



2014 WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIP

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE • SAN DIEGO

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO, HOST



(26-4)

Rank: 1 • Seed: 2

Third-Place Game

Stanford Cardinal 20, UC San Diego Tritons 11

Sunday, Dec. 7, 2014 • 1 p.m.

Canyonview Aquatic Center • La Jolla, Calif.



(16-11)

Rank: 6 • Seed: 4

Stanford Head Coach John Vargas

General comments on the game:

"Every year, we have the same goals. We want to be the best student-athletes in the country, and that means the best in the classroom, and the best in the pool. Unfortunately, we came up short yesterday by a goal, and so that's a little disappointing. But you'll see, in maybe a couple of weeks when they come out with the (national academic awards), we'll probably have 12 or 14 (honored). Our team GPA is going to be somewhere around 3.4, 3.5, probably the top in the country, and so we've got it on that side. Coming up a goal short yesterday was kind of disappointing, but I'm proud that these guys came back and were ready to play today and compete, because at the end of the day, that's what it's all about. Both of these guys (Bret Bonanni and Alex Bowen in the press conference) did a great job today. I'm really proud of them."

On his three seniors, Conner Cleary, Nick Hoversten and Alex Bowen:

"I've been really fortunate to have been able to coach someone as talented as Alex (Bowen). We'll really be looking forward to watching him play in multiple Olympics. I mean we all will. He's just a phenomenal player. (I've been) really happy to be able to coach someone like Conner Cleary, who's developed so much over his four years and a quarter at Stanford. I mean, that was a kid that wasn't recruited by anyone, and he came in and played a significant role on our team and made a huge impact. He also has somehow worked his way onto the national team, because it is really work that he's put in, and I'm super proud of him. Nick Hoversten has had many trials and tribulations in his last five years, and if you guys knew his story, you would be really impressed by what he's gone through. I certainly am. With all three of those guys, I always tell them, we'll be connected for the rest of our lives. As I get older, those connections seem to be a little more important. So really, really honored and happy to have been able to coach them in this period of time."



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Stanford Senior Utility Alex Bowen

On his exceptional career at Stanford:

"Well, it was one heck of a ride. I've met the best friends of my life. I've gone through some hellish practices, but I've gone through them with guys I wouldn't trade it for. I wouldn't make a run at the title with any other team. We came up short. I still wouldn't trade it."

On his individual accomplishments:

"I'm there because of my teammates. They set me up, and I do my best to set them up."

On what's next for his water polo career as a member of the United States national team:

"We have training in the winter. We have a nice little exhibition against Italy in southern California. Other than that, we've got World Championships this next summer, as well as Pan Am Games. Right now, I've worked my way onto the team, and I hope to stay there for as long as I can."

Stanford Junior Driver Bret Bonnani

On his goal-scoring performance the last two seasons:

"I just want to win every game, and do whatever I can to win every game. That's all that really matters, just winning games."

On going into next year:

"We want to win (the national championship). That's all that's really on our minds. It starts on Monday. We want to win."



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UC San Diego Head Coach Denny Harper

General comments on the game:

"I can't even say at this very moment that we are disappointed in that loss. The feeling of a great season is, quite honestly, overwhelming. We had such a great year, and now that it is over, with a couple great seniors here (Joe Dietrich and Josh Stiling in the press conference), that's really the feeling. I think that's how the players feel about it. Stanford is a fantastic team. Obviously, they came here, they were 'in it to win it' for sure, and holy moley, to their credit. I think the character of that team, they came out today and played great for arguably what had to be a challenge for them to get up for a third-place game. They played great. Their team speed was pretty amazing to watch. Obviously, (Stanford junior driver) Bret Bonanni, I think he had eight goals, maybe. He is a shooting machine.

"I think I speak for a lot of these guys, we really, really have so much respect for (Stanford senior utility) Alex Bowen. San Diego homegrown. It was hard to see him in that loss yesterday to USC, but at the risk of sounding corny, we're proud of the career he had. A local product out of Santee."

On his group of eight seniors:

"We have a great program. The culture in our program is great. Great players help perpetuate that. It isn't just the coaching staff. These eight seniors that we've had, though, raised the level of accountability and responsibility in this program. They've set the table for even greater things. I'm anxious to go (from the press conference) because all the returning guys need to work out."



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UC San Diego Senior Two-Meter Joe Dietrich

On his performance in his final collegiate game:

"It was the perfect way to end my career. Obviously, I would've done anything to get the win there (against Stanford). Just going out, playing with the guys that I play with, my friends and teammates, and having it end on the perfect stage, was just amazing."

UC San Diego Senior Utility Josh Stiling

On what his final collegiate game meant to him:

"The outcome of these last two games, is nothing to take away from the season that we've had and the careers that we've had at UCSD. Making it this far was the cherry on top to one of the best periods of my life. I'm just glad that I got to share it with some of my best friends and a great coach."

On his back-handed goal late in the contest:

"I've been telling these guys for the last couple of games, I'm just gonna throw a back hand at some point. I finally snuck it in there at the end. I was pretty happy with myself there."