



NINER TIMES BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2022-23

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Charlotte's women's basketball team
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

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UNC Charlotte's Jada McMillian (15)
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

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UNC Charlotte's Musa Jallow (21) goes for a shot
against University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

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UNC Charlotte's Brice Williams (3)
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

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UNC Charlotte's Musa Jallow (21)
Photo by Chris Crews

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2022-23 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER & SCHEDULE

Women's Basketball Roster

#	Name	Position	Class
0	Aylesha Wade	G	So.
1	Mya McGraw	FW	So.
3	Tamia Davis	G	Sr.
5	Nia Young	G	R-Fr.
10	Dazia Lawrence	G	R-So.
12	Mikayla Boykin	G	Fifth
13	Tracey Hueston	FW	Jr.
15	Jada McMillian	G	Fifth
20	Jacee Busick	G	Jr.
23	Kameron Roach	G	Fifth
31	Keanna Rembert	FW	R-Fr.
44	Angel Middleton	C	R-Jr.

Women's Basketball C-USA Schedule

12/19 vs. UAB
12/29 at MTSU
12/31 at LA Tech
1/5 vs. FIU
1/7 vs. FAU
1/14 at UTSA
1/16 at UTEP
1/19 vs. MTSU
1/21 vs. WKU
1/26 vs. Rice
2/2 at FIU
2/4 at FAU
2/8 vs. UTEP
2/11 vs. North Texas
2/16 at WKU
2/18 LA Tech
2/23 at North Texas
2/25 at Rice
3/2 vs. UTSA
3/4 at UAB

New look team seeks repeat success

WITH PLAYERS STEPPING INTO NEW ROLES, CHARLOTTE AIMS TO RETURN TO THEIR CONFERENCE CHAMPION SHAPE

by Viktor Cunningham
Staff Writer

49er basketball is back as the Charlotte women's basketball team strides into the new year, looking for another successful season.

Last season, we saw a fierce squad as the women's team made their way to a 22-10 overall season with back-to-back wins for a C-USA title and an appearance in the NCAA tournament, where the No. 14 49ers faced off against No. 3 Indiana.

Though we may see many new fresh faces on the court this season, Head Coach Cara Consuegra has high hopes.

"We're improving a lot," said Consuegra. "We've got a lot of returning players coming back, but we also have younger players coming in, so we're basically remaking this team, and I have really felt over the last couple of weeks that we are improving tremendously."

Fresh faces

There are a few new players who found their way down the yellow brick road to Charlotte, N.C. This year includes two new transfers for the forward spot on the team, Tracey Hueston and Keanna Rembert.

"They're learning fast and hungry to get better," said Consuegra.

Hueston hails from the University

of Pittsburgh, where she saw 37 games from 2020 to 2022. The junior, known for her strong rebound game and defensive skills, could play an essential role on the Charlotte team.

Rembert comes in as a freshman recruit from Illinois and previously coming from Raleigh, N.C. Working up from an ecstatic season where she helped lead Millbrook high school to a winning season of 24-7. Rembert managed 21 points and nine rebounds per game at the end of her senior year.

Returning players

The 49er roster features 10 players returning from last season. These are Aylesha Wade, Mya McGraw, Tamia Davis, Nia Young, Dazia Lawrence, Mikayla Boykin, Jada McMillian, Jacee Busick, Kameron Roach and Angel Middleton.

Boykin, McMillian, Busick and Lawrence highlight the list as they step into newer and more prominent roles in the 2022 season. With Octavia Jett-Wilson gone, these players must step up to compensate for the hole left behind.

As Boykin and McMillian enter their final season, they were both selected for the Conference USA (C-USA) all-

preseason team on Oct. 20.

The 49ers were picked to finish third among C-USA teams with two first-place votes in the coach's poll.

"We're looking forward to the opportunity to defend our title," said Consuegra. "The league is as good as it's been since I've been in Conference USA, so we know that's going to be a really tall task. But being picked third shows the respect other coaches have for our roster. We lost some really great pieces, but we're also bringing some really great pieces back. We're looking forward to competing, growing together and getting better every day."

Moving forward

Going into the 2022-23 basketball season, Consuegra reiterates her aspirations for the team as they move forward past their previous big win in the Conference.

"My goal is that the team is constantly growing and getting better, especially for individual players," said Consuegra.

