

# Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

**San Jose State Spartans**

**Coach Tim Miles**

**Latrell Davis**

**Josh Uduje**

Postgame Press Conference

New Mexico - 63, San Jose State - 52

**TIM MILES:** Tough physical battle. We knew New Mexico is so talented, so good it would be that way. I thought we met the moment in terms of physicality.

I was disappointed with our ball handling, some of our shot selection. Thought it held us back offensively.

But you have to credit New Mexico. They got it done. With Dent and Junior Joseph, that's a tough tandem, tough duo to deal with.

**Q. Latrell, the New Mexico coach and players mentioned that Rob's paint presence had them frustrated. What did you see from his performance?**

**LATRELL DAVIS:** Rob gives you something every day. He's going to rebound. He's going to take a big body on. He's going to play defense. He does it all.

So it really helps us when he's a big factor in scoring, rebounding because we get those second-chance opportunities. We limit them to one shot at a time rather than them getting O boards and being able to have second-chance points.

It's a big factor. He sets good screens. It's easier for us as a guard. It's really good to have him out there. It's a big impact.

**Q. Josh, there's been lots of different accomplishments you guys have achieved this year for the first time in the program. What are you most proud of this group this season?**



**JOSH UDUJE:** I think it's been a lot to be proud of for the year, but I would just say our resilience. I mean, we kind of made it a trend to dig ourselves a hole, and we always find a way to kind of dig ourselves back out, climb out of that hole.

So I'm just proud of the way the team just showed resiliency throughout the whole of the year.

**Q. What is it like to deal with Nelly Junior Joseph and Donovan Dent out there?**

**JOSH UDUJE:** Both of them are super talented. I mean, there's a reason why they were named first-team and player of the year. So how they performed today kind of shows that. They're a good two-punch duo.

**Q. Nelly had a good game, but can you tell us, walk us through that dunk?**

**JOSH UDUJE:** Yeah. I mean, Latrell got the steal. And when he kicked it ahead to me, I knew Nelly was -- he wasn't just going to let me lay the ball up. I thought I might be able to sneak -- I didn't think he was going to jump. Kind of glad that he did jump as high --

**Q. You were well aware he was right around there, though?**

**JOSH UDUJE:** Oh, yeah, definitely. But, yeah, I mean, just try to make a play in the moment and ended up being quite high. So hopefully I get SportsCenter. That would be nice.

**Q. One of your highlights for the season right there, right?**

**JOSH UDUJE:** Yes, definitely.

**Q. They're a team that loves to get out and run. They started their game, your first possession, Tru Washington steals it and has a break away. But they only end up with four fast-break points and they're third in the country in fast-break points. What were**



**you able to do to really stop them from getting out and running like they normally do?**

JOSH UDUJE: I mean, Coach made it kind of like a big point on stopping them in transition, making them play in the half court. We know that they've got super high energy guards that can get down the floor quickly. So it was kind of pivotal for us to limit their transition points.

I think we did a good job of that. But good players make good plays. And Nelly and Donovan and even some of the guys coming off the bench, like CJ Nolan and Tru, they did good jobs today, too.

**Q. Latrell, late in the second half it looked like you were doing a lot of -- being aggressive with a lot of dribble penetration. Was it a focus to counter their defense with you trying to cut in there, using your speed and aggression? Looks like you're really trying to push the issue there.**

LATRELL DAVIS: I feel like I'm at my best when I'm being aggressive and playing -- I wouldn't say faster -- but like pushing the pace of it more. That's my game.

I was really just trying to get that going. Like, we're a good team when we run and get those points in transition. So I was really trying to do that and change the flow of the game.

Like, they're a fast team. We don't want to play their game. But at the same time when we have opportunities to run, we've got to run. I feel like that's where our points come in.

So I was just trying to be aggressive, draw the defense. If I could find a teammate, find a teammate. If not, score myself. But that was just really me trying to focus on just staying aggressive, like, drawing more than one defender.

**Q. Josh, your last game. Just the emotions of coming into the game and now it's winding down. What are your thoughts and feelings?**

JOSH UDUJE: I don't think it's really sunk in yet that was my last college game. I probably, later tonight, maybe watching some of the highlights, realize that.

But it's been a good ride. Obviously competing in the Mountain West for two years. And was fortunate enough to win a championship and then play under Coach Miles. He's a great coach.

I'm proud of this team. I'm proud of Latrell. He took a big jump this year. And I expect him to have a great college career, too. But I'm just now just kind of focused on the

next chapter of my life and what that looks like in professional basketball.

**Q. The fast-break emphasis, is that the emphasis when you face the Lobos?**

TIM MILES: No doubt. The first thing you have to do, I think, to guard them is get them out of transition. If you just watch their offensive possessions, you know, and just kind of don't just watch a game, just watch the offensive possessions and you see how fast they are consistently, game after game after game down the floor, you're just, like, this is bad. Like, this is tough to deal with.

But then once you get them out of that, you've got the two-man game and Donovan Dent playing on a screen and roll. He's a maestro. I mean, the way he moves the ball and where he puts the ball.

