

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

Monday, April 6, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Hinkle Fieldhouse

UConn Huskies

Coach Dan Hurley

Solo Ball

Braylon Mullins

Alex Karaban

Tarris Reed Jr.

Finals Postgame Media Conference



other guys on the Michigan sideline?

TARRIS REED JR: Yeah, after the game, it was just a whole bunch of emotions flowing through, just playing the school that I literally came in with. I remember Coach May recruited me out of the portal. I saw some of my old guys, old teammates, just talking to my guy Will Tschetter, Harrison, Nimari, just chopping it up. We came a long way.

I know it sucks to be in this position, but through wins and losses just thank the Lord for it all, big man of faith, big believer in Jesus, and everything happens for a reason.

Q. Solo, you knew this was going to be a physical game. When you get the two fouls in the first half but then early in the second half pick up the two fouls, how frustrating was it to sit there for 10 minutes in the National Championship game and watch?

SOLO BALL: Yeah, it's tough. Even going into this game, a lot of people thought I wasn't going to play, so I don't know what other motivation there would be to be playing in the National Championship game and playing with this great group of guys that we've had so much fun this year with.

It's definitely frustrating not being on the court for that long, and it hurts my team at the moment, but this has been the most fun year of my life with this group of guys, and I just cherish this team.

Q. Alex, Dan talks a lot about a warrior mentality within the team. You finished the night in your final college game with 17 points, 11 rebounds and a double-double. How do you assess your performance in the game overall?

ALEX KARABAN: You know, that's great and all, but I care about winning. I care about winning. I want to do everything, I have done everything in my power to help this program win. I want to do everything every time I step out at night and give it my all. For Coach to play me 40 minutes, I can't thank him enough. That's all I wanted. That's all I wanted, is to give everything I got, leave

Michigan 69, UConn 63

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, number one, congratulations to Michigan. Just an incredibly talented, incredibly imposing team physically, obviously well-coached, great staff. Just overall, just a tremendous university with what they're able to accomplish in sports.

Obviously for us it's tough. Again, we did not come here for watches, we came here for rings. It's hard to be -- I'm not real emotional. Players are crying a lot more than I am. It's hard to be upset with your team. We lost the game because we missed. We missed -- we didn't make enough shots.

But it's hard to be upset with your team when they get 22 offensive rebounds versus that team. That's just how hard we just played to hold that team to 38 percent from the field.

But obviously I just thought the guys picking up two fouls in the first half, losing those three guys when we, I thought, had a great chance of going to the locker room with the lead, really put us in a bad spot.

You know, it's hard to be disappointed in your team when they fight so hard.

Q. Tarris, can you share with us a little bit about that moment you shared with Dusty May and some of the



... when all is said, we're done.®

everything I've got out there and try to do everything to help us win.

We came up short, missed some shots we normally make, but we gave it our all. I'm proud of these guys to my left. I'm proud of the guys in the locker room. I'm proud of Coach. It's going to sting, but like Tarris said, everything happens for a reason.

Q. For Solo and Tarris, what are you going to remember about playing with Alex the most, and he went out 17 and 11. What did you think of how he finished despite not winning?

SOLO BALL: I might cry up here just talking about just the impact he's had, in the locker room, throughout every single practice, every single game. He's just always there, and he's the same person every single day. He doesn't change. Incredibly smart, great guy off the court. I'm going to miss this guy so much. He's going to make so much noise, and I know he's deserving of everything that's coming his way because of how hard he works.

TARRIS REED JR: Yeah, that man down there just -- man, it's tough. He's like the most passionate, competitive, loyal person I've ever met. Just the love he has for the game, the love he has for us, just a leader.

I've never met a person like AK that shows up every day despite good game, bad game, bad day, good day. Getting yelled at by Coach, getting yelled at by us. But he's an everyday guy, honest guy who's going to show up whenever for his team. Like it showed tonight. He gave it his all and just a true heart of a champion.

Q. Alex, the end of a college career is inevitable; you knew this moment would come, but you played it out to the last minute of the last battle. What are your thoughts? What are you thinking? What's going through your mind right now?

ALEX KARABAN: Yeah, you know, blessed that I've been able to wear this jersey for the longest amount of time possible, the max amount, the max amount of minutes, the max amount of games this season. I came back ultimately to win, fell short.

So it hurts right now. It hurts a lot right now. I'm just reminding myself right now that when I came into UConn how much I've grown, and I'm ultimately leaving UConn in a better place right now from where I started. I gave it everything I got. I gave it my heart. I gave everything. All I thought about was UConn basketball every single day.

For it now -- now that I'm leaving and for UConn to be one

of the best brands in college basketball and to be at the top, I left it better than when it started. I'm most proud of that.

Q. Tarris, very similar question. Two years you spent at UConn. It seems like you certainly got a lot out of it in basketball development and personal development. What have the last two years of this chapter of your life meant to you?

