

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Denver vs Michigan

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

T-Mobile Arena

Denver Pioneers

David Carle

Kent Anderson

Sam Harris

Eric Pohlkamp

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Denver. Start with some thoughts, Coach Carle, being back in the Frozen Four.

DAVID CARLE: It's been great so far. I think the organizing committee, obviously North Dakota, the NCHC as the host, the city of Las Vegas, have done a great job so far. Very appreciative of the host. Think it's going to be a great atmosphere.

They obviously know how to entertain, put events on. We're really looking forward to playing at T-Mobile. I think it's going to be a great hit for college hockey.

Obviously games haven't started yet, but a venue we can certainly look to come back to. Very grateful to be here. Looking forward to the games tomorrow.

Our team has done a lot of work to get to this point, as the other teams have. We're excited to get playing again tomorrow evening.

THE MODERATOR: Kent, have you been here before?

KENT ANDERSON: My first time.

THE MODERATOR: So far?

KENT ANDERSON: So far it's amazing. It's nice, got a couple days to get a practice here, get settled in. I'm excited.

THE MODERATOR: Sam, you've probably been here before?

SAM HARRIS: Yeah (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Happy to be back?

SAM HARRIS: Yeah, this is more my climate, nice and warm.

THE MODERATOR: Did you see Elvis and the showgirls today?

SAM HARRIS: Saw them yesterday when we got off the bus.

THE MODERATOR: Elvis, too?

SAM HARRIS: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Did you take pictures?

SAM HARRIS: No (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Eric?

ERIC POHLKAMP: Trying to get my tan on here, so...

THE MODERATOR: We'll use the microphone for questions.

Q. As you know, Vegas has really blossomed as a huge sports town. Your impressions of Las Vegas as a sports hub, your initial impressions in terms of the Frozen Four?

SAM HARRIS: Yeah, no, it's pretty sweet. When they first announced the Golden Knights were coming into Vegas, that was back home when I was in San Diego, is like, I don't know how that is really going to work. They came in, had the great first year.

It's a great city for entertainment, as Coach Carle said. Happy to be a part of it.

ERIC POHLKAMP: Yeah, I really didn't know much about the town. My whole family is out here, 10 of us. Really

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close family. Happy to have them out here. Town is sweet so far.

THE MODERATOR: We have Coach Tortorella back here in Vegas.

KENT ANDERSON: My parents saw we were coming here, they were excited. Obviously didn't really know why, never been her. You can see the bright lights, the excitement building up already. No games played yet. Definitely looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Coach Carle, do you feel Hockeytown here?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah.

Q. What struck you the most about Pohlkamp this year? What he's brought to the group, how his game has evolved?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, his energy, his competitiveness are the things that stand out. Loves being at the rink, being around the players, the guys.

On the ice, very competitive. Wants to impact the game time both ends of the rink. Does it with a level of abrasiveness that's pretty unique I think for his position. To me, again, his personality coming out in how he plays.

Obviously has a tremendous skill set. Has had a great year for us.

Q. Can any of you guys talk about especially for more of the casual college hockey fans how special college hockey is compared to maybe basketball, football, that has perennial teams that always contend? In your case you have schools that are not as big as the Michigans and Wisconsin. Talk about how special college hockey is in terms of having universities that do have hockey backgrounds but are a little smaller in scale.

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's what makes college hockey very unique. It's very local. It's very regional. Very diehard local fanbases.

You get events like this where we're quite a small school, it's really hard for us to compete against a school like Michigan in any sport, outside of our hockey team, our lacrosse program, probably our gymnastics team.

We have a great athletic history and tradition. But to do it with only 6,000 undergrads, not the big alumni base that a

school like Michigan has, I would even throw North Dakota in there as a smaller institution as it relates to Wisconsin and Michigan.

Certainly that's been the hallmark of our conference. We won seven of the last nine national championships. None of us are these big, huge state schools. It starts with great leadership from our presidents and chancellors and our athletic directors. Really it's ingrained within our local communities and fanbases.

There's lots of great college hockey towns around the country that get to play on this stage, which again makes it a wonderful thing. It's not just run and overtaken by the big boys as it would be, like you said, in football and basketball.

THE MODERATOR: Eric, a players's perspective on the topic?

ERIC POHLKAMP: Yeah, I played up -- my freshman year. It's really hard, a different conference with the CHA, almost had three teams in the tournament this year.

It's tough. Every game is really hard. We played North Dakota that year, we played Duluth. We gave them tough games, no different.

