

# NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Michigan vs Boston College

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Xcel Energy Center

**Michigan Wolverines**

**Coach Brandon Naurato**

**Philippe Lapointe**

**Marshall Warren**

**Jacob Truscott**

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference



**Q. Marshall, just your thoughts on the defensive style of play that you may need to play to win this championship?**

MARSHALL WARREN: Yeah, I think just be hard in every zone. Make them turn over the puck. Be good on a line rush against, just be physical. I think we have a great D core back there. As long as we take care of our net, we'll put some pucks in their net.

**Q. Brandon has talked a lot this year about how you guys play better when you have something to prove. At this point in your eyes, what do you have left to prove?**

MARSHALL WARREN: I think we have a lot to prove. Michigan hasn't won a national title since 1998. That's what we want to do for the alumni. That's what we want to do for Block M. And it starts tomorrow.

As a team we were .500 during the break. Went on a little run there. But we're not satisfied yet. It starts tomorrow and we're ready to go. BC is in our way. So we're going to do everything in our power to get the win.

JACOB TRUSCOTT: I think that we just have to, like Marshall said, it just starts with the first puck drop. We've got to go shift-by-shift and have the mentality to prove that we're the best. I have no doubt that since the start of the year that we're the best team at the end of this. Most importantly it starts with our first shift, each guy.

**Q. Jacob and Philippe, third straight Frozen Four with Michigan, does it feel familiar being back here? And**

**how are you building on that experience?**

JACOB TRUSCOTT: Obviously we've had good teams the past three, four years that we've been here. That's why you come to Michigan; you come here to win. The people before us have built a great program for us, and we're just doing our part, and it's a great experience every year.

There's no doubt that we're going to get there. We had no doubt at the start, and we're just happy to be here. And we have something to prove, like we said, and we're not done yet. There's still a lot that this team has to prove to the people out there. It's a good experience, but we've just got to focus on the next game.

**Q. Marshall, I know you've talked about this before but what are the emotions getting ready for this, facing BC? Did you keep in touch with those guys during the season? Has that gone on lockdown now as you get ready to play them?**

MARSHALL WARREN: Our group chat has been pretty quiet ever since we beat Michigan State. Right now I'm emotionless about it. It's a business trip for us. We have to beat them. They're in my way, our way.

And obviously after the game I'll be a little emotional. But right now I'm just focused on playing Boston College and beating them.

**Q. Having a weekend off, how do you guys think -- how it plays into your favor or doesn't play into your favor? Does that disrupt momentum or is it nice to have that rest?**

PHILIPPE LAPOINTE: Obviously it's nice having that break. You go through the regionals and some guys are hurt, like Seamus Casey. But he's healthy now and ready to go. So that time off helps us recover.

But obviously you want to ride that momentum. But Naur had a great plan for us and our training staff had a great plan for us to get back into it. And just build momentum through practice and keep the pace really high. So the guys feel really great coming into the tournament.

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**Q. Marshall, what have you told these guys and the team about maybe what to expect against facing BC?**

MARSHALL WARREN: They're a fast, skilled team, like we know already. But I think they played good on the line rush, similar to Minnesota a little bit, with their top two lines. We've just got to wear them down, be hard in front of our net.

I think it just comes down to who wants it more in those dirty areas and who wants to give it more. I think we have to be utterly desperate because that's how you win championships. I think we've got a good game plan going in and we're ready to go.

**Q. Jacob, you talked a little bit about sort of some other teams, people counting you guys out, you guys not doubting. This is the hometown of probably the hockey team and coach who was counted out the most, right, in the "Miracle on Ice." I wonder if any little thing like that, like, I think last time hockey team won, the football team won. Does it feel like when Michigan won the title, beat Boston College? Does it feel maybe some stars are aligning? Do you guys look at things like that?**

JACOB TRUSCOTT: Obviously it's cool to see the stats with the '98 team and how it's all aligning. But at the end of the day it's up to us to repeat history, something that hasn't happened since '98 where football and hockey won in the same year. Definitely cool to see those stats, but it comes down to us to make it come to fruition.

MARSHALL WARREN: I think it's kind of cool when people doubt you in a little bit of way, because adversity breeds champions. We've been through a little adversity all year. It's cool just proving people wrong. And I think we're going to keep doing that.

But, yeah, we've got a special group here. And we have the 1998 trophy sitting in our locker room. It's kind of cool to look at it every day and see that. You strive for that every day, you want that. So, how far are you willing to go for that trophy? That's kind of been our mantra, our attitude going into this week.

**Q. More recently, football team and you guys both making three straight final four playoff appearances type of things. What takeaways can you maybe draw from their success this year and finally getting over that hump after two straight years losing in the semis?**

PHILIPPE LAPOINTE: I can just remember that Alabama game in the semis. That momentum swings were crazy in

that game. I remember Naur coming into the room after and saying, like, you guys see those momentum swings. That's how it is in the tournament. We know that.

We've been here two years in a row. So that's what it's all about. And just kind of controlling those emotions through those momentum swings and staying even-keeled. And.

Then before we left, you know, Moore came in and talked to the team, the new head coach, and kind of gave us his perspective on his championship this year. And it fired the boys up. And it was awesome for him to do that for all of us and just thankful for that.

JACOB TRUSCOTT: Building off what Phil said, we know a lot of the football guys. We kind of are friends with them, so to be able to hang out with them hear their experiences through the playoffs and what they went through as a team.

The biggest thing is they talk about it with us and we have it in the locker room is just having that swagger, just knowing you're the best and going out there every day and competing with each other. I believe it's the closest team that wins championships.

I think that we've done a good job with that, just bringing the guys together to hang out and have fun and just kind of enjoy this process.

