

Miami Men's Basketball Clips

2021-22

DJ Irving Named MBB Assistant Coach

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
April 22, 2021

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-NEP-SAC 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."

Charlie Moore leads Hurricanes past Florida A&M

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 21, 2021

It has been a slow start for Charlie Moore in his transition to Miami.

The Hurricanes are hoping Moore is starting to break out.

Moore scored 20 points with five 3-pointers and the Miami Hurricanes won 86-59 over Florida A&M on Sunday.

"I was very pleased with Charlie Moore," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "He really quarterbacked the team, he scored the ball, passed the ball and got everybody involved."

The Hurricanes (3-1) also got 19 points from Isaiah Wong while Kameron McGusty scored 14.

Jordan Miller paced the bench with nine points and seven rebounds after starting the first two games following a transfer from George Mason.

"I think I took for granted how hard it would be to transfer and get used to a new system," Miller said. "It definitely surprised me and I tried to maintain positivity and stay in the gym."

Miami shot 50.0 percent (31 of 62) from the floor with 10 3-pointers on 27 attempts while holding Florida A&M (1-2) to 35.3-percent shooting (24 of 68).

"We did a good job overall," Larranaga said. "We held them to under 36 percent overall and 28.6 percent from three for the game. The rebounding has also been a major point of emphasis and we outrebounded them, 49-33."

Moore's second 3 gave the Hurricanes a 16-9 lead.

"My teammates were getting me involved and the coaches have confidence in me to keep shooting the ball," Moore said. "I'm looking forward to keep doing what I did tonight."

McGusty converted on a pair of layups to stretch the lead to 32-15 as the Hurricanes took a 42-21 lead into the break.

The Hurricanes' lead was trimmed to 15 in the second half, but pushed the lead to as many as 30.

Moore, a transfer from DePaul, entering the game averaging 8.3 points on 31.0-percent

shooting, before posting a season-high in points behind 6-of-10 shooting, 5 of 7 from deep.

"I was hoping (a breakout game) would (come)," Larranaga said. "I sent him a video of all his made 3s of his last year at DePaul and told him, 'Hey you need to look for shots and have confidence shooting it.' He told me really enjoyed watching it. I'm sure mentally that helped him."

Wong's 19-point effort was the third straight game he has scored at least 18 after being held to seven in the opener against Canisius.

McGusty leads the Hurricanes in scoring (19.0) and is sixth in the ACC.

UP NEXT

Miami will face Dayton (1-3) in the first round of the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee, Fla. on Thursday (12:00 p.m., ESPN2) with the winner possibly facing No. 4 Kansas on Friday.

"It would be fun (to play Kansas)," said Moore, who also spent two seasons at Kansas. "I'm looking forward to all games. It would be fun to play an old school I attended so hopefully we get to play them guys. We have to win a game before we play them so one game at a time."

MBB Rolls to 86-59 Victory over Florida A&M

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 21, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team turned in a dominant performance Sunday night at the Watsco Center, recording an 86-59 wire-to-wire win versus Florida A&M.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore scored a season-high 20 points to pace Miami (3-1), which led by 15-plus for the final 23 minutes of its November home finale and remained undefeated in its all-time series with the Rattlers.

"I thought they might start launching more threes [after halftime], but we did a good job overall," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said of his team's defense. "We held them to under 36 percent overall and 28.6 percent from three for the game. ... The rebounding has also been a major point of emphasis and we outrebounded them, 49-33."

After missing their first two shots, the Hurricanes hit five in a row on their way to building a double-digit lead in fewer than nine minutes. Miami's edge dropped below 10 for just 21 seconds the rest of the night and it led by 21 points, 42-21, when the halftime buzzer sounded, as it doubled up the Rattlers through 20 minutes.

Florida A&M (1-2), in the opening frame, got points from just three players, never scored more than four points in a row and shot just 25.0 percent (9-of-36) from the field. The Hurricanes, meanwhile, notched a 51.6 percent (16-of-32) mark at the other end, with Moore logging 12 first-half points on a 4-of-5 clip from 3-point range.

Miami stretched its advantage as high as 25, 58-33, with 14:12 to play, but the Rattlers would not fold, mounting a 10-0 run to make it a 15-point game with 10:21 on the clock. The Hurricanes, though, immediately answered with a 3-pointer by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, never let Florida A&M get any closer and eventually upped their edge as high as 30.

Miami went on to finish the game with a 27-point margin of victory, its largest since defeating Stetson by 22, 82-60, on Dec. 4, 2020. Moore finished with 20 points on 6-of-10 shooting, including a 5-of-7 mark from beyond the arc. The Chicago native, whose first 15 points came from long range, added co-game-highs in both assists (four) and steals (three).

"I liked that Charlie Moore took control of our team early," Larrañaga said. "He really quarterbacked us. It's his first game at Miami where he scored 20 points ... [and he had] just a great all-around game."

Miami's two other backcourt starters, McGusty and

third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, also scored in double figures. The former posted 14 points on 6-of-11 shooting, while the latter tallied 19 on a superb 8-of-11 clip, including a 3-of-6 ledger from deep.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg co-led all players in both rebounds (eight) and assists (four), the second mark just one shy of his career best.

Graduate student forward DJ Jones led all players with 24 points for Florida A&M. He shot 11-of-19 from the floor and grabbed a co-game-high eight rebounds. Sophomore guard Jalen Speer added 19 points and went 4-of-8 from 3-point range.

Miami held senior guard MJ Randolph—he entered the night averaging 24.0 points, 8.0 rebounds and 8.0 assists per game—to just nine points, four boards and three assists. He shot 3-of-13 from the field, missed his first eight shots and did not score until the final 14 minutes.

The Hurricanes, who led for 38:58, concluded the night shooting exactly 50.0 percent (31-of-62) from the field, while limiting the Rattlers to a 35.3 percent mark (24-of-68). The Hurricanes' plus-16 margin on the glass included pulling down 16 offensive boards and allowing only 18 defensive rebounds.

In addition, the Hurricanes had a 24-7 advantage in bench points, their largest positive margin of the young season.

"The guys off the bench did a good job," Larrañaga said. "Anthony Walker, Jordan Miller, Wooga Poplar and Bensley Joseph all gave us a lot of quality minutes. That's a big key for us."

Miami now heads to the ESPN Wide World of Sports in Kissimmee, Fla., where it will play three games in four days. First up is a matchup with Dayton Thursday at noon, live on ESPN2.

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 upped their unblemished record to 9-0 all-time against Florida A&M, all at home, and 2-0 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Miami's nine victories against the Rattlers mark its highest total against any team it has never lost to.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 673-465 in 38 years as a head coach, including 203-131 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the second time in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, Wong and

sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr.

– The Hurricanes are now 86-9 since the program rebirth (1985-86) against non-Power Five, in-state foes, including 65-4 at home, 18-4 under Larrañaga and 14-3 at the Watsco Center in his tenure.

– Miami has led by 16-plus points in three of its four games this season.

– Sunday marked Miami's 300th game at the Watsco Center, where it now owns a 212-88 (.707) mark all-time.

– The Hurricanes will not play another home game until 12/4, with the 13-day break their longest since a 30-day stretch from 11/16/19 to 12/14/19.

– Miami, which scored over 85 points for the second time this season, set new top marks in field goals made (31), field goal percentage (50.0), field goals attempted (62) and rebounds (49).

– Jones tied for the most made field goals by a Miami opponent since the start of 2018-19, becoming the ninth individual to do so in three-plus campaigns.

– Before Moore, the last Hurricane to make five 3-pointers in a game—none did so last season—was Chris Lykes on 3/11/20 against Clemson in the ACC Tournament in Miami's last outing of the 2019-20 season.

– Moore, who eclipsed 150 made 3-pointers in his career, recorded 20-plus points for the 21st time, including the first this year.

– Moore also scored in double figures for the 59th time, including the second this season.

– Wong, who surpassed 750 points and reached 1,750 minutes played as a Hurricane, registered double-digit points for the 36th time, including the third in 2021-22.

– McGusty tallied double-figure points for the 67th time, including the 39th at Miami and fourth in as many games this year.

– Waardenburg, who reached 150 made field goals as a collegian, posted four assists for the second time in four games this season after hitting that mark just three times in 83 outings through his first three active collegiate campaigns.

– J. Miller, who reached 100 assists in his career, finished with a season-best nine points and co-season-high seven rebounds.

Miami Hurricanes, sparked by Charlie Moore's threes, beat FAMU 86-59 at home Sunday

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 21, 2021

Thanksgiving break began Saturday at the University of Miami, but the men's basketball team was busy at work Sunday night, stuffing the basket from distance in an 86-59 win over Florida A&M.

The Hurricanes led the Rattlers from start to finish at the Watsco Center.

Despite having several good perimeter shooters, UM had struggled from three-point range before Sunday night. They made 2-of-10 three pointers against FAU and 6-of-26 against UCF. But the Hurricanes found their rhythm against FAMU with 10 threes.

Transfer point guard Charlie Moore led the way, making five of his seven three-point attempts — four of them in the first half. He finished the night with a team-high 20 points and four assists.

UM coach Jim Larranaga, in an effort to help Moore to find his outside shot, made him a video of his three-point highlights from last season at DePaul. The motivational tactic worked.

"I was very pleased with Charlie Moore, he really quarterbacked the team, scored, passed, got everybody involved," Larranaga said. "I sent him a video of all his made threes at DePaul and told him, 'Hey, look for your shots and be confident.' He told me he really enjoyed watching it, we put it to music, so I'm sure mentally that helped him."

It did, Moore said.

"It actually did help, seeing myself knocking down shots, doing what I do," Moore said. "Also, my teammates getting me involved and coaches having confidence in me to keep shooting the ball. I'm looking forward to keep doing what I did tonight to help the team win."

Guards Kam McGusty and Isaiah Wong, who returned to the Hurricanes after testing the NBA waters, both played well. Wong went 8-of-11 for 19 points with five rebounds. McGusty went 6-of-11 for 14 points. Sam Waardenburg was strong on the boards with eight rebounds.

Larranaga said before the game that he wanted more production from the bench — and he got it. Transfer Jordan Miller, Anthony Walker and freshman Wooga Poplar combined for 22

points and 16 rebounds.

Miami won the rebounding battle 49-33 over the Rattlers and played stifling defense on FAMU guard MJ Randolph, who scored 27 on the road at Kansas State and was one rebound shy of a triple-double in the previous game against LeMoyne-Owen. Randolph was held scoreless in the first half and finished with nine points.

"We were very worried because of how well Florida A&M played on the road at Kansas State where they were within two points late in the second half and MJ Randolph had dominated with 27 points, so our real emphasis was trying to slow him down and I think our guys did a great job," Larranaga said.

Associate coach Chris Caputo is the team's defensive coordinator, and Larranaga gave him credit for devising the game plan for shutting down Randolph.

Miami took control of the game early, pulling ahead 23-11 after a 7-0 run. Unlike last season, when the UM bench was so thin the team often played with just six or seven healthy players, 10 Hurricanes got into Sunday's game in the first 10 minutes.

Moore made a pair of three-pointers and a pair of free throws during a 10-0 UM run to open a 25-point Miami lead — its biggest of the night — with 14:12 to go in the first half.

FAMU went on a 10-0 run to close to 58-43, but never got closer.

The Hurricanes (3-1) head to Orlando later this week for the ESPN Events Invitational, where they will play Dayton on Thanksgiving Day at noon (ESPN2), Kansas or North Texas on Friday, and on Sunday the Canes play a third game against Alabama, Belmont, Drake or Iona.

