

NCAA Men's Frozen Four Semifinal: Massachusetts vs Minnesota Duluth

Friday, April 9, 2021

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

PPG Paints Arena

Massachusetts Minutemen Coach Greg Carvel

Postgame Media Conference

Massachusetts - 3, Minnesota Duluth - 2 (OT)

MODERATOR: We have the head coach of Massachusetts with us, Greg Carvel. Opening thoughts?

COACH CARVEL: For two periods Duluth is the best team we've played this year. They play a really heavy style that we're not used to playing against.

And I think for two periods we struggled with it. I don't know if frustration is the right word. But what we usually do just wasn't working. And so after the second period I really urged the players to realize that it's going to take more. And I thought the kids did a great job in the third period.

As the game wore on, Duluth, it felt like they were only playing three lines. We were trying to match. And it seemed like they were just rolling three lines. We felt like we had four lines going.

So, we kept rolling four lines the whole game. When it got to overtime and as we found more confidence in our game and more aggression, being more aggressive in our play, we were getting them stuck in their D zone and that really wears you out when you have to play in your own zone for a long time. The overtime was pretty lopsided.

And I give credit to our guys. We pushed them hard. We push them hard all the time. Our practices are demanding. We have a great strength coach who does a great job conditioning them.

It's not just tonight. A lot of games this year we felt our conditioning, as games wore on, we were able to maintain and even push things to a higher level. And tonight we did.

I thought the first two periods, the goals they scored were how goals were going to be scored tonight. I think they



were all scored the same, just grinding around the net, banging in rebounds.

I wasn't happy with our play for the first two periods. Obviously the third period was great. And overtime was even better.

Just to comment, I was just informed that Henry Graham, Carson Gicewicz and Filip Lindberg are all going to be traveling to Pittsburgh tomorrow and will be available for the game on Saturday. I was just informed by our administration.

MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Is this as much a testament to your guys' character as anything, given everything that was laid out in front of them, to win a game like this with what happened going in? And then what happened through the first two periods, for them to find that in themselves?

COACH CARVEL: When you get to this stage, I'll tell you, you can prepare them as much as you say the right things. And I really liked our message in preparation. But when you get on the stage, you don't know what's going to actually going to -- what's going to happen.

And we just weren't ourselves. Again, it's tough to play against Duluth. I just felt that the guys, they weren't used to that kind of struggle. And I just, after the second period I challenged them. I said, you guys have a lot more to give.

As a coach, you feel, you coach long enough, to know when you're going. We just weren't going. We just, for whatever reason, we weren't pushing hard enough. And I really challenged them and they came out in the third and did a great job.

Once they got the momentum going, when they realized how well they could play, the game became really lopsided. And again I felt like being able to play four lines was a big part of that.

Once we found the aggression in our game and realized, hey, it's going to be hard to score; you're going to have to



earn it -- once they realized that, the game kind of swung our way.

Q. What can you say about the play of Matt Murray, just given the circumstances tonight?

COACH CARVEL: He played well. It's a tough situation. It's one thing to -- when you haven't played in three months, I think it's been about that long since he started a game. I give him a lot of credit for how well he's practiced and his effort and his attitude, which all of our guys have tremendous effort and attitude every day.

But when you don't have a live game, it's hard. To be honest, that was the only thing I was worried about, losing a couple of players up front, we can overcome that.

I thought the kids that we stuck in tonight -- Kiefiuk and Faith -- I thought they played pretty well for not having played for extended period. But it was the goaltending I was concerned about, just that Matt hadn't played in so long. He's a good goalie and he made saves that he needed to tonight.

And it's quite a story to be able to overcome that situation of losing that many players. And everything tonight was a testament to the culture of this team. I'm very proud of them.

Q. Garrett Wait was about a three-fourths-of-the-time player for the Gophers. He had two goals in two years for them. He wasn't in the transfer portal long before he heard from your coaching staff. Talk about what you saw there and what he's done for your team?

COACH CARVEL: I didn't see anything. Jared DeMichiel was aware of him when he went on the portal. I think Jared jumped on it pretty quickly. What I was told was that this kid has some ability, offensive ability. And so I trust my assistants with everything, with recruiting.

