

Miami Men's Basketball Clips

2021-22

DJ Irving Named MBB Assistant Coach

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
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University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga announced Thursday the hiring of DJ Irving as the team's new assistant coach.

Irving, a former two-year captain at Boston University, comes to Coral Gables from Roman Catholic High School in Philadelphia.

"I am honored and incredibly excited to be an assistant coach at the University of Miami," Irving said. "I want to thank coach Larrañaga for this amazing opportunity to be a part of his program. He believed in my energy, my passion for the game and my will to help this team get better every day. I cannot wait to work with the players, as well as learn from such an experienced group in coach Larrañaga, coach Caputo, coach Courtney and the rest of the staff. This is something I have been working towards for a very long time and I am truly blessed to be able to live out my dream in Coral Gables. Go Canes!"

In October 2018, Irving joined the coaching staff at Roman Catholic, a storied program that has produced numerous NBA players, including Rasual Butler and Brad Wanamaker. For three seasons, Irving was the assistant varsity coach and head freshman coach.

Irving's duties at Roman Catholic included player development and scouting varsity opponents. He aided the Cahillites to the Philadelphia Catholic League championship game each year, including winning the crown in 2019.

In addition, Irving worked with Team Final—the AAU program former Miami standouts Ja'Quan Newton, Davon Reed and Lonnie Walker IV played for—over the past year. Most recently, this spring, he served as the assistant coach of the U15 team.

"DJ came highly recommended to me by coaches and friends I trust. I was immediately impressed with his passion and enthusiasm for working with young players," Larrañaga said. "As a former outstanding Division I point guard who has been coaching at both the high school and AAU levels, he brings a different point of view into our program and recruiting process. I believe DJ has an extremely bright future ahead of him. I am confident our players will enjoy the energy DJ brings to the court and the close personal relationship he'll develop with them off the court. DJ is a winner in every

sense of the word."

Prior to his time at Roman Catholic, Irving spent the 2017-18 season as a professional player in Cadiz, Spain, with Union Linense Baloncesto. He led the team in scoring, assists and steals, while holding captain status on a mostly Spanish-speaking roster and helped his team place second in the division.

The previous year, Irving served as the special assistant to the head coach at his alma mater. Irving held that role during the 2016-17 campaign for BU head coach Joe Jones, aiding the Terriers to an 18-14 mark and a second-place finish in the Patriot League.

Irving got his start in the collegiate ranks immediately following the conclusion of his collegiate career. He served as a graduate assistant at Penn State during the 2014-15 season, helping the Nittany Lions to an 18-16 record, good for their most wins in four years.

Irving excelled as a collegian at BU, where he started 120 games in his four-year career. The two-time All-America East honoree and one-time All-Patriot League designee averaged 11.4 points, 3.1 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 1.1 steals per game as a Terrier. He finished his tenure with 1,456 total points, one of his numerous top-10 marks in the school's all-time record books.

BU compiled a 78-54 record during Irving's career, including logging a stellar 50-16 mark in conference action and winning the 2014 Patriot League regular season title. Three times, Irving helped the Terriers reach the postseason, headlined by a berth in the 2011 NCAA Tournament.

A native of Chester, Pa., Irving was a two-time PIAA First Team All-State selection at Archbishop Carroll High School in Radnor, Pa. He graduated from Boston University in 2014 with a degree in sociology.

Already Feeling at Home

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
July 6, 2021

It was, of course, a significant part of his college basketball education.

During his three-year career at George Mason, Jordan Miller learned all about the Patriots' memorable run to the Final Four in 2006.

He knew the names of the players on the roster. The coaches, too. He gained an understanding of the history the Patriots made that season and how their Cinderella story captured the imaginations of college basketball fans across the nation.

So earlier this year, when Miller received a call from Jim Larrañaga, the high-scoring guard was intrigued.

"The first thing he said to me when I answered the phone was 'Do you know about my success at George Mason?' and I was like, 'Well, duh,'" Miller recalled with a laugh. "I know the fan base does. They live and die by that Final Four trip they took. It's impossible for me not to know about that success. Of course I knew. And we just got to talking from there."

It proved to be a memorable conversation for both Miller and Larrañaga, who led the Patriots on that historic run before taking over as the head men's basketball coach at Miami.

Not long after their talk, Miller – who had entered his name in the transfer portal earlier – made the decision to enroll at Miami and join the Hurricanes himself.

He did so without ever setting foot on Miami's campus or meeting with Larrañaga and the rest of his new coaches face-to-face.

Still, he was convinced his new home was the right place for him in so many ways.

"Compared to all my other Zoom visits, Coach Larrañaga and the staff put so much effort into making it a good presentation. They broke down my analytics and stats from my previous years and showed me how I could fit in at Miami," Miller said. "They sent me clips of full games they watched from my past season at George Mason and I really saw the effort. The amount of times they would reach out to me, throughout the day, just to see how I was doing...they cared about my wellbeing. That really stood out to me."

The Hurricanes' efforts to make Miller feel

welcome didn't end there.

The same day he moved into his new dorm this summer, a handful of his new teammates – including forward Deng Gak, center Rodney Miller and guards Kameron McGusty, Harlond Beverly and Isaiah Wong – came over to chat before the group went out to eat together.

"It meant more than I could ever express in words," Miller said. "Being a transfer, I didn't know what to expect. Having that warm welcome and not feeling isolated was great. That first day, we were all laughing, getting to know each other and I couldn't have asked for a better welcome."

Since, Miller has been focused on trying to build on-court chemistry with those new teammates.

He brings with him an impressive resume, that includes being selected as a third-team All-Atlantic 10 honoree last season after averaging 15.8 point, 6.1 rebounds, two assists and a steal per game.

During his three years at George Mason, Miller had 50 double-digit scoring performances, seven double-doubles and on three separate occasions, topped the 25-point mark.

In high school, the Virginia native set the scoring record at Loudoun Valley High School with more than 1,700 points in his career. Twice he earned Virginia High School League All-State honors and in 2017, he was named the VHSL 4A Player of the Year after leading his team to the state championship.

Now, Miller is hoping to make a quick adjustment to the ultra-competitive ACC. His new coach already believes the experienced, high-scoring guard will make an impact.

"The first thing is he can play multiple positions. He can play guard, he can guard a guard, he can guard a big. He can shoot the three, he can post up," Larrañaga said. "He's very good at rebounding, driving the ball to the basket. He's got a lot of versatility in his game and that's going to be very helpful to us right from the very beginning."

Miller also brings with him invaluable experience, something he's honed not only over the course of his collegiate career, but from growing up around the game and learning it from his three older brothers, Jeffery, Justyn and Jovon, a former player at Ferrum College.

Playing beside them, Miller said, helped him

develop into the player – and person – he is today.

"We were definitely very competitive. Sometimes the arguments would go from the court to the house and my mom had to shut them down real quick," Miller said. "But I think that shaped me into who I am today. I have a love for basketball and I'm a very competitive guy at heart and that's where it all stemmed from. I always looked up to my older brothers and playing with them was bonding time. It was more than just shooting hoops. It was bonding and getting to spend time with your family. And yeah, there were definitely a lot of fights that got taken from the court to the house, but it was always in good spirits. I could not have asked for [better] older brothers. They've been great and supportive throughout my whole basketball career."

Now, Miller is hoping that competitive spirit leads to success at Miami.

The Hurricanes have faith that it will and that, both Larrañaga and Miller said, will only be a positive for the Hurricanes.

"He's quickly made the adjustment to our basketball program and fits in extremely well. He'll have no problems competing at this level," Larrañaga said. "He'll be able to compete in multiple positions because he's now older, stronger and has enjoyed a lot of success previously."

Said Miller, "I know a lot of people don't get to experience this and I'm blessed with this opportunity, to do something I love and play basketball at Miami. I've been blown away and I'm just happy, really glad to be here...It can only go up from here."

Isaiah Wong to withdraw from NBA draft, rejoin Miami Hurricanes for junior season

By Jonathan Givony
ESPN
July 6, 2021

Miami guard Isaiah Wong told ESPN he will withdraw his name from the 2021 NBA draft and return to the Hurricanes for his junior season.

“Going into the NBA draft process for me was more about hearing what teams were saying what I needed to work on in order to improve my draft stock,” Wong said Tuesday. “That’s what I’ve been trying to implement all summer.”

Wong was named third team All-ACC last season after averaging 17.1 points, 4.8 rebounds and 2.4 assists in 35 minutes per game. As one of just three ACC all-conference members returning, he’ll likely be a candidate for preseason player of the year honors next season.

After a quiet freshman season, the 6-foot-3 Wong emerged as one of the top-scoring sophomores in the country among power-conference players.

“My whole life I’ve never been projected as anything. I always had to prove myself every step of the way,” he said. “Coming into the ACC, I had a great opportunity to be successful in our system. I didn’t worry about what people were saying. I was just focused on my game.”

Wong returns to a Miami team hoping to bounce back from an injury-riddled 2020-21 campaign. The Hurricanes return second-leading scorer Kameron McGusty, a super senior, and are among the several finalists in the recruitment on Jalen Duren, the No. 2 recruit in the 2022 class, who may elect to graduate high school early and enroll in college this summer.

“Next year we should be much better as we have some really good players coming in,” Wong said. “We have the potential to do some great things at Miami next season.”

Ready to do His Part

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
July 27, 2021

Charlie Moore admits it wasn't exactly the easiest way to do things.

When he made the decision to transfer from his hometown program, he knew that because of the COVID-19 pandemic there was a very good possibility he'd have to choose where he'd play next without actually seeing that place in person – or without physically meeting his new coaches.

Fortunately, he'd already been through the recruiting process once and already built a connection with Hurricanes head coach Jim Larrañaga.

That connection paid off.

"It was pretty tough, not being able to go on visits like a normal recruiting process. But with Miami recruiting me, I just felt at home with those guys. The conversations were genuine," said Moore, who was recruited by the Hurricanes coming out of Chicago's Morgan Park High School. "I could tell they really cared about me and wanted the best for me throughout the process. They felt I could really come in right away and help the team be the best it could be. That genuineness, I felt it, even through Zoom calls. My parents felt it as well. At the end of the day, I felt like it was the best decision for me."

As to whether he and his new coaches laughed about their first go-round together on the recruiting trail?

"Yeah, we definitely did," Moore chuckled. "We definitely did."

Added Larrañaga, "We had recruited Charlie out of high school. We knew him to be a terrific point guard, a terrific leader, and a terrific passer, so we felt like he would fit in immediately. And he has. He really knows how to distribute the ball, he knows how to run a team. He can score. He works hard defensively and he's going to really help us, right from the jump."

A redshirt senior who has experienced virtually all the highs and lows of college basketball game during his stops at Cal, Kansas and DePaul, Moore knows what will be expected of him when he suits up for the Hurricanes.

And the 5-foot-11 guard says he's more than ready to do his part to help Miami compete for

an ACC title and put together a deep NCAA Tournament run.

No doubt his resume will help.

Last year, Moore started 15 of DePaul's 19 games and led the Blue Demons in assists (4.2), steals (1.5) and minutes (32.3). He was the team's co-leader in scoring, averaging 14.4 points per game. A year earlier, he led DePaul in both scoring (15.5 ppg) and assists (6.1).

Now, the point guard is eager to see how he matches up against the best in one of the nation's top basketball conferences.

"The ACC is one of the top conferences in the country. Coming here with great teams like Miami, North Carolina, and Duke, getting to play against teams like that is a dream come true, to be honest," said Moore, who likes to draw on-court inspiration by studying the games of Stephen Curry, Damian Lillard and Chris Paul, among others. "I always watched these teams and how they competed and now I'm in the shoes to do so myself. Coming to the ACC, I just try not to take anything for granted. Continue to get better, help my team come out with wins. That's most important. That's my big goal, helping this team be the best we can be."

Moore is no stranger to competition.

He was introduced to the game as a toddler by his father, Curtis, and he was a fixture at his older brothers' high school games, often running onto the court during timeouts to put up shots before the games resumed.

Those older brothers – Michael and Paris – didn't always take it easy on Moore when the three would play together, even if he was younger.

That, he says, helped him become the player he is today.

"I was always with them. I grew up around basketball. My dad loved basketball. My brothers played and they used to work out a lot and I would be out there with them," Moore recalled. "I always wanted to be better than my brothers, I always had that competitive spirit and basketball came within my family. Growing up, seeing it all the time, being around it all the time...Even when I was losing to my brothers. I'd run back out there and do it again. It was always fun."

Basketball and family have always gone hand-in-hand for Moore, which is part of the reason he returned he returned to the Midwest, first

playing at Kansas and later DePaul.

In 2015, Curtis Moore suffered a serious stroke that left the entire family stunned – but, Charlie Moore notes, brought them closer than ever before.

Moore transferred to Kansas and later to DePaul in order to be closer to his father as he navigated a difficult recovery.

Being nearby, he said, was crucial.

"It was tough. One day, he was up and the next day, he was in the hospital...It's a tough feeling for someone to go down like that. You're so used to them walking and doing such-and-such with them, him taking you out, him shooting and working out with you and it was tough," Moore said. "But it made me and my family much closer. And it made me a better person."

"He's doing way better now. He's still recovering, but he's feeling better than he has in a long time and that's another thing that helped me make the right decision to come here to Miami and try to create something special...I feel like things are better back at home now, so I'm not as worried as much as I once was. I can come out and play freely and do what's best for the team."

Moore knows that while his father may be watching from a distance, he'll always have the unwavering support of the man who introduced him to the game.

And he's determined to continue making him proud – and make the most of the opportunity he's now got as a Hurricane.

"My dad has always been supportive, always wanted what was best for me, always put me in situations where I could succeed," Moore said. "I don't know another way to be. It's pretty cool. It's a great feeling. It means the world to me."

MBB Signs Bensley Joseph

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Aug. 18, 2021

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga announced Wednesday the addition of Bensley Joseph to the Hurricanes' 2021 recruiting class.

A 6-foot-1, 165-pound guard from Arlington, Mass., Joseph is a graduate of Putnam Science Academy in Putnam, Conn.

"We are thrilled to welcome Bensley and his entire family into our Hurricane basketball program," Larrañaga said. "Bensley is an outstanding point guard, a great leader, an excellent defender and a terrific passer. He is a valuable addition to our team."

Joseph is considered the top recruit in the state of Connecticut by all three major recruiting websites—247Sports, ESPN and Rivals. The former two label him a four-star recruit, as does the 247Sports Composite.

ESPN pegs Joseph as the No. 80 overall player in the country, placing No. 14 among point guards. The 247Sports Composite rankings list Joseph at No. 101, including No. 16 at his position.

Joseph spent the 2019-20 academic year at Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, Mass. There, he posted a dazzling stat line of 15.4 points, 7.2 rebounds and 6.8 assists per game, en route to earning Class AA All-NEPSAC distinction.

A highly-sought-after recruit throughout his high school tenure, Joseph played on the AAU circuit with Expressions Elite. He committed to the Hurricanes over offers from Boston College, Georgetown, Marquette, Providence and others.

Joseph is the third high school player to sign with Miami in the class of 2021, following fellow guards Nisine Poplar and Jakai Robinson, both of whom did so in November. The Hurricanes have also inked a pair of transfers in Jordan Miller from George Mason and Charlie Moore from DePaul.

Miami adds walk-on PF Thomas Oosterbroek to top-25 class

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Sept. 10, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes have added Los Angeles (Calif.) Brentwood power forward Thomas Oosterbroek as a walk-on ahead of the 2021-22 season.

