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Cal Poly (Football) • UC Davis (Football) • Chicago State • Houston Baptist • New Jersey Inst. of Technology
University of North Dakota • University of South Dakota • Southern Utah (Football) • Texas-Pan American • Utah Valley

Conference Race Heats Up As Teams Near Halfway Point

The Great West Conference Basketball race for the inaugural title is heating up as the teams near the halfway point.

South Dakota took a half game lead over second place Houston Baptist after getting two road wins last week. The Coyotes defeated the Huskies, 92-70, at Houston on Thursday and then squeaked by Texas-Pan American, 72-71, at Edinburg, Texas, on Saturday.

North Dakota picked up its second GWC win at Texas-Pan American on Thursday, 78-74, in a double-overtime thriller before heading to Houston to face the Huskies on Saturday. HBU defeated the Fighting Sioux, 75-65.

Chicago State got to enjoy its home court for the first time this conference season, and the Cougars pulled out a 43-41 win over Utah Valley, which experienced its first GWC road test of the year. The Wolverines then traveled to NJIT and fell to the Highlanders, 71-46.

Utah Valley will return home on Thursday and host Texas-Pan American. The game will be a special night for the Wolverines as former UVU standout and current Utah Jazz player Ronnie Price will be inducted into the Wolverines' Athletics Hall of Fame.

Chicago State will continue its home-stand and host Houston Baptist on Thursday before the Huskies travel west to face Utah Valley on Saturday.

Also on Saturday, the Cougars will host Texas-Pan American, concluding the GWC contests for the week.

Great West Men's Basketball Standings

Thru Games of Feb. 2

	GWC Games			All Games		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
South Dakota	4	1	.800	12	9	.571
Houston Baptist	3	1	.750	4	16	.200
NJIT	2	2	.500	7	13	.350
Texas-Pan American	2	2	.500	3	20	.130
North Dakota	2	3	.400	4	17	.190
Utah Valley	2	3	.400	9	12	.429
Chicago State	1	4	.200	6	16	.273

LAST WEEK'S GWC RESULTS

1/28 at Chicago State 43, Utah Valley 41
1/28 South Dakota 92, at Houston Baptist 70
1/28 North Dakota 78, at UT-Pan American 74 (2OT)
1/30 at NJIT 71, Utah Valley 46
1/30 South Dakota 72, at Texas-Pan American 71
1/30 at Houston Baptist 75, North Dakota 65

THIS WEEK'S GWC GAMES

2/4 Texas-Pan American at Utah Valley, 7:05 pm
2/4 Houston Baptist at Chicago State, 7:30 pm
2/6 Texas-Pan American at Chicago State, 4:30 pm
2/6 Houston Baptist at Utah Valley, 7:05 pm

All times local to site

RILEY WALLACE TO CHAIR CIT SELECTION COMMITTEE

BOSTON, Mass.-- The winningest coach in Hawaii history, Riley Wallace, has been named chairman of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament (CIT) selection committee.

"I am very pleased to be working with CollegeInsider.com," said Wallace. "I think I speak for countless coaches when I say that CollegeInsider.com has been a major asset to the game of college basketball. This tournament was created to give deserving teams, which would otherwise be overlooked, a chance to compete for a postseason championship."

The CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament is a single-elimination men's Division I college basketball tournament. The CIT consists of five rounds, with all five rounds being played at on-campus sites. Those sites will be determined through a seeding process.

"Last year's tournament was a major success," said Wallace. "Bradley's 75-footer that beat Oakland will be the lasting moment, but there were a lot of highlights. The goal now is to make the 2010 tournament even better and we have already taken some steps in that direction."

One such step came last September with the announcement that the Great West Conference would receive an automatic bid to the CIT. The winner of the conference tournament final, which will be played on March 13, will be the first official entrant to the 2010 CIT.

"Giving the Great West an automatic is a great opportunity for the players, coaches and fans for the programs in that conference," said Wallace. "They are now afforded the same opportunity as teams from other small conferences. They can participate in postseason play."

Wallace will oversee the entire selection process, which includes an expanded committee of former coaches and administrators. Former DePaul head coach Jerry Wainwright, former UCLA head coach Jim Harrick and former Southern University head coach Ben Jobe are among the new additions to the 17-member selection committee. The process will culminate with the announcement of the 16-team field on Sunday, March 14.

"The CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament is a really good thing for college basketball," said Wallace."



