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Media Menu for Creighton's games

Thursday's 6:00 p.m. game vs. Georgetown or DePaul
 Television: FS1 | Online: FoxSportsGO | Radio: 1620AM, WestwoodOne
 Gus Johnson and Bill Raftery will be on the call, with Erin Andrews on the sidelines

Friday's 8:30 p.m. game vs. Xavier or Marquette
 Television: FS1 | Online: FoxSportsGO | Radio: 1620AM, WestwoodOne
 Gus Johnson and Bill Raftery will be on the call, with Erin Andrews on the sidelines

Saturday's 7:30 p.m. championship game
 Television: FS1 | Online: FoxSportsGO | Radio: 1620AM, WestwoodOne
 Gus Johnson and Bill Raftery will be on the call, with Erin Andrews on the sidelines

Creighton Defies Expectations, Finishes Second in Big East

In their First Season in a “Major” Conference, Creighton Thrives Against Tougher Competition

— By Creighton Otter —

How ‘bout them Bluejays, huh? A year ago, Creighton fans were writhing in anticipation of the athletic program’s big break — an invitation to join a reconfigured Big East Conference. Having just won what would be their final appearance at Arch Madness, the Jays were assured a spot in the 2013 NCAA Tournament. The week of the Big Dance, Creighton officially accepted the aforementioned invite to the Big East.

Fast forward 12 months, and the Jays just finished their first season in the league 14-4, good for second place. Creighton’s a lock for another NCAA Tournament, touting computer numbers that are exceptional and boasting the best player in college hoops.

Doug McDermott will almost assuredly pick up the Big East Player of the Year award Wednesday. A few weeks from now, he’ll most likely snag the Naismith National Player of the Year award too. In between, McDermott and his teammates have the opportunity to win another conference tournament and add to the hardware on the Hilltop.

Sure, this is the role experts everywhere cast this Creighton team in before the season. Picked to win the Valley in preseason polling, the Bluejays started the year with the proverbial target on their backs. The atmosphere surrounding the season finale was the kind people imagined in October and November, when the Bluejays were a media darling in the category of “mid-major” most likely to dance deep into March.

So, about that tournament, does anyone have a clue how this Big East Men’s Basketball Tournament is going to shake out the next few days?

I don’t. I mean, I think Creighton has as good a chance as any team, if not better, to win the whole damn thing. Between McDermott, Ethan Wragge, Grant Gibbs, Jahenns Manigat, and Austin Chatman, the core Bluejays haven’t lost a conference tournament game since the semifinals in 2011 (heck, Gibbs wasn’t playing for CU at that point, either, and it seems like he’s been here forever).

Sure, the six straight wins came in St. Louis, as part of another league. But stakes being as they are, Greg McDermott’s Bluejays have won 8 postseason games in the past two years, if you count NCAA Tournament second round victories in 2012 and 2013. That’s pretty solid, of course.

You can bet that Bluejays fans are flocking to Madison Square Garden this week with memories of those past March successes fresh in their minds. But blue-clad fans inside and outside Manhattan are certain to realize they’re far, far away from Laclede’s Landing and the action inside Scottrade Center the next few days.



Doug McDermott goes up for a slam against Providence last Saturday. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

DePaul is, to this semi-trained eye, by far the worst team in the Big East. They’re the #10 seed in week’s Big East tournament, an underdog to #7-seed Georgetown in the tournament’s first round. The Blue Demons sport a #182 rating according to Kenpom.com. The Hoyas are #49. I know it’s only one metric, but it’s telling that Georgetown — two spots worse in Kenpom than Nebraska, the Big Ten’s #4 team — is in the play-in game in NYC and sports a top-50 Kenpom rating. That’s depth, right?

Oh, and DePaul? The worst team in the Big East, with that #182 Kenpom rating? There are four MVC teams with worse Kenpom scores. Just sayin’.

#9-seed Butler (#96) and #8-seed Seton Hall (#90) meet in the first game on Wednesday, and they both sport top-100 Kenpom ratings. The Bulldogs stomped the Pirates to end the regular season; they get the turnaround special. The winner gets #1-seed Villanova (#6 Kenpom) on Friday. The Wildcats are trying to secure a #1 seed in the NCAA Tournament; they’ve only lost two conference games all season — both to the Creighton Bluejays.

Speaking of our beloved Bluejays (#9 Kenpom), they’ll get a Thursday evening quarterfinal against DePaul or Georgetown. My money’s on the Hoyas to face CU, a situation that unfortunately conjures thoughts of CU’s loss in D.C. last week.

In one of the other quarterfinals, #4-seed Providence (#53 Kenpom) and #5-seed St. John’s (#37) meet Thursday afternoon. Both teams can’t afford to lose if they want to remain in contention for an at-large spot in the NCAA Tournament. The two teams split wins at each other’s home gyms, and Thursday’s matchup promises to be an intriguing rubber match.

In the quarterfinal nightcap, #3-seed Xavier (#44 Kenpom) plays #6-seed Marquette (#59). The Musketeers and Golden Eagles did the traditional split of home wins this conference season. Marquette needs to win the tournament this week to get into the NCAA Tournament, while Xavier can avoid any doubts by advancing to the semifinals Friday at MSG.

Seriously, those quarterfinals are pretty solid, especially considering what Jays fans have watched the past few Fridays in St. Louis. That’s not a holier-than-thou statement; merely, facts. The Big East is deeeeeep, and let’s be honest ... that depth could leave a swarm of Creighton fans spending Saturday evening — or, gulp, Friday evening — jamming into a crowded restaurant in Little Italy or standing in line for a trendy spot in the Meatpacking District instead of watching the Bluejays compete for a Big East tournament crown.

Still, I like my odds siding with the Big East and National POY and his band of Bluejays.

ETHAN WRAGGE "THE LUMBERJACK"



PHOTO BY
MIKE SPOMER FOR WBR

ARTICLE BY
MAX UNIVERS

FROM THE MOMENT WRAGGE SET FOOT ON THE COURT FOR CREIGHTON, HE WAS A GUNSLINGER FROM LONG RANGE.

In his very first game in a Creighton uniform — a road tilt at Dayton (a 90-80 loss), he played 11 minutes off the bench and made 3-4 from three-point range, already displaying the sort of prowess from behind the arc that would endear him to Bluejay fans. And in the home opener the following week against Florida A&M, he did one better, going 4-8 from three-point range. After two games, he was already building a resume as a shooter to be reckoned with; very few true freshmen before or since have had that kind of production in their first two games.

Over his five-year career, he's grown from a lanky, foul-prone shooter into a bearded assassin capable of making threes from anywhere on the court. He wasn't a regular starter until about a third of the way through his senior year, yet despite a part-time role he's provided a ton of great memories for Bluejay fans. Here's his ten best, as voted on by the editors of WBR.

#10 | DECEMBER 11, 2010 | WRAGGE DROPS SIX THREES ON ST. JOSEPH'S

On a snowy Saturday night in the midst of an injury-riddled sophomore campaign, Wragge provided the home crowd — and CU legend Bob Harstad, in attendance to have his jersey retired — with the first of many memorable shooting displays. Wragge scored 18 points in 22 minutes, going 6-9 from three-point range with five of them coming in an amazing four-minute stretch that saw him also assist on another.

#9 | NOVEMBER 9, 2012 | WRAGGE BLOCKS THREE SHOTS AGAINST NORTH TEXAS

During his first three years on the Hilltop, defensive shortcomings kept Wragge from logging as many minutes as his coaches would have liked — first Dana Altman, then Greg McDermott. By his junior year, though, he'd made huge strides on defense, and he showed off his improvement in the season's very first game by blocking three shots. Here's what WBR's Creighton Otter had to say about the defensive display:

“Wragge stood out for more than just his shooting touch. Coaches and players alike have raved about the improvements to all parts of his game entering his redshirt junior season. And Wragge made the most of his minutes Friday evening; recording 3 blocked shots and 7 rebounds in addition to his one made three-pointer and one free throw. Coach McDermott mentioned in the postgame radio interview that Wragge didn't play as much Friday as he would most nights, since Echenique's strength and athleticism were needed against the UNT frontcourt. But he legitimately blocked three shots, something that Coach Mac and Wragge joked about last night.”

#8 | NOVEMBER, 2012 | WRAGGE SCORES 73 POINTS IN 90 MINUTES

During the first month of the 2012 season, Wragge was on fire, making three-point shots at an unparalleled pace even for him. On November 14 against UAB, he made 4-8 from behind the arc for 12 points while corralling two steals. But he was just getting started. Three nights later in a win against Presbyterian, he made six of eight to tie the CenturyLink Center record for most threes in a game. Against Longwood, he was a perfect 3-3 from three-point range and 4-4 from the free throw line, and then he took his hot shooting to Las Vegas, where he torched Wisconsin and Arizona State on back-to-back nights — going 4-7 against the Badgers for 17 points, and 3-7 for 13 points against the Sun Devils en route to all-tournament team honors. Over that five-game stretch, he scored in double figures in all five, totaling 73 points in just 90 minutes of action.

