

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**Providence Friars**

**Kim English**

**Ryan Mela**

**Jaylin Sellers**

**Stefan Vaaks**

Postgame Media Conference



Providence - 91, Butler - 81

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

KIM ENGLISH: It's always great to be back in New York. Greatest arena in the world. Fun to play. I thought our guys were awesome.

Rough start, but felt like our shot quality was good to start the game except for about four or five minutes. We were getting some good looks. We just had to get our defense to be better. I think 14 of the first 16 points were right at the rim. Once that defense got better, you know, we know that they're a high-possession team, we're a high-possession team, so a 16-point deficit's not the end of the world. Our guys showed great resolve, great togetherness, great fight to find a way to win and to live another day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Ryan, how many times do you think Coach English has said to be aggressive this season and I'm curious if you will listen to him today?**

RYAN MELA: Every day, every game. So if you want confidence, you go out there be aggressive, play my game, so, yeah.

**Q. Ryan, you're working with a staff that really trusts your shooting. We have seen you kind of reap the benefit of such these past few games. How much**

**confidence do you have from beyond the arc right now?**

RYAN MELA: Yeah well, Kim's been telling me to shoot for two years, started to finally to listen to him. They give me a lot of confidence to shoot the ball. It's part of our offense. They want us to take the open threes. So the coaching staff gives me a lot of confidence.

**Q. Stef, how long did it take to you get back to normal after having the flu bug and how much was today maybe the first time at all you kind of felt like your old self out there?**

STEFAN VAAKS: Yeah, I think I was good already for the Georgetown game. But, yeah, I mean, Kim's just been telling me to shoot the ball. If you really look at the sideline, whenever I wouldn't shoot the open shot, he would go crazy. But, yeah, it felt good to be, like, really back in the rhythm.

**Q. Jaylin, Coach said a 16-point deficit is, you know, not that much to overcome because of the high possessions, but it's different when you're down 16 possessions in a regular season game and when you're down 16 points in a game where you could be eliminated and your season ends. So was there any extra urgency when you were down 16 or did you treat it as if this is just another game where we are down and we can get back into this?**

JAYLIN SELLERS: First, I would like to thank God, my lord and savior.

But I just think that we just had to calm down and get into the game. I feel like we wanted to win so bad. Some shots didn't go in, we didn't get back in transition, and stuff like that. So we tried to stay calm, don't over react. It's early in the game. So we just stayed together and just fixed the things that we was messing up on and that's getting back in transition.

**Q. Jaylin, your early thoughts on St. John's again. Obviously, you guys won here already. You had that**



**crazy game up by you guys. Just seeing them for a third time, what do you expect out of that matchup?**

JAYLIN SELLERS: I think it's going to be a highly competitive game. It's going to be a high-energy game. It's going to be a fun game to play in. It's going to be our third time seeing 'em, and I know they're going to bring their best, and I'm going to make sure our guys bring ours.

**Q. Stef, you had a strong second half here against St. John's in January and another one here today. What is it about this building that has given you confidence to step up and knock down shots?**

STEFAN VAAKS: I don't know, I mean, I treat every game the same, so, I mean, I guess the rims are good here. I don't know.

**Q. Jaylin, the game against St. John's, the way it ended for you personally, getting ejected, is there any extra motivation going into tomorrow's game against them?**

JAYLIN SELLERS: Not really. No extra motivation. They're on the list, so we got to take care of business to keep our season alive. Me personally, I learned from the situation, and now it's just time to be a leader and make sure that my guys are ready to play the next 40.

**Q. Coach, obviously, Jaylin mentioned right there just trying to keep it -- is this essentially a business trip for you guys as of right now? Are you going to let the personal beef necessarily come in between you and St. John's and what you guys have to accomplish tomorrow in order to continue your season?**

KIM ENGLISH: There's no beef. There's no beef. We played a game. A jump ball led to some guys in each other's face. It's a hard foul. There was no beef between us and St. John's. We have a game in the greatest arena in the world and it's one of the best coaches in the history of college basketball against the Big East Player of the Year. It's a team program we have a lot of respect for. That's all it is. There's no beef between us and St. John's.

**Q. Dan Hurley recently said that St. John's playing at home, it's basically a home game in the Big East tournament. Do you think it's fair that they play at MSG?**

KIM ENGLISH: I mean, I think this is a great arena. I think this is the best conference tournament in all of college basketball.

**Q. Do you have to manage your team's emotions --**

**given the last game against St. John's, is that a message that you have to give?**

KIM ENGLISH: No. I think it was all, truthfully, blown out of proportion, to tell you the truth. Again, it was a hard foul, a couple guys got in each other's face, there was some pushes. I mean, I think it got completely blown out of proportion. But that's college basketball, click bait, fodder, BS right now. I don't think it was that bad.

**Q. Corey came back today, no Jason. How nice to have him back and was Jason close to going?**

KIM ENGLISH: Yeah, we had who we had. We've had enough. You know, we've had enough. Scoring's not replaced. It's redistributed. We got enough. Corey is a warrior. He hurt his hamstring against Seton Hall. He got kneed in his testicles tonight and he twisted his ankle tonight, and he battled and fought and was out there like an old lion, and now we got to get back and get some recovery and be ready to battle in about 17 hours.

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