

2024 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 26, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Lincoln Financial Field

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Devon McLane

Marco Napolitano

Media Conference



Notre Dame for that fifth year and play again this year?

MARCO NAPOLITANO: I think that's a great question. But for me the choice was definitely pretty easy. I have the rest of my life to go into the working world and kind of do that part, but just to have the opportunity because of COVID to come back, do the thing that I love with all my best friends, I mean, it was definitely a super easy choice. Just like the fact that we're back here again just kind of makes it all worthwhile. So definitely a super easy choice for me.

Q. You were a starting member of the team last year and then at the beginning of the season you didn't start in those first couple of games. Wondering what your mindset was as it related to the first couple of games and how you continued to be just a big part of the program and obviously you started moving forward. But where was your mind kind of after those first couple of games and how did you keep yourself motivated and go from there?

MARCO NAPOLITANO: It's definitely a great question. It was kind of a little bit of a battle between me and a sophomore, Will Gallagher. And me and him are super, super tight. We were supporting each other and basically everything that was going on. When he was starting, I was riding him all the way. He's one of my best friends.

When I had the opportunity to step in, he was supporting me all the way as well. I think it kind of speaks to the culture that we have as a defense and just kind of as a team in general.

But I think just kind of everyone being super supportive of each other and just kind of just how we were able to operate kind of that battle that sometimes happens between all of our teammates, just kind of having each other's backs, no matter what. We were able to work through that.

Q. Devon, you guys have obviously run three midfields pretty much all season. Just how much has that helped you guys out as an offense to be able to enjoy that much depth? And how much value do you

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Notre Dame student-athletes Devon McLane and Marco Napolitano.

Q. Devon, how did you find Notre Dame as your grad transfer destination, and has the experience matched up to your expectations?

DEVON MCLANE: I think, if anything, this has exceeded my expectations. It's been a tremendous year. I think that's all attributed to the culture that's on this team. The guys were super accepting and they've had a slew of fifth-years come in each year kind of since COVID happened. And I think they've been great with the transition. They've been super welcoming and have really made this place super special to me and my family.

Q. You had six points against Maryland the first time. What was working for you in that first Maryland match-up?

DEVON MCLANE: I think the best part about our offense is just it's an unselfish offense, and that day just happened to be a day where I was left open a couple times. And then some other guys made some pretty nice finishes on feeds I had. But I think any guy on our offense can have a day any day.

So we know that. We play with that confidence. And that helps us achieve our goals and put the ball in the back of the net, just playing with each other and playing for each other.

Q. Marco, you obviously won the national championship and were part of the team last year. What went into your decision to come back for a fifth year knowing you had the opportunity to say kind of, hey, this is the end, I'm going to go out as a champion? What made you decide to come back to



think there is in that in a second-game-in-three-days scenario like tomorrow?

DEVON MCLANE: I think we saw that in the ACC tournament a few weeks ago. But in the second half of the game the other day, we knew coming out of halftime, like, we're a tremendously deep team. We're able to run out three midfielders.

It's rewarding for us. Guys are putting a ton of work in in practice. Guys are always putting in their extra work. So it's awesome to be able to get nine midfielders on the field in a game. And I think you don't see that across really any team in college lacrosse. And that means when we're all going in, you're fresh. You're ready to go.

And it's been great. We all support each other. We have a great culture and it's exciting to see guys go out there and take advantage of their opportunities given the amount of work they're putting in during the week.

Q. Marco, can you describe what it's like to play for a team, with the exception of one game, that has been pretty much unbeatable this season? With the exception of one game, you guys have been unbeatable this year. How does it feel to be a part of that team? How does it feel to play for that?

MARCO NAPOLITANO: We have a lot of confidence going into every game. Like this game, I know last year we were obviously in the same sort of scenario going into the national championship. We have that one-day break. And Coach and our messaging last year was just to play the game, not play the scenario or whatever the outcome may be.

