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Boise at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 62, Boise State 58

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

Feb. 25, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"That was a big-time college basketball game and Boise (State) came ready to play, but so did the Aztecs. I take great comfort in having five seniors in the starting lineup and they make a coach look good. And these two guys next to me (referring to Matt Mitchell and Jordan Schakel), four-year starters in the program, fourth-year seniors, have won a lot of timely games and this was one of the most memorable. We put ourselves in a position to go to (Las) Vegas (the MW Championship Tournament) and try to win a conference title. I could not be prouder of a team, (of) their resolve and their toughness to beat a very good Boise (State) team on our home floor on senior night."

On if the quick turnaround between games affected the outcome or the program's readiness for the matchup:

"We were ready. We had a really good walk-through today at eight in the morning and [it was] spirited and we were ready to go. But Boise (State) is a good team and they made things hard so a lot of the game looked disjointed. [But that was also] because we guard hard, so it was two good teams, knowing what each other's strengths are and doing a good job of trying to take it away. [The game] did not look free-flowing or smooth, but it was beautiful to a coach."

On if Thursday's close game helped the team execute during the close stretches of today's game:

"I think having good players helped us (in close stretches of the game). The last play of the game where we got to switch on a ball screen [when] they were fronting Nathan (Mensah), Matt (Mitchell) had enough savvy and intelligence to get to the high post and deliver a perfect lob pass at game time — that is just players playing the right way and playing together. I could not be more proud of that."

On Joshua Tomaić's play today:

"Playing hard is a skill. Josh's greatest skill is that he plays hard. That means offensive rebounding — he pursues the ball, he trails in there when the guard drive, and he picks up all timely baskets that were so important when he got them. Josh's play down the stretch was immeasurably important for our success today."

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On his decision to foul Boise State in the late stretches of the close game:

"The game before that (Thursday night's game) we were up three with 30 seconds ago and so it was hard once the play started to foul, and [because of that] they hit a couple of step-back threes on us. This game, when we had the clock manageable, it was under 10 to start with, so we knew [the right decision was to] foul as soon as they crossed mid-court. To our credit, that does not always work. It (fouling the other team when up late) works when you make free throws and both these guys sitting next to me (referring to Matt Mitchell and Schakel) made timely free throws in order to secure the win."

On how he coaches through a game with low scoring, little flow and difficulty to get in rhythm:

"I told the guys (his players) at halftime, 'I do not think there has been more yelling from the bench in the first half in the past two or three years', because they (Boise State) were switching defenses, pressing, then zoning, the man-ing and we (his coaching staff) are yelling all the time (because of that). I just said 'we got to quit yelling and let you guys just be the players you are, play in space, play intelligently and do not let us (the coaches) take you out of the game.' As much as we try to get them in the game, (Boise State's switching defense) was frustrating for everybody. This team has a lot of resolve and grit, found a way to make timely plays and stops when we needed them, and came up with a really hard for victory."

On what the last two games say about the toughness of his team:

"Over the past two years, we have really hard to beat. We are 49-6 over the last two years. As much as everybody loved last year's team, this year's team is very special (too). They (his student-athletes) are joy to coach and hopefully our best basketball still ahead of us."

On what it says about his team that they have not trailed in the second half in the last 10 games played:

"We hold ourselves to a high standard. If we are playing the lower half (of the league), it is not who we are playing, it is how we are playing. [Because of that mindset], sometimes we are upset with the team even if we are up 10, 12, 14 points because we know what (type of game) lies ahead. This (today's game) was what lied ahead—a close game where we had to play well. So, it does not matter who we are playing or where we are playing, we are trying to play to our standard. I think this team has embraced that and done a great job of it."

On if he addressed the inequal foul counts between his team and their opponent:

"Boise State was playing aggressively, they were driving the ball and creating contact and they were doing a good job (at causing fouls). And so eventually. Like most games, it tilted a little bit (the foul count towards San Diego State), but we ran Jordan (Schakel) along the baseline and then they (Boise State) held him one or two times and bumped him, and then we started attacking on the dribble a little bit more and creating contact (to turn the foul count towards Boise State). I always say college basketball is a hard game to officiate. Boise State deserved every call they got and hopefully we did too."

On if he shifted how the team guarded Derrick Alston today and how his play was different from the first game:

"We played him just as hard (as today) on the first night, but good players can score over good defense and he bounced up and made some hard shots over us in game one. He had some clean looks, it was not anything we did (differently), we gave him a couple clean looks in the first half especially that just did not go in for him. He struggled through uncharacteristic off-shooting night and we benefited from that."

