

**March 22, 2014**



**BIG**  
MEN'S ICE HOCKEY  
**TOURNAMENT**  
SAINT PAUL 2014

Wisconsin – 5  
Ohio State – 4

An interview with:

**Coach Mike Eaves**  
**Jefferson Dahl**  
**Mark Zengerle**

**THE MODERATOR:** Forwards Mark Zengerle and Jefferson Dahl from Wisconsin.

We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Eaves.

**COACH EAVES:** As you can well imagine, pretty exciting for our group of young men to be the first to win the Big Ten Tournament. The comments that were shared with Ohio State coaching staff is they had a great run. We were in their boots last year. We know what it takes. They were a desperate team. They played their fannies off. They can walk out of this building with their heads held high.

I think it was interesting you could tell from our opinion as a coaching staff they were the more desperate team early in the game. When we got down 4-2, seems we got desperate, played to a higher level, got the job done in overtime.

Very proud of these young men, especially our seniors. I thought they provided real good leadership on the bench and in the locker room, and ultimately they got it done on the ice for us.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Mark, take us through the winning play. Looked like the puck was laying there for a long time in the slot.**

**MARK ZENGERLE:** Yeah, no, it's still a little bit of a blur, to be honest with you. Yeah, the puck was kind of hopping around. People were whacking at it in the front in the slot. I made my way around it, got a little bit of wood on it. I still don't know if it went, but it was nice to get that one.

**Q. Jefferson, your goal ignited everything there. How did you maintain yourselves after falling down 4-2?**

**JEFFERSON DAHL:** We kind of talked about it all year, just responding after a goal. We had one last night. Tonight was kind of the same thing. Just get the puck, try to out-work them.

We talked about it in the third, just trying to get to the net. You saw our defense throw a great shot on net. There were guys around the net, fortunately it came to my stick.

**Q. Mark, second conference championship for you. What does that mean in the grand scheme of things?**

**MARK ZENGERLE:** It's huge. It feels great. We came into this tournament, we knew we were going to play next weekend no matter what. That's not the attitude we had, but the attitude we came in with, we wanted to win.

It was important for us to get this Big Ten Championship. As you saw, we had no quit in our game. Our attitude, it reflected out there.

**Q. Jefferson, you had a tough stretch in terms of scoring goals. Did you ever get down on yourself at all?**

**JEFFERSON DAHL:** Not really. I mean, the thing was, we're doing good things in the offensive zone trying to create chances. It's just a matter of finishing.

I thought Zuli [Morgan Zulinick] played a great game. Just a matter of time getting to the net.

**Q. Mark, looking at the math, you probably clinched a number one seed. That obviously was part of this deal or one of your hopes.**

**MARK ZENGERLE:** Definitely, that was another goal. I think when you go into the season, there's certain goals you have. Winning this was one of them. We came into the weekend, we knew we had an opportunity to get that one seed. That's important for us. We learned that last year, the little things that go into having it.

Wherever we are, we'll get ready and get prepared this week. It will be a fun weekend next weekend.

**Q. Mark, falling behind 2-0 early isn't what you wanted. What did you find out about yourselves coming back?**

MARK ZENGERLE: Yeah, we're a resilient group. It started with Jefferson, the next shift. Sometimes it might be tough going down two with seven minutes left. They came out right away and got that next goal, 4-3. Gained a little more confidence in our group, the bench. The rest of the game there, we were buzzing.

**Q. Jefferson, any time you win a championship, special teams plays a lot. What was working well for you guys? You clamped down on their power-play in the last five meetings you had with them.**

JEFFERSON DAHL: I think it was just bearing down. We had tons of guys blocking shots. Frank [Simonelli] took one in the wrist. Sean Little and Keegan [Meuer] were blocking shots. We were clearing it 200 feet. Anytime you can play four corners and out-work them, you're going to have success. I thought we did a good job of that tonight.

