

February 26, 2011



SAN DIEGO STATE

COACH FISHER: This was the kind of atmosphere, excitement, electricity that you dream about having. And these were two teams that merited that type of attention.

We played hard. BYU played hard. We played okay. BYU played better. They are a really, really good basketball team, and they showed that again today. This is not the first time they have showed it, but they are good. So are we. But today, they were a little bit better. They shot -- when they had to make a basket, somebody made a basket and it was never the same somebody. That's the mark of a really good team.

I'm proud of our guys. The test for us, as is every losing team, is how will you respond, short turnaround, all of the things that go into it. But the character we have got, with the three here and the others in the locker room, I feel strongly that we will compete hard in our next game. And hopefully we'll have another opportunity to play them in the conference tournament.

As disappointed as we are, we know there is a future for us and we need to say, okay, what did I not do as a coach; what did I not do as a player, and grasp something that you can learn from it, and say, if and when we play them again, if and when we play a team of that style/caliber, we'll be better prepared and hopefully have a better outcome.

Proud of our team, proud of our fans, disappointed in our loss.

Q. D.J., can you express the disappointment that you have in the way things turned out, or what's going through your mind right now?

D.J. GAY: We are very disappointed in the outcome of the game. But like Coach said, it was a hard-fought game. They played better. We just have to go back and learn from it and hopefully get another shot.

BILLY WHITE: Like D.J. said, I think the whole team is disappointed with the way we played

tonight. But like Coach said, we just have to bounce back, look at film tomorrow, see what we did wrong and correct it and practice and try to move forward, and don't forget about what happened today. But you know, we have got to move forward and just try to stay focused.

Q. Having played them twice, is there something about the matchups, something about that team that is not a good matchup for you guys?

D.J. GAY: No, I wouldn't say that. They just had players step up today and knock down open shots. They made 14 three-pointers. I think we did a pretty good job on Fredette but they just had guys step up and knock down shots.

Q. Can you explain the game plan in guarding Fredette?

D.J. GAY: To put a little bit of length on him. You saw Billy and Kawhi and Chase on him just to keep fresh bodies on him and wear him out and make him shoot over the top, double him off ball screens. And I think we did a pretty good job.

Q. Is there a frustration, like when you guard that closely and they still make those shots, does that make it a little bit harder the next time down the court and then they do it again and again and again?

D.J. GAY: It's frustrating of course when they knock down shots, put a hand in your face or they just get a wide open look or they knock down a shot. But as the game goes on, you have to be able to move on to the next play and that's what we have tried to do. But like I said, they just shot great from the field.

Q. You got a lot of Fredette today. Seemed like you had some success against him. Did you feel like you guys were limiting what you wanted him to do most of the time?

BILLY WHITE: I think so. I know that he wants to, you know, try to get into our bodies and try to make us foul him. I think we did a good job

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today guarding him, me and Kawhi and Chase, like D.J. said, try to keep fresh bodies on him. But unfortunately we left other guys open and they made tough shots and sometimes wide-open shots.

So we just got to, you know, look at tape, like I said and try to see exactly what happened and try to correct it next time.

Q. You guys have seen a lot of Jimmer. Can you speak to how he's evolved as a passer? Their coach as was saying his ability to create was getting better and better where he can find the guys after he's double teamed.

D.J. GAY: I think we didn't give him that much attention. You have no choice but to be able to find the open man, constantly getting double teamed and pressured and stuff like that. You see defenses just collapse as he penetrates, and his court vision has gotten better. He is finding the open man. And he has a great supporting cast to knock down shots.

Q. For any of you three or all of you three, were you surprised as well as they shot the ball today?

BILLY WHITE: A little bit. If you leave people wide open, they are going to make it, so you know, we just -- you know, we were double-teaming Jimmer, and he found the open man. Sometimes they were wide open. Sometimes they made tough shots.

Q. D.J., we have seen limited offense on you against BYU these two times, do you look to be more of a distributor when you play them or is it something that's tough about your defense to get around?

