



Stat of the week

The Atlantic 10 named four field hockey student-athletes to A-10 honors: VCU graduate student Litiana Field to the A-10 First Team, graduate student Janne Wetzel and senior Lonica McKinney to the A-10 Second Team and freshman Ana Iglesias to the A-10 Rookie Team, according to VCU Athletics.



From across the pond: London native adapts to VCU basketball

ARRICK WILSON
Sports Editor

London native Toibu “Tobi” Lawal visited VCU for the first time this summer, considering his commitment.

“When I came for my visit — I could see myself being here,” Lawal said. “Richmond is a beautiful city.”

The VCU freshman and men’s basketball forward decided VCU was the place for him, committing to the black and gold in May. Lawal has spent the fall semester adjusting to VCU and Richmond as a college student.

Prior to arriving in the United States, Lawal went to the City of London Academy. From there, Lawal went to Lee Academy in Maine where he averaged 14.5 points, 11.4 rebounds and 3.0 blocks, according to VCU Athletics.

The VCU coaching staff found Lawal by a video highlight reel, according to assistant coach J.D. Byers. Byers said when watching the video, the staff was interested in bringing Lawal to Richmond to wear the black and gold.

“He was just impressive, and he had a lot of attributes that fit our style of play,” Byers said. “His character, the work he had put in — it seemed like a really great fit.”

Lawal is entering his fourth year of

playing organized basketball. Lawal said soccer and track were his sports of choice before taking to the court, but he decided to try out basketball due to his 6-foot-8-inch height.

“I enjoyed playing football for a long time, but I don’t know because I started to grow — I stopped playing because obviously, my friends are like, ‘Why don’t you try basketball?’” Lawal said. “It [basketball] can go from zero to 100 in a matter of seconds. It’s really quick, it’s exciting.”

Lawal said he’s found the transition from London to the United States manageable because of his focused mentality.

“It wasn’t really hard for me to adapt. When I came here, I had a goal. I knew what I wanted to get out of coming here,” Lawal said. “Me coming to the states was me taking basketball seriously, me saying I’m going to share this as far as I can.”

Lawal’s concentration has been on display to the coaching staff, as Byers said it has led to massive skill advancements over the offseason.

“He’s focused, he’s very determined and he brings a tremendous work ethic every day,” Byers said. “I think that’s why he continues to make these large improvements.”

VCU head coach Mike Rhoades said Lawal has improved greatly since he joined the black and gold this summer.

“He’s only getting better and better. I mean, how much he’s improved since June fourth, when he got here. It’s been pretty crazy and he’s a great listener,” Rhoades said.

Lawal took 12 credits over the summer, earning three As and a B, according to Rhoades. Rhoades said this is already a sign of Lawal being an exceptional student-athlete.

“He’s a great student. He really cares about learning and he cares about getting better. He’s a pleaser,” Rhoades said. “When you have that mentality as a freshman, he’s gonna play a lot for us.”

Lawal said his experience with summer classes helped him transition to becoming a college student business major at VCU.

“Obviously, it was something that I had to get adjusted to. It wasn’t really easy,” Lawal said. “I think I adjusted well — it helped me, especially coming into the start of school now, because now it seems much easier to handle.”

Lawal said he is looking forward to seeing the distance the black and gold can advance and develop as a team in the approaching season.

“I’m just trying to see how far we get because I know this team is very capable of going far, especially in March,” Lawal said. “I just want to see how far we can get.”

VCU freshman forward Toibu ‘Tobi’ Lawal shoots a free throw in a scrimmage against Shippensburg University on Oct. 29. Photo by Guy Enkh

Sports

pick of the week

MARCUS WILSON
Contributing Writer

For this week’s pick, we’re going to the NBA as the New York Knicks square off against the Utah Jazz at Vivint Arena in Salt Lake City, Utah on Nov. 15.

The Jazz, who were initially predicted to have a lackluster season, have started off their regular season hot, and are looking

to extend their winning record throughout the season, according to ESPN. The Knicks, on the other hand, have a losing record, according to the NBA.

