

NCAA Men's Frozen Four

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T-Mobile Arena

Sean Hogan

Luke Strand

Steve Metcalf

Tim Troville

Trevor Large

State of the Game Press Conference



that require a different rule. I think it's greatly beneficial for all.

THE MODERATOR: Sean, can you give us a snapshot of the purpose of CHI.

SEAN HOGAN: I became executive director a year and a half ago. There's been no changes in that year and a half. It's been smooth.

For the longest time, college hockey had one mission. We were out there to create an environment where players, American players in particular, stayed out of the CHL, stayed on the NCAA Division I development path.

Now as everybody knows, the landscape has changed, but our marketing mission, we want to make sure that every family knows, whether you're from Canada, the U.S., European players, that the last stop on your road to the NHL is going to be NCAA Division I hockey.

So the overall marketing mission of College Hockey, Inc. is that. We'll do the research, be a resource for coaches, players, agents and advisors that use our services every day.

We'll still work on the growth piece. We had a win recently with Maryville University, NCAA Division I hockey, a partnership with the NHL, we can do feasibility studies to create more NCAA Division I teams on the men's and women's side.

One of the new things is just the future of college hockey, being involved with some different special events. We do the Icebreaker. We're involved with the Spengler Cup with the Hockey Commissioners Association. Maybe there's something we can do on the women's side creating more opportunities for players.

This is my opinion now. If I'm the NHL, the more players that can come from NCAA hockey directly to the NHL is a good thing for them because the more you can tie their sport, especially in the U.S., to college fanbases, that's an outstanding opportunity for the NHL to grow the game.

THE MODERATOR: Trevor, could you get us started. What is the process in how you go about modifying or getting the new rules?

TREVOR LARGE: Sure, it is a rule change here. Some of the exciting things that are happening and have happened is our structure has changed where in the past -- well, where it is now is there's, for Division I men's, a group of six people on the committee that are now in charge of and trying to change and tweak the rule book to obviously make the game of hockey better.

I think it's an exciting change for all levels, but specifically with Division I men's, it's an opportunity for us to hear from the coaches, hear from everybody that's working towards our rule book. The fact that it's Division I men's, that's an opportunity to become more aligned in what we're trying to do. That definitely exists, trying to prepare players for pro hockey. There's great opportunities for us to make some changes to the rule book, although I think it's in a great spot and the changes feel small, but we're always trying to progress and make our game better, so...

THE MODERATOR: By different, how was it in the past?

TREVOR LARGE: In the past we had a committee where, I'll pick 10 for the number, it's happened in the past that it's more or less, if we had 10 voting members, five of those votes would be on the women's side and five on the men's side. You obviously have Division III as well. Maybe in the past if we were making a changes for any level, women's hockey, men's hockey, Division I, Division III, you needed more of a consensus vote to make a change for all.

Not that ours were always right and theirs were always wrong. Sometimes there's some differences in the game



The more teams we can create, the more fanbases we can create, the more players that come through our pipeline on the road to the NHL is a good thing for everybody.

Might not be as the two paths as it used to be. You're going to be 16, 17, 18 years old, play junior hockey wherever you want. When a college hockey team recruits you, they're ready for you, you should be ready for college hockey because that's going to be the next step on the development path to the NHL on the men's side.

THE MODERATOR: Tim, a lot of anticipation for where we're at. Buildup to this, take us through how it came to be and how it's gone so far.

TIM TROVILLE: First I'd like to thank on behalf of the committee and NCAA hockey, MGM Live Events, Las Vegas Events, T-Mobile Arena, VGK, and our North Dakota who was a participant here as well. They've all done a fantastic job making this a special event for student-athletes.

These bid processes go back in this case six years. It was 2020 when Las Vegas was bidding for this event. I think from our committee standpoint, that predates me, we know this is the entertainment capital of the world, there's much to do here, some world-class events that happen here all the time. How could college hockey shine on this strip and not be overshadowed by all the things there are to do here?

Now we're through our semifinals looking forward to the national championship game tomorrow. The feedback so far is this has been really spectacular. It's great to see all the college hockey jerseys from all over the country on the Strip and at the hotels, here around the arena. Atmosphere here yesterday was excellent for our two games. What a double overtime game we had in semifinal number two.

We are really happy and provide to be able to bring college hockey to different cities across the United States. What we're hoping when we're talking about growth of the game, we're hoping to see more Division I men's ice hockey programs join us.

