SPORTS

FOOTBALL:
CANDLE RETURNS TO HIS HOME STATE IN CLASH AGAINST MIAMI UNIVERSITY



First-year UConn football coach Jason Candle speaks to the Huskies during the Huskies' spring game at Rentschler Field in July 2026. Candle will lead the team against Miami in Oxford, Ohio, this Saturday, Sept. 26, just under five hours from where he grew up.
PHOTO COURTESY OF UCONN ATHLETICS.

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Head coach Jason Candle will lead UConn football against Miami in Oxford, Ohio –– just under five hours from where he grew up.

UConn is coming off a dominant 48-20 performance against Southern Mississippi. The heat was a main concern against the southern program, but the coaching staff and players handled it well, scoring 27 points in the first half alone.

A defensive score in the third quarter continued their momentum after Anas Luqman cashed in on a pick-six.

"Big interception, big touchdown, anytime you can get a defensive score, momentum is everything and when you get one of those, that's just huge," Coach Candle said.

UConn's defense looks to stand strong in another week against an offensive-heavy program.

The (2-1) Huskies now face a (1-2) Miami side that Coach Candle is familiar with, having faced it four times during his tenure at Toledo. The Redhawks are led by freshman quarterback David McComb, who has thrown over 800 yards and scored five touchdowns this season.

"[Chuck Martin]'s got a good staff; he's got a great culture there, and they're going to be in the thick of it again in that league," Candle said.

The Redhawks are coming off a 35-31 defeat to Cincinnati after leading by 21 points going into the half.

The Huskies look to clean up in their next game, particularly in penalties, which have been a recurring issue for the team this season. They have accumulated 27 penalties so far this season for 280 yards.

"We can't have the penalties and the things that are hurting us and taking yards," Candle said.

Quarterback Kalieb Osborne leads the team in rushing yards with 152 and four touchdowns, but other players have stepped up, especially in their last game. Cyncir Bowers ran for 84 yards on 11 attempts, including a 42-yard touchdown.

McComb has his own offensive weapons, finding wide receiver Maleek Huggins for 205 yards receiving on the season with a season-high 128 against Cincinnati. Running back Lazaro Rogers also adds to the offensive firepower with 78 yards rushing and one touchdown so far this season.

UConn enters with a clear edge on both sides of the ball. Its offense averages just under 40 points per game, while its defense holds opponents to 22. Miami's offense puts up 30 points per game, but its defense allows 34, swinging the advantage early in favor of the Huskies.

This Saturday is a chance for UConn football to separate itself from programs and prepare for tougher opponents in the upcoming weeks.

Kickoff is set for 3:30 p.m. and can be streamed on ESPN+.

THE WEEKLY POWER PLAY:
2026–27 NHL SEASON KICKS OFF TUESDAY

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The start of the 2026-27 NHL season begins Tuesday with five games on opening night. Here's a look at two of the night's top matchups.

New York Rangers vs. Boston Bruins

The Boston Bruins host their Original Six rival, the New York Rangers, at TD Garden. Puck drop is set for 8 p.m.

The Bruins are coming off a return to the playoffs last season, while the Rangers will try to rebound after missing post-season action last season.

Boston finished with a 45-27-10 record, sitting in fourth place in the Atlantic Division at the end of the season, and returned to the playoffs after missing the 2024-25 postseason. Despite their return, the Bruins were eliminated in the first round by the Buffalo Sabres.

The Rangers ended their regular season with a record of 34-39-9 and failed to make the postseason. New York earned the No. 5 pick in the 2026 draft, where it selected Alberts Šmits, who appeared in his first preseason game for the Rangers last Tuesday. The defenseman earned nearly 16 minutes of ice time and was paired with Braden Schneider. Šmits played nearly four minutes in the penalty kill and even recorded an assist.

"One of the biggest challenges for young players is just the physical size and strength of the guys in this league," Rangers head coach Mike Sullivan said in a postgame press conference. You guys can see it: he's a man as an 18-year-old. His physical stature –– he's big and strong."

As for the Bruins, they have returning key players such as Morgan Geekie, who had a standout season last year. Geekie scored 39 goals and recorded 68 points wearing the Black and Gold and will look to remain a lead goal scorer for Boston for the second year in a row.

Goaltender Jeremy Swayman will also play a key role for Boston following his 31-18-4 record in net last season finishing and a .908 save percentage. Swayman also finished the season as a Vezina Trophy finalist.

Another chapter in the Boston-New York rivalry continues Tuesday as both teams look to begin the regular season with a win.

Carolina Hurricanes vs. Florida Panthers

The reigning Stanley Cup champions begin their season against the Panthers, who won the Cup in both 2024 and 2025 before missing the playoffs last season. Before the game starts, Carolina will raise its second Stanley Cup banner at Lenovo Center.

The Hurricanes finished 52-22-7 with 113 points last season, clinching first place in the Metropolitan Division before advancing through each round in the playoffs to defeat Vegas in six games during the finals for the Stanley Cup.

Sebastian Aho led Carolina with 80 points and 53 assists last season, including five goals throughout the playoffs.

Carolina will look towards goaltender Brandon Bussi to be a force in the net following the loss of Frederik Andersen, who signed with the Edmonton Oilers during the offseason. Bussi recorded 31 wins for the Hurricanes and a .895 save percentage.

As for the Florida Panthers, they had a less-than-stellar season following their championship wins two years in a row. They finished in seventh place in the Atlantic Division with a 40-38-4 record.

Injuries certainly played a role in the number of losses as one of their key players, Aleksander Barkov, missed the entirety of last season following a torn ACL injury.

The Panthers also welcome Brady Tkachuk to the team, brother of Matthew Tkachuk who has been with the Panthers since 2022. Brady Tkachuk scored 22 goals across 60 games during his time last season with the Ottawa Senators.

Florida also faces a goaltending change, as Sergei Bobrovsky departed after being part of Florida's two Stanley Cup championships. During the offseason, the Panthers acquired Jacob Markstrom from the New Jersey Devils. Markstrom had a .883 save percentage last season and a 23-19-1 record in net.

Puck drop is set for 5 p.m. on Tuesday.



Boston Bruins Pavel Zacha plays against New York Rangers Blake Wheeler during the first period of a Bruins vs Rangers game, Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023, in New York. The Boston Bruins host their Original Six rival, the New York Rangers, at TD Garden with puck drop set for 8 p.m. on Tues, Sept. 29.
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