

25 Hard: Week 1

SM's Top 25 rankings for the week of Monday November 4th, 2024

Written by Sean Murawski // SM Sports

The sights are set, the goals have been written, the whiteboard material needs no editing: San Antonio, Texas, April 5th, 2025. Who will be the four teams competing for college basketball's most precious prize?

Today, Monday November 4th, 2024, is the day when the journey to the Lone Star State begins. All of the intrigue, excitement, and tension will hit the hardwood for five months of great basketball and even greater discourse. Does UConn have it in the tank to threepeat? How will John Calipari fare at his new home in Arkansas? Will Mark Sears lead Alabama to the top of the promised land for the first time in program history? Is this *finally* the year for Gonzaga? Which team that we aren't talking about will end the hopes of the teams we can't shut up about?

It all will get answered this season, but for now, let's just enjoy the ride. The ride begins with an impressive slate of opening week games. We don't have much room to breathe from the jump, as **Baylor and Gonzaga** faceoff on opening night (11:30 pm, ESPN2). **UConn** kicks off their title defense (again) when they play **Sacred Heart at home** (Wednesday 11/6, 7 pm, FS1). The weekend slate culminates in two more titanic top 25 matchups. **North Carolina vs. Kansas** at Allen Fieldhouse (Friday 11/8, 7 pm, ESPN) will be followed on Saturday 11/9 by an ESPNU doubleheader: **Baylor vs. Arkansas** (7:30 pm), and then **Auburn vs. Houston** (9:30 pm).

Elsewhere, AP and SM #1 team **Kansas** begins their campaign against **Howard** at home tonight on ESPN+ at 8 pm. **Alabama** looks to take last season's historical success one step further, beginning their quest tonight against **UNC Asheville** at 9 pm on ESPNU.

We can talk all we want about projections, predictions, and conjecture. However, the only way to reach our final destination is to take the first step. Once again, let's enjoy the ride. Happy hooping!

****Bold: indicates AP top 25 team****

****Check smsports.net every Monday for updated weekly rankings****

SM Top 25 Rankings: Week 1		
1. Kansas (0-0)	Big 12	vs. Howard; vs. North Carolina
2. Alabama (0-0)	SEC	vs. UNC Asheville; vs. Arkansas State
3. Houston (0-0)	Big 12	vs. Jackson State; vs. Auburn
4. Duke (0-0)	ACC	vs. Maine; vs. Army
5. Connecticut (0-0)	Big East	vs. Sacred Heart; vs. New Hampshire
6. Gonzaga (0-0)	West Coast	vs. Baylor ; vs. Arizona State
7. Baylor (0-0)	Big 12	at Gonzaga; vs. Arkansas
8. Arizona (0-0)	Big 12	vs. Canisius; vs. Old Dominion
9. Iowa State (0-0)	Big 12	vs. Mississippi Valley State; vs. Kansas City
10. North Carolina (0-0)	ACC	vs. Elon; at Kansas
11. Tennessee (0-0)	SEC	vs. Gardner-Webb; at Louisville
12. Purdue (0-0)	Big Ten	vs. Texas A&M-CC; vs. Northern Kentucky
13. Auburn (0-0)	SEC	vs. Vermont; vs. Houston
14. Texas A&M (0-0)	SEC	at UCF; vs. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
15. Creighton (0-0)	Big East	vs. UT Rio Grande; vs. Fairleigh Dickinson
16. Texas (0-0)	SEC	vs. Ohio State; vs. Houston Christian
17. Marquette (0-0)	Big East	vs. Stony Brook; vs. George Mason
18. Cincinnati (0-0)	Big 12	vs. Arkansas-Pine Bluff; vs. Morehead State
19. Arkansas (0-0)	SEC	vs. Lipscomb; vs. Baylor
20. Florida (0-0)	SEC	vs. South Florida; vs. Jacksonville
21. Indiana (0-0)	Big Ten	vs. SIUE; vs. Eastern Illinois
22. Kentucky (0-0)	SEC	vs. Wright State; vs. Bucknell
23. UCLA (0-0)	Big Ten	vs. Rider; vs. New Mexico
24. St. John's (0-0)	Big East	vs. Fordham; vs. Quinnipiac
25. Ole Miss (0-0)	SEC	vs. Long Island; vs. Grambling State

In the Hunt: Illinois, Xavier, Texas Tech, Wake Forest, Rutgers

The Big 3: Matchups to Watch

****All rankings refer to the SM Poll, not the AP poll*

Monday, November 4th

(7) Baylor at (6) Gonzaga (Spokane, WA)

11:30 pm, ESPN

Friday, November 8th

(10) North Carolina at (1) Kansas (Lawrence, KS)

7 pm, ESPN2

Saturday, November 9th

(13) Auburn at (3) Houston (Houston, TX)

9:30 pm, ESPNU

Sean Murawski is a writer for his own personal sports website, smsports.net. He publishes weekly columns and rankings on men's college basketball, as well as coverage columns for the MLB.