It's my own personal goal, I don't know if I'll ever get the chance to do it, but I'd love to see us grow up to maybe 75 programs. The player pool is growing. Just having additional opportunities to play college hockey is good. I think where we choose to put the Frozen Four may weigh into that, too.

It's been great.

THE MODERATOR: Luke, men's ice hockey coach at Minnesota State. Member of the Division I men's ice hockey committee.

We talked about the rule changes here. From a coach's perspective, kind of the state of the game in your mind, any tweaks that you think would be worth considering here as we go to the summer?

LUKE STRAND: I think technology has grown to the point of can we utilize technology to the best of its ability as far as review, replay on that side, if that happens, change the format of the use of a timeout, the auto penalty, things of that nature can come to fruition if the technology party finds balance with that.

Those are big parts. The one thing that's happened is the game has never been in a better player pool pace ability level than it is right now. We probably have to just keep up with it on the rest of the avenues as much as it is on the ice itself.

Technology is probably one for me that would help due that. I don't know. I don't want robot refs. I don't want the robot umpire thing, that's for sure (smiling). If you want to fast forward this thing along and get to where our players are all striving to play in the National League, that's going to be part of their process, too.

THE MODERATOR: Steve, Sean mentioned a fun new event, college hockey's participation in the Spengler Cup. Take us through what that was like.

STEVE METCALF: Yeah, thanks.

The Spengler Cup, that was this conversation started many, many years ago with Mike Snead, who was in Sean's role before him for years petitioning the NCAA to allow something like this to happen.

When Mike was at the end of his tenure, there was a proposal out with the NCAA to allow a college hockey team to go. I remember one night I was walking the dog. A woman, Joni Comstock who was the vice president of championships at the NCAA, calls me and says, Hey, we have a meeting tomorrow. We have the Spengler Cup thing on the docket. What do you think about it?

What do I think about it? I think it's a great idea.

She said, I'll vote for it tomorrow.

We're working on this for years. One phone call I'm walking the dog, we're going to the Spengler Cup.

We got invited to go and check it out. We saw what an incredible tournament it is, first class in every regard. So we were excited to get an opportunity to go there. We thought we'd be leaving there with an invitation, which wasn't the case. They were a little unsure about the college game, whether we could compete, whether these young kids we had to play hockey with the pros. So I invited the guys to come to the Beanpot, which was going to be in about a month or so. Couldn't make it. Why don't you watch one of our games? They watched Boston College against Providence College. This was the Boston College team with Perreault and Leonard and those guys. The guy called me next day and said, No, you guys will be just fine.

I guess fast forward a couple months, we got an invitation, we started putting the team together. Sean was a little anxious about it. Enough of my commissioner colleagues said, This is a good idea, let's do it.

I guess we accepted the invitation probably last March I would guess. Went down to the coach's convention. We had determined that Guy Gadowsky would be the head coach. We just started building up the staff. I guess the rest is history.

We had an incredible experience. Lots of people have asked me about the last couple days, told me they watched the games. Recently we got an invitation back for two more years. Two more teams and staffs and coaching staffs that will go and experience the magic of Davos, Switzerland, and the Spengler Cup.

THE MODERATOR: Happy to take your questions. Who wants to be caller number one?

Q. Sean and Trevor, you alluded to working to add programs, even how small and medium-sized schools are a good candidate for that. We have Maryville coming in. At the same time we just lost Mercyhurst and last year AIC. Are there things that can be done to try to help viability, especially when we see the disparity in finances? Trevor, your perspective as a member of Atlantic Hockey and seeing two of your fellow teams leave Division I.

SEAN HOGAN: I'll talk a little bit about growth. This past year in partnership with the NHL, I want to make sure we give credit, they're the ones that fund the feasibility study project.

We met with three different athletic departments. One was women's only. That's a good number of schools that would be interested in this landscape to add Division I hockey. In my opinion, this is again my opinion, where I think we're

going to see growth on the men's or women's side are Division I schools that do not have major college football. The cost to compete at that level with revenue share and NIL money, third-party paying players, when I discuss our sport with others, you're going to be really good in college basketball and you can have an outstanding NCAA Division I hockey program. Our sport is one of the few sports where the major blue bloods don't always win the national championship. You can elevate your athletic department, your university, schedule some of the biggest blue bloods in college sports, they'll be on your schedule, come to your building. That's not something that happens in a lot of other sports.

