

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Holy Cross vs Michigan

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Crisler Center

## Holy Cross Crusaders

**Candice Green**

**Megan Cahalan**

**Kaitlyn Flanagan**

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. You guys just came off of a big tournament victory and both of you had All Tournament -- All Patriot League tournament honors. How has that momentum kind of helped you prepare for this moment against Michigan tomorrow?**

MEGAN CAHALAN: Yeah, obviously, it was really good momentum coming into here. Obviously, we've been blessed to be able to be here three times, so we kind of know how the process works. We know how good these teams are. We've played against really good competition in our past four years, so obviously having a really good -- great game -- all four seniors had a really great game against Lehigh in the championship, so I think just that momentum, we're ready to come here and compete.

**Q. There's been a ton of buzz here about how much women's basketball has really grown over the last few years, specifically women's basketball, and it's really exciting to see you guys here at this stage alongside another great Michigan team. Could you talk a little bit about how encouraging it is to see how the game has grown, throughout your college careers especially?**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: Definitely. I think we've definitely seen it, like you said, grow over even just our four years, so the amount of growth in such a short amount of time is really crazy. Being a part of the March Madness tournament, like, we kind of get to see that firsthand. We're such a small part, I think, of what's happened. Some of these bigger names -- bigger schools have really



taken the charge with that. But to be a part of it, even in a small way, I think we're really grateful for it and to be able to witness it firsthand has been so, so cool. Just like the support that we've got and even at our school, at Holy Cross, has been amazing over the last four years.

**Q. Curious what the reaction was like when you found out that you would be facing Michigan, and then kind of what the mindset's been like trying to stop an offensive Juggernaut like them.**

MEGAN CAHALAN: Yeah, we were all really excited. Our reaction video, I think, is posted on our page. But we were all really excited. It's a new place for us to go. I think it was between here and Iowa, we knew. So obviously being able to come to a new place has been super exciting.

We treat it like every other game, right? Their players, we're scouting, we're doing our best to just not look at it as the 15 seed versus 2 seed and just look at it as another basketball game. I think that luckily, like I've said before, we have a ton of experience playing these big teams, so it's not something that's overwhelming us. We're just taking it one step at a time, focusing on our scout, and just seeing -- yeah, just not being overwhelmed by the pressure right now.

**Q. Michigan has been especially heralded for its press. How have you guys been getting ready to face that?**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: We watched clips right before we got on the bus here of the press. It's definitely something we've been emphasizing. They have a lot of length, they're super aggressive, obviously, very athletic. So it's something that we're working on. Our coaches are doing a good job of prepping us. We're having six people on the court pressing us, just trying to emulate it as best as we can.

But nothing's like the real deal, so I think it's going to be an adjustment for sure in the game, but we're trying to, I think, make that adjustment period as small as possible with our preparation so we can adjust to it quickly in game.



**Q. You guys have touched on the experience of being in March Madness before. You're both seniors. You're led by a strong senior core group. What does having the experience of playing in March Madness together in the past bring to you guys to feel more prepared going in this time?**

MEGAN CAHALAN: Yeah, like I mentioned before, I think one of the biggest thing is that we're not overwhelmed by the moment. We came in here -- we played a great Maryland team when we were freshmen that liked to press the entire game, so we're used to that length, we're used to that pressure. Just playing Iowa, it was, I think, the most-watched game at that time.

So I think just, like, all those little things that we've already dealt with before is kind of just helping us not be overwhelmed and not feel the pressure of these types of games. Obviously, we have such a strong core of seniors that have been through a lot together. So, yeah, it's just experience really matters in these types of tournaments and at this time of March, so, yeah.

