

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 14, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**UConn Huskies**

**Dan Hurley**

**Alex Karaban**

Postgame Media Conference



So what we'll do is the same thing we did in 2023. We'll stay in the hotel tonight, the coaches will break down the film, we'll watch the edit in the morning with the team, and we'll leave the Big East tournament experience here on Sunday morning.

I think there's, like, a marathon? So we obviously have to try to time up how the hell we're going to get out of here with the bus through the city, which is what I'm thinking about right now, oddly.

Yeah, we'll do what we did in 2023. We'll leave it here. Yeah, we know that we play our best basketball versus -- you know, in the NCAA tournament and versus non-conference teams. Our group know that's. This is a really, really physical league. That was a really, really, really physical game, and we're excited to play in the NCAA tournament that doesn't get played like that.

**Q. Silas went out for a short time in the locker room and then he came back and then he, you know, went down again. Didn't exactly see what happened, but do you have any -- I know you haven't had much time, but do you have any update on how he's doing?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I don't even know if he got re-taped in the back. When he came back out there, he just reappeared on the bench. I went over to him and I said, Are you good? He said, Yeah, I'm fine. I mean, the first thing I just had heard that it was a very mild sprain with no swelling. Obviously we'll take precautions with an X-ray. But, I mean, we'll keep our fingers crossed. I mean, it didn't look -- hopefully it's not something that lingers.

**Q. Throughout the week, staff and players have been talking about bringing joy back into playing, especially after the Marquette loss. How do you get that joy back after a loss like this?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I mean, it's like a new season, really. As important as it is to win your regular season, it's as important to win your tournament, you know. Unfortunately for this business, you could do all those

St. John's - 72, UConn - 52

THE MODERATOR: We will start with a statement from Coach.

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, obviously huge credit to St. John's. They just really jumped us to start the game. I think we knew that it would be a very forceful response from them and we just weren't able to match it. We weren't able to finish some things around the basket and just kind of settle into the game. And then just playing catchup was an issue. But all the stuff for us that's been problematic throughout the year, just defense in the first half, the turnovers, and then obviously just a brutal night shooting. Just a brutal night shooting. I would imagine the shot quality's going to be pretty decent.

But yeah, I mean, this time of year if you have a little bit of magic with shot making, it's going to be an issue. But credit St. John's. They got a team that's built incredibly well to play in this conference here, and just the ultimate credit to them. They deserved it and we didn't.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Obviously you guys have to get over this pretty quickly and move on to other goals. Do you think this team is equipped to do that from what you've seen, to get over this loss and then understand that there's bigger goals that remain?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I think definitely. I mean, we didn't -- you know, I think we've responded pretty well. We'll do the same thing -- I'm not going to make the same mistakes with this team. I didn't crush them in there. They're crushed, the group is crushed. We laid an egg in something that we desperately wanted to win. I mean, we just laid an egg.



things, but if you have a bad NCAA tournament, it's cruel. So, you know, yeah, whether it's right or wrong, your team, the coach, the players, you end up getting -- in the end, the time of year that's about to come to fruition is going to be what we're ultimately going to be judged on.

So, you know, we weren't championship quality. We've had a great season, 29-5. We just haven't had a championship season. And now for us, we've got to try to atone for what we didn't get by just having a great NCAA tournament, making a run.

**Q. What can you say about Zubly and the performance he had? He had almost a triple double with blocks. Just how much of a handful is he going to be in the NCAA tournament for teams that haven't seen him?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I mean, just that guy, I mean, he's one of the best players in college I've ever coached against. I mean, that guy is -- I mean, the production -- the point production, the rebounding production, the havoc he causes on defense, the relentlessness that he plays with, and then just him as a leader of that team, just his personality. I mean, the rage that he plays with, the fire that he plays with, I mean, that guy's just a total butt kicker. I mean, he's on the handful of best players I've ever coached against in college. I mean, that guy is a true difference maker that elevates everyone around him.

I don't have any idea, you know, why that guy is not making in as a first-round player in the NBA draft. I mean, he's a switchable defender, he can make threes, he can guard 1 through 5. I mean, the guy's like a Al Horford, almost the way Al Horford plays in the NBA, not when he was at Florida.