The Rattlers (1-2) were led by 6-9 forward DJ Jones, who scored 22 points on 10-of-18 shooting with eight rebounds. Guard Jalen Speer had 19 points, including four three-pointers.

FAMU had several South Florida natives on its roster, including freshman Jordan Jackson, a Columbus High grad who is the son of Heat announcer Jason Jackson and UM senior associate athletic director Shirelle Jackson.

Other FAMU locals included Jahvon Smith (Hallendale Beach), Caleb Muller (Boca Raton), and Wylie Howard III (Lauderhill).

Moore's 3-point barrage powers Miami past Florida A&M 86-59

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Nov. 22, 2021

Sixth-year senior guard Charlie Moore came to Miami determined to make an immediate impact.

After averaging hardly eight points through the Hurricanes' first three games, the DePaul transfer stepped up to score a team-high 20 points on 5-for-7 3-point shooting and added four assists to guide Miami past Florida A&M 86-59 on Sunday at the Watsco Center.

"He really quarterbacked the team," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "He scored the ball, he passed the ball and really got everybody involved."

Larrañaga said he'd hoped Moore's breakout outing was near. The Hurricanes' 11th-year head coach sent Moore footage of his 3-point shooting proficiency at DePaul last season, a 34.6% clip, earlier in the week.

Moore shot 1-of-11 from 3-point territory prior to UM's home game against Florida A&M (1-2), but opened with two deep threes in the first half to push Miami (3-1) to a seven-point lead seven minutes through.

"Just seeing myself knocking down shots, you know, doing what I do," Moore said on the video's importance for his shooting confidence. "Also, [it was] just my teammates that got me involved. The coaches have the confidence in me as well to keep shooting the ball ... I'm just looking forward to continue doing what I did tonight and to help the team win."

Guards Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong teamed up to produce 33 points, each playing 26 minutes or more. The Hurricanes out-rebounded the Rattlers 49-33 and ignited a 10-2 run minutes after halftime, but also faced a 12-3 run with 9:46 left.

"We were very worried coming into this game because of how well Florida A&M had played on the road at Kansas State, where they lead for a majority of the first half and were within two points late in the second half," Larrañaga said. "And, MJ Randolph had dominated the game offensively with 27 points, a number of assists in getting everybody involved."

Florida A&M relied on 18 second-half points from forward D.J. Jones and guard M.J. Randolph's nine to pull within 15 points, after UM led by 25 at the 14-minute mark.

But George Mason transfer guard Jordan Miller's scoring provided the Hurricanes with added momentum, after a two-point total at Florida Atlantic Tuesday. Miller hit a three and executed a backdoor cut for a slam dunk on a 5-0 burst and Miami's 72-49 advantage, uplifting the Hurricanes faithful.

"I think I took for granted, you know, how hard it would be to transfer and get used to a new system," Miller said. "It definitely surprised me, but I just try to maintain positivity and stay in the gym, and knowing as long as we get the win, regardless of how I do, I know I can provide defense. And if that means I don't score and we win, I'm fine with that."

Rattlers guard Jalen Speer nailed one final three for Florida A&M's final score. The team's second-leading scorer registered two 3-point shots in each half, posing an issue for UM's perimeter defense down the stretch.

The Hurricanes' reserves, however, supported Moore, Wong and McGusty, adding 24 points over Florida A&M's seven.

"The whole key is you have to have a complete team, guys who can contribute in some way. Offensively, scoring points, getting assists, making threes, making free throws, and then defensively, guarding their man or helping or defensive rebounding. There's all different ways to help the team, and I think our bench did that."

With its largest margin of victory on the season completed, Miami travels to Kissimmee, Florida, for the ESPN Events Invitational and a first-round matchup against Dayton of the Atlantic 10 Conference on Thursday. Tip-off is scheduled for noon.

"Onto the next. That's the mindset that we have," Miller said. "It was a good win tonight, it gives us a lot of confidence going into this [tournament] but I think we're on a mission this year, and we're not going to stop until we reach our goals. We're going to do whatever it takes, so I think we're ready."

Thanksgiving Tournament Time

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 23, 2021

After a one-year hiatus due to a COVID-19 cancelation, the University of Miami men's basketball team is once again set to compete in an in-season tournament.

For the ninth time in Jim Larrañaga's 11 years at the helm, the Hurricanes will take part in an eight-team event. This time, it is the ESPN Events Invitational at the ESPN Wide World of Sports' HP Field House in Kissimmee, Fla.

The Hurricanes open competition Thursday at noon against Dayton to tip off the tournament, then play again Friday and Sunday, both versus to-be-determined opponents. Miami's focus heading up the turnpike is on just one game, though.

"Well, the preparation, really, is not about playing three teams. It's about playing Dayton on Thursday and being well-prepared," Larrañaga said. "...We won't start preparing for our next opponent until after the game on Thursday, when we know who we'll be playing."

While the game planning for Friday's matchup—it will be against Kansas or North Texas at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. or 1:30 p.m.—may not begin until one day beforehand, the physical planning is already underway.

Miami (3-1) opened the season with four games in 13 days, a far more normal schedule than what an in-season tournament provides. Thus, to get ready for such a vast difference in game frequency, some changes are needed.

"We shortened practice today. We'll shorten it tomorrow," Larrañaga shared. "Hopefully we're in good enough shape and have enough depth that our guys feel comfortable that they're [physically ready] to play three games in four days."

One benefit Miami does have as it faces that type of test is indeed the luxury of good depth, something it has not had over the last few injury-plagued seasons.

After going three-and-a-half seasons without ever playing even 10 scholarship guys in a game, the Hurricanes have done so in each of the past three games. That includes going 11 deep in two of those contests, something that only happened six times in Larrañaga's first 10 years total.

"Well, I think, when you have a very good starting five, it's vitally important to give the starters quality rest," Larrañaga said. "The only way you can do that is if you have a good bench, guys you're confident you can put in and they'll play well. Right now, we feel like we can go 11 or 12 deep."

Nine different Hurricanes recorded at least one basket in Miami's last game, an 86-59 throttling of Florida A&M Sunday night at the Watsco Center.

After each of Miami's first three games were decided by 10 points or fewer, this one was quite the opposite. It led for 15-plus points for the final 23 minutes and built its cushion as high as 30 points.

It was the way the Hurricanes carried over their strong opening 20 minutes into the second frame that encouraged their head coach.

"I like that we put two good halves together," Larrañaga remarked. "We've been defending very well in the first half, not quite as well in the second half, but we were still able to score the ball at a high rate. Scoring 86 points, it was a well-balanced offensive attack."

The performance on the offensive end was, as usual, guided by Miami's three-headed backcourt attack of third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, Kameron McGusty and fellow sixth-year senior guard Charlie Moore.

McGusty, Miami's leading scorer on the season at 19.0 points per game, finished with 14 points on 6-of-11 shooting, while Wong tallied 19 points on an efficient 8-of-11 clip.

Moore, though, stole the show. In his fourth game as a Hurricane, the Chicago native broke out with a 20-point performance that included a 5-of-7 display from 3-point range. He added four assists and three steals, while committing just two turnovers.

"Charlie is our catalyst, both on offense and defense. I think he's doing a very good job with on-ball defense," Larrañaga said. "I think, on offense, the other players like him because he's a very willing passer. But for us to truly be successful, he also has to be a double-digit scorer and stretch the defense out with some good 3-point shooting."

The 5-foot-11, 180-pounder will look to do just that when the Hurricanes take the court on Thanksgiving Day against Dayton, which enters the tournament at 1-3 on the season.

Coming off a solid 14-10 (9-6) campaign, the Flyers were picked fifth in the Atlantic 10 preseason poll. In 2019-20, they went 29-2 (18-0) and ended the year on a 20-game winning streak before the cancelation of the season.

Dayton is under the direction of fifth-year head coach Anthony Grant, whom Larrañaga has faced six times, going all the way back to 2006 when both were in the CAA.

"My experience of coaching against Anthony Grant started when George Mason played Virginia Commonwealth," Larrañaga shared. "My staff was very familiar with the style of offense and defense that he learned from Billy Donovan at Florida. So, that familiarity helps you in preparation since it has repeated itself over the last 15 years."

Larrañaga's George Mason staff at that time included Chris Caputo, now Miami's associate head coach all these years later. Meanwhile, Larrañaga and Donovan are both Providence College alumni, while Grant hails from Miami.

Despite all the connections, familiarities and history between the two staffs, this is a game that will, of course, be played on the hardwood by the particular players on the 2021-22 rosters for these coaches.

This group of Flyers presents some difficult matchups for the Hurricanes to contend with, on both ends of the floor.

"Dayton plays multiple defenses. They're a team that can pressure full-court for 40 minutes or they can pack in their man-to-man," Larrañaga said. "They'll play a little 2-3 zone. They ice ball screens. They're a very versatile defensive team. And then on offense, they really like to pound it inside. They're bigger than us and they have a very deep team, as well."

After playing Dayton, Miami will have initially its usual postgame routine. Then, in the evening, things will be a bit different.

Rather than a normal team dinner, the Hurricanes will head out for a Thanksgiving meal together. While away from their blood relatives, they will celebrate the holiday with their chosen family at The U.

Two days later, on their tournament off-day, they will follow that up by visiting Disney World to enjoy another fun, team-bonding experience.

"I think any time you go on the road as a team, as a program, you want to develop off-the-court chemistry," Larrañaga said. "The holidays are a perfect time because you get to spend more than just a day or two [together], but almost a full week."

Thursday's tournament-opening matchup will be televised live on ESPN2 HERE, with Jon Sciambi and Chris Spatola on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live can be found HERE.

Sciambi is a familiar name to Miami fans, as he previously worked for the then-Florida Marlins, AM 790 WAXY and the aforementioned AM 560 WQAM, the latter alongside Zagacki from 1992-94.

Following its appearance in the ESPN Events Invitational, Miami will head to University Park, Pa., where it meets Penn State Dec. 2 at 9:15 p.m., live on ESPNU in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge Presented by Continental Tire.

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

UM opens ESPN Events Invitational with Thanksgiving Day game vs. Anthony Grant's Dayton

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 23, 2021

Among the many things University of Miami men's basketball coach Jim Larranaga is grateful for this Thanksgiving is the fact that his roster — decimated by injuries last year — has 14 healthy players heading into Thursday's noon game against Dayton.

Miami is one of eight teams in the ESPN Events Invitational this weekend in Kissimmee. The field also includes No. 4-ranked Kansas, No. 10 Alabama, and five mid-majors — Dayton, Iona, Belmont, Drake, and North Texas.

The winner of Thursday's UM-Dayton game (ESPN2) plays the winner of the Kansas-North Texas game in a Friday semifinal at 1:30 p.m. The losing teams play Friday at 11 a.m. The tournament final is on Sunday at the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex.

Dayton is historically a strong team and is led by fifth-year coach Anthony Grant, a Miami High grad who went on to play at Dayton and was an assistant coach at the University of Florida. The Flyers, known for their athleticism, have struggled so far this season. They are 1-3 after a win over UIC and losses to UMass-Lowell, Lipscomb and Austin Peay.

The Canes (3-1) are not taking the game lightly.

"Anthony Grant is an outstanding coach, he and I have battled against each other many times," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "Their team this year is very typical of an Anthony Grant team. They have a lot of size, athletes, skills, they run a lot of different offenses and defenses, so our guys really need to mentally prepare because they're perhaps the best team we've played so far."