The 49ers kick off the season on Tuesday, Nov. 8, against Appalachian State. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m. inside Halton Arena, with the game available to stream on ESPN+.



Charlotte women's basketball team after winning their final 2021 regular season game
Photos courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Out with a bang

FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS MIKAYLA BOYKIN AND JADA MCMILLAN STEP INTO LEAD ROLES AS THEY FINISH THEIR CAREERS AS 49ERS

by Jesse Morris
Staff Writer

With hard-earned experience and talent aplenty, fifth years Mikayla Boykin and Jada McMillan are among the best that the Charlotte women's basketball team has to offer. As the 49ers prepare for their 48th season as a program, these two players are a sure fixture of the season.

"We are really lucky we still have those two," said Head Coach Cara Consuegra. "I think that has been somewhat seamless in terms of maintaining our culture, our standard and how we do things the Charlotte women's basketball way. Those two are leading this, and that's huge. They are calling the other kids up and telling them, 'Hey, this is how we do things.' That's obviously huge for us."

Since last season

Expertise and hands-on knowledge are even more important with the loss of veteran player and leader Octavia Jett-Wilson.

"Experience plays a big role... I had

a lot of knowledge, even coming from Duke... and just carrying everything I've learned from those four years at Duke and then transitioning over to us winning a championship last year," said Boykin. "I think just me helping my teammates, telling them about different things that I see, will help them in the long run as well."

The varied careers of Boykin and McMillan add depth to their experience. McMillan has played her entire collegiate career at Charlotte, while Boykin transferred from Duke before the 2021-2022 season. The pair sat second and third in scoring on the squad last season; Boykin averaged 13.2 points per game and McMillan 8.6.

Such performances contributed to Charlotte's title run, ending in the first round of the NCAA tournament and a 22-10 overall season.

"Our defense was phenomenal [last year], I know we were [in the top ten] in three-point shots... we took pride in our defense, and this year we want to take [the defense] to another level," said Boykin.

Carrying on that success will take both strong players and leaders, and in Boykin and McMillan, the 49ers have both.

"I feel like I'm one of the leaders on the team. I think that my role is kind of similar to last year... just bringing my game. I like to lead by example, so doing whatever it takes on the court to ensure that my team follows behind that," said Boykin.

Fast friends and a strong pair

Their partnership on the court extends beyond its boundaries. In the years the two have donned the Green and White, the pair have become good friends; however, it is a connection that existed for longer.

"A lot of people don't know, [but] Jada and me... we've been in the same basketball realm for a long time," said

Boykin. "This even started back in high school. So, once I came to Charlotte, me and Jada have kind of meshed well together, and I think we really play off of each other. Jada might see things that I might not see, and she will tell me about it, and that'll help me, and I see things that Jada might not see... I think that it's good that you have two of [that] type of player on the court at the same time because we see the court a lot differently."

The stat sheets reflect the partnership these two share. For three-pointers made, Boykin held a robust .336 to McMillan's .048. However, with field goals made, McMillan had the edge last season with .444 to Boykin's .401. Combined, they make a strong pair that could prove crucial to the 49ers' prospects.

The season ahead

Boykin is looking to make some changes for the new season to excel even further at the top.

"I feel like a personal goal for me – I was [on the] second team last year, doing whatever I can to bring [performance] up another notch, whether that's first team play or whatever it takes," said Boykin.

On the other hand, McMillan's good field goal percentage and high points per game last season makes her a solid player who, with some improvement with three-

pointers, would be even more impressive.

"Jada [McMillian] is going to have to be more aggressive on the offensive end," said Consuegra. "Her junior year, she was a bit of a figure for us, one of the best in the league. Last year she took a step back and said, 'let me facilitate more' because that's naturally what she wants to do. But I think we're going to need her to look to score a little bit more."

When it comes to progress for any of them, it will take overcoming the most significant obstacle they face: themselves.

"The biggest challenge [for the team] is ourselves," said Boykin. "I think [we're] going up against ourselves every day, just making sure we're being the better version... we all want to see ourselves improve, and just coming in and making ourselves [better] is the biggest challenge."

On Oct. 20, it was announced both Boykin and McMillan made the Conference USA Preseason All-Conference team.

With forward-thinking and improvement-minded people leading the charge, such as Boykin and McMillan, the 49ers could have much to look forward to in the upcoming season and the first match against Appalachian State at home on Nov. 8.



