



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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## San Diego State-Gonzaga Postgame Quotes

### SDSU Head Coach Brian Dutcher

#### **Opening Statement:**

"Well, the one thing I learned is that I need to talk more from my chest than my throat because my voice goes every game. I'm learning something new every day as a head coach. I have to save my voice somehow, but what a great game to be vocal and yelling about. I thought our kids showed great resolve coming off of 12 days of practice without a game. It's like having a second training camp. Nobody wants a first training camp, but we had two training camps. It was good to see they were rewarded for all the work they put in that 12 days. We didn't come out rusty. My concern was we would come out a little rusty. We hadn't played in so long. Even though we had been working hard, we had no game time. I thought we came out and obviously got off to a great start. When they went to zone, I think all the work we've done on the zone offense since the Cal game kind of paid off today. We still missed a lot of open shots, but the ball moved a little bit more freely. Against Cal we kept putting it in the high post, but we kept looking in there and looking in there, trying to forcing it in without moving it. Today I thought we moved the ball better and put it in the high post and the low post. We did a lot better with our zone offense. About this game specifically, we knew we had to take care off the ball. The Zags run as well as any team in the country. Turnovers were a big priority. We only turned the ball over nine times today, so that was big for us – forcing 16. The other thing we did specifically for them – we've cried uncle in the past and we did it against the Zags – we just had three back on every shot, or tried to. A lot of times you try to get two guards to get back on a shot, but we've done that before against BYU when we played them. They ran so well we just cried uncle and said they were better running than we were getting back, so we'll send back three on the shot. I think we did a pretty good job after the start of the game, controlling their fast-break baskets or attempts. We made it more of a half-court game. Our kids played gritty. They played tough. They rose to the occasion. It was nice having Trey Kell, a senior, on the floor for an end of a game. That's what you wait for as a coach – whether it's D.J. Gay in his senior year or Xavier Thames in his senior year. You wait for your seniors to steady the ship at the end of the game. I thought Trey [Kell] and Devin [Watson] did a great job of that. Our defense was really good, and it starts with ball pressure. Jeremy Hemsley was fantastic. He put a lot of heat on the ball and he set the tone to our defense with his pressure on the ball to start the game. I'm real proud of how Jeremy played. Jalen McDaniels, the skinniest guy in basketball, continues to just move around and get rebounds and play hard. He's an energetic, fantastic young player that's going to have a really nice future here at San Diego State."

#### **On the team's energy starting the game 11-0:**

"Basketball doesn't change anywhere. When the ball goes in, everybody plays harder. The key to being a great team is when the ball doesn't go in, you still play hard. That's championship teams, so we'll see if we're that kind of team. When the ball doesn't go in, if we'll still play as hard defensively. When the ball goes in like it did to start the game, we got our momentum going. I thought that was really important because with not having played a game, if we got off to a slow start, who knows how long it would have taken us to get our rhythm. We got right into rhythm. It might have been the longest stretch I've ever seen without a dead ball or timeout. We played all the way to the 12-minute mark without a whistle. We missed the 16-minute timeout, and then we got to the 12-minute timeout and neither coach wanted to take their first timeout in that segment, so we just rode it until there was finally a foul call. I think everybody took a deep breath. Everybody was tired on the floor. I brought three or four guys in at that time. We just kept the momentum going from that point."

#### **On Jalen McDaniel's performance in the second half:**

"Against the zone, we have always done a good job putting it in the high post and that is where Jalen thrived today. He caught it in the high post, faced out and hit that twelve-foot jump shot. Against Cal, we did not put it along the baseline enough. We tried to put it down the baseline a little bit more today. That is where you attack the zone on short corners and high post. Everyone knows that. If you watch any game in the country, everybody is trying to attack those spots. I thought we did a good job getting in those positions and making good plays out of it. The Zags were fantastic. When we got in the high post and drove it in there, how many shots did they block at the rim? They went vertical and made us score over them. I thought the refs called a great game. There was contact,

but it was contact we were initiating with the drives. They were jumping up vertically and they did a really good job. I tried to talk to the kids about trying to get in there, jump stop and use shot fakes. They are a fantastic shot-blocking team and they are good at protecting the rim. They did a good job against us today."

**On Devin Watson's crafty play:**

"Devin is crafty like that. When you are an undersized player like that, your whole career you have to be crafty. He has always been crafty and that is at every level that I have seen him play at. Whether it was high school, AAU, at San Francisco, or now with us. He has the ability to get in there and be crafty. I think he needs to do more of that when he is driving in there and trying to force the contact. When he is not getting the calls, he needs to stop short and pivot around and be more crafty with the runner. I thought he did a good job down the stretch with the one basket he hit."

**On reason behind switching up the lineup:**

"I was tempted to throw Trey (Kell) in there right away. After he warmed up, maybe he would be loose and his thigh would be looser and ready to go; but, Jeremy has worked so hard and attended all twelve days of practice. At some level, you have to reward a guy that is there every day working his tail off. It was an easy decision for me to say I am going to start Jeremy, knowing I have Trey behind him. So, I rewarded Jeremy for all of his hard work. He pressured the ball and then came out and hit two big threes. Jeremy is playing at a really nice level. My decisions are never going to be easy because I have a lot of good players."

