FOOTBALL: HUSKIES VIE FOR BOWL ELIGIBILITY IN SENIOR DAY MATCHUP AGAINST OLD DOMINION

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Sitting just one win away from their third-straight bowl game, the University of Connecticut Huskies welcome the Old Dominion Monarchs to Rentschler Field on Saturday afternoon.

With their backs against the wall last Saturday, UConn conquered James Madison 46-22, improving its record to 5-5. Despite the huge win, there is still work to do if the Huskies want their season to continue past the next two weeks.

"We're not out of the corner; we're still in the same corner," head coach Jason Candle said.

UConn's Week 12 matchup brings another Sun Belt Conference opponent to The Rent in the form of Old Dominion. The Monarchs are 3-7 on the year but are coming off a bye after defeating Coastal Carolina 21-8 in one of their best performances of the season.

Old Dominion forced six turnovers against the Chanticleers; their stout defense also carried them to a 10-3 win over Appalachian State earlier this year. Watch out for Brandon Crutchfield in the secondary: The cornerback has four interceptions on the year including taking one all the way back for a touchdown.

On the other hand, the offense for Old Dominion has struggled. After dropping 31 points against Norfolk State in their opener, the Monarchs have not mustered more than 23 points in a game. Jaxon Potter has assumed the role of starting quarterback for Old Dominion. Potter has tossed one touchdown compared to five interceptions this season.



UConn wide receiver JD Willoughby celebrates after scoring a touchdown in the Huskies' game against James Madison University on Saturday, Nov. 14. UConn earned its fifth win of the season, defeating the Dukes 46-22.

PHOTO BY JACOB BLACKWELL, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Anchored by the linebacking core of K'Von Sherman, John Lista and Hayden Pegg, the UConn defense has found its stride late in the season. The team clamped down against James Madison and could take advantage of Old Dominion's offensive struggles and potentially force some turnovers on Saturday.

An additional storyline for this game is UConn's Senior Day. Over 20 UConn players are expected to be honored with their families on the field pregame.

"That's a tough one for me every year, some of these seniors, potentially all of these seniors could be done with just a few practices left in their career and this is their last home game," Candle said. "You want to make sure that you do the best job for them, so they remember walking off that field with a win."

For the players who have given their blood, sweat and tears to the program, Saturday's game will be a special encapsulation of many football careers.

"I'm very grateful, being a local kid to New England having everybody come by for this last game is going to be awesome," offensive lineman Ty Chan said. "Having it be my last season as a fifth-year senior is something I'll always cherish for the rest of my life."

The Lowell, Mass. native has been with Connecticut since last year and was a driving force behind Cam Edwards' 1,000-yard season in 2025. This year, he has been a catalyst for Cyncir Bowers' breakout year.

Bowers has 762 rushing yards and 10 rushing touchdowns on the year. The West Virginia transfer had 123 rushing yards and three total touchdowns against James Madison. He has eclipsed 100 yards rushing in three games this season.

"If you keep hitting the hole hard, eventually they are not going to come tackle you," Bowers said. "They are going to be in the wrong spot, and you need to exploit it."

Quarterback Kalieb Osborne had his most efficient game of the season last Saturday. Osborne completed 16 of 20 passes for 274 yards and three touchdowns. Almost half of those yards went to wide receiver Shamar Porter.

The third-year Husky is having a breakout year after playing behind Skyler Bell for the previous two years. Porter has 22 catches for 468 yards and four touchdowns with a yards per catch average of 21.3. Against James Madison, Porter had four grabs for 135 yards and a 67-yard touchdown. Those 135 yards were good for top 10 receiving yards in the country during Week 11.

"This year he's definitely gotten his opportunity to flourish so anytime that we have those play action passes and those deep balls, I know he's going to come down with that ball," Chan said about Porter.

Connecticut has a chance to finish over .500 at The Rent for the third straight season. With a 3-3 home record, the Huskies can finish the job against the Monarchs and punch their ticket to bowl season.

"You only get 12 opportunities to play." Candle said. "This is an opportunity to earn another one; I think it means everything to them (the players)."