2009-10 GREAT WEST CONFERENCE MEN'S BASKETBALL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

Feb. 1, 2010	Roman Gentry, South Dakota
Jan. 26, 2010	Shawn Deadwiler, Utah Valley
Jan. 19, 2010	Mario Flaherty, Houston Baptist
Jan. 11, 2010	Corey Claitt, Utah Valley
Jan. 4, 2010	Tyler Cain, South Dakota
Dec. 28, 2009	Carl Montgomery, Chicago State
Dec. 21, 2009	Steve Smith, South Dakota
Dec. 14, 2009	Mitchell Bouie, South Dakota
Dec. 7, 2009	Jordan Swarbrick, Utah Valley
Nov. 30, 2009	Jake Thomas, South Dakota
Nov. 23, 2009	Mario Flaherty, Houston Baptist
Nov. 18, 2009	Jordan Swarbrick, Utah Valley

Great West Conference Game Recaps

Thursday, January 28

Great West Conference Men's Basketball featured three games on Thursday with Chicago State, North Dakota and South Dakota coming away with the victories.

Chicago State, playing its first GWC game of the season on its home floor, defeated Utah Valley, 43-41 on Thursday in Chicago, Ill.

The game was tied at 41 with 8.6 seconds remaining when Chicago State's Carl Montgomery hit two free throws.

Jordan Swarbrick, who led the Wolverines with 13 points, had a three-point attempt at the buzzer that would have given Utah Valley the win, but the shot rimmed out and CSU held on for the victory.

Swarbrick scored seven straight points and UVU led 41-36 with 2:47 left in the game, but the Wolverines couldn't hold on.

CSU tied the score at 41-41 after Jonathan Montgomery hit 1-of-2 foul shots with 23.5 seconds left before the Carl Montgomery free throws that won the game. The win by Chicago State avenged an earlier 48-43 loss to UVU at Orem, Utah.

Utah Valley (9-11, 2-2 GWC) shot just 26.7 percent from the field, while CSU shot 25.8 percent from the field. Chicago State held the rebounding advantage, 37-26.

Chicago State's Christian Wall led all scorers with 14 points. Carl Montgomery tallied a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds for the Cougars (6-16, 1-4 GWC).

South Dakota traveled to Houston Baptist and handed the Huskies their first conference loss of the season, 92-70.

HBU got out to an early 12-5 lead before the Coyotes found their rhythm from the three-point line, hitting 53 percent (9-of-17) from beyond the arc.

USD's Jake Thomas connected on 4-of-7 from long range, while Roman Gentry hit on 3-of-6 and Louie Krogman finished with 2-of-3 three-pointers. The trio led five Coyotes in double figures. Gentry scored 22 points followed closely by Thomas with 21. Krogman finished the game with 14 points, while Tyler Cain scored 12 points and Kendall Cutler rounded out the double-digit scoring with 10. Cain, the GWC Preseason Player of the Year, led the Coyotes with eight rebounds and a season-high eight blocked shots.

The Huskies were led by Andrew Gonzalez, the GWC's leading scorer, with 26 points. Mario Flaherty posted a double-double with 17 points and a career-high 20 rebounds.

Houston Baptist (3-16, 2-1 GWC) used a 6-0 run to cut the lead to single-digits at 65-56 with 11:10 left, but that was as close as the Huskies could get down the stretch. Cain and Gentry would combine for 18 of USD's final 25 points, as the Coyotes pushed their advantage to as many as 24 in the final four minutes.

HBU shot 35 percent (28-of-80) for the game to 51.6 percent (32-of-62) for the Coyotes (11-9, 3-1 GWC). The Huskies held a 48-43 advantage on the boards in the loss.

In Thursday's final GWC game, North Dakota overcame a seven-point deficit in the final minute of regulation and out-scored Texas-Pan American 10-6 in the second overtime to post a 78-74 victory at Edinburg, Texas.

Travis Bledsoe scored a game-high 24 points while Travis Mertens posted a double-double with 17 points and a career-high 11 rebounds for the Sioux.

Mertens made a free throw in the final second to send the game into overtime and opened the second overtime with a lay-up that sparked an 8-0 run by UND that was too much of a deficit for the Broncs to overcome.

Luis Valera led the Broncs with 13 points and Aaron Urbanus added 10 points as that duo went 10-of-10 from the free throw line in the opening 20 minutes. Bledsoe and Goodman led a 5-of-10 effort from beyond the arc, while the Broncs struggled, making just 1-of-11 from deep.

The Sioux open the second half on a 10-4 run to regain the lead and build what was their largest lead of the game til that spurt in the second overtime that led the visitors to the win.

The Broncs answered with a 13-2 run to take the lead right back and extend it out to a 47-40 margin. UND responded with a 9-2 spurt to tie at 49-49 with 4:01 to play.

UND went on an 8-0 flurry in just over a minute of play after the Broncs had reeled off seven straight points, taking the lead at 57-56 on a Mertens floater in the lane with 27 seconds to play.

The Sioux fouled Matt Mierzycki, who sank two free throws with nine seconds to play, but the Broncs returned the favor and sent Mertens to the line with just one tick on the clock. Mertens sank one of those to send the game into overtime at 58-58.

UTPA scored the first five points of the extra session, but UND scored the next four to make the final two minutes interesting. The Sioux pulled to within a point on three different occasions down the stretch.

