

# Prep Basketball Roundup

## North Greene Boys Stay Hot Against West Greene

The North Greene boys picked up their seventh consecutive win on Saturday night by raining three-pointers down over West Greene.

The Huskies hit from behind the arc 11 times to knock off the home standing Buffaloes 80-59.

The Huskies started fast and led 23-15 after one quarter of play. Big man Elijah Smith led the charge with nine points in the period. Turner Bailey hit from deep twice and finished the game with 24 points and six three-pointers.

Smith had 17 points on Saturday, Andy Stevens scored 15 and Zane Potter had 10.

In the second quarter Stevens picked up the offensive load for North Greene and dropped in nine points while Bailey again connected from deep twice. At halftime the Huskies led 41-28.

West Greene had three players in double figures on Saturday. Kyler Clowers led the Buffaloes with 12 points, Grayson Potter had 11 and Cody Allen 10.

The game closed at a torrid pace as the teams combined to score 44 points in the fourth quarter. Bailey led North Greene with nine points in the period while Matthew Smyth put in seven for the Buffaloes.

**NORTH GREENE 23 18 15 24 80**  
**WEST GREENE 15 13 11 20 56**

**North Greene:** Bailey 24, Smith 17, Stevens 15, Potter 10, Loftis 5, Pierce 5, Foulks 3, Dickson 1

**West Greene:** Clowers 12, Potter 11, Allen 10, Smyth 9, Bennett 9, Lane 7, Shoemaker 1

## Huskies Get Defensive To Beat Unaka

The North Greene boys locked down on defense Friday night and kept their chances of claiming a share of the regular-season district title alive with a 62-35 win over Unaka.

North Greene has one District 1-A contest left in the regular season, tonight at Sullivan North, and if they win the Huskies and Hampton would both finish at 8-2 in league play. The Huskies and Bulldogs split their two contests this year.

On Friday the Rangers were held to just 13 field goals as the Huskies were suffocating on the defensive end of the floor.

Elijah Smith started the game by taking control of the paint and scoring eight points in the first quarter as North Greene took a 19-14 lead.

In the second quarter Unaka could only muster three points, all at the charity stripe, and North Greene's lead reached 36-17 at halftime. Smith continued to carry the load for the Huskies and added seven more points to his total.

Smith led all scorers on Friday with 20 points while Andy Stevens and Evan Pierce both put in 10.

Isaac Hill led the Rangers with 11 points. After Unaka narrowed the gap in the third quarter North Greene outscored the Rangers 18-6 in the final period to take the convincing win.

**NORTH GREENE 19 17 8 18 62**  
**UNAKA 18 8 12 6 35**

**North Greene:** Smith 20, Stevens 10, E. Pierce 10, Potter 7, Loftis 4, Bailey 4, S. Pierce 3, Foulks 2, Malone 2,

**Unaka:** Hill 11, Johnson 8, Ensor 5, Houghton 4, Drew 3, King 2, Sexton 2

## South Greene Boys Take Down Trojans 60-56

Morristown West came into Rebel Gym Tuesday night having beaten the South Greene by 36 points in November. The Rebels were ready for them this time and gutted out a hard-fought 60-56 victory.

West took an early 6-2 lead as Trent Lovelace hit a pair of threes in the early going.

The home team came back to lead 10-6 on a three-pointer by Sam Mease with 2:02 left in the first segment. The first quarter came to a close with the teams tied 12-12.

The second stanza began as a basket

swapping affair with Brian Stewart and Jeramiah Anderson connecting for West. Ayden Stills answered with a three-pointer for South Greene and teammates Jake Standridge and Lorenz Bank added two buckets.

The game was tied four times in the second quarter, but in the final 2:08 of the half Noah Compton scored two baskets and Chase Carter added another for the Rebels. South Greene went into the break leading 31-25 and they never surrendered that lead the rest of the night.

Morristown West began the third quarter with a flurry of baskets to knot the score at 31-31, but Aydan Stills responded with two charity tosses and a bucket for the Rebels.

Before the quarter was over Standridge hit two triples and Brown nailed another as the Rebels headed into the final segment with a 47-41 lead.

During the fourth quarter the Trojans stayed close until Brown hit four consecutive free throws to give South Greene a 57-50 lead.

Morristown West got within three points with 33 seconds remaining on the clock and then regained possession, but was unable to convert. South Greene was able to finish out the game at the free-throw line.

