



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State-San Diego Christian Postgame Quotes

SDSU Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"First of all, I want to apologize for not scoring 98, that's what we scored in our first two outings. I thought we played pretty well offensively, the turnovers were a little up, but I thought they were guys playing too unselfish, they were trying to find Kameron (Rooks) looks on the roll three times in the first half and threw it away, tried to feed him inside. In the second half, I told them right away, 'Don't try and throw it on the roll, just throw back and throw it to him when he's already established on the block.' The first play of the second half, they got it inside to him. The hard thing with basketball is that when your shot's not going, you miss some three's, sometimes you press too hard. I thought a couple of them pressed a little bit today, I had to tell them just to relax a little bit, let the game come to them. That was the beauty of Malik's game today. You never felt like he was forcing his game, it just came really easy to him today. That's when we are at our best when we just kind of let it come easy and Malik was the perfect example of that today. I think Jeremy was another great example, that he just let the game come to him. He never seemed like he was pressing the game. The easier you play sometimes the easier it is to get into the flow, and both of those guys were the perfect example of that today."

On how it felt to get his first official game under his belt:

"Yeah, I mean it really was my first official game, but at that exhibition game against UCSD I kind of got the butterflies out and played in the arena, so it felt like a game. I told the guys I'm going to talk to Mike May, I know I'm only 1-0 but I'm going to try and get that close door scrimmage and that exhibition game on my record. You know I'm 58 years old. I could use all the wins I could get. I've only got one so far. So hopefully there will be many more to come."

On the challenge of playing a less talented team:

"This is no disrespect to San Diego Christian, but I put San Diego State as playing San Diego State today, because we are playing a standard that we have seen in practice. So, San Diego Christian, you know, they play hard. Everyone can have good players but obviously we are vastly more talented than them. I wanted the challenge to be to play against the standard we set for ourselves instead of our opponent, and I thought we did for the most part. That's what I kept telling them, play to a high standard, don't play the score, don't play the opponent. Play to the standard we have set for ourselves. Individually, you know, 'Max (Montana), you're playing against Max today, concentrate and be the best player you can be,' and I said that to every player on the team. I thought for the most part they did that. Eleven turnovers is our high, we had six in the exhibition and six in the closed door scrimmage, but 11 is probably the more normal number. So, 91 points to 11 turnovers is probably more to the norm, and if we could have that, then we probably have a pretty good year. But, I thought they shared the ball, and none of the turnovers were like a guy tried to force his game and dribble into the trap and dribble it off his knee by trying to do too much. They might have shared the ball too much."

On the starting five:

"This is third lineup I've change and really I've changed that one position. I started Jeremy Hemsley against USC in the scrimmage, I started Max Montana against UCSD, and then I started Matt Mitchell today. So, I told them that spot may turnover and another spot may turnover. It's based on how they practice and how they play. I don't know what I'm going to do against Arizona State. I'm going to watch some more tape of their game tonight, see what I think will be the best lineup starting the game against them. It might be something that changes from game to game. I'm not settled on a lineup by any stretch of the imagination. I am going to give these guys a chance to play their way in or out and the smart players are going to be the ones who pay more attention as to who is in the game with five minutes to go, than who is in the game at the start of it."

On preparing for Arizona State:

"I wouldn't say since last year—I would probably say for about a week—we've been preparing for them. I said in my press conference that usually coach speak is that we are playing the next one in front of us and that's not the case. We've been working on Arizona State stuff for three, four, five days and then we will do it on Sunday and Monday for practice leading into the game. They are a very dynamic team. They have excellent guards and they are hard to contain, hard to guard, so that will be a real challenge for us on the road. We've been trying to get a head start on that all week."

On Adam Seiko redshirting:

"As of today, that is official that he's redshirting. We've kind of had that feeling, but I told him that's not the way we do things. We don't make our own declarations on social media. We're always teaching. We've all been on board with Adam redshirting. He's missed a lot of the preseason practices and we've got a deep roster already. Much like we

did with Jalen McDaniels and Nolan Narain, Adam's going to be a really good player in this program, but he'll be far better as a fifth-year senior on the floor than he is as a true freshman. That redshirt year will serve him well and then serve the Aztecs well in the long run. I told him at the time when we talked about it that there is an asterisk on it, that if disaster were to strike, and we hope it doesn't, when we have multiple people go down and we need them to win games, then we would bring him out of his redshirt. But hopefully that will not happen and we can stay healthy and allow him to redshirt his freshman year."

On Matt Mitchell's performance:

"He missed some good open looks. He played a little bit like a freshman today, which is not a surprise. Matt's been great in the two preseason games, but the first regular season game he had a couple looks that didn't go in and he got backdoored a couple of times. So he looked like a freshman at times, but a very talented one that will learn from what happened today. He knows how to play, that's the beauty of Matt's game. We don't have to teach him the instinctual stuff. He knows when to deliver the ball, how to pass it, where to move it, so Matt is going to be a wonderful player. I'm sure he wished a few more of those open threes would've dropped today, and I want him to take them. He's an excellent shooter, so every shot he took I thought was a good look for him."

On first-game jitters as a head coach:

"My wife sent me a really nice text telling me how proud she was of me, so I said, wow, this must be a really big day, I'm the head coach. So that's when I realized it's kind of a big deal for our family. If I was taking over at 29, I might've had a few more butterflies, but at 58 I've seen a lot of basketball and I feel like the beauty of this is Coach Fisher gave me a lot of responsibility while I was here. So a lot of the things I'm doing, I did for him. Other than I'm the final say in the timeouts, my job is a lot like it was before I was the head coach."

