

April 11, 2009



An interview with:

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COACH JACK PARKER
NICK BONINO
COLBY COHEN
MATT GILROY**

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the national champion Boston University Terriers to the podium. We have head coach Jack Parker; Nick Bonino; Most Outstanding Player Colby Cohen; and Matt Gilroy.

Opening comments, Coach.

COACH PARKER: I can't believe we have a BC title, for starters.

THE MODERATOR: That's BU, Coach.

COACH PARKER: Oh, that's BU, okay. I feel better. I feel better.

Opening comments. Wow. What a hockey game. What a finish. The finish made it an unbelievable game, obviously. And all I can think of is that it's the greatest game comeback I've been involved in, the greatest comeback I've been involved in. When we lost the '91 championship after being down by three goals, we came back, tied it up late in the third period, I mean real late, and went into triple overtime before we finally lost the game.

I was thinking about that tonight. Because we spent so much emotion those last couple minutes when we pulled the goalie and got the goals, but the team was so jacked up when we went into the dressing room. I didn't want to leave it all there.

The only thing I can say, we won that game because big-time players make big-time plays, and the guy sitting next to me made an unbelievable play to get it over to Bonino to get that goal. And we were real fortunate for the one before that. We were just dogging it. And when

we pulled the goalie -- I've never used Colby Cohen 6 on 5 before. I put him out there because of his size and effort and how well he was playing tonight. And he goes out and gets the goal to get us back in it.

In my mind, players do something that needed to get done and it wasn't my doing. I'm so proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Colby, can you take us through the goal and maybe, more importantly, take us through what kinds of thinking goes into this when you fantasize that you might score the winning goal in overtime for the national championship?

COLBY COHEN: Well, I mean, for starters, the goal Kevin shot and (indiscernible) makes a great play, rolls the blueline just like we've done a lot this year, leaves it for me. And I'm getting close to scoring some goals this weekend and I've been hitting a couple of bars, and I just let it go and I saw it get blocked and go up over the goalie's glove.

And I saw it go in and that was it. I don't remember anything after that. And just an unbelievable feeling.

Q. You're in an elite group with Gilroy as a Hobey winner and national champion. Did you ever think you'd get both in one year?

MATT GILROY: No, from the start of this year, what this team has done and what we've committed to the team, and we got here, I think everyone August 31st, and we went through testing and we used to run the river twice a week, 5:00 in the morning. It was horrible.

COACH PARKER: Stop whining about it. (Laughter).

MATT GILROY: And it just brought us closer together. And to see Colby score, I didn't even see it go in but just the bench, it was unreal and it's something the senior class will never ever

forget. It's unbelievable to go out the way we did.

Q. Matt, a lot of us have been wondering all year, could you give us both the meaning and backstory to burn the boats?

MATT GILROY: Coach read a story to us. It was about Hernando Cortez, and it was about going overseas and winning a battle and when they finally got to where they were going he burnt their boats and after they won the battle they were going to take the other guys' ships home.

And that's what our mentality was all year. It doesn't matter who we were, we were going to be a team and we burned the boats every night when we went out there together. And that's something I'll keep forever and it means something special.

Q. Matt, can you talk about the play and the tying goal looked like you were trying to pull the goalie over maybe to give more room for the shot?

MATT GILROY: No, it didn't go through my head at all. I just got the puck out of the corner of my eye. I saw Nick sitting wide open. He put the puck on Nicky's stick and put it away. He went in and we went into overtime. Once we had that, I think the whole bench and the whole team knew it was ours.

Q. Matt, as the clear No. 1 team coming into this tournament, after that first game, everything's been extremely difficult for you in terms of the last-minute goal against UNH. Coming back against Vermont and now this one. Can you just talk about how difficult it's been to go and pull off what you guys have just done?

MATT GILROY: I think the way we did it, might give Coach a heart attack, but I wouldn't want it any other way. The dramatics of it. J-Lo scoring, and then Thursday night was unbelievable. And what just happened now is still I'm in awe over it and it's a great feeling.

Q. Colby, could you just go back and look at the game winner again. You got the puck and took a look. What did you see and what was going through your mind?

COLBY COHEN: I don't know. I saw a guy coming at me, and I thought about trying to fake and going around the guy, but the ice was already a little chewed up at that point.

NICK BONINO: Colby, you closed your eyes.

COLBY COHEN: I closed my eyes and shot it and here we are right now. I was just trying to shoot it towards the net. Take a slap shot and get it to the net and hope for a rebound. But got lucky, I guess.

Q. For any of the players, can you talk about the mentality on the bench, what it was when you got down 4-2, what you were saying to one another and that sort of stuff?

