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San Diego State-Wyoming Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 69, Wyoming 66

Thomas & Mack Center | Las Vegas, Nev.

March 11, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"First of all, I want to credit Coach (Jeff) Linder and the Wyoming Cowboys. To play with less than a 24-hour turnaround and have a game plan set against us that gave us issues, slowed the paced of the game down and would not let us fast break, they ran the shot clock and then attacked us off a high-ball screen or an isolation play—they did a great job. With that being said, I like the toughness, mentally and physically, of my team. [I am proud] that we made timely plays down the stretch and found a way to advance in the Mountain West tournament today. I could not be prouder of this group and I can not wait to play again tomorrow."

On the dramatic shift in today's game's play versus previous matchups with Wyoming:

"I think it was a credit to them, they said they did not feel like they could play with us in an up-tempo game. The key to basketball is winning, not playing where it is fun all the time. I know they (Wyoming) are not a slow-down team, but they thought slowing the game down gave them the best chance to win and it did. They played us right to the very end and we were lucky to make timely plays to escape with a win today."

On Matt Mitchell's difficulty scoring throughout the game:

"That is what I love about Matt—[even though] he was not scoring, he did not get frustrated and start taking bad shots. Sometimes guys press their games. Matt said it all along, his most important thing is winning games, so even though he scored not up to his average today, he can go for 20 or 30 (tomorrow) and that is the beauty of our team and basketball. It does not have to be one guy every night, we have a lot of pieces, and Terrell (Gomez) was the guy tonight. Trey Pulliam really carried the load [as well]."

On what his team needs to do to get a better seed than currently projected in the tournament:

"We have to win games. Then, they (the selection committee) will have to sit in that room and try to say that a team that has won 11-12 straight teams is worthy of a higher seed. If we win again tomorrow, we keep adding to that number. Hopefully winning means something in March and if we continue to win, our seed will get higher."

On Trey Pulliam's play today:

"They (Wyoming) made a decision that they were going to go under and not guard Trey (Pulliam) or Lamont (Butler) on ball screens and I think both men made them pay. I did not think either of them were afraid of the moment, and I think both of them stepped up and made timely shots. Lamont hit a couple of threes when they would not guard him tight, and Trey attacked to the basket and scored at a high level. At some level, you can say it (Wyoming's) was a decent game plan, but on another level you can say both guys (Trey and Lamont) had productive games."

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On Wyoming's offensive game plan:

"We were shocked by it (their game plan), or at least I was. A team that scored 111 points a game before and raced up and down the court against any team they played all year, they thought the best chance they had to win was to slow it down, and that is a credit to Coach Linder. His team believes in him and believes in the game plans he sets, and they went out there and executed it."

On the frustration levels on his bench today:

"For me, there was none. If you watch enough basketball games, sometimes as much as you want it to go one way, the other team has a lot to do with how the game goes. So they decided to slow down the game and at that point you are left with a dilemma, are you going to start scrambling and trapping all over the floor and play a way we have not played all year? So we mixed in some pressure to try and speed them up a little bit, but if you looked at the game, it was a one-possession game the whole game. I was comfortable that we had enough players and plays down the stretch that we could win a low possession game."

On if he was worried his team would get disheartened by Wyoming's last-minute shot clock successes:

"This is a veteran team. Veterans do not get out of place and disjointed like young teams do. I have got senior and juniors that are playing at a high level. They have seen every game imaginable and played in games like this, so as long as they believe in themselves, they believe in the coaching staff, we find a way to make timely plays and win these games. 51-6 over the last two years is remarkable and a lot of that has to do with our mental toughness."

On having veteran players to make tough shots when they count:

"Look at the last three or four games that we have had. A one possession game against Boise State, a low possession game here, and Matt (Mitchell) makes every free throw he gets. He has got ice water in his veins and he knows how to close a game out. If we put the ball in his hands at the end of the game and they foul him, it is a pretty good chance that he will make those free throws."

