

2023 NCAA DIV II Men's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 28, 2023

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Lincoln Financial Field

Lenoir-Rhyne Bears

Greg Paradine

Victor Powell

Dylan Stape

Evan Voss

Media Conference



DYLAN STAPE: I feel like we knew what they wanted to do, and if we limit what they want to do and make those big plays smaller, then I think we had a great shot of taking them to what we did with zero goals, one goal, four goals, things like that each quarter.

VICTOR POWELL: Off what Stape said, I think we had a great game plan from Coach P and Coach Crompton here. We just overwhelmed them. We did what we did. We played how we've been playing all year, and we just took it to them.

Q. Evan, you're a sophomore, but there's a lot of guys that are fifth years and I think a few sixth years thrown in there. How did you feel the locker room, the veterans, having been here before in the locker room helped the young guys like yourself?

EVAN VOSS: Yeah, last time this team was here, I was a senior in high school. I was at that game Championship Weekend. It was heartbreaking even as a high schooler to see that.

I think the message from the older guys the entire year is don't give up and everybody's in our way. We took that mentality every day into practice and then even games, win or loss, we kept our heads held high and just came back and obviously ended it with winning the whole thing.

I think Myles Moffat, who's really mentored me through my two years here, has been just incredible. He learned under guys like Ben Corrigan and Joe Buduo. So it's really just paved the way for guides like me. And then the incoming freshmen that I'll end up mentoring.

Q. For both Victor and Dylan again, having gotten here a couple of years ago, they kind of talked when they were in here that they felt the moment was maybe a little too big for them. For you guys, you've been there before. How meaningful was that experience, and how meaningful was it to kind of finish the deal this time around?

DYLAN STAPE: That was the biggest experience for us.

Lenoir-Rhyne - 20, Mercyhurst - 5

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by the national champion Lenoir-Rhyne Bears. Congratulations, gentlemen. Head coach Greg Paradine, student-athletes Victor Powell, Dylan Stape, and Evan Voss. We're going to follow the same format. Go with an opening statement by coach followed by questions for the student-athletes.

Coach, an opening statement?

GREG PARADINE: First I'd like to congratulate Coach Ryan. Mercyhurst had a fantastic year. He runs a tremendous program.

I'm just so incredibly proud of these guys. We had an unbelievable run, and I told these guys the first day that we got together in August that we could do this, that we could be national champs. We have the talent in this room to be national champions.

These guys believed it, and it came to fruition. It's definitely a little shocking from starting the program from nothing to where we are now, but all credit goes to my assistant coaches, these guys up here. Just tremendous student-athletes.

Q. For both Victor and Dylan, obviously congrats on a title. The way you guys came out, I think you forced turnovers on their first four possessions, and you were up 4-0 before they even got a shot. What kind of went into that on your end, and did you feel like you guys kind of overwhelmed them a little bit right from the start?



We knew at that time, we were like, oh, wow, we're here. The stage was very big for us. And we kept telling all the younger guys, hey, this is just another game. A lot of people out there cheering for us, but it's just another game. Just go out and do your best and play, and we'll go up on top.

VICTOR POWELL: I think it was a great experience as well. Coming into this year, we just knew what we had to do. I wouldn't say the stage was too big for us. We knew what it took to win, and we came out with a W today.

Q. You guys played great, collectively as a team. You guys had a great fan base that followed you guys here. Were you guys able to feed off that energy from the fan base?

DYLAN STAPE: Yeah, I think that was the biggest thing, seeing all our fans and former alumni come out for us. Being from Hickory, North Carolina, people came out from everywhere, and it was so great to see. I loved that, seeing all that. It was a great, great boost for us to go out there and just play our hardest.

EVAN VOSS: I think on top of that, the last weekend we played at Limestone, and we felt like that was a home game for us with how many people traveled there. Not many schools get that. It was just an incredible experience. We have the best fan base in the world.

Q. For Victor and Dylan, it seemed like the style of defense today was very much built on being very physical. You guys were imposing in many different facets, whether it was in settled or even in transition situations. How much of that was a step up from maybe how you might usually be, or was it a point of emphasis to say, hey, let's try and push these guys around today to set the tone?

DYLAN STAPE: I think that was our message all year, attack them before they attack us. I think we did that tremendously today.

VICTOR POWELL: I think that's how we've played defense all year. We're a big, physical group. We're also athletic too. We've just been playing the same style all year, and we're going to continue to do that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

Q. Coach, you alluded to it, but how rewarding is it having been here from the very beginnings of this program and seeing it go as far as it possibly can to the National Championship?

GREG PARADINE: It's surreal. Seeing all those guys out there that took a chance to come and start a program from nothing, and you saw the support. It's all those guys that started this program. It's like having a baby. It was like they went through stages, and it grew, and it matured.