COLBY COHEN: We were kind of just keeping our heads up. We've been on an even keel all year. We don't get too high and we don't get too low. And, I mean, the seniors are going down the bench. Everyone was just kind of getting accountable. And we knew what we had to do. We didn't want to count ourselves out yet. And national championship is up for grabs, we're not going to stop until the last buzzer sounds.

I think we kind of proved that we're a resilient bunch and we're going to do everything we can to tie it up and hopefully push it to overtime.

Q. Matt, talk about you're here, you won a national championship, and it's all done and it's all said and done. Obviously you'll remember this championship game. But is there a memory about this season that sticks out the most to you?

MATT GILROY: Playing with my brother is something special. It was something I always wanted to do, I'll never forget. But I think out of all the championships we've won this one I'll never forget and the fashion we did it, it's something you'll never forget.

And just being with the guys and celebrating like we did, it's an unbelievable feeling. And to be honest with you I can't believe it happened. We were down 3-1, I was like, oh boy, and then 3-2 happened. And we just started rolling. And it's unreal.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks guys. Congratulations. Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, all year you said Matt Gilroy has been one of the best captains you ever had. What made him so special and unique about his leadership this year?

COACH PARKER: I think a number of

things. First, the way he handled his teammates, the way he was an example as well as a leader. And I told him after the game, he made -- he held me accountable, literally, he held me accountable. He made me a better coach this year.

And I'll never forget, it was almost like he was an assistant coach on this team. He got great help from Strait and John McCarthy, but he was the straw that stirs the drink as far as leadership is concerned. And it was his team.

There's no question in my mind this was his team more than mine or (indiscernible) or Quinny's. It was the seniors', and he was the guy that was making sure it was his team.

Q. I was hoping you could talk to me about what your staff did and what their work has meant to you in this championship, because your assistants a lot of times get overlooked.

COACH PARKER: First of all, we've got a great goaltender coach who's got us a freshman goalie to play well all year long. And Mike has done a fabulous job and fabulous job checking out the opposing goalies and telling our shooters where to go. He did it all year. Did a nice job this weekend.

Davis and Quinny, Mike Davis and David Quinn, are both real hardworking guys. They do a lot of the video work and they do a lot of the planning and suggestions about how we should play a team. And it was Mike's job to get us ready for Miami if we were going to play them. It was Dave's job to get ready for Bemidji. And Mike did a great job because that's the team we played, and I'm sure Mike -- we would have been ready for Bemidji as well.

But I think that in general throughout the season, and certainly throughout the playoffs, they're more than assistant coaches. They're guys -- the three of us decide, not just me. The three of us get after each other pretty good, too. But when the smoke clears, it's a central theme that we're going to give the team. And they've been very, very good X- and O-wise and they've been very good emotionally.

Q. Every time that you've needed a big goal this season you've gotten it. It seems one game after another. And you've needed it. A lot of times you've gotten it from a lot of different players. In your career have you ever seen anything like it with your team or any other team?

COACH PARKER: I obviously haven't seen enough of other teams, but with this team I've never seen nothing like this where it seems like we were getting a big goal here, big goal there, as you mentioned. Always seems like they're always late. The momentum. I thought the biggest goal of the tournament was the Saponari goal last night -- two nights ago when we got the power play. It was a huge goal to get us back in the dressing room 3-3 and feeling better about ourselves. That was huge.

We've had that all year. We've kind of dried up on our power play down the stretch here because so many teams have watched it all year and they've gotten better at killing it. So we weren't as fortunate or the goals didn't come as easy on our power play. That kind of blew games over for us earlier in the year, and that didn't happen. We had to rely a little bit more on gritty goals and I don't think you can describe it any better than the gritty goal that Zach Owen got with the 6 on 5.

Q. Can you give us something about Colby Cohen that maybe the world doesn't know and how a 19-year-old kid with such a deep roster ends scoring the game-winning goal to put BU into another a niche in history?

COACH PARKER: I don't think anybody -- if they've watched us, they know enough of Colby Cohen. The reason he got the game-winning goal is he's a terrific offensive defenseman who can shoot a puck 100 miles an hour. I think he ran one off the crossbar. He's a terrific goal scorer for us for a defenseman all year long.

The reason we recruited him, he was a great power play guy, not only because he can move the puck and get great plays, but he's got a cannon. And, as they would say, a missile.

And that's what he brings. When we're recruiting guys we like to see something special. What do we like about this guy, what makes him special and the thing that made Colby special, he's such a great offensive defenseman, especially with the shot.

Q. This team's ability to come through in the clutch and sort of refuse to lose was -- made the burn the boats adage appropriate for this team. Can you elaborate on burn the boats and why you told them the story and how you proved it to be the motto?

