

Panther Report



VOLUME 11, ISSUE 11

OCTOBER 7, 2011



University of Pittsburgh Joins ACC

On September 18th, 2011 The Atlantic Coast Conference Council of Presidents has unanimously voted to accept the University of Pittsburgh and Syracuse University as new members. The invitation followed the submission of letters of application from both universities. The move was met with a great amount of excitement from the University of Pittsburgh as a new era has begun. The ACC is also excited at the new opportunities that come with Pitt's entrance into the league. "The ACC has enjoyed a rich tradition by balancing academics and athletics and the addition of Pitt and Syracuse further strengthens the ACC culture in this regard," said Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner John Swofford. "Pittsburgh and Syracuse also serve to enhance the ACC's reach into the states of New York and Pennsylvania and geographically bridges our footprint between Maryland and Massachusetts. With the addition of Pitt and Syracuse, the ACC will cover virtually the entire Eastern Seaboard of the United States."



This is an exciting day for the University of Pittsburgh. We have a long history of competing and collaborating with the distinguished universities that already are members of the Atlantic Coast Conference, and have enormous respect for both their academic strengths and their athletic accomplishments," said University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. "In looking to our own future, we could not envision a better conference home for Pitt and are grateful to the Council of Presidents for extending an invitation to join the ACC community."

This is a very significant day for all of our student-athletes, coaches and staff at the University of Pittsburgh," said Steve Pederson, University of Pittsburgh Director of Athletics. "The strength and quality of the ACC is highly regarded by everyone at Pitt. When we set high expectations for our student-athletes in their academic, athletic and personal goals, it is important to provide every opportunity and resource to enable that success. Joining the ACC and the outstanding institutions in this conference will give every Pitt student-athlete the chance to achieve their highest aspirations."

Pitt Coach Jamie Dixon will lead his Panthers into this new era in the ACC and is excited at both the new opportunities and competition that they will be facing. We're excited, and I don't know when we will officially enter the ACC, but we're excited about this season, we're excited about next season. Whenever we do enter the ACC and begin play in that conference, we'll be ready for that as well. Chancellor Nordenberg and Steve Pederson, what they've done over the years in monitoring this whole situation has put the University in the best situation it can be. They did an unbelievable job and we have great respect, confidence and admiration for what they've done and the position they've put us in. "We knew realignment was going to occur at some point and the possibility of it. I think our Chancellor and (Athletic Director) Steve (Pederson) and I have made every effort to help the Big East stay together, grow, get better and add more teams, but we also knew there was the possibilities of realignment where we might be the team that moves on. I don't know if people realize how much time and effort that the Chancellor and Steve (Pederson) have put into this every day. To think what Chancellor Nordenberg has done with building this university, the growth and the rankings and all different things, it's amazing. But to have his feel and to have his input on the conference, he's been constantly on top of that. I always felt in our conversations that if we were to move conferences, that the ACC would be the conference.

The University of Pittsburgh will continue to compete in the Big East until the move to the ACC is complete. The new opportunities that come with the move to the ACC puts the University of Pittsburgh in the limelight that it deserves. Now in its 59th year of competition, the ACC has long enjoyed the reputation as one of the strongest and most competitive intercollegiate conferences in the nation. Since the league's inception in 1953, ACC schools have captured 122 national championships, including 65 in women's competition and 57 in men's. In addition, NCAA individual titles have gone to ACC student-athletes 140 times in men's competition and 99 times in women's action.

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2011-12 Schedule

Oct 10	Blue/Gold Scrimmage	5 PM
Oct 29	La Roche College (Exh)	4 PM
Nov 7	Kentucky Wesleyan (Exh)	7 PM
Nov 11	Albany	7 PM
Nov 13	Rider &	6 PM
Nov 16	Long Beach St	7 PM
Nov 22	LaSalle &	7 PM
<u>The Palestra —Philadelphia, PA</u>		
Nov 25	Penn &	7 PM
Nov 27	Robert Morris	5 PM
Nov 30	@ Duquesne**	7 PM
Dec 3	@ Tennessee	5:15 PM
Dec 6	VMI	7 PM
<u>Madison Square Garden</u>		
Dec 10	Oklahoma St	2:30 PM
Dec 17	South Carolina St	6 PM
Dec 20	St. Francis (Pa)	7 PM
Dec 23	Wagner	8 PM
Dec 27	@Notre Dame(ESPN2)	7 PM
Jan 1	Cincinnati	7 PM
Jan 5	@DePaul(ESPN2)	7 PM
Jan 11	Rutgers	7 PM
Jan 14	@Marquette(ESPN-U)	2 PM
Jan 16	@Syracuse(ESPN)	7:30 PM
<u>ESPN College Game Day</u>		
Jan 21	Louisville	9 PM
Jan 25	Providence	7 PM
Jan 28	Georgetown(ESPN/ESPN2)	4 PM
Jan 30	@West Virginia(ESPN)	7 PM
Feb 5	Villanova(ESPN)	2 PM
Feb 8	@USF	7 PM
Feb 12	@Seton Hall	Noon
Feb 16	West Virginia(ESPN/ESPN2)	9 PM
Feb 19	USF(ESPN2)	7 PM
Feb 26	@Louisville(CBS)	2 PM
Feb 29	St. John's(ESPN-U)	7 PM
Mar 3	@Uconn(ESPN/ESPN2)	Noon
<u>Big East Championship</u>		
Madison Square Garden, NY		
Mar 6-10		TBA
<u>NCAA Tournament</u>		
Mar 15-18	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds(CBS)	TBA
Mar 22-25	NCAA Regionals(CBS)	TBA
Mar 31-Apr 2	NCAA Final Four(CBS)	TBA

