

AZTEC BASKETBALL

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



Postgame Quotes

New Mexico at No. 6 San Diego State ► Feb. 16, 2011

San Diego State Head Coach Steve Fisher

(from the postgame radio interview)

Opening statement:

"I am so impressed with how hard New Mexico competed. This was a tough basketball game with two very good basketball clubs. They are good. They are the only team in our league that has beaten BYU. They competed tonight as if it were a tournament game. This was a nice victory for us."

On the low scoring in the last few minutes:

"You would like to make every shot you take. Several of them were going to go in. The flip of that is 29 second half free-throws. Once again Malcolm (Thomas) and Kawhi (Leonard) were sensational, 10-for-12 for Malcolm and 8-for-10 for Kawhi. Twice we rebounded missed free-throws and were able to get it back to the line. We had a hard time when we went inside. They are big. They blocked eight shots and those that they didn't they changed arcs and angles on them. We did just enough to get a victory. We are going to take it and talk about what we need to do tomorrow."

On the play of Malcolm Thomas:

"He was very good. When he has an opportunity to attack one-on-one, he is difficult to stop from getting a really good shot. Some of those he ducked under and got himself to the free-throw line. He had four big blocks. I know Billy (White) saved one layup and it might have been Billy that saved two, just by running the floor and getting it as it looked like it was going to go in."

On how the team is playing:

"We have done a good job playing through fatigue, playing through a bit of frustration and playing through not so good offensive play to not allow ourselves to be hurt at the defensive end. One basket in the last 10 minutes and we found a way to make stop after stop on the defensive end."

On Brian Carlwell's energy:

"Carlwell gives you everything he's got. I respect and admire him for that. He made some wonderful plays. Those five offensive rebounds were huge. I know he blocked one of Drew Gordon's shots. He did a perfect job of forcing him back over his left shoulder instead of allowing him to go the other way. He's always ready."

(from the postgame press conference in the Mezzanine Level)

Opening Statement:

"This was a tough, hard fought game. Exactly the way I thought it would be. New Mexico competes and they did that and then some tonight. (Head Coach) Steve Alford has done a marvelous job and he has a team that doesn't let up, that doesn't give up and is very talented. (New Mexico) is coming off of a loss at Colorado State—the first time in Alford's tenure that they had lost to Colorado State. They were 5-5 (in conference play) coming in, 17 wins. Huge game for both teams, and we played that way. Not expertly, but as hard fought as any game in the country was played tonight—for both teams. We do enough to get ourselves victories. Tonight we took two free-throws in the first half and 29 in the second, and Malcolm Thomas and Kawhi (Leonard) were money for us—10-for-12 and 8-for-10—from the free throw line. You couple that with them having 17 turnovers to our nine, that was a huge disparity. We had more opportunities and that's what you have to have. So I'm thrilled with the victory and looking forward to taking a deep breath tonight and getting ready for Air Force starting tomorrow."

On the Aztecs' scoring drought in the second half:

"We made a lot of free-throws, again. There are a lot of ways to skin a cat, a lot of ways to get wins. We would have liked to make more field goals but we made just enough. Late in the game we were at the free throw line almost every trip down. It's hard to make a field goal if you're shooting free-throws. We had some looks; they are long, they blocked five shots and altered probably five others. So, we did just enough."

On the Aztecs' defensive intensity:

"I thought we guarded like crazy. They slipped one time on us and got an open three but I thought we guarded pretty effectively. They're good—(Dairese Gary) is a load inside, he's hard to guard in there. He is big, strong, quick and he can create angles. I thought we did a good job challenging him. We had nine blocks and I thought Billy White blocked two shots at a crucial stage that looked as if they were going to be layups and he came running from behind and (they) got blocked—saved us a possession, saved us two points. As much as they altered shots, we did the same and then some."

San Diego State Senior Guard D.J. Gay

On the game tonight:

"It was an aggressive game, we didn't play our best. It was a very competitive game down to the end. Both teams played extremely hard. We didn't play our most intelligent basketball, but we played hard and so did they."

On improvement for the upcoming games:

"Win or lose, you have to constantly be moving, you have to constantly be moving forward. You can't stay or fall behind. We did get the win, we didn't play our best, but at the end of the day we do have to go back and watch film and learn from it, but the key thing is that we did come out with a win."

On the turnover before halftime:

"I think I was over anxious. I was too aggressive, I wanted too much to make that play and that's definitely not me, but I think I was over anxious and I got too excited about making that play. It goes to show that I'm human, I even turn the ball over, it's just a matter of time I guess."

San Diego State Senior Forward Malcolm Thomas**On the second half:**

"I think that we tried to play hard defensively, but we just didn't execute well enough on the offensive end. We're going to try to do a better job of that in practice and try to make it translate to the game."

San Diego State Sophomore Forward Kawhi Leonard**On playing against Phillip McDonald:**

"The way you have to play on defense is to keep coming off screens from the baseline, so I had to stay attached to him. He played hard, I was playing hard too. It's not conflict between us, we were just playing a hard game and I give it up to him for playing hard."

New Mexico Head Coach Steve Alford**On the game:**

"I really appreciate our guys' effort. You play on this floor, as good as they are and they get to the line 20 more times than you do in the second half and you're still right there, that's a credit to your team. I thought our guys battled like crazy. They did a good job at getting to the free-throw line. For whatever reason, we couldn't get there."

On keeping composure:

"That's what I like about our young team, they haven't gotten rattled. We got down double-figures in this game in the second half and we battled back. We've done that pretty consistently. So I'm very, very pleased with the effort. We played a smarter game which I appreciate. It wasn't a game where we made a lot of shots. It was a little better, but we didn't make a lot of shots. As I told them we have a key three-game stretch. We really try to do that. We box it into a three-game season, that's Utah, UNLV and TCU. We're sitting here at 17-9 and we have to do everything we can to get this thing to 20-9 going into the last week of the regular season."

On SDSU:

"This season they only lost one game and that was at BYU. We know how good they are. We know how talented they are. We're at a two-possession game at the end. This is the kind of effort for 40 minutes (that) we have to have. We just have to have it consistently."

New Mexico Forward Drew Gordon**On the game:**

"We're not shooting well right now, so we have to get that better. But this is definitely a confidence booster. (SDSU) is a great team coached by a great coach. Now all you can do from here is build."

On how to get into the NCAA Tournament:

"You have to take it one game at a time. Where we end up is where we end up. We just have to look at the next game ahead of us."