Charlotte women's guard Jada McMillan
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics



Charlotte women's basketball guard Mikayla Boykin
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

The spark plug

CHARLOTTE GUARD, DAZIA LAWRENCE, BECOMES MORE OF A PIVOTAL PIECE ON TEAM IN HER SECOND SEASON

by Bradley Tepper
Staff Writer

As the women's basketball team gears up for a new season, redshirt sophomore Dazia Lawrence is ready to pick up where she left off last season. After getting her first extended playing time last season, she became a pivotal player near the end of the season and in the NCAA tournament for the 49ers.

Lawrence got her career high in points, 20, against Southern Miss in the last regular season game. Then, in the NCAA tournament against Indiana, she came off the bench for seven points and two rebounds.

This season, Lawrence will continue to improve in a more significant role this year with the team.

"[Lawrence] is going to be an impact player for us from start to finish this year," said Head Coach Cara Consuegra. "I was proud of her for everything she overcame to get to a point where she contributed for us last year."

With her success late in the season, Lawrence discussed what she is anticipating for the season ahead:

"Basically, continuing what I started last year. I think at the end of the season, I was getting good reps, and I was ready to play. I'm just ready to continue what I started last year," said Lawrence.

Lawrence has worked hard in the off-season to improve her game on the defensive side. She is also working on building confidence to be able to get more opportunities at scoring.

"I think one thing that is going to help me this year is defense. This off-season, although dealing with an injury, I have been more intentional about my presence on the defensive end. Also building confidence, more confidence in taking my kill shots and looking for opportunities to score. So those are some of the things I'm focused on," said Lawrence.

Dealing with injuries is a challenge for basketball players and is a way to deal with some adversity. Lawrence struggled with some injuries early in her career but has reflected on how that has taught her many lessons.

"You know, anytime you go through an injury, it can be tough, but in the long run, it teaches you a lesson. It also gives you rest that you don't think about at the moment. So, I'm very grateful for all the injuries I've faced because I have gotten something from them. I've learned lessons and have gotten a lot more rest," said Lawrence.

Lawrence was very efficient off the bench last year and will hope to make the transition to produce at a high level this year. While this is a challenge for many players, Lawrence says believing in herself, her team and her coaches will help her reach that goal.

"I think just believing in myself and staying confident and believing in my coaches who believe in me. I know that even if I do make mistakes, my team will have my back, keeping me in high spirits. You know you can never get too high in this game; you can never get too low. So just having a steady level-headed mind this whole season and just being myself, I think that will take me far," said Lawrence.

Being on a team that won the conference championship last year and competed in the NCAA tournament, Lawrence has played in some big games. The team expects to be the same quality of team they were last year and make it another successful season.

"Most of us have been [to the NCAA tournament] and know how it feels. We're going to keep it going and keep the same momentum we had last year. We went through a lot last year, so we know how to do it and deal with adversity better. This year we're going to be more

prepared, more equipped with lessons that we learned last season to bring them over this year, and we're just going to keep that same energy. We want to feel the success again," said Lawrence.

With many other talented players on the team, Lawrence discussed what role she sees herself having this year, "I think I will have multiple roles for different games, whatever my team needs me to be," said Lawrence.

"I think she can be a three-level scorer for us, and she can be one of our best, if not our best defender," said Consuegra. "I have high expectations for her. How she performs this season is going to greater

impact how good of a team we are."

Lastly, with the excitement of a new season around the corner, Dazia talked about her goals and expectations, "Just to have fun this year and have a great season. I tell myself to detach from expectations because when you expect something, and it doesn't happen, you get down on yourself. So, I want to continue what I started last year and have fun," said Lawrence.

Lawrence and the 49ers kick off the season on Tuesday, Nov. 8, against Appalachian State. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m. inside Halton Arena, with the game available to stream on ESPN+.



Charlotte women basketball's Dazia Lawrence (10) in the 2021 season
Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

An unlikely pair

ALY KHALIFA AND JACKSON THREADGILL ARE A WINNING DUO FOR THE 49ERS

by Sam Perry
Staff Writer

When asking players and coaches what it means to be a Charlotte 49er, they always mention the family atmosphere and how players find a new home not just in the city of Charlotte but with their teammates.

This family atmosphere brought together a kid from up the street in Concord, N.C., and another from Alexandria, Egypt, to be more than just roommates or teammates; it brought them together to become true brothers.

