

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Penn State vs Boston U.

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Boston U. Terriers

Jay Pandolfo

Ryan Greene

Quinn Hutson

Shane LaChance

Semifinal Pregame Media Conference



overcome and where you still want to get to?

QUINN HUTSON: I think coming to tomorrow's game, obviously, the last two years haven't gone the way we wanted, and I think I'm personally going to use it a lot. Even guys that haven't experienced it on our team, I think they're going to look back and be like, wow, they didn't want to do it before, and I think they're going to want to do it for us, as well. I think it's a big moment, big opportunity tomorrow to get that back.

Q. Shane, I wonder if you can speak to where you feel like your growth has happened as a player, but also as a leader, and if those two are intertwined and how you've gotten to this point in helping the room along?

SHANE LACHANCE: Yeah, I think first of all, I think as a player, coming into as a freshman, you don't really know what to expect. I think you're just kind of trying to fit in right away and gain confidence. I think that goes hand in hand with leadership. Once I'm confident and once I know that I can lead by example on the ice, that's when I can start using those other leadership tactics that I know -- that I know work, that I know work for this group. Like I said, I think it all starts from me with my play on the ice. It's the biggest thing for me is leading by example, and if I'm doing that, then I know I'm being a good leader.

Q. Earlier today I had a chance to speak with the Gatto family, Logan and his dad. I know that he's been with you guys for the last few years. This is for the players.

What has Logan and his family, how have they helped uplift you guys' spirits throughout the seasons? He really seems to enjoy, one, hockey, but also being a part of the BU family.

RYAN GREENE: Yeah, for me, like Logey has just been someone who comes in before games and puts a smile on your face, brings a lot of energy. He comes in screaming most times and trying to hype us up. But no, the relationship with Logey and our team has been awesome. It's been great to have him around. I think it's pretty cool for him to be able to experience kind of what we go through on game days and practice days, whatever it be.

JAY PANDOLFO: We're excited to be back here again. I think at times this year with the kind of inconsistencies in our game, I don't know if we had a great feel that we were going to find our way back here. But this group of players, the leadership group, three of these guys sitting up here today, they willed their way back here. They've done it all year. I'm real proud of them.

Again, we're happy to be here. St. Louis is a great sports town. They've been a great host up to this point. Looking forward to getting going tomorrow.

Q. Coach, if I were to tell you after that Yale game in December that you guys would be back here on this stage, I guess, what would you say at that time?

JAY PANDOLFO: I think I would have said that I still have plenty of belief in this group because of the players that we have, the players that have been here.

I think sometimes it's good for a team to go through the adversity we've went through this year, as long as you learn from it. And I think we have, in a lot of different moments.

I wouldn't say -- right after the game maybe if you asked me, I would have said something different, but knowing these players that we have, I'd say, yeah, we'll find a way.

Q. Quinn, to piggyback on that answer, the adversity that you guys, this group has faced and to know that you're back here for a third straight time, not having won a semifinal, what is the state -- your approach going into this knowing how the adversity you've

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But yeah, it's awesome having him around, and I think it's great.

QUINN HUTSON: Yeah, he comes to all the home games, obviously, back in Boston, and every time we're warming up right before the game he walks in. He's always got a new haircut or something going on and it's either a mohawk or something crazy he's got going on. He's the most happy to be here, so it makes it all happy getting ready for the game.

SHANE LACHANCE: Yeah, I think it's just important to realize what he's going through and however we can help and however we can help make his day better, but also, I don't know if he realizes it or not, but he makes us so much more happy and he puts a smile on our face. We might be stressed out and nervous a little bit before a game, and he comes running in and you kind of forget a little bit about the game, and you just kind of loosen up, and -- yeah, he definitely makes the atmosphere in the locker room way better for sure.

Q. Anybody been to St. Louis before?

QUINN HUTSON: I used to live in Beverly Heights.

Q. You've been up in the Arch?

QUINN HUTSON: Yeah. But I don't think I'd go back.

Q. Jay, have you been up in the air?

JAY PANDOLFO: I have not. I've been here, but...

Q. Maybe today?

JAY PANDOLFO: Nah, no time.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the impact your goaltender, Yegorov, has had on you, on your team since coming over midway through the season, just his impact ever since he's gotten on campus?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, he had an immediate impact for us the first game we threw him in. He got right to the ice and got a penalty before we even started the game. But yeah, he just has a presence in the net. He's got an infectious personality off the ice where day one I think these guys understood what type of kid he was, how much he cared, how grateful he was for the opportunity, all those things.

