

Miami Men's Basketball Clips

2021-22

DJ Irving Named MBB Assistant Coach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sense of the word."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Already Feeling at Home

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
July 6, 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hurricanes' efforts to make Miller feel

welcome didn't end there.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Playing beside them, Miller said, helped him

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Jonathan Givony
ESPN
July 6, 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ready to do His Part

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
July 27, 2021

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

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

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

That connection paid off.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No doubt his resume will help.

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

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

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

Moore is no stranger to competition.

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

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

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

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

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

playing at Kansas and later DePaul.

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

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

Being nearby, he said, was crucial.

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

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

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

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

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

MBB Signs Bensley Joseph

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Aug. 18, 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joseph is the third high school player to sign with Miami in the class of 2021, following fellow guards Nisrine 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 Filippas 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 Pre-season 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 lead 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 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 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 Larrañaga 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 Larrañaga'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 @CaneShoops 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 in 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 ESPN 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, the 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 Mustapha 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.

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 tighter 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'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]."

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 Sessoms, 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 at 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.

MBB Rallies to Beat Clemson, 80-75, in ACC Opener

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 4, 2021

Trailing by nine with under five minutes left, the University of Miami men's basketball team stormed back to defeat Clemson, 80-75, Saturday afternoon at the Watsco Center in its first game of the 2021-22 ACC slate.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg scored a career-best and co-game-high 18 points for Miami (6-3, 1-0 ACC), which made six of its last seven shots and closed the thriller on a 19-5 run.

"I thought that was one of the finest comebacks on an outstanding team," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "When I watch Clemson, they are so efficient offensively with their 3-point shooting and PJ Hall inside makes it very difficult to defend them. Their defense is tough, you've got to figure out how to attack it. I think Sam Waardenburg's performance tonight, going 6-of-10 from the field with 18 points, three assists, one turnover, one steal and two blocks is one of the best frontcourt performances we have had in quite a while."

The Hurricanes started just 3-of-13 from the field, as Clemson (5-4, 0-1 ACC) built an early 16-8 lead through just 7:09. Aided by quality 3-point shooting, Miami pulled even at 30 with 3:34 remaining in the half.

Clemson, though, closed the frame on a 10-4 burst, capped with a 3-pointer by fifth-year senior David Collins in the closing seconds to give the Tigers a 40-34 edge at the break.

Both teams posted strong clips from long range in the opening 20 minutes. Miami, which started 5-of-9 on 3-pointers and just 1-of-9 from two, went 5-of-12 (41.7 percent), while Clemson shot 7-of-12 (58.3 percent) beyond the arc.

The Tigers connected on 7-of-9 field goals during an early second-half stretch to rebuild their eight-point lead, 57-49, with 11:58 left. Miami, though, had a burst in which it shot 6-of-8 to trim the deficit to two, 59-57, with 8:59 to go.

Clemson upped its edge to a game-high nine, 70-61, with 5:02, but the Hurricanes scored 12 straight points—the first five from Waardenburg—in 2:20 to put Miami ahead, 73-70, with 2:29 left.

The Hurricanes did not stop there, though, continuing the run until it went all the way up to 19-3, as they closed out the game by shooting 5-of-6 at the line in the final 30 seconds. Clemson got the final bucket of the afternoon to make it a five-point final margin.

"I think our defense picked up," Larrañaga said of the Hurricanes' finish to the game. "Jordan Miller's defense on PJ Hall was the difference because PJ was drawing fouls on us and he was scoring with his back to the basket. What Jordan did is, he kept the ball out of his hands."

Waardenburg shot 4-of-7 from 3-point range in the win, marking the second consecutive game he connected on four shots beyond the arc. His six made field goals also tied a career high, previously set on Dec. 21, 2019, against Coppin State.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 15 points and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong tallied 13. Miller, a fourth-year junior guard, scored a season-high 13 points on 5-of-7 shooting, with a 3-of-5 clip from 3-point range, including the eventual game-winning 3-pointer. All of his points came after halftime.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore added eight points, a season-high five assists and a career-best two blocks.

Hall, a sophomore forward, paced the Tigers with 18 points, finishing 6-of-14 from the floor and 6-of-6 at the line. Collins recorded 15 points, a game-best nine rebounds and a co-game-high five assists, but Miami forced him into five turnovers.

Sophomore guard Chase Hunter scored 15 points, finishing 3-of-4 from long range, and senior forward Hunter Tyson added 10.

The Hurricanes led for just 2:55, but it was the final 2:55. They shot 60.0 percent (15-of-25) from the field in the second half, including 46.2 percent (6-of-13) from long range, to earn the win. They also logged a 21-10 margin in points off turnovers in the game, while forcing 18 and committing just eight.

"I'm very excited for this team. They have worked really hard. This is a great week," Larrañaga said. "We went to Orlando and struggled against Alabama in the second half and to bounce back and play two really good games and win both, one on the road and then one at home—with our students coming out to support us—that was huge. To have those fans—our students—cheering for us [really helped] and the band was great. I'm hoping as the season progresses we can get more and more fans to the games because that makes a huge difference."

Up next for Miami is a home matchup with Lipscomb, set for Wednesday 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 @CanesHoops on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 15-17 all-time against Clemson, including 9-4 at home and 9-6 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 676-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 206-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 676 victories in his career, Larrañaga passed Denny Crum for sole possession of No. 34 on the all-time Division I wins list.

– For the sixth time this season and fourth in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong.

– The Hurricanes improved to 7-11 all-time in ACC openers, including 5-6 at home, 5-6 under Larrañaga, 3-5 at home under Larrañaga and 1-1 versus Clemson.

– Miami also upped its mark to 12-6 all-time in ACC home openers, including 6-5 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– The last seven Miami/Clemson games have now been decided by a combined 28 total points, good for an average of just 4.0 per contest.

– In four of the last five Miami/Clemson matchups, the winning team trailed at halftime.

– The last time the Hurricanes shot 60-plus percent in a half was on 2/1/21, posting a 60.7 percent clip (17-of-28) in the second frame of a win over Duke.

– Waardenburg, who drew three offensive fouls in the first 22 minutes of the game, tallied double-digit points for the 16th time, including the fourth this season.

– After making a high of three 3-pointers in a game twice in his career previously, Waardenburg has now hit four in back-to-back outings.

– In addition, Waardenburg led Miami in scoring for the second game in a row after never previously doing so.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar surpassed 100 minutes played in his young career.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 1,350 points and 300 free-throw attempts as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 71st time, including the 43rd at Miami and eighth this year.

– J. Miller, who moved past 950 points in his career and played a season-high 35 minutes, scored in double digits for the 51st time, including the first this year.

– J. Miller also made multiple 3-pointers for the first time as a Hurricane, tripling his prior season high, with the last one giving the Hurricanes the lead for good with 2:55 remaining.

– Wong, who reached 50 steals at Miami, scored double-figure points for the 41st time, including the eighth in 2021-22.

– Moore, who eclipsed 450 assists as a collegian, notched his 38th five-assist outing as a collegian, including his first as a Hurricane.

UM rallies in final minutes to beat Clemson in ACC opener as Tigers AD wooed by Miami

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 4, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes rallied in the final three minutes to win their ACC home opener 80-75 against Clemson Saturday afternoon, but some of the biggest UM boosters were not at the Watsco Center to see the exciting ending.

They were busy trying to lure Tigers athletic director Dan Radakovich back to UM, where his career began in 1983. According to multiple sources, talks continued Saturday between the two sides and Miami is prepared to offer big money for Radakovich, a highly respected administrator who makes \$800,000 annually.

Asked about reports that Radakovich was perhaps headed to UM, Hurricanes basketball coach Jim Larranaga said: "I am not privy to any information from anyone in the know, but what I will tell you is that everybody I have spoken to that knows Dan raves about him.

"(UM Board of Trustees member) Paul DiMare raved about the job he did at Georgia Tech and then repeated at Clemson. I spoke to Craig Littlepage, who was the AD at Virginia, who knows Dan very well and he raved. I spoke to (WQAM radio announcer) Joe Zagacki, who has known Dan since 1982, and he raved."

Larranaga said he asked Clemson basketball coach Brad Brownell "if this were to happen, what do you think? And he raved. He is a heck of a businessman with tremendous experience. I look forward to finding out if it's Dan or who our next leader will be."

Brownell said he has not spoken to Radakovich about the UM job offer and that he first saw the news on the team bus on the way to the airport Friday.

"I don't know if it surprised me -- probably a little bit," Brownell said. "Dan's the kind of guy who has been highly successful and he's going to have opportunities...Whatever he decides I'll be happy for him. He's been really good to us and however he wants to finish his career he has earned his right to do that."

Brownell called Radakovich "an outstanding leader...first-class, top-notch AD" who hires good people, helped improve facilities and does not micromanage.

In addition to offering his thoughts on Radakovich, Larranaga had plenty to say about his Hurricanes, who trailed Clemson from the

opening whistle until the closing minutes, when Jordan Miller, a George Mason transfer, drilled a three-pointer off a Tigers turnover to give UM its first lead, 71-70, with 2:55 to go.

The Watco Center crowd erupted.

Larranaga called it "one of the finest come-backs" of his long career.

"We were playing a quality opponent like Clemson who makes it very difficult to guard them inside and outside," he said. "They're a fantastic three-point shooting team, 10th in the country, and at halftime were shooting 50 percent from three. And they have an unstoppable force inside in PJ Hall, who is a very hard matchup for us."

Miami trailed 40-34 at halftime and Clemson had opened a nine-point lead with five minutes remaining. It appeared the game was out of reach for the Canes. But Sam Waardenburg, who led UM with a career-high 18 points and four threes, scored five straight points and made a steal that led to a Charlie Moore driving layup to close the gap to two points.

Miller's shot then pushed UM ahead during a 15-2 run that included five Clemson turnovers. The Canes (6-3) made five free throws in the final 30 seconds to seal the win over the Tigers (5-4), who were led by Hall with 18 points and seven rebounds and USF transfer David Collins (15 points, 9 rebounds)

Kam McGusty had 15 points, four rebounds and three assists for UM. Miller and Wong both scored 13 points.

"My hat's off to my players because when we went back by nine, we didn't hang our heads, we stayed patient, worked really hard defensively and got some stops and we were able to score efficiently," Larranaga said. "Sam's been playing fantastic. We're putting the ball in his hands more. He's a key component of our strategy this year."

Sam Waardenburg shoots Hurricanes past Tigers in ACC opener

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 4, 2021

Sam Waardenburg scored 18 points with four 3-pointers and the Miami Hurricanes won 80-75 over Clemson in their ACC opener on Saturday.

The Hurricanes (6-3, 1-0 ACC) also got 15 points from Kameron McGusty and 13 apiece from Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller, who posted a season-high.

Miami trailed 70-61 with five minutes left, but Waardenburg helped spark a comeback by hitting a 3, his fourth of the game, and converting a layup on the ensuing possession to cut the deficit to 70-66 a minute later.

The run continued with a layup by Charlie Moore, a 3 by Miller and a pair of free throws by Wong, who capped the 12-0 run to give Miami a 73-70 lead with 2:29 remaining.

Miami continued its push down the stretch and held off the Tigers (5-4, 0-1) who have lost four of five.

The win was their second in four days as they also defeated Penn State as part of the ACC-Big Ten Challenge. It was a positive turnaround to the week, which began with a 96-64 loss to Alabama on Sunday.

Waardenburg shined in both victories with 14 points and four 3s against the Nittany Lions. He has shot 8 of 15 from behind the arc the last two games after going 2 for 7 in his first seven games.

Miami shot 49.1 percent (27 of 55) from the floor, including 11 of 25 from 3. Miller added three 3s while four other players also made at least one.

Miami's starters all played at least 30 minutes while none of the five reserves who appeared in the game played more than 10 minutes.

UP NEXT

Miami returns to their home court again on Dec. 8 against Lipscomb to begin a three-game stretch out of conference before conference play resumes on Dec. 29 against NC State.

Miami basketball escapes with late run to defeat Clemson in ACC opener

By Alan Rubenstein
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 4, 2021

The Miami basketball team used a 19-5 run to end the game after taking their first lead on the way to an 80-75 victory over Clemson on Saturday afternoon at the Watsco Center. A Jordan Miller three-point field goal with 2:55 remaining gave Miami their first lead of the game. Miami improves to 6-3 with the victory.

The Hurricanes used good balance for the second straight game with four players in double figures. Sam Waardenburg led Miami in scoring for the second straight game with 18 points. Kameron McGusty scored 15, Isaiah Wong and Miller 13 and Charlie Moore eight. Miami outscored Clemson 46-35 in the second half.

Miami turned up their defense in the second half. Clemson made seven of its 12 three-point attempts in the first half, just two of nine in the second half. The Hurricanes were able to overcome a 39-21 rebounding deficit by forcing 18 turnovers while committing only eight. Miami trailed 40-34 at halftime.

Miller was critical in the second half. The George Mason transfer scored all 13 of his points in the second half on five of six from the floor and three of four three-point attempts. Waardenburg scored 10 after halftime and Wong eight. Clemson finished with four players in double figures led by P.J. Hall with 18.

The Miami basketball team shot the ball exceptionally well in the second half. Miami made 60 percent from the floor, six of their 13 three-point shots and 10 of 12 from the free-throw line. Miami made 11 of their 25 three-point attempts and 15 of 17 free throws for the game. The Miami starting five all played 30 minutes or more.

The Hurricanes did get better bench play than they recently have. Miami had 17 points off the bench. The Hurricanes were able to overcome Clemson holding the lead for 35:41 to just 2:55 for Miami. Miami is off until Wednesday when they host Lipscomb in their first of their last three non-conference games of 2021-22.

Back With a Purpose

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 5, 2021

It has been, for Sam Waardenburg, a very, very good week.

And that's meant it's been a very, very good week for the Hurricanes, too.

Waardenburg, a sixth-year redshirt senior forward, had a career-high 14 points in Miami's 63-58 road win over Penn State on Wednesday. He followed that by posting another career-high – this time of 18 points – in the Hurricanes' 80-75 comeback win over Clemson on Saturday afternoon at the Watsco Center.

He's playing some of the best basketball of his career and given what he endured last year when he was sidelined with a foot injury, that isn't something Waardenburg takes for granted.

"It's been really good. It's so great to be back on the court every game," Waardenburg said. "But yeah, it's been a really fun week. The team's playing well together and when we do that, it's fun. A win like [Saturday's], fighting back, that's the most fun you can have on the court."

For Waardenburg, part of that fun now comes from being one of Miami's go-to options.

His knowledge of the Hurricanes' system, ability to score, defend and get his teammates involved means he's more than earned the trust of Hurricanes head coach Jim Larrañaga.

He's also become a catalyst to help run Miami's offense in key situations – like when the Hurricanes needed to find a way to rally against the Tigers in Saturday's ACC opener.

Miami (6-3) trailed by nine with five minutes remaining, but closed the game on a 19-5 run to clinch its conference opener.

Waardenburg had five straight points and a steal during that stretch to help the Hurricanes close the gap. Along with his 18 points and the steal, he finished with three rebounds, three assists, and two blocks.

"Sam had a fantastic game. He's been playing fantastic. And if you've noticed, we've been putting the ball in his hands a lot more, putting the ball in his hands at the top of the key," Larrañaga said. "He can make that 3-pointer. That stretches the defense...Our guards can

use him as a ball screener and create opportunities for themselves.

"Sam can score it. He got some assists, but one of the big keys, he's a very active defender. He guards ball screens very well. He can guard big guys. He can switch off to smaller guys...He's a key component to our strategy and has been since the season began."

Waardenburg, undoubtedly, takes his responsibility as one of Miami's floor generals seriously. He gained a new appreciation not only for the game, but for coaching, while sidelined last year.

With guidance from former Hurricanes assistant coach Adam Fisher, who is now at Penn State, he began scouting some of Miami's opponents and put together reports on what he saw during games.

As the season progressed, Waardenburg said he developed a better understanding of what Miami's coaches and support staff do on a daily basis to get the Hurricanes ready to play.

And all of that knowledge, he says, has helped him perform the way he has through Miami's first nine games in which he's averaged 8.3 points and 3.8 rebounds, while totaling 18 assists, nine blocks and five steals.

"Coach L always talks about how as players we don't always look at the game from a coach's perspective, but me being out for the whole year, I kind of wanted to be around the coaches and whatnot," Waardenburg said. "I spent a lot of time with Coach Fisher last year. He gave me assignments. I had to do reports after games. And just through that, I started to look at the game from a coach's perspective a bit more. From there, building that IQ on the floor, you just kind of soak in a different part of the game that you don't really see when you're a player and you're out on the court. You don't get to see everything. That's probably what I learned the most – seeing it from a different angle, understanding if I'm facing this side of the court, I kind of actually know what's happening on the other side of the court in my head as well. Those little things have just helped me improve my game."

As to how he's felt physically since his injury, Waardenburg says every passing day gets better. He's keenly aware of the need to take care of his body, get the necessary treatment and do what he must to continue strengthening his foot.

He credits Miami's athletic trainers and

strength and conditioning staff for helping prepare him for the rigors of the season that still await and he's confident things will only continue getting better – for him and the Hurricanes moving forward.

"It's felt good this week, so that's been good," he said with a laugh. "I've always loved winning and it's been special, making that decision to come back. It starts with all the guys in the locker room. They create such a fun environment and it makes you want to come in every day and get better. They put all their trust in me and I put all my trust in them. It's just been amazing. They're always on me to shoot the ball, shoot the ball, so I've been able to get a few looks the last few games and those have gone down."

"Going forward, we're going to continue to work as a team, put trust in one another and hopefully, get some more wins."

Bring on the Bisons

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 6, 2021

Jordan Miller joined the University of Miami men's basketball team during the offseason after a trio of superb seasons at George Mason.

A 6-foot-7, 195-pound guard, Miller averaged 13.0 points and 5.9 rebounds over his 69 appearances—all but three of them starts—for the Patriots. Last year, he put up 15.8 points and 6.1 boards per outing, en route to Third Team All-Atlantic 10 honors.

The fourth-year junior then turned in a strong offseason for the Hurricanes and earned a starting role from day one. The results, however, did not immediately follow.

Miller scored just nine points on 3-of-11 shooting in the first two contests, then moved into a reserve role for the next three. He never stopped competing, though, and quickly regained his starting spot as he settled in to his new surroundings.

"The adjustment, as far as coming to a new team and fitting into the program and finding the way that you're going to fit into the program, it was something I took for granted," Miller shared. "I put in a lot of work in, in the offseason and played [three prior] years of college basketball—I'm not new to it—but me never being a transfer and experiencing it for the first time, I didn't know what to expect. The only thing I could do was stay in the gym and be ready for whatever hit me.

"Obviously, I hit some adversity, but staying positive, staying in the gym and hearing positive things from my teammates were things that helped me get more comfortable on the court," Miller continued. "But it's a learning process [like many] things in life. It's something that's fun; new challenges excite me."

One thing that never changed for Miller—no matter his performance or role—was his focus on what mattered most. That was always clear.

"I want to win," Miller said. "Regardless of how I play, winning is the most important thing at the end of the day."

As Miller has adjusted, his play has improved and, indeed, the Hurricanes have been winning.

Since reentering the starting lineup, Miller is averaging 7.5 points and 4.3 rebounds per game while playing strong defense and providing versatility at both ends of the court. He is also shooting a lofty 66.7 percent (12-of-18) from the floor and 50.0 percent (4-of-8) beyond the arc during that time.

Miami is 3-1 in those games, with the lone loss to a top-10 Alabama team. The other three victories have all been impressive, the first a rally from a 12-point halftime deficit to the reigning CUSA champion, North Texas.

The Hurricanes followed that with a road win over Penn State in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge and then stormed back from a nine-point deficit in the final five minutes to beat Clemson in their conference opener.

Miller's play has, quite clearly, been a huge boost for the Hurricanes during that stretch. He is averaging 30.0 minutes per game over the last four outings, fourth-most on the team, while placing second in rebounding.

"It feels amazing," Miller said of seeing his hard work pay off. "Words can't even describe it, but I'm focused on being consistent and it not just being one game [and instead] ... for the rest of the games throughout the season. But something like this, the last game, it was a big confidence booster for me. It also showed that the work I'm doing isn't for nothing; it's for something."

That one game Miller is, in particular, referring to is the triumph over Clemson. In his first ACC action as a Hurricane, he turned in his best performance yet.

Miller scored a season-high 13 points on 5-of-7 shooting, including a 3-of-5 clip from deep. His 3-pointer with 2:55 remaining gave Miami (6-3, 1-0 ACC) a lead for the first time all afternoon and it held on the rest of the way.

All of his points came in the second half—he missed just one shot after the break—when his team needed him most to work its way back after trailing nearly the whole game.

"I think my teammates did a good job trusting me," Miller said of his second-half performance. "It would be easy for them to be like, 'Okay, he didn't necessarily have a good first half. Let me take these shots because he might not necessarily be warm or this might not be his game.' But they really trusted me and knew that I've been putting in the work. I think it really showed in the second half."

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg scored a career-high 18 points in the 80-75 victory, while sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty tallied 15 and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong added 13.

Miller's play helped Miami shoot 60.0 percent (15-of-25) in the second half and bring in what matters most to the Middleburg, Va., native: a win.

"It felt great, it was huge," he said. "You don't want to start off conference play 0-1; it's a little demoralizing. Getting that win at home, with the crowd—everyone was energized. We just look to build off that in the future."

Miami's first chance to do just that comes Wednesday at 7 p.m., when it takes on Lipscomb at the Watsco Center in the first meeting between the two programs.

The Bisons enter at 5-4 on the season and are led by freshman forward Jacob Ognacevic, who is averaging 18.6 points per game on 60.9 percent shooting. In addition, junior center Ahsan Asadullah is averaging a near

double-double, putting up 17.0 points and 9.8 rebounds per contest.

Lipscomb, which tied for third in the Atlantic Sun pre-season poll, won the league's tournament in 2018 and claimed the regular season crown in 2019. Its third-year coach, Lennie Acuff, is No. 20 among active Division I head coaches with 591 victories.

"I think just playing Miami basketball," Miller said of the key for the Hurricanes Wednesday night. "[It's about] defending and putting a really big emphasis on defending, [as well as] sharing the ball and trusting each other. Any team in college can beat any other team on any given night. We've just got to go out there, play hard, play for each other and play with each other, play for the fans here at UM. I think [if we do that], we should be successful."

Although going from league play back in to non-conference action can be odd, it will not change the approach for Miami leading into this game.

Rather, it will simply be a helpful lift for a team heading into a contest against a strong opponent.

"Basketball is basketball; we've got to get a win. I think [the Clemson game] was a good confidence booster for us," Miller shared. "... We've got to stay 10 toes down and make sure that we're coming ready to play regardless of whether it's ACC play or non-conference play."

Aside from a win, there is one other thing Miller is hoping for Wednesday night. That is to see the stands—especially the student section—filled with Miami fans.

Coming off a season with empty arenas throughout the country, the support in the building means even more. The team, as 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga has repeatedly mentioned, feeds off the encouragement and excitement provided by people in the seats at the Watsco Center.

To Miller, the fans are truly a part of the team.

"I see UM fans and our team being one big family," he said. "When family shows out to your game and they cheer you on, it's loud. You hear them cheering after a bucket or a big defensive stop, it really energizes us and helps us do what we did last game. As important as we are to the success of the team, I think the fans are just as important."

After playing Lipscomb, Miami travels to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., where it plays Fordham Sunday at 11:30 a.m. in the Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational, live on FloSports.

McGusty Tabbed a Senior CLASS Award Candidate

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 7, 2021

For more information on each of the candidates, please visit www.seniorclassaward.com.

Kameron McGusty of the University of Miami men's basketball team is a candidate for the 2021-22 Senior CLASS Award.

The sixth-year redshirt senior guard is one of 30 nominees in the sport of men's basketball, as announced Tuesday. The prestigious award honors Division I seniors with notable achievements in four areas of excellence: community, classroom, character and competition.

McGusty is averaging 16.7 points, 6.2 rebounds and 1.9 assists per game through the first nine contests of the season. The Hurricanes' leader in scoring and rebounding, he already owns three double-doubles and three 20-point performances in 2021-22.

A native of Katy, Texas, with over 1,350 points as a collegian, McGusty is also a strong student who received a bachelor's degree from Miami in May 2021 after majoring in sport administration with a minor in sociology. McGusty, a two-time ACC Honor Roll member, is now pursuing a second bachelor's degree as an exploratory arts and sciences major.

The 6-foot-5, 190-pounder has donated or volunteered his time in support of several charitable causes, including Operation Christmas Child, the Boys & Girls Club, Fight4Literacy and hurricane relief funds.

This is the third season in a row and fourth time in six years a Hurricane is a Senior CLASS Award nominee, as McGusty joins Nysier Brooks (2020-21) DJ Vasiljevic (2019-20) and Davon Reed (2016-17) in that group. He is one of four candidates from the ACC this season, alongside Syracuse's Buddy Boehm, Virginia Tech's Justyn Mutts and Clemson's Hunter Tyson.

An acronym for Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School®, the Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities.

The candidates will be narrowed to a field of 10 finalists in February and those names will be placed on the official ballot. Ballots will be distributed through a nationwide voting system to media, coaches and fans. The Senior CLASS Award winner will be announced during the Final Four.

Canes keep rolling as McGusty scores career-high 29 in 76-59 UM win over Lipscomb

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 8, 2021

There is a different energy in the University of Miami men's basketball locker room this season, a positive vibe that was missing the past few years. Coach Jim Larranaga and his Hurricanes are having fun again, and the results are showing on the court.

The good times continues Wednesday night, as the Canes overcame a slow start and rolled to a 76-59 win over Lipscomb at the Watsco Center. It was Miami's third win in a row and the team improved to 7-3.

After the game Larranaga trotted over to the baseline in front of the pep band and "Category 5" student section and celebrated with them. Last week, following a win over Clemson, Larranaga congratulated the team in the locker room by praising their fighting spirit, and then broke into a Muhammad Ali dance that had his players roaring and falling off their chairs.

The scene was reminiscent of the Coach L that led the Hurricanes to the Sweet 16 in 2013 and 2016. Injuries and other issues have plagued the team the past few seasons, but this season the Canes' fortunes seem to be turning.

"There's no fun in losing," Larranaga said.

"There are no smiles or happy faces. When we win, we invite young kids and their families to come down and say hello to the players. If we lose we tell them to go home. When we lose nobody's in a good mood. After a win my wife and I go out to dinner with friends. After a loss, I go directly home and start figuring out how to win our next one."

Wednesday there were plenty of happy faces.

Kameron McGusty led the Hurricanes with a career-high 29 points, including four three pointers. Isaiah Wong – finally recovered from a debilitating sinus infection -- scored 20 points, and Jordan Miller had 12 points and nine rebounds. Point guard Charlie Moore scored eight points to go with five rebounds and four assists.

"There's a lot of joy and happiness in the locker room," McGusty said. "Everybody's cheering each other on. We just have good energy out there. I feel like we are building off what we did in the ACC Tournament last year. We haven't had to deal with any injuries, knock on wood. So just good morale and spirit."

Sixth year redshirt senior Sam Waardenburg said the new team attitude was evident the morning after their blowout loss to ninth-ranked Alabama in the ESPN Events Invitational in Orlando a few weeks ago. After trailing by just three at halftime of that game, the Canes were outscored 63-34 in the second half.

Waardenburg said the next morning, the players called a meeting to dissect the game tape and he felt they were "locked in" in a way he hadn't seen the past few seasons.

There was some concern about how the team would recover after five players transferred, including point guard Chris Lykes, but incoming transfers Moore and Miller have been great additions.

"This is a group that's very well-connected," Larranaga said. "On the court they're really trusting each other. Seventeen assists is a good indication. I think also the way we're playing with Sam Waardenburg and Jordan Miller handling the ball a lot. Our bigs are not getting left out of the offense. Early in the season they were. I thought Jordan was terrific. We're getting better."

The Hurricanes forced 15 turnovers with the help of some mid-game adjustments by associate head coach Chris Caputo, whom Larranaga calls his defensive coordinator.

"In the second half Kam and Isaiah caught fire, we were able to find them over and over again and we ended up with 17 assists and 10 turnovers, which is a very good offensive night," Larranaga said. "When Kam was open he made the shot, when he was guarded he put it on the ground and attacked. He used the ball screens very effectively, and he did it unselfishly. He found the open man, that's what allowed Isaiah to have 20 points."

Lipscomb, an ASUN conference team from Nashville, went basket for basket with the Hurricanes for most of the first half before Miami pulled ahead by nine at halftime.

McGusty made a point of thanking the fans who showed up. Miami has struggled with attendance, and although it wasn't a big crowd Wednesday, it was spirited.

"Category 5 helps us so much, we really appreciate that," he said. "We need all the support we can get. If we can the Watsco filled up as much as possible, that's going to help us. It helps us bring energy and get going. So, let's keep it going."

McGusty Leads MBB to 76-59 Win over Lipscomb

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 8, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team dominated the final 26 minutes of its Wednesday night matchup with Lipscomb, en route to a 76-59 victory at the Watsco Center.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty dazzled with a career-high 29 points on 12-of-19 shooting to help Miami (7-3, 1-0 ACC) win its third consecutive game.

"I thought the guys did a very good job of making adjustments constantly throughout the game," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "...We ended up going with a small lineup and those guys did a terrific job. They scrambled, forced some turnovers. They showed some real quickness and athletic ability, and then were able to score in transition."

Lipscomb (5-5) built an early three-point lead behind a 3-of-6 clip from deep compared to Miami's 0-of-4 mark. The Hurricanes, however, forced misses on the Bisons' final six long-range attempts of the half and began to take control of the game.

Miami used a 14-0 run in just 4:25 to turn that three-point deficit into an 11-point edge, 35-24, with 1:17 on the clock. The surge included back-to-back dunks by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, followed by a run-capping 3-pointer by McGusty.

The Hurricanes held Lipscomb scoreless for 5:31, as it committed three turnovers and missed six straight field goals before connecting in the final half-minute to make it a nine-point margin, 35-26, at the break. McGusty tallied 12 points in the opening 20 minutes, shooting 5-of-8 from the floor, while Miller logged three steals and two blocks at the other end.

Lipscomb pulled within eight—the closest it would get—early in the second half, but Miami countered with a 13-5 run to double its advantage to 16, 55-39, with 12:45 to go. Its lead never dipped below 14 points the rest of the way.

The Hurricanes upped their edge as high as 19, their second-largest in any game all year, on their way to a 17-point win, also their second-biggest of 2021-22.

Along with setting a career best in points, McGusty also set new top marks in field goals

made and attempted, the former by two and the latter by one. He shot 4-of-7 from 3-point range, made his lone free throw and added a career-best three blocked shots.

"I thought Kam got it rolling and the other guys were very, very confident in his shot-making," Larrañaga said. "They kept getting him the ball in transition. He made some baskets in the half-court level. We sent him a lot of ball screens; he shot well off the ball screen. Charlie Moore has a good feel for who's got the hot hand and he was able to get the ball to Kam."

Wong totaled 20 points on a blistering 9-of-13 shooting, including an 8-of-9 mark inside the arc. Miller logged 12 points, a co-season-high seven rebounds, career-high five steals and career-high three blocks, the latter three marks leading or co-leading all players Wednesday. Moore chipped in eight points, a season-high six rebounds and four assists.

Just one Lipscomb player finished with double-digit points, as sophomore forward Kaleb Coleman totaled 12 off the bench. Five others notched between six and nine points in the setback.

The Hurricanes, who shot over 50 percent in both halves, ended the night with a 51.6 percent ledger (33-of-64), their second-highest mark of the season. They also held Lipscomb below 40 percent in both frames and to just a 37.1 percent tally (23-of-62) overall.

In addition, Miami's 11 steals tied its top total of the year, while its 18 assists tied for second-highest mark.

The Hurricanes now travel to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., where they square off with Fordham Sunday at 11:30 a.m. in the Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational, live on FloSports.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

- The Hurricanes claimed the opening meeting between Miami and Lipscomb, marking their third win of the season in a first-time matchup.
- Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 677-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 207-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.
- With 677 victories in his career, Larrañaga passed Denny Crum and moved into a tie with Mike Montgomery for No. 33 on the all-time Division I wins list.
- For the seventh time this season and fifth in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Wong and sixth-year

redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

- Miami improved to 4-0 under Larrañaga when playing a non-conference game immediately following a November or December ACC contest.
- Two Hurricanes scored 20-plus points for the second time this season, joining the 11/13/21 matchup with UCF, when McGusty (28) and Wong (20) also did so.
- The last time Miami shot over 50 percent in both halves was 11/26/21 against North Texas in Kissimmee, Fla., in the ESPN Events Invitational.
- The other game in which Miami logged 11 steals this year was 11/13/21 versus UCF.
- Sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., made his 75th collegiate appearance.
- Freshman guard Bensley Joseph, who eclipsed 100 minutes in his young career, set new highs in minutes (19), rebounds (four) and assists (two).
- Wong, who surpassed 850 points as a Hurricane, registered his 17th 20-point showing, including his third this season.
- In addition, Wong scored in double figures for the 42nd time, including the ninth this year.
- McGusty, who surpassed 500 made field goals in his career, logged his 17th 20-point performance, including his 11th at Miami and fourth in 2021-22.
- Additionally, McGusty tallied double-digit points for the 72nd time, including the 44th as a Hurricane and ninth this season.
- McGusty's prior career high in made field goals was 10, set 3/11/21 against Georgia Tech in the ACC Tournament quarterfinals in Greensboro, N.C.
- In addition, McGusty's prior career high in points was 28, recorded on both 11/13/21 versus UCF and 12/21/19 against Coppin State.
- J. Miller tallied double-digit points for the 52nd time, including the second this season, with the two coming back-to-back.
- J. Miller also became the first Hurricane with five steals in a game since 1/5/21.
- Additionally, J. Miller became the second Division I player this season to log 12 points, seven rebounds, five steals and three blocks in a game, including the first to do so with no turnovers.
- Moore logged six-plus rebounds for the 10th time in his career.
- Freshman guard Wooga Poplar tied his career high in rebounds (five) and set a new top mark in assists (four).

McGusty sets career-high, leads Miami to third consecutive victory over Lipscomb

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 8, 2021

Redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty delivered his fourth 20-point game of the season, pouring in a career-high 29 points in Miami's 76-59 victory over the Lipscomb Bisons (5-5) on Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

The Oklahoma transfer turned it on against Lipscomb in the second half, shooting 60% from the floor and sinking a trio of 3-pointers. The performance narrowly edged McGusty's previous career-high, when he scored 28 points against Coppin State in 2019, and earlier this season against Central Florida.

"It's a great feeling. I wouldn't be able to feel that without my teammates," McGusty said. "It's a testament to all the hard work I've put in ... and the belief of the coaching staff."

Even with the 17-point margin, the game wasn't easy from the start. After scoring 80 points in their come-from-behind win on Saturday over Clemson, it was the defense from Miami (7-3) that emerged early on. Lipscomb opened the game making just one of its first six shots, while turning the ball over twice inside the opening five minutes.

The Hurricanes ran into some frustrations towards the midpoint of the first half. Sophomore Anthony Walker picked up two personal fouls within 20 seconds, and his replacement, Rodney Miller, Jr., went down with an injury 49 seconds after entering the game. His status is still to be determined going forward.

The finish to the first half was all Miami, building its deficit out to nine points. Miami led a 14-0 run in the last quarter of the half, highlighted by back-to-back dunks from guards Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller. The Bisons finished the half scoring on just one of their final eight attempts.

In addition, UM forced the Bisons into some major mental errors, with Lipscomb committing nine first-half turnovers. Miami came into the contest forcing an average of exactly 14 turnovers per game against its opposition.

"We trapped the ball screen a few times, we trapped the pick a few times, we fronted the low post one time," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "When you have different ways to force your opponent into turnovers, you're doing something right."

UM hit just two 3-pointers in the first half, but

came out of the break with some sharpshooting prowess. McGusty and Wong each drilled shots from beyond the arch within two minutes to stretch the lead back out to 11.

From there, McGusty started to steal the show. The redshirt senior sparked Miami with eight straight points, including two triples to boost UM to a 53-39 lead, its largest lead of the contest.

"[McGusty is] a great player, he always attacks," Wong said. "I saw that before I came here that he was going to be one of the top ACC guards."

Wong responded in suit, scoring 10 consecutive points over a four-minute span for Miami. The New Jersey native closed the contest with 20 points, just one point behind his season-high output against North Texas in Orlando, Florida.

In the end, the balanced attack of Miami saw it cruise at the end of the game. The Hurricanes shot 50% in the second half, and combined for 17 team assists to lead to the impressive 17-point win.

"I think this is a group that is really well-connected," Larrañaga said. "17 assists is a good indication."

The win secured Miami's first three-game winning streak since the start of last season, when they beat North Florida, Stetson and Purdue. Now, they've beaten Penn State, Clemson, and Lipscomb.

The Hurricanes will look for a fourth consecutive win when they head to New York for a neutral site matchup against Fordham at the Barclays Center. Miami won its last game at the Barclays Center in 2019 against Temple but are 2-3 all-time at the home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets.

Kameron McGusty, Isaiah Wong lead Miami past Lipscomb

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 8, 2021

Kameron McGusty continues to knock down shots in his best start as a Hurricane.

He got some help too.

McGusty scored a career-high 29 points, Isaiah Wong added 20 and the Miami Hurricanes rolled to a 76-59 win over Lipscomb on Wednesday.

"I thought Kam got it rolling and the other guys were very, very confident in his shot-making," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Jordan Miller was the only other Hurricane in double figures with 12 as he also led the team with eight rebounds.

Miami (7-3) has won three straight while Lipscomb (5-5) has dropped its last three.

McGusty made 12 of 19 shots from the floor and hit 4 of 7 from behind the arc. He is averaging a career-best 17.7 points a game and already has four 20-point games after having three all of last year.

"They kept getting him the ball in transition, he made some baskets in the half-court level, we sent him a lot of ball screens; he shot well off the ball screen," Larranaga said. "Charlie Moore has a good feel for who's got the hot hand and he was able to get the ball to Kam."

Wong's 20-point effort was the third time he has eclipsed that total and has reached double figures in the past eight games. Wong hit 9 of 13 shots.

McGusty and Wong are the fifth-highest scoring duo in the ACC and will be expected to continue to carry the load throughout the season.

The game was tied at 24 before the Hurricanes ended the first half on a 11-2 sparked by McGusty who made a layup and hit a 3.

A strong start to the second half saw the Hurricanes stretch their lead to 55-39 after a dunk by Wooga Poplar, which came after a two-minute stretch where McGusty hit a pair of 3s and finished a layup.

Miami's lead continued to stay in double figures the rest of the way.

Miami shot 51.6 percent (33 of 64) from the

field while holding Lipscomb to 37.1-percent (23 of 62) shooting.

The Bison has 15 turnovers to Miami's 10.

"We ended up going with a small lineup and those guys did a terrific job," Larranaga said. "They scrambled, forced some turnovers. They showed some real quickness and athletic ability, and then were able to score in transition."

Only six Hurricanes scored in the game as Larranaga primarily went with a seven-man rotation.

An eighth, Anthony Walker, went scoreless in nine minutes and has scored just eight points in the last five games.

UP NEXT

Miami goes up against Fordham on Sunday (11:30 a.m., FloSports) at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. as part of the Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational.

New York State of Mind

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 10, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team's next road trip, a visit to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., is an exciting one.

However, before looking forward to its next game, a team must always look back at its most recent one.

For Miami (7-3, 1-0 ACC) that was a review of its 76-59 victory over Lipscomb Wednesday night at the Watsco Center. The Hurricanes dominated the game for the final 26 minutes on their way to a third consecutive win.

"First of all, there were three things that we really needed to emphasize at the defensive end of the floor," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We needed to defend the three, we needed to defend the cuts because they move very well without the ball and we needed to defend the low post.

"After analyzing the statistics and the video, they only scored twice out of 26 times on cuts, they only scored once out of five times on a low-post feed and they shot 7-of-28 from three," he continued. "So, the three things that we emphasized, we defended very, very well."

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller keyed the Hurricanes' defensive effort, totaling seven rebounds, five steals and three blocks. He also posted 12 points and two assists at the other end, becoming just the second Division I player this season to reach all of those figures.

Miami, as a team, also excelled on offense against the Bisons. It shot over 50 percent from the floor in both halves and finished with a 51.6 percent clip on the evening.

Two players, in particular, led the way: sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

McGusty shot 12-of-19 overall, 4-of-7 from deep and 1-of-1 at the line, finishing with a career-high 29 points. His 12 made field goals also set a career high—as did his three blocked shots on the defensive side of the floor—while his four made 3-pointers put him one off his career best.

Wong, meanwhile, totaled 20 points on a blistering 9-of-13 mark from the floor. He went 8-of-9 inside the arc, as he repeatedly created quality shots off the bounce.

"Well, believe it or not, that's actually kind of an expectation that we have for both of them throughout this year," Larrañaga said of the duo. "They're both high-octane scorers and very good players who can play off of each other. They play very well together. We can rest one and the other one can carry us for a while. And when you add Charlie Moore to our backcourt, we actually have three outstanding, double-figure scorers."

The standout backcourt will now take its show on the road to the Big Apple for a matchup with Fordham Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

Miami is set to play the Rams in the home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets. It will be the 19th time in Larrañaga's 11 years the team has played in an NBA arena. This season, though, there is a particular reason why the Hurricanes are headed to this venue at this time.

"I think it's very important this year because the ACC Tournament is going to be in Barclays," Larrañaga shared. "Playing a team like Fordham that stretches the defense, shoots a lot of threes and drives the ball is exactly the preparation we need to get ready for more ACC games."

Fordham was picked No. 14 in the Atlantic 10 after posting a 2-12 (2-11) record last season, but is already 7-4 on the year after winning four of its last five contests.

First-year head coach Kyle Neptune's roster features a trio of upperclassmen leading the charge. Junior guard Antonio Daye Jr., is Fordham's leading scorer at 18.0 points per game, while graduate student guard Darius Quisenberry is averaging 16.7 points per contest.

Graduate student forward Chuba Ohams, meanwhile, is averaging a double-double at 14.5 points and a staggering 11.8 rebounds per game.

"They are an outstanding 3-point shooting team," Larrañaga said. "Their two guards, Quisenberry and Daye, both average 17-18 [points per] game. They can shoot the three, they can put it on the ground and get to the basket. Those two guys are a real handful. Their big guy, Ohams, has had a game where he's had 20 points and 22 rebounds. So, he's a major concern of mine. This is a going to be a real challenge for our defense."

For six Hurricanes, including three staff members, the voyage to New York will be a trip to—or at least close to—home.

Larrañaga hails from the Bronx, N.Y., while associate head coach Chris Caputo is from Elmhurst, N.Y., and sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., is from Laurelton, N.Y. Freshman guard Jakai Robinson is from Ossining, N.Y., just outside the city.

Meanwhile, Wong is from Piscataway, N.J., and director of basketball operations Jeff Dyer is a native of Hillsborough, N.J. Both—like the four previously mentioned—are within 50 miles and 90 minutes of Brooklyn.

For Larrañaga, though, this trip is about basketball, not catching up with friends and family.

"In actuality, my focus is strictly on my team," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "My family will be there. My wife is coming with us and she'll meet with my family. I'll be with my players and coaches, trying to get ready for the game. I'll get a chance to maybe visit with my family after the game, but the most important thing is us playing hard and playing well and being the best version of ourselves we can be on Sunday morning."

While "morning" can sound a bit odd when referring to a college basketball game, that is indeed the case for this contest. It will actually be the seventh time in Larrañaga's 11 seasons Miami has a pre-noon tip-off and his team is 5-1 in the prior six.

Already this season, Miami has played at 11 a.m. once and noon twice, posting a 2-1 mark in those affairs. The pregame routine for this one will be similar to those two.

"I think it's the same preparation. We just have to get ourselves physically, mentally and emotionally ready so that, from start to finish, we're focused on playing basketball," Larrañaga shared. "Our players have played at all different times throughout their lives. When they were playing AAU ball, they sometimes had to play at 8 o'clock in the morning. So, 11:30 should be nothing special."

Wednesday's matchup will be televised live—a subscription is required—on FloSports HERE, with Andrew Bogusch and Scott Greene on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats for the game will be available HERE.

Following its matchup with Fordham, Miami has seven days without a game and then hosts Stetson Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, live on RSN.

No pizza or hot dogs, but fourth win in a row as UM men beat Fordham 72-66 in Brooklyn

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 12, 2021

Miami Hurricanes coach Jim Larranaga and his top assistant, Chris Caputo, are native New Yorkers and wanted their players to get a feel for the Barclays Center in Brooklyn because that is where the 2022 ACC Tournament will be held.

They also wanted to prepare for tough conference games by facing a team that shoots a lot of three-pointers and stretches the defense.

Mission accomplished. The Canes rallied in the second half and knocked off Fordham 72-66. It was Miami's fourth win in a row and the team improved to 8-3 heading into a one-week break for final exams.

Point guard Charlie Moore led UM with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting, seven rebounds, two assists and three steals in 38 minutes. Isaiah Wong added 17 points and seven rebounds. Kam McGusty had 15 points, Anthony Walker eight points, and Jordan Miller chipped in eight points and nine rebounds.

Miami, which trailed by two at halftime, held Fordham to 21 percent shooting from three-point range (8-of-38) and to 29 points in the second half.

"They took 38 threes, and we did a reasonably good job of defending them," said Larranaga, who rushed through the press conference because he had family to visit with before the flight home. "We made some real key shots and free throws and that's what it's all about."

Larranaga was pleased with the balance in scoring and the fact that the Hurricanes won the rebounding battle 41-32 and outscored the Rams 34-26 in the paint, both areas his somewhat undersized team has been trying to improve.

Moore was the catalyst all game long.

"I couldn't take him out," Larranaga said. "He was really running the team very well. Playing 38 minutes...If he gets 18 points and seven rebounds, that's a great night for him. He was named Player of the Game. Everyone knows we've got three exceptional guards, Charlie, Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty and it was Charlie's turn to step up and play huge."

Miami was favored by 10 but took a while to get going. Fordham took an early lead, UM missed eight of nine shots during a three-min-

ute scoring drought, and the Rams took a two-point halftime edge with a three-pointer by Antonio Daye at the buzzer.

It was a completely different story after intermission. The Hurricanes clamped down on defense, found open shots, and went on a 16-2 run to open a comfortable 14-point lead with eight minutes to go.

Fordham got to within five points with under two minutes to go, Larranaga called a time out and called a backdoor play for McGusty that worked to perfection. The veteran guard made the shot, got fouled for a three-point play and the Canes never looked back. McGusty, Miller and Moore made six consecutive free throws to seal the win.

"The reason we scheduled this game was we wanted to play in the Barclays Center and get our guys a little accustomed to the New York environment," Larranaga said. "We landed at Newark and bused them over and it almost took as long to get from the airport to our hotel as it took to get from Miami to Newark. We have to adjust our schedule for the New York atmosphere."

Although he would love to have spent a few days with friends and family in New York City, the coach was headed straight back to Miami after the game.

"I'm sure a lot of the guys would love to be going into Manhattan to get a slice of pizza or a dirty water hot dog or hang out in Times Square, but we'll be back in Miami by 6 tonight," he said.

Miami's next game is at home Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. against Stetson.

MBB Tops Fordham, 72-66, in Brooklyn

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 12, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team picked up its fourth consecutive win by defeating Fordham, 72-66, in the Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore scored a game-high 18 points for Miami (8-3, 1-0 ACC), which trailed at the break, but turned in a tremendous defensive performance in the second half to register the win at the Barclays Center.

"I thought the game was played exactly like we envisioned it. Our guys defended the three very well. We knew they would shoot 30-plus threes and they ended up shooting 38," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "...You have to defend those well because they could catch fire and go on a run. Our guys never let them do that."

After opening 4-of-16 from the floor, Miami made three shots in a row, including back-to-back 3-pointers by Moore to take a five-point lead, 20-15, with 7:24 on the clock. The Hurricanes, though, could not retain their lead for the remainder of the half.

Following a 0-of-9 start from 3-point range in the first 10 minutes, Fordham (7-5) went 4-of-8 the rest of the frame. The Rams hit consecutive shots from deep in the final 45 seconds, including a buzzer beater by junior guard Antonio Daye Jr., to take a 37-35 edge into the locker room.

A pair of Fordham graduate students, guard Darius Quisenberry (12) and forward Chuba Ohams (11), combined for 23 points in the first half, with the latter shooting 5-of-5 from the floor.

After the Rams scored the first basket coming out of the intermission, Miami answered with 16 straight points in just 5:38 to turn a game-high four-point deficit into a then-game-high 12-point lead, 51-39, with 12:58 to play. The Hurricanes held Fordham without a point for 6:43 and, even beyond that stretch, forced 10 consecutive missed shots.

The Hurricanes extended their surge to 20-2 and took a game-best 14-point edge, 55-41, with 11:52 left. The Rams, however, countered with a 12-2 burst of their own to make it 57-53 with 7:53 remaining.

Miami then held Fordham scoreless for 4:16

and went back up by 10, but junior guard Kam'Ron Cunningham hit a pair of 3-pointers to make it a four-point game, 63-59, with 2:08 to go. An old-fashioned three-point play at the other end by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty 21 seconds later, though, all but iced the eventual six-point win.

"One of the things that they did in the first half is they kept switching ball screens and our guys took advantage," Larrañaga said. "In the second half, they chose to go under ball screens and, I thought, our guys really read that well, ended up getting good shots and making those shots."

Moore, who shot 7-of-13 from the field, grabbed a season-high seven rebounds, one shy of his career best, in a season-best 38 minutes of action. He also posted a season-high-tying three steals to pace all players, en route to claiming game MVP honors.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong finished with 17 points and a season-best seven rebounds, while McGusty tallied 15 points on 6-of-12 shooting. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller posted eight points and a season-best nine rebounds, the latter mark co-leading all players, in a season-high 36 minutes.

Ohams, who blocked three shots, led Fordham with 15 points on 6-of-6 shooting, but Miami held him to just one basket—on his lone attempt—in the second half. Daye scored 13 points and Quisenberry added 12, the latter shooting 0-of-8 after the break, including 0-of-7 from deep.

The Hurricanes' strong defense held Fordham to just a 23-of-60 clip (38.3 percent) from the field, including an 8-of-38 mark (21.1 percent) ledger from deep. Miami, meanwhile, made three more field goals on one fewer attempt and hit just three fewer 3-pointers on 22 fewer tries.

Miami, which won for the second consecutive time when trailing at the break, also posted a 41-32 edge on the glass.

After a week without a game, Miami returns to action Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. against Stetson at the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Fla., live on RSN.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 2-1 all-time against Fordham, including 1-0 at neutral sites and 1-0 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 678-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 208-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 678 victories in his career, Larrañaga passed Mike Montgomery for sole possession of No. 33 on the all-time Division I wins list.

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

– As announced prior to tip-off, sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., will miss 3-4 weeks with a left groin injury sustained Wednesday against Lipscomb.

– The Hurricanes moved to 9-10 in NBA arenas during Larrañaga's 11 years, playing in seven different venues across nine different seasons.

– Miami is now 3-3 all-time at the Barclays Center, including 2-1 in the regular season.

– The Hurricanes improved to 6-1 in Larrañaga's tenure when playing in games that start before noon, including 2-0 this year.

– Fordham's 21 second-half 3-point attempts tied for the second-most by a Miami opponent in any frame since it joined in the ACC in 2004-05, trailing only the 22 by Duke in the second half on 2/7/09 in Durham, N.C.

– Seven of the Hurricanes' 11 turnovers—including all but one of the first eight—were offensive fouls.

– Along with Miller, Moore and Wong, a fourth Hurricane also grabbed a season high in rebounds, as fifth-year redshirt junior Deng Gak posted four.

– Ohams and Quisenberry combined for just four second-half points after registering a combined 23 in the first frame.

– Fordham shot just 29.0 percent (9-of-31) in the second half.

– McGusty, who notched his 75th start as a collegian and eclipsed 1,400 points, tallied double-figure points for the 73rd time, including the 45th as a Hurricane and the 10th in 2021-22.

– Wong, who recorded his 50th start at Miami, scored in double digits for the 43rd time, including the 10th this year.

– Moore, who surpassed 1,350 points in his career and made a season-high seven field goals, logged his 63rd double-digit scoring performance, including his sixth this season.

Charlie Moore's 18 leads Hurricanes to 72-66 win over Rams

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 12, 2021

Isaiah Wong added 17 points, Kameron McGusty chipped in 15 and Jordan Miller nearly had a double-double with eight points and nine rebounds for the Hurricanes, who have won four straight for the first time in two years.

Miami (8-3) had its 14-point lead cut to four with two minutes left after a 3-pointer by Kam'ron Cunningham.

McGusty converted a three-point play on the ensuing possession for a 66-59 advantage.

Fordham (7-4), which led 37-35 at halftime, followed with a pair of free throws to cut the deficit to five, but would not get any closer the rest of the way.

McGusty extended the lead to seven with 40 seconds left after making two free throws. Miller and Moore also hit two free throws down the stretch as Miami made 15 of 19 in the game.

The Hurricanes shot 44.1 percent (26 of 59) from the field, 5 of 16 from 3.

The Rams scored the first points after the break, but the Hurricanes responded with a 16-0 run for a 51-39 lead. Wong ignited the run by hitting a 3 and finishing a three-point play.

Miami has posted wins over Penn State, Clemson, Lipscomb and Fordham for its longest winning streak since winning five in a row December 2019.

Moore made 7 of 13 shots on his way to his second-highest scoring game of the season.

MILLER OUT

Center Rodney Miller will miss three to four weeks with a left groin injury sustained in last week's win over Lipscomb. Miller is averaging 2.3 points in 10 games this season.

UP NEXT

Miami returns home against Stetson for its final non-conference game on Dec. 20.

Gak Ready to Step up as Non-Conference Play Concludes

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 18, 2021

When a player gets hurt, it is never a good thing and no one is happy about it.

An injury, however, does inherently present an opportunity for someone else to step up. That is the case right now for the University of Miami men's basketball team.

Sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., went down with a left groin injury in the Dec. 8 win over Lipscomb. It will keep him sidelined for three to four weeks.

A veteran with 31 collegiate starts under his belt, including three this season, Miller is certainly a loss for the Hurricanes. However, they do have another upperclassman ready to step up: Deng Gak.

"I'm just [approaching the opportunity] with a good attitude," Gak said. "...It's a long season and a lot of things [can happen]. I've been on the other side, being hurt. So, I understand how quickly things can change, how lineups change and stuff. It's something I'm used to, change."

Gak, a fifth-year redshirt junior forward, assuredly knows better than most about dealing with injuries. After redshirting for non-medical reasons as a freshman in 2017-18, he suffered significant knee injuries early in each of the next two seasons.

The 6-foot-11, 220-pounder played the first eight games of the 2018-19 campaign before a season-ending right knee injury and the first seven games of 2019-20 before a season-ending left knee injury. Through his first three years on campus, he took part in just 15 games.

Over the past two seasons, though, Gak has played in 34 of Miami's 38 contests, starting two of them.

"It's cool. Three years, I feel like I really missed out on playing games," Gak shared. "That, I feel like it really affects you as a player. Missing one affects you, but I was unfortunate enough to miss multiple. So, I feel like my ability [to impact] games is not where I want it to be at, but I'm okay with little improvements."

With Miller out, Gak's role is set to increase and, in fact, already has. While he is far from joyous about his long-term teammate's injury, he is understandably excited for the chance to earn additional minutes.

"Most definitely," Gak confirmed. "I think everyone wants to showcase their games. So, I think this little bit of extra playing time I get will definitely help my

case. Hopefully I can use it to carve a bigger role for myself."

The first chance Gak had to do that was in Brooklyn, N.Y., where Miami (8-3, 1-0 ACC) defeated Fordham Sunday at the Barclays Center in the Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational.

Other players stole the show from a statistical standpoint, including sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore posting an 18-point, season-high seven-rebound performance to garner game MVP honors.

Gak, though, excelled in his role. The big man came off the bench and grabbed a season-best four rebounds, as well as played solid defense and made both of his free throws. He finished plus-six, tied for the fourth-best mark on the team, behind only Moore, third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong (17 points and seven rebounds) and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller (eight points and nine rebounds).

"I felt like my production was high for the minutes I played," Gak said. "I was ready. Coming into the game, I knew Rod wasn't playing, so I was mentally ready. I'm happy I helped the team when I got in there."

For Gak, it is not about the amount of minutes he gets on the court, but rather about the way he utilizes them. That is a lesson he gets from his head coach, Jim Larrañaga, a two-time ACC Coach of the Year.

"Coach L has a [saying], 'It's not about playing time, it's about playing well,'" Gak shared. "I think ... with the little time I have, I might as well go out there and leave my mark. I think that's how I do approach it."

From a team perspective, Gak was also pleased with the way Miami responded to defeat the Rams at the home of the Brooklyn Nets.

Trailing by four early in the second half, the Hurricanes scored 16 consecutive points to take a commanding lead. They led the rest of the way, en route to a fourth straight win.

"There was a point in the game where we went on a run in the second half. I like how composed we were," Gak said. "I feel like our problem a lot [of times] in past seasons was our ability to finish games. We weren't always poised. But I feel like this year, with the new additions, we've been able to practice at a high level [and then in] game situations, we're good at holding late-game leads and even extending them now."

Up next for Gak and the Hurricanes is their lone game in a 16-day stretch, a Monday night matchup

with Stetson. Miami will host the Hatters at 7 p.m. at the Watsco Center.

There is only one program, Florida State, the Hurricanes have played more than Stetson. Miami owns a 50-33 mark versus the Hatters over the 83 contests, including a 10-0 ledger since the 1985-86 rebirth, a 31-13 record at home and a 2-0 tally under Larrañaga.

Most recently, Miami logged an 82-60 home victory on Dec. 4, 2020, a game Gak remembers as one of his first back from injury.

Stetson will be the fourth in-state, non-Power Five foe Miami faces this season. The Hurricanes are 86-9 since the program rebirth against such opponents, but they always present a challenge.

"Those games are fun. Coach always warns us about those games," Gak said. "...They've got to give us their best shot and try to prove they're better than us. They're always good competition and we've got to be ready. It's not a big-name ACC school or a Power Five school, but ... it's always a little rivalry when it's in-state."

The Hatters are 4-6 on the season, including 2-2 versus fellow Sunshine State schools. They are led in scoring by junior guard Rob Perry, who is averaging 13.7 points per game.

Stetson features a balanced scoring attack, with five players posting between six and 14 points per outing. That type of offense can sometimes present challenges for a defense, but Miami is prepared.

"With those type of games, we've just got to stick to how we play ... and to what we practice every day," Gak said. "[That is defending the] elbows and blocks [and allowing] no catch-and-shoot threes, just basic Miami defense. But we have to do it at a high level. I feel like basketball has evolved to a point where even mid-major schools can light you up. It's really because of the three-ball. Anyone can lose."

The Hurricanes' game against Stetson will be televised live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun—and FOX Sports GO, with Tom Werme and Brian Oliver on the call. A full affiliate is available [HERE](#) and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, [HERE](#).

After facing Stetson, Miami has eight days without a game and then hits the court Dec. 29 against NC State in the first of 19 consecutive ACC contests, with action slated for 9 p.m. at the Watsco Center, live on ESPNU.

Kameron McGusty has 27, Hurricanes beat Hatters

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 20, 2021

Kameron McGusty is playing his best basketball, which will be much-needed for the Miami Hurricanes heading into ACC play.

McGusty scored 27 points for the third time this season and hit six of the Hurricanes' 14 3-pointers in an 82-72 win over Stetson on Monday.

"Kam McGusty had a great all-around game scoring 27 points," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "I just think he got in a very good rhythm and got some really good looks. We had a couple of offensive rebounds, kick-out 3s for him and then, against the zone we were able to find him. But he wasn't the only one; we made 14 threes. So, everybody kind of chipped in, in that category."

Miami (9-3) wrapped up its non-conference schedule on a five-game winning streak, which includes a win over ACC foe Clemson. The Hurricanes will look to carry the momentum into next week when they resume conference action on Dec. 29 against NC State.

"Collectively our chemistry is starting to come together," McGusty said. "We're starting to help each other out more, making the right plays, knowing where guys are going to be and figuring out how we have to play to win."

McGusty, who made 9 of 12 shots, is fourth in the ACC in scoring at 18.3 a game on 51.1-percent shooting after averaging 13.3 last season.

"I try not to pay attention to the stats too much," McGusty said. "I know for us to win my team needs me to rebound and defend, and of course score. I've been doing all of the little things to help us win. Scoring is just extra that comes with it."

The Hurricanes also got 16 points from Isaiah Wong while Sam Waardenburg scored 10 of his 12 points in the first half.

Charlie Moore added nine points and eight assists while Jordan Miller grabbed 11 rebounds.

"I was staying on attack mode and finding open teammates," Moore said. "They were making it easy on me to and knocking down shots."

Six different players hit 3-pointers for the Hurricanes, who played without center Rodney Miller and guard Harlond Beverly.

McGusty and Waardenburg sparked the Hurricanes early, scoring the first 11 points.

Anthony Walker's layup capped a 13-2 run to give Miami a 21-9 lead 10 minutes in.

"I thought we got off to a great start," Larranaga said. "We ended up having a very good night offensively."

The Hurricanes, who shot 45.2 percent (28 of 62) from the field and 48.3 percent (14 of 29) from 3, took a 39-26 lead into the break after McGusty's 3.

Miami maintained a double-digit lead in the second half and it ballooned to 20 after a dunk by McGusty for a 75-55 advantage.

UP NEXT

The Hurricanes host NC State on Dec. 29 in the first of three straight ACC home games.

McGusty Shoots MBB Past Stetson, 82-72

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 20, 2021

The University of Miami men's basketball team defeated Stetson, 82-72, Monday night at the Watsco Center in its non-conference finale.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty led all players with 27 points, shooting a dazzling 9-of-12 from the field and 6-of-8 from 3-point range in the Miami (9-3, 1-0 ACC) victory, its fifth in a row. The Hurricanes never trailed and led for nearly 39 minutes.

"I thought we got off to a great start. We ended up having a very good night offensively," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "Defensively, we played well in spurts, but there were spurts where Stetson really just made a lot of shots. They ended up shooting 50 percent from three, which is obviously very disappointing. But we were shooting the ball so well from three ourselves. We made 14 3-pointers, which is our high. We had 20 assists, which is terrific."

After a nearly even start through four-plus minutes, the Hurricanes began to take over and grab control of the game. Miami went on an 18-5 run in 6:04 to go up by 14 points, 26-12, with 8:59 on the clock. The stretch included the Hurricanes making five shots in a row and Stetson (4-7) missing seven straight, as well as committing five turnovers, on the other end.

The Hatters cut the deficit back down to eight, but Miami used a 9-4 run in the final 3:12 to take a 13-point edge, 39-26, into the locker room.

Miami posted an assist on 11 of its 13 first-half made field goals, tied for its second-most in any frame this year. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore tallied seven of them, already two past his prior season high.

The Hurricanes put the game out of reach early in the second half when they made four 3-pointers in three-and-a-half minutes. McGusty hit three of those, including two on back-to-back possessions, as he opened 6-of-6 from deep through 28 minutes of action.

Miami, which had an 11-and-a-half minute stretch during the second half in which its eight made field goals were all from beyond the arc, eventually upped its lead as high as 20 in the closing minutes. The Hatters, with the game out of hand, closed the night on a 15-5 run in the final 3:44, to make it a 10-point final margin.

McGusty did miss his final two 3-pointers in the last two minutes, but still set a career high in long-range makes and recorded the most by a Hurricane since Jan. 18, 2020. The Katy, Texas, native finished just two points shy of a career best, as well as posted four rebounds, two steals and zero turnovers.

He became just the sixth player in the nation this season to post 27-plus points against a Division I foe while making six-plus 3-pointers and nine-plus field goals, as well as shooting at least 75 percent in both areas.

"Kam McGusty had a great all-around game scoring 27 points," Larrañaga said. "...I just think he got in a very good rhythm and

got some really good looks. We had a couple of offensive rebound, kick-out threes for him. And then, against the zone, we were able to find him. But he wasn't the only one; we made 14 threes. So, everybody kind of chipped in, in that category."

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, who made three 3-pointers, finished with 16 points, six rebounds and a season-high-tying four assists. Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg tallied 12 points, including 10 in the first half, and matched a season high with four assists.

Moore posted nine points to go along with his season-best eight assists—the most by a Hurricane since Jan. 30, 2021—and season-high-tying three steals. Fourth-year junior forward Jordan Miller grabbed a season-high 11 rebounds to lead all players.

Sophomore guard Chase Johnston paced Stetson with 18 points on 6-of-11 shooting from 3-point range, while junior guard Rob Perry notched 16 points. Graduate student guard Christiaan Jones added 12 points, while sophomore guard Stephan Swenson matched Moore with eight assists.

Miami ended the evening 14-of-29 (48.3 percent) from 3-point range, while Stetson shot 13-of-26 (50.0 percent) from deep. In total, 27 of the 55 made field goals in the game came from deep.

In addition, 41 of the 55 baskets were assisted, as the Hurricanes logged a season-high-tying 20 and the Hatters posted a season-best 21. Miami, though, had a season-low six turnovers compared to Stetson's 12.

Following an eight-day respite from game action, Miami returns to the court Dec. 29 at 9 p.m. for a matchup with NC State, live on ESPN2 from the Watsco Center.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 51-33 all-time against Stetson, including 32-13 at home and 3-0 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Miami's 51 wins over Stetson are its most versus any opponent, while its 84 matchups are its second-most against any foe, trailing only Florida State (87).

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 679-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 209-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 209 victories at the helm of the Hurricanes, Larrañaga tied Brad Brownell and Jim Valvano for No. 15 among coaches during their time at an ACC school.

– For the ninth time this season and seventh in a row, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, J. Miller, Wong and Waardenburg.

– The Hurricanes are now 87-9 since the program rebirth (1985-86) against non-Power Five, in-state foes, including 66-4 at home, 19-4 under Larrañaga and 15-3 at the Watsco Center in his tenure.

– The last time the Hurricanes won five straight games was 12/2/19 to 12/31/19, which also upped their record to 9-3, as well as featured four non-conference victories and an ACC triumph over Clemson.

– Miami last made 14-plus 3-pointers in a game on 12/21/19 when it set a program record with 18 against Coppin State.

– Prior to Monday, the Hurricanes' season low in turnovers was eight, set both 12/1/21 at Penn State and 12/4/21 versus Clemson.

– Miami, which posted 20-plus assists for the 17th time in Larrañaga's tenure and moved to 16-1 when doing so, also recorded 20

assists earlier this season on 11/9/21 versus Canisius.

– With eight assists, Swenson posted the second-most by a Miami opponent this season, trailing only the 10 by Alabama's JD Davison on 11/28/21.

– Johnston's six made 3-pointers marked the top total by a Hurricane foe since Georgia Tech's Michael Devoe posted seven on 2/20/21.

– The Hurricanes' 11 first-half assists matched their top mark before the intermission this year, tying the mark set 12/4/21 against Clemson, and trailed only the 13 recorded in the second half on 12/8/21 versus Lipscomb.

– Stetson shot 61.5 percent (16-of-26) in the second half, the first team to pass the 60 percent mark in a frame against Miami since No. 10/9 Alabama logged a 63.9 percent mark (23-of-36) on 11/28/21.

– Moore's seven first-half assists marked the highest total by a Hurricane in a session since Bruce Brown Jr., notched seven in the second half on 1/21/18 at NC State.

– With seven rebounds before the break, J. Miller tied for the third-most in a half by a Miami player this season, including the second-most in the first half.

– J. Miller, who earned his 75th start as a collegian and surpassed 2,500 minutes, recorded his 10th double-digit rebounding total, including his first of the year.

– Waardenburg, who eclipsed 500 points and 100 made free throws at Miami, scored in double figures for the 17th time, including the fifth this year.

– Wong, who eclipsed 300 made field goals and 2,000 minutes as a Hurricane, notched his 44th double-digit point total, including his 11th this season.

– McGusty, who surpassed 150 made 3-pointers as a collegian, tallied his 18th 20-point showing, including his 12th at Miami and fifth in 2021-22.

– McGusty also recorded his 74th double-figure point total, including his 46th as a Hurricane and 11th this year.

– The lone other time McGusty made even five 3-pointers in a game was 12/21/19 versus Coppin State when he shot 5-of-7 from deep.

– The only other players with 27-plus points, six-plus made 3-pointers, nine-plus made field goals and at least a 75 percent clip in both categories against a DI foe this season are LSU's Darius Days (11/9/21 vs. UL Monroe), Davidson's Foster Loyer (11/9/21 vs. Delaware), St. Joseph's' Taylor Funk (11/26/21 vs. Georgetown), Jacksonville State's Jalen Gibbs (11/27/21 at Elon) and Georgetown's Kaiden Rice (12/8/21 vs. UMBC).

– In addition, McGusty is the first Miami player in Larrañaga's tenure to reach each of those numbers in an outing, including the first to even make six 3-pointers on only eight attempts.

– Moore, who registered the highest assist total by a Hurricane since Harlond Beverly had nine on 1/30/21 at Wake Forest, posted his 39th five-assist performance, including his season of the year.

– Moore, who moved past 350 free-throw attempts in his career, became the third Hurricane to foul out this season, as he did so with 44 seconds left.

– Fifth-year junior forward Deng Gak logged his 50th appearance as a Hurricane.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar, who scored the co-second-most points of his career with eight, moved past 50 points in his young collegiate tenure.

With 5-game win streak entering ACC play, Miami has 'no doubt' it can make run at Tourney

By David Wilson
Miami Herald
Dec. 20, 2021

After three straight losing seasons and Marches mostly spent at home, the Miami Hurricanes made it through non-conference without doing anything to cripple their chances to make a run at a return to the NCAA Tournament in 2022.

With an 82-72 win against the Stetson Hatters in Coral Gables, they'll also go into the meat of the Atlantic Coast Conference schedule playing as well as they have all year and it's enough to have Miami starting to think about bigger goals.

"There's no doubt in my mind," guard Kameron McGusty said, "that we can make the actual NCAA Tournament."

The Hurricanes' win Monday was their fifth in a row, matching their longest winning streak since 2019, and all five victories have been various degrees of encouraging.

The streak started Dec. 1 with a road win against the Penn State Nittany Lions in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge, continued Dec. 4 with a win against the Clemson Tigers to open conference play and is still going after three straight wins against mid-major opponents by an average of 11.7 points.

With one game left before the calendar flips to 2022, Miami (9-3, 1-0) is only one victory away from matching its full-season win total from a year ago.

"I thought our guys handled the competition very well," coach Jim Larranaga said. "Overall, 9-3 at this stage of the season is a step in the right direction for us."

Considering the way the last three years went, it's a leap.

The Hurricanes won just 10 games last year, 15 games the year before and 14 the year before that. This year, they'll have a chance to get double-digit wins before New Year's Day.

With losses to the UCF Knights and Dayton Flyers last month, non-conference play was far from perfect for Miami, but its nine-point average margin of victory during this winning streak is a vast improvement from the first seven games, when the Hurricanes were outscored by nine.

"We've improved a lot," guard Charlie Moore

said.

Miami's defensive play against Stetson (4-7) left Larranaga a bit frustrated. Its offensive play fit right in with the winning identity the Hurricanes' have established.

Miami, which is now averaging 15.2 assists per game during the winning streak, matched a season high with 20 assists in front of 2,232 at the Watsco Center. The Hurricanes went 14 of 29 from three-point range — setting season highs in makes and attempts — and scored at least 72 points for the fourth straight game.

They played nine players in the first seven minutes after mostly being stuck playing seven last year. They got 12 points from forward Sam Waardenburg, 10 rebounds from guard Jordan Miller and eight assists from Moore—none of the three played for the Hurricanes last season. Their lead was 13 at halftime, grew as large as 19 and never shrunk to single digits in the second half.

McGusty led the way with 27 points, cracking 20 for the fifth time this season, and star shooting guard Isaiah Wong even shrugged off a 2-of-8 start from the field to finish with 16.

Miami hadn't played since Dec. 12 because of finals and didn't miss a beat on one end of the court. On the other, the Hurricanes suffered through too many lapses, Larranaga said, and let the Hatters shoot 49.1 percent from the field and 13 of 26 on threes.

Another long break now lies ahead. Miami will take the rest of the week off to let players go home from Christmas, then return with the actual important part of the season looming. This homestand wraps up with three games against the NC State Wolfpack, Wake Forest Demon Deacons and Syracuse Orange in the next two weeks.

The Hurricanes' start has been good enough to keep their Tournament hopes alive. Those three games might reveal how realistic those hopes are.

"We're 1-0, we're playing pretty well," Larranaga said, "but we have three very strong opponents coming in."

Hurricanes sink season-high in three pointers, beat Stetson in final non-conference game

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 21, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes delivered 14 3-pointers on Monday night, part of an 82-72 win over Stetson at the Watsco Center.

The mark easily bested Miami's previous season-high set against Clemson. It was the most threes Miami had hit in almost two years, when the Canes splashed a program-record 18 threes in their win over Coppin State on Dec. 21, 2019.

Miami's 82 points against the Hatters was its second-largest tally of the season, only behind 86 points against Florida A&M. The performance was the most amongst its current five-game win streak, and it all came through a newfound movement of the basketball.

"We're sharing the ball consistently well," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We're getting good balance in our offense."

Miami (9-3, 1-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) distributed 20 assists while committing just six turnovers, its lowest number of the season. Point guard Charlie Moore dished out a season-high eight assists, beating his previous best of five.

"I've started to feel more comfortable than where I was at the start of the year," Moore said. "My teammates made it easy for me to get those assists."

Entering Monday night, redshirt senior Kameron McGusty was tied for fourth in the ACC in points per game, averaging 17 1/2 per game. After facing Stetson (4-7), that total has only gotten better.

McGusty scored over 20 points for the fifth time against the Hatters, scoring 27 points on 9-of-12 shooting, making his first six 3-pointers of the night. For reference, in each of his first two seasons at Miami, McGusty had only scored over 20 points seven times. Now, he's already two below that number with over fifteen games to go.

"I don't take L's personally ... my teammates, we don't take losses, we take it as a lesson," McGusty said. "Any time we play a game, and we go back to the drawing board, watch the film, we figure out what we need to do."

For McGusty, there hasn't much he hasn't been able to do. The Oklahoma transfer is averaging 19.2 points during the win streak,

and has shot at least 42% from the field in each game.

In addition to the 3-point barrage, there also came some very important effort. The Hurricanes totaled 14 offensive rebounds against Stetson, leading to 14 second-chance points. Miami entered Monday as the worst offensive rebounding team in the ACC, averaging a hair over seven offensive boards per contest.

Forward Jordan Miller made huge contributions to the board battle. The George Mason transfer finished with 11 rebounds versus the Hatters, including a team-high four offensive rebounds. It was the first game Miller contributed double-digit boards all season, after recording nine for the Patriots.

Miami concludes non-conference play riding its longest win streak of the season, heading into an eight-day rest period at second place in the ACC. At 9-3, the Hurricanes know they could be on the cusp of something bigger this season.

They will have the chance to prove it after the break with three conference opponents coming to Coral Gables. UM starts this stretch next Wednesday against North Carolina State, which will either be 8-4 or 7-5 going into the contest. The Wolfpack boast one of the most lethal scorers in the conference, with forward Dereon Seabron averaging 19.8 points this season, good for third in the ACC.

Miami will look to top N.C. State for the second consecutive game next Wednesday at 9 p.m. The game will be nationally televised on ESPNU.

Miami wants 'identity' to be defense. It'll determine whether UM can make Tournament push

By David Wilson
Miami Herald
Dec. 23, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes have found their "identity," Kameron McGusty said Monday, and it isn't necessarily what outsiders might expect.

With non-conference play complete and Miami riding its longest winning streak since 2019, the Hurricanes have a legitimately good offense and still an oft-porous defense, yet their defense is why they have faith they can make a real run at the 2022 NCAA Tournament.

"Our defense has improved," coach Jim Larranaga said Monday, not many caveats necessary.

The offense, led by three dynamic guards in the backcourt, has been good all year long, even averaging 73.3 points per game while Miami (9-3, 1-0 Atlantic Coast) was dropping three of its first seven. The defense was awful then — allowing 74.6 points per game — and better now.

On this five-game winning streak, the Hurricanes are averaging 74.6 points per game and allowing 66.0. They have a conference win against the Clemson Tigers and beat the Penn State Nittany Lions in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge. They go into the meat of ACC play as a top 100 team, according to KenPom.com, with the No. 54 offense in the nation and No. 164 defense, in terms of adjusted efficiency.

The most obvious aspect of their identity is their efficient offense. They needed better defense to make it work, and they've been heading in the right direction since a pair of ugly losses to the Dayton Flyers and then-No. 10 Alabama Crimson Tide at the ESPN Events Invitational.

"We kind of got beat up a little bit, but, at the same time, we needed that," McGusty said Monday. "That helped us a lot. I'm a big believer in we don't lose games. We take it as a lesson. I don't take L's personally. None of our teammates do. We don't address it as a loss. We take it as a lesson, so I think that's something we've taken head on and we've embraced."

The big lessons came on defense.

Against Alabama, Miami only trailed by three at halftime, then gave up 63 in the second half to get blown out in Kissimmee. Three days later, the Hurricanes beat Penn State in State College, Pennsylvania, despite only scoring

63 points.

It taught the Hurricanes, McGusty said, that their identity had to be on "the defensive end, realizing that we need to lock in a little more there."

There's still a long way to go, of course, and Monday provided a reminder, as Miami could never quite bury the Stetson Hatters and had to settle for a not-as-close-as-the-score indicated 82-72 win in Coral Gables.

Stetson stayed alive by going 13 of 26 from three-point range and shooting 49.1 percent from the field. It was a setback for the Hurricanes' defense, but also an excuse for another lesson.

"They used a lot of ball screens," Larranaga said, "and we didn't help off of the ball screen nearly as much as we need to."

The offense is trending in the right direction, too, and players chalk much of the across-the-board turnaround up to the chemistry they've had to build on the fly.

McGusty and star shooting guard Isaiah Wong are the only two starters who suited up for Miami last year. Fellow guards Charlie Moore and Jordan Miller are both transfers, and forward Sam Waardenburg missed all of last season with an injury.

Of the four bench players the Hurricanes used Monday, two are true freshmen. This was always going to be a team that had to improve as the year went on.

Right now, Miami is showing signs of it.

"I feel like we've improved a lot," Moore said Monday. "It's a lot of people's first year here at the University of Miami playing as a team. At the beginning of the season, we were still trying to get our chemistry together, learning how to play with each other and over these last couple games and games that we've played have helped us improve."

Miami's transfer point guard is 'starting to get more comfortable.' UM is reaping rewards

By David Wilson
Miami Herald
Dec. 24, 2021

When Charlie Moore was searching for a new home after he decided to transfer from the DePaul Blue Demons in April, he surveyed the landscape and saw enough with the Miami Hurricanes to intrigue him.

He had a prior relationship with Jim Larranaga, who recruited Moore while he was a four-star recruit at Morgan Park in Chicago. He was close with Bill Courtney, who was previously an assistant coach at DePaul. Most importantly, he saw potential, particularly on the offensive end where Isaiah Wong, Kameron McGusty and Sam Waardenburg gave him a cadre of three-point shooters to complement his pass-first mentality.

"It was a big reason to come here," the guard said Monday. "I knew we had talent here. We just had to put it together."

With Miami (9-3, 1-0 Atlantic Coast) up to nine wins and in the midst of a five-game winning streak, it's starting to look like Moore might have been on to something.

Its 82-72 win against the Stetson Hatters on Monday in Coral Gables was Miami's fourth straight game scoring at least 72 points and boosted the Hurricanes up to 51st in the nation in adjusted offensive efficiency, according to Kenpom.com. A year after just 66.4 points per game, Miami is averaging 73.8.

The Hurricanes have done much more than just add Moore to a 10-win team, but a player like him was one of the most glaring missing pieces a year ago.

"He's been tremendous for us," McGusty said Monday.

On Monday, Moore dished out a season-high eight assists, giving him an average of 4.4 per game during the winning streak.

Four of his eight assists went to McGusty, with all four leading to three-pointers as he made a season-high six. Miami attempted 29 threes and made 14 — both season highs — with Moore generating six off assists and hitting one of his own in the second half at the Watsco Center.

"I give him a lot of credit for my performance tonight," McGusty said after scoring 27. "He does a great job of penetrating and pitching, and getting our offense flowing."

Moore, who averaged just 2.6 assists per game in his first seven games as a Hurricane, is now up to 3.3 assists per game, which has him on pace for Miami's best full-season mark since Ja'Quan Newton averaged 3.4 in the 2016-17 college basketball season.

The toughest part of the Hurricanes' schedule lies ahead with the meat of ACC play set to begin Dec. 29, so Moore still needs to do it against stiffer competition.

He has a track record, though. He averaged 4.2 assists per game last year and 6.1 the year before while playing in the Big East Conference. His history suggests the last five games are a sign of what's to come rather than an outlier.

It's natural for him to get better as the year has gone on, too. He's a transfer, as is fellow guard Jordan Miller, and Waardenburg didn't play last year because of an injury and two freshmen were part of the rotation Monday. Miami is still just a dozen games into a season of trying to integrate five-plus new pieces and Moore, who has the ball in his hands more than anyone, has the greatest responsibility to learn everyone's tendencies and make everything work as a cohesive whole.

"I'm starting to get more comfortable," he said. "It's still a process, but I'm starting to become more comfortable than I once was at the beginning of the season."

Larranaga has been happy with his play all year long, pointing to the Hurricanes' three-point shooting as the difference.

In the first seven games, Miami shot just 27.1 percent from long range. In the last five, the Hurricanes are at 39.1.

"I think he actually has played consistently well from the start of the season," Larranaga said. "We're just starting to shoot the ball better."

Whether the assists are a product of the shooting or the shots are a product of the passing ultimately doesn't matter. What matters is Miami has hit on a winning identity and Moore is at its core.

G Harlond Beverly will miss remainder of season

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 27, 2021

Third-year sophomore guard Harlond Beverly will miss the remainder of the season, the team announced on Monday.

Beverly, who appeared in four games in the Hurricanes' 9-3 start, will undergo back surgery.

"Losing Harlond for the season is a severe blow to our team," head coach Jim Larranaga said in a statement. "His versatility and ability to play multiple positions make him very valuable. My staff and I are tremendously supportive of Harlond. We know how much he wants to compete alongside his teammates and cannot wait to see him do so once again. We look forward to working with Harlond on his rehab and full recovery."

Beverly started 15 of the 19 games he appeared in last season, averaging 6.7 points and 4.5 rebounds, but had a limited role this season. He came off the bench in all four contests, scoring just two total points in 9.3 minutes a game.

Beverly also missed the end of last season with a back injury.

He was a top-75 recruit in the 2019 class and has showed flashes at times during his three seasons. He scored a career-high 20 points against NC State on Feb. 5, 2020. He has also posted nine rebounds and nine assists in separate ACC games.

With Beverly out, freshmen Wooga Poplar, who is averaging 4.8 points in 12 games, and Bensley Joseph, who is averaging 2.1 points in 11 games, will continue to be the Hurricanes' top reserve guards.

Freshman SG Jakai Robinson planning to redshirt

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 28, 2021

Freshman guard Jakai Robinson has not appeared in a game yet this season and is not planning to, according to head coach Jim Larranaga.

Robinson was the Hurricanes' top-ranked recruit in the 2021 class.

"He's doing great," Larranaga said. "He's a great kid, practicing very hard and very well, but we're really thinking about redshirting him and getting him another year to develop in our program and when all of these guys graduate like the guards in Charlie Moore and Kam McGusty it opens up a great window for him to contribute more. That could change. We don't know what we're going to be dealing with health-wise or injury-wise."

It was announced on Monday the Hurricanes will be without reserve guard Harlond Beverly (back) for the remainder of the season.

Even with the loss of Beverly, Larranaga does not intend to insert Robinson into the rotation when the Hurricanes (9-3, 1-0 ACC) take the floor on Wednesday (9:00 p.m., ESPN) against NC State (7-5, 0-1).

"I've been re-thinking it every day," Larranaga said. "He's doing a great job. He's ready to go, but we also have been trying to space out those minutes because we have two freshmen in already who are contributing mightily Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar. When you start to get too young, you need to get ample opportunities to your veterans to lead and that means the upperclassmen guys like Charlie Moore, Jordan Miller, Deng Gak, Sam Waardenburg and Kam McGusty to get more of the minutes."

Robinson was considered a four-star recruit and the 85th-best overall prospect in the 2021 class according to the 247Sports composite rankings out of Upper Marlboro (Md.) Rock Creek Christian Academy.

Joseph was considered the 104th-best while Poplar was 124th, giving Miami three top-150 recruits in the class.

With Robinson and Beverly out of the mix and Rodney Miller still recovering from a knee injury, Miami is expected to have nine scholarship players available for Wednesday.

SF Jordan Miller finding different ways to be valuable

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 28, 2021

Jordan Miller has been a valuable player for the Hurricanes this season even if he has not been scoring at a high clip.

Fresh off a season-high 11 rebounds in a win over Stetson, Miller will be looking to help Miami in any ways possible to extend a five-game winning streak on Wednesday (9:00 p.m., ESPNU) against NC State to begin the bulk of ACC competition.

"At the end of the day I just want to win basketball games whether or not I play how I want to play or if someone else has a great game, I just want to win basketball games," Miller said.

Miami (9-3, 1-0 ACC) won its first conference a game earlier this month before three straight non-conference foes.

"I'm really excited for it, all of us are," Miller said. "Conference play is something that you look forward to because that's when the best basketball comes out. That's when everybody wants to win.

Miller, who led George Mason in scoring last season at 15.8 a game, is averaging 6.4 points on 44.4-percent shooting.

"As far as my production, getting used to a new system was something I didn't expect," Miller said. "It was my first time transferring. I didn't know what was going to be thrown at me, I didn't know what curve balls were going to be thrown at me or the adjustment period. It's just taking things one day at a time, staying in the gym, making sure I'm staying positive. If we're winning basketball games, that's all that matters to me because at the end of the day we all just want to win. But I see myself getting more comfortable and I am getting more comfortable and adding a little more production to my game to help us win."

Although his scoring has been lower than he would like, he is fourth on the team in minutes at 27.0 per game and his production has shown in other areas as the team's leading rebounder (6.1). He is also a part of Miami's best three-man and five-man lineup and the second-best four-man lineup according to EvanMiya. He also showed his all-around game in a win over Lipscomb on Dec. 8 with 12 points, nine rebounds, two assists, five steals and three blocks.

"I take pride in the defensive side," Miller said.

"I think I've been playing really, really good defense as of late in the last couple of games. Defense is something that doesn't take skill, it takes effort. If the ball's not falling I know I can go to the other side and help my teammates on the defensive side especially and I think that's why my minutes have stayed the same. I've made a real conscientious effort to defend really well."

Miller has grabbed 29 rebounds over his last three games.

"Rebounding is something I take pride in and something I think I do really well," he said. "It's another effort thing, it's not skill, it's just how bad do you want the ball. I think I want it bad and it has shown the past couple of games. Any way I can help, I want to help."

NC State (7-5, 0-1) enters on a three-game losing streak.

"We've watched film on them and we've all seen them play before," Miller said. "They're a high-octane, offensive team and are really good, just like everybody else in the ACC. As long as we stick to the game plan and stay focused on the scout, knowing the personnel, it should be a good game and I think we can come out on top."

Miller is familiar with NC State leading scorer Dereon Seabron as the two hail from Virginia. Seabron is third in the ACC averaging 19.0 points a game and leads the conference in rebounding at 10.3.

"We played each other back in high school, especially in AAU," Miller said. "He was in my same classification and in my senior year we lost in the state semis and we were to play him if we won. I played against him in AAU. We never really had a conversation, but I'm sure I'll say, 'What's up' to him when he comes out. I'm sure his game has evolved since then so I'm looking forward to playing against him again."

Back against the Pack

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 28, 2021

After eight days without a game, its longest stretch of the season, the University of Miami men's basketball team is ready to return to the hardwood.

The Hurricanes get back to action Wednesday at 9 p.m. when they host NC State at the Watsco Center in their first of 19 consecutive conference games.

However, before Miami (9-3, 1-0 ACC) turns its attention to the opponent, it must first look inward. Following a break for the holidays, during which some players returned home to be with family and friends, it is important to ensure each individual is ready for basketball.

"You have to concern yourself, always, with the conditioning and timing and rhythm and chemistry of your team because it varies actually from day to day and week to week, even during the season when there is no break," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But [that is] especially so when there is a break in the action and people have kind of ... focused on other things outside of basketball. So, what we've already done is we've tried to get guys back in time to get some conditioning in and then some real practices."

While getting players' bodies revved up again is an annual task for coaches following the holiday break, there is an additional element adding some difficulty to that in 2021. That is, of course, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hurricanes, like many others teams, have altered their initial practice schedule after the break to factor in player health and safety.

"We've been limited because of COVID to doing things socially distanced," Larrañaga explained. "So, there has not been any competition the first two days. Today will be the first day that we'll allow the players to compete and go up and down in a scrimmage-type situation to get game-ready."

One positive for Miami, despite the added hurdles created by the pandemic, is the way the team has been playing of late.

Following a 2-2 start, the Hurricanes are 6-1 in their last seven games with the lone loss against then- No. 10/9 Alabama. After falling to the Crimson Tide, Miami has won five consecutive games, including two against Power Five foes.

Most recently, on Dec. 20 at the Watsco Center, the Hurricanes defeated Stetson, 82-72, in a game it never trailed and led for nearly 39 minutes.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty turned in one of the best performances of his career, scoring 27 points on 9-of-12 shooting, including a 6-of-8 mark from deep. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored 16 points and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg added 12, each dishing out a season-best four assists.

In addition, sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore totaled nine points and a season-best eight assists. The Hurricanes collectively ended the night with 20 assists, marking the 17th time in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure they reached that mark.

"There are a number of things that contribute to getting assists. Number one is, the guy you throw the ball to makes the shot," Larrañaga said of the ball movement against the Hatters. "Sometimes, even if you run great offense and you get a great shot, you don't always make it. So, one of the best things we did against Stetson is we made the open shot. Secondly, Stetson played a lot of zone, which means there are always going to be openings in the zone if you can find the open man. Our guys have been finding the open man regularly."

"And then lastly, you have to have a group of guys that are totally unselfish and are just willing to find the guy with the hot hand," Larrañaga continued. "Against Stetson, it was Kam McGusty most of the game. At times, it was Isaiah Wong. At times, it was Charlie Moore. So, we're very pleased with the balance of sharing the ball."

While the Hurricanes are on a hot streak and playing well, improvements are still needed, as is always the case. Sometimes, progress can come from a new piece making his presence felt alongside those who are already excelling.

As the team enters the gauntlet of ACC play, Larrañaga is looking for other players to step up next to the vaunted backcourt trio of McGusty, Moore and Wong.

One individual in particular whom Larrañaga is looking to is third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker, who owns four collegiate double-doubles.

"We're going to need his point production," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year shared. "Many times last season, he was in double figures. It would be great if he could get himself consistent-

ly in double figures this year."

When Walker and the Hurricanes take the court Wednesday to play NC State, they will be facing a team with a similarly dynamic backcourt.

The Wolfpack, at 7-5 (0-1 ACC) on the year, features four players averaging over 11 points per game. Three are guards, while the other is a wing. Fifth-year head coach Kevin Keatts' fifth-leading scorer is also a guard.

Redshirt sophomore guard Dereon Seabron is atop the scoring report, averaging an impressive 19.0 points and 10.3 rebounds per game. He is the ACC's leading rebounder and third-leading scorer, but NC State's offensive depth makes it difficult to hone in on just him.

"Their four perimeter starters are outstanding scorers. They can shoot the three, they can take you off the bounce one-on-one. They're very gifted offensive players," Larrañaga said. "On their bench, Casey Morsell is very similar to the starters in that he can really score the ball. Seabron is an outstanding scorer, one of the best in the league and a real challenge for any defense. But their freshman, [Terquavion] Smith, is also an incredible scorer, so you can't just devote all your energy into Seabron. You really have to defend all four of their perimeter positions."

Wednesday's action will be televised live on ESPNU HERE, with Jay Alter and Perry Clark, the Hurricanes' head coach from 2000-04, 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 NC State, Miami opens the new year by hosting Wake Forest Saturday at 6 p.m., live on ESPNU.

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

Single-game tickets for 2021-22 Miami men's basketball games are still on sale and can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office at 1-800-GO-CANES. For more details, dial that number or email canestix@miami.edu.

UM basketball teams back in ACC action this week. Here's what you need to know

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 28, 2021

The University of Miami basketball teams were on a roll in mid-December, the men on a five-game win streak and the women on a three-game run. Then the Omicron cloud rolled in.

Coach Katie Meier's team had a few players test positive and was forced to postpone games against No. 15 Duke and North Florida. The men's team hasn't had any cases of yet, but the new COVID variant led coaches to change their players' holiday travel schedule and tighten practice protocols.

Both UM teams will try to stay COVID-free and continue their winning runs this week as ACC play resumes. The men (9-3 overall, 1-0 ACC) play at home against North Carolina State (7-5, 0-1) on Wednesday at 9 p.m. (ESPNU). The women (7-3) are on the road against Virginia (3-8) on Sunday.

"It's really hard, some of our players were quarantined and could not go home [for the holiday break]," Meier said. "Physically everybody's going to be just fine, but emotionally and mentally nobody was ready for another year of rescheduling, who are we playing, games postponed, forfeits, canceled, are we playing this opponent or not?"

"We were coming off an 86-point performance (against Robert Morris), playing great, we're rolling, ready to start the ACC, fired up, got through finals and right when we had a chance to ramp it up, we got shut down."

Meier and Larranaga hope the disruptions won't be as severe as last year because of new CDC and ACC recommendations reducing the quarantine days to five instead of 10 in asymptomatic cases.

The last time the UM men played on Dec. 20, they beat Stetson 82-72 and had a huge performance from Kam McGusty, who scored 27 points on 9-of-12 shooting, including 6-of-8 from beyond the arc. Larranaga said McGusty is playing with "supreme confidence" this season. Point guard Charlie Moore added nine points and a season-best eight assists. The Hurricanes combined for 20 assists.

Larranaga is hoping for similar unselfishness and tenacious defense against the Wolfpack, which has four players averaging double figures. Dereon Seabron (19 ppg), 10.3 rpg) is the ACC's leading rebounder and third-leading scorer.

"N.C. State is loaded with offensive talent," Larranaga said. "Seabron is a super talent in the ACC and nationally. He's going to be in consideration for player of the year, but he has a lot of help. The freshman (Terquavian) Smith is on fire. I think we match up well with them, hopefully we'll defend and rebound well and share the ball like we did in our previous five games."

The men's team plays again at home on New Year's Day at 6 p.m. against Wake Forest, which at 11-1 is tied with Duke for the best record in the ACC. Miami's 9-3 record is third best in the league.

Top scorers Kameron McGusty, Dereon Seabron set to take flight

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 28, 2021

Two of the ACC's top scorers, Kameron McGusty and Dereon Seabron, will be in action on Wednesday (9:00 p.m., ESPN) when McGusty's Hurricanes hosts NC State.

McGusty, a sixth-year senior, enters the game fifth in the ACC averaging a career-high 18.3 points per game while Seabron is enjoying a breakout season for the Wolfpack as he is third in the ACC in scoring (19.0) and first in rebounding (10.3).

"We're both bigger guards in the conference so I look forward to taking on the challenge when I'm matched up on him for sure," McGusty said.

The two have different styles of games with McGusty connecting on 20 of his 51 attempts (39.2 percent) from behind the arc while Seabron has made just three 3s.

"I think his versatility and motor is what makes him," McGusty said. "He averages 10 rebounds a game and is always on the offensive boards. He has a ton of crafty moves and crafty finishes. He's long and athletic. He's a really good guard, 6-7, can handle the ball and plays the point sometimes. He's definitely going to be a challenge."

The two could guard each other.

"I'm looking forward that matchup, but we switch so if I'm on him, I'm on him," McGusty said. "If I'm not, I'm not. They have two other really good guards that I've been watching."

The McGusty-Seabron matchup will be one to keep a close on, but both teams have other scorers as well.

Miami's Isaiah Wong was fifth in the ACC in scoring last year and is putting up 15.6 a contest this year, only to be overshadowed by McGusty's hot start.

NC State has two other players, forward Jericole Hellems (14.4) and guard Terquavion Smith (13.8) averaging at least 13 a game.

McGusty has been efficient scoring the ball, shooting 51.1 percent from the field, 39.2 percent from 3, and 82.1 percent from the free-throw line for a true shooting percentage of 63.4, which ranks third among ACC guards.

McGusty's PER rating, a popular player

efficiency rating used in the NBA to assess an overall value combining positives and negatives with plays, is 27.69, which ranks sixth in the ACC.

