

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 3 Final - Michigan vs Texas

Monday, March 30, 2026

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Michigan Wolverines
Coach Kim Barnes Arico
Brooke Quarles Daniels
Syla Swords
Olivia Olson

Elite 8 Postgame Media Conference

Texas 77, Michigan 41

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the Michigan Wolverines. We have Head Coach Kim Barnes Arico, and her student-athletes Olivia Olson, Brooke Quarles Daniels, and Syla Swords. We'll begin with an opening statement from Coach and then open it up to questions.

KIM BARNES ARICO: Well, that was a tough game for us. Obviously, we're extremely disappointed. Texas is a great team, but we're a better team than we looked tonight.

We had a bunch of shots go in and out. We had it cut in the third quarter. I thought we were going to be able to make a run. They just put us away. They're really, really, really talented.

We've spent a lot of time talking through this season about our program and kind of the jumps that we made. I know our team is really disappointed tonight, but I also want us to be able at some point to celebrate the best season in program history.

The growth last year, we were extremely disappointed when we lost in the second round at Notre Dame, and this year we came back, and we made it to the Elite Eight.

So these guys right now aren't feeling really great, and they probably can't see what they accomplished in this moment right now, but what they've been able to do this season and their development and their commitment and their chemistry, all of it, is really, really special.



I heard Vic say he lost in the Sweet 16 by 60 and then the following year he came back and was able to get to a Final Four. So we talked in the locker room a little bit about, you know, we're a 2 seed. The difference between the 2s and 1s right now. Last year we made our jump. Next year, you know, we're going to look forward to making another jump.

So disappointed. Texas, like I said, is a great, great program. And really just want to give a shout-out to our seniors, just what they've meant to our program and one who is up here. You guys have asked me a lot of questions about her in the last few weeks, but we'll really miss her and her energy and her fight and her love for our team and our program.

She had a hell of a season for us, and that's Brooke Daniels.

THE MODERATOR: We'll now open it up to questions for student-athletes.

Q. Syla, on such a tough shooting night, how much do you see as it's just an ice cold night and how much of it is the Texas defense making things difficult?

SYLA SWORDS: Yeah, I mean, looking at the field goal percentages here, it's hard to win games with the shots we were putting up, but we were getting really good looks at the rim and looks we normally make.

That's a credit to the defense. It's a credit to their length and physicality. We can't just say we had an off day. I mean, Texas is known for their defense, and that's why we were so excited to match up with them because we pride ourselves in our defense as well.

I would say definitely they altered our shots, but we got to our spots and just couldn't finish them. We pride ourselves on our defense as well, so I would say definitely they altered our shots, but we got to our spots and just couldn't finish them.

Q. I guess Olivia, Texas made their first nine field goal attempts when they finished the first quarter and got

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11 of 12. What was the challenge of trying to slow them down with your guys' defense against their offense?

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, I think they just have so many different weapons, and we didn't come out with enough energy, and on the defensive end especially with shots not falling, we didn't use that as fuel to get stops on the defensive end, and it kind of just trickled from there, yeah.

Q. For either of you guys, basketball is obviously a game of runs. Texas went on a couple of big runs. What seemed to be the challenge of you guys going on runs of your own or being able to counter those?

BROOKE QUARLES DANIELS: Yeah, I just think when you're playing against the physicality and the length, you know, we're a great shooting team, and this is probably one of our rougher games.

I think, you know, when you are shooting shots that you normally make at a 60 or 70 percent level and they're not falling and then they're coming down on the end with easy transition points, sometimes it's hard to keep your head straight when they go on those runs like that, so...

Q. Olivia, obviously pressure is one of your all's things. How much of a concern was it dealing with their experience and dealing with that, and how do you think that played out? How do you think their experience helped them handle pressure deep?

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, they've been to a Final Four. They're an older team. They have a vet point guard.