COACH PARKER: It didn't come from me originally. I was sitting in my house in Gloucester and Ben Smith come by one day in early September, Ben was a former assistant of mine, former Northeastern head coach and women's Olympic coach and won a gold medal. And Ben came by with a printout of a story about Cortez, and he decided he was going to be the guy that captured (indiscernible) people couldn't get the treasure and became the Spanish goal, but the treasure in South America and he was going to do it he was going to go to Mexico and get all that gold.

He got four or five ships together. He got the best men he could find and he sailed across. The story, there were people whining halfway over, this is harder than I thought. I didn't know it was going to be about this way. When he got to Cuba he got rid of all the whiners he got them on the beach, Yucatan Peninsula, hence the Sea of Cortez, and he drilled them more and more now he thought they were ready and the very last day, the last night going inland to get the treasure he gave one last order and that order was burn the boats.

And his aids looked at him and said what are you talking about? Burn the boats, I want you to go out and burn the boats. And they asked him why. He said because I want to -- I want to raise the level of commitment. If you want to get this treasure you have to raise the level of commitment because nobody else can do this. His quote was: If we're going back, we're going back in their boats. There was no turning around jumping, he had to go beat that club if you wanted to get back and that's what he did.

That was the thing we were trying to do. We were trying to raise the level of the commitment. When Ben was telling me the story, he said then Cortez gave one order and I said: Burn the boats. And he was kind of, geez, how did you know that? I said because I watched The Hunt for Red October about a week before that. In that movie Sean Connery was telling them why they couldn't go back. He was telling Russia they were stealing the sub, they couldn't go back he told that story. He said we just burnt the boats, he said, so it seemed like a pretty good idea, that I might want to use it with my team.

And then I got another guy calling me about the same thing, about two weeks later, it was Bobbie Richardson a former assistant of mine he brought it up. He said this is something we should have. We decided that was going to be the theme. Raise the level of commitment, boys. Every time

you see the word burn the boats, the phrase burn the boats, you're going to know the commitment needed here, and the raise of the level of the commitment will show up in the back. It showed a pot of gold with DC in the back. That's what it was on the back of the T-shirt. They got the pot of gold tonight.

I'd like to make a comment first because it reminded me of DC. This is the best NCAA tournament, not just because we won, this is the best NCAA tournament I brought my team to because of a bunch of things here.

Most importantly, George McPhee and the Washington Capitals could not have been they turned over backwards for us. They did an unbelievable job in the greater Washington sports community that handled it all. It was unbelievable how much they did for us, the four teams here.

The second reason why is that the committee, Steve Cady and his crowd, and it is a crowd, did an unbelievable job handling what needed to be done telling everybody what needed to be done. And to be able to come to this city and to be able to see a hockey game and then go out and see what else is here, I mean, we're driving around back and forth because a million things we had to do and every corner there was an unbelievable architecture. The city is so clean. The restaurants were fabulous.

And any chance -- and I couldn't believe nobody's ever had a national championship in Washington D.C. before. I'm proud we won it here the first time. And I'm sure the committee will decide to come back here sometime quick, and the rest of the sports should look at it too. What a great town. I congratulate Washington D.C. The Capitals and George McPhee and Steve Cady for an unbelievable job. I appreciate everything you've done for me. Sorry for the plug.

Q. Coach, throughout the year we've talked about your team's ability to win championships in the various in-season tournaments, and you've always said it doesn't matter there's only one tournament we want to win. And after all the games that happened this year over a course of six months, it comes down to sudden death overtime. What do you tell the guys in the locker room?

COACH PARKER: Well, first thing I do is quiet them down, and then I let them be for a while. Then I went back and said: This is an

opportunity that you probably didn't think you had with six minutes to go in the game or four minutes in the game and now you've got it. Make sure you take the best opportunity here that you've got and do something with it. And most importantly you've got to play offense over defense. You can't just try to rush up and get the goal. You've got to make sure you play the right way and sooner or later we'll get a goal.

Q. Jack, can you talk about your penalty kill tonight? The fact that, hey, it killed 7 for 7 but maybe what you changed after the first one because they seemed to have a lot of great looks after the first and then you shut them down pretty well for the rest of the way?

COACH PARKER: We didn't get it to change much. They saw what they were doing and executed a little bit better. They have seen a lot of power plays through the year. The last two seasons we were a fabulous penalty-killing team all year. And 0 for 7. One of the Achilles heels of this team is the penalty taking we took some stupid penalties tonight. I thought the referees did a great job. We deserved the penalties I had guys slashing sticks out of their hands and breaking them in half and looking at the referee like how did you call that. If they didn't call it they would be hung.

