BIG EAST MEN'S BASKETBALL STANDINGS

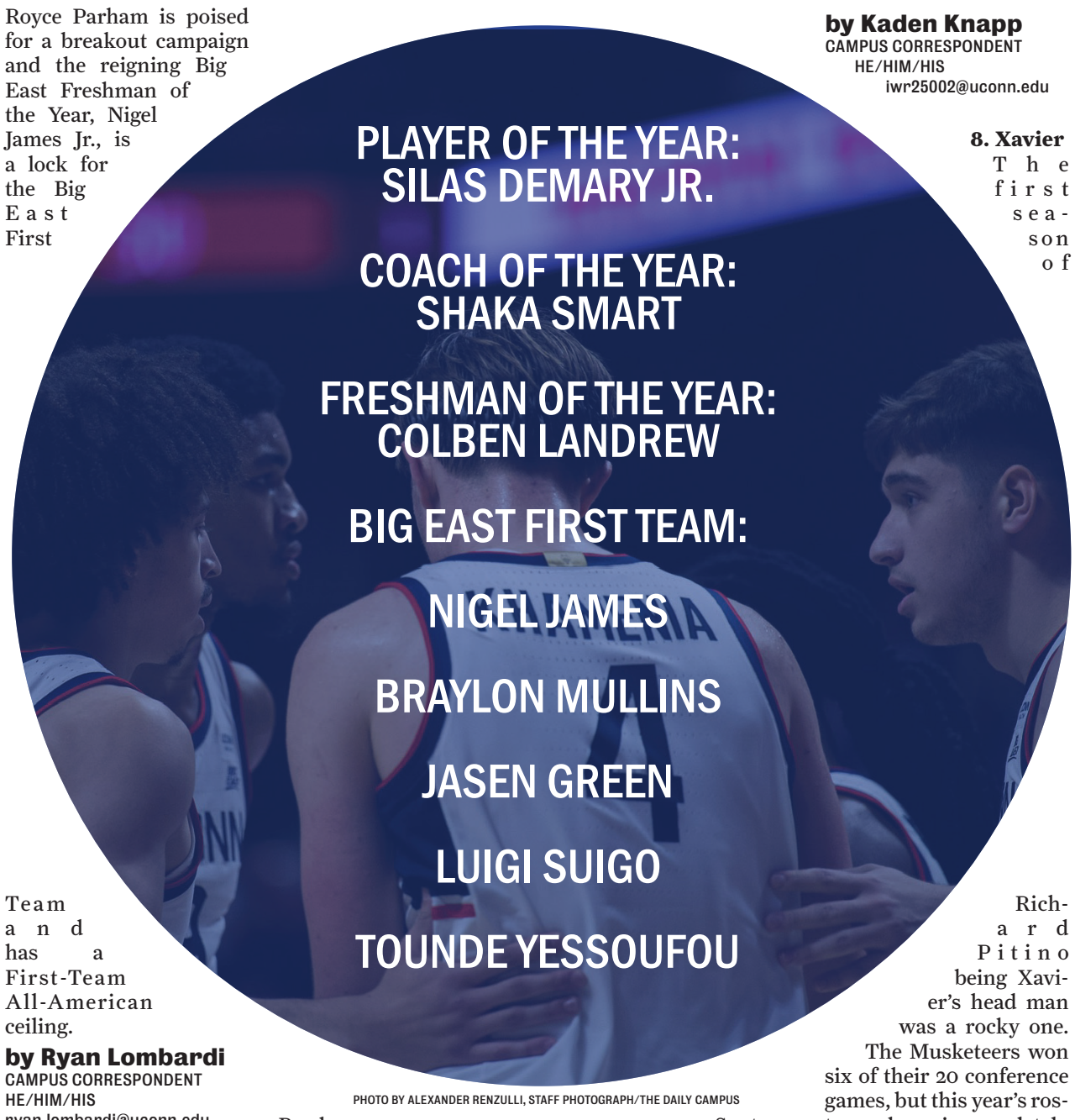


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1. UConn

After falling short to Michigan in the national championship, Dan Hurley and the UConn Huskies are determined to get back to Ann Arbor. The Huskies have two major losses to their roster, including Alex Karaban and Tarris Reed Jr., both of whom were drafted in the first round of the NBA Draft.

Key returners include Jayden Ross, Braylon Mullins and Big East Preseason Player of the Year Silas Demary Jr.

Forced to utilize the portal to rebuild, Hurley and his staff picked up seven transfers. Key additions include Na'Jai Hines, a 6-foot-10-inch center from Seton Hall who led the Big East in blocks, and Nik Khamenia, a 6-foot-8-inch forward who averaged 5.7 points off the bench for Duke last season.

