

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

Saturday, April 4, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Hinkle Fieldhouse

Michigan Wolverines

Coach Dusty May

Trey McKenney

Elliot Cadeau

Aday Mara

Semifinals Postgame Media Conference

Michigan - 91, Arizona - 73

THE MODERATOR: We're joined now by Michigan head coach Dusty May and student-athletes Trey McKenney, Elliot Cadeau and Aday Mara.

DUSTY MAY: This game was very indicative of how this group has played throughout the season, unselfish basketball. A connected group who defends, gets out in transition and then shares the basketball.

I thought our assist-to-turnover ratio, I thought our job on the glass, especially before the game was in doubt was as impressive as anything. And the one thing that we thought really jumped out was our ability to get 50/50 basketballs and be quicker to the ball than Arizona tonight.

But just very proud of our effort. What a great group.

Q. Elliot and Trey, I think everyone was surprised when Yaxel came back in the second half -- he looked like he was in some obvious pain, but he seemed determined to play. What did he say to you guys at halftime and what do you think about his gutsy performance?

ELLIOT CADEAU: We didn't really get a lot of time to talk to him we were on the court at halftime and he was getting treatment. But we know what type of guy Yaxel is. If he can play, he's going to play. We asked him, are you good? He said, yeah. So we expect him to be on the court.



He told us when he got on the court, he was going to give it his all.

TREY MCKENNEY: I think it just shows the guy who Yaxel is. I mean, he just wants to put it all on the floor for Michigan, and he wants to give the fans what they came here for.

I'm just really grateful to have him as a teammate. He's one of the best players in the country, and he really showed that tonight. But he's selfless as well. So I'm just really grateful to be around him.

Q. Elliot and Aday, all the transfers brought into Michigan this year, you guys have obviously have been playing great, reached the championship game. What do you see from Coach May and the coaching staff that's let you guys mold such a cohesive identity in such a short time?

ELLIOT CADEAU: I think they did a really good job of putting five or four transfers, or five players on the court at all times that are really good at passing the ball. And I think they knew that when they were recruiting all of us.

Just having five people on the court that are all playmakers and also great scorers just helps us have connectivity on the court, for sure.

ADAY MARA: I think the same. They did a great job putting, as he said, players that were not selfish. And I think now in the era we are, with the transfer portal, we've just got to learn and adapt as soon as possible to what we have and the different teams that we play.

So I think just we've got to change, and we've got to learn every day so we can play together.

Q. Trey, you guys came out of the gates with a sense of physicality and energy that Arizona was trying to catch up to. Was that kind of the goal coming into this one? And what do you guys feel like helped you set the tone early?

TREY MCKENNEY: I mean, during the season we have had some type of mental lapses during big games, but I think we came out, and we really knew how high the stakes were. And we just really wanted to leave it all on the floor.

We had nothing left. Really, we only have a couple of days left with the bonds that we've made throughout the summer. So I think it just really shows a lot about our team to be able to flip that switch and just push for more in the second half.

Q. Elliot, you guys have had a lot of experience in blowouts. You got a blowout of the Final Four. Did having all that experience help you guys know how to navigate it? And also, separately, do you like that Coach May keeps the starters in late in these kind of games and doesn't, like, go all bench unit really early? How do you guys process that with all the experience you've had in these big wins?

ELLIOT CADEAU: We felt like we had a lot of games like this. And we learned from them. Some games the teams actually came back. So we stressed in the huddle keep our foot on the gas because it's March, it's April. Anything can happen, like they could come back from a 30-point deficit.

Q. Elliot, right from the beginning, you seemed to come out and have great control of the game and be very calm at the same time. How were you able to do that in such a big stage? And did you feel that you had to do even more of that once Yaxel got the two fouls and went out?

ELLIOT CADEAU: Yeah, for sure. I think that just comes from the coaching. They have so much confidence in me. I missed a lot of shots today. I had a lot of turnovers today, but I didn't hear one thing about that from the coaching staff.

It just helps me stay calm. If I turn the ball over and I look over at Coach, they're calm. So that just helps me stay calm as well.

And definitely I tried to be more aggressive when Yax came out, for sure.

Q. Elliot and Trey, you guys in the first half from 3 as a team shot 5-for-16. In the first eight minutes of the second half you guys combined, 6-for-8, and you guys each had two in that time span. Can you just talk about that particular run and really getting it going from beyond the arc. When Arizona was not getting their shots to fall, you guys as a team cohesively really got it going.

