



## Basketball is Back!

As the 2024-25 men's and women's basketball seasons begin, meet the new international players on the women's team, read about Jerome Hunter's journey over the past year, dive into the men's schedule, discover which member of the men's basketball team you are based on your horoscope and more all here!



# Meet the Men's Basketball Team



Front Row (L to R): Michael Wolf, Roddie Anderson III, Marcus Foster, Trey Green, Dayvion McKnight, Dante Maddox Jr., Ryan Conwell, Brad Colbert, Bob Nunge  
 Back Row (L to R): Ian Sabourin, Dailyn Swain, Jerome Hunter, Lassina Traore, John Hugley IV, Zach Fremantle, Cam Fletcher, Henry Thole

# Meet the Women's Basketball Team



Front row (L to R): Irune Orio, MacKenzie Givens, Vivien Nejašmić, Daniela López Meri Kanerva, Tae'lor Purvis, Júlia Garcia Roig, Aizhanique Mayo, Phoebe Holmes, Olivia Borsutzki, Lucía Martínez López, Jordan Miller

Back Row (L to R): Grad Assistant Kevin Hermansader, Coach Brianna Sanders, Head Coach Billi Chambers, Coach Ashlee Kelly, Petra Oborilova, Lika Kvirkvelia, Loren Christie, Jovana Nikolić, Coach Myia Johnson, Director of Player Development Simeon Spurling, Assistant Athletic Director Avery Wright, Grad Assistant Kanayo Offodile, Strength & Conditioning Coach Gil Weinstein, Athletic Trainer Jamie Brown

# From All Around the Globe to Now at Cintas

By ADDISON BURKE  
Sports Editor

A team from across the globe is hitting the Cintas court this season. With the most international players in Division One women's basketball in the country, the Xavier women's basketball team is looking forward to a great season supported by a plethora of international returners and newcomers.

This season, 12 of the 16 players on the team are from outside the United States. Loren Christie, Daniela López, Lika Kvirkvelia and Júlia Garcia Roig are the four international returning players alongside two returning players born and raised in the States: Tae'lor Purvis and Aizhanique Mayo.

This year, the team has welcomed Meri Kanerva, Phoebe Holmes, Petra Oborilova, Vivien Nejašmić, Lucía Martínez López, Jovana Nikolić, Irune Orió and Olivia Borsutzki from all around the world.

There are more international players than U.S. born players on the team this year. There are just four Americans playing for the Musketeers, equal to the number on the team who were born in Spain.

Kanerva is a first-year student joining the Musketeers for her first season of collegiate basketball. She hails from Espoo, Finland.

One of her biggest adjustments to living in Cincinnati has been the heat of the Midwest, even though it gets all four seasons like Scandinavia.

"(It's exciting) seeing how (hard we) work, the work we put in shows," Kanerva said.



Photo courtesy of Nicki Mabry

Jovana Nikolić is in her first year of collegiate basketball and comes from Belgrade, Serbia. She is one of the 12 international players that are a part of the women's basketball team this season at Cintas.

"I'm excited to also see how the program grows, and how we're gonna make it a winning program (again) and the journey towards that."

Holmes is a first-year student coming from the land down under – Northeast Queensland, Australia – and is also playing in her first season of collegiate basketball. Holmes is preparing to adjust to Cincinnati's winter weather, having only seen snow once in her life.

"I'm just here to be a sponge and soak up the environment and learn as much as I can," Holmes said. "So when I go back to Australia, I can be a role model and show girls that you can go across to the other side of the world for basketball."

Oborilova is a junior originally from Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, where she was a member of the championship winning U17 and U19 National teams. Oborilova is new to Xavier, but not to Head Coach Billi Chambers, who coached her two years ago at Iona.

When Oborilova visited Xavier, she was blown away by the facilities and the care the team received.

"I'm excited to get out there and play with them because I think we have a really special group of people this year, and it's great to be with the coaches again," Oborilova said.

Nejašmić is a first-year student coming from Split, Croatia in her first trip to the United States. Despite having to adjust to the language barrier

and different basketball terminology, she is excited about this upcoming season.

"To be honest, it's so exciting to experience this new (style of) basketball," Nejašmić said. "I would say it's way different from basketball in Europe to basketball here at universities, and I'm so excited for the game, just to experience this with a whole new thing with my teammates."

