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Boise at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 71, UNLV 62

Thomas & Mack Center | Las Vegas, Nev.

March 3, 2021

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement

"What this team accomplished this season is really special because of the circumstances we had to do it in. I told them today that we started back in September or November; one coach in gloves and a mask, one basketball, one player and we couldn't rebound the ball for the player. To think a few months later we are celebrating a conference championship. I couldn't be more proud of our coaching staff and our team that we were able to accomplish our goal of winning a title under these circumstances and it's a credit to everybody in our program."

On how far the program has come since coaches Fisher and he took over:

"I learned from Coach a long time ago that if you surround yourself with good people and good players, good things can happen. That is what we have done. We've got a good coaching staff, an underrated coaching staff. We've got players who have sacrificed parts of their games in order to win, and I couldn't be happier for this group and the way they played this season together. I just told them our best basketball is hopefully still ahead of us."

On the maturation of Matt Mitchell and Jordan Schakel over the last four years:

"I've been blessed to have them with me. I took over four years ago. That's when they were freshman and it's been an incredible four years together. Three (Mountain West) titles in those four years, NCAA tournaments, a season that we didn't get to finish last year, a season where we started slow this year. We've had great joy together over these four years and I'm so grateful they made an old coach look so good."

On the support the program has gotten this year and what it has meant:

"Well, we've had great support for our administration. From (San Diego State) President (Adela) de la Torre to Athletics Director John David Wicker, and all our administration to keep us safe, to have protocols that have kept the team safe, yet allowed us to be on the floor, and the city of San Diego was a big part of that. They found ways for us to practice in a safe manner. So, it not just the players, it's all the people that put all the time in that allowed us to get on the floor and allowed us to enjoy this moment together. So, this championship goes to a lot of people who helped us find a way to play basketball this year."

On Jordan Schakel's status prior to the game:

"We didn't know if we would have Jordan at all tonight. He didn't practice for two days. As of last night, I would say he was doubtful, but he's gutsy. He warmed up. I'm sure he is not even near 100 percent, but a Jordan Schakel at 50 percent is good enough for us. He gutted it out, found a way onto the floor, so now we've got to get him some rest, continue to rehab, and get him healthy for the conference tournament and the NCAA tournament."

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San Diego State Senior Guard Jordan Schakel

On how satisfying it is to get to this point and earning a championship:

"It's very satisfying, having gone through everything this year. On the floor struggling a bit, and off the floor every day is a struggle with all we have to deal with, but its nights like this that make it worth it. You work this hard to prove yourself and you go out there with your guys, have an opportunity to play for a championship and coming through is special."

On the importance of answering every UNLV run:

"It was very important, knowing how dangerous they are. Anytime you give a team life and they cut (the lead) to single digits, they get a little hope. So it was very important we were able to cut down those runs. They never saw single digits in the second half, I don't believe. So I thought that was huge."

On what happened to his back:

"I just hurt it on Monday. I don't really know how, but it started flaring up. I didn't know if I was going to be able to play. There was a lot of prayer and (team athletic trainer) Sergio (Ibarra) did a great job rehabbing. So I gave it a go. You can't sit these games out. Playing for a championship is not something everyone gets to do. I've been blessed to play for a lot of championships and there was no way I was going to sit this one out."

On the vibe in the locker room after the game:

"Its cool. I've seen Dutch get doused with a lot of water over the years and he seems equally excited every time. We know how hard winning is and we've been blessed to win. I think it was cool for the younger guys, to be involved in winning a Mountain West regular-season championship. They are now spoiled, but I was spoiled as a freshman when we won the Mountain West tournament. So hopefully they take this and keep it going for their four years. We pass it down to the younger guys to keep the tradition going."

San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

On his feelings of winning a conference title after everything that he and the team have had to go through:

"It's a feeling of relief, joy, happiness. Happiness for the young guys who have never experienced this before, happiness for the older guys who haven't been here before. All of them coming here to win, wanting to be part of something special. It's a sigh of relief."

On how he saw tonight's game as it was evolving:

"I think UNLV is a really tough team. As coach always says, 'There are very tough teams in this conference.' UNLV is one of them. They have gone through some adversity this year, missing some games, including our games back in December. They came out today and played hard, like the way we do."

On if he feels the accomplishment of winning back-to-back championships or if that is something that will come later:

"I think it's something I will be able to reflect on later. Being in this moment before, you kind of get a feeling of relief and joy, but at the same time there's a feeling of not being done yet because in my freshman year we were out (of the NCAA tournament) in the first round. Last year we didn't get a tournament. I'm really focused on our conference tournament and moving forward and winning games."

On the importance of winning the defensive battle against Bryce Hamilton:

"It was very important. I pride myself on being a two-way player. I kind of had a chip on my shoulder from (Boise State's) Derrick Alston going off in the first game of that series. I knew coming into this game I wouldn't have a second game. I had to go in aggressive for 40 minutes. But I wasn't the only guy on him, it was a team effort."

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On if winning MW Player of the Year is important to him:

"Yes, but at the same time as long as we are winning, I think I'd be content. Player of the Year is an accolade that comes with winning. With us being Mountain West (regular season) champions, moving into the conference tournament I think it will all work itself out. All I'm worried about is winning games."

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