Now it's like a full grown, healthy human being. It's just amazing to like look back. It's kind of hard to believe.

But those guys that were in the stands -- and these guys alluded to it -- they're what this program's all about. It's all about family. And the support we've gotten from them the whole way, it means the world to me, and I know it means the world to those guys that we were able to finish it to get a championship because those guys came to build a program from nothing.

Like I said, we got a little competitive in the first couple years, and then we were able to win a championship, the SAC Championship. We were able to get to a National Championship. You never know, once you get to a National Championship in '21, there's no guarantee that you're ever going to get back to that point.

I thought from the beginning of the year we had the talent, but those guys showed the heart. Then we had some bumps along the way.

The different guys who made an impact on the team. Matt Mancini was a transfer, face-off guy. He was unbelievable today. Rob Pensabene, the goalie, was just incredible. Those guys just started playing mid-year. It was just incredible contributions from all of our guys and our coaching staff. Just tremendous.

Q. You guys come out with aggressive attitude. You guys were up 4-0. You guys were beating them on both sides of the ball, offensively, defensively. You guys are shutting them down. You guys go from a zone defense to a cover man-to-man defense. You guys had them all figured out. Beginning of the third, those guys come out with a little bit of success, and right away you guys shut down the fire. How did you guys -- what was the mentality the whole way?

GREG PARADINE: I think the mentality was for us to play our style. I think that's what all year -- our defense is big and fast and physical. We're athletic. We've got a great goalie behind us. That was the mentality, to be physical, to play -- to not slide if we didn't need to.

We felt like we could win some one-on-one matchups, which I thought we did. We told them at halftime, Mercyhurst isn't here -- they're here for a reason. They're a really good team. We knew they were going to make a

little bit of a run, which they did, but our guys just didn't stop. They were not going to be denied.

And I think what's most impressive about this group is they love each other, like they love being around each other. From the road trip when we knew we had to go to Tampa, we spent a week on the road, and I think that was something special. The bonding to go on the road like that, this is a group that really, really loves each other.

We just wanted -- I know it's cliché, but we just want to spend another day. That was like our goal. Let's spend another day with each other, another week with each other. Now to play the last game, the last season, and win it is incredible.

Q. Along those lines, what kind of sparked things going on the road there, having to go through three road games to even get to this point? Also, if you could follow up a little bit on what Evan was able to do today in earning outstanding player honors.

GREG PARADINE: I think the big thing was understanding -- and I told the guys. I told them early, I said, you guys are really good. We've got some really good players, and we're dangerous all over the field.

I felt like this -- and I said this at the beginning of the year -- we have the talent defensively, goalie, face-off wise. I feel like we had a complete team from the attack end, defensive midfielders were super athletic. That's what it takes. You need athletes all over the field. Those guys believed. They believed.

When we went down to Tampa, we got down, I think, 7-4 at halftime, it was like, look, just make the next play. Maybe the next play. After Tampa, it really began to swell.

Getting Victor back was a huge boon for us because, when he went down, we kind of stumbled a little bit midway in the season. I know he's a third team All-American, but he's a first team All-American. He is the best defender in the country. He is a beast, and he showed that today. So that was a huge spark getting him back.

Then Evan has been super dynamic. I mean, he's just -- what's been great about Evan is we typically have been a midfield oriented, dodging, out in front of the cage, and he gave us, in this run, a presence from behind. That was really hard to defend us because we could attack from all over, and Evan is a very talented attackman.

Q. Coach, again, piggy-backing on the question, you've been on the road constantly all over the place. You finished your story here in Philly. What's next for

you to get back to this point?

GREG PARADINE: It starts -- next fall will be day one again, and you go from the pinnacle to scratch, and that's our mentality. I think we've got a great group.

Obviously we're going to be graduating some guys who have been with us a long time. Myles Moffat has been a six-year guy. I don't know what I'm going to do without some of those guys, they've been around so long. We're going to miss them.

We've had a tremendous class. Those guys have left their mark not only athletically, but academically, in the community. They're just tremendous young men. I couldn't be more proud of them.

Q. Another emotional question for you. Two minutes left, the crowd's chanting Coach P. Just explain what that moment feels like.

GREG PARADINE: Like those are my guys. Those are the guys that started the program. That's what makes this program special is they're part of our team. They love these guys who are current players. They support them like no other program around.

Between the Bricks, I think, is one of the hardest places to play in all of college lacrosse when our alums come back. I can't thank those guys enough for taking the chance, a school in Hickory, North Carolina, wanted to start lacrosse 12, 13 years ago, and the job that -- it's the foundation that they built is the reason why we're here today.

It goes back to those guys. Just tremendous young men, the guys who have come through this program.

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