

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Denver vs Boston College

Saturday, April 13, 2024

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

Denver Pioneers

Coach David Carle

McKade Webster

Rieger Lorenz

Jared Wright

Matt Davis

Finals Postgame Media Conference

Denver - 2, Boston College - 0

Q. Jared, could you take us through your goal tonight? And Tristan had the Minnesota moment the other night. Were you trying to match that?

JARED WRIGHT: I guess, I don't know. I just remember coming up the ice with the puck and kicked it out to Rieger. Tried picking the guy's stick. Rieger made an awesome play to get it back to me. Just kind of threw it blind to the net, and I was lucky enough it rolled in. And it was a big goal.

DAVID CARLE: What an effort by our team. I thought they executed unbelievably well. These guys up here, everybody laid it all on the line. And we're national champions. So proud of them. They'll walk together forever.

Big compliments to Greg Brown, his staff and the season they had at Boston College. He's returned them to being a perennial contender. And we look forward to playing them again in many of these types of games.

We're going to enjoy this one, and so proud of our team and our program and all the people who came before us.

Q. Rieger, take us through the play because it was kind of a special play by Zeev, I thought?

RIEGER LORENZ: Yeah, Zeev's been doing it all year. He climbed up the ice, beat a few of guys. I was lucky



enough to find open ice, and he found me. And I was lucky enough to put it in.

Q. Matt, the save on Leonard on the power play, I don't know if you saw that it was Ryan Leonard when you're diving across there, but what's going through your mind when you make that save? And after, when the puck is cleared, I saw you go like this, like, no big deal. Wondering your thoughts.

MATT DAVIS: I just saw the puck go back door again. I was like, uh-ho, and I dove over and made the save. I was on the net catching my breath back and just redialing, I guess.

Q. Rieger and Jared, your line was obviously effective tonight. What do you guys think you did to have such success?

JARED WRIGHT: I think we move our feet a lot, stay above pucks. We reload really well. I'm beyond bless to play with Zeevs and Rieger. And I think we just complement each other really well.

RIEGER LORENZ: Both guys are just incredibly hard-working people and hockey players. I think we work well off each other. And, yeah, we're champions.

Q. Talk about how you stifled BC for two periods. They looked very frustrated. The neutral zone looked like that was kind of the strong part of your game.

RIEGER LORENZ: I think it was in the prep work. We have the best coach in college hockey. He prepares us through the weeks and in the pre-scout as well. He's helped me and our teams so much and through all of our careers. We're incredibly blessed to have him, and, yeah, couldn't do it without him.

JARED WRIGHT: Picking back off Rieger our team-first attitude, our commitment to defense, I thought, has gotten better especially down the stretch of the NCAA Tournament. And obviously we have Mathieu Davis in that.

MCKADE WEBSTER: Mathieu Davis, what a job he did. Best goalie in the world.

Truly I think it's the culture. I think it's all year. I think a lot of people maybe came at our defensive structure throughout the year, but we stuck to it. And I think it's just Denver hockey, doing whatever it takes, sacrificing everything for this group. It's all about team success and not individual success in this program.

MATT DAVIS: McKade summed it up perfectly there. The culture at Denver is unmatched, from the alumni, to the coaches, to the administration, to the players. We just bring in just unbelievable people. And I've met some of the best people I'll ever meet at this school and some of my greatest friends.

I think that's really what has taken us to, I mean, both national championships that Webby and I were here for. It's unreal.

Q. Matt, have you seen a replay of that save, or how many people have sent you a replay of that save so far?

MATT DAVIS: I just saw it on the JumboTron. I just thought, sweet. Like, as long as it's not in the back of the net, that's sweet.

Q. Matt, talk about your season. Obviously that was kind of the big unknown for this team going in was the goaltending. And just talk about the journey this season. Because I know you had some ups and downs you went through.

DAVID CARLE: Absolutely. I hadn't played for a while. So I had to get back into some certain details and habits. And I mean with our goalie coach, Ryan Massa, he's been absolutely incredible for me, absolutely incredible.

I love that guy to death. He's done so much for me and for my family. I mean, we had a lot of valleys this year, that's for sure. But man it feels good to be on the summit.

MCKADE WEBSTER: It's not unknown now.

Q. McKade, what does it feel like to win a national championship? But also as the captain of this program, what does it mean to you to be the national champion with the C on your chest?

MCKADE WEBSTER: I couldn't ask for a better group. It's been so easy with these guys and the staff and everyone that puts time into Denver hockey, all the alumni and the administration. It's been super easy.

They're the best guys in the world in that locker room. So I'm super happy for them, especially the guys that hadn't won one. Now they don't have to listen to us talk about what it was like when we won. But super proud of our group. They were awesome.

Q. Rieger, you're an Alberta boy. Probably looked at a lot of schools. What was it that attracted you to this program that obviously has been such a winning program when you were first considering Denver?

