

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 11, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

San Diego State Aztecs

Coach Stacie Terry-Hutson

Jada Lewis

Kim Villalobos

Postgame Press Conference

San Diego State 67, New Mexico 56

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with San Diego State. We have student-athletes Jada Lewis and Kim Villalobos, Coach Stacie Terry-Hutson. Thoughts on tonight's game, Coach?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: Really proud of our team. I know I say that a lot, but I'm just overwhelmed with emotion how we're able to play for each other, play as hard as we are, and really proud of our defense.

We've struggle on that side of the ball for the majority of the season, and these past two or three weeks we've really, really locked in. When you play defense like we have in late February and into March, you're going to give yourself a great chance to win.

A couple of things that stand out to me is the rebounding differential. New Mexico is an outstanding rebounding team. And for us to beat them by 20 really, I think, helped, limiting the second-chance points.

Excited for my girls to continue to play. I was talking to my staff. Only us in our circle, in our administration understand all the adversity that we've been through this year, so for them to have some success and be locked in is just really fun to watch.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Do you guys come into this game with any kind of chip on your shoulder given the way it went in The Pit a couple of weeks ago and the fact you are the 7 seed playing against a 2 seed?



JADA LEWIS: Yeah, definitely, we do have a chip on our shoulder, especially as a 7 seed. We came to prove ourselves. Conference didn't go the way we wanted it to go, but now is the time to show what we can do for real.

KIM VILLALOBOS: Yeah, just to piggyback off of that, we were tied with I think 3, 4 team, so being 7th, definitely want to win the championship. Feel like we are that team that can do it. Everyone in the locker room believes the same thing.

We always have a chip on our shoulder, but we have everything we need in the locker room, so...

Q. What did it take to kind of stop what they were able to do offensively and plug up some of the areas that they like to operate in?

KIM VILLALOBOS: Relying on our defense, just like we did yesterday, just like we did against Wyoming our last conference game. I think it builds the momentum for our offense and just trusting each other on the floor. Yeah, I think everyone did great on defense. Yeah.

JADA LEWIS: Yeah. A big thing this game was win the elbow on the guards, and that's what we did for the most part. We had some slip by, but other than that we won the elbow, and they had to do something different. So I think we did pretty good on defense.

Q. The 15-3 start, what does that do just to gain confidence and settle into a game like this?

KIM VILLALOBOS: After we got that fast start, I think our keyword was just staying poised because, like you said, it is a lot of energy in a game, but anything can happen in March. It's March, like they say.

Yeah, just staying poised, understanding that it's a 40-minute game. Not just five -- like five spurts of offense. So yeah.

Q. Sorry, go ahead.

JADA LEWIS: I was just going to say it's a game of runs.



We go on a run. We need to limit their runs, and then keep going on our run. That's what we did.

Q. You held two of their top scorers scoreless in the first half. What does that do in boosting your confidence offensively and also limiting theirs?

KIM VILLALOBOS: That's a props to the guards because I know they're very fast guards. Yeah, they're good players. So props to them and doing a great job on defense.

JADA LEWIS: Yeah, it was tough. We got into foul trouble a little early. So we had to step up. Our bench players really stepped up. We went deep today, and it was really fun to play and fun to see.

Q. When things kind of started piling up there at the end against you, what do you have to do to kind of dial in, lock it down, and finish it off?

KIM VILLALOBOS: Just trust each other. Trust what we've put into the game, trust how far we've come. It's the quarterfinal. Just understanding that, like I said, it's a 40-minute game. Anything can happen. Yeah, just really staying poised in those moments and just trying to get the win.

JADA LEWIS: Yeah. Keep doing what worked for us. That's how we stuck with it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll dismiss the student-athletes at this time. Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

Q. What was your message to the team before the game, you know, given the way the series went this season, especially in The Pit a couple of weeks ago?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: This is a great rivalry between the two of us. They play fast. We want to try to play fast.

We just wanted to eliminate some of the mistakes that we made when we were in New Mexico. So our game goals were to limit the three. They have two of the best in the league guards in Augmon and Wilson that can get downhill. And we knew we were going to struggle to guard then one-on-one.

So we were trying just to limit the free-throws. I think we gave them 34 free-throws at home. We didn't want to foul, and we just were really focus odd taking away the three ball. So you could see that little bit of emphasis on Reus and obviously Cumber because they're such great three-point shooters.

We knew we couldn't necessarily take away what those

guards were going to do, but we wanted to limit the threes, and I thought we did a good job of that and limiting the second chance points.

Q. In a game where basically anybody on the court can go and get a bucket at any time, you have to find other ways to win. You already mentioned the rebounds piece. What went into that tonight and how did it help you?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: It was just toughness. This team has decided they're going to play for each other and play hard, and we're playing at a high level because we're just playing hard.

The bench is into it. The coaches are locked in, where the staff is putting together great game plans.

There's still areas to improve. The game plan was executed for the most part when they started to pressure us. We fell apart a little bit, so we have to get better there.

But we don't have a true point guard. We've been playing all year like that. Abby has done a great job filling in. And without her -- she fouled out, obviously. And without her, we were struggling a little bit bringing the ball up.

But I thought kids like Meghan Fiso, Kimberly Villalobos, those guys that are point forwards kind of helped bring the ball up. Jazzy Green, who's been with us for a couple months, is doing a great job, just giving us some poise on the court.

Just proud of the team effort. Our bench has been great, and I think that key in March.

Q. A result of some of those things was a total of 19 assists tonight. Just what did you think of the way you were able to spread the ball and get the offense going that way?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: We talk a lot about that. As you know, if you know me as a head coach, I talk a lot about sharing the ball. It's back-to-back nights with 19 assists. We just -- our offense is flowing. My husband is always telling me, Your team just moves the ball, and they get it to the different side of the floor.

You'll see me lose my mind when we start going one-on-one. We're just not that team. But when we share the ball and move it like we have done, we give ourselves a good chance to at least get a quality shot.

Q. You've had a good bench all year, and you've had different players step up. Talk about Meghan Fiso the

last two games. She's really come up huge for you.

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: She told me she's watching a lot of Michael Jordan stuff right now. She's locked in.

She's been fantastic for us. We always knew that she could score the ball, but what I've been really proud of these last two games is her defensive effort. She's really trying to defend, and because of that I can keep her on the floor. She's doing a great job defensively, and that's really been the separation in her game.

But she can score it. She shoots the ball at a high level. She shoots the three. Her midrange is pretty good, and she's understanding what we're trying to do. So really proud of what she's been doing.

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