He fit right in with our group, and then they realized how good a goaltender he was and how accountable he was at

the goaltender position for our team was really important. One example, after that game that he got the penalty, he felt like it was his fault that we lost that game, which it certainly wasn't, and then he played really well after that. We had a tough game versus Providence where he wasn't at his best. I wasn't in the room, but from what I understand, he stood up and took blame, took ownership for it, and that goes a long way with your team. He's been a special part of our group since he's stepped on campus.

Q. Quinn, I don't know if this being in St. Louis has special meaning for you seeing kind of how youth hockey in St. Louis has grown and produced NHL talent over the last decade or so, if you can speak to that.

QUINN HUTSON: Yeah, I didn't live here very long. I was five or six years old, but I remember growing up and playing here. My dad used to run the rink at Fairview Heights, and he always had, like Clayton Keller came through, players like that, and my brother Cole, now he was born in St. Louis actually, so I think it's pretty cool coming back here. It all comes full circle.

Q. Jay, big turnaround for this team. I think people that might not know the Terriers, they look at your penalty kill percentage, 79 percent, not something you aspire to. But since the first of the year it's 86 percent, top 10 in the nation. Give us some insight on how it changed and why it's changed.

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, a couple factors. First half of the season, we were taking way too many penalties, probably averaging five or six a night, and having to kill that many off, it's going to wear your team down. You're going to end up getting scored on if you're taking that many penalties night in and night out. I thought we were a little too passive the first half of the season where we'd kind of sit in and let the power play kind of buzz around our zone, and we weren't clearing plays and killing plays quick enough. We made an adjustment in the second half to get more aggressive on the penalty kill, and it's helped us. I think it helps our team; it helps the way our guys play. It's a more fun way to kill.

You're going to give us some chances here and there, and that's where you need your goaltender to step in. And Big Mike's been really good in the penalty kill for us, too. So, I think all those factors combined is the reason it's been so much better.

Q. You mentioned about Logan coming in and screaming, kind of gets you guys pumped up. When I came in and screamed before the Northeastern game, why did it have no effect?

SHANE LACHANCE: Because you weren't singing.

Q. Shane, you won a championship in the USHL. For any of you guys that have won championships at various levels, how do you try to capture that feeling of it, and also what are the things you take from that, that you're right on the cusp of it here?

SHANE LACHANCE: Yeah, I think anyone who's won anything can tell you that winning is addicting, and every time you win, you just want to keep winning. I think for me, that's something that I've been trying to do here, and obviously last year, we came up short.

I think we're going to use that motivation, as well as my leadership experience in the USHL and try to take little things from that. I think we've got a really good group here, and I think we have what it takes to win, so we've just to lean on that and get the job done.

QUINN HUTSON: I think, obviously, being around here a championship as we wanted. I think two years ago, Hockey East was a huge steppingstone for the program and getting back on top like we have the last three years. And this year, we have the chance to win in Ireland, and I think that was a small start to the season and a pretty big win for us. And I think we are still having a lot of confidence off of a win like that and going to bring into the tournament this weekend.

RYAN GREENE: I would just say kind of like Shane said, when you win, you want to keep winning. So for us, getting the bean pod under our belt was huge, and I think a pivotal moment for our team in this season, and just being in the moment and having a lead in that game and learning how to manage certain situations in high pressure games like that is valuable, and I think that's, yeah, just something that we can take down the stretch.

Q. Ireland, how was that?

RYAN GREENE: Unbelievable.

Q. What was the coolest thing?

QUINN HUTSON: Winning.

Q. Outside of hockey, I should probably clarify that. Did you get to see any of the sights?

SHANE LACHANCE: We got around a little bit. We were there for a week, so it was nice. We kind of just got to check out different places, got a couple tours and stuff. It was fun.

Q. Jay, I wonder, have the last few years impacted how you've structured the bye week and what you know now that maybe you didn't a couple years ago that you would do -- that you've tried to do differently, I guess?

JAY PANDOLFO: I don't know if there's a magic recipe when you have that much time off. I thought this year we maybe got a little bit more rest than we did the last two years. But we've went about it pretty much the same way. You don't want to change up too much, either. We tried to approach it like maybe you have bye weeks during the regular season, so try to approach it like that, making sure you're getting quality work in, making sure you're trying to keep the guys focused. It's a bit of a tough task this time of a year when you're on a high that you were on coming off the regionals and knowing you have to practice for 10 days, it's not fun for anyone. So try to keep it fresh that way.

But I don't think we've changed a whole lot in the last two years. It might be a good question for Ryan and Quinn if they've seen a huge difference. I don't see a huge difference from the last two years. I don't know if that's going to make a difference from winning or losing a hockey game. I think we've prepared well. I thought we were very well-prepared last year. Just we were one goal short.

RYAN GREENE: I mean, I don't think we necessarily changed up anything, what we would typically do with a week off. But yeah, just trying to get quality work in, get prepared and be ready to go by puck drop tomorrow.