**Q. Kaitlyn, I'm going to get a little sappy with you. You are a thousand-point scorer, you've had 400-plus career assists, you're the team captain, you were just named Patriot League MVP, you made March Madness three of the four years you've been at Holy Cross, you've started every single one of the 130 games that you played in a Crusader uniform. Could you just reflect for a little bit for us right now about what all of that means to you as you stand on the pinnacle of potentially your greatest achievement yet?**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: Yeah, I mean, hearing that out loud is kind of crazy. I think that I'm just -- like, in reflecting -- and I've been doing a lot of reflecting with Senior Night at the end of the year and then obviously winning the Patriot League this year. So a lot of reflection happens with that, just with people, you know, family, friends coming up. My family has come to a lot more games this senior year, so I think it's meant a lot more to them, just because they know it's kind of dwindling, my time in college. In reflecting, the word that comes to mind is grateful. I think that I'm grateful for young me for picking Holy Cross. I feel like I have such a great community here. I have the best coaches, the best teammates, and so I think I'm just really grateful for coming here.

**Q. How do you guys beat Michigan tomorrow night? What do you do to win?**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: You know, we mentioned the press. The press is going to be tough to beat. If we can handle the press and limit our turnovers in the press, that

will be a big step, I think, for us.

Candice, our coach, is talking about we're not going to be able to set the pace, but I think managing pace is going to be big for us as well. We're going to have to play to their speed and their style, but if we can know once we get the ball, is this a good time to push the ball or is this a good time, hey, we really need to slow it down and get a great possession right now, that's going to be huge.

Obviously, they have great players, great guard play. They have Ashley Sof, who actually was in the Patriot League with us, went to Meg's high school, right? So we know her well. In the half court defense, it's going to be knowing personnel for us. If we can really hone in on the scout that we've done all year and really being good at knowing personnel, if we can put those things together in a really, really good way, that gives us a shot to be in the game at the end, I think.

**Q. For you guys getting the chance to play in two March Madnesses prior to this and maybe looking up to some of the seniors, the upperclassmen above you, now getting to be in this position as seniors yourselves and kind of inspiring those freshmen and sophomores below you guys, how rewarding is it kind of being on the other side of that?**

MEGAN CAHALAN: Yeah, I can talk a little bit about this because I was more on the bench my sophomore year when we played at Iowa. So I think just their attitudes towards the game. Like, when we played at Iowa, I remember Bronagh Power-Cassidy, Janelle Allen, and Cara McCormack, like, they competed with Iowa for 40 minutes. It was definitely a game.

So I think just having that perspective and seeing them and their attitudes towards the game has kind of helped us come in and know that we can compete in these types of games. And obviously, we try to put that on our younger players and inspire them to hopefully continue the tradition of coming to March Madness and competing with these big teams.

But, yeah, it's very interesting for me, and I'm very grateful to now be on the other side of that, hopefully setting the tone for those underclassmen because I know I was once that underclassmen looking up to my seniors.

**Q. Meg, playing in high school with Ashley against her at Bucknell to now suiting up against each other in March Madness, what's that feeling like? And could you describe how you guys have gone against each other in styles of play?**

MEGAN CAHALAN: Yeah, I just think back to our high school days. We competed against each other every single day in high school. Then, obviously, when I found out she was going to Bucknell, I was super excited to keep that energy going. And then every summer, every time we're at home for fall, Christmas, anything, we're always playing pickup against each other.

So it's just a sense of familiarity on the court on such a big stage that I'm really grateful for. We have a ton of my high school alumni in this tournament. I know we have alumni Zoe Brooks playing at NC State right now. She's here.

So it is just a sense of familiarity that I'm really grateful for because, obviously, it can feel like such a big stage. But when I go out there and I know my matchup is Ashley Sofilkanch, it puts me a little bit more at ease because I've been playing against her since I was 12. So, yeah, I'm extremely grateful and I'm super excited to see her at some point. But, yeah.

**Q. I know she was an assistant with you guys in 2023, 2024, but this is Candice Green's first March Madness as head coach for you guys. Talk about what it's been like being under her direct leadership and how -- just kind of this experience getting to play for her.**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: Yeah, anyone who asks me, I'll tell them Candice is the best. She's not only someone that's really relatable to her players and is a great leader in that sense, but she also just knows the game really well. She takes so much pride in that film and the scout and setting up a good defensive scheme, and on top of that being able to adjust. She's not stubborn with her scheme, right? If something's not working in the game, we're big on trying to adjust.

