

AZTEC BASKETBALL

DEFENDING MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS | FIVE STRAIGHT POSTSEASON APPEARANCES | FIVE CONSECUTIVE 20-WIN SEASONS



Postgame Quotes

Occidental at No. 7/7 San Diego State ► Dec. 31, 2010

San Diego State Head Coach Steve Fisher

FROM THE POSTGAME NEWS CONFERENCE

Opening statement:

"It is great to finish 2010, 15-0. I told our players they can be very proud of how they have gone about their work. This was a good way to finish 2010 and now thing get a whole lot harder as we move into league play. We are going to have to continue to get better and that is what we hope to do. I do think that Billy White will be back and ready to go 100 percent for TCU."

"We wanted to make sure we didn't wait until five minutes to go in the game to substitute. We tried to get everyone in, who was going to play, in the first half and get them some significant minutes in both halves. I know they appreciated it, as did their families. This will wear well for us if and when we need them as we move into league play."

On getting quality minutes out of the bench:

"I think as much as anything it is to tell them how much we appreciate how hard you're working and so often you do not get rewarded when 12,000 people are watching, you get to do it when no one is watching. When you play hard and practice hard, opportunities will eventually get there. We had an opportunity for them today."

"Both of the Franklin players have worked very hard and have not gotten a lot of minutes. Jamaal Franklin brings great energy and effort all of the time. He needs to have game experience where he can get acclimated. LaBradford is a point guard that is used to having the ball in his hands all of the time. He has to continue to grow on giving it up quickly and making the easy play."

"Alec Williams has practiced so well and not been rewarded for it. It is nice to see him get him an opportunity to play. He really has practiced well. Mehdi is as great a person as I have ever had the chance to coach so it was good to see him get minutes when he has not gotten very many of late."

On the sellout crowd and additional media coverage:

"We are pleased that there is an appreciation for what we have done. We are well aware that back-to-back losses could get the callers on the radio show talking about everything that is wrong with our team. We have to not worry about anything but ourselves and what we as coaches try to help them with. It is fun to have people talking about San Diego State Basketball."

On playing a Division III team:

"In a perfect world you would play somebody that you would have to roll up his sleeves and get a little dirty. It is well documented that we have had a difficult time filling our schedule this year. This what we did. This is how we finalized it. This was the last game we got on the document. This was good for camaraderie. This was good for (players) eight through 12. This was good for our team."

On giving the team off during the break:

"We gave them five days off. That is the most I have ever given a team off. We needed that. Our kids appreciated that and came back with a bounce in their step. The timing was good (to give them the time off). I felt like it was more important (giving them the time off) than coming back and having an extra practice or two."

On the play of James Rahon:

"Rahon went to the Torrey Pines tournament and had everyone in their tell him how great he was at that helped his confidence. He is a scorer. He should never be hesitant to take an open shot. He is too good of a shooter."

On the 15-0 start:

"I think we are playing good basketball. If we had played 15 straight league games, we would not be 15-0. If we are going to go undefeated in the league we are going to have to play better. I don't know if anyone is going to go undefeated in the league and probably no one will. To win in this league and not to have back-to-back-to-back losses, we are going to have to continue to get better, I do like the fact that against good teams in hard venues where we have found ways to win. We have had stretches in lots of games where we have played really, really good basketball. I think we have the athleticism and the experience to be very, very difficult for anybody that we play."

On what things worry him:

"(There are) three things that will win us a championship. We have to guard hard and smart. We have to rebound the ball better, especially at the defensive end. We cannot turn the ball over. Those were the three areas that I told our team if we are going to be really good we have to get better."

FROM THE POSTGAME INTERVIEW ON AM 600 KOGO

On the Mountain West Conference:

"I know the middle of the league and the bottoms of the league, from the conference standings a year ago, are all better. It is going to be a question of where will ourselves, Brigham Young, UNLV and New Mexico will be at the end of the day. It is going to be a really competitive, hard fought bas-

ketball league that I do believe, as we speak, merits four teams for NCAA postseason play.”

On Billy White’s injury:

“I believe he will be ready to play and not just be able to be out there, but at peak efficiency when we go to TCU.”