Martínez López is a first-year collegiate basketball player from Ovideo, Spain, where she started playing basketball at four years old. This season, Martínez López is excited to compete with her new teammates and also explore Xavier and Cincinnati.

"I really like to walk around the city and get to know some

of the good spots," Martínez López said. "At Xavier, I really like the campus, the facilities, the classes and all the professors."

Nikolić is a first-year student and is very appreciative to be taking part in basketball in the United States after coming from her hometown of Belgrade, Serbia. This year is her first season of collegiate basketball and she is very excited for the opportunity.

"I'm excited about basketball here because I'm mostly here for basketball and school," Nikolić said. "So I'm excited about the whole new environment and about this big change in my life because it's going to make me a stronger person. It's just a great experience."

Orió is a junior and comes to Xavier after playing at Sacramento State University, but she is originally from Euskadi, Spain. Since being at Xavier, Orió feels that Xavier is her new home.

"(Home) has to be a place where you feel safe," Orió said. "And the people who you feel safe with ... whether it's a place or a person or multiple people, that's home ... I feel really comfortable here."

First-year Borsutzki comes to Xavier from Munich, Germany after multiple years of recovering from injuries. Her arrival was complicated by issues with her scholarship and visa, but now that everything is sorted, she is happy to call Cincinnati home.

"Home is more than just a place where we live," Borsutzki said. "And Cincinnati compared to my city is the perfect match because it has the perfect balance of community and culture that makes me feel right at home."



Photo courtesy of Nicki Mabry

Fans had the chance to get a first glimpse of the 2024-25 Xavier women's basketball team at Musketeer Madness on Oct. 19. All players were introduced before they competed in an intrasquad scrimmage, which Team White won.

# Old Rivalry Turned Into a Charity Match

BY DYLAN PAULSON  
Staff Writer

While there was no official preseason to men's basketball this year, Xavier participated in an exhibition charity match against their old rivals to the northeast at the University of Dayton. The game was a part of a greater project called The Spotlight, an event that spans the course of multiple days through various events to raise awareness for mental health issues in young adults.

This was the first time the two schools have played each other since the Musketeers defeated the Flyers 90-61 in 2015 in their days as bitter rivals in the Atlantic 10. While it was a charity game and will not go on either team's official record, Xavier earned a commanding 98-74 win with their squad of new faces.

The game included several pauses to award donations to three different mental health foundations. All net proceeds from ticket sales will benefit Jay's Light and the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation among other charities within the Dayton and Cincinnati



Photo courtesy of goxavier.com

**The Musketeers faced off against the University of Dayton Flyers on Oct. 20, earning the 98-74 win. Eight different players scored 10 or more points during the game, though fouls troubled them in the second half.**

footprint.

This is the second year in a row that the Flyers have hosted the event in an effort to not only bolster the mental health charities and institutions around them, but also to break the stigma surrounding those struggling with mental health issues in their day-to-day lives.

Struggling in the first half with turnovers, Xavier was able to stay in the game early and ultimately take the lead at the half thanks to their impressive three-point shooting. By the second half, the Musketeers were able to build off their 46-28 halftime lead, and they ended the game with eight different players having

scored in double digits.

Zach Freemantle, who played his first game for Xavier in almost two years, tied with Marcus Foster as the team leaders in scoring, putting up 15 points. They were followed close behind by Dante Maddox Jr. and Trey Green, who each had 12 points to their names. Behind

them came Davyion McKnight and Ryan Cowell with 11 points apiece, then Jerome Hunter and Dailyn Swain, each with 10 points.

Xavier's biggest struggle came not from their shooting, where they were roughly 59% and 12-26 from three, but from fouling. They had only six fouls in the first half, but picked up 16 in the second half. Those 16 fouls in the second half allowed the Flyers to shoot 22 free throws, 17 of which they hit.

Despite their foul trouble and Dayton's ability to find short hot streaks in the second half, the Musketeers pulled off the win.

After a tough season last year, where the Muskies were plagued by injuries and with many questions circulating about how the team would rebound, the game gave hope to the team and fans alike for the upcoming season.

