

INDOOR TRACK: HUSKIES SET RECORDS AHEAD OF BIG EAST CHAMPIONSHIPS

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The UConn track and field team had a busy weekend on the road, wrapping up their final meets before the Indoor Big East Championship. The men and women both competed in the Eagle Elite Invitational, the Valentine Invite and the Giegengack Invite, showcasing the depth and talent across the entire roster as they refined their performances heading into the championship season.

First at the Eagle Elite in Boston, the Huskies broke new ground in program history with two pole vaulters making the top 10 all-time marks. Senior Rachel Mason went down as fourth best mark at 3.76m, once again demonstrating the precision and technical ability that defined her collegiate career. Similarly, sophomore Piper Linn achieved No.10 on the list at 3.61m, showcasing the progress in her development. The high standard of performance continues to prove that the Huskies' pole vault program is only developing in talent across seasons.

Starting on the same day as the Eagle Elite, the Valentine Invite was hosted at Boston University. At the competition, the Huskies saw more records being broken, with graduate student Jenna Zydanowicz breaking the women's indoor school record in the 3000m with her impressive time at 9:06.07. Her performance highlighted the dominance in the UConn distance running program and set a new standard for future competitors to follow closely. Following her standout lead, junior Malin Rahm found her place as seventh-fastest time in indoor program history for the 3000m. With a time of 9:25:56, Rahm continued to set the tone for the Huskies' successful season.

Adding another tally to the list of wins was graduate student Sarah Trainor who also joined the top 10 with the seventh-best time in the 1000m at 2:48.73. This further emphasized the team's strength in middle-distance running.

Adding to the team's packed schedule was the Giegengack Invite. The Huskies made their way back to Connecticut on Saturday to attend the competition at Yale in New Haven, Conn. Further down in the state, the Huskies continued to set the tone for the Big East Championship, with more athletes joining the ranks and establishing their competitive edge. The Huskies made their mark both in field and track events, further establishing their dominance across various events. Graduate student Zayin Roe joined the top 10 ranks in the women's triple jump with a distance of 12.50m. Joining her effort was senior Sinclair Fryer, who won the women's shot put with a distance of 13.52m, further highlighting her continued strength and consistency throughout her time in the program. Continuing the efforts was senior Travis Roux who led the men's weight throw with an impressive mark of 20.52m. Coming in with more field wins, sophomore Enaji Muhammad took home the men's high jump at 2.00m. Senior Marc Morrison secured the top spot for men's long jump at 7.40m. With this win, Morrison added another victory to his impressive season.

Switching over to the track events, junior Anna Connors turned in a strong performance for the 400m with a time of 55.47. Connors solidifies her speed and endurance that makes her a key competitor. Adding to the victories, senior Terrel Williams achieved a win in the 60m hurdles with a time of 7.75, combining precise skill and high speed.

Building on the team's winning spree as well as his own successful season, sophomore Kyle Johnson secured the second-ranked triple jump in the event squad and won the event with a jump of 15.88m, capping

off an exceptional and successful weekend for the UConn Huskies.

With their high performances and substantial wins across all three meets, the Huskies will look to defend

their Big East title at the Big East Championship. The Huskies have demonstrated they are progressing competitively and will look to present that ability in Chicago from Feb. 28 to March 1.



Members of the UConn track and field team in action. The Huskies competed in the Eagle Elite Invitational, the Valentine Invite and the Giegengack Invite this past weekend, and performed well in all. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @UCONNTFXC VIA INSTAGRAM.

COLETTE'S COMMENTARY: UNRIVALED 1-ON-1 TOURNAMENT SHOWCASES BASKETBALL IN ITS RAWEST FORM

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Unrivald is not just redefining women's basketball; it is revolutionizing the game itself. The league's one-on-one competition forces players to rely solely on their offensive instincts and defensive discipline, creating a version of basketball that is

raw, demanding and impossible to fake. In doing so, Unrivald highlights a level of individual excellence that is often lost in a five-on-five format.

The competition was played in a 30-player, single-elimination format with each game lasting a maximum of 10 minutes or until a player reaches 11 points. A seven-second shot clock was used for each possession with

the game clock running continuously. The championship game shifted to a best of three series.

The first round began on Wednesday, Feb. 11, with four players winning their debut. Veronica Burton made a dominant debut with a shutout win against Courtney Williams that lasted just one minute and 15 seconds.

Other matchups were not as definitive as the game came down to one or two points. Aaliyah Edwards, last year's runner-up, had a close 11-8 win over Dominique Malonga. Chelsea Gray defeated Natasha Cloud by just one point after trailing 10-5; however, she made her comeback by making back-to-back three-pointers to get the win. Rookie Sonia Citron narrowly defeated veteran Marian Mabrey in a 12-10 upset win powered by dominant defensive skills.

The tournament also included matchups between teammates, Paige Bueckers and Kate Martin; Breeze Basketball Club teammates faced each other in the first round. Bueckers defeated Martin 12-5, despite an attempt by Martin to overthrow Bueckers with a 5-0 run.

The competition moved into the second round, which took place on Friday, Feb 13. Matchup were played between Kelsey Mitchell and Veronica Burton, Kelsey Plum and Natisha Hiedeman, Bueckers and Arike Ogunbowale, Jackie Young and C. Gray, Allisha Gray and Saniya Rivers, Citron and Rae Burrell, Breanna Stewart and Aliyah Boston and Edwards and Shakira Austin.

The round consisted of Bueckers defeating Dallas Wings teammate Ogunbowale 12-4, despite an early 4-0 lead by Ogunbowale. The round also consisted of two shutout wins by Burrell against Citron and Plum against Hiedeman. Edwards clinched another close win, winning by just two points, against Shakira Austin.

The competition then shrunk to just four match-

ups in the quarterfinals. The round featured another shutout win, this time by Boston who shutout Edwards. The closest game was played between Plum and Michelle, where Plum got the 11-7 win.

Bueckers was also knocked out in the quarterfinals in an upset 11-2 loss to C. Gray. C. Gray put up a powerful defensive strength, causing Bueckers to shoot 1-of-6. A controversial late foul call sealed the win for C. Gray, knocking out Bueckers.

The semifinals and finals of the tournament were played on Saturday, Feb. 14. Plum and C. Gray matched up in the semifinals, where Gray secured the 12-8 win. A. Gray and Boston match up, where A. Gray defeated Boston 12-10.

The tournament then moved into the best of three finals. A. Gray won the first game in a 7-0 shutout win; however, C. Gray bounced back in the second game to win 8-3. In the final game, A. Gray took an early 6-0 lead before C. Gray went on a run to take the 7-6 victory. C. Gray won \$200,000 as the champion of the tournament with A. Gray winning \$50,000 as the runner-up. Plum and Boston each received \$25,000 as the semifinalists.

The tournament ultimately captured the skill, competitiveness and composure that is needed in a fast, competitive game of basketball that is stripped down to its core. Every possession becomes crucial with mistakes highlighted and the best player rising to the top. This tournament highlighted that Unrivald is redefining the game and setting a new standard.



Chelsea Gray of the Las Vegas Aces during the Unrivald 1-on-1 Tournament. The final match of the tournament took place Saturday, Feb. 14. PHOTO COURTESY OF @UNRIVALVEDBASKETBALL ON INSTAGRAM