

Broom/Auburn Dominate Maui to Championship

by Charlie Krausse

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Ever to Conquer. Never to Yield. That describes Auburn basketball 2024. Three Quad-1 games in three days in the Maui Invitational Tournament. Auburn came through as the tournament champions, defeating the Memphis Tigers, 90-76 in the title game.

Tournament MVP, Johni Broome was a force all 3 games. Against the Tigers, he poured in 21 points, 16 rebounds, 6 assists, 4 blocks and 1 steal. Just dominate across the board.

It was more than one game that made him the easy choice as the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. In the opening quarterfinals match against Iowa State, Broome had 21 points and 10 rebounds. While in the semifinals against the Tarheels, Johni added another 23 points and 19 rebounds.

Auburn opened up the tournament drawing Iowa State in the Quarterfinals. The Cyclones entered the game as the #1 defensive team in the country. Every shot the Tigers took, every dribble that Auburn made, every pass attempted, the Cyclones applied heavy pressure throughout the full 40 minutes. It was a knife fight in a phone booth. With just seconds remaining Denver Jones drove to the hoop for the game winning shot. With the offensive rebound/tip-in for the game winner, was the Tournament MVP, Broome. Auburn advanced 83-81.

In the semifinals, Auburn had to contend with North Carolina's speed. Gas and go has been the Tarheel way since Roy Williams took over the historic program. And now under Hubert Davis, things have not changed. RJ Davis and Seth Trimble gave their all, but the size and depth of Auburn was too much for the Heels, as Auburn advanced 85-72.

Memphis awaited Auburn in the Maui Invitational championship as they went through two headline programs in 48 hours, as well. First, they knocked off previously unbeaten and two-time defending national champions, Connecticut Huskies, 99-97 in Overtime. Then on Tuesday night, the Memphis Tigers advanced past Tom Izzo and his Michigan State Spartans, 71-63.

Auburn exploded the opening segment and never looked back. Entering the Under 16 timeout, Auburn led 13-7 with Broome registering at least one tally mark in every stat category - points, rebounds, assists, blocks and even registered a steal.

Dylan Cardwell, Auburn's electronic big man, had a career night in the championship game. The jumbotron sensation scored a career high 18 points (including a 3-pointer), 3 rebounds, 4 assists and a steal.

Chad Baker-Mazara and Denver Jones each reached double-digits in scoring as well with 14 and 11 points, respectively.

The depth was more than Memphis could handle. All nine of Auburn's regulars each played a minimum of 13 minutes and their bench outscored Memphis' 24-17. In comparison, Memphis' Dain Dainja played significant minutes.

Auburn next travels to Cameron Indoor to face Top 10 ranked Duke Blue Devils on Wednesday, December 4th.

Before that, on Monday, December 1st, the first NET Rankings are released. Auburn should find themselves near the very top of the NET Rankings. If not #1 then lock them in at #2. So far, their Non-Conference resume includes Quad-1 Neutral Victories over Houston, Iowa State, North Carolina and Memphis.

At pretty much the halfway point in the Non-Conference schedule, after the Blue Devils, Auburn's schedule continues to be full of headliners, just like Pearl had intended. Future games include a neutral floor game with Ohio State in Atlanta and then facing Purdue in Birmingham, along with Richmond, Georgia State and Monmouth before conference play begins in January.

Maui Invitational Totals:

JERSEY	PLAYER	GAMES	MINUTES	POINTS	REBOUNDS	ASSISTS	BLOCKS	STEALS
0	Tahaad Pettiford	3	52	30	2	5	0	4
1	JP Pegues	3	35	3	4	2	0	1
2	Denver Jones	3	76	33	6	7	0	2
3	Jahki Howard	1	2	4	0	0	0	0
4	Johni Broome	3	102	65	45	13	9	3
5	Chris Moore	3	39	2	4	4	0	3
7	CJ Williams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Ja'Heim Hudson	2	4	0	1	1	0	0
10	Chad Baker-Mazara	3	67	46	13	6	0	3
12	Joah Shay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Miles Kelly	3	56	29	5	2	1	0
14	Presley Patterson	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
17	Drake Cardwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	Blake Muschalek	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
22	Reed Trapp	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	Addarin Scott	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	Chaney Johnson	3	62	24	13	3	3	1
44	Dylan Cardwell	3	60	22	8	9	3	4
	AUBURN TOTALS	3	120	258	101	52	16	21