The Hurricanes are coming off an 86-59 home win over Florida A&M. Point guard Charlie Moore, who transferred from DePaul, led the Canes with 20 points, including five three-pointers, and had four assists.

In addition to those assists, Moore had several more "attempted assists," a statistic UM coaches keep to give credit to players who makes smart passes to teammates who miss their shot or opt to drive and shoot off the dribble rather than shoot directly from the pass.

"Charlie's doing a great job," Larranaga said. "He's getting the ball to the other guys and guys like Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty are

very good at putting the ball on the ground and taking it to the basket off what I would consider a near-assist. It would have been an assist if they chose to shoot it."

Moore's teammates say he became an instant leader.

"Charlie's been in a few programs and has lots of experience playing in different conferences, so he's seen different styles and he's huge for us," said forward Sam Waardenburg. "He helps distribute the ball a lot and has become a mentor for (freshman) Bensley (Joseph)."

Wong benefits from the addition of Moore to the team.

"He's one of the top three best players on our team and he can really score at will, can pass, and he can play full-court defense," Wong said. "I didn't know that about him. He's a really good defender. He's bringing the energy and really wants to win. He has a lot of knowledge and all the players listen to him."

After the three games this weekend, the tough stretch continues for Miami with a road game at Penn State Dec. 1 for the Big Ten/ACC Challenge (9:15 p.m.) followed by the home ACC opener against Clemson on Dec. 4 at noon.

With five games over 10 days, they key is balancing practice with rest, Larranaga said.

"You don't want to wear your guys out at practice," he said. The team took Monday off, practiced an hour and a half Tuesday and will practice for an hour Wednesday. "It's been terrific having 14 guys available," Larranaga said. "We can simulate the other team, run scout teams. We couldn't do that last season."

Miami men's basketball set for stacked ESPN Events Invitational

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Nov. 24, 2021

While college basketball fans chow down on their turkey day feasts on Thursday, the Miami Hurricanes will be stuffed with seven other NCAA Tournament teams.

After starting their 2021 season as victors of three of their first four games, the Canes are set for the ESPN Events Invitational tournament in Orlando, Florida, their toughest stretch of non-conference games this season.

The Hurricanes (3-1) will face three teams that qualified for March Madness last season and can potentially face two AP top 10-ranked opponents. While UM is the lone team traveling to Orlando that didn't participate in postseason hoops last spring, it does enter on a two-game winning streak, beating in-state foes Florida Atlantic and Florida A&M within the last week. Historically, the Hurricanes have impressed in neutral site tournaments, going 53-29 in multi-site games since the program's rebirth in 1985.

Miami will open up against a foe that has frustrated it for years, playing their first-round matchup against the Dayton Flyers, who are 7-1 against the Canes all-time. It will be the seventh meeting all-time between head coaches Jim Larrañaga and Anthony Grant, with Grant holding a commanding 4-2 record against Larrañaga.

"He and I have battled against each other many times before... [Grant] is an outstanding coach," Larrañaga said. "Their team this year is very typical of an Anthony Grant team. They have a lot of size ... They run a lot of different offenses."

Grant's team is an inexperienced group, with 12 underclass players on its roster. The Flyers have the second-most freshmen and redshirt freshmen in the NCAA, behind Arizona. That being said, Dayton still boasts deadly talent.

Toumani Camara, who chose Dayton over Miami this off-season, has done nothing but contribute in his first cracks with his new team. The former Georgia forward has led the Flyers twice in scoring this season, including a 15-point, 10-rebound double-double in his Dayton debut against Illinois-Chicago. Another dangerous player is true freshman DaRon Holmes II, a consensus four-star power forward who is listed as the highest-ranked recruit in UD history.

With the Hurricanes currently in the bottom half of the Atlantic Coast Conference in rebounding, the Flyers pose a big challenge for Coach L's team. But despite their repertoire, the Flyers (1-3) haven't

gotten off the ground to start this season. Dayton has lost three straight games entering this tournament, all against inferior opponents, including those of the Ohio Valley and American East conferences. UD enters Orlando as the last-place team in the American East, but Miami isn't relieved with the Flyers' slow start, but rather alerted.

"They're a very young, energetic team," Miami forward Sam Waardenburg said. "They're going to be coming out with a lot of hunger, and that's a challenge we have to be ready for."

If the Hurricanes can top the Flyers, they will face the winner of Thursday's second game between the North Texas Mean Green and the No. 4 Kansas Jayhawks. If Miami falls, it will face the respective loser of that game. Regardless, both teams provide dangerous challenges.

Despite Kansas' early exit to Southern California in last year's tournament, head coach Bill Self's Jayhawks are always a strong regular season team. Kansas went 21-9 last season, and even being 12 games above .500, posted its worst record in the Self era in Lawrence, Kansas. This season, the Jayhawks have exploded out of the gates, scoring at least 87 points in each of their first three games.

Senior guard Ochai Agbaji has slowly progressed from role player to superstar. He's been exceptional early on, averaging 26.3 points per game, including a career-high 29 points in KU's opening night victory over Michigan State. Kansas does face injury concerns, with guards Remy Martin and Bobby Pettiford each not practicing within the last four days. Self said both are expected to play in Orlando earlier this week.

The prospect of playing Kansas is appetizing to all Hurricanes, but especially for point guard Charlie Moore, who spent two years in Lawrence, sitting out one year due to transfer eligibility. The Chicago native never got the chance to shine for Kansas but might just get the opportunity to dominate against his old team.

"It would be fun to play an old school I attended," Moore said following Miami's win over Florida A&M. "We have to win a game before we play them, so we're taking it one game at a time."

If results go another way, Miami will be matched up against North Texas, a team smaller than most in this invitational, but a team that deserves more respect. The Mean Green have blossomed under head coach Grant McCasland, who has taken them to a Conference USA regular season title and a C-USA tournament championship victory in each of the last two seasons.

It was a miracle 2020-21 season for UNT, earning

its first-ever NCAA Tournament victory over fourth-seeded Purdue. In addition, it was also North Texas' first win over an AP Top 25 opponent in 49 years.

The Mean Green, similar to Dayton, have had a lot of adjusting to do in a little amount of time. North Texas returns just two of its five starters from last season and also welcome nine new freshmen.

Two players that stand out are forward Thomas Bell and junior college transfer Tylor Perry. Bell, one of the few returners from last season, just scored his 500th UNT point in an opening night win over Oklahoma Christian. He is also a force on the glass, finishing nine games with seven or more rebounds last season. Perry, an NCJAA Second Team All-American last season, has exploded out of the gates at the NCAA level, averaging 17.3 points per game, while shooting 56.3% on 3-pointers, including five made threes in UNT's win over Oklahoma Christian.

After the first results come through Friday, Miami will get a day off on Saturday before facing one of Alabama, Iona, Belmont or Drake to wrap up the tournament. Even with the stacked field, this could be the best chance for the Hurricanes to impress in non-conference play, and one guard believes that this is the perfect time to strike.

"This is a great team right now, with all the new players coming in and getting comfortable," Miami combo guard Isaiah Wong said on Monday. "With healthy bodies, they all have unique talent ... We really have a good team this year compared to last year."

Wong has been stellar in the last three games, but also had some exceptional support. The Hurricanes have four players averaging over 10 points per game thus far, including returning starter Kameron McGusty, Moore and third-year sophomore Anthony Walker.

With a healthy roster that has gone deep into its bench and holds a newfound sense of confidence, the ESPN Events Invitational provides an excellent test of who the Hurricanes are in 2021. It seems that there's an overwhelming feeling that Larrañaga, Wong, and the rest of Miami are eager to prove a point.

UM tips off against Dayton on Thursday at 12:30 p.m. and will play again on Friday, but start times are still to be determined depending on results.

MBB Falls to Dayton in ESPN Events Invitational Opener

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 25, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team dropped a 76-60 decision to Dayton Thursday afternoon in the first round of the ESPN Events Invitational.

The Flyers' excellent shooting, particularly beyond the arc, proved too much for Miami (3-2) to handle at the HP Field House at the ESPN Wide World of Sports. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong paced the Hurricanes with 10 points in the Thanksgiving Day setback.

"Well, Dayton's pressure defense to start the game really disrupted us. They got into our heads," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We became very disjointed and never were able to organize our offense or defense to the point where there was a chance for us to make a comeback and win the game."

Miami held an early 13-11 lead, but the Hurricanes then stalled offensively. They missed nine straight shots over five-plus minutes, as Dayton (2-3) went on a 9-0 run to go in front, 20-13, with 7:27 on the clock.

The Flyers continued their offensive surge, posting a stretch in which they went 8-of-10 from the floor, to go up by 13, 36-23, with 1:06 left before the break. The Hurricanes scored the final basket of the half and went into the intermission down by 11, 36-35.

Dayton shot 53.8 percent (14-of-26) in the opening 20 minutes, while Miami posted a 30.0 percent clip (9-of-30). The Flyers also recorded a 44.4 percent mark (4-of-9) from deep, while the Hurricanes shot 9.1 percent (1-of-11) beyond the arc in the opening frame.

Coming out of the locker room, Miami scored six straight points to pull within five, but Dayton countered with 10 in a row of its own. The burst included back-to-back 3-pointers by redshirt junior guard Elijah Weaver, helping the Flyers take a then-game-high 15-point edge, 46-31, with 15:24 remaining.

The Hurricanes never got any closer than 11 the rest of the way, as Dayton earned the victory in front of a bevy of its fans clad in red and white.

"We did do a good job in the second half of cutting the lead to six, but they immediately made an adjustment and made a couple of threes," Larrañaga said. "That made all the difference."

Wong finished the day as the Hurricanes' lone double-digit scorer, marking the first time Miami had just one such player since March 4, 2020. Three other Hurricanes notched eight points, including freshman guards Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar.

Dayton freshman forward DaRon Holmes II led all scorers with 15 points on 5-of-6 shooting. Freshman guard Malachi Smith logged 14 points and a game-high seven assists, while Weaver also scored 14 points, shooting 4-of-5 from deep. Redshirt freshman forward Mustafa Amzil added 11 points in the victory.

The Flyers shot 58.7 percent (27-of-46) from the floor overall, while Miami had a 38.3 percent ledger (23-of-60). The 3-point discrepancy was even wider, with Dayton registering a dazzling 57.9 percent showing (11-of-19), including going 7-of-10 in the second half. Miami, meanwhile, shot just 20.0 percent (4-of-20) from deep.

Dayton's 3-point percentage was the best by a Miami opponent since Jan. 27, 2019, while their field goal clip was the highest the Hurricanes have allowed since Jan. 4, 2020.

"Once you establish a really good inside game, then the threes start flowing effortlessly. That's what happened," Larrañaga said. "We weren't able to stop them inside. That gave them a tremendous amount of confidence; they could start shooting threes and felt no pressure at all."

The Hurricanes return to the court Friday at 11 a.m., when they take on the loser of the Kansas/North Texas game in their second of three contests at the HP Field House, live on ESPN2 or ESPNU.

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 moved to 1-8 all-time against Dayton, including 0-1 at neutral sites and 0-1 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 673-466 in 38 years as a head coach, including 203-132 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the third time in a row, Miami used a

starting lineup of Wong, sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– The Hurricanes fell to 76-56 in multi-game events, including 53-30 since the program rebirth (1985-86), 15-10 under Larrañaga and 1-3 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports.

– The last time Miami lost its opening matchup of a multi-game event was 11/28/13, when it fell to George Washington, 71-63, in overtime in the Wooden Legacy in Anaheim, Calif.

– This marked just the 14th time in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure Miami lost to a team with a sub-.500 record, including only the second time it has done so in non-conference play.