Oosterbroek, who stands 6-foot-7 and weighs 235 pounds, had offers from Cal State Fullerton and Eastern Washington with interest from Loyola-Chicago and Montana State before joining the Hurricanes this week following tryouts.

He will wear No. 32.

Oosterbroek was named to the Gold Coast All-League First Team as a senior.

(Thomas) is one of the most skilled players I've had the pleasure of coaching," Brentwood coach Ryan Bailey posted on social media.

Oosterbroek is one of two walkons on the roster, joining guard Filippos Gkogkos who returns for his third season.

Oosterbroek also joins a freshman class that includes top-100 four-star guards Jakai Robinson and Bensley Joseph and three-star guard Wooga Poplar. Miami's recruiting class, which does not include Oosterbroek in the rankings, is considered the 24th-best class in the country, fourth-best in the ACC, according to the 247Sports composite rankings.

Miami also added guards Charlie Moore (from DePaul) and Jordan Miller (from George Mason) in the offseason.

Miami opens its regular season on Nov. 9 against Canisius. The Hurricanes will have an exhibition game on Oct. 20 against Nova Southeastern.

Dyer Promoted to Director of MBB Operations

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Oct. 4, 2021

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga announced Monday the promotion of Jeff Dyer to director of basketball operations.

In the fifth year of his second stint with the Hurricanes, Dyer served as Miami's associate director of basketball operations for the past four seasons.

"Jeff has worked his way up the ladder at Miami over the past several years through an impressive blend of hard work, intelligence, passion and dedication," Larrañaga said. "He has excelled in so many ways during his tenure at The U and I am excited to elevate him to this new position. Jeff is not only ready to take on this role, but poised to thrive in it."

In his new role, Dyer will aid Larrañaga in numerous capacities and his day-to-day responsibilities will feature a variety of different roles. Included are managing budgets, speaking engagements, community service and team travel, plus overseeing support staff and equipment.

Dyer, who is headed into his seventh year overall at Miami, will also assist with on-campus recruiting and serve as a staff liaison to numerous areas within the athletics department, including academics, communications, compliance, facilities, marketing and ticketing.

Over his four seasons as associate director of basketball operations, Dyer organized opponent film into scout edits, aided with the creation of scouting reports, managed film exchange, assisted with scheduling, helped run camps and hired graduate assistants. In 2018, his first year in that role, the Hurricanes earned a third-place finish in the ACC, posting a 22-10 (11-7 ACC) record and reaching the NCAA Tournament.

"I am incredibly grateful to Jim Larrañaga and the entire staff for their belief in me, not just now, but throughout my entire time at The U," Dyer said. "I have learned so much from Coach L and it has been a privilege to grow my career under his leadership. I am excited for the opportunity to move into this new role here at Miami, a place I truly love, and look forward to helping our team pursue its goals this season and beyond."

In 2016-17, Dyer served as the video coordinator at Bowling Green State University,

working under former Miami assistant coach Michael Huger. Prior to that, from 2014-16, Dyer worked as a graduate assistant at Miami.

During his first stop at The U, during which he earned a master's degree in sport administration, Dyer aided in film breakdown for opponent scouting facilitated the set-up and break-down of practice, worked on analytics spreadsheets and coordinated with the academic office to ensure that the players were on track academically. His efforts as a graduate assistant helped Miami reach the NIT title game in 2015 and the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 in 2016, as the Hurricanes compiled a 52-21 ledger during that two-year stretch.

A 2014 graduate of the University of Delaware, where he earned a degree in health and physical education after serving as a four-year student manager, Dyer hails from Hillsborough, N.J., and now resides in Coconut Grove, Fla., with his fiancée, Nicole.

UM men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga encouraged by team's depth but knows it must stay healthy

By Khobi Price
Sun Sentinel
Oct. 5, 2021

After last year's disrupted and injury-ridden season, the Miami Hurricanes men's basketball team is entering the 2021-22 season with optimism that the program will have greater success than it's had in recent years. The Hurricanes finished the 2020-21 season with a 10-17 (4-15 ACC) record after being without several key players during the stretch run of the year due to injuries.

"Last year, there was no way to anticipate what we were going to be dealing with in terms of injuries," Hurricanes coach Jim Larrañaga said Tuesday.

"When Sam Waardenburg went down, I saw the foot injury. It looked like a mild sprain. It turned out to be a break and he's out for a year. Chris Lykes sprains his ankle. Then Rodney Miller goes down, Kam McGusty gets hurt. There's no way to anticipate who is going to get hurt, when they're going to get hurt [and] how long they're going to be out.

"When we're completely healthy, I think we've got a deep team. [Monday], we had a number of guys who didn't practice because we're dealing with injuries. I'm optimistic we can get healthy and have a good team this year. We have to be healthy in order to be good."

UM lost five players who were on last year's team at one point during the season to the transfer portal: Lykes (Arkansas), Elijah Olaniyi (back to Stony Brook, where he transferred to Miami from) and Nysier Brooks (Ole Miss), Earl Timberlake (Memphis) and Matt Cross (Louisville).

But the Hurricanes brought back Isaiah Wong and McGusty after both guards declared for the 2021 NBA draft before deciding to return to Coral Gables, helping give Larrañaga confidence in his team despite the roster turnover.

"I love the way both of them are practicing right now, the way they're giving it their all every single day," Larrañaga said. "The NBA scouts let them know there are parts of their game they have to work on, mainly on the defensive end of the floor."

Larrañaga identified improved rebounding from both Wong and McGusty as ways for Miami to improve its defense.

"We can't give up the shooting percentages, the offensive rebounds we have," Larrañaga

added. "We're not a very big team physically. We don't have a lot of bulk. So it's up to our guards to really help the big guys with rebounding. Kam and Isaiah are both very capable of averaging five, six, seven rebounds a game like Bruce Brown did."

The Hurricanes also added Jordan Miller (George Mason) and Charlie Moore (DePaul) solidifying UM's backcourt depth.

Moore, a sixth-year guard who's also played at Kansas and California, averaged 14.4 points and 4.2 assists with the Blue Demons last year while Miller, who's 6 foot 6, averaged 15.8 points and 6.1 rebounds with the Patriots.

"Both guys have made a very smooth adjustment to the University of Miami basketball program," Larrañaga said. "Charlie is clearly a point guard but he's also an excellent shooter. Miller, on the other hand, can stretch the [defense] and make some 3s, but he's perhaps our best offensive rebounder as well. He's very good in and around the basket.

"The two of them are certainly going to be in the rotation and I expect them both to make major contributions."

Among other additions to the team, Larrañaga said that he "loves" Miami's true freshman guard trio of Bensley Joseph, Jakai Robinson and Wooga Poplar.

"Very clearly Bensley is a point guard, he likes to distribute the ball [and] plays hard-nosed defense," Larrañaga added. "Poplar can really score, shoots from deep range. We had a 20-minute scrimmage, he had 20 points in 20 minutes. So he can really score, is about 6-4, 200 pounds. As a freshman he's got a lot to learn defensively.

"And Jakai Robinson is a real warrior, really hard-nosed guy, can defend, rebound, shares the ball very well. Those three freshmen are going to get a good look early in the season to see who is ready to help us right away."

Gimbel Named Associate Director of MBB Operations

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Oct. 15, 2021

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga announced Friday the hiring of Joe Gimbel as associate director of basketball operations.

A former DIII assistant coach and DI graduate assistant with an extensive background in the sport, Gimbel fills the spot vacated by Jeff Dyer, who was promoted to director of basketball operations.

"I'm happy to welcome Joe into the Miami basketball program," Larrañaga said. "As soon as I met him, I knew he was the type of person we were looking for to fill this position. Joe is a hard worker with a strong basketball mind; he will benefit our program greatly."

Gimbel served as an assistant coach at Washington College in Chestertown, Md., for the first nine months of 2021. There, as the lone assistant on staff, Gimbel played a role in on-court coaching, recruiting and film breakdown. He also assisted with logistics and operations for the Shoremen.

From June 2018 through May 2020, Gimbel worked at his alma mater, Temple University, as a graduate assistant. His role within the program—first under the legendary Fran Dunphy and then under ex-NBA standout Aaron McKie—included, as permissible, assisting coaches with on-court instruction, as well as aiding with film review and overseeing student managers.

The preceding four years, Gimbel served as a student manager for the Owls, all under Dunphy. Gimbel aided the coaching staff with logistics, facility upkeep and, as permissible, on-court work.

"I am incredibly grateful to Jim Larrañaga for giving me this amazing opportunity to learn under his tutelage and join such a prominent program at the highest level of college basketball. It is truly an honor to be a Miami Hurricane," Gimbel said. "I'd also like to express my thanks to the coaches at Temple University and Washington College—especially Fran Dunphy, Aaron McKie and Aaron Goodman—for their support and guidance."

Gimbel has worked both the Fran Dunphy Basketball Camp and the University of Pennsylvania Day Camp, handling various roles such as fundamentals instruction, coordinating operations and officiating.

The Philadelphia native has also served as a runner for the Hoop Group at multiple camps, as well as for the Under Armour Association at its AAU Finals. His duties included filming games and maintaining facilities.

Gimbel graduated from Temple in 2018 with a degree in sports & recreation management. He added a master's degree in sports business from the school in 2020. Gimbel also earned a HarvardX Certificate in exercising leadership in July 2020.

Hurricanes picked 12th in ACC, Isaiah Wong named Preseason All-ACC

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Oct. 19, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes have been picked to finish 12th in the ACC according to media members at the 2021 ACC Tipoff event and guard Isaiah Wong was selected to the Preseason All-ACC First Team.

"I'm excited about this year's team," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "We have 14 players on the team, 12 scholarship players and two walk-ons. When we are completely healthy, I think we are a deep team. I'm optimistic we can get healthy and have a good team this year, but the big picture is we have to be healthy for us to be good."

The Hurricanes are coming off a 10-17 campaign in 2020-21 and 4-15 in the ACC, which placed 13th.

"Last year there was no way to anticipate what we had to deal with in terms of injuries," Larranaga said.

Wong was named to the All-ACC Third Team last year after leading the Hurricanes in scoring at 17.1 points a game. Wong also averaged 4.8 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 1.1 steals while shooting 43.1 percent from the field, 34.7 from 3 and 80.3 from the free-throw line. Wong was also one of 20 players named to the Jerry West Shooting Guard of the Year Award watch list.

Freshman guard Wooga Poplar received one vote in the Preseason Freshman of the Year poll.

The Hurricanes also return Kameron McGusty, Anthony Walker, Harlond Beverly, Deng Gak, Rodney Miller and Sam Waardenburg while welcoming in transfers Charlie Moore (DePaul) and Jordan Miller (George Mason) and freshmen Bensley Joseph and Jakai Robinson.

"I think our new guys are a group of athletic 3-point shooters," Larranaga said. "They can all handle the ball, they can all shoot the ball and they're good at finding their teammates who can shoot the three. We're likely to shoot a lot more threes than we did last year."

Miami hosts Nova Southeastern on Wednesday (7:00 p.m., ACCNX) for their lone exhibition game.

"I think our guys will be very excited about playing in the Watsco Center, hopefully with some fans in the stands. The Watsco Center

is a great home court," Larranaga said. "When our students come out, our fans come out and our season ticket holders come out, the energy in the building is really what creates the excitement. Our opponent on Wednesday is a team that loves to run and shoot the three. They're very, very fast and it should be an exciting, up-tempo game where the winning team is likely to score over 100 points."

The regular season begins on Nov. 9 with Miami hosting Canisius.

ACC PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

The predicted order of finish was as follows:

1. Duke (47 first place votes), No. 9 in preseason AP Poll
2. Florida State (14), No. 20
3. North Carolina (5), No. 19
4. Virginia (9), No. 25
5. Virginia Tech (5)
6. Louisville (1)
7. Syracuse
8. Notre Dame
9. NC State
10. Georgia Tech
11. Clemson
12. Miami
13. Wake Forest
14. Pittsburgh
15. Boston College

ACC PRESEASON TEAMS

Duke forward Paolo Banchemo was named the Preseason Player of the Year and Preseason Freshman of the Year.

Preseason All-ACC First Team: Buddy Boeheim, Syracuse, 68 votes; Keve Aluma, Virginia Tech, 52; Paolo Banchemo, Duke, 49; Armando Bacot, North Carolina, 46; Isaiah Wong, Miami, 37.

Preseason All-ACC Second Team: Michael Devoe, Georgia Tech, 25; Kihei Clark, Virginia,

23; Prentiss Hubb, Notre Dame, 17; Mark Williams, Duke, 12; Wendell Moore, Duke, 9; Caleb Love, North Carolina, 9; Malik Williams, Louisville, 9.

Wong Scores 40 in Exhibition Win over Nova Southeastern

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Oct. 20, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team defeated Nova Southeastern, 106-95, Wednesday night at the Watsco Center in an exhibition affair to begin the 2021-22 campaign.

The Hurricanes' starting backcourt of third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore combined for 87 points in the win, paced by a game-high 40 from Wong.

"That was exactly the kind of game I anticipated. I used the expression that the first team to 100 would win," Miami head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Jim Crutchfield does a fantastic job and his kids did a really great job. I want to thank Nova Southeastern for the great competition that was out there. We have some guys who can score the ball, but we realize we have to defend and rebound a whole lot better."

Miami used an early 10-0 run—it featured eight straight points from Wong and an alley-oop from third-year sophomore guard Harlond Beverly to third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker—to grab a 17-6 lead after just 4:55 of action.

From there, the Hurricanes continued their offensive onslaught to extend their lead as high as 22 in the first half. The Sharks, however, went on an 18-4 run to pull within eight during the final minute of the frame. After Miami answered with back-to-back buckets to close the session, it took a 45-33 edge into the locker room.

McGusty, who scored 14 points on 5-of-5 shooting in the first 12 minutes of the game, led all scorers with 18 points at the break, adding five rebounds and three assists. Moore totaled 13 first-half points for the Hurricanes, who shot 50.0 percent in the opening 20 minutes, while limiting Nova Southeastern to a 31.3 percent mark.

Miami upped its advantage back to 20, 74-54, with 10:48 remaining, but the Sharks continued to chip away and hit nine of their next 10 shots to make it a seven-point game, 83-76, with 7:04 on the clock.

Nova Southeastern sliced its deficit to four, 85-81, with 4:30 to play, but Wong countered with a personal 7-2 surge to give the Hurricanes a 92-83 edge just a minute later. After another two minutes, Miami had its lead up to 13, 100-

87, with the game solidly in hand, on its way to the 11-point victory.

Wong's 40 points set a would-be career high, as he finished with 10 more than he has in any regular season contest as a collegian. The Preseason First Team All-ACC honoree, who grabbed seven rebounds and a co-game-best three steals, shot 11-of-19 from the floor, 8-of-14 from 3-point range and 10-of-10 from the line. His eight made 3-pointers doubled his top mark in any regular season game.

"Isaiah Wong is a high-octane scorer. He can put the ball in the basket. He can make some incredible layups, [as well as hit] threes and free throws. And his teammates got him the ball. You've got to give a lot of credit to Charlie, Kam and his teammates for finding him in the open court and giving him a chance to go to the rim."

Moore, in his first action as a Hurricane, totaled 25 points, six rebounds and five assists. He went 4-of-6 from deep and 9-of-10 at the line.

McGusty finished with 22 points, shooting 7-of-14 overall, 2-of-4 beyond the mark and 6-of-7 at the line. The Katy, Texas, native added a team-best eight rebounds and a co-game-high eight assists, the latter mark setting a would-be career best.