Xavier looks to its first regular season challenge against Texas Southern University tonight at 7:30 p.m., where they hope to get off to a hot start with a win.

# New Names Are Heading Up Into the Cintas Rafters

BY CHARLIE GAINOR  
Staff Writer

Xavier Athletics has announced that former Xavier men's basketball players Trevon Bluiett, Terrell "Tu" Holloway and Romain Sato will all have their jerseys officially retired this year.

Bluiett, who played for Xavier from 2015 to 2018, helped lead the Musketeers to four straight NCAA tournament appearances, including a Sweet Sixteen appearance in 2015 and an Elite Eight appearance in 2017.

He also helped lead Xavier to their first ever Big East Regular Season Championship title in 2018 with a 27-4 regular season record and a 15-3 record in conference play.

Bluiett was a consensus Big East First Team selection three times, becoming one of only thirteen players in the history of the conference to hold that honor.

Bluiett made his mark on the record books, holding second place on Xavier's all-time scoring list with 2,261 points and 12th with 762 rebounds. He also held the record for most three-point baskets in a single season with 105 until it was broken last season by Quincy Olivari with 106.

Bluiett also put up a career-high 40 points in the 2016-17 Crosstown Shootout, becoming the first player since David West to eclipse that mark.

Over the summer, Xavier Athletics also announced that Bluiett would be in-



Photo courtesy of goxavier.com

**Three players from past men's basketball team and two players from past women's team jerseys will be retired this year. All five players will be memorialized in the rafters of Cintas to commemorate their work and dedication to Xavier.**

ducted into the Xavier Athletics Hall of Fame alongside guard JP Macura.

Holloway, who wore the silver and blue from 2009 to 2012, led Xavier to 100 wins and three Sweet Sixteen appearances during his four seasons.

Three of Xavier's five consecutive A-10 regular season titles from 2007-2011 were won in part to Holloway's performances as he finished seventh all-time in points scored with 1,833 and third in assists with 550. His career free throw percentage of 85.2% is the highest in Xavier basketball history.

Off the court, Holloway is best known for his quote following a brawl at the 2011 Crosstown Shootout.

"We went out there and zipped them up at the end of the game," Holloway said in a postgame interview.

The phrase "Zip 'Em Up" was enshrined by Macura in 2021 when it was chosen as the name of Xavier's alumni team for The Basketball Tournament (TBT), and it has become a mantra in the Xavier student section.

That season, Holloway was selected to the A-10 First Team for the second straight year as he became the only player to finish top five in points and assists per game.

"He's made such big plays through the course of his career," former Xavier head coach Chris Mack said. "The moment's never too big for him."

Sato played for Xavier from 2000 to 2004, where he established himself as an elite scorer and defensive aficionado. He helped Xavier to two A-10 regular season titles and two A-10 tournament championships, winning a spot on the All-Tournament team in 2002 and 2004.

In his career, Sato made the A-10 First Team twice, the A-10 First Defensive Team three times and made Dick Vitale's "All-Velcro" Defensive Team twice.

He currently holds fourth place on Xavier's all-time scoring list with 2,005 points scored and holds the record for most consecutive starts at 130 and most career three-pointers with 307.

In 2004, Sato led Xavier

to a four-game sweep of the A-10 tournament that included a 20-point blowout victory against No. 1 ranked St. Joseph and a defeat of host Dayton in the championship game to win their second tournament title in three years.

In the tournament, the Musketeers defeated Louisville, Mississippi State and Texas to secure their first Elite Eight berth in program history. This run would be immortalized in 2004 ESPN-produced documentary, The Run.

Following his college career, Sato was drafted by the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA draft but decided to go overseas to continue his basketball career.

He won four league titles in Italy and was named Ligue A MVP in 2010 before winning the EuroLeague title with Greece's Panathinaikos BC the following year. He was inducted into the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Hall of Fame in 2023.

Alongside Bluiett, Holloway and Sato, women's basketball alumni Amber Harris and Ta'Shia Phillips jerseys will also be hung in the rafters.

"Just as hanging a championship banner is a symbol of excellence, honoring former players with retired jersey numbers is one of the highest honors a program can bestow," director of athletics Greg Christopher said. "Each of these former Musketeer greats contributed to building the foundation of Xavier's basketball programs."

