

PREP BASKETBALL

# Russellville enters latest Daily News Top 10

By MICHEAL COMPTON  
The Daily News

The Russellville Lady Panthers debut at No. 10 in the latest Daily News Area Top 10.

After going 1-26 last season, Russellville is off to a 2-0 start under first year coach Jermaine Savage with wins against Hart County and

Greenwood.

Next up for the Lady Panthers, the unanimous No. 1 in this week's girls' poll Barren County. The Trojanettes are also off to a 2-0 start. Bowling Green jumps up to second, while Edmonson County leaps from six to three.

Cumberland County is fourth, while Metcalfe County slides to fifth.

Allen County-Scottsville, Monroe County, Franklin-Simpson, and Russell County are six through nine in this week's poll.

On the boys' side Warren Central remains a unanimous No. 1 with Clinton County holding in second.

Barren County is third with Bowling Green fourth and South

Warren fifth.

Franklin-Simpson, Monroe County, Glasgow, Greenwood and Edmonson County round out the boys' poll.

This week's voting panel includes Daily News sports writer Micheal Compton; Daily News sports editor Jeff Nations; Brian Davis of The Franklin Favorite in Franklin; Jay Turner of

WCLU 104.7 FM in Glasgow; Don Meador of The Citizen-Times in Scottsville; Chase Landrum of WCLU 103.1 in Glasgow; James Brown WCLURadio.com and Cole Scott of WNKY-TV.

- Boys (FPV) Rec Pts Prv**
1. Warren Central (8) 2-0 80 1
  2. Clinton County - 1-1 71 2
  3. Barren County - 2-0 54 5
  4. Bowling Green - 0-1 44 3
  5. South Warren - 2-0 40 6
  6. Franklin-Simp. - 2-1 35 8
  7. Monroe County - 2-0 30 10

8. Glasgow - 1-1 29 9
  9. Greenwood - 2-1 25 4
  10. Edmonson County - 2-0 12 -
- Others receiving votes: Russell County 12, Russellville 11.
- Girls (FPV) Rec Pts Prv**
1. Barren County (8) 2-0 80 1
  2. Bowling Green - 2-0 63 6
  3. Edmonson Co. - 2-0 61 6
  4. Cumberland Co. - 2-1 55 3
  5. Metcalfe County - 0-2 46 2
  6. ACS - 1-1 44 7
  7. Monroe County - 2-1 36 8
  8. Franklin-Simp. - 0-1 31 5
  9. Russell County - 2-1 11 10
  10. Russellville - 2-0 5 -
- Others receiving votes: Glasgow 4, Warren East 4.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

# ACC's shaky start to basketball season continues

By AARON BEARD  
AP Basketball Writer

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Duke had just played with its best start-to-finish level of competitive fight in an opening month gone awry, only to end up with another loss to a top-flight opponent in No. 5 LSU.

Senior guard Ashlon Jackson was clinging to the idea that the struggles could pay off in the long term.

"We're in the mud right now," Jackson said softly.

She might as well have been talking for the entire Atlantic Coast Conference in women's basketball.

The preseason ACC favorite Blue Devils are 3-6. The league has no top-10 teams in the AP Top 25 poll for the first time in nearly a quarter-century to go with an awful record in Quadrant 1 games that top a postseason résumé. And it wrapped up a 13-3 loss in the ACC/SEC Challenge on Thursday night, including all three matchups involving its ranked teams in No. 11 North Carolina, No. 18 Notre Dame and No. 22 Louisville.

Of that trio, the Cardinals nearly upset No. 3 South Carolina, losing 79-77 at home.



BEN MCKEOWN / AP

Duke head coach Kara Lawson directs her team during Thursday's game against LSU in Durham, North Carolina.

"I know we have good players in our leagues, we have good teams," Duke coach Kara Lawson said after Thursday night's 93-77 loss to LSU. "For (Duke), we haven't had the start that we've wanted. It's our job to change it."

ROUGH START

This isn't the position anyone expected for the ACC. The league opened this year with five AP Top 25 teams, headlined by the North Carolina-based "Triangle" schools of Duke at No. 7, N.C. State at No. 9 and UNC at No. 11.

And the ACC had fielded at least one top-10 team in every AP Top 25 poll dating to December 2001, a run of 453 consecutive polls.

Yet that streak streak ended by mid-November, leaving the Tar Heels — who lost 79-64 at No. 2 Texas on Thursday night — as the league's highest-ranked team for the past three polls.

The Blue Devils opened with a loss to Baylor in Paris, followed shortly after by a loss to West Virginia in which the Mountaineers finished with just five players

because of numerous ejections to knock the Blue Devils out of the AP poll. The Wolfpack, who lost Wednesday in overtime at No. 9 Oklahoma, fell out this week in a season featuring a home loss to unranked Rhode Island.

As of Thursday's games, the ACC has a combined 2-31 record in Quad 1 games, with the Fighting Irish's win against Southern California joining the Wolfpack's season-opening win against Tennessee as the only victories.

Even the two ACC teams that didn't play in the

ACC/SEC Challenge had their troubles Wednesday. Wake Forest was hoping for its first 10-0 start since 2008-09, only to fall behind by 25 at home before losing to William & Mary (3-4), while Quinnipiac (4-3) won at Boston College by 27 points.

WRONG TRAJECTORY

The ACC had a different team reach the Final Four in 2022, 2023 and 2024, while the Blue Devils reached last year's NCAA Elite Eight after winning their first ACC Tournament title since 2013. So there's still a track record to point back to amid the struggles, with UNC coach Courtney Banghart saying this week: "The league will be just fine."

"I feel like we're a better team than people think, I feel like our league's better," Banghart said before the Texas game. "You could say, 'Well there's a couple of results that don't show that.' ... I always say: 'Let's see when it's all said and done, who's advanced (in the NAAs), how many teams did you send to each round, and what that looks like.'"

Maybe so. But the trajectory of the annual SEC tussle is heading in the

wrong direction: from the teams splitting 14 games in 2023 to the SEC winning 10-6 last year and now this year.

"13-3 SEC? I'm glad we're one of the 13," LSU coach Kim Mulkey said after the Duke win, adding later: "We didn't have to have an ACC Challenge to figure out how tough our league is."

DUKE'S CHALLENGE

The Blue Devils' plight has stood out among the ACC's opening-month hiccups.

They entered Thursday having lost three straight, the previous two coming in blowouts to the Gamecocks and No. 4 UCLA. And they faced the unenviable test of slowing LSU's offense, which had scored 100+ points in each of its first eight games to set an NCAA record.

Duke started the game on a 14-1 run as LSU sputtered, only to see the Tigers take control with a 31-point second quarter. By the end, the Tigers had shot 59.7% and were vocally celebrating through the final minutes on the Blue Devils' Cameron Indoor Stadium homecourt.

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