

Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Boise State Broncos

Coach Leon Rice

JaVaughn Buchanan

Dylan Andrews

Postgame Press Conference



San Jose State 84, Boise State 74

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if we can start with you, some thoughts on tonight's game?

LEON RICE: Credit to San Jose. They outcompeted us. Credit to Tim and his staff. They did a great job. Just outfought us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes

Q. JaVaughn and Dylan, after everything you guys have been through, what are the emotions like right now?

JAVAUGHN BUCHANAN: I mean, it's hard. Nobody likes losing. I don't know, it's hard for sure, but we didn't show up tonight, so...

DYLAN ANDREWS: It's a tough feeling. It's a tough feeling.

Q. What happened in the second half there, do you guys think?

JAVAUGHN BUCHANAN: They were just tougher than us. I think that was as simple as it gets.

DYLAN ANDREWS: Like what Coach Rice just said, they wanted it more than us.

Q. JaVaughn, as you close out your career here, I don't know if the thoughts have kind of rung in on what this means to you and if you are able to put this season into perspective at all, but I guess kind of what was going through your mind as you are walking off

the court?

JAVAUGHN BUCHANAN: I mean, just a lot of emotions. We put a lot into it. A lot of people trust me, and so just everything, just thoughts of everything. Yeah, it's just raw emotion right now.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let the student-athletes go at this time. Questions for Coach.

Q. Leon, how tough has this season been to just go through? You guys have been through a lot of ups and downs. Obviously not the way you wanted to end it, but what's this roller coaster been like for you?

LEON RICE: First of all, it's been unpredictable, and that makes it the hardest. The way we've been playing recently has been amazing, five wins in a row in tough circumstances, and these guys always responded. They did, but I've never had a team that could play at the two complete extremes to this much.

You know, you have teams where they have good nights, bad nights, but these have been -- it started the first game of the season. You know, we had a great scrimmage with Washington, felt good about ourselves. A week later, you know -- and I mean, that kind of sums that up a little bit.

That doesn't sit well with me. It doesn't sit well with the fans. It doesn't sit well with our people around the program. It's not going to happen again. We're going to -- you got to have a team full of dogs that fights, and these guys fought.

These guys fought. I'm not going to say that about tonight like to the level that we have been, and they responded, and they did all that stuff throughout the year, but like I said, I've never had a team that had so many swings.

You know, not to make excuses for them, but we had some sickness that went through our team. I don't know -- there were some guys that played like that, but I don't want to take anything away there San Jose. They did a great job, and they handed us our hats. Their guards were dogs.

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Those guys were tough tonight.

And, you know, we knew that. Both games, the final score was not indicative. I mean, we were up three in both games at half. Three. So we knew how good they could be in moments. It's just the thing that they've had all year is not enough depth to sustain those moments over a lot of games, and they sustained it tonight.

Q. Maybe it had to deal with the sickness, I'm not sure, but the guys talking about how they were just outplayed tonight. At times this season too we've talked about having that voice from maybe the players' side that might speak up. Was that something that might have been absent again tonight I guess maybe too?

LEON RICE: Yeah, always is. To have that guy that will take charge of the game and be the leader. Like I said, I don't want to indict them for one game. It's a long season. I'm trying to look at the big picture, because yesterday you felt great about this team and the way we've been playing and the last 15 games have been terrific, and they've been competing their tail off, but like I said, that's kind of the way this season -- not kind of. It's the way the season started, so you know, that's a tough one.

We knew we had a -- to win this tournament, you got to play great, great, great, great, and I thought our focus was pretty darn good, but it wasn't. It wasn't good enough to take on San Jose tonight.

Q. My question was similar to that. Just how does this -- they outplayed, they outthustled. How does that happen with a three-conference win team compared to the team that you have been over the stretch that you've had? How do you try to explain that?

LEON RICE: That's the million-dollar question. Like I said, I've never had a team that -- you know, develop those habits, and that's what we've shown in this last month and a half, two months. We've shown pretty good consistency, pretty good -- not pretty good. Real good. I got to give them credit. There's been a lot of games where people thought we had no chance, and we went out and got it done.

Then I think it's maybe it's this group where when people think the other team has no chance, that's when we don't show up. You know, I mean, that would be my analysis just off the cuff. That probably sums it up. When people thought we had no chance, we always competed, but yeah, I'd say that probably sums it up.

Q. I know you've been focused on this tournament, so

I don't know if you have thought about it at all, but any chance you would take a postseason invite, or do you guys want to go on, focus on next season?

LEON RICE: ^ Julie start I haven't even discussed it yet or anything. Cody, and I and Jeremiah will talk. It's a different era, so I don't --

Q. Coach, I was just curious, after a season ends like this, what did you tell the players tonight in the locker room?

LEON RICE: Well, you know, it doesn't change how I feel about them as people. I love these guys, you know, and we battled together, and we had some great moments, so you don't want to post-game rant to damage relationships about people you care about.

It doesn't mean they're bad-character guys. It doesn't mean I'm not going to love them. It doesn't mean Boise is not always going to be a home for them, but this program deserves more, and it deserves dogs.

We've had dogs, and the people that came before them that built this, they were hungry, tough, and I'll get a lot of texts from them, because they follow us, and they're proud of the way we compete. That's kind of what our teams always have been known for.

Again, like I said, I'm not trying to pile on them, but when it's this much swings, that can't happen, and our program doesn't have that. We're going to go out and get some dogs. We're hunting for them. This doesn't sit well with any of us. That's our mission, and that's all I care about right now.

I don't care about any postseason. We're not into consolation prizes at Boise State, so I don't care about that.

My focus is on I want guys that want to wear the blue and orange with such pride that, you know -- and we've always had that. We've always had that. That's what I'm going to go get in this offseason, the toughest guys and the guys that will compete and the guys that will lead and the guys that will just continue to fight and continue to fight and really good basketball players, because we got a great program.

We're always contending, and we're always in the hunt of things. You can't have those big of swings like that, so we'll get it done.

But it's a privilege to coach for Boise State. It's a privilege to play at Boise State, and that's a big part of what we do.



We always represent, because we play so hard always.
I'm not sure we did that tonight.

So like I said, I'm not trying to pile on, and I don't want to -- because I love these guys. It's a tough journey, but man, we put a lot into it, and our staff did a great job with this group because, you know, I won 20 games and had some moment of just excellence. It's crazy when you can have those high highs like that and then moments of just head-scratching like who is this? But we'll fix that. We'll fix that. That's what we do.

We're going to have a team of people behind it, and we're going to go -- like I said, we're going hunting for some dogs, and we're going to find them.

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