Meanwhile, for the Sharks, Junior guard/forward Sekou Sylla registered 26 points and a game-best 14 rebounds. He had a double-double in the first half alone, recording 10 points and 11 rebounds before the intermission.

Senior guard Eddie Puisis posted 20 points for Nova Southeastern, while redshirt sophomore guard Mike Moore had 13 and freshman guard Dallas Graziani added 11. Three Sharks, including Sylla, fouled out on the night, as the team amassed 23 personal fouls.

The Hurricanes, who shot 16-of-32 in both halves, logged a 27-of-31 (87.1 percent) mark from the stripe. They also compiled 11 blocks on the night, including four from fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller in his first game at Miami. Wong tallied three, as did sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg, who made his return to the court after missing the 2020-21 season due to injury.

After nearly three weeks off, the Hurricanes will open the 2021-22 regular season Nov. 9 at 7:30 p.m. with a home contest against Canisius.

Miami Hurricanes basketball gives glimpse of team in exhibition. Takeaways from win

By Jordan McPherson
Miami Herald
Oct. 20, 2021

Isaiah Wong entered the Miami Hurricanes' lone exhibition game ahead of the 2021-2022 season with a slew of preseason hype. The third-year sophomore is a preseason first-team All-ACC member and landed on the watch list for the Jerry West Award, given annually to college basketball's top shooting guard.

Wong lived up to the early hype Wednesday in the Hurricanes' 106-95 win over Nova Southeastern University at the Watsco Center, scoring a game-high 40 points while adding seven rebounds, three blocks and three steals in 31 minutes of work.

"That boy's good," guard Charlie Moore said. "It was like he wasn't missing any shots tonight."

Well, Wong missed some shots Wednesday — he was 11 of 19 from the field, 8 of 14 from three-point range and sank all 10 of his free throw attempts — but not when they mattered the most.

Like when the Sharks cut Miami's lead to seven points, 55-48, early in the second half. The Hurricanes hit three consecutive three-point shots to bring their lead back to double digits.

Wong hit the final two of those three-pointers, the start of an individual 11-point flurry over a span of 3:15 that pushed Miami's lead to 69-52.

"It was a lot of open shots," Wong said. "I just felt comfortable."

The Hurricanes' expanded their to as many as 20 points, 74-54, with about 10 minutes left.

It was large enough to withstand another late Nova rally that cut Miami's lead to four points with 4:30 left before Wong added another seven points in a span of 48 seconds on a pair of free throws, a layup and another three-pointer.

"He is a scorer," Hurricanes coach Jim Larranaga said. "He can make 3s. He can make driving layups. He's a high octane offensive player, but he's also a terrific athlete."

But Wong's huge night didn't overshadow some of Miami's deficiencies that were shown on Wednesday.

Nova out-rebounded Miami 48-41, including a staggering 18-2 mark on the offensive end.

That led to the Sharks tallying 13 second-half points and taking 90 shots from the field (although the Hurricanes did hold them to 41-percent shooting).

"Defense and rebounding is key," Larranaga said. "That's half the game at least. We're not good at it. We're undersized ourselves. ... They were able to go to the basket and score. ... They flew off the offensive boards. We'll watch the video and learn from it."

The Hurricanes now have a little less than three weeks before the season truly begins. Miami opens the season on Nov. 9 against Canisius. Three of the Hurricanes' first four games will be played at the Watsco Center, along with a Nov. 13 game against UCF and Nov. 21 against Florida A&M. The only game in that stretch not played on UM's home court is a Nov. 16 contest against Florida Atlantic in Boca Raton.

More takeaways from the exhibition win:

- Charlie Moore makes an early impression. The sixth-year senior has played at California, Kansas and DePaul and has 117 career games at the collegiate level under his belt. His experience, the Hurricanes hope, will pay dividends during his lone season at Miami.

He showcased his skills Wednesday, scoring 25 points on 6-of-10 shooting (including 4 of 6 from three-point range) while hauling in six rebounds, tallying five assists and going 9 for 10 from the free throw line.

- Kameron McGusty's fast start. The sixth-year senior was heavily involved in Miami's offense early, scoring 18 of his 22 points in the first half. He stuffed the stat sheet elsewhere, too, with eight rebounds, eight assists, two steals and a block.

- Little seen from the freshmen. The Hurricanes have four freshmen on their roster: guards Bensley Joseph, Jakai Robinson, Thomas Oosterbroek and Wooga Poplar. Only one saw action on Wednesday.

Poplar came in off the bench and played 14 minutes. He scored 5 points and corralled five rebounds.

Larranaga said he would have liked to have gotten Joseph and Robinson into the game, but the priority for Wednesday was to get his starters extended playing time.

"60 percent of our starting unit didn't play for us last year," Larranaga said. "I needed to give

them all a lot of playing time together.

- The return of Sam Waardenburg. The 6-10 forward and sixth-year senior from Auckland, New Zealand played in his first game since March 11, 2020, after missing the entire 2020-2021 season with a left foot injury. He scored 4 points with four rebounds, five assists, three blocks and one steal.

Five observations from Hurricanes preseason practice

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Oct. 26, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes are 14 days away from their season opener against Canisius.

With their lone exhibition game under their belt, a 106-95 win over Nova Southeastern, they will be looking for a strong start to the season after a disappointing 10-17 campaign last year for their third straight losing season after three-year run with NCAA Tournament appearances.

Internally, the staff is "cautiously optimistic" for the season. It helps having a strong scorer in guard Isaiah Wong, a preseason All-ACC First Team pick, who should contend for the league's scoring title after finishing fifth last year at 17.1 points a game.

The Hurricanes held their preseason media day on Tuesday as well as an open practice with a 30-minute viewing period. Here's five observations from practice:

UP-TEMPO WITH QUICK SHOTS

The Hurricanes went through multiple drills, including running plays without a defense, focusing on putting up quick shots. Ball movement was key with a number of players touching the ball before a shot was taken. This seems to be in line with how the Hurricanes want to play this year with a more modern lineup with versatile forwards on the court with a trio of guards.

While the shots were put up at a quick pace, they did not seem rushed. The players either worked the ball to the perimeter for an outside shot or fed the ball inside for a finish at the rim. Regardless of where the ball ended up, the emphasis was clear and something they worked on throughout the practice.

BALANCED LINEUP

Even though the team has its shortcomings, notably with its interior force, there is a more balanced lineup with the first and second units. They have their point guards in Charlie Moore and Bensley Joseph; wings (many of whom rotate to the point) Isaiah Wong, Kameron McGusty, Harlond Beverly, Wooga Poplar and Jakai Robinson; forwards Jordan Miller and Anthony Walker with Sam Waardenburg, Deng Gak and Rodney Miller at the 5-spot.

This balance should help with a steady lineup on the floor even though there is a variety of

skill sets with Wong and McGusty as proven scorers at the ACC level with Moore and Jordan Miller as double-figure scorers at previous stops.

MILLER AND WALKER ARE KEYS

George Mason transfer Jordan Miller earned the start in the exhibition game and the staff likes the all-around game from the lefty even though he was held scoreless on one shot attempt. Miller was active in practice, often finishing at the rim in drills while showing his shooting touch. He will be a key for the team moving forward because they will need his production on both ends of the floor.

Walker, his current back-up, is also a key and one who will look to be productive on both ends like he showed in a recent closed scrimmage scoring 30 points. Walker is in his third season and has improved in each of his first two years. Another jump in his game is much-needed.

LACK OF STRONG POST AN ISSUE

Without a strong interior player the team is likely to run into issues on both ends of the floor. The need for a traditional big man would help with the team's rebounding issues, which was on display in the exhibition game, in addition to protecting the paint with a shot-blocking presence. Defending a scorer down low could provide issues as well as guards who can penetrate and finish in the lane. The coaching staff will try to find different ways to combat this issue as much as possible.

Offensively there should be plenty of spacing on the floor, which should benefit Wong, who excels at driving to the basket and drawing fouls. However, easy buckets close to the basket could be tough to find without a true post scorer. The key offensively, in addition to spacing, is being able to hit perimeter shots at a high rate.

ENERGETIC AND A POSITIVE VIBE

Even with last year's struggles and disappointments, this team looked to be very energetic and there was a positive vibe at practice, which should not be understated. This has been a common theme for Jim Larranaga's teams at Miami and it appears this team enjoys being on the court together. The two transfers have seemed to make smooth transitions and have fit in well with their new teammates.

This is what you want to see from any team,

especially with the season just two weeks away. It will be interesting to see how it translates onto the court and certainly winning helps, which the Hurricanes should be able to be 4-0 heading into the competitive ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee featuring No. 3 Kansas and No. 14 Alabama.

Guards Win Games

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Oct. 29, 2021

It might be cliché, but it's true.

And Jim Larrañaga, entering his 11th year at the helm of the Hurricanes and his 38th overall as a collegiate head coach, knows just that.

"I think, at the college level especially, guards win games," Larrañaga said. "They're the ones with the ball in their hands. They're the decision-makers. They're the 3-point shooters. They're the ones that put pressure on the ball defensively. So, to have the experience that we have in our backcourt gives our coaching staff a lot of confidence."

Led by Charlie Moore, Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong, the University of Miami men's basketball team possesses an elite backcourt trio capable of leading the team to victory on any given night.

In their first game action as a unit, the group combined for 87 points, 21 rebounds and 13 assists in an exhibition victory against Nova Southeastern. Their offensive prowess is indisputable and they have the career credentials to back up that claim.

The lone newcomer of the three is sixth-year redshirt senior Charlie Moore, a transfer from DePaul. Over his two years there, Moore averaged 15.1 points and 5.5 assists per game, notching four double-doubles.

A Chicago native, Moore paced the BIG EAST in assists (6.1) in 2019-20 and was a Preseason First Team All-BIG EAST honoree last year. He enters his final collegiate season, at Miami, as one of only 15 returning Division I players already with 1,200 points and 425 assists to his name.

The 5-foot-11, 180-pounder's abilities as a natural lead guard—one who can not only score, but also distribute—will enhance a Miami offense that struggled at times in 2020-21.

"Point guards in basketball are like quarterbacks in football. They have the ball in their hands probably more than any other player and they become the primary decision-maker," Larrañaga said. "If they're so focused on scoring, then it makes it difficult on your other players to really produce a lot of points because the point guard is the one shooting the ball. When you have a player like Charlie, who's very good at distributing and then, if need be, he can make the open shot or create the open shot for himself—that combination makes him a much more valuable quarterback."

"If you compare it to football, if Charlie was a quarterback, he could run with the ball himself, he could

hand it to his running backs, he could throw it to his wide receiver and he could throw it to his tight end," Larrañaga continued. "He has all the options and can get everybody involved. That's what Charlie does."

McGusty, like Moore, is a sixth-year redshirt senior. He, too, is taking advantage of the extra year granted by the NCAA due to COVID-19 impacting the 2020-21 season.

A native of Katy, Texas, McGusty flirted with moving on to the professional level during the offseason. He submitted his name for consideration in the NBA Draft and went through the pre-draft process.

Ultimately, the 6-foot-5, 190-pounder determined he wanted to return to The U for one last go as a collegian.

After doing so, McGusty, who has averaged 12.8 points per game in two seasons competing for Miami, approached the offseason with the exact mindset you'd expect from someone who made that decision.

"I think Kam has been very focused. He's gotten himself in fantastic shape," Larrañaga shared. "He has the ability to play the one, the two or the three. He's shooting the ball extremely well. He's working very hard defensively and the other day [against Nova Southeastern], he rebounded the ball. So, I think Kam is headed towards a very good senior year."

Just like McGusty, Wong also entered his name into the NBA Draft, received feedback and elected to return to college.

Although he is just a third-year sophomore, he already has one of the highest profiles of any guard in not only the ACC, but the country. That is what happens when you average 17.1 points, 4.8 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 1.1 steals per game while co-leading a Power Five conference in 20-point outings (11) like Wong did last year.

A 6-foot-3, 185-pounder, Wong is the second-leading returning scorer in the ACC. He earned Preseason First Team All-ACC accolades and made the Jerry West Award Watch List.

Big things are, assuredly, expected of Wong after his dynamic 2020-21 campaign. His head coach knows the Piscataway, N.J., native is ready to build off his success a year ago.

"Isaiah Wong has improved in a lot of categories. The first—and maybe the most important—is his team defense. He's working harder at the defensive end of the floor. He understands team defensive concepts better. That's very, very important,"

Larrañaga said. "Number two, he continues to get stronger. He's increased his vertical jump and he's increased his lateral quickness and straightaway speed through a lot of hard work and our strength and conditioning program."

"And then, lastly, he's worked very, very hard on his 3-point shot and his ability to find the open man," Larrañaga added. "He's always been a terrific scorer, but now he's got deep range on his 3-point shot and he's been very, very good in practice at getting in the lane and kicking it out to other 3-point shooters. I think Charlie Moore has had a very positive impact on Isaiah."

Not only has Moore aided Wong with his 3-point shooting, he has also helped the Hurricanes in that area as a whole.

After shooting under 30 percent from beyond the arc last season, Miami looks to have a chance to vastly increase that number in 2021-22. Part of that is, certainly, because of Moore.

However, Larrañaga's confidence in his team's improved 3-point shooting goes beyond just the man running the point.

"Well, there are [a few] things that will make a significant difference. Number one, Charlie Moore is very good at finding the open 3-point shooter. Two, Kam McGusty and Isaiah Wong have improved their 3-point shooting ability," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "Third, we have Sam Waardenburg, who we missed last year because of an injury, and he gives us a big player who can stretch the floor. And then [in addition to all that], Wooga Poplar is an outstanding 3-point shooter and Jordan Miller is a solid 3-point shooter and Anthony Walker is an improved 3-point shooter. So, we have more opportunities to find a good 3-point shooter because there are more of them."

Unlike last season when attendance was prohibited due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Miami faithful will be able to come watch the Hurricanes in person this year.

With such a talented, high-octane backcourt ready to take on some of the top programs in the nation, it could not be a better time the Watsco Center doors to be open once again.

"The arena is now open to the public. We need to get our students and our community behind this team because it's going to be a very exciting team, led by our version of 'Lethal Weapon 3,'" Larrañaga remarked. "We have [starting guards] who are very exciting to watch and will play at a very high level. And with the experience we have returning, we should be a very, very competitive team in the ACC."

Isaiah Wong preparing for 'likely' final season at Miami

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Oct. 31, 2021

Isaiah Wong enjoyed a breakout sophomore season last year, finishing fourth in the ACC in scoring and being named to the All-ACC Third Team.

The 6-foot-3 guard from Piscataway, N.J. entered his named in the NBA Draft following the season and went through draft workouts, but was not invited to the NBA Draft Combine and eventually withdrew his name to return to Miami for a third season, which begins against Canisius on Nov. 9.

"We believe wholeheartedly in him and have tremendous confidence that this will likely be his last year at the University of Miami because he's an NBA-quality guard," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "We've already had a number of NBA scouts here at our practices watching him and they've all been very, very impressed and have shared with me and my staff that they also believe Isaiah is a first-round pick."

There are currently two former Miami guards in the NBA in San Antonio's Lonnie Walker and Brooklyn's Bruce Brown. NBADraft.net projects Wong as a second-round pick in 2023.

Wong was named to the preseason All-ACC First Team and roared out of the gate with 40 points in Miami's lone exhibition game against Nova Southeastern.

