

## Bobby Hurley willing to do the rare: mid-major road games

(by Matt Norlander, CBS Sportsline/Dec. 4, 2019)



Hurley's trying to get ASU to three straight NCAAs for the first time since the '60s. [USATSI](#)

On Tuesday night, Arizona State won 71-67 at [San Francisco](#), giving the Sun Devils back-to-back Ws vs. mid-major teams. (The previous was vs. Princeton.) The only other team from a Major Seven conference to schedule consecutive roadies vs. mids: SMU, and even that is not true if you don't consider [UNLV](#) a mid-major, which many don't.

Hurley told me he hasn't swayed from his promise when he took the ASU job in 2015.

"If we are ever in the conversation for the NCAA Tournament, we're not going to not get in because of who we scheduled," he said.

He's right. ASU's average nonconference SOS across his five seasons, per KenPom, is 112th. That's respectable enough for a big-league school. This season is on pace to be his second-toughest, only behind his first year.

Hurley's scheduled six top-10 noncon teams in five seasons, which is crazy tough - and consider that ASU had ONE such opponent the previous 17 seasons before Hurley got there.

***He's changed the mindset and approach of the program. As a result, Arizona State is as interesting and arguably relevant as it's been for most of the past 40 years.***

Hurley's willing to risk it by playing in mid-major environments and he's willing to risk it by going up against teams projected to the 3 line or better. What's more, Arizona State was 8-22 in its previous 30 non-league tilts before Hurley got there.

Now it's 7-2 -- [by far the best non-league road record by a coach in school history.](#)

And given that last season's scheduled game at USF was nixed because of life-threatening wild fires, Hurley could have backed out of the series at no cost to his university due to natural-disaster stipulations. But he kept it and it's paying off.

Those wins will reflect well in the NET rankings and look good comparably to other teams fighting for the bubble, if indeed the Sun Devils are near the cut line a third straight season.

ASU should be 7-2 when [Georgia](#) comes to Tempe on Dec. 14. And the only reason *that* game is happening is because Hurley was insistent on playing back-to-back road games a season ago in mid-December. How many power-conference coaches are scheduling back-to-back roadies vs. mids and high-majors? You might not need both hands to count them all.