#7 | DECEMBER 22, 2011 WRAGGE'S FOUR-POINT PLAY AGAINST NORTHWESTERN

When the Big Ten's Northwestern Wildcats visited in December of 2011 — a legit NCAA Tourney threat that year — it was one of the highlights of the home slate. And the game lived up to it's billing, going back and forth all night in an exciting battle. Northwestern's Drew Crawford put his team ahead with 16 minutes to play, and then Doug McDermott scored six straight to give CU back the lead. Crawford and the Wildcats hung around, and tied it with eight minutes to go. Jahenns Manigat hit a three from the corner to put Creighton back in front, and then Ethan Wragge came up with a steal on the defensive end. Running in transition, Grant Gibbs found Wragge in front of the bench. He launched a three and was fouled in the process; the shot went in, and after making the free-throw, he'd given Creighton a seven-point lead. It was the key play of what wound up being a signature win for the 2011-12 team, and the normally reserved Wragge responded with a celebratory scream and fist pump as the sold-out crowd did the same.



*Ethan Wragge celebrates a four-point play from the floor after being knocked down on a three-point shot against Northwestern.
(Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)*

#6 | NOVEMBER 16, 2013 | WRAGGE MAKES SEVEN THREES AT ST. JOSEPH'S

The win at St. Joseph's is remembered mostly for the first game-winning shot of Doug McDermott's career, but Ethan Wragge had a transcendent performance of his own that night, making seven 3-pointers. Ott described it thusly:

"With McDermott struggling to get good looks and the Hawks making open shots from long range, Creighton needed a spark off the bench. Senior forward Ethan Wragge stepped in and started doing what he does best — shooting from deep. In a three-minute span of game time in the first half, Wragge made four of five three-point attempts. Frankly his shooting kept Creighton in the game; despite his flurry of triples, Wragge watched as Saint Joseph's kept responding with their own offensive production to keep the Jays at bay. Wragge ended the first half with a team-high 12 points, and his deft shooting touch helped stem the tide for the Bluejays while McDermott (8 first-half points) wiggled his way free."

#5 | NOVEMBER 30, 2011 | WRAGGE KEYS COMEBACK AT SAN DIEGO STATE

In what might be his best all-around game as a Bluejay, Wragge scored 19 points, made 4 of 6 three-pointers and 7 of 10 overall (making THREE layups in one game!) and was the key catalyst in a comeback from a 17-point road deficit. Wragge scored three baskets in the final four minutes, including a three to break a 69-69 tie, a putback off a McDermott miss to break a 74-74 tie, and a miraculous layup in the final seconds to increase their 82-81 lead to three points.

#4 | MARCH 10, 2013 | FIVE THREE'S IN MVC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

With both Creighton and Wichita State struggling to score (gross understatement; the two teams combined to start the game 0-15 from the field), Ethan Wragge checked in with just less than 13 minutes to play in the first half and CU up 6-3. In the next 4 minutes, Wragge made three threes and missed a fourth by an eyelash. While Doug McDermott sat on the bench, Wragge shined. His third three-pointer gave the Jays a 19-7 lead and forced Gregg Marshall to take a timeout.

The Shockers chipped away at Creighton's double-digit lead, though, and capped their comeback with a go-ahead layup by Malcolm Armstead with just less than 2 minutes to play in the first half. Then, with McDermott on the pine again, Wragge unleashed a #wraggebomb that gave the Bluejays a 30-28 lead. Creighton wouldn't trail again. Wragge finished with 15 points in 16 minutes off the bench.



Ethan Wragge drains one of his five threes in the 2013 MVC Title game. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

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whiteandbluereview.com/seniors2014



#1 | JANUARY 14, 2014 | WRAGGE MAKES SEVEN STRAIGHT AT VILLANOVA

Was there any doubt what would be #1? On January 14, 2014, Ethan Wragge had a shooting display for the ages as the Bluejays ambushed the #4 team in America on their home court. Villanova won the opening tip, and James Bell put up a three which missed; JayVaughn Pinkston corralled the rebound, put up a second shot, and when it missed, too, Doug McDermott cleared. They ran in transition and found Ethan Wragge open for a three, which he swished. 40 seconds later, he nailed a second three after a turnover by Ryan Arcidiacono to give CU a 6-0 lead. Three pointers by Jahenns Manigat and Doug McDermott followed on the next two possessions, while Villanova tried to keep up with buckets by Daniel Ochefu and Darrun Hilliard. It was 12-5, Creighton, when Wragge nailed his third three-pointer to grow the lead to 10, prompting a timeout by Jay Wright in an attempt to slow down The Lumberjack.

Unfortunately for Wright and the Wildcats, there were still a lot of t(h)rees left to be chopped down, and The Lumberjack had barely broken a sweat. Wragge buried a three at the 16:13 mark and another with 15:49 to go, sending the teams into the first media timeout with Creighton in front 21-5.

Would he cool down after a break? Nope. On the Jays' first possession after the timeout, Wragge swished another three — his sixth straight without a miss — and 44 seconds later, he buried another. After Ethan Wragge hit his 7th three-pointer in the first half, Bill Raftery commented on the FS1 broadcast, "That's a joke, I mean it's absolutely comical. Sheesh!" But it wasn't a joke. At that point, Creighton had taken a 27-7 lead in the first six minutes of the first half.

#3 | MARCH 22, 2013 | FOUR STRAIGHT THREES IN NCAA VS CINCINNATI

In the first half of Creighton's 2013 NCAA win over Cincinnati, Wragge got red-hot from downtown, torching the Bearcats for four 3-pointers, including a stretch of three straight that had TV analyst Reggie Miller — himself no stranger to big threes — impressed. The #wraggebombs were deadly, stretching Cincinnati's defense and allowing Doug McDermott a little more room to maneuver down low, where he took the game over.

#2 | JANUARY 12, 2014 | LONG-RANGE WRAGGE BOMBS

In their first meeting of the 2013-14 season, Xavier led by as many as 13 early in the first half, but Creighton chipped away at the lead. And when Ethan Wragge, The Lumberjack, chopped down the Musketeers lead with a long three at the 9:04 mark to give CU a 23-22 lead, the place went berserk. Little did they know he was just getting started. In the opening moments of the second half, Wragge got into one of his patented #wraggebomb zones, making three treys in a span of 62 seconds, each one further away from the basket than the last.

After the third, the noise inside the arena was deafening — louder than at any point on New Years Eve against Marquette, louder than at any point during last March's wild game against Wichita State, maybe louder than at any point in the 10+ years of the CenturyLink Center. Heck, it was so loud Xavier couldn't communicate on offense, leading to Wragge getting a steal (a steal!) from a befuddled Matt Stainbrook. It's probably a good thing his outlet pass to Doug McDermott didn't result in a made three — Doug's shot hit the rim and bounced off — because it allowed the nearly 19,000 fans in attendance an opportunity to catch their breath and appreciate what they'd just witnessed.



Top Left: One of Ethan's long-range #wraggebombs against Xavier. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

Above: Ethan Wragge was on fire early in the Jays' NCAA win over Cincinnati. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

JAHENNS MANIGAT

“THE CANADIAN RED BULL”



PHOTO BY
ADAM STREUR FOR WBR

ARTICLE BY
MAX UNIVERS

Jahenns Manigat was the final recruit brought to Creighton by Dana Altman before he left for Oregon. The guard from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada visited Omaha the weekend of April 17, 2010, and signed a letter on intent four days later. Three days after that, Altman took the Oregon job, leaving Manigat in the lurch.

“Coming into this, you know that’s the nature of the business,” he told the Omaha World-Herald on April 27. “What is one day can be completely different the next. You have to adapt and adjust. That’s all you can do. I still intend on coming to Creighton. Hopefully, the coaches will get in touch with me, the sooner the better.”

Greg McDermott kept two signees — Manigat and Will Artino — while releasing another (Keith Denson) from his LOI and rescinding their offer to Tyrone Nared. Manigat has gone on to become a fan favorite, a team leader, his teammates’ biggest cheerleader, the emotional center of the team and a three-year starter. It would be tough to find a player that’s developed more over the course of his career than Manigat; under the tutelage of McDermott and staff, he’s turned into a great defender, a dangerous (albeit streaky) shooter, and a nice ballhandler. He’s provided Bluejay fans with a ton of lasting memories. Here’s his ten best, as voted on by the editors of WBR.

#10 | November 12, 2010 | Three 3-Pointers in Creighton Debut

In his very first game at Creighton against Alabama State, Jahenns Manigat gave CU fans a glimpse of what he’d bring to the team over the next four years. He wasn’t the most athletic, he wasn’t the best shooter, he wasn’t the best defender, but he’d be damned if anyone would out-hustle him or beat him to a loose ball. Here’s what I wrote after that game:

“Jahenns Manigat, the freshman guard from Canada, made 3-5 from long range for 12 points in 22 minutes, but it was his energy off the bench — on defense, going after loose balls, keeping his teammates up when the game turned tense in spots — that while can’t be quantified with stats, is impressive for a freshman and gives the Jays another dimension they lacked last year.”