**SOUTH GREENE 12 19 16 13 60**  
**MORRISTOWN WEST 12 13 16 15 56**

**South Greene:** Standridge 12, Brown 12, Bank 9, Stills 9, Compton 8, Carter 6, Mease 3, Myers 1

**Morristown West:** Stewart 15, Lovelace 10, Anderson 8, Young 8, Lambert 5, Olden 4, Mullins, 2, Portilo 2, Salansky 2

## Buzzer Beater Sends Morristown West Past Lady Rebels

The South Greene girls could not hold off Morristown West's late rally on Tuesday, and a shot at the buzzer by Caroline Harville gave the Lady Trojans a 58-56 win.

West scored the first six points of the game, but then the home standing Lady Rebels rattled off 17 straight and led 17-8 at the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter South Greene continued to find the bottom of the net with ease, shooting an impressive 76 percent from the field in the first half.

Braelyn Wykle scored 19 of her 23 points in the first half. The largest lead of the game came at the 2:28 mark in the second quarter when Taylor Lamb dropped in a 12-foot jumper to make the score 34-17.

West chipped away at the score and the teams went to the locker rooms with the Rebels leading 37-25.

The second half began much the same as the first with the Lady Trojans scoring the first ten points before South Greene went on an 11-0 run sparked by two baskets from Lamb.

Blayne Shultz of Morristown West hit the last bucket of the period and the Lady Rebels led 48-37 at the end of three quarters.

Shultz opened the fourth quarter with two free throws and a three-pointer, bringing the Lady Trojans to within six points. Morristown West then came alive as Laken Phillips knocked down a trey, and was followed by buckets from Hefner and Shultz to make the score 50-49 with 3:48 left.

Wykle and Lamb stretched South Greene's lead back to seven points with 2:19 on the clock, but the Lady Trojans continued to battle.

Harville converted an old-fashioned-three-point play to tie the game at 56-56 with 1:04 on the clock.

The Lady Rebels ran the clock down to 7.9 seconds before a pass went awry and West's Shultz came up with the ball. She hustled to the other end and found Harville who drained the game-wining bucket as the buzzer sounded.

**SOUTH GREENE 17 20 11 8 56**  
**MORRISTOWN WEST 8 17 12 21 58**

**South Greene:** B Wykle 23, Lamb 16, Franklin 11, Williams 6

**West:** Shultz 18, Harville 12, Hefner 12, Phillips 7, Howard 4, Simms 3, Davis 2

Tusculum responded with an 11-5 run to retake the lead at 64-63 as Woods and Tyree each knocked down a 3-pointer for the Pioneers.

Trailing by one at 66-65, Coker followed with five unanswered points on a Halls' trey and a layup from Barrett as Coker led 70-66 with nine minutes to go.

The Pioneers tied the game for a ninth time as Smith drained a three-pointer to even the contest at 74-74, but the Cobras struck back with five in a row on a Barrett three-point play and a Williams' basket to lead 79-74 at the 6:16 mark of the half.

Peeler connected on a triple to pull TC within a pair (79-77), but Samuels fol-

lowed with an offensive board and basket to give Coker an 81-77 lead with 5:14 remaining. Brandon Mitchell's dunk cut the deficit to 81-79. But the Cobras scored eighth straight including a Williams basket and a pair of treys from Halls as Coker led 89-79 with four minutes left.

Woods gave TC some hope with his two triples in a 15-second span as TC trailed 93-87 with 2:35 to go.

Coker pushed the game out of reach with a 7-1 spurt to take its largest lead of the afternoon at 100-88 following a tip-in bucket from Barrett with a minute left.

The Cobras finished the game shooting 52.9 percent from the floor, including a

## BIG PICTURE

Tennessee: Fell two games behind

# Virginia No. 1 In Preliminary NCAA Rankings

**BY JOHN MARSHALL**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Virginia suffered a surprising home loss to unranked Virginia Tech, ending its winning streak at 16 games.

One recent defeat was not enough to sway the NCAA Division I Basketball Committee. The Cavaliers are still viewed as the best team in the country a month before Selection Sunday.

Virginia was the top overall seed in preliminary NCAA Tournament rankings released on Sunday, a day after losing to the Hokies. Villanova, Xavier and Purdue earned the other No. 1 seeds.

