

2026 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Monday, May 25, 2026
Charlottesville, Virginia, USA
Scott Stadium

Princeton Tigers
Coach Matt Madalon
Colin Burns

Chad Palumbo

Ryan Croddick

Finals Media Conference



matchups. And I think when we do all those things, good things happen.

CHAD PALUMBO: Just to reiterate that. You gotta rely on your principles more than any scout or anything like that. We just came out and we just trusted our ball movement. We trusted our spacing. We trusted our pick setting, and that's what sparked the run for us.

Q. Chad, Ryan made 33 saves in two games. He's the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. What's it like playing offense when you know you have him in cage?

CHAD PALUMBO: It's pretty nice. Ryan is my best friend. I know he's always in a good headspace going into the games, and he's holding it down down there for us. When Ryan is seeing the ball, this team feels unstoppable. I think he's the energy and the pulse of our entire defense.

Q. Ryan, from your standpoint after you fall behind 3-0 on, what did you see that your post defense was doing differently when they went to that zone?

RYAN CRODDICK: I think we prepared all year to go into the zone. We haven't had to use it much lately, but we had to trust in our guys. Zone sort of slows them down a bit, and they're a super athletic team. The game started to move a little slower, and it was very helpful for us.

Q. For Ryan and Chad, to kind of build off what Matt was saying earlier about having those six trophies in the office, how much did that fuel you, the idea of being able to add that legacy to your own careers?

RYAN CRODDICK: I think you saw all the fans out there, just years and years of Princeton, the long orange line. We can always count on those guys for anything. And it's super awesome to bring back a trophy to such a storied program.

CHAD PALUMBO: Yeah, we all call it the long orange line. You saw it. They were the rowdiest fans this weekend. They do everything for us. They help us a ton on and off the field. And I think through that 25-year drought or whatever it was, like our alums were as hungry as we

Princeton 16, Notre Dame 9

THE MODERATOR: All right. We welcome the 2026 NCAA Division I national champions Princeton Tigers to the podium. We have head coach Matt Madalon, Colin Burns, Ryan Croddick and Chad Palumbo. We'll take an opening statement from Coach and then open it up for questions for the players and then bring back questions for Coach.

MATT MADALON: Extremely proud of this crew. But I don't know. To reflect on it quickly in terms of opening statement, we walk into an office with six National Championship trophies every day. It reminds us we're at a place where it can be done. So it's extremely motivating.

You see those teams, especially the 2001 team here today. We've always termed it like forever teams, those teams that win championships stay together forever, 25-year reunions and so on. That's what these guys get to do now which we're most proud of. Thank you.

Q. For both Colin and Chad, what did you manage to do in that run there after going down 3-0 on and what sort of fueled that?

COLIN BURNS: It was a quick turnaround with two games in three days. Coach Mitchell was harping yesterday on not putting in anything new, but just playing on our principles that we've gone overall year. And he really talked about how it's all about us.

So we just focused on doing us well, which is good spacing and ball movement and trusting each other and winning

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were, and they're always willing to help and support us however possible.

Q. Colin, you've obviously played with Nate a lot. You got a heck of a matchup today. Still managed to score a goal (indiscernible) a couple of assists. What would your case be as he is one of the five Tewaaronon finalists?

COLIN BURNS: Nate is so awesome because he's your best player but he never makes it about himself. He doesn't turn the ball over really. He plays within the offense. He's unselfish. He knows that he's going to have the number one defenseman on him every game, and he doesn't make it about himself. He doesn't care about getting his. He just wants the team to win. And I think that's what makes him so special.

He's an unbelievable player, and I think his point-to-turnover ratio is awesome, and he's the best player on the best team. So why not win the Tewaaronon for that reason?

Q. Chad, what was your feeling like when you heeded that ball out into the stands there when the clock hit triple zeros?

CHAD PALUMBO: Yeah, it was pretty surreal. That's a moment that you kind of dream about your whole life. Kind of when we realized that we were going to win it, it was just unbelievable. I don't think there's words really to describe that moment.

MODERATOR: Thanks, gentlemen. All right. We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. Matt, when you look at what this group managed to do, and I know we talked in the preseason about how there was belief there that it could be done, did that ever waver with you guys at any point, whether it was early in the season or down 3-0?

