

**March 24, 2011**



Connecticut - 74  
San Diego State – 67

An interview with:



COACH FISHER: When your season comes to a screeching halt like it will for every team with one exception, it hurts. It should hurt, regardless of when, where and how. For our team this year, for what they've accomplished, it hurts exponentially more.

I could not be more proud of how we competed, how hard we played, and unfortunately we came up a bit short. Wasn't for lack of effort, wasn't for lack of trying, but we came up short. That's the nature of this game. We'll pack our gym shoes up as Connecticut moves on to the round of 8, and the last thing I will say that I said to our team is give one another a hard hug and tell them how much you love them, and don't be ashamed to cry. Don't be ashamed to shed a tear.

You've done so much for San Diego State, the community, and for yourselves that when we reflect back on it, all of us will know that, the legacy that you've established. When it ends, it's hard and it ends for us today. And we're very, very disappointed.

**Q. D.J., you got off to a cold start and then made some key 3-pointers to get your team back in the game. Talk about your mindset at that point. Did you think you were going to ride the hot hand and try to overcome them at that point?**

D.J. GAY: Starting the second half we were down and I felt like there was a need for me

to get more aggressive offensively. There was nothing to lose, you know, but a lot to gain. We tried to speed the tempo up, get guys open shots and stuff, but just didn't go our way.

**Q. Billy, could you talk about the frustration or the difficulty of staying in front of Kemba and how he either got the 3 pointer or got to the basket almost at will?**

BILLY WHITE: He's just an amazing player. Our goal was to try to contain him, you know, he's almost impossible to stop.

Our goal was just to try to make him make tough shots and shoot over us and he did a real good job today penetrating the lane and shooting wide-open three's.

**Q. D.J., you heard what Coach Fisher had to say and I'm sure in a couple of days or maybe even in a couple of hours that all is great, but right now you had such a great career at San Diego State. To end like this, how does it make you feel?**

D.J. GAY: It hurts. These two guys by my side know, we all became a family and for this to be our last game, you know, it really does hurt. You never want it to come to an end. We had a lot of success this year, a lot of accomplishments, but at the end of the day, we wanted it all.

**Q. D.J. and Billy, it seemed like you guys were trying to be very physical with Connecticut, particularly Kemba, was that part of the game plan coming in?**

BILLY WHITE: Not at all. We knew that they were trying to be physical, we were just trying to match their physicality. That wasn't our game plan to be physical.

D.J. GAY: I just think that both teams just fed off each other. When one team threw a punch, the other team threw a punch. So it was going back and forth. As the game went on, both teams got more physical.

But that was just us adjusting and them

adjusting, us not backing down and them not backing down.

**Q. Malcolm, can you comment on practically playing in front of a home crowd? Clearly you had fans outnumbering the UCONN crowd, did it feel like you were playing in your home gym?**

MALCOLM THOMAS: It definitely felt like a home game, we have to thank our fans and give them all the credit for the type of season we had all year, and without them I don't think we would have made it this far. So we're just thankful for everybody who supported San Diego State this year.

**Q. D.J., now that you've seen these guys and you played 'em, you haven't played everybody left in the tournament, but what are your thoughts about how far UCONN can go?**

D.J. GAY: I don't know. It's the NCAA Tournament. Anything is possible. They're a very good team, have a great leader with great role players.

I think they're going to have a chance to go as far as, you know, they want, if they keep playing the way they're playing. They play as a team and they're very good.

**Q. D.J., how difficult was it to overcome those technicals, and the momentum switch that each of 'em brought with you? How did you digest that, and how big of a factor was it?**

D.J. GAY: It hurt. The first one put Kawhi Leonard on the bench and we need him out there, so that was our first adversity we had to face in the game.

The second one with the momentum we did have, that one hurt as well. But we knew no matter what the outcome was of the call we had to go out there and continue playing hard.

**Q. The incident about midway through the second half when Jamaal got called for the technical, what happened and do you think that was the turning point?**

D.J. GAY: I have no idea what happened. From what I hear Jamaal was walking back to the bench, and I guess there was a bump exchange or something. Somehow, I think it was Kemba ended up on the floor. I don't know how hard he was hit, but I guess that's what happened.

But I don't know -- that was, again, an adversity that we had to fight through in the game, it gave them the ball, two free-throws, and we just had to try and play on from it.

**Q. D.J., can you talk about what was said when Kawhi Leonard got the technical? Do you know what happened when he got his?**

D.J. GAY: I have no idea. I have no clue.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen. Now open the floor up to Coach Fisher.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about the technical fouls, exactly how you saw them and how it affected your team?**

COACH FISHER: I'll go the last one first. I didn't see what happened on the last -- on the technical on Jamaal. He said they walked and bumped into each other. The official said that Jamaal bumped him. I didn't see that.

I saw the first one. Both players were talking to one another, and Kawhi Leonard got hit with a technical foul and my comment was at this level, at this stage could you not say something to them about -- to me both guys were talking, and unfortunately for us, obviously, we get the technical and it's Kawhi's second foul early and he came out. But I was watching both of them as they were going and it was not one man talking, it was two.