**On limiting Trey Kell in the first half:**

"I was worried about Trey's conditioning. He has not been through a full practice since Thanksgiving. He has got to get his legs back underneath him and the injuries he has had did not allow him to run. He had an ankle injury and a thigh injury. I think his conditioning is lacking a little bit, but I know his mentality and his toughness is not. I tried to rest him as best as I could and maybe go offense for defense a little bit. I also did that with Jeremy. I brought him in defensively and brought Devin back in offensively and made a few adjustments when I had a dead ball. I think everyone that played contributed today. I thought Trey did a good job drawing contact and getting to the foul line."

**On how big of an impact this win has on their season:**

"This is obviously the highest-quality win of any team in the Mountain West. We have played other teams close. Vegas took Arizona to overtime and Nevada had fantastic games with Texas Tech and TCU, but they just could not get over the hump. Boise's win at Oregon was a really nice win. It is nice beating a nationally ranked team on national television where it is seen around the country. Not only is it a win against a ranked team, it is a game that was close enough and exciting enough where people were probably tuned in and walked away saying 'San Diego State is pretty good'. I think we are pretty good. How good? I do not know yet, but we will try to continue to get better and find that out."

**On what this win means to him personally:**

"This is all honesty, I am more excited for the kids than I am for myself. This is what I was hired to do. This is not a rebuilt program. This is a program that expects to win games like that. That is why those people are in the stands. People expect to see the Aztecs win. That atmosphere and that crowd helped us win. I do not feel like this is a great shock that we won a game like this. This program has won games like this. I think Gonzaga respected us wholeheartedly and came in and played a hard game against us. I am just proud of how the kids responded and that they were rewarded for all of their hard work."

**SDSU Freshman Forward Jalen McDaniels**

**On senior guard Trey Kell's absence in two of three losses and influence on team:**

"I feel like it makes a big difference because he makes plays for us, and I think he got to the line twice and went four-for-four, so I feel like he helped us in crunch time."

**On Trey Kell's calming presence as a senior leader:**

"He is [calm]. It seems like he doesn't have pressure on him."

**On big win after Cal game and beating 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked team:**

"I feel like it is a big win for us, and a confidence booster going into league play. I feel like it was a good win for us."

**On energy and moral boost in second half:**

"That set us off—we started playing harder on defense and everybody was even more locked in."

**SDSU Senior Guard Trey Kell**

**On full team playing:**

"One thing [Coach Dutcher] has been stressing to us for a while is how deep this team is. We don't need, you know, everyone or any person to play a lot of minutes every game, and there's not one person that needs to go out every game for us to win. We have capable scorers, capable passers, and tonight was a group effort."

**On using 12 day break to recover from his injury:**

"I think I practiced a full practice probably one time, and then I probably did a couple half-practices before, so, yeah. I was a little tired out there but that was the main thing, I felt fine besides that. I'm not 100% but I was good enough to go, and I wasn't going to miss this game."

**On Coach Dutcher's decision to not have him start:**

"I'm not completely sure, I think he wanted to go with [Jeremy Hemsley] because Jeremy has been practicing really well for us these past twelve days. Plus, I haven't practiced in a while, and I'm not in the shape I was in from sitting out so long, I think he wanted to go with Jeremy and I think that was also part of the thinking as well, try to not log so many minutes as early so I can finish the game later."

**On Matt Mitchell's starting performance:**

"Matt's one of those people that's not shy. If he's got a shot, it's going up. But we have that confidence that's in him as well. We don't want him to play any other way. We don't want him to think twice about any shot. You know, if he has it, take it because as you can see, he's capable."

**Gonzaga Head Coach Mark Few****On the loss:**

"It was a defensive battle out there for a long time. We had a hard time finding baskets in any consistent manner and we weren't very tough out there. Again we had another half where we only shot one free throw but in the second half we got plenty of stops but couldn't find any baskets. San Diego State was long, I thought their length bothered us. [Jalen] McDaniels came in, made some big plays, hit some mid-range jump shots against our zone [and] had a couple put backs. At the end, they were a lot smarter than us. Trey Kell shot nothing but free throws — we have to be smarter than that."

**On turnovers plaguing his team:**

"Yeah, we got guys that just can't quite figure that out and it's our veterans. Until they want to figure it out and put a little governor on their passes and decisions, it's going to continue to hurt us."

**On his team's rim protection giving them a chance in this game:**

"It did but they got comfortable. I thought we could have made a couple adjustments, the players as far as where people were on the floor. They ended up hitting some big threes."

**On if playing zone was a decision after scouting San Diego State:**

"We've played zone all year. We've always played it against everybody and see if it's working better than our man-to-man. Obviously we zoned them last year and got some good mileage out of it. That's just how we approach every game."

**On the second half shooting struggles:**

"I thought that stretch from about the fifteen minute mark to the five minute mark was fairly inept. We might find the post and then we'd turn the ball over, get an offensive foul [or] take a quick three. I didn't feel like we were doing that good of a job searching and probing and being tough enough. Again, their length, you got to give them credit. They are long and athletic and we have to do a better job of finding ways to finish against them."

**On freshman Matt Mitchell's shooting touch:**

"You are going to give up shots with zone, actually Mitchell had a couple of his in the first half against our man-to-man, but you are going to give up a shot or two in the zone and those guys stepped up and made them."