

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

Thursday, April 11, 2024

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

Boston College Eagles

Coach Greg Brown

Cutter Gauthier

Jacob Fowler

Will Smith

Semifinal Postgame Media Conference

Boston College - 4, Michigan - 0

GREG BROWN: An interesting game. I thought we did a great job of capitalizing when we had chances, but Michigan did a great job of coming out of their zone with a ton of speed. So even when we were ahead a few goals, it never felt like we were in control or the game was settled. Credit to them on being able to transition so well.

But with those transitions, our defense did a great job handling rushes, and Jacob was outstanding in the net tonight. So we were able to thwart those.

Ideally we like to spend more time in the offensive zone, but they were doing a solid job defensively keeping us on the perimeter. But when we did get small cracks and chances, we were able to finish those. So we'll credit to our forwards to capitalize on our chances.

I thought the third period when we were ahead, we started to simplify our game, play a little safer, use the walls a little more, and we were able to do a nice job there keeping pucks out of the middle and spending more time not scrambling in our zone.

So I was really happy with probably the second half, maybe second, probably 12, 13 minutes left in the third, we did a great job of really limiting their chances to come back and get in the game.

I thought our penalty kill did a good job. Power play really sharp on the first one. Moved the puck well. But after that,



I think their penalty kill was solid and did a good job of keeping us on the outside.

All in all, it was a track meet, which we kind of expected. A lot of rushes going both ways, but I think our rush defense was probably the best part of our game tonight. And we did a great job there.

Q. Cutter, you mentioned the other day that the Beanpot loss to BU really put a fire in this team's belly. How much fire are you all feeling now after this win being just one step away from the big trophy?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: I said it earlier in the year. Anytime someone commits to Boston College it's to win championships, and we have an opportunity for that on Saturday. Been super proud of our groups up to this point. And we owe this guys -- it was an early match-up at Conte Forum and unfortunately didn't come out with the win then. Even since then we haven't let that sour taste out of our mouth. And we're going to be ready to go on Saturday.

Q. Cutter and Will, how much does it help having a goalie like Jacob who has just a calm demeanor in the net but he's always in position and always ready? What does that mean for a team?

WILL SMITH: I mean, going into every game, it's nice having him back there. He has such a confidence in net. Coach touched on it, there were a few too many, too many odd-man rushes. So having him back there definitely helps. Looking at this he had 32 saves. I mean, he was unreal tonight.

CUTTER GAUTHIER: He's probably the calmest goalie I've ever played with. Any opportunities we give up, just knowing that safety net back there that he's in between the pipes, and he's as competitive as all of us, and he's a great kid as well.

So super pumped for him and the game he had today. It's been fun learning how to score goals on him in practice. But great kid and he had one heck of a game tonight.

Q. Jacob, are you one of those goalies that likes to



feel the puck? And if so how much fun was that third period where you've got some goal support and they're firing away with 17 shots?

JACOB FOWLER: I mean, our D were really good tonight eliminating the grade A chances against. So didn't really feel like 32 shots against. They made it pretty easy on me to kind of be able to see everything and kind of limit the severity of the chances.

Q. Will, you're a local guy from Lexington, Massachusetts. What does it mean to wear the BC sweater and score the game-winning goal to send BC to the national championship?

WILL SMITH: Told me as a kid this would be kind of crazy I remember the days I was watching Johnny Gaudreau in the same Frozen Four. So it's a dream come true. It would be unbelievable to get that trophy just like he did.

Q. Cutter and Will, your guys' rush defense was phenomenal tonight. How effective was that in helping you guys move pucks up ice and create chances in the second and third?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: It's huge. Coach preached on it. It's the small details, having good gaps. They have a really solid forward corps, and they like to transition fast.

Our D had great gaps all night. It gave us the freedom to make plays off the rush. And they had, like I said, great gaps, super confident back there. Just watching it all game long.

You have the utmost confident when three studs are coming down on them. And it was super fun to watch how great they were tonight.

