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San Diego State-Nevada Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 77, Nevada 70

Thomas & Mack Center | Las Vegas, Nev.

March 12, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"I could not be more pleased with the way we played today, [for] playing back-to-back games and for the energy we came out with against a very good Nevada team. Steve Alford does a great job and his team was well prepared. They (Nevada) play hard and they are hard to guard, but we found a way to make enough timely plays to get a win and get back to the championship game in the Mountain West. We are excited for that opportunity, and whoever we play, Colorado State or Utah State, we know they are both very good teams, very well coached teams, and we will have our hands full tomorrow afternoon."

On getting his transition offense going again after last night's game:

"It was really important (to get the transition offense going), especially for Jordan (Schakel) [because] it was the only time they really lost him. We got really open looks because he got out on the break where they could not locate him and we found him on the break to make a couple of really big threes in the first half. Same with (finding) Terrell (Gomez) (on the fast-break offensive possessions), and Adam (Seiko) had a fast break three. The more points you can score with the floor broken, the better your chances are of winning. Our fast break points were really important especially in the first half."

On adjustments the team made at halftime to have more success on defense:

"We just kept trying to switch [because] we wanted a body in front of (Grant) Sheffield and (Desmond) Cambridge (Jr.), we wanted to let someone else beat us besides those two. Our posts have good feet so they move their feet [and while] they (Nevada) still got downhill some, they were not hitting threes behind ball screens or creating space off ball screens and getting downhill. I thought, for the most part, we were able to keep a body in front of the (Nevada) body."

On defensive shifts in the second half to keep Nevada's big men from scoring inside:

"We just fronted and gave a little better backside help. It is like anything, the more they run something, the more you recognize it, the more you get comfortable guarding it. Our help defense was able to sagging a little more and give that guard assistance running the post."

On his trust level in freshman Lamont Butler:

"I trust everybody I put on the floor and we are 10 deep. Hopefully, that will pay dividends for us tomorrow [because] when you play three games in three days, it's always tough, and this is the only time we'll have to do that. [In the] NCAA tournament [there is a] day in between games, so this will be the ultimate challenge (playing a third game in the same number of days) and playing all these guys and sharing minutes will hopefully give us fresh legs where we can be competitive tomorrow."

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On his thoughts on Aguek Arop's technical foul in the second half:

"They (the refs) told me he pushed someone in the chest and deserved it. I have not seen it (the play) yet. Officiating basketball is a hard job, and one bench is happy, and the other bench isn't happy and that is every call. Every call can be argued, and is argued, and most of the time when you go back and look, the refs are correct on about 95% of those calls. We have got great officials in this league and I have not seen the foul on Aguek to know either way."

On how he plans to get Nathan Mensah playing at his best after a difficult game tonight:

"It is tough. I think he had his second foul three minutes into the game and so when you sit the whole first half, you have no chance to get in the rhythm of the game. Basketball is a rhythm game. So then he came in and got another foul so he could not get into rhythm. But, that does not mean we do not have confidence in Nate, or that we won't go to him the next game during important times of the game and hopefully he will step up and answer."

On his comfort level playing in Thomas & Mack Center:

"I am more comfortable with my team than the building. If you bring good players in, I do not care where you get play, you are going to give yourself a chance to win. We have always had a lot of good players in this program that play the game the right way and put themselves in position to win good games. We have been very fortunate with the success we have had here at the Thomas and Mack, both against UNLV and then in the conference tournament."

On how tough it is for a player to come into the game after missing time and then play out of position as Aguek Arop did tonight:

"He had three really good days of practice leading into the first game and we did not get him in because that was a different kind of game. When Nate got in foul trouble and Josh got in foul trouble, it was nice to have AG (Aguek Arop) to step in. He can play multiple positions and he played the five today for extended minutes. I thought he was really effective and that bodes well for both he and the Aztecs as we move forward."

On the team's balanced offensive play as of late:

"Every night it is a different guy. Last night, Terrell (Gomez) at 20, tonight, Lamont (Butler) and Trey (Pulliam) got downhill on ball screens and caused havoc. It was good to see Matt (Mitchell) even though he missed some threes in the first half get his rhythm on the three-point shot — it makes us really dangerous when Matt's making threes. We have contributions from everybody and it can vary from game to game and we ride that hot hand when we find it."

