

# Panther Report



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## Pitt Announces 2011-12 Schedule



The University of Pittsburgh released its entire 31-game 2011-12 basketball schedule on Wednesday. Game times and additional ESPN Regional/Big East Network and local television games will be announced at a later date.

Highlighting Pitt's non-conference schedule is a BIG EAST/SEC Challenge game at Tennessee (Saturday, Dec. 3 on ESPN) and a contest at Madison Square Garden in New York City against Oklahoma State (Saturday, Dec. 10 on ESPN2). Both of those contests offer a renewal of recent rivalries. Last year, No. 11 ranked Tennessee defeated the No. 3 Panthers, 83-76, as part of the BIG EAST/SEC Invitational at the CONSOL Energy Center. Tennessee has appeared in seven consecutive NCAA Tournaments and has advanced to three NCAA Sweet Sixteens over the last five seasons. Pitt and Oklahoma State will meet for the fifth time in the last eight years. The two programs have met nine times, including the 2004 NCAA Regional (63-51 OSU win) and the 2009 NCAA Tournament Second Round (84-76 Pitt win). The teams also played a two-year series in both 2006 and 2007.

Pitt and Duquesne will meet in the annual City Game on Wednesday, Nov. 30 at the CONSOL Energy Center. Separated by two miles, the schools played the first-ever basketball contest in the new downtown arena last December.

Overall, Pitt will host nine non-conference home games at the Petersen Events Center. It opens its regular season against Albany on Nov. 11. Home opponents include Rider (Nov. 13), Long Beach State (Nov. 16), La Salle (Nov. 22), Robert Morris (Nov. 27), VMI (Dec. 6), South Carolina State (Dec. 17), St. Francis, Pa. (Dec. 20) and Wagner (Dec. 23).

Pitt will play four games as part of the fifth annual Philly HoopGroup Classic. On Thanksgiving weekend, the Panthers are scheduled to play Penn on Friday, Nov. 25 at the Philadelphia Palestra. Pitt's other three preliminary HoopGroup games at the Petersen Events Center include Rider, La Salle and Robert Morris.

Pitt's 18-game Big East regular season schedule includes nine home games and nine road contests. Home opponents at the Petersen Events Center include Cincinnati, Georgetown, Louisville, Providence, Rutgers, St. John's, USF, Villanova and West Virginia. ESPN College Game Day will make its second-ever visit to the Petersen Events Center prior to the Louisville contest on Saturday, Jan. 21.

Additionally, Pitt will host exhibition games against both La Roche (Oct. 29) and Kentucky Wesleyan (Nov. 7). The Blue-Gold Scrimmage, Fan Fest and Maggie Dixon Heart Health Fair is scheduled for Saturday, October 22.

According to ESPN bracketologist Joe Lunardi, Pitt ranks among the nation's top-10 schools in combined non-conference strength of schedule ratings over the last four years. Lunardi also rates Pitt No. 3 nationally in average ratings percentage index over the last nine seasons (2002-11) as the Panthers average a 13.0 ranking, trailing only No. 1 Duke (5.9) and No. 2 Kansas (9.6).

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### 2011-12 Schedule

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

## Schedule Release Continued.....



Gibbins poured in 16.8 pts. per game last season and returns as Pitt's leading scorer for his final senior season.

During its 18-game conference schedule, Pitt will play nine home games, nine away contests and face each of the 15 league opponents at least once. Additionally, Pitt will play three of those schools two times apiece (West Virginia, Louisville and USF).

Home opponents at the Petersen Events Center include Cincinnati (Jan. 1), Rutgers (Jan. 11), Louisville (Feb. 21), Providence (Jan. 25), Georgetown (Jan. 28), Villanova (Feb. 5), West Virginia (Feb. 16), USF (Feb. 19) and St. John's (Feb. 29).

The Panthers' 2011-12 road opponents are Notre Dame (Dec. 27), DePaul (Jan. 5), Marquette (Jan. 14), Syracuse (Jan. 16), West Virginia (Jan. 30), USF (Feb. 8), Seton Hall (Feb. 12), Louisville (Feb. 26) and Connecticut (March 3).

The Big East Championship is scheduled for March 6-10 at Madison Square Garden and the NCAA Tournament Second and Third Rounds begin March 15-18.

Combining Pitt's Big East and non-conference schedules, the Panthers will play 16 games against teams that advanced to postseason play in 2010-11 and 13 contests versus schools which appeared in the NCAA Tournament.

The schedule currently includes 15 national television appearances and 20 total televised games. ESPN College GameDay will make its second-ever visit to the Petersen Events Center prior to the Louisville contest on Saturday, Jan. 21. Live broadcast times for the ESPN College GameDay television show are 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. In addition, Pitt will appear on ESPN's "Big Monday" coverage twice during the 2011-12 season.

Pitt returns two starters and seven of its top-10 letterwinners from a squad that won the Big East regular season title outright with a 15-3 record, finished 28-6 overall, garnered a No. 1 seed upon entering the NCAA Championship and advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the 10th consecutive season.



## Panthers Sign Professional Contracts in Europe

Former Pitt Panthers Gilbert Brown, Gary McGhee, and Brad Wanamaker will all be continuing their basketball careers as they have all signed professional contracts with teams overseas. After finishing what was one of the most successful careers a class has ever had at Pitt, these former Panthers are not done playing basketball.



**Gilbert Brown** received a lot of interest from the Boston Celtics throughout the summer, but due to the lockout he has decided to sign a professional contract in Germany. This season Brown will be playing in the 1st league in Germany for S. Oliver baskets Wuerzburg. Brown's contract however allows him to leave the team at any point in the year if the Celtics call if the NBA lockout finally comes to an end.

