Daily Sports

SOFTBALL:

Huskies bounce back with dominant win over Hofstra after tough weekend series against Providence



Caprice Bohmer of the UConn softball team makes a pitch during a game. The Huskies beat Hofstra 11-3 Wednesday afternoon, looking to capitalize on this momentum during their Big East matchup against Creighton University this weekend. PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER

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The UConn softball team continued Big East Conference play this past weekend, with a three-game series against the Providence Friars at the Burrill Family Field at the Connecticut Softball Complex. The Huskies fell 2-1 in the series. The team regrouped on Wednesday with a final out of conference matchup, hosted by the Huskies, against Hofstra University.

In the first game of the series, the Huskies kept the game close but ultimately fell 7-6 to the Friars, snapping their 11-game winning streak. In the circle, the Huskies struggled early on; freshman Caprice Bohmer made her 19th start of the season, and in 5.1 innings, she gave up six runs on nine hits and added three strikeouts. In the sixth inning, Amber Bretton came in for relief, making her 14th appearance, going 1.2 innings, giving up one run on three hits with a pair of strikeouts.

The Friars took control of the game early on with a pair of home runs. The first homer brought two players home and the second homer brought three players home, bringing the Friars to an early 5-0 lead. The Huskies defense, led by Bohmer, quickly took control, holding the Friars scoreless for the next three innings.

The Huskies offense also began to quickly find their rhythm. Senior outfielder Kaitlyn Kibling walked with loaded bases, giving the Huskies a run, and bringing the score to 5-1 at the bottom of the second inning. In the bottom of the fifth, freshman Emma Willers hit a single to center field, scoring sophomore infielder Cat Petteys, and bringing the Huskies a run closer to closing the gap. The Friars saw the Huskies closing in and quickly responded with a run of their own in the sixth inning.

The Huskies quickly closed the gap to only one run when Petteys hit a home run, bringing in three players, and bringing the score to 6-5. The Friars saw the Huskies quickly gain momentum and decided to stop their momentum at the top of the 7th inning, bringing the score to 7-5. The Huskies did not go down without a fight, bringing it back to a one run game, when Kibling scored freshman Ava Calciano; however, they were not able to get a final run to tie the game.

The Huskies split the next two games against the Friars, falling 4-3 in extra innings in the first game before responding with a 12-4 run-rule win.

In game one, UConn's offense struck early with RBI doubles from Petteys and senior Haley Coupal and a sacrifice fly from senior infielder Savannah Ring to build an early 3-1 lead. In the circle, the Huskies dominated with Sydnee Koosh holding the Friars to just one run over 4.1 innings. This dominant defense led to a key double play. The Friars quickly came with their own dominance, tying the game in the seventh inning and scoring the go-ahead run in the eighth inning. The Huskies could not respond to this go-ahead run, giving the Friars the win.

The Huskies flipped the script in the series finale with an explosive offensive performance. Kibling led the offense with perfect success at the plate, including a triple and a homerun. Sophomore catcher Heidi Barber and Willers each contributed offensively, adding home runs. The Huskies closed off the game, going 9-for-15 with two outs and scoring five runs in the sixth. Defensively, UConn pitching remained composed led by Koosh and Bretton, allowing just one walk in game two.

The Huskies bounced back from a tough weekend with an 11-3 win over Hofstra. The Huskies set the tone early with a first inning run and then went on a six-run stretch across the third and fourth innings. The dominance continued into the fifth inning with four runs, topped by one run in the seventh inning. Offensively, the Huskies were consistent throughout, scoring in five separate innings and finishing with 11 runs on seven hits. In the circle, Bohmer was powerful, holding Hofstra to three runs, refusing to give them a chance to gain momentum.

The Huskies will look to bounce back in Big East play with a weekend series against Creighton University at the Burrill Family Field. The first game will take place on Friday, April 24 at 7 p.m. The second game will take place on Saturday, April 25 at 4 p.m. The series will conclude on Sunday at 12 p.m. Husky fans can tune into all three matchups on FloSports.

