

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

Thursday, April 10, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Boston U. Terriers

Coach Jay Pandolfo

Mikhail Yegorov

Cole Eiserman

Jack Hughes

Semifinal Postgame Media Conference



Q. Jack, as a senior, what's it like to finally break through after what happened in the semifinals the past two years, and just to be a part of this victory?

JACK HUGHES: I think for all of us, we all come here for a reason. We want to win a national championship. So just thinking about having the opportunity to do that in a couple of days is exciting. Almost doesn't really feel quite real just because it just ended.

But that's been our goal the whole way. It's a little bit of a relief for now. And we're going to get back to work and hopefully win it all.

Q. Jack, your line was producing tonight, a lot of high-quality chances for you guys in the offensive zone. What was working for you guys tonight?

JACK HUGHES: I think as a team we were successful when we got the puck below the goal line and started to go to work. And I think the three of us had that mindset the whole game is we're going to try to get it down there, get possession and then trust each other to win our battles, separate. Get some pucks to the net and some good things happen.

Q. Cole, seems like Cole Hutson found you again. It was a pretty late pass, though. Did you always think he was going to get it to you and what did you see on that play?

COLE EISERMAN: I think whenever 44 has the puck, always expecting to get it. He's such a great player. With him, he was just looking for an angle. I trust -- he could have went around the net four times he still could have found me. It was great. It was a late pass, but great play.

Q. Mikhail, coach kind of talked about you knew pressure was going to get ramped up from them. Could you feel it towards the second half that third period that you would face higher volume than you did the previous two periods?

MIKHAIL YEGOROV: Of course. I knew they would -- they're a really good team. And we had a really good

Boston University - 3, Penn State - 1

JAY PANDOLFO: Obviously excited. We found a way this year to win this game. The last two years, we couldn't get through the semifinals. Certainly a step in the right direction, giving us an opportunity here to play for a national championship.

I thought overall the first two periods, I thought we played real well. Didn't give up a whole lot. We know how they play. They're really good in transition. The only chances they really had were on transition. They had the breakaway on the penalty kill.

But other than that, they didn't have a whole lot of chances even strength in the first two periods. I thought we did a really good job.

I thought in the third, it's hard to end a team's season. So, you knew they were going to push. They're a team that funnels everything to the net, and that's how they ended up getting that first goal there, and it certainly gave them life. And they started believing. And they were putting everything to our net.

Someone took care of a lot of those shots. Big Mike did a heck of a job there in the third when we were a little bit under siege.

But our guys stuck with it. And if you're going to win a championship, you have to find a way to be able to play in those tight games. We've been in enough of them this year. And real happy.

prescout on them. I knew that they were going to funnel everything to the net.

But I worked a lot in the gym so I can face that many shots. I expected that but it was a fun game. It was obviously exciting.

Q. Mikhail, how would you describe what the last three months has been like for you, this run, coming to BU? And obviously now you're a couple days away from winning the national championship, how do you put it in perspective what this has been like for you?

MIKHAIL YEGOROV: 100 percent. It's been great, of course, just great coming here and getting a chance to play and now actually sticking through the whole season basically and, yeah, getting trust from Coach, getting an opportunity to play with those amazing guys.

They treat me as I was a part of their team for like four years. It obviously helped. But yeah, like as you mentioned, now we get to play in the national championship and it's kind unbelievable a little bit.

Q. How does it feel to play with a couple of Hutsons and a Celebrini?

JACK HUGHES: Makes it a lot easier. I can tell you that. That's all I got.

Q. You guys are a lot bigger than Penn State and were a lot more physical tonight. Was the point of emphasis going into tonight sort of beating down this fast team in Penn State and not letting them have their success in transition?

JACK HUGHES: A little bit, yeah. I think our mindset was we have to defend first and then we're going to get our chances. We've got to reload on them, make sure they don't get behind us because that's what makes them successful is they're a dangerous team off the rush.

So, stick on puck, eliminating their body, not letting them get up the ice was a big part of what we wanted to do. And I think we did a pretty good job of it.

Q. Jack, teams are feeling each other out, and obviously catch a break there with the puck. Can you just take us through that play and the ability to get there and poke it in?

JACK HUGHES: I just remember they turned it over, got a pretty good bounce. I can't remember exactly what it hit. But Matty shot it. I started driving maybe a little too late. Got a fortunate bounce, and it was just laying there.

Obviously feels good to get on the board early and play a little bit looser for us and with a little bit more confidence.

Q. Jack and Cole, it's been said that the team play its best with its back against the wall. What was the reaction when Penn State scored early in the third?

COLE EISERMAN: I think something we're used to. We played some games where, in the Beanpot, B.C. scored first Cornell scored first and Ohio State scored first. I think in big games stuff like that happens.

But we have great leadership, stay even keeled. There's a lot of game left, and in hockey a lot of things can happen very quick. Whenever that happens we just settle back in and just keep playing our game.

JACK HUGHES: I mean, we have a lot of confidence in our room that we've done it before the whole season. We did it in Ireland. We did it against Ohio State. We can't get too high, can't get too low when we give up goals or when we score. I think we just stayed with it and we've done it all year.

Q. Mikhail, you said that you like the pressure and that you just want to keep having fun out there. How much fun did you have tonight?

MIKHAIL YEGOROV: It was awesome. Again, playing against a great team, it's always fun. I'm trying to still learn how to deal with the high pressure, and obviously those games helped a lot playing in front of a big crowd. But, yeah, I mean the guys helped a lot and it also helps. But I just tried to have so much fun there.