What can we do as a college hockey body to protect some of these programs, especially the independents? Do what we can to schedule them, seems like 10, 15 years ago we found a way to bring them all in conferences. I know that's not always going to be possible. As much as we can, bring everybody in the group. Sounds like a pie in the sky type dream. We need to do that to protect our sport. We added one in Maryville. In the same week we lost one. So we're still at 63. We want to get to 75, 85 programs. It's doable.

There's places that have really strong ACHA Division I hockey programs. Went to a game this year out in the Midwest. They had 9,000 fans at a game. It's doable. A lot of it's going to have to be money donated by the university, or by third parties, new money. Nobody wants to take the money already donated to create something new.

We're out there beating the bushes. If I see a rink being built suitable for Division I by a university, there is one in Tuscon, I called the University of Arizona. It was a hard no. Doesn't mean we didn't try to do it. That's one thing we're out there doing, beating the bushes trying to create more teams. We're doing it too for men's and women's.

THE MODERATOR: What about the loss of a couple programs? Not optimal?

TREVOR LARGE: No, not at all. I can't speak too all the things that happened at either institutions for obvious reasons. I obviously go to the staff and the players, as that's not something anybody signed up for, to go through that I can only imagine.

It's very, very difficult.

I know this for sure. There's not one reason why any of those things happen. When you look at individual campuses, what they're dealing with, there's some similarities, but everybody's a little bit different. I can't talk to why or obviously any of those things for either.

I started my coaching career at AIC, had great friendships that were built there. They exist and they linger. It's part of best part of the game of hockey.

The reality is that hockey is an expensive sport. I think we're all tasked with trying to make sure the best opportunities are available to compete at the highest level, to have all the resources we all want. There is great parity that exists in college hockey. That's my own personal belief. There's obviously differences in conferences and individual institutions.

Maybe the competition that's on the ice is parity, but it doesn't exist in all other areas.

Obviously it's not something that anybody wants for programs to go away. We're very hopeful with the work. You can see the things happening. We have to be understanding that a lot of these decisions, I'll say some with the Rules Committee, they can come with financial decisions that teams are going to have to make. We have to be conscious of those things and understand that the game is expensive. We have to grow properly.

Hopefully that answers the question.

Q. Steve, all the losing the NCAA has done in court, judges have said that conferences can have autonomy in certain things. I don't know if those conversations happen or you think you foresee they will happen. You have wide disparities even within your own conference in terms of who can spend what money or not. Do you foresee a day where the conferences will set boundaries within their teams?

STEVE METCALF: We always talk about standards within the conference. I think those conversations are different now than they used to be about ADs, institutions less receptive to being told what they should do, what the minimum standard is, those kinds of things.

The commissioners, we certainly talk about might there be something we should all try and do together to try and rein in some of the craziness that is happening in our world.

It's a balancing act. You don't want to believe involved in any kind of collusion. You don't want to restrict student-athletes that have been given so much rights and freedoms lately that they didn't have before. I'm generally supportive of that.

You try to make good common-sense decisions for the game. We're in a new era with the NCAA and the new men's hockey oversight committee which has more

responsibilities, more oversight, more autonomy than we've ever had before. I think we want to give that a little time to see what that looks like. Maybe they can move some items that college hockey is universally in favor of in some cases, give that a little time to work.

Q. The potential changes to eligibility, the five-year window, starting at 19. What are the potential challenges, potential benefits of that change?

STEVE METCALF: I feel like he's looking at me, but I'm looking at Luke (smiling).

LUKE STRAND: We're already old (laughter).

If it works backwards, it's going to affect junior hockey, potential NCAA. A little bit adapt or die, gets younger players in there and things. At the same time these players are becoming more elite at an earlier age, too. It's not the end of the end for me.

I think you've got to be equipped to change. Probably going to affect some programs, like ours, maybe a little bit more. Some programs are already taking the 17-year-old playing yesterday. It's out there.

I don't think it was intended for hockey.

SEAN HOGAN: I would add, it's going to have downstream effects. Again, we've only had about 36 hours to think about this. My initial thought was the eighth and ninth graders, you see this in college football, high school football, you have parents making decisions, I want my kid to repeat a year, so they get that 19-year-old graduation date, get another five years. I can see that happening. I don't think that's the intention of this. That's how some people are going to be thinking. Not ideal.