And you know, to bring it back to the quote, like, we're coming, and Coach said in the locker room after the game, like, last year we lost by a lot in the second round, and this year we made it to the Elite Eight. We're going to use this as fuel to keep going.

I mean, yeah, they're a really good team, and they're a Final Four team. So we're not there yet, but we're going to keep working to get there.

Q. For Olivia and Syla, just sort of piggybacking on that, I was going to ask you, as Kim said when this all clears, will you see that the next rung of the ladder is there for you to take that next step? What do you think this team is missing?

SYLA SWORDS: Yeah, I would say as much as we don't like to hear it, we're still young. This is only the second time the program has been in the Elite Eight. So as much as we can lean on people that have come before us, as

much as we can lean on our seniors, a lot of it falls on us as sophomores, and we have to be better at the end of the day.

We can't just fall back on saying that we're young and they're experienced and just take that loss before the game starts. I think I'm just really optimistic coming into next year, because everybody, 1 through 14, seniors included, are people that are going to get in the gym as soon as Coach allows us when we get back and get working again.

We're going to be watching film from this game, and we're just going to be taking it as fuel for next year and seeing how far we can go on that next run, like you mentioned.

OLIVIA OLSON: I think the best thing about our team is we want to get back in the gym and get better, and we want to see what we need to work on. I think just growing from these games and being put in this situation is really the missing piece that you said.

That's the missing piece. Like, we needed to get here, and now we know what it's like to be here, and we're going to use that just to get better as a team.

Q. Brooke, obviously today was really, really hard, but I wanted to know if you had any word to kind of encapsulate your season, not only here at Michigan but playing underneath Kim?

BROOKE QUARLES DANIELS: Honestly probably just one of a kind. Coming from, like, a different program and wanting to be in these moments and wanting to be coached and wanting to be, you know, demanded a level of excellence. I mean, playing at the school of Michigan, you're going to be an elite program athletically, academically.

Coach Arico when I first got here always reminded me, you know, this isn't Oakland. We need you to be better. Who gets to say that they played against one of the youngest Olympians to be on the court, a McDonald's All American, and just being able to be coached by one of the most winningest coaches in Michigan history.

And like for her to be a woman, it's a dream come true. I've always known that I was meant for these moments and this stage. Thank you to Coach Arico for allowing me to put on the block M and putting so much trust in me. It's just something that you can't...

Q. Brooke and Olivia, Brooke, I can see the emotion in your face. With five minutes to go you came out after that timeout, and Olivia you were giving her a pep talk. If you could tell me about what that moment was like

for each of you and what the message was, Brooke that, you got from Olivia.

BROOKE QUARLES DANIELS: Yeah, Liv was just telling me, you know, it's not over. You got to keep giving your all. That's one of the biggest things we always bounce off of each other. Just challenging each other with the killer mentality.

She knew that I needed somebody to lean on, and she was picking me up in that moment. That's just really a representation of Liv.

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, I would say, I mean, Brooke, she's one of the hardest workers on the team, and she's given us literally everything she could possibly give to our team with defense and just pressing all the time and just being a leader for our team. She's really given everything.

I kind of just was, like, this is how you're going to go out, you're going to go out doing the same thing as you always have, yeah.

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think these guys don't realize it, but I had a number of people stop me even from my walk from the locker room here and they told me that this team gave them the ride of a lifetime. I think in our Ann Arbor community, around the world, like, this team gave people a ride of a lifetime.

They've just been pouring into each other and leaning into each other and had an incredible, incredible run. It sucks. Unless we won a national championship, it was going to suck. Did we want it to happen this way? No. But they have given the University of Michigan, the women's basketball community in the state of Michigan, our friends, our family, people that have watched a ride of a lifetime. They're just a joy to be around. They're fun to watch, and they love and care for each other.

So it's been an amazing group.

Q. Brooke, seeing five sophomores on the court at the end of the game, how do you feel about the hands you are leaving this program in and what it can do in the future?

