



# FINAL FOUR



Illinois' Keaton Wagler



UConn's Tarris Reed Jr.



Arizona's Jaden Bradley



Michigan's Yaxel Lendeborg



## UCONN HUSKIES

No. 2 seed • 33-5 record • East Region • Big East

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 • 6:09 ET/5:09 CT • TBS  
LUCAS OIL STADIUM, INDIANAPOLIS



## ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI

No. 3 seed • 28-8 record • South Region • Big Ten



MONDAY, APRIL 6

8:50 PM ET/7:50 CT  
TBS

## ARIZONA WILDCATS

No. 1 seed • 36-2 record • West Region • Big 12

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 • 8:54 ET/7:54 CT • TBS  
LUCAS OIL STADIUM, INDIANAPOLIS



## MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

No. 1 seed • 35-3 record • Midwest Region • Big Ten

### UCONN HUSKIES

- **Path to Final Four:** No. 15 Furman, 82-71; No. 7 UCLA, 73-57; No. 3 Michigan State, 67-63; No. 1 Duke, 73-72
- **Final Four History:** 1999 (champion), 2004 (champion), 2009, 2011 (champion), 2014 (champion), 2023 (champion), 2024 (champion)
- **Top Players:** Tarris Reed Jr. (14.7 PPG), Silas Demary Jr. (5.9 APG), Alex Karaban (13.4 PPG)

• **Notable:** A senior forward, Karaban has won two national titles with the Huskies. In his fourth season at UCONN, Karaban is averaging 17.7 PPG over the first four games of the tournament.

• **Coach: Danny Hurley**  
The only coach in the Final Four to have won a title, Hurley (348-179) is seeking his third national championship crown since taking over the Huskies in 2018.



### ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI

- **Path to Final Four:** No. 14 Penn, 105-70; No. 11 VCU, 76-55; No. 2 Houston, 65-55; No. 9 Iowa, 71-59
- **Final Four History:** 1949, 1951, 1952, 1989, 2005
- **Top Players:** Keaton Wagler (17.9 PPG), Andrej Stojakovic (13.6 PPG), David Mirkovic (13.5 PPG)
- **Notable:** A freshman point guard, Wagler scored 25 points to lead the Fighting Illini over Iowa in their Elite Eight contest. Wagler is averaging 17.5 PPG and 3.7 APG in his first NCAA Tournament.

• **Coach: Brad Underwood**  
Underwood has compiled a 302-136 record over 13 seasons as a head coach, which includes his time at Stephen F. Austin, Oklahoma State and Illinois. This is Underwood's first trip to the Final Four.



# Four looking for more

## After Elite Eight stunner, UConn chases third title in four years

BY DANIEL SUDDEATH  
CNHI

**T**hey've survived four rounds of March Madness, but the ultimate test awaits in Indianapolis as a new NCAA Men's Basketball king will be crowned at Lucas Oil Stadium.

No. 1 seeds Arizona and Michigan join No. 2 Connecticut and No. 3 Illinois in the quest for the title beginning Saturday. The Fighting Illini are the only program in the Final Four without a championship under their belt. Last year's title-winner, Florida, failed to make it to Indianapolis, meaning a new champion will emerge from this year's field.

Saturday's first game pits Illinois against UConn. The Huskies have won two out of the last three championships and are seeking their program's seventh overall title. They're coming off the tournament's most memorable moment when Braylon Mullins sank a deep 3-pointer late in the Huskies' Elite Eight contest against Duke to send UConn to the Final Four.

Illinois advanced after freshman guard Keaton Wagler scored 25 points against Iowa to send the Fighting Illini to their first Final Four since 2005.

Both teams feature balanced offensive attacks. Along with Wagler, Andrej Stojakovic and David Mirkovic have been major contributors for Illinois. The Fighting Illini have a deep bench, especially when it comes to their frontcourt.

Tarris Reed Jr. is coming off a 26-point, nine-rebound performance against Duke.

He's scored in double digits every game of the tournament, including a 31-point, 27-rebound outing against Furman. Senior Alex Karaban, a member of the 2023 and 2024 UConn title teams, has steadied the Huskies all season. Though he was held to just five points against Duke, he's averaging 17.7

PPG in the Big Dance.

Illinois coach Brad Underwood is making his first trip to the Final Four, while UConn's Danny Hurley is seeking his third title in four seasons.

Saturday's nightcap features two heavyweights in No. 1 seeds Arizona and Michigan. The Wildcats return to the Final Four for the first time since 2001, while it was 2018 when the Wolverines last played in the final weekend.

Despite the recent droughts, Michigan and Arizona have enjoyed remarkable seasons. Arizona last lost on Feb. 14 in overtime to Texas Tech. Michigan enters the Final Four the winner of 10 out of its last 11 games.

Two freshmen key Arizona's offense in guard Brayden Burries and forward Koa Peat. Burries leads the Wildcats in scoring, and is averaging just shy of 18 PPG in the tournament. Peat has been a force in the paint and heads to Indianapolis after scoring 20 points and grabbing seven rebounds against Purdue in the Elite Eight. Another freshman, Ivan Kharchenkov, added 18 points and eight rebounds against the Boilermakers.

The Wildcats balance their freshman star power with experience. Senior Tobe Awaka averages just less than a double-double with 9.3 PPG and 9.1 RPG.

Big Ten Player of the Year Yaxel Lendeborg leads Michigan into the Final Four. The senior forward is averaging 21 PPG in the tournament and scored 27 against Tennessee in the Elite Eight. Lendeborg anchors a dominant Wolverine frontcourt that also features Morez Johnson Jr. and Aday Mara.

Michigan point guard Elliot Cadeau has set the table for the Wolverine big men. The junior had 10 assists against Tennessee. He's averaging 8.3 APG in the Big Dance.

Arizona's Tommy Lloyd and Michigan's Dusty May are seeking their first national titles as coaches. May led Florida Atlantic to the Final Four in 2023 before taking the Michigan job.

### ARIZONA WILDCATS

- **Path to Final Four:** No. 16 LIU, 92-58; No. 9 Utah State, 78-66; No. 4 Arkansas, 109-88; No. 2 Purdue, 79-64
- **Final Four History:** 1988, 1994, 1997 (champion), 2001
- **Top Players:** Brayden Burries (16.1 PPG), Tobe Awaka (9.1 RPG), Koa Peat (14.1 PPG)

• **Notable:** As a freshman Peat, has been a star on a talented Arizona roster during the tournament. Peat has scored in double figures in every game of the Big Dance, including 20 against Purdue and 21 against Arkansas.

• **Coach: Tommy Lloyd** In his fifth season at Arizona, Lloyd will be coaching in the Final Four for the first time. Lloyd, who was an assistant coach at Gonzaga before being hired by the Wildcats, is 148-35 over his career, all at Arizona.

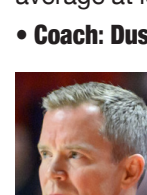


### MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

- **Path to Final Four:** No. 16 Howard, 101-80; No. 9 Saint Louis, 95-72; No. 4 Alabama, 90-77; No. 6 Tennessee, 95-62
- **Final Four History:** 1964, 1965, 1976, 1989 (champion), 1992, 1993, 2013, 2018
- **Top Players:** Yaxel Lendeborg (15.2 PPG), Morez Johnson Jr. (7.3 RPG), Elliot Cadeau (5.8 APG)

• **Notable:** Balance has been the key for the Wolverines this season. Four players average double digits in scoring per game. Eight players average at least 20 minutes per game.

• **Coach: Dusty May** In two seasons at Ann Arbor, May has led the Wolverines to a 62-13 record. His overall mark stands at 188-82, which includes taking Florida Atlantic to the Final Four in 2023.



Content: Daniel Suddeath, CNHI • Photos: Associated Press; • Design: William Bowman, CNHI

## Final Four Most Valuable Players

2025 Walter Clayton Jr, Florida	2010 Kyle Singler, Duke	1996 Tony Delk, Kentucky	1982 James Worthy, N. Carolina	1968 Lew Alcindor, UCLA	1954 Tom Gola, La Salle
2024 Tristen Newton, UConn	2009 Wayne Ellington, N. Carolina	1995 Ed O'Bannon, UCLA	1981 Isiah Thomas, Indiana	1967 Lew Alcindor, UCLA	1953 B.H. Horn, Kansas
2023 Adama Sanogo, UConn	2008 Mario Chalmers, Kansas	1994 Corliss Williamson, Arkansas	1980 Darrell Griffith, Louisville	1966 Jerry Chambers, Utah	1952 Clyde Lovelette, Kansas
2022 Ochai Agbaji, Kansas	2007 Corey Brewer, Florida	1993 Donald Williams, N. Carolina	1979 Magic Johnson, Michigan St.	1965 Bill Bradley, Princeton	1950 Irwin Dambrot, CCNY
2021 Jared Butler, Baylor	2006 Joakim Noah, Florida	1992 Bobby Hurley, Duke	1978 Jack Givens, Kentucky	1964 Walt Hazzard, UCLA	1949 Alex Groza, Kentucky
2019 Kyle Guy, Virginia	2005 Sean May, North Carolina	1991 Christian Laettner, Duke	1977 Butch Lee, Marquette	1963 Art Heyman, Duke	1948 Alex Groza, Kentucky
2018 Donte DiVincenzo, Villanova	2004 Emeka Okefor, UConn	1990 Anderson Hunt, UNLV	1976 Kent Benson, Indiana	1962 Paul Hogue, Cincinnati	1947 George Kaftan, Holy Cross
2017 Joel Berry, North Carolina	2003 Carmelo Anthony, Syracuse	1989 Glen Rice, Michigan	1975 Richard Washington, UCLA	1961 Jerry Lucas, Ohio St.	1946 Bob Kurland, Oklahoma St.
2016 Ryan Arcidiacono, Villanova	2002 Juan Dixon, Maryland	1988 Danny Manning, Kansas	1974 David Thompson, NC State	1960 Jerry Lucas, Ohio St.	1945 Bob Kurland, Oklahoma St.
2015 Tyus Jones, Duke	2001 Shane Battier, Duke	1987 Keith Smart, Indiana	1973 Bill Walton, UCLA	1959 Jerry West, West Virginia	1944 Arnold Ferrin, Utah
2014 Shabazz Napier, UConn	2000 Mateen Cleaves, Mich. St.	1986 Kevin Ellison, Louisville	1972 Bill Walton, UCLA	1958 Elgin Baylor, Seattle	1943 Ken Sailors, Wyoming
2013 Luke Hancock, Louisville	1999 Richard Hamilton, UConn	1985 Ed Pinckney, Villanova	1971 Howard Porter, Villanova	1957 Wilt Chamberlain, Kansas	1942 Howard Dallmar, Stanford
2012 Anthony Davis, Kentucky	1998 Jeff Shepherd, Kentucky	1984 Patrick Ewing, Georgetown	1970 Sidney Wicks, UCLA	1956 Hal Lear, Temple	1941 John Kotz, Wisconsin
2011 Kemba Walker, UConn	1997 Miles Simon, Arizona	1983 Akeem Olajuwon, Houston	1969 Lew Alcindor, UCLA	1955 Bill Russell, San Francisco	1940 Marvin Huffman, Indiana