

Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 13, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

UConn Huskies

Dan Hurley

Braylon Mullins

Silas Demary Jr.

Tarris Reed Jr.

Postgame Media Conference

UConn - 67, Georgetown - 51

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started.

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, obviously thrilled to get back. We've been in the semifinals since we basically have been back to the league, I think, every year. So it would be nice to be able to get to the Saturday championship in this league. And really it was great to be out there with Ed tonight. Ed's one of the best coaches in college basketball. Former National Coach of the Year. I thought it was -- Ed was where -- and Georgetown was where they belong tonight, Friday night semifinals at the Big East tournament.

So it was pretty cool, UConn-Georgetown semifinal. I thought we guarded at a real high level, did the job on the backboard, took care of the ball, for the most part, and survived, like, a -- not a great shooting night because these guys were so tenacious defensively, and obviously Braylon had a great shot-making night. But great balance. Bench gave us a lift. Thrilled to be playing tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. A lot of people looking forward to this St. John's-UConn round three. You split two games. You beat 'em by 32 last time. Presumably they're going to be pretty motivated and it's a championship game. What do you expect from them and what can we expect in this game?

SILAS DEMARY JR.: I would say expect them to come out and play hard. This is almost like their home court, so expect them to come out and play hard and try to make as



many plays as they can. We got to prepare, get back to the hotel, recover, watch film, and just do what we need to do to be ready for tomorrow.

DAN HURLEY: You guys have nothing on that?

TARRIS REED JR.: Piggyback off what he said. I feel like knowing we split two games, beat them last time out there, they beat us last time here at the Garden. So knowing what we're walking into, knowing that this is a second opportunity to really win a championship, I feel like we got to focus on what we need to do on the court offensively and defensively.

DAN HURLEY: I just think both programs have really pushed each other the whole year. We're a 29-win team, they're a 27-win team. I mean, two of the best teams in the country. Obviously it's going to be a death match for the Big East championship, but also, you know, both of us have really delivered for this league in a year where this league needs a game like this tomorrow night that everyone that's a basketball fan's going to be dialed into. So, yeah, it's exciting. You knew there was going to be a third round and here we are.

Q. During the season, it often tests your will, your character, you often talk about championship DNA. What's the biggest key you are looking for tomorrow, anything different for the matchup?

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I mean, just the paint defense, the things that we didn't do in the first game we did in the second game. Then everything went wrong for them and a lot of things went right for us. But if you really look back at that first game, I mean, the self-inflicted wounds, the 15 or 16 turnovers, the inability to guard the paint. It's no secret how they play. They assault the paint, they assault you on the glass, meaning how hard they go after it.

Then we obviously have to keep them off the free-throw line. They're at the free-throw line a lot. It was a big disparity in the first game, and the second game it wasn't. So turnovers, keep 'em off the free-throw line, guard the paint, and then it's going to be World War III on backboard.



Q. Last night Jayden kind of did it with his defense, his athleticism, a couple of steals and dunks, and tonight he kind of hit those two dagger threes. They were getting some momentum -- I don't know if they were daggers, but they were getting a little momentum both times and he hit a couple of three-pointers. Is he just rounding into a really well-rounded player right now?

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, that's obviously the defense too, the length, the disruption. Just having that type of athlete on the court, it just does a lot for our defense. I'm just so happy for him because's guy that has stuck with the program, he loves UConn, he's the ultimate program guy, and now he's getting a chance to play. I think back-to-back games now he's been in the 20s with his minutes, played 25 minutes in the Big East semifinals.

So this is a guy who one day has a chance to be an NBA player. I think we all know he has that type of talent. He's maturing before everyone's eyes right now.

Q. Shaheen was here earlier and he thought that the body of work of Seton Hall meant they should be in the tournament, but he also said that he believes the conference is underrated. On the eve of a night before two top-13 teams play in the finals of the conference, do you believe this conference deserves four teams in the NCAA tournament?

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I mean, listen, we're talking about teams making the tournament that are one game over 500. You know, that's crazy. Listen, every team in our league is basically a top-100 team efficiency-wise. There's a lot of manipulation that goes on with -- and they have so many games that are so close to being a quad 1, quad 2, where we had programs just miss that net threshold of top 75 where they easily could have three or four quad 1 wins if we didn't have, like, some under-performances in the non-conference that became land mines for them.

I mean, their non-conference was absolutely NCAA caliber. Then they got to the semifinals of the Big East tournament and 20-plus wins. I mean, they could -- if they're in the NCAA tournament, they will win a game. So, hell, yeah, Seton Hall has the quality of an NCAA tournament team.

Q. For each of you, I'm curious about what the coaching staff has been saying to you guys to motivate you to get to this point. None of the three of you have been in the Big East championship game. I don't believe that either Tarris or Silas reached the championship games of the conferences you were in beforehand. What is the motivation to get to this

point? What have the coaches been telling you about what to expect for a game for tomorrow?

TARRIS REED JR.: First, I mean, this is why you choose to come to UConn. You want to be in these big-time games and really win championships. Looking back on my college career, speaking personally, I haven't won any type of championship, so came here, worked, put our head down --

DAN HURLEY: Yet.

TARRIS REED JR.: Yet. Yeah. Came here, worked, a great group of guys, great coaching staff, and just really hungry for it. So tomorrow night's going to be a great opportunity to get my first one.

SILAS DEMARY JR.: For me, I probably say the coach has just been telling us play with a lot of joy and passion and kind of just being in the moment and enjoying it and being where our feet are. I think at times we kind of looked ahead during the season instead of just enjoying and being around each other and enjoying that practice, enjoying that team together. I think sometimes we overlooked it and got lost.

And I think over the past couple days, we're just telling each other to have fun and to have joy and have each other's back. And like Tarris said, we came here to be a part of winning. Like, I haven't won in college. I won in high school, but I want to be able to win here, and I feel like we have the opportunity to do that tomorrow, and I feel really good about us preparing and doing it.

BRAYLON MULLINS: Just to go off what they said, I'm so grateful to be in the position, and I think we're all grateful to be going into the Big East championship game. And being a freshman, like, I mean, there's nowhere else I would want to be at. So just treating it as another game, preparation, I think that's just how we're going to look at it and just go in and play as hard as possible tomorrow.

Q. Tarris, it was funny that Silas mentioned joy and passion because you said that the other day. You were trying to find that -- what you had in the non-conference. Do you feel like you found it now?

TARRIS REED JR.: Yeah, I feel like -- for me, like, the joy of the Lord is my strength. That's where I get my foundation. That's my foundation. That's everything. That's my motivation, that's the way I move. So us finding that joy as a team together, just finding it -- like he said, being present. It's so easy to get caught up in your everyday life and not really just focus on the process. And just enjoy the journey, man. It's really a blessing. So being



able to stay present, stay where your feet are, enjoy the journey, and have fun with it, not so worried about the end result.

Q. Do you feel like the team has found that at this point?

TARRIS REED JR.: Yeah.

Q. The way in which your last game against St. John's ended with the 24 straight missed shots, 17 minutes without a field goal, does that hold any weight either from a psychological aspect or a game-planning aspect going into tomorrow night?

DAN HURLEY: I think it's definitely from a game-planning, but the thing with this one is it's a no-day prep. They were locked in on their first two games, and now we'll try to prioritize a little bit of sleep, but there's not a whole lot you're going to be able to do. You're going to wake up tomorrow, it's going to be breakfast. I don't imagine either team's going to shoot around. We're both going to probably try to save our legs. Maybe you'll do a walkthrough at the hotel, you'll watch film, and for the type of game it's going to be, you're going to want your players to be as fresh as possible.

I think for us the biggest thing with these guys coming out of that Marquette learning experience is, you know, we're not, like, an upstart or an underdog story. When you're UConn, there's a different level of pressure going into these championship moments where it's, like, expected. So we don't get the benefit of being the underdog. So I just think with these guys, I think the staff, I think the players, this time of year we've earned a 29-4 position, we've been one of the top 5 college basketball teams the whole year. Just go out and attack these games, and I think our vibe is pretty good going into a big game tomorrow and then into the Selection Sunday.

Q. When Tarris hit the bench and Eric came in and got those minutes, how much do you think about his future and how excited are you about that?

DAN HURLEY: Big Eric? Yeah, listen, Eric, if you really look at what he's done from a numbers perspective, and that's what we've tried to sell on Eric the whole year, and obviously the people that surround the players, is that you got to have some level of patience. Eric's playing behind one of the top centers in the country, the way Donovan did as a freshman.

So, yeah, without Eric's contributions when Tarris was hurt and we won those early season games versus Illinois and Kansas on the road and we were right there to beat

Arizona at home without Braylon and Tarris, he showed his worth, he showed his quality. We wouldn't be where we are without that big fella. And he's a great, great guy. I mean, he's a great, great human being, just dealing with just him the individual. He's as good a kid as you'll ever coach.

Q. You've won two National Championships as a head coach and one Big East --

DAN HURLEY: Thanks for reminding me of that too. That felt good. We should start every press conference by saying that. Thank you.

Q. You've won two. You've only won one Big East championship. How much would it mean to you to get that second Big East championship, especially against a legend like Rick Pitino?

DAN HURLEY: Listen, we've had a chance to coach against Coach eight times, and we're getting a chance to study his teams. You see why he's one of the best. His teams are so hard to beat. You develop an appreciation and a respect, I think. You know, there's more of a mutual respect, I think, having battled each other as many times as we have. I think kind of a little bit of the edginess, at least from my standpoint, I look at it like it's, you know, it's a privilege for these two programs with what they have done in college basketball this year and what he's been able to build here. It's just a, it's a privilege to get on the court tomorrow night. And, I mean, listen, somebody's walking out with the tunnel with nothing and somebody is getting confetti dropped on their head tomorrow.

Q. How bad do you want it to be you?

DAN HURLEY: I think you know that. You've seen how I act. What do you think, man? Oh, shit. Another 500. All right.

Q. You were close.

DAN HURLEY: I almost got through it.

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