"Isaiah's one of those guys that you love coaching," Larranaga said. "He's kind of a quiet, young man who just works his tail off. He gives you a great effort every day in practice and every time he puts on his basketball shoes. He's an outstanding scorer, but he's improved dramatically in his defense and rebounding and he's really working to create opportunities for his teammates. He's worked on his game. We love the fact that he decided to return and pull his name out of the draft."

New point guard Charlie Moore has been impressed with Wong, who averaged 17.1 points a game last season.

"Oh man, that boy good," Moore said after the exhibition game. "It was like he wasn't missing any shots. He played hard, played the right way. He was on fire from the 3-point line. He played a great game."

The addition of Moore, who finished seventh in assists per game in the Big East last year

at DePaul after leading the conference the previous season, should help Wong find more opportunities.

"I love playing with Charlie," Wong said. "He just makes the game way easier for me. I was getting a lot of looks and a lot of open 3s. I thank Charlie for all of that because he's a pass-first guard and he proved it. I feel like that 40-ball was because of Charlie and Kam (McGusty)."

Wong will be looking to lead the Hurricanes back to having a winning season after three straight losing campaigns including going 10-17 last year, 4-15 in the ACC.

The Hurricanes open their season with games against Canisius, UCF, FAU and Florida A&M before participating in the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee with an opening-round game against Dayton and No. 3 Kansas and No. 14 Alabama as potential foes.

2021-22 Miami men's basketball preview

By Ramona Naseri
Duke Chronicle
Nov. 4, 2021

2020-21 record: 10-17, 4-15 in the ACC

Head coach: Jim Larrañaga

Tenure at Miami: 11th season

Career coaching record: 670-464

Home court: Watsco Center

Starters: G Kameron McGusty, G Isaiah Wong,
G Charlie Moore, G Jordan Miller, F Sam
Waardenburg

Bench: G Harlond Beverly, G Wooga Poplar,
F Deng Gak, F Anthony Walker, C Rodney
Miller Jr.

Overview: Miami has had a rough string of losing seasons, but, after third-year sophomore Isaiah Wong and sixth-year redshirt senior Kameron McGusty withdrew their names from the NBA draft, the Hurricanes have a better chance this season. Wong led the team last season with 17.1 points per game while McGusty contributed with the second most points.

Freshman Bensley Joseph is a top-100 recruit, while Charlie Moore is a transfer from DePaul who had 14.4 points per game last season, and Jordan Miller is a transfer from George Mason with 15.8 points per game on his 2020-21 record.

There will also be some veteran players whose performances are up in the air, like junior Harlond Beverly who has been inconsistent but can be a great contributor if he rides off of the confidence of a hot streak. With Miami's new talent coming in, they have a more promising outlook than years past.

Team ceiling: The Hurricanes haven't made an NCAA tournament appearance since 2018, and the last time they made it to the second round was in 2016, so it's likely that the best outcome for this team is making it back to the second round.

Team floor: A worst-case scenario for this team is an even tougher losing season than last year with a lower-end seed in the ACC tournament.

University of Miami basketball team gets big assist from transfer guard Charlie Moore

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 6, 2021

Charlie Moore, the most highly touted of the new players on the University of Miami basketball team, is known as a pass-first point guard, a prolific scorer who gets just as much joy – maybe more – from driving the lane and dishing off to open teammates.

The 23-year-old former Illinois Mr. Basketball, who transferred to UM after stops at Cal, Kansas and DePaul, has 427 assists over his nomadic college career.

His most meaningful assist came away from the court and offers a glimpse into the kind of person running the floor for the Canes as the 2021-22 season gets underway Tuesday with a home game against Canisius

In April 2019, after his sophomore season at Kansas, he decided to transfer to DePaul so he could help take care of his father Curtis, who had been in a wheelchair since suffering a stroke in 2015. Moore was entering his senior season at Morgan Park High in Chicago when he and his mother were out shopping and got the call that his father had collapsed at home.

His father, a talented basketball player in his day, wound up in a coma and hospitalized for seven months. He couldn't walk and had trouble speaking. Moore helped his father as he recovered, while also shining on the basketball court and fielding 23 scholarship offers.

He had offers from Memphis, Xavier, St. John's, LSU, Iowa State, Iowa and Miami, among others. He initially chose Memphis but changed his mind after a coaching change and ended up at the University of California.

During his freshman season at Cal, Moore started all 34 games and averaged 12.2 points and 3.5 assists. A coaching change at Cal led him to transfer to Kansas. He sat out the 2017-18 season per transfer rules and struggled to fit in his sophomore season, averaging 2.9 points and 13 minutes per game.

Once he got to DePaul, he felt at home and thrived. He averaged 15.5 points and 6.1 assists as a junior, 14.4 points and 4.2 assists as a senior. He quickly became one of the top players in the Big East and was named to the All Big East Academic team.

When coach Dave Leitao was fired, he once again looked for a new home. His parents fully supported his decision to join the Hurricanes,

where he was reunited with former DePaul assistant coach Bill Courtney.

"I had relationships with BC and with Coach L (Jim Larranaga) because they recruited me," Moore said. "I saw the potential here. I want to win for my last year and play in the ACC. All of my moves made me a better player and person. I've been through a lot, so I want to bring my experience to this team.

"My decisions came from coaches leaving, and then the big one was going back home to help my family. I wanted to help my Mom and give my Dad some motivation. I feel like it helped them the two years I was there. Now I get to go on to a better situation for me."

Courtney remembers the first time he saw Moore play. He was coaching Cornell at the time.

"I was recruiting a kid at Morgan Park High School in Chicago, he was a senior and Charlie was a sophomore," Courtney recalled. "He was like a little kid. He always had a baby face but he was even smaller with a baby face. The coaches there kept telling me 'This guy's gonna be really good' and I said, 'That little guy?'"

Nine years later, when Courtney heard Moore put his name in the transfer portal, he called his contacts at DePaul. Miami point guard Chris Lykes transferred to Arkansas after an injury plagued senior season, and UM was desperate to find a replacement. They were hoping for a guard in the mold of Shane Larkin and Angel Rodriguez, who both led the Canes to Sweet 16s.

"I called up there that same day and said 'If Charlie's looking for a place, we need a point guard and this might be a great place for him,'" Courtney said.

So far, he seems like a great fit. Teammates gushed about his passing and leadership.

"He helps us get easier shots," said Isaiah Wong, who scored 40 points in the preseason win over Nova. "If you see me and Kam (McGusty) getting 25 points, you're definitely going to see Charlie with 10-11 assists."

Larranaga added: "We are very fortunate that Charlie decided this is where he wants to be. His teammates enjoy playing with him and the fans will enjoy watching him."

Moore, who is 5-11, is "a little bit more of a distributor" than Lykes, Larranaga said. "He

gets other people involved. Playing alongside Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty he has two outstanding scorers on either side of him. That combination will create a lot of scoring chances."

Moore also brings positive energy, which was needed after last year with the rash of injuries and COVID restrictions.

"He's always got a smile on his face, he's upbeat every day, all the guys like him," Courtney said. "He's a big reason they're 100 percent rowing their oars in the same direction."

Start of a Season

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 7, 2021

The beginning of a new season is always exciting. This year, that is even more apt than usual.

During the 2020-21 season, fans across the country were largely prohibited from attending college basketball games. No tickets were sold at the Watsco Center.

Tuesday, for the first time since March 2020, a Hurricane fan can enter the arena with a ticket to watch the University of Miami men's basketball team in action. That night, at 7:30 p.m., the Hurricanes open the 2021-22 slate against Canisius.

"There is a lot of excitement entering this year because fans will now be allowed back in the building. Last year, we played in front of empty arenas all season long," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "It's been a long time since we were able to experience that electricity that you get when you're playing at home and your fans get into it and are cheering wildly for the home team. We want to have great crowds in the Watsco Center. We believe this will be an exciting team to follow."

The Hurricanes got a small taste for what the return to fan attendance will be like just a few weeks ago when they hosted Nova Southeastern in an exhibition game. Supporters took spots in the stands, while cheerleaders returned courtside and the pep band, much to Larrañaga's delight because of the excitement it brings, took its rightful spot behind the basket again.

All of those in the building saw quite the show from Miami's talented backcourt trio in the 106-95 victory.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong dropped 40 points on 11-of-19 shooting, adding seven assists. Charlie Moore notched 25 points, six rebounds and five assists, while fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty tallied 22 points, eight boards and eight assists.

"I think Charlie Moore, Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty all have very good ball-handling and shooting skills, and are good at playing with each other," Larrañaga shared. "They like the chemistry that they have with each other. And so, they can bring out the best in one another."

The Hurricanes, however, got just 15 points

from their bench in the win against the Sharks, eight of which came from third-year sophomore guard Harlond Beverly.

Larrañaga knows that production from those outside the starting five—the backcourt trio, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg—will be particularly important this season. Tuesday will be the first time those players have the opportunity to make an impact in an actual game.

"We have a group that will start the game that [includes five] experienced veterans who can play very well together," Larrañaga said. "But then, a lot of our players off of the bench are inexperienced and there is great concern about us needing some quality depth to really play at the highest level. The guys off the bench that are a little bit older—like Harlond Beverly, Anthony Walker, Deng Gak and Rodney Miller—those are the guys we're really counting on to give us some quality depth."

One of those players in particular, Walker, a third-year sophomore forward, is coming off a tremendous end to the 2020-21 season.

The Baltimore native averaged 12.1 points, 6.0 rebounds, 1.4 assists and 1.1 steals per game over his final 14 outings last year. All of those were marked improvements from his first 12 appearances of the season.

"Anthony Walker really has the most potential [of our reserves] and is coming off of a really solid season last year," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "So, hopefully he'd be the one to step up and give us a nice lift."

Regardless of the players on his roster—starters or backups, old or young—Larrañaga always has a consistent message for his team as it enters a new season.

What he tells them is not as much about X's and O's as it is about how he expects them to act. If they do that, the results should follow.

"We want our guys to always have a very, very positive attitude, make a total commitment to being the best that they can be and always behave in a first-class manner. We feel our players should be role models on the court, in the classroom and in the community," Larrañaga shared. "The message to them is that they represent more than just themselves. They represent their families, our basketball program, our athletic department, our university. They really owe it to themselves to give their best every single day in practice and in

games so that our fans can fully appreciate their dedication."

The Hurricanes will get to put their practice efforts to the test against a Division I opponent for the first time when they take on the Golden Griffins Tuesday night.

Canisius played only 13 games during the abbreviated 2020-21 season and posted a 7-6 (7-5 MAAC) record on the year. That ledger includes a five-game winning streak in league that, due to a lengthy layoff without games, went from Jan. 1 to Feb. 19.

Senior forward Malek Green is the leading returnee for the Golden Griffins, as he paced the team in scoring at 13.2 points per game last year. The Cincinnati native, who earned Preseason Third Team All-MAAC distinction this year, is part of a versatile offensive attack for the visitors from Buffalo, N.Y., who were picked No. 11 in their league this season.

"Canisius is likely to start three seniors and a junior—all guys who played last year—and maybe one freshman. So, they're a veteran team and their guys off the bench are also veterans," Larrañaga said. "...Probably seven or eight of their guys are veteran players who have played a lot of college basketball and are very, very comfortable with each other. They love to execute their half-court offense and shoot a bunch of threes, but also post up. They've got a very good balance of perimeter shooting and inside players." This will not only be the first time Miami and Canisius face off on the hardwood, but the first time the two schools meet in any team sport currently sponsored by either institution.

Larrañaga, though, has coached against the Golden Griffins twice before, splitting a pair of non-conference matchups during the 1986-87 season, his first year at Bowling Green. While those games certainly do not factor in for Tuesday night, the 2013 AP National Coach of the Year does know what his team must do to come away with a victory.

"We're going to need our starters to play very well and then hopefully get a very nice contribution from the guys off the bench. We're going to have to defend," Larrañaga said. "We are not a big team and so we're going to have to keep Canisius off of the backboards and do a good job of contesting their threes. And then, hopefully, get into the open court. The faster paced the game is, the better I think that will be for us."

Hoops season tips off tonight, eyes first winning ACC season since 2017-18

By Staff
CaneSport
Nov. 9, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes men's basketball season tips off tonight against Canisius.

It'll be the start of what UM hopes will be its first winning ACC campaign since 2017-18. And the pieces are in place to do that, despite UM's predicted ACC finish by the media: 12th.

"We all feel disrespected by that," center/forward Sam Waardenburg said. "It is what it is. That's all over our locker room right now. It's a chip on our shoulder we have. We have high desires and high hopes for this team this year."

A year ago, with an injury-marred team, Miami finished 10-17 and 4-15 in league play.

Since then this team has been reshaped.

The players that transferred out: Chris Lykes (Arkansas), Elijah Onaniyi (returned to Stony Brook after finishing third on UM's team with 10.5 PPG last year), Nysier Brooks (Mississippi, averaged 7.4 PPG, 5.8 RPG) and Earl Timberlake (Memphis, averaged 9.3 PPG, 5.0 RPG, 2.0 APG in 7 games).

That's three starters and a part-time starter who was a top recruit a year earlier. So it's a different-looking roster this year.

And it'll be a different feel at the Watsco Center.

"There is a lot of excitement entering this year because fans will now be allowed back in the building. Last year, we played in front of empty arenas all season long," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "It's been a long time since we were able to experience that electricity that you get when you're playing at home and your fans get into it and are cheering wildly for the home team. We want to have great crowds in the Watsco Center. We believe this will be an exciting team to follow."

This year's team?

Well Larrañaga lured transfer guard Charlie Moore from DePaul along with Miller, and Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty decided to return after weighing their pro options.

Moore led DePaul in scoring last year with 14.4 points and averaged 4.2 assists and 1.5 steals.

Miller? As a junior last season he led George Mason with 15.8 points per game and also averaged 6.1 rebounds and 2.0 assists. He plays the 3/4 and is a physical presence at 6-7 and 200 pounds.

As for returners, Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty coming back is huge for the program.

Wong enjoyed a breakout season with 17.1 points and 2.4 assists per game, and McGusty battled injury for much of last year - he played in 20 games and averaged 13.3 points and 2.8 assists.

Then there are the other returning veterans: guard Harlond Beverly (6.7 PPG, 3.3 APG) and the 4/5 Waardenburg, who is back off a broken foot and is likely the starting center despite being undersized.

Waardenburg started 24 games two years ago and averaged 5.9 PPG, 6.0 RPG and 1.1 blocks.

Also back is 3/4 Anthony Walker, who has flashed at times and could be an athletic guy in the front court. He averaged 9.6 points and 4.7 rebounds last year.

Center Deng Gak, who struggled with injury last year, is now healthy, and big man Rodney Miller also returns off a torn MCL last year. Neither have made much of an impact thus far in their careers, but they can help on the defensive end and on the boards.

For his part, Miller has dropped 15 pounds from last year, down to 235 (and he weighed 285 when he first arrived at Miami).

The team also benefits from three highly regarded freshmen being added to the roster - guards Bensley Joseph, Jakai Robinson and Wooga Poplar.

Poplar is a guy who can provide scoring punch, and Robinson has already made a name for himself as a physical defender.

"We have a group that will start the game that [includes five] experienced veterans who can play very well together," Larrañaga said. "But then, a lot of our players off of the bench are inexperienced and there is great concern about us needing some quality depth to really play at the highest level. The guys off the bench that are a little bit older—like Harlond Beverly, Anthony Walker, Deng Gak and Rodney Miller—those are the guys we're really counting on to give us some quality depth."

Regardless of the players on his roster—starters or backups, old or young—Larrañaga always has a consistent message for his team as it enters a new season.

What he tells them is not as much about X's and O's as it is about how he expects them to act. If they do that, the results should follow.

