Sports

Photo of the Day | Women's Basketball



Azzi Fudd, Husky of Honor, hugs Coach Geno Auriemma on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2026 at M&T Bank Center at Harry A. Gampel Pavillion in Storrs, CT. Huskies took the win over the Hawkeyes with a final score of 91-79.
PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

NCAA Men's Basketball

OPENING WEEK TAKEAWAYS:

UConn's unmatched backcourt, Illinois and UCLA set the offensive standard



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

by Will Scoppa
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
will.scoppa@uconn.edu

Villanova and Notre Dame tipped off the 2026-27 NCAA Men's Basketball season in Italy on Nov. 1. Since then, there have been a dozen buy game upsets, breakout campaigns and historic programs meeting expectations or underperforming.

UConn has the best backcourt in the country, again

Three seasons ago, Dan Hurley and the Huskies cut down the nets on the backs of Tristen Newton and Cam Spencer. This weekend, Silas Demary Jr. and Braylon Mullins combined for 44 points in UConn's 85-77 win over Michigan.

The Huskies were +14 when Demary was on the floor, as he notched seven rebounds and four assists while never turning the ball over to go along with his 21 points. Demary was notably aggressive offensively with 17 field goal attempts and was constantly on the downhill attack looking to drive to the middle of the lane and utilize the two-man game with bigs Na'jai Hines and Oskar Giltay. He was up to 17 points by halftime and was showing glimpses of 2024 Newton in Allen Fieldhouse as the rest of his starters all dealt with foul trouble.

Mullins had his second-straight 20-point performance for the first time in his career. The sophomore got UConn the lead early with a pair of threes, and the Huskies never looked back. In a game where UConn shot 36 free throws, Mullins was the catalyst, going 10-for-11 from the line.

East Texas A&M wins a pair of buy games, heats up Porter Moser's seat

East Texas A&M earned its first win over a power conference school in program history Monday night, upsetting Oklahoma in its home arena 68-64. Jaret von Rosenburg's team transitioned to Division I ahead of the 2022-23 season, becoming members of the Southland Conference. The Lions were NCAA Tournament eligible for the first time last year and currently have one of the best resumes in the country a week into the season, picking up a quadrant one win at Oklahoma. They followed with a 72-71 win at Rice on Thursday.

Moser is now 96-76 in his sixth season at the helm and has made the NCAA Tournament just once in 2025. The ninth-seeded Sooners, led by Jeremiah Fears, fell in the first round to UConn. Moser went dancing at Loyola Chicago twice and reached the Final Four as a No.11 seed in 2018 and upset No. 1 seed Illinois to advance to the Sweet Sixten as a No. 8 seed in 2021. Needless to say, Moser has been unable to replicate that success with Oklahoma.

Illinois and UCLA are a tier above the rest of the Big Ten offensively

Illinois and UCLA are the two programs that could not have asked for a better start to the season offensively. The Illini scored 120 points in a win over FDU and 112 in a NCAA Tournament game rematch against Penn. While David Mirkovic is sidelined with a foot injury, Andrej Stojakovic has led the way offensively with back-to-back 20-point performances.

UCLA kicked off the year with an 84-75 win over then-No. 5 Arizona in Las Vegas, and matched Illinois with a triple-digit scoring night against North Florida, tallying 114 points. The Bruins also had one of two "Husky" 30-0 runs this week, as they went on a 35-0 run against North Florida, which is good for the longest scoring run since 2020 between two D1 teams. Louisville would follow with a 33-0 run against Morehead State on Saturday, as the two are just the fourth and fifth "Husky" logged in the last five years, a term coined by UConn against Illinois in the Elite 8 in 2024.

Braden Smith graduated, Purdue's golden era is over as they start 0-2

Purdue started 0-2 for the first time since 1976-77; long-time head coach Matt Painter is 0-2 for the first time in his 23-year coaching career. The Boilermakers suffered two buzzer beaters in a buy-game loss to Valparaiso, one sending the game to double overtime and the other being a game-winning three pointer by Justus McNair.

Saint Louis is the top program in Missouri, Josh Schertz has built a perennial mid-major powerhouse

Missouri returned its leading scorer in Mark Mitchell and landed its highest-ranked high school recruit since Michael Porter Jr. in Jason Crowe Jr. To do so, Dennis Gates spent $16.25 million on his roster. Yet on Friday, the Tigers fell to St. Louis on the road 90-84. Billikens head coach Josh Schertz spent just a fraction of what Gates did on his roster but has emerged onto the scene as one of the best coaches in the sport as Saint Louis has the makings of a top 25 team yet again. Not to mention, Robbie Avila is back and is soon to return for the Billikens.

Arkansas is too young and playing carelessly, not a true national title contender

John Calipari's squad looked as youthful and inexperienced as ever Sunday afternoon as they got routed 91-72 by Virginia on a neutral floor. Virginia led by as many as 27 points midway through the second half, capitalizing with 24 points off Arkansas' 15 turnovers. The difference between each offense was staggering. Virginia zipped the ball around the three-point line, and a Cavalier only put the ball on the floor to attack the basket, never using more than three dribbles. Arkansas, on the other hand, featured an offense that relied less on ball and player movement and more so on NBA draft talent breaking down their defender off the dribble, typical of a Calipari-led team. When Virginia would cut Razorbacks' dribbles off and beat them to their spot, they found success forcing turnovers by putting freshmen like Jordan Smith Jr. and Mikka Muurinen on their heels as they had to pick up their dribbles, resulting in lazy passes.

