

2023 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 28, 2023

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Lincoln Financial Field

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Coach Kevin Corrigan

Griffin Westlin

Maxim Manyak

Media Conference



course.

Q. (On the brackets in their lockers.)

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Yeah, I think the captains before we got here this year, they all decided it would be a great idea to put the brackets in our locker. Every day we have that to look at and motivate us before we go out to practice. We don't really have a choice because it's right above your helmet, right in front of your eyes.

It's kind of just been that extra push, that extra motivation. It's great to see. We know we were not in this position last year, and just to be here, we're so grateful. We've worked so hard for this, and like so many driving forces, that's one of them that's helped us get here.

Q. How are your legs going into tomorrow?

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Everybody is feeling great. We're all happy to be here. Everybody is in the same position, but everybody is feeling great. There's a lot of adrenaline that's going to kick in, and like I said, everybody is happy, motivated and ready to take on our next challenge.

We've kind of moved past Virginia already after beating them yesterday, and it's time to focus on Duke and our main goal at hand.

Q. (Inaudible.)

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: I think there's a lot of things we learned. First and foremost, that if we play our game, there's really nobody who can stop us for the last couple years. I feel like Duke has always had this hype around them and they've brought in a bunch of talent, but we know who we have in our locker room, and something that's so special about our locker room is you can really see it on the field. Nobody cares who's getting the credit. Nobody cares who's scoring the goal.

If you watch our two best players on offense, Pat and Chris Kavanagh, when somebody else scores a goal, they're celebrating harder than anybody else on the field, and I think that shows a lot to just who we are and how we play

KEVIN CORRIGAN: Just with a full of appreciation of how hard it is to get here, I just want to say we're thrilled and excited and really couldn't be more gratified to be in this position and to have a chance to be one of the last two teams standing and a chance to win it all.

Q. Both teams obviously missed the tournament last year. Does that even matter at this point?

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Yeah, I think that really in a way does matter for us. It's always in the back of our minds. We always think about what happened last May. But we use it as more motivation every day. Since the fall, it's kind of been the message we've been pushing, and that's what we've kind of ridden on all year.

It is just two teams standing now, but in the back of our head we've still got something to prove that's been a driving force all year, and I don't think that's ever going to stop until we get exactly what we're looking for here.

Q. Griffin, what are some of the benefits (indiscernible)?

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Yeah, first and foremost, I don't want to say we're exactly dwelling on it. That's not the right word, I would say, but we've just been trying to use it as motivation every single day.

Duke might not talk about it. We don't want to focus on it in bad ways. But we know how to motivate ourselves. We've got a great group inside our locker room, and we're so close and tight-knit, and it's just been a driving force every day to keep pushing us. We know what happened last May, and just makes us want to get this job done so much more for South Bend, for Notre Dame, for Coach, of

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and the unselfishness in our locker room, and everybody is always just rooting for each other. Whether you're on the bench or whether you're on the field, everybody is rooting just as hard and cheering as hard. I think that's one of the greatest standards going into this game.

Q. Coach, how much does this run (indiscernible)?

KEVIN CORRIGAN: Well, for any team to reach its full potential, you can't have different agendas in the room. There has to be one agenda, and everyone has to be willing to sacrifice toward that goal and that ultimate achievement, the ultimate achievement being the team being the absolute best that it can be, not necessarily winning the last game. If you have that capability, then that's part of it.

You can't get there without that kind of mindset and without that kind of buy-in from everybody in the room. I don't care if it's guys who are playing 60 minutes or guys who aren't getting on the field. It's still important in the everyday process that we go through to get where we want to be.

MAXIM MANYAK: Yeah, I think something that we've really been focusing on this year is that good teams win games but great teams win championships and great cultures win championships. That's something that we've been working on since last May, since I was here as a freshman. Coach has done a fantastic job with it, and we've really been focusing on and using all 57 guys every single day, and we wouldn't be here without all 57 of us.

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Kind of just to touch on that. Many days throughout the week, there's so many shout-outs given at practice, but on our team we have a blue squad and a gold squad, and most of those days the gold squad is getting shout-out. These guys have to learn new defenses, new offenses every week, and they're putting their best foot forward every single day to give our team the best look, and that stuff doesn't go unnoticed.