So those two things, sometimes you can find a coach who is really good at one and not as great at the other, and she's great at both. So I think having a leader like that, it just trickles down, and I think everybody really buys into her system and her way of playing and her way of trying to win. Yeah, she's great. I can't say enough good things about Candice. I'm really happy that her first year officially as head coach, we were able to be so successful -- not only, like, for our seniors, but for her. I think that was also a big thing that we all talked about is we wanted to win also for her. When you have a coach that you want to win for, you're going to be successful.

**Q. What message would you like to send directly to Holy Cross current students, alumni, faculty, everybody that's watching you excited to watch you tomorrow?**

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: What you got?

MEGAN CAHALAN: I would say we're ready to compete, so be ready to show out. Yeah, one of the biggest reasons we won against Lehigh was that Holy Cross support and everybody that came out. So, yeah, just continuing that same support for us is going to be huge.

**Q. How would you describe each other's styles of play and just overall the biggest strengths of your team?**

MEGAN CAHALAN: I mean, as mentioned, she's been our starting point guard since she was a freshman and just her leadership is something that I cannot speak enough about. We've talked about it before. She's definitely our coach on the court, and just her calmness and her ability to just know the game is something that I've never seen before, something that I've never played with.

I've always said, I never want to be on the court without Kaitlyn because I just know she always has my back and, yeah, just her leadership for the last four years has been incredible.

KAITLYN FLANAGAN: Meg is super calm, super confident, and also consistent for us, and I think that her being that consistency for us this entire year is something that we really needed. I think all of our -- everybody on our team brings something different, and that has been what has made her such a great leader, not only the way that she connects with our team, but, like, her consistency on the court. She's never one to shy away from taking a big shot, even if there's pressure on it. She's okay with being the one that misses that big shot. But she's also usually making it. So that I think sums up Meg's game pretty well.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse the student-athletes and we'll then come back with Coach.

(Pause.)

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll take questions for Coach.

**Q. This Holy Cross team is limiting opponents to less than 57 points a night. That is good for 19th in the country. Just a testament to the intensity and pace that you guys play with. On the other hand, this Michigan team is top 10 in the country in scoring, they play an amazing press. Kaitlyn kind of -- you know, she gave us a little bit of an insight into the practice, but how are you planning on playing at your pace to try and control this game best you can?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, it's a great question, right? We

play great defense. They play great offense. Obviously, they've got a lot of talent on that team and they play fast. So for us, we talk about -- it's going to be hard for us to control the pace. For us, it's just going to be managing, right? And then also, it's understanding they're going to turn us over. It's how do we respond to those turnovers, how do we not let them bunch up, and basically just how do we keep our composure. That's going to be a big thing for us tomorrow.

I think we have a little advantage in a sense that we have seniors who have been in moments like these. But obviously, playing against somebody who plays like that is -- it's going to be a surprise, right? It's going to be a little bit unknown.

**Q. I was just kind of curious, I guess, a little bit about, like, sort of the game plan tomorrow against Michigan and sort of like how you're sort of hoping to defend such a talented offensive team.**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, we're going to have to come ready. They've got two All Big Ten members, right? They've got an All-American, Sofilkanich, we know her, right? Patriot League post player -- Player of the Year.

So we're going to have to pressure the ball, keep people in front. Our help in our rotation is going to have to be so next level, so next level. They got a lot of talent. And then for us, it's just going to be hard for us on the glass to finish plays. We're just going to have to play elite defense. And you know what? We're also just going to have to stop 'em maybe one or two times. You know what I mean? We're not going to get every rebound, especially when you're playing rotation double basketball.

So we're going to talk a lot about getting second stops, that kind of thing. But, yeah, it's going to be a challenge for us, but you never know.

**Q. We got the chance to speak with you after the Patriot League championships on Sunday, and while you were obviously elated, you also mentioned that Holy Cross had really struggled in the third quarters of these games and that you were not satisfied with the way they were turning the ball over and the way they were shooting the three ball. What have you been able to do in practice in order to counter some of those concerns?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, for us, it's hard, especially this late in the season, right? You kind of are who you are. So a big thing we've been talking about is finding another way to make up for it. We're turning the ball over, then crash harder. Play better defense, rebound better. But I would

say in practice, it's, hey, get more shots and do more decision-making drills. That's really all you can do. Other than that, it's just, hey, next play, right? Yeah.

