

# Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday March 1, 2020

**Stacie Terry-Hutson**

**Monique Terry**

**Kennedi Villa**

**Sophia Ramos**

**Taylor Kalmer**

**San Diego State Aztecs**

Utah State - 81, San Diego State - 79 (OT)

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with San Diego State University.

COACH TERRY-HUTSON: Well, this one really hurt. I thought both teams played extremely hard, obviously wanting to get the victory to survive and advance. It was a back and forth game, a good college basketball game. And I thought our kids showed a lot of grit, getting ourselves into a position to get back into the game when they went on that run and to get us to a position to win. So a lot of big shots made by both teams.

And this hurts. Obviously our expectation was to come in here and compete for a conference championship. I thought we were very confident. I know we were very confident because we had played so many close games and played our conference opponents so close. We've talked how wide open this race is this year. I think the Mountain West has stepped up the level of competition, and I think it's going to be an exciting tournament.

But I just am proud of these kids and I thought they played hard.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. I know it's a little bit of seeing the forest through the trees for the moment, but how do you guys reflect on this season and what you've accomplished this year?**

SOPHIA RAMOS: This season was definitely something special, and I'm so happy to be part of it. The coaching staff really put a lot of trust and had high hopes for us. And I think we lived up to a lot of the hype



of San Diego State women's basketball.

We have great leaders from our seniors. Taylor came in and shocked the conference. I think she might have gotten robbed a little bit for sure. Monique came in, did big things for us. And everyone just played their role.

This season was something huge for us, I can't wait to come back next year with a great coaching staff and great team and go ahead and upset some others this time next year.

COACH TERRY-HUTSON: When we look back on this season it's going to be -- the word we keep using is "growth". Our seniors have really pushed the needle and changed the culture of this program. We have leadership in our locker room. Our young people have also stepped up in so many different ways. We've done a lot of good things for the program this year. And I know sometimes it's not always reflected in our record, but this felt good. This felt good, obviously this year.

We've had some adversity with some of our players going down. And we've had opportunities for others to step up. And it played out like it should.

I'm so proud of Monique and what she was able to do. She filled a big void for us this year. Sophia and Taylor were consistent all season, being the go-to guards.

We had two kids, obviously, on the all-conference team, so we're very proud of that. And I thought Kennedi has accepted her role and was huge for us today. Had some great defensive possessions and actually scored the ball for us, which is always just gravy on top of it. But she did -- we got a lot still coming back in this locker room. And they're going to be hungry and ready to compete next season. But we're going to miss our seniors because they definitely helped push the needle.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned how coming into this game a big part of what you guys wanted to do was get production from the bench. You got 21 points and a big spark from Kennedi. And large part of that, she had a new career high in points and rebounds and also tied her career high in steals. Could you just talk about the contributions that you got from your bench today?**

COACH TERRY-HUTSON: I think it goes back to what we were talking about, our culture. These kids have bought into what we're trying to sell. And Kennedy Villa, whose role has just changed -- she's just one of the pieces to this puzzle, they never complained. They always just put their head down and work. And it's nice to see some of their hard work pay off.

I mean, these are great kids. I love this team. They're good people. So this is so much bigger than basketball for us. It's being able to be part of something, and sometimes you don't always get rewarded like some of our stand-out guards do. But like Monique and Isabela and Kennedy Villa and some kids off the bench who continued to work and filled roles for us, it just shows what this program is about.

**Q. The start to this game was kind of shaky one for both teams. Was that just a good defensive matchup that we saw, or was it a mix of a little bit of nerves or --**

SOPHIA RAMOS: I think it might have been a little bit of nerves for both teams. We had the late game so we're staying in the hotel kind of bunched up all day kind of anxious and ready to play.

I think it was just nerves for sure. Just looks like it hurt us a little more at the beginning than it hurt them. Like Coach said, we put ourselves into a position to succeed and win. Just one basket better.

**Q. In the second half you guys really made a push and you guys were able to outscore them in the third and fourth quarter. What can you say about the fight that this team just has where you guys were down by as much as 15 and forcing it to overtime and being in another one of those close games?**

MONIQUE TERRY: I think it was just defensive mistakes on our part. I feel like we knew what it took to win, but we just were making defensive mistakes that we knew we could have done better at. I just feel like we just made too many mistakes at this time.