The Huskies also feature three freshmen on the squad, including Big East Preseason Freshman Player of the Year Colben Landrew. The 5-star prospect from McComb, Miss. averaged 23.9 points and 6.5 rebounds during his senior year of high school.

Altogether, Big East coaches have the Huskies finishing in first place in the conference.

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2. St. John's

The back-to-back Big East Champions St John's Red Storm are looking to continue the dominance they showed last season. The Johnnies are coming off an 80-75 loss against Duke in the Sweet 16. For their 2026-2027 campaign, they are projected to be in the top 25 in the country; KenPom has them at No. 23. After weeks of uncertainty, it was confirmed this past week that Quinn Ellis and Keyshawn Hall will be eligible to play, so St. John's will open the season with a fully stacked roster. The Achilles' heel for any opponent of St. John's is Tounde Yessoufou. In May 2026, Yessoufou withdrew his name from NBA draft and transferred to play for Rick Pitino and his staff. Yessoufou, a guard, transferred from Baylor, where he averaged 17.8 points a game. As the Johnnies look to take back the top spot in the Big East, they will be a force to be reckoned with this season.

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3. Marquette

Marquette went 12-20 and finished seventh in the Big East at 7-13 last season, missing the NCAA Tournament for the first time in the Shaka Smart era. In 17 years, Smart has endured just two losing seasons. After going 11-22 at Texas in 2016-17, he led the Longhorns to the big dance with a 19-15 record the very next year. A similar turnaround could be in store in Milwaukee this season. Marquette lost Chase Ross and Ben Gold to graduation, and three bench pieces portaled out. Yet Smart, notorious for refusing to utilize the transfer portal, brought in senior big Sananda Fru from Louisville and junior guard Nolan Minessale from St. Thomas. They join two four-star freshmen and five of the Golden Eagles' top seven scorers from last season. Marquette returns 60.3% of its minutes, the highest percentage in the Big East, according to Bart Torvik. Roster continuity and internal development will be at a premium for Smart and his staff. Royce Parham is poised for a breakout campaign and the reigning Big East Freshman of the Year, Nigel James Jr., is a lock for the Big East First Team and has a First-Team All-American ceiling.

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4. Villanova

Kevin Willard transformed the Villanova Wildcats last season in his first year as head coach, leading them to a 24-9 record and a No. 8 seed in the NCAA tournament. They go into this year with high expectations, despite a significant roster turnover. Their key returner is senior guard Tyler Perkins, selected to the All-Conference First Team after leading his squad in scoring last year. Sophomore forward Matt Hodge is expected to return later in the season while recovering from an ACL injury in February. The Wildcats secured a top 30 transfer class, featuring forwards Devin Royal and Kwame Evans Jr. Sophomore UIC transfer Elijah Crawford is expected to take over starting point guard duties after averaging 14.1 points and 4.9 points as a freshman. Villanova also landed 7-foot-3 Italian center Luigi Suigo after deciding to withdraw from the NBA draft, completing an imposing Wildcat frontcourt. Despite a revamped roster, Willard's squad has enough depth and talent to make another postseason run.

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5. Providence

The Providence Friars enter a new era of college hoops under first-year head coach Bryan Hodgson. Hodgson enters his 19th season after spending 15 as an assistant before head coaching at Arkansas State and South Florida. He becomes the 17th head coach in program history for the Friars following their 15-18 record last season. The program competed in five overtime games last year, including double overtime against Butler in both regular season matchups. The Friars fell in four of these five games. Providence adds Miles Byrd, a 6-foot-7 senior wing transfer from San Diego State who was named the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year. The Big East program averaged 85 points per game last season but lost their main scorer Jaylin Sellers to the NBA. Forced to rebuild, the Friars brought in 10 transfers to compete in the Big East with Malik Mack being the only player from a previous Big East program transferring from Georgetown. The new coaching change along with transfers should give the Friar Faithful something to cheer about this upcoming season.

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6. Seton Hall

After finishing with a dismal 7-25 record in 2024-25, few expected the Seton Hall Pirates to engineer one of the nation's most dramatic turnarounds just a year later. Following the departure of nine players in the transfer portal, Head Coach Shaheen Holloway rebuilt the roster, and the results were undeniable. Last year, the Pirates finished 21-12 overall with a 10-10 record in Big East play, earning fourth place in the conference standings. They carried that momentum into the Big East Tournament, where they defeated Creighton in the quarterfinals, but ultimately fell to St. John's in the semifinals. In the loss against St. John's, Adam "Budd" Clark led the Pirates with 17 points and 11 assists. While Clark has since departed from the program, Holloway has again turned to the transfer portal to reload his roster. Among the newcomers are Simeon Wilcher, Mayar Wol and Devin Williams, all of whom made significant contributions to their previous squads. They are expected to play key roles in Seton Hall's program this season. With a retooled roster, a proven head coach and a program that exceeded expectations a year ago, Seton Hall enters the season as a potential sleeper in the Big East.

