

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 23, 2022

Maui, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

San Diego State Aztecs

Brian Dutcher

Postgame Press Conference

Arkansas - 78, San Diego State - 74

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for coach.

BRIAN DUTCHER: That was a heck of a basketball game. Two teams on tired legs finding a way to get it out. Overtime in the final game. It was exciting. I mean, it went right to the end. Obviously, we wish we would have closed better. We didn't. It ended up going to overtime, and we still had opportunities in overtime.

I told Matt I would take that shot he had to tie the game nine out of ten times, downhill to the rim. Unfortunately, it didn't go in. They got a pretty good whistle. The free throws were, I think they shot 38 free throws. That's pretty good for a college game. We shot 23.

They did a really good job on the offensive glass in the second half. I think they had one at halftime, ended up with 10 for the game. That was the real difference in the game.

But I thought we fought hard, competed hard, and learned a lot about ourselves moving forward for the rest of the season.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for coach.

Q. The third place game is always tough. You're coming off a loss in the semis, when you have the chance to get to that final, and then one team's going to leave the third place game with two wins in three days here, and one's going to leave with two losses in a row leaving here. As you leave town, what's the attitude on your team?

BRIAN DUTCHER: That we had learnable moments, teachable moments, and we can get better from here. Obviously, we competed hard. We competed really hard for two games in a row. We played Arizona and Arkansas back-to-back and let Arizona slip out on us late in the second half. Arkansas battled to the end, had a chance to win, and couldn't close.

So we learned a lot about our team, that we're tough. We're strong enough to play with power 5 schools, and that we have to use these moments we had here in Hawaii to learn and grow as a team. And we will do that. We always do that.

Q. What are some of those things that you think you need to, you learned, and you'll fix in the next few weeks?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just tighten up our offensive efficiency, learn time score, what's a good shot, what's a hard shot depending on the time and score, and still being aggressive not having them afraid to make plays.

So it's usually the offensive end. I thought defensively we played a heck of a game. They got to the line a lot. 38 free throws is, I don't know the last time we gave up 38 free throws to anybody. That's a lot of free throws. So we have to do a better job of defending without fouling.

Q. The first game the offense really flowed, shared the ball, lots after assists. The last two games hardly any assists. Was that something other teams were doing or something that you need to clean up?

BRIAN DUTCHER: They're not helping as much. They're trying to make us beat 'em with two-on-two play. That's what good teams do. That's what we do sometimes. We're going to make your best players try to beat us one-on-one or two-on-two.

Although we gave a lot more help because we knew they were trying to go down hill. They were playing a lot of isolation, attacking off the bounce basketball, which they did a great job of, and then they crashed the glass.

Every game is different. That's the whole beauty of it. You have to prepare. I thought we did a really good job in a short prep to be ready for 'em, and I thought we controlled the tempo of the game for a large part of the game.

Q. What happened in the handshake line?

BRIAN DUTCHER: I don't know. I don't know. I was already through it. So I just tell our kids, I tell 'em every year, I tell 'em every month, You represent yourself first, your family second, and this university and athletic program third. Don't do anything that would embarrass any of us. So that's a message I deliver every year to our guys and I think they do a good job of up holding that. They represent themselves with a lot of class.

Q. Last play of regulation with Lamont's turnover, what would you have liked to have seen happen there?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Well I told him, We have the next jump ball and we have a timeout. So obviously, you know, if he got tied up maybe could have held it and tried to get a jump ball. I could have maybe come down the sideline and taken a timeout. But obviously we can't turn it over and that's what happened.

So we have to take a timeout or we have to make them grab the ball from us. Because we get the next jump ball. So we knew time and score and timeouts. Maybe I could have come down the sideline. I thought he was probably going to get fouled or at worst a tied up ball. They ended up making a play and securing the ball. So that's a credit to Arkansas's press at the end.

Q. Was that where you wanted the ball to go on the inbounds?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, we want to run Lamont up. He can break left or right if he catches the ball then we cut one guard diagonal and we step the other guard in. So he's got options to pass the ball, he's got a target diagonally and the target, the inbounder coming back in. So he obviously thought he could make that sideline pass and had it deflected. So credit to Arkansas, that length and athleticism paid off for them.

Q. Did you want him that deep and that far toward the sideline?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, he cuts diagonally up the sideline. So that usually leaves one guy to guard two. Either that guy's either got to take the diagonal or the pass back to the inbounder. So they did a good job. I would have to go back and look. But one thing you can't do when you have the next jump ball is throw it away. You have to make them at least tie you up for a jump ball.

Q. Does it surprise you that he was involved in that turnover? He's a guy that's a veteran, really strong with the ball, he's been around the block, he's been in those situations a zillion times in his career.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, you see it a lot. This is early-season college basketball. It's hard. You get trapped and you got to make a play. Like I said, it's always easy when you look on tape after the game. You can see spacing and where everyone's open. But when you're in the heat of it and they're trapping you and you have to split it or you have to get a jump ball, it's hard.

So Lamont is strong, he's a smart player and he didn't make the play, obviously.

Q. Bigger picture looking at this tournament. Four years ago after you played here it looked like you might not be coming back. You were not a lock to come back. What's the status now? And obviously the PAC-12 thing's looming. If PAC-12 takes you it makes it a lot harder to come from the PAC-12 than it does from the Mountain West.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, I think we've represented this tournament well when we've come. I think our fan base has been supportive. We have as many fans as any team that comes to this event.

So we're wholeheartedly excited for all the opportunities we had to play in it and hopefully we'll have another one down the road at some point.

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