"I think there a number of guys in the league who are already having sensational seasons in the non-conference and Kam is certainly one of those," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "If you look at some of the other teams around the league, Dereon Seabron is also having a terrific start, Kam is playing with supreme confidence. You love to see that in all your players. He's shooting the ball, handling it well, defending well, rebounding well. His ability to play within himself and not do so many difficult things that all of a sudden his percentages drop off and what's nice is all of our staff and his teammates have supreme confidence in him."

McGusty has poured in at least 20 points in five games this season including 27 against Stetson last time out.

"The biggest thing with my confidence is I've taken a step mentally as a person and player," McGusty said. "I've got to credit coach L and the coaching staff. I do a lot of visualization, I meditate every day and getting my mental right is the biggest thing. All of the shots I hit, I watch them go in, in my head first. That's the biggest thing and my teammates have been real encouraging. Everything around the facility and staff is just positive with good energy."

McGusty will be looking to help lead the Hurricanes to a sixth straight win, which was last done in 2017 when Miami reeled off 10 straight to begin the season.

"I feel very prepared. I'm excited for the challenge. I've always been a guy that has taken on challenges head-on. I never run from anything. The best way to get to where you want to go is to go through it."

Hurricanes need improved, productive play from bench

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 29, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes have settled into a consistent starting lineup through the first 12 games of the season.

Finding production from the second unit will be key as the Hurricanes begin their full slate of ACC games on Wednesday (9:00 p.m., ESPNU) against NC State.

Forward Anthony Walker is the top scorer and rebounder off the bench, which is averaging 15.7 points a game as a unit, while receiving the most minutes.

"Anthony Walker is a huge key for us," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "He's had some very good practices leading into the game so hopefully he'll play as well as he's been practicing."

Walker's playing time has dipped since getting at least 18 minutes in each of the first five games and averaging 10 over the next seven, but is still important to the Hurricanes' success.

Walker is averaging 5.5 points and 1.9 rebounds on 35.8-percent shooting. His offensive rating is 85.7 according to Kenpom, which is the lowest on the team other than Harlond Beverly (58.7) who has been ruled out for the season with a back injury after appearing in just four games.

First-year freshman guards Wooga Poplar and Bensley Joseph are next in the rotation averaging 12 minutes a game behind Walker's 14.7 and have had their moments although the pair together on the court has been the least productive pairing on the team among the 33 pairings with at least 50 possessions according to EvanMiya.

The combination of Poplar and Joseph together has a minus-25.2 adjusted team efficiency margin, meaning they are being scored by 25 points per 100 possessions while adjusting to the strength of opposing players on the court.

Poplar is averaging 4.8 points on 46.7-percent shooting to provide some offensive production off the bench while Joseph is averaging 2.1 points on 33.3-percent shooting.

Joseph is known for being a better defender, but when he is on the court, he has been a part of five of the team's seven least efficient pairings on defense.

Walker, Poplar and Joseph are the Hurricanes' top players off the bench in what is forming primarily an eight-man rotation.

"When we lost Harlond it gave Wooga Poplar and Bensley Joseph an opportunity to earn more playing time and they've done a great job," Larranaga said. "They've stepped up."

Fifth-year junior forward/center Deng Gak has been limited to 3.9 minutes over 10 games after averaging at least 12 minutes per game over his last three seasons.

Gak's minutes have stayed the same even with sixth-year senior center Rodney Miller missing the last two games with a left groin injury against Lipscomb on Dec. 8.

"Hopefully (Rodney) will be back soon and be able to contribute," Larranaga said.

Miller averaged 2.3 points in 6.7 minutes over 10 games before the injury.

When Miller is healthy, he gives the Hurricanes 10 scholarship players on game day as the staff wants to redshirt freshman guard Jakai Robinson and with the aforementioned Beverly out.

Miami (9-3, 1-0 ACC) enters the game against NC State (7-5, 0-1) on a five-game winning streak.

"We've won five in a row and we want to keep playing well," Larranaga said.

Starters Kameron McGusty, Isaiah Wong, Charlie Moore, Sam Waardenburg and Jordan Miller are the team's top five scorers and rebounders.

Hurricanes ready for boost in competition heading into 2022

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 29, 2021

Even with a five-game winning streak, including two wins over Power Five opponents, the Miami Hurricanes (9-3, 1-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) always have to be prepared for what's around the corner. After a refreshing holiday season where UM played just two games in 17 days, Miami braces for two key home games in conference play.

So far, the season has shown more positives than negatives for head coach Jim Larrañaga. The Hurricanes enter the final week of the calendar year tied with North Carolina for third place in the ACC, despite losses to UCF and Dayton.

The teamwork shown during this surgical win streak has been second to none, boasting a 1.8 assist-to-turnover ratio during their last five games (77 assists, 43 turnovers), including 20 helpers to just six giveaways in their last win over Stetson. Their overall assist-to-turnover ratio is tied for third-best in the conference.

In addition, the preparation has been there for the Hurricanes. Miami endured brutal losses versus Dayton and Alabama in the ESPN Events Invitational Tournament over Thanksgiving, which has taught the team a valuable lesson.

"We kind of got beat up a little bit, but at the same time, I think we needed that," sixth-year redshirt senior Kameron McGusty said. "I'm a big believer in [that] we don't lose games; we take it as a lesson. I think that's something we've taken head on, and that we've embraced."

From here on in, it's in-conference play for the Hurricanes, with an entourage of 21 ACC contests from December to March, all leading to the ACC Tournament. The competition will be fierce night in and night out, even in a weakened Atlantic Coast Conference thus far.

Miami resumes its conference slate on Wednesday, as it welcomes the North Carolina State Wolfpack (7-5, 0-1 ACC) to the Watsco Center. While UM enters the contest on its largest winning streak of the year, NC State comes into Florida on their worst losing streak of the year, winless in their last three.

The Wolfpack are dealing with a host of changes from 2020 into 2021. NC State lost five of the eight players that participated in at least 15 minutes against Miami last season,

whether it be to graduation, transfer, or injury.

Leading scorers Devon Daniels and D.J. Funderburk both graduated from Raleigh, North Carolina, this year, along with long-time point guard Braxton Beverly. Explosive guard Shakeel Moore transferred to Mississippi State, and emerging star Manny Bates suffered a season-ending injury in the Wolfpack's opening night win over Bucknell.

"One of the biggest challenges is when you bring in five new guys with the guys that are returning," NC State head coach Kevin Keatts said. "My biggest challenge early on is developing chemistry."

Keatts' team has found some significant strengths in its first twelve games, including a presence to make up for the graduations. Redshirt sophomore Dereon Seabron averaged just 5.2 points and 3.4 rebounds per game last season but enters Wednesday leading NC State in points (19.0), rebounds (10.3), assists (3.1) and steals (1.8), as the only player in the ACC to lead his team in those four metrics.

In addition, the Wolfpack have been hounding the offensive glass this season. NC State averages an astounding 12.8 offensive rebounds per game, the most of any ACC squad. While the Hurricanes rank last, UM has seen one of its transfers make a large impact on the glass in its last three games.

"It's a bit of both, with being in the right time and having comfort in the program," junior guard Jordan Miller said. "But it's also the effort I put in. I take pride in rebounding the basketball."

Miller, who has snagged 29 rebounds in his last three games, is beginning to play as promised. Despite scoring only one point against the Hatters, Miller led all players with four offensive rebounds and 11 total boards in the contest.

The Hurricanes, who come into Wednesday tied for last in rebounds per game in the ACC, will have to compete in the battle in an effort to continue their win streak. Miami will tip-off against NC State at 9 p.m., and the game will be televised nationally on ESPNU.

That will take the team into 2022, where it will continue its home stand against one of the biggest surprises in college basketball so far. UM's third conference game will come against Wake Forest, which had been under .500 in each of the last four matchups against Miami, but will enter New Year's Day with at least 11

wins.

The Demon Deacons (11-1, 1-0 ACC) are off to their best start to a season since 2008-09, when they started 17-1. Wake has beaten three Power Five teams thus far, with its only loss coming to 12-0 LSU.

The Demon Deacons have struggled to find a consistent source of offense since forward John Collins' departure to the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. As good things come to those who wait, the answer has come through an Oklahoma transfer.

Redshirt senior guard Alondes Williams is on pace to become one of the best single-season players in Demon Deacons history through his first 12 games. The Milwaukee native is averaging an ACC-leading 21 points per game, while shooting over 55% from the floor.

Williams, also known as "Man Man," scored a new-career high 36 points against VMI, and followed up with 34 points versus Charlotte. He was also the first Wake Forest player since Jeff Teague, another former Atlanta Hawk, to score 30 points in back-to-back games.

Williams was named the Oscar Robertson National Player of the Week for those performances, the first ever Demon Deacon to achieve the award. He is also a versatile player, recording the first Wake Forest triple-double since NBA great Tim Duncan in 1997.

In addition to Williams, upperclassmen Daivien Williamson and Jake LaRavia have boosted the Deacs' scoring totals. With the three combining to average 48.4 points per contest, Larrañaga knows his team's defense must improve.

"Our defense has been inconsistently very good; it's been very good at times, and not so good at times," Larrañaga said. "We've had two very good days of preparation."

Miami will welcome Wake Forest to Coral Gables on New Year's Day to open 2022. Tip-off for the Demon Deacons and Hurricanes is set for 6 p.m., and the game will also be shown on ESPNU.

Shorthanded MBB Storms Back to Beat NC State, 91-83

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 29, 2021

Facing an eight-point deficit with 11 minutes to play, the University of Miami men's basketball team rallied back to defeat NC State, 91-83, Wednesday night at the Watsoo Center.

Down two players, including a starter, due to COVID protocols, Miami (10-3, 2-0 ACC) still managed to tally its sixth consecutive win and tally a season-best point total. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored a season- and game-high 25 points for the Hurricanes in the thrilling victory.

"I was very impressed with NC State's athletic ability—how fast they were, how high they jumped, how aggressive they were attacking the rim and getting to the offensive boards. It was a real concern at halftime. We were actually playing too fast for ourselves," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "In the second half, they were able to come out again and take control the first 10 minutes, but then we settled down. Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty took control for us, offensively. Anthony Walker and Jordan Miller did a great job of screening and offensive rebounding and getting some interior baskets, which we didn't get in the first half.

"[This was] a great team effort and an impressive game from start to finish," Larrañaga continued. "It was such a terrific competition."

The Hurricanes made five consecutive field goals early in the first half, including notching an 8-0 run that featured back-to-back 3-pointers and a dunk, to take a then-game-high eight-point lead, 25-17, with 9:58 on the clock. The Wolfpack, however, countered with six straight points of its own to quickly pull back within two.

NC State (7-6, 0-2 ACC) eventually took a one-point lead, 30-29, with 6:32 remaining in the frame. The teams played evenly the rest of the way and the Wolfpack went into the locker room ahead, 41-40.

Miami shot 7-of-13 from 3-point range in the first half and held NC State to just 39.5 percent (15-of-38) shooting overall, but the Wolfpack posted an 11-2 edge on the offensive glass and an 11-3 margin in second-chance points. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 16 first-half points for Miami, the highest total before the break by any Hurricane this season.

Coming out of the break, the Wolfpack quickly upped its lead to seven, opening the frame on an 8-2 run with back-to-back 3-pointers to go up by seven, 49-42, with 17:50 to play. NC State went on to increase its lead to eight before Miami answered with an 8-1 surge to again make it a one-point game, 65-64, with 9:31 on the clock.

After the Wolfpack extended its advantage back to five, Miami scored eight straight points, capped by back-to-back 3-pointers from third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, to take its first lead of the second half, 76-73, with 4:39 remaining.

NC State made a pair of free throws at the other end to get within one, but Miami countered with 10 straight points in just 2:15 to go up by 11, 86-75, with 1:45 to play. The Wolfpack never got any closer than eight the rest of the way, as the Hurricanes controlled the closing minutes for the eight-point win.

Miller's 25 points, which tied the third-highest total of his career and nearly doubled his prior season best of 13, came on 9-of-16 shooting, both marks season highs and the latter one shy of his career best.

The Middleburg, Va., native went 4-of-6 from deep and 3-of-5 from the line, with the four made 3-pointers his new top tally as a Hurricane. Miller also notched five rebounds and two blocks in 37 minutes of action, the latter also a season high in his first year at The U.

"He's been getting more confident and more comfortable just playing with the guys. The better he plays, the better we are," Larrañaga said. "Basketball is pretty simple; you've got to put the ball in the basket, you've got to keep the other team from putting it in the basket. Jordan is doing both."

McGusty finished with 20 points and a co-game-high 11 rebounds, the latter figure one below his career best and his new top mark in ACC play. He shot 6-of-11 from the field, 2-of-3 on 3-pointers and 6-of-7 at the stripe, adding a season-best five assists.

Wong totaled 19 points, including 15 in the second half and 14 in a sub-seven-minute span from 10:09 to 3:18 on the clock. The Piscataway, N.J., native, who shot 7-of-13, also chipped in five rebounds and a season-high-tying four assists.

"At one of the timeouts midway through the second half, I reminded Isaiah of how well he played at NC State, against these guys, last year," Larrañaga said. "I told him, 'This is your time. You know how good you are. I know how good you are. You need to have the ball in your hands and take charge.' And that's what he did, he and Kam."

Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker also scored in double figures. Coming off the bench, he posted 11 points, all in the second half, and went 4-of-4 from the floor, while grabbing a season-high-tying four boards.

Senior forward Jericole Hellems paced NC State with 24 points on 9-of-17 shooting in the setback. Redshirt sophomore guard Dereon Seabron, the ACC's third-leading scorer and top rebounder, finished with a 14-point, 11-rebound double-double, adding a game-best six assists.

Freshman guard Terquavion Smith also totaled 14 points for the Wolfpack, while redshirt senior guard Thomas Allen logged 13 on 6-of-10 shooting to go along with seven boards.

Miami finished the night with a season-best 55.4 percent clip (31-of-56) from the field, while its 31 makes matched its second-highest total. In the second half alone, the Hurricanes shot 64.3 percent (18-of-28), their best mark in any frame all year.

Additionally, Miami shot a season-best 52.6 percent (10-of-19) from long range, with the 10 makes matching its third-highest mark of the year.

At the other end, the Hurricanes held NC State to 41.7 percent shooting (30-of-72) overall and a 29.6 percent ledger (8-of-27) on 3-pointers, counteracting the Wolfpack's 41-32 edge on the glass that included an 18-6 margin offensively.

The Hurricanes resume play on the first day of 2022, as they host Wake Forest Saturday at 6 p.m., live on ESPN.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 13-15 all-time against NC State, including 6-6 at home and 9-8 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 680-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 210-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 210 wins as an ACC head coach, Larrañaga passed Jim Valvano on the all-time leaderboard, moving into a tie with Brad Brownell for the No. 15 spot.

– The victory gave Larrañaga 104 wins in ACC action (regular season and tournament), tying Everett Case for No. 15 all-time.

– For the first time, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Wong, fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore.

– As announced prior to the game, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg and freshman guard Wooga Poplar were both unavailable due to COVID protocols.

– As announced Tuesday, third-year sophomore guard Harlond Beverly is out for the season, as he will have back surgery to address a lingering injury.

– Sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., returned to the court for the first time since injuring his left groin 12/8/21 versus Lipscomb.

– With 10 wins in 13 games, Miami has already matched its total from an injury-riddled 2020-21 campaign in which it played 27 games.

– The Hurricanes are riding a six-game winning streak for the first time since 11/10/17 to 12/22/17 when they started the 2017-18 season with a 10-0 record.

– Miami went undefeated in December for the second time in three years and moved to 50-15 in the month under Larrañaga, the .769 winning percentage its best in any month during his tenure.

– The last time the Hurricanes scored 90-plus points was on 2/19/20, when it tallied 102 in a triple-overtime win at Virginia Tech, while it last scored 90-plus in regulation on 12/21/19 when it notched 91 versus Coppin State.

– Miami last scored 90-plus points in regulation against an ACC team on 2/27/18 when it recorded 91 in a victory at ninth-ranked North Carolina.

– In Larrañaga's 11 years, Miami is now 17-1 when tallying at least 90 points, including 6-1 in ACC competition.

– The Hurricanes improved to 4-3 on the season when trailing at the half, including winning their third such game in a row.

– With 51 points after the break, Miami scored 50-plus in a half for the first time since 11/13/21 when it notched 54 in the second session against UCF.

– The only time this season Miami made more than 31 field goals was 12/8/21 versus Lipscomb, while it also recorded 31 on 11/21/21 against Florida A&M.

– The Hurricanes' prior season high in field goal percentage was 54.2, posted 11/26/21 against North Texas in Kissimmee, Fla.

– Miami's previous top 3-point percentage this season was a 48.9 clip (14-of-29) in its last game, 12/20/21 versus Stetson.

– The lone other time Miami shot 60 percent in a half this season was in its other ACC game, as it logged exactly a clip of exactly 60 (15-of-25) in the second frame against Clemson on 12/4/21.

– McGusty's 16 first-half points trailed only Wong's 18 in the second half against UCF (11/13/21) and McGusty's 17 in the second half versus Lipscomb (12/8/21) for the most in a session by a Hurricane in 2021-22.

– McGusty led all players in first-half points (16), rebounds (seven) and assists (season-high-tying four).

– Two Hurricanes scored 20-plus points for the first time since 11/8/21 versus Lipscomb when McGusty (29) and Wong (20) did so.

– Moore, who reached 300 rebounds as a collegian, recorded a season-high-tying three steals.

– Wong who surpassed 900 points, 250 free-throw attempts and 200 made free throws, scored double-figure points for the 45th time, including the 12th this year.

– Making his fourth collegiate start, Gak, who reached 100 points as a Hurricane, played a season-high 16 minutes, shattering his prior top mark of six.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 3,250 minutes played in his career, notched 20-plus points for the 19th time, including the 13th at Miami and sixth in 2021-22.

– McGusty also registered his 75th double-digit point total, including his 47th at Miami and 12th this season.

– Additionally, McGusty logged his sixth double-figure rebounding total and sixth double-double, all at Miami, including his fourth of each this season.

– McGusty also posted his fourth five-assist performance, all of which have come as a Hurricane, including his first of the season.

– J. Miller, who now has 999 collegiate points, tallied 20-plus points for the seventh time, including the first this year.

– In addition, J. Miller scored in double figures for the 53rd time, including the third in 2021-22.

– The 12 points J. Miller scored in the first half alone tied his second-most in a complete game this year.

– Walker scored in double digits for the 18th time, including the third this season.

– The 11 points for Walker marked his highest point total since the second game of the season when he logged 12 against UCF on 11/13/21.

– Walker moved past 400 points, 200 rebounds and 150 made field goals as a Hurricane, as well as reached 50 blocks.

– Freshman guard Bensley Joseph scored seven points, one shy of the best mark in his young career, in a career-high-tying 19 minutes of action.

Isaiah Wong rallies Hurricanes past Wolfpack for 6th straight win

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 29, 2021

Isaiah Wong picked up an offensive rebound and slammed home a one-handed dunk to help ignite the Hurricanes in the second half.

The dunk also sparked Wong, who had made just one of his first six shots prior.

Wong then went on a flurry, including a pair of 3s on consecutive possessions, and finished with 15 of his 19 points in the second half to rally Miami past NC State with a 91-83 victory for their sixth straight win.

"Most definitely that dunk got my energy and the whole team's energy up," Wong said. "It gave me a boost of confidence."

It is the longest winning streak for Miami (10-3, 2-0 ACC) since starting 10-0 in 2017 and they matched their win total from a year ago when they went 10-17.

"We're really have a good time and it's showing on the court," Wong said.

The game featured 10 lead changes with Miami leading by as many as 11 and NC State eight.

"I thought that was an incredibly exciting college basketball game and a heck of a home-court victory for us," coach Jim Larranaga said. "I was so impressed with NC State's speed, quickness, athletic ability and how they were able to attack the basket with their dribble-drives and offensive rebounds. They beat us on the boards, but you've got to give our guys a lot of credit. They fought from behind most of the night."

With Wong starring late, it was Jordan Miller who was strong throughout, finishing with a season-high 25 points with four 3-pointers.

"Jordan Miller had a sensational game," Larranaga said.

Miller made 9 of 16 shots to score more than twice as much as previous high of 12.

"I had it going and my teammates found me and I'm just getting more comfortable as the season goes on," Miller said.

Kameron McGusty gave Miami 20 points, 11 rebounds, five assists and two steals.

Miami trailed by as many as eight in the second half as NC State (7-6, 0-2) looked in control.

Anthony Walker, who made all four of his shots and finished with 11 shots, made a layup to help begin the turnaround as the Hurricanes went on a pivotal 18-2 run.

"We did a really good job of just staying composed," Larranaga said. "We did not lose our poise down the stretch. We only had nine turnovers against a team that pressed for 40 minutes."

Wong's second 3 came on a dish from McGusty to put the Hurricanes ahead 76-73 with 4:39 left and they never looked back.

"The biggest play of the game was Kam using a ball screen to penetrate and kicking out to Isaiah for a 3," Larranaga said.

Wong scored 12 of the Hurricanes' 16 points during one stretch.

"With 10 minutes left and the game on the line we asked him to just step it up, and he and Kam both took over," Larranaga said.

Miami played without Sam Waardenburg and Wooga Poplar due to COVID protocols, but welcomed back Rodney Miller (left groin) after a two-game absence.

Miami hosts Wake Forest (11-2, 1-1) on Saturday (6:00 p.m., ESPNU).

Five takeaways from Hurricanes' win over NC State

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Dec. 29, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes won their sixth straight game with a 91-83 victory over NC State on Wednesday.

Jordan Miller scored 25 points to lead the way while Kameron McGusty had 20 points and 11 rebounds and Isaiah Wong scored 19 points.

Here are five takeaways from the game:

ISAIAH WONG TOOK OVER THE GAME

Jim Larranaga approached Isaiah Wong and asked him if he remembered last year's game against NC State and how many points he had. Wong responded, knowingly he scored 25, and then Larranaga encouraged him to step up in the second half, which he did. Wong was given the ball more and took advantage of his opportunities, getting to his mid-range game, driving to the basket and knocking down 3s. It was a much-needed surge from one of the best guards in the ACC and not only was it needed in the game, but for league play moving forward. Wong was 1 for 6 before his impressive dunk and then finished 7 of 13. There are not many players who can take over a game like he did.

KAMERON MCGUSTY FILLING IT UP

Kameron McGusty continued his impressive season by posting 20 points, 11 rebounds and five assists—numbers he has never amassed in a game before. McGusty is playing at an All-ACC level and doing it in multiple ways. His confidence is showing, but he is also very efficient and is scoring at different levels, making him a tough matchup. He has to be accounted for on the offensive end, which opens up scoring opportunities for others. His strong first half with 16 points was needed to keep Miami in the game before others helped lead after the break.

JORDAN MILLER PROVED HE CAN SCORE

Jordan Miller scored a season-high 25 points on 9-of-16 shooting. He did a great job of finding his spots on the court and delivering much like he did in his final season at George Mason. He has the ability to be a productive scorer and should be able to use this game as a launching point moving forward as a consistent double-digit scorer, which is must-needed with the attention McGusty and Wong receive. Miller was also important on the defensive end, which will still be a priority for him even

with his scoring output.

BENCH STEPPED UP

With Sam Waardenburg and Wooga Poplar out, Deng Gak, Anthony Walker and Bensley Joseph needed to step up and they did. Gak earned the spot start and played in a season-high 16 minutes to provide a presence inside while Walker made all four of his shots and scored 11 points off the bench and Joseph scored seven and was a team-best, plus-18 in his 19 minutes. All three stepped up in their roles and even though a trio of starters had big nights, it was important to have role players step up too.

JIM LARRANAGA KEPT TEAM IN THE GAME

A struggling first half by Wong was helped by the encouragement by Jim Larranaga, who gave Wong the ball more in the second half instead of going away from him since he was off. Larranaga has also received credit from Miller for keeping him positive throughout the year even though his scoring has been down and it paid dividends in this game. Larranaga also showed energy on the sideline in the second half, which appeared to be needed with the team struggling to get over the hump. It was a positive game from a coaching perspective to get his top players in good spots and come away with the comeback win.

UM loses two players to COVID, but Canes rally in second half, beat N.C. State 91-83

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 30, 2021

COVID finally caught up with the University of Miami men's basketball team, but the Hurricanes overcame the loss of two players and rallied to beat North Carolina State 91-83 late Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

It was Miami's sixth win in a row. The Canes are 10-3 overall and 2-0 in the ACC heading into Saturday's home game against Wake Forest.

Jordan Miller had his best game since transferring from George Mason, leading the Hurricanes with 25 points on 9-of-16 shooting with five rebounds and a pair of blocks.

"Jordan had a sensational game, played with a lot of confidence and aggression," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "He played at the four, the five, and was guarding the three. He played like an ACC veteran."

Miami senior guard Kam McGusty, the fifth-leading scorer in the ACC, continued to build on his breakout season with 20 points with a team-high 11 rebounds and five assists. Isaiah Wong struggled early with just four first-half points but caught fire in the final 10 minutes and finished with 19 points, five rebounds and four assists.

Wong said Larranaga approached him at half-time and asked, "Remember last year against N.C. State? How many points did you have?" Wong told the coach he scored 25. Larranaga challenged him to play like that in the second half.

He obliged.

With Miami trailing 64-58, Wong went up for a thunderous dunk, which ignited the crowd and the UM bench. He went on to score 12 points over the next few minutes, including back-to-back three pointers.

"That dunk definitely got my energy up, got my confidence up," Wong said, smiling. "It was a huge boost to see the crowd and the other players getting hyped."

Anthony Walker came off the bench and chipped in 11 points and four rebounds in 23 minutes.

"That was an incredibly exciting college basketball game," Larranaga said. "A heck of a home victory for us. I was so impressed with

N.C. State's speed, quickness and athletic ability and how they were able to attack the basket... But you gotta give our guys a lot of credit. We fought from behind most of the night. Miller was sensational, and Kam and Isaiah Wong took charge the final 10 minutes."

The Hurricanes had not had a single player miss a game since the pandemic began, but two players – starting forward Sam Waardenburg and freshman Wooga Poplar – were forced to sit out Wednesday's game due to COVID protocols.

Poplar was asymptomatic, but tested positive after returning from winter break, Larranaga said. Waardenburg, who stayed in Miami over break, had been having cold symptoms and initially tested negative, but tested positive this week.

Miami missed sixth-year senior Waardenburg's leadership and inside presence and Poplar's spark off the bench. The Canes were outmuscled in the paint the first half but turned things around and controlled the boards in the second half.

McGusty and Miller carried the team from start to finish.

After entering his name in the NBA Draft last spring, McGusty decided to return to UM for a final season and so far, it seems like a wise decision. He is playing with more confidence than ever, crediting a new ritual of daily meditation and visualization exercises.

McGusty said he imagines different shots going in, and that helps sharpen his focus during games. He scored 16 of Miami's first-half points and led the team with seven rebounds and four assists before intermission.

Deng Gak started in place of Waardenburg and made a few nice plays early, including a dunk off a McGusty assist to give the Canes a 25-17 lead at the 10-minute mark. But the Wolfpack then went on a 13-4 run to go ahead 30-29, and the teams traded leads the rest of the first half.

N.C. State led 41-40 at halftime.

Miami went on its best second half run with a lineup that included Wong, McGusty, Miller, Walker and freshman Bensley Joseph, whose tenacious defense inspired the rest of the Canes to pick up their effort, Larranaga said.

"We stayed positive and poised down the stretch," Miller said. "This team handles

adversity well. We never hung our heads. The rim felt big for me and credit to my teammates for finding me."

Miller said he was not surprised to see Wong's second-half scoring outburst. "Zay is the kind of guy who can score a lot of points in a short period of time," he said. "He's very clutch. He can have a quiet first half and then score 15 in the second."

The Wolfpack (7-6, 0-2 ACC) had four players in double figures – Jericole Hellems (24), Terquavion Smith (14), Dereon Seabron (14), and Thomas Allen (13).

Hurricanes rally late for sixth straight victory

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 30, 2021

It wasn't easy, but the Hurricanes walked off their home court with another conference win.

In need of a quick spark, Miami blazed on a late 18-2 run in a 91-83 victory over NC State Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

"I thought that was an incredibly exciting college basketball game, and a heck of a home court victory for us," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "I was so impressed with NC State's speed, quickness and athletic ability, and how they were able to attack the basket with their dribble drives and their offensive rebounding."

The Hurricanes (10-3, 2-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) trailed by eight points with 11 minutes left and a five-game win streak on the line.

Moments later, their veterans stepped up to deliver the Wolfpack (7-6, 0-2 ACC) a knockout blow. Sophomore guard Isaiah Wong drilled back-to-back 3-point field goals, putting the Hurricanes ahead for the final 4:39.

"I think with Isaiah, there's a very fine balance between really being aggressive and looking to score, and then really looking to create for his teammates, and he's doing a good job of both," Larrañaga said. "But in the last 10 minutes, when the game was on the line, we asked him to just step it up, and [have] he and Kam [McGusty] take over. And they both did."

Wong scored 15 points after halftime, including a right-handed dunk on an offensive rebound to send the arena into a frenzy. The Preseason First Team All-ACC honoree was one of four Hurricanes to finish with double digits in the scoring column.

"That dunk really got my energy up, it got the whole team's energy up and it gave me a boost in my confidence," Wong said. "Seeing the crowd get hyped and the players get hyped, we picked up on our defense and we picked up on our scoring, too."

Junior forward Jordan Miller erupted for a season-high 25 points and buried a three with 2:40 to play as part of UM's 10-of-19 3-point attack.

"I always want to give credit to my teammates; they found me," Miller said. "I think my teammates are trusting me a lot more. The rim just felt big tonight. I got it going a little bit

and decided to stay aggressive. I'm looking to build off of this and stay consistent, it's just one game."

NC State pressured Miami throughout the first half, converting a six-point deficit into a one-point advantage at halftime. The two teams traded baskets through the final 6 ½ minutes, until UM erased the deficit and pulled away.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty produced his fourth career double-double. The former Oklahoma transfer collected 20 points, 11 rebounds and five assists to help guide the Hurricanes.

After posting 11 offensive rebounds and 11 second-chance points in the first half, NC State lacked scoring offense in the final minutes. The Wolfpack missed nine of their final 12 shots and the Hurricanes shot over 64% from the field in the second half.

Forward Jericole Hellems led the Wolfpack with 24 points, while guard Dereon Seabron contributed 14 points and 11 rebounds.

Walker logged all of his 11 points and four rebounds in the second half in place of sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg, who was sidelined with freshman guard Wooga Poplar due to the ACC's health and safety protocol.

"You're supposed to step up when your number is called, and I think he did a great job of that tonight," Miller said. "Ant's one of those people that's always involved, always going to contribute one way or another. I think tonight he really showed he can contribute just as much as all of us."

With the victory, Miami holds a 2-0 start in ACC competition for the first time since 2015. The Hurricanes are winners of six straight contests after a four-year drought.

"I think this team is really together, and they really trust each other," Larrañaga said. "So, they know that tomorrow and Friday are preparation days, and that we've got to get ready for Wake Forest. This one's already behind us. We feel good about the win tonight, but would feel much better if we played just as hard and just as well on Saturday."

Next, Miami is back at home to host Wake Forest on Saturday. Tipoff is scheduled for 6 p.m.

New Year, Same Focus

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Dec. 30, 2021

For the first time since the opening 10 games of the 2017-18 campaign, the University of Miami men's basketball team has won at least six contests in a row.

The group four years ago included three future NBA players in Bruce Brown Jr., Dewan Hernandez and Lonnie Walker IV. This one features a veteran-laden roster focused on one goal: winning.

That mentality was instilled many months ago and it has keyed the team through its strong start thus far, but maybe more importantly, also through its few tough outings. The bond between the 14 players on the roster, five of whom are in at least their fifth year of college, has been vital in making that happen.

"I think that we have a terrific group of young men. I don't think we have a selfish guy amongst the group and I think that they have great character," Miami assistant coach Bill Courtney said. "It's easy when you're winning to have great character and we've done that. We've been great teammates and we've had a positive vibe around practice all the time ... and in the locker room. I think these guys really enjoy playing with each other, enjoy being with each other off the floor.

"Even in the times of struggle—we lost a game to Alabama or Central Florida or Dayton—we didn't fall apart," Courtney added. "A lot of times in college basketball, you may have that situation [and it can be difficult], but we've stayed together and even come together more in the tough times. When you see that happen, you know that's going to lend itself to future success."

In addition to its off-court togetherness, conference-leading Miami (10-3, 2-0 ACC) has also relied on a dynamic offense.

The Hurricanes currently rank No. 36 nationally in KenPom offensive efficiency. They also rarely give the ball away, placing No. 12 in turnover percentage, also according to KenPom.

Miami is averaging 77.3 points per game during its winning streak, including posting 80.2 points per contest over the last five outings. In their last two games, the Hurricanes are averaging 86.5 points, even further upping that superb number.

Courtney, in his third year on staff at The U, is in his first season as the Hurricanes' offensive coordinator and has played a big role in the team's excellent play on that end of the floor.

"Even going back to when we first got to back together in the summer, the challenge was laid out to guys who have been terrific scorers in their careers, but haven't necessarily had great team success," Courtney shared. "In order to have great team success, we made it clear to those guys—you're going to have to share the basketball. And there was tons of film work and tons of playing together. To our guys' credit, they've done an unbelievable job of sharing the basketball. They're playing for each other, they're finding the open man, they're moving it and they're playing very unselfishly. That's a big reason why our offense is working right now."

Most recently, Miami showcased its offensive arsenal Wednesday night in a 91-82 victory over NC State at the Watsco Center. It marked the first time since a 91-88 victory at ninth-ranked North Carolina on Feb. 27, 2018—in the same season the Hurricanes had those three NBA players—Miami scored

90-plus points in a regulation ACC contest.

Making that even more impressive is the fact that the team was without two players due to COVID protocols: freshman guard Wooga Poplar and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg, the latter of whom started the first 12 games of the year.

Down a talented scorer off the bench and the lone starting big man, other Hurricanes rose to the occasion to get the win.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored a season- and game-high 25 points on 9-of-16 shooting, including a 4-of-6 tally from deep. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty notched a 20-point, 11-rebound double-double, adding a season-high five assists.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong notched 19 points, including 14 in the final 11 minutes, while third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker added 11 points and made all four of his field goals.

Other players who did not fill the box score all made their mark felt on the game and helped the Hurricanes earn their second ACC win in as many tries.

"I think all those guys stepped up in a big way in Sam's absence. Obviously, he does so many things for our team, things that are not seen in the box score, like setting flare screens or moving the basketball or helping on defense, those kind of things," Courtney said. "I think Jordan, obviously, was terrific. He made up for Sam's production, as well as his own, with some of the things that he did, like shooting the basketball and driving the basketball, [as well as] all the things he did defensively.

"Even a guy like Deng Gak, who people won't see—the stats might not show it, but his ability to guard and help on ball-screens, particularly in the first half, [was vital]," Courtney continued. "His activity, helping us guard their perimeter players was huge. A huge part of us winning the game last night was him stepping up. And then even though he's not a big, you add Bensley Joseph to that with what he did. So, collectively, you had guys do a lot more than they normally do."

To defeat NC State, Miami had to rally back from an eight-point deficit with 11 minutes to play. Wong spearheaded the charge, registering 14 of his points from then on.

However, it was more than just the scoring punch of the reigning Third Team All-ACC performer. This team has repeatedly shown it does not get rattled by late deficits.

Miami is 4-3 this season when trailing at halftime and has won three consecutive games when facing a deficit at the break. In its other ACC contest, an 80-75 victory over Clemson on Dec. 4, the Hurricanes trailed by nine with fewer than five minutes to play.

"One of the things we always say before the game is to have poise down the stretch. No matter what deficit we face, we've got to stick to doing what we do and being who we are," Courtney remarked. "We haven't gone away from that as games have gotten a little bit more tense. We've been able to execute offensively and we've gotten timely stops. We've not been a terrific defensive team maybe throughout a game, but when it has mattered most, we've seemed to really lock in and really focus and play good defense to get the necessary stops. That has helped us a lot in some of these close games."

Up next for the Hurricanes is a matchup with a Wake Forest team that co-leads the conference in overall victories, owning an 11-2 (1-1 ACC) record. Action is slated for Saturday, the first day of 2022, at 6 p.m.

Graduate student guard Alondes Williams, arguably the best player in the ACC thus far, leads the way for the Demon Deacons. He is averaging 20.5 points, second-best in the league, and a conference-high 5.1 assists per game in his first season at Wake Forest.

The 6-foot-5, 210-pounder from Milwaukee, who transferred in from Oklahoma, has scored 32-plus points thrice this season, including twice in the last three games. Courtney said he is "playing as well as any player in the country right now."

Thus, when looking for players who will need to take on a bigger role in this game, the veteran coach does not turn to bench players stuffing the stat sheet, but rather to starters who will need to expand their impact.

"The challenge is going to be on our wings to guard Alondes Williams," Courtney shared. "So, really, the step-up part is going to be for Isaiah and Kam to play defense on Alondes Williams. I think that's going to be huge."

Williams, though, is far from the only Demon Deacon the Hurricanes will need to hone in on when they start the new year.

Second-year head coach Steve Forbes' roster blends a number of transfers with a handful of talented returnees.

"Jake LaRavia, who just got back from [sitting out due to COVID] protocols, is a terrific all-around player—inside, outside, skilled, tough, athletic. Their other transfer, Dallas Walton, is a load inside," Courtney said. "He's a big, strong kid who is very physical, does a good job defensively and scores in the low post. So, you add those three to Daivien Williamson and Isaiah Mucius, who are returners playing at their best levels since they've been in college, you see the reason why they're a good team right now.

"They're executing like crazy at the offensive end of the floor," Courtney continued. "They're really sharing the basketball. They're really playing for each other; you can absolutely see it on film. These guys are doing a great job playing together and that's why they average 80 points a game. And then defensively, they play great team defense. They're really helping each other on that end of the floor. They're a veteran team."

Miami is 12-13 all-time against Wake Forest, including 9-2 at home and 7-5 under head coach Jim Larrañaga.

In the first 10 years of Larrañaga's tenure, the home team has won all 11 campus-site games in the series. Most recently, the Demon Deacons posted a 66-54 home victory on Jan. 30, 2021.

This year's contest will be shown live on ESPNU HERE, with Derek Jones and Cory Alexander 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 can be found HERE.

After playing the Demon Deacons, Miami wraps up a three-game conference homestand Wednesday at 8 p.m. against Syracuse, 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.

Single-game tickets for 2021-22 Miami men's basketball games are still on sale and can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office at 1-800-GO-CANES. For more details, dial that number or email canestix@miami.edu.

Improved Kameron McGusty brings vital leadership to Miami basketball

By Luke Chaney
The Miami Hurricane
Dec. 31, 2021

A hurricane is brewing in Coral Gables, as the red-hot Canes (10-3, 2-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) have rattled off six straight wins, three of which were against significant Power Five opponents in Penn State, Clemson and NC State.

One driving force behind Miami's recent success has been the leadership of veteran guard Kameron McGusty, who has averaged 19.6 points per game over a five-game span. The redshirt senior is also coming off an efficient 27-point performance against Stetson, a performance in which he shot 75% from both the field and from deep.

"I just think he got in a very good rhythm and got some really good looks," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after McGusty's showing against Stetson. "We had a couple of offensive rebounds, kick-out threes for him and then, against the zone, we were able to find him."

Returning to Coral Gables for a fifth collegiate season was not always the plan for McGusty, however. The redshirt senior guard added his name to the 2021 NBA Draft, concluding a successful 2020-21 season in which he averaged 13.3 points and 3.8 rebounds per game.

While McGusty withdrew his name from the draft and announced his return for one final season at Miami, he gained valuable knowledge throughout the process from professional scouts and management.

"I gathered a lot of good information about my game currently and the things that I could do to improve my game and what would translate to the next level and what wouldn't," McGusty said. "[I was told to become] a little more consistent on my 3-point percentage ... [They also wanted me to] guard four positions because of my size and versatility."

Through the first 12 games of his redshirt senior season, McGusty has improved in these areas of his game; his 3-point percentage has jumped from 32% last season to 39% this season, and he often takes on the task of guarding opposing teams' best offensive wing players.

"Kam has always been a great guard," Miami guard Isaiah Wong said. "He's a great shot creator and he can get to his spots ... He's doing a great job right now."

The former Oklahoma transfer's leadership abilities were challenged just weeks ago after a rough showing in the ESPN Events Invitational; Miami finished the Thanksgiving weekend tournament with a disappointing record of 1-2.

"When we played in Orlando, we got beat up a little bit," McGusty said. "We needed that; I think that helped us a lot. I'm a big believer that we don't lose games; we take it as a lesson ... Any time we play a game, we go back to the drawing board and watch the film and we figure out what we need to do better."

McGusty's leadership became more needed than ever against ACC opponent Clemson in a late comeback win. These leadership qualities will be vital to the Hurricanes as they enter the thick of their conference schedule.

Hurricanes on six-game win streak, face big ACC test at home Saturday vs. Wake Forest

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Dec. 31, 2021

Even before the start of the new year, the University of Miami men's basketball team had already matched last season's win total with 10 victories.

The Hurricanes (10-3) are on a six-game winning streak for the first time in four years and tied with Louisville atop the Atlantic Coast Conference standings with a 2-0 league record heading into Saturday's 6 p.m. home game against Wake Forest (11-2, 1-1 ACC).

Miami is coming off a 91-83 win over North Carolina State in which transfer Jordan Miller scored a season-high 25 points, Isaiah Wong finished with 19 (including 14 in the final 10 minutes) and Kam McGusty had 20 points, 11 rebounds and five assists. Sam Waardenburg and Wooga Poplar missed the game after testing positive for COVID.

The Canes are averaging 80.2 points during the past five games, are ranked No. 36 in the nation by KenPom in offensive efficiency and No. 12 in turnover percentage. The team is much improved over last year's injury-plagued squad, which finished 10-17 overall and 4-15 in the ACC.

Miami faces a massive challenge on Saturday against the Demon Deacons.

Graduate student guard Alondes Williams, among the best players in the league this season, is averaging 20.5 points and a conference-high 5.1 assists in his first season at Wake Forest.

The 6-foot-5 Milwaukee native, who transferred from Oklahoma, has scored 32-plus points three times this season, including twice in the last three games.

"The challenge is going to be on our wings to guard Alondes Williams," said UM assistant coach Bill Courtney. "So, really, the step-up part is going to be for Isaiah and Kam to play defense on Alondes Williams. I think that's going to be huge."

Second-year coach Steve Forbes' roster includes a blend of transfers and returning players.

"Jake LaRavia, who just got back from [COVID] protocols, is a terrific all-around player — inside, outside, skilled, tough, athletic. Their other transfer, Dallas Walton, is a load

inside," Courtney said. "He's a big, strong kid who is very physical, does a good job defensively and scores in the low post. So, you add those three to Daivien Williamson and Isaiah Mucius, who are returners playing at their best levels since they've been in college, you see the reason why they're a good team right now."

"They're executing like crazy at the offensive end of the floor. They're really sharing the basketball. They're really playing for each other; you can absolutely see it on film. These guys are doing a great job playing together and that's why they average 80 points a game."

Miller said the Hurricanes are excited to get into the meat of the ACC schedule.

"Obviously it feels good to have these wins under our belt, but eyes forward," Miller said. "Our eyes are focused on the end goal, which is make the NCAA tournament and win the national championship. So, there's no ego or cockiness. We're trying to keep piling the wins and stay hungry."

MBB Edges Wake Forest, 92-84

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 1, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team picked up its seventh consecutive victory with a 92-84 wire-to-wire triumph over Wake Forest Saturday night.

Despite playing without a starter due to COVID protocols for the second consecutive game, Miami (11-3, 3-0 ACC) used sizzling offense from start to finish to take down the Demon Deacons at the Watsco Center.

The Hurricanes, behind a game- and season-high 25 points on 11-of-18 shooting from third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, shot 61.5 percent on the night, their best mark since Dec. 25, 2017. It also marked their third-best ledger ever in ACC play, including their top tally since Feb. 13, 2013.

"We had so many guys make so many different contributions. Isaiah, obviously, was the biggest with 25 points and some key baskets down the stretch," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But Charlie Moore was the one that got us off to such a great start and then Kam McGusty was the one that they ended up fouling at the end and he helped us stay in front by making his free throws. Then you have Deng Gak and Anthony Walker and Jordan Miller doing their jobs, both defensively and offensively. So, just a great team effort."

After a nearly even start to the game, Miami held Wake Forest (11-3, 1-2 ACC) scoreless for over five minutes and scored 10 straight points to go in front by 12, 18-6. The Hurricanes, though, did not stop there.

Buoyed by a 6-of-9 start from 3-point range, including a 3-of-3 clip by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, Miami upped its run to 19-6 and grabbed a 15-point edge, 27-12, with 8:29 on the clock. The Demon Deacons, though, made their final 10 field goals of the half to pull within five and the margin sat at just that, 43-38, entering the intermission.

Moore and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, who also started 3-of-3 on 3-pointers, combined for 25 first-half points, with 12 and 13, respectively. At the other end, three Wake Forest big men—junior forward Jake LaRavia, senior forward Khadim Sy and graduate student center/forward Dallas Walton—combined for 13-of-18 shooting, logging 27 first-half points.

Early in the second half, after Miami went up by eight, Wake Forest hit back-to-back 3-pointers to make it 52-50, but the Hurricanes countered with seven straight points to spark a 12-4 run that gave the Hurricanes a 10-point edge, 64-54, with 13:56 to go. The surge included eight points from sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, who was previously scoreless.

Wake Forest trimmed its deficit back down to three, but the Hurricanes countered once again, this time using an 8-1 run to go up by 10, 80-70, with 5:58 remaining. From there, the Demon Deacons cut the margin to three twice, but never pulled any closer, as Miami held on to earn their third ACC win in as many attempts.

"There were so many things we had to guard. Their post game was ridiculously good. They're also an excellent 3-point shooting team and they're a great transition team," Larrañaga said of withstanding Wake Forest's runs. "It's very, very hard to stay out in front of a team like that and yet, we led from start to finish, which is a real tribute to our players."

In addition to setting a season best in points, Wong also set a season high in makes, finishing one shy of his career best. He added a season-high-tying four assists in the victory.

Moore finished with 18 points, shooting 6-of-7 from the floor, 3-of-3 on 3-pointers and 3-of-4 at the line. The Chicago native also dished out a co-game-high seven assists, one off his season best, and committed just one turnover.

Miller, who eclipsed 1,000 points with his first basket of the game, totaled 17 points on 7-of-9 shooting, including a 3-of-5 ledger from deep. McGusty scored 15 points, all in the second half, and went 10-of-11 from the line, both new top tallies in ACC play, while grabbing a game-high eight rebounds.

LaRavia finished with a team-high 19 points for the Demon Deacons, shooting 9-of-13 from the floor, while notching seven rebounds and six assists. Senior forward Isaiah Mucius scored 17 points, including 14 in the second half, and went 5-of-9 from long range.

Graduate student guard Alondes Williams, the ACC's second-leading scorer, registered 15 points, six rebounds and a co-game-high seven assists. Miami held him without a point for the first 19 minutes of action. Walton scored 13 points on 5-of-6 shooting, while Sy added 10 on an equal mark.

Following a 7-of-10 start from 3-point range, Miami went just 2-of-8 the rest of the way to finish 9-of-18. The 50 percent clip, though, still marked the team's second-best total of the season.

The Hurricanes have now scored 90-plus points in back-to-back games for the first time since November 2016 and for the first time in ever consecutive ACC contests.

"I think the opponent has a lot to do with that. We're playing teams that are very up-tempo, that look to score quickly," Larrañaga said of the offensive success. "We're not a team that just slows it down, but we want to be more selective. We need our opponents to play some half-court defense. We executed our game plan very well and were able to score at a high level."

The Hurricanes finished the night with 19 assists and just nine turnovers, as well as shot 19-of-27 (70.4 percent) from the stripe, whereas the Demon Deacons were 4-of-8 (50.0 percent).

Miami now wraps up the third three-game ACC homestand in program history Wednesday at 8 p.m. against Syracuse, 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.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 13-13 all-time against Wake Forest, including 10-2 at home and 8-5 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– The home team has won 12 campus-site games between Miami and Wake Forest during Larrañaga's 11 seasons.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 681-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 211-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 211 wins as an ACC head coach, Larrañaga passed current Clemson head coach Brad Brownell for sole possession of the No. 15 position on the all-time leaderboard.

– Now owning 105 ACC wins (regular season or tournament) as a head coach, Larrañaga surpassed Everett Case and moved into a tie with Bud Millikan for No. 14 all-time.

– For the second time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Wong and fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak.

– As announced prior to the game, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg was unavailable due to COVID protocols for the second consecutive outing.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar returned to action after missing the previous

game due to COVID protocols.

– The Hurricanes are currently the only team in the ACC with a 3-0 league record and sit alone atop the conference standings.

– Miami is 3-0 in ACC play for the second time ever and first since 2012-13, when it started league play 13-0.

– The Hurricanes are riding a seven-game winning streak for the first time since 11/10/17 to 12/22/17 when they started the 2017-18 season with a 10-0 record.

– Miami last scored 90-plus points in consecutive games in the first two contests of the 2016-17 campaign: 92 versus Western Carolina on 11/11/16 and 94 at North Florida on 11/16/16.

– According to the ACC office, Miami is the first team to score 90-plus points in back-to-back ACC regular season games in nearly five years, with Florida State the last to do so, on 2/5/17 against Clemson and 2/8/17 versus NC State.

– The Hurricanes last scored 92-plus points in regulation on 11/13/18 when they notched 96 versus Stephen F. Austin.

– In Larrañaga's 11-year tenure, the Hurricanes are now 18-1 when tallying 90-plus points, including 7-1 in ACC play.

– The only other times Miami reached a 60 percent field-goal clip in an ACC game are 2/13/13 when it went 30-of-47 (63.8 percent) at Florida State and 1/31/10 when it shot 24-of-38 (63.2 percent) against Virginia Tech.

– The last time the Hurricanes shot at least 60 percent in a game was 12/25/17, when it posted a 30-of-50 ledger (60.0 percent) against Middle Tennessee State in the Diamond Head Classic in Honolulu.

– Miami's three best 3-point percentages of the season have come in its last three games: 48.3 percent (14-of-29) versus Stetson on 12/20/21, followed by 52.6 percent (10-of-19) on 12/29/21 versus NC State and now 50.0 percent (9-of-18) against Wake Forest.

– Over the past three contests, the Hurricanes are shooting 33-of-66 from 3-point range, good for an even 50.0 percent clip.

– Miami shot at least 64 percent in the second half for the second straight game, as it went 16-of-25 (64.0 percent) tonight and 18-of-28 (64.3 percent) on 12/29/21 against NC State.

– Wake Forest registered 23 assists, the most by a Miami foe since No. 16 Virginia Tech had 25 in an overtime affair on 2/6/21.

– McGusty, who made his 125th appearance as a collegian, moved past 1,450 points and 250 made free throws, as well as reached 400 rebounds.

– McGusty, who has now made double-digit free throws in a game four times this season, tallied double-figure points for the 76th time, including the 48th at Miami and the 13th in 2021-22.

– McGusty's prior high in made free throws in ACC play was six, most recently recorded on 12/29/21 versus NC State, while his previous high in attempts was nine on 2/14/21 at Notre Dame.

– J. Miller's 13 points in the first half alone tied for his second-most in any game this season, trailing only the 25 he scored in the most recent contest, 12/29/21 versus NC State.

– J. Miller, who eclipsed 1,000 points in his career on a layup just 1:28 into the game, tallied double-digit points for the 54th time, including the fourth this season.

– Moore, who eclipsed 3,500 minutes played as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 64th time, including the seventh this year.

– Moore also recorded five-plus assists for the 40th time, including the third this year.

– Wong notched his 18th 20-point performance, including his fourth in 2021-22.

– Wong also registered double-figure points for the 46th time, including the 13th this season.

– Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker fouled out with 50.6 seconds left, the fourth disqualification of the season by a Hurricane and the second for Walker.

UM men ace first test of new year, beat Wake Forest 92-84, extend win streak to seven

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 1, 2022

The new year began with a telltale game for the University of Miami men's basketball team.

Yes, the Hurricanes had won six games in a row and already matched last year's season win total, but the big question heading into Saturday night's home game against Wake Forest was how they would do against one of the top teams in the ACC.

Answer: The Canes never trailed, led by as many as 13 and knocked off the talented Demon Deacons 92-84.

It was the Hurricanes' seventh win in a row, and they improved to 11-3 and 3-0 in the conference, the first time since 2012-13 that Miami opens league play with three straight victories. Wake Forest dropped to 11-3 and 1-2 in the ACC.

"We led start to finish, that's a great win, seven in a row, I could not be happier to start the new year that way," said coach Jim Larranaga.

Miami point guard Charlie Moore nailed a three to open the game, hit another one a minute later, and a third at the 10-minute mark to give the Canes a 21-8 lead and set the tone for the night.

"I want to give a lot of credit to Charlie because he got us off to a great start, hitting those threes, stretching their defense," Larranaga said. "And playing great defense on their point guard. I thought Charlie really quarterbacked the team."

Transfer Jordan Miller then hit back-to-back three pointers to make it 27-12 and Miami never looked back.

"Playing against a great team like Wake Forest we had to come out the gates ready to play, it was important for us to come out with a great start and get our engine going," Moore said. "It led to us playing an overall good game."

The Canes kept sharing the ball, spreading the scoring, and by halftime they were shooting 55 percent from the field, 58 percent from behind the arc and leading 43-38.

Perhaps the most impressive stat of the half for UM was that the Demon Deacons' leading scorer Alondes Williams was held scoreless until 38 seconds before intermission. Williams, a graduate student transfer from Oklahoma,

ranked second in the conference with 20.5 points per game and had scored 32-plus points twice in the previous three games.

But the Hurricane defenders clamped down on him and made things difficult for the 6-5 guard. He finished with 15 points with eight rebounds and five assists (he leads the ACC with 5.1 assists per game).

On the other end of the floor, Miami guard Isaiah Wong torched the Demon Deacons from all over the court – hitting from long distance, slashing and spinning to the basket for layups and making uncontested mid-range jumpers. He was the game's high scorer with a season-high 25 points on 11-of-18 shooting.

"Ever since last year I felt we had one of the best teams in the ACC, but we had so many injuries, so now we are proving our point that we are one of the best in the conference when we're healthy," Wong said. "I am not surprised by how well we're playing. We have great players."

Moore, a transfer from DePaul, continued to distribute the ball smartly, getting all his Hurricane teammates involved in the offense. He had five assists to go with his 18 points on 6-of-7 shooting.

"We have a great team, we knew that from the beginning of the season, but we had to get our chemistry together," Moore said. "This is the first time for us playing together with a couple of transfers. The more games we play, the more we learn to play off each other, and see what others are good at. It's starting to come together."

Miller, a transfer from George Mason, followed up a season-high 25-point performance against North Carolina State with another strong game against Wake Forest. He went 7-of-9 for 17 points.

Kam McGusty struggled offensively in the first half but had a big dunk early in the second half that seemed to ignite his game. He also made 10 of 11 free throw attempts and had 15 points on the night.

"Kam did not have a typical game for him, but he was 10 for 11 from the foul line and still ended up with 15 points, and we needed every one of those," Larranaga said.

The coach said his assistant Bill Courtney, eager to get McGusty going, suggested a back-door layup early in the second half and that is the play that led to McGusty's dunk.

"Everything's a team effort," Larranaga said. "Isaiah was great. Charlie was great. Kam came through in the clutch. Anthony Walker and Jordan Miller were terrific, and Deng Gak's defense set the tone early and clogged the paint."

Wake Forest hung around and made a few late runs, but Miami withstood the pressure.

The Canes' offensive output is significantly improved from last season, when the team finished 10-17 and had just four conference wins. Miami was averaging 86 points over the past few games and got 92 against the Demon Deacons.

With Miami leading 90-84 and 23 seconds remaining in the game, Moore raised his arms up to plead with fans to get loud. They did.

Starting Hurricanes forward Sam Waardenburg missed his second game after testing positive for COVID. Freshman Wooga Poplar, who sat out the N.C. State game for COVID protocols, returned to the active roster.

The Hurricanes are back home Wednesday night against Syracuse and then hit the road to play second-ranked Duke.

Isaiah Wong has 25, Hurricanes 3-0 in ACC for first time in 9 years

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 1, 2022

Miami's best conference record since was going 13-5 in 2015-16. Both teams advanced to the Sweet 16.

The Miami Hurricanes are surging.

Miami has gone 16-41 (.281 winning percent) in the ACC during the previous three seasons.

Isaiah Wong scored a season-high 25 points and the Hurricanes improved to 3-0 in the ACC for the first time since their 2012-13 championship season with a 92-84 win over Wake Forest on Saturday.

Miami hosts Syracuse on Wednesday (8:00 p.m., ACCN).

Charlie Moore had 18 points and seven assists, Jordan Miller scored 17 and Kameron McGusty chipped in 15 with eight rebounds for the Hurricanes, who won their seventh straight.

Miami (11-3, 3-0) surpassed its win total from last season's 10-17 campaign by shooting 61.5 percent (32 of 52) from the field, 9 of 18 from 3.

"We had so many guys make so many different contributions. Isaiah, obviously, was the biggest with 25 points and some key baskets down the stretch," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Wake Forest (11-3, 1-2) was led by Jake LaRavia's 19 points while Alondes Williams, the ACC's second-leading scorer, had 15 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Miami never trailed in the game and took a 43-38 into the break.

"It's very, very hard to stay out in front of a team like that and yet, we led from start to finish, which is a real tribute to our players," Larranaga said.

Williams's jumper cut the deficit to 52-50, but Miami responded with a 7-0 burst with a layup by Wong, a dunk by McGusty who added a 3 to cap the run.

Moments later, McGusty sank all three free throws after being fouled on a 3-point attempt to extend Miami's lead to 64-54.

Williams kept the Demon Deacons in the game, making a layup with three minutes left to pull within 83-80.

But McGusty helped close it out, making 3 of 4 free throws in the closing minute.

Wong is averaging 19.4 points over his last five games.

Miami started 13-0 during their lone ACC championship season in 2012-13 before finishing 15-3 and winning the conference tournament.

Miami defeats Wake Forest at home, extends win streak to seven

By Luke Chaney
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 2, 2022

Miami guard Isaiah Wong scored a season-high 25 points as Miami edged out Wake Forest 92-84 Saturday at the Watsco Center.

"We all just came in and focused on what we had to do and tried to play our hardest," Wong said. "We won the game, and we all feel happy."

Apart from his scoring, Wong played a pivotal facilitating role in Miami's victory; he was second on the team with four assists.

Leading the Hurricanes (11-3, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) in that department was redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, who finished the game with seven assists. This was the second time in a span of three games that Moore has produced at least seven assists.

"Charlie got us off to a great start," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "Charlie really quarterbacked the team."

Moore started the game with three made shots from deep in the game's initial 10 minutes, bolstering the Hurricanes to an early 21-8 lead.

"Playing against a great team like Wake Forest, we had to come out the gates ready to play," Moore said. "It was important for us to come out with a great start and get our energy going. It led to us playing overall a good game."

One reason why Wake Forest (11-3, 1-2 ACC) was able to battle back and cut Miami's lead to as little as two was the advantage they had in the paint. The Demon Deacons outscored the Hurricanes 48-38 in paint points.

This was in part because of the loss of Miami forward Sam Waardenburg, who missed his second consecutive game due to COVID protocols. Waardenburg has started at center for a majority of Miami's games this season, and his rim protection on defense and ability to space the floor on offense have been missed.

"Sam Waardenburg is a huge part in everything we do," Larrañaga said. "[Waardenburg's absence] put a lot of responsibility on Deng Gak's shoulders to start the game and play well ... between Deng Gak, Jordan Miller, and Anthony Walker, we had three guys who rotated at the four and five [positions], and they were a tremendous help."

Miller, a junior transfer from George Mason, has been tremendous over his last two outings, scoring a total of 42 points and shooting 7-of-11 from deep.

"Jordan's surprised me with the way he's taking people off the dribble," Wong said. "I didn't know he had all that in his bag. Jordan is a special kind of guard or big, whatever you could call him."

The Hurricanes will complete their four-game home stand on Wednesday against Syracuse. Tip-off is scheduled for 8 p.m.

"We just have a great team," Moore said. "We've known that from the beginning of the season, but we had to get our chemistry together. It's our first time playing with a couple transfers and new guys here, so we had to adjust and pick our chemistry up ... It's starting to come together, and I think we're finding our rhythm."

McGusty Named ACC Player of the Week

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 3, 2022

Kameron McGusty of the University of Miami men's basketball is the ACC Player of the Week, as announced Monday afternoon by the league office.

A sixth-year redshirt senior guard, McGusty averaged 17.5 points, 9.5 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 2.0 steals per game in the Hurricanes' two ACC victories last week. He shot 42.1 percent (8-of-19) from the field, 42.9 percent (3-of-7) on 3-pointers and 88.9 percent (16-of-18) at the stripe.

McGusty opened the week with a 20-point, 11-rebound, five-assist performance in a 91-83 decision Wednesday night against NC State, marking his fourth double-double of the year. He finished one shy of his career best in rebounds and notched a season high in assists in the win.

Three days later, in a 92-84 triumph over Wake Forest Saturday night, McGusty posted 15 points and a game-best eight rebounds. He scored all 15 of his points in the second half and went 10-of-11 from the free-throw line.

A native of Katy, Texas, McGusty is the third player in program history win ACC Player of the Week multiple times, as he also claimed the distinction on Dec. 29, 2019. He joins Jack McClinton (thrice) and Durand Scott (twice) on that list, with McClinton the only other Hurricanes to earn the accolade in multiple seasons.

The last Miami player to win ACC Player of the Week outright was Tonye Jekiri, who did so on Nov. 23, 2015.

McGusty and the Hurricanes, who currently own an 11-3 (3-0 ACC) record, return to action Wednesday at 8 p.m., when they host Syracuse at the Watsco Center, 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.

Hey, South Florida, how about some love for the ACC-leading UM men's basketball team?

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 4, 2022

A New Year's plea to South Florida sports fans: Stop fretting about the Dolphins and Tua Tagovailoa for a moment and Google "ACC men's basketball standings".

Go ahead, we'll wait.

Look who's sitting there on top of the heap, in first place, ahead of Louisville, North Carolina and Duke: The University of Miami Hurricanes.

Shocked? Don't be. Those Canes that you have probably been ignoring are 11-3 overall, 3-0 in the conference, and riding a seven-game win streak heading into Wednesday's home game against Syracuse.

They are fun to watch and scored 90-plus points in back-to-back wins over North Carolina State and Wake Forest.

Different players catch fire each night. Kam McGusty scored 27 against Stetson. Jordan Miller, a George Mason transfer who has been the biggest surprise of the team, put up 25 against the Wolfpack. Isaiah Wong torched the Demon Deacons for 25.

They have a true point guard again. His name is Charlie Moore, and he took a circuitous journey to Coral Gables with stops at Cal, Kansas and DePaul before transferring to Miami last summer.

Moore is not as electric as Chris Lykes, who transferred to Arkansas, but he is efficient, a calm leader who exudes positive energy and doesn't need the ball in his hands. He is more than happy to dish off to open teammates, reminiscent of former UM point guards Shane Larkin and Angel Rodriguez, who led their teams to Sweet 16s.

Maybe most significant, Moore is a sixth-year senior who turns 24 in February. He is one of four sixth-year seniors on this UM team, along with center Rodney Miller (25), McGusty (24), and Sam Waardenburg, who turns 23 in February. They are mature, experienced, and they love college basketball.

It is too early to know how Miami will finish, but these are exactly the kind of players Jim Larranaga loves to coach.

Larranaga has done best with veteran rosters. His 2012-13 Sweet 16 team that won the ACC and finished No. 5 in the AP poll, featured six

seniors. His 2015-16 Sweet 16 team was led by redshirt senior transfers Rodriguez and Sheldon McClellan, senior Tonye Jekiri, red-shirt junior Kamari Murphy, and junior Davon Reed, who is now with the Denver Nuggets.

UM basketball players and coaches are having fun again. Larranaga is doing post-game dances again.

But most local sports fans wouldn't know any of this because they don't show up for games. Despite the seven-game win streak, Miami ranks dead last in ACC home attendance so far this season with 3,015 fans per game.

The student section fills up only when there is a chance to mug for ESPN cameras. Most nights, it is only half-full, if that. One November game, there were two students total in that section. TWO. Granted, it was the start of Thanksgiving break, so out-of-town students had gone home, but what about the large number of South Florida commuter students? Where were they?

There have been brief periods when fans flocked to see the Canes play, like in January 2013, when students camped outside the arena on "Larranaga's Lawn" the night before UM stunned No. 1 Duke 90-63.

But for the most part, UM basketball has never gotten the attention it deserves.

Dick Hickox led the 1959-60 Hurricanes to a 23-3 record, top-10 ranking and their first NCAA Tournament. Players on that team, known as "The Cinderella Five," drove themselves to road games and their coach, Bruce Hale, laundered their uniforms and shared an office with coaches from three other sports.

When Hale went on the recruiting trail, he pulled out a photo of the palm tree-lined Miami Beach Convention Hall and told prospects that is where the Hurricanes played most of their games — never bothering to mention the campus was a half hour drive from Miami Beach.

In 1964-65, the Canes got some attention because future NBA Hall of Famer Rick Barry led the nation with 37.4 points per game.

The program hit rock bottom on April 22, 1971, when the UM Board of Trustees voted to do away with basketball because of sagging attendance and financial losses. The nomadic Hurricanes had traipsed from the Coral Gables High gym to the Miami Beach Convention Hall to Miami-Dade Junior College to Dinner Key Auditorium.

I was a student at UM in 1985 when the program was resurrected after being shut down for 14 years. That team, coached by Bill Foster and led by "Downtown" Eric Brown, Kevin Presto and Dennis Burns, played at the James L. Knight Center adjacent to the downtown Hyatt hotel.

I began covering the team for the Herald in the late 1990s, when they played at Miami Arena and Leonard Hamilton got the team back to national prominence. They reached the Sweet 16 in 2000, a minor miracle considering UM went 0-18 in the Big East in 1993-94.

"If only they had an on-campus arena," people would say. "The students would come. The place would be packed."

Well, they got a \$48 million, 8,000-seat on-campus arena 18 years ago. Still waiting for those students and packed houses.

Maybe Dan Radakovich can help. He was just hired as the new UM athletic director. He has a long to-do list. Filling the Watsco Center should be near the top.

With a 3-0 conference record, Miami prepares to welcome Syracuse

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 4, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes are rapidly heating up.

Three Atlantic Coast Conference games have come and gone, and Miami has moved to 3-0 in the conference for the first time since January 2013.

The momentum carries for UM, which is riding its longest winning streak in four years.

"Seven in a row, could not be happier to start the new year that way," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said following a 92-84 victory over Wake Forest Saturday night.

Prior to their first ACC road matchup, the Hurricanes (11-3, 3-0 ACC) welcome Syracuse to the Watsco Center on Wednesday night. Miami has powered through all but one home test this winter, and knows it has what it takes to threaten the Orange.

"Ever since last year, I've felt like we've had one of the top ACC teams, but we had a lot of health problems," third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong said. "So, coming into this year, we have everybody healthy and I feel like we've proven our point that we are one of the top ACC teams when we are healthy."

Miami has won its last two conference matchups through high-scoring performances, scoring at least 90 points in each. The achievement separates the Hurricanes from any other conference opponent dating back to February 2017.

"A lot of it has been because of the tempo of the game. Our opponent plays very fast," Larrañaga said.

The Canes have lacked one fundamental piece in their starting lineup, however.

Forward Sam Waardenburg, averaging 7.4 points and 3.8 rebounds, has been sidelined for two games due to COVID-19 health and safety protocol. The sixth-year redshirt senior has also shot 42% from 3-point territory this season, and is expected to return Wednesday.

"Sam Waardenburg is a huge part of everything we do, offensively and defensively," Larrañaga said. "He's a very smart player, very team oriented. So, it put a lot of responsibility on Deng Gak's shoulders to start the game and play well. And then Anthony [Walker], it puts a lot of responsibility on him to add some

scoring to our frontcourt."

Syracuse (7-6, 1-1 ACC) holds the fifth-leading scoring offense in the ACC. The bulk of the Orange's scoring originates from veterans Buddy and Jimmy Boeheim, both sons of legendary head coach Jim Boeheim. Each average no fewer than 14 points per contest, and Buddy is the conference's fourth-leading scorer after earning Preseason First Team All-ACC honors.

Guard Joseph Girard III collected 16 points in the Orange's conference opener against Florida State, yet only scored three in a loss to Virginia.

"So much of defense is team defense," Larrañaga said. "But before you can play team defense, you have to play good individual defense."

Forward Cole Swider and center Jesse Edwards are bolstering Syracuse's rebounding attack, averaging over six rebounds apiece. UM collects an average of 31.2 rebounds per night, ranking last in the ACC.

The Canes last defeated the Orange in March 2020, the final home game of their 2019-20 season. Now, Miami seeks to continue expanding its lead in the ACC while continuing to mesh as a team that has begun to fly under the radar nationally.

"I think we just have a great team, we knew that from the beginning of the season," sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore said. "But, we had to get our chemistry together. This is our first time playing with a couple of transfers and, you know, new guys here. So, we just had to just adjust and pick our chemistry up. I think the more games we're playing, we're learning how to play off each other."

The Hurricanes finished 13th in the conference last season following a 4-15 ACC mark, and were charted 12th in the ACC's preseason poll. Miami has won three of the first seven total home games played in the ACC.

The ACC remains without a second represented team in the Associated Press Top 25 rankings, aside from No. 2 Duke. Miami did not receive votes in the major polls again Monday.

"Honestly, my staff and I just focus on the things we can control, which is practice," Larrañaga said. "What time we're going to practice, how long we're going to practice, what are we going to do in practice, what's our game plan. We'll sit down and evaluate the opponent, what they do well, and maybe what

we can take advantage of and how do we hide our weakness and emphasize our strengths."

Syracuse leads the all-time series 20-9. Tip off is scheduled for 8 p.m.

"I'm not surprised of us right now, because we've got players that can play their tails off and they work hard," Wong said. "We have the top players right now, so it's coming good."

Surging Hurricanes Set to Host Syracuse

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 4, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team is on a seven-game winning streak, with four of those victories over Power Five foes.

The biggest key in the success? Elite offense.

Miami (11-3, 3-0 ACC) is up to No. 25 in offensive efficiency, according to KenPom, and has scored over 90 points in each of its last two games. It is the first time any ACC team has done that in consecutive regular season league games since February 2017 and the first time the Hurricanes have ever done so.

There is one player in particular whom 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga feels has made the biggest impact on the team's offensive execution.

"Well, I think our offensive philosophy has always been to share the ball and Charlie Moore's style of play has become contagious. Charlie is a very willing passer; he gives the ball up effortlessly," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year shared. "And now, Isaiah Wong, Kam McGusty, Jordan Miller and Sam Waardenburg, they're all doing it. That's why we've ended up with a lot more assists than turnovers and a lot more scoring. I'd also credit our opponents for creating really up-tempo, exciting games. When you play so many possessions, a team can get into a very good offensive rhythm and that's what has happened in these last two contests."

In the Hurricanes' last game, a 92-84 victory over Wake Forest Wednesday night at the Watsco Center, the offensive display was particularly good, even by the team's lofty standards.

Miami shot over 59 percent in both halves and finished with a 61.5 percent clip (32-of-52), its highest mark in a game since Dec. 25, 2017. The team posted 19 assists—led by seven from Moore, a sixth-year redshirt senior guard—and just nine turnovers.

Wong, a third-year sophomore guard, paced all scorers with a season-high 25 points on 11-of-18 shooting, adding a co-season-high four assists. Moore scored 18 points, finishing 6-of-7 from the floor and making all three of his 3-pointers.

Miller, a fourth-year junior guard, recorded 17 points on 7-of-9 shooting and went 3-of-5 beyond the arc. McGusty, a sixth-year redshirt senior guard who won ACC Player of the Week honors, scored all 15 of his points in the second half and shot 10-of-11 from the line.

"I think Wake Forest is [really good]. They have great size and scoring ability, especially in the paint. They are much bigger and more physical than us. With that being said, I was really happy with the way our guys were able to execute on offense and keep scoring," Larrañaga said.

"We got off to a great start thanks to Charlie Moore; he played great early. And then, in the second half, when Wake Forest was making its run, Isaiah Wong—as he has done repeatedly throughout his career—just stepped up and kept scoring to keep us ahead, even when it was just by three points. He'd make a big basket, make a shot or make a play and that allowed us to stay out in front for the whole game."

For Miller, meanwhile, the outing was his second elite performance in a row. He scored a season-high 25 points three days prior in the 91-83 win over NC State.

A first-year Hurricane who joined the team from George Mason, Miller's performances came at a key time, as Miami played its last two games without sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg due to COVID protocols.

After averaging 6.4 points per game in his first 12 outings, Miller put up 42 total points in the two wins. The Middleburg, Va., native, who surpassed 1,000 collegiate points with his first basket against Wake Forest, shot 16-of-25 from the floor and 7-of-11 from long range on the week.

"My own thought is Jordan is getting more and more comfortable, more and more confident," Larrañaga said of Miller's recent surge. "[He is] feeling better and better about the way he is playing and how much his team shares the ball with him. He's getting more touches and feels more included as the season progresses and we play more and more games."

Miller and the Hurricanes now wrap up a three-game ACC homestand, the third such occurrence in program history, Wednesday at 8 p.m. against Syracuse.

The Orange are under the direction of 46th-year head coach Jim Boeheim, the second-winningest coach in Division I men's collegiate basketball history. For his nearly five decades as the Syracuse head coach, the constant with Syracuse has been its 2-3 zone.

One of the few teams in the nation that exclusively plays zone defense, the Orange can give their opponents fits. Miami, which has never eclipsed 70 points in its 10 meetings with Syracuse since the latter joined the ACC, is well aware of that.

"I think Syracuse is a very good team. They have a lot of good players. They have a lot of size. They're bigger at every position than us and that's what makes the zone so challenging," Larrañaga said. "[Boeheim has] actually made an adjustment; he's added a 1-3-1 zone to his arsenal. So, you've got to be prepared for the 2-3 and you've got to be prepared for the 1-3-1. You have to be prepared for their size and the length that they play that zone with because they play it differently than anybody else that we'll play all season."

Syracuse enters the week at 7-6 (1-1) on the season, but features one of the most prolific offensive attacks in the nation. It ranks No. 19 in the KenPom offensive efficiency

and is averaging 78.2 points per game.

The Orange's entire starting lineup is averaging over 11 points per game, led by Buddy Boeheim's 19.5 per contest, fourth-best in the ACC. They are shooting 45.7 percent overall and 37.2 percent from deep.

"When you prepare for an opponent, sometimes you can focus on one or two or even three guys, but with Syracuse, they have five guys in double figures," Larrañaga shared. "They have a lot of different ways to score the ball. They're an outstanding shooting team from three and from two. So, they can spread your defense out and they can also drive you. They're very good in around the basket. They're just, really, a complete offensive team."

Miami owns a 9-20 all-time record versus Syracuse—that includes a 5-10 ledger at home—but has been much better during Larrañaga's tenure than before it. He is 4-6 against the Orange thus far after the Hurricanes were just 5-14 prior to his time at the helm.

The 2013 Associated Press National Coach of the Year is looking for a strong contingent of Miami fans to come out Wednesday night and support the team to continue that recent success versus Syracuse.

"We've won seven in a row. We have so many challenges ahead of us. This is our last home game for a while," Larrañaga said. "We have to go on the road to Duke and Florida State after this. So, we're really hoping that the local community—our local fans—will get behind this team and cheer them on to victory."

Wednesday's matchup will be televised live on ACC Network HERE, with Angel Gray and Dan Bonner 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 contest will be available HERE.

Following its outing against Syracuse, Miami will travel to Durham, N.C., for its first true road game in over a month, set for Saturday at 8 p.m. against second-ranked Duke, live on ACC Network from Cameron Indoor Stadium.

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

Single-game tickets for 2021-22 Miami men's basketball games are still on sale and can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office at 1-800-GO-CANES. For more details, dial that number or email canestix@miami.edu.

MBB Rallies from 18-Point Deficit to Beat Syracuse, 88-87

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 5, 2022

Trailing Syracuse by 18 with under 21 minutes left and by 14 at the break, the University of Miami men's basketball team stormed back to defeat Syracuse, 88-87, Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

The Hurricanes drilled six straight 3-pointers to open the second half, en route to an eighth consecutive victory. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore paced Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) with a season-high 25 points in the comeback win.

"I thought Syracuse played a tremendous first half. I thought they executed their game plan extremely well and we were kind of caught a little passive against their zone," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We were standing around; we weren't moving the ball very well. It ended up with bad shot selection and they blocked [a lot] of our shots. As the half was closing, we found a little better way to move the ball. So, at halftime, we stuck with that game plan for offense.

"But the key to the game was our defense," Larrañaga continued. "We started pressing them and pressuring them, and the game got to be very, very fast. We were able to take advantage of some of their miscues, missed shots and turnovers. We scored in the open court before they could get their defense set."

Syracuse (7-7, 1-2 ACC) used separate 10-0 and 14-2 runs to build a 31-15 lead with 5:53 left on the first-half clock. Miami missed 10 consecutive shots against the Orange's active 2-3 zone and started just 3-of-10 from 3-point range while conceding a 7-of-11 mark at the other end.

The Orange, who shot 9-of-15 beyond the arc in the half, upped its lead as high as 18, but the Hurricanes scored the final four points before the break and trailed by 14, 44-30, entering the intermission.

Moore led Miami with 13 points and five boards in the first half. At the other end, Syracuse junior center Jesse Edwards logged 14 points on 7-of-9 shooting, adding six rebounds and five blocks, the latter already the top single-game total by a Miami foe all season.

After shooting just 4-of-14 from deep in the opening session, the Hurricanes made all six of their long-range attempts in the first 5:09 of the second, sparking a 20-4 surge to go in front by two, 50-48, with 14:51 to play. Including the final 27 seconds of the first half, it was a 24-4 run in 5:36 for Miami.

The Orange retook the lead soon thereafter, but Miami scored nine straight points to go up by eight, 63-55, with 9:51 remaining. Following back-and-forth basketball, Syracuse senior guard Buddy Boeheim scored six points—sandwiched around a Miami basket—in 51 seconds to cut the home team's lead to two, 69-67, with 4:50 on the clock.

Miami countered with a 7-2 run, capped with a three-point play by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, to take a seven-point lead, 76-69, with 2:24 to go.

The Orange hit four 3-pointers in the final 1:18, including three by senior forward Cole Swider, but the Hurricanes never lost the lead. Moore hit a 3-pointer of his own with 61 ticks left to counter Swider's first long-range make, then Miami went 6-of-8 from the line and got a fast-break dunk from fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller during the last 46 seconds. Swider's buzzer-beating 3-pointer moved the final margin from four to one.

Moore turned in arguably his finest game as a Hurricane, shooting 8-of-14 from the floor, 6-of-10 from deep and 3-of-4 at the line. The eight made field goals set a season best, while the six made 3-pointers matched his career high. The Chicago

native added five rebounds and a co-game-high six assists, while committing just one turnover in nearly 37 minutes of action.

"Well, I thought Charlie Moore was sensational from start to finish. He just needed a helping hand; he got it from Kam McGusty and Isaiah Wong in the second half, and from Jordan Miller," Larrañaga said. "One of the keys is we had Sam Waardenburg back; Sam had been out [because of] COVID protocols. Him coming back, handling the ball, sharing it and screening and playing good defense was one of the major keys."

McGusty scored 19 points, including 12 on 5-of-8 shooting in the second half, while adding five rebounds, a season-high-tying five assists and a season-high-tying three steals. Wong, meanwhile, posted all 14 of his points in the final 11 minutes and shot 8-of-9 from the stripe.

Miller added 11 points, a team-high eight rebounds and a career-best six steals, the most by a Hurricane since Jan. 2, 2016. Waardenburg, who hit the first 3-pointer of the second half, chipped in seven points and five rebounds.

Syracuse junior guard Joseph Girard III led all scorers with 26 points, shooting 8-of-15 from the floor, 7-of-12 beyond the arc and 3-of-4 at the line. Edwards totaled a career-high 22 points on a 10-of-13 clip, adding a game-high nine rebounds and a career-best seven blocks.

Swider scored 20 points on 6-of-9 shooting from long range, giving the Orange a trio of 20-point scorers, marking the first time a Miami opponent has achieved that feat since February 1989. No other player reached double figures, as Miami held senior guard Buddy Boeheim, a top-five scorer in the league, to nine points on 2-of-7 shooting before he fouled out.

After shooting just 34.6 percent (12-of-35) overall and 28.6 percent (4-of-14) from 3-point range in the first half, Miami recorded 56.7 percent (17-of-30) and 43.8 percent (7-of-16) ledgers in the second half. The Hurricanes, who finished the game with a 44.6 percent mark (29-of-65), scored 58 points after the break.

The second-half performance helped the Hurricanes counteract blistering long-range shooting from the Orange, who went 17-of-32 (53.1 percent) in that category. Their 17 makes set a school record and marked the second-most ever by a Miami foe in ACC play.

The Hurricanes also notched 14 steals, tied for their second-most ever in ACC play, to earn a 25-11 edge in points off turnovers and an 18-3 advantage in fast-break points.

Its three-game homestand now complete, Miami now hits the road to play second-ranked Duke Saturday at 8 p.m., live on ACC Network from Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C.

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 10-20 all-time against Syracuse, including 6-10 at home and 5-6 in Larrañaga's tenure.
- Miami scored 19 more points Wednesday than it has in any of its prior 10 matchups against Syracuse since the latter joined the ACC, as well as 22 more points than it has in any such regulation game.
- Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 682-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 212-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.
- Now owning 106 ACC wins (regular season or tournament) as a head coach, Larrañaga moved past Bud Millikan for sole possession of the No. 14 spot on the all-time list.

– For the third time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Wong and fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak.

– Waardenburg, who came off the bench for the first time this season, returned to action after missing the last two games due to COVID protocols.

– The Hurricanes are currently one of two teams in the ACC with a 4-0 league record and sit, alongside Louisville, atop the conference standings.

– Miami is 4-0 in ACC play for the second time ever and first since 2012-13, when it started league play 13-0.

– The Hurricanes are riding an eight-game winning streak for the first time since 11/10/17 to 12/22/17 when they started the 2017-18 season with a 10-0 record.

– Miami is the first team to score 88-plus points in three consecutive regular season ACC games in nearly four years, dating back to when Florida State did so on 1/20/18, 1/24/18 and 1/27/18.

– The Hurricanes are now 5-3 on the season when trailing at halftime, notching four such victories in a row.

– This is the second year in a row Miami has won a game it trailed by 18-plus, as it rallied back from a 20-point deficit to beat Purdue by four on 12/8/20.

– From the 0:27 mark of the first half to the 9:51 mark of the second half, the Hurricanes outscored Syracuse by 26 points, 37-11.

– Miami's 14 steals tied for its second-most all-time in ACC play, matching its total exactly one year ago on 1/5/21 against North Carolina.

– The Hurricanes' prior season high in steals was 11, recorded twice, on both 12/8/21 versus Lipscomb and 11/13/21 against UCF.

– Before J. Miller's six-steal performance tonight, the top mark by a Miami player in 2021-22 was five, also by J. Miller on 12/8/21 against Lipscomb.

– J. Miller is the first Hurricane with six steals in a game in over six years, dating back to 1/2/16 when Angel Rodriguez had six, also versus the Orange.

– The six steals for Miller tied for the most by a Hurricane in ACC play, matching Shane Larkin (1/10/12 at North Carolina) and Rodriguez, and tied for the third-most by a Miami player in any game all-time.

– Syracuse is the 13th Division I team in the last 12 seasons to lose a game in which it made 17-plus 3-pointers on at least a 53.0 percent clip, including just the fifth such Power Five team.

– The last time an opposing team had three 20-point scorers against the Hurricanes was over 30 years ago when Texas did so on 2/22/89.

– Girard's seven made 3-pointers are the most by a Miami opponent since Georgia Tech's Michael Devoe posted the same number on 2/20/21.

– The only team to ever make more than 17 3-pointers in a game against the Hurricanes in ACC play was Boston College last season, when the Eagles went 18-of-35 on 1/12/21.

– Edwards is the first Miami opponent to post seven blocks in a game since Minnesota's Reggie Lynch did so on 11/29/17.

– Moore, who eclipsed 1,400 points in his career, recorded his 22nd 20-point showing, including his second this year.

– Moore, whose prior game with six made 3-pointers came on 12/18/18 against South Dakota State while he was at Kansas, scored double-digit points for the 65th time, including the eighth this season.

– In addition, Moore notched his 41st five-assist performance, including his fourth in 2021-22.

– Moore is eighth player this season to record 25 points, six assists, five rebounds in a game against a Division I foe without committing multiple turnovers, including the first to do so with six made 3-pointers.

– Waardenburg surpassed 400 rebounds at Miami.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 100 steals as a collegian, tallied double-figure points for the 77th time, including the 49th as a Hurricane and 14th this year.

– McGusty logged his fifth five-assist outing, all as a Hurricane, including his second of the season.

– Wong registered double-digit points for the 47th time, including the 14th in 2021-22.

– J. Miller, who set a new top mark in rebounds in ACC play, scored in double figures for the 55th time, including the fifth this season and third in a row.

Hurricanes extend win streak to eight, stay atop ACC with 88-87 thriller over Syracuse

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 5, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes, the surprise team of the ACC, made their biggest statement of the season Wednesday night, overcoming Syracuse's stifling vaunted zone defense and an 18-point deficit to survive a thriller 88-87 at the Watsco Center.

The game went down the wire. Syracuse forward Cole Swider drilled a three-pointer at the final buzzer, but Miami eked out the win.

It was the first time in 11 meetings that Miami scored more than 70 points against the Orange.

It was the Hurricanes' eighth win in a row, and improved their record to 12-3 and 4-0 in the ACC.

Charlie Moore led Miami with a season-high 25 points, six assists and five rebounds. Kameron McGusty scored 19, Isaiah Wong had 14 (all in the final 10 minutes), and Jordan Miller chipped in 11.

"Charlie Moore, I can't say enough about him," UM coach Jim Larranaga said of his point guard, a sixth-year senior who transferred from DePaul. "He's been the difference maker in our offense. He scored 25 points in a variety of ways, but what he's really sensational at is getting other guys involved. He's like our Tom Brady. I don't know anything about football except Tom Brady's a great quarterback and he gets all his team to function as a team. That's what Charlie is doing. It's been contagious.

"Look at our two passes at the end of the game. Kam McGusty touchdown passes to Jordan Miller for a dunk, to Isaiah Wong for a layup. Those are game-winning plays. When you win by one every basket is important."

Miami entered the game as one of four remaining unbeaten teams in the ACC along with traditional powers Duke, North Carolina and Louisville. The Canes were eager to prove that they belonged among those college basketball bluebloods.

They struggled in the first half, shut down by Syracuse's suffocating zone, and trailed by as many as 18 before intermission. Miami tried to penetrate into the paint, but kept running into 7-foot center Jesse Edwards. The Canes missed 11 of 12 shots during one stretch and went 4-of-14 from three-point range for the half while the Orange went 9-of-15 from distance. Wong went into halftime frustrated

and scoreless.

It appeared that Miami's win streak was over.

But the Hurricanes made adjustments at halftime, switched to their man-to-man offense and looked like a different team in the second half. They knocked down six three-pointers over five minutes to take their first lead of the night, 50-48, with 14:51 to go. The critical long-range baskets came from Sam Waardenburg (back from COVID protocols), McGusty, Moore, and freshman Bensley Joseph.

A 9-0 UM run stretched the lead to 63-55. Syracuse closed the gap to two, but Miami had another burst and a Moore three made it 80-74 with a minute to go. The Hurricanes scored 58 points in the second half.

The crowd, which included a large Syracuse contingent and until that point appeared to be favoring the visiting team, erupted with a roar for the Hurricanes. By the end of the game, everyone in the building was on their feet and Miami fans were ecstatic.

"We were a little passive in the first half against the zone, we had to make some adjustments, and were able to do that at halftime offensively and defensively," Larranaga said. "We came out very aggressive defensively, trying to force some mistakes that got us a nice little run to start the half, cut it from 14 to three and were able to finish strong."

Moore said he never lost faith in his team. Even when they were down by 18, he told his teammates to stick together, pick up their defensive energy, and stay calm. They listened.

Waardenburg said the victory demonstrated that this Hurricanes team is made up of players who trust each other.

"We got down in the first half and we all trusted Coach would put in a good game plan at halftime, we trusted in one another that we'd work even harder and that's something we've emphasized through this stretch, to trust each other," he said. "It also showed our fight. We're clearly a very talented team, great scorers, but that second half doesn't happen unless you're willing to fight."

Waardenburg said the team was uncomfortable in the zone offense, just passing it around the perimeter, so they went back to their man offense and got better ball movement and ball screens and were able to kick it out for threes and Wong was able to attack the baseline.

The game was a battle of two of the most veteran and well-respected coaches in college basketball – Larranaga, who has been coaching since the late 1970s, and Jim Boeheim, the second-winningest coach in Division 1 history, in his 46th year at Syracuse.

Larranaga knew that his team was in for a challenge unlike any it had faced thus far this season.

"When you prepare for an opponent, sometimes you can focus on one or two or even three guys, but with Syracuse, they have five guys in double figures," Larranaga said before the game. "They have a lot of different ways to score the ball. They're an outstanding shooting team from three and from two. So, they can spread your defense out and they can also drive you. They're very good in around the basket. They're just, really, a complete offensive team."

Two of Syracuse's most dangerous players are Boeheim's two sons. Buddy Boeheim was averaging 19.5 points per game and coming off a 27-point performance against Virginia. Jimmy Boeheim, a transfer from Cornell, was averaging 14.7 points per game.

Buddy finished with 9 points, Jimmy with 7.

Syracuse had four shooters all shooting better than 32 percent from 3-point range in Joseph Girard (47.4 percent), Jimmy Boeheim (40 percent), Swider (33.3 percent) and Buddy Boeheim (32.6 percent).

Girard led Syracuse with 26 points, Jesse Edwards had 22 and Swider had 20.

"They have a lot of size. They're bigger at every position than us and that's what makes the zone so challenging," Larranaga said. "(Boeheim has) actually made an adjustment; he's added a 1-3-1 zone to his arsenal. So, you've got to be prepared for the 2-3 and you've got to be prepared for the 1-3-1. You have to be prepared for their size and the length that they play that zone with because they play it differently than anybody else that we'll play all season."

Syracuse dropped to 7-7 (1-2 ACC)

Miami will travel to Durham, N.C., this weekend for a Saturday 8 p.m. game against second-ranked Duke, live on ACC Network from Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Charlie Moore pours in 25 to lead Miami to comeback win over Syracuse

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 5, 2022

When the Hurricanes had open 3-pointers, they missed.

When they drove, their shots were swatted away by Jesse Edwards.

On the other end, Syracuse was filling it up.

Not much was going right for the Hurricanes who found themselves down 18 in the first half.

But the Hurricanes went into halftime, made adjustments and came out firing as Charlie Moore's season-high 25 points led Miami in an 88-87 win over Syracuse on Wednesday for their eighth straight win.

"In the second half we just picked up our energy," Moore said. "Going into halftime we just tried to stay together, gather ourselves and pick up the energy on defense led to us getting good shots and getting the win."

Kameron McGusty added 19 points and Isaiah Wong scored all 14 of his points in the second half for the Hurricanes.

"I think the guys are really thrilled to win eight in a row, four in a row at home in the ACC," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Although we will celebrate today, tomorrow we will get right back to work because we go on the road now."

Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) remains atop of the ACC standings with No. 2 Duke (12-1, 2-0) up next.

"This is huge," Moore said. "I feel like every game ACC game is big. All of these teams are great and they're used to winning. We have to take it one game at a time."

Moore made 8 of 14 shots from the floor, 6 of 10 from 3.

"Charlie Moore, again, was fantastic from start to finish," Larranaga said. "I can't say enough about him. He's been the difference-maker in our offense. When you talk about scoring, which Charlie did today with 25 points and he does it in a variety of ways, but what he's really sensational at is getting other guys involved. He's like our Tom Brady. I don't know anything about football, but I know Tom Brady gets everybody involved and gets everybody to function as a team and that's what Charlie is doing. It's been contagious."

Syracuse (7-7, 1-2), which has lost four of six, was led by Joe Girard's 26 points and seven 3s as the Orange hit 17 of 32 from behind the arc. Edwards finished with 22 points, eight rebounds and seven blocks.

The Hurricanes trailed by as many as 18 in the first half, but Bensley Joseph's 3 capped a 24-4 run for a 50-48 lead.

"We were a little passive in the first half against the zone," Larranaga said. "We had to make some adjustments and we were able to do that at halftime offensively and defensively, most importantly defensively—we came out very aggressively and trying to force some mistakes."

Wong sank a pair of free throws for a 65-58 lead with eight minutes left.

McGusty made a key three-point play for a 76-69 lead with 2:24 left and the Hurricanes held on the rest of the way with Cole Swider making a 3, Syracuse's fourth in the final two minutes, at the buzzer for the final score.

"We were able to finish strong like we have in previous games," Larranaga said.

Miami made 7 of 10 free throws in the last two minutes while Moore added a 3 and Jordan Miller had a dunk.

McGusty, the reigning ACC Player of the Week, added five rebounds, five assists and three steals to go with his 19-point effort.

Syracuse used a 10-0 run to take a 17-8 lead, which grew to 28-15 after a 3 by Girard.

The Hurricanes fell behind by double digits after missing 12 of 13 shots.

Miami trailed 44-30 at halftime.

Sam Waardenburg returned after missing the last two games due to COVID protocols and came off the bench for the first time, scoring seven points and grabbing five rebounds in 29 minutes while Deng Gak started and was held scoreless in six minutes.

Waardenburg is the only Hurricane to appear in Miami's last NCAA Tournament game in 2018.

"It's been a few difficult years and it just feels that trust in one another is a different feel in the locker room and practice," Waardenburg said. "The communication is just at a different level and guys are having fun. I think that's one of the most important things when you

trust each other, it translates to games and winning, it creates a fun environment and guys want to get in the gym. That's contagious and that's really stood out this year."

Two others have NCAA Tournament experience with other teams as Moore played two games with Kansas in 2019 and McGusty played in one in 2018 with Oklahoma.

Miami plays at No. 2 Duke on Saturday (8:00 p.m., ACCN).

"It's going to be an entirely different environment than what we have been playing in the last month," Larranaga said.

Cardiac Canes erase 18-point lead, squeeze Syracuse 88-87.

By Cal Friedman
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 6, 2022

When asked why he transferred to the University of Miami, Charlie Moore said he wanted to win in his final season at the NCAA level. Moore, a sixth-year redshirt senior, led by example against Syracuse, scoring a season-high 25 points in Miami's 88-87 win.

"The will to win, we just had to make those adjustments. We never doubted ourselves," Moore said. "I just told the team to stay together. We just had to figure out how to score against the 2-3 [zone]."

Wednesday night's high-scoring affair at the Watsco Center saw a total tale of two halves. For the fifth time in his coaching career, Jim Larrañaga got the better of legendary Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim, with pivotal second-half adjustments corralling Miami (12-3, 4-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) from a 14-point deficit at the break.

Miami struggle throughout the first half against Syracuse's renowned zone. The Canes went on two scoring droughts over 2 ½ minutes in the first frame, shooting as poorly as 25% with six minutes to go.

"We were a little passive in the first half against the zone," Larrañaga said. "We made adjustments at the half, we started trapping the ball and forcing mistakes."

Syracuse's 44 first-half points were the most points given up by Larrañaga's team in an opening frame, but the Canes started the second period with a fury. Miami opened the half on a 14-3 run, while the Hurricanes held Syracuse (7-7, 1-2 ACC) without a make for the first 5:24.

Miami's halftime adjustments were just what the doctor ordered for guard Isaiah Wong. The third-year sophomore was held scoreless for the first 29:42 of the game, but sparked to life with two layups — including a vital and-one — to boost Miami to a six-point lead with 10:00 to go.

"Isaiah has shown he can score in a variety of ways," Larrañaga said. "I was surprised in the first half, he had a couple of nice looks."

Wong finished the second half with 14 points, including two and-ones, two rebounds and an assist. The performance marked Wong's 14th consecutive game in double-figures.

The game finished on an intense pace, with the two teams scoring 15 points in the final minute of the contest. Despite forward Cole Swider's buzzer-beating three, Miami held on for another huge victory.

The win marked the eighth win in a row for the Canes, who improved to 8-1 at the Watsco Center this season. Miami delivered 58 second-half points, their most of the season. The Hurricanes are now averaging 51 points in the second half of ACC contests.