Q. We basically have seen a full season now of CHL players in the NCAA, plus NIL and all the third-party money. What is the landscape in terms of parity, competitiveness? Is it what you thought? Is there any reason to worry that things are going to get top-heavy or...

TREVOR LARGE: Again, we're getting really good, I'll say coaches, at the curve balls and change, having to figure them out. It's all happening relatively quickly where maybe in the past there wouldn't be change for many years. Now it seems like it's almost monthly.

I think it's inevitable. The way I would explain it is, my job hasn't changed, if I'm looking as the type of coach at Canisius. What has changed is the pool of players. It is a larger pool. Is it great for everybody? I don't know how I

could answer that exactly.

In terms of having a larger player pool that's available to all colleges, I think there's some real benefit there.

Obviously we're getting, I don't know by the numbers, but an influx of major junior players. In theory, I think it is relevant, that it's a higher-end player as a whole that is coming to us into our programs. I think there's a benefit.

More to come, for sure. I think as we're all trying to figure out what is our player pool and who are we going after, each institution is not going to have the same player pool they're talking to.

Again, I kind of circle back with the beginning of my answer, my job hasn't changed. I'm looking for the right people who want to come to my institution and compete against everybody.

I think overall it's been I would say a positive thing that's happened. I think the players would say that. It's more opportunity for them. Access to college hockey is there for more players. Overall there has to be some benefit there.

THE MODERATOR: Tim, how has it impacted you, if at all?

TIM TROVILLE: Well, coming from a different type of university, I think we and schools in the Ivy League will be equally interested in those players, what that player pool looks like.

When those students continue on their academic journey and maybe they hadn't thought about college hockey in the past but now they can, we feel that maybe we're a year or two out from those students applying to our institutions.

I think with all of this, all this change in college sports, we certainly don't want to lose sight of the academic mission and setting people up for a lifetime. So whether it's NIL for \$20,000 here, \$50,000, I think we've all seen what inflation does, what you need to do to set yourself up for the rest of your life.

I think everybody should have access to those type of institutions, our hockey-playing institutions. I actually think it's a good thing overall. There will be some level setting. The water will find its level.

It will be great to have more students and more people available to play. Of course, be within the academic mission and contribute to our campuses.

STEVE METCALF: I was going to add, this pool of players

that's coming in, I think we're already seeing the quality of college hockey on the rosters. Doesn't matter if you have a first team, number one team in the country, number 62, your roster is getting better because there's more quality players available.

I don't know the number this year, but approximately one-third-ish of the NHL players came directly from college. I don't know anyone that doesn't think that number is going to grow quickly, maybe as much as two-thirds. That's an indicator of how strong college hockey is going to become. I think we're at the beginnings of that right now.

Q. From an individual entity standpoint, people can understand where in terms of growing the game and getting more schools where you have to look out for your own house first, how much discussion and what kinds of discussion go on about bringing more teams in? At least through the grapevine we hear things, we would jump if we had a league to get into or what have you. What kind of discussions do you guys have that you can tell us about that kind of how do we solve this problem, if that's even solvable?

SEAN HOGAN: First time I've seen you face to face. I've talked to you on the phone a ton.

There is discussion. Sometimes a school will reach out to one of the commissioners directly, say, I'm thinking about adding hockey, we want to join your league. Usually the next step is the commissioner will talk to college hockey, Sean Hogan, we'll start the discussion. I'll bring the NHL involved.

Not everybody knows what College Hockey, Inc. is, especially if you're not in the world of college hockey. Usually the direct approach is to go through a commissioner. So there is discussions. It's up to each individual commissioner and each individual league to decide what's best for them as a fit. But we do have those discussions.

THE MODERATOR: Washington, DC next year, then Chicago, then what's happening next, Tim?

TIM TROVILLE: We had future hosts here today touring around and some bids coming up. We want to get to destinations that college hockey fans want to be. We want to try to balance Eastern, Midwestern and Western sites. Of course thinking we have our tried and true locations that just do a great job hosting this tournament.

I can't tell you quite yet. The interest is high. Even some recent additions at the NHL level that are, How do we get



college hockey in our buildings?

There's no shortage of bids we can look through. We try to figure out what is going to be the best next site to bring this to.

The future is bright for this tournament. We'll make that decision here coming up in the next six months or so.

THE MODERATOR: Six months. How many sites are we going to award?

