

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - UAB vs San Diego State

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Spokane, Washington, USA

Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena

**San Diego State Aztecs**

**Lamont Butler**

**Jaedon LeDee**

**Derrion Trammell**

**Brian Dutcher**

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: It's a pleasure to welcome San Diego State student-athletes Lamont Butler, Darion Trammell, and Jaedon LeDee to the stage.

Lamont is a Mountain West All-Defensive team member. Jaedon, First Team All Mountain West. And Darrion is a starting guard. We welcome those gentlemen.

**Q. Well, to break the ice, let me just ask each of you, starting with Lamont, maybe just quick thoughts about being here in Spokane and about facing UAB. Lamont?**

LAMONT BUTLER: We're really excited to be here. March Madness is something we all dream of. Last year, we had an incredible run, and this year we are here to show it wasn't just a one-year thing, that we can do it again. So we're very excited and can't wait.

JAEDON LeDEE: We're really blessed to be here in Spokane and play tomorrow. It's a blessing to be in March Madness. We just want to take care of business and do our jobs and make a run like we did last year.

DARRION TRAMMELL: Yeah, this is how -- I mean, why some of us came here. This is why most people play college basketball is to be in these seats and in this environment. It's a blessing, like Jaedon said, to be here, and we're trying to seize this opportunity.

**Q. For any of the players, talk about last year and that national run and why you think this team maybe has**



**the ingredients to repeat that?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: Last year was special. We brought a lot of good pieces back, obviously, from last year. We kind of know exactly what it takes. It's all about passing on the tradition to the younger guys who haven't been a part of it.

I feel like we've done a great job with that. We had a great preseason. Regular season, we played a lot of great teams, a lot of hostile environments. So I think we're just set up to do it.

We challenged ourselves early on in the season, so now we're here to show it.

JAEDON LeDEE: Just to piggyback off what Darrion said, we kind of got a few guys who were here last year for the run, and we got the new guys who have been here with us all year. We've been trying to rub off what we've learned in this tournament last year. So just the experience we got throughout the year and from last year, we can all gel it together, make a run this year.

LAMONT BUTLER: To echo off what they said, experience is key for us. Like you said, we've got a lot of guys coming back who experienced what it was last year. So we're going to be ready for that. And then the new guys are really good, and they're going to really help us go on this run.

**Q. For Darrion and Lamont, they switch defenses a lot. How much of a challenge is it and what's your thought process when you play a team like this to quickly identify it and adjust?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: The main thing is don't panic. At the end of the day, they'll be scrambling around a lot. So just being solid with the ball and making sure we make our reads as solid as possible and getting it where we know the ball is supposed to be is key.

It's definitely just keeping our cool and being basketball players. I feel like that's what the game is going to come down with all the scrambling and how long and athletic

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

they are. It's a basketball game. It's all about being smart with it.

LAMONT BUTLER: I would say being organized is going to be key. It's going to take a lot from me and Darrion because we have to recognize it, like you said. We can't let it speed us up and let us go wild because that's how they want us to play because of all the switching defenses.

So just stay organized, keep our pace up, and we'll be able to handle it.

**Q. As you look at them on tape, you mentioned their athleticism, switching defenses. Rebounding is something Coach Dutcher has talked about a lot. Is rebounding the key to the game or limiting your turnovers?**

DARRION TRAMMELL: It's definitely a good mix of both. We obviously have to rebound. That's been the key to the game for pretty much every game we've had this season. It's nothing new. I think we kind of worked our way to be pretty physical and take care of the rebounding battle.

Obviously, limiting turnovers is something we do really well already. It's all about keeping our composure in this environment. It's very easy to get out of character or get sped up. It's about having that experience and knowing that we've been here before. It's all about keeping our cool and, obviously, rebounding.

JAEDON LeDEE: Defensive rebounding usually is the key to games so, I mean, we can control that, control the glass, you know, limit our turnovers, I think we've got a good chance of coming out victorious tomorrow.

LAMONT BUTLER: Rebounding is definitely a key factor in this game. One of their best players, Number 3, he's one of the best offensive rebounders in the country and on their team. So we're going to be really focused on him. Then they've got some other guys that really crash. So we're going to be locked in on that aspect.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, guys.

We'll ask Coach Dutcher to make an opening statement, an overview, and will open it up for questions. Coach?

