

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Michigan State vs Boston College

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St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

Boston College Eagles Coach Greg Brown Cutter Gauthier Eamon Powell Jack Malone

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference

GREG BROWN: First, we're excited to be here. These guys next to me have worked really hard this year with their teammates, and you hope to be rewarded for all that effort. It's no guarantee. You have to beat a lot of very good teams to get here.

It's nice for them to have this opportunity, and we're excited to get started tomorrow.

Q. National coach of the year.

GREG BROWN: If you get an award like that, that means you have a lot of really good players on your team. Again, these guys have worked hard.

I think the one thing I appreciate is when we strung several wins together, they were never satisfied and didn't take nights off. They just kept pushing to keep winning. And as a result we've got ourselves to a good spot, and, whatever, they gave me something for that. I still had zero goals, zero assists, zero blocked shots. These guys have done all the work.

Q. Cutter, for you, just your thoughts on being here in Saint Paul and having the opportunity to win a national championship on top of what you guys have already accomplished?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: Yeah, it's a huge opportunity for us as a group to be where we're at today. And we're super fortunate for how our season's gone so far, and we couldn't be more excited and thrilled to be here in Saint Paul and



get the games underway. And, like I said, we're just super thrilled for this opportunity to be here today.

Q. Eamon, so much focus on, so much attention to the high-powered offense. But despite the fact that you posted 31 wins, it almost feels like Fowler's overshadowed a bit. What's it like to play in front of him and, as a defenseman, to have a goalie like him behind you?

EAMON POWELL: He's been awesome all year. Like you said, sometimes he doesn't get the credit he deserves, which is crazy because he gets so many accolades, but he brings so much confidence to our group, obviously. Other teams, other good teams are going to push the pace and bring some momentum. And he's always back there given us confidence.

As a defenseman like you said, he's always communicating. He's been unreal, and as a freshman he's really stepped up for us. He's been awesome all year.

Q. Jack, you'll be leading this team into the Frozen Four. And what you've seen so far, how do you encapsulate it all and how do you stay hungry for two more games?

JACK MALONE: Like Coach said, never being satisfying has been our MO here for the past couple of months, looking forward to the Hockey East and the national tournament. We've got a lot of great players and accomplished a lot, but the ultimate goal is right in front of us.

And knowing we're so close to that adds to the hunger for us. And we're not going to stop until we, until where we believe we can be.

So I think that it's just a culmination of a lot of success and a lot of good habits throughout the year that have ultimately got us into this position. So we want to continue to capitalize on what we've built on and keep going. Two of the biggest games of the year are ahead of us.

Q. Eamon and Jack, what's it like playing with Cutter?



What can you tell me about him as a player and as a person? Go ahead and spill all the beans; I can tell he's excited about that.

EAMON POWELL: Cutter has been awesome. Obviously from day one, coming in as a freshman there's a lot of hype, there's a lot of press about him.

But just his day to day, the way he goes about his business, he's just another kid, another guy in the locker room. His ability to connect with his teammates and really push each other on the ice and off the ice, I think is one of the best qualities about him.

Obviously you see all the stuff he does on the ice and how remarkable he's been for us this year in particular. So there's not enough good things to say about him. And he's going to have a bright future, for sure.

JACK MALONE: I agree with everything that Eamon just said. Even as a sophomore, he kind of surprises you the type of confidence he has in the locker room. And the voice he has amongst the guys, takes on a leadership role for us, for sure, and gives us a boost if we need it.

He's always working and setting an example for the big freshman class we have, and even for guys like myself and Eamon who have been around college hockey for a while. His habits are great. Like Eamon said, he's got a lot of hockey left to play in his future.

Q. Cutter, your team has won 14 games in a row. What was said after that last loss to motivate you guys?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: Obviously whenever you get the opportunity to play for a trophy like we did at the Beanpot and you come up short just due to a slow start is something you kind of kick yourself in the behind for. And we've had lots of success this season. And after that game we've had a lot of anger, too.

We set a goal at the beginning of the year to win a handful of trophies and one was stripped from us. That definitely put some fire in the pot for us. And we're just super excited to get back here and showcase our skills and our competition to win the games that matter the most.

Obviously that one sucked for us early on, but it was a nice wake-up call for us to hone in on the small details that we lacked in that game in a high-pressure moment. We're excited to get back here and play some big games. We have two left to get to the ultimate goal, and that's why you play college hockey.

Q. Cutter, the boys have mentioned a bright future for you. What do you anticipate that looks like? I know you're focused right now on getting to Saturday's title game, first and foremost. But how do you plan on making that decision, whether that's coming back to BC, NHL, and what do you anticipate that looks like?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: My goals and all that kind of stuff is pretty cool. But that's in the future and that's kind of far away. And all the guys have mentioned to me is live in the moment, go day-by-day and whatever the case may be.

I'm super excited to be here with the group of guys we have, and we came all this way to win a national championship. And Michigan is standing in our way. So we're just focusing on that tomorrow night.

Q. All season we've heard about Michigan's offense but seems like their defense improving in the last month has made a difference for them. What's the strategy against the Wolverines to get to their net?

EAMON POWELL: Obviously they have a lot of talented players up front. I think it goes to show you for all the teams that are here, a lot of really good players up front. A lot of offense.

And, like you said, as of recent, their defense has been great. Obviously I've played with Marshall Warren and know a couple of the other defensemen as well. So they're all talented players and they could definitely impact a game.

I think it's not to be taken lightly. They have a strong squad and they're here for a reason. I think we're just building up and gearing towards playing them tomorrow night.

JACK MALONE: I think that going into any game here you're expecting the other team to be good on both ends of the ice. I think when it comes down to for us is focusing on us.

We have a game plan that may be catered to our opponent but more or less it's pretty similar to the way we've been playing all along, and that's to move our feet and play simple. And if we have opportunities to make plays, then to make them.

We've got to respect the talent that they have and the power of some of their guys. But at the same time we want to be able to go into the game with confidence that we're going to execute our game plan no matter who the opponent is.

CUTTER GAUTHIER: Kind of like what Eamon said,



everyone's here for a reason. Michigan's had a good season. We've had a good season. Everyone here is at square one.

Doesn't matter how we got here, where we came from, there's two games to be played and whoever comes out fighting the most and has those small details, like the defense you mentioned, is going to come out on top. And we're just going to focus on everything we can control and what we can do to win that game tomorrow.

Q. Jack, Coach Brown was quick to turn all the attention to you guys. But what can you say about him as a coach that obviously earned him the accolades he earned today?

JACK MALONE: I mean, I think his response says a lot, the fact that he kind of deflects the credit to us, but at the same time he's been the leader of the group all year long. The way he controls the room and the voice he has and the messages he gives us, at times that may be tough. He gives us great messages to motivate us and to move us in the right direction.

And he's been a great leader for us all year long. Can't speak highly enough of the type of person he's been off the ice as well. He's a great coach but he's a great person as well. And I think that's why all the boys really love him.

Q. How are you feeling right now? Watching the end of that practice, looked like you guys were having fun, looked pretty loose out there. How are you feeling getting ready for tomorrow night's game?

EAMON POWELL: The biggest thing, obviously you can get caught up, it's a big stage, big pressure, but I think the big thing for our group is just to enjoy it. I think we're at our best when we're having fun and we're playing loose and stuff like that.

And obviously we got a young team. But like I said before, when we're enjoying it, we're having fun, we're just enjoying being out there, I think that's when we're at our best. So I think headed into this weekend and tomorrow, obviously, I think that's kind of the mindset, obviously be focused and dialed in when we need to be, but at the same time hockey is fun and we deserve to be here.

JACK MALONE: Like the boys, like Cut was saying, super thrilled to have this opportunity. It's what we look forward to all year long. And like Eamon said, it can be a lot.

The fact that when you're growing up and dreaming playing college hockey you dream of yourself being in the position we're in right now, and that could be a big pill to swallow.

But the boys are up to the test for sure and it's something that we've been preparing for physically and mentally, and to be here is just awesome.

I think everybody's going to be playing at their best tomorrow because we've got a group of guys who can really come to the plate, step up, no matter what it is, whether it's scoring goals, making plays, blocking shots. It's a great group to be a part of. And we're all just super excited and ready to bring out our best.

CUTTER GAUTHIER: I'm happy to be here. It's my first Frozen Four and just can't wait till tomorrow night's puck drop. Ready to go.

Q. The Wild are out of town. You got their locker room because you're the top seed did. Any, Matt Boldy or Billy Guerin leave you any nice notes behind or anything like that?

GREG BROWN: Been texting with Billy. Got to play with Billy back in college. Matt, Coach York said Matt was going to leave us a note, but I haven't found it yet. We'll keep looking.

Q. What has it been like to coach Cutter, and what can you tell me about him as a player from your perspective?

GREG BROWN: Everyone notices the goals and the offense, but two things. One, as a player, he's really expanded his game this year. We give him the toughest match-ups most nights.

He plays against a lot of other teams' first lines. He takes big draws in the defensive zone. He kills penalties now. So aside from his offensive abilities that everyone sees, he's really developed a 200-foot game.

And it's huge for our team, as a young team, to have a guy who is still young on the team but he can stabilize. When he gets out there, he can make sure not a lot of things go wrong. If we need to change the momentum he does a great job of that too. He's been enormous for our team.

Off the ice, or not during games, I think Jack mentioned it, he has a real purpose every single day. He shows up to get better. And his intensity in practice, his preparation for practice is all stuff that the other young guys have seen. He's probably helped them without ever realizing or knowing it just by the way he goes about his business.

Q. Jacob Fowler is only a freshman but he's won at every level. How important is that and what does he bring in that experience?

