Daily Sports

Elliot's Weekly Tip-Off:

The shot heard round the world

- the Basketball Capital of the World

by Elliot Koplas
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
ejk23008@uconn.edu

Just 0.4 seconds remained when Braylon Mullins sunk a 35-footer to give UConn the 73-72 lead over Duke.

Mullins, an Indiana native, sunk the game winner to send the Huskies to his home-state in Indianapolis for the Final Four. This marks UConn's third Final Four appearance in the last four years as they fight for their seventh national championship.

No. 3 Illinois will stand in their way after defeating Iowa 71-59 in the Elite Eight. Illinois defeated Penn, VCU and Houston in the previous three rounds, winning by an average of 20 points.

The Huskies' win margin has only been an average of eight, and their previous two games are a one point and four-point win. Regardless, Dan Hurley and the Huskies get the job done.

The last time these two met in the tournament in 2024, UConn went on a 30-0 run blowing out Illinois before 'March-in' to claim the title.

UConn holds the dominant edge over Illinois as the Fighting Illini looks to deliver a payback punch.

The two will battle in the first game of the Final Four on April 4. Both programs have beaten some of the best on their way to Indianapolis and are looking for one more win to make the national championship game.

The other side of the Final Four pits Michigan against Arizona.

Both teams represented their region as the top-seed and cruised their way into the Final Four.

Michigan is averaging the most points per game out of any team with 95.3 across all four games. This is the third highest scoring average in the tournament since 1985, setting up a showdown against the other offensively dominant program, Arizona.

The Wildcats are averaging 89.5 points per game which is the second most of the four teams remaining and could make a scoreboard shatter with all those buckets.

The two teams have a combined record of 71-5. Two notable common opponents each team faced are Purdue and Alabama.

Arizona beat Alabama in December by 21 points in Alabama. Proving the Wildcats have what it takes to get the job done on the road.

Michigan defeated Alabama in the Sweet Sixteen by 13 in a heavyweight showdown.

The Wolverines faced Purdue twice this season, beating them once in the regular season but losing in the Big Ten final to the Boilermakers. Both were competitive games between two elite programs.

Arizona knocked off Purdue in the Elite Eight matchup and seemed to handle the Boilermakers relatively well, winning by 15.

Both teams have dominated their opponents so far this tournament and with one season ending after this weekend. The winner will face either UConn or Illinois for a spot in the national championship.

March Madness is all about delivering entertainment through last second shots, half-court heaves and record-breaking stats. We have already witnessed this last weekend as we arrive at our final four teams.

The stage is set with history on the line.

Will Illinois reach their second national championship in program history?

Will Michigan win its second ever national championship and first since 1989?

Will Arizona win its second national championship after only winning in 1997?

Or will UConn solidify their title as the Basketball Capital of the World?

Braylon Mullins holds up a piece of hoop netting he cut. The Indiana native is returning to Indianapolis for the Final Four matchup against Illinois on Saturday, April 4.

PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

University of Connecticut advances to the Final Four after a huge win against Duke on March 29, 2026. Braylon Mullins scored the game winning three pointer with only three seconds left in the game, securing a 73-72 win for the Huskies.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS