

# NCAA Men's Frozen Four: Western Michigan vs Boston U.

Saturday, April 12, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

## Western Michigan Broncos Coach Pat Ferschweiler Hampton Slukynsky Owen Michaels Tim Washe

Finals Postgame Media Conference



Western Michigan - 6, Boston University - 2

**PAT FERSCHWEILER:** I was doing my hair. That water bath can really throw a guy off.

I want to congratulate Boston University on a tremendous season and a hard-fought contest. But I want to say how proud I am of this team. They stuck together, they believed in themselves from start to finish, not only in the season, this game, but they stayed focus on each game, each individual game, one by one all season.

And the leadership we have up here, phenomenal. Great group of young men that cared about each other all year. Couldn't be more proud of them.

**Q. Can you guys speak about the Lawson Lunatics. I'm from Penn State. I've never been to the arena in Kalamazoo. Can't say I've seen more beer drank out of shoes or mullets, or shirtless fans. There was craziness going on. Can you speak about the Lawson Lunatics and the support you have and what it means to you?**

**TIM WASHE:** No, I mean, they earn their name every night. You saw it tonight. They travel really well, holy. The support is phenomenal. Can't ask for better fans that we have.

**HAMPTON SLUKYNSKY:** They're nuts. Every home game we have it's rocking, and they're lined up for hours before the game out there. They're unreal.

**OWEN MICHAELS:** Yeah, they're the best. I love playing

in front of them. They give us the energy and mojo each and every night. It's awesome seeing them, feeling their support each and every night.

**Q. Tim, what's it mean to be the captain of this first national championship team and what this team's been through? And secondly, if I may, a question about, what do you make of Owen Michaels, what he's done over these past couple of days?**

**TIM WASHE:** Just a great feeling being a part of this group. We said at the start of the year it was special. We wanted to prove that. We did it every day by just focusing on each day at a time, getting better every day. And then just came down to belief.

And old Mikes, oh, man, where to start. The biggest stage, the big players show up. And that's what he did. He came up huge for us. Just so happy for him and these guys.

**Q. Hampton, can you talk a little bit about your journey here? Committed to Northern initially and then coming here with your brother and ending up where you are?**

**HAMPTON SLUKYNSKY:** It's been a crazy last year for sure. Obviously planning to go to Northern this year. With all three coaches leaving there, we were able to open up our recruitment. We were open to going anywhere, and trying to find the best spot for both of us.

We were lucky that the best spot was at the same spot. We knew right after the Zoom call with the coaches that we were going to come here. Obviously with the history last three years making the tourney, we knew we'd have a chance to win.

It's just really special to share this with him. We're just fortunate to be a part of this team.

**Q. Hampton, it's all good now. You're a champion. You've got a knot on your head. But almost four goals tonight where you had the puck wrapped up. They got two. Was it just one of those nights for you, probably never had goals like that? But how were you feeling**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
**sports**

**especially on that delay, the challenge, that could have been their third goal?**

HAMPTON SLUKYNSKY: To be honest, that's just hockey. Some nights you're controlling it well. Some nights it's just kind of bouncing.

The first one, the guy made a good play, he got his stick on it before I could cover it. The one in the third, I didn't see the shot. I was still up against the post. I think our D was in front of me (indiscernible). I didn't even see it. It just hit me and I didn't know where it went.

I didn't know what the call was going to be, but I knew with the no-goal call on the ice that it was probably going to be a no goal.

**Q. Owen, you scored the empty-netter, you raced to the bench jumped into a mega pile. What was going through your mind and what you were screaming towards the stand?**

OWEN MICHAELS: I'm not sure what I was screaming, but just a ton of emotions. That goal was not about me one bit. It was about this team and this group and doing something this program's never done. I just wanted to be with the guys.