GREG BROWN: He showed early on that he's got a calmness to his demeanor. He doesn't get rattled by anything. And I think, especially with a young team, the guys can feed off of that.

When you see him no matter what the score is, doesn't let a bad goal affect him, not that he lets in many, but doesn't let a bad goal affect him. Doesn't let a lot of pressure, where the other team is in our zone for a while, doesn't let that get him rattled. He just keeps calm, steady, goes about his business. And the team definitely feeds off of that.

They see him back there doing his thing. Not that he's relaxed, but he's under control all the time. He doesn't start flailing from side to side or guessing. He just stays right within himself. And it's huge for not only our defense but our whole team.

Q. Ryan Leonard had a spectacular freshman season. Does it look to you maybe he's taken another step up in this postseason?

GREG BROWN: I guess just to be able to do that in the postseason is taking a step up because the games that much tighter, the ice gets that much smaller when you're playing -- we had a very tough regional against two excellent teams that really tried to take ice away and limit your chances, and he was still able to find his cracks to create offense.

If you can produce like that at the same rate or even a little more than you did in the regular season, then that's very impressive. It's so hard to produce in playoffs at any level. You see that in the NHL, you see it in college. So for him to contribute as much as he did last week is a great testament to his abilities.

Q. BU alum Jack Eichel told me his vote was for Will Smith for Hobey Baker. What has Will meant for your team? And how do you describe what he's meant for the team in his freshman year?

GREG BROWN: That's nice of Jack. For Will to lead the country in scoring as a freshman is extremely impressive. I guess he's got a lot of abilities, but his awareness of space and how to create space for his teammates is something that's really special for a young kid, a freshman.

The familiarity with his linemates, so they know how to read him, also helps. But he can really see things that not a lot of kids see, especially that young.

He has a great ability to pass the puck exactly how hard it

needs to be passed. If he needs a rocket to put through a small area, he does. Or if he needs to lay it out to an area in front of people, he does that extremely well, too.

Like a good quarterback who knows exactly how hard to throw it, or a short stop who can always get the guy out by half a step, Will has that ability. For any young guys, like all of our young guys that are that high in the scoring race nationally is a testament to their abilities.

Q. I can't wait until the BU folks hear that Jack Eichel voted for Will Smith. (Laughter). But the same question I had for the players in terms of watching that practice there's a lot of chirping going on. Looks like a lot of fun. They're pretty loose. Is that what you like to see from your teammates as you get ready for tomorrow night?

GREG BROWN: Yeah, it's still hockey. I think it's so important to be excited for the moment but not to stress over it. It's an opportunity for the guys to do something. They'd be kicking themselves if we didn't get the opportunity to be here. So when you are here, you should enjoy it, not stress over it.

Q. When you look at the fine line between really good offensive teams and still being responsible in your defensive zone, you've meshed it pretty well. Is there a secret?

GREG BROWN: No. All coaches will stress. It's clear you need offense. The four teams here average the most goals a game. But all of them will tell you -- and we're no different -- that if you can't take care of things in your own end you don't get to this point.

We want to be offensive. We want to make plays and create. But you have to be responsible or you don't get to play in playoff games. You don't win playoff games.

Our guys have understood that message this year. They've been very receptive to practices. I know when we practice D zone it's not their favorite thing. But they understand that they want to win and that's a huge part of it.

Q. I know you're a big USA Hockey guy, and college hockey is that next step before professional hockey. How exciting is it to see how much college hockey has grown with the amount of NHL draft picks for your squad and everybody here, just the testament it is to how elite hockey at the college level is?

GREG BROWN: It's great to see that the depth in college hockey is as high as it's ever been. You keep seeing the

percentage of NHL players from college creep up every year. I think it's become so clear that it's a great path for kids to, one, get an education but, two, achieve their goals of wanting to play pro hockey.

You see high-end Canadian kids coming down now. You see so many American kids, and it's just great to see. It's exciting for USA Hockey, and it's exciting for college hockey that now more and more foreigners are recognizing that it's a great path as well.

Q. When you've got 33 wins there might not be a lot of opportunities to face a ton of adversity over the course of the year. I'm curious, when you look back at the regionals and how those two games played out, specifically for the younger guys, because the older guys have been through stuff before, but specifically for the younger guys to go through that, have to make some in-game adjustments in both of those games and have success, how important could that be this weekend?

GREG BROWN: Yeah. We knew if you make it to the NCAAs you're going to have tough battles, but both of those teams play a different style than us, and they're both heavier, a little older, and so it was tough going. There wasn't a lot of free ice out there.

So for our guys to go through that and figure out a way to come out on top is huge, to have that experience. The game tomorrow is going to be, I'm sure, just as tightly contested but different style probably than our regional games, but anytime you can weather the storm, everything doesn't go perfectly, but you find a way to come out on top, it gives you that much more confidence when you go for your next test.

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