I knew he didn't play much. It was a coaching change. There's a lot of fallout when a coach -- they change coaches and you weren't recruited by that coach. We've seen it a thousand times.

And even when he got to campus I didn't know if he was going to be able to play for us. We really pushed him. He needed to condition. He needed to learn how to play our style. And he's a real good kid and he's very coachable and he accepted being challenged.

And he scored -- I think he scored 27 goals in USHL. I've never coached a player at this level that's scored 27 goals in USHL. I was excited for that. And he has the ability to

score. I think it was a third of the way into the year or maybe a little more that I realized that I want to see if he had some chemistry with Trivigno, and they have. I think tonight was his ninth or tenth goal.

He's a nice complement on that line. He's got really good hands on the net. He has a ways to go. He'll be an even better player next year when he has the summer to go home and train and know what's expected of him. He's been a great addition. We had three transfers this year and they've all been huge additions to our team.

Q. I think Garrett, if I use the words right, he's talked about extra skating after practice and called it the big boy pants skate or something like that. Was this the big boy pants overtime for the team? Because you're skating, I know it was good in the third but it really seemed to change even in overtime?

COACH CARVEL: Again, I just felt like -- I think Duluth ran out of gas because they didn't roll four lines. I thought we took it up a notch.

And the one thing about this team is they know what makes them good and when they smell blood in the water I just thought they took it up a notch and they all played great down the stretch in overtime.

But it's been really -- I think the biggest difference of our team over the last two months is the fact that we've got four lines that I'm very comfortable with.

We were trying to match, but if they're only playing three lines I've got to play that fourth line against somebody. Eventually I didn't care who they put on the ice. We were just rolling four lines for the most part.

And that's so -- it's such an asset to be able to do that, to play all your players. And it was great because we're in overtime I'm looking at the bench, the next line up is completely rested and ready to go and to continue the momentum that we had built.

Q. How good was it to see a kid like Anthony get that second goal and get the amount of opportunities he had tonight?

COACH CARVEL: Well, the thing I've learned about Anthony is that he rises in the NCAA Tournament. He scored two years ago scored our first goal against Harvard, really broke up the dam.

And he was the guy to go up and take the place of Gicewicz, because Anthony's played as heavy as anybody. We know he'll go to the net. We know he'll finish hits. We

know he'll be a pest to play against.

That goal he scores, that's what we were hoping for from him. And that was the biggest, probably the biggest goal of the year for us -- even bigger than the overtime goal because it felt the overtime goal was an eventuality. But that goal in the third period, we needed that. It gave us a huge, huge bump and we never turned back from there.

Q. You just talked about Anthony's goal there, and he gets that by getting his body to the paint. When you're having issues getting pucks through and getting pucks on net, does that kind of force you to put the emphasis more on getting to the dirty areas and getting some traffic in front of the goal?

COACH CARVEL: It's every game. Every game, especially this time of year, it's get to the dirty areas. I believe all five goals in the game were scored on rebounds.

So, that's always been a focus for us is to be aggressive in the offensive zone, keep pucks in the offensive zone, try to tire teams down and then grind the puck to the areas where 50/50 chance, hopefully it lands on your stick. And that was the case on Anthony's goal.

On the game winner it was more a case -- that was actually our plan going into overtime was try to wear them down, cut back, take a puck to the back post and have somebody there to tap it in. Great execution by that entire line.

Q. You mentioned execution of the line. Garrett's going to get a lot of credit for that goal but what did you think of the way that Bobby kept possession of the puck and put himself in position to make the play for Garrett?

COACH CARVEL: Yeah, that's most of the credit goes to Bobby. Again, that was what we were trying to do. We were trying to wear them down, use our feet, create some operation and have presence in the back post. And they executed. It was well done.

I'm not sure where Lopes was in the whole scheme. But we need that line to be -- they need to make differences in the games for us. They did all year long, not so much in the regionals. And I told them going into tonight that that line needed to make a difference and they made a huge difference.

MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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