

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - San Diego State vs LSU

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

## San Diego State Aztecs Coach Stacie Terry-Hutson Kim Villalobos

## Cali Clark

### Media Conference

LSU - 103, San Diego State - 48

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: I'm at a loss for words when it comes to this team. But I will say this, I'm just really proud of the season that we had. This game didn't reflect who we are and what we've been able to accomplish. So really proud of that.

We got beat by a very good team today. I thought we tried to battle in some moments. But this is going to be something we'll watch back and learn from and continue to grow our program so we can compete better next time we're in this position.

But I told the girls, don't let this game cloud what we've been able to do, and we've had a great season. 25 wins the last three years with a core of this group have been really, really good. We're just going to continue to get better.

**Q. Kim, how much were the early fouls kind of a damper on your game what you were hoping to do here today?**

KIM VILLALOBOS: Definitely a damper. I fell like I'm a physical player. I feel I could have been extra physical today. The fouls were a little too much. I wanted to be out there with my team, so definitely it wasn't nice being on the bench. But regardless I was supporting them.

**Q. Aneesah Morrow had 12 points and 12 rebounding, shot 3-for-11. What did you ladies think of your overall defensive effort on her in particular?**



KIM VILLALOBOS: I think the overall game plan, I think, was boxing out every player. I think they all kind of crashed the boards aggressively, and boxing out was definitely the emphasis. I think we did it maybe in spurts.

She had some boards. But I think we gave our effort. I think everybody tried on the team.

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: She was a key piece of what we were trying to defend because she's such a good player. So I don't know that we held her down, but we knew we wanted to crowd the paint. If we were going to give up anything it was going to be 3s.

And they were able to shoot a high percentage from the 3-point line. We didn't do anything to slow her down. We wanted to make sure she saw a crowd. That was the difference, I think.

**Q. You guys have been on an incredible run through the Mountain West Tournament, winning the championship game in triple overtime, getting the first appearance for San Diego State in this tournament since 2012. What's that been like for you guys to be a part of? What does it mean for you guys?**

CALI CLARK: I think obviously we won the Mountain West. We all kind of have this saying that we say, it's we over me. I think this was really important for us. We really built a group dynamic coming in and we had high aspirations for how we were going to perform today.

We knew we were going to play together as a team and really focus on that. And I think we did that, and I think we had a couple of mistakes. But I wouldn't regret anything that we did this season. I think we did really great in the Mountain West. And we really left our mark this year.

**Q. Bigger picture, can you just reflect on what your time at San Diego State has meant to you and reflect on your careers?**

CALI CLARK: I transferred in this last year. And Stacie and the coaching staff took a chance on me. I came from another team in the Mountain West and didn't get as many



minutes as I did this year. They really took a chance on me and saw my potential and saw what I could be.

I think with that and obviously building my confidence I was able to be a key player this year and really make a difference on the team.

Obviously I wouldn't be able to do that without them and my teammates supporting me along the way because they've been playing with me. But I just am forever grateful for the team and the family that I got to build this year.

**KIM VILLALOBOS:** Like Cali said, I'm so grateful that I came to the school when I was 18 years old. I'm now 23, turning 24, which is so crazy. The time flew by but it's also because I was accompanied by the best people that I've met my whole life.

Trying not to get emotional, sorry. Super grateful. Super happy. We won a championship. That's all I've wanted for my career.

**Q. Cali, I know it doesn't feel great right now but one of the points of emphasis that the LSU girls were talking about Kim pointed out the bench production you guys have and really challenging her bench. We saw that tonight in a way maybe we haven't seen most of the season. Did it just feel like they kept throwing different people at you all night long and they were having some success?**

**CALI CLARK:** A little bit. LSU is a great team. Obviously they're ranked No. 3 in DI in this region. I think that they were productive. I don't think that it felt very different.

They all kind of felt the same to me in terms of like production and aggressiveness, which is expected from an SEC team, I guess. But I think we did our job to the best of our ability.

**Q. How do you assess your team's overall performance this season? And what would you like to improve ongoing in the next season?**

**STACIE TERRY-HUTSON:** I thought we had a great season. Like I said, 25 wins is nothing to shake a stick at. We've had a really quality schedule in the non-conference that prepared us for, I think, our conference run and our conference season championship.

But we talk a lot about the bench -- again, I want to answer that question because I think it's a great question -- but we were very successful this year. I thought we did a lot as a unit, we sacrificed. There were a lot of kids that probably could have started at times that came off the bench. And

we had some success being able to play that way because we were so deep.

Our superpower this year was our depth. We have some young kids who can be great in our program if we can keep them all together. And our transfers were phenomenal for us.

I'll forever be grateful for the Adryana Quezada and Kim Villalobos and Meghan Fiso and those girls that stuck it out and stayed with us. Just a really good group of human beings. That's what I'm going to take away from this season is they're just great girls -- young women. And they're going to be destined to do great things.