After Julius Hearn made one of two free throws to put the Broncs up 68-66 with 19 seconds to go, Bledsoe's three-pointer rimmed out, but Mertens corralled the loose ball and put it back in with 1.2 to play and send the game into double overtime.

UND opened the second extra session with an 8-0 run as they held the Broncs scoreless for the opening 3:40 of the period. Mertens made a lay-up and Nick Haugen and Bledsoe made four straight free throws to build UND's largest lead of the game.

UTPA tried to stage a late rally, scoring six straight in the final 1:20, but Dustin Monsebroten made two free throws to seal the victory for the Sioux. Valera led the Broncs with 19 points on 7-of-7 shooting from the floor and a 5-of-5 effort from the line. Jared Maree and Matt Mierzycki each added 13 points for UTPA (3-19, 2-1 GWC).

Bledsoe went 12-of-14 from the foul line to lead the Sioux, while Haugen made all four of his attempts in the extra sessions. Goodman was the third Sioux to reach double figures, scoring 12 points on 5-of-6 shooting from the floor. Mertens' career-high on the glass led UND to a 43-35 advantage.

Saturday, January 30

There were three games on the Great West Conference men's basketball docket on Saturday with NJIT, South Dakota and Houston Baptist picking up the victories.

New Jersey Institute of Technology got a game-high 18 points off the bench from Sammy Schickel and the Highlanders defeated visiting Utah Valley, 71-46, at Newark, N.J.

Schickel shot 7-of-10 from the field, including 4-of-6 from beyond the arc. Chris Flores posted 16 points and a team-high five rebounds and five assists. He also had a team-high four steals. Jheryl Wilson added 12 points and a game-high six assists.

Utah Valley (9-12, 2-3 Great West) was led by Aaron England who re-recorded 12 points from long-range (4-of-5) off the bench for the Wolverines, while Jordan Swarbrick registered 10 points. Tyray Petty led UVU on the boards with eight.

NJIT took a 40-18 lead into the locker room at the half. Utah Valley was held to 28 percent (13-of-46) from the field for the game, while the Highlanders connected on 54 percent (27-of-50). The Highlanders were a perfect 10-of-10 from the charity stripe, while UVU hit 13-of-15 for 87 percent. NJIT held a slight 29-28 edge in rebounding.

At Edinburg, Texas, South Dakota benefitted from a Roman Gentry putback with 4.7 seconds remaining to gain a 72-71 win over Texas-Pan American.

Gentry scored 19 points to lead the Coyotes to the win, despite trailing by 16 points (51-35) at the half.

South Dakota, who shot 61 percent (14-of-23) from the field in the second half, tied the game at 65 with 4:50 remaining. UTPA then built a four-point lead with 49 seconds left but Jake Thomas hit a three-pointer to bring the Coyotes within one. Steve Smith then stole the inbounds pass to allow USD to score the final five points of the contest.

Joining Gentry in double figures for the Coyotes were Louie Krogman with 13 points, followed by Jordan Boots who added 12 points on a perfect shooting night of 4-of-4 from the field, including 3-of-3 from three-point, and 1-of-1 from the foul line. Tyler Cain led the Coyotes in rebounding with nine to go along with three blocked shots and five assists.

Texas-Pan American's Aaron Urbanus led all scorers with 25 points. Also in double figures for the Broncs were Jared Maree with 13 and Julius Hearn with 11. Hearn also led the Broncs in rebounding with seven.

UTPA shot 41 percent (25-of-61) for the game, while South Dakota connected on 55 percent (28-of-51). The Coyotes (12-9, 4-1 GWC) held the rebounding advantage with 35 caroms, compared to 29 for the Broncs (3-20, 2-2 GWC).

In Saturday's final Great West contest, Houston Baptist defeated North Dakota, 75-65, at Houston, Texas.

HBU led 41-32 at the half and came out with a 15-0 run to start the second frame, giving the Huskies their largest lead of the game at 56-32.

The Sioux fought back and cut the deficit to 10 (60-50) with just over nine minutes remaining, thanks to a 16-2 run of their own.

Andrew Gonzalez led the Huskies with a double-double of 24 points, including 13-of-14 from the free throw line, and 13 rebounds. Miles Dixon added 17 points, including two three-pointers that sparked the Huskies' opening run of the second half. Wendell Preadom completed the Huskies double-figure scoring with 15.

UND's Travis Bledsoe led all scorers with 25 points. Patrick Mitchell posted a double-double with 13 points and a game-high 10 rebounds for the Sioux (4-17, 2-3 GWC).

North Dakota connected on 41 percent (24-of-59) from the field to 38 percent (21-of-55) for the Huskies. The Sioux had to foul down the stretch and send HBU to the line where the Huskies hit 70 percent (28-of-40) for the game. The Huskies (4-16, 3-1 GWC) held a 47-35 advantage on the boards.