

HOCKEY EAST COACHES MEDIA TELECONFERENCE (DEC. 1, 2009)

MAINE HEAD COACH TIM WHITEHEAD QUOTES

Talk about the season to this point:

We got off to a slow start in October, but we are making a lot of improvement and chipping away at the win column. Most importantly, we have improved our team defense and as a result, we're feeling better about our team. We have a long way to go to sustain it, but we're making progress.

Talk about your team offense:

From an offensive perspective, our coaching staff knew that we would be better this year because we saw our players in practice each day last year. We had a taste of that offense in the Hockey East playoffs last year, and that gave our returning players a lot of confidence that we could play with anyone. As a result, we have kind of picked up where we left off there and have worked hard to keep improving. We have more improvement to go, but we have been much more consistent offensively this year.

How important are your captains Tanner House and Jeff Dimmen:

Our captains have been great. We don't have a lot of upperclassmen, so it is essential that all our juniors and seniors lead by example. They have been doing that, and I am really proud of our juniors and seniors. House and Dimmen have done a tremendous job leading the way and really reestablishing the culture that has made us successful here at Maine. We've been able to get that back on track last spring and in the summer and it has carried over this fall. Those two captains have been the biggest reason for our improvement and focus on and off the ice and getting our culture back to where it needs to be to prepare to win. Our upperclassmen came back in great shape this year. They are a very coachable group, and our coaches are really enjoying working with this year's team.

Thoughts on Gustav Nyquist:

Gustav has done a great job along with his fellow sophomores Brian Flynn, Spencer Abbott, Will O'Neill and Ryan Hegarty. What Gustav and the others have done is that they really dedicated themselves in the spring and summer to adding muscle to their frame as younger players, and it has really paid off. You can see that in Gustav. He is much stronger on the puck and he is able to win a lot of one-on-one battles. He was already a fierce competitor, but that extra strength has helped him immensely. It has given him a little more speed and strength and confidence in those areas. I am really excited for Gustav and those other sophomores as well.