

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

San Diego State Aztecs

Coach Stacie Terry-Hutson

Jada Lewis

Sarah Barcello

Abby Prohaska

Postgame Press Conference

UNLV 66, San Diego 49

THE MODERATOR: For San Diego State we have student-athletes Jada Lewis, Sara Barcello, Abby Prohaska. Coach Stacie Terry-Hutson, we'll start with you and get some of your thoughts?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: I hate to see it come to an end, but I thought our group battled. We just ran out of gas.

But these kids competed for the four days that they've been here, and it was really fun to watch. I've never seen them so locked in playing for each other.

We played some really good basketball here in Vegas. They don't need to hang their heads. I'm really proud of them. I know it hurts. Our season is ending. We wanted this championship, but they should be proud of themselves because they laid the foundation, and they also laid the expectation, and that's to be here next year.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. For either of the players, personally what does it mean to get to this point overall this season to the first championship appearance since 2013? Are?

JADA LEWIS: I mean, it means a lot, honestly. I'm very proud of what we went through to get here. There was a lot of ups and downs, but honestly when we found out the bracket, there was no doubt that we would be here.

ABBY PROHASKA: Yeah, I feel like we had a lot of



confidence coming into this tournament, but it stems from the beginning. I mean, we talked about it before the season even started. We believed in each other. We believed in the locker room and the people that were supporting us from the jump.

Yeah, but it means a lot. I'm really glad we were able to set that expectation of getting back here next year.

Q. For any of you that want to answer this, you guys don't look like a team that just took a pretty big loss to this same team and came a lot closer this time. It looks like you guys expected to win this game.

ABBY PROHASKA: Yeah, I think we came in fired up. Like Coach was saying, we've played really good basketball here, and I think just stems from really being prepared and getting our ass beat while we were here. I mean, that set the foundation. You don't want to get embarrassed like that.

Coming out here it was personal. Unfortunately, we couldn't get the job done, but I think we still played a hell of a game.

Q. This is a team that's won now three straight tournament championships. What do you think that the team can take from this to build on to take in next time the program is back at this level?

JADA LEWIS: If you're asking what I think you're asking, I think we've built the foundation right now. We know we can get here. We know what it takes now to get to this point.

I think this is the foundation, and this is just the beginning for this team.

Q. To any of the players, when you went in at halftime, it was tied. Were you at all disappointed that you weren't ahead? You really made them play well below their normal level in the first half. Unfortunately, you guys went through a drought yourselves. If you could do it all over again, would that be the one thing you might look back on a little bit?



ABBY PROHASKA: Honestly we had them exactly where we wanted them. It was 0-0 coming out of halftime. We wanted to keep it a low-scoring game, and I think we did that.

Like Coach said, we've played four games in a row. I'm 24 years old. We're not that young.

Q. Yes, you are.

ABBY PROHASKA: It kind of weighs on you a little bit. But yeah, I think we had them exactly where we wanted them. I wouldn't change halftime at all. Unfortunately, we just couldn't finish it out in the long run.

Q. All three of you are transfers into this program. What is so special about San Diego State basketball, and what are you going to remember most about it? To all of you.

JADA LEWIS: I came here because of Stacie, honestly. She's been the best coach this year, and I couldn't have asked for anything more. Even our assistants, all the staff, everyone is great. Honestly San Diego isn't half bad either.

ABBY PROHASKA: Oh, I'm going to get emotional. I really -- I fell out of love with basketball at Notre Dame. I wanted to quit, and I needed a place where I could fall in love again.

Stacie provided that for me, and I'm just so glad to have played a part in the transformation of this program.

SARAH BARCELLO: Going off of what was said, I think definitely Stacie and the coaching staff, but also just the potential for success at San Diego State. It's a phenomenal program top to bottom, academics, and just wanted to make something happen that hasn't happened.

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

Q. Stacie, talk about what you did differently from that game 11 days ago. They had 16 threes, and they had zero in the first half. They scored 28 points the first quarter. They only this 27 at the half. What did you do different tactically that worked?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: We wanted to make it a little ugly. We knew they were a high-scoring offensive team, but we just wanted to try to limit the threes. Desi and their post players do a good job down low so, we knew we couldn't completely stop that, so we just wanted to keep the score in the 60s. We did half of our job, but just

couldn't find a way to score the ball.

