

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Denver vs Boston U.

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St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

Denver Pioneers

Coach David Carle

McKade Webster

Jack Devine

Shai Buium

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference

DAVID CARLE: It's great to be back in Saint Paul, when we won here two weeks ago. It was obviously our goal to get back here. It was a tough road out in Springfield playing two great teams, UMass and Cornell.

But really proud of on your team for getting through that and getting us back here. They've done a great job all year, and it's always a good season when you're playing on the last weekend.

Q. Playing with Zeev is always a challenge, but now you get a chance to play in a national championship atmosphere with him. Has anything changed over the course of the season?

SHAI BUIUM: I wouldn't say anything has changed. I would say we're just excited for this moment. We've dreamed of this since we were kids. We've probably celebrated out back home in the yard pretending we won a national championship before. So we're just really excited for this moment.

Q. It's obviously a power of two really offense. What will be the key to slow down BU's offense tomorrow?

MCKADE WEBSTER: We want to play our hockey, Denver hockey. And we want to make them come through us, play a 200-foot game, stop (indiscernible) pucks and make it difficult for them to get to our net front.

Obviously stopping their offense, they have good players on their team. We stick to what we do and we play playoff hockey throughout the NCHC. We've been doing it for the last eight weeks here in the playoffs. So I think making



them come through us and making them go 200 feet.

JACK DEVINE: I think Webby did a good job going there. I think we know how good of a team we are. We know how strong we are defensively. I don't think we need to change anything up. We believe in ourselves, if we stick to our game we'll have a lot of success.

We're also battle tested the last couple of weeks. I think playing UMass and Cornell, those are tough battles. And I think we've proved how good we are defensively.

SHAI BUIUM: I think they hit it spot on.

Q. Jack, just talk a little bit, kind of give us some insight about what it's been like pre and post without Rizzo, and how you've adapted, continued to be productive with new linemates?

JACK DEVINE: Rizzo is obviously a tremendous player. He plays with a lot of skill. At the University of Denver we have a next-man-up mentality. And we have guys on our roster to fill his role with Carter King and Tristan Broz.

I've been fortunate to play with Tristan who is another skilled guy, tremendous hockey sense. Obviously he's tremendous player, but we have other guys on our team who can fill his role and play a big part in our success.

Q. Shai, talk about the development of this team defensively, because at the beginning of the season I know that that was kind of the challenge because the number of young guys on this team. But obviously with the way you guys played in the regional, you guys have come a long ways. But can you just talk a little bit about the development of this team defensively?

SHAI BUIUM: Yeah, I mean, obviously we're a young group, 11 freshmen. I think we've been learning a lot throughout the year. We faced some adversity getting swept by North Dakota, one in our building against Western. I think that's helped us learn a lot.

We take that, we go to video. And as a team we grow. I think that the 2-1 wins showed a lot in our team a lot of



growth. That was the first time all season we've done that. So we're ready for the challenge ahead of us.

Q. I don't have to talk to you about the tradition and history and the goal for the 10th championship. But you are a young team. Do you ever look at yourselves as underdogs, or do you take the ice every time thinking we're as good as everybody?

MCKADE WEBSTER: I think we're the best team here, and we set out day one of training camp that we're going to win a national championship. So put a challenge in front of us, but no we want to be playing in the last game.

We don't think of ourselves as underdogs or anything like that. We're ready to go. And, yeah, we want to be there and we want to lift the trophy at the end of the season.

Q. McKade, as someone who has been through it and been successful in Boston, what have you imparted on this team and what your role has been and how it's evolved over the course of the year to bring them to this point?

MCKADE WEBSTER: I think we just have such a great group of guys, and I think everyone in the Denver community -- the administration, coaching and staff -- they've done a great job with our group.

But, no, we have a special group in that locker room and there's a lot of people that do a lot of things for our community in Denver.

I think moving forward it's just trying to talk to them and take a breath and enjoy the moment. We deserve to be here. And I think the experience of all these guys, we've all won one.

You can take a step back and analyze everything that we'll see tomorrow that we've been there and nothing's going to faze us.

Q. Shai, Boston University obviously has a lot of offensive talent. How aware do you have to be of Macklin Celebrini?

SHAI BUIUM: We've talked about him. He's obviously a good player. We just stick to our game. Keep them on the outside. Don't let them make plays. Keep them away from our net and good defense turns into good offense for us. And we'll go and try to score some goals.

Q. To add on to what your players say about the game plan to slow down Boston University tomorrow?

DAVID CARLE: I thought they summed it up real well. There's four great teams here. Every team has offensive weapons. You don't get here without that. So trying to limit their opportunities, their time in space, the best you can.

I think our team showed how committed they are to team defense, they have the last couple of months and certainly last weekend in Springfield. It's a big ask, it's a big lift, but the group's confident and feeling good about themselves and I think ready to face the challenge.

Q. For your whole roster, it's blended together and you've played a team game. But we know this time of year it's goaltending, it's special teams. How do you feel right now with your power play and with your P.K.?

DAVID CARLE: Good. I think you see the numbers drop as far as penalties. This time of year I think teams are more disciplined. Refs are maybe a little bit less likely to call some of the fringe-type penalties.

