

#9

Louisville Cardinals

17-4 (8-1) 3rd in Big East

Previous 5 Games

USF W 80-54
WVU W 69-63
UConn L 51-68
@ St. John's W 60-47
@ ND L 57-90

Next 5 Games

DePaul
Providence
@ Cincinatti
@Georgetown
Marquette

The Louisville Cardinals, after beginning the season very much under the radar, have come on strong of late. They have jumped to number nine in the polls following an undefeated January. Even after a loss to new number one Connecticut, the season is looking bright for a very talented and well coached team from Louisville.

The Cardinals roster is centered around two very talented young players, who unfortunately didn't play their best games against UConn, who handed the Cardinals their first loss since December and their first loss in Big East play. Coach Rick Pitino

is a hall of fame caliber coach who is capable of getting his team up for any game (see UL v. Pitt) but the size and physicality of Connecticut proved to be too much for a young Louisville front line.

After feasting on Big East also-rans over the last four games, No. 6 Louisville (22-5, 13-2 Big East) takes on No. 10 Marquette on Sunday at Freedom Hall. The Cardinals are 4-1 against ranked opponents this season and haven't played a Top 25 team since losing to No. 1 Connecticut on Feb. 2. That game also marked the only time the Cardinals have lost a conference home game this season. A win Sunday would help the Cardinals keep pace with Connecticut (also 13-2 in the Big East). Louisville has won four straight games behind good defense and better shooting. The Cardinals have shot at least 54 percent from the field (including a season-high 67 percent from 3-point range) in three of the last four games. Also, the Cardinals' defense is forcing an average of 16 turnovers during the current win streak.

Since joining the Big East, Louisville has had the upper hand against Marquette. The Cardinals have won two straight and four of five against the Warriors.



Terrence Williams throws one down in the open court.

What We Said:

If you count Earl Clark and Terrence Williams, the backcourt is even better. Clark is a very complete player who can score inside and out. However, it is the 6-9 wings ability to hit the glass that makes him so valuable. He averaged a team high 8.1 rebounds per game on top of his 11.1 points. Clark does not really look like a wing at his size, but he plays like one and Williams is nearly the opposite. He looks like a wing, but he plays like a point guard and a power forward. Williams averaged 11.1 points, 7.2 rebounds, 4.5 assists, 1.3 steals and 0.8 blocks as a junior. Whatever the team needs him to do, Williams can do. The key to the frontcourt will be the development of Samuels. If the freshman can do a little scoring in the paint, it will take a huge effort to stop the Cardinals offense. However, Williams' health could cause some problems. The senior may miss some time early in the year while recovering from knee surgery and if he is not back in full form, Louisville could struggle.