They came out and shot lights-out last time we were here. They were very prideful about themselves. They weren't going to allow that to happen again, but it was just the scout, just making sure they didn't get threes.

It was 16, like you said. That's unacceptable. We have to be better. We've been playing such better defense overall except for that the last four or five weeks, so they were mad at themselves.

We came back and had a tough film session and a wonderful practice, and then came home and beat Wyoming. So they wanted it. I wish I could say I did something great. They did that. They wanted it.

Q. Same question asked of the athletes: What does getting to this point at this level for the program mean to you personally and then these students mean to you?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: This group is very special because of all the adversity that we've been through. I've been saying that, but I mean, two of these kids up here will have surgery when we're done.

One is playing with a torn meniscus.

The other one that's shoulder's popping is in and out every day in practice. We've had some injuries other than that.

It's just the tenacity and the grit that they've shown to get to this point and the leadership that these three have shown is only going to trickle down and have a long-lasting effect on the underclassmen. So I'm forever grateful for that.

It started last year with that group, and now this group has really just taken the torch and run with it. So the expectations are just different now. The standards are higher now. We need to be back having this same conversation a year from now. That's the goal.

Q. You've seen UNLV a few times now. You've seen other good teams around college basketball. What do you think this team is capable of doing going forward and what should be their expectations?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: UNLV? They're a well-rounded team. They can hit you from a lot of different areas. They're well-coached. She does a great job.

But when you have post play like you do, you have shooters on the perimeter, and they have some guards coming off the bench that have a phenomenal midrange

game that can get downhill, so they can hurt you in a lot of different areas.

I think they're going to have a lot of success in the tournament when you get outside of the conference. We know each other pretty well. Hell, we run a lot of the same damn plays. So when they get out of I think Mountain West you'll see a lot of success because they're pretty poised for a long run in the NCAAs.

Q. I asked the kids that, but about the first half I thought they played -- you did a great job on them in the first half. You had a six-point lead. You went seven minutes without scoring. What did they do or what did you not do during that stretch when you may have been able to make some hay?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: I went to the locker room and said the same thing. That was our opportunity to probably stretch a lead out. Maybe go into halftime up six or seven because we played really good defense.

I thought we didn't move the ball like we have been. I thought we took some early shots in the shot clock. A lot of one-on-one that wasn't very successful. They just wanted it so bad, I think they kind of took it in their own hands.

We settled in, came back in the third quarter, and moved the ball a little bit, was able to score a little more. At that point we were just running on fumes, and I wish I had four, five more timeouts. I would have used them all, but they were just tired. I mean, those shots that were going in earlier in the week just were rimming out.

Q. Do you expect to still be playing, and do you have any idea in which tournament?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: I don't know. I don't know. There's a couple of tournaments that are coming. We'll have to go back and sit and talk.

But I mean, there's an RPI thing that comes with all of that. I don't know. It's like -- I don't know. We'll see. I guess the answer is I don't know.

Q. What is it about the culture of this program that you're able to bring in transfers and they're able to buy in as immediately as this group has? To that as well, what does it mean to you personally hearing what impact you've had on each of these young ladies?

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: I think that's why all of -- well, myself and my staff why weigh in on what we do, to impact lives like that. We want to give them a safe place to land.

A lot of them haven't had great experiences at their previous schools, and we want them to make sure that they leave with that love and excitement about basketball again.

San Diego, like they said, is just a great opportunity to play in a phenomenal arena, have all the resources that you possibly need. We have of the support from our administration and the community, and it's just a great place to land.

Like she said, San Diego is the best city to live in, but they're going to have fun in our program. They're going to work really hard. They're going to have a lot of fun, and I think it's attractive to a lot of young ladies who want to come and do something and build something, and we're going to go out and sell this program.

This is going to help. This is going to help. This run is going to help in recruiting, and back-to-back 20-win seasons is going to help. We've turned the corner. We had the blinker on for a long time, but we finally turned the corner.

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