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BIG
MEN'S ICE HOCKEY
TOURNAMENT
SAINT PAUL 2014

Wisconsin - 2
Penn State - 1

An Interview with:

**PENN STATE
HEAD COACH GUY GADOWSKY
MATTHEW SKOFF**

MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Gadowsky and Matthew Skoff.

COACH GADOWSKY: This was a tremendous experience and we're very proud of the strides that our team took. I thought we improved a ton. It was everything we thought it would be in terms of the great atmosphere, the great venue, the incredibly high hockey, the great teams, the great traditions.

It was a phenomenal year to compete in. It was an absolute honor. And disappointed we came up a little short today but extremely proud of how far we've come. I think Wisconsin deserves a lot of credit, not just for today, but they've been a tremendous team all year, and they definitely deserve to be in the position they are in where they rested last night. They definitely deserved that.

I'm not sure, but possibly played a part, I don't think -- we just didn't have any jump today at all. And maybe some of it is for playing a game, almost two games last night and then having to play a great team like Wisconsin.

So they certainly deserve the position they're in and they took advantage of it.

MODERATOR: Questions for student-athlete Matthew Skoff.

Q. Do you look at that with a frustrated eye, or do you look at it as just an indication of how close you are to getting where you have to be?

COACH GADOWSKY: No, I think it's positive. This is a very tough league to play in. The fact that we could stick close with a lot of the

programs, many of the games, I think is very optimistic.

Tonight, obviously, Skoffer [Matthew Skoff] played tremendous. He played a lot better than we hoped he would have to play tonight, but when you have great goaltending, that certainly helps to keep the game close. We weren't able to sustain enough pressure tonight. But to answer your question, I think the team feels pretty optimistic about where we're at.

Q. You played basically a game and a half yesterday. What was the experience doing that and then just a day later to play another 60 minutes --

MATTHEW SKOFF: I mean, it wasn't anything -- I think all year, you play so much and you practice so much, it didn't really affect me that much. So I think anytime I just get in the net, I need to try to focus on what I have to do at that time. So just try to do my job every night.

Q. You and your teammates were fatigued last night, the jump wasn't there that perhaps you had yesterday.

MATTHEW SKOFF: I don't know if I could sense it. I'm in the net. I'm not really on the bench or anything. I didn't really get that kind of feel. I was just trying to do the best job that I could to help my team win.

Q. Matt, Guy mentioned you have improved a lot over the season. Have you seen much improvement from you from a defensive perspective over the past few months?

MATTHEW SKOFF: Absolutely. From our first Big Ten game, I think we lost 7-2 to Wisconsin. That was a 2-1 game in the playoffs. That just speaks about how good we got defensively throughout the year with sticks on puck or just backchecking to the house.

So it was a full team effort, defensively, improvement throughout the whole year.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Matt. Questions for head coach.

Q. What happened to the bench minor, which led to their power...

COACH GADOWSKY: Yeah, yeah. We hit a rush. As you know, we weren't creating a lot. We finally had to rush, but we had to jump up a defenseman to take advantage of it. So we had four guys on the rush. And I'm not sure if it was a bad angle shot on net or a pass across the crease, but the rebound came out and we had four guys caught and they ended up coming on what I think was at least a three-on-one, possibly a four-on-one, and I think one of our forwards said, hey, it's four-on-one anyway; I'd rather have a five-on-four than a four-on-one. And he tried to sneak past that. So unfortunately, our Big Ten refs are pretty good.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about that improvement and how optimistic you are for the future?

COACH GADOWSKY: I'll take the second one first. Extremely optimistic. As I said before, it's an incredible honor to play in this league, and I spoke about the venues and the atmosphere. And I think Penn State, what we have in terms of our venue and our atmosphere, deserves to be right up there in the Big Ten.

It's a ton of fun. It's very motivating. I think it attracts great student-athletes. So because of all that, I'm extremely optimistic. And I do think we've come a long, long way.

Skoffer mentioned the difference between our first Big Ten game and the one that we just played. There's a huge difference. Not only defensively. There's just a difference in confidence and a difference in our experience. And I feel like we're just a much, much different hockey team.

I think if you ask any of the guys, they'll agree that they feel a lot more mature than they did at the start of the year.

Q. Coach, obviously your goaltender played very well today. How tough is it (indiscernible) Wisconsin offense, where they've obviously got a big top line but you get a secondary guy like [Michael] Mersch who, you know, the top 10 goal scorer in the country that play on their second line?

COACH GADOWSKY: He's a secondary guy, huh? He's been great against us. That's not a surprise to us. He's been great against us all year. He's a tough, big body to handle. He's great

on the power play. But he's also a confidence guy, five-on-five, and tough to handle in defensive zone.

They're a great team. We know they are. You're right; Skoffer played great, a lot better than we hoped he would have to play. But he gave us a chance to win.

But you gotta give their whole team some credit, too. I know he scored them, but they were very difficult to play against today. And they're an excellent hockey team.

Q. The defensive strength, what did you think of Wisconsin's?

COACH GADOWSKY: I think what they do differently than other teams they're just a very big-bodied, heavy team. I can't explain it. But it's not that they buzz around you so much in our defensive zone, but they wear you down. They make plays but it's more heavy, tough. They're really hard to play against. They make you play a physical hockey game. I think that's what separates them.

Q. You were grinning as you were explaining that. Did that define the whole deal?

COACH GADOWSKY: Sure, yes.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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