On perimeter defense:

"I thought our defense was a little better and we went back to the basics. We played a lot more one-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three, and we built it up from the basics again. And I thought our defense was better at the start of the game. I thought toward the end there were guys running around, we weren't matched up, I didn't know if we knew who we were guarding, just kind of scrambling down the floor picking up a body. That can't happen in games. That was maybe a product of the score and the situation at the end. I thought they got a little sloppy in their matchups. But I thought they played hard all the way to the end. We didn't have guys leaking out trying to get a dunk. I thought they stayed in there, they rebounded and they pretty much kept a body in front of a body until the very end. It wasn't like how sometimes in a game like this when you're way ahead, guys will contest a shot and then run out trying to get a dunk. I thought they stayed at home. They tried to please the coaches, which is a good thing. They're trying to make us happy and they know what we want from them. So I'm pleased with the fact that they're listening, they're learning, and they want to do the right things."

On Malik Pope's performance:

"Hopefully it's the consistency, because we've seen this level of play. We've seen it in the conference tournament the last two years, when he looks like an NBA player. I told him in a timeout today I thought he looked really athletic today. It was more so on the defensive end. I thought he sat down and really moved his feet and didn't look stiff like he can at times. If he has that kind of athleticism and he's able to sit down and play that kind of defense and let the game come easy, then he's going to have a good year and the Aztecs are going to have a good year."

SDSU Senior Forward Malik Pope

On completion of the first game:

"Staying focused to the game plan and having fun with it. We didn't really look at the team as an underdog or anything like that. We just took advantage of the opportunity and let the game come to us. It was a fun first game back. We got the jitterbugs out, so it was really fun."

On his first half dunk:

"I could just thank Matt Mitchell for the lob, that was a great pass. All my teammates too, honestly."

On Jeremy Hemsley's response to defense:

"I think he means locking in on the defensive end. (Head Coach Brian) Dutcher said, 'It takes five.' If one person doesn't see the ball, that will hurt. Honestly, we are just trying to get better at that day by day. Being a team, seeing the ball on defense, and being in the right position."

On team turnovers:

"What did we have, eight? Yeah, that was a big focus for us at halftime. Dutcher said, 'We already had six and we got six in the first two games together.' We're honestly trying to lock in on that every position. When we got seven, we were like, 'We can't get seven.' Then there were eight. It's just play by play and trying to stay focused."

SDSU Junior Guard Jeremy Hemsley

On how the first game went:

"I agree with Malik, it was all about having fun. It was the first game so that was one of the focuses that we had—leaving it all out there and making sure we don't take as many plays off. Last year, that was something we did a lot. We took a lot of plays off so I think we did a good job tonight of that being one of the focuses. One of the bullet points on the board before we went out was playing to a higher standard so I think we did a good job of that tonight."

On Brian Dutcher's first game as a head coach:

"He did good, I'm proud of him. He was talking about it before the game, he's been waiting so long. I couldn't have waited that long to be a head coach. He was rewarded for his patience. I'm proud of him."

On what the team needs to work on:

"I'd say defense. I think that's obvious, we still have a lot of work to do on that end, but I'm pretty sure every team in the country does. Like all the coaches say, that's something we have to be better at if we want to go far and be the team that we all think that we can be. So I think defense is that main point that we have to focus on because we have so many threats on the offensive side of the floor, I think we'll be fine there, so it's definitely defense."

On if it becomes harder to play when you know you are dominating the opposition:

"I think that was one of the focuses [Coach] Dutcher told us before we went out tonight, that we were playing against ourselves. No disrespect to the team we just played, but obviously that's not the level of competition we're going to play all year. So I think the challenge tonight was making sure we were going to be able to run our sets and we didn't have as many mental lapses because the competition wasn't as great."

On the difficulty of stepping up their game to play Arizona State after playing San Diego Christian:

"I don't think it's hard to bring up that level of intensity playing a different team. We know what we have to do. We know ASU is good and we know we can't go in there being lackadaisical or taking plays off. I think we'll be up for the challenge. We've been scouting them all week, we've been going over their plays and going over their sets so I don't think it's going to be any different playing them."

San Diego Christian Head Coach Edgar Mendez**On facing SDSU:**

"I grew up in San Diego, so first off I am a San Diego State fan and grew up being around the program, so it is always good to know that they're good. As a coach, competitively we know we are overmatched but we just want to come out here and get better. That's the thing that we look at always, but the arena, the atmosphere it is just always so fun for these guys."

On what impressed him tonight, and what the team could work on:

"Well, we wanted to come in and show that we could run our offense against any type of defense. I though in moments, in spurts, we did a really good job. They are really good defensively. They are really long. We are not going to see anyone like them so it's hard to also assess it until I watch film. But, I am proud of how they competed, especially in the middle parts of both halves. We have to start better and end better and that's what we really need to work on."

On takeaways from tonight's game:

"The best thing you can always take from a game is film. You get to watch and show them what they are doing, what they are doing right or what they are doing wrong. It is not always to show them what they are doing wrong, a lot of times you can show them that they can do it, that they have done it, and that they can do it against a very good team. That is always a very strong positive for us as a coaching staff."

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