

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship - Final Four: UConn vs Purdue

Monday, April 8, 2024

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

State Farm Stadium

**UConn Huskies**

**Coach Dan Hurley**

**Tristen Newton**

**Stephon Castle**

**Cam Spencer**

Finals Postgame Media Conference

UConn 75, Purdue 76

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by student-athletes from the UConn. Questions...

**Q. Cam, the three of you were named to the top team, All-Tournament team. You especially, this is something that happened to you after you transferred to the school. Is that something that Coach kind of sold you on, those kinds of opportunities?**

CAM SPENCER: No, I mean, it was all about the team and going to accomplish another championship. I had never been a part of a championship like this. That's really what Coach Hurley and I talked about in the recruiting process.

This was our goal from day one. So to do it with your brothers and your family that you go to war with every day is just really special right now.

**Q. Cam, there was a moment there where I think you got a foul called on you, looking for a jump ball. You were running around. Coach calmed you down. How often is that going in that direction and not you having to calm Coach down?**

CAM SPENCER: Yeah, we're two similar personalities. I was going for the offensive rebound, felt like I had the ball. Just heat of the moment reaction.

But luckily I have Coach to have my back and calm me



down because I probably would have gotten a technical if I didn't calm down. So yeah...

**Q. Cam, you came into college, only one scholarship offer. Your first year you were the first team in the whole country to get eliminated. Talk about the trials and tribulations to get here, get the win. Also you have some nice hardware against your brother. Talk about that with your brother relationship.**

CAM SPENCER: I wouldn't be here without my brother. Having four years ahead of me, I've always been able to watch him grow up and go through similar experiences that I'm now going through.

Like I said, I wouldn't be here without him. I'm so thankful for all the work he's helped me put in. Yeah, I can't say enough about my family. I wouldn't be here without them. So thankful.

**Q. The UConn guards outscored the Purdue guards 55-17. How much going into the game was it your mindset to control and disrupt their guards? How proud are you of the fact you dominated them?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I mean, it was a big part of our game plan just trying to limit as much as we can from the guards. I thought we did a good job of that. Just playing confident on the other end. I feel like Coach put us in great positions to be successful all anytime and it worked out for us.

TRISTEN NEWTON: Yeah, I mean, we knew he was going to get his points. It took him 25 shots to get 37 points. That was the game plan, just limit the guards. Steph, Cam, got in there and did a great job on the guards, limiting them and their impacts.

CAM SPENCER: Obviously coming in we knew Zach Edey is a tough guy to stop. We wanted to make him work for everything.

I think the coaches made a point that we'd be really locked in if we could control their three-point attempts. I think holding them to seven, we were just really locked in on not letting those other guys get involved in the game.



I think Steph, Tristen, all the guards did a great job.

**Q. Did you expect them to back off three-pointers? Did you actually expect they would simply not take them, show that discipline and react to how you were defending them, or did that come as a surprise to you?**

TRISTEN NEWTON: I mean, we watched the film. They get their three-pointers off, people going down there and helping on Edey. They did a great job game planning and made sure it was a focus that we didn't leave the three-point line and let Edey do his damage. He only shoots twos. He doesn't shoot threes. If he makes 15 twos like he did today, that's 30. Where are the rest of the points going to come from?

They did a great job on scouting. Credit to them.

**Q. Talk about your on-the-ball pressure, relentless throughout the whole game, how you made it so daunting for those guys to get any shot up.**

STEPHON CASTLE: I mean, yeah, I feel like our post defense started with pressuring the ball and just trying to limit easy catches for Edey. I mean, I feel like our coach did a great job with the scout. I feel like we executed it well and it worked out for us.

**Q. Tristen, something Coach talked about on Saturday was how this team never lost its drive, didn't act like they were the defending champions. How much did you take it on yourself to set that kind of tone for the team? When did you realize these guys were as locked in as the team was last year? Was it even before the season started?**

TRISTEN NEWTON: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't take any credit for setting the tone. It was all Coach. Last year was last year. It's not defending that trophy. '23 trophy is in Coach's office. Nobody can take that from him.

This ace whole different year. We had goals, winning five championships. We got all those done. Credit to Coach for setting the tone and everyone just follows his lead.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse the student-athletes and ask Coach to make an opening statement.

DAN HURLEY: First off, like I said, I think yesterday was a privilege to share the court with Matt Painter and Purdue, one of the top programs in the country, one of the best coaches in the country. Just total class personified across the board with those guys.

