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Point Loma Nazarene at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 71, Point Loma Nazarene 51

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. | November 27, 2023

Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"That was a good game for us. Point Loma is a ranked Division II program. They played us without their best player tonight. They stretch the floor, they shoot threes, and they provide a whole different challenge than we have faced this year. We've played teams where we're not even guarding certain players because they can't shoot, and we're trying to over-help and this is a game where you really can't help off anybody because they shoot the ball so well. They do a good job spreading the floor, they run a good offense and they have a good team. It was a good challenge for us. We played a pretty good first half, even though we got down, we had 15 baskets, and 13 of them assisted. We shot 51% from the field, made a lot of threes, and we played good offensive basketball. We fouled too much early in the first half, and then the second half came and we only had two assists, we shot 12% from three and a lot of them were the same shots that we were making. That's why the assists dropped because we're missing open shots. I didn't like that many turnovers. We just played a game against Cal where we only had six turnovers for the game, maybe five or six, and we had 14 today. It was a case of guys trying to make too many plays for a teammate. It wasn't like we were dribbling off our foot or forcing it in there. We're forcing passes that weren't there, trying to play unselfish. In the last few games we played, every possession of the game was so critical. In this game, when you get a lead, sometimes you get sloppy, and as a coach, you don't want that. You're trying to play to whatever standard that we set for ourselves. We gambled too much where we thought we were going to steal the ball, and all sudden they got it open three. They had open threes that they missed. We can say our defense was good, but they shot 29% for the game, which is really good defense, but that's false because we gave them a lot of shots that they just missed by being out of position. The beauty of basketball is we continue to learn through winning. We have a high ceiling that we are not near yet that we can get to if we continue to work and learn from all these different games."

On the bench's improvement:

"We're getting healthy finally. Miles Byrd could only play a half today, and he was tightened up, so he's not 100% yet. We weren't even sure if Micah Parrish was going to play today because he was so banged up from the Cal game, but he played. Darrion coming back. It was good to have Demarshay out there for five minutes to get some of his timing back. We're getting to full strength, but we're not there yet. The bench is important. I used it, but I probably could have used it more today. As a coach, I'm just trying to be demanding, and I want to see a certain product out of those guys before I take them out of the game, timing-wise, and how they play. I thought we could have played better even though we were 20-some ahead. Some of the mistakes you make in a game like this, you can't make against a title contender from your conference. If you make those

kinds of mistakes, it will cost you the conference. We're trying to play to our standard instead of just the score who were playing."

On playing Division II programs:

"There's a metric. This doesn't count on the metrics at all, as far as evaluating our season. My choice would be do I want to play a team that's ranked 320-some and have it be a game where it hurts my metric because we're not winning by 20 or 30 points, or I can play a good Division II team and get my team better, and it doesn't count against me metrically. It just doesn't count as a game at all. Our strength of schedule is still really high. It's hard to get teams to play. No one wants to come here and play. The conference had it for years that you could play one Division II team, and they relaxed that rule this year because it's hard getting games right now, home games especially. Good teams will play you in a neutral site, but they won't play you home and home, so we have to get home games."

On having a target on your back after playing in last year's National Championship game:

"The team we see on tape is not the team we're going to play. It's true, we'll watch a team, and they might be sloppy and not play hard, but when they play against us, they're going to play hard as heck. That's not just because of playing in the National Championship Game. That's because there are 16 conference banners hanging out there, and everybody wants to try to be as close to San Diego State as they can. You see more and more Mountain West teams playing more like we play because we're hanging banners, and they want to hang banners. We're playing teams that are giving us their absolute best every time we take the floor.

Senior Guard Lamont Butler

On the mindset of playing a Division II team:

"Our focus is always ourselves. We go into it trying to better ourselves, try to play as best we can, and not really worry about the opponent as much. They're a Division II team, they're really good, they came out playing hard. We just went out there and then tried to play our best and try to win the game."

On his personal connection to Point Loma head coach Justin Downer:

"It was really cool to see Coach Downer — definitely a special moment. We talked about it. I actually went and watched his dog on Thursday, that's how close we are. That's my guy. I have much love for him and it was great to see him in a head coach position. It's been a long way since the Riverside Poly days and we were both there. I'm very proud of him.

"He was one of the first to really take me under their wing. I was a freshman coming in and he worked me out every day my first three years of high school until he left, and we really built a special bond. He was with my family at the Final Four run. He's always coming over to the house talking. He's just a really good mentor. It's definitely special to be here on the court with him."

On where the team is seven games into the season:

"I feel really good about the team, we're six and one, we're winning. The crazy thing is we still have a lot of room to improve. Myself, I feel like I still haven't played at my highest level yet. But the team is clicking on high cylinders right now. We're just going to continue to get better."

Senior Guard Darrion Trammell

On a different level of intensity from opposing teams:

"It's something that we talk about every game. We talk about how the team that we see on film is not the team that we're going to see when we play them. We're going to get their best shot. Players are going to have probably one of their best games but I think that's what makes us special because we still come out victorious at the end, and through a team's best game, we can come out and pull a W out."

On what the team needs to improve from tonight:

"We need to improve on staying mentally locked in on both ends. Obviously, there were a couple of lazy possessions, both offensively and defensively. So staying locked in for the whole game because we know most games are going to come down to the wire, any possession could lose you the game."

Point Loma Nazarene Head Coach Justin Downer

Opening statement:

"It's a great opportunity. It's a pleasure. It's an opportunity our program doesn't get too often. First of all, I just want to thank God for the opportunity and for allowing the stars to align with this late scheduling. A lot of credit to Coach Dutcher for being gracious enough to invite us into their home. That's why they're so good because they don't back down from anybody. They'll play anyone at any time in their own building. We hold ourselves to a similar standard as they do and have a lot of the same winning traditions as they do. I give Coach Dutch a lot of credit for inviting us in here and putting on a show for the city of San Diego."

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