

UConn overwhelms South Carolina for 12th title



Geno Auriemma added yet another jewel to his Hall of Fame crown Sunday, as UConn overwhelmed South Carolina 82–59 to win its record 12th NCAA women’s basketball national championship — all under Auriemma.

The Huskies came out sharp and never let up, leading by double digits at halftime and turning the game into a rout by the fourth quarter. It was the first time in Dawn Staley’s three championship appearances that her team fell short, and the Gamecocks struggled mightily to keep pace on either end.

Azzi Fudd poured in 24 points and Paige Bueckers added 17, finishing her storied UConn career with a long-awaited national title. Bueckers also passed Maya Moore — who was in attendance — for the most career NCAA tournament points by a UConn player with 477.

The story of the night, though, may have been freshman forward Sarah Strong. She tallied 24 points, 15 rebounds, five assists and three blocks, becoming the first UConn freshman to post four double-doubles in a single NCAA tournament. Her 114 total points in this year's tournament set a new Division I record for a freshman.

South Carolina, which entered 35-3 and seeking back-to-back titles, never found its rhythm. The Gamecocks shot just 34% from the field and had no player score in double figures until late in the fourth quarter. They were outscored 46–33 in the second half and succumbed to UConn's defensive pressure.

With the win, Auriemma improves to 12-1 in national title games and reestablishes UConn's dominance at the top of the sport. It's the Huskies' first championship since 2016 and a defining moment in a new era powered by a blend of veterans like Bueckers and Fudd and rising stars like Strong.

The dynasty isn't done yet — it just reloaded.