TIM TROVILLE: Three years' worth. The bidding cycle will take about six months.

THE MODERATOR: Six months we'll get three more sites?

TIM TROVILLE: I think that's the timeline. I wish Chad was in the room to fact check me. Pretty close the next few years.

Q. Trevor, to your point, you mentioned having a bigger pool of players is wonderful. I think the real issue then is if you go out, even before, if you go out and recruit great players because you see them early, then they develop, it's super easy for them to transfer. For those smaller schools, it's hard to compete when those players that you develop and grow can transfer pretty easily. Obviously there's a whole thing with possible players being recruited mid-season to transfer out to a different school next year. It's all crazy, we all know. I don't know if you have thoughts. I'm thinking about the gentlemen's agreement in the day, yeah. The question is, what can you do to stop this from going even more crazy than it is?

THE MODERATOR: I can't wait for this answer. Trevor, that's a tough one.

TREVOR LARGE: Well, we deal with it every day. You're talking about there's a lot in there. One is recruiting players, then there's retaining players. It's something that we all have to do.

I really don't know if there's any coach that hasn't experienced a player transferring. I'd be shocked if there's somebody that's done that. We've had some really good players in our program that have decided to transfer. They're not easy conversations for anybody involved. They're not easy for the player. They have to put a lot into what they want to do in their career, what they feel is best.

There's some good things because the player having options is only good. I would hope there's maybe some

guardrails we can put on to try to help because I don't know if every decision that that player's making has always been to their benefit.

When you talk about tampering, those conversations that are being had prior to when a coach would be allowed to do that, there are some things that are happening currently to try to help with that so they're not happening, because those aren't good for anybody involved.

I'm definitely hopeful that those rules will help. But the reality is, it's an opportunity that the players have. For a coach to sit here and say it's not a good thing, I don't know.

Obviously we want to attract the best talent we can and we want to keep the players and have them graduate from Canisius. We feel like that relationship becomes lifelong, not for a year.

I'm not naïve. We've had players transfer into Canisius. It's been a right opportunity for them, a good experience for them. They do leave as a Canisius graduate and what that means.

There's not one side to how this story can be told, there's multiple. It is definitely a challenge for all us of us to manage the recruitment of that player, now we're going to have to recruit them for their time with us. That can be challenging.

LUKE STRAND: Can I plead the Fifth (smiling).

I'm with Large on the retention. The development internally, development of people, a little culture versus vulture type of thing. Can you keep people around a little bit longer than they were out of the relationship part?

Big picture is, like, you want guys who want to wear your jersey and represent your program. If the door says that they've got something else to do, I'm confident to say someone else will want to wear their jersey they left behind.

You don't like it, but it's real. Got to keep making good of the guys you got.

Q. Tim, you talked about sort of expanding the teams in the league. Also in terms of bids for the Frozen Four. Vegas, DC, those are cities without college hockey teams. Is that something you're taking into consideration?

TIM TROVILLE: Well, I would like to personally. I think bringing this championship to these types of cities I think is a big deal for exposure, particularly for young kids to see it,

get into their areas.

But I was talking earlier about a program like UNLV, them being nearby. We have several that are in the south, which you would consider ACC and SEC country. They're playing high-level hockey. When we get to Tampa, Florida now has become an NHL juggernaut in hockey. Can we get some college hockey programs there?

Even recently I've said in the past if you look at what like Arizona State has done, some of those places. We were just in St. Louis. Adding Lindenwood, some of those programs.

I do think we could have some influence by bringing this tournament to some of those areas. Thinking about Pacific Northwest, what can we do up there to bring this tournament, those type of cities.

We all want to do our part. I've always had 75 in mind, 85, whatever it might be. I think this is a great sport. I mentioned it before. I was a college baseball player. This sport, it just took a grip of me. I've had a great opportunity through what I do at Harvard to be part of this.

I think more students should have access to college hockey. Then even watching a college hockey game for the first time, I think about what that can do to some campuses. Football is great, basketball is great. A lot of other sports great are great. But when somebody sees a hockey game live at the skill level these students play it at, I don't know how that doesn't grip you. That's why we feel this way about college hockey.

We want to put the Frozen Four in those cities that can support it and are enthusiastic to have it. Vegas has done such a great job with it. Six years ago, I don't know if anyone would have thought bringing this to Vegas is a good idea. But it is. Hopefully we're here again at some point in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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