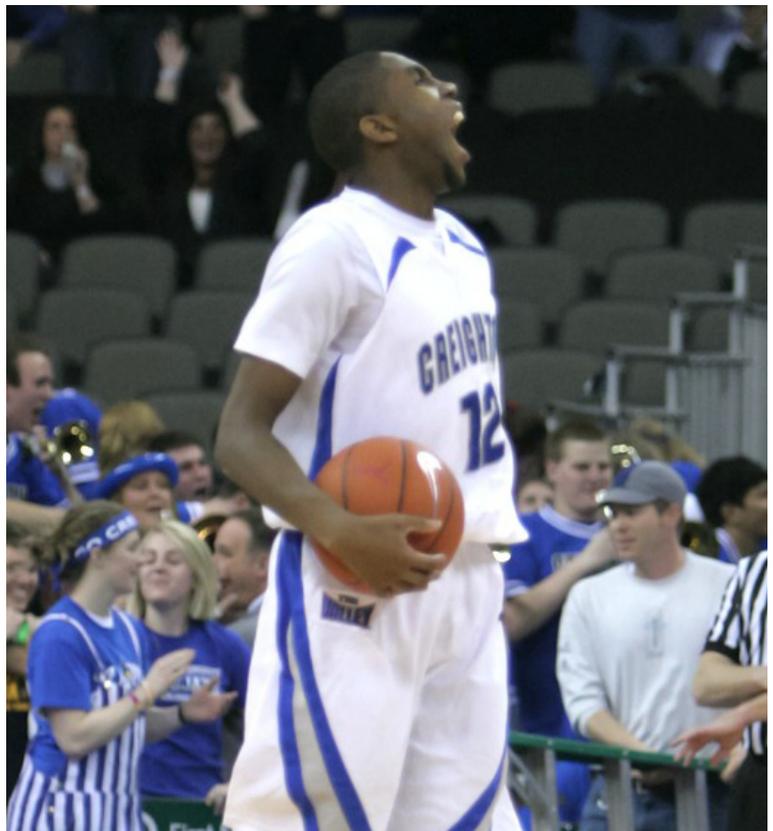
#9 | March 4, 2011 | Manigat Nearly Blows MVC Opener, Then Redeems Himself

In his first-ever MVC Tournament game, Jahenns Manigat came oh-so-close to being a goat. With Creighton leading UNI 60-57 and ten seconds remaining, Kaleb Korver rebounded an errant shot and fired it upcourt to a streaking Manigat. The Creighton half of the arena exploded, certain of a layup or a dunk that would drive the nail in the Panthers coffin, and to the loudest crowd noise of the afternoon, Manigat dribbled for what should have been a victory lap.

Instead, he missed it. The layup bounced around the rim, and was corralled by Jake Koch. Instead of a victory lap, it had turned into a nightmare. When asked what was going through his mind after the miss, at first Coach Greg McDermott joked. “After I wanted to strangle him?” Then he turned philosophical. “You’d like to put it away there, obviously, and he missed it. In that situation, you’re going to miss it one time out of 100, probably, and that just happened to be the one.”

In the huddle, they regrouped, because they still had a three point lead to protect. Wouldn’t you know it, Manigat would get his shot at redemption. “We talk about rear-view mirror all the time. You’ve got to put it behind you. It’s the next play. You’ve got to forget about the last play, good or bad,” Coach Greg McDermott said after the game. “We instructed them to stay on the floor and not go for shot fakes. It’s easy to listen to that. When you get out there and Kwadzo (Ahelegbe) is up to not leave your feet, that’s not easy to do. He defended it extremely well. He kept Kwadzo in front of him.”

Indeed he did. As Ahelegbe rose up to shoot at the buzzer, Manigat stayed in front, didn’t bite on the shot fake, and partially blocked the would-be tying shot. It was glorious redemption for the player who could easily have been the biggest goat in recent Creighton basketball history.



Jahenns Manigat celebrates a MVC Tourney win over Northern Iowa in March of 2011. (Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)

#8 | Summer, 2010 | Greeting Fans at Summer League

It's hokey but my first memory of Jahenns Manigat comes from before he even played an official game for Creighton. In the summer of 2010, Dana Altman had just departed for Oregon after three straight NCAA Tournament-less seasons, the end of the P'Allen Stinnett Era was still a raw memory, and fan goodwill toward the program was at a low ebb. New coach Greg McDermott allowed his players to compete in the Metro Summer League, something Altman had put a stop to during his final years as coach, and that allowed fans to get up close and personal with new players such as Doug McDermott and Jahenns Manigat. McDermott played well, but it was Manigat who embraced the role of goodwill ambassador — chatting with fans before and after games, shaking hands, signing autographs, posing for photos, and thanking fans for coming out to watch them. He wouldn't play a "real" game for four months but he was already becoming a fan favorite among those in attendance that summer.

#7 | March 28, 2011 | Manigat Key to Spoiling Altman's Return

When Dana Altman and the Oregon Ducks came to Omaha for the CBI Finals in March of his first season away from Omaha, it was his final Creighton recruit that was the key to the Bluejay victory. Here's how Ott described the pivotal stretch, where Creighton increased a five-point lead to a 17-point cushion midway through the second half:

"Following a 3-pointer by Kaleb Korver to push the lead to 8, McDermott hit a 3 of his own to put CU up 11. He hit a layup after missing a 3-point attempt, and then made two free throws after a Jahenns Manigat steal. He capped a personal 9-0 scoring run off another steal and assist from Manigat, this one due to a marvelous effort from the freshman from Canada. Manigat dove to the court to force a steal near the time line and then, outstretched on the hardwood, somehow contorted his body to roll a pass to McDermott, who was streaking down the wing near Creighton's basket. McDermott, Manigat's roommate, grabbed the ball and attempted a layup in seemingly one smooth move, and his shot was goaltended. Just like that, Creighton led by 17, thanks in large part to a guy Altman brought to CU (Manigat) and a guy who came to the Hilltop specifically because Dana left for Oregon (McDermott).

The freshman from Canada had a stellar game, scoring 11 points and grabbing 3 rebounds while dishing 7 assists and collecting all of Creighton's 4 steals. He played 37 minutes, a career-high, and has established himself as an integral part of the immediate future of Creighton basketball. Everyone is in awe with Antoine Young's play in this tournament — and rightfully so. But Manigat has been almost as impressive. He scored 17 points in the team's first game against San Jose State, but recorded just 4 points in the next two wins combined. However, in those two games he still played 66 minutes and dished 8 assists to just 1 turnover while swiping 2 steals and recording a block. For the four games, he has 17 assists, 7 steals, 8 rebounds, and just 4 turnovers. He brings intensity to the court whenever he's in the game — and energy even when he's on the bench, which hasn't been often in the past four games."



Jahenns Manigat forces one of his four steals against Oregon in March of 2011. (Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)



Jahenns Manigat had seven assists in the Jays' NCAA win over Cincinnati. (Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)

#6 | March 22, 2013 | Jahenns Has 7 Assists in NCAA Tourney Win

Against a tough, defensive-minded Cincinnati team in the 2013 NCAA Tournament, Jahenns Manigat was clutch at handling the ball. While fellow starting guards Austin Chatman (2 assists, 3 turnovers) and Grant Gibbs (4 assists, 5 turnovers) struggled with their pressure, Manigat thrived — dishing out a team-high 7 assists while turning it over just twice in 38 minutes. With Doug McDermott scoring almost at will, he did what was needed to help his team get the win, and on that day, it was controlling the ball and finding open teammates.

#5 | January 29, 2011 | In First Career Start, Manigat Scores Eight Points

A half-hour or so before tipoff against a feisty Indiana State team, the tweets and texts started pouring in: freshman Jahenns Manigat would start in place of Josh Jones, who was late for a morning meeting. No one knew how the freshman would respond to the sudden promotion. As Ott wrote after the game:

"He tended to get sped up when filling in a minute or two here for Antoine Young or Kaleb Korver or Darryl Ashford to this point in his first season. He spent more of his energy working the team into a frenzy during the pregame pump-up circle. He had to resign his spot to Wayne Runnels; Manigat needed to make an impact. Jahenns struggled offensively in the first half. He missed all four of his shots from the field but hit a couple of free throws. He grabbed a couple of rebounds and recorded an assist."

After he settled down, Manigat played a good second half of basketball, and wound up the day with eight points, three rebounds, two assists, two steals and a charge taken. He's been a fixture in the starting lineup in almost every game since.

#4 | December 31, 2013 | Manigat Scores 16, Dunks on Marquette

In the Bluejays' Big East debut, Jahenns Manigat played exceptional basketball, scoring 16 points to go along with his usual solid defense. The two combined for one highlight-reel-worthy play in the first half, when he jumped in front of a pass, intercepted it, then streaked downcourt to throw down his first career dunk.

Well, he grazed the rim anyway. There was heated debate on whether it could actually, technically, be classified as a dunk, and he laughed about it on the postgame radio show afterwards:

“Here’s what we’re not going to do (laughing). Until we get the photo finish at the end, at the top of my jump, if I touched the rim, then we can call it a dunk (laughing). But I’m not going to lie, you guys want to know what I was seriously thinking about? UNI, freshman year, MVC Tournament. I still remember missing that fastbreak layup. If I wasn’t trying so hard to slap the backboard I probably wouldn’t have missed it. But that shows the growth, right? (laughing) I had a good athlete trailing me, I just wanted to make sure I finished with a bucket. I told my teammates, you guys and all 18,525 fans lifted me up on that one. I couldn’t jump like that on my own!”

#3 | February 14, 2012 | Manigat Makes 5 Threes in Win at SIU

Coming off three straight losses — a buzzer-beater at Northern Iowa, a disappointing defeat at Evansville, and a blowout loss at home to Wichita State — the Jays needed someone, anyone, to provide a spark in their next game. When Doug McDermott picked up two early fouls and spent most of the first half on the bench, his roommate, Jahenns Manigat, took over the game. He made his first three attempts from three-point range, and went 5-6 for the game in scoring 17 points.