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appreciate their dedication."

And yes, hopes are high.

"We're looking forward to our first game," Larrañaga said. "Every year come in with a lot of optimism, confidence because the guys are working so hard. The key is can we keep everybody healthy and playing well. (Do that and) we can compete with all the teams on our schedule."

* Game 1 opponent Canisius played only 13 games during the abbreviated 2020-21 season and posted a 7-6 (7-5 MAAC) record on the year. That ledger includes a five-game winning streak in league that, due to a lengthy layoff without games, went from Jan. 1 to Feb. 19.

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The game will be telecast on the ACC Network.

Following its meeting with Canisius, the Hurricanes return to the hardwood Saturday at 2 p.m. for a in-state showdown with UCF, live on ACC Network Extra from the Watsco Center.

MBB Defeats Canisius, 77-67, in Season Opener

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 9, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team started its 2021-22 campaign with a 77-67 victory over Canisius Tuesday night at the Watsco Center.

Paced by a 20-point, 10-rebound double-double from sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, who shot 8-of-14 from the floor, Miami (1-0) never trailed the Golden Griffins and held the lead for the final 39 minutes.

"It was quite a battle. I thought, in stretches, we played very well," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after his 201st win with the Hurricanes. "I thought our defense was really solid, but we turned the ball over too much. We know that and we've got to get better at that. The players know you can't be careless; you've got to be strong because the defense is trying to force you to make mistakes."

The Hurricanes scored on their opening five possessions, including hitting their first four shots, to take a quick 11-4 lead after just 3:12. Miami went on to stretch its advantage as high as 11, 30-19, with 5:41 left in the half, but Canisius (0-1) never let the deficit grow beyond that before the break and closed to within six, 37-31, at the intermission.

McGusty scored 12 points on 5-of-6 shooting in the opening 20 minutes, while Canisius senior forward Malek Green tallied 13 points on 6-of-10 shooting. The Hurricanes went 17-of-32 (53.1 percent) from the floor, logging 10 assists, while the Golden Griffins shot just 13-of-31 (41.9 percent).

The Hurricanes created all the separation they needed to seal the win with a 13-2 second-half run, taking a 67-50 edge with 7:23 to play. Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker tallied nine points during the surge, while Miami held Canisius without a field goal for 6:40, as it missed 10 consecutive attempts.

The 17-point lead proved to be the largest of the game for Miami, which won its season opener for the 32nd time in 37 seasons since the program rebirth in 1985-86.

McGusty led all Hurricanes in scoring and topped all players in rebounding, matching his career high in the latter total, to record his third collegiate double-double. The Katy, Texas, native, who made his first four 3-pointers, added four assists and two steals to his ledger.

"Well, Kam is doing everything at both ends of the court. He's handling the ball like a point guard, he's shooting the ball like a shooting guard, he's rebounding like a small forward—and we need that," Larrañaga said. "He's an older guy with a lot of experience and a lot of confidence in his game and especially on a night when Isaiah [Wong] was not clicking on all cylinders, we needed everything from Kam."

Three Hurricanes joined McGusty in double figures, with Walker tallying 14 points and a career-high-tying three blocked shots. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, in his official Miami debut, posted 13 points, a co-game-high four assists and a co-game-best three steals.

In addition, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg, in his first action since 2019-20, recorded 10 points, six boards and a career-high-tying three blocks. He also finished with four assists, one shy of his career best.

Green led all scorers with 21 points for the Golden Griffins, shooting 7-of-11 from the floor and grabbing a team-best eight rebounds. Armon Harried scored 11 points in the loss, while fellow junior guard Akrum Ahemed added 10.

Miami, which notched 20 assists, ended the night shooting 48.3 percent (29-of-60) from the field, while limiting Canisius to a 41.4 percent clip (24-of-58). It also controlled play down low, tallying a 42-31 edge on the glass and a 42-32 advantage in paint points.

Up next for the Hurricanes is an in-state showdown with UCF, set for Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Watsco Center, live on ACC Network Extra. Season tickets are still available and can be purchased [HERE](#).

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes claimed the first all-time meeting between Miami and Canisius.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 671-464 in 38 years as a head coach, including 201-130 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, fourth-year junior guard

Jordan Miller and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, marking the first starts as Hurricanes for Miller and Moore.

– Miami moved to 57-14 all-time in season openers, including 48-10 at home, 32-5 since the program rebirth (1985-86), 16-2 since joining the ACC (2004-05) and 9-2 under Larrañaga.

– The Hurricanes are now 59-12 all-time in home openers, including 33-4 since the rebirth, 16-2 since joining the ACC and 9-2 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Tuesday marked the first time in 612 days—since 3/7/20—fans were allowed to buy a ticket and attend a basketball game at the Watsco Center.

– The Hurricanes have now logged 20-plus assists in a game 16 times in Larrañaga's tenure, after hitting that number for the first time since 12/29/20 at Virginia Tech.

– Moore scored Miami's first points of the season—and his first points as a Hurricane—on a driving layup just 18 seconds into the game.

– Moore, who eclipsed both 1,250 points and 125 steals as a collegian, registered his 58th double-figure point total, including his first at Miami.

– McGusty, who has posted all three of his double-doubles since transferring to Miami, recorded his 14th 20-point showing, including his eighth as a Hurricane.

– In addition, McGusty, who moved past 450 made field goals in his career, notched his 64th double-digit scoring performance, including his 36th at Miami.

– Waardenburg, who surpassed 50 steals in his career, tallied double-figure points for the 13th time and first since 2/8/20, as he missed all of last season with a left foot injury.

– Walker, who eclipsed 1,000 minutes played and 100 free-throw attempts at Miami, scored in double figures for the 15th time as a collegian.

– J. Miller moved past 900 points in his career.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar earned his first official playing time as a Hurricane.

Kameron McGusty's 20 leads Hurricanes to 77-67 win in opener

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 9, 2021

Kameron McGusty picked up right where he left off the end of last season.

McGusty scored 20 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead the Miami Hurricanes in a 77-67 win over Canisius in the season opener at the Watsco Center on Tuesday.

"It feels great to open the season with a win," McGusty said. "Starting 1-0, the way we defended, the way we defended, putting ourselves in a good situation to go into Saturday to play harder.

A crowd of 3,234 was on hand cheering on the Hurricanes (1-0) a year after playing in an empty arena due to the pandemic.

"It seems like it was years ago that we played in the Watsco Center in front of a crowd and I thought our guys responded very well," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

McGusty's starting backcourt mates had up-and-down performances as DePaul transfer Charlie Moore added 13 points with four assists and five turnovers while Preseason All-ACC guard Isaiah Wong was held to seven points on 3-of-11 shooting.

Miami (1-0) also got 14 points from Anthony Walker and 10 points from Sam Waardenburg in his first game since March 2020 after missing last season with a foot injury.

Walker paced Miami's bench, which combined for 22 points.

"What I was most pleased with was the bench really helped us tonight as well," Larranaga said. "Rodney Miller scored some buckets, Anthony Walker scored, Harlond Beverly played some good defense and ballhandling. If we can get our depth to be pretty productive, that would be a real step in the right direction."

Wong scored 40 in the Hurricanes' lone exhibition game, but was unable to find his scoring touch after averaging 17.1 a contest last year. He missed all three of his 3-point attempts and did not get to the free-throw line. He also had three turnovers in 31 minutes.

"Isaiah did not have a huge night, but he's going to have a lot of huge games," Larranaga said. "He was probably over-excited. He was so pumped up to play. You see his athletic ability. He made some terrific defensive

plays--stole a high-low pass, got a steal, but he was going to the basket and I would say he was just a little bit out of control. So much of Isaiah's game is he's got great control of the situation, but tonight he was in a little bit of a hurry."

The Hurricanes never trailed and took a 40-36 lead into the break, but did not pull away until the second half, taking a 50-46 lead and going on a 17-4 run over a six-minute span to lead 67-50.

"I thought we were really going to get control of the game and then all of a sudden there were a couple turnovers, a foul, we didn't handle that situation particularly well, but then we regrouped," Larranaga said. "Sam Waardenburg went down with a cramp, was able to come back and finish the last two minutes so that was good, but we had Anthony Walker and Jordan Miller in there, two of our more athletic frontcourt players and they did a good job. Jordan tipped one in, Anthony got a nice baseline layup, made a couple of free throws as well."

McGusty, who averaged 18.8 points over the final five games of last season, made 8 of 14 shots from the field, 4 of 7 from 3. His 10 rebounds tied a career-high, last set in December 2019. It was his third career double-double.

"It's my teammates, they're the ones who build the confidence with me, they're the ones who look for me and who always get me going and give me the energy I need so it's all the credit to them and the coaching staff," McGusty said. "They believe in me and I need that confidence."

McGusty had 12 points in the first half, making 5 of 6 shots, and then had eight in the second half.

"Kam McGusty I thought had a great game," Larranaga said.

Miami shot 48.3 percent (29 of 60) from the field, 5 of 17 from 3 while holding the Griffins (0-1) to 41.4-percent shooting (24 of 58) and had the edge in the rebounding battle, 42-31.

Canisius was led by Malek Green's 21 points.

NEXT UP

Miami hosts UCF on Saturday (1:00 p.m., ACCNX).

New-look Miami Hurricanes begin season of optimism with double-digit win against Canisius

By David Wilson
Miami Herald
Nov. 9, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes, for the first time in years, are optimistic about how this season could go. They're deeper than they've been in years, have more top-end talent than they've had in years and are now far out from under the cloud of an FBI investigation, which hampered recruiting and roster construction for years.

It's far too early to know whether its optimism is founded, but Miami at least survived its first test of the season Tuesday, beating the Canisius Golden Griffins, 77-67, to open the season in Coral Gables.

"It's great to start the season with a win," guard Kameron McGusty said. "We're starting 1-0."

While it wasn't always convincing, the Hurricanes (1-0) pulled away in the second half and led by at least 10 for all but eight seconds of the final 10:44 to keep the 3,234 at the Watsco Center crowd at ease. Miami's new-look starting lineup — featuring two transfers and another player who missed all of last season with an injury — combined for 55 points, with guards Charlie Moore and Kameron McGusty, and forward Sam Waardenburg all cracking double figures. The Hurricanes even went nine deep after they mostly was stuck with a seven-man rotation throughout Atlantic Coast Conference play last year.

McGusty led all scorers with 20 and notched a double-double with 10 rebounds, while Moore chipped in 13 and Waardenburg added 10. Off the bench, forward Anthony Walker scored 14 points and center Rodney Miller Jr. had eight. Miami won its opener despite getting just seven points from Isaiah Wong, who led the ACC in scoring last year and averaged more than 17 points per game.

"We're the sum of our parts," Walker said.

The question of whether the Hurricanes will end their three-year NCAA Tournament drought was never going to be answered Tuesday. The first day of the season was, however, the first real chance for coach Jim Larranaga to start figuring out how he can craft these parts — the deepest collection he has had since at least 2018 — to get them back there.

A DIFFERENT-LOOKING MIAMI LINEUP

He started four guards around Waardenburg,

his floor-spacing forward. He used nine players in the first half and had eight players log at least 12 minutes. Miami raced out to a 30-11 lead in the first half before letting Canisius (0-1) hang around with too-inconsistent offense, too many missed free throws and some expected defensive lapses.

After a layup by McGusty pushed the Hurricanes out to a 30-11 lead with 5:42 left in the first half, Miami went scoreless for the next 3:27 as the Golden Eagles chipped away and trimmed the Hurricanes' lead to 30-27 before Miami rebuilt a 37-31 edge at the half.

McGusty went into halftime with 12 points on 5-of-6 shooting to carry Miami as Wong went just 3 of 9 for six points in the first half. The star shooting guard finished 3 of 11 from the field.

"Isaiah did not have a huge night, but he's going to have a lot of huge games," Larranaga said. "He was just a little out of control."

At the heart of whatever postseason hopes the Hurricanes have are these two guards. Both tested the NBA draft waters last year before ultimately deciding to return to South Florida to try to build their draft stock and finally prove they could guide a Tournament team. Last year, they combined to average 30.4 points per game, but the Hurricanes had the third worst scoring offense in the ACC with 66.4 points per game. This year, Miami believes it has outfitted them with an better supporting cast.

Moore and Jordan Miller, a pair of transfers, start alongside Wong and McGusty in a four-guard backcourt, and Waardenburg, who missed all of last season with a foot injury, rounds out the lineup as a nontraditional center.

The Hurricanes will sacrifice some defense and rebounding with its 6-foot-10, 225-pound redshirt senior as the only player taller than 6-7 in the lineup, but the tradeoff is a potentially high-octane offense. Although the offensive explosion wasn't totally there Tuesday, the Hurricanes made up for it by outrebounding the Golden Griffins, 42-31, and holding them to 41.2-percent shooting.

A DEEPER MIAMI TEAM

Winning with defense was a positive development because this team already believes in its offense.

Wong gives Miami an NBA-caliber engine,

who can create his own shot and led the ACC in scoring last year. McGusty is a dynamite No. 2, who can score in bunches with or without Wong on the court. Moore, who transferred from the DePaul Blue Demons, is a true point guard, who led the Big East Conference in assists two years ago. Miller, who transferred from the George Mason Patriots, was an all-Atlantic 10 Conference last season. Waardenburg contributes to the offensive machine, too — when he was a freshman, he shot 43.8 percent from three-point range.

With those five, the Hurricanes have a promising foundation, but, perhaps more importantly, Larranaga has trust in more than just those five.

"What I was most pleased about was the bench really helped us out, as well," Larranaga said. "If we can get our depth to be pretty productive, that'd be a real step in the right direction."

Read more at: <https://www.miamiherald.com/sports/college/acc/university-of-miami/article255641251.html#storylink=cpy>

MBB Inks Top-20 Recruiting Class

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 10, 2021

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga announced Wednesday the signing of four high school players to National Letters of Intent.

The Hurricanes have officially added Favour Aire, AJ Casey, Danilo Jovanovich and Christian Watson to the program. The quartet forms the nation's No. 17 recruiting class—tops in Florida and sixth-best in the ACC—according to the 247Sports Composite Class Calculator.

"I am thrilled to welcome Favour, AJ, Danilo, Christian and their families into the Hurricane basketball program," Larrañaga said. "All four of them fit exactly what we are looking for in a high school recruit. Each is a tough, talented player who has faced strong competition and is ready to work hard at the next level. My staff and I cannot wait to get them on campus and begin coaching them."

The tallest high school recruit to sign with Miami since Deng Gak in the class of 2017, Aire checks in at 6-foot-10 and 212 pounds. A native of Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria, the power forward/center attends Bishop McNamara High School in Forestville, Md.

Aire, who competed for New World on the adidas 3SSB circuit, holds the No. 59 spot in the Rivals rankings, checking in at No. 12 among centers. He also places No. 97 on the 247Sports list and No. 106 in the 247Sports Composite rankings, taking the No. 16 and No. 18 spots, respectively, at his position. Each of those outlets, along with ESPN, consider him a four-star prospect and the fourth-best player in the state of Maryland.

Tabbed by The Washington Post as an All-Met Honorable Mention as a sophomore in 2019-20, Aire held offers from programs such as Georgetown, Georgia, Indiana, LSU, Louisville, Maryland, Pittsburgh, Rutgers and Virginia Tech, per 247Sports.

"Favour is an outstanding talent. He's a big guy with tremendous ball skills; he can shoot the three, put the ball on the ground and post up," Larrañaga said. "He has an excellent jump-hook. Defensively, he's an exceptional rebounder and shot-blocker."