BROOKE QUARLES DANIELS: Yeah, I mean, I kind of had a similar question a couple of weeks ago just about, like, how Liv and Sylva and Mila have been able to kind of lead our team in that way, but I mean, when you look at them and what they've been able to do and how they've been acknowledged nationally and internationally, you know, they were made for these moments.

Just with Coach Arico being able to recruit such high-level class and everything, I think the program is going to be in great hands. I think people are getting us now, but it's not going to be that way the next year or the second year, so you got to get us now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time today, ladies. We'll now take questions for Coach Barnes Arico.

Q. I wanted to ask you, I think there was a point perhaps in the third quarter where you kind of sat down. You weren't standing much after that. I noticed that you had your head on your hand kind of just observing. What was going through your mind there? I think this was right around the same time that Texas was kind of building its lead.

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, it was tough. We've been a team that has fought through everything this year, and we've challenged ourselves against the best teams in the country to be in a position that we were tonight.

That was the UConn of the world and the Vandys and the UCLA and the Notre Dames. We've always been able to find that second gear.

Tonight we couldn't against Texas. It was their rebounding, and we've always been in rebounding battles. We're usually undersized, but we find a way to mix it up, we find a way to come up with the ball. We find a way to come up with the loose balls, and we get the balls to fall on offense. Sometimes we have droughts, but usually we're able to get going.

You know, it's a credit to Texas for sure. You know, maybe a little bit of our inexperience in those moments, but we couldn't generate it, and it was just tough for us to get going.

And I think we were letting the emotion -- you know, Brooky knew it was her last game. The emotion of the game was really getting to us. So it was hard to be in those moments down the stretch.

Q. In 2022 obviously that was Naz's the last year; you guys made that Elite Eight run. This team is a little bit different in terms of how young they are, but that year obviously meant so much for a springboard for this program. I'm curious what you think the springboard for this year is. I don't know if it's too early to kind of think about that, but with such a young group, I'm sure you're kind of looking to see what this could do for the program.

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, Sylva always says it, and



Olivia says it. Naz has been around a lot. She was actually here the other day. She flew in for the game.

They came because they watched her. They came because they wanted to be the next Naz Hillmon. They came because they saw Naz Hillmon and her team and her class bring us to a Sweet 16 and to Elite Eight, and they wanted to follow Naz.

Like you said, that group came after her because of her, and now what they've been able to do in their short period of time has been incredible. I think for anybody that's watching around the country, for those young girls that are watching around the country or the players that are watching our team play, it's an exciting brand of basketball. People want to be a part of it.

If you listen to our girls speak, I mean, they love this program, they love our University. They feel like they are a part of something really, really special. If other people hear that, I think they want to be a part of it.

Right now, you know, Kendall Dudley came in as a transfer. Ashley Sofilkanch came in last year as the player of the year in the Patriot League, and Kendall Dudley came in as another McDonald's All American in that class of sophomores.

I think they attract like-minded people. Naz attracted Sylla and Olivia for sure. I think this group is going to attract some great people as well.

Q. There's a video tweet out pregame of you guys listening to a Bo Schembechler speech. What went into the decision to listen to that before the game?

KIM BARNES ARICO: That was the team. That wasn't my decision. Every pregame we have a circle, and during that circle somebody does a game day speech. It could be a group of people that do a game day speech. You know, the last one was the coaches did it.

So today was the seniors. I think when you come to the University of Michigan, the traditions that go with being a part of the block M run really, really deep. You know, when you make that commitment to Michigan, you learn about those traditions, and it becomes something that's in your blood and really important.

To our team, they decided to do that today, because that was something that they felt inside was really important to them.

Q. Kim, I assume that the decision to have the five sophomores at the end was intentional on your part;

and if so, how does it clarified for them the offseason and the work that they're going to put in, and what did you want them to take from it, remember, feel, that sort of thing?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think part of it was I wanted to get Brooke out of the game and give our fan base that was here today a chance to celebrate and honor her and kind of what she's meant to our team this year. So that was part of that.