D.J. GAY: I notice they put their best defender on me, Emery, and he does a great job of playing off-ball and playing on-ball. I sense that they are giving me attention, which would leave other gaps open for other players. They make it hard for me to get my three-point shot off, and once I get past the first defender, the second defender steps up really quick.

Going into a game like that, I think I should have been more aggressive offensively. But they did do a good job of playing me on the offensive end.

Q. Billy, if you look at how much kind of hype surrounded this game and how excited these students and also the entire town got for

this matchup, is it at all deflating, given how much emotion you showed on the court today, to walk out of here with a loss?

BILLY WHITE: Kind of. You know, I think everybody, the whole school, people are disappointed, but you know, I know they are going to stay behind us 100%. We just have to keep moving forward. It's not the end of the world. We just have to keep fighting, keep playing hard every night. We have got two more games left, and we have just got to, you know, like I said, look at the tape tomorrow, if we watch tape or move on, I know our team is not going to forget about this. And hopefully we'll have another shot at the Mountain West Conference.

I think D.J., they both referred to the number of open shots; in doubling Jimmer as much as you guys did, were you not executing off the ball the way you wanted, or were you basically just daring them to make the shots that they did?

COACH FISHER: I'm not 100% sure. I know that a couple of Hartsock's baskets, we did not do a good enough job of -- we call it stunting, having the next guy in line be up and try to say, is he going to switch and run to him. But we did a better job in the second half, and yet, it seemed as every time when they move that ball and n-one, one more pass, they had a guy that was shot-ready and when that ball hit his hands, he had the ball up.

They made some shots that were hardly -- that were hard to contest. They made some shots that were flying at them. They made shots. They did make some open shots. But they made some shots that if you go back and look at the film, I would think that some of them were, as you say, hats off to you for having the toughness to take it, and then make it. And that's what good teams do. And they are better than a good team. They are a terrific team.

Your offense seemed to bog down at times against their zone. Were you disappointed in the execution against their 2-3?

COACH FISHER: I thought we had all sorts of looks that we were not able to bring to closure with. Not unlike the first game. I don't know how many times we had that ball inside and we couldn't get it go in. Now, they are men out there. They are big guys and they contested every shot. There was no gimmies in that game. But we had looks.

Against the zone, usually it takes you a

little longer to get that look, but we had a lot of good looks, and didn't make enough of them.

From what you've seen of BYU both on tape and in person, have you ever seen them play better than the two games they have played against you guys?

COACH FISHER: Well, that would probably be unfair to everybody they have played. I told our team: BYU is Final Four good. And I don't know that our guys liked to hear that.

And then I said: We are, too. Today, they were the better team. And they were. No excuses. They made plays. They made shots.

I thought we had opportunities when we closed the half with a 15-6 run. And we just were never able to -- I don't know that we ever had a lead in the second half. You know, they go up eight, we get two straight baskets, but you have to -- against a team that good, you have to be able to make important plays. And we had several of them, too many to mention, where it looked like, well, we are going to get that interception, and all of a sudden it goes off our hands and they get it and they shoot in a three. We have got the ball, we are going to get a basket; and all of a sudden they come in, deflect it away and we miss it, and they go down and get a basket.

That's what winning is all about. That's what they did today, very, very effectively.

As you probably know, they scored more than half of their points from beyond the arc. When a team is shooting like that and they have a point guard like Jimmer, are they beatable? How do you take them out of their game?

COACH FISHER: You have to make shots yourself. I mean, a team -- if you are going to be -- if you are to go to play toe-to-toe with them, you have to come back and also make shots.

They were good. And every time we kind of crept up to them, they would make a play, or two, to put the spread backup again. And we would fight like crazy to get a couple baskets and get a deflection and a steal and one roll-off and they would go down and score a basket.

Whether they shoot 14 for 24 or not, they are going to be a very, very difficult out for anyone in the NCAA Tournament. I don't care who it is. They are that good.

That got it?

One more quick question. You mentioned the mark of teams, how they respond to a loss like this. How do you think your team will respond to this?