**Q. A lot of times in Michigan's losses what their opponents have been able to contain is those second-chance points and just their general presence in the paint. How are you guys going to be looking to do that tomorrow?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, we're going to have to try to find a way to match their physicality. Obviously, you're dealing with a different type of athlete over there. But for us, it's just focus, go hit somebody, push somebody back, and then most importantly we need all five down there. No one can leak out.

Yeah, it's going to be a challenge for us. That's probably the biggest thing we're talking about, other than not turning the ball over, but how do you contain a team like that on the glass, yeah.

**Q. Your kids that were just up here talked about winning the championship in the Patriot League and wanting to win it for you as well as themselves. I just want to hear what you think about your group of kids that you've gotten to coach these last couple of years.**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, they're just a special group. Let me tell you something. Talk about, each one of those kids brings something different and my love for them goes so beyond basketball. They set standards for us, they come in and work hard, they hold people accountable, they love each other, right? There's just so many different things that they do down the line. They care about the game as much as we do as coaches.

We come up with scouts, and I've been on teams where it's like, oh, I got to test you, I got to do all these things, right, to make sure that you're putting in the work. These are the kind of kids that are like, Coach, what game should I watch? So just dealing with that level of dedication and care is really special for me. And then they're also fun to be around.

**Q. In big games like this with the serious disparity between the rankings, there are oftentimes where I feel that players that are not as well-known on a Holy Cross roster, for example, could be the unsung hero of the game. Could you talk maybe about some players that you think have matchups that they could exploit? Maybe like a Simone Foreman or someone along that line that maybe is not as familiar to a Michigan as someone like Kaitlyn or Meg.**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, that's a great question. I think Mary Donnelly is somebody that comes to mind. I mean, she's somebody that every time we're on this stage has competed and played really well. I mean, Meg, she's battled Sofilkanich here for almost eight years, right, because they played high school ball together. So she's got some familiarity there. But, yeah, I could see those two having a chance, yeah.

**Q. You haven't lost in over a month now. Just that momentum coming into this game, along with the tournament win and the fact that you have had, like, less rest, right, you guys are still kind of warm in a sense comparatively to this Michigan team that hasn't played in two weeks. How do you think that plays to your advantage here?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean I think it plays a little advantage, right. We're going to get on the court, we're going to have a little bit, probably a little bit more legs to start. But this is a Michigan team that's been playing fast all year. So I imagine they will be ready to go pretty quickly. But I think for our team we talk about it, 40 minutes sometimes can seem a little daunting, we're just going to take it one minute at a time, yeah.

**Q. We've talked about Kaitlyn and Meg began a little briefly, but could you please speak to the, to their strengths as individuals and what they bring to your roster.**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean they're a dynamic duo, they're our captains. Meg has a lot of strengths, she's been through a lot. She kind of brings this energy, this fun, this smile, this arm around your shoulder, how you doing. And then Flanny brings intensity, she brings accountability. Sometimes she's yelling in the huddle a little bit more than I am. So, yeah, I think they complement each other well.

**Q. I see you wearing the We All We Got sweatshirt. I was kind of curious why that message is so important to you and how you've been putting it into practice the last couple days heading into tomorrow's matchup?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, unfortunately, we have a lot of Pats fans on our team, so -- (laughing). No, but, one of our assistants, Coach Cat, she brought it up to start playoffs. And I think for us it's just, we've had a very up-and-down year. We've gone through our troubles, we've gone through our adversity, and at the end of the day we are all we got, you know what I mean. And it is all we need. I'm just happy, a big message I think for our group is, even through the bad times, it's been fun with this group, you know? And, yeah, we're just all we have yeah.

**Q. Michigan's a good team, but they're a very young team, whereas your team does bring in a lot of experience including in March. So how do you think that's going to help you guys tomorrow?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean, I think for us we're hoping -- it's obviously a big margin, right, the gap is big. We're just hoping any kind of leadership, any type of composure, any type of physicality we can bring, that can close that gap, right. But, yeah, I think our seniors have that experience, they have been on this stage, and hopefully they can help lead our younger ones.

