

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Furman vs San Diego State

Saturday, March 18, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Amway Center

## San Diego State Aztecs Coach Brian Dutcher Lamont Butler Darrion Trammell Micah Parrish

Media Conference

San Diego State 75, Furman 52

**BRIAN DUTCHER:** First of all, I'd like to congratulate Furman University and Coach Richey on a great year. They're a really tough club. We prepared hard. We knew they were good. Then we played a really good game today at both ends of the floor.

Obviously we hang our hat on defense. That's the one thing that we do every game. Then when we get the opportunity, we start making shots and play good offensively, then we're very good.

We're fortunate to be moving forward. We're happy. We're looking forward to playing in the Sweet 16.

**Q. Coach, first time back in the Sweet 16 for the program since 2014. What does it say about this team to battle throughout the season and make it back there?**

**BRIAN DUTCHER:** We're about the right things. I mean, this is a veteran group. They play the right way. They're for one another.

Most teams can't play this deep a bench and have great chemistry. We have incredible chemistry playing a nine-man rotation. And that's been the key to our success, that we play selfless, we play together, and we're all about winning.



**Q. Dutch, it just seemed like teams have spurts and moments when the energy and effort really peak, but it seems like you guys main that throughout. There never really was a lull. It seemed like you were hustling, chasing loose balls, the kind of things that win these games. Was it different today in terms of just that sustained effort from start to finish? That's hard to do.**

**BRIAN DUTCHER:** It's hard to do, but when you have the depth we have, we always have fresh legs on the floor. We don't play a guy and all of a sudden he's tired because he's so valuable he can't be off the floor. Everybody 1 through 9 is the same on this team. Anybody is capable of leading us to scoring. Anybody is capable of making important plays.

Our depth is our strength. That's why we're able to play over a sustained amount of time in any game, because we have great depth.

**Q. Darrion, going from JuCo basketball to this, what does that mean to you?**

**DARRION TRAMMELL:** It's just a dream coming true. Obviously we're not done yet, but I mean, this is a blessing to get here. All the hard work I feel I've put in and doing things the right way, and I feel like I'm being rewarded for that. I'm just grateful to be here with my teammates.

**Q. Dutch, you talked all season about how you wanted a 40-minute performance and a good offensive and good defensive performance. How rewarding is it that it came together in this game?**

**BRIAN DUTCHER:** It's the best. You should play your best at the end of the season, and we're playing our best basketball at the end of the season. And that's what we've always done at San Diego State basketball, whether it was Steve Fisher leading this program, growing this program, to me taking over, we've always gotten better. And we're playing our best basketball at the most important time of the season.



**Q. Micah, there was a stretch in the first half where you took over a little bit scoring, held them out. What was it you were able to see that allowed you to get free up on offense?**

MICAH PARRISH: It was really my teammates finding me in transition. We just try to find an open guy. Each game might not be your game, but I guess today was mine, and the teammates just kept finding me. So just got to thank my teammates.

**Q. Darrion, was this perhaps maybe this team's most complete game? It seems like the contributions defensively, offensively just came from so many places. You guys really shared the ball and got easier baskets throughout. Was this one of the most complete games?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: I think it's one of them. It's one of our most complete games. I feel like we had another game earlier in the season where our offense was clicking and defense was clicking. But like I said, we're not done yet. I feel like we can take another step. And that's the urgency we're going to carry in practice every day because I feel like we're not done yet.

**Q. Coach, talk about that little run you guys had at the end of the first half, 15-0, held them scoreless for about 11 minutes. I know you hang your hat on defense. Talk about that spurt there.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, obviously if we get two or three stops in a row and then we can score a basket, we're going to build on most leads. So I thought our defense was really good. We have an ability to play a center like he's a guard. Our bigs have good feet. Our power forwards have good feet.

We just felt playing Furman we were going against five guards, that these guys were all really skill and talented, and even though you're a center you're guarding a guard tonight. And I thought our defense set everything up for us.

**Q. For Lamont and maybe one or two of you also could chime in, what did you do to them specifically defensively? They were late in the shot clock a lot of times. How much did it help having played Colorado State and Air Force and some of the same principles five times in year?**

LAMONT BUTLER: Well, we tried to pressure them and get them off their sets. Like Dutch said, we've got centers who can guard guards, so we switched a lot and that helped a lot. And we kind of just controlled the tempo on

the defensive side and we didn't let them get out and run in transition as much, so I feel like that helped us a lot.

DARRION TRAMMELL: Yeah, we had to disrupt them. They had two really good players on their team and the whole thing was just disrupt and keep the pressure on them. We were switching out and our bigs did a great job guarding the guards, switching out aggressively, and I think our defensive aggressiveness was really high tonight.

**Q. Dutch, a lot of the outside conversation in recent years has been about where this program hasn't gotten to in the NCAA Tournament. How satisfying is it to now shift that in terms of Sweet 16 and now it's about where you have gotten?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I just like the professional nature of this team. They're not in there throwing water bottles around. We have games to play. As much as we're enjoying this, which we are, it's rare that you can make any kind of run in the tournament. We're focused on the next task. We're about winning, and we want to continue to win.

**Q. Coach, for this to be the first Sweet 16 for San Diego State under your tutelage, what this means to you personally and why you feel like this team is advancing this season.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I know it's hard to believe, but I'm not taking any personal credit for it. I try to think back TO all the NCAA Tournament games I've been involved in, whether it was at Michigan with Coach Fisher or with him at San Diego State. If you're part of a team, you feel like you're part of all of those.

As much as people want to say this is your first head coaching experience, I just embraced them all like they were all mine or they were all ours.

I'm really not focused on what I'm doing for the first time. I'm focused on what we're all doing for the first time.

**Q. Micah, at halftime, you probably didn't hear this, but Charles Barclay said San Diego State has grown men and Furman has college kids, they couldn't handle the physicality. Did you sense today that you were just bigger and stronger than them?**

MICAH PARRISH: I don't think it's fair to say that. I feel like Furman was really good. I felt like we were just better at going inside. They have good players, four great guards. We just had a better advantage inside today.

**Q. Brian, going back to what you just mentioned being part of other teams that have gone far in the**



**tournament, how can you lean on that experience taking this team into the Sweet 16 next week?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I just said it before the game, teams don't win that play on their heels. We've got to play on our toes and with that comes intelligence. You can't go out and play crazy. I think we play connected, we play the right way, and we play with confidence. I thought the first game, as much as you could say about it, I thought we were nervous. There's always nerves that go into it. So now that we've settled into the rhythm, we know what this about, I think we'll play better moving forward. And that's really encouraging moving into the Sweet 16.

**Q. It's going to be a while before you find out who you play, but there's a chance, and obviously Alabama is favored, you could face the No. 1 overall seed in the tournament. I'm sure you guys have seen them play. If each one of you could answer what are your thoughts on possibly playing a team like that.**

LAMONT BUTLER: For me, playing the top teams is what I want to do. I came here to compete, and I thought we can compete with any team in the country. Also, it's about ourselves. If we focus on ourselves, we can beat anybody.

DARRION TRAMMELL: Like Lamont said, I think that's the culture we have. We're all competitors. We have an entire lineup of competitors. That's our mentality. But yeah, like Lamont said, we have to focus on ourselves and take it day by day, and everything will work itself out.

MICAH PARRISH: Like those two said, focus on ourselves. I got the chance to play Alabama last year for my old school, so I understand what it takes to win the game and things like that. We've just got to basically focus on ourselves really.

**Q. What does it mean for the conference with the Mountain West, because a lot of people on the East Coast don't know about you guys because we don't see you playing late-night basketball. Talk about the Mountain West and how great that conference is.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I just think it's one of the hardest travel conferences in the country. When we're traveling to Laramie or Logan and we're playing at altitude at 7,000 feet. In some of these environments, they're hard to get to, and we're battle tested.

Someone asked me what would it feel like if this building was full of Furman fans. I said it would feel like a road game and we're 8-2 on the road. We've been battle tested. We're ready for any environment. I think the Mountain West has a lot to do with that.

**Q. Large contingent of fans there in the arena today. What did it mean to have that support behind you guys, and were you be able to sense them there and did it motivate you guys?**

MICAH PARRISH: Yeah, definitely. It's great to see all the San Diego State fans come all the way here to Orlando, Florida, to come and watch us play and cheer us on. That means a lot to me and my teammates. I know our families got to come out here, we got to spend a little bit of time with them in hotel and things like that. So that just means a lot to us.

**Q. With you guys going to Sweet 16, maybe further, what do you feel is the key in those types of high intensity games? Whether it's offensively, defensively or if it's just your mentalities, what is that key factor for you guys?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: I mean, defense travels. That's something we have on the paper every game, every away game. That's something that we hang our hats on. I think that's going to take us very far. Like tonight if the offense is flowing, I feel like we're a very hard team to beat, but it's not something we have to rely on like a lot of teams do, so I feel like that's an advantage against our competition.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.



# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Furman vs San Diego State

Saturday, March 18, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Amway Center

**Furman Paladins**

**Coach Bob Richey**

**Jalen Slawson**

**Mike Bothwell**

Media Conference

San Diego State 75, Furman 52.

**BOB RICHEY:** Well, first of all, a lot of credit to San Diego State. I thought they played a really good game. You know, I thought they were very physical. I thought they were able to do some damage to us inside, and then they started getting comfortable from the perimeter.

You know, unfortunately it wasn't our night, and we wish we would have played better. Wish we would have shot the ball a little bit better. But some of that you have to give credit to them. But there's nothing that can take away what this group has done.

It's an unbelievable story, and I couldn't be more proud of our team, at a time where I'm extremely disappointed that we didn't advance. But it's really hard to not pull the lens back a little bit and still see what that group was able to accomplish.

For that, I'll be forever grateful.

**Q. Jalen, Mike, just like Coach said, you made the round of 32. How rewarding was it to come back, put on that Furman jersey, make the NCAA Tournament, win a game, and play on the weekend?**

**MIKE BOTHWELL:** Yeah, it's something no one can take away from this team. Greatest team in the school's history. No one has won more games than us, and we enjoyed it. That's the best part about it. We enjoyed the good times, we enjoyed the bad times, and we're going to have



relationships created and bonds created that will last a lifetime.

We put so much pride behind this jersey, with our alumni, with our current students and fan base. And people around the country know who Furman is now, if they didn't already. That's something that we're going to definitely take pride in. And when we get to process all that we accomplished, I'm sure we'll feel really proud about what we have done.

**Q. Coach, midway through the first half it was tied. I think you had 10 rebounds apiece. Virtually every stat line was tied. What happened in those last 10 minutes of the first half specifically? It just seemed like that wave could never be stopped.**

**BOB RICHEY:** Well, you know, I've always thought, this is a complementary game, and we look at it a little bit like there's two different ends. When you study really good teams, they're complete. It's not really an offensive team or defensive team. Great championship level teams are complete. The reason they're complete is because the two ends affect one another.

We're up 16-12 playing pretty well and we foul a three-point shooter, and I thought it affected our energy. I wouldn't necessarily say it was panic, but the ball quit moving and we were over-dribbling, and it was a little bit what they were scheming us to do.

And then we had some -- not just turnovers, but we also had what we call shot turnovers, which are bad shots that basically are just like a turnover. I thought they were able to play in transition and they were able to get the game up and down a little bit instead of having to score in the half court. I thought our half court defense initially was good.

You know, once they were able to open up the margin, I thought they settled in, they got a little bit comfortable. And we just could not -- our guys kept trying. I'm really proud of how they kept fighting. To see Garrett Hien dive on that loose ball right there with a couple minutes to go, that's the pride of the jersey.



But we just couldn't -- we could not catch a rhythm. The duck-ins clearly were bothering us. Obviously they started making shots. When they're making shots like that -- the biggest difference in their winning and losing when you look at it analytically is how well they shoot it from three. And when all the sudden Trammell is jumping up there and making those tough shots, and Parrish has 14 at halftime, now you compound that with what they're going in the interior, and then they're limiting your good looks.

Even sometimes when we get did looks, they just didn't go in tonight. But again, just you don't want to beat it up too much. It's been -- to see them continue to fight and to see them continue to compete, it made me a proud coach.

**Q. For Jalen and Mike, if you could both answer this. What were they doing to you defensively? Because you're a team that averages 82 points a game and you were late in the shot clock almost every possession there late in the last few minutes of the first half.**

JALEN SLAWSON: They did a really good job gapping us. We're a downhill team and we use drives to create for one another. Credit to them; we let the ball stick a little bit. But their gaps, their gap presence and then they pressured us, crawled up into the ball a lot, obviously them picking us up full court bothered us a little bit.

But yeah, they kept us from driving, kept the ball out of the paint, kept a really strong floor and played really hard.

MIKE BOTHWELL: Yeah, I would say, like Coach said, it was complementary. We stopped getting stops. And when we were taking the ball out of the net every time, it's hard to have a good flow, not getting any transition buckets. They made us work for everything we got. We didn't get any easies tonight. That and missing some open threes kind of stuck our rhythm. We kind of got in a rut.

But credit to them; they're known for their defense. They showed why today. They're known for physicality. They showed why today on both ends of the floor. But definitely us not getting stops made it worse. We didn't get out in transition, which is our best layer.

