MEN'S BASKETBALL:

NO. 6 HUSKIES AIM FOR BOUNCE-BACK WIN AT BUTLER

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For the first time since November, the UConn men's basketball team (22-2, 12-1 Big East) lost a game, falling to St. John's on Friday night.

As a result, the Huskies dropped to No. 6 in the newest AP Poll and are now in second place in the Big East standings after St. John's beat Xavier on Monday night.

Connecticut has another Quad 1 game on the horizon, visiting the Butler Bulldogs (13-11, 4-9 Big East) on Wednesday night. It is a Quad 1 game, for now.

The Huskies are unbeaten against Butler, a 12-0 record dating back to the 2011 National Championship game. Coincidentally, this year's title game will also be in Indianapolis, Ind.

St. John's exposed UConn, and Silas Demary Jr. looked like a shell of himself with a season-high nine turnovers.

"I've got to be better with the ball," Demary said on Monday evening. "Nine turnovers is unacceptable...I've got to be better with the ball, especially being a primary PG on the floor. Just got to be better, [make] smarter decisions and just being aware of defenders getting up underneath me."

Many of the mistakes the Huskies made on Friday night are not new, but the loss serves as a wake-up call for the team to address these issues before they lose again, regardless of their terrific record this season.

"The video coming out of that game was not any [different]," Dan Hurley said, noting the tone of the coaches did not change either. "We've had games the last couple of weeks that we have not felt really good about the way we played. It came home to roost for us in this game, the things that were causing us to play closer games than they should have been."

UConn had a lot of momentum following dominant performances against Creighton and Xavier, to the point where the team thought they could run the table.

"I think when you run off that many [wins] in a row, you kind of get to the feeling of 'Man, I don't think anybody can stop us,'" Demary said. "I think having that attitude kind of hurt us, because we still got to respect the opponent and respect what the opponent has done."

Even though the Huskies lost for the first time since the Arizona game, UConn's offense is still one of the 30 most efficient teams in the country. Turnovers and free throws were the glaring problems in Friday's loss to the Red Storm.

"It's jarring, no matter how many games, no matter how the season has gone," Hurley said. "If you can't defensive rebound or make a free throw, or take care of the ball or protect the paint on defense, if our centers can't do that, if our wing defenders can't keep the ball out of there, then the rest of the year is gonna be a struggle."

Wednesday night will be a homecoming for Braylon Mullins. The freshman phenom grew up about 40 minutes away from Butler's campus, which is on the border of Indianapolis and Rocky Ripple, Ind.

"It's always good to see family," Mullins said. "I think at this point of the season, it's just like any away game, any home game. It's just like we're focused on that game. We're focused on winning that game."

Connecticut has already beaten Butler this season. The Huskies won in Hartford, Conn., 79-60, behind a career-high 26 points from Solo Ball, who was named to the Jerry West Award midseason watch list last week.

The Bulldogs have struggled lately, losing four straight games for the second time this season.

Butler is led by Finley Bizjack, one of the best scorers in the Big East, averaging 17.9 points per game. The junior guard has proven that recently, averaging 21.6 points in the last five contests.

Michael Ajayi is a double-double machine, averaging 15.8 points and 11.6 rebounds per game. He and Bizjack have played in every game this season and are the only players averaging over 30 minutes a game.

"We have those two guys eyed on the scout," Mullins said.

Freshman Azavier Robinson showed promise for the Bulldogs this season, averaging 6.1 points per game on 47% shooting and a 43.3% mark from deep. On Tuesday morning, the team announced that Robinson will miss the remainder of the 2025-26 season due to a left wrist injury and will undergo surgery. It was a brutal blow for a team that does not have a true point guard to replace him after Jalen Jackson went down during the non-conference part of the season.

Tip-off from historic Hinkle Fieldhouse is set for 7:30 p.m. and is available to watch on TNT and truTV.



The UConn Huskies take on the St John's Red Storm at Madison Square Garden in New York City on Feb. 6 , 2026. Despite a close game, the Huskies lost 72-81.
PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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