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Nevada at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 65, Nevada 60

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif.

Jan. 7, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"I have said it before but winning a college basketball game is tough. This was a hard-fought game today. I put that on the board that we had to have a measure of mental toughness and physical toughness. And I thought we did. Because when things [were not] going great, they are out making a run, we are fumbling the ball [and] we can not get a basket. To be able to hang in there, and Jordan (Schakel) make a big three down the stretch and then get the stops we got the game on the line, says a lot about the character of this team even when things are not going great. We have an ability to hang in there long enough and make timely plays to win the game. A stat that I was really pleased with is that we were 19-for-22 from the foul line in a really close game and we needed every one of those. So I am proud of the way we stepped up and made free throws during the game and down the stretch."

On the effect of playing three games in six days:

"Yeah, we are tired, there is no question we are tired. And this was three games in six days, [so] we should be tired. And now we will play four in eight days. So tomorrow, I am leaning not to put them on the floor at all. We will watch some tape and save legs. This was a tough game, especially the way we play. We guard so hard that we are on defense usually a long time because we are hard to score on. So, these guys are playing tough physical defense for 30 seconds every possession. I am so proud of how tough they were to hang in there, even with tired legs and to gut out a win against a good Nevada team, an 8-3 Nevada team. So, we are proud of our effort, and we are going to have to have another great effort to play this Nevada team again in two days."

On Nathan Mensah getting into a rhythm offensively:

"They (Nevada) had a game plan where they were going to help on the low post. They were going to stay extended on shooters and it was a good game plan, so we had to score inside. Nathan was one-on-one inside; he was able to score some timely baskets down the stretch. We were helping off-ball screens with Nathan most of the game. And then in the last two minutes and 30 seconds, we switch ball screens with Nathan, and he had a play one-on-one with a point guard (Sherfield), the leading scorer in the game. I thought he did a magnificent job playing one-on-one with the game on the line."

On whether this game was reminiscent of games against New Mexico when Steve Alford coached there:

"Oh yeah, [it felt like those] hard-fought games. I mean, for years the two best teams in the Mountain West were New Mexico and San Diego State. We would fight for titles every year, and Steve (Alford) knows how to coach in this league. His teams play hard, they are disciplined, and they play good basketball. So we are very fortunate to win tonight. Glad we were on our home floor and we will have to play well again in two days to come out on top."

On the ability of Nathan Mensah to play defense on an elite point guard:

"It is big time. We do not fear putting Nathan on anybody. The very second play of the game, Sherfield drove and got the flagrant one (foul), where he kind of cleared with the elbow and Nathan did a good job on that one. So he is hard to guard. This is a very good guard and so for Nathan to have the ability — and Josh (Tomaic) too. You know, we asked Josh to do the same thing, to just switch on to a point guard and keep them in front. Then have the rest of the team to play help defense to try to act like they are in two places at once. Our defense won the game for us down the stretch."

On not taking charges in practice:

"We don't take charges in practice because I don't want guys falling into each other. You know, taking charge and then falling into Nate's (Nathan Mensah's) legs or falling into Matt's (Mitchell's) legs. It is just something we do on game day. So, it is a tremendous credit to these guys to not take them in practice. But when we get to a game, be willing to step up and take a charge and that is everybody on the team is willing to take, take the charge on the defensive end."

San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

On if he believed the charge he took in the second half would be painful and if he believes it is a "veteran move" to be able to make the right plays to draw a charge:

"I don't think anybody is guessing that it is going to be that painful coming down. I saw [Grant] Sherfield getting downhill and I know some [players] carry into their floater and [then] they fall forward so I thought if I could slide in there and take a charge, we would get it going the other way. So, I was able to step in there and get one (a charge). It is a very tough play [to make] but just being here (at San Diego State) over time, we do not really [plan to] take charges in the game and it is more about the feel [of the game]. We do not take charges in practice, so it is more feeling the game. Guys like me, AG (Aguiek Arop) and Adam (Seiko), Jordan (Schakel), all these guys take them (charges in game), [and] all these guys have the right mindset. [To get better] it is just about the about practice, repetitions and just trying to get it down, trying to get that feel for it."

On what changed in his play throughout the second half:

"Aggression. That is what did it for me. In the first half, we were running a couple plays for me to get downhill and double-dutched the ball, thinking the big is going to come over [to guard me] because he had blocked it the first time [I shot]. [In the second half] I changed my mindset and just said I was going to go through them whether they were there or not. And so, kudos to my aggression."

On moving up on SDSU's all-time scoring list:

"It is a blessing. I am grateful to be able to be here four years, to be able to put the ball in the basket. I am just trying to get wins, where I am on the scoring list (SDSU's all-time best scorers), it will be where it is. I know I can put the ball in the basket. I am not worried about trying to be in the top 10 or top five all-time, I am just trying to get wins and trying to win a national championship."

San Diego State Senior Forward Nathan Mensah

On his ability to get shots off inside early in the shot clock tonight and if it gives him confidence:

"It does give me confidence, it gives me confidence [and trust] from my teammates to trust me to make the best play. When I get the ball in the first few minutes, it helps me in a positive manner as well. I could not have done it without my coaches and teammates."

Nevada Head Coach Steve Alford

Opening Statement:

"I am really proud of our effort. I thought we really competed. We had a great run at the end and then about the last minute and a half, (San Diego State senior guard Jordan) Schakel, who we did a really good job on all day, got away from us for a big three that hurt at that time. You know, we had more field goal attempts, we get more field goals made and only turned the ball over nine times against their pressure defense. We

gave ourselves a chance. We just got beat at the free throw line and that is kind of our Achilles heel. We did what we wanted to do defensively, we just fouled too much and the difference in the game was at the line.”

On being able to play San Diego State again in two days:

“Well, I would rather play them in three weeks in Lawlor (Events Center). But I do not get that choice. I have got to come back here. It is just the way this year is. So, if you are asking me to play them in 48 hours in Viejas (Arena) or in three weeks in Lawlor, I’ll take (Lawlor). Hopefully, we can get some rest and can make some minor adjustments. We like the game plan and the guys executed and from a coaching standpoint, that is all I can ask.

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