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Basketball Edition



Photo courtesy of @xavier_wbb via Instagram

Preview



Richard Pitino Begins New Era at Xavier



BY LUKE ESSIG
Sports Editor

After an offseason of uncertainty, Xavier landed on its new head coach: the University of New Mexico's Richard Pitino.

Son of St. John's University Red Storm's head coach Rick Pitino, Richard is inheriting a team unlike any Xavier has seen before. With only four returning players from last season, fans are hoping Pitino can build something from the ground up.

An experienced coach, Pitino has a 247-186 (.570) career coaching record over 13 seasons with Florida International University, University of Minnesota and the University of New Mexico.

Pitino is coming off his best season as a head coach – going 27-8 and coming first place in the Mountain West Conference with a 17-3 record. Last year, New Mexico made it to the

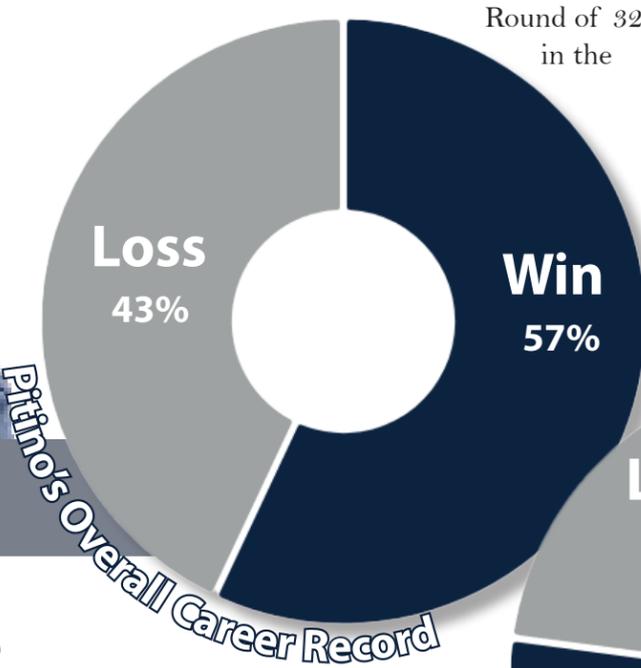
NCAA Tournament. Xavier hired the 43-year-old coach before anyone else could.

Similar to his father, Pitino will likely bring fast-tempo basketball to Xavier. He wants to attack before other teams' defenses can get set, focusing on catching opponents off guard. This is a different philosophy than what former coach Sean Miller had implemented, as he utilized a more traditional and ball-control focused style of play.

Pitino is no stranger to winning a basketball game. While an assistant coach to his father at the University of Louisville during the 2011-12 season, the Cardinals went all the way to the Final Four. From 2007-09, during his first stint there, the Cardinals went to the Elite Eight twice.

He has been vocal on X this offseason, showing transparency after the preseason loss to Murray State University. Pitino knows this is a very different year for Xavier basketball.

Winning over fans will likely not be difficult after the events that transpired in the offseason, but he wants to become more than just a new coach. He wants to save Xavier basketball.



Round of 32 in the

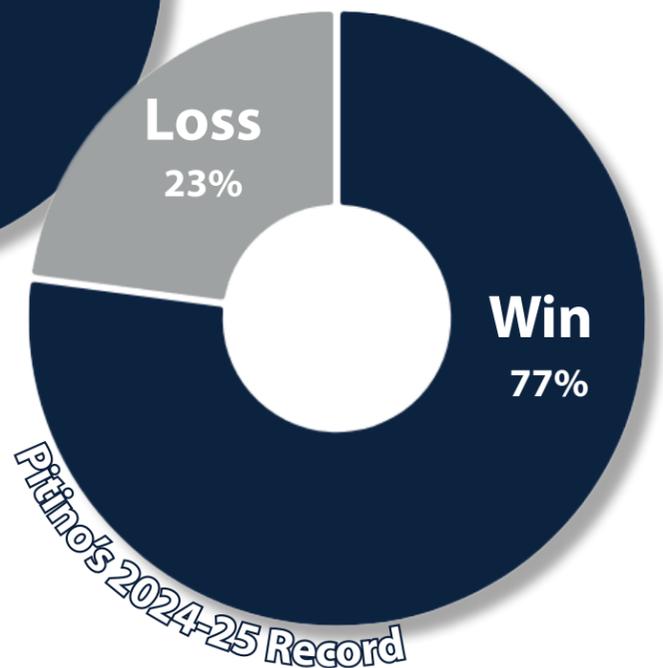


Photo courtesy of @xaviermbb via Instagram

Career Fast Facts

Overall Win/Loss Record

247-186

Highest AP Ranking

#12 (Minnesota)

