

Notre Dame

April 6, 2018 – Quotes

Jeff Jackson, Bo Brauer, Dylan Malmquist



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MODERATOR: We're joined by Notre Dame. Questions for the players.

Q. What does that young fan, Rudy, mean to this team, and talk a little bit about your relationship with him?

DYLAN MALMQUIST: I mean, honestly Bo probably knows more than I do, Bo is really close to him. But he means a lot to our organization and our team. I mean, he's a really special part of it.

BO BRAUER: His family reached out to us a little while ago. And about halfway through we had a "Skate With the Irish" after one of our games. We didn't know exactly what was going on. Then his family reached out to us after he got diagnosed.

And since then we've been going to pizza parties with him and going bowling with him and done all these fun activities. And he's been a part of our team in the locker room. And he's been able to make it out to the regional and this trip. And, yeah, it's just been a really special relationship to -- really meaningful to both our team and his family.

Q. What's going through your mind, the last minute of the third period, and you guys have been very successful, were you guys calm? And then take me through your emotions after Jake scores?

BO BRAUER: It was pretty amazing. I was just right in the middle of the bench, and I saw Jake move it over to Cam up the left side. I thought right back to the Ohio State moment in the Big Ten championship when Cam ripped that one.

And then he made that awesome play to Jake. And I didn't see it go in. I just saw the whole bench topple over me just going crazy. And I spun around. I was looking at Coach Slaggert. And we were just in shock and awe, like, holy cow. We were just stunned and we were going nuts. And it was a really, really cool moment.

DYLAN MALMQUIST: I'd also reiterate that. There were only ten seconds left. Jake picked up the puck and everyone's screaming, 10, 10, just to try to get a shot on net and he kicked it out wide to Cam. And I mean with Cam's speed and his shot, you can only assume that he's going to go down and rip one like he did against Ohio State.

And then he just made this finesse pass right into the middle. And I mean once the puck went in you kind of looked around the bench, everyone started jumping and it was an unbelievable feeling.

Q. Did you guys sleep last night?

BO BRAUER: Woke up a few times in the middle of the night, but still managed to get some sleep.

Q. I understand you guys have -- you're close with the women's basketball program and stuff. They welcomed you to the last-second club. And you told them, where you guys been? We've been doing

this for a week or something like that.

DYLAN MALMQUIST: Yeah, I mean, we're giving them a run for their money right now. They did it in both the Final Four and the championship game. And I know most of the guys on our team were watching. And that was unbelievable just to see them be able to do that and pull out a championship for this university, and to have a moment like that that was our own, that was a really cool experience.

Q. Are we in for a last-second shot tomorrow night, Bo?

BO BRAUER: We'll see. We'll see.

Q. Can you guys just kind of speak to Jake's strengths as a captain and kind of the effect that his presence has on your team on and off the ice?

BO BRAUER: Yeah, it's been pretty amazing to be with him the last four years. He's really matured. And he stays really focused in the locker room and really focused on the bench. And I think his calmingness all over the rink and just to keep that really helps our team. And it lets everyone know we're all right getting down 2-0. And he just kept battling.

And we look at him as a leader and he stepped up big time. And it's really easy to follow a guy like that that can make big plays and stay calm under those kind of moments.

DYLAN MALMQUIST: Yeah, I mean, he's our leader, and he stepped up big for us last night. And it just goes to show that he has that in him. And on the ice, when you watch him play, you can tell he's a very smooth skater and makes good puck decisions. And so we just watch him, to be able to do that under pressure and it helps us out a lot on the bench.

Q. You guys are from Edina, playing a Minnesota team in the final. What does that mean to you?

DYLAN MALMQUIST: That's going to be a very cool atmosphere and very cool experience for all of us especially the Minnesota guys. I mean, just playing in the X alone, in the Frozen Four, is very cool as it is. But to play a Minnesota team and most likely have most of the crowd rooting against you, that's something we've experienced before and it's very fun.