Led by guard Jordan Clarkson, the Jazz’s best basketball has yet to be seen, averaging over 15 points for the season, according to Basketball-Reference. The players are noticing the chip on their

shoulder that has given more motivation, with such bold predictions for their 2023 downfall season, according to the NBA.

“If we keep playing with the same energy, come with the same fight, this is a team that can continue to win games,” Clarkson said in an interview.

The Jazz will continue their winning season by taking the win in front of

a home crowd in Salt Lake City. The cultivation of doubt from sources and the home court advantage gives the Jazz the push they’ll need to come out with this win.

With key players such as forward Malik Beasley and young guard Collin Sexton, the Jazz are looking for a successful season.

Women’s volleyball look to attack A-10 postseason



VCU players huddle during a game against the University of Dayton on Oct. 14.
Photo by Alessandro Latour

THAILON WILSON
Staff Writer

VCU women’s volleyball is the sixth and final guaranteed playoff seed in the Atlantic 10 conference.

The team’s recent win at Duquesne University gave the black and gold an even conference record of eight wins and eight losses, locking them a spot for the Atlantic 10 playoffs.

Throughout the season, senior outside hitter Qairo Bentley has led the team in kills and points helping a numerous amount of times to secure sets for the Rams, according to VCU Athletics.

Bentley has won two A-10 conference player of the week awards and she is third in the entire A-10 in points scored and kills, according to the A-10.

Getting honors was one of her personal goals alongside working hard with the team, Bentley said

“One of my personal goals was to earn like an A-10 weekly honors, which I achieved,” Bentley said. “Then my only other team goal was for everyone to enjoy themselves and come out of a different type of culture and adapt to the change.”

In a similar suit, redshirt sophomore middle blocker Jasmine Knight has had an impactful sophomore campaign so far as she is second in points scored for the team, according to VCU Athletics.

Knight said she is happy her and Bentley can provide for the team in key situations that the team sets up for them.

“It’s really good that our team can count on us and like hard situations and good situations. I’m really grateful for my teammates to be there for me to help me,” Knight said.

The Rams have an even record within the conference but they also currently have an overall record of 13 wins and 15 losses.

Bentley said she is happy with how the season has been going. She sees an upward trend in the team’s play.

“We’re trending upwards on skills and performance wise, and I think our record doesn’t show how hard you’ve been working in the gym week after week,” Bentley said. “We’ve had a lot of adversity to go through this semester with team members injury, stuff like that.”

The Rams have gone through some changes, including the resignation of former head coach Jody Rogers. Former assistant coach Kevin Maureen Campbell is serving as head coach, according to VCU Athletics.

Campbell said she knew coming in that coaching was going to take a lot of work but she is thankful for the amount of effort the team has put in.

“They give me and our staff a lot of energy, and they want to be great. So we have a great group of young women,” Campbell

said. “We’re very lucky.”

The Rams will be hosting their final weekend rally here at the Siegel Center on Nov. 12 and 13 against George Washington University. VCU already has a guaranteed spot in the A-10 playoffs, but the team could potentially move up to the fifth seed after the GWU two-game weekend matchup.

Campbell said the team looks to work for a potential spot in the NCAA tournament while at the A-10 tournament.

“After GWU, we’ll go to A-10 tournaments, and at that point, everybody there’s record is zero. We can then work our way into a NCAA berth,” Campbell said.



VCU redshirt sophomore middle blocker Jasmine Knight looks to spike in a game against Liberty University on Aug. 26.
Photo by Alessandro Latour

GAME RESULTS

NOVEMBER 3
WOMEN’S FIELD HOCKEY - VS. NO. 1 SAINT JOSEPH’S LOST 2-1 <i>Atlantic 10 Tournament</i>
NOVEMBER 4
MEN’S SOCCER - VS. NO. 6 DAYTON LOST 1-0 <i>Atlantic 10 Tournament</i>
WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL - AT DUQUESNE LOST 3-1
NOVEMBER 5
WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL - AT DUQUESNE WON 3-2
NOVEMBER 7
WOMEN’S BASKETBALL - VS. LAFAYETTE WON 65-42
MEN’S BASKETBALL - VS. MANHATTAN WON 73-56