I think the other piece is, you know, those five are a core group to the future of this program, and they all are really special in their own way. They all bring something incredible to our team and to our program. They know that it's their turn now, and they know that they want to get back in the gym.

I mean, you know, Olivia Olson is already, like, when can I get back in the gym? Man, I was terrible. I'm like, oh, my gosh, can you take a deep breath. You are one of the best players in the country, and you have proven that all year long.

But she's so down about this. They are the hardest workers, the most driven people. They will take this, and they will use this for motivation certainly coming into next season.

Q. Texas, just from your ability to scout them over the last few days or even before then, I know you said you didn't think your team necessarily played its best basketball or what they're capable of playing, but did you think Texas was even better than what you saw on film? How do you think, as they look to try to win a national championship, they could fare in Phoenix?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think one of the greatest things about our team and our program is when we have a chance to really prep for people. We feel like if we were a football team and had to play once a week, we would be, like, awesome.

But the quick turnaround in the NCAA Tournament, you know, we were preparing for Louisville, and you have a quick turnaround to prepare for Texas. Holy cow. So what have we had? We haven't had much time.

Obviously my assistant coaches do that on the front end, but for me and for the players to really dive into what Texas is like, especially a team that we haven't had any experience playing -- you know, we've played Louisville in the past. We've played UConn in the past. We've played some of these other great programs. We haven't played Texas. So it is our first time.



You know, obviously you watch on film and you watch on TV and you see how incredible their team is, but when you have to do it live, it is a little bit different. Their size and their physicality and the rebounding, I mean, we won the rebounding battle against Louisville, who is a great rebounding team by nine the other night. Texas smoked us in the rebounding battle.

The 50/50 balls, we pride ourselves on coming up with those. They were ripping them out of our hands. Then you take the experience of a fifth-year point guard and an All American in Madison Booker, and, you know, it definitely wore us down.

We were tired, and we're usually the team that's making other people tired.

We couldn't initiate offense. They were in our face. Like, that was pressure that we haven't faced all year long. Then when we were able to break it, we couldn't get our shots to fall, so then we got tighter and tighter.

That certainly had to do with Texas. I mean, they're a great team. I will give them all the credit, for sure.

Q. Kind of sticking with Texas, I mean, you obviously refer to the relative youth of your team and the experience they gained going through this. How much do you think it's helped Texas in a game like this that they have been there before, especially a player like the point guard Rori Harmon?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Like I said, I was listening to some of his stuff, preparing for this game. You know, he gave the examples of his team had to be in positions like this before to get to where they are now.

Rori has been in a lot of those situations, and just her composure throughout the game, her ability not to get sped up throughout the game, her ability to find her team, her players, who's hot throughout the game, I mean, she just showed incredible experience. I think that they've been there. You know, they've done it before. To knock them off, we got to be on it, and we weren't able to generate that tonight.

Q. Y'all dug a little hole the other night and got out of it. Got into a similar hole tonight. What was your level of concern? I'm sure you were sitting there hoping on getting back in it, but what's your level of concern that you're going to be able to dig out of a hole against this kind of team?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Well, we knew that was

concerning. It was concerning the other night. We talked about it tonight. It was definitely concerning, but we -- I think we cut it -- and I'll have to go back in the third quarter -- to, like, 12. I felt like, okay, and then they went on this run, and we just couldn't get the rebound.

I mean, I think we got them to miss five straight times, and they got five straight rebounds, which is unheard of for us. We tried to go zone a little bit to give them that look, and that's kind of what we did against Connecticut, but we were able to rebound out of it. We weren't able to rebound out of it.

And then I think that really deflated us. Then we couldn't score. Then they just extended it.

I felt pretty good actually, but then, you know, we couldn't get stops and then we couldn't score. You know, I don't think we're whatever the deficit was, you know, inferior opponent to them, but they're a really great team. They're a great team, for sure.

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