A 6-foot-8, 205-pound forward from Chicago, Casey is the highest-rated pledge among Miami's signees. A unanimous four-star recruit, he comes in at No. 55 and No. 57 overall

according to Rivals and ESPN, respectively, while placing No. 67 in the 247Sports Composite rankings.

A 2020-21 Chicago Sun-Times All-City honoree and two-time Chicago Sun-Times All-Area designee, Casey led storied Whitey M. Young Magnet High School to a 15-1 record in 2020-21, his first year at the school. The prior season, he put up 22.0 points, 10.2 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 2.3 steals per game for Tinley Park High School.

"AJ plays in a very tough high school league in Chicago. He's also played against the best players in the Nike EYBL events," Larrañaga said. "His size, athletic ability and versatility allow him to be very efficient both inside and outside on offense, as well as very flexible on defense."

Jovanovich, a 6-foot-8, 200-pound forward from Milwaukee, joins The U from Whitnall High School, the alma mater of Miami HEAT standout Tyler Herro. A consensus top-five player in the Badger State, Jovanovich places No. 198 in the 247Sports Composite rankings.

Both 247Sports and the 247Sports Composite and consider Jovanovich to be a top-45 small forward in the country, while ESPN ranks him as the nation's No. 31 power forward. Each of those outlets, as well as Rivals, consider him a three-star recruit.

Jovanovich competed for Phenom University-Team Herro in the Nike EYBL, averaging 15.5 points, 6.8 rebounds and 2.2 assists per game to rank sixth in Cerebro Sports' C-RAM score, which compares an individual to a replacement player, similar to WAR. He held offers from programs such as DePaul, Illinois, Penn State and USC, per 247Sports.

"Danilo is a clever player who has a lot of craftiness in his game. As a left-hander, he's really good in around the basket," Larrañaga said. "He's an excellent driver, but he's also a terrific passer and he really does a great job of finding the open man. He was very much a glue guy for his AAU team, Phenom U, and that's something we'll want him to be at Miami."

A 6-foot-7, 200-pound guard, Watson hails from the "DMV" area, from which the Hurricanes have successfully signed numerous standouts during Larrañaga's illustrious tenure. A native of Lanham, Md., Watson attends St. John's College High School in Washington, D.C.

Labeled a four-star prospect and top-30 small

forward by both ESPN and 247Sports, Watson comes in at No. 87 and No. 109 in their respective rankings. He also holds the No. 140 spot on the 247Sports Composite list. All three tab him as the best prospect at a Washington, D.C., high school.

Watson selected Miami over Georgetown, Marquette and Rutgers, amongst other offers. He played his grassroots basketball for DC Premier on the UA Association circuit.

"Christian is a high-octane, multifaceted offense player. He can play the one, the two or the three. He can shoot the three and he can drive it to the basket," Larrañaga said. "He has played in the best high school basketball league in the country, in Washington, D.C., the WCAC. He has played against some of the best players in the country and has proven himself to be a very efficient player."

The 2021-22 Hurricanes resume play Saturday at 2 p.m. when they host UCF at the Watsco Center, with action set to be televised live on ACC Network Extra.

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

On the Court Again

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 12, 2021

Sam Waardenburg waited a long time for Tuesday night—608 days, to be exact.

Nearly 20 months after his last competitive outing, the forward from Auckland, New Zealand, finally hit the hardwood as a Hurricane once again.

Now a sixth-year redshirt senior, Waardenburg missed the entire 2020-21 campaign due to a left foot injury sustained in preseason practice. Weeks after the season ended, he made the decision to return to Miami for one final year.

Tuesday, in Miami's 77-67 season-opening victory over Canisius at the Watsco Center, he was back where he wants to be. His return to action—along with a victory and Hurricane supporters back in the stands—made for a memorable night for the big man.

"It was amazing. You get sidelined and whatnot for a whole season—I know there are a few guys on the team who can say this, as well—and you get a whole new appreciation for the game and the love that you really have for it when you kind of get it taken away from you," Waardenburg shared. "Being back on the court and also having fans there, as well, that was awesome. We had, I think, a good turnout for our first game and there was lots of energy there. We had a lot of energy from our guys, as well. We were all super excited to get back into the season so it was a great feeling all around."

Waardenburg not only played, but he did so quite well. He stuffed the stat sheet with 10 points, six rebounds, four assists, three blocked shots and two steals.

The blocks total matched his career high, while the assists and steals numbers both put him one shy of doing so. Meanwhile, the double-digit point total was the 13th of his career, including the fifth time he grabbed at least a half-dozen rebounds while hitting that scoring mark.

Waardenburg said he felt "comfortable" against the Golden Griffins. He used that same word to describe the performance of his team as a whole, too.

"The starting five, especially, coming out [as well as we did] at the beginning, that's just the way we've been playing in practice," he said. "We run this five-out offense that we all feel comfortable in and I feel like we do have really good chemistry in that system. It's only going to get better over

time. The way that we play in practice and scrimmage in practice, it just kind of translated to the game and we felt comfortable out there."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty paced Miami with a 20-point, 10-rebound double-double, while third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker scored 14 points and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore added 13.

McGusty, Moore and third-year sophomore Isaiah Wong will often be the defensive focal points of the opposition, making it important for Miami's big men to step up as they did Tuesday. Along with Walker's 14 points and Waardenburg's 10, sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., added eight points on 4-of-5 shooting.

Getting that type of production from its frontcourt will be a huge boost for Miami, with 11th-year head coach Jim Larraga harping on it to his players. It is something the group will look to continue moving forward.

"Yeah, that's of big importance. It's something Coach L emphasizes with us, that we need balance on the floor on the offensive end, from the inside and outside scoring," Waardenburg said. "Even though we have, I think, the best perimeter guys in our league and possibly the country—they can score at a high level—[you cannot] rely on the jump-shot every night. You do need to find that balance. So, Ant and Rod coming in and giving us big minutes, giving us points—they're big energy guys, as well—we need to continue to have that for the rest of the season."

The next chance for Waardenburg and his frontcourt brethren to display what they can do will be Saturday at 1 p.m. when the Hurricanes welcome UCF to the Watsco Center.

The Knights head into the game at 1-0 on the season after defeating Robert Morris, 69-59, Wednesday night at Addition Financial Arena in Orlando, Fla. Fifth-year guard Darius Perry paced all players in points (18) and assists (four) in the win.

The former Louisville Cardinal is UCF's leading returner in both categories, after averaging 14.7 points and 3.4 assists per game last season. The Knights went 11-12 (8-10 AAC) in 2020-21, but return many key pieces and were picked fifth in the AAC preseason poll.

Records and stats aside, though, it is always a big deal when Miami faces a fellow Sunshine State foe, especially on its home court.

"Whenever you play an in-state school, there's

always a little extra something to it. You kind of get that feeling that the team coming in, they're really trying to take that one from the home team," Waardenburg shared. "So, you know UCF is going to be coming in with a lot of energy, a lot of drive. That's just another challenge for us; we've got to step up to it and exceed it, bring more energy than them. I got to see a little bit of their game [on TV] last night; they're a very good team. They've got size and whatnot, but that's just something that we're going to have to expect and we're going to have to take on."

The Hurricanes are 8-2 all-time against UCF, including 4-1 at home and 2-1 in Larraga's tenure. The last three meetings in the series, however, have gone to the visiting team. Most recently, that result was a 79-70 win for Miami on Nov. 12, 2019.

Saturday afternoon, the Hurricanes will look to reverse the recent trend in the series and get a win on their home court. Waardenburg knows just what the team will need to do in order to make that happen.

"Obviously, the coaches are going to give us a good game plan. We have our structure in what we do and we've got to rely on that. We've got to trust in the system that we play and we've got to bring 110 percent effort," he said. "We've got to outwork them; that's the goal for every game. The team that brings the most effort has the best chance of winning that game. We've got to focus on defense, take another step at the defensive level and make sure everyone is rebounding."

"Offensively, we know we can get looks because we have all those options that the defense [has to deal with]," Waardenburg continued. "The defense is collective; we've all got to chip in there and make sure that we're working at the highest percentage that we can."

Saturday's game will be televised live on ACC Network Extra HERE, with Kyle Sielaff and Megan Perry on the call. Danny Rabinowitz will have the radio broadcast on WKIS FM 99.9 HD2 HERE. The game can also be heard on WVUM 90.5 FM HERE, while live stats will be HERE.

After playing UCF, Miami hits the road for the first time in 2021-22, as its next contest is scheduled for Tuesday at 6 p.m. against Florida Atlantic at Abessinio Court at FAU Arena in Boca Raton, Fla., live on CBS Sports Network.

MBB Drops 95-89 Decision to UCF

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 13, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team fell, 95-89, to UCF Saturday afternoon at the Watsco Center.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty led Miami (1-1) with a career-high-tying 28 points, shooting 7-of-14 from the field and 14-of-17 at the line, but the Knights controlled the boards and shot a blistering 40.7 percent from 3-point range to record the win.

"I thought UCF came out with a really good focus at the offensive end and made a number of threes," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We got four or five very good looks from three, but just didn't make them. As a result, we dug ourselves a 10- or 12-point hole and spent the whole time trying to get back in it. We got close, but it was not good enough."

The Hurricanes missed their initial eight 3-pointers, as UCF (2-0) built an early 16-6 lead before Miami countered by knocking down its first long-range shot and then hitting two free throws to slice the deficit in half with 10:54 on the clock.

UCF upped its edge as high as 14 in the first half, but again Miami pulled within five, this time using a 10-1 surge to make it 28-23 with 5:44 remaining. The Knights went on to take an eight-point cushion, 43-35, into the locker room.

McGusty scored 14 first-half points for Miami and went 8-of-10 from the line, where the Hurricanes shot 19-of-23 (82.6 percent) as a team through 20 minutes. UCF went 6-of-16 (37.5 percent) from 3-point range compared to Miami's 2-of-15 (13.3 percent) mark.

The Knights scored nine consecutive points in the first two-and-a-half minutes of the second half to go up by a game-high 17 points, 52-35.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, however, kept the Hurricanes within striking distance, as he scored Miami's next 15 points in a span of just 3:50, including dropping 10 in the first two minutes. His offensive explosion, which featured a 5-of-5 clip from the floor and a 5-of-5 mark from the line, helped Miami cut the deficit down to eight, 60-52, with 12:21 to go.

The Hurricanes, who shot 59.4 percent (19-of-32) in the second half, made it a two-possession game, 64-58, with 9:01 remaining, but UCF responded with its 10th 3-pointer. Miami continued to fight, though, and got within three points with 11 seconds left after forcing a backcourt turnover and quickly converting it into two points, but UCF held on to take the win.

"We started making threes, we started getting to the foul line a little bit more and we got a few stops," Larrañaga said of the comeback bid. "The thing that you want when you're behind is if you foul, you want them to miss at least a few free throws, but they didn't miss any. They shot over 90 percent from the free-throw line. We were behind and forced to foul. It gave them the chance to score without really having to run any offense."

McGusty's 28 points matched the top mark of his career, which he previously set Dec. 21, 2019, versus Coppin State. His 14 made free throws and 17 attempts also set new highs, the former by six and the latter by seven.

Wong finished with 20 points, shooting 7-of-10 from the field and 5-of-5 at the line, adding a team-high five rebounds. Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg scored a career-best 16 points, shooting 5-of-7 overall and 4-of-4 from the stripe.

Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker added 12 points before fouling out to give Miami four double-digit scorers.

Junior guard Darin Green Jr., paced UCF with 23 points, finishing 9-of-16 from the floor and 5-of-9 at the line. Fifth-year guard Brandon Mahan logged 15 points and made all 10 of his free throws, while junior forward CJ Walker notched a 14-point, 11-rebound double-double. Sophomore forward Isaiah Adams chipped in 12 points for the Knights.

Both teams excelled from the stripe on the afternoon, with the Knights registering a dazzling 88.9 percent ledger (24-of-27) and the Hurricanes posting a 79.5 percent tally (31-of-39) of their own. Both the makes and attempts totals for Miami set or tied its top mark of Larrañaga's 11-year tenure.

UCF finished with a plus-20 margin on the glass, 43-23, and vastly outshot Miami from 3-point range. The Knights went 11-of-27 (40.7 percent) beyond the arc, while the Hurricanes were just 6-of-26 (23.1 percent).

The Hurricanes did have a 25-8 edge in points off turnovers, but UCF had a 40-17 advantage in bench points, led by the showings of Adams and Mahan.

Miami now opens its road schedule Tuesday at 6 p.m., when it faces Florida Atlantic at Abessinio Court at FAU Arena in Boca Raton, Fla., with action slated for CBS Sports Network.

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes fell to 8-3 all-time against UCF, including 4-2 at home and 2-2 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– The visiting team in this series has now won each of the last five games played in either team's home arena, a streak that dates back to Dec. 27, 2002.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 671-465 in 38 years as a head coach, including 201-131 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the second time in as many games, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Waardenburg, Wong, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore.

– Miami is now 84-9 since the program rebirth (1985-86) against non-Power Five, in-state foes, including 64-4 at home, 16-4 under Larrañaga and 13-3 at home in his tenure.

– The Hurricanes fell to 58-7 in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure when scoring 80-plus points.

– Saturday marked just the 11th time Miami has allowed 90-plus points under Larrañaga, including the first since 2/8/20 when Florida State did so in Tallahassee, Fla.

– Miami last scored 50-plus points in a half on 12/2/19 when it recorded 50 in the first frame at Illinois and it last allowed 50-plus points in a half on 1/16/21 when it did so in the second stanza against Louisville.

– The Hurricanes used double-digit scholarship players for the first time in nearly four years, dating back to 12/23/17 against New Mexico State in the Diamond Head Classic semifinals in Honolulu.

– Saturday also marked just the seventh time in Larrañaga tenure Miami has played 11 scholarship individuals, including the first since 2/28/15 versus North Carolina.

– Two players, freshman guard Darius Johnson and fifth-year guard Darius Perry, fouled out for the Knights, while Miller and Walker fouled out for Miami, the latter mark giving the Hurricanes more disqualifications in one game than they had all of last season (one).

– The Hurricanes' 31 made free throws were their most since making 31 on 2/25/15 versus Florida State, tying their top mark under Larrañaga.

– Miami's 39 free-throw attempts were their most of the Larrañaga era, eclipsing the mark of 38 set on both 1/2/12 against UNC Greensboro and the aforementioned 2/25/15 game versus Florida State.

– The last time the Hurricanes had 19-plus made free throws and/or 23-plus free-throw attempts in a half both came on 2/26/19 in the second session at Wake Forest, when they went 21-of-26.

– Miami last had two 20-point scorers on 3/5/21 against Boston College, when McGusty (27) and Nysier Brooks (21) achieved the feat.

– Before scoring 15 points in under four minutes, Wong had just nine total points on the season through three halves of play.

– McGusty's prior career high in made free throws was eight, set on 1/7/17 at Kansas State, when he was still at Oklahoma, while his previous high in attempts was 10 on 12/8/20 versus Purdue.

– The 17 attempts for McGusty tied for the third-most by a Hurricane since the program rebirth (1985-86) and marked just the sixth time since then a Miami player reached that mark, though he is just the third individual to do so.

– McGusty, who surpassed 1,250 points, 250 free-throw attempts and 200 made free throws as a collegian, recorded 20-plus points for the 15th time, including the ninth as a Hurricane and second this year.

– In addition, McGusty scored in double figures for the 65th time, including the 37th at Miami and second this year.

