

MERRIMACK HEAD COACH MARK DENNEHY QUOTES

On General Comments:

We currently lead the country in games decided by one goal or less and unfortunately we've been on the wrong side of that ledger more often than not. As a team, we're not getting frustrated. People ask me if I'm discouraged. To be honest, as tough as this year has been, I've had more fun this year than any other year. We have more players this year, and I can go in to Northeastern on a Friday night and know we have enough players to compete. If anything, we're not discouraged. Now is the time to work harder. We're bridged a large gap that was here when we got here.

On maintaining focus:

I am a subscriber to foundation for a better life website. And I get quotes from there daily to keep our guys' heads in the right place. As frustrated as they are, they get to go out and hit somebody. I have to rely on lack of sleep and too much coffee. I give our seniors credit. Guys like Rob Ricci and Mickey Rego. It would be very easy to get beaten up in the three and a half years they've been here and the losses they've accumulated. There haven't been many games this year where we haven't had a chance to compete at the end. And the guys truly believe that. It shows itself every weekend. They know it's there, and that's what keeps them going. A couple years ago, we scored 37 goals in 34 games. We're close and the guys know that.

Catalyst for Accomplishments this season:

Rob Ricci:

I want to be careful. We're headed in the right direction, but no one is happy with where we currently sit. But if I had to look at the catalyst for improvement, I can't go any further than Rob Ricci. From day one when I got here it was obvious, he was someone who could play on any team in the country. To comeback last year after sitting out a season and lead our team in scoring and to start this season with an injury and handle the adversity and to lead by example, there's not too many teams in the conference who don't prepare for him. And he does a great job of working with our younger players.

On the Younger Players:

Halfway through my fourth year here and this freshman class is the best class we've had here. Karl Stollery is as good as any freshmen defenseman in Hockey East, which automatically puts him among the best freshmen defensemen in the country. Jesse Todd has had a good second half playing with Ricci and he isn't foreign to playing with good players in big games. Chris Barton has avoided the sophomore slump. We've asked a lot of him and of our younger players and they've delivered. We miss Joe Loprieno's leadership especially in our own rink. He's not a fun guy to play against. There's no doubt we're excited with where we're going. Hopefully we can keep these guys around for four years. I think we've stabilized the program. We have a core group of players. Now it's a matter of sprinkling in some superstars as we move forward.