

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - San Diego State vs UConn

Thursday, March 28, 2024

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

TD Garden

San Diego State Aztecs

Brian Dutcher

Jaedon LeDee

Darrion Trammell

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

UConn 82, San Diego State 52

BRIAN DUTCHER: First of all, congratulations to UConn and Coach Hurley. We wish them the best of luck moving forward. They're an outstanding team and will be very dangerous down the road.

With that being said, I want to say it's not the ending we're going to remember, it's the journey because the journey is everything. We've been on an incredible journey together. I take great joy here tonight with these three guys sitting next to me, the fact that they're 7-2 on college basketball's biggest stage over the last two years. It's something to take great pride in. I said if losing a basketball game is the worst thing that's going to happen in your life, you're going to have a fantastic life.

We're just enjoying each other's company, the brotherhood that they're always going to be a part of, the family that Aztec basketball is. We rejoice in that even though we're disappointed in the outcome of the game. The game is not the journey, and we embrace and love the journey we were on together.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Is UConn better this year than last year?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Either better or we're worse, I don't know. Yeah, they're good. They're connected. They're dangerous. We tried to hang in there. We didn't play our best game, but that's a credit to them. We knew we had to



make some shots, and we didn't make enough shots. They have an ability when they get ahead with the offense they run to really extend every possession and punish you, and that's what they did.

We came down and pressed, tried to get a shot, get back in the game. They make you defend for 30 seconds. They're very talented. They're very well-coached.

Q. I guess Jaedon, can I ask you the same question. Are they better than they were last year.

JAEDON LeDEE: I couldn't really tell you off the top of my head. The team is really good. They played a really good game tonight. I don't think we played our best ball, like Coach said. Kudos to them. They played really well tonight.

Q. Jaedon, Coach Hurley just gave you a ton of props for how you were defending Clingan out there. Can you talk about what that matchup was like for you defending a guy who was 7'2", being as strong as you are?

JAEDON LeDEE: Yeah, I knew the severity of everything, and I just got a lot of heart. I'm not going to let him just go in there and do what he wants to do down there. I was just out there competing.

He's a great player. He's going to have two more great years in him, and I was just out there competing against him. That's it.

Q. In your intro you just talked about the journey of this team. I think nobody maybe more so than Jaedon has had such a journey throughout college basketball, having to transfer so many times, getting to this point with San Diego State. Tell me a little bit about the development you really saw from him throughout this year. He goes from averaging eight points to almost 21.5. From this year compared to last year, tell us a little bit about his improvements.

BRIAN DUTCHER: Part of his results last year were directed towards me because I didn't give him the freedom



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I've given him this year. With the team we have this year, I gave him more freedom, and he played great within that freedom.

He was not selfish. He shared the ball with his teammates. He was hard to guard, and we're just proud of how he played for us and just wish him the best hopefully in a pro career that will start here in the near future.

Q. Darrion, can you talk about your experience over the last two years, going to the national championship last year and the Sweet 16 this year and how it's going to help you in the near future?

DARRION TRAMMELL: It's everything I wanted coming here. Me and Dutch and the coaching staff talked. The biggest thing was to make runs in March.

I feel like we were successful in doing that. Obviously losing tonight isn't what we wanted, but I'm blessed just to be in this position. Dutch gave me the opportunity to play on the biggest stage, put me in the situation to be successful. That's all I can ask for.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us. Questions for Coach.

Q. Did you have a message specifically for the seniors after the game? I saw you talking to Pal right as he was walking off. Is there anything specific you wanted to mention?

BRIAN DUTCHER: I thanked them all for what they've given me. Jay Pal coming here for that one year and being as important as he was to us. Jaedon for three. Darrion for two.

Just thanked them for all their efforts and told them, I'm here for you. Whether that's today, tomorrow, five years from now, ten years from now, that's the player-coach relationship.

It doesn't end when their careers end. I want them to know I'm here for them when they need me. My dad was a coach, and he is 90, and he still has former players calling him. So I know what it is, and I take great pride in that.

Q. Obviously you guys had far travel to get to Boston. Do you feel like with the way the second half played out that there was any travel lag or fatigue with the distance you had to come to get here?

BRIAN DUTCHER: No, there was just a lot more UConn. So, no, the tournament is the tournament. Like I said, would we rather be sitting at home or jump on a five and a

half hour flight? Like we said yesterday, we would take a ten-hour flight to be here. We're so proud to be here and represent San Diego State University and try to do it the right way, play hard as long as we can, and only one team is leaving this event happy, and that's going to be the national champ.

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