

# NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Minnesota State vs Denver

Saturday, April 9, 2022

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

TD Garden

**Denver Pioneers**

**Coach David Carle**

**Magnus Chrona**

**Ryan Barrow**

**Mike Benning**

Finals Postgame Media Conference



I'm just kind of overwhelmed with everything. But I saw a shot and took it. Went with my gut, and now we're here. So I'm happy.

**Q. You guys went down a goal in both your regional games, and then on Thursday they tied it up late to send in overtime. How do you guys continue to find the poise to come back when you go down a goal?**

MAGNUS CHRONA: I really can't talk about that, but --

COACH CARLE: It's because he keeps us in the game, that's why.

MAGNUS CHRONA: I think we stuck with it. We always have believed ever since the St. Cloud game when we were down 3-0, we found that we had belief no matter what, how much we're down we always have a chance and we always stuck with it. And as Mike said, now we're here. It's a great feeling, for sure.

RYAN BARROW: I just think we're battle tested. We've been through a lot of different games, scenarios this year. And we've come out on top. So I think we've had that experience, and I think that's kind of how we were able to turn the tide there in the third.

**Q. Magnus, there's a lot of hard work that goes in behind the scenes to get to this point. But what do you think has been some keys, whether it's in practice, strength training, whatever it may be, for you to develop your game and be where it is right now?**

MAGNUS CHRONA: I would say my consistency, coming in with an open mind every day, and always work hard, even if it might not be my day, it might be a tough day, but I believe that I was more consistent this year, and I believe our whole team was consistent, and we really worked hard for this opportunity. And yeah, it started early and fortunately it ended very late for us, and I think definitely our consistency this year was unbelievable, for sure.

**Q. Ryan, you still -- my memory is not very good but I think you got the 'do in the '70s. How many games have you played in and how good was it to end it this**

Denver - 5, Minnesota State - 1

COACH CARLE: Words don't describe the feelings. I'm so proud of our team and what they were able to accomplish this year. It means the world to our staff and our players to be a part of this journey with these guys. It was just so much fun. They committed to each other every day to get better. It was not easy, but they continued to stick with it.

I can maybe count on one hand the amount of bad practices we had. They just worked all year, believed in each other all year, and we faced our biggest test tonight.

Mike Hastings and his staff having an excellent hockey team. And they made us earn it. And you gotta earn this trophy. And our guys earned it tonight. And we are so proud of them.

**Q. What did that guy say at the end of the second period or what was said by others at the end of the second period that created that last 20 minutes?**

RYAN BARROW: I think it was just, obviously, like, they were outplaying us, but at the end of the day they were only up 1-0. So one shot changes the entire outlook on the game.

**Q. Mike, you looked a bit stunned on the ice when Colby was talking to you after the game. I don't know if it sunk in yet that you had the game-winning goal. What did you see and how do you feel now compared to right after the game?**

MIKE BENNING: I've started to collect my thoughts now.

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way?

RYAN BARROW: Unbelievable. Obviously you come to Denver to win national championships, and I came the year after they won it. And took five years, but we're here now. So but unbelievable feeling.

**Q. School record for games played.**

RYAN BARROW: Not bad.

**Q. Mike, was this Minnesota State team a puzzle you needed to crack; and if so, what did you see that led to the sort of deluge?**

MIKE BENNING: You know, they're a pretty sound team, they're older. All of us to keep playing our game and just shots to the net. He's a really good goalie but he's not perfect. So obviously I saw a shot and took it. And Barrow saw a shot and took it. And a lot of our guys did. And just kind of picking away at the game piece by piece. And I think that's how we found our success tonight.

**Q. Magnus, you're making some key stops throughout the game, when guys were out in front of you were not figuring it out yet. When you got the tying goal, what was your mindset to stay in the game, stay locked in when it seemed that all the hard work had sort of paid off in the moment?**

MAGNUS CHRONA: A big thing for me this year for me has been pretty easy just breathe. But honestly, as we know as soon as we had one, I think our momentum kind of falls down after and we just kept getting more. And after the first one I felt almost immediately that we were going to get a second goal. And after that I mean it was just pure joy and trying to stay in the moment for the time and enjoy it.

**Q. I can imagine it's never a good feeling watching the other team score from inside the penalty box, tell us about that moment. And did that put something in your belly that I gotta make up for that one?**

MIKE BENNING: Yeah, it really pissed me off, I'm going to be honest. (Laughter).

