Things are a little different these days in Storrs. After 23 seasons with Hall of Fame coach Jim Calhoun at the helm, the University of Connecticut basketball team has a new head coach. Calhoun retired last September, a season removed from leading UConn to the program's third national championship – all since 1999.

UConn kept things in the family though after Calhoun stepped down, naming former Husky player and assistant Kevin Ollie as the new head coach. Ollie spent the last two seasons working for Calhoun after spending 13 seasons in the NBA.

"The players love him," Notre Dame Head Coach Mike Brey said of his UConn counterpart. "You can tell the kids on the team love him and he walks that line of being able to be close to them, but yet being their coach and getting on their backside extremely well. I think it's a great decision by Connecticut to enlist Kevin long term."

Ollie is the 18th head coach in UConn history. He called it his "dream job" when he took the baton from his former college head coach and mentor. He was a four-year starting point guard from 1991-1995 and was also a two-time captain. The Huskies won two Big East regular season championships and made the NCAA Tournament in three of his four seasons on campus.

Brey says the two coaches talked at Big East Media Day prior to the start of the season. Ollie's

voice was hoarse from his first days as head coach and he asked why Brey still had his voice and Brey responded “My first couple years as a coach I always lost my voice, so you’re on the right track.”

The Huskies (11-3, 1-1 Big East) have suffered their three losses to New Mexico, North Carolina State and Marquette. They picked-up their first Big East win of the season earlier this week against DePaul.

Connecticut’s top two leading scorers are guards Shabazz Napier and Ryan Boatright. They average 17.4 and 16.2 points, respectively. Brey said this week that he is very impressed with how Napier and Boatright are playing right now, adding the duo “makes them go”.

“I think our guys really love those challenges,” Brey said of the increased competition the Irish will face this Saturday against one of the top backcourts in the nation. “They had that challenge on Monday (against Cincinnati). They know when really good guards are coming at them – they’ve risen to that challenge. Eric (Atkins) and Jerian (Grant) really love the challenges like we’re going to have on Saturday.”

Napier’s scoring average is up from 13.0 points last year, while Boatright’s has increased from 10.0 last season. They totaled 198 and 100 respective assists last year and have 119 between them in the current campaign.

Other than Ollie’s fresh face on the bench, the biggest difference for the Huskies this season is their presence in the paint. UConn has always had a big man in the middle to swat away shots. Alex Oriakhi and Andre Drummond were the two main men last year, with 92 and 45 respective blocks. UConn does not have that same kind of presence though this season.

“It really is amazing to look at their stats,” Brey said of preparing for the Huskies. “Their blocked shots are usually off the charts. To not be looking and going, ok there’s three front line guys, how are we gonna deal with this?”

Tyler Olander leads UConn with 19 blocks, while DeAndre Daniels is right behind at 18. Only

one other Husky has as many as nine blocks. It's a big change for a team that has had as many as five players with at least 20 blocks in recent years.

"These two guards make those front line guys really good players," Brey continued. "Just like our guards can make our other guys better players. How do we control those two guys? There's gotta be a team awareness."

Brey says the preparation for UConn is similar to the preparation the Irish had before facing Cincinnati earlier in the week, so he hopes that continues into their prep against the Huskies. Brey says the biggest on court difference for UConn at the defensive end of the floor is they play more zone defense now to keep their stellar guards on the floor for more minutes. There are some differences in their offensive sets as well.

"They're moving and cutting more," Brey assessed. "(They have) a little bit more of a motion look instead of ball screens and sets right away under Jim Calhoun. Now, at the end of the day it reverts back to, somebody ball screening for Napier or Boatwright or those guys just getting ready to go."

Both guards have the ability to shoot as well, so the difficulty in defending them is playing up on them while still being aware of their ability to drive past a defender. Brey reiterated that, like Monday, team defense will be a key on Saturday.

No. 17 Notre Dame (14-1, 2-0) has rattled-off 12 straight victories heading into Saturday afternoon's game against the Huskies after Monday's 66-60 win over No. 21 Cincinnati. The 14-1 start is the best for Brey in his 13 seasons as Irish head coach.

Jack Cooley, an early top contender for Big East Player of the Year honors this season, is averaging team-highs of 15.2 points and 11.2 rebounds. Grant is averaging 12.7 points and Atkins is averaging 11.2. Saturday's game tips-off at 2 p.m. ET.