**Q. We heard earlier about just the fans attendance but there seemed to be a lot of alumni, former players, former coaches. Can you speak on what it meant to have their support, to have them travel out here and watch you guys win your first-ever national championship?**

TIM WASHE: They're on us a lot. Those guys support us tremendously. They want to be around. We just got a close-knit family and group of alumni here. And just everyone wants to be part of this. Just a special moment for everyone.

**Q. Could you hear the fans well on the bench?**

TIM WASHE: Felt like a home game.

**Q. Owen, what do you make of these last three days, scoring the overtime? And how much did you sense that that was a pivotal moment and goal that was when you made it 4-2 at that point?**

OWEN MICHAELS: It was definitely a big moment in the game. Kind of tilt the ice back in our way, in our favor. Like I said earlier, it's not about me one bit. It's about this group and the Western Michigan Broncos doing something we've never done. Each year it seems like the bar keeps

getting raised. We took a lot of pride this year in doing our part, and we sure did.

**Q. Hampton, did you get the chance to speak with Hakkarainen when he was laying across your goal line, he kind of stopped that third goal from going in. Did you give him a thank you after the game? Did you speak to him about that play?**

HAMPTON SLUKYNSKY: In the moment, I remember saying something. I don't remember what I said, but I don't know what I said but that was huge. Yeah, I think he got it before I covered it. That was a good play.

I didn't even know until I saw the replay, looked up and was kind of laughing to myself. Yeah, that was funny for sure.

**Q. You keep checking boxes. There's no more to check now. How does it feel?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: It feels great, honestly. The pride I feel as an alum and former captain of this program and to see it reach new heights and have this group of special young men execute at that level and care about each other at that level is so special.

**Q. What did you make of the flow of the game, and when Owen -- especially with those two long delays in the third period, and both going your way -- and then Owen getting that fourth goal to make it 4-2?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: I don't think any one of those calls honestly were controversial in any way. I think they were easy calls. In fact, the revs came over, said they're looking at it but it's no goal.

The delays are fine because you get to rest your top players. We're not panicking. We're a calm group. Nothing was going to faze us.

And obviously they were pushing it when it was 3-2. We talk about skating out of scrums. That's exactly what Owen Michaels did. There's a flurry around the net, and a lot of people want to whack the puck out of there and it's hard to skate. He skates all the way down the ice and buries it at the other end. It's a winning play and something we talk about on a regular basis.

**Q. I think people who were just seeing your team were impressed top to bottom, quality team. I think tonight two goals by D and then a couple by bottom six forwards. Could you speak to the depth of your club and what an advantage it is?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: It's a huge advantage. We've got

depth all year. In scoring, I think we're the number one or two team in scoring in the country. That's for a reason. We're not just carried by one guy.

We have a superstar in Alex Bump, no doubt. But a lot of really good supporting players. Some of the most important moments in the game, Washe and Goethe. Garrett Szydlowski to Cam Knuble to Ty Henricks. We believe in these guys. They love each other. And they knew they were going to execute. And they just played Bronco hockey and stuck with it. Just love the crew.

**Q. College rosters change so fast, it's hard to be a quote, dynasty in any college sport. How much are you going to relish making the recruiting calls as a national champion? How much do you realistically think it's going to boost your recruiting in the next couple of years?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: We've had great recruiting, as you can tell by the team on the ice. But what we're trying to do is build something that players want to come to. We talked about the alums earlier, how proud they are. What I know and certainly felt when I played there is players who play at Western Michigan love being Broncos.

And there's a true pride in our program from top to bottom. And when you're there you love your experience there. That's what we want to create first, and we believe that will attract players.

**Q. You mentioned you felt Tim is the best captain in college hockey this year. Obviously moving on. What do you think he can bring to the next level to the NHL in terms of his the skill set he brings?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: I think he's a winning forward on any given team in the NHL. Obviously later down the lineup. But he can win a draw against anyone, he can kill a penalty. And his physicality, honestly -- and it probably doesn't seem like it to you guys -- is dialed back a little this year because he's almost too strong at times for college hockey.