**Q. Bob, you talked about in this moment it's difficult to look at the big picture through all this, but what can you take from this experience in the NCAA Tournament maybe into next year and the teams in the future?**

BOB RICHEY: Well, that's what we just talked about in the locker room. Now you've tasted it. Like we've experienced it. Let's call it what it is. We're not using any excuses whatsoever. San Diego State played great today. But we

experienced a day Thursday that the program has never seen. We haven't experienced anything like that. The fashion that it happened, the emotions behind that, everything is new. From how we had to handle yesterday, the media sessions were a little bit extended, just we tried our best to normalize things as best we could, but at the same time enjoy it. But I had no worries about our prep. I thought our team was ready to play.

But now that we've been here, like it's a different taste. That's what I just told our team. It changes the sight lines a little bit. It changes a little bit what you're aiming for.

When you deal with success, failure is something that forces you to respond. What we went through last year, we knew we were going to respond to that. We worked all off-season with that. Sometimes what success can do is make you complacent, and I think the challenge going forward for us is to understand this has to make us hungrier. This has to push us every day to want to get back here and continue to show that we belong in the NCAA Tournament.

Look, you look at this, one eighth of the games were won by mid majors in the first round. Like mid majors are showing they belong in this thing. I don't want to get into an analytical spill of how this thing is harder to get in because you don't get rewarded for winning and you get just absolutely pummeled for losing. We lost at Western Carolina and fell 20 spots. We won eight games in a row and we only gained 20 spots. But what the mid majors are showing right now is we do belong.

I'm hoping that the country can continue to see that. And I know our program, we're going to walk out chest up, chin up, chest out, and we're going to look back on this and understand this was an incredible story. Not just the weekend, the whole year.

And just like last year, we counted all joy. We're going to count this all joy, and we're all going to find different things that we learn from this. But look, there's nobody walking out of here with their head down. I couldn't be more proud to be a part of it and to see how much this program has grown and how much the people inside this program have grown.

**Q. Coach Richey, could you talk a little bit about Jalen and Mike and what they mean to this university as a whole as their career comes to a close today? I know you've been with them the entirety of their career and how they've submitted themselves as program legends this year.**

BOB RICHEY: Well, he said we only have ten minutes and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

I think we've used about eight. That's going to be too short of an answer.

I just love it, about what it stands for. I love the fact that they had the conviction to do what they thought was right for themselves individually. But I think that care was due to their teammates and their program and their institution. I think it was a decision that it wasn't so much -- the question has always been why didn't they leave. Well, the better question would be, what did they stay for.

I think as you look inside our program, like you've got to ask yourself that. Like come to Greenville, come to Furman University, come to practice, come see how our players operate, come see how close they are, how connected they are.

Listen, it's hard to leave, because they love -- look how they just kept playing. They care about one another.

I think that's what the world doesn't quite understand. Like oh, they were supposed to leave. No, they weren't. They stayed for a reason, and they knew what they were coming back to do. And what I love about the story is everything that they've been rewarded with has been based off of that decision. And they delayed not only gratification, but they had to work through adversity.

For that, I just think it's an incredible deal. It wasn't our night tonight, but again, I think that's why we can walk out of here knowing that -- listen, the last time we lost, we were in Charleston and we lost to Citadel. And we basically had to win three in a row to win the league in the regular season and we had to win three in a row to get here.

And not only did they win six games in a row but then they won a game in the NCAA Tournament. I think for them, it's going to be something that resonates the rest of their life. I think when they go through hard, this will be something that will be ironed in their heart that now they know, hey, this is what you have to do.

Hard is hard, but it's necessary, and it's necessary to produce the growth, and I think that's what they were able to experience.

**Q. You just mentioned mid majors. This was a mid-major versus mid-major battle, but now San Diego State could be stepping up a huge level to Alabama. Is this a team that could challenge Alabama, or is that just a huge level, a huge jump?**

BOB RICHEY: I love what Coach Bennett said the other day in his press conference, that great basketball has no level and has no limit, and I'm a big subscriber to that. I

wish the college basketball world would subscribe to that.

I don't think San Diego State is a mid-major team. I really don't. They've got high-major length and size. They play extremely hard. When you look at the league, when you look at the Mountain West and how they schedule, the resources they put in, most of them by six games, when you look at their model, it really is pretty close to a high-major model, what they're doing TV wise and things like that.

I don't know anybody in their program. I don't know how they operate. But I'm telling you this, like they don't look at themselves as a mid-major. Watching them on film, they're very well-coached, they're very disciplined. They play extremely hard. They know who they are and they know what they're about. They could advance as far as they want in this thing because of how physical they are, how they defend and how they rebound.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.