LATO'S LENS:

2026 COLLEGE FOOTBALL SPRING GAME STANDOUTS TO WATCH

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Now's the point in the college football offseason where you can basically smell the fall coming. This past weekend, several teams around the country concluded spring football with intrasquad games, giving fans a preview of what their team looks like heading into the home stretch of the offseason.

Scrolling through Instagram has afforded me the opportunity to see several highlights, stat lines and emerging players who look ready to have an immediate impact come fall. That being said, here are five players whose spring game performances raised eyebrows and, more importantly, showed signs of translating when the games start to matter.

Ethan Grunkemeyer, Quarterback (Virginia Tech)

Filling in for the injured Drew Allar at Penn State last season, Ethan Grunkemeyer showed flashes of being "the dude" for a college football team after leading the Nittany Lions, who had head coach James Franklin fired, to a 7-6 season and a win in the Pinstripe Bowl over Clemson. After the season ended, Grunkemeyer entered the transfer portal and followed Franklin to Blacksburg to turn the struggling Virginia Tech program around.

In their spring game Saturday, the rising sophomore completed 13 of his 17 passes for 136 yards, one passing touchdown and an interception, which is very impressive for a spring game. He ran Virginia Tech's offense to a tee, displaying both accuracy and excellent arm talent. Though he's currently in a battle for the starting quarterback spot with redshirt freshman Bryce Baker, Grunkemeyer's performance should give him momentum for that role.

Chris Henry Jr., Wide Receiver (Ohio State)

Since his commitment in 2023, Buckeyes fans have been frothing at the mouth to see Chris Henry Jr., the second-ranked wide receiver in the class of 2026, in action. And he did not disappoint in the Ohio State spring game at Ohio Stadium in Columbus, Ohio.

The 6-foot-5 true freshman hauled in four catches for 96 yards and a touchdown, with two of those catches being flashy, deep completions in traffic. As physically imposing as he is right now, he's still developing and has a full summer to prepare. In an already stacked wide receiving room with veterans Jeremiah Smith and Brandon Inniss, Henry is proving himself as a legitimate wide receiver-three target.

Alberto Mendoza, Quarterback (Georgia Tech)

Everybody knows Fernando Mendoza. After all, he's on the verge of being drafted first overall in the 2026 NFL Draft in just a few days. However, let's not take our sights away from his little brother, Alberto, who looks poised to be the starting quarterback for the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets this fall.

Sitting behind his brother for the 2025-26 national champion Indiana Hoosiers, Mendoza saw minimal action, amassing only 24 passing attempts in the final minutes of several Indiana blowout victories. However, he looked like a seasoned veteran over the weekend after completing 12 of 16 passes for 148 yards and one touchdown. He even had head coach Brent Key refer to him as "the guy." Should Mendoza win the starting job over rising freshman Grady Adamson, the Yellow Jackets are a serious threat to make a run at an ACC title.

Savion Hiter, Running Back (Michigan)

Even though his 10 carries for 44 yards in Michigan's Maize and Blue game aren't crazy on paper, true freshman running back Savion Hiter certainly impressed Saturday. The five-star prospect from Mineral, Virginia, showcased power against one of the best defenses in the country, ripping off several chunk plays while falling forward on nearly every carry.