The relationship between junior teammates Aly Khalifa and Jackson



Charlotte's Aly Khalifa (15) and Jackson Threadgill (12)
Photos by Chris Crews

Threadgill has benefited the program and what they can accomplish on the court.

Meeting

A chance pairing of Threadgill and Khalifa as roommates has sparked this friendship that is a key to the success of the 49er basketball team.

"I came here in 2020 in August, and he [Threadgill] was my roommate; we both were freshmen. I was injured, though, I was on crutches, and he was living right next to me. Jackson [Threadgill] and I have lived together since freshman year, and when we moved off campus, we moved together, and this year, we are together again. From

the start, we both knew it would be a longtime friendship," said Khalifa.

Friendship on the court

Good communication between teammates and playing for each other more than oneself is a critical component of the system that Head Coach Ron Sanchez has put together for the 49ers. So the relationship between Threadgill and Khalifa is the foundation of what Sanchez's scheme needs.

"I think Jackson [Threadgill] and Aly [Khalifa] have a brotherly connection and appreciate each other off the floor, and it really does help them play. When you watch them play together, they care for one another. I hope that that is something that is injected into the other guys," said Sanchez.

Playing with someone who is practically family gives a competitive advantage because you know the tendencies of the other person and how they play. Khalifa has found this to be crucial not just in-game but in the preparation of games.

"We talk about basketball off the court a lot. We agree on a lot of things; we talk about it and watch film together," said Khalifa. "If you have a best friend off the court, you want to be with him on the court every time, and you want to pass him the ball and see him doing good, and he wants to see you doing good as well. The relationship off the court is important for us on the court together."

Honorary Threadgill

The two players' friendship has cultivated to consider each other as family. With Threadgill's family being local and Khalifa's being from out of the country, Threadgill and Khalifa tend to head over to his family's house and hang out.

"Anytime he [Khalifa] comes to my house, he's just another family member, honestly. He just lays on the couch and plays with my dog. My mom treats him like another son," said Threadgill.

Threadgill has formed a close-knit relationship with not just Threadgill, his teammate but the whole Threadgill

family, becoming an honorary family member.

"He [Threadgill] introduced me to his family, who are like my family now. We are always at his house eating, having fun or just laying down and chilling," said Khalifa.

Favorite Niner moments

Khalifa and Threadgill have made memories on and off the court.

"On the court, the fans calling my name when I'm running in gives me goosebumps. It's just a different feeling when you hear them call your name or just cheering 'Aly, Aly,' you feel like they have confidence and believe in you," said Khalifa.

Threadgill's favorite memories surround his relationships with his teammates.

"On the court, I would say the relationship I built with the guys here, just the camaraderie and getting to know everyone," said Threadgill. "Off the court, I like representing the city being a local guy; being a part of the community, I would say, is the best part."

The team's Costa Rica trip on Aug. 4-11 was something both players said helped the team bond.

"The Costa Rica trip was a great experience. It was humbling getting to see some things that you usually don't see here; you take a lot of things for granted. Going over there allowed us to spend time together and build camaraderie. I think it was essential for us," said Threadgill.

"The Costa Rica trip was my best moment with the team," said Khalifa. "I had never done something like that with the team before. We did a lot of activities together, and we had fun together."

Khalifa, Threadgill and the 49ers kick off the season on Monday, Nov. 7, against Coppin State. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m. inside Halton Arena, with the game available to stream on ESPN+.

2022-23 MEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER & SCHEDULE

Men's Basketball Roster

#	Name	Position	Class
0	Rich Rolf	FW	Fr.
1	Montre' Gipson	G	Grad.
3	Brice Williams	G	R-Jr.
5	Isaiah Folkes	G	So.
10	Nik Graves	G	Fr.
11	Daylen Berry	G	R-Fr.
12	Jackson Threadgill	G	Jr.
14	Regin Larson	G	Sr.
15	Aly Khalifa	FW-C	R-So.
20	Robert Braswell IV	FW	Sr.
21	Musa Jallow	G	Sr.
22	Josh Aldrich	FW	Grad.
24	Igor Milicic Jr.	FW	So.
25	Lu'cye Patterson	G	R-So.
30	Tyler Fearne	G	R-Fr.

