



FINAL FOUR



Sarah Strong



Joyce Edwards



Madison Booker



Lauren Betts

UCONN HUSKIES



No. 1 seed • 38-0 record • Fort Worth • Big East

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2025
MORTGAGE MATCHUP CENTER, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
7 P.M. EASTERN, 6 P.M. CENTRAL • ESPN

S.C. GAMECOCKS



No. 1 seed • 34-3 record • Sacramento • Southeastern Conference



UCLA BRUINS

No. 1 seed • 35-1 record • Sacramento • Big Ten

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2025
MORTGAGE MATCHUP CENTER, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
9:30 P.M. EASTERN, 8:30 P.M. CENTRAL • ESPN



TEXAS LONGHORNS

No. 1 seed • 35-3 record • Fort Worth • Southeastern Conference

UCONN HUSKIES

• **Path to the Final Four:** No. 16 UTSA, 90-52; No. 9 Syracuse, 98-45; No. 4 North Carolina, 63-42; No. 6 Notre Dame, 70-52

• **Final Four History:** 1991, 1995 (champion), 1996, 2000 (champion), 2001, 2002 (champion), 2003 (champion), 2004 (champion), 2008, 2009 (champion), 2010 (champion), 2011, 2012, 2013 (champion), 2014 (champion), 2015 (champion), 2016 (champion), 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2025 (champion)

• **Top Players:** Sarah Strong (18.6 PPG), Azzi Fudd (17.5 PPG)

• **Notable:** A sophomore forward, Strong does it all for the Huskies. She leads UConn in points, rebounds, steals and blocks per game. Strong is averaging 19.5 PPG in the tournament

• **Coach Geno Auriemma:** UConn is seeking its record 13th national title with Auriemma at the helm. The winningest coach in Division I college basketball history at 1,250-165, Auriemma is making his 25th visit to the Final Four.

SC GAMECOCKS

• **Path to the Final Four:** No. 16 Southern, 103-34; No. 9 USC, 101-61; No. 4 Oklahoma, 94-68; No. 3 TCU, 78-52

• **Final Four History:** 2015, 2017 (champion), 2021, 2022 (champion), 2023, 2024 (champion), 2025

• **Top Players:** Joyce Edwards (19.7 PPG), Ta'Niya Latson (14.4 PPG)

• **Notable:** Nadino Okot averages a double-double for the Gamecocks with 13.2 PPG and 10.8 RPG.

• **Coach Dawn Staley:** Since taking over the program in 2008, Staley has led the Gamecocks to eight Final Four appearances and three national championships. Staley returns South Carolina to the Final Four for the sixth straight season this year.

Familiar Four return

UConn looks to win record 13th NCAA crown

BY DANIEL SUDDATH
CNHI

The first weekend in April often brings the same question when it comes to NCAA women's basketball. Can anyone beat Connecticut?

The answer last season was "no," and an upset of the undefeated Huskies could prove to be even more difficult to accomplish this year.

Fellow No. 1 seeds UCLA, Texas and South Carolina will attempt to achieve that feat beginning Friday when the Final Four tips off at the Mortgage Matchup Center in Phoenix. It marks just the second time that all of the previous season's Final Four teams returned to the Final Four the following year, with the first being in 2006.

Friday night's opening contest features the winners of the last three titles in South Carolina (35-3) and UConn (38-0). It's also a rematch of the 2025 championship game, which UConn won 82-59. Both teams have breezed through the tournament this season en route to the Final Four.

UConn star sophomore forward Sarah Strong (18.6 PPG) and senior guard Azzi Fudd (17.5 PPG) have been difficult for opponents to contain. Freshman Blanca Quinonez has developed into another weapon for the Huskies, scoring 20 points in 30 minutes against Notre Dame in the Elite Eight.

The Huskies are seeking a record seventh undefeated season under coach Geno Auriemma. They're also attempting to win a record 13th national title. UConn's last loss came on Feb. 6, 2025, to Tennessee.

The Gamecocks certainly aren't strangers to success. Coach Dawn Staley

returns South Carolina to the Final Four for the sixth straight season as the Gamecocks, who most recently won the title in 2024, look for their fourth championship.

