



THE DIAMONDBACK

2021-22  
BIG TEN  
BASKETBALL

# SEASON PREVIEW

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO MARYLAND BASKETBALL



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 3 MIDNIGHT MILE

## 4 MEN'S SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

## 5 ERIC AYALA, DONTA SCOTT AND HAKIM HART RETURN

## 6 WOMEN'S SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

## 7 WOMEN'S STATE OF THE PROGRAM

## 8 MEN'S 2020-21 SEASON RECAP

## 9 WOMEN'S 2020-21 SEASON RECAP

## 10 FOLLOWING IN CHLOE BIBBY'S FOOTSTEPS

## 11 MEN'S TRANSFERS

## 12 MEN'S MEDIA DAYS

## 13 WOMEN'S MEDIA DAYS

## 14 2021-22 MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROSTERS

### THE DIAMONDBACK

Founded 1910,  
independent  
since 1971.

ANGELA MECCA  
Editor in chief

3150 S. Campus Dining Hall,  
College Park, Md., 20742  
(301) 314-8200

<https://dbknews.com/contact-us/>

THE DIAMONDBACK:  
Job openings: <https://dbknews.com/jobs/>  
Newsletter: <https://ter.ps/DBKNL>

### FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



ADVERTISING:  
ads@dbknews.com  
(301) 276-5770

Ethan Tuttle  
Advertising Manager

### WRITTEN BY:

Jacob Richman  
Katie Manganelli  
Kevin McNulty  
Logan Hill  
Varun Shankar  
Will Beltran  
James Gordon  
Eli Cohen

### COPY EDITED BY:

Angela Mecca  
Ella Sherman  
Zoe Pierce  
Jessica Umbro  
Devon Milley  
Mira Varghese  
Julia Rich  
Courtney Cohn  
Ella Sherman  
Zoe Pierce  
Nataraj Shivaprasad  
Gabrielle Lewis

DESIGNED BY: Ogenna Umeozulu  
Vincent Petroni  
PHOTO EDITING BY: Julia Nikhinson

FRONT COVER PHOTO BY: Julia Nikhinson  
BACK COVER PHOTO BY: Joe Ryan

## READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Dive deep into **data**

Investigate the powerful

Produce stories with **impact**

Howard Center fellowships and aid available for graduate students. For more information: [go.umd.edu/Howard](https://go.umd.edu/Howard)



HOWARD  
CENTER  
FOR INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM  
SEEDS: HOWARD FOUNDATION

PHILIP MERRILL  
COLLEGE of JOURNALISM

## THE DIAMONDBACK daily

Stay in the loop by signing up for The Diamondback's newsletter!



# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MIDNIGHT MILE

Maryland men's basketball and its fans reconnect for 50th anniversary of Midnight Mile

By Jacob Richman | @JacobHRichman | Senior staff writer

The last time Maryland men's basketball was truly among its fans, members of the 2019-20 roster were raising the Big Ten championship trophy.

But as the clock hit 12:03 a.m. a new Maryland squad was surrounded by its fans once again, racing from the start line of Kehoe Track at Ludwig Field for the 50th anniversary of the Midnight Mile.

"I kind of took it for granted, the last ones," coach Mark Turgeon said. "Just watching all the kids, how happy they are, cause they're the ones that missed out ... to see especially the freshman and sophomores who haven't been a part of Maryland basketball before, it's really cool."

It only felt right that the first major fan event after a year-and-a-half hiatus was perhaps one of the most well-known athletic traditions at the university.

### ORIGINS OF THE MIDNIGHT MILE

Former Terps coach Lefty Driesell began the tradition of the Midnight Mile in 1971. Wanting to get the extra head start on the official start date for basketball via NCAA rules, Driesell required his team to run one mile around the track at Maryland Stadium a few minutes after midnight.

Despite not promoting the workout heavily, about 800 students showed up to watch after word spread around.

That 1971-72 season was the beginning of an era of sustained success the Terps had never experienced before.

In his first two seasons at the helm of Maryland basketball, Driesell's teams had gone 27-25. But the same year the Midnight Mile was born, the Terps went 27-5, reaching as high as No. 5 in the AP Poll.

That unprecedented season opened up a five-year stretch of 22-plus win seasons and three top-10 finishes, a monumental change for a program that had only placed on an AP Poll four times in the previous 48 seasons.

"That's when basketball changed around here," Turgeon said. "We've been good for a long time, but it started with Lefty and that team."

Now, the Midnight Mile is an all-out fan event and beloved tradition.

Turgeon said he hadn't had the chance to speak with Driesell before this year's event, but knew the former coach would love getting to see how his tradition has continued to grow. This year's Midnight Mile drew record numbers of runners, with more than 1600 students joining the dash.

"He knows this is going on and I know it makes him really happy," he said. "When he sees the video of this tonight, that was a lot of kids ... that was really cool."

And since Driesell began the midnight celebration, schools across the country

"That same kind of feel that I had before," Ayala said. "I just remember everybody being on the court after and just a lot of celebration, a lot of smiles."

It wasn't Alec Musheno's first mile either.

Musheno, a senior government and politics and management major, was at the last iteration of the season's kickoff. But this year brought a whole new experience.

"This was far more people than the first time," he said. "And it just feels like the same energy that the team always has."

Musheno said he loves the premise of the event, particularly as someone who used to run cross country.



JULIAN REESE throws a Midnight Mile shirt into a crowd of students on Oct. 21, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

have replicated the concept with their own events, but Maryland prides itself on being the first.

### RETURNERS TO THE MIDNIGHT MILE

This wasn't Eric Ayala's first time at the Midnight Mile.

The senior has returned to play for the Terps despite initially testing the waters with entering his name in the NBA draft. While former teammate Aaron Wiggins took the leap, Ayala chose to return to Maryland for one last go at taking his team on a run in the NCAA tournament.