BO BRAUER: Yeah, you know, we think back to five years ago when we won it with Edina in the semifinals, we played against Duluth East. And it kind of reminds me about that playing -- a lot of those guys on the UMD team are from northern Minnesota. And it's just a really special opportunity to come together with the Irish, and hopefully we can really do something sweet tomorrow night.

Q. What did you learn from last year's experience here that maybe helped you a little bit last night?

BO BRAUER: Yeah, from last year, you know, we came into it probably being a little more satisfied than we should have in that we were stunned beating UMass Lowell in overtime. And I think not having as much experience under the bright lights last year hurt us.

And taking that as motivation to get us back to here really has helped us. And, again, being calm and just staying positive throughout, it has really helped us.

DYLAN MALMQUIST: Yeah, I think what Bo is saying has hit the nail on the head. But I think focusing on us rather than focusing on everything else and putting all the distractions from the Frozen Four to the side and just focusing on what we have in the locker room and our team has been a big part of it.

Q. Can you guys talk about the unit as a whole in terms of the forwards? People have said, I mean, you could say this is a weakness or not, but not having a 20-goal scorer on the roster kind of -- and wondering maybe where those goals are coming from, but from your guys' perspective, what do you all bring to the table and what's kind of the mentality as the game goes on?

DYLAN MALMQUIST: I mean, the unit as a whole, everyone contributes, everyone knows their role and

everyone does their job, which is the biggest part of it. And I think everyone knows what their job is and what their role is and goes out there and tries to perform.

BO BRAUER: I couldn't agree with Dylan more. I think everyone on our team has accepted their role and played it really well. And I think that's a big part of just having depth and not necessarily a star player but a bunch of guys that can all score.

And even our defense has really been a big part of the scoring this year, and you need that with a team like this, and it's been -- it's worked really well this year.

Q. Sixteen in a row, I think you lost five out of the next nine. What was that stretch like and how much did that help that team kind of maybe regroup from there?

BO BRAUER: That was a really neat stretch to go through. And we were playing some great games and we got really good goaltending then, and we were just finding ways to win. And I think that's helped this team, just go through different kind of scenarios with these wins and be like, all right, we've been in this spot before; we know what to do and we can do this.

DYLAN MALMQUIST: And I think during the five out of nine, whatever it was, losses, facing that adversity has really helped us come to the end of the season in the playoffs, just knowing how that feels and not wanting to have that feeling has really been a big part.

Q. Dylan, I think you are one of five Minnesotans on this team. Do you think the Big Ten Conference will help teams like Notre Dame and Ohio State maybe get more kids from Minnesota?

DYLAN MALMQUIST: I mean, Notre Dame already has a very good pipeline from Minnesota. When I came in, I think I was one of five Edina guys alone. Might have been eight or nine Minnesotans as it is. Our coach, Andy Slaggert, does a very good job recruiting from there and really brings out the family aspect, which is a big part of Minnesota and helps a lot of guys over to Notre Dame.

MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Jackson.

Q. As a four-year guy on your blue line, what do the Jordan Gross bring to this team from a consistency standpoint?

COACH JACKSON: I've said it many times, I give Jordan a lot of credit because when he first came to Notre Dame he was a little bit one dimensional. Always a good offensive player. Had play-making ability, scoring ability from the back end. But him and I had a serious conversation after his first year just about the importance -- if he aspired to play at the next level he would probably have to learn how to defend better.

And he did a conscious effort to do that. When he was a freshman, even maybe partially through his sophomore year he wasn't killing penalties. He wasn't being used in much of a defensive role. Last night, he was playing against Michigan's top line. After the first couple of goals got scored we had to change our defensive pairs a little bit, and Jordan was out there against the Marody line.

It tells you how much he's grown as a player. And it's rare for kids to sacrifice maybe offense in order to become better defensively. But it's allowed him to be more of a player that's going to have a bigger impact on the game overall.

And I give him a lot of credit for that. He still has a great ability to do things offensively. But now he can defend. And that helps him even more offensively because he can transition from playing good defense.

Q. What's it like having the young man, Rudy, around the program with everything he's gone through in his life?

COACH JACKSON: You know, it's been hard for me because I don't like publicizing it. It's become a little too

public for me. The kid's going through a very difficult time in his life. I'm sure his parents are as well.

