

Nothing But 'Net - EXTRA - 04/07/2026 - NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week as a #1 seed in the National Championship game of the NCAA Tournament in Indianapolis, and they won it. [On Monday \(04/06/2026\), they beat \(#2 seed\) Connecticut 69-63](#). Michigan's final record is 37-3.

What Happened?

Michigan won the National Championship! They did, they really did it. After getting to the Championship game several times (most recently, 2013 and 2018) and coming up short, it almost seems surreal that they finally won it all. They were obviously the best team in the country this season, but that doesn't always translate into a championship. This season, it did. They set a school record for wins, with 37, which is just short of the all-time record for wins in a season (38). They won the Players Era Festival championship at Thanksgiving, they beat their archrivals (Michigan State) twice, they won the Big Ten regular season championship by 4 games, they almost won the Big Ten Tournament, and they powered through the first 5 games of the Big Dance. The win in the championship game wasn't as pretty as the other 5 tournament games, but it was still a solid win.

I've got to say it again: Michigan won the National Championship! Wow, that feels good.

Game Flow

After 5 fairly comfortable wins in the tournament, Michigan was finally in a dogfight. The game was close and tense the whole way, although Michigan was ahead for most of it. They opened up a couple 11-point leads, but they could never pull away. It was a defensive battle, and neither team shot well.

Michigan led for the first 9 minutes, by as many as 5 points, but UConn stayed close. It was all tied up (13-13) at the 11:10 mark, when UConn went ahead for the first time, 16-13, with 10:23 to go. They held the lead for about 4 minutes, until Michigan went back ahead (19-18) at the 6:47 mark. The lead went back and forth for a couple minutes, until the key moment in the game: with 3:18 left in the half and UConn up 25-23, [Yaxel Lendeborg](#) missed a 3-pointer (that happened a lot in this game), and [Morez Johnson Jr.](#) went up for the offensive rebound. Johnson was initially called for a foul, but when the officials looked at the replay, they saw that he had been a victim of "hook and hold". After review, the officials reversed the foul call on Johnson, and instead called a flagrant foul on the UConn player. Johnson hit both free throws to tie the game (25-25), then Michigan got the ball and scored another 2 points to go up 27-25. They never trailed again. They pushed the lead as high as 5 points, settling for a 4-point lead at halftime (33-29).

Michigan led for the entire 2nd half, but they could never pull away. They got their first 11-point lead (48-37) at the 12:56 mark, but UConn cut it right back to 5 points (45-40) with 8:24 left. Michigan pushed it back up to 11 points (56-45) at the 5:44 mark, but UConn got it back to 6 points (62-56) with 2:30 to go. It was "hero time" for [Trey McKenney](#): even though Michigan was shooting a miserable 1-for-14 from 3-point range at this point, Trey tried a 3-pointer with 1:50 left, and he swished it. That gave Michigan a 9-point lead (65-56), which was just enough. UConn played some brutal defense in the last minute, and Michigan had a hard time even getting the ball in, but it wasn't enough. UConn got within 4 points (67-63) with 37 seconds left, but Michigan made their free throws and won the game.

It was an ugly win, but a win nonetheless.

Stats

[The game stats](#) were not very good:

Overall shooting - 21/55 = 38.2% (Poor)

3-point shooting - 2/15 = 13.3% (Very poor)

Free throws - 25/28 = 89.3% (Great)
Rebounds - Michigan lost 46-39
Turnovers - Michigan won 10-11

Michigan won this game at the free throw line.

By the way, our old buddy Tarris Reed Jr., who transferred to UConn from Michigan in 2024, had a decent game, but didn't hurt Michigan much: 4/12 shooting, 13 points, 14 rebounds. He looked a lot better than he ever did at Michigan.

Who Started?

The starters were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Elliot Cadeau](#), [Morez Johnson Jr.](#), [Yaxel Lendeborg](#), and [Aday Mara](#).

Who Looked Good?

Cadeau was the leading scorer, with 19 points. He was named the MOP (Most Outstanding Player) of the Final Four.

Despite an ankle and knee injury, Lendeborg played 36 minutes, and did pretty well: 13 points. He didn't shoot very well: 4/13 overall, 0/5 from deep.

Johnson was a force inside, with 12 points and 10 rebounds, for nice double-double. 5 of those rebounds were offensive boards.

Mara had a decent game, with 8 points on 4/7 shooting. He missed his first 3 shots, then made 4 in a row.

[Trey McKenney](#) was the hero off the bench, with his clutch 3-pointer in the closing minutes of the game. He ended up with 9 points on poor shooting: 2/9 overall, 1/4 from deep. Ah, but that one shot...

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had a quiet game, with 4 points off the bench.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Burnett scored 4 points. It was kind of a disappointing way for him to end his Michigan career.

[Will Tschetter](#) was worthless off the bench, with 0 points. It was a very disappointing way for him to end his Michigan career.

Who Else Played?

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play?

[Oscar Goodman](#) and [Malick Kordel](#) were the able-bodied scholarship players didn't get to play. [L.J. Cason](#) and [Winters Grady](#) are both out with injuries.

None of the Scout Team players ([Howard Eisley Jr.](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#), and [Charlie May](#)) got to play.

What Does It Mean?

Michigan achieved their ultimate goal: a National Championship. The details don't matter. Sure, it was an ugly game, but an ugly win is still a win.

This Week

Clean out the lockers. Schedule the parade. The season is over, and it was a glorious one.

Check back next week the Season Wrap-Up and a Look Ahead.

Go Blue!