



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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Texas Southern at San Diego State Postgame Quotes Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. November 5, 2019

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"Good half. The first half was fun to watch. We guarded at an elite level, shared the ball, played well. The second half was tough to get through. We had 10 assists at the half and then we had two assists the second half. I was mass-subbing, so you lose some of the rhythm of the game when you sub five guys in, five guys out. Some of the rhythm issues of the second half was due to what I was doing, trying to get bodies in and out of the game with that type of lead. The thing that would make (winning) it easier is if we made some free throws. We were 9-for-21 in the second half. We did not shoot the free throw very well. With games like this, if you make the free throws, the lead stays where it is, but we missed so many free-throws. We're getting fouled so we're not getting assists when you get to the foul line. Maybe we were passing the ball okay, but just not making the free throws. I told the guys after the game: it's never as good as you think it is, or as bad as we looked at times in the second half. It's somewhere in between. We'll go back, study tape, make improvements where we need to. This is a good team, a good group of guys that appears to be able to defend at a pretty high level. Our defense has been pretty solid and at the end of the day that's how we'll win, with our defense and our rebounding."

On what KJ and Malachi bring to the team:

"They bring a veteran presence about them that the other two (Devin Watson and Jeremy Hemsley) provided, but they're different types of players. Every guard is different. Malachi is different than Devin. They're both very good scorers, but they play a little bit different. KJ had some really good looks today and he is still trying to get comfortable with what we're doing. He came from Santa Clara where the ball was in his hand 80% of the game, so he now doesn't have it as much, but when he has it, he has to be effective. I thought he would have been (effective today) if he made a few of the shots he had. He had good looks that didn't go in. I want his assists a little higher. He had three turnovers and no assists today, so he has to make a few more plays for others when he has the opportunity. They both play the right way: unselfish and they came here to win. They're going to sacrifice part of their game that they played at their other schools in order to win and they're surrounded by a lot of really good players. I think they are willing to do that and have shown the ability to do that for the Aztecs."

On AG being back and what he brings to the team:

"AG is an effort player, a great rebounder. He's probably our best rebounder, both on the defensive and offensive end. That's what I've said: we have to rebound if we want to win. He gives us more comfort in the fact that Keshad (Johnson) does a lot of freshman things out there. He's dribbling through traffic and turning the ball over and going to the wrong place sometimes, but he's a wonderful young man and is going to be a really good player. AG just gives us a little more stability in that position because he's played it for a year. As a sophomore in a tough environment like at BYU, he'll be more serviceable to come in and play solid minutes. It may not be spectacular, but the minutes AG gives us because of his experience will be invaluable as we move on with the season."

On experimenting with the team roles:

"I think we'll play more players this year, more bodies on the floor, because we're pressing often). We're up 94 feet the entire game. That wears the other team down, so if I'm asking these guys to pick up and press – that's a lot of work. I'll go to the bench as we continue to press the other

team. You play shorter periods when you're picking up 94 feet and turning the guard and trapping and playing a scrambling defense. You tend to tire out a little faster, so it's good to have the depth in order to play that way."

On how altitude will affect the team:

"We're going to find out because we're going to pick up. Altitude affects everybody differently. It's not the same for every person so it'll be interesting to see how some of these guys will respond. (Some of them have) played in altitude obviously before, and with KJ (Feaign) coming from Santa Clara, he has played at BYU multiple times. We'll see how they respond to being there. I know when we had Kawhi (Leonard) he seemed to really have a tough time at BYU so we'll see how everybody responds individually and what effect that has on our performance."

On missing Jeremy Hemsley defensively:

"Defensively with Jeremy gone, I was concerned and still am- we'll see how it goes with our length at that position. Jeremy was 6'3"-6'4" and he had extra length defensively. Sometimes, a smaller guard can play really hard but at the end of the day (the opponents) are going to rise up and shoot over you at some level. So, they're not easy shots but they're harder to shoot over a 6'3" guard than a 6'1" guard. I'm interested to see how that plays out during the year. I know they (this year's team) guard(s) the ball extremely hard, so they're not bad defensively, they just lack some of the length we've had in the past."