On the 15-0 start:

“It has been absolutely spectacular. I told our kids, they need to be proud of the way they have handled themselves at every opportunity. They have been knocked down, but still been successful. We have to close this chapter, which has been really good reading for us, and get ready for the next one. It will be a whole lot harder to write, but if we can write the same type of scenario, it will be a whole lot more fun to read it come March and April.”

San Diego State Sophomore Guard James Rahon

On his perceived two-game shooting slump:

“I don’t consider it a slump. I just wasn’t making them. Every shot I take I think is going in. I just have to focus on the next one and not think about your last shot.”

On getting a win before the conference season:

“It was especially good because we’re going into conference, the most important part of the season. So it was nice for everyone to get a nice feel for it right before we go into it.”

On if the team gains anything from playing a Division III team:

“Any time you’re in a game atmosphere, you really can’t resemble that in practice with 10,000 fans. I think it’s good for all of us to be comfortable playing in an environment like that.”

On if there is talk on the team about being one of the last undefeated teams in the country:

“I think we’re just more worried about ourselves. We’re already at a point where we just need to worry about winning and winning our next game.”

San Diego State Sophomore Guard Chase Tapley

On getting a win before the conference season:

“It was a great tune-up. Everybody got some playing time, worked on their skills. It was a great confidence boost for some of our teammates and for us. It was a great win.”

On playing after a five-day layoff from their last game to resuming practice:

“We were fresh. We came in, practiced hard the last two or three days. We really focused in on some (different) aspects of the game. We just need to get back in the lab and get ready for conference.”

On if there is talk on the team about being one of the last undefeated teams in the country:

“It’s human nature to talk about it, but our main focus is just us and us getting better.”

San Diego State Senior Forward Malcolm Thomas

On if the team works on things during a 30-point game:

“I know the coaches, they wanted to work on second-side throwing it in to the post. When we were up 30, we were just trying to execute plays because we really haven’t done well in that area in the past games. So we were just trying to work on execution.”

On starting league play vs. TCU:

“It’s going to be a war because TCU, last year, when they came here, was a war. I’m expecting it to be an even tougher game this year. We’re just going to have to match their intensity and hopefully come out with a victory.”

On the Mountain West Conference:

“It’s a pretty tough conference. No matter who we play, freshmen, seniors, everybody is going to play hard. We have to do the same thing if we want to win this conference. Like I said, it’s going to be a war and we’re just going to have to bring it.”

On having a target on their backs:

“I think everybody likes it. When the expectations are so high, it’s so easy for everybody to turn your back on you. When everybody is cheering against us, we like it, we feed off it like when our fans cheer for us. It’s kind of the same thing.”

Occidental Head Coach Brian Newhall

On San Diego State:

“(They’re) good, real good. We didn’t shock the world. We weren’t Chaminade, we weren’t Hoosiers, we didn’t get this one for all the small colleges out there. Our assistant coach made a great observation, he said, ‘Not only are they very athletic, but they are skilled.’ Sometimes you don’t have both... They’re a very good team. When they match up in their conference, I think they’ve got a nice blend of size and perimeter scoring. They’re a hard team to beat. And I’ve been in enough of these to know we’re getting about their C-plus interest level games and I’m glad it wasn’t a B. Whenever we schedule these, and we’ve played a lot of good teams on the road, your hope is that they’re not coming in a playing with a ton of energy. Tonight? Wow, their crowd has changed that where when you come out and there’s a crowd whoever you’re playing. I was happy with how well we played, taking care of the ball. Other than three or four runs, it was a good game for us to learn as we get ready more for our conference. Post players at Division III are 6-7, it’s a very different thing. (SDSU’s) guys were getting deep position and we did what we could. We’re usually not a zone team, but after two possessions it became, ‘Wow, big! Very big! This will be longer.’ They’re well-coached and sound. It will be fun to watch them the rest of the year.”

On keeping the fans from getting free curly fries (had to hold opponent under 50 points):

“You’ve got to look for the little wins. I didn’t know that. I was asking my players, but I didn’t know that the curly fries were at stake. It was a moral victory. We had fun, though. When we do these, we know coming in that we want to be sound, we want to compete, we want no one to get hurt, we’re not going to hold the ball - it’s good for us, it’s good for them. I hope (SDSU) got something out of it where they chased us around a little bit. But that was our biggest win.”