

2021 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

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East Hartford, Connecticut, USA

Duke Blue Devils

John Danowski

Terry Lindsay

Media Conference



Maryland - 14, Duke - 4

Q. We're joined by Duke head coach John Danowski and student-athlete Terry Lindsay. Coach, if you could make an opening statement please.

JOHN DANOWSKI: I want to congratulate John Tillman, his staff, Maryland players. They're terrific. We wish them best of luck on Monday in the National Championship Game.

Q. Terry, unusual game today, one sided. What did Maryland present to you that maybe you weren't expecting, or what surprised you about their efforts today?

TERRY LINDSAY: They just had a really good game plan going into today and just outplayed us today.

Q. Terry, just a couple things here. First off, how big do you think that sequence late in the first half was where they were able to rattle off a few goals? Two, if you could just kind of size up what this season has been like for you guys and how much it's meant to you.

TERRY LINDSAY: The sequence, each sequence in the game is up and down. Each team goes on runs, so we weren't backing down when that happened. What was the second question?

Q. Just kind of sizing up the season for you guys and just what this whole thing has been like.

TERRY LINDSAY: The whole year we've -- I'm just really proud of the guys in that locker room. Being a fifth year coming back, just wanted to be back with this team and this coaching staff, and I couldn't be more proud of how we fought through everything this year.

Q. I'm just curious about the emotions of the guys down there on the field as the game was winding down, and what really the message was there in the huddle on the field and in the locker room?

TERRY LINDSAY: We brought it up, we're never going to give up. That's an ethos of Duke lacrosse. Never give up.

Q. I know you play defense, but can you just assess how well holistically your offense found their identity this season?

TERRY LINDSAY: No, thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Terry, thank you very much.

Q. Coach, you've spoken about the importance of team chemistry, especially on the offense, adding a couple of really talented, but new guys on that end. Can you just assess the ability of the collective group finding their identity this season?

JOHN DANOWSKI: I think it would be hard to really kind of make an assessment right now. It's very emotional after just scoring a couple of goals in the national semifinal, but clearly that's something that we just never kind of found our -- the offense never really found its place. We weren't very good in transition throughout the year. I think today was an example. We had a couple of opportunities in transition, and it was just hard to find that right balance and that right chemistry, very difficult.

It was good enough to get to this point, but certainly it was something that I think we struggled with all year.

Q. When you played Virginia during the regular season and beat them, that was one of the better games of the year. As you look at this potential matchup now with Virginia and Maryland, what do you see as you think just initially about those teams matching up?

JOHN DANOWSKI: We just lost to Maryland, so I'm not really thinking a lot about Virginia right now, to be honest. I

thought Maryland is great, great coaching staff. Coach Tillman, Coach Bernhardt, Coach Benson, they do a fabulous job. I'm not one to -- certainly, I wouldn't be a good person to give you any insight there.

Q. Just wanted to ask, first off, a bit about the pressure that Bernhardt was able to bring to bear on you guys defensively. Do you think ultimately that was as big a difference as anything at that end?

JOHN DANOWSKI: Again, Jared Bernhardt is an option quarterback playing lacrosse. He's a terrific decision-maker. He knows when to hand the ball off, when to pitch it, and he knows when to carry it. The same thing in lacrosse. The coaching staff has done a great job with him -- pick play, getting a shorty on him. Then when there's a shorty on him, the guys panic. Not panic, but they slide, and Jared's very, very comfortable in being very unselfish, and he's surrounded by a lot of good players. You can't discount that either.

I thought that second half was better, but he scores on the rebound. He picks up a loose ball in front of the cage. He's just a player. We call guys like that players. And he's the best -- truly the best I've seen in quite a while.

Q. You mentioned the offense not really coming together this year, and obviously with all the talented pieces, I'm just wondering if you have any initial reactions and reflections on why the offense couldn't come together.

JOHN DANOWSKI: I think it's -- you know, a lot of guys who come out of high school or different programs, they were good players because they had the ball on their stick. Learning to play off the ball, I mean, we're talking about Jared Bernhardt here for a second, and he's a fifth year senior. He's been in their program for five years. He's very comfortable with his teammates. He's very comfortable with those guys around him, and they all feed off each other.

You have somebody like Brennan O'Neill, who's learning a new system, and Mike Sowers learning a new system, Joe Rob coming off knee surgery missing the first two game of the year, midfielders. Nobody really kind of outplayed each other in practice, so they were all good, all good players, but again, we were searching for that little bit of depth.

You saw, we played a lot of people today at midfield, but at the end of the day, we really couldn't run past anybody from Maryland. Maryland short sticks were terrific. They bluffed us out of a lot of dodges. So you've got to really tip your cap. I don't know that it was so much we dependent play well. Maybe it was that Maryland played great, and

the goalie made 17 saves. I don't know -- I thought we shot in the stick a bunch, but he made the plays.

So you have a goalie that makes 17 saves, you got short stick D-middies who stand up, and poles who do a nice job of bluffing and getting back, and all of a sudden, they hold you to a low number in a big game.

Q. I'm almost wondering if you just answered what I was going to ask, but you mentioned the transition game, and Sowers scores that goal with five minutes to go in the second, and it was almost 20 minutes without a goal. Is there any one or a couple of things that you can put on as to what the biggest difference was throughout that stretch and being unable to score? Or did you kind of just stay out there with the short stick and whatnot?

JOHN DANOWSKI: We played a lot of defense. Those guys at face-off X did a nice job -- even though the statistics would say 12-10 Maryland, it seemed a lot worse to me than 12-10. So we thought that -- we went to Doc there in the second half, and he did a nice job for us, winning 6 out of 9.

Our inability to clear the ball well certainly has been a factor all season. We're just kind of like deer in headlights. We knew exactly what Maryland was going to do in the ride, and we prepared for it Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and yet under the bright lights, we struggled there a little bit and gave them extra possessions.

We didn't check up at the midfield line at one point on an errant pass by Maryland, which gave Maryland an extra possession, when their defensemen just kept the ball in the offensive half of the field, and they scored on that subsequent possession.

So we made some plays that we didn't pay attention to detail, and what you need to do in a championship series, you need to be on every aspect of the game.

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