And as a fan-favorite from that 2020 squad, getting to be with his supporters again brought back the sensations of raising the conference trophy.

And he knows getting to go out and support the team at a celebration means a lot to the members of the roster makes it all the more special.

"It's just a really fun way to get out," Musheno said. "It's midnight, I'm at UMD with a thousand people running for this amazing basketball team that I'm just excited to be back and go to the games."

### NEWCOMERS TO THE MIDNIGHT MILE

It was Fatts Russell's first time, not just at the Midnight Mile but around the Maryland faithful.

After transferring from Rhode Island during the offseason, Russell finally got his first taste of Terp fans, and he said it only amped up his excitement for his upcoming

debut for the Terps.

"It's fun. Coming from my old school we didn't have things like this," Russell said. "Just to be able to see everybody, see all our fans is good."

It was Brady Hammann's first go at the mile too.

Hammann, a sophomore information systems major, was a big Maryland basketball supporter last season. But only being able to watch on television as the Terps fought their way through the Big Ten limited his excitement.

This year Hammann got to meet members of the team, a moment that seemed to surprise him.

"When [Turgeon] called them our classmates, it was pretty cool because I never really thought about the basketball team like that," Hammann said.

While sophomores finally had the chance to meet much of the team they spent the last year watching from quarantine, freshman got to meet the players they plan to cheer on for the rest of their time at Maryland.

And for some, after their senior years of high school were underwhelming due to the pandemic, this was an introduction that only served to excite.

"Last year, I really didn't get much of a senior experience, so being able to be here for my first year and getting to be around so many people who have so much school spirit is really, really cool for me," Jordan Lamprides, a freshman government and politics major, said.

The Terps revel in their student section and having them back will be a gamechanger against a loaded conference schedule.

So with Maryland men's basketball back boasting a highly-touted squad, the connection between fan and team is back in College Park to join them.

"You can just feel the energy around here," Russell said. "Everybody just keep telling us good luck this year and we're excited. That's definitely going to get us pumped for the season."



# MEN'S SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

*A first look at Maryland men's basketball 2021-22 schedule*

By Will Beltran | @Willy\_b28 | Terps Watch writer

## Nonconference home stretch

Maryland men's basketball begins non-conference play with a five-game home stretch. With the pandemic forcing fans to watch the 2020-21 season from their TVs, seeing Xfinity Center rocking again will be a delight. The Terps open against Quinnipiac, followed by games against George Washington, Vermont, George Mason and Hofstra. Playing at home against unranked opponents, Maryland should be favored to win each of these games.

## Baha Mar Hoops Bahamas Championship

As College Park's weather gets colder, a late semester trip to Nassau, Bahamas, should be a nice change for the Terps. To begin the 2021 Bahamas Championship, Maryland will play the Richmond Spiders.

If the Terps beat Richmond, they will play the winner of Mississippi State vs. Louisville. If Maryland loses to Richmond, they will play a consolation game. While neither Louisville nor Mississippi State are ranked, both teams received votes in the preseason AP poll, indicating they are formidable squads.

## Hokie Dokie

Typically a highly anticipated game for Maryland fans, the Big Ten/ACC Challenge rekindles old rivalries once a year. Instead of getting to bid farewell to Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski on his retirement tour, College Park will welcome Virginia Tech on Dec. 1. Virginia Tech joined the ACC in 2004 and never established a rivalry with Maryland to the likes of Duke, North Carolina and Virginia. The Hokies are a talented squad,

however. Although unranked in the pre-season AP poll, Virginia Tech is returning three starters from last year's NCAA tournament team. Despite the lack of history, this should be a good one in Xfinity.

## Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational and rounding out non-conference play

Maryland will play Northwestern in what will be the first Big Ten conference game of the year. Next, the Terps will travel to Brooklyn, New York, for this year's Basketball Hall of Fame Invitational. Maryland will take on the Florida Gators for the third time ever. The Terps are 1-1 against the Gators, so the winner will hold the all-time head-to-head record. Regardless of the outcome, this will be a unique experience for both teams. Maryland will then wrap up

nonconference play with two home games against Loyola (Maryland) and Brown.

## Big Ten Play... and a game of note

Maryland's final 19 games will be in the Big Ten, which is stacked yet again. Five teams were included in the preseason AP poll in No. 21 Maryland, No. 17 Ohio State, No. 11 Illinois, No. 7 Purdue and No. 6 Michigan. Michigan State, Indiana and Rutgers also received votes. The Terps are not Big Ten favorites right now, but should contend for the title. Mark your calendar for Jan. 18 when Maryland plays at Michigan. In three games last season, the two teams had on-court scuffles, Twitter beefs and head coach ejections. This will be a fun one to watch.

Discover all that WAAVE has to offer:

- 10% off for all UMD Students and Faculty
- FREE New Patient Registration on-site
- Ask us how to get your medical card for FREE
- Referral program: bring a friend and save!!

Stay well. Stay buoyant. With WAAVE.

Open 7 days a week

Monday - Saturday 10am - 9pm • Sunday 11am - 7pm

7327 Hanover Parkway, Suite A, Greenbelt, MD 20770  
240.436.0600 • mdwaave.com • greenbelt@mdwaave.com

# BACK FOR MORE

*Veteran players bring experience and leadership to Maryland men's basketball*

By Jacob Richman | @JacobHRichman | Senior staff writer

When Eric Ayala and Fatts Russell are in the weight room together, they talk about having never made it past the opening weekend of the NCAA tournament.

Ayala's Maryland men's basketball squad has been ousted in the second round in two consecutive tournaments, first by LSU in 2019 and then Alabama in 2021. And Russell's former team — Rhode Island — was knocked out in the second round in 2018 by Duke.

