

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 15, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**Creighton Bluejays**  
**Head Coach Greg McDermott**  
**Jackson McAndrew**  
**Ryan Kalkbrenner**  
Postgame Media Conference

St. John's 82, Creighton 66

THE MODERATOR: For Creighton Coach Greg McDermott, and we have Jackson McAndrew and Ryan Kalkbrenner.

GREG McDERMOTT: Well, congrats to St. John's. They've had a remarkable year. Dominated our league and pretty much saved their best for this conference tournament. They just wear into you over time.

I would have guessed at halftime that 66 points might be enough to win the game, the way both teams were defending, but they made some shots the second half and then we made some mistakes, and we made those mistakes.

We went under RJ a couple of times by mistake. We blew a switch on an out of bounce play. That was nine points. Sometimes you make mistakes, and they don't cost you because they miss the shots, but tonight every time we made a mistake, they made us pay.

We lost to a really good basketball team. I think they're going to represent the Big East in a positive way next week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You guys made the run to get here, fended off DePaul on Thursday, and beat UConn last night. How tough is it to get back to this point and have the second half unfold the way it did?**



GREG McDERMOTT: I mean, it's hard to get to this game, let's be honest. We've been fortunate to be here quite a few times. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to finish the job.

But, like I told the guys, obviously we're disappointed in tonight, but we also need to be proud of the fact we essentially won a road game last night against a really good team, and then you have to hook it up and play another road game tonight against a really good team in an electric environment.

I'm proud of what these guys have accomplished to this point, and the season is not over. You know, we're going to celebrate tomorrow, and then we're going to flip the switch and turn it into preparation mode.

**Q. Ryan, what stings the most when you think about just the last ten minutes and kind of how on fire they were and how kind of alive the building came?**

RYAN KALKBRENNER: You know, it's a really tough environment to play in. They got hot, and like Mac said, our focus in the second half wasn't as good on defense, so it was harder for us to kind of keep them from getting what they wanted. Obviously, they scored 57 points.

Yeah, it should never happen to us. We're a much better defensive team than that. So just kind of knowing that we had a better defensive effort to give in the second half.

**Q. Coach, you played a pretty aggressive drop coverage with Ryan to start out the game, and it worked in the first half. What kind of led to that decision and then kind of what did St. John's do to counter that successfully?**

GREG McDERMOTT: That's our base defense. We tried to stay on top of Kadary and RJ a little bit and make them cut towards the baseline instead of towards the top of the floor. We did a pretty good job of that the first half.

The second half, like I said, we made some mistakes on some screens, closed out short on RJ a couple of times,



and a couple of those threes were killers. You know, then I thought Zuby made some tough plays around the basket. He had a couple tough finishes over Ryan that not many people do.

You know, they made 14 shots in a row in that stretch, and that doesn't happen to us very often.

**Q. Jackson, as a freshman, can you kind of just talk to me your first Big East tournament and the experiences there? You experienced big highs with the UConn win and then also a big low here.**

JACKSON McANDREW: Yeah, I would say it was definitely a blessing going through this process. Got to feel a little bit of everything here on the wins and losses. I think I definitely learned a lot from Coach, from Ryan and all the older guys as we went through it. I think it was a great experience, obviously.

You know, this is something that I'm definitely going to be looking forward to in the next years.

**Q. For Coach and Jackson, Coach, obviously a lot of teams pay attention to Ryan, to Steve, and to Jamiya kind of as your big three, but seeing Jasen step up last night and then obviously what Jackson was able to do tonight, can you talk about some of the younger guys and the confidence you see in them going into the tournament?**

GREG McDERMOTT: I think a game like tonight is huge for Jackson to play as well as he did on this stage is great for his confidence. Ty Davis on Thursday played terrific for us. Jasen Green, to your point, yesterday had a great game.

I think any time young players can have success when the lights are the brightest, I think it helps them moving forward, motivates them to continue to work because it's validation of the work that they put in that it's paying off.

You know, we had some other guys step up. A lot of the year it's been Kalk and Steven and Jamiya, and then we would get guys sprinkled in. We don't get to tonight without guys off the bench and the play of Jackson and Jasen. It's really good for us I think moving into the tournament that guys are going to be disappointed in this loss, but feel good about some things that transpired.

**Q. Ryan, did they do anything different in that stretch where they made 14 straight, or were they just hitting shots?**

RYAN KALKBRENNER: I don't think they were doing

anything drastically different. I think they had a little bit better execution. They were executing their offensive stuff better than we were executing our defensive stuff. They had a little more energy to what they were doing.

I don't know. It's hard to say right now. Obviously I think we'll have to go back and look at the film and learn from that.

**Q. Coach, you talked about gaining experience for your team ahead of the tournament, but in terms of physicality you played a double overtime game against DePaul, you played a physical UConn team yesterday, and a physical St. John's team tonight. Do you think that your team is better prepared now in terms of endurance for what they might expect come tournament time?**

GREG McDERMOTT: You know, we always play fast, so I think our endurance is pretty good, but to your point, you know, a 50-minute game late at night and then you crank it against UConn, it takes a lot of wind out of your sails.

Both teams played back-to-back nights. I think both teams are on fumes a little bit, and adrenaline kind of takes over and that gets you through a game like tonight. You know, we need a little rest.

Fedor's injury certainly didn't help. That took an important ball handler out of our line-up who was playing really well. That was unfortunate that our bench got pretty thin because of that injury.

**Q. Ryan, I guess I know how badly you wanted to be in this game and to win this game, but you do have one more NCAA Tournament in front of you pretty soon. How challenging is it going to be, and what are the keys to just taking this for what it is and flipping the script so you guys can be locked in for that?**

RYAN KALKBRENNER: When you're in your fifth year of college basketball, you learn how to turn the page. Obviously we're all going to be really disappointed about this one. We got an off day tomorrow to be a little disappointed and turn the page. I know we're all going to be locked in and ready to go on Monday, but yeah, like I said, I've done this five years for me. You know that the sun is coming up tomorrow, and you got more games to play, so you got to be locked in. Then just try and help guys like Jack, Ty, and the younger guys see that because I remember me as a freshman, I would have been not ready to turn the page at all.

So, yeah, just helping the young guys and helping everyone move forward from this because, like you said,



we got more games to play.

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