So you have to be ready to execute. You might only get a power play or two in the game, and you might be asked to kill one once or twice. You just have to be ready for those moments whenever they are. And both units have been going well on the P.K. and the power play for. Having a little bit of extra time to prepare is always helpful and I'm sure it will be a big factor in the game tomorrow.

Q. From the outside, the perspective on your goalie that Matt Davis is pretty special. He waited his turn, which in this day and age guys don't take their turn, they take off. He's gotten his time, gotten back gotten healthy. From your perspective from the inside as to what he's meant, his development and bringing it to the point now that you are playing potentially for a national championship?

DAVID CARLE: He's been through a lot in his first two years, being behind Chrona. Has had the opportunity to work with Ryan Massa, who we were able to add as a full-time assistant this year. Ryan was with us the previous two years. There's a level of consistency in the coaching, the teaching that he's getting. Saw a lot of growth in his game through the last two years.

I think one of the bigger moments for Matty was when Chrona got hurt at the end of last year, down the stretch. And it allowed Matty to carry the ball down the stretch toward the end of the year. He made some real big saves, helped to stay in some games and win a lot of games down the stretch a year ago.

It gave him a little bit of experience and opportunity. I thought that was great for his growth and also for the growth of the program in leading into this season.

And this year he gets hurt in game five, doesn't play another game in the whole first half. So it hasn't been this super smooth sailing type season. He's gone through a lot this year, has started every game after the break.

And you could tell timing, just repetition, coming back midseason, that's not an easy thing to do. And worked through some of those moments of adversity, in addition to our team getting better defensively in front of him.

I think it's all kind of come together at the right time over the last four to six weeks for him and our group. And we know our hands are going to be full tomorrow with some really good players and an excellent team that we're facing, but the adversity and his path, I think, has prepared him well for this stage.

Q. What have you seen in the development of Tristan Broz since he's joined your program?

DAVID CARLE: I think finding a level of confidence and comfort in the room, it's not easy I don't think in any program to be a transfer. And it's not easy on the individual coming in. It's not easy on the guys in the room, and I think they've done a great job over the last 18 months, he's done a great job of kind of letting his guard down and the guys accepting him and all those things.

He's getting back to the player I think that we all saw in Fargo, and just a more consistent, on-your-toes, engaged physically and mentally -- and obviously I think the results are speaking for themselves with Rizzo having been out for the extended period he was. Tristan was one of the guys that we asked to step up and play a bigger role and play more minutes. And I think he's done a really nice job with it.

Q. We talked a little bit on the conference call about your familiarity with playing here, but it sounds like the committee really made it a pretty unique experience. Can you talk about what you've seen since you got off the plane and been to the rink here?

DAVID CARLE: I think the NCAA always does a great job, certainly, at this event. We're really grateful for all the work they do, and it's a big lift by Visit Saint Paul, the building, the Gophers, the host institution and all the people that come and lay the groundwork, logistics infrastructure, I think to make it a really special experience for the players, and that's the most important thing is that they have a great experience here.

And this place, this city, this state, they know hockey. They know how to run it at a really high level. And we've been blown away by the hospitality we've received thus far.

Q. You've had a chance to coach the World Junior team and a lot of these players you know a little bit in depth. Advantage, disadvantage at this point, or does it matter?

DAVID CARLE: I don't think it really matters one way or the other. It's good to see some of them. We had a great journey and experience together back in December and January and accomplished something really special, but as far as impacting this event, I don't see it being a major factor.

Q. Rizzo's availability?

DAVID CARLE: Rizzo will be in tomorrow.

Q. Thinking back to your team from two years ago and winning in Boston and obviously Buium coming in has been -- I think he's a defined impact freshman. But I remember how good Behrens has been for you. Can you give us some insight about him, maybe a little bit of a forgotten guy because Buium's been so impactful?

DAVID CARLE: Sean has really been a mainstay since his freshman year, he's played big minutes for us, Was paired with Kyle Mayhew for a couple of years, playing against other teams' top lines from day one. Power play, penalty kill, you know, north of 20 minutes from day one stepping on campus.

He's been through a lot of the wars through our league, through this tournament, through the World Juniors, has a lot of big game experience, someone that we'll obviously lean on heavily tomorrow and hopefully all weekend playing against teams with excellent offensive players and how he takes away time and space, how he gets into people, even at his size. His ability and desire to block shots, he puts it all on the line for his teammates, and I think he's got a lot of respect from the room and all the little things that he does to help a team win.

Might not be the flashiest things, but he wins defensive defenseman of the year in our league for a reason. It's hard to do that at sub-6, and he's done that. It just goes to show, I think, the respect that he has amongst our league and the results that he puts in on the ice shutting down other teams' best players.

Q. Describe, I guess, how Massimo is looking and



feeling right now. Obviously it's been a long time off here for him.

DAVID CARLE: It has been. He's been on his progression path obviously for a little while here, and I think our medical team's done a great job with him. He's been able to skate since getting back from Springfield in, like, a regular jersey and take contact and get involved.

It's been a day-by-day thing: How is he doing? How are you feeling? Is there setback? Is there not? He's had a good week of practice, and he's ready to go for tomorrow.

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