I think it's great that our guys -- I give our guys a lot of credit for all the efforts that they've put in to spending time with him and helping him through this situation.

But it's really -- I'm not sure it's something that should be, you know, in the public eye as much as it is right now. It's natural, I guess, because he has been with us over the last few weeks. And we're all rooting for Rudy.

But I think it's important that everybody recognizes that he's not a symbol for us; he's a young man that's going through a very difficult time in his life and his family's life.

Q. Jeff, your players over the last couple of days have had a lot of fun joking about the last-second finishes, maybe giving you a heart attack and all that kind of stuff. Have you heard from anybody that's not affiliated with the team, you know family member, minister, cardiologist, who is generally concerned about your well-being with all of this?

COACH JACKSON: No, we have our team doctor. But, you know, yeah, I've had -- every year I go through an annual physical. So I've done the treadmill test a couple of times. Every year I get a physical and always, at my age, in this line of work, you always want to check your health.

So I'm in good health. A little heavy right now. I always gain weight during the season and have to lose it in the summer, but other than that my heart's been really healthy.

Q. Want to ask you about the three Michigan natives. What have Colin, Dylan and Dawson brought to the team?

COACH JACKSON: I'm a Michigan native, too. So for me, we recruited heavily when I first started at Notre Dame in Michigan, along with Minnesota and Illinois. We're Midwestern. We lost several kids from Michigan to the Ontario Hockey League and we kind of backed away from recruiting there because we felt those kids were a little bit more high risk for coming to school.

And the move to Hockey East might have perpetuated that as well. But now that we're back in the Big Ten, you know, I think Michigan's got to be a prime recruiting area for us. We have a couple more kids that are committed to us coming in from Michigan. I can't get into their names.

But the guys that we have, I mean, typically. I mean, it's funny, like, kids have a different dynamic from different states. At least from my perspective. And Michigan kids, the kids I used to have up at Lake State and the kids I've had at Notre Dame, like Erik Condra, they're generally gritty kids. They have some grit to them.

And even Dylan as a goaltender, he's got a little jam to him. He's got internal confidence, just like Colin does. The kids from Michigan are a little different than Minnesotans. And I've always liked the Michigan kids because they seem to have that little bit of grit to their game, and they're confident internally and it shows in the way they play their game.

Q. Wonder if you could talk a little bit about your relationship with Scott, why Duluth and Notre Dame like to play each other as often as you have in the past couple of years?

COACH JACKSON: My assistant, Andy Slaggert, has probably had a closer relationship with Scott over the years but I've developed one as well. It's no different than my relationship with Nate Leaman or even Mel Pearson. People that you coach against, you learn to have great respect for them as coaches. So you get to know them.

The teams that we have a respect for, we like to play them. I mean, with Duluth it's been obviously more nonconference, but we've had them -- they're in our place next year again. So we've had our good relationship with them. They play the game the right way. Scott's one heck of a coach. His staff has done a tremendous

job. And we just like how they do things.

Their athletic director is a former assistant athletic director from Notre Dame. Our hockey operations director is originally from Duluth. That's where we got him from. So there's ties in many ways to Minnesota-Duluth and Notre Dame. But it's just the respect factor. We have such respect for them as a program and their coach and their coaching staff.

Q. Now that you've brought up that Michigan kids are different than Minnesota kids, could you explain that a little bit?

COACH JACKSON: You know, I mean, even when I was at Lake State, and my time as a national coach for USA Hockey, I had some great Minnesotans. Jordan Leopold was with us on the national program. Go down a long list of guys that ended up playing at the U. I've had Benny Clymer, the national junior team. The kids I had at Lake State -- Brad Willner. I'm just trying to go back to the '90s here in my head.

But the kids we have from Minnesota -- I mean the one thing about Minnesotans as far as hockey goes is that first of all it's the epitome of family in this state. They come from good families. And generally with good families there's ties to religion, which obviously being a Catholic school ties into it. And the other thing that comes generally with solid families is good academics, which also ties into Notre Dame.