Last year he was, like, we just have one game versus Duke. We're not playing for the national championship. It's like that "one next game." And I think that's kind of the same mindset that we had going into championship versus Maryland tomorrow. It's just one game versus Maryland.

Really doesn't matter what's happened in our season or their season leading up to this point. We just have one game versus Maryland tomorrow.

That's kind of the way we've been approaching this game. Obviously it's great that we've had success up to this point, but really anything can happen tomorrow.

Q. Because you guys have been so dominating this year, is there pressure to sort of complete the run and win the championship tomorrow?

MARCO NAPOLITANO: I don't think so. Just like I was

saying, it's basically -- the way we've been thinking about it is we just have one game versus Maryland. If we come into it with that sort of attitude and approach, I think there's basically no pressure.

Anyone can beat anyone on any given day. We've seen that throughout the entire season. If we kind of just come in with that kind of approach, I think we'll be successful.

Q. Devon, you played attack most of your career at Brown. How different of a mindset is it to then play midfield here at Notre Dame where you're not on the field as much as you typically would be if you were an attackman? Has your mindset changed or is it just wrapping your mind around a different position and just not being out there as much?

DEVON MCLANE: Right. I think we play a position-less offense, so I end up behind the goal. I end up in familiar spots kind of throughout a possession. So it doesn't change too much. I guess in the beginning it was a little different not being on there for some transition opportunities.

But we have such a strong attack. We have such a strong midfield unit. So it really doesn't change anything. It's great to be out there. It's great to help contribute. So wherever I fit in, that's where I was looking to play.

Q. I know you were asked a little bit earlier about transferring into Notre Dame. Just curious how the communication with your old Brown teammates has been throughout this year; have they been pretty supportive? Are you getting a lot of text messages from them? I imagine they've been following you in your journey this year.

DEVON MCLANE: It's been great. The best thing about fifth-yearing at another school is you get a whole new network of people, a new group of 60 guys, and their connections and ties within there. So the Brown guys have been super supportive. They're a great group of kids.

My brother is actually on the team, so it's fun to have those relationships. There were a bunch of kids there yesterday supporting the team and a bunch of them have become Notre Dame fans, too, so that's cool to see.

Q. Marco, after you guys lost the Georgetown game, the Maryland game was the beginning of the winning streak you're on now. I'm wondering, what was the team's mindset going into that game? What was the mindset coming out of that first Maryland match-up?

MARCO NAPOLITANO: I can definitely speak from a



defensive perspective, obviously. The Georgetown game was not our best game from the defensive end. It was mostly a fifth-year and senior guys on the defense.

We got together and we kind of talked about what our standard was and what we wanted the rest of our season to look like because most of us weren't going to be coming back next year. So I definitely say that that Georgetown game was a big turning point for us as a unit.

We just kind of all were able to get together and kind of -- it was less about the Xs and Os and kind of more about what we wanted out of our standard and kind of the leadership to look like going through the rest of our season.

So it was kind of less about Maryland going into that and kind of more just about us and how we wanted to continue with the rest of our season and kind of the rest of our lacrosse careers.

Q. Devon or Marco, I'm curious, what does today look like for you guys? Are you guys watching film? How are you guys preparing for Maryland tomorrow? Do you have a practice? Just curious as to how it relates to Sunday for you both.

DEVON MCLANE: We have practice and film later today. Our coaches do a great job preparing us for that. They were scouting the game yesterday. So super helpful.

Coming into the weekend, we knew it was going to be a common opponent after Denver, having played UVA twice, having played Maryland once.

Obviously very different teams come May, but just seeing a familiar opponent is comfortable, I guess. But we had that quick turnaround in the ACC tournament, so it was a good practice run for this weekend.

So some relaxation time, hydrate and just spending time together. This is kind of the day we talked about all year is like the practice of the year. You're the last two teams standing. So we're looking forward to it and it's going to be a great day tomorrow.

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