



# 2018 Big West Men's Basketball Tournament

## Presented by MemorialCare

### Game 11 - Semifinals Quotes

#### Final - No. 4 Cal State Fullerton def. No. 1 UC Davis, 55-52



## No. 4 Cal State Fullerton

### Head Coach Dedrique Taylor

*(Opening Statement)* "Heck of a battle. Both teams faced adversity. Our group was just resilient. I couldn't be more proud of this group of guys. No matter what, good, bad, right, wrong, good or ugly, they stayed the course. Fortunately we were able to withstand a very very good UC Davis team. I thought their pace was excellent. I thought TJ Shorts II showed why he's the player of the year in the conference. But our guys, we started together and we played hard, especially down the stretch. We got some big stops and some big baskets from some guys. The word that define this win tonight, would have to be resiliency.

*(On message to team when down 13)* "We needed a spark. We needed to find a way to get ourselves going. I think you have to credit Davis' defense and their physicality, as well as their pace on offense. Being down thirteen or up thirteen, you have to play the game the same way. I thought our group stayed the course, I thought they fought really, really hard. When you're good in choosing your attitude, your effort, and you're a good teammate, good things are happening for us. And that just what I encourage our guys to do. Stay in the moment and keep fighting."

*(On TJ Shorts II's performance)* "I thought one advantage that we had, was that our group is a little more athletic and a lot more length than what he's maybe used to. I think that definitely gave us an advantage going into the night. And I mentioned it to our guys that he's quick, he's really fast and if he can get into your space, we're going to be in trouble. So use your length and your athleticism to keep him in front and make him score over you. He got some buckets over the top of us but over the course of time, he wasn't able to get to the front of the rim or see the rim like he's used to in other games, when he's scoring twenty or twenty-five points per game."

*(On message to team before championship)* "Same message: stay the course. Right now, I'm full of so many different emotions, and I'm trying to hold back, but it's a special opportunity for this group of guys. This is a unique opportunity for Cal State Fullerton. It's been a while since we've been in this position, so it's important that we take a moment, step back, and enjoy it, but let's finish it. Let's finish it the right way, and I want to make sure that we're ready to do that. We have the opportunity to do something special. We'll celebrate with all of our fans the best we can, but we're going to regroup and get after it tomorrow."

### Sophomore Forward Jackson Rowe -

*(On spark)* "Lot of our transition points, and-ones. Any play that could get us close to catch up to them."

*(On emotions after Garrison Goode going to line late)* "Out of all the players that go to the line, he's the one you want for to go to the line, when the game's on the line. It felt good that he was at the line, but at the same time we knew that anything can happen. This is the finals. The Big West Championship. Anything can happen."

*(On aggressiveness)* "It's a part of the spark. In order for us to win somebody had to be aggressive. Somebody had to spark the team and do whatever it takes. So a lot of our guys were going at each other with the other team, and I feel like that good basketball because we're competing."

### Junior Guard Khalil Ahmad -

*(On message to team when down 13)* "We just told ourselves we got to stay together, get stops, get our transition baskets."

*(How testy did it get out there)* "Game's like that are always fun. Neither of us wanted to go home. We're both really good teams, played competitive. We were just going at each other and saying things at each other."

## No. 1 UC Davis

### Head Coach Jim Les -

*(Opening statement)* "One play one game doesn't define them. This has been an unbelievable group. They played their tails off and played together. We just fell a little bit short tonight. They've been a pleasure to coach and as a coach I couldn't be more proud of them for how they're handling the defeat as well as they maturely handled success and sometimes you have to go through these down moments to continue to climb up the hill and have the spectacular moments. We'll let it simmer tonight but tomorrow we'll get back at it and this group is going to grow from this experience and be better and stronger because of it."

*(On how the defense didn't collapse with TJ Shorts II)* "He's a warrior [TJ Shorts II], he attacks the rim as well as anybody I've ever coached and I thought it was very physical in the paint and sometime because of his stature maybe he doesn't get the benefit of the doubt. He made some great plays, I thought he made the defense pay a couple of times kicking the ball out to the perimeter. There were a couple of shots we'd like to have back because there were a lot of good looks and at some point you have to make them pay for collapsing their defense...he didn't shoot a free throw all night"

*(On momentum shift in the second half)* They [CSF] made a conscious effort during a stretch of just putting their head down and going towards the basket. It was physical and they were able to make some plays at the rim. Once they saw the ball go through the basket, their confidence level raised considerably and then we went inversely at the same time where we had some opportunities that we normally make that we didn't and it snowballed from there. They're definitely a momentum team; they seized the momentum and were able to take the lead."

### Junior Guard TJ Shorts II -

*(On physicality tonight)* It's physical every night. I knew coming in it was going to be tough whether you're playing Fullerton or another team I'm always prepared for physicality. I knew it was going to be physical it wasn't anything different."

*(On final minute of the game)* There were tough plays down the end but we can't just look at that final minute of the game. We'll get back to the film and look at the full 40 and see where we went wrong over the course of the game and then we'll bounce back and be ready to go. "

### Junior Forward AJ John -

*(On emotions during the game)* "We come in every game to compete and play hard. It was a little extra rivalry within this game. They beat us both times during the regular season. Even going back to last year when we knocked them out in the tournament so I know we were marked on their calendar. It's a competitive environment in the game."