Q. You're familiar with being in a Frozen Four championship as a player. What's it like to finally make it as a coach after falling short the past two years?

JAY PANDOLFO: It feels good. I was fortunate playing really good teams when I was a player at BU. We only won one time. So I have a pretty good understanding how hard it is to win when it's just a one-game. It's hard.

The margin for error is slim. And I learned that as a player. I've learned that as a coach too.

Obviously it's not easy to get here, but once you get here you've still got to find a way to, number one, win the first hockey game so you actually have a chance to play for the national championship. Certainly came up short the last two years.

It helped our team to have an understanding of you have to

play a certain way if you want to get to that final game. I thought for the most part tonight we did that.

It feels good to get there. We certainly hope that the job's not done yet.

Q. You talked a little bit about Jack Hughes and his growing role and production over the second half of the season. Seems tonight he almost made some passes that kind of his linemates didn't expect him to make they were so incredible. Can you talk about him?

JAY PANDOLFO: He's been excellent in the second half. He's been excellent down the stretch. Arguably our best forward, right up there.

We had him start killing penalties in the second half when we started being more aggressive because he's quick, has a good stick and he's a really intelligent player. I feel like that's helped his overall game.

He's obviously on the power play as well, but when you're killing penalties you stay in the game, it gives you confidence. And I think it's helped his confidence overall.

And when he's skating and moving his feet he's got a great stick and then his skill takes over. He's got great skill. He's smart.

He made a lot of plays tonight. First period made two or three plays where we just didn't put the puck in the net. I've been really happy with him.

And he's really determined. He knows this is his last opportunity. He's been, number one, playing great, but his leadership has been excellent for us. He doesn't wear a letter, but his leadership on the bench, calming guys down, in the room, he's been excellent.

Q. Bringing in Mikhail at the midseason, what was the decision process there? And how could you have anticipated that this was the guy that was going to bring you to a national championship game?

JAY PANDOLFO: Well, we just felt -- he was in Omaha on the USHL. And that was one reason. We wanted to strengthen the goaltender position in the first half. We just felt we needed some help there. And we thought he could come in and compete for the starting job.

And we gave him an opportunity and he really never looked back. That was kind of the thought process behind it. Could he come in and help shore up the goaltending position a little bit? And let's see if he can do it.

We watched him a lot. We had a pretty good feel that he was going to be able to help. Whether he was going to completely take over the starting role, we didn't know that. But we put him in that BC game, and really he's never looked back.

He's a terrific kid. I think you can see it with him sitting here. He's just got an infectious personality. And he's really grateful for the opportunity he's gotten. He enjoys every moment. He's been a great teammate. Just a lot of great things about him. We're certainly glad to have him. In the third period he made sure they didn't put another puck in.

Q. Seems like in kind of the first two periods you guys were kind of breaking out of the zone pretty easily. Was that a little surprising that the forecheck wasn't as hard early in the game there?

JAY PANDOLFO: We watched a lot. We prescouted them pretty well. We had an understanding of how they forecheck. We felt like we were going to be able to exit our zone pretty clean a lot of times. So it was just kind of the game plan against them.

They do a lot of their damage on transition, as you see. And the offensive zone when they create a turnover they funnel everything to the net.

It gets difficult, when pucks are coming from everywhere, they look for bounces, that's what they did on that first goal they got. We felt we could exit our zone pretty good tonight and for the most part we did.

Q. We talked a lot about discipline for this team, like the whole year, and it only took two penalties tonight. Can you talk about how that might have been a point of emphasis for you guys and how your success in playing a disciplined game and kind of sticking to your game helped you guys tonight?

JAY PANDOLFO: Yeah, it was a serious problem in the first half. I mean, I think we're probably still the most penalized team in the country based off numbers, I would think.

But the second half has been a lot better. That's helped our penalty kill where you don't have to kill -- the beginning of the year we were killing five, six penalties a game, five-minute majors. It was a lot of issues with that.

It's gotten much better second half. I think our guys understand, listen, if we're going to continue to do that, it's going to be hard to win hockey games. So our guys

figured that out.

Q. You mentioned how hard it is to get here. Your game was supposed to start a little earlier tonight. What was it like to watch that previous game with Western Michigan and DU in terms of what it might show, what you'll be facing on Saturday?

JAY PANDOLFO: It's difficult when you're sitting there and it's 2-0 in the third period and you're hoping the game kind of ends and you can get ready for your game. Then they come back.

Guys are already warmed up and ready to go and then it goes into overtime. And you've got to kind of figure out a way to stay focused, and do you warm up again? So our guys handled it really well.

They were actually having a lot of fun during it just to kill the time. Credit to them.

Yeah, I watched that game pretty closely. Obviously Western Michigan, first two periods really outplayed Denver. But Denver, they're not going to quit. They always find a way to come back, and they did.

But at the end of the day, Western Michigan found a way to win that hockey game. They're a very structured team. They have a lot of offensive talent. It's going to be a tough match-up for us.

But we'll enjoy this and then get to work on them tomorrow morning.

Q. When you play a team like Penn State who uses their speed and transition game to their advantage, was there really a point of emphasis of trying to outphysical them tonight?

JAY PANDOLFO: I don't know if we really talked about outphysicaling them. We talked about more of staying above the puck, making sure they don't get into transition. Don't turn over pucks inside their blue line because they're ready to go north on you all the time. For the most part, we did a pretty good job.

But we weren't really talking too much about let's pound them into the wall, any of that sort of stuff. We want to finish our checks when we have an opportunity. But it's more staying above the puck against them than anything else.

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