

2026 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Saturday, May 23, 2026
Charlottesville, Virginia, USA
Scott Stadium

Princeton Tigers
Coach Matt Madalon
Tucker Wade

Ryan Croddick

Nate Kabiri

Semifinals Media Conference

Princeton 14 - Duke 7

MATT MADALON: Obviously, thrilled to be sitting here right now. Very proud of these guys sitting to my left. Very proud of our team, the whole organization, from the fans and everything showed up.

Just a really cool opportunity. I'd say, again, I'm just thrilled with the opportunity this team gets to play on Monday. I thought Duke played a great game, stretched out on us, executing in transition. Uncharacteristic game for us with 18 turnovers. But these guys gutted through a really tough 60 minutes. So proud of them.

MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Tucker, to me, that game really turned in the last minute or so of the second quarter with your two goals. Can you describe basically how those two plays unfolded and how you felt that gave your team juice?

TUCKER WADE: Yeah. The 0-5 start, I'd rather hit them, but you just gotta keep playing. We trust each other, and I got a lot of trust in the guys around me to step up when I needed them to. So you hope to do your part.

Q. Can you run us through the sequence.

TUCKER WADE: Sequence, the first one I just tried to attack the middle. Second one I was hoping to get a screen shot with little time. Got a little lucky.

Q. Ryan, you stopped that first shot. Seemed like you



were seeing the ball well all day. Talk about your game.

RYAN CRODDICK: I thought from the first shot you can kind of tell how the game is going to go from there, it's going to come easy or be hard like it was last week. After that first shot I was kind of feeling it. The grass was bouncing pretty nice. And yeah.

Q. Nate, Ryan had 20 saves today. Him having that performance, does that surprise you at this point?

NATE KABIRI: It does not, no. Every day in practice he gives me a lot of trouble. But he makes me better. So I'm glad to have him as my goalie.

Q. Ryan, late third quarter on Duke's extra man, you pick off the pass there in the cage, start a fast break that gives you a goal. Duke seemed to have some momentum. They scored a couple minutes earlier. Describe that play and the lift that it gave your guys there. It looked like it really deflated Duke.

RYAN CRODDICK: Obviously (indiscernible) doesn't help us there. I was yelling at the guys this is the way they could get back, climb back into this game. I thought I could just make a play there, and I love coming out of the edge. These guys know from practice.

I think I got a jump on it, and, yeah, it was great.

Q. Tucker and Nate, you mentioned turnovers a little earlier. How much of a priority (indiscernible) did you feel like cutting those down allowed you guys to create a little separation?

NATE KABIRI: Yeah. We knew Duke was going to be a super physical team. You were going to have to move your feet on the perimeter. Yeah, those turnovers really weren't great. But we know that our superpower is ball movement. So just getting back to that is what helped.

TUCKER WADE: I felt like a lot of turnovers came from us not playing Princeton lacrosse. We're okay with turnovers if we feel like we're playing the right way, playing with each

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other, ball movement, throwing hard. So I think it was more the factor of that.

So that's what we tried to get back to, settle in, have our guys settle in to what we do day in, day out.

Q. Nate, can you describe how their defensive game plan compared to your expectations? Specifically, did you expect to be guarded by 27 as opposed to 13? And then separate from that, felt like you were able to get switched on a short stick pretty easily, especially in the first half.

NATE KABIRI: Yeah, no. I mentally prepared for whoever I was going to go up against, any of their defenders. They're all great defenders.

And I'd say that in terms of switches, we kind of found early that they were playing sides on a lot of our off-ball action. So tried to take advantage of that.

Q. For each of the players, Princeton's first trip to the Finals in 23 years. What does that mean to you guys to finally make it back to Memorial Day?

RYAN CRODDICK: It's awesome for the program as a whole. It's pretty cool on Monday they're honoring the 2001 team, 25th anniversary. We all came here to play two games, not one.

NATE KABIRI: Yeah, I'd just say it's a testament to all the great alumni that came before us and the culture they instilled in this program, and we're just trying to keep it going.

TUCKER WADE: Yeah, just trying to focus on the next game, get it done.

MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. Congratulations. What do you think was the pivotal sequence in that game?

MATT MADALON: I think the most emotional was probably the play Crod made (indiscernible). They just kind of get going offensively. I think Duke did such a good job early on, pressing out, pressing with Jason, stretching and pressing, being really physical, the physical team that they are.

Took a minute for us to settle in. Obviously Crod (indiscernible) won a couple of face-offs early. Still couldn't get a lead. Couldn't really put a figure on one pivotal moment. Croddick's play was really emotional. Trying to get the tide to turn and our offense playing a little more

consistently. We were down, what was it, ten turnovers in the first half, seven in the second, probably two (indiscernible) the game, so maybe five true ones. Not great, but better.

Q. Matt, along those lines, the 18 turnovers, what seems to be recipe for disaster. Duke is so physical, as you mentioned. How do you offset that today?

MATT MADALON: For us, I don't know exactly -- I don't know all of our 18 turnovers. Tucker did a really nice job of saying we're okay with turnovers as long as we're playing our style of lacrosse. I think you just grip it all tight. You can't give Duke too many chances. I think that's more frustrating than the turnovers. You're giving a really good team a lot of opportunities, probably too many.

Q. When you look at Ryan, obviously the saves stand out, but when you throw the pass in and the ground balls and the hitting off passes, to have that complete a guy back there making that much of a difference, how significant is it on a day like today?

MATT MADALON: I mean, look, we're really proud. I got a lot of gray hair because four years here. We keep getting better at clearing. We're 29 of 31. It's a part of the game, you don't want to turn the ball over. He's the backstop, he's the poise, and he really does control and do a heck of a job.

Q. Chad got the match-up against Charlie Johnson today. Two assists, I think. What did you see from him balancing that match-up within the offense?

MATT MADALON: Man, I thought 27 on Duke was awesome. Thought he did a good job playing Chad, got in, tied him up, got under his arms early. Chad had a couple too many turnovers early. Chad did a good job forcing down the stretch. 27 did a great job today.

Q. Coach, your thoughts on guiding the program back to the Final for the first time in 23 years?

MATT MADALON: I'm so proud. I'm so proud of seeing all of our alumni in the stands and everyone cheering, obviously the 25-year reunion of the 2001 team. To be able to do that with all the orange (indiscernible) is cool. I'm really so proud these guys get this opportunity.

Q. Were there any lessons from the '22 run that you employed this beak?

MATT MADALON: I kind of grabbed our guys midweek, our coaching staff, we just said, hey, look coming in '22 we're so happy to be here. This is a lot less of a surprise,



but it's extremely distracting. We gotta talk to you guys every half an hour. We got media, pictures, got everyone telling you how great you are. Got people reaching out for tickets.

There's a lot of distraction. I think the teams that are most locked in get it done throughout this weekend. That's what we tried to learn from '22, tried to stay internal as long as we could.

Q. Matt, with the number of longer possessions you guys were able to generate, particularly in the second half, did you feel them kind of wearing down a little bit as you guys kind of did your thing, passing well all, those things?

MATT MADALON: Maybe it's good game management by Coach Mitch. You put yourself up a handful coming out of the third quarter going into the fourth. We know there's a lot of time to close it. You can also chew clock by having really smart offensive possessions.

I think we turned the ball over around the 11-minute mark with 39 seconds left in our offense. That was one of our mistakes. We would have liked to manage that better. But Coach Mitchell did an outstanding job down the stretch.

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