– Wong, who eclipsed 100 assists as a collegian, notched double-digit points for the 34th time and 20-plus points for the 15th time, including the first this season in both categories.

– Waardenburg, who moved past 350 points and 2,000 minutes played at Miami, surpassed his prior career best of 15 points, which he set multiple times, most recently on 2/8/20 at Florida State.

– This is the second time in Waardenburg's career, in which he now has scored 10-plus points 14 times, he has posted back-to-back double-digit point totals, joining 12/2/19 at Illinois and 12/14/19 versus Alabama A&M, and the 26 points he has scored in those two games are the most he has ever tallied in consecutive contests.

– Freshman guard Bensley Joseph earned his first collegiate minutes and scored his first basket on a 3-pointer with 25 ticks left.

Miami Hurricanes lose 95-89 to UCF despite 48 combined points from McGusty, Wong

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 13, 2021

The Hurricanes got their first true test of the early season at home against UCF on Saturday afternoon and discovered there is still plenty of work to be done.

Despite a highly touted new point guard, a deep bench and 48 combined points from Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty, Miami lost 95-89 against a sharpshooting, experienced Knights team that was relentless on the boards.

The Hurricanes, hoping their four-guard backcourt would produce high-octane offense, sputtered early. They missed 11 of their first 12 three-point attempts and shot 4-of-17 overall through the first 12 minutes. The Knights took advantage, opened a 14-point early lead and never looked back.

"I thought Central Florida did an absolutely great job of all different kinds of shot-making," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "Three-pointers, pull-up jumpers, interior shots. They made 90 percent from the foul line. We got ourselves off to a slow start, missed some wide-open threes from guys who can really shoot the three; we ended up digging ourselves a double-digit hole and spent the rest of the game trying to make a comeback."

Miami guard Wong, an NBA prospect who led the ACC in scoring last season, got in early foul trouble and played just 11 minutes in the first half, scoring two points before intermission.

Wong made up for his absence in the second half. He reeled off 15 consecutive points to chip away at UCF's lead and finished with 20 points, but the Knights kept hitting from outside to maintain a double-digit lead.

McGusty, who like Wong returned to UM after testing the NBA waters last spring, led the Hurricanes with 28 points, 14 of them from the free-throw line. The Hurricanes got to the line 39 times, but the Knights made 24 of their 27 free throws (89 percent) and that proved critical.

UCF also outrebounded the Canes 43-23.

"We have a few weaknesses and rebounding is one of them," Larranaga said. "We're not a big, strong, physical team. I hate this word, but we're kind of a finesse team. That team is very athletic, strong, physically imposing and when the shot missed, they were all over the glass

and we couldn't keep them off the boards."

Miami (1-1) made a furious effort to catch up in the final 30 seconds after a pair of UCF turnovers. A three-point play designed for freshman Bensley Joseph at the top of the key closed the deficit to five points with 25 seconds to go. Jordan Miller's layup got Miami to within three points with 10 seconds to go.

"We did a very good job at the end of getting within range, but they would not miss a free throw down the stretch and that eliminated any possibility of us pulling ahead," Larranaga said.

Forward Sam Waardenburg, who is back in the starting lineup after missing all last season with a foot injury, had 16 points. Anthony Walker pitched in 12 points. Point guard Charlie Moore struggled with his shot, going 1 of 8 with three assists in 27 minutes.

"Obviously, this was not a very good defensive game for us and that's something we need to work on," Waardenburg said. "We're an undersized team, but that shouldn't be an excuse. We have to work harder and make sure everyone is boxing out and that we keep them off the boards. That was a big issue."

Miami had the most trouble containing forward C.J. Walker and guard Darin Green Jr. Walker finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds. Green led the Knights with 23 points. Isaiah Adams (12 points) and Brandon Mahan (15 points) also finished in double figures.

Longtime Hurricanes fans may have noticed a familiar face on the Knights bench. Former UM point guard Kevin Norris has been a UCF assistant coach for six seasons under head coach Johnny Dawkins.

UM's next game is Tuesday night on the road at Florida Atlantic.

Kameron McGusty scores 28 but Hurricanes fall to UCF 95-89

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 13, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes were unable slow down the UCF Knights and ultimately came up short.

Kameron McGusty scored 28 and Isaiah Wong added 20, but the Hurricanes could not keep up with UCF in a 95-89 loss on Saturday.

"I thought UCF came out with a really good focus at the offensive end and made a number of 3s," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "We got four or five very good looks from 3, but just didn't make them. As a result, we dug ourselves a 10- or 12-point hole and spent the whole time trying to get back in it. We got close, but it was not good enough."

Sam Waardenburg chipped in 16 points while Anthony Walker contributed 12 for the Hurricanes, who lost to UCF for just the third time in 11 meetings.

Miami (1-1) made just 5 of 23 from behind the 3-point arc and was dominated on the boards as UCF (2-0) won the rebounding margin 43-23 behind 16 offensive boards to Miami's 14 defensive rebounds.

"I'm afraid we have a few weaknesses and rebounding is one of them," Larranaga said. "We're not a big, strong, physical team. We're a--and I hate this word--kind of a finesse team and that team is very athletic and very strong at certain positions and very physically imposing. When the shot missed they were all over the glass and we couldn't keep them off the boards."

The Knights got 23 points from Darin Green Jr.

Miami shot 45.6 percent (26 of 57) from the floor while UCF shot 50.0 percent (30 of 60).

The Hurricanes trailed 64-58 with nine minutes left, but UCF pulled away down the stretch, leading by as many as 12 late while Miami was not able to get any closer than six for most of the way before a late surge.

McGusty hit a jumper to cut the deficit to 92-87 with 15 seconds left. Bensley Joseph got a steal on the ensuing possession and Jordan Miller converted a layup to pull the Hurricanes within 92-89 with 11 seconds left.

UCF's Dre Fuller Jr. made a pair of free throws and Walker turned it over, ending the Hurricanes hope at a comeback.

McGusty's second 20-point game of the season came on 7-of-14 shooting while making 14 of 17 free-throw attempts. The 17 attempts tied for the third-most in UM history, only two shy of Eric Brown's school-record (since 1985-86) set in 1989.

"I can't ask Kam to do it all on his own," Larranaga said.

Wong scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half.

"What Kam needs is the Isaiah Wong who played in the second half," Larranaga said. "Isaiah is such a big part of our offense and when he and Kam are clicking together, then we are a much harder team to guard."

The Hurricanes started slow, falling behind 16-6 behind 3-for-13 shooting and missing all eight of their 3-point attempts.

UCF led 43-35 at halftime with Miami making 7 of 25 shots (28.0 percent).

UP NEXT

Miami plays at Florida Atlantic on Tuesday (6:00 p.m., CBSSN).

Hitting the Road

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 14, 2021

Every game is a learning experience.

Sometimes, games also confirm what is already known. That was the case for the University of Miami men's basketball team in its narrow 95-89 setback to UCF Saturday afternoon at the Watsco Center.

One clear takeaway from the defeat was something the Miami (1-1) coaching staff already knew and is aware must be addressed moving forward.

"Well, clearly the rebounding is an issue, especially getting ready to play FAU, which is one of the top offensive rebounding teams in the country," head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "It's a weakness that we've got to figure out how to improve."

Every team, no matter its caliber, has areas that need work. Identifying those deficiencies so they can be fixed or, at least, masked is essential.

As the Hurricanes prepare for the aforementioned matchup with Florida Atlantic, set for Tuesday at 6 p.m. at Abessinio Court at FAU Arena in Boca Raton, Fla., Larrañaga has his team trying to do just that.

"We just have to be more conscious of it. Our players have to take more responsibility, they have to be more physical and have to be prepared to block their men out," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "We were doing a lot of switching and that sometimes creates a problem because it creates mismatches; we end up with our big players guarding perimeter players away from the basket and our guards underneath trying to guard their bigs. So, we're probably going to have to make an adjustment there."

Although Miami certainly did not get the result it was looking for, there were some positives from the game. Most notable was the way the Hurricanes got to the free-throw line, as they went 31-of-39 from the stripe.

The 31 makes tied for the most by a Miami team in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure, while the 39 attempts set a new high during that span.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty alone went 14-of-17 at the line, both numbers career highs and the latter tied for third-most by a Hurricane since the program rebirth (1985-86), en route to a career-high-tying 28 points.

"The first thing is, in that particular game against Central Florida, there were a lot of possessions,"

Larrañaga said of Miami's ability to get to the line so often. "That may be more of the case this year; we'd like to play in more of an up-tempo situation. Secondly, our leading scorers—Kam McGusty and Isaiah Wong—are very, very good at getting to the basket. So, that's going to be something that we keep trying to develop more and more."

Wong, a third-year sophomore guard, hit all five of his free throws and finished with 20 points, 15 of which came in a scintillating three minutes and 50 seconds of action. Another third-year sophomore, forward Anthony Walker, also scored in double figures, notching 12 points for his 13th double-digit point total in his last 16 outings, dating back to last season.

In addition, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg finished with 16 points, setting a new career high. He is averaging 13.0 points per game through the first two outings of 2021-22, his highest mark in any two-game stretch of his career.

The strong play comes after the Auckland, New Zealand, native missed all of last season due to a left foot injury and went over 600 days between competitive games.

"Sam is our best frontcourt defender, our best shot blocker and probably our best defensive rebounder over a long period of time. His versatility—because he's going to play both the four and the five—is going to be very impactful," Larrañaga shared. "His ability to hit the open shot—especially the 3-point shot—will create opportunities for the other players to drive the ball to the basket. Sam's off to a good start and we want him to keep building on that."

Up next for Waardenburg and the Hurricanes is that South Florida showdown with Florida Atlantic. The Owls are 1-1 on the young season after dropping a 99-92 road result at New Mexico and posting a 78-56 home win versus Warner.

Junior guard Michael Forrest is the go-to performer for Florida Atlantic, leading the team in points (16.5), rebounds (6.5) and assists (3.5) per outing.

The Lauderhill, Fla., native is not the only Owl, though, whom the Hurricanes will have to lock in on to succeed defensively Tuesday night.

"[Florida Atlantic is] just a terrific offensive team, very well-balanced," Larrañaga said. "They've got a great point guard [in Forrest]; he had 26 in their first game. They've got an excellent freshman, [Alijah Martin], he's a two-guard who can really shoot. And they're very big. They're all over the offensive glass and that's a major concern to us."

One other factor Miami will have to deal with when it takes the court for opening tip—and likely in the

hour leading up to that—is a rowdy, fired-up crowd of Florida Atlantic fans.

In what will be the Hurricanes' first non-conference true road game since a Dec. 2, 2019, victory at Illinois—that was 715 days before this one—the team will be headed into a hostile environment. That is something Larrañaga will indeed address with his team, but it will not be a prime focus.

Instead, most of the attention will be on doing what Miami sets out to do from a strategic standpoint, as is the case each time it plays a game.

"Well, we'll talk about [the crowd], certainly, but the focus has to be on the game, executing the game plan. When you execute your game plan, you put yourself in a good position to win the game," Larrañaga said. "It's when you don't execute, when you don't rebound, when you don't defend, when you don't switch properly or you don't trap properly, that's when you run into problems. The fans can be a major factor in the game if they get behind the home team and give them energy, but if the visiting team can get out in front and quiet the crowd, that's always very helpful."

The Hurricanes are 24-1 all-time against Florida Atlantic, tied for their eighth-most wins against any opponent and tied for their fifth-most against current Division I programs. Miami's .960 winning percentage in the series is its best all-time against any foe it has played at least nine times.

On the road, Miami owns a 5-1 ledger against the Owls, with the lone setback coming in a 74-73 overtime decision on Dec. 3, 2002. That was the last time the two teams met in Boca Raton, with the Hurricanes winning nine in a row since then, including notching a 74-60 home victory on Nov. 8, 2019, in the most recent meeting.

Tuesday's matchup will be televised live on CBS Sports Network HERE, with Dave Ryan and Bob Wenzel on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats can be found HERE.

After its visit to Florida Atlantic, Miami returns home to Coral Gables, where it hosts Florida A&M Sunday at 8 p.m., live on ACC Network from the Watsco Center.

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

MBB Wins 68-66 Thriller at Florida Atlantic

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 16, 2021

Isaiah Wong's last-second layup handed the University of Miami men's basketball team a 68-66 victory Tuesday night at Florida Atlantic.

Miami (2-1) led for over 39-and-a-half minutes and never trailed in the contest, but needed Wong's late bucket to earn the win in front of a packed house at Abessinio Court at FAU Arena. Wong, a third-year sophomore guard, paced the Hurricanes with 18 points in their first road matchup with the Owls since Dec. 3, 2002.

"I thought their players did an outstanding job of [using straight-line drives and] ... in the second half, that we were not able to stop it and we ended up fouling them," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "Then, they made their free throws and cut into our lead kind of steadily, not all at one time. So, we were still able to stay in front. I know the score was tied at the end, but I think we led nearly from start to finish."

The Hurricanes jumped on Florida Atlantic (1-2) right from the tip, grabbing a 15-3 lead in the first six-and-a-half minutes. They also forced eight turnovers in the opening seven minutes and held the Owls to just three field-goal attempts in that time.

Miami upped its edge as high as 16 in the opening half and took a 14-point margin, 34-20, into the break. Wong scored 10 points before the intermission, including starting 4-of-4 from the field in the first 5:06, while the Hurricanes went 13-of-15 (86.7 percent) at the stripe in the frame.

After sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore started the second half with a jump-shot to again put Miami up by 16, Florida Atlantic scored nine straight points to begin a 13-3 run that trimmed its deficit to six, 39-30, with 15:40 to play.

The Hurricanes pushed their advantage back up to 16, 55-39, with 8:20 on the clock, but the Owls would not go away. They responded with a 22-8 surge to make it a two-point game, 63-61, with just 1:57 remaining.

Miami scored three straight points to go up by five with 26 ticks left, but Florida Atlantic, at the other end, finished a layup through a foul, missed the shot, grabbed the rebound and drilled a game-tying 3-pointer with 16 seconds remaining.

Wong, though, made a heroic drive to the rim for Miami, putting a shot off the glass and in with 0.7 showing on the scoreboard, sending the

Hurricanes—who then got a defensive stop after a timeout—into jubilation.

"Well, we had a timeout; we chose not to use it," Larrañaga said. "What we wanted to do was just clear everybody out of Isaiah's way and let him take his man, expecting that he would either score or get fouled. He was able to juke and jive his way to the basket and make an acrobatic layup, which he's very good at."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, who led the Hurricanes with eight rebounds, scored 14 points and went 12-of-14 from the line, marking the second game in a row he reached a dozen-plus in both categories. The Katy, Texas, native took nine of his free throws in the first half, connecting on his initial eight.

Freshman guard Wooga Poplar, who went scoreless in four minutes of action in Miami's first two games, totaled 12 points in the win, finishing 4-of-5 from the floor, 3-of-3 at the stripe and making his lone 3-pointer.

Junior guard Michael Forrest, who made the game-tying 3-pointer, led all scorers with 21 points, 16 of which came in the second half. Freshman guard Alijah Martin tallied 15 of his 17 points after the intermission to join Forrest in double figures, while freshman center Vladislav Goldin grabbed a game-best 11 rebounds before fouling out.

Despite shooting just 35.3 percent (18-of-51) and allowing a 49.0 percent mark (25-of-51), the Hurricanes recorded the win behind their free-throw shooting. Miami went 30-of-38 (78.9 percent) from the stripe, its second game in a row hitting 30-plus free throws.