Miami advanced to 8-1 on the season when three or more players finish in double-figures, with four Hurricanes scoring in double-figures for the fourth time in ACC play. After Miami dealt with injuries in each of their last three seasons, a fully healthy Hurricanes squad has started to make serious noise in college basketball.

"It's been a few difficult years. This year, with this trust that we have in the locker room, the communication is at a different level," Miami forward Sam Waardenburg said. "These guys are having fun, and that translated to winning games. We create a great energy, and that carries over."

Waardenburg was only a redshirt freshman when Miami last made the NCAA Tournament back in 2018. Now, in 2022, Miami might have another tournament team brewing in Coral Gables.

Miami's win streak is up to eight and the team has no conference losses, but the run will face its toughest challenge yet in its next contest, as Miami visits the No. 2 Duke Blue Devils on Saturday. The Hurricanes will search for their first win at Duke since 2015. The game tips off at 8 p.m. and will be televised on ACC Network.

Five takeaways from Hurricanes' comeback win against Syracuse

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 6, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes won their eighth straight game with an 88-87 victory over Syracuse on Wednesday.

Charlie Moore led the way with a season-high 25 points, Kameron McGusty added 19, Isaiah Wong scored all 14 of his points in the second half and Jordan Miller chipped in 11.

Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) is off to their second-best start in conference play, only behind their 2013 championship team that started 13-0.

The Hurricanes trailed by as many as 18 points in the first half as Syracuse (7-7, 1-2) took a 44-30 lead into the break.

Here are five takeaways from the game:

ADJUSTMENTS

Miami trailed 44-30 at halftime and needed to make adjustments, which they did on both ends of the court. On defense they decided to pick up full court while implementing traps at times, which made Syracuse uncomfortable getting up the court, but they were also out of rhythm when setting up their half-court offense. On offense, Miami found more open looks from 3, and hit them, as they rotated different players in at the high post in the middle of the zone while running a man offense instead of their usual zone, which created more movement without the ball.

CHARLIE MOORE WAS GREAT

Moore led the charge with 25 points, scoring 13 in the first half and 12 in the second, as he made 8 of 14 shots, 6 of 10 from 3 with many coming from about five feet behind the arc, which allowed him more space to get his shot off over the defenders. Moore was also very efficient with the ball, dishing out six assists with just one turnover. He made an impressive lob pass to Jordan Miller two steps inside the arc over shot-blocking menace Jesse Edwards in the second half to highlight his overall impressive game.

KAMERON MCGUSTY PLAYING AT VERY HIGH LEVEL

McGusty has had moments throughout his career where he has scored at a high clip, but what he has been doing this season with his all-around game, including increasing his

scoring output, has been very impressive. He is playing at a very high level as one of the best players in the ACC and his play continued against the Orange with 19 points, five rebounds, five assists and three steals.

CONFIDENCE GROWING

It would have been very easy to remain in a lull after falling behind by 18 in the first half and chalk it up as 'it just wasn't our night' especially after starting 3-0 in the conference. However, this team dug team, was not complacent, roared out of the gate in the second half and took control of the game on their way to the win. With each victory, you can see the confidence growing and overcoming a big deficit like this should only increase their confidence because there will be other difficult situations where they will find themselves down with shots not falling and they will need to grind back into the game. There is also a sense with the veterans who have been in the program that they are tired of the losses that have piled up in previous years and they have no desire to go back to those days.

ROTATION WAS IDEAL

The Hurricanes went with a nine-man rotation, which seems ideal for this team with Moore, McGusty, Isaiah Wong, Jordan Miller and Sam Waardenburg each logging at least 29 minutes. This is likely to be the plan moving forward for the rest of the season with Anthony Walker, Wooga Poplar, Bensley Joseph and Deng Gak in reserve roles to be used when needed. The key for Jim Larranaga moving forward is getting the most out of their secondary lineups whether it is deciding who to insert Poplar or Joseph in with at the guard spots, how to maximize Walker's efficiency or how Gak can find ways to be productive.

Stepping Up To Lead

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 6, 2022

Jim Larrañaga wouldn't exactly call himself a football expert.

But the Hurricanes men's basketball coach knows enough about the game to know exactly who Tom Brady is and what the seven-time Super Bowl champion and three-time NFL MVP has accomplished in his remarkable 22-year career.

So on Wednesday night, after Miami rallied from an 18-point first-half deficit and used a 58-point second half to edge Syracuse and pick up an 88-87 win, Larrañaga couldn't help but draw a parallel between Brady and one of the players that made the Hurricanes' comeback possible.

"He's like our Tom Brady. I don't know anything about football, except Tom Brady is a great quarterback and he gets all of his team to function as a team, whether it's his running backs or his receivers," Larrañaga said. "That's what Charlie [Moore] is doing. It's been contagious."

Against the Orange, Moore – a 5-foot-11 sixth-year redshirt senior guard – did a little bit of everything.

He scored a season-high 25 points. He was 6-of-10 from 3-point range. He had six assists and five rebounds. He had a steal. A block – and became the first player in the nation to post that stat line against a Division I opponent this season.

Just as importantly, when the Hurricanes needed a calm voice to help them stay strong after a tough first half, Moore delivered.

"Charlie's great...He knows his role and tonight, he knew we had to hit some threes against the zone and he did an amazing job of that," Hurricanes forward Sam Waardenburg said. "It's something he does in practice all the time. It feels like he's got limitless range...He's been amazing for us and he's a great leader as well. Through the tough times in the first half and when we were building that lead and whatnot in the second half, he was constantly talking, making sure we were locked in, not giving up. He just did an amazing job for us tonight and so far in this stretch as well."

That leadership, that poise, that experience – all of those are things Larrañaga hoped Moore would bring to Miami when he arrived as a

graduate transfer last summer.

And through the Hurricanes' first 15 games, Moore has delivered.

The guard is one of three Hurricanes averaging double figures (12.0 ppg) along with Kam McGusty (18.3 ppg) and Isaiah Wong (16.3 ppg). He has a team-high 58 assists, which ranks sixth in the ACC. And his skill on the defensive side of the floor has made a difference too, with Moore totaling a team-high 25 steals. That's third-most among ACC players.

All of that has helped the Hurricanes win eight straight and start conference play with a 4-0 mark for only the second time in program history.

It's the kind of start to the season Moore says he was hoping for when he transferred to Miami after two seasons at DePaul, two at Kansas and his freshman campaign at Cal.

"That was one of the main reasons I wanted to come here, to win. I've been a part of different programs, but winning is very important to me," Moore said. "Winning solves a lot of problems. It gets the whole team in situations to help them succeed, now and later on down the line in life. That's why I think we're just playing so hard, trusting each other, just trying to win."

Being compared to one of the most successful quarterbacks of all time doesn't hurt either.

"That's an honor from Coach L," Moore continued with a smile. "He's a legendary coach. He's seen guards for many, many years. For him to call me our Tom Brady out there, I'm happy. I feel like I'm doing my job. But I've got to continue doing my job and stay humble to help my teammates come out with the win."

With Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) set to take on second-ranked Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium on Saturday and matchups against ACC foes including North Carolina, Florida State, Virginia, Louisville and Notre Dame all looming on the schedule, Moore knows there is still plenty of work to do, both for him personally and the Hurricanes as a whole.

He wants to continue being a leader, both on and off the floor. And he wants to make sure the Hurricanes continue pressing forward, even when things get tough – as they did during the first half against Syracuse.

"I think we've just got confidence in ourselves. We believe in each other. We believe in the team and we believe in the coaching staff,"

Moore said of the resiliency the Hurricanes showed against the Orange, who held a 14-point lead at the half and then pulled within four twice in the game's final seconds after Miami took the lead. "It makes it easy to go out there and just keep playing our game. Basically, we'll figure it out as long as we're playing hard on the defensive end and executing on the offensive end. We're doing our jobs, so eventually, something good will happen."

Energy and Trust

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 7, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team has proven time and time again it thrives in the second half.

The Hurricanes are 5-3 when trailing at the intermission, winning four such games in a row. They are also a perfect 7-0 in holding onto a halftime lead. Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) is averaging 42.7 points on 51.3 percent shooting in the second half compared to 34.4 points on 43.5 percent shooting in the first half.

Most recently, the Hurricanes used a dominant second-half display to rally past Syracuse Wednesday night at the Watsco Center. Miami trailed by 18 points in the final minute of the first frame and by 14 at the break, but dropped 58 points on 56.7 percent shooting (17-of-30) after the break to post an 88-87 win over the Orange.

"In the first half, as a team, we struggled. It was just [about] trying to figure out what we needed to do and just how to come back from a big deficit," third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong said. "But I think, the team, we figured it out during the second half and we knew we could come back at any time. We just needed to figure out how to space the floor, how to create for one another and have somebody catch fire.

"We felt like in the second half, we brought the intensity," Wong added. "We had people helping each other and I think we figured it out. We came out in the second half with fire, hitting shots and playing defense with pressure. We felt like that's why we came back and won."

Charlie Moore led the way for Miami, notching a season-best 25 points, five rebounds and six assists, while shooting 6-of-10 from 3-point range, the first player in the nation to achieve that line against a Division I opponent.

Fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 19 points, including 12 in the second half, and tied a season high with five assists. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller posted 11 points, a co-game-high eight rebounds and a career-best six steals, the most by a Hurricane in over six years and tied for the third-most ever by a Miami player.

Wong, meanwhile, scored all 14 of his points in the final 11 minutes. He went 8-of-9 from the line to help ice the comeback win.

The late surge has been a consistent theme for Wong in 2021-22 and is a big reason why Miami has been so efficient in the second half. The Piscataway, N.J., has turned into a Mariano Rivera of sorts—a dominant closer.

Wong is averaging just 5.7 points in the first half, while shooting 41.5 percent overall, 18.5 percent from deep and 59.1 percent at the line. In the second half, those numbers skyrocket to 10.6 points on 56.4, 33.3 and 78.6 percent

figures, respectively.

"I feel like in the first half, I just try to figure ... out what they're playing [on the defensive end]," Wong shared. "When I start to feel it and when I start to notice it coming in, it just always happens in clutch time. So, the last 10 minutes, during the second half, that's when it really comes in and I start to figure it out. I just get more comfortable."

A reigning Third-Team All-ACC performer who currently ranks seventh in the league in scoring at 16.3 points per game, Wong thrives on the chance to step up in big spots.

"Coach L [and my] teammates, they all rely on me," Wong said. "They're like, 'Hey, this is your time. This is what you do.' They trust me and ... I trust in myself to be one of those players."

Wong actually had a quiet start to his career, averaging just 2.8 points per game on 29.8 percent shooting in his first 17 collegiate outings as a freshman in 2019-20.

In the next game, on Jan. 21, 2020, at eighth-ranked Duke, Wong had a then-season-high eight points. It was then that he started to settle in as collegian.

The following game, at North Carolina, Wong scored 19 points, his first of nine straight double-digit point totals. Since then, he has been one of the finest players in the ACC.

"Just going into the Duke game, we weren't winning, but I felt like I was starting to feel more comfortable. [I was] just getting more touches and getting more easy layups and buckets," Wong recalled. "I felt like I was ... just helping the team as much as possible and gaining coach's trust. When North Carolina came, he started me and I felt like I was getting more touches and I was getting more good possessions. I felt more comfortable playing and that's what really got me going."

Miami now returns to Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C., for the first time since that career turning point for Wong.

The ACC-leading Hurricanes square off with the second-ranked Blue Devils Saturday at 8 p.m. in their first true road game since a Dec. 1 win at Penn State.

"They're number two in the country, so this is one of the really tough games we have this season ... but coming into this game, we've got to take it how we take every game," Wong said. "[We need to] just try to be the most professional team [we can be in our approach] and just try to play to the best of our abilities, look at the scout and try to help the team win."

The Blue Devils are 12-1 (2-0) on the season with wins over teams such as Kentucky, Gonzaga, Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech. They are led by freshman forward Paolo Banchemo, a potential top-three NBA Draft choice, who is averaging 17.1 points and 7.5 rebounds per game.

Meanwhile, junior forward Wendell Moore Jr., another potential All-American, is averaging 16.3 points, 5.4 rebounds and 4.8 assists per game, the latter mark second-best in the ACC.

Banchemo and Moore are one of two teammate duos in the ACC who both rank top-eight in scoring. McGusty (18.3) and Wong form the other.

That Miami can match the Blue Devils in that category, however, is not the prime contributing factor to the Hurricanes' confidence entering the game. Rather, it comes from the team's strong play of late.

The Hurricanes have won eight games in a row, their longest streak since starting the 2017-18 campaign with 10 straight victories. Miami is also 4-0 in ACC play for the second time ever and first since 2012-13.

"That helps a lot. Just coming into this game with four ACC wins, we're all ... sharing the ball and we have good energy in the locker room," Wong remarked. "I feel like that is ... going to help us. We're just trusting each other going into the game. With all that and with the 4-0 [ACC record] and the eight-game winning streak, we're rolling right now. We're on a little hot streak and we're going to bring it into that game, too."

Miami is 8-22 all-time against Duke, including 2-11 on the road and 6-7 under 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga. The six victories are tied for the second-most by any team since "Coach L" started his tenure at The U in 2011-12.

Two of those wins are on the road, as the Hurricanes are one of just five teams with multiple wins at Cameron Indoor Stadium during that timeframe.

Despite Miami's success of late, including a 77-75 home win on Feb. 1, 2021, in the most recent meeting with the Blue Devils, Wong knows it will be a difficult task to earn a victory in Duke's vaunted arena. The Hurricanes, however, are ready to give it their all.

"We're just trying to get the best of what each player has," Wong said. "Coming into that game, we're just going to play hard, just go how the game flows and just try to come up with the win on Saturday."

The action between Miami and Duke will be broadcast live on ACC Network HERE, with Jay Alter and Malcolm Huckaby on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE. In addition, live stats for the contest will be available HERE.

After playing the Blue Devils, the Hurricanes visit Tallahassee, Fla., where they take on Florida State Tuesday at 8 p.m., live on ACC Network from the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center.

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 need to know as red-hot UM heads into Saturday road game at No. 2 Duke.

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 7, 2022

Jordan Miller has dreamed about playing in front of Duke's Cameron Crazies since he was a kid shooting hoops with his three older brothers on the courts at Banneker Elementary School in Middleburg, Virginia.

Saturday he will see what it's really like as the Atlantic Coast Conference-leading Miami Hurricanes, winners of eight in a row, take on No. 2 Duke at 8 p.m.

UM enters the game undefeated in the conference with wins against Clemson, NC State, Wake Forest and Syracuse. The Canes (12-3 overall, 4-0 in the ACC) trailed Syracuse 44-30 at halftime Wednesday but scored 58 points in the second half to pull out an 88-87 victory.

While that was a huge test, facing the Blue Devils at storied Cameron Indoor Stadium is more daunting.

Duke (12-1, 2-0 ACC) and its loaded roster features freshman Paolo Banchero, a 6-10 and 250-pound projected NBA lottery pick who is averaging 17.1 points and 7.5 rebounds. Junior forward Wendell Moore Jr., another potential All-American, is averaging 16.3 points, 5.4 rebounds and 4.8 assists per game.

Legendary coach Mike Krzyzewski is retiring after 42 years, so his team has extra motivation in his final season.

"Being able to play in those gyms, play against the well-known coaches is something I took into consideration before I chose UM," said Miller, who transferred from George Mason last summer and has been one of the Hurricanes' biggest surprises. "This is what college basketball is about. It's exciting. New experiences. I'm excited to play these top-notch teams.

"I expect the fans to be going crazy, they're known for the Cameron Crazies, I expect a great game and great atmosphere."

Miami is 8-22 all-time against Duke, including 2-11 on the road and 6-7 under 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga.

"Everybody knows you play Duke at home and the Cameron Crazies are there it's going to be entirely different environment than what we've been playing in the past month," Larrañaga said.

Sixth-year senior Sam Waardenburg, asked how he can prepare younger teammates for a road game at Duke, said: "You can tell them about it, but they're not going to know until they experience it, especially at Duke, those Cameron Crazies... it's an insane environment."

The Hurricanes' high-tempo offense, which averaged 90 points the past three games, has gotten most production from its guards.

Kameron McGusty is averaging 18.3 points per game. Isaiah Wong is averaging 16.3 points and point guard Charlie Moore, a DePaul transfer, is averaging 12 points and four assists and scored 25 against Syracuse. Miller, a 6-7 guard/forward, had 11 points, eight rebounds and six steals against Syracuse.

Duke's Moore said he is not surprised by Miami's success this season.

"I know their personnel because I played against Isaiah Wong since high school and he's been that good ever since; I've guarded Kam McGusty the past few years and he is really good, as well," Moore said on a Zoom interview Thursday. "I got a chance to see Charlie Moore a couple of times, and I think he's one of the keys to their team. He makes their team go with the energy and enthusiasm he brings."

Moore expects a tough matchup for the Duke guard trio, which includes Trevor Keels and Jeremy Roach.

"They have three or four really good guards. We make it tough for opposing teams because I don't think other teams have three guards like we do who can switch all three of those positions," Moore said. "It's definitely going to be a huge matchup for us. We've got to come in locked in and take their perimeter out of it."

Miami is undersized, so it's biggest challenge will be figuring out how to contain Banchero and 7-1 center Mark Williams.

"Basketball's all about making opposing players uncomfortable and making them take shots they are least comfortable with," Miller said. "The series of wins we got make us really confident going into this game. This is a big game that can open up a lot of eyes for not only ACC fans but the rest of the nation to see that we're serious."

Five keys for Miami to pull off upset at No. 2 Duke

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 7, 2022

It has happened before.

It will not be easy to do it again.

The Miami Hurricanes take an eight-game winning streak into Cameron Indoor Stadium on Saturday (8:00 p.m., ACCN) aiming for an upset of No. 2 Duke.

Miami (12-3, 4-0 ACC) is expected to be double-digit underdogs when the lines are released while Kenpom predicts a 16-point win for Duke (12-1, 2-0).

Miami beat Duke 77-75 in last year's meeting, but the Blue Devils were unranked.

Miami has lost the last five games against ranked Duke teams with the last win in 2017, which was at home. The last time an unranked Miami team has won at Duke when the Blue Devils were ranked was a 90-74 win in January 2015 when Duke was ranked fourth.

Here are five keys for the Hurricanes to pull off the upset:

STRONG GAMES FOR KAMERON MCGUSTY AND ISAIAH WONG

Kameron McGusty (18.3 ppg) and Isaiah Wong (16.3 ppg) both need to strong games for Miami to have a chance. McGusty is having a career year with six 20-point games and is shooting 50.7 percent from the field while Wong has shown the chance to explode for any stretch as he is shooting a career-best 49.7 percent. McGusty and Wong have different offensive games, but both are at their best when they are able to mix in their perimeter shots with getting to the basket and going to the free-throw line.

Neither have had a lot of success against Duke in the past as McGusty has not scored more than 13 in three games against Duke while Wong has only scored in double figures once in three games.

LIMIT TURNOVERS

Duke's last two opponents, Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech, both had 10 or less turnovers and stayed within 12 points. Neither shot 45 percent from the field, which only three opponents have this season, to aid in the losses, but they at least gave themselves opportunities to score by limiting their turnovers.

The Hurricanes have done a good job of keeping their turnovers down this season with less than 10 in each of the last four games and no games with more than 13, which they had in 10 of their 27 games (37 percent) last year.

DIFFERENT DEFENSIVE LOOKS

Paolo Banchero is a dynamic scorer who excels close to the basket, but also can knock down mid-range shots and the occasional 3. If Banchero goes off, which he certainly can, Miami will have a tough time winning and the same goes for center Mark Williams. Miami must pay close attention to Williams as he is a similar offensive player to Jesse Edwards who just dropped 22 against Miami.

The key for Miami is to mix up their looks, which could be packing the paint as much as possible. With that being said, they implement primarily a man-to-man defense, but in this one, it could be tough matching up with Duke's bigs. Last game against Syracuse Miami pressed and opted to trap when possible. Some sort of mix of defenses will likely be needed in this one to try to get Banchero and Williams out of a rhythm because both are matchup problems with what Miami has in the frontcourt.

FORCE TREVOR KEELS AND JEREMY ROACH TO SCORE

Duke's offensive strengths are in the frontcourt with the combination of Banchero and Williams and Wendell Moore, a wing with an inside-out game. With that said, guards Jeremy Roach and Trevor Keels are capable of scoring, particularly Keels who has reeled off points in bunches at times. However, Miami should try to make Roach and Keels beat them on the offensive end. Both have been steady, but not great, behind the arc and neither are shooting over 42 percent from the field. Given Duke's strengths which becomes even greater because of Miami's weaknesses, there has to be some give and take and allowing Roach and Keels to shoot more should be in the game plan.

STAY CLOSE ON THE BOARDS

Miami is almost assuredly going to be out-rebounded in the game as they rank last in the ACC in rebounding margin (minus-3.5 a game) while Duke is seventh at plus-3.5. The key for Miami is to keep it close especially with its defensive rebounding. Allowing multiple second-chance opportunities for Duke is not likely a positive outcome especially since

second-chance shots can often result in close to the bucket, which is where Duke can really exploit Miami. One of Miami's top rebounders, Jordan Miller, could find himself in difficult matchups in this one especially if Williams can avoid foul trouble. Finding others to get their hands on rebounds will be imperative.

Upset-hungry Miami ready to play against No. 2 Duke

By Luke Chaney
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 8, 2022

Miami is looking to accomplish something it hasn't done in almost six years: defeat Duke in Durham, North Carolina.

The last time the Hurricanes were victorious against the Blue Devils amongst the "Cameron Crazies" of Cameron Indoor Stadium was in January 2015, when an unranked Miami team traveled up to Durham and defeated then-No. 4 Duke 90-74.

Circumstances are similar this time around, as Miami (12-3, 4-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) is attempting to make a statement against the heavily favored and second-ranked Blue Devils.

Duke (12-1, 2-0 ACC) is off to another great season led by head coach Mike Krzyzewski, who announced during the offseason that he plans on retiring at the conclusion of this season.

The Blue Devils are led by superstar freshman forward Paolo Banchero, who many experts consider to be the top-rated prospect in the 2022 NBA Draft.

At 17.1 points and 7.5 rebounds per game, Banchero leads Duke in both scoring and rebounding. Standing at 6-foot-10 and weighing 250 pounds, he is a rare mix of size and athleticism at the forward position that makes game planning against him an absolute nightmare.

Miami is 8-22 all-time against Duke, including 2-11 on the road and 6-7 under Hurricanes head coach Jim Larrañaga.

"It's going to be an entirely different environment than we've been playing for the last month," Larrañaga said of Miami's upcoming test.

Guards Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong lead the Hurricanes in scoring this season; the latter of whom was especially dominant in Wednesday's win over Syracuse, dropping 19 points to go along with five rebounds and five assists.

"[Duke is] number two in the country, so this is one of the really tough games we have this season," Wong said. "[We need to] just try to be the most professional team [we can be] and just try to play to the best of our abilities."

Miami is entering Saturday's contest 4-0 in

ACC play for the first time since 2012-13. During that 2012-13 season, the Hurricanes improved to 5-0 in ACC play with a commanding 90-63 victory over then-No. 1 Duke.

"[The 4-0 start in ACC play] helps us a lot," Wong said. "We're just trusting each other going into the game. With all that and with the 4-0 [ACC record] and the eight-game winning streak, we're rolling right now. We're on a little hot streak and we're going to bring it in that game."

Miami will also need contributions from sixth-year guard Charlie Moore, who played a pivotal role in Miami's one-point win against Syracuse, scoring a team-high 25 points, including a 6-of-10 stripe from deep. Moore also finished the game with five rebounds and a team-high six assists.

"In ACC play, every game is big," Moore said. "All these teams are great...these games are big. We just have to take it one game at a time and just try to keep getting better each and every day."

Elite performances from a myriad of Hurricanes will be needed for Miami to upset the No. 2 Blue Devils. Tip-off is scheduled for Saturday at 8 p.m.

"We're just trying to get the best of what each player has," Wong said. "Coming into that game, we're just going to play hard, just go how the game flows and just try to come up with the win on Saturday."

MBB Stuns No. 2 Duke, 76-74, at Cameron Indoor

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 8, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team matched its record for the highest-ranked opponent defeated on the road in program history, shocking second-ranked Duke, 76-74, Saturday night at a sold-out Cameron Indoor Stadium.

The Hurricanes led by as many as eight points in a start-to-finish thriller to become the first team in the nation this season to knock off a top-two team on the road. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore scored a team-high 18 points for the Hurricanes, who tied a program record in ACC play with 15 steals.

Seven of those steals came from Moore, good for the most ever by a Hurricane in ACC play and tied for the second-most ever by an opposing player at Cameron Indoor Stadium. The stingy defense helped Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) up its winning streak to nine in a row.

"That was an exciting game from start to finish," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after moving to 7-7 against Duke during his time at The U. "I thought our guys played extremely well and got us off to a good start. Duke came roaring back and played very well. We were tied up at the half and both teams kind of just exchanged punches in the second half.

"Duke, obviously, has earned their high ranking," he continued. "I'm really proud of the way my guys executed the game plan and stuck together."

The Hurricanes, who forced eight turnovers in the first 10 minutes, used an 8-0, 51-second burst to grab a 14-6 lead after just 5:11, but Duke (12-2, 2-1 ACC) quickly answered. After the two teams exchanged baskets, Miami went scoreless for 5:24, missing 10 straight shots, as the Blue Devils scored 13 straight points, including drilling three consecutive 3-pointers, to go up by five, 21-16, with 9:52 on the clock.

Duke extended its run to 18-2, taking a 26-18 lead with 7:02 left in the half. The Hurricanes, however, countered right back, holding the Blue Devils without a point for five minutes and notching 10 in a row at the other end to go ahead, 28-26, with 2:52 remaining.

The sides went into the intermission deadlocked at 32, the first even score at the break for Miami this season. The Hurricanes notched 11 first-half steals, setting a program record in the ACC era (since 2004-05) for a single frame. Moore, who scored a game-best nine first-half points, individually recorded five steals, already tying his career high. In total, Miami forced 13 turnovers and committed just four, en route to a 13-0 edge in points off giveaways.

Duke took a five-point lead in the second half, but Miami answered with a 13-2 surge in just 3:08 to go in front by six, 60-54, with 9:12 left. The spurt was part of a streak of nine straight made field goals, including three in a row by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

The Hurricanes held a three-point edge, 71-68, in the final 100 seconds, but Duke scored six consecutive points in 48 seconds to go up, 74-71, with 44.9 ticks remaining. Moore made a driving layup through contact at the other end and although he missed the free throw, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller grabbed the rebound and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty made a layup to put Miami up by one. After a defensive stop, Wong split a pair of free throws with 16 seconds to play.

Duke then missed multiple shots at the other end, sending the Hurricanes into a raucous celebration in front of the silent crowd of 9,314.

"When they got ahead by three, it didn't look good for us, but Charlie Moore made a sensational move to the basket, made an incredible layup and then Jordan Miller came up with an incredible offensive rebound," Larrañaga said. "Kameron McGusty hit the game-winner, so a lot of guys contributed throughout the game."

Miller, Wong and McGusty all joined Moore in double figures. Miller scored 17 points on 6-of-11 shooting from the field, adding a 4-of-4 mark from the line to set a season best in makes. Wong notched 15 and McGusty, in a season-high 38 minutes, added 14.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg tied career highs with team-high five assists and team-best three blocks, while freshman guard Wooga Poplar grabbed a career-high six rebounds to lead the Hurricanes.

Duke freshman forward Paolo Banchemo paced all scorers with 20 points on 6-of-10 shooting, adding a 6-of-7 mark from the line. Junior forward Wendell Moore Jr., registered a 12-point, 10-rebound double-double, adding a game-high seven assists, but Miami forced him into six turnovers.

Sophomore center Mark Williams added 12 points on 6-of-8 shooting for the Blue Devils, adding a game-best seven blocks, while freshman forward AJ Griffin chipped in 10 points. Two other Duke players—freshman guard Trevor Keels and sophomore guard Jeremy Roach—scored nine points apiece, as Miami held the starting guards to a combined 5-of-19 clip from the floor.

Miami forced Duke into 19 turnovers and committed only five, tied for its fourth-fewest ever in an ACC game, and post a 17-2 edge in points off turnovers. The undersized Hurricanes also had a 52-38 advantage in paint points, good for a season high in that category.

Although Miami shot just 4-of-16 from 3-point range, it went 3-of-5 in the final 16 minutes after starting 1-of-11 in a game that featured 15 lead changes and 10 ties.

The Hurricanes are back in action Tuesday at 8 p.m. against Florida State at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center in Tallahassee, Fla., live on ACC Network.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 9-22 all-time against Duke, including 3-11 on the road and 7-7 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Since Larrañaga arrived in 2011-12, Miami's seven wins against Duke are solely the second-most of any program during that span, trailing only the 10 by North Carolina, which plays Duke at least twice a year.

– The Hurricanes' three road victories over Duke since Larrañaga's 2011-12 arrival are solely the second-most of any team, behind just the four by North Carolina.

– Miami (7-7) and Louisville (6-6) are the only ACC teams with a .500 record against Duke during Larrañaga's tenure, with one of the Cardinals' wins coming before they joined the league.

– According to ESPN Stats & Info, Larrañaga is the fifth coach with multiple AP top-five road wins over Duke, joining Dean Smith (five), Gary Williams (three), Roy Williams (three) and Dave Odom (two).

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 683-467 in 38 years as a head coach, including 213-133 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 213 wins as an ACC head coach, Larrañaga tied Vic Bubas for No. 14 on the all-time leaderboard.

– Larrañaga now has nine wins over top-10 foes during his Miami tenure, including eight in ACC play.

– The only other team in country to defeat a top-three opponent on the road this season was then-No. 23 Wisconsin, which won, 74-69, at then-third-ranked Purdue on 1/3/22.

– The victory matched the highest-ranked AP opponent the Hurricanes have ever defeated on the road, as they previously defeated second-ranked Connecticut, 73-71, on 2/20/99 in Storrs, Conn.

– This is the fourth AP top-two win in program history, with three of those four versus Duke, as Miami also knocked off the top-ranked Blue Devils, 90-63, on 1/23/13 and beat the second-ranked Blue Devils, 71-69, on 12/21/62, both at home.

– The Hurricanes now have eight victories all-time over teams ranked in the top five of either poll, including five in Larrañaga's tenure and six against Duke.

– Miami now owns seven wins over AP top-five teams, including four under Larrañaga and five versus the Blue Devils.

– This is the fifth AP top-three win in program history, including the third under Larrañaga and the third against Duke.

– Saturday night marked the second time Miami has ever beat a top-three opponent while unranked, with lone other occurrence coming on 12/21/62 in a 71-69 home win against Duke.

– Miami's last ranked victory was a 78-72 triumph over No. 16/18 Louisville on 1/16/21 in Coral Gables, while its last top-10 win was a 91-88 decision at ninth-ranked North Carolina on 2/27/18 and its last top-five victory was a 64-61 home result against third-ranked Virginia on 2/22/16.

– For the 10th time this season and first since 12/20/21, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong.

– The Hurricanes, for the second time (also 3/1/21 at Virginia), wore throwback jerseys, courtesy of adidas, that paid homage to Miami's teams of the late 1990's, including the 1999-2000 squad that won a share of the BIG EAST regular season title and earned the program's first Sweet 16 berth.

– The Hurricanes are currently the only team in the ACC with a 5-0 league record and sit alone atop the conference standings.

– Miami is 5-0 in ACC play for the second time ever and first since 2012-13, when it started league play 13-0.

– The Hurricanes are riding a nine-game winning streak for the first time since 11/10/17 to 12/22/17 when they started the 2017-18 season with a 10-0 record.

– The win snapped a seven-game ACC road losing streak (last win on 1/9/21 at NC State) and a five-game losing streak against ranked foes.

– Miami's 15 steals matched the mark set on 1/22/05 versus North Carolina for its most ever in ACC play.

– Moore's seven steals set a new program record in ACC play eclipsing the prior mark that was recorded three times: Jordan Miller on 1/5/22 versus Syracuse, Angel Rodriguez on 1/2/16 versus Syracuse and Shane Larkin on 1/10/12 at North Carolina.

– Moore's seven steals tied for the second-most in any game in program history and marked just the third time a Hurricane has reached that figure: Jerome Scott (nine) on 3/4/91 versus FIU and Vernon Jennings (seven) on 1/5/00 versus West Virginia.

– Only three other visiting players have logged seven-plus steals at Cameron Indoor Stadium: Florida State's Trent Forrest (eight on 2/10/20), NC State's Spud Webb (seven on 2/20/85) and NC State's Kenny Carr (seven on 2/18/76).

– The Hurricanes' prior record for steals in a half in the ACC era was 10, recorded twice: at Boston College on 1/20/16 and at North Carolina on 1/22/05.

– The last time Miami was tied at halftime was 3/1/21 at No. 21/20 Virginia in an eventual 62-51 loss.

– Both teams were perfect from the free-throw line in the first half, as Miami shot 5-of-5 and Duke went 8-of-8, while the Hurricanes also notched a 22-10 advantage in paint points through 20 minutes.

– Moore, who eclipsed 150 steals as a collegian, tallied double-digit points for the 66th time, including the ninth this year.

– Wong, who surpassed 950 points at Miami, scored double-figure points for the 48th time, including the 15th in 2021-22.

– J. Miller scored in double figures for the 56th time, including the sixth this season and the fourth in a row.

– McGusty recorded double-digit points for the 78th time, including the 50th as a Hurricane and 15th this year.

– The only other time Waardenburg had five assists in a game was 11/13/18 against Stephen F. Austin.

Miami Hurricanes shock No. 2 Duke 76-74 on the road, extend win streak to nine

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 8, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes traveled to Durham, North Carolina, seeking respect and an upset against No. 2 Duke on Saturday night.

They got both.

Despite entering the game atop the ACC and riding an eight-game win streak, the Hurricanes were 15-point underdogs against the Blue Devils. They didn't play like it in a 76-74 victory that surely will turn heads and get them into the Top 25.

The veteran Miami team with four sixth-year seniors came in fearless and confident and stunned the Blue Devils and the sea of blue and white clad Cameron Crazies. Miami improved to 13-3 overall and 5-0 in the conference.

"That game showed what kind of team we are, we love dogfights, and it shows we're not a team to play with anymore," said guard Kameron McGusty, who scored 14 points and made the game-winning shot with 20 seconds left. "We're the real deal and I think everybody saw that tonight. We can compete with anybody, and we can beat anybody."

McGusty, a 24-year-old sixth-year senior, returned to UM for a final season after initially entering his name in the NBA Draft last spring. He was motivated by the opportunity to turn around a team that won only 10 games last season and went 4-15 in the conference. The Canes were picked 12th in the 2021 preseason ACC poll.

In the first week of January Miami has already exceeded last year's win totals.

"It's finally good to see all that hard work paying off," McGusty said. "As a program these last two years we've really gone through it. We had to stay down for the come up and it feels great to actually see all the work come together. I'm so happy for my guys, for Coach L (Larranaga), for the Miami fan base, the City of Miami. I'm just so happy for everyone right now and happy we could prove people wrong."

The Hurricanes made up for their lack of size with aggressive, tenacious defense. They blitzed, trapped, tried to get their hands on every Duke pass, got 15 steals and forced the Blue Devils into a season-high 17 turnovers. Miami scored 17 points off turnovers and Duke scored two.

The 15 Miami steals tied a program best in ACC play.

Point guard Charlie Moore led the Hurricanes with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting and had seven steals, more than any player in UM history in an ACC game. He was one of four players in double figures. Jordan Miller scored 17 and Isaiah Wong had 15 – 10 in the second half. Sam Waardenburg added five assists, most on backdoor passes.

"We played a fast, good and older team tonight," said Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, who is retiring at the end of this season after 42 years at the school. "The story of the game was the turnovers. We played well at times and had an opportunity to win, but you have to finish tough and we didn't finish."

The Canes had proven they have offensive firepower as they averaged 90 points in the previous three wins over Wake Forest, North Carolina State and Syracuse. The question was whether they could defend Duke's big men. Freshman Paolo Banchero is a projected NBA lottery pick. Mark Williams is 7-1 and AJ Griffin is a force inside.

Williams threw down a ferocious dunk in the opening minute on an assist by Banchero and it looked like maybe the Hurricanes would be in for a long night.

But McGusty got Miami on the board, Moore made two shots and Wong hit a three and a layup to give Miami an 11-6 lead that stretched to 14-6 after a trio of Moore free throws. Duke went on a 13-0 run and the Canes went cold, missing 14 of their next 15 shots and the Blue Devils pulled ahead 26-18.

The Hurricanes then scored 10 in a row, tied the game 26-26 on a dunk by freshman Wooga Poplar, and took the lead on a shot by Miller. Duke went ahead by four, but Miami caught up and the score was tied 32-32 at halftime.

The teams traded leads the entire second half. Every time it seemed UM got a little cushion Duke battled back and took the lead. By the end of the night Miami had led for 18:53 and Duke for 14:17.

Among the surprising stats: Miami outscored Duke 52-38 in the paint.

Banchero led Duke with 20 points and seven rebounds. Williams had 12 points and seven rebounds.

"That was an exciting game from start to finish," said Larranaga, who is 7-7 against Duke since taking over at Miami. The Hurricanes were 2-15 against Duke before he got there.

"Both teams exchanged punches in the second half, and when they went ahead by three (late) it didn't look good for us, but Charlie Moore made a sensational move to the basket and layup and then Jordan Miller came up with an offensive rebound and Kam hit the game winner," Larranaga said. "Duke has certainly earned their high ranking. I'm really, really proud of how my guys executed the game plan."

Larranaga said because his team was undersized the plan was "trying to limit how many times they dunked the ball on us." They relied on deflections, steals, and team defense. And trust in each other. Larranaga, McGusty and Moore all mentioned the word "trust" when explaining how they pulled off the upset.

Asked where the victory ranked in his career, McGusty didn't hesitate.

"Woooo! I'm not going to lie, this is No. 1 without a doubt," McGusty said. "I had my Dad in the stands. Just beating Duke. Not too many kids or young adults get to say they beat a blueblood and make a game-winning shot. It's a blessing."

"Duke has a heck of a program. Coach K is a heck of a coach. Their players they bring in every year are good. Their crowd is always good. This is dream come true for a kid. When you're six, seven years old watching the NCAA Tournament or watching Duke playing North Carolina, you dream of being in this game, being able to win a gym like that. I'm speechless. I'm so thrilled right now."

The Hurricanes are back on the road Tuesday at Florida State.

'We're the real deal': Kameron McGusty's layup lifts Miami over No. 2 Duke

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 8, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes entered the season with modest expectations and started slow.

Since a 4-3 start, the Hurricanes have reeled off nine straight victories. None bigger than the one on Saturday night.

Kameron McGusty scored 14 points including a go-ahead layup with 20 seconds left to send the Hurricanes to a 76-74 win at No. 2 Duke.

"It shows we're not a team to play with anymore," McGusty said. "We're the real deal."

Charlie Moore led the Hurricanes, who were 15-point underdogs, with 18 points and seven steals and Jordan Miller added 17 to give Miami its first win over a top-5 team since beating No. 3 Virginia 64-61 on February 22, 2016.

"That was an exciting game from start to finish," coach Jim Larranaga said. "I thought our guys played extremely well, got us off to a good start. Duke came roaring back, played very well, tied it up at the half and both teams exchanged punches in the second half.

Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) is off to their best start in conference play since going 13-0 in their 2013 championship-winning season.

"We can play with anybody," McGusty said. "We can beat anybody. It's finally good to see all of that hard work paying off. As a program these last two years we've really gone through it. We had to stay down for the come up. This feels great to actually start to see all of the hard work and everything coming together. I'm just so happy for my guys, so happy for coach L, the Miami fanbase, the city of Miami, I'm so happy for everybody right now.

The Hurricanes are enjoying a turnaround season after three straight losing seasons for the first time since the early 90s, going 39-51 and winning just 28 percent (16-41) of their conference games.

"I know for the players, they're thrilled," Larranaga said. "They're excited about a big win like this. For me, as a coach, I know we have 15 more conference games. So, this is just one of 20. No matter who you beat and where you beat them, it counts as one. Right now we're happy with this great victory tonight, but we know we've got a major challenge on Tuesday at Florida State."

Paolo Banchero led Duke (12-2, 2-1) with 20 points including two key baskets down the stretch, but the Hurricanes bounced back. After Mark Williams gave Duke a 71-70 lead following a dunk with 1:33 left, Banchero blocked Wong's shot, made a layup and then converted a turnover by Sam Waardenburg for a dunk and a 74-71 advantage with 45 seconds remaining.

"When they got ahead by 3, it did not look good for us," Larranaga said.

Moore responded with a layup and was fouled, but missed the free throw. Miller grabbed the offensive rebound and McGusty finished with a go-ahead layup for a 75-74 lead with 27 seconds left.

"It was one of those things where my body just took over," McGusty said. "I saw the late, the gap, the opening and laid it in. Nothing too crazy. I don't feel I did any crazy moves or anything. I just did a straight-line drive."

After Trevor Keels missed a layup, Wong split a pair of free throws for a 76-74 lead with eight seconds left.

Moore and Keels both missed 3s in the closing seconds to seal the win for Miami and snap Duke's five-game winning streak.

"Duke has obviously earned their high ranking," Larranaga said. "I'm really proud of the way my guys executed the game plan and stuck together."

Miami played sharp throughout with only five turnovers compared to Duke's season-high 17, which led to 17 points for the Hurricanes. Miami also outscored Duke 52-38 in the paint as both teams shot 46 percent from the floor with Miami making 32 of 70 shots and Duke 27 of 59.

"Us coming out with the win, we feel pretty good about it," Moore said.

The Hurricanes started strong, building a 16-8 lead behind seven points from Moore and five from Wong.

Duke responded with a 13-0 run, capped by 3s by AJ Griffin and Jeremy Roach, for a 21-16 lead. The Hurricanes missed eight straight shots during the run.

The teams went into the break tied at 32 after Anthony Walker's layup in the closing seconds tied it for Miami, which outscored Duke 22-10

in points in the paint and 13-0 in points off turnovers.

The second half was played tight throughout with both teams trading leads. Moore drilled a 28-footer from the top of the key to give Miami a 63-57 lead and Miller's dunk gave Miami a 67-63 lead with five minutes left.

Moments later Wooga Poplar cut back door and made a layup on a pass from Sam Waardenburg for a 69-66 lead with 3:34 remaining, setting the stage for a thrilling end.

MOORE STEALS

Moore's seven steals is the second-most ever by a Hurricane, only training Vernon Jennings's nine against FIU in 1991 and it was the most ever by a Hurricane in an ACC game. Angel Rodriguez (2016) and Shane Larkin (2012) each had six in a game.

"I just wanted to help my teammates as much as possible," Moore said. "Duke is a very big team so I just wanted to get in there and just help them out as much as I can to help us get a win. I used my energy and IQ out there to just get steals."

SUCCESS AGAINST DUKE

Larranaga's Hurricanes improved to 7-7 against Duke over his 11 seasons in Coral Gables. Miami was 2-15 against Duke prior to Larranaga's arrival in 2011.

Miami also won last year's meeting to end a four-game skid, which included three straight losses of at least 30 points.

Saturday's win was the first for an unranked Miami team at a ranked Duke team since 2015.

UP NEXT

Miami plays at Florida State on Tuesday (8:00 p.m., ACCN).

McGusty's basket helps Miami stun No. 2 Duke 76-74

By Aaron Beard
Associated Press
Jan. 8, 2022

Kameron McGusty watched No. 2 Duke's last shot bounce off the rim as the horn sounded, then turned toward the Miami bench — now an oncoming rush of celebrating orange-clad players — with a huge fist pump.

Moments later, he was emphatically talking and trading high-fives with Hurricanes fans on his way off the court.

"We're the real deal," McGusty said. "And I think everybody saw that tonight."

McGusty hit a hanging layup in traffic with 22.8 seconds left and the Hurricanes survived that final-play shot for the win to stun the Blue Devils 76-74, earning their first win against a top-5 opponent in nearly six years while remaining unbeaten in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Charlie Moore had 18 points and a career-high seven steals for the Hurricanes (13-3, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their ninth straight game. This time, days after rallying from 18 down to beat Syracuse, Miami won at Duke's famously rowdy Cameron Indoor Stadium with a fearless performance that had them repeatedly beating defenders off the dribble or on backcuts while answering every push by the homestanding Blue Devils (12-2, 2-1).

"We came out here and just played together and played hard," Moore said, adding: "Our energy out there, our effort and us trusting each other helped us come out with the win."

After a free throw from Isaiah Wong pushed Miami to the 76-74 lead with 8.0 seconds left, Duke had two chances to win. On the first, Wendell Moore Jr. pushed the ballcourt and launched a 3-pointer from near the Duke bench, but the ball bounced out of bounds on a loose rebound and went back to the Blue Devils with 0.7 on the clock.

On the final play, Moore inbounded to freshman Trevor Keels, whose desperation 3 hit the rim but wasn't particularly close to end it.

That sent Miami players running to midcourt to celebrate and in a chest-bump heavy mob. Moore simply walked around near that crowd with both arms raised triumphantly, while McGusty held court with Miami's fans before team headed off to continue the celebration in Cameron's cramped visiting locker room.

McGusty finished with 14 points for Miami,

which shot 58% in the second half to secure its first win against a top-5 opponent since beating Virginia in February 2016.

Miami also finished with 15 steals while forcing Duke into a season-high 17 turnovers.

Not bad for a team picked to finish 12th in the ACC before the season and facing the preseason favorite on the road.

"Woooo, I'm not going to lie," McGusty said when asked where this win ranked for him in his career. "This is No. 1 without a doubt."

Star freshman Paolo Banchero had 20 points to lead Duke, including two late baskets and critical steal to set up his own transition dunk that pushed the Blue Devils to a 74-71 lead. But Moore answered with a whistle-drawing basket to cut the deficit to one with 33.3 seconds left.

Then, after Moore missed the tying and-1 free throw, McGusty put Miami ahead for good with his driving basket.

"I know the main story will be about the last minute. But to me the story of the game was our turnovers," retiring Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

BIG PICTURE

Miami: Jim Larranaga's Hurricanes have revised those low preseason expectations with their play since the start of December. The 4-0 ACC start was only the second in program history and first since starting 13-0 in 2013, while the eight-game run was the program's best since going 10-0 to start the 2017-18 season. Now the Hurricanes have everyone's attention, and could land in Monday's next AP Top 25 poll as a result.

"These guys are really playing the game," Larranaga said. "They're doing a lot of things at both ends of the floor to help each other."

Duke: The Blue Devils were playing their second home game this week since returning from a stoppage due to a COVID-19 outbreak. They grinded through a win in Tuesday's return against Georgia Tech while shooting a season-low 37%, though the Blue Devils looked got their offense rolling by shooting 57% after halftime, but the problem was more their inability to drivers or cutters along with all those turnovers.

"They definitely played a good game, but at the same time, I think we helped them out a

lot," Moore said.

UP NEXT

Miami: The Hurricanes stay in their home state to play a road game, visiting Florida State on Tuesday.

Duke: The Blue Devils play their own in-state road game by visiting Wake Forest on Wednesday.

Duke can't execute in final seconds to hand Miami a huge win in Cameron

By John Watson
TheDevilsDen
Jan. 8, 2022

Duke Basketball fell from the ranks undefeated in ACC play with a 76-74 setback at the hands of the Miami Hurricanes on Saturday evening in Cameron Indoor Stadium, dropping to 12-2 overall and 2-1 in conference games.

Paolo Banchero scored a team best 20 while Mark Williams added 12 points and 12 rebounds as the Blue Devils couldn't shake off a mistake heavy offensive performance to for the first time since dropping a similar decision to Ohio State in the ACC/Big10 Challenge.

After an extended pause due to COVID, Duke turned in a rusty performance against Georgia Tech earlier in the week, and started slow and sloppy on Saturday as well.

The Blue Devils turned it over four times in the first four minutes and drew a heated reaction from head coach Mike Krzyzewski after a defensive breakdown that led to a fouled three point shooter at the first media timeout which led to the Blue Devils falling behind 14-6 early.

Whatever the head coach said in that huddle seemed to resonate as the Blue Devils responded with a 20-4 run to take a 26-18 lead with just under eight minutes remaining in the half...and it seemed as though Duke was ready to pull away.

Until they didn't.

Miami responded with an 10-0 run to regain the lead, fueled by the Blue Devils' continual turnover issues. Duke surrendered the ball 13 times in the opening half, including 11 Miami steals that led to 14 points, allowing the Hurricanes to overcome Duke's size and rebounding advantage.

Following a 30 second timeout, the Blue Devils began to tighten up on offense, scoring on three straight possessions to grab the lead back with less than a minute remaining before two more turnovers led to easy Miami buckets to tie the game at intermission.

The first half's trends continued at the beginning of the second period as Miami continued to use defensive pressure to frustrate Duke on one side, and schemed to mitigate the size disadvantage on the other end.

It seemed as though Duke was poised to take control after Mark Williams helped the Blue Devils built a 52-47 advantage early, but once

again the Hurricanes would counter as Isaiah Wong got hot to key a 13-2 run for the visitors to regain the lead at the midway point of the half.

Making 13 of their first 19 shots in the second half, Miami held a 63-59 lead with 7:42 remaining. But Duke continued to go inside and forced the Hurricanes' leading scorer into foul trouble with 6:31 remaining, after Trevor Keels tied the game at 63.

But Wong and Miami continued to out-scheme and execute their hosts, taking the lead right back with back to back baskets bookending more forced turnovers, Duke's 17th and 18th on the night.

At the 2:26 mark, Miami led 69-68, but after the teams traded baskets Banchero scored inside and then blocked Miami on the other end before leaking out for an insurance dunk to make it 74-71 with 44.9 seconds remaining.

Then the wheels fell off.

Duke couldn't stop a Miami drive to the hoop, and fouled the shooter on the made basket, cutting it to 74-73. After the Hurricanes missed the free throw, Duke couldn't grab the offensive rebound and surrendered another basket at the rim to fall behind by one.

Another empty and erratic offensive possession resulted in a missed jumper and after two more Miami free throws, Duke had one more chance to tie with 10 seconds remaining. But Wendell Moore missed a three pointer and a last second three by Trevor Keels was also off the mark.

ROCKED LIKE A HURRICANE: Duke men's basketball falls to Miami for first ACC loss

By Glen Morgenstern
Duke Chronicle
Jan. 8, 2022

When climate change experts warned of hurricanes becoming stronger and a more frequent problem, this probably isn't what they meant. But when the Miami Hurricanes arrived at Cameron Indoor Stadium to face Duke Saturday night, they fulfilled that prophecy in a new way.

The matchup felt as chaotic as a hurricane, with constant lead changes and momentum swings. No. 2 Duke fell to Miami by a score of 76-74 Saturday night, the Blue Devils' first loss in ACC play this season. Meanwhile, the Hurricanes extended their perfect conference record. After finishing the first half dead even, Duke fought to regain its lead after the intermission. The comeback fell short, proving that Miami is indeed a real power player in the conference this season.

"The main story will be about the last minute," Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "But to me, the story of the game was our turnovers. To me, it shows the rust that we have."

Throughout the second half, the lead kept swinging like a pendulum. Miami responded to a Mark Williams slam with a dunk of its own. A pair of Wendell Moore Jr. free throws was met with an Isaiah Wong 3-pointer. Eventually, the Hurricanes pulled ahead again. With eight minutes left, Duke trailed 63-59.

No Hurricanes player torched Duke in particular, but the team's veterans came to play. Charlie Moore and Kameron McGusty, both sixth-year seniors and highly capable perimeter shooters for Miami, challenged young Duke defenders. Charlie Moore finished with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting. McGusty scored 14 points to complement him, with many coming in the second half to maintain Miami's slight advantage.

"[Charlie] Moore played great," Krzyzewski said. "I thought Moore was the key to the game. The seven steals were huge."

With two and a half minutes to play, a tip-in from junior forward Wendell Moore trimmed Duke's deficit to just one. So close.

As the digits on the clock ticked below one minute, the Blue Devils finally found what they thought was their saving grace. Freshman Paolo Banchero converted a layup, giving Duke its first lead in a long time. Banchero then ran back on defense, intercepted a pass,

and slammed home the ball on the fast break to push the score to 74-71 in Duke's advantage.

But on the other end, Charlie Moore and McGusty returned the favor with a putback layup each to give Miami a two-point lead. Wendell Moore Jr. could not hit a pull-up wing 3-pointer on the other end, but the Hurricanes knocked the ball out of bounds with 0.7 seconds left to play.

The Blue Devils had one last chance. Freshman Trevor Keels drove toward the right elbow, but saw the lane clogged with Hurricane defenders. A stepback heave from long range bounced off the right side of the rim, and Duke's hopes were finally dashed.

"I thought we had a good shot," Krzyzewski said. "Trevor really took the ball hard and had a chance to maybe get a foul. They executed really well on the last play—we had a chance to win. But we did not."

Duke (12-2, 2-1 in the ACC) banned all food and beverages from Cameron Indoor Stadium to be consistent with the University's policy of no indoor dining. It's certain that fans snuck in items to munch on anyway. But during a tense first half of basketball, nobody seemed in the mood for contraband Doritos.

No Duke player seemed fully in gear when the game tipped off. Banchero made just one field goal in the first half. Wendell Moore played somewhat better, scoring six points and grabbing seven rebounds in the first half. However, he also committed four turnovers, a theme for Duke in the opening period.

The Hurricanes (13-3, 5-0) took advantage of six Blue Devil turnovers in the first eight minutes to take an early lead. By the end of the half, Duke had committed 13 turnovers.

"We helped them out a lot," Wendell Moore said. "A lot of our turnovers were unforced errors—just lazy passes, dribbling the ball off our legs, dribbling into double teams... just things that we know we really can't do."

However, Duke stormed back as it has so often done this season. Banchero nailed a wing triple to give Duke its first lead. Two other 3-pointers from Jeremy Roach and AJ Griffin helped the Blue Devils go on a 13-2 run.

The lead quickly evaporated. The Blue Devils made all eight of their free throws, but Miami converted on all five of its attempts from the charity stripe. After 20 minutes of play, the

only missed free throw was by JJ Redick, who missed a free throw during halftime to miss out on \$1000 being donated to the Duke Children's Hospital.

Duke headed into halftime all tied up with Miami at 32-32.

The second half opened with much more energy from both sides. Williams rocked the rim on a dunk and made an and-one layup on the next Blue Devil possession to earn a one-point lead, but they were not able to finish regulation on top.

"I think it starts with me," said Wendell Moore, one of the very few upperclassmen on the Duke roster. "I think I could be a more vocal leader on the court."

Wendell Moore finished with 12 points and 12 rebounds, and Banchero led Duke in scoring with 20 points. However, the duo combined for nine turnovers among the team's 17 total.

Next, the Blue Devils will head to Winston-Salem to take on a 13-3 Wake Forest squad Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Paolo Banchero, No. 2 Duke Upset by Charlie Moore, Unranked Miami in ACC Action

By Adam Wells
Bleacher Report
Jan. 8, 2022

Duke's five-game winning streak came to an end Saturday night when Miami stunned the No. 2 Blue Devils 76-74 at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

After trailing for most of the second half, Duke appeared to get back on track with six straight points to take a 74-71 lead.

Charlie Moore's layup with 33 seconds remaining made it a one-point game. He missed his free-throw attempt to complete the three-point play, but Jordan Miller got the offensive rebound and Kameron McGusty hit a layup to put the Hurricanes up by one.

The Blue Devils missed their last three shots in the final 23 seconds, including Trevor Keels' three-point attempt at the buzzer.

Paolo Banchero led all players with 20 points in the loss. Wendell Moore Jr. finished with a double-double of 12 points and 12 rebounds.

Four of Miami's five starters scored at least 14 points, led by Moore's 18. He also had seven steals.

Head coach Mike Krzyzewski's team had been rolling since a Nov. 30 loss to Ohio State. The Blue Devils won their previous five games by an average of 17.6 points. They climbed up to the second spot in the Associated Press Top 25 rankings thanks to this recent hot streak.

The Hurricanes have been a problem for Krzyzewski recently. They also knocked off the Blue Devils 77-75 in their only meeting last season. Head coach Jim Larranaga's team entered this matchup unranked, though that will almost certainly change when the new AP poll comes out Monday.

Miami is now 13-3 overall (5-0 in the ACC) and has won nine straight games.

Turnovers were a huge problem for Duke in this loss. It gave the ball away a season-high 17 times, compared to just five for the Hurricanes. Four of the Blue Devils' five starters had at least three turnovers, including six by Moore.

This was a close game throughout, with neither team leading by more than eight points at any point.

Thanks to its sticky-fingers defense, Miami

attempted 11 more field goals than Duke (70-59). It also helped offset the Blue Devils' 44-31 advantage in rebounding.

Despite this setback, there's no reason to be concerned about Krzyzewski's team going forward. Keels isn't going to have many nights when he shoots 2-of-11 (1-of-6 from three).

The Blue Devils entered Saturday making 36.5 percent of their three-point attempts, but they only made six of 21 attempts behind the arc against Miami.

This game is much more of an indication that the Hurricanes should be thought of as a top-tier ACC program this season. Larranaga has dramatically transformed his team since a 96-64 loss to Alabama on Nov. 27.

There are still flaws with Miami's defense that can be exploited. It allowed 84.7 points per game in its previous three wins, but as long as its creating turnovers like it did Saturday, this is a team capable of beating anyone in the country.

Miami will continue its two-game ACC road trip Tuesday at Florida State. Duke will look to rebound Wednesday at Virginia Tech in its first conference road game of the season.

Miami (FL) stuns No. 2 Duke, 76-74, in huge ACC road win

By Evan Marinofsky
NCAA.com
Jan. 9, 2022

while Duke falls to 2-1.

In a day full of upsets in men's college basketball, Miami (FL)'s 76-74 takedown of No. 2 Duke takes the cake as the biggest.

It didn't always look like such a sure bet though.

With the 71-70 lead and under 1:30 to play, Hurricanes guard Isaiah Wong was blocked on a layup. Duke immediately went the other way and Duke's Paolo Banchero scored on a layup to give the Blue Devils its first lead of the final five minutes.

To make things worse for Miami, redshirt senior Sam Waardenburg turned the ball over on the ensuing run down the court and Banchero ended up with the ball under the Hurricanes hoop, which he slammed down to give Duke the three-point advantage.

That's when Miami's Charlie Moore kicked it into full gear.

Down three points, Moore drove toward the Duke hoop, fell forward and chucked up a hail mary. Not only did it bounce in to cut the Duke lead to 74-73, but Moore, who had four fouls of his own, drew a foul. He missed the free throw, but that only set up Miami's Kameron McGusty to convert on a two-pointer to give the Hurricanes the 75-74 lead.

Duke missed all its final shots, fouling Wong to keep its hopes alive. Wong's free throw with eight seconds left accounted for point No. 76.

Blue Devils freshman Trevor Keels was able to get off a last-second shot but it missed, ensuring a Hurricanes upset.

Moore was massive for Miami, finishing with a team-high 18 points and seven steals. Team-mates Jordan Miller, McGusty and Wong were also huge in getting the win, each finishing with double-digit points.

The two ACC rivals entered the second half tied, 32-32. The Hurricanes never let the Blue Devils get more than an arm's length away, with Duke's biggest second-half lead only being five. Miami had no issue answering.

The Hurricanes dominated in the paint, scoring 52 points. They also earned 17 points off 17 turnovers from Duke.

Miami improves to 5-0 in ACC conference play

Five takeaways from Hurricanes' win over No. 2 Duke

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 9, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes won 76-74 at No. 2 Duke on Saturday.

Charlie Moore led the way with 18 points and seven steals, Jordan Miller scored 17, Isaiah Wong added 15 and Kameron McGusty chipped in 14 including a go-ahead layup with 20 seconds left.

Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) is off to their second-best start in conference play, only behind their 2013 championship team that started 13-0.

The Hurricanes trailed 74-71 with 45 seconds left, but pulled out their first win over a top-five team since 2016.

Here are five takeaways from the game:

NCAA TOURNAMENT A REALISTIC GOAL

The Hurricanes have not been back to the NCAA Tournament since 2018, which capped a school-record, three-year run, and have not been close to contention. Coming into this year it seemed to be a far-fetched goal. However, with the string of nine straight victories, five in the conference, and the big one over Duke, the NCAA Tournament should be a realistic goal for the team at this point in the season. Will it be easy? Of course not, but there are enough positives with the team and results to have a tournament appearance as a goal.

The latest projections by various outlets have four or five ACC teams making the tournament to give some sort of indication of where Miami will need to be in the hierarchy of the standings.

Also worth noting is Kenpom now projects Miami to win 20 games in the regular season (20-11 overall, 12-8 ACC) for the first time this season. Miami's last 20-win season was in 2017-18 when they finished 22-10. Miami has won 10, 15 and 14 games the last three seasons.

CHARLIE MOORE AND JORDAN MILLER STEP-UP

The coaching staff had expectations for transfers Charlie Moore and Jordan Miller to come in and have large, productive roles this season. Both started a bit slow, especially Miller, but during this recent run, they have been extremely important. Moore has reeled off three straight games of scoring at least 18 points for only the third time in his career.

Meanwhile, Miller has posted double-figure scoring efforts in each of his last three games and five of his last seven after failing to reach 10 in his first eight.

Their production will be needed the rest of the way as Miami does not have other secondary scorers they can turn to if they are not making shots.

BIG ROAD WIN

Yes, any time and anywhere you beat Duke it is a good win. However, for Miami to win a high-profile game on the road is extremely valuable moving forward and the Hurricanes did so by staying composed with just five turnovers. The shortcomings of recent years have been largely discussed and one of their struggles has been winning away from home as Miami went 5-26 in road games over the past three seasons including going winless in 10 games in 2018-19.

The win over Duke improved Miami to 3-0 on the road (5-2 away from home) which is a positive sign moving forward with nine conference road games still on the schedule. Staying afloat on the road will be imperative, but the team should gain plenty of confidence from winning at the toughest ACC environment.

EXCITEMENT FROM KAMERON MCGUSTY

Kameron McGusty was all smiles in speaking to reporters in his postgame press conference after hitting the go-ahead shot, but he also spoke about his excitement for his team, the fans and the community for the win. This is his fourth year at Miami and he knows times have been tough, which makes the win even sweeter. He also knows this is a different team and he is excited about the team moving forward. McGusty has always had a good perspective on where the team is, good or bad, and it was good to see him excited about the team's success. He knows more work is still ahead, but enjoying the victories is also important and he was a big part in the win.

THIS TEAM IS BETTER THAN MOST THOUGHT

The Hurricanes were picked to finish 12th in the conference at ACC media days, started 4-3 with losses to UCF, Dayton and Alabama by 32 and it was hard to see how this team was going to forge ahead with a positive season.

However, regardless of what you or I or anyone thought before, it is OK to be wrong. The results were not there before. They are now. This team is better than most thought and even the coaches were "cautiously optimistic" before the season began, which is not exactly a strong endorsement for a 13-3 start, 5-0 in conference and a win at Duke.

But here we are now. It is time to give this team credit while also understanding there is a tough road ahead. They will not be sneaking up on anybody and will now have a target on their back.

Isaiah Wong is no longer a nice player on a bad team, Kameron McGusty is not just a guard who can score at times, Charlie Moore is not just a steady point guard, these guys can all play and have proven themselves.

Moreover, the Hurricanes have proven themselves. With that said, one should temper the expectations the rest of the way because they are not as complete or deep as the 2013 championship team, but that is OK. This team is still fun to watch, competes at a high level and has a chance to make the tournament.

Time to hop aboard.

Miami dethrones No. 2 Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium for first time in six years

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 9, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes stunned the college basketball world.

From the opening tip, they battled the nation's second-ranked team in one of the nation's most hostile home court atmospheres and needed one last push.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty drove down the middle of the lane and floated in a game-winning layup through traffic to lift Miami over No. 2 Duke 76-74 Saturday night at Cameron Indoor Stadium for the first time since January 2015.

"Duke obviously has earned their high ranking. I'm really, really proud of how my guys executed the game plan and stuck together," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said.

Less than nine minutes remained in the second half and Miami (13-3, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) held a six-point advantage over Duke (12-2, 2-1 ACC). Four Hurricanes again scored in double-digits, but the Blue Devils weren't finished.

Duke forward Paolo Banchero threw down a breakaway dunk to finish Duke's late 6-0 push. The Preseason ACC Player of the Year totaled a game-high 20 points and added seven rebounds.

With 44 seconds left, Miami trailed by three points without a timeout. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore raced to the hoop, drew a foul and rolled in a layup, but missed the following foul shot.

And then, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller grabbed the Hurricanes' 10th offensive rebound. Miami swung the ball to the left wing to set up McGusty for the dagger layup before Duke's Trevor Keels misfired on a final 3-point miss with 0.7 seconds left.

"To come here to a historic arena like Cameron Indoor," Moore said. "To come here with my teammates, we play hard together, trusting each other out there on the court and trusting the coaching staff's game plan. And us coming out with the win, we feel pretty good about it."

Duke committed 17 turnovers, while Miami had only five. Moore produced a career-most seven of the Hurricanes' 15 total steals, while scoring 18 points in the team's ninth consecutive victory.

"We played a fast, good and older team tonight," Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "The story of the game was the turnovers. We played well at times and had an opportunity to win, but you have to finish and we didn't finish."

Both teams remained tied at halftime following a 13-0 Blue Devils run in the first half. Miami's early eight-point lead vanished, though the Hurricanes held Duke to below 35% shooting and scored 13 first-half points from forced turnovers.

"We know whenever we play an ACC team, [the opponent will] probably going to be bigger and more physical than us," Larrañaga said. "So, we really have to do it with teamwork. I thought our guys today really showed great anticipation, and kind of understood what Duke was trying to do with their offense ... We surrounded them, deflected the ball a couple of times, stole it a couple of times. That's teamwork."

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored five straight points and McGusty nailed a right-handed floater to cap off Miami's nine straight points halfway through the second. Wong scored 15 points and McGusty added 14.

"I've been saying that we love those types of games. We love dogfights," McGusty said.

"We love where we have to get scrappy, where we have to really work and all 40 minutes have to really go. And also, it just really shows that we're not a team to play with anymore. We're the real deal and I think everybody saw that tonight. We can play with anybody."

Miami finished 4-of-16 on 3-point field goals. The Hurricanes' offense shifted from reliance on perimeter shots toward backdoor scoring opportunities down the stretch, as sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg dished four second-half assists.

"In the last several timeouts, I kept telling the team to keep throwing it back to Sam and using him as a screen, and they did that beautifully and Sam handled it beautifully," Larrañaga said.

Duke out-rebounded UM 44-30, but the Hurricanes scored 52 points in the paint and went 8-of-11 at the foul line. Freshman guard Wooga Poplar provided four points off the bench and logged a team-high six rebounds.

Moore and Waardenburg were each tacked with four fouls, while Duke's Jeremy Roach, Mark Williams and A.J. Griffin all had three. Each team shot 46% and exchanged eight-point advantages across the first half.

With the victory, the Hurricanes received their first versus an Associated Press top-five team since 2016. Larrañaga moved to 7-7 against Duke through his 11th season at UM.

Miami next heads to Tallahassee, Florida, for a matchup against Florida State Tuesday. Tip-off is scheduled for 8 p.m.

"I know for the players, they're thrilled. They're excited about a big win like this," Larrañaga said. "For me, as a coach, I know we have 15 more conference games. So, this is just one of 20. No matter who you beat, no matter where you beat them, it counts as one."

"A Great Team Effort"

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 9, 2022

As they excitedly poured into the locker room, Jim Larrañaga looked around.

The Hurricanes head coach knew his team was ready to celebrate – as well it should, after upending the No. 2 team in the country. But the moment didn't feel quite right yet, not with one player – guard Charlie Moore – still outside wrapping up television interviews after Miami's stunning 76-74 win over Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium on Saturday.

All night long, the Hurricanes had played as a complete team. For them to truly enjoy their incredible moment, all of them had to be there. And so, when Moore rejoined his teammates, there was joy –pure, unadulterated joy.

"It was very exciting," Larrañaga said. "A lot of energy in that locker room. It was a great team effort."

A team effort indeed.

Four different Hurricanes scored in double figures against Duke. Others found ways contribute by distributing the ball, while still others helped by turning up the defensive pressure on the high-scoring Blue Devils, who came into the game as double-digit favorites on their home floor.

Moore, a sixth-year redshirt senior, led the Miami offense with 18 points and had a game-high seven steals, the most ever by a Hurricane in ACC play. Fourth-year junior Jordan Miller added 17 points. Third-year sophomore Isaiah Wong had 15 points and sixth-year redshirt senior Kam McGusty finished with 14 points, including a layup with 23 seconds left that proved the eventual winner.

Sam Waardenburg was plenty involved, too, dishing out a team-high five assists while collecting a team-high three blocks. Both were season-high marks for the sixth-year redshirt senior.

But the balanced scoring wasn't the only hallmark of Saturday's thrilling win for Miami, which has now won nine straight and is a perfect 5-0 in ACC play.

The Hurricanes forced Duke into a season-high 17 turnovers and notched 15 steals, matching the program's record for most ever in ACC play set against North Carolina in 2005.

All of that, the Hurricanes know, made a difference in giving Miami its fourth-ever win over a team ranked in the top two of the Associated Press Top 25.

"We're not very big and we're not bulky. We know whenever we play an ACC team, they're probably going to be bigger and more physical than us," Larrañaga said. "We really have to [have] teamwork. I thought our guys today really showed great anticipation and kind of understood what Duke was trying to do with their offense. We were just trying to limit how many times they dunked the ball on us in the paint. It took a whole team to do that. We surrounded them. Deflected the ball a couple of times, stole it a couple of times... That's teamwork. Charlie Moore was everywhere in the first half, getting steals and also scoring the ball. This is a team that relies very heavily on each other and they trust each other and have confidence in each other."

Added Moore, "It wasn't easy. Those guys are great players, skilled players. Big players as well. We just used our energy and we helped each other a lot out there in order for us to not have them contribute as much as they should or the way they normally do. It was just a fun experience helping each other out there with what we planned to do."

And while beating the Blue Devils at home may have put the Hurricanes in the national spotlight this weekend and given them plenty of reasons to be excited, Miami's players and coaches made it clear after their celebration that this was a win to build on – not one to dwell on.

The Hurricanes (13-3, 5-0) are set to face Florida State in Tallahassee on Tuesday. It'll be the first of two matchups against the Seminoles in 11 days, with a showdown against North Carolina sandwiched between the two rivalry games.

And March – when Miami wants to be at its best – is still more than a month away.

That leaves plenty of time to keep growing and continue improving.

"The league is a marathon, not a sprint," Larrañaga said. "[Of] 20 games, we've won five. But there are still so many obstacles in the way to just focus on one victory. We have to continue to build on what we're trying to do... I think one of the things we knew coming into the season, and hoped it would materialize on the court, is that we have a bunch of veteran guys. It was a matter of 'Are they going to be

willing to sacrifice and do all the things it takes to have a really good team, chemistry-wise?' And Charlie Moore and Jordan Miller, our transfers, fit in beautifully. Our returning players have all done really well. Our freshmen are contributing. It's really been a total team effort."

Added McGusty, "I knew it was only a matter of time... Summer workouts, practice before our actual first game. I always knew we had the pieces. We just had to put it all together. We got off to a slow start [this season], but like I always tell my guys: a loss isn't a loss. It's a lesson. We're always very good at going back to the drawing board, going back to the film and communicating and talking to each other about what we need to do to help each other. We've come such a long way in terms of talking on the court, learning each other's game. We're basically a whole new team... Does it surprise me? No. Am I happy for us? Yes. And yes, we have to continue to keep going. It's just another win. We've got to take it as we're supposed to win these games now. That's what we have to do. Back to the drawing board, start scouting for Florida State and get ready for Tuesday."

One Game at a Time

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 10, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team made history Saturday night, pulling off a monumental upset of a five-time national champion.

The Hurricanes went into historic Cameron Indoor Stadium and left with a 76-74 triumph over second-ranked Duke. It marked the third time Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga has won in Durham, N.C., the second-most of any coach during his 11-year stint at The U.

Despite facing a larger team filled with five-star recruits and future first-round picks, Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) flawlessly executed on both ends of the court to knock off the Blue Devils for the seventh time in 11 years.

"Probably the two statistics that stood out to me the most are that we scored 52 points in the paint and only gave up two points off of turnovers," Larrañaga shared. "So, we didn't turn the ball over and we attacked the rim, which was our game plan."

The Hurricanes' 52 paint points shattered their prior season high of 42, set on Nov. 9, 2021, in the opener against Canisius. Despite a size disadvantage, the Hurricanes finished plus-14 in paint points.

Miami's five turnovers also matched the program's third-lowest total ever in ACC play. That, paired with tying the school record for steals in an ACC game with 15, led to a 17-2 edge in points off turnovers.

Much of the success, both in terms of taking care of the ball and in forcing turnovers, came by way of Charlie Moore. The sixth-year redshirt senior guard scored a team-high 18 points while committing just one giveaway and logging seven steals.

Moore's seven steals set the program record in ACC play, tied for the second-most by a Hurricane in any game and matched the second-highest total ever by a visiting player in Cameron Indoor Stadium's 82-year history.

"Charlie is our Tom Brady. He's got so much responsibility on his shoulders," Larrañaga said. "He's got to deliver the ball, whether he scores it or passes it or just orchestrates our offense. He is our quarterback and he's doing a terrific job at both ends of the court. I'm really impressed with his play."

Picked No. 12 in the ACC preseason poll, Miami is off to its finest start in conference play since 2012-13. The Hurricanes have won nine games in a row, the fifth-longest active streak in the nation, with six of them against Power Five teams and five in league competition.

The victory over Duke—a result that included 17 points from fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, 15 from third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong and 14 from sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty—is assuredly the highlight thus far. One could argue it is actually the single best win by any team in the nation this season, as no other program owns a top-two road win.

Miami's esteemed head coach, however, knows the road does not get any easier, even with the league's preseason favorite now in the rearview mirror.

"Certainly, beating the number-two-ranked team in the country is a terrific accomplishment by this year's team, but we have to constantly remind ourselves that the ACC is a marathon and not a sprint," Larrañaga said. "It's about 20 games and not just one. Every team we play in the league is very capable of beating us. We have to prepare one game at a time."

A colossal victory over an iconic program can certainly aid a team from a mentality standpoint, but it does have the capacity to go in the opposite direction.

Larrañaga is aware of just that.

"The danger is there being a let-up. It's not that your confidence doesn't grow—it grows with every victory—but you've got to be very, very careful you don't dwell on the past," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year explained. "That game is over. We've got to get ready for Florida State. [The Seminoles have] four guys over 7-feet. We're not a big team; they're gigantic. So, we've got to prepare for them. Duke is over."

Indeed, Miami's next game is against its in-state, conference foe. The Hurricanes square off with the Seminoles Tuesday at 8 p.m. at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center in Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State is 8-5 (2-2) on the season, but features a talented roster picked to finish second in the league after going 18-7 (11-4) and reaching the NCAA Sweet 16 a year ago.

"They're long and athletic," Larrañaga said. "They're fast, they protect the rim. They're an outstanding Leonard Hamilton-type team and we've got to do a great job of preparing for them."

Hamilton, of course, served as Miami's head coach from 1990-2000, compiling a 144-147 record and leading the program to three consecutive NCAA Tournament berths. Larrañaga, who sports a 213-133 ledger at The U, is the only other coach to guide Miami to March Madness in three straight years.

The two coaches have a combined 41 years of experience in the Miami-Florida State rivalry, which

the Seminoles hold a 51-36 all-time lead in. There is no program in the country the Hurricanes have faced more often than Florida State.

In the most recent meeting, the Seminoles earned an 88-71 road decision on Feb. 24, 2021, against a Miami team with just six available scholarship players.

"Well, it's always been a great rivalry because we compete with Florida State for everything," Larrañaga said. "Not just in football and basketball, but for students, for notoriety around the state, for everything."

Redshirt sophomore guard Caleb Mills is the leading scorer for this Florida State team, averaging 13.2 points per game. He also co-leads the Seminoles, who handed Louisville its first ACC loss Saturday night, with 1.8 steals per outing.

Meanwhile, for Miami, Larrañaga is not focused on one player in particular who needs to step up in Tuesday's contest. Rather, he is looking for his group to continue playing the way it has during its five-week winning streak.

"I think everybody has a key role," he said. "The way a team functions is that everybody executes their role to the best of their ability, no matter if you're a starter and leading scorer or a guy who comes in off the bench and plays six or eight minutes. Those are all important roles and all important minutes that you play. Wooga Poplar was sensational in 11 minutes yesterday [at Duke and] we could not have won the game without him."

Miami, set for its first Saturday-Tuesday turnaround of the ACC slate, also needs to get physically prepared for this matchup.

"We need time to recover," Larrañaga said. "We didn't get back to [campus in] Miami until nearly 3 o'clock in the morning. So, the expression we use, 'sharpen your saw,' becomes vitally important right now."

The Hurricanes' matchup with the Seminoles will be televised live on ACC Network HERE, with Dave O'Brien and Cory Alexander on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE. In addition, live stats for the game can be found HERE.

Following its outing in Tallahassee, Miami has a weekend bye and then hosts North Carolina Jan. 18 at 7 p.m., live on ACC Network from the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Fla.

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

Miami receives votes, but misses out on AP Top 25 Poll

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 10, 2021

The Miami Hurricanes received votes in the AP Top 25 for the first time this season, but missed out after beating then-No. 2 Duke.

Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) has won nine straight and is off to their second-best start in ACC play to lead the conference.

"The ACC regular season is not a sprint, it's a marathon," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Every game is important. Being 5-0 is great, but we have 15 more conference games and we have to prepare for each one of them. You never know when you're going to face adversity--COVID, injuries, playing a team that's really hot or having a bad shooting night. The season is very, very long and you have got to focus on one game at a time. Our focus right now is preparing for Florida State."

The Hurricanes received 65 votes, which ranks 28th.

The 76-74 win over Duke was the first win over a top-five team since beating No. 3 Virginia in February 2016.

Miami's other game against a current top-25 team was a 96-64 loss to No. 24 Alabama on Nov. 28.

Miami plays at Florida State (8-5, 2-2) on Tuesday (8:00 p.m., ACCN) in its only game this week. Miami has lost the last seven, and nine of 10, in the series and have not won in Tallahassee since 2016.

The last time Miami was ranked in the AP Top 25 Poll was when they were 22nd in the final 2018 poll.

Duke (12-2, 2-1), which dropped to eighth, is the only ACC team ranked while Miami is the only other team who received a vote.

Miami is 1-1 against current top-25 teams.

Mike Krzyzewski, ACC coaches praise Jim Larranaga and the Hurricanes

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 10, 2022

The ACC-leading Miami Hurricanes were one of the hot topics during Monday's teleconference with the league coaches.

Miami (13-3, 5-0 ACC) has won nine straight including beating No. 8 Duke on Saturday and is enjoying a turnaround season after going 10-17 last year.

The Hurricanes will look for their 10th straight on Tuesday (8:00 p.m., ACCN) at Florida State (8-5, 2-2), which has won the last seven meetings.

Here is what some of the coaches had to say about the Hurricanes:

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI, DUKE

Meetings: Miami beat Duke 76-74 on Jan. 8 in only scheduled meeting

On the film from the Miami game...

"The lack of practice hurt our defense in that we were playing man-to-man than team man-to-man. A thing that goes when you do not practice or just starting a season is talk and communicate. I know we didn't have good talk and then your movements are reactionary, they're not anticipatory. That's where we're at and have to get back to. We can talk about X's and O's all day, but they have to be drilled, practiced and played. We have to get there. Miami is difficult to defend no matter what. We didn't play well, but they made us not play well. Still at the end of the game we were in a position I feel we should have won if we make a stop."

On Miami's turnaround with Jim Larranaga who critics on Twitter wanted to fire him...

"I'm not big on critics on Twitter, sounds like a comedy show on HBO because you don't have to back up any statements or you don't have to have an expertise on what you give an opinion on. I would rather, to be quite, listen to all of you (in the media) who watch the sport, in a press conference before or after today and any comments you might have because you watch the game.

"Jim is one of the outstanding coaches in the history of our game. He's one of the winningest coaches and he's done a great job at Miami. Last year no team that I can remember has been devastated with injuries as much as his team was last year. And for him to keep those kids coming back, especially in (Isaiah) Wong and (Kameron) McGusty and (Sam) Waardenburg, it shows that those kids trust him and believe in him. He's been able to complement them in two outstanding transfers in (Charlie) Moore and (Jordan) Miller.

"They have a veteran team. All of them can shoot and they share the ball. They're very difficult to defend. Jim's always done that. As long as Jim wants to coach it would be smart to keep him there. Hell he might win the league. It's going to be an NCAA Tournament team and it will be a tough out whoever ends up playing them. They have one of the better teams."

LEONARD HAMILTON, FLORIDA STATE

Meetings: None yet. Will play at Florida State on Jan. 11 and at Miami on Jan. 22

On what he sees in facing Miami and their backcourt...

"The biggest challenge Miami presents for us is that they are extremely mature. They are similar to the way we have been over the years where we have guys who have progressed through the program to have four graduate players and a fifth-year guy and some seniors. They are sure of themselves, confident, not nervous, they know who they are and they play to their strengths. We are the complete opposite in that we have four veterans and six or seven first-year players. We are going through our growing pains of just getting comfortable with each other, finding our roles, knowing where our strengths and weaknesses are and having typical things with missing players here and there and some veterans not being there. They present a challenge for us from that standpoint. We know we have to execute a little better, have to be focused and a little more connected than we have. We've had some good games and we've shown some inconsistencies of still trying to find ourselves."

On facing Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong and the stress it puts on a team...

"If you look at back at the ACC all teams are going to have somebody like this.

"They are just have really, really carved out a system that gives them consistently to play to their strengths. They're great creators off the bounce, they are extremely confident, they make tough shots, they create for each other, they're skill level and ability—they have a wiggle. Some guys are catch-and-shoot guys, some guys have straight-line driving ability. These guys can change directions, finish with either hand and you can't back off of them because they have proven they can knock down shots. We've had guys like this in the past, not many, that are tough shot-takers and tough shot-makers. They create a different type of challenge than some teams. Some teams have a combination of a system where they move the ball, but also have the ability to break it off because of their ability to create off the dribble. It is extremely challenging for most people."

On what Charlie Moore brings to Miami...

"Charlie is a point guard and what you call a 'points' guard. Not only does he have the ability to create for his teammates, when he crosses half-court, he's open. He has unbelievable range. He has courage and toughness—that Chicago-tough mentality that he learned playing on the playgrounds of Chicago. He's unbelievably quick and fast. More than anything else, he plays with a swagger, a toughness that he believes in himself. He believes if you leave him open, he's going to knock it down and if you are up and on him, he's quick and fast enough to blow by you. And for a guy his size, he finishes at the rim in a really, highly-skilled fashion. Plus he's been through the war. He's been to (four) different schools in (four) different conferences. He's not going to face anything that he hasn't already faced. He gives them a really, really set of skills.

"And then you have (Jordan) Miller from George Mason and he's hanging out, knocking down jump shots. Obviously they are a team that has all of the making that can do something really, really big in the postseason."

On their defense in forcing Duke to 17 turnovers with 15 steals...

"That's extremely challenging to do against Duke in their arena. Their quickness and speed, their ability in their mind, they are preparing for just about anything because they are an experienced team. When you think about fourth or fifth-year players and freshman and sophomores—17, 18 and 19 to 21, 22 and 23, there's a big difference. They don't get rattled. Mentally and emotionally, they're engaged. They make good decisions because they've been there and done that many, many team. This is a team that's proven what they're capable of doing and it's good to see especially coming off last year when they had so many injuries and things they had no control over. You have to take your hat off to coach (Jim) Larranaga because I think he has created a system for the talent they have and they're going to be a handful for anybody."

JIM BOEHEIM, SYRACUSE

Meetings: Miami beat Syracuse 88-87 on Jan. 5. Will play again at Syracuse on March 5.

On Miami...

"I think they've got a really good team. I think their veterans and guards are really solid. They get to the basket and make plays."

On the conference only having one ranked team...

"I think we have a good conference. I think the teams are good, I think they're underrated. I think back to last year and teams played well in the tournament. I think we have a lot of good teams. We didn't play particularly well in the non-conference part of the year and that put us in this position, but I think we have a lot of good basketball teams."

STEVE FORBES, WAKE FOREST

Meetings: Miami beat Wake Forest 92-84 on Jan. 1. Will play again at Wake Forest on Feb. 12.

On the loss to Miami...

"We gave up 60-percent shooting to Miami, and I was wondering if that's who we are or if it is a one-off, but obviously Miami's pretty good."

On the Miami-Duke game...

"I watched about the last 10 minutes and I felt like Miami was going to be there at the end because they're so good with the ball in their hands. Every one of those guys is skilled, they can keep their dribble. One of the things that's hard to defend is when you are really good off the dribble like (Kameron) McGusty or (Isaiah) Wong or (Charlie) Moore, you draw attention and help. Then you lose sight of your man and then back door layup, easy basket. Then you get hugged up because you don't want that to happen and then McGusty goes to the basket and Charlie Moore makes a 3 from the logo. It's hard. You try to keep them under control. We try to play that way and spread you out, drive it, pass it to the wing, get them moving. There's very times when you come down and run a play. Players have to make plays. That's how Miami plays, that's how we play and we're not going to change."

UM still unranked despite Duke upset, nine-game win streak. Next up: FSU on the road

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 10, 2022

Beating No. 2 Duke on the road, winning nine games in a row and leading the ACC with a 5-0 league record was not enough to land the University of Miami men's basketball team in the Top 25.

The Hurricanes (13-3) got votes for the first time this season on Monday but did not crack the AP or Coaches poll. Miami finished third among "also receiving votes" (28th overall) in the AP poll. They were 26th in the Coaches poll.

Duke, meanwhile, slipped to No. 8 and was the only ACC school in the Top 25.

Miami aims to keep its win streak alive and build a case for a ranking as it heads into a road game Tuesday at Florida State (8 p.m., ACC Network). The Seminoles (8-5, 2-2 ACC) are coming off a win over Louisville.

FSU coach Leonard Hamilton, who coached at UM from 1990 to 2000, had high praise for the Hurricanes and their coach Jim Larranaga. He said Miami's trio of guards Charlie Moore, Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong pose a unique challenge.

Moore averaged 21.5 points in wins over Duke and Syracuse in the past week, and had seven steals at Duke, second most ever by a visiting player at Cameron Indoor Stadium. Against Syracuse he had 25 points, six assists, five rebounds, a steal and a block.

McGusty was named ACC Player of the Week last week after averaging 17.5 points, 9.5 rebounds, and four assists in wins over NC State and Wake Forest. Wong scored 25 points against Wake Forest.

"They have really, really carved out a system that gives them the chance to consistently play to their strengths," Hamilton said on a Zoom interview Monday. "They're great creators off the bounce. They are extremely confident. They make tough shots. They create for each other. They are very skilled and they have what we call a wiggle. Some guys are catch-and-shoot guys. Some guys are straight-line drivers. These guys can change directions, finish with either hand, and you can't back off them because they've proven they can knock down looks."

UM can also defend. The Canes had 15 steals against the Blue Devils and forced them into

a season-high 17 turnovers. It was Miami's seventh win against Duke during coach Jim Larranaga's 11-year tenure, and the third at Cameron.

"They have a veteran team, all of them can shoot, they share the ball, they're very difficult to defend," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Hamilton has been very impressed with Moore, a sixth-year senior who transferred to UM from DePaul last summer and had previous stints at Kansas and Cal.

"Charlie is a point guard and is also a points guard," Hamilton said. "Not only does he have the ability to create for his teammates, when he walks across half court he's open and he has unbelievable range. He has courage and toughness you learn playing on the playgrounds in Chicago. He's unbelievably quick and fast. But more than anything else, he plays with a swagger. And, for a guy his size he finishes at the rim in a highly skilled fashion."

Moore's experience shows, Hamilton said.

"He's been through the wars. He's been to several different schools, different conferences, he's not going to face anything he hasn't already faced. And then you have [Jordan] Miller [a transfer] from George Mason he's just hanging around hitting jumpers. They're a team that has all the makings of a team that can do something really, really big in the postseason."

Both Hamilton and Krzyzewski credited Larranaga for UM's turnaround. Last season the injury-plagued Canes finished 10-17 overall and 4-15 in the ACC. They were picked 12th in the 2021 preseason ACC poll.

"Jim's one of the outstanding coaches in the history of our game, one of the winningest coaches and he's done a great job at Miami," Krzyzewski said. "No team that I can remember has been devastated with injuries as much as his team was last year. For him to keep those kids coming back, especially Wong and McGusty and [Sam] Waardenburg — it shows those kids trust him and believe in him. And he's been able to complement them with two outstanding transfers in Moore and Miller."

"As long as Jim wants to coach, they'd be smart to keep him there. Hell, he might win the league. That's going to be an NCAA Tournament team and he'll be a tough out for whoever's playing them. They have one of the better teams."

Hamilton added: "You have to take hat off to Coach Larranaga because he's created a system that fits the talent he has and they're going to be a handful for anybody."

Larranaga has been around long enough to know not to get too excited in early January.

"Certainly, beating the number-two-ranked team in the country is a terrific accomplishment, but we have to constantly remind ourselves that the ACC is a marathon and not a sprint," Larranaga said. "We have 15 games to go. You've got to be very, very careful you don't dwell on the past. We've got to get ready for Florida State. They have four guys over 7 feet. We're not a big team; they're gigantic. So, we've got to prepare for them. Duke is over."

Miami Is the Talk of the ACC—Just Don't Tell the Hurricanes

By Jason Jordan
Sports Illustrated
Jan. 10, 2022

Miami's Charlie Moore is aware that what he's saying is a hard sell. He even tacks on a matter-of-fact "seriously" to reinforce his point.

Still, the notion that in less than 48 hours, Moore and his Hurricanes teammates have erased Saturday's emotional win over then No. 2 Duke from their minds—a win that came at Cameron Indoor Stadium in Mike Krzyzewski's final season—is a bit far-fetched, to say the least.

That win? In that place? In this year?

C'mon.

"You're actually reminding me of it now," Moore said with a laugh. "We haven't mentioned it since Saturday. I mean, of course, I remember it, and, yes, it was a big win, but we're on to the next now. We don't talk about that anymore."

Gotta respect the tunnel-vision approach for a team that needed just over a month to eclipse its ACC win total from last season (4–15).

Now, the Hurricanes (13–3, 5–0) are the talk of the ACC, sitting atop the league standings ahead of their big matchup with Florida State on Tuesday.

That said, Moore and the Canes don't feel validated by what they deem to be belated acknowledgments and proverbial attaboys. In fact, they're downright indifferent about your belief.

"We really believe in ourselves," Miami guard Kameron McGusty said. "We're not worried about who does or doesn't believe we're for real."

You'd be hard-pressed to find naysayers after the manner in which they beat you-know-who Saturday, withstanding the classic late Duke run and countering with countless clutch plays down the stretch.

Still, the basketball-sized chip is understandable for a team picked to finish 12th in the conference in the preseason and one that remains unranked despite a nine-game winning streak.

"KenPom ranks us the third luckiest team in the country," McGusty said with a laugh. "This is after we won on Saturday. That's disrespectful. It just shows us we haven't done anything,

and it makes us hungrier. We know what we've got, and we know what we can do with what we've got."

Jim Larrañaga certainly does.

Based on his personnel, the Hurricanes' coach knew that their best chance for success this season was to implement a strategy he hadn't used since 1990 when he was the head coach at Bowling Green.

The five-out offense spaces the floor and combats a lack of size with speed and quickness.

"We looked at our roster and saw that we were skinny," Larrañaga said. "So, we designed the offense to accommodate the skill sets of the guys we have. We have older guys who have certain skills that we should be able to take advantage of."

Larrañaga tasked associate head coach Chris Caputo and assistant coach Bill Courtney with researching modern variations of the five-out offense. The pair studied NBA teams like the Heat, the Rockets, the Spurs and Division II powerhouse Nova Southeastern.

If the D-II reference perplexed you, then you haven't been paying attention.

Everyone from Heat coach Erik Spoelstra to Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens has made the call to Sharks coach Jim Crutchfield to pick his brain about how to operate his notorious, quick-hitting offense.

Larrañaga purposely set an exhibition against Nova Southeastern in October to give his team the experience against the Sharks' frantic pace on both ends of the floor.

Miami eventually pulled out the 106–95 win.

"They came in here and trapped us all over the place, ran and shot in a way that they weren't used to," Larrañaga said. "I wanted to challenge them to handle the pressure and to see how to run the offense. That really helped us."

Canes guard Isaiah Wong said the experience against the Sharks opened their eyes to the possibilities this season and planted the seed for a confidence that grows by the day.

"Not just by the win," Wong said. "Our confidence grows every day in practice. I've never been a part of a team that has this level of focus and this level of confidence. Honestly, we expected to win that game at Duke."

They certainly looked the part.

As they've done throughout their winning streak, the Canes and their stable of four sixth-year seniors tactically dismantled Duke, using stifling defensive pressure and active hands to snag 15 steals and force the Blue Devils into a season-high 17 turnovers. Duke's bulky guards had fits staying in front of Miami's lean and quick playmakers, whose backdoor cuts and precision passing frustrated the Blue Devils all night.

"This is what we've done all year, it's just a tough matchup with what we're putting on the floor," Moore said. "They're a great team, but we showed what we're capable of. Now it's just about getting better and staying consistent going forward."

This is where McGusty, a 24-year-old sixth-year senior, is hoping the "with age comes wisdom" axiom rings true.

"We take a lot of pride in the fact that we're older and have more experience than most teams," McGusty said. "It's really a mental strength that turns into a physical strength for us. I feel like this is what will keep our focus throughout the ups and downs of the season. We don't talk about that last win; it's all about what's in front of us. The only people we care about proving things to is ourselves, and we're constantly doing that."

Is ACC-leading Miami for real? Why Coach K and Coach Ham believe Coach L's Hurricanes can have a 'really big' season

By Manny Navarro
The Athletic
Jan. 11, 2022

When Manny Diaz and Blake James were sitting on the hot seat in October, there were some Hurricanes fans who believed it might be time to part ways with basketball coach Jim Larranaga, too.

But Rudy Fernandez, one of two men school president Julio Frenk entrusted to take a close look at the athletic program's shortcomings, never believed there was a problem with Miami's basketball program.

Fernandez knew a rash of injuries and an FBI corruption probe, which eventually redacted UM's name from an indictment in 2018, had everything to do with the Hurricanes' stumbling to three consecutive losing seasons and not Larranaga, 71, losing his touch.

"I'm not big on critics on Twitter," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said Monday — two days after the ACC-leading Hurricanes, picked 12th in the preseason, won their ninth consecutive game to improve to 13-3 and 5-0 in conference play with a thrilling win at No. 2 Duke.

"Jim is one of the outstanding coaches in the history of our game," college basketball's winningest coach continued. "He's one of the winningest coaches and he's done a great job at Miami. No team that I can remember has been devastated with injury as much as his team was last year. For him to keep those kids coming back especially in (Isaiah) Wong and (Kameron) McGusty and their big kid (Sam) Waardenburg — it shows that those kids trust him and believe in him. He's been able to compliment them with two outstanding transfers in (Charlie) Moore and (Jordan) Miller.

"They have a veteran team and all of them can shoot and they share the ball. They're very difficult to defend. Jim's always taught that. As long as Jim wants to coach, they'd be smart to keep him there. Hell, he might win the league. They're going to be an NCAA Tournament team, and they'll be a tough out. They have one of the better teams."

Duke, which beat Kentucky and Gonzaga in November before losing to Ohio State, slipped six spots to eighth in Monday's Associated Press poll.

The Blue Devils (12-2) remain the only ACC team ranked. Miami, which won the ACC championship in Larranaga's second season with the program in 2013 and made the NCAA Tournament in 2016, 2017 and 2018, was third among other teams receiving votes in the poll.

The ACC isn't getting much respect these days. It ranks fifth among conferences according to KenPom — behind the Big-12, Big Ten, SEC and Big East. Outside of Saturday's win at Duke, the Hurricanes, ranked 82nd by KenPom, have only one other win over a top-50-ranked opponent: its ACC opener against Clemson (10-5, 2-2, 39th KenPom) at home on Dec. 4.

Miami hasn't been ranked since Lonnie Walker, Bruce Brown and Dewan Hernandez — three NBA players — were knocked off by Final Four Cinderella Loyola Chicago in the opening round of the 2018 tournament.

The only players still at Miami from that Hurricanes squad are the 6-10 Waardenburg, now a 22-year-old sixth-year senior, and center Rodney Miller, a 25-year-old sixth-year center.

This latest Hurricanes team is built around a stellar guard trio of McGusty (18.1 ppg, 5.8 rpg, 2.1 apg), Wong (16.3 ppg, 3.9 rpg, 2.2 apg) and Moore (12.4 ppg, 2.8 rpg, 3.8 apg), who take turns attacking the rim off the dribble and on backdoor cuts while hitting 3-pointers on the perimeter.