RIEGER LORENZ: I mean, I think Webby already touched on it, when I came down getting recruited just seeing the quality of coaches and the quality of people. It's a winning culture. And you get excited to be part of something like that.

MATT DAVIS: Shout-out to (indiscernible).

RIEGER LORENZ: Shout-out to Edge School.

Q. McKade, talk a little bit about, I know it's tough when he's sitting right there, but talk about Matt and just kind of a little bit of his personality and what you guys maybe know about him?

MCKADE WEBSTER: Oh, I know everything about him pretty much. I live with him. I won't trade any of his secrets. But he's an unbelievable guy. He's gone through a lot in his career to be here.

I'm so happy for him. And I don't want to say I called it, but I said he'll win a national championship one day here. If I'm not here, he'll still do it. So, like, we all knew this in the back room, how good he was, and he would carry us to a national championship.

So he's a great guy. His family's awesome. He has one of the best families ever. I'm just super happy for him, because last time he wasn't -- had the control to be playing. So now he was out there. And he won us a national championship this go-around. Super proud of him, and he's an unbelievable guy.

Q. Rieger, safe to say this might be your favorite building to play in ever? You'll be comfortable playing here?

RIEGER LORENZ: Yeah, and a lot of good memories in here so far this year, so yeah.

Q. Not that you need bulletin-board material in this game, I don't know if you saw this before the game, but Cutter Gauthier gave an interview on ESPN, saying,



there's going to be a lot of tears for that team over there. Did you guys see that at all or did that register at all?

MCKADE WEBSTER: No, we didn't see that. We don't really care that much. He's a great player. They have a great team over there. No disrespect from our group or anyone. Hope he has a good career.

Q. Jared, could you go through your decision to go to Denver?

JARED WRIGHT: Just my visit. Like Rieger said earlier, just the people and the coaches. And honestly I'm just very lucky that this coaching staff saw something in me. Just very grateful for the opportunity to get to play here.

And, I mean, just Denver hockey is everything to me and I'm so proud just to be a Pio.

Q. I talked to your coach yesterday and he mentioned the thing that's locked in for him with regard to you is how calm you've been in the goal for the last little while. Do you feel there was a game where a switch flipped, or what's that all about?

MATT DAVIS: I had to go through a couple of hiccups to learn that throughout the year, and it was just kind of trusting in the process that me and Ryan Massa set out and my sports psychologist Stephen Gonzalez. And we made it so that I would just focus on my breath. I mean kind of pump my own tires in net when I would talk to myself. I mean, it sounds kind of weird, but I am a goalie, so --

Q. What have you learned, first as an assistant coach now as a head coach, just about the four-game nature of the NCAA Tournament, where you don't have to be the best team necessarily from September to now; you have to be the best team in March and April? Is this kind of another testament to that?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I think I mean it's a really hard tournament to win because of the single-elimination nature of it.

Certainly, I think, you're always trying to get better week-to-week, month-to-month, and trying to keep the big picture in mind and not get too high, get too low with a regular-season game here or there, even though it feels that way sometimes. You think the world's ending after a 7-2 loss at home to Western, and you're totally elated sweeping St. Cloud on the road.

You try to keep an even keel with it, learn, learn throughout

the process. And we had a group of guys, led by McKade, that really bought into the things that we were preaching. And they know. They're smart kids and smart players. Many of them have won before and been on big stages.

They knew the transformation we needed to make, and they fully committed to each other. It has nothing to do with me or our coaches, it's them committing to one another. And they drove the bus the last two, two and a half months of this season. And couldn't be prouder of them.

Q. BC generates a lot of their offense in transition with speed. And it seemed like maybe the exception of that Will Smith break-away in the first period, I can't think of many other times where they were able to attack the zone with numbers. How much of a focus was it to stay above them in the neutral zone?

DAVID CARLE: It was everything. We feel our offensive zone was the most important zone to try to slow them down -- how they break pucks out, how they transition out of their D zone, how they pull pucks back and really try to spread you out.

It makes it really, really challenging. And I thought in the third they actually started to put more pucks behind us and generate possession that way, rather than trying to go through us off the rush. And that led to a lot of what they were able to create. Obviously the power plays were very dangerous as well.

But they're a team that keeps you on your heels. If you play on your heels, you're playing with fire. You have to find a way to skate forward and angles and stay on your toes and disrupt them and make them uncomfortable. I thought we did that well the first two periods. And the third period was Matt Davis' show.

Q. You had players telling the world that you're the best coach in the nation. What does that feel like? What does this group mean to you?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, it means a lot. It's a far cry from six years ago when everybody said I was too young to do this.

I think we've got great people. I've been extremely blessed to have great mentors, be supported by an unbelievable wife and family. And it's a total team effort to do what we do at Denver. And just really proud of the whole program. I think the run we're on is a reflection of the people that we have.

