

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

Thursday, April 10, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Penn State Nitanny Lions
Coach Guy Gadowsky
Nicholas DeGraves
Jimmy Dowd Jr.
Aiden Fink

Semifinal Postgame Media Conference

Boston University - 3, Penn State - 1

GUY GADOWSKY: It's always tough when the season ends. I honestly can't help but feel so grateful, is one, and positive about this year and this team because, again, I've said it before, but we were left for dead not long ago. And for these guys to come back and play in St. Louis is remarkable and better than that is how they did it.

They are such great representatives to our university, which is really important at Penn State. And I learned a lesson from them this year.

I mean, the way that they stuck together and stayed positive in the hardest times when it would have been easy not to is just really, really impressive. They're really good men and I'm really proud to be a part of this group.

Q. Aiden, as difficult as it feels right now, what's it like to be part of the first program to reach the Frozen Four? And as difficult as it is to put it in perspective what this might mean years later?

AIDEN FINK: Yeah, obviously it was a great year for us. First Frozen Four for our program. I think it's massive for a program. And it is difficult losing, but this senior class did an unbelievable job with the leadership this year showing us the way, and we're just going to get prepared, learn off this and come back next year ready.

Q. Jimmy, you're a guy that embodied Penn State and made it your home. Can you kind of talk about what it means to you to end your Nittany Lion career on one of the biggest stages in the sport?



JIMMY DOWD JR.: Obviously it's super tough with the outcome that happened but to be able wear the Penn State crest for the past five years, it means everything to me. And for Gads to take a chance on a undersized guy like me and put the trust in me it means the world.

I really can't put it into words these past five years, but just every single guy that's come to this program. And the group of guys that we had this year, I knew it was special the second we all got together at the beginning?

Q. On a similar subject, what do you want the underclassmen to remember and learn from you moving forward starting the next season?

JIMMY DOWD JR.: Just remember this feeling now. Like, it's tough now obviously with the loss. But this program is in such a better place. And like my coach, Vinny Smith, when I played for the Avs, he said you want to leave the place better than you found it. I think that's what we did this year.

It's a testament to our leadership but also the younger guys and everyone buying in every single day and just to keep it rolling from here.

Q. Nick, you had the goal in this contest tonight. Could you talk about what you Ben and Dane when you were out there that third period what you did so well to give you a shot in that third period?

NICHOLAS DEGRAVES: Yeah, I think we're three players that like to go to work. And we kind of said going into the period, we're going to simplify our games and try to get as many pucks to the net. Fortunately we were able to get a bounce there, and unfortunately couldn't get another one.

Q. Aiden, do you guys think the physicality of the postseason got to you, (indiscernible) and Laubach?

AIDEN FINK: Yes and no. Obviously it's postseason. Every player is going to try to finish their hit. But we have nine other guys that are all really good. So I'm going to say, yeah and no.

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Q. The game started about an hour and a half after it was scheduled. Arguably your first period wasn't your best. I'm wondering if that layoff, all that time in the locker room, had anything to do with it?

GUY GADOWSKY: No. It was the same for both teams. Actually, I really liked -- our guys seemed loose. No, nothing to do with our slow start.

I will say, we didn't play our best. But at the same time we had a couple of breakaways, a couple 2-on-1s. We just didn't finish. Sometimes you don't have your A game and you finish until you did.

We certainly got momentum later but when we had chances to, big chances, when we weren't playing our A game, we just didn't finish.

Q. I want to know what the message you had for your team was going into that third period. You were obviously down 2-0. What was the message to the team in the locker room before the third period?

GUY GADOWSKY: The message was that we knew we didn't have our A game going. Yet, at the same time, it was two goals, breakaways, couple 2-on-1s, so we don't have to change, we just have to keep doing what we're doing and it's going to go.

When we came out, we got one early, and I really thought that we were going to get the snowball rolling. Give BU credit. They found a way to keep the puck out of the net and played very well.

But I like what we did. I like everything we did except finish.

Q. I asked Aiden about that top line being outphysicalized. I figured I'd ask you as well.

GUY GADOWSKY: I don't know, I think we played some very physical teams in the Big Ten. They handled it well. I wouldn't say that.

If you talk about physicality a little bit I might say the top line, Reese was, because he had enough misconducts that the next one would put him out for multiple games. I do know that that affected him a little bit because he's such a tough warrior type player that, just in the back of his mind, he had to take his foot off the pedal a little bit when it came to physicality, which is very difficult for a player like Reese to do.

But I don't feel that anyone was playing physical on them

that took us by surprise or changed things other than, again, Reese probably couldn't step up as much as he normally would because of his suspensions.

Q. After a historic season reaching the first Frozen Four in program history and getting a lot more eyes on Penn State hockey, plus support from Pat Kraft, how do you think this season can help catapult Penn State perennially into a next tier of college hockey?

GUY GADOWSKY: We have work to do for that to happen, but this is a nice start. Whenever you get to check a box that you did something for the first time, it certainly helps. I think that -- I like to think that the way these guys are helps. I think there's a lot of eyes on our game, but I hope there's a lot of eyes on what type of men these guys are. I mean, they are. They're fantastic students.

You look at the senior class, it's not just what Dylan Lugris did, but there's a question about Jimmy Dowd, he could be the mayor of State College. He could. Everywhere I go, when I see hockey, they look at me, ask me if I know Jimmy Dowd. That's a wonderful thing.

What Dylan Lugris did in the community is incredible. The community will be a much, much better place because of the senior class and the type of guys they were. It's not just how we played, the success they had, it's what kind of men they are. I think they're just great people that did a lot for this community, and I'm really proud of that, and I think that will be just as impactful.

Q. You entered the year with a very young team, just to see how far they've gotten with the talent they have, how hopeful does this leave you for the future?

GUY GADOWSKY: Not only because of the young talent, we're hopeful. I think we're more hopeful because of the lesson that the program learned. And the lesson that we learned isn't something you can read about and just say, okay, we got it. Like, you can't. You really need to go through it.

And the fact that we were so far back, so left for dead and came back to make the Frozen Four, is something I don't think any of these guys are ever going to forget. I know I'm not. I'm really grateful to be part of this group because of that lesson.

It's not just a lesson in hockey for next year. I know you're talking about short term, but it's a lesson that these guys are going to carry with them well beyond Penn State and also well beyond hockey. It's true.

You can talk about it as much as you want, oh, that's the

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way to do things, but when you're really faced with a challenge and you're really in a down spot and you pull each other together and lift each other up and you see success, it's something you don't forget. For not only because of the young talent but because of the lessons we learned, yes, I'm very optimistic about the future.

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