# Look to The Future, Not to the Past

BY HANNAH WOLKE  
NewsWire Intern

As we gear up for the upcoming season of Xavier women's basketball, it's easy to look back at last year and feel a sense of sadness.

With only one win last season to show for their efforts, many students may be hesitant to invest their time and energy into supporting the women's team. However, let's take a moment to shift our perspective and focus on the promise and potential that this season holds.

One of the most remarkable aspects of sports is the ability to grow from challenges. Last season, the team faced adversity, but every setback was an opportunity for growth. The players have spent the offseason honing their skills, building chemistry and learning from past experiences. They've shown resilience, and that determination is bound to pay off this season.

With the arrival of new recruits and a renewed coaching strategy, the energy surrounding the team is showing. Fresh talent can invigorate a team, bringing new perspectives and skills to the court. These players have a chance to make their mark and contribute to a brighter future for the Xavier women's basketball program.

Newcomers can really help to pave the path for a new start and signal an uphill climb for a team who has struggled in the past. Xavier women's basketball isn't exempt from this trend.

Furthermore, nothing can elevate a team's spirit quite like the support of their community. When we fill the stands, we create an atmosphere that motivates our athletes to give their all. Imagine the thrill of watching the team thrive in a lively environment where every cheer boosts their confidence and fuels their drive to succeed. Student presence at games can make a difference — your cheers could be the spark that ignites a winning streak.

Let's not forget that sports are about more than just wins and losses. It's about camaraderie, passion and the journey each player undertakes. The Xavier women's basketball team embodies these values, and they deserve our support as they embark on this new chapter. By attending games and cheering them on, we can celebrate their efforts, hard work and the spirit of competition.

Hype is often what students seek at a basketball game, or any sporting event Xavier hosts. It creates an electrifying atmosphere that



Photo courtesy of Nicki Mabry

After a tough 2023-24 season, the women's basketball team is looking to bounce back and achieve wins this season under second-year head coach Billi Chambers.

transforms a simple sporting event into an unforgettable experience.

When the energy in the arena is palpable with enthusiastic cheers, school spirit and the thrill of competition, everything combines to elevate the excitement. Students revel in the camaraderie of cheering for their team, wearing school colors and engaging in spirited traditions and cheers that echo throughout the venue.

The buzz of anticipation builds before the game as friends gather, sharing snacks and stories, their excitement growing with each passing moment. This adrenaline

rush of excitement is what we all collectively should show the women's basketball team this season.

Moreover, the hype isn't just about the game itself. It's also about the social aspect. Students often see basketball games as a chance to connect with friends and meet new people, making it a highlight of their school experience. These games are another chance to get out of the dorm, apartment or house and hang out with your friends.

As we look forward to the upcoming season, let's embrace a mindset of hope and positivity. The road to im-

provement may be challenging, but it's also an exciting opportunity for transformation. This is our chance to witness growth, to support all of our athletes and to be part of something special.

We all know the feeling when no one shows up to events that we are dedicated to and love, like a sports event, theater productions or a business conference. So, let's show the women's basketball team, and all women's teams for that matter, that we appreciate all their hard work and that we are here to support them through all their ups and downs.

## The Sean Miller Podcast Take Us Behind the Scenes of MBB

BY SPENCER TRACY  
Staff Writer

With the 11th-most wins in all of college basketball since 1985, Xavier has been a universally respected program despite receiving relatively minimal media attention. That is, until last summer, when three die-hard Xavier fans put their heads together to create a behind-the-scenes look at the Xavier basketball program.

Flashback to the summer of 2023: Xavier alumnus Anthony Breen ('14) used his creativity and love for Xavier basketball to develop an idea that would allow access into the mind of highly respected college basketball coach Sean Miller. Breen added Adam Baum, Paul Fritschner ('19) and Josh Sempstrott to form the dream team. Coach Miller was all in, and the "Sean Miller Podcast" was born.

The podcast is produced by 1831 Media, of which Breen is the founder and CEO. Baum oversees the marketing, Fritschner hosts each episode and Sempstrott does the editing.

The next steps in bringing the podcast to life were creating content and marketing the podcast to gain viewers. Finding a guest for each episode was as simple as "whoever is in the building at the time," according to Baum.

