By PAT EATON-ROBB

The Associated Press

STORRS, Conn. — Connecticut needed just one game to convince voters in The Associated Press poll that the Huskies are still a pretty good basketball team, despite losing a Hall of Fame coach and five underclassmen after last season.

UConn (1-0) moved into the Top 25 on Monday at No. 23, on the strength of its 66-62 win over Michigan State in Friday's Armed Services Classic played at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

The team hadn't been ranked since Jan. 23 and didn't receive a single vote in the preseason poll. Guard Shabazz Napier said it's a bit of validation for the Huskies, but not something they are excited about.

"We're just trying to be the best team we can be, whether someone else likes us or not," he said. "We know how good we can be, and we're just going to strive for that."

UConn was picked to finish ninth in the Big East after Jim Calhoun retired in September and was replaced by Kevin Ollie, a former Husky point guard who had no head coaching experience. The Huskies lost their two best players, Andre Drummond and Jeremy Lamb, to the NBA draft, and three other players transferred after the NCAA declared the Huskies academically ineligible for the 2013 postseason.

An NCAA ban does not disqualify a team from the AP poll.

“We’ve still got something to prove,” said guard Ryan Boatright. “Twenty-three ain’t nothing but a number next to your name, so we’re going to be the same UConn team that won that first Michigan State game.”

There wasn’t a lot of movement in the poll after the opening weekend of the 2012-13 college basketball season.

Led by Indiana and Louisville, the first seven teams in the initial regular-season poll were the same as the preseason Top 25. The Hoosiers (1-0) were again a solid No. 1, receiving 46 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel. Louisville (1-0) was No. 1 on 18 ballots.

Kentucky (1-0), which received one first-place vote, was third, followed by Ohio State, Michigan, North Carolina State and Kansas.

Syracuse and Duke swapped places at eighth and ninth and Florida again rounded out the top 10.

UConn was the only newcomer. Michigan State (0-1) dropped from 14th to 21st with the loss to the Huskies. Florida State (0-1), which lost 76-71 to South Alabama, dropped out from 25th.

Not every voter was convinced that UConn should be ranked. Dave Borges, who covers the Huskies for the New Haven Register, said he needs to see a greater body of work before putting Connecticut in his Top 25.

“I considered ranking them,” Borges said. “But I didn’t have a huge opinion of them before the season and it was tough for me to completely change that after one game.”

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