

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Denver vs Boston U.

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

Boston U. Terriers

Coach Jay Pandolfo

Macklin Celebrini

Case McCarthy

Lane Hutson

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference



opportunity. Like Coach said here, we're all grateful to be here, and I'm grateful to have this opportunity to perform on this stage.

But we're not just satisfied to just be here, we want to do well here. And hopefully we can get it done this weekend.

Q. What did you learn most about the experience last year that maybe there's a different feeling among the group or handling the emotions this year?

LANE HUTSON: Yeah, obviously we know what to expect with all the media stuff, and, you know, how big the stage really is. Now, no one's caught off guard by that.

But going off of last year, just being in that situation and being down goals (indiscernible) Minnesota just knowing it's not a great feeling and we don't want that to happen again. I think we've got a group here that can find a way to win and find a way to win different ways. We're just going to have fun here.

Q. Interestingly enough, the three student-athletes selected all have siblings on the team. I guess you can get the take from each of you, but does that start to get a little old, like why am I'm playing with my brother, it's been six months? Quinn, I know your doesn't even talk to you so you probably don't even have to answer that, but the whole perspective of the family thing and kind of the family thing for the whole family to have three sets of brothers and a little bit of a different dynamic?

CASE MCCARTHY: Obviously, I'm super grateful the age gap between me and Gavin is a little bit bigger and it's an opportunity that I never thought I'd have. But to be able to have him be part of this team, be part of this group and experience this opportunity with him is something I'm going to hold for me the rest of my life. I know my family is as well.

Q. Lane, do you actually talk to Quinn? (Laughter).

LANE HUTSON: I talk to Quinn a little bit, I guess. (Laughter). But it's like anyone here, our team really is a

JAY PANDOLFO: We're excited to be back here, excited for this opportunity again to come back two years in a row. It's hard to do.

I think internally, the expectations were for us to get back here. Externally, I think as well, people thought we could be here again. And to live up to that and get here, it's not easy.

So it's a credit to our group. But we're certainly not satisfied for just being here again. And we want to make sure that we're on top of our game starting tomorrow.

Q. Case, what's it like for you to be part of this after being injured last year, deciding to come back, and now getting to practice and play in the Frozen Four?

CASE MCCARTHY: It's special. You want to be on the ice with your teammates. Unfortunately, last year I didn't have that opportunity, but it was cool seeing it from a different perspective.

The opportunity to come back and play in one is something I'm super grateful for. Super proud of our team the way we competed the last couple of weeks, and just excited to get going.

Q. Macklin, when deciding to come play college hockey, this is why you come to play in college. What does it mean to be playing this weekend as a freshman?

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: Super special. Special opportunity for our group. And, I mean, we're all super excited for this



... when all is said, we're done.®

brotherhood. I come to the rink and Quinn's my teammate but he's also my brother, but that's how I feel with everyone. Everyone here's my brother.

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: Kind of the same thing. Obviously it's pretty special opportunity to play with Aiden. Done it for a couple of years, but at this stage it's really special.

And it's fun, but like Lane said, the whole team kind of feels like they're brothers now. We're a super close group. So we're fortunate enough to have that.

Q. Lane, you were here last year. Obviously I know you're very happy to be back. The story line is very special for you I think. How do you think you've progressed from last year during the whole year? How did you evolve as a player?

LANE HUTSON: I think going off of last year, last year we had a special team, but I think over the summer, something I wanted to work on was getting faster and stronger. And I feel like I've done a pretty good job of that. The team's been growing along with me. So everyone here makes it easy on me.

Q. Macklin, I know obviously your focus this weekend is on this team and this tournament, but how much do you think this will help buoy your stock heading into the draft this year? And how much in the back of your mind is that a little bit?

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: I don't think I'm very focused on that. We've got a job to do this weekend. And it's kind of cliché but everything else will take care of itself. So we're focused on Thursday, first of all, and playing the best hockey for 60 minutes and then not looking past that.

Q. What's going to be key to shutting down Denver's high-powered offense tomorrow?

CASE MCCARTHY: I think for us it's dictating the way we want to play, worrying about ourselves, minimizing our mistakes. It's something that we've been growing as a team over the course of the year, and I think when we're playing our style, we're hard to deal with.

We have speed. We have some physicality aspects. We just have to stick to our game and stay patient for a full 60 minutes.

Q. Macklin, a lot is made about the fact that you're one of the youngest players in college hockey. A year ago this time what was the decision process? What were your options and what made you choose to go to the college route at your age?