Men's Basketball C-USA Schedule

12/22 at UAB
12/29 vs. MTSU
12/31 vs. LA Tech
1/5 at FIU
1/7 at FAU
1/14 vs. UTSA
1/16 vs. UTEP
1/19 at MTSU
1/21 at WKU
1/26 at Rice
2/2 vs. FIU
2/4 vs. FAU
2/9 at UTEP
2/11 at North Texas
2/16 at WKU
2/18 at LA Tech
2/23 vs North Texas
2/25 vs. Rice
3/2 at UTSA
3/4 vs. UAB

A comeback story

AFTER A KNEE INJURY KEPT HIM OUT FOR OVER A YEAR BRICE WILLIAMS RETURNS TO ACTION

by Lily Warlick
Staff Writer

Redshirt junior Brice Williams plans to make his long-awaited return to the Charlotte men's basketball team this season. He redshirted in the 2021-22 season due to a knee injury, keeping him off the court for over a year. Williams said he is ready to get back out there.

"I haven't played in over a year and a half, so I'm excited to be back out on the court," said Williams. "It feels good to be back. Just to be out here with the guys is everything. I love being around them, playing the game and getting better every day."

Head Coach Ron Sanchez said Williams brings a level of experience to the team.

"Brice [Williams] knows exactly how we have to play," said Sanchez. "He brings a different level of experience and has done many good things for us. He is a guy we expect to take another step."

In the 2020-21 season, he was second in scoring on the team in Conference USA (C-USA) games with 11 points per game. While Williams was out, he said he took time to ensure he was ready to return.

"I cleared my head and took a break from the game. I got my body right and, more importantly, my mind right. A lot of the rehab process is taking your time and letting your body heal itself," said Williams.

Coming back after a year and a half is not easy, but Williams had his coaches and teammates by his side.

"The coaches were everything. They were patient, and they gave me everything I needed. Even if that was a ride when I couldn't drive myself, they provided me with the utmost support," said Williams.

During the rehab process, Williams dealt with a medical setback while letting his knee recover.

"I had a setback where my knee became inflamed because I came back a little too early, or maybe I wasn't ready like I thought I was," said Williams. "You

have to be thankful for the good and the bad. You grow in the good and more in the bad."

His injury did not stop him from setting goals. Williams said he needs to step into a leadership role to achieve his goals.

"I just want to show up in practice every day and try to lead. I want to show that I bring value to the defensive end and not just the offensive end," said Williams. "I want to be a consistent player and leader every day."

Last season, the 49ers boasted a 17-14 overall record but fell short in the C-USA Championship tournament. The squad enters the season with high expectations as they look to improve from a year ago. Williams said the squad's mentality hasn't changed, and the main goal is winning.

"The main goal is just to win," said Williams.

"That's the team's goal and my goal. That's above any of my personal goals. Of course, I want to do well and excel on the court, but I'd much rather win. We have to be more mentally resilient. We need to band together. When times get hard, we need to look towards the other teammates for support."

In the offseason, the 49ers made additions in the form of Igor Milicic, Lu'Cye Patterson, Montre' Gipson, Josh Aldrich, Nik Graves and Rich Rolf. So, Williams has had to adapt to playing with new teammates.

"I feel like I fit perfectly with them. The team has every bit we need. We must put it all together so we can have a good season," said Williams.

Williams must prove to his coaches and teammates that he deserves to be on the court.

"I want to do what I can to help the team, whether that's defense, scoring, or shooting. I don't plan on forcing anything or having anything handed to me. I want to do whatever the team needs me to do so we can win," said Williams.

Brice's inspiration is his father, Henry

Williams, the all-time leading scorer at Charlotte. Henry passed away in 2018 at 47 due to kidney disease. Brice is carrying on the family legacy by playing at his dad's alma mater.

"It's very special even though I try not to think about it," said Williams. "I remember we talked about me coming here and playing. It's bittersweet."

Brice said he wants to embody his father's mental toughness, which was instilled in him from a young age.

"My dad was everything to me. It all hit me when he was gone, just being able to see him wake up every morning and have this mental toughness. That really stuck with me. It's something I want to embody," said Williams.

With the season approaching, Williams is taking it one day at a time and is thankful for the opportunity to play basketball again.

"I'm going to take it day by day. It's a blessing to be here, and it's a blessing to be able to play basketball, let alone walk again."

Williams and the 49ers will play their first game on Monday, Nov. 7, against Coppin State. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m. inside Halton Arena.