COACH FISHER: The same way we always have. Same way we did last time we lost to them. It will be harder because we are playing on the road.

I love our team. We have got really, really good people with character. If it doesn't burn and hurt, then something's wrong with them. It does. That's all they will be thinking about tonight.

But, we have more work to do. We have got what most people, as it will start to unfold, will say the most important season ready to play, and that's the tournament. Now, we have got two games, hopefully three games, before the NCAA Tournament. But welcome back; the resiliency of youth is always good. Forgive, but don't forget. Don't forget what happened.

I think it's been a long time since we have been back-to-back with losses and our goal and pride will hopefully allow that to continue on.

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BYU

COACH ROSE: Well, I thought it was a great college basketball game. Great atmosphere. Two good teams. And I think you saw a really good game. Both teams battled hard and we were fortunate to make a few plays and win the game.

But really proud of our team. I'm proud of these two seniors here. They led us through some tough times with some injuries and illness over the week, but we came in here with a lot of confidence and we were able to get a big win for our team.

So with that, we'll take any questions.

Q. Have you guys shot from three-point range as well any time this season as you shot here today?

JIMMER FREDETTE: When we shot -- I don't even know what we shot. What did we shoot?

Q. 58 percent. 14 of 24.

JIMMER FREDETTE: Yeah, we have shot pretty good like that a couple of times this year. We have guys that can make shots, especially when they are open. A lot of times, they are double-teaming me and I was getting them the ball and they were wide open, so they are going to make shots if they are wide open. So that was the key.

Q. For anyone on the dais, what most impressed you about the way Abouo and number 34 played?

JACKSON EMERY: The most impressive thing to me was they scored a lot of points and they hit a lot of open shots which was really impressive. But the way they just battled on the defensive side, the rebounding. I mean, San Diego State is so athletic, they are so big, but Noah and Charles, they took it to heart to really fight back, and I thought they did a terrific job rebounding, as well.

Q. What was going through your mind when you got your fourth foul late in the game?

JIMMER FREDETTE: Just not to foul again. That's all I was thinking about. You know, I had a little chippy, kind of just reached in and got me for the fourth and I told coach that I don't want to foul anymore. I just want to stay in.

I know how to be start and try to stay away from fouling, especially on offensive end charges, things like that, doing the best I could. And fortunately, it worked out.

Q. The crowd was obviously on you from the minute you walked into the bidding. Can you just talk about how you hands the that had and what you thought of it?

JIMMER FREDETTE: I just tried to block it out. I didn't really look up there at all until the end of the game when we won. That was about it. That was the only time I looked up there. I just blocked it out and knew that they were going to be a great atmosphere and great fans. They love San Diego State basketball.

But the big key was that we sustained their run so they didn't get into the game all too much. We were able to keep a lead and score consistently, and I think that was a good thing for us.

Q. You showed a lot of emotion at the end of the game, can you describe the emotions you were feeling as you guys realized --

JIMMER FREDETTE: Definitely. We were just really, really excited to win this game. It's a huge game. Obviously two Top-10 teams at their place, they have not lost at home. Everyone was picking San Diego State to win so we were coming in kind of as the underdogs. We realized that and knew we were going to have to battle to get that win and I thought our team did a great job of just making shots and getting rebounds, getting loose balls, doing things that we needed to do, and that's why it was an emotional win.

Q. Can you explain like when you are being doubled, especially with two Bigs like that, how do you make the transition from scorer to distributor at that point?

JIMMER FREDETTE: You just read what the defense gives you. Obviously they started to just put two guys out on me and doubled me as soon as I came over half-court and that leaves a guy open. So willing passer, give up the ball, and they were sticking shots. They were paying for doubling me tonight. So it was great by my teammates to be able to make those shots.

Q. Since you guys have not been exposed so much per se this year in terms of being on television a lot and people seeing you, what do you think you showed today in terms of having a team other than Jimmer? I think people identify your team mostly with Jimmer because of his exploits. Can you talk about the statement you made today as a whole, as a team, please?