It was all part of a record-setting night, in which the Bluejays followed his lead and set an MVC record by shooting 77.5% from the field (31-40) and 85.7% from three-point range (12-14).

#2 | December 12, 2012 | Manigat Shuts Down Crabbe

In a virtuoso defensive performance, Jahenns Manigat hounded the Pac-12's leading scorer, All-America candidate Allen Crabbe, into 6-for-26 shooting from the floor. He face-guarded Crabbe the entire night and frustrated Cal's offensive star in a way few defenders were able to that season (or ever). In the first half Crabbe went 0-9 from the floor, his only points coming on two made free throws. Whether it was behind the arc or on mid-range jumpers, wherever Crabbe went, Manigat shadowed him, never allowing him a clean look. It was particularly impressive because in order to attempt to free Crabbe for a shot, Cal ran multiple screens on every possession — and yet Manigat was tough enough to fight through them while remaining in position to contest the shot.

“I tried my best to stay right behind him, to chase him as hard as I could, and to make his shots as challenging as I could without fouling him,” Manigat noted on the AM590 postgame show after the game. “Watching the tape on Crabbe, we knew all of his tendencies. He kind of has a tendency to kick his legs out a little bit when he shoots, and Coach Mac told me to watch out for that so I could avoid it and not foul him.”

For almost all of the 32 minutes Manigat played, he was literally chasing Crabbe around, fighting through screens, sprinting back and forth from sideline to sideline, non-stop. Oh, and he had 11 points, six assists and five rebounds, too.



Jahenns Manigat skies for a fastbreak dunk against Marquette. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

#1 | March 10, 2013 | Manigat Clinches MVC Title with Drive

It's fitting that the greatest moment of Jahenns Manigat's Creighton career came in the midst of his greatest game in a Bluejay uniform, which was also one of the biggest games his team had played at that point. In the 2013 MVC Championship game, he scored 16 points in 39 minutes, had five rebounds, played tremendous defense, and scored the game-clinching basket. Not bad for a days work, eh? Here's what Ott had to say the day after the game:

“Manigat, a streaky shooter his entire career, missed his first two three-point attempts Sunday. He also turned the ball over twice in the first 16 minutes. But when Manigat connected on a deep trey to break a 24-24 tie with just less than 3 minutes to go in the first half, something clicked. Well, almost. He missed his first three-point shot in the second half, too. But then, really, something clicked. He drilled consecutive threes to help push Creighton's lead to 9 right before the under-16:00 media timeout. He'd add his final three-pointer with just about 5 minutes to go in the game; it gave the Jays a 13-point lead, their biggest of the game. And all the while, whether he was knocking down shots or not, Manigat was doing work on defense and doing what he could on offense and on the boards to get the Jays a victory.

Manigat scored a season-high 16 points. He scored 15 points in his previous four games combined. Manigat tied a season high with 5 rebounds. He didn't commit a turnover in the second half. He played a team-high 39 minutes, too, all of which were spent hounding WSU players defensively.

Three years after he missed a game-clinching layup against UNI, in the same city but on a significantly more important stage, Manigat made magic happen. With 3:32 to play, an Austin Chatman free throw gave the Jays a 66-55 lead. During the next 3:11, Wichita State scored 10 straight points, pulling to within 66-65 thanks to an Armstead three-pointer. Coach Mac called a timeout to set up a play. So with about a 7-second differential between game clock and shot clock, the Bluejays needed a quality look. What they got was a Wichita State defense that took them out of sync. Manigat ended up with the ball, and he managed to find a crease near the lane through which he elevated and hit a leaning layup. Perhaps he needs a greater degree of difficulty when faced with a shot near the paint?”

GRANT GIBBS

“THE ELDER STATESMAN”

PHOTO BY
MIKE SPOMER FOR WBR

ARTICLE BY
MAX UNIVERS



Grant Gibbs began his career at Gonzaga, redshirting in 2008 and playing in 24 games as a freshman in 2009. Frustrated at his nagging injuries, he looked to transfer closer to home, and when Greg McDermott took the Creighton job in 2010 Gibbs opted to join him.

He sat out the 2010-11 season, then hit the ground running in 2011. He was voted a team captain before ever playing a game, a testament to his stature among his teammates, and his steady grasp of the game made him a de facto coach on the floor even in his earliest games in a Bluejay uniform. His ability to dish out assists while not turning it over is almost unparalleled in the annals of CU hoops, and his cunning in close games has been a key factor in the Jays' success the last three years.

He's been an integral part of many of the best moments in his career. Here's his ten best, as voted on by the editors of WBR.

**#10 | December 19 and 22, 2011
22 Assists in Two Games**

Even early in his first season at Creighton, Grant Gibbs had a unique ability to get the ball to his teammates in position to score. In just his tenth game, he nearly had Creighton's first point-rebound-assist triple-double in their win at Tulsa, finishing with nine points, seven rebounds and 10 assists. Then three nights later at home against Northwestern, he set the CenturyLink Center Omaha record with 12 assists, a mark that tied for sixth-most in Creighton single-game history and was the most by a Bluejay in ten years. In doing so, he became the first Bluejay with consecutive games of 10 or more assists since Duan Cole in 1990.

After the Tulsa game, WBR's Patrick Marshall examined the "Gibbs/McDermott Connection" and found that two-thirds of McDermott's 102 baskets to that point had an assist, and of those, half were from Gibbs. To be exact: Gibbs had 59 assists through the Tulsa game, and 34 of them had been to McDermott."

#9 | January 15, 2012 | First Career Dunk

Creighton's 90-71 blowout of Southern Illinois in January of 2012 would have been a run-of-the-mill conference win over a struggling opponent if not for two milestones — Doug McDermott scoring

his 1,000th point and Grant Gibbs throwing down his first career dunk. Fittingly, the dunk was a McDermott/Gibbs Connection, but in reverse. After catching the ball on the perimeter from Antoine Young in transition, McDermott drew two defenders. Meanwhile, Ethan Wragge put a pick on another SIU defender (two, actually) and Gibbs rolled to the hoop. McDermott zipped a pass to a streaking Gibbs, who exploded for the dunk. It was met with incredulous excitement by pretty much everyone in the arena, most of whom believed he wasn't capable of dunking due to his injury history and relative lack of leaping ability in general. On Bluejay radio, Nick Bahe was no less surprised, exclaiming, "Meet me at the rim, Mr. Gibbs!".



*Grant Gibbs throws down his first career dunk.
(Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)*

#8 | July 2, 2013 | Sixth-Year Granted

It was considered a longshot by most observers, but over the summer the NCAA granted a sixth year of eligibility to Grant Gibbs. He'd spent two seasons at Gonzaga before transferring to Creighton, but redshirted his first year there — a season that coincided with an injury that would have kept him off the floor anyway. Then after his freshman year, he transferred to Creighton, and during the year he was forced to sit out because of the transfer, he had knee surgery for another injury that would have kept him off the floor anyway. That was the crux of the appeal for a sixth year, and the reason for the NCAA granting him a rare exemption.

The news was delivered to him in person, and in a pro move, videotaped by Rob Anderson. It's an all-time classic.



*Grant Gibbs is about to learn he's been granted a sixth year by the NCAA.
(Screencap of a video posted by GoCreighton to YouTube: <http://youtu.be/xafWbAqHxRA>)*

#7 | January 13, 2012 | Gibbs the Instigator

Grant Gibbs has always had a little Eddie Haskell in him — seeming to take great joy in subtly pushing an opposing player's buttons until he boils over with frustration and hurts his team. It's happened time and again during his career. Sometimes the opponent simply picks up a dumb foul or two, sometimes the opponent tries to show Gibbs who's boss and makes a terrible decision with the basketball, and sometimes...well, sometimes the opponent snaps.

During a January, 2012 game at Illinois State, Gibbs talked back-and-forth with Johnny Hill all night and in the game's waning moments, Hill couldn't take it anymore. As Gibbs came up court with the ball, Hill literally shoved him in the chest, sending Gibbs flying wildly into the scorers table. He was assessed two technical fouls and was ejected from the game, then continued jawing at Gibbs and had to be restrained by his teammates.

After the free throws, several Redbird fans threw debris onto the court, including a mini basketball. Gibbs picked it up and held it high where the officials couldn't help but notice it, then walked it over and handed it to one of them; this of course infuriated the fans even more, because it led to another technical foul being assessed. Gibbs truly embodies the old saying that if he's on your team, you love him, but if he's on the other team, you despise him, and that was never more evident than that January night in Normal.

#6 | December 1 and December 6, 2012 Gibbs' Behind the Back Pass to Wragge

Two early December blowouts in 2012 showcased Gibbs' passing ability and innate knack for knowing where his teammates would be at any moment. On December 1, they blew out St. Josephs 80-51 thanks to nine assists and no turnovers by Gibbs. Here's what Ott had to say after the game:

"After 40 minutes, the Jays shot an identical 57% from the field in both halves. They hit 48% of their three-pointers, with McDermott knocking down 5 of his 7 attempts. The aforementioned offensive explosion doesn't happen without Gibbs and Chatman. Playing against a team that has all sorts of size and length advantages against the Bluejays, Gibbs and Chatman were nearly flawless in their distribution and facilitation of Creighton's offense.