Each episode is unique, ranging from special guest



Photo courtesy of @seanmillerpod on Instagram

Created by those behind the Sean Miller Podcast, the "All In" docuseries will follow this year's men's basketball team as they strive to make it to the NCAA tournament this March.

appearances from Xavier basketball alumni and National Basketball Association (NBA) players who were once coached by Miller to simple sit-down episodes with just Fritschner, Baum and Miller. The show maintains consistency while bringing in a variety of perspectives surrounding the game.

This platform has given Xavier basketball a voice and media attention which has never been more valuable than it is today when it comes to recruiting. This was an element Miller and the Podcast crew were aware of.

"It absolutely plays a part (in the recruiting process)," Fritschner said. "Obviously there are rules, but giving them a voice, recruits enjoy a bit of attention."

The podcast has averaged

10,000 listeners and viewers per episode across Apple Podcasts, Spotify and YouTube in their first year of production.

Both Baum and Fritschner have a vision and are asking the same question: "How can we continue to engage with our audience and grow our audience at the same time?"

Baum emphasized their efforts to utilize Miller's connections through college athletics and the NBA. Fritschner added that his vision for the future focuses on the students at Xavier.

"It's also about the 1,000 students in the student section and how to engage them in content they enjoy," Fritschner said. "They create the environment of the Cintas Center."

For those who aren't aware, Sean Miller is a massive foot-

ball fan, specifically a Pittsburgh Steelers fan. The NFL offseason is known for its "Hard Knocks" series which produces an exclusive look into a team's season.

This past May, Baum, Fritschner and Sempstrott received a text from Miller with a link to the Steelers' "Hard Knocks" episode with a follow up text saying, "Can we do this?"

Today, the three-man team is prepared to launch the first episode of an all-exclusive look into the Xavier men's basketball program called "All In." The first episode of the series will be released on the "Sean Miller Podcast" YouTube channel on Nov. 12.

While the "Hard Knocks" staff has about 100 staff members for each of their departments, the "All In" docu-

series staff consists solely of Fritschner, Baum and Sempstrott. Each member is constantly working on some aspect of the docuseries while simultaneously producing the next podcast episode.

"[The 'All-In' series crew has] been to everything since their first team meeting on June 1st," Fritschner said. "They went to Kings Island, we were there. Zach Freemantle went to throw out the first pitch at a Reds game, we were there."

Miller granting access behind the scenes to Xavier men's basketball to the members behind "All In" and the players willing to participate in this docuseries has played a massive role in the construction of the docuseries.

Both Fritschner and Baum emphasized they are "not here to make anybody look bad, we're here to tell a story." They are betting on the talent of this team to create a memorable season and capturing every drop of sweat earned to reach the NCAA tournament.

With the rise in media attention and Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) deals that provide benefits to college athletes, we could be seeing more teams follow the steps of the "Sean Miller Podcast" with the goal of providing a voice for these young stars who, at the end of the day, are the stars of the show.

# A Look at the Men's Basketball Schedule

*The men's basketball team strives for big wins in one of the most competitive conferences*

BY OLIVER THOMAS  
*Guest Writer*

Xavier men's basketball is officially back! Xavier is looking to bounce back after a down 2023-24 season and earn its second tournament run since 2019.

The Musketeers open the season with three games against Texas Southern University, Indiana University Indianapolis and Jackson State University.

Their first major test of the year will be against a strong Wake Forest University team as they come to Cintas on Nov. 16, giving the Musketeers a chance at a power five-win.

Before Thanksgiving, Xavier will head to Florida for the Fort Myers Invitational. There, Xavier will take on South Carolina, a team coming off a March Madness appearance.

Depending on the outcome, Xavier will face either Virginia Tech or Michigan, both of which are solid power conference teams.

The team will then face a harder challenge as they travel to Fort Worth on Dec. 5 to take on Texas Christian University for the Big East-Big

12 Challenge.

Dec. 15 marks one of the most anticipated games on Xavier's schedule as they travel just two and a half miles to face off against their crosstown rival, the University of Cincinnati in the annual Crosstown Shootout.

The Musketeers will be looking to extend their win streak in the rivalry to six wins in a row.