QUINN HUTSON: I think the bye week is tough. It's a lot of practice and just staying focused on what we're practicing for. I think nobody wants to play more games than me. I get sick of practice just as much as the next guy. But I think the last three years, just got to stay focused on what's ahead.

Q. Quinn and Ryan, along those lines, the last two years, you guys were the first team out on the ice for practice. You had the early game. This year you're out a little later, playing in the late game. Does that matter? Is there a preference either way? Does that switch things up for you guys as you try to break through this year?

QUINN HUTSON: Yeah, I don't think it really matters at all. I think all season, we've played at different game times all year and it just matters when you show up, so I don't think it's a big difference.

RYAN GREENE: I would say the same thing. We played



some early games, played some late games. I feel like we have a good feel for both of them. The late game gives you a little bit more time to prepare and get your body ready, but I wouldn't say there's anything crazy.

Q. What is the optimal game time? When do you guys like to play, like if you could pick?

QUINN HUTSON: 6:00.

RYAN GREENE: I'd say 7:00.

SHANE LACHANCE: Yeah, same, 6:00, 7:00.

JAY PANDOLFO: I used to like playing at 1:00 in the afternoon. It gives you a head start after the game.

Q. Jay, this is a question for you. Obviously, the rise of freshmen and the importance of freshmen in college hockey, especially true freshmen, seem to definitely be a big part of college hockey these days. You guys obviously have quite a few of them. How do you get them ready for this situation, for many of them, one of the biggest stages they'll have played on?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, I think for us, we've historically gotten high-quality players at a young age, and for the most part, they've been in big games, whether it's World Juniors or U-18 world championships or whatever it may be. I think they have a head start there, and I think for us, we give our young players opportunities early on in the season to play in big roles, so they're comfortable when you get down the stretch this time of year that they feel comfortable in those roles. Yeah, you haven't experienced that yet, but I still think they see our staff has confidence in those young players where they feel good about their games, and that's what we did with these guys here. All three of these guys as freshmen played prominent roles for our team. When you get to those big moments you feel comfortable that you're ready for it.

Q. The arrival last night, I don't know if you're all staying at the same hotel, but I think at least one team walked into the middle of a political campaign event. I wondered kind of what the vibe was when you walked through that.

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, that was us last night. I think the -- I forget her name. I think she won, so it was a celebration. That's a big win, landslide. It's a huge lobby there, so it really wasn't much of a factor. I was a little concerned it was going to be loud in our rooms for our players so they couldn't get -- wouldn't be able to get good rest, but I didn't hear anything, so yeah, it was different for sure.

Q. Did you think it was for you guys?

JAY PANDOLFO: No, no, because someone had said it when we walked off the bus, so we were all aware of what was going on.

Q. Your main focus is obviously on Penn State and trying to get tote national championship, win a national championship, but recruiting never ends for a coach. How are you handling this time of the year with the transfer portal being open? You guys already got one pretty big name from the portal. How have you handled it in the past? Is there someone on your staff that kind of is monitoring things and leading that charge? How do you balance this time of the year right now?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, it's an interesting time of year for sure when you're still playing and the portal opens and players are in there. It's definitely a balancing act.

Joe Pereira, who's our associate coach, he handles a lot of it. He's very good at it. He has an understanding of some guys maybe we have an opportunity to attract, and I think for us, it's a balancing act trying to sort out who's coming back next year, who's going to sign a pro contract. You have all those factors.

But that's just part of being a head coach in college hockey. There's always constant change with your roster. Now with the portal, it does give you an opportunity to fill some of those spots when guys become available.

Yeah, it's a challenging time when you really -- your focus really wants to be on Penn State more than anything else, but you still have to make sure that you're looking at what's available for next year because you want to have a good team every year, so that's part of it.

Q. Jay, another big picture issue is just the whole eligibility landscape. Could you have imagined in your days going to BU and having OHL players? What does this do, and how do you put your arms around this whole big issue that just seems to be ever changing?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, I think you just have to adapt to it, whatever the rules may be. You just have to adapt as a program and try to sort out how you want to handle it.

It's a bigger player pool; that's for certain. I don't know if we've 100 percent figured out how we're going to handle everything with the CHL, and I still think there's some rules that need to be sorted out, especially with drafted players, and I don't know how it's all going to end. I think things

change week to week right now in college sports. We're just ready to adapt to whatever rules come into play.

Q. Could you all have imagined this landscape back when you were in college?

JAY PANDOLFO: I never really thought about it. I do think it was going to come to this point at some time, and now it's here. Like I said, you just have to adapt. Back then, you wouldn't have thought this was going to happen, but as a player, you wouldn't even think about it. It wouldn't even really cross your mind because those were the rules, and that was what it was.

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