

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Chicago, Illinois, USA

United Center

Michigan Wolverines

Dusty May

Elliot Cadeau

Yaxel Lendeborg

Postgame Press Conference



Michigan - 68, Wisconsin - 65

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Michigan head coach Dusty May along with student-athletes Elliot Cadeau and Yaxel Lendeborg.

DUSTY MAY: What a fabulous basketball game, kind of a modern Big Ten game where teams were fighting, clawing, scrapping, competing at the highest level, but also making some high level shots and plays.

Very, very proud of our guys. When you see them make the big shots that they made tonight, you just think back to how much work they put in in the gym after practice, before practice, in the mornings, whatever the case, on the weekends, and the game rewards that behavior. These guys deserved -- I feel like both of them hit game-winning shots. They deserved that because of what they've done up to this point.

Q. Yax, speak on the game-winning shot, and what was the call, and what led to it? Was this the first game-winning shot of your career?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: This is my first game winner. I've hit a couple of game tie-rs in overtime. The play call was for me to get the ball down low in the post. I didn't do a good job sealing. AC had a driving angle. I tried to clear it out for him, and he kept his composure. Didn't force up a bad shot, made the one more to the open guy, and I happened to be there to make the shot.

Q. You mentioned keeping your composure in those final few minutes when Wisconsin was going on the onslaught to get back in the game. How did you both keep calm, continue to generate good looks, and get

stops?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: We know we're a pretty good team. We had some guys just hyping each other up a little bit, getting rowdy, but it's all in the love of the game. We haven't had many opportunities or games like this where we felt that kind of game pressure.

This is all like a learning point for us. We're going to do a lot better next game or whenever it happens again to take advantage of that moment and punching them right back in the mouth instead of taking a couple hits and a couple hits.

Q. For both of you guys, what makes Wisconsin's drive and kick game so hard to defend?

ELLIOT CADEAU: I just think their guards are really good. They could get downhill pretty much at will. They're just really fast. Once they get downhill, they're good passers, and they have a lot of shooters surrounding them. That's kind of what makes their offense good.

Q. For Elliot, there was a critical 3 you hit, well, you took the first one wide open, went out. Then you took another one 5, 10 seconds later that went in, and huge shot. Have you always been wired that, even when you miss a shot, you have the self-confidence to deliver one a few seconds later?

ELLIOT CADEAU: Yeah, I feel like the past probably two years of my life I haven't been wired like that, but thanks to my coaching staff, I'm now wired like that. I was wired like that in high school. So them just giving me confidence, my teammates giving me confidence to just shoot it again even if I miss, they don't care if I miss again.

Q. You guys had really great rim protection today. Aday had five blocks, you had one, Morez had two. Can you talk about the rim protection particularly and again as they were having the onslaught with the 3s, right as they started going back inside, it was hard to get that momentum going because that rim protection?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I think Aday has the best rim



protection I've ever seen in my life. He does a really good job walling up, blocking the shot. All year we've really been relying on him down there. A lot of us play aggressive defense, and we were allowing him to have our back, and he has been. Him doing that and doing it on the other side of the floor too is really what led to this win honestly. He kept us in it when we were down.

Q. Elliot, you guys haven't been through a game like that. You're down with foul trouble early, up by 15, down by 4 with just a few minutes left. Going through those ebbs and flows, that being new, is that something that maybe was good to experience before the tournament?

ELLIOT CADEAU: Yeah, that was definitely a new situation, but we've definitely been in situations where we've been up and teams went on crazy runs. Like at Michigan State that happened, and that was on the road. We've kind of been in positions sort of like that already. We know just to keep our head low -- stay level headed, and we know just to keep our composure in those moments.

Q. What has this year been to you as far as the success that you've had individually, collectively with this team, hitting your first game winner, and now you're on the brink of a championship postseason. What has this year meant to you?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: This has been the best year of my life honestly. I've had so much fun. I've had a lot of learning points as well. There's been times where I had a really bad game that I couldn't really get out of my head. Today, for example, I was really down on myself first half because I felt like I was letting my team down.

Coach was really letting me know he has my back regardless. He wants me to be more aggressive. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work.