**Q. Steve, on the second technical you guys had a 4-point lead then there is the time-out and the review, free-throws, seemed like you guys came out flat. Do you think that was a big turning point?**

COACH FISHER: I don't remember the sequence after that, maybe you can look and help me with what happened after that. Obviously, it cost us the free-throws. This was a game of runs, the whole game. We had one, they had one, they had one, we had one, and unfortunately right at the end we couldn't make one more shot. Kawhi had an open 3. We were down with a couple minutes to go, and we couldn't get one to go down.

They get the ball back. We do a good job defensively. They get the ball back and Jeremy Lamb hit a 3 after that. So many factors, especially when you don't move on -- especially when it's a relatively close game, and today's game was close.

**Q. Kawhi and D.J. seemed to have off first halves. Was that their game being off or something that Connecticut did, combination, how did you see it?**

COACH FISHER: Connecticut is good. They guard hard.

I think Kawhi missed some good shots early, but we're a team when one guy struggles, a little bit, somebody else gets going and both Kawhi and D.J. have been players that they can get spurts and make two or three in a row and they can have periods where they go oh for four or five and that happened also.

**Q. Coach, the free-throws, I know you're looking at that number and you got to scratch your head, it kinda came back to bite you. On Kemba, you said those quick guys are quick on film and you see them then they're quicker. Was that the case as well?**

COACH FISHER: Obviously, we didn't shoot free-throws well enough today and free-throws can advance you or send you home. We missed enough of them to say if we'd have made this one and this one, maybe.

Walker is very good, he's a hard guard, he's a hard guard to keep off the bounce and when he shoots it from the perimeter as well as he did today you're going to get 35 points, like he did, against us.

**Q. Coach, this has been an outstanding year for your conference and an interesting one in terms of the business aspect of college sports. Where do you see -- how do you feel your conference represented itself in the tournament and where do you see the league going as a basketball conference from here on out?**

COACH FISHER: We have a really, really good basketball league. We as coaches and players know that and I think the people who follow and cover this league and the fans know and appreciate that. You build representations on a national level on what you do against the marquis teams, nonconference, but more importantly what you do in post-season play, and we had two teams advance to the Sweet 16. I have not heard what BYU did --

**Q. They lost.**

COACH FISHER: Which was a first. All the ratings that are out there, and I don't know how

you have 'em, our league was very, very highly regarded from top to bottom.

It's nice to have success in postseason play. Our goal when we lose a couple, we gain a couple is to continue to maintain the quality of the league. I know that there will be teams in our league that will be fighting not only to get to the NCAA Tournament but to get to the Sweet 16 and beyond like BYU and ourselves did this year.

**Q. Coach, getting back to Kemba just for a minute, you started out with Chase Tapley on him, did you want to switch men, did you think Billy was a better match-up? What was your thought process?**

COACH FISHER: That was our thought all game, we were going to vary who guarded him, go with Chase to start with and either fatigue or success by Walker, we had it planned all along that Billy was going to guard him for a good portion of the game. And it didn't matter who was guarding him, he was pretty effective today.

**Q. Coach, with D.J. having such a big second half, did you focus on getting him the ball more in the second half?**

COACH FISHER: We tried a couple of times, we have an out-of-bounds play. We tried to get him when he made the one three, and after a time-out we ran a side three to get him an open three.

For us, I think he made both of those to -- one he got an "and 1" and I think he missed the free-throw. When he made a couple we tried to get him a couple more shots. Obviously, they knew he had made a couple, so they tried a little harder to guard him, too.

**Q. Coach, we know about the 34-3 and winning the conference titles and stuff. What was the biggest accomplishment you guys did this year, big picture? What's this going to mean moving forward for the program and for what San Diego State means basketballwise?**

COACH FISHER: 34-3, winning the conference, winning the conference tournament for the second straight year, winning first-ever game in NCAA history for San Diego State and following that up with another victory, gaining a national acclaim with a 2 seed.

We'll have a lot to reflect back on with pride, and this will be a team that 10, 20 years from

now when we're bringing teams in, they'll talk about San Diego State of 2010 and '11 with a lot of positive pride for what they've accomplished. They up'd the bar for the program, and they know that we've got a program and they're proud of the fact that they have had a huge, huge role in taking it to unprecedented heights for San Diego and San Diego State.

**Q. Steve, other than the final score, was there anything uncharacteristic or particularly disappointing about the way the game went for your team? Was there something that you saw that you hadn't seen down the stretch?**

COACH FISHER: No, I don't think so, Tim. I don't believe we've had very many technical fouls. We had two player technical fouls and I'm sure that will be a story line when folks write about the game. We played hard.

We played very hard. We have been a team of spurts, Connecticut is a team of spurts and unfortunately they had a spurt that we weren't able to quite climb the hill enough to get that last basket, you know, I watched -- I watched Kawhi measure that three when we're down a point with a couple of minutes to go, and I thought when he shot it it was going to go in. He's a money player, a big money player and unafraid to take a shot and when we missed it, I thought we did a great job defending, but couldn't secure the rebound to give ourselves another chance and Jeremy Lamb, who is a terrific player, comes right back with three huge plays.

I don't think anything uncharacteristic about how we competed and played. We played a very good team who is on a big-time run with how they're playing, and they're led by a superstar in Walker.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**