BRIAN DUTCHER: First of all, we're in the East Regional, and we're playing in Spokane, Washington. That's about as far west as you can get. We're excited to be here, to get a couple games on the West Coast, hopefully.

We've prepared hard, we're healthy, and we're ready to go and excited for an opportunity to see if we can win some

games on college basketball's biggest stage.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Dutcher.

**Q. Dutch, what is it about this UAB team that creates challenges with the athleticism, the way they switch their defenses? What type of challenge is this?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: They're older. You're not seeing a lot of sophomores and freshmen out there. Juniors and seniors that have played a lot of basketball. Everybody on the floor is dangerous offensively, which is rare. Usually, there's one or two guys you key on. If you don't pay attention to everyone out there, anyone on that floor is capable of putting up 20, 25 points.

So that's a concern that we're going to have to do a good job defensively. They're the No. 22 ranked offensive rebounding team in the country. Everybody knows we've struggled sometimes rebounding the ball, and so we have to make sure we play defense at a high level and finish with a rebound.

**Q. You always talk about the NCAA tournament's all about match-ups. How do you rate this match-up? Is it a good match-up for you? Is it a rough match-up? Where do you fall on that?**

A. As far as a match-up with UAB, a lot of times, somewhere across the season, you've played someone that plays like the team you're going to. And really, nobody plays like aah that we've played.

They play multiple defenses. The Mountain West is predominantly man, and then they'll mix in some 1-3-1 zone. UAB plays 1-3-1 to man, they play 2-3 to man, 1-2-2, three-quarter court press into the 2-3. They play straight man.

So we'll have to adjust switching defenses and be comfortable knowing that maybe as coaches, we're not going to have as great a control over the game as what we do when we play a straight defense. So sometimes it's going to be about players making plays, but that's what March is about. Players making plays to win games. This will be the perfect setting for that.

**Q. Dutch, can you just comment on the play of their forward, the 6'9" Yaxel Lendeborg and when makes him you know increase and able to have the success he can have.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: He's as close to Degehart from Boise as we can play. He's important to them. He can shoot the open 3. If you take the 3 away, he'll drive by you. He can

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

post up. He can score at all three levels; he shoots it, he drives it, he posts it. And then add rebounding to that, he's super dangerous.

We'll have our hands full with him, whether it's Jay Pal, Elijah or at times Jaedon, he'll be a challenge for us at the defensive end.

**Q. Fairly or unfairly, the way college basketball works, teams like yours are judged by what they do in this game, and maybe the next game, and not what you've done in the last 34 games.**

A, do you like that? B, do you just sort of accept that and embrace it?

BRIAN DUTCHER: You're judged every day in this business. Every possession, every win, every loss. You're going to be judged in coaching so you've got to have a thick skin. You've got to know what you're doing is right, believe in what you're doing, and believe in your kids. That's what we do.

I mean, no matter how this goes, I said two years ago when we lost to Creighton in the first round, people wondered if we'd ever win an NCAA tournament game. Last year, we won five games. People don't think we'll ever lose one now.

We'll see what it is when we get on the floor. We'll be ready for our moment. We'll play hard, we'll play smart, and we'll let it all hang out on the floor.

**Q. Dutch, Andy Kennedy talked about the fact that you guys go back maybe three decades in terms of knowing each other. What's your relationship like with Andy? Obviously, he's done an amazing job at UAB.**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Andy and I were both assistants a long time ago recruiting against each other. That's competitive. Then I followed his career. He's had an amazing career. SEC coach of the year twice, stepped in for Huggins at Cincinnati, has done a great job now at UAB. So just the fact that he and I are still coaching means we've done something successfully. This is a hard business to survive in, and we both survived and, to a degree, we've both thrived in the business.

**Q. Obviously, you see on tape what they do tactically. Do you have a sense for what type of kids he has? Being in a mid-major and kind of having to find guys who maybe don't have five stars and aren't highly touted, just the personality, what kind of personality does he have on that team?**

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, I mean, they look a lot like we did when they're having great success. They have great length, they have great experience. They seem to play with a real level of toughness about them.

So, you know, you could close your eyes and switch uniforms and both teams look like each other. So talented, non non-Power 5 teams that compete hard, play at a high level. It should be a real challenging game for both of us tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much for your time.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Thanks, everybody. We'll see you tomorrow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports