against Purdue was working.

"I just feel like the other coach looks at me like, 'Yo, are you serious?'" Hurley said. "There's nothing more important to me than to have the respect of the coaches that I have respect for."

Hurley added that he had never heard the song before, suggesting that the 2003 release was outside of his '80s through '90s musical comfort zone.

Hurley also suggested that the team poll fans to see whether they think the spectacle should continue. However, Hurley himself seems to have his opinion decided.

"It may be stupid," Hurley said. "We may have to stop doing it."