On struggles of SDSU's offense this season:

"We're communicating at a high level. So, we're talking out there on the floor and there's no confusion. People that have come to practice thought this well — this is the best they've ever seen an Aztec team communicate on the floor with each other. So, we can switch up our defenses someday, we switch ball screens someday-today we didn't switch a ball screen all game and we did a great job communicating what direction we wanted to send it and where the help was coming from. If we communicate and were on the same page were pretty good defensively."

San Diego State junior guard Malachi Flynn

On how he felt shooting tonight:

"I felt good as was just trying to get into the rhythm. As the season goes on, I'll continue to be aggressive, and eventually they're going to fall. That's what we put the work in for. Eventually it's going to happen."

On he biggest difference from last Wednesday to today in terms of shooting the ball:

"I think just getting out there and being more comfortable. This is just another game filled. I just continue to do that, I think it'll help."

On job to spreading the floor, creating opportunities and being mindful of that role:

"That's part of my job as a point guard, one of the point guards on the team, I have to find guys. If it was just me shooting that's not going to work all of the time. I need to find guys. I have to continue to find guys like Jordan, especially when he's hot like tonight. We've got to give him the ball as much as we can."

On Aguek Arop being back:

"That's big! I mean, he came back in and had a put back in 10 seconds, like less than 10 seconds. He had a mid-range pullup in the middle of the paint. We see it every day in practice and we're happy that he's back out there."

On playing well first half, but not at the same level in the second half:

"No it's definitely unacceptable, we can't come out and relax. The coaches got on us, we know, we are all older guys, so we can't come out and play like that that's how you give up leads. Crazy things can happen so that's defiantly a thing we are going to have to change moving forward."

On how long of a wait to get back on the court did it feel like tonight:

"It felt like forever to be honest, Coach Dave (Velasquez) told me it had been like 20 months. That's Almost two years. It's definitely felt that long."

On offensive rebounds given up tonight:

"I think, to be honest, (Coach Dutcher) is more concerned with how many were giving up, we gave up 14. So that's still not good. That's one of the emphasis points we're going to have for the whole year. So we've got to get that number lower than 14. That's too high."

On not committing any turnovers:

"If you're going to have the ball in your hands, you can't turn it over at a high rate. The best guys they don't turn the ball over. So that's something you've got to take pride in."

San Diego State junior guard Jordan Schakel

On is hot start in the first half:

"It felt pretty good. I've been working a lot this summer, so it's been happening in practice. I was glad it happened in the first couple minutes to get us off on a good start. I think we played well in the first half."

On comparing last year's backcourt to this year's:

"You know, it's just different guys. I don't think you can really compare them, it's what we have now, so I'm excited for what we have. I'm excited for these guys on the team and in the bac court. I couldn't be happier."

On the offensive struggles in the second half:

"I just think sometimes that's how the game goes. Hopefully I can just save that and bring it on Saturday because we are going to need it."

Texas Southern State Head Coach Johnny Jones

On tonight's performance by the Aztecs:

"They did a tremendous job, they were tougher and played with great divergence and poise in the basketball game especially for their first game of the year. They did a tremendous job of spacing the floor and shooting the basketball. They knocked down nine threes in the first half and were able to break the game open and they did a tremendous job of controlling the glass. They got 61 rebounds tonight, 20-something offensive rebounds on top of 47-percent shooting so they did everything that they needed to in the beginning and really set the tone for this game."

On the new look Aztecs:

"They're still as solid; they are really good. They're strong defensively and they did a magnificent job on the boards and they're still physical inside. They still have a big physical presence inside. Certainly hats off to those guys, I've watched them play for several years, they lost a lot of guys last year and they seem like they've done a tremendous job of reloading."

On his ejection:

"You want to make sure your kids are out there fighting the right way, that they give it a chance and I guess we just saw it a little bit different. It happens."

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