

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Wisconsin vs North Dakota

Thursday, April 9, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

T-Mobile Arena

North Dakota Fighting Hawks

Dane Jackson

Ellis Rickwood

Jake Livanavage

Semifinal Postgame Media Conference



Wisconsin 2, North Dakota 1

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by North Dakota. Opening thoughts from coach.

DANE JACKSON: Yeah, I guess first of all say congratulations to Wisconsin. I thought they checked extremely well. Played with a lot of pace and a lot of tenacity. Seemed to kind of throw us off our game a little bit. Tip the hat to Mike Hastings and his staff, what a good job they did.

I think as far as a statement, my biggest statement is not much on the game, more about the year. Just told our guys about how proud I am of getting back to our core culture. These guys just embodied that all year, to be selfless, team first, competitive, just workers throughout the year. Couldn't be more proud of the efforts day to day that the guys put in, the standard they set for the culture of our program going forward.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Ellis, what did you think happened in the first period?

ELLIS RICKWOOD: Yeah, I think it was maybe a couple lapses of judgment there. We didn't really come out hot. They were ready to play. Their second goal is unfortunate. The guy jumped our F3, had a mini breakaway and scored. It's just hard in these games to go down that early.

I thought we kind of fought back. It was just a little too late.

Q. Jake, you had some difficult season, difficult ends to seasons. Taking the regional championship and the

Penrose. How does that feel?

JAKE LIVANAVAGE: Yeah, you know, this group is just so special. They're so much fun to come to the rink with, each guy every single day. Yeah, I mean, what we built this year, the tradition's back. We want North Dakota hockey to be at the top every single year.

I think under Coach Jackson it will be like that for a long, long time.

Yeah, I mean, I just couldn't be more proud of the group, what we did this year, getting tradition back to what North Dakota wanted.

Yeah, just love every single one of these guys.

THE MODERATOR: Ellis, the season?

ELLIS RICKWOOD: Yeah, even though it's my only one year here, first year here, it was just so special. There really is levels. Where I was coming from was a lot different. How professional it is here, just the great group of guys. We talk a lot about how good everyone is on the ice. It was one of the tightest teams I've ever been on.

Like Liver said, coming to the rink was so much fun. I was so excited to come to the rink every day. Yeah, it sucks not to go all the way. I think North Dakota is in a good spot with Jax. It's going to be exciting moving forward.

Q. Jake, you had that five-on-three there for pretty much a full two minutes. Did that kind of feel like a chance where you had an opportunity that if you just got one things would've flipped in your favor?

JAKE LIVANAVAGE: Yeah, special teams is such an important part of the game. I don't know exactly how many power plays we had, but we just weren't good enough. The amount of power plays we had, we should capitalize. That can turn the momentum right in the second period, give us momentum going into the third as well.

Yeah, it wasn't just good enough for the guys out on the ice. Yeah, it's a big part of the game, and we didn't get the

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

job done.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let the players go. Thank you very much.

We'll continue with questions for Coach Jackson.

Q. Their penalty kill was very effective. Can you talk about what they were doing, why you couldn't figure it out?

DANE JACKSON: Yeah, our power play has been very good all year. A big part of it has been kind of our tenacious mentality to get pucks back after a shot, after a stick knocks a puck down. We've done a very good job of quickly getting around it, supporting the puck, getting a second or third chance. We didn't seem to be able to do that when they disrupted us. They seemed to get the clear. When you're coming all the way down, it kills a lot of time on our clock.

I think that was one of the keys, that is just wasn't quite quick enough to support pucks, try to get those second chances.

Q. What did you think happened in the first period that allowed them to get momentum?

DANE JACKSON: Yeah, they were just being a little quicker. They were quicker on pucks. It's something we really talked about. We felt our last game that we had played good short pass support. Had the chip, we guys skating onto it, we plate north, simple and fast. That's what you need when teams are checking well. You got to get around the puck to make the next small little play.

We weren't quite executing at a high enough level. They were tenacious and quicker. We weren't managing the puck well. We kind of hooked some pucks to the middle that started some of their play and gave them momentum.

I just thought they were kind of a little sharper and our execution wasn't good enough to kind of break through their checking early on.

I thought as the game went along, we did a better job of it. Then we made a big mistake, giving up a breakaway when we had numbers back. We left the middle back, didn't track back well enough. We have to protect the middle first. We didn't do that. That's a big mistake.

Q. The five-on-three power play, what did you see on that? What was your assessment?

DANE JACKSON: Yeah, again, weren't quite crisp

enough. I thought we had a couple good looks. When you get the full two minutes, that was kind of a moment in the game we had to get one. Seemed like goals were hard to come by. That was a critical juncture. Our power play has been good all year.

We did practice it over the previous -- practice it before we came here. I thought we were prepped, but we just didn't execute at a high enough level. When you get a one-timer, you got to hit your spot. They got some clears on us, especially five-on-three, we should be tenacious enough to keep that puck alive generally. We just didn't quite have that, weren't in sync quite enough there.

Q. What does this year's team mean to you?

DANE JACKSON: Yeah, that's a good question. It means a lot. Talked to our guys about just the character of our group. We've talked about it a fair amount, about the critical incident we were at on April 1st this year where guys could have chose to transfer or sign or whatever, and they chose to kind of be part of a solution and be leaders. That right there was something that I'll never forget about those guys.

You know all of our core players that could have signed or transferred. So that right there was a big deal for me.

Then again, with 15 new guys, about how we had great leadership on this group, but we had 15 new guys that totally bought in. I'll kind of reiterate a little bit what these guys said about I feel our staff did a good job of kind of setting the standard and then our players kind of maintained that standard of how we work, how we treat each other, how we battle every day, the selflessness that we play with, the pride that we kind of play in our program.

Those kind of core beliefs that we've kind of instilled, I think -- I don't think, I know, will be carried on by the young guys for next year. I know our program is in a great spot. That's where everything starts, starts with the culture, the care for the group and selflessness. Our guys definitely played with that all year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