& Philly HoopGroup Classic
** City Showdown



'41, '57, '58, '63, '74, '81, '82, '85, '87, '88, '89, '91
'93, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11

Sweet 16: '57, '74, '02, '03, '04, '07, '09
Elite 8: '41, '74, '09

Rings and Things



Senior Nasir Robinson takes over the reigns as a Senior leader entering the 2011-2012 season.

For the Men's Basketball team, last season's regular season ended with a 60-50 win over Big East conference opponent Villanova, on the first Saturday af-



ternoon in March. The win, however, signified much more. With the win, Pitt became the outright Big East regular season champs. Last season's team finished 28-6 overall compiled a conference record of 15-3. On Saturday afternoon, September 24, the Pitt Men's Basketball team was awarded at halftime of the Panthers football game against Notre Dame with their Big East regular season championship rings. In addition to the presentation of the rings, four freshman, John Johnson, Durand Johnson, Malcolm Gilbert, and Khem Birch were also introduced.

Panther Facts!

Did you know that Jamie Dixon holds a 11-0 Record against current ACC schools!



Panther Preview

Expectations have not changed for Pitt Basketball as fan excitement is once again at an all-time high. Pitt enters its 2011-12 season ranked among everyone's top-25. The Panthers are once again considered among the favorites to challenge for the Big East title. Despite losing three senior starters in Gilbert Brown, Gary McGhee and Brad Wanamaker comprising 41.4 percent of its scoring and 44.7 percent of its rebounding from last year's squad, Dixon returns two senior starters, seven experienced letterwinners, seven of its top-10 in minutes played, 58.6 percent of its scoring and 55.3 percent of its rebounding from last year's team. In addition, the Panthers add four talented freshmen and two players who earned medical redshirts last year.

FORWARDS

Depth will be the key for Pitt in the frontcourt in 2011-12. Despite losing small forward Gilbert Brown, Pitt's third leading scorer from a year ago and a 1,000-point career scorer, the Panthers return four lettermen at both forward positions.

Leading the pack is the team's top-returning rebounder in senior **Nasir Robinson**. An undersized power forward at 6-5, Robinson's 54.8 field goal percentage ranked second in the Big East last year. Robinson, who started 55 games over his first three seasons, has proved to be a force around the basket and rugged defender. A premier zone-buster on offense who creates matchup problems, Robinson makes up for his lack of size with quickness and agility. Look for Robinson to improve upon his 9.4 ppg. and 4.9 rpg. averages from a season ago.

Redshirt sophomore **Talib Zanna** made 13 starts and saw action in 27 games last year before suffering a broken right thumb, an injury that sidelined him for the season's final seven games. Athletically gifted for his size, Zanna's strong physical presence on the boards and a blossoming offensive game, will put him in position to earn minutes at both power forward and center this season. Zanna's 14-point, 12-rebound double-double against Maryland at Madison Square Garden last November gave Pitt fans a glimpse of his unlimited talent.

Redshirt sophomore **Lamar Patterson** is a smart, steady and savvy distributor who can also hit open jump shots. His perimeter passing ability and court vision makes Patterson a seasoned option at small forward. He saw action in 32 of 34 games in 2010-11, can play either forward position and will compete for a starting spot at small forward.

Sophomore **J.J. Moore** is an extremely athletic and experienced wing who appeared in 23 games off the bench last season. A penetrator with a scorer's mentality, Moore possesses the ability to score either from inside or on the perimeter. At 6-6, Moore will make a major contribution at both the small forward and shooting guard positions.

