MEN'S BASKETBALL:

WOFFORD TRANSFER NILS MACHOWSKI COMMITS TO UCONN

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The Huskies are not done yet as UConn landed a portal commitment from Wofford transfer Nils Machowski on Tuesday.

A rising junior from Berlin, Germany, Machowski was one of the starting guards at Wofford, where he played just one year after playing his first two seasons at UCF. With the Terriers, he drastically improved his numbers to 17.2 points, 5.7 rebounds and 2.6 assists on 33.7 minutes per game while shooting 43.3% from the field, 38.2% from 3-point range and 79% from the free throw line.

Once Solo Ball announced his decision to use a medical redshirt, adding more depth to the backcourt became a massive need for the Huskies.

Machowski will likely serve as a backup combo guard role for the national runners-up, with Silas Demary Jr. and Braylon Mullins set up to be the starting backcourt for the 2026-27 season.

Before his breakout season in Spartanburg, S.C., Machowski started nine games at UCF (seven of which came with a knee injury to Mikey Williams), averaging 2.9 points, 1.7 rebounds and 0.8 assists on 11 minutes per contest with shooting splits of 39.6% from the floor, 32.9% from deep and 78.9% from the charity stripe.

Wofford went 19-13 overall and 11-7 in the Southern Conference (SoCon), with Machowski listed as a "major contributor" on KenPom, meaning that he was used in 24-28% of the team's possessions.

He was the team's best player numerous times throughout the season. The first instance was a 28-point outing in a 94-86 win at Bellarmine, knocking down four 3-pointers. His 27 points proved to be massive for the Terriers in a 79-74 win at Western Carolina. He followed that game with a career-high 37 points on 12-of-17 shooting, including an 8-of-11 mark from downtown, in a 95-86 win at The Citadel, also grabbing seven rebounds.

The latter two performances helped him become the first player in program history to be named the Lou Henson National Player of the Week by Collegeinsider.com, earning the honor on Jan. 5.

Standing at 6-foot-3, 183 pounds, Machowski recorded five double-doubles and only failed to score double figures three times out of the 32 games he appeared in. He scored 20 points or more in 10 games while reaching 30 or more three times this season.

His performance last season was sufficient enough for him to be named to the All-SoCon second team. He scored 551 points, more than anyone on the roster and accounting for 21.8% of the team's points.

Machowski played for Germany's youth national team in both the 2022 U18 European Championship and 2024 U20 EuroBasket, but his most notable accomplishment overseas were back-to-back championships with Alba Berlin's U19 team in 2022 and 2023, hitting a buzzer-beater in the latter's title game.

It will be quite a transition from the SoCon to the Big East, but Machowski's experience in his two seasons at UCF helped with playing in the Big 12 and playing meaningful minutes in the Knights' run to the College Basketball Crown's championship game. Since transferring to Wofford, Machowski has only faced one major-conference opponent: at Auburn on Nov. 11. That game was one of the lowlights of a huge season for him, finishing with 5 point and five assists on 2-of-8 shooting.

The last two players that played for Alba Berlin won national championships with the Huskies: Niels Giffey and Leon Tolksdorf.

The Huskies are reportedly in the market for a power forward to back up Duke transfer Nik Khamenia, with three other scholarship spots open for reserve players.



Nils Machowski, a recent UConn MBB commit during a game. Machowski began his career playing for the University of Central Florida.

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SAM'S SECTION:

DEMARY, MULLINS HEADLINE RETURNEES FOR 26-27 MBB SEASON

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With most deadlines over, everyone from the 2025-26 UConn men's basketball team has decided on their future.

Returning from last season include Silas Demary Jr., Braylon Mullins, Jayden Ross and Jacob Ross, with Solo Ball redshirting.

Demary, frequently called "QB1" by Dan Hurley, averaged 10.1 points, 5.9 assists (led the Big East), 4.5 rebounds and 1.6 steals on 28.4 minutes per game while shooting 44.6% from the floor, 38.5% from deep and 80.1% from the free throw line. The rising senior from Raleigh, N.C. will be one of the contenders for preseason Big East Player of the Year. He is currently recovering from a Grade 2 ankle sprain with one torn ligament and two partially torn ligaments in his left ankle, but is expected to be healthy ahead of summer workouts, which start on June 1.

