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San Diego State vs. UNLV Postgame Quotes

No. 25 San Diego State 82, UNLV 71

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. | February 11, 2023

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"Real happy with the victory today over UNLV. They've been playing good basketball and have won four of their last five games. I thought it was important that we continue to do what we're doing at a high level: that's sharing the ball, I think we had 23 assists, and then rebounding the ball at the offensive end— we had I think 18 offensive rebounds—I don't know the exact number. But all the things we've been doing to be successful, we're continuing to do. Now I was concerned the first time we played them. We had 21 turnovers then, and we had 21 again tonight. I never thought that would happen where we'd have another 21 turnovers, but they lead the conference in forcing turnovers. I think there are 15 a game that they're forcing. That's the thing of coaching, there's always areas to improve. We have to take better care of the ball and we've done that over the last stretch, so this was a little bit of an anomaly. But they pressure, they play physically, and they do a good job. I'm extremely pleased with the victory. As a coach, there's always stuff you need to work on. That's why I think we continue to grow as a program all the time because winning sometimes isn't enough. It's winning playing your best. There were some things they hurt us on— they hurt us on the high ball screen the entire second half, more so than the first half. We're already looking to Fresno, because that's what they do— they play high ball screen. We'll go back to the drawing board and try to get better at that. There's always something to get better at, and that seems to be the task at hand for the next two days of practice: to get better at pick and roll defense again."

On the recent production from the bench:

"Yeah, it's been all year that we've had great production off the bench. Whether it was the last game against Utah State or this game, Micah, Adam, Jaedon, and AG all come off the bench and provide not only offense but great defense and rebounding. Most teams might take a step back when they go to the bench, but at times we're playing even with the starters and at times we're playing better than the starting group. That's the beauty of this team. Try to find who's playing well and narrow that lineup down in the second half to have the best guys playing on the floor at the same time. And that's what we've been able to do."

On letting off the gas towards the end of the game:

"It's human nature and I can't let it be human nature. You're up 22 points and you relax just enough to forget that you have to play at your maximum efficiency to have success. In whatever sport you're playing, you have to perform at your highest level. It was even the free throw box out at the very end. Jaedon doesn't box out, they get the rebound, get a basket, and

then a turnover. Then he flops, they get another basket, and it's just that a play can turn the momentum of a game. It's just all the detail stuff and that's the beauty of coaching. We have to see what those things are that we need to improve in and then put them into a practice plan. That's what we do. We don't accept poor play no matter what time of the game it happens. We'll watch this last five minutes, and a credit to UNLV, they attacked the basket. They got 28 free throws; they played downhill against us. They're very aggressive, very talented, and very well coached. You have to take the good with the bad— be extremely excited for the three quarters of the game we played well, and then find the teachable moments in the last two, three, or four minutes. There were teachable moments that we can teach to, and that's what coaching is— teaching."

On the culture and philosophy around bringing in transfer student athletes:

"I think Matt said it best when he talked about culture, and you don't have culture unless you have four, five, and six year guys. Seiko's six years, Mensah's five years, Arop's five years, Keshad Johnson's four years, and Lamont Butler's three or four years. These guys have been in the program, so they set the culture and the new guys come in and they see what it is. We're not bringing eight or nine guys in every year and trying to reinvent our culture. We have veterans that set the tone. When we sign a guy, we tell them what it is: you got to defend here or don't come. If you don't like playing defense, this is not the place for you. If you defend, I'll let you have great freedom on offense, but you have to defend. They know what they're getting into when they come. They're not just told it's going to be sunshine all the time. Work goes into it, and if you want to put the work in and you want to be part of a winning culture, then this is the place to come."

San Diego State Senior Guard Matt Bradley

On the team's potential and ceiling:

"Yeah, the ceiling is really high. As everybody knows, we are the deepest team in this conference. So, when we get production from everybody, you know, that's a first-place team you are looking at. I'm just happy for our guys and everybody that stepped up today for sure. But the ceiling is high."

On the environment of Viejas Arena during the game:

"We're really thankful for our fans. You know, we've been traveling around and playing at other gyms. There's no way it's close to our gym with what the other teams have to offer. The Show and all the fans, that is an edge we have when they (opponents) come and play at Viejas. As a player, we're really thankful to have that. So, keep coming, we're really thankful."

On rebounds and getting after every loose ball:

"Yeah, for sure. Like from everybody too and we were player led at moments and coach led at moments but either or, our coaches are on us to make those plays and as a team, we hold each other accountable to make those plays. So definitely a difference maker, in offense rebounding, we're the best team in the conference doing that and that's our advantage when shots aren't going in. Second chance opportunities so we know that's a good part of our offense."

San Diego State Senior Forward Nathan Mensah

On how altitude affects the game:

"I feel like I just hold back a little bit. It's kind of like you have it in your mind that they need you more on defense than offense. So, I hold back on offense and make sure on defensive end, I'm fully prepared to be on the defensive end."

On the improved defensive performance from three:

"It's just a team effort where every game we come together and make sure that we're going to stop their best shooters. That makes it easier for everyone on the floor. If those guys don't have it going, their team struggles. Most teams emphasize on three pointers to win, while we emphasize on defense to win."

UNLV Head Coach Kevin Kruger

On SDSU's depth:

"They play incredibly well together. They're incredibly selfless. They help each other. When a guy makes a mistake and you think you've got an opportunity to take advantage, they quickly rotate. They fight for each other and they're just incredibly consistent in that. So that's what makes them really hard to beat."

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