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: For the last couple of years I've been thinking more and more about college hockey. And obviously I went to Chicago and felt like college hockey was the right path for me, just playing against older, more mature, stronger players. I felt like it would help me best just to develop. And obviously we have a great coaching staff here that made it a very easy decision to come here.

Q. Macklin, you showed your creativity on that spinning assist against the Gophers in the regional final. Could you take us through that play and what you saw?

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: Yeah, you can maybe call it lucky, but, no, I just tried to -- first of all, I just tried to get in the zone, and I saw someone coming backside. I didn't know who. I didn't know where. I just kind of threw a back post and fortunately enough it landed on Shane's tape and he was able to put it in.

I just tried to make the best out of an okay situation.

Q. The focus that Macklin gets on the ice, how does that help you guys as a team?

CASE MCCARTHY: He draws a lot of attention, that's for sure. I think for us, the way he works, the way he competes, he sets up plays and creates time and space for whoever he's on the ice against. Obviously you see it on the line especially.

But like Lane's goal against RIT to get us going in regionals, just finding time and space and being able to create those plays that end up on the back of that.

LANE HUTSON: Yeah, it's pretty special having a player like him on our team. I think when the other team has to worry about him so much, it definitely creates chances for other guys. And not many guys can contain him. So it's pretty special having him out there when you're out there with him.

But I think he just creates so many chances for everyone else, and it's definitely really fun playing with him.

Q. Lane or Case, what's the message from the leadership group going into tomorrow, especially for the younger guys that haven't been on this stage before?

CASE MCCARTHY: I think for us, it's enjoy it. It was good today to get out and practice and kind of take everything in, the experience, the rink with all the media and everything like that.

But tomorrow it's a business trip. We came here to win hockey games, and it starts tomorrow and starts from the drop of the puck. There isn't any time to kind of get used to the game. We have to be ready from puck drop, and I think it will help to have a lot of the experience from last year kind of show through with all the guys.

Q. QUESTION; what else can you say about Macklin? Can you say nice things about Macklin -- I know you did about him as the player. Or chirp him, either way.

LANE HUTSON: He's a pretty special player. It's really fun playing with him. He makes it real easy for our guys, for me especially. But just seeing how hard he works, how hard he competes every shift. When your most skilled player is doing that, it makes everyone want to do it, and it's easy to follow and get behind him.

Q. QUESTION; every NHL rink is 200-by-85 with a lot of seats around it. What have you guys thought about this place coming here yesterday and getting a look at Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul?

MACKLIN CELEBRINI: It's pretty cool. It's a unique rink. We played in MSG, in the Garden, this year, and they're both very cool and unique in their own way. It's also the same ice sheet, same surface. Not much different, though, when the puck drops. It's definitely a very cool experience and a very cool rink, but the same game at the end of the day.

Q. QUESTION; what do you think about the different NHL rinks you've played in?

CASE MCCARTHY: This one's cool. I've had the opportunity to play in this rink before, way back. Macklin keeps reminding me of how old I am on a daily basis whenever I say that.

But no, this one, it's pretty cool. The setup's a lot different than a lot of those other rinks, like the Garden, MSG, those types of rinks with the pillars on the corners and stuff like that.

But kind of like what Macklin said, when puck drops, you kind of forget about everything and just focus on the task at hand.

Q. QUESTION; I see Logan and his family are here and their other team impact members for other team members as well. Case, what has it been like to work with him, to have him around the team in the locker room? And how does that change your perspective?

CASE MCCARTHY: It's huge for us having him around. He's always got a smile on his face, always motivating us, and I think that perspective of sometimes things aren't going well for us on the ice or maybe before the game you're dealing with something or after the game, but just seeing him around, how much joy he brings to our locker room, it's been huge for us, having him on the bus, the plane. Just bringing that energy for us, it's been huge the past two years to have him around.

Like yesterday, sitting on the bus with him, just kind of hanging out, I think he saw a boat or restaurant 18 times on the way to dinner. It's been super cool getting to know him and getting to know his family and seeing it through a different perspective.

Q. QUESTION; Macklin's just 17. I know a lot has been made of that what have you seen from him as a player from the beginning of the year to now and just how exciting has it been to watch him?

JAY PANDOLFO: It's been a pleasure to coach Macklin. Just even from day one, his maturity, his preparation, his passion for the game. He comes to the rink every day, and you can tell he loves playing the game, and he wants to get better.

Forget the talent he has -- his talent is off the charts. But his competitiveness is second to none. And that's a pretty good recipe to have.

