Daily

SPORTS

Men's Basketball:

HUSKIES HOST PURDUE IN FINAL PRESEASON TUNE-UP



UConn men's basketball takes on Syracuse on Oct. 13, 2026 at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, CT. The Huskies took a decisive victory in the preseason clash 72-52.
PHOTO BY ALEXANDER RENZULLI, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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The final exhibition matchup is upon the No. 4 UConn men's basketball team as they play host to the Purdue Boilermakers. The Boilermakers look a bit different since the last time they squared off, which was in the 2024 national championship where the Huskies took down Purdue to capture back-to-back titles.

UConn is coming off a fantastic road win in East Lansing against No. 6 Michigan State. Transfer forward Nik Khamenia led the way with 19 points on 6-for-11 shooting. With Braylon Mullins sidelined for his second straight game, Nik Khamenia stepped up brilliantly to fill the void. Mullins is expected to play Tuesday night ahead of the season opener against Gardner-Webb on Nov. 2.

One of the knocks from the team's last outing was foul trouble. Na'jai Hines fouled out and Oskar Giltay picked up four fouls. In the game against Syracuse, Giltay fouled out. The Huskies will key in on the big men on Tuesday. In recent years, UConn has come down low, so both transfer centers must stay disciplined and protect the paint without getting into foul trouble.

Purdue goes into this season unranked in the AP poll, something that has not happened since the 2022-23 season. They also held a streak of 79 consecutive weeks inside the top 25.

This season, Purdue will be without Braden Smith, who wrapped up his 4-year career with the program and finished as the NCAA Division I men's all-time career assists leader with 1,103, passing Bobby Hurley's 1,076.

Another departure for Purdue is Trey Kaufman-Renn, who was recently granted another year of eligibility and transferred to Kansas. The 24-year-old averaged 14.2 points and 8.3 rebounds per game last year.

Despite losing a few veteran players, Purdue has come out on top in their two exhibition games, the first being a 32-point win over Ball State and a 30-point win over Purdue Fort Wayne. Tuesday is the first big test for Purdue, as the Huskies tested themselves twice in their preseason slate.

The Boilermakers now look to guard C.J. Cox to be one of the new leaders, who started all 39 games for the team last season, averaging 8.5 points per game. In their last exhibition against Purdue Fort Wayne, Cox put up 13 points and four rebounds.

The leading scorer for Purdue was 4-star redshirt freshman Antoine West Jr., who put up 16 points in 20 minutes of play, raining in four three-pointers in seven attempts. The 6-foot-2 guard sat out last season to further improve his game this season, and so far, that has worked out immensely.

UConn Freshman Colben Landrew has been stepping up to the plate in a big way so far. Landrew's play has been exceptional; his physical play may put Dan Hurley into a predicament in terms of rotations. Landrew started in both exhibitions and has been all over the court both offensively and defensively. The freshman played 31 minutes against the Spartans, and 11 of his 13 second-half points were crucial in picking up the win.

Landrew is certainly knocking on the door of a starting role with his recent play. However, senior Jayden Ross hasn't lived up to expectations thus far. Shooting just 3-for-11 with eight total points over both exhibition games may not be enough to hold onto his spot. While Ross started both exhibition games, Mullins' imminent return could force head coach Dan Hurley into a tough choice: will he trust his young prospect on opening night, or stick with his four-year veteran?

The final preseason tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at PeoplesBank Arena and can be watched on WFSB and UConn+.



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