NCAA Tournament Appearances

2016-17, 2018-19, 2023-24, 2024-15

Statistics courtesy of sports-reference.com

Pitino Coaching Timeline

2012



2013



2021



2025



Forty Years With the Musketeers

BY WILLIAM COFFMAN

Local & National News Editor

Xavier athletics has seen a lot of coaches and players come and go over the years, but for the last four decades, there has been a constant presence student-athletes have been privileged to depend on. That presence has been Sister Rose Ann Fleming.

Fleming has been with Xavier since 1982 and has left a mark on the university that few can replicate. Fleming's time with the athletic department began in 1985, when she was tasked with setting up a system of academic advising for student-athletes.

"I knew in my heart I could do it, but since I'm religious I said 'I got to do one thing. I've got to talk to the provincial tonight to make sure this is okay with her, because she okayed me coming over here to teach.' And they said 'okay.' And I said, 'I'd like to make one other request. I'd like to be able to teach at least a three-credit course once each semester,'" Fleming said.

When Fleming took the role, there were concerns nationwide about cheating and other breaches of integrity by student-athletes. Due to this, Fleming was given two tasks: help athletes earn their degrees and do so without there being any question of fairness.

"That was the first of August or so, and from there, I think within about a week or two, coach (Pete) Gillen arrived ... We became great friends, and he was such a big help to me," Fleming said.

It was coach Gillen who introduced Fleming to the basketball team, a moment that would spark one of Xavier's iconic partnerships.

"He had all the players lined up, and he started to talk. He introduced me, and he said, 'If I ever get a call from her, you are not going to play until you straighten everything out,'" Fleming continued, recounting the first meeting.

Since that meeting, Fleming has continued to play a crucial role for the basketball team. She joined them for some of the biggest games in the Musketeers' history, including the team's first-ever Elite Eight appearance.

"This was 2004, we went down to the Georgia Dome, and our game was scheduled down there against Duke... I thought for sure we were going to win, and I was very hopeful ... the game had gone really, I thought, well, and all of a sudden, toward the end, it just didn't work out," Fleming said.

"We lost. And you know, that's just the way sports turns out. You have to be able to win or lose. And all total, as far as I was concerned, our players played well. I was very proud of them," she continued.

Fleming's time at Xavier extends beyond the student-athletes. She has taught a first-year seminar on sports based on the Global Conference on Faith and Sport that took place at the Vatican in 2016. The class focuses on the impact sports have on people and communities, and how the lessons



Photo courtesy of @xavieruniversity via Instagram
Sister Rose Fleming has been an iconic member of Xavier University for 43 years.

learned in athletics translate to other areas of life.

The basketball program has undergone a lot of change in the last 40 years. One of the most significant was the move to the Big East Conference, something Fleming believes helped the program and school.

"It's just a bigger development, honestly. With a lot of schools in the conference there's a commonality in terms of the Jesuit tradition," Fleming said.