Miami ranks 24th in offensive efficiency and 201st in defensive efficiency. Without much size, the Canes crowd the paint defensively and look to create turnovers. Duke had 17 on Saturday, and Miami turned them into 17 points. The Canes, who outscored the Blue Devils 52-38 in the paint, also don't chase offensive boards, Krzyzewski said. Instead, by Larranaga's design, they opt to get back on defense to prevent fast breaks.

"We tweaked our vision during the summer when we realized we were not going to be a big, tall, bulky-type team," Larranaga said. "So many teams in the ACC are so much bigger than us in terms of height, weight. So we looked at our roster and said, 'Hey, we think the best way is maybe to spread the floor and play five out on offense and kind of scramble a little bit on defense, try to force some turnovers.' Fortunately, those things have materialized. Not necessarily in the very beginning of the season, but as we've progressed. I think the guys have gotten more and more comfortable in the style and I think they have really embraced the idea of trusting each other and sharing the ball a lot."

Moore, playing for his fourth team in six years after transferring from DePaul, had seven of Miami's 15 steals at Duke. He had a season-high 25 points in Miami's come-from-behind win over Syracuse last week.

Florida State coach Leonard Hamilton calls Moore a "points guard" because he scores and stretches the floor with his long-range 3-point shot. Larranaga, though, compared him to quarterback Tom Brady, an experienced passer who helps take pressure off McGusty and Wong.

Larranaga likens Jordan Miller to his two best point guards at Miami before his arrival: Angel Rodriguez and Shane Larkin. Krzyzewski called Moore "one of the top three additions to our league as far as impact on a team."

"Not only does (Moore) have the ability to create for his teammates, when he walks across half court, he's open," Hamilton said. "He has unbelievable range. He has courage and toughness, that Chicago tough mentality that he learned playing on the playgrounds. And he's unbelievably quick and fast."

"But more than anything else he plays with a swagger, a toughness that he believes in himself. He believes that if you leave him open, he will knock it down. If you get too close to him, he's quick and fast enough to blow by you. And for a guy his size, he finishes at the rim in a highly skilled fashion. Plus, the fact he's been through the wars. He's been to several different schools, different conferences. I mean, he's not going to face anything he hasn't already faced. Obviously, they are a team that has all the makings of a team that can do something really, really big in the postseason."

McGusty, a 24-year-old from Katy, Texas, who thought about

leaving Miami for the NBA last season along with Wong, hit the winning bucket at Duke on a tough floater on a drive to the hoop. He was the ACC Player of the Week last week. Wong, picked to the preseason All-ACC team, scored 25 points in the win over Wake Forest on Jan. 1.

"When you've got talented experienced guards in college basketball you've got a chance," Mark Packer said on the ACC Network's Packer and Durham show Monday. "You brought up the Syracuse game. They're down 18 at home, no problem. We'll get back in the game. They make six straight 3s to start the second half. They catch Syracuse, win the game. The NC State game, down eight with about 10 minutes to go. No problem. They win the game. You mention the Clemson game. You're starting to see a trend with these guys — there is no panic in the way they play."

Hamilton said what makes McGusty and Wong tough is they both have plenty of "wiggle."

"They have really, really carved out a system that gives them the chance to persistently play to their strength," Hamilton said. "They're great creators off the bounce. They are extremely competent. They make tough shots. They create for each other. Some guys are catch-and-shoot guys. Some guys have straight-line drivers. These guys can change directions, finish with either hand. You can't back off them because they've proven that they can knock down looks. We've had kids like this in the past, but not many. They're tough shot takers and they're tough shot makers. It's extremely challenging for most people."

The Hurricanes will have a chance to improve their postseason status with good tests in their next three games.

It starts at Florida State (8-5, 2-2) on Tuesday, and is followed by back-to-back home games against North Carolina (11-4, 3-1 ACC) on Jan. 18 and the Seminoles on Jan. 22.

FSU has won seven in a row against the Hurricanes, and Hamilton is 25-12 against his former team. Yet he had nothing but good things to say about the team Larranaga has built after three straight losing seasons.

KenPom projects Miami will finish 20-11 and 12-8 in conference play.

Will that be enough to get Miami into the tournament? The Canes don't really care what computers, polls or people say about them anymore. Beating Duke only raised their level of confidence.

"We're not a team to play with anymore. We're the real deal," McGusty said. "We can play with anybody. We can compete with anybody. We can beat anybody."

"As a program, these last two years we've really gone through it. We had to stay down for the come-up and it just feels great to start to see all the hard work and everything just coming together. I'm just so happy for our guys. I'm so happy for Coach L, for the Miami fan base. I mean, just the city of Miami. I'm just so happy for everybody right now."

University of Miami basketball coach Jim Larranaga deserves an apology. Here's why

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 11, 2022

Be honest now.

Were you one of the critics who demanded that Jim Larranaga be fired before this season? Were you one of the people who insisted that the 72-year-old legendary coach was past his prime and needed to move on?

If so, you owe Larranaga an apology.

Of course, you probably won't be that gracious because you posted your strong opinions on Twitter, where anybody can say anything anonymously without having to ever face the people they trash.

Here are some of the comments people made about Larranaga:

Feb. 20, 2021: "Miami's gotta fire Coach L. That program is a disaster."

Nov. 18, 2021: "Miami has an awful roster and in a few weeks we'll have a new AD and Larranaga's seat will be on fire."

Nov. 25, 2021: "Fire Jim Larranaga. I can't take this terrible basketball."

Dec. 3, 2021: "The new AD needs to fire Larranaga and get Turgeon if they want Miami basketball to be relevant."

Oh, really?

Is the program a disaster now? Do they have an awful roster? Is Larranaga's seat on fire? Are the Hurricanes playing terrible basketball? Is Miami basketball irrelevant?

No. No. No. No. And No.

Heading into Tuesday night's game at Florida State the Hurricanes were 13-3 and sitting alone atop the ACC standings with a 5-0 league record and a nine-game win streak after a road upset at No. 2 Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Before Larranaga arrived at Miami 11 years ago the Hurricanes were 2-15 against Duke. Since his arrival, the Canes are 7-7 against the Blue Devils, which is second-most wins against Duke by any team in the nation. Only North Carolina has beaten Duke more times (10) during that span. And three of those Hurricanes' wins were at Cameron Indoor, one of the most intimidating arenas in college

basketball.

Three nights before beating coach Mike Krzyzewski and his Blue Devils Larranaga's Canes rallied from 18 points down to beat another Hall of Fame coach, Jim Boeheim, who is in his 46th year at Syracuse.

Between them Krzyzewski and Boeheim have won six national titles (five for Coach K) and have reached 17 Final Fours.

Larranaga has one Final Four on his resume after a magical run at George Mason in 2006. That 11th-seeded Patriots team managed to upset No. 6 Michigan State, defending champion North Carolina, Wichita State and top-seeded UConn — silencing critics who said the Patriots didn't deserve an at-large bid and had no business being in the Big Dance.

Larranaga loves competing against the best coaches in America and silencing doubters. It is one of the main reasons he chose to take the Miami job rather than riding out his career at George Mason, where he was so beloved that the menu at Brion's Grille, a restaurant in Fairfax, Virginia, featured the Jim Larranaga Burger (which was slathered in honey mustard, jack cheese and banana peppers).

Shortly after Larranaga took the Miami job at age 62 he revealed that when he left his job as an assistant coach at the University of Virginia 25 years earlier, he wrote down a career goal: "ACC head coach." He considered it the ultimate challenge to test his coaching skills against the likes of Krzyzewski and North Carolina legend Roy Williams.

So far, so good.

There were skeptics who felt Larranaga was past his prime in 2011, that UM should have gone for a younger coach. But he didn't take long to win them over. In his second season the Canes won the ACC regular-season title, topped North Carolina for the ACC tournament title, and reached the Sweet 16 in the NCAA Tournament. It was the first time since 1974 that a school other than Duke or Carolina won the ACC regular season and tournament championship.

Three years later, the Canes reached the Sweet 16 again. The program took a dip the past three years, but it would be unfair to blame Larranaga. There was an FBI probe into recruiting that UM was tangentially mentioned in, but nothing came of it and the school's name was redacted from the indictment. Although UM was cleared, it hurt two recruiting

cycles.

Then, there was a plague of injuries that befell the team to the point that many nights Larranaga had just six or seven healthy scholarship players. Even John Wooden would have struggled to win with such a thin roster.

Last summer, things started to turn around. Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty announced they would return to UM after initially declaring for the NBA Draft. Sam Waardenburg decided to return, as well. DePaul point guard Charlie Moore and George Mason's Jordan Miller transferred to Miami. All of a sudden, Coach L had the kind of team he loves — four sixth-year seniors, positive energy, and a poised point guard who can score at will but happily shares the ball.

I asked Krzyzewski on a Monday conference call what he thought of the job Coach L has done, considering there were critics calling for his ouster on Twitter a few months ago.

"I'm not big on critics on Twitter," Krzyzewski said. "It sounds like a comedy show on HBO, let's watch Critics on Twitter."

"Jim's one of the outstanding coaches in the history of our game, one of the winningest coaches and he's done a great job at Miami. No team that I can remember has been devastated with injuries as much as his team was last year. For him to keep those kids coming back, especially Wong and McGusty and (Sam) Waardenburg — it shows those kids trust him and believe in him. And he's been able to complement them with two outstanding transfers in Moore and Miller."

"As long as Jim wants to coach, they'd be smart to keep him there. Hell, he might win the league. That's going to be an NCAA tournament team and he'll be a tough out for whoever's playing them."

Larranaga's not done at Miami. He is as hungry as ever. He's still doing Muhammad Ali dances in the locker room. Don't be surprised if his team is dancing again come March.

MBB Drops 65-64 Heartbreaker at Florida State

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 11, 2022

Despite leading for over 32 minutes, the University of Miami men's basketball team fell, 65-64, Tuesday night at Florida State.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore paced the Hurricanes with a game-high 20 points, as Miami (13-4, 5-1 ACC) saw its nine-game winning streak come to an end in its first road setback of the year behind a pair of Florida State (9-5, 3-2 ACC) free throws in the final second.

"I thought both teams battled equally for 40 minutes and, in the end, it was one big play after the other," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We made a bunch of big plays, they made a bunch of big plays. On the last one, Evans made the two free throws. That's the difference in a one-point game."

The Hurricanes used an early 7-0 burst to take a 15-7 lead after 7:10 of action. Florida State answered back with a 13-1 run, including notching 11 straight points, to grab a 20-16 edge with 8:28 on the first-half clock.

Miami, though, soon responded with nine consecutive points to go back in front, 25-20, with 5:16 left before the break. The Hurricanes went on to take a one-point cushion, 29-28, into the locker room.

The Seminoles shot just 1-of-10 (10.0 percent) from 3-point range in the first half, while Miami notched seven steals and forced 10 turnovers. Florida State, though, recorded a 21-13 edge on the glass, including a 7-2 margin at the offensive end.

Despite Florida State entering the bonus with 10:12 to go, Miami held a four-point lead, 50-46, with under nine minutes remaining. The Seminoles then scored six points in 52 seconds—first with an old-fashioned three-point play and then a 3-pointer—to go up, 52-50, with 7:59 left.

Miami regained the lead, 53-52, on a 3-pointer by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong just 42 seconds later and later upped its advantage to three, 61-58, on a pair of free throws by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty with exactly two minutes to play.

The Hurricanes still held a one-point lead with under a minute to go, but Florida State redshirt senior forward Malik Osborne drilled a go-ahead 3-pointer to make it 63-61 with 27 ticks

left, the Seminoles' first made field goal in over six minutes.

Miami went back in front on a third-chance corner 3-pointer by Moore with just seven seconds on the clock. That snapped a span of five-plus minutes without a make for the Hurricanes. Florida State senior guard RayQuan Evans, though, hit two free throws with 0.8 seconds left to give the Seminoles the win.

Moore's 20-point showing came on 8-of-12 shooting, including a 4-of-5 mark from 3-point range. The Chicago native added a game-high six assists, three rebounds and co-game-best three steals before fouling out in the last second.

McGusty, who eclipsed 1,500-career points, recorded 17 points and a game-best nine rebounds, finishing just shy of a fifth double-double in 2021-22. Wong scored 10 points, adding a season-best five assists and co-game-high three steals.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored nine points, all on 3-pointers in the first six-and-a-half minutes of the second half, and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg posted eight points and a career-high-tying three blocks.

Freshman guard Matthew Cleveland led Florida State with 15 points on 5-of-7 shooting. Redshirt senior guard Anthony Polite tallied 12 points and a co-team-high eight rebounds, while shooting 4-of-6 from the floor and 4-of-4 at the stripe. Evans scored 11 points in the Seminoles' victory.

Miami shot 46.2 percent (24-of-52) from the field and 42.9 percent (9-of-21) from 3-point range. Florida State, however, tallied a 37-25 advantage on the backboards, a 17-8 edge in second-chance points and a 25-0 margin in bench points.

The Hurricanes logged 10 steals, their third straight game in double figures, and forced 15 turnovers while committing 11. The entire game was played within a 12-point window, including the whole second-half within a six-point window.

Miami now returns home to Coral Gables, Fla., and, following a weekend bye, hosts North Carolina Tuesday at 7 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 Face-

book.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

- The Hurricanes moved to 36-52 all-time against Florida State, their most common historical foe, including 8-34 on the road and 8-14 in Larrañaga's tenure.
- Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 683-468 in 38 years as a head coach, including 213-134 in 11 seasons at Miami.
- For the 11th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong.
- The Hurricanes lost when leading with 2:00 left for the first time this season (13-1) and for just the 15th time in Larrañaga's tenure (196-15).
- Miami previously held a perfect 12-0 record when hold its opponent under 50 percent shooting this season.
- The last time Miami led Florida State at the half was 1/27/18, when it held a 45-32 edge on the way to an 80-74 victory, its most recent triumph in the series.
- The Hurricanes' last loss when leading at halftime was on 3/11/21 versus Georgia Tech in the ACC Tournament quarterfinals.
- Eight different Seminoles scored in the first half, compared to just four Hurricanes, with only one Miami reserve even attempting a field goal.
- When Florida State entered the bonus with 10:12 left on the second-half clock, it had just two fouls of its own.
- Miami had a player foul out for the fifth time this season, with Moore's disqualification his second of 2021-22.
- McGusty, who surpassed 1,500 points as a collegian on a fast-break basket with 13:44 on the first-half clock, tallied double-figure points for the 79th time, including the 51st as a Hurricane and 16th this year.
- Waardenburg posted a career-high-tying three-block performance for the second consecutive game.
- Wong, who made his 75th appearance at Miami, logged double-digit points for the 49th time, including the 16th in 2021-22.
- Wong recorded his fourth five-assist showing, including his first of the season.
- J. Miller surpassed both 1,050 points and 500 rebounds in his career.
- Moore, who moved past 1,450 points and reached 500 made field goals in his career, registered his 23rd 20-point performance, including his third of the year.
- Moore also scored in double figures for the 67th time, including the 10th this season and fourth game in a row.
- In addition, Moore tallied his 42nd five-assist outing, including his fifth of 2021-22.

Miami Hurricanes' winning streak snapped in dramatic fashion by rival Florida State

By Andre Fernandez
Miami Herald
Jan. 11, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes' winning streak survived the "Cameron Craziess" and the Duke Blue Devils.

But on Tuesday night, it couldn't survive a place Miami still hasn't been able to overcome in six years.

Despite Charlie Moore's 20 points and almost another dose of last-second heroics, the Hurricanes were unable to add another triumph to their resurgent season as they fell to rival Florida State 65-64 in another Atlantic Coast Conference road nail-biter at the Donald L. Tucker Center.

Miami (13-4, 5-1 in ACC) had its nine-game winning streak snapped and lost for the eighth consecutive time to the Seminoles (9-5, 3-2 ACC). The Hurricanes have not won in Tallahassee since Feb. 14, 2016.

Just three days after Miami stunned then No. 2-ranked Duke on its home floor, UM coach Jim Larranaga's veteran-led squad delivered in the clutch once again in the closing seconds to give itself a chance at another dramatic win.

Leading 61-60 with under a minute to play, Isaiah Wong missed a three-pointer from the top of the key which would have made it a two-possession game.

Instead, Malik Osborne's three-pointer gave FSU a 63-61 lead with 24.7 seconds left.

Moore drove to the rim on the ensuing possession, but his shot bounced off the backboard. Jordan Miller soared in to claim the rebound, but his put back drew rim. Miller, however, collected his own miss and kicked it out to Moore, who swished his three with seven seconds left to give the Canes a 64-63 lead.

"When Charlie hit that three I was thinking there's a lot of time left," Larranaga said. "Seven seconds is an eternity when you're only up one point. They're very athletic and fast and we tried to contain the dribbler but Evans did a great job of pushing it down the floor from top speed and he tried to get himself all the way to the basket, which he was able to get there and Charlie defended it and obviously the referee called a foul."

Against Duke, Moore's layup with 33 seconds left, followed by a Kameron McGusty layup and clutch free throw by Wong completed a Miami comeback from a three-point deficit.

But on Tuesday, a late whistle led to a different ending for Moore and the Hurricanes.

Moore fouled Florida State's RayQuan Evans near the paint with 0.8 left, sending Evans to the free throw line. Moore fouled out on the play, and Evans then buried both free throws to seal the outcome.

"Not much you can do about that. He made some clutch free throws," Larranaga said.

"After the game I told Charlie he made an incredible shot, Jordan Miller got a great offensive rebound and threw it to Charlie and I thought that was going to be the game winner. But as it turned out Florida State was able to come back and get a bucket."

The loss kept the Hurricanes from what would have been their longest winning streak since they opened the 2017-18 season by winning their first 10 games.

The Hurricanes were the last undefeated team in the ACC to fall as FSU beat previously unbeaten ACC teams for the second consecutive game having upended Louisville this past Saturday.

The Hurricanes surprisingly were not ranked following their 76-74 upset victory this past Saturday over Duke. Miami entered the game among teams also receiving votes in both the AP and Coaches Polls.

Tuesday's loss ruined the Hurricanes' chances of climbing into the top 25, which were almost certain with a victory considering they will not play again before the next rankings are released.

But Hamilton, who coached at Miami for a decade from 1990-2000, and has led the Seminoles to three consecutive Sweet 16 appearances coming into this season, had high praise for the Hurricanes after the game.

"Miami has a really, really good basketball team. They have the ability, in my opinion, to get to the Final Four," Hamilton said. "They are so difficult to defend. Every time you make a mistake, they make you pay. They execute very well. They seem to be in sync with each other, creating for each other. They were making it hard for us to run anything. We were fortunate to win this game...They are going to be a tough out for anyone."

Moore scored 10 of his points in the first half as Miami opened the game picking up where it left off on the defensive end against Duke.

Miami finished with 10 steals and 21 points off 15 Florida State turnovers. But 10 of those giveaways came in the second half as the Seminoles played much more efficiently in the second half, shooting 5-of-10 from 3-point range. Miami's defense limited FSU to 1-of-10 shooting from 3 in the first half.

However, the Hurricanes, who entered the game averaging only 9.5 turnovers per game this season

and 8.2 against ACC competition, committed 11 turnovers leading to 15 FSU points.

Moore shot 8-of-12 and finished with six assists while McGusty totaled 17 points and nine rebounds for the Hurricanes. Wong finished with 10 points and five assists.

Despite a distinct size disadvantage with FSU having two 7-footers in John Butler and Naheem McLeod, Miami held its own with 16 points in the paint in the first half, but was outscored 32-20 overall.

Sam Waardenburg was held to only two points in the second half and finished with eight overall.

Freshman Matthew Cleveland led FSU with 15 points while Anthony Polite scored 12 and grabbed eight rebounds while Evans finished with 11 points and four rebounds.

Last-second FTs snaps Miami's 9-game winning streak at Florida State

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 11, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes looked like they were going to end their losing streak to Florida State after Charlie Moore's go-ahead 3 with seven seconds left.

But a foul by Moore on the other end sent RayQuan Evans to the free-throw line with 0.8 seconds left.

Evans made both to snap Miami's nine-game winning streak as the Hurricanes lost 65-64 on Tuesday.

"That was a tremendous college basketball game," Miami head coach Jim Larranaga said. "It seems like the teams in the ACC are playing these incredibly close games. The last time (at Duke) we were able to get a stop with eight seconds left. Tonight we weren't."

Moore finished with a game-high 20, Kameron McGusty added 17 points and Isaiah Wong chipped in 10 for the Hurricanes, who lost their eighth straight in the series--their longest active streak against any team and have not won in Tallahassee since 2016.

Miami (13-4, 5-1 ACC) suffered its first loss in conference play.

"Miami has a really, really good basketball team," Florida State head coach Leonard Hamilton said. "They have the ability to get to the Final Four. They're so difficult to defend. Every time you make a mistake, they make you pay. They execute very well. They seem to be in sync with each other, creating for each other and defensively they had (seven steals) in the first half and they were stripping the ball from us and making it hard for us to run anything. We feel very fortunate to win this game."

Florida State (9-6, 3-2) has won four of five.

"I thought Florida State did a tremendous job defensively," Larranaga said. "I thought our guys played very well and it came down to the last possession."

The two teams will meet again in Coral Gables on Jan. 22.

The game was tight throughout with Miami holding a 59-57 lead with four minutes left.

Moore missed a free throw and McGusty a leaning shot before a pair of missed 3s by Wong and McGusty, but still held a lead.

McGusty was fouled after an offensive rebound by Moore and knocked down two free throws for a 61-58 advantage with two minutes remaining.

FSU's Anthony Polite converted two free throws to cut the deficit to 61-60 with 1:27 left.

Wong missed a 3 on the ensuing possession and FSU countered with a 3 by Malik Osborne with 27 seconds left to take a 63-61 lead.

Moore and Jordan Miller missed layups, but Miller was able to find Moore open on the baseline for a 3 that looked to be the game-winner even with time remaining after Florida State called timeout before Evans drew the foul on Moore.

"I was thinking there was a lot of time left," Larranaga said. "Seven seconds is an eternity when you're only up one point. They're very athletic and fast. We tried to contain the dribbler, but Evans did a great job of pushing the ball down the floor on top speed and he tried to get himself all the way to the basket, which he was able to get there and Charlie defended and obviously the referee called a foul and there's nothing you can do about that. He made some clutch free throws."

Florida State's Caleb Mills, who tied a career-high with 27 points last game against Louisville, was held to 4 points on 2-of-10 shooting.

Evans finished with 11 points.

Miami hosts North Carolina on Jan. 18

Moore's late 3 not enough, Miami's 9-game win streak ends against FSU

By Wyatt Kopelman
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 12, 2022

Miami got the go-ahead 3-point shot it needed with seven seconds left, but the celebration didn't last long.

Florida State hit two foul shots with 0.8 seconds left to break the Hurricanes' nine-game win streak in a 65-64 Miami loss Tuesday night inside Donald L. Tucker Civic Center.

"That was a tremendous college basketball game," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "It seems like the teams in the ACC are playing these incredibly close games. Last time [against No. 2 Duke], we were able to get a stop with eight seconds to go, and tonight we weren't. That's how close these games are, and the last possession seems to determine the success."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore sank Miami's last three from the far left corner after fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller corralled an offensive rebound off a missed layup. Florida State guard Rayquan Evans then drove to the basket and drew a foul to disqualify Moore at five fouls.

"I was thinking there was a lot of time left," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "Seven seconds is an eternity when you're only up one point. They're very athletic and fast, and we tried to contain the dribbler but Evans did a great job of just pushing it down the floor at top speed. He tried to get himself all the way to the basket, which he was able to get there and Charlie defended it. Obviously, the referee called the foul, so there's not much you can do about that."

Both Miami (13-4, 5-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) and Florida State (9-5, 3-2 ACC) spent over four minutes without converting on field goal attempts until the game's final 27 seconds. Florida State forward Malik Osborne broke the Seminoles' drought with a 3-pointer from the left wing.

The Hurricanes watched their eight-point advantage disappear at the 12-minute mark of the first half. The Seminoles teamed up to take their first lead on their 11-0 run, before Miami answered with a 9-0 burst and closed the first half with a one-point lead, 29-28.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 11 second-half points and grabbed nine rebounds to help the Hurricanes to a narrow lead for the majority of the half.

Moore added 10 points and nailed 4-of-5 3-point attempts.

Yet, Miami hit one of its last seven shots to fall 13 points underneath its scoring average, despite scoring 21 points off Florida State turnovers. The Hurricanes were outrebounded 37-25 and surrendered 14 offensive rebounds in their eighth straight loss to the Seminoles.

"What I told [Charlie] after the game was that he made an incredible shot," Larrañaga said. "Jordan Miller got a great offensive rebound and threw it to Charlie, and I thought, again, that was going to be the game-winner."

Miami returns home to face North Carolina Tuesday at the Watsco Center. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

ACC-leading Hurricanes will need Joseph, other bench players, to step up vs Tar Heels

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 14, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes' veteran starting guards -- Charlie Moore, Kam McGusty and Isaiah Wong -- deservedly get much of the credit for leading UM to a 13-4 record and the top of the ACC standings heading into Tuesday's home game against North Carolina.

Between them they have scored 46.7 points per game and all three have gone off for 25 or more points at least once.

But without the contribution of the bench, Miami likely would not have won nine games in a row. The bench averaged 14.5 points in wins against Duke, Syracuse, Wake Forest and North Carolina State. Last Tuesday night, FSU's bench outscored Miami's 25-0 and snapped the Hurricanes' win streak.

The Hurricanes will need Anthony Walker, Wooga Poplar, Bensley Joseph, Deng Gak and Rodney Miller, Jr., to play a bigger role against the Tar Heels on Tuesday.

"It was very, very disappointing that our bench was not able to contribute at the offensive end at all against Florida State. Zero points," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "They've been so good in other games, including the game before against Duke. Anthony Walker and Wooga Poplar scored, against Syracuse, Bensley Joseph nailed a couple of threes.

"We did not have a great game from our bench and unfortunately that's one of Florida State's greatest strengths."

Had the Miami bench players scored even two points, the win streak might still be alive.

One of the non-starters who has been clutch in most games is Joseph, a freshman point guard. The Massachusetts native was a four-star recruit coming out of Putnam Science Academy in Connecticut. He was rated the No. 14 point guard in the Class of 2021 and Top 100 overall by a few recruiting sites.

When he committed to UM, he said one key reason was: "The way Coach Larranaga brings his point guards up and how they develop so much. I feel I could be the next one."

After the first few weeks of practice, Joseph was concerned about how much playing time he would get. Larranaga and his staff analyzed Joseph's statistics to that point, showed him what he needed to improve, and he got to work with the guidance of his older teammates.

He is averaging 12.3 minutes, 2.5 points and 1.3 rebounds per game. He hit a pair of three-pointers at critical moments against Syracuse and had seven points in 19 minutes against N.C. State.

Best of all, Larranaga said, Joseph has never stopped smiling since he arrived on campus.

"Bensley Joseph smiles every day," Larranaga said. "In fact, our three freshmen are all that way. Wooga, Jakai Robinson is quieter, but all three have positive upbeat personalities, which I love. In Bensley's case, he has taken to heart the idea of improving, playing smarter, being more selective with his shots. He's been our sixth man the whole season and a key contributor at both ends of the court. He'll keep getting better and better."

Joseph conceded that there was an adjustment period as he transitioned to the college game. But he remained optimistic.

"I'm a positive energy guy," he said. "I'm learning every single game. Learning with these older guys, they're teaching me a lot and I'm having fun."

The highlight of the season so far, he said, was the road win at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium.

"That feeling was indescribable," Joseph said. "I had a little pause when that game was over because I grew up watching Duke and all the superstars, so playing on that court, against famous Coach K, it felt so surreal. I was in shock for a moment. It felt good going up against those Crazies, having them in silence felt really good. To go in there as an underdog...people don't expect us to go in that gym and win a game like that in that hostile environment. It was so fun and surreal."

The Hurricanes' next two games are at the Watsco Center. They play Tuesday against North Carolina (7 p.m.) and have a Saturday rematch against FSU (2 p.m.)

'Major challenge' looms with Armando Bacot, Tar Heels up next

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 14, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes have a week to prepare for their next game against the North Carolina Tar Heels.

They will be looking to use the time wisely to find ways to attempt to slow down Tar Heels' standout Armando Bacot when they square off at the Watsco Center on Jan. 18.

It won't be easy.

"Carolina is major challenge for us because of their size, speed and scoring ability," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Bacot has been on a terror, averaging 20.0 points and 13.5 rebounds over his last six games including a 29-point, 21-rebound performance in his last game against Virginia.

What makes facing Bacot an even tougher challenge is that Miami's interior presence is not a strength. Sam Waardenburg has moved into a center role this year after primarily playing the 4-spot in years' past.

Waardenburg's best attributes are on the offensive end of the court as someone who can help facilitate the offense through the high post, looking for teammates—something he has excelled in since his days in New Zealand—while finishing with dunks or knocking down jumpers.

The Hurricanes (13-4, 5-1 ACC), who are coming off a 65-64 loss at Florida State on Tuesday, will be looking to take advantage of the mismatch issue on one end by using ball movement with ball screens to create favorable matchups on offense.

Miami is led by its trio of guards in Kameron McGusty (18.0 ppg, 5.9 rpg) Isaiah Wong (15.9 ppg, 3.7 rpg) and Charlie Moore (12.8 ppg, 3.9 apg).

Continuing to find ways for them to score to offset what could be a tough game against the 6-foot-10 Bacot will be a key.

Miami has faced Bacot before in the last two seasons, but he has shown improvements this year in averaging career-highs in points (16.6), rebounds (11.1), assists (1.7), steals (0.9) and blocks (1.5) in addition to a career-best 64.2 field goal percentage.

"Bacot is playing at an extremely high level

right now and Carolina is really exploiting his ability to score and rebound at both ends," Larranaga said. "He's having a sensational year."

ACC centers have done well against Miami this season with Syracuse's Jesse Edwards scoring a career-high 22 points on Jan. 5 while Wake Forest's Dallas Walton surpassed his season average with 13 on Jan. 1 and Duke's Mark Williams also did the same with 12 on Jan. 8.

"It's not one of our major strengths," Larranaga said. "Our guys fight like crazy and do a really good job of competing, but we're not a big, strong physical team. Guys like Sam Waardenburg and Jordan Miller weigh 200-215 pounds.

The Tar Heels (11-4, 3-1) host Georgia Tech (7-8, 1-4) on Saturday before traveling to Miami. UNC has won three of four and eight of the last 10.

North Carolina also has a pair of guards to keep an eye on in Caleb Love (15.6 ppg, 3.4 apg) and RJ Davis (12.9 ppg, 3.6 apg) as both are shooting over 40 percent from 3.

With a healthy roster, Miami's Jim Larranaga should be dancing into March

By Tom D'Angelo
Palm Beach Post
Jan. 15, 2022

The burning question when it comes to Miami Hurricanes basketball: Is coach Jim Larranaga ready to dance again in March?

Larranaga likes to bust out a move in the locker room after a big win, especially the Ali Shuffle to honor his favorite athlete. But those moments have been rare in recent years with the Hurricanes taking a dip since their last trip to the NCAA tournament in 2018.

Until now.

Miami, picked to finish 12th in the 15-team ACC, has been the surprise of the league. Even with a one-point loss at Florida State Tuesday dropping its record to 13-4, 5-1 in the ACC, the Hurricanes still lead the league. But after winning its first four conference games and eight straight overall - and rallying from an 18-point deficit to beat Syracuse - Miami still had its doubters.

Until a stunning 76-74 win at No. 2 Duke last weekend.

"Hell, he might win the league," Duke's Mike Krzyzewski said Monday. "That's going to be an NCAA tournament team and he'll be a tough out for whoever's playing them."

Krzyzewski knows from experience. Since Larranaga arrived, Miami has split 14 games with Duke. Those seven wins are the second most over the Blue Devils during that span behind North Carolina's 10.

And if Duke runs the table at home, the final home loss of Coach K's legendary career will be to Coach L.

"They are the real deal," FSU's Leonard Hamilton said. "They are very efficient in what they do and they realize that their system is geared towards their talent. They are a good basketball team."

Pretty good praise coming from his elders. Yes, elders.

At 72, Larranaga is among the four oldest men's basketball coaches in ACC history, but the other three currently are coaching in the league and he faced all three in succession the last two weeks, Syracuse's Jim Boeheim, 77; Krzyzewski, 74; and Hamilton, 73.

And if not for FSU's RayQuan Evans calmly

dropping two free throws Tuesday with less than a second remaining for the one-point win, Larranaga would have had the Septuagenarian Sweep.

So what kind of Muhammad Ali rope-a-dope has Larranaga pulled off after three consecutive losing seasons? Your chances of winning rise dramatically when you have enough players to conduct a full practice and enter games not having to rely on a bench full of walk-ons.

A year ago, Larranaga was on the verge of placing a "Help Wanted" sign on his door, looking for anyone who could dribble, shoot and, most importantly, play defense. Miami played its last eight games with six scholarship players, and several others with seven on scholarship. Somehow, he managed to will his decimated team to a 10-17 record.

"The problem with that is when you only have six or seven healthy players you can't afford for any one of them to get hurt," said Larranaga, whose team faces North Carolina Tuesday before its rematch with the Seminoles next Saturday. Both games are in Coral Gables.

"It's very, very hard to prepare for an opponent because you can't simulate what the opponent's strategy is going to be. You can tell your team, you can show them on video, but they can't actually physically get out there and plan like we can this year."

This season Miami added key transfers in Charlie Moore from DePaul and Jordan Miller from George Mason, has remained relatively healthy and is experienced.

Of the Canes' top six scorers, Kameron McGusty, Moore and Sam Waardenburg are in their sixth year; Miller is in his fourth and Isaiah Wong (a preseason All-ACC first team pick) and Anthony Walker are in their third. The Hurricanes are the oldest team in the ACC, and ninth oldest in Division 1, with an average age of 21.38.

Proving Jim Larranaga is tough to beat when he's playing with a full deck.

"Last year we didn't really have the bodies to run full court," Wong said.

"When somebody goes down, we can replace them and still have a full practice, and keep our chemistry up, and still play with the same energy."

An energy that has carried over into the locker room.

Larranaga repeated the story Thursday from the first time his Ali Shuffle went viral following a 2013 NCAA tournament win to advance to the Sweet 16. "I just did it because I was excited our players were excited," he said.

Then he broke out the Whip/Nae Nae a few years later after a win over Florida. And few things go viral faster than someone who has been mistaken for Bernie Sanders and Larry David doing the Whip/Nae Nae.

Now, Larranaga is catching that dance fever again, entertaining his team by doing the Ali Shuffle following Miami's win against Clemson last month.

"As a coach, you get excited for your players," he said. "You want them to celebrate and enjoy big victories."

Think of it as a warmup for The Big Dance. The one coming in March.

Freshman PG Bensley Joseph settling into key reserve role

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 17, 2022

Freshman backup point guard Bensley Joseph has been earning valuable playing time in his first season.

And the Hurricanes have needed his services on both ends of the floor when he enters the game.

"Once we started practice and we had enough statistical information to analyze his game, he was very concerned about playing time," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "I explained to him about how you earn playing time. When I showed him the stats he was absolutely shocked that they weren't of his capability. He has really taken to heart of improving, getting smarter, being more selective with his shots and being ready when he takes the court.

"He's been basically our sixth man throughout the season and a key contributor on both ends of the court. He's going to keep getting better and better."

Joseph has played at least 10 minutes in five of the last six games for the Hurricanes (13-4, 5-1 ACC), averaging 3.7 points during that span.

"I think my freshman year is going very well," Joseph said. "I'm learning every single game. I'm taking it in, learning from these older guys, they're teaching me a lot. We're doing well so far, we just have to keep it up."

He does not post big offensive numbers—2.5 points on 37.9-percent shooting—but his role is important to handle the ball, defend and give starter Charlie Moore a break.

"At the beginning of the year it took me some time to adjust and I think coach L, after talking to him, gave me some more thoughts on how to push and be better in my role," Joseph said. "I'm trying to do everything I can to help this team win as many game, just being that positive energy guy and making everyone happy."

Joseph has been part of a bench that has had its moments this season, but Tuesday's 65-64 loss at Florida State was not one of them as the bench was held scoreless and the four reserves combined were also held without a rebound or assist.

"Very, very disappointing that our bench was not able to contribute at the offensive end at all, zero points," Larranaga said. "They've

been so good in other games, including the game before against Duke. We did not have a great game from our bench and unfortunately that's one of Florida State's greatest strengths. They had 25 points from their bench. We were right there still at the end, up one with seven seconds to go so it didn't cost us the game. But very clearly, if those guys were able to get 6-10 points, it would have been a significant contribution and it probably would have helped us win the game."

Joseph and the Hurricanes will be looking to bounce back from the loss when they host North Carolina (12-4, 4-1) on Tuesday (7:00 p.m., ACCN).

"We're not the biggest team, we're probably not the strongest team in the ACC, but we defend and I like being a smaller, undersized team going out there and playing as hard as we can," Joseph said. "I think those results were showing in our streak that we were on. Hopefully we're going to come back and get it back going."

The Marathon Continues

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 17, 2022

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga has said it repeatedly: the ACC slate is a marathon, not a sprint.

This week, the conference-leading Hurricanes got a brief break during that marathon. Miami (13-4, 5-1 ACC) had a weekend bye and did not play on Saturday.

After playing five league games in a 14-day span, along with one conference contest earlier in the year, the pause is a valuable one for Miami.

"We played six ACC games fairly quickly," third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker said. "So, I feel like this break was good for us to sharpen our saws, get our bodies right, get some treatment and regroup, especially after our loss we just took."

That setback was a narrow one, as Miami dropped a 65-64 thriller Tuesday at Florida State.

The Hurricanes led in the final second, but committed a foul with 0.8 ticks left at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center in Tallahassee, Fla., only to then watch Florida State senior guard RayQuan Evans hit two free throws for the win.

Charlie Moore scored a game-high 20 points for Miami in the rivalry matchup, adding six assists, three rebounds and three steals. Fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty posted 17 points and nine boards, while third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong added 10 points and a season-high five assists.

Although the close defeat was certainly demoralizing, the Hurricanes knew they could not let that feeling linger, even with an upcoming break. Miami quickly moved on, set to focus on its next challenge.

"Right away after the game, we regrouped. We're a team; we lose together, we win together," Walker shared. "We've seen a lot of success early this season. So, this one bump in the road won't put too much [of a] dent in our confidence and our ability to work together. It was simple; we've got to move on to the next one because we've got a lot more games to play. So, we've just got to focus on UNC."

The Tar Heels come to Coral Gables for a Tuesday night matchup at the Watsco Center, with tip-off set for 7 p.m.

Miami is 8-26 all-time against North Carolina, but that includes a solid 6-10 ledger under Larrañaga's leadership. The Hurricanes' six victories over the Tar Heels during his tenure trail only Duke and

Virginia for the most of any team during that time.

In the most recent meeting, North Carolina posted a 67-65 road victory on Jan. 5, 2021, winning on a driving layup with three seconds left.

This year, though, the Hurricanes will see a different face directing the Tar Heels on the visiting sideline. North Carolina is under the direction of first-year head coach Hubert Davis, who spent the previous nine seasons as an assistant to the legendary Roy Williams.

"Despite the coaching change, they're pretty similar. They still race up the court and try to score as quickly as possible," Walker said. "That is something I've gotten to play against over the years and Coach L really puts emphasis on, that they go attack the basket in the first five seconds of the shot clock. So, just knowing that they're big, they like to post up and they like to run the floor, it's an emphasis that we put on in practice and during film."

North Carolina is 12-4 (4-1 ACC) on the season, including a 9-2 record in its last 11 games since a 3-2 start. The Tar Heels are led by junior forward/center Armando Bacot, one of the top players in the nation.

A 6-foot-10, 240-pounder from Richmond, Va., Bacot is averaging 17.4 points and an ACC-best 11.3 rebounds per game. The latter mark is 1.5 boards better than second-place Dereon Seabron of NC State and puts Bacot fifth on the national leaderboard.

There is no question the guard-heavy Hurricanes have their work cut out for them in trying to slow down Bacot, but that is a test they look forward to.

"We love the challenge. Coming into the season, it was a concern that we weren't one of the biggest ... or the strongest teams in the league," Walker said. "So, just being able to ... defend one of the best bigs in the country, it's good for us to show the public that we can do it and it's good to show us we can do it."

Checking in at 6-foot-9, Walker will, of course, be one of the players tasked with trying to defend Bacot.

The Baltimore native's role has changed this season from what it was down the stretch last year, as he is coming off the bench to provide defense, energy and rebounding.

That, however, does not bother him at all. In fact, he feels he has adjusted quite well to what his coaches are asking of him and is focused on the team as a whole, not himself.

"It's been an easy transition, mostly because of the team's success," Walker explained. "Anything that will help the team win, I'm willing to do, obviously. So, just being able to support the team the way I have this season, although it's different, it's working out well because of the team success."

One way Walker has made a concerted effort to show that support is by being a vocal presence. He is consistently one of the louder players on the sideline and, when he is not in the game, can often be seen greeting his teammates when they come off the floor at a timeout.

Walker is averaging a solid 5.6 points per contest, tops among Miami's reserves, but he knows it is imperative to make an impact even when he is not on the hardwood. Using his voice more frequently is one way he has done just that.

"[I know] that my teammates need me to be vocal, even if I'm not on the court. To be vocal off the court is extremely important," Walker said. "Coach L stresses bench help a lot, coming in and playing well and also [cheering your team on] when you're not in the game. So, of course, I take pride in that. I want my teammates to know I'm supporting them on and off the court."

Walker is averaging 11.5 points per game in two collegiate outings against North Carolina and assuredly has the capability to affect the game multiple ways Tuesday night.

Miami's meeting with North Carolina will be shown live on ACC Network HERE, with Rece Davis, Debbie Antonelli and Brooke Weisbrod 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 will be available HERE.

After playing the Tar Heels, the Hurricanes host Florida State Saturday at 2 p.m., live on either ESPN or ESPN2 from the Watsco Center, in the Seminoles' 2021-22 return game.

Single-game tickets for 2021-22 Miami men's basketball games are still on sale and can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office at 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.

UM coach Jim Larranaga hopes for big home crowd Tuesday as Hurricanes play Tar Heels

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 17, 2022

Classes resume at the University of Miami on Tuesday after winter break, and Hurricanes men's basketball coach Jim Larranaga hopes the students will show up in big numbers for the 7 p.m. game against ACC rival North Carolina.

Miami leads the conference with a 5-1 league record and is seeking to rebound from a one-point loss to Florida State last week, the Canes' only loss in the past 10 games.

"From my experience at Miami tells me that playing North Carolina at home is a big draw, that people love the big games," Larranaga said. "Duke, North Carolina, it doesn't matter where you play them, that's a big game. I hope our fans and students will turn out and I hope they'll wear their masks and try to stay safe. And if they're not comfortable, they'll stay home and watch it on TV or listen to [WQAM announcer] Joe Zagacki on the radio — all of those are good options."

Not including the 2021 COVID-era game, the last three times Miami hosted the Tar Heels the average attendance was more than 7,500.

Tuesday's game is a battle between two of the top teams in the ACC. Miami is 13-4 overall and UNC is 12-4 and 4-1 in the conference. Miami is a guard-oriented team that does not have big bodies in the paint, which means the Hurricanes will have to neutralize Carolina's size in other ways like it did in a road upset win at Duke with 15 steals.

"Carolina is major challenge for us because of their size, speed and scoring ability," Larranaga said.

The Tar Heels are led by center Armando Bacot, one of the top players in the nation. The 6-foot-10, 240-pound junior is averaging 17.4 points and an ACC-best 11.3 rebounds per game. He had 29 points and 21 rebounds against Virginia.

"Bacot is playing at an extremely high level right now, and Carolina is really exploiting his ability to score and rebound at both ends," Larranaga said. "He's having a sensational year."

Miami forward Anthony Walker said the Tar Heels are just as dangerous under first-year coach Hubert Davis as they were under legendary Roy Williams.

"Despite the coaching change, they're pretty similar. They still race up the court and try to score as quickly as possible," Walker said. "That is something I've gotten to play against over the years and Coach L really puts emphasis on, that they go attack the basket in the first five seconds of the shot clock. So, just knowing that they're big, they like to post up and they like to run the floor, it's an emphasis that we put on in practice and during film."

Miami's backcourt trio of Charlie Moore, Isaiah Wong and Kameron McGusty will have its hands full against North Carolina's Caleb Love (15.5 points, 3.4 assists) and RJ Davis (13.4 points, 3.8 assists).

"RJ Davis and Caleb Love are basically scoring machines," Larranaga said. "They can shoot it from deep, they can shoot it off the bounce, can score in transition, they make threes and then when [Grady] Manek steps out and stretches your team out at the four, they become an outstanding offensive juggernaut. They're playing great right now. They're not winning, they're winning big and the three-point shooting is an added dimension to an already outstanding tremendous inside game."

Hurricanes, Tar Heels feature top-tier guards

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 17, 2022

Miami and North Carolina feature some of the best guards in the ACC.

The backcourts will be looking for strong performances when they square off on Tuesday (7:00 p.m., ACCN) at the Watsco Center.

"Every team has strengths and weaknesses, Carolina just has a lot more strengths," Miami head coach Jim Larranaga said. "They're not only an outstanding team in the paint with those three big guys alternating and posting you up and scoring with their back to the basket, but now they're perimeter game is outstanding."

Miami (13-4, 5-1 ACC) and North Carolina (12-4, 4-1) are both among the top three in the league standings.

North Carolina's backcourt of Caleb Love (15.5 pts, 3.4 ast) and RJ Davis (13.4 pts, 3.8 ast) are both shooting over 44 percent from the field, 43 percent from 3 and 80 percent from the free-throw line to complement leading scorer in 6-foot-10 forward Armando Bacot (17.4 pts, 11.2 reb).

"RJ Davis and Caleb Love are basically scoring machines," Larranaga said. "They can shoot it from deep, they can shoot it off the bounce, can score in transition, they make 3s and then when (Brady) Manek steps out and stretches your team out at the 4, they become an outstanding offensive juggernaut. They're playing great right now. They're not winning, they're winning big and the 3-point shooting is an added dimension to an already outstanding tremendous inside game."

Miami is led by its trio of guards in Kameron McGusty (18.0 pts, 5.9 reb), Isaiah Wong (15.9 pts, 3.7 reb) and Charlie Moore (12.8 pts, 3.9 ast).

"The problems are they've got some guys who are dynamic and talented enough to be able to create offense any time they want to whether it's for themselves or their teammates," North Carolina head coach Hubert Davis said. "They can shoot the ball, but their ability one-on-one off the bounce to be able to attack and get to the basket is really good. For us, from a defensive standpoint, that we've talked about is how important it is to be able to guard your guy and take pride in guarding your guy without help. But also be able to be in position to help in the paint."

"In our losses against Purdue, Tennessee and Kentucky we really struggled against dynamic guards in the paint. It's a point of emphasis against Miami and we have to do a good job of keeping them away from attacking and keeping them off the free-throw line. We know what we have to do against a really good and quality opponent."

One of the things Miami has done well defensively is coming up with steals, ranking second in the ACC with 8.4 steals per game.

"One of the things we have been forced to do is try to change the objective of how we're going to come up with the basketball," Larranaga said. "We're trying to force more turnovers, create more pressure, trying to make teams react to us and if we can force more turnovers that would really be a step in the right direction (on Tuesday)."

TURNOVER MARGIN

The teams are on opposite ends of the spectrum in the ACC in turnover margin with Miami leading the way at plus-4.2 while North Carolina is second-to-last at minus-2.5.

Davis indicated his team might feature a zone defense in addition to their usual man-to-man defense.

"It might happen," Davis said. "I like to change defenses and looks and that's something you have to do against Miami. You just cannot give them a steady diet throughout the entire game because they get comfortable. They understand where the points are to attack so you have to give them different looks in the game to even have a chance from a defensive standpoint to be successful. It's very difficult to defend anybody if you allow them to run their offense like they do in shootaround. That's something we'll try not to let Miami do."

NET RANKINGS

The NCAA's NET rankings released on Sunday had Miami 84th, which takes account into quality wins and losses. Although Miami is 13-4 overall, they are just 1-2 in 'Quad 1' games.

"I do not (pay attention to the NET rankings)," Larranaga said. "I'm sure my staff does, but we do not talk about it at all. The NET rankings this time of year—I think this is true, not 100 percent certain, that if you win by 30 that's really meaningful. If you win big so there are teams around the country including

our own conference that played teams in the non-conference that you could beat by 25 and look good doing that. That's never been our approach. We play teams in-state that's a rivalry game. We played at FIU and that's not an easy game for us. We killed them by 1, but that was not an easy game."

North Carolina is 32nd in NET rankings. They are 0-4 in 'Quad 1' games.

The 'Quad 1' games are defined by teams ranked in the top-30 in RPI, which Miami currently is and North Carolina is not.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Miami is looking to return to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since a three-year run that ended in 2018. However, it is not something Larranaga has discussed with the team.

"Not now, it's way too early now," Larranaga said. "We've played six conference games. That's way too early in the season for anybody to know anything because there's just too much adversity out there. You can have a COVID break, a couple injuries to key players so you've got to keep grinding and put yourself in a position in March to figure out if you're an NCAA Tournament team with enough quality wins, very few bad losses and it's totally out of your hands what a committee will do in selecting 68 so you're better off focusing on your team and executing the game plan every night. If you do that, you give yourself a chance."

Larranaga has taken Miami to the NCAA Tournament four times in his 10 years. He has also taken George Mason, five times in 14 seasons with five wins, to the NCAA Tournament. Larranaga is 9-9 in the tournament with one Final Four, one Elite 8 and three Sweet 16 appearances.

Hurricanes race to 27-point halftime lead, rout UNC Tar Heels 85-57 to stay atop ACC

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 18, 2022

Apparently, the University of Miami student body and local community finally figured out that the Hurricanes men's basketball team is having a heck of a season.

Question now is whether the national pollsters will notice.

The biggest crowd of the season showed up at the Watsco Center Tuesday night and got quite the show as the ACC-leading Hurricanes trounced the North Carolina Tar Heels 85-57 in a battle of two of the top teams in the conference.

North Carolina's 27-point halftime deficit matched its largest in the last 25 seasons. The other time the Tar Heels were losing that bad at halftime was at Duke in 2010.

Miami, which has lost just one of its past 11 games, improved to 14-4 overall and 6-1 in the ACC. Tuesday's win follows January victories over Wake Forest, Syracuse, Duke, and one-point loss on the road to Florida State.

UNC dropped to 12-5 and 4-2.

UM forward Sam Waardenburg, a sixth-year senior from New Zealand, was one of three Hurricanes who scored more than 20 points. He came out like a man possessed and scored a career-high 21 points on 7-of-9 shooting. He had been averaging 7.1 points per game this season.

Seventeen of Waardenburg's points came in the first half. He made all six of his shots before intermission, including a career-high four three pointers. Two of them came after Charlie Moore behind-the-back passes. Waardenburg also had two thunderous dunks that ejected the crowd of 5,979 fans from their seats.

"That loss at Florida State hurt a bit, so seven days off everyone's been really fired up, trying to get back on that win streak," Waardenburg said. "The energy from the team has been at a whole new level. We know we're a very good team and compete in the ACC at a very high level, so coming into this game we had that on our minds and I was able to hit my looks."

Waardenburg's teammates fed off his energy and went on an early 14-0 run to take a 16-5 lead. UNC had no answer for Waardenburg or guards Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong, who also had hot hands and led the Hurri-

canes on a 10-0 run later in the half to stretch the lead to 30-11.

Wong finished the night with a game-high 25 points on 9-of-18 shooting and grabbed eight rebounds. McGusty registered a double-double with 20 points and 10 rebounds.

After the game, coach Jim Larranaga and UM players all credited the team's unselfishness for its recent success. The Canes moved the ball well, had 16 assists and just four turnovers.

"This team has a lot of veterans, so we know if we get double-teamed the next man's got to come up and get the ball," Wong said. "How we play feels easy, passing, not turning the ball over, keeps the ball rolling on pace. We're not selfish, so we don't turn the ball over. We're successful because we're sharing the ball and we have multiple scorers who can get to the paint and shoot threes. And, we have trust in each other."

Meanwhile, on the other end of the court, the Hurricanes played suffocating defense on the taller Tar Heels, who missed nine shots in a row while UM extended its lead in the first half. North Carolina center Armando Bacot came into the game as one of the top-rated players in the nation, averaging 21.3 points and 14.7 rebounds over the previous seven games. Miami kept him scoreless for the first 13 minutes of the game.

A 7-0 UM run to close out the first half gave the Hurricanes a 49-22 lead.

Miami shot a blistering 58 percent in the first half (18-of-31) while North Carolina shot 23 percent (7-of-31). The Hurricanes forced the Heels into 10 first-half turnovers, had eight steals and outscored UNC 20-2 off turnovers.

The storyline remained the same in the second half. The Hurricanes stayed way out in front and never let the Tar Heels back into the game. UNC had 14 turnovers and the Hurricanes capitalized, scoring 30 points off those giveaways.

Despite scoring just three points in the first half, Bacot was the Tar Heels' leading scorer with 15 points.

The Hurricanes are back home Saturday at 2 p.m. for a rematch against Florida State.

"We have a little grudge we need to get off our chests," Wong said. "We gave the fans a show tonight and I hope they come back on

Saturday."

Sam Waardenburg, Hurricanes torch Tar Heels in 85-57 win

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 18, 2022

Sam Waardenburg had a big responsibility on the defensive end of the court against Armando Bacot, but it was his offensive prowess that proved to be the most important.

Waardenburg scored 17 of his career-high 21 points in the first half to help the Miami Hurricanes build a 27-point lead at the break and the Hurricanes rolled to an 85-57 win over North Carolina on Tuesday.

"We know we are a very good team and can compete in the ACC at a very high level," Waardenburg said.

Isaiah Wong led all scorers with 25 points behind five 3s while the Hurricanes also got 20 points and 10 rebounds from Kameron McGusty.

"A lot of teams are saying in scouting reports I can only drive to the basket," Wong said, "but I'm a decent shooter so coming into every game I've got to switch my game up a little."

Miami (14-4, 6-1 ACC) bounced back in a big way from its only loss since November, falling 65-64 at Florida State last week, and has won 10 of 11.

"Everyone was hurting from the loss to Florida State, but the seven days off really helped us and everybody came in fired up to get back on a winning streak," Waardenburg said. "We had a great game plan."

Miami snapped a five-game losing streak to North Carolina with their first win over the Tar Heels (12-5, 4-2) since February 2018. It was the largest margin of victory for the Hurricanes in the series, surpassing a 26-point win during Miami's 2013 ACC championship season.

"There was no question our guys were really ready to play and executed our game plan to perfection," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "One of the advantages we had was we had a week to prepare for this game and we got a lot of rest so we had a lot of energy. Right from the opening tip we demonstrated that energy and effort on both ends of the court."

Miami shot 46.0 percent (29 of 63) from the field, 46.4 percent from 3 (13 of 28) while North Carolina made just 33.8 percent (22 of 65) of its shots and 6 of 30 (20.0 percent) from 3.

The Tar Heels were led by Bacot's 15 points, many coming with the game out of reach. Bacot entered the game coming off consecutive 29-point games and averaging 22.5 in his previous six.

"We were aggressive in trying to keep the ball away from Armando Bacot," Larranaga said. "He was tremendous in the last two games. We had to somehow slow him down."

The Hurricanes jumped out to a 16-5 start, sparked by a pair of 3s by Waardenburg.

"I was able to feed off everyone's energy and I got the looks and knocked them down," said Waardenburg, who made 7 of 9 shots in the game, including 5 of 6 from 3.

Moore's strong crossover led to a layup and a 27-11 lead for the Hurricanes at the mid-way point of the first half.

More flashy plays from the Hurricanes as Wong hit a step-back 3, which has been a notable weapon for him this season, for a 30-11 advantage.

"Every day I come into the game and work on my craft," Wong said. "I come in and think about what I'm going to do next game and every game I see little openings. The next day I practice on them and how I can get open. I take shots I know I can make so I practice that every day."

Miami's lead ballooned to 21 after a dunk by Waardenburg while North Carolina missed 19 of its first 25 shots.

"Sam's a really good player and he's always been a good piece for our team," Wong said. "He's been a main piece even though he doesn't score much in some games, but he's always one of the main pieces that we need on our team--a stretch-5 that everybody can rely on."

Moments later Wong drilled a 3 at the top of the key for a 45-22 lead.

The Hurricanes went into the break with a 49-22 lead as Miami hit eight 3s in the first half, four by Waardenburg. The halftime deficit was the largest by North Carolina since 2010 when they trailed by 27 to Duke.

"When you give Sam Waardenburg a chance to rest and he was shooting the ball well in practice, he can be a major factor for us on both ends of the court," Larranaga said.

North Carolina shot just 22.6 percent (7 of 31) in the half.

The onslaught continued in the second half with Waardenburg drilling a 3 to pick up where he left off and Wong converted a 4-point play for a 62-30 lead.

An emphatic two-handed dunk by Jordan Miller put an exclamation point on the big win.

TAKING DOWN ACC POWERS

With a win over Duke earlier this month, the Hurricanes have knocked off the two ACC perennial powers during the same season for the first time since the 2016-17 campaign.

The only other season Miami has accomplished the feat was during their 2012-13 ACC championship season, going 4-1 against the two.

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Florida State on Saturday (2:00 p.m., ESPN) in a quick rematch from the Seminoles' 65-64 win last week and looking to end an eight-game losing streak in the series.

"We played FSU last week and it was a tremendous college game," Larranaga said. "We had a 1-point lead with seven seconds to go, but they made two free throws to win it and that's very typical of an ACC game and very typical of a rivalry like ours with Florida State. They've had our number for the last several years when we've been short-handed, but hopefully we'll learn from the first game and do a better job this time."

MBB Dominates North Carolina in 85-57 Win

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 18, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team turned in one of the most impressive performances in Watsco Center history Tuesday night, rolling to a thorough 85-57 drubbing of North Carolina.

Miami (14-4, 6-1 ACC) outscored the Tar Heels by 27 points in the first half and led by as many 33 on the night, en route to the decisive 28-point victory, North Carolina's largest loss in ACC play since Jan. 14, 2012. It also marked the Tar Heels' first conference loss by 25-plus since a 26-point setback, 87-61, at Miami on Feb. 9, 2013.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong tied a season high with a game-best 25 points for the Hurricanes, while sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg added a career-high 21 and redshirt-senior guard Kameron McGusty had 20. It marked the first time since Jan. 7, 2006, Miami had three 20-point scorers in a regulation affair.

"We had a whole week to prepare for them and part of the preparation was rest," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after his seventh win over North Carolina during his tenure at The U. "We really got a chance to sharpen our saws and rejuvenate our energy level. It showed right from the very beginning. Carolina played on Saturday and then had a long trip to Miami on Monday. We took advantage of a situation where the guys really executed at both ends."

The Hurricanes, in front of 1,232 students, used an early 14-0 run, sparked by back-to-back-to-back 3-pointers, in a span of just 3:05 to grab a 16-5 lead after just 5:50 of action. Miami forced five North Carolina (12-5, 4-2 ACC) turnovers in a stretch of 2:47.

Soon thereafter, the Tar Heels missed nine consecutive shots and Miami used a 10-0 run—making it a 28-8 extended surge—to go in front by 19 points, 30-11, with 9:02 left in the first half. Another 7-0 burst upped the edge as high as 21, 37-16, with 5:42 on the clock. The Hurricanes eventually closed the frame on a 10-0 run to take a 27-point lead, 49-22, into the locker room.

Miami, which started 12-of-19 from the floor, shot 18-of-31 overall (58.1 percent) in the opening 20 minutes, including 8-of-14 (57.1 percent) beyond the arc. At the other end, North Carolina opened 3-of-18 and finished the session at 7-of-31 (22.6 percent), including 4-of-17 (23.5 percent) from deep.

Waardenburg (17 points), Wong (15) and McGusty (12) combined for 44 first-half points on 16-of-24 shooting (66.7 percent), including an 8-of-10 clip (80.0 percent) from deep.

The Hurricanes upped their cushion to a then-game-high 32, 62-30, on a four-point play by Wong with 14:02 remaining. They eventually extended it to 33 points, 84-51, on a 3-pointer by freshman guard Wooga Poplar with 1:57 play. It marked the largest lead of the year for Miami and co-third-largest deficit of the season for the Tar Heels, trailing only 34- and 35-point margins on Dec. 18, 2021, versus RV/No. 21 Kentucky.

North Carolina never cut the deficit any lower than 22 during the entire second half, as Miami rolled to the 28-point triumph and held the Tar Heels to a season-low point total, 12 fewer than their mark against the Wildcats.

Wong's 25 points, the second-most by a North Carolina foe all year, came on 9-of-18 shooting from the field, including a 5-of-9 clip from deep to set a career high in made 3-pointers. He added a season-high eight rebounds, two assists and two steals.

In addition to his career high in points, Waardenburg set top marks in made field goals and made 3-pointers, as he finished 7-of-9 from the floor and 5-of-6 beyond the arc. The Auckland, New Zealand, native scored 16 points in the first 16 minutes and made his first five 3-pointers of the night.

McGusty, meanwhile, notched his 20 points on a 7-of-15 clip from the field and a 5-of-7 mark at the line. He added a team-high 10 rebounds to record his fifth double-double of the year, as well as registered a season- and game-best four steals.

"When Charlie [Moore] is distributing the ball the way he does and those guys are hitting shots the way they did, [we have a great offense]," Larrañaga said. "In Sam's case, every time we play against a team that really tries to help on our guards, Sam has the opportunity to try to get himself open from 3-point range. Tonight, not only was he open, he was really ready to shoot it. He went 4-for-4 [on 3-pointers] in the first half alone, which I'm sure made a huge difference in the Carolina scouting report because Sam doesn't normally shoot that much and certainly not from three all the time."

Junior forward/center Armando Bacot, the two-time reigning ACC Player of the Week, finished with 15 points and a game-high 12 rebounds for the Tar Heels, but Miami forced him into four turnovers and limited him to three first-half points.

No other Tar Heel scored in double figures—a first for the team this season—as RJ Davis placed second with nine points on 3-of-10 shooting. Fellow sophomore guard Caleb Love shot just 2-of-12 in a five-point performance and graduate student forward Brady Manek went 2-of-8 in a seven-point outing.

Miami finished the night with a 46.0 percent mark (29-of-63) from the field, including a 46.4 percent ledger (13-of-28) from 3-point range. The Tar Heels shot just 33.8 percent (22-of-65) overall and 20.0 percent (6-of-30) beyond the arc. Their field goal percentage was their worst of the season and the 22 made field goals matched a season low, set Nov. 21, 2021, against No. 18/17 Tennessee.

The Hurricanes posted a dominant 30-5 edge in points off turnovers, good for a season-best total and differential, as they logged 10 steals and forced 14 giveaways. At the other end, Miami committed just four turnovers, their lowest mark of the season and tied for its third-fewest ever in ACC play. North Carolina, which got outscored 13-4 in fast-break points, had just one steal on the night.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 9-26 all-time against North Carolina, including 4-10 at home and 7-10 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Miami's seven wins over the Tar Heels since 2011-12, the start of Larrañaga's tenure, are the third-most of any team, trailing only Duke (13) and Virginia (11).

– Dating back to the beginning of Larrañaga's time at Miami, the Hurricanes are one of three times with at least four double-digit wins over North Carolina, alongside Duke (five) and Virginia (five).

– Since Larrañaga arrived at Miami in 2011-12, the Hurricanes are the only team with three wins over the Tar Heels by 15-plus points (only Louisville has two) and the only team with two victories over them by 20-plus points.

– Also since Larrañaga got to Coral Gables in 2011-12, Miami has handed North Carolina two of its five largest losses, including two of its three ACC regular season defeats by 20-plus points (26 and 28).

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 684-468 in 38 years as a head coach, including 214-134 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 214 wins as an ACC head coach, Larrañaga passed Vic Bubas for sole possession of the No. 14 spot on the all-time leaderboard.

– Larrañaga is now 14-17 against Duke and North Carolina during his tenure at Miami—the program was 4-31 before his arrival—to trail only Virginia (15-15) for the most wins of any team against those two schools since the start of the 2011-12 season.

– Since Larrañaga's arrival in 2011-12, Miami is the only school with seven double-digit victories over Duke and North Carolina (no one else has six), the only school with five 15-point wins (no one else has four), the only school with three 20-point wins (only Ohio State has two) and the only school with three 25-point wins (no one else has two).

– Dating back to the start of Larrañaga's Miami tenure in 2011-12, three of the six largest victories over Duke or North Carolina are by Miami, including three of the only

four ACC regular season wins by 25-plus points.

– This is the third time in Larrañaga's tenure Miami has defeated both Duke and North Carolina in the same season, joining the 2012-13 (four wins) and 2016-17 campaigns.

– For the 12th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Waardenburg, Wong, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore.

– Fourteen-time MLB All-Star Alex Rodríguez, former NFL standout Eric Decker and the Miami HEAT's Max Strus were among the fans in attendance.

– According to ESPN's Bryan Ives, the Tar Heels' 27-point halftime deficit matched their largest mark over the last 25 seasons, equaling Duke's 53-26 edge on 3/6/10 at Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C.

– Per the ACC's Andy Fledderjohan, Miami's 27-point lead marked the second-largest advantage of any team in ACC play this season, trailing only North Carolina's 29-point edge, 49-20, at Boston College on 1/22/22.

– The Tar Heels' prior largest halftime deficit of the season was 11 against RV/No. 21 Kentucky on 12/18/21 in Las Vegas.

– North Carolina's first five field-goal attempts of the night all came from 3-point range, while five of Miami's opening seven did so.

– The Hurricanes' 14-0 run in the first half marked the largest unanswered surge the Tar Heels have allowed in 2021-22, passing a 13-0 surge by Georgia Tech 12/5/21.

– Four players accounted for all 49 of Miami's first-half points, as McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong shot a combined 18-of-27 (66.7 percent) from the field through 20 minutes, including 8-of-11 (72.7 percent) from deep.

– The last time Miami had multiple 20-point scorers was 12/29/21 against NC State when J. Miller (25) and McGusty (20) did so.

– The last time Miami had three 20-point scorers was 2/19/20 in a triple-overtime game at Virginia Tech when Wong (27), Chris Lykes (23) and McGusty (21) did so.

– The Hurricanes last had three 20-point scorers in a regulation game on 1/7/06

against No. 14/12 Maryland when Anthony Harris (22), Robert Hite (22) and Guillermo Diaz (21) did so.

– The only other times Miami had four or fewer turnovers in an ACC game were all during the 2013-14 season, on 2/15/14 at Virginia Tech (three), on 2/22/14 versus Boston College (three) and on 1/15/14 against Florida State (four).

– The Hurricanes have posted 10-plus steals in four consecutive games (49 total) and have forced 13-plus turnovers in five straight contests (78 total).

– North Carolina's prior season low in field-goal percentage was a 39.0 clip (23-of-59) on 12/11/21 against Elon.

– The only player to score more points this season against North Carolina than Wong is Kentucky's Sahvir Wheeler, who had 26 on 12/18/21.

– Waardenburg, who notched his 50th start as a Hurricane, scored in double figures for the 18th time, including the sixth this season.

– Tuesday marked the first time Waardenburg has scored 20-plus points, the first time he has made five 3-pointers and the first time he has hit seven field goals.

– Moore logged his 100th start as a collegian.

– McGusty, who surpassed 550 made field goals in his career, tallied 20-plus points for the 20th time, including the 14th as a Hurricane and seventh this season, as well as reached double-digit points for the 80th time, including the 52nd as a Hurricane and 17th this season.

– McGusty logged double-digit rebounds for the seventh time, all at Miami, including the fifth this season.

– In addition, McGusty recorded his seventh double-double, all at Miami, including his fifth this year.

– Wong notched 20-plus points for the 19th time, including the fourth in 2012-22, and scored in double figures for the 50th time, including the 17th in 2021-22.

– Third-year sophomore Anthony Walker eclipsed 1,250 minutes played at Miami.

– Freshman guard Bensley Joseph tied career highs in minutes (19) and assists (two), while notching an ACC high in rebounds (three).

– Freshman forward Thomas Oosterbroek scored his first collegiate point on a free throw with 44 seconds remaining.

Bonner grad Isaiah Wong fulfilling potential in Miami

By Rob Rose
cityofbasketballlove.com
Jan. 18, 2022

When Jim Larrañaga first watched Isaiah Wong while recruiting him he recalled seeing a skinny kid that could score the ball and loved playing basketball.

The University of Miami head coach needed to add a guard that could put up points with a pair of key players headed to the NBA at that time, and envisioned Wong working his way into a leader for the program.

While Wong's talent was always evident, Larrañaga credits the Bonner-Prendie graduate's work ethic for why in 75 games the 6-foot, 3-inch guard is 28 points away from reaching 1,000 points at Miami halfway through his third season and looks on the way to an NBA career of his own.

"I don't think you can ever under-estimate the amount of passion that someone has for the game," Larrañaga said. "If you look at Isaiah's passion for basketball, his work ethic, his willingness to do whatever it takes to get better, he has the ultimate goal of playing professional basketball and I think he's well on the path to accomplishing that. But it has to do with his tremendous work ethic. We describe that as everybody can work hard once in a while, but it's really the great players that work hard, consistently, every single day and that is definitely the way to describe Isaiah."

When Wong walked onto campus in 2019, he was 20 pounds lighter and struggled to adjust to the size and speed of high-level college basketball. It took three months before he earned a spot in the starting lineup toward the end of his freshman year and set up a stellar sophomore season.

Wong worked with the coaches to adjust his diet and training to build muscle and it paid off immediately. Along with a commitment to improving his 3-point shot, Wong went from 7.7 points per game as a freshman to team-high 17.1 ppg as a sophomore.

The breakout season put him on the radar for NBA teams, and in April 2021 he decided to enter the NBA draft with an option to return to Miami after working out with teams. After he spoke with a few NBA squads, Wong made the choice to head back to college and continue to improve his game, armed with feedback from the league he always dreamed he would enter one day.

"Throughout the process, I learned a lot," Wong said. "They said, 'You need to work on defense, you need to work on your shot (and) you just need to keep on trying to win more games and try to be more just more of a help to your team.' I feel like coming into this season, I've been working on that and just trying my best to be the best person I can on and off the court and just try to play my role on the team."

After being named Preseason First Team All-ACC, Wong's average is slightly down to 16 ppg, but the Hurricanes are winning a lot more. After Miami had losing campaigns during his first two years, the team is off to a strong start this season.

Headed into Tuesday's game vs. North Carolina, Miami sits atop the ACC standing with a 13-4 overall record. With a victory over Duke on its resume, Miami could be bound for the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2018.

While Wong has been winning games and improving his professional prospects, his high school community has enjoyed watching him grow. Bonner-Prendie head coach Kevin Funston was slightly conflicted when Wong went against his alma mater Pittsburgh for the first time, but has been proud of how Wong battled adversity and became one of the top players in the ACC.

"He's always been able to just quietly put his head down, prove everybody wrong and continue to succeed and accept the challenges the best way possible," Funston said. "So honestly, all this stuff that he's been doing has been par for the course. He's just doing what he does and that's why I feel like the future's bright for him because it's not like things have been handed to him. He's one of the hardest working kids I've ever been around. He's got an addiction to basketball and he plays with such joy, passion, focus and concentration that it's just incredible to see it and to me he's poetry in motion."

That motivation Funston mentioned is something that has stuck with Wong since high school. Despite a pair of dominant seasons during his two years at Bonner-Prendie and success on the AAU circuit, Wong never received the recruiting rankings he wanted.

He ended up No. 79 in his 2019 class according to 247Sports, but took advantage of a chance to showcase his skills against them at the Iverson Classic event in 2019. Going against top-ranked recruits from schools like

Duke and Kentucky, Wong was one of the best players on the floor.

While recruiting rankings don't mean much now that he's at college basketball's highest level, Wong still plays with a feeling that he has to show he belongs every time he steps on the floor.

"I just feel like I always have something to prove because I think if I was in a position where they thought I was a 5-star athlete and all that, I feel like I wouldn't have like the grind or the obstacles that I had to get through my whole life," Wong said. "So I feel like with all this like being the underdog and all that, I think it helps me more as a person just try to overcome and just try to prove people wrong that I am one of the top players and they should put some respect on my name."

Wong has earned so much of what he envisioned when he got to Miami — a starting spot, all-conference recognition and NBA prospects — but his coach hopes this is just the beginning. As the Hurricanes head into the heart of ACC play with Wong on the brink of a major milestone, Larrañaga continues to be impressed by how much the skinny scorer he saw play as a high school sophomore has grown into a man looking to lead his team back to the NCAA Tournament and achieve his dreams.

"Certainly scoring 1,000 points as a college player is quite an accomplishment and for anybody to do it halfway through your junior year is even more significant," Larrañaga said. "To understand that his ceiling is still even higher; he hasn't reached his full potential. He's got a whole 'nother level he can get to and we want him to do that. Whether it's this year or in his future, I think for him in the long run he can develop every part of his game and truly be a great player."

Always Working to Improve

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 19, 2022

The shots kept falling. The points kept coming. The lead kept growing.

And with each passing minute of Miami's dominant 85-57 win over North Carolina, Hurricanes guard Isaiah Wong knew he was inching closer to a very special personal milestone.

That may have been, he conceded with a slight smile, when things got a little dicey.

"I knew I needed 28 more points before the game so I was just trying to play my game and play it to the best of my ability," said Wong, who has now scored 997 points during his Miami career. "In the second half, I was getting real close and I started taking little questionable shots. But that's how the game goes. When you feel like you're close to something, you strive for it."

That Wong may have to wait a big longer to score his 1,000th point as a Hurricane was about the only thing that didn't go his and Miami's way against the Tar Heels on Wednesday night.

The third-year sophomore tied his season-high with 25 points in the win. He was 5-of-9 from 3-point range and set a career high in makes beyond the arc. He also had a season-high eight rebounds, two assists, two steals and converted on a four-point play in the win.

All of that helped play a part in the Hurricanes handing North Carolina its biggest loss in ACC play since Jan. 14, 2012 and helped Miami retain first place in the conference standings.

That's plenty for Wong to celebrate, especially given that he expected Miami (14-4, 6-1) to have a season like this when he made the decision to return to Coral Gables after going through the NBA Draft process.

"I felt like [this] year, if we had a healthy team and brought in some players, then we were going to be one of the top teams in the ACC," Wong said. "We beat some top-ranked teams last year even though we didn't have a lot of players. I was just imagining if we had healthy players and that's what's happening right now. That's what made me stay. I wanted to feel what winning was like."

Winning is something Wong and the Hurricanes have done plenty of since conference

play began last month.

Miami has posted victories over the likes of Syracuse, Duke and now North Carolina in that stretch. They've shown their mettle, rallying for several come-from-behind wins. And Saturday, the Hurricanes have the chance to avenge their lone ACC loss, a 65-64 nail-biter at Florida State.

Wong has been a force for the Hurricanes throughout all those memorable moments, averaging 16.4 points and 3.9 rebounds per game while dishing out 42 assists and totaling 18 steals.

His work ethic, Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said, has helped set the tone for the Hurricanes and his growth as a player has served to inspire some of the freshmen still adjusting to the demands of the college game – demands that not long ago tested Wong, too.

"I love Isaiah. He is as consistent a worker as I've ever coached. He comes into practice every day and he loves basketball. He loves working on his game. He loves playing with his teammates and when you have a player like that..." Larrañaga said. "He had a lot of things to learn when he came in, but he was like a sponge. He just wanted to absorb everything that we had to share with him, whether it be in the weight room or defense, rebounding, all the different things that you can really learn. He's done that, and some. To score 1,000 points in his junior year, after having been a young freshman that didn't get to play nearly as much during the first two or three months of the season, he has shown how good he is in these last two years and he still has a higher ceiling. He can keep improving."

For Wong, that's just one of several goals moving forward.

The guard wants to continue pushing his game to the next level. He wants to be one of Miami's leaders. And he wants to see the Hurricanes, as a whole, continue to build on their success.

The next step for both him and the Hurricanes will come Saturday when the Seminoles (11-5, 5-2) come to Coral Gables, bidding to take Miami's top spot in the ACC standings.

Wong knows it's yet another opportunity for the Hurricanes to show what they can be this year and he's eager to do his part.

"I want to see our team get even better. Where we're at right now, we're good, but I feel we

can up the notch right now," Wong said. "We should come into every game like we did against North Carolina. We should keep on doing that to more and more teams throughout the season so we can prepare for March Madness... Just keep improving every game, improving our defense, improving our offense and trusting in the team. If we just keep doing that, I love that."

"And I just have to do what I love to do: score the ball, play defense and just try to help the young kids. Wooga [Poplar] and Bensley [Joseph] are at the point I was at my freshman year. I'm just trying to relate to them, trying to help them as much as possible and keeping up with them at all times."

Miami returns after FBI story set team back for years

By Matt Norlander
CBS Sports
Jan. 19, 2022

You see what Miami did to North Carolina on Tuesday? The U won 85-57, giving the Hurricanes their largest margin of victory (28) ever vs. the Tar Heels. The Hurricanes blasted up KenPom's rankings too; they were 83rd at the start of the game and 59th after it. At 13-4 overall and an ACC-leading 6-1 with wins over UNC, at Duke and vs. Wake Forest, Jim Larrañaga's team is a viable at-large candidate as of today. Pretty solid for a team picked 12th in the ACC back in October.

It's been some time, but welcome back, Miami.

If you forgot about this school, you're far from alone. It was irrelevant the last three-plus years. Truth is, Miami went through more unnecessary anxiety than any other school -- with nothing to show for it. When Larrañaga left George Mason for Coral Gables in 2011, he inherited one of the toughest gigs in the ACC. Yet, for the first seven years of his tenure, he had a better record in ACC play than all others except Virginia, Duke and North Carolina -- with a winning record vs. the latter two.

Then Sept. 26, 2017 happened. The FBI announced an unprecedented investigation into corruption within college basketball recruiting. Miami was initially roped into it because of a loose connection to former recruit Nassir Little but was ultimately exonerated and cleared of any wrongdoing. Still, said exoneration did not come immediately. Miami paid a huge price in recruiting. The FBI headlines combined with losing NBA picks Bruce Brown and Lonnie Walker after the 2017-18 season meant Miami lost all its momentum.

Remember the first team Loyola Chicago beat on its way to a Cinderella Final Four run? It was Miami.

Things went downhill fast after that.

Remember how good of a player Saddiq Bey was for Villanova before becoming a first-round NBA pick? Most don't know he privately committed to Miami 48 hours before the FBI showed up. Miami couldn't effectively recruit for 18 months. It didn't sign a player in the class of 2018, relying only on transfers to fill the roster. The following season was in limbo until the first of two federal trials in the fall of 2018 finally cleared Miami's name. At that point it was 1.5 recruiting classes behind.

"Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it," Larrañaga said Tuesday night. "And I shared that with my staff and with my my players look at, you know, everybody goes through adversity in life and how we handle it will determine whether we're able ever able to overcome it. And we're heading in the right direction both this year and with our recruiting moving forward."

A lot of credit is due to Larrañaga, his staff and the players who bought into playing at a place that had little business getting back into ACC title contention. Last season, when it was trying to work its way back, Miami's players missed 113 combined games to injury, the most of any power conference program. This has been a slog.

"You have to be committed physically, mentally, emotionally," Larrañaga said. "And spiritually. And the beautiful thing about this team is they're very committed to each other, they trust each other, like playing with each other. And I give a lot of credit to Charlie Moore and to Jordan Miller, because those guys ... they were at other schools. They got recruited highly. They could have gone someplace else. It's not that that freshmen couldn't, but these are older experienced guys. You know, sometimes those guys come in and they want to show you what they can do instead. Charlie and Jordan have just embraced our philosophy."

There's also been murmurs about when Larrañaga is going to retire. But at this point the U could be the sneaky team that makes it back to where they were for much of the first half of Larrañaga's tenure: at or near the top of the ACC. He's a guy with a 14-17 mark vs. Duke and North Carolina. Miami was 4-31 against those two before he got here. The only coach with a better record since Larrañaga arrived has a national title. His name is Tony Bennett. Beware the Canes.

Miami, Florida State set up Saturday showdown with wins over ACC bluebloods

By Tom D'Angelo
Palm Beach Post
Jan. 19, 2022

Two of college basketball bluest bluebloods crossed the state line Tuesday and both returned to Tobacco Road wondering what in the name of Michael Jordan just happened.

North Carolina did its best to desecrate the tradition built and cultivated by Dean Smith and Roy Williams in a stunning 28-point loss at Miami. Two hours later, the state continued to show no respect for the Mike Krzyzewski Farewell Tour as Florida State handed Duke its second ACC loss in an entertaining overtime win. This coming 10 days after Miami was responsible for the Blue Devils first conference loss at then-No.2 Duke.

"I'm not sure the Carolina schools want to deal with those dudes anymore," said ESPN basketball analyst Seth Greenberg, a long time head coach with stops at Virginia Tech and South Florida.

Tuesday's results guaranteed Miami (14-4, 6-1) and Florida State (11-5, 5-2) enter their rematch Saturday in Coral Gables occupying the top two spots in the ACC.

This would be like Democrats running 1, 2 in popularity in Wyoming. Or Bill Belichick and Nick Saban topping a poll of the warmest, friendliest, fuzziest coaches in America.

Never in the 17 years that Miami and Florida State have been in the ACC together have the two schools even finished in the top 5. They have had their moments, winning the regular season title and conference tournament once each.

That is one more ACC title than Miami has won in football. And Florida State's football program has had nowhere near the success of its basketball counterpart the last five years.

"We may not be the Tobacco Road of the South ... Carolina and Duke still have their longevity and tradition," Miami coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But I think we're basketball programs that our universities can be proud of and our players can really enjoy being a part of."

To be clear, what is happening is not new to both schools. Leonard Hamilton has built one of the more consistent basketball programs in the country at Florida State, the Seminoles going to four consecutive NCAA tournaments (five if not for COVID) and playing in the Sweet 16 three straight years. Miami averaged nearly

24 wins and went dancing three three times from 2014-15 to 2017-18 before hitting a dry spell the last three years.

But what we witnessed on back-to-back games Tuesday, and to see these two teams both ahead of Duke and Carolina at the top of the standings, is as common as a snow angel contest being held in South Florida.

"You've got really good coaches that have reputations and you have programs that have had success fairly consistently," Greenberg said. "And then if you're in this conference that historically made its reputation in basketball.

"The league is branded, the institutions are branded and they're invested."

Still, Florida never will be considered anything other than a football state, even with the level of play nothing like it was during the heydays of the '80s, '90s and 2000s. Back then the Miami-Florida State football rivalry was every bit as entertaining and spectacular of the Duke-North Carolina football rivalry.

The Florida Turnpike is not Tobacco Road. Never was. Never will be. For every Rick Barry at Miami, North Carolina has produced a Jordan and James Worthy and Phil Ford and Charlie Scott. For every Dave Cowens to come out of Florida State Duke has a Christian Laettner and Grant Hill and Johnny Dawkins. But the state is capable of producing enough basketball players to stock the rosters of its marquee universities.

"Florida's got tremendous hoops," said ESPN basketball analyst Dalen Cuff, who starred at East Lake High in Tarpon Springs before playing four years at Columbia. "People think of it as a football state but they've just got tremendous athletes and a lot of the basketball players that are really good who end up going out of state.

"Anytime you have a game like this with two teams in a state like this it may turn some of the attention on some of those recruits ... to maybe stayed focused on the schools in state."

Miami and FSU have been on a different track in recent years but on a similar journey in 2021-22. Both started slow having lost key contributors and integrating freshmen and transfers into the lineup.

Although neither will receive much of a seedings bump from their non-conference play. Both started finding their mojo as league

play began, with help, it must be noted, by a conference that is not as deep or talented as we've been accustomed to seeing.

"I think they'll be competing to the end to win a title," Cuff said. "With Florida State, that's nothing new. Miami hasn't been in this competition in recent years."

Florida State's identity under Hamilton always has been its defense and depth. Krzyzewski called Tuesday's loss the most physical game his team has played in this season. Miami's guard play with Isaiah Wong, Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore has been the best in the conference, and among the best in the country, which atones for its lack of size.

"No one predicted this," Larrañaga said. "No one thought Miami and Florida State would be in this position. I also caution it's still early in the year. We're not even at the halfway point (of conference play). You really won't know which programs are going to elevate themselves to a consistent level until we get into mid February and early March."

OK, so we'll off on calling Florida a basketball state. But only until March.

Sunshine State Showdown Take II

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 21, 2022

It would be hard to imagine a better return to the court after a weeklo

ng break than the University of Miami men's basketball team's performance Tuesday night.

The Hurricanes dismantled national powerhouse North Carolina from start to finish in an 85-57 victory, the Tar Heels' largest conference loss in nearly nine years.

Miami (14-4, 6-1 ACC) held a 27-point advantage at the break—tied for the biggest mark against the Tar Heels in the last 25 years, per ESPN's Bryan Ives—and led by as many as 33 points in front of a jam-packed student section.

"In terms of executing the offensive and defensive game plan, I don't think we could've done it any better. Sam Waardenburg did a great job of fronting [Armando] Bacot," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after his second 25-point win over North Carolina. "Our guards did a great job of—when they tried to throw it to him, they knocked it loose, they stole it or they took a charge. When you're able to execute your defensive game plan, it often helps converting your defense into offense and the guys did that at a very efficient level. You've just got to give credit to Charlie Moore, getting the ball to the right guy—Sam Waardenburg with the hot hand, Isaiah Wong with the hot hand, Kam McGusty with the hot hand. Those guys just played extremely well together."

Moore dished out four assists, moving him three away from 500 as a collegian, and facilitated a dazzling offensive attack that included a trio of 20-point Miami scorers for the first time in over 16 years in a regulation game.

Waardenburg, a multidimensional forward, scored a career-high 21 points, shooting 7-of-9 from the floor and 5-of-6 from 3-point range. Wong, a dynamic offensive guard, dropped a season-high-tying 25 points, shooting 5-of-8 from deep to set a career best in makes, as well as added a season-best eight rebounds.

McGusty, a do-it-all guard, rounded out the trio by tallying 20 points to go along with four assists and a season-best four steals.

Moore, Waardenburg and McGusty are all sixth-year redshirt seniors, while Wong is a third-year sophomore guard. Miami's other starter is Jordan Miller, a fourth-year junior guard. The five are in their combined 25th season of college basketball.

"I think the experience of our starters has made a world of difference—their physical, mental and emotional maturity," Larrañaga remarked. "They're able to stay calm under a great deal of stress during the game. Whether we're ahead or behind, the guys have been able to stay even-

keeled. I think that's been a big reason why we've played well at the end of close games and also how we were able to get a lead and sustain that lead for 40 minutes [against North Carolina] because we were very, very consistent at both ends."

One element of Miami's success defensively was its ability to force turnovers. The Hurricanes logged 10 steals and North Carolina had 14 total giveaways, which Miami turned into 30 points.

It marked the fourth consecutive game the Hurricanes have posted double-digit steals. Over their last five games, they have forced 78 turnovers, with 58 of them coming via steals.

"Well, I give a lot of credit to my coaches," Larrañaga said of the recent defensive performances. "This summer, we spent a lot of time talking about our roster and what our strengths and weaknesses were. We realized very quickly that we're not a big, strong, physical team with a lot of bulk and back-to-the-basket-type players. The ACC is full of guys that are really good in around the basket ... [and are] skillful and big, 240 or bigger."

"So, we decided that we would need to scramble more," he continued. "Meaning [we would] trap, rotate, front the post and do a lot of things to try to disrupt the opponent and force more turnovers because our weakness was going to be our defensive rebounding. We wanted to try to force turnovers to counteract that. We've been able to do that so far in ACC play."

One of those recent games in which Miami had 10-plus steals was Jan. 11 at Florida State in a classic rivalry thriller that came down to the final second. Moore hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with seven seconds left, but Florida State senior guard RayQuan Evans made two free throws with 0.8 ticks left to give the homestanding Seminoles the win.

Just 11 days later, the Sunshine State foes are slated to face off once again. In a matchup of the two teams atop the ACC standings, Miami will host the Seminoles, who enter at 12-5 (5-2 ACC), Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Watsco Center.

It is the first time since the Hurricanes joined the ACC in 2004-05 they will play a conference foe twice in the span of three games during the regular season.

"Well, certainly, the teams are very familiar. When you play someone early in the season and late in the season, a lot of things can change," Larrañaga said. "Right now, there are not a lot of changes. We've played Carolina, they've played [Syracuse, Duke and North Florida] and now we've got to play each other again. They'll have a chance to watch our game against North Carolina. We've already watched their game against Duke. We recognize that Florida State is the longest, tallest, and most athletic team in our league. They're a very hard matchup for us."

The Seminoles are led by redshirt sophomore guard Caleb Mills' 13.8 points and 2.9 assists per game. Miami, though,

held him to four points on 2-of-10 shooting, including a 0-of-5 mark from 3-point range, in their first matchup.

The Hurricanes will look to replicate that defensive performance against Mills, as well as some other areas of success in the teams' second meeting. However, Larrañaga knows his team will have to make improvements if it wants to come away with a rivalry victory.

"I thought we really did a very good job at both ends of the court and we were very much in position to win the game with seven seconds to go," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "What we learned a little bit is that Florida State's defense—they do a very good job of switching. If we can improve any area, it would be our ability to attack their switches properly. [We also will look] to make some adjustments in maybe guarding them at the other end of the floor, knowing that certain players really like to drive right and certain players really like to shoot the three. We've got to recognize the game plan and recognize why we tell someone to force a guy left when his strong hand is really his right."

Miami is 36-52 in its all-time series with Florida State, its most common foe in program history. That includes a 28-16 mark on its home court and an 8-14 ledger under Larrañaga.

Saturday, the Hurricanes will hope to see their fans who cheered them on to a rousing victory Tuesday night return to the Watsco Center, as they look to earn a 'W' in the intrastate rivalry.

"For the first time in a very long time—ever since I can remember—the two Florida schools are one-two in the ACC right now," Larrañaga said. "It doesn't mean we'll end the season that way, but we would love for our fans to turn out, knowing what a big game this is on Saturday at 2 o'clock."

Saturday's matinee matchup will be televised live on ESPN HERE, with Dave O'Brien and Cory Alexander 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 can be found HERE.

Following its matchup with the Seminoles, Miami hits the road to play Virginia Tech Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va., live on ACC Network.

Single-game tickets for 2021-22 Miami men's basketball games are still on sale and can be purchased HERE or by calling the ticket office at 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.

UM and FSU men's basketball teams meet Saturday in rematch of the ACC "newbloods"

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 21, 2022

Casual college basketball fans may do a double-take if they check the ACC men's standings this week. Sitting alone on top is the University of Miami, followed by Florida State University. Basketball bluebloods Duke and North Carolina are in third and fourth place.

In the past two weeks the unranked Hurricanes beat then-No. 2 Duke on the road and routed the Tar Heels at home by 28 points. The unranked Seminoles knocked off No. 6 Duke by one point in overtime on Tuesday.

FSU coach Leonard Hamilton likes to categorize his team as the "newbloods" and that moniker fits the Hurricanes this season, as well. Miami has won 10 of its past 11 games, the only blemish a one-point loss at FSU after a debatable call.

National buzz has been building around both teams, and an ESPN audience will get a chance to see the UM-FSU rematch Saturday at 2 p.m. The Canes drew their biggest home crowd of the season for the North Carolina game and an even larger, more boisterous crowd is expected at the Watsco Center on Saturday.

It is the biggest Miami-Florida State game in recent memory – maybe ever – as both teams seek national recognition and a spot in the Top 25. UM, which was picked 12th in the ACC preseason poll, is 14-4 overall and 6-1 in the conference. FSU is 12-5 and 5-2 in the ACC.

"For the first time in a very long time—ever since I can remember—the two Florida schools are one-two in the ACC right now," UM coach Jim Larrañaga said. "It doesn't mean we'll end the season that way, but we would love for our fans to turn out, knowing what a big game this is on Saturday."

UM players are salivating for the chance to play the Seminoles again and avenge the heartbreaking loss in Tallahassee. In that game, UM point guard Charlie Moore hit a go-ahead three-pointer with seven seconds left, but FSU guard RayQuan Evans made two free throws with 0.8 left to give the Seminoles the win.

"Guys are very hungry for this next one," said sixth-year senior Sam Waardenburg, who scored a career-high 21 points against UNC. "We played very hard up at FSU, put ourselves in a great position to win that game, but com-

ing into this guys are very hungry and Coach will give us a great gameplan and we have to execute. Florida State's very good right now, hungry's the word."

Guard Isaiah Wong added: "We have a little grudge we need to get off our chests."

FSU is among the tallest teams in the nation, which presents a matchup issue for the undersized Hurricanes. Larrañaga and his staff have compensated for the team's lack of size by implementing a scrambling defense that forces turnovers.

So far, the strategy is working.

UM had 15 steals against Duke and forced the Blue Devils into a season-high 17 turnovers. The Canes had 10 steals against UNC and the Tar Heels had 14 turnovers, which Miami converted into 30 points. It was the fourth consecutive game the Hurricanes have posted double-digit steals.

"I give a lot of credit to my coaches," Larrañaga said of the defensive success. "(Last) summer, we spent a lot of time talking about our roster and what our strengths and weaknesses were. We realized very quickly that we're not a big, strong, physical team with a lot of bulk and back-to-the-basket-type players. The ACC is full of guys that are really good in around the basket...skillful and big, 240 or bigger.

"So, we decided that we would need to scramble more, meaning (we would) trap, rotate, front the post and do a lot of things to try to disrupt the opponent and force more turnovers because our weakness was going to be our defensive rebounding. We wanted to try to force turnovers to counteract that. We've been able to do that so far in ACC play."

Point guard Charlie Moore spearheading Miami's turnaround season: 'This guy's been great'

By Tom D'Angelo
Palm Beach Post
Jan. 21, 2022

Charlie Moore never saw the ball roll through the hoop. He tried. He peeked at the rim as he was tripped by Duke's Jeremy Roach, but by then he was nearly parallel to the ground, his body sliding along the floor at Cameron Indoor Stadium, eventually off the court and into the photographers.

"I just flipped it up and when I flipped it up I couldn't see it anymore," Moore said. "I was trying to look it through but at the end I couldn't because I was falling."

The shot was acrobatic and magical. And it may become the signature shot to a Miami season that has a chance to be as special as that moment. Miami was trailing then No. 2-Duke by three points with 33 seconds remaining when Moore somehow got the ball up after Roach defended him by sticking out his leg.

And when it fell through, the Cameron Crazies were in a stunned silence. It got quieter when Jordan Miller corralled Moore's missed free throw and, 10 seconds later, Kameron McGusty gave Miami the lead for good.

But it took that 76-74 win at Duke two weeks ago not only for ACC-leading Miami (14-4, 6-1) to be taken seriously, but also for the rest of the country to start paying closer attention to the Hurricanes' backcourt and its unselfish point guard. Moore, 23, has become the final piece to Jim Larranaga's three-man backcourt along with Isaiah Wong and McGusty. He is a seasoned, well-traveled player who is finishing his career at Miami after stops at Cal, Kansas and DePaul.

Even Larranaga - who has been coaching for more than a half century, 39 of those as a head coach - did not foresee the impact the 5-foot-11 Moore would have on his team.

"He's so much better than I anticipated," Larranaga said. "I thought he was going to be good, but this guy's been great. The way he gets our team to play together and the way he shares the ball. The way he scores with the ball, the way he defends the ball. The way he comes up with loose balls, steals ...

"He's all over the place. He has his finger prints on almost every play."

That mark certainly has made a difference this season, one in which Miami completed

the Tobacco Road sweep by destroying North Carolina, 85-57, Tuesday. The Hurricanes' lone blemish in the ACC is a one-point loss at Florida State, a game that can be avenged Saturday when the teams meet at 2 p.m. in Coral Gables in the league's marquee game of the season - so far.

Miami and FSU (12-5, 5-2) occupy the top two spots in the ACC standings.

"Two teams who got a lot confidence right now," Moore said.

Moore is the Hurricanes' third leading scorer (12.5 points per game) behind McGusty and Wong. He is second in the league with 2.0 steals per game and sixth with 3.9 assists.

And his play has drawn comparisons to another legendary ACC point guard and future Hall of Famer.

"I think he's playing like Chris Paul did when he was at Wake Forest," Larranaga said, acknowledging this as a "very lofty" comparison.

"Chris Paul scored, he got assists, he got rebounds, he made big shots, he made a lot of great decisions, he defended. I think Charlie is very similar in that regard."

The staple to Moore's game is his unselfishness. That trait, along with an ability to take to ball to the basket as he did against Duke and knock down clutch 3s as he did with seven seconds remaining at FSU before RayQuan Evans' game-winning free throws, makes him difficult to defend.