**Q. Mark, is there another level that your line can go to in terms of production or are you maxed out at the moment?**

MARK ZENGERLE: Not at all. Every shift, every game we talk. We want to be big-time out there and produce every game. With the puck and away from the puck, we want to do things well. I think at the end of the year everyone feels that way.

I don't think we're maxed out at all. We're going to keep working, growing and playing better hopefully.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

We'll continue with questions for coach.

**Q. Speak of the elation in the locker room postgame and also what you can do to improve, if anything, for next weekend.**

COACH EAVES: I think the elation is seen and felt on the smiles of these young men. When you're a player and you achieve a championship, there's an emotional high that you get because you're so wound up in preparation, all the emotions that are going through you. So there's great elation in that.

I think the lesson, we have made the analogy that going into the playoffs in this tournament and beyond is much like trying to climb Mt. Everest. The higher up you go, the less oxygen there is in the air, the games get tougher. We had to overcome some being behind. Those are good lessons to put in the hip pocket as we go into next weekend because the games are going to be pretty much similar to this.

You're going to have to battle through some things, adversity of being behind, stay with it, stay patient. I thought our group showed some maturity getting behind twice by two goals. That maturity and that steely resolve paid off for us.

**Q. Obviously their desperate nature played into the start. What did you see that you didn't like from your team at the outset?**

COACH EAVES: Well, their desperation between our going out and playing. It's hard to explain to young men. We're trying to end their season. That's a very difficult thing to do. They were playing at a higher desperate rate. We were playing for a championship; they were playing for their lives. There was a gap there.

All of a sudden when we got down 2-0, the power-play goals really allowed us to get our feet underneath us. When we got down in the third, we got a shot of adrenaline, felt we could keep going and create something special, and we did.

**Q. What would you say about [Joel] Rumpel's performance tonight?**

COACH EAVES: Well, I haven't looked at all the goals. The one I didn't see was the one off the angle. Apparently it hit Jake McCabe's stick and changed the speed of the puck. Went just inside the far post.

It was one of those nights that for a goaltender, you give up goals, you're not used to giving up those goals. Like a starting pitcher, you give up some runs, you have to keep your team in there.

His maturity was the fact he didn't get down on himself. Kept himself square and kept himself in the game mentally and gave us a chance to get back in, which he did.

**Q. Looking at the score sheet, your three goals are scored by your senior leadership.**

COACH EAVES: We've talked many times that we as a coaching staff will go in and we'll say things. We'll carry a message. But we leave the room, we need those young men to carry on with what was said and to do it on the bench, and they did that. They've done that all year. Through good times, bad times, they're able to give each other feedback and do it in a good way. It's helped us grow into the team that we are now.

**Q. A lot of success in this building. What is your main takeaway from this first Big Ten Tournament?**

COACH EAVES: I think I mentioned it earlier, I think the lessons from this game in terms of being mature, getting through some adverse situations, handling that. As we said, the games get tougher and tougher. The difference between each team now is so little. I don't know who we're going to play next week, but it's going to be one heck of a game just like we saw tonight probably.

**Q. When you hear Mark's [Zengerle] response to the idea that they haven't maxed out on what that line can do, I would think that makes you feel good?**

COACH EAVES: You certainly don't want to put a ceiling on them. If they feel they can keep going, what they've done is pretty good. The fact that they feel like that, it's pleasing as a coaching staff to hear what he said about playing well with and without the puck.

They're understanding that when they play well without the puck, they've got the puck back. Mark would not have said that even two years ago. But he gets it now, his whole line understands that. It's not surprising to see that tonight.

**Q. Last night Don [Lucia] said knowing there was another game to be played next week for his team, it was a last learning experience opportunity. Same situation for you guys. What does it do for these guys to actually live being in a playoff game and being able to battle back from those deficits?**

COACH EAVES: It prepares us for the next level. Prepares us for less oxygen in the air as we climb this mountain.

We can talk about it, but the fact they lived through it and handled it, you can't replace that with anything.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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