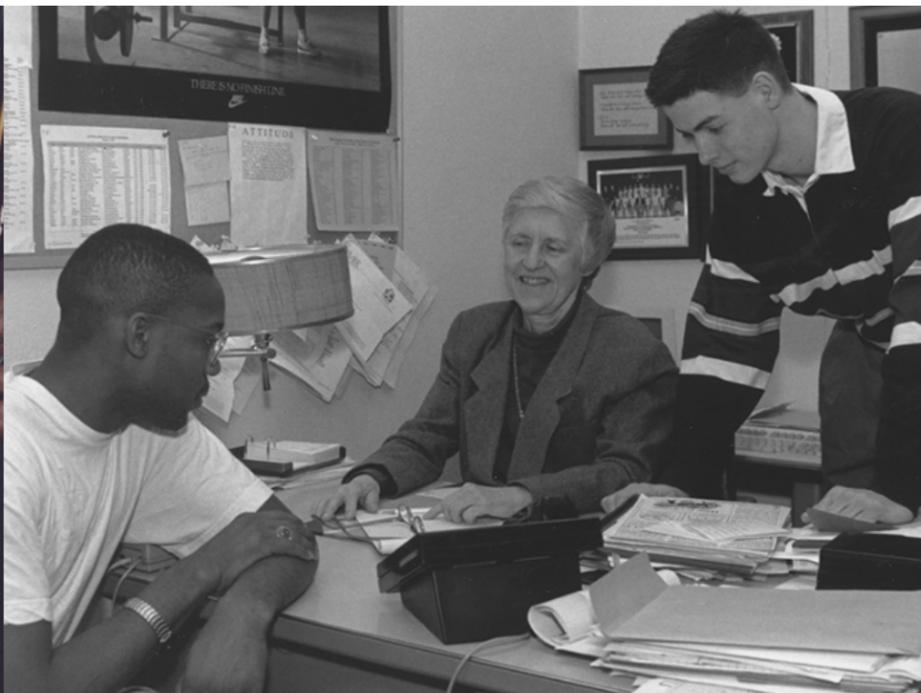
"I think that's important to reinforce in our own players that this isn't just something that Xavier is forcing us to do and act and teaching us. But this is something that humanity has accepted, out of the 500-year tradition of Ignatius, and that's one way of instilling in our players the respect for the whole Jesuit tradition. So, I think it's been a great benefit,"

she continued.

Fleming has accomplished a lot, both at and outside Xavier. She has helped thousands of athletes earn a college degree, while at the same time receiving six degrees of her own. She is showing no signs of slowing down and is ready to keep helping students and the Musketeers. There is one other goal she would like to see accomplished.

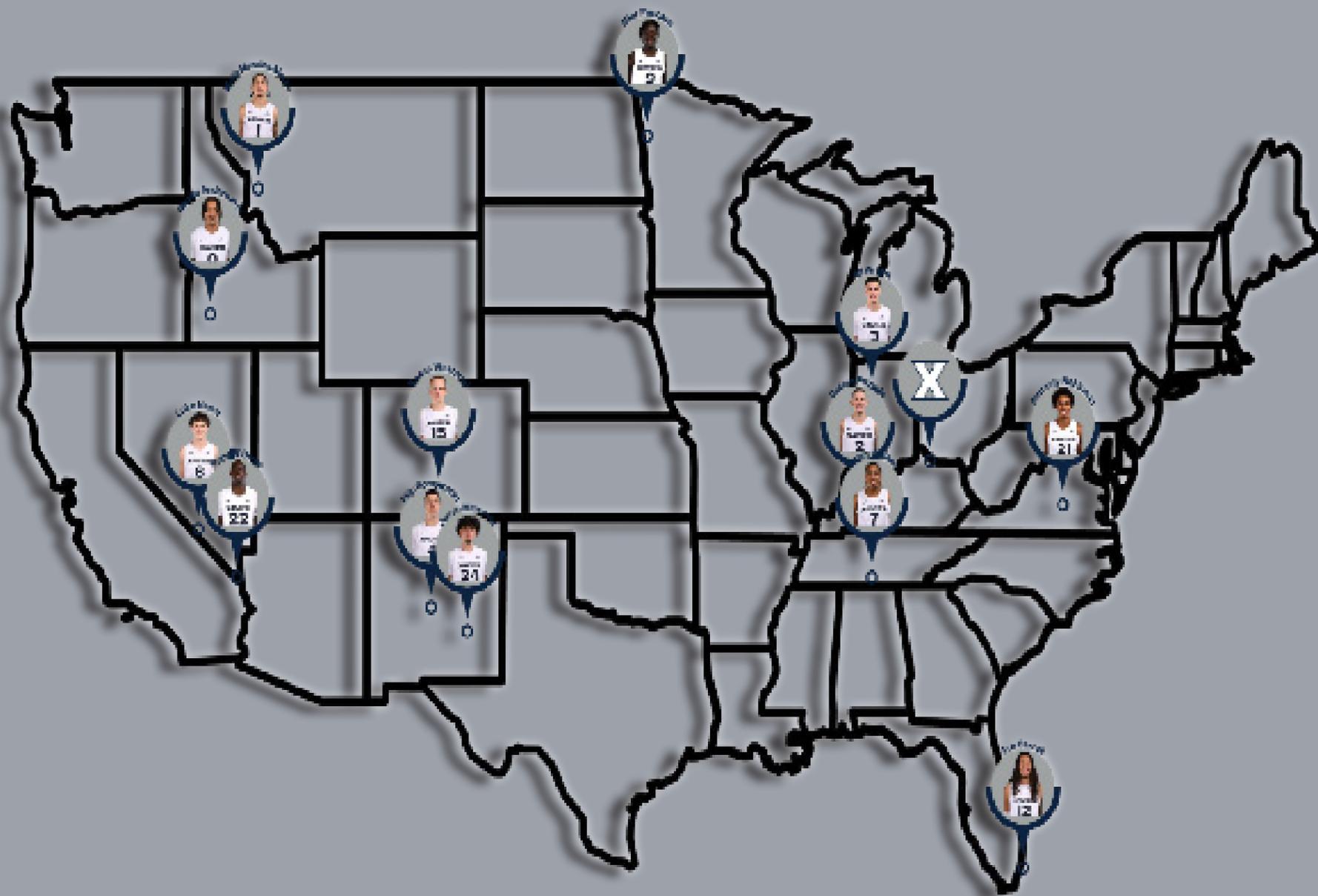
The Big East Conference added an impressive alumnus to its ranks, Pope Leo XIV. He graduated from Villanova in 1977, a fellow Big East school that Xavier plays twice in the regular season of college basketball. Fleming hopes that, for one of those games, the pope will make an appearance.