Pitt also adds Baltimore native and 6-6 freshman **Durand Johnson** to the frontcourt. Johnson offers a combination of scoring and shooting ability in 2011-12.

Sophomore walk-on **Aron Nwankwo** provides depth at forward.

CENTER

Pitt must replace one of its all-time best defensive centers and the school's sixth all-time leading shot blocker Gary McGhee.

The Panthers will look to former McDonald's All-American and junior **Dante Taylor** to fill the starting center role. A strong physical rebounder, Taylor has worked diligently in the offseason to improve his offensive low post game. Over his first two seasons at Pitt, he averaged 4.6 points, 4.1 rebounds and blocked 42 shots while playing reserve minutes. Look for Taylor's numbers to increase significantly as his minutes increase in 2011-12.

Freshman **Khem Birch**, one of two McDonald's All-American players on Pitt's roster, will backup Taylor and also compete for playing time at power forward. His exceptional athleticism, leaping ability and 6-9 height will enable Birch to make an instant impact on the defensive end. Birch is a terrific shot blocker who displays impressive mobility for a big man.

Freshman **Malcom Gilbert** will also compete for playing time at center. At 6-11, the athletic and mobile Gilbert has also proven to own an effective defensive game.

GUARD

Because of his offensive playmaking abilities, departed off guard Brad Wanamaker will certainly be missed and his production will be difficult to replace in 2011-12. An all-around player who earned All-Big East Second Team honors along with the Big East Sportsmanship Award, Wanamaker led the Panthers in assists, while also averaging 11.7 points and 5.2 rebounds last season.

Pitt returns senior guard **Ashton Gibbs**, who is already one of the most prolific scorers and shooters in school history. Gibbs enters his senior season ranked among Pitt career leaders in scoring (23rd, 1,207 points), 3-point field goals made (4th, 216), 3-point field goal percentage (2nd, 44.1) and free throw percentage (2nd, 87.9). A First Team All-Big East selection last year, Gibbs led the Panthers in scoring (16.8 ppg.), set the school's season record for 3-point field goals made (102), scored 20 or more points in 12 contests and reached double figures in 26 of 31 games. Gibbs also ranked third among NCAA Division I leaders in 3-point field goal pct. (49.0), fifth in 3-point field goal per game (3.3) and 18th in free throw pct. (88.9). Look for Gibbs to log major minutes at both guard positions in 2011-12.

Redshirt junior **Travon Woodall** also returns as a key contributor at point guard. He is the team's top-returning distributor after leading Pitt and ranking second in the Big East with a 2.34 assist:turnover ratio last season. Woodall also has displayed a knack for hitting clutch 3-point shots late in contests. Look for Woodall to emerge as a leader in the Panthers' backcourt in 2011-12.

Redshirt freshman **Cameron Wright** returns to the squad and will compete for playing time at shooting guard. A player who fits Pitt's system, Wright blends athleticism, competitiveness, quickness and scoring ability. This summer, Wright earned a tryout for the USA Basketball Under-19 Team this summer.

Freshman **Isaiah Epps** is a solid ball-handler and capable outside shooter. The lefthanded guard, who redshirted the 2010-11 season, will compete for minutes at point guard this season.

Freshman **John Johnson** is a play-making combo-guard from Philadelphia. Johnson can create his own shot, distribute to teammates and finish in traffic at the rim. He will challenge for playing time at both guard positions in 2011-12.

A fan favorite, senior walk-on **Nick Rivers** will also provide depth at both guard positions.



Big East Regular Season Champions: 1987, 1988, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2010

Big East Tournament Champions: 2003, 2008

PITT
BLUE-GOLD
SCRIMMAGE
BASKETBALL
FAN FEST

Maggie Dixon
Heart Health Fair 2011

Saturday, October 22
2:30 p.m.
Petersen Events Center
FREE ADMISSION
PittsburghPanthers.com
800-643-PITT (7488)

- Fan Fest activities for the entire family
- Live radio broadcast with 93.7 FM The Fan
- Activities with the Pitt players on the court
- Blood pressure screenings, cholesterol testing and other heart-healthy activities

Blue-Gold Scrimmage: 5:00 p.m.
Dunk Contest immediately following the scrimmage.

Watch the scrimmage live on Pitt Panthers Television on the Comcast Network.

Upcoming Events



October 14th

First Official Day of Practice

October 22nd:

Maggie Dixon Heart Health Fair

Fan Fest

Blue-Gold Scrimmage

Dunk Contest

**Calling All
Panther Hoopers!**

If you wish to join the Panther Hoop Report and receive our monthly newsletter please contact Jason Richards with the Pitt Men's Basketball Staff. Thank you and Hail to PITT!

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