

NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Denver vs Western Michigan

Thursday, April 10, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Denver Pioneers

Coach David Carle

Aidan Thompson

Jack Devine

Semifinal Postgame Media Conference



Western Michigan - 3, Denver - 2 (2OT)

DAVID CARLE: Congratulations obviously to Western. Played a great game. They've had an excellent season and we wish them all the best in representing our league in the national championship game.

For us, obviously, it stings. No matter the success that you've had, losing is never easy. And just really appreciate the effort our guys put in this year. It's not easy being the defending champions and the effort you get from everybody.

And certainly we had our bumps in the road but we always found a way to spin it, use it, grow, get better.

Certainly proud of our seniors who came in either our COVID year or the year after, when we missed the NCAA Tournament, had a losing record and followed it up with arguably one of the best four-year windows in Denver hockey history.

So proud of their efforts, their contributions. Carter King, Connor Caponi, Jack Devine and Matt Davis and the guys who were in their class who departed early. They end with two championships, three frozen fours and the most wins in Denver hockey history.

Q. Jack, you were the last guy off the ice there. Coach Carle just talked about the reflecting on the four years and everything. What are your thoughts on your college career and what you guys were able to accomplish here?

JACK DEVINE: I'm so thankful for this place. Denver University has done wonders for both me and as a person.

I'm just proud of this group of guys.

We had a target on our back all year. And even to the end there we never backed down and came out of the season with 23 brothers for life.

Could not thank the University of Denver enough and Coach Carle enough for what he's done for me both as a player and a person.

Q. Aidan, as your coach talked about facing being the national champions, what do you make of the response the team had in the third period with the game on the line?

AIDAN THOMPSON: Proud of the group, worked so hard all year. Came up short. Just proud of the guys. It sucks. That's all I've got.

Q. When you think of this year's group and what you guys have done throughout your careers here at Denver but the team this year, what comes to mind about this year's team specifically?

JACK DEVINE: I think faced a lot of adversity throughout the year, just proud of the way we were able to fight back and kind of hard to speak right now. That's it.

Q. Coach, first two periods, just didn't seem like you had your game. What do you attribute it to? Was it something that Michigan did that you didn't expect?

DAVID CARLE: They're a good hockey team. They're just two teams on the ice trying to battle it out. And I think we felt like if we could get our feet moving a little bit more, get the puck moving, get them into some more precarious situations, we'd be able to have some success.

I give them a lot of credit, obviously, with how they played, not only in the first two periods but the whole game. They're a hard team to generate on. We said it coming in, the two top-scoring teams, it felt like it would be a 3-2 game and whoever made the last play was going to win. That's kind of how it played out.

I think the guys referenced it. I mean, tonight was -- again, did we play our best the first two periods? No. But we never backed down. We fought back and put ourselves in a position to still win the hockey game. That's all you can ask for.

A little bit indicative of our season where we had bumps in the road, but we never went away. And the guys never folded in the tent or quit on each other or the program. And they continued to fight.

Q. As much as you don't want to make excuses and you want to toughen it up, it's realistic to stay that the 5D situation wore on you. Is that fair to say? I noticed guys like Garrett Brown were playing more today than last weekend. Feel free to correct me if I'm wrong. Zeev and Eric were playing more together. Was that just circumstance of just being behind? Talk about -- Western's so aggressive as it is. Were they able to exploit that?

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, they probably -- for sure they exploited it better than maybe Providence or because did. But we had plenty of time to rest and recover and do all that.

I think it's more a credit probably to how well they played. And we were just challenged certainly in those first two periods to win a lot of puck battles, extend a lot of possession. They were winning more races and more puck battles than we were. When you're defending that much for two periods, it gets really challenging.

So, again, proud of how we responded in the third. Thought we simplified some things a bit. Find a way to tie the game. And certainly at that stage it's anybody's game. We had a couple of our own looks.

Been in this game where we found the right side of it. I think back to the Michigan game in Boston, Cuse (phonetic) had a two on one and the puck rolled on him and we come down and we make the play.

This tournament is so damn hard to win, and I think that's always evident. In any game, in any round, the event, every game is so challenging to win.

Q. Could you speak a little bit about how Matt Davis, after last year's spectacular run in the tournament, and he follows it up with another spectacular run?

DAVID CARLE: I mean, obviously he was ready to go tonight through the first two periods. We can all speculate what the score could have been without him in the net after two. And he was at the top of his game and kept it at two.

Kept our team within range. And a huge part of why we got to overtime.

So proud of everything he's been through throughout his time. We've talked about it a lot.

Being the backup for two years, plays his first five games as a junior, gets injured, out the whole first half, really. And then finds his game at the end of last year at the right time, finds a way to peak and does the same thing this year.

But got to play the whole year. Pretty consistent throughout the year. Hopefully he gets an opportunity with a club at the next level.

Q. At the risk of being scoring for this question we don't always get a chance to see you and talk to you all the time, you're the hottest name in college hockey, hottest name in young hockey coaches, fair to say. There's people tweeting, saying let the David Carle sweepstakes begin. I know you're going to take time. You don't know what's going to happen yet. But what is your latest statement on what probably will be even more suitors for your services moving forward? Just being real about it.

DAVID CARLE: I think I've always been real about it. My answer really hasn't changed. Without dissecting and giving you the honest answer you deserve -- because that takes time -- I would just reference you to previous interviews that I've shared the information because nothing has changed.

Q. Wondering if you could reflect a bit on Zeev Buium. Another game where he was obviously targeted, a guy that's played physically in pretty much every game. Obviously Hobey Baker finalist season. Just your thoughts on him and what he's done for your program.

DAVID CARLE: Yeah, I mean, Zeev and his brother both contributed a lot to Denver hockey. Obviously they're part of these championships that we've won over the last couple of years.

Zeev is a hell of a hockey player. Didn't come in as a projected first-round pick, but really got an opportunity, showed his stuff, showed who he can really be and flourished at our program.

I'm so happy for him, proud of him with everything he was able to accomplish. Certainly thought like tonight they did a good job on him.

I thought the refs missed two trips on him where they took his feet out. But that's just me. One led to a 2-on-1 in the

overtime. That's hockey and I get it, it's overtime. They missed a call on us at the end of the third period, a hold. Goes both ways.

Zeev is a hell of a hockey player, really bright future in front of him, obviously. The most important part about Zeev is the competitor he is, the person he is, always believes in himself that he can make a play, impact the game, and certainly although he didn't impact it as much as he would have liked to tonight, I thought he had some moments where he got open and had some looks and was doing his thing.

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