



Saturday, January 6, 2024

ST. JOHNS @ VILLANOVA

Game Time: 1:00pm ET

TV: Fox

Selection: St. Johns + 5 (- 120)

After a slow start to the season, Rick Pitino has the Red Storm rolling. They have won eight of their last ten games, and that stretch includes a narrow 4 point loss to UCONN. Point guard Daniss Jenkins shrugged off early-season turnover issues and had 24 assists and five turnovers in his past four games. Another guard, Nahiem Alleyne, has adapted to coach Rick Pitino's style and become a difference-maker in multiple roles, averaging 12.3 points and 50% shooting the past four games. This is typical Rick Pitino with the bench making a huge difference in the outcome of games.

The Storm arsenal is deep. RJ Luis appears past the injuries that cost him 10 of the first 11 games and, despite the rust, looks like a high impact scorer and defender. Freshman forward Brady Dunlap came off the bench and had a breakout 13-point performance in Wednesday's huge 86-70 win over Butler. [Butler came back last night to play Villanova very tough]

Pitino's defense is starting to improve and look more like a typical Pitino defense. They have a solid shot blocker in Joel Soriano. In three Big East games, the Storm quieted some of the opponents' biggest guns. Xavier three-point expert Quincy Olivari was just 0-for-2 on the arc; UConn's Tristen Newton managed 4-for-14 shooting; while Butler's two top scorers had an aggregate 20 points and only 5-for-20 shooting. The Storm now play some zone defense and get more press turnovers. Opponents are starting to feel the pressure.

St. John's has a MONSTER head coaching advantage in this game. The Wildcat's coach is Kyle Neptune who is barely above .500 in his three years of head coaching experience, and although he has the current conference leader in Villanova, the jury is still out on whether or not Neptune will lead this team to championships as the fans have become accustomed to. Pitino and the Storm roll into Finneran Pavilion with a hot hand, and Pitino will be looking to show Neptune a few reasons why he is one of basketball's all-time greatest coaches. Take St. Johns and the points.

If a single game you purchased does not win based on the point spread, you will receive the next equivalent game FREE OF CHARGE.

Any questions or comments can be sent to: wiz@wizardraceandsports.com

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