JIMMER FREDETTE: Well, I think it was great. Obviously I've been telling everybody, all of the media, all year long that it's not just me. It's our team. I keep tell them if they are going to double-team me I'm going to try to get it to my teammates and they are going to make shots and that's why we have been winning games this whole year. If they don't double-team me then it's my time to go be aggressive and score the basketball until they have to. That's what makes our team good. I'm glad that more people were able to see that; that our team is very good.

JOHN WALL: I think that the biggest compliment for this group of players this year is that they have just found ways to win games. And tonight, Jimmer had nine assists, and we needed other guys to step up. The question about when Jimmer decides if he's going to be a scorer or if he's going to distribute the ball, that's what makes him really good, because he can make that decision and he does it in a way to help our team win games.

We talked about it all year long; that this is a very good team, with a couple special players. Jimmer is a good offensive player that I think I've coached and Jackson is as good of a competitive player and defensive player; the job he did again tonight on their perimeter guys, a big reason we won.

Q. Jimmer, in the second half, did you make more of a concerted effort to take the ball to the hole than did you in the first half?

JIMMER FREDETTE: I just was making some shots in the first half. They were leaving me a little bit more space in the first half. So I was just kind of shooting them, made a couple of shots.

The second half we were setting the high ball screen and I kind of refused it a couple of times. They were kind of cheating towards the screen and not letting me use it and I was able to cross over and get to the basket a couple of times, a couple of n-ones (ph), reading the defense, seeing what they are doing and playing off of it.

Q. You said the other day that you probably have seen 28 different defensive looks in 28 games. Was the look when they were using Kawhi and Billy and Malcolm, that you mentioned before, was that new and something that you had not seen before?

JIMMER FREDETTE: People have doubled me as soon as I've come over half-court like that but the length and athleticism that they put on me is different, you know what I mean. So those guys are very quick, they are long. They are athletic. They can move their feet. They try to get their hands on passes and tip the ball.

So it was different in the fact that they are just a lot bigger and a lot more athletic than just having two smaller guys on you.

Q. Coach, can you talk about moving to the zone defense, really seemed to stifle San Diego State in the second half.

COACH ROSE: Well, we got in a little bit of foul trouble so I thought maybe we could shorten the game a little bit because the way they attacked that zone, they really like to go side to side to get in the middle and then they go back to one side. Really we were just kind of trying to get to the 16-minute time-out ask then to the 12 and try to get through some foul trouble that we had. Kyle Collins worth was not able to play as much as we wanted him to because he had the flu during the week. So James Anderson got poked in the eye and Stephen Rogers kind of hurt his ankle so we were kind of down a few guys. We thought that the zone could buy us some time.

Q. I think About off the second half missing four layups and then hits four 3s in the

second half. Talk about the bump that he gave you.

COACH ROSE: Those four shots that he missed, I mean, he was as aggressive as he's been all year long through that stretch, and when you get Charles to that spot where he's competing like that, he is terrific for this team. And he knew, all of the guys knew, that this was a game where every possession was a game-winner. That's what was really, you know, important for us to play every possession as if it was the last possession of the game. It's hard to do. Especially over the course of a long season.

But this was a big game for us. We seem throughout the season to have been -- everybody coming in to play us was the underdog and that we were supposed to protect what we had and where we were. And this was one of the few opportunities this year where we got to play from the other side, and where we were the underdog and I really thought our guys responded.

Q. The first half, what mood did you sense out of the guys at halftime, as far as was it more frustration or anger?

COACH ROSE: I think our guys were really positive. We were tired at halftime, because it was a really physical, aggressive -- they got a couple run-outs. I think we were up seven or eight and they got a couple of run-outs and got a lot of adrenaline and energy in the building.

But being up three and having the lead the whole half, okay, that was important. I think we got up 6-2 and they might have caught us a couple of times but for the most part we had the lead and that's a good way to play on the road in a really hostile -- because it never really gets to the apex of their -- where they want to get this thing to.