The guard tandem has their sights set high this season, and they're using the promise of a deep run in the tournament to motivate them during their final seasons in college basketball.

"We evaluate each other off of, 'do we feel like this is Final Four energy?'" Russell said. "If we don't have that energy, [we] stop it."

Ayala delved into the NBA draft process over the offseason, but instead returned for another run with the Terps. He said he learned a lot while looking into the world of professional basketball.

"Going through that, I got to learn a lot about my game," Ayala said Oct. 12.

He said that he learned where he needed to improve to play to his full potential if he were ever to take the court in the NBA. But for now, he's focused on the team coach Mark Turgeon has assembled in College Park.

There's one thing that's certain — this is Ayala's team.

The senior has been a cog in many strong Maryland teams with the likes of Anthony Cowan Jr., Bruno Fernando, Jalen Smith and Aaron Wiggins.

The only difference is that Ayala is now the frontman.

While Turgeon was incredibly active in the transfer portal, it's the returning players that will lead a highly-touted and more athletic Terp squad.

"We're older," Turgeon said. "That's huge in college basketball. You look at the last several champions, they've been old."

Ayala isn't the lone member of the squad bringing back a Maryland track record.

Donta Scott and Hakim Hart are the two

most experienced members, outside of Ayala, to have dawned a Terps jersey over the last few seasons.

And with the trio entering this year with more tools in their chest, they have the chance to raise their team to new heights.

"Donta's gotten a lot better," Turgeon said. "Eric was humbled through the NBA process, so he's hungry. Hakim's put on about 15 pounds of muscle, he looks like a whole different player."

Ayala began to really find his legs last season with no clear superstar on the roster in the pandemic-riddled 2020-21 season. He averaged a team-high 15.1 points per game and became the clutch player down the stretch.

In the final four games of the season — two Big Ten tournament and two NCAA tournament games — Ayala averaged 19 points and 6.3 rebounds. He took a noticeable step forward in leading a Maryland team that went in with less hype than previous seasons.

Now, with his stock as high as it has been in his collegiate career — earning a spot on the Jerry West Award 2022 Preseason Watch List — he gets to make his mark on Terp basketball while prepping for his future.

"He realized there were some things like leadership, being more consistent, becoming a better defender," Turgeon said of Ayala's return to Maryland. "I think it's the best thing for him."

For Scott, leadership has come to the forefront of his impact on the Terps. It was clear at the team's media day he had already become one of the primary leaders in the squad.

As the team went through an open practice, Turgeon stopped the team midway through a drill. But it wasn't Turgeon that did the coaching.

Scott was the one to step forward and walk Qudus Wahab through what the drill was supposed to look like.

"That's part of his leadership, that's part of his growth and his maturation that now he's becoming that extension of coach Turgeon," assistant coach Bruce Shingler said. "He's talking, he's leading. When things are going the wrong way he's grabbing guys



GUARD ERIC AYALA during Maryland men's basketball's 68-57 win over Michigan State on March 11, 2021, at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

and putting them together."

A member of the Karl Malone Award 2020 Preseason Watch List — an award ultimately given to the top power forward in the nation — Scott's ability on the court is well known. He has good size at 6-foot-8 and displayed his strong three-point shot, making 43.8 percent of his attempts, fifth all-time at Maryland.

But his leadership is principal as the Terps bring in a new-look squad between transfers and young players.

Hart has arguably done the most personal work over the offseason. Turgeon proudly said Hart had put on 15 pounds of muscle the past months. And it shows.

While his stats don't scream success yet, his coaches and teammates are confident in the steps he has taken as of late.

"He's a very smart player," Scott said. "He has [pushed] himself over the year to get stronger. It's a slow process but it's getting there."

With his physical transformation and additional year of experience, Hart knows he has begun evolving into a leader on the team.

"My leadership has developed on the court, talking more on defense and offense. Just making sure the younger guys know what they're doing," Hart said.

And the Terps have their fair share of young players, with James Graham III, Julian Reese and Pavlo Dziuba — who all turned 18 over the summer — looking to become helpful pieces to the team.

Knowledgeable players like Ayala, Scott and Hart bring in young talent.

In previous seasons, Maryland has been a pleasant surprise in the tournament or even a serious threat to go for its second national championship.

"We've had some teams that overachieved that made the tournament and won a game, probably weren't supposed to," Turgeon said. "We've had a team or two that didn't go as far as we thought."

But Turgeon has no reservations that this team, led by its veterans, can make the deep run they've wanted for years.

"I think this team has a chance to do that because we're gonna be a little bit deeper, a little more experienced," he said.



# WOMEN'S SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

*A first look at Maryland women's basketball 2021-22 schedule*

By Will Beltran | @Willy\_b28 | Terps Watch writer

## First five games

Last season, Maryland women's basketball led the NCAA in points scored. Maryland retained all their starters for the 2021-22 season and are ranked No. 4 in the AP preseason poll. The Terps' first five games are against nonconference opponents in Longwood, Villanova, James Madison, Mount St. Mary's, and UNC Wilmington. Every game but James Madison will be at home. Each opponent in this slate is unranked, so the Terps should start hot.

## Baylor and Bahama drama

The Terrapins' first test is against preseason No. 7 Baylor. The Bears are

coming off an Elite Eight appearance. However, longtime head coach Kim Mulkey departed for LSU this off-season. Hired in 2000, Mulkey brought Baylor to elite status by winning three national championships. Mulkey was replaced by former WNBA head coach Nicki Collen. Under Collen, Baylor will still be a tough out. Last season, Baylor ranked No. 5 in scoring offense, so expect a shootout at Xfinity Center.