Charlotte redshirt junior guard Brice Williams (3) defending during a game
Photos courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Make or break

CHARLOTTE LOOKS TO TAKE NEXT STEP IN CRUCIAL 2022-23 SEASON

by Mathis Gaglione
Staff Writer

The 2022-2023 basketball season is right around the corner, and the Charlotte 49er men's team has many unfamiliar faces walking around campus. The 49ers finished eighth in Conference USA (C-USA) and 17-14 last season. The team is looking to take a significant step this season.

Head Coach Ron Sanchez said his expectations for the upcoming season are qualitative.

"My expectations are always qualitative," said Sanchez. "We must eliminate what we call 'losing factors' to go far. The biggest thing for us is to improve on the defensive side of the ball."

A look at last season

The 49ers finished 17-14 overall and 10-8 in C-USA play last season. The team boasted wins against Appalachian State, George Washington and Valparaiso.

The team struggled in big-time matchups against No. 12 Arkansas and Davidson though.

The 49ers then started 4-2 in C-USA play before finishing 10-8. A first-round exit in the C-USA Championship tournament against Rice ended a promising season.

New additions

Charlotte lost eight players from last year's roster, including three from the starting lineup, highlighted by All-Conference guard Jahmir Young.

To recoup the massive roster turnover, Charlotte brought in six new players, including four through the transfer portal. Graduate student Montré Gipson out of Tarleton State, graduate student Josh Aldrich from USC Upstate, sophomore Igor Milicic Jr. from Virginia and redshirt second-year Lu'cye Patterson from Missouri State.

Sanchez also brought in a couple of new freshmen, Rich Rolf and Nik Graves.



Charlotte men's basketball team celebrates on the sidelines
Photo by Chris Crews

"We have a lot of new guys that will have to step into new roles. We don't know what happened until we get out on the floor," said Sanchez.

As for the key 49ers who returned, standout second-year Aly Khalifa will be back this year. Khalifa was a huge bright spot for the team last season. Seeing the development of Khalifa was truly awesome to watch, and now going into year two in the program, there are high expectations of the big man this season.

Jackson Threadgill, Robert Braswell IV and Musa Jallow are also vital contributors from last year's squad who will make an appearance again this season. Brice Williams, returning from an injury that kept him out for a year and a half, will look to bring production to the squad.

"We will need the returners to take big steps if we want to be successful," said Sanchez. "They know what is asked of them and what they need to do."

Although a good portion of the roster has completely changed from a year ago, the 49ers still expect to compete in the conference this year. Charlotte hasn't finished better than No. 8 in the C-USA since 2019, and there's hope the team can eclipse that this season.

Key matchups

The 49ers begin their season with two home games against Coppin State and Maryland Eastern Shore, which will be heavily favored.

Charlotte will then make their way to the Myrtle Beach Invitational from Nov. 17-20, with their first matchup against NCAA tournament team Boise State.

The two big scheduled out-of-conference games for the 49ers are Davidson and Appalachian State. Charlotte will play at Davidson this year and try to retake the Hornet's Nest Trophy on Nov. 29. App State will travel to Halton Arena three days later as the

49ers look to continue their winning streak against the Mountaineers.

Charlotte's out-of-conference games will be over after two contests against Detroit Mercy and Monmouth. C-USA play will begin on Dec. 22 against the reigning conference champs, The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"We're excited to unveil our schedule for the 2022-23 campaign," said Sanchez. "We look forward to competing throughout the non-conference with in-state rivalries and several participants in last year's NCAA tournament. This slate will prepare our program for the challenges that await us in Conference USA."

Projected finish

For the C-USA preseason poll, Charlotte is projected to finish No. 9 in the conference, only ahead of FIU and UTSA. The current 2023 Kenpom rankings have the 49ers sitting at 183 out of 363 eligible schools, and no Charlotte players received preseason All-Conference Honorees.

Takeaways

The 49ers expect to eclipse what they did last year. The conference is still very strong and experienced. The question is if the roster additions will put this team in a position to compete for a conference championship this season.

This is an essential building year for the program, and the younger players will grow in the future.

Looking ahead

The 49ers are seemingly flying under the radar heading into the 2022 season, and that is not always a bad thing. Charlotte will get a chance to take control of the narrative starting Nov. 7 in the team's home opener against Coppin State. Tipoff is scheduled for 6 p.m. and will be available to stream on ESPN+.