WILL SMITH: I mean, all year we've been talking about how we want to play fast. So I think it's nice when our D are back there. And they can turn over and they're playing it quick up to us. We love playing fast, and just go right back on offense.

Q. Four goals, it just seems like a regular thing for you guys game in and game out. How are you able to make it look so easy with every game?

CUTTER GAUTHIER: We said it many times. We're a very competitive group with a lot of high octane on the offensive side, and we do our best to score goals. And we loved doing it all season long.

It's just the confidence we have that we build up over the last eight, nine months in practice competing against the

best players in the country. Anytime you get an opportunity to have a chance on net, we're always striving to get pucks to the net and create chances. And we were fortunate to get four in tonight.

Q. Cutter and Will, you've been playing on these big stages and finding success and finding ways to push, going back to the World Juniors. What has that been like and how much have you guys helped each other along in those situations as well?

WILL SMITH: I think we've talked about this a lot, these big opportunities, we like to have fun and enjoy the moment. So I think dating the all the way back to World Juniors, crazy atmosphere. And go all the way through the year we've had huge games -- Beanpot hockey and now here. We feed off the energy, and we love playing in front of these atmospheres.

CUTTER GAUTHIER: Everyone says we have a super young group, which we do, but we have a very experienced group as well playing in high-octane games like World Juniors, Hockey East championship and the Frozen Four. And there's no doubt in our game in the locker room, and we've been super confident with the group we had all season long.

Even being the younger guys, we never looked at that affect our game. We stick to the Coach's plan, playing fast and competitive and always out-compete the other team. And it was a fortunate night for us to pop four in and it's the ultimate goal on Saturday night.

Q. You mentioned you already saw Denver earlier this season. A match-up of two of the best offenses in the country. What's it going to take to stop Denver on Saturday night to bring home the medal?

GREG BROWN: We'll have to be very sharp. Kind of got to watch most of their game tonight while we were waiting. And they're still able to generate offense at a very impressive rate.

Hopefully we won't give up as many odd-man rushes as tonight but we know we'll have to be sharp. They create on the rush and they're great in the offensive zone.

Their defense is very active. They're going down the wall or joining the rush all the time. So we're going to have to do a really thorough job defensively when they have the puck.

Q. What have you learned about your team since that loss to Denver?

GREG BROWN: That was a long time ago. We've improved a lot. But that was a really fun hockey game. It was back and forth. It was two good teams both making a lot of plays.

I think the biggest mistake we made in that game was we took a few penalties. I think we had maybe three in the last 10 minutes of the game. So we learned from that.

But other than that, I think both teams have stuck to that style. Both teams are creating offense. And when you play against a team that's that gifted offensively, you know you have to manage the puck because if you give them free chances, they'll really make you pay.

I think we didn't have a ton of neutral zone turnovers tonight, but we were not as effective with our forecheck of keeping them in the zone. They came out of their zone great, for them, with too much speed. So we'll have to be better at that against Denver.

Q. Obviously Michigan's got a really good power play. I don't think they ever really got a chance to do much in the zone. I know they had two chances where they were called for penalty like 30 seconds later. I don't know if you think that those are sort of turning points for you, especially the 4-on-4 where you scored the two goals, maybe ask what you saw from their power play and if you thought that was also a turning point?

GREG BROWN: It's always nice when the power play is done quickly like that. But they still looked dangerous. I thought we got some great blocks when they were able to create lanes and get shots. I thought Hreschuk and Minnetian had couple great blocks there. So if you don't get those blocks then all of a sudden the power play feels much more dangerous.

I thought we had a few good clears as well. Their power play was the best in the country. So, one, you want to limit chances, which we were fortunate not to get too many and a couple of them ended quickly. And when they moved the puck as effectively as they do, you have to get blocks when they get you out of position. So we did a great job on that.

Q. Did you ever find Matt Boldy's surprise in the locker room?

GREG BROWN: Still looking. Billy Guerin came over at the restaurant to say hello last night. So that was good. Still wondering what's in our locker room. At least we still have two more days to find out.

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