Sophomore forward Joyce Edwards scored 24 points and grabbed 12 rebounds during South Carolina's Elite Eight win over TCU, her second double-double of the tournament. Edwards is among five Gamecocks who average double figures in scoring.

Friday's second game features a rematch as UCLA (35-1) will attempt to avenge its only loss of the season against Texas (35-3). The Longhorns defeated the Bruins 76-65 in November.

Texas forward Madison Booker is averaging 22.5 PPG in the tournament and also leads the Longhorns in rebounding. Point guard Rori Harmon dished out 13 assists during Texas' Elite Eight victory over Michigan.

Coach Vic Schaefer is in his sixth season at Texas, leading the Longhorns to a 179-39 record and back-to-back trips to the Final Four. The SEC champion Longhorns are seeking their first national title since 1986.

UCLA features one of the best front-court players in the country in senior Lauren Betts. She leads the Bruins with 17.2 PPG, 8.6 RPG and 2 BPG. Betts scored 35 against Oklahoma State in the Round of 32 and 23 against Duke in the Elite Eight.

Kiki Rice has also been a major contributor for the Bruins this season, averaging 15.2 PPG.

The Big Ten champion Bruins are seeking the program's first title after advancing to the Final Four for the first time in 2025. Coach Cori Close has a 356-144 record since taking the helm in 2011 at UCLA.

Friday's winners will advance to Sunday's national title game.

UCLA BRUINS

• **Path to the Final Four:** No. 16 California Baptist, 96-43; No. 8 Oklahoma State, 87-68; No. 4 Minnesota, 80-56; No. 3 Duke, 70-58

• **Final Four History:** 2025

• **Top Players:** Lauren Betts (17.2 PPG), Kiki Rice (15.2 PPG), Charlissee Leger-Walker (5.8 APG)

• **Notable:** Betts is one of the biggest stars in the country. The senior center leads the Bruins in scoring and rebounding, and shoots almost 58% from the field. She's averaging 24 points in four tournament games this year, including a 35-point performance against Oklahoma State in the second round.

• **Coach Cori Close:** After leading the Bruins to the program's first Final Four appearance in 2025, Close has UCLA back in contention this season. Close, who took over UCLA in 2011, is 356-144.



TEXAS LONGHORNS

• **Path to the Final Four:** No. 16 Missouri State, 87-45; No. 8 Oregon, 100-58; No. 5 Kentucky, 76-54; No. 2 Michigan, 77-41

• **Final Four History:** 1986 (champion), 1987, 2003, 2025

• **Top Players:** Madison Booker (19.3 PPG), Jordan Lee (13.3 PPG), Rori Harmon (6.3 APG)

• **Notable:** The unquestioned leader of the Longhorns, Booker has been on a tear in March. The junior scored 40 against Oregon in the Round of 32, and is averaging 22.5 PPG in the tournament.

• **Coach Vic Schaefer:** In six seasons at Texas, Schaefer has returned the Longhorns to national prominence. He's 179-39 during his tenure in Austin. At Mississippi State, he twice led the Bulldogs to national title game.



Dawn Staley, South Carolina

RECENT CHAMPIONS

- 2025-UConn
- 2024-South Carolina
- 2023-LSU
- 2022-South Carolina
- 2021-Stanford
- 2020-No touney/COVID
- 2019-Baylor
- 2018-Notre Dame
- 2017-South Carolina
- 2016-Connecticut
- 2015-Connecticut
- 2014-Connecticut
- 2013-Connecticut
- 2012-Baylor
- 2011-Texas A&M
- 2010-Connecticut

MOST TITLES WON

- Connecticut-12
- Tennessee-8
- Baylor-3
- Stanford-3
- South Carolina-3
- Notre Dame-2
- Louisiana Tech-2
- Southern Cal-2

MOST FINAL FOURS

- Connecticut-25
- Tennessee-18
- Stanford-15
- Louisiana Tech-10
- Notre Dame-9
- South Carolina-8
- LSU-6
- Georgia-5
- Maryland-5



Geno Auriemma, UConn