

## Lady Pirates vs. Duke, Round III

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*By Taylor Lee and Carly Moon*

So we meet again.

In the first round of the NCAA women's basketball tournament, the 15th seeded Hampton University Lady Pirates (20-12) will play the second-seeded, nationally ranked Duke Lady Blue Devils 9 p.m. Saturday March 18.

This is not the first time that **Hampton and Duke** have seen each other. It is the third encounter out of the six times that the Hampton women have been in the NCAA tourney in the past eight seasons.

Duke won the last meeting on March 24, 2013 by a 67-51 count. In 2010, Hampton lost 72-37.

A 15th seed beating a 2nd seed team has been done before by **three Historically Black Colleges and Universities**, all men's teams from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC): Hampton University, Norfolk State, and Coppin State University.

The Lady Pirates defeated Bethune Cookman University 52-49 and earned the 2017 MEAC tournament championship on March 11.

All-time scorer Malia Tate-DeFreitas, plus Ashley Bates and Chanel Green were three Hampton University regular-season starters that were sidelined because of injuries. Low post player Kaylah Lupoe was injured during the MEAC championship game. Together, the four student-athletes accounted for 57.5 percent of the team scoring.

"It was unlikely and improbable. We've got three starters sitting on the sideline, and then Lupoe gets hurt," said coach David Six (photo right). "And we still find a way."

"I am just so thankful to be a part of this team. When everyone thought we were going to lose or give up, we actually won," said Monnazjea Finney-Smith (photo right), member of the MEAC all-tournament team. "To be able to play against a great team [Duke] with such a great history is just exciting.

"I trust my coach will prepare us and have a great game plan, and I am definitely excited to be here."

To catch the game, tune into **ESPN3** at 9 p.m. on Saturday.



If you want to support the Lady Pirates at the game in Durham, North Carolina, the Office of Student Activities is taking a bus to cheer the girls on. The first 200 people to sign up can go for free. A mass email was sent notifying students to "Get on the Bus." In addition to a free ride and ticket to the game the passengers also get free T-shirts and lunch boxes.

"I want to make sure that the team has full support from their peers," said Anzell Harrell, director of student activities, "because I have watched them work so hard to get to this point."

Some Hampton students speculated on whether the women's basketball team could make it past Saturday. "I get scared when I hear big-school names like Duke compared to Hampton. They probably think it's going to be an easy win," said Isaiah Spencer, a sophomore journalism major from Montclair, New Jersey. "I know we're going to prove them wrong."

*The writers are students in the **Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications.***