

## **CBI Championship: UL Monroe vs Loyola-Chicago Preview**

Posted by Rebecca Grant on Monday, 30 March 2015 in MBB Nation

Playing for its ninth tournament championship in school history, the Louisiana Monroe men's basketball team heads north to Loyola-Chicago for game one of the College Basketball Invitational (CBI) best of three championship series on Monday at 7:00 p.m. at Gentile Arena. ULM (24-12, 14-6 SBC) reached the finals of the CBI after defeating Eastern Michigan 71-67, Mercer 71-69 and Vermont 71-65. The Warhawks showed their resilience and grinded them out after trailing in the second half in all three games.

Senior Tylor Ongwae has been on a tear in the CBI. He's averaging 25.0 points per game in the tournament and is shooting .381 (8-21) from three-point range. He's hit big three-pointers late in all three contests to either give ULM the lead or put the game away.

Junior Majok Deng is averaging a double-double in the CBI with 16.7 points and 11.0 rebounds per outing. Junior Jamaal Samuel has also stepped up in the tournament, averaging 11.3 points and 7.0 rebounds over the three games.

On the season, Ongwae leads the team in scoring with 14.5 points per game and grabs 6.6 rebounds per contest, while Deng averages 10.6 points and 7.5 rebounds per outing.

ULM enters the game ranking sixth in the country in field goal percentage defense (.381) and eighth in the nation in three-point field goal percentage defense (.294).

The Ramblers (22-13, 8-10 MVC) reached the CBI Championship series after defeating Rider 62-59, Oral Roberts 86-78 and Seattle 63-48, all at home. Loyola-Chicago is in its second season in the Missouri Valley Conference and was previously in the Horizon League.

Milton Doyle leads the team with 11.5 points per game and returned for the CBI after missing 11 games in conference. Christian Thomas averages 11.2 points and 4.5 rebounds per game. The Ramblers have three more players averaging at least 8.3 points per game in Montel James, Earl Peterson and Devon Turk.

As a team, Loyola-Chicago shoots .394 from beyond-the-arc on the season.

Tonight is the first meeting between the teams. Interestingly, it is also Loyola's first game against a Sun Belt Conference team since Dec. 28, 2002, when it dropped an 88-77 decision to Louisiana-Lafayette. In all, Loyola has faced just five of the 11 current members of the league, posting a 17-5 (.773) all-time record. However, that number is a bit flattering for the Ramblers, as they are 14-0 against Arkansas State with all 14 of those meetings occurring between 1925-41. Loyola's last win over a Sun Belt opponent was a 94-73 victory over Georgia State on Jan. 4, 1992 in Chicago.