

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Michigan vs Auburn

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

State Farm Arena

**Michigan Wolverines**

**Tre Donaldson**

**Vladislav Goldin**

**Danny Wolf**

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference



**maybe just a scouting report or statistics?**

TRE DONALDSON: I mean, 100 percent. I was there for two years, so I know how it operates, I know how everything runs. When you're around people for so long, you catch on to what they do for sure. I definitely have tried to help as much as I can with that aspect just to give us our best chance to win.

**Q. Vlad, you told us before the season that you thought this team had championship DNA, that you could make a run. What made you so confident after being with these guys for just a few weeks?**

VLADISLAV GOLDIN: It's just like, I don't know, the connection with the guys, their work ethic, like all the small things that not many people can see. You only can see it only when you work with them. That's something that I think I was able to see.

**Q. For Danny, Coach May was in here saying, when they were looking at you on film, they wanted to see you against high major athletes on film, get some opinions before deciding whether to bring you to Michigan. I was curious, just in your thought process, how much did that factor into wanting to test yourself at the Big Ten level, or did what you did against Auburn last year in the tournament sort of prove that for you? Just what was your motivating factor was for trying to play at this level?**

DANNY WOLF: Yeah, obviously I'm sure the game they analyzed most was probably the Auburn game, just the best look for them. Yeah, we won the game, and I had a solid game. I mean, it started before that.

It was just after the season my family and I just knew I needed to not only prove myself against caliber guys such as the Auburns, the Texas A&Ms, Big Ten competition. And it was just challenging myself at practice every day and getting to go against arguably one the best centers in the country every day and we have a bunch of other frontcourt guys to challenge me.

I knew for what I needed and what I wanted for my basketball career, I needed to do that and make that step up. In that Auburn game, I held my own pretty well. We

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with the student-athletes.

**Q. Tre, matching up against your old team. Has this been a game that's been circled on your calendar since the transfer?**

TRE DONALDSON: I wouldn't say it's circled. The likelihood of this happening wasn't really high, so I mean just the opportunity is a blessing, and I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. Vlad, just asked your coach about the number of collisions you get into in a game, whether it's screening, rebounding, playing defense or offense. He said maybe you slip more screens and avoid contact earlier in a game to save it for later. Do you think that's the case? But kind of talk about you embracing a high contact playing style.**

VLADISLAV GOLDIN: We know we're one of the most physical teams, so we just have to like adjust and play as physical as they are. But we're going to see how they defend, how they play, and if I need to slip some screens, I'm going to slip some screens, but if they're not going to switch and we're just going to get a couple hits.

**Q. Tre, just about the Auburn thing again, is there something -- because you have a very personal connection with them, some intel, some inside knowledge that you can share with the coaches as far as their player tendencies, anything that goes beyond**



were able to come away with a win.

Yeah, it was more so to just challenge myself and get myself better to prove myself, I would say.

**Q. My question is for Vlad. Vlad, Dusty mentioned that the key to this team gelling quickly was relationships and you guys being like minded. Would you say there was a certain point this season where it all clicked and you guys realized, yeah, we can actually win this thing?**

VLADISLAV GOLDIN: It's been happening all season. It doesn't happen in one day. It's like routine like day by day, and it's just like getting better and better and better. Then one day you just look back and you might say it's clicking, but it's been a long process.

**Q. For any of you guys, I know you've got to beat Auburn first, but the opportunity to play Michigan State, a rival for a third time, get some revenge, would you relish that opportunity, or it doesn't matter to you?**

TRE DONALDSON: As a team, we're not really worried about what's next for us. We've got to take care of the task at hand. Then if we're able to take care of the task at hand, we'll deal with whatever's ahead.

**Q. Tre, as far as Auburn football, I was curious how close you came to playing Auburn football. Since your uncle played Auburn football, who will he be cheering for?**

TRE DONALDSON: That's crazy that you knew that. Not many people really know that my uncle played at Auburn.

I was close. I was extremely close to it becoming a reality because my basketball recruitment started so late, and the connection I had with the Auburn football staff, I really had a chance at playing there.

But basketball is what I wanted to do. That's why I took that route. But I was extremely close.

To the second part of your question to do with my uncle, my uncle is going to be here, and he will be cheering for Michigan.

**Q. Danny, you guys were -- you found different ways to win in the first two games. What was it, five games in nine days or something when you were playing Texas, physical game, down by 10 in the second half. Do you guys enjoy the role, I guess, of being underdogs or having just sort of a lot of things not going your way and finding a way to win? Do you**

**guys relish that kind of role?**

DANNY WOLF: I think it started earlier in the season, Michigan the prior year did not live up to Michigan standards. Obviously there were injuries and things of that nature.

