



MERCYHURST

PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES

Saturday, March 21, 2009

Head Coach MICHAEL SISTI

Opening Statement..

We're excited to be here. I'm very proud of the team and the way we played. We have handled adversity all year. It was a wild game. As a non-biased fan, I'm sure it would have been fun to watch for the excitement. There were crazy things going on with goalies out of the net and empty-net misses. What was nice was that, for women's hockey fans, it was an exciting game until the final buzzer.

On being in championship game...

It's really rewarding. One thing we have always done is persevere. We never gave up on our goals. In our program, there is a lot of expectations and pressure on the players. We're a real young team. We started off 3-4 and our backs were against the wall. We knew we could only lose six or seven games in order to accomplish our goals, and for that young a team to be in that situation early, we needed our leaders like Valerie (Chouinard) to step up and lead by example. The biggest thing we needed, though, was wins. Fortunately, we got a few under our belt and slowly started to build chemistry. Our young players were learning how hard you have to work to win at this level, and things started coming together. This team has risen to the occasion and done a real good job digging deep when they have to. We're here, and in a lot of ways we expected to be here. We knew it wouldn't be easy, and tomorrow, anything can happen. We're playing the No. 1 team in the country. They have all the tradition and all the experience in the event. We have nothing to lose and I know our players will be prepared and play with great pride and passion. Back in October, any one of us would have taken this scenario. It wasn't an easy road and it won't be easy tomorrow, but this is why you play. We tell our recruits that you'll be pushed and challenged if you come to our program, and every year they will have an opportunity to play for a championship. This is the first group that has a chance to do exactly that. We're going to have fun with it and see what happens.

On the adversity faced this year...

There were a lot of things. On our first three trips, our bus broke down. When we came to BU early in the year, the engine blew on one of the turnpikes and we had to get shuttle service to and from our hotel. Our bus ended up spending 10 days here getting repaired. We had that kind of adversity, as well as some team chemistry. Basically, 35 to 40 percent of our team was new, so we had to get those new players involved, and with only four seniors, they had to learn how to lead. People had to understand their roles and handle the responsibility of those roles. We had all kinds of things on and off the ice – fortunately, nothing tragic, but it just seemed there were new issues each day that kept challenging us. Christmas-time was important for us because we did get the two big wins against St. Lawrence where I really thought we came together as a team. It was kind of 'put up for shut up' for the first half, knowing that if we lost those two games, we might be out of the NCAA race. Not only did we win them, we won them convincingly and played well in all areas of our game. We spent a lot of time meeting with the team and each class group trying to sort out what problems we did have – personality conflicts, leadership issues, and anything that could help us become a better team. It was a bit of a risk because, after those two big wins, everyone was feeling good and everyone wanted to get home for Christmas. We felt that if we took the time to sort it all out, when they came back from Christmas, we could have everyone on the same page and start rolling. That worked really well for us, and here we are.

On playing an unfamiliar opponent...

On the quick turnaround, I think it would be better to play a team you're more familiar with. We have to throw in some new packages here in a short period of time, but our players are smart and the coaching staff did a great job of getting ready for them. This time of the year is exciting. Our players will play with pride and passion. What's nice about Wisconsin is that what you see is what you get. They're good. You know what they do and they do it extremely well. It's a matter of, 'can you stop it or not?' They've played the

same system for a while. Their power play is outstanding, and they are very disciplined and detail-oriented. That's why they're so good. It will be a great challenge. Meghan (Agosta) said yesterday, 'To win a championship, you've got to play the best and try to beat them.' Right now, they're the best.

Senior Forward VALERIE CHOUNARD

On last night's win...

Like coach said, it was a crazy game with a lot of things happening. We've been through a lot of adversity and we worked hard until the last minute. That was a pretty good game.

On how she discovered Mercyhurst...

A few of my friends were going to school there. When I went to visit, it was a small school. At first, I didn't really speak English, so I met one-on-one with my teachers. I met the coaching staff and really liked the way the program was structured. That's why I committed to Mercyhurst.

On Wisconsin...

Wisconsin is a really good team with a lot of really good players. We have to play our best hockey and play our system. They are a fast team, so we can't let a period go. We need to play all three periods and all 60 minutes. You have to be able to give your best and be ready to compete until the last minute.