On the team's recent trips to the conference tournament championship game and if he will look at past games to game plan:

"I think it is just depending on the opponent (to create our game plan). Last year, it was (Sam) Merrill against (Malachi) Flynn and Malachi missed a shot, Merrill made a shot, and Malachi missed a half-court shot. [It was the] two best players making plays down the stretch and I wish one of ours would have gone in, but tomorrow, it will be maybe the same two teams, maybe not, but it will be a different cast of characters, and we will see who steps up. It is March Madness and usually somebody steps up makes big plays in March, and hopefully that is an Aztec tomorrow."

On how he plans to get Nathan Mensah going offensively:

"Well, we have to get him out of foul trouble. In the first game, we were hitting him for lob dunks, and he was playing fantastic[lu]. Every game is not your game, depending on how the defense plays. Nathan had a few post touches (tonight) but he could not get the rhythm of the game [because] he got in early foul trouble. That is why we are so lucky to have the bench we do, [we can] come [at you] with Josh (Tomai), come at you with AG. We do not fall off when we go to the bench because we have a lot of good players in this program."

On currently coaching three players with 1,000+ points in their collegiate careers:

"That is a heck of a team to be coaching, isn't it, and they all shoot the ball, and they all play the right way. They are unselfish, and so you have three 1,000-point scorers and you do not see any of them play selfishly. They all play with each other and they play well together. That is a credit to them, and I am lucky to be coaching such good players."

San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

On how the San Diego State players overcame the game's officiating:

"Basketball is a game of difficulties and sometimes frustrations. You just have to play through those frustrations and no matter what the refs are calling, you [have] got to play through. The calls may go your way, they may not go your way, but no matter what you just got to play."

On Trey Pulliam and Lamont Butler's play tonight and how excited he is to have two point guards who play at a high level:

"It is amazing (to have both Trey and Lamont play at such a high level. I just do my best job and the team does their best job of trying to instill the utmost confidence in those guys, because we know they can go (play any night), we know they can put the ball in the basket, [and that] they can get stops on the defensive end. So, it was all about just trying to instill confidence in them [throughout the season]. It seems it is paying off."

On how the team kept its focus when Nevada would come back from 10-point deficits:

"[We] Just stay together as a team and we 'stick to the genius', stick to what we are doing on the offensive end and stick to what we are doing on the defensive end. [When they break into our lead] lock it in a little bit and try to tighten up what we are doing (in the game plan). I felt like we just stayed together through the course of the game."

On what propelled his post-halftime scoring run:

Well, the message at halftime was to stick to genius and stay together. I do not think we were doing anything wrong with the game plan [or] anything wrong on the court, [but] I felt like we could have tightened up a little bit in the first half. And so, in the second half we came out and tightened up. [In the second half] I came out and tried to be the aggressor and tried take attention off some of the other guys on the team and it paid off."

On regaining success in his three-point shot and the importance of the first one "falling in" during his second half run:

"It was very important (to see the ball go in). It felt good going in and I did not hit one in the last game, so I knew [this game] I kind of had to get myself going. When the defense is giving me the shot, I am going to take it, I am just that type of guy, I am that type of player."

On his team's defensive success against Nevada's top scorers:

"I felt like we did our job (defending Nevada) [and] we followed the game plan to a tee. Our job was to stay in front of the ball and not let them (Nevada) get downhill. We did a good job of staying in front of the ball and trying to contest all their shots but credit to those two guys (for the shots they made) because they are very tough shotmakers."

On how special his fourth consecutive conference championship game appearance in his four-year San Diego State career is:

"[It is] very special. I am happy to be a part of this conference tournament championship and a part of this conference, and [I am happy] to be able to be on a team like this and play for a program [like San Diego State], play for (Coach) Dutch(er) and a coaching staff that really believes in their guys. I think Coach says the best, 'we get better as the year goes on and as the year winds down, we find a way to win games consistently.'"

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