

April 7, 2011



University of Minnesota Duluth – 4  
Notre Dame – 3

An Interview With:

**UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA DULUTH  
COACH SCOTT SANDELIN  
JUSTIN FONTAINE  
JUSTIN FAULK  
JACK CONNOLLY**

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement?

COACH SANDELIN: Pretty exciting. I couldn't be more proud of our team. Again, we didn't start the game the way we wanted. We got down, battled back, got down, battled back. Had a great second period. Third period wasn't our best period.

But our guys kind of weathered the storm at the end and got some gutsy performances. Kind of how we've been a lot through the year. When our backs have been against the wall, our guys have found ways to kind of grind out wins. And that's kind of what it was tonight.

But we built the lead, we held onto it, and we've got a chance to play tomorrow night. So I'm extremely excited for our players and our program and this is a pretty special time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players first.

**Q. Justin, can you talk about the third period and kind of the onslaught that they brought on. Looking at the shot, I think you were guys out-attempted I think 25-6 and out-shot 15-2. Talk about that and also talk about how well your goalie played in that period.**

JUSTIN FAULK: Like you said, they kind of out-chanced us there and out-shot us, but I think it just showed our team's composure. We got the puck out when we needed to, and our guys were always down blocking shots, and just tell Kenny that I think he played great. He made some huge saves for us going down the stretch and even throughout the whole game and kind of kept us in it the whole time even at the beginning when we were down there. And he just played amazing for us.

**Q. For Justin Fontaine. Justin, after the selection show they talked up the power plays of the other three teams that were in your region, and since that happened, your power play has gone on a run. Did seeing that when the selections were announced, was it a catalyst for the work that you guys have been doing with your own power play with what's been going on with that in this tournament?**

JUSTIN FONTAINE: Our power play has been great all year, even though we weren't in the top in the nation. It's been one thing we relied on and wanted to capitalize on because special teams is huge. And we were just able shut down those guys and then wanted to come out and bury a few ourselves, and that's what happened tonight, and obviously we got the lead.

**Q. For Justin, there was a lot of attention on, obviously, you, Jack, and Mike, but can you talk about J.T. Brown? Seems like tonight he was in the middle frame a big majority of the scoring chances you guys had?**

JUSTIN FONTAINE: Yeah, he's been a player for us all year. Stepped his game up. And when the team needed a boost he's been there moving his feet, winning battles, and he's just been a big key to our team all year. I mean, him driving that and drawing penalties, it's great to see from incoming freshmen. And he's been great for us all year.

Any further questions for players?

**Q. Jack, just what does it mean to know that you guys are now going to the championship game and what it means for this program and for you guys as players.**

JACK CONNOLLY: Yeah, I mean, it's an unbelievable feeling. Like you said, we're looking to make history in our program. This is something that's never been done, and I couldn't be more proud of the guys and our coaching staff. We've worked hard all year, and this is our ultimate goal is to get to this game on Saturday.

So, yeah, we're looking to go out there and play our game and hopefully we'll come out on top. But we're definitely excited. And it's been a fun ride so far.

**Q. Really, any of you guys, if you just want to talk a little bit about how well the power play was working and how important it was to come back from those one-goal deficits to get a lead tonight.**

MODERATOR: Who's that directed to?

**Q. Jack or Justin. Either, or all three of them, if they want to just talk about how well power play has worked actually the last three games through the regional and through this game.**

MODERATOR: I don't mean to put you under any pressure, Kevin, different to pick one. I mean --

**Q. Jack.**

MODERATOR: All right. Jack?

JACK CONNOLLY: Yeah, our power play has been huge for us. Like you said, we got down there early in the game tonight, battled back. J.T. got a big power play goal for us there and, you know, going down 2-1 and then Schmidty got a big goal for us as well.

But then we drew penalties by moving our feet. It was hard work that drew those penalties. And we take it upon ourselves to try and capitalize for our team. We're out there for a reason, and that's to get some momentum and try to put the puck in the net when we can. And fortunately we were able to do that tonight. And hopefully we can carry it proudly into the championship game.

MODERATOR: Do either one of the Justins want to add to that?

JUSTIN FONTAINE: I just thought we were moving our feet and filling a lot of holes. We

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were able to get a lot of switches in and had a few chances, and it kind of kept us going at times. And I want to just give credit to all 10 of our power play guys. It was a good night on the power play.

**Q. Justin Faulk, a lot has been made about this being Duluth's hometown because it's in Minnesota, but this is literally in your backyard. How excited were you to be playing today and have the opportunity to play in front of your home town crowd?**

JUSTIN FAULK: Like you said, I mean, I live about five, ten minutes from here. It's just amazing knowing that, like I said, I do live that close. And having family and friends here watching and at the game or on TV, it's just exciting, and I couldn't have asked for a better location for it.

MODERATOR: Further questions?

**Q. This is for Justin Faulk. Can you talk about how well you guys played on the penalty kill in terms of -- you held them to only two shots in five power plays. What was so effective, and in particular, how did you keep them out of even the offensive zone so much?**

JUSTIN FAULK: I think it was just our gaps in the neutral zone, and our forwards kind of pressured them off to one side and allowed our D to step up and pinch them off at the blue line.

And then even when they did get in the zone I think when they were along the boards we were able pressure them pretty well. And when they did have shot opportunities I think a lot of guys were willing to sacrifice their bodies and block a shot for the team.

MODERATOR: Anything else for the players? Guys, you can be dismissed. Thanks very much. Congratulations. We'll look forward to seeing you tomorrow and on Saturday.

And we'll continue with your questions for Coach Sandelin.

**Q. Scott, can you talk about the play of Reiter today and really through the whole tournament? He came in maybe not the hottest goaltender around after the Final Five, but he's really -- there are three straight 30-save games, 15 stops, or 14 or 15 in the third period tonight.**

COACH SANDELIN: Well, like the guys said, he's been outstanding for us. You need that at this time of the year. Every coach would say

**University of Minnesota Duluth -  
4.7.11**

that. I think Kenny's rebounded after the Bemidji game.

We went with him because we knew he was capable of playing that way. We've seen it in his time here, and so we had confidence going into the regional, and he's lived up to that.

I think our guys are feeding off that, too. I didn't really like the shots in the third period, but we didn't need to make him work that hard, but, you know what, sometimes through the year your goalie needs to win games for you. And he certainly has been a big, big part of that the last three games, especially on the penalty kill.

**Q. Coach, the power play, is it a question of having more success with what you usually do or are there certain things that you changed before the tournament started, going back to before the regionals, your success on the power play in this tournament?**

COACH SANDELIN: No, I mean, as we got the personnel like I said a number of times through our year, we went through stretches where we were getting opportunities and not scoring. Right now they've been going in. We have a group that we have a plan and they create within that plan. And when they do that, obviously they're pretty good players.

So I can sit up here and say we diagram all this stuff, no, but we have some set plays, and, you know what, you gotta have the players. And that unit has been very, very good all year, and not just with Jack and Mike and Fonzie, those guys have been on there for two or three years, so they're pretty familiar with each other.

And we've moved some different people in there. J.T. wasn't on there at the start of the year, he was in the second half. So we made some changes. But those guys just have good chemistry and they create within what kind of our plan is.

**Q. Scott, even when things are not going well, it seems like your team doesn't get rattled. Has there been a turning point in the season that kind of helped elevate that confidence for your club?**

COACH SANDELIN: You know, Joe, I know you've covered us. I think throughout the year, even early in the year, there really hasn't been a sense of panic. We've been down in games. We were down a lot in first half. We've been down a lot in second half.

I think this team -- again, it goes back to the belief in each other, that they can win hockey

games. And just sometimes you just got to stay with it.

And, I don't know, sometimes they're better when their backs are against the wall. I think they've proved that all year too.

I don't want to spot teams one-goal leads, I'll tell you that. But we did respond the right way on both occasions and built the lead in the second period and made that stand up.

So very, very proud of our team for that.

**Q. Coach, it seemed like maybe there were some nerves there in the first minute or two, especially after that goal. Did it help to get a power play right after that and get into an offensive flow and maybe calm things down a little bit?**

COACH SANDELIN: Yeah, I think so. I think that was -- somebody had asked that question, too, before we started. I'm like, you know what? I mean, if you don't have nerves, you're probably not human. We're all that way. Coaches are that way. You just gotta go out and get some shifts under your belt. And obviously not giving up a goal in the first minute was the way we wanted to start, but sometimes that can snap you back.

But there's no question that goal was big. And our guys fought for it. Let's go get it back when we got the power play, and they went out there and got it done. And that certainly gave us a little spark.

**Q. Scott, can you put this into perspective just for the program, first time in 27 years, what do you think was the difference in finally getting to a title game?**

COACH SANDELIN: Great group of kids. Perseverance. A belief in each other. I mean, really, I mean, it wasn't our best game. I mean, we had moments. We built the lead and obviously we held on, but we won the parts of the game that you need to win. We won the special teams game. We got good goaltending.

This group of kids has been very resilient all year. I can't say enough. We never -- I'm not going to keep saying we haven't lost back-to-back games, because I said it a hundred times, but they find a way. They find a way. And I think it all goes back to they all believe in each other and they kind of had a goal.

And we're very fortunate. And this means

a lot to our program. I remember '84. I was there. We got beat by Duluth, but, anyway, in the semifinals.

But for our community, for our program, for our players, they've been a good team. They might not be, as everyone says, the best team. We've got some great players, but we've got a really great team. And I think that's pretty special. And as a coach, that's fun. That's fun.

So I'm very happy for them.

**Q. Any sentimental favorite tonight with your --**

COACH SANDELIN: No (laughter).

I'm a WCHA guy, so I'll leave it at that time. I'm just happy we're there.

MODERATOR: Coach, thanks very much.

COACH SANDELIN: Thank you.

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