He's 6'3", 215 pounds, chiseled out of a piece of granite. At times he has to control himself so he doesn't destroy people out there and get penalties. His penalties went down this year. His offense went way up. He refocused his energy and his compete in a real leadership type of way.

**Q. I don't know if you ever imagined what the last minute of a national championship game with you on the right end of it would feel like. But if you did, how did this compare?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: It's a great last minute when you're up 6-2. It's probably a different feeling when you're up 3-2. We certainly enjoyed it.

The players enjoyed it on the bench. Obviously when we got the fourth goal, fifth goal, trying to calm people down because there's some game left, with a minute left, we could feel the championship was ours. We got to hug it out. Not only as my staff to me the best most supportive staff I could possibly have, but they're also my best friends. So to live it with them and to earn this with them, extremely important.

**Q. We heard from some of your players earlier that tonight felt almost like a home game. Can you speak to just the atmosphere as a whole, insider (indiscernible) and just the ability of your fans and just Bronco country to come out and support your team in such a big way?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: Amazing performance from Bronco Nation all weekend, especially tonight. It certainly did feel like a home game.

And you look up there, Kalamazoo is only 150,000 people. Felt like half the town was here. It was great. You could feel the presence in the streets during the day. They push our players forward. We don't achieve at the level we achieve at every day without their belief in our program and their support of our program.

**Q. Thinking back to the start of your coaching career, started with youth hockey, building a program. I believe (indiscernible) was a part of that as well --**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: He was.

**Q. Just in terms of the path to here, going back to that time, how big of a dream was this for you? Did you think this was possible, and how does it feel now that you've achieved it?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: For those in the room that don't know, I started coaching. I created a midget program in Kansas, Overland, Kansas. Not exactly a hockey hotbed, but we turned it into a national powerhouse. We did a lot of the principles that we brought here to Western Michigan. That's players that love hockey, players that want and love to work every day.

We believe that work is the secret sauce of success. We haven't lost that. We're still a blue-collar program. We'll continue to be that every single day knowing that if you outwork the next guy, you can beat them when it matters

most.

**Q. You and Alex Bump had a pretty long hug there on the ice and looked like a conversation. Could you take us through that and reflect on his season.**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: Alex Bump is a star. Him choosing us and believing in what we're trying to do here, him coming every day and getting better every single day, which he has the last two years, and now he's turned himself into a National Hockey League league player, no doubt in my mind, I just told him I loved him and I was proud of him.

**Q. Could you speak a little bit about your relationship with athletic director Dan? You almost arrived at Western Michigan around the same time. There was word that he helped fly some of the fans out tonight. Could you speak to what he's done to help build this program to where it is now?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: To be successful, you need the resources and support and belief from your administration. I've talked open and honestly at all times, Dan Bartholomae is a superstar athletic director. He's organized our department. He has given us direction and support. Every coach at Western Michigan University feels exactly the same way. We feel supported and believed in and freed up to do the best job we can do.

**Q. For those who don't know or haven't seen Owen Michaels, what do you make of his performance these last two games?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: I talked the other day about last year Owen Michaels had two goals and maybe six assists or some version of that. But his quality of play was higher than his points.

We knew he had offense in him. Now, did we know he had 18 goals and all these things? But we also know he is a warrior. He's a future captain of the program, no doubt about it. Funny thing about warriors is they always show up at the biggest moments. He showed up in the biggest moment, no doubt in our mind.

**Q. Let's go into this a little bit because nobody knows about your program. I've been with you a lot, and this year I saw a whole bunch of Bronco fans come out of the woodwork, walking around here, walking around the arena today, listening to the arena today. Did it feel like people now know who Western Michigan is?**

PAT FERSCHWEILER: Certain our fans have known for a while that we're a team that competes and cares and tries

to represent the Broncos as best we can every single day. We're a simple program because I believe simple is repeatable. Repeatable is successful. That's what we try to do every day. Our guys come to work. They love coming to the rink and they love each other, and that's a recipe for success anywhere.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

