



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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

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Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"Well, two regular season games to go, obviously, it will be a tremendous challenge at Boise. Last year they beat us three times. We got them at our place, but obviously they were shorthanded. Shaver didn't play, and they're going to have a sold-out building on senior night. So, it's a real challenge. I'm happy that we got a piece of the regular season title, and now we have to be selfish and try not to share it. We have two games to do that at Boise, and at our senior night, Saturday against Wyoming. So, we want to make sure that we continue to play at a high level. We already have the number one seed in the conference tournament, which is nice. And we're hanging a banner which is nice. But the job for coaches is to get their team to play their best basketball down the stretch. So, we can't take anything for granted. We have to get better every day. So, we're playing our best basketball when we get to march in the conference tournament and the NCAA Tournament. That's the goal, and that's what we're working towards."

On Saturday's performance and playing on the road:

"I mean, the environments we played in are incredible. New Mexico had their biggest crowd in 10 years. We played in Colorado State, and it was full. We played at Utah State, and it was full and raucous. It'll be sold out in Boise, and so to win in such tough environments is a credit to this team. We are 7-1 in the conference on the road and that's hard to do. It'll be a real challenge tomorrow night in Boise, but we played our best basketball, not only at home but on the road also and that's a credit to this team and how mentally tough they are."

On Butler's game-winner over New Mexico:

"You always close your eyes and dream to that moment. You know a lot. I'm sure felt bad at the end against Arkansas, and to have a chance to redeem yourself, not only redeem yourself, but in a way that hung a banner for the aspects of winning the conference championship. That's an incredible moment for him. Obviously, I overcoached the play, I told him to drive all the way to the basket and try to get a layup. We're only down one but he shot a three and it went in and so we're all going to fade in the glory of that and I'm so happy for Lamont and the way he was able to make that play and win us a conference title."

On getting better as a season goes on:

"Yeah, I mean, Steve Fisher was a head coach here, came all those years ago, we've always gotten better as the season went on. That's kind of what we tell the guys, that's what we believe. That's a message we preach, and when you continue to do it, there's obviously something to it and we're getting better in February. We have to continue to get better. That's the meat of the season. Where we're at now doesn't matter, where we're going is everything. So, we have to get better to get to where we want to go."

On how much better the team can get:

"Obviously we can get more connected offensively, you know, be more efficient defensively. We seem to be getting better. Our numbers go up every week as far as efficiency at the defensive end. So, we are getting better and we're growing, but there's another level we can go and we have to find a way as coaches and as players to get there and that only comes through work at practice."

On Darrion Trammell's shooting slump and how he responded:

"Darrion, he is mentally tough. I mean, I'm not a guy that tries to stress the team when things aren't going well, because there's enough internal stress. So, Darrion was already able to overcome his own stress level. He hasn't shot the ball well all year, but his confidence has never waned and to see him finally have that moment, maybe this is something that will propel him to a four, five, six game stretch where he shoots it at an elite level and that that will get us better."

On senior night on Saturday:

"I mean, these guys have been here. Seiko's been here all six years I've been a head coach, so he's had a six year run with me. Nate and AG have been with me five years and so these guys have all been important to the Aztecs and important to me personally. I saw Matt Bradley come in and it was good to see him hang a banner, that's what he came here for to win at the highest level. So, all these guys are getting rewarded. Keshad Johnson's, been here with us so it's fun to have these guys with me all these years. To see the success they've enjoyed playing their hearts out for this university and it'd be great to honor them on senior night Saturday against Wyoming."

On where the Butler shot ranks all-time for him:

"You always remember the buzzer beaters you know, usually you got to get a stop or you make free throws to win a game but you don't have a game winner like that. It was like Trey Pulliam when he hit the runner against Nevada a couple years ago. We've had them, but there aren't a lot when you look back over the history of a program. This is one I'll always remember because like I said, it wasn't just to win a game, it was to win a banner. And so that was a really special moment."

On what the team's seeding could look like on selection Sunday:

"Yeah, I said maybe with the exception of the 30-2 team, you know we're always on pins and needles at this time of the year. You know games ago we never feel we're securely in the field. I think we're in the field securely now we're just playing for seedings. You know, how high can our seeding go? You know, the only way to go higher is to win games. So, we have to find a way to win games to give ourselves the best seeding we can going into the NCAA Tournament in March."

How to keep the team focused going into the Boise game:

"We will see. I mean they know what Boise did to us last year. They don't all have those games were three games and went to the final possession and so this is round two against Boise and we may see him again for a round three. So we want to be playing well and they're going to be playing well. They are the defending champs so they're not giving up on a banner. They're hoping that if they can beat us, and we trip up the last game, they can still get a piece of this title. Same with Nevada, so they're still playing for a title and they'll be inspired and we will be inspired because we know it's an important game."

On the Mountain West Tournament and how it prepares teams for the NCAA Tournament:

"Yeah that's what they say, iron sharpens iron. I don't think you'd be surprised if you looked up and San Jose State was playing for the finals or New Mexico. These teams that aren't playing for the title right now Utah State. You know, all these teams are good and so there's going to the potential of a bid steal at the end of this year with the Mountain West Tournament because everybody's good. This is a really competitive conference, and it will be that way when we all go to Vegas."

San Diego State Senior Guard Darrion Trammell

On finding his stroke:

"Yeah, work is what I always talk about. Just continuously staying in the gym, just trusting myself and having that confidence in myself, and my teammates and coaches."

