

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Col of Charleston vs San Diego State

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Amway Center

**San Diego State Aztecs**  
**Coach Brian Dutcher**

**Matt Bradley**

**Darrion Trammell**

**Adam Seiko**

Media Conference

**Q. Matt, for you, what's this like having the second opportunity? Obviously you were here a year ago, but what's it like having that experience and coming back for a second time?**

MATT BRADLEY: It feels really good. This is why I came back for my second year to have this opportunity again. Right now we're just capping off to this amazing season that, winning the regular season, winning the Mountain West tournament. We just want to show everybody what type of team we have, so really looking forward to this opportunity.

**Q. Darrion, what about you, having a first opportunity here in the NCAA Tournament?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: This is a blessing. This is what I came here for. This is what we talked about throughout the whole year in the summer when I was in the process of transferring here. It's just a blessing, and we're finally here, and we're excited to do what we came here to do.

**Q. Not your first or second or even third, Adam. How do you put this one into perspective for you?**

ADAM SEIKO: Yeah, it's always good to be back in the tournament. Been here a few times now. And more for these guys, knowing they're out for a year and Matt for two years, this is what they came here for, to win championships. So I'm happy to be back, but got to focus



on going 1-0 right now. Focus on the game ahead of us, and I believe these guys will be ready.

**Q. Matt and Adam, Charleston takes a lot of threes. You guys pride yourselves on defending the three. What's the key to stopping a team that takes a lot of threes?**

MATT BRADLEY: To start off, they do a really good job rebounding out of their shots. We've got to rebound and defend the three-point line really well. Charleston is a really good team. We've been prepping for them all week just on guarding them. Really looking forward to this matchup.

ADAM SEIKO: They have a lot of guys that shoot the three, and they might not shoot it at a very high percentage but they're all confident. Like Matt said, they offensive rebound a lot so we're going to have to try and secure a rebound and stop them from getting offensive rebound and kicking out for threes. We got close to a touch, keep us above the three-point line and we'll be good.

**Q. I've asked Matt about this before but I want to ask Darrion and start with you, Adam. Just take me into the locker room last year after that loss. I know it was a tough loss, but what was that like and how much did that sort of stick with you all summer, all fall, all season, having to wait a whole year to get back?**

ADAM SEIKO: Yeah, last year was a shocker. In control of the game for the most part of the game, and those last five minutes of the game just dwindling down and turning the ball over and not hitting our free throws, which is all on us at the end of the day.

But we were motivated to come back this year, make it again, and more so win the regular season title conference championship leading into this to have some momentum. That's in the past, that's behind us. We're focused right now on just going 1-0.

**Q. Darrion, I think you told me you watched that game. Having watched it, saw what happened, and then getting -- being part of a team, what's your sense of**

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**how much that stung and how much it has motivated this team to get back here?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: I mean, it brings the intensity in practice every day. I feel like it's not a game like you can really forget, something that's going to sit with you for a while. And that's the motivation we carry with us and that's the chip we have on our shoulder. I can still feel it, and that chip kind of grew on me, as well. It's just something that you have to kind of try to forget and move on, and we're here to win one game at a time.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just excited to be here, eating chicken wings at 2:00 a.m. last night. Got in a little late, but they were good, and we're ready to go. When the guys were tired -- I worked for Lou Henson a long time and we'd have a guy that might be late for an 8:00 a.m. class, and Coach would ask, "What time does your mom get up to go to work in the morning?" And the player might say 4:00 or 5:00 a.m. And he would say, "Then how can you not be ready to go for an 8:00 class?"

And that's what I told the team today. What time does your mom get up to go to work in the morning. Then you have no excuse not to be ready to go.

We're ready to go. Excited for the opportunity to play a very good team. Pat Kelsey has done a great job with his squad, and they kind of remind me of the East Coast version of us. Even though we don't play the same way, we're wired the same way. We're deep, we play with a chip on our shoulder, and it should be a really competitive game.

