



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

GOAZTECS.COM | @GOAZTECS | @AZTECSPR | #GOAZTECS

San Diego State Men's Basketball Press Conference November 7, 2017

SDSU head coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"First, I'd like to congratulate (SDSU women's soccer head coach) Mike Friesen and our women's soccer team for making the NCAA Tournament and winning the Mountain West. They're playing at UCLA Friday. Heck, if we didn't have a game, I might have driven up there to watch them. But everyone knows we open the season against San Diego Christian Friday at Viejas Arena and the team is looking good. We're ready to start the regular season and start playing games for real."

On the team focusing on correcting errors from years past:

"Part of that is just maturing. Jeremy going into his junior year is not the same player he was as a freshman, even though he was Freshman of the Year in the conference. He continues to get better, and everyone gets better. That's the key to any team, that we get better. The veterans set that example, Jeremy sets that example and he's not satisfied where he is as a player. He's always looking to improve himself and as he improves, the team improves."

On coming back after a disappointing season last year:

"The team has worked hard. Jeremy has put 20 pounds on over the summer and some of the layups that maybe fell out last year are going in because he's stronger. He takes contact at the rim and his confidence has grown in that. He continues to shoot the ball well. All of these improvements, to a large degree, are based on the improvements that these kids put in over the summer to improve themselves not only strength-wise but also shooting-wise. As coaches, we're reaping the benefits of that now on the floor, and the whole team is. Hopefully it'll continue and if hard work is rewarded, then we'll have a better year."

On the team's depth:

"It's nice to have depth at every position. I started all three guards at USC in the closed scrimmage. They played very well, and I could very well do that in the opener Friday or at Arizona State on Tuesday. That lineup will be based on who we're playing and who's playing well, and Jeremy's played extremely well. It's nice to have the depth at every position and it's comforting as a coach to know I can go with different combinations. If I want to go with three guards, I can do it. I can play two and Jeremy is not the starter and comes off the bench, I know he'll be ready to go as he is every day. It's comforting as a coach to have different options to put out there."

SDSU junior guard Jeremy Hemsley

On the start of the season:

"It's kind of hard to believe I'm a junior already. It's gone by pretty fast. But the team looks good and I think everyone's excited."

We're all excited to begin this new era with a new head coach so I think there's a different level of trust with the players and the coaching this year so I think that's something I'm excited about."

On if there's a different atmosphere around the team with the head coaching change:

"I would say so. I know Dutch is a more happy-go-lucky guy – not saying that (former head coach Steve Fisher) Fish wasn't but Fish wouldn't show those emotions as much as Dutch does – but at the same time, Coach Dutch does a good job of, when it's time to be serious, when it's time to get work done, he does a good job of making that clear. And I think another thing is, he's done a good job this year of holding everyone accountable and not letting everybody make the same mistakes that we made last year. These past two years, we went through a lot of things and we made a lot of mistakes so I think the coaching staff has done a great job this year of making sure that we don't make the same mistakes that we made in the past."

On how the focus has changed this year:

"It's a different focus this year. We've been through so much and we know that we can't make the same mistakes that we've made these past few years. We know that we have to have a different focus this year if we want to get to where we want to go. I think that's the biggest improvement is a different focus. We know that if we want to move forward in the right way, we have to put our trust into the coaches and believe what they're saying and just have them lead the way but at the same time, try to do our best to be a player-driven team."

On how the team has grown:

"I would say that we have grown a lot offensively and I think with that, we have a lot of players that are able to score, and a lot of players that know their role on this team and of course, defense has always been a trademark for the Aztecs. But I'd say that it's just going to be another year that we're good on defense but we have so many threats on the offensive end of the floor that it's going to be refreshing for everyone to see."

On the team's finish last year:

"It wasn't anything that we expected so I do say it was shocking but like I said, it's a new year and to be honest, I don't really remember too much from last year. All of my focus has been on just being the best player and best person I can be for this team. We did have our struggles last year and we might have our struggles this year but I do see a lot of improvement in different areas for this team."

On how the team will close out games this year:

"Of course last year, we didn't do a good job of that. But I think that's a focus on every team, is being able to close out games the right way so I'd say that's definitely a focus of ours this year."

On Devin Watson:

"Having Devin Watson does take a certain load off the guards because he's really talented. He's able to pressure the ball on the defensive end, he's able to push the ball on the offensive side of the ball, so I think Devin has been a great addition to the team. He takes a lot of pressure off the guys who have been here."