

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 9, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

UConn Huskies

Coach Dan Hurley

Jordan Hawkins

Andre Jackson Jr.

Postgame Media Conference



game was our sloppiness with the ball and then also us fouling, and then our inability to really shoot a free throw in the game.

Obviously they were physical defensively. But I mean, we played unbelievable for 28 minutes. They made an unbelievable run. And we won the game and we play tomorrow in the semifinals for the third year in a row. So we're happy about that.

**Q. Besides the win, what are some things that you need to work on defense moving forward?**

COACH HURLEY: What was that?

**Q. What are some things they need to work on defense moving forward?**

COACH HURLEY: We were elite defensively in the first half -- 29 percent. We held them to 1-for-9 from 3. I thought we got away from our principles of maybe taking away the paint. But, again, I think it was the fouling that just disrupted the rhythm of the game.

We were playing such great basketball at both ends of the court. And once it turned into a whistle-fest and we were putting them at the free-throw line they were able to chip away. Mix in some live-ball turnovers and you can't get back and get set defensively. I think that's why they shot 51 percent from the field.

We weren't set as much in the second half because we weren't getting stops; we were turning the ball over.

**Q. Tristen obviously came up big, couple of daggers, seemed like daggers at the time. Explaining his game, can you tell us why he didn't start the game?**

COACH HURLEY: In terms of the starting piece, our culture is really important, the way -- it's a big responsibility in terms of all the things that you do. And just felt like a small message needed to be sent to Tristen.

And Nahiem is normally is the first guard off the bench. He

UConn - 73, Providence - 66

COACH HURLEY: If you stop playing for a little bit or get a little bit sloppy -- obviously the live-ball turnovers, it's the thing I've harped on -- that will be an issue that could prevent this team from really achieving great things. The 21 assists is great, but 18 turnovers really allowed them back in the game.

But I thought they weren't going to go away quietly, not with the atmosphere, not with the Providence program and the product they have and what they do. So obviously excited to get a chance to play the regular-season champ tomorrow.

**Q. Andre, could you compare and contrast the emotions you're feeling, what you're feeling about the situation as you build up to the lead of 25, 26, and then the emotion and everything you're feeling and what you're trying to express to your teammates as you're trying to hold it together when it's cut to five?**

ANDRE JACKSON JR.: Really just staying with an even keel and really leaning on my teammates when it's tough. So, like, when I was turning the ball over I was looking to Hawk and Tristen. And they were picking me up and I was trying to pick them up as well. Just trying to stay together, regardless of what was going on.

**Q. Coach, is there anything you learned about yourself as this comeback was happening, maybe with how you could have dealt with certain stuff differently?**

COACH HURLEY: Yeah, I think a technical foul might have been really bad. That might have happened in the past based on -- listen, I thought what got them back in the



was the last guy in the rotation.

Whether you're playing for the Big East Tournament or a regular-season game, you've got to have principles and try to teach some larger lessons. And usually when players are put in that situation, they have a bad game and -- because of the distraction that goes on with that. And I was just blown away by his mental toughness tonight and being able to put that behind him and perform at a high level.

**Q. Alex didn't have the best first half, but in the second he really turned it around, hit the big shot with a minute left. Can you speak on Alex's ability to stay even keeled in those clutch moments?**

COACH HURLEY: He had some tough calls against him that put him in foul trouble. Alex is one of the best freshmen in the country the whole year. He's basically started every game on a team that has been basically has played a top-10 type of season from the full body of work.

And we're worse when he's not in the game because of everything he does for us from the offensive end, the cerebral. And he's a much improved defensive player. So we don't function as well offensively.

And that played a big part in Providence making the run when he was in foul trouble in the second half. He's been that valuable. He's been that valuable of a freshman in the Big East this year.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to ask about Sanogo specifically because watching that game, specifically down low in the paint he was pretty unstoppable. I wanted to get from your perspective as a coach what you saw from him and what makes him go?**

COACH HURLEY: It had to be a workmanlike performance from Adama today. It had to be a workmanlike performance from him today because Croswell is one of the best low post defenders in the country. He gets incredible leverage. He makes it really hard to score one-on-one in the post.

So we needed defense from Adama. We needed him to get on the offensive glass, we needed him rolling in the ball-screen game and creating open 3s for teammates.

Obviously this wasn't the type of matchup where we could throw it into the big fella as much as we'd like. But I thought he was efficient.

**Q. Andre, seemed like every loose ball you rebounded you really had to fight for. What was it like out on the**

**court during the game?**

ANDRE JACKSON JR.: It was just desperation. In these moments, you gotta leave it all on the line or else you go home. Both teams really brought that edge. That's what it was, really, desperation.

**Q. Dan, had your parents right there right next to you. What's that like for you, and what's it like for your dad? Does he give you feedback after the games?**

COACH HURLEY: Yeah, I thought they were all too close. He was trying to whisper stuff. When the run was going he was trying to whisper some things: Get this guy out; call timeout. I could hear him moaning and groaning.

I just thought they were too close. They shouldn't be there. They should be back. I hope they're not in the same seats tomorrow.

My son was over there. He almost got me a technical, Danny, because I think he got on James one time, breathing. I don't need them that close.

**Q. For either of the guys, as that lead is sort of whittling down, do you try and stay composed? Do you feel a little nervous? Do you feel rushed as they're pressing and that lead is coming down?**

JORDAN HAWKINS: You've got to stay composed in situations like this. You're playing for a championship; you gotta stay composed. They did a great job coming back. They played hard. They feasted off our mistakes. You just gotta stay composed in that situation, stay with your team, stay in that tight huddle and just believe.

**Q. Jordan, playing instead of watching, was it everything you expected, or were the emotions a little different?**

JORDAN HAWKINS: Absolutely. Everything I expected -- last year I got a good feel for it, watching it, but playing it is very different. It's very exciting. Just feel the energy of the crowd. It's really loud in there. It's amazing.

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