"For me, it comes naturally to get my teammates involved, just making the right basketball play, making sure my teammates are happy," he said. "It's a part of my game. It's just natural."

Moore's road to South Florida was circuitous. After being named Illinois' Mr. Basketball (and being recruited by Miami) he signed with Cal and started all 34 games as a freshman. When coach Cuonzo Martin left for Missouri, Moore transferred to Kansas. After two difficult years (one as a redshirt), he returned home to enroll at DePaul. It was an emotional decision made as much to help his mom, who has been caring for Charlie's dad, Curtis, who suffered a stroke in 2015 and has been using a wheelchair since.

"Just going back home, being comfortable, making sure my dad was fine, helping my mom with things. It was great," Moore said.

"Knowing I had to leave, it was pretty tough."

That decision, made with the blessing of his family, came after DePaul coach Dave Leitao was fired. Moore thought he had found a home after averaging 15.1 points and 5.5 assists in his two years at DePaul and being named to the Big East All-Academic team.

The timing, though, was perfect for Miami. The Hurricanes were losing point guard Chris Lykes, who transferred to Arkansas, and a pass-first point guard was on the market.

"Charlie became our No. 1 priority in the recruiting cycle for a transfer," Larranaga said.

This is where Miami assistant coach Bill Courtney comes in. Courtney was on the DePaul staff when Moore arrived and became Larranaga's connection to Moore.

"Just knowing the success they've had here before, I wanted to help get it back to what it was," Moore said.

The combination of transfers like Moore and Miller and a much healthier roster has Miami's turnaround - UM was 10-17 last season - among the more notable in the country.

And it all starts with Moore, and his leadership and his unselfishness.

"He's a terrific leader," Larranaga said. "He's a great quarterback, a great catalyst for everything we're doing."

Saturday's game

FSU at Miami

2 p.m., ESPN2

Loudoun Valley grad Miller turns up the heat in first season at Miami

By Carl Lukat
Loudoun Times-Mirror
Jan. 21, 2022

Former Loudoun Valley High School standout Jordan Miller proved he could thrive playing NCAA Division I basketball during his three seasons at George Mason University.

This season, the fourth-year junior is making waves playing in one of the premier conferences in college basketball.

Following the dismissal of George Mason head coach Dave Paulsen at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 season, Miller entered the transfer portal with the aim of joining a Power Five program.

University of Miami head coach Jim Larranaga was first to contact Miller, offering him the opportunity to play for the Hurricanes in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"I'm big on who reached out to me first. Actually, George Mason reached out to me first on my first go-around," Miller said. "Miami reaching out to me first and seeing how they really analyzed my game and told me how I could fit in, that really stood out."

"And Coach L, he took Mason to the Final Four in 2006 so there was that George Mason connection," Miller continued. "It almost felt like it was meant to be as far as the transition he made, and the transition I was going to make and ultimately made."

After leading George Mason in points (15.8 per game) and rebounds (6.1) last season, Miller is growing into his role at Miami. He has started 15 of 18 games this season, averaging nine points, six rebounds and two steals.

"I get along with all the players and the coaching staff really cares about us," said Miller, who eclipsed 1,000 points for his college career Jan. 1 during a 92-84 home win over Wake Forest. "I've had nothing but a good experience here, and we are winning some basketball games."

Miami has won 14 of its first 18 games this season, highlighted by a 76-74 victory over No. 2 ranked Duke on Jan. 8 at renowned Cameron Indoor Stadium. Miller scored 17 points in the thrilling win.

"Getting a win at Cameron Indoor Stadium with literally all blue in the crowd feels good. We really wanted to let people around the college basketball world know that we are someone

who should be respected," Miller said. "Going in there and playing our hearts out and proving everybody wrong is a great feeling."

Miami moved into sole possession of first place in the ACC following an emphatic 85-57 home win over North Carolina on Jan. 18. The Hurricanes (14-4, 6-1) are the lone ACC team with just one conference loss.

Miller, who is majoring in communication studies with a minor in sport administration, said his team goals for this season are to "make the NCAA tournament and win the NCAA championship."

"If we keep competing and striving to get better every day, the sky is the limit for us," Miller added. "It's not going to be an easy road and we all know that. But that's what really drives us to keep putting in the work."

Individually, Miller aspires to earn a spot on the ACC's all-defensive team. The 6-foot-7 guard feels defense is the aspect of his game that has improved most at the collegiate level.

"Everybody thinks they can play defense until you get to the college basketball world," Miller said. "Even in my freshman year, I was struggling to play defense. Defense is one of the things I've really paid attention to. Now, I can confidently say I really feel that I'm one of the best defenders in the ACC. I'm just trying to prove that night in and night out."

Prior to college, Miller played varsity basketball for coach Chad Dawson at Loudoun Valley. He was the 2017 Virginia 4A Player of the Year after leading the Vikings to a state championship in his junior season. Miller also played AAU basketball for the D1SA Spartans.

Miller, the career scoring leader at Loudoun Valley, is excited to see what the future holds. He is focused on taking his game to the professional level after college.

"The NBA is my goal, I'm not going to settle for less," Miller said. "I'm going to put my all into this game. No matter how long it takes, I'm just going to continue to get better and take basketball to the highest level I can."

MBB Comeback Bid Falls Short against Florida State, 61-60

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 22, 2022

In a matchup of the top two teams in the ACC men's basketball standings Saturday afternoon at a sold-out Watsco Center, the University of Miami dropped a heartbreaking 61-60 decision to Florida State, as it came one point shy of breaking the record for the largest comeback in ACC history.

The Hurricanes trailed by 24 at halftime and by 26 early in the second half, but stormed all the way back to cut the deficit to one in the final minute. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, who scored 18 of his game-high 22 points in the second half, missed a fadeaway jump-shot at the buzzer that would have given Miami (14-5, 6-2 ACC) the win in front of 7,972 fans, including a record 1,682 students.

"We didn't do, really, anything very well in the first half and put ourselves in a huge hole, but in the second half, the guys made the adjustments," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "They played smart, they played hard, they played together, they didn't give up, they didn't hang their heads and put us in a position to win the game."

Florida State (13-5, 6-2 ACC) held Miami without a field goal for 8:19 of action midway through the first half and went on a 14-1 run to build a 22-7 edge with 8:12 on the clock. The Hurricanes started just 3-of-15 from the floor and missed their first seven 3-pointers.

The Seminoles continued their excellent offense and lockdown defense, eventually taking a 24-point lead, 43-19, into the locker room after a buzzer-beating 3-pointer by redshirt senior forward Wyatt Wilkes. They closed the frame on a 10-2 run and hit their last six field goals of the session.

Miami, which posted a season-low point total in a half, shot just 6-of-23 (26.1 percent) in the session, including 1-of-12 (8.3 percent) from deep. At the other end, Florida State went 18-of-32 (56.3 percent) overall and had just two turnovers, one of which came on the opening possession.

The Seminoles scored to open the second half and take a game-high 26-point lead, but Miami answered with eight straight points in 90 seconds to make it 45-27 with 17:21 to go. The Hurricanes, who forced nine turnovers in the first 10 minutes of the second frame, extended the surge to 15-4 to pull within 15 points, 49-34, with 12:58 on the clock.

The Seminoles went back up by 19, but Miami continued to chip away, posting an 18-4 run—including 12 straight points in 3:13—to trim the deficit to five, 57-52, with 4:31 to go. After Florida State went back up by nine with 2:40 on the clock, the Hurricanes countered once again, eventually making it a one-possession game, 61-58, with 1:22 remaining on Wong's second four-point play of the half.

Then, a fast-break alley-oop dunk by redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg off a pass from Wong made it an 8-0 burst and a one-point contest, 61-60, with 38 ticks left. The Hurricanes forced a shot-clock violation at the other end and then called a timeout with 8.8 seconds remaining to set up the final play, but Wong's full-court drive ended with a shot that bounced off the rim.

If Wong's shot went in, the Hurricanes, who held Florida State without a point in the last 2:40, would have surpassed the ACC record of a 23-point comeback, recorded thrice.

"We didn't put our heads down; we kept plugging away," Larrañaga said of the second-half showing. "One of the things is, if you start playing the score, then you stop playing the game. It's not the score, it's the execution of your plan. In the first half, we didn't execute very well. In the second half, we executed everything, to the point that we were defending them well."

"What really hurt was they got three offensive rebounds [and then went up by nine in the closing minutes] because we were scrambling, trying to force a turnover," he continued. "We weren't able to do it, they got those rebounds and it reduced the clock, but we still were down one with the ball. It was [one heck of] a college basketball game."

Wong, who surpassed 1,000 points as a collegian with his second bucket of the game, shot 5-of-11 in the second half, including 3-of-5 from deep, to go along with a 5-of-5 clip at the line, en route to the 22-point showing.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guards Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore scored 12 points apiece for Miami, but finished a combined 8-of-23 from the floor, including 1-of-8 on 3-pointers. Waardenburg added eight points and a career-high-tying three blocks, all of which came in the first half.

Redshirt sophomore guard Caleb Mills paced the Seminoles with 16 points on 7-of-9 shooting, but the Hurricanes did force him into seven turnovers, the most of anyone they have played this season.

Redshirt senior guard Anthony Polite added 15 points, 13 of which came on 5-of-5 shooting in the first half. No other Seminole tallied more than seven points in the contest.

Miami, which went 6-of-13 (46.2 percent) from 3-point range in the second half, finished the day with just a 37.0 percent clip (20-of-54) from the field overall, its second-lowest mark of the year.

After committing seven turnovers and forcing just two in the first half, the Hurricanes tallied just three of their own and forced 15 at the other end in the second half, the latter the highest mark by a Miami foe in a half in 2021-22.

The Hurricanes also held Florida State to 7-of-20 shooting (35.0 percent) after the break, including a 0-of-6 ledger from 3-point range. Nonetheless, the Seminoles' first-half performance proved enough to give them their second one-point win over Miami in a 12-day span.

The Hurricanes now hit the road for a trip to Blacksburg, Va., where they face Virginia Tech Wednesday at 7 p.m., live on ACC Network from Cassell Coliseum.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 36-53 all-time against Florida State, their most common foe in program history, including 28-17 at home and 8-15 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 684-469 in 38 years as a head coach, including 214-135 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the 13th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, Wong and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller.

– Former MLB All-Star Yonder Alonso, 2019 MLB All-Star Sandy

Alcantara of the Miami Marlins, first-round NFL Draft selection David Njoku of the Cleveland Browns, the Miami HEAT's Max Strus, the Miami HEAT's Gabe Vincent, former Miami standout guard Ja'Quan Newton and Barstool Sports founder Dave Portnoy were among the fans in attendance.

– Representatives from 11 NBA teams, including two general managers, attended Saturday's game.

– The prior student attendance record was 1,667, set on 12/2/09 versus Minnesota.

– The last men's basketball sellout at the Watsco Center—attendance was prohibited in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 protocols—was on 1/15/18 versus Duke.

– The last time Miami had over 7,000 fans at the Watsco Center was on 1/4/20 against second-ranked Duke (7,049) and the last time over 7,500 fans attended was on 11/5/19 versus fourth-ranked Louisville (7,576).

– Wong, who entered quadruple digits on a layup with 2:03 left in the first half, is the 42nd player to score 1,000 points as a Hurricane, including the 27th to do so in three or fewer seasons and the 11th to do so under Larrañaga.

– The 18-point second-half by Wong tied for the most by a Hurricane in a frame this season, matching the mark he set himself on 11/13/21 after the break versus UCF.

– Miami's previous lowest point total in a half this season was 25 on 11/25/21 versus Dayton in the ESPN Events Invitational in Kissimmee, Fla.

– The only game this season in which Miami had a lower field-goal percentage was on 11/16/21, when it posted a 35.3 percent ledger (18-of-51) at Florida Atlantic.

– Before Saturday, the highest turnover total by a Miami opponent in a half this season was 13 by second-ranked Duke on 1/8/22 in the first frame, while the top second-half mark was 11 by Clemson on 12/4/21.

– Prior to Mills' seven-turnover performance, the top mark by a Miami foe this season was six by three different players, most recently Duke's Wendell Moore Jr., on 1/8/22.

– According to ESPN's Bryan Ives, Miami is the second ACC team in the last 45 seasons to lost by exactly one point to the same team twice in the same regular season, joining 2016-17 Clemson against Virginia Tech.

– Saturday snapped the Hurricanes' four-game winning streak when trailing at halftime, as they fell to 5-4 in such contests, including 3-1 in ACC play.

– The setback also ended Miami's six-game winning streak in ACC home games, which went back to the 2020-21 regular season finale against Boston College on 3/5/21.

– The Hurricanes are 6-2 in the ACC with both losses by one point to Florida State, with whom they share first place.

– Wong (39), McGusty (38) and Waardenburg (37) all either set or tied their season high in minutes played, while Moore (37) finished one shy of his top mark.

– Waardenburg made his 100th appearance as a Hurricane and reached 550 points.

– Wong, who eclipsed 350 made field goals and 2,250 minutes played in his career, registered 20-plus points for the 20th time, including the sixth this year.

– Wong also scored in double figures for the 51st time, including the 18th this season.

– Moore, who upped his career assist total to 499, registered double-digit points for the 68th time, including the 11th in 2021-22.

– McGusty scored in double digits for the 81st time, including the 53rd at Miami and 18th this year.

UM rallies from 26 down, gets assist from Mario Cristobal, but falls short 61-60 to FSU

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 22, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes had just cut Florida State's lead from 26 points to 10 Saturday afternoon on a rim-shaking dunk by Kameron McGusty, and the noise level reached ear-piercing levels at the Watsco Center – sold out for the first time in four years.

Newly hired UM football coach Mario Cristobal, as fired up as the overflowing student section, stomped onto the court during the timeout, waved his arms wildly to ignite the crowd, grabbed a microphone and screamed “Let’s Go Canes! Let’s Go Canes!”

The Hurricanes outscored the Seminoles 27-8 over the final 10 minutes, and had a chance to win, but Isaiah Wong missed a fadeaway jumper in the final second and Miami lost 61-60.

It was the second time in 12 days that UM fell short by one point to FSU and the ninth time in a row the Canes lost to the Noles.

Although Saturday’s nationally televised loss was a heartbreaker, UM coach Jim Larranaga and his players left feeling proud of their resilience. Down by 24 at halftime and shooting 1-of-12 from three-point range it seemed highly unlikely that the Hurricanes would be in position to win at the end of the day.

But they were.

“I thought that was one heck of a college basketball game and I was thrilled to see the place sold out, our students turned out in large numbers, it made for an absolutely electric atmosphere,” Larranaga said. “The fans were treated to two great teams slugging it out. Florida State did everything right in the first half, we dug ourselves a major hole and we did a lot of great things in the second half.

“I’m very, very proud of our players and the job they did fighting back and making this a great game.”

UM had rallied from an 18-point deficit to beat Syracuse a few weeks ago, so the Hurricanes vowed not to give up against FSU.

They came out more aggressive defensively in the second half, trapping and scrambling and forcing turnovers, which they didn’t do in the first half. A few UM players picked up quick fouls in the opening minutes of the game, so that affected their defensive game plan.

Offensively, Miami found its rhythm after intermission and started knocking down threes. Wong made a pair of four-point plays to help UM chip away at the lead and assisted on a Sam Waardenburg dunk with 38 seconds remaining that got UM to within one, 61-60.

“We could have just quit the game in the first half because we were down by 26, but we all stayed together and that’s what I like about this team,” said Wong, who led UM with 22 points, 18 of them in the second half. “We all play hard to the end and we can make any comeback. We always have that hope that we can still win the game, even when we’re not doing so well.”

Wong had the ball in his hands with eight seconds to go and was eyeing the rim as he dribbled up the court.

“I was trying to attack the paint that last possession but they trapped me and I just went off instinct and shot the ball fadeaway and I missed it,” Wong said.

Waardenburg, one of five sixth-year seniors on the team, said the team’s maturity showed.

“Obviously, that was a tough one, that’s one we really wanted, especially after the game up at FSU a week and a half ago,” said UM forward Sam Waardenburg. “It’s a bit of a sting, but Coach L stressed to us in the locker room to keep our heads high and energy high because we fought hard for that one. I want to thank the fans. That was the loudest game I’ve ever been a part of at the Watsco Center. They were huge getting us back into that game.”

McGusty and Charlie Moore each scored 12 for UM. FSU was led by Caleb Mills (16) and Anthony Polite (15).

The Seminoles are deeper and taller than the Hurricanes, with four 7-footers on the roster, and that presented problems.

“They have a lot of size and take up a lot of room on the floor and they’re a tremendous defensive team,” Waardenburg said. “When you drive into that paint, they crowd you and it’s quite difficult to find guys. I really hope we see them again. We want to get a W against them. It’s been a while.”

The Hurricanes and Seminoles are tied with an ACC-best 6-2 conference record. Miami is 14-5 overall, FSU is 13-5. Duke is third at 5-2 and is 15-3 overall. With a sweep over Miami and a win over Duke in the past two weeks, FSU should get into the Top 25.

“That was a perfect example of what I call an ACC blowout, we beat Miami by one point,” FSU coach Leonard Hamilton told the Herald on the phone after the game. “We’re probably not quite as good as we played in the first half and I’m sure they’d say they’re not as vulnerable as they played in the first half, but that’s what happens in the ACC.”

Hamilton, who coached at UM from 1990-2000, praised Larranaga for turning Miami around this season and said he hopes fans appreciate the in-state rivalry and how far the programs at UM and FSU have come.

“It’s amazing, you have to give Coach Larranaga a lot of credit for coming from an injury-plagued team to the team that was No. 1 in the ACC,” Hamilton said. “That says a lot about his ability to recruit and assess how to play within the talent they have. They play a unique style, different from all the other teams we play and it’s extremely effective. I think it’s great to have two teams from Florida ranked 1 and 2 in the ACC. You could say we’re 1A and they’re 1B.”

Florida State lets big lead slip away before hanging on for win at Miami

By Tom D'Angelo
Palm Beach Post
Jan. 22, 2022

Jim Larranaga got what he wanted.

The Watsco Center was sold out for the first time in four years. The students finally caught on to one of the best stories in the country when it comes to college basketball.

And football coach Mario Cristobal lost his mind trying to pump up the crowd.

Miami had a rare, true homecourt advantage.

And it almost meant something.

The problem was, Larranaga's team didn't bother to show up early like the crowd. But even after digging a 26-point hole, it almost did not matter.

After a dreadful start, Miami was in a position that seemed inconceivable about 20 minutes earlier ... down one point and the ball in Isaiah Wong's hands with the game on the line.

This would have been Miami's equivalent of completing a 4th-and-14.

Except, after a magical 19 minutes, Miami's comeback fell one bounce short.

"We had a great chance and unfortunately just missed," Larranaga said.

Wong's contested jumper was one of the few things that did not go right for Miami in the second half, sealing Florida State's 61-60 victory in a game more than any other that was a tale of two halves.

Finally, FSU was on the winning side of a wide right.

The Hurricanes fell behind 45-19 after FSU scored the first basket of the second half and then mounted a furious rally but never forged ahead.

"You probably saw the best half we played all year and you probably saw the worst half we played all year," FSU coach Leonard Hamilton said.

For those only absorbed in Miami and Florida State football, this is what a competitive game between two very good teams looks like. It's something you have not seen in more than two decades.

This was the marquee game of the season for the ACC, and it was not on a 100-yard long field. Miami (14-5, 6-2 ACC) and Florida State (13-5, 6-2) entered as the top two teams in the ACC. They still are, except they have swapped spots with the Seminoles now leading the conference by virtue of a season sweep of their in-state rival.

"We've played two great games with Florida State," Larranaga said. "We've come up short both times by one point."

But "it's January, you want to look at those things in March."

Still, this is a nice spot for both. Now, it will look even better if Florida State can bottle the first half and Miami the second half.

Then, when we hit March, things could get even better.

But these two halves were as different as downtown Tallahassee is from South Beach. Miami's five-out offense is designed to negate its lack of height and strength down low. It's an offense dominated by three guards and a stretch five, 6-foot-10 Sam Waardenburg.

But FSU said "I'll take your five-out and raise you three seven footers." And by the half the Seminoles had a 43-19 lead, including 26-10 advantage in the paint, and held Miami to 6-of-23 shooting, 1-of-12 on 3s.

A quick basket to open the second half stretched the Seminoles' lead to 26 and then ... Miami decided to join the festivities.

"They mixed the defense up, they trapped us and we didn't handle the trap very well," Hamilton said. "We told them at halftime they were probably going to play some zone. We knew they would trap full court and half court. Preparing them mentally for that and them going out and playing against it is another thing."

The lead started to shrink. A Kameron McGusty steal and dunk cut it to 10, which prompted Cristobal to rush the court. Larranaga was asked if he caught the football coach's act.

"I was pretty busy," he said.

Busy drawing up more plays to get his surging team closer. McGusty sliced it to eight. Charlie Moore got it to six. A Wong 3 (after two free throws by Caleb Mills) and it was five.

FSU built the lead back to nine but Wong, who

led all scorers with 22, scored on a lay up and then a four-point play - knocking down a 3 and the free throw with 1:22 to play - that had the crowd truly believing. Waardenburg made it a one-point game with 38 seconds to play.

When Anthony Polite (15 points) missed the front end of a one-and-one, Miami got the rebound and called time out. Eight seconds remained.

"To have the ball with eight seconds to go being down by 26 at one point you got to be pretty happy to be in that position and a chance to win the game," Larranaga said.

Miami needed to make one more play. But in the end, it was FSU celebrating a one-point win, just as it did in Tallahassee..

Miami's huge rally falls short in ninth straight loss to FSU

By Adam Lichtenstein
Sun Sentinel
Jan. 22, 2022

Miami trailed rival Florida State by 26 points early in the second half after starting the game flat. A little more than nineteen minutes of game-time later, the Hurricanes had the ball in their hands with a chance to win the game in its final seconds.

Despite cutting its deficit to one point and getting the ball in Isaiah Wong's hands as the waning time elapsed, Miami fell to FSU 61-60 in Coral Gables on Saturday, dropping its second game to its biggest rival in 11 days.

"We could've just quit the game in the first half because we were down by like 26," Wong said. "But we all stayed together, and that's what I like about this team. [We] play hard to the end and we can make any comeback, even if we're down by as many points as possible. But we always have that hope that we can still win the game even if we're not doing so well."

The Hurricanes, who entered Saturday's game in a packed Watsco Center in first place in the Atlantic Coast Conference, started on a cold streak. Miami shot only 26 percent from the field in the first half. The poor shooting allowed FSU to build a double-digit lead within the game's first eight minutes.

"In the first half, honestly, I think we were a little out of sync, trying to run offense," Miami coach Jim Larrañaga said. "What happened is we missed some wide-open shots, which I think would've gotten us going. They were good shots, they're open shots, but we missed them."

FSU rolled to a 43-19 halftime lead, which the Seminoles extended to 26 with 19:33 left in the half.

Miami charged back with a furious second-half comeback, cutting a 26-point deficit down to five with 4:31 left in the second half.

"We had that idea that when we're coming out, we're going to put immense pressure on them, were going to start on a full-court press and we're going to mix it up," redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg said.

A Florida State possession that saw the Seminoles grab three offensive rebounds before Caleb Mills sunk a layup to extend the lead to nine with 2:40 remaining made a comeback more difficult for UM. Still, Miami fought to

close the deficit again.

Wong, who scored 18 of his team-leading 22 points in the second half, got the ball after Miami forced a shot-clock violation with eight seconds remaining. He tried to drive to the basket, but the Seminoles forced him to pull up for a shot, and Wong could not sink the game-winner.

"He's very capable of making those shots," Larrañaga said. "The one thing is: Eight seconds left, you're driving the length of the court and you know Florida State is going to try to protect the rim and not let him get a layup. I wish he could've gotten all the way to the basket. That would've been great, but he pulled up, and he's a terrific jump shooter, mid-range, and I think he got a good look."

The loss gives Miami its second conference loss, tying the Hurricanes with Duke (who they beat on Jan. 8) and FSU. The Hurricanes have lost nine straight games against the Seminoles.

"Hopefully, in the ACC tournament or something like that, I really hope we'll see them again because I really want to get a W against them," Waardenburg said. "It's been a while."

Isaiah Wong sparks valiant comeback before Hurricanes fall to Florida State

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 22, 2022

As well as the first half could have possibly went in Miami's blowout win over North Carolina, it went about as bad as possible against Florida State on Saturday.

Still, the Hurricanes had a chance to win in the closing seconds in front of a sellout crowd.

The Hurricanes fell behind by as many as 26 points in the second half before cutting the deficit to five led by Isaiah Wong's 22 points before eventually falling 61-60 to Florida State on Saturday after Wong's 15-footer missed at the buzzer missed.

"I was trying to attack the paint on the last possession, but they trapped me and I just went off of instinct and shot a fadeaway and missed it," Wong said.

It was the ninth consecutive loss to Florida State in the series.

"They're a very good team and hopefully in the ACC Tournament or something like that, I really hope we get to see them again because I really want to get a dub against them," senior forward Sam Waardenburg said.

Miami (14-5, 6-2 ACC) dropped into a tie with Florida State (13-5, 6-2) for first place in the ACC, but the Seminoles own the tiebreaker after also winning 65-64 in Tallahassee last week.

"I just every ACC game is like this," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "I know people look at rankings and standings and stuff like that, but it's January. You want to look at that stuff in March as to how good the team played for an entire season. I've said it over and over again--the regular season is not a sprint, it's a marathon and every game is worth the same value--one, one win or one loss. We've played two great games with Florida State and have come up short both times by one point. But we have a very good team and they have a very good team. The ACC is a great league and we play Wednesday night and it will be another great game."

Wong scored 18 of his game-high 22 in the second half after Miami trailed by 24 at halftime and became the 42nd player in school history to surpass 1,000 career points.

"Zay is amazing," Waardenburg said. "It's not something that surprises you in the game because he works on it every day and puts a

tremendous effort into his game so it's not really a surprise. He's one of the best shot-makers in the country."

The Hurricanes also got 12 points apiece from Charlie Moore and Kameron McGusty

"Well, that was one hell of a college basketball game," Larranaga said. "I was thrilled to see the place was sold out, our students turned out in large numbers and it made for an absolutely electric atmosphere. The students were engaged the whole team and I think the fans were treated to two great basketball teams slugging it out."

The two losses to the Seminoles are the only two by the Hurricanes in their last 12 games since November.

Florida State, which was led by Caleb Mills's 16 points, has won six straight.

Miami trailed by as many as 26 early in the second half, but a shot clock violation with 8.8 seconds left gave Miami an opportunity for the win.

Wong dribbled the ball up court to make a play and got a clean shot off with two defenders on him. The shot just missed off the rim.

"He's very capable of making those shots," Larranaga said. "The one thing is with eight seconds left you're driving the length of the court and you know Florida State is going to try to protect the rim and not him get a layup. I wish he could have gotten all the way to the basket. That would have been great, but he pulled up. He's a terrific mid-range shooter and I think he got a good look."

Miami started strong in the second half and Wong's four-point play after a corner 3 cut the deficit to 49-33 to bring the crowd to its feet.

Wong sank all three free throws after being fouled again on a 3 and then moments later drove and dished out to Waardenburg for 3 to cut Florida State's lead to 55-43 with eight minutes left.

McGusty's two-handed flush after a turnover and then a jumper before Moore's layup pulled Miami within six with six minutes left to cap a 12-0 run, which ignited the crowd with the help from an emphatic Mario Cristobal on the microphone to the crowd during a timeout.

Free throws ended the run, but Wong responded with a step-back 3 to pull Miami within 57-52 with 4:31 left.

Florida State regained its footing on both ends led by a pair of layups by Mills.

Then Wong again converted a four-point play and moments later tossed an alley-oop to Waardenburg to pull Miami within 61-60 with 38 seconds left.

"We did a lot of great things in the second half and had a chance with eight seconds to go to win the ballgame and unfortunately just missed," Larranaga said. "I'm very, very proud of our players and the job the job they did in fighting back and making this a great college basketball game."

It was a tale of two halves for the Hurricanes, who shot 26.1 percent (6 of 23) in the first half while shooting 45.2 percent (14 of 31) in the second half while outscoring Florida State 41-18 after the break.

"In the first half I think we were a little out of sync trying to run offense," Larranaga said. "And what happened we missed some wide-open shots that I think would have gotten us going. They were good, open shots, but we missed them. And when you miss shots it allows Florida State to just guard the rim, which they're good at because they're so big. The second half we were able to do a better job, make 3s, penetrate and dish, but the most important thing was our intensity on defensive end picked way up and we started trapping and scrambling and forcing turnovers, which really helped us."

The Hurricanes fell behind 16-6 after a two-handed dunk by Tanor Ngom.

Miami's woes continued, missing 12 of its first 15 shots with six turnovers for a 22-7 deficit 12 minutes into the game.

The rest of the first half did not go much better, falling behind by as many as 21 and going into the break trailing 43-19.

The 19 points were a season-low in the first half by Miami and a far cry from the 49 they put up in Tuesday's 85-57 win over North Carolina.

"Florida State did an outstanding job and did everything right in the first half and we dug ourselves a major hole," Larranaga said.

Miami made just 6 of 23 shots in the first half, 1 of 12 from 3, with seven turnovers and one assist.

Miami plays at Virginia Tech on Jan. 26.

Understanding the Assignment

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 24, 2022

Pride and disappointment might not be similar emotions, but they can assuredly go together.

They both fit the bill in describing the most recent showing by the University of Miami men's basketball team. Trailing Florida State by 24 points at halftime and by 26 early in the second frame, the Hurricanes cut the deficit to one and missed a buzzer-beater to fall, 61-60, at a sold-out Watsco Center.

Those emotions, along with many others, were on the mind of assistant coach DJ Irving when he left the arena Saturday evening after another thrilling installment of the Sunshine State rivalry.

"I was definitely happy our guys fought back. It was exciting to see that they could compete and stay locked in for that long, even being down so much—down 26 at one point—and not just give up," Irving shared. "We showed that against Syracuse, as well. It's good that we know going forward that we're capable of doing that, but you definitely never want to be down that match. Happy that we were able to come back, but also anxious to figure out why we got down so much."

Outscored 43-19 in the first half, Miami shot 26.1 percent (6-of-23) overall and 8.3 percent (1-of-12) from 3-point range. It forced just two turnovers and committed seven, while getting outscored 26-10 in the paint and 6-0 on fast breaks.

The Hurricanes then posted a 41-18 margin in the second half, shooting 45.2 percent (14-of-31) from the floor and 46.2 percent (6-of-13) beyond the arc. They forced 15 turnovers and committed only three, as well notched a 16-14 edge in paint points and an 11-0 advantage in fast-break points.

To Irving, after reviewing the film, much of the change between the first half and the second came in two specific areas.

"I think it was maybe us thinking a little bit too much in the beginning because Florida State playing that switching-one-through-five defense, kind of like a matchup zone," Irving said. "I thought we were thinking a little bit too much in the beginning. In the second half, we did a good job of upping our defensive pressure, which led to our offense. So, I think, moving forward, we've just got to [get to that] a little sooner."

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong finished the afternoon with 22 points, including 18 in the second half, and eclipsed 1,000 points as a collegian with his second basket of the game. Sixth-year redshirt senior guards Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore scored 12 apiece for Miami (14-5, 6-2 ACC).

The three of them are veterans, as are the Hurricanes' other two starters, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg and fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller. Together, the five own a combined 531 collegiate appearances, including 375 starting nods.

That experience is why Irving is not concerned about an emotional letdown carrying over from the tough defeat when the Hurricanes they take the court Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Virginia Tech.

"I think—because we've got so many veteran guys that have been around so long—I'm not really worried about that. These guys are mature," Irving remarked. "Most of these guys are a year away from being professionals. They're already acting like professionals. So, they know what we've got to do going into the next game. Going into [Monday's] practice, they understand the assignment in being ready to go."

Miami's matchup with the Hokies, at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va., pits two familiar teams against one another. The two sides meet twice a year due to ACC scheduling and have played some memorable contests of late.

Two of the last three games went to overtime—including an exhilarating triple-overtime Miami road win on Feb. 19, 2020 in which Wong had 27 points and 12 rebounds—and the other one was a two-point decision. While the rosters are not completely the same, there are some familiar faces on both sides.

Furthermore, despite Virginia Tech's 10-9 (2-6 ACC) record, the Hokies are currently No. 40 in KenPom, boasting both a top-55 offense and defense.

"Definitely, as a coaching staff, we've been talking about that; they're a lot better than their record," Irving said. "The games that they've been losing have been coming down to the wire, so I definitely expect another one, [particularly] knowing the history of Miami and Virginia Tech, especially over the last couple years. Kam and Isaiah have all been a part of these [recent close] games. I definitely expect ... on their home court, it's going to be a battle

to the end."

Virginia Tech, under third year head coach Mike Young, is known for its high-level offensive sets. It also has two standout forwards—graduate student Justyn Mutts and redshirt senior Keve Aluma—who form one of the finest frontcourts in the ACC.

Mutts is averaging 10.5 points and a team-best 7.3 rebounds per game, while Aluma, a reigning Second Team All-ACC honoree, is posting 15.9 points and 6.7 boards per contest.

"Very, very meticulous and detailed in how they run their stuff. [They use] a bunch of different actions; actions leading to more actions," Irving said. "[They are] always trying to go to their two big fellas, Mutts and Aluma. It's very different than what we've been playing against in Florida State, Duke and North Carolina. Those teams are trying to get up and down the court as quickly as possible; these guys are taking their time, using the shot clock and getting it to their bigs."

Given the Hokies' reliance on their talented frontcourt duo, Miami will need the players tasked with guarding those players to step up.

That is why Irving feels Miller, who checks in at 6-foot-7, could be poised to be a key player Wednesday night, as could some of the team's reserves.

"I think, obviously, our bench can always help. I think because Jordan was in foul trouble the last game, he's going to be a key to this game, especially with their two bigs being the focal point of their offense," Irving shared. "I feel like Jordan can come up big for us and help us win this game, for sure."

The game in Blacksburg will be televised live on ACC Network HERE, with Angel Gray and Dan Bonner on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats can be found HERE.

After playing Virginia Tech, Miami has a second straight road contest, slated for Saturday at noon, live on RSN from McCamish Pavilion in Atlanta.

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

Experienced Hurricanes trying to stay positive after second close FSU loss

By Adam Lichtenstein
Sun Sentinel
Jan. 24, 2022

Miami's first loss to Florida State came in Tallahassee and ended on a close foul call. The Hurricanes lost to their chief rival by one point.

UM hoped for a different result in front of a sellout home crowd. They fell in a deep hole, but mounted a furious second-half comeback. The result: another one-point loss.

"These games are one-point games, one-possession games, one decision, one shot, one block, one this, one that," Miami coach Jim Larrañaga said on the Atlantic Coast Conference coaches Zoom call on Monday. "Florida State is a heckuva basketball team. They've got like four guys over seven feet, and we're probably the smallest team in the ACC. So what I look at it is: We played a great second half, and we had a great crowd on hand — it was sold out for the first time in years."

With more than a month left in their ACC regular-season schedule, the Hurricanes have plenty of time to bounce back despite the two frustrating defeats.

"The ACC regular season is not a sprint, it's a marathon," Larrañaga said. "You have a lot of games. There's a lot of ups and downs. You've got to overcome a lot of adversity during the course of a regular season, and I think our guys are doing that."

UM (14-5, 6-2 ACC) will look to regroup as it has an experienced roster built around older players, including sixth-year seniors Kameron McGusty, Charlie Moore and Sam Waardenburg, which may help the team stay even-keeled for the upcoming games.

"We have a very simple philosophy, based on three words, and the first word is attitude," Larrañaga said. "We tell all our players, all my coaches — and I try to believe and follow this — that life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it, and you must remain positive through all circumstances. If you have adversity, welcome to the real world."

Following Saturday's loss to the Seminoles, Miami is tied with Duke and the FSU for the No. 1 spot in the ACC.

"Hey, we were picked preseason No. 12, and right now we're sitting tied for first place," Larrañaga said. "I think everybody would say we're off to a good start."

Despite their winning ways, which included an 85-57 rout of North Carolina last week, the Hurricanes were left out of the Associated Press poll's top 25 on Monday.

The Hurricanes received four votes, placing them at 38th in the nation. Last week, Miami received 21 votes and was 31st in the nation.

Miami faces two teams that are currently at the bottom of the ACC standings this week. The Hurricanes play Virginia Tech (10-8, 2-5) on the road on Wednesday, followed by another road trip to face Georgia Tech (8-10, 1-6). Virginia Tech is 13th in the ACC, while Georgia Tech is last.

"There's no nights off," Larrañaga said.

"There's no easy games. There's no game that you can look past. Every game, that's why I keep repeating it's a marathon. You can't slow down in the middle of a marathon and expect to finish strong. People will be bypassing you one game after another."

'It was unreal': Over 2,000 students attend Florida State game

By Isabella Didio
The Miami Hurricane
Jan. 25, 2022

Duke, North Carolina, even at Florida State it might seem normal. But at the University of Miami, to see students sprinting through the concourse of the Watsco Center at one o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, unheard of.

Maybe if Drake was waiting onstage inside the arena. But no famous rapper was there to greet the students. Just 14 players, led by their endearing coach, hoping to exact revenge on their biggest rival.

30 minutes before the game, nearly 1,000 students, reflecting the bright lights of the arena off their Pit Viper glasses, shouted obscenities at the opposing team for the entirety of their warm up. They basked in the attention of the dozen cameras that captured the type of emotion that hasn't been seen from UM students in a long time.

"Standing from the front row and looking up, you could feel the energy and excitement from the student section building up as we got closer to tip-off," said junior Rohin Vaidya, one of the two basketball chairs for Category 5. "It was unreal."

The energy from the student section, all 2,000 of them, was palpable, and entirely unfamiliar to most current students.

Most UM students never experienced the full-body chills that come when an arena erupts in roaring cheers after their college team scores a basket.

The truth is UM students haven't had much to cheer for the past few years. Aside from Olympic sports – track and field, diving and tennis – there have been no major postseason successes. And as a result, students don't attend games.

Other journalists or die-hard fans can complain all they want about the students not being supportive, but this is Miami, where there are plenty of other activities, so if students have a choice between cheering on a losing team or exploring Miami, they'll almost always choose the latter.

But Saturday afternoon, the full-body chills were in full effect as the Hurricanes, led by Isaiah Wong, razzle-dazzled their way back from a 26-point deficit.

"Obviously in the first half, it wasn't the great-

est feeling. Nobody ever wants their team to be down 20+ points," Vaidya said. "There was definitely a worry that students were going to leave at halftime. But, I think anybody who has watched this team since the start of the season knew they were going to put in a strong comeback effort in the second half."

The student section, recently dubbed "The Eye", led by the never-wavering Category 5, laid out cheering instructions on every seat. Nearly every single student stayed until the last buzzer.

"That was probably the loudest game I've ever been a part of at the Watsco Center," said sixth-year redshirt senior Sam Waardenburg.

The Hurricanes are giving students something to cheer for the first time in a long time. The pure heart and determinism the team displayed to pull themselves out of the deepest whole was inspiring.

"We are hardworking," said point guard Isaiah Wong. "We had an off first half, but the second half we just stayed together and put in as much effort as we could. We all stayed together and that's what I like about this team. We all play hard to the end. We can make any comeback. We always have that hope that we can still win the game."

Although the Canes lost the game by one point in heartbreaking fashion, the game and the environment inside the Watsco Center felt like a return to normalcy and a return to the long-desired basketball environment that's been missing for years.

"That's what Miami is all about. Pure passion, spirit and pride of being a Miami Hurricane," Vaidya said. "Regardless of the final score, I think we all had a lot of fun in the student section. We were so proud of the fight and resiliency of the team and we showed that by cheering them on as they walked off the floor."

What you need to know as ACC-leading Miami Hurricanes face Virginia Tech on the road

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 25, 2022

At Duke. At Florida State. North Carolina at home. Florida State at home.

It was easy to motivate the University of Miami men's basketball team the past few weeks with four games in a row against high-profile opponents. The exciting stretch of games began with an upset of then-No. 2 Duke on the road and ended Saturday with a heartbreaking — but thrilling — one-point loss to FSU in front of the first home sellout crowd in four years.

Now comes a different kind of challenge. The Hurricanes, who share the ACC top spot with FSU at 6-2, must try not to overlook upcoming back-to-back road games against 13th-place ACC team Virginia Tech and last-place Georgia Tech.

Miami plays the Hokies (10-9, 2-6) Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Cassell Coliseum and then plays the Yellow Jackets (8-10, 1-6) Saturday at noon in Atlanta.

"That's the whole key to playing and coaching in the ACC, there's no nights off, no game you can look past," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "I keep repeating, it's a marathon. You can't slow down in the middle of a marathon and expect to finish strong. People will be bypassing you one game after another."

Hurricanes assistant coach D.J. Irving is confident UM's veteran team will not suffer a letdown. The roster includes five sixth-year seniors, and their maturity is a big reason the team has not folded when down or been rattled in clutch moments.

"Because we've got so many veteran guys that have been around so long — I'm not really worried about that. These guys are mature," Irving said. "Most of these guys are a year away from being professionals. They're already acting like professionals. So, they know what we've got to do going into the next game."

The recent games between Miami and Virginia Tech have gone down to the final minutes.

Two of the last three meetings went to overtime — including a triple-overtime Miami road win on Feb. 19, 2020, in which Isaiah Wong had 27 points and 12 rebounds.

Larranaga and Irving say Virginia Tech is better than its record, and its frontcourt is as dangerous as any in the ACC.

Redshirt senior Keve Aluma, who made second-team all-conference last year, is averaging 15.7 points and 6.8 rebounds. Grad student Justyn Mutts averages 10.1 points and 7.1 rebounds.

"I think they're really good," Larranaga said of the Hokies. "Keve Aluma and Justyn Mutts are an absolutely fantastic 1-2 combination inside. They both can stretch the defense and take you outside. They're first in the league in defending the three and first in the league in three-point percentage, so it's a very challenging combination. And playing at Tech is one of the toughest places to play. Their fans are very rabid."

UM's only two losses since the end of November were by one point to FSU, which gives Larranaga reason to be optimistic heading into the rest of the ACC schedule.

"These games are one-point games, one possession, one decision, one shot and Florida State is a heck of a basketball team," Larranaga said. "They have four guys over 7 feet and we're probably the smallest team in the ACC. The way I look at it is, we played a great second half (against the Seminoles), we had a great crowd, first time sold out in years. We're in the ACC, which I consider the best league in the country, even if the experts don't. Those guys are wrong a lot. They picked us 12th, so I feel pretty good right now."

Charlie Moore hits half-court shot at the buzzer to lift Hurricanes past Hokies

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 26, 2022

There was some confusion on how much time would be left on the clock and where the Hurricanes would take the inbound pass in the closing seconds.

Once the details were sorted with Miami getting the ball on the sideline just past mid-court with 1.8 seconds left, Charlie Moore got the ball and did the rest.

Moore took one dribble, heaved a half-court shot and banked it in at the buzzer to lift the Miami Hurricanes to a 78-75 win at Virginia Tech to stun the packed crowd on Wednesday.

"I was excited," Moore said. "I just ran off the court. My teammates followed me and tackled me. They had a great time and I'm happy as well."

Kameron McGusty scored 17 of his 19 points in the second half to lead the Hurricanes who also got 18 points from Jordan Miller as all five starters scored in double figures.

"I thought that was another fantastic college basketball game, exciting from start to finish," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Obviously Charlie Moore's game-winning shot was absolutely incredible."

Miami (15-5, 7-2 ACC) bounced back from a heartbreaking one-point loss to Florida State and still has not lost consecutive games this season.

"It means a lot," Moore said. "We started off slow last game. We wanted to pick that up this game and not let ourselves get behind. I felt like we played pretty good for the most. Virginia Tech shot the ball extremely well. They executed well. It went down to the wire. It was a great game."

Virginia Tech (10-10, 2-7) has lost three straight.

The Hokies looked to pull away and had a 67-61 advantage, but McGusty calmly hit a 3. Moments later Miller stuffed home a put-back dunk and McGusty finished on a transition layup to tie the game at 68 with 4:32 left.

Isaiah Wong was fouled on a 3 and made all three of his free-throw attempts to tie the game at 75 with 1:09 left.

After a miss, McGusty was called for a charge

with 28 seconds left.

Virginia Tech's Hunter Catoor missed a 3 at the top of the key in the closing seconds before Miller corralled the rebound.

Miami called timeout with 1.8 seconds left. Moore took the inbound pass, took one dribble and sank the game-winner as Miami closed the game on an 8-0 run. Moore finished with 13 points, six assists and five steals.

"The coaches set up a great play," Moore said. "They had Sam (Waardenburg) set a screen close to half court and he wanted me to loop around. I just took one dribble—I knew I could take one with 1.8 seconds left—and I just wanted to get a shot up, get a great attempt it. It was a great shot. I'm happy for me and my teammates and my coaches as well."

Moore, who could not recall the last game-winning shot he has had over his basketball career, thought the shot had a chance.

"It felt pretty good," Moore said. "I banked it. I didn't know it was going to go that hard."

The Hurricanes shot 54.7 percent (29 of 53) from the floor and hit 11 of 18 (61.1 percent from 3) and made 9 of 10 from the free-throw line. They needed every point possible to withstand the Hokies, who were shooting over 70 percent in the second half before being held scoreless over the final two minutes, 24 seconds.

Virginia Tech shot 50.0 percent (25 of 50) in the game—13 of 26 from 3 and 12 of 24 from 2.

"I thought Virginia Tech played a tremendous second half," Larranaga said. "They shot the ball so well and I thought our guys kind of hung in there. We were not playing our best, but we were still in the hunt and every chance we got, we made a big play. It came down to the last possession, the last shot, just like it has the last four or five times we've played these guys."

Miami went on a 14-0 run to take a 20-9 lead. Miller helped spark the run with a layup and hitting a 3.

The Hurricanes took advantage of the Hokies' 11 turnovers in the first half, resulting in 18 points, but only led 36-31 at the break.

Miami plays at Georgia Tech on Saturday (12:00 p.m., BSFL).

Charlie Moore's half-court buzzer beater stuns Virginia Tech, completes Miami comeback

By David Wilson
Miami Herald
Jan. 26, 2022

Charlie Moore bounced on his toes near mid-court and waited for the whistle to blow, and then he was off.

The Miami Hurricanes and Virginia Tech Hokies were tied with 1.8 seconds left Wednesday and Miami needed perfection, precision and a little bit of luck to avoid overtime. Moore, Kameron McGusty and Sam Waardenburg delivered it all for a stunning 78-75 win in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Waardenburg lined up a screen near Moore and the guard looped his way toward the ball. He went back to the three-point line and then dashed toward midcourt to get ready for his prayer. Kameron McGusty led him perfectly in stride, Moore took one dribble and heaved.

He just wanted to make sure he got off a shot and then, all of a sudden, this one felt good.

The buzzer sounded, the shot banked in and the Hurricanes swarmed Moore while he sprinted back into the tunnel.

"That," Moore said, "was incredible."

His path took him right past Miami's bench and then he took U-turn back to the locker room. He pointed one finger to the sky while the crowd of 7,086 at Cassell Coliseum fell silent.

Miami, for the moment, took sole possession of first place in the Atlantic Coast Conference after its most incredible win of the year.

"I just wanted to get a shot up, get a great attempt up," Moore said.

The Hurricanes (15-5, 7-2) blew an 11-point first half lead and rallied from six down in the final seven minutes. They shot 54.7 percent from the field and Virginia Tech (10-10, 2-7) shot 50. Miami was down 75-70 with two minutes left and shut out the Hokies the rest of the way while getting heroic moments from guards Jordan Miller, Isaiah Wong and, most of all, Moore.

It was another game decided by one possession — five of the Hurricanes' last six have been — and Miami didn't even get flawless execution down the stretch to pull out this win. The Hurricanes just made the plays when they mattered.

"We've been in so many of these games

already," coach Jim Larranaga said, "so our guys have been very, very consistently poised in the last three, four minutes of games and they're making big play after big play."

It started with an offensive rebound and an and-one by Miller with 1:57 left, only he missed the free throw to leave Miami down 75-72. The Hurricanes got a stop and another offensive rebound, and swung a pass out to Wong in the right corner.

The strength of this Miami team is it doesn't need to rely on one go-to option, but Wong, the Hurricanes' most legitimate NBA prospect, tends to have the ball in his hands in the biggest moments and he made a savvy play this time. He jab stepped and faked a shot, goaded Keve Aluma into the air and fired up a three-point attempt while the Virginia Tech forward bumped into him. The star shooting guard got to the free-throw and made all three free throws to knot the score at 75-75 with 1:09 left.

After another stop, the Hurricanes had a chance to take the lead and nearly did. McGusty slashed from the left wing and drew nearly the entire defense into the paint. The guard tried to fling a pass out to Moore, wide open on the left wing, only for the whistle to blow for a charge. With 28.9 seconds left and the shot clock off, Miami needed one more stop to, in all likelihood, force overtime.

"We were not playing our best, but we were still in the hunt," Larranaga said, "and every chance we got we made a big play."

The Hurricanes forced Hokies guard Hunter Cattoor into a long, errant three and Miller grabbed the rebound with a little more than a second left, taking a few dribbles and then taking timeout to give Miami a sideline inbound, just shy of midcourt, with 1.8 seconds left.

This wasn't the plan, either, Larranaga said. He told the officials the Hurricanes were going to call timeout as soon as they got the rebound, he said, and he figured he would have about 2.5 seconds left to draw up a game-winning play from underneath the Hurricanes' own basket. Instead, the referees didn't grant the timeout until Miller was already dribbling near midcourt, setting up an unorthodox situation for Miami.

The play was going to be simple. Larranaga sent Wong and Miller down to either corner to force Virginia Tech to guard them, and clear out midcourt. He told Waardenburg to set a pick for Moore and implored McGusty to lead

the sixth-year redshirt senior on the inbound. It got Moore a relatively open look with his left foot behind the halfcourt line and he nailed it. "I was excited. I just ran off the court and my teammates followed me," Moore said. "They tackled me. They had a great time."

It was the 10th lead change of the second half and first since the 9:18 mark. It gave Moore 13 points — all five starters scored at least 12, as McGusty led the way with 19 and Miller added 18 — and the Hurricanes an 11th win in 13 games.

It's not an unparalleled moment in Miami history — Larranaga immediately recalled former guard Ja'Quan Newton's half-court game-winner against the then-No. 9 North Carolina Tar Heels in 2018 — but it's another signature moment for a team quickly piling them up this season.

"It means a lot," Moore said. "We played pretty good for the most part. Virginia Tech shot the ball tremendously well and executed tremendously well. It went down to the wire. It was a great game."

Miami Knocks off Virginia Tech, 78-75 at the Buzzer

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 26, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team defeated Virginia Tech, 78-75, Wednesday night at Cassell Coliseum on a half-court buzzer-beater by Charlie Moore.

Miami (15-5, 7-2 ACC) trailed by six in the final seven minutes and by five in the final two, but stormed back down the stretch to earn its fourth road triumph in five attempts. The Hurricanes made five of their last seven shots and closed the night on an 8-0 run in the final two minutes, capped with Moore's game-winner to send the visiting bench streaming onto the court in jubilation.

Kameron McGusty, a sixth-year redshirt senior guard like Moore, paced Miami with a game-high 19 points, including 17 in the final 15 minutes.

"When we've played Virginia Tech in the last five years, it seems like it always comes down to the last possession—the last shot, the last stop—and tonight was no different. It was a tremendous college basketball game, very entertaining," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "There was a lot of great shot-making and there were a lot of great plays. You have to give our guys credit because we fell behind by [six points] late in the game and we could've easily said to ourselves, 'I'm tired. We tried hard, but we didn't get this one.' Instead, at the timeouts, you could tell they were bound and determined to get back in it and tie this game up and try to win it at the end."

The Hurricanes made eight straight shots early in the game and, during that stretch, posted a 14-1 run in just 3:06 to go in front, 20-9, with 13:18 on the clock. The surge included 12 consecutive points in only 2:05.

Miami's offense, however, then cooled down, as Virginia Tech (10-10, 2-7 ACC) countered with a 15-6 burst to cut the deficit to two, 26-24, with 4:12 remaining in the frame. The Hurricanes outscored the Hokies by three the rest of the session and took a 36-31 edge into the locker room.

Virginia Tech shot 7-of-15 (46.7 percent) from deep in the opening 20 minutes, but Miami forced 11 turnovers and committed just five, leading to an 18-3 edge in points off giveaways. The Hurricanes also got 14 first-half points from fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, a native of nearby Middleburg, Va., on 5-of-6 shooting, including a 2-of-3 clip from deep, to go along with a 2-of-2 mark at the line.

The Hokies scored six quick points—an old-fashioned three-point play and a 3-pointer—in the first 62 seconds of the second half to go ahead, 37-36. Virginia Tech upped its cushion to four, 62-58, with 8:50 remaining after a trio of free throws following a stretch of six consecutive made field goals, including two from beyond the arc.

Virginia Tech continued its offensive surge and took a game-high six-point advantage, 67-61, with 6:35 to play. The Hurricanes, though, answered with a 7-1 run in 1:12 to level the score at 68 with 4:53 on the clock.

After the teams exchanged baskets, the Hokies scored five points in a row to go up, 75-70, with 2:24 remaining. Miami then tied it at 75 just 75 seconds later after a Miller layup through a foul and a trio of free throws from third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

The Hurricanes got a defensive stop and then committed a turnover, followed by another stop, after which they called timeout with 1.8 seconds left to draw up the eventual exhilarating game-winning play.

"We sent Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller down the floor to try and stretch their defense out. We had Sam Waardenburg screen for Charlie and just told Charlie to get on the run," Larrañaga said. "One of the major keys in a guy scoring a shot like that is you have to have someone who throws a great pass so he can catch it on the move. Kam McGusty has been inbounding the ball all season for us. He threw a perfect pitch, Charlie caught it on the dead run, took one dribble and then banked in a shot. But Charlie had already asked for the ball at the timeout, so we knew we were going to him. He wanted a chance to win it."

McGusty's second-half performance helped pave the way for the Miami comeback. After starting 1-of-8 from the floor, he made his final six shots of the night, including three from 3-point range. The Katy, Texas, native added a co-team-high seven rebounds and season-high-tying five assists in the victory.

Miller finished with 18 points on 7-of-9 shooting, also posting a co-team-best seven rebounds, two assists and two blocks. Moore posted 13 points and six assists, the first of which gave him 500 as a collegian. He shot 3-of-6 from 3-point range and logged a game-high five steals in a season-high-tying 38 minutes.

Wong scored 12 points, as did sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg, the latter of whom went 4-of-4 from the field, 2-of-2 from deep and 2-of-2 at the line. The Hurricanes had five double-digit scorers for the first time all season.

Redshirt senior forward Keve Aluma paced Virginia Tech with 14 points, while three Hokies had 13 points apiece: junior guard Nahiem Alleyne, junior guard Hunter Cattoor and sophomore guard Darius Maddox.

Graduate student forward Justyn Mutts recorded nine points, a game-high 10 rebounds and a game-high eight assists for Virginia Tech. He scored all of his points in the final 12 minutes of the game.

Miami finished the night with a 61.1 percent clip (11-of-18) from 3-point range against the ACC's best 3-point percentage defense. That is the best mark by a Virginia Tech opponent during Mike Young's three seasons as head coach and the third-best ever by the Hurricanes in ACC play.

At the other end, meanwhile, the Hokies shot 50.0 percent (13-of-26) from deep. The Hurricanes, who totaled 10 steals, logged a 23-8 edge in points off turnovers and a 16-3 advantage in fast-break points to counteract the Hokies' 23-4 cushion in bench points.

Miami now heads to Atlanta, where it squares off with Georgia Tech Saturday at noon, live on RSN from McCamish Pavilion.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 25-19 all-time against Virginia Tech, including 9-10 on the road and 15-9 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– The last four meetings between the Hurricanes and Hokies have featured two overtime games and two one-possession games.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 685-469 in 38 years as a head coach, including 215-135 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the 14th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, J. Miller, Waardenburg and Wong.

– Moore is one of just 31 active Division I players with 500-plus assists,

a figure Indiana's Xavier Johnson also reached tonight after Moore did.

– Moore's five steals marked the fourth time this season a Hurricane has logged five-plus in a game this year, including the second time he has done so.

– The only two ACC games in which Miami has ever shot better from 3-point range (min. seven 3PM) were on 2/27/16 versus No. 11/NR Louisville (72.7 percent, 8-of-11) and 1/7/06 against No. 14/12 Maryland (63.2 percent, 12-of-19).

– The aforementioned game against Louisville on 2/7/16 was the last time Miami shot 60-plus percent from 3-point range in any game.

– The last time the Hurricanes won on a last-second shot was 11/16/21 when Isaiah Wong scored with 0.7 ticks remaining at Florida Atlantic, while the last time they won on a buzzer-beater with the clock at 0:00 was on 2/27/18 when they did so on a near-half-court heave from Ja'Quan Newton at ninth-ranked North Carolina.

– Mutts' eight assists tied for the second-most by a Miami opponent this season and marked the top such total by an ACC player.

– The game featured 14 lead changes and nine ties, both the second-highest marks in any of the Hurricanes' outings this season, trailing only the 15 and 10, respectively, on 1/11/22 at Florida State.

– Miami shot 51.9 percent (14-of-27) in the first half and 57.7 percent (15-of-26) in the second half, marking the first time since 1/1/21 versus Wake Forest it eclipsed 50 percent in both frames.

– The Hurricanes earned their 14th victory in Larrañaga's tenure (14-116) when trailing with 2:00 left, including their ninth in ACC play (9-78) and first this season (1-4).

– Miami last won a game when trailing with 2:00 remaining on 12/8/20 versus Purdue, when it came back from a 20-point deficit to garner the victory.

– The last time five Hurricanes scored in double figures in the same game was 3/9/21 against Pittsburgh in the opening round of the ACC Tournament in Greensboro, N.C.

– In the last seven games, the Hurricanes have forced 109 turnovers and registered 75 steals.

– According to ESPN's Bryan Ives, Miami is the first ACC team since Virginia in 2019-20 to have a stretch of six-plus consecutive games with at least five of them decided by one possession.

– The Hurricanes shot 90.0 percent (9-of-10) from the free-throw line, while the Hokies shot 80.0 percent (12-of-15).

– Miami logged an 18-4 advantage in paint points during the first half of action and finished with a 30-20 margin.

– J. Miller, who surpassed 400 made field goals and 2,750 minutes played as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 57th time, including the seventh this season.

– Waardenburg, who reached 150 free-throw attempts at Miami, scored double-digit points for the 19th time, including the seventh this year.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 1,150 points, 350 free-throw attempts and 3,500 minutes played in his career, registered double-figure points for the 82nd time, including the 54th as a Hurricane and 19th in 2021-22.

– McGusty tallied his sixth five-assist performance, all at Miami, including his third this season.

– Moore recorded double-figure points for the 69th time, including the 12th this year.

– Moore tallied five-plus assists for the 43rd time, including the sixth in 2021-22.

– Wong tallied double-digit points for the 52nd time, including the 19th this season.

– Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker tied a career high with three steals, matching the mark he set on 3/10/21 versus Clemson in the second round of the ACC Tournament in Greensboro, N.C.

UM guard Charlie Moore's half-court game-winning shot was not a lucky heave. Here's why

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 27, 2022

Coach Jim Larranaga does not pay much attention to social media, but when your point guard hits a half-court buzzer-beating game-winning bank shot that earns No. 2 on ESPN SportsCenter's Play of the Day, it's fun watching video replays on Twitter.

Charlie Moore's spectacular shot to beat Virginia Tech on the road Wednesday night went viral, and the Miami Hurricanes enjoyed reliving the moment before turning their attention to another road game Saturday at Georgia Tech.

Larranaga said he watched the replay on the plane ride home, on his way to campus upon arrival in Miami, and again several times Thursday morning. When he got to his staff meeting, his assistant coaches showed him other angles of the shot and celebration on Twitter.

"I got a lot of text messages, the shot that Charlie made was incredible and is being talked about everywhere," Larranaga said. "My wife and I were watching the replay of the celebration, the guys sprinting, chasing Charlie through the tunnel. I must have watched it a dozen times on Twitter."

After watching and dissecting those final 1.8 seconds, Larranaga was able to explain exactly how that shot came to be. It was not just a lucky heave. It was a calculated, perfectly executed play.

"What nobody probably realized from watching on T.V. was that I was standing close to midcourt trying to get the referees to tell me where we were taking the ball out. I didn't know if it was length of court, side court or at the hashmark, which is where it ended up being," Larranaga said. "When we finally got that instruction, it changed our thinking as to what we needed to do."

In the meantime, Moore approached assistant coach Bill Courtney and said: "I want the ball. Give me the ball."

Moore, a sixth-year senior known for his poise under pressure, was having a good game, playing confidently, so Larranaga ran the play for him.

UM coaches put Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller down the floor because both are threats to catch and shoot from deep. That stretched the

Hokies defense, and Sam Waardenburg was asked to set a screen for Moore to free him up. Moore cut around, caught McGusty's perfect pass on the run, took one dribble, got a good look at the basket and made the shot.

Moore called the shot "crazy" and gave credit to Waardenburg and McGusty for putting him in position. He said it's the kind of shot he dreamed about as a kid on the playgrounds of Chicago.

"What is missed and is so important was Kam McGusty's pass because if it had been a little behind Charlie or a little in front of him, Charlie never would have been able to make that play," Larranaga said.

The moment the ball went through, Moore ran toward the tunnel with his index finger raised and his teammates ran alongside him. They practice for moments like that, and it has come in handy, as five of UM's past six games came down to three points or fewer.

"At the end of every practice we do a two-minute drill where we pretend the score is 70-70 and we work on our end-of-game situations," said Waardenburg. "We prepare well for those moments."

But Moore's shot was more exciting than anything they had practiced.

"It's something you're going to remember the rest of your life," Waardenburg said. "It was college basketball at its best. Charlie's a smart enough player to understand how much time he had to do what he did. You could say that was lucky shot, but when you have someone who prepares as well as Charlie does, the chances of that happening for him are higher than anyone else because he takes deep threes and practices that all the time. That moment was built for him."

Waardenburg said his initial reaction upon seeing Moore's shot fall was simple: "Hug that man. That was incredible."

The win, coupled with Florida State's loss to Georgia Tech, put Miami (15-5, 7-2 ACC) in sole possession of first place in the conference. The Canes play the Yellow Jackets at noon Saturday.

“We’re In This Together”

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos
MiamiHurricanes.com
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Charlie Moore has managed to hit a few half-court shots during his basketball life.

But never one like this.

Never one that silenced an entire arena. Never one that gave his team a conference win on the road. Never one that capped yet another memorable game for the Miami Hurricanes.

“That shot was kind of special,” the sixth-year redshirt senior guard said of the buzzer-beating heave that lifted Miami to a 78-75 win over Virginia Tech in Blacksburg on Wednesday night.

Special indeed.

With 1.8 seconds left on the clock and the game tied, Moore and the Hurricanes returned to the floor after a timeout knowing they’d have little time to work if they wanted to get out of Cassell Coliseum with a win and without having to play overtime for it.

But Moore felt comfortable, thinking to himself he might have just enough time to give the ball a little dribble before putting up his shot.

He did.

The shot banked off the glass, fell and pandemonium ensued on the Miami sideline, with the Hurricanes chasing after Moore as he rushed down the floor and out the tunnel in pure joy.

“My coaching staff, they showed a great play for me and my teammates executed it very well,” said Moore, who finished with 13 points and earlier in the game notched the 500th assist of his college career. “Coming out of the timeout, I knew my coaches and my teammates trusted me to take this shot...I just wanted to get a shot up, give us a chance to win and it happened to go in. I’m excited. My teammates are excited for me. I’m just happy we came out with a win.”

It’s a win that not only put the Hurricanes (15-5, 7-2) alone atop the ACC standings, but proved yet again they’re a resilient bunch that can’t be counted out, even in the toughest of situations.

Miami trailed Virginia Tech by six points in the final seven minutes and by five in the final two before closing the game on an 8-0 run.

That stretch included three key free throws from Isaiah Wong and a clutch rebound from Jordan Miller that gave the Hurricanes – and Moore – the final shot.

Before Wednesday’s effort, already this season, the Hurricanes rallied from an 18-point deficit to beat Syracuse 88-87. Miami trailed by nine with five minutes left in an eventual 80-75 win over Clemson. The Hurricanes hung on for a 76-74 thriller of a win over then second-ranked Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

And just days ago, though Miami ultimately came up short, the Hurricanes fought back from a 26-point deficit against rival Florida State and gave themselves a chance to win on the game’s final shot.

“We’ve been in so many of these games already. Just look at [our] last games,” Hurricanes head coach Jim Larrañaga said. “Syracuse we won by one. At Duke, we won by two. At Florida State, we lost by one. Florida State at home, we lost by one. Now, we win by three. Our guys have been very, very consistently poised in the last three, four minutes of games. They’ve been making big play after big play.”

Said Moore, “We believe in each other. We trust in each other’s talents and what we’re able to do on the court. We feel like we’re a great team. We have confidence to make these comebacks and runs...I feel like us just believing in each other, trusting each other and just staying poised, we have those characteristics as a team and that helps us continue to fight when we’re down in games or things like that. It says a lot to have a poised team all across the board. It’s pretty rare. We just have to continue to get better, continue to trust each other. We still have a long season ahead of us. We have to continue to stay humble as well.”

For the Hurricanes, the next test comes Saturday at Georgia Tech (9-10, 2-6).

Though the Yellow Jackets have struggled this season, on Wednesday night, they knocked off the same Florida State team that has challenged Miami twice this season. And the Hurricanes know nothing can be taken for granted in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Miami will look to put together another balanced effort like the one against Virginia Tech that featured five players scoring in double figures, including Kameron McGusty, who had 17 of his game-high 19 points in the final 15 minutes.

The Hurricanes know they can continue being a force. But they have to keep working together.

“Going into an environment like Virginia Tech, playing teams like Virginia Tech tough, making those shots, executing well, we’ve got to be poised,” Moore said. “Those types of teams are going to make runs. We’re going to make our runs. We can’t get down on each other or start doubting each other. We know we have to stick together in those types of games because we’re in the ACC. Those types of games are going to happen night in and night out. If we doubt each other, it’s not going to work out in our favor.”

Poised and Competitive, MBB Visits Atlanta for Next Test

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 27, 2022

Few feelings in sports beat the thrill of a half-court, game-winning buzzer-beater.

The University of Miami men's basketball team got that thrill Wednesday night at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va., as Charlie Moore banked in a shot from the logo to give his team a 78-75 road win over Virginia Tech.

It marked the first true buzzer-beater—with 0:00 left on the clock—by a Hurricane since Ja'Quan Newton's famous heave to stun ninth-ranked North Carolina on Feb. 27, 2018.

While the final moment of the game understandably stole the show—it was No. 2 on SportsCenter that night—it was part of a truly excellent game, even without the scintillating ending, between two conference foes.

"Well, one of the things that was very apparent is that both teams shot the ball well and were very efficient on offense," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "Virginia Tech shot the ball extremely well, being at home and playing with a lot of confidence in the second half. It really took a determined effort by our players to match them every step of the way. We were very fortunate that we were the last ones to make a shot because it was tied at that time. It looked like an overtime thriller, but Charlie Moore took care of that."

A sixth-year redshirt senior guard in his first season at The U, Moore finished with 13 points, six assists and a game-high five steals in the triumph. On a night he also surpassed 500 collegiate assists, he gave Miami fans a moment they will remember for years, as, of course, will he.

The Chicago native's buzzer-beater sealed yet another comeback win for the Hurricanes, who trailed by six with fewer than seven minutes left and by five in the last two minutes.

Miami (15-5, 7-2 ACC) once again rallied for a victory, marking the eighth time this season it has won a game it trailed in the second half, including the fifth time away from home and the third in a true road outing.

This veteran-laden team has proven again and again it simply does not quit.

"I think, when guys enjoy playing with each other and the games are really competitive and fun, that they enjoy the competition," Larrañaga shared. "When you have experienced guys who have been through the wars over a period of time, they realize that the game is not over until it's over. Every possession is important—every shot, every turnover. All those things create the opportunity to win at the end. And our guys have been very poised down the stretch.

"They've hung together, they've trusted each other, they've made some very good decisions and they've also done that at the defensive end of the floor," he continued. "It's not just been our offense, but forcing turnovers or forcing a missed shot or getting a key rebound; we've done all those things."

Indeed, the Hurricanes turned in another strong defensive performance against the Hokies, whom they held without a point for the final two minutes. Miami also logged 10 steals, its fifth time in the last seven games reaching double figures.

The Hurricanes also excelled at the other end of the court Wednesday night, posting their best 3-point percentage in nearly six years and their third-best mark ever in ACC play. The 61.1 clip (11-of-18) is the highest ledger allowed by the Hokies in Mike Young's three years as the head coach.

Miami got 3-point shooting, paired with pinpoint offensive execution, from several players. Sixth-year redshirt forward Sam Waardenburg made all four of his field goals, both 3-pointers and both free throws, finishing with 12 points, a figure matched by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored 18 points on 7-of-9 shooting, while sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty had 19. Alongside Moore, that gave the Hurricanes five double-digit scorers for the first time since March 9, 2021.

McGusty, in particular, proved key for the Hurricanes. After a 1-of-8 performance in the first 25 minutes, he shot 6-of-6 and totaled 17 points in the final 15.

"Actually, while the game was going on, I was very concerned about him because he had missed a couple of shots he normally makes," Larrañaga said. "He had gotten himself in a position where he could've had a huge game, but in the second half, he seemed to just calm down, relax, focus and take advantage of each opportunity that presented itself. He ended up having an overall great game."

As exhilarating as Wednesday's triumph was, the Hurricanes must quickly prepare for the next step in the ACC grind. Miami now has a second consecutive road game, slated for Saturday at noon against Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Only about 36 hours after arriving home from the buzzer-beating win, they will take off for the Peach State to play another dangerous ACC team.

While some teams may have an emotional letdown after such a joyous victory, the Hurricanes appear poised and focused for their next task.

"Well, there is always a concern emotionally after a game like that, but [we know] Georgia Tech is a very good basketball team, especially at home," Larrañaga said. "They

just beat Florida State, who just beat us. So, we know we have our hands full and our players understand that you've got to take the season one game at a time."

The Yellow Jackets are 9-10 (2-6 ACC) on the season, but knocked off the then-ACC-leading Seminoles by 14 points, 75-61, Wednesday night at McCamish Pavilion, where they now host Miami.

Georgia Tech turned in a splendid 2020-21 campaign, including winning the ACC Tournament after ending the Hurricanes' Cinderella run—and their season—in the quarterfinals. Miami does own a 14-12 record against them though, including a strong 6-6 mark on the road and a 7-6 ledger in Larrañaga's tenure.

"I think Josh Pastner has done a great job of alternating his defenses, playing the zone, playing man. They're a high-energy team," Larrañaga said. "They have a lot of interchangeable parts; they're all about the same size. They play very well together. I think Michael Devoe and Jordan Usher are two really high-level ACC players. You've got to guard them because they're capable of carrying the offense for long periods of time."

Devoe presents a particularly difficult task for ACC defenses. A Preseason Second Team All-ACC honoree, he is the league's second-leading scorer at 19.2 points per game.

The senior guard lit Miami up for 29 points in the teams' first meeting last year, shooting 11-of-16 from the floor, including a blistering 7-of-11 beyond the arc. He scored 13 points on 4-of-8 shooting, including a 3-of-4 tally on 3-pointers, in the ACC Tournament contest.

Larrañaga knows his players once again have their work cut out for them in trying to limit Devoe this time around.

"You can't get any separation on Michael Devoe. He is such a high-octane scorer that if you give him a three, he's going to make the three and if you overplay the three, he's so good at getting to the rim," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "He's very, very clever in the paint, shot-faking and getting fouled. He can play the one, the two, the three. He's very good in the open court. He is, deservedly, a very well-respected player around the ACC and the country."

Miami's outing in Atlanta will be shown live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Florida locally—with Bob Rathbun and Brian Oliver on the call. A full affiliate is available HERE and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, HERE. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats will be available HERE.

Following its matchup with the Yellow Jackets, Miami returns home to host Notre Dame Wednesday at 7 p.m., live on RSN from the Watsco Center in Coral Gables.

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

10 reasons why Hurricanes lead ACC near midway point

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 27, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes lead the ACC following a thrilling victory at Virginia Tech on Wednesday with Charlie Moore hitting a half-court, buzzer beater.

Miami improved to 15-5 overall, 7-2 in the ACC, which tops the conference near the midway point of the 20-game conference slate.

Miami is in first place, but five teams are within one game with No. 9 Duke (6-2), Notre Dame (6-2), Wake Forest (7-3), North Carolina (6-3) and Florida State (6-3) in the mix.

So what have been the keys to the Hurricanes' success? Here's 10 reasons:

ONE OF THE BEST OFFENSIVE TEAMS

Miami has been led by being highly efficient on the offensive end of the court, ranking 18th nationally out of 358 teams, scoring 115.2 every 100 possessions according to Kenpom, and posting even higher marks in conference games in having the highest adjusted offensive efficiency rating in the ACC. In comparison only Miami's 2015-16 team, which went 27-8 and advanced to the Sweet 16, has had a higher rating at 119.4 (ranked 11th) in the last 21 seasons. Not only are they shooting the ball well from inside and outside the arc (more on that later), but Miami is shooting 74.5 percent from the free-throw line. They also do not turn the ball, ranking fifth nationally in turnover percent at 13.7. All of these numbers are extremely favorable and they have been carrying over, and sometimes even better, in conference play, making them a very tough team to guard.

EMERGENCE OF KAMERON MCGUSTY

Sixth-year senior guard Kameron McGusty has been one of the Hurricanes' top players the previous two seasons, but McGusty has taken his game to an All-ACC-caliber level in his final year. Larranaga noted McGusty has been one of the most consistent players in the ACC this year and he is in prime position to be an All-ACC First Team selection and possible Player of the Year candidate if the Hurricanes remain towards the top of the standings. He is averaging a career-high 17.9 points per game while posting career-bests in all three shooting categories—field goal percent (48.8), 3-point shooting (36.6) and free throws (82.4). Not only has he been a dynamic scorer, both in knocking down long range and improving on his drives to the basket, but he leads the team in rebounding at 6.2 a game, over two more than his previous career high at 4.0.

POISE AND MATURITY

Miami has a very experienced team with a number of

players who have played a lot of games throughout their college careers. Miami's starting five has a number of older players in Kameron McGusty (24 years old), Charlie Moore (turns 24 next week), Sam Waardenburg (22), Jordan Miller (22) and Isaiah Wong (turns 21 tomorrow) with Rodney Miller (25) and Deng Gak (23) on the bench. Their poise and maturity shows during games as they are doing a good job of battling back in games they are down while also staying poised and mature throughout the season, as they have avoided consecutive losses following their five defeats. Bouncing back and showing resilience has been a key to the success.

ISAIAH WONG HAS IMPROVED FROM BREAKOUT SEASON

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong enjoyed a breakout campaign last year, finishing as the runner-up for the ACC Most Improved Award. Although his scoring average is slightly down from 17.1 to 16.5, he has been a much more efficient player on the offensive end improving his field goal percent from 43.1 to 47.1 and cutting down on his turnovers from 1.8 to 1.2. He was a good scorer last year, but this year he has added a step-back 3 to his arsenal while showing the ability to take over the game and score in bunches.

LIMITING WEAKNESSES

Larranaga and the staff knows its weaknesses, particularly with not being very big in the frontcourt and not having an inside scoring presence. However, the staff and team have done a great job of limiting its weaknesses from being exploited and no bigger example of that was when they blew out North Carolina, which was led by center Armando Bacot who entered the game on a terror. They limited Bacot and avoided being overwhelmed inside. Even though they rank last in the ACC in rebounding margin at minus-5 a game, which could eventually haunt them down the stretch, they are doing a good job of not having these games where they are dominated on the glass by allowing teams to be a plus-20 on the boards like last season. The guards are doing a good job of collapsing on the defensive end and coming up with loose balls while the undersized frontcourt is doing its best to stay active as well.

CHARLIE MOORE A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT AT PG

When Chris Lykes went down with an injury that limited to him to just two games last year, Harlond Beverly was thrust into the lineup as the Hurricanes' point guard and he struggled in handling that role as the least efficient player in the ACC. Charlie Moore transferred in from DePaul and immediately took over as the point guard and is having the best season of his six-year career. Moore has stepped in and provided his usual mix of scoring at 12.5 points per game and assists at 3.9 while shooting 44.4 percent, 39.3 percent from 3, which are both career-highs.

ACC NOT AS STRONG

This is not the main reason why Miami has jumped out to a 7-2 start to lead the ACC, but it is a reason that cannot be overlooked. The ACC has had just one team, Duke, ranked for large portions of the season and the typical strong teams in the ACC—Virginia, North Carolina, Louisville and Syracuse—are just not as strong as they have been in recent years. Even Florida State, which has beat Miami twice this year, is not as strong as they have been. That does not mean these teams are not threats to Miami, it has just helped that Miami has been able to rise to the top of the standings at the midway point with those four not being as strong. Miami still has two against Virginia, which has given the Hurricanes fits in recent years.

BETTER 3-POINT SHOOTING

One of the reasons why Miami struggled last year going 10-17 was the amount of inefficient players taking long-range shots with three of its top six in 3-point attempts shooting under 27 percent. This led to Miami being ranked 325th nationally out of 347 teams in shooting at a 29.5-percent clip. In comparison, Miami is ranked 39th this season at 36.8 percent and leads the ACC in 3-point shooting during conference games at 42.5 percent.

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

The coaching staff and personnel deserve a lot of credit for creating a positive environment with the program. Even though the team has struggled in the past three years, which included five players departing last year, the staff has been able to create an upbeat attitude around the program, led by Jim Larranaga. The positive energy has helped the program get back to competing for NCAA Tournament bids after three straight appearances in 2016-18 and four, with two Sweet 16 appearances, in a six-year span.

ROLE PLAYERS PROVIDING SPARKS

This team is led by McGusty, Wong and Moore, but the team's other two starts in Miller and Waardenburg have settled into their roles and each have provided major sparks at times throughout the year. Miller is coming off an 18-point game on Wednesday against Virginia Tech. He also poured in 25 against NC State and 17 apiece against Wake Forest and Duke. Waardenburg scored a career-high 21 in a win over North Carolina and drilled four 3s in consecutive games against Penn State and Clemson in a pivotal point in the season. Neither are averaging in double figures, but both are threats and are doing a lot of things to help the team win games. Anthony Walker, Wooga Poplar and Bensley Joseph have also been key role players off the bench.

Miami plays at Georgia Tech (9-10, 2-6) on Saturday (12:00 p.m., BSFL).

Waardenburg holds Miami's spacious offense together

By Joseph Dycus
Blue Ribbon Report
Jan. 27, 2022

There are glue guys who contribute to their team in whatever minutes or role they play, and then there is Sam Waardenburg: a glue guy who found a way to contribute without even playing a minute. He had planned on spending his senior 2020-21 season doing what he had done since his redshirt freshman season in 2017. Sam was going to knock down jumpers, defend multiple positions, grab rebounds on both ends of the court, and occasionally throw a snazzy dime or two to a teammate.

Those plans were dashed when a broken foot during a preseason practice sidelined the Miami big man for the year. But while the Hurricanes slogged through a COVID and injury-plagued 10-17 season, the New Zealander kept on contributing to the team without ever touching the floor.

Instead of listlessly taking in the game from the sideline, Waardenburg became another coach on Jim Larrañaga's staff. He dutifully kept track of every aspect of the game and compiled detailed write-ups of what he saw. These reports would help inform Larrañaga and his assistants. It was an alien but ultimately fruitful experience for the now-super senior.

"Maybe for the first time in my career, I was watching the game from a coach's perspective, and it's completely different [from what you see as a player] when you do that," Waardenburg says. "I really appreciate and credit coach Fish for doing that. It helped my IQ and has helped me on the floor this year with the five-out offense we run."

"Fish," otherwise known as coach Adam Fisher, had spent the previous eight years in the Miami program before the Penn State alum went home. Fisher recruited Waardenburg to Coral Gables a half-decade before and gave him guidance during the strange and difficult time. Even though 2021 was a difficult year for the Hurricanes and Waardenburg, Fisher said his protégé handled it with class.

"He encourages guys, and he's probably one of the best teammates I've ever seen," Fisher says. "I think he'd be an outstanding coach, and one of these days if I ever get a job somewhere as a head coach, I'd love to have him on my staff."

Fast-forward a year, and a healthy Waarden-

burg is once again the glue guy for the clinical Miami Hurricanes. Their stay in the basement was nothing but a blip—the Hurricanes are currently 15-5 and first in the ACC (7-2). Their only two league losses came to in-state rival Florida State.

"When Sam returned for this season, our coaches during the summer said, 'you know, we might want to consider spacing the floor and using Sam as a five man on offense and letting him handle the ball as a stretch five rather than a stretch four,'" Larrañaga says. "We knew we were going to be more of a finesse team, and so five out became a very popular direction we were going to go in, and it's worked out really well because Sam is a very good facilitator."

Larrañaga studied film of the Nuggets with Nikola Jokic and looked a few miles away to FTX Arena, where the Heat use Bam Adebayo as an initiator on the perimeter. The Hurricanes took an immediate liking to the new system. After a rocky 4-3 start, they have exploded to an 11-2 record, and both those losses to FSU were by a point.

"It happened early on in the preseason," Waardenburg says. "It was just one practice where we were like 'Let's throw the ball to Sam in the middle and get some movement going.' It was working well with the skilled players we have like Kam [McGusty] and Isaiah [Wong] and Charlie [Moore] as well as the guys we have coming off the bench."

The Hurricanes have proven this five-out offense is more than just a preseason fancy. They rank third in the ACC in field goal percentage (.480), three-point accuracy (.407), and free throw attempts (19.3) and are top of the league in points per game (79.5). Their offensive rating (109.7) is also in the top 50 in the country. No matter what metric you use, it paints Miami as a top-tier offense.

If North Carolina needed any convincing Miami was "for real," the Tar Heels became believers after the Hurricanes blew them away, 85-57, in South Beach. McGusty and Wong were prolific scorers, but it was Waardenburg's 17-point first-half outburst that put Miami ahead early. He hit four 3s from all over the court and mixed in a few straight-line dunks by attacking closeouts when the Tar Heels scrambled to defend his shot.

"Sam's a really good player coming back from his injury, and he's been a main piece even if he's not scoring a lot in some games," Wong said after the UNC game. "He's a stretch five

everyone can rely on, and the scouting report is mostly on me, Kam, and Charlie. They leave Sam wide open, and he can go off at any time."

A few days earlier, another traditional ACC powerhouse went down, albeit in a different and more dramatic fashion. When Miami prevailed over Duke by a slim 76-74 margin, the difference in the game should be credited to Miami's frenetic defense. With Waardenburg flying in and out of the paint as a switchable five, the Hurricanes pestered Duke into 17 turnovers (to the Hurricanes' five). Miami may rank near the bottom in rebounding, but it more than makes up for it with a league-leading 10 steals per game.

"Now we're smaller and Sam is versatile and can switch and he can front," Larrañaga says about implementing his famed scramble defense this year. "Anthony Walker and Jordan Miller can front, too. We decided we'll try to force more turnovers so that if we get beat on the boards, it won't be quite as dramatic as if we didn't get any turnovers."

One of two players left from Miami's last NCAA tournament team in 2018 (Rodney Miller being the other), Waardenburg knows what a locker room destined for March basketball looks like. He says the biggest similarity between that year's team and this year's is "how much fun and love there is in the locker room."

Now a grizzled leader among many talented athletes, Waardenburg's career may end with him passing, shooting, and defending for a team that goes deep into the tournament. After that, the multitasking big man who is working on his second master's degree will have plenty of career choices in his post-collegiate life.

"I would say that after 22, going on 23 years of my life in school, I might be ready to leave the classroom behind," Waardenburg says. "But I'll always be thankful for my time here, and I'm really looking forward to the rest of the season and whatever it brings."

Miami Hurricanes are atop ACC, but know better than to take Georgia Tech lightly

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 28, 2022

The casual fan might see the University of Miami in first place in the Atlantic Coast Conference and Georgia Tech in 14th place and figure that Saturday's noon matchup in Atlanta won't be much of a game.

But anybody who follows the two teams more carefully knows better.

The Yellow Jackets' record is 9-10 overall and 2-6 in the conference, but they are coming off a 75-61 win against Florida State, which swept the Hurricanes this month.

As if that weren't enough to motivate the Hurricanes (15-5, 7-2 ACC), Georgia Tech has beaten UM the past three times they played. Last February, the Jackets won by 27, and Michael DeVoe scorched the Canes for 29 points, including 7-of-11 from three-point range.

Georgia Tech went on to win the ACC tournament, DeVoe was the MVP and he is the second-leading scorer in the conference this season at 19.2 points per game. Jordan Usher averages 15.4 and had a big game against the Seminoles on Wednesday with 19 points, eight rebounds, five steals and five assists.

Tech had 13 steals against FSU and will aim to disrupt Miami's scoring trio of guards Kam McGusty, Isaiah Wong and Charlie Moore, whose half-court buzzer-beating shot sank Virginia Tech on Wednesday.

McGusty ranks sixth in the ACC with 17.9 points per game and Wong is seventh with 16.5.

"Georgia Tech has their own unique style, just like Florida State does," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "They change defenses a lot. They play man, they play zone, but their zone is unique. It has different shapes and strategies. Sometimes they like to trap out of it, they like to trap in the corners, they vary the pickups and pressure. They're very good at forcing turnovers. You have to be very careful not to make mistakes."

Miami moved into sole possession of first place in the ACC after the road win over Virginia Tech. The team's only two losses since late November were to Florida State, both by one point.

But the Hurricanes know they face a tough

challenge Saturday on both ends of the court.

"They're also a very potent offensive team whenever Michael DeVoe or Jordyn Usher catch fire because they can carry the offense for long periods of time," Larranaga said.

"You can't get any separation on DeVoe. He is such a high-octane scorer that if you give him a three, he's going to make the three and if you overplay the three, he's so good at getting to the rim. He's very, very clever in the paint, shot faking and getting fouled. He can play the one, the two, the three. He's very good in the open court. He is, deservedly, a very well-respected player around the ACC and the country."

After the Georgia Tech game Miami is back home next Wednesday against Notre Dame (7 p.m.)

Lucky or good? Either way, the Hurricanes are excelling in close games

By Adam Lichtenstein
Sun Sentinel
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When Charlie Moore's last-second, half-court heave bounced off the backboard and through the net to give Miami a three-point road win over Virginia Tech on Wednesday, there had to be some element of luck involved. Desperate shots from about 50 feet away require some good fortune.

But the Hurricanes' ability to pull out another close win is more than luck. Miami has excelled in close games this season, winning seven of 10 games where the final margin of victory has been six points or fewer. A couple of small changes in those close games would likely mean several more losses, and Miami would not be in first place in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"Those types of games, especially like [Wednesday], those are games that you remember for a very long time," sixth-year senior forward Sam Waardenburg said. "And ones like that, especially, those you remember for the rest of your life. That's college basketball at its best. That's just fun, all around."

Waardenburg said the team prepares for tight, late-game situations, and that training has been needed. Many of the Hurricanes' conference games have been particularly close. Of their nine ACC games, six have been decided by six points or fewer. Miami is 4-2 in those games, with two one-point losses to Florida State marking the only blemishes.

"We prepare well for those moments because ... we're in the ACC and you've got to expect to have a lot of games like that where it comes down to one or two possessions," Waardenburg said.

So why is Miami so good in close situations? Coach Jim Larrañaga said it simply comes down to having good players who know how to play in close situations.

"I think any coach would tell you in close games, your players have to stay cool, calm and collected," Larrañaga said. "We call it 'poise down the stretch.' To have that kind of poise, you need very good players. You need players who understand the moment, who understand what it's going to take either to make a shot or to stop the other team from making a shot."

It doesn't hurt that Miami (15-5, 7-2 ACC) has a roster built around experienced players. The

Hurricanes have four sixth-year seniors and two additional players who are in their fourth or fifth year of college.

"Most of our guys have been in games like that throughout their career," Waardenburg said. "The more you get to experience, the more you're able to stay cool, calm and collected in those moments. I feel like [Wednesday], especially, we did an amazing job of keeping our composure."

Still, one metric points to the Hurricanes having a bit of luck. The college basketball analytics site kenpom.com has a "luck" rating that tries to isolate how much a team is outperforming its expected winning percentage. By that metric, Miami ranks as the 19th luckiest team in Division I basketball and the luckiest team in the ACC entering Friday.

"I don't think it's luck or anything like that," Moore said. "I just think it's our work we put in every day. We come in focused and ready to work."

That luck may have shown itself when Moore sunk his last-second shot on Wednesday. Or maybe it was Moore preparing himself for that same situation.

"You can say that it was a lucky shot," Waardenburg said, "but when you have someone who prepares as well as Charlie does, the chances of something like that happening for him than anyone else, really, because ... he takes deep threes. He's really good at it. He practices it all the time. So that moment was kind of built for him."

Whether it's luck, skill or preparation, the Hurricanes will need more of it as they progress deeper into ACC play and get closer to postseason tournaments. Miami visits Georgia Tech (9-10, 2-6) on Saturday. The Yellow Jackets are 14th in the ACC but just knocked off Florida State, which Miami couldn't do in two games against the Seminoles.

"I feel like the games are only going to get much harder than they are now," Moore said. "Everybody's starting to come into form, get better, knowing that it's getting down to the wire. All games are starting to become more and more important, so I feel like these games will definitely help us. There's going to be more games like this."

MBB Tallies 73-62 Road Victory at Georgia Tech

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
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The University of Miami men's basketball team retained its spot solely atop the ACC standings with a 73-62 win Saturday afternoon at Georgia Tech.

Miami (16-5, 8-2 ACC) outscored the Yellow Jackets by a 25-8 margin during a sub-nine-minute stretch midway through the game, en route to earning their second road win in four days and moving to 5-1 in opponents' arenas. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty paced the Hurricanes with a game-high 20 points in the victory, during which they led by as many as 19 points and trailed for just 44 seconds.

"I thought our guys played extremely well. There is always tremendous adversity, especially on the road, but even within the game, so many different things happen and you've got to constantly make adjustments," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "I thought our guys made adjustments beautifully, especially down the stretch. Charlie Moore was playing great, but then fouled out; Bensley Joseph came in and did a great job. Our guys off the bench, like Anthony Walker, really helped us in the first half.

"It came down to [the fact that] Georgia Tech plays very, very hard and we had to overcome a late run by them, and our guys were able to do it."

Miami jumped out to an early 12-5 lead through 6:33 of action, holding Georgia Tech (9-11, 2-7 ACC) scoreless for four-plus minutes. The Yellow Jackets then answered with eight straight points to go up by one, after which the Hurricanes scored eight of their own in a row, making it 20-13 with 8:12 on the clock.

Georgia Tech pulled back within one multiple times down the stretch of the half, but Miami eventually ended it on an 8-2 surge, capped with a buzzer-beating 3-pointer by McGusty, to take a then-game-high eight-point edge, 36-28, into the locker room.

Both teams shot under 40 percent in the opening 20 minutes, but the Hurricanes went 11-of-12 (91.7 percent) at the line compared the Yellow Jackets' 1-of-4 mark (25.0 percent). Georgia Tech senior guard Michael Devoe, the ACC's second-leading scorer, scored five first-half points on 2-of-8 shooting after opening 0-of-4 and 1-of-7 from the floor.

McGusty, who hit two 3-pointers in the final 40 seconds of the first half after missing his first four field goals, scored the opening four points of the second frame, giving him a personal 10-2 run and putting Miami up by 12, 40-28, with 18:29 left. After a Georgia Tech basket, the Hurricanes scored seven straight points in 73 seconds to spark a 13-4 run and take a game-high 19-point edge, 53-34, with 13:30 to play. It marked a 17-6 surge for the Hurricanes in the first six-and-a-half minutes after the break.

"Offensively, we play off of our defense. We were getting some really good stops that led to some fast breaks," Larrañaga said. "There was one play Charlie Moore was running on the fast break and Georgia Tech was running back to the lane and he just stopped and hit a three. When you're playing with a lot of confidence, you have the ability to do that. I think our guys were feeling very good at that moment in time."

Soon thereafter, however, the Yellow Jackets went on an 11-0 run in just 3:41 to cut their deficit to eight, 63-55, with 5:10 remaining. They sliced it down to six, 65-59, with 3:53 to go after making a fifth consecutive field goal.

Miami, however, went back up by 10, 69-59, with 2:57 to go and held the Yellow Jackets without a point until just 70 seconds remained, slamming the door on the home team's comeback bid on the way to an 11-point decision.

McGusty, who scored 16 of his 20 points in the final 21 minutes, shot 8-of-8 at the line and grabbed five rebounds on the day. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller posted 13 points and a team-best eight rebounds, adding two assists and two steals.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, who surpassed 1,500 points as a collegian in the win, totaled 12 points, three assists and four steals before fouling out with 3:14 left.

Sixth-year redshirt senior Sam Waardenburg, who played just 23 minutes after committing two fouls in the first 2:01, added eight points, as did third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong. The five Miami starters combined for all but three of the team's made field goals.

Senior forward Khalid Moore paced the Yellow Jackets with 19 points on 9-of-12 shooting in 35 minutes of action. Senior guard/forward Jordan Usher tallied 15 points, a game-high 10 rebounds and a game-high six assists.

Devoe, meanwhile, finished with just 12 points, 7.2 below his average on the year, on 4-of-11 shooting from the field.

Miami finished the day 21-of-25 (84.0 percent) from the stripe, while the Yellow Jackets shot just 3-of-10 (30.0 percent). The Hurricanes also won the rebounding battle, 38-31, their first time doing so in ACC action and their sixth time doing so this season.

Up next for the Hurricanes is a home matchup with Notre Dame, slated for Wednesday at 7 p.m., live on RSN from the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Fla.

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 15-12 all-time against Georgia Tech, including 7-6 on the road and 8-6 in Larrañaga's tenure.
- Miami snapped a three-game losing skid to the Yellow

Jackets, as well as improved to 5-2 at McCamish Pavilion under Larrañaga.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 686-469 in 38 years as a head coach, including 216-135 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– Now owning 110 ACC wins (regular season or tournament) as a head coach, Larrañaga tied Dave Odom for the No. 13 spot on the all-time list.

– With 99 victories in ACC play, Larrañaga passed Bud Millikan for sole possession of the No. 14 position on the all-time leaderboard.

– For the 15th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, J. Miller, Waardenburg and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

– The Hurricanes, for the third time (also 3/1/21 at Virginia and 1/8/22 at Duke), wore throwback jerseys, courtesy of adidas, that paid homage to Miami's teams of the late 1990's, including the 1999-2000 squad that won a share of the BIG EAST regular season title and earned the program's first Sweet 16 berth.

– Moore reached 1,500 points on a fast-break layup with 11:02 left in the game, starting a personal 7-2 run in just 57 seconds.

– Moore is one of just 12 active Division I players with at least 1,500 points and 500 assists, alongside Iowa's Jordan Bohannon, Texas' Marcus Carr, UConn's RJ Cole, Furman's Conley Garrison, Richmond's Jacob Gilyard, Incarnate Word's RJ Glasper, Arizona State's Marreon Jackson, Stony Brook's Jahlil Jenkins, UMass' Rich Kelly, Kansas' Remy Martin and Grand Canyon's Holland Woods.

– The Hurricanes have 16 wins in their first 21 games this season after losing 16 of their first 23 games last year.

– Miami committed a season-high 16 turnovers, three more than it has tallied in any other game, and had more giveaways than its opponent (14) for just the third time all year, including just the second time in ACC play.

– Freshman guard Bensley Joseph, who played a season-high 22 minutes and grabbed a season-best five rebounds, eclipsed 50 points and 250 minutes in the first year of his young career.

– McGusty, with former Oklahoma teammate Trae Young sitting courtside, notched his 21st 20-point performance, including his 15th as a Hurricane and eighth of 2021-22.

– McGusty scored in double figures for the 83rd time, including the 55th as a Hurricane and 20th this year.

– J. Miller tallied double-figure points for the 58th time, including the eighth this season.

– Moore, who moved past 3,750 minutes played as a collegian, registered double-digit points for the 70th time, including the 13th in 2021-22.

– Wong, who eclipsed 300 rebounds Miami, had his streak of 19 consecutive double-figure point totals, dating back to the second outing of the year on 11/13/21 versus UCF, come to an end.

Miami Hurricanes stay atop ACC standings with 73-62 road win against Georgia Tech

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Jan. 29, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes continued to build a case for a Top 25 ranking with a 73-62 road win against Georgia Tech on Saturday afternoon.