And I'll give you a story. The first day of, I guess, training camp for us, he pissed a lot of guys off but it was because of how competitive he is. He doesn't give anyone an inch and he's like that every day. And for a 17-year old to push a group of older players like that, it's pretty impressive and says a lot about him and about his character and about how much he cares.

And that's why he is who he is. And it's been great to have him around. He's a great teammate. He's coachable. He wants to be coached. He wants to be pushed. He wants to learn. And he's going to be a tremendous player for a long time.

Q. QUESTION; same thing I asked Case, what's going to be the key to slowing down Denver and their offense tomorrow night?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, they're a deep team. We've just got to make sure we manage the game. That's always -- it's easy to say, but it's true. Like we've got to make sure that we're staying above the puck, make sure that our reloads are really good, make sure our gaps are good for our D so they don't have a lot of time and space.

And the Buium kid is an excellent player. You have to have awareness when he's on the ice. And can make a play happen at any moment with his feet.

We just have to with awareness of who we're out there against. And we've just got to make sure we're on top of our game.

Q. QUESTION; nowadays players come and go so much more quickly. Macklin probably a one-and-done, let's be serious. But back in your day, you were there four years, Chris Drury was there four years. Maybe you had other guys, but it's much more rare. Do you notice a difference in team building and camaraderie because of that situation? Like, is it harder? Guys aren't there four years building that?

JAY PANDOLFO: Good question. I've only been here two years, I think it's tough for me to answer. I haven't seen it as an issue on our group this year.

This is a very, very close group and like we talked about the brothers, is that part of it? Maybe, but these guys really care about each other.

And I think it doesn't matter our group if you're a freshman or senior or grad student, these guys treat each other the same. And I think it's really impressive. Maybe it's because Case McCarthy is a grad senior, our captain, Gavin McCarthy is a freshman; does that bridge the gap? It might.

But I have not seen it as an issue. Maybe Macklin is a one-and-done, maybe Lane's is done -- we don't know that yet, but it hasn't affected our group at all from a camaraderie standpoint. Hasn't affected our culture in the short time I've been here.

I think if you bring the right type of player, if it's a one-and-done or two-and-done or whatever it might be, if they're the right type of person and they have their feet on the ground when they're here at BU, I think it makes a difference. We have those type of guys right now. So, it hasn't affected us in my opinion.

Q. QUESTION; we saw Doug Grimes on the third line with Zabaneh and Peterson in practice. Do you expect him to be back in the lineup? And what does that do with Jeremy Wilmer? Is that an extra forward or will he be scratched?

JAY PANDOLFO: That's going to be a game-time decision for us. I'm not sure yet. We haven't made a final decision on our lineup. We've looked at different guys in different

spots, we've had some time to do that over the last week and a half. But no decisions yet have been made in our lineup.

Q. QUESTION; I want to go back to Mack as a 17-year-old, first day at camp, future draft pick, skills will be obvious. I think everybody with that skill level is probably highly competitive. How unusual is that edge that would actually tick people off in a player?

JAY PANDOLFO: I don't think a lot of guys -- it's just inside him and the way he's wired. I think if you see, too, a 17-year-old player with that much offensive ability, if you see him on the other side of the puck, the defensive side of the puck, there's not a lot of players that young that have that type of skill that are going to be that hard defensively.

It says a lot about him he cares so much on the defensive side he wants to get the damn puck back. That's the way he's wired.

I've not seen a lot of guys with that type of offensive ability at that young an age, to be that mature to care that much about the defensive side of the game.

Q. QUESTION; since the game against Minnesota -- where were we, Sioux Falls, had to think for a minute -- I've talked to BU fans from nine to 90 because that's part of what I do because I have a very limited life obviously, make no apologies for it. That third period against Minnesota, coaches are hard to please by nature. If you could have drawn it up, was that close to the third period that you would aspire to in terms of how the Terriers handled that situation to come out of that regional with the win?

JAY PANDOLFO: I was certainly proud of our group the way we handled that third period. You're up by one goal going into the third and you know the other team's going to push. They have to, or they're done. And we outshot them.

They made some pushes. And when they did, our guys sacrificed themselves to win a hockey game. So I was very, very pleased. And at this point in the season, it can't just come from the coaches. Like, I felt it on the bench from our guys that they, they're doing everything they could to win that game and keep the lead. From our goaltender on out you could feel it, and it was great to see.

Q. QUESTION; what do you like tapping Macklin on the wings if you go with that fourth line instead of Petersen?

JAY PANDOLFO: I will say I'm probably going to keep that

line together. They've been very good together. And they can play against anyone. They're heavy, two big guys on the wing.