– Dayton's 58.7 clip from the field was the best by a Miami opponent since second-ranked Duke shot 59.7 percent (40-of-67) on 1/4/20.

– The Flyers' 57.9 percent mark from 3-point range was the top total by a Hurricane opponent since RV/No. 23 Florida State posted a 60.0 percent ledger (12-of-20) on 1/27/19.

– Dayton shot 65.0 percent (13-of-20) in the second half, the first time a Miami foe eclipsed 60 since Georgia Tech had a 63.3 percent mark (19-of-30) in the second session on 2/20/21.

– The last time Miami had just one double-digit scorer was 3/4/20 against No. 20 Virginia, when Chris Lykes tallied 16 points.

– Miami over doubled its number of tied scores (three to seven) and quadrupled its number of lead changes (one to four) this season.

– Thursday marked the first time in 2021-22 the Hurricanes played a game in which one team did not lead for 38-plus minutes.

– McGusty eclipsed 3,000 minutes played as a collegian.

– Wong registered double-figure points for the 37th time, including the fourth this season.

– Joseph, who had a career-high point total, made his first three shots of the day, including hitting consecutive 3-pointers in under 70 seconds.

Hurricanes 'shook' in 76-60 loss to Dayton to open tournament

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 25, 2021

The Dayton Flyers looked better than their 1-3 record indicated and gave the Miami Hurricanes troubles throughout the game.

Isaiah Wong led the Hurricanes with 10 points in a 76-60 loss in the first round of the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee, Fla. on Thursday.

"I thought Dayton did a really terrific job with their pressure defense early and some of the early careless turnovers really shook us mentally and we never really recovered from that," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Miami (3-2) will face North Texas (2-2) on Friday (11:00 a.m., ESPN) in the consolation bracket after the Mean Green dropped their first game 71-59 to No. 4 Kansas.

Miami was held to 38.3-percent (23 of 60) shooting from the floor and missed 16 of 20 3-point attempts.

"Dayton's pressure defense to start the game really disrupted us, they got into our heads," Larranaga said.

Dayton (2-3) was led by Daron Holmes II's 15 points and shot a season-high 58.7 percent (27 of 46). The Flyers entered the game with consecutive losses to UMass Lowell, Lipscomb and Austin Peay.

Jordan Miller's back-door layup on a pass from Anthony Walker gave the Hurricanes a 13-11 lead.

The Flyers responded with a 16-4 run and never looked back.

Kameron McGusty hit a jumper to cut Miami's deficit to 36-25 into the break.

Rodney Miller, McGusty and Wong each made baskets out of halftime to pull the Hurricanes within 36-31.

Dayton called timeout and regrouped, reeling off a 10-0 run sparked by a pair of 3s by Florida native Elijah Weaver.

The 15-point deficit at 46-31 was the largest the Hurricanes faced at that point with the Flyers' faithful in full support.

"Dayton's basketball fans are infamous," Larranaga said. "Traditionally Dayton's been

a great basketball program for as long as I've lived and I'm old."

Miami was unable to cut it under 10 and then another 3 by Weaver pushed the lead to 18 with eight minutes left as the Flyers cruised the rest of the way.

"They were able (to score inside successfully), which gave them tremendous confidence and were able to build-up a double-digit lead at the half," Larranaga said. "We made some adjustments in the second half and tried to trap their ball screens and we were able to cut the lead to six, but then they made adjustments, started picking and popping and hitting the open man and started making 3s. Their balance offensively of inside and outside was too much for us to overcome."

Weaver hit four of the Flyers' 11 3-pointers (on 19 attempts).

"I think the 3-point shooting was a direct result of the 2-point shooting early," Larranaga said.

Both teams scored 30 points in the paint, but Miami's poor shooting from the perimeter, which has plagued them all season, hitting 3s at a 27-percent clip, ranking 310th.

A number of Hurricanes had tough shooting performances including Walker (2-10), McGusty (2-8), Charlie Moore (1-7) and Wooga Poplar (2-7).

UP NEXT

Miami plays North Texas on Friday (11:00 a.m., ESPN2) in the second game of the ESPN Events Invitational.

Isaiah Wong helps lead Hurricanes to comeback win; Will face No. 10 Alabama for 5th

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 26, 2021

After a disappointing showing against Dayton to begin the ESPN Events Invitational, the Miami Hurricanes found themselves facing another potential disappointment.

However, Isaiah Wong scored 21 points and helped the Miami Hurricanes erase a 14-point deficit in a 69-63 win over North Texas in the consolation bracket in Kissimmee, Fla. on Friday.

"I think the whole key for the players is to enjoy the victory; enjoy it with their friends, relax get a bite to eat, get a good night's sleep and then we'll start preparing for whomever our opponent is tomorrow," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored 18 points and grabbed 12 rebounds and Charlie Moore added 16 points, who will play in the fifth-place game on Sunday (6:30 p.m., ESPNU) against No. 10 Alabama, an 80-71 winner over Drake later on Friday.

Miami (4-2) trailed North Texas (2-3) 40-28 at halftime and by as many as 14 points at one point.

"I thought our physical effort in the first half just wasn't good enough at the defensive end of the floor to stop them," Larranaga said. "They had 40 points, they shot the ball great from three, they shot it great from two, but at halftime, we just talked about how important pure, physical effort is. We did a fantastic job in the second half holding them to 23 points after giving them 40 in the first half. At the same time, our guards really started to share the ball and get some better looks."

The Hurricanes went on a 13-3 run to begin the second half with Wong scoring five.

"Coach (Bill) Courtney had mentioned a few things that he had observed so, we ran a couple of plays to get Isaiah a basket, to get Kam McGusty a basket," Larranaga said. "Every time one of them worked, our confidence grew."

Moore's 3 and Jordan Miller's layup gave Miami a 52-48 lead.

The game was knotted at 59 with three minutes left.

McGusty made a layup and drew a foul, but

missed a free throw for a 61-59 lead with 2:35 left.

Wong hit a shot for a 63-59 advantage with 1:18 left.

McGusty hit four free throws and Moore hit two in the closing minute to help seal the win.

"We didn't change anything strategically, we came into the second half with a great focus and intensity and were able to sustain it," Larranaga said.

UP NEXT

Miami plays either No. 10 Alabama or Drake on Sunday (6:30 p.m., ESPNU) in the fifth-place game of the ESPN Events Invitational.

MBB Surges Past North Texas, 69-63

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 26, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team rallied back from a 12-point halftime deficit to defeat North Texas, 69-63, Friday in its second outing of the ESPN Events Invitational.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored a game- and season-high 21 points, while sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty logged his second double-double of 2021-22. The duo's strong play helped Miami (4-2) earn the win at the HP Field House at the ESPN Wide World of Sports despite the Mean Green's early onslaught from long range.

"I thought our physical effort in the first half just wasn't good enough at the defensive end of the floor to stop them. They had 40 points, they shot the ball great from three, they shot it great from two," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But at halftime, we just talked about how important pure, physical effort is. We did a fantastic job in the second half holding them to 23 points after giving them 40 in the first half. At the same time, our guards really started to share the ball and get some better looks."

Both teams put on impressive first-half offensive displays, but the Mean Green's 3-point shooting set them apart. North Texas (2-3) started 4-of-5 from deep through five minutes, then sat at 7-of-10 after 11 minutes and 8-of-12 through 13 minutes.

After those same 13 minutes, the Hurricanes were 8-of-14 from the floor, 1-of-1 on 3-pointers and 4-of-4 at the line, yet still trailed by 10 points, 31-21. The Mean Green upped their lead as high as 14 late in the opening stanza and eventually took a 12-point cushion, 40-28, into the break.

Miami, which made its first four shots, went 10-of-20 from the field and 7-of-8 at the line in the first half, despite its 12-point deficit. McGusty had a game-high 10 points at the break, connecting on all six of his free throws. Sophomore guard Rubin Jones led North Texas with nine points, shooting 3-of-3 from deep to help his team to a 9-of-18 clip at the intermission.

The Hurricanes came out of the locker room scorching hot to open the second half, scoring 24 of the first 32 points to take a four-point lead, 52-48, with 11:39 to go. The burst included a stretch during which Miami made 10 of 11 field goals, including six in a row, and had both 7-0 and 9-0 runs.

"Coach [Bill] Courtney, who is our offensive coordinator, had mentioned a few things that he had observed," Larrañaga said of Miami's second-half start. "So, we ran a couple of plays to get Isaiah a basket, to get Kam McGusty a basket. Every time one of them worked, our confidence grew."

After some back-and-forth basketball, the score sat level at 59 with under three minutes left, but Miami broke the deadlock on a McGusty layup, through a foul, with 2:35 remaining. Wong doubled the lead on a baseline pull-up jump-shot with 1:18 to go and McGusty upped it to six, 65-59, on a pair of free throws with 21 ticks left.

A layup by Jones—his only basket of the second half—six seconds

later trimmed the deficit to four, but McGusty again sank a pair of free throws to effectively ice the game. Both teams scored two points in the last 10 seconds, as Miami earned the six-point win.

Wong's 21-point performance came on 9-of-17 shooting, while McGusty finished with 18 points and 12 rebounds, the latter mark leading all players and setting a new career high. The Katy, Texas, native also notched a game-high three steals, drew nine fouls and went 10-of-11 from the stripe.

"I thought yesterday Kam struggled a good bit and he didn't play much in the second half because of it, whereas today I didn't even want to take him out," Larrañaga said. "He had to ask to be taken out two different times because he was going so hard. That's what you want from your leaders. You want their effort to be so good that they need a rest and then go back in and sustain it again."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore totaled 16 points on 6-of-9 shooting, adding a team-high three assists for the Hurricanes.

Redshirt senior forward Thomas Bell paced the Mean Green, who reached the NCAA Tournament Round of 32 last year, with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting. Junior guard Tylor Perry tallied 14 points and Jones finished with 11, while junior guard Mardrez McBride dished out seven assists.

After its outstanding start beyond the arc, North Texas shot 5-of-16 (31.3 percent) there over the final 27 minutes. The Mean Green also missed more free throws than Miami despite half as many attempts, as the former went 4-of-8 (50.0 percent) and the latter 13-of-16 (81.3 percent).

North Texas posted a 22-0 margin in bench points, but the Hurricanes logged a 34-18 advantage in paint points, a 12-5 edge in points off turnovers and a 13-4 lead in fast-break points. They also shot a season-high 54.2 percent (26-of-48) from the floor in the victory.

Miami wraps up play in the ESPN Events Invitational Sunday at 6:30 p.m. against the winner of the matchup between No. 10/9 Alabama and Drake.

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 North Texas.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 674-466 in 38 years as a head coach, including 204-132 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 674 victories, Larrañaga is now tied with Lon Kruger for No. 35 on the all-time Division I wins list.

– For the third time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Wong, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– The Hurricanes improved to 77-56 in multi-game events, including 54-30 since the program rebirth (1985-86), 16-10 under Larrañaga and 2-3 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports.

– Playing in a morning game for just the sixth time in Larrañaga's 11 seasons, Miami moved to 5-1 in such contests.

– Through the Hurricanes' first 53 minutes of action in the ESPN Events Invitational, their opponents shot 19-of-31 (61.3 percent) from 3-point range, as Dayton went 11-of-19 Thursday.

– Miami took its first second-half lead, 50-48, on a 3-pointer by Moore with 12:16 left and then doubled the advantage on a layup by J. Miller 37 seconds later.