UM improved to 16-5 overall and remained atop the ACC standings at 8-2. The Canes have won 12 of 14 games since late November, their only blemishes a pair of one-point losses to Florida State.

"Again, one heck of a college basketball game," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "We played terrific for a long stretch and then Georgia Tech stormed back and did a great job of forcing turnovers. We built a great lead to start the second half and were able to hang on."

Kameron McGusty led the Hurricanes with 20 points and was 8-of-8 from the free throw line. Jordan Miller had 13 points and eight rebounds, and Charlie Moore chipped in 12 points, four rebounds, three assists, and four steals before fouling out with 3:14 to go.

Larranaga made a point to praise freshman backup point guard Bensley Joseph, who wound up playing 22 minutes because Moore picked up a pair of early fouls and then fouled out at a critical part of the game after Tech went on a 12-2 run. Joseph stepped up with five points, five rebounds and two assists.

Going into the game Larranaga warned his players that Georgia Tech thrives on a variety of zone defenses that result in turnovers. The Yellow Jackets forced FSU into 17 turnovers and beat the Seminoles mid-week, and they were pesky again in the early going against Miami.

The Hurricanes averaged 8.4 turnovers per game before Saturday but turned the ball over six times in the first 10 minutes against Georgia Tech and 10 times in the first half. Miami finished the day with 16 turnovers, the first time all season the Hurricanes' opponent forced more turnovers than they did.

"They're the best team in the league at looking for steals," Larranaga said of the Yellow Jackets. "They actually play your passing lanes. They're very, very active defensively so we're not surprised by our number of turnovers. You've got to give their defense a lot of credit."

A pair of Jordan Miller dunks put the Hurricanes ahead 9-3 in the opening minutes and

the Yellow Jackets struggled to score, missing eight of their first nine shots. Tech took a brief lead at 13-12, but the Hurricanes got back in front and were ahead by eight at halftime largely due to sixth-year senior McGusty.

McGusty made four consecutive free throws and back-to-back three pointers to give UM a 36-28 lead at the break. Watching from the stands at McCamish Pavilion was Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young, who was McGusty's teammate at the University of Oklahoma before McGusty transferred to Miami. The two remain good friends.

McGusty's hot streak continued after intermission. He made a pair of layups to open a 10-point lead for the Hurricanes and they never looked back.

Sam Waardenburg, who played only seven minutes in the first half after picking up two early fouls, made it a 15-point UM lead with a three pointer with 16 minutes to go.

Then it was time for the Charlie Moore Show. The Miami point guard, coming off his half-court game-winning shot against Virginia Tech, went on a seven-point scoring run with a layup, a steal that led to a three-pointer, and another layup to push UM's lead to 18 points with nine minutes to go.

The lead got as big as 19 points on an Anthony Walker three-pointer. But the Hurricanes had to work for the victory. Tech started hitting shots, Miami turned the ball over three times over a three-minute stretch and the Yellow Jackets went on their 12-2 run and got within 10.

Miami's veteran-laden team showed poise down the stretch, as it has all season, and made late free-throws to preserve the win.

The Hurricanes play at home Wednesday at 7 p.m. against Notre Dame, which is in third place in the ACC standings at 13-6 overall and 6-2 in the league.

Kameron McGusty scores 20 points, Hurricanes hold off late Yellow Jackets rally

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Jan. 29, 2022

Wins on the road were tough to find over the previous three seasons.

This year, it was been a much different story.

Kameron McGusty scored 20 points and the Miami Hurricanes withstood a rally from the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets during a 73-62 victory in Atlanta Saturday afternoon.

"I think Miami is really good," Georgia Tech coach Josh Pastner said. "I think they're really good and I think they can make a deep run in the NCAA Tournament. They've got great perimeter players and they can flat out put the ball in the basket."

Charlie Moore had 12 points and four steals for the Hurricanes, who have won 12 of 14 and remain atop the ACC standings at the midway point of the league schedule.

Miami (16-5, 8-2 ACC) ended a three-game losing streak to Georgia Tech (9-11, 2-7) and improved to 5-1 on the road this season, 3-1 in ACC games. Miami had won just five of 31 road games in the last three years.

"I think playing on the road every year is hard," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said. "One of the things that was very different for us this year than any other year I've ever coached was starting at home the first four games and we were able to capitalize on that opportunity by going 4-0. That gave us some confidence going on the road because we were playing pretty darn well and if you win one like we did at Duke, you feel good about yourself and now we're 3-1 in conference games on the road. That's a pretty darn good road record in the ACC because I think there's a lot of parity in the league."

Atlanta Hawks All-Star Trae Young, who played one season with McGusty at Oklahoma, sat courtside and watched his former teammate spark a pivotal run.

Georgia Tech pulled within 28-26 on a layup by Jordan Usher shortly before halftime with the crowd to its feet.

However, Miami went on a 19-4 run over the next six minutes, spanning both halves, and led 47-30 after a pair of free throws by McGusty. Sam Waardenburg hit a corner 3 and shortly after Pastner voiced his frustration and received a technical foul, sending McGusty to

the line.

Miami's biggest lead was 19 points at 53-34 with 13:30 left.

"We played terrific for a long stretch and then Georgia Tech stormed back and did a great job of forcing turnovers," Larranaga said.

Georgia Tech cut the deficit to 63-55 with five minutes remaining shortly after Moore, Wednesday's hero with the half-court winner over Virginia Tech, picked up his fourth foul.

McGusty calmly ended an 11-0 run by hitting a pair of free throws.

Georgia Tech's Khalid Moore continued to pound the ball inside and his thunderous one-handed dunk cut the Miami lead to 65-59 with 3:53 left.

Once again it was McGusty who helped Miami stay in front with a backdoor layup and the Hurricanes were able to hold on despite Moore fouling out at the 3:14 mark.

Georgia Tech standout Michael Devoe, who entered second in the ACC in scoring at 19.1 a game, was held to 12 points on 4-of-11 shooting after pouring in 29 against the Hurricanes last year.

Jordan Miller helped Miami get off to a good start with a pair of two-handed dunks for a 9-3 lead. Miller finished with 13 points.

McGusty drilled a pair of 3s in the final minute of the half, including a step-back one at the buzzer, to give Miami a 36-28 lead at the break.

Miami was able to withstand a season-high 16 turnovers and shooting just 41.5 percent (22 of 53) from the field--their second-lowest mark in conference play.

Miami hosts Notre Dame on Feb. 2 in a battle of two of the top ACC teams. Notre Dame is 6-2 in the conference and plays Virginia later on Saturday.

Resilience and Energy

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Jan. 31, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team picked up a 12th win in its last 14 outings Saturday afternoon at Georgia Tech.

Miami (16-5, 8-2 ACC) led by 19 points with under 14 minutes left, but the Yellow Jackets, behind an 11-0 run, battled back to pull within six points down the stretch. It was a 65-59 game with 3:53, coming out of the final media timeout.

From there, the Hurricanes outscored the home team by an 8-3 margin to earn an 11-point win, 73-62, at McCamish Pavilion in Atlanta. It showed, once again, that this experienced Miami team does not collapse in any situation.

"Like [head coach Jim Larrañaga] says, basketball is a game of runs. We know they're going to make their runs and it's just one of those things we've got to hold off and persevere [against] and be resilient about," sixth-year redshirt senior Rodney Miller Jr., said. "But, what Coach L has been saying for the past several games, he's like, 'You guys have had tremendous poise down the stretch.' And to speak on that, we have. I feel like that's what has been key in us winning. We've been really poised in the last ... four minutes of the games. I feel like that has really helped us come out on top.

"I think that is credited to a lot of the seniors on the team," Miller continued. "We've been in close-game situations multiple times so we've been able to handle it."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty paced Miami with a game-high 20 points, including 16 in the final 21 minutes, in front of his former teammate, NBA All-Star Trae Young. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller posted 13 points and eight rebounds, while sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore totaled 12 points and eclipsed 1,500 total in his career.

The Hurricanes' triumph at Georgia Tech was their fifth in six tries on the road. They are one of just 14 teams in the nation to win five-plus road games without losing multiple such outings.

Last week, Miami won two road tilts in the span of just four days. Before knocking off the Yellow Jackets, the Hurricanes won at Virginia Tech, 78-75, on a half-court buzzer-beater by Moore.

To Miller, a sixth-year redshirt senior center, the Hurricanes' ability to take teams down in their home gyms ties in to their confidence in late-game situations.

"It's just a credit to our resilience because road games are the toughest, but a lot of us, we actually turn it into ... something we look forward to," Miller said. "We definitely accept and embrace the challenge, especially at places

like Cameron Indoor or at Virginia Tech. We know we're going to have great games and you need to put your best foot forward. I feel like that's when we really play our best basketball; we really step up to the plate."

As much as the Hurricanes enjoy going on the road and silencing an opposing crowd, they also love playing in front of their home fans. For the first time in 11 days—since the sell-out against Florida State—they will do just that Wednesday night.

Miami is slated to play Notre Dame at 7 p.m. at the Watsco Center, in a matchup of two teams in the top three of the ACC standings.

"I feel like this crowd has probably been the best it's been since I've ever been here," Miller said. "The fans really need to understand how important a home-court advantage is to us; it's amazing how much it helps us win the game. So, I'm super excited. I love being in the Watsco seats and listening to the fans go crazy. We definitely need all the support we can get. It's a big chance for us, so we definitely need all the energy we can get."

Miami is 12-14 all-time versus Notre Dame, including 6-6 at home and 5-6 in Larrañaga's tenure. Most recently, the Fighting Irish earned a 71-61 home victory on Feb. 14, 2021.

The Fighting Irish, who plays ninth-ranked Duke on their home court Monday night, are currently 14-6 (7-2 ACC) on the season. They are 10-1 in their last 11 games, with the lone loss by six points at Virginia Tech.

Notre Dame owns a victory over Kentucky, currently ranked fifth in the country, and is top-40 in the nation in offensive efficiency, per KenPom. The Fighting Irish are led by fourth-year junior guard Dane Goodwin, who is shooting 50.0 percent from 3-point range and averaging 15.4 points per game.

"They shoot the ball well. So, just like all the other games, we're going to have to put our best foot forward and we're going to have to prepare," Miller shared. "Coach L says, 'Hey, how do you guys feel about playing an early game, a late game or this type of game?' And it doesn't really matter because the way we prepare, we're going to be prepared regardless, whatever the time, where [the game is or whatever] the location.

"The coaching staff does an amazing job with preparations and scouts, and they make sure we're definitely ready and prepared for every game," Miller added. "So, I'm super excited to compete against Notre Dame."

The Hurricanes and Fighting Irish actually have quite a few similarities on the hardwood. Both shoot efficiently from the field, rarely turn the ball over and do not crash the offensive glass much.

Virginia Tech head coach Mike Young even described the Hurricanes as "Notre Dame on steroids" after last week's walk-off matchup in Blacksburg, Va.

After several games against teams that play quite different from Miami, this contest will be the opposite. Miller knows effort becomes that much more important when alike teams face off.

"A lot of times you'll see teams beating other teams and it's purely due to matchups. Every game is different because the matchups are different. So, when you go up against a team that's similar to your play style, one of the top things you need to do is just outwork them," the Laurelton, N.Y., native said. "[You need to] be relentless on the court and just play harder than them. Basketball [games are] a sprint, a race. You've got to outwork your opponent, especially when [there are] similarities in the play style. But, just like what Coach L has been saying, we've just got to be prepared, know their personnel, know what they want to do and take that away from them."

Despite being currently tied atop the ACC in the loss column with two setbacks apiece, both Miami (No. 12) and Notre Dame (eighth) were picked to finish in the bottom half of the league in the preseason poll.

Nonetheless, both teams have proven doubters wrong through 20-plus games. Each is receiving votes in the national polls and Wednesday's showdown is a key one at the midpoint of the ACC season.

Miller, much like his teammates, is enjoying the season thus far and doing what he can, even when he is not in the game, to help the Hurricanes continue stacking victories.

"Honestly, it's really easy to have fun when you're winning, especially with your brothers. I feel like this team is so supportive and it's just a great group of guys we've got here together," he said. "We're working really hard. Right now, we've just got to stick to it, put our heads down and just keep going. And I feel like [there is something] I can provide to this team that's simple that nobody has to ask for and that's energy. That's what I'm going to bring. I'm going to help any way I can and just keep helping this team, being a leader on and off the court. That's what I'm going to do. I'm having fun with it. We're loving it, we're enjoying it and the fans are into it. We're just going to ride this out."

Miami's meeting with the Fighting Irish will be televised live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun locally—with Tom Werme and Mike Gminski on the call. A full affiliate is available HERE and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, HERE.

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 can be found HERE.

After playing Notre Dame, the Hurricanes travel to Charlottesville, Va., where they meet Virginia Saturday at 5 p.m., live on ACC Network from John Paul Jones Arena.

Why isn't the UM men's basketball team ranked yet? A combination of reasons

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 1, 2022

University of Miami fans have been waiting for weeks now to see their exciting, resurgent men's basketball team break into the Top 25.

Surely, this week they'd make the list, right? Could the Hurricanes be left out after Charlie Moore's half-court buzzer-beating game-winner at Virginia Tech followed up by a convincing road win at Georgia Tech?

Answer: Yes.

Miami fans will have to wait at least another week and their patience is wearing thin. With good reason.

The Hurricanes have been the surprise of the ACC this season. Heading into Wednesday's home game against Notre Dame they are 16-5 overall and tied with Duke atop the conference standings with an 8-2 league record. The ninth-ranked Blue Devils are 18-3, share the same conference record, and the Canes beat them on Duke's home floor in early January.

So, what gives?

How is it that Duke remains in the Top 10 (the only ACC school voters deemed worthy of a ranking) while the Hurricanes are nowhere to be found in the Top 25? They are way down the list in the AP poll at No. 30 among the "Also Receiving Votes" group with 29 votes.

Miami is 12-2 since late-November, its only two losses by one point to Florida State, which also beat Duke. Shouldn't that be enough to earn a ranking? What about that 28-point rout over North Carolina? Doesn't that count for anything?

Apparently, the voters are not that impressed.

The national narrative is that the ACC is having a down year, so beating Duke, Carolina and Syracuse doesn't mean what it once did. In the Jan. 3 poll, Duke was the only ACC team to receive votes. According to the Raleigh News & Observer, that was the first time in more than 40 years that only one ACC team received votes in the poll – and there were only eight teams back then.

Why the disrespect for the ACC? Here are a few theories:

The ACC's non-conference results this year are nothing to write home about. The ACC is

4-16 against ranked teams and has a losing record against teams from the Big East, Big Ten, Big 12 and SEC. They are 2-2 against Pac-12 teams.

Also, there are not as many NBA first-round draft picks projected from the ACC this winter as in previous years. Other than Duke's trio of Paolo Banchemo, Trevor Keels and A.J. Griffin, there are no shoo-in first-round picks from the conference that for so long bred top NBA talent.

The last two ACC Player of the Year winners – Duke's Tre Jones in 2020 and Georgia Tech's Moses Wright in 2021 – were not picked in the first round.

Another reason voters may be reluctant to put ACC teams in the Top 25 is the over-reliance on analytics, particularly kenpom.com, which ranks teams based on "adjusted efficiency margins", which, in plain English, is the difference between a team's offensive and defensive efficiency, the number of points by which the team would be expected to outscore the average Division I team over 100 possessions.

The latest kenpom.com ratings have Duke at No. 10, North Carolina at No. 34, Virginia Tech at No. 40, Wake Forest at No. 41 and Miami at No. 54.

I was an English and Journalism double major, and never was very good at math, but the more relevant statistic in my mind is 4-0 in head-to-head competition. The Hurricanes are 4-0 against the Blue Devils, Tar Heels, Hokies and Demon Deacons so how can they be ranked below all four of those teams?

There are no analytics or rankings for heart, grit, and outstanding coaching. If there were, UM would certainly be in the Top 25.

Still, ACC coaches believe strongly in their league and feel the conference is as strong top to bottom as it has ever been.

"I've always felt the ACC is the best league in the country, and there's a lot of different ways to measure that," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "A year ago, over a 10-year period the ACC had 110 NBA draft choices. The next closest was the SEC with around 72 and Kentucky had 40 of those. Why the ACC is a little bit underrated right now, in my opinion, it's because we had a lot of changes, transfers, players going pro. There's always a period of adjustment and November was that period for all of us. After November we've done pretty well."

Georgia Tech coach Josh Pastner, a self-described "eternal optimist" insists there is no league better than the ACC and feels Miami is underrated.

"Jim Larranaga's creeping up on 700 wins, he's well deserving of being in the Hall of Fame," Pastner said. "He's an excellent coach, they have an excellent staff, they've got great players. Their perimeter players are so good. In college basketball, if you have great guard play, you're going to have a chance to really advance and that's what they have and that's why they're leading the ACC."

"I think the national media, with all due respect, they think if Carolina or Duke is not Top 5 in AP and dominating, then automatically the league is down, but it's the exact opposite. Because Carolina and Duke have been so good for so long it's forced everyone to raise the bar to try to meet those programs at the very top. It's not that the league is down, it's that the league is so good from one to 15."

"The league is as good as it's been, it's just not as top heavy, so that's just a myth. It's unfortunate. Maybe in the 90's or early 2000s that was the case, but no longer. I think our league is the best league in America."

We'll find out in March.

MBB Falls to Notre Dame, 68-64

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 2, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team dropped a 68-64 decision to Notre Dame Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored a team-high 18 points for the Hurricanes, who could not contain the Fighting Irish's paint play in the first half or their timely 3-point shooting in the second. The setback, which came in front of a record 1,986 students, marked the first in ACC play by more than one point for Miami (16-6, 8-3 ACC).

"I thought Notre Dame did a very good job of getting the ball inside against our defense," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We tried to take away the three and we did that in the first half, but [Paul] Atkinson got 15 points and our defense was spread out too much. But if you don't [do that], they hit a bunch of threes. So, you have to pick your poison and we did. We defended the three very well, but couldn't defend them on the interior."

After the Hurricanes scored the first four points, Notre Dame (15-7, 8-3 ACC) went on a 10-0 run in just 2:19 to take a 10-4 lead after just 4:25. Miami eventually leveled the score at 22 with 5:33 on the first-half clock.

The Fighting Irish, who committed just two first-half turnovers, outscored the Hurricanes by two the rest of the frame and took a 30-28 lead into the locker room.

Miami held Notre Dame, one of the best long-range shooting teams in the ACC, to a 1-of-15 clip (6.7 percent) in the opening 20 minutes. However, the Fighting Irish went 13-of-17 (76.5 percent) inside the arc after making 12 of their first 13 2-pointers. Fifth-year senior forward Paul Atkinson Jr., made his first seven field goals and totaled 15 first-half points for the visitors.

After Miami took the lead early in the second half, the Fighting Irish responded with a 10-0 run in 2:13, sparked by back-to-back 3-pointers from fourth-year junior guard Prentiss Hubb. The burst gave Notre Dame a then-game-high eight-point edge, 42-34, with 13:53 left.

Soon thereafter, the Fighting Irish went on their third 10-0 burst of the night, this one in 2:03, to take a game-best 14-point edge, 54-40, with 10:01 to play. Overall, it marked a 22-6 extended burst during which the Fighting Irish went 4-of-4 from 3-point range after a 1-of-16 start.

Miami cut the deficit to five, 63-58, on a 3-pointer by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore

with 2:29 to go, but fourth-year junior guard Dane Goodwin countered with one of his own at the other end to beat the shot clock. The Hurricanes then pulled within four, 66-62, on a Moore fast-break layup with 30.1 ticks remaining, but got no closer the rest of the way.

Moore joined Wong in double figures, totaling 12 points to go along with a co-game-high seven assists, one shy of his season high, and a game-best three steals.

Third-year sophomore Anthony Walker also notched 12 points, shooting 5-of-7 from the floor and making both his 3-pointers. The Baltimore native, who matched his point total from the prior five games combined, grabbed a team-high eight rebounds, three past his prior season high.

Atkinson led all players in both points (23) and rebounds (11), as he finished 11-of-16 from the floor. Hubb scored 15 points, including 13 in the second half, and dished out six assists. Goodwin tallied 14 points, 11 of which came before the break.

Miami held freshman guard Blake Wesley to five points on 2-of-13 shooting, including a 0-of-7 mark from 3-point range, though he did co-lead all players with seven assists.

Both teams committed just six turnovers, tallied exactly five steals and shot 4-of-6 from the free-throw line. Each side also logged 17-plus assists, as Notre Dame had 20 and Miami recorded 17.

The Hurricanes, who did not attempt a free throw in the first 35-plus minutes, posted a 17-7 edge in bench points, but Notre Dame's 44-26 advantage in the paint proved to be the difference.

"Our defense did not have the energy that we've shown in previous games throughout the ACC [season thus far]," Larrañaga said. "So, hopefully we get some rest and bounce back."

Miami now heads to John Paul Jones Arena in Charlottesville, Va., where it takes the court Saturday at 5 p.m. against Virginia.

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 12-15 all-time against Notre Dame, including 6-7 at home and 5-7 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 686-470 in 38 years as a head coach, including 216-136 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the 16th time this season, Miami used a

starting lineup of Moore, Wong, sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– Miami head football coach Mario Cristobal, 10-time NBA All-Star Ray Allen, 2017 MLB All-Star Yonder Alonso, 2021 NFL First Team All-Pro Braxton Berrios and 2017 first-round NFL Draft choice David Njoku were among the fans in attendance.

– The prior top mark for student attendance was 1,682 on 1/22/22 against Florida State, marking the second straight game the record fell.

– Now with 29 steals in ACC play this season, Moore moved from tied to sixth up to fourth place on Miami's ACC-only single-season list.

– Miami fell to 5-5 when trailing at halftime, including 4-2 in its last six such games and 3-2 in such ACC contests.

– The Hurricanes' three ACC losses are by a combined six points.

– Notre Dame's six turnovers marked the fewest by a Miami opponent this season and ended a streak of eight straight games in which the Hurricanes forced 13-plus giveaways.

– Miami had fewer than seven steals for the first time in ACC play and had its streak of 10 consecutive outings with seven-plus come to an end.

– Notre Dame's three 10-0 runs spanned 2:19, 2:13 and 2:03, good for a 30-0 margin in a total of just 6:35, while Miami outscored the Fighting Irish by 26 points in the other 33:25 of play.

– Atkinson and Goodwin combined for 26 of Notre Dame's 30 first-half points, shooting a combined 12-of-15 from the floor.

– J. Miller reached 100 steals as a collegian.

– Waardenburg surpassed both 2,500 minutes played and 75 blocks at Miami.

– Wong, who eclipsed both 1,050 points and 100 made 3-pointers in his career, scored in double digits for the 53rd time, including the 20th this season.

– Walker, who reached 450 points as a Hurricane, tallied double-digit points for the 19th time, including the fourth in 2021-22.

– Walker set a season high in both made field goals and made 3-pointers, tying his career best in the latter.

– Moore scored in double figures for the 71st time, including the 14th this year.

– Moore registered his 44th five-assist performance, including his seventh this season.

– McGusty, who now has 999 points at Miami, failed to score in double figures for just the second time in 2021-22.

Paul Atkinson, Jr., scores season-high in homecoming, leads Irish to 68-64 win over UM

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 2, 2022

University of Miami basketball coach Jim Larranaga walked into the Watsco Center for Wednesday night's game against Notre Dame and immediately saluted the student section, which was overflowing before tipoff.

UM students, known to be apathetic about basketball through the years, have fallen in love with the resurgent Hurricanes over the past few weeks. They cheered their lungs out and did all they could to energize the Canes, but couldn't do anything to stop Notre Dame forward Paul Atkinson, Jr.

Neither could the Hurricanes, and that is a big reason they lost 68-64 to the Irish.

Atkinson, a 6-9 Yale grad transfer who attended Fort Lauderdale's Westminster Academy, scored a season-high 23 points on 11-of-16 shooting, many of them on uncontested layups and dunks. He also grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds. He showed why he was voted Ivy League Player of the Year while with Yale.

Heading into Wednesday's game Atkinson, a former Miami Herald All-Broward selection, was averaging 11.7 points per game. His season-high was 19 and he had scored 15 by halftime against Miami.

UM coach Jim Larranaga said the Hurricanes' strategy of limiting Notre Dame's three-point shooting worked in the first half, as the Irish went 1-of-15 from beyond the arc, but it left Atkinson open under the basket with too much room to roam and he took advantage.

"Our strategy to begin the game was to keep Notre Dame from hitting threes because they're a terrific three-point shooting team, but Atkinson was terrific," Larranaga said. "We picked our poison, our defense got stretched out and that left him in single coverage with a lot of room to maneuver and get easy baskets. Our help defense was a step slow for some reason."

It was not the first time Atkinson played the Hurricanes in Miami. His first homecoming was in 2018, when Yale played UM in the HoopHall tournament at American Airlines Arena. The Bulldogs rallied from 15 down in the second half that day to beat the Canes, and the game-tying layup in the final minutes was scored by Atkinson.

"I've been here before, played Miami back at

Yale," Atkinson said. "This isn't the first time being home. It's not something out of character. I just played my game. The guards found me a lot today, I was the man open today. I got a lot of layups. Just a team effort."

As it happens, Notre Dame coach Mike Brey first met Atkinson in person at the Watsco Center.

"The first time I met Paul was here at this game (UM vs. Notre Dame) last year because remember he committed to us and we didn't have a visit. It was all Zoom and I never met him," Brey said. "He comes in and does that."

Notre Dame led by as many as 14, but the Hurricanes kept chipping away and the crowd went wild when UM point guard Charlie Moore (who else?) stole the ball and went the length of the floor for a layup to close the gap to six with 30 seconds to go. A pair of Isaiah Wong free throws with six seconds left got UM within four, but the Canes ran out of time.

Wong led UM with 18 points, Moore and Anthony Walker had 12 each. The team's leading scorer, Kam McGusty, had an off night with seven points on 3-of-12 shooting.

Miami dropped to 16-6 overall and 8-3 in the ACC. Notre Dame is 15-7, 8-3.

Wednesday's game was a battle of two teams with similar storylines. Both are surprise ACC teams who were dismissed in the preseason conference poll – the Irish were picked eighth and the Hurricanes 12th. The two teams play a similar style with good shooters and few turnovers. And they were the only two ACC teams other than Duke to get votes in the AP poll this week.

Both teams struggled from beyond the arc in the first half, but the Irish led 30-28 at halftime. Miami had trouble driving the lane and its first trip to the free throw line was with 4:17 to go in the game.

"It's a long season, all teams have ups and downs, and this was one of our down times," Wong said. "We have to forget about this game. We know we have a great team."

The Hurricanes play on the road at Virginia on Saturday.

Hurricanes drop out of 1st place with 68-64 loss to Fighting Irish

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 2, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes pursued Paul Atkinson when he decided to leave Yale.

However, Atkinson picked Notre Dame and the West Palm Beach native had his best game of the season Wednesday against the Hurricanes.

Notre Dame pounded the ball inside to Atkinson for a season-high 23 points to go with 11 rebounds and it proved to be too much for the Miami Hurricanes in a 68-64 loss, dropping the Hurricanes out of first place in the ACC.

"He gave us a problem on the inside," forward Anthony Walker said.

Miami (16-6, 8-3 ACC) was led by Isaiah Wong's 18 points while Kameron McGusty, the team's leading scorer, was held to a season-low seven points on 3-of-12 shooting.

The loss dropped Miami into a three-way tie for second along with Notre Dame (15-7, 8-3) and North Carolina (16-6, 8-3), trailing No. 9 Duke (18-3, 8-2) by ½ game. Miami does not have any more games against the three teams at the top, going 2-1 against the trio.

"We've got to pick it up, forget about this game, worry about the next game and just improve on what we have because we have a great team right now," Wong said. "We've just got to do better."

Notre Dame outscored Miami 44-26 in the paint and also won the rebounding battle 38-33 in two areas Miami struggles in.

"I thought Notre Dame did a very good job of getting the ball inside against our defense," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "We tried to take away the three and we did that in the first half, but Atkinson got 15 points and our defense was spread out too much. You have to pick your poison and we did. We defended the 3 very well, but couldn't defend them on the interior."

The Hurricanes did connect better, slightly, from long range, making 8 of 25 (32.0 percent) of their 3-point attempts while the Fighting Irish connected on 6 of 26 (23.1 percent).

"Our strategy at the beginning of the game was to keep Notre Dame from getting 3s, they're a terrific 3-point shooting team, we felt that was the key, but they were able to

take advantage of us inside," Larranaga said. "Atkinson was terrific in the first half."

Charlie Moore added 12 points and seven assists for the Hurricanes who got 12 points and eight rebounds off the bench from Walker.

Wong's dunk gave Miami a 34-32 early in the second half after trailing most of the first, but it ended up being Miami's lead after the break.

Prentiss Hubb responded with back-to-back long-range 3s, freshman standout Blake Wesley finished with a layup and Atkinson hit a shot as part of a 10-0 pivotal run to give Notre Dame a 42-34 lead.

Wong did his best to keep the Hurricanes in the game, hitting a pair of 3s shortly after the run, but Notre Dame continued to counter and went ahead by 14 after a layup by Hubb, who finished with 15 points.

Moore's 3 cut the deficit to 63-58 with 3:29 left and his layup pulled Miami within 66-62 with 30 seconds remaining.

Ryan Corman calmly sank two free throws for the Fighting Irish who were able to hold off the Hurricanes down the stretch.

"Our defense did not have the energy that we've shown in previous games throughout the ACC," Larranaga said. "Hopefully we get some rest and bounce back."

NEXT UP

Miami plays at Virginia on Saturday (5:00 p.m., ACCN) looking to end a four-game skid to the Cavaliers.

Unexpected turn of events led Jordan Miller to UM, and it's paying off

By Cal Friedman
CaneSport
Feb. 3, 2022

In this era of college sports, things change in a flash.

One moment you're on the best scoring streak in your career, leading your team through the conference tournament. The next, your coach is fired after a loss, and your whole collegiate career starts over.

That's what happened to former George Mason guard Jordan Miller, who had no idea that following the Patriots' loss in the 2021 Atlantic 10 quarterfinals that it would be his last time representing the school he loved.

"I was expecting to do my last year at George Mason," Miller told CaneSport. "However, the tables turned... I really didn't know that was going to be my last game being a Patriot."

Not many expected the Patriots to move on from sixth-year coach Dave Paulsen, especially after a five-game winning streak took them into that quarterfinals matchup.

"It was one of those moments where I just went blank, and it didn't feel real for the rest of that day, to be honest," Miller said. "When he told us, I was like 'I don't know what the future holds, I don't know if I'm going to stay.'"

The Patriots and their fanbase embraced Miller, and Miller embraced the George Mason family. The guard went above and beyond to know the fans, coaches, and even arena staff in Fairfax.

When the time came, Miller entered the transfer portal. After experiencing such a strong bond between teammates and fans at George Mason, Miller wanted a similar atmosphere at his next school.

One person who knows a thing or two about the tight bond formed between players and fans at George Mason?

Miami Hurricanes head coach Jim Larrañaga.

Larrañaga's historic run to the Final Four with the Patriots is still fondly remembered in Virginia, by fans and players alike.

"We exchanged a laugh - I told him that it's hard not to know about your success at George Mason," Miller chuckled. "Ever since 2006, Fairfax live and die by that tournament run that [Larrañaga] made."

Larrañaga felt that Miller would be an ideal fit in Miami, and during a virtual visit Miller was blown away by the overwhelming attention the coaching staff

paid to his game. From the second the coaching staff found out the former George Mason guard was in the portal, everyone knew it was a good fit.

"He's such a really good team player, and such a great fit for the guys on our team," associate head coach Bill Courtney said. "After watching the film on him and talking to people about him, it was easy to see that he would be a very important part of what he could do this year."

Courtney had already known about Miller through a coaching associate from AAU basketball. He was confident that the adjustment period to Miami would be brief, and Miller was all-ears to joining the Hurricanes.

"It was very clear that they put a lot of effort into it, and really dove into my statistics," Miller said. "I was very impressed that they really went above and beyond to try and get you to come to Miami."

Despite being born in Southern California, Miller was used to the small town life of Virginia. The move from Fairfax to Florida was a large culture shock at first.

"It was just a lot of loud noise, especially at night," Miller said. "There's lights everywhere. Whereas where I'm from, after 10 p.m., you barely see any lights anywhere."

After a quick settling-in period, Miller was ready to work. He stresses looking for positives in life, and that mentality was contagious from the moment he stepped on campus.

"He's one of the most positive kids you'll find," Courtney said about Miller. "He's very pleasant to be around, his teammates love being around him, people in the athletic department love being around him."

At the start of the season, things didn't quite roll Miller's way. In his first eight games for Miami, Miller averaged 5.4 points and made just two three-pointers. His early season struggles took a toll on his usual sunny outlook.

"It was [tough], it really was," Miller said. "But, ultimately, I'm not the type of guy who's going to sit and sulk about anything. I like to say I'm a very optimistic person, and I think that was a test to see how optimistic I truly was."

Miller admitted that he took the adjustment period for granted, transitioning from being a ball-dominant guard for the Patriots, to a sort of pseudo power forward for the Hurricanes. Despite the early season struggles, Miller had no doubts about his ability.

"I think every transfer has that little adjustment

period," Courtney said. "He was just finding his way. Different teammates, different competition, and he just had to find his niche. He wasn't going to get the touches that he had at Mason... and that's what he had to learn."

Courtney said once Miller and the Hurricanes started conference play was the moment the transfer finally settled in. In his ACC debut, Miller scored 13 points, making three triples in Miami's 80-75 comeback win over Clemson, which set the tempo for the Hurricanes in league play.

Following that, Miller scored a season-high 25 points in UM's win over North Carolina State, then scored 17 in an eight-point win over Wake Forest. As the going got tough, the tough got going.

"It was a big confidence boost for me," Miller said. "It was just continuing to stay in the gym and staying optimistic... I knew that's what the team needed. I'm a big team player."

Watching the Hurricanes play in-conference has shown the importance of Miller's game. In conference play, the fourth-year junior is averaging over 12 points per game, is second on the team in rebounding, as well as first in offensive rebounds with 18 in 10 ACC games.

"He's been tremendous, he's such a smart player," said Courtney. "He provides energy every day in practice, that kind of professionalism has been terrific for our group. He's been basically irreplaceable these last few weeks."

Miami's 1-2 punch amongst their forwards has been deadly in conference play. Miller and Sam Waardenburg have combined for over 23 points and eight rebounds per game in ACC play, with both shooting over 55 percent from the floor.

Miller has scored in double-figures in seven of Miami's ACC games this season, rekindling his George Mason form.

His continued impact will be crucial as Miami looks to continue its strong season.

"He's really found a way in this system, he's playing at a really high level for us," Waardenburg said of Miller's production. "It's fun to play with him because he's not selfish. He cares about winning."

Back on the Road

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 3, 2022

Over the course of a season with 30-plus games, it is only natural for a team to have a few outings in which there is a lull in enthusiasm.

For the University of Miami men's basketball team, that came Wednesday night in a 68-64 home setback against Notre Dame.

Miami (16-6, 8-3 ACC) conceded three separate 10-0 runs, forced just six turnovers and allowed 44 paint points. Still, though, the Hurricanes sliced a late 14-point deficit down to four, before the Fighting Irish held strong in the closing minute to earn the win.

"I think the biggest thing is, we had played so consistently well on both ends of the floor for a very long time and I thought, last night, we didn't have the normal energy," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "I think you've got to really play hard against these teams and, for whatever reason, we appeared to be a step slow last night. Maybe [there was] a little fatigue from so much travel we did last week. ... I think the long season is starting to catch up with us."

The Hurricanes' prior week included a Tuesday flight to Roanoke, Va., followed by a bus ride to Blacksburg, Va. The next day, Miami earned a 78-75 victory at the buzzer against Virginia Tech, followed by a bus ride back to Roanoke and a flight back to South Florida that landed the next day after 1 a.m.

Just over 36 hours later, on Friday afternoon the Hurricanes flew to Atlanta. They tallied a 73-62 triumph over Georgia Tech Saturday afternoon and then flew back home Saturday evening. It was, indeed, a considerable amount of travel in a five-day span.

That, however, is life in the ACC. And it stops for no team and caters to no individuals.

Miami's next game is also on the road; it is set for Saturday at 5 p.m. against Virginia in Charlottesville, Va. Thus, Larrañaga knows it is imperative his players get their legs back.

"We're traveling again. Travel takes energy from you; it zaps you," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "And right now, probably the best thing we can do is have short, very productive practices and not be on the court too long where we're really draining players of their energy."

One player who did bring full-throttle effort Wednesday night was third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker, who turned in arguably his best

game of the season.

The Baltimore native scored 12 points on 5-of-7 shooting and made both of his 3-point attempts. He also pulled down a team-high eight rebounds to set a new season best.

The point total matched his mark from the prior five games combined, while the rebound total equaled his ledger from the previous seven combined.

"For all these months, we've been encouraging Anthony to play up to his physical capability and, last night, he certainly did," Larrañaga said. "He played with a ton of energy and a ton of confidence. He was very aggressive at both ends and it was great to see."

Two Hurricanes joined Walker in double figures in the defeat. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong had 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore notched 12 points to go along with a co-game-high seven assists and game-best three steals.

Walker, Wong, Moore and the Hurricanes now must get ready for their visit to Virginia on a quick turnaround.

Miami is 12-13 all-time against the Cavaliers, including 4-8 on the road at John Paul Jones Arena and 3-9 under Larrañaga. Virginia won the most recent matchup, 62-51, on its home court on March 1, 2021.

Much of Larrañaga's tenure at Miami has coincided with one of the two greatest stretches in Virginia history. The other one, Larrañaga was part of.

From 1979-86, he served as an assistant coach to Terry Holland at Virginia. He helped the Cavaliers to a 169-62 (.732) record over those seven seasons, three of which included 29-plus wins.

Virginia made five NCAA Tournament appearances, four Sweet 16 trips, three Elite Eight berths and two Final Four bids during Larrañaga's tenure, as well as won the 1980 NIT title. He also helped guide Ralph Sampson to three straight consensus national player of the year honors, becoming just the second player in history to do so, alongside Bill Walton.

The many victories and accomplishments, however, are not at the forefront of Larrañaga's mind when he reflects on his time at Virginia.

"My memories of being at UVA are really about the people that I got to know and enjoy working with," he shared. "[That includes people like] Terry and Ann Holland, Craig and Margaret Littlepage, Dave and Lynn Odom, Jeff Jones, the players [such as]

Ralph Sampson and Olden Polynice, all the people that made our stay in Charlottesville so much fun. We had a lot of good players and good teams, and guys who worked really hard and were really great people to be around."

While this Virginia team might not have a player like Sampson—truly, no team does—Larrañaga knows his Hurricanes still have their work cut out for them Saturday evening.

Virginia is 13-9 (7-5 ACC) on the season and ranks top-100 in both offensive and defensive efficiency according to KenPom. Senior forward Jayden Gardner leads the way for the Cavaliers with 14.5 points and 6.8 rebounds per game.

Under the direction of two-time Associated Press National Coach of the Year, Tony Bennett, the Cavaliers won the 2020-21 ACC regular season title.

"Well, Tony Bennett's teams are always terrific defensively. I think they started out the season with some new pieces and it has taken those guys a little while to adjust to the Virginia style, but I think, right now, they're playing extremely well," Larrañaga said. "They're coming off of a nice win. They're very physical. Their frontcourt guys at the four and five are much bigger, thicker and bulkier than our frontcourt. So, we've got to really pull together to be sure that we can execute our game plan against them."

Bennett is, of course, known for his pack-line defense. It is consistently amongst the most difficult defenses in the nation to both prepare for and play against.

To Larrañaga, finding success against the Cavaliers on the offensive end actually begins at the other end of the floor.

"The first thing is, defensively, you've got to keep them from scoring because if they score, they're going to be able to set their defense every time," the 2013 AP National Coach of the Year shared. "Even when you force them to miss, they're very good at getting back in conversion and preventing fast breaks. And we rely very heavily on forcing turnovers and getting into the open court. And when you attack the pack-line defense, oftentimes you can get a 3-point shot, but they're very good at defending the three. So, a lot of the game is going to depend on whether or not we make threes."

Hurricanes drop consecutive games for 1st time with loss at Virginia

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 5, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes shot the ball well, but the Virginia Cavaliers shot it better.

The Hurricanes lost consecutive games for the first time all season with a 71-58 loss at Virginia on Saturday.

"Virginia played a very good game tonight, they shot the ball extremely well, not only from 2, but from 3-point range and we didn't," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored a game-high 21 points and Charlie Moore added 17 for the Hurricanes, who lost their fifth straight to the Cavaliers.

Miami (16-7, 8-4 ACC) allowed a season-high shooting percentage to Virginia (14-9, 8-5) at 63.0 percent as the Cavaliers won consecutive games for the first time since Jan. 1-4.

"Tony Bennett is a hell of a coach and he made some adjustments and was able to carve the 'scramble' defense," Larranaga said. "They got the ball to the high post, low post and they're huge human beings and we had no answer for those big guys inside."

The Hurricanes shot 54.0 percent (27 of 50) from the field, but just 23.5 percent (4 of 17) from 3.

"We went into the game shooting 40 percent from 3, number one in the ACC, and I loved the attempts," Larranaga said. "They were all open. We were moving the ball very well and finding the open man very well. I turned to the bench and said, 'We're getting great shots, they need to start falling.' Unfortunately in basketball there's a domino effect. If you start making them, everybody makes them, but if you miss them, other guys miss them as well."

Miami began the week in first place in the ACC, but with losses to Notre Dame and Virginia, have dropped to fifth.

"I don't think there's anything we have to do differently, the question is and I've said this all along that the regular season is not a sprint, it's a marathon," Larranaga said. "We got out in front by winning our first four conference games at home, but now teams are catching up to us. Every game comes down to, 'do you play well?' Tonight we didn't handle the ball well enough, too many turnovers and we didn't rebound well enough and that's going to

happen throughout the course of a season. I told the players afterwards that we're not the only ones in this position right now. A lot of teams in the league if you lose games you've got to rebound and bounce back and figure out how to get the next one."

The Hurricanes cut the deficit to 37-30 after a jumper by McGusty, but it was as close as the Hurricanes would get the rest of the way.

Virginia led by as many as 21 in the second half.

"We struggled defensively to keep pressure on them," Larranaga said. "I thought we did a good job early, but clearly we were not able to defend them we would have needed to and force more turnovers. They had 13 turnovers, but we probably needed 17."

Miami led early 10-7, but Virginia took control the rest of the first half.

The Hurricanes missed their first 10 3-point attempts, falling behind 28-20 before Moore hit one from deep on the right wing.

The Cavaliers took a 35-26 lead into the break behind 62.5-percent (15 of 24) shooting after Armaan Franklin hit a 3 at the buzzer, giving him 15 points.

NO FREE THROWS

The Hurricanes did not have a free throw attempt for the first time in school history after entering the game averaging 18.7 attempts per game.

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Georgia Tech on Feb. 9.

"Thank goodness we're at home," Larranaga said.

MBB Drops 71-58 Decision at Virginia

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 5, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team fell, 71-58, Saturday night against Virginia on the road at John Paul Jones Arena.

One of the best long-range shooting teams in its league, Miami (16-7, 8-4 ACC) struggled from deep in the setback, while the Cavaliers shot a blistering 53.3 percent (8-of-15) beyond the arc in the win. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored a team-high 21 points for the Hurricanes, who have dropped back-to-back contests for the first time all season.

"Well, when you play Virginia, one of the key statistics is—because they pack the lane—that you've got to make threes," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "We were 2-of-12 in the first half and we only made two more in the second half. That kind of was the difference in the game. We needed to shoot the ball better."

Virginia (14-9, 8-5 ACC) went on a 14-4 run midway through the first half, during which it held the Hurricanes without a point for 4:47, to build a 21-14 edge with 7:38 on the clock.

Shortly thereafter, following a 0-of-10 start from 3-point range, Miami made back-to-back shots from long range to trim its deficit to four. The Cavaliers, however, scored the final five points of the half, with junior guard Armaan Franklin's buzzer-beating 3-pointer giving them a then-game-high nine-point edge, 35-26, at the break.

Despite its slow start from deep, Miami did make 10 of its first 14 shots inside the arc to stay in the game. However, Virginia went 5-of-7 (71.4 percent) from deep at the other end and got 15 first-half points from Franklin, who shot 6-of-9 overall through 20 minutes.

The Cavaliers posted a stretch of six consecutive field goals early in the second half, during which they went up, 48-34, with 14:09 remaining. McGusty responded soon after with back-to-back 3-pointers to pull Miami within 10, but Virginia then went on a 7-0 run to go up by a then-game-best 17 points, 57-40, with 10:04 on the clock.

The Hurricanes got no closer than 13 the rest of the way, while the Cavaliers upped their edge as high as 21 in the home win. The 13-point setback was Miami's first by greater than four in ACC play this season.

McGusty's 21 points came on an exceptional 9-of-13 clip from the field. The Katy, Texas, native went 3-of-5 from 3-point range, while the rest of the team shot just 1-of-12. In addition, with his first basket of the night, McGusty surpassed 1,000 points as a Hurricane.

Fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore scored 17 points on 8-of-13 shooting for Miami. Meanwhile, fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller tallied a career-high seven steals, including four in the first eight minutes, to tie the

program record in ACC play and match the second-highest total in school history. The figure also tied the John Paul Jones Arena record and set a new top mark by a visiting player. A native of nearby Middleburg, Va., Miller also dished out a co-team-high four assists to double his season high.

Franklin paced all scorers with 22 points for Virginia, as he finished 8-of-16 from the floor, as well as added four assists and four steals. Senior forward Jayden Gardner tallied 12 points, a game-high seven rebounds and four assists.

Senior guard Kihei Clark scored 11 points in the win, while sophomore guard Reece Beekman registered nine points and a game-best 10 assists.

Although the Hurricanes, who notched a season-low point total, shot a strong 54.0 percent (27-of-50) from the floor, Virginia posted a dazzling 60.0 percent clip (30-of-50), good for the best mark by a Miami opponent in over four years.

Neither team attempted a free throw in the first 36 minutes and the Hurricanes, for the first time ever in ACC play, ended the night with zero makes or attempts from the line.

Up next for the Hurricanes is a home matchup with Georgia Tech Wednesday at 7 p.m., live on RSN from the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Fla.

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 12-14 all-time against Virginia, including 4-9 on the road and 3-10 in Larrañaga's tenure.
- Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 686-471 in 38 years as a head coach, including 216-137 in 11 seasons at Miami.
- For the 17th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.
- Now with 30 steals in ACC play this season, Moore moved from fourth up to co-third, alongside Anthony Lawrence II (2017-18), on Miami's ACC-only single-season list.
- McGusty, who reached 1,000 points on a jump-shot with 16:56 on the first-half clock, is the 43rd Hurricane to reach quadruple figures, including the 28th to do so in three or fewer seasons and the 12th to do so under Larrañaga.
- J. Miller's seven steals tied for the most ever by a Miami player in an ACC contest, matching the mark Moore set on 1/8/22 at second-ranked Duke.
- J. Miller is just the fourth player in program history to notch seven-plus steals in a game, joining Moore, Jerome Scott (nine on 3/4/91 versus FIU) and Vernon Jennings (seven on 1/5/00 versus West Virginia).
- J. Miller is the third Hurricane during the ACC era (since 2004-05) to record five steals in a half, including the second this season, as Moore did so in the first session on 1/8/22 at second-ranked Duke.
- Just five times in program history has a Miami player logged six-plus steals in an ACC game, with three of them coming this season, including J. Miller doing so twice, as he notched six

on 1/5/22 versus Syracuse.

- Before J. Miller broke the mark Saturday, the record for most steals by an opposing player at John Paul Jones Arena was six by Georgia Tech's Jose Alvarado on 1/23/21.
- The only other player to post seven steals in a game at John Paul Jones Arena is Virginia's Sean Singletary, who did so on 2/24/08.
- Miami finished with just 19 rebounds, its second-fewest ever in ACC play, trailing only the 16 it recorded against Duke on 1/4/07.
- This is the second time in 2021-22 a Division I team took zero free throws in a game, with Miami joining Merrimack (11/21/21 at Virginia Tech) on the list.
- The only other time the Hurricanes did not make multiple free throws in an ACC affair was on 1/30/21 at Wake Forest.
- For the third consecutive game, Miami did not force more turnovers than it lost, as each team logged 13 giveaways, with that mark tying for the Hurricanes' second-most this year.
- This is the first time all season Miami lost when shooting 50-plus percent, as it was previously 6-0, and it is just the 10th time in Larrañaga's tenure the Hurricanes lost when making at least half their shots, as they were previously 86-9.
- The Hurricanes' 58 points tied for their most in a road game at Virginia during Tony Bennett's 13-year tenure as head coach, matching the mark set on 1/12/16.
- The two starting point guards Saturday night, Miami's Moore and Virginia's Clark, have now combined for 201 collegiate starts across 256 outings.
- The last time a Miami opponent shot 60 percent from the field was on 1/27/18 when Florida State went 33-of-55 in Tallahassee, Fla.
- Prior to Saturday, the Hurricanes had won seven consecutive games when allowing 70-plus points.
- The Cavaliers are the first team to shoot over 50 percent in both halves against the Hurricanes since Wake Forest on 1/1/22.
- Virginia recorded 11 steals, tied with Georgia Tech on 1/29/22 for the most by any Miami foe this season.
- Beekman's 10 assists tied for the top mark by a Miami foe this season, matching the number by No. 10/9 Alabama's JD Davison on 11/28/21 in Kissimmee, Fla.
- In addition to eclipsing 1,000 points in his Miami tenure, McGusty also moved past 1,600 total points in his entire college career.
- McGusty, whose nine made field goals matched the ACC high he set on 3/5/21 against Boston College, registered his 22nd 20-point showing, including his 16th at Miami and his ninth this season.
- McGusty tallied double-digit points for the 84th time, including the 56th as a Hurricane and the 21st this year.
- Moore scored in double figures for the 72nd time, including the 15th in 2021-22.
- Waardenburg reached 200 made field goals as a collegian.
- Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker, who reached 50 steals at Miami, tied a career high with four assists, doubling his season high, in just 12 minutes of action.
- Freshman guard Bensley Joseph recorded multiple steals for the first time and notched his first blocked shot.

Hurricanes lost back-to-back games, here's who coach Jim Larranaga called for advice

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 7, 2022

Miami Hurricanes coach Jim Larranaga, feeling his team lacked "juice" in back-to-back losses after winning 12 of the previous 14 games, did what he often does when his teams hit speed bumps: He called Dr. Bob Rotella, his longtime friend and noted sports psychologist.

"My first phone call Sunday was to Bob Rotella," Larranaga said Monday morning. "Our team has drained itself of a lot of energy and we need to be revitalized. We need something inspirational, motivational that gets us going. Somebody to catch fire."

Rotella advised Larranaga to do something he and his staff were already considering doing, which is let the players offer input as to how to get over this mini slump.

"He said, 'Ask your players what they need, let them make some of the decisions moving forward, do they need to go harder at practice? Lighter? More shooting? Whatever it might be, get the pulse of your players and figure out where their mindset is,'" Larranaga said.

Miami knocked off team after team in January, including then-No. 2 Duke on the road, and the Hurricanes spent the month atop the ACC standings. But they were 0-2 the first week of February with losses to Notre Dame and Virginia. Their record dipped to 16-7 overall and 8-4 in the ACC, which puts them in a tie with North Carolina for fourth place.

"We got off to such a great start, were sitting in first place for a good while and now we're not," Larranaga said. "That becomes a mental problem and emotional problem players have to deal with."

He said fatigue could also be a factor, as his starting five play the majority of the game.

"They're getting worn down because they're not the biggest, strongest most physical guys to begin with," the coach said. "When I saw Sam Waardenburg going against (Virginia's 7-1, 242-pound center) Francisco Caffaro I was like, 'He's trying to guard the Jolly Green Giant, the guy is humongous.' That's challenging for all of our guys."

Larranaga said the team could use more consistent sparks from bench players such as Anthony Walker, Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar.

Despite the two losses last week, Larranaga is trying to keep things in perspective.

He pointed out that all the ACC teams are closely matched and rattled off all the close conference games UM has played thus far this season. The Canes trailed Clemson by nine and rallied to win. They trailed Syracuse by 18 and won. They had close wins over N.C. State and Wake Forest, beat Duke by just two and lost to Florida State by one point both times. The victory at Virginia Tech came on Charlie Moore's halfcourt heave.

But they couldn't get in a groove against Virginia last Saturday.

"This past week I did not feel like we had the necessary energy, the juice, to play the best defense that we could play and we rely very heavily on our defense causing turnovers so we can get into the open court," Larranaga said.

"The Virginia game we just could not force enough turnovers and we couldn't make threes. The game sometimes is so simple. Had we made threes...we were 0-for-10 to start the game. It's much different if we're 3-for-10, which is still 10 percent below our average. We had a bad shooting night."

The Hurricanes are back home Wednesday at 7 p.m. against Georgia Tech. The last time they played the Yellow Jackets (10-12) was 10 days ago in Atlanta and Miami won 73-62 after staving off a late Georgia Tech run.

Getting Game-Ready

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 7, 2022

Few members of the University of Miami men's basketball team have a better feel for the upcoming opponent than Jakai Robinson.

That is the case not just this week, but for every outing. The freshman guard is redshirting this season and has thus become an integral part of the Hurricanes' scout team on a daily basis.

Robinson imitates opposing offenses, defenses and personnel to help his teammates get ready for what they will see when they take the hardwood for the game.

The 6-foot-4, 200-pounder has fully bought in to his role—an important one, at that—within the program this season. He is not upset about his lack of game minutes, but rather, is doing all he can to help Miami (16-7, 8-4 ACC) become the best it can be.

"I just want to help my team [and do] whatever I can. So, I know that I can help this team win [when we are] in practice by helping those dudes get better every day," Robinson shared. "Those dudes are helping me get better every day. We're starting to see some success. So, we've just got to keep up it and [I will continue to] embrace my role and be ready for when my number is called next year."

A competitive individual, Robinson also hopes his "passion and energy" will carry over to his teammates, whether that is during a practice, a game or in the locker room. His goal is to do all he can, in any way, to aid the program, regardless of his playing time.

As Robinson has adeptly helped Miami prepare for its first 23 games, he has also improved his own game. By mimicking opposing players on the scout team, he is often going up against the Hurricanes' talented starting lineup in practice.

There are a couple areas in which Robinson feels he has made the strong developments through his first several months as a collegian.

"Definitely [getting used to] the speed of the game, just getting adjusted to the game," Robinson shared. You've just got to play at your own pace. ... And I feel like the biggest thing that I've improved on so far has definitely been my jump-shot. I'm hitting it more consistently, for sure."

Robinson and the Hurricanes, for the first time during this strong season, have dropped consecutive games. Following a 68-64 setback Wednesday night at home against Notre Dame, the Hurricanes fell at Virginia, 71-58, three days later.

Nonetheless, this team is not coming apart. Rather, according to Robinson, the Hurricanes know they must do just the opposite.

"Well, I feel like the main thing that we need to do after two losses like that is just stick together and just know that we play our best basketball when we're together," he said. "So, that's what we need to do [to be] ready for the next game."

Miami fell behind the Cavaliers early on Saturday night and, despite making a few runs, trailed for the majority of the contest.

Kameron McGusty scored 21 points on 9-of-13 shooting and fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore added 17 on an 8-of-13 clip, but the Hurricanes did not do enough at the other end to come away with the win.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller did tie a program record in ACC play with a career-high seven steals, but Virginia shot 60 percent (30-of-50) from the field, the top mark by a Miami foe since Jan. 27, 2018, over four years ago.

"To beat good teams, you have to play better than them. We didn't play better than them," Robinson succinctly said. "They were hitting shots, they were feeling comfortable and we weren't able to disrupt their flow. So, it's going to be hard to beat good teams like that if we're not being disruptive and hitting [our own] shots."

The Hurricanes will look to reverse that defensive performance Wednesday night when they host Georgia Tech at the Watsco Center. The second matchup in 12 days between the two teams is slated for 7 p.m.

Miami won, 73-62, on Jan. 29 at McCamish Pavilion in Atlanta behind a game-high 21 points from McGusty. The victory improved the Hurricanes to 15-12 all-time versus the Yellow Jackets, including 8-6 under 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga. They own a 7-5 ledger at home.

With the two sides having met so recently, the familiarity will help Robinson and his fellow scout-teamers give the best look possible in practice.

"I feel like by me getting a chance to see them in person, I'll be able to do a better job on the scout to help prepare [my teammates] for the next time we play," Robinson shared. "I feel like it should be a better game the next time we play. I feel like if all the people on the scout [team] are doing what they're supposed to do, then we can do [our best] to help the team win."

As Robinson, a wing himself, is assuredly aware,

Georgia Tech has two players on the perimeter whom the Hurricanes must key in on.

One is senior guard Michael Devoe, the ACC's third-leading scorer at 18.6 points per game. The other is senior guard/forward Jordan Usher, who tallied 15 points, 10 rebounds and six assists in the first matchup.

"We just have to match [their] intensity and be disruptive," Robinson said. "We just have to make sure they're not getting any comfortable looks and make it hard for them to do what they normally like to do."

Robinson, who hails from Ossining, N.Y., feels there is one prime element of importance for Miami come Wednesday night.

"We just have to ... play our brand of basketball," he said. "I feel like, when we play our brand of basketball, we're one of the best teams in the ACC. [We have] nothing to fear and just [need to] be ready."

In each of the last two games, Miami has set a student attendance record. First, 1,682 students came to the sold-out game against Florida State on Jan. 22. Then, 1,986 students—an 18.1 percent increase over the rivalry matchup—turned out last Wednesday when the Hurricanes played Notre Dame.

The support from their peers, as well as the local community as a whole, means a lot to the Hurricanes and they hope it continues Wednesday when they are back at the Watsco Center.

"Since last year, [because of] COVID, we didn't have the chance to play in front of fans, it's definitely good to ... play in front of a fan base like that, being sold out," Robinson said. "They're definitely a part of us doing so well. So, I definitely appreciate that. I'm excited to play in front of them and we're definitely going to need them on Wednesday night."

The Hurricanes' contest against the Yellow Jackets will be shown live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun locally—with Tom Werme and Brian Oliver on the call. A full affiliate is available [HERE](#) and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, [HERE](#).

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 will be available [HERE](#).

After playing Georgia Tech, the Hurricanes head to Winston-Salem, N.C., where they meet RV/No. 25 Wake Forest Saturday at 3 p.m., live on RSN from Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

UM basketball team determined to have fun, end skid Wednesday against Georgia Tech

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 8, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes lost back-to-back games for the first time all season last week, but rather than punish the players with a grueling practice on Monday, coach Jim Larranaga and his staff ended the training session with a game of indoor baseball using a beach ball.

The players said it was exactly what they needed heading into Wednesday's critical home game against Georgia Tech (7 p.m., Bally Sports Sun).

"The whole message was it's a game and you're meant to have fun," said forward Sam Waardenburg. "That's something we have to carry over to the basketball, as well. When we were playing at our best level it was a fun environment, everyone was up, lots of energy and enjoyment. It's not like we haven't been doing that the past few games, but we can take it to another level and bring that environment back to the locker room."

Guard Kam McGusty agreed: "Coach L's biggest message was you can't play good without having fun. A lot of coaches if you lose two games you're in the film room, practicing an extra hour, getting cussed out. Coach L saw that as an opportunity to freshen up our mental side. We had some fun and that was very good for us."

Following a 68-64 home loss to Notre Dame last Wednesday night the Hurricanes lost at Virginia, 71-58 on Saturday.

"Those are two tough losses, ones you wish you could go back and play again, but we've got to keep moving forward," Waardenburg said. "We're in a good place. We've got veterans and we'll figure this out."

The last time the Hurricanes (16-7, 8-4 ACC) played the Yellow Jackets (10-12, 3-8) on the road 12 days ago, Miami won, 73-62. McGusty was the leading scorer with 21 points.

Once again, they will have to figure out a way to contain senior guard Michael Devoe, the ACC's third-leading scorer at 18.6 points per game.

"Michael Devoe is, to me, one of the four or best guards at creating opportunities for himself," Larranaga said. "He can create threes. He has the best change of speed and direction in the league. He can go from fast to slow to fast, from right to left, spin, great shot fakes,

great mid-range game, he's terrific at moving without the ball. He is a complete handful for whoever is guarding him."

The Hurricanes are hoping for a big home crowd, like they had against Notre Dame and Florida State.

In each of the last two games, Miami has set a student attendance record. First, 1,682 students came to the sold-out game against Florida State on Jan. 22. Then, 1,986 students turned out last Wednesday when the Hurricanes played Notre Dame.

"It's been fantastic to have the students showing that kind of support for our team," Larranaga said. "We want to create a home court atmosphere here like so many other ACC schools have. We really had it going several years ago with sellout crowds and hopefully we can get back to that now that COVID is starting to die down. And if we can keep it rolling into next year, we'll be heading into the right direction."

Hurricanes trying to get 'fun' back after disappointing back-to-back losses

By Adam Lichtenstein
Sun Sentinel
Feb. 8, 2022

After dropping back-to-back games for the first time this season, Miami coach Jim Larrañaga wanted to get the fun back.

So after practice Monday, the Hurricanes stuck around the gym and played a version of baseball, smacking a beach ball with their hands and running around make-shift bases.

"Sometimes you just need to be rejuvenated somehow, some way," Larrañaga said. "I thought that [Monday] afternoon ended on a very positive note. It was very competitive, a lot of fun, the guys enjoyed it. It's not basketball. It had nothing to do with hoops. And it was a very good way to end practice."

Larrañaga said on the ACC coaches teleconference Monday that he felt his team was drained physically and emotionally. He said losing those games to Notre Dame and Virginia, which pushed Miami from first place in the conference to tied for third, also had an effect on the Hurricanes.

"We got off to such a great start, we were sitting in first place for a good while, and now we're not," Larrañaga said. "That becomes a mental problem and an emotional problem for players to deal with. I think fatigue has become a factor. We're playing five guys an awful lot of minutes, especially in conference play, and they're getting worn down because they're not the biggest, strongest, most physical guys to begin with."

The Hurricanes' veteran coach said the fatigue led to some lapses on defense that contributed to Miami's (16-7, 8-4 ACC) loss to Virginia on Saturday.

"The scramble defense requires great pressure on the ball, and then everybody anticipating the pass out of the trap and then being ready to rotate," Larrañaga said. "And when you're ready, physically, but mentally, you're a step slow, you're thinking a little slower or maybe because of fatigue you're not running quite as fast as you're capable. But those things all materialized in the Virginia game. We were a step slow, defensively. It caused us to have a breakdown that led to easy shots, dunks and wide-open threes."

Trying to get his team on the right track, Larrañaga said he spoke to his friend, Dr. Bob Rotella, a sports psychologist. He said Rotella reaffirmed what he already planned to do.

"He said, 'Ask your players. Ask your players what they need,'" Larrañaga said. "Let them make some of the decisions moving forward. What are the things they need? They need to go harder in practice? They need to go lighter? They need more shooting? They need more rest? Whatever it might be, get the pulse of your players and figure out where their mindset is."

So the Hurricanes played some baseball in the gym on Monday.

"That's something coach has emphasized all season but specifically the last couple of days: 'It's a game, guys, you've got to have fun. You've got to play with your friends and play to the best of your ability,'" sixth-year senior Sam Waardenburg said. "[Monday], after practice, playing that little, fun game was just another emphasis on that."

But the grind continues Wednesday as Miami hosts Georgia Tech (10-12, 3-8) at 7 p.m. The Yellow Jackets are 13th in the ACC, but they've shown the ability to take down quality opponents, having beaten Florida State on Jan. 26. The Hurricanes beat Georgia Tech in Atlanta on Jan. 29.

"I wouldn't say we feel pressure, but we definitely know that we've got to start winning," sixth-year senior Kameron McGusty said. "We've got to get in that win column again. Losing two in a row, we've had a whole week of losing. That doesn't feel good as an organization, doesn't feel good as a player or a coach. So we're definitely ready and locked in."

Bench 'huge' for Hurricanes down the stretch

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 8, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes need contributions from their bench in the final month of the season.

The Hurricanes are led by its starting five, which has accounted for 86 percent of their points and 81 percent of the minutes during ACC play.

Although the bench does not have a big scorer, Jim Larranaga and the staff are hoping to find collective productive from the group.

"The bench is huge for us," Larranaga said.

The Hurricanes have gotten 8.6 points over the last five games, going 2-3, from the bench, which will be looking for a productive game against Georgia Tech on Wednesday (7:00 p.m., BSSUN/RSN).

"We need production from our bench," Larranaga said. "If we can get anywhere between 10-20 points would be fantastic."

Forward Anthony Walker leads the bench in scoring (5.2) and rebounding (2.3) in 14.1 minutes a game.

Deng Gak and Rodney Miller have played sparingly this season as a reserve frontcourt players while freshmen Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar have been the guards off the bench.

"We have some nights where Bensley Joseph, Wooga Poplar and Anthony Walker in particular come off the bench and be very productive," Larranaga said. "Anthony Walker inside, Bensley nailing some 3s, Wooga taking the ball to the basket. We need production from them, not only on the offensive end, but at the defensive end guarding some of these outstanding players. In Georgia Tech's last game, their bench scored 37 points. (Dallan) Coleman and (Miles) Kelly in particular were nailing 3s so we need our guys coming off the bench into the game at approximately the same time those guys do and defend them with a vengeance because those guys are as critical for their success as our guys are for our success."

The bench is especially important for the Hurricanes down the stretch because the amount of heavy minutes the starters have played this year and there could be signs of fatigue towards the end.

Miami beat Georgia Tech 73-62 in Atlanta on Jan. 29 with Miami's bench staying close in scoring at 16-12.

The Hurricanes (16-7, 8-4 ACC) enter Wednesday's game tied for fourth in the ACC with eight games remaining in search to be a top-4 seed for the ACC Tournament, which gives teams two byes before their first game.

Wins will also be key for Miami as it looks for its first NCAA Tournament bid since 2018. Miami is currently a 12-seed in a play-in game in the latest Bracketology projections by CBS Sports's Jerry Palm and EvanMiya.com, and an 11-seed according to ESPN's Joe Lunardi.

Shorthanded MBB Rallies Past Georgia Tech, 79-70

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 9, 2022

Down a starter and facing a 14-point first-half deficit, the University of Miami men's basketball team stormed back to defeat Georgia Tech, 79-70, Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

Playing without fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, the Hurricanes outscored the Yellow Jackets by 23 points over the final 25-plus minutes to end a two-game skid. Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg paced Miami (17-7, 9-4 ACC) with 19 points in the win, the team's third when trailing by 14-plus in 2021-22.

"Well, in the first half, I thought Georgia Tech did a great job of disrupting our offense. So, we fell behind," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after the 100th ACC regular season win of his storied tenure. "We had to figure out a way to get back in it. We chose one offense versus every defense they play and once we did that and everybody knew what we were running and what we were looking for, we were able to score the ball much better. That helped create better defense for us because now we were scoring and setting the defense, rather than missing and having to scramble back."

The Hurricanes forced five turnovers in the opening four-plus minutes and made four of their first five shots to grab an early 8-2 lead after just 4:24. Georgia Tech (10-13, 3-9 ACC) answered with a 30-10 run to go up by 14, 32-18, with 5:56 on the clock after making six of its first nine 3-pointers compared to an 0-of-6 mark for Miami. The stretch included both 9-0 and 7-0 surges.

Larrañaga's team countered with eight points in a row—bookended with 3-pointers by Waardenburg—in just 101 seconds to make it 32-26 with 3:57 to play in the half. After a Georgia Tech basket, Miami scored six consecutive points in 59 seconds—giving it six straight made field goals and four straight made free throws—to up its run to 14-2 and pull within two, 34-32, with 1:53 to go in the half.

The Yellow Jackets took a two-point edge, 36-34, into the locker room behind 13 points from freshman guard Dallan "Deebo" Coleman who scored 13 points on 5-of-5 shooting, including a 3-of-3 clip from deep, in the first 18-and-a-half minutes. Waardenburg tallied 12 first-half points at the other end for Miami.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong opened the second-half scoring in just 16 seconds, leveling the game at 36. Miami, soon thereafter, went in front, 41-39, with 18:15 to go, making it a 23-7 extended run.

The Yellow Jackets regained a four-point lead, 56-52, with 9:59 to go, but Miami responded with 11 consecutive points to take a then-game-best seven-point edge, 63-56, with 6:07 remaining. The Hurricanes held Georgia Tech without a point for 4:56.

Miami went on to put the game out of reach on a 3-pointer by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore with 3:12 to go that upped the cushion to 11 points, 72-61. That made it a 20-5 extended burst for the home team, en route to the nine-point triumph and a season sweep of the Yellow Jackets.

"It was a great comeback," Larrañaga said. "The second half, we got to the foul line a ton and reduced our turnovers."

Waardenburg's 19 points came on a 5-of-8 clip from the floor, including a 3-of-4 ledger from deep in a season-high 38 minutes. He added a perfect 6-of-6 mark from the stripe, matching his career high in makes and his season high in attempts. The Auckland, New Zealand, native added co-game-highs in

rebounds (eight) and assists (five), the former equaling his season high and the latter tying his career best.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 17 points, all in the second half, and paced all players with a season-high-tying four steals. Wong tallied 14 points and seven rebounds, the latter one shy of his top mark this season. Moore posted 13 points on a stellar 5-of-6 clip from the field and co-led all players with five assists, despite battling foul trouble.

Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker, who started in place of Miller, posted 12 points and a season-high-tying eight rebounds in a co-season-best 26 minutes. It marked the second home game in a row he posted that line, while he also shot 6-of-10 from the floor this time to match his career high in makes.

"Anthony Walker has really spent most of this year coming off the bench," Larrañaga said. "He did a great job of starting, scoring 12 points, getting some rebounds and blocking a shot."

Miami had five players score in double figures for the second time this season, while freshman guard Bensley Joseph added four points, a career-best six rebounds and a career-high four assists in a career-best 28 minutes.

Senior guard Michael Devoe, the ACC's third-leading scorer, finished with 20 points, but Miami held him to 6-of-15 shooting from the floor, including a 2-of-7 mark from deep. Senior guard/forward Jordan Usher added 16 points, while Coleman scored 15 and junior guard Kyle Sturdivant chipped in with 12.

Senior forward Khalid Moore, who paced Georgia Tech with 19 points on 9-of-12 shooting, in the teams' Jan. 29 matchup in Atlanta, fouled out with zero points on two shots.

The Hurricanes recorded 10 steals and forced 18 turnovers, while committing just 12, resulting in an 18-6 edge in fast-break points. Miami, one game after becoming the second team in ACC history to not attempt a free throw in a contest, also went 20-of-26 (76.9 percent) at the line.

The Hurricanes now head to Winston-Salem, N.C., for their first of two straight road games, slated for Saturday at 3 p.m. against Wake Forest, live on RSN from Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 16-12 all-time against Georgia Tech, including 8-5 at home and 9-6 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the 10th-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 687-471 in 38 years as a head coach, including 217-137 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– Now owning 100 victories in ACC regular season play, Larrañaga is the 14th head coach in league history to reach triple digits.

– Larrañaga has reached triple-digit regular season victories in three different DI conferences and at three DI different schools, as he won 101 in the MAC while at Bowling Green (1986-97) and 165 in the CAA while at George Mason (1997-2011), becoming the first coach in history to do so.

– With 111 ACC wins (regular season and tournament), Larrañaga passed Dave Odom for sole possession of the No. 13 spot on the all-time leaderboard.

– For the first time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, Walker and Wong.

– The start for Walker, which came on his 21st birthday, was his first of the season and 17th of his career.

– As announced prior to tip-off, Miller, who started 20 of Miami's first 23 contests, missed tonight's game with a right leg injury and is day-to-day moving forward.

– Now with 32 steals in ACC play this year, Moore moved from tied for third up to co-second place, alongside Shane Larkin (2012-13), on Miami's ACC-only single-season list.

– Miami rallied from a deficit of 14-plus points to win for the third time this season, as it also did so on 11/29/21 versus North Texas (14) in Kissimmee, Fla., and on 1/5/22 at home against Syracuse (18).

– The Hurricanes improved to 16-1 this season when scoring 65-plus points and won their 15th such game in a row.

– The other time in 2021-22 the Hurricanes had five double-digit scorers was on 1/26/22 at Virginia Tech, with McGusty (19), J. Miller (18), Moore (13), Waardenburg (12) and Wong (12) reaching that mark.

– This is the 10th time this season Miami has posted double-digit steals, including the seventh in the last 10 outings.

– The Hurricanes, picked No. 12 in the ACC preseason poll, now have as many wins (17) this year as they had losses last year, in three fewer games.

– Miami improved to 6-6 on the season when trailing at halftime, including 4-3 in conference play.

– In two matchups with Georgia Tech this season, the Hurricanes held Devoe to 10-of-26 shooting (38.5 percent) from the field.

– Wong's free-throw attempt with 9:42 on the first-half clock was Miami's first attempt from the line in 51:26 of game action, dating back to the final eight seconds of the matchup with Notre Dame on 2/2/22.

– The Hurricanes outscored Georgia Tech by 12 points, 16-4, over the last 5:35 of the first half, as well as made six of their last eight field goals of the frame compared to a 1-of-7 mark at the other end to close out the half.

– Six players—four on Georgia Tech and two on Miami—had four-plus fouls in the game, with Sturdivant and Moore both fouling out for the visitors.

– Walker, who made his 75th appearance as a Hurricane, scored double-digit points for the 20th time, including the fifth this year.

– Walker's previous eight-rebound performance in 2021-22 was on 2/2/22 versus Notre Dame, while his other 26-minute outing was on 11/13/21 against UCF.

– Walker owns four prior outings in which he made six field goals, with the most recent one on 3/10/21 against Clemson in the ACC Tournament in Greensboro, N.C.

– Waardenburg scored in double figures for the 20th time, including the eighth this season.

– The only other games in which Waardenburg had five assists came on 1/8/22 at second-ranked Duke and on 11/13/18 versus Stephen F. Austin, while his previous eight-rebound outing this year was against Florida A&M on 11/21/21.

– Waardenburg's previous outing with six made free throws was on 2/8/20 at Florida State.

– Wong tallied double-digit points for the 54th time, including the 21st in 2021-22.

– Moore, who picked up his fourth foul with 11:59 remaining, recorded his 45th five-assist outing, including his eighth this year.

– Moore, who reached 175 steals as a collegian, logged double-digit points for the 73rd time, including the 16th in 2021-22.

– McGusty registered double-figure points for the 85th time, including the 57th at Miami and 22nd this season.

– The other outing in which McGusty had four steals this year was on 1/18/22 against North Carolina.

– Joseph's prior career highs in rebounds (five) and minutes (22) both came in the 1/29/22 game at Georgia Tech, while his previous top mark in assists (two) came on four occasions, including in that prior matchup with the Yellow Jackets.

Sam Waardenburg helps Hurricanes erase 14-point deficit in win over Georgia Tech

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 9, 2022

Sam Waardenburg stepped up when the Miami Hurricanes were in a hole.

Waardenburg scored 19 points and the Miami Hurricanes overcame a 14-point deficit in a 79-70 win over Georgia Tech on Wednesday.

"Sam Waardenburg was terrific from start to finish," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored all 17 of his points in the second half and Isaiah Wong also added 14 for the Hurricanes who bounced back from consecutive losses for the first time this season.

Miami (17-7, 9-4 ACC) played without starter Jordan Miller (right leg), who was replaced by Anthony Walker who scored 12 points and grabbed eight rebounds on his 21st birthday in his first start of the season.

"I was very concerned in playing a game without Jordan Miller who's really a key cog in our offensive and defensive schemes, but we had some guys step up and play well," Larranaga said. "Anthony Walker did a great job subbing in for Miller."

Walker had about 15 family members in attendance.

"It was amazing, it was once in a lifetime," Walker said. "I got a lot of my family members who came to watch me play today so the fact that I got the start--I did well today. I came with a lot of energy, played well, felt good about myself. It was just an overall fun experience."

Miller is considered "day to day" according to UM.

Georgia Tech (10-13, 3-9) was led by Michael Devoe's 20 points.

With Charlie Moore in foul trouble, Bensley Joseph stepped up and hit a pair of free throws for a 57-56 lead with 8:34 remaining after trailing for most of the second half.

Moments later, McGusty hit a shot for a 61-56 lead. Waardenburg was fouled away from the ball on the shot and went to the line to knock down two free throws for a 63-56 advantage with 6:10 left.

McGusty's two free throws extended Miami's lead to 69-61 with 3:41 left.

"In the second half we were really able to get to the foul line and cash in," Larranaga said.

Although Moore was on the bench more than normal, he stepped in and knocked down a 3 and made a layup on the following possession for a 74-64 lead with 2:48 remaining.

Layups by Moore and McGusty sealed the victory.

Waardenburg needed just eight shot attempts, making five, in his 19-point performance. He also grabbed eight rebounds and had five assists.

McGusty and Devoe's fifth head-to-head battle did not disappoint as the two both received technical fouls late in the game after a skirmish.

Miami led early, but Devoe hit a 3 from the edge of the midcourt 'U' logo and followed with a free throw to cap a 17-4 run for a 19-12 lead after a missed dunk by Waardenburg who received a technical foul for hanging on the rim.

The Yellow Jackets continued their surge, building a 32-18 lead.

"I thought Georgia Tech came in with a great mindset, played very well and very hard early," Larranaga said. "They kept us off-balanced on offense and we fell behind by 14, but we made some adjustments offensively."

A pair of 3s by Waardenburg helped keep Miami close as the Hurricanes went into the break only down 36-34.

100 WINS

Larranaga picked up his 100th ACC win, becoming only the 14th coach to accomplish the feat.

He has a 100-94 conference record in 11 seasons at Miami.

MILLER OUT

Miller was at the game, but his status moving forward is unclear.

"I think every injury is serious until you're well," Larranaga said. "I don't know how long he'll be out. I think it's on a day-to-day basis."

UP NEXT

Miami plays at Wake Forest on Saturday (3:00 p.m., BSSUN). The Hurricanes won the

first meeting 92-84 on Jan. 1. The Demon Deacons have gone 9-2 since and are 20-5 overall, 10-4 in the ACC.

"They've got a very well-balanced team," Larranaga said. "Not only could they win the ACC, but they have a shot at winning a national championship."

Hurricanes end two-game skid, stay in ACC hunt with 79-70 comeback win over Georgia Tech

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 9, 2022

Two losses in a row could be considered a hiccup in the University of Miami's otherwise impressive conference run so far this season.

Three consecutive losses would have been a bona fide slump and the way the ACC is going this year, the Hurricanes could not afford to be sliding in February because NCAA tournament bids will be at a premium.

UM averted another slip-up, overcame a slow start and beat Georgia Tech 79-70 Wednesday night at the Watsco Center. After the game, Charlie Moore and Anthony Walker celebrated in the student section, which was rocking for the third home game in a row.

All five Miami starters scored in double figures, led by sixth-year senior Sam Waardenburg, who scored 19 points, was 3-of-4 from three-point range, grabbed eight rebounds and had five assists and a block.

"Sam was terrific start to finish," said UM coach Jim Larranaga.

Kam McGusty scored all 17 of his points in the second half to help lead Miami's comeback from a two-point halftime deficit. The Canes trailed by as many as 14 points during the first half.

Isaiah Wong added 14 points and seven rebounds, Moore finished with 13 points and five assists and provided a late-game spark after missing much of the second half in foul trouble.

Walker celebrated his 21st birthday with one of his best games in a UM uniform. He started in place of injured Jordan Miller and more than capably filled in with 12 points, eight rebounds, three assists and a block. Walker had family members in town for the game, and had to request an extra 12-15 tickets, so he was happy to give them a show.

"It was amazing, once in a lifetime," Walker said. "The fact that I got to start, I did well, came with a lot of energy, felt good about myself, so it was just an all-around fun experience."

Walker said the team considered Wednesday's game a must-win.

"This was huge," he said. "We focused on energy and trusting each other. We took two L's,

we can't afford to come apart, especially not after the season we're working and dreaming to have. It was big to come off the last two games with a W."

UM improved to 17-7 overall and 9-4 in the ACC. Georgia Tech dropped to 10-13 and 3-9.

Miami took an early lead in the opening minutes, but then struggled from behind the arc, missing its first six three-point attempts. The Yellow Jackets took advantage, hit a couple of threes and went on a 9-0 run to pull ahead 19-12.

The Canes got sloppy over the next few minutes, missing layups and turning the ball over and Georgia Tech stretched its lead to 14 points on a three by Michael DeVoe. But Miami woke up, started taking care of the ball, made six shots in a row, and clawed back into the game with a 14-2 run that cut the gap to two points.

Georgia Tech led 36-34 at the half.

Miami, which struggled from distance in its previous loss to Virginia, continued to have trouble behind the perimeter. Georgia Tech employed a zone defense that forced UM to shoot from outside, and the only Hurricane with a hot hand from distance was Waardenburg.

The Canes were 2-for-10 from three in the first half and were 3-for-16 (19 percent) midway through the second half.

UM came out strong after intermission and took the lead two minutes later on a three by McGusty. The teams traded leads for awhile, Miami trailed 56-52, but then went on a 20-5 run to take control. The Canes scored 20 points from the free throw line after not getting to the line at all against Virginia and that proved to be key in their comeback win.

"Georgia Tech kept us off-balance and we fell behind by 14, but we made some adjustments and ended up cutting the lead to two at the half, which was very important," Larranaga said. "Then, in the second half we were able to get to the foul line and cash in at the free throw line."

The Hurricanes were without starting guard Miller, who missed the game with a right leg injury. His status is day-to-day moving forward.

A fourth-year junior guard who transferred from George Mason, Miller is averaging 8.7 points, 5.7 rebounds and 1.7 steals per game this

season. He had started 20 of 23 games.

One of Miami's main objectives was figuring out how to neutralize Michael DeVoe, whom Larranaga called "a complete handful." DeVoe scorched UM for 29 points in a win last season and averaged 17 points over the last four games against the Hurricanes.

DeVoe finished with a team-high 20 points. Jordan Usher had 16, and Dallan Coleman added 15.

The Hurricanes are on the road Saturday at Wake Forest at 3 p.m.

McGusty Named a Senior CLASS Award Finalist

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 10, 2022

For more information on each of the finalists, visit SeniorCLASSAward.com. Fans can cast votes for McGusty [HERE](#).

Kameron McGusty of the University of Miami men's basketball team is a finalist for the 2021-22 Senior CLASS Award.

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

The sixth-year redshirt senior guard is one of 10 men's basketball players who made the cut from 30 down to 10, as announced Tuesday. The prestigious award honors Division I seniors with notable achievements in four areas of excellence: community, classroom, character and competition.

The lone ACC player on the list, McGusty is joined by Colorado's Evan Battey, Wisconsin's Brad Davison, Illinois' Trent Frazier, Richmond's Jacob Gilyard, Oklahoma's Tanner Groves, Stephen F. Austin's Gavin Kensmil, Wagner's Alex Morales, Purdue's Sasha Stefanovic and Loyola Chicago's Lucas Williamson.

The sixth Senior CLASS Award candidate in program history, McGusty is the first Hurricane selected as a finalist for the accolade.

McGusty is leading the Hurricanes in points (17.6) and rebounds (5.5) this season, while also notching 2.2 assists and 1.6 steals per game. He has five double-doubles, ranks fifth in the ACC in scoring and owns nine 20-point performances on the year.

The Katy, Texas, native owns 1,630 points in his illustrious collegiate career, including 1,037 as a Hurricane. McGusty is also a strong student who received a bachelor's degree from Miami in May 2021 after majoring in sport administration with a minor in sociology. The two-time ACC Honor Roll member is now pursuing a second bachelor's degree as an exploratory arts and sciences major.

A 6-foot-5, 190-pounder, McGusty has donated or volunteered his time in support of several charitable causes, including Operation Christmas Child, the Boys & Girls Club, Fight4Literacy and hurricane relief funds.

An acronym for Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School®, the Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities.

The finalists were chosen by a selection committee from the list of candidates announced earlier in the season. Nationwide fan voting begins immediately to help select the winner, and fans are encouraged to submit votes online at the Senior CLASS Award website through March 21. Fan votes will be combined with those of the media and Division I head coaches to determine the winners. The Senior CLASS Award recipients will be announced during the Final Four.

Final transfer: Canes' Moore, Gophers' Willis find their fit

By Dave Campbell
Associated Press
Feb. 10, 2022

Charlie Moore's roundabout journey across college basketball just felt right during his two seasons at DePaul, returning to his native Chicago to be near his family.

With his father's mobility compromised by a 2015 stroke and his mother needing to work, his parents needed Moore around more than ever. And Curtis Moore attended all of his son's home games in his wheelchair.

"It worked. I feel like it brought a different energy, a different type of spirit to the household and my mom and my dad for those two years that I was there," said Moore, who started at California, moved to Kansas, then DePaul and is now at Miami. "I feel like things are going much better now. I think my dad's getting better as well."

School-switching has never been more prevalent, thanks to the extra year of eligibility granted by the NCAA for the pandemic-limited 2020-21 season and the relaxed transfer rules that allow one-time moves for immediate eligibility instead of an automatic sit-out year.

An Associated Press review of rosters in the six major conferences (the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern Conference) plus four programs from mid-major leagues that are currently ranked in the AP Top 25 poll (Gonzaga, Houston, Saint Mary's and Murray State) determined 29% of players across those 80 teams have switched four-year schools at least once. That doesn't include junior college transfers.

The Big 12 has the highest portion at 41%. Colorado and Stanford are the only programs without a single incoming transfer. And just five high-major teams didn't add a transfer for this season, Colorado, Connecticut, Purdue, Villanova and Stanford — the latter touting a transfer-free team for the 12th year in a row.

While there's talk about disrupting team chemistry and a lack of resiliency when it comes to the hyperactive transfer portal, there's a personal story behind each switch and it's usually more complex than simply hopping around for more minutes, TV time or wins.

Moore has been a catalyst for the Hurricanes, who've been at or near the top of the ACC all season.

"The school, the people around the school, my

coaching staff, my teammates, they've all just been welcoming and warm and helping people trying to reach their goal. There's no egos or anything like that. It's just people trying to win," Moore said this week in a video interview with the AP. "It's been a great way to end my college career."

Payton Willis has come full circle, transferring back to Minnesota last summer after spending two previous seasons there. He's one of 10 players with Minnesota who have transferred at least once, the most among the high-major programs.

But the sixth-year guard felt like he never truly left.

Willis started at Vanderbilt, where coach Kevin Stallings was fired shortly before he arrived. After two years mostly coming off the bench, he made his first transfer to Minnesota.

"I knew how valuable a Vanderbilt degree is, how prestigious it is. I just felt at home there. But when it was done, it was done," Willis said in an interview earlier this season, declining to go into more detail.

Willis had flashes of success in the 2019-20 season, but was often lost in the Big Ten shuffle, so he moved to the College of Charleston. But COVID-19 conditions created a rather minimalist experience during his single season.

"I probably walked two or three blocks like 90% of the time I was there," Willis said, "or I was at the beach. I really didn't get to see too much, because we didn't have in-person classes. I was either at home or at the gym."

Prepared for an overseas career, Willis put the pros on pause after a call from new Gophers coach Ben Johnson, who previously recruited him as an assistant. The opportunity to play point guard was appealing, so he came returned to Minnesota and started a master's program in youth and leadership development.

Moore and Willis are rare three-time transfers. They're joined by Jalen Coleman-Lands, who arrived at Kansas after Iowa State, DePaul and Illinois. Texas A&M forward Jalen Johnson tore his ACL in preseason practice after arriving from Mississippi State, having previously played at Saint Louis and Louisiana-Lafayette.

For Moore, the firing of coach Dave Leitao last year left him with yet another change to manage. With the confidence and peace gained from his father's improvement, he chose Miami with encouragement from assistant coach Bill

Courtney (they briefly overlapped at DePaul).

"I thought he was going to be good, but this guy's been great, the way he gets our team to play together and the way he shares the ball," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said of Moore recently.

Moore was Illinois' Mr. Basketball in 2016, playing at Morgan Park High School in Chicago. He initially committed to Memphis, but coach Josh Pastner left for Georgia Tech. Moore played one year at Cal, before coach Cuonzo Martin departed for Missouri.

He moved a little closer to home at Kansas, but after a sit-out year and a season in a reserve role, he felt unsettled — particularly with the struggles around his father's health.

"I just wanted to make things better," Moore said.

Now playing in his fourth major conference, the 5-foot-11 Moore helped key an upset of Duke last month and his half-court shot banked in at the buzzer to beat Virginia Tech a few weeks later.

Though the Gophers have struggled in Big Ten play, Willis has two Big Ten Player of the Week awards this season. In a win over Rutgers on Jan. 22 (the only Gopher victory in 11 games since Christmas), Willis had a career-high 32 points and tied the program record with eight 3-pointers.

The extra pandemic-year effect will linger for three more seasons, and Willis offered his advice for those eyeing at the transfer portal: caution and patience.

"Each time I did it, I looked at myself in the mirror: 'Was it on me? Is this truly going to be the better route? Or is it going to be better for me to stay here and stick it out and fight through the challenges?'" Willis said. "Nowadays it's so hard. So many people are in kids' ears about what they should and shouldn't do. It makes it difficult for them to decipher who they should listen to and what they should listen to at the end of the day."

Time for a Top-25 Test

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 10, 2022

Jim Larrañaga made history Wednesday night at the Watsco Center.

The 11th-year University of Miami men's basketball head coach led his team to a 79-70 victory over Georgia Tech, giving him 100 ACC regular season victories. He is just the 14th coach in the 70-year history of the league to achieve that mark.

It was a milestone victory that led to some reflection for the two-time ACC Coach of the Year on all he has accomplished and who helped him get to that figure.

"Well, honestly, it means that I joined two coaches that I worked with for a long time, Terry Holland and Dave Odom, who are both on that list," Larrañaga shared. "I feel very fortunate that I've been able to survive this business as long as I have and be given great opportunities to continue coaching such good players and work with such good assistant coaches. My staff does a fantastic job of recruiting the right student-athletes and then teaching them, coaching them and mentoring them throughout their time here at Miami."

The triumph also made Larrañaga the first coach in NCAA history to win 100 league games at three Division I schools and the first to do so in three Division I conferences.

Miami (17-7, 9-4 ACC) managed to earn the victory despite being without 20-game starter Jordan Miller, as the fourth-year junior guard sat on the bench in street clothes with a right leg injury. Two frontcourt players rose to the occasion in his absence.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg turned in arguably his finest collegiate performance, notching 19 points, a co-season high eight rebounds and a career-high-tying five assists in a season-best 38 minutes. Third-year sophomore Anthony Walker, who earned his first start of 2021-22 on the day he turned 21, tallied 12 points and a season-high-tying eight rebounds, finishing 6-of-10 from the floor to tie a career high in makes in a co-season-high 26 minutes.

"That was the key to our success against Georgia Tech. When you're playing against a team that tries to steal the ball constantly and disrupt your offense, players have to step up and score the ball," Larrañaga said. "Sam did that, both attacking the rim—making a layup, getting some offensive rebounds—and then also hitting some threes. Anthony did it posting up, getting a fast-break dunk and being available a lot on offense, which really helped us."

Three other Miami players scored in double figures, as five Hurricanes notched 12-plus points for the second time this season. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored all 17 of his points in the second half, while third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong had 14 points

and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore tallied 13 points to go along with a co-game-high five assists.

The balanced scoring helped Miami storm back for a victory after trailing by 14-plus points for the third time this season. The Hurricanes trailed by 14 with under six minutes left in the first half and still faced a four-point deficit in the final 10 minutes of the game.

Miami, however, turned in a quality second-half showing to snap a two-game skid and sweep the reigning ACC Tournament champion.

"The two statistics I liked very much both occurred in the second half. We reduced our turnovers in half—we only had four turnovers—and we increased our assists," Larrañaga said. "We had 10 assists in the second half. So, 10 assists and only four turnovers. [We were] handling the ball much better, distributing the ball much better and had a really good balance in our offensive attack in the second half."

In addition to taking better care of the basketball, the Hurricanes also got a boost from their home crowd once again.

The Miami faithful helped the team rally back from an eight-point deficit to win at the Watsco Center for the fourth time, all in ACC play.

"I think being at home helped us. If you recall, many of our comebacks have come at home," Larrañaga remarked. "Syracuse, we were down. Clemson, we were down. Last night, we were down. A lot of credit belongs to the fans—especially the students—who cheered us on. As soon as we got things headed in the right direction, they created the energy in the Watsco Center that helped us overcome those deficits."

If Miami falls behind in its next game, it will not have a helpful home crowd to rely on, but rather a hostile one.

The Hurricanes' next game is Saturday at 3 p.m. against RV/No. 25 Wake Forest at Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Winston-Salem, N.C. It is a matchup of two teams in the top four of the ACC standings who were both picked to finish in the bottom four in the preseason poll.

The Demon Deacons are 20-5 (10-4) on the season and lead the conference in wins. In addition to their No. 25 spot in the Ferris Mowers Coaches Poll, they also rank No. 28 according to KenPom, which ranks its offense and defense both in the top 50 nationally.

"Wake Forest has the ingredients that a coach loves to have, very similarly to what we had in 2013," Larrañaga said. "They have the premier player in the league—the leading scorer and leader in assists—in Alondes Williams. He is their point guard and quarterback. When you have a guy who is that proficient at scoring and passing, he sets up his teammates extremely well. They also happen to have [one of the] biggest frontcourts with Dallas Walton,

Jake LaRavia, Isaiah Mucius and Khadim Sy. They are very big and skillful up front.

"So," Larrañaga continued, "they've got the great point guard, the great size and the great skillfulness to compete for an ACC championship and an NCAA championship."

Wake Forest is 9-2 in its last 11 games. That stretch started three days after a loss at Miami on the first day of 2022.

The Hurricanes, with Waardenburg unavailable due to COVID-19 protocols, earned a 92-84 victory. That is the highest point total of the season for Miami, which shot a season-best 61.5 percent (32-of-52) in the game, and is the second-highest mark Wake Forest has allowed.

While the Hurricanes might have experience playing and defeating the Demon Deacons already this year, Larrañaga knows the team his players will see Saturday is not the same one they did six weeks ago.

"Well, I thought they were really good when we played them the first time and they're even better this time," he said. "And they're better because they've had more games under their belt to figure out what they want to do and Alondes Williams has grown into his role as the premiere leader in the conference. They're a tough out for anybody."

Miami is 13-13 all-time against Wake Forest, including 8-5 under Larrañaga. However, the program is just 1-11 on the road against the Demon Deacons, with the lone victory by a single point, 74-73, on Feb. 9, 2011.

Each of the last 12 campus-site meetings between the two programs went to the home team, a stretch that dates back to the start of Larrañaga's tenure in 2011-12.

"My coaching staff and I will have to put together a great game plan and the players are going to have to execute that because Wake Forest is the most difficult place for us to get a win," the 2013 Associated Press National Coach of the Year said. "[I am in] my 11th season at Miami and we've never won at Wake Forest. So, it would be great if we could turn the tables on them Saturday."

Miami's game in Winston-Salem will be televised live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun locally—with Evan Lepler and Mike Gminski on the call. A full affiliate is available HERE and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, HERE. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats can be found HERE.

Following its contest against Wake Forest, the Hurricanes travel to Louisville, Ky., for a second consecutive road affair, this one slated for Wednesday at 7 p.m. against Louisville, live on RSN from the KFC Yum! Center.

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

UM is 1-11 on road at Wake Forest, faces another tough game Saturday vs Demon Deacons

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 11, 2022

Plane rides home from Winston Salem, North Carolina, have not been much fun for the Hurricanes over the years.

Miami is 1-11 on the road against the Wake Forest Demon Deacons, with the lone victory by a single point, 74-73, on Feb. 9, 2011.

The Canes will try to end the long road losing streak on Saturday (3 p.m., Bally Sports Sun), but it will not be easy.

The Demon Deacons are 20-5 (10-4 ACC) and are tied with Duke and Notre Dame for the most wins in the conference. They are 9-2 in their past 11 games after losing 92-84 to Miami on New Year's Day. They are ranked No. 25 in the coaches' poll and rank No. 28 on KenPom, which rates its offense and defense both in the top 50 nationally.

"Right now, I think they may be the best team in the ACC," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "They have Alondes Williams, who is leading the league in scoring and in assists. If he finishes the season that way, he'll be the only player in conference history to do that. They've got one great player quarterbacking their team."

The combination of Williams and a big front court makes Wake Forest one of the top teams in the country, Larranaga said.

"They've got tremendous size with Dallas Walton, Jake LaRavia, Isaiah Mucius and Khadim Sy," he said. "They are very big and skillful up front. They've got a very well-balanced team. Not only could they win the ACC, but they have a shot at winning the national championship, I think."

UM guard Isaiah Wong expects one of the toughest games of the season on Saturday.

"They're a good team, they have one of the top players in the ACC, they're on a winning streak so we've got a tough game going over there because they play best at home," Wong said. "We've got to stick to what we do. It's going to be a good game."