And so as far as the energy in the building against you; I thought that was a real big part. We were able to consistently score the ball, and it happened with Charles in the second half, and it happened with Noah in the first half. Jackson hit some really big shots for us throughout the whole game.

And then with Jimmer, when he sees opportunities for him to attack -- and he has to be aggressive the whole game and I think that's what makes him special. He's relentless on how he attacks. But there are times when he's kind of trying to read it and read it and when he sees an opportunity, he's pretty good at converting; those two-and-ones were really big at crucial times for us.

Q. You mentioned illness and somebody else had the flu; did a lot of kids get sick this week for your team?

COACH ROSE: Yeah, Thursday, after the Colorado State game Thursday, we were down to very few guys in practice. We did some shots and free throws and went over some game plan things. Our doctors did a terrific job of getting guys back. I don't know if it was food poisoning or some kind of a flu bug, but hopefully we can get that behind us and move on to the big challenge of next week.

Q. I know you downplay a lot of things, but from an historical perspective, is this the biggest regular season win in BYU basketball history?

COACH ROSE: I kind of judge wins by times, so the best win last year's team and the best the year before, all of the teams that were before I got here, I can't really judge. But by the way the guys responded in the locker room after the game, yeah, this was a big win. A big win for those players and I'm really proud of them, because this is one of those opportunities that you get and you want to be able to -- I think everyone appreciated the fact that this game meant something.

Early in the year when we saw the schedule in July that there was going to be a nationally-televised game, you hope that you can make the game relevant by both teams playing well during the season, and that this is going to be a big game, and it sure was and our guys appreciated being here. And then they were really excited about winning the game.

Q. Can you talk about how good of a ball handler Jimmer is?

COACH ROSE: Well, I'm telling you that he is as creative as any player I've played with as a player in college or played against or coached. I mean, he knows how to find ways to get shots. And he's learned that -- a lot of guys, you know, they practice ball handling so that they can get to certain areas on the floor and dish the ball.

But Jimmer is always on attack to score, and we finally figured that out. It took a while, the first year, tried to play him at the two without the ball a little bit and you realize that he's just one of those players, when he has the ball in his hand, that he can make plays and he can create plays for himself and I think what he's really done this year,

become a lot more patient and really found ways to create shots for his teammates.

You saw him tonight. He had one pass when he was like a 30-foot pass to Charles in the corner for a big shot; those are plays that I think he's really become good at this year, finding that guy that's left. He's the last rotation, because he got a double and then everyone else is bumping up and then he finds that guy. Tonight, Noah and Charles were both really good at converting those shots.

Q. Another macro question in. Terms of seeding, how do you think this helps you and do you think you deserve a No. 1?

COACH ROSE: You know, people ask me that a lot, and probably all of the local media here, they understand what my answer is going to be, because I just really worry about the next game. This is a really good basketball team. I hope people across the country today got to see that this is a very good team with a couple of really special players on it.

But you know, by our RPI and by this conference's RPI and our record in the league, we should get some pretty good consideration. We have got lots of games to play though. Seriously I don't really think about it. The only time I actually think about seeding is when guys ask me, when guys like you ask me the question.

But realistically, I'll enjoy this for a few hours and then we'll get ready for New Mexico. New Mexico has been good against us the last couple of years.

Q. You mentioned your team is a very good team with special players; what is your assessment of San Diego State and their team and their players?

COACH ROSE: This is as good of a team as we have played I think since I have been at BYU. We played a North Carolina team a few years ago in Vegas and they ended up winning the National Championship that year, by Ty Lawson only played a few minutes in that game. He sprained his ankle.

But this group right here, what they do and how they do it -- we are really fortunate because the strength of our team kind of plays into things that they have a few problems with, and then the matchup becomes good. When you get a couple of guys making some big shots -- but this is a very good team. And I mean, I believe that we have been fortunate in both games to make a few plays

late. But I'm really impressed with everything they have. They have got great guards, Rahon, Tapley were terrific tonight and the front line is as good as any in the country.

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