Gibbs recorded 9 assists without committing a turnover, pushing his assist-to-turnover ratio to 48-8 for the season (6:1). That's absolutely ridiculous, but also undeniably necessary for the Big Blue Machine to function. McDermott is the team's star, its best player. But so much of what Doug does wouldn't happen without the savvy and skill that Gibbs brings night in and night out. He's Creighton's most valuable player, and if left to a vote it probably wouldn't even be close." Late in the game, he made one of his best passes — behind the back to a wide-open Ethan Wragge for a three-pointer.

Later that week against Nebraska, he was even better, dishing a season-high 10 assists while scoring 5 points, grabbing 5 boards, and committing just 1 turnover. He also earned two large tiger-stripe scratches on the side of his face, which were indicative of the physical and catty nature of that season's edition of the in-state rivalry game.

Grant Gibbs is fouled as he shoots over Nebraska's Andre Almeida.
(Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)



#5 | February 7, 2014 | The Return

On January 7, Grant Gibbs injured his knee in a game at DePaul, and when he had to be helped off the floor most people assumed the worst — that with less than 20 games remaining in his career, this was a career-ending injury. He was battling under the basket for a rebound and got tangled up with DePaul's DeJuan Marrero; the play resulted in Gibbs hitting the court awkwardly, grimacing in pain. He laid on the court with his jersey covering his face for several minutes before being helped off the floor, unable to put any weight on the leg. It was a heartbreaking scene.

That made his return a month later even sweeter. One month to the day of the injury, versus the same team he'd suffered the injury against, he removed his warmups and made his way toward the scorers table about two minutes into the game. You could hear the precise moment fans in different parts of the arena realized what was happening, because an excited rumble overtook the arena...and when he checked in during a stoppage in play at the 16:59 mark, the resulting noise shook the arena.

And what a return it was. 30 seconds after checking in, he threw an assist down the baseline to McDermott for an easy layup. On the very next possession, he threw an assist to McDermott for a three-pointer. It was like he'd never left. Gibbs played 21 minutes, with seven points, eight assists, five rebounds and a steal. He looked timid his first few minutes on the floor, constantly adjusting his knee brace during stoppages, and during one sequence opting not to dive on the floor for a loose ball. But as the game wore on, he got back into the flow and played a spectacular game.

#4 | March 16, 2012 The Inbounds Pass off the Back

There's no more Gibbsian play than inbounding the ball off the back of a defender to himself, leading to an uncontested layup before the defense knows what happened. It's the kind of play you make in your driveway when you're ten years old, but no one does in a Division 1 game either because they don't have the guts to try it, or because they don't even notice the opportunity. Not Gibbs. He's done it at least six times by our count, including on the sport's biggest stage — in the NCAA Tournament.

In the 2012 tourney against Alabama, Creighton was behind 48-41 with 8:45 to play. Inbounding the ball underneath his own basket, Gibbs noticed the Alabama defender had his back to him, so he threw the ball in, bouncing it off the defenders' back, then scooped it up and laid in a basket. It all happened so quickly that CBS' crew of Jim Nantz and Clark Kellogg weren't certain what had happened initially; when they saw the replay, Nantz started to explain what he thought had occurred and then stopped, laughing at the absurdity of what had actually happened. You talk about guts of steel — to make that play, in that situation, on that stage? Yeah.



Grant Gibbs puts Creighton ahead with 11.8 seconds to play in regulation against Illinois State. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

#3 | March 4, 2012 Gibbs Scores Five Points in Overtime, Leads CU to Title

Playing for the 2012 Arch Madness title, Creighton had to outlast a spunky Illinois State team that was playing for their NCAA Tournament lives. Doug McDermott was brilliant, but it was Gibbs that stepped up to make play after clutch play, taking advantage of all the defensive attention focused on his teammate. As Ott wrote following the game:

“Leading the charge among the supporting crew was Grant Gibbs, a player who chose Creighton over Northern Iowa as his transfer destination after leaving Gonzaga because McDermott was winding up in Omaha instead of Cedar Falls. To a man, the Bluejays — with McDermott the most vocal and frequent advocate — give Gibbs credit for keeping the team loose all season and facilitating much of the offense through his off guard position. On Sunday, two days after one of his least impressive games of the year, Gibbs (career-high 20 points, 7 rebounds, 5 assists, no turnovers) proved his teammates profits.

Gibbs made just about every play he could have to keep his team in the game and push them over multiple obstacles to a title. Three-pointers that kept Creighton close in regulation. Two free throws late to keep Illinois State from getting the stop they needed at the stripe. The first basket of overtime — a three — that allowed the Jays to open the extra period with momentum. He crashed the boards hard, even while getting fouled but not getting calls. He routinely outfought taller, bigger Redbird players for long caroms and loose balls.”

#2 | March 2, 2013 | The Rainbow Three

There’s nothing quite like the pressure of winner-take-all game — Wichita State and Creighton were tied atop the standings on the final day of the season, and the winner would take the regular season title while the loser would be the runner-up.

Ahead 55-52 with 11:37 to play, Doug McDermott checked out for a quick breather. Gibbs found Ethan Wragge for a three to put them up

58-52, and then Wragge made a second three moments later. Gibbs threw an assist to Austin Chatman on the next possession for another three, whipping the crowd into an absolute frenzy and forcing Gregg Marshall to take a timeout.

Gibbs had assisted on two three-pointers in 90 seconds and made the pass that set up the assist on a third, but he’d add a three-pointer of his own at the 7:28 mark. Off a wild crosscourt pass from Chatman that nearly sailed over his head out of bounds, he launched a high-arching three from the corner that seemingly stayed up in the air for 10 seconds. It swished through the net, and when it came out the bottom Creighton had a 69-54 lead.

For the game, he had 12 points and eight assists, but it’s that rainbow three that’s the most memorable play he made that afternoon.

#1 | March 18, 2012 | “The Wink”

Six minutes into their 2012 NCAA Tournament game against North Carolina, Grant Gibbs the Instigator had perhaps his finest moment. While fighting for the ball under the UNC basket, he slapped at it in a manner that John Henson didn’t appreciate — namely, hitting his injured wrist. He shoved Gibbs and was immediately assessed a technical foul.

It was what happened afterward that made it the most memorable thing Gibbs has done in a Creighton uniform, though. As he walked back up the court to shoot free throws, he winked at the Bluejay bench — a moment caught live by CBS’ cameras. It enraged Tar Heel fans, and when Kendall Marshall was injured later in the game it was all the evidence they needed that CU was a dirty team.

Roy Williams didn’t share that sentiment, of course. He understood full well what Gibbs’ intent was — to get Henson riled up and off his game. On his Monday night radio show the day after the game, he commented, “If you’re asking me would Roy Williams wink at the bench after drawing a technical, probably not. But Michael Jordan would.”

DOUG McDERMOTT "DOUGIE McBUCKETS"

PHOTO BY
ADAM STREUR FOR WBR

ARTICLE BY
MAX UNIVERS



Doug McDermott came to Creighton as a bit of an afterthought — his first day as a Bluejay was overshadowed by the announcement of his dad as the new head coach — and leaves as the greatest player to ever wear a Creighton uniform.

I'm not trampling on Creighton's significant basketball history by saying that. You can argue about a lot of things, but the one certainty, the one thing on which everyone agrees is this: Doug McDermott is unequivocally, officially, inarguably, without a doubt, the best basketball player to have donned the White and the Blue.

He's given Creighton fans four years of memories. He made scoring 30 points in a game — something once seen as extraordinary — into a regular occurrence. He did things on a college basketball court that few have done before and few will do again. He took Creighton to new heights, from MVC titles to the Big East, and will probably wind up scoring 1,000 or more points than the previous highest scorer in school history.

It's impossible to summarize four years of unbelievable moments from one of the greatest college basketball players ever into one list, but we tried — here's his ten best, as voted on by the editors of WBR. (*Ed. Note: when this article originally ran on the site, the Senior Night performance hadn't happened yet. That's why this list has ELEVEN items, not ten.*)

#11 | February 16, 2014 McDermott Scores 39 on 13-17 Shooting against #6 'Nova

In your biggest games, you need your biggest player to play like it, and when #6 Villanova came to town Doug McDermott set the tone. He scored his team's first 11 points, hitting back-to-back threes to start the game to the delight of the capacity crowd which roared at ear-splitting decibel levels. Against one of the nation's best defenses, he went 13-17 overall, 4-6 from three-point range and 9-9 from the free-throw line en route to 39 points.

Coach McDermott told 1620AM after the game, "He's very dedicated to wanting to help this team win. I've been coaching a long time, and even if he wasn't my kid I don't know that I've ever been around a player that has a knack for big games the way Doug has a knack for big games. One of my assistants came in before the game into the locker room and said, Doug is LOCKED IN. He said, 'I like it when Doug is locked in.' (laughs) And I said, 'That makes two of us.'"

#10 | March 4, 2012 | McDermott Carries Jays to Title, Scores 33

Because of MVC Tournament Most Outstanding Player Doug McDermott, the Bluejays assured themselves of a return to the NCAA tournament in 2012, as the sophomore carried them to an overtime victory in the MVC Title Game. Here's what Ott wrote while basking in the joy of an MVC title:

"Great players take over the most important of games, and McDermott did so Sunday afternoon in front of a national broadcast television audience. He scored 12 straight points during one stretch of the second half, cutting into Illinois State's 4-point lead and answering every Redbird run with a pick-and-pop three-pointer or a nifty finish in the frontcourt. Jon Ekey played solid defense against McDermott, and the sophomore Player of the Year in the Valley still managed to score 33 points, grab 6 rebounds, and carry the Jays and Creighton Nation on his back to a tournament title.