"I hope we get to see him at some point. I hope he gets over here," Fleming said.



Photos courtesy of xavier.edu

A year ago these players were here....



Tre Carroll

Florida Atlantic University

Pape N'Diaye

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jovan Milicevic

University of New Mexico

Filip Borovicinanin

University of New Mexico

Gabriel Pozzato

University of Evansville

Isaiah Walker

Belmont University

Anthony Robinson

University of Virginia

Malik Moore

University of Montana

Mier Panoam

University of North Dakota

All Wright

Valparaiso University



Dining Dollars are Now Usable in Cintas

BY GAVIN GUFFEY
NewsWire Intern

Xavier students will be allowed to spend dining dollars in the Cintas Center this basketball season.

This development comes as a result of Student Government Association (SGA) senators presenting the idea in the spring, according to Senior Director of Auxiliary Services at Xavier Bill Moran.

“We started talking about that in the spring, but it was too close to the end of the basketball season to be able to pull it off,” Moran said.

Now that a new basketball season has begun, dining dollars have been implemented in Cintas and are now available for student use. Luca Filigenzi, a junior Philosophy, Politics and the Public major, was on the SGA committee tasked with marketing the proposal to Xavier’s administration. He shared that SGA had heard from students previously that they would like to see dining dollars expanded to basketball games.

“As a member of the Campus On and Off Liv-

ing Committee, the idea of using dining dollars at basketball games fell under our jurisdiction, and one of our senators, Will Coffman, worked to make the idea happen,” Filigenzi said.

The only restriction on food in Cintas is that students cannot use Dining Dollars to buy alcohol.

“That’s a legal requirement that we’re not able to do since it’s tied to a meal plan,” Moran said.

Dining Dollars use in Cintas is likely not going to be a feature available for other sporting events at Cintas.

“It will most likely be in effect for just the basketball season, as that’s when we’ll have the concessions for people to spend their money on,” Filigenzi said.

Moran highlighted the importance of a connection between SGA and different administrative groups, such as Auxiliary Services.

“We usually get an opportunity to go to SGA and present annually to the new senators and

just tell them all about what we do,” Moran said. “So, they have open lines of communication, and whenever they come up with ideas that they think would better the student experience, what have you, they’ll approach us.”

Moran also emphasized that it was a relatively easy implementation for Auxiliary Services to make Dining Dollars usable within Cintas.

“There really wasn’t too significant of a cost barrier to do that, all we needed to buy was a particular card reader that we could place inside the arena, and people could tap,” Moran said. “It was a minimal cost, and we actually had a spare one on the shelf that we weren’t using. It was really no cost to be able to do that.”

Moran noted that this new change will give students more options with basketball season just around the corner.

“It gives some flexibility. And there’s another service point for Dining Dollars,” Moran said.

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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.





Photo courtesy of @xaviermbb via Instagram

Crosstown X-citement Returns

BY HANNAH KREMER
Managing Editor

The most anticipated event of the year, the Crosstown Shootout, returns to Cintas on Dec. 5, with the iconic Crosstown Campout kicking off festivities the night before.