To answer your question, because it was a good question. It was impressive. We were talking about what do we see that we didn't expect. I didn't expect the bench to come in and shoot the ball as well as they did. And that makes LSU really, really dangerous when they can go as deep as they did tonight.

I thought the transition game was something that we weren't ready for. They were really pushing the ball. We didn't get back. We knew we were going to get outrebounded. We knew who was going to shoot the ball the majority of the time. And we knew about the transition. But I think it was a little bit faster than we were ready for.

If they can play that fast and score the way they did, it's going to be a hard out moving forward.

**Q. You kind of touched on this a little bit, can you just talk about the impact of the seniors, whether they've been here for one year or five, and getting the program to this moment and kind of leaving that impact for future students to continue to build on?**

**STACIE TERRY-HUTSON:** We were just talking about that as we were waiting to come in. Kim has been with me for five years. She was one of the COVID babies that came up with us. And we had some struggles early on, but for her to have the seasons, the last three seasons we've won 70-something games over the last three years, and really done a really good job making sure we were competitive every time we touched the floor.

That's what I'm going to take away from that group. They've done a great job raising the bar or getting the bar back to where it was. The standard now is to win a championship. That's what our goal is now moving forward.

I thought we came back after last year's championship run, we lost in the championship game the year prior. We

came back focused and really ready to go. And I think that played a big part in the success that we've had this year. I expect nothing less with the young ladies that come back.

College athletics looks really different now. So who knows what's going to be on the roster moving forward, but we're going to make sure we put a group together that understands what San Diego State athletics, what we're about and moving forward. And just make sure we get back to this level.

This is a great experience for them. I told to bottle this up so we can understand what it feels like so we don't have to feel it again.

**Q. Just because of your history here, I was wondering if you kind of noticed -- even as you were focusing on coaching -- the panache with which some of the LSU players played with?**

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: Panache, that's a good word.

**Q. And how the crowd responded to that. I know it has nothing to do with basketball fundamentals, but do those intangible things make it even tougher for a visiting team here or maybe even affect how they play?**

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: Yeah, I was impressed with the crowd. This is a little different than what it was when I was here -- and as it should be. You guys won a national championship here -- as it should be.

But it's a great home-court advantage. And it was deafening at times when they went on runs. But we expected that.

Obviously I'm disappointed in the outcome, but I'm also very proud of what LSU women's basketball has been able to do because I was a part of it and still hold it very dear to my heart. I wouldn't have got the job that we have now if we didn't have the success we had at LSU. I'll be forever grateful for my time at Baton Rouge. I'll always be cheering for the Tigers. Go, Tigers.

**Q. You mentioned it a couple times. It's interesting to me, with this success you'll have more eyeballs on your program and have other larger programs trying to steal your roster. How do you deal with the double-edged sword?**

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: It's crazy, but that's what it is. Sometimes you don't want to think of it that way, but that's what college athletics is moving to. But our jobs as coaches is to mentor and to guide them. No matter who is on our roster year in, year out that's what our goal is

always.

We want to make sure they come in and respect our program, respect themselves and become better women when they leave our program. That's what we're selling and that's what we've been able to do over the last 12 years.

So really proud of that piece. We're graduating our young ladies. They're going into careers of service, which always makes me very proud, playing overseas, playing professional basketball. But when they come in, it's really fun to be a part of the journey. That's what I focus on.

We're going to have some leave and some go. We've had a lot of success with transfers, too, but it's really about the journey. And I have enjoyed this group thoroughly. We've done some amazing things, and I will forever be grateful for what they were able to give San Diego State women's basketball.

**Q. Yesterday you were hit with a barrage of questions about you talking to your team about your time here at LSU and the tournament. Obviously that was a long distance away. Now that you've been here for the first time in 12 years, what will you take away from the experience and what do your younger players take away to go back next year and say let's go back and do it again?**

STACIE TERRY-HUTSON: Absolutely. It's just a great feeling to be in the NCAA Tournament. I mean, that's everybody's goal. Any postseason play is always exciting. And I think that's what we're going to take from it. Just being able to compete at a high level.

Again, it wasn't the outcome tonight that we wanted, but I just love sharing the court with some of these athletes, Coach Mulkey, what we've been able to do, lift the game as we have over the last couple of years. That's what I'm taking from this.

It's just, like I said, I've been doing this for a long time and watching my daughter go through it now, and women's basketball has grown leaps and bounds, and that's really what I'm proud of.

I mean, the eyeballs on the sport, the crowd that we mentioned, the viewership on ESPN, the games that we're getting and prime time slots, I mean, that's really what it's about.

We're raising the bar, all of us, and I think it's part of our responsibility as coaches, but just very proud of these young women who are doing everything they can. I

couldn't go, I don't know, one commercial break without seeing Flau'Jae on a Powerade commercial.

As I'm looking at it, I'm proud of her and all the women getting these opportunities. I'm grateful to be in the position that we're in, but I am just amazed at where the game has gone over my time.

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