

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - UC San Diego vs Michigan

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Denver, Colorado, USA

Ball Arena

**UC San Diego Tritons**

**Coach Eric Olen**

**Tyler McGhie**

**Hayden Gray**

Media Conference

Michigan 68, UCSD 65

THE MODERATOR: Coach, some comments on tonight's game.

ERIC OLEN: Start with congratulations to Michigan. Really good basketball team. Talented players. Very well-coached. Did lots of things that gave us problems, especially in the first half. So congrats to them.

Proud of my team's effort. Thought our guys continued to fight. Obviously great response to a disappointing first half. Thought we played a little more the way we wanted to play in the second half, gave ourselves a chance.

Unfortunately just came up a couple plays short.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Tyler, one thing that's jumped off the squad from watching you play this past year is how much fun you guys have playing together. Talk about what that has meant to you this year.**

TYLER MCGHIE: Yeah, I mean, this team is obviously special. 30 wins in a season. It doesn't happen by surprise. Yeah, I mean, just the confidence that these dudes instill in me. I mean, 3-15 from three and I have the ball with 10 seconds left.

Just a great team to be around on and off the court. I'm a fifth-year. I've been on some pretty good teams. This one is definitely the most special team I've ever been on.



**Q. Hayden, 38 minutes, basically the whole game. You were there when things were rough in the first half and when you came roaring back in the second half. What did that run feel like? How did you instill confidence into the team?**

HAYDEN GRAY: Yeah, 38 minutes at elevation, I was definitely feeling it, I'm not going to lie. But, I mean, we knew we were going to make a run. We always make a run.

But we just started off too slow. Like, we just put ourselves in a hole. Credit to them, like they had a great game plan going into it. They're well-coached, got good players.

But yeah, we knew we were going to make our run. We had a shot, man. We had a shot at the end. Put it in our best player's hands. Hit the back of the rim. It is what it is, man.

Yeah, I've had so much fun this year. It was a blessing to be able to play here in front of all those fans, for sure.

**Q. Tyler, can you take us through the last play. Did you get the look you wanted?**

TYLER MCGHIE: Yeah, I mean, down the stretch we were hunting the big men. Yeah, I think I got the shot I wanted. Step back going left. I thought it was in. Hit the back. Couldn't believe it. I still can't believe it.

It's a great team. Yeah, it was great.

**Q. The atmosphere on campus has been electric. Everyone has been following this team. What does it mean, especially compared to last year, to have so much fan support this year?**

HAYDEN GRAY: It's been real cool just to see, like, the culture kind of shifting around campus. Big shout-out to KSDT Sports. They kind of started that wave. They kind of brought that culture onto campus. Shout-out to them.

THE MODERATOR: We'll dismiss the student-athletes at this time. Thank you, guys.

Questions for the coach.



**Q. Some of your key guys probably played their last game for the school. What was your message to them following the game?**

ERIC OLEN: I like that it's only likely that they've only played their last game because you never know what's going to happen.

Yeah, we shared some moments in the locker room. Seasons are hard when they finish. I'll keep the specifics between us.

Just trying to express how much we appreciate what they've done for all of us in the room and our program. Yeah, really proud of those guys.

**Q. You've been here since 2004. 2017, the loss against Chico State. 2020 also was a tough ending. You could have gone to the national championship that year. This year, the way it ended was unbelievable. You seem to be doing well emotionally. What are the emotions like for yourself understanding what you've accomplished? Is it dawning on you how incredible this season has been?**

ERIC OLEN: I can always count on you to reach back into the archives for some 2017 UCSD-Chico State box scores (smiling).

Seasons are hard when they finish. Everyone is emotional in the locker room. I don't think I have a full appreciation for what the last six months has done. It's a special group. I told those guys it's been the best basketball experience of my life.

I just really appreciate everything they've done for us.

**Q. Can you take us through the last play there. Decision not to call a timeout. What were you hoping to get? Why did you decide to go for a three?**

ERIC OLEN: The way Ty was playing, we knew we weren't going to call timeout to say get the ball to Ty, let him go one on one, didn't feel necessary. I try not to do that in those moments. I try not to over-coach them.

I think everyone on our team knew exactly what we were trying to do. We got the switch we wanted, the matchup we wanted, the guy we wanted with the ball. I know Ty felt like it was in, but I also thought it was pretty good defense from Wolf.

He's capable of making those. He's been making shots like that, you saw the four or five minutes before what he

can do. When he gets going like that, we try to get him the right matchups and let him go to work.

We would have made that same decision down three, down two. We were going to do the same thing. If he missed one of those free throws, we would have run it down and let Ty decide it on a make or miss.

A lot of confidence in those guys, Ty in those moments. If I could do it again, I'd do it the same way.

**Q. The other day Dusty May talked about how Power Five teams play tight down the stretch when they're playing an underdog. Did you feel you get a little bit looser as you tightened the game up, made that run?**

ERIC OLEN: I think we just found our rhythm. Maybe we're saying the same thing. I thought we were a little tight early. We weren't great early obviously. We dug a little hole. But we had free throws. We had some shots at the rim, could have been closer. Those things happen every game.

I did think the nerves maybe affected us early in the game. I also think I didn't do a great job of getting those guys in the right situations. I thought they had a good defensive game plan. They forced us into a lot of one on one. That's not really how we try to play. We have good players that can play one on one. We pick our spots with that. They did a nice job of getting us into those situations. I didn't think our spacing was great in the first half.

I think they deserve a lot of credit. We're playing a good team. It's not just about us.

I just thought we found our rhythm, and we played more of the way that honestly we've been playing all year. I was glad that we found that and gave ourselves an opportunity.

**Q. How proud are you of this team for managing with foul trouble and come back late?**

ERIC OLEN: That's part of it. We're pretty aggressive playing guys with fouls. I try not to foul 'em out. Couple of those guys took care of that on their own tonight.

It's a physical game. Big team. Great size, great players. They pose some challenges there.

But yeah, I mean, proud of our group overall. Appreciated the fight from them. They never give up. Like Hayden said, they always think they have a run coming. More often than not, they're right.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time, coach.