“Virginia’s a dominant defensive team, but they’re much better offensively than they’ve been,” committee chair and Creighton athletic director Bruce Rasmussen said during the selection show. “They have a great strength of schedule and they’re 10-1 from home.”

The NCAA followed the precedent set by College Football Playoff a year ago by releasing its rankings early to drum up support for Selection Sunday. The preliminary rankings held up: The committee stuck with 15 of the top 16 seeds.

This year, the committee is using a new quadrant system that gives more weight to wins on the road and neutral courts.

Virginia, No. 2 in The Associated Press poll, has five Quadrant 1 wins four wins against top-10 RPI teams. The top four teams are a combined 40-8 away from home this season.

The Cavaliers (23-2, 12-1 ACC) would play in Atlanta as the No. 1 seed in the South, a region that includes Cincinnati, Michigan State and Tennessee.

Villanova, the No. 2 overall seed, tops the East Region in Boston with Duke, Texas Tech and Ohio State.

Xavier was the top seed in the Midwest Region, joined by Auburn, Clemson and Oklahoma in Omaha.

Purdue, despite losing both of its games last week, is No. 1 in the West Region with Kansas, North Carolina and

Arizona in Los Angeles.

The committee originally had Kansas in the South, but swapped with Cincinnati in the West to even out the regions. It also placed Clemson, the top No. 3 seed, in Omaha because there were already ACC teams in Boston and Atlanta.

“One of the responsibilities of the committee is to make sure the four regions are balanced as much as possible in terms of strength of teams,” Rasmussen said. “If we did not switch Kansas and Cincinnati, those regions would be unbalanced.”

Many of the top seeds have suffered recent losses, but those were balanced out by key wins early in the season.

Purdue earned a No. 1 seed despite losing both games this week, though both were to ranked teams — No. 14 Ohio State and No. 4 Michigan State. The Boilermakers (23-3, 12-1 Big Ten) had won 19 straight heading into this week.

Villanova (23-2, 10-2 Big East), the No. 1 team in the AP poll the past five weeks, lost to St. John's this week. Duke (19-5, 7-4 ACC) lost to the Red Storm last week and to rival North Carolina this week.

Kansas (19-6, 8-4 Big 12) lost to Baylor this week and has dropped two of three to fall a game behind Texas Tech in its bid to win a 14th straight Big 12 championship.

Oklahoma (16-8, 6-6 Big 12), which climbed to No. 4 in the AP Top 25 early in the season behind freshman phenom Trae Young, has lost three straight and six of eight. Arizona (20-6, 10-3) has losses to Washington and UCLA the past two weeks.

“The committee was pretty strong in its consensus of the No. 1 teams, but there was a lot of dialogue all the way through the first quadrant because the teams are so close,” Rasmussen said. “It’s paper thin.”

The rankings could certainly change before the field of 68 is selected on March 11 with more than 1,000 games yet to be played.

## PIONEERS

FROM PAGE 1B

in the game, as eight of the 10 Pioneers to see action had at least one steal. Locklear's 12 points off the bench marked the fourth time this season that she scored in double figures, but the first since against Bluefield State on Nov. 25. Locklear was 6-for-10 from the field and registered a season high with her five assists.

Wilson scored the first basket of the game on Tusculum's opening possession, and back-to-back three-pointers from Wilson and Johnson gave the Pioneers a 10-4 lead just over two minutes into the first quarter. The lead swelled to 14-7 on a steal and layup by Cupidan with 5:55 to go in the quarter, but Coker pulled within a point at 19-18 on a steal and layup by Kaleah Hires with 1:19 remaining. Baskets by Locklear and Wilson in the final minute gave Tusculum a 23-18 lead at the end of the first quarter.

A layup by Williams brought the Cobras within 23-20 in the first minute of the second quarter, but Tusculum responded with a 9-2 run. Duke had a pair of layups during the run, while a basket from Locklear gave the Pioneers their largest lead of the first half at 33-22 with 2:20 to play in the second quarter.

Tusculum led 33-25 at halftime as the Pioneers shot 14-for-33 (42.4 percent) from the field and the Cobras connected on 39.1 percent (9-for-23). Wilson led the Pioneers with nine points in the first half, with six points apiece from Locklear and Duke off the bench. For the Cobras, Williams had six points, 11 rebounds and

four blocks in the half while Sydney Shull had a team-high seven points.