**Q. Dutch, you have a group of guys that have been to multiple -- most of them multiple NCAA tournaments. I think only two guys have not been to one at all. Last year you thought that would matter. Obviously at the end of the game, the team that was less experienced ended up winning. What's your approach to NCAA Tournament experience? Does it really matter, or is it just kind of two teams playing and all that stuff is irrelevant?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, I saw Pat in the hallway, and like you said, hay is in the barn. The hay has been in the barn. We've played a whole season. We're playing our best basketball now, they're playing their best basketball now, so March is for players. Coaches, they'll call the plays they've called, they'll make an adjustment or two which we'll make, but someone is going to step up and have that magical moment in March.

So whether it's one play that saves the game or an effort play, it'll be a play or two that'll separate the teams at the

end of the day. And which player is going to make that play, I don't know. Hopefully it's one of ours.

**Q. Coach, they take a lot of threes. You guys have made a point of defending the three very well. How does that matchup look for you?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Well, obviously we're going to try to contest them all. We're not going to prevent them from taking them. Hopefully they shoot them over a hand, and then if they make them, you tip your hat. We've done a good job defending the three-point shot all year. I think we'll do a decent job tomorrow of contesting them, and then we'll see if they're going to make them over a contested hand.

**Q. Not just the fact that they take so many threes, they've got this innate ability to rebound missed threes and create additional opportunities. What is it about their style that allows them to have so much success on the offensive glass?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: They send more people than anybody in the country. They're going to send four on every shot, and the only guy that probably won't go is the guy that shoots it because it's hard to shoot it and then go get it. I told our guys they're going to get some, because if you send that many guys and you commit to get them, you're going to get some.

The key is not letting them score on an offensive rebound. So don't quit playing if they get it. Don't let them kick out and shoot an uncontested three, don't let them get it and shoot an uncontested lay-up. They're going to get offensive rebounds, but don't let them lead to baskets, and that will be the key.

**Q. Pat Kelsey mentioned he has been in an assistant, he was in as head coach at Winthrop, now with Charleston. You've been in as a head and an assistant a zillion times. What's it like -- even though you've been here before, is it still as unique and new as it was the first time you got there as an assistant?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: It's great watching the kids enjoy the experience. I've been to a number of them, obviously, and been fortunate to do that, and sometimes people want to talk about whatever your past performance is. Every team is different. Everybody has got new pieces every year. So this is new pieces, a different feel, and hopefully we'll have the success that I think this team has worked for and deserves.

**Q. You've been in a lot of postgame locker rooms. Describe what it was like last year when you had to**



**walk into that locker room and talk to your guys.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: That's the part that really never changes because as much as you think your season is never going to end, when it ends, it's always so abruptly.

Whether it's first round, second round, Elite 8, National Championship game with Michigan, when you go in that locker room, you never are where you want to be unless you win it all. You're always a step short of where you want to be.

So if we win one game, lose a second, we're going to be disappointed. If we go to the Final Four and lose in the semis, we're going to be disappointed.

So everybody deals with a disappointed locker room at the end of the year. And it just crashes down, and just the finality of it is always hard to deal with, no matter what round it is. Or ending short in a conference tournament like last year when Boise beat us, the feeling from last year to this year. We had two shots to win the game against Boise and we were crushed when we didn't do it. Whenever your season ends, it's always crushing.

**Q. The players have talked about the way you lost that game, not so much that you lost it, but the way you lost it has stuck with them all season, and that they have been waiting for their chance to get back to this. Even Darrion said he could feel it even though he wasn't there. What's your perspective on that? Could you sense that from last spring through the summer, through the fall, through this whole season, that they've been waiting to get back and maybe get some sort of redemption?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, like I said, the thing we've been talking about more than anything is play our best. Play our best. Play to our standard. If someone beats us, tip your hat to them. It's where you feel like you've done things to cost yourself a game, like a turnover that's uncharacteristic, like a missed free throw, those are things that are biting and hard to deal with.

