

Providence Head Coach Bob Deraney

WHEA Media Conference Call 9/20/11

On Team Expectations:

I don't think I've been this excited about a team in a very long time. Our kids have worked extremely hard in the offseason and have come back prepared to maybe take our team to places it hasn't been in a long time. Our program is built on a tradition of success and we haven't had the type of success we've been accustomed to over the last few years. This is a group I think can get us back to the places we feel we need to be every year.

On 10th Anniversary of the League...

First of all, it's been a privilege to be in the league for the last ten years and personally being involved in the development of the league and the split from the ECAC to Hockey East and being in on those discussions. Obviously, the ECAC was a wonderful caretaker of women's ice hockey for a very long time and they had a lot to do with Hockey East getting off the ground. It's unbelievable that it's been ten years and I think it's been ten very successful years. When you talk about the growth of the league, we're very young. But the combination of having two Hockey East teams vie for the National Championship last year, obviously, says a lot about the league and how far we've come. The other thing, to, is the competitiveness of our league from top to bottom. I think we have eight terrific coaches who have done a wonderful job over the last few years, especially. All the coaches who have been involved in Hockey East have been instrumental in making, what I think, is one of the most balanced women's ice hockey leagues in the country.

On Genevieve Lacasse playing internationally...

What can I say about Genevieve? Four years ago, Team Canada knew a little about who she was but really didn't know much about her. Over her last three years here at Providence College, I think her play and the amount of minutes and the records she's broken at Providence College speak for themselves and the fact of what a tremendous athlete she's developed herself into. She deserves all the credit. Not only is she a terrific hockey player, she's also a tremendous person. When you have that combination... I usually say, everyone in this world has the opportunity to be great, but very few have the combination of great talent and great work ethic, and I think Genevieve epitomizes that. Whatever she does, she just doesn't want to be good at it, she wants to be great at it. Obviously, she is the backbone of our team. And she has changed the landscape of women's ice hockey, without question. She is the best puck-playing goaltender in the world. Not just in our league. She allows us to play a different style than if we didn't have a puck-playing goaltender back there. So not only has she impacted our team, she has changed the goaltending position much as Tom Barasso did in the mid-eighties and Ron Hextall did in the NHL. That's not lost on me. This young woman is not just having a tremendous impact on our team, but she's changing the game and the way the goaltending position is meant to be played.

On having seven seniors coming back...

We're kind of like a sandwich, in the fact we've got a big senior class, we've got a big freshman class, and two solid classes in the middle. I think we're about as well-balanced a team as we've had in a long-time. That's always been our forte. We've had marquee players, but even our marquee players really compliment the rest of our team. That's been the reason behind our success.

The senior leadership we have right now, and the skill level – that's why I'm so excited. The last team we had with this many seniors on it won a Hockey East Championship and went to the national tournament. Obviously, we're just focusing on tomorrow and getting ready to play McGill, but there's no question the expectations for this team are very high and deservedly so.

On returning to The BOG Ice Arena...

One of the things we have an obligation to do as college hockey programs is to promote our sport. If we don't promote our sport, who's going to? I think we need to be less provincial and get our game out there. Play anywhere, anytime. If people are interested in our game, we owe it to our sport to go out and play that game. Whether they want us to play at midnight, or whether they want us to play outdoors. Whatever it is to promote our game because our student athletes, the improvement they've made since 1998 when the US won the gold medal has been exponential. Problem is nobody knows about that. The only way to get them to know about that is to do what we're doing. Fortunately, we have a terrific partner in Dave Flint who agreed to go back there again because, without question, it was a terrific environment for our student-athletes to play in. They were very excited to play in it. I think Dave will tell you, our players and his players unanimously wanted to play that game again. And that also excites me about the Hockey East Championship going down to Hyannis. Kudos to our coaches who understand the need to promote this game. What a wonderful way to promote the game by taking our championship to Hyannis and a terrific women's hockey community.

On strength and weaknesses of the team going into the year and what you look to gain from the first few non-conference games....

Every time you come in you want to see what your assets are and that's what training camp is all about. See what kind of talent you have, see how improved your players are from one year to the next. And then based on that, come up with some sort of game-plan on which to allow our kids to be at their best and continue to work on the things we need to improve on. Obviously, I think we're going to be very strong in the cage. I think we're going to be very young on defense, but I think we're going to be very skilled at the forward position. That's the way I assess our team right now. We've got a couple of freshmen who have really come in and caught our eye early, especially at the defense position. If they can come in and fill the holes that we think they can over the course of the season, than I really like our chances of being able to get back to the playoffs, and hey, all bets are off at the point. They are one-game series and anything can happen, as was proven last year.

On Players taking next step in their development...

I have to say, when our season came to an ending last year - it took a world class player to make a world class play to beat us. That was the worst thing that could have happened to us but also the best thing that could happen to us because all of our kids, to a person, even our incoming freshman, got the message about how bad it hurt. There are a lot of times when our season ends when I'm not too impressed with what happened, in fact I'm disappointed in our play. But that wasn't the case last year. When you're at that time of year and you don't beat yourself but, like I said, a world-class player in Kelli Stack makes a world-class play, it doesn't hurt as much, but it burns more. And I think our kids have taken that feeling and haven't forgotten what it was like. And they're going to use that to fuel their fire all year long. So when you ask me who's going to take a step forward, I expect every one of our kids to take a step forward – in their game, in their conditioning, and in their intelligence in the way we play the game. Hopefully, you won't see individual players but you'll see a team playing the game better than it's ever been played before. That's our goal.