ELLIOT CADEAU: I think it kind of takes a little time to get used to shooting at game speed in this arena because we never played here before. But also, me and Trey talked at halftime, and we told each other, like, we had to hit shots this half. And we came out and we had each other's back with that.

TREY MCKENNEY: I would just say it's really a testament to the work we put in I mean. When you come in and before practice, I mean, everybody's getting their own individual work in. We all work on our games.

So I mean, when we're in the spotlight like this, we all have the confidence that we can and run off, you know, two 3s in a row or whatever that may be in this situation.

Q. (In Spanish).

ADAY MARA: I was just saying the process of being here in this year, I'm so grateful and so happy that I'm able to play with this group. I'm able to fight for the national title.

But it was a process just coming from maybe two years that I didn't have the opportunity to show what I was able to do, and now just to be in this position. But it was a long year, tough year. But it was fun, too. We're just having fun.

We know it's just one more, so we're going to try to get it.

Q. What does it mean to have a guy like Roddy whose game doesn't always jump off the stat sheet but seems to be such a steadying influence on both ends of the floor?

ELLIOT CADEAU: That means everything. We had a lot of new guys coming here. He was one of the returners. As soon as we got here, he showed us the culture of Michigan. He set the tone for all of us. He taught us so much.

And just having a guy we can always rely on that, like, no matter if he's hitting shots or not hitting shots, we can always rely on him to do what he does. So it's always great to have a player like that on the team, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. Could you address what Aday did for you today? And also when Yaxel showed the perseverance to get back in the game in the second half and he hit those two 3s, what did that mean to you and the team?

DUSTY MAY: Well, I think the guys know that Yax is about



winning. And from day one, he's always just been one of the guys. And when you have a first-team All-American potential player of the year that just wants to be one of the dudes, it helps everyone else fall in line and just accept their role. Our glue guys were awesome tonight.

Aday was sensational. He was at the rim, catching lobs. He was a force down low. He was a pressure release up top. I mean, he's such a smart basketball player.

And obviously his rim protection -- he did a great job on Peat. He did a great job forcing a lot of those misses around the basket because of his aggression.

Q. At halftime, Elliot's 2-of-14 and ends up with a double-double. Even though 2-of-14, the TBS staff at halftime, broadcasters today called him by far the best player on the court. When did this additional gear kick in for him as a distributor and as a leader of this team?

DUSTY MAY: As a distributor, he's always been that. As far as his leadership, he's been really consistent with that as well. He leads more with his energy and effort.

And I thought he took what the game gave him in the first half. You mentioned his attempts. A couple of those were passes off the backboard. Krivas is so good in his drops, we didn't think we'd be able to throw traditional lobs. So we've spent about 5 to 10 minutes the last three days working on the lob off the backboard. So he didn't really have that many attempts.

And then we told him if he got caught in between he and they forced him to shoot those -- we don't shoot a lot of floaters and middies -- but if he does have to shoot them, just make sure if you miss them you miss them long, because he's going to pull the big over and it's going to give Aday and Rez and those guys an opportunity to rebound on the backside.

And then obviously he got it going in the second half and made several big, big shots and found his rhythm.

Q. You had Yax for five and a half minutes in the first half and Aday playing with two fouls, and yet you pull away somewhat at the half. Talk about how crucial that stretch was and how you were able to pull that off.

DUSTY MAY: Well, obviously Rez had two fouls and Aday had two fouls. Yax, I think, had two fouls and a couple -- then two injuries. And so we were obviously extremely concerned. Our staff's done an unbelievable job of managing the minutes and the rotations and getting those guys in and still in the few minutes here and there.

But when we went small we were obviously concerned -- when you're playing Arizona going small and we were able to get stops, the guards were flat and wings were flying in and keeping balls alive.

And once we were able to get them we turned our disadvantage on one end to an advantage on the other and had them spaced out. And I thought we generated some great looks in the first half and they didn't go down. And then the same shots dropped in a second.

Q. I know you don't have guys who have played in the Final Four before, but what kind of a difference do you think it made to have a bunch of guys who have been around the block in college basketball to be able to come out here and, as you said, I think, play the way you normally play?