The Bearcats are ranked No. 20 in the preseason AP poll, thanks to a strong off-season and the addition of transfers, including top 20 transfer Dillion Mitchel and four-star transfer Arrinten Page.

To add on, they have returners Simas Lukosius, Day Thomas and Dan Skillings Jr., all of whom were double-digit scorers last year.

This will be the toughest Cincinnati team Xavier has seen in years because of their new recruits and returners. However, the depth and athletic ability of this year's Xavier roster will make this a competitive game.

At the start of the Christmas break, the Musketeers have a tough start to conference play on Dec. 18 as they

travel to Hartford, Conn. to face the defending back-to-back national champions, the UConn Huskies.

Even after losing multiple starters from last year's team, the Huskies have key starter Alex Karaban returning, as well as multiple important bench pieces, and have added multiple elite recruits and transfers.

The Huskies will then travel to Cintas a little over a month later in what could be a defining game for Xavier's season. Both games against UConn will be incredibly tough to win and will require Xavier's best performances of the year.

However, with how well-rounded Xavier's roster is this year, both games are up for grabs and the Musketeers have two great opportunities to build toward their tournament goals.

Right after traveling to UConn, Xavier will host another ranked conference foe as Marquette University and head coach Shaka Smart travel to Cintas.

The Musketeers have struggled with the Golden Eagles in recent face offs, losing

five out of their last six games against them and not having won against Marquette on the road since 2018.

It won't get any easier this year as Marquette returns 70% of their scorers from last year's Sweet Sixteen campaign.

Xavier will be up against Marquette's senior duo of pre-season All-American guard Kam Jones and forward David Joplin, who combined to average 28 points per game last year.

The next Big East challenge will come in late January when the Musketeers travel to Omaha, Neb. to face No. 16 Creighton University.

The Blue Jays have the 7'1" three-time Big East Defensive Player of the Year, Ryan Kalkbrenner, on their side, presenting potential challenges for Xavier's offense.

Creighton also has been ranked as the third-best offense coming into this season by Ken Pomeroy thanks to the two high-powered guards Pop Issacs and Steven Ashworth. This game will be key for Xavier's defense in proving their strength and abilities.

Even with only three Big

East Teams in the preseason AP top 25, it will be one of the most competitive conferences in college basketball this year.

Another test will come from St. John's University, who is ranked No. 19 by Ken Pomeroy. Head coach Rick Pitino has built a strong roster, landing the nation's top transfer Kadari Richmond, as well as the No. 12 transfer Deivon Smith.

Providence, Villanova and Seton Hall will be competitive matchups for the Musketeers, as it is likely all three of these schools will be fighting for a tournament spot come March.

Matchups against Georgetown University, Butler University and DePaul University in conference play will be good chances for the Musketeers to show off their skills and give them the potential to move up in their conference ranking.

If the Musketeers can leave non-conference play with a positive record and have a strong start to conference play in December, then they will have the potential of clinching a tournament spot come March.

## The Three Musketeers of the NBA

BY JOE REARDON  
*Newswire Intern*

Three former Xavier Musketeers are now a part of the National Basketball Association (NBA).

Though none of them were at Xavier together, Naji Marshall, Colby Jones and Quincy Olivari are now representing Xavier with the Dallas Mavericks, the Sacramento Kings and the Los Angeles Lakers, respectively.

Marshall played three seasons at Xavier as a starter for the entirety of his sophomore and junior years.

During his junior year, Marshall averaged 35.6 minutes per, 16.8 points, 6.3 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game. He was named to the All-Big East First Team in 2020.

Marshall joined the NBA in 2020 after initially going

unselected in the NBA draft and is now in his fifth season.

He spent his first four years in the NBA with the New Orleans Pelicans, playing in 230 games and averaging 7.5 points per game across his four seasons.

During this past offseason, Marshall signed a three-year, \$27-million contract with the Dallas Mavericks.

Similar to Marshall, Jones also played three seasons with Xavier. During his final season with the Musketeers, Jones played 36 games, averaging 15.0 points, 5.7 rebounds and 4.4 assists per game.

In 2023, he was named National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) All-District (5) Second Team and All-Big East Second Team.