TARRIS REED JR: Man, thank the Lord for it every day. It wasn't easy choosing UConn the first time, choosing UConn to come back again out of the portal. So I give all thanks to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And thanks to the man to the left of me, Coach Hurley. I mean, just recruiting me out of the portal, coming back after a bad Michigan year, and he saw something that I didn't even see in myself. Top of my head, Ecclesiastes 7:8: Better is the end than in the beginning.

Just looking back at the whole journey I done had, journey with these guys, I'm going to miss it. Like I said, the Lord does things in mysterious ways, and I got all my tears out. I'm just blessed to be in the position I'm in today. I love these guys for life. They're my brothers for life.

Q. Dan, you said you weren't emotional. It looks like you're starting to get there. How do you balance the pride that you have in those guys and this team this year with the sadness that comes with the end of it?

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, I'm not -- like I said before, it's like it's hard to have a level of disappointment where literally it just came down to we just didn't make enough shots in the basket. To be able to keep that team under 40 percent from the field, 38 percent, this team has destroyed everyone they've faced in this tournament. Again, your team gives you 22 offensive rebounds; that's how hard we played.

Just what the group has able to overcome just throughout the year, the growth, the way they played in March, just the whole experience that this team has given the coaches, the fan base, to play to the last -- to be one of the last two teams standing -- a lot of people talk about you're better off losing in the first game in the Final Four than losing in the championship, that is the biggest bunch of crap of all -- it is such a bull --

THE MODERATOR: Stuff.

DAN HURLEY: It is. It's like, this is where you wanted to be. It hasn't set in yet. On the flight tomorrow it'll set in, on the bus ride back. Eventually it'll hit you that you were

close to pulling off what would have been a historic third championship.

But this team just gave us so much this year. Just didn't make enough shots.

Q. Dan, how do you sum up what Alex has meant to your program the last few years and his contributions?

DAN HURLEY: Okay, so now the crying. No, no, come on. This guy changed my life, the staff's lives, the joy he's brought to the university, the fan base. His decision to come to UConn has made us -- Florida won the National Championship last year. I'll probably get in trouble for this. Michigan won the National Championship this year. But he's helped to make UConn, I think, right now -- we're probably the premier program in college basketball right now, having been to three out of four National Championship games, haven't won two of them.

He's put UConn in that rarefied place in college basketball.

Everyone owes everything to that guy, and I figure, let me just play -- let me play him into the ground one more time, just one more 40-minute game for Alex. Let me just play that guy into the ground one more night like I have throughout his career. He deserved to play 40 minutes.

Q. Obviously you mentioned Michigan has rolled through this tournament. I know you have a lot of respect for Dusty May. Where does this Michigan team rank for you in terms of the most difficult opponents that you've played in your career?

DAN HURLEY: Well, it's one of the better teams that I've played, certainly since I've been a college basketball coach. When I was back at Rhode Island, I coached against an Arizona team with Aaron Gordon and Hollis-Jefferson and Nick Johnson and T.J. McConnell. I've coached against some teams with a lot of good players.

They're legit. They definitely deserved to win the National Championship. They're clearly the best team in the country this year. They're just so hard to score against at the rim. I could talk about the threes that we missed, and I thought we had a lot of good threes that we missed. But they just made it so tough on us around the rim.

That was probably what even got us more than the missed threes was some of those rim shots, all those transition baskets. I think they cut it to four. Could have put some serious game pressure on them. They changed so many shots around the rim. They're just so tall.

Q. Coach, we've talked about Alex Karaban, what he's meant to this program, but Luke Murray, long overdue getting a head coaching job. You've been with him since the Wagner days. Talk about what he's meant to this program and just to you over the years.

DAN HURLEY: Yeah, Luke is like a brother. We're both very similar. We're both hard to work with -- no. (Laughing).

We're very similar, though. We're like the same person, and we're both bald. He's a brother. He's worked with me at every place I've been. We've made each other better. We've got a deep friendship. Boston College is about to have a renaissance in basketball.

Q. Dan, how much did the officiating change the game --

DAN HURLEY: This guy! I know about fines. Is there a fine -- I think so.

Q. It seemed very inconsistent from first half to second half, touch fouls....

DAN HURLEY: Hey, listen, that's an all-star group there, Kip and Jeff, obviously, and James who we're familiar with, as well. Yeah, it's such a physical game. Michigan is so physical. I just thought -- again, it's not the reason why we lost the game. Obviously plus 13 at the free-throw line, plus 12 in attempts. I just thought that the first half foul trouble really -- I thought we were positioned if we didn't have that foul trouble to potentially go into halftime with a lead.

You go in with a lead and they make a run, you're down five instead of 11.

But we also, too, a problem for our team has been undisciplined fouling at times. But it's hard to ref that game. We both played so hard. That's not an easy game to officiate.

If I could have those three guys ref every game the rest of my career, I would sleep well at night.

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