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Utah State at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 71, Colorado State 55

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. | February 13, 2024

Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"I told the team after we lost at Colorado, 'They got off to a great start.' I told them, 'Everybody has a game plan until you get punched in the mouth. Let's go out there and punch them in the mouth.' Tonight, I looked up, and they punched us in the mouth. We were down again. We had to take a punch and then find a way to fight back. They make 8 threes a game, and they had seven at halftime. If they had made seven more, we wouldn't have won the game. They made one in the second half, which hits around their average. Jaedon [LeDee] played 7:27 in the first half, and you can see how valuable he is. He didn't come out in the second half, and he was a difference in the game. He was hard to guard in there, he fouled two of their bigs out. He's a dynamic offensive player, and we're doing a better job finding him. We're finding him in the paint and finding ways to get him the ball. I am proud of our effort. At halftime, all I said was, 'There's no X's and O's now. It's get back.' We gave too many fast-break baskets to start the game. That was the number one key on the board – transition defense, and they ran us like crazy in the first half. Then we have to be mentally right, physically it doesn't matter. We have to be mentally right where we believe that if we put everything into it, we have enough time to come back and win the game. They need to have the right mentality going out there. Put everything that went wrong in the first half out of your mind, concentrate, be mentally tough, and go out there and give it everything you have in the second half. It was probably the best half we played all year defensively. We held the team that's top of the country offensive efficiency-wise to 11 points. That's incredible. Then I think the rebounds were two apart at halftime, then you out-rebound them by 22. The second half was as good as we can play at the defensive end. That takes great energy, and we had it for the entire second half."

On the transition defense being a factor:

"We didn't get back on defense in the first half. Transition defense was the number one key to the game to the point where we wanted to send three guys back. We never send three guys back on a shot. We sent two back and rebounded with the other three, but we wanted three back on the shot. That didn't happen all the time as much as we wanted to do. We felt if we could make them play us in the half court, it would be better for us because they're a dynamic running team. Our transition defense was better in the second half where they couldn't get out on us and get easy baskets. We made them get everything in the half-court, and in this arena, that's better for us."

On the approach for the upcoming game vs. New Mexico:

"We will prepare just like we did for Colorado State. We're playing four quad-one games in a row at Nevada, vs Colorado State and New Mexico, and then we go to Utah State. We can't sit there and think we've arrived because we've won this game. We

play another one in two days. We don't have any time to over-celebrate. We have to break down the film and get ready for New Mexico. That's what we'll do."

Senior Forward Jaedon LeDee

On what flipped with the team at halftime:

"We got hit in the mouth in the first half. In any good fight, you get hit, and you just keep fighting. The coaches kind of dug into us a little bit at halftime, but we rallied as a team. We knew it was a tale of two halves, and we came out more explosive in the second half."

On his thoughts during the first half:

"I knew my teammates had me in the first half, I have all the faith in the world in them. I knew that they were going to give it their all and keep us in the game. Then when I got back in, I had to contribute where I could."

On the atmosphere in Viejas:

"It was loud. We picked it up, and the energy in the crowd gave us a lot of energy. When Lamont [Butler] got fouled, and then their coach got a technical, I could barely hear what was going on in there. It was really a changing point for us with the crowd."

Senior Guard Lamont Butler

On Coach Dutcher's halftime conversation:

"Coach Dutcher was telling us at halftime that the only way we could get back into the game and change the outcome was our mentality. Physically, it is what it is, but we can't lose our mental side, and we have to believe that we can win the game. We came out there, played with heart, and got the job done."

On his aggression in the second half:

"I knew if we got out and running, if we got a lot of stops, we would be able to get out in transition. I tried to attack in transition and just be aggressive. I knew Jaedon [LeDee] was going to bring a lot of attention. I tried to call my number a little bit, but it was a team effort."

Colorado State Head Coach Niko Medved

Opening Statement:

"It's pretty clear when you look at the stat sheet, but I know the first half they had two offensive rebounds, and the second half they had 12 by my count. They got back 12 of their 20 misses. They missed 20 times, they got back 12, and that's a recipe for disaster. We could not meet the physicality of them. We were not able to keep the ball out of [Jaedon] LeDee's hands like we were in the first game [at Colorado State]. We wanted to try to front him a little bit more. We had no bigs left at the end of the game, Joe Palmer, 6'4, comes in and gets to a front, but our other bigs were not able to. Obviously, some of the shots that went down in the first half didn't go down in the second half. That's basketball, but we were not able to get to the

free throw line or finish in the lane like we were [in the first half]. That was another huge key for us. I think I have my math right still with nine minutes to go, we had the lead. Joel Scott being in foul trouble and fouling out was massive tonight. I thought he was playing with a ton of physicality and force tonight and coming up with loose balls and rebounding. When he got in foul trouble and he fouled out, that was a huge loss for us.

On the importance of offensive rebounds and turnovers:

"It's huge. It's everything, and that's the thing with [San Diego State], you have to take care of the ball, and you can't give them second chances. Those are things we were able to do at our place and what we were able to do in the first 20 minutes, but you have to do it for 40 minutes. In the first half, we made some shots. Even when we had good looks, it was just like that in the second half – the shots weren't able to go in. But that's basketball. The story was the second chance points, and us not being able to finish. We still had an opportunity with nine minutes to go, but you know it was as poor of a half as we played all year, but you got to give [San Diego State] credit too."

Colorado State Guard Josiah Strong

On the foul trouble contributing to the loss:

"We had some guys in foul trouble, which hurt us a little bit. In this environment, you have to be tough, no matter who goes down, the next man has to be able to step up. We knew they were going to push back. They pushed back pretty hard, and we didn't respond the way we needed to."

On getting bullied on the glass in the second half.

"We definitely got a little complacent coming out of the half. We were in the right mindset to start the game for sure, we got off to a good start. In the second half, we kind of let our guard down. They definitely bullied us on the offensive boards. I think they got 12 offensive boards in the second half, so we have to clean that up for sure."

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