As the game dragged on and it became evident Illinois State wouldn't surrender, McDermott started to display "The Look" — that poise, that body language shown by a tremendous individual and team player when he decides it is time to take over a game. As a frontcourt player, McDermott is dependent on teammates to find him in good spots to score. Gibbs and Young did that, and Dougie Fresh rewarded them with finish after finish. His 33 points tied Nate Funk for Creighton's single-game record in a Valley tournament game. But all apologies to The Dimer; McDermott's was more impressive given the stage (championship game, versus the semifinals) and the fact his game was close (Funk's 33 came in a 75-58 blowout against Missouri State in 2007)."



Doug McDermott embraces the MVC Championship trophy. (Photo by Adam Streur for WBR)

#9 | December 9 and 15, 2012 | McDermott Gets 30+ in Back to Back Games

During two December nights in his junior year, Doug McDermott torched back-to-back teams for 30 points, becoming the first Bluejay since Bob Harstad in 1990 to accomplish that feat. First, he lit up Akron with 30 points on 10-15 shooting and a career-high 6-8 from three-point range. In the first half, McDermott used a between-the-legs dribble to get space from a defender, then drained a three-pointer over 7-foot center Zeke Marshall. The next trip down, McDermott's spin move left Marshall in the dust as CU took its first double-digit lead of the game.

In their next game, he was even more impressive, lighting up the Cal Golden Bears for 34 points. In a first half when his teammates struggled to make shots, McDermott scored 18 points on 6-8 shooting, including 2-2 from three-point range and 4-4 from the line. He made as many field goals as the rest of the team combined in that first half, with the rest of the Jays going 6-23 from the floor and 1-9 from three-point range. The phrase "single-handedly kept his team in the game" is over-used in basketball, because it is still a team sport, but this is one of those times where it's absolutely the truth.

#8 | January 11, 2013 | The Showcase in Springfield

The first half of this game went about as well as Missouri State could have hoped for — they more or less held Doug McDermott in check with 11 points, the rest of the Bluejays were missing tons of open looks, and they played just well enough themselves to keep the crowd invested. There were four ties and 10 lead changes, as neither team could pull away from the other.

Then the second half came, and like a buzzsaw, whatever hopes of an upset Missouri State had were chopped down by an All-American who put on the type of performance people will tell their grandchildren about decades from now. That's only slightly hyperbolic. He scored all of Creighton's points in an 18-5 run that pushed the lead out to 50-32, making an absurd 14 straight baskets without a miss. Doug's 44-point game at Bradley last year might have resulted in more points, but this was something altogether different. I mean, he outscored the Bears 28-25 all by himself in the second half. Here's what Ott wrote after the game:

"Don't poke the bear. In essence, that's what Action 3 News television sports director Chase Williams and broadcaster extraordinaire (and WBR contributor) Nick Bahe warned no one in particular Friday night. With the early minutes of Creighton's road game at Missouri State proving a bit chippy and very physical, the gentlemen bringing the TV broadcast back to the living rooms and sports bars in Omaha proved prophetic. Be careful how physical you get with Doug McDermott, Bears; most of the time he excels in the face of such confrontation.

And so began what for our current purposes we'll call The Showcase in Springfield. McDermott scored 39 points in 33 minutes, setting the JQH Arena record and single-handedly pulling the Jays away from a game Bears team in the second half. McDermott missed just one shot in the second half, going 10-11 from the field, 3-3 from three-point range, and 5-5 from the free throw line. His 28 points in the second half were more than the entire Missouri State team combined (25). He also doubled up his own teammates during the second stanza, 28 to 14.

The Bears pressured McDermott and fellow frontcourt mate Gregory Echenique early and often. McDermott missed three of his first four field goal attempts. But from the 12:11 mark in the first half until the 4:13 mark in the second half, McDermott couldn't miss. Seriously. McDermott started the second half on a personal 18-5 scoring run that saw the Bluejays distance themselves from MSU. He made 14 consecutive shots at one point. The biggest applause among the Bears faithful in the second half came when McDermott finally missed. At that point, though, MSU fans had paid witness to the greatest player in recent Missouri Valley Conference history.

Perfect low post position leading to lay ups. Baseline pull-up jumpers. Quick-release three-pointers from the top of the arc. Fade-away, fallback jumpers. Left-handed scoop shots in the lane. Dribble-drives against helpless defenders. Put-back tips in the paint. It was all on display against Missouri State."



Doug McDermott started his 30-point barrage in this game against Akron. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

#7 | January 7, 2012 Career-High 44 Points in win at Bradley

In this January, 2012 game, Doug McDermott had one of the greatest single-game offensive performances in the storied history of Creighton Basketball. His 18 field goals were one away from the all-time school record, and his 44 points were the most by a Bluejay since Benoit Benjamin scored 45 in a January, 1985 game. At several points during a second half where he scored 31 points, the television crew of Travis Justice and Nick Bahe were so amazed that they were reduced to incredulous giggling. Who could blame them? As he did in the game the previous month against Tulsa, Doug McDermott was playing on a different level than everyone else on the court. Bradley threw every defensive strategy known to man at him in an attempt to at least slow him down, to no avail.

Hilariously, at one point, the Bradley P.A. announcer inside Carver Arena said after a basket with obvious frustration, "Doug McDermott, two more points." As I wrote after the game, "his ability to break opposing teams' confidence apparently extends to public address announcers now, as well."

In his postgame piece, Ott gushed, "I'm banging away at the keyboard while hoisting a cold Heineken to honor McDermott, who etched his name among some fairly special company in the Creighton record books tonight. McDermott's 44 points are the sixth highest total in a single game in the program's history, and the highest output since Benoit Benjamin scored 45 points against Indiana State in 1985. In back to back games in 1985, Benjamin made 18 field goals against Southern Illinois and Indiana State. No one at Creighton has made 18 field goals in a game since that week nearly 22 years ago — until tonight. McDermott went 18-23 from the floor, tying him with Benjamin (x2) and Eddie Cole for the second-highest field goal makes in a game in CU history (Bob Portman (x2) and Wally Anderzunas share the record with 19 makes)."

#6 | February 18, 2012 Improbable Bucket Leads to Win over Long Beach

In their 2012 BracketBuster game, a talented, hungry Long Beach State team led by Casper Ware came to the CenturyLink Center determined to leave with a win. With 4:30 to play, Long Beach State led 76-69, answering every Creighton run with a run of their own, and though the crowd was trying valiantly to keep the Jays in the game, time was running short. The fans knew it. The Jays knew it. Long Beach State knew it. Doug McDermott made a cross-court pass to the far wing, where a wide-open Ethan Wragge fired up a three-pointer. The shot missed badly, but flying seemingly out of nowhere was McDermott, who in one motion caught the ball, redirected it, and tipped the ball in. It was the sort of play that said to his teammates and to the Creighton fans, “We’re winning this game.” Literally.

“He was a little more vocal during our timeouts than he usually is,” Greg McDermott said in his postgame remarks on AM590. “His statement was, ‘We’re not losing this game. We are NOT losing this game!’ I kept hearing it out of him, and that’s the natural progression for Doug as a leader. He believed we were going to win, and he certainly made winning plays for us tonight.”

From the moment that ball dropped through the bottom of the net, everything changed.

Creighton outscored Long Beach State 10-3 from that point forward, taking confidence from Doug McDermott’s example. They played their most inspired defense of the season, with freshman Austin Chatman fighting through screens to stay in the grill of LBSU point guard Casper Ware, forcing him into wild shots and taking them out of their offensive flow. They made clutch play after clutch play, from McDermott’s rebound and putback with just under two minutes left to cut the lead to two, to Gregory Echenique’s running hook shot to tie it at 79 with 90 seconds left, to Echenique ripping down his most ferocious rebound in a career full of ferocious rebounds with 48 seconds left, to Echenique forcing a turnover to set up the final possession after Chatman turned it over on a dubious over-and-back call.

All of those plays over the final four minutes, inspired by Doug McDermott’s tip-in and his words in the huddle, put the Jays in position to win, and gave Young the opportunity to seize his signature moment — making his patented off-balance running jumper in the lane, this time just as the clock read all zeroes.

#5 | December 19, 2011 | McDermott Scores 35 on 16-23 Shooting, Impresses Tulsa Coach

It’s hard to remember a day when this was true, but in December of 2011, Doug McDermott wasn’t yet a household name among college hoops fans outside of the MVC footprint. That all changed after his performance at Tulsa. Patrick Marshall wrote afterward, “Doug McDermott went out and scored a career high 35 points on 16-of-23 shooting, in the process showing off moves that everyone has been watching all season — spinning left, spinning right, hook shot, jump shot. Tulsa did not have an answer for him. On a play in the second half as the shot clock was running out, McDermott nailed a long three pointer with a hand in his face that basically epitomized the night he was having. He then connected on another three pointer 30 seconds later, upping his three-point shooting percentage to 57.5%. Remarkably, he now has nine straight games scoring more than 24 points.”