Jones is in his second season in the NBA, currently playing for the Sacramento

Kings. He was drafted 34th overall in the 2023 NBA Draft, originally to the Charlotte Hornets.

After some draft trades, he ultimately ended up with the Kings. He played in 30 games with the Kings during his rookie season and averaged 2.1 points per game.

Olivari only played one season for the Musketeers, but he was a highly influential player on the team. He started all 34 games of the 2023-24 NCAA season, averaging 32.2 minutes, 19.1 points, 5.6 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game.

Olivari also set the school's single-season record for three-pointers with 106. He was named NABC All-District (5) Second Team and was an All-Big East Honorable Mention in 2024.

Olivari is currently in his rookie season in the NBA with the Los Angeles Lakers. Olivari has yet to make his regular season debut, but has played for the Lakers in the Summer League and in four of the six Lakers preseason games.

Olivari received praise for his performance in the Lakers preseason game against the Milwaukee Bucks from Lakers head coach J.J. Redick.

"Quincy (Olivari) just completely changed the game. To me, and I told our guys this after, what he did is the blue-



Photo courtesy of Xavier Athletics

**Naji Marshall spent three years at Xavier before declaring for the NBA draft. He played four seasons with the New Orleans Pelicans, and now plays with the Dallas Mavericks this year.**

print for what we're asking for a few of our players in terms of just picking up full court, being disruptive, taking time off the shot clock," Redick said.

Olivari was also mentioned by teammate and NBA star LeBron James for his performance in the preseason. During the Lakers' Media Day, Olivari posed for a picture with James, prompting

Lakers' fans to ask, "who is #41?" After Olivari's efforts against the Bucks in the preseason, James chimed in on Instagram with a picture of Olivari, saying, "They know who 41 is now."

All three players are poised to make their mark in the NBA this season, showcasing the legacy of Xavier basketball on the national level.



Photo courtesy of Xavier Athletics

**Quincy Olivari played one season at Xavier, breaking the record for most three-pointers in a single season. Olivari now has a two-way contract with the Los Angeles Lakers.**

# One Last Season at Cintas

*Jerome Hunter steps into Cintas for one final season after multiple injuries*

**BY BEN DICKISON**  
*Back Page Editor*

“My head’s high. We brought Xavier back,” Xavier men’s basketball forward Jerome Hunter said to the media following Xavier’s loss to Texas in the 2023 Sweet Sixteen.

In head coach Sean Miller’s first season back at Xavier, the Musketeers had advanced to the Big East Championship game and their first NCAA Tournament appearance in five seasons. At that point, Hunter professed an unwavering commitment to taking Xavier’s program to new heights the next season.

But Hunter’s aspirations would be halted by a series of health issues that have kept him out of the game until now.

Hunter was in the midst of growing his role on the team according to Miller on the “Sean Miller Podcast.” Mill-

er quickly followed up those words with “and then...”

Miller was referring to the onslaught of chest pains Hunter began feeling during summer league play in late June 2023. Hunter suffered a heart attack, which he discovered after reporting his symptoms to his brother and then being urged by his mother, coaches and athletic trainer to seek medical help.

As Miller described, Hunter would’ve likely suffered heart attack symptoms during a team practice the day he was admitted to hospital care. Coach Adam Cohen and athletic trainer Connor Barnes helped Hunter get the medical attention he needed quickly after his symptoms first began.

Hunter navigated his recovery process from June through January, when he was cleared to return to full-contact basketball activity. He was set to be an impact player and

fan favorite in his final season of college basketball, which had been delayed to the 2024-25 season as he completed his recovery. “And then...”

On Feb. 5, 2024, just weeks after returning to full contact basketball activities, Hunter tore his Achilles tendon in practice.

“The things I endure for this sport is crazy. But I love it. God has a plan and one day this will all be for something,” Hunter wrote in a post on X, breaking the news.

Now, eight months after the tear, Hunter is about to step back on the floor at Cintas Center for one last ride. He has been practicing fully since late September and is fresh off of a 10-point performance in Xavier’s win over the Dayton Flyers.

The 98-74 Musketeer victory was the first chance for the Xavier faithful to see Hunter in action since the 2023 Sweet Sixteen game.

Hunter remembers that game against the Longhorns as a marker for depth in a college basketball roster.