Coker cut the Tusculum lead to 34-31 on a basket by Hayley Kropp with 6:53 left in the third quarter, but the Pioneers answered with back-to-back three-pointers from Cupidan and Johnson and a jumper from Wilson to go on top 42-31 with 5:31 remaining in the third quarter. Tusculum's lead stayed around 10 points for the rest of the quarter, with a basket from Cupidan in the final seconds giving the Pioneers a 49-38 edge entering the fourth quarter.

Williams scored on a jumper to start the fourth quarter to bring the Cobras within 49-40, but a basket from Locklear would push the Pioneer lead back into double figures for the rest of the game. Locklear scored six points in the first 3 1/2 minutes of the fourth quarter as the Tusculum lead would swell to 59-44 with 5:39 left.

Wilson scored her 11 points on 5-for-10 shooting from the field, and also contributed three rebounds, three assists and two steals in 29 minutes. Johnson had a team-high six rebounds to go along with her 10 points, while Duke had 10 points and a pair of blocked shots in 14 minutes off the Pioneer bench. Callie Patterson had five points but also had three rebounds and a career-high four steals.

Kropp finished with eight points and five rebounds for the Cobras, who shot 12-for-19 from the foul line (63.2 percent) compared to 7-for-14 by the Pioneers.

Tusculum will visit SAC-leading Carson-Newman on Wednesday at 6 p.m. The Eagles are 23-1 overall and 15-1 in the SAC, including a 90-67 win over the Pioneers in Greeneville on Jan. 10.

## COKER

FROM PAGE 1B

scored four in a row to tie the game before Dakota Jennings converted a layup as the Cobras led 45-43 at the intermission.

Neither team had a lead of more than two points in the opening five minutes of the second period. Tusculum took a 53-51 lead on an offensive rebound a put-back by Jackie Davis. But a 7-0 run by Coker gave the hosts a 58-53 advantage following a Demarco Jackson three-point play with 14:06 left in the contest.

## ALABAMA

FROM PAGE 1B

anything from Alabama because I thought they did pretty much whatever they wanted to do.”

Alabama seemed to be operating at a different speed after leading by 10 at the break, opening the second half with three dunks and a fast-break layup.

“We were just running,” Sexton said. “I feel like when we’re running, we’re just at our best.”

The Vols came in on a six-game winning

streak and hadn't allowed any of those opponents more than 63 points.

Alabama topped that with 10:20 left on, appropriately, Hall's dunk.

The Tide outscored Tennessee 50-18 in the paint.

The Vols made just 16 of 58 shots (27.6 percent). Alabama made 31 of 56 for a 57.1-percent clip and seven of those were dunks.

“Defensively, as bad as we had played all year long, obviously,” Barnes said.

## BIG PICTURE

Tennessee: Fell two games behind

Auburn in the SEC race and would lose the head-to-head tiebreaker to the Tigers. Previous five losses had come by a combined 30 points, including two overtime defeats.

Alabama: Has won five straight over Top 25 teams since an early loss to then-No. 14 Minnesota.

Continues to be up and down, handling top teams like Florida and the Vols and getting upset other times

## PAINT BY NUMBERS

Much of Alabama's offense came via dunks and drives on a 5-of-14 night from 3-point range.

sizzling 21-of-34 in the second half (61.8 percent). Coker also went 24-of-31 at the free throw stripe along with 14-of-17 in the final 20 minutes. The Cobras edged TC in rebounding 39-37 as both teams finished with 15 offensive rebounds. Coker forced 19 turnovers resulting into 24 points for the home team.

Tusculum went 17-of-20 at the free throw line (85 percent) and connected on a dozen 3-pointers.

The Pioneers return to action on Wednesday when they travel to rival Carson-Newman for an 8 p.m. contest at Holt Fieldhouse. C-N edged the Pioneers 91-86 in last month's meeting in Greeneville.

“We didn't want to settle for jumpers because we hadn't been shooting it well,” Johnson said. “So we tried to play from the basket back out to the 3-point line. Give our guards credit for penetrating. Our bigs finished inside and fortunately when we drove we were in the right spots for most of the night.”

## UP NEXT

Tennessee

Alabama hosts LSU Tuesday night.

Tennessee returns home to face South Carolina Tuesday night.