



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"We're excited to get back home. First place is on the line and it's still early in the conference season. But Boise, San Diego State, it's going to be a great game. It's going to be round one of maybe two or three rounds between the two teams. They're very good. Leon Rice has a good team again. They're veteran, they're talented, and they're winning basketball games. So, we will have our hands full tomorrow night with a full Viejas arena and great energy. Hopefully we'll be able to come out on top with a well-deserved victory."

On Boise vs. SDSU history

"Well, hopefully they're thinking about last year as a motivating factor. They're good, every game was a one possession game. The game here that was so low scoring, we had come off a two week pause. They're good, they were good defensively, they're good defensively again. I think they're the number eight ranked defense in the country this year, so they're going to be hard to score on. The basket is going to be at a premium. Hopefully we'll be ready offensively to play a better game than we have in the past against them, and I think we will."

On second half defense:

"We got to bring more energy in the second half. I think if you watch the first half of the second half, our energy seems to be higher. Whether we have to get more warm up before the start of the second half, or something to get them moving again, we have to do it. We're better offensively and not as good defensively, that's basketball. That's how it works sometimes. We're happy with our growth offensively, but we have to get back to being the Aztec defensive team."

On playing Boise after a tough loss:

"Obviously, this is the fourth game in 10 days, so we haven't had a day off in a long time. And so, we're just on the grind right now. Coaches are, players are, and we're just trying to do whatever we can do in a short turnaround to be ready for a good Boise team. They played at Air Force, so they traveled here. That's this conference. It's a hard conference. It's unforgiving and on the road especially. So we have to find a way to hold home court against Boise and it'll be a tough thing to do."

On this game being a must-win game:

We have to find a way to win at home. Obviously, the New Mexico game we let slip away and they deserved to win. They played hard and they're very good. But you have to win at home and find a way to split on the road. We have the best road record in the conference, 4-1. I think the next best is two wins. So we've done a good job on the road and we have to continue to do that, but we have to hold home court. We've been very good in this arena and a lot has to do with our fan support, the energy they bring to the building along with the team and hopefully that will happen tomorrow night."

On what happened in the Nevada game:

"We played a good first half, up two at half, up a point with four minutes to go. We didn't close, they closed. We had a couple of shots that I liked and we ran down I think five, we had a play and Matt had a wide open three up top, you have to make those shots with the game

on the line. They closed the game by scoring and we missed shots and opportunities, that's college basketball. And that's this league. I think those teams at the top, whether it's Utah State, New Mexico, Boise, Nevada, us, those are all hard places to play. Anybody that can get a win in any of those places is gonna have a leg up."

On Aguek Arop potentially playing more:

"He is valuable to the team. His plus minus is off the charts. When he is on the floor, we all take great comfort in that. He knows his body better than anybody, obviously four games in 10 days is hard on him, but he's in rehab every day. He's trying to be the best version of himself he can be and when he's on the floor, good things happen for the aztecs."

On Darrion's offense:

"He's got good looks; he's just got to make them. He had a really good week of shooting in practice, so I was encouraged going into the game at Nevada, but he goes 0 for five from three. The three-point shot is a big part of any game and we're shooting at a high percentage as a team, really high. If we could get him more competent, get him making a few, it will help us a lot."

On Boise's Chibuzo Agbo:

"Chibuzo played at saints. He's a wonderful player and an even better person. He's having a really good year for Boise, shooting in the high 40s from three. He's a dangerous offensive player, and he seemed to find his rhythm. He started at Texas Tech and transferred and found a better rhythm playing at Boise for Leon, and he's going to be dangerous. So we're going to have to pay attention to him tomorrow."

On confidence going into the game:

"We put the work in, we prepare hard, and I tell them hard work is always rewarded. Now whether it's rewarded every game, we don't know. If we continue to work hard, play hard, we'll continue to improve and we'll hit our stride. Hopefully it starts tomorrow night. If it doesn't, it'll start a game or two down the road, but we work hard in the program and usually hard work is rewarded."

San Diego State Senior Guard Adam Seiko

On if the game vs Nevada was an off road game:

"Yeah, that was a tough game. Everyone played hard in that game. I don't think there's ever anything at all on our end. Credit to Lucas, Coleman, and Baker for making tough shots all game. I mean, they were making really tough shots after we watched their film, contesting the chance. Lucas was hitting turnaround. So we guarded them pretty hard, but then there were little things as far as offensive rebounds that we didn't get. They beat us in that category. They were getting back in transition. So, we weren't able to get that many transition buckets. But we realized in the second half that we had to throw the ball to the side, and we were pretty successful on that. But then they just hit tough shots, they just made more shots. And they played well so credit to them."

On if players think about losing all three games to Boise last year:

"Yeah, losing those three games, all one possession games. That was super tough. Knowing that we had a chance to win when we were at the free throw line. Could have been some questionable calls made but we can't control that. So we definitely take it a bit personal. Boise is always a good matchup. They're a great defense. We're a great defense, so it's going to be a dogfight. So, when they come here, we want to set the tone, we want to let them know that we're not playing around and we want to stay in first place."

On how he prevents defensive lapses and lack of energy as a senior leader:

"Everything starts in practice, holding each other accountable and every single thing that we do in practice. Sometimes we'll have a good 45 minutes of practice, then we'll kind of drop down a little bit and it translates into the game, so we can't have those lapses in practice and then in the game, we've got to know how to learn on the fly. We got to make adjustments on the fly. And guys have to be disciplined

and have concentration in timeouts. Every single thing we're trying to get done. They're just holding each other accountable. That's all I can do, that's all the seniors can do. And with that, we'll be in good shape."

On the importance of getting a win against a top team:

"It is very important. We want to hold first place. Boise with three losses each, we have to hold first place especially at home. We always put it as Mountain West vs Viejas. They came here last year and beat us so these next couple of games we have to play hard and just want to keep our spot because we want to win the regular season conference and the tournament championship. It's going to be a great match up."

On if he thinks the fans will storm the court following a win:

"No. We're not storming the court. We expect to win here. Our culture of winning, how many championships we have. We know what it takes. We know what we're about. Just win the game."

On what it is about the league that allows teams to turn over and still have success:

"Yeah, the turnover has been great for them. Boise, some people thought that they were going to drop off a little bit with losing Akot and Kigab but they've brought in some good guys. Max Rice is playing really well. Degenhart, Shaver, all these guys play super hard. So, they have a really good starting five. The thing we have to do is we just press them, get them tired. Both teams had a great turnaround. So, it's exciting to see them do well."

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