“I remember we all were gassed. We only really had five guys that year, nobody off the bench. And then Texas had a whole new five coming off the bench. I was like, oh, so that’s what can happen,” Hunter said.

That 2022-23 Xavier squad, which sported the 11th highest-scoring offense in the country, lost forward Zach Freemantle for the end of conference play and postseason play due to a foot injury.

Freemantle injured the same foot before the 2023-24 season, leaving Xavier with the need to engage in stopgap recruiting during the off-season to fill his and Hunter’s places in the front court.

Last year’s front court rotation all came and went; now, Hunter feels like he holds a spot on one of the deepest

rosters in college basketball.

“We have an older team. Coach Miller made sure he got himself an older team,” Hunter said. “We’ve got guys who have been through the grind.”

Hunter sees potential in this team to reach heights unseen even by the 2022-23 squad, affirming the importance of buying into the seven new transfers on this year’s roster.

“The most important thing is that we all trust Coach Miller,” Hunter said. “(All of our transfers) were the best players on their teams. So now, I have to make sure they’re learning to win together.”

Hunter is continuing to build his leadership skills through the basketball program, but also feels he has made leaps in skill development over the course of his rehab.

Hunter expressed his dedication to improving his three-point shot. He has not been able to excel from beyond the arc in his Xavier career thus far, shooting just over 20%. However, he appreciates Miller’s openness to growth.

“With Coach Miller, it’s all about you,” Hunter said. “If you want to shoot threes, show that you can do it in practice.”

Hunter said this year’s team mantra, “ALL IN,” can be attributed to the consensus among the players that Miller and his staff will not put them in a position to fail.

Hunter has had many trials laid before him during his Xavier career, but he is now ready to return to the court and play in his final season of collegiate basketball.

As the Xavier Nation anticipates the return of Hunter, he is ready to meet the moment.

“All my injuries are in the past. I’m so thankful for the support I’ve had along the way. It’s time to win,” he said.



Photo courtesy of Nicki Mabry

**Jerome Hunter was unable to play for the 2023-24 season after suffering a heart attack before the season began and then after tearing his achilles tendon in Feb. 2024, just weeks after being cleared for full contact play again. Hunter is now prepared to take part in his final season at Xavier.**

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## Mission Statement

The Xavier Newswire is committed to reporting the news, as well as explaining its significance to readers. In addition, through publishing opposing viewpoints and opinions, the Newswire hopes to foster a dialogue on campus and among students, faculty and staff.

## Advertising

All inquiries should be directed to the Business Manager, Melissa Navarra, by email at [newswire@xavier.edu](mailto:newswire@xavier.edu) or at [www.xaviernewswire.com](http://www.xaviernewswire.com)

## For Your Information

Xavier Newswire is published weekly throughout the school year, except during vacations and final exams, by the students of Xavier University, 3800 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45207.

## Which XU Basketball Player are You Based on Your Zodiac Sign?



**Aries: Lassina Traore**

You were done before you could even start this academic season. Yes, bio med is too hard. Switch to a marketing major.



**Taurus: Brad Colbert**

You would look better with a mullet, point blank period.



**Gemini: Desmond Claude**

You leave when things get hard.



**Cancer: Dayvion McKnight**

You are loyal to your team. You are underrated, but you can be a weapon when you are used correctly.



**Leo: John Hugley IV**

You are the moment. You are the star of the show. Keep up the great work, babes!



**Virgo: Sean Miller**

Coaches don't play. Stay on the sidelines this cuffing season.



**Libra: Dailyn Swain**

Your smile is so shiny, it blinds your opponents on the court.



**Scorpio: Henry Thole**

Nobody knows what to expect out of you. I can't even write something about you because I just don't know.



**Sagittarius: Bob Nunge**

People solely refer to you as your last name because of your brother, and you're ok with that



**Capricorn: Jerome Hunter**

You are an overachiever, constantly setting the bar high – except for with your Spanish quiz this week. Don't worry, even the best players get injured for a season.



**Aquarius: Marcus Foster**

You have first-year energy despite being way too old for that.



**Pisces: Student Managers**

You're at your best during the pregame, but you're not made for the game. Hal-lowweekend was not made for you.