So it's easier for us to go into Minnesota and recruit these kids. And when you're talking about that, generally you're talking about character. And I've not had a Minnesotan, like I've had a number like Anders Lee and Steve Fogarty I'm so proud of. Great captains for us. They've been the epitome of character. And you never have to worry about them in school. You never have to worry about them off the ice socially. They're just solid citizens, and Minnesota does the best job in the country of developing young players. Their system, the youth level in high school does a tremendous job in their development and skill and generally, instinctively, I think that they've captured the market on elite players because of the way the coaching and the system in which they play.

Q. Not to bring up these crazy endings that have maybe added some more gray hairs to you there, but how confident do you feel in your team being able to do that again tomorrow against a Bulldogs team that seems to have done quite well living off of two-goal leads early on?

COACH JACKSON: You know, you can never predict what's going to happen. These situations -- there's been some luck to it as well. I think back to the Michigan Tech game where the puck almost rolled into our net right before we scored the game-winner in overtime. It's almost like it's meant to be. But you can't rely on that.

We can't go into the game thinking we're going to score the goal at the last minute. I'd rather have won that game with a one-goal lead in the third and not have to go through that. But these kids have found a way to get it done. And I'm not going to argue with that. They find a way. They're very calm.

And their calmness has probably impacted me in being more calm, when we give up a lead or when we get behind, they're just very calm in how they handle it. The locker room, on the bench. I hear them: We got this. We got this. We're all right. We're all right. It's rare in today's game to have seniors especially seniors that are quality players. So when you do get them you have to embrace them and let them lead your team.

And even guys like Bo that may not play a ton of minutes, he's an inspirational leader for us. Goes back to what I was talking about with Minnesota kids, he's just a character kid. They find a way and a lot of it has to do with their attitude and their maturity, having been through so many different scenarios since they've been here.

Q. You look at these two teams on paper and looks like there's some similarities spread around offense, nobody's really a flashy big goal scorer. Can you maybe compare and show some of the similarities and some of the differences between these two teams?

COACH JACKSON: Well, I haven't studied them enough yet to be able to do that and I'm not sure I'm going to

have enough time to do that. When you're playing a team that you know like Michigan, it's one thing. It's a little bit more challenging when you haven't seen a team -- we played them the beginning of last year, probably an unfair evaluation since I think it was the second week of the season. But like I know how Scott coaches.

I know how they play the game. Like I said, they play the game the right way. They play a fast game. They play transitionally. They have their depths. You're right, they're spread out like we are as far as their offensive depth. But they've got some talented young defensemen and their goaltending is solidified which probably helped push them over the top to get to this point. So I'm not sure how much difference -- I mean, both teams have pretty good special teams.

Last night I think it was a bit of an anomaly with us on faceoffs but they seem to be a good faceoff team. We have to be stronger on the dot in order to have possession of the puck. So I don't see a ton of differences in a lot of ways. But I guess we'll find out.

Q. Could you just talk a little bit about the factors that went in to you making Jake a captain this year what you saw from him last year and also how he's matured as a player and a leader?

COACH JACKSON: Jake is -- every captain I've had has had similar traits, character traits. And Jake falls into that. Jake was an alternate captain last year. I did something I never did before, I named a goaltender captain last year in Cal Petersen just because of his character. I want guys that -- I want guys that I can trust on the ice, off the ice, in the classroom, guys that are driven, guys that want to become players that want to be great.

I'm not overly concerned about how rah rah they are. They lead by example is more important to me than by voice. And I think Jake, he was a young, young kid when he came into Notre Dame right out of Saint Michael's College in Toronto. And I knew he had the it factor when I recruited him.

I challenged him in his last year at juniors about him needing to pick up his game while he was still a recruit. And I told him that he's not going to be ready to play if he doesn't. And he got it done.

And then after he got there he was a little bit as a freshman he was a little bit hyperactive. He'd take unnecessary penalties. I had to sit him down a few times but he figured it out. Just like Jordan Gross you challenge them in certain ways and they figure it out. And not every kid does that. But when you have guys that learn what they have to do to become more successful, those are captains for me.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

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