Kickoff is set for 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, and fans can tune in on CBS Sports Network or listen to the Huskies play on FOX 97.9 FM.

THE WEEKLY POWER PLAY: BOSTON COLLEGE TO RETIRE THE LATE JOHNNY GAUDREAU'S NO. 13

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The legacy of Johnny Gaudreau will carry on at Boston College, as the school announced Wednesday that it will retire the late hockey star's No. 13. It will take place during a pregame ceremony on Feb. 12, 2027, ahead of the Eagles' men's hockey matchup against none other than the UConn Huskies.

Gaudreau, who spent three seasons with Boston College from 2011-14, became one of the program's most accomplished players. His No. 13 will become the third retired number in Boston College men's hockey history, alongside David Emma's No. 16 and Mike Mottau's No. 3.

"We are proud to honor Johnny Gaudreau by retiring his No. 13 at Boston College," BC athletics director Blake James said in a statement. "Johnny was an extraordinary player who helped bring a national championship to the Heights and became one of the most accomplished players in our program's history. He will always hold a special place in the Boston College family."

Gaudreau made an impact from the start of his time at Boston College, helping the team capture the 2012 national championship during his freshman season. He recorded 21 goals and 23 assists for 44 points in 44 games, finishing just one point behind teammate and current Montreal Canadians winger Chris Kreider.

As a sophomore, Gaudreau finished with 51 points and earned Hockey East Player of the Year honors to establish himself as a top offensive player in college hockey.

His junior season was one to remember, as Gaudreau finished with 36 goals, 44 assists and 80 points, earning the Hobey Baker Award which is given to the top player in men's college hockey. This year, Gaudreau became a two-time Hockey East Player of the Year and a two-time First Team All American.

In three seasons with Boston College, he tallied up 78 goals and 97 assists for 175 points in 119 games. His contributions helped the Eagles earn three Beanpot championships and two Frozen Four appearances.

After his junior season, Gaudreau signed a contract with the Calgary Flames, the start of his 11-year NHL career that also landed him in Columbus playing for the Blue Jackets. He earned the nickname "Johnny Hockey" as he became a seven-time NHL All-Star. He ended his professional career with 243 goals and 500 assists for 743 points in 763 games.

Gaudreau also left a lasting impact on international hockey. He represented the United States in six international events, including five International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) championships. Across these tournaments, he recorded 43 points in 40 games, one of the most in U.S. men's IIHF history.

His impact on the hockey community has remained strong since his death in August 2024. Gaudreau and his younger brother, Matthew, were killed after being struck by an alleged impaired driver while riding bicycles in New Jersey. They were killed just the day before they were set to attend their sister Katie's wedding. John was 31 years old, while Matthew was 29.

Tributes to the brothers have continued across the hockey world, specifically with Team USA. During the 2026 Winter Olympics, Gaudreau's No. 13 jersey was hung inside the men's hockey locker room as a tribute to the former national team player. His former Columbus Blue Jackets teammate Zach Werenski, who represented Team USA, also helped keep his memory alive throughout the tournament.

"It's super special to see his jersey hanging, and we're playing for him and trying to make him proud," Werenski said in an interview with NBC News.

The U.S. men's national team also honored Gaudreau following its gold medal victory at the 2025 IIHF World Championship, bringing his jersey onto the ice during its celebration. The tributes reflect the impact he had on his teammates and the relationships he established throughout his career.

Gaudreau also maintained a connection to Boston College after his successful start in the NHL. He returned during the offseason to complete his undergraduate studies, graduating with the Class of 2021.

Now, Gaudreau's No. 13 will have a forever place among Boston College's most celebrated players. The ceremony will serve as another reminder of the legacy he left behind, and he continues to live on through the players, fans and hockey community he inspired.



Boston College men's hockey player from 2011 to 2014, Johnny Gaudreau, after winning a 2012 NCAA national championship. BC will retire his No. 13 jersey on Feb. 12, 2027, before a game against UConn at Kelley Rink.

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