# Sports

Photo of the Day |




**UConn men's basketball celebrates their seniors in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 28, 2026. The Huskies defeated the Pirates as they played their last game in Gampel of the 2025-2026 season.** PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# MEN'S BASKETBALL: KARABAN INDUCTED INTO HUSKIES OF HONOR AS NO. 5 UCONN SWEEPS SETON HALL, 71-67

**by Sam Calhoun**
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
samuel.calhoun@uconn.edu

Alex Karaban is regarded as one of the greatest players in the Dan Hurley era. In his last game at Gampel Pavilion in his decorated career, he was surprised with an induction into the Huskies of Honor.

"I never thought that'd happen," Karaban said after the game. "Just to have the career that I'm having, and then to look up there and see my name up there and my legacy up there, forever and special."

Karaban went through Senior Day, as did Tarris Reed Jr., Malachi Smith, Dwayne Koroma and Alec Millender. However, the game had a lot at stake, including a chance at a share of the Big East regular season title for the No. 5 UConn men's basketball team (27-3, 17-2 Big East).

There was a lot at stake for Seton Hall (19-10, 9-9 Big East), being considered on the wrong side of the bubble. Just like the game in Newark on Jan. 13, this was a battle that went down to the wire, with the Huskies winning 71-67.

"If you watch that game, that's a team that is NCAA [Tournament]-caliber," Dan Hurley said. "They were so determined and just so hard to play against, but we showed the heart of a team, a championship-level team."

Karaban was emotional throughout the pregame ceremony, and that ignited a fire in him. He had his best game of the season, playing all 40 minutes and scoring 23 points on 8-of-11 shooting, 5-of-6 from 3-point range. Now inside the top 10 on the UConn all-time scoring list, 15 of Karaban's 23 points came in the first half, helping the Huskies stay within striking distance despite trailing 33-32.

"It wasn't my intent to play Alex for that long," Hurley said. "We were losing, and we had multiple players struggling. He was playing great. He has a week off, and we have a bye week. He has looked much better. We were down most of the game, so we needed him to play those heavy minutes."

The Pirates, led by a 20-point performance from A.J. Staton-McCray, led by as many as eight points with 8:45 left in the game. Those back-to-back championship teams were well-known for their 10-0 'kill-shot' runs when they needed one, and Saturday's game was no different.

Smith went 1-for-2 at the free throw line before Karaban buried back-to-back 3-pointers, followed by a Braylon Mullins 3-pointer with 5:57 remaining, the latter of which gave Connecticut a 58-56 lead.

"We lost track a little bit," said Seton Hall head coach Shaheen Holloway, who was dealing with the flu according to the FS1 broadcast. "I thought we had control of the game, just a lack of urgency."

Seton Hall, not known for its offensive capabilities, could not miss at times in this contest. The Pirates shot 50% overall in the first half and 47.2% overall. They were unconscious from deep, knocking down 9-of-18 3-point attempts. Staton-McCray had four of those 3-pointers.

"The way in which they shot the ball was a little bit surprising," Hurley said, referring to their 31.1% 3-point percentage, which ranks outside the top 300 nationally. "They haven't been shooting it that great."

Free-throw shooting, at times, has been this team's weakness. In the final 2:32, UConn went 10-for-12 from the charity stripe when Seton Hall played the foul game after losing its 65-64 lead with 1:22 to play.

"It's been an issue," Hurley said. "These guys are working hard to fix it. Today, turnovers got us, but we made the clutch free throws. Solo [Ball] made them; Braylon made them. We looked like a 27-win team down the stretch when we needed to just find a way to win the game."

Reed finished with his second-consecutive double-double, completing his final home game with 10 points and 11 rebounds on 3-of-8 shooting. His last two games will put him in contention for Big East Player of the Week. It was quite a memorable Senior Day for the former Michigan Wolverine.

Reed was a huge presence on the glass. The Huskies needed it, finishing with a 30-27 edge over the Pirates. That included a 12-9 effort on the offensive end. Even though that was less than the 16 offensive rebounds given up in the St. John's game, all nine offensive rebounds felt huge for Seton Hall, with six of them coming in the second half.

The turnovers remain a problem, as UConn turned it over 15 times, with eight coming in the first half.

The magic number is now one. One win ties for the most Big East wins in a season (2023-24 UConn) and gives the Huskies a share of the regular-season title, which can be shared with St. John's.

With a Providence win over Creighton on Saturday night, UConn is better positioned to be the No. 1 seed in the Big East Tournament. In the likely scenario that both Connecticut and St. John's win out, it all comes down to who finishes with a higher seed: Providence or Creighton. The reason for this is that UConn would finish as the top seed with Providence ahead of Creighton in the standings. UConn went 2-0 against Providence, and St. John's went 1-1. If Creighton is ahead of Providence, St. John's would have the top seed due to sweeping Creighton, while Connecticut went 1-1.

"One of our goals is really obtainable, and that was a Big East regular season championship, and it's right there in front of us," Reed said.

UConn is now 52-24 all-time against Seton Hall and 8-5 since joining the new Big East in the 2020-21 season. For the first time since the 2008-09 season, Connecticut swept both games against the Pirates in the regular season. That season also ended with UConn as a 1-seed in the NCAA Tournament and a trip to the Final Four.

The Huskies now have a week off until their regular-season finale at Marquette on Saturday.




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