"I'm just trying to do everything I can to be 100% for June 1," Demary said to the media on Tuesday afternoon. "Want to be at my best so I can give my best to the guys and start prepping to win another championship."

Was there ever a doubt that the starting point guard would be in Storrs for one last season?

"I don't think so," he answered. "This was always home for me, and it was never a doubt that I was gonna leave right after the Michigan game."

Mullins will look to build off the euphoric tournament run he experienced as a freshman, including making even more big-time shots for the Huskies as he looks to take his game to the next level.

"It's just crazy how everybody has seen that," he said on the game-winner over Duke in the Elite Eight. "I had so much fun last year. I mean, the tournament—it was an experience, especially getting back to Indy...But, I mean, we didn't get the ultimate goal, and that's something you want to strive for, and it builds a little fire in you."

The rising sophomore from Greenfield, Ind. finished his first season averaging 12 points, 3.5 rebounds, 1.4 assists and one steal on 28.3 minutes a contest while shooting 42.1% from the floor, 33.5% from downtown and 88.9% from the charity stripe. He is expected to be one of the faces of college basketball and hopes to be a more vocal leader.

"I know I am one of the quietest on the team, so just trying to figure that out and learn and be better at that," he said.

When asked if he will be screaming and yelling next season, Mullins said he hopes so.

"That's the goal, right?" Mullins smirked.

Jayden Ross will likely elevate into the starting lineup for the 2026-27 season in a potential Andre Jackson-like role. The rising senior from Bristow, Va. will have another shot at a second national championship, finishing his junior year with averages of 4.6 points, 2.5 rebounds and 0.8 assists on 17.4 minutes off the bench with 50.4% overall shooting, 39.1% from the 3-point line and 69.2% from the foul line. Expect the older Ross to make a push to improve on the offensive end of the court.

"I think I found a lot of consistency in my shot towards the end of the year," Ross said. "Next year, looking to be more aggressive and assertive on offense is one of the main things that I'm looking to be able to do."

His brother, Jacob, will be coming off his redshirt season where he developed away from the bright lights of playing for a blue-blood program like UConn.

"I think I grew the most mentally, and then my body—adjusting to the college life, having more time to be in the weight room, the resources with the kitchen being upstairs—just growing my body, growing my mental toughness and learning how to withstand a full season of grinding and putting your all every day, no matter how you're feeling—good or bad," he said.

His goals are similar to what his older brother did on the court.

"I want to be one of the best defenders on the team," he said. "I just want to do all the gritty stuff—the stuff that may not show up on the stat sheet. I just want to be a blue-collar guy that really gets everything out of the mud, does whatever the team needs to do to win and just be an overall winning player."

On April 20, the team announced that Solo Ball would undergo wrist surgery and take a medical redshirt with a return to action in the 2027-28 season.

"It was probably one of the toughest decisions I've ever made," he revealed. "I bawled my eyes out, probably a good 2-3 days. I got all my tears out. Right after it happened, I got some more tears out. It was eating me alive, just the fact that I couldn't put on a jersey that long."

Ball revealed that after the season, he was diagnosed with two ruptured ligaments in his left wrist.

"It started in December," Ball recalled, mentioning later that it was December 16 against Butler in Hartford. "I didn't really know how bad it was at first, but one thing about me is I was just gonna push through and fight for my team to the best capability I possibly could."

Expect him to serve as a player-coach while sidelined next season.

"I've seen the playbook enough, seen 160 plays, so I definitely got some kind of insight just to help people out," Ball said. "I'm definitely gonna be an energy guy, be vocal. I'm not gonna be a ghost at all. I'm gonna be the same Solo."

Leaving the program from last season's team include Eric Reibe (transferred to USC), Jaylin Stewart (transferred to SMU), Jacob Furphy (transferred to Boston College), Rrezon Elezaj (transfer portal) and Uroš Paunović (transfer portal).

Four more scholarships left for next season, with freshmen Colben Landrew and Junior County as well as transfers Najai Hines (Seton Hall), Nik Khamenia (Duke), Oskar Giltay (Stanford) and Nils Machowski (Wofford) coming in.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/ THE DAILY CAMPUS