

March 11, 2014



Nevada – 53
San Diego State – 48

An Interview With:



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by San Diego State. Coach, if you could open with a few remarks about tonight's game.

COACH TERRY: I'm disappointed, disappointed that we lost. Obviously our goal this season was to win a championship, and we fell short this year. So I'm disappointed. Disappointed for these two, that they didn't have that opportunity.

But really proud of the way that our kids fought tonight. Did not give up. Played hard the entire game. Our defense was so good, so good. I told them early if we kept this game in the 50s, we had a shot to win. We definitely had that.

So I'm just proud of our effort. Thought we played really, really hard. And we're going to build on that going forward.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. When Mimi came back in the game for Nevada, seemed like they took control of the game. Was she just a bigger presence than you were expecting or shots weren't falling?

CIERRA WARREN: I mean, she is a big presence, but what she really did was crash in the paint, so that makes it really hard, being that most of our points do come from the paint.

Watching Air Force, they probably saw that was how to win the game.

Q. With the one-on-one battle against her, is that something you get up for knowing she's one of the better centers in the league?

CIERRA WARREN: I mean, every game you get excited. It doesn't matter who you're playing.

I mean, yeah, she is a great player. But any game you play you want to get excited, you want to score, you want to do your best.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for coach.

Q. Could you comment about Mimi when she came back in the second half, do you feel that was a turning point there?

COACH TERRY: I do. I think her presence makes it tough for us to score in the paint. But not only Mimi. I thought they did a good job of clogging everything up, making it tough for us to get some easy points.

She does a great job altering shots, as well. So she kind of took us out of our rhythm. Normally we can get to the paint and get to the free-throw line. We didn't have that opportunity tonight. So obviously that is reflected in the score.

But she's a big presence. Anchoring that zone, I thought they played a very good game tonight.

Q. I thought defensively you were strong the whole game. Forced the 10-second violation in the final minute. What play were you trying to run there?

COACH TERRY: We ran a couple things. We were looking to come off a double screen, down screen, and get the three. We were just going to take the first available shot at that point because obviously time was not our friend. So we were just looking to get something easy.

Chloe came through and made a couple buckets at the end, Desi Culberson got a good look for us to get it back in range. A couple calls didn't go our way. I mean, it's a different ballgame.

I want to say this. Nevada did an

awesome job executing their game plan. They're a very talented team. They're going to really make some noise in this tournament.

I mean, they just did a great job executing their game plan against us.

Q. It's hard to sum things up after the game is over. If you can look back on your first season, analyze things you did well, things you would like to improve on.

COACH TERRY: I don't know if we have the time for all that.

I think we grew a lot as a team. I inherited a bunch of young women who didn't have a lot of experience. And the ones that did ended up getting injured. So our record, I don't want to be judged on our record, I want to be judged on the growth we made from the start to the finish because that's really what I'm most proud of.

We finished the season without a point guard. For us to come and be competitive, down the stretch, in this league, is a testament to how good and how hard and diligent our young ladies were this season.

For me going into the spring, we're going to work on our ball handling, we're going to work on shooting, being better shooters. We have excellent post players. Our guards have grown a lot, too. But for me that's going to be the key so people can't pack it in like they did this season.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Nevada. Coach, just some remarks on tonight's game.

COACH ALBRIGHT: We're just glad to get a W. I thought that San Diego State played really hard. I don't know if y'all can tell from where you are sitting, they're a big team. They're big, athletic, strong. It's so hard to rebound.

In the first half we couldn't get many rebounds and we weren't able to run at all. That was our game plan.

We're normally a much better offensive team than we are defensive. But tonight it proved to be the opposite.

I thought our team defense on Cierra, she was one for eight. First team all-conference, I thought we doubled her, had a great game plan, and they followed it. She is a dominant player. Trust me, we've watched her and she can play, play, play.

Really kind of sagged off I think their fatigue. We kept telling our players if we could get to the last 10 minutes, we'd be all right.

I think Mimi had seven blocks, which is one of the reasons she's co-defensive Player of the Year. Danika hit some tough shots in the first half, extended it. In the second half we got to the free-throw line. That's really where the battle was won, with the free throws and our defense.

We didn't shoot the ball well. It was just hard to find shots. They're just so long and strong and big.

I thought T-Moe, when she was at point guard, started a run for us. I think we got down by three. They got to the free-throw line. As she can kind of will things to happen, she did a really, really good job there.