Obviously what could you say? We won - by a lot again.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You won by a lot again. Congrats. After they made their one three-pointer, you hopped off the bench and called a timeout. You were in a lather. Was that specifically about making sure this doesn't become a trend?**

DAN HURLEY: That was a late clock mistake. Braden had it with three on the clock. He used the ball screen. In such a late shot clock situation, Donovan needed to get up there high and eliminate the attempt.

Just the game plan and Luke for a day and a half prep to have us as ready as he did defensively for that game was just impressive. We didn't want to give up threes. We didn't care if Zach took 25, 28 shots to get 30, 35 points. This whole game plan was no Smith, no Loyer, no Gillis, no Jones. Keep that collective group under 18, 20 points as a group. They had no chance to win, no matter how well Zach played.

**Q. You won your six games in this tournament by 140 points. You haven't backed away as you've dominated through this. Do you feel like this is an historic team, and do you feel like this is one of the greatest teams of all time?**

DAN HURLEY: I think it's up there in terms of the greatest two-year runs that a program maybe has ever had just because -- I can't say anything about Duke because I'm going to piss my brother off. But I guess I can say stuff about Florida. But I love Billy Donovan. So I'm in a bad spot (smiling).

I just think it's the best two-year run I think in a very, very long time just because of everything we lost from last year's team. To lose that much and, again, to do what we did again, it's got to be as impressive a two-year run as a program's had since prior to whoever did it before Duke. To me it is more impressive than what Florida and Duke did because they brought back their entire teams. We lost some major players.

**Q. Jay Wright said it was the most dominant team he could remember. That gives you a chance there. Is that what you're going to be making your mark on, nothing but dominance? Is it going to be a standard going forward, one you can reach every year?**

DAN HURLEY: I know things are going to be a little crazy for the next 10 days. Unfortunately we're going to head into the portal, like everybody else now. I've been dreading

this moment. But now worry here.

Yeah, we'll enjoy this for a couple days. On the flight home tomorrow, we'll start talking about what the roster's going to look like. Obviously we graduate some players. We're going to lose a couple potentially to the NBA early entry. We're going to dive in and put together a roster that can play a comparable level of basketball to the one that you guys have witnessed the last two years. That's I know what our mindset will be.

We're going to be focusing on trying to put together a three-year run, not just a two-year run.

**Q. To accomplish this feat in this era of NIL and the transfer portal, it almost could be considered something entirely different, particularly special with the landscape. Do you think winning two in a row in this era is something that could be replicated again? Do you think because you won in this era, it deserves to be held in a different regard?**

DAN HURLEY: I mean, I think that's probably for you guys to decide. Obviously it's a special run. Yeah, I mean, shit, we're going to try to replicate it again. We're going to maintain a championship culture. We're bringing in some very talented high school freshmen. Our returning players, through player development, will take a big jump. We'll strategically add through the portal.

I don't think that we're going anywhere.

**Q. You mentioned your brother. He won back-to-back titles as a player, you've done it as a coach. Can you put in perspective how incredible that is, two guys in the same family has done it? What does it mean to your family?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, it's incredible. It's incredible to join Bob in that club. Bob was in the arena tonight. He wanted to kind of stay out of the camera lens. He was in a box enjoying the comfort of that tonight. It was just awesome to have him here for that.

Obviously my dad. It's like my dad, he looks at me, he looks at my brother, he sees us coaching in college, what it would have looked like for him if he was doing it. So I know it means a lot to me and Bob again. We're the version of my father that would be coaching in college. Even after back-to-back for me, I'm still just a worse version of him. A little bit worse. I'm getting better, and I'm coming for him (smiling).

**Q. We've asked you about the potential to repeat. Now that you've done it, does this feel different?**

DAN HURLEY: It doesn't. It really doesn't. I mean, it's the same feeling that you have. You just feel so light right now. You know what, though? Maybe it feels a little bit better because knowing how great this team's been, we've worn the everything shirt the whole year. Everyone in this organization gave everything so that we could win everything this year. The MTE we were in, the Big East regular season, the Big East tournament, the regional and national championship. We wanted to give everything so we could win absolutely everything.

The thought of Cam Spencer and Steph Castle in their short window of time with us not to experience a national championship like we all have felt. Once we realized how good the team was, that became a little bit of a pressure point. It would have sucked today to have blue and yellow confetti and we have to walk off that court with Cam Spencer and Steph Castle.

**Q. I hope I don't misquote you. You said out on the court something about UConn giving you all the resources you need. Can we interpret that to mean you intend to be back at UConn next year? You're not going to entertain conversations with anybody else that might have a job coming open tomorrow?**

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, yeah, I don't think that's a concern (laughter). My wife, you should have her answer that.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, coach.

DAN HURLEY: She'll answer that question better than I can. Yeah, shit...

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