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7. Creighton

Creighton is coming off one of their most disappointing seasons in years. The Bluejays failed to make the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2019, finishing 16-11 and 9-11 in Big East play. The biggest change in Omaha is Alan Huss taking the helm. Greg McDermott retired after 16 seasons of coaching for the Bluejays. Huss is not a fresh face; he played college ball in Omaha, then he served as an assistant for five seasons before departing to High Point. Huss led High Point to a tournament appearance before jumping ship back to Creighton last season as the Associate Head Coach. The Bluejays are led by senior foward Jasen Green; the hometown kid averaged 10.5 points, 6.3 rebounds and 2.4 assists while shooting 54.4% from the field. Green is looking to improve those numbers this year, especially after the departure of seniors Josh Dix and Nik Graves last season. Junior Guard Austin Swartz put up an average of 10.9 points last season, proving to be a crucial piece for the Bluejays. Incoming transfer from South Florida Wes Enis is looking to take the Big East by storm this year. The 6-foot-2 guard started at the Division II level before helping the Bulls make the tournament last season. Enis put up 16.4 points with 3.6 rebounds last year on average shooting splits. The first year of the Huss bus in Omaha should be a fun one.

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8. Xavier

The first season of Richard Pitino being Xavier's head man was a rocky one. The Musketeers won six of their 20 conference games, but this year's roster makeup is completely different. Junior Jovan Milicevic is the lone notable returner. The big man was second on the team in scoring and first in three-pointers last season. He'll slide from center to power forward and will be accompanied by LSU transfer Mike Nwoko underneath. The two previously played together in Canada, and Pitino says their chemistry is already really good. Nwoko averaged 13.4 points and 5.9 rebounds in Baton Rouge last season. Senior Chance Westry, a UAB transfer, is projected to start at point guard. According to Pitino, Westry is expected to make an immediate impact. There's real talent in this team's new roster, but a group this new brings up plenty of question marks for the Musketeers.

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9. DePaul

Chris Holtmann continues to rebuild the DePaul Blue Demons as he enters year three at the helm. The Blue Demons finished 16-16 overall and 8-12 in the Big East last season, highlighted by sweeping the season series against Seton Hall and Creighton. With many of their players transferring or graduating, Holtmann made a splash in the portal by signing Magoon Gwath from San Diego State. Gwath averaged 8.9 points per game for SDSU last season. The 7-footer shot over 50% from the field in his two seasons with the Aztecs. His defensive presence will make up for the loss of NJ Benson — Gwath averaged over 1.5 blocks per game in both of his college seasons. Kahmare Holmes is another transfer to watch for the Blue Demons. Holmes averaged 19.5 points and 2 steals for Wofford last season, including a 36-point game on 10/16 shooting against Stamford last January. Layden Blocker is the top returner for the Blue Demons. Blocker averaged a steady 11.1 points and had 1.6 steals per game. The Blue Demons will use this core to establish a defensive identity and try to play spoiler in the Big East. This may not be the year DePaul breaks their 20+ year NCAA tournament drought, but they are well on their way in Chicago.

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10. Georgetown

Ed Cooley and the Georgetown Hoyas are gearing up for the 2026–2027 season with a revamped roster. Their season ended just shy of the Big East Championship, as nobody expected the 11-seeded Hoyas to make a run to the semifinal, where their season ended against UConn.

During the offseason, the team lost their two leading point scorers, KJ Lewis (14.9 PPG) and Malik Mack (13.6 PPG) to the transfer portal. Mack is staying in the Big East and will join the Providence Friars. The team lost six other players and retained seven players, including 7-foot-1 Vince Iwuchukwu, who averaged 11.6 points and 6.1 rebounds per contest. Some portal pickups include Jaland Lowe, who averaged 8 points per game at Kentucky, and Chol Machot, a 7-footer from College of Charleston who poured in 8.9 points and swatted 2.5 shots per game. The Big East coaches have Georgetown finishing 10th, ahead of only Butler.

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11. Butler

The Butler Bulldogs are beginning their 2026–27 season with a new chapter following the retirement of their previous coach, Thad Matta. Their new head coach is Ronald Nored, who was a standout point guard at Butler. He returns to lead the team after coaching in the NBA, most recently as assistant head coach for the Atlanta Hawks from 2023 to 2026.

With a huge number of roster changes, the only player who appeared in more than 20 games last year is senior center Drayton Jones. Nored and his staff have recruited a revised transfer class of guards and forwards, including Christian Moore (The Citadel), Eduardo Klafke (Ole Miss) and Samis Calderon (Kansas).

The Bulldogs, now with a greatly altered roster, will rely on Nored's defensive strategies to shape their approach, and Butler will open the regular season on November 2 against Lafayette, aiming to improve on last year's record.