The 92 points the Hurricanes scored against the Demon Deacons earlier this season is the highest point total of the season for Miami, which shot a season-best 61.5 percent (32-of-52) in that game.

But Larranaga expects a tougher test against Wake Forest this time around.

"I thought they were really good when we played them the first time and they're even better this time," he said. "And they're better because they've had more games under their belt to figure out what they want to do and Alondes Williams has grown into his role as the premiere leader in the conference. They're a tough out for anybody."

Miami is 13-13 all-time against Wake Forest, including 8-5 under Larrañaga.

The Hurricanes (17-7, 8-4 ACC) are coming off a seven-point home win over Georgia Tech on Wednesday.

Sixth-year senior forward Sam Waardenburg played one of his best games with 19 points, eight rebounds and a career-high-tying five assists in a season-best 38 minutes. Anthony Walker got his first start on his 21st birthday in place of injured Jordan Miller. He had 12 points and a season-high-tying eight rebounds, finishing 6-of-10 from the floor.

"Anthony has been improving every year and this year he's been playing very well, getting rebounds, shooting the ball with confidence and taking people in the post and I love seeing it," said guard Isaiah Wong.

The game Saturday is important as ACC teams jockey for position heading into the final few weeks of the season. Wake Forest is in third place in the standings and Miami is tied with North Carolina in fourth place.

MBB Logs 76-72 Road Win at No. 25 Wake Forest

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 12, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team rallied back from a 13-point deficit, including a 10-point margin in the second half, to take down RV/No. 25 Wake Forest, 76-72, Saturday evening.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored a team-high 22 points for Miami (18-7, 10-4 ACC) which earned its fourth win of the year, including its second in a row, after trailing by 13-plus points. The win also marked Miami's first at Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum since 2011 and sealed a season sweep of the Demon Deacons, who lead the ACC in overall wins.

"Very simply, the game is played in spurts. We were in too much of a hurry to start the game," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said after his first road win at Wake Forest. "I told them we wanted to play fast and run, but we got in a hurry and started taking ill-advised shots. When you do that, you give the other team a chance to run because your defense is not going to be set. In the second half, we calmed down, we shared the ball much better and played Miami basketball. The guys just stepped up and made one big play after another."

After a nearly even start to the game, Wake Forest (20-6, 10-5 ACC) went on a 12-3 run to take a 27-16 edge with 7:03 on the first half clock. The Demon Deacons made 10 of their first 18 shots, including starting 5-of-8 from deep. Miami, meanwhile, made just seven of its first 18 attempts, including notching a 1-of-3 mark on 3-pointers.

Wake Forest later used a 9-2 surge to go up by a game-best 13 points, 38-25, with 3:11 remaining in the frame. The Hurricanes then hit back-to-back 3-pointers, sparking an 8-2 burst to end the half and make it 40-33 through 20 minutes.

Miami notched an 8-0 first-half advantage in points off turnovers and Wake Forest went just 3-of-7 from the line, but the Demon Deacons shot 55.6 percent (15-of-27) from the floor and 53.8 percent (7-of-13) beyond the arc.

Wake Forest drilled yet another 3-pointer to open the second-half scoring, but the Hurricanes countered with a 9-2 surge to get within three, 45-42, with 16:20 left. They eventually upped it to a 23-9 extended mark to go up by four, 56-52, with 10:03 remaining.

The Demon Deacons took a 57-56 lead with 7:46 to go, but Miami went back in front by three before Wake Forest eventually leveled the score at 67 on a 3-pointer with 3:02 to go. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong put the Hurricanes back in front, 69-67, on a pair of free throws just 17 ticks later. McGusty upped the cushion to a game-high five points, 72-67, on a 3-pointer with 1:30 on the clock.

After the teams exchanged baskets, Wake Forest graduate student guard Alondes Williams, the ACC's leading scorer, converted a three-point play to trim the deficit to two, 74-72, with 37 seconds to go.

Wong, however, countered with a contested, banked-in jump-shot with 11.2 ticks on the clock. The Hurricanes then got a stop at the other end to seal their second top-25 road triumph of the season.

"Everybody makes contributions. Jordan Miller's tip-in was a huge basket, [as was] Sam Waardenburg's three from Charlie Moore's around-the-back pass and Charlie's three from Jordan Miller's assist," Larrañaga said. "And then, when the chips are down, we have Kam and Isaiah, who can take their man and create for themselves. Both of them did that in a very big way."

McGusty's 22 points, five of which were in the final 90 seconds, came on 8-of-14 shooting, including a 3-of-5 clip from deep. He added three steals in the win.

Wong scored 20 points of his own, shooting 8-of-14 from the floor and 4-of-4 at the line, as well as grabbed a game-best seven rebounds, one shy of his season high. Sixth-year red-shirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg posted 12 points and a career-high-tying three steals to set a season best.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, who did not play the last game with a right leg injury, tallied eight points and six rebounds off the bench, including the aforementioned tip-in to up Miami's lead from one to three with 3:14 to play.

Williams paced all scorers with 25 points, including 24 in the final 25 minutes, on 9-of-15 shooting. The Hurricanes, however, held the ACC's assist leader to just four, paired with forcing him into seven turnovers, tied for the most by a Miami foe all year.

Senior guard Daivien Williamson was the only other Demon Deacon to score in double figures, as he finished with 12 points. He notched eight points on a 3-of-3 clip in the first 5:06 and then shot 2-of-5 the rest of the way, adding just four more points.

Both teams made over half their shots from the floor, with Miami logging a 51.7 percent clip (30-of-58) and conceding a 54.9 percent mark (28-of-51). The Hurricanes, however, finished with a spectacular 19-0 margin in points off turnovers. They forced 17 giveaways and committed just seven of their own.

Up next for Miami is a visit to Louisville, Ky., where it plays Wednesday at 7 p.m. against Louisville, live on RSN from the KFC Yum! Center.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 14-13 all-time against Wake Forest, including 2-11 on the road and 9-5 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– This is the first time since a Miami road win on 2/9/11 that the visiting team has won a game in this series, snapping an 11-game streak of campus-site matchups won by the home team that dated back to the start of Larrañaga's tenure in 2011-12.

– Saturday marked the first time the Hurricanes have ever won in regulation at Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 688-471 in 38 years as a head coach, including 218-137 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– Now owning 101 victories in ACC regular season play, Larrañaga tied Dave Odom, who attended Saturday's game,

for No. 13 on the all-time list.

– For the second time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, Waardenburg, Wong, sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore and third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker.

– Miller played 27 minutes off the bench, his first action as a reserve since 11/25/21 versus Dayton in Kissimmee, Fla., after missing Wednesday's victory over Georgia Tech.

– The Hurricanes, for the fifth time (also 3/1/21 at Virginia, 3/9/21 versus Pittsburgh in the ACC Tournament, 1/8/22 at Duke and 1/29/22 at Georgia Tech), wore throwback jerseys, courtesy of adidas, that paid homage to Miami's teams of the late 1990's, including the 1999-2000 squad that won a share of the BIG EAST regular season title and earned the program's first Sweet 16 berth.

– Now with 34 steals in ACC play this year, Moore moved into a tie with Guillermo Diaz (2004-05) for first place on Miami's ACC-only single-season list.

– This is the first time Miami has swept multiple teams (Georgia Tech and Wake Forest) in regular season play since 2017-18 (Pittsburgh and Virginia Tech).

– Miami is now 200-15 under Larrañaga when leading with two minutes left in the game, including 90-10 in ACC competition.

– The Hurricanes improved to 17-1 this season when scoring 65-plus points and won their 16th such game in a row.

– Miami rallied from a deficit of 13-plus points to win for the fourth time this season, as it also did so on 11/29/21 versus North Texas (14) in Kissimmee, Fla., on 1/5/22 at home against Syracuse (18) and on 2/9/22 at home versus Georgia Tech (14).

– This is the 11th time this season Miami has posted double-digit steals, including the eighth in the last 11 outings.

– The Hurricanes are now 7-6 when trailing at halftime, including 5-3 in ACC play.

– After taking a 5-3 lead through 1:50 of action, Miami did not go back in front until 10:37 remained in the game.

– Miami's plus-19 margin in points off turnovers was its second-highest of the season, trailing just a plus-25 tally (30-5) against North Carolina on 1/18/22.

– Before Williams, the only Miami opposing player to log seven turnovers in a game this season was Florida State's Caleb Mills on 1/22/22.

– Saturday marked the first time the Hurricanes won an ACC game in which they shot under 70 percent from the line, improving to 1-3 in such contests.

– J. Miller eclipsed 1,100 points as a collegian.

– Waardenburg, who surpassed 600 points at Miami, scored in double digits for the 21st time, including the ninth this year.

– The last time Waardenburg recorded three steals in a game was on 3/11/20 versus Clemson in the ACC Tournament in Greensboro, N.C., while the lone other time he had three steals in an ACC contest was on 2/10/18 at Boston College.

– McGusty, who moved past 1,650 points as a collegian, registered his 23rd 20-point performance, including his 17th at Miami and 10th this season.

– McGusty tallied double-digit points for the 86th time, including the 58th as a Hurricane and the 23rd this season.

– Wong notched 20-plus points for the 21st time, including the seventh in 2021-22.

– Wong scored in double figures for the 55th time, including the 22nd this year.

– Moore reached 1,550 points in his career.

Kameron McGusty, Isaiah Wong lead Hurricanes to rare win at Wake Forest

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 12, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes do not seem phased by double-digit deficits.

Even in tough environments.

Kameron McGusty scored 22 points, Isaiah Wong added 20 and the Miami Hurricanes won at Wake Forest for the first time since 2011 with a 76-72 victory on Saturday.

"They just played harder and they had more urgency in the second half," Wake Forest coach Steve Forbes said. "I thought we left points on the table in the first half and we blew some opportunities."

Sam Waardenburg chipped in 12 points for the Hurricanes, who won for just the second time in 12 trips to Winston-Salem.

The Hurricanes (18-7, 10-4 ACC) overcame a 13-point deficit to hand Wake Forest (20-6, 10-5) just its second home loss of the season in 15 games and moved into a tie for third place in the ACC, trailing only Duke and Notre Dame at 10-3.

"They're not just good against everybody, but they're definitely good against us," said Miami coach Jim Larranaga, who was 0-5 at Wake Forest entering the game. "We had some opportunities to win here and fell short so tonight is a really special win."

It was the fourth win for Miami this year after trailing by as many as 10 this season.

Jordan Miller, who missed last game with a right leg injury, converted on a backdoor layup for a 54-52 lead with 10:37 left for the Hurricanes' first lead since the opening minutes of the game.

"We came out in the second half and they turned it up," Forbes said. "We had 10 turnovers in the second half off live balls where they were just laying it up and there's really no defense for that. The offense really created a lot of problems for our defense."

Miller followed with another layup to cap a 10-0 run and finished with eight points and six rebounds in 27 minutes.

"He told me at the pregame that he was feeling good and should be able to go, but not until a player gets on the court and tests it do you know what the result will be," Larranaga said.

McGusty drilled a 3 out of a timeout for a 74-69 lead with 1:30 remaining.

McGusty added a layup moments later, but Alondes Williams converted a three-point play to cut deficit to 74-72.

Wong made a tough shot in traffic with 11 seconds left to seal the win.

McGusty and Wong each made 8 of 14 from the floor.

"Wong and McGusty are going to make some plays, they're good players, you're not going to stop them all game," Forbes said, "but when it's game time you've got to find a way and they just went and made plays."

The Hurricanes were able to force the Demon Deacons into 17 turnovers and convert the miscues into 19 points while not allowing Wake Forest to score any points off of their seven turnovers.

"That's been our strategy throughout the season and we made a concerted effort during the offseason of scrambling, pressuring the ball, rotate and hustle because we lack size," Larranaga said. "They are so much bigger than us."

Wake Forest led by as many as 13 points in the first half and took a 40-33 lead into the break.

"I thought Wake Forest got off to a great start and I thought we were very much in a hurry," Larranaga said. "We wanted to play so hard and so well, but we rushed. In the second half we calmed down and executed our offense much better and our defense was outstanding in forcing turnovers and converting them into points."

Williams finished with a game-high 25 points, but had seven of the Demon Deacons' 17 turnovers.

NEXT UP

Miami plays at Louisville on Feb. 16. The Hurricanes are 0-6 all-time at Louisville.

UM overcomes flight delay, double-digit deficit, wins 76-72 road game at Wake Forest

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 12, 2022

Seven-and-a-half-hour flight delay? No problem.

Double-digit deficit on the road? No worries.

The seemingly unflappable Miami Hurricanes once again relied on their experience and maturity, rallied in the second half, and beat Wake Forest 76-72 on Saturday afternoon in Winston-Salem, N.C. It was UM's second win in 13 road games against the Demon Deacons, and first under coach Jim Larranaga.

It was also the fourth time this season UM overcame a double-digit deficit and 10th time the team won after trailing in the second half.

With the win, Miami improved to 18-7 overall and 10-4 in the ACC, leapfrogging Wake Forest into a third-place conference tie with North Carolina.

Getting there was as difficult as winning the game.

The Hurricanes boarded their flight in Miami at 2 p.m. Friday, but there were mechanical issues, so the team de-planed and didn't wind up taking off until 9:30 p.m. While they awaited a new plane to show up, they took the team bus to Outback Steakhouse in Westland Mall in Hialeah for dinner. They loaded up on appetizers, had a leisurely, hearty meal, returned to the airport and didn't get to Winston-Salem until 11:30 p.m.

"They handled that adversity with such class," Larranaga said of his players, four of whom are sixth-year seniors. "They didn't get upset. They didn't start complaining. They went to dinner as a team, had a lot of laughs, enjoyed it...we didn't get to our hotel 'til midnight. When a team handles adversity the way we did (Friday), and then in the game, when adversity hit, they handled it the same way. They were calm. And down the stretch every starter made a big play, one right after the other."

Jordan Miller had a tip-in at crunch time. Charlie Moore made a three to close the gap from 10 points to one with 12 minutes to go. Sam Waardenburg got a steal and a layup to give Miami a 63-61 lead with five minutes to go. And then Kameron McGusty and Isaiah Wong attacked the basket with abandon in the closing minutes.

McGusty led the Hurricanes with 22 points

and Wong added 20. Both were 8-of-14 from the floor. Wong also had seven rebounds. Waardenburg chipped in 12 points.

One of the keys to Miami's victory was that the Canes forced the Demon Deacons into 17 turnovers and held a 19-0 edge in points off turnovers.

"In the second half our defense was outstanding in terms of forcing turnovers and converting the turnovers into points," Larranaga said. "That's been our strategy throughout the season. We made a concerted effort during the off-season of scrambling, pressuring the ball, trap, rotate and hustle because we lack size."

He said that style of defense was critical against a Wake Forest team that was much taller and stronger physically than the Hurricanes. The Demon Deacons were 9-of-21 from three-point range and shot 55 percent, but the turnovers did them in.

ACC Player of the Year candidate Alondes Williams, who leads the conference in scoring and assists, finished with 25 points, but he had seven turnovers due to Miami's pressure. The Demon Deacons, who fell to 20-6 overall and 10-5 in the league.

"We're not big enough to just stay back and rebound with other teams," Larranaga said. "If we don't force turnovers, we're going to struggle defensively. But when we are forcing turnovers and we're pretty darn good in the open court converting those, that makes a huge difference. It's hard for the opponent to make up for those points."

Miller, a starter who missed the previous game with a leg injury, came off the bench and made key contributions in 27 minutes.

The Hurricanes head to Louisville on Wednesday, another place Larranaga has never won. He hopes to reverse that trend like he did on Saturday at Wake Forest.

Head of the Snake

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 14, 2022

Again. The Hurricanes did it again.

For the fourth time this season—and the second in a row—the University of Miami men's basketball team stormed back from a deficit of 13-plus points to earn a victory.

Saturday evening's comeback, though, was particularly impressive. The Hurricanes rallied on the road against a top-25 team, clawing their way to a 76-72 triumph against RV/No. 25 Wake Forest at the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

Miami (18-7, 10-4 ACC) trailed by 10 points early in the second half, but outscored the Demon Deacons by 14 over the final 19:10 to sweep the season series.

"I think we just stayed together as a team. We picked up our energy, defensively, in the second half," sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore said. "We started executing in the second half. As a team, I feel like we just stick together through it all. In those tough environments especially, like Wake Forest, it's critical we stick together as a team and stay strong. I feel like we did that."

Saturday's triumph marked the 10th time this season Miami won a game after trailing in the second half. The Hurricanes also improved to 7-6 when behind at the break, including 5-3 in ACC action.

Those prior experiences help the team remain confident when facing large deficits, even if their goal is, of course, to avoid being in those situations.

"We never get rattled. We understand the stakes at hand," Moore shared. "We understand that when we get down like that, all we've got to do is put together some stops and score in transition or in half-court. If we do that, we can come back and win. But it's not something we're proud of or we're looking forward to doing every game because we know we can do it. We've got to [open] with better starts at times, but it's good to see that we can make those stops and execute offensively in order for us to come back in games and come out with the win."

Moore battled through foul trouble against the Demon Deacons and had his six-game double-digit scoring streak come to an end. It marked just the second time in the last 12 games he did not tally 12-plus points.

However, he still knocked down a huge second-half 3-pointer and finished with three assists compared to one turnover. Moreover, Miami assuredly has the high-octane guard depth that allows a player to have an off night scoring the ball.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored 22 points and third-year junior guard Isaiah Wong posted 20, each shooting 8-of-14 from the floor in the win. They combined for the Hurricanes' final nine points in the last 2:45 after Wake Forest evened the score. Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg added 12 points.

For Moore, it is a joy to compete alongside elite backcourt mates at his side, as any of the three have the ability to go off for a big game at any point.

"Oh, man, it's a great feeling being able to play with other guys that know the game, can score the ball, make the right play for the team and also play hard defensively," Moore said. "It's a great mixture of guys who are going out there to play to win and to help the team ... to the best of our abilities. So, it feels good. It's a blessing to play in a backcourt with Zay and Kam. I love it. I just try and go out there and play my game. They play their games and I just feel like we feed off of each other. It's pretty great."

Moore, as expected for a veteran team leader, mentioned the defensive element the Hurricane guard group brings. That mindset actually extends to the team as a whole.

Over its last 11 games, Miami has forced a whopping 164 turnovers, with 113 of them coming off steals. In eight of those outings, the Hurricanes recorded double-digit thefts.

Miami had just seven giveaways versus the Demon Deacons and forced 17 at the other end, leading to a eye-popping 19-0 edge in points off turnovers. Stacking numbers like that, against any foe, is truly a team effort and the Hurricanes have consistently excelled in doing so.

Moore, though, is the one leading the charge, as he is averaging 2.12 steals per game to co-lead the ACC, with fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller (1.75, co-third) and McGusty (1.64, sixth) not far behind.

"I just think I play defense well off of my teammates. I'm the head of the snake most of the time; I'm guarding the guy who's bringing the ball up. So, I just have to come out to every game and bring energy," Moore remarked. "I feel like my energy can be contagious to other players on the team. So, I just try to bring as much as energy as I can and hopefully it helps my teammates to see the energy that I'm bringing and they start to pick it up, which does [happen]."

The Hurricanes will assuredly need to bring that defensive intensity in their next game, Wednesday night against Louisville, if they hope to do something they have never done before.

Miami is 0-6 all-time on the road against the Cardinals, who are also the only team 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga has not defeated in an away game.

Action at the KFC Yum! Center in Louisville, Ky., is slated for 7 p.m. Four of the Hurricanes' six road losses to the Cardinals are in that building.

"I know it's not going to be an easy game. I know they're not doing as well [as usual] this season, but I feel like everybody in the ACC is a good team," Moore shared. "Like I've said before, I just feel like anybody can win in the ACC, any night out. So I know, going into Louisville, playing in their house, they're going to play extremely hard. They're going to play to win, so we've got to go out there and execute, play Miami basketball and just give 110 percent effort out there."

Although the Hurricanes have turned in some strong defensive

performances of late, Louisville presents a unique challenge.

The Cardinals, who enter at 11-13 (5-9 ACC) on the season, do not have a single double-digit scorer on their roster, but do have 10 individuals averaging at least 5.0 points per game. Senior guard Noah Locke and fifth-year senior forward/center Malik Williams, who logs a team-best 8.3 rebounds per outing, co-lead Louisville in scoring at 9.5 points per game.

Facing a team without any defined go-to player can be difficult, especially after Miami's last two games came against teams with a top-three scorer in the ACC.

"It sounds like they're a pretty well-rounded team," Moore said. "So, I feel like we've just got to go out there and play our defense, pack the paint and force them to shoot tough twos and tough threes. [We need to] play together, as a team, defensively. I feel like we've been doing that a lot this season. So, we've just got to keep it going and bring it into the next game as a well."

Despite its winless record the road against Louisville, Miami is 5-13 all-time versus Louisville, one of the most historic programs in the country.

In the most recent meeting, the Hurricanes earned a 78-72 upset win over then-No. 16/18 Louisville on Jan. 16, 2021—exactly 13 months prior to this season's affair—at the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Fla. Wong scored a career-high 30 points in the win, adding seven rebounds and a career-best six assists.

Miami will now look to get its first road win over the Cardinals in front of a rabid fan base that packs a 22,000-seat arena. That is certainly no easy task.

However, the Hurricanes are 6-2 in true road games and have already won at vaunted Cameron Indoor Stadium this season.

"It's always fun to play in somebody else's home. Me, personally, I feel like I like playing away better sometimes," Moore said. "It's going to be a big game. Like I said, people tend to play harder at home. They've got their fans and crowd behind them. So, they play harder, they shoot better, they play defense better. [It will be] just an all-around better game for those guys. So, [playing in that environment] shows who we are as a team and we've just got to go out there, execute defensively and offensively to the best of our abilities and, like I said, keep giving 110 percent effort. That will help us come out with the win."

Wednesday night's matchup will be broadcast live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun locally—with Evan Lepler and Cory Alexander on the call. A full affiliate is available [HERE](#) and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, [HERE](#). Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM [HERE](#), while live stats will be available [HERE](#).

After playing Louisville, the Hurricanes return home to face Virginia, with action slated for Saturday at 5 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.

Louisville is reeling, but Miami Hurricanes not overlooking Wednesday's road game

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 15, 2022

The Louisville Cardinals have lost six games in a row for the first time in 31 years, parted ways with coach Chris Mack a few weeks ago, and don't have a single player averaging double digits.

But University of Miami coach Jim Larranaga and his Hurricanes are not taking the Wednesday road game at the KFC Yum! Center lightly. The Canes, in a two-way tie for third place in the ACC with a 10-4 conference record, are well aware that conference games have been unpredictable this season.

"Louisville is, physically, one of the most talented teams in the league," Larranaga said. "Malik Williams is coming back, which gives them a high-quality big guy to go along with (Sydney) Curry and (Jae'Lyn) Withers, so they've got up front a three-headed monster. Their guard play, Jarrod West is outstanding and El Ellis, when he's at the top of his game, makes Louisville hard to guard."

The Cardinals will be back home for the first time in 15 days.

"They're back home after being on the road, I think they'll play with a great deal of passion," Larranaga said.

As of last week, there were only two places Larranaga had not won a road game with Miami – at Wake Forest and at Louisville. The Canes rallied to beat the Demon Deacons 76-72 on Saturday, and are hoping to pick up another road win on Wednesday.

Although the Hurricanes (18-7) have proven to be a comeback team this season, they prefer to avoid drama, if possible.

"We understand that when we get down like that, all we've got to do is put together some stops and score in transition or in half-court and if we do that, we can come back and win," Moore said. "But it's not something we're proud of or we're looking forward to doing every game because we know we can do it. We've got to get better starts, but it's good to see that we can make those stops and execute offensively in order for us to come back in games and come out with the win."

Miami's success has come largely because of its scrambling defense, which has forced 164 turnovers in the past 11 games, including 113 steals. Among the familiar faces on the

Cardinals roster is guard Matt Cross, who transferred from UM last season.

"I know it's not going to be an easy game. I know they're not doing as well (as usual) this season, but I feel like everybody in the ACC is a good team," Moore said. "Going into Louisville, playing in their house, they're going to play extremely hard. They're going to play to win, so we've got to go out there and execute, play Miami basketball and just give 110 percent effort out there."

MBB Wins, 70-63, at Louisville

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 16, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team led for 36-plus minutes in a 70-63 victory at the KFC Yum! Center, tallying the first road victory over Louisville in program history.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored a co-team-high 15 points for the Hurricanes, who improved to 7-2 in true road contests and clinched a winning conference record. Miami (19-7, 11-4 ACC) led for the final 35 minutes and 36 seconds of the night.

"Well, you always have to be concerned as a coach going on the road, especially in a place that you've never won before. You don't know how your opponent is going to play at home," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "They can come out and play with tremendous energy and be inspired by the crowd. They can shoot the ball better than they have. You can have big games. But our guys took control of the game early, established a 10-point lead and were able to hold on down the stretch by making really good plays."

Moore hit all three of his 3-pointers in the first five minutes, while the Hurricanes went on an early 13-0 run in just 2:33 to build a 16-6 lead after just 6:21 of action. Louisville (11-14, 5-10 ACC) cut its deficit to seven four times, but did not get any closer the rest of the half.

Miami, meanwhile, stretched its advantage as high as 12 on two occasions, first on a second-chance 3-pointer by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty that made it 27-15 with 8:28 on the clock. The Hurricanes went on to take a 10-point cushion, 35-25, into the locker room.

Larrañaga's team, which notched a 22-20 edge on the glass, shot 45.5 percent (15-of-33) in the first half and posted 10 assists, while the Cardinals shot only 34.4 percent (11-of-32) and had just three assists.

After a Miami basket to open the second half, the Cardinals went on a 13-6 run to make it a five-point game, 43-38, with 14:16 to go. The Hurricanes extended their advantage back to 10, but Louisville again countered, this time with a 9-2 burst to make it a three-point margin, 52-49, with 8:26 on the clock.

Following a scoreless drought of 2:34, Miami scored four straight points to take a 56-49 lead with 6:43 remaining. The Hurricanes eventually went up by 10, 64-54, on a four-point play by Wong with 3:31 left. His and-one free-throw gave him 171 makes from the line in ACC play in his career, setting a new program record.

Louisville responded with seven points in a row to make it 64-61 with just 1:10 to play, but McGusty hit a shot-clock-beating jump-shot at the other end with 34.4 ticks left to up the margin to five. After a defensive stop, Moore added two points from the line to make it a seven-point cushion, 68-61,

with 17 seconds on the clock, all but icing the game.

Moore and Wong's 15 points both came on 5-of-13 shooting. Moore notched a co-game-high three steals, breaking the program's ACC-only single-season record in the process, while Wong grabbed a season-high-tying eight rebounds.

McGusty totaled 14 points and a season-high six assists, pacing all players and finishing one shy of his career best. Five of his assists came in the first 11 minutes of the contest.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller recorded 10 points and seven rebounds, while sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg logged eight points along with a game- and season-high nine rebounds, adding a career-high-tying three blocks.

"I think Charlie Moore got us off to a great start and then Jordan Miller and Anthony Walker did some things, got a dunk or two. Isaiah got a dunk. And so, guys were playing with a lot of confidence," Larrañaga said. "Later in the second half, Sam Waardenburg drove in and dunked it. When you're getting baskets at the rim, everybody feels good. Isaiah's three that he got fouled on and Kam's elbow jumper were both huge baskets when the game was in doubt."

Louisville sophomore guard/forward Dre Davis paced all scorers with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting. Junior guard El Ellis notched 17 points and senior guard Noah Locke added 11.

Miami ended the night shooting 45.9 percent (28-of-61) from the floor and tallied 16 assists. Louisville, meanwhile, shot 42.9 percent (27-of-63) and had only six assists. Each team had 10 turnovers, but the Hurricanes, for the second time in ACC competition, won the rebounding battle, 38-36.

The Hurricanes also limited a Louisville team that came into the contest averaging 8.2 made 3-pointers per game to just a 2-of-13 clip (15.4 percent) beyond the arc.

Miami now returns to the Watsco Center for its first home game in 10 days, slated for Saturday at 5 p.m. against Virginia, 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.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

- The Hurricanes moved to 6-13 all-time against Louisville, including 1-6 on the road and 4-6 in Larrañaga's tenure.
- With the win over the Cardinals paired with Saturday's triumph at then-RV/No. 25 Wake Forest, Larrañaga now owns a road victory over every program in the ACC.
- Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 689-471 in 38 years as a head coach, including 219-137 in 11 seasons at Miami.
- Now owning 102 victories in ACC regular season play, Larrañaga moved past Dave Odom for sole possession of

the No. 13 spot on the all-time list.

- For the 18th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong.
- Now with 37 steals in ACC play this year, Moore moved past Guillermo Diaz (2004-05) for sole possession of first place on Miami's ACC-only single-season list, with his take-away with 14:09 left on the first-half clock setting the record.
- Wong now has 171 made free throws in ACC play in his career, passing the 170 mark set by Durand Scott (2009-13) and Jack McClinton (2006-09) to move into first place in program history.
- Now with 1,686 minutes played in ACC action as a Hurricane, Wong passed Tonye Jekiri (2012-16) for fifth place on the program's ACC-only career leaderboard.
- With 261 rebounds in ACC play at Miami, Waardenburg entered the top 10, on the program's ACC-only career leaderboard, now placing eighth.
- Waardenburg now has 22 blocked shots in ACC play this season, moving into the top 10 on Miami's ACC-only single-season list in co-sixth place, jumping from No. 12 and passing four people.
- The Hurricanes improved to 18-1 this season when scoring 65-plus points and won their 17th such game in a row.
- Wednesday marked the first time in 2021-22 the Hurricanes had co-leading scorers.
- The only other ACC game this season in which Miami outrebounded its opponent was on 1/29/22 at Georgia Tech, 38-31.
- The Hurricanes' 10-point halftime lead was its second-largest of the season in ACC play, trailing only the 27-point cushion, 49-22, against North Carolina on 1/18/22.
- Wong's seven first-half rebounds tied the third-highest total in a frame by a Hurricane this season, including matching the second-highest mark before the break.
- Freshman guards Bensley Joseph and Wooga Poplar both reached 25 games played in their young careers.
- McGusty, who surpassed 450 rebounds as a collegian, tallied double-figure points for the 87th time, including the 59th as a Hurricane and 24th this season.
- McGusty logged five-plus assists for the seventh time, all at Miami, including the third this year.
- McGusty's prior season high in assists was five, which he registered on both 1/26/22 at Virginia Tech and 1/5/22 versus Syracuse.
- Moore scored in double figures for the 74th time, including the 17th in 2021-22.
- Moore recorded five-plus assists for the 46th time, including the ninth this season.
- Wong, who surpassed both 1,100 points and 2,500 minutes played at Miami, tallied double-figure points for the 56th time, including the 23rd this year.
- The other game this season in which Wong had eight rebounds was on 1/18/22 versus North Carolina.
- J. Miller, who moved past 450 rebounds in his career, registered double-digit points for the 59th time, including the ninth this season.
- Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker reached 50 assists as a Hurricane.

Hurricanes win at Louisville for the first time

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 16, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes looked right at home at a place they had never won.

Isaiah Wong and Charlie Moore each scored 15 points and the Hurricanes won at Louisville for the first time, beating the Cardinals 70-63 on Wednesday.

"Our guys took control of the game early, established a 10-point lead and were able to hold on down the stretch by making really good plays," Miami head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty added 14 points for the Hurricanes who have won three straight.

Miami (19-7, 11-4 ACC) moved into sole possession of third place in the conference standings with North Carolina falling to Pittsburgh on Wednesday. No. 9 Duke and Notre Dame, at 12-3, are one game ahead of Miami with five games left.

The Hurricanes also got 10 points and seven rebounds from Jordan Miller, eight points, nine rebounds and three blocks from Sam Waardenburg and eight boards from Wong.

Miami had dropped its previous six trips to Louisville (11-14, 5-10).

The Hurricanes led 16-6 six minutes into the game with Moore hitting 3s on consecutive possessions with Wong and McGusty also drilling long-range shots.

McGusty tossed an alley-oop pass to Wong for a dunk and followed with a 3 to give the Hurricanes a 27-15 advantage.

"I think Charlie Moore got us off to a great start and then Jordan Miller and Anthony Walker did some things, got a dunk or two, Isaiah got a dunk," Larranaga said. "Guys were playing with a lot of confidence."

Miami led 35-25 at the break and improved to 11-1 when leading at halftime.

"I am of getting in front of you guys and having to talk about what we didn't do right to win a game," Louisville interim head coach Mike Pegues said. "It's extremely frustrating. I had a long talk with the guys in the back and told them the most disappointing thing was that we didn't play hard in the first half. I thought we were lifeless, no energy, no pop – and I don't really understand why, because the practices

haven't been that way."

The Hurricanes finished with five dunks in the game including Wong's to cap it in the final minute.

"When you're getting baskets at the rim, everybody feels good," Larranaga said.

The Cardinals cut Miami's lead to 64-61 with 1:10 left after a jumper by El Ellis, who finished with 17 points, second-highest total in the game only to teammate Dre Davis's 18.

McGusty followed with a jumper to make it 66-1. After a miss and a foul by Ellis, Moore hit two free throws essentially sealing the win.

MILLER STARTS

Miller returned to the starting lineup in place of Walker after one game off the bench following missing one game with a right leg injury. Walker scored six points in 17 minutes.

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Virginia on Saturday (5:00 p.m., ACCN).

UM hangs on to beat Louisville on the road, Cardinals on longest skid since 1940-41

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 16, 2022

As of last week, there were only two ACC opponents Miami Hurricanes coach Jim Larranaga had never beaten on the road – Wake Forest and Louisville. In the span of five days, he and his team beat them both.

Miami, playing with the poise and unselfishness that has become its hallmark this season, conquered the Cardinals 70-63 at the KFC Yum! Center Wednesday night.

With just over two weeks left in the regular season, the Hurricanes are 19-7 overall, 11-4 in the ACC and in sole possession of third place in the league standings behind Duke and Notre Dame.

The Cardinals, meanwhile, continued their downward spiral with a seventh consecutive loss. The last time Louisville lost seven consecutive games was 81 years ago, during the 1940-41 season.

“The KFC Yum! Center had not been kind to us the last half-dozen years, and it was very important for us to play well and get the win,” Larranaga said. “Louisville came at us very hard the second half, driving to the basket, so we’re very fortunate we were able to hang on late.”

After trailing by as many as 12 points in the second half, Louisville took advantage of a two-minute UM scoring drought and closed the gap to three. The home crowd, desperate for a win, got loud and the Cardinals’ bench was energized. But Miami’s wily veterans did not flinch.

Sixth-year senior Sam Waardenburg faked a handoff and flew to the basket for a one-handed dunk. Third-year sophomore Isaiah Wong made a step-back three from the corner and drew a foul for a four-point play.

And then, after the Cardinals went on a 7-0 run to close to within three, UM’s sixth-year senior Kam McGusty knocked down a mid-range jumper to give the Canes a five-point lead with 35 seconds to go. Another sixth-year senior, Charlie Moore, sank a pair of free throws and Wong put an exclamation point on the game with a dunk.

Wong and Moore each scored 15 points. Wong had eight rebounds and Moore five assists. McGusty had 14 points and six assists, Jordan Miller 10 points and seven rebounds

and Waardenburg contributed nine rebounds and three blocks to go with his eight points.

“Our three guards have always been able to step up when they were needed the most,” Larranaga said. “Isaiah’s four-point play was huge. Charlie drew those fouls and made free throws. Kam’s ability to hit that medium-range elbow jumper was obviously critical. You have to have players make plays. You can tell them what offense to run, but they’re the ones that have to execute.”

The Hurricanes took control of the game early with a trio of Moore three-pointers, all of them from far beyond the arc. Wong also hit an early three and Miami led the Cardinals by 10 points after seven minutes.

Their shots kept falling the rest of the half and they took a 10-point lead into halftime. The Hurricanes shared the ball all game and finished with 16 assists while Louisville had six.

Larranaga credited the unselfish style of play to Moore, the DePaul transfer, who joined the team this season. The coach said Moore came in and started distributing the ball to his teammates, which led to better team chemistry and helped Wong and McGusty, who were already good shooters, get more open shots.

Louisville struggled with its shot in the first half, but went 16-of-31 after intermission to stay in the game. Dre Davis scored a season-high 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting to lead Louisville and El Ellis added 17 points.

Cardinals guard Matt Cross, who transferred from Miami last year during his freshman season, played seven minutes and did not score.

Miami returns home for a Saturday 5 p.m. game against the University of Virginia. The Hurricanes are hoping to avenge a 71-58 road loss to the Cavaliers on Feb. 5.

Staying Fresh

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 17, 2022

Nearly all season long, the University of Miami men's basketball team has excelled in late-game situations.

The Hurricanes have consistently fended off opponents' late runs and, as evidenced by their 10 wins when trailing in the second half, churned out comebacks of their own.

Miami (19-7, 11-4 ACC) turned in its most recent such display Wednesday night in a 70-63 victory over Louisville at the KFC Yum! Center, the program's first road triumph over the Cardinals.

Louisville trimmed a 12-point deficit down to three. Then, after the Hurricanes pushed their edge back up to 10 with just 3:31 left, the Cardinals cut it to three once again, with 1:10 to go.

Miami, though, ended the game on a 6-2 run in the final 35 seconds, once again holding strong to earn a conference win, this time in front of 12,065 fans. While lifting and conditioning certainly play a part in the team's ability to close out games, the players' mindset is the most important element.

"It really starts with us just having competitive guys. I can say we did different conditioning protocols in the fall here or late in the summer, but it really boils down to our guys wanting to win," Miami strength & conditioning coach Phil Baier said. "So, that's first and foremost where you see this energy. But from my end of things, it [is really about] the guys making sure they are continuing their habits, they are continuing their routines. They are believing if I say, 'Hey, we should do this stretch' or 'We should hydrate with this' or 'We should eat this and it's going to show up later in the season or later in games and that's going to be what fuels you to perform.' We have a great group of guys who trust us—myself, [athletic trainer] Sam Johnson and Nate Diaz, our nutritionist—in terms of us providing a service and providing supplies for them to be successful."

Miami's entire starting lineup played 31-plus minutes at Louisville, but still had the energy—both physically and mentally—to stem the home team's tide and earn the win.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong and sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore co-led the Hurricanes with 15 points apiece. Wong, who converted a critical four-point play with 3:31 remaining, pulled down a co-season-high eight rebounds. Moore, who hit three 3-pointers in the first five minutes, added five assists and a co-game-best three steals.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, whose elbow jump-shot with 34.4 seconds left upped the edge from three to five, totaled 14 points and a season-best six assists. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller, in his second game back from a right leg injury, added 10 points on 5-of-6 shooting to go along with seven rebounds.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg chipped in eight points to go along with a game- and season-high nine rebounds, as well as a career-high-tying three blocked shots.

All of those players—as well, of course, as Miami's valuable reserves—need to be able to keep up that same level of late-game effort as the season progresses. That can assuredly be difficult as the schedule inches towards late February and beyond.

Baier, in his third year at The U, knows it is imperative to keep players' bodies in the right condition as the end of a campaign approaches.

"Staying fresh late in the season is really all based upon the foundation you lay in the offseason and the habits you've built," he shared. "You train extremely hard in the off-

season, you practice, you develop your skill work and you develop these routines that have led you to, hopefully, the success you've experienced right now. And it becomes a challenge, at times, to maintain these routines as the schedule [gets deeper] or as expectations increase. So, right now, we really focus on training twice a week.

"We focus on making sure guys are getting eight hours of sleep and drinking half their body weight in ounces of water," Baier continued. "And then, we try to provide them with as many opportunities to fuel/eat as possible. The main goal is to replicate that every single day, whether it is a lift day with practice, whether it's a lift day by itself, whether it's just a practice day or, obviously, a game day."

An added element that can make late-season preparation even more difficult is when players must prepare for a game on short rest. That is the case now for the Hurricanes.

Miami, just two-and-a-half days after getting back to campus following the victory in the Derby City, will take the court once again. It is slated to host Virginia Saturday at 5 p.m. at the Watsco Center.

When reading for such a quick turnaround, it is imperative the entire staff is on the same page about how to handle it. Beyond that, alterations must be made for different players based off their workload in games.

And, of course, making sure the players put the right food and drink in their body becomes of added importance.

"We give them hydration supplements. We'll add calories or recovery to their fueling through smoothies and different meals or editing menus to kind of make sure they're picking correct options," Baier said. "On my side of things in particular, we'll do different stretch routines. We have utilized yoga in the past. We'll make sure we structure our practice properly so it's not taxing them too much, but we are still getting out and moving and making sure we're not just being completely stationary. It's really a staff-wide approach. I'm not going to come in and have our starters—our high-minute guys—do conditioning, but they're going to need to move. Our middle- and low-minute guys are going to come in and do some work to make sure they are staying on the right track."

Miami has already played Virginia this season, dropping a 71-58 road decision Feb. 5 at John Paul Jones Arena in Charlottesville, Va. It is the team's lone ACC loss by greater than four points.

The Hurricanes logged 13 steals, including seven from Miller to tie a program record in ACC play, but still came up short. Virginia shot 60 percent (30-of-50) from the floor, good for the highest mark by a Miami foe in over four years.

"Obviously, the last game versus Virginia, we're going to take and we're going to learn from it," Baier said. "Hopefully, Saturday we put out a great product, compete our tails off and come out on the right end."

Miami is 12-14 all-time against Virginia, including 7-3 at home and 3-10 under 11th-year head coach Jim Larrañaga.

The Cavaliers, according to KenPom, play at the slowest adjusted temp of any team in the nation. The website lists their average possession length among the three longest both offensively and defensively.

That, despite the familiarity from the matchup two weeks ago, is a different type of opponent to get ready for than most others Miami faces in ACC. The Hurricanes need to be prepared for a measured, grind-it-out contest where they must lock in on their sets, at both ends of the floor, for extended periods of time.

Baier does not change his physical approach for the players much for such a game. He does, however, address the mental element with them.

"It's going to be a little bit more of a mindset. I'll talk to guys about how, in the offsea-

son, you only get four days a week to train and you've got to take advantage of every opportunity," Baier said. "This team is going to slow the game down. This goes back to what we talked about in the offseason and continue to train in-season here; you've got to take advantage of every opportunity because in this game, there are going to be fewer of them. They're going to slow it down. Those are really more one-on-one conversations. So, we may need to be smarter. We may need to be more aggressive. We may need to carry a more physical mindset to what we're doing."

This outing will be Miami's 27th of the season, matching the total it played during the entirety of the COVID-shortened 2020-21 campaign.

The Hurricanes still have several games beyond Saturday this season and have all their goals still within reach. They enter the stretch run of the season seeking to keep up their strong play and add to their stellar win total, while not looking beyond the game right in front of them.

Miami, according to Baier, also has the ideal mentality, on multiple fronts, going into the last quarter of conference play.

"Man, I think we're in a great spot. We've got experienced, competitive dudes who really trust this staff," he shared. "That goes all the way from Coach L down through our assistants to me to Sam to Nate. They trust the program we're putting in front of them and they know that we have their best interests in mind.

"From a mindset standpoint, they're really looking at it one game at a time," he continued. "But, in terms of the stretch run, I think everybody is excited. I think everybody is going to continue doing what we're doing and continue to prepare the right way and [that gives us the opportunity to] compete for a championship in March. That's what it's about."

Saturday's contest is also Miami's fifth annual #Fight4Literacy game. In Florida, nearly 30 percent of fourth-grade students cannot read at even a basic level. Less than 38 percent are considered proficient. These statistics are critical.

Illiteracy costs our nation's health care system hundreds of billions of dollars per year and indicates future rates of poverty and crime. But, in partnership with Coaching for Literacy, the Miami men's basketball team hopes to change those statistics in Miami-Dade through its fifth #Fight4Literacy game presented by International Paper.

Larrañaga and his staff will wear green lapel pins and wristbands to raise awareness for literacy. Fans are invited to make a donation in support of local programs. One hundred percent of funds generated at the game will stay in Miami-Dade through grant partnerships with CARE Elementary. Since 2013, Coaching for Literacy has granted more than \$730,000 to local literacy partners to fund initiatives like mentoring, after-school programs and providing age-appropriate books for children.

The Hurricanes' game against Virginia will be televised live on ACC Network HERE, with Jay Alter and Jordan Cornette on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE. Action can also be heard on 90.5 FM WVUM's Mixr channel HERE and in Spanish on WMYM 990 AM HERE. In addition, live stats can be found HERE.

Following their matchup with the Cavaliers, the Hurricanes head to Pittsburgh, where they play at the Petersen Events Center at 8 p.m. against Pittsburgh, live on ACC Network, in their first Tuesday game in five weeks.

It's been a while since UM won 20 games. Canes can reach mark Saturday vs. Virginia

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 18, 2022

Every college basketball victory in February is important with post-season tournaments a few weeks away, but a home win over Virginia on Saturday would take on extra significance for the Miami Hurricanes because it would be win No. 20.

It has been a while since Miami hit that milestone. Four years to be exact.

The Canes have not won more than 15 games since 2017-18. They are 19-7 so far this season.

"(Winning 20 games) means your team has enjoyed a fair amount of success and should feel very good about themselves," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "There's more games after you hit 20, but if you hit that 20-game win benchmark, I think it means an awful lot, especially if it's accomplished in the regular season. That means you've won 65 or 66 percent of your games and I think any coach would tell you that's a heck of a winning percentage."

UM enjoyed 20-win seasons in six of Larranaga's first seven years at UM, including a 29-7 record in 2012-13 and 27-8 in 2015-16, the two seasons they made the Sweet 16.

Then came the three-year dip. There was an FBI probe into recruiting that UM was tangentially mentioned in, but nothing came of it and the school's name was redacted from the indictment. Although UM was cleared, it hurt two recruiting cycles.

The team was also plagued by injuries and many nights Larranaga had just six or seven healthy scholarship players.

This season, the UM locker room is a happy place again. Guard Isaiah Wong said there is positive energy and lots of joking around, including teammates making fun of the fact that he puts ketchup on his raisin bagel egg and cheese breakfast sandwich.

Miami is one of the biggest ACC surprises this season. Predicted to finish 12th in the preseason conference poll, Miami now sits in third place with an 11-4 league record. Two of Miami's ACC losses were by one point to Florida State. The other two were to second-place Notre Dame and 71-58 on the road against Virginia.

The Cavaliers shot 60 percent in that game,

had 23 assists, and made 8-of-15 from long range. Miami did not get to the free throw line at all that night, while Virginia was 3-of-3 from the stripe.

UM players are eager to show they can do better on Saturday at the Watsco Center (5 p.m., ACC Network).

"That pack defense that (coach) Tony Bennett established when he first got to Virginia is an outstanding defense they have perfected," said Larranaga, who was an assistant at Virginia early in his career. "They make it very, very difficult on our offense to get good shots and they're very good at limiting the number of possessions in the game. In addition to that, for whatever reason, they never get called for fouls. And they foul a lot."

The undersized Canes also are at a disadvantage against Virginia, whose roster includes 246-pound Jayden Gardner, 7-1 and 242-pound Francisco Caffaro and 6-11 and 231-pound Kadin Shedrick.

"They have three humongous guys who take up a lot of space around the basket, are very physical, and do a lot of holding to hold their position inside and they get away with that," Larranaga said. "I don't know how they do it. It's like magical and makes it a hard team to guard."

Miami is led by Kameron McGusty, who averages 17.6 points, Wong with 15.8 points per game, and Charlie Moore with 12.4 points and four assists per game.

Jordan Miller leads UM with 5.8 rebounds a game. He said a 20th win would be "a token" for their hard work, but their sights are set on bigger things.

"Coach L likes to use the expression that the season is a marathon not sprint, so as nice as it would be to get the 20th win, I think we're focused on the bigger goal, making the NCAA tournament and winning the national title. But 20 wins would be a nice reward along the way."

Hurricanes lose 10-point lead, snap winning streak with loss to Virginia

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 19, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes have typically been the team that erases double-digit deficits with big second-half performances.

Instead, they were on the receiving end.

The Hurricanes gave up a 10-point lead in the second half and lost 74-71 to Virginia to snap a three-game winning streak on Saturday.

"I thought we played a terrific first half, scored 40 points, and had a 10-point lead, but at the start of the second half Virginia really took over," head coach Jim Larranaga said.

Kameron McGusty scored 20 points to lead the Hurricanes, who have lost six in a row to the Cavaliers including twice this season.

"Their offense and defense work very well against us and that's why we've struggled against them over the years," Larranaga said.

Miami (19-8, 11-5 ACC) dropped into a tie for third place with North Carolina (11-5) in the ACC with four games left behind Duke (13-3), who won on Saturday, and Notre Dame (12-4) which lost earlier.

Virginia (17-10, 11-6) has won five of six.

Miami led 40-30 early in the second half, but the Cavaliers soared back with a pivotal 23-4 run over a seven-minute span to take the lead at 53-44.

"Kihei Clark, in particular, really just took over the game," Larranaga said. "They ran off a (23-4) run. I called the earliest timeout of this season and maybe ever when I called it when it with 17 minutes left in the half. I saw the signs and certainly hoped we could correct it. But nothing really went well for us for a while. We fought back, but they did a lot of good things--made free throws, made some baskets and got some stops."

The Hurricanes responded with a 7-0 burst, but were unable to regain the lead with the Cavaliers in a rhythm on the offensive end as they shot 62.5 percent (15 of 24) in the second half and scored 44 points.

"Both times we played them, the way they run their offense makes it very difficult for us to trap them and force turnovers," Larranaga said. "When we're not able to do that, our defense has never been one that can just play

man-to-man and just guard guys."

The Cavaliers stayed in front down the stretch and Jayden Gardner's fadeaway shot gave the Cavaliers a 65-57 lead with 1:39 left. Gardner finished with a game-high 23 points.

Miami was able to cut the deficit to three after a 3-pointer by Charlie Moore with 37.8 seconds left.

Gardner split a pair of free throws for a 69-65 advantage, but McGusty missed a 3. The teams traded points in the closing seconds with Miami unable to close the gap.

"(The run was on us), we have to take responsibility for that," said Jordan Miller, who scored 15 points. "The energy was not as good as it should have been coming out (of the break). They made a good adjustment. However, we have to adjust to their adjustment. It gives us something to strive to be better at. Use it as a fuel, never take a loss to the heart, go on to the next one and most importantly put it behind us."

The Hurricanes made their first five shots to jump out to a 12-4 lead.

The Cavaliers battled back and took a 28-25 lead while holding the Hurricanes scoreless for over four minutes.

Miami bounced back to finish the half on a 13-2 run to take a 38-30 into the break. A pair of three-point plays by McGusty and Wong helped spark the run.

UP NEXT

Miami plays at Pittsburgh on Tuesday (8:00 p.m., ACCN).

MBB Falls to Virginia, 74-71

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 19, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team led Virginia by 10 points early in the second half, but could not hold on, dropping a 74-71 decision Saturday evening at the Watsco Center.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored a team-high 20 points for Miami (19-8, 11-5 ACC), which had its three-game winning streak come to an end in its second setback of the season versus the Cavaliers.

"Well, I thought we played a terrific first half. We scored 38 points in the first half and had an eight-point lead," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "But the first seven minutes of the second half were just a disaster for us. They outscored us 19-6 and never looked back."

The Hurricanes made their first five shots and raced out to a 12-4 lead through three minutes. Virginia (17-10, 11-6 ACC) quickly answered with a 14-6 surge—it made five straight field goals and a pair of free throws—to level the score at 18 with 13 minutes left in the frame.

The Cavaliers, buoyed by 9-of-10 shooting from the line, eventually took their first lead, 28-25, on a three-point play with 6:17 on the clock. Miami, though, upped its lead back to eight, 38-30, by the time the halftime buzzer sounded, closing the session on a 13-2 run. The Hurricanes held Virginia scoreless for the final 5:06 of the half and scored nine straight points.

Miami posted a 20-10 margin in paint points, a 13-0 advantage in fast-break points and a 6-0 edge in points off turnovers through 20 minutes. It also limited the Cavaliers to 37.0 percent (10-of-27) shooting, including a 12.5 percent clip (1-of-8) from deep.

A steal and fast-break layup by McGusty to open the second half gave the Hurricanes a game-best 10-point lead, 40-30, with 19:36 to play. The Cavaliers then scored eight consecutive points in 92 seconds. They eventually upped their run to 23-4, taking a 53-44 lead with 12:13 left after making eight straight field goals.

Miami, though, responded with seven points of its own to cut its deficit to two, 53-51, with 9:08 to go. The Hurricanes pulled within two twice more, but could not get any closer, despite scoring 14 of the final 23 points.

"I thought Kihei Clark actually just took over the game," Larrañaga said of Virginia's finish. "[He was] making threes, making good decisions and making free throws. When he's playing that well, you have to have someone step up and try to shut him down."

McGusty's 20 points came on 6-of-13 field-goal shooting, including a 3-of-6 mark from deep, and a perfect 6-of-6 ledger at the line. The Katy, Texas, native added four assists to go along with a season- and game-best four steals, one shy of his career high.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller totaled 15 points on 7-of-11 shooting, adding six rebounds. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, who battled foul trouble from start to finish, scored 14 points and dished out a co-team-high four assists. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong added 10 points and a co-team-best seven rebounds.

Senior forward Jayden Gardner led all scorers with 23 points on 9-of-14 shooting for the Cavaliers. He added seven rebounds, two assists and a game-high three blocks.

Senior guard Kihei Clark recorded 17 points, including 14 in the second half, to go along with five assists. Redshirt sophomore forward Kadin Shedrick totaled 13 points and a game-best 13 rebounds, the latter the top mark by a Miami opponent all season. Sophomore guard Reece Beekman led all players with seven assists.

Virginia finished the night shooting 49.0 percent (25-of-51) from the floor after posting a blistering 62.5 percent ledger (15-of-24) in the second half alone. Miami, meanwhile, shot 41.8 percent overall (28-of-67) after logging a 38.9 percent mark (14-of-36) after the break.

After the first game between the two teams included zero free throws in the first 36 minutes, both teams excelled at the stripe Saturday. The Cavaliers went 19-of-25 (76.0 percent) and the Hurricanes went 9-of-9, its first time making nine-plus free throws without a miss since March 2, 2016.

Miami ended the night with a 15-1 edge in fast-break points and a 42-24 cushion in paint points, but Virginia registered a 21-6 advantage in bench points.

Up next for the Hurricanes is a trip to Pittsburgh, where they play Tuesday at 8 p.m. against Pittsburgh at the Petersen Events Center, 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.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 12-15 all-time against Virginia, including 7-4 at home and 3-11 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 689-472 in 38 years as a head coach, including 219-138 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the 19th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Wong and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

– With 23 blocks in ACC action, Waardenburg moved into the top five on Miami's ACC-only single-season leaderboard, checking in at co-fifth, alongside Kenny Kadji (2012-13).

– McGusty now has 32 steals in ACC action in 2021-22, passing teammate Jordan Miller and Anthony Lawrence II (2017-18)

to move from co-sixth into the top three on Miami's ACC-only single-season list, tying Shane Larkin (2012-13) for third place.

– With 56 steals in ACC action at Miami, McGusty passed Brian Asbury and Shane Larkin to enter the top five of the Hurricanes' all-time ACC-only career leaderboard.

– McGusty now has 115 made free throws in ACC play in his career, passing Brian Asbury to move into the top 10 on the

program's ACC-only career leaderboard.

– With 758 points in ACC competition as a collegian, Wong surpassed Davon Reed, who attended the game, to enter the top three on Miami's ACC-only career list.

– Wong now has 255 made field goals in ACC play at Miami, also passing Reed to enter the top three on the Hurricanes' all-time ACC-only leaderboard.

– Four of Miami's five ACC losses this season are by four points or fewer, including three by one possession.

– The Hurricanes dropped to 18-2 this season when scoring 65-plus points, as their 17-game winning streak in such games came to an end.

– Miami's 15-game winning streak when totaling 70-plus points also came to an end Saturday, as did its nine-game winning streak when at least four players tally double-digit points.

– The last time Miami lost a game it led by 10-plus was on 1/5/21 versus North Carolina, when it dropped a 67-65 result after holding a 10-point edge.

– The largest lead the Hurricanes held in a game they previously lost this season was nine on 11/28/21 versus No. 10/9 Alabama in a 96-64 setback in Kissimmee, Fla.

– The two starting point guards Wednesday evening, Miami's Moore and Virginia's Clark, have now combined for 209 collegiate starts across 264 outings.

– After attempting zero free throws in its 2/5/22 meeting with Virginia—a first for any program in ACC play in program history—Miami took one just 84 seconds into Saturday's game.

– The two teams, who totaled three free throws in their prior matchup, combined to shoot 16-of-17 from the line in the first half, as Miami went 7-of-7 and Virginia went 9-of-10.

– McGusty notched the fifth occurrence this season of a Hurricane making six-plus free throws without a miss, including his second such performance.

– The last time Miami made multiple free throws in a game without a miss was also against Virginia, as it went 2-of-2 on 3/4/20.

– The Hurricanes last made nine-plus free throws in a game without a miss on 3/2/16 at Notre Dame.

– Virginia is the second Miami opponent to record just one steal in a game, joining North Carolina, which did so on 1/18/22.

– The last team to shoot over 60 percent in a half against the Hurricanes was also Virginia, which went 15-of-24 (62.5 percent) in the first frame on 2/5/22.

– Before Shedrick grabbed 13 boards Saturday, the highest total by a Miami foe this season was 12, recorded three times, all in Hurricane wins.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 600 made field goals and 200 assists, logged 20-plus points for the 24th time, including the 18th as a Hurricane and the 11th this year.

– McGusty, who also moved past 3,750 minutes played as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 88th time, including the 60th at Miami and the 25th this season.

– Waardenburg moved past 450 rebounds as a Hurricane.

– Wong, who surpassed 150 assists in his career, tallied double-digit points for the 57th time, including the 24th in 2021-22.

– J. Miller recorded double-figure points for the 60th time, including the 10th this year.

Miami Hurricanes unravel in second half, rally falls short in 74-71 loss to Virginia

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 19, 2022

Seventeen minutes remained in the game and the University of Miami was in the lead, not typically a situation where coach Jim Larranaga would call a timeout. But he didn't like what he was seeing and wanted to warn his players that if they didn't step up in a hurry, Virginia would beat them for a second time this season.

He was right.

The Cavaliers tweaked their offense, got hot during a 23-4 run, Miami let its foot off the gas and paid the price with a 74-71 home loss.

The Hurricanes had a comfortable eight-point halftime lead on Saturday, stretched it to 10 to start the second half, and it looked like they would reach a 20th win for the first time in four seasons. But Virginia shot 62.5 percent the second half after being limited to 37 percent in the first half.

The Hurricanes mounted a furious comeback, as they have many times this season. However, on this night there would be no late-game magic.

Miami had lost 71-58 to the Cavaliers on the road on Feb. 5. Although this one was closer, it hurt no less.

"We played a terrific first half, but the start of the second half Virginia really took over, Kihei Clark in particular just took over the game," Larranaga said. "I called the earliest timeout of this season, and maybe ever when I called it with 17 minutes left in the game, but I saw the signs and certainly hoped we could correct it, but nothing went well for us for a while."

Asked what he told his players during that timeout, Larranaga said: "I told them Virginia had become the aggressor and we were not playing with the same level of energy and intensity that we did in the first half and if we didn't pick it up this is going to be just like it was at their place."

The Hurricanes have been at or near the top of the ACC standings all season, but they need to keep building their resume to impress the NCAA tournament selection committee. A 20th win is a critical box to check, but the Canes (19-8, 11-5) will have to wait until at least Tuesday, when they play Pitt on the road.

The Cavaliers were the only conference op-

ponent to beat Miami by more than four points this season, and they made it tough again on Saturday with their pack line defense and the 23-4 second half run that gave them a nine-point lead after trailing by 10.

Larranaga said the Cavaliers' style of offense makes it difficult for the Hurricanes to trap them and force turnovers, which is the bread and butter of Miami's defense. "Our defense has never been one that can just play man to man and guard guys," the coach said. "Their offense and their defense work very well against us and that's why we've struggled against them throughout the years."

Miami had the hot hand early hitting six of seven shots over the first five minutes, stayed ahead most of the half, and when Anthony Walker slammed home a dunk off a Kam McGusty steal and assist to put UM up 36-30, the Watsco Center crowd erupted, and everyone was on their feet.

After three losing seasons and a decrease in fan interest, the resurgent Hurricanes have energized the fan base. The game was billed as Basketball Alumni Day. Among the former Hurricanes honored: Lonnie Walker of the San Antonio Spurs, Davon Reed of the Denver Nuggets and Dewan Hernandez of the G League's Westchester Knicks.

The Hurricanes hoped to deliver a win for their alumni, but they fell short.

McGusty led Miami with 20 points. Jordan Miller was 7-of-11 for 15 points with six rebounds. Charlie Moore, who sat much of the game in foul trouble, finished with 14 points and four assists and Isaiah Wong added 10 points and seven rebounds.

Jayden Gardner was Virginia's top scorer with 23 points on 9-of-14 shooting and Clark scored 17.

"They were getting open looks, moving the ball and we just couldn't find the same groove we had in the first half shooting the ball," McGusty said. "We figured it out midway through the second half, but they went on a good run, that's basketball. We can't put our heads down. We have to stay together and not let one loss affect us."

Time to Respond

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 20, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team played just 27 games in its COVID-shortened 2020-21 campaign.

Snakebitten with injuries all season long, the Hurricanes finished the year 10-17. After 27 outings this year, the Hurricanes have 19 wins, a massive nine-win improvement that is among the best of any Division I team in the nation.

Miami (19-8, 11-5 ACC) had a chance to get to 20 wins through 27 contests, but came up just short Saturday night against Virginia, dropping a narrow 74-71 decision at the Watsco Center.

The Hurricanes held the Cavaliers to 37.0 percent (10-of-27) shooting in the first half, but they turned in a dazzling 62.5 percent mark (15-of-24) after the break to earn the win.

"I thought we played a great first half. We got up by 10 [after halftime] and then Kihei Clark dominated the start of the second half," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "They went on a 23-4 run and never looked back. We fought like crazy the last 13 minutes, but we were never able to overcome that run."

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty paced the Hurricanes with 20 points, adding a co-team-high four assists and a season-high-tying four steals, while fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller tallied 15.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore added 14 points and a co-team-best four assists, while third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong posted 10 points and a co-team-high seven rebounds.

The balanced scoring attack was not enough, as the Hurricanes never regained the lead after Virginia turned its 10-point deficit into a nine-point edge. For a Miami team that has excelled in second halves over the last 11-plus weeks, it was rare to see its opponent make the late surge instead.

Larrañaga, in his 11th-year at the helm of the Hurricanes, pointed to two reasons why the Cavaliers were able to flip the script with their run early in the second half.

"One, we were able to build the lead because Virginia had to go to its bench and we were able to take advantage of that," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "And then, in

the second half, we got in foul trouble. Charlie Moore is our leader and he wasn't out there for most of that run. He picked up his third foul; we needed to protect him a little bit."

The Hurricanes will not have long to dwell on their setback, as they return to action Tuesday in Pittsburgh, Pa. There, at the Petersen Events Center, they square off with Pittsburgh at 8 p.m.

It will be Miami's third game in six days, the first such stretch for the Hurricanes since Jan. 5-11.

Making the turnaround even more difficult is the presence of one of the most dominant and imposing big men in the nation patrolling the paint at both ends for the Panthers.

"Sunday was a recovery day. We watched video tape to get mentally ready. Monday, we'll start preparation physically," Larrañaga shared. "And then we also have the shoot-around at Pitt. So, hopefully our guys will respond. This will be a very, very challenging game for us because John Hugley draws so many fouls and so much attention. We've got to be sure we don't wear Sam Waardenburg out in the first 10 minutes of the game."

Hugley, a sophomore forward, is averaging 14.5 points and 8.2 rebounds per game, both the best among Pittsburgh players.

He is assuredly the focal point of the defensive scouting report for any team entering a match-up with the Panthers, but the quality in the backcourt around him means teams cannot divert too much focus to him.

"We've got to put enough pressure on their guards and enough guys in the lane to limit the amount of space that he gets to work with. If he has a lot of room, he's unguardable one-on-one," Larrañaga explained. "We'll try to front him. We'll try to help from behind and maybe trap him at times and really pay him a lot of attention. But you can't give so much attention to him that you let their guards go loose. Ithiel Horton made seven threes against Carolina."

Pittsburgh enters the contest at 11-16 (6-11 ACC) on the season, but has improved its play considerably of late.

Larrañaga has seen just that when evaluating the Panthers on film, as he prepares his team for its first of three road games in a 12-day stretch.

"They're a team that, first of all, is playing its

best basketball right now," he said. "They've won three out of four and they've done it in a very systematic way, by really attacking the rim with John Hugley, who leads the country in free-throw attempts, and their guards, who are constantly looking to get to the rim, as well. They attack the rim about as well as anybody in the league."

As is often the case for the undersized Hurricanes, Larrañaga said his team will need to "force turnovers and make shots" to come away with the victory in the Steel City.

Tuesday night's contest will be broadcast live on ACC Network HERE, with Dave O'Brien and Cory Alexander on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats will be available HERE.

After playing Pittsburgh, the Hurricanes return to the Watsco Center to play Virginia Tech Saturday at 3 p.m., live on RSN, in their regular season home finale, at which five seniors will be honored.

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

At his fourth school in sixth years, Charlie Moore is thriving for a surprising Miami team

By Craig Meyer
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Feb. 21, 2022

When Charlie Moore thinks back to the start of his college basketball career and all the time that has passed since, he can't help but chuckle.

The world has changed dramatically since Moore arrived on the University of California, Berkeley campus as a wide-eyed freshman in the summer of 2016. At that time, and on the other end of the San Francisco Bay, Colin Kaepernick was an active NFL quarterback looking to regain the form that vaulted him to stardom earlier in his career. Barack Obama was president. Kevin Spacey and Louis C.K. were still beloved entertainers.

In his own life, Moore can think back to former teammates or members of his 2016 recruiting class like Jayson Tatum, Lonzo Ball and Bam Adebayo who are now in their fifth season of their professional careers.

"That makes me look back and say 'Man, I've been playing for a long time,'" Moore said Friday.

It has been an uncommonly long and unconventional journey for Moore in college basketball, but as he enters the final stretch of his final season, it's poised for a happy ending.

Now a sixth-year senior guard at Miami, Moore is a stand-out on one of the ACC's top teams, averaging 12.4 points and a team-high four assists per game for a Hurricanes squad that's 19-8 heading into Tuesday night's game at Pitt. That only tells so much of Moore's story, though. Miami is the fourth school in his college career, a convoluted path that brought him from high school in Chicago to Cal to Kansas before returning home to Chicago for two years at DePaul and then using his final season of eligibility in sunny South Florida.

Though an extreme example given his number of stops, Moore embodies the increased player movement in men's college basketball, one of several athletes who put a name, face and personal story to a trend that can often be demonized. He's an example of how the sport has a nasty tendency of altering dreams and changing plans, of how things often don't transpire as once hoped and how, through it all, there's something resembling a reward waiting at the end.

"I really don't regret anything I've done throughout my career or in life," Moore said. "It was all a learning process for me."

A top-60 recruit and Illinois' Mr. Basketball coming out of Chicago's Morgan Park High School, Moore originally committed to Memphis, but backed out of that pledge after coach Josh Pastner left for Georgia Tech (Pitt, oddly enough, was one of the programs recruiting Moore the hardest).

It was a harbinger of what would await the 5-foot-11 guard once he got to college. The vision he had for himself was constantly subject to change due to circumstances largely outside of his control.

Moore ultimately signed with Cal, where he averaged 12.2 points per game as a freshman in 2016-17 and led a 21-win team in assists and steals per game. After that season, though, coach Cuonzo Martin accepted the job at Missouri, leaving Moore without the man he came to play for while being 2,100 miles from everything he had ever known.

"You go to a school thinking your coach is going to be there your entire career at that school, but it doesn't work like that," Moore said. "It's a business. People have other goals and other aspirations and other visions that they seek. Me personally, I can't control what they see and what they think. Just for me seeing my coach leave, one of the biggest reasons I'm here is because this man recruited me here. It was just a different outlook on things. It was hard. I gained trust with this coach and this coaching staff. It went away just like that."

He transferred to Kansas and redshirted his first season there, in accordance with NCAA transfer rules. Once he was eligible, he struggled to carve out a role with the Jayhawks, averaging just 2.9 points in 13.1 minutes per game.

In search of more playing time and a chance to be closer to his family as his father continued to rehab from a stroke he suffered in 2015, Moore ended up at DePaul and was granted a waiver for immediate eligibility by the NCAA. He shined there, leading the Blue Demons in scoring in back-to-back seasons while helping provide care to a family he had missed being near.

"Just them seeing my face and them not having so much pressure on themselves was great for me," Moore said. "That was my main reason for going back, to help them."

After his second season there, a new twist on a familiar theme arose when DePaul fired coach Dave Leitao after a 5-14 finish in 2020-21. Moore wrestled with what to do next. He had one more season of college eligibility at his disposal thanks to an NCAA ruling in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but he considered the possibility of going pro. Impressed by the coaching staff and its plans for him, Moore eventually chose to come back to college for one final run, this time at Miami.

Last year, Moore was one of 1,729 players to transfer from a Division I program in the first year in which athletes were able to transfer once without the penalty of having to sit a year. Divided across 358 Division I teams, programs lost an average of nearly five players.

The notion of the mysterious-sounding "transfer portal" became a topic of constant conversation and debate across college basketball. It raised questions about whether the level of roster turnover was healthy for an already transient sport. There were more biting criticisms of the

portal, namely as it related to the players who populated it, many of whom became stand-ins for larger critiques about a new generation of athletes. Former North Carolina coach Roy Williams lamented what he saw as the portal's role in the loss of loyalty, commitment and responsibility. While discussing the slew of transfers, longtime ESPN analyst Dick Vitale tweeted last year "what a sick message we're sending to young ppl/ quit & just run when things get tough." Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Walton referred to it as the "Tinder portal," equating it to the popular dating app.

Moore's career provides a sympathetic counter. Two of his three transfer decisions came because a coach who had made commitments and promises to him either left or was fired. In one of those instances, he was penalized under existing rules by having to sit out a year. There were family considerations, as well, that went far beyond the basketball court.

He wasn't an impetuous player taking advantage of a system. If anything, he had been abused by it. His career provides a level of nuance to a discussion that can sometimes lack it.

"I think people think everyone transfers because they didn't have a good season or a certain situation at a school. That's not always the case," Moore said. "People have life outside of basketball, as well, that can affect them on the court. The biggest misconception is people believing and thinking, but not really asking questions about why this person is transferring or the reason behind it. If it's for a legitimate reason, you shouldn't feel any type of way about it."

In his fourth home in six years, he's thriving.

On an experienced team with another sixth-year senior in guard Kameron McGusty, Moore has helped put Miami on pace for its most wins in six years. He's making 38.8% of his 3-pointers and has been a menace defensively, with an ACC-leading 2.1 steals per game. In a 78-75 victory against Virginia Tech on Jan. 26, Moore banked in a half-court shot as time expired to deliver his team a crucial win.

"We felt like, yeah, this kid's a perfect fit for us," Miami coach Jim Larrañaga said Monday. "Not only has he played well, but he has really been the difference in terms of how we play with the way he shares the ball. He and Jordan Miller are two transfers that just fit in beautifully. They're terrific. I love those guys."

The high note on which Moore hoped to end his college career has come into form as his strange collegiate saga enters its final stages. He never sought the trek he ultimately took, but it has undeniably shaped him.

"I feel like people can learn if you have a vision or a dream or a goal to do something, don't ever give up on it," Moore said. "If you really believe in something, you should put forth effort and work hard in order to achieve that goal."

What you need to know as Miami Hurricanes face Pittsburgh on the road Tuesday

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 21, 2022

Pittsburgh coach Jeff Capel spent the past few days scouting the Miami Hurricanes for their game Tuesday night, and among the many things he was impressed by was the team's poise.

"When you watch them, they're never really rattled," Capel said Monday. "You look at them in huddles, how they interact with each other, they're just incredibly confident and they have a belief in who they are individually and collectively. It also seems, watching them on tape, that they really enjoy playing with each other."

Those attributes are why UM's experienced, veteran squad believes it will bounce back from Saturday's home loss to Virginia and earn its 20th win of the season on the road against the Panthers (8 p.m., ACC Network).

The Hurricanes are 19-8, tied for third place in the ACC with an 11-5 league record, and eager to pile up more wins to earn a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

"We can't let one loss affect us, we love playing with each other and for each other and we can't let anything break us," said guard Kam McGusty, one of four sixth-year seniors on the team. "It's a marathon, not a sprint. You're going to win some, lose some. We just have to stick together through it all."

UM coach Jim Larranaga said his players did not dwell on the loss to the Cavaliers and are ready for their next challenge.

"This is a really great group to work with, and one of the things we talk about all the time is 'Just don't complain,'" Larranaga said. "There's always going to be adversity. We're going to face it, so is every other team."

He said the Canes are laser-focused on Pitt (11-17, 6-11 ACC), which struggled early in the season but has won three of its past four games — over FSU, North Carolina State and North Carolina. The Panthers are led by sophomore forward John Hugley, who is 6-9 and 240 pounds and has a knack for getting to the free-throw line.

"Pittsburgh is a hugely physical team," Larranaga said, no pun intended. "John Hugley, who we recruited, is a horse inside, shooting more free throws than any other college player in the country. Their guards are very physical. This is going to be a very physical game, and I

want us to do a better job of getting to the foul line. Virginia shot 25 free throws and we only shot nine. That's very uncharacteristic for us."

Hugley will be a handful for UM's undersized big men.

"We've got to put enough pressure on their guards and enough guys in the lane to limit the amount of space that he gets to work with. If he has a lot of room, he's unguardable 1-on-1," Larranaga explained. "We'll try to front him. We'll try to help from behind and maybe trap him at times and really pay him a lot of attention. But you can't give so much attention to him that you let their guards go loose. Ithiel Horton made seven threes against Carolina."

Capel said all five of UM's starters can dribble, pass and shoot, which makes them tough to defend.

"It's really five out, with [Sam] Waardenburg being the guy who initiates things with ball screens and dribble handoffs," Capel said. "They have some really outstanding 1 on 1 players on the perimeter that can all dribble, pass and score. They have outstanding shot makers where even if you're playing good defense guys like McGusty, [Isaiah] Wong, [Charlie] Moore have the strength and creativity to make tough shots. They're good decision-makers, smart, and selfless, a tough team to prepare for."

MBB Rolls to 85-64 Road Win at Pittsburgh

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 22, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team recorded a dominant wire-to-wire 85-64 victory Tuesday night against Pittsburgh at the Petersen Events Center.

Miami (20-8, 12-5 ACC) grabbed an early 12-point advantage, led by 20 points at halftime and upped its margin as high as 30 in the second frame, en route to clinching its first 20-win season since 2017-18. The triumph also moved head coach Jim Larrañaga into a tie for first place on the program's all-time wins list.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guards Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore scored a co-team-high 19 points for the Hurricanes, who improved to 8-2 in true road contests this season.

"Well, I thought [keeping our feet on the pedal] was the whole key. When you get a lead, it's very easy for the players to let up," Larrañaga said. "They play the score instead of the game, but we didn't do that tonight. I think maybe that is because of the Virginia game where we had a 10-point lead [in the second half]. We thought we were in control and Virginia quickly came out and took over. So, tonight we didn't let Pitt do that."

The Hurricanes raced out to a 14-2 lead after just 3:33, making six of their first eight shots and forcing four turnovers at the other end, which they converted into nine points. Pittsburgh (11-18, 6-12 ACC) then scored 10 straight points in 98 seconds, with the first eight from graduate student forward Mouhamadou Gueye, to make it 14-12 with 14:22 on the clock.

After that burst by the home team, Miami regained control and steadily rebuilt the lead. The Hurricanes eventually closed the half on a 16-5 run in the final 5:01, including an 8-0 mark in the last 1:29. That upped the advantage all the way to 20, 47-27, at the intermission.

Miami shot 59.4 percent (19-of-32) in the session, its best first-half mark of the season, and forced 11 turnovers while committing just three, leading to an astounding 19-0 edge in points off giveaways. Moore, who ended the frame with a buzzer-beating jump-shot, and McGusty combined for 27 first-half points, tallying 14 and 13, respectively.

"I think everything we were trying to do worked successfully," Larrañaga said of his team's first-half performance. "Sometimes you come into a game with a good game plan and it works, everything is clicking, offensively and defensively. Sometimes you go into a game and you have a game plan, but the other team is very well prepared for what they think you're going to do and they are able to take advantage. But tonight, we were able to force turnovers and get into the open court. We were able to shoot the ball well and we had a number of assists early in the game that led to open shots."

The Hurricanes scored 10 of the first 14 points after the break, quickly upping their edge to 26, 57-31, with 17:19 remaining. Miami eventually stretched its lead to 30, 80-50, on a 3-pointer by McGusty with 4:58 to play.

That proved to be the largest margin of the night for the Hurricanes, as Pittsburgh then countered with 12 straight points in 2:44 to cut the

deficit under 20 for the first time all half. Soon thereafter, a 3-pointer by freshman guard Bensley Joseph ended the scoring and gave Miami its second ACC win of the season by 20-plus points.

Moore's 19 points came on a stellar 7-of-10 clip from the field and he tallied a game-best five assists. McGusty scored his 19 points on a 7-of-13 mark, including a 3-of-5 ledger from deep, adding four rebounds, four assists and a co-game-high three steals.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller tallied 12 points on 6-of-8 shooting, as well as logged five rebounds and a co-game-high three steals. Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg also scored 12 points, including nine in the second half. Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker added seven points and a team-best six rebounds.

Pittsburgh sophomore forward John Hugley paced all players with 20 points, shooting 7-of-9 from the field and 6-of-9 at the stripe. He also grabbed a game-best seven rebounds.

Senior guard Jamarius Burton scored 12 points for the Panthers, but Miami held him to 4-of-11 shooting. Gueye finished with 11 points and sophomore guard Femi Odukale chipped in 10.

Miami ended the night shooting 55.2 percent (32-of-58) from the floor, including 45.0 percent (9-of-20) beyond the arc. It also notched a 75.0 percent clip (12-of-16) at the line.

Meanwhile, Pittsburgh registered 48.1 percent (25-of-52), 29.4 percent (5-of-17) and 52.9 percent (9-of-17) marks, respectively.

Miami logged 12 steals and, for the first time this season, forced 20 turnovers, leading to a 30-13 edge in points off giveaways. In addition, the Hurricanes had a 19-5 cushion in bench points and a 44-30 margin in paint points.

Miami now returns home to Coral Gables, Fla., where it hosts Virginia Tech on Senior Day, Saturday at 3 p.m. at the Watsco Center, live on RSN.

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 25-20 all-time against Pittsburgh, including 9-10 on the road and 9-3 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 690-472 in 38 years as a head coach, including 220-138 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 220 victories at Miami, Larrañaga tied Bruce Hale (1954-67) for the program's all-time wins record.

– Now owning 103 victories in ACC regular season play, Larrañaga tied Norman Sloan for No. 12 on the all-time list.

– For the 20th time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong.

– Moore now has 57 steals in 2021-22, passing Steven Edwards (1992-93) to enter the top 10 on Miami's single-season leaderboard, placing co-ninth, alongside John Salmons (2001-02 and 2000-01).

– With 76 assists in ACC action this year, Moore entered the top three on the program's ACC-only single-season list, passing Anthony Harris (2004-05) for third place.

– With 59 steals in ACC action in his career, McGusty passed Guillermo Diaz (2004-06) to reach the top three on the program's all-time list, checking in at co-third, alongside Davon Reed (2013-17).

– McGusty now has 291 points in ACC competition in 2021-22, jumping from No. 11 to sixth on the program's ACC-only single-season list, passing Robert Hite (2005-06), Sheldon McClellan (2015-16), Chris Lykes (2018-19), Davon Reed (2016-17) and Rion Brown (2013-14).

– With 100 made field goals in ACC play this season, McGusty moved past Chris Lykes (2018-19), Davon Reed (2016-17), Kenny Kadji (2012-13), Jack McClinton (2007-08) and Robert Hite (2005-06), from No. 11 all the way up to co-fourth, alongside Rion Brown (2013-14) and Guillermo Diaz (2005-06) on the Hurricanes' ACC-only single-season leaderboard, becoming the sixth player in program history to reach triple digits.

– McGusty now has 35 steals in ACC competition this year, moving past Guillermo Diaz (2004-05) into second place on the program's ACC-only single-season list, behind only Moore, who has 38 this season.

– Miami clinched its 19th 20-win campaign in program history, including its seventh in Larrañaga's 11 years at the helm.

– The Hurricanes improved to 19-2 this season when scoring 65-plus points, including 17-2 when scoring 70-plus.

– This is the first time Miami has swept three-plus ACC teams in regular season play since 2012-13 when it went 2-0 against five programs (Boston College, Clemson, Florida State, North Carolina and Virginia Tech).

– Tuesday marked the 12th time this season the Hurricanes have posted double-digit steals, including the ninth in the last 14 outings.

– The previous top mark for giveaways by a Miami foe this season was 19 by Syracuse on 1/5/22.

– The last time Miami shot 50-plus percent in both halves was 1/26/22 at Virginia Tech.

– In the opening 3:33, during which the Hurricanes grabbed the early 14-2 edge, all five Miami starters made a field goal.

– Tuesday marked the second time this season Miami has led by 20-plus points at halftime in ACC play, alongside its 1/18/22 outing versus North Carolina when it held a 49-22 edge at the break.

– The Hurricanes' previous best first-half field-goal clip this season was a 59.3 percent mark (16-of-27) versus Wake Forest on 1/1/22.

– The first-half 59.4 percent mark tied for the fifth-best ledger in any half by the Hurricanes this season, including the sole fifth-best in ACC play.

– The 21-point margin of victory is the third-largest of the season for Miami, behind the 28-point win, 85-57, over North Carolina on 1/18/22 and the 27-point triumph, 86-59, against Florida A&M on 11/21/21.

– Waardenburg, who reached 75 made 3-pointers at Miami, tallied double-digit points for the 22nd time, including the 10th this year.

– Moore, who surpassed 550 made field goals in his career, scored in double figures for the 76th time, including the 19th this season.

– Moore recorded his 47th five-assist performance, including his 10th in 2021-22.

– McGusty, who eclipsed 300 made free throws and 1,700 points as a collegian, scored double-digit points for the 89th time, including the 61st as a Hurricane and 26th this year.

– J. Miller, who moved past 3,000 minutes played in his career, scored double-figure points for the 61st time, including the 11th this year.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar played an ACC-only career-high 16 minutes and grabbed five boards, one shy of his top mark and one off the team lead.

Hurricanes roll at Pittsburgh, Jim Larranaga ties record for most wins at Miami

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
Feb. 22, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes built a big lead and sustained it with a complete performance.

Kameron McGusty and Charlie Moore scored 19 points and Jim Larranaga tied the Miami record for most wins by a coach as the Hurricanes rolled to a 85-64 win at Pittsburgh on Tuesday.

"We played a very good game from start to finish," Larranaga said.

Jordan Miller and Sam Waardenburg each added 12 points for the Hurricanes who have won four of five and bounced back from a loss to Virginia after leading by 10.

"The regular season is a marathon," Larranaga said. "We told the team there's four miles left. Today is one of the four and now we have three miles left. In order to win a marathon you've got to play your best or run your best at the end of the race and that's what we're trying to do."

Larranaga won his 220th game in his 11th season as head coach of the Hurricanes, tying Bruce Hale's mark over a 13-year span (1954-67).

"I'm very proud of what my staff has accomplished," Larranaga said. "It's very challenging coaching in the ACC against all these great coaches and great players. At one time we had four Hall of Fame coaches and even with Coach K stepping down, in my mind we have at least two more Hall of Fame coaches in Leonard Hamilton and Tony Bennett is a lock. When you're coaching against guys who have been so successful and yet we've been able to compete pretty well, I'm proud of our teams and players who have won those games and my staff for recruiting those guys and helped prepare us to win those games."

Larranaga is 220-138 (.615 winning percent) at Miami. He will have a chance to set the record on Saturday at home against Virginia Tech.

Miami (20-8, 12-5 ACC) won its 20th game for the first time since the 2017-18 season.

"You have to give a lot of credit to our seniors, they did a great job," Larranaga said. "I'm very, very happy winning 20 games and having a very solid record in the ACC so far, but we've got a lot of work still ahead of us."

The win moves Miami into a tie with North Carolina for third place, 1 ½ games behind first-place Duke with three games left.

"I told the team (before the game) there's four miles left

Pittsburgh (11-18, 6-12) is 11th.

The Hurricanes improved to a league-best 8-2 on the road after going 5-26 in the previous three years behind 55.2-percent (32 of 58) shooting, their third-highest mark of the season, and forcing a season-high 20 turnovers, which led to 30 points.

"The defense is predicated on trying to force turnovers," Larranaga said.

The Hurricanes jumped out to a 14-2 start, sparked by 3s by Moore and Waardenburg, and never looked back.

Even though the Panthers closed the gap at 14-12, the Hurricanes continued to pour in baskets and led 47-27 at halftime behind 59-percent shooting, the best in the first half this season.

Moore had 14 at the break and McGusty 13.

"(Kam) and Charlie Moore were both great in the first half," Larranaga said. "Isaiah (Wong) was not as proficient as he usually is so we need Kam, Charlie, Sam and Jordan to step up—Jordan was terrific. Those guys all chipped in and also I give compliments to Wooga Poplar, Bensley Joseph, Anthony Walker and Deng Gak who came off the bench and gave us some quality minutes."

MCGUSTY MAKING A CASE

McGusty is having his best season of his career and is making a case to be an All-ACC selection, averaging 17.8 points and 5.1 rebounds.

"I think he's had multiple good seasons, this is his best," Larranaga said. "I think he's matured with his age and consistency of effort on every day in practice and every game. He shot the ball very well tonight. Our team shot the ball very well tonight. He's our leader."

McGusty jammed his finger late in the game when deflecting a pass.

"We'll have to see how bad it is tomorrow," McGusty said.

UP NEXT

Miami hosts Virginia Tech on Saturday (3:00 p.m., BSUN).

Hurricanes roll past Pitt 85-64 on the road, reach 20 wins for first time in four years

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 22, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes have been among the biggest thieves in the ACC this season, relying on steals and forcing turnovers to make up for their lack of height.

That was especially apparent during an 85-64 win on the road at Pitt Tuesday night. Miami, which improved to 20-8 and 12-5 in the ACC, had become known this season for falling behind and rallying to win in the final minutes. There was no need for late-game drama against the Panthers.

The Hurricanes led from start to finish. Charlie Moore got things going with a three-pointer to open the game, and that set the tone.

Four minutes in, Miami already had three steals and nine points off turnovers. By halftime, the Canes led 47-27, were shooting 58 percent, and held a 19-0 edge over the Panthers on points off turnovers.

By the time the game was over, the Hurricanes had 12 steals and 30 points off turnovers, compared to 13 points off turnovers for Pitt. It was the first time in four years that the Hurricanes reached 20 wins.

Miami's sixth-year guards Moore and Kam McGusty showed why they are considered among the best in the conference. They shared the ball, made shots from distance, attacked the rim and played ferocious defense.

McGusty and Moore combined for 27 first-half points. The Canes kept finding their shots for the rest of the game, as the Panthers had no answers.

"It's always good to win a conference game, especially on the road, and especially when we played so well in the first half and were able to get a commanding lead," said UM coach Jim Larranaga. "We were able to sustain it. You have to give a lot of credit to our seniors. I'm very, very happy winning 20 games, having a very solid record in the ACC, but we have a lot of work still ahead of us."

It was Larranaga's 220th win at UM, tying Bruce Hale for most victories in program history. With three games to go in the regular season, Miami is tied with North Carolina in third place in the ACC.

The NCAA tournament selection committee looks for teams that play well late in the

season and UM has won four of the last five games. They also look at road record, and the Canes are 8-2 in opposing ACC arenas.

"The regular season is a marathon, and we told the team there's four miles left," Larranaga said. "You want to run your best at the end of the race and that's what we're trying to do."

McGusty and Moore scored 19 points apiece. Moore was 7-of-10 with five assists. McGusty went 7-of-13 with four assists and three steals. Jordan Miller went 6-of-8 for 12 points and Sam Waardenburg scored 12 on 4-of-5 shooting, including a pair of rim-shaking dunks that delighted the Hurricanes' bench.

But the highest-flying dunk came from Miami forward Anthony Walker, who has become known for his vertical leap. He ended the night with seven points and six rebounds.

Wong had a quiet night with just four points on 2-of-10 shooting with no rebounds and no assists. But his teammates made up for it.

McGusty jammed a finger late in the game and Larranaga said they were unsure how serious it was.

"Kam and Charlie were our leaders in the first half, Isaiah was not as proficient as he normally is, so we needed Charlie and Kam and Sam and Jordan to step up and they all chipped in," Larranaga said. "Also, compliments to Bensley Joseph, Wooga Poplar and Anthony Walker and Deng Gak, they came in off the bench and gave us quality minutes."

One of Miami's biggest concerns entering the game – literally – was Pitt sophomore forward John Hugley, who is 6-9 and over 250 pounds. He leads the nation in free throw attempts. Against Boston College, he scored 32 points and was 15-of-20 from the foul line.

Going into the game, Larranaga said he was worried that Waardenburg, who weighs 215 pounds, would get worn out early in the game battling Hugley. That was not the case.

Miami's swarming defense kept the ball out of Hugley's hands for much of the first half. He finished the half with nine points and just one trip to the free throw line. Hugley finished the night with 20 points on 7-of-9 shooting and made 6-of-9 free throws, but he didn't get much help. Pitt dropped to 11-18, and 6-12 in the ACC.

The Hurricanes are back home Saturday against Virginia Tech.

Senior Send-Off

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 24, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team turned in one of its finest performances of the season Tuesday night in the Steel City.

The Hurricanes cruised to a commanding 85-64 victory over Pittsburgh at the Petersen Events Center. Miami jumped out to a 14-2 edge, never relinquished the lead at any point, upped its margin to 20 by halftime and extended its advantage as high as 30 in the second half.

The 21-point final margin was Miami's third-largest of the season, including its biggest on the road and second-largest in ACC play.

It can be difficult for a team to remain locked in from start to finish after taking such a large lead. However, Miami had no such problems on the way to claiming its 20th win of the season.

"I would just say [that is because of] our togetherness, our energy and playing for each other," sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty said. "We're having fun out there, throwing alley-oops, dunking and playing good defense. Just, the energy is contagious. It's kind of what has put us over the edge this year."

Miami (20-8, 12-5 ACC) excelled offensively versus the Panthers, shooting a blistering 55.2 percent (32-of-58) from the floor, including 45.0 percent (9-of-20) from beyond the arc.

McGusty and fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore each tallied 19 points, shooting a combined 14-of-23 from the floor. Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored 12 points on 6-of-8 shooting and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg added 12 points on 4-of-5 shooting.

The Hurricanes, who have just one reserve averaging over 3.0 points per game, also logged a 19-5 margin in bench points. McGusty cited the aforementioned togetherness, paired with an excellent opening, as reasons why the team's offense clicked in the road win.

"I feel like just the way we started the game [set the tone]. I drove to the lane, threw an easy pass and Charlie hit a three," the ACC's fifth-leading scorer said. "He came down in transition the next possession looking for me. I shot it and missed it, but it was just [an example of how], like I said, we're just playing for each other and playing together. We're at that point in the season where we've kind of got our mojo. We know each other's game. We make each other better. Just little things like that have been helping us all season."

In addition to its impressive offensive display against the Panthers, Miami also turned in an excellent defensive showing.

The Hurricanes recorded 12 steals and forced a season-best 20 turnovers. That led to a 30-13 advantage in points off giveaways, including a spectacular 19-0 mark in the first half alone.

Tuesday marked the 12th time this season Miami has tallied double-digit steals, including the ninth in the last 14 outings. Moore, Miller and McGusty rank one-two-three in the ACC in steals in league play, with all three also in the top four overall.

The ability to take the ball away from their opponent and then put it in the hoop at the other end is something the Hurricanes pride themselves on.

"We know that, in order for us to be successful, we've got to turn people over a little bit more," McGusty shared. "We've got to be a little bit more scrappy. We've got to play a little bit harder. We're undersized, so that's part of our identity and what we do."

Miami will need to hone in on that skill in its next outing, as it faces a Virginia Tech team that ranks No. 26 in KenPom's offensive efficiency metric. Action is slated for Saturday at 3 p.m. at the Watsco Center.

McGusty knows slowing down the Hokies, who are 7-1 in their last eight games, will be no easy task. Redshirt senior forward Keve Aluma, the team's leading scorer at 15.7 points per game, paired with numerous guards who can connect on 3-pointers with quick releases is a difficult combination.

"All their guards can shoot the ball at a high level. Running them off the line and just making it difficult for Aluma [is vital]," McGusty remarked. "We can't let him get comfortable. If he is comfortable, he is going to be able to catch the ball and either spray it out to one of his guards or back us down and get to his little jump hook."

"It's not going to be easy," he added, "but the defense is kind of what has propelled us and what we've been leaning on and what has taken us to this level so far. So, we've just got to keep trusting in our defense and put it all together for 40 minutes."

The first matchup between the two teams was a thrilling one, as Miami earned a 78-75 road triumph Jan. 26 at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va. Moore banked in a half-court shot at the buzzer to earn the road win.

It is since that game that the Hokies have won seven of eight, upping their season ledger from 10-10 to 17-11 (9-8 ACC).

"After the game, we had all agreed that they were a lot better than what their record showed," McGusty said. "So, we have a lot of respect for Virginia Tech as a team and we've just got to come home and defend our home court. We haven't won a game at home since Georgia Tech. So we're looking to get back in that win column at home and send all the seniors and our fans out on a good note going into the conference and, hopefully, NCAA tournaments."

Saturday will be a special day at the Watsco Center, with Miami set to recognize McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak and sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr.

The five have a combined 29 seasons of collegiate experience, including 22 at The U.

McGusty, in his fourth year at Miami, knows Saturday's home finale will be a "very emotional" one as he nears the end of a long and impressive collegiate career.

"Four years ago when I got here, man, I was broken. I lost my confidence at my last school. Nothing went as planned. And just to be able to get another chance to be able to rewrite my story, it's just been a blessing," McGusty shared. "And the way everything has gone—coming here, I'm thinking, 'As soon as I get here, everything is going to be back to normal.' I get hurt. We have injuries two seasons in a row. And now, just to finally see the light at the end of the tunnel from a team standpoint and an individual standpoint, it's just a blessing."

"The University of Miami means so much to me, just the relationships I've built, the stuff I've been through, the person it has made me and the player it has made me," McGusty continued. "I wouldn't change anything. So, it's definitely going to mean a lot to me playing on this floor for the last time."

As McGusty reflects back on his college tenure, he has life lessons he knows will prepare him for the future, after he leaves Coral Gables.

That applies not just to his basketball career, but even more so off it. Some of what he has learned even ties in to a consistent message from his head coach at The U, Jim Larrañaga.

"Just to never give up and always believe in yourself. Coming into college, I would've never imagined I'd be in college for six years and [playing a] fifth year at the University of Miami," McGusty shared. "So many things can happen. Coach L always says life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it. That's what my college career has been the last six years with the trials and tribulations, being able to react and stay strong throughout everything. It has been a blessing."

McGusty, though, knows a storybook ending is far from guaranteed and coming away with a Senior Day victory will not be easy.

Although Miami is 25-19 all-time against Virginia Tech, including 12-6 at home and 15-9 under Larrañaga, the last four games have all been fantastic matchups.

Two of them went to overtime, including one to three extra periods. Another ended with Moore's buzzer-beater and yet another featured a two-point final margin.

The four games, with two going to each team, were decided by just 16 combined points, seven of which were in the triple-overtime affair.

"My whole career, the times we've played against them, it has always ... come down to the wire, whether it was overtime, a last-second shot or [Isaiah Wong]—his freshman year, my junior year—hitting that one-legged floater, I guess you could say, to seal the deal," McGusty said. "It's always a back-and-forth dog fight. So, I look forward to it. They're one of the more fun teams, in my opinion, to play against."

With a surely passionate pregame ceremony followed by a matchup of two teams in the top half of the ACC that continuously play exhilarating head-to-head games, Saturday could be exciting from start to finish.

In addition to honoring its five senior players, the Hurricanes will also recognize eight managers before the game. The list includes co-head managers Henry Adams and Harrison Miller, as well as Isi Beraja, Ben Blackburn, Jake Cellar, Deven Connors, Ben Schuster and Aidan Shanahan.

Miami's home finale will be televised live on RSN—that is Bally Sports Sun locally—with Tom Werme and Brian Oliver on the call. A full affiliate is available HERE and it can also be seen on WatchESPN, subject to blackout, HERE.

