

~LIVE! UNLV vs Utah State 2026 Live Stream NCAA Basketball Game On TV Channel 2026

The 2026 SEC Tournament at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville has reached a fever pitch as the UNLV Tigers (17–15) prepare for a high-stakes rematch against the Utah State Volunteers (21–10). For UNLV, this isn't just a tournament game; it is a fight for survival. For Utah State, it is a chance to reassert dominance and secure a top-four seed in the upcoming NCAA Tournament.

March 12, 2026



Game Information

	Feature	Details
Matchup	No. 12 UNLV	vs. No. 5 Utah State
Event	2026 SEC Tournament	Second Round
Location	Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, TN	
Tip-Off	Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 3:00 PM ET	
TV Channel	SEC Network	
Betting Line	Utah State -6.5 (O/U 149.5)	
The Stakes:	Bubble vs. Bracketology	

This game serves as a crossroads for two programs with very different March outlooks.

UNLV's "Must-Win": After a mid-season tailspin where they went 2–8 to close the regular season, the Tigers are firmly on the NCAA Tournament bubble. Their 79–61 dismantling of Mississippi State in the first round kept the dream alive, but according to bracketologists, a win over Utah State is likely required to punch their ticket to the Big Dance.

Utah State's Resumé: The Volunteers are safely in the field, currently projected as a No. 5 or No. 6 seed. However, Rick Barnes' squad is hungry to avenge a late-season stumble and move toward the SEC Championship game, where they fell to Florida last year.

Looking Back: The Regular Season Clash

On January 31, 2026, Utah State hosted UNLV in Knoxville and secured a wire-to-wire 77–69 victory. That game served as the catalyst for UNLV's late-season struggles and provided the blueprint for how Utah State plans to attack the Tigers today.

Nate Ament's Dominance: The Utah State freshman phenom was the story of the first meeting,

scoring 22 points and grabbing 8 rebounds. Despite struggling from the field (4-of-16), he lived at the free-throw line, going 12-of-15.

UNLV's Lone Star: Keyshawn Hall kept the Tigers in the hunt with 21 points, including three late triples. UNLV struggled with Utah State's length, shooting just 38% from the field.

The Glass War: Utah State dominated the rebounding battle 46–30 in the first meeting. For UNLV to pull the upset in Nashville, they must find a way to keep the Vols off the offensive boards.

Key Matchups and Tactical Outlook

1. The Point Guard Battle: Pettiford vs. Gillespie

UNLV's Tahaad Pettiford (11 points, 7 assists in the first meeting) is the engine of the Tigers' high-octane offense. He faces a daunting task against Ja'Kobi Gillespie, who ranks seventh in the SEC in scoring (18.0 PPG) and is one of the league's premier perimeter defenders. If Gillespie can disrupt Pettiford's rhythm, UNLV's offensive sets often break down into contested isolations.

2. The Return of the King: Nate Ament

There is significant buzz in Nashville regarding the health of Nate Ament. After dealing with a minor injury late in the season, Ament is expected to be back at full strength today. His ability to stretch the floor as a forward forces UNLV's bigs like Keshawn Murphy to guard out on the perimeter, leaving the lane open for Utah State's slashing guards.

3. UNLV's Bench Spark: Kevin Overton

In Wednesday's win over Mississippi State, Kevin Overton was the X-factor, exploding for 22 points and six three-pointers. Utah State's bench, led by Jaylen Carey, will need to match that energy. If Overton stays hot from deep, the 6.5-point spread could evaporate quickly.

Statistical Comparison

Category	UNLV	Utah State
Scoring Offense	83.4 PPG	75.7 PPG
Scoring Defense	79.6 PPG	69.4 PPG
Adjusted Off. Efficiency	#9 Nationally	#37 Nationally
Adjusted Def. Efficiency	#106 Nationally	#14 Nationally

This is a classic "Offense vs. Defense" matchup. UNLV boasts a Top 10 offense that loves to play in transition, while Utah State brings a Top 15 defense that excels at forcing teams into the final seconds of the shot clock.

The Verdict

The betting market has settled with Utah State as a 6.5-point favorite, giving them a 66.9% chance to win according to ESPN Analytics. However, UNLV is playing for their season. Under head coach Steven Pearl—a Utah State alumnus playing against his alma mater—the Tigers will likely play with a level of desperation that the Volunteers haven't seen in weeks.

Expect a physical, high-possession game. If UNLV can keep the rebounding margin within five, they have the scoring punch to make this a one-possession game in the final minute. If Utah State controls the paint as they did in January, they will cruise into the quarterfinals to face No. 4 seed Vanderbilt.

Will Nate Ament's return be the difference?

Can Kevin Overton stay hot from three?

Is UNLV's bubble about to burst?