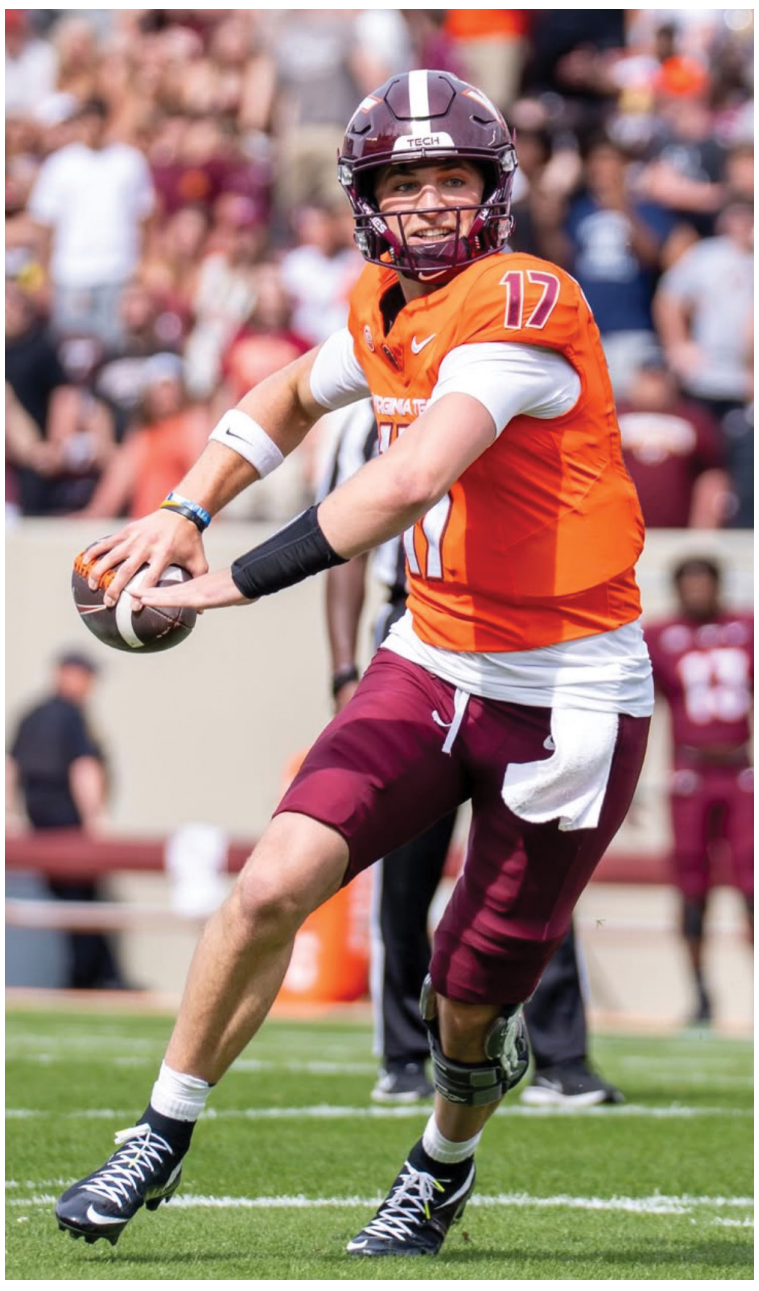
Hiter's size is second to none. Measuring in at 6-foot, 210 pounds, he should have no problem plowing through Big Ten defenses and becoming the next great Wolverine running back. Not to mention, new offensive coordinator Jason Beck's offense is nearly identical to a traditional Michigan offense, with the use of tight ends in the run game, so Hiter should fit right in and thrive early.

Braylon Conley, Cornerback (Georgia)

Looking at the defensive side of several spring games, Georgia's Braylon Conley was one of the many names to stand out in discussions after Georgia's G-Day on Saturday.

Conley spent the last two seasons at USC, transferring to Athens after playing in nine games for the Trojans. Despite recording only 14 total tackles last season, he looks to be a key cog for Kirby Smart's defense in 2026.

The cornerback was targeted several times by the Georgia offense, allowing just one completion throughout the scrimmage, and finished the day with two tackles and a pass breakup. Despite being behind veteran corners Ellis Robinson and Demello Jones, Conley looks to provide terrific depth on the Bulldogs' defense in hopes of another SEC championship title.



Quarterback Ethan Grunkemeyer of Virginia Tech looks to pass the ball during a game. Grunkemeyer had a strong performance during the Hokies' Spring Game, showing his capabilities before the fall comes around. PHOTO COURTESY OF @SONSOFSATVT ON INSTAGRAM.