

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Michigan vs Denver

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

TD Garden

Denver Pioneers

David Carle

Cole Guttman

Bobby Brink

Justin Lee

Semifinal Media Conference



I think college hockey is a really great landscape of diverse schools. I think that's great for the student-athletes. They get to pick a lot of different experiences. Some kids want big school, Big Ten, football, all that. Some kids don't want that.

I think it gives the player pool a really good opportunity to tailor their experience to what they're looking for. That diverse opportunity I think is great for the student-athletes.

Obviously it doesn't matter necessarily what type of school you are, you can have success in college hockey, given whatever of those three I laid out you are.

THE MODERATOR: Student-athletes are present.

We will keep on with questions.

Q. With four 'Western teams' playing in the Frozen Four in Boston, how do you view the east/west divide in college hockey, if there is one, or what is your role as western programs playing a little further from home?

COLE GUTTMAN: We've been here once this year. Hockey East is definitely a different league than the NCHC. We spent time in the NCHC. We think it's a good battle. We didn't have the success we wanted against the eastern schools. We've traveled around. It's a lot of fun playing out of conference. We're excited to play some out-of-conference teams here this weekend.

BOBBY BRINK: Obviously we feel the NCHCs is one of the best conferences in the college hockey. But there's good teams in every conference.

I wouldn't say there's really a divide like we really look at. I mean, maybe some people do.

JUSTIN LEE: I kind of agree with both of these guys. There's good teams coming from all conferences and we're excited to play them.

THE MODERATOR: David, what have you seen over the course of time?

THE MODERATOR: Head coach of the Pioneers, David Carle.

Obviously these two teams in the first semifinal, 17 national titles between them, including 8 for Denver. Historic programs.

David, you've been here before. How was the trip in? And size up your matchup tomorrow against Michigan.

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, thanks. Great to be here. Trip was good. Left yesterday around noon. Got in, had a good meal. We practiced in Denver. Obviously getting ready. Had a good practice here today. Looking forward to getting after it tomorrow.

It will be a very entertaining, I would assume, hockey game against us and Michigan. Two very storied programs, with a lot of history. We're looking forward to getting after it tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Let's expand on the storied programs. We know the history. How cool is it that a big football school can play DU at this level and you're both right there for the championship?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, we are very different, absolutely. I think that's college hockey. Obviously have some schools that are a part of the Power Five conferences, others that are Division I like we are that are non-football, and then you have Division III schools that are Division I in hockey.



DAVID CARLE: I mean, I don't know. I mean, it probably factors more into recruiting, the east and west thing, as far as where teams recruit from, the makeup of rosters.

At the same time I think rosters are getting more diverse in that as well with where kids come from. I don't think kids are necessarily tied to a certain area. So it's not something that we think about too much.

Q. Bobby, I'm wondering about your relationship or friendship, if you have one, with Ben Meyers. He said you guys have played together a little bit over the years. I would think your dad is going to be wearing Denver gear for the first game, or if he brought an old Gopher jersey for the second game?

BOBBY BRINK: I played with Ben a couple times. He's a really good guy. I've enjoyed all my experiences with him. He's obviously a great player.

I think my dad is all Pioneers this weekend.

DAVID CARLE: He better be (smiling).

Q. For the players, what challenges does Michigan present for you guys?

JUSTIN LEE: I think their offensive skill. They're very offensive minded. I think that's going to be a challenge for us. I think we're ready for it.

COLE GUTTMAN: Yeah, obviously they got a lot of top-end players, a lot of high draft picks. They're a very skilled team so we're going to have to be very defensively sound.

I think we're a skilled team, too, so we can go back at them in the same way they're going to come at us. We're going to have to play a full 60 like we've been playing in playoff hockey.

BOBBY BRINK: The same what those two said. They're a skilled team that likes to produce offense. I think to combat that we just got to be hard defensively and play within our structure. I think we'll be successful.

Q. Bobby, I think you just mentioned there's 40-something NHL Draft picks in this Frozen Four. How do you think your college experience has helped you develop as a player? You're obviously a very skilled player when you got to Denver. Where have you improved the most? How has DU helped you do that?

BOBBY BRINK: I think I've improved in all aspects. I came as a young kid. I think I've grown up a lot throughout my three years here. People have taught me how to be a professional on and off the ice. Developed skill-wise. I've learned how to play defensively, kill penalties. My game has grown in all aspects throughout these three years.

THE MODERATOR: What about the police escort? How was that?

BOBBY BRINK: Pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: Were the cops zipping in and out on the motorcycles?

BOBBY BRINK: Yeah (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Did you get any pictures?

BOBBY BRINK: A few videos.

Q. Cole, I know it's still kind of early, but what is different for you about the Frozen Four this time around than the last time when you were in Buffalo?

COLE GUTTMAN: It's always fun coming to the Frozen Four, being in this atmosphere, making it this far.

I'd say our team as a group, I think we have a lot of depth this year. I think leading up we've proved ourselves to be a top team in the country. I'm really excited to see how we respond. We're ready to go. I think our preparation has been really good.

A couple years ago I think our emotions were a little high. We were all excited to be there, we had a really young team. This year we have a goal of staying even-keeled, treating it like any other weekend. We got to prepare the same way and we've just got to execute.

Q. Coach, high-scoring teams in the Frozen Four. Momentum shifts greater in high-scoring games or... What kind of mindset do you have there? At the regional, there were a couple teams that wanted to slow you down. These teams might want to skate with you, feel like they can skate right past you.

DAVID CARLE: I think Cole nailed it on the head. Again, we're trying to stay even-keeled, stay in the moment. I think the games last weekend, although they were low scoring, they were not emotional. There weren't momentum swings or emotional swings in it. I thought we did a nice job of staying levelheaded for the most part.

That led to our success, our ability to just kind of stick with

it shift after shift, ultimately I think led us to success. That's what these guys are preaching as our leadership group in the room. I think that's what the players are following. That will be a lot of our same mindset here this weekend.

There's going to be things in the game that don't go our way, things that do go our way. We have to try to approach the next shift just like we did the last.

THE MODERATOR: Any Bruins fans on the Pioneers?

JUSTIN LEE: Not after they traded Hinam (smiling).

Q. David, what did you learn from Frozen Four to Frozen Four to take into this experience of getting players ready? You want it to feel like it's another game. How do you as a coach prepare them for that?

DAVID CARLE: I think you try and act and behave similarly. Throughout the year, again, we talked about this at the regional in the press conferences, but it's not like it's first time we've ever talked about the Frozen Four or how you have to manage yourself in win-or-go-home games. You just try to find different touch points throughout the year where you can draw to what the experience in Loveland would be like, what the experience in Boston here would be like.

Like Cole said, we prepare a certain way for every weekend and every game throughout the year. Our preparation was the exact same this week as it was in the middle of February, as it was in the middle of November. So there's that level of consistency and confidence that we've put in the work and the preparation to go out and put our best foot forward and have success.

THE MODERATOR: Boston, '98, was where the name Frozen Four was born, in the back hallways of this building years ago. We put it into play I think 2000 for the first time.

Q. David, without giving away any secrets, you're a team that can score and move the puck, as is Michigan. Is the thought you'd prefer a track meet with them or is the tendency trying to slow down what they like to do?

DAVID CARLE: We're going to go for 9-8 (smiling).

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVID CARLE: There you go.

THE MODERATOR: I think that's what we're all hoping for, okay.

Q. Better talk to your goalie, though (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: More questions?

Q. Just wondering if anybody has any relationship with the city of Boston, if you've been here before, whatnot?

THE MODERATOR: Any Boston connection?

COLE GUTTMAN: No.

BOBBY BRINK: No.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else? Gang, thanks so much. Appreciate it. Good luck tomorrow.

DAVID CARLE: Thanks, everybody.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports