

# NCAA Men's Frozen Four Finals: St. Cloud State vs Massachusetts

Saturday, April 10, 2021

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

PPG Paints Arena

## St. Cloud State Huskies

## Coach Brett Larson

### Postgame Media Conference



Massachusetts - 5, St. Cloud State - 0

MODERATOR: We're joined by Brett Larson.

COACH LARSON: Congratulations to UMass. Played a great game and well deserved.

MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Can you just take me through what happens with that short-handed goal and just how big a momentum swing that becomes in the game?**

COACH LARSON: I think at that point we started pressing a little bit. We thought we had a good first period. You wouldn't know it by the score, but we controlled the territory. Our main goal was to make them defend as much as possible.

We thought we got a lot of O zone early, and then unfortunately we have a player blow an edge and take another player out and they get a two-on-one. All of a sudden you're down 1-0 even though you really like the start. They get a late goal in the period on a wrap-around play. And I felt like we started pressing a little bit too early.

We tried to make kind of a zone entry play that was a tough play. And then a one-on-one type situation where we probably got a little overaggressive on it. And I thought that was the turning point of the game then when they went up 3-0.

**Q. We've seen teams like UMass get to the championship game before and then come back the following year and win it and such. You did it at UMD. What do you think as a team these guys can learn from tonight and take over in the next year?**

COACH LARSON: I couldn't agree -- we just talked about that in the locker room. We talked about the history of this tournament. UMass was standing on our blue line two years ago with a similar loss and they used it as fuel. Not just fuel. The taste of this. I think for our guys to get a taste of getting this far, this is the farthest the Huskie hockey program has ever been. They did something special in 33 years of the program just getting to this game.

But I think we were just gripping it a little tight and didn't, weren't able to quite execute plays when we got the puck early. We had the jump. We had the work. But we were just gripping a little tight and forcing things.

And I think that you could see UMass had been through it. Maybe a little bit more of a maturity level for having gone through it. And I know our guys are going to use this as fuel to get back here. And use this experience once we're here again to be better.

**Q. What was the message like to the team during the first intermission?**

COACH LARSON: At that point it was stick with it. We liked our game. We thought we had a ton of jump. We didn't get a lot of shots in the first period. I think they were 7-3 to them. But I think our main goal was O zone time. We didn't want to wear down in our end defending too much. We thought we carried that territorial advantage in the first period.

We thought if we got the first one in the second period we would be right back in the game. Unfortunately, that's where we had the miscue in the power play, ended up giving a short-handed goal and the momentum went the other way from there.

**Q. It seemed like they were able to kind of take away the middle of the ice from you guys. Was that something, I guess, that -- was that something they did well, I guess, tonight?**

COACH LARSON: For sure. Especially once they got up. Once they got up, they went into a pretty structured 1-3-1 in the neutral zone, took away the middle. We were forced



to wrap pucks and try to seal it and come up with possession that way. I thought they ran it well once they got the lead.

**Q. Just overall, Brett, what are the things that you guys talked about after the game? I mean, obviously you're going to have a lot of guys coming back next season. A lot of good things, because I don't think at the beginning of the season -- maybe you expected to be here but I don't think a lot of people did.**

COACH LARSON: The number one thing we told them was we were really proud of them and we love them. They're a great group of guys. They've stuck through a lot this year.

And they don't want to hear it right now. Nothing you really say, I guess, sinks in. But to think about what they did and to go farther than any team in our program's history and just to get to this game in a year when not many people expected it, other than the guys in that room.

They're just a great bunch of kids, and we're really proud of them. That was probably the biggest message.

Second message was what I already talked about with the history of this tournament and the teams that have lost in this game using it as fuel and a learning lesson to come back and be better.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

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