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San Diego State Men's Basketball Press Conference Quotes

Fowler Athletics Center | San Diego, Calif.

March 9, 2020

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"No on-floor activities today. Then we'll start getting ready tomorrow for the NCAA Tournament, which is the greatest time of the year. The first couple days will be self-study; try to get the Aztecs better over the next two or three days, and then come Sunday we'll learn who our opponent is, and we'll start preparing for them. I like the fact we get a little rest right now. We'll rejuvenate, get our legs freshened up, correct the things we need to correct, from an execution standpoint at both ends of the floor, maybe put something new in and get ready for the best time of the year."

On if the team is any different now from when it had an undefeated record:

"I don't think so. We lost two games by a total of six points, and we had shots in both to tie or win the game. We've got a good basketball team. I'm hoping these close games have us more prepared for March. How would we be served if we won every game by 12 or 14 points, and then the first NCAA Tournament game we either have to come from behind like against Boise State, where came back from 16 down? Against Utah State, we had the lead and lost it, then built it back up. Those are all moments that you learn from. We've had every possible scenario to prepare us for March."

On importance of matchups at the NCAA Tournament:

"Matchups are everything. It doesn't matter where you play. Obviously, if we could be the number one seed on the West Coast that would be the dream, but it's who you play. Some teams you're more suited to play against than others, that's just basketball. I'll always say about the NCAA Tournament, you could start it all over, with the exact same matchups, and there'll be a different champion. There are that many close games and everything has to go right to win the whole thing. It's one and done and that's the best part of the NCAA Tournament."

On Nathan Mensah's injury progress:

"I'm holding out hope that he can play come March 20. He had a doctor's appointment today and has another one tomorrow, so he's in the medical protocol to check all the things and make sure that he gets cleared. Whether that happens or not, I'm not sure. I don't have control over that, but I'm holding out hope that when we take the floor in our first NCAA Tournament game, Nathan will be in uniform and playing. We'll throw him out there and see what he's capable of doing. I know one thing, we don't have anybody else on the team with a seven-foot-four wingspan, so if he just comes out and puts his arms up, that may be enough."

On Matt Mitchell's contribution to games against Utah State:

"The first two games against Utah State, we don't beat him without Matt playing at an elite level. He basically was the deciding factor and they knew that. So, in the third game, they just made things tougher on him. Matt has the shots Matt has and they just didn't fall this game. He plays the way I want him to play. He's aggressive, he attacks the basket, he takes open shots, and unfortunately not enough fell in that game."

San Diego State Junior Guard Malachi Flynn

On playing three games in three days and then getting two weeks off:

"It's nice to get a little rest. I think we're all a little beat up from the three games, whether it's little sprains or just little things here and there. It will be nice to have that week and a half off before we've got to hit the road again."

On final shot:

"I think all of the guys practice that, playing around at practice, throwing up shots from (half court) not knowing whenever you'll need it in a game. It's definitely something that everybody on the team shoots. We do it at shoot around, shooting half court shots and stuff like that. It looked good, but it's so far that just an inch offline and it doesn't go in. You've got to wait until it happens."

On his first Selection Sunday as a competitor:

"It's exciting to be at this level, to finally be on the March Madness stage. It's something I'm looking forward to and I'm getting ready to play. I knew (the Aztecs had) been here year in and year out in the past. Coming here, this is what I wanted to do and we're here now."

On what Nathan Mensah brings to the team:

"I don't think we have anything like Nate. Nothing against our other guys, he's just a presence down low on offense and defense. We've definitely missed him. I don't think it's going to hurt our chemistry at all. I think we're all ready for him to be back on the court if he's ready."

On second to last shot against Utah State:

"We ran a little play to get a switch. We agreed in the timeout to go right away to go get a bucket. (The defender) gave me a look and I took it. I've practiced that shot many times. I don't think it was the shot (selection) necessarily, it just didn't fall that day. The play was to get a switch and get to work."

San Diego State Junior Forward Matt Mitchell

On what Nathan Mensah brings to the team:

"Nathan brings a presence on the defensive end like no other and seemingly every time we throw it up on the offensive end, he's finishing with a dunk. He really brings that inside presence for us. Yannik has done a great job while he's been gone but having Nate down there and Yannik together will serve us greatly."

On if he's recovered from Saturday's loss:

"It's a new week. New day. You've got to look past it. You've got to move on. The next day has passed. I'm sure we'll go back to look at the film and look at what we can do better and see where we can get better and we will. As far as the game and emotionally, mentally, I'm past it. We're moving on. Now, it's one and done and we're moving on to the tournament, so we've got to focus on that."

On potentially playing in Madison Square Garden:

"I think it'd be fun. I've never played there before. It was my first time playing in STAPLES Center earlier this season. I think it'd be a good experience to get that and play in Madison Square Garden and live out my dream as a child of playing in NBA arenas."

On playing in an empty arena due to the recent health scare:

"I think it'd be weird. If I were to play in an empty arena, I'd rather play in the JAM Center. I think fans and spectators are important to the game of basketball. I think they're what make it fun and exciting, other than the players. Our fanbase, including The Show, has become a big part of San Diego State and who we are. I'd hate for it to come to where they wouldn't be able to come see us."