

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Creighton vs San Diego St.

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

**San Diego St. Aztecs  
Head Coach Brian Dutcher**

**Trey Pulliam**

**Matt Bradley**

Media Conference

Creighton - 72, San Diego State - 69

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Head Coach Brian Dutcher and student-athletes for San Diego State, Mr. Bradley and Mr. Pulliam.

We'll start with an opening statement for Coach Dutcher, then move to questions for Coach and the student-athletes.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just a really good college basketball game. Unfortunately, we ended up on the losing end of it. But that's March. It's the agony and ecstasy of March. And I thought we competed at a high level, put ourselves in a position to win. But to Creighton's credit, they closed the game and beat us.

So I couldn't be more proud of our team, how they prepared, how they fought. And it's just part of life. It's -- you're not always going to get what you want. But that doesn't mean you don't work for it, doesn't mean you don't want it, sometimes you just don't get it.

We wanted to win, so did Creighton. And they made more plays than we did down the stretch to get the victory.

So happy for our effort, proud of my team, proud of the seniors that played their last game at San Diego State. But congratulations to Creighton and good luck moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Questions here in Fort Worth?

**Q. Just for Trey and Matt, just can you take us through what happened the last few minutes of regulation**



there?

THE MODERATOR: Trey, you can start.

TREY PULLIAM: I think they just turned up the pressure on us. They just made plays when they needed to make plays. Yeah, they just made the plays that they needed to make, really. Took it into overtime and just kind of ran with it.

MATT BRADLEY: All I can really remember is, you know, it was a tied game. I don't know how many minutes left. I was at the free-throw line and I ended up missing the one-on-one and that sent us into overtime. Just wish I could have made those free-throws.

THE MODERATOR: Next question for the student-athletes or Coach Dutch?

**Q. Dutch, I think you guys were up nine with like 2:29 left in regulation. Was there any single moment in there that you thought really turned it and changed it down the stretch?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: You know, I don't know how many turnovers we had against the press. I think maybe one. You know, the one where three guys were on Lamont and we tried to call a time-out, I asked -- you know, I asked one of the officials, I said, What happened? There were three guys there. I thought he was fouled. He said, I didn't see anything.

So what can you do? They got a steal on that. I think we threw the ball away one time. But we made enough plays where we have to finish with a layup, we have to finish with a free-throw, we have to finish plays. And we didn't finish enough of them.

So that's college basketball. I watch these games every day, watching all these teams go against Press at the end, and as much as you can say, well, geez they should be able to solve the Press. Every game I watch, teams have trouble with the press down the stretch.

So we had trouble, but still, we broke it, we got down to the



floor, but we didn't finish at the other end. Once we broke it, we didn't get points out of those possessions a lot of times. Whether it was drive, miss a layup, miss a put-back, miss a free-throw, we had opportunities and we didn't close when we had those opportunities. And to their credit, they did.

**Q. Just to get some clarification on this: Chad was so hot in the first half. I think he had 12 points -- or 15 points in 12 minutes. He only played five minutes in the second half. Why was that?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just, he's got to become better defensively, you know? And we've got a lot of good players on this team. We got a deep bench. And so we had a six, seven, eight-point lead, back and forth most of that half, you know, fairly comfortable. And we felt we could close the game with good defense and good offense.

And, obviously, Chad had a magnificent stretch when he was there. But, obviously, we put the guys in the game we thought would win for us down the stretch, and we didn't make enough plays.

THE MODERATOR: More questions here in the room? Right-hand side again.

**Q. Coach, there's a lot of talk today about the Mountain West's struggles and it's been nine games in a row. Obviously, you're worried about your own team. But is there anything that you can say to get over the hump there?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I just think that's the flavor of the week. Last year, it was the Big Ten. Right now, it's the Mountain West. And tomorrow after the games, it might be someone else. So that's March Madness.

So I said this earlier in the week, everyone was upset about how the Big Ten played last year, and turn around they got nine teams in this year. So hopefully our conference continues to play well, put teams in here, and we get on a run. We're more than capable.

THE MODERATOR: Any more questions here? Go to the left-hand side.

**Q. Matt, after you missed the free-throws at Boise State, you talked about wanting another opportunity. You had one tonight. Were you thinking about that? Was that in your mind and, you know, how do you sort of process all that?**

MATT BRADLEY: Yeah, most definitely. I was just, you know, I knew this was my second chance, you know, that

me and Coach Dutch had been talking about.

Yeah, you know, Boise State didn't really go through my mind. But I knew this was my opportunity to close the game at the free-throw line. It doesn't come down to skill, it comes down to just belief, swagger, something that I've been lacking.

And it's been a theme towards the end of the game for, you know, pretty much this whole season. You know, during this offseason, definitely got to do some soul searching and, you know, figure out what it is with me mentally that's causing me to do that. Because it doesn't come down to skill. So yeah.

**Q. Question for Trey. You talked last year about, you know, how rough that loss against Syracuse was. You weren't really in the game. Obviously, this one is a different way. Is this a worse way to lose? I know there's no great way to lose, but does this sting more than maybe that Syracuse game did?**

TREY PULLIAM: Obviously, probably, yeah. Just because we were up with two minutes and I feel like we just gave them the game. Like, we had it in our hands. But like Coach Dutch said, that's credit to them. They made plays down the stretch. They made plays when they needed to. We just came up a little short.

**Q. Dutch, I know it hurt to see. But to see a freshman point guard play the way that Trey Alexander did at the end of that game, what would you make of his performance tonight?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: He played great down the stretch. He made important plays down the stretch. And I thought our defense was pretty good for the most the part. Didn't want to give up threes for Hawkins or O'Connell. And they had one for the game.

We wanted to pressure. Defense, we forced 20 turnovers. So I thought our defense played pretty good. But Trey broke us down at the end. He got in the paint at the end of the game.

And that's what it is. You have to make plays down the stretch. And they made more than we did. And he made his fair share down the stretch to help them win the game.

THE MODERATOR: Any more questions? If not, guys, we'll let you go. Thank you for being here.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Thanks, everyone.