Virginia is a top five team in the country, can seriously rival Duke for ACC title

As much as Sunday's meeting was a meltdown for Arkansas, that was heavily inflicted by Virginia's strong play on both ends of the floor. Despite Preseason ACC Player of the Year Thijs de Ridder playing limited minutes due to foul trouble, the Cavaliers dominated the game from start to finish. All five starters scored in double figures, resembling an even scoring attack similar to Duke. Virginia matches up well with Duke at every position and will meet Feb. 6 in Charlottesville.

"Last year was an anomaly," Memphis is back and Jayden Reid is one of the nation's premiere scorers

Penny Hardaway's Tigers started the season 2-0 after missing the NCAA Tournament last year. Memphis picked up an 80-76 quadrant one win over Iowa State on a neutral floor on Monday and followed with an 89-88 thriller of a victory over VCU at home. Northwestern transfer Jayden Reid has been the difference thus far with 26 and 32 points in the wins respectively.

BYU will go as far as Rob Wright III takes them, has a chance at All-American

BYU experienced significant roster turnover in the offseason but were able to agree to a deal with Wright allowing him to return. The junior lead guard scored 33 points in the Cougars' season-opening win over Ohio State. Wright had an efficient night from the field, shooting 9-for-15 and going 4-for-5 from beyond the arc.

The Amari Allen, Trey McKenney sophomore breakouts are here

Amari Allen was a projected late first-round pick when he withdrew from the 2026 NBA Draft in May to return to Tuscaloosa for his sophomore season. Labaron Philon stayed in the draft, allowing Allen to be given the keys to the team and take over the offense through the point-forward role. In just the second game of the year against Arkansas State, Allen recorded the fifth triple-double in program history with 16 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists.

McKenney caught fire from beyond the arc in the second half against Connecticut to will Michigan back in the game and cut down a lead that grew as large as 18 in the second half to just an eight-point defeat. The sophomore finished with a team-high 22 points on 8-for-11 shooting in the second half after being held scoreless in the first.

Week One First Team

Jayden Reid, guard, Memphis (29.0 ppg, 1.0 rpg, 4.0 apg, 2.5 spg, 53.1 FG%, 45.5 3P%, 82.6 FT%)

Andrej Stojakovic, guard, Illinois (22.5 ppg, 6.0 rpg, 4.0 apg, 1.0 bpg, 64.3 FG%, 50.0 3P%, 66.7 FT%)

Ivan Kharchenkov, forward, Arizona (27.0 ppg, 10.0 rpg, 4.0 apg, 2.5 spg, 54.8 FG%, 37.5 3P%, 77.3 FT%)

Dior Johnson, guard, UCF (34.5 ppg, 4.5 rpg, 2.0 apg, 1.0 spg, 68.8 FG%, 66.7 3P%, 82.6 FT%)

Robert Wright III, guard, BYU (27.0 ppg, 1.0 rpg, 3.0 apg, 1.0 spg, 66.7 FG%, 62.5 3P%, 92.9 FT%)

Week One Second Team

Jaland Lowe, guard, Georgetown (22.5 ppg, 3.5 rpg, 5.0 apg, 0.5 spg, 62.5 FG%, 62.5 3P%, 62.5 FT%)

Davis Fogle, guard, Gonzaga (22.0 ppg, 4.5 rpg, 4.0 apg, 2.0 spg, 45.2 FG%, 36.4 3P%, 85.7 FT%)

Rodney Rice, guard, USC (23.5 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 9.0 apg, 1.0 spg, 40.7 FG%, 40.0 3P%, 95.5 FT%)

Alijah Arenas, guard, USC (25.5 ppg, 6.0 rpg, 1.5 apg, 1.5 spg, 56.3 FG%, 20.0 3P%, 87.5 FT%)

Braylon Mullins, guard, UConn (21.5 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 0.5 apg, 1.5 spg, 50.0 FG%, 41.2 3P%, 92.3 FT%)

Week One Third Team

Daniel Jacobsen, center, Purdue (25.0 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 2.0 apg, 0.5 spg, 0.5 bpg, 75.0 FG%, 82.4 FT%)

Money Williams, guard, Boston College (28.5 ppg, 7.0 rpg, 4.5 apg, 1.0 spg, 45.5 FG%, 30.0 3P%, 85.7 FT%)

Jake West, guard, Northwestern (21.5 ppg, 4.0 rpg, 9.0 apg, 0.5 bpg, 53.8 FG%, 42.9 3P%, 90.0 FT%)

Paulius Murauskas, forward, Arizona State (27.0 ppg, 7.0 rpg, 2.5 apg 1.0 spg, 58.1 FG%, 25.0 3P%, 84 FT%)

Pryce Sandfort, forward, Nebraska (22.5 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 3.0 apg, 2.0 spg, 59.3 FG%, 28.6 3P%, 90.0 FT%)