No, the same situation, here at Denver. College hockey is so good this year. It's tough to win any night. It's tough to win in that environment, for sure.

Q. Obviously coming into this game there's two goalies, both freshmen, small goaltenders. What can you appreciate by Jack's style? What can you say about Johnny's performance this year?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I mean, four freshmen goalies are here, two freshmen goalies in the championship game a year ago. Really a unique circumstance going on right now in college hockey.

Certainly Jack is an excellent goalie. Michigan is an excellent team, 31 wins. Jack got hurt for a bit. Their depth in all three positions is really good. A lot is made of Johnny. Certainly what he's been able to do for us in the second half. Our guys have lots of belief in him and his abilities.

There's four great goaltenders here. We're looking forward to the competition.

Q. Explain to the national media that's on the scene now what it means to be a Pioneer from maybe in July until now, and the history that you have of winning

championships.

KENT ANDERSON: Yeah, the Pioneer family is a special one. Being here for four years, you learn about all the success, the tradition, the culture this place has. Every day you're lucky to be with these teammates, staff, with everyone.

A great alumni base. Being able to talk with those guys, get their wisdom, their experiences, it's a family all around, a special place to be.

SAM HARRIS: Yeah, especially since the first time I went on my visit, I just kind of knew it was going to be my home. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this program. For everybody who has come before me, it's our job to continue on that legacy, making sure we're leaving it better than we found it.

ERIC POHLKAMP: Yeah, to be honest with you, I really didn't know much about Denver, coming from a small town in Minnesota. Found out really quick what it meant to be a Pioneer. Don't care about the money, the fame, the glory, you just come here to win. We're trying to do that this weekend.

Q. Coach Carle, you used the word 'abrasive' to describe Eric's leadership style. That word is usually a pejorative. Could you expand on that a little bit.

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I mean, I think I described it within how he plays. So I just think he attacks the game with and without the puck. He can put people on their heels with how he attacks with it. He's obviously got a great shot. But when he's not shooting action like he's coming at you, I don't think it's very comfortable feeling for people. When he's coming at you when he doesn't have the puck, again, I don't think it's a real comfortable feeling.

That's what I mean by it. It's an aggressive style. 'Abrasive' is what came to mind and came out of my mouth for you, so... That's how I describe him.

Q. Speaking about kind of an aggressive style, Sam, you've got a terrific reverse check. Can you talk about how you've developed it, expand upon maybe the abrasive nature of your reverse check.

DAVID CARLE: Word of the day.

SAM HARRIS: Yeah, I'd say ever since I could start hitting, I just liked it. Anytime somebody came near me, I had the chance to kill them, I wanted to. Just kind of threw my body into them full force. If the reverse happens, it happens. If not, I'm laying on my ass. I got to get up and

keep going.

THE MODERATOR: Terrific summary.

DAVID CARLE: Sam Harris, everybody (smiling).

Q. The perspective of you guys for the goaltending position. Didn't really play out in a linear way this year. There was certainly some ups and downs, adversity you had to deal with with Johnny Hicks being the starter.

THE MODERATOR: Is that a question?

Q. Just about the goaltending position, how it evolved over the course of the year.

DAVID CARLE: Is that for me?

Yeah, I mean, it was fairly, I don't know, out of our control in a lot of ways. Q earned a starting role, did a really good job in the first half. He got injured in January. Then Johnny was given an opportunity to come in and play. He's taken that opportunity and run with it. That's a lot of what life is.

Johnny I think had a really good first half getting an opportunity to work with Ryan and our whole team, just kind of dial in his details, improve week to week. That prepared him and gave him a moment to be able to step in and kind of seize it.

He certainly has and hasn't looked back.

Q. Boston and Eric played together quite a bit. Lately that hasn't been the case. I don't remember when that changed. Talk about when that happened, why. What goes into that decision to keep them on separate pairs?

DAVID CARLE: Do you remember when that happened Eric?

ERIC POHLKAMP: No.

DAVID CARLE: That would be the defensive man, Dallas Ferguson.

I think you like to try different things. Our line combinations are different than what they were at the start of the year. We had some injuries, as well, on the back end, too. Just dealing with different things.

There's a few games there where we were playing five D for a couple of weekends coming out of that seven-game

winning streaks when Brownie was out. Everybody was kind of playing with everybody. In those moments you get an opportunity to see different guys, how it meshes and gels. We like the balance it gave us when we got to it.

Again, it's kind of stuck for us. When you go on a run like we have, you're not really overhauling things too much. You're just trying to tinker here and there, not trying to screw it up as a coach.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, guys.

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