That long three as the shot clock was expiring — a turnaround, spinning, heave of a shot from 30 feet out — is the play everyone remembers from

this game, and rightfully so. Was it a spectacular play? Sure. It’s what it symbolizes, though, that makes it so memorable. For a lot of Bluejays fans, it was the moment when they realized McDermott was going to be more than just a really good player, but one of the best to ever play for Creighton. I can remember sitting at the Olympic Sports Bar with the Bluejay Banter guys watching the webcast of the game — remember webcasts? — and being completely dumbfounded at that shot. No one does that. Well, mere mortals don’t do that. Doug did. And from that moment on, the secret was out.

But don’t take it from me. Here’s Tulsa coach Doug Wojcik from his postgame press conference, in what’s now become a legendary rant on Doug:

“I tell you what, that was one impressive performance by Doug McDermott. I thought the guy single-handedly broke the spirit of my team. In particular, my three seniors and sophomore post players. He was terrific. We really wanted to defend the three-point line against them. They make 10 three’s a game. We did a really good job on (Jahenns) Manigat. He gets one shot, no three’s. We did a really good job on Ethan Wragge. He’s an excellent three-point shooter. My goodness, it really surprised us how good McDermott was, particularly in the post against size, how good his strength is, how good his stamina is, how good his feet are, and how good of hands he has. He was very impressive to me, tonight.”

#4 | January 28, 2014 McDermott’s Game-Winning Three Ruins St. John’s Comeback

Prior to hitting the game-winner at St. Joseph’s earlier this year (spoiler alert: it’s next on our list), Doug McDermott had never made a last-second shot to win a game for the Bluejays, which was a surprising thing to a lot of people. That one came on the road, making the game-winner against St. John’s a special moment, and barring a repeat against Providence tonight, in all probability a once-in-a-career moment. Knocked to the ground on the shot, after McDermott’s game-winning three-pointer dropped through, he laid on the court for a few seconds not for dramatic effect, but to soak in the immense roar of the fans inside CenturyLink Center.

He was the likely Wooden Award winner as the best player in the country before, but with that shot, he’d given voters his “Wooden Moment” — an indelible memory that all but clinches his coronation. It lit up Twitter like a Christmas tree, with dozens of national analysts from ESPN, Fox, CBS, NBC and elsewhere proclaiming that after that shot, in that moment, every other contender for the award was now playing for second place.

That’s a moment.

With the game tied at 60, would the Jays set up a play for McDermott? Would St. John’s allow the best player in the country to even touch the ball? On the Creighton radio broadcast, Nick Bahe speculated that they would not — that St. John’s would double him, and make someone else beat them. Whichever guard had the ball when it crossed half-court would be the player that would have to make the play. Instead, St. John’s coach Steve Lavin opted to defend the final possession straight-up, just as they had all night. Isaiah Zierden put a spectacular screen on the player assigned to guard McDermott, St. John’s shot-blocker extraordinaire Chris Obekpa — putting his backside into him and pushing Obekpa back, allowing McDermott to catch the ball and get just enough of a view of the rim to put up a shot.

Was there any doubt the shot would go in? McDermott told the media afterward that although he didn’t see it go in, he knew it was destined to go in the second it left his hands, and the roar of the crowd let him know he was right.

Doug McDermott launches a game-winning shot against St. John's. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)



#3 | November 16, 2013 | First-Ever Game Winner Sinks St. Joseph's

Doug McDermott — two-time All American, leading scorer in school history, holder of a huge chunk of Creighton's records — had never made a game-winning shot before this mid-November Saturday night in Philadelphia. Against St. Joseph's, against a defense that had done a good job of slowing him down all night, he finally won a game with a last-second shot.

Trailing 79-78, the Jays had to inbound the ball four times (!) — on the first, they couldn't get it in and called timeout; on the second and third, they were fouled because St. Joe's had fouls to give, and on the fourth, they got it to McDermott. They ran a circle play, one of the most basic basketball plays in the book, and it created just enough confusion to get McDermott open for a split second. That was enough for Gibbs to hit him, and McDermott nailed the shot while being fouled mid-flight — his jumper put them up by one, and the free-throw put them up two. After the free throw, St. Joes inexplicably tried a full-court pass with 4 seconds remaining, instead of bringing the ball up the court. Devin Brooks intercepted it, made both free throws, and the game was in the bag.

After the game, Coach McDermott explained the genesis of that play on the 1620AM postgame. "We ran our circle out of bounds play that we talked about on the pregame. You'd have thought I was crazy if I had said we were going to win a game with that play. I thought of it a couple nights ago when I was having one of those sleepless nights, to use against their switching defense. Coach Vanderloo informs me that his fifth grade daughter's basketball team is running the same play, so yes it's basic, but it was just able to create just enough confusion. There's a little method to the madness, though. Grant's got to slap the ball on the screen, he's going to pass the ball when Doug's in a certain spot, and the defense just got caught for a split second on a miscommunication, and Doug got loose."

After the game, Ott gushed, "At the end of the night, McDermott made it happen. Thanks to subs Wragge and Brooks and steady play by Grant Gibbs, the Bluejays were able to keep Saint Joe's at an arm's length for most of the second half. McDermott continued to fight through a challenging evening, and eventually converted a hoop with just over four minutes to play that helped the Jays regain a 7-point lead. A 12-4 run by the Hawks would erase that margin, though, and leave the Jays trailing 79-78 with less than 30 seconds left. The Bluejays stayed calm. They cleared everything out for Brooks, who made a nice

drive to the left of the hoop but saw his layup attempt blocked by DeAndre Bembry. The Hawks challenged every inbounds pass but Gibbs and the Jays were able to stay the course and eventually get the ball in the hands of their All-American. McDermott drilled the game-winner while also being fouled (video), and the senior collected himself and hit the ensuing free throw to give Creighton a two-point lead with less than five seconds to play.

Holy \$&!+ is right. McDermott saw constant attention and physical defense from various Hawks all night. But he stayed the course and once again proved just how versatile an offensive threat he is. The shot he hit was ridiculous; a quick-catch, fading jumper from just inside the arc during which he drew more than just a bit of contact from the defender. Definitely one for the highlight reel."



Doug McDermott made his first-ever game-winner at St. Joseph's. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

#2 | March 2, 2013 | McDermott Delivers Masterpiece, Scores 41 in MVC Title Clincher

Creighton had gotten off to slow starts a lot in 2012-13, particularly during their February swoon. In the regular season finale with the MVC title on the line, Doug McDermott decided that a slow start was simply not an option, so he took it upon himself to take over the game while his teammates got their sea legs. He scored the team's first nine points on an array of jump shots and layups, and didn't miss a single shot in a first half where he scored 18 points. Here's what Ott thought after the game wrapped up:

"The junior All American had a game for the ages, high stakes and increased pressure be damned. It was evident early that McDermott was in a groove, as he scored Creighton's first 9 points and established himself offensively against WSU's Carl Hall. With every outstanding move that McDermott made against the Shocker defense, the intensity inside the building grew.

The Jays built a 9-point lead midway through the first half, but the Shockers rallied to take a lead that would change hands back and forth until late in the half. That's when McDermott tied the score at 29 apiece with a nifty move in the lane. A little more than a minute later, double-teamed by WSU defenders, McDermott found Avery Dingman with a cross-court pass that set up a wide-open look for a three-pointer. Dingman drilled it, and Wichita State wouldn't lead the rest of the afternoon. That was one of McDermott's three assists. But as well as he passed out of defensive pressure, people won't talk about his three assists 20 years from now.

In what will surely go down as one of the greatest single-game performances in Creighton history, McDermott scored a season-high 41 points. He dazzled fans, coaches, teammates, and his opponents with an array of pivot moves, face-up jumpers, and deft three-point shooting. He went a perfect 10-10 from inside the arc, 5-8 behind it, and 6-6 from the free throw line en route to one of CU's most spectacular offensive performances ever."

#1 | March 8, 2014 | McDermott Scores 45 in Home Finale

What can you say about this game? The biggest crowd in Creighton basketball history watched Doug McDermott score a career-high 45 points, pushing him past 3,000 career points in the process and avenging a previous loss to Providence. The Bluejays beat the Friars 88-73 and sent seniors McDermott, Grant Gibbs, Jahenns Manigat, and Ethan Wragge out on a winning note in their final home game in front of a boisterous Bluejays fanbase appreciative of everything the four gentlemen have accomplished during their years on the Hilltop.

"I'm spent. Last night was crazy." Ott wrote after the game. 18,000 Bluejay fans would agree.

The first five points of the game were scored by Doug McDermott on a nifty layup and Grant Gibbs on a three-pointer, two of Creighton's seniors seizing the moment and getting their team off to a fast start. After Avery Dingman made a basket at the 15:10 mark to give Creighton an 8-5 lead, they proceeded to make 11 — ELEVEN — straight field goals over the next seven minutes. First McDermott made a basket, then a second, and then a three-pointer, and then a second three-pointer. After those ten straight points by McDermott, it was clear that this was a man on a mission. He wasn't content with just making sure Creighton won the game. He was going to get 34 points so that he could surpass 3,000 for his career in front of his home fans.

The first half featured a 32-9 run with McDermott scoring 18 of the 32 points. They took a 45-22 lead into the half, with Doug McDermott scoring as many points by himself as Providence did as a team.