– The last time Miami won a game after trailing by 10-plus points at halftime was 12/8/20, when it came back from an 18-point deficit at the break to beat Purdue.

– The Hurricanes' last win when trailing by double digits at any point was also the 12/8/20 game versus Purdue, in which its largest deficit was 20.

– North Texas' 13 made 3-pointers marked the highest total by a Miami foe since Wake Forest made 13 on 1/30/21.

– Miami's 81.3 percent clip from the line was its second-best of the season, trailing only the 83.3 percent (10-of-12) ledger it recorded one day prior against Dayton to begin the ESPN Events Invitational.

– In half of Miami's six games this year, McGusty has registered at least 10 made free throws and 11 free-throw attempts.

– McGusty, who surpassed both 1,300 points and 350 rebounds as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 68th time, including the 40th at Miami and fifth this season.

– In addition to being his second in just six games this season, McGusty's double-double was the fourth of his career, all of which have come as a Hurricane.

– Waardenburg eclipsed 450 points at Miami.

– Moore, who moved past both 1,300 points and 3,250 minutes played in his career, logged his 60th double-digit point total, including his third this year.

– Wong scored 20-plus points for the 16th time, including the second in 2021-22, as well as scored in double figures for the 38th time, including the fifth this year.

– J. Miller made his 75th appearance as a collegian.

Miami basketball wakes up beating North Texas 69-63 at ESPN Invitational

By Alan Rubenstein
Canes Warning
Nov. 26, 2021

The Miami basketball team began the second half with a 24-8 run and held on late for a 69-63 victory over North Texas at the ESPN Invitational in Kissimmee, Florida. Miami trailed 40-28 at halftime before the needed run to begin the second half to seize the lead. The Hurricanes tightened up their defense in the second half.

North Texas shot 53.6 percent from the floor in the first half and made 9-18 three-point attempts to take the 12 point halftime lead. Miami held the Mean Green to 8-24 from the floor in the second half. North Texas did make 4-9 three-point attempts after halftime. Miami was consistently offensively throughout the game.

The Hurricanes shot 54.2 percent, made four of their 12 three-point attempts and were 13-16 from the free-throw line. Miami outscored North Texas 40-23 in the second half. Isaiah Wong led Miami with 23, Kameron McGusty had 18 and Charlie Moore 16. McGusty led Miami with 12 rebounds and was 10-11 on free throws.

Miami played with far more urgency in the second half. McGusty put the Hurricanes ahead to stay with a layup with 2:35 remaining. Following an uninspiring loss to Dayton on Thursday, the Hurricanes victory over North Texas was needed. Three North Texas players finished in double figures led by Thomas Bell with 18.

Sam Waardenburg scored eight and Rodney Miller six for Miami. The Hurricanes starters played the majority of the minutes. Head coach Jim Larranaga utilized only 27 minutes off his bench in the victory. The Hurricanes received no points and only one assist and rebound off their bench. Miami has a day off before playing Sunday.

The Miami basketball team will play Alabama or Drake at 6:30 pm on Sunday night for fifth place. Tenth-ranked Alabama was upset 72-68 by Rick Pitino-led Iona on Thursday. Drake lost 74-69 to Belmont. After concluding play in Kissimmee, Miami will play at Penn State on Wednesday night in the ACC-Big 10 Challenge.

Miami surges in second half for 69-63 win over North Texas

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Nov. 26, 2021

Stuck in a 12-point halftime deficit, Miami didn't roll over Friday.

The Hurricanes outscored North Texas 41-23 after halftime behind 14 second-half points from third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong. Sixth-year senior guards Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore combined for 34 points in Miami's 69-63 win in the ESPN Events Invitational in Orlando, Florida.

"I thought our physical effort in the first half just wasn't good enough at the defensive end of the floor to stop them. They had 40 points, they shot the ball great from three, they shot it great from two," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But at halftime, we just talked about how important pure, physical effort is. We did a fantastic job in the second half holding them to 23 points after giving them 40 in the first half. At the same time, our guards really started to share the ball and get some better looks."

Wong, the Hurricanes' only double-digit scorer in the team's 16-point loss to Dayton Thursday, finished with a game-high 21 points. The Atlantic Coast Conference's fifth-leading scorer scored five points in the first 3 ½ minutes of the second frame, while McGusty and Moore added two quick layups to help fuel a 13-3 Miami run.

"Coach [Bill] Courtney, who is our offensive coordinator, had mentioned a few things that he had observed," Larrañaga said. "So, we ran a couple of plays to get Isaiah a basket, to get Kam McGusty a basket. Every time one of them worked, our confidence grew."

North Texas (2-3) only managed to tally eight points in the second half's first 9 ½ minutes, while the Hurricanes (4-2) gained a four-point advantage. Guard Tylor Perry and forward Thomas Bell then drilled back-to-back 3-point field goals to alleviate the Mean Green scoring drought, putting North Texas back ahead by two.

Wong took over the back-and-forth battle, thereafter, scoring nine of Miami's next 11 points, as the Hurricanes scored 13 transition points in the half. McGusty and Moore registered UM's final six at the foul line, while holding North Texas to six in the final seven minutes and without a lead.

North Texas nailed nine 3-pointers in the first

half and out-rebounded Miami 14-7. George Mason transfer guard Jordan Miller contributed six second-half points and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg scored four. Miami received no points from its reserves, however.

Without forcing 12 North Texas turnovers, the Hurricanes may have not garnered their first win of the multi-day event. McGusty, the team's leading scorer at 16.8 points per game, grabbed a season-most 12 rebounds, and made 10 of 13 UM foul shots.

"I thought yesterday Kam struggled a good bit and he didn't play much in the second half because of it, whereas today I didn't even want to take him out," Larrañaga said. "He had to ask to be taken out two different times because he was going so hard. That's what you want from your leaders. You want their effort to be so good that they need a rest and then go back in and sustain it again."

Bell provided the Mean Green with 18 points, yet North Texas relinquished 34 points in the paint.

Up next, the Hurricanes play the winner of the matchup between No. 10 Alabama and Drake. Tip-off is scheduled for Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

MBB Defeated by No. 10/9 Alabama

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 28, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team led No. 10/9 Alabama for nearly 17 first-half minutes, but could not slow down the reigning SEC champions in the second session of a 96-64 setback to conclude the ESPN Events Invitational.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty logged a 21-point, 10-rebound double-double for Miami (4-3) at the HP Field House at the ESPN Wide World of Sports.

"I thought the starters played well for 15 minutes, but as soon as we went to our bench, we lost our lead and our composure," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "The second half, we just couldn't do anything right. Once Alabama started rolling, we couldn't stop them."

Miami used a 13-2 run, including scoring eight straight points, midway through the first half to take a nine-point lead, 27-18, with 6:22 on the clock. The burst included six points by McGusty, two of them after a technical foul on Alabama (6-1) head coach Nate Oats.

The Crimson Tide, however, closed the half on a 15-3 run to take a three-point edge, 33-30, into the locker room. Eight of those points came consecutively in the final 2:13, with junior guard Jahvon Quinerly's buzzer-beating 3-pointer breaking a would-be tie at the intermission.

The Hurricanes led for 16:47 of the opening 20 minutes, buoyed by McGusty's 10 points, eight rebounds and two steals.

Alabama started the second half on a 7-0 run in the first 1:25, making it a 15-0 surge in 3:38, dating back before the intermission. That upped the Crimson Tide's lead to 10 points, 40-30.

The Hurricanes quickly pulled back within six, but Alabama controlled play for the rest of the game, en route to victory in the tournament's fifth-place matchup.

"They were just faster than us," Larrañaga said of the Crimson Tide's second-half showing. "They beat us down the floor, they drove the ball to the basket, they got layups and got open threes. We couldn't stop the dribble penetration and we couldn't contest the threes well enough to make them miss."

McGusty's 21 points came on 8-of-13 shooting from the field, including a 2-of-4 mark from deep, to go along with a 3-of-4 mark at the line. His 10 rebounds led all players and gave him a double-double for the second consecutive outing.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong registered 14 points, including Miami's first six of the second half. He shot 4-of-7 from the floor and 6-of-6 at the line. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore added 12 points on

5-of-11 shooting.

Alabama senior guard Keon Ellis paced all players with 22 points, finishing 8-of-11 from the floor, 5-of-6 from deep and 1-of-1 at the line. Junior guard Jaden Shackelford scored 15 points, while redshirt sophomore forward Juwan Gary posted 13.

Freshman guard JD Davison also scored 13 points, adding a game-high 10 assists—the most by any player through Miami's seven outings this season—and six rebounds.

Although the Hurricanes shot a strong 46.0 percent (23-of-50) from the field, they allowed the Crimson Tide to shoot 53.6 percent (37-of-69) overall and 53.3 percent (16-of-30) from 3-point range. In addition, Alabama notched a 42-23 edge on the glass and a 15-4 advantage in second-chance points.

"We have to play a whole lot better because we've got a very tough schedule coming up," Larrañaga said. "We already have played a tough schedule. That was a very, very disappointing performance."

Up next for Miami is a visit to the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park, Pa., where it faces Penn State Wednesday at 9:15 p.m., live on ESPNU in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge Presented by Continental Tire.

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 moved to 1-3 all-time against Alabama, including 0-1 at neutral sites and 1-1 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 674-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 204-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the fourth time this season and second in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Wong, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– The Hurricanes fell to 77-57 in multi-game events, including 54-31 since the program rebirth (1985-86), 16-11 under Larrañaga and 2-4 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports.

– Miami last played a team ranked top-10 in both polls on 2/8/20, when it dropped a 99-81 decision at eighth-ranked Florida State.

– The Hurricanes allowed 90-plus points under Larrañaga for just the 12th time, falling to 2-10 in such games.

– Sunday marked just the fourth time Miami has lost by

30-plus in Larrañaga's tenure, including just the first in non-conference action.

– Miami's three opponents in the ESPN Events Invitational combined to shoot 40-of-77 (51.9 percent) from 3-point range, with all three making 11-plus shots and all three posting a clip over 43.0 percent.

– Two of the Hurricanes' three opponents in the tournament shot over 63.0 percent in the second half, as Alabama posted a 63.9 percent clip (23-of-36) and Dayton shot 65.0 percent (13-of-20) after the break Thursday.

– The Crimson Tide made 11 consecutive shots at one point during the second half, five of which came from 3-point range.

– The last time the Hurricanes allowed 16-plus 3-pointers in a game was 1/21/21, when Boston College made 18 on its home court.

– Alabama scored 63 points in the second half, the second-most Miami has allowed in a frame since it joined the ACC in 2004-05, trailing only the 64 it conceded at third-ranked North Carolina in the second half on 1/31/07.

– Davison is the first Miami opponent to post double-digit assists since Notre Dame's Prentiss Hubb had 10 on 2/23/20.

– McGusty registered 20-plus points for the 16th time, including the 10th at Miami and third this year.

– In addition, McGusty scored in double figures for the 69th time, including the 41st as a Hurricane and sixth this season.

– McGusty also posted his fifth double-digit rebounding total and fifth double-double, all of which have come at Miami, including three this season.

– Wong, who surpassed 800 points as a Hurricane, tallied double-digit points for the 39th time, including the sixth this year.

– Moore logged double-digit points for the 61st time, including the fourth in 2021-22.

– Third-year sophomore guard Filippos Gkogkos made his season debut, checking in for the final 2:11.

– Freshman forward Thomas Oosterbroek made his collegiate debut, playing the last 1:38.

Hurricanes falter, allow 63 points in second half to No. 10 Alabama

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Nov. 28, 2021

As the first half ended, the Hurricanes displayed their ability to keep pace with a top-10 team.