With only two exhibition games under the University of Cincinnati Bearcats' belt and only one game for the Xavier Musketeers, it's hard to predict who will come out on top. The Bearcats' basketball team recently fell to No. 14 University of Arkansas Razorbacks by 28 points, 89-61. However, they showed great persistence in their prior exhibition game against No. 7 Michigan University Wolverines, which ended 100-98.

Like the Bearcats, the Xavier Musketeers experienced a significant roster turnover for the 2025-26 season, losing veteran players like Jerome Hunter and Zach Freemantle. They played their only exhibition game against Murray State on Oct. 18, losing 75-70 under new head coach Richard Pitino's management.

Regardless, Vice President of X-Treme Fans and senior marketing and entrepreneurship major Adam Fowler, is not concerned that either team's performance will affect turnout to this year's Crosstown Shootout.

"It's a new group of players and a new coach, but I think everything's off the record for that

game. Anything can happen. It being a home game, (and the team) jacked up by the crowd, is also a huge competitive advantage," Fowler said.

Regardless of the team's performance, students at Xavier have been camping out every other year at Cintas for the Crosstown Shootout since 2015. In the past, students have created elaborate tent setups in anticipation of the game, while enjoying competitions to move up in line, eating catered food and listening to music spun by a DJ.

What sets this Crosstown Campout apart from previous years is the day it falls on. Instead of the Shootout on a Saturday and the campout the night before, students will line up on Thursday for a Friday afternoon game.

While the game will still fall on the week before finals, attendance is expected to be higher, as the event will no longer prevent students from studying that weekend.

"You technically have all of Saturday and Sunday if you want to dedicate that to studying for your finals," President of X-Treme Fans and senior sports marketing and business major Kacey Hilvert said. "I think it's in a better position this year than it has been."

This year's game will be more critical than ever. In last year's

2024 Crosstown Shootout, held at Fifth Third Arena, Xavier had its five-game winning streak broken in a Bearcat victory, 68-65. The Musketeers will be seeking retribution, but in their own arena.

If there is anything at Cintas that cannot be beat, it is the student section. Whether a part of X-Treme Fans or not, the section as a collective brings vibes that are sure to be electric for the shootout and other games to come.

"There are so many different groups of people that add to the (gameday) atmosphere that aren't a part of the X-Treme Fan's Board of Directors. They make Xavier what it is," Fowler said.

Although the details of the event are still being worked out between X-Treme Fans and the athletics department, students can look forward to the spirited energy that comes with a long, competitive rivalry. Previous traditions are expected to return, such as pizza handouts and possibly custom-made t-shirts for the shootout.

Students can also look forward to X-Treme Fans events coming later this year, including a trip to the Big East Tournament in New York City, as well as activities surrounding the matchup between Richard Pitino and his father, Rick Pitino, when St. John's plays Xavier this season.



Photo courtesy of xavier.edu

The Skyline Chili Crosstown Shootout Campout is scheduled earlier this year, taking place on a Thursday into a Friday, leaving some details up in the air.

Big East Preseason Rankings

Men's

- 1 St. John's
- 2 UConn
- 3 Creighton
- 4 Providence
- 5 Marquette
- 6 Georgetown
- 7 Villanova
- 8 **Xavier**
- 9 DePaul
- 10 Butler
- 11 Seton Hall

Women's

- 1 UConn
- 2 Marquette
- 3 Seton Hall
- 4 Villanova
- 5 Creighton
- 6 St. John's
- 7 Georgetown
- 8 DePaul
- 9 Butler
- 10 Providence
- 11 **Xavier**

Statistics courtesy of bigeast.com

For Your Information

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Xavier to Open Big East Against Creighton

By OLIVER THOMAS
Staff Writer

With two of the top five teams in the country, as well as multiple potential NCAA Tournament teams, Xavier will have plenty of chances to make a statement in conference play in their first season under coach Richard Pitino.

Xavier opens Big East play on Dec. 17, when the No. 23 Creighton University Blue Jays make the trip to Cincinnati. Even after losing multiple All-Big East players from last year's team, Creighton will still be one of Xavier's toughest conference opponents.

Head coach Greg McDermott has put together a strong lineup, including 6-foot-10 Iowa transfer Owen Freeman, the 2024 Big Ten Freshman of the Year, as well as other highly rated transfers.