The 2021 Baha Mar Hoops Pink Flamingo Championship may be in the vacation destination of Nassau, Bahamas, but the Terrapins will not be relaxing. Maryland will start against preseason No. 5 NC State. Like the Terps, NC State was upset in the Sweet



GUARD ASHLEY OWUSU attempts a shot during Maryland women's basketball's 104-84 win over Iowa on March 13, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

Sixteen last year and are returning all their best players. Following NC State, Maryland will play No. 3 Stanford. Stanford was the national champion last season and are capable of another championship this year. If Maryland goes undefeated against this trio, they will have a legitimate argument for best in the nation.

## Final big time matchup before Big Ten matchups

In the Big Ten/ACC challenge, Maryland will host the Miami Hurricanes. Maryland should be favored to win this game as Miami is unranked and has missed the NCAA tournament the past two seasons. Following, Maryland will play their first two Big Ten games of the season at Rutgers and against Purdue at home.

The pattern should be clear now, Maryland will have played the pre-season No. 7, No. 5 and No. 3 teams in order. Next up, a battle at No. 1 South Carolina. The Gamecocks lost

to Stanford in the Final Four last year but are loaded for another deep run. Under head coach Dawn Staley, South Carolina has blossomed into an elite program over the last decade, winning it all in 2017. The Terps will need to adhere to their "All gas, no brakes," mantra more than ever to defeat the preseason favorite on the road. Maryland finishes nonconference play at Coppin State.

## Big Ten play

After Maryland's nonconference gauntlet, the Terps begin the Big Ten gauntlet. The conference is once again stacked with five teams in the pre-season AP top 25. The poll includes No. 17 Ohio State, No. 11 Michigan, No. 9 Iowa, No. 8 Indiana and No. 4 Maryland. Michigan State received votes as well. Being the reigning back-to-back Big Ten champions and returning nearly the entire team from last season, the Terps are the Big Ten favorites yet again.

# WOMEN'S STATE OF THE PROGRAM

*Despite returning its starters, Maryland's first five is uncertain*

By Kevin McNulty | @kevinfmcnulty | Senior staff writer

Angel Reese joined Maryland women's basketball as the highest-ranked recruit in the history of the program. Coming in at No. 2 in ESPN's 2020 recruiting rankings, Reese had lofty expectations for her freshman year.

However, the Baltimore native broke her foot just four games into the 2020-21 season, and she was sidelined for 12 weeks. By the time Reese returned, Maryland was 16-2, going 13-1 without her. The Terps had figured out how to win in her absence.

"Angel went through a really hard year, lost a lot of her freshman campaign," coach Brenda Frese said. "Her being healthy is the most important thing, and then being consistent. She didn't really get that opportunity, losing so much of her first year."

Reese had started each of Maryland's first four games, and when she went down, Tennessee transfer Mimi Collins slid seamlessly into the starting lineup. Reese was no longer a starter when she came back from her injury months later.

In a series of tweets and retweets, Reese indicated her displeasure with her playing time in the NCAA tournament, starting after the Terps' dismantling of Alabama in the round of 32.

But a few weeks ago, Frese reminded everyone she prioritizes winning.

"Obviously when you come here to Maryland, you're gonna sacrifice many minutes in order to win championships," Frese said. "I mean that's what all championship teams have to go through. You have to have the depth, the talent, the competition."

And with the majority of the team returning this season, Frese's squad has those qualities. The Terps will begin the season ranked No. 4 in the AP poll, three spots higher than they were in the final poll last season.

Even though this year's team is almost all returners, there are certainly developments to look out for as the Terps embark on another quest for a national championship.

Although Reese returned to a diminished role last year, Collins shined as a member of the starting five. The red-shirt sophomore was a key contributor to Maryland's 26 wins, averaging 10.6 points and 6.2 rebounds on the season.

Collins was one of six players to average double-digit points per game last year, along with Ashley Owusu (17.9), Diamond Miller (17.3), Chloe Bibby (13.2), Katie Benzan (12.7) and Reese (10.0).

"It's a great luxury to be able to have — just talent across the board," Frese said. "It really was, to be able to see Mimi come into her own and have the kind of season that she had."

The positive spin on the Collins-Reese dilemma was that Maryland had six players that could make a legitimate case for starting minutes. The negative spin was that the second-ranked recruit in the country from last year was coming off the bench.

But rather than worrying about their starters, the Terps are choosing to highlight the advantages of their often-in-surmoundable scoring depth.

"I think our offensive chemistry is just phenomenal, and you're only going to see it get better this year," Bibby said. "I don't think anyone cares about who gets the bucket or who gets those two points. Sometimes it's more about the assist or the play, and I love that about this team."

Reese doubled down on Bibby's assertion ahead of the upcoming season, reiterating this year's focus is on playing team basketball. She said this season is "like a refresh" for her, and she's ready to pick up where she left off before her injury.

"It doesn't really matter to me, whatever coach needs me to do," Reese said. "If I just have to rebound, if I have to just cheer on the side, if I have to defend, whatever I need to do to win the cham-

pionship because it's bigger than me, it's for the team."

In addition to its high preseason ranking, Maryland is favored to win the Big Ten again, according to the conference's head coaches and media panel. That's not a surprise for a team that will return the majority of the production from the nation's highest scoring offense last season.

Maryland prided itself on sharing the basketball last season. The Terps maintain that their scoring depth wreaks havoc for opposing teams, and it will likely carry them far in March.

"We're very unguardable, and we're very versatile," Collins said. "Every single opponent, they have to figure out how to guard all of us at once."

No matter who's on the floor, Maryland is built to win. There's no denying that.



MARYLAND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PLAYERS comfort coach Brenda Frese following her speech. The Terps won the Big Ten Tournament after beating Iowa 104-84 at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on March 13, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK



# TERPS WIN YOU GET FREE PIZZA!

Order Any Large Pizza And Get A 2nd Large Pizza  
Free Each Time Terps Men's Basketball Win!\*

\*Available all season long. Promo valid only on the following day  
when **TERPS WIN!** 2nd pizza of equal or lesser value.