On if other team's surprising game plans helped prepare the team for a game like today:

"When you are playing well like we have been over the past two years and you are ranked, you are going to see everyone's best effort. I always tell the team 'whatever team you see on tape leading into the game is not going to be the team we are playing. They are going to play with extra motivation, they are going to play harder, and they are going to do whatever it takes to win and they are going to adjust the game plan to try and win the game.' That is what you saw tonight. Wyoming had a great game plan, they played extremely hard and they pushed it to the very end. But to the credit of our team, we make timely plays when timely plays are required. We are not afraid of the moment, we make big shots, we make big free throws with the game on the line, and we get the stops we needed with under a minute to go to come out of here with a victory."

On Aguek Arop and his likelihood to play moving forward:

"He had a great week of practice, but this was a game we did not get him in. There was a spot in the second half where it was either going to be Keshad (Johnson) back in or AG (Aguek Arop) and we debated but we thought Keshad had a little bit of rhythm from the first half. Moving forward, my intention is to get AG important minutes and hopefully he will be ready when his number is called. If he would have missed a couple practices, I would have been concerned (about his readiness to play). But he was in our Saturday full speed shootaround and then he went three full days of practice where we went against each other hard and he looked really good. I wish I would have gotten him a minute or two tonight, it was not the pace of the game where we could do that but moving forward, he could be the first guy off the bench tomorrow. That is how much I value AG and the contribution he is making."

San Diego State Senior Guard Terrell Gomez**On his breakout offensive play and both him and the team's philosophy in the postseason:**

"It is about time. I was just looking at really producing—it is March now, that is what I came here for, and I have to make the most of it. We have a team full of seniors, and we all talk amongst ourselves—it's like Coach says, 'player-led teams go far'. We all talked amongst ourselves and expressed our goals, and mine was to leave it all out on the floor and really win as much as I can for the rest of the year. We are getting better, and I think most teams around this time are going downhill, but I think we are getting better."

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On if Wyoming's change in game plan from their first MW Tournament game surprised the San Diego State team:

"We expected to have our track shoes on for this game. They scored 111 points last game, and last time we played them, they shot a lot of threes. One thing that really stuck with me that Coach (Dutcher) says is 'when you let a team make threes on you, you give them a chance [to win], so guard the three-point line.' I knew it would be a game today, but I did not expect the game to be this slow, I expected us to have our track shoes on, but it went a lot slower. The game plan worked for them a little bit, but I think it is good practice for us if we run into a team in the NCAA tournament that likes to hold the ball, throw it inside and stall time.

"I was impressed that the group of a couple of freshman they had were able to adjust their game from scoring that many points and then coming in [the next day] with a whole other game plan. That is tough to do, especially as a younger team. It really caught us off guard—the first two plays we came down the court on defense, we had to realize what they were doing. Dave (Velaquez) kind of sniffed it out and said 'they are trying to stall time, they are stalling' so we made some adjustments at half time which I feel like worked. I think (in the second half) we got them to speed up a bit more."

On the success Wyoming's guards had in the midrange game and if San Diego State planned to allow them or if it came a reaction to Wyoming's adjustments:

"This is a veteran team and we had to make an adjustment today because they (Wyoming) made an adjustment. They hit us with something we did not expect, playing that slow, we did not expect that at all. The mid-range game did work, but the way we guard, that is fine with us. We do not want to give up open threes or straight-line drives to the basket."

On his team's offensive struggle:

"I saw things were getting stagnant, and I saw how they (Wyoming) were guarding our other guards as well. When Coach (Dutcher) said I needed to play the one, I knew I had to be myself, be very aggressive, draw two defenders if I must and pass to the other guy, or just create for myself. I felt like I needed to step up, I am a senior, and I wanted to produce to help my team win."

On why he came to San Diego State and what the team talks about on its own:

"Throughout my career, I have had success scoring the ball. I came here to win and produce. I really want to win, first and foremost, and win with my brothers, and that is what we talk about on our own (as a team). We do not just talk about it (wanting to win) with Coach (Dutcher), we talk about things on our own—I came here to win, and that is the goal."

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