But I just felt I had to contribute in a way, just keep on going piece by piece. And getting that second goal is huge. And the big Swede over here staying solid between the pipes was awesome for us, too.

**Q. Ryan, what does it mean to be part of the team that won the championship that ties Denver with the most all-time?**

RYAN BARROW: It's crazy, honestly, I can't really put it into words, but I'm so proud of this group. We knew we had something special and really helped having these young guys come along after the year we had last year. And I'm not going to lie, at times it probably made DC nervous, me nervous. We're a pretty loose bunch, but then we always turned it on. So I never really got too worried.

But just an unbelievable group to do it with and to tie Michigan at 9 is awesome. I know that was one of DC's goals.

**Q. You guys have gone on like these crazy runs all season where you guys are just kind of like keep scoring goals. The best example I saw was that St. Cloud game and obviously this one, too. What does that feel like when you just sense blood in the water?**

RYAN BARROW: It's a lot of fun. A lot of guys are scoring a lot of goals. So I think a lot of guys set career highs in points, but that doesn't really matter. It just helps the team be successful. Obviously you can dig yourself out of holes when the next line up is really excited to get on the ice because you know you have a chance to possess pucks, make plays and score goals.

And then obviously I gotta give a shout out to Magnus. For the first 40 minutes I don't think our team realized we were in the national championship game there for a bit. He stood on his head, and once our feet got under us, we were able to do what we were able to do.

**Q. What's going on in Stockholm?**

MAGNUS CHRONA: I don't know, I've got to text my mom. She's pretty nervous. It's pretty late. They stayed up to watch me. It was fun.

**Q. When you raised that trophy above your head, what goes through your mind? Is there a person or place that you're thinking of that kind of got you here?**

MIKE BENNING: It's pretty blank, to be honest. (Laughter). But that's what you dream of as a little guy, winning a national championship. And you just look at the guys that you went to battle with, and all of them raising it up, too, it's pleasant.

RYAN BARROW: I think just "we did it." Our alumni is so close at Denver and you hear all those stories about winning national championships. And you just picture winning one yourself. I can't remember how many times I watched the 2017 team pump-up video of them winning the natty, so it will be pretty sweet to watch my own now.

MAGNUS CHRONA: I had a tragedy in the family in March before we played Colorado College. My grandma passed away. And ever since I dedicated every single win for her. And it's definitely -- it was a relief that we won. And I did it for her.

COACH CARLE: I'm with Mike, it was pretty blank. (Laughter).

**Q. Mike, you guys went straight over to the DU section. We talked a lot over there with a bunch of players about how much the fan support has meant. What did it mean to see such a big and loud DU section tonight and did you guys really feed off of that there in the third period especially?**

MIKE BENNING: Yes, totally. They've been good for us all year, they've been following, a small section of them have been following us around. And we might not have like other teams and numbers, but like we hear that section loud and clear and that obviously gives us energy even if we don't think it does. I think it does. And just the support from back home at the university. Like everyone's up too.

**Q. Mike and Ryan, they make it tough for you guys to get through the neutral zone into the offensive zone and set up the way you want to. You guys were able to do that cleanly on that first goal. Do you feel once you were able to do that that transition into the offensive zone opened up for you and allowed you to do what you did the rest of the third period?**

RYAN BARROW: They do a great job jamming you up in the neutral zone. And what we talked about in the second intermission was just coming towards pucks. You don't want to leave a linemate on the island there. Once we started supporting pucks, that kind of works -- once we started opening our mouths, I think maybe big stage, you get a little timid, you're not really talking. Once we started helping each other out there I think it made a huge difference.

**Q. Ryan, can you just talk about the leadership that Coach Carle gave you guys, not just to get you guys here but to get you guys through the evening?**

RYAN BARROW: Unbelievable, I think me and him have grown as people. I've been here all four years he's been a head coach, so I've seen him grow as a coach and mature and gain more respect each year from the players. When you have a coach you want to go play for, makes the leadership group's job a lot easier because leaders lead and the followers follow.

**Q. It's easy to say preach patience and whatnot when it's 1-0, but you only had eight shots and not a lot of O zone time. Did you have to do something different there? It wasn't just a patience thing?**

COACH CARLE: I didn't think we were playing very well, outside of our goaltender. And Ryan made a mention of it. We weren't connected. A lot of that was what Mankato was doing. And in the third I thought our legs got going more. We were more connected on the ice. We were talking more.

And it did lead to, obviously, some O zone time. I thought the last 10 of the second our puck pressure started to get better. We started to create some turnovers, but we weren't there offensively with the puck.