If the other team makes plays, then you tip your hat to them. We want to come in here and play our best, and if we run into a team that beats us playing their best, then we'll tip our hat to them, but we want to play at our best right now.

**Q. On the topic of the loss last year, how hungry and how much do you want to get a win in the NCAA Tournament as the head coach of San Diego State?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, I want to win every game I play.

I'm nervous whether we're playing an early season against a Division II opponent. I'm wired that way. So I'll be nervous, but it won't be any more nervous than any game I've played all year.

We always silently pray before the game, and my prayer is always help me to guide these guys, not put extra stress on them. Help me to be the best version of who they are. The game is stressful, so whatever I do on the bench, it won't be to add stress to our team. It'll be to try to uplift them, make them believe they're better than they are, and get them ready for the moment.

**Q. The late arrival last night, was President Joe Biden at play at all in regards to late getaway?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I would never do that. Yeah, our plane was a little late getting in to pick us up because of restricted airspace around Air Force 1. Charters, as much as they sound like they're going to get you here early, they usually get you here when they get you here. We left San Diego at 5:00, landed at 12:00 or 12:30. Like I said, I wasn't joking, I was eating chicken wings at 2:00 a.m. They were good. They tasted really good, and we were happy to have them, and we're happy to be here.

**Q. How do you approach a team that -- metrically speaking, I think they'd be seventh in your conference and they haven't played a lot of high-level metric teams at least -- a team that your players may look at and say, well, they're just an average team in our conference. How do you get them to focus that you're not playing Syracuse, you're not playing North Carolina, so you're not playing a team from power conference. How do you get them to focus on the fact that they could be really good?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Because they look at them and they see us. They know what it is. This is not a Power Five school going against a non-Power Five where you might say, well, we're a Power Five conference. This is two non-Power Five schools that are wired the right way, that play hard-nosed tough basketball, and you have to respect it when you see it on tape. And our guys have seen it on tape.

It won't be because we underestimate them that they have success against us. We know what they are, we know who they are, and we see ourselves in them.

**Q. Keeping them off the boards and second-chance step-in threes is a key to the game, but what else do you see as being from a strategic standpoint a key to this game?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just know your personnel. They play 10 guys, so when a guy comes in off the bench, it can't be like, well, we don't know what this guy does. We switch so much that you're going to guard all 10 guys at some point. Nate may be on their point guard. He's got to know what his game is. So this is a know-your-personnel game, know shooters from drivers from post-up guys and know their strengths. So when you get on a guy, you have to know him.

We have painstakingly continued to study everybody on the team and be conscious of the match-ups we have.

**Q. Is there an opponent that you've played this year that is somewhat similar to how they play offensively? Is it Utah State or is it someone else?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I said they play with great freedom offensively, so there's not a guy on their team that's afraid to take a shot at any time. So we have to just be aware of that, we have to be conscious of that, and play with a hover hand and close out with high hands and play the right way.

They're good. They're dangerous. But they play with great confidence, and hopefully we can force enough misses and rebounds that we'll have a good chance to win the game.

**Q. What's unique about AG than some of your other players? As he said, he doesn't plan to play basketball professionally. I think most of your other players do plan to play. How does it change maybe his approach to games this season, and particularly this game, every game now could be his last game of his career, not just of his college career but of his basketball career. Do you notice that in him? He definitely seems like he plays like it's going to be his last game.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: I just think that's why his teammates and the fan base and everybody embrace him so much, because they know he's only playing for his team, he's only playing for his university. There is no basketball beyond this.

Everything he's putting into it is for San Diego State, for his brothers around him, and for the town of San Diego. So everybody embraces a guy that's just putting it all on the line for the moment, and that's what AG does every time he steps on the floor.

**Q. Pat Kelsey at the end of their practice jumped up, grabbed the net, climbed up and swung on the rim. Are you going to do that today?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: The only way I can get to the rim is winning a championship and climb a ladder, so no, I'm not

going to get that. But I've cut a couple nets down this year and did a couple trust falls, but I can't jump up and get the rim and pull myself up.

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