But after trailing for almost 17 minutes, No. 10 Alabama made every necessary adjustment.

The Crimson Tide charged ahead on a 22-2 run and held Miami scoreless for over five minutes in the second to cruise to a 96-64 win at the ESPN Events Invitational in Orlando, Florida.

"They were just faster than us," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "They beat us down the floor, they drove the ball to the basket, they got layups and got open threes. We couldn't stop the dribble penetration and we couldn't contest the threes well enough to make them miss."

Even worse for UM, Alabama's lead never fell below 23 points.

DePaul transfer guard Charlie Moore added seven points in the first half behind McGusty's 10. Miami took a nine-point lead before the six-minute mark and Alabama's 15-3 run to close the first 20 minutes.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 11 consecutive Hurricanes points after halftime and totaled 21, though the team-high was nowhere near enough to keep Miami (4-3) within reach. The former Oklahoma transfer registered 20 points on the third occasion this season and 10th at UM.

"I thought the starters played well for 15 minutes, but as soon as we went to our bench, we lost our lead and our composure," Larrañaga said. "The second half, we just couldn't do anything right. Once Alabama started rolling, we couldn't stop them."

Alabama (6-1) shot 3-of-13 from 3-point territory before halftime, but then hit 13 3-point shots to open the floodgates. Miami was out-rebounded 42-23.

Alabama guard Keon Ellis scored 17 points in the second to spark the Crimson Tide's 63-point half, as the Hurricanes allowed the most points to a Power Five opponent since Jan. 18, 2017, a 17-point loss to Wake Forest. 15 of Ellis' 22 total points came from beyond the 3-point arc.

Crimson Tide guard Jaden Shackelford, Alabama's leading scorer, tallied 15 points on five 3-point makes. Forward Juwan Gary and guard JD Davison each added 13 as the Crimson Tide's other two double-digit scorers.

Alabama scored 25 points off 13 Miami turnovers, also capitalizing on 22 assists to the Hurricanes' six.

With its worse defeat of the season, Miami travels to State College, Pennsylvania, to face Penn State in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge Tuesday. Tip-off is scheduled for 9:15 p.m.

"We have to play a whole lot better because we've got a very tough schedule coming up," Larrañaga said. "We already have played a tough schedule. That was a very, very disappointing performance."

Hurricanes 'lose composure' in 96-64 loss to No. 10 Alabama

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Nov. 28, 2021

Poor defense and perimeter shooting continue to be issues for the Miami Hurricanes.

Both areas were glaring on Sunday.

The Hurricanes led early before waking up No. 10 Alabama in a 96-64 loss in the fifth-place game at the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee, Fla. on Sunday.

"That was a very, very disappointing performance," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored 21 points and grabbed 10 rebounds as one of the lone bright spots for the Hurricanes, who have lost 24 of their last 25 games against ranked opponents dating back to 2018.

Miami (4-3) led 27-18 after a jumper by McGusty before Alabama (6-1) went on a 15-3 run to close the half and extended a dominant run after the break.

Since Miami's nine-point advantage, the Crimson Tide outscored the Hurricanes 47-11 over a 15-minute span.

"I thought the starters played well for 15 minutes, but as soon as we went to our bench, we lost our lead and our composure," Larranaga said. "The second half, we just couldn't do anything right. Once Alabama started rolling, we couldn't stop them."

Alabama's surge came by hitting 16 of 30 from behind the arc, which Miami has struggled at defending as they entered the game ranked 321st nationally (out of 358 teams).

"They were just faster than us," Larranaga said. "They beat us down the floor, they drove the ball to the basket, they got layups and got open threes. We couldn't stop the dribble penetration and we couldn't contest the threes well enough to make them miss."

Conversely, the Hurricanes made just 4 of their 17 long-range attempts—2 of 4 by McGusty.

Isaiah Wong added 14 points and Charlie Moore chipped in 12. Only one other Hurricane, Jordan Miller with six, score more than three.

The Hurricanes went 1-2 at the tournament with a loss to Dayton and a win over North Texas.

Miami, which also lost to UCF earlier this season, will look to quickly re-group for a game at Penn State (4-2) on Wednesday (9:15 p.m., ESPNU) in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge.

Not only were the Hurricanes overwhelmed behind the arc, but the Crimson Tide were able to attack the paint at will in their pivotal run and finished with more points in the paint 38-28.

The Crimson Tide also dominated inside with a wide disparity on the boards, grabbing 42 rebounds to Miami's 23.

UP NEXT

Miami plays at Penn State on Wednesday (9:15 p.m., ESPNU).

What to expect as UM men's basketball team faces Penn State in ACC/Big Ten Challenge

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Nov. 30, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team, which went 1-2 against three tough opponents at the ESPN Events Invitational over Thanksgiving weekend, is back on the road against Penn State on Wednesday as part of the ACC/Big Ten Challenge (9:15 p.m., ESPNU).

Miami coaches learned a lot about their team at the tournament in Kissimmee during the weekend. The Hurricanes (4-3) were held to just one double-digit scorer in a loss to tournament champion Dayton, which shot 57.9 percent from three-point range. They beat North Texas by six points and lost by 32 to top-10 Alabama.

Kam McGusty had an outstanding weekend with back-to-back double-doubles — 18 points, 12 rebounds against North Texas and 21 points, 10 rebounds against Alabama. Through seven games, McGusty is averaging 17.6 points and 7.1 rebounds. His three double-doubles match his prior career total.

Isaiah Wong scored 42 points during the weekend.

"If we could bottle the defensive second half against North Texas and the first half against Alabama, we'd all be very happy with our defense," UM associate head coach Chris Caputo said. "We're still trying to find ourselves offensively, as a group, in terms of trying to continue to generate good shots. We're doing a good job taking care of the ball and getting to the free-throw line."

Three-point shooting has not matched expectations.

"We believe we're a very good three-point shooting team from statistically in practice and from guys' careers who just haven't been able to either make or generate just enough good threes," Caputo said. "That's something we've got to continue to work on as the season goes on."

Penn State is 4-2 under first-year head coach Micah Shrewsberry, a former Boston Celtics assistant who worked alongside Jay Larrañaga, the son of Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga. The Nittany Lions' associate head coach is Adam Fisher, who worked at UM for eight years.

Junior forward Seth Lundy and senior guard

Sam Sessoms average 15.3 points per game for Penn State. Fifth-year senior forward John Harrar chips in 9.7 points and 10.7 rebounds per game, while senior guard Jalen Pickett ranks No. 18 among active Division I players with 491 career assists.

"They have a very strong starting five, guys that play a lot of minutes and have a lot of experience. They did very well in the tournament, losing to a good LSU team in overtime and then handling Oregon State pretty well, by 15," Caputo said. "Tough, physical defensive team [and a] 3-point shooting team on offense. I think we've got to, again, be prepared to try to replicate those two halves defensively from Orlando for a game, if you want to win on the road.

"We enjoy those moments where you're on a big stage, playing on national television and there are some bragging rights involved."

One Challenge Behind, Another Ahead

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Nov. 30, 2021

When the University of Miami men's basketball team departed for the ESPN Wide World of Sports last week, it knew three difficult games were on the horizon. It was just a question of against whom they would be.

The Hurricanes knew they would face Dayton, a team that has played in four of the last seven NCAA Tournaments, Thursday in its opening game at the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee, Fla., but that was all.

Well, they also knew they would be in for tough tests against whatever other opponents came their way in the bracket.

"We played three really good programs," Miami associate head coach Chris Caputo said. "[It was] very challenging, which we knew [it would be] because, really, if you look at the tournament, it was potentially the strongest field in all of the MTE's this season. And so, you knew you were going to get three really, really good games."

Miami indeed got just that, finishing 1-2 with losses to the tournament champion, Dayton, and a top-10 team, Alabama. In between, the Hurricanes knocked off North Texas, which won Conference USA and reached the NCAA Tournament Round of 32 last season.

The Hurricanes' first affair was a 76-60 setback against Dayton, which toppled fourth-ranked Kansas the next day and then edged Belmont to win the crown.

The Flyers held Miami to (4-3) just one double-digit scorer, as third-year sophomore Isaiah Wong paced the team with 10 points. Dayton also shot a blistering 57.9 percent from 3-point range, the top mark by a Miami foe since Jan. 27, 2019.

"While Dayton certainly had not performed up to their capabilities at home, losing those three games, we knew going into the game, it was going to be a very big challenge," Caputo shared. "Obviously, it proved to be, [as they went] ahead and won the tournament. You're talking about a program that has incredible history and, obviously, an enormous fan base that traveled with them to the tournament and it really felt like a home game for them."

In the Friday affair against North Texas, Miami trailed by as many as 14, including facing a 12-point deficit at the half. That margin for the Mean Green, however, was not enough. The Hurricanes outscored North Texas by 18, 41-23, in the second half to earn a six-point victory, 69-63. It marked their biggest comeback win since Dec. 8, 2020.

Wong again led the way for Miami, this time scoring 21 points on 9-of-17 shooting. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty added an 18-point, 12-rebound double-double, the latter mark setting a career high.

"North Texas is another program we have a lot of respect for. They won a game in the NCAA Tournament last year and returned some key guys," Caputo said. "It was a great battle and then they went and beat Drake, who was in a lot of people's preseason top-25 and a team that a lot of people talked about for a [potential] at-large bid. It was a good win for us."

Miami capped the tournament by playing a top-10 non-conference opponent in the regular season for the first time since Nov. 17, 2014. Unlike that day, when Miami knocked off No. 8/7 Florida in Gainesville, Fla., the Hurricanes could not pull off the upset.

Although it built a 28-17 first-half advantage, Miami could not continue that performance over the final 26 minutes. The Crimson Tide scored 63 points in the second half of a 96-64 triumph.

McGusty recorded his second straight double-double, notching 21 points and 10 rebounds, while Wong added 14 points and sixth-year senior guard Charlie Moore scored 12.

"We played a very good first half against a top-10 team and then it was a very disappointing finish to the

game," Caputo said. "But, I thought, for most of the first half, in a lot of ways, we had the game under control. So, there are some things to build upon."

After playing 120 minutes of basketball in four days against three quality opponents, the Hurricanes certainly learned more about their team.

They displayed glimpses of what they can be defensively, while continuing to showcase a similar offensive feel to the season's first four games. Now, it is about improving in both of those areas moving forward.

"I think, if we could bottle the defensive second half against North Texas and the first half against Alabama, we'd all be very happy with our defense. And I think we're still trying to find ourselves offensively, as a group, in terms of trying to continue to generate good shots," Caputo shared. "We're doing a good job taking care of the ball and getting to the free-throw line. We believe we're a very good 3-point shooting team [based off what we see] statistically in practice and [from] just looking and guys' careers who just haven't been able to either make or generate just enough good threes. That's something we've got to continue to work on as the season goes on."

Also on display for the Hurricanes in Kissimmee was, of course, the play of McGusty, who has developed into one of the best guards in the ACC.

Through seven games this season, he is averaging 17.6 points, 7.1 rebounds, 1.6 assists and 1.6 steals per game. The Katy, Texas, native owns three double-doubles—matching his prior career total entering the season—and, as aforementioned, two of them came at the ESPN Events Invitational.

It is clear that, after deciding to withdraw from the NBA Draft and return to Miami, the 6-foot-5, 190-pounder is making the most of his final collegiate season.