And then in the third I think both started to start to happen. And it obviously led to the goals and the final result. But obviously we couldn't have done it without Magnus standing on his head. Made a few massive saves to keep it at 1. And without that, we're out of the game.

**Q. The general consensus among people who were not playing in the game was that Minnesota State was dominating those first two periods. I'm wondering, did you feel that way or were you just looking at the scoreboard, 1-0, we can get back into this at any time?**

COACH CARLE: Yes, that's all that matters is the scoreboard. We were always one shot away from it. Did our guy have to make some saves? Absolutely. Were we playing our best? No, we weren't.

We did get a couple looks. Not nearly as many or sustained pressure or sustained looks as we would like. And again they played great. I give their staff and their team a lot of credit. And sometimes it takes all 60 minutes. And we utilized the last 20 to our fullest advantage. And it takes a full team and we utilized our goaltender to the extreme. It's a total and complete win. And at the end of the day the scoreboard says what it does.

**Q. Ryan was mentioning that it was one of your goals to get that ninth championship. What does it feel like? And why was it one of your goals, besides just winning?**

COACH CARLE: Denver hockey and the university has done a lot for me in my life and my family, with my brother having gone to the school and them honoring my scholarship -- the story has been really well documented.

For Monte to give me an opportunity as a young assistant coach to come back, for Carleton and John Miller and Ron

Grahame to give me the opportunity to lead the program at such a young age after Monte left for the NHL, that burden does not fall or that responsibility does not fall on me lightly.

And I owe a lot of what I have in my life to the university. And this program is very special. It means the world to me. Our alumni group is very tight and it certainly was a goal to get to nine. The ultimate goal is to be the first one to 10, I will tell you. Winning Thursday against Michigan, the team at 9, was a huge step in that direction. And obviously tonight is an even bigger step.

So, again, I'm so thankful and blessed to work where I work, to be a part of the staff that I'm a part of, and for the people to believe in me and obviously our players to get this accomplished is an unbelievable achievement. And we're all so proud to be Denver Pioneers today.

**Q. Could you just talk a bit about Magnus and just like how today was -- it felt like the culmination of like a long process of his maturation as a goaltender?**

COACH CARLE: I agree. He came to us, honestly, a year before we probably planned. Filip Larsson signed after his freshman year. Magnus comes in, is in a very competitive goaltender battle with Devin Cooley, does exceptionally well with it. His freshman year, 2020, the season gets canceled. He has a really good freshman year. And his sophomore year was indicative of a lot of players in our program; it was a real challenge to gain any traction within the environment we were forced to be in around the regulations that we had in our local community.

And I give him and a lot of our players a ton of credit. They worked very hard this summer. They came back focused. They built a foundation. Magnus came back with a very refreshed and growth mindset, I would say. And he improved from day one to now in exceptional ways.

And he talked a little bit about it, so much of it for him was between the ears and just showing up ready to work with a great attitude and really being a leader and the rock back there for his teammates.

And that starts in practice for him. And it wasn't perfect throughout the year, but it continued to get better, as you said. And this tournament certainly was a culmination of it. He was excellent throughout and led his team to a national championship.

**Q. I'm sure you saw that 3-2 in the neutral zone in your nightmares leading up to this game. But you're down just one goal. How much were you up and down the bench exhorting the guys, going, hey, just one, we just**

**need one, and that will open it up for us?**

COACH CARLE: I mean, it was just more reinforcing the game plan rather than focusing on the scoreboard. We felt if we could get to doing what we do, we would give ourselves a chance. And Magnus made save after save there in big moments.

And I think that gave the guys life that he's putting it on the line for us. We need to up our game. And again, in the second, I thought it was an opportunity for us to take a breath again and to come out and really play Denver hockey for the last 20.

**Q. We've talked a lot about how this team parallels 2004. Obviously now what does it mean to you to get No. 9 in the same building as the 2004 team that kind of put Denver hockey back on the map?**

COACH CARLE: It's huge. We have four now since the turn of the century, I think that's the most out of anybody. We've done it with three different head coaches, that's very impressive in my opinion, and this program is -- Ryan said it. You come here to try to win championships. It's not easy to play at Denver. We challenge recruits when they come on campus. We challenge our players. We hold them accountable. It's a big responsibility to play in our program.

And ultimately it takes people who are team first and they want to be part of something bigger than themselves. So to do it again in Boston, that team really did put, I think, Denver hockey back on the modern map. And we're here to stay, obviously.

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