



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State vs. Saint Mary's Postgame Quotes

San Diego State 74, Saint Mary's 49

Mott Athletics Center | San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Dec. 22, 2020

### San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

#### Opening Statement:

"We played a solid defensive game. I couldn't be more proud of how we defended and then the ball started going in a little bit. I mean, we all know the offensive woes we had against BYU. But (tonight) we played with a little better rhythm offensively and made some jump shots. Nathan (Mensah), obviously... I couldn't be any prouder of him. I think he had 18 points, 13 rebounds, six block shots, somewhere in that range. Nate made a big difference at the defensive end; anchored our defense. (Offensively) we shared the ball; we add scoring from a lot of different people, and just a really hard-fought, good win for the Aztecs tonight."

#### On what he thought was the biggest improvement from the BYU game to this one:

"Well, it's nice to see the ball in the basket. When you look up and you're at 40 (points) at halftime instead of 20, that'll make everybody feel better, including the head coach. So, it was great to see the ball go in. We shared it. It wasn't just one guy like Matt Mitchell having to get 30 for us to win or have a chance to win. The points were pretty evenly distributed. We got contributions from everybody and just proud of our guys."

#### On why Nathan Mensah was so dominant offensively against Saint Mary's:

"Well, we gave it to him in the low post, you know, we have to give it to him for him to be successful. And when we did, he produced offensively. And then at the defensive end we know what it is. I mean, he had six block shots and how many others were changed? He might have changed four, five, six other shots. He's what we'd hoped he would be when he came here, what we missed last year when we didn't have him, a shot blocking presence to anchor our defense."

#### On the upcoming schedule and dealing with postponed games:

"We're actively pursuing games. The conference is looking at the (UNLV) situation and trying to figure out how we can get games in. So right now, you know, I'm nervous. We want to play. We want to play anybody anywhere, any place. And so, we continue to search for games, and we'll see what the conference does with the games that may or may not be canceled."

#### On the team's success away from Viejas Arena this season:

"We're going all neutrals. Hey, I'm glad we're playing basketball. I always say that with this COVID-19 and shut downs, we've been blessed to play and will hopefully continue to stay healthy and continue to play. We've been better on the road defensively. We were spectacular against BYU defensively, but we couldn't get an offensive rhythm. And a lot of that had to do with BYU. But I think as they play more together, this group, they're going to get a better feel how to play with each other. Because as much as you can draw it up on paper, sometimes you have to learn through experience and this team, hopefully, as they gain experience together, will continue to get better at the outcome."

## San Diego State Senior Guard Terrell Gomez

### **On his adjustment to playing at San Diego State and if he sensed this kind of game was coming:**

"I'm used to playing really, really fast. I don't know if people noticed but today, we pushed the ball a lot better. I'm used to getting up the court fast and if you don't have anything then you get into the offense, instead of just initially getting into the offense when a team makes a basket. So other than that, I just have to do a better job of making my shots and I did that today. I've been in the gym really working on just making my shots. I think our team defensively is always good, you know, but I just felt like offensively last game, we had a lot of guys not shooting."

### **On what it means to have a shot blocker like Nathan Mensah playing behind you on defense:**

"Well, it gives you more confidence knowing you got somebody behind you that can alter a shot...not just block a shot. So (you can) guard a little harder (knowing he is back there), but also, you can't put your big in foul trouble. I just have to keep guys in front of me the best I can. But I also know he has my back."

### **On if his first three pointer sparked him and the team:**

"Yeah I definitely gave the team bit of a spark. I've just got to get to that groove, which is doing those things again and having the confidence to make those plays. Coach told me 'I know you're not used to coming off the bench.' It's a little different. You can't jog up the court once or twice and then kind of get your rhythm. You've got to be instant offense when you get in. So basically, like in (tonight's) game, I'm just trying to push the tempo. I'm definitely trying to be an offensive spark for my team, as well as defensively...get a couple of steals, and I'm going in my head when I made that shot, I'm like, 'yes, it's going to be a good game, so let's go.'"

## San Diego State Junior Forward Nathan Mensah

### **On what has allowed him to have so much success away from Viejas Arena this year:**

"I wouldn't say anything that's changed (between playing at home and playing away) it's just the mentality that I come to the game with, especially playing not so good against BYU. It was like something I had to prove myself this game. So I wouldn't say it's either an away game or a home game, it's just I played bad and I tried to turn it up this game."

### **On what allowed him to get six blocked shots against Saint Mary's:**

"I think that our guards also being able to stay in front of their guy for a very long time made it much easier for me. If the guards contain the guys they are guarding, I'm just doing the rest of the job. So that made it very easy. So I would say our guards played a good role in (my being able to block shots)."

### **On the matchup with Matthias Tass:**

"It boils down to who is stronger. I think me personally, my strength on him really paid off and it got to a point where I felt like I had him under control. So I just tried to be disciplined."

### **On getting early touches and what it means for him and the team:**

"It builds confidence at the early stage of the game. As soon as I'm able to get going it builds confidence for me. So just really being aware of that and making sure I get the ball in the early stages (of the game builds confidence for the team as well)."

**-SDSU-**