We wouldn't be where we are today without those guys putting in that effort every day. It truly does take 57 guys, and I think this year especially, like every single guy has realized that they do have a role on this team. Like I play an important aspect in getting us to where we want to be, and it's been helping us. It's been proving itself, no doubt.

Q. (Inaudible.)

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: To be honest, I haven't watched any of their game yet.

KEVIN CORRIGAN: Why don't you let me answer that one.

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: Coach can answer that one.

KEVIN CORRIGAN: Since I have.

Yeah, we don't change a lot defensively. We adjust and we try to be consistent in our decision making and those kinds of things. We feel like we have a great goalie. If we can give up the shots that we want to give up in the areas that we want to give them up, then we feel good about it. If we let people get to spots that we don't want them to be in, we don't feel so good.

We'll have a chance -- now, these guys, they've been focusing on resting for the last not even 24 hours now, and we've been focusing on preparing, but honestly, they know us, we know them. We've played each other. This will be, what, six times in the last three years now. I don't think more than a couple goals probably separate us at any time during that.

We know what the job is.

Q. Griffin, you grew up with Brian. Seeing him score that goal yesterday, have you ever seen him score an overtime goal and what was that like?

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: I had never seen him score an overtime goal. I think we had this conversation yesterday. That was, I think, his first overtime goal.

But you can't help but be happy for him. Like he's one of my best friends. I've grown up with him. I've played with him for over 10 years now. It was almost like scoring the goal myself. Like just the happiness that I felt for him, the smile on my face. There's nobody who deserves it more. That kid works so hard, and what he's gone through and overcome, and what a special moment and special circumstances.

I think I could speak for everybody in the world saying, you can't help but smile and just be so joyful. I didn't even know what to say to him to be honest. I just grabbed him and hugged him and probably head-butted him in the face like three times throughout that process, but was just telling him I loved him to death and I was so happy that he decided to come to South Bend and all of the above all day long. Just pure joy, absolute joy.

Q. (Inaudible.)

KEVIN CORRIGAN: No. I mean, we had some action set up and it started with him, and he read it perfectly. He read that they weren't coming to slide to him early, so he kind of feathered it out a little bit, and then they were pressing out

to Eric in front of him, so he turned it down and tried to get to the cage.

I think it was a great read by him and a great shot because the guy was draped on him. It was really a terrific play by him.

Q. (Inaudible.)

GRIFFIN WESTLIN: I can start with this one. It's magical. He's a special player. There's really not many players like him out there. It's comforting in a way, just to know that you throw a ball in there, Jake is probably going to catch it and dunk that thing. I don't know, it's just very special to watch.

I know everybody is always just so happy for him. He's such a good kid, happy kid, rooting for everybody all the time, and you can't help but just be happy and proud of him and what he's overcome and how hard he's worked and his dedication to his craft, not only his craft but what he's been doing when he hasn't been playing lacrosse, as well. You really just can't help but be happy for the kid and just keep rooting for him every day.

KEVIN CORRIGAN: He's spent more time rehabbing than he has playing in the last couple years, and yet he's playing, last year and this year at the end of the year, at an extremely high level.

He's got a rare combination of great game sense, great fundamentals, and just off-the-chart creativity and ability to improvise in the moment. You usually see a guy who's one or the other of those kinds of things, not somebody who brings all that together in one guy.

Q. What were some of the keys (indiscernible) the whole defense?

KEVIN CORRIGAN: You know, I think you've just got to guard them. They have so many weapons, and you have to have athletes to play them. You saw yesterday, what did they score, 16? That's a good defensive team from Penn State who was mixing zone and man and doing all kinds of things, and yet there they are hanging 16 on them at the end of the day. It's just a really good offense. A number of guys that would be the best player on any other team.

If you think I'm going to tell you what we're going to do -- that was a lot of nothing right there, and that's what you're going to get on that one. But thank you for asking.

Q. (Inaudible.)

KEVIN CORRIGAN: Good. Yeah. Those guys lay it out there, man. They put it out there and they walk off the field like the warriors they came on the field as. But when the bell rings at 1:00 on Monday, they'll be there.

Q. (Inaudible).

KEVIN CORRIGAN: He did, yeah.

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