**Q. Alex, what are you going to remember most about playing in the Big East?**

ALEX KARABAN: I mean, it's my favorite conference. There's no conference like it, round robin, we have the best coaches in the country, great home environments, and it's one tough league. I mean, you get the best players in the league, you get the best shot every single night. Obviously, the Big East tournament is one-of-a-kind. So the Big East conference is great, and I'll always remember just how special and how much respect I have for all the teams in the league.

**Q. Alex, what made their defense so difficult to score against?**

ALEX KARABAN: Yeah, I mean, they came out from the start just pressuring and, you know, they set the tone and we -- you know, they just set the tone, and we just had to

find a way to respond and we just didn't do that to start the first half. I mean, they pressure, they're athletic, they could switch, they could -- you know, they have a really good defense, they're super well-coached.

And then the shots just didn't fall our way today. But I'm not going to take away credit from St. John's. They deserve all the credit for how they played defensively.

**Q. Did you like where you stood deep into the second half when you pulled to within eight or ten a couple times and you had a few shots in the air that seemed to be good looks?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I mean, listen -- I don't know if it was 10, obviously cut it to -- I don't know if it got to seven, and then some unfortunate things happened. But I think -- I don't know if it was 10, Braylon gets an open three, I think we offensive rebound the ball, Solo gets an open three to cut it to seven, and then I think we got the ball back again, drove it, missed a layup. You know, you go 3-19 from three.

It's just the way the game started for us, I think was -- you know, Tarris had a couple of good opportunities. We had so many things at the rim. We just couldn't settle into the game and then it just kind of unraveled for us.

But, yeah, I thought that if we put some game pressure on them down the stretch, I thought that we had a chance. If we make one of those threes and it's seven and the crowd starts turning a little bit, and they get a little game pressure tight, there was a window for us there.

**Q. Alex, the way the season has unfolded, where you've kind of played three or four of your best games and three or four of your worse games in the last couple of weeks or last few weeks. Can you put your finger on that inconsistency and what could be done or said to kind of address it?**

ALEX KARABAN: I'm not sure what the inconsistency is. It might be turnovers. We had a lot of turnovers today. I think all those losses that you said, we had a bunch of turnovers. We just didn't defend at the level that we typically would defend at. So we show up defensively, we show up taking care of the ball, then we're one of the best teams in the country. So we just got to do it on a nightly basis.

**Q. Obviously, UConn in March, special things happen. And this loss, although devastating, doesn't define this season. Is there anything you can take away from the effort tonight moving in as you look forward to March?**

DAN HURLEY: I mean, I don't want to, you know, probably comment on the effort, because I think you get fooled a lot sometimes. Like, I don't know how much of tonight was us getting punked and being soft, or, you know, they just played great and we just missed shots. I don't want to probably comment too much on that until I get a chance to see the film on whether we were soft and just got punked or just played bad.

**Q. Was there anything that St. John's did differently from the last time you guys played them at your place? Was there any differences, just in terms of the way they defended or anything like that schematically?**

DAN HURLEY: I mean, they were into us more. Like, when you're playing at home, I mean this is, I mean, MSG is where St. John's plays home games. I think typically teams on the road aren't as aggressive defensively as you are at home. I think you pressure more at home, you're more confident, you feed off the crowd. So I would say they probably got into us a lot more.

But the difference in the game was we had five turnovers in the first game, and we were turning the ball over, I don't know if it was 11 at halftime, it ended up being 17, but they had 15 points off turnovers in the first half.

**Q. Alex, is there anything you wish that you had done differently tonight?**

ALEX KARABAN: The whole 40 minutes I wish I done differently. I mean, I wish some of my shots went in. I wish I didn't lose focus on Sellers and Hopkins when we were coming back and Sellers got a layup and Hopkins got the middle. There's a lot of things I wish I had done differently. There's not much you can do about it, you just got to sit with that pain and really, you know, you just got to sit with the pain. And, yeah, I mean, yeah, I wish I played a whole different 40, but, yeah.

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