Joe Zagacki 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 will be available HERE.

Following their matchup with Virginia Tech, the Hurricanes hit the road for back-to-back away games to cap the regular season, first traveling to Chestnut Hill, Mass., where they play Wednesday at 9 p.m. against Boston College, live on ACC Network from Silvio O. Conte Forum.

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

This is why Sam Waardenburg traveled 8,000 miles from New Zealand to play for Hurricanes

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Feb. 25, 2022

Miami Hurricanes fans can thank Coach Jim Larranaga's son, Jay, for alerting his father in the summer of 2016 that there was a 6-10 kid from New Zealand named Sam Waardenburg who might be a good fit for the UM program.

The younger Larranaga was an assistant coach with the Boston Celtics at the time and saw Waardenburg play at an NBA-sponsored camp in Australia. Waardenburg was already turning heads that year as a member of New Zealand's youth national team, playing at tournaments in Kazakhstan, Fiji, and China.

He was eager to play college ball in the United States after seeing other Kiwis having success, including high school teammate Tai Wynyard at Kentucky.

"It was a really good camp, and Coach L's son recommended me to Coach L, who put assistant coach Adam Fisher on the job of recruiting me, and ever since Day One I felt a sense of family," said Waardenburg, one of five players being honored at the home game against Virginia Tech Saturday (3 p.m., Bally Sports Sun) as part of UM Senior Day.

"I came to visit and fell in love with the beautiful campus, beautiful city and the vibe around the program."

Both of his parents were teachers and earned master's degrees, academics were vital to Waardenburg and liked that Miami's geography department had a good reputation. Since arriving on campus, he has obtained a bachelor's degree in Geography, added a master's degree in Sports Administration in August 2021 and is currently pursuing a second master's degree in Liberal Arts.

On the court, Waardenburg's role has grown each season. Last year he sat out the entire season with a rare and serious Lisfranc (midfoot) injury. He was devastated at first but used the time off to help Fisher with scouting reports and observe the game from a coach's point of view. He says that perspective has helped him in his starting role this season with the Hurricanes, who are 20-8 and 12-5 in the Atlantic Coast Conference heading into Saturday's game.

"That time on the bench built my basketball IQ to another level," he said, and he has become an integral part of Miami's offense and defense, averaging 8.5 points and 4.1 rebounds.

"You can't even measure the value and impact he's had at both ends of the court," Larranaga said of the sixth-year senior. "When you describe players like Sam you normally would describe them as a stretch four but because of our roster we decided to move him to the five and let him handle the ball a lot, screen on the ball a lot, and stay on the perimeter where he can utilize his three-point shooting and driving ability."

"He's done all those things exceptionally well. He's handled the ball, screened, shot from three, driven to the basket. If you look what he's done, being an undersized five man, in terms of bulk, he weighs 215 playing against guys 240-250 and he's been able to sustain great effort throughout the games."

He also is a locker room leader. When the transfer portal exploded last spring, Waardenburg was the first UM player to announce he was returning. He says he was determined to not leave the program worse than it was when he arrived.

"I came in with guys like Davon Reed and Kamari Murphy, with the program at arguably its best, I experienced the NCAA Tournament a few times, and the next three years were not where it should have been, so I didn't want to leave it while it was down in the gutters," he said.

After he declared his return, Isaiah Wong and Kam McGusty followed.

"His decision to return to school is probably the most important decision for this team to have the success it has enjoyed so far," Larranaga said. "There's always a domino effect. When Sam announced that he was returning that was a major step, very positive statement for our program and had a great impact on his teammates."

Teammate Jordan Miller said of Waardenburg: "His basketball IQ is very high. Him being able to play at the five position and be a pick and pop threat and take the other bigs off the bounce because they don't necessarily have lateral quickness is something that really helps our team. He also provides leadership, he's been through a lot, and is highly respected."

Other seniors being honored Saturday are McGusty, Charlie Moore, Deng Gak and Rodney Miller Jr.

MBB Drops 71-70 Heartbreaker to Hokies in Home Finale

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
Feb. 26, 2022

After coming back from a nine-point first-half deficit, the University of Miami men's basketball team led for nearly the entire second session Saturday evening against Virginia Tech, but fell, 71-70, at the Watson Center.

The Hurricanes held an eight-point edge with under two minutes to play, but the Hokies closed the contest on a 12-3 run over the final 92 seconds to come away with the win. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty scored a team-high 15 points for Miami (20-9, 12-6 ACC), which set a program record by tallying 16 steals in an ACC affair.

"Well, I thought it was a great basketball game up until the last 20 seconds," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "And even then, we executed pretty well, but Virginia Tech was able to come up with a couple deflections and steals. That's an individual effort. It was just a great job by them."

Virginia Tech (18-11, 10-8 ACC) used a 9-0 run midway through the first half to build a 24-15 edge with 5:38 on the clock, as the Hurricanes went scoreless for 4:22 during a stretch they missed nine of 10 shots.

Miami ultimately went 5:01 without a field goal, but then scored seven points on three consecutive makes in 56 seconds, forcing turnovers on both the Hokies' possessions during that time, to cut the deficit to two, 26-24, with 3:10 to go. Virginia Tech went back up by six, but Miami closed the session on an 11-3 run in the final two minutes to take a two-point advantage, 35-33, into the locker room.

The late burst included back-to-back 3-pointers by McGusty to initially tie it, a layup by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong to put Miami ahead and, after a Virginia Tech 3-pointer, a buzzer-beating 3-pointer from Wong.

The Hokies, the ACC's leader in long-range shooting percentage, started just 1-of-9 beyond the arc and went 2-of-10 (20.0 percent) in the half, but posted a 12-of-13 clip (92.3 percent) inside it. Miami, though, forced nine turnovers and committed just two, leading to a 13-2 edge in points off giveaways.

An 8-2 run by the Hurricanes early in the second half upped their lead to six, 47-41, with 14:19 remaining. After Virginia Tech, for the second time, got within one, Miami used a 9-3 surge—part of a stretch during which it made five straight field goals—to go up by a then-game-high seven points, 58-51, with 8:33 left.

The Hokies, though, continued to fight back and trimmed the deficit to two, 61-59, with 5:27 on the clock. They then went scoreless for 3:55, though, as Miami hit back-to-back 3-pointers, the latter of which, from sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, upped the lead to a game-best eight, 67-59, with 1:42 to play.

Virginia Tech answered with seven unanswered points to make it a one-point affair, 67-66, with 40 ticks left. Miami then got a fast-break dunk from fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller three seconds later and added a point at the line from Moore 12 seconds after that to go up by four, 70-66, with 25 seconds remaining, but both also missed a free throw.

A layup from freshman guard Sean Pedulla trimmed the deficit to two with 17 seconds to play and sophomore guard Darius Maddox then stole the inbounds pass and drilled a go-ahead 3-pointer with 12 ticks left. It marked the first lead of the half for the Hokies, who hit their last five shots and got a defensive stop at the buzzer to hold on for the win.

McGusty's 15 points came on 6-of-12 shooting and he added a game-best four steals to match his season high.

Wong finished with 14 points on 6-of-9 shooting, while Moore tallied 12 points, a season-best nine assists to lead all players and three steals. Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walk-

er scored 11 points on 5-of-8 shooting off the bench and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg tallied 20 points and a career-high-tying three steals.

Redshirt senior forward Keve Aluma paced all scorers with 18 points on 8-of-9 shooting, adding a game-best 10 rebounds. Pedulla recorded 17 points, including 13 in the second half, although Miami did limit him to 2-of-8 shooting from deep.

Maddox finished with 13 points, shooting 3-of-5 on 3-pointers, while junior guard Hunter Cattoor notched 10 points and a co-team-best six assists. Graduate student forward Justyn Mutts added nine points, eight rebounds, six assists and a game-high four blocks.

Miami shot 50.0 percent (28-of-56) from the floor and had five double-digit scorers for the third time this season, including the second against the Hokies. It also forced 19 turnovers and committed only six, leading to a 26-15 edge in points off giveaways and a 10-0 margin in fast-break points.

The Hokies, however, recorded two of their four steals in the final 40 seconds and shot 58.0 percent (29-of-50), the third-highest by a Miami foe this year, including the second-highest in ACC play. They made 13 of their first 14 2-point attempts through 21 minutes and finished 22-of-27 (81.5 percent) on such shots.

For the Hurricanes, the setback marked their fifth in ACC play by four points or fewer, including their fourth by one possession and their third by a single point.

Saturday also served as the final home contest for five Miami players, all of whom were honored before the game: McGusty, Moore, Waardenburg, fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak and sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr.

"The seniors, they actually got us off to a good start. They scored on the first possession; Rodney Miller scored at the rim, which was good," Larrañaga said. "They've contributed so much. They're very much responsible for us having this season, not just in games, but in practice, [as well as with] their leadership on the court and off the court."

Up next for the Hurricanes is a two-game road swing to cap the regular season, beginning Wednesday at 9 p.m. against Boston College, live on ACC Network from Silvio O. Conte Forum in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 25-20 all-time against Virginia Tech, including 12-7 at home and 15-10 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– The last five games in this series have been decided by a total of 17 points, with seven of those in a triple-overtime contest and the additional 10 split among the other four.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the ninth-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 690-473 in 38 years as a head coach, including 220-139 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– For the first time this season, Miami, to further recognize its seniors, used a starting lineup of Gak, McGusty, R. Miller Jr., Moore and Waardenburg.

– The Hurricanes' Senior Day starting lineup has a combined 29 years of collegiate experience, totaling 539 games played and 304 starts.

– In addition, the five starters are an average of just over 24 years of age, with a combined total age above 102.25.

– Moore now has 60 steals this season, passing John Salmons (2001-02), John Salmons (2000-01), Angel Rodriguez (2015-16) and Angel Rodriguez (2014-15) to rise from co-ninth to co-sixth, alongside Vernon Jennings (1998-99), on the program's all-time single-season leaderboard.

– Moore is just the fifth player—seventh occurrence—in program history to register 60 steals in a single campaign.

– With 85 assists in conference action this season, Moore eclipsed Angel Rodriguez (2015-16) for second place on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard.

– With 306 points in ACC play this year, McGusty passed Guillermo Diaz (2005-06) and Jack McClinton (2007-08) to enter the top five on Miami's ACC-only single-season scoring list, checking in at fourth place.

– McGusty is the fourth Hurricane—fifth occurrence—to register 300 points in ACC play in

a single season.

– McGusty has now played 630 minutes in ACC competition this season, shooting from No. 11 up to sixth on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard after passing Sheldon McClellan (2015-16), Bruce Brown Jr. (2016-17), Durand Scott (2012-13), Sheldon McClellan (2014-15) and Chris Lykes (2018-19).

– With 106 made field goals in league action this year, McGusty passed Wong (2020-21) for third place on the Hurricanes' ACC-only single-season leaderboard.

– McGusty, with 76 free-throw attempts in league play, entered the top 10 of Miami's ACC-only single-season leaderboard, tying Dwayne Collins (2009-10) and Guillermo Diaz (2005-06) for ninth.

– With 63 made free throws in ACC play in 2021-22, McGusty entered the top five on the Hurricanes' ACC-only single-season leaderboard, passing Angel Rodriguez (2014-15) to place co-fifth, alongside Chris Lykes (2018-19).

– With 612 minutes played in ACC competition this season, Wong jumped from No. 16 up to ninth on the Hurricanes' ACC-only single-season list, moving past Tonye Jekiri (2014-15), Guillermo Diaz (2005-06), Anthony Lawrence II (2017-18), Anthony Lawrence II (2018-19), Sheldon McClellan (2015-16), Bruce Brown Jr. (2016-17) and Durand Scott (2012-13).

– Wong now has 96 made field goals in league action this season, entering the top 10 on the program's ACC-only single-season list after passing Chris Lykes (2018-19) and Davon Reed (2016-17), checking in at co-eighth place, alongside Kenny Kadji (2012-13) and Jack McClinton (2007-08).

– J. Miller now has 34 steals in ACC action this year, moving into a tie with Guillermo Diaz (2004-05) for third place on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard, behind only the totals from Moore (41) and McGusty (39) this year.

– Saturday snapped a six-game Senior Day winning streak for the Hurricanes, who fell to 9-2 in such games under Larrañaga.

– Miami dropped to 202-16 in Larrañaga's tenure when leading with two minutes left, including 92-11 in ACC play and 19-2 this season.

– The Hurricanes fell to 19-3 this season when scoring 65-plus points, including 17-3 when scoring 70-plus.

– Saturday marked the 13th time this season Miami has posted double-digit steals, including the 10th in the last 15 outings.

– Entering 2021-22, the Hurricanes had two ACC games in program history with 14-plus steals, but have reached that figure thrice this season: 1/5/22 versus Syracuse (14), 1/8/22 at second-ranked Duke (15) and now Saturday (16), as well.

– The other two times in 2021-22 the Hurricanes had five double-digit scorers were on 1/26/22 at Virginia Tech and on 2/9/22 against Georgia Tech.

– Miami's six ACC losses this season are by totals of one, one, four, 13, three and one, an average of just 3.8 points per setback.

– The only two teams to shoot better against the Hurricanes this season are Virginia (60.0 percent) on 2/5/22 in Charlottesville, Va., and Dayton (58.7 percent) on 11/25/21 in Kissimmee, Fla.

– Virginia Tech shot 60.9 percent (14-of-23) in the first half, the second team to eclipse 60 percent before the break against Miami this season, joining Virginia, which shot 62.5 percent (15-of-24) at home on 2/5/22.

– The Hokies were 10-of-22 (45.5 percent) over the first 18 minutes of the second half before making their last five shots to finish 15-of-27 (55.6 percent) in the frame.

– Virginia Tech shot 5-of-22 (22.7 percent) beyond the arc in the first 39 minutes of the game prior to hitting its last two attempts.

– Moore, who eclipsed 1,600 points and 4,000 minutes played as a collegian, scored in double figures for the 77th time, including the 20th in 2021-22.

– Moore, who also reached 300 made free throws, posted his 48th five-assist showing, including his 11th this season.

– Before Saturday, Moore's season high in assists was eight, registered on 12/20/21 versus Stetson, while his ACC best was seven, notched twice (2/2/22 against Notre Dame and 1/1/22 versus Wake Forest).

– Walker, who eclipsed 250 rebounds at Miami, tallied double-digit points for the 21st time, including the sixth this year.

– McGusty scored in double figures for the 90th time, including the 62nd as a Hurricane and 27th this season.

– Wong registered double-digit points for the 58th time, including the 25th in 2021-22.

– Waardenburg scored in double figures for the 23rd time, including the 11th this year.

Shipping up to Boston

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 1, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team's last five games against Virginia Tech have all been wild, wacky and weird.

Each game has come down to nearly the final possession, with two going to overtime—including one reaching triple-overtime—and all including memorable shots and plays.

The Hurricanes won, 78-75, in Blacksburg, Va., on Jan. 26 on a half-court buzzer-beater by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore. In the teams' second meeting this season, though, favor tilted towards the Hokies.

Virginia Tech climbed back from an eight-point deficit in the final 100 seconds Saturday to defeat Miami, 71-70, at the Watsco Center.

"I thought the Virginia Tech players really made big plays. [Sean] Pedulla got a steal, got an assist. [Hunter] Cattoor got a deflection. [Darius] Maddox hit a three. [Keve] Aluma got a dunk," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "There were just so many good plays that they made. And we had made a lot of good plays leading up to it, including a Charlie Moore steal that led to a layup and a Kam McGusty baseball pass that led to a Jordan Miller three-point play [opportunity]."

"Unfortunately, though, we missed some critical free throws," Larrañaga continued. "Kam missed a one-and-one, Charlie missed the second, Jordan missed one and Sam missed one of two. When you look back—we're such a good free-throw shooting team—obviously those free throws could've put us over the top."

Miami, which lost when leading with two minutes left for just the 16th time in Larrañaga's 11 seasons, entered the game shooting 75.3 percent from the line and went 3-of-4 in the first half, before logging just a 5-of-9 clip in the second frame.

Moore posted 12 points, a season-high nine assists and three steals on Senior Day. Fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty posted a team-high 15 points and season-high-tying four steals in his final game at the Watsco Center, while sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg had 10 points and a career-high-tying three steals.

The Hurricanes' other two Senior Day honorees, fifth-year redshirt junior forward Deng Gak and sixth-year redshirt senior center Rodney Miller Jr., both started. Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored 14 points on 6-of-9 shooting and third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker added 11 in just 14 minutes.

Despite the bevy of strong performances, the Hurricanes could not close out the win on a sentimental evening.

"It was Senior Day and there was just so much emotion," Larrañaga said. "We didn't play out of character—we did a lot of things in character—but, I think, in the end we were in a little bit of a hurry. When you rush, you tend to make mistakes. And we rushed. We just didn't calmly execute at the end."

As his team has risen from its No. 12 spot in the ACC preseason poll to the top four of the standings for nearly the entire season, Larrañaga has preached a consistent message: the regular season is a marathon, not a sprint.

Given the success Miami (20-9, 12-6 ACC) has had this season, that communication has often come after victories. This time, though, it is after a loss and remains just as important.

"With three miles to go, we stumbled a little," Larrañaga said. "Now, we've got to regroup in the last two miles."

The Hurricanes' second-to-last mile comes Wednesday night in Chestnut Hill, Mass. There, Miami faces Boston College at 9 p.m. at Silvio O. Conte Forum.

While it is certainly possible there could be some lingering effects from the gut-wrenching setback against the Hokies, Larrañaga knows his team still has a great deal to play for and hopes the focus is on that.

"A win on Wednesday would automatically qualify us for the double-bye," Larrañaga remarked. "We'd be one of the top-four seeds [in the ACC Tournament]. So, we couldn't ask for anything more. We're out of the running for the regular season title now, so the best we can hope for—and our goal has to be—is to get one of those four byes."

The 9 p.m. start is the Hurricanes' co-second-latest of the season. It is also their first time tipping off after 8 p.m. since the calendar turned to 2022.

Nonetheless, Larrañaga does not expect to make many changes to the team's usual gameday process. In fact, the plan is quite the opposite.

"The key with playing a late start is trying to keep your routine pretty much the same," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year shared. "[You have] your pregame meal four hours before. You do your shootaround the day of the game and be sure the guys are focused with high energy."

Another unique element of the trip to Massachusetts is that the Hurricanes will not fly back to Miami afterwards. It is the first time all season they have a road game where that is the case.

Instead, the team will travel to Syracuse, N.Y., the following morning. It is the first time since Feb. 26-March 1, 2021, the Hurricanes have a two-leg road trip.

"Well, I think just having a good travel plan is very important and then executing the plan. So far, this year, we've been able to do that," Larrañaga said. "The players

have been able to stay focused, even when there is a distraction like [when we were] going to Winston-Salem and had to, basically, regroup and not take off until 9:30 at night. But the guys have handled each of those trips very well. Hopefully, we'll be able to do the same this week."

Once Miami arrives at its destination—in whatever city that may be—the team has fared quite well in road contests this season.

The Hurricanes are one of just nine teams in the nation with eight-plus true road wins and fewer than three such losses, joining Davidson (9-1), Drake (8-2), Duke (8-2), Boise State (8-2), North Texas (8-0), USC (9-2), VCU (9-1) and Wisconsin (9-2).

"When you look at the teams in our league, Duke and Miami are the only teams in the conference that have eight road victories. We're both 8-2," Larrañaga remarked. "I think our guys have focused on trying to be the best that we can be. We lost at Florida State, we lost at Virginia. But the loss at Florida State was by one point and the loss at Virginia, they really just played a great second half, like they did here."

When Miami arrives at Wednesday night's game, it will face a Boston College team that is 11-17 (6-12 ACC) on the season, but has won two of its last three outings.

The Eagles are led by graduate student guard Makai Ashton-Langford's 11.9 points and 3.4 assists per game.

"They play very, very hard at the defensive end of the floor. They have a seven-man rotation that I think is outstanding," Larrañaga said. "They do a great job. The guys off the bench do a terrific job, [as does] their starting unit. And they're big; they've got two big guys that are a factor. They both can score in around the basket. [James] Karnik can step outside. So, it's going to be a major challenge and another great ACC game for us."

The Hurricanes own a 26-27 all-time ledger versus Boston College, including a 10-14 mark on the road and a 13-3 record under Larrañaga. In the most recent matchup, Miami earned an 80-76 home victory on March 5, 2021, to cap last year's regular season.

Wednesday's game will be broadcast live on ACC Network HERE, with Mike Monaco and Malcolm Huckaby on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats can be found HERE.

After playing the Eagles, Miami returns to the court Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Carrier Dome against Syracuse, live on ESPNU in its regular season finale.

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

UM can clinch double-bye in ACC tournament with road win at Boston College Wednesday

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 1, 2022

The ACC season is a marathon, not a sprint. That is the message Miami Hurricanes basketball coach Jim Larrañaga has been drilling into his team all season.

Coming off a one-point home loss to Virginia Tech, the Canes face a critical road game Wednesday at Boston College (9 p.m., ACC Network). With a win, Miami clinches fourth place in the ACC standings and automatically qualifies for a double-bye in the ACC Tournament next week in Brooklyn, New York.

"With three miles to go, we stumbled a little," Larrañaga said, referencing the marathon message and the loss to the Hokies. "Now, we've got to regroup in the last two miles."

"We'd be one of the top-four seeds in the ACC Tournament, so, we couldn't ask for anything more," he said. "We're out of the running for the regular season title now, so the best we can hope for—and our goal has to be—is to get one of those four byes."

The 9 p.m. start is unusual, but Larrañaga does not expect to make many changes to the team's usual gameday routine.

"The key with playing a late start is trying to keep your routine pretty much the same," he said. "Your pregame meal four hours before. You do your shootaround the day of the game and be sure the guys are focused with high energy."

Miami has had success on the road this season. The Hurricanes (20-9, 12-6 ACC) are 8-2 on the road and one of nine teams in the country with eight road wins and fewer than three road losses.

"When you look at the teams in our league, Duke and Miami are the only teams in the conference that have eight road victories. We're both 8-2," Larrañaga said. "We lost at Florida State, we lost at Virginia. But the loss at Florida State was by one point and the loss at Virginia, they really just played a great second half, like they did here."

Boston College is 11-17 (6-12 ACC) but has won two of its past three games.

The Eagles are led by graduate student guard Makai Ashton-Langford's 11.9 points and 3.4 assists per game.

"They play very, very hard at the defensive end of the floor. They have a seven-man rotation that I think is outstanding," Larrañaga said.

"And they're big; they've got two big guys that are a factor. They both can score in around the basket. [James] Karnik can step outside. So, it's going to be a major challenge and another great ACC game for us."

After the game, UM flies directly to Syracuse, where the team faces the Orange at 1 p.m. Saturday in the regular-season finale.

Larrañaga Sets Miami Record in 81-70 Win at BC

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 2, 2022

University of Miami head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga made history with his team's 81-70 victory Wednesday night at Boston College.

The two-time ACC Coach of the Year now has 221 victories in his 11 seasons at the helm of the Hurricanes, breaking a program record that stood for 55 years.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong scored a season- and game-high 27 points for Miami (21-9, 13-6 ACC), which led for over 37 minutes and trailed for only 100 seconds at Silvio O. Conte Forum. The Hurricanes, who held an edge of 10-plus points the entire second half, clinched a double-bye in the ACC Tournament with their ninth true road win in 11 such tries.

"I don't get emotional about anything individually. My whole goal has always been about the team," Larrañaga said. "Individual honors are nice—they recognize people—but the most important thing for a coach is for the team to do well, for the players to win and feel good about themselves. This team was expected to finish 12th and they finished [at least] fourth and got a double-bye in the tournament. I'd say that's an outstanding job by those guys and my coaching staff, who are the ones that have basically mapped out the plan of how to be productive and how to beat some of these teams."

After Boston College (11-18, 6-13 ACC) scored the opening basket, Miami tallied nine straight points in 87 seconds to take a lead it would never relinquish.

The Hurricanes started 14-of-22 (63.6 percent) from the field, grabbing early control of the game. They extended their lead as high as 17 points, 40-23, in the opening half. The Eagles scored the final basket of the frame and Miami took a 15-point advantage, 40-25, into the locker room.

Wong scored 17 points, including 12 of the Hurricanes' first 18, in the opening 16-and-a-half minutes, starting 5-of-7 from the floor, 3-of-4 from deep and 4-of-4 at the line. Miami also recorded six first-half steals, including five in the opening nine minutes, while Boston College had zero, leading to a 17-4 cushion in points off turnovers.

The Hurricanes continued their strong play at both ends in the second session and pushed their cushion up to 19, 60-41, with just 11:25 to play. Miami then went scoreless for 3:06 and the Eagles scored eight unanswered points to cut the margin to 11 with 8:38 remaining.

Boston College got its deficit down to 10, 70-60, with 5:23 to play, but the Hurricanes never let the lead slip below double digits. In fact, they went on a 9-2 run to extend it back to 17 with just 2:18 to go, on their way to the 11-point victory.

Wong's 27 points came on 9-of-16 shooting, including a 5-of-9 mark from 3-point range to tie his career high in makes. He added a co-game-best seven rebounds and two steals.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored 18 points on a blistering 8-of-10 shooting, finishing one shy of his season high in makes. The Middleburg, Va., native added six rebounds in the victory.

Sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg recorded 16 points, shooting 5-of-7 from the floor, 3-of-5 on 3-pointers and 3-of-3 at the stripe, as well as dishing out four assists. Kameron McGusty recorded 10 points and four assists, while fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore

totaled eight points and a game-high five assists, en route to breaking Miami's nine-year-old ACC-only single-season assist record.

"We scored over 80 points. We shared the ball very well," Larrañaga said. "Isaiah caught fire early; he had 17 at the half and 27 for the game. Sam Waardenburg was terrific. Jordan Miller was terrific. Charlie was himself, had another good game. Kam got himself in foul trouble, but hit some very key baskets in the second half. Anthony Walker and Bensley Joseph came in off the bench and gave us some quality minutes."

Graduate student guard Makai Ashton-Langford paced the Eagles with 21 points, 19 of which came in the second half, during which he shot 7-of-11. It marked the highest single-half total by a Miami foe this season.

Senior forward/center James Kamik recorded 13 points and a co-game-high seven rebounds, while graduate student guard Brevin Galloway notched 11 points. Junior forward Quinten Post added 10 points and shot 5-of-6 from the field, as did Kamik.

The Eagles shot 60.0 percent (18-of-30) in the second half after posting just a 38.5 percent clip (10-of-26) in the first half. They finished with a 50.0 percent mark (28-of-56) on the night.

The Hurricanes, meanwhile, posted a clip of 55-plus in each half to register a 56.4 percent ledger (31-of-55) overall, their second-best mark of the season. They also recorded nine steals and posted a 21-12 edge in points off turnovers.

Miami now travels to Syracuse, N.Y., where it caps the regular season Saturday at 1 p.m. against Syracuse, live on ESPNU from the Carrier Dome.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

– The Hurricanes moved to 27-27 all-time against Boston College, including 11-14 on the road and 14-3 in Larrañaga's tenure.

– Miami is now .500 in its series with the Eagles for the first time since it was 1-1 after a matchup on 12/29/89.

– Wednesday's decision snapped a seven-game winning streak by the home team in the Miami/Boston College series, as the last time a visitor won was when the Hurricanes did so on 1/20/16.

– Larrañaga, who entered the game with the 10th-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 691-473 in 38 years as a head coach, including 221-139 in 11 seasons at Miami.

– With 221 victories at Miami, Larrañaga eclipsed Bruce Hale (1954-67) for the program's all-time wins record.

– Now owning 104 victories in ACC regular season play, Larrañaga passed Norman Sloan for sole possession of No. 12 on the all-time list.

– For the 21st time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Waardenburg and Wong.

– Moore now has 90 assists in ACC play this season, breaking the record of 87 set by Shane Larkin in 2012-13, with his historic pass coming on a 3-pointer by Waardenburg with 10:34 on the first-half clock.

– With 61 steals this year, Moore passed Vernon Jennings (1998-99) to enter the top five on the program's single-season leaderboard, placing co-fifth, alongside Robert Hite (2003-04).

– Moore has now played 618 minutes in league action this year, moving from co-No. 14 up to ninth place on the program's ACC-only single-season list, passing Guillermo Diaz (2005-06), Anthony Lawrence II (2018-19), Sheldon McClellan (2015-16), Bruce Brown Jr. (2016-17), Durand Scott (2012-13) and Sheldon McClellan (2014-15).

– With 1,167 points, Wong passed Ja'Quan Newton (2014-18) and Kevin Presto (1,156) to enter the top 30 on Miami's all-time scoring list, checking in at exactly No. 30.

– Wong now has 803 points in ACC play at Miami, passing Durand Scott

(2009-13) for second place on the program's ACC-only all-time leaderboard and becoming the second Hurricane to reach 800.

– With 291 points in conference action this year, Wong passed Kenny Kadji (2012-13), Robert Hite (2005-06), Sheldon McClellan (2015-16), Chris Lykes (2018-19), Davon Reed (2016-17) and Rion Brown (2013-14) to enter the top 10 on the Hurricanes' ACC-only single-season leaderboard, placing seventh.

– Wong now has 105 made field goals in ACC play in 2021-22, logging the seventh triple-digit mark in program history and entering the top five on the program's ACC-only single-season list, passing Kenny Kadji (2012-13), Jack McClinton (2007-08), Robert Hite (2005-06), Guillermo Diaz (2005-06), Rion Brown (2013-14) and his own mark last year to check in at fourth place.

– With 241 made field goals in ACC competition in his career, McGusty entered the top five on the Hurricanes' ACC-only all-time list, tying Chris Lykes (2017-21) for fifth place.

– McGusty now has 657 minutes played in ACC action this year, passing Rion Brown (2013-14) and Shane Larkin (2012-13) to enter the top five on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard, placing fourth.

– With 1,592 minutes played in ACC competition in his career, McGusty moved past Dwayne Collins (2006-10), James Dews (2006-10) and Rion Brown (2010-14) to go into the top 10 on the program's ACC-only career leaderboard, checking in at ninth.

– Miami has 21 wins in a season for the 14th time in program history, including the sixth in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure.

– The Hurricanes moved to 20-3 this season when scoring 65-plus points, including 18-3 when scoring 70-plus.

– The only game this season in which Miami logged a better field-goal percentage was on 1/1/22 versus Wake Forest, when it logged a 61.5 percent tally (32-of-52).

– Miami got just two points from its bench on the night, including none in the first half.

– Wednesday marked the third time in 19 ACC games the Hurricanes did not get beat on the glass, as each team tallied 28 rebounds.

– Before Ashton-Langford's 19-point second half, Florida A&M's DJ Jones held the top single-half mark versus Miami this season, as he scored 18 after the break on 11/21/21.

– Wong's 17 first-half points tied the mark set by Waardenburg on 1/18/22 versus North Carolina for the most by a Hurricane before the break this season.

– The 17 first-half points also matched the third-highest total by a Miami player in a session this season—seventh occurrence with 17-plus—to trail only the second-half totals of 18 Wong recorded on 11/13/21 against UCF and 1/22/22 against Florida State.

– Wong, who surpassed 1,150 points and 400 made field goals at Miami, registered his 22nd 20-point showing, including his eighth in 2021-22.

– Wong, who also moved past 350 rebounds, scored in double figures for the 59th time, including the 26th this season.

– The only other time Wong made five 3-pointers in a contest was earlier this season on 1/18/22 against North Carolina.

– J. Miller, who eclipsed 1,150 points and 200 made free throws in his career, tallied double-digit points for the 62nd time, including the 12th this year.

– Moore, who moved past 550 assists as a collegian, posted his 49th five-assist outing, including his 12th this season.

– Waardenburg, who eclipsed 650 points and 2,750 minutes played as a Hurricane, scored in double-figure points for the 24th time, including the 12th in 2021-22.

– McGusty registered double-digit points for the 91st time, including the 63rd at Miami and the 28th this season.

– Freshman guard Wooga Poplar surpassed 250 minutes played in his young career.

– Freshman guard Bensley Joseph, playing about eight miles from his hometown of Arlington, Mass., logged a career-high-tying six rebounds to eclipse 50 in his first season as a collegian.

After leaving Oklahoma, Kameron McGusty shines as an All-ACC star at Miami

By Tim Skeval
The Daily Orange
March 2, 2022

In 2018, Kameron McGusty left Oklahoma after just two years in the program. Despite being named a preseason All-Big 12 honorable mention before his sophomore season, McGusty averaged nearly three points per game fewer than he did as a freshman, and he knew a change of scenery would help his career.

McGusty landed in Miami, where he has become the Hurricanes' leading scorer. The team travels to Syracuse on Saturday, and it is in contention for a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

To Shannon Heston, who coached McGusty in high school, the guard was always a "gamer" who worked hard, making McGusty's success this season as unsurprising. While playing for Heston, McGusty won district MVP as a sophomore at Seven Lakes High School (Texas) before moving to Sunrise Christian Academy in Kansas. He developed into a 4-star recruit, and Miami assistant Chris Caputo said McGusty has the work ethic and talent to make it in the NBA.

McGusty tested the NBA draft waters after last season, when the Hurricanes went 10-17 but advanced to the ACC Tournament quarterfinals. But Miami never saw the "best of Kam," Caputo said, since the guard had missed seven games that year. He ultimately decided to return for a sixth collegiate season this year.

"He felt that if he got in unbelievable shape, and tried to stay as healthy as possible, he would find himself having a season like the one he's having now," Caputo said.

McGusty is now having a career year in practically every statistic. He's averaging 17.4 points per game on 47% shooting, and also records five rebounds and 2.5 assists per game while defending the opposing team's best player.

"I don't think you can put an All-ACC first team together that he's not on," Caputo said.

Even after McGusty scored at least 20 points in three of Miami's first seven games, the Hurricanes still sat at just 4-3. But after a 32-point loss to Alabama, they went on to win nine straight, capped off by a two-point road win against then-No. 2 Duke. During that stretch, McGusty poured in 29 points on 63% shooting in a win against Lipscomb while also adding three blocks.

"Whatever I can do to contribute I will do,"

McGusty said. "I want to help our team win games."

In the Hurricanes' 13 games since upsetting Duke, McGusty has scored at least 10 points 12 times, but Miami also lost five times by four points or less. Although dominating each game is the Hurricanes' goal, playing in so many close games will help the Hurricanes once they start postseason play, McGusty said.

"They all want to get back. The focus is there. It's been very, very refreshing to have a group like that," Caputo said of the Hurricanes.

Miami currently sits at 21-9, and is projected to be a No. 10 seed in Joe Lunardi's latest Bracketology prediction. With one regular season game remaining against SU, McGusty hopes to have both his team and their seeding projection heading in the right direction prior to Selection Sunday. Caputo and Heston both described McGusty as "relaxed" and ready for "any challenge" heading into Saturday's game and the postseason as a whole.

"Whenever you have guys around you that want to see you do well, it's hard to not have success," McGusty said.

Wong scores 27, thanks Mom as UM clinches double-bye in ACC tourney with road win at BC

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 3, 2022

Miami Hurricanes guard Isaiah Wong was struggling with his shot recently and getting frustrated, so he turned to the person he always turns to when he needs a lift – his mother, LaChelle.

She and her second-oldest son Terrence met Isaiah at the UM gym earlier this week and worked with him until the wee hours. The family shootarounds paid dividends.

Wong scored a season-high 27 points and tied a career-high five three pointers to lead the Hurricanes to an 81-70 road win at Boston College late Wednesday night.

With the victory, Miami clinched a double-bye to the quarterfinals of next week's ACC tournament in Brooklyn, New York.

"My mom and brother have been helping me late nights working on my shot, so I just want to say thank you to them because I was having issues this whole season, but I had a good shooting day today and I want to thank my mom for that," Wong said.

"She was like, 'I don't want you to go back to the old Zay, do you need anything?' I said 'I just need to get some shots up, work on my game,' so she brought herself and my brother and we just shot around and my brother was rebounding for me. It felt good coming into this game, and I think it was because of what my mom did and how she helped me."

Isaiah and his mother have always had a special bond. He signed his first contract with her when he was in elementary school. She drew up annual contracts for all four of her sons because she wanted to encourage them to set goals and give their best in academics, athletics, and life.

The Wongs are still signing contracts, and Isaiah and his teammates are one step closer to one of his goals – an ACC championship. UM is 21-9 and 13-6 in the ACC heading into Saturday's regular season finale on the road at Syracuse Saturday.

He said earning a double-bye in the conference tournament will make a huge difference.

"Last year when we were in the tournament it was hard because we kept on winning, but we were playing back to back to back and it took a toll on everybody's body," Wong said. "With

this double bye we're going to feel refreshed, play with a lot of intensity coming in and play fewer games so that's going to help us a lot."

Wong found his shot in the opening minutes, scored nine in a row, had 12 points after five minutes, and 17 by halftime.

UM coach Jim Larranaga said he got a hint before the game that Wong might have a big night.

"Isaiah was on fire from start to finish and we were able to ride him the first half and then at a crucial time when Boston College was making a move on us," the coach said. "I tend to listen to my coaching staff, and they told me 'Isaiah's going to have a big night.' I don't know how they knew, but they knew before the game. They said this was a game, the way Boston College plays defense, the way we play offense, that Isaiah should get a bundle of opportunities to score."

The win was Larranaga's 221st since joining UM, making him the winningest head coach in school history, breaking Bruce Hale's record. He credited his longevity, and his assistant coaches and players for the milestone.

Wong was one of four Hurricanes in double figures. Jordan Miller went 8-of-10 for 18 points. Sam Waardenburg had 16 points on 5-of-7 shooting with five rebounds, four assists and two steals. Kam McGusty finished with 10 points and four assists.

Point guard Charlie Moore, who transferred to UM from DePaul this season, had five assists, which brought his season total to 90, breaking the school record for assists in ACC play. Shane Larkin held the record with 87 assists during the 2012-13 Sweet 16 season.

Once again, as they have all season, the Hurricanes had excellent spacing, shared the ball, and played with composure. Larranaga was especially happy to see his forward and center, Miller and Waardenburg, combine for 34 points.

"Look at our four and five position, we had 18 and 16 points, and look at their field goal percentages, 13 for 17 from the field. Nobody does that. That's hard to do. They're so team oriented. The way we've played all season is share the ball, share the ball, share the ball. The most important thing is we earned that double bye in the ACC tournament, something we've fought hard for all season."

One More on the Road

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 3, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team continued its string of road excellence Wednesday night at Boston College.

The Hurricanes recorded an 81-70 victory over the Eagles at Silvio O. Conte Forum in a game they never trailed after Boston College scored the opening basket.

Miami (21-9, 13-6 ACC) is now 9-2 in true road games this season. The only other teams in the nation with at least nine such wins and fewer than three such losses are Davidson, Duke, USC, Wisconsin and VCU.

According to freshman guard Wooga Poplar, the team's success away from home is largely due to its mentality, in a variety of ways.

"Keeping composed, basically not taking people for granted [based off] how their record is, being humble and taking games one by one," he said.

The Hurricanes shot over 55 percent from the floor in each half versus the Eagles and ended the night with a 56.4 clip (31-of-55) that ranks as their second-best mark of the season. Miami also reached 80-plus points for the 10th time this season.

The win, which gave head coach Jim Larrañaga the program record with 221 victories, featured 15 assists and 10 turnovers. The ball movement was a particular key in the Hurricanes' offensive performance, but they also got the job done on the defensive end of the floor.

"Sharing the ball, playing [well] with each other and effort," Poplar said of what led to the stellar showing. "I feel like we were disruptive on defense. And [we were] just playing as a team."

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored 18 points on 8-of-10 shooting, while sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg stuffed the stat sheet with 16 points, five rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Kameron McGusty scored 10 points despite foul trouble and fellow sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore totaled eight points and a game-best five assists, breaking Miami's ACC-only single-season program assists record in the process.

Third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, however, stole the show. He scored a season-best 27 points, just three shy of his top mark as a collegian. The Piscataway, N.J., native shot 9-of-16 from the floor, 5-of-9 on 3-pointers to tie a career high in makes and 4-of-4 at the line.

"He was [not shooting as well] his last couple games, but his shot was falling," Poplar said. "I feel like if he's hitting shots, he can do that every night."

Wong, McGusty and Moore are three talented veterans whom Poplar has played behind during his inaugural collegiate campaign.

All three are potential All-ACC players and they have a combined 376 appearances at the college level. Few rookies in the nation have had the chance to learn from a better, deeper crop of players at their position.

"I just feel like it has helped me a lot because they're way older than me," Poplar said. "I'm only 19. So, I have time to get through my mistakes and be better and just probably pick up in their shoes next year."

Although he has learned and improved on the hardwood during the 2021-22 campaign, Poplar actually feels his "way of looking at things, just as a human" is where he has made the biggest leap in his development.

Now, just one regular season game remains in the Philadelphia native's freshman season. It comes Saturday at 1 p.m. against Syracuse at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse, N.Y.

The two teams met earlier this season, with the Hurricanes logging a scintillating 88-87 home victory on Jan. 5 after rallying from an 18-point deficit. Miami shot just 34.3 percent (12-of-35) in the first half, but posted a 56.7 percent clip (17-of-30) in the second half against the Orange's vaunted 2-3 zone defense.

"In the second half, the effort picked up," Poplar recalled. "And I feel like the crowd at UM, they gave us momentum."

Although Miami managed to come away with the win, the high-scoring Orange turned in a dazzling offensive showing. They became the first Hurricane foe with three 20-point scorers in over 30 years and they shot 50.0 percent (29-of-58) from the field.

Poplar knows that such a balanced, dynamic offensive team makes for a stiff test for the

Hurricanes, who must be well in-tune with the scouting report when they take the court Saturday afternoon.

"Just knowing your personnel. So, whatever their weakness is, trying to force them to do that," Poplar said of what Miami needs to do defensively against a foe that has so many weapons. "And just playing as a team. Like, helping, being in the right space at the right time, holding your own and guarding your yard."

Syracuse is 15-15 (9-10 ACC) on the season and is led by senior guard Buddy Boeheim's 19.0 points per game, the second-best mark in the league.

The Hurricanes own a 10-20 all-time record versus the Orange, including a 3-10 ledger on the road and a 5-6 mark in Larrañaga's 11-year tenure.

Miami's regular season finale will be shown live on ESPNU HERE, with Mike Monaco and Steve Evans on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while live stats will be available HERE.

Following the conclusion of the regular season, the Hurricanes will travel to the ACC Tournament at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., where they will have a double-bye and will open play Thursday at a to-be-determined time against a to-be-determined opponent.

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

Miami Hurricanes have plenty to play for in regular season finale at Syracuse Saturday

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 4, 2022

The Miami Hurricanes have already clinched a double-bye in the ACC tournament next week, but they are not overlooking their regular season finale at Syracuse on Saturday (1 p.m., ESPN).

UM can move up to third place in the conference standings with a win at the Carrier Dome combined with a Duke win over rival North Carolina in the much-hyped final home game for retiring legendary coach Mike Krzyzewski.

Miami coaches and players are hoping Saturday's game will be less dramatic than the teams' first meeting in Coral Gables on Jan. 5.

The Canes fell behind by 18 with 21 minutes to go in that game and rallied for a thrilling 88-87 victory. Miami shot just 34.3 percent (12-of-35) in the first half but improved to 56.7 percent (17-of-30) in the second half against the Orange's stifling 2-3 zone defense. Miami scored 58 points in the second half.

Point guard Charlie Moore led UM with a season-high 25 points, six assists and five rebounds. Kameron McGusty scored 19, Isaiah Wong had 14 (all in the second half), and Jordan Miller chipped in 11. It was the Hurricanes' eighth win in a row at that time.

Although Miami came away with the win, the Orange became the first Hurricane opponent with three 20-point scorers in over 30 years — Joseph Girard had 26, Jesse Edwards 22 and Cole Swider 20. Buddy Boeheim, son of Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim, averages 19 points, but UM held him to nine points in the first game.

The Hurricanes also forced the Orange into 19 turnovers, which led to much of Miami's offense.

Syracuse is 15-15 (9-10 ACC) entering Saturday's game. The Orange is coming off three losses in a row to North Carolina, Duke and Notre Dame, and extra motivated because it is Senior Day.

Miami is 21-9 on the season and 13-6 in the ACC. The Hurricanes beat Boston College 81-70 on Wednesday and are 9-2 on the road. They were led by Wong, who scored a season-high 27 points, three points shy of his career high.

He and his teammates are determined to end

the regular season on a winning note and head to Brooklyn, New York, on a roll for the ACC tournament.

"I'm a heat check player, if I make one three the basket starts getting larger and larger," Wong said. "That's when happened when I was hitting step-back threes. My confidence was getting better, so I kept on shooting. We've got to keep on going. We've been winning a lot on the road, so when we play Syracuse we've got to stick to our game plan, play defense and share the ball. If we do that we can come up with another W."

Jordan Miller leads UM comeback as Hurricanes rally from down 18 to beat Syracuse 75-72

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 5, 2022

It was senior day at the Carrier Dome Saturday, and the Miami Hurricanes spoiled the party and broke Syracuse hearts for a second time this season, rallying from 18 points down to defeat the Orange 75-72.

UM was behind by seven with just over a minute to go and scored the final 10 points of the game on heady plays by Kam McGusty, Jordan Miller and Charlie Moore.

Miller, a transfer from George Mason, had his best game in a Miami uniform with 25 points on 10-of-13 shooting with 13 rebounds, two steals and a block.

The opportunistic junior took over in the final minute. He grabbed an offensive rebound off a Moore missed free throw, raced up the court and scored on a bank shot to push UM ahead 73-72 with 13 seconds to go. He then grabbed a defensive rebound off a Syracuse missed jumper, got fouled and made a pair of free throws to seal the win.

"Jordan Miller was sensational from start to finish," UM coach Jim Larranaga said. "Jordan was around the basket, finishing so many plays, including the game-winning offensive rebound off the missed free throw and then banking in the bucket. It was an unbelievable play. We showed some resiliency like we have all season long."

Larranaga said Miller is the team's best offensive rebounder.

"It's a skill that I don't know how he developed it, but not only can he get the offensive rebound, he can tip them in, has a great assortment of layups and touch shots and for him to get that one at the end was really spectacular."

Miller said he takes pride in his rebounding.

"It doesn't take skill, it's just a matter of how badly you want the ball," Miller said. "I wanted to win this game so bad. We always find a way to get it done. We were down but nobody hung their head. We had been there before and we knew we had plenty of time."

McGusty scored 19 points, Isaiah Wong had 15 and point guard Moore, whose steal in the final minute was crucial, had 11 points with eight assists and just one turnover.

Miami had already clinched a double-bye in next week's ACC tournament and ends the regular season with a 22-9 record and was 14-6 in the conference. The Hurricanes were 10-2 on the road, one of the only teams in the nation with 10 road victories. Syracuse is 15-16 and 9-11.

The storyline of UM's comeback was almost identical to the last the teams played in early January.

Syracuse's high-octane offense, led by coach Jim Boeheim's sons Buddy and Jimmy, kicked in early and the Orange opened an 18-point lead -- the same exact gap they had on Jan. 5. UM answered with a 16-2 run to close to within four, and the Hurricanes hung around and kept chipping away.

Buddy Boeheim, the ACC's leading scorer, led Syracuse with 30 points and his brother had 14.

"Syracuse played a terrific first half, we were a little bit passive and indecisive," Larranaga said. "We started playing much better defense in the second half, pressuring the ball and getting the game to a much faster pace, which favored us."

The Hurricanes will open the ACC tournament on March 10 in Brooklyn, New York, as the No. 4 seed and will play in the 2:30 p.m. quarter-final.

"The marathon is now over, and now the sprints begin," Larranaga said. "Every game is one and done."

Jordan Miller's 25 and 13 lifts Hurricanes to comeback win at Syracuse

By Christopher Stock
InsidetheU
March 5, 2022

Down by 18, no problem.

The Miami Hurricanes faced an 18-point deficit for the second time against Syracuse and both times came away victorious.

Jordan Miller scored 25 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to help lift the Hurricanes to a 75-72 win at Syracuse in the regular season finale on Saturday.

"This is a big win," Miller said. "Winning at Syracuse, they're a really good team, and it says a lot about our team."

Miami (22-9, 14-6 ACC) closed the game on a 10-0 run and will receive a double-bye in the ACC Tournament before beginning play in the quarterfinals on March 10. Miami will be the 3-seed if North Carolina beats Duke later on Saturday. Otherwise, they will be the 4-seed.

"The marathon is now over," head coach Jim Larranaga said. "Now the sprints begin. Every game is one-and-done. If you win you move on. If you survive, you advance."

Kameron McGusty added 19 points and Isaiah Wong chipped in 15 as the Hurricanes shot 63.3 percent (19 of 30) in the second half after shooting 38.5 (10 of 26) in the first half.

"It was a great come-from-behind victory," Larranaga said. "Jordan Miller was sensational from start to finish. We showed some resiliency like we have all season long."

Syracuse (15-16, 9-11) lost its fourth straight despite 30 points, 18 in the first half, from Buddy Boeheim.

The Orange appeared in control after Joe Girard drilled a 3 from the top, Wong missed a 3 and Boeheim got a bucket to drop for a 70-60 lead with 2:29 left.

However, the Hurricanes stayed close as Charlie Moore forced a jump ball on a press, giving Miami the ball back and McGusty hit a shot to pull within 72-69 with 46 seconds left.

A turnover by Girard gave Miami the ball back. Moore missed a 28-footer, but Miller tipped in a bucket to cut the deficit to 72-71 with 25 seconds left.

Moore stole the ball from Swider at half-court and was fouled with 14.5 seconds left. He

missed the front end of a one-and-one, but Miller got the board and the put-back for a 73-72 lead.

Miller also got a defensive rebound on a miss by Girard and calmly hit a pair of free throws for a 75-72 lead with 3 seconds left. Jimmy Boeheim missed a corner 3 to end it.

"Rebounds is something I take pride in," Miller said. "It's something that does not take skill. It's just how bad do you want the ball. I wanted to win this game so bad. I'm just glad we got it done, we always find a way to get it done and we got it done today."

Miami fell behind by as many as 14 in the first half and trailed 37-26 at the break, making just 1 of 11 from 3, and was down 18 early in the second half.

"There was a lot of positive vibes coming out of the locker room," Miller said.

The Hurricanes also overcame an 18-point deficit in an 88-87 win over Syracuse on Jan. 5.

NCAA TOURNAMENT PROJECTIONS

Miami is poised to make its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2018 as the bracketology projections before the game had Miami as a 9-seed (ESPN), 11-seed (CBSSports) and 8-seed (EvanMiya.com).

Miami will play in the quarterfinals of the ACC Tournament in Brooklyn, N.Y. on March 10.

MBB Shocks Syracuse, 75-72, After Trailing by 18 in Second Half

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 5, 2022

The University of Miami men's basketball team ended its 2021-22 regular season in scintillating fashion Saturday afternoon, storming back from an 18-point second-half deficit to stun Syracuse, 75-72, at the Carrier Dome.

Miami (22-9, 14-6 ACC) trailed by 10 with under three minutes left and by seven with just 70 ticks to go, but closed the game on a 10-0 run in the final minute to silence the 23,108 in attendance.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller scored a season-high-tying 25 points and grabbed a season-best 13 rebounds to record his first double-double as a Hurricane. He also scored the final six points of the afternoon in the last 25 seconds.

"We've shown the ability to continue to play the game and not the score. I think a lot of players and teams look at the score," Miami head coach Jim Larranaga said. "If they are ahead, they think they've already won. If they are behind, they think they've already lost. This team has really shown the resiliency and relentlessness to keep playing no matter what the score is and we did that today. We have done that throughout the season. Whether we are ahead or behind, we kept playing hard."

After the Hurricanes scored the first five points, Syracuse (15-16, 9-11 ACC) answered with 11 in a row in just 87 seconds. It eventually upped the run to 15-2, taking an eight-point lead, 15-7, with 13:43 on the clock.

The Orange took a 14-point edge, 37-23, with 56 seconds left in the half and went on to take an 11-point cushion, 37-26, into the locker room behind 18 points from senior guard Buddy Boeheim.

Syracuse made four of its first five 3-pointers and shot 6-of-12 (50.0 percent) from deep, as well as 9-of-9 (100 percent) at the line, in the first half. Meanwhile, Miami went just 1-of-11 (9.1 percent) and 5-of-7 (71.4 percent), respectively, at the other end. Both teams posted sub-40 percent clips from the floor.

The Orange scored the first seven points after the break, grabbing a game-best 18-point edge, 44-26, with 17:32 remaining. Miami, though, responded with a 13-0 burst in just 2:45, shooting 5-of-6 from the floor and 2-of-2 at the line, to make it a five-point game, 44-39, with 14:43 on the clock.

The spurt reached 20-5, as the Hurricanes closed the margin to three, 49-46, with 10:42 left. The Orange missed 14 of 15 field-goal attempts after starting the half 3-of-5, but then made a 3-pointer to go up by eight, 56-48, with 9:12 to go. That started a stretch of back-to-back-to-back long-range makes, pushing the advantage back to 10, 62-52, with 7:10 left.

Six straight points by Miami, including an alley-oop dunk by third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, sliced the deficit back down to four, 62-58, with 4:34 to go. The margin then grew back to 10, 70-60, with 2:29 on the clock.

After five consecutive points by the Hurricanes, including a 3-pointer by sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore following the team's 2-of-16 start from deep, sliced the margin in half, Boeheim hit two free throws to make it a seven-point game, 72-65, with just 1:10 left. From there, Miami took over.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty hit a jump-shot with exactly 1:00 left to begin the late comeback, after which Moore forced a back-court turnover and McGusty then hit another jump-shot. That made it 72-69 with 46 ticks left.

Moore then forced yet another turnover and missed a 3-pointer, but Miller tipped it in with 25 seconds to go, as Miami pulled within one. Moore then came away with a steal and got fouled, heading to the line for a one-and-one with 14.5 seconds remaining.

Although the Chicago native missed the front end, Miller tipped in the miss with 12.8 seconds on the clock to give Miami its first lead since it was 5-3. Junior guard Joseph Girard III missed a shot at the other end, Miller grabbed the rebound and then calmly hit two free throws with 3.9 ticks left. Graduate student forward Jimmy Boeheim III's 3-pointer at the other end then sailed off the mark and the Hurricanes poured onto the court in raucous celebration.

"I think things happen for a reason. The guys had a lot of energy. We changed our defense from man-to-man to a zone trap and that gave us a chance to get a steal or turnover," Larranaga said of the final minute. "The two that were critical was Charlie Moore forcing that jump-ball and the Syracuse player dribbling off his knee. So, we had two turnovers, which gives you a chance because you don't have to foul—I didn't want to foul them since they are great free-throw shooters—and they didn't get a shot because they are great shot-makers."

"The two turnovers led to baskets, which immediately cut into the lead," he continued. "Guys have to make shots and big plays. Kam McGusty made several foul-line jumpers, but the player of the game was Jordan Miller, that offensive rebound basket and his two free throws to follow."

Miller had his best performance as a Hurricane, matching the season-best point total he set on Dec. 29, 2021, versus NC State. His 10 made field goals tied a career high, equaling a tally he recorded during his George Mason tenure.

The Middleburg, Va., native, who went 5-of-5 at the stripe, pulled down two more rebounds than he had in any prior contest this year, as well as added an assist, two steals and a blocked shot.

In the second half alone, Miller logged a 16-point, 10-rebound double-double, shooting 6-of-8 from the field and making all four of his free throws.

"He had a great afternoon," Larranaga said. "One of the things about the zone is if you are behind the zone hiding on that baseline, you get some opportunities to get to the offensive boards. He is the best offensive rebounder we have and maybe the best offensive rebounder we've had [in my tenure] at Miami."

McGusty finished with 19 points to enter the top 30 on Miami's all-time scoring list. The Katy, Texas, native shot 8-of-16 from the floor to finish ACC action with 118 makes, a new program record. Fifteen of his points came on 7-of-10 shooting in the second half.

Wong tallied 15 points, while Moore added 11 to go along with a game-best eight assists, one shy of his season high.

Buddy Boeheim poured in 30 points in his final home game, shooting 8-of-17 from the floor, 5-of-9 beyond the arc and a perfect 9-of-9 from the line. His 30 points marked the highest total by a Miami foe this season.

Girard, who had the previous top total against Miami with 26 in the teams' Jan. 5 meeting in Coral Gables, Fla., scored 17 points, but the Hurricanes held him to a 4-of-14 clip from the floor. Jimmy Boeheim added 14 points, but did so on just 4-of-16 shooting. No other Syracuse player eclipsed six points.

Miami limited the Orange to just 33.3 percent shooting (20-of-60) on the day, tying its best defensive performance of the season. At the other end, it shot 51.8 percent (23-of-56) from the floor, as it improved to 10-2 in true road games this season.

Syracuse went 21-of-23 (91.3 percent) at the line and made its first 12 attempts, as well as shot 11-of-24 (45.8 percent) from 3-point range. Miami logged 14-of-18 (77.8 percent) and 3-of-18 (16.7 percent) ledgers at the other end, but recorded a 42-16 edge in paint points.

Up next for the Hurricanes is the start of postseason play, as Miami travels to the ACC Tournament at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., where it will play at a to-be-determined time versus a to-be-determined foe as either the third or fourth seed.

MIAMI HURRICANES POSTGAME NOTES

—The Hurricanes moved to 11-20 all-time against Syracuse, including 4-10 on the road and 6-6 in Larranaga's tenure.

—Larranaga, who entered the game with the 10th-most victories of any active Division I coach, is now 692-473 in 38 years as a head coach, including 222-139 in 11 seasons at Miami.

—With 222 victories as an ACC head coach, Larranaga tied Carl Tracy for No. 13 all-time in conference history.

—For the 22nd time this season, Miami used a starting lineup of McGusty, J. Miller, Moore, Wong and sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

—McGusty now has 1,156 points in his Miami career, passing Ja'Quan Newton (2014-18) and tying Kevin Presto (1985-89) for the No. 30 spot on the program's all-time list.

—With 118 made field goals in ACC play this year, McGusty set the program ACC-only single-season record, which was previously 113 by both Jack McClinton (2008-09) and Guillermo Diaz (2004-05).

—McGusty recorded 335 points in league action this year, passing Wong's mark last season to end up third on Miami's ACC-only single-season leaderboard.

—With 147 free-throw attempts in conference play in his career, McGusty entered the top 10 on Miami's ACC-only all-time leaderboard, matching Anthony Lawrence (2015-19) for the No. 10 spot.

—McGusty finished with an 81.6 percent clip (120-147) from the line in conference play in his career, placing sixth on the program's all-time ACC-only list.

—McGusty played 689 minutes in ACC action in 2021-22, passing Wong's mark a season ago to finish second on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard, behind only DJ Vasiljevic's 693 mark in 2019-20.

—Wong tallied 306 points in conference play this season to finish fifth on Miami's ACC-only single-season list, passing Guillermo Diaz (2005-06) and Jack McClinton (2007-08) and logging the fifth 300-point occurrence, including his second.

—Wong played 679 minutes in league action this year, passing Shane Larkin (2012-13), Davon Reed (2016-17) and his

own ledger in 2021-22 to check in at third on Miami's ACC-only single-season leaderboard.

—Moore logged 100 made field goals in ACC play in 2021-22, surpassing Jack McClinton (2007-08), Kenny Kadij (2012-13) and Robert Hile (2005-06) to enter the top 10 on the program's ACC-only single-season list, alongside Rion Brown (2013-14) and Guillermo Diaz (2005-06) in co-sixth place, with the eighth triple-digit mark.

—J. Miller played 618 minutes in ACC action this season, scoring from co-No. 15 up to ninth on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard after passing six individuals.

—J. Miller logged 111 rebounds in ACC competition this year and, after passing five-plus individuals, finished No. 10 on the program's ACC-only single-season leaderboard.

—J. Miller shot 60.5 percent (95-of-157) in league play this season to place second on the program's ACC-only single-season list, trailing only Ebuka Izundu's 63.0 clip (80-of-127) in 2018-19 and becoming the second Hurricane to eclipse 60.0 percent.

—Waardenburg finished the ACC slate shooting 53.9 percent (52-of-115) from the floor, good for the eighth-best ACC-only single-season mark in program history.

—With a 45.6 3-point percentage (26-of-57) in ACC play this season, Waardenburg placed third on Miami's ACC-only single-season list and became the third individual to top 45.0 percent.

—Waardenburg shot 39.6 percent (59-of-149) in league competition in his career, good for the fourth-best mark on the Hurricanes' ACC-only career leaderboard.

—The Hurricanes' 14 ACC victories are the second-most in program history, trailing only the 15 they recorded in 2012-13.

—Miami has 22 wins in a season for the 12th time in program history, including the fifth in Larranaga's 11-year tenure.

—This is the first time Miami has swept three ACC teams (Georgia Tech, Syracuse and Wake Forest) in regular season play since 2012-13 when it went 2-0 against five programs (Boston College, Clemson, Florida State, North Carolina and Virginia Tech).

—The Hurricanes now have two wins this season in games they trailed by 18 points, both against Syracuse, as they rallied from an equal deficit on 1/5/22.

—According to KenPom, Miami and Denver are the only teams with multiple wins this season in games they trailed by 18-plus points, with Miami the lone team to log two such victories in regulation.

—Miami also now owns five wins when trailing by 13-plus points and eight when down by eight-plus points.

—The Hurricanes went 6-3 in ACC play this season when trailing at halftime.

—Miami earned its 15th win of Larranaga's tenure when trailing with 2:00 left, including its 10th such victory in ACC play.

—The Hurricanes moved to 21-3 this season when scoring 65-plus points, including 19-3 when scoring 70-plus.

—Miami's win probability, according to KenPom, dropped to as small as 1.5 percent, which the website ranks as the 25th-lowest mark of any team in a victory this season, including third among Power Five conference contests.

—B. Boeheim's 18 first-half points tied for the second-most in a frame by a Miami opponent this season, matching Florida A&M's DJ Jones' mark in the second half on 11/21/21 and trailing just the 19 by Boston College's Makai Ashton-Langford in the second frame on 3/2/22.

—The last player to score 30-plus points against the Hurricanes was North Carolina's Coby White, who did so on 2/9/19 in a game that went to overtime in Chapel Hill, N.C.

—Prior to Saturday, the lowest field-goal percentage by a Miami foe this season was 33.6 by North Carolina, when it shot 22-of-65 on 1/18/22.

—The Orange shot 28.1 percent (9-of-32) in the second half, the lowest mark in the second frame by any Hurricane opponent this year, as the prior mark was 29.0 percent by Fordham on 12/12/21 when it went 9-to-31 at the Barclays Center.

—The Hurricanes shot 63.3 percent (19-of-30) in the second half, their first time reaching 60 percent in a frame since going 16-of-25 (64.0 percent) after the break against Wake Forest on 1/1/22.

—The two teams combined for just three bench points, as Miami had two and Syracuse had one.

—Miami led for just 91 seconds of action, its lowest total in a victory this season.

—J. Miller, who surpassed 450 made field goals as a collegian, notched his eighth 20-point performance, including his second in 2021-22.

—J. Miller, who set a season high in made free throws and tied his season best in attempts, tallied double-digit points for the 63rd time, including the 13th this season.

—J. Miller registered double-figure rebounds for the 11th time, including the second this year.

—J. Miller posted his eighth double-double, including the first on the road by a Miami player in 2021-22 and the first by a Hurricane other than McGusty in 2021-22.

—The last time J. Miller made 10 field goals in a game was on 11/28/20 versus Howard, early in his junior season with the Patriots.

—Wong, who reached 250 made free throws as a Hurricane, scored in double figures for the 60th time, including the 27th this season.

—Wong logged multiple blocks for the second time in his career, as he also did so on 2/1/21 versus Duke.

—Moore scored in double figures for the 78th time, including the 21st this year.

—Moore posted his 50th five-assist showing, including his 13th in 2021-22.

—McGusty totaled double digits in the scoring column for the 52nd time, including the 64th at Miami and 29th in 31 regular season games this year

Three MBB Players Earn All-ACC Distinction

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 7, 2022

Three members of the University of Miami men's basketball team garnered All-ACC accolades, as announced Monday morning by the conference office.

Kameron McGusty received First Team All-ACC plaudits, while Isaiah Wong earned Third Team All-ACC distinction. Charlie Moore picked up both Honorable Mention All-ACC and ACC All-Defensive Team recognition.

"I am thrilled for Kam, Isaiah and Charlie," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "All three of them had truly excellent seasons and were key factors in the overall success of our team. They're each very deserving of these honors and I'm glad people around the league are aware of what they have accomplished."

A sixth-year redshirt senior guard, McGusty is the third First Team All-ACC designee in program history, joining Jack McClinton (2007-08 and 2008-09) and Shane Larkin (2012-13). He is the fifth Hurricane, regardless of league, to earn first-team status in any conference, as Tim James (1997-98 and 1998-99) and Johnny Hemsley (1998-99) did so when Miami was in the BIG EAST.

The Katy, Texas, native finished the regular season third in the ACC in steals (1.8), co-third in made free throws (116), fourth in scoring (17.5), fifth in free-throw percentage (82.9), co-sixth in 20-point games (11), co-seventh in made field goals (186), No. 11 in field-goal percentage (47.4) and tied for No. 12 in double-doubles (five).

A third-year sophomore guard, Wong picked up third-team accolades for the second year in a row, making him the fourth player in program history to notch first-, second- or third-team honors multiple times. He joins McClinton (2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09), Guillermo Diaz (2004-05 and 2005-06) and Kenny Kadji (2011-12 and 2012-13) on that elite list.

The Piscataway, N.J., native placed No. 10 in the ACC in scoring (15.5), No. 10 in made field goals (176), tied for No. 10 in 20-point outing (eight), No. 12 in free-throw percentage (73.9) and No. 13 in field-goal percentage (46.3) during the regular season. He also averaged 4.3 rebounds and 1.9 assists per game.

A sixth-year redshirt senior guard in his first season at The U, Moore is the seventh Hurricane to record ACC All-Defensive Team recognition, joining Anthony King (2004-05), Julian Gamble (2012-13), Shane Larkin (2012-13), Durand Scott (2012-13), Tonye Jekiri (2014-15 and 2015-16) and Davon Reed (2016-17). This is the fifth time a Miami player made the ACC All-Defensive Team and received Honorable Mention status or above.

Hailing from Chicago, Moore capped the regular season second in the ACC in steals (2.0), fourth in assists (4.3) and sixth in assist-to-turnover ratio (2.13). His 63 steals on the season are co-fifth-most in school history. In addition, Moore's 44 steals and 98 assists in ACC play both set new program records.

McGusty finished fourth in All-ACC balloting with 315 of a possible 390 points, while Wong tied for No. 12 with 119 points and Moore placed No. 19 with 42 points. In addition, Moore earned 45 of a possible 78 points in All-ACC Defensive Team voting, good for fourth-most.

Third-year sophomore forward Anthony Walker tied for second place with six votes for ACC Sixth Man of the Year, while Larrañaga placed fourth in ACC Coach of the Year balloting with three votes. Moore finished fifth for ACC Defensive Player of the Year with two votes.

This is the fourth time three Hurricanes have received first-team, second-team, third-team or honorable mention plaudits in the same year, alongside the 2012-13, 2014-15 and 2015-16 campaigns. In addition, it is the fourth time Miami totaled four-plus honors, joining the same three seasons.

Fourth-seeded Miami begins ACC Tournament play Thursday at 2:30 p.m. in the quarterfinals against a to-be-determined opponent, live on ESPN2 from the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

2021-22 ACC Award Winners

Player of Year: Alondes Williams, Wake Forest

Rookie of Year: Paolo Banchemo, Duke

Coach of Year: Steve Forbes, Wake Forest

Defensive Player of Year: Mark Williams, Duke

Most Improved Player: Dereon Seabron, NC State

Sixth Man of Year: Matthew Cleveland, Florida State

2021-22 All-ACC Team

First Team

Armando Bacot, North Carolina, 380

Alondes Williams, Wake Forest, 373

Paolo Banchemo, Duke, 372

Kameron McGusty, Miami, 315

Buddy Boehem, Syracuse, 241

Second Team

Keve Aluma, Virginia Tech, 192

Dereon Seabron, NC State, 166

Wendell Moore Jr., Duke, 161

Blake Wesley, Notre Dame, 148

Jake LaRavia, Wake Forest, 147

Third Team

Dane Goodwin, Notre Dame, 131

Mark Williams, Duke, 119

Isaiah Wong, Miami, 119

Jayden Gardner, Virginia, 106

Michael Devoe, Georgia Tech, 105

Honorable Mention

Caleb Love, North Carolina, 84

PJ Hall, Clemson, 72

John Hugley, Pitt, 54

Charlie Moore, Miami, 42

Brady Manek, North Carolina, 38

Kihei Clark, Virginia, 22

AJ Griffin, Duke, 22

Paul Atkinson Jr., Notre Dame, 20

Terquavion Smith, NC State, 15

Reece Beekman, Virginia, 15

Note: All-ACC Team points are determined on a 5-3-1 system (five points for first team, three points for second team, one point for third team).

ACC Player of the Year

Alondes Williams, Wake Forest, 41 votes

Armando Bacot, North Carolina, 31

Paolo Banchemo, Duke, 6

ACC Freshman of the Year

Paolo Banchemo, Duke, 72 votes

Blake Wesley, Notre Dame, 4

Terquavion Smith, NC State, 1

Trevor Keels, Duke, 1

ACC Defensive Player of the Year

Mark Williams, Duke, 46 votes

Reece Beekman, Virginia, 20

Leaky Black, North Carolina, 7

Wendell Moore Jr., Duke, 3

Charlie Moore, Miami, 2

ACC Most Improved Player

Dereon Seabron, NC State, 33 votes

PJ Hall, Clemson, 28

Mark Williams, Duke, 4

John Hugley, Pitt, 4

Dane Goodwin, Notre Dame, 3

Jesse Edwards, Syracuse, 2

Wendell Moore Jr., Duke, 2

James Kamik, Boston College, 1

RJ Davis, North Carolina, 1

ACC Sixth Man of the Year

Matthew Cleveland, Florida State, 52 votes

El Ellis, Louisville, 6

Anthony Walker, Miami, 6

Khadim Sy, Wake Forest, 6

Kadin Shedrick, Virginia, 5

Quinten Post, Boston College, 2

Cam Hayes, NC State, 1

ACC Coach of the Year

Steve Forbes, Wake Forest, 40 votes

Mike Krzyzewski, Duke, 19

Mike Brey, Notre Dame, 13

Jim Larrañaga, Miami, 3

Mike Young, Virginia Tech, 1

Hubert Davis, North Carolina, 1

Tony Bennett, Virginia, 1

All-ACC Defensive Team

Mark Williams, Duke, 77 votes

Reece Beekman, Virginia, 69

Leaky Black, North Carolina, 55

Charlie Moore, Miami, 45

Wendell Moore Jr., Duke, 33

All-Rookie Team

Paolo Banchemo, Duke, 77 votes

Terquavion Smith, NC State, 73

Blake Wesley, Notre Dame, 72

AJ Griffin, Duke, 66

Trevor Keels, Duke, 50

McGusty, Jean-Baptiste shining examples of what is still right with college basketball |

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 8, 2022

How heartening it is, as we plunge into March Madness, to know there are still Kameron McGustys and David Jean-Baptistes left in college basketball.

In the age of kids bolting to the NBA before they know their way around their college campus, McGusty is having his best season as a Miami Hurricane at age 24 and Jean-Baptiste, a Tennessee-Chattanooga graduate student from Miami Norland High, is making ESPN highlights knocking down NCAA Tournament-bid-winning buzzer-beaters at age 23.

They call these veteran sixth-year players "Super Seniors," beneficiaries of the optional extra year of eligibility the NCAA allowed to make up for the COVID-interrupted 2020-21 season.

Super, indeed. That is the perfect moniker for players who delight in the college game, who already earned their diplomas but felt five years wasn't enough time to learn everything they could from their coaches and professors.

In both cases, their patience, hard work and persistence has been rewarded.

McGusty, who flirted with the NBA Draft last spring but wisely opted to return to UM, on Monday was named to the All-ACC first team, just the third Hurricane in program history to earn that honor following Jack McClinton and Shane Larkin. His last season at Miami has been his best, with career-high stats in points per game (17.5), rebounds (4.8), and field-goal percentage (47.4).

Most important to him, the team is having its best season since he arrived as a transfer from Oklahoma in 2018.

As the Hurricanes headed to Brooklyn, New York, on Tuesday with a 22-9 record and a double bye into the quarterfinals of the ACC tournament, McGusty told the Herald that his two greatest decisions in life were transferring to Miami and returning to school this year.

His says he has transformed on and off the court due to habits coach Jim Larranaga has instilled: proper rest, drinking a gallon of water a day, meditating and visualizing goals every day and focusing on positive thoughts.

"All of those things ended up adding up for me and those are the types of things Coach L always teaches," he said. "He's more than just a basket-

ball coach. He's a life coach."

Jean-Baptiste is another shining example of what is still good about college athletics. The graduate student received the prestigious Chattanooga's Blue Award, given to a student who exemplifies excellence in academics, leadership, service and dedication to the school. He is the first student-athlete to win the honor.

On the court, the Miami native has improved each season. He made 35 three-point shots as a freshman, 50 as a sophomore, 54 as a junior, 59 as a senior and 89 (!!) as a Super Senior. His most recent, at the end of Monday night's Southern Conference championship game, was the most memorable. It made ESPN "SportsCenter" and went viral on Twitter.

With 4.3 seconds remaining in overtime, Chattanooga inbounded the ball under its basket trailing Furman 63-61. Jean-Baptiste collected the inbound pass, dribbled the ball over halfcourt and was swarmed by three Furman defenders.

With the clock winding down, he leaped up from beyond the three-point arc and launched the game winner at buzzer to earn the Mocs an NCAA Tournament bid.

If you haven't seen the shot, go look for a replay right now. Making the shot even sweeter is knowing that it came from a sixth-year senior for whom wearing his college jersey means the world.

Both McGusty and Jean-Baptiste credit their Caribbean roots for their resiliency. McGusty's mother and biggest inspiration, Julie Winn, is from Trinidad and Tobago. His father's family is from Guyana. His favorite restaurant in South Florida is Caribbean Delite in Palmetto Bay, where he finds authentic curry and roti the way his grandmother and great-grandmother made it.

Jean-Baptiste is of Haitian heritage, carries a backpack with a Haitian flag and takes every opportunity he can to express pride in his family background.

This is a young man who commuted an hour by Tri-Rail to high school because he was determined to keep playing for Norland after he moved to Pompano Beach. To be at school by 7:15 a.m. he woke up at 4:30 a.m., took the Tri-Rail to the Golden Glades station and would then walk or take a bus to school. He would stay at school until well into the night, after basketball practice, and take buses and trains home.

"If you look at the Haitian flag, the palm trees and just how still they are, I just think no matter

what storm that's affecting you, no matter what's happening around you, still unfazed," Jean-Baptiste told the Chattanooga Times Free Press in a recent interview. "Still being us, still being resilient. I just think the people of the Haitian culture, how resilient they are, it translates to the game of basketball."

McGusty was a talented football player and highly coveted basketball recruit coming out of Sunrise Christian Academy. He chose Oklahoma over Florida, Texas, Indiana, and Louisville, among others. He was one of the Sooners' top freshmen since Blake Griffin and was named to the Big 12 All-Newcomer team. But his role changed as a sophomore when Trae Young arrived, and McGusty's numbers dropped.

"I needed a change of scenery, needed to fall in love with the game again," he said. He was intrigued by UM because of the success Big 12 transfers Sheldon McClellan and Angel Rodriguez had with the Hurricanes. He also liked that Larranaga is known for getting guards to the NBA.

Last Spring, McGusty tested the NBA waters. He entered his name in the draft, but scouts told him he would be better off returning to UM for a final season, fine-tuning his game and leading the team to a winning season. They told him he could be like Chris Duarte, who toiled at Northwest Florida Junior College and Oregon before becoming the Indiana Pacers' 2021 NBA first-round pick.

McGusty took the advice to heart. So far, so good. He is a big reason the Canes are having their best season since 2017, and he will enter the NBA Draft better prepared than he was a year ago.

Jean-Baptiste said he learned a lot on those train rides to Norland, lessons he still carries today.

"The thing about those train experiences was I learned a lot... I had times where I'm waiting, and I'm just talking to people about life. I'm 16, 17 years old, and I'm talking to 30-year-olds about their outlook on life and learning from them."

And he and McGusty are still learning, taking full advantage of everything a college scholarship has to offer. Sure, Name, Image and Likeness deals are nice. But the life lessons these two athletes have gained the past six years are priceless. If only more college athletes had the same wisdom and patience.

McGusty Tabbed an AP First Team All-ACC Honoree

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 8, 2022

Kameron McGusty of the University of Miami men's basketball team earned Associated Press First Team All-ACC distinction, as announced Tuesday afternoon.

It is the second first-team plaudit for McGusty in as many days, as he also garnered the same award Monday morning in the official ACC balloting.

The Associated Press honors are given out by a voting panel that consists of 15 journalists covering the ACC regional footprint.

McGusty concluded the regular season third in the ACC in steals (1.8), co-third in made free throws (116), fourth in scoring (17.5), fifth in free-throw percentage (82.9), co-sixth in 20-point games (11), co-seventh in made field goals (186), No. 11 in field-goal percentage (47.4) and tied for No. 12 in double-doubles (five).

A native of Katy, Texas, McGusty scored in double figures in 29 of 31 games during the regular season, including the final 26. He reached 15-plus in 22 outings and scored 27-plus on three occasions.

McGusty is the one of just three Division I players, including the only one from a Power Five league, averaging 17-plus point while shooting at least 47 percent from the field, 36 percent beyond the arc and 82 percent at the line.

The entire list of Associated Press All-ACC designees can be found [HERE](#).

Fourth-seeded Miami opens ACC Tournament action Thursday at 2:30 p.m. in the quarter-finals versus a to-be-determined opponent, live on ESPN2 from the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

2021-22 Associated Press ACC Award
Winners

Player of Year: Alondes Williams, Wake Forest
Newcomer of Year: Paolo Banchemo, Duke
Coach of Year: Steve Forbes, Wake Forest

First Team
Alondes Williams, Wake Forest (unanimous)
Armando Bacot, North Carolina (unanimous)
Paolo Banchemo, Duke
Kameron McGusty, Miami
Buddy Boeheim, Syracuse

Second Team
Wendell Moore Jr., Duke
Dereon Seabron, NC State
Mark Williams, Duke
Jayden Gardner, Virginia
Keve Aluma, Virginia Tech

2021-22 Associated Press All-ACC Team

Ready for the Sprint

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 8, 2022

For months, Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga has stressed that the ACC regular season slate is a marathon.

Now, that marathon is over. The Hurricanes finished it with a 14-6 record, good for the fourth-best mark of any team.

Up next is a different type of a race, a much shorter one: the ACC Tournament.

"The regular season is a marathon because it has 20 games. Each of them has equal value in terms of trying to win your league," Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga said. "So, whether you finish, like Duke did, 16-4 and in first place, it doesn't matter who you beat [because] ... as long as you've got the best record in the league, you've won the marathon. That's different when you get to the postseason because the postseason is a sprint. You're in a heat. You win the heat, you move on to the next heat until you can win the championship. So, it's survive and advance, win and move on, lose and go home. And that's what it is when you're in a sprint; you either win your heat or you're out."

Miami (22-9, 14-6) will begin its sprint at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., a bit later than most of the league, as the Hurricanes earned a double-bye in the ACC Tournament as the fourth seed. Thus, they will not play until Thursday.

Meanwhile, six teams begin action on Tuesday and three of them advance to Wednesday, when another five teams start their sprint.

This is the fourth time in the last 10 years Miami has garnered a double-bye in ACC Tournament play. Thus, Larrañaga assuredly knows the value in the extra days off.

"You have a little more time to rest and prepare your team for a one-and-done game," the two-time ACC Coach of the Year said. "Whereas, when you have to get there on Monday [if you are playing] on Tuesday, you've got very little time to actually rest and recover from the regular season. For me, that recovery period is very, very important."

Miami has found ample success in the ACC Tournament during Larrañaga's first 10 seasons, posting an 11-9 mark. That is the co-fourth-highest total of any team in the conference since the 2012 event.

Included in that ledger is, of course, the Hurricanes run to the 2013 ACC Tournament crown, a first in program history. Miami has reached at least the quarterfinals all but two times during his tenure and last year did so as the No. 13 seed, the first such team ever to do so.

It is clear Larrañaga knows what it takes to excel on this stage and he intends to share that with his players in advance of the games this week.

"Well, the first thing is I'm going to tell my team is, 'Everybody you play is a really good team.' It's because, in these situations, you're not playing the team you played during the regular season," Larrañaga said. "Everybody, by now, has figured out their best way of playing; their players are going to be at their best. Nobody's got the home-court advantage; it's going to be on a neutral site. And so, to even win one game, you have to be at your best in that one game. To win the tourna-

ment, you have to be at your best three, four or five nights in a row. In our case, it would be three nights in a row."

Miami is entering the ACC Tournament coming off an invigorating 75-72 victory in its regular season finale Saturday at Syracuse.

For the second time this year, the Hurricanes stormed back from an 18-point deficit to take down the Orange. This time, they did so on the road after trailing by 10 with 2:20 left and by seven with 1:10 to go.

Fourth-year junior guard Jordan Miller led the way with his first double-double as a Hurricane, tallying a season-high-tying 25 points on 10-of-13 shooting to go along with a season-best 13 rebounds. He scored the final six points of the afternoon over the last 25 seconds.

Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Kameron McGusty, a First Team All-ACC honoree, tallied 19 points, while third-year sophomore guard Isaiah Wong, a Third Team All-ACC designee, posted 15. Sixth-year redshirt senior guard Charlie Moore, an Honorable Mention All-ACC pick and an ACC All-Defensive Team selection, chipped in 11 points and forced three turnovers in the final minute.

Despite the thrill of that win, it will not be a factor for Miami as it heads back to the Empire State to begin postseason action.

"No, it's not something we dwell on," Larrañaga shared. "It's always about preparing for the next opponent. Especially when it comes to Syracuse; nobody plays the 2-3 zone for 40 minutes like Jim Boeheim's teams do."

While Syracuse is not a possible opponent for Miami in its opening game, two other teams it defeated in the regular season are: fifth-seeded Wake Forest and No. 13-seeded Boston College.

Initially, the Hurricanes actually had three possible foes, prior to the Eagles' 66-46 victory over No. 12-seeded Pittsburgh in the opening round.

The opponent, however, is not a focus for Miami right now anyway. Instead, the team's attention is internal.

"We're preparing to be the best that we can be. We're trying to be the best that we can be, no matter who we play because even though whomever we play [we have already faced before], they're going to be a very different team," Larrañaga said. "It's just the way it is. It's not that their style is going to change. It's their level of confidence that comes from knowing everybody is 0-0 going into this tournament. You're not looking at your record and saying, 'Oh, we're not very good because we had a losing record' or saying, 'We didn't have a great season.' No, [you look at it like], 'This is a great opportunity for us to get on a roll and try to win our way into the NCAA Tournament by winning the ACC.'"

Wake Forest is 23-8 (13-7 ACC) on the season and is led by graduate student guard Alondes Williams. The ACC Player of the Year is averaging 19.3 points and 5.3 assists per game.

Miami is 14-13 all-time versus the Demon Deacons, including 2-0 on a neutral court—both matchups came in the ACC Tournament—and 9-5 in Larrañaga's tenure.

The sides met twice this season, with the Hurricanes taking both matchups. First, without sixth-year redshirt senior forward Sam Waardenburg unavailable due to COVID-19 protocols, Miami logged a 92-84 triumph on Jan. 1. Then, it rallied from a 13-point deficit, including a 10-point

mark in the second half, for a 76-72 road decision on Feb. 12.

"The difference between Wake Forest when we played them twice during the regular season and what they're doing now is they've gone to an oversized lineup, as big a lineup as any college team in the country," Larrañaga said. "They are playing a lot with Alondes Williams, who is 6'5, at the point. And then [they have] guys who are between 6'6 and 6'8 at the two, Jake LaRavia at the three, Khadim Sy at the four and Dallas Walton at the five. That is a humongous lineup, whether it starts [or not]. It doesn't have to necessarily start, but they're playing LaRavia, Sy and Walton a lot together, which is much different than the team that we played a month ago."

Boston College, following its win against the Panthers, is 12-19 (6-14 ACC) on the season. It is paced by graduate student guard Makai Ashton-Langford's 12.0 points and 3.3 assists per outing.

Miami owns a 27-27 all-time ledger against the Eagles, including a 1-2 tally on neutral courts, a 1-1 mark in the ACC Tournament and a 14-3 record under Larrañaga.

The Hurricanes earned an 81-70 road triumph over Boston College last Wednesday, a victory that clinched their double-bye and gave Larrañaga the program's all-time wins record (221).

"They're a team that has terrific athletes at the one, two and three, and then two huge guys at the four and five," Larrañaga shared. "Their big guys can really score the ball and they are very efficient. Their guys have the capability of getting hot. They're a volume team. They don't play slow; they play very aggressively at both ends of the court."

While Coral Gables might be one of the farthest ACC cities from Brooklyn, the New York metro area is home to thousands of Miami alumni.

Larrañaga would like to see the Hurricane faithful in the area head to the Barclays Center and cheer on their team this week.

"We hope that [the Miami fans] in the Northeast will realize that we're playing at the Barclays Center and the ACC Tournament is right in their backyard," he said. "Hopefully all of our alums, friends and fans in New York will come and support the Hurricanes."

The Hurricanes' ACC Tournament opener will be televised live on ESPN2 HERE, with Dan Shulman, Jay Bilas and Holly Rowe on the call. Joe Zagacki will have the radio broadcast on AM 560 Sports WQAM HERE, while Jay Alter, Sean Kelley and Bob Valvano will call the game for ESPN Radio HERE. In addition, live stats can be found HERE.

The winner of Thursday afternoon's game will play Friday at 7 p.m., on ESPN or ESPN2, against either top-seeded and seventh-ranked Duke, eighth-seeded Florida State or ninth-seeded Syracuse in the ACC Tournament semifinals.

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

Larrañaga Receives Two-Year Contract Extension

By Alex Schwartz
MiamiHurricanes.com
March 9, 2022

The University of Miami and head men's basketball coach Jim Larrañaga have agreed to a contract extension, Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich announced Wednesday.

The winningest coach in program history, Larrañaga received an additional two years on his deal, taking it through the 2025-26 campaign.

"I am excited to have Jim continue to lead our men's basketball program," Radakovich said. "He is an outstanding ambassador on and off the court for Miami and for the game of college basketball. We look forward to many more seasons of success with Jim at the helm."

A 38-year coaching veteran, Larrañaga ranks No. 34 all-time among Division I coaches, including No. 10 among active coaches, in victories with a 692-473 ledger. He is a stellar 222-139 in 11 years at Miami and has led the program to unprecedented heights during his illustrious career in Coral Gables.

Over a third of the Hurricanes' 20-win seasons have come under Larrañaga's leadership, as he has directed his team to a seventh such campaign in 2021-22. His tenure also includes all three of Miami's 25-win seasons, two of its three NCAA Sweet 16 berths and a sweep of the 2013 ACC titles.

During his Miami career, Larrañaga owns two ACC Coach of the Year plaudits, two USBWA IV Coach of the Year accolades and one NABC All-District II Coach of the Year distinction. In 2013, he won Naismith, Associated Press, Henry Iba USBWA and Rupp National Coach of the Year recognitions after guiding the Hurricanes to a 29-7 (15-3 ACC) record and the best season in school history.

Larrañaga's 222 wins at Miami place him in a tie for No. 13 on the ACC's all-time leaderboard, while his 105 regular season conference victories also give him the No. 13 spot. He is the only coach in NCAA history to win 100-plus league games at three different schools or in three different conferences.

"I'd like to thank President Frenk and Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich for their belief and trust in me. I'm honored and humbled by the University of Miami's amazing continued support of me, my players and my staff," Larrañaga said. "This extension is truly about all of us associated with the program

and what we have accomplished together. I love working at Miami and this city has truly become home for me and my wife, Liz. I'm incredibly excited to continue coaching here at The U and look forward to leading the program to more memorable moments in the future."

The Hurricanes went 22-9 (14-6 ACC) during the regular season and finished fourth in the conference standings after being picked No. 12 in the ACC preseason poll. This is the eighth time in Larrañaga's 11 years Miami has exceeded league expectations, including the third time by four-plus spots.

In addition to his teams' on-court success, Larrañaga's program has posted a perfect Graduate Success Rate (GSR) each of the past four years. All 28 departing undergraduate seniors who have played for the Hurricanes during the Bronx, N.Y., native's tenure have earned a Miami degree.

Larrañaga and the fourth-seeded Hurricanes begin 2022 postseason play Thursday at 2:30 p.m. against fifth seeded-Wake Forest or No. 13-seeded Boston College in the ACC Tournament quarterfinals, live on ESPN2 from the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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This is what UM coach Jim Larranaga said about his contract extension through 2025-26

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 9, 2022

University of Miami basketball coach Jim Larranaga was in a particularly good mood Wednesday afternoon as he sat in a Manhattan hotel, overlooking the city he grew up in.

On the eve of his resurgent team playing in the ACC tournament quarterfinal, the university announced that Larranaga had agreed to a two-year contract extension through the 2025-26 season.

Larranaga, 72, is the winningest coach in program history.

He told the Herald that he has loved his 11 years at UM, was determined to get the program back to winning after a three-year dip and the extension was the result of long conversations he had with new UM athletic director Dan Radakovich, UM president Julio Frenk and members of the Board of Trustees.

"In recruiting, one of the most consistent questions I get is 'Are you going to be here, or are you going to retire?'" Larranaga said. "My answer was always 'I love Miami. I'm going to be here as long as the university wants me.' When I met with Dan and explained where I stood and how we were getting these questions, he was very comfortable in addressing the uncertainty of how long I would be here."

Larranaga said the stability of the program is critical going forward as he and his staff try to restock the team with new talent with many seniors leaving.

"Now, I can tell those recruits and their families, 'If you come here as a freshman, I will be here for the next four years,'" Larranaga said. "They want to know that I will be there to take care of their sons."

Radakovich said in a statement: "I am excited to have Jim continue to lead our men's basketball program. He is an outstanding ambassador on and off the court for Miami and for the game of college basketball. We look forward to many more seasons of success with Jim at the helm."

A 38-year coaching veteran, Larranaga ranks No. 34 all-time among Division I coaches, including No. 10 among active coaches, in victories with a 692-473 record. He is a 222-139 in 11 years at Miami and has led the Hurricanes to seven 20-win seasons, two Sweet 16s and a sweep of the 2013 ACC titles.

He has won two ACC Coach of the Year awards, two USBWA IV Coach of the Years and one NABC All-District II Coach of the Year distinction. In 2013, he won Naismith, Associated Press, Henry Iba USBWA and Rupp National Coach of the Year recognitions after guiding the Hurricanes to a 29-7 (15-3 ACC) record and the best season in school history.

Larranaga said he and his wife, Liz, feel they found a true home in Coral Gables, and he is eager to continue coaching as peers have either retired or are retiring, such as Duke's Mike Krzyzewski.

"The major factor in me wanting to keep coaching is I am very competitive, and it hurt very, very deeply that we did not have winning seasons these past three years," Larranaga said. The team was plagued with a rash of injuries that often left Larranaga with just six or seven healthy scholarship players.

Also, there was an FBI probe into recruiting that UM was tangentially mentioned in, but nothing came of it and the school's name was redacted from the indictment. Although UM was cleared and the school gave Larranaga a coaching extension at the time to show its support, it hurt two recruiting cycles.

Finally, things turned around this season. The Hurricanes went 22-9 (14-6 ACC) and finished fourth in the conference standings after being picked No. 12 in the ACC preseason poll.

In addition to his teams' on-court success, Larranaga's program has posted a perfect Graduate Success Rate (GSR) each of the past four years.

All 28 departing undergraduate seniors who have played for the Hurricanes during the Bronx, N.Y., native's tenure have earned a Miami degree.

"I'd like to thank President Frenk and Vice President and Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich for their belief and trust in me," Larranaga said. "I'm honored and humbled by the University of Miami's amazing continued support of me, my players and my staff. This extension is truly about all of us associated with the program and what we have accomplished together."

Jim Larranaga on his contract extension, the ACC tourney and 'dirty water hot dogs'

By Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
March 9, 2022

Some college basketball purists, especially those in the tradition-rich Tobacco Road region of North Carolina, may not be thrilled that the ACC men's basketball tournament is being held this week at the Barclays Center, home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets.

It is just the 15th time since the event began in 1954 that it is not being played in the state of North Carolina.

But University of Miami coach Jim Larranaga, a Bronx native, loves the idea. He is delighted to be back home with his fourth-seeded Hurricanes, who got a double-bye into the Thursday quarterfinals. They will play at 2:30 p.m. against No. 13 seed Boston College, which knocked out No. 5 Wake Forest 82-77 on Wednesday. The game will be on ESPN2.

"It's great, I get to eat some pizza and eat some dirty-water hot dogs," Larranaga said about the tournament being in Brooklyn. "The guys are going to enjoy it. I think it's exciting. New York is really the mecca of basketball. The tournaments that are held in New York are always well-attended. The fans are great."

Larranaga, 72, had another reason to be in a good mood on the eve of the game. UM announced that the coach had agreed to a two-year contract extension through the 2025-26 season. He is in his 11th season at Miami, is the winningest coach in school history and has also been an enthusiastic ambassador for the university.

In an interview with the Herald at the team's Manhattan hotel Wednesday afternoon, Larranaga said the extension was the result of conversations he had with new UM athletic director Dan Radakovich, UM president Julio Frenk and members of the Board of Trustees.

"In recruiting, one of the most consistent questions I get is 'Are you going to be here, or are you going to retire?'" Larranaga said. "My answer was always, 'I love Miami. I'm going to be here as long as the university wants me.' When I met with Dan and explained where I stood and how we were getting these questions, he was very comfortable in addressing the uncertainty of how long I would be here.

"Now I can tell those recruits and their families, 'If you come here as a freshman, I will be here for the next four years.'"

That stability is especially important now, as UM is senior-heavy and will need to restock.

The Hurricanes (22-9, 14-6 ACC) practiced Wednesday at the cozy Leman Prep School gym in the Financial District as snow and freezing rain fell over the city. Larranaga joked that his undersized players looked bigger running up and down the small gym.

On Thursday, they return to the 17,732-seat Barclays Center, where they beat Fordham on Dec. 12. One reason Larranaga and his staff chose to play that game was to get the team acclimated to the surroundings. During that trip, Larranaga jumped off the team bus during a red light and grabbed a hot dog from a street vendor.

The stakes are much higher this trip, but the coach is still reminding his players to have fun.

"March Madness is now here, officially," Larranaga said. "The marathon is over and now we begin the sprints. If you're competing in the Olympics in the 100-yard dash you must win your heat to move on and that's what we need to do. The ACC tournament is survive and advance, lose and go home. We're ready to play our best basketball right now."

"Our goal was to get this program back to where it needed to be, we've done what we needed to do to put ourselves in position to go back to March Madness, but we're focusing on the ACC tournament right now," said sixth-year senior forward Sam Waardenburg.

Asked if veteran players have been telling the younger players what to expect, Waardenburg said: "You can't really tell them, you have to experience it yourself. The ACC tournament will have an amazing crowd, the cheerleaders and the band with us and the cheerleaders and bands from all the other schools, it's going to be a completely different environment."

Last year, after a disappointing regular season, the Hurricanes made a run in the conference tournament before losing to eventual champion Georgia Tech in the quarterfinals.

Regular-season champion Duke is the No. 1 seed this week and coming off a demoralizing loss to archrival North Carolina in retiring coach Mike Krzyzewski's final home game after 42 years at the school. Notre Dame is the No. 2 seed followed by No. 3 North Carolina and No. 4 Miami.

Depending whom you ask, the ACC is either having a down year or there are so many

teams with similar records because they are all good and beating up on each other.

Duke was the only ACC team to spend the entire season ranked in The AP top 25.

It is difficult to predict what will happen in the tournament because there have been so many inconsistent results through the regular season. Duke routed UNC by 20 in February and then lost by 13 to the Tar Heels at home. Florida State beat Miami twice, beat Duke and Syracuse in the regular season and then lost by 39 to Syracuse on Wednesday.

Miami has four sixth-year seniors, and that experience has proved vital time and again as the team never got rattled, twice rallying from 18 points down to beat Syracuse and making game-clinching shots in the closing minutes. That composure is a key reason the Hurricanes have had great success on the road. They are the only Power 5 team in the nation with 10 road victories.

Larranaga feels that gives his team an edge.

"The ACC tournament is not played on your home court, the NCAA tournament is not played on anyone's home court, you've got to be able to travel well and play well away from home," he said.

If the Canes beat Boston College, they advance to Friday's 7 p.m. semifinal against the Duke-Syracuse winner.