

Men's Basketball:

No. 6 UConn holds No. 15 St. John's to 40 points

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Two storms came to Connecticut this week.

After being battered by a foot of snow this weekend, No. 6 UConn weathered a red storm on Wednesday night, defeating No. 15 St. John's 72-40.

The win was the Huskies' first over Rick Pitino and the Johnnies since the 2024 Big East Tournament Semifinal. UConn was swept by St. John's last season and were defeated in this year's first encounter, 81-72.

The Red Storm had their 13-game unbeaten streak snapped that dated back to Jan. 3, and it was their first loss on the road this season. The 32-point loss was also the St. John's largest margin of defeat. 40 points were the fewest the Huskies have given up all year. They gave up 47 to UMass Lowell on Nov. 7. The River Hawks are currently ranked No. 316 in KenPom net rating.

Bryce Hopkins scored the game's first basket after working an undersized Solo Ball into the paint. Alex Karaban responded with a three-pointer on the wing that set off a 9-0 run for the Huskies. Tarris Reed Jr. led the run with five points.

The Johnnies knocked down threes on back-to-back possessions before Oziyah Sellers punched home a dunk to make it a two-point game. That's when UConn turned PeoplesBank Arena into, as Dan Hurley would put it, "a mad house." Six different scorers fueled an 18-point run that put the Huskies up by 20 with 6:37 to play in the first half.

UConn's defense suffocated the Red Storm over the seven-minute run. St. John's shot 0-of-12 during the Huskies' offensive avalanche. Malachi Smith disrupted possessions at the top of the key, forcing turnovers and diving loose balls.

Dan Hurley said that Reed played the best game of his career on Saturday night during the pre-game media availability. He seemingly took that as a challenge ahead of Wednesday's contest.

Reed's activity in the paint had no answers, not even when matched up against the Big East Player of the Year front runner, Zubey Ejiofor. Ejiofor posted a 21-point double-double when the two powerhouses collided earlier this month.

UConn's starting center returned the favor with 20 points and 11 rebounds. He shattered his career high block total, sending six shots back to their senders. He held Ejiofor to just six points, his lowest scoring output since Dec. 13, against Iona. Reed checked out of the game with three minutes to go to a standing ovation from his home crowd.

The Johnnies pressed right out of the gate after its success in the first meeting at Madison Square Garden, when they forced the Huskies to commit 15 turnovers. Silas Demary Jr. was especially aggravated by St. John's ball pressure last time these teams met. He committed nine turnovers, a performance which he called "unacceptable."

The Huskies were far more careful with the ball in round two. UConn committed just 5 turnovers, tied for its lowest total of the season with its game against Creighton on Dec. 18.

UConn put the game away with a 20-1 run in the second half, interrupted by a lone free throw by Hopkins. The Red Storm missed 24 straight field goals. Their last make came with 17:28 to play in the game.

The Huskies will play their final home game of the season against Seton Hall on Saturday at Gampel Pavilion. UConn pulled out a 69-64 win over the Pirates (19-9, 9-8) on Jan. 13.

The game tips off at 12 p.m. and is available to watch on FOX.



UConn men's basketball team playing against St. Johns at Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn. The Huskies dominated the game, holding St. Johns to 40 points. PHOTOS BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS