

WOMEN’S HOCKEY:

UConn to host Quinnipiac in exhibition match

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The UConn women’s hockey team will hit the ice for the first time this season on Saturday for an exhibition matchup against Quinnipiac.

UConn enters the season ranked at No. 7 on the USCHO’s poll, one down from their final rank of sixth last season. The team finished 28-9-2 last year with a 17-6-1 record in conference play.

The Huskies will look to follow up on their dominant 2025-26 campaign, where they won the Hockey East championship in a thrilling double overtime finish and beat Princeton for their first-ever NCAA tournament victory.

Head coach Chris Mackenzie will be entering his 14th season with the program, a mark that stretches over half the program’s existence.

Quinnipiac enters the match ranked No. 6 on the poll following a 29-9-2 overall record and a 14-6-2 conference record in a season where it also won its conference tournament before falling in the second round of the NCAA tournament. The Bobcats are led by Cassandra Turner, who is in her 12th year at the helm and 18th with Quinnipiac overall.

The Huskies’ two main



Junior and newly appointed women’s ice hockey captain, Claire Murdoch on the ice. Murdoch scored a point per game last year.

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stars of that fabled Hockey East final have left for the PWHL, with forward Kyla Josifovic going to Detroit and national goaltender of the year Tia Chan heading to San Jose. Chan was the only goaltender in the top ten for the Patty Kazmaier award, given to the top collegiate wom-

en’s hockey player every year.

Though two star talents have departed, the Huskies still have plenty to go around. Junior and newly appointed captain Claire Murdoch finished last season at exactly a point per game, a number which may only increase

as she enters the latter half of her collegiate career.

UConn also has talents like Livvy Dewar and Julia Pellerin up front, so there will be adequate players to fill the void left by the graduated players.

“I just think there’s gonna be someone that’s

gonna step up, it’s happened enough over the 13 years we’ve been here,” head coach Chris Mackenzie said when asked about Chan’s departure. “We’re gonna need one of the three that are in there right now to step up, Shannon [Moran], Amelia [Wilkinson] and Tay-

lor [Belchetz] have been competing, and we’ll see what happens.”

It remains unclear which of the three goalies will be in the net on opening night in St. Cloud State, but tomorrow’s game could provide a general idea of who Mackenzie is leaning toward. The performance of whoever plays will also play a role, given that all three have a combined five appearances at the collegiate level.

Quinnipiac junior Felicia Frank will likely get the start for the Bobcats. Frank was in the top three for the goalie award behind Chan and enters the season as a favorite this year.

Quinnipiac also has Patty Kazmaier top ten finisher Kahlen Lamarche returning for her senior year. Unlike the Huskies, the Bobcats have more certainty in their top-end talent, which could give them an upper hand in the game.

The two teams last met each other in the semifinals of the annual Nutmeg Classic, where UConn won 4-3 en route to winning the tournament. The two also faced each other last season in an exhibition game in Hamden.

Both foes will face-off on Saturday at the Toscano Family Ice Forum with a puck drop scheduled for 3 p.m.

FIELD HOCKEY:

Huskies host Villanova, No. 3 Princeton in weekend slate



Senior field hockey goalie, Natalie McKenna in net for the Huskies. McKenna played an important role in the Huskies’ win over the Scarlet Knights on Sept. 13.

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Fresh off a 4-3 shootout victory at No. 17 Rutgers, No. 10 UConn (4-1) returns to Storrs for a two-game homestand.

The Huskies open Big East play against Villanova (5-1) today at 3 p.m. They will then welcome No. 3 Princeton (3-1) on Sunday, Sept. 20, at noon. Both contests will be played at the George J.

Sherman Family Sports Complex.

In the latter part of their game against Rutgers, the Huskies displayed amazing determination by staying in the 7-on-7 overtime for 20 minutes, even though a player had been sent off on a late card. In the high-pressure penalty shootout, they converted three of four penalty kicks. Lucy Zich, the freshman forward who was named Big East Freshman of the Week,

remains a major offensive threat and continues to apply constant pressure on the opposing defense. Moreover, sophomore goalkeeper Natalie McKenna played a key role by making five important saves in regular time and three vital saves in the shootout. The Huskies will need to maintain this high level of play in their first home game at Storrs.

UConn has generally beaten Villanova in the past, with a 38-7 all-time

record and securing nine of their last 10 meetings. The teams last played on Sept. 19, 2025, when the Huskies went to Conshohocken, Pa., and won by a small margin, 2-1. Lene Bunjes and Abby Davidson scored the first-half goals. They also maintained a strong defensive record, limiting the Wildcats to just one shot on goal.

UConn has a record of 18-13 against Princeton. Their most recent match was on Sept. 21, 2025, in New Jersey. Princeton

shut the Huskies out 5-0 in their Senior Day game, capitalizing on early offensive chances. UConn was limited offensively, managing just 10 shots overall, including five penalty corners.

In both games, the Huskies intend to influence the pace by taking an active role in the midfield. In the match against Villanova, they will press aggressively to keep the Wildcats deep and set up early penalty corners. How-

ever, when they play No. 3 Princeton at home on Sunday, they will focus on careful marking and staying calm under pressure — disrupting the Tigers’ transitions and making the most of their high-percentage counterattacks to cope with the difficult two-game homestand.

Today’s game against Villanova will be broadcast on ESPN+, while Sunday’s clash with Princeton will stream live on UConn+.