On Paul Weir and New Mexico's mutual agreement to separate after the season:

"I want to wish Paul (Weir) well and I want to wish New Mexico all the success in picking their next head coach and finding their way back into the competition in the Mountain West."

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San Diego State Senior Guard Jordan Schakel

On staying locked in a game when he is in foul trouble:

"It is not hard to stay locked in a game like this with everything that was at stake. You have to stay ready, everyone off the bench stays ready, and that is just the nature of this team. We all just stay ready and when our numbers called, we go in and try to do the best we can do, so there's not really any different than that (when in foul trouble)."

On if he wants to be the Aztecs' "guy" in late game free-throw shot situations:

"I am confident in myself at the free throw line, no matter what time of the game it is. I would love to (be the guy to look for in those situations)."

On how he managed his emotions throughout the game while in foul trouble:

"[I] just [focused on] being happy for my teammates. It is not really a big deal to be on a bench with foul trouble because I should not have been in foul trouble, I control that. So, not really anything I can do (when in foul trouble), just be happy for my teammates and everybody was playing hard and playing well so it was easy to do that."

On his emotion levels during today's game which was what could be his final game in Viejas:

"To be honest, it is not really that emotional without people in the stands, they give a lot of [that type of] energy. This game [was one] everybody was energized [for] because of what was at stake, we were playing a really good team, but the emotional part of it, the fans who pour it all onto the court, was not there, so it was not really that emotional to me."

San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

On what he saw during the game-altering play when he threw a lob to Nathan Mensah for a late score:

"I had seen it all game (the option to lob to Mensah). They were switching (on Mensah) and Trey (Pulliam) was trying to get the ball in there, T-Go (Terrell Gomez) was trying to get the ball in there, even Jordan (Schakel) sometimes too, so I thought my guy (defender), maybe not seeing me coming from across the court that [going] high-low was just a wise idea, [especially with] Nathan (Mensah)'s size and hands around the rim."

On how he fights through a game with low scoring, little flow and difficulty to get in rhythm:

"I think the way to fight (through this type of game) is together. As I said last game, we had adversity, and that was that game's adversity, and this was this game's adversity (lack of rhythm). I think maybe a couple calls did not go our way in the second half and (throughout) the first half the teams had each other flustered, so nobody could find a rhythm. I think the way through (these games) is fighting through it together. Sticking and staying together is the thing we do best."

On his mindset of team wins over individual accolades:

"Well, the W is in our side of the check box. That is all that has really ever mattered to me being here at San Diego State. [when I was] in high school and just over the course of my life, I found success through winning. That is something we talked about as a team, success through winning, and not (focusing on) one person shining. I do not think there is a lot of situations where there is going to be one person shining and the entire team is [also] succeeding. I see it best fit for everybody to be happy for each other('s success), and to go (work) together."

On his assignment to Derrick Alston on the defensive end of the game:

"I take all match-ups personally, no matter who it is. I take every game personally, and I take pride on the defensive end, in getting stops. In the first game, seeing (Derrick) Alston go off upset the entire team. Being a leader on this team and the way I see being a leader on this team, I take that (his teammates being upset) highly personally and I take that fault to myself. [But] I took pride in my defense today for the entire time I was on the court."

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On his emotion levels during today's game which was what could be his final game in Viejas:

"As Jordan (Schakel) said, I think some of the emotion is taken out of the gym when the fans are not here. But at the same time, I think we are still happy for each other, especially being senior night and Jordan (Schakel) and I's last game in Viejas where we poured our blood, sweat and tears into for the past four years. I think to some extent we do take a joy out of this, getting a W on our last game on this home floor, but at the same time, we are not done yet and we are still going so we can not get ahead of ourselves."

Boise State Head Coach Leon Rice

Opening Statement:

"We have to lock these kinds of games down. We could have gotten off to a better start, maybe we could have had 30 points at half instead of 20. But that is basketball and I was really proud of the way our guys battled, that was a gritty tough game that turned into more of a rock fight than we wanted. I can not fault my guy's effort and how hard they tried, played, and you just wish you could have made more shots."

On the late game fouls and his team's inability to tie the game late:

"Not much we could do about that, they (San Diego State) did a good job of fouling us. We were trying not to foul and to instead get a tie up, because we thought we had the tie up because we had the possession arrow and we felt like if we could just get a two-pointer and a tie-up, we could have the last possession and a chance to win. Those free throws (caused by a foul instead of a tie-up) changed the tides for us. I was proud of the way our guys battled and we are going to bounce back on Senior Night against Fresno State."

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