Two weeks later, Xavier hosts the No. 4 University of Connecticut Huskies on New Year's Eve. Dan Hurley's Huskies look as dangerous as ever, with returning players Alex Karaban, Tarris Reed Jr. and Solo Ball, all of whom earned spots on the preseason All-Big East first team.

Keep an eye on Big East

Preseason Freshman of the Year Braylon Mullins, whose size and athleticism could cause problems for any defense that loses track of him.

The most anticipated game of Xavier's schedule comes on Jan. 24, when the Musketeers host the No. 5 St. John's University Red Storm. In a family affair at Cintas Center, Richard Pitino will coach against his father, Rick Pitino, for the first time in Big East play. The Red Storm have maintained their defensive identity from last season and Xavier will need a strong offensive showing to keep up with one of the nation's stingiest defenses.

They will have to keep an eye on Big East Preseason Player of the Year, Zuby Ejiofor, the big man who averaged 14.7 points and eight rebounds for last year's Big East champions.

Though not ranked to start the season, the Marquette University Golden Eagles have consistently been a shoo-in for the NCAA Tournament during coach Shaka Smart's first four years at the helm.

After losing three dou-



Photo courtesy of xavier.edu

ble-digit scorers from last season, Smart built one of the most unique rosters in the nation — taking no transfers or freshmen, a rarity in today's era of college basketball. Xavier hosts the Golden Eagles on Feb. 14.

Just three days later, on Feb. 17, Xavier will welcome the Villanova University Wildcats, a program that has been desperate to find an identity ever since the retirement of legendary coach Jay Wright. The Wildcats fired

head coach Kyle Neptune, replacing him with former Seton Hall University and University of Maryland coach Kevin Willard. As expected under a new coach, Willard's roster features several transfers, including former ESPN five-star Devin Askew, who nearly averaged 20 points last season at Long Beach State.

A team that has flown under the radar are the Providence College Friars, who will visit Cincinnati on Jan. 10. In his third year with the Friars,

head coach Kim English has built an experienced roster that includes Villanova transfer Jason Edward, who averaged 17 points last season at Vanderbilt.

Another third-year head coach hoping for a breakthrough season is Ed Cooley with the Georgetown University Hoyas. The anticipation is not great surrounding the Hoyas, who lost their two leading scorers from last season and failed to land major impact transfers.

A team that has more positive energy than the Hoyas are the DePaul University Blue Demons, who seem to be trending upward in their second season under Chris Holtmann. Though a 14-20 record last year may not impress at first glance, considering the Blue Demons won only three games the year prior, Holtmann has this program headed on the right track.

With three returning starters and the addition of Kaleb Banks, a transfer who averaged 14.7 points and 6.7 rebounds at Tulane University, the Blue Demons have a squad that should be competitive in conference play.