**Q. What are you anticipating out of BC? And how do you think you guys match up?**

BRANDON NAURATO: They're the number one team in the country. They won the regular season. They won the playoffs. First off, congrats on all four girls (indiscernible). That's awesome.

They're a good team and we have a ton of respect for them and their staff. With video nowadays they know what we're about and we know what they're about. It just comes down to executing, like Phil talked about.

Just with the momentum swings, even in that Alabama game, we're watching the football team, it's just making the big play at the right time, but you don't know when that time's going to come. You don't know if it's a big or small play, but just stacking all those together and making sure we're on the right side of it.

**Q. Phil kind of mentioned how important the break is, especially for a guy like Seamus coming back. But what does Seamus coming back this week do for your team?**

BRANDON NAURATO: It's huge. He's one of the leaders in the D core. Super proud of the guys for stepping up when he wasn't around. We're happy to have him back in a lot of different areas.

**Q. What has Rutger McGroarty meant to your team? And what have you seen from him this season?**

BRANDON NAURATO: Just a leader. One of those guys that brings energy every room that he walks into. Always positive, smiling, makes you smile. And obviously a great player on the ice.

But just Rutger and that sophomore class, but all these guys, just a really good example of good people and what Michigan is all about.

**Q. Bringing your team in here, it's a different environment again. Every Frozen Four is a little different. Are there more distractions, the same distractions? How do you keep it simple?**

BRANDON NAURATO: I think that's probably one of the biggest things we've talked about that we learned from -- not that it was a negative in the past -- but just that it's easy to get distracted. I don't think, if you ask the guys, that we're just excited to be here in the past. I think they're ready to go.

But this year it's, like, we may look back on it in 5, 10, 15 years and be happy that we went to three Frozen Fours in a row, but we're here to win. And we've got to earn that and we have a lot of work to do and it starts on Thursday.

**Q. Do you see any similarities from the team two years ago? I know you weren't head coach then, but you came into Boston with seven first-round picks. Do you see any similarities to the talent that BC brings in with the four first-round picks and the guys that played up for the program?**

BRANDON NAURATO: Yeah, big time. There can be nothing going on. And they can have ultra-talented players that can make something happen out of nothing.

I think that's the biggest thing with the momentum shifts; you feel like, oh, this team is outshooting the other time 9-to-1 in this segment. They deserve to score. That's the difference when you have game breakers. You can be getting out-shot or out-played, and they put one in the back of the net and it changes all the momentum.

**Q. Again just to talk a little bit about your fan base, your band. I kind of joked in the Maryland Heights about it seemed like between you and Michigan State,**

**your bands are having their own battle, how much does that excite your team and motivate them to go forward?**

BRANDON NAURATO: It's huge. I think Michigan in general has the largest alumni network in the world. From the band to the Children of Yost, to just the regular students, the support has been unbelievable. We probably don't appreciate it enough until you're not here and you look back or you watch other programs.

But that's why Michigan is what they're all about is because of the support.

**Q. Going back to last offseason when you brought in Marshall Warren, I guess what were you kind of expecting out of him? Now that you've got to coach him for a year, what are your takeaways and what has he been like?**

BRANDON NAURATO: Just a leader, a veteran, mature kid. Brings nothing but positive energy in the room. Pushes other people to be the best versions of themselves. I think Marsh had a good first half with Edwards out. He probably took on too much, like a lot of those guys in regards to ice time and trying to take care of the D core.

But he's been outstanding in the second half. And even just simplifying his game, being hard, but just being a leader in the room, on and off the ice, and making plays in big moments. He's been great.

**Q. How valuable is the experience that Jake Barczewski brings, being a fifth-year player?**

BRANDON NAURATO: He's a four-year starter at Canisius. Obviously played in the tournament and won the playoff championship with them.

I think he's gained a ton of experience this year playing in big events like the Duel in the D and the Big Ten championship on the road, and the NCAA regionals in his hometown.

We believe in Barzo. He's another guy that brings positive energy. And the guys want what's best for him. I think he's going to be outstanding on Thursday night.

**Q. So there's a lot of players from the U.S. NTDP program on both sides have. You guys talked about that at all in the locker room, or is it just push that out, do your own thing?**

BRANDON NAURATO: I think a lot of these guys have played with and against each other, whether on World

Juniors or in junior hockey or at the national program. The top 17-year-olds go there at one point, and BC has a lot of them and we have a lot of them. Just a credit to the recruiting and what that program's built.

**Q. Phil mentioned how Coach Moore talked to the team. Is that something you helped set up? Have you talked to him at all about managing going to a championship, a playoff?**

BRANDON NAURATO: Yeah, we spent time with him as a staff and we had a really good talk. And then he asked if he could come talk to the players, too. It was quick, simple stuff, but stuff that matters.

If you haven't been here before you wouldn't appreciate his messaging, but it was really good. It's just a business approach. We're here like any other road trip all year. We're not walking around the town, like, just happy to be here. We've got a job to do, and we're ready to do it.

**Q. You know, you mentioned the amount of draft picks you guys have and BC has and in general BU and DU as well. How exciting is it for college hockey to really continue to grow and put elite hockey talent on the map? Before it was more let's go play juniors, but now you have some of the best players in the world saying let's go play college hockey.**

BRANDON NAURATO: To me, with this Frozen Four and Buium from Denver and the line at BC and Gauthier and what he's doing. Macklin Celebrini is probably going to go No. 1 overall. It's a great time for college hockey. I think it's only going up. I think it's super exciting.

We've been talking to some recruits recently and they're picking like every high-end 15-, 16-year-old between major, junior, it's not even close. We're a little biased.

But it's really impressive what college hockey has done every conference, and I think it's going to keep getting better and better.

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