Just how much I've learned this year in general has really helped me out and is really molding me to be better in the future no matter what I'm doing in my life. So I'm really grateful that I made the decision to come here and get coached by Coach Dusty.

Q. For either or both players, what's it like to be on the other side when someone gets as hot as that guy was in the second half?

ELLIOT CADEAU: I don't really know how to feel about it. They're just really good players. We can't call it like luck or anything because the same players, the same two players did that to us last game. It's kind of something that we kind

of expected them to do because they did it last game. It was just like a feeling like we've got to close out better, like take away the attempt.

YAXEL LENDEBORG: For me I would say it's very frustrating. We play super hard defense, and then he gets open for a split second, makes one, and now all of a sudden he made six. It's like what are we doing right now? What happened? You just feel helpless. I feel hopeless honestly. I'm trying to find where he is, I can't find him, and next thing you know he's shooting a wide open 3. It's definitely a bad feeling.

Q. Other than Elliot being on the floor most of the half, what was working better in the second half? Offense seemed to flow much better.

DUSTY MAY: That and then Yax was much more aggressive. Then we started getting Aday into the post, and then he got going, and then we felt like we were getting a little bit static. They did a good job of digging and getting it out of there. So a combination of all those things.

This was a game, I think, we've talked about being in close games, well, we haven't been in a close game like this all year where there was a lot of friction in our huddles. The emotion was pouring out late in the game because there were such extreme runs. There's always runs. These were extreme runs.

I was proud of our guys. They were able to regulate their emotions, get back together, and figure out a way to win. When you get this late in the season, you've got to figure out some different ways. Rapp, what a performance. Same thing with Bieliauskas. Those guys, they give Carrington and Boyd and Blackwell and Rohde, they give those guys a lot of room because of their unique skills.

It's a well put together roster. They have a good team. I think Rapp was probably all league out on the West Coast. Bieliauskas is playing at the highest level in Europe for a great club. Then obviously Coach Nick Boyd, I've seen him do that a lot. I almost feel like I was holding him back a little bit for as well as he's playing now.

Very proud of him. The dude, he elevates the level of work whatever room he goes in. He has passion for the game, his passion to compete is second to none. For our guys to match that and find a way to win here on a neutral site, very, very proud of our guys.

Q. Dusty, we've talked about Michigan is a tough matchup for Ohio State. Is Wisconsin a tough matchup for Michigan in terms of what they do? They beat you once in the regular season, and this came

down to the wire, or is it just they're doggone good?

DUSTY MAY: When you have Nick Boyd and John Blackwell, you're a tough matchup for 364 teams in the country, you're a tough matchup. We were disappointed because I thought our game plan was much better than it was in Game 1. The game plan and the execution and the contingency plans. But we let them get to their strengths, rejecting the corner ball screens. They rejected three, and they made us pay for all three of them.

We felt like our mistakes, even though we held them to 28 in the first half, they had about 15 on our mistakes, on our errors. We had a rebound in our hands, they knock it out they get a 3-pointer. We still have a long way to go, but luckily we can really sit out and guard. Being so process oriented, I literally thought we did a really good job of guarding and Rapp was hitting out of the world shots.

The one that was disappointing, was we got a late clock, and they literally bowling passed it across the court. It was a two-side, we had two defender in that area. I don't know if they took their eye off the ball or relaxed, for them to get a 3 and that really super charged them, and after that he made some big, big shots.

It's like our roster. It all just fits well together.

Q. Dusty, you mentioned experience and some things your team hadn't experienced, friction in the huddle, stuff like that. Did you learn anything about your team that you didn't know today?

DUSTY MAY: Yes, absolutely. I'd rather keep some of that in house, but I liked it. We don't ever make it personal. We've talked about it since day one, and when we say it all fits, typically what fits isn't this guy's a shooter, this guy is a driver, this guy can score in the post, whatever the case. It's more how their personalities fit. If they don't, how do we make them fit and understand each other from the other's perspective?

Our guys, we haven't been in this moment, so we haven't seen that come out, and I thought it was really, really healthy because it was constructive, there was thought and intent behind it, and none of it was selfish. None of it was about myself. It was about what this team needs to do to win.