MATT MADALON: This wasn't a group that really looked too far ahead. I think we kind of felt pretty good coming into the preseason and then got humbled very quickly, and I think that humbling kind of put us in the mindset of kind of one day at a time, one week at a time, and kind of fall back on our seniors and our leadership in terms of those moments.

I think they just kind of stayed humble throughout the year, tried to get better every single week, tried to learn and grow within our systems, and obviously prevailed at the end. Thrilled to be here.

Q. Chad I think assisted or scored your first three goals after that Notre Dame 3-0 run. 4 and 1 today. What has coaching Chad Palumbo been like over the last four years.

MATT MADALON: He's our emotional leader. He's one of our team captains. His love for the game is what we've kind of always based our recruiting around. You want to really find guys that truly love this thing and love their craft and love being a great teammate. And he truly embodies that. So outside all the special things he does on the field, that's what makes him really different.

Q. May I ask you about that timeout 3-0 down and also going into the zone.

MATT MADALON: You know what, they came out, we actually thought we had a pretty good game plan in terms of kind of gauging their athleticism and speed. They just came out with more pop than we were expecting. They were getting too close to Croddick, the looks were too clean.

So we knew we had it in our back pocket. We were primarily going to try to zone the second line. But then we decided to slow the game down, and it took a minute. When you go to zone, it kind of takes the athleticism away from a unit and makes them really try to execute. And then you got Crod backstopping you. So we were able to manufacture some stops, started chipping away and tilt the field.

Q. I was wondering what you think the significance of being the first NCAA team championship for any sport, Princeton sport since 2012, and then specifically for men's lacrosse since 2001?

MATT MADALON: You know, Princeton is a very, very successful athletic department. So that's actually shocking. We're obviously really proud. Look, we have great leadership in our department. We have great leadership within the program, and great group of guys.

So just to be able to put it all together reminds everyone on campus that it can be done at the highest level and done the right way with high academic guys. So we're really proud of that.

Love having the hometown in the house.

Q. May I ask you about the ground balls. 18-3 at the end of the first quarter. You had a significant advantage for most if not the whole game. What would you attribute that to?

MATT MADALON: Probably hard work all year. We always kind of preach that. We break huddles on GBs a lot. As not exciting as that sounds, it is the most important part of the game. I think our guys really focused on that. You're playing on a surface you're unfamiliar with, so you gotta focus on those moments, and I think that did help us tilt the field as well.

Q. I know you value the consistency of having been in the tournament the last five years, having gotten to the quarterfinals a bunch of times, but to get to the top after the last seven, eight, nine years, how meaningful is that for the program, for you and for everybody involved?

MATT MADALON: You know, for the program we always recruited these guys with the hopes and dreams that if you put it all together, you loved each other, you train the right way, you live your life the right way and balance it, you'd have an opportunity. That obviously makes me the most proud. It's a place where we're going to continue to try to do it.

Q. After the game you said that Ryan Croddick is a goalie you want to see at the next level. What makes him have the most outstanding performance and one you want to see after this?

MATT MADALON: I mean, I'll speak about him forever. Just size, twitchiness, eye-hand, ball control. He's, again, one of the best I've been around. The pro games is hard to crack into. There aren't that many pro teams. There are a lot of great goalies. But he should be up there. He's in those ranks.

Q. I know the focus is absolutely on today, but what does it mean to be returning with so many of the key players from this season and having a really great opportunity to go back to back next year?

MATT MADALON: It's really exciting. You lose Palumbo and Dunphey on offense in terms of the top six, top nine, obviously Meeks and Crod walking out and I think obviously our two poles.

I don't think Friedman and Kistler got enough credit throughout the year. They kind of just did their job. You never write about them. You never hear about them. That's the best attribute of a defenseman. Means he didn't make too many mistakes.

We'll very much miss those guys, and we're thrilled to get right back to work. It will be a hungry group.

Q. What did you think of having championship

weekend on a college campus?

MATT MADALON: I loved it. I love the big football stadiums. It's always a dream. I came down here when I was eight or nine years old and watched the championship down here. I think I stayed in the same place we did. Full-circle moment.

You see all these little kids, signing autographs, and a handful of our captains are like, hey, stay focused, really try to eliminate the distractions. You gotta embrace that. It's the future of our sport. Our guys did a good job with that. It was a really cool experience.

Thank you for the coverage all year, guys. I appreciate it. You treat our program very well. Thank you.

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