San Diego State was in the championship game last year. The last three years they kind of owned everything. For us to be picked 10th in the league, we only played them once this year, I thought that would be an advantage, I don't think it was much of an advantage tonight. They seemed to know what we were going to do and take it away.

I was really, really proud of our players. They found a way to win. It was a very ugly basketball game. I know that. It probably looked like there weren't a lot of shooters out there.

We didn't make 11 threes. Last time we played them we made 11 threes. We made five. That was the difference in the game if you look at it. We won by five free throws in that, didn't we?

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Danika, talk about what changed when Mimi came back in after her third foul?

DANIKA SHARP: Just her presence in the key is a huge factor for us. She is a defensive threat. Like coach said, that's why she's co-defensive Player of the Year. We need her in there because she changes shots a lot.

Q. Mimi, you picked up your third foul in the second half. How hard was it to sit on the bench and fight?

MIMI MUNGEDI: It was really hard. But I knew my teammate, we are a good team, we stick together, which is one of our motto. I think that's what we did. I was just encourage them, We can do it, let's go, let's go. We got it. So I was pretty happy about it.

Q. Talk about facing Fresno State in the semifinals and having two days off to prepare.

DANIKA SHARP: Well, obviously we know they're a great team. They're the No. 2 seed for a reason. But we split with them in the regular season, so we know we can compete with them. We have to guard all their shooters because defense is going to be a huge factor.

MIMI MUNGEDI: I think we have to perform better on offense and defense to beat them, to be honest. They're a really good team.

COACH ALBRIGHT: They didn't have much trouble finding the basket today. We watched that game. They're fun to watch, aren't they, unless you're coaching against them. That's not a lot of fun.

We'll come up with something. We don't have as big of bodies. I think we just couldn't find the shots we normally can find. Hopefully we'll be able to find some of those shots.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for coach.

Q. Last year you played in the opening game, won that. This year you find yourself as the No. 3 seed playing in the semifinals. If you had to pinpoint one or two things, what has been the biggest turnaround for you?

COACH ALBRIGHT: I think the off-season was. It was our first year in the Mountain West. Boy, what a difference it was. It was a lot of distance between us and the other teams physically. I think Matt Barber, our strength coach at the time, he's now at Maryland, and now Bubba, our kids committed to get in the weight room. They're stronger, faster, more agile.

They changed the NCAA rules. It was the exact perfect time for us because we got 'em in the gym. They all elected to stay at summer school. We're fortunate that we have administration who paid for them to be at summer school. We saw them a lot.

They paid their own money to go over to San Francisco and play in a ProAm game. I think that probably helped Mimi the most of anybody. She got a lot of minutes. Her team only had two post players. She had to play a lot.

That's the first long answer, is the off-season.

My staff was tremendous in their player development.

The other thing is the chemistry on this team. They're so unselfish. They get along very, very well. They have given up any individual goal. We never had a Player of the Week. I think we are the only team that never had one. I'm not saying we should have.

Our depth, you probably didn't see our depth tonight. We feel like our depth, we can usually outscore the bench about 20 points. It was a little different tonight because we played Mimi more minutes.

I was thinking about this, our depth tonight almost hindered us a little because everybody was nervous when they went in there. The second time they all did well. You saw it in Nyasha at the very first of the game, we had a little lead, she just gave it right to them, then fouled them.

When you are doing that with a lot of people, we couldn't get the flow, so we shortened the bench the second half. We'll get back to that probably when we get to Fresno State.

Q. Moving forward with the game against Fresno State, you split with them in the regular season, what do you see as the keys to Friday's game? You played them without Alex Sheedy and then with. How different are they?

COACH ALBRIGHT: They're better with her, that's for sure. She just gives them another player that can play three, four, five. They all play all positions. They're really tough.

But when all is said and done, we'll do the very best we can. They won the tournament last year. It's a tough game. I mean, it's got to be a tough game, doesn't it, when it comes down to the four teams.

I think that Taylor Thompson, she's just such a heady point guard. They spread the defense so wide. If there's a team that is exactly opposite to guard, then San Diego State who is inside, you can pack it in. Oh, my gosh, they're so outside oriented. They could hit 20 threes in a game and it would just be easy some nights.

But they are not invincible. They've lost some games this year. We've got a lot of tape, a lot of ideas. We're excited to have two days off to prepare for them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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