Sam Stevens is one of our most responsible players. They're a very effective line for us.

They're listed as a fourth line, but I'm not sure we have a fourth line. We have a lot of depth in our lines. The way they're listed doesn't mean one, two, three, four. We play our lines pretty evenly. They're very good at what they do.

Q. Looking at the third line again, if Doug Grimes does play tomorrow, just what identity does he bring to that line?

JAY PANDOLFO: He brings some size. It's another line, you have Zabaneh, who has a ton of speed, and you have two big wingers to create some space for him.

Grimes is a big forward. He's long. He skates very well. Just adds another element of size for our group.

Q. Similar question I had for Case, what is it like with working with Team IMPACT and having Logan around the team the last couple of years.

JAY PANDOLFO: I think it's been awesome for our team to have him around. Just the energy he has, the excitement he has every time he is around, it puts things into perspective, like Case said.

You're having a bad day, had a bad game, you see him after, and he's always got a smile on his face. And it helps you forget about it a little bit. So I think it makes these guys, too, grateful for where they're at and it goes a long way.

And their family's been great. It's been great to have him around. It certainly helps our team and he's been excellent.

Q. Two questions, one if I could, first of all, what was it like for you guys after the Hockey East championship, guys said they quickly turned the page because they knew they had to play, but two best teams in the country, you had an opportunity to go right and get back here. What was that like for you as a coach?

JAY PANDOLFO: We're certainly disappointed. But we knew we had to -- we knew we weren't done. That's for sure. We knew we still had an opportunity to play in the NCAA Tournament and get back to the Frozen Four.

Our guys, they took it upon themselves hey, we've got to move on. Are we disappointed? Of course.

Can we learn from some things that happened in that game? Of course we can. It was a quick turnaround, which I thought was great for our team.

For us, going on the road, I think it was a good time, getting away from the distractions around Boston and get away from the noise and be together and go out there and get the job done, and we did that.

So it's a credit to our group and the leadership group we have and a credit to our group for the way they respond to some adversity that we've been through this year and it hopefully helps us this weekend.

Q. You and I were both here 30 years ago. Nothing to be proud of, the fact that we're both old enough to say that. But the Frozen Four experience for you four times as a player, what it's like now. The hotel has been renovated. This is the same hotel, by the way. I found that out this morning. But just what the experience is like, then and now, to be part of a Frozen Four, first now as a coach and then as a player?

JAY PANDOLFO: Just grateful to be back here as a coach. Grateful for the opportunity that I had when I played at Boston University, playing for Jack Parker, playing with a lot of very good players, a lot of competitive players, a lot of high-character players. We had some great teams.

In saying that, when you're here, it's very difficult to win. This is the sixth time, but the five times I went before, I only won one time. It's very hard to win this tournament. The margin for error is very slim. The biggest thing is you can't beat yourself. That's part of it. You've got to limit your mistakes. Discipline is a factor. All these little things add up over the course of a game are really important.

That's what I learned from my experience here and it's very tough to win, but you've got to have the mindset that you believe you can. So that's how we're going into this year.

Q. You mentioned you played in the Frozen Four as a player. How impactful is this experience for the young players and their careers?

JAY PANDOLFO: I think it's great to be on this stage. I think guys come to BU to expect to have this opportunity. So it's a credit to them to get here. But this is a great stepping stone for these guys to play in this environment.

It's different than if you play in the National Hockey

League. You go to the playoffs you've got a seven-game series. In this environment you have one game. It's one-and-done. So that's high pressure, and it can help you grow as a person and as a player.

Q. Speaking with Shane Lachance for a few minutes, he seems to be a kid that's embraced the lineage in his family. What's it been like for you to watch as he goes about his business as he gets better and better?

JAY PANDOLFO: It's been a lot of fun coaching Shane. I know his family very well, beyond Jack and his mom. I know his dad very well. I roomed with his uncle for four years at BU. So the history is there.

Shane is a Terrier through and through. He grew up watching it, being part of it. He takes so much pride and cares so much when he puts that jersey on.

He's a leader on our team as a freshman and he has so much respect for the program. The players feel that. They have so much respect for him.

Even though he's a freshman he speaks as much as anyone because he knows what it means to people who care about this Terrier program. And I can't say enough good things about Shane Lachance. He's been awesome for us. He's continued to grow his game over the course of the year.

He knows who he is as a player. He's very comfortable in our room. Just a lot of things that go unnoticed about Shane Lachance. He means so much to our team.

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