

JACKPOT



PHOTO BY MIA HENNER / THE SUNFLOWER

Clarence Jackson takes a jumpshot point during the game against South Alabama on Nov. 13 inside Charles Koch Arena.

BETTING ODDS TO WIN THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

WICHITA STATE +15,000

MICHIGAN +1,200

ARIZONA +8,000

UNLV +20,000

Shockers ready to test their luck in Las Vegas after undefeated start

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After two straight close games to open up the season, Wichita State picked up their first double digit victory on Tuesday, defeating Tarleton State, 61-45. The Shockers are now set for its biggest test of the season this weekend with the Roman Main Event on Friday. WSU will face Arizona in the quarterfinals and then face Michigan or UNLV on Sunday.

The Shockers have not yet faced a top-100 opponent in KenPom this season, but that will change after this weekend. Arizona (No. 41) and Michigan (No. 3) are both in the top-50, according to the metric.

"I'm excited about the challenge," head coach Isaac Brown said. "These tournaments are big time, they can definitely help you get into the NCAA Tournament with some quality wins. Arizona's a quality basketball team. We've got to play well in order to win these games."

The Shocker offense has had its growing pains through the first three wins, especially during first halves. WSU is currently shooting 35% during the first 20 minutes, but WSU's offense clicked the final 20 minutes ahead of the trip to Vegas. In the second half against Tarleton State, the Shockers shot 52.2% from

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 Head Coach

the field and 45.5% from three.

"I think anytime you can see the ball go through the net, I think that gives you confidence," Brown said. "Now those guys know we can make shots, when we take good shots and drive the basketball, try to create for a teammate. We've got to do that to beat these teams."

WSU's defense looked ready for its biggest test of the season on Friday. The Shockers forced five shot-clock violations in the first half and held the Texans (0-3) to 38.3% shooting (18-47) and 3-16 from three.

The Shockers utilized a three-quarters court press to help take a lead late in the first half. They trailed 20-19 and forced four straight turnovers to go up 23-20. Three more Texans turnovers allowed the Shockers to go up 29-20.

"We know we're very athletic,"

Clarence Jackson said. "Steals turn into buckets. Steals turn into dunks."

Starting center Morris Udeze turned in his best game of the season on Tuesday, scoring a season-high 15 points in the victory. Udeze's 15 points were more than he combined to score in the first two games of the season.

Udeze will be put to the test this weekend as Arizona's frontcourt features Chrisitan Koloko, who has the ninth best block percentage in the country. Teams have also struggled inside the three-point line against the Wildcats, shooting 29.3%. That mark is the lowest in the NCAA.

"It felt like I was forcing it the first two games," Udeze said. "I kind of calmed down in the second half and let the game come to me. It felt like a little break-through."

WSU's star guard Tyson Etienne is expected to make his return to the lineup on Friday, after missing the game against Tarleton State. Etienne came off the bench against South Alabama and scored five points on 1-10 shooting.

"I definitely think he'll be back," Brown said. "He had to sit out tonight, he wasn't feeling well again. He was a real leader on that bench and we needed that. He's one of the better players in the country and he'll be ready to go in Vegas."

ARIZONA

FRIDAY, NOV. 19 | 9 P.M. CT | ESPN

WICHITA STATE

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
 SUNDAY, NOV. 21 | 8:30 P.M. CT | ESPN



THIRD PLACE GAME
 SUNDAY, NOV. 21 | 11 P.M. CT | ESPN2

UNLV

FRIDAY, NOV. 19 | 11:30 P.M. CT | ESPN2

MICHIGAN