TAYLOR KALMER: We know how to fight. We've been in that position quite a bit of times in overtime. We've been there. We've done that. Sometimes it just turns the other way and unfortunately that's happened to us quite a few times. But we always knew how to fight and we kept pushing game after game, practice after practice. And that showed in the second half.

**Q. Coach has talked about how each of you have contributed in a certain way, a type of leadership to the locker room. Is there anything that you guys had said initially when you went to the locker room to kind of motivate your teammates to keep their**

**heads up and stay positive?**

TAYLOR KALMER: Naomi told Mo and Baylee to keep their heads up. And there's a lot of love in that locker room and a lot of support from the coaching staff and from the rest of the team, knowing that a lot of these younger girls have more opportunities coming and to just take what they've learned from us and to keep that going and to keep the culture strong because right now it's at a great spot.

MONIQUE TERRY: I don't really think anything had to be said after this game for everyone else to know what to do next time. I feel like we felt this one hard. So I feel like next year they're going to ball everything up and just take it next year and run with it and run with it hard.

I'm not going to be surprised with everyone coming back and the coaching staff coming back, I'm not going to be surprised if we surprise everybody.

SOPHIA RAMOS: I think we had some great leadership this year. A lot of what helped us and a lot that helped me was when I got down on myself, Taylor and Te'a were the first ones to come over grab my hand, look me in the eye and say, you're good -- positive attitude. That's all you can ask for from great teammates like them.

From the top-down, the coaching staff, they're everything. This is a staff I will go to war for and I know they have my back and I'm excited for next year with them. We have some great leadership. It's going to be a good year next year. I'm really sad to see our seniors go, and I hate to see it go out like this. But they were great. They were great to be a part of. I'm tremendously happy to have had them by my side.

COACH TERRY-HUTSON: We haven't talked at all about Utah State. I just want to say this. I thought they played a great game. Made big shots after big shots. Coach did a good job putting them in a position to win. And like I said, I just can't speak enough about the coaches is in this league. So many close games. So many upsets.

It was just -- just stinks to be on this side of it, but I thought they played a really good game. And Bassett was just one basket better than us tonight.

**Q. Coach, you told me that coming into this one that the one thing to watch out for in Utah State was their 3-point shooting. And they were -- they made 11 on the night. Could you talk about what was difficult, I guess, to sort of match up against their shooting from deep?**

COACH TERRY-HUTSON: Right. I didn't think we did a good job taking away the 3-point line tonight. Our

defense wasn't what it needed to be and hasn't been of late. We've done a good job -- I think we're first or second in the conference in 3-point field goal percentage. And that obviously didn't show up tonight.

We did some uncharacteristic things tonight. And when we go back and watch this they'll see we just made too many errors to come out on top.

We didn't do a good job there. And I thought those uncharacteristic plays really put us behind the 8-ball and we were playing catch-up the entire time. We did a good job getting ourselves back into the game, I thought. But sometimes it's just challenging.

I thought we should have had a better game plan and executed defensively a little better in the first half. Tonight our offense was pretty good. Anytime you could score 79 points you put yourself in a position to win -- but you just can't give up 81, not in this league, and expect to win.

**Q. You guys had another positive trend to sort of end a regular season on a good note, on winning the rebound margin. And tonight you guys had 49 rebounds, being able to get 16 offensively. Could you talk about what you guys did collectively to put yourselves in position to just box out and grab those boards?**

TAYLOR KALMER: It's been an emphasis this whole season, especially with teams who crash a little bit more and their guards crash. So I mean that's something that we worked on quite a bit. And made sure that we had that nailed down.

KENNEDI VILLA: Like TK said, rebounding has been an emphasis this whole season. We watch a lot of film on rebounding, and when we see ourselves not rebounding it's pretty embarrassing. So I think we tried to be more mindful and (indiscernible) a couple girls on there that got a lot of rebounds. So I think that was an area we tried to focus on a lot more today.