On hitting four consecutive three pointers at New Mexico:

"I think it's just by taking them one by one, you kind of forget about the shots you made. I was just in the flow of the game, and everything just played out very well for myself. Just letting myself be myself. Having that confidence like I said earlier, worked out for the best."

On his emotions at the end of the New Mexico game:

"I told him he saved my life. I mean, that turnover could have been costly. And he stepped up and made a big shot. I think before I told him I had breakfast, lunch, and dinner for him for the rest of the month. So, I'm very grateful for Lamont."

On Lamont's shot being redemption after the Arkansas game:

"Oh, yeah, definitely. I feel like that moment was just for him, he definitely stepped up, knocked it down. I think he said in the interview, he can't let those seconds define him as a player. He definitely showed that it doesn't define him at all."

On what it was like to silence the crowd:

"It was great. We enjoyed every second of it. Obviously, I didn't get to enjoy the one at Utah State. So, I mean, I got one at the pit. And it was great. We celebrated in the locker room as conference champs. We owed them one since they got us here. So, I don't think it could have been better."

On how his consistent shooting affects his confidence:

"I just kept my confidence. My confidence keeps going up and up and up and that's what I've been looking for. Throughout the season, I had a couple of short games where I didn't feel like myself, I slowly started to feel like myself in that game."

On what it's like to have a coach that encourages him to shoot:

"I mean, it's everything you could ask for. Being in the transfer portal and that's something that I always look for, having a head coach that believed in me. Just letting me be myself and give me that same freedom that I had at my previous school. It's great, he told me that's how it was going to be and that's how it is so that's all you can ask for to have a head coach that stays true to his word."

On how much better it is to have an outright conference title rather than sharing it:

"It's everything. Obviously, we celebrated after we won the share of it. But at the end of the day, we're winners like we want to have it to ourselves. Last year Boise got them a few times. So, we're going with that mindset. We want to beat them at their home court and have that title to ourselves."

On what the senior class means to him:

"Everything, especially with AG, he was at my recruitment dinner. We talked about it like we're going to win this conference championship, going to make a deep run and marks and guys like all my seniors they just welcomed me with open arms."

They're veterans and they've been in the program for a while obviously coming into such a defensive heavy team. They've helped me along the way. Just showing me the ropes. So, I'm very grateful."

On if he came here wanting to win and hang up banners:

"Yeah, that was my whole mindset. I want to hang a banner as well. I thought there was no better place to do it than San Diego State, a little closer to home. They have a great culture. That's all I kept hearing about during the recruitment process is their winning culture and just how their alum, they always come back, and everyone always has good things to say about San Diego State. So hang a banner and I'm hoping everything goes well."

On how much he looks at bracketology as a player:

"I can't look at that stuff. I feel like once you look at it, you kind of have it in the back of your head and it's not a good thing to be thinking about. You got to get caught up in the moment, winning game by game and just letting things take care of itself."

San Diego State Senior Guard Lamont Butler

On the last play vs New Mexico:

"Last play I got the ball with around six seconds left. Got a screen from Nate at half court, tried to get downhill but I lost a little bit with two seconds left. I had to make a shot and I'm just glad it went in."

On originally trying to get to the basket:

"I was going to try to get to the rim, it was a little crowded. So, I didn't want to force it in there and turn the ball over so I just ended up taking the shot I'm comfortable with."

On if he knew that it was going in once it left his hand:

"Yeah, it felt good. It felt good leaving my hand. Like I said, I'm just glad it went in."

On what it was like to silence the crowd:

"Oh, it was great. It was great. The atmosphere was amazing up there. It's really just fun to be in that environment and its fun to win there too."

On if there was any redemption in the wake of the Arkansas game in November:

"Yeah, kind of put that behind. I didn't really think about that much. Like I said, I'm glad we got the win. I wish we could have won the Arkansas game too but I'm glad we got it done vs New Mexico."

On what went through his mind after he made the shot:

"I was a little shocked. I was a little shocked like dang the ball just went in. After that, I was just like, 'I guess that's what I do.'"

On the lineage of Aztec guards winning games in last second shots:

"I see a couple of things on Twitter talking about all that, Aztec guards that have done it. I'm just glad to be a part of it and I hope to continue to make my mark."

On how much better it would be to win the conference title outright:

"That's our goal. We came here to win the whole thing, lonely by ourselves. So, we're going to try to get these next couple wins and then go into the tournament with some wins."

On how far the team can go:

"We can go far. I believe that we can get to the national championship and win it. That's our goal for our team. Everybody believes that too so that's what we're going for."

On Darrion getting him breakfast, lunch, and dinner:

"Yeah, every time, every day he's been getting it."

On if he's ever hit a game winning shot for a title:

"No, never. I've never hit a game winning buzzer beater shot so that was awesome."

On how his shot has compared to his dream:

"It's kind of surreal, kind of like a spitting image. Just like what I used to do when I was in a backyard when you're shooting just like 321 and it went in so I'm just grateful."

On what senior night and the senior class means to him:

"They've been big. Just growing up with them. We got a lot of wins here. A lot of good times. It's going to be sad to see them go but we still have more work to do."

On if he looks at brackets for this time of the year:

"We just take it a game at a time like I said if we win, everything else will take care of itself from there. We will be playing for a high seed going into March Madness."

On if he was surprised that coach put the ball in his hands:

"A little bit. In the game I was missing, I was probably like three for ten at that point. Darrion was cooking so I thought I would try to give the shot to him, but he trusted me. I trusted myself so it worked out."

On coming off the high and going into Boise:

"Like I said, we have a goal. We're focused on that. We should go in there and just try to win."

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