"I think he's in the best shape of his career; I think he would admit that," Caputo said. "It's taken a little bit for him to get to that point, but I think when you're in great shape, you can really compete on both ends for long stretches. He's been able to do that. I think he's taken it upon himself to work to become a very good defender."

"He's an older senior and somebody who's very serious about his craft and basketball and being a good player. He works at it," Caputo added. "He's very much in line with a lot of the guys that we had here kind of at his size category and position who were really serious about competing, being two-way players, winning and hoping to have a career after college, playing professionally. So, I think he's in a good mental space and, going forward, hopefully he can continue that into the ACC [schedule]."

That start of that conference slate is right around the corner, but Miami has one other game to get through first. The Hurricanes will meet Penn State Wednesday at 9:15 at the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park, Pa., in the annual Big Ten/ACC Challenge Presented by Continental Tire. It is part of a difficult 10-day stretch for Miami that includes five games, all against Power Five or high-quality mid-major opponents.

Penn State, currently 4-2 on the season, is in its first campaign under the direction of head coach Micah Shrewsberry. He is a former assistant for the Boston Celtics, where he spent five years working alongside Jay Larrañaga, the son of Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga. And that is not the only coaching connection between the Hurricanes and Nittany Lions.

"Coach Shrewsberry is somebody we knew very well throughout the years, being at Purdue and playing Purdue last year. He was responsible for a lot of the offensive concepts," Caputo said. "So, I think we're very familiar with a lot of things they do and, obviously, they're going to be very familiar with us with Adam Fisher, our former assistant coach, now there as the associate head coach. There will be a good amount of familiarity [between the staffs], which is not always common in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge."

Fisher worked at Miami for eight years, serving as the director of basketball operations from 2013-15 and as an assistant coach from 2015-21. He departed in March to work for Shrewsberry, returning not only to where he attended college, but also much closer to family.

Coaching against a friend and former colleague, as will be the case when Miami's staff matches up with Fisher, is a difficult task for multiple reasons. The first, of course, is that familiarity from an X's and O's standpoint.

The second is that it leads to rooting against someone whom you otherwise hope the best for.

"Obviously, you always root for the people that you worked with to have success, whether they're an assistant coach somewhere or they're a head coach, but not when you play them," Caputo remarked. "We've played James Johnson—he's been with us at George Mason and Miami—who's at NC State. You always kind of pay attention to their scores and you're hoping for the best for them. But again, not when we play them. It would be the same thing for Penn State. But certainly, 'Fish' has had a great impact on our program."

"I'm very happy for him that he was able to go back to his alma mater, where he's from, where his wife is from, where their families live," Caputo continued. "His daughter is now able to grow up with both sets of grandparents right around the corner, in-state. That's a great thing. Obviously, you always wish well on those people, and yet, there's no morality when you step on the court. We've got to go hand them a loss if we can."

In order to do that, Miami will need to slow down a quality offensive attack that features several standout players. Two of them are junior forward Seth Lundy and senior guard Sam Sessions, both of whom are averaging 15.3 points per game.

Meanwhile, fifth-year senior forward John Harrar is averaging a near double-double at 9.7 points and 10.7 rebounds per game, while senior guard Jalen Pickett ranks No. 18 among active Division I players with 491 career assists.

The Nittany Lions, who went 11-14 (7-12) during the 2020-21 campaign, tied for No. 12 in the Big 10 preseason poll. They are coming off a solid 1-1 showing at the Emerald Coast Classic in Niceville, Fla., against a pair of teams that combined for four wins in the 2021 NCAA Tournament.

"They have a very strong starting five, guys that play a lot of minutes and have a lot of experience. They did very well in the tournament, losing to a good LSU team in overtime and then handling Oregon State pretty well, by 15," Caputo said. "Tough, physical defensive team [and a] 3-point shooting team on offense. [They are] a very methodical offensive team, so we're going to have an [opponent] more like North Texas than Alabama in the sense of you're going to really have to commit to defending for long shot clocks. I think we've got to, again, be prepared to try to replicate those two halves defensively from Orlando for a game, if you want to win on the road."

The Hurricanes and Nittany Lions are two of the most successful programs in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge of late. Both teams are 6-1 in the last seven years, matching Duke for the best record during that stretch. Only two other teams, Virginia (5-1) and Iowa (5-2), boast even five wins in the event since 2014-15.

Most recently, Miami logged a 58-54 win over Purdue, with Shrewsberry on the sideline as an assistant, in the 2020 event. That was the game on Dec. 8, 2020, in which the Hurricanes last overcame a double-digit deficit, as they trailed by 20 points total, including by 18 at the break, before defeating the Boilermakers.

The previous year, Miami went on the road to Illinois and knocked off the Fighting Illini, 81-79, at the State Farm Center in Champaign, Ill. Those triumphs came after a narrow 57-54 loss to Rutgers in 2018, which followed four consecutive victories from 2014-17 against No. 24/25 Illinois, at Nebraska, versus Rutgers and at No. 12 Minnesota.

"I think we've had good teams. Obviously, prior to the last couple years, we were really one of the better teams in the ACC for a long stretch," Caputo said of Miami's success in the event. "... I think the credit goes to our players. We take pride in representing the ACC. We enjoy those moments where you're on a big stage, playing on national television and there are some bragging rights involved. It's important to us to represent our league well. It's really a fun event to play in."

"It's great to watch the other scores throughout the week to see how the league is doing and this will be no exception," Caputo continued. "I'm sure we're going into a great environment at Penn State. I'm sure they'll have great fan support. We've done this a number of times on the road and hopefully we can do it again."

MBB Notches 63-58 Win at Penn State

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 1, 2021

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. – The University of Miami men's basketball team knocked off Penn State, 63-58, Wednesday night at the Bryce Jordan Center in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge Presented by Continental Tire.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg paced Miami (5-3) with 14 points, including 11 in the first seven minutes, in a game that featured 11 lead changes and six ties. With the win, the Hurricanes became the only team with a 7-1 record in the annual inter-conference showdown over the past eight years.

"I thought we played with a defensive intensity and focus for 40 minutes tonight, a little different from some of the other games where we defended for a half, maybe 30 minutes. Tonight, we really stuck with it," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "I think some of that credit has to go not only to our starters, but the subs, especially [freshman guards] Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar coming in and playing so hard defensively that we were able to rest Charlie and Kam, who were in foul trouble. [It was] ... just a terrific team effort."

The Hurricanes started the night by making their first four 3-pointers, including three on back-to-back-to-back possessions in 68 seconds. Three of the four makes in the opening 4:28 came from Waardenburg.

Miami held Penn State (4-3) scoreless for a five-minute stretch late in the half, forcing five turnovers during that time and going on a 7-0 run at the other end, en route to taking a 27-21 lead with 2:09 on the clock. The edge remained at six, 29-23, heading into the break.

Both teams shot under 40 percent from the floor in the first 20 minutes, but the Hurricanes hit twice as many 3-pointers (four) and forced 10 turnovers while logging just four giveaways.

After the Nittany Lions pulled within one early in the second half, Miami again hit back-to-back-to-back 3-pointers, using a 9-2 run in 71 seconds to go up by a game-high eight points, 38-30, with 17:19 left. Penn State, though, countered with a 15-2 surge, including 10 straight points, on seven consecutive made field goals to go in front, 45-40, with 12:14 remaining.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty answered with a personal 7-0 burst to give the lead back to Miami, 47-45, with 8:59 to go. The Hurricanes eventually extended it to a 13-3 run to go in front by six, 54-48, with 6:36 to play.

Penn State hit a pair of free throws to cut its deficit to two with 1:31 left, but McGusty drilled a second-chance 3-pointer at the other end to make it 63-58 with 38 ticks remaining. Neither team scored in the closing seconds and Miami came away with its third straight win in the Big

Ten/ACC Challenge.

"When a guy sits out as much as Kam and Charlie did in the first half, they have more juice than the guys who played [so much] in the first half. Even though guys are in great shape, you can get worn down," Larrañaga said of how Miami closed out the win. "...But Charlie, Kam and Isaiah really stepped up in the second half and did a great job. Road victories are hard to come by, especially when the ACC comes to town and plays a team like Penn State on the road."

Waardenburg, who paced the Hurricanes in scoring for the first time as a collegian, finished 5-of-11 from the field and 4-of-8 from long range, the latter two marks both career highs. He also chipped in four rebounds and three assists.

McGusty, Wong and Moore, a sixth-year redshirt senior guard, all scored 12 points. McGusty tallied all of his after the break, as he played just six first-half minutes after picking up two early fouls, while Moore added a season-high-tying four assists and zero turnovers.

Penn State fifth-year senior forward John Harrar led players in both points (16) and rebounds (12). He shot 6-of-6 from the field and 4-of-5 at the stripe. Junior forward Seth Lundy added 14 points and eight rebounds in the setback.

The two sides posted nearly identical field goal clips, with Miami shooting 43.1 percent (25-of-58) and Penn State shooting 43.4 percent (23-of-53). However, the Hurricanes' 3-point mark proved to be the difference, as they logged a 36.0 percent mark (9-of-25) and conceded just a 25.0 percent ledger (6-of-24).

Miami led for 26:16 and trailed for just 6:54 in a game that was played within a 13-point window from start to finish.

The Hurricanes now return home to Coral Gables, Fla., where they host Clemson in their ACC opener Saturday at noon, 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.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 1-4 all-time against Penn State, including 1-2 on the road and 1-0 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Michigan and UCLA are now the only programs Miami has played four-plus times without earning a victory.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 675-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 205-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 675 victories in his career, Larrañaga moved into a tie with Denny Crum for No. 34 on the all-time Division I wins list.

– For the fifth time this season and third in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of Waardenburg, McGusty, Moore, Wong and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller.

– The Hurricanes improved to 9-6 all-time in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge, including 5-4 on the road and 8-3 under Larrañaga.

– Miami is the only team in either conference with seven wins over the last eight Big Ten/ACC Challenges, breaking a tie with Duke and Penn State, both of which were 6-1 entering the week.

– The Hurricanes have won four straight Big Ten/ACC Challenge road games, dating back exactly six years, to 12/1/15 at Nebraska.

– Miami has won four consecutive non-conference road games, going back to 11/12/19 at UCF.

– Wednesday marked Miami's first game of 2021-22 that did not feature a lead of 14-plus points by either team.

– Moore, who made his 125th appearance as a collegian, moved past 450 made field goals.

– In addition, Moore scored double-digit points for the 62nd time, including the fifth in 2021-22.

– Waardenburg, who made more 3-pointers (three) in the first 4:28 of Wednesday's game than he previously did all season (two), surpassed 50 makes in his career, as well as moved past 100 assists.

– Waardenburg had never hit four 3-pointers in a game previously and only made three twice, both at home: 2/7/18 vs. Wake Forest and 12/21/19 vs. Coppin State.

– Waardenburg, who also eclipsed his prior career high in both field-goal attempts (10) and 3-point attempts (five), scored in double figures for the 15th time, including the third this year.

– Wong, who moved past 250 rebounds and 50 steals at Miami, tallied double-figure points for the 40th time, including the seventh this season.

– McGusty, who surpassed 150 assists in his career, scored in double digits for the 70th time, including the 42nd as a Hurricane and seventh in 2021-22.

– J. Miller eclipsed 450 rebounds as a collegian, including grabbing the offensive rebound that led to McGusty's late 3-pointer, as well as reached 350 made field goals.

Kameron McGusty's surge helps lift Hurricanes past Nittany Lions

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 1, 2021

Miami's trio of guards helped lead the way to a bounce-back win by hitting pivotal shots down the stretch.

