FOOTBALL: HUSKIES SET FOR ROAD TEST AGAINST AIR FORCE

by Elliot Koplas
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
ejk23008@uconn.edu



The UConn Huskies face off against the University of Massachusetts Minutemen at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on Oct. 23, 2026. The Huskies took a decisive 35-16 victory in the historic New England rivalry.
PHOTO BY ALEX RENZULLI, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The UConn Huskies seek their third straight win this weekend, heading out west to Colorado to face the Air Force Falcons.

This is the second meeting in a home-and-home series between the two, where UConn defeated the Falcons 26-16 in East Hartford.

The Air Force sits at 5-2 on the season, fueled by the run game and keeping the ball in its own hands.

"When they're on schedule and doing what they need to do that way, this is a really tough operation to stop. They do a good job squeezing the air out of the ball on offense and limiting the other team's possessions," said UConn Head Coach Jason Candle.

The Huskies hope to execute special teams again following a successful mission in their previous game after a blocked punt and touchdown by Shamar Porter. As for the offense, making sure they take care of the football and capitalize on every possession is crucial against this Falcons side.

UConn's running game has taken off in their previous few games, fueled by the legs of junior Cyncir Bowers. The offensive line is a large part of Bowers' success.

"It all started with the [offensive line]; I feel like the last four or five weeks they've stepped up to the challenge, and they've been playing great," said Bowers after UConn's 35-16 win over UMass.

Bowers rushed for 131 yards in the contest for his second 100-plus rushing game this season. The Huskies look to him, along with quarterback Kalieb Osborne, for their legs and yards on the offensive side.

The Air Force leads the nation in time of possession, averaging over 36.5 minutes per game, and ranks No. 2 nationally in rushing yards per game. The key to its success has been controlling the clock and simply keeping the ball out of its opponents' hands.

The main key for UConn is to capitalize on every offensive drive, because it won't have as many as it normally does. The Falcons will likely stick to their strong run game after quarterback Liam Szarka remains out of the season following a lower-leg and knee injury during Air Force's 14-9 win over Navy in Week 5.

The Falcons have since shifted to quarterback Evan Medders to lead the offense. In his five games played this season, he has only attempted 14 passes, with only eight completed. These, combined with his 92 total passing yards on the season, favor Air Force's run game.

Medders, however, was a key contributor to the run game in the Falcons' loss against Wyoming last weekend, with 115 on the ground. They also rely on running backs Owen Allen and Rocco Conti, who both possess over 350 rushing yards this season.

The defensive line for UConn is going to be tested this weekend against one of the strongest running teams in the nation. Seizing every opportunity it has will result in a win or loss; the margin for error is slim to none in this matchup.

As for the Air Force, it sticks to its strong running game and drains the clock, squeezing out wins by tiring down its opponents. Next weekend, the Falcons face the best rushing team in the nation, Army. But first, the Huskies stand in their way.

The two sides continue their battle for bowl-eligibility as the season reaches the final stretch.

Kickoff is set for 3 p.m. on Oct. 31 and can be streamed on MW+.

THE WEEKLY POWER PLAY:
WHERE WILL DYLAN LARKIN END UP?

by Nicole Caruso
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
nicole.caruso@uconn.edu



American professional ice hockey player Dylan Larkin. The longtime Detroit Red Wings captain requested a trade out of the place he has spent his entire NHL career so far.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @DYLANLARKIN71 ON INSTAGRAM

During the offseason, the longtime Detroit Red Wings captain requested a trade out of the place he has spent his entire NHL career so far. Larkin's future in Detroit remains uncertain, and the possibility that he may join a Stanley Cup contending team is becoming more real as the days go on.

The 30-year-old center lost his captaincy when the organization announced during preseason that it would start the 2026-27 season without a named captain. Reports have indicated most recently that Larkin's preferred destination is down to 10 teams with several contenders interested in adding a top six center to their team.

Larkin has gathered 646 career points with the Red Wings organization, ranking among the franchise's most prominent players. However, he has not made the Stanley Cup Playoffs since his rookie season in 2015-16, with Detroit missing the postseason in each of the past 10 seasons.

Larkin was asked what exactly pushed him to request a trade after last season, but his answer did not reveal much.

"It wasn't easy to get to that decision," Larkin said in an interview with NHL.com. It was very hard. It wasn't a spur-of-the-moment thing. But I don't take what I did lightly, and I got to that point, and I'm not quite ready to talk about it."

The reported list of teams on his list includes the Utah Mammoth, Minnesota Wild, Florida Panthers, Vegas Golden Knights, Carolina Hurricanes, Colorado Avalanche, Dallas Stars, New Jersey Devils, Tampa Bay Lightning and Washington Capitals. Each team provides Larkin with a fresh start, but here are the teams I believe he might end up with.

1. Utah Mammoth

Utah could make the most sense for Detroit because of its ability to offer a substantial return in exchange for Larkin. The Athletic placed the Mammoth at the top of its list of potential destinations for Larkin, emphasizing the organization's high-level prospects available.

Utah has young players who could be of interest to Detroit as it considers the future of its roster and hopes to make it back in postseason contention.

Prospects such as center Caleb Desnoyers and left-winger Tij Iginla could peak Detroit's interest, although any trade would depend on Utah's willingness to part with potential NHL stars.

The biggest challenge is the salary cap. Larkin carries an $8.7 million annual cap hit through the 2030-31 season, meaning Utah would need to create room or include salary in a potential deal.

2. Minnesota Wild

Minnesota could be an ideal fit for Larkin, especially with the talent the team already has on its roster as the Wild have built a team around strong offensive and defensive players. Adding an established veteran center could help bring the team toward Stanley Cup contention again.

Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy lead the offense for the Wild as Kaprizov is the franchise's all-time leading goal scorer and Boldy is coming off a 42-goal season. Adding Larkin would give the Wild another offensive threat.

Larkin could be especially strong alongside forward Joel Eriksson Ek, who provides the Wild with scoring chances and defensive responsibility. Larkin's quick speed on the ice and strong puck control would allow Minnesota to spread its scoring talent across the lineup rather than having all its scoring stars all on the first line.

The Wild also offers a strong defensive foundation for Larkin with Quinn Hughes and Brock Faber. Veteran defensemen Jared Spurgeon and Jonas Brodin offer additional experience on the ice that would match well with Larkin's.

The question is if Minnesota can afford to add Larkin to the mix. Kaprizov has a $17 million annual average value on his new contract, with Hughes' contract expected to include a raise depending on a future extension. The team would also have to determine what it is willing to give up with Detroit likely to seek a strong return, potentially involving younger players, or draft picks.

3. Washington Capitals

With captain Alex Ovechkin retiring after this season, the Capitals have more motivation than ever to strengthen their roster while Ovechkin is still in the mix.

Larkin would offer Washington an experienced center who has no problem leading offensively on the ice. His addition could also improve the team's options at a position when more depth is crucial for a postseason run.

Again, for Washington the challenge would be putting together a package that works for the Red Wings while also accommodating Larkin's contract. Washington's urgency to make one final playoff push with Ovechkin is something to look out for.

For Larkin, the decision marks an opportunity to seek postseason action that he has yet to make throughout the past 10 years. For Detroit, it could provide strong assets to help rebuild a team that has struggled to get back in the playoffs.

Utah appears to be the strongest contender for Larkin and Detroit with its combination of trade assets and flexibility. Until a deal is made, Larkin will remain with the Red Wings and will look to perform well on the ice to make himself appealing to these teams as he looks to find a new home in the league.