DUSTY MAY: These guys have such a -- our guys, Arizona's guys, even their young players, they have such a, I guess, extensive background playing high-level basketball games, whether it's national team stuff or even this year, we scheduled incredibly aggressive -- we had the second toughest schedule in the country behind my friend Nate at Alabama who tries to have the toughest schedule every year. We followed that model.

So we just felt like we were battle-tested. And we were concerned that playing that schedule, the stamina, the mental stamina, the physical stamina that this season can take, going through the Big Ten play.

And I give our guys a lot of credit. They've taken a backseat when they needed to and they've stepped up when they've needed to. And it's a group that's very bright and they have great self-awareness.

Q. I think Ian Eagle would call this question a triple Yaxel. Number one, you brought him back kind of later in the second half when the game was pretty well decided. Wondering why take that risk?

DUSTY MAY: Well, apparently you guys missed the UConn-Duke game. The game was already decided that we were playing Duke tomorrow. They were up 19, correct, in the second half? And who won?

So being out -- you're playing Arizona, one of the best teams -- statistically, the number one or two team all year in the country and you're up with 20 with 10 minutes left, with eight and a half minutes left. We didn't feel quite as confident as you guys did that we could just put the kids to bed. And he came in and Elliot was in foul trouble, and so he just held it down.

So yeah, obviously we felt like the game was still in hand.

Q. Their game plan obviously was to try to get physical with you. Can you just talk about not just how your bigs handled that but your guards? Did you challenge them before the game knowing that was coming?

DUSTY MAY: We've played with great physicality all year. We've done a great job in the weight room. We've done I think a real solid job of not beating our guys up in practice but yet preparing them for the mental and physical wear and tear of these type of games.

But it's a mindset. It's not as if Morez Johnson needs to get souped up to go bang against those guys. That's who he is by nature.

Then you look at Trey McKenney, how physical he is for a freshman. Roddy and even Aday, Aday's really come a long way with his strength and also just his mindset.

Yeah, I think the guys, the Big Ten schedule prepared these guys for this.

Q. Arizona, most of the season has been longer, stronger than the teams they have played. How much do you think you maybe knocked them back on their heels with your size and strength early on?

DUSTY MAY: I think a lot of it is simply match-ups. And when we've played this model, this Arizona model this year -- and they're the souped-up version, they're the steroid version of Gonzaga and these other teams -- we just felt like if a team relies on scoring 15 feet and in, with Aday and Morez and Yaxel and Nimari Burnett and Roddy Gayle, because of our size, length, it's going to be tough to score enough points 15 feet and in -- if we're making some shots and we're in a decent rhythm offensively.

I think that's what happened tonight. I do think we matched up well with Arizona better than we have some other teams this year.

Q. When you were recruiting Aday out of the portal, did you sort of envision a bigger or different role for him than he had at UCLA, and is what we saw tonight kind of the ultimate of what you envisioned with him? I mean, he just said up here that he wasn't able to show what he could do for two years.

DUSTY MAY: I'm not going to speak on any of where these guys were before. Aday's put a lot of work -- he obviously -- it takes time to grow into this role. He's physically more mature than he was.

Did we envision this? We went back and we looked at his film and playing with the Spanish national team, playing for Zaragoza and he had shown glimpses of this.

I mean, coming over he was, I think, projected on the mock drafts as maybe a lottery pick, top 10 pick, as just like a lot of those guys are. And then those things changed. But he's playing ball at a high level and he's added a lot a lot to our program.

Q. Back to Elliot for a second. I know by the end everybody had a lot of stats. But the way teams come out in these games often sets the tone for what it ends up being. Can you just speak about him at the start, especially with Yaxel's two quick fouls, the way he sort of controlled the game, not only the shooting, but the steals and with the passes that he made and the assists that he got early on?

DUSTY MAY: Yeah, the thing with Elliot and Yaxel and Morez and Aday and these guys, all the portal guys, when we've played on the biggest stages in the most important moments, their play has been elevated.

The assistant coaches, we were talking about it before the game, were like, man, Elliot's going to have a big game because of the way Arizona defends, but also just because of the stage. He's fearless. He's incredibly competitive.

And his basketball IQ is off the charts. And so we felt very confident, when you have someone that can control the game like he does, and also push tempo, and then when he's not in foul trouble, he's a pest defensively, and he cancels ball screens. He gets you out of your offense. He's been awesome for us.

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