PROMO CODE: TERPSWIN

COLLEGE PARK 301.864.0300  
7201-B Baltimore Ave. College Park, MD 20740  
[www.paisanospizza.com](http://www.paisanospizza.com)



# 2020-21 MEN'S BASKETBALL RECAP

*Looking back on a season where Maryland exceeded expectations*

By Logan Hill | @Logahilltopper | Terps Watch Editor



GUARD ERIC AYALA motions following a free throw during Maryland men's basketball's 68-57 win over Michigan State on March 11, 2021 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

After winning the Big Ten conference title for the first time ever in 2020, Maryland men's basketball returned to the NCAA tournament and advanced to the round of 32 for the second time in three years.

Without star point guard Anthony Cowan Jr. and standout sophomore Jalen Smith following the 2019-20 season, the Terps returned the rest of that season's nucleus, while also adding a handful of players via the transfer portal and its 2020 recruiting class.

Led by a core of Darryl Morsell, Eric Ayala, Aaron Wiggins and Donta Scott, while also getting contributions from

the Crimson Tide transfer Galin Smith, Boston College transfer Jairus Hamilton and sophomore Hakim Hart, Maryland finished the season 17-14, falling to Alabama in the NCAA tournament's round of 32.

When the season began, expectations were relatively low for coach Mark Turgeon's squad after losing their top two players from the 2020 season. There were questions about post play, as well as who would emerge in the lead role on offense. Those questions continued to loom as Maryland dropped back-to-back games to Clemson and Rutgers after starting off 4-0. Maryland dropped its second game of conference



GUARD HAKIM HART during Maryland men's basketball's 68-57 win over Michigan State on March 11, 2021 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

play on Christmas Day, falling to Purdue by three points.

Maryland's fortunes changed a little following a win over No. 6 Wisconsin three days later in Madison, Wisconsin, giving the team its first of three wins over ranked teams in a month's time.

Consistency was a problem for the Terps throughout the season, and eight days into February, they were 10-10 with their prospects of returning to the NCAA tournament looking bleak. However, a five-game win streak in February helped

them finish the regular season 15-12.

A win over Michigan State in the Big Ten tournament all but locked up a trip to the Big Dance for Maryland, which secured a ten seed and a first round matchup against seventh-seeded Connecticut.

The Terps took down the Huskies 63-54, thanks in part to 23 points from Ayala. They would fall in the next round to the Crimson Tide, ending a season that looked a lot better at the end, than it did at the beginning.

# 2020-21 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL RECAP

*Looking back on one of the best offensive teams in Maryland history*

By Logan Hill | @Logahilltopper | Terps Watch Editor



THE MARYLAND women's basketball team celebrates as the final buzzer sounds and they win the Big Ten Tournament on March 13, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

After winning their 5th Big Ten title and also winning the Big Ten tournament before the coronavirus pandemic canceled the NCAA tournament, Maryland women's basketball had their sights set on more two seasons ago.

Losing Kaila Charles, who went on to the WNBA, along with Stephanie Jones, Blair Watson and Sara Vujacic to graduation, the Terps needed their younger players to step into a bigger role. Compounding these graduations, Taylor Mikesell, Shakira Austin and Olivia Owens transferred to Oregon, Ole Miss and Kentucky, respectively. With seven contributors from the 2019-20 team gone, Maryland had to look elsewhere for production.

The Terps added a handful of transfers, two of whom went on to play substantial roles. Chloe Bibby, a senior transfer forward from Mississippi State, along with

Katie Benzan, a senior transfer guard from Harvard, both became 2020-21 starters, alongside Ashley Owusu, Diamond Miller and Mimi Collins.

Scoring was no problem for Maryland, as they led the nation in points per game at 90.8.

Perennially one of the top programs in the entire country, the Terps dealt with some adversity to begin the season. After taking down Davidson to start the season with a win, Maryland fell to No. 24 Missouri State in the Gulf Coast Showcase, dropping to 1-1.

From there, with a handful of games cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, they reeled off 10 straight wins, including three wins over ranked opponents. The Terps dropped a heartbreaker in Columbus, Ohio, falling to No. 17 Ohio State. Despite a furious comeback, the Buckeyes came out on top, ending a streak of 24 consecutive Big Ten wins for coach Brenda Frese's team.



MIMI COLLINS and Diamond Miller bump shoulders before Maryland women's basketball's 104-84 win over Iowa on March 13, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

Topping a 10-game win streak is difficult, but that is exactly what the Terps did after that loss, reeling off 15 straight victories, taking first place in the conference and another victory in the Big Ten tournament in the process.

Coming into the NCAA tournament as a two seed, Maryland cruised to the Sweet Sixteen, knocking off Mount St. Mary's and Alabama before taking on Texas. After scoring at least 80 points in seven straight contests, the Terps were stifled by the Longhorns, who knocked off Maryland, 64-61. Owusu and Miller were named All-Big

Ten First Team, with Benzan making the Second Team and Bibby and Collins being named Honorable Mentions. Frese took home Big Ten Coach of the Year and was named National Coach of the Year by ESPN, the AP and The Athletic.

One of the most exciting teams in all of college basketball a season ago, Maryland came up short of its goal of a national championship, making it to the brink in style. With all five starters and key depth returning from a season ago, the Terps should be poised to march toward another chance at a National Championship in 2021-22.