2025-26 Xavier Basketball Schedules

Women's

Men's

DATE	DAY	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME (EST)	TV
Oct. 18	Saturday	MURRAY STATE	Cintas Center	2:00 PM	
Nov. 3	Monday	MARIST	Cintas Center	7:15 PM	ESPN+
Nov. 6	Thursday	LE MOYNE	Cintas Center	7:00 PM	ESPN+
Nov. 10	Monday	SANTA CLARA	Cintas Center	8:30 PM	FS1
Nov. 14	Friday	IOWA	Carver-Hawkeye Arena	TBD	TBD
Nov. 18	Tuesday	OLD DOMINION	Cintas Center	7:00 PM	ESPN+
Nov. 21	Friday	GEORGIA	TD Arena	9:00 PM	ESPN2
Nov. 23	Sunday	CLEMSON / WVU	TD Arena	1:00/3:30 PM	ESPN
Nov. 28	Friday	TEXAS A&M - CC	Cintas Center	5:30 PM	ESPN+
Dec. 1	Monday	SAINT FRANCIS	Cintas Center	7:00 PM	tru
Dec. 5	Friday	CINCINNATI	Cintas Center	7:30 PM	tru
Dec. 12	Friday	MISSOURI STATE	Cintas Center	7:00 PM	tru
Dec. 17	Wednesday	CREIGHTON	Cintas Center	6:30 PM	FS1
Dec. 20	Saturday	GEORGETOWN	Capital One Arena	8:00 PM	FS1
Dec. 31	Wednesday	CONNECTICUT	Cintas Center	5:00 PM	peacock
Jan. 3	Saturday	DePAUL	Wintrust Arena	2:00 PM	FS1
Jan. 7	Wednesday	MARQUETTE	Fiserv Forum	7:00 PM	FS1
Jan. 10	Saturday	PROVIDENCE	Cintas Center	4:00 PM	FS1
Jan. 14	Wednesday	BUTLER	Cintas Center	6:30 PM	FS1
Jan. 21	Wednesday	CREIGHTON	CHI Health Center	7:00 PM	FS1
Jan. 24	Saturday	ST. JOHN'S	Cintas Center	2:30 PM	tru
Jan. 28	Wednesday	SETON HALL	Prudential Center	7:30 PM	peacock
Jan. 31	Saturday	DePAUL	Cintas Center	1:00 PM	FS1
Feb. 3	Tuesday	CONNECTICUT	PeoplesBank Arena	7:00 PM	peacock
Feb. 9	Monday	ST. JOHN'S	Madison Square Garden	6:30 PM	FS1
Feb. 14	Saturday	MARQUETTE	Cintas Center	3:00 PM	tru
Feb. 17	Tuesday	VILLANOVA	Cintas Center	6:30 PM	FS1
Feb. 21	Saturday	BUTLER	Hinkle Fieldhouse	1:30 PM	tru
Feb. 24	Tuesday	PROVIDENCE	Amica Mutual Pavilion	7:30 PM	tru
Feb. 28	Saturday	GEORGETOWN	Cintas Center	1:30 PM	tru
Mar. 3	Tuesday	SETON HALL	Cintas Center	7:00 PM	tru
Mar. 7	Saturday	VILLANOVA	Finneran Pavilion	12:00 PM	tru

Photo courtesy of @xavier_wbb via Instagram

March 11-14, 2026

Photo courtesy of @xaviermbb via Instagram

My Love Letter to Sean Miller

BY MACI TAYLOR
Back Page Editor

This is for Sean Miller. You know what? I can't even say his name. This is for S***.

S***, you backstabbed us and left us to wither away in Cintas. You decided to take your "talents" to Texas, where there is no climate and temperatures are about as hot as Xavier's dorms, with all units locked to 85 degrees just as winter weather begins in Cincinnati. Unlike Texas, at least you can ask Physical Plant to do something about the heat if you call them enough.

S***, is the reason you left for Texas because you thought it was one big roadhouse? I hate to tell you this, but there are no golden brown rolls sprouting from the ground or peanuts in bowls ready for you to crack open. It's okay, buddy. It is a common misconception among backstabbers and men who sweat through all of their clothes.

Or was the reason you left because Xavier figured out that you were riding on the coattails of Zach Freemantle, Dailyn Swain and Quincy Olivari? We suspect that you had slipped them money or handwritten love letters under the table, forcing them to stay and making you look like a great coach. These bribes must have really worked on Swain when he followed you to Texas.

Certainly, Pitino needed no bribes with his coaching



*In a satirical take on former head coach S*** M*****'s departure, Back Page Editor Maci Taylor bids farewell to "he who must not be named" and welcomes Richard Pitino to the Xavier family.*

talent, as Filip Borovicinan followed closely behind his coach's transfer. Roddie Anderson also stayed loyal to the soil... but not to you. Why did you do it, S***?

S***, we did love you at one point. Your leadership abilities and coaching skills led us back to the coveted March Madness tournament. Last year, we squashed your beloved Texas (horns down) and made it into the madness.

But, like you always do, you let us down. S***, passing the ball around the perimeter, not setting any picks and forcing Freemantle to try to carry us to victory is not a recipe for success.

And I am sure you have heard about our new, more handsome head coach, Mr. Richard Pitino. He is loyal, brave and is a nepo baby (we also love you, Rick). When he steps on the court, he de-

mands attention and easily commands our players.

He designs plays instead of just saying "do whatever you want." He even recruited a lookalike of Jason Momoa! Pitino is everything you are not, and I can promise you that we will never take you back... again.

At least we can have confidence in Pitino's coaching with his overall communication. More chronically online

than you were, S***, there's no need to listen to an hour-and-a-half podcast to know what Pitino's getting at. Not when you can read his feedback on X.

Thank you for our time together. We will cherish your memory with your old bobbleheads tucked away in the back of our closet. We're moving on to bigger and better things. Bye, S*** and remember... horns down.



Photo courtesy of @xaviermbb via Instagram