We took stupid penalties, penalty killers bailed those guys out and some of those guys were guys that killed penalties, too. I don't think it was anything technical they played a little bit harder and played a little bit smarter, and the effort was there for sure. I thought that our power play, the first one we had we had all kinds of chances and we went 0 for 2 and we're going to get all set here and didn't get any others after that.

Miami played an unbelievably physical game. They played through us every single time. I thought they had the better of the play as far as the physical play is concerned and I thought in the second period especially they were much more disciplined positionally than we were. We were running around and guys trying to do too much and trying to do individual things.

And I was impressed with Miami on the film when I saw them. I was more impressed with them tonight how I saw them how hard they played and they certainly deserve -- we kind of snatch victory right out of what happened. And I'm sure it was a tough thing for them to watch and have happen to them.

But as I said before, everybody goes home as a loser instead of the one that wins the championship. 16 teams lose, and it's a hard pill to swallow. Couldn't be worse for Miami tonight the way they lost, but also the fact -- one of the things I was concerned about before the tournament started, the history of this tournament is such that I mentioned this the other night the teams that are supposed to win this tournament most of the time don't.

Because they think they had a great year, they're the No. 1 team, coming in No. 1 ranked but the team that plays great in April or plays great in March and April are the ones that win this tournament and sometimes the best team doesn't win.

And I thought Miami had the best team in the nation last year, and they were ranked that way all year and they didn't win this tournament. And what has happened many, many times, is another year and maybe even the very next year when they didn't expect to win it, they were there to win it. And it's happened a number of times. And it certainly happened to BC the last year as I mentioned.

So I was really concerned about that that they might come back and grab it from us because we were the favorite and they had the tough loss last year in the quarterfinals.

It didn't happen and it was unfortunate for them. I can't tell you how -- we'll sit back and watch this game and realize just how fortunate we were to win and how hard Miami played against us for 60 minutes. They had a hell of a year.

Miami University has the best winning percentage of any team in the nation in the last five years in college hockey. And they're a hell of an opponent and everybody knows who they are now.

Q. Coach, this is your third one. They've been neatly spaced apart. Do they get better with age?

COACH PARKER: I don't. But they do. Is it four decades? I think it is four decades. I feel like Ted Williams, he played in four decades.

Four decades. Now, if we could get back to one after next year on, we could do it, we could do it in five decades. Might have to prop me up like Uncle Bernie whatever it was, that movie. (Laughter). But it was -- somebody asked me, is there a lot of pressure for you to win this tournament because you haven't been here for so

long? I've had a lot of experience in college hockey and one of my experiences is getting there a lot, then not getting there for a long time.

We got there five straight years my first five years. I thought it was automatic. Then we didn't come back for 11 years. Then we got there for, I think, seven out of eight tournaments we got to the Frozen Four.

And then we had, is it 11- or 12-year hiatus? It's nice to get back here. It's nice to not have to go back two or three times to win it again, to get it the very first time back.

Q. Aside from the different tournaments that this team won over the course of the year, what would you say is the difference as far as the players and the makeup of the team, this team compared to your other national title teams?

COACH PARKER: Look back in the history of the other national teams, '95 we won the tournament pretty easy. We won 6-2. I forget what the semifinal game was, we won the final 5-3.

Q. 7-3.

COACH PARKER: Clarkson. So it was a little easier. The '78 team beat, I thought, was the defending national champion Wisconsin with everybody back, one of the greatest college hockey teams of all time, and beat them in the semifinals with some great players on both sides.

And then beat our archrival. The big thing was in our last two national championship games that I've coached we've beat our archrival. We beat Maine, big rivalry. When we beat BC in '78, that has been and always will be our biggest rival. When we won it in '72 we beat Cornell which is our biggest rival.

So to tell you the truth I was glad to see us get away from Hockey East teams it's nice to have a national flair and play somebody different in the final.

Q. You touched on it a little bit before that Matt's only the fifth player to win both the Hobey and a national championship in the same year. You mentioned that the best team doesn't always win. But besides that, can you think of any other reasons why it's so rare to have a player get both the Hobey and a national championship in the same season?

COACH PARKER: Because I think it's hard to do either one of those things, period. And, therefore, to double up in the same season is a

real difficult task. I say this all the time. People don't understand unless you're in the trenches how difficult it is to win the national championship.

And then people don't understand how difficult it is for people's opinions, a lot of sports writers, a lot of different coaches and a lot of different people get to vote in the Hobey Baker. How they come up with who is the best player in the nation is a hard thing to do. It's a hard thing to win. You've got two very, very difficult things to do to place them both in the years doubles up the odds. I think that's probably the reason why it hasn't happened too often.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.
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