# FOLLOWING IN BIBBY'S FOOTSTEPS

Chloe Bibby sets the tone for Maryland leadership and inspires those who will succeed her

By Varun Shankar | @ByVarunShankar | Staff writer



CHLOE BIBBY at Maryland women's basketball media day in Xfinity Center on Oct. 14, 2021. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

Diamond Miller remembers a time when Maryland women's basketball was practicing against its scout and wasn't taking it seriously. The team was goofing off, a lackadaisical performance.

Then, Chloe Bibby stepped on the court, and the dynamic changed. The Terps locked in and picked up their energy for the rest of practice.

"Simple stuff like that is what a leader does," Miller said. "You change the energy when you step on the court."

A year after transferring to the University of Maryland, Bibby is the team's most vocal leader. She's a player that, in some ways, embodies the culture of this era of Maryland women's basketball and, in others, has shaped it.

"I expect the best from these guys," the graduate forward said. "I kind of demand that from them every time we step on the floor."

Bibby's leadership partly comes from her wealth of experience, having played in the NCAA tournament, the SEC and FIBA.

But that experience also comes with consequences.

This will be the last season Bibby and the seniors get to play as Terps — meaning someone must replace their leadership.

Coach Brenda Frese knows who she wants to step up into that role.

"Ashley Owusu and Diamond Miller, veteran seasoned backcourt now with two years of experience," Frese said. "We're really kind of concentrating on pushing them to be better leaders, bigger leaders as they go into their third year."

That experience largely came over the last year, when the pair spearheaded a team that won the Big Ten regular season and tournament titles and made it to the Sweet Sixteen. Over the summer, both went to San Juan, Puerto Rico, helping USA Basketball win gold in this year's FIBA Women's AmeriCup.

But experience alone does not beget leadership. The knowledge it gives must be paired with intent to disperse that wisdom, an intent the Maryland pair appears to have.

Owusu, more soft-spoken by nature, saw how Bibby and Katie Benzan came in and fit with the team after transferring, how their confidence and ability to be vocal helped them to immediately

be leaders.

"Just being able to come out of my shell more," Owusu said. "I'm kind of an introvert, so being able to use my voice more and be more vocal on the court."

Frese said the coaching staff is looking for Owusu to improve her leadership. The coaching staff continues to draw out "another side of her" to get that consistent energy and voice from her as a leader.

Miller has been looking for her own consistency on the court, but she knows that as she develops, she'll be expected to step into the role of a leader.

She's been learning from Bibby, and while their personalities aren't exactly the same, Miller said she hopes to emulate a "little sprinkle" of Bibby's leadership.

As part of her process to become a better leader, Miller's been trying to find the balance between winning and friendship.

"When you're trying to win, you got to say what you have to say," Miller said.



FORWARDS CHLOE BIBBY and Mimi Collins kiss the Big Ten Tournament trophy after beating Iowa 104-84 at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on March 13, 2021. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

# BUILDING A CONTENDER

Transfers feature in the new iteration of Maryland men's basketball

By Eli Cohen | @Ejcohen17 | Staff writer

Only seven of the 16 players on the Maryland men's basketball team wore Terp jerseys last season.

Of those seven, only three averaged more than five minutes per game. Despite that, Maryland finds itself ranked No. 21 in The AP's preseason Top 25 poll — even with the departures of 2020-21 Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year Darryl Morsell to Marquette and Aaron Wiggins to the NBA draft.

This can be largely attributed to the stacked transfer class brought in by coach Mark Turgeon.

With the NCAA enacting the one-time transfer rule, granting immediate eligibility to all student-athletes who enter the transfer portal for the first time, the transfer portal's impact is higher than ever.

In the past, there was a looming uncertainty regarding the portal due to inconsistencies from the NCAA on what should grant a student-athlete immediate eligibility, presumably dissuading many from entering. With this no longer being a fear, its role in building a roster is different — and Turgeon knows that.

"The portal's definitely changed, everything's about the student-athlete, and guys were able to leave and go right away," Turgeon said. "It's part of our game, it is what it is. We want to blend it, we still want to sign some high school players, but we want to make sure we can add players to make us good."

Turgeon did just that this off-season, adding some of the transfer portal's top talent while also addressing positions of need, signing six transfers in Pavlo Dziuba, a sophomore forward from Arizona State, Xavier Green, a graduate guard from Old Dominion, Ian Martinez, a sophomore guard from Utah, Fatts Russell, a graduate guard from Rhode Island, Qudus Wahab, a junior center from Georgetown and Simon Wright, a graduate forward from Elon.

The class is highlighted by Russell and Wahab, who are expected to start at point guard and center, the Terps'

two most glaring holes from last season.

"We weren't built for last year's Big Ten [without a center]," Turgeon explained. "We're more built for Big Ten [this year]."

And the portal brought them the height they desperately needed with Wahab as a long and physical true center and Dziuba, who's 6-foot-8 and a strong player. Adding those two alongside 6-foot-8 Donta Scott and 6-foot-10 Julian Reese offers plenty of new physicality.

Out of the nine Big Ten teams that finished the season with an overall winning record, Maryland snagged the second-fewest rebounds due to the void of that true center. The 6-foot-11 240-pound Wahab, who averaged 12.7 points, 8.2 rebounds and 1.6 blocks per game in

top returning scorers Hunter Dickinson, Trevion Williams, Kofi Cockburn and E.J. Liddell who do most of their damage in the post. With the addition of Wahab, the Terps should be better suited to rival that this season.

On top of an anchor in the paint, Maryland was also missing a true floor general last season. Thankfully for them, that's what the team is getting in Russell, who had plenty of ties to the Terps before signing with Maryland.

Russell was a teammate of Scott in high school at Imhotep Charter in Philadelphia and played against Hakim Hart, a fellow Philadelphian and Eric Ayala frequently. Assistant coach Matt Brady recruited Russell out of high school when Brady was a member of La Salle's staff.

