

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 12, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

UConn Huskies

Dan Hurley

Solo Ball

Tarris Reed Jr.

Postgame Media Conference

UConn - 93, Xavier - 68

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started.

DAN HURLEY: Obviously for us was just great to get back on the court after the choke job over the weekend. I was just really impressed with the way that these guys came out, the energy level. There was no residual from that performance. I thought these guys led the way. Tarris, especially there playing with that level of force just to get us off fast, get us off to a quick lead, you know.

And much credit to Richard. I mean, I think Richard has done as good a job as almost any coach in the league this year. I thought it was so tough with Coach of the Year in this league between Shaheen and Kevin and Chris Holtmann, and the job Richard did was right up there with those guys. So we knew they were dangerous and we knew we needed to get separation early in the game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Solo, regardless of how you finish the season, win or lose, you have to hit the reset button somehow when you commit to the post-season, right? It's a new season, 0-0. What does that process look like for you and what did it look like for the team from Saturday to today?

SOLO BALL: Yeah, that was actually something that Coach brought up to me right away, just the fact that going into the post-season, it is a new season, and you've got to erase what you did before, whether it was good or bad, and just capitalize and just trust your work. I mean, we've put in so much work since June, even May. Like, we've just been working constantly for the past 10 months. So



just continue to trust the work that you put in and trust the process and then everything will fall into place.

Q. We've talked about how this --

DAN HURLEY: Let me correct, Solo. We have not been working for 10 months. That would be a violation (laughing). You suck at math because -- well, maybe it is.

SOLO BALL: I couldn't do the math in my head. That was my fault. I wasn't thinking.

DAN HURLEY: And you went to great schools.

SOLO BALL: St. James, Brewster.

DAN HURLEY: A couple others too.

Q. We've talked about how the bench has been kind of up and down throughout the year. To get the level of production you guys got from Malachi, Eric, and Jayden today, how important was that for you guys?

DAN HURLEY: With Stewie being down, just a necessity. I mean, with Silas getting those two fouls in the first half, I mean, halftime situation, you know, could have been much different for us and a much tighter game.

But I thought Malachi was awesome in the first half. Jacob Ross, huge. And then Eric gave some great minutes. We had that combo at center that made us dominant in '23 and '24. The numbers those guys put up has been our recipe for being great.

So if we get that type of bench production, we're going to win a lot of games the rest of this college basketball season.

Q. Looking back at last weekend and the dominant win today, can you just talk about how you model leadership and resilience for your players as they're all still growing up and learning from you?

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I think, for the most part, I model it



pretty good. Sometimes I may be close to the line of maybe not modeling it great. But I think what I tried to do coming out of that game, I think for me is -- yeah, we had a brutal film session on Sunday (laughing). Yeah, it was tough. But I wasn't probably as angry or animated. I was kind of -- right? I was a little bit more sad or -- like, it made me sad. I think they were waiting for angry, mad Dan, and I did not give that to 'em.

And then just as that ended, we just wanted to leave it in that room, and I just wanted to remind the players, we've been a top 5 college basketball team the whole year, you know, whether it's -- any type of metrics. Forget the -- you know, I guess KenPom or whatever that is. Like, we've played top 5 basketball, we've been ranked in the top 5 pretty much the whole year. Whether it's strength of record, wins above bubble, I mean, we've been top 5 team the whole year. That's who we are, guys.

We don't have anything to show for it yet. We don't got a championship yet. We don't got a Final Four yet. But don't forget who we are. We're now a 28-4 team that beat some really high seeds. We beat a potential 1 seed in the NCAA tournament. We've beaten a 2 seed in the NCAA tournament. We got some great, great wins. So that's who we are, not that game that we choked away.

And, again, I'm not trying to devalue what Marquette did. Shaka's got a great young team that's going to be a problem next year. But we know that we blew it.

Q. With the physical play tonight from Tarris inside, how did that help set the tone for the game and then carry throughout, especially ending the game the way you did?

DAN HURLEY: Tarris is, I mean, I don't know if he always likes to hear this, I mean, but Tarris is the difference between us winning this tournament. Tarris is the difference between us getting to the Final Four. That combination of Tarris and Eric, the best version of Tarris is one of the best centers in the country, bar none. So when he's focused and playing -- and I thought he probably, for me, what's crazy about this fellow, is he probably played at 70 percent tonight of what he's capable of. But that's how talented and that's how good he is. And when you say that about a guy that went 17, 14, you know, two blocks. I mean, that's just how incredibly talented and how awesome a player the guy is.

Q. You talked about the bench production. J Ross gave you great minutes, even if his numbers weren't out of this world. But when he was in the lineup as maybe a small ball 4 with regards, how much more does that give you a more versatility in the lineup with

him at that spot? From a floor spacing standpoint how much better does that make this offense?

DAN HURLEY: The athleticism on the court -- you know, Alex has been playing 40 minutes. I mean, that's not sustainable. And it's diminishing returns. So to be able to get Alex a manageable 29 minutes, get J Ross to 22 minutes. He went 4-6, he made a three, he had nine points, he had three assists, he stole the ball three times. I mean, he brings an element on the perimeter defensively that we desperately need. I think this is great for his confidence tonight.

Q. Tarris, and maybe Solo can weigh in after, but you got to tell me what Sad Dan looked like. What does that sound like? What, does it leave you feeling guilty, or what is it?

TARRIS REED JR.: Honestly, after that Marquette film it was a little bit like uncomfortable, because you're not used to it. But I feel like we all understood what happened, especially in that Marquette game that what we lost, and what potentially we had to move on from it. So we understood the job, we understood the mission, we understood what we had a hand in. Coming into this tournament, we knew we couldn't do that again. So I feel like around the room each and every one of us understood that the job that we needed to do, and that's come out here and dominate.

DAN HURLEY: Can solo answer that, too?

SOLO BALL: I think Coach just cares so much about this sport. And there's, that's one thing you have to appreciate the most like playing for a coach like that is just, he wants to win so bad. And the rest of the coaching staff is like that as well. So, I mean, there is no difference between Sad Dan or Angry Dan, as much as I would really say. I mean, it's just, when you have a coaching staff that just cares so much about this sport, I mean you want to just do anything you can to win.

DAN HURLEY: If I could add to that, too. This is the type of young men that I coach. I mean, these guys, too, I mean, they actually offered to pay parts of the fine. I mean, there were men -- do you remember that? How nice a moment was that? Now obviously it would be illegal, so I couldn't accept it. But there were guys raising their hand, I'll give a thousand. I'll give 500. I mean, 2,500. I mean, it was a -- we're done. Okay. Thank you. (Laughing).

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