

2024 DIV III NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 26, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Lincoln Financial Field

RIT Tigers

Jake Coon

John Mozrall

Kaden BRUNson

Media Conference



take that away from him.

But on certain possessions, I think a few shots were a little deep. We could have worked for a better one. We had been playing a lot of defense. So we maybe could have worked the ball around a bit more, maybe ran them down a bit more, tried to get them tired. It's late. It's hot.

Other than that, a few good saves, a few good defensive plays.

KADEN BRUNSON: Yeah, I think they got off to a good start in the fourth and then personally I was just trying to make a couple looks probably that, I don't know, could have pocketed it for a little longer and had a longer possession like John said but good start for them in the fourth.

Q. You beat this team in March. What was the big difference today on a grand stage?

JAKE COON: Looking down through the stats here, first time around, I think we had the better half of the face-off play, right, and today they were over 50 percent, pushing over 60 maybe.

So that's definitely a big difference. I don't want to take anything away from our face-off crew. I thought they made some plays when they needed to today but certainly if you're looking at the differences, that's a big difference.

Other than that, I think we played a little bit better aggressive style defense the first time around. Today we just, you know, for whatever reason, weren't playing real tight defense and aggressive defense. At times we showed it but other times it was kind of playing itself, I guess is all I'll say. But those are the two things that stand out to me. I think save-wise, pretty even, even this time. A couple bad bounces and I think you see the difference.

Q. Obviously this time of year, a lot of guys are hurt and battered up. Mike was out there limping around. How much of a warrior was he for you guys down the stretch?

Tufts 18, RIT 14

JAKE COON: They have worked hard and this incredible senior group that has put a lot in this program. Been to three title games in four years, which is really impressive. So can't say enough about our senior group. Love those guys. Just came up a little short today. We fell behind. A little bit of a tough finish for us, as well. I thought a couple bounces went there way and here we sit. That's all I've got.

Q. Obviously not the brightest moment right now but when you guys reflect on the last four seasons plus in some cases, what are some of the things that are going to stand out most?

JOHN MOZRALL: It's been an absolute roller coaster the last four years. Getting to play lacrosse is a joy and treat that should be cherished. We had a nice program behind us when I initially came in and cane initially came in. It's just the next initial steppingstone we need to take to start pushing for the playoffs.

KADEN BRUNSON: For me it's my second year on the team. I transferred in last year and I just can't say enough about how well this team has treated me when I came in, taught me the ways of the alumni and how they built the program. Sucks to come up short but just proud of our guys.

Q. You had it tied heading into the fourth quarter. What did they do differently that kept you to one goal in the fourth?

JOHN MOZRALL: I thought we were getting some decent looks. The goalie was making some good saves. Won't



JAKE COON: Yeah, he's dealing with a knee injury right now which happened a few weeks back, and we were fortunate enough to even get him back. We weren't sure if he was even going to be able to participate at all. Fortunate enough to get him back.

Yeah, he's a warrior. He's grinding through that and figuring it out. Trying to play with a knee brace on for the first time over the past few weeks.

So he's a tremendous player for us. You know, I thought he could have played a little better today honestly. You know -- he's one of the best defense men in the country and I hope he goes out there and makes plays all over the field. At the same time, he's one of the big reasons why we are here today.

Great kid. Great player. Has been a great captain for us. You know, sorry to be losing him next year, but he'll be putting on another orange. I'll watch him next year.

Q. They had such an advantage in ground balls, 49-34, and I just came off that field. It was brutally hot. Do you think them with the ground balls and then fatigue in that fourth quarter was what caused the demise for you guys?

JAKE COON: I certainly should have mentioned that to you. The ground ball battle, I think the first time we might have been on top of that. A lot of that has to do with face-off play when they win a bunch of them, they are going to get possessions and then we are playing a lot of defense.

Yeah, I think our defense did get a little fatigued. We are trying to run five or six guys down up close, and we run three polls in five short-stick d-mid.

So we are trying to play depth and let our guys play but we did play quite a bit of defense because they are winning face-offs. Definitely a factor. We looked a little tired at times late in the game, I would agree with you.

Q. Alex had a bit of a tough first half with six saves in third quarter. What changed for him in the defensive unit at halftime for him to start seeing the ball better and looking more comfortable?

JAKE COON: I'm not sure. He did. He had a much better second half than first half. He's been pretty steady for us most of the year. He had a couple tough games in the playoff run. He had the flu one weekend and tried to battle through that and didn't pray great, unfortunately. But we got through.

But you know, he's a great goalie. It's his first time in this environment, so tough to kind of manage through that. Maybe the shaky start was -- had something to do with the jitters.

But he settled in nicely. We're excited to have him back for the future.

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