A two-time All-Atlantic 10 team



FATTS RUSSELL is a graduate transfer from Rhode Island. JAMES SINGER/THE DAILY FIVE CENT CIGAR

his sophomore season at Georgetown, should change that.

The other four ranked Big Ten teams — No. 6 Michigan, No. 7 Purdue, No. 11 Illinois and No. 17 Ohio State — have

member, Russell comes into College Park with a new role. A lot of weight was on his shoulders to score the ball at Rhode Island, where he scored 14.7 points per game last season and 18.8

as a junior.

Now, with plenty of other weapons alongside him, Turgeon hopes to see him flourish as a distributor.

"Fatts played at a lower level [at Rhode Island], had to do a lot of scoring. One of the things we talked about when we recruited him, he didn't have to score as much here — he'll have nights where he scores, but make guys around him better, and he's very good at that," Turgeon said.

While he may not have to rely on his scoring as much, Russell still can put the ball in the basket when need be. But one of the determining factors of his role as a scorer will be his ability to shoot from beyond the arc.

Last season, that's where he struggled, only sinking 24 percent of his attempts from beyond the arc compared to 36 percent from his junior season. Now though, he feels much more confident from range.

"Coming to College Park, my shot was kinda streaky, but now I feel like every time I shoot it that it's going to go in. That's all praise to [assistant coach Matt Brady], 'shot doctor' is the right word for him," Russell said.

With Russell, Wahab and the rest of Turgeon's additions, some of the Terps' returners should be able to go back to a more natural role.

Scott, a power forward with a smooth stroke from deep, won't be forced to reside in the paint as much, on offense or defense.

Senior guard Eric Ayala, the Terps' leading scorer last season will be able to adjust back to more of an off-the-ball or two-guard role as Russell will take care of much of the ball-handling.

That, coupled with previous relationships and a good mix of personalities are large reasons why the Terps are confident in their chemistry so early on.

"I feel like I've been playing with them for so long. We've got a lot of guys from the same area. Like Fatts [Russell] coming in, I've been playing against him my whole life almost, so our chemistry just clicked automatically," Ayala said.



# A STRONG BOND

*New-look Maryland men's basketball ramps up preseason with chemistry already built*

By Katie Manganelli | @KatieManganelli | Senior staff writer

**M**aryland men's basketball has made a lot of changes over the offseason.

The Terps have added nine new players to their roster — some have years of college basketball experience, others are some of the youngest players in the league. Maryland has also lost two key pieces on both ends of the court in Darryl Morsell and Aaron Wiggins, and coach Mark Turgeon has brought in new talent to fill the gaps they've left.

Turgeon has a lot to look forward to this season after a summer of transition. But he let it be known at Maryland men's basketball's media day that most of his emotion rests in one place.

"Probably the thing I'm most excited about is how well our guys get along," he said.

And his players say the same.

New and old Terps are proud of the environment they've created on the court at Xfinity Center and beyond. Even the youngest players are fitting in well on one of the oldest teams Maryland has had in recent memory.

Pavlo Dziuba, an 18-year-old Ukrainian native and transfer from Arizona State, looks to veteran Donta Scott for advice.

"Donta's helping me so much because he's in my position," Dziuba said. "This [is] actually how I want to play, so, I'm looking [up to] him."

The Terps have also forged relationships with the younger players off the court. And those relationships are helping new players adjust and improve their game.

"One thing I'll say about our team is that, even off the court, we love to hang out with each other," freshman James Graham III said. "We're always with each other, any time, playing the

game ... I will say that this is one of the closest teams I've ever been a part of in terms of everyone actually, genuinely, liking each other."

One of the strongest friendships, though, is the bond between Rhode Island transfer Fatts Russell and Eric Ayala.

Russell and Ayala have known each other for years. They competed against each other in the AAU circuit when they were in middle school and have kept in touch ever since.

The veteran players — Ayala, Russell, Scott and Hakim Hart — have taken well to each other. And their coaches

have taken note of the bond between them.

"You see some of the guys have grown up with each other, played high school ball," assistant coach Bruce Shingler said. "Hakim, Fatts and Donta have known each other for years and you can see that chemistry."

Growing up with his teammates has allowed Russell to appreciate their game. He and the other potential starters are each other's biggest fans.

"It's fun playing with Eric, Donta, [Hakim], [Qudus Wahab]," Russell said. "Sometimes I get into, like, being a fan ... I see Eric get a crazy shot and I

forget, oh snap I'm on the court with him."

Even though many of the players have history together, Russell credits Turgeon for the positive atmosphere around the team.

And Russell is optimistic that the team's bond will translate to success on the court this season.

"[Turgeon] recruits great people. And then when you have great people around, then it's easy to gel with," Russell said. "We don't have nobody with any hidden agendas. We're the best of friends off the court so when we get on the court, it's easy."



HEAD COACH MARK TURGEON during Maryland men's basketball's 68-57 win over Michigan State in the Big Ten Tournament on March 11, 2021. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

# POWERHOUSE ROSTER RETURNS

*Bringing back nearly everyone, Maryland women's basketball eyes a national title*

By Varun Shankar | @ByVarunShankar | Staff writer

**M**aryland women's basketball has a new lease on life.

The team's loss against Texas in last year's Sweet Sixteen could've — and in normal years, would've — been the last game for program stalwarts such as Katie Benzan, Chloe Bibby and Channise Lewis.

But the extra year of eligibility given to athletes due to COVID-19 gave the trio of seniors the option to come back and rejoin their teammates to chase another chance at glory. It's an option they all pounced on.

"I feel as though it was unfinished business," Benzan said. "I came here to win championships, and yeah we won a few [Big Ten titles] but at the end of the day, the national championship is our ultimate goal."

The graduate student guard, who led the nation in three-point percentage, has a running joke that everyone getting to return is maybe the one silver lining from the pandemic.

