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5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

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San Diego State at Air Force Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 91, Air Force 59

Clune Arena | Colorado Springs, Colo. | Jan. 24, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"It was a hard-fought win today. I mean we knew it was going to be tough. We knew they'd respond after the way we beat them in the first game, and the first half was very competitive. They moved the ball at a better pace; they were quick with their cuts and they caught us on a lot of action. We were fortunate to have a 13-point lead (at halftime), which we built on in the second half, and this was a game where we had multiple contributors. We played all 10 guys significant minutes and then got some of the guys in at the end of the bench in for the last seven. So, everybody contributed today, which was important because I looked at them and the altitude did have an effect on us. I know people probably don't want to hear that, but even in shoot around today I thought certain guys were struggling. So, we went to the bench quick. We played maybe three- or four-minute stands for most of the guys and it was just a great team effort today."

On what the game plan was for Matt Mitchell:

"Yeah, we had him on a time restriction. I think the maximum was 15 minutes. So, we got 14 out of Matt today and moving forward, hopefully that will grow where those minutes will go up as we head into Wyoming this coming weekend. It's really good having Matt back. He just plays with such poise and true leadership out there. It's great having him back on the floor."

On what led to the team scoring 90 points in each game at Air Force:

"Well, I told the guys, we won't see another matchup zone, probably the rest of the year. So whatever we did offensively it's hard to say we're going to build on (it) other than the fact that we shared the ball and we move the ball. I think we had 21 assists on 31 baskets, and I think we had 27 assists the game before. So, we're sharing the ball and that part can continue to happen. But as far as the offense we ran, it was suited just for Air Force or anybody that would zone us."

On Jordan Schakel and his success at making threes:

"He had six and he could have had 16; he got a lot of good looks. Jordan shoots the ball well and he's a threat, so he pulls the defense out and when he does, he was able to drive it in there some and find his teammates. So, Jordan's more than just a shooter, but he's a very good shooter."

On the decision-making process on bringing Matt Mitchell back:

"Well, we want to get his game timing back. That's very important to the success of this team. He went through hard workouts (prior to) the games he didn't play. Here, both prep days, he went through extended workouts and his pain level was minimal. The brace gives him an extra layer of protection and the doctors all thought that it was fine for him to get out there play with the minutes restriction to start. We'll start growing those minutes as we move forward."

On the intensity the team brought and if it was a topic they emphasized coming into the game:

"Yeah, especially that final group that got in. You know, we had a pretty significant lead the first game and they came in and got outscored down the stretch. They've got pride and the veterans got on them. So when the freshman and the walk-ons got in down the stretch, with a couple

veterans, they wanted to earn their minutes, earn their respect so that they could be trusted moving forward getting serious game minutes. I think they came with a defensive mindset and they played better today than they did yesterday down the stretch.”

San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

On if he knew he would play heading into the game and how he feels after it:

“I’m definitely feeling a lot better. I felt good out there tonight, no pain, no mental or physical restrictions. I think it was more of a game day decision and how I felt after shootaround. We took a lot of precautions on whether to put me out there. There was a lot of thought going into it, but I ended up going out there, because I feel good. After shootaround and the long workouts I’ve been through I was looking good, so I decided it was okay for me to step out there and Dutch agreed.”

On if he feels he is 100 percent or if he still has some ways to go:

“I think I still have a little way to go, but I definitely think that I’m always going to be game ready, just because of the type of player I am. And I heard Dutch say earlier, that if I had my way I’d play 40 minutes tonight and that’s just type player I am. I want to be out there on the court to help my teammates try to get a win. But I’m definitely proud of these guys for doing it without me and getting that hard fought win on Friday and definitely today as well.”

On how his knee feels after the game:

“My knee feels great no pain, no physical, or mental restrictions. All I’m trying to get used to the brace. It’s a custom fit brace for me to wear during the game and for extra protection so I don’t reinjure it and so I’m not risking a further injury. I has definitely been different having a brace on, but I’m getting used to it and I feel good today.”

San Diego State Senior Guard Jordan Schakel

On if the half-court offense the team put in for Air Force or if the Falcons matchup zone got him more opportunities to shoot:

“It was kind of both. They do a lot of switching, a lot of pointing and the offense that we put in allows us to move freely. A lot of times when guys drive the defense can get confused. I was just able to move myself into spots, and my teammates did a great job of finding me when I was open.

On the team’s “next play mentality” and if airballing his first shot of the second half and then scoring 13 points in the next few minutes is an example of that:

“Yes. That might have taken a toll on me (in the past), but when I watch NBA games, I see Steph (Curry) airball a lot, I mean not a lot, but every time he just comes back and acts like it doesn’t bother him. That’s just what you have to do. The defense takes a breath when you’re not aggressive. We have a lot of guys on our team that can make shots. If anyone airballs, we’re always saying ‘just keep shooting.’ We always count on the next shot going in and that’s kind of how you have to play and that is part of the next play mentality.”

On what led to the team making 16 three pointers:

“Oh, I think just confidence and (that) we have a lot of good shooters. Adam (Seiko) started the game extremely hot. Terrell (Gomez) started and finished the game extremely hot. So it’s just guys like that. We have a lot of good players that can shoot the ball. Matt was two-for-two from three in his first game back. So it’s just confidence and getting to the open spot. When we move and pass the ball like we did tonight against the matchup zone, we get a lot of open looks and we were able to knock them down.”

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