Trust me, like I, we, the staff, we need help from our players. They're in the battle. So when they come over and say, hey, they're doing this, this, and this, Coach, can we look at this? Absolutely. We're going to empower them to make those decisions and think like coaches on the floor because, when they're in it, they're able to contribute more

than I think people give them credit for.

Q. Following up on that, how good was it for you guys to have a game like this before you go into the tournament? Also, Yax mentioned that you said something to him at halftime. What did you say? What was that conversation like? How much did you feel you needed to have that conversation with him?

DUSTY MAY: Actually, the staff encouraged me and gave me a couple bullet points, and then I said them in my own words with my own delivery. The gist was that, look, we're big boys here. We can live with whatever the results are, but we're not going out like that. We're going to be aggressive. We're going to be afraid of failure. We're going to let it rip, being us.

If it's not good enough, we'll get on the bus tonight and go back home and start preparing for the NCAA Tournament and then draw tomorrow. Either way, we can live with the results. We're not going to let results, the Twitter, how much guys make, and all this other stuff, affect us going after something together and doing all the difficult stuff together and getting all that clouded by what's really important, and that's what they're learning right now and their journey and their process to become the absolute best versions of themselves.

When they walk out the doors, some of them very soon, hopefully a month or so, that they're ready to make it in the real world and be productive citizens.

Q. You had pretty much a full 29.5 seconds to figure out what you wanted to do on that last possession. You chose no timeout, had him come up the court. What exactly -- were you trying to get that shot, or was it just working around and see what you can get?

DUSTY MAY: We had a play. We didn't execute it. Credit Wisconsin. We thought Yax had a matchup in the post. He went to it, and then we had a timeout, and at 3.8 I looked, and I did a quick scan. I thought Elliot Cadeau, the floor's busted, they're out of their shell, they're scrambling, I think he's going to make something good happen. That was it.

It was a split second, take a quick scan of what's going on, timeout, are we going to be able to squeeze something good? Typically when the game gets like that, if you have really good players and guys that know how to play, they find something better than you can organize against a set, on balance, physical defense like Wisconsin.

Q. You are on the brink of doing something that the conference hasn't seen since 2017-2018, and that's a

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

repeat champion in the Big Ten tournament, which happened to be John Beilein's Michigan Wolverines.

DUSTY MAY: That wasn't that long ago. That's just a couple years ago.

Q. What does that mean to you, that you're on the verge of making your own history for this program?

DUSTY MAY: It means we're going to go out there and watch this game and scout the best we can and come out here and compete together as well as we can for 40 minutes tomorrow, and just know we have some guys that will step up -- Will Tschetter I thought in the first half really held it in the road for us tonight. These guys come in and take some of his shine. When we do well, it doesn't take the shine off of anybody else. When he plays well, it doesn't take the shine off of him.

Will sacrificed a lot. His energy, he made a big shot, but his life -- same thing. I thought we were on the verge of getting down big when we were down eight in the first half and they were rolling. We were trying to get to halftime without being in much more foul trouble.

Those contributions, that's what we're looking for. Whether it's Nimari, Roddy, Trey, whatever, we know someone is going to have a big game, it's going to be their moment, and everybody else is going to embrace that and be just as happy for them as they would be themselves.

Q. You mentioned the last few weeks about not getting into early foul trouble, and if they do, how do they respond for that? Elliot had two early fouls, sat out most of the first half. He had a really big second half, as you mentioned, even in that last play. Can you talk about what he did to rebound in that capacity in the second half, and what his presence on the floor looks like when he can stay out of foul trouble and make those big plays happen?

DUSTY MAY: When he's in neutral, he's an elite process and thinker. Because he's so competitive, sometimes a jersey grab, a push gets him out of his stuff. We're just trying to get him to in that moment just freeze, take a deep breath, and get recentered because that usually carries -- like the foul, we thought there was a play that happened before. He responds to the foul, grabs his jersey, and now it's two.

Just trying to get him to where we're not responding to a missed call, something we think that happened. He's too important to our team, and he's especially important now with L.J. out. Once again, what an opportunity for Trey McKenney to play point for 10 minutes in the first half.

Those minutes are invaluable. We'll lean on that again.

This is very, very healthy for us to be where we are right now, still finding some things out about ourselves and discovering new ways to win.

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