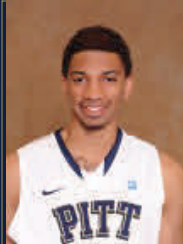


**Brad Wanamaker** grabbed the attention of many NBA teams especially the Atlanta Hawks, however he has opted not to wait for the NBA lockout and took his talents overseas. Wanamaker joined the Serie A Italian team Cimberio Varese. He has recently joined the team in time for their training camp before the season.



**Gary McGhee** had numerous workouts with NBA teams and the Oklahoma City Thunder was one team that expressed the most interest. But like many undrafted rookies the lockout has made it difficult to stick around and attend training camps. McGhee decided it would be best to continue his career overseas until the lockout is over. He recently signed a two year deal with the 1st Division Croatian team KK Zagreb Croatia Osiguranje.

## NEW PANTHERS ON CAMPUS



### Khem Birch

#24

6'9"

220 LBS

An explosively athletic player at 6-feet-9-inches tall, Khem Birch is considered one of the nation's top shot blockers in his recruiting class. Birch is physically gifted, extremely coachable and has a feel for the game. He has been described as a phenomenal athlete who is quick off his feet and plays high above the rim. He runs the floor well, has great mobility and is quick laterally. On defense, he is a long and extremely athletic frontline player who can change the game with his shot-blocking ability. He also has the potential to guard multiple positions. On offense, he uses his length to grab offensive rebounds, consistently scoring with tipins above the rim or on the break. He scores in and around the lane when he receives the ball from cutting and slashing in between defenders. He also has good touch around the basket, has several post moves and can hit a short jumper from the corner. A soft spoken, mature Canadian, Birch signed a National Letter of Intent with Pitt on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010. Born Khem Birch on September 28, 1992...Son of Wendy Sparks...Became the highest ranked recruit to choose Pitt since Brian Shorter in 1987. Selected Pitt over North Carolina, Kentucky, Syracuse, Connecticut, Ohio State, St. John's, West Virginia, Florida, Texas, Arizona and Providence.

### Malcolm Gilbert

#33

6'11"

235 LBS

Malcolm Gilbert is described as a terrific defensive player and tremendous shot blocker who has the rare ability to change a game without scoring. Gilbert is a great low post defender with natural athletic ability and possesses the physical tools needed to play the game at the highest level. He is also improving on the offensive end as he has developed a hook and jump shot. A well-built center, he owns a huge wingspan, runs the court well, has solid touch around the basket and is aggressive when blocking shots. He also is an exceptional student who considered Ivy League schools Harvard and Princeton. Born Malcolm Gilbert on September 19, 1991...Son of Charles and Yarah Gilbert. Selected Pitt over Virginia, Ohio State, Wake Forest, Maryland, Virginia Tech, Georgetown, Saint Joseph's and Clemson.



### Durand Johnson

#5

6'6"

190 LBS

A combination forward, Durand Johnson (pronounced "Der-ron") has been described as a terrific shooter with NBA range who can make big shots and score at a high level. Johnson is as smooth a shooter as they come. He has a great shot fake, range and quick trigger with the ability to pull off a catch or step back. He has also added a dribble drive to his game, can get to the basket with ease and rebounds well for his position. He has great size and is an above the rim finisher. A quality player who is fun to watch and plays with toughness, Johnson is also one of the best defenders in his class because of his length, athleticism and competitiveness. His size, versatility and competitive nature are his strengths. Johnson makes things happen, is a threat to score every time he touches the ball, but also plays within the framework of his team. Born Durand Johnson on June 17, 1992...Son of Derrell and Tonia Johnson. Chose Pitt over Florida State, Maryland, Louisville, Georgetown, St. John's, Seton Hall, Marquette and Cincinnati.

### John Johnson

#4

6'1"

175 LBS

John Johnson is a combination guard who is a streaky long-range shooter. He has great burst off the dribble, quickness and playmaking ability that makes him a good fit for Pitt. At the end of the game, he wants the ball. He can get to the basket and dish or finish and has an effective jumper with range. He's also a good defender, knows how to win and his heart is his biggest asset. When he steps on the floor, he's going to bring it at 150 percent. He has that constant aggression from the way he looks to the way he plays. A quick guard who can beat his defender, he handles the ball, shoots well, is an excellent finisher and facilitator who can drive to the basket and involve his teammates. A competitor, he is fearless, plays with heart and Pitt toughness. Born John Johnson on December 9, 1991...Son of Arlene Johnson. Also considered offers from Saint Joseph's, Notre Dame, St. John's, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech and Penn State...Also was hearing from Marquette, Providence, Louisville, Kansas, Clemson and UCLA.



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

**Big East Tournament Champions:** 2003, 2008

## *Panthers Receive Big East Championship Rings*

On Saturday September 24th, 2011 your Pitt Panthers will be receiving their Big East Regular Season Championship rings. A special presentation of the rings will take place during the home football contest against Notre Dame at Heinz Field. Players and staff will be announced in a ceremony and will be delivered their rings for winning the Big East Regular Season Championship. Before the game the Panthers will be signing autographs outside of the main concourse of Heinz Field on Art Rooney Avenue. Come out to support your Panthers and celebrate a great day for Pitt Athletics.

Saturday  
September 24th, 2011

Pitt Panthers  
Vs.  
Notre Dame



## *Upcoming Events*



### September 24th:

Big East Ring Ceremony  
(During Notre Dame Football Game)

### 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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