And couldn't be more happier or more proud that these kids, they get an opportunity, eight of them to win again.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

The other 19 get their first crack at winning at this level. And I think when you do things like this, you just have so much joy for them because of how much work they put in together. And to be able to walk out of here as the last team standing is such a huge honor them. Really proud of them and share a lot of joy with them.

Q. How would you describe what your game plan was going in, what you're showing the guys on film? And how did that first match-up early in the season kind of influence what you were trying to do?

DAVID CARLE: Again, they're dangerous. A lot of it was how we angled, how we tried to control the middle of the rink, try and make them play through us. We trusted that if we did that, we have good sticks on our end as well, and if we get transition going the other way from good defense that we'd get our opportunities and our chances.

I thought both goalies were the two best players on the ice. And I think it was a real similar game to when we were out there for the fourth game of the year. That was a 4-3 game. I think the goalies -- and the level of desperation defensively this time of year goes up -- and I think that has been the story to a lot of our games.

Many of them could have been 4-3, 4-2, 5-3, but the goaltending and the level of desperation on the D side in critical moments was extremely high. That's a little bit of the game plan and such.

Q. What makes Rieger Lorenz an effective player? And how different is he today versus the first game he had as a freshman with Denver?

DAVID CARLE: I think he's very different, in a good way. And Rieger had a very productive junior career, took part in Hockey Canada events. And I think coming to Denver and playing at the college level, he looks like a specimen -- he looks like a man. But you forget he's a true freshman sometimes.

And there was a lot of growth and maturity, I think, to be had in his game. And he's found a way to, I think, transform himself into, really what we talk about is finding a B game. So when he's not scoring or producing, he's still adding a lot of value to the game.

I think that's something for a lot of young players that is hard to find, and I think it's a reason why many don't ultimately make it because there's only so many top six spots in the NHL. Those guys usually stay in the league for a while. So there's not a lot of turnover there.

And the guys who can find a niche in playing and finding a

B game in contributing to a team's victory, regardless of being productive, have success. And he's found that consistency. He needed to -- it's all him. He made the decision that that's what he was going to do.

And you look at the year he's had, he's had 16 goals, 14 assists. And my DU math, that gets me to 30, which is a pretty good year in college hockey. He's turned himself into a really good 200-foot winger.

And really proud of him for wanting to buy in and learn. And I think he's shown all of us and shown the world that he can play on an NHL roster some day.

Q. You've never shied away from your stated goal of winning the race to 10. Now you've done it. Could you reflect on the journey, and now that you're here, what that means to you.

DAVID CARLE: There's a lot of great college hockey programs. It's a really hard event to win. And obviously the nine title teams prior to went through a huge lift to get us here. But we certainly try and attract people that want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Like McKade said, they don't care necessarily about their individual success as much as the team's success. And the transformation, I think, of Denver hockey from the late '80s, early '90s to now, and obviously the success we had in the '50s and '60s and the lull that the university itself went through in the '80s and '90s. And the university was really saved by Dan Ritchie and many of his colleagues and friends in the city, and I think when they stepped in to save the university, it was with this vision in mind.

He brought everybody to Division I in our athletic department in 1999, built the Ritchie Center, and I think it's so special that he got to be here to experience this because in his wildest dreams, he's got a high standard, but I don't know if he would have dreamed of five championships since that building was built and being the first to 10.

We owe so much to the people who came before us, and we're so proud to be Pioneers and carry that honor of being the first to 10.

Q. Is there a way to describe, I guess, what Matt Davis did tonight?

DAVID CARLE: Superhuman. This whole run, he gave up three goals. It's incredible what he did. A lot of big-time saves in those games. It's not like we weren't giving up any chances. Did we get better defensively? Yes. Did we get more predictable? Yes. But there's many moments in



all these games that he could have cracked and he didn't.

I agree with McKade, without him we're not sitting here. So he earned this for us, and so proud of the work that Ryan Massa has done with him over the past three years.

Obviously Matt spoke a little bit to that and his perseverance and getting through a lot of his challenges and adversity. Couldn't be happier for Matt and his family and what he was able to do for this program on this playoff run.

Q. Could you describe how Jared Wright has developed in his two years in the program?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I'm not sure there's a faster player in college hockey. His speed is exceptional. I think his offensive confidence continues to grow. Again, 15 goals in college hockey is not an easy thing to do. And I think he's learning to score in different ways.

You watch him in Juniors, a lot of it, truthfully, was the breakaway he had tonight. He scored a few of those goals this year. Most of his goals last year were that way. But he's scoring in different ways around the net, finding open ice in quiet areas. So that's been great to see.

And he's the nicest human you'll ever meet. Amazing, amazing kid. So proud of him. Teammates love him. You can tell how much it means to him to be here and to be part of this, and there's not many people that you cheer harder for than Jared Wright, I'll tell you that.

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