**Q. Curious too how you sort of have seen Kaitlyn specifically develop over the course of the last couple seasons. Not just on the court, but also sort of as a leader off of it as well.**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean she's somebody that used to be pretty quiet, kept to herself, kind of probably felt a lot of things, but didn't feel like she was probably the one to say them. So I've seen her just, you know, her communication really step up. Her work ethic has always been amazing. Her attention to detail has been amazing. But I think it's her voice is the biggest thing I've seen grow over these last three years with her.

**Q. For those less familiar with your team, what style of play on the court does Holy Cross basketball look like at its best?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean at its best we're defending and we're getting stops. We talk about this a lot as a team, you can control the shots you dictate, you can't necessarily control if your shots go in. Obviously we could put in the time and we can get the reps, but at the end of the day sometimes the basketball gods are just mean that way, right. So for us we're all about getting stops, being great on the glass, and then pushing tempo when we can.

**Q. This is like your first full year as head coach running the ship. What's the feeling like being here at March Madness, like how are the vibes for you?**

CANDICE GREEN: Oh my God, they're amazing, are you kidding me? I got the AD, the SWA, we got everybody here, we got Sue here, this is great. I mean, my mom's here, people are driving from Jersey, Georgia, like you know what I mean, the support and then just like obviously the environment, right, is incredible to be at a place like Michigan and compete with some of the best players in the country, some of the best coaches in the country, right. So it's just a blessing. I'm super grateful and trying to stay in the moment and enjoy.

**Q. Michigan is going to be an outlier in terms of teams that you faced this year in terms of the talent that's really on the roster and the scoring potential. Could you draw a comparison to any opponent you had this season that you maybe felt is most applicable to this Michigan team that you can draw game plan from, game plan-wise, I should say, from?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean obviously, I mean they're not the same as Duke, but in terms of just their athleticism, their talent, we can kind of draw from them. When it comes to teams in the Patriot League, I would say they got a couple kids that can shoot it like Lehigh, they can press like Navy, right. We've been saying they press like Navy on steroids, right. So, yeah, we're ready in terms of what to expect, but obviously when you go against a team like this you're never truly ready until you step on the court.

**Q. Michigan has benefited from a player from the Patriot League with Ashley's transfer here. Your group stayed together, I'm curious whether or not the transfer portal impacted you in any way, whether there was any work you had to do to keep this team together over the last couple years because the bigger schools sometimes can take players from your level and help to enhance their teams. I'm just curious how your team stayed together?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I mean credit them and their camaraderie, right. I think that team, especially this senior class really loves each other and really wanted to stay with each other and do the full four years here. I mean, we talk a lot about each one of them probably could have left and made some pretty good money, right. But I think that speaks to kind of their camaraderie and I think it also speaks to just Holy Cross and the value of that education and the experience they have there. It's a hard one to want to leave, right. So, yeah, no, I'm super excited that all of 'em stayed together and their legacy at Holy Cross is a pretty big one.

**Q. You've talked about Ashley, the familiarity from playing, competing against her when she was at Bucknell, what does that familiarity bring for your team as this matchup approaches?**

CANDICE GREEN: Yeah, I think it's just not as surprising, right, when you play a player you've already played with. It is interesting, obviously at Bucknell a lot of their offense went through Ash, and now here it's, you know, she's maybe not the first or second option, so it is like, oh, wow, like the Player of the Year is, you know, the third option here, right, fourth option here. So, yeah, that kind of just speaks to how good Michigan is, right. But I think it will

help our girls, right, because it's like, we know what she likes to do, let's try to focus on other people. But she's an incredible player. She's super talented. We're excited to see her.

**Q. I asked this also to Meg and Kaitlyn, how about a direct message for Holy Cross fans, alumni, anybody watching that's excited tomorrow, what do you got to say to them?**

CANDICE GREEN: Thank you for your support. You guys have been fantastic. We're going to go out and compete and show Holy Cross women's basketball as best we can tomorrow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