The Hurricanes now return home to Coral Gables, Fla., to host Florida A&M Sunday at 8 p.m. at the Watsco Center, live on ACC Network.

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @Cane-sHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes, with a 10th straight victory in the series, improved to 25-1 all-time against Florida Atlantic, including 6-1 on the road and 5-0 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Miami's 25 wins against the Owls are now solely its eighth-most versus any program all-time—breaking a tie with its totals against Florida, Pittsburgh and Virginia Tech—including fifth-most versus current Division I programs.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 672-465 in 38 years as a head

coach, including 202-131 in 11 seasons at Miami. – For the first time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Wong, sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr. and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– For Miller Jr., the start was his first since 3/7/20 against Syracuse in the 2019-20 regular season finale, 619 days ago.

– Miami is now 85-9 since the program rebirth (1985-86) against non-Power Five, in-state foes, including 18-4 in true road games, 17-4 under Larrañaga and 4-1 on the road in his tenure.

– Zach Johnson's jump-shot to beat Clemson with 0.4 to go on 2/13/19 was the last time Miami won a game in the final second.

– The last time the Hurricanes played a non-conference true road game was 12/2/19 when they won at Illinois in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

– For the second consecutive game, two Miami opponents fouled out, as Goldin and graduate student forward Batumba Baruti both did so.

– Over its last two games, Miami is 61-of-77 (79.2 percent) from the free-throw line, following a 31-of-39 showing Saturday against UCF.

– After reaching 30 made free throws in a game three times in Larrañaga's his first 10 seasons, Miami has now done so back-to-back in the second and third outings of his 11th season.

– Similarly, after notching 38-plus free-throw attempts in a game twice in Larrañaga's first 10 years, the Hurricanes have now done so in consecutive games within the first three affairs of his 11th campaign.

– After posting career bests of eight made free throws and 10 attempts through his first 112 outings, McGusty has surpassed both of those marks in each of the last two games, as he went 14-of-17 versus UCF.

– McGusty notched double-digit points for the 66th time, including the 38th as a Hurricane and third in as many games this year.

– Wong, who moved past 250 made field goals as a Hurricane, scored in double figures for the 35th time, including the second this season.

– Poplar scored the first points of his career on a driving layup with 11:30 on the first-half clock and then added a 3-pointer just 48 seconds later.

– J. Miller eclipsed 2,250 minutes played as a collegian.

Isaiah Wong's last-second layup lifts Hurricanes to 68-66 win over Owls

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 16, 2021

A late falter nearly turned into a disaster until Isaiah Wong came up with a heroic play.

Wong scored 18 points including a layup with 0.7 seconds left to lift the Miami Hurricanes to a 68-66 win over FAU on Tuesday.

"I told everybody to just get out of his way and told Isaiah to just go ahead and score," Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored 14 points and Wooga Poplar added 12 points for the Hurricanes, who played at FAU for the first time in 19 years and improved to 25-1 in the series.

"A lot of my friends in coaching think I'm crazy for playing in-state games in the biggest non-conference game for our opponents," Larranaga said. "It's my understanding this was the largest student crowd ever to attend a Florida Atlantic home and that's terrific for college basketball--to create energy and enthusiasm all over the country. We've always been willing to do that knowing that this is the way you prepare your team for the hostile environments during the ACC. We've done it every year since I've been the head coach at Miami and we'll continue to do. My hats off to Dusty May and their players for battling back. I thought our guys came out of the locker room really determined. I know they were disappointing in the way we performed at home against Central Florida so this was a very good way to create a better memory than the last one."

The Hurricanes (2-1) shot 36.4 percent (18 of 50) from the field while the Owls (1-2) made 49.0 percent (25 of 51) of their shots. The Hurricanes made 30 of 38 from the free-throw line with McGusty sinking 12 of 14.

"I thought Florida Atlantic's defense was actually very good and I'm just pleased we squeaked out a two-point victory," Larranaga said.

Miami led 66-61 with 23 seconds left before allowing a layup and a foul. The free-throw shot missed and FAU got the offensive rebound and found Michael Forrest for a 3 to tie the game at 66 with 16 seconds left. Instead of calling timeout, Wong brought the ball up and shook his defender before finishing with a layup on the right side.

"He was either going to score or get fouled in that situation," Larranaga said. "He's a very

hard guy to keep from scoring."

A long inbound pass hit the backboard down the court and FAU was unable to get a shot off to give Miami the win.

Charlie Moore's layup gave Miami a 15-3 lead, which was sparked by eight points by Wong.

The Hurricanes continued to lead throughout, including a 34-20 edge at the break, but the Owls cut the deficit to 60-57 with 2:37 left on a three-point play by Forrest, who led the Owls with 21 points.

After Wong hit a jumper, Forrest followed with a 3 to pull within 63-61.

Wong added a pair of free throws as the Owls missed their next two 3s. Charlie Moore split a pair of free throws to extend Miami's lead to 66-61 with 23.3 seconds left.

Jim Larranaga made a change in the starting lineup with Rodney Miller in for Jordan Miller for the first time this year. Neither player made a basket as they combined for four points.

The Hurricanes' bench, led by Poplar, combined to score 26 points.

"I think that's really big concern for me and my staff that the bench hasn't been able to contribute both offensively and defensively," Larranaga said. "We're just not getting a lot of production. Wooga has that capability to make shots and score the ball, but he's got to earn some playing time through his defense and he's been practicing harder and trying to get better defensively so he's going to be called upon again. So is Bensley (Joseph), but we also moved Rodney Miller in the starting lineup and brought Jordan Miller off the bench. He was in the game down the stretch and got a big offensive rebound, free throws and we were able to get contributions several guys off the bench."

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Florida A&M on Sunday (8:00 p.m., ACCN).

UM squeaks out 68-66 win at FAU on game-winning layup by Isaiah Wong

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 16, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team survived FAU's relentless perimeter defense and a raucous Owls crowd to squeak out a 68-66 road victory on Tuesday night.

FAU's Michael Forrest, a Blanche Ely High grad, made a three-pointer from the corner to tie the game with 16 seconds to go, but Miami guard Isaiah Wong took the ball up the court, made a hard move to the basket and scored the game-winning layup with six seconds remaining.

Forrest led all scorers with 21 points and was 4-of-9 from beyond the arc. Wong was UM's leading scorer with 18 points on 7-of-15 shooting. Kam McGusty was 1-of-8 from the field but finished with 14 points for UM after making 12 of 14 free throws. Freshman Wooga Poplar was 4-of-5 for 12 points.

Freshman Alijah Martin had 17 for the Owls.

"A lot of my friends in coaching think I'm crazy for playing in-state games when it's the biggest non-conference game for our opponents," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "It's my understanding that that was the largest student crowd ever to attend a Florida Atlantic home game, and that's terrific for college basketball, to create energy and enthusiasm all over the country.

"We've always been willing to do that knowing this is how you prepare your team for the hostile environments we're going to face during the ACC season."

Asked what he was thinking in the final seconds of the game, Larranaga said: "I just told everyone, 'Get out of his way and Isaiah, just go ahead and score.' He was either going to score or get fouled. He's a very hard guy to keep from scoring. I thought Florida Atlantic's defense was very good and I'm just pleased we were able to squeak out a victory."

The Hurricanes (2-1) are back home Sunday night against Florida A&M. FAU (1-2) plays UT-Martin at home on Friday.

Trusting the Process

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 19, 2021

The transition from high school to college athletics is a difficult one, especially at the highest level of the sport in the ACC.

For a player coming off an injury that cost him his entire senior season, it can be even more challenging. That is the exact situation for Bensley Joseph of the University of Miami men's basketball team.

A freshman guard, Joseph did not play in 2020-21 at Putnam Science Academy in Putnam, Conn., due to a left ankle injury. He then watched Miami's entire exhibition game and season opener from the bench, biding his time behind a veteran-laden backcourt.

That time, though, was not long. Head coach Jim Larrañaga called on Joseph against UCF and he responded with 17 strong minutes of action. Joseph followed that with another solid 13-minute showing off the bench three days later at Florida Atlantic.

"Just trusting the process and just waiting for my time to come, working hard every single day in practice," Joseph said of how he showed the coaching staff he was ready to play. "It's hard to win at this level in this conference. I just feel like [I am] showing up every day with a hard-working mindset, just trying to get better at everything I can do. So, I feel like that's what is getting me some minutes right now. I'm just working hard and bringing energy, especially on the defensive end. That's something I take pride in."

A key for Joseph in being ready to hit the court running—literally and figuratively—when needed was remaining emotionally invested, even if the early outlook on his playing time looked bleak.

"My mindset was to just stay positive. I know my team; we have a veteran team right now. So, it's not going to come easy right now," Joseph shared. "It's just a patience thing, I just wanted to stay patient. I kept my head up [and I was] cheering for my team and [was just] waiting for my opportunity. Once my opportunity came and my name was called, I just knew all that work I've been putting in for the past couple months since I've been here, I just had to let it all show."

The 6-foot-1, 195-pounder's first action came in a loss, as Miami dropped a narrow 95-89 result to UCF Saturday at the Watsco Center. The next time out, he played in a victory for the first time, as the Hurricanes edged Florida Atlantic, 68-66, Tuesday night in Boca Raton, Fla.

Joseph, who hails from Arlington, Mass., is encouraged by the way his team bounced back from the setback versus the Knights and held on for a win in front of a nearly sold-out crowd at FAU.

That has him feeling like, even early in the season, the

Hurricanes are where they need to be from a mental standpoint, just as he was when he was called upon to step up.

"UCF, they punched us in the mouth and I feel like we responded pretty well versus FAU. We've just got to keep responding and getting better all together," Joseph said. "Right now, everyone is bought in. We just [have to] keep buying in. Our team, we're not the biggest, we're probably not the strongest, but we're fast and we've got a lot of heart. So, I feel like if we put all those together and keep trusting what we're doing, trusting what Coach is saying and trusting the process all together as one, we could be unstoppable."

In the victory at Florida Atlantic, the Hurricanes led by 16 with under eight minutes to go before the Owls put up a furious rally. A 3-pointer by junior guard Michael Forrest evened the score at 66 with just 16 seconds on the clock.

However, in the face of a potentially painful loss, Miami stayed together. It executed offensively at the other end, with third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong dropping a driving layup off the glass and into the hoop with 0.7 ticks remaining.

The Hurricanes then got the much-needed defensive stop on the final play, which also helped display the mentality of the team down the stretch.

"I saw a lot of composure. Guys didn't get caught up in the moment and try to do too much, just stayed composed and stayed relaxed. We stayed together," Joseph said. "Yeah, those moments can be very scary; tie ballgame [with the game] clock ticking down, but I feel like our composure as a team was very good and it was able to get Isaiah a bucket for a game-winning layup. That's how we play together."

Wong scored 18 points in the win to lead the Hurricanes, while sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty tallied 14 and went 12-of-14 from the stripe. Freshman guard Wooga Poplar—another newcomer who stepped up mightily—notched the first 12 points of his career and went 4-of-5 from the floor.

Miami shot 30-of-38 from the line, its second consecutive game reaching each of those figures after hitting both of them just once previously in Larrañaga's first 10 years at the helm.

Both of those games, as aforementioned, were against in-state foes. Now, Miami has a third straight Sunshine State team on the docket, as it faces Florida A&M Sunday at 8 p.m. at the Watsco Center.

This is the first time since the opening three games of the 2012-13 campaign—Nov. 9, 13 and 16—the Hurricanes are playing three consecutive games against Florida schools.

"I'll approach it just like any other game, but playing in-state schools, it's always a big competition and rivalry.

It's like bragging rights for the school you play at," Joseph remarked. "Obviously, FAMU is going to try to come into Watsco and they're going to play as hard as they can and represent FAMU, where they're from. But I feel like, if we keep our composure and we play as hard as we can for all 40 minutes on the offensive and defensive side, we'll get the result we want."

The Hurricanes are 8-0 all-time against the Rattlers, good for their most wins against any team without a loss. All eight of those meetings, like this one, have come on Miami's home court. Just one, though, was during Larrañaga's tenure, a 90-59 victory on Nov. 16, 2017.

This year's Florida A&M team is 1-1 on the young season, boasting a 95-70 home win Monday over LeMoyné-Owen after a close 67-57 loss at Kansas State five days earlier in its season opener. The Rattlers went 8-12 (7-5 MEAC) last year and are now in a new conference, as they were picked sixth in the SWAC preseason poll.

Florida A&M's star through two contests has been senior guard MJ Randolph, who leads the team in points (24.0), rebounds (8.0) and assists (8.0) per game.

"I like the challenge in those type of guys because it kind of brings me into a mode where I want to personally shut them down and take them out of their loop," Joseph said of facing high-level opposing guards. "But, as a team, we're ... going to focus on all their players—the whole team—and just try to shut them down as much as possible. Our team, we're big on defense and defense is what is going to win us lots of games ... and hopefully we come out with a dub [in this one]."

Sunday's affair will be broadcast live on ACC Network HERE, with Mike Monaco and Paul Biancardi on the call. Joe Zagacki and Danny Rabinowitz will have the radio broadcast on AM 790 WAXY HERE. The game can also be heard on WVUM 90.5 FM HERE, while live stats will be HERE.

After playing Florida A&M, Miami will head to the ESPN Wide World of Sports in Kissimmee, Fla., where it plays three games in four days in the ESPN Events Invitational. Its first matchup is set for Thursday at noon against Dayton, on either ESPN or ESPN2.

Season tickets for the 2021-22 men's basketball home schedule start at \$160 and are on sale now through the Miami Hurricanes ticket office. Tickets can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office a 1-800-GO-CANES. For more details, dial that number or email canestix@miami.edu.

To keep up with the University of Miami men's basketball team on social media, follow @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Here's what you should know about UM men's basketball game Sunday vs. Florida A&M

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 19, 2021

Another tough in-state test is ahead for the University of Miami men's basketball team on Sunday night. The Hurricanes, who lost to UCF and barely squeaked by FAU, are in for a tough game against Florida A&M.

This game is at home, at 8 p.m. at the Wastco Center, so the atmosphere won't be as hostile as it was at FAU. But the Rattlers have proven through their first two games that they are dangerous.

They opened their season at Kansas State, where they led in the second half before losing by 10. Senior captain MJ Randolph scored 27 points in that game and had seven rebounds and six assists.

Then, on Monday, FAMU beat Division II LeMoyne-Owen 95-70. Rudolph came one rebound shy of a triple-double – 21 points, 10 assists, nine rebounds. Six Rattlers scored in double figures.

Miami, meanwhile, needed an Isaiah Wong driving layup in the final seconds to get past FAU 68-66. Wong led the Canes with 18 points. Kam McGusty added 14 (12 from the foul line), and freshman Wooga Poplar had 11 off the bench.

UM shot 36 percent from the field against the Owls and were 2 of 10 from beyond the arc. But they compensated by drawing fouls and getting to the free throw line 38 times. They scored 30 points from the line. That has been a strength early his season. Against UCF they were 31-of-39 from the line.

"Charlie Miller, Isaiah and Kam are all good free-throw shooters, and Bensley [Joseph] and Wooga made their free throws, too, so we want to get to the free throw line as often as possible," said UM coach Jim Larranaga.

Increasing scoring and rebounding from the bench will be a focus for the Hurricanes

"The bench has been an area of concern because we weren't getting a lot of production there," Larranaga said. "Wooga has the moves to score, but he has to earn playing time through his defense and he has been working on that. If we can count on the bench for 25 points and 10 to 15 rebounds, we will be a better team."