How do you pick a favorite moment on a night like this? Was it Warren Buffett, festooned with Bluejay temporary tattoos on his face, having a one-on-one discussion with Doug McDermott during shootaround? Was it McDermott's final pregame introduction, as the roar of the largest crowd to witness any event ever at CenturyLink was so loud no one could hear anything?



Doug McDermott celebrates after a bucket against Providence. (Photo by Mike Spomer for WBR)

How about his breakaway slam dunk early in the second half? Or the roar every time the scoreboard showed an industrious fan who had made a sign with updated point totals tracking Doug's distance from 3,000 points? Maybe you liked the anticipatory roar when that sign was shown during a timeout and "2,998" was next to Doug's name.

For most, I have a hunch their favorite moment was Doug surpassing 3,000 points on an absurd step-back three-pointer from 28 feet, holding up three fingers as he ran down court to the loudest noise imaginable. The timeout after the next possession when the standing ovation was still continuing, oblivious to the action on the court, so that Coach Mac — Dad — could give Doug — his son — a hug was something else. And then a determined Doug came back into the game, intent on setting the arena scoring record, and rattled off nine more points to come within a whisker of breaking Colt Ryan's record. The crowd singing "Sweet Caroline", serenading Doug with an acapella version while he shot free throws. A having-the-time-of-his-life Doug yelling to radio analyst Nick Bahe in the middle of the next possession "Here comes Dakotal!", telling him that they were about to run a play they'd executed countless times over the last four years.

When he took his curtain call, exiting a home game for the final time, grown men openly wept. There will be more victories, more All-Americans, more stars...but there will never be another player the likes of Doug McDermott at Creighton.

Record-Setting 2013-14 Creighton Bluejays

Shattering The Record Book

— By Panon —

The 2014 Creighton senior class has left a big impression in the hearts of Bluejay fans everywhere and provided many great memories. In similar fashion, this year's team and the 4 seniors have left a mark in the Creighton record books. Heading into the Big East tournament, here is a look at where they stand:

TEAM RECORDS

3-Point Field Goals (Season)

309 (30 Games)
Previous: 307 (2012-13, 36 Games)

3-Point Field Goals (Game)

21 at Villanova, 1/9/2014
Previous: 20 vs. Chattanooga, 2/19/2005

Points in a Season

Current Record: 2,772 (2012-13, 36 Games)
This Season: 2,397 (30 Games)

Free-Throw Percentage (Season)

Current Record: 75.93% (2012-13, 489-644)
This Season: 74.83% (434-580)

SINGLE GAME RECORDS

Points Scored

51 Bob Portman vs. UW-Milwaukee 12/16/67
47 Eddie Cole at Morningside 11/29/54
46 Bob Portman vs. Weber State 12/23/68
45 Tim Powers at Idaho State 01/29/66
Benoit Benjamin vs. Southern Illinois 01/17/85
45 Doug McDermott vs Providence 03/08/14

3-Pointers Made

9 Kyle Korver vs. Evansville 1/15/2003
9 Ethan Wragge at Villanova 01/20/2014

SEASON RECORDS [Thru games of 3/8]

Most Points in a Season

834 Doug McDermott (Jr.) 2012-13
801 Doug McDermott (So.) 2011-12
795 Doug McDermott (Sr.) 2013-14
738 Bob Portman (Jr.) 1967-68
734 Bob Harstad (Jr.) 1989-90
688 Benoit Benjamin (Jr.) 1984-85
681 Bob Portman (Sr.) 1968-69
671 Vernon Moore (Sr.) 1984-85
651 Rod Mason (Sr.) 1987-88
620 Chad Gallagher (Sr.) 1990-91

Scoring Average

Scoring Average	Pts	G
29.52 Bob Portman (Jr., 1967-68)	738	25
26.50 Doug McDermott (Sr., 2013-14)	795	30
26.19 Bob Portman (Sr., 1968-69)	681	26
23.58 Eddie Cole (Sr., 1954-55)	448	19
23.07 Doug McDermott (So., 2011-12)	692	30

Field Goals Made

307 Doug McDermott (So.) 2011-12
303 Bob Portman (Jr.) 1967-68
284 Doug McDermott (Jr.) 2012-13
276 Doug McDermott (Sr.) 2013-14
265 Vernon Moore (Sr.) 1984-85
259 Eddie Cole (Jr.) 1953-54
258 Benoit Benjamin (Jr.) 1984-85
258 Bob Harstad (Jr.) 1989-90

3-Point Field Goals Made

129 Kyle Korver (Sr., 2002-03)
100 Kyle Korver (So., 2000-01)
96 Ethan Wragge (Sr., 2013-14)
91 Booker Woodfox (Sr., 2008-09)
82 Tad Ackerman (Jr., 1994-95)
80 Doug McDermott (Sr., 2013-14)

3-pt FG Percentage (minimum 50 attempts)

.490 Doug McDermott (Jr., 2012-13)	77-157
.486 Jimmy Motz (Jr., 2004-05)	54-111
.486 Doug McDermott (So., 2011-12)	54-111
.480 Kyle Korver (Sr., 2002-03)	129-269
.478 Ethan Wragge (Sr., 2013-14)	96-201
.476 Booker Woodfox (Sr., 2008-09)	91-191
.470 Duan Cole (Jr., 1990-91)	63-134
.469 Nate Funk (Jr., 2004-05)	67-143
.468 Jahenns Manigat (So., 2011-12)	59-126
.468 Ben Walker (Jr., 1999-00)	36-77

Team Field Goal Percentage

.535 1984-85	961-1,797
.519 1976-77	908-1,748
.504 2011-12	975-1,935
.501 2012-13	942-1,882
.498 2002-03	974-1,956
.496 2013-14	827-1,667

3-pt FG Percentage (since 1986-87)

.424 2011-12	287-677
.420 2013-14	309-735
.416 1999-00	289-694
.414 2004-05	293-707
.414 2012-13	307-742

Average Attendance

2013-14	17,896 (16 Games)
2012-13	17,155 (17 Games)
2011-12	16,664 (16 Games)
2008-09	15,930 (19 Games)
2006-07	15,909 (14 Games)

CAREER RECORDS

Points Scored

1. 3,011 Doug McDermott 2010-present
2. 2,116 Rodney Buford 1995-99
3. 2,110 Bob Harstad 1987-91
4. 1,983 Chad Gallagher 1987-91
4. 1,876 Bob Portman 1966-69
5. 1,801 Kyle Korver 1999-03

Scoring Average

24.68 Bob Portman, 1966-69
21.51 Doug McDermott, 2010-present
20.51 Paul Silas, 1961-64
20.19 Bob Gibson, 1954-57
18.10 Benoit Benjamin, 1982-85

Field Goals Made

1,087 Doug McDermott, 2010-present
811 Chad Gallagher, 1987-91
778 Rodney Buford, 1995-99
759 Bob Harstad, 1987-91
747 Bob Portman, 1966-69

Field Goal Percentage (minimum 300 attempts)

.625 Gregory Echenique, 2010-2013	374-598
.611 Mike Grimes, 2000-04	292-478
.585 Vernon Moore, 1981-85	649-1109
.562 Benoit Benjamin, 1982-85	610-1085
.551 Chad Gallagher, 1987-91	811-1472
.550 Doug McDermott, 2010-present 1087-1977	

3-Point Field Goals Made

371 Kyle Korver, 1999-03
320 Ethan Wragge, 2009-present
258 Doug McDermott, 2010-present
245 Ryan Sears, 1997-01
212 Rodney Buford, 1995-99
200 Nate Funk, 2002-07
197 Jahenns Manigat, 2010-14
185 Matt Roggenburk, 1986-90
177 Duan Cole, 1987-92

3-pt Field Goal Percentage (min. 100 attempts)

.4580 Doug McDermott, 2010-present	258-563
.4551 Booker Woodfox, 2007-09	147-323
.4530 Kyle Korver, 1999-03	371-819
.4415 Rod Mason, 1986-88	132-299
.4400 Nerijus Karlikanovas, 1998-00	48-109
.4396 Ethan Wragge, 2009-present	320-728

Free-Throw Percentage (min. 100 attempts)

.891 Kyle Korver, 1999-03 312-350
.844 Mike Caruso, 1968-71 276-327
.831 Doug McDermott, 2010-present 416-509
.826 Cavel Witter, 2007-10 246-298

Assists

570 Ryan Sears, 1997-01
549 Ralph Bobik, 1971-74
505 Antoine Young, 2008-12
481 Grant Gibbs, 2011-present
458 Randy Eccker 1974-78

Rebounds

1,751 Paul Silas, 1961-64
1,126 Bob Harstad, 1987-91
1,060 Doug McDermott, 2010-present
1,005 Benoit Benjamin, 1982-85
979 Bob Portman, 1966-69



What is **White & Blue Review?**

People have been rooting for Creighton athletics since the school's earliest days on the Hilltop. They've cheered for All Americans. They've watched future Olympians and professionals grace fields and courts around campus. And they've worn the White and the Blue the entire time.

Named for the school's colors and the fight song that blares from courtside speakers and sideline P.A. systems, we created White & Blue Review to provide timely news, thoughtful analysis, and unfiltered opinions about Creighton sports to Bluejays fans everywhere.

As fans of Creighton sports, it is our goal to promote Bluejays athletics. We hope to engage Creighton fans in discussions about anything and everything related to Bluejays sports.

And while we stand by our opinions, they are not those of anyone associated with the Creighton athletic department, including Bluejays student athletes.

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