Kameron McGusty led the surge scoring all 12 of his points in the second half including a key 3-pointer late and the Hurricanes won 63-58 at Penn State on Wednesday.

"Charlie (Moore), Kam and Isaiah (Wong) really stepped up in the second half and did a great job," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Road victories are hard to come by, especially when the ACC comes to town and plays a team like Penn State on the road."

Miami (5-3) improved to 7-1 in their last eight games in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge.

"I thought we played with a defensive intensity and focus for 40 minutes tonight, a little different from some of the other games where we defended for a half, maybe 30 minutes—tonight, we really stuck with it," Larranaga said.

The Hurricanes got 14 points from Sam Waardenburg, who hit four 3s in the first half.

Isaiah Wong made a pair of shots in the closing minutes to keep the Hurricanes in front of the Nittany Lions (4-3) and finished with 12 points.

Charlie Moore also scored 12 for the Hurricanes, who shot 43.1 percent (23 of 58) from the field, but knocked down 9 of 25 from 3.

The Hurricanes led early, but found themselves down 45-40 with 12 minutes left before McGusty went on a 7-0 run by himself.

Moore's consecutive layups moments later gave the Hurricanes the lead for good with 7:30 left.

Wong's three-point play stretched the lead to 64-58.

Penn State cut the deficit to 60-58 with 1:31 left after a pair of free throws by Jaheem Cornwall.

McGusty then missed a 3, but Jordan Miller got the offensive rebound and McGusty got another crack at it. This time he sank a 3 for a 63-58 advantage with 38 seconds left.

Both teams missed opportunities down the

stretch with Miami holding on for a bounce-back win after a 32-point loss to No. 14 Alabama on Sunday.

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Clemson on Saturday (12:00 p.m., ACCN).

McGusty's spark leads UM to 63-58 win over Penn State in ACC/Big Ten Challenge

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 2, 2021

One reason Kam McGusty initially entered the 2021 NBA Draft is because he was already 23 years old and was worried that he would be considered too old by pro scouts if he played another year of college basketball.

NBA scouts told him age was not an issue, that he would increase his draft stock if he went back to the University of Miami, worked on his defense, and proved he could lead a winning team.

He did exactly that on Wednesday night, scoring all 12 of his points in the second half – including nine in a row – to lead the Hurricanes to a 63-58 road win against Penn State in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

Miami improved to 5-3 heading into Saturday's home ACC opener against Clemson.

McGusty and Isaiah Wong, who had been averaging 32 combined points per game, had only two points at halftime. McGusty got in early foul trouble, spent time on the bench, and came back energized in the second half.

His 9-0 run, which included a three-pointer and a ferocious driving layup, gave UM a 47-45 lead. Veteran point guard Charlie Moore, who is 23 years old, also relied on experience and made some key second-half plays to contribute to the win.

Four Hurricanes finished in double figures – McGusty, Wong (who was battling a sinus infection) and Moore with 12 apiece, and Sam Waardenburg, who made three three-point baskets in the first five minutes and led UM with 14 points.

"That was a terrific road win for us, a really physical battle," UM coach Jim Larranaga said.

He told the team before the game that he wanted more contributions from the forward and center. Waardenburg took the challenge to heart and opened with a trio of threes to give UM an early lead.

"Penn State did a great job in the second half, thank goodness Isaiah, Kam and Charlie Moore stepped up," Larranaga said. "It was a great team effort."

The fact that McGusty got in early foul trouble worked to his advantage in a way, the coach said.

"As it turns out that was a good strategic move because in the second half he was able to generate a lot of the energy while the other guys were exhausted," he said. "Same with Charlie. Our freshmen Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar came in and allowed those guys to rest in foul trouble and that was a key strategic move because those guys played so well in the second half."

McGusty is off to a great start this season. Going into Wednesday's game, he averaged 17.6 points and 7.1 rebounds per game.

"Kam is an older senior and somebody who's very serious about his craft and basketball and being a good player. He works at it," UM assistant coach Chris Caputo said. "He's very much in line with a lot of the guys that we've had here kind of at his size category and position who were really serious about competing, being two-way players, winning and hoping to have a career after college, playing professionally. So, I think he's in a good mental space and, going forward, hopefully he can continue that into the ACC (schedule)."

Penn State (4-3) was led by John Harrar, who was 6-of-6 for 16 points and Seth Lundy with 14.

Balanced attack leads Miami to 63-58 win in ACC/Big Ten Challenge

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 2, 2021

Four Miami Hurricanes scored in double-figures on Wednesday night, as Miami recorded its first-ever win in program history over Penn State, downing the Nittany Lions 63-58 at the Bryce Jordan Center in State College, Pennsylvania.

It was another successful showing from head coach Jim Larrañaga's Miami in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge. The win marked Miami's third straight in the event, and its seventh win in its last eight games with the only loss coming back in 2018 against Rutgers.

"We talk about this all the time, we think the ACC is the best league in the country," Larrañaga said. "We wanted to represent the ACC as best as we could."

Miami (5-3) strongly represented the ACC in the first half with its defense. After flustering in the ESPN Events Invitational last week, UM started the contest forcing Penn State into 10 first-half turnovers, including seven giveaways in a six-minute span.

In addition, the Hurricanes held the Nittany Lions to just 18.2% on 3-point field goals in the opening half. A major point of emphasis for the Canes became perimeter defense, after PSU entered Wednesday's contest shooting over 40% from deep in two of their last three games.

On the offensive side of the ball, the Hurricanes got some major scoring from redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg. The New Zealand native started the contest by draining his first three attempts from beyond the arch. His start tied his career-highs in 3-pointers made in a single game.

"I told the team before the game we needed our [forwards] to step up and make plays tonight," Larrañaga revealed. "Boy, did Sam Waardenburg take that to heart."

Waardenburg finished the contest in style, leading the Hurricanes in scoring with 14 points for the first time in his career. His lone second-half three set his single-game record for threes in a game with four, passing his previous performances set back against Coppin State in 2019 and Wake Forest in 2018.

Miami responded to a 5-0 Penn State run in style to open up the second half. Waardenburg, followed by transfers Charlie Moore

and Jordan Miller, each sunk triples to put the Canes up by eight, the largest lead in the game. The Hurricanes struggled tremendously in their previous three games from distance, making an average of just over four threes during their Feast Week games in Orlando.

The second half teetered back and forth as the minutes wound. The Nittany Lions sparked forward in the second half, scoring 15 of the next 17 points, including an 8-0 scoring run to take a five-point lead with 12 minutes to go. UM responded with McGusty contributing to nine of Miami's next 11 points, including seven consecutive points to give the Canes a 51-48 lead.

In the clutch, Miami needed to go to one of its top scorers, and Isaiah Wong stepped up and stole the spotlight. Wong, after scoring just five points in the first half, scored seven of nine Hurricanes points to pull UM into a four-point lead late. Miami held the Nittany Lions to just two points in the final two minutes and held on to win by five.

It was a difficult night for the third-year sophomore, as Larrañaga revealed following the game that Wong played with a sinus infection. Despite starting the contest shooting just 1-for-8 from the floor, coach knew he could go to his star guard when the Canes needed him most.

"I didn't take him out in the first half because he was one of our lone veteran guards," Larrañaga said. "In the second half, he and Kam made some really tough shots."

Both Wong and McGusty, followed by Waardenburg and Moore, combined for 48 points in the win. The Hurricanes' bench unit also held Penn State's reserves to zero points across the game.

The win serves as a huge-confidence builder for Miami, following two double-digit losses to Dayton and No. 9 Alabama last week. The Hurricanes will need to keep momentum and confidence going into Saturday for when they host fellow 5-3 opponent Clemson in their ACC opener. The contest gets underway at noon from the Watsco Center.

Conference Competition

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 2, 2021

No men's basketball program has performed better of late in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge than the University of Miami.

The Hurricanes logged a 63-58 victory over Penn State at the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park, Pa., to move to 7-1 in the event over the last eight years. No other team in either league has seven victories during that stretch.

Miami (5-3) trailed by five with 12 minutes left, but controlled play down the stretch to earn a fourth consecutive road win in the annual clash.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg paced the victors with 14 points, shooting 4-of-8 from 3-point range to set career highs in both categories. He scored 11 of his points in the opening seven minutes, including drilling three 3-pointers in the first five, immediately setting the tone for Miami.

Additionally, sixth-year redshirt senior guards Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore each scored 12 points, as did third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

"Sam Waardenburg had, perhaps, his best game as a Miami Hurricane," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "He did everything; he defended, he shot the ball well, he handled the ball very well. And then, in the second half, I thought Charlie, Kam and Isaiah really stepped up and made big shots for us."

While that quartet accounted for nearly 80 percent on Miami's scoring on the night, there were other players who made an impression on their coach. And they did so at the other end of the court.

In particular, it was freshman guards Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar who drew rave reviews from Larrañaga for their performances off the bench.

"I would say [watching the film] reaffirmed that our freshmen did a terrific job defensively when Charlie Moore and Kam McGusty were in foul trouble the first half," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "We didn't lose the lead and not play well when they were in the game."

After playing for conference pride against the Nittany Lions, Miami must now shift into a

completely different mode for its next game. Up next is the start of league play.

Saturday at noon, the Hurricanes host Clemson at the Watsco Center in their first of 20 conference outings this season.

The Hurricanes are ready for conference action to begin. Now, they are just looking to get an added boost from some valuable supporters when they do so.

"I think the excitement can be generated by our students and our fans and the community getting behind this team. Our players are all already excited. They're really looking forward to starting the ACC league race," Larrañaga shared. "...Our fans really need to get out there and help us because they really do help. Category 5, when the students show up, that's a huge help for us. It really creates an electric environment in the Watsco Center."

Miami is 6-11 all-time in ACC openers, but sports an 11-6 ledger in ACC home openers. This is the second time the Hurricanes have opened conference play against Clemson, previously doing so in 2008-09.

The Tigers head into the weekend at 5-3 on the season. They were picked No. 11 in the ACC preseason poll after registering a 16-8 (10-6) mark and making the NCAA Tournament last year.

Sophomore forward/center PJ Hall is the top scoring threat for Clemson through eight games, as he comes in averaging 13.9 points per contest.

Larrañaga's opposition on the Clemson sideline is a familiar face, dating back to 2002, and one who presents difficult strategic matchups.

"I think Brad Brownell has done a terrific job there. We've competed against each other for not just the 10 years in the ACC, but [four more] years in the CAA," Larrañaga said. "His team is an outstanding defensive team and an outstanding 3-point shooting team. They play very hard, very physical."

"They really do a fantastic job of developing a game plan suited to their opponent. So, they can change [what they do]," Larrañaga continued. "Sometimes they're going to really pressure, sometimes they'll go zone, sometimes they'll do a lot of switching. They really base their strategy on a lot of different elements."

The Hurricanes are 14-17 all-time against Clemson, including 14-12 since 2001, 8-4 at

home and 8-6 under Larrañaga. Miami upset the fifth-seeded Tigers, 67-64, on March 10, 2021, in the second round of the ACC Tournament in Greensboro, N.C., in the teams' most recent meeting.

Saturday's contest will be broadcast live on ACC Network HERE, with Wes Durham and Malcolm Huckaby on the call. Joe Zagacki and Danny Rabinowitz will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE.

Action can also be heard on 90.5 FM WVUM HERE and in Spanish on WMYM 990 AM HERE. In addition, live stats for the game will be available HERE.

Following its matchup with Clemson, Miami returns to non-conference play, as it hosts Lipscomb Wednesday at 7 p.m., live on ACC Network.

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