When we came together in the summer, we knew what we were capable of, and we knew what we wanted to get Michigan basketball back to. So I guess from that perspective we had that underdog mentality just given that the expectations weren't that high because of the prior year.

As soon as we started playing and meshing, we knew that we weren't really underdogs at that point because we had such a high level team and high level locker room and character. We had a pretty good regular season, and we were in the race for a Big Ten title. Then that kind of slipped out of our fingers.

Then from a public standpoint, our team kind of -- everyone thought that we lost track, and they wrote the 'ship off. We knew what we were capable of. We never lost faith in each other or trust in each other. Obviously we were looked at as underdogs in the Big Ten tournament given what happened the previous games. Even in this tournament, everyone thought UCSD was going to win, and a lot of people thought Texas A&M was going to win.

We just try to block out the outside noise and realize that people who have those opinions don't have trust in us or have impact on us. We certainly play with a chip on our shoulder.

**Q. The transfer portal is open right now. I know maybe it's not something any of you guys are exploring, but some of your teammates may be. Just a player's perspective on the fact that those decisions have to be made while the season is still happening?**

DANNY WOLF: Obviously there was news last week about players on our team entering the portal. Times are changing now. It's college basketball is just going to such a unique and different place than what anyone is used to.

I don't want to speak to my thoughts on the portal being open during March Madness when teams are playing. I think it's just -- I just -- from a perspective of a coach that's still coaching, it's a unique position to be in because you have to prepare for the biggest game of the year while also not getting behind the eight ball.

I don't really know what coaches are doing in terms of the portal, and that's not for us to worry about. We rock with

the guys we have, and everyone is still bought in. Things unfolded in ways that weren't expected last week. We really just didn't put much thought into it and tried and look past it.

We have the biggest game of the year tomorrow night, and I don't think anyone on our team and I don't think any one of our coaches are going to be worrying about the portal the next 24 hours.

**Q. Danny, you talked a little bit about the Auburn game last year already, but what are the first things that come to mind for you when you think about that game? And what do you remember about the matchup with Johni Broome?**

DANNY WOLF: Obviously it was an unbelievable game for Yale. I want to think it was one of the highlights of my basketball career, up-and-down game. We had a clear underdog mentality that game, but we knew how good we were and we knew what we were capable of.

I think that's the same mentality this year although not as big of an underdog type mentality.

Yeah, then from a matchup perspective, they started Johni at the five, and Cardwell came off the bench, so that was my matchup. I thought I held my own, but I know that a year later I'm a far different player than I was last year. Now they obviously start Johni and Dylan in arguably one of the best frontcourts in the country.

I like to think that our frontcourt room is one of the best frontcourts in the country as well. I know we're all really excited for the opportunity, and it's not often that you get two elite frontcourts going at it this late in the season.

For myself, Vlad, Will, we're all very excited.

**Q. Wanted to ask Danny and Tre, you guys matched up just last year in the NCAA Tournament in that first round game. Obviously Danny might have a bit more of fond memories than Tre in that one. Wanted to ask about was there anything in particular you guys noticed about playing each other for the first time, and what do you think each guy will bring to the table now that you're both on the same side trying to beat Auburn?**

DANNY WOLF: I was actually thinking about this last night, and I'd never tell Tre this, but we were watching film as a team before the tournament, we were watching film from the SEC Tournament, and there wasn't a huge -- because Tre came off the bench, and there wasn't that big of an emphasis placed on Tre. But when we saw the

highlights, we all were like looking around and being -- I don't want to use bad words, but it was like, oh, crap, this kid can go.

I was actually thinking about this last night because I forget which game it was in the SEC Tournament, but I think he had 19 points or something. He looked like a stud. So from the moment that Michigan was telling me that they were recruiting him in the portal, when I kind of had an idea as to where I was going, I knew it was a kid I wanted to play with. You guys have kind of gotten a glimpse of that these last few weeks as to just the high level player he is.

Yeah, that's what I'll say about that.

**Q. Vlad, back in the day, you played at the U18 European Championship with great guys like Viktor and against great players like Franz, Santana, Augustas and Moussa. I was curious how that experience helps you for something like this for how you have to play great players all the way and how that compares to the NCAA Tournament.**

VLADISLAV GOLDIN: I mean it's a pretty similar environment when you play a tournament, one game, if you win, you play next. If you don't win, you obviously go home.

We've been playing against great players all year long, so it's not something that we haven't seen before.

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