"I wasn't able to finish my senior year at Harvard, I didn't get a graduation, all of the negative things that come along with COVID, we have this one blessing," Benzan said. "Not many people get five, six years in college to play at the highest level, so I know that I'm blessed in that."

This year's team, ranked No. 4 in the preseason AP poll, is nearly identical to the squad that won the Big Ten regular season and tournament titles. Ten of the 11 players and 93 percent of the points scored from the nation's best offense remain on the roster.

Having that many players return gives coach Brenda Frese a luxury afforded to few: stability. Maryland is rich in that almost entirely due to Benzan's silver lining.



MARYLAND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL takes a team photo during the Terps' media day in Xfinity Center on Oct. 14, 2021. JOE RYAN/THE DIAMONDBACK

But with that continuity comes expectations, something Frese's squad had less of last year as they dealt with an influx of new players.

But the coach and her players aren't fazed by the weight of the rosy predictions people have for their season, even as they adjust to being the hunted rather than the hunters.

"I think pressure is what you make of it," Frese said. "I think this team has always welcomed that."

Maryland's motto for this season is "Complete the mission." And that mission is simple: be the only team that gets to end their season with a victory.

Having almost entirely familiar faces looking back at her means Frese gets to build off what her team learned last year rather than starting from scratch.

After last season, when the coach

only had a couple weeks to work with her squad before playing games, it was a welcome change to have her team in the facilities throughout the summer to work on their fitness and skills.

"We're a lot further in practice than we've ever been," Frese said. "We've been able to put the defense in and implement it like you normally would, which is quite different from a year ago."

The Terps also have experience in players such as juniors Ashley Owusu and Diamond Miller, the kind that can't be taught by Frese or honed in practices but instead developed in stages like the Big Ten and NCAA tournaments.

That experience with big games will only continue to grow this season, as the Terps are slated to play 13 games on national TV.

They'll also gain experience with

their imposing nonconference schedule, one that boasts three top-five teams. It's a grueling set of opponents that will test Maryland far beyond any of its regular season games from a year ago, but it's an examination this team welcomes.

"This group would rather play a team that they're going to be tested versus playing a team [they're] going to beat by 50," Frese said.

But this team knows that, while they were given a rare second chance after last year's loss, no such reprieve is coming this time around.

That prospect doesn't scare them. It just makes them more determined.

"We were hungry last year, but now we're more hungry just because we know this is actually the last go around for all of us ... we have to give it our all," Miller said. "We just have to."



# 2021-22 ROSTER

## WOMEN'S

**#0, SHYANNE SELLERS,**

GUARD, FRESHMAN, AURORA, OHIO

**#1, DIAMOND MILLER,**

GUARD, JUNIOR, SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY

**#2, MIMI COLLINS,**

FORWARD, REDSHIRT JUNIOR, SLIDELL, LOUISIANA,  
PREVIOUSLY: TENNESSEE

**#3, CHANNISE LEWIS,**

GUARD, GRADUATE STUDENT, MIAMI, FLORIDA

**#10, ANGEL REESE,**

GUARD/FORWARD, SOPHOMORE, BALTIMORE,  
MARYLAND

**#11, KATIE BENZAN,**

GUARD, GRADUATE STUDENT, WELLESLEY,  
MASSACHUSETTS, PREVIOUSLY: HARVARD

**#13, FAITH MASONIUS,**

GUARD/FORWARD, JUNIOR, BELMAR, NEW JERSEY

**#14, TAISIYA KOZLOVA,**

GUARD, SOPHOMORE, MOSCOW, RUSSIA

**#15, ASHLEY OWUSU,**

GUARD, JUNIOR, WOODBRIDGE, VIRGINIA

**#21, EMMA CHARDON,**

FORWARD, FRESHMAN, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

**#55, CHLOE BIBBY,**

GUARD/FORWARD, GRADUATE STUDENT,  
WARRACKNABEAL, AUSTRALIA, PREVIOUSLY:  
MISSISSIPPI STATE

**#0, MARCUS DOCKERY,**

GUARD, SOPHOMORE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

**#1, JAMES GRAHAM III,**

GUARD/FORWARD, FRESHMAN, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

**#4, FATTS RUSSELL,**

GUARD, GRADUATE STUDENT, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA,  
PREVIOUSLY: RHODE ISLAND

**#5, ERIC AYALA,**

GUARD, SENIOR, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

**#10, JULIAN REESE,**

FORWARD, FRESHMAN, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

**#11, XAVIER GREEN,**

GUARD, GRADUATE STUDENT, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA,  
PREVIOUSLY: OLD DOMINION

**#12, PAVLO DZIUBA,**

FORWARD, SOPHOMORE, KYIV, UKRAINE,  
PREVIOUSLY: ARIZONA STATE

**#13, HAKIM HART,**

GUARD, JUNIOR, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

**#14, AIDAN MCCOOL,**

GUARD, SOPHOMORE, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

**#15, SIMON WRIGHT,**

FORWARD, GRADUATE STUDENT, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA,  
PREVIOUSLY: ELON

**#20, IKE CORNISH,**

GUARD/FORWARD, FRESHMAN, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

**#23, IAN MARTINEZ,**

GUARD, SOPHOMORE, HEREDIA, COSTA RICA, PREVIOUSLY: UTAH

**#24, DONTA SCOTT,**

FORWARD, JUNIOR, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

**#31, ARNAUD REVAZ,**

FORWARD, SOPHOMORE, SION, SWITZERLAND

**#32, BRETT KARKUS,**

GUARD, FRESHMAN, HEWLETT, NEW YORK

**#33, QUDUS WAHAB,**

FORWARD, JUNIOR, LAGOS, NIGERIA, PREVIOUSLY: GEORGETOWN