As I think they get more perimeter shooting, they could be a nightmare in the NCAA Tournament.

**Q. You mentioned Donnie already. But first Mountain West player to have five straight games I think it is 20 and five -- 20 points, five assists. He is a guy that I know teams can focus on, but still has ended up getting those points. What is the best approach to -- do you slow him down? Do you let everyone else do their things? What's the best approach with Donovan Dent?**

TIM MILES: You can't just let him do his thing because he can dominate the game. And really just the ability -- Nelly Junior Joseph is a big deal for him, too. The screens that he set give him a huge advantage. Just the physicality of that action.

If you took a tall, skinny guy and tried to set that ball screen you could get through it. I think he gets some help from his center. But you just gotta do your best job you can on him and on all of them.

I thought Tru Washington had a couple of big plays for them against us. But at the end of the day, they're a really good basketball team.

**Q. I think 34 minutes into the second half there was an 8-0 run and then a 7-0 run and Pitino called a timeout. After that you had a quick exchange there with Donovan Dent. Was that to get in his head?**

TIM MILES: (Indiscernible) backup play? Who was that for? He said, no, we're running pistol chase. And then we fouled Junior Joseph.

I didn't even give it to my team. I tried to have them figure it out. I didn't want to be a spy. But I was just teasing him. You'll have exchanges with different players that you've competed against and you respect. It was all in good fun. It was the most fun I had today.

**Q. Thinking about next season, when do you start doing that in terms of pieces, mentally getting ready?**

TIM MILES: It's, like, today, we were our own worst enemy at times. We turned.

It over 18 times. You could just see our body language kind of turn. We just didn't do our job defensively a few times late in the first half and at different times in the second half.

You just don't have as many shared experiences. I think we have, what, 11 or 12 new roster spots. It's like most of our team is new.

So building that culture and that mental expectation over time, you would think you get better as the year goes on. And I think we did. But you still don't have all those shared experiences, like, we've been through this before. We can do it again. Remember this game.

So that's hard. I hope we can keep some of these guys. I have a meeting with my athletic director on rev share next week to find out what the numbers look like and what we can do to provide that and when that's going to happen.

And we're always raising the money for NIL. We're probably tenth out of 11 in the league. That's hard. You can only beat the Oakland A's against the Dodgers so many games before it goes badly for you.

**Q. Back-to-back days where all the guards were in foul trouble. How difficult was it to manage that in the second half there? And at some point you had to kind of throw the kitchen sink in there, let it all ride.**

TIM MILES: Say forget it, right. And I got to that point actually about five minutes in the first half. I think I put Latrell in with two and Josh back in with two.

You just kind of get to a certain point, you're like -- there's only a small chance they're going to foul out by accident, by just playing hard, because we don't really foul that much.

But we also don't really turn it over that much. Look at what happened today. I just felt like we're going to roll with it, and if the consequences are what they are, then we'll live with it later.

**Q. It's been a roller coaster ride of a season, I'd say, for you guys, just overall. What can you say about this year's group? You got a new group every year. This group with a lot more upperclassmen, what can you say about this group?**

TIM MILES: It was interesting that we would dig -- we start the year like 1-5. Then we get back to 7-6. Then we start the league year 1-5. Then we get back to 5-7, 12-12. And then the injuries hit. Then we've got a couple of the guys back at least. But not 100 percent. Rob's not 100 percent. Donovan's not 100 percent.

But every time we end up digging ourselves a hole, we would climb back out of it. I've said that to these guys repeatedly since November. I remember telling them in November, like, we're going to have a winning record at Christmas. We're going to do this. I think they looked at me like, "In what sport? Come on, Coach." But we did. I credit them for staying with it.

We're not always the friendliest coaches. It's very no nonsense. We have a certain expectation. Usually, when everybody is on board, good things happen. I think these guys saw the value of that. But the thing I think we've got to be careful of, if you take a bunch of guys that had certain roles and now they come to a place like San Jose State and they think they're going to have a bigger role, you can't let that be selfish. You can't let that, oh, what I'm doing is what really matters. It's still, we'll make you better, the team's got to win. Bottom line. Those are the two things that have to happen in the whole process. We'll make you better and give you an opportunity for your future but the team's gotta win.

**Q. As you know, the college basketball landscape is rapidly changing. You've got a year under what the new norm is seems like. Anything you'll do different or the same in the offseason, now that you started since you took a walk from the locker room to the stage, your vacation is over?**

TIM MILES: I think just identifying the mental characteristics that are important to me. Like what I need out of a player in terms of formulating a game plan, going through the trials and tribulations of a season I think are really important. Where we get that information, I think, is critical.

If you ask every kid's the coach, hey, what's he like to coach, what do you think they're going to tell you? They're going to tell you, he's great. You need to dive in and find out, OK, where are we at with resiliency; where are we at with and competitiveness; where are we at with building a

winner.

It truly reminds me of being an NAIA coach when I started 30 years ago where you're bringing in eight or ten new kids all the time. We used to bring them in on 300 bucks, 500 bucks. If you were really good, you got a thousand.

And it's kind of similar with NIL we're getting the morsels. The guys that want the opportunity get better.

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